GUIDE TO THE FN17 NGONDE FILE

[The FN17 Ngonde file covers two closely related Bantu-speaking societies: the Ngonde proper of northern Malawi, and the Nyakyusa of adjacent southwestern Tanzania. The only important difference between the Ngonde and the Nyakyusa is that they are located in different political divisions. Otherwise, they are very similar culturally. The bulk of the material in the file is on the Nyakyusa, studied principally by the husband-wife team of Godfrey and Monica Wilson in the period 1934-1938. The basic sources are 1: Wilson, a study of Nyakyusa age-villages; 2: Wilson, a study of rituals of kinship among the Nyakyusa; 3: Mackenzie, a missionary ethnography of the Ngonde; and 9: Wilson, a study of the relationship of religion to Nyakyusa social structure. Two of the sources (4: Tew and 8: Wilson) are summaries of the entire culture. The other sources are descriptive and analytical studies of special aspects of Ngonde society, particularly that of the Nyakyusa.

The information in this file concerns mostly the social relationships and religious beliefs of the population. Data on economic activities and daily life are also adequately presented. Like many other African peoples, the Ngonde, as a result of European contacts, are undergoing rapid cultural changes. Some of the effects of these changes are recorded in this file. The file was processed between 1957 and 1965.]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

a. The cultural area

THE Nyakyusa and Ngonde[1] are a Bantu-speaking people who live at the north-west corner of Lake Nyasa, on the marshy plain at the head of the Lake, and in the hills that rise steeply to the north and west of it. They straddle the Songwe river which divides Tanganyika from Nyasaland. The area is enclosed by the Lake itself, the escarpment of the Livingstone mountains on the north-east and the Poroto mountains on the north-west. To the west the boundaries are less clearly defined, but coincide pretty closely with the boundary of Rungwe district and with the watershed which separates Nyasaland from Northern Rhodesia. To the south the boundary is that of Chief Mwafulira's country, which lies some twenty miles south of Karonga (see Map I). Most of the area is thus situated between 9° and 10° S., and 33° and 34° E. It covers approximately 4,500 square miles and the population is about 235,000.[2]

Within this area there are local differences in language and custom. The dominant groups are the *Nyakyusa*, who live in Tanganyika on the Lake-shore plain and up into the hills as far as Rungwe mission, and the people of *Ngonde* who live on the Lake-shore plain in Nyasaland. These two groups speak dialects which, though differing somewhat in vocabulary and pronunciation, are easily understood by speakers from both, and their social structure is essentially similar. The main difference is that in Ngonde a

[1] The old men say *Nkhonde*, and the name appears in most of the literature as *Konde*.

[2] The area of Tukuyu district is 1,866 square miles, and the area subject to the Kyungu, the paramount chief of Ngonde, is 2,687 square miles. The Tanganyika census of 1931 gives the population of Rungwe district as 195,062: this was believed in the district to be an over-estimate. The population of Ngonde is approximately 40,000. For the southern boundary of the Ngonde people in 1881 see James Stewart, 'Lake Nyassa and the Water Route to the Lake Region of Central Africa', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, New Series*, Vol. III, 1881. He states that nine miles north of Mount Waller is a marsh; south of it are the Tumbuka, north of it the 'Chungu' (i.e. Ngonde).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

centralized chieftainship[1] developed with the development of the ivory trade, whereas among the Nyakyusa (who were geographically much more isolated) nearly a hundred small chiefdoms maintained their independence until the European conquest. In their economy, their kinship system, their age-village organization and their rituals, however, the people of Ngonde are very similar to the Nyakyusa.

The Nyakyusa themselves may be sub-divided into those living on the Lake-shore plain (*MuNgonde*), those around *Masoko*, those to the east under the Livingstone mountains in *Selya* and *Saku*, and those to the north, viz. the *Kukwe* and *Lugulu*. The last two groups differ appreciably in dialect and custom from the others, but all speak dialects which are mutually intelligible.[2]

There are also a number of small groups with old langugages of their own which, though related to that of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde, are more or less unintelligible to them; and they have equally distinct cultures. These include the *Penja* on the plateau to the west of the Kukwe; a small group of *Nyika* on the same plateau; the *Ndali* in the hills to the north of the Songwe; the *Sukwa* to the south of them; the *Lambya* and *Wenya* further west; small groups of *Henga* and *Mambwe* on the western border of Ngonde, and the *Kisi*, a people famous as potters and fishermen, who live on the north-east shore of the Lake. Most of these people are now, we are told, being rapidly assimilated to the Nyakyusa and Ngonde in speech and in law, but we have little

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3, 1939.

[2] The term *Nyakyusa* means primarily the people of the Lake plain in Tanganyika, and those around Masoko, but it is now used by extension to include those in Selya and Saku, together with the Kukwe. We use 'Nyakyusa proper', for those on the Lake plain and around Masoko. The terms *Ngonde* and *Mwamba* are a source of some confusion because their meaning varies with the location of the speaker, and the meaning of Ngonde also varies with the prefex used. The primary meaning of *Aba-Ngonde* is 'the people of the plains' but anyone travelling in the direction of the sacred hill Mbande, on which the Kyungu (the paramount chief of Ngonde) lived is spoken of as going *KuNgonde*, whether he start from nearby, or from as far away as Tukuyu (cf. Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 7). *MuNgonde* is generally used by the Nyakyusa for the Lake-shore plain of Tanganyika. In this book we use *Ngonde* for the area of the Kyungu's supremacy, and avoid *MuNgonde*. *AbaMwamba* means by derivation 'the hill people', but is generally used for 'the people to the north'. The Ngonde of Karonga call those on the plain around Mwaya *BaMwamba*, the men of Mwaya apply the name not to themselves, but to the people of Selya, while the people of Selya apply it to those in the hills to the north of them. We therefore avoid the term.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

first-hand knowledge of them. On the coast they are classed with Nyakyusa and Ngonde as *Sokile*, a nickname derived from the traditional Nyakyusa greeting.

This book is concerned with the Nyakyusa.[1] What it contains is true in general terms for the people of Ngonde, but how far it is applicable to the smaller groups cited we are not certain. The Ndali, Sukwa, and Penja, are said to have long had an age-village organization; and Henga, Nyika and Kisi living intermingled with Ngonde and Nyakyusa have adopted it; but of the customs of the Wenya and Lambya we know little. Dr. Kerr Cross and Monteith Fotheringham, who travelled extensively in the area before 1890, reported that the Ndali and Sukwa (of Misuku) were very similar to the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people, but that the Lambya were different, practising shifting *citemene* cultivation, and living in stockaded villages.[2]

According to their own traditions the Nyakyusa and Ngonde chiefs (who trace descent from common ancestors) came ten generations ago from Kinga country, on the Livingstone mountains, and found the Rungwe and North Nyasa country already occupied. They established themselves as chiefs and have since been increasing the area of their occupation. The Kinga also affirm that their chiefs are related to those of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde, and they join with the Nyakyusa in sacrifice to common ancestors at Lubaga and LiKyala (see Map III), but the Kinga culture is quite distinct from that of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde; we stayed long enough in Kinga country to convince ourselves that the Kinga live in kinship villages and not in age-villages, and that they differ from the Nyakyusa in many other respects.

There seems little doubt that the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people have been expanding in an area not uninhabited, but sparsely inhabited, and that the assimilation of the Penja and other groups now proceeding is no new phenomenon, but part of a process which has long been going on. Within recent years over 2,000

[1] The Nyakyusa as here defined numbered 159,044 in Rungwe district at the 1931 census, and 3,732 outside the district; the Ndali 22,834, the Lambya (within Rungwe district, and not including those in Nyasaland) 12,403, and the Kisi (in Njombe district) 2,115. *Tanganyika Territory, Census of the Native Population*, 1931.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika, *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), p. 286; L. M. Fotheringham, *Adventures in Nyassaland* (1891), pp. 129–33. Nyondo was a Lambya chief, cf. Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 10.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

167 Nyakyusa families have crossed the Poroto mountains and settled
177 in Safwa and Nyika country. They have moved, primarily, to secure good pasture, fertile garden land, and accessible markets; and the accounts of Nyakyusa history which we have suggest that the first two of these motives have long been in operation. There is no sign of these Nyakyusa immigrants being absorbed by the previous occupants of the country. Indeed, were it not for the intervention of the Administration, it seems that the Nyakyusa immigrants might soon dominate the less organized Safwa and Nyika. As it is, certain of the Safwa and Nyika Native Authority Courts are conducting proceedings in Nyakyusa as well as in their own languages,[1] a fact which supports the Nyakyusa boast that all their neighbours are learning their language. Many Kinga, Mahasi, Wanji, and Poroto are said to learn to speak Nyakyusa, though there are few Nyakyusa settlers among them, since they find the language useful in external contacts.[2] The Kinga tell a myth of how they, together with the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, the Ndali, the Ngonde, the Mahasi, the Kisi, the Pangwa, and the Bena came from a place Ilongo (in the present Bena country) which they call 'the dark house' (*nyumba nditu*), and the Penja speak of a centre of dispersion, Kina, to the north of Rungwe mountain, from which they and the Safwa and Poroto came. The people of Ngonde, for their part, trace connections with the Inamwanga and Iwa, saying that their chiefs in their journeyings left sons to rule these people; they also assert that one of their predecessors on the Lake-shore plain was a hunter from Fipa country.[3]

● 101 Despite these tenuous links with their eastern, northern, and north-western neighbours, the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people are, as we have said, culturally quite distinct from them. The Nyakyusa themselves are emphatic that their culture differs from the cultures of the Kinga, the Safwa, the Poroto, and the Nyika—a statement which our own observation, and the evidence of other writers, confirm.[4] And the Ngonde differ in many respects both

[1] R. de Z. Hall, 'Local Migration in Tanganyika', *African Studies*, 4 (1945). 2,100 families had moved before 1938; 3,000 by 1941.

[198] [2] This is despite the fact that Swahili is the official vernacular for Tanganyika, being the medium of instruction in Government primary schools, and the language used by the Administration.

[3] Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 10.

[4] E. Kootz-Kretschmer, *Die Safwa* (1926); J. Thomson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back* (1881), Vol. I, pp. 46–52; R. de Z. Hall, op. cit.; D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

from the Inamwanga and Iwa to the north-west and the Henga to the south. The affinities of the Inamwanga and Iwa appear to be with the Mambwe,[1] while the Henga are an offshoot of the Tumbuka-Kamanga people who took refuge from the Ngoni in Ngonde.[2] Of the Phoka who live high up in the hills south-west of Ngonde we know almost nothing, except that they are skilled cultivators, and their language is closely related to Tumbuka.

The cultural group consisting of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people, together with small groups in Rungwe district and Ngonde largely absorbed by them, and including the Nyakyusa immigrants in Mbeya district, probably numbers about a quarter of a million.

Of the more distant cultural affinities of this group we know nothing: there are no consistent similarities in culture between it and any other known group. The elaborate age-organization, and the great ceremony of handing over secular power to the next generation, which is held every thirty years or so, suggest East African connections, while the girls' puberty and marriage ceremony (*ubusungu*) is in many ways similar to the *cisungu* ceremony of the Bemba;[3] and the witchcraft beliefs are like those of the Azande[4] and the Lovale.[5]

b. Environment and economy

The Nyakyusa-Ngonde country is fertile, well watered and, to European eyes, spectacularly beautiful, with its arc of high mountains and sparkling lakes. The Nyakyusa valley forms part of the

[1] F. F. R. Boileau and L. A. Wallace, 'The Nyasa-Tanganyika Plateau', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. XIII (1899); J. C. C. Coxhead, 'The Native Tribes of North-Eastern Rhodesia, their Laws and Customs', *Royal Anthropological Institute, Occasional Paper*, No. 5, 1914; C. Goldsbury and H. Sheane, *The Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia* (1911).

[2] F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), Vol. I, p. 52; M. Sanderson, 'Some Marriage Customs of the WaHenga, Nyasaland', *Journal of the African Society*, Vol. XXII (1922–3); T. Cullen Young, 'The WaHenga of North Nyasaland', *Journal of the African Society*, Vol. XXIII (1923–4); 'Tribal Intermixture in Northern Nyasaland', *J.R.A.I.*, Vol. LXIII (1933); 'Habits and Customs of the Olden Days among the Tumbuka-Kamanga People', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. X (1936).

[3] A. I. Richards, *Bemba Marriage and Present Economic Conditions*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. 4. (1940).

[4] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (1937).

[5] C. M. N. White, 'Witchcraft, Divination and Magic among the Balovale Tribes', *Africa*, Vol. XVIII (1948), pp. 81–104.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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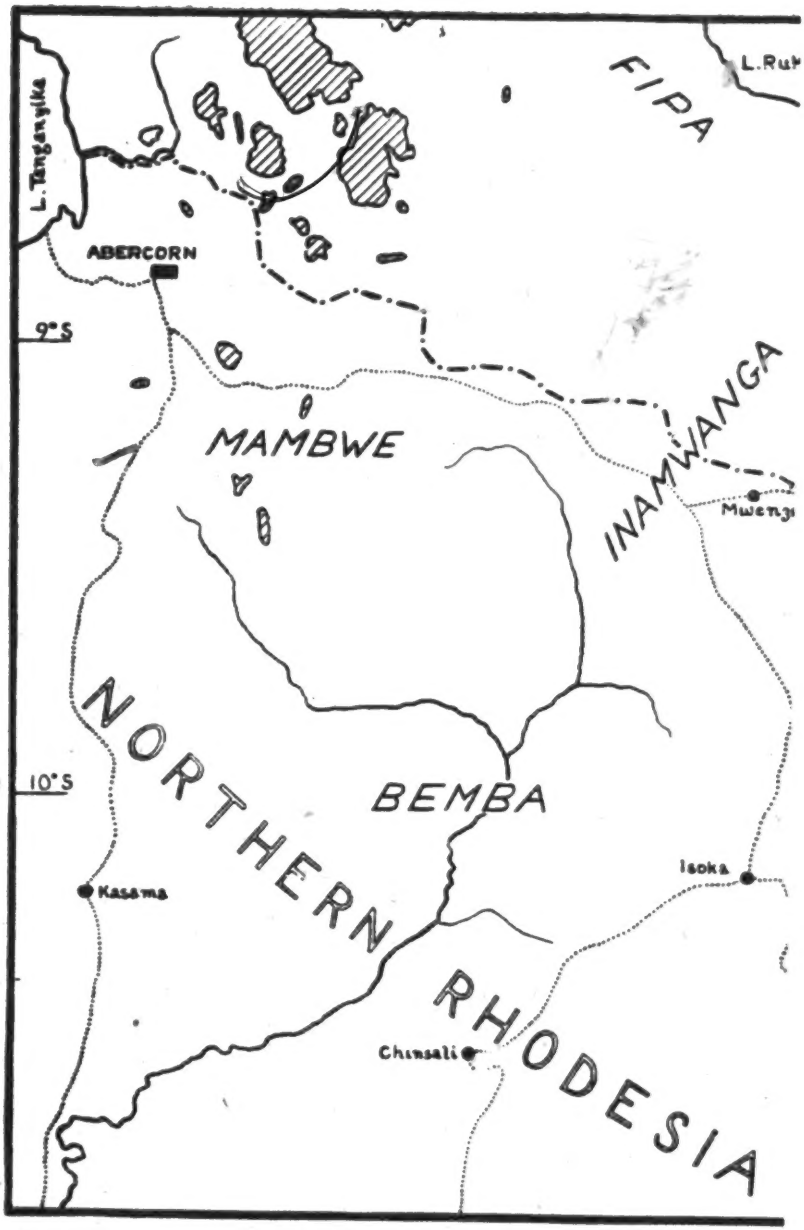

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[facing p. v (a)]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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MAP I. THE CULTURAL AREA

he approximate area occupied by the Nyakyusa-Ngonde people and groups

[facing p. v (b)]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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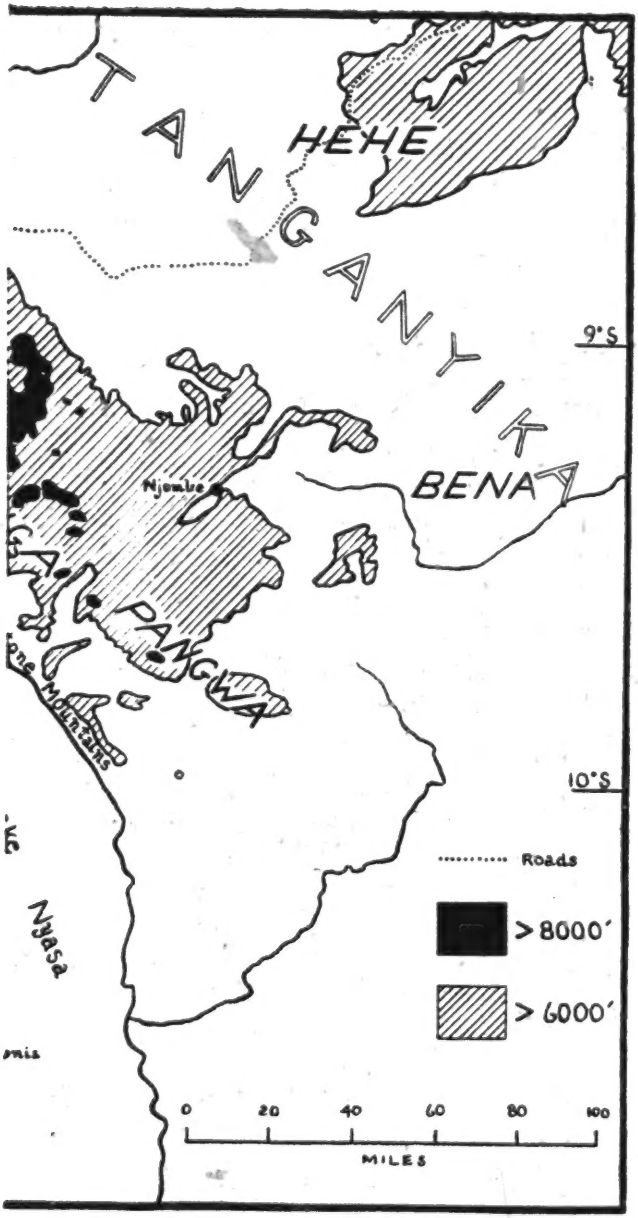

Drawn by J. V. L. Rennie

dominated by them.

[Facing p. v (c)]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

131 Bukukwe, culminating, so far as the peopled regions
133 are concerned, in Tukuyu, five thousand feet above sea-level, the residence of the Administrative Officer and his staff, with Post and Telegraph Offices, and a large Government Hospital. Here also are many small trading stores, conducted by Indians and Somali; and a little to the south is the Kyimbila
[797] Station of the Scottish Churches Mission, carrying on the work of the exiled German missionaries. Still further to the south, and less elevated, is the British military post of Masoko.

The population of these fertile and healthy high-
361 lands is dense. From Tukuyu or Kyimbila, looking
101 south and west, numerous villages, each hidden in its banana grove, fill the view westwards to the Bundali Hills, where the Kibira River is marked out by a morning mist, and southwards towards the lake, thirty miles distant. In this region the people call themselves Nyakyusa, with a number of local names indicating no difference of origin or language. The
241 soil is so fertile, and the rain usually so abundant, that in many places two crops are taken annually of some foodstuffs, while of the others the single crop is so great that scarcity, no uncommon occurrence in some parts of Central Africa, is rarely experienced.

133 The Bundali Hills close in this happy valley (for in
101 spite of its elevation the country has the appearance of a valley) on the west; and beyond them, after a most exhausting march, over lofty summits, through deep ravines threaded by bridgeless rivers, one comes to the home of the Bandali, a race of hardy

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

highlanders closely related to the Konde. Here, at Isoko, is another station of the Scottish Churches Mission. 133 101 [797]

Eastwards of the Tukuyu uplands lie the Kinga Mountains, better known as the Livingstone Range, near the foot of which lies the Itete Station of the Scottish Churches Mission. From here one gets a view of lake and mountain, river and plain, which may well be regarded as one of the finest of the kind in Africa. The evening sun, shining upon the great mountain mass, reveals hundreds of crevices and folds in which lie tiny houses, beside waterfalls or rapidly dashing streams; while up to the summits stretch the wheat-fields, green or golden yellow in the evening light. At one's feet sleep the countless villages, banana hidden; and away in the distance Lake Nyasa reflects the last gleams of departing day. 133 [797]

Over the mountains lies the country of the Kinga people, a land indescribably rough and mountainous, but here and there well watered, with fertile valleys producing wheat, oats, peas, in abundance, besides the usual African products. Here the cold is so great that during part of the year many of the people sleep in pits hollowed out of the ground, and heated by fires which are extinguished at bed-time. 133 101

Northwards the upland valley is bounded by the Igale Hills, from the top of which one looks to the lofty Mbeye Mountain, which from one point of view presents an astonishing likeness to Arthur's Seat and the Salisbury Crags at Edinburgh. Beyond Igale live the Sango and the Safwa, the former a vigorous

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

133 and warlike tribe, the latter until recently their
101 oppressed subjects and slaves.

173 The earliest traditions go back to a time when the Konde dwelt in Malongo, in the area now known as
[173] Mahenge. There their god Ngeketo, roused to wrath by three attempts to destroy him, abandoned them, and is now the God of the white men. Whether on this account, or for some other reason, a great migration brought them to the country north of the Songwe River, where they settled down, no doubt conquering older inhabitants. At some unknown time, but before the Angoni reached so far north in their great march from Zululand, the Sango, neighbours of the Konde northwards, were driven out of their homes by intertribal warfare. They broke down over the intervening mountains, and overcame the unwarlike Konde, among whom they settled down as chiefs, retaining until now the tradition of their Sango ancestry. Whether at the same or another time, the Kinga, probably for the same reason—pressure from behind—swarmed down the steep mountain passes, and established themselves in the Nserya region.

One of the leading Kinga chiefs was Mwangonde, who, under the name of Chungu, occupied land at Kabari, near the Mwakeleli Mission Station. His son, Kyabara Chungu, setting out with an armed force in search of more fertile garden land, met with varying fortunes, until he was finally obliged to cross the Songwe into what later became Nyasaland. In this region Chungu seems to have made easy con-

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

IV. NORTH NYASA REGION

NGONDE, NYAKYUSA, KINGA

TRIBAL AND SUB-TRIBAL GROUPINGS AND DEMOGRAPHY

101

NOMENCLATURE

The whole group of Nyakyusa and related peoples were formerly called *Monde*.[1] The *Ngonde* people are sometimes spelt *Nkonde*, and once at least have been referred to as the '*Chungu*',[2] presumably meaning the people of Chungu (the title of their paramount chief). The *Nyakyusa* are sometimes spelt *Niakiusa* and sometimes referred to by the names of some of their branches, e.g. *Seria* (also spelt *Selya*, *Salya*) or *Mwamba*. They are also called *Sokile* (or *Sochile*). Some other members constituting this group have names with variant spellings which will be indicated below.

GROUPING

The Ngonde and Nyakyusa are immigrants from the east into the area they now inhabit. By tradition they are offshoots of the same stock as the *Kinga* in the Livingstone mountains. From this stock the *Iwa* (or *Iba*) and the *Nyamwanga* (*Miamwanga* or *Niamwanga*) chiefs are also said to derive. The Kinga are thought to be related to the *Wanji* of the north and to the *Pangwa* in the Pangwa mountains. The *Matengo*, south of the Ruhuhu river, are probably related to the Pangwa.

(*a*) *Kinga* inhabit the Livingstone mountains on the eastern shores of Lake Nyasa in Njombe district, Tanganyika.

(*b*) *Nyakyusa* are in Tanganyika in Rungwe district, with a recent immigrant section in Mbeya district. They inhabit the northern shores of Lake Nyasa, the western as far as the Songwe river, and the eastern as far as the Livingstone mountains. The *Mwamba* (also called *Lungulu*) in Rungwe district are a branch of the Nyakyusa. The name Nyakyusa covers three sections: *Nyakyusa* proper, *Kukwe*, and *Selya*.[3]

(*c*) *Ngonde* are in Nyasaland, in the plain on the west lake shore, between the lower reaches of the north Rukuru river and the Songwe.

(*d*) *Nyamwanga* and *Iwa* live in Abercorn and Kasama districts, Northern Rhodesia. The Nyamwanga in the hills at the north-eastern sources of the Chambezi river, and spreading into Tanganyika Territory; the Iwa on the watershed between Chambezi and the Luangwa river sources.

In addition to these five tribes, who claim historically to be of one stock, there are numerous small groups, living in semi-isolated conditions in the surrounding mountains east and west of the north end of Lake Nyasa. These areas have never been surveyed. It is not certain when the Ngonde came into their present country,[4] but they came as immigrants into already inhabited land; according to Wilson, their neighbours, the

[1] Kerr-Cross, 1894.
[2] Stewart, 1881.
[3] Wilson, 3, 1938, p. 15.
[4] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 11, makes no attempt to date their first arrival; Murray, 1932, p. 208, says that they appear to have inhabited the country as far back as can be traced with any degree of historical accuracy.

[p. 71]

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Sukwa, *Wenya*, *Lambya*, are politically subordinate, but culturally distinct.[1] They are probably remnants of the original inhabitants of the country. But Wilson also mentions elsewhere that the *Ndali* and *Lambya* of the upper Songwe river are two cultural groups closely related to the Nyakyusa.[2] We know that many of the small independent neighbours of the Ngonde are related to each other (*Tambo*, *Wandya*, and *Fungwe*),[3] their political independence being mainly due to the mountainous nature of their country.[4] Many of their names, which we take to represent distinct tribes, are merely locality names,[5] and some of the names which appear on the Tribal Map of East Africa represent only very small groups of people: for example, the *Tambo*, between the Iwa and the Luangwa river, were estimated in 1911 to be only 500 altogether.[6] These peoples are most probably remnants of the original Tumbuka[7] cluster, and through them belong to the Nyanja–Cewa group; some of them may possibly have been forerunners of the *Bisa–Senga* immigration from the Congo, or they may have affiliations with the tribes of Tanganyika, *Fipa* or *Safwa*. It is unprofitable, on the existing information, to speculate on their original ethnic grouping, and impossible, without a survey in the country itself, to discover their present cultural affinities. At present their geographical position is the only reason for grouping them together in the Ngonde cluster. The *Henga* to the south of the Ngonde are an exception. Their arrival in the country is a matter of historical knowledge,[8] and they certainly belong, not to the Ngonde, but to the Tumbuka cluster.

Similar difficulties are found on the east side of Lake Nyasa. The *Wanji* and *Poroto* north of the Kinga, the *Pangwa* and *Matengo* on the south, and small tribes on the lake coast, the *Kisi*, *Sandia*, *Mpoto*, &c., appear as names on the maps, but little else is known of them.

Dr. Meinhard considers that the Nyamwanga and Iwa on the west, and the Kinga and Pangwa on the east, are culturally too dissimilar to be counted in the same group with the Ngonde and Nyakyusa.[9] However, information about these peoples is so scanty that it has been necessary in any case to base this report on the Ngonde and Nyakyusa, which have been studied by Godfrey Wilson.

History

As far as available information is concerned, only the history of the Ngonde has been recorded, and it would also seem as if this is the only one of the related groups which has developed a centralized political system, except the Nyamwanga and Iwa. The Nyakyusa, as they spread westwards, were ruled by a number of petty chiefs, each of whom was succeeded by two or more sons, who carved out separate chiefdoms in the area into which they were expanding. There was no paramount political authority, but a number of tiny chiefdoms, none of which to-day exceeds 3,000 adult males, and most of which are far smaller than that. To-day about 100 traditionally

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 7.

[2] On the other hand, the *Mbeya District Notebook* records that the Lambya are related to the Nyakyusa, and the Nyika have affinities with the Lambya, but the Ndali are of a different origin.

[3] Coxhead, 1914, pp. 3 and 58.

[4] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.

[5] Nyirende, 1931 (footnote by Young, T. C.).

[6] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.

[7] See Young, T. C., 1, 1932, p. 60: 'Far back in the hills . . . there exists still a Nyika people whose speech has been much less interfered with by the incomers, and which apart from dissimilarity in tone and accent, is not far removed from Tumbuka-Kamanga speech.'

[8] Lugard, 1893, vol. i, p. 51.

[9] Professor M. Wilson corroborates this.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

THE CONSTITUTION OF NGONDE.

1. *A COMPARATIVE PROBLEM.*

Ngonde is a district at the north end of Lake Nyasa; its centre is fixed, its boundaries vague. The centre of Ngonde is the sacred hill Mbande which stands in a bend of the Lukulu River eight miles from the lake. Here is the traditional home of the Kyungus, the paramount chiefs of Ngonde.[1] But its boundaries cannot be so easily defined. A man moving from any direction and almost any distance towards Mbande will say he is going "to Ngonde." One man may start five miles from Mbande and proceed to its base, another may, in the north at least, start far away among the Nyakyusa in Tanganyika and stop fifteen miles short of the Songwe, where alone the Kyungu's supremacy begins to be effective, and yet both alike say they are going "to Ngonde." But in this paper the name Ngonde is used to refer to the area of the Kyungu's present political paramountcy alone, an area defined in the north by the Songwe River, which is also the boundary between Nyasaland and Tanganyika, in the east by Lake Nyasa, in the west by the Nyasaland—Northern Rhodesia boundary and in the south by the borders of Chief Mwafulira's country some twenty-five miles from Mbande; an area of 2,687 square miles. 131

The population of Ngonde, thus defined, is 40,000, with a density of just under fifteen to the square mile; while the rainfall averages 45" per annum. It is thus very different from the country of the Nyakyusa across the Songwe, where the average rainfall is more than twice and the density of population about six times as great. 161 132

The people of Ngonde are not homogeneous in language and culture. The dominant group lives on the strip of plain which stretches along the shores of the Lake, north and south from Mbande, and the district is here referred to as "the plain," "the Ngonde plain" or "Ngonde proper." Behind them, in the hills which rise westwards to the borders of Northern Rhodesia, live small groups of Lambya, Sukwa, Wenya, Henga and Mambwe. They, while politically subordinate to the Kyungu, differ considerably from the inhabitants of Ngonde proper in their ways of life and speech. These upland groups we did not visit and, unless the contrary is specifically stated, all references here to the culture or customs of Ngonde should be taken to refer to the plain alone. 101

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[1] I use the forms Kyungu, Ngonde, Mbande now used by the young men and officially accepted. The old men speak of Chungu, Nkhonde, Mphande.

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

THE RELATIONSHIP SYSTEMS OF THE WANGONDE AND WAHENGA TRIBES, NYASALAND.

By MEREDITH SANDERSON, M.R.C.S., F.R.G.S.

I.—THE WANGONDE.

1. THE Wangonde are a Bantu tribe inhabiting that part of Central Africa [01] adjacent to the north-west shores of Lake Nyasa. They are a somewhat primitive [81] people, as yet little contaminated by European civilization; they are intensely conservative and their customs differ from those of neighbouring tribes. As a result of this conservatism their system of relationship still bears, in its nomenclature, [177] evidence of its evolution from exogamy in its most primitive form, and of all Nyasaland tribes the Wangonde have probably been least influenced by contact with others. In recent history they were victimized from time to time both by Arab slavers and by the Angoni, but neither appear to have left any trace of their domination. It should be mentioned, however, that the chieftainship was usurped some 10 (?) generations [563] ago by an adventurer who, according to tradition, came from the north-west (towards Tanganyika) and whose descendants still form the ruling caste. It may be that some new customs were introduced at this time, though this is denied by the descendants of the old nobility, who still retain a large share of influence in tribal council.

2. *Definitions.*—ILUMBU = "brother"[1] to "sister," or "sister" to "brother." 601 A man calls his elder "brother" *mkuluwangu*, a younger one *nung'una*: the same terms are used by a woman for her "sisters." All children of uncles and aunts are regarded as "brothers" and "sisters," including those of maternal uncle and of paternal aunt; those of father's elder "brother," of mother's elder "sister," and of mother's "brother," are called *wakulu*, irrespective of age.

The term *wamyitu* is often used, irrespective of sex, as alternative for "brother" or "sister"; its real meaning is rather "kinsman," and it may also be used for any relative or connection except the age-classes immediately above or below that of the speaker (*e.g.*, father or son), as it implies a degree of intimacy not permitted with those degrees. *Wamyitu* means "my" (lit. "our") "kinsman"; the second and third persons are *wamyinu* and *wamyao* respectively: there is no singular form.

[1] The use of inverted commas with English terms of relationship indicates that they are used in the full classificatory sense.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

128 as they do, in their behaviour and their mutual relationships to a common type. Space forbids such an undertaking here; and it is necessary to emphasize that, although the most significant facts are described in an orderly manner, and although certain reasons for these facts are indicated in their specific character and in their connections with one another, yet these reasons are not fully or systematically worked out, and the result is a description which leaves the facts only half-explained. And, in so far as this society is not here fully analyzed, so it is not yet fully comparable with others. The reader of this paper will detect many points of similarity and of difference between Nyakyusa society and some other with which he is familiar, but the comparison cannot be made to yield any propositions about the nature of human societies in general until the facts of both have been fully explained in terms of their particular social, cultural, and external conditions.

Climate, Cultural Groups, and European Contact.

101 The Nyakyusa live in the Rungwe District of South Tanganyika in
131 the Rift Valley at the head of Lake Nyasa. The valley is dominated and
133 closed at its North end by the recently extinct Rungwe volcano, from whose foot the land, starting as an upland plateau 5,000 ft. above sea-level, tumbles southwards for twenty-five miles in a broken cascade of hills, to level out in a plain fifteen or twenty miles from Lake Nyasa. The Lake is 1200 ft. above the sea. The East wall of the Rift rises to 10,000 ft. or more in the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains, but the West wall is two
[132] or three thousand feet lower. The climate is very wet, for about 130″ of rain fall each year, and, at 9° South of the Equator, is also very hot. The rain and the sun together make the land extremely fertile; the
[161 731] district is thickly populated (over 100 to the square mile), famine is rare and the Nyakyusa are far better fed than most of their neighbours. Rice
177 was introduced into the plain by Arabs, coffee by the German Missiona-
241 aries in the hills, and these two crops to-day, under the enthusiastic care and guidance of the Government Agricultural Department, bring to many Nyakyusa a small but steadily increasing cash income.

262 Their main foods are bananas, maize, beans, sweet potatoes and a
241 variety of greenstuffs, together with meat and curds from their cattle. Millet is extensively grown and is used both for making beer and for eating in the form of porridge.

101 The name *Nyakyusa* is nowadays used by themselves as a general name for all those who have similar speech and customs and who live in Tanganyika; but formerly it only covered those who live in the South of the district, in the plain and up in the hills as far North as the administra-

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tive capital, Tukuyu, and it is still thus used to distinguish this group 101
from others. This group will here be referred to as "*Nyakyusa proper*." Those in the North of the district to the West and East of Mount Rungwe call themselves *Kukwe* and *Mwamba* respectively, and there is a group of chiefdoms to the East, under the Livingstone Mountains, called *Selya*. [184]
All these four groups share a common culture, distinguished by minor local peculiarities of dialect and custom. Immediately bordering the Nyakyusa to the South West are the *Ngonde* (Europeanized as "*Konde*") in Northern Nyasaland; they belong to the same cultural group but are distinguished by greater differences of custom and speech than the others. I have not yet visited them.

In the hills to the West of the Rift live the *Ndali*, who are included in this administrative district; and on the plateau under these hills, to the West of the Kukwe, live the *Penja*. Both these small groups have old languages of their own which, though related to that of the Nyakyusa are [197]
more or less unintelligible to them; and they have equally distinct cultures. But they are now rapidly being assimilated to the Nyakyusa both in [177]
speech and in law.

I use the name Nyakyusa, in accordance with modern usage, to include the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, Mwamba, and Selya groups, but to exclude the Ndali, the Penja, and the Konde. The Nyakyusa together with the Ndali and Penja number 150,000; the Konde of Nyasa- [161]
land 30,000.[8]

Members of the Berlin and Moravian Missions were the first Euro- 797
peans to settle in the district, where they have lived now for forty-five 177
years and have made numerous converts. The German Administrators followed them closely, and later came a few planters. But pronounced economic change is a matter of the past five to ten years during which time the Lupa Gold Fields of South Tanganyika have been opened up and have employed increasing numbers of Africans on the diggings. During the past few years the young men of the Nyakyusa have developed [166
the habit of going for a few months, now and again, to the Gold Fields to 464]
earn money for tax and clothes. They seldom stay more than six months at a time, often only one or two; so that their absence does not cause the same difficulties in their own community that are found in other areas where the men spend longer periods away from home.

The Family, together with a sketch of wider Kinship Groupings

The relationships of husband and wife, parent and child, sibling and 593
sibling are continually visible in the culture of the Nyakyusa. The

[8] Government Census figures.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

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102
103
133
487
131
101

Map I. Country north of Lake Nyasa

[p. viii]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE peoples with whom this book is concerned, the Nyakyusa and the Ngonde, occupy an area shut in by mountains at the northern end of Lake Nyasa, and enjoy a culture which, though varying locally, clearly springs from a common basis and is traditionally attributed to similar origins. The most conspicuous features of their political organization are (i) the balance of power between chiefs and commoners; (ii) the 'coming out' ritual in which a generation of men which has governed for approximately thirty years retires and hands over the administration to its sons, retaining only ritual functions; and (iii) the system of age-villages.

All are agreed that chiefs and commoners belong to different stocks; the commoners being descended from the original occupants of the country while the chiefs trace their descent to a line of invaders who came down from the Livingstone mountains eight generations ago. According to the myth, they brought with them fire, and cattle, and iron tools, and they found a people who ate their food raw in a land 'without trees'.[1] Commoners are *abatitu*, black people, while Ngulube, an early ancestor of the chiefs, was 'pale'[2] and chiefs (*abanyafyale*) generally are said to have been lighter in colour and 'different in their bodies'. After generations of intermarriage between chiefs and commoners there is no consistent difference in physical type between them, but the range of physical type among the Nyakyusa as a whole is wide.[3]

Nyakyusa and Ngonde historians say that their chiefs are related to those of the Kinga, who live high above the Nyakyusa valley to the east in the Livingstone mountains, whence the chiefs came. The Kinga acknowledge the connexion and join with the Nyakyusa in sacrifice to their common heroes, but culturally the

[1] Possibly the lake-shore plain. The hills until cultivated are covered with either savannah or rain forest.

[2] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3, p. 10 (1930). According to the Ngonde version Ngulube was the *first* ancestor.

[3] cf. F. Fülleborn, *Beiträge zur physischen Anthropologie der Nord-Nyassander* (1908). *Das Deutsche Njassa- und Ruvuma-Gebiet Atlas* (1906).

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I

In many areas of Eastern Africa the pressure of peasant populations on their tribal lands is a critical feature of the contemporary scene, and this is most especially so in the more fertile parts where the African has accepted the new cash economy and is beginning to appreciate the potentialities of the modern world. The situation has been highlighted recently in the public mind by the publication of the Report of the East African Royal Commission[1] which examined the economic conditions of our time and made general recommendations.

In Tanganyika the overall density of population is low (22 persons per square mile) and the general scale of economic activity still remains little above subsistence level over vast areas of Territory. There are, however, islands of extremely dense populations scattered through the country, often associated with the mountain areas, where soil is fertile, rainfall is reliable and adequate and the cultivation of crops for sale in world markets has gone ahead fairly easily. These populations still comprise peasant farming communities with little capital and their "natural" impulse is to expand their extensive agricultural system rather than to intensify their cultivation on existing holdings. Serious overcrowding soon results for the favourable areas are limited and surrounded by drier bushlands. African attitudes and legal customs concerning their land do not change quickly and they lag behind new conditions of physical limitation and economic development. Whilst the recommendations of the Royal Commission may be valuable in the establishment of general policy, it is obvious that detailed application through time demands a fairly exact knowledge and understanding of particular local conditions if it is to be reasonably successful. This is particularly the case in so large a country as Tanganyika, with its multiplicity of environments and tribal systems of law, land tenure and agriculture, and the social attitudes which encompass them.

The present essay is an attempt, sponsored by Government, to describe and analyse the land and population conditions in one small area of the Territory where a cash economy is emerging and where the pressure of a peasant population on its land resources has become acute. It is hoped that some of this account may be applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to other similar areas both in Tanganyika and elsewhere, and that the conclusions reached may be helpful in dealing with the problems there; but primarily this is a study of one particular part of the country in order to provide the information upon which detailed policy may be founded.

The Nyakyusa are not entirely typical of many of the Bantu people of East Africa for they have a most distinctive social organisation, peculiar to themselves, based on age-villages and petty, independent chiefdoms. Also, they inhabit a country whose annual rainfall is unusually high, averaging about 100 inches. On the other hand, these people are one of the very few in Tanganyika for whom we have an excellent account of both their pre-European and early European systems of land tenure. Based on this information, obtained *before* modern changes began, we can perceive, analyse

1. *East African Royal Commission* 1953-5, *Report*: H.M.S.O. 1955. Cmd. 9475.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and try to understand the nature and reasons for change. Here, then, is a good opportunity for the study of social change – not only in land tenure as such, but also in village and family organisation, political authority and economic life.

II

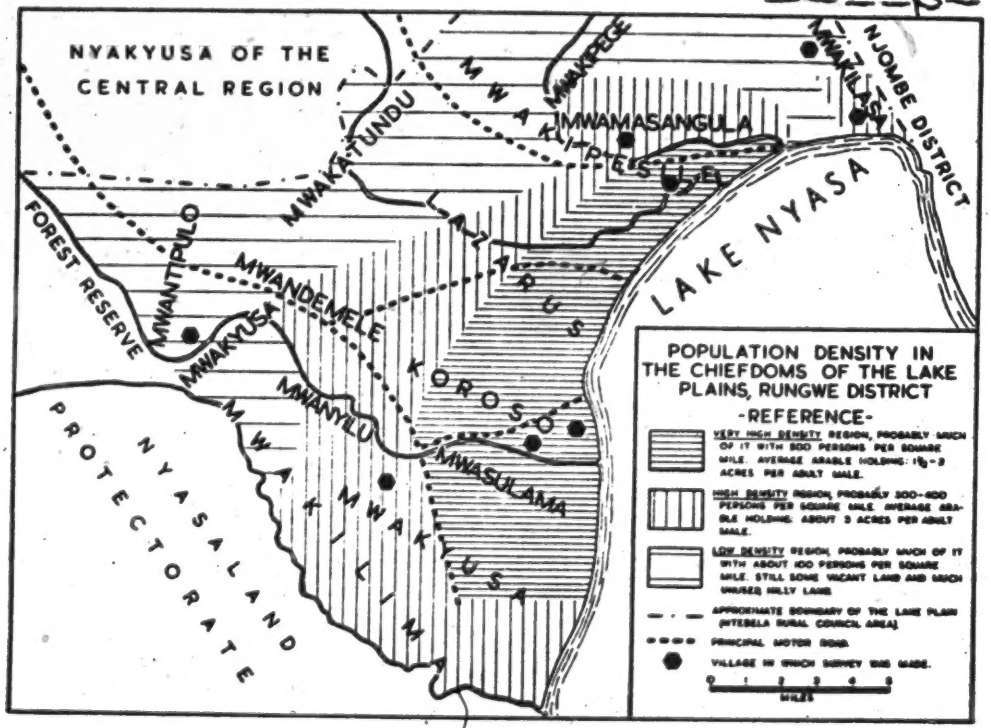
The Nyakyusa are a Bantu people inhabiting the main part of the Rungwe District in southern Tanganyika, immediately to the north of Lake Nyasa. In 1948 they numbered about 199,000 in that District, but about 10,000 men were probably at the time temporarily absent from their homes and in employment in the mines and towns of the Rhodesias and South Africa (see Gulliver, 1957), whilst about 20,000 had migrated to live in the adjacent Mbeya District to the north.

The tribal area comprises a confined geographical basin surrounding the northern end of Lake Nyasa. It extends only about 40 miles from the tip of the lake at 1,550 feet above sea level to the Poroto Mountains in the north at 8,000 feet; and from east to west is only about 30 miles, from the almost sheer walls of the Livingstone Mountains (with peaks up to 10,000 feet) to the Ndali Highlands (rising to about 7,000 feet). There are therefore unusually large ecological differences within so small an area. Three major regions are to be distinguished: the "Northern Highlands" over about 4,500 feet, the low-lying "Lake Plains" in the south, and the "Central Region" in between. Everywhere rainfall is reliable and high, averaging at least 100 inches annually[1], and this amply compensates for a certain poverty and misuse of the soil, although (and particularly in the Central Region) it brings dangers of soil erosion. Except in the highest parts the banana is the staple food, supported by maize, beans, finger millet and groundnuts. In the Northern Highlands coffee has become well established as the principal cash crop: in the Lake Plains paddy rice cultivation provides both a food and a cash crop: in the Central Region the country is too low generally for coffee and too high and dry for rice; consequently cash-cropping is considerably inferior and the people's standard of living is rather poorer.

The Nyakyusa and their country tended for a long time to be relatively isolated from the outside world by high mountain walls and rain-soaked roads. In addition, or because of it perhaps, they developed an almost unique culture which was supported by considerable conservatism and high insularity. They still continue to regard their African neighbours beyond the mountains as their social and cultural inferiors. The turmoil of the slave-trade in Central Africa passed them by; in modern times they have not enthusiastically accepted Christianity and they have refused to take up the use of Swahili, the Territorial *lingua franca*. In recent years, and most especially since the end of World War II, they have, however, accepted and pushed forward with vigour a rapid and extensive economic development, involving particularly the production of coffee and paddy as cash crops, and large-scale labour migration to the south in the high-wage mining industries. The multiplicity of petty, often tiny, independent chiefdoms has been reorganised to provide four local government areas, each under a Rural Council, in which the old chiefdoms have become something like parishes[2]. Although much of the old conservatism and narrow parochialism persists, yet there is now an atmosphere of accepted change, of a keen desire for economic development, and a general acceptance of a cash economy.

Probably the most significant feature of modern life in the Nyakyusa country is the increasing scarcity of land for agriculture in relation to the

1. At Tukuya, in the Northern Highlands, annual rainfall averaged 99.28 inches between 1919 and 1952: at Kyela, in the Lake Plains, the average between 1940 and 1951 was 106.21 inches.
2. See Kingdon, Z.E.: The initiation of a system of local government by African rural councils in the Rungwe District, Tanganyika; *The Journal of African Administration*, iii, 4, October, 1951.


NYAKYUSA OF THE CENTRAL REGION
MWAKAPEGE
MWAKILASI
NJOMBE DISTRICT
MWAMASANGULA
MWAKA-TUNDU
MWA KITESSE
LAKE NYASA
FOREST RESERVE
MWANTIPULO
MWANDEMELE
MWAKYUSA
MWANYILU
KOROSO
MWASULAMA
MWA KILIMA
MWAKYUSA
NYASALAND PROTECTORATE
POPULATION DENSITY IN THE CHIEFDOMS OF THE LAKE PLAINS, RUNGWE DISTRICT
-REFERENCE-
VERY HIGH DENSITY REGION, PROBABLY MUCH OF IT WITH 500 PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE. AVERAGE ARABLE HOLDING: 1½-2 ACRES PER ADULT MALE.
HIGH DENSITY REGION, PROBABLY 300-400 PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE. AVERAGE ARABLE HOLDING: ABOUT 3 ACRES PER ADULT MALE.
LOW DENSITY REGION, PROBABLY MUCH OF IT WITH ABOUT 100 PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE. STILL SOME VACANT LAND AND MUCH UNUSED HILLY LAND.
APPROXIMATE BOUNDARY OF THE LAKE PLAIN (NTEBELA RURAL COUNCIL AREA)
PRINCIPAL MOTOR ROAD.
VILLAGE IN WHICH SURVEY WAS MADE.
0 1 2 3 4 5
MILES

[Facing p. 15]

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Chagga FN4
Haya FN8

House-types of the Banyakyusa

By Agnete Bisgaard

During a stay in the Southern Highlands in Tanganyika in 1955, I was given the opportunity to inspect—and draw plans of—some of the houses belonging to the local Bantu tribe of the Nyakyusa. In literature they are known also under the name of Konde.

The district in which they live is fairly high above sea level and near the borders of Rhodesia and Nyasaland; the rainfall is fully adequate. Banana and coffee are doing well—the banana trees often forming groves in between which you catch a glimpse of the village houses.

The district invites comparison with other localities in Tanganyika where the country is high, and where precipitation is plentiful. Such localities would be the districts around Kilimanjaro and near Bukoba to the west of Lake Victoria. In the former live the Chagga tribe, in the latter the tribe of the Haya. Even here banana and coffee are plenty—and the I.Q. of both tribes is said to be high, as is the case of the Banyakyusa (plural of Nyakyusa).

Maybe you might therefore expect to find a corresponding standard of dwelling-houses, perhaps even the same type of hut. But in this matter you will be highly surprised; so great are the differences between the three areas. Apart from the original design of the house being round and the roof thatched, no similarity exists between the various houses or their interior lay-outs.

The round, thatched Chagga hut has its roof all way down to the ground. It is not very large and the interior lay-out is quite primitive. A cow or goat lives all its life indoors and is fed there. A short and uncomfortable bed is found near by. Down the centre of the floor is a stone-paved aisle. Everything looks quite simple—especially when you remember that in other aspects the Chagga are quite advanced in their use of modern facilities; for instance they use electricity for the grinding of their maize.

The Haya hut—the old, round type—is a really magnificent thing. I think its centre is seven or eight metres high. In front it has a kind of overhang, maybe you might call it a front room, where people will sit, and where guests will be received. If you are a wellcome guest, a straw mat will be rolled out to cover the grass flooring of the hut. The walls of the front room are solid plates made from a kind of reed. The hearth is placed near the centre of the inner room.

N 114 N [101] N 131 N 245 000 G N H 342 171 C 342 231 H 342 [574]

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P.53]

Some Field Notes on the Nyakyusa

(Tukuyu District, Tanganyika Territory)

By F. Rudolf Lehmann

The following field notes on the Nyakyusa (Wanyakyusa, Wanyakjussa) represent only a small part of what I wrote down during my residence of about three months among this people in the summer of 1939. The present selected notes refer only to my sojourn in the village of Katumba near Masoko, with an ethnic group of the Nyakyusa who call themselves „Wa-Masoko"[1]. Notwithstanding the short time I had

[1] Cf. R. Thurnwald, p. 65; G. Wilson, Land Rights, p. 35.

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

343 Also the stables I saw were very clean; their length is adjusted to the number of cattle which are sheltered therein. Sometimes a wooden hoop is to be found in such a stable, hanging down from the ceiling. [251] The inside of the hoop is filled with a wicker-work whose meshes are dense enough to hold fruits to be dried. If such a hoop is hanging in the stable being out of use, a bag made of leaves containing pumpkin seeds *(inyugu)* for later planting may be fastened to it, and on the beams of 233 the framework of the walls you may find a plaited leather neckband *(ulukoba)* for cows destined to hold a cow's bell *(ibangala)*. The sound of the bells of the cattle gave already great delight to the first European visitors of Nyakyusa and Ngonde Land, as we can read with Fotheringham (p. 24): "It is a pretty sight to see the herd coming into villages in the evening, and pleasant to hear the tinkle of the bells which are suspended from their necks, recalling in homely quietude the peaceful scenes of the Swiss."

184 The daily life of the Nyakyusa differs more or less among the ● 101 different ethnic groups which in former times had been independent units. Nowadays, however, all those groups who have similar speech and customs and share, therefore, a progressing common culture, only distinguished by minor local pecularities, are called by the common name "Nyakyusa" (Cf. G. Wilson: An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society. Bantu Studies, Vol. X, 1936, p. 254 f).

Synopsis

080 Verfasser beschreibt in diesem zweiten Bericht die verschiedenen Arbeiten aus dem Alltagsleben der Nyakyusa. Die Betreuung der großen Rinderherden, einschließlich des Melkens, ist Männersache, die Frauen reinigen nur die Ställe. Die Männer behacken die Felder, die Frauen säen, reinigen, ernten und bereiten alle Nahrung zu. Diese Arbeitsteilung fand Verfasser 1939 noch unangetastet, dagegen waren die zahlreichen mit Saat und Ernte verbundenen Zeremonien durch den europäischen Einfluß fast verschwunden. Ebenso war der Verfall der traditionellen Künste und Handwerke weit fortgeschritten durch europäische Einwirkungen wie durch die überall verstreuten indischen Händler als Vermittler der ausländischen Waren. Diese hatten auch die traditionelle Kleidung abgewandelt (als die Europäer kamen, gingen die Eingeborenen noch überwiegend nackt). Die alten geometrischen Muster, die äußere Hüttenwände und Türen schmückten, waren zum Teil mit Zeichnungen von Fahrrädern, Autos, Flugzeugen u. a. durchsetzt. Während früher auch das Alltagsleben der Nyakyusa in deren verschiedenen ethnischen Gruppen deutliche Unterschiede aufwies, sind diese ehemals unabhängigen Einheiten unter den europäischen Einwirkungen mehr und mehr kulturell zusammengewachsen.

11:Thwaites C-5 (ca. 1942) 1944
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P.236 A]

WANYAKYUSA AGRICULTURE

By D. H. Thwaites, Agricultural Assistant, Tanganyika Territory

131 The Wanyakyusa occupy the District of Rungwe in the Southern Highlands Province. The district lies between 9° and 9½° S. latitude
133 at the northern tip of Lake Nyasa. The altitude ranges from 1,500 feet to 9,500 feet. The
631 district is divided into twelve chiefdoms. The Administrative Headquarters are at Tukuyu, which was known before the British occupation as Neu Langenberg.

Inhabitants

101 The local people are not indigeneous to this area. They came, tradition has it, from
[173] Mahenge via Ukinga after many tribal fights. They are akin to the Wahenga in Nyasaland bordering on the Tanganyika boundary. It is
191 estimated that only 10 per cent of the Wanyakyusa speak Kiswahili. According to the 1935
161 census the total poulation was 153,204. The
162 total number of tax-payers in 1942 was 35,304, or 23.04 per cent of the total population.

181 The people themselves are extremely industrious and intelligent. As there are 90 people to the square mile, living conditions are
105 crowded and emigration is continually taking place. The people are partial to litigation over cattle and women. The number of cases heard annually in the Native Courts is about 6,000. There is no one historical and traditional head of the tribe. The twelve Chiefs are, in reality, hereditary Headmen who have been selected by Government to be Chiefs. They are in effect only *primi inter pares* in native eyes, the outlook of the people being unusually democratic for a native tribe.

105 The people live in houses made of wattle and daub or bambco frame, with thatched
342 roof, and villages are sited mostly along ridges.
361 Rectangular houses are now built instead of the round huts of former days. They often stand in rows with a main street down the middle with bananas in the background. The more progressive natives build with sun-dried or burnt brick. Stock are stalled in the same house owing to the prevalence of thieving, but sleep in separate rooms.

Climate

132 The rainfall of the district varies in the different areas. In Tukuyu itself the annual average for 25 years (1918-1942) is 100.22 inches. On the Lake shore the average is probably higher, but no continuous statistics are available. The heaviest rainfall months are from December to May, but, in most years,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

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487
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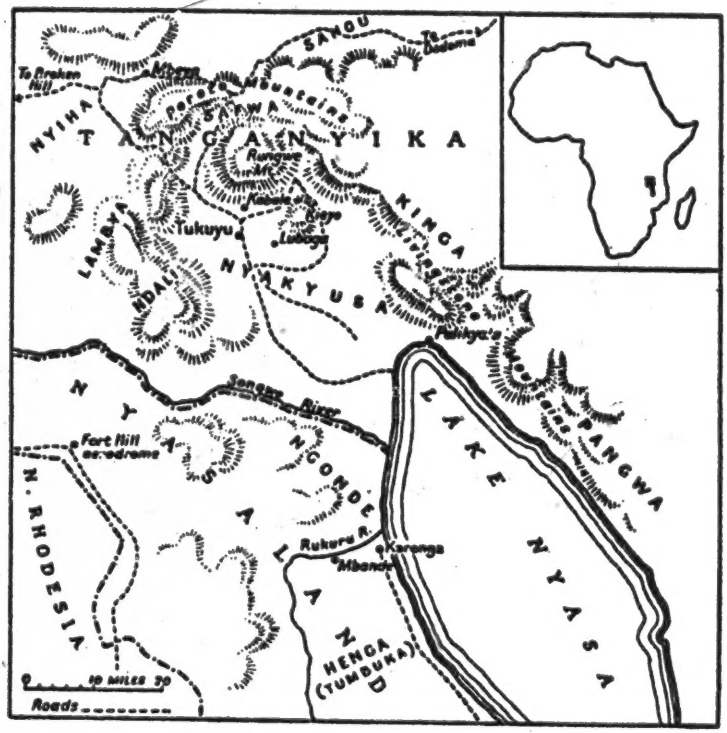
101



Map I. Country north of Lake Nyasa

[p. viii]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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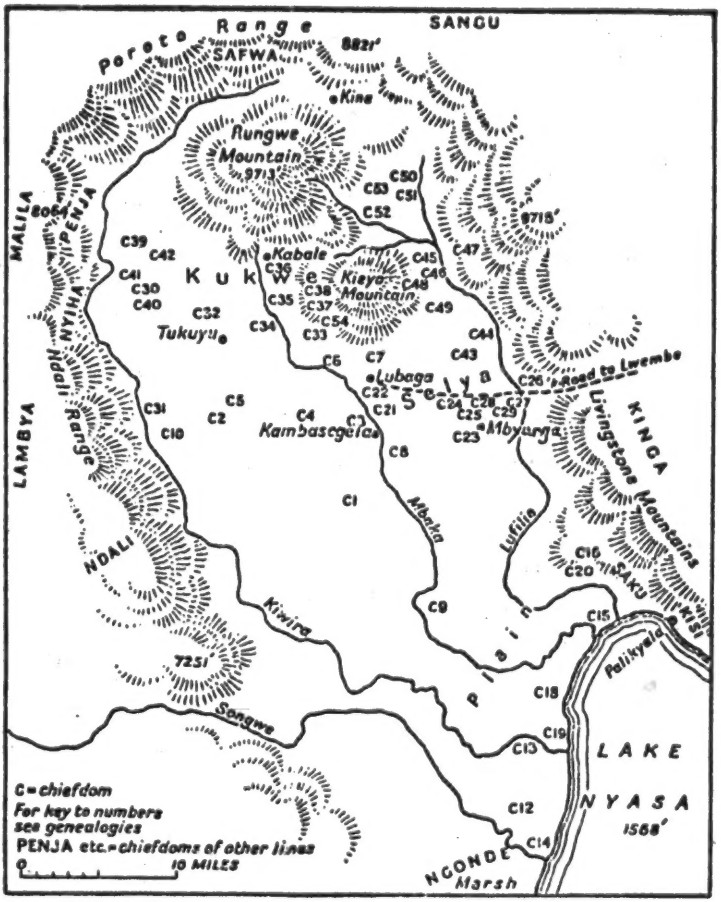


Map II. Nyakyusa valley showing location of chiefdoms

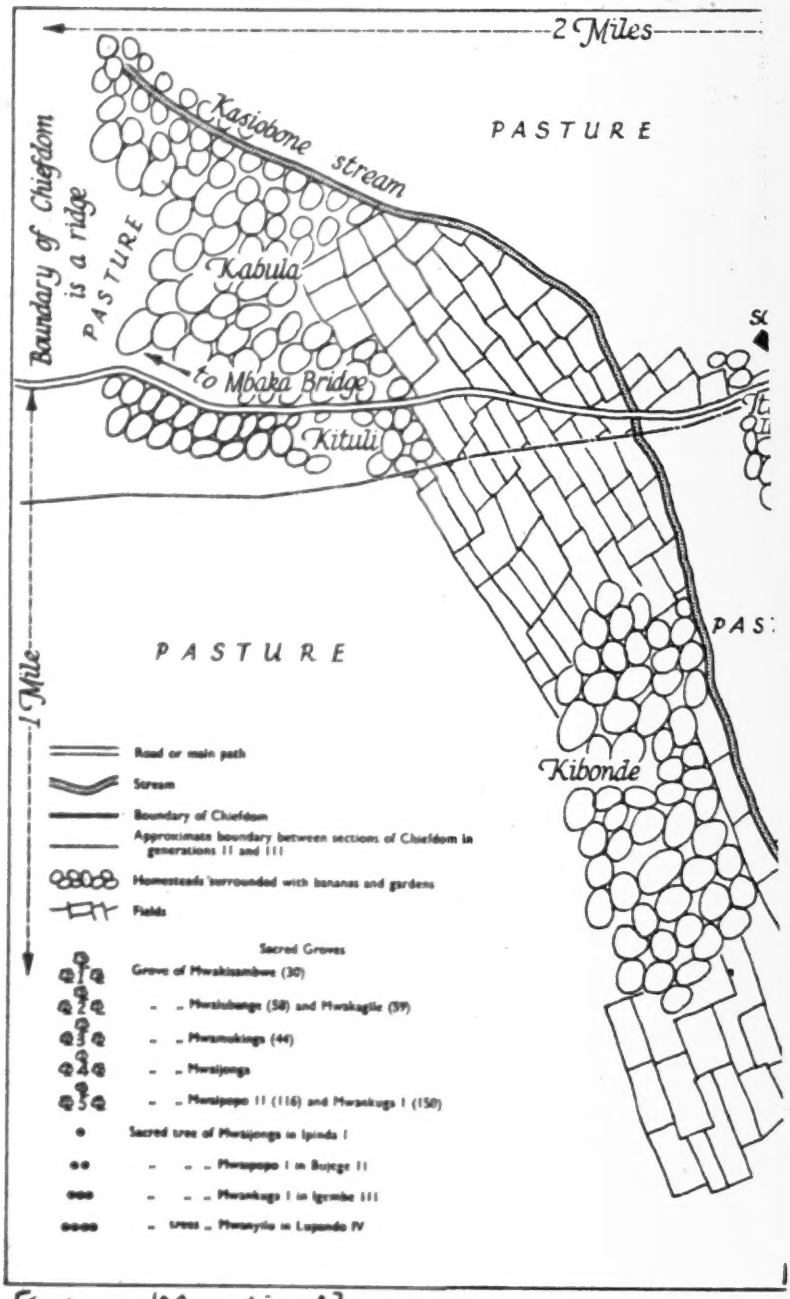
9: Wilson
102
361
778
631
561

FN17 Ngonde
Nyakyusa

Chart showing position of sections of plan of Mwaipopo's Chiefdom. (Facing p. 100)

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

102
361
778
631
561

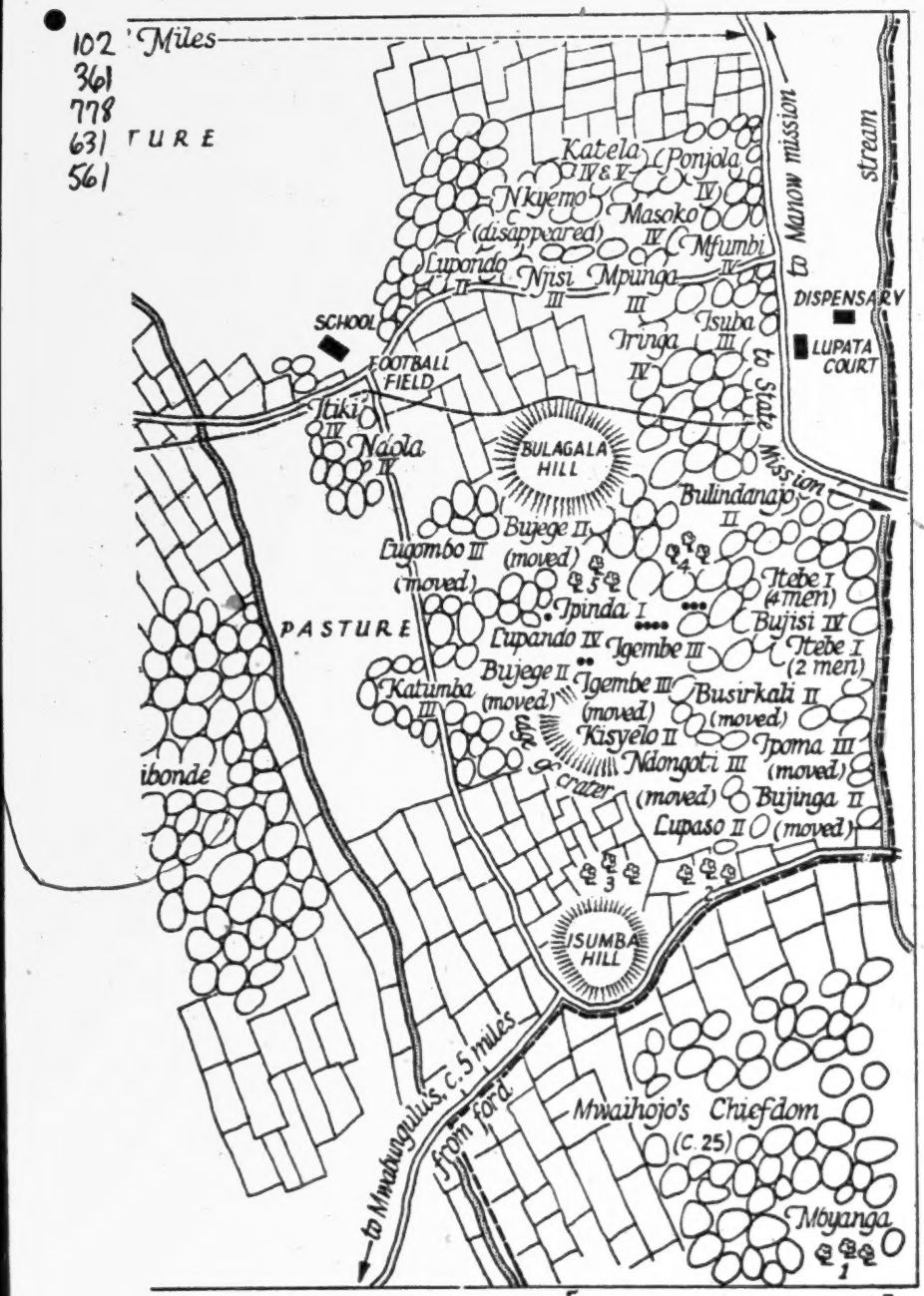


[facing p. 100; section A]

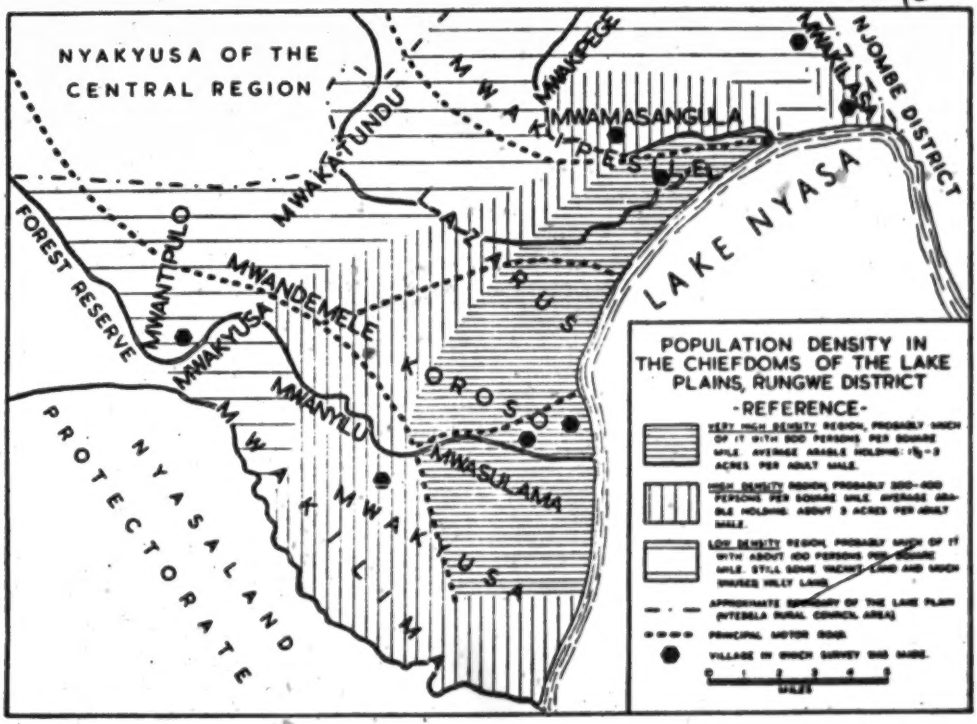
PLAN OF MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

102
361
778
631
561

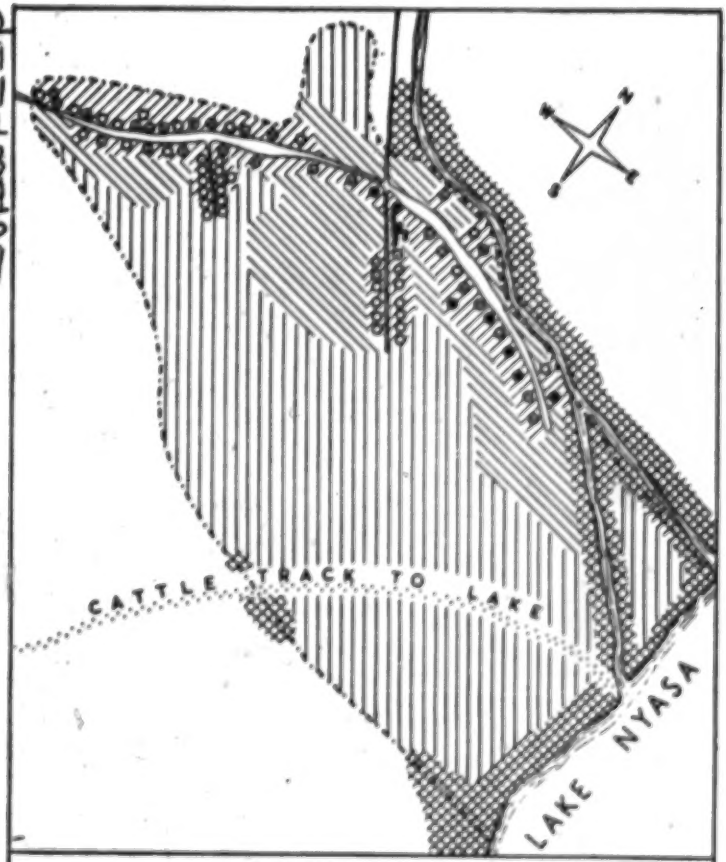


POPO'S CHIEFDOM (C 24) IN 1955 [facing p. 100; section B]


NYAKYUSA OF THE CENTRAL REGION
NJOMBE DISTRICT
MWAKIPESILE
IMWAMASANGULA
MWAKIPESILE
MWAKATUNDU
MWANTIPULO
MWANDEMELE
MWAKYUSA
FOREST RESERVE
LAZARUS
KOROSO
MWASULAMA
MWANYILU
MWAKMWAKYUSA
NYASALAND PROTECTORATE
LAKE NYASA
POPULATION DENSITY IN THE CHIEFDOMS OF THE LAKE PLAINS, RUNGWE DISTRICT
-REFERENCE-
VERY HIGH DENSITY REGION, PROBABLY MUCH OF IT WITH 500 PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE. AVERAGE ARABLE HOLDING: 1½-2 ACRES PER ADULT MALE.
HIGH DENSITY REGION, PROBABLY 200-400 PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE. AVERAGE ARABLE HOLDING ABOUT 3 ACRES PER ADULT MALE.
LOW DENSITY REGION, PROBABLY MUCH OF IT WITH ABOUT 100 PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE. STILL SOME VACANT LAND AND MUCH UNUSED HILLY LAND.
APPROXIMATE BOUNDARY OF THE LAKE PLAIN (NYEKELA RURAL COUNCIL AREA)
PRINCIPAL MOTOR ROAD.
VILLAGE IN WHICH SURVEY WAS MADE.
0 1 2 3 4 5
MILES

[Facing p. 15]

102
311
361
162
243
244
245
487



SKETCH PLAN OF KAPUGI VILLAGE,
KOROSO'S CHIEFDOM, 1955

-REFERENCE-

[Facing p. 29]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

KN
102
103
133
487
131
101

Map I. Country north of Lake Nyasa

[p. viii]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Note

643 103 Chiefdoms do not have names which continue indefinitely. They are referred to by the name of the ruling chief or one of his illustrous ancestors, and often several different names are in common use for one chiefdom. To simplify the map we have assigned a number to each chiefdom held by a segment of the Nyakyusa or Kukwe lineages (*vide* genealogies, pp. 3, 27), and these numbers are plotted on the map. The map is based on that of Mr. R. de Z. Hall (sometime D.C., Tukuyu) and includes all, or almost all, the Nyakyusa and Kukwe chiefdoms recognized by the Administration.[1] The Penja, Nyiha, Ndali, Lambya, and Saku chiefdoms on the fringes of the valley are indicated, but not plotted. The map does *not* include all chiefdoms recognized in some fashion by the Nyakyusa themselves, e.g. Mwabungulu (178) 'came out' in 1953 and has been established at some distance from his elder brother with his own senior headman, but he is not recognized by the Administration as a chief and therefore his domain is not included on the map as a separate chiefdom.

[177] [1] Two names listed by Mr. Hall are omitted, Ali Bin Omari because he is an immigrant and Mwakalinga of Kimbila because he is the son of a commoner appointed as headman by the German Administration, and not a member of either royal lineage.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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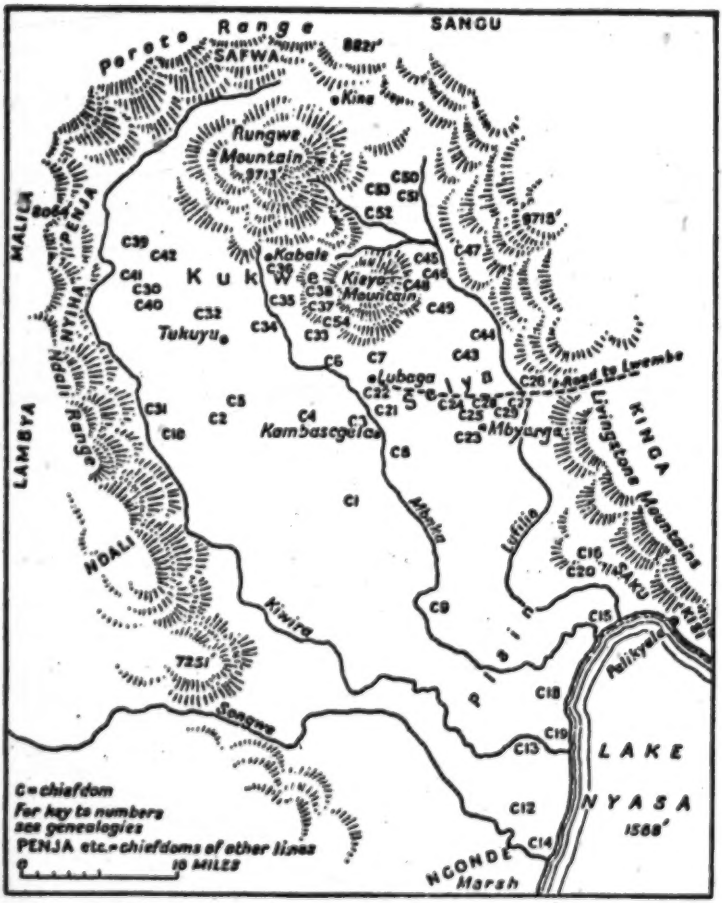
103
133



Map II. Nyakyusa valley showing location of chiefdoms

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VI

LAND AND POWER

643 The crux of the chiefs' 'coming out' was a redistribution of power
561 and of land, and we must pause in our description of the ritual
423 cycle to discuss the relation between chiefdoms and villages and the land, and to consider more closely the balance of power between successive generations.

(a) THE TERRITORIAL ALIGNMENT OF CHIEFDOMS AND VILLAGES

173 Tradition makes it clear that the heroes came to a sparsely
361 occupied country and that their descendants gradually spread out as their numbers increased. The settlers chose to live on hillocks overlooking the surrounding country. Lubaga and
[103] Mbande, the seats of the two 'divine kings' are commanding sites.
[778] The grove of Kabale, where the ancestors of the Kukwe chiefs first established themselves, is on an eminence rising from the plateau, and Kambasekela (near the Mbaka bridge) on which the early chiefs Mwaipaja (21) and Mwaipopo (26) were buried is a hill very like Mbande, overlooking the plain.

361 Unlike most of their neighbours the Nyakyusa show a preference for cleared and cultivated land, planted with bamboos and the
[824] oil-bearing *unsyunguti* trees (*Trichillia supp.*)[1] as well as the great *umwali* (*Chorophora excelsa*) which, in their view, adds dignity to the homestead.[2] A study of the trees planted at the 'coming out' and the sacred groves in Mwaipopo's chiefdom (C 24)[3] shows that for four generations the ruling chiefs (descendants of Mwaijonga 82) have established their principal villages within a quarter of a mile of one another, and for seven generations the descendants of Mwakisambwe (30) have lived within two or three miles of one another (*vide* plan, p. 101), though there were acres of fertile land

[1] I am indebted to Mr. P. B. Nightingale, Forestry Officer, Tukuyu, for giving me the botanical names of these and other trees.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 77-8.

[3] C followed by a number is the reference number of a chiefdom as listed in the genealogies of chiefs.

9: Wilson
643
622
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631
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FN17 Ngonde
Nyakyusa

Chart showing position of sections of chart on "Villages of Mwaipopo' Chiefdom." (Facing page 91)

A	B
C	D

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

VILLAGES OF MWAIPOPO'S CH

	Gen.	Chief	Village	Headman	Structural Position	Land
643	I	*Mwaijonga* (82)	IPINDA	*NJOBAKOSA*	Senior village of Mwaijonga	
622			Itiki	*Kisogota*		
103			ITEBE	*NGULYO*	Second senior village of Mwaijonga	Moved for Ipc
631			Bukeba			
551			Itumba			
	II	*Mwaipopo I* (115)	BUJEGE	MWANSAMBE (Mwegama)	Sons of Ipinda and Itiki	Moved for Lu
		Mwaipopo II (116)				
			Bujinga	Katolile		Moved for Ipc
			Lupaso		Older section of Bujinga	Moved at com Mwankuga II
			Kisyela			
			Busirkali		Contemporaries of Mwaipopo II	
			Bulindanajo	Mwasota	Much younger men than those of Bujege	
			Kibonde	Mwakikato		
			LUPONDO	*MWAIKOFU*	Sons of Bukeba	
			Kyemo	*Kanyeka*		
			Kitule	Mwangoba		
			Kabula	*Mwakitwange*		
	III	*Mwankuga I* (150)	IGEMBE	MWAMBUPUTA (Mwafungo) b. c. 1880 active in 1955	Sons of Bujege	
		Mwankuga II (151) active 1955				
			Katumba		Younger brothers and a few sons of Igembe	
			Lugombo	Nsusa (active 1955)		Moved for I members gon
			Ipoma	Kabolile	Sons of Bujinga and Busirkali. Younger men than in Igembe	Got land from
			Ndongoti		Younger brothers of Ipoma	Moved south
			Kibonde (junior section)	*Mwakileka*	Sons of Kibonde	
			NJESI	KAKUJU (old & fragile 1955)	Sons of Lupondo	
			Mpunga	Mwakatika	Younger sons of Lupondo	
			Isuba	Mwakabumbe	Youngest sons of Lupondo	
			Lukwego	Lyambelo	Sons of Kitule	
			Ndobo	Nyambege	Sons of Kabula	
			Kilosi	Katelule	New village	Colony in for
			Kiloba	Nsusa (of Lugombo)	New village	Colony in for

[facing p. 91; section A]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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551

OF MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM[1]

	Land	Numbers (Men or boys) 1955	Comments
			Widows of Mwaipopo live here
			Not surviving
ijonga	Moved for Ipoma	6	
			Not surviving
			Not surviving
	Moved for Lupando	8 (31 wives)	
	Moved for Ipoma		
	Moved at coming out of Mwankuga II, but not again		
II		7 (22 wives)	
se of			First built where Itiki is now. Driven out by Bujege
			Chiefdom of Mwakipesile
		9	
			Disappeared by 1955
			Chiefdom of Mwakabule
		8 (30 wives)	Mwambuputa now senior priest of country. 'Brought out' Mwanyilu.
s of		10	Junior members including Kilasile moved to Lupando. 57 members in 1938.
	Moved for Lupando. Many members gone to forest.		Nsusa now headman of Kiloba, new village in forest.
	Got land from Bujinga		Akimu, son of Mwaipopo II, a former member, moved to forest.
	Moved southward		
			Sub-chief Likosyela
		12 (26 wives)	
		8	
			Mwakibweli sub-chief
	Colony in forest	48	Akimu, a junior son of Mwaipopo II, was sent to watch over this colony. In 1953 Mwabungulu was established as sub-chief of the area.
	Colony in forest	156	Possibly subdivided

[facing p. 91; section B]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

643
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		Kibonde (junior section)	*Mwakileka*	Sons of Kibonde	
		NJESI	KAKUJU (old & fragile 1955)	Sons of Lupondo	
		Mpunga	Mwakatika	Younger sons of Lupondo	
		Isuba	Mwakabumbe	Youngest sons of Lupondo	
		Lukwego	Lyambelo	Sons of Kitule	
		Ndobo	Nyambege	Sons of Kabula	
		Kilosi	Katelule	New village	Colony in fore
		Kiloba	Nsusa (of Lugombo)	New village	Colony in fore
IV	Mwanyilu (177)	Lupando	KILASILE MWANSASU	Sons of Igembe Married	Occupies site by parts of I and Lugomb out' of Mwany some member and some sout make room for members of Ig the headman and Lugombo
		Nsanga	KILASILE MWANSASU	Section of Lupando. Younger sons of Igembe and Lugombo. Married.	
		Itiki	KILASILE MWANSASU	Sons of Igembe and Lugombo some married, some *c.* 14	
		Ndola	KILASILE MWANSASU	Sons of Igembe and Lugombo. Some married. 12 boys.	
		Bujisi	Pauliki Mwambepo	Sons of Ipoma. Mostly married.	Occupies the Itebe of gene split and has to the north then by Ipo moved some c at 'coming ou Busirkali II have also mov
		Ponjola	Balyemo Mwakasumbula	Sons of Kilbonde III	
		IRINGA	SIKAMBOMBO KIGULEWE	Sons of Njisi. Some married.	Occupies lanc pied by Njisi
		Masoko	SIKAMBOMBO KIGULEWE	Sons of Mpunga and Njisi	
		Katela	SIKAMBOMBO KIGULEWE	Sons of Masoko and Mpunga. Younger brothers of Iringa. Ages 15-20 years.	
		Mfumbi	Batungulu Mwamusilu	Sons of Isuba	
		Ponjola	Batungulu Mwamusilu	Sons of Isuba. Younger brothers of Mfumbi. Ages *c.* 12-15 yrs.	
		Kitule		Sons of Lukwego	
		Kabula		Sons of Ndobo	
		Nkuju	Mwanjotile	New village	Colony in fore

[1] A more elaborate version of this table appeared in *Good Company*. Certain misspellings and errors
Capitals = senior village of senior headman of chiefdom.
Italics = dead.
Total No. of taxpayers (including migrant labourers) 1955: 857.

[facing p. 91; section C]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643
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103
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551

			Sub-chief Likosyela
		12 (26 wives)	
		8	
			Mwakibweli sub-chief
	Colony in forest	48	Akimu, a junior son of Mwaipopo II, was sent to watch over this colony. In 1953 Mwabungulu was established as sub-chief of the area.
	Colony in forest	156	Possibly subdivided
	Occupies site previously held by parts of Bujege, Igembe, and Lugombo. At 'coming out' of Mwanyilu Bujege split, some members moving north, and some south, some west, to make room for Lupando. Some members of Igembe, including the headman, moved south, and Lugombo moved west.	20 (including Nsanga)	Kilasile first built in Katumba. Father was in Igembe. Born *c.* 1912. Made fire at Mwanyilu's 'coming out'. This village has a new name. It was originally called Mpuguso.
sons			These Mwanyilu's mates. He first built here.
ried.			
ome		11	Christian village near school. Mwabungulu (178) first built here but moved to forest. Mwakagile (59) had occupied this site, then Mwaijonga built Itiki I on it.
		25	3 men of Bujege who had to move to make room for Lupando have built at one end of Ndola but this is irregular.
d.	Occupies the site first held by Itebe of generation I which split and has two tiny sections to the north and south, and then by Ipoma III which moved some distance to south at 'coming out' of Mwanyilu. Busirkali II and Bujinga II have also moved southward.		F. of Pauliki in Busirkali. Bujisi also called Ipoma. New name has scarcely been established.
			No son of Likosyela 'came out' with Mwanyilu.
	Occupies land formerly occupied by Njisi	29 (14 wives)	17 men away at work, 12 present. Sikambombo made fire at Mwanyilu's 'coming out'. His father was in Njisi.
		10	
		23	
			Also called Isuba
ers of			
			Names of villages of generation IV not ascertained.
			Names of villages of generation IV not ascertained.
	Colony in forest	136	New village established for second heir Mwabungulu, who is a sub-chief. Possibly subdivided.

misspellings and errors have been corrected and the villages established in generation IV added.

[facing p. 91; section D]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Note

621 It should be realized that (i) the names of the two senior villages of a
631 generation are well known and clear cut, but those of subordinate
561 villages are more fluid. Furthermore a village often has subdivisions,
distinguished by its members by name, but known to outsiders only by
[103] the general village name. (ii) A village may acquire a new name at the
[796] 'coming out'; the senior village of Mwanyilu's generation used to be called 'Mpuguso' but 'came out' as 'Lupando'. (iii) Some villages die out altogether, e.g. Kyemo II. (iv) Some villages straddle generations. Katela in 1955 is in the same sort of position as Katumba in 1935. It includes eight sons of Mpunga who belong to generation III, but also fourteen sons of men of Masoko who 'came out' with Mwanyilu. In the case of Katumba the members who were sons of men of generation III moved to younger villages and 'came out' with Mwanyilu, among them being his senior headman Kilasile, a man of over forty. But Kilasile's contemporaries who were sons of men of generation II could not 'come out' with Mwanyilu, at least not as a group—and the members of Katumba attended the 'coming out' as 'fathers'. Boys join a village of contemporaries but may move later to a village of younger men who are of their own structural generation.

At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu and Mwabungulu five village headmen were 'caught' and secluded with their chiefs. They represented five clear-cut villages. Kilasile and Sikambombo, Mwanyilu's two senior headmen who made fire are leaders of Lupando and Iringa respectively; Pauliki and Batungulu their juniors are leaders of
[622] Bujisi (or Ipoma) and Mfumbi (or Isuba), and Mwanjotile the single headman of the junior heir, Mwabungulu, has his own village of Nkuyu established on newly settled land in the forest. The young men of Kibonde were included under Kilasile's authority, and those of Kituli and Kabula under Sikambombo's. The names Lupando and Iringa are well known as those of sections of Mwanyilu's chiefdom, but the names Bujisi and Mfumbi are not: the young men of these villages still use the names of their fathers' villages, Ipoma and Isuba, though there is a clear territorial separation between fathers and sons. Taxes
[651] are collected under the names of Igembe, Ipoma, Kibonde, Njisi, Isuba, Kituli, and the three forest villages, Kilosi, Kiloba, and Nkuyu.

[p. 101 is blank]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the broken country to the north of Lake Nyasa live the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people who, together with those closely related to them in language and culture, number[1] nearly a quarter of a million. They stretch across the river which divides Tanganyika Territory from Nyasaland and, because they were hemmed in by mountains and swift rivers, they long remained isolated from the outside world. They are skilful herdsmen and cultivators, well fed, and practising a system of green manuring and rotation which allows of fixed cultivation, in contrast to the shifting systems of most of their neighbours.

Their villages are large. Each is occupied by a group of age mates together with their wives and young children. Father and son and grandson *must* live in separate villages and full brothers are commonly separated also. Fathers and young sons are in adjoining villages, but the villages of grown men are scattered about a chiefdom without reference to the genealogical connections of its members. The only kinship relationships common within a village are those of half-brothers and of affines, for a man often marries the daughter or sister of a village mate. But although they live dispersed, agnatic kinsmen are bound together by a strong lineage organization. Property, in the form of cattle, circulates within agnatic lineages, passing from brother to full brother in order of seniority, and thence to the son of the senior brother, who inherits, with the cattle, obligations towards his juniors and a certain authority over them. Half-brothers may also be linked by regular exchanges of cattle—'milking one another's cows', as the Nyakyusa call it. Cattle are given at a marriage by the groom to the bride's father, and distributed by him among his brothers and sons; the bulk of them usually going to one of the bride's full brothers, who retains through life a special responsibility for her and her children. Polygyny is approved. The form most favoured

[1] Throughout this book the present tense refers to the period 1934–8 when the material presented here was collected.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

105 is the marriage of two sisters, or of a woman and her brother's daughter, to the same man; such 'sisters' are closely identified and their children are treated almost as full siblings.

Besides being bound together by a common interest in property —the cattle of the lineage—kinsmen join in the celebration of rituals to their common ancestors; for the very fact of their kinship is held to make them mystically dependent upon one another, and more particularly on the prayers of the most senior among them. At a funeral kinsmen will gather from many of the villages of the chiefdom, and some from other chiefdoms also. The range of kinship recognized varies somewhat with status, but the effective lineage group is normally of a span of three or four generations only, including descendants of a common grandfather or great-grandfather.

105 Traditionally villages were grouped in a number of small in-
571 dependent chiefdoms led by hereditary chiefs. Each chiefdom contained many kinsmen, but there was no fiction of common descent of all the men of a chiefdom, or of chiefs and people. There were thus three types of social group: villages occupied by age-mates, who shared common land rights, and herded and fought together; lineages bound by common interest in inherited cattle and common rituals; and chiefdoms in which the bond was occupation of a common territory and allegiance to a common chief.

105 Relations between the three groups are epitomized in the traditional law relating to theft, adultery, murder, and witchcraft.[1] A man was a member both of a village and of a lineage and both groups were responsible for his behaviour. An adulterer or cattle-thief was speared by the injured party and his kinsmen, if they could catch him. If they could not, they might attack any member of his age-village. This commonly led to war between the villages, but short of this, the kinsmen of the dead man claimed compensation from the thief or adulterer and his kin, not from the avengers. Both lineage and age-village were therefore corporate groups, the members of which were mutually responsible for each other, and it is significant that *both* senior kinsman and village headman of the defendant were required to accompany him when the case came to court. Murder was treated as a private delict, the kinsmen of the dead attacking or claiming compensation from the murderer and his kin, but witchcraft was treated as an offence against the

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company* (1952), p. 150.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

state, and the property of a convicted witch went to the chief. 105 ● Therefore the lineage was not the unrivalled principle of social grouping among the Nyakyusa as it was among the Tallensi or Nuer, but it was a corporate body.[1]

The existence of three types of groups among the Nyakyusa 105 made for social integration. The divergent interests of villages were 182 checked by the fact that every man had kinsmen in many other villages upon whom he was dependent, economically and ritually; the fissiparous tendencies of lineages were checked by the loyalties of lineage members to different villages; and the villages and lineages were all held to be dependent upon their chief for the fertility of their land, control of the weather, and success in warfare.

Since an account of the Nyakyusa age-villages and an outline 000 of their kinship system have already been published,[2] we may now turn directly to the topic of this book, their religion.

The traditional religion of the Nyakyusa people has three 771 elements: First, there is a lively belief in the survival of the dead 105 and in the power of senior relatives, both living and dead, over their descendants; secondly, there is a belief in medicines, that is, in a mystical power residing in certain material substances which is used by those who have the requisite knowledge; thirdly, there is a belief in witchcraft, that is, an innate power to harm others exercised by certain individuals, and in the mystical power of fellow villagers to punish wrongdoers. This last power, 'the breath of men', is akin to witchcraft. It may be objected that a belief in witchcraft is in no sense 'religious', but to exclude discussion of it in an account of Nyakyusa religion is comparable to excluding a reference to the devil in a discussion of Christianity. Evil is a reality which must be interpreted in one fashion or another in every cosmology.

The belief in the survival of the dead and the power of senior relatives, is expressed in a series of elaborate rituals, one set of which concern only kinsmen and are directed towards the im-

[1] There appear to be many gradations between a society with no corporate lineages, such as the Lozi, and one like the Tallensi in which the lineage is the basis of all important social groups, just as there are gradations between a stateless society in which all offences are treated as quarrels between groups of kinsmen, and a primitive state in which any serious assault is an offence against the state.

[2] Monica Wilson, op. cit. and 'Nyakyusa kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, ed. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde (1951).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

mediate ancestors of the participants, and another set which concern chiefdoms and groups of chiefdoms, and are directed towards the immediate ancestors of ruling chiefs and certain distant ancestors of the chiefs' line, heroes in Nyakyusa history. The name of one of these heroes, Kyala, has been used by the missionaries to translate the word 'God', but all the evidence available goes to show that Kyala was, traditionally, but one of several distant ancestors to whom regular sacrifices were made on behalf of a large group of chiefdoms. All the rituals of this type—those directed to family shades, the chiefs' ancestors, and the heroes—are concerned with that which is beneath (*pasi*), not that which is above. Men look to the earth where corpses are buried, not to any sky god.

The theme of the present volume is the rituals celebrated by kinsmen at death, at the puberty and marriage of a girl (the last two events usually coinciding), at birth, especially twin birth, and in misfortune. A further volume will deal with the communal rituals celebrated before the annual break of the rains; whenever public misfortune such as drought, flood, famine, or plague occurs or threatens; before battle; and when a chief is succeeded by his sons, and the younger generation take over power from their elders. There is no circumcision or initiation of men other than the 'coming out' ceremony, when a whole generation takes over responsibility for the administration and defence of the chiefdom from their fathers. Some reference to three of the heroes—Kyala, Lwembe, and Mbasi—is made in texts on the rituals of kinsmen, but our discussion of them is postponed to the second book in which the rituals directed to them are described.

A section of the Nyakyusa people is Christian and its influence on pagan thought and practice is appreciable; however, discussion of this is also postponed to the second book, since it is most evident in the changing concept of Kyala. There, too, the connections between change in ritual and other aspects of the social structure between 1934 and 1955 are analysed.

The Nyakyusa cult of senior relatives (like any ancestor cult) is not intelligible or significant apart from a study of kinship, and it may be argued that this material should be presented only as part of an analysis of Nyakyusa kinship, but we cannot discuss everything at once and some measure of abstraction is necessary. No one ritual among the Nyakyusa is fully intelligible without reference to the whole series of rituals. The principle, propounded forty-five years ago by Professor Radcliffe-Brown, that a symbol

11:Thwaites C-5 (ca. 1942) 1944
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P.236 A]

WANYAKYUSA AGRICULTURE

By D. H. Thwaites, Agricultural Assistant, Tanganyika Territory

131 The Wanyakyusa occupy the District of Rungwe in the Southern Highlands Province. The district lies between 9° and 9½° S. latitude
133 at the northern tip of Lake Nyasa. The altitude ranges from 1,500 feet to 9,500 feet. The
631 district is divided into twelve chiefdoms. The Administrative Headquarters are at Tukuyu, which was known before the British occupation as Neu Langenberg.

Inhabitants

101 The local people are not indigeneous to this area. They came, tradition has it, from
[173] Mahenge via Ukinga after many tribal fights. They are akin to the Wahenga in Nyasaland bordering on the Tanganyika boundary. It is
191 estimated that only 10 per cent of the Wanyakyusa speak Kiswahili. According to the 1935
161 census the total poulation was 153,204. The
162 total number of tax-payers in 1942 was 35,304, or 23.04 per cent of the total population.

181 The people themselves are extremely industrious and intelligent. As there are 90 people to the square mile, living conditions are
105 crowded and emigration is continually taking place. The people are partial to litigation over cattle and women. The number of cases heard annually in the Native Courts is about 6,000. There is no one historical and traditional head of the tribe. The twelve Chiefs are, in reality, hereditary Headmen who have been selected by Government to be Chiefs. They are in effect only *primi inter pares* in native eyes, the outlook of the people being unusually democratic for a native tribe.

105 The people live in houses made of wattle and daub or bamboo frame, with thatched
342 roof, and villages are sited mostly along ridges.
361 Rectangular houses are now built instead of the round huts of former days. They often stand in rows with a main street down the middle with bananas in the background. The more progressive natives build with sun-dried or burnt brick. Stock are stalled in the same house owing to the prevalence of thieving, but sleep in separate rooms.

Climate

132 The rainfall of the district varies in the different areas. In Tukuyu itself the annual average for 25 years (1918-1942) is 100.22 inches. On the Lake shore the average is probably higher, but no continuous statistics are available. The heaviest rainfall months are from December to May, but, in most years,

105

Identification

The Ngonde (Konde, Nkonde, Wangonde) with whom are included the closely related Sukwa in N Nyasaland and the Nyakyusa (Niakiusa, Sochile, Sokile) with the closely kindred Kukwe, Mwamba, and Selya (Seria, Salya), are a Bantu nation related to the Lambya and Iwa linguistically. The Ngonde division numbered 62,000 in 1945, and the Nyakyusa division 163,000 in 1931.

Basic Economy

Primarily agricultural, with fixed cultivation, fallowing, crop rotation, and use of green manure. The staple crop is bananas, but maize, finger millet (eleusine), and manioc are also extremely important. Other crops include sweet potatoes, taro, peanuts, beans, cow peas, pumpkins, and rice (introduced by the Arabs). There are numerous short-horned cattle, but relatively few sheep and goats. Milk is an important food, but cattle are not eaten except at death feasts; they are reserved primarily for taxes, fines, and marriage payments. Chickens, dogs, and bees are also kept, but only men eat eggs. Fishing and hunting are unimportant. Fishing is done with nets, weirs, spears, and hooks; hunting, with traps, pitfalls, and ambush.

Sex Division of Labor

Boys herd cattle and men milk them; they are taboo to women. Men also do all the hunting and most of the fishing, although women catch small fry with dipnets. Men clear the land and hoe the crops; the women plant, weed, and harvest, but do appreciably less agricultural work than the men, who spend 4-6 hours a day in hoeing throughout the year.

Property

Cattle are the most important possessions; they belong mainly to men. Among the Nyakyusa, millet and rice belong to men, all other harvested crops to women. Pasture land and waste land are the collective property of the village under its headman. Trees and bamboo are private property. Agricultural land belongs to the village and is distributed by the headman among individual men. The latter enjoy usufruct rights only, parceling out most of their land

105

among their wives but keeping some for their own use. A man can keep land rights in another village so long as he maintains cultivation, but they are not inherited as part of his estate.

Inheritance is patrilineal, with matrilineal survivals. Positional succession prevails; a man's cattle, movables, dwelling, land (in his own village), and widows are inherited by a single heir. The order of priority is Br, half Br, ElSo (always the ultimate heir), ElBrElSo, etc. In default of any near patrilineal heir a SiSo inherits.

Social Stratification

The Ngonde proper have a mild form of slavery resulting from capture in war, debt, or seduction of a chief's wife; a slave woman becomes free by marrying a free man, and the children of all slaves are free. Chiefs are distinguished from commoners, and there are wealth distinctions.

Marriage

The normal mode of marriage is by payment of a negotiated and substantial bride-price in cattle (8-12 among the Nyakyusa). Sibling linkage prevails, a sister's bride-price being used to obtain a wife for her paired brother. Elopement also occurs, being regularized by subsequent payment of the customary bride-price (in the case of a Nyakyusa married woman by refunding the bride-price to her first husband and paying an adultery fine of 2 cows). Another alternative to a negotiated bride-price is bride-service (for men lacking cattle); in such cases the eldest Da belongs to her mother's father. A man receives the bride-price for his first wife from his Fa (sometimes a FaBr or MoBr for whom he works), who gets the cattle from (1) their natural increase and (2) marriage payments received for daughters, sisters, and brothers' daughters. Marriage-cattle transactions are extremely complex. The cattle are paid in installments over a period of years. The recipient (normally WiFa) distributes the cattle to his sons and brothers for their marriages, later getting cattle back from them when their daughters marry.

Polygyny is general, and is preferentially but not exclusively sororal. The first Wi is the chief wife; the second is usually her Si, the third her BrDa; over each of these a man has a prior right. Both the levirate and the sororate prevail, and marriage is allowed

105

with a FaSi, though forbidden with a SoWi. Each co-wife has her own separate hut, or at least a separate alcove in a long hut. A survey of 3,000 Nyakyusa adult males showed 34% to be bachelors, 37% monogamous, and 29% polygynous; 70% of the women lived in polygynous families; 90% of long-lived men eventually became polygynous, but few men married before 25 or became polygynous before 45.

Family

Polygynous families are the norm. A typical household includes a man, his wives, his young sons, and his unmarried daughters; associated with it are banana groves surrounding the huts and scattered plots cultivated with other crops.

Residence

Neolocal residence is the norm. Because of extremely strong avoidance between a SoWi and her HuFa (and all his classificatory brothers), boys between the ages of 11 and 13 from an entire district move from their fathers' homes to a new age-village of their own in the vicinity. Until marriage, they continue to eat with their mothers and hoe with their fathers, but thereafter they hoe on their own land near the age-village, where their wives join them. A girl goes to visit and sleep with her betrothed several years before she sets up house with him. A man, to better himself, may remove to another village at will, e.g., that of a FaBr or MoBr, for whom he hoes and eventually receives marriage cattle in return. A man may also attach himself to another village if discontented with his own headman. Among the Nyakyusa, matrilocal residence with bride-service is an alternative to neolocal residence with bride-price; in such cases at least some of the children belong to their MoFa or MoBr rather than to their own Fa.

Kin Groups and Exogamy

Local exogamy is absolute under the age-village system.

Marriage is forbidden with any first cousin, and disapproved with any second cousin. The Nyakyusa have bilateral kindreds, called ikikolo, and are reported formerly to have practiced preferential cross-cousin marriage.

Descent is patrilineal. There are patrilineal lineages, apparently

105

agamous. Lineages three or more generations in depth are involved in the control and exchange of cattle, in inheritance, and in certain rituals, but in certain other respects it is the kindred rather than the lineage which functions. Genealogies are reckoned patrilineally for 6-9 generations, bilaterally for about 4 generations. The kindred is exogamous.

Probable survivals of matrilineal descent include residual inheritance by a SiSo and the special relationship between a MoBr and SiSo (since a MoBr secures a wife with Mo's cattle, his nephew can make free with his property and has a right to receive one cow from him to establish his own herd).

Kinship Terminology

Fa, FaBr--tata. Mo, MoSi--juba. Ch--umwanangu (also BrCh, (ms), and SiCh (ws). ElBr (ms), ElSi (ws)--unkulu. YoBr (ms), YoSi (ws)--unuguna. Br (ws), Si (ms) --ulilumbu. Hu--undume. Wi--unkasi.

MoBr, SiCh (ms)--umwipwa. FaSi--jubasenga ("cattle mother"). BrCh (ws)--umwanasenga. GrFa, GrMo, GrCh--umwisukulu.

Sibling terms are extended to parallel cousins. Cross-cousin--untani.

Settlement Pattern

The community is a straggling village of 30-40 households (among the Ngonde proper a cluster of huts about 30 yards apart with banana groves between, the huts being aligned in two rows facing each other). Dwellings are round with cylindrical walls and conical roofs. Rectangular structures with walls and saddle roofs also occur, but usually as cattle stalls rather than dwellings.

Community Organization

Each community is an age-village (efepanga), occupied by men born within five years of one another, together with other men who have changed their village. There are no kin villages or clans. Circumcision and clitoridectomy are not mentioned.

Local Government

Each age-village has a headman, called "great commoner" (olifumu), selected by the chief and senior headman of the district. There is no unilinear rule of succession.

105

State

Clusters of 6-12 age-villages are organized into essentially autonomous districts with paramount chiefs (olifumu), of whom there are 60 among the Nyakyusa. These districts range in population from a few hundred to about 10,000. A chief's power is limited by the influence of the local headmen and by the freedom of men to change village membership. Each chief is succeeded by two sons--the ElSo respectively of his first and his second wife. Well before his death he divides his land at a ceremony called "coming out" (ovosoka), his sons being about 35 at this time. New headmen are selected at this time, and the villages of the chiefdoms are realigned in two groups; the maturing boys of the new age-villages are given permanent land. The retiring chief, however, retains his religious functions until his death. At the "coming out" each new chief ceremonially marries his two "great wives," each of whom will produce an heir and successor, and settles in a senior age-village, assuming secular authority over his half of the existing age-villages, which are split into two "sides" in anticipation of the next division. Among the Ngonde proper, but not among the Nyakyusa, there is a paramount chief over the entire tribe, with divine-king attributes; he exercises purely religious ascendency over the chiefs, who are practically independent in secular matters; there are also "territorial nobles" who are succeeded by only one son each. The only similarity to the Ngonde paramount chiefship among the Nyakyusa is a sentimental religious bond uniting the Selya and some Mwamba and Nyakyusa chiefdoms to a sacred Selya grove.

Warfare

Warfare was formerly endemic, both intra- and extra-tribally. It was waged to avenge wife or cattle stealing and insults to depose chiefs. The sources do not mention cannibalism or headhunting.

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Pp. xiv, 278; 16 plates; tables; 3 maps; bibliography; index.

Yale: Nkd88 N8 951w

[This source deals with the structure, economy and values of Nyakyusa society. For the purposes of the Ngonde file, the Nyakyusa are considered to be part of the Ngonde nation. The monograph includes discussions of the environment, village structure, mystical interdependence among members of the age-village, the maintenance of order, and characteristics of an age-village organization. Effects of European contact, particularly missionary activities which have succeeded in the conversion of a good number of Nyakyusa to Christianity, are dealt with. A large part of the book consists of documents relating to the villages, in almost all of which witchcraft and sorcery figure prominently. Dr. Wilson is currently at the School of African Studies at the University of Capetown. --Analyst]

Field date: 1934-1938 Evaluation: Social Anthropologist-5
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary Processed in 1957

2: Wilson, Monica Hunter. Rituals of Kinship Among the Nyakyusa. London: Oxford University Press for the International African Institute, 1957.

Pp. xii, 270; 8 plates; 4 tables

Yale: Nkd88 N8 957W

[This source is the second of three projected volumes on Nyakyusa social organization, the first concerning itself with the age-village structure (see 1: Wilson, this file) and the third to deal with various communal rituals. The rituals treated in this volume are concerned with burial, the farewell to the dead, puberty and marriage, birth, and misfortune (e.g. killing, sorcery). Attention is paid to differences in detail among the various groups of Nyakyusa society. In the actual description of the rituals, pertinent interviews with the informants are brought in whenever possible. After the discussion of the various rituals, Wilson discusses the participants, generally close relatives and neighbors, and the native conception of reality as it pertains to the rituals. The main body of the text closes with a sociological analysis of the rituals of kinship based on the theories of Radcliffe-Brown. The last forty pages contain representative documents concerning funerals, death rituals, marriages, misfortunes, and some genealogical

2: Wilson, Monica Hunter.

tables. References are contained in footnotes to the pages. At the time of publication, Wilson was at the School of African Studies of the University of Cape Town. --Analyst]

Field date: 1934-1938
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Social Anthropologist-5
Processed in 1957

3: Mackenzie, D.R. The Spirit-Ridden Konde: A Record of the Interesting but Steadily Vanishing Customs & Ideas Gathered during Twenty-four Years' Residence amongst These Shy Inhabitants of the Lake Nyasa Region, from Witch-doctors, Diviners, Hunters, Fishers & Every Native Source. London: Seekyl Service & Co. Limited. 1925.

Pp. xvi, 17-318; 21 plates; end-map; index.

Yale: Jm M18 (Day Missions)

[This source is a record of information gathered by Mackenzie, a Scots missionary, from the years 1902 to 1923 (approximately). A popular account, rather than a standard ethnography, it nevertheless follows the standard ethnographical practice of that time in treating of various aspects of material and non-material culture in different chapters, among which are village life, law and crime, hunting and fishing, arts and crafts, eating and drinking, warfare, and the worship of spirits. The second half of the book is given to a description of the religious life of the Konde, remarkably objective for a missionary account. Although the range of the material is wide, little is covered with any great detail; but this was not the purpose of the book, which aimed

111 FN17 Ngonde

3: Mackenzie, D.R.

at indicating the leading ideas and practices which make up the background of Konde culture. --Analyst]

Field date: ca. 1925
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Missionary - 5
Processed in 1957

111

FN17 Ngonde

4: Tew, Mary. Peoples of the Lake Nyasa Region. Ethnographic Survey of Africa; East Central Africa, Part I. London: International African Institute, 1950.

Pp. 71-92 only have been processed for this file.

Yale: Nkd74.Et3.I.1

[The Ethnographic Survey is financed by a grant from the British Colonial Development and Welfare Fund. Its aim is to present a concise and accurate account of existing knowledge of the African peoples. Material for this source on the Ngonde and Nyakyusa peoples has been taken largely from Godfrey Wilson's studies, some of which have been processed for this file. --Analyst]

Field date: none
Analyst: Robert Lee

Evaluation: Ethnologist-4
Processed in 1957

5: Wilson, Godfrey. The Land Rights of Individuals Among the Nyakyusa. The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 1. Livingstone, Northern Rhodesia: The Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1938.

Pp. 52; 1 map.

Yale: Bk21.2n 1

[Mr. Wilson, in this concise report, has described the land-tenure system of the Nyakyusa in its physical and social context. Of special interest is his description of the property rights in a polygynous family, the internal population movement and its effects upon the land-tenure rights of the new and former residents, and the legal and economic changes brought about by measures introduced by the British colonial administration. --Analyst]

Field date: 1934-1938
Analyst: Robert Lee

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1957

6: Wilson, Godfrey. The Constitution of Ngonde. The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3. Livingstone, Northern Rhodesia: The Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1939.

Pp. 86; 2 maps.

Yale: Bk21.2n 3

[Mr. Wilson has traced here the political system of Ngonde from the traditional period to the present day. The relationships between the political status of the Kūyungus, the territorial nobles, and the local chiefs, and the economic practices and religious beliefs of the Ngonde people are carefully delineated. The impact of British rule upon the development of the native political and judicial institutions is succintly described in the concluding part of this monograph. --Analyst]

Field date: 1934-38
Analyst: Robert Lee

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1957

7: Sanderson, Meredith. The Relationship Systems of the Wangonde and Wahenga Tribes, Nyasaland. Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol. 53, pp. 448-459. London: 1923.

Yale: Nk10 ;R81 v. 53

Omitted from the Files: pp. 455-459 which are concerned with the Wahenga

[This source contains a brief sketch of the relationship terms of the Ngonde, together with a brief discussion concerning the implications of the uses of some of these terms, as well as a listing of the succession in inheritance. --Analyst]

Field date: ca. 1920
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Unknown - 5
Processed in 1958

8: Wilson, Godfrey. An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society. Bantu Studies, Vol. 10, pp. 253-291. Johannesburg: The University of the Witwatersrand Press, 1936.

Yale: Nkd74 B228 v. 9-10

[This source is a brief synthesis of Nyakyusa society as seen by Wilson in 1936, during the middle of his fieldwork. The major sections include descriptions of the climate and cultural groups, the age-villages, and the chiefdom and wider groups. Much the same material is covered by his wife Monica in later publications. (See particularly 1: Wilson and 2: Wilson, this file.) Wilson died before he was able to publish the major results of his field work. --Analyst]

Field date: 1934-1936
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Social Anthropologist-5
Processed in 1958

9: Wilson, Monica. Communal Rituals of the Nyakyusa. London; New York, Toronto: Published for the International Institute by the Oxford University Press, 1959

Pp. viii, 228; 3 maps; 5 tables; 17 photos; index.

Yale: Nkd88 -/- N8 959

[This volume is a study of the relationship of religion to Nyakyusa social structure. The author examines the origin myths (the charter), political and age-grade ceremonies, ancestral sacrifices and the varying importance of ancestral shrines, political power and status based on religion, sorcery, "medicines," oracles and cosmology. In the final section she discusses the influence of the Christian missionaries and the native African churches on Nyakyusa society--Analyst.]

Field date: 1934-1955
Analyst: Robert J. Theodoratus

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1962

10: Gulliver, P. H. Land Tenure and Social Change among the Nyakyusa. An Essay in Applied Anthropology in South-West Tanganyika. East African Studies No. 11. Kampala, Uganda: East African Institute of Social Research. 1958.

Pp. iv, 47.

Yale: Nc97 B4 Ea77 11

[In this study the author shows that the Nyakyusa land shortage is a result of the increased demand for paddy (as a cash crop) and secondarily from the slow population growth. As a result it is becoming increasingly difficult for young men to obtain arable land. Also land is now usually obtained by inheritance, village exclusiveness has increased and the relative authority of local headmen has grown in respect to that of the chiefs and councils. The author makes several recommendations to alleviate these growing problems--Analyst.]

Field date: 1954-55
Analyst: Robert J. Theodoratus

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1962

11: Thwaites, D. H. Wanyakyusa Agriculture. The East African Agricultural Journal, Vol. 9, pp. 236-239. Nairobi, Kenya Colony: Government Printer, 1944.

Pennsylvania State University: E6 30.86 Ea77.

[This source presents a summary of Wanyakyusa agricultural methods, with emphasis on the production of the primary food and economic crops. In addition to the above, information may also be found on climate, soils and vegetation, diet and land tenure and economics.]

Field date: ca. 1942
Analyst: John Beierle

Evaluation: Agricultural Specialist-5
Processed in 1963-1965

12: Bisgaard, Agnete. House-types of the Banyakyusa. Folk, Vol. 4, pp. 47-63. København: Dansk Etnografisk Forening, 1962.

Personal copy of Timothy J. O'Leary.

/This study of Nyakyasa house types was made by the author, a professional anthropologist, during a stay in the Southern Highlands of Tanganyika in 1955. To further supplement the detailed descriptions of the native houses, both of the round and rectangular types, the author has provided a number of sketches showing the interior arrangement of furniture, hearths, animal pens, etc. Some data are also presented on the distribution of house types among neighboring tribes./

Field date: 1955
Analyst: John Beierle

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1963-1965

13:

Lehmann, F. Rudolf. Some Field Notes on the Nyakyusa. Sociologus, Neue Folge, Vol. 1, pp. 53-68. Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1951.

Yale: Nm10 So19 1-3.

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[This source consists of notes on the ethnography of the Nyakyusa collected by the author, a professional anthropologist, during three months in the summer of 1939 during which he lived at the village of Katumba near Masoko with a branch of the Nyakyusa calling themselves "Wa-Masoko." The field work was financed by a grant from the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures. The author's notes pertain to the medicine man and his practices of magical and medical therapy, sorcery, ceremonies terminating the mourning period, acts of propitiation to the ancestors, divination, the girl's puberty ceremony and its function in preparing her for marriage, the chief's hut and furnishing, tabu practices in agriculture, and various types of dances.]

Field date: 1939 Evaluation: Ethnologist-5

Analyst: John Beierle Processed in 1965

14: Lehmann, F. Rudolf. Notes on the Daily Life of the Nyakyusa (Tanganyika Territory). Sociologus, Neue Folge, Vol. 1, pp. 138-148. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1951.

Yale: Nm10 So19 1-3.

[This source consists of a series of notes on various ethnographic aspects of Nyakyusa daily life, pertaining to etiquette, dairying and cattle raising, agriculture, division of labor in the society, hunting, fowling and fishing, food preparation, foreign trade, diet and eating customs, the Nyakyusa blacksmith and his work, dress, art, house types, furniture, and housekeeping. Mention is made throughout the text of how these various aspects of Nyakyusa life have been changed by the processes of acculturation and to some extent, socio-cultural changes within the society itself.]

Field date: 1939
Analyst: John Beierle

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1964-1965

112

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Library of Congress: DT429.C6

[All the material contained in this source is duplicated by an earlier publication by Wilson (see 8: Wilson, this file). Therefore, it has not been processed for the Ngonde file. --Analyst]

FN17 Ngonde
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Wilson; Monica. Nyakyusa Ritual and Symbolism. American Anthropologist, vol. 56, pp. 228-241. Menasha: American Anthropological Association, 1954.

Personal copy of Timothy J. O'Leary

[The material in this source has been superseded by a later publication by Wilson (see 2: Wilson, this file). Therefore, it has not been processed for the Ngonde file. --Analyst]

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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE peoples with whom this book is concerned, the Nyakyusa and the Ngonde, occupy an area shut in by mountains at the northern end of Lake Nyasa, and enjoy a culture which, though varying locally, clearly springs from a common basis and is traditionally attributed to similar origins. The most conspicuous features of their political organization are (i) the balance of power between chiefs and commoners; (ii) the 'coming out' ritual in which a generation of men which has governed for approximately thirty years retires and hands over the administration to its sons, retaining only ritual functions; and (iii) the system of age-villages.

N 101 131 [184] N 642

All are agreed that chiefs and commoners belong to different stocks; the commoners being descended from the original occupants of the country while the chiefs trace their descent to a line of invaders who came down from the Livingstone mountains eight generations ago. According to the myth, they brought with them fire, and cattle, and iron tools, and they found a people who ate their food raw in a land 'without trees'.[1] Commoners are *abatitu*, black people, while Ngulube, an early ancestor of the chiefs, was 'pale'[2] and chiefs (*abapafyale*) generally are said to have been lighter in colour and 'different in their bodies'. After generations of intermarriage between chiefs and commoners there is no consistent difference in physical type between them, but the range of physical type among the Nyakyusa as a whole is wide.[3]

N 173 N [167] N [569] N 144

Nyakyusa and Ngonde historians say that their chiefs are related to those of the Kinga, who live high above the Nyakyusa valley to the east in the Livingstone mountains, whence the chiefs came. The Kinga acknowledge the connexion and join with the Nyakyusa in sacrifice to their common heroes, but culturally the

N 173 N K 171 [648]

[1] Possibly the lake-shore plain. The hills until cultivated are covered with either savannah or rain forest.

[2] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 2, p. 10 (1950). According to the Ngonde version Ngulube was the *first* ancestor.

[3] cf. F. Fülleborn, *Beiträge zur physischen Anthropologie der Nord-Nyassaländer* (1906). *Das Deutsche Nyasa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet Atlas* (1906).

[119]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and Tutsi who established conquest states to the north-west.[1] 173

Whatever the origin and adventures of the heroes they were important in Nyakyusa and Ngonde history because their graves became centres of religious ritual which linked together groups that were otherwise largely independent. The myths about them are the charter for chieftainship. They are depicted as benefactors who brought to uncivilized men not only the institution of chieftainship itself, but fire, cattle, iron, seed, and a creative power resident in their own bodies and those of their anointed heirs. But the myths also justify the power of commoners who first occupied the country and who have witchcraft in their bellies:

773 [174] [778] [754]

The commoners whom Lwembe found here were extraordinary. They were cultivators, but they had not yet got fire, they ate their food raw. It was we chiefs, it was Lwembe, who brought fire and cattle—he came and found the original occupants without cattle; hence the commoners say, 'We are the earth'. Commoners are different from us physically, they are black; they are awe-inspiring, they are witches. Before you Europeans came the chiefs like Mwaipopo (116) were not awe-inspiring, they feared the commoners very much; the commoners hammered the chief with their fists—yes, by daylight. And if the chief cut a man's bananas that man took the chief's. If the commoners were angry with Mwaipopo they fetched Mwangomo (124 whose chiefdom adjoins Mwaipopo's) at night by their witchcraft; he came in the night with his people and seized the cattle, both those of the chief, Mwaipopo, and those of the commoners. The next day the commoners said: 'It is we, we are angry. Why do you not look after us? Why do you not kill cattle for us?' Then Mwaipopo would kill two head of cattle and all the men in the country ate. . . . Mwaipopo and his equals were not awe-inspiring long ago, it is you Europeans who have created chieftainship and awe.

539 [777] [754] [643]

[1] cf. H. H. Curson and R. W. Thewson, 'A Contribution to the Study of African Native Cattle', *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Science and Animal Industry*, vii, 2 October 1936 (Government Printer, Pretoria). An analysis of the distribution and migration of breeds in Africa. [113]

H. B. Thompson and R. Scott, *Uganda* (1935), pp. 195 ff.

Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 68: 69.

M. Merker, *Die Masai*, pp. 157 ff., 1904, Berlin.

H. H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, 1904, pp. 86, 103 (early photographs of Nyoro cattle).

The short-horn type predominates among the Nyakyusa, but some animals suggest an intermixture with Sanga cattle. The hump is regarded as a great delicacy and is exaggerated in the clay cattle which boys model. Cf. Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 70. The similarity between the ritual and symbolism of the Nyakyusa and those of the Gandu as described by Roscoe is marked. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, 1911. [231] [825] [592]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER III

THE 'DIVINE KINGS'

17

(a) CHARACTERISTICS OF 'DIVINE KINGS'

THE heroic myths and genealogies proclaim the origin of chieftainship, and point to a distinction between ordinary chiefs and those we call 'divine kings'. Two remote ancestors who were preeminent are worshipped as heroes and creators, their graves are centres at which a large number of chiefdoms join in celebration, and living representatives are selected in every generation bearing their names. These are the 'divine kings', the Lwembe of Lubaga (in the centre of Nyakyusa country) and the Kyungu of Mbande near Karonga in Nyasaland. A third hero, Kyala, is associated with the cave, PaliKyala, near Ikombe at the north-east corner of the Lake, and he is worshipped in the same way as the other two, except that the priest of the cave is not his descendant and does not embody him. According to the myth, Kyala was the brother of Lwembe, but died without issue. However, the word for chiefs—*aba-aya-fyala*—is popularly believed to mean 'the sons of Kyala'.[1] 773 769 643

Kyala is one hero among others, but his name is *aba* used in the sense of 'the lord': a chief is *kyala gwaka* (his lord) to a commoner, a father is *kyala gwaka* to his son or daughter 'because he created him' and a shade is *kyala* to his living kinsman (*ungwaka je kyala*). Of one who performs a feat—something difficult—it is said 'he is Kyala'.[2] This usage is said to be very old, but there is yet another meaning of the word which is new. *Kyala* was used by the European missionaries (who first established themselves near PaliKyala) as their translation of 'God'. Today these three conceptions are inextricably mixed: Kyala the hero, Kyala 'the 769 643 [775] [171] [197]

[1] I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Pauter for drawing my attention to this point. It is doubtful whether *Kyala* and *fyala* in fact come from the same root. *Fyala* in Hehe means the daughter of a chief (A. G. O. Hodgson, 'Some Notes on the Wahehe of Mahenge District', *J.R.A.I.*, lxi (1931), p. 401). In Bena *ipalyana* means 'my husband's father or mother' (A. T. and G. M. Culwick, *Ubena of the Rivers*, p. 136). In Gando *mafyala* means 'lady', mistress of a household and garden (J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, p. 44). cf. Hyiha, *fala* 'to beget, to bear' (J. L. Krapf and J. Rebmann, *A Nyika-English Dictionary*, edited by T. H. Spurdens, 1887). [192]

[2] cf. F. R. Lehmann, 'Some field notes on the Nyakyusa', *Sociologus*, New Series, 1951, vol. 3, p. 68. [113]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173 rulers were not of the royal blood but 'nobles' (*amakambwa*),
643 descendants of the five leading men who had arrived with the Kyungu, of those he found already occupying the country, and of those who arrived after him. Later the slaughter of the Kyungu's
[694] sons ceased, and as they grew up they were established as subordinate chiefs through his territories, gradually taking over power from the commoners who had previously ruled, by a process familiar in other parts of Africa.[1] But the 'nobles' retained considerable power. At Lubaga the descendants of the two men who had arrived with the first Lwembe, and of some of those who were there before him, became priests, and priests only; in Ngonde those of similar origin developed secular, as well as ritual, functions.

The reasons why the office of Kyungu developed into a paramount chieftainship, and that of the Lwembe did not, have been examined in a previous publication,[2] and may therefore be dealt with very briefly here. The most important factor was that
[439] the Kyungu exported ivory and amassed wealth which was used
[556] to bind territorial rulers to him, while the Lwembe remained cut off from the outside world and did not trade at all. The geographical situation largely accounts for this. The ivory of Ngonde first went north, and later south-east, across the Lake, and Mbande was well situated for both routes. It lies eight miles from the Lake and close to a defile which leads from the lakeshore plain to an open table-land stretching north to Lake Tanganyika, the very route which engineers later selected for the Stevenson road. Lubaga, on the other hand, is forty miles from the Lake and the only routes northward lay over broken country and passes 8,000 feet high. Giraud remarks in his journal that the Nyakyusa were the only people he had come across among whom the chiefs did not claim at least one tusk of every elephant killed;[3] they did not claim it, for they had no use for the ivory; but the Kyungu's right to a tusk from every elephant killed was enforced.

The growth of a paramount chieftainship in Ngonde was slow. The early Kyungus lived within an enclosure on Mbande to which only their personal servants and the nobles of Ngonde had

[1] cf. M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 380; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 13-14; I. Schapera, in *African Political Systems* (edited Fortes and Evans-Pritchard), pp. 60-1.

[2] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3 (1939).

[3] V. Giraud, *Les Lacs d'Afrique Equatoriale* (1890), p. 186.

[113]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Kyala has no living representative—in the myth he had no descendants—but only a priest. However, the priest is sometimes referred to as 'Kyala' as were the early missionaries who preached about Kyala.[1] The present priest (1936) is a young man who, by his own account, would be a Christian were it not for his public responsibility in providing food for the country. His grandfather, Mwakinyasa, was a Kisi who came as an immigrant doctor from Ikubajila in Kisi country to the south, and was the first of his family to hold office at PaliKyala. Before that the chiefs of the line of Mwampasa themselves celebrated the ritual. According to Mwampasa's descendant, the present chief Mwandula, 'We planted food and the crops failed, but when "the owner of food" (Mwakinyasa) came with many medicines it grew, there was much food in the homesteads, hence we said: "Kyala has indeed loved this man, let us give him the duty of sacrificing", so the chiefs gave him cattle of his own and said: "Let the ritual come out of our bodies and go to Mwakinyasa."' It was Mwakinyasa who (according to his grandson) introduced a variety of crops—beans, maize, cowpeas and groundnuts—to the people of Ikombe; before that they grew only bananas and *mapemba*,[2] so the myth of the hero who brought benefits is linked to the new line of priests. But there is no tradition that the priest of Mwampasa's line was once a 'divine king' like the Lwembe and the Kyungu.

Those who sacrifice at PaliKyala are the local chiefs (descendants of Mwampasa), the Kinga chiefs Mwakalukwa and Kyelela (to whom Mwampasa was related), and various chiefs of the Nyakyusa plain as far west as Mwandisi (107) near Mwaya. The Kinga priests bring bamboo beer, hoes, sheep, and occasionally goats or cattle; the local people offer white fowls, flour, cattle, and, traditionally, pots, which are produced in quantity near by, and which were being sold at the market at Ikombe when the Europeans first arrived in the country.[3] The Nyakyusa of the plain send black (or black and white) cattle and sheep. According to the Kinga priests they themselves offer black animals in Bu-Kinga when they want rain—black clouds—and white animals when they want sun and a clear sky. At Lubaga only dark animals are offered, but at PaliKyala white fowls and black, or white (or

[1] F. Fülleborn, *Das Deutsche Nyasa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet*, p. 317.
[2] *Mapemba*—maize in Penja, but here it is contrasted with *ifimbe* (maize).
[3] Joseph Thomson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back* (1881), v. I, pp. 260-3. The missionary, Dr. A. Merensky, saw hatchets and choppers, as well as pots, on the floor of the cave. F. Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

future boundary between the two halves of the chiefdom, where it will split the next generation. They serve as beacons[1] and are cited as evidence both of the 'coming out' and of the division of land in any later dispute. At the same time the trees are symbols of chieftainship and with their growth the success of the reign is mystically linked. According to one account, 'four headmen fetch the cuttings and the young chief stands between them (*vide plate* 6) and tells the trees to grow well, and the others say: "We are planting you likewise, we are at the ritual of establishing a new chieftainship, you are a symbol for our chief, spread branches that our young headmen and other people may rest in your shade."' A doctor assists at the planting, burying at the roots a live white sheep and medicines, which, it is said, later turn into the lions or leopards which protect the trees from the impious (*vide infra*, p. 58); and he sweeps beneath the trees, a symbol of what the senior headman must do in future, for it is his duty to 'watch over the trees'. In Nyakyusa thought, village headmen are an integral part of chieftainship—it cannot exist without them—and the trees symbolize *both* the chief and his lady and the two senior headmen. The same informant (well known as a doctor for the 'coming out') told us: 'It means we are planting the chief and his lady; *umpandapanda* is the herd to herd *indola*, which is the more important. *Umpandapanda* is the woman, it may dry up, but *ulupando* (*indola*) never does; it is the chief, it is familiars (*ulupege*). but *umpandapanda* is not', and a moment or two later, 'the *ulupando* is the senior village headman, *umpandapanda* is the junior headman'. The strength of the chief is associated with the growth of the trees. If these trees go dry the reign will not be successful, the chief will be defeated in war. If they flourish and grow the reign will be successful, the chief is a ruler. The *indola* planted for Mwaijonga (82) is shown proudly by his great-grandson, and Mwambete (162) who had a long reign and an enormous family boasted of the size of his *umpandapanda*—'a great spreading tree'. Ideally the young chief should, in due course, sit in the shade of his *indola* with his headmen, to settle disputes.

After the trees are planted the young men build their senior headman's house and the doctor sets up his hearth bricks, burying medicine beneath them also. The marriage of the chief follows.[2]

[1] cf. D. Kerr-Cross, 'Greater-Lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, v, IV (1895), p. 117.

[2] According to most accounts, but *vide infra*, p. 56.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

system is still the accepted form in Mwaipopo's chiefdom; the advantages of separating kinsmen in different villages are explicitly stated, and the contrast between the Nyakyusa and their neighbours in this respect emphasized. 'Certainly we do not live with kinsmen here but the Kinga do.' 'It is not good for a son to live close to his father, they will quarrel.' 'When we move to another village we consider friendship not kinship in selecting it.'

631 166 561 361 [183] [601]

(b) THE BALANCE BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND SECTIONS

The ritual cycle of the 'coming out' and the sacrifices in the groves helped to maintain a balance of power between generations, as well as between chiefs and commoners. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) in 1953 it was Mwabuputa, the senior village headman of his father, who took the leading part. He was described as 'the greatest man in the country' who 'brings out the chief' and his manner indicated that he was well aware of his power. During the reign of Mwaipopo (116) the power of his father's village headmen, Njobakosa and Ngulyo, was apparent at every ritual. Spiritual power was shared between chiefs and commoners, but exercised ideally by a virile chief of the ruling generation and the experienced headmen of the retired generation.

643 561 796 [554]

Those chosen as senior village headmen at the 'coming out' are commonly older than the young chief, but village headmen are thought of as surviving their chief—it is they who were responsible for smothering him, and performing the sacrifices in his grove. The headmanship is an *office* and so long as the office is necessary an incumbent is found for it, in the person of the heir of the original holder who is so closely identified with the deceased that most precise inquiry is often necessary to establish whether a given individual is the original holder, the succeeding heir, or a later heir, successor to the successor. The Ngulyo who officiated at the rituals in 1935 was the heir of the original Ngulyo (some said the *grandson*, not the son) and he was criticized by Kasitile as being 'a young man who knew nothing'. The principle, so familiar in Central Africa, of a perpetual office[1] emerges, among the

[622] [782] [554] [769]

[1] I. Cunnison, *Kinship and Local Organization on the Lunguda*, Communications of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute No. 5 (1950), pp. 14-15; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), p. 102; A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, O.U.P. (1939), p. 94; 'Some Types of Family Structure among the Central Bantu', in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, p. 224; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, London (1911), p. 3. [113]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 There is no single supreme power; it lies in the several heroes,
775 in medicines, in witches, and with the shades. Kyala is a hero, a forefather, to whom sacrifices are made, and he is comparable to Lwembe and Kyungu, though he left no direct descendants. The evidence suggests that the names Kyala, Lwembe or Mbasi, Kyungu, and Ngulube were used in the same way in different areas, Kyala being the hero of the north-east shore of the Lake, Kyungu of the north-west, Lwembe of the central Nyakyusa valley, and Ngulube of the scarp edge of the Livingstones. Sometimes informants used Lwembe and Kyala alternatively saying they meant the same thing, although, as we have noted, Lwembe (or Mbasi) was specially associated with cattle, whereas Kyala, who was killed and rose again, only controlled crops, and may perhaps be taken as personifying vegetation. The distinction is in no sense clear-cut, but there is a hint of a cultivating people having
[174] been defeated by cattle-keepers with iron weapons, since Kyala was finally killed with a 'razor' (*ulwembe*), and The Razor himself —Lwembe—could not be killed though men tried.

In their creative aspect the heroes and shades are closely identified: 'Kyala creates desire'; 'the shade rouses up in the
[842] belly when a woman conceives'; 'Kyala and the shades stand together'. Kasitile said:

> Lwembe . . . makes a child. I lie with a woman; Lwembe is there, he works. Sometimes, if he is angry he works badly and a leg is missing, or the woman has a miscarriage. Sometimes he works well. Lwembe goes about looking upon the mothers; he is in my bellows (i.e. in my wife). It is he who came from BuKinga . . . and wished first to build at Nsamba's (i.e. where Nsamba go now lives). He failed there and went to Kasambala's and failed there and he seized Lubaga. All is his. A child is his and a cow, and the iron which the Kinga make is his, and food is his. . . . He is in a bull and a man. Where do you get the 'blood' (to beget a child)? Are you alone? . . . No, the Kukwe do not *know Lwembe, but the people of the plain do, they are one with us.*
>
> QUESTION: And Kyala?
>
> KASITILE: He is there, Kyala and Lwembe are together among us and the people of the plain. It is Lwembe who creates twins. You do not. Who has made your body? Who has created you? Who has given you strength and breath so that you are born, and live, and grow up, and marry? It is Lwembe and Kyala together.[1]

[1] cf. J. Buss, 'Die Zwillingsgeburt bei den Nyakyusa', *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 73. Jahrgang, pp. 194ff.; 'Aus dem Leben von Asyukile Malango', *Zeitschrift für Eingeborenen-Sprachen*, Band xxxv (1936), p. 202.

[113]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

311
423

4. The safety valve of labour migration should not be closed and young Nyakyusa should be encouraged to go away to work whilst wages abroad are relatively high.

5. Finally, with a view to the future as well as the present, it is suggested that an individual's land-holding should be at his own disposal, and, if desired, by money sale. Purchasers should, at first anyway, be limited to members of the village where the holding lies or to men willing to settle there.

These recommendations are to be taken only as a suggested programme for administrative consideration. No attempt can be made here to lay down the details of future policy, for that is the function and responsibility of administrators and technical officers, African and European, and not of the Sociologist.

The Sociologist could, however, with profit participate in the discussions and work preparatory to the development of a satisfactory programme. It is essential that a complete programme be arranged and executed to tackle all or most of the problems concerning the land, economics and agriculture. Tinkering with different aspects here and there is likely to be unfruitful and is unlikely to command the propaganda and drive of a comprehensive scheme. Such a planned scheme should be able to catch the imagination and support of the people themselves, especially if they and their leaders can be brought to see the reasons for it and the value it may bring.

113

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N.B. In Wilson, M. (1951) there is a full bibliography of works dealing with the Nyakyusa.

12: Biegaard E-5 (1965) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

171
342
580

grass. This last-mentioned type is used by the Batutsi of western Tanganyika as temporary shelter on their perennial wanderings.

Why, then, do not all tribes build to the same design? There are 120 different tribes in Tanganyika alone, and were you to put the question to a member of one of these tribes, he would simply say, "We follow our custom!"—and this is actually the answer. It takes time to be influenced; people will stick to their old customs,—a fact which, as seen from an ethnographical point of view, is really an advantage. Changes should not come too quickly.

At about the time when Johnston wrote the above lines, the history of Johannesburg as a town had just begun. Now, that city is all grey stone colonnades and streets criss-crossing at right angles. Even if the gold was behind all that, you never know when a similar fate may befall some part of Tanganyika. What cannot be called forth by the diamonds to the south of Lake Victoria?

Were the African village to disappear entirely,—it would truly be missed. It is interesting to follow the development which is under way in Tanganyika, and which cannot be halted,—to see how it will influence the charming villages and their inhabitants.

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113

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AGNETE BIEGAARD
Aalborg,
Denmark.
Sept. 1961.

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

535 [832] These dances seemed to be a representation of "sex appeal" or courting. Each new phase of the dance was introduced by the advancing of one or two young women fairly near to the side of the men, then each retreated followed by the whole lines of both the sexes. If the youngest girls present who stood mostly behind the "dancing" line (i. e. the group of the advancing women and older girls) were to come too near the proper dancing place, they were driven back. The older people and the *amafumu* were only spectators.

535 292 The women had no special dancing dress, but the men did. They now wore mostly a sort of tight jackets or sweaters and wide robes, coloured or with patterns.

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Synopsis

000 Verfasser legt seine Ermittlungen vor, die er während seines dreimonatigen Aufenthalts im Dorfe der Masoko (die zu den Nyakyusa gehören sammelte. Sie geben einen Einblick in die damals, 1939, überwiegend traditionsgebundene Lebensweise dieses Stammes, namentlich bezüglich der Medizinmänner und der Behandlung der Kranken. Um im Falle der Schwester des Häuptlings die Ursache der Erkrankung zu ermitteln, wurde ein Wahrsager gerufen, der bei einer Sitzung den Ehemann als Urheber feststellte. Zur Heilung wurden vom Häuptling Zeremonien am Grabe von dessen Vater angeordnet. Außerdem beschreibt Verfasser aus eigener Erfahrung die Trauerzeremonie nach dem Tode eines Kindes, die Initiation eines verlobten Mädchens u. a.

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the figures. Also bicycles, aeroplanes, motor-cars and other striking 531
objects of the European civilization are to be found represented and [177]
concentric white circles adjacent to these drawings or paintings.

14. Houses. Sometimes the upper portion of the framework of the 342
rectangular houses is not fully plastered with mud leaving broad open areas or strips horizontally or slopingly to the base-line. This may have its origin in an artistic motive and at the same time be useful in ventilating the interior of the hut. The ancient custom of the Nyakyusa to fill out the spaces between the framework of the walls with flat, oval cakes or clods of clay, supported inside the house by a second framework of bamboo *(uvumango)*, has also a decorative effect.

The preparation of those oval sun-dried clay cakes is the work of the [339
women. L. Monteith Fotheringham described this in his "Adventures 462]
in Nyasaland" (London 1891, p. 22) with the following words: "The
women make the bricks in shape like large eggs by pressing the clay [113]
between their hands." The building of the framework of the hut and the thatching of the roof is the task of the men. Nyumba means "the house" in Kinyakyusa as wellas in Swahili; *isyenga* is the name for the old-fashioned hut of the Nyakyusa possessing a round baseline and a framework expanding upwards in diameter. The rectangular hut is called *ikibaga* and the smaller rectangular hut used as a store or a fowl pen, *akabaga*. It is interesting to note that there is no special word for roof in Kinyakyusa. This part of the hut or house is simply called "the above" *(iyuru)*. In contrast to this fact the different poles of the roof-structure are specially named according to their position parallel to or at right angels to the ridge of the rectangular houses. *Ukutalike* means to bind the different rafters of the roof together; *imbanda* is the name for the supporting poles of the roof, and *isyengo* for the poles of the framework of the walls.

15. Outfit. Inside the house we find besides the bedsteads *(ikitara,* 352
pl. *ifitara)* and the household utensils, the grinding-mill *(urusuara)*, [412]
consisting of an upper (smaller) and a lower (broader) stone. The flour
falls into a basket placed in front of the mill. Sometimes in a corner [231]
of the hut a nest *(ikitere)* for a sitting hen on top of a pole is to be
found. Outside the house is a place for the sweepings *(urutagililo)*. The 356
cleaning of the interior of the houses and also the repairing of the mud 462
plaster is the task of the women, but I saw men cleaning the space in front of the huts. At any case, it must be acknowledged that the cleanliness of a Nyakyusa village leaves little to be desired.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

PREFACE

THE material presented in this book was collected by my late husband, Godfrey Wilson, and myself, between 1934 and 1938; he then being a Fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation, and I a Research Fellow of the International African Institute. Godfrey Wilson was in the field from September 1934 to December 1935 (with one month's break) and again from September 1936 to January 1938; the interval having been spent in London, digesting material. I did not begin work until March 1935, and was invalided out of the Territory with malaria for six months in 1937, so that I only spent a total of twenty months in the field. We had three main centres of work: Mwaya on the Lake-shore plain, Isumba in Selya, and Ilolo on the plateau near the Moravian mission of Rungwe; and either together or singly we stayed for some time in Kinga country on the Livingstone mountains, in Ngonde, at Lubaga, near LiKyala, at the White Fathers' station of Makete, on the Lupa gold-fields, in the Government station of Tukuyu, and at the Church of Scotland mission station, Livingstonia (Kondowe), to which youths from Ngonde and a few from Nyakyusa go to be educated (cf. Maps II and III). At one time or another we walked through almost all the district except for the Ndali hills: that expedition, long planned, was repeatedly prevented by attacks of malaria. At Mwaya and Isumba we were lent disused mission houses close to villages; in Ilolo we lived in a Nyakyusa-style house built for us in the main thoroughfare of the village; when camping we pitched our tent within the village usually near the homestead of the chief or headman.

As will be seen, the Nyakyusa are an extremely democratic people, and we lived in democratic fashion with Nyakyusa dropping in to visit, and sharing with us tea, or occasionally more solid meals, at all times of the day. We in turn were welcomed and fed in our friends' houses. After the first few months the atmosphere was extremely cordial, and the Nyakyusa took immense pains to explain their customs and to invite us to events which they thought would interest us. We both learnt to speak Nyakyusa and took notes largely in the language.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

114
122

THE material presented here was collected by Godfrey and Monica Wilson under the auspices of the Rockefeller Foundation and the International African Institute between 1934 and 1938. For leisure to complete the writing, and to revisit the Nyakyusa in 1955, I am indebted to the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the University of Cape Town.

MONICA WILSON

School of African Studies
University of Cape Town

[p. vii]

[p. viii is blank]

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

●114 121 642

My wife and I were engaged in researches among the Nyakyusa from September 1934 to January 1938; and our informants constantly told us of the general similarity between their own customs and those of the Ngonde plain. They made it clear, however, that while they and the men of the Ngonde plain shared an otherwise almost identical culture they yet differed markedly in their political systems. The Nyakyusa, when the Europeans reached them, were organized in small independent chiefdoms, the people of Ngonde possessed a paramount chief, the Kyungu. More recently, among the Nyakyusa, a sustained attempt by the Tanganyika Administration to set up two paramount chiefs had failed; in Ngonde, on the other hand, where the Kyungu's supremacy had, until recently, been officially unrecognized by the Nyasaland Administration, his position seemed to be quite secure. The contrast was an interesting one and demanded investigation. Nor was this the only difference between the Nyakyusa political system and that of Ngonde; besides a paramount chief Ngonde possessed a group of hereditary nobles (*amakambala*) which was apparently quite unparalleled among the Nyakyusa.

114 121 642 171

So in July 1937 we crossed the Songwe and spent some time in Ngonde studying these differences. Our visit confirmed the fact that the traditional culture and social system of the Ngonde plain was in almost all respects identical with that of the Nyakyusa. The patrilineal kinship organization with marriage by cattle, the age-villages each with its great-commoner or headman (*ulifumu*), the little chiefdoms each consisting of a group of age-villages united under a hereditary chief (*umalafyale*), all were there.[1] The descriptions we were given of the traditional rituals at death, at girls' puberty, at the birth of twins and at the "coming out" of young chiefs seemed to be identical in general significance and almost identical in detail with the rituals we knew among the Nyakyusa. Language also was similar, though here the similarity had been less close in former times. And yet there were the two great differences: at the apex of the political system of Ngonde was the Kyungu, while a group of hereditary nobles formed an integral part of it. Again and again our informants confirmed this general identity, these specific differences: "Everything is just the same among us as among the Nyakyusa, only in the case of the Kyungu and his nobles (*amakambala*) is there any dissimilarity." How then was this dissimilarity to be accounted for?

[1] This social system is discussed in the first paper of this series—*The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa* (1938), and also in papers contributed to *Bantu Studies*, one in September 1936—"An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society," another in April 1939—"Nyakyusa Burial Ceremonies."

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

634 accessible in an earlier book, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*,[1]
796 and the details need not be recapitulated here.

769 Perhaps the reader has already noted a certain difficulty over tenses: 'is' tends to merge into 'was'. When we first visited
● 114 BuNyakyusa in 1934 missionaries of various denominations had
797 already been at work, and a foreign government in control, for
177 forty years past. Between 1934 and my last visit in 1955 the changes have been great, but I use the present tense for things seen at first hand, whether earlier or later, and a separate chapter is devoted to the twenty years' change. It is well to recognize at the outset, however, that in 1934 the sanctity and power of the
[643] 'divine kings' was already questioned and their rituals were
[796] curtailed, and even the pagan cosmology of the Nyakyusa was beginning to exhibit traces of Christian influence. One striking example was the changing, or rather the fluid, connotation of the name *Kyala*.

Two new types of organization developed in BuNyakyusa with the arrival of the Europeans: churches which are based on a principle of association wholly new to the pagan tradition—common belief as opposed to kinship or contiguity; and a centralized system of government. To these have now been added trading concerns, of which the most important are co-operative societies exporting coffee and rice.

The subject of this book is (i) the traditional rituals celebrated
121 on behalf of chiefdoms and groups of chiefdoms, and (ii) the changing ideas and values apparent as a section of the Nyakyusa turn from paganism to Christianity. In the concluding chapters an attempt is made to demonstrate the links between the changes in social structure and the changes in ritual.

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*, 1957.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

always hangs under the eaves and is only used for prayer, filled it with 783
water and put into it a stone and a live coal from the fire. Then he 782
took some roots from the roof (previously put there ready) and we
went off to the same spot as before (*vide supra*, p. 115). Kasitile chewed [778]
the root, took water and blew it out, and began to pray:

'Do not be startled, come in your own persons, gather together, [769]
with Mwakanjoki (60). You made friends with him before, now he has entered, he has made himself our friend. Indeed I made a mistake, I have come to enter; I cut you on the head, I have done wrong. The sons of Kagile (i.e. 59 + his descendants) complain of me, saying, "It is he who has gone off with the millet, bananas, and maize; and children cry at night behind the huts; we are barren because he has cut Mwakanjoki." I have sought this cow which you wanted. Mwakanjoki (60), Lwembe (37), Mwakalebela (19), Mwatonoka (29), Mwalubange (58), Mwakagile (59), Mwaijonga (82), Kyala (2), we have come to attend to you (pointing to the grave). Kikungubeja, Nyanigwa Kyamba Kitali,[1] Lyambilo (12) come to your home if you are at Mwalubange's (58), come if you are at Mwaitende's (61), come Mwakanjoki (60) and the Kinga and Lwembe (3); Mwakalebela (19) come, give me cattle and millet, and the powerful medicine which you had. Since you are brooding over me go out from my body, go out! I pay my debt. We have come to take you to your home since you have gone off in a huff, come! I will never cut your branches again. I fear you and I will respect the branches. Come to your house, that of Mwamaloba (85), of Kanjoki (mother of 60), come. And he (G.W.) is [123]
innocent (*nsele*), do not fear him. He is the owner of the ritual, he is Mwamaloba (85), he is my senior, I am the junior. Sometimes I wish to embrace him, sometimes I fear that he is going to imprison me.[2] May the bananas increase! I am left alone! It is I who am here! Move [789]
out of my body! And give us medicine! May the offering increase overnight, may the cattle increase and the maize, and in the morning let me tell Mwaipaja (G.W.) that the bananas and medicine have increased. If there is anything else you are a liar, if this chill begins again then I have gone, I am not here. Amen! (*sic*).'

Very early the following morning the sacrificial bull was killed. [171]
Kasitile had arranged that our Mohammedan cook should come to cut its throat.[3] Then, later in the morning, the crucial drinking and 'speaking out' began. Kasitile had provided two pots of beer.

[1] These Kinga priests whose names are titles of office.

[2] In the earlier years of our acquaintance Kasitile had denied both the smothering of an ailing chief and human sacrifice for the drum. It is possible that he had co-operated in either one or both of these ritual acts. He himself reported that the Kinga diviner had told him: 'You have a European as a close friend. . . . You enjoy his company much, but there is something left . . .' (i.e. the friendship is not yet complete). [114]

[3] Ostensibly so that he could partake of the meat, but the reason given seemed inadequate.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER III

CHANGING CONDITIONS AND THE PRESENT SITUATION

Population

At the African Census in 1948 there were recorded, in their own tribal area, approximately 198,000 Nyakyusa at an average density over the land available for their use of 212 persons per square mile. [161]

In the Lake Plains alone there were, in 1948, 55,700 inhabitants living at an average density of 268 persons per square mile. Population densities in the other Nyakyusa areas were rather lower than this.

These figures do not, however, give the full picture from the point of view of land occupation and use, for large numbers of men, and some women, were at the time of the Census absent from their homes and living temporarily in employment areas abroad – chiefly in the Rhodesias and South Africa. I have estimated elsewhere that approximately 8,000 men would have been away in 1948, of whom 95 per cent. or even more would return to settle down at home, for there was only a very small proportion of men who remained more or less permanently absent. That is to say, these men remained dependent for their land needs on their own tribal territory, and indeed at least some were active land-holders whilst the rest had lesser rights in family holdings. [167]

If, therefore, we include these temporary absentees, the measure of the pressure of population on the land is shown by an average density of population for all Nyakyusa of 220 persons per square mile. At least 3,000 of these migrant labourers (possibly more) had their homes in the Lake Plains, and this number increased the density of population dependent on the land resources of this region to 282 persons per square mile.

The statistically average family in 1948 comprised about five people, and therefore the population density can be restated in the form that for all Nyakyusa there were available about 15 acres of land per family. In the Lake Plains there were about 12 acres of land available. These averages do not, of course, take account of either unusable land such as swamps, steep slopes, infertile tracts, etc., nor of the land necessarily taken up by roads and paths, open spaces in the villages and the like.[1]

These figures indicate that, taking a broad and general view based on averages, the density of Nyakyusa population or their pressure on their tribal lands ranked amongst the highest in Tanganyika in 1948.[2]

Unfortunately census enumerations before 1948 were too unreliable to allow of any satisfactory estimate of the probable rates of population increase, but from general information and internal evidence it is thought not unreasonable to suggest that in the Lake Plains population is increasing perhaps at the rate of one per cent. per annum; and in the rest of the tribal area the annual increase may be one and a half per cent. per annum. The high incidence of malaria and other debilitating diseases in the Lake Plains during the flood period of the wet season each year accounts for the lower estimate of increase there. [169] [169]

1. The measure is taken in these calculations of Nyakyusa who were permanently resident in other parts of the Territory. These lived chiefly in Mbeya District (Chunya, Tukuyu and Mbeya Town) which they constituted about 30,000 in 1948.

2. The higher population densities in 1948 were in Sukuma—Ukara Island (Ukerewe District) 300, Mwanza (Mwanza District) 240, Lushoto 170, Bungoro (including Tongwe, Nyala, Lusahala, Kaja, etc.) (Mpanda 240, Ufipa 150, Kasanga 140). Figures extracted from Population Census, Govt. of Tanganyika, 1952.

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Chagga FN4
Haya FN8

House-types of the Banyakyusa

By August Biegaard

During a stay in the Southern Highlands in Tanganyika in 1955, I was given the opportunity to inspect—and draw plans of—some of the houses belonging to the local Bantu tribe of the Nyakyusa. In literature they are known also under the name of Konde.

The district in which they live is fairly high above sea level and near the borders of Rhodesia and Nyasaland; the rainfall is fully adequate. Banana and coffee are doing well—the banana trees often forming groves in between which you catch a glimpse of the village houses.

The district invites comparison with other localities in Tanganyika where the country is high, and where precipitation is plentiful. Such localities would be the districts around Kilimanjaro and near Bukoba to the west of Lake Victoria. In the former live the Chagga tribe, in the latter the tribe of the Haya. Even here banana and coffee are plenty—and the I.Q. of both tribes is said to be high, as is the case of the Banyakyusa (plural of Nyakyusa).

Maybe you might therefore expect to find a corresponding standard of dwelling-houses, perhaps even the same type of hut. But in this matter you will be highly surprised; so great are the differences between the three areas. Apart from the original design of the house being round and the roof thatched, no similarity exists between the various houses or their interior lay-outs.

The round, thatched Chagga hut has its roof all way down to the ground. It is not very large and the interior lay-out is quite primitive. A cow or goat lives all its life indoors and is fed there. A short and uncomfortable bed is found near by. Down the centre of the floor is a stone-paved aisle. Everything looks quite simple—especially when you remember that in other aspects the Chagga are quite advanced in their use of modern facilities; for instance they use electricity for the grinding of their maize.

The Haya hut—the old, round type—is a really magnificent thing. I think its centre is seven or eight metres high. In front it has a kind of overhang, maybe you might call it a front room, where people will sit, and where guests will be received. If you are a welcome guest, a straw mat will be rolled out to cover the grass flooring of the hut. The walls of the front room are solid plates made from a kind of reed. The hearth is placed near the centre of the inner room.

[P.49]

N 114 N 107 N 131 N 245 000 G N H 342 171 C 342 231 H 342 [574]

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Haya FN8

H 342 As indicated above, the floor is covered with grass. Various domestic utensils may be seen, stuck into thin screens of plant material.

H 342 178 But this old, beautiful type of hut is very much on the decline. It is costly to make and to keep in repair, and the thick straw roof is, admittedly, highly inflammable. A flying trip round Lake Victoria clearly shows how the straw roofs in the banana groves are being replaced by corrugated iron. This change may even have another reason, viz. the fact that fodder for cattle is in short supply and that the grass for roofs is hard to come by. No doubt, it is a question of time when the fine old Haya hut will have disappeared.

N ● 114 In the Southern Highlands, where I was given the opportunity to stay for three months at various Danish mission stations, I visited the village round the Rungwe mission, the neighbouring villages of Ilolo and Kikota, and some villages near the Rutenganio mission station. I made a trip to Lake Nyasa and another to the Poloto mountains. I must admit to a limited knowledge of drawing technique and of house construction, but I have measured a number of houses and sketched their plan and also the furnishings I found in them. The positioning of the various objects has been established.

N 361 [342 356] The high standard of dwellings of the Banyakyusa is truly to be wondered at. The houses, clustered in villages, often along a winding street, lie intermingled with banana and coffee bushes. The houses are large and their interior is clean. Often two or three houses belong to one family, and, if so, will be grouped round a courtyard.

N 342 [824] Even if you could find houses built from sun-dried bricks and fired tiles, most were from bamboo with a grass roofing.

All houses stand on a clay base which, though not very high, no doubt means some protection against penetration of ground moisture during the heavy rains of April–June.

N [824] Besides bamboo, sometimes the hole of tree fern, *mukoko*, is used in outer walls. Such tree fern stems have not the carrying capacity of bamboo, but they are far more resistant to rot. Among the other common features of the existing types of houses, should be mentioned the mud cloth, the size of rolls that from the inside are pressed between the vertical bamboo poles; also, the inner wall is roughcast with a mixture of mud and cow-manure; the floor is from tamped clay. In some places you find very fine floors in which a pattern has been rolled into the wet clay; to this end a short length of the stem of the banana cluster has been employed, viz. the length between the seats of the male and the female flowers. Also employed are another plant stem, or an empty corn cob.

N [287] [531]

N 354 585 In all houses where women live, there are one or more hearths. The presence of two hearths in one house usually means that the husband has two wives, each wife having her own hearth, either in the common house or in a house of her own.

N 342 The houses always have a kind of ceiling made from bamboo sticks and carried

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[p.53]

Some Field Notes on the Nyakyusa

(Tukuyu District, Tanganyika Territory)

By F. Rudolf Lehmann

The following field notes on the Nyakyusa (Wanyakyusa, Wanyakjusa) represent only a small part of what I wrote down during my residence of about three months among this people in the summer of 1939. The present selected notes refer only to my sojourn in the village of Katumba near Masoko, with an ethnic group of the Nyakyusa who call themselves „Wa-Masoko"[1]. Notwithstanding the short time I had

[1] Cf. R. Thurnwald, p. 88; G. Wilson, Land Rights, p. 31.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[122] for research, I am very grateful for a grant from the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures[2] which enabled me to start my ethnographical field work among these people. I wish also to express my thanks to the Government of the Tanganyika Territory, the Provincial Commissioner of Mbeya, and the District Officer of Tukuyu for all the courtesy I received during my work.

[114] [123] 1. My first step, after my arrival at Katumba near Masoko, was to pay a visit to Mwamasika, the chief *(omalafyale)*[3] of the village and

[291] [516] [622]

The chief Mwamasika with his counsellors.

of those adjacent. On the open place near his hut he welcomed me in company with his *amafuma*[4], the influential men of his villages. My attendant, the interpreter and I were asked to sit on chairs, while the *amafuma* sat down on mats or on large banana leaves on the ground; but the chief remained standing. I explained the aim of my visit, and that I would be very glad of his support. The chief promised it, and he kept his promise excellently. On other occasions the chief also sat [431] on a chair. In the afternoon of the first day I sent to the chief some presents. The following he made a return in form of food. This exchange of gifts is named ukubonole, handing over the gift.

[123] [757] 2. In a small village belonging to Mwamasika's chieftainship was the residence of a medicine man, to whom I paid a visit as soon as I could. When I met him he was being consulted by a sick male person who had a stomach complaint *(ugufu)*. After some negotiations he allowed me

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[2] Cf. Africa. Vol. XI, p. 497.
[3] Cf. Wilson, Introduction, p. 282; Land Rights, p. 44.
[4] Cf. Wilson, Land Rights, p. 12. W. translates *ulifuma* (*ulifuma*) by „great commoner", Introduction, p. 276, 282.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

●115 We got a great deal of help from two Nyakyusa clerks, Leonard Mwaisumo (now dead) and John Brown Mwaikambo. Mwaisumo laboured to teach us the language (for there is no published grammar or dictionary in Nyakyusa) as well as the conventions of the country, and he wrote many valuable texts. Mwaikambo (who joined us after Mwaisumo had been appointed clerk to the Appeal Court of the district) was also invaluable in writing texts, which gave both his own account of events and those of people he interviewed. Mwaisumo was a commoner; Mwaikambo the son of a chief. Both men were Christians; both had passed Standard VII, and spoke reasonably good English. To mention others by name is perhaps invidious, but we cannot omit these: the great rain-maker, Kasitile, an old man and a conservative, who formally introduced Godfrey Wilson to his ancestors, and opened his heart on matters of ritual; Mwakionde, famous as a doctor and maker of lions, a regular Silenus in his joviality and consumption of beer; Mwandesi, an ancient chief recognized by the Nyakyusa themselves as their foremost authority on history, and Mwaipopo, the chief in whose country we lived in Selya (see Plate V); Mwambupota, Kakuju, Nsona, and Mwafula, village headmen and conservatives; Fibombe, a Christian elder (see Plate VI); Furukoto, the pagan (but sceptical) chief of Ilolo, and his sister Martha, a leading woman in Rungwe congregation. Our house-boy Angombwike, and his wife Ndimbomi (see Plate IX) were also admirable informants. Both were Christian, but Angombwike came from a family of pagan doctors, his mother Mwangoka being one of the foremost practitioners in Selya, and herself an excellent informant. These are but a few among many able informants, for we were instructed in *iki-Nyakyusa*, that is, Nyakyusa language and culture, by people of varying status from all over the district.

100 To the Europeans of Rungwe district and Ngonde we also owe a great debt for warm hospitality, professional help, and a friendly tolerance of the eccentricities of anthropologists. We spent delightful week-ends in Tukuyu, Karonga, and Mwakelili, the guests of one and another of our European friends, who are too many to mention all by name. We must however acknowledge our particular obligation to Mr. P. M. Huggins, District Officer of Rungwe when we arrived, and Mrs. Huggins; Mr. Fox-Strangways, sometime District Commissioner at Karonga, and Mrs.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KaKwe

house. Then she goes in and steals a piece of firewood from the 768
loft[1] and runs off with it, laughing. The officiant pursues her and 587
makes her drop it and gives her medicine, while the company cry: 'A thief, a thief!' She takes the firewood back to her husband's home. 'It is a sign that she has entered her father's house, just as the spear is a sign that she has entered the house of another husband.' In rich families the new husband sends a bull which is [554]
killed and eaten at the ritual.

Our informants were agreed that 'there is no fear of the gasping cough if a woman runs away from her husband and goes to a lover', and in practice no ritual is performed when she visits her father after divorce and re-marriage, but it is perhaps significant that such a situation could scarcely have arisen in the past, since [556
divorce by agreement rarely, if ever, occurred. An adulterer fled, 177]
if he could, with his lover to another chiefdom, breaking off all [684]
relations with her kin.

(b) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

Now we turn to the Kukwe interpretation of events. Our two 115
principal informants here were Mwasalemba, an elderly pagan man, brother to the chief Porokoto, whose wife, Syungu, acted as officiant at rituals in the chief's family, and Kakune, a young doctor who had learnt the medicines from his mother. Mwasalemba was much more coherent than Syungu herself, and his interpretation was confirmed by Kakune and numerous other informants. Again I give the interpretation of the two principal informants without any editing other than placing consecutively statements made on different occasions.

i. *Mwasalemba's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. and translated 158
by him soon afterwards.)

MWASALEMBA: Perhaps a youth, perhaps a girl, runs mad; he runs about naked so that we say: 'He's mad, why doesn't he cover himself?' He goes to the place of defaecation and takes filth and eats it: he goes into people's houses and takes things, he might even take some things from you, from a European, without fear; he knows not what he does. Sometimes, after a visit to a doctor, he recovers altogether and never has the fit again—that is the lesser kind of madness. But sometimes he 158
recovers and then the fit takes him again later—that is the more serious 757

[1] The loft (*ngule*) consists of horizontal beams running at wall level across a portion of the hut. Here every married woman keeps a supply of dry firewood. It is her private store-place which may not be touched without her permission. [422 417]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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GOOD COMPANY

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[p. iii]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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By the same Author

REACTION TO CONQUEST

THE ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL CHANGE
(with Godfrey Wilson)

[p. iv]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

GOOD COMPANY

A STUDY OF NYAKYUSA AGE-VILLAGES

by

MONICA WILSON

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1951

[p. v]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

101
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133

The fine dot stipple indicates the aj

[facing p. v (a)]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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MAP I. THE CULTURAL AREA

he approximate area occupied by the Nyakyusa-Ngonde people and groups

[facing p. v (b)]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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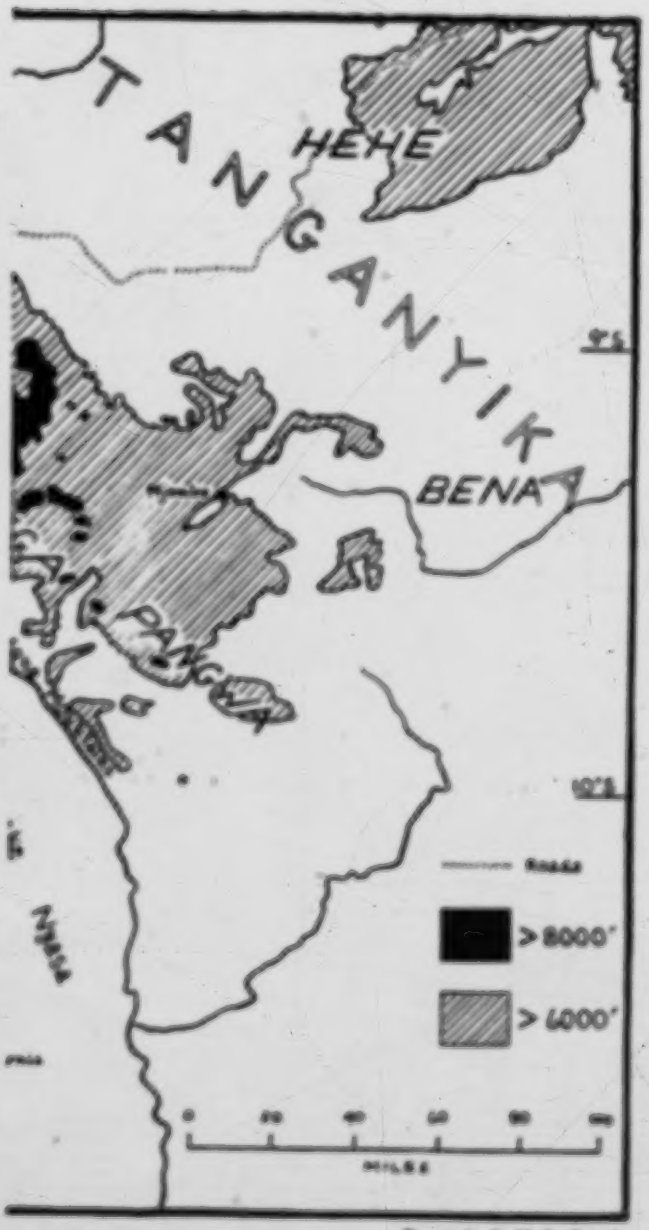

Drawn by J. V. L. Brown

demonstrated by them.

[Facing p v(c)]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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[p. vi]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

PREFACE

THE material presented in this book was collected by my late husband, Godfrey Wilson, and myself, between 1934 and 1938; he then being a Fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation, and I a Research Fellow of the International African Institute. Godfrey Wilson was in the field from September 1934 to December 1935 (with one month's break) and again from September 1936 to January 1938; the interval having been spent in London, digesting material. I did not begin work until March 1935, and was invalided out of the Territory with malaria for six months in 1937, so that I only spent a total of twenty months in the field. We had three main centres of work: Mwaya on the Lake-shore plain, Isumba in Selya, and Ilolo on the plateau near the Moravian mission of Rungwe; and either together or singly we stayed for some time in Kings country on the Livingstone mountains, in Ngonde, at Lubaga, near LiKyala, at the White Fathers' station of Makete, on the Lupa gold-fields, in the Government station of Tukuyu, and at the Church of Scotland mission station, Livingstonia (Kondowe), to which youths from Ngonde and a few from Nyakyusa go to be educated (cf. Maps II and III). At one time or another we walked through almost all the district except for the Ndali hills: that expedition, long planned, was repeatedly prevented by attacks of malaria. At Mwaya and Isumba we were lent disused mission houses close to villages; in Ilolo we lived in a Nyakyusa-style house built for us in the main thoroughfare of the village; when camping we pitched our tent within the village usually near the homestead of the chief or headman.

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

115 We got a great deal of help from two Nyakyusa clerks, Leonard Mwaisumo (now dead) and John Brown Mwaikambo. Mwaisumo laboured to teach us the language (for there is no published grammar or dictionary in Nyakyusa) as well as the conventions of the country, and he wrote many valuable texts. Mwaikambo (who joined us after Mwaisumo had been appointed clerk to the Appeal Court of the district) was also invaluable in writing texts, which gave both his own account of events and those of people he interviewed. Mwaisumo was a commoner; Mwaikambo the son of a chief. Both men were Christians; both had passed Standard VII, and spoke reasonably good English. To mention others by name is perhaps invidious, but we cannot omit these: the great rain-maker, Kasitile, an old man and a conservative, who formally introduced Godfrey Wilson to his ancestors, and opened his heart on matters of ritual; Mwakisonde, famous as a doctor and maker of lions, a regular Silenus in his joviality and consumption of beer; Mwandesi, an ancient chief recognized by the Nyakyusa themselves as their foremost authority on history, and Mwaipopo, the chief in whose country we lived in Selya (see Plate V); Mwambuputa, Kakuju, Nauna, and Mwafula, village headmen and conservatives; Filombe, a Christian elder (see Plate VI); Porukoto, the pagan (but sceptical) chief of Ilolo, and his sister Martha, a leading woman in Rungwe congregation. Our house-boy Angombwike, and his wife Ndimbomi (see Plate IX) were also admirable informants. Both were Christian, but Angombwike came from a family of pagan doctors, his mother Mwangoka being one of the foremost practitioners in Selya, and herself an excellent informant. These are but a few among many able informants, for we were instructed in *ibi-Nyakyusa*, that is, Nyakyusa language and culture, by people of varying status from all over the district.

To the Europeans of Rungwe district and Ngonde we also owe
120 a great debt for warm hospitality, professional help, and a friendly tolerance of the eccentricities of anthropologists. We spent delightful week-ends in Tukuyu, Karonga, and Mwakelili, the guests of one and another of our European friends, who are too many to mention all by name. We must however acknowledge our particular obligation to Mr. P. M. Huggins, District Officer of Rungwe when we arrived, and Mrs. Huggins; Mr. Fox-Strangeways, sometime District Commissioner at Karonga, and Mrs.

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Nyakyusa

Fox-Strangeways; the late Mr. Eustace of the Tanganyika Agricultural Department, and Mrs. Eustace; the Rev. and Mrs. Marx of the Moravian mission at Rungwe; the Rev. and Mrs. Faulds of the Church of Scotland mission at Karonga; the Rev. and Mrs. Galbraith of Livingstonia; Mr. Godfried Schuler, a planter, and his wife; and the Officers of the King's African Rifles then stationed at Mäsoko.

When planning work among the Nyakyusa, we were guided by Lord Lugard, who had lively recollections of 'the north-enders', and by the Rev. D. R. and Mrs. MacKenzie, missionaries of the Church of Scotland in the area for many years. Mr. MacKenzie had published *The Spirit-Ridden Konde* in 1925, and was deeply interested in the Nyakyusa-Ngonde people; he lent us manuscript notes on the language and gave us the most generous encouragement.

Godfrey Wilson was concerned to make a general sociological study of the Nyakyusa, while I had been commissioned by the International African Institute to study particularly the effects of Christian missions on the community; in practice we found it profitable each to work primarily with our own sex, though we did not do so exclusively. Nyakyusa men proved better informants than women, largely, we think, because the men all had a training in logic, gained in discussion in the villages and in court. Women lacked this training and, except for doctors and those who had had some schooling, they found it difficult to give an account of their customs. The pagan women were markedly less coherent than conservative Pondo women (among whom I had previously worked[1]), a difference which I attribute to the narrow scope for leadership among the women in the traditional Nyakyusa society. And the difference between conservative pagan Nyakyusa women (doctors excepted) and Christians who had had some schooling was very noticeable.

Material on pagan and Christian, as well as that on men and women, overlapped at every point; and shortly after leaving the field we agreed that to describe pagan and Christian groups separately would distort the facts very seriously, and that we would collaborate in writing three books on Nyakyusa kinship, Nyakyusa villages, and Nyakyusa chiefdoms, including in each of

[1] Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest: Effects of Contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa* (1936).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

them an analysis of pagan and Christian differences. Godfrey Wilson died on active service before the writing of these books was begun, and I am thus solely responsible for the form of this volume, but the material is from the field notes of us both. Portions of Chapter I, and a few paragraphs in other chapters have been quoted (with minor emendations) from articles already published by him. Throughout the book the present tense refers to the period 1934–8 when the material was collected.

The problem of combining adequate documentation with lucidity has not yet been solved in anthropology: either monographs are so loaded with texts and case records as to be almost unreadable, or else they are impressionistic, and the student is left wondering just what evidence there is for the author's conclusions. We have attempted to meet this difficulty by publishing certain relevant documents in a separate section. These documents represent only a small selection of the field notes used, but at least they illustrate the type of evidence on which our argument is based. Many of them are translations of texts written in Nyakyusa by Mwaisumu and Mwaikambo from their own knowledge, or at the dictation of others.

The maps have been drawn by my friend and colleague at Rhodes University College, Professor J. V. L. Rennie, to whom I am much indebted for the time and trouble he has lavished on them. The map of Rungwe District is based on one compiled by Mr. R. de Z. Hall, and traced by Mr. G. D. Arthur, which was given me by the courtesy of the Survey Department of Tanganyika.

Finally, I am indebted to Dr. Audrey Richards, Professor Meyer Fortes, and Professor Dover Wilson for reading this manuscript and making many valuable suggestions.

Rhodes University College,
Grahamstown, 1949.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CONTENTS

PREFACE page vii

I. INTRODUCTORY
- a. The cultural area 1
- b. Environment and economy 5
- c. Relations with the outside world 8
- d. The form of Nyakyusa society 11
- e. The subject of study 18

II. VILLAGE ORGANIZATION
- a. The genesis of the village 19
- b. The 'coming out' ceremony 22
- c. Relations of villages within one chiefdom 31
- d. Moving 35
- e. Variation in the basic form of village organization 37
- f. Modern modifications 38

III. ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION
- a. Land 44
- b. Building 49
- c. Cultivation 50
- d. Herding 55
- e. Hunting and fishing 58
- f. Housekeeping 60
- g. Economic co-operation beyond the village 60

IV. VALUES
- a. Good company 66
- b. Dignity 77
- c. Display 78
- d. Decency 84
- e. Wisdom 87

V. MYSTICAL INTERDEPENDENCE
- a. Witchcraft and 'the breath of man' 91
  - i. The nature of witchcraft 91
  - ii. The supposed activities of witches 92
  - iii. 'The defenders' and 'the breath of man' 96
  - iv. Witchcraft, 'the breath of man', and morality 100
  - v. Procedure in witchcraft cases 109
- b. The age-village and the ancestors 111
- c. The age-village and Medicines 123
- d. The age-village and Christianity 127
- e. Witchcraft, medicines and the British Administration 132

VI. THE MAINTENANCE OF ORDER
- a. Arbitration 136
- b. Witness to contracts 148
- c. Communal responsibility of the age-village 149
- d. Social separation 152

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

VII. CHARACTERISTICS OF AN AGE-VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

a. The peculiarity of Nyakyusa villages page 158
b. Age-villages and incest 159
c. Good company 160
d. The incidence of accusations of witchcraft 163
e. The form of witch beliefs 164
f. The 'breath of men' 167
g. Kith and kin 170
h. Relative social status 170
i. Constitutional form 173
j. Necessary conditions of age-villages 173

SELECT DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NYAKYUSA AGE-VILLAGES

1. Villages in Mwaipopo's chiefdom 181
2. The 'coming out' (ubunke) 185
3. A land dispute between villages of the same chiefdom 188
4. A boundary dispute 191
5. Labour histories (summary) 193
6. Change in the relation of fathers and sons 195
7. Homosexuality 196
8. Misfortunes attributed to mystical causes 198
9. Methods of witchcraft 214
10. A myth of witchcraft 217
11. Witchcraft and lust for meat and milk 218
12. Inheritance of witchcraft 219
13. Acquiring witchcraft from friends 221
14. Consciousness of witchcraft 222
15. Associations of ubulogo and ubupoto 223
16. Things associated with witchcraft 225
17. Dreams as evidence of witchcraft 226
18. Grounds of accusation of witchcraft 228
19. 'Things which are said to anger the witches and make them throttle us' 229
20. Threats of witchcraft 231
21. Children learning of witchcraft 234
22. The 'breath of men' 235
23. Ritual of reconciliation 240
24. Procedure in a witchcraft case (traditional) 241
25. The ordeal (ukwaafi) 244
26. The autopsy 247
27. Witch driven away for witchcraft 251
28. Fear of hereditary witchcraft 252
29. Christian suspicions of witchcraft 254
30. Sorcery 255
31. Deaths attributed to 'the horn' 256
32. Procedure in witchcraft cases (modern) 257
33. Settlement of disputes in Christian villages 262
34. Settlement of disputes between pagans and Christians 264
35. Joint responsibility of neighbours 266
36. Moving 267
37. Fetching home a private individual 270
38. Bringing home a village headman 271

BIBLIOGRAPHY 273

INDEX 278

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ILLUSTRATIONS

(Photographs by the author)

I. CULTIVATION IN NYAKYUSA COUNTRY *facing page* 18
In the foreground are bananas, coffee, and bamboos; in the middle ridges for sweet potatoes and mounds for maize. On the extreme right Rungwe volcano appears. The house is a modern style, and raised for drainage.

II. THE GENESIS OF A VILLAGE 19
Boys' huts built on the edge of their fathers' village

III. MEN'S VILLAGES HIDDEN IN BANANA GROVES AND FRINGED BY CULTIVATED LAND 24
A long hut is visible in the centre of the picture to the right, and an umuali tree on the left. In the cultivated land are oil-bearing umyangati trees

IV. A CHRISTIAN BOYS' VILLAGE BEING BUILT ROUND A SCHOOL (the larger building in the centre of the picture) 25

V. THE CHIEF MWAIPOPO 50

VI. FIROMBE, A CHRISTIAN ELDER 51

VII. A LITTLE GIRL PLANTING SWEET POTATOES IN HER MOTHER'S FIELD 66

VIII. MEN ON A PIG-HUNT 67

IX. NDIMBOMI, A CHRISTIAN WOMAN, STOOPING TO GREET A MAN 70

X. 'THE DIGNITY OF THE HOMESTEAD'—— OLD STYLE 71
Note the tree planted and carefully protected, in the court-yard

XI. A TRADITIONAL STYLE LONG HUT (*IKIBAGA*) 78

XII. 'THE DIGNITY OF THE HOMESTEAD'—— NEW STYLE 79
Chief Porokoto's main house in Ilolo village

XIII. DISPLAY—THE *UKUMOGA* DANCE AT A MARRIAGE FEAST 130
A woman in the foreground is wearing the traditional brass body-rings

XIV. A MEN'S *UKUMOGA* DANCE AT A FUNERAL 131

XV. SETTLEMENT OF A DISPUTE 146
The anthropologist (Godfrey Wilson) is sitting with the court. On his right is the chief Mwaikaje, on his left Kasitile the rain-maker. Behind him (in a topee) is Mwaisumo the clerk, and Mwakisonde, famous as a doctor and maker of lions. In the background is a half-built hut

XVI. THE FAVOURITE WIFE OF A CHIEF 147

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

MAPS

I. THE CULTURAL AREA *frontispiece*
II. NGONDE AND NYAKYUSA COUNTRY *facing page* 2
III. RUNGWE DISTRICT 26

[p. xiv]

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

a. *The cultural area*

THE Nyakyusa and Ngonde[1] are a Bantu-speaking people who live in the north-west corner of Lake Nyasa, on the marshy plain at the head of the Lake, and in the hills that rise steeply to the north and west of it. They straddle the Songwe river which divides Tanganyika from Nyasaland. The area is enclosed by the Lake itself, the escarpment of the Livingstone mountains on the north-east and the Poroto mountains on the north-west. To the west the boundaries are less clearly defined, but coincide pretty closely with the boundary of Rungwe district and with the watershed which separates Nyasaland from Northern Rhodesia. To the south the boundary is that of Chief Mwafulira's country, which lies some twenty miles south of Karonga (see Map I). Most of the area is thus situated between 9° and 10° S., and 33° and 34° E. It covers approximately 4,500 square miles and the population is about 235,000.[2]

Within this area there are local differences in language and custom. The dominant groups are the *Nyakyusa*, who live in Tanganyika on the Lake-shore plain and up into the hills as far as Rungwe mission, and the people of *Ngonde* who live on the Lake-shore plain in Nyasaland. These two groups speak dialects which, though differing somewhat in vocabulary and pronunciation, are easily understood by speakers from both, and their social structure is essentially similar. The main difference is that in Ngonde a

[1] The old men say *Nkhonde*, and the name appears in most of the literature as *Konde*.

[2] The area of Tukuyu district is 1,866 square miles, and the area subject to the Kyungu, the paramount chief of Ngonde, is 2,687 square miles. The Tanganyika census of 1931 gives the population of Rungwe district as 195,062: this was believed in the district to be an over-estimate. The population of Ngonde is approximately 40,000. For the southern boundary of the Ngonde people in 1881 see James Stewart, 'Lake Nyassa and the Water Route to the Lake Region of Central Africa', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, New Series*, Vol. III, 1881. He states that nine miles north of Mount Waller is a marsh; south of it are the Tumbuka, north of it the 'Chungu' (i.e. Ngonde).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

101 centralized chieftainship[1] developed with the development of the ivory trade, whereas among the Nyakyusa (who were geographically much more isolated) nearly a hundred small chiefdoms maintained their independence until the European conquest. In their economy, their kinship system, their age-village organization and their rituals, however, the people of Ngonde are very similar to the Nyakyusa.

101 The Nyakyusa themselves may be sub-divided into those living on the Lake-shore plain (*MuNgonde*), those around *Masoko*,
197 those to the east under the Livingstone mountains in *Selya* and *Saku*, and those to the north, viz. the *Kukwe* and *Lugulu*. The last two groups differ appreciably in dialect and custom from the others, but all speak dialects which are mutually intelligible.[2]

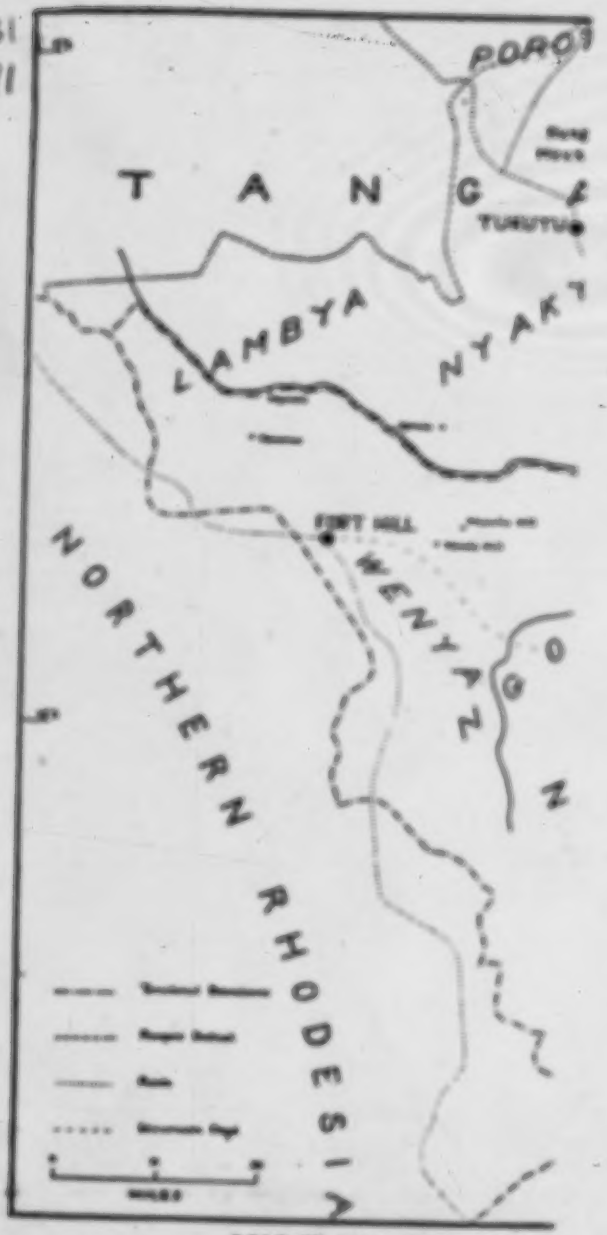
There are also a number of small groups with old languages of their own which, though related to that of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde, are more or less unintelligible to them; and they have equally distinct cultures. These include the *Penja* on the plateau to the west of the Kukwe; a small group of *Nyika* on the same plateau; the *Ndali* in the hills to the north of the Songwe; the *Sukwa* to the south of them; the *Lambya* and *Wenya* further west; small groups of *Henga* and *Mombwe* on the western border of Ngonde, and the *Kisi*, a people famous as potters and fishermen, who live on the north-east shore of the Lake. Most of these people are now, we are told, being rapidly assimilated to the Nyakyusa and Ngonde in speech and in law, but we have little

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3, 1939.

[2] The term *Nyakyusa* means primarily the people of the Lake plain in Tanganyika, and those around Masoko, but it is now used by extension to include those in Selya and Saku, together with the Kukwe. We use 'Nyakyusa proper', for those on the Lake plain and around Masoko. The terms *Ngonde* and *Musonko* are a source of some confusion because their meaning varies with the location of the speaker, and the meaning of Ngonde also varies with the prefix used. The primary meaning of *Abo-Ngonde* is 'the people of the plains' but anyone travelling in the direction of the sacred hill Mbaende, on which the Kyungu (the paramount chief of Ngonde) lived is spoken of as going *KuNgonde*, whether he start from nearby, or from as far away as Tukuyu (cf. Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 7). *MuNgonde* is generally used by the Nyakyusa for the Lake-shore plain of Tanganyika. In this book we use *Ngonde* for the area of the Kyungu's supremacy, and avoid *MuNgonde*. *AbaMusonko* means by derivation 'the hill people', but is generally used for 'the people to the north'. The Ngonde of Karonga call those on the plain around Mwaya *BaMusonko*, the men of Mwaya apply the name not to themselves, but to the people of Selya, while the people of Selya apply it to those in the hills to the north of them. We therefore avoid the term.

3:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

131
491



MAP II. NGONDE AND ?

[facing p. 2(a)]

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

131 1070
491

D NYAKYUSA COUNTRY

Drawn by
J. F. L. Resnick

[facing p. 2(b)]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

first-hand knowledge of them. On the coast they are classed with Nyakyusa and Ngonde as *Sokile*, a nickname derived from the traditional Nyakyusa greeting.

This book is concerned with the Nyakyusa.[1] What it contains is true in general terms for the people of Ngonde, but how far it is applicable to the smaller groups cited we are not certain. The Ndali, Sukwa, and Penja, are said to have long had an age-village organization; and Henga, Nyika and Kisi living intermingled with Ngonde and Nyakyusa have adopted it; but of the customs of the Wenya and Lambya we know little. Dr. Kerr Cross and Monteith Fotheringham, who travelled extensively in the area before 1890, reported that the Ndali and Sukwa (of Misuku) were very similar to the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people, but that the Lambya were different, practising shifting *citemene* cultivation, and living in stockaded villages.[2]

According to their own traditions the Nyakyusa and Ngonde chiefs (who trace descent from common ancestors) came ten generations ago from Kinga country, on the Livingstone mountains, and found the Rungwe and North Nyasa country already occupied. They established themselves as chiefs and have since been increasing the area of their occupation. The Kinga also affirm that their chiefs are related to those of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde, and they join with the Nyakyusa in sacrifice to common ancestors at Lubaga and LiKyala (see Map III), but the Kinga culture is quite distinct from that of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde; we stayed long enough in Kinga country to convince ourselves that the Kinga live in kinship villages and not in age-villages, and that they differ from the Nyakyusa in many other respects.

There seems little doubt that the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people have been expanding in an area not uninhabited, but sparsely inhabited, and that the assimilation of the Penja and other groups now proceeding is no new phenomenon, but part of a process which has long been going on. Within recent years over 2,000

[1] The Nyakyusa as here defined numbered 159,044 in Rungwe district at the 1931 census, and 3,732 outside the district; the Ndali 22,834, the Lambya (within Rungwe district, and not including those in Nyasaland) 12,403, and the Kisi (in Njombe district) 2,115. *Tanganyika Territory, Census of the Native Population*, 1931.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika, *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), p. 286; L. M. Fotheringham, *Adventures in Nyassaland* (1891), pp. 129–33. Nyondo was a Lambya chief, cf. Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 10.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

167 Nyakyusa families have crossed the Poroto mountains and settled
177 in Safwa and Nyika country. They have moved, primarily, to secure good pasture, fertile garden land, and accessible markets; and the accounts of Nyakyusa history which we have suggest that the first two of these motives have long been in operation. There is no sign of these Nyakyusa immigrants being absorbed by the previous occupants of the country. Indeed, were it not for the intervention of the Administration, it seems that the Nyakyusa immigrants might soon dominate the less organized Safwa and Nyika. As it is, certain of the Safwa and Nyika Native Authority Courts are conducting proceedings in Nyakyusa as well as in their own languages,[1] a fact which supports the Nyakyusa boast that all their neighbours are learning their language. Many Kinga, Mahasi, Wanji, and Poroto are said to learn to speak Nyakyusa, though there are few Nyakyusa settlers among them, since they find the language useful in external contacts.[2] The Kinga tell a myth of how they, together with the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, the Ndali, the Ngonde, the Mahasi, the Kisi, the Pangwa, and the Bena came from a place Ilongo (in the present Bena country) which they call 'the dark house' (*nyumba ndita*), and the Penja speak of a centre of dispersion, Kina, to the north of Rungwe mountain, from which they and the Safwa and Poroto came. The people of Ngonde, for their part, trace connections with the Inamwanga and Iwa, saying that their chiefs in their journeyings left sons to rule these people; they also assert that one of their predecessors on the Lake-shore plain was a hunter from Fipa country.[3]

101 Despite these tenuous links with their eastern, northern, and north-western neighbours, the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people are, as we have said, culturally quite distinct from them. The Nyakyusa themselves are emphatic that their culture differs from the cultures of the Kinga, the Safwa, the Poroto, and the Nyika—a statement which our own observation, and the evidence of other writers, confirm.[4] And the Ngonde differ in many respects both

[1] R. de Z. Hall, 'Local Migration in Tanganyika', *African Studies*, 4 (1945). 2,100 families had moved before 1938; 3,000 by 1945.

[148] [2] This is despite the fact that Swahili is the official vernacular for Tanganyika, being the medium of instruction in Government primary schools, and the language used by the Administration.

[3] Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 10.

[4] E. Koots-Kretschmer, *Die Safwa* (1926); J. Thomson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back* (1881), Vol. I, pp. 46–52; R. de Z. Hall, op. cit.; D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

from the Inamwanga and Iwa to the north-west and the Henga to the south. The affinities of the Inamwanga and Iwa appear to be with the Mambwe,[1] while the Henga are an offshoot of the Tumbuka-Kamanga people who took refuge from the Ngoni in Ngonde.[2] Of the Phoka who live high up in the hills south-west of Ngonde we know almost nothing, except that they are skilled cultivators, and their language is closely related to Tumbuka.

The cultural group consisting of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people, together with small groups in Rungwe district and Ngonde largely absorbed by them, and including the Nyakyusa immigrants in Mbeya district, probably numbers about a quarter of a million.

Of the more distant cultural affinities of this group we know nothing: there are no consistent similarities in culture between it and any other known group. The elaborate age-organization, and the great ceremony of handing over regular power to the next generation, which is held every thirty years or so, suggest East African connections, while the girls' puberty and marriage ceremony (*ubunangu*) is in many ways similar to the *cisungu* ceremony of the Bemba;[3] and the witchcraft beliefs are like those of the Azande[4] and the Lovale.[5]

b. Environment and economy

The Nyakyusa-Ngonde country is fertile, well watered and, to European eyes, spectacularly beautiful, with its arc of high mountains and sparkling lakes. The Nyakyusa valley forms part of the

[1] F. F. R. Bolleau and L. A. Wallace, 'The Nyasa-Tanganyika Plateau', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. XIII (1899); J. C. C. Coxhead, 'The Native Tribes of North-Eastern Rhodesia, their Laws and Customs', *Royal Anthropological Institute, Occasional Paper*, No. 5, 1914; C. Goldsbury and H. Shaane, *The Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia* (1911).

[2] F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), Vol. I, p. 52; M. Sanderson, 'Some Marriage Customs of the Wahenga, Nyasaland', *Journal of the African Society*, Vol. XXII (1922–3); T. Cullen Young, 'The Wahenga of North Nyasaland', *Journal of the African Society*, Vol. XXIII (1923–4); 'Tribal Intermixture in Northern Nyasaland', *J.R.A.I.*, Vol. LXIII (1933); 'Habits and Customs of the Olden Days among the Tumbuka-Kamanga People', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. X (1936).

[3] A. I. Richards, *Bemba Marriage and Present Economic Conditions*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. 4. (1940).

[4] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (1937).

[5] C. M. N. White, 'Witchcraft, Divination and Magic among the Balovale Tribes', *Africa*, Vol. XVIII (1948), pp. 81–104.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

133 Great Rift valley, walled in on the east by the Livingstone mountains, which rise to 10,000 feet, and on the west by the rather lower Ndali hills. It is blocked to the north-west by Rungwe volcano and the Poroto mountains; the volcano rises from the floor of the Rift to nearly 10,000 feet, and the lowest pass over the Poroto mountains is 8,000 feet. Scattered throughout the hills are a number of small lakes formed in the craters of old volcanoes, each one like a jewel set in the green of field and pasture.

132 The rainfall in this valley is very heavy, averaging over 100 inches in the year, and innumerable streams rush down the 161 mountain slopes, flooding parts of the plain during the torrential rains of March and April. The dry season is short—it scarcely exists in the hills—and such a rainfall, combined with skilful cultivation and stock-breeding, makes a large population possible. The average density for Rungwe district is over eighty persons to the square mile; the population is most concentrated on the Lake-shore plain, but stretches up into the hills to 6,000 feet. South of the Songwe the rainfall is much less—at Karonga it averages only 45 inches a year—and the country supports a smaller population, the average density for Ngonde being less than fifteen persons to the square mile.

The Nyakyusa grow a variety of crops of which the chief are 24 bananas and plantains, finger millet, maize, cow-peas, coco-yams, cassava, sweet potatoes, ground-nuts, curcurbits and, recently, rice and coffee. They also breed short-horned, humped, cattle which [231] are carefully stalled at night, and hand-dressed to keep them free from ticks. Banana plantations stretch mile upon mile through the plain and along the crests of the ridges.[1] In them are hidden the villages, often so close together that the boundaries between them are not obvious. On the fringes of the bananas are the tilled fields, and beyond the fields the open pasture land. Unlike most of their neighbours in Central Africa the Nyakyusa practise fixed, not shifting, cultivation, and the land is kept in good heart by green manuring, rotation of crops, and periodic fallows.[2] Only in the cultivation of finger millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins,

[1] J. F. Elton, *The Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa* (1879), pp. 330–1, and D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., pp. 285–6, comment on their great extent.

[2] According to the Nyakyusa themselves the productivity of their fields is slowly diminishing. Most of them attribute this to the neglect of traditional rituals. We do not know how far their observations are objective, and how far they are biased by the tendency to glorify the past. D. H. Thwaites, in his article

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

planted at the break of the rains, and of the new crop, rice, is a seed-bed of ash prepared, and then it is grass and scrub which is burned; they do not fell or pollard trees to provide ash. For other crops there is no burning; the weeds are hoed in green instead; and, at a second hoeing before planting, the earth is piled into ridges or mounds to ensure drainage. Formerly, it is said, the chiefs insisted that the ridges on slopes should be made contour-wise, and recently this law has been revived. Elton, the first European to travel through the area, observed that there was 'terraced cultivation everywhere';[1] and the ridges do in fact look like terracing from a distance.

Hoeing is the work of men and boys; only quite recently have a few women, whose husbands are away in European employment, begun to hoe for themselves. And most men hoe for three or four hours a day during the greater part of the year, for crops are planted in succession. Neither old age nor high status excuses a man from this duty. Even the chief Mwaipopo, who was already grown up when the Europeans arrived in his country, hoed regularly in his fields during the years 1935–8. Iron hoes were made by Nyakyusa smiths from iron obtained from the Kings,[2] but they were scarce, and some men had to use wooden hoes such as many of the women still have for weeding (*vide* Plate VII). The women are solely responsible for sowing, weeding, and reaping.

Cattle are fairly numerous:[3] few men over twenty-five nowadays own none, and many older men have four or five cows in their stalls. Long ago, we were told, cattle were scarcer, some men having to marry without them, but Cotterill (1876)[4] and Kerr-Cross (1890)[5] both said 'cattle abound' in Nyakyusa coun-

on 'Wanyakyusa Agriculture' (*The East African Agricultural Journal*, April 1944), states that 'though the soil is not being eroded to any great extent it is still being impoverished'.

[1] Elton, op. cit., pp. 326, 330.

[2] Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 272–3. Possibly iron was also obtained from the west. Kerr Cross (op. cit. p. 289) saw large foundries in Nyika country before 1890. cf. Elton, op. cit., p. 321 and map at the end.

[3] No census of the cattle in the district had been taken when we were among the Nyakyusa. D. H. Thwaites, op. cit., states that, 'The number of cattle in the district (Rungwe) in the 1941 census was about 2.3 head per taxpayer or 55 head per square mile'.

[4] H. B. Cotterill, 'On the Nyasa and a Journey from the North End to Zanzibar', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XXII (1878).

[5] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyassa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 119.

I:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN1
Nyakyusa

try, and Lugard speaks of 'enormous herds' in 1888[1] which a rinderpest epidemic decimated in 1892.[2] A few Kukwe keep one or two sheep, but we saw no goats at all in Rungwe district,[3] and neither sheep nor goats figure in ritual: cattle and fowls provide flesh for sacrifice. Every woman keeps fowls, as every man seeks to own cattle.

With curds and meat from their cattle, with fowls, fish, bananas, grain, pulses, roots and curcurbits, as well as bean tops and pumpkin tops, and—less generally—fruit, the Nyakyusa are exceptionally well fed. Since the dry season is so short and two crops of maize and pulses are grown in the year, there are no 'hunger months' such as the Bemba and many other African peoples experience. Shortages and famine occur, but rarely. All the early travellers comment on the quantities of food available in Nyakyusa country.[4]

c. *Relations with the outside world*

Perhaps the most significant fact in the history of the Nyakyusa is their long isolation, which is mainly the result of their geographical position. Surrounded on three sides by high mountains, and on the fourth by the stormy head waters of the Lake,[5] the district was largely cut off from the outside world. Slave caravans passed to the north, the west, and the south, but never through Nyakyusa country; and though they were repeatedly attacked by the Sangu, who are said to have raided as far as the Nyasa plain,[6] and several times by the Ngoni, the Nyakyusa repulsed both peoples. Certain of the Kukwe chiefs were forced for a period to pay tribute to the Sangu chief, Merere; but according to their own account none did so for long, and some never paid at all. Kerr-Cross comments on the contrast before 1890 between the unfortified villages of the Nyakyusa and Ndali, and those of the Lambya and Nyika, who, living in open country and harried

[1] Lugard, op. cit., p. 131.
[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa* (1897), p. 430; D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., p. 119.
[3] Fotheringham, op. cit., pp. 1, 25, mentions goats in Ngonde.
[4] See especially, Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 268, 274; Lugard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 131.
[5] In 1946 a Lake steamer, the *Vipya*, sank in a storm near Karonga with heavy loss of life.
[6] Kerr Cross, op. cit., pp. 119–29.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

by the Arabs and Bemba, built their huts within a stockade.[1] 131
According to Thomson, the Nyakyusa were unaware even of the 177
existence of Lake Tanganyika in 1879 and their more distant eastern neighbours, the Pangwa, Bena, and Hehe had no communication with them.[2]

Unlike the Nyakyusa, the people of Ngonde were trading with 439
the coast long before the arrival of the Europeans, a fact which 177
had a profound effect on their political institutions;[3] but even they did not suffer from the attacks of slavers until *after* Europeans were established in Karonga. 721

From the point of view of the Nyakyusa-Ngonde people the 721
Europeans came just in time. It was the establishment of British control in Nyasaland which prevented the complete destruction of the people of Ngonde by the slavers, and it is likely that the Nyakyusa also were saved by European intervention, for the raids of Arab slavers and their Sangu allies were becoming serious in Kukwe country in 1889[4] before the German annexation.

The first Europeans known to have sighted Nyakyusa country 177
were a party from the Livingstonia mission (then established at the south of Lake Nyasa) who circumnavigated the Lake in the mission steamer, the *Ilala*, in 1875. They anchored off the north shore but did not land.[5] Two years later, the same steamer sailed by two famous missionaries, Dr. Stewart (of Lovedale) and Dr. Laws (of Livingstonia), landed Frederick Elton, H.B.M. Consul at Mozambique, and a party near the Mbaka mouth.[6] Elton and his party travelled through Selya and Kukwe country to the fort of the Sangu chief, Merere, and thence started for the coast. Elton died on the road, but some of the others got through.[7] In 1879 Joseph Thomson (aged 20), alone with his carriers, travelled through Hehe and Bena country, crossed the Livingstone moun-

[1] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), pp. 286–7; Fotheringham, op. cit., pp. 13–5; 269.

[2] Thomson, op. cit., pp. 248, 276.

[3] Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., *passim*.

[4] Fotheringham, op. cit., pp. 238–41, 288. The Sangu had previously been occupied in a prolonged war with the Hehe. cf. Elton, op. cit., p. 374; Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 229–34.

[5] E. D. Young, 'On a recent Sojourn at Lake Nyassa', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XXI (1877), pp. 230–1.

[6] J. Stewart, 'The Second Circumnavigation of Lake Nyassa', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, 1879, pp. 289–304.

[7] Elton, op. cit., pp. 318–44; Cotterill, op. cit.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 tains to the north-east corner of Nyasa, and went on through Nyakyusa country to Lake Tanganyika.[1]

609 Despite the isolation of the Nyakyusa and their own fear of travelling in foreign chiefdoms, they were not inhospitable to these white strangers: Elton and all his party (some of whom were delayed by illness and travelled separately), and later Thomson, walked up the Nyakyusa valley in safety though it was 'teaming with armed warriors', who carried 'most cruel-looking spears'. Elton remarks that 'the people of Konde, though not unfriendly, are passively obstructive, and being in want of nothing are disinclined to render any services whatsoever to strangers'.[2] But Thomson appears to have been on the best of terms with the Nyakyusa he met. The Kukwe fled from their villages at Thomson's approach, but were usually persuaded to return.[3]

177 After these journeys of discovery, mission work and trade
724 developed quickly. The African Lakes Corporation, a company formed to develop legitimate trade in Central Africa as a means of combating the slave trade, established a station at Karonga; and a road was surveyed from Karonga through to Lake Tanganyika.[4] Out-stations of the Livingstonia mission were set up at Chirenji (Mwini Wanda) in the hills north-west of Karonga, and at Kararamuka near Tukuyu.[5] Meantime, an Arab slaver, Mlozi, had settled in Ngonde, and a protracted struggle ensued between him and his Henga allies on the one side, and the people of Ngonde and the Europeans on the other, during which many Ngonde were enslaved or killed and their villages destroyed. Five thousand Nyakyusa spearmen came to the aid of the Europeans but, being more concerned with loot than with the defeat of the Arabs, they returned home with the goods they had taken instead of pursuing Mlozi and his men when they had the chance to do so.[6] Lord (then Captain) Lugard was for some months in command of the exiguous European force and its allies, and nearly

[1] Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 260–86.
[2] Elton, op. cit., p. 332.
[3] Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 281–9.
[4] Fotheringham, op. cit.; F. L. M. Moir, *After Livingstone* (1923).
[5] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI, 1890, pp. 281–93.
[6] Fotheringham, op. cit., pp. 117–23.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

died of wounds and fever. Because the Europeans lacked arms the war dragged on,[1] and the power of the slavers was finally broken only in 1895, when Sir Harry Johnston came up the Lake with a well-armed force.[2]

German missionaries of the Berlin and Moravian missions arrived in 1891, and established themselves at a number of stations in Nyakyusa country.[3] The Songwe had by that time been agreed upon as the boundary between Nyasaland and German East Africa, and the German administration followed hard on the heels of the missionaries.[4] Twenty years later war broke out between England and Germany; there was fighting throughout Rungwe district, and many Nyakyusa were impressed as carriers. The absorption of the Nyakyusa into a world society was considerably accelerated by war.

d. The form of Nyakyusa society

Not only was the Nyakyusa valley long isolated from the outside world, but it was divided into a number of small, independent chiefdoms, whose members had few dealings with people beyond their own chiefdoms and those immediately adjoining. Each family produced for its own needs, so that trade was the merest trickle; and marriage outside the boundaries of the chiefdom was discouraged, since beyond the jurisdiction of one's own chief there was no security for life and property. A plea against a man of a neighbouring chiefdom might not be heard by the defendant's chief. Nyakyusa men enlarged to us on the dangers and difficulties of travelling even twenty miles from home, before the coming of the Europeans; a journey from Selya to Tukuyu (twenty-five miles) was said to take three days, because travellers had to seek cover so often.

The number and size of chiefdoms varied; for a continuous process of splitting, together with periodical conquest and reabsorption, was going on and, as we have seen, the area of Nyakyusa occupation was expanding. In 1938 the Nyakyusa themselves

[1] Lugard, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 51–167.
[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa* (1897), p. 143.
[3] A. Merensky, *Deutsche Arbeit am Njassa* (1894); J. T. Hamilton, *Twenty Years of Pioneer Missions in Nyasaland* (1912).
[4] F. Fülleborn, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, Band IX (1906).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631 recognised over 100 chiefdoms, mustering anything from 100 to 3,000 adult men apiece.

Although no centralised political authority existed before the 769 German occupation, certain groups of chiefdoms joined in com-
631 mon rituals directed to common ancestors. We traced four such centres of worship among the Nyakyusa; the most important being Lubaga, in the middle of the valley, where Kinga priests (from the top of the Livingstone mountains) join with many Nyakyusa chiefdoms in sacrifice to Lwembe, who is claimed as the ancestor both of the chiefs of the Nyakyusa proper, and of the Kinga. At LiKyala, on the Lake-shore plain, Kinga also join in sacrifice with the surrounding Nyakyusa chiefdoms. In Ngonde the chief connected with a similar centre of worship, Mbande, developed far-reaching secular as well as religious powers; and by the time the Europeans arrived he was established as a para-
[439] mount chief with the title of the Kyungu. This development was directly connected with the fact that Ngonde traded with the outside world, and that their Kyungu, through his control of ivory, was able also to control the guns and cloth which came into the country:[1] the Nyakyusa, remaining isolated, remained politically disunited.

Besides sacrificing to a distant ancestor in company with the representatives of a large group of chiefdoms, two or more chiefs who are neighbours participate in a sacrifice at the grove in which their common father, or grandfather, is buried. Thus common worship links both large groups of chiefdoms, whose chiefs are more or less distantly related, and small groups of contiguous chiefdoms whose chiefs are close kinsmen. The sacrifices made are to the chiefs of immediately preceding generations, and to certain great heroes of the distant past, such as Lwembe and Kyala.

769 All these sacrifices are believed to bring rain and fertility, for the well-being of each chiefdom is thought to be bound up with
789 the health of the chief and the goodwill of his ancestors.

The Nyakyusa are all agreed that their chiefs, *abanyafyale*, are
173 'strangers' who came down from the Livingstone mountains
622 eight or ten generations ago, and found the valley already occu-
563 pied by people who had no knowledge of fire, but ate their food raw. The chiefs brought fire with them—some say, cattle also;

[1] Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., pp. 9, 39-48.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and by virtue of this great benefit were accepted as chiefs. Such 173
is the myth (*vide infra*, p. 26). It is remembered that the chiefs 622
of different groups such as the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, the 563
Lugulu, and the Saku arrived at different times, but of the proportion of the immigrants to the former occupants, and of the proportion of men to women in the invading groups, we learnt nothing. Some suggest that the chiefs were lighter in colour than the previous inhabitants of the valley,[1] and the term *abatitu*, 'black people', is used for commoners as contrasted with chiefs. But chiefs intermarry freely with commoners and there is no 563
observable difference in physical type between them and their 622
people to-day. The Nyakyusa are without a clan system, and [618]
though kinship with a chief may be remembered for three (or perhaps even four) generations, the body of 'kinsmen of the chief' is not defined as it is in tribes which have a 'royal clan' like the Bemba or Pondo. Moreover, among the Nyakyusa the chief's [623]
advisers are never his kinsmen, but commoners. Sons or grandsons of a chief are ineligible as village headmen, who are the counsellors of the chief, and who had in the past very great control over him. The contrast is made between chiefs, *abanyafyale*, on the one hand, and commoners, *amafumu*, on the other, and the leaders of villages, chosen each generation by their predecessors (*vide infra*, p. 23), are the *amafumu par excellence*.[2] Words from this *-fumu* root mean 'chief' in various central Bantu languages (Bemba, Tumbuka, Nyanja); and it is tempting to suppose that the *amafumu* were the old chiefs conquered by the invading *abanyafyale*, but that is only a supposition. The important point for the contemporary social structure is that the village leaders are *commoners*; that their position is not hereditary, since they are selected afresh each generation; and that formerly they had very great power over the chief. This power has diminished considerably with the development of European administration. The Nyakyusa, indeed, were astounded to be told that the British

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 10 (footnote).

[2] For this reason *ufifumu* was translated by Godfrey Wilson as 'great commoner', in 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. X (1936), and other papers, but this translation has considerable difficulties, and I have preferred to translate *ufifumu* as 'village headman' in the contexts in which it means the leader of the village, and 'commoner' or 'villager' in other contexts. It must be clearly understood that 'village headman' as used in this book means something quite different from 'headman' as used by the Administration (*vide infra*, p. 258).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

563 constitution (about which they asked many questions) was a
623 democratic one; for, they said, the Administration always supported the chiefs against the commoners.

621 The villages to which commoner leaders are appointed differ from all other Bantu villages of which we have knowledge in that they consist of groups of age-mates, not groups of kinsmen; boys build with contemporaries and remain with them through life; girls join the villages of their husbands at marriage; therefore relatives, other than husband and wife and young children, do
602 not live together. Nevertheless kinship ties are important, for property circulates within the kinship group rather than within the village, and kinsmen are believed to be mystically interdependent, in a way in which fellow villagers are not. The most prized
[556] possession of the Nyakyusa are cattle, for cattle enable a man to marry, to live in comfort, to gain prestige by feasting his friends; and cattle pass along the roads of kinship. They pass between brothers, and half-brothers, and the sons of brothers; between fathers and sons; and between affines. Kinsmen also participate in common rituals, praying to common ancestors, and seeking protection from mystical dangers which are thought to travel, like
[578] cattle, along the roads of kinship. Ever fearful lest a quarrel among them should bring misfortune on all, they strive to live in harmony.

The range of kinship recognized varies somewhat with the status of the family concerned and the proximity and personalities of its members, but, generally speaking, economic and religious co-operation link the descendants of a common grandfather, and marriage between the descendants of a common great-grand-
[581] father is excluded. A legal marriage is effected by the passage of cattle from the groom's group to the bride's, and it is this passage which is said to create kinship (*ubukamu*), with the consequent mystical interdependence, between a man and his wife, and between the one partner in a marriage and the close kinsmen of
595 the other. Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan, and it is made
428 possible by the ten years' difference in the average marriage age of men and women. Girls are betrothed very young and finally join their husbands at puberty, while few pagan men marry under twenty-five. Inherited cattle are controlled by the older generation and polygyny is the prerogative of age. For property passes not directly from father to son, but from brother to brother,

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

through each group of full brothers, until, when the last full brother is dead, and the son of the eldest is an adult, the family stock comes to him. Thus few men under forty (other than chiefs) have more than one wife. Of 3,000 tax-payers (presumed to be 18 years and over) in Selya, 34 per cent were bachelors, 37 per cent monogamists, and 29 per cent polygynists. Plural marriages breed wealth, for the polygynist is likely to command the labour of many sons as well as several wives, and in due course he expects to receive the marriage cattle of many daughters.

Social status turns primarily on age, sex, and the control and distribution of wealth. As we have seen, the position of a chief is hereditary, but kinship with a chief does not carry office, nor are the kinsmen of chiefs conspicuously wealthy. Every man in turn hopes to control the property attaching to the house into which he was born, and all who live long enough do so. But there is a delayed right of primogeniture, for the senior son of a senior son inherits the bulk of the family stock when it passes to his generation, and the eldest of each group of full brothers has a special claim to the cattle coming in from the marriages of his sisters.

Seniority, whether within the context of the lineage, or of the hierarchy of age-villages, is something respected in itself, but wealth carries authority and prestige only in so far as it is used generously, in hospitality: one man is great and distinguished (*aniya*) because he feeds people, another of little account because he is poor or mean.

Women occupy a position very subordinate to men in Nyakyusa society. They play no part in public life, except in so far as the two great wives of a chief, and the first wife of a village headman co-operate with their husbands in rituals; and in the relationship of husband and wife, as well as in that of father and daughter, a woman is expected to show obedience and respect. Her deference is expressed conventionally in her crouching to greet men (*vide* Plate IX), and in her use of the submissive *ee* ('Yes, my lord') when addressed by them. Having no great chiefs and little regard for rank, Nyakyusa men show no trace of subservience in their manner to each other, but they expect a meek compliance from all women. The only relationships with a male in which a woman may in some measure assert herself are those which she has with a brother, and with a brother's sons. Leader-

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

562 ship among the women themselves is, moreover, less developed than in many other African societies.

178 The isolation and self-sufficiency of the Nyakyusa are diminishing rapidly, for considerable economic and political develop-
439 ment followed the 1914–18 war. Coffee (first introduced by the German missionaries) has been developed as a native crop for
444 export, and the cultivation of rice (which had been fostered by the British to provide food for their troops) has expanded. Gold-digging began some fifty miles beyond the borders of the Nyakyusa country, on the Lupa river, and there Nyakyusa men have found both employment as labourers and a ready market for much of their produce, so that by 1936 Rungwe district was exporting goods worth £24,000 annually.[1] In addition to this peasant production there are a small number of European estates
[167] producing coffee and tea for export.[2] We estimate the number of Nyakyusa working outside the district as migrant labourers at about 8,000 or 25 per cent of the able-bodied men. There were about 7,000 Nyakyusa men on the Lupa gold-fields in 1937,[3] and a small number on the coffee plantations of Mbozi. These are all within a hundred miles of home; and the Lupa labourers return usually after two or three months' work. A considerable number of Nyakyusa are also at work on the sisal plantations of the coast, and employed as domestic servants or in other semi-skilled jobs through Tanganyika, who remain away for periods up to two or three years. Nyakyusa labourers are regarded by European employers as intelligent and capable of heavy work, but lacking in all the subservient virtues.

642 The system of Indirect Rule was established in 1926, and a consistent attempt has been made to develop a centralized Native
177 Authority for the Rungwe district. The traditionally sovereign chiefs of the Nyakyusa have been grouped in eleven court districts with one chief as president of the Native Court in each (see Map III); these eleven chiefs, together with the two presidents of the Ndali and Lambya courts, belong to a single federation, with an appeal court and joint Native treasury of its own. In the eleven Native Courts (which are courts of record) most of the

[1] Figure estimated on the basis of information supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu.

[2] In 1938 the total area alienated was 26,0[illegible] ac.; only 2,200 ac. of this was being worked.

[3] Estimate of the Labour Officer on the [illegible]upa, 4 June 1937.

[illegible] [Missing on the original - Analyst]

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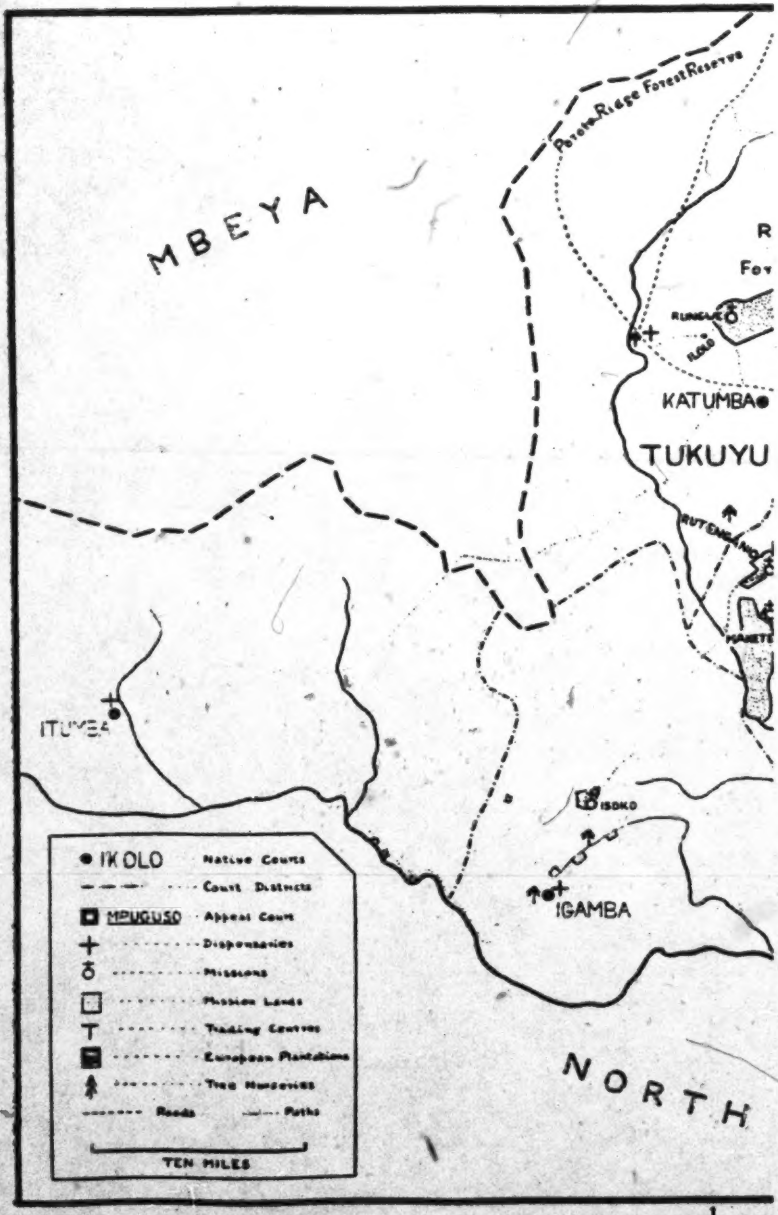

MAP III. RUNGWE

[facing p. 16(a)]

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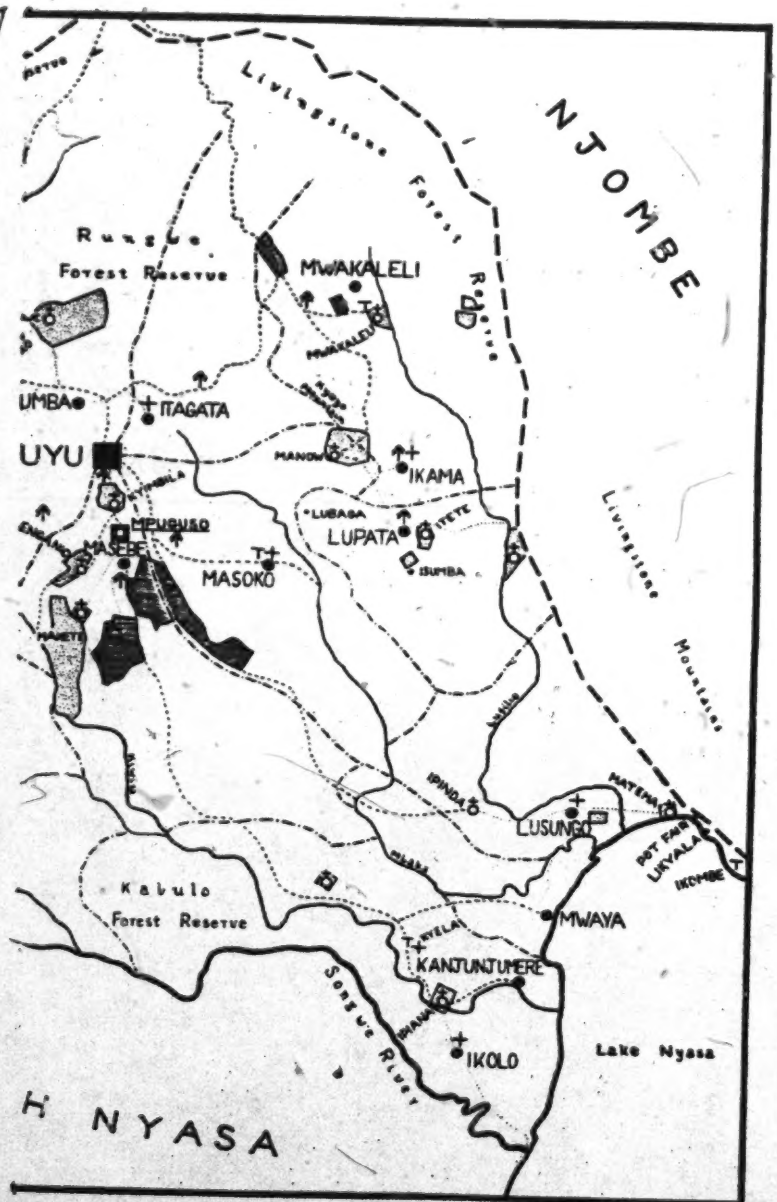

GWE DISTRICT

Drawn by J. V. L. Rennie after R. de Z. Hall and G. D. Archer

[facing p. 16 (b)]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

642 traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their village headmen, and assist the president and his village headmen in the 177 hearing of cases. Much of the legal business previously transacted by each chief in his own country is now taken to court (*KwiKoroti*); but the power of village headmen to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages is still the basis of the legal system.

177 Though the Administration has worked through the traditional authorities it has consciously and deliberately modified the tradi- 871 tional system; and, as part of its policy of development, it has 654 established schools, dispensaries, and nurseries for coffee-seed- 797 lings and other plants. There are three schools in Rungwe district receiving Government grants: one directly under the Administration, one under the Native Authority, and one a mission school. There are also a great number of 'bush schools', that is, mission village schools under uncertificated teachers giving instruction in the three R's and in religion. Over 19,000 children (12·6 per cent of the population served) are enrolled in the various schools; but 96 per cent of these are in 'bush schools', many of whom never learn even to read and write.

797 The structure of Nyakyusa society has been further complicated by the conversion of a substantial minority (16 per cent in 1938)[1] of the people to Christianity. The Christians form a group with values radically different from those of the pagans, on whom they react in innumerable ways.[2] The growth of this diversity in the society is a direct effect of its diminishing isolation.

128 To treat of Nyakyusa villages as if missions, or the Administration, or migrant labour and coffee export did not exist would simplify, but distort our analysis. We have therefore included some account of the differences in behaviour between pagan and Christian, of the effects of centralization on the position of village headmen, and of the influence of trade and migration on economic co-operation in the village. A discussion of the organization of schools and Christian congregations; of the development of courts of record, and 'court districts'; of the relation between

[1] Calculated from figures supplied by the courtesy of the missions and the independent African Churches working in the district.

[2] Moslems are very few and they have little influence on the community as a whole. These few are mostly Swahili traders, Ngoni settlers, or soldiers of the K.A.R. from Nyasaland. We heard of only two or three Nyakyusa who had turned Moslem.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

128 chiefs and the Administration, and between Nyakyusa workers and their employers, falls outside the scope of this book.

e. The subject of study

121 Nyakyusa society may be viewed as three circles of relationship —the relationships of kinship, village relationships, and relationships within and beyond the chiefdoms. This book is concerned with the second of these circles, that found within and between villages. Such relationships are not fully intelligible apart from the relationships of kinship and of the chiefdom, but a measure of abstraction is necessary—it is not possible to talk about everything at once. A sketch of kinship relationships has already been published;[1] a full account of them and of the relationships of chiefdoms has been planned; and the general theoretical approach has been set forth in *The Analysis of Social Change*[2] and in a paper entitled *Some Possibilities and Limitations of Anthropological Research*.[3]

The fundamental question we pose is *why age-villages*? Why should the Nyakyusa differ from all their neighbours of whom we have knowledge in the form of their villages? Why should they live with contemporaries, rather than kinsmen? The attempt to answer this leads us to discuss the characteristics of Nyakyusa society, which can be shown to be associated with the age-village organization, so that we can reformulate the question thus: *What are the peculiarities of Nyakyusa society not found in neighbouring societies with kinship villages*? We know too little about the neighbouring societies to answer this question fully, but some indication of the Nyakyusa peculiarities is given, and an analysis of these compels us to consider the relation between Nyakyusa values and social structure.

[1] Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde, 1950.
[2] G. and M. Wilson, 1945.
[3] Monica Wilson, 1948.

I: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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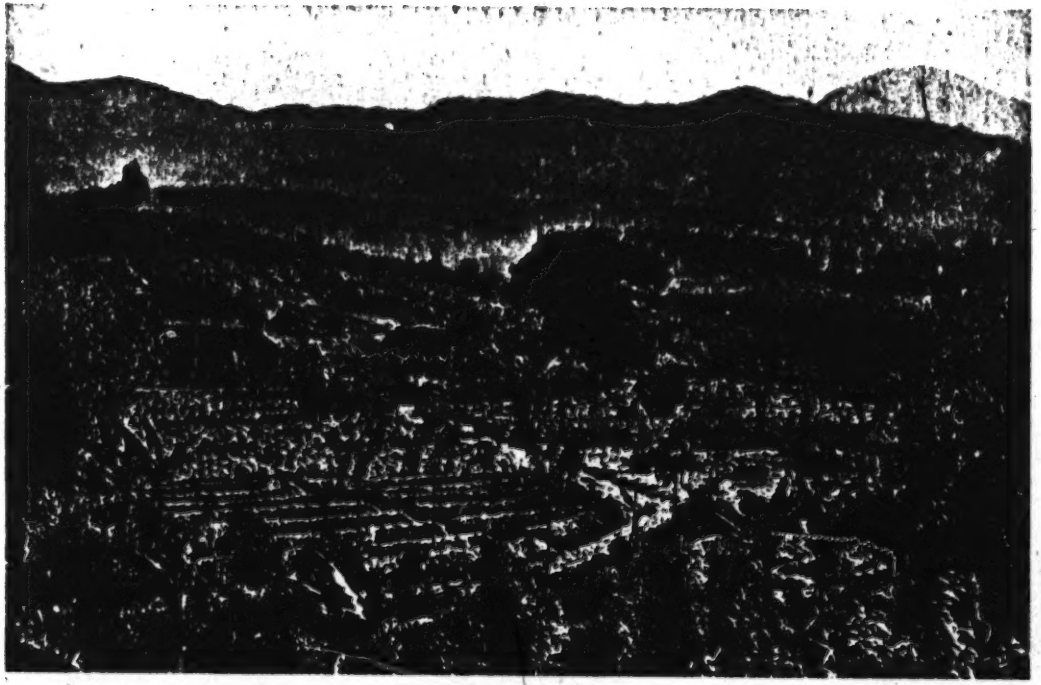

I. CULTIVATION IN NYAKYUSA COUNTRY

In the foreground are bananas, coffee, and bamboos; in the middle ridges for sweet potatoes and mounds for maize. On the extreme right Rungwe volcano appears. The house is a modern style, and raised for drainage.

[Facing p. 18]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER II

VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

621 591 NYAKYUSA villages (*ifipanga*)[1] are formed by groups of boys or men, all roughly of the same age, together with the wives and young children of those who are married. Women belong to the villages of their husbands, young children to those of their fathers. Girls live at home until they are betrothed, after which they visit their future husbands periodically, and soon after puberty each joins her husband in his village. Boys, who marry later in life, leave home at about the age of ten or eleven and set up villages of their own.

a. The genesis of the village

857 231 Between the ages of about six and eleven boys sleep at their fathers' houses and herd their fathers' cattle. This is a full-time, if not a very arduous, occupation. The cattle are driven out about an hour or two after sunrise and return to be milked about 1 p.m.; after an hour they are again driven out and do not come back until sunset. The cattle of a group of neighbours, usually five to ten,[2] are herded together by their young sons; and so these boys spend all day together for several years of their lives. This group of boys is the germ of the future age-village; it is a community with a common activity in the herding of the cattle, with a leader and laws and customs of its own.[3]

591 561 857 When the boys reach the age of ten or eleven, two important changes usually take place in their lives. Firstly, they leave the herding of cows to their younger brothers, and themselves begin the business of hoeing the fields which will occupy them until they die; secondly, they no longer sleep in the houses of their fathers but join an age-village of boys. Nowadays the two changes usually, but not always, take place at the same time, and well before puberty.

[1] cf. Xhosa *intanga*, 'a company of persons or animals of equal age'.

[2] The herd group is smaller in young men's villages where few are cattle-owners, and a very rich man occasionally herds his cattle alone.

[3] G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 51–3.

[p. 19]

J:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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II. THE GENESIS OF A VILLAGE
Boys' huts built on the edge of their fathers' village

[facing p. 19]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

591 Before the establishment of peace by European authority, how-
231 ever, cattle were commonly herded by young men, armed, and
857 only the calves were entrusted to boys, who herded them near the homesteads; therefore moving to a boys' village did not coincide with the change of occupation. Even to-day it is not uncommon for some boys who have reached puberty to be found herding cattle. One we knew herded his father's cattle although he had reached puberty, because he had no younger brothers old enough to take over, and there were only five or six boys in his herd-group altogether. There are also cases where special circumstances put the age of moving later. In one age-village the boys leave home a little later than usual because there are leopards about and it is dangerous for small boys to walk from the village of their fathers to that of the boys, after dark.

857 When a number of the sons of a village of married men have
342 reached the right age, their fathers give them a piece of land to one side of the parent village on which to build. There they build little huts of reeds for themselves, sufficiently well thatched to keep out the heavy rain, and there they sleep (*vide* Plate II). The building of the huts on this land begins in a playful manner, before the boys move. While they are still herding cows and sleeping at home they build miniature huts there in their spare time, but do not sleep in them. When they move they build slightly more substantial huts with better thatch. At the beginning, when a group of boys starts a new village, or when boys join one already formed, they do not all have huts for themselves: two or three friends share a hut. But later, as they grow older, each builds for himself.

857 Until he marries each boy hoes his father's fields in his father's
264 village and eats food cooked by his own mother at his father's
571 house, but he sleeps with his friends. Thus between the time when he leaves home and his marriage each is a member of two villages: economically he still belongs to that of his father; socially to that of his own contemporaries. Though bachelors eat at their parents' home, it is very rarely that they do not eat in the company of their own friends. A bachelor does not simply go home to eat by himself, but a group of bachelors, friends living in the same boys' village, go round together eating at the house of each one's mother in turn.

621 In an age-village of married men there are always several
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Nyakyusa

different herds of cattle; and it is not only those from the same group of herd-boys that set up a new village together, but all the sons of the age-village. Thus when a boy leaves the herd group he joins a larger community, including the friends of his own age who have herded cows with him, and many others as well. Every boys' village consists primarily of the sons of the member of an older village who originally gave the land for its building, but sons of other villages live there too.

The village begins with perhaps a dozen boys, and their younger brothers join them, one by one; but after some years, when the senior members of the boys' village are between sixteen and eighteen years old, the younger ones begin to be refused admittance to the village: 'they are children.' The young ones then either begin a new age-village of their own, or else join a village which has already been started by the sons of a nearby men's village a little junior to that of their own fathers. If you inquire who are the members of such and such a boys' village you are always told that they are the sons of a particular village of men, but detailed investigation reveals the presence of some sons of other men's villages as well. Brothers, half-brothers and other relatives are sometimes members of the same village, but more often not; and if they do belong to the same village that is because they are near each other in age, and were born in the same village, not because they are kinsmen.

The members of the older boys' village, which is now closed and no longer increases in numbers, begin to marry as they reach the age of about twenty-five. Getting married is often a gradual process; but it is not until he has his wife permanently with him that a young man can have fields of his own and eat the produce at his own place. The cultivation of land requires the co-operation of a man and woman, and cooking on any elaborate scale is a woman's business. As the young men marry their village expands. The site is not changed but the houses are built ever bigger and farther apart, and adjacent land is brought under cultivation. The boys' village with which we are best acquainted is in this transitional stage. It has fifty-three members altogether, the majority of whom are single; but some few are married, cultivate their own fields with their wives and eat food cooked by their wives in their own houses. Of those who are single some again are betrothed to girls who visit them from time to time, but each

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Nyakyusa

582 241 621 still cultivates his father's fields and eats at his father's home. In former days, we were told, the marriage age of men was even later than it is at present (*vide infra*, p. 80). 'Perhaps after twenty a boy would be betrothed, but to a young girl, and he would wait eight years before she grew up.'

857 From the time boys begin to herd they recognize one of their number as a leader. 'When we herd cows as boys', a friend told us, 'there is always one who is obeyed by his fellows whatever he says. No one chooses him, he gains his leadership and his prestige by bodily strength. For always, when we are boys together among the cows, we vie with one another and dispute about going to turn back straying cattle, or about fetching fire to cook the food we have brought with us. And so we start fighting, and we go on fighting until one of us beats all his fellows completely and so becomes the leader. And then it is he who sends others to turn back straying cattle, to fetch fire and to collect firewood. And he is greatly respected. He settles quarrels too. What we quarrel about most as boys is a particular insult: one says to another: "You are only a child, you are, I am your senior." This is always happening and then it is the part of the one who is leader to set those two on to fight. We all stand round and watch and the one who first cries is proved the child.'

622 Later, when the boys have built apart from their fathers, one of their number is often appointed by the headman of their fathers' village to settle disputes between them. Some boys' villages have no such appointed leader, but many of them do. Such appointments are, however, temporary. It is only when political authority is transferred to their generation that the young men's permanent leaders are chosen.

b. The 'coming out' ceremony

561 622 621 643 Eight or ten years after the young men of the senior boys' village of the chiefdom have begun to marry, their fathers hand over the government of the country to them. This transfer of authority is effected in an elaborate ceremony called the 'coming out' (*ubusoka*).

The 'coming out' is a series of legal acts by which the country of an old chief and his village headman (*amafumu*) is, with certain reservations, handed over into the possession and control of his

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

two senior sons and their respective village headmen. These legal acts are accompanied by much pomp and ceremony. It is at once the initiation of all the youth of the chiefdom into public life, the constitution of two new political units and the proclamation of two new chiefs. It consists not only of a series of legal acts but of religious ritual as well, action being taken to increase the personal qualities appropriate in a chief and his village headmen by treatment with medicines.

The 'coming out' comprises six main events: firstly, the public recognition of a number of age-villages of young men, and the selection of headmen to lead them; secondly, the magical treatment of young chiefs and headmen to make them dignified and powerful; thirdly, the public recognition of the two young chiefs; fourthly, a cattle raid; fifthly, the establishment of the young age-villages on adequate land; and sixthly, the marriage of the young chiefs.

When the eldest sons of his contemporaries reach the age of about thirty-three to thirty-five years the old chief is approached by his village headmen who say: 'The sons have grown up, let us make the "coming out" for them.' After a period of delay, for he is unwilling to relinquish his own honour and power, the old chief agrees, and the 'coming out' takes place. He fears lest he may fall ill from 'the breath of men' should he delay too long (*vide infra*, p. 134). His two heirs, together with all the boys and young men, whether married or single, who are sons of the old chief's contemporaries, are summoned to attend, according to their age-villages, at the old chief's principal house. When they arrive they wait there for several days, while the old village headmen discuss with their chief where to give the young men land, and whom they will select as headmen of the young villages. In many of the young village groups there are already leaders previously appointed by the village headmen of their fathers. If they have proved satisfactory their appointments are confirmed by the old village headmen; if not new ones are selected.

In selecting leaders of the young men's villages the old headmen look for men who are wealthy, who come from respected families, who have ability in judging cases, and are popular with their fellows; in the old days they looked also for courage and the ability to lead men in war. These qualities correspond to the village headman's functions. He should be hospitable to his

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

622 neighbours, he judges their cases; he is their leader at ceremonies
157 and in the old days he led them to war also. He represents their desires to the chief, and it is through him, and in consultation with him, that the chief gives orders. Besides this each headman
[754] (*ulifumu*) is believed to protect his own villagers from witchcraft, 'to watch over the country by night', to shield men and cattle from the spiritual forces of evil.[1] To fit them for this task, village headmen are treated with medicines at the 'coming out' to give them the power of seeing and fighting witches.

622 So important is this position of village headman that legal precautions are taken 'to prevent the village headman becoming a chief', as several informants have put it to us. It is illegal to choose a village headman from among the kinsmen of a chief, and it is illegal to elect the son of a village headman to that office in any age-village of his own contemporaries, though he may perhaps inherit the position in his father's village when his father dies.

622 To return to the 'coming out' ceremony: when the old men
621 have made up their minds, one of them goes among the crowd of young men, and catches hold of those they have chosen in order of seniority: first the one who is to be leader of the senior village of the first son of the old chief, then the leader of the senior village of his second son, then the leader of the next senior village of the first son, and so on. There are commonly eight age-villages of young men; of these four will belong to the chiefdom of the first son, four to that of the second. The eight new village headmen are now publicly known, four in each new chiefdom.

622 The young chiefs, together with the senior headman of each,
789 are then treated with medicines that they may be impressive (*nsisya*). From birth a chief undergoes periodical treatment to
643 make him impressive (*nsisya*) 'that we commoners may tremble before him'. The treatment at the 'coming out' is directed towards the same end: 'We treat him, then he will be altogether a chief, men will respect him!' The village headmen now drink the

[1] The essential meaning of a word in one culture is often illuminated by the
[192] meaning of a word from the same stem among neighbouring people. In this connection it is significant that *ifumu* in Bemba and *mfumu* in Nyanja mean 'chief', but in Ankole *abafumu* means 'magicians' (including diviners) (*African Political Systems*, p. 145), and among the Sukuma *bafumu* is used in the same sense (*Africa*, Vol. XIX, p. 14). cf. H. H. Johnston, *A Comparative Study of the Bantu and Semi-Bantu Languages*, Vol. II, p. 270.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

medicines of power for the first time, and these are thought to create or develop in them *amanga*, that is, the power of seeing and fighting witches (*vide infra*, pp. 96-102). To the senior headman of each young chief is handed a magic horn to attract people to the country. 'The horn is the luck of the chief that many people may come to build.' To each is given also a magic tail, which, it is believed, will enable him to dream of wars that are approaching and which, together with a magic spear, he carries into battle. 'The spear of the chieftainship is to fight battles with, it is manhood, strength.' The horn, the tail, and the spear are emblems of office handed on by the senior village headman of the old chief to the senior headmen of the young chiefs. They were treated periodically by a special doctor and a set was provided for each independent chiefdom at the coming out. The treatment of these emblems is now rarely undertaken—we were fortunate to see it once. The Nyakyusa say that since the country has been pacified, it has become unnecessary; its purpose was to secure success in war.

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The next stage in the action is the one from which the whole institution takes its name: 'the coming out' (*ubusoka*). The two young chiefs are secluded for a few hours in the hut of the old chief's first wife, where they receive various forms of magical treatment, and when this is finished someone outside knocks at the door and cries 'Come out!' Then, to quote the words of a village headman who told us about his own 'coming out', 'The director of ceremonies said: "Get up!" The chiefs got up and came out (*basokile*)[1] of the house to us, and we, the crowd of young men, cried "Come on!" and welcomed them. Then we all ran shouting and calling the war cry towards the next chiefdom. In the old days we should have invaded that country to take cattle and to bring them back and eat them at the new huts which we build next. But that is finished now.' The senior headmen of the new chiefdom lead the charge, each grasping his war tail, his

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[1] cf. the traditional Nyakyusa greeting (now archaic) '*Sokile!*' literally meaning 'You have come out (of the house)' i.e. 'Good morning!' This greeting was not confined to those who had been through the *ubusoka* ceremony.

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A comparison of the meaning of the root in other Bantu languages is again suggestive. In Xhosa *ukusoka* means 'to install circumcised lads into manhood by giving them presents when they come out from their seclusion and are publicly acknowledged as men by the assembly of men' (Kropf, *A Kaffir English Dictionary*); *ubusoka* means bachelorhood, celibacy (of a circumcised man, not a boy).

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

622 spear, and magic horn. In this way the new chiefs are shown to
643 their people.

Chiefs who are to be independent now separate, each moving
622 off with his men to the place where the senior age-village of that
372 chiefdom will eventually be built. All fire in the country is ex-
621 tinguished, even the fires in the homesteads of the old men, and
643 in each of the new independent chiefdoms new fire is made, ceremonially, by the senior headman of the chiefdom and his fellow next in rank. One holds a lion-bone while the other twirls a medicated stick in a groove in the bone. The senior headman and his second each gives fire to the village headman immediately junior to him, and then the latter in turn to his immediate junior, until each of the headmen has fire. At this point the future division of each new chiefdom is foreshadowed, for the second senior headman in each new chiefdom is recognized as the leader of one side of the country. As each village headman lights his fire he calls: 'Come men of such and such a village to me!' and they take fire from him.

643 Since we are not primarily concerned with symbolism in this
372 book we shall not enter at length into the interpretation of these
773 events.[1] It must suffice to remind our readers of the Nyakyusa myth that their chiefs came down from the Livingstone mountains ten generations ago bringing fire with them, and that they found the previous inhabitants of the valley, who became their subjects, without fire, and eating their food raw. The extinguishing of the old fires and lighting of new is interpreted by the Nyakyusa as a symbol of the new chieftainship. A chief with whom we were well acquainted explained it thus: 'The fire is the fire of lordship (*umoto botwa*). The old chieftainship is coming to an end, the new has come. They extinguish the fires in all the homes, those of the young men and those of the old men, then they make new fire which is taken to every home. For formerly Mwangamilo [the old chief] would have had little power [after the 'coming out'], Mwakyusa and Reubeni [his sons] would have ruled.' But why fire? we asked. 'Because of old,' they relate, we chiefs came with fire, the commoners had not yet got it, they ate raw food only. When we came we slept in men's houses and we made fire and cooked food. Men were astonished, and said:

[1] A full analysis of the symbolism of one ritual necessitates a comparison of all the rituals of the society, which will be made in another book.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

"Ha! what's this?" They were burned; so they said: "These are chiefs because they brought this fire." It is this they remember, even to-day. . . .' And another informant explained: 'The fire means (*kukuti*) that a new chief has come, he brings fire, we throw away the old fire in the house.'

Having lighted their fires the young men cut bamboos and build temporary shelters for themselves, making one or more huts according to their numbers. It is forbidden for them to sleep in old huts, nor may they build on the site on which they lived as boys. Usually their first huts are on what was formerly pasture land, and later their fathers move aside to make room for the new generation. On the new site the two senior headmen of the new chief, together with a doctor, plant with magical ritual two branches of a *ficus* (known in Nyakyusa as *iliyabe*)—a species which is important economically since the bark of saplings provides the traditional dress of Nyakyusa women. These trees, known as *ulupando* and *umpandapanda*, are planted where the future boundary will run between the two halves of the young chief's country, and the senior headman (who is leader of the senior half of the country) builds his house near where the *ulupando* has been planted. He and his colleague, together with the doctor, proceed, after planting the trees, to set up the hearth-stones of his hut. Again magic is performed. Nyakyusa informants were not agreed as to the symbolism of these trees, as they were about the symbolism of the new fire. The root *ukupanda* means to plant a crop, or to set up, or establish the hearth-stones of a house; it is used also for establishing, or treating, with medicines. Some informants interpreted the *ulupando* as the chief and *umpandapanda* as his wife, saying: 'We are planting the chief and his wife.' Others said that the two trees represented the two senior headmen of the country, another that they represented the chief's two senior wives. What is certain is that *ulupando* is regarded as more important than *umpandapanda* and that both are taboo. No one may cut the trees. If anyone breaks the taboo it is believed that lions and leopards (closely associated with chiefs) will roar at night, and treatment by a doctor will be necessary to still them. It is also widely believed that the strength of the chief is associated with the growth of the trees. 'If these trees go dry the reign will not be successful, the chief will be defeated in war. If they flourish and grow the reign will be successful, the chief is

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 a ruler.' It is relevant to add that cuttings of this tree strike easily
643 in the soil and climate of Nyakyusa country. When a chief dies
784 he is buried beside his trees, and gradually a thicket—a sacred
[764] grove—forms round them.

The young men spend much time feasting and dancing. Formerly not only did they raid cattle for food from neighbouring chiefdoms, but they also took cattle, milk, and bananas from their fathers' villages. And they still do the latter, for they say: 'We are now the owners of the country.' The milk and bananas are often sent by the old chief, but 'if the chief is stingy, they teach him a lesson by going and *taking* bananas, saying: "We are important people."' Great emphasis is laid on this right of the young men to take food: one group, the mates of the first heir of a senior chief, boasted to us: 'We came out with grandeur, we ate many men's cattle.'

342 After a month or two the members of each new village move
621 off to build on a site of their own, and the wives of those who are married join them. Wives do not come to the first temporary shelters. The senior of the new villages remains on the site of the temporary shelters where fire was made, the ritual trees planted, and the hearth-stones of the senior headman established with magic. Gradually each member builds himself a permanent hut.

621 The old men move aside to make room for their sons. If land
561 is short they may move on to the site on which a boys' village formerly was, or there may be other land available. Whatever the position, adequate land must be provided for the young men's villages. And, we were told, 'We old men are glad to move, we are glad our sons are so many and we leave the land to them.' Or again: 'The old men move because new fire has come; the young men have made themselves into new people, hence they cannot build on their old sites but on new ones. Perhaps the old men will succeed them, for they may build in the boys' village where their sons were, or if there is space they go elsewhere. But the old men rejoice greatly, for their sons have "come out".' Nevertheless there are sometimes disputes between villages of different generations regarding a particular site (*vide* Document, p. 188).

643 A few months after the 'coming out' each of the two young
582 chiefs marries two wives. A young chief may be married already;
585 but the two whom he now takes rank as his great wives (*abehe*

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

abakulumba) and their eldest sons are his two heirs in the chieftainship. Young girls, daughters of neighbouring chiefs, are carried off with a show of force from their fathers' homes, by the young chief's men, who themselves later contribute to the herd of cows sent to regularize the position. The two great wives are thus married not solely with the cows of their husband, but also with those of the men whose sons their sons will one day rule. The duty of arranging the match lies with the village headmen of the old chief, and it is said that they are often guided in their choice by dreams. 643 582 595 [622]

The girls who are carried off are just about to reach puberty, and they stay at the house of one of the men of the old chief until their periods begin. When both have reached puberty they are initiated, not at their fathers' houses, as are ordinary girls, but in the country of their husband, and both together. At their initiation the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the old retiring chief) play the part normally played by a girl's parents and their neighbours, while the young chief and his men take the usual part of a husband and his friends. And then, after the ceremonies are over, the two girls are given to the young chief as his wives. Houses are built for them separately, i.e. in the senior age-village of the new chiefdom for the first wife, in the next senior village for the second wife; and in this separation of dwelling place is already apparent the future division of the chiefdom between their sons. 643 583 595 881

Within the chiefdom, and among the wives and children of the chief two 'sides' (*imibafu*) are recognized. Usually, in each country there are, at its beginning, at least two age-villages and half the wives of the chief on either side. This distinction of two sides is important in succession, a son from each side eventually inheriting half the country. 428 616

From the time of the 'coming out' of the two young chiefs till the day of their own father's death there exists between him and them a delicate balance of prestige and power. Each of the three, traditionally, has judicial authority in his own age-villages, but appeals in difficult cases may be taken from either of the young chiefs and their village headmen to the old chief and his village headmen, while the religious duties of chieftainship are exercised entirely by the old chief. But in the old days it was the young chief who fought and fed men. 'Young chiefs used to lead their 643 642

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 men to funerals in other countries and start a fight, and raid
642 cattle. The old chief would say: "I am too old to lead people to war and to funerals, and to feed men, I have no cattle, you have the power to do these things now." It was the lusty young men (*abatubwa*) who fought, not the old men.'

643 Formerly this transition period rarely lasted long, for the old chief usually died shortly after the 'coming out' of his sons. Success in war and probably also the fertility of the country were believed to be dependent upon the virility of the chief. As one informant put it: 'The old chiefs died because there was war: the people would complain of an old chief saying: "He is too old, when we fight we are beaten, he had better die. Perhaps the young chief will help us." ' The old chief's death was commonly interpreted as due to 'the breath' (*vide infra*, p. 101) of his people who loved his sons rather than himself, but we have evidence that chiefs were sometimes ceremonially strangled by their village headmen. Nowadays many chiefs survive for years after the 'coming out' of their sons, and relations between the generations are consequently complicated, as we shall see later.

643 At the death of the old chief control of the villages of old men passes to the two young chiefs and their village headmen, half to
622 each side. Village headmen of the old chief, relinquishing most of their secular functions to their successors, enter upon new religious duties as priests in the sacrifices to the chief who has just died, and this priesthood they hand on to their sons. The dead chief's full brother is still the religious head of both chiefdoms, but all the secular functions are now exercised by the young chiefs, each in his own country. And the religious functions also fall to them when all their father's full brothers are dead.

The 'coming out' ceremony has been described in some detail, for it is the occasion when chiefdoms and villages are formally established, and the future relations between them are made clear. The splitting of the old chiefdom into two independent halves; the division of every new chiefdom into two sides, each under a senior headman; the boundaries, membership, and relations of the age-villages within each side—all are defined at this ceremony. In the catching-hold of the village headmen, and in the making of fire, the relative status of leaders and villages and the membership of each village are shown. In the planting of the ritual trees on the boundary between the two sides of the country, and

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the establishment of the mother of an heir in each, the future division of the country is foreshadowed. Finally, it is the occasion on which power is formally handed over to the younger generation, and the success of the new headmen as war leaders is put to the test.

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c. Relations between villages within one chiefdom

Within each chiefdom, then, there are two sides, each under a senior headman. On each side are two or more age-villages of contemporaries of the chief—men of the ruling generation. Attached to these villages are boys' villages made up of the younger brothers and sons of contemporaries of the chief. They live separately from their fathers and may have their own village leaders, but legally each boys' village is subject to the authority of the headman of its parent village. On each side there are also two or more villages of old men, contemporaries of the chief's father, whose headmen have ritual functions. Each village established at a 'coming out' ceremony has considerable autonomy under its own headman, but it is subject to the senior headman of the side it belongs to in two ways: cases not settled by a village headman go to the senior headman of the side, and a senior headman leads the villages of his side in war and communal hunts. Even villages of old men are subject to the authority of the senior headman of the ruling generation on the side of the country where they live. Boys and young men of the generation which had not yet 'come out' used to fight and hunt as village groups under the leadership of the senior headman (of their fathers' generation) on the side of the country to which they belonged. Whether or not each boys' village was also subject in war and chase, as in legal disputes, to the authority of the headman of its parent village is not clear. Certainly each boys' village formed a defined segment within any larger group.

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To recapitulate, there are always villages of three generations in existence—those of contemporaries of the late chief, the headmen of which have ritual functions; those of mature men, contemporaries of the ruling chief, whose headmen have administrative and military functions; and those of boys and young men, contemporaries of the heir, who have not yet 'come out', and who fight under the leadership of their fathers' senior headman.

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[631] Sometimes, as we shall see presently, villages of a fourth generation exist also.

561 621 Each age-grade, or generation, covers a span of 30 to 35 years, and each village comprises an age-set with a span of 5 to 8 years, though this is longer in sub-chiefdoms (*vide infra*, p. 37). The average age of members in each grade varies with the date of the last 'coming out' ceremony. Just before the ceremony the elders with ritual functions are those over 65 or 70; the mature men of the ruling generation those between 35 and 65; and the 'boys' who have not yet come out, those between 10 and 35. Just after the ceremony the ruling generation consists of those between about 10 and 35, anyone over 35 being an elder. Those just too young to participate in one 'coming out' may be just too old to participate in the next. The village of Katumba in Mwaipopo's country was in this position: it had been created after the 'coming out' of the young chief Mwankuga, but informants were uncertain whether or not it would be established as a separate village at the 'coming out' of his heir Mwanyilu (*vide* Document, p. 183).

622 643 561 621 The two senior headmen of a new chiefdom are chosen from the two senior villages established at a 'coming out' ceremony, so that a commoner's chance of holding high office is greatest when he is just a little older than a chief's heirs. The senior village of one generation begets the senior villages of the next (*vide* Document, pp. 181-5). Thus, though the son of a village headman in one generation cannot become a village headman in the succeeding generation, there is a tendency for leadership within the chiefdom to pass from one *group* of men to their sons. Those who participate in a 'coming out' while very young tend to have least authority in the country, and are superseded when still under forty by the generation of their sons. The immediate contemporaries of a chief, i.e. those with whom he lives during boyhood, have a special bond with him all through life; and it may sometimes happen that when a chief dies young and is replaced by a brother (his own son being too young to inherit) a junior village comes into prominence because its members have been 'the companions' of the new chief. Bulindanajo in Mwaipopo's country was a village of this kind: Mwaipopo I had died young, and was succeeded by his brother Mwaipopo II ('Mwambene') who had 'come out' as a youth in Bulindanajo; and his immediate contemporaries from that village maintained a special bond with him.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Theoretically the territorial arrangement is one in which the villages of the ruling generation lie at the centre of the country, each surrounded by satellite villages of their sons, while smaller villages of old men lie on the boundaries. In practice—at least nowadays—the pattern is more complex, with old men's villages squeezed in between those of the ruling generation. From the time of its establishment as a separate chiefdom at the 'coming out', the future division of the country is adumbrated: there is a senior headman in each half of the country with villages subordinate to him, and the mother of an heir in each half. On the boundary between the halves stand the ritual trees, landmarks for all to see. 631 621

Age and locality coincide, while kinship cuts across local grouping, fathers and sons, and very often brothers, being in different villages. But kinsmen tend to be established in the same side of a country, and so to remain within one chiefdom. Kinship terms are extended in some measure to the villages of the chiefdom, which are classified as those of 'our fathers', 'our elder brothers', 'our young brothers', and 'our sons'. Women have no direct share in the age-organization: their membership of a village turns on their relationship to some man—father, husband, husband's heir—and the age-range of women within one village is very wide. 621 602 [562]

Villages vary considerably in size. Boys' villages, as we have seen, begin with a dozen members or less, and the villages of old men are often very small also; we knew one with only 10 households, another with 11. The villages of young and middle-aged men commonly vary between 20 and 50 households, with 30 as a fair average in the hills. In Mwaipopo's country there were 540 taxpayers on the roll and we recorded 19 established villages and 6 boys' villages.[1] Some members of the boys' villages, and some elderly men, were not on the tax-roll, so that the average was over 20 boys or men in each village. Villages in the plain are somewhat larger, averaging around 40 households. 621

Men's villages are usually subdivided into sections under the leadership of assistant headmen, appointed by the headman of the village. These assistants do not share in the 'coming out' cere- 621 624

[1] *Vide infra*, pp. 181 ff. The tax registers are no guide to the number of villages since in them several villages are commonly lumped together as one under a senior village headman.

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

361

III. MEN'S VILLAGES HIDDEN IN BANANA GROVES AND FRINGED BY CULTIVATED LAND

A long hut is visible in the centre of the picture to the right, and an *umwali* tree on the left. In the cultivated land are oil-bearing *umiyunguti* trees

[facing p. 34]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 mony, and are clearly distinguished from those who do. Indeed
624 they may be appointed at a considerably later date. The qualities looked for in them, however, are similar to those looked for in the village headmen, namely, wisdom in dealing with men, generosity, wealth, and the respect of their neighbours. They are expected to settle disputes, to pass on the orders of their chief or village headman to the men under them, to entertain their neighbours, and 'to watch over the country by day and by night'. On the hot Lake-shore plain, where the cattle are brought in before noon to stand in the shade of the bananas and are protected from insects by the smoke of a fire specially kindled for the purpose, an assistant headman is called 'he of the heap of hot ashes' (*ugwakyemo*), implying that he is the leader of the group whose cattle are herded together. 'He of the heap of hot ashes' is responsible both for the cows and for their masters. 'If the cows give no milk he will call the ten friends and warn them that if there is a witch among them he will be driven away.' Again, the extent of an assistant headman's influence depends very largely on his personal popularity. 'The village headman chooses a man of wisdom and says: "Build here with your friends": he is there first, and, if he is charitable (*mololo*), more people will come.' Generally speaking the assistants are more important in the large villages of the plains than in the smaller villages of the hills.

621 The distinction between the sub-divisions of a village and two separate villages is theoretically quite clear for the villages of men, since each independent village has been formally established at a 'coming out' ceremony. But in practice the distinction is somewhat blurred; for large villages often split *after* the 'coming out' ceremony into sections which operate very much as independent villages. This became apparent when we analysed in detail the villages of Mwaipopo's chiefdom (*vide* Document pp. 181-5) and found, besides the nineteen established villages, five village-sections which were treated in many respects as independent villages. Boys' villages remain somewhat fluid until the 'coming out'; but those offshoots of a parent village which have been closed to younger brothers may be regarded as separate villages.

361 Boys build their huts close together and plant bananas round them (*vide* Plate II). Then, as they grow older and marry, they build larger huts and space them further apart; but the homestead

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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IV. A CHRISTIAN BOYS' VILLAGE BEING BUILT ROUND A SCHOOL
(the larger building in the centre of the picture)

[facing p. 35]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

361 of a married man is close to those of his neighbours, his banana grove probably adjoining theirs, while the main garden-lands of the whole group are all together at a distance (*vide* Plate III). Boundaries between age-villages are thus not always apparent to a stranger. A solid hundred acres or so of houses and bananas may turn out to consist of two or three villages, each with its own organization, and each having a block of garden-lands separate from the others.

If any question arises about the village a man belongs to, the points discussed are: where he has built and where he cultivates —i.e. to what village the land he uses belongs; with whom he herds his cows; and which village headman he goes to in case of a dispute. Membership of a village is therefore defined primarily in terms of economic co-operation and political allegiance.

d. Moving

621 The age-system is somewhat modified by men moving from one village to another. When a man dies his heir frequently comes 166 and lives where the dead man was living, so becoming a member of his age-village. A man's heir is his full brother next to him in [#28] age, and only when all the full brothers of a family have died does the property pass to the eldest son of the eldest brother. The difference in the ages of a man and his heir is often, therefore, only a few years; but even if the difference be great, and the heir many years younger than his new neighbours, he is now treated as their contemporary. He sits with them at ceremonies and he shares their rights at any division of meat.

621 Were all heirs to remove to the homesteads of those who had died, the villages of old men would, of course, continue to exist indefinitely. In fact they do not. In Mwaipopo's chiefdom there remained only one small village of old men, the grandfathers of the generation which had last 'come out'. Other villages of this grandfathers' generation were remembered by name; the heirs of former members sometimes used the old name; but they did not live together as a group; they were members of other villages of their own generation. Even the heir of the headman of each old village, who acted as a priest, lived in some other village. It was said that these grandfathers' villages would disappear even in name when Mwaipopo, the father of the young chief died. No

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 villages of the great-grandfathers' generation survived, even ritually (*vide* Document, pp. 881–5).[1]

166 Men also move from one village to another and they do not always join a village of their exact contemporaries. A stranger may come and be granted land in a village even though he is considerably older or younger than the bulk of its members. Such movement from one village to another is now very considerable: we estimated that at least 80 per cent of the married men have at some time or other moved from the chiefdom in which they first cultivated gardens of their own. There is also movement from village to village within a chiefdom.

[681] Everyone agreed that moving is not something new. In the past a convicted witch was expelled from his village, and sometimes from the chiefdom; thieves and adulterers were also expelled or fled to take refuge with another chief (*vide infra*, pp. 118–9). But it is probable that movement between villages has increased greatly since the imposition of European control. The main [754] reason for moving nowadays is, as we have said, the fear of witchcraft. Subsidiary reasons are the desire to get suitable land for cultivating cash crops, the desire to be near some centre of employment (such as Tukuyu or Rungwe), and the desire to live with others of like mind, as fellow Christians or fellow pagans, fellow Moravians or fellow adherents of the 'Watch Tower' (*vide infra*, pp. 40–3).

166 Women move from one village to another even more often than men, for, not only do wives move with their husbands, but 591 a girl commonly marries a man of a village other than that in 587 which she grew up, and is later inherited by a kinsman of her dead husband who lives in yet another village. Since first wives are usually ten years younger than their husbands, and junior wives may be forty or fifty years younger, most women are inherited at least once during their lives, and some are inherited several times. The modern high divorce rate accelerates this long- [581] established circulation of women from village to village.

[1] It is possible that the existence of villages of four generations was due to the fact that Mwaipopo continued to live long after the 'coming out' of his heir Mwankuga—a survival not usual in traditional practice (*vide supra*, p. 30).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

e. Variation in the basic form of village organization

The splitting of a chiefdom into two at the 'coming out', the division of each country into two sides, the establishment of two age-villages of men in each half, and the development of two boys' villages attached to each village of men: all this division and sub-division into two equal parts creates the basic form of Nyakyusa political organization. But there are frequent variations from it. Formerly, in large chiefdoms sometimes three or even four sons went through the 'coming-out' ceremony, each with his own village headmen, and each setting up an independent chiefdom. Very often, we were told, a chief would build a separate royal homestead (*ikitangalala*) for his favourite wife, and her son would 'come out' with his two senior brothers and inherit a small country subordinate to one of them. Again, the division of an old chief's country into two was not always accepted by the young men concerned; quarrels and fighting between them were common and the position established at the 'coming out' was sometimes modified by war. If one of the two decisively defeated the other, he took all his brother's cattle and reduced him to a subordinate position. The land of the Nyakyusa is full of such minor chiefdoms; by the clerks who collect tax they are described as 'villages', but they are radically different from villages in their constitution; for, while they often consist only of a few score families, they are themselves articulated into age-villages, and have at their head not an elected village headman (*ulifumu*) but a hereditary chief (*umalafyale*). A minor chief marries in the ordinary way, like a commoner, and only one of his sons inherits his chieftainship; while his chiefdom, owing to its small size, is often simply divided into two villages, one for the old, one for the young men. 621 643

There is no separate 'coming out' ceremony for a minor chiefdom but the heir goes through the ceremony with his superior, remaining with him during and after the fire-making ceremony. His mates form one village under their own headman, who is subordinate to one of the two senior headmen of the new independent chief, taking fire from him. Great emphasis is laid on the fact that no separate fire, kindled by friction, is lighted for a subordinate chief. 643

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631 In the chiefdom of Mwaipopo, with which we were well acquainted, there are three such minor chiefdoms. In one no heir survived; but the heirs in the other two went through the 'coming out' ceremony with their superior chiefs, and the young men from each of the three formed a separate village, attached to one or other of Mwaipopo's two heirs. How many generations these subordinate chiefdoms survive as separate groups is not certain: the three in Mwaipopo's country were chiefdoms of his junior brothers which had lost their independence to him. In his case four brothers had 'come out' together, and the senior had conquered the others. Probably at the coming out of Mwaipopo's grandson these subordinate chiefdoms will appear only as villages, and no heir from them will be treated as a chief.

This formation of subordinate chiefdoms is a traditional variation of the standard pattern still going on. There are further modifications which are modern.

f. Modern modifications

643 177 In 1926, as has been noted, the British Administration created new 'Native Authorities'. The traditionally independent chiefs of the Nyakyusa were grouped together into eleven court districts,[1] and in each district a 'Native Court' was set up, consisting of the various chiefs and their village headmen, under the hereditary presidency of one of the chiefs, who thereby became senior to all the others in that Court district. Salaries for chiefs were introduced, the senior chiefs receiving far higher salaries than the others; the meetings of each Court are now always held in the territory of the senior chief (*umalafyale unkulumba*), and to this Court has been transferred a great deal of the legal business which, before 1926, was transacted by each chief sitting with his own village headman in his own chiefdom. The chiefs themselves were consulted in the selection of the Court presidents, and those chosen were normally the chiefs with the greatest number of men in each particular Court district.

The introduction of salaries has had a profound effect upon the relative status of the two young chiefs who 'come out' together. When an ordinary chief, with a small salary, dies, the Government recognizes the first son alone as chief and pays the whole

[1] There are two other courts in Rungwe district for Ndali and Lambya.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

salary to him. This reduces the second son to the position of a minor chief as effectively as a defeat in war might have done in the old days. But, while the action of warfare only occasionally led to the subordination of one of the brothers, this action of the Government does so invariably, and always subordinates the younger brother. When a senior chief dies, on the other hand, the salary is usually divided; the bulk of it goes to the first son, together with the position of senior chief, while the second son is given the salary of an ordinary chief. 643 177

Nevertheless, whether the junior brother is to become a chief in receipt of a salary or not, he still goes through the 'coming out' ceremony with his brother, and is apportioned villages and headmen. Even in a country in which there are several minor chiefs there still is the division into two, some being regarded as subordinate to the senior heir, and the others to the junior. Division of a chiefdom into two at the 'coming out' is the basic form which is maintained, at least ceremonially, despite all modifications.

The introduction of Courts and salaries has brought a new element into the relationship between the old chief and his heirs. Only one of them can receive the salary and they commonly dispute about it. Quarrels are particularly frequent over the position of senior chief, for the presidency of a Court carries with it a relatively large salary. Old senior chiefs cling to the position long after their sons have 'come out'. There is no compulsory superannuation of chiefs, and the traditional mechanism for getting rid of an old chief when his sons were ready to take over—strangulation by his councillors—no longer operates. The old headmen remain in power along with the old chief. Thus one effect of British Administration in Nyakyusa country has been to maintain the older generation in power much longer than was traditionally usual, and to delay the assumption of full responsibility for government by the younger generation.. 643 177 578

Another modern change which has far-reaching effects is the omission in some chiefdoms of the 'coming out' ceremony. When there is no 'coming out' the old men do not move aside to make room for their sons, and consequently the territorial demarcation between villages of old and young becomes blurred. Among the neighbouring people of Ngonde the 'coming out' ceremony has been dropped. There boys still build apart from their fathers, and the villages of young and old are more or 643 177 621

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 less separate, but as time goes on the demarcation between
them becomes less and less clear. In most chiefdoms of the
177 Nyakyusa the ceremony is still observed, but in the country of
Porokoto, near Rungwe mission, it has not been performed for a
621 generation, and there the territorial separation between young and
old is much less definite than in other chiefdoms. The maintenance of the age-village system is ultimately dependent upon the moving aside of the old men in each generation to make room for their sons.

The reason commonly given for the omission of the ceremony in Ngonde is that since the country has become more densely populated there is no longer room for two chiefs to divide the country of their father. The old system of division was adapted to an expanding population in a relatively empty country; and the two young chiefs ordinarily ruled a greater area, and more men, than their father. Further, it is said, the ritual was in one aspect a preparation for war, and fighting between chiefdoms has ceased. These explanations are obviously not adequate, since the ceremony is still performed in Nyakyusa chiefdoms in which there is neither room for expansion, nor war. Its omission may be related rather to the general abandoning of traditional rituals in Ngonde. Forty-five per cent of the people of Ngonde, including many leading men, are professing Christians, and there is a very general scepticism of the efficacy of traditional rituals. This scepticism extends even to those who are not Church members.

643 In Porokoto's chiefdom the 'coming out' was omitted partly
because of a dispute over the succession; but there, also, many of
197 the traditional rituals are not regularly performed (as they are in
other parts of Nyakyusa country), because the proportion of Christians is high since Porokoto's chiefdom adjoins the main Moravian mission station, Rungwe, and because pagan faith in these rituals has therefore been shaken. As Porokoto (who is not a professing Christian himself) put it, when explaining why he had not performed the twin ritual for his own twin daughters: 'We see that nothing happens to the Christians when they omit the rituals, so we begin to say "What value have they?" ' Thus not only are Christians forbidden by their Churches to participate in the ritual acts of the 'coming out' but pagans themselves begin to doubt their necessity.

The presence of Christians further complicates the traditional

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

village organization since many of them live in separate Christian villages, or sections of villages. When the first German missionaries arrived among the Nyakyusa in 1891, they bought land from the chiefs and village headmen at the different points at which they decided to settle, and villages of Christian converts have grown up on this land. The nucleus of these villages consisted of Ngonde workmen who came from Karonga (where a Scots mission was already established) to help the Germans build their mission houses. Later, local Nyakyusa who came to work at the mission stations built there too, and a party of ninety slaves, rescued by the German administration from the Arab leader, Mlozi, were given into the care of the missionaries and settled on the land they had bought. These slaves were from other tribes, not Nyakyusa, and there was difficulty in repatriating them to their home villages. The foreigners and Nyakyusa who remained on mission land were those who accepted Christian teaching. Practically all the early converts were already working for the missionaries and living near them before their baptism, and later converts were encouraged to move out of their pagan villages and join the new villages of Christians on mission land. On the other hand, any who left the Church, or who were suspended for practising polygyny or for some other cause, were, and still are, liable to be turned off mission land by the missionary in charge. Thus these villages comprise only professing Christians.

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In the villages on mission land there is a certain division of authority between Church and State. Up to 1914 such villages were treated as being outside the control of any chief. A Nyakyusa informant described the position thus: 'The missionaries said that they had bought their land and they would not admit any authority of the chief over it. They collected the taxes for the (German) Government themselves. The chief never sent into "European country" (*KiSungu*) for anything. The people there did not cook for him. The missionary used to be the chief in the European country; but since the English came it is different.' Under the system of Indirect Rule the administrative authority of chiefs over Africans living on mission-owned land is recognized; taxes are paid through the chief, and civil cases between Christians may be taken to the chief's court (*vide infra*, p. 138). But chiefs still treat Christians living on mission land rather differently from those living on land which has not been so allocated. They

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

797 are, for example, chary of calling out Christians to carry loads when
621 a Government official comes by wanting porters, or of sending their messengers into the mission villages when they require food for any purpose. The leaders of the villages on mission land are not headmen appointed at the 'coming out' (in which the Christian villages do not share), but 'elders' or 'peacemakers' appointed by the Church (usually the missionary and 'session'); and it is under such a leader that the members of a village on mission land rally when they are called out to co-operate in some activity, such as a pig hunt, in which each village acts as a unit.

621 Even on mission land, however, the traditional village organization and age-grouping are in some measure maintained. Boys leave their fathers' houses well before they reach puberty and build together a little distance away. There they are joined by younger brothers until the village is closed and the youngsters are told to start a new village of their own. Where there is plenty of land, as at Itete mission in Selya, the division between the generations is still quite clear, but where good building sites are scarce, as on Rungwe mission land, the divisions are blurred. As we have seen, the maintenance of clear territorial divisions between the generations depends upon the old men moving aside and leaving the greater part of the land for the more numerous ruling generation. Such a movement never occurs on mission land, which is not part of the land of any chief. It follows that territorial separation of age groups cannot there continue for long.

797 Many Nyakyusa Christians nowadays prefer not to live on
621 mission land, on the ground that there is less security of tenure, and less opportunity to develop coffee planting, on mission land than off it (*vide infra*, p. 48). At the same time the Moravian and Berlin missions have ceased to press their early policy of gathering converts at mission stations,[1] so that more and more Christians are coming to live intermingled with pagan neighbours. Very often, however, Christians choose to gather in one section of a village: scholars who have decided to become Christians often get permission to build near their school; they choose to move out of the pagan villages in which they have been living in order to

[1] The Scots mission in Ngonde never sought to gather its converts into separate villages, recommending rather that Christians should remain in their own homes and influence their pagan neighbours.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

build with Christian contemporaries, and sometimes the teacher is himself quite a young man and builds with them. Members of two independent churches, the Watch Tower[1] and the followers of Ngemela, have also built apart with fellow believers. Each such group has its own name, and a sense of unity, and its religious leader is recognized as the leader in secular affairs also, but politically it is a section of a larger pagan village of contemporaries. We know of no case in which a purely Christian group living off mission land has been given status as a village at the 'coming out'.

Since the same word, *ikipanga*,[2] is used both for a village and its sub-divisions the distinction between village and village-section is often not clear in ordinary speech, but it is apparent at the 'coming out', and in legal procedure.

[1] The Watch Tower (Jehovah's Witnesses) is of course a world organization, but Nyakyusa followers were organized under their own leaders and so far as we could discover were subject to no outside supervision between 1935 and 1938.

[2] *Ikipanga* is also used sometimes for the following of a chief, and nowadays for a congregation or church; cf. the Xhosa *ibandla*.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER III

ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

602 THE primary economic units in Nyakyusa society are the kinship groups—the elementary family, the cattle-owing lineage, and the 476 group of cognates who co-operate in production and exchange many gifts, and among whom cattle circulate.[1] However, fellow villagers also work together, exchange food, and have a common interest in certain property.

a. Land

423 The village is the land-holding group. As we have seen, land is allocated to a boys' village, at its commencement, by the parent 245 village, that is the village to which the fathers of most of the boys belong. Little boys' huts are usually to be seen going up on a strip of pasture-land, adjoining the block of banana groves which shroud their fathers' houses. The boys' land is primarily a building site, but very soon after moving into their huts they turn over the ground and plant banana suckers (*vide* Plate II). Bananas begin to bear very quickly, and so in a little more than a year after the establishment of a boys' village, its members have bananas of their own, which they cook for themselves and eat with their 241 friends at odd times during the day. But they have, as yet, no 423 fields, for the cultivation of fields requires the co-operation of a wife. Bachelors continue to eat their main meals at their parents' village. As the boys grow up and marry they begin to cultivate garden-land adjacent to their village. Some of these gardens are acquired by individuals from their own fathers and fathers-in-law, but whether there may also be a block grant of garden-land by the parent village as a whole to the boys' village as a whole we 423 are not certain. In any case the land of boys' villages is limited, and at the 'coming out' the old men move aside and the young men enter their inheritance. The allotment to each village is

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe Brown and Daryll Forde.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

decided by the old village headmen and chief in consultation, at the commencement of the 'coming out' ceremony. This moving aside of the old men is an essential part of the ceremony and occurs even when there is unoccupied land available. For example, at the 'coming out' of Mwankuga, Mwaipopo's heir, the old men moved aside to make room for their sons, although there is a large area of unoccupied land in the chiefdom, which is slowly being colonized by Mwaipopo's men.

Although the main redistribution is at the 'coming out', later readjustments are common enough. If a particular men's village attracts many members, and these members become wealthy in wives and children, then it may be necessary for the old men to move aside a second time, to make yet more room for their sons. The senior headman of the side of the chiefdom concerned, in consultation with the chief and other village headmen, has the power to make equitable adjustments in the land holdings of the villages of his side. We watched one village, whose numbers had diminished, being moved to make more room for a junior one which had flourished. But so long as its members remain together, a village retains its name and identity, though its site may be moved more than once. 'A village', the Nyakyusa say, 'consists in men, not in land.'

Boundary disputes between villages of a chiefdom are not unusual. In the old days these often led to war. Nowadays they are taken before the Court, whence there is an appeal to the federal court, the District Officer, the Provincial Commissioner and thence to the High Court (cf. p. 137). One such case, which we observed, had dragged on for years because the chief concerned, who happened to be president of the Court, feared to give judgment lest he be bewitched by the village which lost the case (cf. Document p. 191).

The division of the land allotted to each village lies with the members of that village, under the leadership of their own headman. The village headman himself, and other prominent individuals in the group, get first choice of sites: a son does not have a prescriptive right to the building site and gardens of his father when the old men move aside for their sons. 'If you are prominent, and you like your father's old site, that's all right, the others agree; but if you are unimportant ("light"), no; one of the important men takes it; *you* have no power.' Certain building and garden

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

425 554 sites are preferred to others, but the division of them at the 'coming out' does not appear to create much friction.

When the old men move they still maintain rights over what 423 may be regarded as the major 'improvement' made on their old sites, that is, trees which they or others have planted. There are two species which were traditionally and still are of great value to the Nyakyusa, the bamboo and the *unsyunguti*. Bamboos are used for house-building, while the *unsyunguti* produces a fruit which is both delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment. As has been shown in a previous essay[1] rights over these trees are maintained when individuals move from one village to another. Similarly, when a whole village moves, rights over bamboos are maintained, the former owner returning to cut them himself if he chooses. But the less valuable *unsyunguti* crop is left to the occupier. As one old man put it: 'We don't send our wives back to harvest the *imisyunguti* trees lest the young men make love to them there.' Bamboos are felled by men. Further complications are now potentially created by the planting of coffee-trees, but we know of no case in which a 'coming out' has yet taken place in a chiefdom in which coffee has been extensively planted—the first coffee-planters were those living on mission land which is unaffected by the 'coming out' ceremony. Now that coffee planting is becoming general, however, the difficulties of moving whole villages will be much greater.

The only land which was traditionally excluded from the 'new deal' in each generation is the very scarce and valuable ground in the bottom of old volcanic craters. This land is owned by families, and is always claimed by a kinsman when the occupier dies or moves to another chiefdom. It may be that long ago the land in each particular crater was owned solely by members of some particular village, but now it is held by old families scattered all over the chiefdom in which it lies. Thus ordinary [428] land, of which in the old days there was ample, was re-allotted in each generation, but the most valuable ground was passed down from father to son. We shall return to this point again in our last chapter.

425 As we have seen, movement of individuals from one village to another is very frequent. Normally land for building and gardens

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa*, pp. 43–5; Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 1, 1938.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

is granted to a stranger by the villagers concerned, acting through 425
their headman, not by the chief, who is usually informed, but seldom interferes. Only if a member of the chief's own family is moving within the chiefdom from one village to another, or if a very important stranger comes from outside, he may go to the chief and ask for a building plot, and the chief may then exercise his right of overlordship and grant the request. But this is a special and unusual case. It is villagers who grant land to an ordinary new-comer[1] and thereby accept him as one of themselves. His own wishes are taken into account whenever possible; if he sees a piece of ground which attracts him, and no one else has a claim to it, then it will be his.

We must emphasize the willingness with which strangers are 609
received both by the villagers and the chief. Men are still scarcer 425
than land in most places and the prestige and prosperity of villages and chiefdoms are increased by each addition to their membership. As we have said, part of the magical treatment at the 'coming out' is directly designed to attract followers to chiefs and village headmen. Strangers to a village are always given a house to sleep in while they are building their own and are usually given food as well, both formally by the chiefs and village headman and informally by the neighbours. This formal giving of food has lapsed in Porokoto's chiefdom, which adjoins Rungwe mission, and to which very considerable immigration has taken place in the last forty years; there the relative scarcity of land is reflected in a decline of hospitality to new-comers, though none have yet been refused land. But the usual custom still is to receive them generously.

The granting of land to a new-comer is subject to the rights of 425
a villager who has moved but may return. As we have seen, moves from one village to another are frequent, and unless a man has been expelled for witchcraft or some other serious crime his building site and gardens are kept for him, at least for a time. Anyone who occupies them does so on the understanding that he must vacate them should the former owner, or his heir, return. Further, a man who moves retains certain rights over bamboos, *imiyunguti* and coffee-trees. The precise conditions under which individuals who have moved may reclaim their land have been discussed in *The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa*,[2]

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 41. [2] pp. 36–41.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

425 and need not be recapitulated. The essential fact here is that the village is the group which allocates land to a new-comer, and which maintains the rights of individuals who have moved and who wish to return.

425 Once established in a village, a man can hoe any ground which has not yet been cultivated, and thereby make it his own.[1] No
423 reference need be made to the headman and other villagers, provided that he does not encroach on land formerly cultivated by others, or on the main pasture land. There is no limit to the acreage he may use. Pasture-land is jointly owned by the whole village group and no individual has exclusive rights to any portion of it. Every member of a village has the right to graze his cattle on the village pastures, and this right may also be granted to an outsider by the village headman in consultation with his neighbours. But no one has the right to cut trees near the village (unless they are ones he has planted or inherited) without the permission of his fellow villagers. The death of one man we knew, the younger brother of a chief, was attributed to the fact that he had cut a branch from a self-sown tree growing in the arable land of a village in which he was a new-comer, without asking permission of his fellow villagers. It was said that 'the owners' of the village were angry and killed him because he had not asked their leave before lopping the tree. He had wanted the branch to make an axe-handle.

423 The land rights of Christians living in the chiefdoms are identical with those of their pagan fellows; but those who live on
797 mission land are in a different position. They are tenants of the mission, paying an annual rent of 1s., and liable to be evicted by the missionary in charge if they leave the Church. A man so driven out loses the coffee-trees he has planted. One Christian informant remarked: 'We do not think it good to plant coffee on mission land because very often a man is turned out of the Church.' And at Rungwe mission even those moving voluntarily lose the coffee they have planted. Now all trees introduced by Europeans have been declared by the Federation of Chiefs to be the property of the planter, even though he has moved to a different chiefdom, and Christians feel that they have greater security of ownership in coffee planted in the chiefdoms than in that on mission land. The difficulties likely to arise at a 'coming out' are ignored, and

[1] Ibid., pp. 41-2.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

it is implied that coffee planted in the chiefdoms will be inherited by a man's heirs. As a leading Christian woman put it: 'We like to build on this side of the river because the other is mission land, and if a man moves he loses the coffee and everything else he has planted there. . . . A man has children and he wishes his children to inherit what he has planted.' The number of coffee-trees each man may plant on mission land is also limited to 100, so that the development of large plantations, such as some astute Nyakyusa are undertaking, is impossible there.

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b. Building

When a group of boys starts a new village two or three friends usually combine to erect a little hut and live in it together. As younger boys join the village the older ones instruct and help their juniors to build. Thus, although as they grow older each boy builds a hut for himself, the habit of co-operation with village-mates in construction is already established. Until they are married, boys do all the work on their huts for themselves, fetching their own reeds or bamboos for the frame, and cutting and carrying thatching grass. They usually leave their huts unmudded. Adult men, on the other hand, are helped by their wives and female relatives as well as by sons and sons-in-law, and one or two of their own village neighbours. Men fell the bamboos, construct the framework of the house, and thatch, while women cut and carry grass, carry bamboos, mould the mud bricks which are packed between the bamboo uprights, and plaster the hut inside. The wife for whom the hut is being built is responsible for the women's work, but she usually gets some help from her co-wives and women neighbours, as well as from her mother and sisters, and the mother and sisters of her husband. Sons and sons-in-law are expected to bring with them other young men, their village-mates. Co-operation is thus both with relatives and village neighbours—the neighbours of the couple building the hut, and of their sons and sons-in-law.

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The huts of married men are built with immense care, for not only are substantial houses essential to comfort, and indeed a condition of survival, in this climate of torrential rains and cold winter mists, but the Nyakyusa take great pride in the appearance of their homesteads (*vide infra*, p. 77). The early European

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1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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291
142

V. THE CHIEF MWAIPOPO

[facing p. 50]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 travellers in the area all comment on the excellently built huts and the cleanness of the villages.[1] Lord Lugard calls their huts 'the neatest and the most wonderfully built of any I have seen in Africa, excepting only the houses of the king and chiefs in Uganda.'[2] This high standard of building necessitates hard work and co-operation between a number of men and women.

c. *Cultivation*

241 The primary unit in cultivation is the elementary family consisting of a man, his wife and unmarried children or, in the case of a polygynous family, of the house group of a wife and her children, together with her husband, part of whose time is spent in hoeing her fields.[3] There is also, however, some co-operation with other relatives, and with village neighbours.

241 476 Unmarried sons hoe with their fathers and very often they bring one or more village-mates to work with them, making return, in due course, by working with these friends for their respective fathers. The boys who come are fed after hoeing, and should be fed generously, by the woman in whose fields they have [5:4] worked. After his betrothal a young man comes in the same way with village-mates to hoe for his father-in-law, as well as continuing to hoe for his own father. Once his wife joins him they have their own fields, and the bulk of his time is spent in hoeing for her, but he still hoes one or two strips (*embaka*) for his own father and for his father-in-law. Such help is reciprocal, for his 'mothers' (i.e. his own mother and his father's other wives) and sisters, as well as the 'mothers' and sisters of his wife, will help his wife with her tasks of sowing, weeding, and reaping. From the point of view of village organization the essential fact is that young men working for fathers and fathers-in-law very frequently bring one or two village-mates with them. A typical hoeing group is made up of a man with his sons, and one or two village-mates of the sons.

Larger hoeing parties, to which not only youths, but also older men come, are fairly common, especially among the Kukwe.

[1] Elton, op. cit., p. 323; D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyasa' in *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 116–7.

[2] F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), Vol. I, p. 52.

[3] The respective rights of the husband and of each wife have been analysed by Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., pp. 16–29.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

142
387

VI. FIBOMBE, A CHRISTIAN ELDER

[facing p. 51]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241 To these come some of a man's village-mates and male relatives
476 or special friends from other villages, as well as his sons and sons-in-law with their village-mates. At one such party we noted in the morning eight helpers, of which six were men, two being classificatory brothers of the owner and four of them friends. There were also two young sons of the owner working. In the afternoon a son-in-law came with a party of his village-mates. Such hoeing parties are not the concern of the whole village. Only those who have been specially invited, or very close friends of the owner of the field, come (the number usually ranging between ten and twenty), and some of those invited may be from other villages. It is difficult for one to whom an invitation has been sent to refuse. After work the guests are feasted. Traditionally they were given milk with bananas or beans (a prized food), but nowadays beer is expected. For the party noted above two pots of beer were provided, one being given to the older men and the other to the son-in-law with his friends. Christians, many of whom are forbidden to brew beer, provide meat, rice, or milk —all much prized foods. Possibly the proportion of men attending this type of work party has diminished as opportunity for paid employment has increased—we have no certain evidence.

Mutual assistance in cultivation turns on kinship and personal friendship: all the members of a village or a village-section are not obliged to work with a neighbour. But it is insisted that neighbours should keep in step with one another in cultivation. It will be remembered that their garden-lands are together, and each year different types of garden are hoed by groups of villagers—millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins in one place, potatoes in another, maize and beans in another, so that while the gardens of one particular household are scattered, each crop is in one or two blocks. Neighbours cultivating the same crop in adjoining fields should, according to Nyakyusa ideas, begin each process in cultivation together, and the whole village should keep in step. As one informant put it, 'in hoeing and planting one must be neither ahead of nor behind one's neighbours'.

241 The idea reaches its furthest development among the Kukwe
476 in regard to three crops planted with the first rains, namely,
622 finger millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins. Traditionally, no Kukwe man might begin to clear ground for these crops until his village headman had begun, or, if he lived in the village of a chief or in

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241 an immediately adjoining village, until his chief had begun.
476 Members of other villages do not regard the chief, but wait only
for their village headman to begin. Within the family, junior
622 wives must follow senior wives, but there is no precedence
between brothers. If two should live in the same village it does
not matter which begins sowing first, provided both follow the
leader, nor need a junior age-village wait on a senior one to begin.
Not only must the headman of the village begin the clearing, but
each process in cultivation must be initiated by him or his senior
wife; thus clearing, raking, burning, planting, and reaping, are
ceremonially begun, and the wife of the headman should be the
first to wash her millet, and he the first to eat of the new crop.
Further, once a process is initiated, the villagers should press on
with their tasks so that all may finish about the same time.

241 Now the cultivation of millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins[1] is
622 peculiar in that the weeds and grass are not turned in for green
manure, as they are for all other crops (except rice), but are
collected in heaps and burnt, just before the rains break at the
end of the dry season. And the fire for this must be lighted
[312] ritually by the headman of the village. Using fire-sticks and
'medicine of plenty' (*unkota gwa ifugo*[2]) bought by the Kukwe
from the Sangu people, he ignites a special fire in his own field
and then, if a great wife of the chief lives in the village, he lights
the heaps in her field. All the members of the village take fire
from him, or from the field of the chief's wife. To take fire from a
house is forbidden, because the owner of the house from which
it is taken may be a witch, who will rot the heaps so that the
millet does not grow, or will not ripen. Roasting food on a burn-
ing heap, or taking a brand to light tobacco is likewise forbidden,
lest the person who does so has medicine which will rot the
millet.

241 It is thought that if one breaks the rule, beginning a process
before the headman, the fields of all the other villagers will suffer.
'If men hoe higgledy piggledy the food in their gardens does not
grow, and if they reap higgledy piggledy the yield from all the

[1] Some Kukwe held that these rules about cultivation applied also to maize and to an old root crop, *umbogo*, but the most reliable informants were agreed that the rule was only strictly enforced with regard to the three crops planted 'at the break of the rains, in the new year'.

[2] 'A village headman, *ugwa ifugo*, is one who drives off witches and protects the food.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

gardens will be small.' And the crops of one who lags behind, 241
when his fellows have planted together, are also said to suffer. For this reason, if one woman is delayed and unable to work along with them, her friends will plant a corner of her field when they plant their own, so that the fertility of her fields may not be lost.

An educated informant explained that 'those who have learnt agriculture may think that late planting is unsuccessful because it is not the right season—the weather is wrong—but others think the failure is due to not planting at the same time as their neighbours.' Christians living on mission land, with their gardens in a block by themselves, do not trouble about planting simultaneously, but many of those living in mixed villages with fields adjoining the fields of pagans conform 'because if they do not plant with them they do not have pleasant social relations'. In some chiefdoms, however, the custom is dying even among pagans. In Porokoto's country we were told: 'The custom is now dead, men just burn higgledy piggledy. A fire blazes up somewhere. We ask, "Whose is it?" "So and so's" comes the reply. "Oh! All right!" The custom has died because the Christians are many and the chiefs have turned to the Christians; their hearts are with the Christians even though they themselves are not baptized, and about this burning of the rubbish heaps for millet they say: "What is it for? Does it avail anything?" '

Among the people of Selya the rule was traditionally less 241
elaborate than among the Kukwe. It is polite and customary for 576
those whose fields adjoin to call one another so that they may begin each process together. 'We speak to each other saying: "Friends, let us hoe a millet field over there, all of us, hunger comes on us." ' And if a son hoes a field next to his father's his 'mothers' call their daughter-in-law to plant with them, since their fields adjoin. But the only sanctions for keeping in step in hoeing and planting are conventional; there is no suggestion that the laggard's crops will fail. If, however, a man *burns* his millet field before his neighbours have heaped their weeds, they have ground for complaint. They say: 'Why have you harmed our crops?'

Underlying the emphasis on neighbours cultivating simul- 241
taneously is the idea that the fertility of fields and crops in ear 754
can be stolen by witchcraft and sorcery, and that if one man's

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241 crop is conspicuously better than that of his neighbours it is at
754 their expense; he has illegally enticed the fertility or grain from their fields into his own; he has, in the Nyakyusa phrase 'overstepped' his neighbours.

Ideas as to what creates 'overstepping' vary slightly in the different local groups, but everywhere it is insisted that no man should get a start of his neighbours by burning his rubbish heaps with medicines before they are ready to do so. And not only does communal burning prevent individuals 'overstepping' their neighbours, but the medicine used is said to be a direct protection against witches and sorcerers. Dependence upon medicines and the elaboration of taboos are thus associated with a technique of cultivation—burning of weeds—in which fertility diminishes rapidly, much more rapidly than it does with the technique of green manuring practised for other crops.

241 The Nyakyusa have no elaborate communal ritual of the first-fruits, emphasizing precedence, such as plays a great part among many of the Southern Bantu. Significantly, their Ngonde relatives, with a more centralized political organization, forbade any man to eat of the new maize and pumpkin leaves until these had been offered ritually, first at the ancestral grove of their overlord, Kyungu, then at the groves of their chiefs, beginning with the senior, and then to the ancestors of each family. The Kukwe say that the headman of the village should be the first to eat certain of the new crops, just as he is the first to hoe, and plant, and reap, but the people of Selya do not trouble at all about precedence in this matter.

754 Among all the Nyakyusa, however, those who have been drinking the chief's *ifingela* medicine, or medicines for protection against sorcery which return the disease to the sender, must take special precautions when eating food grown on fields fertilized with ash. Now the medicine burnt with the rubbish is said to protect the crops from witches and sorcerers, and both the chief's *ifingela* medicine and retaliatory medicines border on sorcery. The underlying idea seems to be that since those who have been using these dangerous medicines partake in some measure of the nature of sorcerers, they are in danger from food nourished by the ash of that fire.[1] The important point here is that among the

[1] The associations made here will be developed in another book on Nyakyusa symbolism.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Nyakyusa generally it is kinship groups, not villages, which eat protective medicines with certain first-fruits. 754

Unlike many other cattle-keeping Bantu the Nyakyusa take great pride in cultivation, men boasting about their strength in hoeing, and praising those who are diligent. Significantly, the vocabulary relating to bananas matches in richness that relating to cattle: we recorded a dozen terms—and there were said to be many more—for varieties of bananas and plantains, which are distinguished by the form and flavour of the fruit, and thirteen terms for types of cattle, distinguished by colour and markings. 241 192

Not only does success in cultivation carry prestige in itself, but it provides the wherewithal for hospitality, on which status in a Nyakyusa community turns. To be respected a man must entertain his neighbours with food and millet-beer. Control of grain and vegetables to do this depends upon his own effort in hoeing, as well as upon having wives and sons to work with him. We have seen how the laggard among the Kukwe believes that the fertility of his gardens will be sapped by his neighbours being ahead. There is thus considerable social pressure compelling both men and women to cultivate diligently. At the same time, however, no individual should be too conspicuous. Each must keep in step in cultivation with his neighbours; and though his fields may be a little larger than the average, they must not be a great deal larger. The area cultivated (visible crops and stubble) by seven compound families on the Lake-shore plain in 1935 averaged 6·13 acres per family; which, divided by the number of members in each family, gave rather over half an acre per head (men, women, and children) or 1·3 acres per adult. The acreage ranged from 1·99 to 0·61 per adult.[1] 574 241 [626]

Cultivation thus involves co-operation primarily within elementary and compound families, but it also involves village co-operation, in that neighbours hold land together, help one another in some measure, and try to carry out each process simultaneously. 476 241

The pressure of neighbours still helps to keep laggards up to the mark, and also to keep the most energetic from getting far ahead. But the village control over cultivation is diminishing for, as we have seen, the custom of keeping in step is no longer strictly insisted upon even among the Kukwe, nor does it apply 241

[1] Monthly report of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu District, July 1933. Figures supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu, 1935.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241 to those crops, production of which is now expanding—beans, groundnuts, coffee and rice—even though the latter is planted like millet in a seed-bed of ash. The cultivation of rice is on a commercial basis. A small number of men own ploughs which they hire out for preparing rice-fields, and the weeding and reaping is also often done by hired labour. For the hulling, grading, [474] and marketing of coffee the Agricultural Department has established a coffee co-operative, to which all native-grown coffee is sold, but in this organization villages as such play no part.

d. Herding

231 In each village there are, as we have seen, several herd-groups,
857 five to ten neighbours herding their cattle together. This associa-
476 tion is voluntary, but it is usual for members of adjoining home-
steads to co-operate—special friends in a village tend to build together—and the group is more or less stable. All the boys of appropriate age (six to eleven) go to herd, even though there is one son of their father already in the group, and when a man has cattle, but no sons of an age to herd, he may leave his cattle to be looked after by the sons of neighbours. As one old man put it: 'My cows are herded by other men's sons, but I give them neither milk nor payment, it is not done in this country. When I beget a son he will herd too.' There is thus considerable give-and-take between fellow members of the group. Among Christians, and those pagans who wish their sons to go to school, the herds take shifts, half attending the morning session of school, and half the afternoon session. Formerly, young men armed with spears herded the cattle for fear of raids, while boys herded the calves which grazed near the villages. The same young men used to herd and hoe, taking it in turn, or hoeing in the late afternoon when the cattle grazed near the villages and could be herded by the youngsters. The cattle were trained to follow the call of a herdsman and in case of danger were quickly led away and hidden.[1]

231 In the large villages of the plain an assistant headman, one of
476 whose functions is the care of cattle, is connected with each herd-
group. In his homestead, under the bananas, a smoky fire is kept going during the heat of the day, and there the cattle of the group

[1] D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., p. 121; F. L. M. Moir, op. cit., p. 93.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

stand protected from insects: hence his title 'he of the heap of hot ashes' (*ugwakyemo*, *vide supra*, p. 34). The protection of their cattle from raiders by day, and witches by night, was one of the main co-operative activities of the village, and each herd-group within the village was particularly concerned with the protection of its own cattle. For the boys of one herd-group the association is very close since they are together on the pasturage for the greater part of the day. Friendships then formed sometimes last a lifetime.

A few rich men choose to herd their cattle separately from those of their neighbours. 'They are the men who have many cattle! They want to show off their herd, so that men may say: "That's the herd of so and so." ' Sometimes their sons, against orders, foregather with other herd-boys on the pasturage, but they are careful to bring home the herds separately. We knew three men near Rungwe who were spoken of as herding their cattle separately, though in fact their sons often joined friends in the pasturage. To herd alone is regarded as somewhat ostentatious,[1] and only a few individuals do it.

Many rich men do not even keep all their cattle at their homesteads for fear of the jealous witchcraft of their neighbours. Instead, they disperse their herds among friends in other villages (of their own or neighbouring chiefdoms) believing that the cattle may in that way escape danger. Porokoto explained: 'We place cattle with friends (*ukufufya*) on account of sickness and death. Supposing I have three or four cows, and they all calf, but the calves die, then I place the cows with friends. People say: "The cows will escape in another village or chiefdom." If, when cattle die and are cut up, wounds are found in their stomachs,[2] then the owner places the others with friends.' Not all of them are sent to the same place.

The fear of witchcraft was traditionally, and is still, the main reason for placing out cattle, but nowadays they are sent away for other reasons also: Nyakyusa living around Rungwe often send cattle to friends on the other side of the mountains in Mbeya district, where grazing is particularly good, and wealthy Christians place out cattle because their wives, working single-handed,

[1] A beast which gores others may be herded apart without any imputation of pride to the owner.

[2] Taken as evidence that they have been killed by witchcraft, *vide infra*, p. 116.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

231 find the cleaning of byres in which many cattle are stalled, very
476 arduous. A pagan who has many cattle always has more than one wife.

Thus, herding together was traditionally, and still is, one of the main common activities of neighbours in a village; most cattle are herded with those of neighbours, but there is a measure of co-operation with relatives and personal friends of other villages. It is likely that the practice of placing cattle with friends of other villages is becoming more common.

e. Hunting and fishing

224 From the point of view of village co-operation, hunting and
226 fishing are relatively unimportant, for, in the first place, game and
262 fish provide the Nyakyusa with prized foods to eat as relish with the staple bananas, roots, and cereals, rather than with main
476 items of diet; and secondly, hunting and fishing are not primarily village enterprises.

226 Most fishing is done by men, individually, each keeping his own catch; but groups of herd-boys or young men sometimes co-operate to divert a branch of a stream temporarily, so that they may tickle the fish stranded in the shallow pools. They choose a place where a stream divides naturally, and block one channel with stones; but such enterprises are on a small scale. Periodically however, when fish were plentiful, communal fishing was organized during the dry season. The seeds of a certain legume, grown for the purpose, were thrown into the river to stupefy the fish. Men, women, and children waited some way down the stream with hand-nets, and when, an hour or two after the poison had been put in, the fish began to float down stupefied, they were easily netted. The poisoning was organized by the chief and village headmen and all the villages of the chiefdom participated, as well as those from neighbouring chiefdoms, when their chiefs were on good terms. Friends naturally went together, but the various villages did not act as separate units as they do in a communal hunt. Communal fishing never occurred regularly, for if fish were scarce the chief might forbid it for a number of years, and it is now rare, since poisoning the rivers has been forbidden by the Administration. We heard of only one such fishing during our stay in Nyakyusa country.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Hunting for food, like most fishing, is an individual affair. A number of men have shot-guns with which they hunt buck (duiker, bushbuck, and waterbuck) which are scarce, and game birds (guinea fowl, partridge, and duck) which are plentiful. The limiting factor is ammunition, which is relatively expensive, and few men waste a cartridge on birds unless they are sure of getting at least two with one shot. They stalk the sitting birds and fire (at point-blank range) at several birds in a line. One or two chiefs employ men specially to shoot for them, but in the diet of the people as a whole game plays a very small part, and there is no tradition of it ever having been of great importance. 224 223

Hunting for the protection of life and property is, on the other hand, a communal concern, organized like war. The chief calls out his men who assemble by villages, each under its own headman, and the chief disposes the groups. Attendance is compulsory and individuals or villages who fail to appear without good reason may be fined. Such communal hunts are still organized to kill wild pig, which devastate the gardens of some chiefdoms. We took part in one to which five village groups consisting of about 160 men and boys came. Formerly they were organized also if lion or leopard or other big game attacked men or cattle. The aim was to surround the animal and spear it, and here the importance of village relations became apparent, for the Nyakyusa argued that a man was less likely to be a coward if, in moments of danger, he stood with his relatives and village neighbours. 'We said that people of different age-villages should not stand together, every man should have his friends or relatives near him, so that if the leopard caught him the others would have to help and not shrink back! So people of the same age-village stood together, or relatives with relatives.' 224

Towards the end of last century Nyakyusa country abounded in big game.[1] Elephant were purposely shot out before 1935 because they were so destructive of crops, but lion, leopard, buffalo, hippo, and crocodile are still fairly common. [136]

[1] Elton, op. cit., p. 319; D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), p. 282; 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyassa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 119; F. L. M. Moir, *After Livingstone* (1923), pp. 90–119.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

f. Housekeeping

356 Every married woman has her own hearth and granary, and
476 she works very largely alone when cooking and cleaning; but in
313 one essential activity women who are neighbours in a village regularly co-operate, and that is in fetching firewood. We never saw a woman going alone; usually there is a group of three or four up to a dozen or more. Firewood must be fetched two or three times a week, and the journey and the collection of the wood takes from four to ten hours, depending upon the distance of the village from a patch of forest or bush. Thus the women spend up to thirty hours a week fetching wood, and it is with village neighbours that this time is spent, not with relatives from other villages. If a woman is ill her friends will help in bringing wood and cooked food for her. Some co-wives co-operate in this way, fetching wood together, and helping each other in sickness, but whether they do or not depends upon personal friendship. Often it is with an unrelated neighbour, rather than with a co-wife, that a woman works most closely. Only when co-wives are sisters, or aunt and niece, are they expected to work together regularly.

476 Village neighbours—women—also co-operate in the preparation of feasts, as we shall see in the following chapter.

g. Economic co-operation beyond the village

476 The economic relations of fellow villagers, and the changes
taking place in these relations, cannot be understood without
602 some reference to economic co-operation beyond the village boundaries. As we have already indicated, co-operation with relatives living in other villages is very important: cattle, the most prized possession of the Nyakyusa, circulate within kinship groups, between father and son, brother and brother, and between affines, and these same relatives assist one another in cultivation and building. But beyond the circle of kinsmen and village-mates there was formerly little economic co-operation.
[438] Each village and kinship group was largely self-sufficient, buying from outside little save iron spears and hoes, medicines, salt, cosmetics, and brass or copper wire for ornament.

326 Smiths were essential to the Nyakyusa economy for they

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

fashioned iron hoes for cultivation and spears for hunting and war; they also made the cow-bells with which rich men loved to decorate their cattle. Doctors were equally important, for the medicines supplied by them were believed to influence health, fertility, and success in every undertaking. Neither smiths nor doctors served only their own home villages—the number of smiths was much smaller than the number of villages—and doctors living at a distance were generally preferred to those living near by. The need for iron goods and for medicines therefore took men out of their own villages and made links with other villages, often in other chiefdoms. Some at least of the iron ore which the smiths smelted was obtained from the distant Kinga mountains outside the Nyakyusa area all together (*vide supra*, p. 7), and many medicines came from the Kinga or Sangu. *Umwafi* for the poison ordeal was bought from Ngonde. Three other commodities also came from far—these were salt, which Kinga bought from Bena country and sold to the Nyakyusa; a red root (*ikipimba*) used as a dye and cosmetic, bought by the Mahasi from the Sangu and sold to the Nyakyusa; and brass or copper wire for making body rings (*amanyeta*).[1] There was scarcely any cloth in the country when the Europeans first arrived.[2] Pots were sold throughout the Lake-shore plain by the Kisi—Thomson found the Kisi pot-market operating in 1879[3]—and in the hills by Penja specialists. The details of this trade will be discussed when we come to consider the wider relations of the Nyakyusa: here we are only concerned to show that though villagers were dependent on outsiders for a little iron and salt, together with some medicines and ornaments, the bulk of the trade remained very small—salt and iron were extremely scarce—and economic relations beyond the village and kinship group were tenuous.

[1] We do not know by what route the wire came in: it is possible that it was as scarce as cloth before the first contact with Europeans. Elton speaks of spear shafts 'beautifully inlaid with a delicate tracery of brass and copper wire' (op. cit., p. 323), but the first reference we have traced to *amanyeta* in Nyakyusa country is in D. Kerr-Cross 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 118, his observation having been made in 1893. At that time he says 'you could buy anything for brass wire'. c.f. Moir, op. cit., p. 89. Fotheringham (op. cit., p. 27) says that the brass wire used in Ngonde (before 1889) was imported from Britain.

[2] Elton, op. cit., pp. 316, 320, 322, 331; Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 268, 274.

[3] Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 263. The market was at Pupanganda, at the N.E. corner of the Lake, on the narrow strip of land between the escarpment of the Livingstones and the water.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

439 The modern position is quite different. Each village still produces almost all its own food, but very considerable quantities of clothing, metal utensils, and tools are imported, in addition to salt, medicines, and ornaments. All the men and some of the women wear cloth. Every man possesses at least one loin-cloth, [651] a hoe, and an axe, and he must pay an annual tax of 12s. with an additional 2s. for every wife after the first. These essential expenses are met by the sale of produce and labour. Rungwe district is one of the main sources of food for the nearby Lupa gold-fields, while its native-grown coffee is sold on the London market. In 1936 produce to the value of some £24,000[1] was sold from Rungwe district to the outside world, and considerable quantities of produce were also sold within the district to Government officials, missionaries, traders, and their servants. At the same time an exchange of different types of produce, particularly of rice from the plains for ground-nuts from the hills, is developing, and markets flourish at several centres.

441 Trade is in the hands of Indians and Swahili settled in the Government station, Tukuyu, the military station, Masoko, and 443 the Lake-shore port, Mwaya. These traders employ Nyakyusa agents on a commission basis, to sell their goods and bring in produce; and there are many small shops scattered through the district, where commercially-minded Nyakyusa sell cloth, salt, paraffin, matches, hoes, knives, tin dishes, padlocks, soap, and cigarettes; and buy produce. But the shop is not a village centre. In the first place, one shop usually serves several villages; in the second, dependence on trade-goods is not yet so great that shopping close at hand is a necessary convenience, and when a purchase is to be made the buyer often prefers to go to one of the three main trading centres where his choice is greater. There was no sign of a Nyakyusa shop serving as a meeting-place for a village or a group of villages, as does the trading store of the Transkei.[2] Tukuyu market is indeed a social centre but it attracts custom from all over Rungwe district, not merely from one village or group of villages. Trading thus draws men outside their village; it does not nourish relationships within the village.

445 Employment for wages is the second means of meeting essential expenses, and we estimated that in 1936 approximately

[1] *Vide supra*, p. 16.
[2] Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 356.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

£25,500 was earned by Nyakyusa migrant labourers and those 465
employed in the district.[1] Earnings from employment are thus probably about equal to the total earnings from the sale of produce.

Within the district Nyakyusa men are employed in Govern- 464
ment service as clerks, hospital orderlies, agricultural inspectors, and as labourers on roads and buildings. They are employed also 357
as house servants by Europeans, as labourers on the twelve European-owned estates in the district, and as shop assistants and servants by Indian traders. There is also a little employment of Nyakyusa by Nyakyusa in agricultural work. Traditionally chiefs, being responsible for hoeing the fields of many wives, sometimes employed poor men to hoe for them, rewarding them after two hoeing seasons with a heifer or bull, but the extent of such employment was, in the old days, small and confined to the chiefs. Nowadays it has been considerably extended, rich men employing others to hoe or, less commonly, to plough for them, and paying them in stock or cash. A few monogamists also employ young boys to assist their wives in fetching wood and water.

Most Nyakyusa men now take paid employment at one time 464
or another. Of a small sample of seventy-nine men, seventy-six (94 per cent) had been in paid employment. There was, however, 466
a marked difference between the work histories of young and old, and between pagan and Christian. Of the pagan men over middle age, the majority of those who worked had not done so willingly, but had been conscripted as carriers, and the total periods for which they had worked were short, averaging under six months per man. On the other hand, all the Christian men over middle age had worked willingly, and the total period for which each had worked averaged over twelve years. Of the young men, all who had worked had done so willingly, but as with the older men, there was a marked difference between the length of time pagans and Christians spent in employment. The profession of Chris- 464
tianity is, amongst the Nyakyusa, correlated with education, and 785
Christian young men, more especially the sons of Christians, tend to secure the skilled or semi-skilled jobs. Those who have skilled work tend to stay longer in a job and return home less frequently because they fear lest they may not find an equally good job again, and because they have often travelled far to find skilled

[1] Based on the estimated number of men in employment, and an analysis of wage rates within and outside the district.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

work. The unskilled can always get a job, and frequent moves make little difference to their pay. In the sample taken 81 per cent of the Christian sons of Christians, 40 per cent of the Christian sons of pagans, and 5 per cent of the pagan sons of pagans had had skilled or semi-skilled jobs. These cases are set out in a table on p. 193. Of twenty-eight individuals who remained over a year at a stretch in employment, twenty were in skilled or semi-skilled jobs, and eighteen had had some schooling.

It was very difficult to get adequate information on the proportion of time that young men spent away, for though the periods they spent at work might be accurately remembered, the periods at home were not easily recorded. Ten young Christians (other than those cited in the sample above), whose work histories were carefully investigated, had spent, on the average, eighteen and a half months, out of the twenty-five months preceding their return home, in employment outside Rungwe district. That is, they had spent less than a quarter of their time at home. They are certainly not typical of the whole district, but they are probably not unrepresentative of the young Christians.

Certain points emerge from this study. Firstly, the time spent away from their homes at work by middle-aged and elderly pagans is negligible. Secondly, the middle-aged Christians have all worked for long periods, but during most of that time they have lived with their families in Christian villages attached to missions in the district; they are not migrants in the sense that their sons are, though they move from one mission village to another following employment. Thirdly, the great bulk of the young men work outside the district at some time, and those in skilled jobs (mostly Christians) tend to stay away for much longer periods than the unskilled. The effects of this are noticed by Nyakyusa themselves, who remarked of Kabembe Christian village that: 'There were few nice houses, for so many of the young men are away at work.' Nevertheless, even in Christian villages, the effects of men's absence is much less marked than it is in Ngonde, where the percentage of absentees is estimated at over half the able-bodied men.[1]

[1] It was estimated in 1934 that the total male labour force of the district was approximately 10,000 and that, of these, 500 men were in Southern Rhodesia and the Union, and 5,000 on the Lupa goldfields. (Figures supplied by courtesy of the District Commissioner, Karonga, from District records.)

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Economic co-operation beyond the village has therefore increased enormously, and this is correlated with a decrease in economic co-operation within the village. The change is most obvious in the case of migrant labourers who, while remaining members of their villages (for they are domiciled there) cease, during the period they are at labour centres, to co-operate with their village neighbours in building, herding, hoeing and hunting; and those of their wives who accompany them are also withdrawn from village activities. 476

Of the men in paid employment within the district, some, such as house servants, police, hospital orderlies, and clerks attached to the Government station, are very largely withdrawn from economic co-operation in their villages; and even labourers employed on European estates, who still cultivate for themselves, and those who meet essential expenses by growing cash crops on their own account, co-operate less with their village neighbours than was customary in the old days. 476 464

As we have seen there is no village co-operation in the production of the main cash crops—rice and coffee—such as there was in the cultivation of three of the main food crops; therefore those who grow cash crops spend a smaller proportion of their time working with their neighbours than their fathers did. Moreover, the cultivation of cash crops encourages the development of hired labour at the expense of work parties attended by neighbours. In effect, the cultivation of cash crops involves less village co-operation than did the traditional cultivation of food crops, and in so far as men's energies are directed into producing cash crops, village co-operation becomes relatively less important. 241 476

We argue that while traditionally there was considerable co-operation in production between fellow villagers, that co-operation is diminishing, and its diminution is correlated with employment for wages and the production of crops for sale. The more educated the individual the more time he is likely to spend working outside his village, and the less he co-operates in economic activities with his fellow villagers. 476 178

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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VII. A LITTLE GIRL PLANTING SWEET POTATOES IN HER MOTHER'S FIELD

[facing p. 66]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IV

VALUES

a. Good company

829 876 521 515 ONE of the values most constantly stressed by the Nyakyusa is that of *ukwangala* which, in its primary sense, means 'the enjoyment of good company' and, by extension, the mutual aid and sympathy which spring from personal friendship. It implies urbane manners and a friendliness which expresses itself in eating and drinking together; not only merry conversation, but also discussion between equals, which the Nyakyusa regard as the principal form of education. 'It is by conversing with our friends', said one of our witnesses, 'that we gain wisdom (*amahala*); it is bad to sit quite still in men's company. A man who does this is a fool; he learns no wisdom, he has only his own thoughts. Moreover, a man who does not spend time with other people is always dirty, he does not compare himself with any friends. For we learn cleanliness of body in company, those who are dirty learning from their more cleanly friends. Again, if a man is accused of some crime and brought before the chief and is unable to defend himself easily and with eloquence we mock at him and say: "What is the matter with you? Do you live all by yourself? How is it that you are so foolish?" Wisdom and cleanliness are the two great things to be learnt in company. It is bad to live alone far from other people, such a man learns nothing: he never learns to express himself well, to converse wittily with friends, or to argue a case with eloquence. It is better to live with other people.'

829 876 'To live with other people', says our informant, but he implies 'to live with contemporaries'. For *ukwangala*, in the sense of discussion and easy give-and-take, can never occur between men and women, and is made difficult between men of different generations by the respect required of sons for their fathers. Since men are held to acquire manners, eloquence, and wisdom only in company it is necessary, the Nyakyusa argue, that they should build in villages, rather than in scattered homesteads, and since

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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VIII. MEN ON A PIG-HUNT

[facing p. 67]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

829 876 *ukwangala* is only possible between contemporaries[1] they must build with contemporaries. The value set on *ukwangala* is thus related to the age-village; male contemporaries build together, and the company of, and good fellowship with, his age-mates is what creates a man of wisdom and character. Such is the Nyakyusa view of society.

576 264 572 For conversation to flow merrily and discussion to be profound there must be *ifyakwangalela*—'the wherewithal for good fellowship', that is, food and drink—and very great stress is laid on sharing these. Men and boys are expected to eat regularly with age-mates. Traditionally, fathers and sons never ate or drank together—to do so was held to be incompatible with the respect due from son to father—and men sought the company of equals at meals. From the time a small boy begins to herd he is encouraged to bring home two or three friends to eat with him, and in turn he visits each of them. Since boys have no fields of their own until they marry, but co-operate in cultivation with their parents, it is to their own mothers they go for food, and parents are proud of a son bringing many friends. 'Perhaps', said Angombwike, 'a son will come with his friends and cut a huge bunch of bananas, and take thick milk and eat with them. When the father comes back his wives will tell him: "Your son has eaten all the thick milk and cut a banana bunch!" Then he will ask: "How many men were with my son?" "Six!" "Ah, he's a chief!" the old man [861] will say, smiling proudly.' 'And formerly if a young man came home often alone to eat, his father would beat him, or even take a spear and wound him, and when people asked why he would say: "This great fool comes *alone* to my place, again and again." It is good to eat with friends, for boys to go round in groups of four or five.'

264 562 574 After marriage each man is cooked for by his own wife, but he continues to eat with his friends, bringing them to his home or going to their's .The first wife to come to a young men's village is said to have a hard life. 'She has to draw water and cook for all the young men of the village—they come to drink, and to wash, and they beat her with a stick if she refuses them. No, the

[1] *Ukwangala* is sometimes used with reference to relatives as well as to village-mates, as in the phrase '*atikwangala kamunu nabakamu bake*', meaning 'he is not on good terms with his relatives'; but in its fullest sense it can only be used with reference to contemporaries.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

264 husband will not be angry; if he were, he would be mocked at:
562 "Did not your father provide marriage-cattle for this woman for you that she might be the wife (*unkasi*) of us all?" Sometimes, when
574 the woman is cooking, her husband's friends come and take food out of the pot before she has finished cooking. When she protests, saying it is not yet cooked, the men say: "It is your work to cook, ours to eat." Then when her husband comes she tells him that so and so, and so and so, have eaten the food and there is only water left in the pot. . . . But when her husband's friends begin to get married they say to their wives: "That woman is really our wife! Listen to her!" And she has honour among the other women, and when they go to fetch firewood she walks with nothing, another carries her axe and head-pad.' This account cannot be taken literally—the first wife in the village does not provide *all* the food for her husband's friends, who still eat at their mothers' homes, nor do they have any sexual rights over her though they call her 'wife', but she must serve them as far as she can.

571 Sometimes, we were told, men's eating groups last a lifetime,
264 but often friends quarrel or move, and the group breaks up. 'Per-
578 haps one eats at midday and does not summon his friend, but only calls him to the evening meal, then the other, who always calls his friend to the midday meal also, is angry, saying: "He grudges me food", and they separate. They just stop calling each other to eat. Or sometimes one tries to seduce his friend's wife, and on that account they separate.'

264 Eating with contemporaries is still considered right and proper
178 by Nyakyusa men, and it is generally practised by pagans, but the old men say that youths are less ready to share food than formerly. 'This custom of eating together is dying.' Certainly in Christian villages the practice has declined markedly. Many unmarried Christians eat with their friends, but the majority of the married men eat at home alone. Out of eight married men living in Rungwe, for example, only two ate together regularly, and the most educated group, the clerks, are notorious in the district for their eating habits. 'People are much shocked at the clerks for eating food alone. They say they are proud.'

264 Apart from eating regularly with certain close friends, well-to-
574 do pagan men are expected to entertain generously, inviting fellow villagers to drink beer, or to a 'dinner party'—an ample meal with delicious dishes, very carefully served—from time to

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

time, and providing meat feasts at funerals and at the initiation and marriage of daughters. 264 574

As it is proper for men to eat with their equals it is improper for them to eat with their juniors, or with women. In the past fathers and sons never ate or drank together. Nowadays they sometimes do so, even though conservative pagans, especially if the fathers and sons have been working together. Three reasons are adduced for the change: first, the example of Europeans and Swahili; secondly, the fact that the country is at peace and it is safe for all the men to drink together, whereas formerly, when there was constant danger of attack, the young men were forbidden to drink at all; and thirdly the fact that young men earn money and buy beer for themselves which they may invite a 'father' to share (*vide* Document p. 194). When the Nyakyusa drink beer they replenish the pot repeatedly with boiling water, and men expect to have the water boiled for them by a woman. As Mwambuputa explained, 'Sometimes my son brings his pot (of beer) to my place and calls his friends saying: "We will take the pot to mother's house and she will pour in water for us." Then they come to my place, and they invite me to drink, and I accept, and we drink together. How can I grudge my son beer when I have some? Did he and his friends not entertain me?' The change turns on the fact that a young man can earn money and buy beer for himself while yet unmarried. Formerly no unmarried man commanded millet for brewing. Now, when he is drinking in his father's homestead he cannot but invite his father to join him. 264 593 178

Women commonly eat alone with their young children and unmarried daughters. Sometimes co-wives who are good friends eat together, but they have no obligation to do so, and in a big homestead perhaps only two wives will eat together and each of the others eat alone. More usually a woman sends a dish of food to each co-wife to eat in her own hut. For a woman to eat food with a man is considered quite impossible. In those families in which men no longer ate with neighbours one or two ate with their young sons, but we heard of none who ate with their wives. The example of Europeans did not influence them to this extent. 264 595

It is admitted that women also enjoy company and profit from it, and it is considered good that they should get on with their fellows, but there is no suggestion that it is a woman's duty to 264 462 574

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Nyakyusa

IX. NDIMBOMI, A CHRISTIAN WOMAN, STOOPING TO GREET A MAN

[Facing p. 70]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

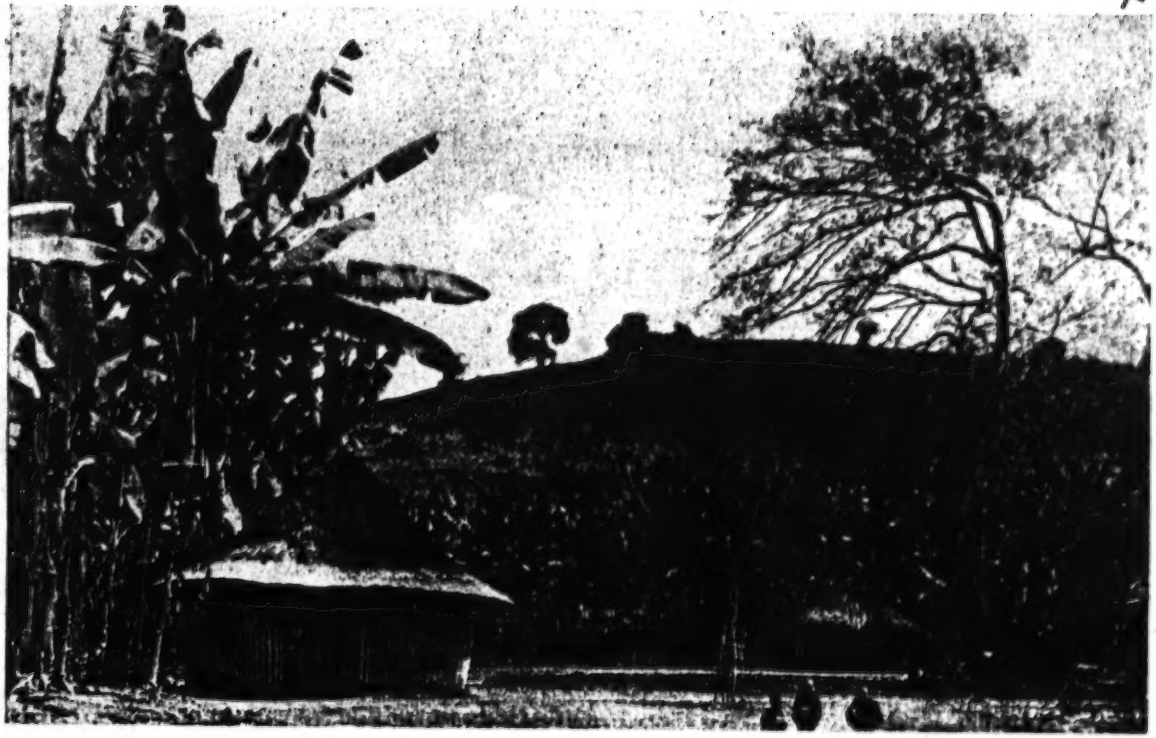
264 cultivate her mind by conversation, or to eat regularly in com-
462 pany. In more formal hospitality there is the same difference; a
574 woman never invites her friends to drink beer with her, or to a 'dinner party', as her husband must do if he is to have prestige with his neighbours. Women only share the ritual feasts at initiation and marriage, and at death.

585 There are local variations in Nyakyusa rituals, notably between
764 the Kukwe and Nyakyusa proper. But everywhere there is an obligation to provide feasts at the funerals and marriages of de-
574 pendants. When his wife or unmarried child dies, a man must kill cattle for his relatives and neighbours to feast at the burial,[1] while an heir provides a feast for his relatives, and the neighbours of the 'father' from whom he has inherited. At these feasts equal portions of meat are allotted to relatives and neighbours—or were so allotted until the rights of neighbours to meat at funerals were formally limited (*vide infra*, p. 93). An heir must also brew beer, or kill a bull, to feast the deceased's neighbours when he begins to cohabit with his widow, or moves the property from his village. At the initiation and marriage of a girl there is a series of feasts (five in Selya), the food for which is provided partly by the groom's family and partly by the bride's; and if, as is usual, the bride is still a virgin or has been deflowered by the groom himself, he must provide a bull in thanks for her virginity (*engambako jabusungu*), which is killed to feast the neighbours and relatives of her parents. The carcass is divided into three portions, one for the immediate neighbours of her father (men), one for 'those relatives with whom the father is on good terms and exchanges cattle', and one for the 'mothers' of the bride. Women as well as men eat meat and other fine food at all the marriage and funeral feasts.

574 The third occasion on which a feast for the village neighbours
is thought to be essential is when a man or woman has offended
576 his (or her) neighbours, or the neighbours of a 'father'. Thus a woman who has shirked her duty of advising on the division of her brother's inheritance, and is disapproved of by her neighbours on this account, begs pardon of them over a brewing of beer (*vide infra*, pp. 107, 236); a son, having insulted his father's neighbours

[1] For the circumstances under which other relatives must provide cattle for funeral feasts see Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939), p. 18.

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa



X. 'THE DIGNITY OF THE HOMESTEAD'—— OLD STYLE
Note the tree planted and carefully protected, in the courtyard

[facing p. 71]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

574 by insulting his father, begs pardon of them by bringing a bull
576 which his father may eat with them; or a daughter-in-law, having inadvertently caught sight of her father-in-law, brings beer for him to drink with his neighbours.

574 At all feasts food is allotted in terms of kinship and village affiliation, and this tends to enhance the solidarity of kin groups
264 and villages. For example, funeral meat is first divided between
764 relatives and non-relatives, and that allocated to non-relatives is subdivided by villages, each village headman present being given a share to divide between his people, men and women. When a relative of the chief has died, and the whole country has come to mourn, the chief allots a cow to each of his senior headmen, who then divide the carcasses between the villages in their respective halves of the chiefdom. The meat at a 'coming out' ceremony, and at the great feasts which were held after battle, was divided in the same way, and we saw a division of this kind when a senior headman who had been in exile was welcomed home (cf. pp. 273–4). Thus the right to share in a feast depends either on kinship with the provider, or on membership of a village.

574 The Christians' code of hospitality differs somewhat from that
184 of the pagans: the latter stress feeding *neighbours*, whether it be in the daily eating together, or at informal beer and dinner parties, or at ceremonies, while the Christians stress feeding strangers, quoting the text 'I was a stranger and ye took me in'[1] and the parable of the Good Samaritan.[2] The pagans jibe at the Christians for being inhospitable because (as the Christians themselves admit) they entertain their neighbours less than pagans do; the Christians point to their wider obligations, and the fact that they do feed and house visitors from a distance, especially fellow Christians gathering for Church festivals. The Christians are very conscious also of the difficulties of hospitality in a monogamous household, for a wife must not only do all the cooking for visitors (and many Nyakyusa dishes require considerable labour to prepare), but she must also help to grow the food. The pagan who can afford to entertain much has several wives who share the work between them, whereas a Christian, no matter how rich, cannot have more than one wife and remain a member of his Church—unless it be one of the two small independent

[1] Matthew xxv. 35.
[2] Luke x. 29.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

574 African churches which countenance polygyny. The difficulty is
184 partially overcome in some well-to-do Christian families by hiring labour to work in their fields and to fetch water and wood, and by offering visitors coffee or tea, which are easily prepared, in place of home-brewed beer; nevertheless the conflict between
[182] the value of hospitality (to which pagan and Christian alike subscribe, though they define it rather differently) and the value of monogamy, is often acute.

621 The mutual obligations of neighbours are not confined to feeding one another, for neighbours share with relatives the obligation of giving sympathy and assistance at the various crises in Nyakyusa life; the concept of *ukwangala* includes keeping on good terms with people by being sympathetic and obliging.

764 All the members of a village (except young children) are
621 obliged to attend every burial of an adolescent or adult in that village; they go to mourn the death of a neighbour or condole with one who is burying a 'son', for if a man dies while his father (or father's full brother, or his own senior brother) is yet alive, he is often buried in his 'father's' homestead.[1] Where a youth or man is buried by his 'father', his fellow villagers must attend the funeral also, but boys and young men need not go to a funeral in their fathers' village unless it is a village-mate of their own who is being buried.

[754] Funerals are occasions for feasting and dancing, so the obligation 'to mourn one another' (*ukulelanela*) does not press hardly, and the Nyakyusa feeling is that no one would fail to come unless he were a witch, and fearful lest his victim rise from the grave and denounce him. 'If a man does not go to his neighbour's burial then at once people say: "It was you who bewitched him. Why else do you not come to bury him?" ' Failure to come is certain evidence that the truant is 'a harsh man who does not keep on good terms with people (*nkali, atikwangala kanunu nabandu*)'.

764 One neighbour, 'he who went about most with the dead man', is appointed by the headman of the village to help the relatives dig the grave, and village neighbours must also bring small gifts of food and firewood for the entertainment of the many guests.

[1] A married man whose 'fathers' are dead, or do not choose to exercise their right to bury him, is buried at his own home, and a woman who has borne a child is buried at her husband's home.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Food (other than meat) is provided on the day of the burial by the women of the home at which the burial takes place, on the succeeding day by visiting relatives, and on the third day by village neighbours. Women neighbours, like woman relatives, often bring gifts of bark-cloth belts (*amakiba*) with which to bind up the bellies of their bereaved friends, who are all atremble and full of fear, and so support them. These belts symbolize the sympathy of friends in the fearful grief of the mourners. 'If a woman wears many belts at a burial that means that she has many friends; her passionate grief is comforted by their friendship.'[1] And neighbours, like relatives and close friends from other chiefdoms, may bring cloths which are used to wrap the corpse and bind up the bellies of the chief mourners. But these gifts of food, firewood, belts, and cloth are the limit of a neighbour's obligations; very rarely does a neighbour bring a bull to kill for the funeral feast, whereas close kinsmen and affines are obliged to provide a bull or cow for this purpose if they have one. And neighbours take virtually no share in the elaborate ritual which follows for cleansing relatives from the contagion of death, driving the thought of the deceased out of their minds, and bringing back his spirit to bless the home. Their only part is to bring small gifts of millet from which to brew the beer drunk at the close of this ritual.

764 [431 292]

At an ordinary birth there is very little ceremony and the village as a group is not concerned, though close friends will help the mother during her confinement, fetching wood and water for her, and bringing occasional gifts of cooked food; but twin births are regarded as fearful and dangerous, and an elaborate ritual is performed to cleanse relatives from the contagion which, if left untreated, is believed to lead to serious swelling of the arms, legs, and stomachs, accompanied by diarrhoea. Relatives are treated with many medicines, while village neighbours are sprinkled with one only, but their cattle, especially the cattle herded with those of the man who has begotten twins, are thought to be in danger. At one twin ritual we watched there was some discussion whether all the cattle of the age-village should be treated, or only those of the herd-group to which the father of the twins belonged. Finally it was decided that on previous occasions all the cattle of the village had been treated, and a message was sent

[844] 621 845 783 [753]

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939), p. 12.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 to bring all the herds of the village for treatment. The father of
783 these twins explained that neighbours would suffer less than
621 relatives, if left untreated, but 'their legs would ache a little *because we eat with them*'. And here we come to an idea which
[264] appears in many situations in Nyakyusa life, the idea that contagion is spread through eating together. Relatives of parents of twins are not thought to be in danger until they eat or drink with one of the parents: the ritual is performed so that they may eat together safely. Similarly a murderer and his relatives are thought to be in magical danger from the relatives of the murdered man only if they should eat or drink with them. So too, the bond between neighbours which puts them in danger from the impurity of one of them is the sharing of food.

881 At the initiation and marriage of a girl, neighbours again assist
621 and identify themselves with the principals. When she reaches puberty a girl is secluded, and her companions in the village—the girls who are her immediate juniors, for the older ones will have joined their husbands—keep her company. Some are her own younger sisters and half-sisters, others are not related at all. Should one girl of the village not join them she is not accused of witchcraft, but it is unusual for one to stay away; to do so would show 'pride' (*amatingo*). These companions (*abapanji*) sleep and eat with the 'bride' (*unsungu*)[1] and share her tasks and lessons, fetching firewood, making mats, learning songs, and listening to the instruction of 'the mothers'. They and the 'bride' go about together as a group and, accompanied by one or two 'mothers', may visit a 'bride' and her maids in another village, the two
[576] groups competing in dancing and singing. So keen is the rivalry that formerly, we were told, the visits sometimes led to fighting between the maids and 'mothers' of each 'bride', particularly when the competing groups came from different chiefdoms. At the end of the ritual two of the maids accompany the bride to her
[864] husband's house, and spend a few days with her there, sharing the attentions of her husband at night (*vide infra*, p. 87).

During her seclusion the bride avoids her father, whom she refers to as 'father-in-law', and she avoids also all his contem-

[1] *Unsungu* means a girl who has reached puberty but has not yet borne a child. She is usually, though not invariably, betrothed, and her 'husband' has a part in the puberty ritual. There is no exact English translation, and we think that 'bride' is the least misleading in this context.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

poraries, the men of the village. They are forbidden to enter her 881
hut, and if she catches sight of one outside she turns away from 621
him and shields her face with a mat. And at the end of the seclusion each 'village father', as well as her own father, must make her a small gift, before she will greet him. The co-wives and some of the village neighbours of the bride's mother form the group of 'mothers' who treat and instruct the bride, help to provide food for the feasts, and finally take her to her husband. Not all the 881
village neighbours are expected to cook for the marriage feasts of 621
a commoner's daughter, only immediate neighbours and special 576
friends (together with relatives) who have been asked to do so; but if an immediate neighbour is not invited to help he will feel affronted. Twijulege explained that 'If the owner of the homestead overlooks someone who has built close to him, and does not say to him, "They are coming to bring the marriage-cattle for *your* child, please help us to cook", then that friend will be angry, and will think to himself, "Perhaps we are not on good terms (*tutikwangala kanunu*) though I had always thought we were", and he will say to the father of the bride: "Why did you not tell me that they were coming to bring the marriage-cattle for your child that I might help you with the food? I was startled by the rejoicing." ' An old man who had only called one friend, besides relatives and the 'best man', to help cook at the marriage of his daughter, was stigmatized as 'a surly fellow who does not care about being on good terms with people'.

The groom, on his part, is supported by his village-mates, who 585
come in a crowd driving the marriage-cattle, and dancing the 621
stamping marriage dance (*ukukanya nganya*). His mother, who 535
has a share in the ritual and brings gifts of food, follows him, accompanied by some of her co-wives and village neighbours.

Village solidarity is thus exhibited at ceremonies, not only in 621
the allocation of food, but by the manner in which village contemporaries of the same sex rally to each other's help, dance together and, if need be, fight together.

Besides offering sympathy and help when their fellow is in 621
need, it is the duty of neighbours to give him advice, and per- 572
suade him to act wisely. If, for example, a man has delayed very long in providing marriage-cattle for his son, his neighbours take the son's part, and try to persuade him to give the cattle. 'Perhaps', said one informant, 'the son may elope with a girl, and

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 then if the father says his son has done wrong his neighbours
572 reply: "You have caused him to do wrong yourself. Did you suppose him to be a boy that you did not provide marriage-cattle for him?" Then the father becomes more ready to pay damages for his son.' And again, 'If a young man finds that his father objects to his marrying the girl he loves, he complains to his father's neighbours (*pamafumu abapalamani ba guise*). Then they discuss the matter and say to the father: "Do you want him to teach you a lesson by taking a chief's wife or daughter, for whom many cattle must be given?" So the father agrees.'

768 Neighbours are concerned, too, to see a fair distribution of a
621 deceased fellow's estate, and the fulfilment of the heir's obligations to his wards. '*It is not the relatives, but "the fathers of the* village" who watch over a young boy's interests when his father is dead' (*vide infra*, p. 106). We listened to one discussion of a [584] quarrel over inheritance which was believed to have led to kinsmen working sorcery against each other. At this discussion four village neighbours of the sick man (thought to be suffering from the sorcery of his father's brother's son), as well as ten relatives, attended.

684 The father's neighbours are also asked to mediate when a son
593 has wronged his father and seeks forgiveness. For example,
621 Mwangobola's son had committed adultery with his father's wife. He paid six head of cattle and then went off to the coast,
783 where he remained a long time. When he returned he brought two cows and approached his father's neighbours, asking them to take the cows to his father. When they took the cows his father said: 'He must find a bull as well, and brew beer, because he is my eldest son.' So he got a bull and brewed beer, and the father also brewed. 'Then', said the old man who reported the case, 'the fathers of the village came together and the bull was killed and they ate the meat and drank the beer. . . . Thus the son made friends with his father.'

621 Here we have the ritual of reconciliation between relatives in
783 which neighbours of the senior must participate, for their anger is held to be as dangerous to the junior as that of his senior relative. Informal giving of advice merges into the practice of arbitration, and of murmuring against a wrong-doer, and thus, it is thought, causing him misfortune. These latter practices are discussed in ensuing chapters.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

b. Dignity

Though the Nyakyusa lay so much stress on geniality, and 156
praise a man for being 'a good mixer', yet they greatly admire 577
dignity (*ubuniya*). To be *niya* (dignified, impressive) is one of the attributes of chiefs and village headmen, sought, as we have seen, through medicines; but ordinary men may also aspire to it in their persons and homesteads. Indeed, *ubuniyas bwa nkaja*, the dignity of the homestead, is one of the legitimate channels of ambition to a Nyakyusa, and is something achieved largely *through hard work*.

Two styles of huts are traditional—one round, with the wall 341
slanting outwards towards the top, and a conical roof; the other 577
rectangular with perpendicular walls, a pitched roof, and curving 515
gables (cf. Plates X and XI). For a homestead to be dignified the huts must be built of good bamboos, and the space between them packed with oval-shaped mud bricks, carefully worked in patterns. Special pains are taken with the ends of long huts (*ifibaga*) to get a good curve on the roof pole, and a pleasing design of bricks and criss-cross binding on the gable (cf. Plate XI). Inside, the walls are plastered smooth, and house-proud women mould a pattern in the mud with their fingers, which runs round the wall like a frieze. A long hut, showing that the owner has many cattle and young wives to house, adds dignity, but the homestead of a relatively poor man may be *niya* if the huts are well built, the open space between them weeded and swept, and the bananas pruned and heavy with fruit; while a shabby long hut and a dirty court are never dignified, no matter how rich the owner. The insistence on cleanliness both within the huts and 577
in the court is very marked;[1] men themselves weed and sweep 515
regularly around their homesteads, and their young sons must help them. The Nyakyusa jibe at their neighbours for being dirty in person, in cooking, and in their homesteads: indeed the dirty habits of the women is given as a main reason for not intermarrying with the Kinga or Poroto; and a Christian confided in

[1] Thomson, Kerr-Cross, and Legard were all greatly impressed by Nyakyusa cleanliness; Thomson, op. cit., p. 271; Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyasa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), p. 283; Legard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 132.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342

XI. A TRADITIONAL STYLE LONG HUT (IKIBAGA)

[Facing p. 78]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

577 us that it was a great effort to her to accept food from the Poroto
515 when she went on preaching tours, because their huts and pots were so dirty.

351 Trees are felt to add to the dignity of a homestead as well as throwing a grateful shade; the beautiful *umwali* trees have long
577 been valued for this purpose, and to-day exotics are much sought after. For example, the old chief Mwaipopo, noticing a fine cypress when he visited us at Isumba (a cottage that had once been a German mission hospital) inquired whether there were not some seedlings under the tree. He himself carefully dug up one and took it away to plant in his 'capital'. Some Nyakyusa even *steal* trees to adorn their homesteads. It is said that jacarandas planted out in an avenue at Tukuyu disappeared within a very short time.

341 The attributes of dignity in the homestead are changing perceptibly. Well-built huts in the old style, a long *ihibaga*, a well-
577 swept court, fruitful bananas, and fine *umwali* trees are mentioned
177 by the old men; but many of the younger ones prefer hip-roofed houses (a style introduced by Europeans and known, appropriately enough, as 'the partridge') with windows and door of European pattern, beds of flowers, roses, fine coffee and exotic trees. Yet they keep the court well swept; for lawns have not become fashionable.

577 A fine presence, a well-kept homestead rich in cattle and bananas and shaded with stately trees, are in themselves impressive, but the possessor of them only reaches his full dignity when he acts as host, and uses his fine food and fine home for lavish hospitality. Wealth and an impressive manner, without urbanity and hospitality, may well lead to accusations of witchcraft.

c. Display

156 Feasts provide opportunity for swaggering parades and dances in which the Nyakyusa delight to display themselves and their possessions; they are the great occasions for *ukumoga*, that is, display in approved forms. Dancing, exhibiting a beautiful body with only a narrow bark-cloth belt to hide it, showing off physical strength and the aggressiveness of a warrior, parading orna-

342
241

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

XII. 'THE DIGNITY OF THE HOMESTEAD'—— NEW STYLE
Chief Pereketo's main house in Ilolo village

[facing p. 79]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

156 ments and fine clothes, or a splendid herd of cattle—all these are forms of *ukumoga*.

Traditionally Nyakyusa women wore only a bark-cloth belt 291 tied around the waist and drawn between the legs to fall in streamers in front (cf. Plate XIII), and the pagan women cling to 177 this dress, maintaining that it is only 'Swahili women with dirty diseases' who have to wear clothes to cover their sores, and if a pagan woman has a cloth she will probably wave it like a flag or hang it over one shoulder, when she dances. Except for the Christians, few Nyakyusa women regularly wear clothes. The Christians like a brightly coloured cloth tied under the armpits, and hanging to the knees (cf. Plate IX). Women make their own [287] bark-cloths with great care, and decorate them with geometrical patterns in red and black, the red dye being imported from the Livingstone mountains; they mix this same dye with a fatty [386] ointment made from the seeds of the *unyunguti* tree, and rub it all over themselves. The most prized ornament (worn by both [301] sexes) are body rings of coiled brass or copper wire (cf. Plate XIII). In the past men went naked except for these body rings[1] but, unlike the women, they have taken enthusiastically to clothes, and swagger around in brilliant loin-cloths or flowing white togas; or, if rather more sophisticated, in freshly pressed shorts and shirts, or lounge suits and topees.

535 The series of ceremonies at a girl's initiation and marriage, and 156 at a funeral, are regular occasions for dancing, and the birth and death rates are so high that these occur very frequently within a chiefdom of 3,000 men. Once in a generation the eagerly anticipated 'coming out' ceremony offers an even greater opportunity for display. Skill in dancing is admired and the young people are encouraged to practise. A bride's mother does a great deal of the heavy work for her daughter, saying '*amoge tasi*', which means literally 'let her display herself first', and implies 'let her have a good time while she can'; and a father may use the same phrase of his son. Angombwike explained: "The old men used to take 156 great pride in their sons; often a man would say to his son: "Don't 593 you hoe for me, I'll do the hoeing myself, you go and swagger about." Sometimes a man would sell a cow and buy a huge-bladed spear and give it to his son. Then, if he heard that his son

[1] cf. Elton, op. cit., p. 322; H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, p. 18.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

was a fierce man in war, and always quarrelling with and spearing his fellows, he would say with pride: "He is my son!" And if he heard people saying: "The son of so and so is a fierce man", he would rejoice. And if the son wished to marry young his father would refuse him cows, saying: "Swagger first." 'That truculence (*ubukali*) is a form of swaggering for men, is still evident in the funeral dance, when men charge up and down with spears, displaying their strength, and take umbrage at the slightest thing (*vide infra*, p. 151). And marriage was deliberately delayed partly because a bachelor was thought to be a fiercer warrior than a married man.

This admiration of truculence, as shown in the funeral dance, reveals a contradiction in Nyakyusa values. On the one hand urbanity and good temper are praised—they are intrinsic to *ukwangala*—on the other truculence. Is the opposition one between old and new values, or is the contradiction itself traditional? It is obvious that a readiness to fight was a quality valuable to the village in the days of inter-village warfare, and the Nyakyusa tell of murderers and even thieves being reprieved just because they were so useful in war. 'We did not drive away violent men (*abagasi*) in the old days; we said: "They will fight along with us in the future" '; whereas since the pacification of the country, quarrelsome men have become nothing but a liability, likely to get their fellows and their chief into trouble with the Administration. The Christian emphasis, also, is all on the virtue of peaceableness. There has probably been some change in values with the disappearance of war from the villages, but we think that a certain contradiction always existed: swaggering young men were admired, and children were warned not to be quarrelsome (*nkali*) towards their fellows, lest they be accused of practising witchcraft, or rouse the anger of a witch. The contradiction is not, of course, peculiar to Nyakyusa society, and it may be resolved by defining the groups within which fighting is excluded, and those in which it is approved. Most Nyakyusa would hold that in the old days quarrelsomeness within the village was bad, that towards members of another village of the same chiefdom it was allowable, and towards members of another chiefdom it was good. In the wider society of to-day the same distinctions are apparent: the war dance at funerals is limited lest it lead to fighting between villages (*vide infra*, p. 151) but admir-

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ing audiences watch their friends in the detachment of the King's African Rifles at bayonet drill in Masoko.[1]

Display is felt to be particularly appropriate to young people, and bachelors were held to be the fiercest warriors, but neither dancing nor fighting was confined to young men. The chief Mwaipopo (Plate V) was famous as a skilful and ardent dancer when over seventy, and the leader in war was the senior headman of the country, who, if not already married when he took office, had to marry almost immediately, since his wife shared in the ritual of establishing his house. Furthermore the villages of married men of the ruling generation fought, as well as the villages of their bachelor brothers and sons.

That the Nyakyusa had some skill in warfare is certain, for they defeated and drove off Ngoni raiders and warriors of the Sangu chief Merere,[2] but they never developed a military kingdom like that of the Bemba to the west, or the Hehe to the east, nor did they raid at large like the Masai and Ngoni. Their geographical position sheltered them very considerably from outside attack, and discouraged raiding abroad. They confined themselves mostly to lifting the cattle of neighbouring chiefdoms.

Cattle, whether they be spoils of war or inherited wealth, are displayed. Not only does a long byre add to the dignity of a homestead, but, when there is some ceremony at the home of a rich man, he shows off his herd by driving it round and round the homestead. At other times his sons gallop it along the village street, the iron bells with which the animals are adorned ringing merrily. Nyakyusa smiths make cow-bells in sets,[3] to chime in harmony, and the aim of a rich man is to own a set of bells which ring a full chime, and a herd large enough to carry them. Nowadays those who own bicycles display them in the same sort of way, riding round and round the homestead at a ceremony, and ringing the bells madly.

Unlike the enjoyment of good company (*ukwangala*), display

[1] This detachment was not supposed to include Nyakyusa who were recruited for a detachment stationed outside the district, but in fact Nyakyusa got in by posing as men from Ngonde, Nyasaland.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 119–20; Lugard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 56, speaks of the Nyakyusa as 'brave in war'.

[3] We deposited a set in the Livingstone Memorial Museum, Livingstone, N. Rhodesia.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

156 (*ukumoga*) is not confined to the company of contemporaries of the same sex. Indeed the liveliest dancing is before members of [535 the opposite sex, and is often the preliminary to love-making; but 584] full opportunity for display is thought to depend upon living in a village, rather than in scattered homesteads. Some Nyakyusa are 166 colonists, cultivating and building out in unoccupied bush country five or six miles from a settled area; but living out in the bush 156 is disliked by most people and is done, we were told, only for gain. Cattle are said to increase very much more quickly out in bush, where grazing is plentiful, than they do on the village pastures, and the yield of virgin fields made in the bush is high. Hence the Nyakyusa dictum: 'People live in the villages for display, in the bush for gain.' And individuals commonly display themselves as members of a group—a group of contemporaries of the same sex, that is, of village-mates.

d. Decency

834 The basis of Nyakyusa sexual morality is the separation of the sexual activities of successive generations, more particularly the separation of the sexual activities of mothers and sons, and the complete segregation of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

Nyakyusa informants hold that boys are sent out of their parents' 834 village to build apart so that their parents may have privacy. Mwaisumo explained: 'If a boy over ten years old stays at home 864 to sleep, he is laughed at by his friends, and his own parents send him away. They say, "If he sleeps at home he will hear what his parents talk about at night"; the night is always full of lewd talk; and he may even see them undressing. He will grow up a fool, with little wisdom! You see at the boys' village', he went on to say, 'the older boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love-making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger ones listen to these things and that's all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn, but we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night; and that is very bad, that is foolishness. But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to listen, that is how children grow up.'

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Another informant added: 'Boys usually move of their own accord; if they don't their fellows mock them saying: "Why do you sleep with your mother and see the evil things of your mother when she puts on her bark-cloth? . . . You sleep with your mother and see the evil things of your father and mother. Perhaps they think you are asleep, but you see them."' 834

Sons and mothers are separated at night, but the boys come to their mothers' houses for food; fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law are completely segregated from the time a girl is betrothed or, if she has been betrothed in infancy, from the time she is about eight years old. Her father-in-law is pointed out once to the newly betrothed girl, and after that she must never look at him. She never enters a house in which he is, and she leaves a path if she catches a glimpse of him, or is warned by her friends that he is approaching; she also avoids his name and anything associated with him, being particularly careful to avoid going near the bed in her mother-in-law's house, should she visit her mother-in-law during her father-in-law's absence. The avoidance is extended to a large group of kinsmen—her father-in-law's brothers and cousins, her mother-in-law's brothers, the husbands of her mother-in-law's sisters, and the fathers-in-law (direct and by extension) of each of her own sisters;[1] but it is *not* extended to the father-in-law's village-mates. In practice, the forms of avoidance vary with the actual relationship—the more distant the connection the less strictly are the rules observed—and with the locality, for the Nyakyusa proper avoid in-laws more carefully than the Kukwe do. A Nyakyusa wife, for example, should *never* enter her father-in-law's house, but a Kukwe wife may do so during his absence. 834 606 602

The Nyakyusa argue, cogently enough, that it would be quite impossible for father-in-law and daughter-in-law to live in the same village and avoid one another as they do; and indeed the difficulties of avoidance are apparent at ceremonies when members of different villages are congregated. Then the women are on the watch all the time, and one or another is constantly taking refuge in a hut, or in the bananas, as her friends warn her of the approach of a 'father-in-law'. The practical difficulties were obvious when we attended a funeral ceremony at Mwambelike's 606

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

606 house, one pouring wet day, when sitting or cooking out of doors was impossible. Mwambelike's wife was cooking for us and other visitors. Suddenly there was a cry from her husband and others, 'Father-in-law!' She ran out of the room, leaving her cooking. The man who came in was a mother's brother's son (*untani*) of Mwambelike's father, and counted as a mother's brother (*umwipa*) to Mwambelike. Mwambelike explained to him that his wife was cooking and asked him to stay 'at the door', so he went out, and the woman came back. She cooked placidly for half an hour. Mwambelike said: 'Tell my daughter to come and help you with the cooking', then, looking round, he said: 'Oh no, she can't, her father-in-law is here too.' This was her betrothed husband's mother's brother. Mwambelike's daughter was about thirteen years old and had not yet reached puberty. Some time later the wife called to this girl to bring her some water. Nothing was said by the men and after three calls the girl scurried in giggling, put the water down, and scurried out. Then the men took notice, the 'father-in-law' said nothing, but Mwambelike said apologetically: 'It's all right; she did not look at him.' When the wife had finished cooking our food she went out, and the men called her 'father-in-law' in. He stayed about five minutes then, realizing that all the men were hungry, he said: 'I will go away. Let her get on with her cooking'; so he went out and she came back and cooked for the other guests.

606 The strength of the feeling against seeing one's father-in-law is
177 apparent in the behaviour of Christian women. The missionaries
795 have taught that avoidance is unnecessary and inconvenient, if not unchristian, and that a daughter-in-law should behave as a daughter to her husband's father. Various Christian women assured us that they 'did not avoid their fathers-in-law', though most admitted to 'avoiding a little'. One day S—, who had volunteered that she did not avoid her father-in-law, had come to tea with us, together with another Christian woman. S—'s father-in-law, a chief, came along the veranda on an unexpected visit. Before he was visible S— leapt up, gasped 'father-in-law!' and hid herself in the corner of the room behind the door, facing the wall with her face buried in her hands. She stood there a few seconds gasping, then came back to her place and pushing away her chair, sat down on the floor, whispering determinedly: 'I *won't* avoid him, I *won't* avoid him.' Her friend also slipped off

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

her chair and sat on the floor. We said to Mwaipopo as he entered: 'There is a daughter-in-law here.' He said: 'That's all right, she is enjoying the company of Kagile (M.W.)', but he was obviously restive, and went outside as soon as food appeared. He said to G.W.: 'That's quite all right, let them go on enjoying each other's company. She (i.e. S—) does not avoid me because M— (a local missionary) brought her to me one day and I killed a bull for them, but let us stay outside now, for they would be ashamed to eat.' The women protested very much saying *they* would go out, but the chief would not agree. As soon as they had drunk their tea they hurried off, and crouching down with their backs towards the men they answered their farewell greetings. 606 177 795

In reply to queries as to why they insist that father-in-law and daughter-in-law avoid one another, the Nyakyusa relate a myth of incest between them: 'Long ago a chief's son married a very beautiful wife. The boy's father saw the girl and after one look desired her, for she was very beautiful, and he said: "She is fit to be a chief's wife (*umwehe*)." Men said this was a very bad thing and agreed that in future they would not look at their daughters-in-law. That is how avoidance began. It was for fear of fathers making love to their sons' wives.' This myth is related with some diffidence, and not everyone knows it, but it was told us, or referred to, repeatedly, and may be taken as current in the society. One informant, a very intelligent woman doctor, also associated seeing a father-in-law with seeing his sexual activities. 'We think that to see your husband's father is very rude, because it is as if you saw him sleeping with your husband's mother. You compare, you see, your husband's body and you see your husband's father's body. It is very bad.' 606 835

Age-villages are then associated with the feeling that fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law must be kept completely separate lest they should commit incest, and that adolescent youths should not have any glimpse of the sexual activities of their parents; but the separation of the generations is not complete, for marriage with the daughter of a village neighbour is approved, provided he is not an *immediate* neighbour. Mwakionde explained that in the old days people disliked marriage with the daughter of a next-door neighbour because she was 'like a daughter'—'the fathers ate *embalaga* (a dish made with bananas) together'—but marriage with the daughters of other village-mates was always approved. 606 621 834 582 582

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

582 Marriage with the daughter of a father's age-mate is also favoured, though she is called 'a village-sister' (*ulilumbu pa kipanga*), and such a marriage means that a girl has to avoid a father-in-law in her own father's village.

837 Adultery with the wife of a village neighbour is regarded as a heinous offence, much worse than ordinary adultery, and so also
835 is the seduction of the wife of one's father, or of one of his village neighbours, even though a father's wives are eventually inherited by his son. 'It is bad,' Mwaisumo said, 'because they are friends of one's own mother.' That is to say, there is a direct extension of the incest taboo so long as the father is alive. A son who has com-
[764] mitted adultery with his own father's wives is afraid to attend his father's funeral lest he fall dead.[1]

584 Since marriage between 'brothers and sisters of the village' is approved, courtship goes on between the youths of a boys' village and the girls of their fathers' village, with this limitation, that brothers and sisters, or cousins—the descendants of a common grandfather or great-grandfather—must not be present at a flirtation. Boys from the same age-village go about together, and they commonly flirt with any group of girls they meet, whether from their fathers' village or not. It is then that the incest taboos are learnt. If one of the boys is known to be related to one of the girls his companions send him away saying: 'Don't you see your sister is here? You cannot come.'

Formerly, we were told, girls of the same village lived together (until they were married) in a girls' house (*isaka*), where they were visited secretly by lovers, who had external relations with them. Such girls' houses no longer exist among the Nyakyusa, each daughter living in her father's homestead until she is married, and sleeping with her own mother, or with a step-mother when her father visits her mother, or with the other children in a separate division of the long house, if her mother is the only wife. Only when she is keeping an older companion company at the initiation ritual does she sleep with the other girls of the village in a hut provided by the 'bride's' father.[2] But permanent girls' houses still exist in Ngonde. There each family

[1] Occasionally an elderly man gives his son leave to sleep with his wives in secret, while he (the father) is still alive; then an elaborate ritual is performed on the father's death.

[2] This hut is referred to as *isaka* also, but only during the initiation; it is to be distinguished from a hut regularly reserved for girls.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

usually has a separate hut for its girls, to which, we were told, 584
their lovers come secretly by night.

Nyakyusa informants connected the existence of girls' houses 582
with the marriage age. In Ngonde the marriage age of girls is
much higher than it is among the Nyakyusa, partly because there [795]
are many more Christians (45 per cent as against 16 per cent)
who do not allow polygyny, partly because even the girls from
pagan families in Ngonde dislike marrying a polygynist, and
partly because a much higher percentage of young men are away at
work, than from Nyakyusa country. Formerly, they said, the marri-
age age was higher among the Nyakyusa also, and then the Nyak-
yusa had *isaka*. It is certain that among the Nyakyusa betrothal [881]
of a girl has long taken place before puberty, for the husband
plays an essential part in the puberty ritual, and there were always
some girls who were betrothed when quite tiny; but the evidence
is fairly clear that the average age of betrothal among the pagans
has been going down. The Nyakyusa view is that no man in his
senses, who is able to marry, will engage a little girl of eight if he
can find one approaching puberty; and it is the scarcity of wives
that makes men 'marry' little girls. It is also clear that the number [231]
of cattle in the country, and their rate of circulation, has increased
during the last two decades, so there are 'too many cattle chasing
too few brides' with the result that the marriage age of girls
has fallen, and the number of cattle given at marriage has
increased.

Once she is betrothed, a girl's 'husband' has exclusive sexual 584
rights over her, and she cannot entertain lovers in the *isaka*. The 836
only two occasions on which she may flirt and have external 881
relations with a man other than her husband, are during an initia-
tion ceremony, when the girls of the village who have not yet
reached puberty sleep with their fellow who is being initiated,
and there entertain young men, and when she accompanies a
bride to her husband's house. A bridegroom is expected to have
external relations with his wife's two friends, as well as with his
wife, on the night they bring her to his house. Love-making at the
initiation-marriage ritual is held to be 'part of the ritual' and a
means of sex education, and a husband can make no complaint
about his 'wife' receiving lovers then, provided that penetration
does not take place.

Homosexual practices are said to be very common in the boys' 838

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

838 villages—they begin among boys of ten to fourteen herding cows, and continue among young men until marriage, but they are said never to continue after that, and are regarded simply as a substitute for heterosexual pleasure. 'A man never dreams of making love to another man'—only of making love to a woman. If a boy's own father, or a village father, finds a son with another youth he will beat him, but provided both parties were willing, there is no court case, and the older men treat the practice tolerantly as a manifestation of adolescence. To force a fellow to [604] have homosexual intercourse against his will is a serious offence, comparable to witchcraft (*vide* Document, p. 196). Lesbian practices are said also to exist, but we have no certain evidence of this: if they do occur it is much more likely to be among the older wives of chiefs and other polygynists than among the girls, who have so much attention from young men.'

864 It is in conversation and play with village contemporaries that some knowledge of sex is acquired. Girls learn about sex from their immediate seniors, and they get some sex experience, along with formal instruction on morals, at the puberty rituals of their seniors in the age-village and at their own initiation. Boys learn from the conversation of their older fellows at night, in the boys' village. Any suggestion that sex education should be given by parents or middle-aged teachers shocks the Nyakyusa profoundly, for they hold that discussion of sex is totally incompatible with the respect due from children to parents. The taboo on sex talk between members of different generations appears to be absolute among men, but is less emphasized among women, for formal instruction on morals is given to a girl by her mother's fellows during the initiation ritual, and a young wife of her father, or of her father's neighbour, may whisper advice on sex matters even although she is classed as a 'mother'.

[34 As we have already indicated, there are profound differences between pagans and Christians in their sex code. The Christian 795 dogma that sex relations should only take place between adult 177 married persons excludes the freedom of girls to have external sex relations before betrothal, or in the 'bride's' hut; it excludes girls visiting their betrothed husbands before puberty; and it excludes homosexuality, which is regarded as a mortal sin. Segregation of successive generations is not a part of the Christian tradition, hence the modifications in the rules of avoid-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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ance among Nyakyusa Christians, and the tendency for fathers and sons to build fairly close to one another.

The forms of display approved among Christians are also changing with the change in the sex code. The nakedness of the Nyakyusa shocked the missionaries, and it is insisted that Christian women, as well as men, should wear at least one cloth; also many of the traditional dances and songs are felt by the Nyakyusa converts themselves to be incompatible with the profession of Christianity, consequently at funerals and weddings there is often a group of Christians dancing quite separately from pagans, and singing their own song, which, more often than not, is a hymn. A wedding dance to a hymn does not appear incongruous to Nyakyusa, as it does to European observers.

e. Wisdom

There is a very close connection between the values we have cited, and all save one are coherent with one another. The enjoyment of good company implies observance of the rules of decency; *ukwangala* is between equals, not between parents and children; it merges into neighbourliness, for one who does not help, or seek help from, a neighbour is unfriendly (*atikwangala kanunu*); and it is dependent upon that generous hospitality which is one of the manifestations of dignity (*ubuniya*). 182

The one value which is not wholly coherent with the others is the value of display (*ukwoga*). Certain forms of display are compatible with urbanity and friendliness between neighbours, but the swaggering truculence of the warrior is not—it is liable to breed quarrels between fellow villagers, as well as with outsiders; and display also ceases to be compatible with other values when it involves adultery. The friends of a woman who has eloped with a lover may greet her with the phrase: '*Ndaga, umogile*!' which literally translated means 'Thank you, you have displayed yourself', and implies, 'Congratulations! Had a good time?' But no Nyakyusa would maintain that to commit adultery was, in general, good. [837]

The all-embracing virtue to the Nyakyusa is wisdom (*amahala*). It includes the enjoyment of company and the practice of hospitality, for no man is wise who is surly, or aloof, or stingy; it includes neighbourly behaviour, dignity, and respect for law and 577

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

577 convention, but it does not include display. The wise may dance, but they do not need to dance in order to be wise, and those who commit adultery, or are boastful, or quarrelsome show foolishness (*ubukonyofu*) and sinful pride (*amatingo*), the opposite of wisdom. Wisdom is expressed in all relationships, not only in village relationships, but it is *learned* in the village; pagan Nyakyusa insist that 'it is by conversing with our friends that we gain wisdom'.

795 The Christian view is somewhat different. Urbanity, neighbourliness, hospitality, and dignity are components of wisdom
577 for a Christian also, but he would add something further—'the knowledge of God'—and such knowledge is sought not in village relationships only. It is sought also in schools, in the religious teaching of the missionaries, in the scriptures, in worship, and in prayer.

080 Having considered some of the values[1] realized in age-villages, we now turn to the sanctions maintaining them.

[1] It may be asked why we have omitted fertility in our discussion of values realized in village relationships, when fertility in men, cattle, and fields is one of the ultimate values of Nyakyusa society. The reason is that fertility is realized in the relationships of kinship and of the chiefdom, rather than in village relationships. The village rituals in the fields, which we have described, are primarily defensive—to protect the crops against the attacks of witches and sorcerers—and the fertility of the soil is held to depend mainly on the chief, and the rituals he performs on behalf of his country.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

MYSTICAL INTERDEPENDENCE

a. *Witchcraft and 'the breath of men'*

In the Nyakyusa view two of the main co-operative activities of a village are defence against witches, and the punishment of wrong-doers through sickness brought upon them by the murmuring of their fellows. Fellow villagers are 'members of one another' as much on account of this mystical interdependence as on account of their economic co-operation and enjoyment of each other's company. The village headmen are spoken of as the leaders in the 'war by night' against witches, as they are leaders in war by day, and it is they also who are foremost in bringing 'the breath of men' (*embepo sya bandu*) on a wrongdoer, so that his body becomes cold, and he falls ill. We must therefore examine the concept of witchcraft and of this 'breath of men' in order to understand village relationships.

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i. *The nature of witchcraft*

The Nyakyusa believe that certain people have pythons (*isota*) in their bellies which give them power to harm men and cattle, by throttling, tramping, wounding, and kicking them. These are the witches (*abalosi*). They are said to fly by night on their pythons, or 'on the wind', either singly or in covens, to attack a chosen victim, and to leave on their beds their skins, which 'can feel nothing'. So closely are the witch and his pythons identified that if a python is killed the witch will die. The pythons are thought to be usually inherited from one or other parent, children of both sexes inheriting from either father or mother: children are 'born with witchcraft in their stomachs', and it is developed by accompanying a parent on his or her evil erranda. However, not *all* children of a witch are necessarily witches. 'If a man witch marries a woman witch then the whole family are witches, but if the man is pure (*mwela*), and the woman only a bit of a witch, then she may say to herself when she first bears a child:

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 "This time I will respect my husband and leave the child to him", but the next one she makes her own.' Occasionally, it is said, pythons may be acquired in childhood from a woman, or perhaps even a fellow herd-boy, who is a witch, and who transfers his or her witchcraft by giving the child some mysterious substance to eat, but it is the inherited character of witchcraft which is emphasized.

754 Witchcraft (*ubulosi*) is sharply distinguished from sorcery
(*ubutege*), that is, the illegal use of destructive medicines, for it is
763 a physiological condition, not merely the manipulation of certain materials. The pythons are believed to be visible in an autopsy, a 'swollen bowel' (*ubula*) in a corpse being the typical mark of a witch. 'When the bowel is swollen, they take it out and say: "It is a python, he was a witch".' Some educated Nyakyusa maintain that the 'swollen bowel' is, in some cases at least, acute tapeworm; however that may be, the condition of the bowel is taken as conclusive evidence. 'If', said Mwangwanda, 'a man is accused of witchcraft during his lifetime, and then at the autopsy his bowels are found not to be swollen, people admit his innocence, saying: "We accused him falsely, see, he was pure!" '

ii. The supposed activities of witches

754 The typical crime of the witch, in Nyakyusa belief, is to harm men and cattle, and the motive is greed. The pythons are thought to lust for meat and milk, hence witches go in dreams by night to 'eat people inside', and to milk the cows of their neighbours. 'It is said', explained one of our friends, 'that throttling (*ukupita*) is in order to eat delicious food. The witches say that human flesh is delicious, and the milk of cows is also delicious' (cf. Document, p. 218). Another friend elaborated further: 'People say that it is the pythons of a witch that cause him to go and bewitch (*ukulogo*) the milk, because they wish to drink milk. When he has throttled the cows they are satisfied. And they are satisfied with human flesh when "he of the pythons" has eaten a man. So I hear. I have heard too, that if the pythons smell meat (of an animal killed for eating) and if people grudge meat to him (or her) of the pythons, then the pythons will fly with him to throttle people and eat them. Similarly smelling milk leads to the throttling of cows.' The stock myth of witchcraft (cf. Document, p. 217) is about a

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

woman who was once caught by her husband when she came home during the night with human flesh and began to cook it. 754 Domestic fires are thought to become infected, because the witches are in the habit of roasting human flesh over them; sometimes, it is said, they use the victim's hearth, sometimes their own. Fear of such contamination by witches was one of the reasons for clearing out the ashes and lighting new fires, at the new year, and when an epidemic or other misfortune threatened (*vide infra*, p. 121).

The human flesh eaten is always spoken of as that of living 754 victims, never that of corpses, as in some other areas, though the 764 living die of the witches' attacks. Further, it is believed that witches kill people in order to feast on the beef of cows killed at the funeral. 'To what', said old Mwandesi, 'are the many deaths among us due? They are due to meat!' So strong was this feeling that at the end of 1935 the chiefs and village headmen of a number of chiefdoms stretching from Mwaya on the Lake to Mwakaleli in the hills (but not including the western Nyakyusa chiefdoms), decided to abandon the custom of killing many cows at a funeral. 'There is', they said, 'too much death in the country, the witches are killing people so as to have meat. Let us go back to the old custom and kill few cows. . . . If anyone complains that at a burial he was given no meat to eat, he is a witch, and we will turn him out of the country.' Formerly, we were told, two was the maximum number of cows killed at a funeral, and they were not killed until the witch had been discovered by the ordeal.

The theme of the witches' lust for meat is elaborated in various 754 ways. It is said, for example, that the witches never use their own teeth when they go to eat a victim but like to borrow the victim's teeth, and that if startled, they may go off with the teeth altogether. One whose teeth have been used by the witches and then put back, knows about it in the morning because he finds his teeth rather loose. Most fearful of all, those who dream of being chased by witches hear them boasting to one another: 'We will *all* eat!'

It is meat and milk, the most prized foods of the Nyakyusa, which are commonly spoken of as exciting the greed of witches. Millet (from which beer is brewed), beans, and rice, are said to be subject to occasional attacks by witches, e.g. millet (or beans, or rice) ripening in the fields, or drying in the sun, is thought to get

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

less when 'he (or she) of the pythons' has passed by. Mwaisumo explained: 'They say that if the owner of pythons or the owner of medicines passes when food has been spread out to dry, the food will disappear. He bewitches it (*ukulaga*). It is as if he hankers after the food in his heart, and it disappears and becomes less.' Nevertheless, of the thirty-eight accusations of witchcraft recorded, none actually turned on loss of grain or pulse. We heard also that a witch may spoil a brewing of beer, causing it to taste bitter, but again we could trace no case of this.

The lust of witches for good food is constantly emphasized by the Nyakyusa and, unlike some other Bantu people, they do not make a direct connection between witchcraft and sex: there is no suggestion of *incubi* or *succubae* such as play a great part in Pondo thought,[1] and sexual dreams are not taken as evidence of witchcraft. The facts that the witches are witches by virtue of 'pythons in the stomach', that they always go naked, and fly through the air riding their pythons when on their evil nocturnal errands, suggest sexual associations, but we cannot prove that the Nyakyusa are conscious of such symbolism. It is, however, significant that the word commonly used for working witchcraft, 'throttling' (*ukupita*), is also used as a polite word for sexual intercourse, and that the other word for working witchcraft *ukulaga*[2] (passive: *ukulagigwa*) is similar to *ukulagwa*, meaning to copulate. Bestiality and homosexuality between a grown man and a boy (but not between two youths) are spoken of as witchcraft (*ukulosi*), and sex play between girls, including stretching of the vaginal opening, is called *ukugulagala*, a word used for the cunning—the wicked cleverness—of witches.

An association is also made between witchcraft on the one hand and menstruation and pregnancy on the other. A woman who is a witch is said to pass on her witchcraft to her child by neglecting the menstruation taboos before the child is yet conceived. 'It starts when a woman is menstruating, then she begins to give the child her cunning (*ukugulagala*).' Some of the menstrual blood is

[1] cf. Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, pp. 273–89.

[2] *Ulaulaga* and *ukulosi* are from the same root. For its meaning in other Bantu languages cf. H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. II, pp. 392ff. Also E. J. and J. D. Krige, *The Realm of a Rain Queen*, p. 250; C. M. N. White in *Africa*, 1948 (Vol. XVIII), pp. 83 ff.; H. H. Johnston, *A Comparative Study of Bantu and Semi-Bantu Languages*, Vol. II, p. 416. The close similarity of meaning in a number of languages is striking.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

believed to remain in a woman and, if she has neglected the taboos, this blood 'rots' the child later conceived (cf. Document, p. 219). This connection is insisted upon, though witchcraft inherited from the father is spoken of as being carried directly in his blood, which is thought to be transferred to his wife during intercourse. 754 841

Furthermore, a pregnant woman is believed to have some of the attributes of a witch. She, like a witch, causes grain and pulse to diminish if she passes near by when it is spread out to dry, or greets women who are stamping or grinding grain. If she speaks or comes too close 'the child inside catches hold of the food, and it disappears'. And if she should speak inadvertently, forgetting that she is pregnant, she must throw a stone or a piece of stick into the grain, or take a little of the flour in her hand, otherwise the women will say: 'She is proud, that girl, she is a witch, why is she talking?' and it is thought that she will have a miscarriage. A pregnant woman, like a witch, and one who has been using medicine, is spoken of as 'heavy' (*nzito*) in contrast with one who is 'empty' (*bwas*), having nothing in the belly, and Mwaikambo explained that, 'When they speak of a pregnant woman being "heavy", they think that perhaps the foetus is witchcraft.' The foetus and the python of witchcraft are felt to be somewhat alike; but in most situations they are clearly distinguished, and indeed it is held that a woman may have both. If the afterbirth is delayed it is said that the woman is herself a witch, and her python is closing up the vaginal passage, so that the afterbirth cannot come away. A pregnant woman is not spoken of as a witch unless she harms someone by neglecting the taboos connected with her state, and her husband, who must keep the same taboos, may also be called a witch if he breaks them. 754 843

Sickness and death among men and cattle, and a diminution in the milk yield of cows, are held to be common results of witchcraft, and any 'unnatural' event, such as a case of bestiality, or of sodomy between a grown man and a boy (not between two youths), or of intercourse between a young man and an old woman, or of unusual behaviour among animals or birds, is taken as evidence that witches are at work. It is the 'unnatural' element that is emphasized (cf. Document, p. 225). An owl hooting on one's roof, and someone staring at one, are also taken as indications of witchcraft. 754 [787]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

iii. 'The defenders' and 'the breath of men'

787 Proof of the activity and identity of witches is sought first in
759 the dreams of victims and of 'the defenders' (*abamanga*) of his
79 village who are believed to have power to see and to fight witches in dreams. As we have seen, the witches are believed to leave their bodies sleeping and to fly through the air to the house of the man against whom they have a grudge, and there to enter his body while he sleeps, and either 'throttle' (*ukupita*), 'trample' (*ukukwanga*), or 'eat' (*ukulya*) his inside. In the morning, or during the night, the victim wakes up more or less conscious of what has happened to him. If they come often, many nights running, he falls sick and may die, unless he takes steps to defend himself. 'The defenders' (*abamanga*) are believed to be able to see and recognize the identity of the witches and to counter them in two ways. First by turning them back at night, saying: 'Where are you going to throttle your fellow? Go back!' and then driving them off with spears or striking a witch's python, so that the witch dies; and secondly, by reporting to neighbours and to the political authorities the names of the people they have seen engaged in witchcraft. An ordinary person can never recognize the witch who attacks him, even though he may be conscious that he is being throttled. And all these things happen in dreams: 'The witches go out in dreams to throttle people.' 'It is in dreams that "the defenders" recognize them.' Certain dreams, interpreted by a traditional symbolism, are taken as signs of being bewitched: 'If I dream that someone comes to fight me, perhaps he beats me with a stick, perhaps he overwhelms me and crushes me down to earth, perhaps he hits me with his fist; then I wake up and tell people: "Last night they came to throttle me." ' 'If I recognise people who come to fight me in my dreams that means I have myself the power of defence; if I do not recognize them then I have not.' 'If I dream that I am flying alone through the air high up at night, that means they have come to throttle me.' 'If I wake up suddenly at night in fear and sweating, even though I do not recollect the dream, I know they have come to throttle me.' 'Dreams of being chased, of being beaten, of the house burning, of one coming to the door and weeping for me as if I were dead, these are all signs of witchcraft.' Close friends tell one another

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

their dreams—provided they have not dreamed of attacking one another—and when more than one of them has dreamed of X as an aggressor, then the presumption is very strong that X is a witch. Dreams to the Nyakyusa are the stuff of religious reality, and the very close association between witchcraft and dreams is apparent in the language—*injoni* meaning a dream, and *ubuloni* (the same root in the abstract noun class) meaning witchcraft. It is perhaps also significant, that *ukugoga* means to dream, and *ukugogwa* (in the passive form) means to be killed. Restless nights are taken as proof that either the witches or ancestors are troubling a man: 'We do not sleep' (*tukigona*) is the formal phrase in which village headmen or priests notify the chief that something is amiss in the country, and a ritual is required; and an ordinary person using the same phrase implies that he is harried either by the ancestors or by witches. 'You *may* sleep or you may not' (*ukigona*) is the commonest form in which a threat of witchcraft is made.

The vision and power of 'the defenders' (*abamanga*) comes from the same source as the power of the witches,[1] from pythons in the belly, the essential difference between the witches and 'the defenders' being that the latter use their power in accordance with law and morality, while the witches act for selfish ends, and their activities are illegal. This close association of 'the defenders' with the power of witchcraft is apparent in language, *ukumanga* being sometimes used almost synonymously with *ukulaga* for 'to bewitch', while *abamanga* means 'the defenders'.[2] There are, moreover, certain differences between the pythons of witches, and those of 'defenders'. In the first place, the condition of 'the

[1] For similar concepts among the Thonga and Azande cf. H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. II, p. 516; E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*, pp. 224 ff.

[2] cf. the Bantu homage discussed by E. J. B. Moore in *Africa*, Vol. XIII, 1940, pp. 211 ff. and *Bantu Studies*, Vol. 15, 1941, pp. 77 ff.; the note on the use of this root in a number of languages in *Africa*, Vol. XVI, 1946, pp. 119-20; and C. M. N. White in *Africa*, Vol. XVIII, 1948, pp. 83-102.

I translate *-manga* in Nyakyusa as 'mystical power', *aba-manga* 'to exercise mystical power' (for good and evil), and *aba-manga* as 'those possessing mystical power', with the further implication that they use this power for defence. Writing in *Africa*, Vol. IX, 1936, pp. 83, and Vol. X, 1937, pp. 267 ff., we translated *aba-manga* as 'defender witches' and *aba-loi* as 'aggressor witches'. On further reflection, however, I have preferred to confine 'witch' and 'witchcraft' to those acting in a manner disapproved by their society, since this is common usage, and for want of a better term I call *aba-manga* 'the defenders'.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 defenders' is not visible at an autopsy. Secondly, it is maintained
781 that while a witch has several pythons, a defender has only one,
791 and whereas witchcraft is always inherited or acquired in early childhood, a python of defence may be acquired later, through drinking medicine. Old Mwandesi, recognized by the Nyakyusa themselves as an authority on law and history, explained it to us thus: 'Some are born with pythons; they are those with many pythons, perhaps three. Some get them from medicine made of leaves which is given them to drink at the "coming out", they have only one, it is they who watch over the cattle, they are the village headmen (*amafumu*). He who has many pythons, who is born with them, having inherited them, suns them secretly at his home. He takes them out and suns them, then swallows them again, they are his intestines. Such a man is a great witch; he is the kind who is convicted of witchcraft. But the village headman who has got his python through medicine has only one, he does not sun it, he is not convicted of witchcraft, he only detects the witches in dreams. When he begets a child the latter will have one python only. If his son or daughter goes about throttling people, then his father says: "Where did you get *many* pythons? See! I have only one. It is you woman! (accusing his wife)." So they submit themselves to the poison ordeal. The man vomits and the ordeal catches the woman.' Mwandesi contradicted himself in this statement, first suggesting that the power of defence was only acquired through drinking medicines, and then that the child of a village headman inherited one python from his father. Most Nyakyusa maintain that the power of defence can be acquired in either fashion. The medicines drunk at the 'coming out' develop it even in an 'empty' man, but many men, including assistant headmen and ordinary citizens who are not specially treated at the 'coming out', are believed to have it. It is asserted that no women have it, though many of them are spoken of as witches, and in particular instances informants implied that some women 'saw' the witches (cf. Document, pp. 252–3).

Mbukile confirmed Mwandesi's main point, saying: 'Some of us are empty, pure (*bwela*), we have no pythons, not one; some are 'defenders' and pure, they are those who watch over the country; such a man has only one python to watch over his country. The ruler of the country, the chief, also has one python; for both village headman and chief watch over the country. Some are

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

witches, they have two or three pythons, it is they who are caught by the poison ordeal.'. 'Watching over the country' implies detecting the witches and turning them back, and also reporting them the next morning to the authorities. Particularly 'the defenders' watch over the cows, and they are said actually to increase the milk yield by sucking the milk from the teats and spitting it out again. Mbukile explained this also: ' "The defender" watches over the cows. He takes milk in his mouth and squirts it on the ground; he does not swallow it in his dream. The next day the milk will be plentiful.' A village headman we knew enlarged further on the point: 'If a man is the son of a true village headman and goes to drink the milk of cows, he drinks from the teats, but his python vomits the milk and the next day the owner of the cow will find much milk and say: "He who came last night was the child of a village headman (*alifwesa*). He was good, he was not a witch, no, but a benefactor."[1] So they say. But if a real witch goes to bewitch the cows then the milk dries up altogether for a time. The owners of the cows will milk none for many days. He is a witch indeed.' Similarly, it is held that if witches can be compelled to vomit the human flesh they have eaten, 'to put back the meat', the patient will recover.

'Emptiness' and 'innocence' are associated in several contexts; and vomiting, spitting, and confession (*ukusosya*) are all taken as expressions of good will and repentance. *Ukusosa*, for example, means both 'to spit' and 'to forgive', the symbolism being interpreted in this way: 'If a father is angry with his son or daughter he may say some day, "I forgive you now" and spit on the ground: all the anger that is in him comes out like spit.' Blowing water from the mouth is an essential element in prayers to the ancestors, and the close association between them is apparent in the language: *ukuputa* meaning to 'blow out water' and *ukuiputa* (the reflexive form) meaning 'to pray',[2] with the implication of confessing whatever anger or grudge a man may have in his heart. Kasitile, the rainmaker, explained: 'This prayer with water is to confess *everything*. If I do not pray with water then something is left within.'

[1] For a similar concept among the Thonga cf. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. II, p. 505.

[2] The Zande symbolism is very similar: cf. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, 'Zande Theology' in *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XIX (1936), pp. 11–16.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

576 In Nyakyusa society it is senior relatives who formally blow
754 out water to express their good will, not suspected witches, as among the Azande. But the admission of anger by the supposed witch or justly shocked neighbours, and their wishes for the patient's good health, are anxiously sought (*vide infra*, p. 101), for such good wishes are thought to lead directly to his recovery.
754 The reverse of this emphasis on the value of confessing anger is the belief that the man who nurses a grudge in secret without ever admitting it is the most dangerous enemy, whether he be a senior relative muttering to the shades, or a neighbour using witchcraft, or a rival who has turned to sorcery. Mwambuputa, a conservative village headman without any school education, was very explicit on the point: 'The root of witchcraft is this—when two people have a quarrel in their hearts and do not let it out. Maybe I have a neighbour who hates me, but he never lets it out, he says nothing and we seem to be on friendly terms—these are the quarrels that are pregnant with witchcraft. But if he lets it out and tells me that I have wronged him in some way then the quarrel has no menace in it. It is when he lets nothing out and stays silent, though angry in his heart, that he comes in dreams to throttle me. That is the root of witchcraft.' Hence the insistence on one accused of witchcraft admitting guilt (*vide* infra, p. 112).

754 'The defenders' are powerful, but it is believed that witches are occasionally able in dreams to get past them, and throttle
791 men against whom they have a grudge, or their cows. ' "The defenders" do not go out in dreams to fight the aggressors every night. A witch wanting to throttle a man comes night after night.' 'Nowadays it is much worse than it used to be, since the Europeans prevent us reporting them, and getting them stopped; "the defenders" work hard, but some nights they sleep without dreaming and the witches get past.'

754 Although the primary function of 'the defenders' is to see and drive off witches, nevertheless they are also thought to use their
791 power to punish a wrong-doer. In doing so they are assisted by the witches, but, the Nyakyusa argue, the village headman who
626 leads this night attack in dreams is no more breaking the law than he is when he fines a thief in court. In both cases he is exerting power to maintain the law. The Nyakyusa have a lively fear of shocking their neighbours, for it is held that the shocked astonish-

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ment of fellow villagers (*bikuswiga*) or their angry murmuring (*bikwibunesya*) will bring on wrong-doers 'the breath of men' (*embepo sya bandu*) causing them, or their children, or cattle, to fall ill, and this breath is the power of the pythons exerted by 'defenders' and witches acting together. We asked Mbukile whether 'the defenders' really came to choke a proud, quarrelsome person. 'Mother! They come. "The defenders" and the witches all call one another. They all go. "The defender" is not angry (at the attack), he says, "The man killed himself, he was a quarrelsome fellow!" ' And another friend explained: 'If a woman witch wishes to choke her husband, perhaps the first night "the defenders" will turn her back, but then she will plead with them and explain that her husband is a bad man and ill-treats her, then perhaps on the second night they will change their minds and come and help her. Yes, "the defenders" turn round sometimes and throttle people.'

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'The breath of men' is thought to cause prolonged illness but not death, and should a death occur then a charge of witchcraft may be brought, and the suspects be required to drink the poison ordeal. 'We said, it is forbidden to kill a man. We others were afraid, although we had disliked the victim ourselves, we feared at some later time the witch would kill us.' All our informants accepted this view in theory, but in practice several cases in which the supposed victims died were cited as instances of 'the breath of men' (see table, pp. 206–8).

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The effect of 'the breath of men' is spoken of as 'the curse' (*ikiguns*)[1] and its typical symptom is sterility, or a paralysis of the legs, which, it is thought, can only be cured when the sinner repents and reforms his behaviour, providing at the same time a feast of beer and meat for men of his village or, if it be against his father that he has sinned, of his father's village. At the feast it is essential that the men of the village should *admit their responsibility* for the sickness, and express hopes for the recovery of the patient. 'Formerly, they would pray and pray, they would let out all their anger, saying: "Certainly we were angry, it was us, but now it is all over." Then life would come back to the sick man and he recovered' (cf. Document, p. 240).

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We see then, that a clear distinction is made by the Nyakyusa

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[1] *Ikiguns* is not used in the Kukwe dialect, but is common usage in Selya, on the Lake-shore plain, and in Ngonde.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 626 between the legal and illegal use of power derived from pythons. 'The breath of men' is the general public opinion of a whole group—of an age-village or chiefdom—acting through the 'python power' of those of its members who happen to be possessed of it, led by one or more village headmen and directed against a single person. On the other hand, individuals proved to be witches are those believed to have acted by themselves, either against the public opinion of their age-village or chiefdom, or at any rate without securing its support. No pagan Nyakyusa doubts that witchcraft is bad, or that 'the breath of men' is used to bring legitimate punishment on evil-doers, but the classification of particular cases varies somewhat with the point of view of the individual. The victim of 'the breath of men' may speak indignantly about the attacks of 'the witches'.[1]

791 576 'The defenders' are regarded as pillars of society, and their exercise of python power as right and proper, yet no one readily admits to the possession of such power; it is a proud and boastful thing to do, and not good manners. Informants, when discussing it, rarely spoke as if they had direct knowledge of the power, usually prefacing their remarks with: 'It is said that', or 'I hear that'. This was true even of village headmen who are all believed to have the power. One such man, to whom a direct question was put, replied: 'I would not go so far as to boast of it myself, but other people in my village have it.' In villages of mature and old men, others besides the headmen are often known by name as having it; and besides this there is the general belief that in each such age-village 'some people', not specified, have it as well.

iv. Witchcraft, 'the breath of men' and morality

754 [626] Now the power of witchcraft and 'the breath of men' is held to operate primarily within one age-village, and it is denied that it can ever extend beyond the chiefdom. 'How could the people of another chiefdom "eat" a man?' said the village headman, Mwafula, 'It is those *here*'. The typical accusations are against neighbours and wives or co-wives and, nowadays, against fellow workers living in the same camp (cf. table, p. 198). The fact that it is within the village that witchcraft is thought to operate is

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'An African Morality' in *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936), pp. 87-8, for such a case.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

shown by the way in which one fearing witchcraft, or accused of practising it, moves to another village. Sometimes he goes to another chiefdom, but often he only moves to another village in the same chiefdom—the chief himself may feel safe in one village of his country and not in another (*vide* Document, p. 190). It is on his fellow villagers that the good man depends for protection, and it is they whom the evil-doer fears. 754

Accusations within the lineage are rare. At first we were told that they did not occur at all; later a number of elderly informants agreed that this was not true—'the young men have misled you', they said; but careful inquiry only elicited three concrete cases[1] of witchcraft within the lineage (cf. table, p. 204). As we have seen, fellow members of a lineage normally live in different villages, and just how the idea of attacks by kinsmen is reconciled with the theory of village defence is not clear. Possibly it is argued that the witch attacks while visiting his kinsman, for it is in terms of visiting that the effect of 'the breath of men' on erring sons or younger brothers is explained. Where 'the breath of men' is thought to have affected someone of another village, it is argued that he or she came frequently to visit in the village of the attackers (cf. Document, p. 237), and the heir who neglects his elder brother's or father's funeral rites, and who is thought to suffer from 'the breath' of the deceased's justly indignant neighbours, is supposed to fall ill when he comes to their village to enter into his inheritance, or to make arrangements for the disposal of his property. 754 613

Even within the village it is the immediate neighbours that are primarily concerned in a case of suspected witchcraft. In the large villages of the plains the leader of a section, 'he of the heap of hot ashes', has the specific duty of protecting the herd which stands in the smoke of his fire against witches; and in smaller villages, also, a witchcraft case commonly begins with murmuring among a few next-door neighbours. Suspicion of witchcraft falls first on a member of the same village-section, then on a fellow villager; only rarely, and in peculiar circumstances, does it fall on a member of another village, and never on someone outside the chiefdom. 754 621

Differences of rank are relatively slight in Nyakyusa society 754 554

[1] A possible fourth is quoted on p. 246, but the exact relationship of the accused to the victim was not known to our informant.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 and scarcely affect accusations of practising witchcraft, save that
554 the chief himself is never accused, though he is often thought to suffer from the witchcraft, or 'the breath', of his men. The commoners, 'the black people' (*abatitu*), are said to be the real witches, but a study of cases shows that junior brothers and sons of the chiefs are, in fact, sometimes accused. Village headmen may be accused just like the humblest of their followers, and men are accused at least as often as women (cf. table p. 198). Thus though witchcraft is held to be hereditary, and is particularly associated with menstrual blood, it is individual behaviour, not birth, or sex, that determines accusations.

754 What sort of behaviour, then, leads to accusations of witchcraft, and what sort of behaviour is thought to provoke attack by a witch, or bring upon one the chilling breath of men? We found that some quite specific teaching was given to Nyakyusa children on this point.

754 The type most usually described as a witch is the person whose
626 character makes him (or her) to some extent isolated and unpopular—a proud man who treats his neighbours with disdain; a retiring man who always keeps silent in public; a glum wife, or one who fails to greet the other women she meets and to inquire after their children. Such people are treated by their neighbours with less courtesy and hospitality than the traditional ideals of good manners demand. 'Perhaps we do not summon him to drink beer, or to eat with us: and then when our cows fail to give milk we think, "doubtless it is he who is throttling them".'

One who fails to show sympathy with a neighbour in bereavement, neglecting to attend a funeral in the village, or one who does not try to persuade a neighbour to remain, when that neighbour is preparing to move for fear of witchcraft, is immediately suspect. The chief characteristic of witches is always said to be pride (*amatingo*), which includes a cold aloofness, as well as boastfulness and irascibility.

And what sort of people are thought to be attacked by witches? Informants agree that, though they act without public support, witches seldom act without provocation. It is argued on the one hand that they act from greed, and on the other that suppressed hatred drives them to attack (*vide supra*, pp. 92–4 and table, pp. 198–205). The Nyakyusa see no contradiction in this, for they

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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believe that the witches, lusting after food, choose as victims those against whom they have a grudge. The exception is the witch who, having eaten with his fellow witches, fails to provide a victim in his turn and is compelled to offer a kinsman of his own. Mwamunda, talking of witchcraft between relatives, explained: 'Throttling of relatives is of two kinds: firstly, when kinsmen quarrel over something, perhaps cattle, and one throttles the child of his relative; secondly, when there is no quarrel, but a witch has gone with his fellow witches to eat of their food in his dreams, then they come to him and say: "You have eaten our food with us, give us your food. If you don't we shall eat your wife." Then he points out the child of his kinsman to them' (*vide infra*, p. 114). Far more often, however, the witches' attack is attributed to a quarrel, or to envy roused by conspicuous success. Men are said to excite the envy of witches by acquiring many cattle, hoeing a much larger garden than others, earning more at work, or by boasting about the importance of the position they hold in government or other employment. A woman excites envy by becoming the favourite wife of her husband, or by carrying a heavier load than her fellows when she goes with them to fetch firewood (cf. Document, p. 229). Our friends constantly referred to the danger of rousing envy; it is in fact believed to be the motive behind witchcraft in a large proportion of cases.

Good food rouses the envy of witches also, and the man who eats alone is felt to be in danger, but not only from the witches. It is said: 'If you have grudged your neighbours meat . . . those who watch over the village by night, "the defenders", will be angry, and call the witches to help; they will eat you.' Here we come to the legitimate use of python power, 'the breath of men'. Greed at a feast; failure to share whatever meat, or beer, or other fine food one has, whether it be prepared in the village, or brought as a gift from affines; failure to send the customary cut of an animal killed as a gift to the chief; and failure to provide a feast on certain occasions, are all regarded as sins liable to bring on the wrong-doer the 'curse' or 'breath' of his aggrieved neighbours. The feasts specially mentioned as being necessary are those at death and at marriage (*vide supra*, p. 70, and Document, p. 206). As Mwakwelebeja, an old commoner, put it: 'If I did not kill at a funeral, the neighbours, those who eat the meat, would be angry. As they scattered from the funeral they would say: "He is

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 hard, he has not killed a cow for the death of his child." When
626 they go round telling other people like this, they bring down the "breath of men".'

626 But it is not thought that neighbours are concerned only with enforcing hospitality within the village; they are also shocked (*bikuswiga*) by disrespectful behaviour towards parents and parents-in-law; by a wife swearing at her husband or hitting him; by incest; by a woman 'soiling' her lover, i.e. by running off with him repeatedly, and so enraging her husband that he forces him to eat filth; by a woman continuing to bear children after her son has married a girl who has reached puberty; and by any other manifestation of 'pride' (*amatingo*). Their shocked astonishment is held to bring on the wrong-doer their chilling 'breath' which causes sterility, paralysis, or some other lingering illness, or makes the child of a woman who has insulted her mother-in-law, or peeped at her father-in-law, thin and sickly.

'If a woman should look at her father-in-law on purpose her friends shout at her and say: "You are proud (*namatingo*) you look on your father-in-law." Then she won't get children or her child falls ill. It is true also that if she says the name or looks on a father-in-law she will have difficulty when she comes to die. . . . She might die slowly and in pain or she might be old and weary and wish to die, and not be able to do so. . . . It is "the breath of men" that causes her child to be ill. If the father-in-law on whom she looked said nothing about it nothing would happen, but if he told his friends then the woman's child would be made ill by "the breath of men"—the child the woman was carrying when she saw the man, or her first-born child, would suffer' (cf. Document, p. 236).

Another informant said: 'Suppose that a man dies leaving a young son, and his brother, the heir, refuses to give this boy a cow for milk or, later, cows for marriage, then the dead man comes in a dream to the heir and reproaches him. Then he, the heir, fetches his wife and tells her: "We must give him (the ward) a cow, my brother came to me by night and reproached me," and so he will give the boy a cow. If he still refuses to do so, his fellows in the village, fellows of his elder brother (the heir having taken over the elder brother's homestead) will pass judgement on him and there will be much "breath". And if he refuses to provide marriage-cattle for his brother's son and provides them

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for his own son whom he begot saying: "He is my own flesh and blood", then the men of the village will pass judgement.' 626

This 'breath' is thought also to fall on a chief who is harsh towards his people, or who acts unconstitutionally, as in refusing to make a 'coming out' ceremony for his sons when his village headmen advise him; and it falls on a village headman who treats a junior in office unfairly, or is overbearing to his men. Both pagan and Christian informants insisted that fear of 'the breath of men' was a powerful sanction in the traditional system against arbitrary rule. Asagene, a Christian deacon, himself raised the subject one day and said: 'Headmen and chiefs—pagans—would be hard on their people and seize their goods if they (the headmen and chiefs) did not fear witchcraft. Witchcraft is like God to them.'

At every point the solidarity of the village is emphasized; the neighbours themselves are held to be insulted by the bad behaviour of a son—'their son'—to one of their fellows, or by a woman 'soiling their son', or by an heir failing to recognize their concern in the inheritance of a deceased fellow. For example, Mwakanyamale had begotten no child for ten years, and this was attributed to the fact that, after quarrelling with his elder brother and refusing to attend his funeral, he had not admitted his fault to the men of the village when he came back and killed a cow. [842] His impotence was attributed to their curse.

As we have seen, recovery is thought to depend (i) upon the wrong-doer reforming and providing the men of the village, which is angry, with a bull or beer for a feast, acknowledging guilt as he does so; and (ii) upon the men of the village admitting *their anger and responsibility for* his illness, and *expressing good* will. 'If a daughter-in-law should have looked on her father-in-law by mistake she makes beer and sends it to her father-in-law. He calls his friends and admits: "Indeed I was angry with her for she looked at me", and the others say: "Yes, indeed, let her child get fat".' (*vide* pp. 235-6). 783 626

It may well be asked, is there any objective reality at the root of this belief in 'the breath of men'? Does the wrong-doer, fearing his neighbours, really become paralysed or impotent? It is possible that a sinner may sometimes develop these symptoms as the result of fear. We do not know, what is certain is that impotence, sterility, lingering illnesses including paralysis, and sickly 626 753

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

626 753 children, are not uncommon; that the penalty of sin is believed often to be delayed, and an illness may be attributed to a wrong committed many years previously; and lastly, that the victim of retribution may be one of several individuals. Parents are thought to be punished by the sickness of their children as well as in their own persons; in a case of sexual transgression it may be either partner who suffers; in the case of a neglected death ritual it may be either the heir or the widow on whose behalf it should have been performed (cf. Document, pp. 206, 236–7). When a [842] woman bears a child after her son is married to a girl who has reached puberty, it is thought that she may fall ill herself, or her husband may be cursed 'because he had agreed to his son marrying a grown girl before the son's mother had grown old'; or the son may have no children because he eloped with his wife, or has 'married a grown girl when his father had only agreed that he should be betrothed to a little girl'.

626 754 869 A lively fear of witchcraft and of the 'breath of men' is inculcated in Nyakyusa children when quite young; Mwaikambo, a Christian, explained that boys learn about witchcraft from their senior play-mates when they are out herding, and in the hut at night in the boys' village, when tales are told. 'Then one fears in one's stomach and thinks: "Father! perhaps I, also, will be eaten by witches."' Ambilikile, another Christian informant, confirmed this, saying: 'We learn about witches from comments on cases of sickness, and from tales. When someone has died people say: "He was a witch, we found a python." Or perhaps of another it is said that "the witches had eaten him". In these tales the witches are said to have eaten people, or speared them, by means of witchcraft, so that the victim dies. We are also told how the *witches fight in the power of witchcraft with their fellows from* other villages, and how they fly on their pythons. What we hear always makes witchcraft awe-inspiring. I feared it very much.'

We had ample evidence that for most Nyakyusa the fear of witchcraft and of 'the breath of men' continues throughout life, and that it directly affects behaviour. It is, perhaps, the main sanction for moral behaviour within the village.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

c. Procedure in witchcraft cases

Whenever someone is very ill there is anxious speculation among relatives and neighbours as to the cause of the illness. If witchcraft is suspected—and witchcraft is thought to be by far the commonest cause of sickness and death—people begin to whisper (*ukuheka*) that so and so is responsible. Even if the trouble is only a sudden fall in the milk supply there are whispers about witchcraft and the identity of the witch. Then the neighbours meet and complain (*ukusijaja*), or else the leader of the village-section, or even the headman of the village, takes the initiative and, summoning his people, admonishes them. The object of such complaint and exhortation is to warn off the witch. 'People speak very angrily, then the witches are ashamed within themselves, and stop their witchcraft, because they die of shame.' If the warning is effective—that is if the patient or the cows recover—the case will be dropped; but if the trouble continues then the village proceeds to the discovery of the witch. Mwaisumo explained: 'If sickness occurs, the village headman will call his people round him and say: "This village is not right, disease is killing the people, there must be someone who is bewitching them. We warn him to stop!" Then, if he does not stop he will call the people round him again and say: "Well, we must drive him away." Then they discuss their dreams with the headman, it is always by their dreams that they find out the witch, no other way.' A case was quoted in which the milk yield of a village had diminished and the villagers had 'called one another' to come together to complain. While they were complaining a 'defender' called out: 'I have seen the one who is throttling the cows; come together again to-morrow, and no one must stay behind.' When they met the next day one man called the names of each villager in turn, and 'the defender' responded to each with 'Yes', until 'Mwaalutaba' was called. Then he was silent. The name was called three times, and at the third time the whole company groaned. Mwaalutaba got up and, denying the accusation, appealed to the ordeal. He was found guilty by it and was driven from the village (cf. Document, pp. 241–3).

Mwakwelebeja, himself a commoner credited with the power of discovering witches in dreams, made a revealing comment on

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

741 754 the discovery of witches. He said: 'The witches betray themselves. When we are sitting discussing the witches throttling people, we may notice one looking nervous and glancing sidelong at his friends, then we, who are innocent, know that he is the man.' Certainly a suspect is closely watched, and if he shows anxiety, or fails to join in the condemnation of witches and the expression of good will, this is brought up against him, as the following case shows.

754 627 'A certain man called Mwakagugu had a guest staying with him; a soldier on leave. Now this soldier was in the habit of calling in the neighbours to eat when his wife cooked a meal, and M. was always angry in his heart, wishing to eat alone with his guest. When the soldier invited in other people M. would refuse to join them. (The soldier was correct, according to Nyakyusa custom, in what he did. It is good to call in friends to eat.) On one occasion the soldier bought some beer and a crowd of men were drinking it, in another house, not M.'s; but they took a dry bamboo from M.'s place as firewood, to heat the water for the beer. Then M. was very angry indeed and asked: "What do you mean by taking my bamboo?" And his neighbours silently criticized him, thinking "Our friend here has not even bought this beer, and then he gets angry when we take his bamboo!" Another day when the soldier killed a bullock and gave a leg of the meat to some guests of his who were present his child fell ill, its ear swelled up and burst, and it screamed with pain. Later, a neighbour's wife cooked some porridge for her husband without any relish so when she brought the porridge to where the men were sitting, the soldier called to his own wife to bring a chicken she had cooked, as relish, and he offered it to the other men, eating none himself. Again, on yet another occasion, when his wife brought him his porridge she called M. to join him; but M. laughed and said: "Let them (the soldier and his other friends), eat it by themselves." This was the woman's story. And then straight away they were startled by the child screaming and refusing to lie down.

'So then all the neighbours gathered together and gave expression to their anger (*ukwijeje*), asking themselves the cause of the sickness, and why it was that it always became apparent when they were eating. "If the man in question" they said, naming no one, "does it again, we will expel him from the country!" As

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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soon as this was over M. at once began to whisper to a friend: "Why do they ask about this sickness, and all the other sicknesses we have they say nothing about? When we are ill is that not an illness?" His friend answered: "It is taboo to speak like this, they will hear you!" And when M. went on whispering he said: "Get out of my house." When the others heard of this they drove M. away, saying that it was he who was making the child sick. And that night the child's illness reached its height, and was worse than ever before.'

(In reply to question): 'At first when they met to express their anger they knew it was M. but feared to accuse him openly. When, however, he began to whisper they feared no longer and said openly: "You are a witch!" The headmen have forbidden all private whispering about witchcraft, as distinct from a formal public gathering to express anger; so that when his friend said to M.: "It is forbidden to speak like this", this was what he referred to. What he meant was: "Why did you not say this openly if it pains your heart? Now you seem to be making the illness worse!" In other words, the object of the open expression of anger was to warn M. off, but by continuing to whisper himself he showed that he had not repented. He was still angry. If he had said nothing they would not have expelled him.

'After M.'s neighbours had driven him from his home (by word of mouth only) he moved, but the village headman, Mwambuputa, brought him back to a different part of his village, not to the section of it (*akapanga*) where M. had previously built; he put him in the house of one of his men. Then his neighbours grew angry asking why Mwambuputa, who himself had forbidden murmuring, had brought back one whom they had convicted of witchcraft! So they went to Mwambuputa's place and expressed their anger to him. Then he agreed to go and expel him. I who recount the case, went with them.

'When we reached the house where M. was staying the assistant headman of M.'s old section, Mwakyandwike, stood out and said: "I have a word to say to my father Mwambuputa. I am astonished that you received back M. after I had driven him away because he is an evil man who does not like to have friendly dealings with us his neighbours." Then Mwambuputa replied: "When I fetched him back I did not know you had convicted him of witchcraft, I thought he was simply moving." "Yes,"

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 replied the other, "that is why I have followed him, for your
627 house is my home! If you love M. you too will be expelled!" And the others said: "Had you known about the case, we should have expelled you both!" "Let us tell him then", said Mwambuputa. But M. was not in the house and had to be fetched. When he came Mwambuputa said: "Your neighbours have followed you saying that they have expelled you. You have done some evil, have you not? I, when I received you, did not know of this, I thought you were just moving." "What is their reason for driving me away?" asked M. "That I've not yet asked them, we will ask them together." Then one man said: "You M., when you moved, why did you move?" M.: "The reason was this, our child (*sic*) at home was sick and we met to express our anger; after this I said to a friend, 'Why do they express their anger and say some one of us has eaten the child for there is a great deal of fever about and many children are sick?' This I said, and then found my friends said I was the witch. 'We expel you' they said, so I moved." "Yes," they said, "you knew yourself to be a witch, why else did you not show indignation and surprise and take your friends to Mwambuputa to be tried? Now you've given them power, and they have followed you here!" Another said: "If your friends drive you from the village will you be obstinate?" Then Mwambuputa said: "No more words, leave the village, your fellows tell you to go!"

754 M. condemned himself in the eyes of his neighbours by
783 suggesting that their hinted accusation was false, after they had gathered to express indignation; and here we come to one of the essential points in the Nyakyusa concept of witchcraft. A witch may repent; if he does repent he is no longer a danger to the village, but an asset, since as a witch he has the power to defend the village as well as to attack; and *admission of guilt is taken as a sign of repentance*. The Nyakyusa hold that a witch is always conscious of his evil activity and they have no ritual expressions of good will such as the Zande blowing on chicken wings, but they stress the obligation of a suspect to admit guilt, either directly or by implication. It is said that in the past, if a suspect admitted guilt, he was not driven out. Very few people, however, do admit guilt; the only case we traced was that of a labourer on the Lupa gold-fields who was accused by his fellows of harming the eyes of one of the gang, who had just discovered a large

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

nugget of gold. This 'witch' was actually expelled from the camp by his fellows, but Nyakyusa, commenting on the case, remarked that had it occurred in one of the home villages, he would only have been fined. 754 783

Sometimes a case begins with the startling shout of 'a defender' in the night, who claims to have seen in his dreams that a witch is attacking either himself or a fellow villager. 'A man who dreams of fighting, or being beaten, will sometimes wake up in the middle of the night and go out of his house and shout: "You, so and so, why do you come and fight with me?" But often he will not mention the name then, but waits till the morning when his friends will come and ask him: "Why were you shouting last night?" Then he tells them the name of the man he dreamed of, and if another man dreams of him in the same way the next night or later, then they say he is a witch.' Such a case was described by Mwaikambo: 'A certain man, Kololo, dreamed of his fellow, and in the morning he called out on the road, "I dreamed of so and so, we fought with him in the night, he was throttling me." So his fellows came to his help and said to the accused man: "You, Moses, we have caught you, move elsewhere!" So Moses [who was a pagan, despite his name] moved to another village in the same chiefdom, that of Korosso.' 754 787

Occasionally a witch reveals himself by threatening a neighbour with whom he has quarrelled, using the stereotyped phrases: 'You *may* sleep or you may not' (*Uligoma*), or 'What are you?' (*Uligwahi*), or 'Something may happen!' Here is an actual case as reported to us: 'Mwantibe once ordered a boy, the son of a village neighbour, to go on a message for him, but the boy refused, though it is customary for men to send their neighbours' sons on messages. Then Mwantibe got angry with him and snatched his cloth away, saying in anger: "You, boy, something may happen!" implying that the boy would fall ill. The boy fell ill that very evening, and died shortly afterwards. Mwantibe hurried to return the cloth, but the boy's people drove him away with it saying: "What sort of sorrow have you? Are you pretending, so that we shall not suspect you?" For they said it was he who had "eaten" the boy.' 754

The cases quoted so far all involve a direct accusation of witchcraft against the suspect, but sometimes he is compelled to move without ever being accused face to face. Mwaisumo ex- 754 627

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 plained: 'The men of the village cut a banana stem and wrap
627 banana leaves round it, and go at night and put it in front of his door; they also pull some of the thatching off the roof and put it with the banana stem. They do this without ever accusing him to his face of being a witch. Then, in the morning, when others pass by, they notice and say to each other: "See, he has been caught, he is a witch!" In the fields men will call out to one another, saying: "Have you heard? So and so has been caught as a witch?" They will call out where he can hear them, and he cannot stand it. He will go away to another chief.'

Instead of using a banana stem his neighbours may barricade his doorway with thorns while he is out. 'This symbolizes', Mwaikambo said, 'that we (your neighbours) wish to spear you; because, if you try to pass, the thorns will spear you. But we have left you, get out!' Or, as another informant explained: 'The thorns are the hearts of men, symbolizing that the men are all angry.' Occasionally, it is said, a brave man will clear away the thorns and remain, but his neighbours whisper about it and later on they will barricade his doorway again, and he will move. Placing the banana stem, or the thorns, is a joint action by the neighbours—should an individual do it on his own his neighbours will bring a charge against him. One informant suggested that the procedure is a new one developed to avoid making a direct accusation of witchcraft, which is a punishable offence under European administration; but this is doubtful.

622 The following case illustrates not only the practice of barricad-
627 ing the doorway of a supposed witch, but also the responsibility
754 of headmen for the defence of the village, together with the belief that a witch may throttle his own child. 'Nachela was an assistant headman in the village of Mwambuputa, appointed by Mwambuputa himself. Nachela's child cried by night and Mwambuputa was angry with him because he did not report the matter. "Why did you not tell me that your child was ill here? Why do you hide it? Indeed you are bad, it is you who are making the child ill, get out of our country!" Nachela watched over a village-section, he was Mwambuputa's assistant, therefore it was that Mwambuputa said: "Why do you hide the fact that your child is ill here, you my assistant? Indeed you have bewitched it yourself." Nachela denied the charge saying: "It is not I. No!" Then he went away to Selika about a case. While he was away his neighbours

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

barricaded his doorway with thorns. On his return he found them, and he moved to Mwaihojo's country (the adjoining chiefdom).'

Often an accusation of witchcraft is made without resort to divination at all: the behaviour of the accused (as in the cases quoted on pp. 110–13) or the word of 'the defender', is taken as evidence. But if there is doubt as to the identity of the witch, the patient or his family may consult a diviner (*undegwa*),[1] putting before him the names of persons they suspect. Whatever the grounds of accusation, however, it was normally confirmed by the *umwafi* ordeal, if the accused did not admit guilt. The chief might order a suspect to go to the ordeal, or a man or woman accused by his neighbours would appeal to the ordeal, when denying the charge. In such a case the accuser and accused first went to the chief to report and get official witnesses, then, accompanied by these witnesses and other friends, they went to a doctor who had a store of a certain medicine, *umwafi*, and there, at his homestead, they drank the *umwafi* together. Those who failed to vomit were judged guilty. The procedure was described by a number of witnesses (*vide* Documents, pp. 241–6). The accuser and the accused, each accompanied by supporters, go to the doctor, who warns them not to drink if what they have said is false. The doctor sprinkles powder into tepid water and gives the accuser and the accused the infusion to drink. He addresses the *umwafi*, and the supporters address each their own friend. Then, when one vomits his (or her) supporters applaud trilling,[2] and they go home, the man who vomited paying the doctor. Mwandosi described how after one of the two had vomited the other would sit tense and miserable, quite still. He would be left alone awhile, but later the doctor would try to make him bring up the poison: 'Should a man die!' they said. Only rarely, it seems, did anyone die of drinking *umwafi*.

If the accuser failed to vomit he was judged guilty of witchcraft himself; if neither vomited both were judged guilty; if both vomited the accuser was fined, paying two or more cows to the accused in compensation for slander. If he had no cows he might give a girl in marriage.

[1] For the methods of divination see Godfrey Wilson 'An African Morality', *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936), p. 80.

[2] A high-pitched ululation expressing praise and triumph.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 Sometimes the individuals concerned did not actually take the
627 ordeal themselves, but each was represented by one of his or her
695 children, as when Mwaisumo's mother was accused of bewitching the village cows, and one of her younger sons drank the *wamafi* representing her (cf. Document, p. 241). Very often the ordeal was used to discover which *group* was responsible for the trouble, whether it was the father's people or the mother's, or perhaps the village, and a child was chosen to represent each group and given the poison. Mwaisumo himself had drunk *wamafi* as a child, representing his father's people (cf. Document, p. 244). And a sceptic explained that each family chose a member who vomited readily—his family was always represented by a certain daughter who vomited *wamafi* immediately.

The ordeal is only administered nowadays in the greatest secrecy, and probably very rarely, for informants who had no hesitation in discussing with us witchcraft accusations and trials of supposed witches, though these were well known to be illegal, denied that the ordeal was administered. The most recent example we traced occurred in 1932.

763 So far we have only dealt with cases in which witchcraft is
787 suspected as the cause of illness among men, or of a decrease in
754 the milk supply. The matter is more serious if someone has actually died. If there is any doubt as to the cause of death, an autopsy is performed, and a diagnosis made from the condition of the stomach and intestines. 'Wounds' or scars in the stomach are taken as evidence of attacks by witches, and a black oily substance in the bowel, or red streaked with black and white, is a mark of sorcery; if the bowel is swollen, or if the entrails burst out of the incision, it is proof that the deceased was himself a witch, and was probably killed in a quarrel with fellow witches. Death due to a relative having been bound with ropes (cf. Document, p. 249), or a disease of the bowels (*ikiterya*) attributed to natural causes, is also thought to be apparent at an autopsy. Some maintain too, that the source of witchcraft can be discovered from the examination, wounds on the right side of the stomach indicating that the witch is a member of the father's family, or of the age-village; wounds on the left indicating that he is a member of the mother's family (cf. Document p. 246).

At the autopsy the crowd is kept at a distance and usually only one or two senior relatives or neighbours, the headman of the

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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village, and the doctor who operates are present. Occasionally their judgement is challenged. 787 754

'Once an old pagan woman, whose husband was reputed to have been a witch, demanded an autopsy. When they opened the stomach the entrails (*elitondoleli*) jumped out. [When the entrails jump out this way they say "the python is fighting".] The observers looked, and said to the doctor, "All right, all right, bind him up again!" But the widow objected, saying, "No, come near all of you." She called all the people and went to the corpse, and tore open the stomach. All cried out, saying: "Alas! do not do that. It is forbidden." Then she turned to the old people and said: "Is there anything here? Nothing! He is only a witch by hearsay. Yes, indeed, just because the entrails jumped out you convicted him."' For detailed accounts of two of the autopsies observed see the Document on pp. 247–50.

In the past the source of witchcraft was always confirmed through the ordeal; nowadays divination with the rubbing-board is sometimes used instead. Mwamunda described the procedure: "The custom of drinking *uwusafi* has ceased, but some, when a person has died, perhaps a child, make an autopsy. . . . Then, if they find wounds of witchcraft (*efilonda efya mango*) the father and the mother of the child go to a doctor to divine, but they do not drink *uwusafi*, they divine with the rubbing-board. Perhaps the divination indicates the mother. She then goes to her father, and he goes to divine with his wife, the grandmother of the dead child. If he (the grandfather) is then indicated he next takes his kinsmen with him, and when the divination indicates one of them the man will say: "This divination is nonsense; it always deceives." But others will think him guilty and say: "A kinsman was caught, he had eaten his grandchild." Or perhaps the divination indicates the father of the dead child. If so he divines again asking: "Is it relatives, or is it the country?" (For a man has a country, not a woman.) Then perhaps the divination will show that it is not relatives, but the "breath of God" (*Kyala*), that is to say other people, non-relatives. Or perhaps the divination indicates the father of the dead child and his relatives; and if so the father goes with his kinsmen and one of them is indicated. Then the father goes again with the man indicated by the previous divination, to confirm the verdict. Before going to court he asks himself: "How shall I bring a case which depends for evidence on divination? 787 754

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 754 Will the Europeans allow it?" And so (instead of bringing a charge of witchcraft) he sues his kinsman for a shilling. Later he sues him for a cow, and some even get a court order to collect the cow. Another man in such a position may claim a legal separation from his kinsman and their reciprocal debts in cattle are repaid.[1] It's a case indeed, that!'

Mwamunda came from Rungwe, not far from the administrative centre, Tukuyu, hence perhaps his hesitation in preferring a charge of witchcraft; in more remote parts cases concerning witchcraft are taken to the courts. Nsusa explained: 'We judge cases concerning witchcraft openly, but we do not have them written in the court book. When "a defender" has seen his fellow throttling someone he tells us, and we judge that witch. It is "the defenders" who see the witches. Perhaps "the defender" comes out of his house by night and calls out: "I see so and so throttling so and so! Listen to-morrow!" Yes, that happens nowadays. When someone tells us this we agree, the witch is convicted, even though he denies it. We say: "You are a witch, a thief, even though you do not admit it, get out of the country." Formerly when the accused denied he was a witch they went to the ordeal, and the ordeal caught the witch; now, since the Europeans have forbidden the use of *wawafi*, we accept the word of "the defenders". For you know the defenders *see* the witches! In dreams!' 'What about the man who accused the wife of Mwakobela?' we asked. 'He denied it; he said: "I did not see her". So on that account we said: "Since you have slandered her you must pay thirty shillings." If he had really seen her and told us properly we should have decided against the woman and divorced her from her husband, but he denied it, saying: "I did not see her", and we all said: "The woman is not a witch, who has seen her?" And if a man is fined because he has accused his fellow of witchcraft without seeing him really, we do not write that in the book either.'

754 683 Formerly, when a man was convicted of witchcraft, and did not admit it, he was compelled to move from his village, and often to leave the chiefdom altogether. Often his cattle and crops were taken by the chief, who killed one or more for 'the innocent' to eat. No compensation was paid to relatives as in an ordinary

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

homicide. 'Was he speared by *day*?' say the Nyakyusa. On the other hand, if relatives themselves brought the accusation, the chief could not take the accused's property. Since kinsmen themthemselves were driving the man out, whose property should the chief take? Everything went to the kinsmen, save one cow, which they gave the man they were driving out, that he might start a herd in his new home. A wife convicted of witchcraft was commonly divorced, being sent back to her father, who had then to return the marriage-cattle given for her. Rarely was a supposed witch killed.

As we have seen, supposed witches are still often banished if men, or divorced if women, but property is no longer seized, the practice having been effectively stopped by the British Administration. There is considerable variation in the actual treatment of supposed witches at the present time. Some husbands do not divorce their wives when they are convicted of witchcraft, others do so immediately; some chiefs drive supposed witches out of their country, and others allow them to settle in another village of the chiefdom. We have no evidence that those who are supposed to have killed others by witchcraft are usually treated more severely than those whose crime is causing sickness or a decrease in the milk supply. The punishment seems to vary, and to have varied formerly, rather with the status and personal popularity of the accused in his village, or with the affection a man has for his wife, than with the nature of the crime.

Those who have been convicted of witchcraft are not ostracized. A wife divorced on account of her witchcraft commonly remarries soon after; a man driven out for witchcraft is admitted to another village. The attitude is: 'Perhaps he bewitched his fellows there, we do not know, but he has not bewitched us.' Often a man who has been driven away by neighbours is fetched back again, a year or more later. Such was the case with the village headman Mwamila, who went to his chief and said: 'People are eating your child'—one of the chief's children had a disease of the eyes which blinded him. The chief ordered his people (*i.e.* their representatives) to take the ordeal. Then all were angry at Mwamila for going to the chief, because he went alone to whisper about them. Had he gone with others they would have been satisfied, but to go alone was not right. The ordeal indicated Mwamila himself, and the chief took all his four

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 cows. No, they did not take his food and mats, was he not a village headman? He moved; but, after one year only, they went to fetch him back.'

Here, in the accusation against a village headman, who, by virtue of his office has the power of defence and of bringing 'the breath' on wrong-doers, we come to the root of the ambivalence towards those accused of witchcraft. Witches are dangerous, but the very power which makes them dangerous also makes them valuable as 'defenders', for no distinction between the power of attack and defence is consistently maintained. The essential difference lies in the use of the power. Hence, Mwaiseumo declared, people actually like it when a man who has admitted witchcraft builds among them. 'They say he has the power of defence, and they think that a man who has once admitted witchcraft will not throttle them.' A parallel attitude towards homicides and cattle-thieves existed in the traditional culture, when chiefs were sometimes urged to rescue a homicide from the vengeance of a dead man's kin, or a cattle-thief from enraged victims, on the grounds that one who had proved himself such a fierce warrior (by killing another) or so skilful in lifting cattle, was too useful in war to be lost to the chiefdom.

754 Nevertheless, if a person who has once been accused of witch-
683 craft makes himself (or herself) unpopular again, the old case is raked up against him or her, and there are men who have been driven from one chiefdom to another, each time accused by their neighbours, and wives who have been divorced for witchcraft by one husband after another. This is the terrible fate held up before 'proud' children.

584 And what of the slur on the family when a member is con-
571 victed of witchcraft? We have seen that witchcraft is considered
582 hereditary in all but a few exceptional cases, and the stock reaction to an accusation is: 'We are astounded! No one in *our* family has ever been convicted of witchcraft!' In practice, parents are loath to allow a son or daughter to marry into a family in which either parent has a reputation of witchcraft; two or three cases were cited in which parents had opposed a marriage for this reason (*vide* Document, p. 151). But such arguments are private within the family, and the family feared by one group of neighbours need not be considered dangerous by people from another village. Since practically every adult marries at least once, the

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

objection to marrying the child of one who has been convicted is clearly not pushed to its logical conclusion. No slur is cast on any one lineage when an individual is convicted of witchcraft, for he may have inherited it from either parent, or even got it from a friend; conversely no lineage is cleared by an autopsy, for not all the children of a witch are necessarily witches. Thus a man may have a father or brother or son who is 'pure', yet be a witch himself. As we have seen, even persons belonging to the same lineage may occasionally accuse each other. Nevertheless, when an individual who is reputed to be a witch dies, the close relatives do sometimes insist on an autopsy, in order to clear the deceased of suspicion, and possibly themselves also (*vide supra*, p. 117). In one case we recorded it was a daughter who insisted on the autopsy being performed on her mother, a reputed witch. No witchcraft was found.

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So far we have dealt with cases of misfortune befalling an individual, followed by action against a fellow villager who is suspected of being responsible. This type of case is far the commonest within the field of witchcraft. When a general misfortune, such as a plague or epidemic, threatens, the chiefdom acts as a whole, not the villages separately, and the ritual is directed primarily to securing the blessing of the shades. There is some suggestion of ridding the chiefdom of witchcraft at the same time, but the emphasis is on appeasing the ancestors. The traditional new year cleansing (*ukutag' ikikungu*), now rarely performed, was also the concern of chiefdoms not separate villages, and it involved prayer to the ancestors.

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b. The age-village and the ancestors

We have dwelt at length on witchcraft and 'the breath of men', for, in Nyakyusa belief, the defence of the village against witches and the punishment of wrong-doers by 'the breath' of their fellows is the main corporate activity of the village in the religious sphere. There are no village rituals directed to the ancestors comparable to those performed on behalf of lineages and chiefdoms. Indeed, belief in the power of shades operates only in situations where social position is determined by descent, as it is in lineages and in the succession to chieftainship. The office of village headman is not hereditary. The son of a village headman

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 cannot be appointed as headman in any village of his own genera-
769 tion, and villages of past generations disappear. When a headman
622 dies, his village still being in existence, his place is taken by his heir who may be a son, but this office is only temporary. The village ceases to exist when its original members die off. Moreover, there is no suggestion that the shade of a headman's father broods over the village as the shade of a chief is thought to brood over the land he ruled.

The Nyakyusa have a lively belief in the power of shades,-a
775 belief closely connected with the dependence of the members of a lineage upon one another for cattle,[1] and with the office of 'divine king', but such belief scarcely affects village relationships, for the shades are not thought to be concerned with behaviour between neighbours, as distinct from relatives.

It is true that the proper performance of family rituals includes
775 feasting neighbours, but the implication always is that the shades
621 are concerned only in enforcing obligations towards themselves
602 and fellow kinsmen, not towards non-relatives. On the other hand, neighbours are concerned in the enforcement of kinship obligations. When a son insults his father, the father's neighbours are insulted also; when a daughter-in-law peeps at her father-in-law the shocked astonishment of the neighbours may cause her children to pine. And so, when an erring son begs pardon of his father, he must provide a feast for the neighbours, 'that they may see that his father is satisfied'.

A situation often arises in which both the shades and 'the breath
775 of men' operate, sometimes 'the breath' of shocked neighbours
626 supporting the shades, and sometimes shades and men each
754 exacting their due. One illustration of this was given us by Kalunda: 'If you do not carry out the burial rites for your father, people are angry, they throttle you, and the shade is angry also, he comes on your body. No, the witches do not call the ancestors to help; both are angry on their own account. To-day the black ones, the witches, come and throttle you; to-morrow the ancestors come. People are angry because they do not eat meat; the shade is angry because you did not perform the burial rites for him. He says: "See, I left much property, why did you not bury me properly?"' And in discussing the obligation of a daughter-in-

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'An African Morality', *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936); Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

law to avoid her father-in-law, another informant said: 'It is forbidden to look at fathers-in-law. If we do look then we shall not die well, we shall long to die and not be able to do so, because both those below (the dead) and those above (the living) are angry. Yes, it is the witches we mean when we say "those above".' 775 626 754

c. The age-village and medicines

Unlike the belief in witchcraft and 'the breath of men', which mainly affects relationships within a village, or the ancestor cult which is confined to the relations between kinsmen, and between chief and people, the use of medicines (*imikota*)[1] enters into every type of relationship in Nyakyusa society. Medicines are employed to win success in almost every undertaking: cultivating, herding, hunting, love-making, war. They are regarded as one of the main props of authority; the impressiveness (*ubunitya*) of a chief, and the power of a village headman to command, being directly related to the medicines with which they are treated (*vide supra*, pp. 24–5). They are resorted to for the promotion of fertility, for the treatment of the sick, and for protection and retaliation generally, as well as the means of directly harming an enemy. Medicines are believed to operate along with other mystical powers. For example, they are an essential element in rituals directed to the ancestors, and they are used for the discovery of witchcraft (in the *ordeal*) as well as for protection against it, and for the treatment of patients thought to have been 'eaten' by the witches or chilled by 'the breath of men'. Used alone, medicines are held to be ineffective against witchcraft or 'the breath of men', but they are regarded as a useful complement to other action, such as the banishment of the witch or the repentance of the sinner. 757 789

The power of witchcraft or of defence against witches (*amanga*) is connected with medicines, for it is thought often to be acquired for defensive purposes (and more rarely for aggressive purposes) through drinking medicines (*vide* pp. 25, 221). But the powers of witchcraft, or witch defence, and of medicines are quite distinct; the one implies a peculiar physical condition, the presence of one or more pythons in the belly, whereas the other may be bought from a doctor and used by anyone, and its 754 757 789

[1] The root *-koto* implies something derived from a plant, cf. *ikí-koto*, a wooden spoon.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 efficacy neither depends upon nor affects the user's anatomy.
757 The creation and control of wild animals, for example, is thought
789 to turn on knowing the right medicines, not on any innate power, and is not therefore classed as witchcraft.

The Nyakyusa hold that just as 'python power' may be put to
791 good or evil use, so also medicines may be employed legally or
754 illegally. Particular techniques are not in themselves either good or bad; their morality turns on the purpose which they serve.
789 Thus our friend and neighbour, Mwakionde, who was believed to have created four lions, which were roaming the neighbourhood, by placing certain bundles of twigs in the long grass, was regarded as a benefactor; for the lions had attacked neither men nor cattle, and besides adding dignity (*ubunyu*) to the country were killing the wild pig, which had been destroying the gardens. But a certain X— was driven out of Mwaijande's country because he was alleged to have created leopards which had killed children and cows. 'In 1926 X— was notorious for making leopards. It was said that he got a medicine from Misuku to make them. His neighbours feared to quarrel with him for in that year leopards infested the whole of Selya, especially the country of Mwaijande. It was said that if one quarrelled with this man one's child would be killed by leopards the following day. He was notorious. Once he quarrelled with a neighbour, saying: "Your cattle are eating my food." Then the following day the child of that man was taken by a leopard. The chief drove X— out. When they questioned him he denied having familiars ("animals") but the chief said: "Move from my country, for your animals are destroying this country." He said: "Chief, give me the ordeal." The chief refused, saying: "No! get out of my country." So he moved. Now he is back in the country of Mwaijande. He returned to the place from which he had moved."[1]

789 Not all medicines believed to cause sickness and death are illegal; there are many retaliatory medicines which are believed only to harm the evil-doer, e.g. the thief, the adulterer, or the eater of stolen food; and the use of these 'medicines of ownership' (*ifilembeko*) is considered quite legitimate. A man gives his wives medicines to drink (without their knowledge) and then any lover who may sleep with them will, it is said, contract disease in

[1] In another account this man was spoken of as a witch (*mwalwi*), cf. Document, p. 252.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

consequence, though the wives themselves are free. Further the adulterer will pass the disease on to any women he subsequently sleeps with, including his own wives. Gonorrhoea is one of the diseases attributed to this type of medicine. Medicines are also put on houses or fields, for the purpose of bringing upon thieves, or eaters of stolen food, the itch, swollen genitals, dislocation of the knee-cap and thigh, and other ills. One doctor proudly told us of a medicine he possessed which would prevent a thief leaving the field in which he was stealing 'and make him go round and round till daylight, when he is discovered and admits his theft'. Certain protective medicines are thought to cause sorcery to recoil on the sender. But their use is legal; so also is the use of a vengeance magic called 'the horn', *ulupembe* (cf. Document, p. 212), and another type, *ilyepa*, which is held to work only between relatives. These medicines are resorted to when one party to a dispute is dissatisfied with the judgement given in court, and occasionally in cases which have never been taken to court. They are held to harm the person against whom they are directed only if he be guilty. If he is innocent, they recoil on the user. What is illegal is the direct use of medicines to harm an enemy, without any safeguard to ensure that the medicine should only harm the guilty. This is *ubutege*, 'the snaring of men', which we translate here as sorcery.[1] The common techniques of sorcery are said to be putting medicine in an enemy's path, pricking it into his footprints, or putting it into his food and drink.

In theory the distinction between the legal and illegal use of destructive medicines is clear, but the classification of a particular case depends upon the standpoint of the informant. Just as the supposed victims of 'the breath of men' referred angrily to the attacks of 'witches', so informants whose families were alleged to have suffered from 'the horn', referred to it as 'sorcery' (*ubutege*).

The belief in sorcery and in retaliatory magic is directly parallel to the belief in witchcraft and the 'breath of men', while the belief in protective medicines is parallel to the belief in the power of 'the defenders'. The distinction between the two sets of beliefs turns, however, not only on the difference between the manipulation of medicines, and the exercise of an innate power,

[1] In 'An African Morality', *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936) 'sorcery' was used for all destructive magic; I now confine it to the illegal use of destructive medicines.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 but also on the relationships to which they apply. While witchcraft,
789 'the breath of men', and the power of 'the defenders' are thought to operate primarily within the village and never beyond the chiefdom, sorcery, retaliatory and protective medicines may operate beyond the village and chiefdom as well as within them. Moreover, while the whole village, led by the headman, joins in defence against witchcraft, protective and retaliatory medicines are used primarily by individuals and families. Medicines of vengeance ('the horn' and *ilyepa*) are directed against kinship groups—members of an agnatic lineage, their spouses, and the children of daughters,—are all held to be in danger—not local groups. The next-door neighbours of a man attacked will be safe so long as they are not kinsmen or affines.

The one occasion on which the village or village-section, acting
241 as a group, uses medicines, is at the burning of rubbish heaps in
789 the fields, before planting millet and certain other crops (*vide supra*, pp. 51–4). As we have shown, these medicines are supposed to protect the grain from witches and sorcerers, as well as to increase the yield. The Kukwe argue that the headman who lit the medicated fires must also be the first to taste the food grown on the fields, and he takes it with medicines, but this is not insisted upon by all the Nyakyusa; most commonly it is family groups that are careful to eat protective medicines with the first-fruits from their fields.

754 Envy is what makes men take to sorcery, the Nyakyusa say,
789 envy of another's riches, or power, or employment. As we have seen, envy is cited as a motive for witchcraft also. But it is not the sole motive. Greed is the primary cause (*vide supra*, p. 92). And while witchcraft can only be used to work off a grudge against a village neighbour, sorcery can be used against anyone. Like witchcraft, the effects of 'the breath of men' are said to be confined to the village. Moreover 'the breath' can only operate against a known sinner—it is the murmuring of neighbours about an individual which causes him to sicken; whereas most retaliatory medicines work against unknown persons, discovering the thief, adulterer, or sorcerer, as well as punishing him. As elsewhere in Africa, the use of sorcery and retaliatory medicines is said to be almost entirely confined to men, though women are often named as witches. In short, the situations in which sorcery and medicines of retaliation are used overlap at one or two points with those in

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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which witchcraft and 'the breath of men' operate, but their supposed fields of action are relatively distinct. 789

In the past, the punishment for sorcery was death with torture by impaling, not merely confiscation of property and banishment. Proof of the practice of sorcery depended upon the evidence of the doctor who had supplied the medicine (who was not regarded as implicated in the crime) and upon the *wusafi* ordeal. The Nyakyusa insist that the practice of sorcery was formerly rare, and that it has increased enormously, much more than the practice of witchcraft. This belief is to be related to two facts. First, Nyakyusa co-operate much more than they formerly did with people who live in different villages. The clerks who work together in Government offices, and who have a fearsome reputation as sorcerers, do not necessarily live in the same village; and being apart at night when the witches fly, they cannot be supposed to bewitch one another. But there is frequent occasion for friction between them and therefore a standing temptation to employ sorcery. So also in other types of employment, in trade and on journeys, individuals are frequently in contact with men of different villages. Secondly, belief in sorcery is felt to be compatible with the acceptance of a scientific explanation of causes of disease in a way that belief in witchcraft is not. *Ubutege* is commonly translated as 'poisoning' by those who speak English, whether the medicine is or is not put into food or drink, or whether it is supposed to affect all who eat it or only the individual against whom it is directed. All types of sorcery tend to be rationalized as 'poisoning'; and many educated Nyakyusa who deny the reality of witchcraft admit to a lively fear of sorcerers. 754 683

As the table on pp. 198–213 shows, however, accusations of witchcraft are still much more common than accusations of sorcery in the community as a whole. We heard of thirty-eight cases of supposed witchcraft to eleven of sorcery, and there was no reason to think that our friends were more likely to mention the one type of case than the other. 754

d. The age-village and Christianity

Since common action against witches, and to punish transgressors through 'the breath of men', is one of the primary functions of an age-village, what happens in a Christian village, or 195 754 184

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

795 when members of a pagan village embrace Christianity? Orthodox Nyakyusa Christians, that is, those accepting the teaching of
754 the European missionaries of any of the four denominations at
184 work in the area, deny the reality of witchcraft and of 'the breath of men'; they deny the power of any individual to harm another by virtue of 'a python' in the stomach, or to bring illness to his erring neighbour by murmuring with others about him.

As we have already seen, the profession of Christianity and school education tend to coincide among the Nyakyusa, and the educated tend to be sceptical of witchcraft, while believing in sorcery. Such scepticism is directly related to the dogmatic teaching of missionaries, to instruction in physiology in schools, and to the challenge of certain missionaries and Nyakyusa Christians that pagans should prove the existence of witchcraft at autopsies (*vide* Document, p. 254). The suggestion that 'pythons' are really acute tape-worm (*vide supra* p. 92) or an enlarged kidney is typical of the critical attitude of educated Christians to pagan dogma. We have no doubt that belief in witchcraft is weakening, and that this weakening is directly due to mission teaching.

795 Nevertheless most Christians continue to have some belief in a
754 mystical power exerted by individuals or groups to the harm of
184 others. For a few the contradiction between the traditional and the Christian dogma involves acute mental conflict; for many the
626 conflict is resolved through the concept of 'the curse' (*ikigune*) of the congregation, led by the priest or pastor and elders, and through emphasis on sorcery rather than on witchcraft. Most Christians believe that the just wrath of those set in authority, and of the faithful members of a congregation, may bring misfortune on a sinner. They argue that the power which punishes the wrong-doer comes from God, not from ancestors or from pythons in men's bellies, but that it is brought upon an individual by the anger and murmuring of men.[1] Further, it is believed that

[1] The phrase 'the breath of men' (*ukupepa cya bantu*) is never used with reference to the punishment of sinners in the Christian congregation, but always 'the curse' (*ikigune*), a word which is used to translate certain phrases in the Gospels, and which conveys an idea felt to be compatible with Christian dogma. As already noted (p. 101) the pagans of the plain and of Selya use 'the curse' (*ikigune*) more or less synonymously with 'the breath of men' (*ukupepa cya bantu*). For details of cases of misfortune attributed to the curse of Christians see Monica Hunter, 'An African Christian Monday', *Africa*, Vol. X (1937), pp. 289-91.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Christians are only affected by the shocked astonishment of fellow Christians, not by the disapproval of pagans, and the unit within which 'the curse' is commonly spoken of as operating is the congregation. In two of the cases we recorded (*vide* Document, p. 209) it was suggested that illness was due to the anger of neighbours, fellow Christians, over stinginess and greed, but in the other cases it was not village neighbours who were primarily concerned, but the Christian congregation, a group embracing members from many villages.

The type of behaviour believed to be punishable by 'the curse' of fellow Christians also differs somewhat from that thought to be punished by 'the breath of men'. The virtue Christians emphasize most is chastity, and 'the curse' is often said to be a punishment for fornication or adultery. The other sin commonly spoken of as bringing down a curse is disobedience, or disrespectful behaviour to the minister (or priest) or elder of the congregation. Among pagans 'the breath of men' serves also to sanction sexual morals and to sustain respect for those in authority, but their sex code is different. It is incest, or familiarity between father- and daughter-in-law, which they regard as really evil, not sex relations outside marriage. And they emphasize respect to senior relatives and fathers' neighbours rather than to the leaders of any wider group.

Christians lay much less stress on hospitality to neighbours than pagans, and it is generally agreed that they eat alone more than pagans would dare to do. As one Christian put it, a pagan would *always* call his neighbours to share meat or beer when he had it, but a Christian might eat a sheep, or a goat, or even a calf, alone with his family. It is good, the Christians say, to call friends to share a feast, but not an inescapable obligation. Nor do Christians regularly send the saddle and ribs of any animal they kill to the chief, as pagans do; 'for', they say, 'we do not fear "the breath of men".' But hospitality towards strangers is felt to be a condition of salvation. One informant explained that 'If a man is stingy towards his neighbours it does not matter; but if he is stingy towards a stranger from a distance, he might die from lack of food; and that would be the fault of the stingy one. Such a fault would prevent him from entering Heaven.' This statement points to the most striking difference between Christian and pagan morality—the range of moral obligations. A pagan's duties

J.M.Gibson E.S.(1924-1926) FN17 1951 Nigeria FN17 Nyakyusa

XIII. DISPLAY—THE *UKUMQUA* DANCE AT A MARRIAGE FEAST

A woman in the foreground is wearing the traditional brass body-rings

[facing p. 130]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

795 are primarily to his kinsmen and fellow villagers, and secondarily
to fellow members of his chiefdom; beyond the chiefdom and
574 circle of kinsmen he had, traditionally, no obligations. The
184 Christian definition of 'neighbour' is a much wider one. It is
577 emphasized by the missionaries that the Christian Church is universal, and Nyakyusa Christians themselves are conscious of their unity with, and obligations to, members of other chiefdoms, other cultural groups, and other races. The new sanctions for behaviour operating within the Christian group—the emphasis on Christian duty; the hope of that 'peace which passeth all understanding' and of eternal life; and the fear of suspension or expulsion from the communion of the faithful, and of hell-fire[1]—all these apply to relations beyond, as well as within, the village, the chiefdom, and the circle of kin.

795 Two other points were mentioned by Christian informants
184 when discussing the differences between pagan and Christian
577 morality: they said that Christian children growing up were liable to be 'proud' (*namatiego*) in their bearing and manner of greeting, because they do not fear 'the breath of men'; and also that Christian men were not afraid to ask many cattle for their daughters at marriage, again because they do not fear their neighbours' disapproval in the way pagans fear it. The implication is that there is less insistence upon conformity to a given code among Christians than among pagans; a greater tolerance of diversity of behaviour.

795 These differences between pagan and Christian dogma are
788 matched by differences between their ritual. There are no
184 Christian rituals in which the village as a group, distinct from other groups, is concerned. The congregation—the group worshipping in one church—is drawn from many villages, and though devout Christians living in the same neighbourhood often gather for morning and evening prayer, such rituals never include a whole village. Even in a Christian village on mission land only a small proportion of the villagers attend daily prayer regularly. As we have seen, the members of a pagan village meet from time to time to warn off witches, or to bless a repentant wrong-doer (*vide supra*, pp. 101, 109 ff.), but since belief in witchcraft or in 'the curse' is not orthodox among Christians, there is no ritual con-

[1] cf. Monica Hunter, 'An African Christian Morality', *Africa*, Vol. X (1937), p. 289-92.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

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292
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XIV. A MEN'S DRUMMING DANCE AT A FUNERAL

[facing p. 131]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

nected with it in a Christian village or village-section. The nearest parallel to the pagan ritual of reconciliation is the formal readmission of a repentant sinner to the congregation.

The change in belief and ritual tends to weaken village solidarity; for the Christian village is neither a defensive unit, nor is it the group from within which retribution and forgiveness come. A Christian does not feel himself dependent upon village neighbours to the same degree as does a pagan. We argue that the extension of the range of interdependence reduces its intensity in the narrower circles of relationship, and this is evident in the religious as in the economic aspect.[1]

Since the authority of a village headman is largely dependent upon his supposed mystical power, Christians are rarely appointed to this office by the Nyakyusa. We heard of only one Christian headman and he was in the country of a Christian chief. Christians cannot go through the full 'coming out' ceremony which involves treatment with medicines to give *amasepo*, and a Christian headman cannot fulfil the traditional ritual functions in relation to the chief and his ancestors. But in Ngonde, where the percentage of Christians is high (46 per cent as opposed to 15 per cent among the Nyakyusa) and the 'coming out' ceremony has been dropped, there are a number of Christian headmen who simply abstain from the performance of any pagan rituals (as does the Kyungu himself) leaving them to those headmen who are pagan and feel the ritual to be important. And pagan informants whom we asked about defence against witchcraft in a village in which the headman was a Christian, replied: 'Others will protect the country from witchcraft,' implying that there are always other 'defenders' in a village besides its leader.

In Christian village-sections the same difficulties do not arise, for assistant headmen are never treated at the 'coming out', nor have they ritual functions, other than the formal reproof of supposed witches (*vide supra*, p. 109). Hence the recognized leader of any group of Christians living in a pagan village is normally a Christian. In Christian villages on mission land the leaders are, of course, always Christian. These villages do not participate in any 'coming out' ceremony and the leaders are appointed by the missionary in consultation with the 'session' (*i.e.* representatives of the congregation), not by the old chief and

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 13-21.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

623 his village headmen. In some villages the 'elder' is both a religious
773 leader and a secular authority, but there is a tendency to separate
184 the two offices and to appoint a 'peacemaker' whose duty it is to settle disputes, collect taxes, and represent the village in its relationships with the chief and the administration, while the 'elder' confines himself to watching over the spiritual welfare of his people. Such division of authority is symptomatic of the growing differentiation of Nyakyusa society.

c. *Witchcraft, medicines, and the British administration*

154 Under British administration the use of the *wamafi* ordeal, im-
177 putation of witchcraft, intimidation or obtaining goods under
627 false pretences by threats of witchcraft or sorcery, or offers of protection against them, are punishable offences. As we have seen, the ordeal is now administered only in the greatest secrecy, and probably very seldom, but accusations of witchcraft are frequent, and are even heard before the Native Courts, though not recorded (*vide* Document, p. 237). In the villages near the Government station more caution is observed in making accusations than in more remote parts of the district: very often the identity of the witch is only hinted at, or thorns are piled at his door by persons who remain anonymous (*vide supra*, p. 114) so that no individual can be convicted of imputing witchcraft. As one man put it: '"The defenders" see the witches, but cannot name them to anyone.'
[761] Autopsies continue in conservative villages but they are no longer performed on every corpse, as is said to have been customary in the old days. The chief Fwokoto, himself a sceptic, argued that it was no use performing an autopsy when a charge could not be laid. If the members of a village are all convinced that a particular fellow is a witch he is forced to move, since his unpopularity becomes intolerable to him (*supra*, pp. 110–5). As Mwambuputa put it: 'We don't like him, and he doesn't like us either: he does not enjoy our company (*atikwangala na swewe*), so he moves.' But if the friction is only between two individuals, the supposed witch may bounce it out, for without resort to the *wamafi* ordeal there is no sure means of deciding between the accuser and the accused.

159 The prohibition of witch-finding is not accepted as right and
177 just: the common view is that the Europeans 'protect the witches',

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and they are condemned for doing so. One old man argued in this way: 'Where you Europeans are wrong is in forbidding witchcraft in word only and not in spirit. It does no good to say that witchcraft does not exist; but if you had driven witchcraft out of our hearts that would have been good.' And again: ' "The defenders" still fight the witches, they make great efforts, but they may no longer speak about it. In the old days when a witch went to choke his fellow "the defenders" would see him and turn him back, and then on the morrow they would tell people that he was a witch, and he would have to go to the chief and take the ordeal which would convict him. But now "the defenders" have to be silent because of you Europeans who say there is no witchcraft, so that though the witch is perhaps turned back the first night, the next night he goes again and throttles his fellow.' Many Nyakyusa think that Europeans are hypocrites when they deny belief in witchcraft. One friend, the Christian wife of a chief, said to us: 'You are dissembling like all Europeans, you don't want to admit the reality of witchcraft. You are just dissembling.' Nor are Europeans thought to be immune from witchcraft: the attacks of malaria from which we ourselves suffered were immediately interpreted by our servants and friends as due to witches.

Since most people are sure that evil desires manifesting themselves as witchcraft or sorcery exist, movements of witch-finders partake of the nature of religious revivals. The *Muchapi* movement, described by Dr. Richards for the Bemba[1] appeared among the Nyakyusa in 1932, and had a brief popularity, dying out again before 1934. The professed aim of the leader was to rid the country of witchcraft and sorcery, and the attitude of most Nyakyusa was expressed in the comment of a Christian friend who said to us: 'He (the witch-finder) did very well because he brought to light all those that killed people and made them hand over the medicines which they had used.'

The sense of insecurity created by a continuing belief in witchcraft along with the prohibition of the traditional means of discovering witches, finds expression in the frequent movement of individuals from village to village. Such movement occurred in the past, and it was often linked with suspicion of witchcraft, but whereas in the old days it was always the individual convicted in

[1] A. I. Richards, 'A Modern Movement of Witch-finders', *Africa*, Vol. VIII (1935), pp. 448–61.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 the *nwaafi* ordeal who moved, now it is often the man who sup-
754 poses himself a victim of witchcraft who flies for his life (*vide infra*, pp. 153 ff.); and it is probable that circulation between villages has in this way increased very considerably.

754 Denying the reality of witchcraft, the British administration
626 ignores the belief in the legitimate use of 'python power' to enforce law and morality, any disputes arising out of this being
673 classed as 'witchcraft'. One case turning on the belief in 'the breath of men' was heard by the District Officer of Tukuyu while we were in the district. The facts, as given us by the District Officer concerned, and by Nyakyusa informants, were as follows:

Mwankuga, a chief, fell sick and one of his sons-in-law, a clerk, advised him to get treatment from the European doctor then investigating tuberculosis in the district. When Mwankuga's junior half-brother heard this he came to Mwankuga, along with others, advised him not to go to a European doctor, and offered to cure him himself. He said that *he* had made Mwankuga ill—'had closed his stomach'—because Mwankuga had refused to make the 'coming out' ceremony for his sons when pressed by his village headmen to do so. Mwankuga's half-brother said 'the country was angry' because of the delay in the 'coming out' ceremony. He insisted that Mwankuga's illness was due to 'the breath' of the whole country, not to the sorcery (*ubutego*) of an individual. Mwankuga acknowledged that he had done wrong in refusing to hold the ceremony, and handed over two cows which his half-brother demanded, receiving in turn medicine, which he drank. Five days later Mwankuga gave his half-brother three more cows which were killed at Mwankuga's homestead and eaten by his people. Then, later on, since he did not recover, and one of his sons for whom the 'coming out' should have been held died, Mwankuga reported the matter to a senior chief, Mwakatumbula, president of the court district in which he lived. Mwakatumbula referred the case to the District Officer, and Mwankuga's half-brother was tried for 'obtaining goods by false pretences', under Section 287 of the Penal Code. The accused denied that he had ever said that he was the cause of Mwankuga's illness, and though the latter brought witnesses, the District Officer found that their testimony was 'not sufficiently reliable to substantiate the charge', and 'that there was no reason to suppose that the accused had acted in bad faith'. He referred the

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

case back to Mwakatumbula's court 'for investigation for an offence under Native Law and Custom'. Two points which came out in the examination before the District Officer are significant. First, Mwankuga readily admitted that he had done wrong in delaying the 'coming out' ceremony. He said to the court: 'I did wrong in refusing to hold the *ubunka*, I did wrong.' Secondly, the court (*i.e.* the Nyakyusa assessors) specifically inquired whether or not Mwankuga's half-brother had got his share of the meat provided by Mwankuga. It emerged that he had eaten some meat, but the witnesses were not clear as to how much he had got.

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When the case came up again before the Native Court the general opinion was: 'The son of the chief has died. They (*i.e.* the witches) have "eaten" him. The chief himself has been ill because he refused to hold the "coming out" ceremony.'

Two other so-called 'witchcraft' cases came before the District Officer while we were in Tukuyu District. One turned on the use of vengeance magic to collect a debt, the doctor who had supplied the medicines being the accused (see Document, p. 213). The Nyakyusa view that only the individual who has commissioned a doctor to work sorcery on his behalf, and not the doctor himself, is guilty, if death from sorcery (or poisoning) has been proved, is not, of course, accepted by the Administration. In the other case a Sangu doctor told two individuals that they were threatened with 'witchcraft' and got cattle from them in return for his supposed protection. He was expelled from the district (see Document, pp. 258-61).

The difficulties of administration in this field are obvious. No one with a background of western science can admit the reality of witchcraft or 'the breath of men', as defined by the Nyakyusa, or the possibility of discovering truth through the *wamuji* ordeal. Yet prohibition of the ordeal, when belief in witchcraft is so strong, breeds a sense of insecurity. The only solution is to kill the belief in witchcraft. As we have shown, it is somewhat weakened by elementary education and Christian teaching; and we believe that its disappearance turns on increasing technical control, particularly in the field of disease, on scientific education, and on the development of impersonal relationships.[1]

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 88–95, 102–4.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VI

THE MAINTENANCE OF ORDER

626 VARIOUS forms of social pressure which serve to maintain order in the village have already been discussed: economic reciprocity, the need to be approved, and a supposed mystical interdependence are the foundation of order. We have shown that neighbours depend upon each other for help in many undertakings, that prestige accrues to affability and generosity, that men fear to shock their neighbours lest sickness fall on them, and that they admonish their children not to be proud and quarrelsome lest they be accused of practising witchcraft. The desire for prestige and the fear of sickness, or of gaining the reputation of being a witch, directly modify behaviour towards neighbours. Nevertheless, disputes between fellow villagers occur, and there is a regular legal mechanism for dealing with them.

a. *Arbitration*

627 The Nyakyusa set great store on arbitration by a friend. It is common practice for individuals who have quarrelled to state their dispute before a respected friend and ask for his opinion on the case. The statement is made in public and any man who happens to be present may offer an opinion. There is no attempt to hush up a quarrel—rather it is held that the expression of it paves the way for reconciliation—and the emphasis is laid on arriving at a settlement which is agreed to by both parties. Arbitration of this sort begins in the herd-group when two small boys will take their dispute to a fellow, the leader of their group, and the practice continues throughout their lives in the villages of youths, mature men, and elders. The respected friend to whom the case is first submitted is most often the leader of the village-section to which one or both parties to the dispute belong. But he need not necessarily be an appointed leader; any respected man may be asked to arbitrate. If his decision is not accepted by

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

both parties, or if he declares the case too difficult and refuses to give an opinion, then it is taken to the headman of the village. Should the headman fail to settle the dispute, it goes to the senior headman of his side of the chiefdom, thence to the chief sitting with his headmen, and nowadays it may go on through the Native Court, and the Native Appeal Court, to the District Officer sitting with native assessors, the Provincial Commissioner, and the High Court of Tanganyika. 627

Village headmen neither have, nor had, power to enforce their decisions; such power lay with the chief alone in the old days—he would send some of his junior kinsmen and men from his capital (ikitwapalele) to execute judgement—and he alone could order the parties to a dispute to drink the poison ordeal, from which verdict there was no appeal. Nor is a village headman or other arbitrator paid a fee—a pot of beer or a hoe from the plaintiff to 'open the case', and beer (or occasionally a bull) as a thank-offering from the party for whom judgement was given, were the perquisites of a chief alone. The arbitrator's reward is prestige—the honour and respect of his fellows. As we have said, a case may be submitted to anyone for arbitration and no slight to the existing authorities is thereby implied; but if cases are constantly taken to some individual in the section other than himself, a section leader may grow jealous. We heard of one who was reputed to have tried to poison a new-comer to his section, a Christian, who was hospitable and became so popular as an arbitrator that the appointed leader feared lest he might lose all his authority. The hospitable man is respected and his fellows often ask for his opinion on a case as they sit together over a pot of beer. 653 622 627

But though village headmen cannot enforce their decisions, they are not to be ignored. An individual does not take a case direct to the chief; usually his village headman takes it to the senior headman of the side,[1] and the latter then takes it to the chief. Both will have heard something of the case and, if it is not regarded as 'too difficult', will have attempted to reconcile the 622 627

[1] It appears that a village headman *should* proceed through the senior headman of his side, but in Pumbwe's chiefdom procedure was modified by the fact that there had been no 'coming out' ceremony. Thero Mwelule, the headman of a junior village, brought cases direct to the chief (*vide infra*, p. 148). It was modified also in Mwakipesile's country by the absence of Mwaisumbe, one of his two senior headmen (cf. Document, p. 181).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

622 parties before referring the matter to the chief. And any decisions
627 they may have reached are reported to the chief.

Disputes between members of a boys' village may be settled by the leader of their village, but more serious cases go to the headman of their fathers' village, and may proceed through him to the senior headman of the side. Old men go to their own headmen, but there is an appeal to the senior headman of the ruling generation, on the side in which they live, except in inheritance cases. In these the old men are the ultimate authority. Christians living in sections of pagan villages take their cases to their section leader—himself a Christian, whose position is comparable to that
627 of a pagan assistant headman. Thence a civil case goes to the
795 village headman, but where an offence against the Christian code is involved (as in theft, or adultery, or wife-beating) the case also comes before the court of the congregation, consisting of the minister, elders, and deacons. Disputes between members of Christian villages established on mission land come before the 'elder' or 'peacemaker' of the village, appointed by the Church, and if they are not settled by him they usually go directly to the chief. They also come before the court of the congregation if they involve an offence against Church law (cf. Document, pp. 262–3).

627 Disputes between pagan women are settled in the same way as disputes between men. There is neither the leadership and authority of a senior woman of the homestead as among the Nguni and Bemba,[1] nor that of a senior age-set or women's council as among the Meru[2]. The first woman to be settled as a wife in a young men's village is, as we have seen, entitled to the deference of the wives who follow her, but she has no authority over them. In the same way, though a man's senior wife takes precedence in family rituals, and the wife of a headman may lead in a village ritual, or the wife of a chief in one made on behalf of the country, such precedence in ritual does not carry authority over other women. Certain women versed in the rituals performed at puberty, marriage, birth, and death, and knowing the proper medicines to use, are called in on these occasions, but such

[1] Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, pp. 18, 35–41; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 38–9; A. I. Richards, *Bemba Marriage and Present Economic Conditions*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 4, pp. 67–9.

[2] E. M. Holding, 'Women's Institutions and the African Church', *International Review of Missions*, July 1942, pp. 290–300.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

abanyago have no more general authority than the doctors who divine or treat the sick. Their parallels among men are the priests (also called *abanyago*) who perform the rain ritual and the sacrifices to dead chiefs. 627

The one position which endows a woman with legal authority is that of father's sister. A senior sister has a joint responsibility, along with the headman of the village, for the distribution of her dead brother's property, and her brother's children may appeal to her to arbitrate if they have a dispute with their father while he is yet alive: this is particularly important in the families of chiefs, since a chief's son cannot bring his father before commoners for arbitration. The authority of a father's sister is, however, exercised only within the lineage and does not extend even to wives of lineage members. Co-wives may take a dispute for arbitration to their husband, but if, as often happens, he is thought to be prejudiced, they go to a male neighbour, or to the headman of the village, in the same way as when the dispute is with an unrelated person (cf. p. 140). 627 768 613 604

Only in the group of unmarried girls in a village does there appear to be the germ of control by seniors of the same sex. We traced one case in which a quarrel between two girls nearing the age of puberty was settled by the slightly older girls of the same village, who punished one who had beaten her fellow without justification, and then lied to them when they inquired into the case, by scratching her with their nails. As they reach puberty the girls, who have grown up together in one village and formed a closely knit group, become scattered among the different age-villages of their husbands and there leadership among women is not developed (*vide infra*, pp. 171–2). This does not mean, however, that women are excluded from arbitration; they can, and frequently do, bring cases on their own account, not necessarily acting through husband or father. Unlike the pagans, Christian women who have quarrelled do sometimes ask a leading woman of their congregation to arbitrate. At Rungwe the women leaders were the sister of the chief and the wife of a teacher, both personalities; and it was to them that their fellows went to relate their troubles and ask for an opinion. We traced two such cases. Very often, however, Christian women go to a man, the Christian leader of the village, as their husbands do. 627 795 627

The Administration has not attempted to suppress arbitration 627

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

627

among the Nyakyusa, though the villagers say they have been told to 'bring all cases to Court and write them in the book', and a District Officer, in fining a man 5s. for accepting a fee of 2s. for adjudicating in a case concerning marriage-cattle, commented: 'I am afraid that arbitration is a common offence.' He went on to say, however, that 'preclusion of headman and elders from hearing cases is repugnant to the native sense of justice', and pointed out that he fined the accused only because he had accepted a fee. Nevertheless the Nyakyusa maintain that individuals submit less readily than formerly to the judgement of village headmen and are anxious to bring cases to the Native Court 'that they may be paid quickly'. European officers are constantly pressing that fines or payments ordered should be handed over quickly, whereas in cases of arbitration payment is often long deferred, even though its justice has been accepted by both parties. Again and again the report of a case before a village headman ended with 'So and so was ordered to pay such and such, but he has not yet done so'. It was suggested that disputants are less ready to reach an amicable settlement, and more prone to press for their pound of flesh than formerly (*vide infra*, p. 147).

The cases settled by friends and village headmen are mainly disputes over the ownership, destruction, or sale of property; often such minor property as a bunch of bananas, a hen, a few cents, or a pot of beer. For example, a certain woman, A, took a hen belonging to her co-wife, B, while the latter was away, and cooked it for their husband. On her return B asked her husband about her hen, but he denied any knowledge of what had happened to it. B's friends, however, told her that A had cooked the hen for their husband while B was away, and B actually asked her husband where the hen he had eaten had come from. He replied that he did not know—possibly it came from A's father. So B brought her co-wife to the headman of the village, who ruled that A and the husband must each pay B a hen. The husband's fault lay in his not asking whence the hen he ate came.

Another woman was carrying a pot of beer to a smith to pay for an axe which her husband had bought. Three young men stopped her on the way and begged her to sell it to them instead, promising the regular price of 1s.; but though they drank the beer they delayed payment, and after some time she sued for it before the headman of their village. The young men admitted their debt,

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

but when the case was recorded 45 c. was still outstanding, one man having paid 30 c., another 25 c., and the third nothing. 627

Another dispute brought for arbitration to a male neighbour was between two women who had together brewed beer for sale. The beer went sour and they quarrelled over the division of the 19. 10 c. they got for it; they had expended 1s. on millet with which to brew so there was only 10 c. to divide.

Cases involving property of greater value are brought in exactly the same way. For example, one man, A, accused another B, of stealing the cow-bell off one of his cows, when A's herd was grazing near B's homestead. The case was first brought before B's immediate neighbours who thought him guilty, and ordered him to produce the bell. He refused and the case went to the village headman, who also found B guilty and ordered him to pay 10s. fine. B accepted this judgement but had not yet paid the fine when the case was reported.

Very often a claim on a kinsman or an affine to hand over cattle due is also pressed before a friend or village headman, as when a young man, Y, brought his father before one of his father's most respected friends, Kasitile the rain-maker, demanding that his father somehow 'find' a cow which he owed him. The case was as follows: A, the father, had two sons, X and Y. When X's full sister married, one cow from the marriage-cattle was given to Y. When Y's full sister married one cow was duly given in return to X. Then X's sister left her husband and the marriage-cattle had to be returned, plus two for the adultery fine. Y not only lost the cow he had received for her, but A took from him also a cow for the fine. This cow Y had got as an adultery fine for his own wife. Y was therefore demanding one cow back from A, and wanted him to 'look for it among his sons-in-law'. People commenting on this case said that it was perfectly proper for Y to bring his father before a friend, but he should not take the case to Court as he was threatening to do.

Besides the many disputes over property a smaller number of accusations of assault or insulting behaviour are settled by arbitration. In one case a woman complained that her husband had beaten her unjustly. His defence was that he suspected her of adultery. A certain man who had bought a bunch of bananas from his wife had asked for a calabash ladle (for drinking), and when he asked for it they were close together. The husband saw

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

627

them. Next morning the wife took the bananas to the purchaser. In the evening the husband went off to visit his friends so his wife 'left the hearth empty'. He came home late, and finding no food prepared, accused her of adultery and beat her. The village headman argued that had the husband really suspected adultery he would have 'caught' his wife when she was talking with the man who bought the bananas, and the husband was ordered to pay 2s. to his wife. Accepting the decision he offered her a cloth worth 2s. but she asked for cash which he had not yet found when the case was recorded.

In another case a herd-boy, X, supported by his father, accused a fellow herd-boy, Y, of insulting and beating him. Y had called X a witch and accused him of 'throttling the cattle'. X and his father took the case first to Y's father who ordered Y to pay X 1s. When Y refused, X and his father proceeded to the village headman who ordered Y to pay 2s. which he eventually did.

Accusations of practising witchcraft are also aired in village-section and village, and may be settled there without ever going to the chief. This procedure we have already described.

As is evident from the examples cited, friends and village headmen arbitrate not only in cases between neighbours, but also in those between members of different villages; the plaintiff always applying to the friends or head-man of the defendant for an opinion on the case. Very often the disputants are relatives who may choose to apply to another relative to arbitrate, but who have no obligation to do so;[1] fathers and sons, husband and wife bring their disputes as readily before friends and village headmen as before relatives. There is, however, a strong feeling that they should settle by arbitration and not proceed to the chief's court. Indeed it is felt that all cases should be settled amicably by agreement before arbitrators, and not by order of the court; the obligation to reach agreement is all the greater when the disputants are relatives.

We quote a final case in some detail as it exemplifies the emphasis laid on agreement as well as illustrating procedure. The case, which we followed throughout ourselves, was one between two comparative new-comers to the village, a young man almost a boy, called Kenani, and L. a man of forty or more.

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Law', *Africa*, Vol. IX, 1936.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

627

Kenani first came to the chief Porokoto, saying: 'Someone has burnt my maize-field.' The chief replied: 'Is the village headman not there? He takes cases; only if there are hard words does it come up to me.' So Kenani went to the village headman, Mwafula. He arrived about 4.15 p.m. and the man he accused came about 5 p.m. Mwafula sent for four or five neighbours to help him try the case. The two disputants stood up with one of the neighbours between them, as if they were at court. Kenani stated his case, L. (the accused) intervening with comments.

K.: 'On Thursday last week [eight days previously] L. was burning the grass and my maize was burnt too.'

L.: 'I was burning to get fresh pasture for my cattle.'

K.: 'But I am not a stranger in this country. The cattle ought not to graze in the village; it's within the village there; sheep ought to graze there, not cattle. That part has never been fired before. I was ill when my food was burnt, but I sent my sister to say to L.: "See, you burn the grass and my maize is destroyed." But he said: "I burnt for fresh pasture only, did I deliberately kindle the rubbish in your field in order to spread the fire to it?"'

Here the arbitrators[1] expressed surprise to each other that L. should insult a man after burning his maize. They asked L.: 'Did the woman, his sister, come to ask you about the matter?'

L.: 'Yes, she came, but she said [speaking in her brother's name] "You have burnt my maize and you burnt it deliberately, give me two plots (*imbuka*) of maize." To which I replied: "What! Two plots indeed! Did I kindle the rubbish on your field? I didn't know there was any maize where the fire scorched the field."'

K.: 'It is this which especially hurts me, this talk about "not kindling the rubbish in my field". If he had come to me and said, "Friend, I was burning a patch for fresh pasture, but the fire spread into your field, I am sorry, I am indeed very much to blame." Had he said this, I should not have come here. You see that L. is my senior. I should have said: "Since you, my senior, have admitted that you are at fault I am satisfied. That's all right." But when he began talking about not kindling the rubbish

[1] The same word *abalungi* is used for members of a court of arbitration, and the chief's court, and Native Court. We translate it as 'arbitrator' in the first context and 'judge' in the other two.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

627 in my field, I thought to myself, "He did indeed burn arrogantly and deliberately." And so I have come for a judgement.'

The arbitrators, speaking partly to one another and partly to L.: 'When somebody's crop has been burnt, who would you expect to take offence? Surely the owner of the food, not he who burnt it! It is for the latter to abuse himself and say, "I am at fault". The owner of the food is naturally sore at the thought of his burnt food.'

To L. direct: 'Had you spoken to your fellow saying: "It is true, friend, I was burning for fresh pasture and the fire spread," we should have pressed Kenani to forgive you, saying: "Friend, your senior has admitted his fault, forgive him." What have you to say to this?'

L.: 'Do you mean I deny that I did the burning? I was certainly burning, for fresh pasture. If you say, "Pay!" I will pay for the land I burned, but for the maize I will not pay. How should I know its whereabouts?'

Arbitrators: 'For the land you don't pay, it is not his, and it's not yours. There is an owner from whom we always seek land. And you are both new-comers. But you have burned somebody's crop.'

L.: 'I was burning to get fresh pasture for cattle. I did not burn crops.'

K.: 'But cattle should not graze there. It's part of the village.'

Mwafula: 'It is certainly part of the village—I went to see.'

Here the discussion was interrupted by one of the arbitrators, Jacobu, who protested that this was a breach of procedure. Mwafula should not have gone beforehand with only one of the disputants to see about a disputed point, but two arbitrators should have risen now and gone with the disputants to see. He shouted a lot; and so did Mwafula, who explained that when the chief had told Kenani to lay the case before him, he had ordered him to go with Kenani to see the burnt maize. At last they calmed down and Jacobu was rebuked by one of the other judges who said in a quiet voice: 'Perhaps you have been drinking beer —or haven't you?' After this they continued the case, but as it was getting late and both Kenani and L. showed signs of rising temper and began shouting again, the case was deferred to the next morning.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

627

During the proceedings Mwafula was referred to by all parties as 'father', and he addressed the parties singly by name and collectively as 'countrymen' (*mwe ba kiwe*). Sometimes the procedure was formal, sometimes not. Sometimes one of the arbitrators addressed the man standing between the disputants who repeated the question to them, and they conveyed the answer in the same way; but sometimes this procedure was omitted and conversation, with even two or three speaking and shouting at once, took its place. There were many repetitions which we have omitted, and the whole case was recapitulated at one point for the benefit of a late-comer.

When the case was resumed the next morning Nsajigwa, a next-door neighbour of Mwafula who had not attended the first sitting, was present, and the case was explained to him. L. was less aggressive than previously and agreed to pay 'for burning for fresh pasturage', in the same words as before, but he did not press the point that he thereby implicitly renounced responsibility for the maize, though he clearly did so. The arbitrators attempted again to get him to make some apology to K. and so have the whole thing settled amicably, but this he would not do.

K.: 'Had L. said, "I am sorry it spread from the pasturage", I should not have come here; but since he only admits to burning rubbish in my field, and offers to pay for the land, refusing to pay anything for the crop, I say he does not care at all that he has destroyed someone's food. He thinks, "The maize was small and the owner is small; the maize was not full grown and the owner is not full grown either." But just as even a hen has a house to enter (for refuge) so I have a shelter, the Law (*ubulongi*), which is a refuge for us all.' Kenani then went on to relate how L. had beaten him with a stick and had had to pay a fine of 7s. for it; and that this was why L. still hated him. But Jacobu told him not to bring up a case already settled.

All the arbitrators were agreed that L. was in the wrong. Some wished to 'cut the case' and name a fine, but Nsajigwa, before they had well begun to discuss the amount, said: 'Since it has come to fining and they do not agree, let the case go up to the chief, we cannot finish it.' He spoke with authority, and the sitting broke up.

Lingering behind we asked Mwafula why they did not give a

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Nyakyusa

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372

[Facing p. 146]

XV. SETTLEMENT OF A DISPUTE

The anthropologist (Godfrey Wilson) is sitting with the court. On his right is the chief Mwalimu, on his left Kamila the rain-maker. Behind him (on a tripod) is Mwamupwe the clerk, and Mwakisole, famous as a doctor and maker of tiras. In the background is a half-built hut

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

62 judgement. He replied: 'Because in the villages we only arbitrate, we do not compel people to submit to a decision. If hard words are spoken and the disputants do not agree, then we take the case to the chief. But (turning to another man) we were wrong not to decide on a fine, we ought to have named so many shillings. Then if L. had refused to pay it we should have taken the case to the chief.'

When we arrived at the chief's place he at once sent off two men with the two disputants to count the burnt maize stalks. They found eighty-seven stalks burnt irretrievably and sixty-eight scorched but recovering.

Chief to K., through Mwafula, who acted as spokesman: 'What have you to say? The maize is really burnt.'

K.: 'I say he must pay. Had he expressed regret I should not have come here, but even at Mwafula's he did not apologize, he said: "I will pay for the land, but the maize has not been burnt, I will not pay for that." Though the arbitrators, Mwafula and the others, pressed him to admit his liability, saying: "The fire spread from the pasture", he would not admit it. And even when we went there with witnesses to see the maize he called to some young men, "If the mother or sister of Kenani comes to fetch firewood here tell them I shall imprison them, I have bought this land. I have paid Kenani." (Laughter in court.) And he said to some women who were gathering firewood near by: "Why do you gather firewood on my land?" (More laughter.) It seems that he does not regret at all that my food is burnt. Had we two been alone when he was questioned he would have speared me. He has long sought to injure me and now he is destroying my food. Therefore I have to run to the Law to escape from him.'

Timothy Mwenjesi, who had not heard the case, now arrived and started speaking, saying: 'It always happens when a man has fired the pasture and burnt another's field that he goes to his fellow and says: "Friend, it has spread . . ." and nothing more is done about it.' The judges explained the case to him; after which K. continued: 'If you say he should not pay, then I wish to have a letter to show the European Administration, saying, "L. has burnt the food of K., and has not paid", so that if I should burn your food, Timothy, and you say "Pay", I shall refuse, supported by this letter which proves there is no payment for such things.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

142

XVI. THE FAVOURITE WIFE OF A CHIEF

[facing p. 147]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

627 One of the other judges: 'How does he seek to injure you?'

K.: 'No, that is another matter, we are only concerned with the case of the maize.'

Porokoto: 'Answer the judge's questions. Tell him.'

K. explained that his sister had run off with a man and that the lovers had hidden in L.'s home. The court messengers searched for them for many days but could not find them, and K. joined in the search, for his sister's husband was pressing him to return the cattle given for her. At last one day K. and a friend called at L.'s home, not searching, just calling, and were startled to find his sister's seducer. The latter seized a stick and fought K, who fled to the chief. The chief sent messengers to fetch the wanted man and L., in whose house he was hiding. They were some time in coming, so the chief sent K. to the top of the hill to bid them hurry up. He did so, and L., coming up first, said: 'Were you calling me?' 'No', said K., 'I was calling the messenger', but L., being an older man, felt insulted, thinking he had been shouted for by a boy, and took a stick and beat K. savagely. He was summoned for this and fined 7s.

Porokoto: 'Oh, it is this you mean when you say he sought to injure you, and now he seeks to destroy your food?'

K.: 'Yes.'

Porokoto: 'You, L., have done wrong in one thing; you insulted K. by saying "Did I kindle the the rubbish on your field?" As it is a fining matter, come to the Court on Monday."

Men at the chief's place, commenting on this case, said it should have been settled amicably. 'The country has decayed, we have turned ourselves into bees instead of men. European times (*ikisungu*) have come, constantly we pay one another. People fear to come and build with us, saying: "See, there they pay, I have cattle, and children" (implying, I am a prosperous man and do not wish to grow poor by going there).'

We asked Porokoto how the case would have been settled in the old days. He replied: 'In the old days L. would have given K. seed to plant again; but a new way has come now, we have discarded our own way; now we pay shillings. When millet was burned in the past they paid a bull, because a basket of millet was sold for a bull.' Turning to an old man, Mwambege, who was there, he asked: 'Was it not so, Mwambege?' 'Yes—perhaps an iron hoe was paid. When I came here from Lugulu country I burnt

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

627 some pasturage and the fire destroyed two plots of millet. I gave the owner an iron hoe.'

627 692 The ideal is settlement by agreement; in practice (at the present time) a large number of cases go (like this one) to the chief, and then on to the Native Court. Thence there are many appeals to the Native Appeal Court, the District and Provincial Officers' Courts, and even to the High Court of Tanganyika. As we have indicated, it is likely that fewer cases are settled by arbitration than formerly; but before the coming of the Europeans, chiefs' courts with power to enforce judgement existed, and were used. There was no 'golden age' in which all cases were settled by agreement.

627 208 The decision of arbitrators is essentially the judgement of public opinion in the village, or the respective villages, of the disputants. Cases are heard in public, neighbours drop in and join in the discussion, and a decision cannot be given contrary to their expressed opinions.

b. Witness to contracts

675 Not only do fellow villagers play a part in settling disputes, they also act as official witnesses in various types of legal transaction. The village headman is an essential witness at an autopsy (*vide supra*, p. 116) and at the distribution of the estate of one of his men. Whenever marriage-cattle are handed over, two or more non-relatives are called upon to serve as witnesses,[1] and those chosen are commonly village neighbours of either the groom or his father-in-law. We heard one man censured by his friends because he had neglected to take a village neighbour with him as witness when he went to summon his son-in-law to his daughter's puberty ritual. He had visited his son-in-law's 'best man' (*umfusya*) as was correct, but had omitted to take a friend with him to witness the conversation that took place. Even in matters that are kept very secret at least one official witness may be summoned. For example, an old man occasionally gives his heir permission to sleep with his wives while he is yet alive, and he does so in the presence of a neighbour or senior relative, for though the affair is very private it is absolutely necessary to have a witness to prove that the right was granted.

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Law', *Africa*, Vol. X (1937).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

This practice of having official witnesses to every contract, and summoning them to give evidence should a dispute later arise, is one of the most important means of maintaining order in Nyakyusa society, and village neighbours are the usual witnesses. 675

c. *Communal responsibility of the age-village*

Formerly, in Nyakyusa law two forms of group responsibility were emphasized: the mutual responsibility of kinsmen, and the mutual responsibility of fellow villagers. A case of murder or manslaughter was primarily the concern of the agnatic lineage if the victim was a male or an unmarried girl, and of the lineages of both husband and father if the victim was a married woman. The kinsmen either killed the murderer, or brought him before the chief, who imposed a fine which went to the injured relatives. The Nyakyusa make a distinction between 'spearing by day' (direct physical injury) and 'spearing by night' (witchcraft); and only in the latter type of case did the fine go to the chief. Witchcraft was thus treated as an offence against the state—the chiefdom—while murder or manslaughter was an offence against the kinsmen of the dead. The concern of the state in witchcraft, and the joint responsibility of kinsmen on the one hand, and of fellow villagers on the other, was evident when, as sometimes happened, both groups were required by the chief to clear themselves of suspicion of witchcraft by each providing a representative to take the poison ordeal. Should the representative of either group fail to vomit then the responsible individual within that group was sought out by means of divination and the ordeal (*vide supra*, p. 116). 613 621 672 754 682

In a case of adultery the injured husband, together with his kinsmen, pursued and attempted to kill, or torture and kill, the adulterer: self-help was not only permitted but expected in this situation,[1] and a man's near kinsmen were obliged to assist him. Neighbours were not obliged to assist in executing vengeance, but they might be victims of it, for if the injured husband did not find the adulterer he might kill any village-mate of his enemy. Such an attack commonly led to war between the two villages; 684 696 721

[1] D. R. MacKenzie, *The Spirit-Ridden Konde* (1925), p. 61, says: 'The injured husband has the right to inflict death on the paramour. This is no mere tale of the past but a grim fact to-day . . . cases of this nature are very numerous.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

684 and some informants suggested that it only occurred between the
696 villages of different chiefs, though others insisted that it did occur
721 between villages of the same chiefdom. Indeed any seduction of a woman of another village was liable to lead to war. A man of Bulindanajo seduced the wife of the headman of Bujege, Mwansambe. The men of Bulindanajo returned the woman to her husband, saying to their fellow: 'The men of Bujege are fearsome (*basisya*), it's a village of fathers, she's your mother' (cf. Document p. 181). But Mwansambe was angry and made war. The men of Bulindanajo protested, saying: 'We brought the woman back!' but he took no notice and attacked them. He was defeated, and fled.

685 A thief or an obstinate debtor was also a danger to his neigh-
686 bours. For a victim or creditor living in another chiefdom, and so
696 unable to obtain satisfaction in a chief's court—since a chief paid little attention to a complainant who was not his own man—might seize the wife of any village-mate of the man who had his property. Hence, the old men say, thieves and adulterers were liable to be banished from a village[1] just like witches and sorcerers, for they too brought misfortune on their fellows.

War between villages was apparently the usual upshot of an
672 attack on the village neighbour of an enemy, but occasionally a
696 settlement was arranged between the two villages concerned, and the adulterer or thief was held responsible for compensating his injured neighbour, or the latter's kinsmen. Kalunda and Mwalubunju explained: 'In the old days if a man ran off with my wife I should go and kill a village-mate of his. That meant, "Go, you villagers and look for my wife." Yes, this happened even in a village of my own chief. Then the villagers would go and look for my wife and when they found her with their neighbour they would bring her back to me with a spear or hoe as compensation. The man they would accuse, saying: "It was you who killed your fellow", so that he would have to make peace with the family of the dead man, not I. He would give them a daughter of his own to wife, or else pay ten cows, and they would be relatives then. Yes, ten cows they paid for a man's death, though only two for a woman in marriage.' Here the differing responsibilities of kinsmen and fellow villagers are evident.

621 The village was a fighting unit taking up quarrels on its own
701

[1] A cattle thief caught in the act was speared. . . . MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 86.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

account with other villages of the same chiefdom, and forming a detachment under its own headman in the army of the chiefdom. Before an attack each village was harangued by its headman who urged: 'Keep all your spears together. If you abandon your fellow you have a case against you! All return together!' And, as we have seen, it was held that men of the same village should stand shoulder to shoulder in war and in a hunt, that they might be brave.

Cattle raids and adultery cases were the prime causes of war—fighting commonly began with a dispute over a woman, or lust for meat. Less frequently it was a quarrel between two villages or two chiefdoms over a boundary that led to war. Hostilities often flared up at a funeral when men danced the war dance with spears (*ukukina*). The Nyakyusa interpret this dancing at funerals as an expression of anger at death, a protest against death.[1] 'Formerly we protested against death, we said: "Our fellow has died, *aje!* Let us put our friend to rest!" We protested with war, we protested with spears, and people died.' Or as another informant put it, 'The war dance is a way of weeping. We dance the war dance because war is in our hearts.' But the anger at death very easily merged into anger against human enemies. 'If the men of two chiefdoms or two villages were present at a burial they would quarrel and fight. The fight began when one hurled his spear into the ground and thus spewed the earth over someone else. Perhaps there would be only a few dancing at first and many sitting down, but when a neighbouring chief was seen approaching with his men, and the sound of the trumpets was heard, those already there would say: "If we sit still they will say there are no men but only women at this funeral. Let us dance too." So they would all get up and dance, and if the others did anything there would be war. Now the custom of the war dance is dying out. We chiefs control it, and when another chief comes to a funeral we tell all our men to sit down while he and his men dance at the grave, because if we do not, the war of old times is liable to break out.'

In fact peace has been effectively enforced among the Nyakyusa.[2] We neither saw nor heard of a fight in the three years we were there. Thus mutual dependence in war is no longer a strong sanction for village unity. The joint responsibility for certain

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939.)

[2] A contrast to Pondoland or Zululand.

L Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

721 torts committed by its members has also disappeared. Instead,
672 there is both a great increase in the number of cases treated as
673 offences against the state; murder, manslaughter and grievous
177 bodily injury being no longer treated as offences against a group of kin, but as crimes against the state; and a great extension in the *range* of law. A modern Nyakyusa has no difficulty in suing a debtor, or the seducer of his wife, living in another chiefdom.

Nevertheless neighbours still feel a certain obligation for the
621 maintenance of each other's rights. For example, a certain young
672 man eloped with a very young girl, who, though betrothed, had not yet reached puberty. On their way out of the district they were seen by a 'village father' of the girl, who brought them back to her father, and then joined with him and other neighbours in beating the young man and taking him to the chief. The youth admitted his fault in seducing so young a girl and asked the chief to summon his father-in-law (for he was already married) that he might borrow from his father-in-law the cattle with which to pay the fine for seduction. But his father-in-law was a neighbour of the father of the girl he had seduced, and he refused to lend any cattle, saying, 'You have run off with the daughter of my neighbour in the village: that means you have wronged *me*.'

839 And a group of herd-boys are still liable to be treated by their fathers as responsible for one another. One informant, discussing
672 a case of bestiality committed by a herd-boy, remarked that the leader of the group forbade the others to mention it at home on the ground that 'if our fathers know they will say that we all (in this herd group) do it.'

d. Social separation

681 One of the mechanisms for maintaining good relations in Nyakyusa villages (as in all groups) is the separation of the dissident individual from the group.[1] This separation may be compulsory or voluntary. As we have seen, witches, thieves, adulterers, and obstinate debtors were formerly banished from Nyakyusa villages because they were regarded as a danger to their neighbours, liable to harm them directly or to bring retribution upon them. The village, being held responsible for certain actions of its members, and forming a defensive unit against the sup-

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 60–1.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

posed action of witches, exercised the right of expelling members thought to be dangerous to it. Nowadays, since a village is no longer held responsible for the torts of its members, men are not often banished for theft or adultery, but supposed witches and sorcerers are still frequently compelled to move. 681

There is also a great deal of voluntary movement to escape friction in the village. This is commonly expressed in terms of witchcraft—a family moves to avoid the witchcraft of its neighbours; but neighbours are not feared unless there has been a quarrel. It is when the parties to some dispute have *not* been reconciled that fear of witchcraft germinates, and illness precipitates a move. 166 578

Among ordinary commoners only their immediate neighbours are believed to be dangerous and such men therefore sometimes move only from one village to another of the same chiefdom; but very many move right outside to another chiefdom altogether, preferring to make assurance doubly sure and to put a long distance between themselves and their spiritual persecutors. And in the case of certain men of high social status, such as senior village headmen who are the advisers of the chief, and priests, for whom a wider circle is dangerous, it is held to be essential to leave the chiefdom.

We have argued (*vide supra*, p. 36) that movement from village to village has always occurred among the Nyakyusa but that it is increasing. The change is almost certainly a symptom of increasing friction within the village. One traditional mechanism of settling disputes—the ordeal—has lapsed, while fear of one's neighbours' witchcraft continues. It is possible also that the incidence of disease, and hence of suspected witchcraft and sorcery, has increased among the Nyakyusa—tuberculosis and venereal diseases are said to have spread greatly since 1914[1] and, in the opinion of the German missionaries, malaria is much more prevalent at the higher altitudes than it was before 1914; but there 166 578 164

[1] The incidence of tuberculosis in Rungwe district is now thought to be about sixteen per thousand (C. Wilcocks, *Tuberculosis in Tanganyika Territory*, Government Printer, Dar-es-salaam, 1938). Dr. D. Kerr-Cross, in a list of diseases encountered during ten years' practice in north Nyasaland before 1897 reports that he only saw one case of 'pulmonary tubercular phthisis', but syphilis (which the natives called 'the disease of the Arabs'), was very prevalent. Dr. Kerr-Cross was a missionary doctor who travelled extensively in Nyakyusa country. (See his articles already cited and H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, pp. 473-7.)

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 is another reason also for increasing movement. Formerly, to
578 move to a strange chiefdom was hazardous—a refugee might be
killed, or his wife or cattle seized by the chief; nowadays it is safe.
164 Even to-day a man's status is lower in the village in which he is a stranger than in his home village. The old families of a village, 'the owners of the soil' (*abilema*), are spoken of as *amafumu*, which, in its restricted sense, means village headmen who have 'come out' with the chief, but which is also used more widely for commoners of importance. And in the past, we were told, an individual's security of life and property depended upon the support of his neighbours, the *amafumu*, and a stranger was much less likely to receive this than an 'owner of the soil'. If a chief seized a stranger's wife no one would protest, but if he dared to touch the wife of an 'owner of the soil' the village would rise as one man. Hence the incentive to overcome friction by submission, rather than by moving, was stronger in the old society than it is to-day.[1] It may well become stronger again soon. The present circulation from village to village is possible because men are still scarcer than land in Nyakyusa country, but as the population increases, and the production of crops for sale expands, it is probable that strangers will be less welcome and movement more difficult.

166 To lose a member who has not been expelled is a slur on a
village, for the implication is that the man who has moved has
621 suffered from the witchcraft of his neighbours. A good neighbour should persuade a fellow contemplating a voluntary move to stay (*vide infra*, p. 243), and when someone has moved of his own accord (and sometimes even when he has been expelled) his fellows go, after the lapse of a little time, to fetch him back.

'When a man moves from his home chiefdom, his village neighbours there, in the majority of cases, follow him within two months and ceremonially invite him back with a show of force by seizing his belongings and carrying them off home to his old village. They may really like and respect him and if, as is usually the case, he has moved because of sickness, they are most anxious to prove to him that his tacit suspicions are unfounded, they wish to rid themselves of the slur of witchcraft. To invite him back is to express affection for him and so to demonstrate that he could

[1] cf. the modern tendency for Pondo homesteads to break up. Hunter, op. cit., pp. 15, 59.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

not have been bewitched, for see, everyone likes him! Such an invitation is often, but by no means always, accepted. If a man refuses the first time then the villagers may or may not go again later to ask him back; but if he was an important member of the village—the headman, a noted doctor, the son of an old family—the invitation may go on being repeated for years; and he will then almost certainly return in the end. Whether or not he accepts a particular invitation depends again largely on his own health and that of his family and upon his relations with his new neighbours at the time it is made. Sickness and suspected witchcraft, or quarrels and insults in the new village will incline him to go home (see Document, p. 267). And a man can always return, even without an invitation, unless he was originally expelled for being himself a witch.'[1]

If an important or popular man is slow to return 'home' his former friends not only go to fetch him, again and again, during the course of years but, if he dies before his return, his corpse may be fetched back to be buried in his original village. He is also summoned to feasts there. The village was a fighting unit, and its strength, like that of the chiefdom, depended upon its numbers; hence the reluctance to lose a man and the readiness to welcome new-comers.

Men who have moved voluntarily usually return 'home' to their original village in the end. As a Selya man explained: 'The majority do come back, only a few stay permanently away. Some move for better food, the great majority because they fall sick and wish to recollect themselves in the tranquillity of another chiefdom—this is the main reason for moving, but they come back in the end. Whenever a man is slighted in the country to which he has gone, whenever he falls sick there—back he goes home. A man does not lose his affection for home, for there is his sacred grove, his fathers' graves. But the real reason for returning is that in every other place a man is less respected than at home, he is made light of; but in his own country he is known to belong to an old family and is treated with great respect, his neighbours call to mind the days when he and they herded cows together as boys, and the fact that his father is buried among them. That is why people go home again.'

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa*, pp. 32-3.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 A man who has been driven out and then fetched back pro-
783 vides a feast for his friends on his return. This feast is essentially the same as the 'ritual of reconciliation' that takes place when a wrong-doer begs pardon of his own village or that of his father (*vide supra*, p. 101). For a private individual only his own village is concerned, but if the exile happens to be a senior headman then all the villages of the chiefdom participate. A detailed account of such a feast, which we attended, is given on pp. 271–4.

166 In a civilized society social separation overcomes friction in
795 two ways: first, it separates individuals who are personally in-
578 compatible, and secondly, it provides the individual who is a misfit in one group with a choice of groups whose values may be more compatible with his own than those of the group from which he came.[1] In Nyakyusa society villages were formerly all of the same type, with virtually identical group values, therefore the individual only escaped from personal incompatibilities by moving. In the modern society, however, there is a variation of type as between pagan and Christian villages and, among the Christians, as between the several denominations. The convert in a pagan village often moves to a Christian village finding that more compatible, and the son of a Christian, having abandoned Christianity and perhaps married several wives, leaves the Christian village in which he grew up and joins a pagan one with whose members he has more in common.

578 The Nyakyusa, in their rationalizations about witchcraft,
166 recognize the fact that friction is often personal and may be over-
754 come by moving. Constantly villages receive individuals who have been driven out of some other village for practising witchcraft, and when we inquired whether a man who had once been accused was not feared as a neighbour, the reply was always in the same tenor as that of Mwamunda: 'Perhaps he has bewitched his fellows there, we do not know, but he has not bewitched us.' There is also the implication that quarrels may be forgotten after a temporary separation, since those who have moved because they feared witchcraft, and even some who have been accused of practising witchcraft, are welcomed back.

578 When our informants discussed moving and returning to the
166 home village they always emphasized friction with one's fellows (*abanine*) as providing the chief impetus to move, and the desire

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, op. cit., pp. 60–1.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

to rejoin the group in which he is 'known', in which he has 578
'friends with whom he herded cattle as a boy', as that which 166
provides the chief impetus to return. Never once did an informant suggest friction with the village headman as the reason for moving[1] or loyalty to a former headman as the reason for returning. The Nyakyusa village is in no way the personal following of a headman, as the villages of some other central African peoples (such as the Bemba,[2] Yao, and Ngoni[3]) appear to be. It is essentially a group of equals, established before adolescence, whose stability and continuity turn on friendship and co-operation between its members. It is already a corporate group, with very close bonds forged through years between its members, before the permanent leader is chosen, and it continues as a group though its leader dies or moves.

We do not deny that the personality of the village headman— 622
particularly his generosity and his skill in settling disputes 621
between his men—affects the stability and growth of the village; 166
some villages increase noticeably in size after the 'coming out', while others shrink, and headmen (like chiefs) use medicines to attract men to them; but the Nyakyusa themselves imply that it is the character of the villagers rather than the character of the headman which determines movement to and from the village.

The headman, like any private individual in the village, must 622
remain on good terms with the other members lest *he* be driven 626
out. A number of cases were cited in which headmen had moved because they had become unpopular with their men and feared their 'breath' or witchcraft (*vide* pp. 204–8; 268–70) but most of them had returned after the lapse of a little time.

What private individuals and headmen alike fear is not a quarrel with one individual, but the disapproval of the village or village-section as a whole; for 'the breath of men' is but the crystallization of adverse public opinion. The man who has the support of his fellows in a dispute with one neighbour is shielded in 'the war by night'.

[1] Personal friction with a chief occurs (*vide* pp. 191–2).
[2] A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, pp. 110 ff.
[3] M. Gluckman, J. C. Mitchell, and J. A. Barnes, 'The Village Headman in British Central Africa', *Africa*, Vol. XIX (1949), pp. 91, 98, 100.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VII

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN AGE-VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

a. The peculiarity of Nyakyusa villages

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VILLAGES in which contemporaries live together permanently have not been reported among any people in Africa other than the Nyakyusa; such villages are not found among their neighbours, and diligent inquiry from Africans of many tribes has not revealed them elsewhere; it is possible that the Nyakyusa system is unique, but we still know too little of Africa to be sure. A similar system might well exist elsewhere without having been noted by Europeans. The fact that Nyakyusa villages were organized on an age basis was not recorded either by the missionaries[1] or the Administration, though the system of Indirect Rule had been in operation for eight years before we began work in the district.

What is common in Africa is for groups of male contemporaries —age-sets—to live together in temporary villages or club houses before marriage. The warrior-villages of the Masai,[2] the regimental barracks of Zulu[3] and Swazi,[4] the cattle posts of Tswana[5] and Pedi,[6] are all occupied by groups of contemporaries; while among the Kikuyu[7] and the Kipisigis[8] local detachments of age-

[1] D. R. MacKenzie, *The Spirit-Ridden Konde*, speaks of 'small boys' living in 'tiny houses' of their own (pp. 27–8); J. T. Hamilton, *Twenty Years of Pioneer Missions in Nyasaland*, says: 'The elder boys live together in long oblong houses at the end of the village. When one of them marries he builds a house near the boys' quarter, and in this manner the village extends in this direction.' (p. 40.) He does not suggest any further separation of the generations.

[2] L. S. B. Leakey, 'Some Notes on the Masai of Kenya Colony', *J.R.A.I.*, LX (1930), pp. 185–209; D. Storrs Fox, 'Further Notes on the Masai of Kenya Colony', *J.R.A.I.*, LX (1930), pp. 447–65.

[3] E. J. Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus*, pp. 261–7.

[4] H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 117–37.

[5] I. Schapera, *Native Land Tenure in the Bechuanaland Protectorate*, pp. 25, 220–9.

[6] G. M. Pitje, *Some Aspects of Male Education among the Pedi and Cognate Tribes*. (Thesis accepted for the M.A. degree in the University of South Africa. Unpublished.)

[7] W. S. and K. Routledge, *With a Prehistoric People*, p. 118.

[8] J. G. Peristiany, *The Social Institutions of the Kipsigis*, pp. 49–51.

[p. 158]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sets have club houses in which young men sleep. Among the Cewa, though boys do not move out of the parent village, they have a special hut in which they sleep together from the age of five or six.[1] But among all these people the age-set scatters at marriage, each young man building his permanent home, to which he brings his wife, alongside his kinsmen or, in the case of the Cewa, alongside his wife's kin.

The peculiarity of the Nyakyusa then consists in the fact that contemporaries live together permanently through life, not merely as bachelors: age-villages appear in an isolated area surrounded (so far as we know) by people with no similar institution.

We cannot hope to explain how, or when, age-villages developed among the Nyakyusa: there is no reference to them in such documents as exist, and we could trace no oral tradition regarding their origin. Even the historian Mwandesi (cf. p. vi) had no idea whether age-villages were introduced by the incoming Nyakyusa chiefs, or were found by them among the previous inhabitants of the valley, or were invented after the conquest. We can, however, inquire into the social characteristics associated with age-villages. *What are the peculiarities of Nyakyusa society not found in societies with kinship villages?* In this chapter we attempt to answer that question.

b. Age-villages and incest

The Nyakyusa themselves associate living in age-villages with decency in sex life—the separation of the sex activities of successive generations, and the avoidance of incest. When asked why small boys build apart from their parents they refer to the danger of a growing boy overhearing lewd talk between his parents, or seeing them unclothed (*vide supra*, p. 82); and they enlarge on the difficulties of father- and daughter-in-law avoidance were father and son to live in the same village—an avoidance which is consciously related to the fear of incest between father- and daughter-in-law (*vide supra*, p. 85). We may add also the fear of young men seducing their fathers' junior wives, who are often girls of their own age. Nyakyusa informants did not mention this last point as a reason for living in age-villages, but it is significant

[1] A. G. O. Hodgson, 'Notes on the Achewa and Angoni of the Dowa District of Nyasaland Protectorate', *J.R.A.I.*, LXIII (1933), p. 129.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 that adolescent sons are not permitted to visit their homes after
834 dark, and when they come by day for their meals they are
often required to eat in the open court-yard and not 'hide in
606 the bananas or huts' lest they make love to their fathers' wives.
They do not sit about in the men's village. Thus, although the villages of fathers and sons adjoin until the sons 'come out', the young men are physically separated from their young 'mothers'.

The feeling that sons should not be cognizant of the sex activities of parents, and that father-in-law and daughter-in-law should avoid one another is not, of course, peculiar to the Nyakyusa; all we seek to show is that the extreme elaboration of these avoidances among the Nyakyusa is dependent upon the existence of age-villages. Whereas a Pondo daughter-in-law must never
[171] walk across the courtyard of the kinship village in which she lives, or approach the cattle byre or the men's side of her mother-in-law's hut, lest she come too near her father-in-law, yet, living in the same village, she necessarily sees him daily; the Nyakyusa daughter-in-law, living in a separate village, need not (and should not) set eyes on her father-in-law after her marriage. Where the territorial segregation of fathers and sons is blurred (as at Rungwe) there father- daughter-in-law avoidance is less strictly observed. The Nyakyusa regard this extreme form of avoidance as a peculiarity of their culture which has been imparted by them to the small groups (such as Ndali, Penja, and Nyika) whom they are assimilating.

Father- and daughter-in-law incest is clearly a potential danger in a society in which cattle are controlled by middle-aged and elderly men, who frequently have to choose between taking another wife themselves and giving cattle for a son's marriage, and who are accustomed to marrying young girls of an age suitable to be wives to their sons. But we cannot show that the danger is *greater* among the Nyakyusa than it is among other patrilineal cattle people such as the Pondo, Zulu, or Swazi, who do not find it necessary to segregate fathers- and daughters-in-law in different villages.

On the other hand the danger (common to all polygynous societies) of sons seducing their fathers' wives is exaggerated among the Nyakyusa by the absence of circumcision, the late
595 marriage age of men, the very early betrothal and marriage of
582 girls, the high degree of polygyny, and the practice of sons

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

inheriting their stepmothers. Where circumcision is practised a grown woman scorns sex relations with an uncircumcised boy, therefore uncircumcised youths are not potential lovers of their fathers' junior wives; but with the Nyakyusa there is no ceremony to mark the sexual maturity of a male, and adolescent youths are acceptable to young married women of their own age. And not only does the wide difference in the age of men and girls at first marriage allow of a high degree of polygyny, but the very early bethrothal of girls (over whom their future husbands have exclusive sexual rights except during the initiation ritual) means that there are very few girls available to the unmarried men. The institution of girls' huts (*isaka*) has disappeared among the Nyakyusa owing to the lack of nubile girls who are not already betrothed, and the period of seclusion at initiation (when betrothed girls are available to men other than their husbands) is short. The contrast with Nguni society, in which girls do not marry until sixteen to twenty-two, and have several years of great sex freedom before marriage[1] is marked. We suggest that it is because unmarried girls are so scarce and lusty bachelors so many, that the seduction of the wives of polygynists is frequent, and homosexual practices are general.[2] Nyakyusa insist that formerly seduction was rare,[3] and possibly the impulse towards it was indeed less strong when girls married rather later and *isaka* existed (*vide supra*, p. 87).

Lastly, the Nyakyusa permit the inheritance of a father's widows by his sons, a practice regarded as improper by certain other peoples (e.g. the Pondo[4]) who practise the levirate. A son is required to treat all his father's wives as 'mothers' while his father and father's full brothers are alive, and intercourse with a father's wife is treated as a heinous offence necessitating special purification; but after the death of the father and his full brothers these same women become wives of their former 'sons'—with the limitation that a man cannot inherit his own mother or her kins-

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 180–6; M. Kohler, *Marriage Customs in Southern Natal*, pp. 20–44; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 135–6.

[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, p. 408 (footnote), hints that similar practices exist among the Nyasaland Tonga and elsewhere *before* adolescence only. The Nyakyusa certainly continue after puberty.

[3] MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 63, states that the acknowledged child of an adulterous union was openly put to death.

[4] Hunter, op. cit., p. 211.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

587 woman. It is scarcely surprising that the seduction of the young
835 wives of an ageing father is a common theme for scandal. We do not suggest that the Oedipus complex involving own mother and son never occurs among the Nyakyusa; what we are concerned to show is that the relationship between a man and his stepmothers is particularly likely to be ambivalent.

593 It may be asked why there is so much emphasis on the segrega-
584 tion of sons from their parents, and not of daughters. The answer again lies in the sex difference in the marriage age. Betrothed girls pay long visits to their husbands even before puberty, and directly after the initiation which follows first menstruation they leave their fathers' home to join their husbands. During her initiation a girl carefully avoids her father and his contemporaries in the village, and after marriage, when she returns home to visit, she must observe certain restrictions not applicable to an unmarried girl: notably she must not approach her parents' bed, and informants interpret the taboo as being due to the danger of mixing the sex activities of mother and daughter.

621 In short, we argue that there is a connection between the exis-
835 tence of age-villages and the fear of incest between father-in-law and daughter-in-law on the one hand, and between stepson and stepmother on the other, and we suggest that certain features of the Nyakyusa social system facilitate incest of the second type. The incest theme elaborated in one fashion among people organized in clans and practising clan exogamy, and in another among people practising brother—sister avoidance, finds yet a different expression in age-villages, of which the overt purpose is the separation of sons and mothers, of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

c. *Good company*

The emphasis on the separation of parents and children is
577 matched by the value laid on good fellowship (*ukwangala*)
621 between contemporaries. A main end of age-villages, in the Nyakyusa view, is to allow men the enjoyment of congenial company, that is the company of friends and equals. The value of *ukwangala* is, indeed, directly linked with the age-village organization: to attain it men must build not only in villages, rather than in scattered homesteads, but also with contemporaries rather than with kin, since there can be no free and easy inter-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

course and sharing of food and beer between fathers and sons. 577
Ukwangala implies eating and drinking together frequently, and 621
cannot be fully enjoyed by people who do not live close to one another.

The value of good fellowship with equals is constantly talked 577
about by the Nyakyusa, and it is dinned into boys from child- 869
hood that enjoyment and morality alike consist in eating and drinking, in talking and learning, in the company of contemporaries. The solitary and aloof, those who enjoy the company of women (as opposed to direct sexual satisfaction) and those who seek intimacy with members of another generation, are derided.

Now this very emphasis on the value of good fellowship with 577
equals is doubtless a reflection of the difficulty of achieving it. 578
The frequent accusations of witchcraft and movement from one village to another are evidence of friction between fellow villagers. Does the friction turn on the age-village organization?

d. The incidence of accusations of witchcraft

As we have seen, witchcraft is believed to operate primarily 578
within the village, and the typical accusation is against a neigh- 754
bour.[1] But in other societies also witchcraft accusations are most commonly made against those with whom one is living, and in close daily contact: in Pondoland it is members of the same homestead or of neighbouring homesteads who suspect one another of witchcraft; among Xhosa-speaking people in towns it is fellow employees, or fellow schoolmates; among the Azande it is members of the same small neighbourhood. Therefore it is not only the Nyakyusa who accuse village neighbours of witchcraft.

Of the *frequency* of accusation in different societies we can 754
make no comparison, for statistics on witchcraft are extremely difficult to collect. Few field-workers could be certain that they were cognizant of *every* accusation of witchcraft within a given

[1] Over a third of the accusations of witchcraft recorded were against neighbours, as distinct from spouses or co-wives or kinsmen and, if one excludes the modern type of accusation against fellow workers in the same camp, the proportion of accusations against neighbours is almost one half. The thirty-eight witchcraft accusations cannot, of course, be taken as a random sample in the technical sense; we recorded every case that came to our ears, but cannot be certain that inquiries brought to light every accusation in the villages investigated. Nevertheless the preponderance of accusations against neighbours is significant (*vide* Document, pp. 198 ff.).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 area, during a given period, so we cannot either assert or deny that accusations of witchcraft are more frequent in age-villages than in kinship villages.

578 There are two sets of loyalties in Nyakyusa society: those to a kinship group and those to an age-village. Does conflict arise
621 from a clash between them? We have no evidence that it does. It is true that kin may support a sick relative against his age-
602 group, referring to his illness as due to witchcraft, whereas neighbours will attribute it to his own sin and their legitimate anger; but very often the ancestors and the 'defenders' are believed to work together to punish wrong-doers—those who break avoidance and incest taboos, those who insult seniors, those who neglect traditional rituals (*vide supra*, p. 122). Amity between relatives is sanctioned by neighbours as well as by senior kinsmen, and the importance of enjoying the company of village mates is constantly stressed by relatives. Where a village does appear to support a member against his kin, it is usually on the side of the ancestors and 'justice', in terms of the Nyakyusa code, as when neighbours share a father's anger at the insolence of his son, or after his death protect his son against unjust treatment by the heir. The values of village solidarity and of kinship solidarity are thus coherent.

e. The form of witch beliefs

621 There is, however, a connection between the age-village
754 organization and the *form* of witch beliefs. As we have seen, great emphasis is laid on feasting neighbours, and it is believed that
626 the impulse to witchcraft comes from the lust for milk and meat. The Nyakyusa argue thus: witchcraft comes from neighbours, and neighbours must be fed or they get angry; feeding a witch on milk or beef pacifies him (*vide supra*, p. 92). An explicit connection is made between neglecting to provide feasts on the proper occasions and suffering from 'the breath' of justly angry neighbours whose blighting power springs from the same root as witchcraft. The contrast with the witch beliefs of the Pondo is marked: among them it is held that the drive to witchcraft is sex lust, and all witches have familiars with whom they have sex relations.[1]

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 275–88.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Nyakyusa emphasis upon lust for food as the incentive to crime is not due to starvation, for they are among the best-fed people in Africa, with a much greater variety and quantity of food at their disposal than the Pondo. Why, then, this emphasis in their witch beliefs? We suggest that it is directly connected with living with non-relatives who have no share in one's inheritance. The most prized possession of the Nyakyusa is cattle, and cattle are controlled by lineages. Neighbours who are not kinsmen, and who cannot hope to benefit by inheritance or through assistance with marriage and funeral cattle from a fellow's herd, are more likely to be jealous of his wealth in cattle than are his brothers and sons who directly share in it through inheritance, and the gift of cattle at marriage and death. The only profit which neighbours derive from the herd of a rich fellow is the milk and meat on which he feasts them. Jealousy of another's wealth is a common enough cause for supposed witchcraft, but the affront of inequality is greater when it is constantly before one's eyes. Nyakyusa live close-packed in villages and can hardly be unaware of what next-door neighbours eat. The statement that the pythons of witches are roused by the *smell* of meat cooking and the *smell* of milk (*vide supra*, p. 92) suggests the envy of a poor neighbour when he smells the roast beef and curds next door. Where the local group consists of a lineage (as among the Pondo) people are not necessarily aware of what non-relatives eat. Among the Pondo the pressure to kill cattle for meat comes from within the lineage, and is associated not with the witches but with the ancestors. Sickness is commonly attributed to the *hunger* of the ancestors (*balambile*), who 'want to eat by means of him' who is ill (*bafuna ukudla ngaye*),[1] a notion quite strange to the Nyakyusa.

In short, we argue that it is because people who do not benefit from each other's herds by inheritance and the provision of marriage and funeral cattle, live close to one another, that so much emphasis is laid on the lust for milk and meat as the drive to witchcraft among the Nyakyusa.

And why the Pondo emphasis on sex? Are they more inhibited than the Nyakyusa? At first sight the Pondon sex code seems a freer one than that of the Nyakyusa. The marriage age of men is no later than among the Nyakyusa, while the marriage age of girls is considerably higher, and unmarried men are free to

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 232, 245.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

enjoy limited sex relations with a relatively large group of unmarried girls.[1] But the Pondo have exogamous clans numbering, on the average, 3,000 to 4,000 members; marriage into the clan of either parent or either grandmother is prohibited; and clans, though not strictly territorial groups, have a territorial basis. Therefore very many of the adolescents growing up in one area are forbidden to flirt together or marry. Moreover, clan incest is regarded with great horror and is associated very closely with witchcraft. A pregnant woman (who must confess her sins and her dreams that she may have safe delivery) is specifically instructed to confess any flirtations within the prohibited degrees, and to confess if she has had witch-lovers.[2] Even in town, where so many traditional taboos are disregarded, clan exogamy is still insisted upon by Xhosa-speaking people.[3]

Furthermore, in Pondo belief the 'familiar' commonly appears as a European or light-coloured person.[4] and South Africa is a caste society in which sex relations between white and black are very strongly disapproved. We conclude, therefore, that the 'familiar' stands for the embodiment of sex temptation, of forbidden lust, and that the reason why there is so much emphasis on sex in Pondo witch beliefs is that Pondo live in a society in which sex relations between members of certain large groups who are mutually attractive, are regarded with horror.

In Nyakyusa society the pattern is quite different. Sex relations are prohibited only between the descendants of a common great-grandfather, who are in any case scattered in different villages and not constantly meeting one another. And not only are Europeans very few in Nyakyusa country, but the taboo on sex relations between the colour groups is much less strong than in

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 180–4.

It has been suggested by European doctors that limited sex relations are in themselves psychologically disturbing (cf. M. Kohler, M.D., *Marriage Customs in Southern Natal*, p. 33–5), while Africans have argued that such a practice prevents psychological disturbance (cf. J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, pp. 155–60).

[2] Hunter, op. cit., p. 148.

[3] Hunter, op. cit., p. 483; R. Levin, *Marriage in Langa Native Location* (Communications from the School of African Studies, University of Cape Town), pp. 13–14.

[4] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 282, 491. My further investigations since *Reaction to Conquest* was published indicate that the 'familiar' is usually described as a European when it takes human form.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

South Africa. Sex hunger obviously exists in the large group of bachelors and among the wives of elderly polygynists, but its satisfaction through adultery is not regarded as shameful or horrible. Adultery was formerly extremely dangerous, and is now expensive, but it is not disgraceful. Thus desire, being fully conscious, is not transformed into dreams and fantasies.

It is possible that all witch beliefs are an expression of lust, directed by jealousy, envy, and hatred. Certainly sex lust and the lust for good food appear in the accounts of witch beliefs in one area after another in Africa. The Zande fear that a glimpse of the cats associated with women witches, and particularly with Lesbian practices in the harems of princes, will kill a man, is a classic example of the one;[1] while the Lovale,[2] Thonga,[3] and Nyanja[4] belief that witches kill in order to eat the corpses of their victims is an example of the other. We do not suggest that the Nyakyusa alone believe that the lust for prized food is a motive for witchcraft, or that they think it is the sole motive,[5] but that their emphasis on lust for food, and the particular form it takes, is directly related to the age-village organization. It is significant that the stress laid on sharing food in the village diminishes along with the belief in witchcraft, and a rigid insistence on living with age-mates.

f. 'The breath of men'

And what of the belief in 'the defenders' of the village and the chilling 'breath of men'? Is the idea that contemporaries have a mystical power over one another a function of their living together—a correlate of an age-village, as opposed to a kinship village, organization? The Nyakyusa concept of witchcraft is similar in many respects to that of the Azande, the Thonga, and the Lovale, but, as we have shown, the Nyakyusa differ from these other peoples in the emphasis they lay on the lust for food as a motive for witchcraft; they differ also in the belief that a power

[1] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., pp. 51–57.
[2] C. M. N. White, op. cit., pp. 96–7. [3] Junod, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 506.
[4] B. Malkebu, A. Kumbanga, G. Chipengule, B. Chisunzi *Maholo Athu* Nyasaland Education Department, Zomba (1945).
[5] For the sex associations in Nyakyusa witchcraft *vide supra*, pp. 94–5. There is a hint of the lust for food among the Pondo in the idea that the baboon familiar milks cows, and Thikoloshe steals food. Hunter, op. cit., pp. 275–81, 287.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 akin to witchcraft and distinct from the power of senior relatives is used to punish wrong-doers and to protect[1] the village from witches, and in the belief that village headmen are foremost among 'the defenders'.

626 The closest parallel to the Nyakyusa concept of 'the breath of men' of which we have evidence in Africa is the belief in the 789 'conditional curse' among the Meru, Embu, and Kikuyu people. Lambert shows that the main sanction enforcing the judgement of the Council of Elders among the Meru people was the belief that its curse brought misfortune, and he was told in Embu that the Warriors' Council has a similar power over warriors.[2] Kenyatta shows tha among the Kikuyu the conditional curse was used to protect beacons, to enforce the judgement of the Council of Elders, and to guard against bribery.[3] As we have seen, the Nyakyusa of the plain also use a word *ikigune*, which is best translated as 'the curse', when the people of the hills use the phrase 'the breath of men' (*vide supra*, p. 101), and whatever phrase is used the implication is that misfortune comes from the shocked astonishment and the anger of neighbours (or father's neighbours) which has been expressed in 'murmuring'. In the Nyakyusa view a formal cursing is not necessary to bring down misfortune, but the anger must be *expressed* (*vide supra*, p. 106). A belief in the legitimate exercise of mystical power by contemporaries or seniors to punish non-relatives thus appears in four societies with highly developed age-organizations, and further field-work may show that the two are always coincident.

However that may be, the belief in 'the curse' (or 'the breath 626 of men') among the Nyakyusa is shaped by the fact that villages are occupied by age-sets. The social function of 'the breath of men' in a Nyakyusa age-village is strictly parallel to that of the mystical power of senior relatives in a kinship village. Where, as among most African peoples, the neighbours are kinsmen, no distinction is made between the mystical effects of the legitimate

[1] There are indications that the power of witchcraft is thought sometimes to be used for defence among the Thonga (Junod, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 510, 516), and the Azande (Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., pp. 129-30) but the idea does not apparently bulk large, and there is no suggestion of a similar power being used to punish wrong-doers.

H. E. Lambert, *The Use of Indigenous Authorities in Tribal Administration* (Communications from the School of African Studies, University of Cape Town), pp. 9-10, 14-15.

[3] J. Kenyatta, op. cit., pp. 39-40, 221-2.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

anger of neighbours on the one hand, and of kinsmen on the other. 626

The idea that a Nyakyusa village headman has the mystical power called *amanga*, and leads the attacks of justly enraged neighbours, gives him a position in his village comparable to that of the headman who, among many African peoples, is the senior kinsman in his village. Each has mystical power over the members of his village, and the fact that the Nyakyusa headman's power is derived from 'a python in the stomach', and operates like witchcraft, while the power of a senior kinsman derives from his birth, and operates through the shades, makes relatively little difference to the relations of the village headman with his people. 622 789 754

The Nyakyusa system is peculiar in that the village headman is foremost as the discoverer of, and defender against, witches; he combines the functions fulfilled elsewhere by the village headman and the witch-doctor. The protection which kinship villages in other African cultures seek on the one hand from their ancestors, and on the other from the witch-doctor,[1] the Nyakyusa look for from their village headmen. Doctors who claim to discover witches, and provide medicines for protection against them, exist in Nyakyusa society; some, at least, of them are spoken of as having *amanga*—the same mystical power as the headmen have—through which they are enabled to see and fight the witches; but witch-doctors play a much smaller part than they do among the Azande or the Pondo; in the battle against witches they are quite overshadowed by the village headmen. Defence against witchcraft is a village affair, and the foremost 'defenders' (*abamanga*) are the political authorities. Village rituals directed to the ancestors are conspicuously absent among the Nyakyusa, and our hypothesis is that this absence, together with the belief that the 'python power' of village headmen and others is used to punish wrong-doers and defend the innocent within their village, is dependent upon the age-village organization, in which neighbours are not kinsmen and the position of village headman is not hereditary.

[1] cf. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., pp. 161–82, 251; Junod, op. cit., pp. 505, 516–8. The Thonga 'magician' is also believed to fly and know the witches, because he shares their power.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

g. Kith and kin

602 621 The tendency to identify neighbours and kinsmen—kith and kin—appears not only in religious belief, the two groups being credited with somewhat similar mystical power; but also in verbal usage—'fathers of the village', 'mothers of the village', 'sisters of the village', etc.; in the obligation to respect a father's fellows, to run errands for them and obey their orders; in the belief that a father's neighbours are insulted by an insult to the father, and must be pacified as well as the real father; and in the responsibility of villagers for certain torts of a fellow. The distinction between neighbours and kinsmen is, however, clear-cut in marriage, in rituals, and in the control of cattle. Fellow villagers marry each other's daughters; they neither perform the elaborate ritual at death or twin birth believed to be necessary for the safety of relatives, nor are they required to help each other with cattle for marriages, funeral rites, and fines, as are kinsmen.[1]

Kinsmen are bound together by their common interest in the inherited stock of the lineage and in the cattle coming in for its daughters; by co-operation in cultivation and building; and by the belief that they are mystically interdependent—the contagion of defilement and of certain diseases caused by sorcery travelling along the roads of kinship. Village neighbours are bound together by occupation and ownership of common land; by co-operation in herding and cultivation; and by common defence against enemies 'by day and by night'. In both groups discipline is thought to be maintained by mystical as well as material sanctions, the anger of neighbours bringing ill-health like the anger of senior relatives; and both groups have certain responsibilities for their members in relations with other like groups.

h. Relative social status

621 561 The Nyakyusa material suggests certain further connections between the age-village organization and other aspects of the social structure which comparative study shows to be false. For example, it might be argued for the Nyakyusa (as it has been for

[1] Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage.*

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the Kikuyu)[1] that the equalitarian emphasis is related to the emphasis on age-organization. As we have seen, hereditary office exists among the Nyakyusa but the power of chief and hereditary priest is limited at every point by the power of the leaders of age-sets who are chosen each generation from among commoners. That democratic (i.e. non-hereditary) leadership is not a necessary concomitant of a developed age-organization is, however, proved by the fact that among the Zulu, Swazi, Pedi, and Tswana, whose military organization was based on age-regiments, rank is stressed, and the leaders of age-sets are always sons or kinsmen of the chief. 621 561

It is possible, however, that the low status of Nyakyusa women relative to men is partly dependent on the age-village organization. It is most obviously related to the high degree of polygyny, and the fact that the position of the various wives is not clearly determined by date of marriage, birth, or allocation of property. For a commoner the first wife betrothed is his great wife, who takes precedence in ritual, but there is no ranking of houses and allocation of the bulk of property to different houses as among the Nguni, nor the same strong pressure on a husband to visit each wife in rotation. Instead there is acute competition between a man's various wives for the position of favourite, with a disportionate share of milk and meat and of her husband's attention. We do not suggest that there is no competition among the wives of a Pondo or Zulu polygynist, but we argue that competitive tendencies have freer play among the Nyakyusa,[2] and that this competition depresses the status of women in relation to men. 562 595

Like the kinship organization, the age-village organization favours men. As we have seen, a main end of age-villages, in the Nyakyusa view, is to allow men the enjoyment of congenial company, that is the company of friends and equals. A village consists of a group of male contemporaries and their dependants; ideally, the men live together all their lives and form a close-knit group of equals, between whom mutual loyalty, hospitality, and affability is fostered from childhood. Those who move tend to go to villages in which they already have close friends. The women, 621 561 562

[1] J. Kenyatta, op. cit., pp. 186–9.

[2] Unfair division of milk between wives is said by some Nyakyusa to anger the ancestors who cause the cows to give blood in place of milk; nevertheless unequal allocation of milk is a much commoner cause of complaint than it is among the Pondo.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 561 562 on the other hand, come from many villages, and they move from village to village more than men, because most women are inherited at least once in their lives. Nor do the women form an age-set, for men inherit wives as old, or older than themselves, and they continue to marry young brides until they themselves are elderly. A village thus contains women of all ages, the older ones often being quite late-comers to it. There is neither the unity of a kinship group, with leadership of mother or grandmother, as among a matrilineal people like the Bemba, nor the leadership of the mother-in-law as among the patrilineal Nguni and Sotho peoples. It is true that among the latter peoples the leadership of women devolves on a man's senior wife when his mother is dead, but the pattern has developed in a society in which daughters-in-law usually live for a long time in the same homestead as their mother-in-law, whereas among the pagan Nyakyusa a woman rarely joins her own son until she is decrepit, long after his marriage. When the Nguni or Sotho chief wife is obeyed by her co-wives it is as the successor of her mother-in-law; indeed on the latter's death she is often referred to by junior wives as 'mother'. Where women have authority in a patrilineal society it is usually as mother, or grandmother, or father's sister. But there are none with such positions in the context of the age-village; the office of headman is not hereditary so there is no mother of the heir, and the headman's own mother and sisters normally live elsewhere.

562 613 595 Such solidarity and leadership as exist among women in pagan Nyakyusa society are within the group of women of the same lineage who live together. Great emphasis is laid on the propriety of a wife bringing a younger sister, or brother's daughter, as a junior wife for her husband (*ukusakula*): this is felt to be a compliment to the husband and a comfort to the wife, proof that the marriage has been a success. Co-wives who are of the same lineage are very closely identified, their children being treated almost as full siblings, and they themselves co-operating in everything.

562 795 One of the marked changes in contemporary Nyakyusa society is the development of leadership among women in the Christian congregations.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

i. Constitutional form

Two other negative points are worth noting. First, the Nyakyusa fought among themselves and honoured a brave warrior, but they never developed a military kingdom, nor did they regard battle as the chief end of man. Emphasis on the value of war is not, then, a necessary concomitant of a developed age-organization, as a study of the Masai, Zulu, Swazi, and Pedi material might suggest. Secondly, the constitutional division of a chiefdom once every generation is not dependent upon the age-village organization, for such a division was common enough among the southern Nguni whose age-organizations were of relatively small importance. Among the Pondo and Xhosa the 'great son' and the 'right-hand son' of a chief very often both became independent; the main condition of their separation and independence being that there should be ample land in which they might live, each with his own followers.[1] Nyakyusa chiefdoms could divide in each generation because the Nyakyusa were an expanding population in relatively empty country. 642

j. Necessary conditions of age-villages

The limitations of the connections we have attempted to show must be realized. None of the characteristics cited are *correlates* of age-villages, for in each case either the age-villages could exist without them, or they could exist without age-villages: e.g. fathers- and daughters-in-law could not avoid one another completely if they lived in the same village, but the separate villages in which they live need not necessarily be age-villages; age-villages might be established though father- and daughter-in-law did not avoid one another; and so on. We claim only that these characteristics of Nyakyusa society which have been cited *partly* determine, and are themselves partly determined by, the age-village organization. 621 561

There are, however, certain other characteristics of Nyakyusa society without which age-villages such as we have described could not exist at all. The first of these is the redistribution of 621 561 178

[1] J. H. Soga, *Ama-Xosa Life and Customs*, pp. 25–49; M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, pp. 379–80.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 land in each generation. The territorial segregation of fathers and
561 sons is directly dependent upon the shifting of the old men after
178 the 'coming out' ceremony, without which the young men would not have sufficient land to establish themselves as a compact group on land adequate to support their growing families. Where no redistribution of land takes place, as on mission land and in the chiefdoms where the 'coming out' ceremony has been dropped, the territorial division between age groups becomes blurred within a generation.

621 Redistribution of land in each generation depends upon two
425 further conditions: the existence of ample land to support the
423 population, and relatively little development of land. As soon as
178 land becomes scarce those in possession of it are reluctant to agree to redistribution. It is significant that the most valuable land of all in Nyakyusa country—that in old craters—is *not* redistributed at a 'coming out' ceremony, but is retained by an individual until his death, and then inherited by kinsmen. And as soon as improvements are made in the form of planting long-term crops, or building durable and expensive houses, the difficulties of redistribution are increased. Nyakyusa land-law recognized the right of an elder who had moved, or of his son, to the bamboos and *imisyunguti* trees he had planted (*vide supra*, p. 46). But such rights become much more complicated when it is not only an odd clump of bamboos or two or three trees which are at stake, but a large patch of coffee; or when, in place of the old-fashioned long hut (*ikibaga*) built with the co-operation of kinsmen and neighbours, there is a more substantial house with expensive doors and windows made by an expert carpenter. It has been shown that where individual rights over trees or other long-term crops are recognized, and such crops are planted on a large scale, individual tenure of land, as opposed to a temporary right of usufruct, tends to develop.[1]

621 Secondly, the solidarity of the Nyakyusa age-village, as of
476 kinship villages in other African societies, is a function of a small-
178 scale society. Fellow villagers have been hitherto, and are still in a large measure, dependent upon one another for land, for aid in economic undertakings, for sympathy and good fellowship, and for protection 'by night and by day'. But such mutual dependence is visibly decreasing. In the economic field co-opera-

[1] C. K. Meek, *Land Law and Custom in the Colonies*, p. 28.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tion is already as important beyond as within the village, and village control over the main cash crops has not been established, as it was over certain food crops. With increasing centralization the village headman, embodiment of the solidarity and relative autonomy of each village, is losing power to the chiefs and courts, on the one hand, and to the specialist agriculturalists, school teachers, elders, and ministers of religion on the other.

Friendships beyond the age-village are fostered by common experiences at a boarding school or a labour centre, and by common interests as members of a church or a coffee co-operative which does not necessarily include fellow villagers. And most important of all, fellow villagers are not bound to one another in resistance to external dangers as they were formerly. Lion, leopard, and buffalo still exist in the district, but we heard of no recent case of a village combining for defence against dangerous (as distinct from destructive) game: if action were necessary a European sportsman was usually glad of the chance of a bag. With the cessation of cattle-raiding and inter-village warfare, the curtailment of the right of self-help, and the development of courts with power to enforce judgement in cases involving members of different chiefdoms, dependence on fellow villagers for protection from material dangers and the responsibility of a village for the actions of its members, virtually cease. A sense of dependence upon neighbours for mystical protection lingers, but as elementary education, belief in Christian dogma, and the solidarity of Christian congregations increase, this supposed dependence upon the *amanga* or mystical power of neighbours also lessens. Many men who fear sorcery (including poisoning) do not fear witchcraft, and it is only against witches that neighbours are believed to protect one. Thus change in the form of beliefs is correlated with the development of more intense relationships beyond the village.

An age-village organization is probably dependent upon isolation in another fashion also: by their own account the Nyakyusa feeling that close association between successive generations is improper has been blunted by the example of Europeans and Swahili who do not share this feeling (*vide supra*, p. 69). The missionaries teach that avoidance between father- and daughter-in-law is unnecessary, if not in itself sinful, and the implication is that only 'superstition' maintains the taboo (*vide*

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 *supra*, p. 84). The Nyakyusa pattern of avoidance has un-
177 doubtedly influenced that of the small groups absorbed by them,
but they in turn have been influenced by these groups, and by the
784 example of Christians of neighbouring tribes. In Ilolo avoidance
178 between father- and daughter-in-law is much less strict than in
Selya. This was attributed partly to the influence of neighbouring
small groups of Nyika and Penja, who had not the same tradition
of strict avoidance as the Nyakyusa, and partly to the influence
of the Christians, whose number was proportionately greater in
Ilolo than in Selya. As Nyakyusa informants argued: the pagans
see Christian women disregard avoidance taboos, and they see
that nothing dreadful happens to them (as the result of their
neglect), so the pagans, too, begin to think that avoidance is of
no importance.

621 The relationship between the generations is also modified
561 among the Nyakyusa, as among other African people, by the
power of young men to earn money and so command wealth. As
178 we have seen, sons are in a position to *invite* their fathers to drink
beer in the father's own homestead. Once fathers and sons have
begun to *ukwangala*, drinking beer together, and once the horror
of a woman seeing her father-in-law has diminished, then there
is much less insistence on the need to buttress separation of the
generations by territorial segregation. When convenient, fathers
and sons will continue to live apart, but if a building site and
arable land near his age-mates is lacking a son may suggest that
avoidance does not really matter after all, and his father (if a
Christian or a sceptic) may agree to the son building near him.

621 Nyakyusa age-villages still flourish, but they are hardly likely
561 to survive many decades with increasing pressure on land, the
planting of coffee and other long-term crops, the development of
178 trade and migration, and a diminishing isolation from the ideas
and values of the outside world. Age is no longer the sole basis
for village grouping in Rungwe district—common belief and
common occupation now provide other grounds for building
together. There are Christian villages, an administrative station,
a military station, and trading centres such as Mwaya, the Lake
port. Tukuyu (the administrative centre) has its police lines,
quarters for hospital attendants, traders' quarters, and so on,
C00 while Masoko has soldiers' and traders' quarters. This account
of age-villages may therefore have some significance as a docu-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ment illustrating one of the infinite variations of social form which will not long be available for study. If it is agreed that an understanding of social processes can only proceed from the systematic comparison of many societies, then the recording of vanishing forms, such as that of Nyakyusa age-villages, has some urgency.

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1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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SELECT DOCUMENTS RELATING TO NYAKYUSA AGE-VILLAGES

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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1. VILLAGES IN MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM (1938)

Information from numerous informants

Generation	Chief	Sub Chief	Senior Headman	Headman	Village	Category	Legal Authority	Remarks
I[1]	*Mwaijonga*[2]		Njobakosa		IPENDA	Senior village of Mwaijonga		Village survives only ritually—there is no group of men living together as Ipenda. Njobakosa is senior priest of Mwaijonga and eats sacred meat of cow sacrificed in Mwaijonga's grove
				Kisogota	Itiki			Not surviving
			Ngulyo (inherited from his father, Mwaikibilingwa)		ITEBE	Second senior[3] village of Mwaijonga	Ngulyo settles disputes but is subject to senior headman of next generation, Mwansambe (below)	Village survives with 11 members (original or their heirs). Ngulyo is a priest of Mwaijonga and eats the sacred meat in Mwaijonga's grove
				Mwaisumo ('Mwakyusa')[4] inherited	Bukeba			Not surviving
				Mwaikibilingwa ('Kasebere')	Itumba			Not surviving
II	*Mwaipopo I* (son of Mwaijonga)		Mwansambe ('Mwegama') inherited from his father		BUJEGE	Senior village of Mwaipopo. Sons of Ipenda and Itiki	Mwansambe. Mwenengange settles disputes during Mwansambe's absence, and subject to him	'Coming out' of Mwaipopo I and his brothers was in this village. Mwansambe at present living in another chiefdom but returns for ceremonies and to hear cases

[1] The names of villages of Mwakagile, father of Mwaijonga, have perished: the names of Ipenda and Itebe will be forgotten when Mwaipopo (generation II) dies.
[2] Italics indicate that the person named is dead.
[3] Informants were not all agreed about the relative status of villages and headmen of Mwaijonga's time.
[4] Most individuals are known by more than one name—we include two when two were in common use.

[P.181]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621
631
622
643

[P. 182]

VILLAGES IN MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM (1938)—contd.

Generation	Chief	Sub Chief	Senior Headman	Headman	Village	Category	Legal Authority	Remarks
II	Mwaipopo II (younger brother and heir of Mwaipopo I See Plate V)			Katotile ('Mwakalembo') inherited	Bujenga[1]		Katotile	Kikuku who buried Mwankuga I lives here
					Lupaso[2]	Older section of Bujenga	No separate leader	Consists of 10 men who moved at 'coming out' of Mwankuga from Bujenga. The older men moved, leaving their younger contemporaries (Kikuku, etc.) in Bujenga. Katotile lives here, also Kasitila, the rain-maker. Strictly a section of Bujenga
					Ilusikali	'Younger brothers of Mwaipopo who eat with him', i.e. are of his generation	Mwainyobolela (Tandale) settles disputes	Tandale buried Mwaipopo I
						'Offshoot of Bujenga'		Not established as a separate village at 'coming out' of Mwaipopo. Is strictly a section of Bujenga
				Mwasota	Bulindanajo	Much younger than men of Bujege and Bujenga and Kyemo	Mwasotar	Mwaipopo II originally lived here. There was once a battle between Bulindanajo and Bujege (*side* p. 150).
		Likoyela		Mwakikato	Kibonde		Mwakikato	

[1] Besides having direct authority over his own village, each senior headman has authority over other villages established at the 'coming out' with their own headmen (see p. 31). The villages subordinate to each senior headman are listed in column 6 immediately under his own village.
[2] Lupaso is territorially separate, and spoken of as a separate village, but structurally it is really a section of Bujenga. Other villages of this type are underlined thus:

I:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

VILLAGES IN MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM (1938)—contd.

Generation	Chief	Sub Chief	Senior Headman	Headman	Village	Category	Legal Authority	Remarks
II	Mwaipopo II		*Mwaikofu* Mwakwese ('Mwaisumo') inherited from Mwaikofu		LUPANDO	Second senior village of Mwaipopo. Sons of Bukeba	Mwakwese	Old men have moved to one side. Lupando was originally established as two villages but when the headman of the senior (Mwaikofu) died, the villages coalesced under Mwakwese
				Kanyeka ('Mwasibata')	Kyemo	Younger brothers of Lupando	Kanyeka	Very, very small. Old men have moved to one side
					Kiayelo			
		Mwakabole		Mwangoba	Kitole			Mwakabole 'came out' here
		Mwakipesile		*Mwakitwange* ('*Kasele*')	Kabula			
III	*Mwankuga I* (son of Mwaipopo I)		Mwambuputa ('Mwafungo')		IGEMBE	Senior village of Mwankuga. Sons of Mbujege	Mwambuputa	Mwankuga I 'came out' here. 'Mwambuputa is the greatest (headman) in the country.' Was driven out and later fetched back
	Mwankuga II (younger brother and heir of Mwankuga I)				Katumba	'Younger brothers and a few sons of Igembe.' Mwambuputa's own son built here	Mwambuputa (no separate leader appointed)	53 men. Established *after* the coming out of Mwankuga I. Strictly a section of Igembe. 'Betwixt and between' generations III and IV. Some near contemporaries in Mpuguso
				Nsusa	Lugombo		Nsusa	Nsusa was driven out, later fetched back. Acted for Mwambuputa in his absence. Lugombo has a small sub-division, Itiki.
				Kabolile ('Mwaseba')	Ipoma	Younger than men of Igembe. Sons of Bujenga and Busikali	Kabolile	20 members. Took over land from Bujenga. They 'came out' when very young men. Includes a Christian section under Akimu

[p.183]

621
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I:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621
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643

VILLAGES IN MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM (1938)—contd.

Generation	Chief	Sub Chief	Senior Headman	Headman	Village	Category	Legal Authority	Remarks
III	Mwankuga II				Ndongoti	Younger brothers of Ipoma	Kabolile. Mwakibilingwa (appointed by Kabolile) settles small disputes	28 members: 27 married. One informant suggested that Ndongoti might be established as a village of the next generation at the 'coming out' of Mwanyiku. Others regard it as of generation III and strictly a section of Ipoma. Its members include junior sons of Mwaipopo II
					Kilwa		Kabolile (no separate leader appointed)	At present a section of Ipoma. May possibly be established as a village of generation IV
				Mwakileka	Kibonde (junior section)	Sons of Kibonde	Mwangalaba tries small cases. Others to Mwambipula	
		Mwaseba	Kakuju		NJEBI	Second senior village of Mwankuga. Sons of Lupando	Kakuju	
				Mwakatika ('Mwanscpe')	Mponga	Younger sons of Lupando	Mwakatika	
				Mwakabombe ('Mwaitebela')	Isuba	Youngest sons of Lupando	Mwakabombe	Mwakabombe had moved on account of a quarrel. He was recently brought home
		Mwakibwale		*Mwambegeja*	Lukwebo	Sons of Kitale		
		Mwakipanile		*Kasele*	Ndobo	Sons of Kabula		

[p. 184]

[p.185]

VILLAGES IN MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM (1938)—contd.

Generation	Chief	Sub Chief	Senior Headman	Headman	Village	Category	Legal Authority	Remarks
IV	Mwanyilu (about 10 years old)			None yet appointed as Mwanyilu has not yet come out	Mpuguso	Sons of Igembe	Mwambuputa	'Mwanyilu will come out here'
				"	Nsanga	Younger sons of Igembe and Lugombe	Mwambuputa	'Mwanyilu will build here first'
				"	Ilinga	Sons of Njesi and Mponga	Small cases to Mwakatika. Serious cases to Kakuju	Some members are married
				"	Ipyasa	Younger brothers of Ilinga	"	None yet married
				"	Kungwe	"	"	None yet married
				"	Isuba (junior section)	Sons of Isuba		

Nineteen independent villages established at the 'coming out' ceremonies of Mwaijonga, Mwaipopo and Mwankuga survive.
There are five village sections treated in some respects as practically independent villages. There are other village sections as Itiki which are not so independent.
There are six boys' villages, not yet established, but likely to be recognized at the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu.
The dividing line between village and village section is difficult to determine when villages have split *after* the 'coming out' at which they have been established, as did Bujonga. Our recognition of Busikali as a separate village and not Itiki is somewhat arbitrary.
It is to be noted that villages not only sub-divide but occasionally coalesce. Two independent villages established at the 'coming out' of Mwaipopo coalesced as Lupando, after the death of the headman of one of them.
The traditional organization is modified in that Mwaijonga's country has not been divided or sub-divided into independent chieftainships.

621
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642
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1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

a. THE 'COMING OUT' (*UBUSOKA*)

Mwaikambo (*clerk and son of a chief*).[1]

621 'The village headmen begin to talk among themselves, saying: "Our
622 sons have grown up, should we not establish them?" So they go to tell
643 the chief, saying: "Our sons have grown up, let us show them to the country." Two chiefs always "come out". We call them the senior and the junior. It is an old custom which is still followed that two chiefs should "come out".

[789] 'So the village headmen seek a doctor to make them a medicine horn and treat the tails of chieftainship with medicine. The village headmen take council together and choose two senior headmen to "come out" with the chiefs. These senior headmen drink medicine (*embondanya*) with the chiefs.

'When many people, together with the two young chiefs, have come together the doctor gives powdered medicine (*embondanya*) to the chiefs and the senior headman chosen for each chief. They give a spear of chieftainship, and a horn, and tail to each of the men chosen as senior headmen—one for each chief. Each senior headman then binds the horn to the blade of the spear, and standing with his own chief and many men and women, raises the spear to the sky. The women trill and each party goes to its place of "coming out" on the pasturage.
[535] Each chief, with his followers, goes to his own place. The men dance; sometimes they have drums, sometimes not.

[372] 'Then when each party has reached it own place they make fire with fire sticks. The chief just simulates the action of fire-making then his senior headman takes the sticks and makes fire by friction. When they have built the shelters for sleeping in they warm themselves at the fire they have made; they do not take fire from the houses of men. If there are many of them then there will be three or four shelters, if few, then only one shelter. The men and their chief who has "come out" sleep in these shelters and enjoy themselves together (*sukwangala*). The first day they kill two head of cattle. Also they plant "the tree of coming out" (*umpiki gwa busoka*) which is called *ulupando*. They plant it with a man who has come out previously, a man of their fathers' generation, he begins to plant, then he explains to them what to do, saying "plant", then the new senior headman plants it.

'While they sleep in these shelters with their cattle, they eat food which they take from their fathers, bananas, and milk, and other food.

[1] For a note on conspicuous informants see p. vi.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

From time to time their father, the chief, gives them a bull to kill. During the "coming out" food is very plentiful. If people pass on the road they honour them and give them food, and make love to them that they may build there. They remain in their shelters, they do not go about much. If the chief is stingy they teach him a lesson by taking bananas; they say: "Know that we are important people, we are those who have 'come out' and we are your parents." Later on they play drums—I think only in recent years. And the village headmen seize a woman, the daughter of a commoner, as a wife for the chief.

'The horn is the luck of the chiefs, that many people may come to build. Binding the horn to the blade of the spear is to show that the chief is one who has "come out" (*unsoka*); it is as if he were carried aloft (i.e. "chaired")[1]. We show his greatness ("seniority") to people, then we trill. 643 778

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'The fire made with fire sticks is to symbolize the new chieftainship. We do not take the old fire of the old men. [372]

'The medicine is to make the chief heavy (*nsito*), that it may be apparent that he is a chief. [784]

'The *ulupando* tree is a memorial of the "coming out", that men may come and say: "So and so planted this tree when he came out." Some say it is to show the power (*amaka*) of the chief, because if it does not grow it is said that his chieftainship will perhaps not flourish; then they will say: "Let us move and plant elsewhere." It is said that the spear of chieftainship is to fight battles; it is strength, manhood; it is treated with medicines.

'The tails are those with which battles are fought. When men go to war the senior headman grasps the tail. If the tail does not lead them well they return from the fight. It, also, they treat with medicines.' [778]

[1] A bride at a puberty-marriage ritual is carried about shoulder high.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

3. A LAND DISPUTE BETWEEN VILLAGES OF THE SAME CHIEFDOM

691
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This case was discussed with a great number of informants. We first quote the account written by Mwaisumo (our clerk) which sums up the earlier discussions. 'Mwansambe and Mwakalembo are quarrelling over the land of Ipoma. Both are village headmen of the older generation of Mwaipopo (the chief). Mwansambe is the senior, Mwakalembo the junior. Mwansambe is senior village headman of Mwaipopo. Mwakalembo is the next on his side (see table, pp. 181–2).

'At the "coming out" of Mwaipopo the old men gave Mwansambe the land of Bujege, and said that his junior Mwakalembo should build on the land of Busikali. He (Mwakalembo) built with Mwakwese, the man of Seba.

'When the "coming out" of Mwankuga, Mwaipopo's son, was held, Mwansambe sent to his junior Mwakalembo, saying: "At your place here we are going to build the house of our wife Kalinga, that is to say we are going to plant the *ulupando* tree of our child Mwankuga here." Mwakalembo agreed, but in secret he thought to himself: "My senior wants to seize my village! See he is building the great house at my place, and I am a junior!" So they brought out Mwankuga with Mwafungo as his senior headman, and Mwaseba Kabolile as a junior, and they planted the *ulupando* tree. Mwafungo built with his people and Mwaseba Kabolile with his. Later on Mwansambe arranged for his "sons", i.e. Mwafungo and his fellows, to go to his side, and Mwakalembo thought that his land was saved. He had thought that his senior was taking his country, but lo, the latter had moved!

'At that time Mwafungo went to enter into an inheritance[1] in MuNgonde (i.e. on the Lake-shore plain). On his return he went to the side from which he had come. He sought a bull with which to say: "Fathers, I have arrived." Mwansambe called his junior Mwakalembo saying: "Our son has arrived, they are eating the meat there without our having discussed together where we should kill, or where we should eat the meat." (cf. pp. 271–4.)

'So now Mwansambe wants to give his child Mwafungo a homestead site in which to build, he wishes to give him one at the *ulupando* tree where he first established him, and he has told his junior Mwakalembo so. Mwakalembo objected, saying: "How can you give him my homestead? Where shall I go?"

[1] Another reason for the departure of Mwafungo (Mwambupta) is given on p. 230.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

691
425

'Mwansambe said they could both build there together.

'Mwakalembo said "No."

'Mwansambe said: "How can you refuse? The site is mine, and I am your senior. Do you not see the *ulupando* tree which I planted for my child Mwafungo?"

'Mwakalembo replied: "Yes, I see it, but you went away and left it, you and your children. I gave thanks thinking my land had escaped capture."

'Mwansambe said: "And the *ulupando* tree, do you tell us that it was seized also?"

'Mwakalembo replied: "No, I don't deny the *ulupando* tree, but when you pray you pray in your homestead, in the house of your wife. If you wish you can plant again at your place."

'Mwansambe said: "Why do you quarrel with me, Mwakalembo, I, your father, your senior, I who gave you land on which I said your fellow, Mwafungo should also build, since you are both my children?"

'Mwakalembo replied: "The land about which we are quarrelling is mine, it is the place of my blood. I spilt blood, I seized it from Mwaipaja when I fought with him."

(For originally this land about which they are quarrelling was Mwakwese's, it was where Seba's house was built. Then that Mwaipaja of whom they speak was the assistant village headman—a senior man. The followers of Mwakalembo made love to the wives, they approached them when they (the women) went to draw water. Mwaipaja was angry and called out his men to fight with the followers of Mwakalembo. Mwaipaja was defeated, and fled. The followers of Mwakalembo took his homestead. Mwaipaja was driven out: he built at Lupata where Kalunda and his men are now.)

It is here that Mwansambe planted the *ulupando* tree. It is this land that Mwakalembo means when he says that his land escaped seizure by his senior when he went away again with his followers! Mwansambe says: "See, it is mine also, my father moved Mwaipaja aside, that my junior should build here."

'Mwakalembo says: "I got it by conquest, I spilt my blood."

'People commenting on the case in private say that Mwansambe is wrong, the country is really Mwakalembo's. Many say that although the case is put off it is not finished, Mwansambe will be overcome, and so Mwaipopo himself thinks.

'Mwaseba Kabolile and Mwafungo Mwambuputa are those who hold the country now, they are the children of Mwansambe and Mwakalembo. Mwenenganga, who began speaking (at the trial in court), is the junior ('brother') of Mwansambe but he holds all the seniority of Mwansambe because Mwansambe himself is not in the

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

691
425

country, he has moved. The Mwakalembo who is standing there is not Mwakalembo himself, but his son. And the Mweneganga Mwakoloma who is speaking is a junior, but he speaks because he knows how to speak—he has a "good tongue" (i.e. is an orator). And Ngulyo also is a junior—he is speaking because he knows how to speak. All of these are village headmen, senior men, fathers of Mwafungo and Mwaseba Kabolile.'

The case was twice discussed at greath length in Lupata Court but no judgement was given. Some maintained that were a judgement given war would result, because the losers would attack. Mwaipopo himself, as president of the court, was said to be afraid to give judgement lest he suffer from 'the breath' or witchcraft of the offended parties. He refused to hear the case a third time and, as Kasitile pointed out, sixteen months after the second hearing Mwaipopo was sleeping in the village of Bujenga (Mwakalembo's village), and it was Mwakalembo and his men who were in possession of the disputed land. Mwaipopo feared the witchcraft (or 'breath') of Mwansambe and his men.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

4. A BOUNDARY DISPUTE

Heard by the Lupata Court (president, Mwaipopo), 18/3/35.

Man A brought case against man B for assault.

Plaintiff and defendant gave their accounts, and also Mwangomo, chief of the country concerned. 423

A and B had quarrelled over the boundary of their adjoining homesteads, which are in different villages of the same chiefdom. There was an old quarrel about the boundary of the village. Mwangomo stated: 'The week before this quarrel I went with my brothers and the young village headmen (leaving behind the old village headmen because I thought they would quarrel) to settle the dispute. We walked over the boundary and said to the people concerned: "It is here." 695 683

'A and his two friends (not in court) were not satisfied with my demarcation and grumbled openly saying: "Who is Mwangomo to take from us the place where our fathers lived, and from which they ate the bananas, and give it to our neighbours? We will take it and not care for Mwangomo" . . . or again: "We do not believe that Mwangomo really decided like this, we shall act as if the line was as before." So when I heard that they were talking like this I asked all the people to watch for any man who might do anything against the decision, and I told one man in particular to watch.'

A and B gave evidence, telling much the same story.

A went to cut the banana leaves (i.e prune) on the old boundary, with a bill-hook (*isenge*), and B came and told him to stop. They quarrelled, each claiming that the land had been his father's, and that his father had eaten the bananas off it. Then B caught hold of the bill-hook, and in the struggle A was cut. A now brings a case for assault against B.

Mwangomo: 'B is in the right, and what makes it worse is that since his father died A has never been in the country. He has lived in MuNgonde (the Lake-shore plain); he has only been back a few days in my country and he brings war into it and spoils it.' Mwangomo spoke angrily, and asked that A should be imprisoned.

The Court: 'We follow what you, the chief, say; if people resist you and speak against you it is very bad, but we disagree about imprisoning him, he has only just returned to the country and it is not a good custom to imprison a man who has only just come to a country. Bring his two friends who have lived long in your country.' 695 683

[p. 191]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

695 Mwakisisya (another chief sitting in court): 'What about the other man you drove away without bringing him into court? Mwangomo has
683 aggravated the quarrel, he should have called all the men from both villages together and judged the case there.'

The Court, to A: 'Where have you been staying since the fight? Where have you put all your things?'

A: 'In Mwangake's country.'

Court: 'You mean that Mwangomo had driven you out?'

A: 'Yes.'

The Court: 'Then if you have left the country why do you bring this case, troubling us?'

Mwangomo then decided to drive A and his two friends out of the country and said nothing more about punishing A. So the case ended.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

494
166
212
178

5. SUMMARY OF LABOUR HISTORIES

Information from men concerned

Category	No. of Cases	Worked	Average Total Period (those who worked)	Working One Year and over at a stretch	Schooling		Skilled and Semi-skilled (of those working)	Place of Work		
					Illiterate	Beyond Village School		In District only	Lupa Gold-fields	Out of Province
Pagan: Middle-aged and over	13	85%	5 months	23%	100%	Nil	10%	10%	—	8%
Christian: Middle-aged and over	10	100%	12 years, 4 months	90%	50%	Nil	80%	60%	—	Nil[1]
Pagan: Young	24	92%	—[2]	17%	63%	4%	5%	10%	70%	20%
Christian: Sons of pagans, young	11	91%	—	40%	9%	36%	40%	30%	70%	Nil
Christian: Sons of Christians, young	21	100%	—	38%	5%	19%	81%	5%	66%	29%
Total	79[3]	94%	—	38%	50%	12%	44%	27%	50%	17%

[1] Four worked on other mission stations of the Province.
[2] As many of the men are quite young, a record of the total period worked is insignificant. We lack material here on the *proportion* of time spent at work.
[3] This is not a true random sample for informants were selected haphazard; therefore, the percentages have no exact significance, but a correlation between Christianity, literacy, skilled work, and long-term employment is suggested.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

6. CHANGE IN THE RELATION OF FATHERS AND SONS

Record of G. W.

561 Mwambuputa, the headman, was building himself a new house with the help of six other men. He invited us to wait and join in the
177 beer and bananas, which were about to be served.

264 A boy came to call two of the builders to enjoy the company (and food?) of some other friends. They went off. It turned out that these two were from the boys' village, Katumba, one being a 'son' of Mwambuputa, and the other a friend of this 'son'. They had been eating and drinking with the rest of us.

Q.: 'In the old days, would these two have eaten and drunk with you—boys with men? Would you have called them to help you build?'

'No, formerly that was not the custom. Though we should have called them to help us build, they would not have drunk beer, and they would have eaten their calabash of milk separately, over there (pointing to a corner of the hut), while we men were here with our food and beer.'

Q. 'How is it then that the customs have changed, that now you eat, and even drink, with them?'

'You brought it yourselves, you Europeans. You sit down with your children at table and eat together, and the Swahili do the same. So we say: "He! Formerly we hated our children!" We said: "Eat over there." Let us eat with them!'

Q.: 'No, that does not convince us at all. The Europeans are strangers. How many of you have been into a European's house and seen them eating? Only the house-boys!'

Mwambuputa: 'All right, ask the others!'

Mwalubunju: 'Let me speak! In the old days, because there was war, we objected very much to the young men drinking beer with us. If we all drank together and the war cry was raised we should all be defeated. And men did not begin drinking in the morning, never! They began in the late afternoon when the cows came home . . . and in the evening each went home to his own house . . . but now, since the country is at peace, the young men also drink beer.'

Q.: 'Yes, but still I don't see why you drink *with* them. Why not give them a separate pot? And you eat with them, too.'

Mwambuputa: 'Because, as Mwalubunju has said, the country has fallen to you. It is at peace and there is no war, so the young men buy

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

their own beer.[1] Sometimes my son brings his pot to my place and calls his friends, saying: "We will take the pot to mother's house. She will pour in water for us." Then they come to my place and they invite me to drink and I accept and we drink together. How then can I grudge my son beer when I have some? Did he and his friends not entertain me'?

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[1] This, of course, is not so much a result of peace as of new opportunities of gaining wealth on the Lupa gold-fields and elsewhere, but to the Nyakyusa the two things go together as 'European times' (*ikisungu*).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

7. HOMOSEXUALITY

X (an exceptionally reliable informant)

838 'When a boy sleeps with his friend they sleep together; it is not forbidden. Everyone thinks it all right. Sometimes when boys sleep together each may have an emission on the other (*bitundanila*). If they are great friends there is no wrong done. If a boy has an emission on his friend in his sleep without the friend knowing there is no case. Boys sometimes agree to dance together (*ukukina*) and work their evil together and that also is no wrong. But they fear very much to dance thus because their parents will be angry, saying: "You are learning adultery; you will be fools when you grow up." Boys do this when they are out herding; then they begin to dance together and to have intercourse together. But there is something which is a great wrong—if one [684] boy, perhaps out herding or perhaps in the boys' village at night, catches hold of his fellow and has an emission on him (*nukutundila*) then it is a great case, involving a fine. One who has been forced by his fellow will tell his parents and they will take him to the village headman to inform the headman. It is a great case and the boy who forced his fellow pays a bull or perhaps a cow. They say that to force [754] a fellow thus is witchcraft (*bo bulosi*); he is not a woman. But when they have agreed and dance together, then even if people find them they say it is adolescence (*lukulilo*), all children are like that. And they say that sleeping together and dancing is also adolescence.

'This custom is mostly among children, it is forbidden for men to sleep together. They do not fear lest when they have soiled a friend they will pay; no, they fear to be shamed. Not many cases of grown men having intercourse together come to light, but only of boys together or of a man and a boy. Some, during intercourse, work in the mouth of their friend, and have an orgasm; those do very, very great wrong. Some have intercourse in the anus, some between the legs—there are many who practise this latter form and this is what boys mostly do. That of the mouth people do very rarely when they dance together, because one who does it may have a great case against him.

'A person never dreams of making love to another man but only when two youths sleep together on a mat, then something evil may take place between them, at night during sleep. Perhaps when one has dreamed that he is having intercourse with a woman but he has been caught and not finished, he soils his friend.

'And when out herding, some of the older boys do evil with the

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

young ones, the older ones persuade the little ones to lie down with them and to do that which is forbidden with them between the legs. Sometimes two older boys who are friends do it together, one gets on top of his fellow, then he gets off and the other mounts. All this which they do together or with a junior is a small wrong. When their parents find them they reprove them and tell them it is forbidden, they beat them a little. But when a little boy is caught hold of by an older boy against his will, and he tells that so and so caught him and had intercourse (*ukulogwa*) with him then the older boy will be fined, perhaps a bull. 838 [684]

'It is altogether forbidden to do evil to a fellow by night. The boy who has been so treated will be angry and run off to the court, and he who did evil to him will be fined. He will pay one cow, because they say it is forbidden to do evil to your fellow by night. There are some who, when they have dreamed at night of a woman, wake up and catch hold of a friend, and have intercourse with him.'

A and J.

A and J agreed that homosexuality occurred frequently in boys' villages. 'A boy has intercourse with his fellow, but a grown man? No, never, we've never heard of it. They always want women; only when a man cannot get a woman he does this, only in youth. A few men do not marry but they are half-wits who have no kind of intercourse at all. [732]

'And there is one famous case in the hills of a man who, though not mad, dresses as a woman; but he has no intercourse either with men or women.'

A case was also quoted of a doctor in Tukuyu who 'is a woman; she has borne children, now her body has grown the sexual organs of a man and her feelings have changed also; but she keeps it very secret, she is spoken of as a woman.' [143]

I: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

8. MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES[1]

Information from numerous informants

(a) *Witchcraft*

Total number of cases 92

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accuser and accused
1	Village cows	Married woman (Mother of Mwaisumo)	Neighbour, a very poor man and a stranger to the village	Same village	She bewitched village cows	Cows went dry	*Mwafi* ordeal (drunk by her son Mwaisumo who vomited)	Accuser had nothing to pay as fine, so beaten	Village neighbours
2	Boy	'Village father' (Mwantibe)	Parents of victim	Parents of victim and accused in same village. Boy in attached boys' village	'Eaten' son of village neighbour	Accused sent boy on a message. Boy refused to go. Accused threatened boy who died shortly afterwards	?	?	Village neighbours
3	Man	Village neighbour (Moses)	Victim	Same village	Bewitching his neighbour	Dream of victim	None. Dream related to neighbours who asked accused to move	Accused moved to another village of same chiefdom	Village neighbours
4	Man	Village neighbour, a doctor	Village neighbours	Same village	Caused neighbour to fall ill	Doctor threatened victim after a quarrel, saying: 'You may sleep'. Victim fell ill. Recovered when treated by doctor who had threatened him	None	Doctor forced by neighbours to treat man he threatened, then driven out of village	Village neighbours
5	Man and cattle	Village neighbour, Kagwya	Village neighbours	Same village	'Ate' people. Bewitched cattle	Death of men. Reduction of milk supply.	Autopsy on victims	Accused driven out and his food seized. He returned to his home village	Village neighbours

[1] Misfortunes attributed to the ancestors are not included in this table.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754
637
578

(a) *Witchcraft—contd.*

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accuser and accused
6	Young man	Village neighbour, Kagwya's son	Victims	Same village	Prevented road on which they were working being completed quickly			Accused driven out	Village neighbours
7	Village cows	Man of the village	Village neighbours (public accusation made)	Same village	Bewitched cows	Decline in milk supply	*Mwafi* ordeal. Accused did not vomit	Accused driven out	Village neighbours
8	Child	Man, neighbour of victim's father	Father of deceased	Same village	Killed child by witchcraft	Death of child. Accused did not attempt to persuade father of victim to remain, when he was packing to go after victim's death.	Autopsy on victim. *Mwafi* ordeal. Accused did not vomit	Accused driven out Chief seized his cattle	Village neighbours
9	Child of visitor	Host	Village neighbours	Same homestead	Made child ill	Child very ill with ear-ache. Host angry because visitor feasted neighbours. Child worse after such a feast. Host did not express good wishes for recovery (cf. p. 110 ff).	Discussion before assistant headman and village headman	Accused driven out of village	Village neighbours
10	Child	Man, neighbours of victim's father	Victim's father	Same village	Killed child by witchcraft	Father of victim wanted an unreasonable amount of land. Given one field when he joined the village. Wanted another which was refused him by the villagers	None known		Village neighbours

[p. 199]

754
627
548

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—*contd.*

(*a*) *Witchcraft—contd.*

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Special relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accuser and accused
11	Man	3 neighbours (men)	Victim (before his death)	Same village	Sponsed victim internally (by witchcraft)	Illness and death of victim. He denounced before his death that 3 neighbours (whom he recognized) had sponsed him	Autopsy. Internal 'wounds' found	No case made. Agreed by village that 'friends' in new were innocent, but their names were not made public	Village neighbours
12	(a) Cows (b) Child	Neighbour of child's father	Victim's father	Same village	Bewitched cows killed child	Death of child. Accused 'treated' of his witchcraft	?	Accused driven out	Village neighbours
13	Two men	Neighbour (a man, Kimbile)	Victims	Same village	'He had destroyed their property' by witchcraft	?	?	?	Village neighbours
14	?	Christian elder	Pagan fellow villagers	Same village	?	'Proud'. 'Does not look at people when he greets them.' Built a very big house in a pagan village	?	?	Village neighbours
15	X Labourer on the Lugu gold-fields	Fellow labourer (a Christian) Willem	Victim	Same camp	Had injured X's eye by witchcraft	X had eye trouble. Willem was seen in a dream by a third labourer. Willem had recently found gold	Meeting of all the workers	Willem driven away from the camp	Fellow employees

[p. 200]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

(a) *Witchcraft—contd.*

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accuser and accused
16	Young man, labourer in Lupa gold-fields	Fellow labourers		Same camp	'They stamped on his belly' (a kind of witchcraft)	Alleged that he ate their rations by means of witchcraft. Illness while at work and finally death after returning home	Divination (twice)		Fellow employees
17	Clerk A	Fellows in work camp, especially fellow clerk B	His friends	Same camp	A made B by *mashilo* (a form of witchcraft)	A had replaced B as interpreter and B was jealous. A was greedy when eating with his fellows. Illness began when he choked over a piece of food. He was eating with his fellows	None		Fellow employees
18	Labourer on Lupa gold-fields	Fellow labourers	European employer (etc)	Same camp	Fellow workers had 'eaten' him	Sudden death of labourer. He was lucky in finding gold and his employer's favourite	None	Fellows agreed that one of them had 'eaten' the victim but culprit not found	Fellow employees
19	Labourer on Lupa gold-fields	Fellow labourers	?	Same camp	Fellow workers bewitched him	Died morning after he had received 100s. in prize-money from his employer (cf. pp. 289–90).	?	?	Fellow employees

[P. 201]

764
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787
518

754
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787
578

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(e) *Witchcraft—contd.*

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accuser and accused
90	Headboy of European employer on Lupa gold-fields	Fellow employees. Individual not named but cook hinted at	Victim	Same camp	'People' had bewitched him	Acute illness of victim after sleeping with concubine of his European employer. This woman was given in charge of the cook when the European visited other Europeans, but she and the headboy were lovers. Victim and cook hated one another on account of this woman. Victim hated by his fellow employees because he was headboy and looked after everything during his employer's absence	A doctor gave victim medicine which would enable him to see the witches in dreams. He saw two men who hated him, and employer's concubine carrying a knife	Slow recovery of victim. He told the dream to his lover	Fellow employees
91	Nyakyusa employer of 31 men on Lupa gold-fields	Employees	Victim	Same camp	Employees had 'spoiled him' (with witchcraft)	Acute stomach pain. Weakness. 'He had been angry with his men.'	Divination	Victim recovered	Employer/employee
92	Village headman working as a labourer on Lupa gold-fields	Fellow labourers	?	Same camp	Fellow labourers killed him by witchcraft because he darkened their eyes so that they should not find gold. He himself was a witch.	Sudden death of headman a week after he began work. Gold was scarce and he alone had found some, earning 10s. prize money	?		Fellow employees

[p. 202]

(e) *Witchcraft—contd.*

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accuser and accused
22	Husband	2 wives (not favourites)	Victim	Same homestead	Wives summoned the witches to 'eat' him. Opened the door for them. One herself was a witch	Illness of husband. Wives jealous of chief wife who was the favourite	Divination	Treatment with medicine. Divorce impossible because one aspect a sister of the favourite wife	Spouses
24	Husband	Wife	?	Same homestead	Caused illness in husband	'He hated her and he fell ill.'	Divination		Spouses
25	Husband	Wife	?	Same homestead	'Eaten' husband	Death of husband	?		Spouses
26	Co-wives	Wife (Kajonga)	Husband (first)	Same homestead	'Bewitched loins of co-wives'	Husband did not sleep well with other wives	?	Divorced for witchcraft	Spouses
27	?	Wife (Kajonga)	Husband (second)	Same homestead	?	?	?	Divorced for witchcraft	Spouses
28	Husband's cows	Wife	Husband	Same homestead	Bewitched husband's cows	Cows gave little milk when wife at home, much when wife away	*Afusofi* ordeal. Wife vomited	Husband paid a cow and a bull into in-laws	Spouses
29	Adulterer	Husband of woman seduced				Adulterer began to squint after he had run off with the woman			Husband/wife's lover

754
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787
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[P. 203]

I:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754
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MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

(a) *Witchcraft—contd.*

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accuser and accused
30	Adulterer	Husband of woman seduced (no. 29)				Adulterer was very ill with a poisoned hand. Husband of his lover had been previously accused	Divination		Husband/wife's lover
31	Senior half-brother (different mother)	Junior half-brother	Victim	?			*Mwafi* ordeal. Junior brother vomited	Junior brother judged innocent	Half-brothers
32	Father (pater and genitor)	Middle son (Mwalyale)	Brothers (half?)	?	Killed father	Death of father	*Mwafi* ordeal	Accused driven out of chiefdom. He became rich and brothers later made friends with him. They said '*Mwafi* had been mistaken'	Brothers (half?)
33	Child	Father of child an assistant headman	Village headman	Same homestead	Made child ill	Child ill. Father did not report illness to village headman	?	Accused driven out of village	Village headman/assistant headman
34	Chief's child	Village headman (Mwamila)	People of the chiefdom	Same chiefdom	Caused child to have sore eyes	Mwamila had gone to the chief *alone* and said 'witches are eating the child'. He would have gone with other village headman, had he been innocent	*Mwafi* ordeal	Chief took Mwamila's 4 cows. He was driven out for one year	People of chiefdom and village headman

[P. 204]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P.205]

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

(a) Witchcraft—contd.

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accuser and accused
35	Chief	'People of the north'	?	Same chiefdom?		Chief sick	?	Said that chief and his fellows fought and defeated the attackers in dreams	Chief/People?
36	Chief?	Rich man owning 30 head of cattle (Mwatusa)	Chief	Same chiefdom		Chief 'did not sleep'	*Mwafi* ordeal. Mwatusa did not vomit	Chief seized all Mwatusa's cattle. Neighbours seized his crops. He moved with his wives to another country	Chief/rich commoner
37	Anthropologist	A man who had been refused 1s. when he asked for it as a present	Servants and friends of victim. (Nyakyusa)	Same neighbourhood	Caused attack of malaria (by witchcraft)	Attack of malaria day following refusal of present. Accused did not come to inquire for victim as others did.	None	None	European/African
38	Anthropologist	'The witches' individual not specified	Servants and friends of victim. (Nyakyusa)	Same village	Prevented normal recovery from malaria	Prolonged attacks of malaria, not cured by ordinary treatment. 'It was not just malaria—see you drank much medicine for malaria, but still did not recover.'	None	Formal welcome by wife of chief who lived in village on anthropologist's return, and *apology* for the illness	European/African

754
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1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

553
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(b) '*The Breath of Men.*'

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of Sufferer	Symptoms	Alleged sin	Diagnosis	Ritual performed
1	Village headman (Mwambuputa)	(a) 2 children died (b) Further deaths among his children after he moved	Grudged neighbours certain food Failed to perform death ritual of children before leaving		Fled to Lake-shore plain (Mu Ngonde) Returned home. Killed bull. Admitted fault in not performing ritual
2	Widow	Widow ailing	Ritual not performed for her at inheritance	Illness due to 'the breath of men'. Diagnosis by divination	Heir killed beast. Feasted neighbours and relatives. Told of illness..People admitted their anger.[1] Said the illness was finished. She continued ill.
3	Widow	Widow ill	Heir of chief's family had not killed bull or cow at inheritance ritual	Illness due to 'the breath of men'. Diagnosis by divination	Heir called neighbours and relatives. Killed. Neighbours admitted their anger
4	Enesi	Enesi ill	Father failed to send a gift of food and beer, when she was taken back to her husband, and she is the daughter of a chief's sister	'The breath' comes from her husband's friends. 'They are angry because of the quarrel over food'	None mentioned. The girl died shortly afterwards and her death was attributed to sorcery
5	Chief	T.B.?	Refused to hold 'coming out' of sons	'The country was angry'	Killed 3 cows for people to feast
6	Married woman	Bore no more children	Ran off with lover three times. Finally husband forced lover to eat filth	His father's village 'shocked' because she had 'soiled a man so much'. 'Breath' of village effective because she visits there frequently to see a grandparent. This the diagnosis of the doctor to whom she went for medicines that she might bear children	None mentioned
7	Man (a doctor)	Begotten no child for 10 years	Did not come to bury elder brother with whom he had quarrelled	'The men (of his elder brother's village) were angry. Illness due to the curse (*ikigune*) of men'	Killed a cow in elder brother's village but did not tell the men of the village about it properly (i.e. admit his fault)
8	Man (A)	Man ill for 2 years (with syphilis), eye came out of socket	Incest—man lover of father's sister	All men were astonished and cursed A	A killed 4 cows at father's place. Relatives and neighbours ate after swearing at him, A recovered quickly. (He had also been treated in a mission hospital.)

[1] *Ukwijaja* = to complain. The implication is that they expressed, and so got rid of, their anger (cf. pp. 99–101).

[p.206]

753
783
626
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787

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(b) '*The Breath of Men.*'—*contd.*

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of Sufferer	Symptoms	Alleged sin	Diagnosis	Ritual performed
9	Senior Village Headman	Paralysed	He encouraged chief to expel junior headman from country when latter refused to hoe road	'Illness of senior headman due to the breath of his junior colleague. He was cursed because he was reputed to be the favourite of the chief.' Diagnosis by divination	Bull and beer provided by junior headman. Ate and drank with senior headman and made friends
10	Woman	Unable to walk	Told by villagers (*amafumu*) to choose heir of her brother. Refused to do so, asking them to choose	'They (villagers) cursed her'	Nothing yet done. Thought that villagers will deny responsibility, saying: 'It is not our illness' if offered a cow
11	Woman	Her baby ill	Insulted husband's mother	Illness diagnosed as '*ingoto*,' a disease due to 'the breath of men'. No divination; 'knew themselves'.	Woman and child given medicines by a doctor. Woman's father brought a cow for the mother-in-law she insulted.
12	Headman of young men	Ill a long time and still ill	He and his young men built in the village of their fathers before fathers had moved	Illness due to 'the breath of men' (the fathers) because he seized another's office as headman by building in his village. Diagnosis by divination	Nil. Should have asked old men to bless him
13	Heir (son)	Ill a year. Died the next year	Did not drink father's funeral beer in father's village. 'Others ate the food'	Village angry. Their breath fell on him when he came to fetch away property. Diagnosis by divination	After a year's illness, killed a bull. Ate with friends and relatives in father's village
14	Man	Died	Killed large bull for his children (sacrifice to ancestors) and gave only one leg to neighbours	'Perhaps (he died) because he grudged his fellow villagers meat. Neighbours are shocked if a man kills and does not call them to feast'	
15	Woman	Her child ill	Swore at her husband	Illness diagnosed as *ngoto* (an illness due to 'the breath of men'). Diagnosis by divination	Admission of sin. Woman's father gave her millet to brew beer. Her husband called his fellows to drink and admit their anger and speak about the child's recovery (cf. p. 236)
16	Younger brother of chief	Died	Claimed to be a chief	People said 'breath of men'. Family said witchcraft. Diagnosis by divination	

[P. 207]

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

753
783
926
973

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of Sufferer	Symptoms	Alleged sin	Diagnosis	Ritual performed
17	Village headman	Hurt his hand on a stone directly he reached the Lupa to work	Had left for work without the agreement of his people	'Country was angry because he was a headman' (and had gone to work)	None. Died shortly afterwards. Death attributed to witchcraft of fellow workers (*cf.* case of witchcraft No. 22)
18	Young chief Mwankuga heir of his deceased senior brother and so heir to chieftainship	Did not beget a son by his inherited wives	Not specified	Village headmen angry so medicine chief has taken not effective. The headmen showed their anger by not taking chief to doctor as they should have done. He went alone	None when case recorded
19	Kasitile, hereditary priest (of chief's lineage)	Kasitile ill	Did not cook for his village neighbours. 'They complained because I, a great chief, did not cook food for them'	Fell ill night after attending a beer drink at a neighbour's house	Feasted neighbours. Treated by a doctor
20	Kasitile	Kasitile had worms	Provided 1 pot of beer for fellow priests when he should have provided 4 pots or a calf	Sickness due to wrath of men. Diagnosis of a doctor	
21	Kasitile	Kasitile ill	Cut down a sacred tree which he should not have cut	'The whole country is angry'. 'Priests and village headmen are angry'	Feasted other priests on meat and beer
22	Village headman, Nsuna	His cow drowned	Ordered to pay a fine for slander or move, and refused. Complained to the District Officer	'All the village headmen are angry'	Nsuna moved. Later brought home (*cf.* pp. 262–6)
23	Man (junior brother of chief)	Died	He had cut one branch for an axe-handle from a self-sown tree growing in the cultivated land of a village in which he was a new-comer. He had not asked the villagers' permission to cut wood as he should have done.	'The "owners" of the village were angry and killed him'	None recorded

[p. 208]

785
189
673

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of Sufferer	Misfortune	Alleged sin	Category of individual or group believed to have called down a curse
1	Ex-schoolboy	Cannot get a job	Disobeyed his Nyakyusa teacher	Teacher
2	Ex schoolboy	Dismissed from government job. Reason unknown. Unemployed	Sent to boarding school with mission money, then refused to work for mission. Later married 12 wives. He also stole	The congregation
3	Teacher, son of elder	Eaten by a crocodile (seven years after sinning)	Committed adultery with daughter of chief. Spoke against the church	The congregation
4	Son of elder	Died of venereal disease	Committed adultery	The congregation
5	Pagan man	Died	Refused food to travelling Christian elder	The elder
6	Mohammedan man	Cut his leg with his hoe	Hoed on Sunday	Two Christian men
7	Ex-schoolboy	Always lost his job though clever and good English-speaker. Now a fisherman and 'talks English to the fish'	Not known	European missionary
8	Ex-boarding schoolboy	Cannot get a job. 'Just hoeing like uneducated people'	Eloped with a girl betrothed to a fellow Christian	European missionary
9	Christian woman	Paralysed for sixteen years	Took an unfair share of meat at feasts	Christian neighbours
10	Man-servant of missionary	Married several times. Each time wife died	Dressed in missionary's clothes and sat at table pretending to write with his pen	European missionary
11	Rich man	Property disappeared	Caught with a woman and denied having committed adultery	European missionary (said to have uttered a *conditional curse: 'If you are lying all your* property will disappear')
12	Woman	Became a wanderer	Stole things from loft of mother-in-law's hut. Disobeyed husband and complained of him to neighbours. Asked for divorce	European missionary
13	Young man, newly married	Did not beget a child	Did not make a wedding feast for his neighbours in Christian village	Christian neighbours (complaining they had eaten no meat). Young man's pagan 'mothers' inquired of diviner and this was the diagnosis

[p.209]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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Nyakyusa

754
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(d) *Sorcery* (Ubutagi)

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—*contd.*

No.	Category of victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accuser	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case
1	Chief	'People'	Chief and one of his village headmen	Other chiefdoms	Made chief II	Envy of chief having a court. Illness of chief.		
2	Conquered chief	Conquering chief (pre-European)		Different village but same country (after the conquest)	Conquered had killed conqueror by sorcery	Mwamkulu had taken Mwamba's country. Death of conqueror		
3	Christian who became very popular by healing men. People said he would 'kill' the position of the accused because of his popularity	Senior village headman X		Same village	X sought medicine to work sorcery against the Christian	X envied popularity of new-comer. He was overheard by neighbours saying he would work sorcery. Serious illness of Christian followed		
4	Child of P.	Classificatory brother of P.	P., father of victim	Different chiefdoms		Quarrel over inheritance of cattle. P's brother claimed cows from him. Case went to court of defendant's chief. Decided in his favour		
5	Man (Mwanyika) and his wife	Not specified	Son of deceased (Mwambwa)			Death of Mwanyika and his wife	Autopsy on Mwanyika. Found a powder, thought to be abortive medicine, in his stomach. No autopsy on wife but 'know that she died from the same disease'	Family drank pre-mortem medicine
6	2 wives of X. Sister of X. 1 married daughter and another child. Husband of married daughter					All died within a short time of one another. Sorcery spread through autopsies	Autopsies	Family drank medicine provided by a doctor and the illness ceased

[P. 210]

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngoodo FN17
Nyakyusa

754
789
518
763

No.	Category of victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Special relationship of victim and accuser	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case
7	Daughter of A. Son and daughter of A's full brother B	A accused X, his parallel cousin (child of A's father's brother). X accused A	A, father and brother of victims		Use of sorcery against one another	Junior brother's son wanted inheritance divided. Elder brother's son (A) did not. This was followed by illness of victims	Suggested by doctor that trouble due to sorcery or to anger of ancestors over family quarrel	Open discussion of quarrel (adultery). Drank medicine against sorcery. After prayer in ancestors
8	Child of neighbour B	Man X	Neighbour B	Same village	Sent his leopard to kill the child	Child killed by leopard on day after X had quarrelled with accuser B, saying B's cattle were eating his crops	X asked for ordeal. This refused	X driven out of country by chief. Later restored
9	Foreman and clerk A, very lucky in striking gold and favourite of his employer	Fellow clerk B.		Same camp	B accused of killing A by sorcery	A died suddenly at his house. B was very jealous of A's wealth, and had spoken in secret of his desire to kill A by sorcery, saying 'they be die at his house'		
10	Wife of village headman					Death	Autopsy. Symptoms of sorcery found	
11	Man who had run off with another's wife	Injured husband	Victim	Victim on Lupa. Injured husband in Iringa (200 miles distant)	Husband blowing medicines at the seducer of his wife (i.e. working sorcery—ubunogo). The husband's friends might have classed this as vengeance magic)	Continued illness of victim	Divination by a doctor	Victim treated with medicines. Moved to another house. He finally recovered. He best fell ill

[p. 211]

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

254
784
627
578

(c) *Vengeance Magic* (Ubupumbe—*the Horn*)

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—*contd.*

No.	Category of Victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Special relationship of victim and accuser	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case
1	2 brothers Mr and Mr	A doctor (Mukikuje)			Accused used the horn. Did not tell Mr that he was doing so	Accused said Mr had stolen his collar. Mr and Mr both died	Autopsy revealed death due to 'the horn'	Chief down accused out of country for not bringing rain to court but managing himself. The doctor had used the horn to his own ends
2	1. Relative of accuser. 2. Child of accuser's elder brother	Husband of woman accused (Mwakikuke)	Relative of deceased accuser		Accused used the horn. Relatives of victims spoke of death as due to sorcery (Ubusuge)	Victim 1 had sleeped with accused's wife. Accused boasted that he had revenged himself. Both victims 1 and 2 died suddenly		Woman returned to husband but others of the family should die
3	Child of A and children of other wives of A's husband	Co-wife B.	A, mother of victim	Same household	B used the horn	A had stolen B's harmer and not admitted it when case was taken first to headman and then to chief. B was dissatisfied. The death of child A and children of other wives followed		A paid B for theft. A and other wives went to witch-doctors and death ceased. They recovered
4	Man C, and woman X, with whom he had sleeped	Man A who inherited the woman X	Man B, brother of deceased C	Different child-lineage	A used the horn	C ran off with X, widow of A's elder brother whom A had inherited. C and X both died. A boasted 'I killed them with the horn'		B squared A and had of a distant child-lineage (Sukuma Kwangwa name)

[p. 212]

No.	Category of victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Special relationship of victim and accuser	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case
5	2 of A's children	B, son-in-law of A	A, father of victims		B used the horn	A's daughter left B. A returned only 2 head of cattle to B. Owed him 10 to 12 cattle. Told him to collect balance from his daughter's second husband. B summoned A to cross before horn doctor. A refused. Told B to sue in court. Within 2 years children of A died		A spared B. He was convicted in District Officer's court of manslaughter
6	Gwanjilile, his wife, and his full sister's husband	Hupa (Ihupa)	Family of deceased doctor, Gwanjilile		Hupa kindled the horn	Gwanjilile had a cow belonging to Hupa. The relationship not known. The three victims died		Family paid a cow to Hupa
7	C	Doctor	C			A ran off with B's wife. B followed her and found her in C's house. B claimed damages from A, but A objected saying: "No, she was found with C". The court gave judgement against A, and he paid damages to B. Then subsequently the court gave judgement for A in his case against C, ordering him to return to A the cows A had paid to B. C delayed, so A went to a doctor and got him to make medicine against C. C handed over the cows to A immediately and paid doctor fee to counteract his medicine.	Case brought before D.O.	Doctor discharged. Doubt whether or not doctor should be expelled from the chiefdom in which he lived. Opinion of the Nyakyusa divided on this point

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[p. 213]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

9. METHODS OF WITCHCRAFT

Mwaikambo (clerk).

754 'We people think that the witches have pythons (*isota*) in their stomachs. It is these which have power to change so that they fly. We say a man cannot work witchcraft without a python, but only when he has one. The python can come out of the stomach and enter again. When the python has gone to throttle someone only the witch's body remains. It is said that this body has no strength, and cannot get up; sometimes it can speak a little, sometimes it cannot speak. It is referred to as "a hide".

'When the pythons have come to the place where they are going to eat people, they are said to take out the teeth of others which they use to eat with. They do not eat with their own teeth. When they have "eaten" someone they return the teeth. It is said that if a person wakens before they return his teeth, and cries out that his teeth have gone, then his teeth will disappear all together. He will only have gums in his mouth. The witches do not carry spears with which to bewitch. I, and others also, are surprised at this, for when an autopsy is performed I have never heard it said that tooth-marks have been found, [763] but always that spear wounds have been found. And some, when they wake up in the morning, have said: "My teeth are loose." Then others tell them: "The witches ate with your teeth in the night."

'Witches fight a very fierce war in their supernatural strength (*kumanga gwabo*). It is said that they fight with spears. Those of one village do not fight, but the village of one chief (*sic*) fights against the village of another chief. When the witches of one chief try to kill another chief the latter's men fight them and save their chief. Hence it sometimes happens that the chief kills cattle for his people to thank them for having fought for him.

'Sometimes witchcraft is directed at food or a brewing of beer, causing it to rot. When the witches have spoiled the beer it is not nice. The witches spoil other things like this by means of their witchcraft with pythons.

'When the witches go to "eat" a person, two or four may go together or one may go alone. When they go they travel with the strength of the python; they leave a "skin", or body only. When they come to the person they throw away their teeth; they take the teeth of him whom they are going to eat, and eat with them. And one whose teeth have been returned knows in the morning that the witches used his teeth. We are warned that if ever we find no teeth in our mouths we must not

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

cry out, because then the teeth will disappear altogether, but to be silent, then they will reappear. 754

'And another activity of the witches is to take sickness from one country and cast it on some home they choose. So when people die they say this sickness was brought by the witches to so and so.'

Mwandesi (*a very old man famous as a historian*).

'The witches are always naked when they go to choke a person in dreams. A witch leaves his skin (*ungubo*) on his sleeping-mat and goes naked. When his neighbours, "the defenders" (*abamanga*), see him they may snatch his skin; then when he returns he trembles and sits down naked, ugly-looking. He looks as if he had a curse on him. But after a little while he gets another skin.'

Mwainumo (*clerk*).

'The man of whom we have spoken twice (*vide* pp. 124, 252) is sometimes said to be a witch, he throttles the cattle of the village and men say that he throttles them also. But he is especially notorious for throttling the cattle of the village so that their milk disappears. Once they caught him for witchcraft, saying: "You are throttling us" and they drove him away. He moved to another village but in the same chiefdom, and there also men continually said: "We do not sleep on account of our fellow! If he brings witchcraft to us here he will die, we shall hit him with fists" (meaning that "the defenders" will hit him with fists) when he goes out to throttle his victims. If their cows dry up they say: "We shall hit his python, he will die." For it is said that if a person has a python which throttles the milk, men strike the python and he dies. The python means the witchcraft of throttling cattle or food. Saying "We shall strike his python and he will die" means that we shall strike him when he is throttling our cows and he will die.'

Ntulasongwa (*pagan man*).

'When the chief is good the cows are many and there is much milk. 754
And when the village headman is good, when he forbids witches to come into his village, milk is plentiful. When we say a chief is good 643
(*nsumu*) it means that he never goes to throttle cows, or if we say that 622
the village headman is good it means that he does not go throttling. Formerly chiefs and village headmen were good. If they were great witches, no one came to them. I come from Penja country over there.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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Mwalukasa was good. We knew he was good because people came to him and cattle increased and people loved him. Some who are quarrelsome lose all their men and are left alone. . . . A village headman or chief *gwa ifugo* is one who always preaches to his fellows that "food should be plentiful among us here, friends; none should bewitch others." "A man of plenty" (*ugwa ifugo*) is a village headman or chief who is angry at witchcraft in his village, and forbids it, who allows no one there who is "clever". The cunning of a witch, of one who has the bowel of witchcraft, is to go around throttling cows and eating people. When they go to throttle they go on high, they fly, they go like the wind. If they went on earth they would be killed by "the defenders". It is said that they eat the meat (flesh) of people, truly they eat it. When they go to "eat" a man, they spear him; they take his meat and eat it. A man does not recover when they have taken his meat; he dies. Those whom they have only speared and whose flesh they have not taken, recover. They roast this human meat and then they eat it; in this their cleverness lies. When they go to "eat" a man and have speared him and taken some of his flesh, they do not roast it at his place, they go to their homes, and there they roast it.'

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

10. A MYTH OF WITCHCRAFT

Mwaisumo (clerk).

'This story is often told us by our mothers: A woman once went to bewitch (*ukupita*) leaving her child in her bed. While she was away the child began to cry. So the father woke up and came to see what the trouble was, and he found the mother was not there. When she appeared again he asked her where she had been and she replied: "I was here. I did not go anywhere." This happened several times. One night the father took the crying child to his own bed and made it sleep, but he himself sat awake watching. Then the woman came in and lit her fire and began to cook the human flesh, and he caught her and asked: "Where have you found this meat?" Then she admitted that she'd been to bewitch people and that that was where she had got her meat from. And he said: "You are a witch. You always leave my child crying to go to bewitch people." So he divorced her and sent her home. But people usually say that when a witch goes to throttle people he leaves his skin. The skin stays in the bed, but doesn't feel anything.' 754

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

11. WITCHCRAFT AND LUST FOR MEAT AND MILK

Mwaisumo (*clerk*).

754 'Some "defenders" (*abamanga*), when they smell something delicious
789 in the house of a relative or a close friend, say: "The meat (if it's meat)
smells nice, give me a little to eat, I am a witch, the pythons will rouse
up and carry me off to throttle someone." This can only be said (and
264 it is said quite seriously) in the house of a relative or great friend
because in no other house can a man ask for meat. Shame prevents
him. People think a man who asks for food is a fool.

'Some people, when they have eaten a little and finished, say: "Give me a little more, if we witches are grudged food the pythons rouse up!" It is said that throttling is in order to eat delicious food (*ukupita ko kulya ifinafu*). The witches say human flesh is delicious, and the milk of cows is also delicious.

Some people will eat cooked food which has been left over-night; others refuse it, and when asked why, say: "It is forbidden for us witches to eat cooked food which has stood over-night." I have heard this said often. "The defenders" say it spoils their pythons. Chiefs do not eat kept food either; it is said to spoil their *ifingela* medicine. People say that it is bad for chiefs or witches or "defenders" to eat left-over food because it has been touched by the ancestors at night. This is often said by "defenders" as well as others.'

[p. 218]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

12. INHERITANCE OF WITCHCRAFT

Bwilile (elderly pagan man).

Question: 'How does a mother give her child witchcraft? How does a father give a child witchcraft?' 754

'It starts when a woman is menstruating; then she begins to give a child her cunning (*ubugalagala*). It is said that when a woman is menstruating she should avoid certain things (*ukutila*), particularly she should not pass behind people. For when a woman is menstruating a child has begun in her belly. People know that a certain woman is cunning when they see that she does not avoid people at certain times. Then they say: "Friends, this woman is spoiling the child. Why does she not observe the avoidances? Look, we have seen that she is fruitful (meaning that she is menstruating)." For it is that dirt which creates witchcraft. When a woman does not avoid, then she gives the child in her belly witchcraft. It is from this that witchcraft really comes. When a woman is not cunning, then she always observes the avoidance taboos; she does not go about anyhow. From of old it has been thought important that a menstruating woman should observe certain avoidances. A woman avoids certain things because she fears to spoil the child in her belly. When a woman does not avoid these things, the dirt, that is to say the menstrual blood, goes to where the child is. That is how she spoils the child. On this account women fear to go about anyhow, to pass behind people; they fear those medicines with which we men smear our bodies, all those for good fortune and others. Especially they fear a fierce medicine, that of fire. For there is a medicine with which some people smear themselves which causes a person to faint if the user strikes him once with the flat of his hand. It is this medicine which spoils the child in the belly of a menstruating woman if she passes behind a man. This is the lineage of witchcraft. It comes especially from this, from that dirty little thing (i.e. woman) who does not observe the avoidance rules. Hence, we say she has given her child witchcraft. 841

'A father gives his child witchcraft because the man's blood goes into the woman, for a woman is a pocket.' [842]

Ntulanongwa confirmed the above statement of the origin of witchcraft, and explained:

'A woman does not menstruate when she is pregnant, but some menstrual blood remains in her, which may "spoil" her. We all think that when a woman is menstruating some of the blood remains in her

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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belly, and it is this which spoils the child when a woman does not avoid certain things. There is no other way in which a woman gives her child witchcraft.'

Mwaikambo (*clerk*).

Some people have witchcraft implanted in them (*ukupanda*) by their parents. Some children are witches; they are born with it in their stomachs. When a child is small, even a tiny baby, the witches may take it with them to bewitch (*kumanga*) in order that it also may learn the business of witchcraft. Hence sometimes it is said that a mother, or perhaps a father, shielded himself behind her (his) child, meaning that he fought with other witches and when they were going to spear him he put his child in front of him. When such a child grows up he will be skilled in witchcraft.'

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

13. ACQUIRING WITCHCRAFT FROM FRIENDS

Bwilile (*elderly pagan man*).

'We have heard it said that sometimes, when a woman plays with a friend's child who is growing up a little, she may give it something in food, or offer it something to taste, which causes the child who has eaten it to become a witch. Hence people say: "A stranger gave him (or her) witchcraft; there is none in our family (*ikikolo*)." 754 868

'Some make children climb up the walls or hut pole when they wish to give them witchcraft, hence when a child slides down it is said, "He (or she) is pure; he has no trace of witchcraft in his stomach." If he has any in his stomach, then he clings to the walls or pole, and it is said, "He is giving him mystical power (*amanga*)", meaning the witch is giving him the cunning of witchcraft that he also may be "clever". If there is a girl at home who is cunning, her friends shun her. They admonish her, saying: "Don't do those things. It's forbidden at a husband's place. You will always be driven out." She gives her friends things saying: "You eat that, and you that." And boys do likewise. We knew the custom of old. When boys are out herding cattle one friend tells another to dig up a certain plant, saying it will give him cunning. Hence it is said that a cunning boy wants to make his friends cunning also. When girls are secluded at puberty they always play with younger girls, and if one makes another climb the hut pole or wall the mothers are very angry, saying: "No! That's forbidden. Don't do (bad) things to others. It seems as if you were cunning."'

Commenting on this text, Mwaisumo said: 'The witches learn to enter a house by climbing up the wall, instead of going through the door, so that people don't see them come in. If a child has *no* witchcraft in its stomach at all, no one can give it witchcraft, but if the blood of the mother is dirty with witchcraft it becomes a witch.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

14. CONSCIOUSNESS OF WITCHCRAFT

Mwaikambo (clerk).

754 'Witches act consciously. That is to say a person caught for witchcraft is not startled at being a witch. And in their business of going to bewitch (*kumanga*) when they "eat" people, they go willingly; nothing compels them. We hear that sometimes when witches go to "eat" people some of them are satisfied. The milk is plentiful for though some of the witches say: "Let us drink it", others disagree. When they have agreed between themselves they leave a person alone.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

15. THE ASSOCIATIONS OF *UKULOGA* AND *UKUPITA*

Mwainumo (clerk).

'*Ukuloga* is like *ukupita* but not the same. It is said that when someone is angry with you and has drunk a medicine to give him power to bewitch (*ewaka ga kuloga*), he greets you and the word alone has power to bring illness. You will be very ill. 789 754

'It is said that when a woman is pregnant and walks round a person who has many medicines, one of them being a medicine *ukuloga*, she will have a miscarriage. There is no case (against the owner of the medicines). [845]

'It is said that when the owner of pythons, or the owner of medicines, passes when food has been spread out to dry, the food will disappear. He bewitches it (*ukuloga*). It is as if he hankered after the food in his heart; it disappears and becomes less. When a python man ("he of pythons")—they speak much of python men, little of medicine men—passes cattle and hankers after milk, he bewitches the milk (*ukuloga*). It disappears. He does not throttle (*ukupita*) the cattle; no, the milk just disappears.

'It is forbidden to say of a child that it is beautiful. It is all right to a close friend but not among ordinary people. To do so is to bewitch (*ukuloga*) the child. The child will fall ill. It is forbidden to say of a cow that its udder is big. If the owner hears he says: "You are bewitching it" (*ukuloga*), meaning the milk will disappear. Everyone fears to admire children or cows in this way; if such a sign is followed by sickness or failure of milk people swear at the man who has expressed admiration, but do not bring a case.

'The work of pythons is especially to steal away the milk, to throttle (*ukupita*). It is reported that some say: "I am a witch, but I have not got a python. I do not throttle the cows." They might mean they "eat" people but do not steal milk.'

Kalugu (pagan man).

'*Ukupita* is to throttle (with hands round the throat).' 789

In reply to a question as to the further meanings of the word *ukupita*, Kalugu said: 'When my relatives are there I say: "Have you *kupita* with my wife?" But when we are alone I say: "Did you sleep with my wife?" or "Did you have intercourse with her (*gwalagwa* 754 196

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 *nagwe*)?" We only liken intercourse and witchcraft; witchcraft is quite
754 different. When a woman is an adulteress I say: "You are a witch
196 (*undosi*); you kill me," but it is just a metaphor (*fyo fifwasi*). Adultery involves paying for cattle for all of us; it differs from witchcraft. And when I ask a man: "Why, why did you *kupita* with my wife?" that means: "You are like a witch." It is just a metaphor. But (he volunteered), if I catch an adulterer with my wife, even if he has practised *coitus interruptus*, I am angry and kill him from jealousy, though I do not suffer from diarrhoea.'

837 An adulteress is spoken of as an *undosi* 'because she brings illness
753 upon her husband' by her adultery, if intercourse is complete, but not, it is thought, if *coitus interruptus* is practised. The illness commonly thought to be caused by a wife's adultery is diarrhoea.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

16. THINGS ASSOCIATED WITH WITCHCRAFT

Mwaisumo (clerk).

1. 'Bestiality. This is associated with witchcraft (*tya bu lusi*) because, it is said, witches eat the flesh of human beings which an ordinary person does not eat—ordinary people all avoid human flesh. One who has intercourse with an animal, a thing which an ordinary person does not do but avoids, is like one who eats human flesh.' 754 839

2. 'Intercourse with a very young girl. This is associated with witchcraft because no one desires it, only this person' (*i.e.* such a desire is abnormal).

3. 'Intercourse with a very old woman. This is associated with witchcraft because no one desires old women.'

4. 'Intercourse between a grown man and a boy. This is associated with witchcraft because grown men always desire women.' 754 838

In reply to a question: 'No, it never happens that two grown men lie together, but youths do. That is not associated with witchcraft; that is adolescence.'

5. 'If a woman takes something very dirty (such as excrement) and puts it on her husband's bed, or in his food, because she hates him, that is associated with witchcraft because it is very, very dirty. No one (normal) does such a thing.' 754

In reply to a question: 'No, if children play with excrement, that is not associated with witchcraft.'

6. 'In Selya we do not eat the meat of a leopard though in Kukwe country they do. If a Selya man tastes it people say: "How can he eat leopard meat which no one eats? It's like witchcraft." Leopard meat is forbidden because leopards kill and eat people. 754 262

'So with the meat of a dog or rat or monkey. A dog is not eaten because it's our friend—a person—and a monkey is a person.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

17. DREAMS AS EVIDENCE OF WITCHCRAFT

Muniwmo (clerk).

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'Suppose I dream we are fighting, and that you knock me down, or that you come to beat me, then I will say to my friends that you bewitched me last night. Men talk with their friends and tell their dreams. If several people dream like this of one man, they say: "Why should we dream of him? He must be a witch (*ambosi*)." More than one person must dream of the same man before they will say this. If I dream of you, my friend, like this I will not tell you in the morning that I dreamed so, or else you will say to me: "Why do you accuse me of witchcraft?" and you will take it first to the headman, and then to the chief, and make a case. We Christians do not believe this; we say: "It is just a dream" and we tell it to each other, but the pagans tell it to their friends, and if two or more dream of the same man they say: "He is a witch."

'There are a number of dreams—dreams of fighting, of being chased, being beaten, of the house burning, of one coming to the door and weeping for me as if I were dead—which are signs (*ifimanyile*) of witchcraft. There are other signs, too. An owl (*ingwita*) may come at night and cry on my roof. I go out and chase it away, watching the direction in which it flies; it flies towards your house. Then the next night it comes to another man's house, and he again goes out and chases it and watches its flight, and again it flies towards your house. Then we shall say that you are a witch. Or if you meet a man in the road and stare at him, and that night he falls sick, he will remember and say: "Why did so and so stare at me like that? He is bewitching me."

'A man may dream of a woman, like this, or a woman of a man—of being beaten, etc., and will say it is witchcraft (*abalosi*). But if they dream of each other and desire each other that is not witchcraft. (Here he laughed.) They will seek each other out. He will tell her: "I dreamed of you last night", or she, if she has any love for him, will say: "I dreamed of you." Yes, that is an invitation. It is queer but it often happens that a man and a woman will dream of each other on the same night.

'Women dream of each other, of fetching firewood and fighting.'

[p.226]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Ali (a young man, a Christian).

'The pagans say that if I dream of flying that means that the witches came and tried to eat me. If I do not dream at all, but wake up in a sweat, then they say: "They came to bewitch you by night." They say that the sweat is the water with which the witches wash their hands before eating. Again, if I dream that someone comes and holds me down so that I cannot get up, they say: "The witches came to kill you." They say a man is a defender (*gwe mange*) if he does not merely dream, but sees in his dream who it is that came. So with dreams of fighting, if I recognise that my opponent is so and so, then they say I have mystical power (*amange*), not otherwise. We Christians have all these dreams but say they mean nothing and do not fear them.'

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

18. GROUNDS OF ACCUSATION OF WITCHCRAFT

An elderly Christian man.

754 626 'The pagans are afraid of what they dream, and secondly, if they have quarrelled with a man and they fall sick they at once think he is throttling them.'

'Without dreams of him?'

'Yes.

'Then again, if a man is given milk by his neighbours and yet goes round in other villages, complaining: "They grudge me milk. I don't drink their milk", and his neighbours hear of it, they say to him: "What do you mean by saying we grudge you milk? Scandal-mongering is bad. Indeed, you are a witch." And then, as soon as the cows fall sick, they point to him: "That is the witch who is throttling the cattle." And they drive him out. Yes, without dreams.

'What our parents used to say to us when discussing these things was this: "Pride! If a man is proud and is not sociable with his neighbours; if he boasts, saying: 'I am someone, and others are not people at all,' then we say he is a witch." And if ever the cows fall sick or go dry, then we point to him as the witch who is throttling them and drive him away. This happens without dreams, too.

'And then again, if one man has quarrelled with another and the other falls sick, they may say the one is a witch and drive him out. Perhaps if he was a man of Mwaipopo he goes to live in Mwangomo's country (that of a neighbouring chief). Then one day a man of Mwaipopo's goes to his new village and talks to the people: "I see that you have received so and so here. We drove him out as a witch. He's a great witch, that man." And so when next the cows fall sick or someone dies, they point to him as a witch and drive him away again. Then he goes right up to Mwanguka's (twenty-five miles away) and again someone from Mwaipopo's or Mwangomo's comes up there and repeats the story. A little later the same thing happens and he is driven out again.'

[p. 228]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

19. THINGS WHICH ARE SAID TO ANGER THE WITCHES AND MAKE THEM THROTTLE US

Mwaisumo (clerk):

'Carrying very heavy loads, frequently. They (the witches) wonder (*ukakiba*) at a person and he (or she) falls ill.' 754

'Hoeing a very large field, surpassing others.' 626

'Being more wealthy, as by earning money on the Lupa, like Bingibamo and Kiputa.' 598

'Boasting at work, saying: "I am the senior" like Ramsay and Isiah at Tukuyu.'

'Eating fine food alone. This may be meat, when you have killed a bull or cow, or beer or gifts of food from in-laws, or any other fine food. Mwambuputa was accused of doing this.'

'People are always afraid to carry very heavy things because they think that others will be angry and wonder at it (*ukakiba*). Their astonishment causes illness. Women especially speak of this a great deal when they are fetching firewood. If they carry a very big load others express wonder saying: "It is God who has given you strength surpassing us all." This astonishment brings on serious illness. People fall ill and some even die. Formerly people feared very much to speak to someone who carried a heavy load, saying: "You carry a very heavy load"; they were likely to be fined if they did, because the person to whom they said it would complain, saying: "He wondered at me. He brings down illness on me; he brings the witches by saying I am a strong fellow."

'It is like this also in hoeing; if a man has hoed much he fears lest they (the witches) will kill him; if people say: "He has surpassed us in strength" and are angry, that is what happens—the man falls ill and may die.

'Surpassing others in possessions is said also to anger other people, witches, who kill their fellow because they think that he has a medicine (*ukuta*) which enables him to surpass them in wealth. The medicine for surpassing others is the medicine *of* good fortune (*ukuta gwa kwaba*). There was a case like this concerning the [illegible] of a young man who died quite recently. His name was Bingibamo, the son of Kiputa. This young man was in employment on the Lupa gold-fields . . . and he sent back money to his father to buy cattle. When he had been working for a certain European for a short time

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754
626
578

only he surpassed the other workers as they searched for gold, and found a very big nugget. He saw it first and picked it up immediately. All the others wished to share it; they all went together to their European (employer) to say that their fellow did not find this nugget alone, but that they had all got it. The employer said: "Yes, of course I shall pay you all for sifting, but he found it. He picked it up. I shall give him something separately." So he gave Bingibamo 100s. and to each of the others he gave 6s. The next morning Bingibamo was ill; the following day he died and they buried him. It is said that his fellows "ate" him, they were angry about the nugget he had got. And those who work there (on the Lupa) regularly say that no one who gets a nugget ever escapes; those who get money always die.

"It is said that one who boasts at work saying that he has surpassed his fellows in wisdom and seniority dies like Ramsay, who was a clerk at Tukuyu, and Isiah Mwagomba. They died. Some say privately that the sin (*mongwe*) which killed them was boasting—they boasted very much to their fellows. Some say that there is one man among them (the clerks at Tukuyu) who always kills his fellows if they seem likely to surpass him in seniority (*i.e.* importance). A boastful man (*gwabitafyo*) is always proud (*gwamatingo*), and as for enjoying the company of his fellows he does not keep on good terms with them at all (*atikwangale nabo kamuno*).

"Eating fine food alone is said to kill a man. If you have killed a bull to eat you must give your fellows some, because if you grudge them they will summon the witches to "eat" you. That is to say the people who saw you will tell of it and at night "the defenders" will be angry and summon the witches to "eat" you. Or when your in-laws bring something when they visit you, and you do not call your fellows, but grudge them a share they will "eat" you, as happened in the case of Mwambuputa. It is said that Mwambuputa grudged his fellows certain food, so they were very angry and two of his children died at home. When he found that sickness was spreading at his homestead he fled to the Lake-shore plain (MuNgonde), but there also he found that death pursued him and he returned home again. It is said that sickness pursued him to the plain because he went off without performing the death ritual for the children who died. So when he returned he found two bulls and killed them, saying: "Friends, I have come. I did wrong because I did not gathered the blood for your children while you."

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

20. THREATS OF WITCHCRAFT

Mwaiwemo (clerk).

"It is said that some witches show themselves openly. When he is angry with his fellow a witch may say openly "*Ulipwaki?*" (literally: "What are you?") and his fellow takes ill in the evening, sickness falls on him. Or one who makes love to a woman repeatedly and is refused by her, may say: "Woman, what are you? (*ulipwaki?*) You are very proud, you fancy yourself, thinking that you are more beautiful than all others. Dance and show off—we shall see in what a pleasant fashion." 754

"It is now forbidden, as it was in the past, to swear at (*ukufinga*) a person without cause, saying: "What are you?" If someone speaks before others, and the person sworn at is quarrelsome, the man who swears is fined. The man sworn at will go to law, saying: "My fellow swears at me; I do not know what I have taken of his, he wants to make me ill by swearing at me." Sometimes, also, if he does not wish to be paid, he calls one before the court, or before neighbours to say: "This fellow of mine has sworn at me, if anything happens it is he who is responsible." Meaning that if he falls ill that evening it is this fellow who has caused the illness. And some, when they have recovered, make a case, saying: "It is this fellow", and bring him before the village headman accusing him. If he is found guilty he will pay perhaps a bull. Such tales are told, especially by our mothers, teaching us in childhood that it is forbidden to threaten a friend with witchcraft (*ukwifinga umuino bakwi*).[1] If you swear at your friend and he falls ill that evening then he will say it was you who swore at him. 754 783

"But there are some who wish to be feared and thought witches who constantly threaten people. Such a man says: "What are you? You may sleep or may not (*ukikagwe*), I do not know!" but in great secrecy. Or perhaps sometimes he speaks, saying: "You! Leave me!" He knows that those who are there will tell (his enemy)' 754

Andembile (a young Christian man).

"Some boast of witchcraft, they praise themselves on account of knowledge, or food, or their homestead . . . saying that no one else has built so well; others praise themselves on account of their fields, 754 626

[1] *Ukufinga* means to swear to a statement. In this context it is better translated 'to threaten'.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754
626

and many things of that sort. . . . I once asked an elderly pagan if it were really true that witchcraft existed. The old man replied: "No, it does not exist, and the reason why I say that is this: Once a man hated his fellows and they were angry, and met at his place. (According to the pagan custom when your fellows are angry they gather at your home and they cut leaves; if you do not move you will die, or perhaps something will happen.) When they had met together at his place they said: 'Perhaps you may sleep or may not!' (implying you will not sleep on account of witchcraft.) When they had gone the man threw away all the leaves on which they had been sitting, the leaves which they say bring sickness to a home.[1] He slept, but those who talked about it said: 'He will not escape, for the custom which has been carried out against him is fatal.' He waited and slept again. The next day he was still well. Then I, for my part, understood that witchcraft does not exist, those men boasted, saying: 'Perhaps you may sleep or may not', but nothing happened. They just wished to frighten him. And one day I myself tried to frighten a certain man. His cow had eaten my seed so I went to his house and complained that his cow had got into my food. The next day again the cow ate my seed again. So then I was angry and said to myself, 'I'll frighten this fellow.' When I said: 'Why is your cow in my seed again?' he replied: 'I don't know. Do *I* herd?' So I said: 'My child, perhaps you may sleep or may not when you answer like that!'

"He said: 'Are you a witch then?'

"I said: 'You thought I was just talking. Know that I am talking to you here angry enough to wish to fight with you, so if you are strong in body you will overcome me at night in dreams.' And I went to tell a neighbour that my child perhaps might sleep, or might not, and not to be startled the next day if something happened to that child of mine. That night I blew a calabash trumpet that he should think I was coming and tremble. When he heard it he set off by night, saying:

[1] Mwakisunge commenting on this said: 'When, as boys, we went round in groups eating at one another's houses we were told by our mothers not to cut too many leaves, but just enough for us to use (to sit on). It's forbidden, they said, to strew leaves at a home. It looks as if there were something against the owners of the homestead, you foresaw bad fortune, perhaps sickness or death. So, likewise, if I go to visit a sick friend that does not affect his recovery, but if I shed tears because he is sick some says: "It is forbidden (for) you(?) [illegible], perhaps he will die (because you weep)." And here (in the case mentioned) the leaves were a sign that this man had a case against him. Others wonder, asking: "What has happened, what has happened?" It is said that when people wonder something will happen on account of their astonishment. If they know that there is a friend or a funeral all is well, but if nothing is known then questions are asked, something will happen because people wonder, that is people from other villages, not the neighbours of those who have a case against them.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

"Wives, let us die from our own disease, not this one, pick up the pot and leave it with someone else immediately, we are leaving this home, he is not going to find anyone.' They hid the pot by night, and they moved. A child died after they had arrived at the place to which they moved.

"So I began to understand that witchcraft does not exist but that we die of fear. See, I am not a witch at all, I just tried to frighten that man, but their fear killed them. As for frightening people with witchcraft, we frighten them that they may respect us, or that we may get what we want to eat, they think that if they grudge us they will be threatened by witches."

"The old man who told me (Andambike) this is still alive, living in the country of Kilwa, MuNgonde, in Korosso's chiefdom."

754
676

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

21. CHILDREN LEARNING OF WITCHCRAFT

Mwaikambo (*clerk*).

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'I learned about witchcraft from the accounts related by the elder boys in our boys' village. There we tell about witchcraft; of how the witches fight with people of another village, of their way of travelling to where they commit witchcraft (*kwa kwanaga*), that is flying. We tell how they eat people and that the strength of witchcraft is in pythons. And we speak of some who are dead, who each had a python, or perhaps four, and of village headmen who have protective pythons (*isota ryu baketi*). We relate cases which always appear true, and make us afraid.'

[p. 234]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

22. 'THE BREATH OF MEN'

Mwainumo (*clerk*).

'"The breath of men" is a very serious illness; if a person is ill from "the breath of men" he is in great trouble. Such a person never recovers until they pray (*bikusikemeya*). This illness comes especially when a man enters into his inheritance but does not perform the ritual, perhaps to bury him from whom he inherited—his father, or elder brother, or perhaps his mother's brother. As in the case of the estate of our mother's brother, Mwakaliku. When Mwambilike (informant's elder brother) inherited the woman Kyando, he did not perform the ritual for her. The woman was constantly ailing, but no one knew that she was suffering from this illness until they went to divine and found that she was ill from "the breath" because no ritual had been performed for her from the time she was inherited until now. So Mwambilike found a cow and called together all his dependants and his fellows in the village, and he killed the cow and told everyone about this illness. Then people "complained" (*akwijaja*), and said: "Indeed, may this illness finish." (It was neighbours who complained, not relatives.) From that time the woman concerned has never been ill again. So everyone says: "In truth, 'the breath of men' is very great." 753 626 428

'This illness is very serious, but it never kills people, though they are ill for a long time. If it is not discovered that this is the cause, the patient will be ill for a very long time, perhaps for two or three years. Yes, sometimes it kills when it has spread in the homestead, but people very rarely die from this illness. 753 626

'It is often seen in connection with inheritance. Another case occurred in my country. A certain man built with us who was of a chief's lineage. He inherited from a relative but he did not kill a cow at the death ritual. The wife he inherited was constantly ill until they went to divine and found that it was "the breath of men" (which was making her ill) because he had not performed a ritual since he entered into his inheritance. So he also found a cow and called people (non-relatives) and all his descendants, and killed the cow, and his fellow villagers "complained" (*akwijaja*). But I do not know whether the illness finished or not. What I do know is that he found a cow—I saw it myself when it was lying there dead and people gathered, relatives, descendants, and neighbours. 753 626 428

'*Ingwite* is a disease of children. It comes from the faults used by the mother of the child. It is commonly said that when a married 753 626

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

753 woman has been angry with her husband, and perhaps quarrelled with
him, and has sworn at her husband by "the things" (i.e. the sex organs)
626 of his mother, or perhaps his father, the child she bears will fall sick
with *ingoto*. It becomes very thin and does not grow. The disease is
recognized when a child is very ill from infancy, and it is very thin
[787] but does not die. Then they say it is *ingoto*. Sometimes they inquire of
a diviner and the diviner reveals that it is ill of *ingoto*.

'I remember a certain woman who was married to a man, Akayamba. This man had married two wives, and she of whom I speak was
[578] the third. This woman was very proud (*samatingo fijo*) and was constantly quarrelling with her husband and her co-wives. When she quarrelled with her husband he got angry and beat her. Then she swore at him horribly, about "the things" of his mother or father. She said: "You! So and so of your father! So and so of your mother!" Then this woman bore a girl child and when it had grown a little it became very ill. It was very ill for a whole year. When it began to recover she quarrelled again with her husband and swore at him
[787] insultingly, and the child got ill again. So her husband (the father of the child) and she went to inquire of a diviner. The divination revealed *ingoto*. It said: "Your wife has sworn at you about the things of your mother when you were quarrelling." When they got home the husband drove his wife away, saying: "Go to your father!" When she got home the woman told her father everything and he took millet and gave it to her to make beer with which to pay. So she brewed beer and brought it to her husband, saying: "I did wrong, my husband." Her husband called his fellows and they all drank the beer and expressed their anger (*ukunjoja*) and said: "May the child recover and grow well!"

'This happened when I was 13 or 14 years old. The girl (who was ill) is still alive; her body shows signs of not having grown properly.

'The disease comes from "the breath of men" because these insults were made publicly and others heard them. I do not think anything would happen if the insults were private, I am not sure.'

A curse of neighbours for neglect of rituals.
Kapombele (young Christian man).

789 'If I do not do the (death) ritual properly for my father the death
626 of my children is due to the case against me, the dispute with relatives
842 and the curse of people—non-relatives (*asagwa mbukwa, ibigwa mbunda*).

'Sometimes the villagers (*amafwa*) bind a man's loins so that he cannot beget children with his wife. They are both sterile. Mwakand-

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ale, the doctor in Selya, is a case of this. He had quarrelled with his 789
der brother and did not come to bury him. Later he came and killed
cow, but did not tell the men of the village (*amafumu*) properly, and 626
ey were angry, and so for the last ten years he has had no child. His 842
ves do not conceive at all. That is due to the curse of men (*ikigune*
a bandu).'

A curse for 'soiling a man'.
Angombwike (young Christian man).

Angombwike cited a case of sterility attributed to *ikigune* because a 789
oman had 'soiled' a man.
'She had run away three times with X. Finally her husband forced 626
to eat her filth and drink her urine. X was very ill but recovered. 842
e bore no further children on her return to her husband. She went
Lyandeleko (the informant's mother) for medicine but the latter
d she could not help as it was *ikigune*. Her neighbours were shocked
cause she had "soiled the child of someone". Also the neighbours of
s father were shocked. Their "breath" takes effect because she
its frequently in their village, going to see a grandparent. They say:
This is the woman who soiled your child." '
N.B.—It is the woman who is held to have suffered, not her husband
X.

A curse due to incest.
Grant (young Christian man).

'A, son of B (a chief), made love to his father's sister X. X's husband, 789
had married (*ukwakula*) a full sister, Y, of A. A lay with X. A had 626
philis and X and her husband C both fell sick of it. C asked X 835
ere the disease came from. She accused A. C complained to B.
was very angry and all men were astonished at it. It is forbidden.
w could he have intercourse with his mother, the sister of his
her! B took four of A's cows and gave them to C. People cursed
ngune) A, who was very ill for two years. His eye came out of its
ket. He went to a mission hospital.
'The villagers (*amafumu*) gathered at B's and said: "This sickness
A is because of that case of his when he lay with X. It is because of
t he is sick." So B went to A and told him to bring four cows, which
did. B called his people and brothers and sisters and said: "Bless
r child." They swore and swore at him, and they caught hold of
woman and swore, saying: "How did you agree to sleep with your

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 child? You have both sinned greatly." Then they killed the cows and
626 ate them. I was there. Very quickly A recovered and his eye is all
835 right now.'

A curse on a senior village headman due to the anger of a junior village headman.
Mwandeba (Pagan man).

789 'A young chief, Mwaidemale, called his men to hoe a road at the
626 order of the Government. The third village headman of the country and his men refused to come, saying: "Not we, we have been once already", and they beat Mwaidemale's messenger. So Mwaidemale was very angry, and reported the village headman to his father, who was also very angry and told the headman and all his men (a very big age-village) to move to another chief. And the senior headman agreed, saying: "Indeed, my junior is a proud fellow. Let them go." So they all went to the country of Mwansasu.

'Now the senior headman has fallen ill with the "breath of men". He is unable to walk. The diviner said his illness was due to "the breath" of his junior colleague—he had been cursed because he is reputed to be the favourite of the chief. He was very ill and moved to Korosso's country where he has begun to recover.

'After being away for a year the third headman brought a cow to pay to the chief (Mwakabolofu). The chief refused it, saying: "No, indeed, my country is quarrelsome. Perhaps you think it was you who built it? I do not wish that you should return. Go with your cow." Some of the third village headman's men came back and then Mwakabolofu allowed to build, but he said that he would never let the banished headman back. Many men stayed with their headman and refused to return until he did. Only two years ago (1937) the headman brought two cows to Mwakabolofu who forgave him on the condition that he found something to take to the senior headman, who was ill, to fetch him back from Korosso's country. So the third headman fetched his senior with a huge bull. They came back with it and killed it and drank much beer and made friends. Most of the beer was provided by the third headman, who had spent two years in exile, but some by the senior.

'The mystical power (*amanga*) of the third headman and his men was able to reach the senior headman because a whole village had moved, but had a single man moved he would not have been able to send "breath" to another country, because when "the defenders" come at night in the power of *amanga* (*mmanga gabe*) the owners of the country who remain in it ask them: "Where are you going?" and

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

hey reply: "We are just walking about in our country, to our homes", 789
nd the owners of the country do not drive them away; but of a single 626
nan they ask: "Why are you valking about here?" and they drive him
ff.'

'The breath of men' and witchcraft.
Mwambuputa (Senior village headman).

' "The breath of men' (*embpo sya bandu*) and witchcraft (*ubulosi*) go 789
ogether. If all the members of a village murmur that a certain man is 754
vil then the words of the innocent (*abelu*) have no weight, no strength
t all, but those of the heavy ones (*abasito*) have. It is the heavy ones 626
who carry that breath into his body in dreams, they chastise him, but
he innocent just talk and mumur against him, that is all.'

Question: 'Then that breath comes from the pythons inside them?'

Mwambuputa: 'Yes, that is where it comes from, it is one with
witchcraft, identical. Sometimes they just chastised him a little, he
did not die, but just fell sick; and in such a case there was never any
drinking of *umwafi*; if he kiled a beast for them they would pray
(*ukuiputa*) and pray, they would let out all their anger, saying:
'Certainly we were angry, it was us, but now it is all over." Then life
came back to him and he recovered. That is the curse (*ikigune*).

'But sometimes they would kill him—and then they had to drink
umwafi . . . if a man died and hey found spear-marks, wounds, in his
entrails the chief would get angry and say: "You have killed your
fellow, drink the *umwafi*." Sothen the *umwafi* would convict one of
witchcraft and he would be expelled from the country. For we said:
"It is forbidden to kill a man" We others were afraid, although we
had disliked the victim ourselves, we feared that at some later time the
witch would kill us.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

23. RITUAL OF RECONCILIATION

Mwakionde (doctor, brother of a chief).

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'If my son has sworn at me, my friends in the village are angry and say: "Why has our child sworn at his father?" Then the youth falls ill, and people say: "It is the curse (*ikigune*). It was we who were angry, because he swore at our fellow." Then he seeks something with which to pay—perhaps a bull or cow. If I, the father, am a rich man I brew beer for the people coming to instruct my child and to say: "It was we who were angry, young man, because you swore at your father. Now may you recover!" While they are drinking the beer they kill the bull, which he found, and eat it.'

Mwambelike (pagan man).

'A junior relative who has wronged a senior and later wishes to make friends has to satisfy not only him but his neighbours. For example: A man X seduced a widow of his father who was regarded as the property of his senior half-brother, Y, the heir. (She was not Y's wife, because she was a sister of his mother, but given to deceased's younger half-brother.) Later X paid Y one cow as a fine "for seducing his mother". Then X brought him a bull to re-enter the family and ma e friends, saying: "Indeed, I wronged you, my father." Y said: "If you wish to make friends again you must also bring a cow for the village to eat, so that all shall know that I am satisfied." X brought a heifer calf which was eaten by the village.'

There was no mention of sickness in this case.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

24. PROCEDURE IN A WITCHCRAFT CASE (TRADITIONAL)

Mwakionde (*doctor, brother of a chief*).

'The custom was that if a man was accused of witchcraft he always went to the chief and said: "They have accused me of witchcraft. Please give me witnesses." The chief would send off the man with his accuser and with witnesses to the doctor. If the accuser was proved wrong he had to pay four or five cows, or if he had no cows, a girl, and then after she had borne a child the accused would come to pay cows and be a relative in the end. 754 627

'If the ordeal (*umwafi*) convicted both, neither vomiting, the chief would be angry and say: "You are both witches." Then each would pay four cows to the chief who would kill two from each of the four for his men to eat, and both men would move from the country. If both vomited the chief would say: "You are fools; be friendly," and the village headmen would say: "Yes, but the accuser must pay cows to the accused for accusing him."

'Men never went to drink the ordeal without first going to the chief.

'Sometimes the one convicted as a witch was speared and all his cows taken by the chief—none went to the accuser. If the accuser was caught and the accused vomited, four cows went to the accused, and the others to the chief because the accuser was himself a witch. Some who were great witches died of the ordeal.' [683]

Mwainumo (*clerk*).

'There was a nasty little chap (*haliko ahandu hamo*[1]) who came from the hills to live at Bijilila, and who built next door to father. This chap was very poor; mother and the other villagers always gave him food. I remember the chap very well—he was very dirty in his person.

'Well, once there was complaint (*ukwijaja*) because the milk supply in the village was small. So this chap fortified himself within and said: "Do not go on complaining, sons of Kihabia, I have seen the witch who is throttling the cows. It is Kimpungal Catch her, and let her drink *umwafi*." Mother was astounded at being taken; she was dumbfounded at being "caught" for witchcraft, for in her lineage no one had ever been caught. So then she also said: "Indeed, my husbands,

[1] Mwainumo speaks of him as a thing rather than a person.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754
627

take me to the ordeal, and let me drink (*umwafi*)." Mwankaje, my older brother next to me in age, went to drink the *umwafi*. He vomited immediately after he had drunk it. So that nasty little chap, Mwasulama, was defeated. He escaped paying a fine for he was so poor—they beat him a little with sticks. Had he been rich he would have paid mother a cow, for it was customary for one who had been accused of witchcraft but had vomited the *umwafi* to claim compensation for slander in court, and to be paid a cow.

'Long ago when I was a child, when the AbaMpulo were young men, the homestead they built was very rich. Ngemela and Mwasalutaba, and Mwakinene, and Kyula, and Swita, and all the others built there. Swita was a witchfinder. He had power (*amanga*) to catch witches when they throttled the cows. He always went out to the pasture when he knew that there were people who wished to throttle the cows. On one occasion the cows in the village did not give milk. Everyone was called together to complain (*ukwijaja*), and Swita (Mwaitulo), the man who caught the throttlers of cows, was among them. When they were speaking he, Swita, fortified himself with medicines within and said: "Why are you complaining all of you? I, I have seen him who throttles the cows. Let us all come together again here to-morrow, and no one must stay behind." So they all met together there. . . . Formerly it was the custom to call out names. They met together and one man who shouted the names stood a little distance off and the witchfinder who responded stood a little distance off, separately. The first man shouted the names and the witchfinder responded, saying: "Yes!" All the names were called out, but when they came to the name of Mwasalutaba the witchfinder was silent; the name was repeated and he was still silent; the third time the whole company groaned together. Mwasalutaba then said: "Friends, I am astonished, I am not a witch, I do not throttle the cows, so I ask for the ordeal." So the witchfinder said: "Yes indeed, drink *umwafi*, and if it does not convict you then I will pay a cow." So they went with him and told everything to a certain doctor who had built in the country of Mwambebule, in the hills. When they got to the doctor's Mwasalutaba drank the *umwafi*. They addressed it, saying: "We think that our fellow throttles cows, but if we are wrong tell us, you medicine." While they were yet speaking the sun went down, so they said: "The *umwafi* has caught our fellow." They returned home, and they drove him away. His cattle escaped capture though it was the custom when someone was convicted of witchcraft for the chief to take his cattle, and if he chose, to kill for those of that village who were innocent to eat meat. But Mwasalutaba escaped—they only drove him out, for the village was not really his own village,

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754
627

he came from another side. And he has never moved back to the village, nor has he ever been accused again of witchcraft.

'Swita really knows how to catch those who throttle cows for witchcraft. Here is another tale about it: One of the fellows of the AbaMpulo had begotten a child, and the child died. When they had done the autopsy "the owner of the child" said: "They (the witches) have eaten him", and he prepared to move. Then Swita began to speak in secret saying that the so and so's had killed the child. And they of whom he spoke did not come to persuade their fellow, who was preparing to move, to remain. When the chief heard that a man was preparing to move, and his fellows the so and so's did not come to persuade him to stay he called together the whole village, and was very angry with them. When he found that they all agreed he went to Ngemela (the village headman?) and said: "I think that it is they of whom Swita spoke who have killed the child, their cattle will be taken." Ngemela objected very much to taking their cattle, and the chief went to Ngemela's junior saying the same thing, that it was they (of whom Swita spoke) who had killed the child and he, the chief, would take their cattle. But Ngemela's junior also objected and reported to his senior Ngemela, who agreed that he did not wish to take anyone's cattle. The chief agreed, saying: "All right, I shall not take their cattle." But they, in their foolishness, when they heard that the chief had said that it was they who had killed the child of their fellow, and that he would take their cattle, themselves started the matter saying: "We want the ordeal." Their request was agreed to; they were given *umwafi* to drink, and addressed. But they were killing themselves. When they drank the *umwafi* convicted them; they did not vomit. When this happened and chief said: "See! It is as I thought, it is indeed they who killed the child." And he took their cattle and killed some, and people ate the meat. One cow which he took on account of this case is still there, I know it myself, we call it "Lyakakata". Formerly when people were convicted of witchcraft their goods were taken, or they were driven from the village. This tale was told me by a man belonging to the country in which it happened.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

25. THE ORDEAL (*UMWAFI*)

Mwainamo (*clerk*).

627
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'I was once given *umwafi*. It was long ago but I remember it very well. It was at the funeral of my mother's younger brother my *umwipana umwandi*; he died suddenly, and when he was dead some people of the family said that the disease was from my father's side (*i.e.* from my father's younger brother, *tata umwandi*, my own father was dead at this time); and others said, no, it was from the side of the deceased's new wife—this was his third wife, recently married—he had run away with her from her husband. Those concerned were the deceased's sisters (and their husbands), brothers, wives, and fellow villagers. They said: "Let us drink *umwafi*." So they took two children, I and another, a girl—she was a daughter of the dead man and represented his own house; if she did not vomit then the disease came from within the house (*i.e.* from one of the wives); I, in the same way, represented my father's house.

'The doctor took some banana leaves and prepared medicine, putting some into each leaf; after a little while they called us and told us to stand apart, a bit away from the house. First the doctor gave the *umwafi* to the girl from her leaf, and then to me from mine. The leaves are kept separate and there are several for each person. All the family drew closer and sat around us. The doctor addressed each of us in turn. I do not remember the words exactly, but it was something like this: "If it was you that has brought sickness, let us see. We are sure it was you that brought the disease." Then we both vomited, she a little before me. If one does not vomit it may be very serious; the poison stays in you and you may die. Then they said: "Well, we do not know where the disease came from." Then they gave us water to wash in and some meat to eat—food is specially put aside for those that drink *umwafi*. This was the end.

'*Afterwards it was said that it* was the man who was the woman's first husband who had poisoned my mother's brother. We were being tested for sorcery, not witchcraft, as the autopsy had shown that it was a case of sorcery. Having heard this, we did not spread the news; we kept quiet, waited, and watched. And then after a week the dead man's son, my cousin (*antani*), was dead; and that woman ran away. She was frightened. Then we knew it was her former husband who had killed both by sorcery.[1] The family sought the doctor to get

[1] In another text (quoted on p. 256) Mwainamo explained that the injured husband had used 'the horn', i.e. *umugumuno* magic. Being of the family which suffered Mwainamo calls it 'sorcery'.

[p. 244]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the medicine for the prevention of the disease, and then it was finished. The wife was taken back by the first husband, so the disease could not kill us any more. 754

'When she went back to him he could not come to us again. (True, he had no reason to do so.) Nothing happened to him. It is not our custom to accuse such people to the chief; we do not exactly know if it is the man, and still we have taken his wife. We were all concerned in this because of my mother. It happened four years before my brother died; there were four years between my uncle's death and his. I was in Tukuyu during the influenza after the war—in 1918—and then I went to Selya the next year, 1919, and my uncle died. 627 685

'The procedure is similar in an accusation of witchcraft.'

Mwaikambo (*clerk*).

'*Uwmaji* is always used when someone denies practising witchcraft or theft, or denies that he is a liar. When they[1] have "caught" their fellow in the village and say that it is he who is throttling their cows so that they do not get milk, and the accused man denies it, then they take him to drink *uwmaji*. When they have come to the doctor's place they tell him their tale. Two men support the accused and two the accuser. They do not eat when they are going to drink *uwmaji*. The doctor first says to the accused: "If you are really guilty of throttling the cows, don't trouble the *uwmaji*, but confess." And he replies: "Had I been seen as a witch I would not have come here." And both his supporters say: "Our friend is falsely accused; he has never practised witchcraft."

'The doctor questions the accuser in the same way, saying: "Did you really see your fellow as a witch?" and he and his supporters reply that they saw him.

'So then the doctor gives them *uwmaji* to drink. He sprinkles a little powder in tepid water; or sometimes (so they say) he sprinkles the *uwmaji* on two freshly cut stumps of banana stem, one representing one side, and one the other. Then the stump in which the "new growth" (? sap: *ulufyuge*) first appears is the one that has "vomited". The "growth" appears the same day that they cut it. The doctor addresses the *uwmaji* (*ikupungililage*) and the others present assist, the supporters of each man addressing him. Then one vomits and those on his side trill, but he who has not vomited is very sad. Then they go home and he who has vomited pays the doctor.

'There is very little drinking of *uwmaji* nowadays, but much divination (*ubulagusi*).

[1] i.e. 'the defenders'. Mwaikambo explained, 'A witchcraft accusation always begins with "the defenders" seeing the witches in dreams.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 627 695 'There are some in our country who were caught for witchcraft, for "eating" people and throttling cows. The name of one of them was Sumali, but now he is dead; another is Mwaimama. They denied the accusation very strongly; they were brought before the chief (my father) for their case to be judged, and when he had given judgement they said they wished to go to *umuafi*. So they went to the *umuafi*, and when they had drunk it Sumali vomited and Mwaimama was conquered. Nothing happened to him—he was not driven out, they just told him to stop doing such things—but continually, even now, he is accused of witchcraft whenever anything happens. He's not gone to *umuafi* again.

'This happened before I went to school, when I was still herding cows, about 1925 or 1926. I did not see the trial (before the chief) with my own eyes, but I was there when the *umuafi* was administered.

'On another occasion a woman was "caught" for witchcraft when her child died. When they do an autopsy they sometimes find wounds [763] on the right side or on the left. The right side is the side of the man, the left that of the woman. This time they found them on the side of the woman. The woman (*i.e.* the mother) denied that it was she who had "eaten" the child so they went to *umuafi* and the woman was "conquered" (*i.e.* proved to be lying). It was not she, in her own person, but a member of her lineage who had "eaten" the child. After the *umuafi* had "spoken" they went to a diviner to discover exactly who the individual was.

'I heard about this from others, but Mwaintobile, the father of the child who died, is a man of our country—I know him.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

26. THE AUTOPSY

Note.—It was not easy to see an autopsy among the Nyakyusa—one never knew beforehand when such an operation would be held, and since imputations of witchcraft and sorcery are punishable offences, people were often reluctant to perform it when Europeans were there. There was only one European doctor in Rungwe district, and he was a very busy man with a hospital and dispensaries to supervise. All the operations witnessed were performed over twenty-five miles from his headquarters and far off any road. Therefore, we were never able to arrange for a qualified practitioner to be present at a Nyakyusa autopsy, as we wished. The following layman's accounts, though lacking any anatomical detail, explain the method of procedure, and the Nyakyusa reactions. 763 123

Autopsy (ukupandula) *witnessed by G. W.*, 16/3/37.

Funeral of the wife of Mwampiki: Mwampiki himself is dead, but his homestead and wives have been inherited by a younger half-brother, Mwisalwa. The dead woman is a wife of another half-brother, Mwalembe. Kakuju, the village headman, called me to the funeral. 764

The body was carried apart, away from the crowd of women, behind a clump of bananas, by five or six women, who then washed it and put on a bark-cloth and a cloth (folded tight like a bark-cloth) round the loins. Then the young man, Mwaijumba, and I were allowed to come and watch.

The doctor, a woman, had five little knives of bamboo, made for the autopsy, and thrown away with the rubbish afterwards. Before she began to cut the stomach open another woman, a wife of Mwampiki (wearing mourning belts and smeared with mud) came and crouched down with her face close to that of the corpse, and a cloth covering her head and that of the corpse. 'That is the Nyakyusa custom', the young man explained. 'She is helping the doctor. The fearsomeness (ukwiya) of a human body is less when someone else is at the head.' 763 764

Then the doctor, using the bamboo knives, made an incision across the stomach, and cut through the flesh until the intestines showed. The stomach was swollen up. Mwantembe, a classificatory brother of Mwampiki, had joined us by this time. He was fetched by Mwaijumba to come and examine the corpse. He urged the doctor to make the incision wider and she did so. Mwantembe also insisted on Mwi- 763

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

763 jumba coming close and looking, too. 'Come, Mwaijumba, look, so that another time you will know.' He did not give direct instruction—he was far too much worked up—but he insisted on the other coming to see what was being done and discussed.

At several points the doctor was clearly under the stress of emotion and reluctant to do more than was absolutely necessary—she had to be urged on by Mwantembe. 'Now,' Mwantembe said, 'let us dissect, mother! Let us look well. Let us dissect! Do you say it's a person? No, it's just a log, a piece of firewood!' And several times these words were used by Mwantembe and others to urge her on. 'Do you say it's a person? It's just a log!'

The doctor then pulled out all the contents of the stomach so that Mwantembe and the women could see up into the chest—there was nothing unusual there on either side; then we looked downwards into the loins and found something unusual—a round growth full of blood. I asked if it was a foetus but was told: 'No, it is not; we don't know what it is. We don't ordinarily find that. It is something evil (*lindo*, literally "rubbish"). We are afraid.' The growth was taken out, and also the upper intestine, for there was said to be something unusual about that too, and the liver and something else (*ahanongo*). These, I think, are always removed. We were not told of anything unusual about them. The doctor herself made few or no suggestions—it was Mwantembe who did that—she just did the operation silently.

The stench was foul—several of the women put stoppers of banana leaf into both nostrils. Half-way through the woman at the head of the corpse got up, looking overwrought, and went away to a distance. The others said: 'It's all right, it's not a person, just a log' (i.e. there is no need for her to stay). At length the doctor pushed the rest of the organs back into the stomach and tied up the body with a cloth—another was tied over it to make all secure.

757 763 The discussion (which had been going on spasmodically all the time) broke out in a flood. People nodded to each other and said: 'Sorcery (*ubutego*)! Look! Look! Sorcery indeed!' The young man, Mwaijumba, told us: 'I dreamed of a medicine. When they were at the funeral [the dead woman had been taken ill while at a funeral at her classificatory father's homestead], before she fell ill, I dreamed in my sleep, I saw someone giving a child a banana, but I caught hold of the banana (all in my sleep). I broke it open and I found a powder there in the banana. So then I sent a message to her (the next day when I was awake), saying: "Come home. You have mourned sufficiently." And that very day I fell ill myself.' He told this with great excitement. Mwantembe also was obviously moved and said several times during the autopsy: 'I'm afraid. I'm afraid.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Then Kakuju, the village headman, and Kissogota (an old man, a village headman of the previous generation) came to see the results of the autopsy—the things extracted. The doctor had made a small incision in the thing chiefly suspected—the round growth full of blood and measuring five or six inches in diameter. Kakuju got very excited and insisted on her making a bigger incision to see what was inside. 'Look well!' he shouted, 'You are our ordeal (*umuafi*). We know this illness which is killing people in the country. We know it. We know it (passionately). It's sorcery (*ubutege*), is it not?' Mwantembe then said: 'See, it is sorcery, see!' showing him all that had been extracted. Both Kakuju and Kissogota agreed and then Kissogota said: '*Igube!*' At this word the tension seemed to relax. Kakuju jumped at it. 'Yes, yes (eagerly) *igube*. Is it not *igube*, Mwaipeja?' (passionately to me) '*Igube*,' Mwantembe repeated. '*Igube*', shouted the women. Kakuju and Kissogota walked away talking. Then all the remains (*i.e.* the growth, etc.) and the bamboo knives were buried apart in the waste land, and the body was buried in the usual way.

Angombwike later explained that *igube* was an old word for *ubutege* (sorcery).

Autopsy (ukupandula), *witnessed by G. W.*, 23/3/37.

Funeral of little granddaughter of Mwaihojo (a chief)—daughter of Mwaihojo's son Mwakisisile—aged one year. Child died last night. Funeral at Mwaihojo's homestead.

The doctor, a woman, cut the stomach open crosswise and pulled out the contents of the stomach. 'See that little black thing, branching!' They looked all over thoroughly, up and down. 'Look carefully, people of Selya!' said the doctor. 'You tell lies! You will go and tell lies! Look carefully! See, there is no *ikitanya* (a disease).' All agreed that there was no sign of *ikitanya*, but no positive opinion was expressed till two men had been fetched to look. They came and said: 'Why do you deny it? Why do you not know the disease from ropes (*ungwje*)?' 'Yes,' replied the women, 'but we said we should let the men look first.' Before the men came and gave utterance to the word *ungwje*, the women had, I think, come to the same conclusion; it was clear from the way the doctor pointed out 'the little black thing, branching' that she was certain what it meant, and they nodded in an understanding way. Only when she asked them: 'Look, what is it?' they would not answer, saying: 'We don't know, you are a doctor who understands these things.' Then, instead of saying what she thought, she asked: 'Aren't the men coming to look?'

The men came back to Mwaihojo and repeated: 'It is the disease

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

763 from ropes, that binding. The women were uncertain.' 'Yes, indeed,' replied Mwaihojo. 'Whenever did women know how to perform an autopsy? They don't know how to do it. They only know how to close the corpse again, that's all.'

A woman lay down with her head to that of the corpse under cloths. The other women told her to do this, saying: 'At the head, at the head! You are both brave, you, too!'

The doctor removed the liver, two other parts, and the bile sack. This latter she squeezed out on to the leaves, saying: 'Medicine, medicine, she drank much medicine.' All these she wrapped up in leaves and buried in the foot of the grave.

It was explained that the ropes (*ongoje*) were those of Mwakisinile. Mwakisinile, the father, had gone mad (*abapaga ibigili*) and had drunk medicine before he had married this woman. 'We forgot to give them both medicine later on. When he went mad we bound him with ropes to take him to the doctor.'

753 (It is believed that the kinsmen of one bound with ropes will suffer from the disease *ongoje* if treatment is not adequate.)

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

27. WIVES DRIVEN AWAY FOR WITCHCRAFT

Mahumbeja (elderly commoner).

"Many wives are driven away for witchcraft. They are driven away by their husbands. If a man has several wives one may be bad and throttle her husband's cattle, or throttle her husband himself. Then the man goes and complains (*ukwijaja*), saying: "They have destroyed my cattle", or perhaps, "My neighbours have 'eaten' me", whichever it is. When his fellows hear his complaints they say: "Do not accuse outsiders. See! It's your wife." Some women are bad and the husband does not sleep when he is with his other wives; only when he is with her (the witch) does he have a good sleep. She spoils the fertility of her co-wives. Or sometimes all the wives are friendly and agree to spoil the cattle of their husband. 754 627

"There is a woman named Kajonga whose husband drove her away for witchcraft because she bewitched the fertility of her co-wives. A long time after her divorce she was married to another man, Mwitoba by name. From that man also she was driven away for witchcraft, but what wrong she had done was not much known. Some time later she died. 754 627 587

"Women who are driven away for witchcraft always remarry; they do not run off with men."

Njokakuse.

"When a wife was accused she drank *umwafi*. If she was "caught" by the ordeal sometimes her husband drove her away, sometimes he did not. Usually he did not."

Nsusu.

"Formerly wives were frequently driven away for witchcraft. Such a wife remarried quickly."

[p. 251]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

28. FEAR OF HEREDITARY WITCHCRAFT

Mwaiwene (*ulwi*).

754 5 82. "There are some people who, though they wish to marry a certain woman, fear to do so because the mother or father of the girl is a witch. They are afraid to marry because she is the child of a witch. And sometimes a girl loves a particular young man very much, but if his father is repeatedly accused of witchcraft her parents refuse to allow the marriage, because the young man's father is a witch. Such was the case of a certain young man, in the country of Mwaijande, who loved a particular girl very much. Her father was said to be a witch (*uwalwi*) a maker of wild animals;[1] he was said especially to make leopards. The parents of the young man objected very much to his marrying this girl whose father was a witch, the mother of the young man objected even more than her husband, saying: "Not She is a witch; witches always go in the lineage (*shikule*), and she will also be a witch when she grows up and comes to the house" (*i.e.* her husband's house). The father of the young man and the father of the girl were next-door neighbours, their homesteads adjoined. The matter was only spoken of in whispers, but I heard about it because the brother-in-law of the young man (the husband of his full sister) was my friend, and he told me about it.

'And again, a certain man who was always said to be a witch made love to a woman who was a widow, the husband who had married her having died. They agreed together that they should marry. When the parents of the woman heard they objected very much, saying: "That man is a witch." The woman was not yet old—she was quite young. Her husband had died but there was no one to inherit her. So then she refused the man (who had made love to her) saying: "I do not love you." Her parents argued against the marriage, saying: "We do not like it" and they persuaded her to leave the man, saying: "You know yourself that when he beats you you will think, 'I am married to a witch'." For she was grown up and her parents could not compel her if she loved him, though if she had been a child they would have been able to object and compel her to do what they wished. But she (though she was grown up) followed the advice of her parents and left him and refused to marry him.

[1] There was some doubt whether this man should be classed as a witch or a sorcerer. In this text Mwaiwene refers to him as *uwalwi*, but elsewhere he was spoken of as a sorcerer (*ulale*) *supra*, pp. 104, 156).

[p. 252]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'And again, a long time ago, my brother Mwanuto went to betroth a girl at the place of that man who was a witch. Mwanuma objected very much to his younger brother's action, saying: "You should not marry at that man's place, everyone says he is a witch." But Mwanuto paid no attention to any of them—others also tried to persuade him not to marry the child of a witch. He married her and she is with him now, as his wife. 754 582

'People fear witchcraft in a husband or wife lest he or she bring witchcraft into the house, and they have children who become witches when they grow up. As I explained witchcraft runs in a lineage (*dikoko*). It is especially women who object to their children marrying or being married by a witch, it is they (the women) who forbid the children, and their husbands also object. I remember once that a certain man came to make love to my sister. The mother of this man was spoken of as a witch, and my mother objected very much, saying: "Do not desire this young man's cattle, I do not like him even though you do. His mother's witchcraft is much spoken about." He had come to betroth the girl when she was still very young. The others agreed to what my mother said and refused the young man, saying: "We have not got a child yet (*ready for marriage*), she of whom you speak must first grow up."'

In reply to questions Mwaiseme explained that people fear to marry witches lest their children be witches and be driven from country to country. 'We say it is bad to be driven out. A man is never driven out because of the witchcraft of his wife—he used to divorce her if it were proved—but a girl's parents will refuse to give their daughter in marriage to a young man from a family of witches because if he is convicted of witchcraft she will be driven out with him.' [586]

We were also told of a young Christian who had been refused by a number of women. It was whispered that this was because his father was a sorcerer. Later on, however, he married and the talk died down.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 195! FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

69. CHRISTIAN SCEPTICISM OF WITCHCRAFT

Nsangalufe (Christian Elder, an early convert).

'At first when we repented, the missionaries asked us whether we believed in witchcraft, and we said: "Yes, there is witchcraft", and we told them about it and the wounds found in the bellies of people who have been killed by witchcraft. So the missionaries said to us: "When there is a death tell us, and we shall go and look." I was taken once by Kleus (a missionary) to a death. I was afraid to go near the corpse—everyone was afraid—but the missionary stood over the grave and looked at the corpse and even put his hand inside (the stomach). The person was said to have died of *ipube* (a kind of sorcery), but Kleus said he had died of a disease of the chest. He told people to come and look. Mwaipopo (the chief) was there but he refused to come and look; they all refused. After some time I came and Kleus showed me. In this way we have been and examined corpses, and we have never seen the wounds of witchcraft. . . . Kleus used to go round to funerals, examining corpses. . . . Ndabele here has seen a corpse which the pagans said had a python. Last week Ndabele went to a funeral near here and the pagans said there was a python inside; the woman (who had died) had been a witch. He said: "Let's see the python, let's see it", but no one could show it to him.'

[p. 254]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

30. SORCERY

Mwakisonde (doctor, brother of a chief).

'When they open a dead person and find the intestines red, black and white in different parts, they say the death is due to sorcery (ubwitge). They go to the doctor and get medicine for the relatives. 757 763

'Sorcery comes very quickly, especially when they have done an autopsy. Then the one who takes the body in her arms, and the one who buries after the operation, die very quickly. If the body has been opened the disease spreads very quickly. In one case thirty people died, mostly relatives. In another case, a wife, a girl child, a mother, a father's sister, and a son-in-law (husband of the girl child) all died. The wife died one day, next day the girl child and her mother, then the father's sister, then the husband of the girl. Autopsies were performed on the first three.'

[p. 255]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

31. DEATHS ATTRIBUTED TO 'THE HORN'

Musiwemo (clerk).

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'My mother's brother died from the sorcery (*ubutepe*) of Mwakaliku the younger. His death came about in this way: He had run off with a woman whose name I have forgotten now, and the "owner" of the woman continually stirred "the horn" that all those concerned should die, if they did not return his wife. Almost immediately my uncle fell ill and died; shortly afterwards the child of his elder brother, Mwakyando, fell ill and died three days later. Then we understood that it was this woman who brought the illness, for her husband boasted to people that it was he who had killed members of our family. We drove away the woman in order to end the sickness among us. Perhaps if we had not sent her away the illness would have spread and killed many of us and our wives also.'

[p.256]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

32. PROCEDURE IN WITCHCRAFT CASES (MODERN)

Nsase (*village headman*).

Question: 'How do you manage about witchcraft cases nowadays?' 754

'We judge them openly but we do not have them written in the court book. When "a defender" has seen his fellow throttle someone, he tells us, and we judge that witch. It is "the defenders" (*abamanga*) who see the witches. Perhaps "the defender" comes out of his house by night and calls out: "I see so and so throttling so and so! Listen to-morrow." 627

'Yes, that happens nowadays.

'When someone tells us in this way we agree; the witch is driven out. Yes, even though he denies it, we say: "You are a witch. You are a thief. Even though you do not admit it, get out of the country." But formerly they went to the ordeal.'

Question: 'Now you just accept the word of the defender?'

'Yes, formerly if a man denied guilt when he was accused he went to the ordeal, and the *umwafi* "caught" the witch. Now since the Europeans have forbidden the use of *umwafi* we accept the word of "the defenders". Look, they (the defenders) *see* witches. Yes, in dreams.' [695]

Question: 'What about the man who accused the wife of Mwakobela?'

'He denied it. He said: "I did not see her", so on that account we said: "Since you have slandered her you must pay thirty shillings." But had he really seen her and told us properly we would have overcome the woman in argument and divorced her from her husband, but he denied it, saying: "I did not see her", and we all said: "The woman is not a witch; who has seen her?"

'If a woman is divorced for witchcraft there is no fine, the husband gets back his cows, that is all.'

Question: 'And the friend of Mwamboputa?'

'He was really a witch. They said: "You, Mwamboputa, we will convict you of witchcraft yourself if you are friendly with him."

'And if a man is fined because he has accused his fellow of witchcraft without seeing him, really, we do not write that in the book either.

'No, *umwafi* is not used; the Europeans and the chiefs and the village headmen have strictly forbidden it.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 From the Records of the First Class Subordinate Court of Rungwe

691 *Criminal case, 11/1935.* *Heard 5/2/35 before P. M. Huggins.*
L. Rompotte, prosecuting.
Rex v. Mana, son of Hanani.

Charge: 'By actions and statement representing himself to have power of witchcraft and supplying instruments of witchcraft (green leaves) to one Mwakalobo, son of Mwakalobo.'

Charge read and explained.

Accused pleaded not guilty.

Mwakalobo, headman[1] of Kapya, a pagan (complainant).

754 695 'About two months ago a man called Bakowike came to me at Ikapu, stating that he had been sent by the accused to warn me that there was a conspiracy to bewitch me, on the part of one Mwakagiri and Mwakatumbula, because I was supposed to have taken some of the former's country. I told Bakowike to tell the accused to come and tell his own tale. The accused came that same day at about sundown. We entered the house and then he called me outside to talk to me. Prior to doing this he told me that Mwakagiri had given him four cows to arrange my death as the former stated that I was in possession of his land. He said that if I gave him a cow he would take no action. I did so. He also gave me some ground-up green leaves which he instructed me to mix with water and drink. He alleged that this potion would render me immune from witchcraft.

'The accused went off with the cow. Kikomile (X), Kyongalale (Y), and Mahandi (Z) and three of my wives were present during the above conversation.

'About a week later Mwakagiri came to visit me—I had sent for him. I did not welcome him—I told him I had heard that he was after my life. He asked me who had said this and I indicated the accused. He then told me that the accused had made the same statements about me to him. I then came and reported to the D.O. I threw away the medicine that the accused had given me. Relations have recently been strained between Mwakagiri and myself.'

In reply to question by accused: 'Yes, I sent for you but only because you sent Bakowike to me first to warn me.'

First witness, a brother of the complainant, confirmed his story, having been present when both Bakowike and the accused came to the complainant. He added these points:

[1] Probably a minor chief (*mwalifumbi*), not a village headman (*ulifumbi*). The report of the case was in English.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'Mwakagiri wished to kill Mwakalobo over a land dispute and sub-chief Mwakatumbula also desired to do so, as he did not obey orders. Mwakalobo said he would not drink the powder (given by the accused) except in the presence of all his sons. . . . Bakowike was known to me, he lives at Isagula in Mwakatumbula's country, and Mwakalobo is married to two of his sisters.'

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Second witness, Mwangambo, a classificatory brother of Mwakalobo, entirely confirmed Mwakalobo and the first witness. He also was present when both Bakowike and the accused came. Also, he said:

'I was present subsequently when Mwakalobo sent for Mwakagiri. Both of them stated in conversation that the accused had informed them that each had designs on the life of the other.'

In reply to a question by the accused: 'You did not spend the night with us, nor did you drink beer; there was none. We didn't drink the medicines.'

In reply to a question by the court: 'Yes, Bakowike came back again with the accused.'

A headman ('capitao') of Mwakalobo confirmed the above stories.

Bakowike confirmed the other stories. He said: 'The accused and Mwakyangile with whom the accused lived (Mwakyangile is also a doctor) came and told me that Mwakagiri had come and informed the accused that he wanted to kill Mwakalobo, and had given him four cows for the purpose. He asked me if I was a relative of Mwakalobo's. I told him that I was; then he advised me to go and warn him, which I did that day. Mwakalobo then told me to fetch Mone (the accused). I called him and Mwakyangile the same evening.'

In reply to a question by the accused: 'I did not come to your house. I did not give you a goat in exchange for medicine for my wife.'

In reply to a question by the court: 'I had never heard of Mone before. He lives across a stream about one and a quarter miles away.'

In reply to a question by the accused: 'We did not sleep at Mwakalobo's.'

Note by the court: Impression that this witness had previously met the accused, probably buying medicine from him as stated by the accused, but is afraid of acknowledging the association.

Mwakagiri: 'It is true that Mwakalobo and I have had a dispute about land. I have never met Mwakalobo on any occasion on which we have accused each other of invoking witchcraft against each other, but on various occasions Mwangambo (the second witness) was sent by Mwakalobo to inquire why I was bewitching him. I told Mwangambo I was doing nothing of the sort. This was about a month ago. No one else was present. I did not learn how Mwakalobo came to suspect me.

1:WilsonE-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

I have often met the accused; he came and took a wife from my country. The accused is a doctor. I do not know why Mwakalobo should say that I met him. It is a lie.'

Mwakalobo was called. He said: 'Mwangambo (the second witness) is a nephew of Mwakagiri. I sent him to call Mwakagiri. He came back the same day with Mwakagiri and Nyomilela.'

Mwangambo when recalled confirmed this, adding: 'I live under Mwakalobo.'

Nyomilela: 'I know of no meeting of Mwakalobo and Mwakagiri. They were disputing over land. I heard from Mwakagiri that his nephew Mwangambo had told him that Mwakalobo accused him of exercising witchcraft against him. I am no relative of either party. I never went with Mwakagiri to meet Mwakalobo.'

Note of the court: I am of the impression that Mwakagiri and Nyomilela are hiding something. Their evidence is not given in a straightforward manner.

Accused (Musa): 'I have never received four cows from Mwakagiri. True, I went to Mwakalobo's house. He called me to prescribe for his impotency. He paid me with a cow. I was surprised at this as it is not customary to receive payment till a cure is effected.'

In reply to a question by the court: 'No one approached me with a view to exercising malignant witchcraft. I do not know why I should have been dragged into this. Perhaps Mwakalobo heard I had gone to Mwakagiri's country. I only went there to see my father-in-law. I gave Mwakalobo medicine to cure his impotency. I warned him that it would be no use for his trouble, but he insisted on having it. Yes, he even insisted on giving me the cow as a pledge of friendship. I did not know why he was so positive and wanted to be friendly with me. This is the first gift of that nature that I have received. I have been three months in Isangula. I am on my way to my home at Mwaya. I stopped at Isangula because I was suffering from a boil. All my relatives live in Sangu country.'

In reply to a question by the prosecution: 'I was myself surprised that as a resident of three months' standing I should have been suspected by Mwakalobo of witchcraft.'

In reply to a question by the court: 'Mwakyangile was present with me at Mwakalobo's. I went to call him.'

Note by the court: There is no question that this evidence is given glibly, and carries no conviction. The demeanour of the accused is that of a man seeking for a way out of a trying situation.

Mwakyangile told a different story from Musa. 'Mwakalobo wanted treatment for his children, who were suffering from *ikilanya* (a disease). He wanted nothing for himself.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

In reply to a question of the court: 'He did not complain of impotence.' 754

In reply to a question by the accused: 'We did not discuss bewitching anybody.' 695

Order

'There is in my opinion no doubt that the accused is guilty of practising witchcraft for reward, and is causing fear and annoyance. Section 5 of the Witchcraft Ordinance virtually prohibits any effective and rapid steps being taken to combat witchcraft. Section 5 (i) necessitates the delay of trial by High Court, and the offence disclosed is not covered by it, whereas Section 5 (2) necessitates obtaining from His Excellency the Governor both sanction to prosecute and confirmation of any sentence imposed. Under the circumstances, and in view of the delay that has already taken place, permission is granted by the police to withdraw their request for sanction to prosecute under Section 5 (2).

'By virtue of the powers conferred on me by Section 8 cap. 21, Musa, son of Hassani, is ordered to reside at Mwaya and to report once a month at the District Office, pending such decision as the Provincial Commissioner shall make, following a request that he should exercise the powers conferred on him by Section 8 (3) to order Musa, son of Hassani, to reside in his own domicile, Usangu.'

The Provincial Commissioner agreed to the request and Musa is now in Sangu country. 696

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

33. SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES IN CHRISTIAN VILLAGES

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a. *Christian suing a Christian*

Mundekaye (appointed by the Church to settle disputes in villages on Iteto mission land).

'Nsangalofu (a Christian elder) accused Jonah's son, Lwimiko, of making love to the wife of Nsangalofu's son, Nkisu. I (Mundekaye) was trying the case between Nkisu and Lwimiko. Lwimiko denied everything, but Nkisu's wife said: "Yes, he was making love to me; he did so on three occasions." I gave judgement, saying: "You Lwimiko, are guilty, because the woman admits it," and ordered Lwimiko to pay a cow. Lwimiko refused, so I took the case to the Court. I reported my decision and Lwimiko's refusal to pay. The Court asked Lwimiko why he refused to pay up when the woman admitted their guilt, and ordered him to pay a cow.

'I reported the case to Mwangomo (the chief in whose country Mundekaye lives), but as it was quite clear I took it direct to Court. Difficult cases I take to Mwangomo before they go on to Court.

'Nsangalofu and Nkisu brought the case to me. I called the elders of the Church to be present at the hearing of the case. The congregation notified Mwakapelela (the European missionary who lives on another station) and he ordered that Lwimiko should move off mission land. Lwimiko and Nkisu had both built in Mpanda (a boys' village on mission land).'

b. *Arbitration between Christians*

Asapwe (Christian deacon in Iteto).

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'Mapuge accused Amasiye of stealing a cloth belonging to him, and brought Amasiye before his fellows. He brought him to Kheshen, near whom he lives.

'Amasiye denied the accusation, so the case was taken to Mundekaye (*vide supra*). Mundekaye tried the case with "all the congregation" (i.e. elders and deacons and anyone who cared to attend the court) and found Amasiye guilty. The case was then taken before the missionary who ordered that Amasiye should be fined 2s. and suspended from membership of the Church. He also ordered that should he refuse to pay he should move off mission land, because this was the

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

627-
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second occasion on which he had been found guilty of theft. (The elders of the congregation had suggested turning Amanise off mission land immediately, but the missionary advised giving him a second chance and fining him.)'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 195 1 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

34. SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES BETWEEN PAGANS AND CHRISTIANS

a. Christian suing a pagan

Tuijulaje (Christian man).

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'Adinile (a Christian elder) and Kajobanabawa (a pagan) had a dispute. Cattle belonging to Adinile and his fellows ate Kajobanabawa's crop. Adinile went to drive the cattle out of the field and Kakobanabawa met him as he was driving them out. Kajobanabawa swore at Adinile. So Adinile got angry and went to the chief; the chief took the case to Court and Kajobanabawa was found guilty and ordered to pay 10s. He paid up and the case was finished.'

b. Arbitration between pagan and Christian

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'L. (a Christian preacher) when he was visiting the Ngoni[1] in the bush country bought rice from a pagan Ngoni, Mazuzu, and promised to pay him later on. He was a long time in paying his debt so the Ngoni went to Ulindule, an elderly Christian living near L., saying: "L. has my shilling. He took my rice." L. agreed that he owed the Ngoni a shilling; he said that he had not yet got the money, but would get it very soon. The Ngoni went home and after some time, as he was not paid, he came again. Ulindule tried to pacify him. The Ngoni said: "If the case defeats you, I shall go to Court." So Ulindule called his fellows Kheshen and Hosesh to pacify the Ngoni, and the latter agreed to wait; but still L. did not pay up. So when the missionary visited, the Ngoni took the case to him. How it was decided (by the missionary) no one knows.'

c. Pagan suing a Christian

Mwasumo (chief).

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'Mwasunye, a pagan man, has a young son who was once bathing in a stream where Asangiaye, a Christian, came down to bathe also. Asangiaye said to the boy: "Get out, I want to bathe." The boy replied: "But, I was bathing here first", at which Asangiaye got angry and beat the boy.

'Then Mwasunye and his son hastened to Mundekaye's court

[1] There are one or two villages of Ngoni immigrants in the strip of unoccupied bush country between Selye and the Lake-shore plain. They mix very little with the Nyakyusa.

[p. 269]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(vide supra) and Mondekenye tried the case with his friends and judged that Asangiaye should pay two shillings. Asangiaye refused to pay, so Mondekenye took the case to Mwangomo (the chief in whose country the land on which the Christian village Asangiaye lived in is situated) and there judgement was given that Asangiaye should pay three shillings. Asangiaye agreed to do so.' 691/683

I:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

35. JOINT RESPONSIBILITY OF NEIGHBOURS

Musikambo (elder).

628 'In former times people did not live at peace as we do now. Because
621 they fought frequently they never were friendly with those of other
villages as they are to-day. The occasion for beginning a fight was
537 usually a dispute over women or cattle. If a man had made love to a
woman of another village he got a friend to steal her for him. Then if
the "owners" of the woman saw them they told their chief that men
of such and such a village had run off with "their wife". Their chief
allowed all his people to go to recapture "their wife". Also those who
had stolen the woman told their chief that they had a case against
them, they had stolen someone's wife. Then the chief replied that
they should tell everyone to be ready.'

Mwangwanda (old pagan man).

628 'In the old days if one man A, had "eaten" the cow of another, B,
621 living in a different chiefdom, and failed to repay it, though B came
frequently to claim his cow, and if the wife of a village neighbour of
672 A visited in B's country, B might seize her and take her to his chief,
685 saying: "This woman is the wife of C, a neighbour of A, who has
'eaten' my cow." Then the chief sent to the chief of A's country,
saying that they had caught the wife of C and they wanted the cow
due from A. Then A would send the cow and B would send back the
wife of C with a bull to say: "Thank you, you have settled my case."
Then the husband, C, might demand a hoe as well. If A denied his
debt when the message came, and asserted that B's friends had seized
the woman without cause, his chief would send him to B's chief,
saying: "My man denies the charge. Let them drink *wanugh*." Then
A and B would take the ordeal in B's country.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

36. MOVING

Mwanjala.

'Lukama's father had built in the country of the chief, Mwaikuje, and Lukama moved and went to the country of Mwaeyika. He returned to Mwaikuje's of his own accord, and when he had been there a considerable time his wife fell ill, so he moved again to Mwaeyika's. After three months his fellows came to fetch him, and they put him into his own old house. They told him to choose whether he would go to his own old homestead, or to another, and of his own accord he chose to build on another site, but he occupied his own old house temporarily. After a year and a half had passed, his wife fell very ill again, and he went to Mwaeyika's. He had been there a month when his fellows—those from his other age-village (in Mwaikuje country)—came to fetch him. They put him into another man's house and he lived with him there. He ate his own food for he was the owner of the homestead—a stranger eats of the bananas of strangers. After he had been there some time, but before he had built a house, his wife fell ill again, and he went to Mwaeyika's country where he is still.' 166 621

In reply to a question: 'It is customary to fetch a man who has moved because people mostly move on account of illness. Hence, the man's fellows say: "If we do not fetch him it appears as if it were we who had driven him away, as if we had done that which caused him to move."'

Kimbilala.

'Mwapelya moved and went to Mwankonje's country. He moved on account of his own illness. Before he had been away long his fellows (*i.e.* village neighbours) went to fetch him. He was only away perhaps four or five months. When they brought him back they put him into his old house, for no one had taken it. He took his food from where he had cultivated previously, for as he had not been away long there were still sweet potatoes in his field. He came the first time they went to fetch him.'

Details from various informants, in reply to a question about three new huts being built.

'Three young men have just moved from the village of Mwafula to the village of Mwamunda, because someone had accused them, saying 166 684

[p. 267]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166
184

"You're making love to my wife", and the man who made the accusation was from the family of the chief. On account of this, they said: "The chief is driving us out. Let us move." All three moved because of this case and are building here. Of the three friends who were supposed to be seducing the minor chief's wife, one had been found at night-time in the suspected woman's hut, and had been fined 1m. for "making love to the woman" though they had not been found together.'

Record of G. W., 20/4/35 (from various informants).

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'The chief Mwaipopo was sick, and living "in the forest", *i.e.* in a recently settled and cultivated area at a distance from the main population of his chiefdom. Nesna, one of the headmen of his classificatory son and heir Mwankuga (cf. p. 183) went to see him. On his return Nesna said to Mwankuga: "Mwaipopo told me that you, Mwankuga, were poisoning him. Mwkanyemale (a doctor) says that your doctors are in the hills, you went to fetch them there." Then Mwankuga went to his father Mwaipopo and asked him: "Is it true that you are accusing me of working sorcery against you? Do you say so yourself?"

"Mwaipopo said: "Who told you of this Mwankuga?"

"Mwankuga: "Nesna told me."

"Mwaipopo: "It was Nesna who told me that you were working sorcery against me! Go and ask him about it, and have it out with him."

"So Mwankuga took the case to Mwakinsya (another chief) for arbitration.

"Mwakinsya said: "Nesna is in the wrong and must pay a cow to his chief Mwankuga."

Nesna refused.

"So Mwakinsya said: "All right, we shall go to those who know about the case", and he came with all his men to Mwenangwing, Mwaipopo's senior village headman (*i.e.* the *representative of Mwanamble, vide p.* 181). There a witness gave evidence, saying: "I was with Mwankuga when Nesna told him that Mwaipopo accused him of sorcery." Nesna denied it.

"Mwakinsya said: "I, Mwakinsya, I have finished, Nesna must pay a cow."

"Nesna still refused.

"Mwankuga: "Your honour the judge, and others. I have cows, I shall not ask for his cow, but let him leave my country and build elsewhere."

"Nesna replied that he was hoeing near Mwaipopo in the forest, and

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

sleeping there, and he refused to move. Then Nsusa wrote a letter (he begged a sheet of paper from the clerk of the court and got a Christian, Mlokigwe, to write for him) and sent it to Tukuyu (i.e. to the District Officer.) All the village headmen were very angry.

"Then one of Nsusa's cows fell into a crater-lake and was drowned. An autopsy was done and "wounds" were found in the animal's stomach. It was said that it had been killed by witchcraft. Nsusa moved to Mbambo, because, he said, "They are killing my cows". Then Mwaipopo fetched him to build in the forest. Nsusa replied that he would prefer to go home, and Mwaipopo agreed, but said he must first pay two cows. "I," said Mwaipopo, "am satisfied, but your friends there are angry, you have done wrong to Mwaskupe; you can go if you pay two cows." Nsusa refused and got angry and wrote to Tukuyu again, saying: "Mwaipopo never comes to Court. He spends all his time drinking in the forest, and I, Nsusa, have judged all the cases myself in Court. Now that I am away from Court the cases are not judged; all is silent."

"The clerks at Tukuyu recognized that the stamp and the handwriting were not those of the court clerk, so they wrote to Mwaipopo. He was angry and imprisoned Nsusa for three months. The District Officer advised Mwaipopo not to let Nsusa return to his country, so when he came out of prison Nsusa built in the country of Mwangomo. This was a year or so ago, and the day before yesterday the village headmen went to fetch him. He is here, sleeping in the house of Kasisi, in Igombe. Eight men went to fetch Nsusa, carrying his household stuff and driving back the cattle. (We saw them.) "Yes, Mwaipopo must have agreed, for if a chief drives away a man no commoner can take the initiative in fetching him back."

"Nsusa killed a bull and also provided two pots of beer, one for the men of Igombe and one for the men of Lugombo. His own village was Lugombo, together with Itiki (cf. p. 183). He killed the bull at the house of Kasisi where he is staying. He has not yet been given a homestead."

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

37. FETCHING HOME A PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL

Ilolo village, 19/9/37.

166 621 Five young men ran past our house (which was on the main village street), carrying mats and calabashes.

Angombwike: 'They have gone to fetch one of Porukoto's men who had moved elsewhere. A son of Porukoto (the chief) went with the others to fetch him back. That is as if the chief had gone himself; he loves him. It is customary for people to seize the mats of the man who has moved. If he objects they do not agree to his objections. They say: "You have spent time here.-Let's be off!" They just snatch his mats. The man who has moved agrees and tells them to go, he will follow, and he comes later.

'When he comes they put him in a house where he stays for two or three days; then he asks: "How about a home, friends?" Then they point out a homestead to him. If he does not like it he refuses it and they agree and tell him to choose one for himself, which he does.

'But if he does not agree to come perhaps he sends a son to build here; perhaps he comes but after he has spent two or three days he says: "I am going; I want to return to where I was, so he goes."

'When they go to fetch a man they always run off with his mats.'

[p.270]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

38. BRINGING HOME A VILLAGE HEADMAN

Mwambuputa's home-coming

Mwambuputa is the senior headman of Mwankuga who had fled to the Lake-shore plain from fear of 'the breath' of his men (cf. pp. 229–30). He was brought back with ceremony. His return also brought to a head an old land dispute (cf. pp. 188–90). For the status of the personalities concerned consult the table of villages and headmen on pp. 181–5. 121 622 166

Record of G. W., 1/5/35.

'I visited Tandale (Mwainyobolela) the village headman of Busikali and the man chosen to bury chiefs. Katolile (the village headman by inheritance of Bujenga, and a brother of Jene, Kasitile's wife) turned up with two others to fetch him to the home-coming of Mwambuputa (Mwafungo)[1] in Igembe. We picked up Kikalango (a junior son of the chief Mwaipopo) on the way and he and Tandale told me the following story: 166

"Mwambuputa went to the Lake-shore plain (MuNgonde). Then Mwankuga I (the young chief), while he was still alive, found a cow and the village headmen went off with it to fetch Mwambuputa home. Mwankuga did not go himself. This cow was kept by Mwambuputa, not eaten. It was to say to him; 'Come back, my headman.' Then Mwambuputa agreed and said: 'I will return, take my son back with you now.' So they came back. Then Mwankuga I died, and Mwambuputa came up to his funeral and put up temporary huts to live in, and he has not since been back to MuNgonde. Yes, he could have built proper houses before this ceremony, had he wished, it is not forbidden."

'Those who come to this gathering are his fathers (i.e. the men of Mwaipopo) and his friends (i.e. the men of Mwankuga), all commoners—no chiefs come to this ceremony. And in fact neither Mwaipopo nor Mwankuga II was there, nor did I see any of Mwaipopo's brothers. Kikalango and Kititu (junior sons of Mwaipopo) came to accompany me. We arrived at Mwambuputa's huts with Ngulyo, about noon. About 100 men were present. I noticed Mwambuputa himself, Kakuju, Ngulyo, Tandale, Katotile, and Mwaseba (Kabolile). 166 183

[1] Some informants used the name 'Mwambuputa', others 'Mwafungo'. To avoid confusion we use only the former.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 195! FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166
783

'I was told: "The meaning of the ceremony is this: Mwambuputa says to us: 'My fathers, you sent for me, I have come'; and then they show him a place to build, saying: 'You, friend, this is your homestead here.'" At noon Kakuju explained: "Now Mwanzambe the senior headman of Mwaipopo (actually he has inherited this position and lives in another chiefdom, coming here for cases and ceremonies) has gone to announce to Mwaipopo that: 'Your child has returned'. Mwaipopo will send him back saying to him: 'Thank you for telling me, my headman, do you go and perform the ceremony and ritual (*akatendeleeye, akaeyagule*) he is your child, you are his father.' Then he will return here and say: 'I have told Mwaipopo, let us go and show Mwambuputa his new homestead.' These huts of Mwambuputa's are on the old men's side, it is Bujeje here. He will be given a homestead in Igembe. He had no place in Igembe, he was a stranger. So after the funeral of Mwenkuga I, he went to the old men and was given a homestead, and bananas to eat here. A man named Mwambenja had them before, but he moved to Mwangomo's country. Now they will go and give him a homestead in Igembe. He did build before in Igembe, but he spent a long time on the plain, and others have built there." (For another version cf. pp. 188–90.)

'Then Kakuju asked Kikalango: "Have they told Mwenkuga?" Kikalango replied: "I do not know." Kakuju explained to me: "They should tell him, 'Your man has returned'." Mwanzambe (Mwegama) came back and called the old village headmen together for a discussion. Then he led us off to Igembe, to the homestead of Mbuluko Mwaipopo a cross-cousin (*watani*) of the chief. Just before we got there Mwanzambe turned to Tandale and the other senior men and said: "Look after Mwambuputa in the war by night, look after him in dreams."

'Kititu and Kikalango explained that "Mbuluko is Mwakalungu and Mwaipopo;[1] now they have come here he will have to move and give place to Mwambuputa. At first he refused, but they pacified him. He cannot refuse, he will move. They just considered where it would be best for the village headman to be." And, previously, on the way, they had told me that to whatever house we came, the householder would have to move and give place.

'Two bulls, one full-grown, and one a little smaller, had been promised by Mwambuputa, and were brought with us. Mwanjinga, son of Mwanzambe killed them both. Mwanzambe said to the village headmen: "We give Mwambuputa to you, Mwakwese, and you (here he mentioned other village headmen whose names are not in my notes). He was in exile (*ndiw*), he has returned." A woman, wife of the house-

[1] The implication is that Mbuluko inherited through his mother from his grandfather, Mwaipopo I, but we did not pursue this.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166
713

holder, brought out a dish of cooked beans and set them down. The two men nearest took and shared them. The division of meat was carried out by Mwanaambe in collaboration with his senior colleagues. It was as follows:

1 rib and saddle (*akabaw*) to Mwaipopo (chief)
1 rib and saddle to Mwankuga (young chief)
1 hump to Mwaipopo
1 hump and liver to me (sent with me when I went home).

'It was explained that "If it had been an ordinary killing we would have sent both rib and saddle to Mwaipopo, one for Kalinga, and one for Kalobo (the two chief wives), now we send one to Mwankuga because it is his ceremony."

1 leg to the men of Bujoge
1 leg to the men of Bujenga
1 leg to the men of Nkyenne
1 leg to the men of Ndopumbe
} 4 senior age-villages of Mwaipopo

1 leg to the men of Igembe
1 leg to the men of Ipoma
2 legs to the men of Njesi and their juniors the men of Mpongo
} 4 senior age-villages of Mwankuga

'Mwakatika of Mpongo, the headman of the village immediately junior to Njesi had not come, so Kakuju of Njesi divided two legs, one for his own village Njesi, and one for Mpongo.

'I went home with Kitito and Kikalenga and two children sent to carry my meat. On the way Kitito said: "The leg of Igembe will be divided up at Mwambuputa's place (*i.e.* where it was killed) into four parts. The four villages of Igembe will each get their share: each of these four groups will have a pot, but the meat will be no further divided.

Igembe, 1 pot
Lugombe, 1 pot
Katumba, 1 pot
Nkibonde, 1 pot ('They eat with the men of Igembe')."

'(This was confirmed the following day by a young man of Katumba who had eaten some of the meat.)

'Kabolile Mwaseba of Ipoma came with his younger men also. Mwalisu Mwaijonga is his assistant headman and he was there, but Kabolile cooked all the meat together, in one pot. It was explained that "While in Igembe we have many villages it is not so in Ipoma.

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)195' FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

186
783

There is Ndengeni, true, but they always eat with their elders. The men of Igembe are the oldest of all, they are inheriting from the men of Bujoge as they die. They are senior to the men of Ipoma who are their juniors. The men of Ipoma did go through the 'coming out', but with their elders. Mwalisu has no separate village."

'About the ceremony I was told "Mwambuputa took the initiative, he sent a message to Mamumbe saying: 'I have returned' and Mamumbe told the others." And someone else explained that, "Before Mwambuputa killed the bulls we did not see that he had come back; now he has returned."'

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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Nyakyusa

INDEX

Adultery, 56, 76, 86, 89-90, 158, 169, 187, 203-4, 209, 211, 237
Age-sets, 32, 158-9, 171-2
Ancestors, 12, 14, 54, 121-3, 164, 165, *see also* Shades
Arbitration, 76, 136-48, 237, 262-4
Avoidance, 83-5, 106, 123, 160-2, 164, 173, 175-6
Autopsy, 116-17, 121, 198-200, 210-12, 247-50

Building, 20, 42-3, 49-50, 244, 246-50, 272
'Breath of men', 91, 96-108, 122-3, 125-6, 129, 134-5, 157, 167-9, 190, 206-8, 235-40

Cattle, 7-8, 14-22, 34-5, 37, 55, 57-8, 60, 73, 81-2, 91, 95, 119-20, 151, 160, 170, 216, 242-3
Chiefs, 1-3, 12-13, 15, 22-31, 37-42, 51, 58-9, 63, 90, 104, 119, 181-90, 204-5, 207, 212, 268-9
Chiefdom, 11-12, 18, 22-35, 37-40, 121, 173, 181-5
Christians, 17, 36, 40-3, 51, 57-8, 63-4, 70-2, 80, 84-5, 89-90, 107-8, 127-32, 137, 139, 156, 172, 175, 200, 209-10, 254, 262-5
'Coming out' ceremony, 22-31, 37-40, 107, 134-5, 186-7, 188-9
Courts, 16-17, 58-9, 117-18, 132, 137, 140 ff., 190-2, 258-61, 264-5
Cultivation, 3, 6-7, 20-1, 50-6, 170
  areas cultivated, 55
Cultural area, 3-5
'Defenders', 96-102, 109-12, 115, 118, 120, 123, 126, 164, 167-9, 245
Dignity, 77-8
Display, 78-82, 89
Divination, 115, 117-18
Dreams, 96-7, 100, 109-10, 118, 226-8, 245
Dress, 79, 89

Eating, 20, 67-70, 183, 194-5, 206, 222, 228-30, *see also* Food
Employment, 16, 63-4, 193, 200-2

Family, 50, *see also* Kinship
Feasts, 70-2, 105, 164, 272-4
Fire, 26-8, 37, 52
First-fruits, 54-5
Fishing, 58
Food, 8, 67, 73, 75, 93-5, 105-6, 164-7, 216, 218, *see also* Eating
Funerals, 70, 72, 79-80, 104, 108, 122, 151, 236-7

Gold-fields, v, 16, 194-5

Herding, 19-22, 56-8, 73-4, 141, 152, 155, 170, *see also* Cattle
Homestead, 34-5, 77-8, 188-90
Homosexuality, 87-8, 196-7
Housekeeping, 60
Hunting, 31, 58-9, 175

Incest, 86, 129, 159-62, 164, 166, 206, 237-8
Indirect Rule, 16-17, 38, 41
Informants, vi-vii
Inheritance, 14-15, 35-8, 76, 79, 161, 188, 207, 211, 219-20, 235, 252-3

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 F7117 Ngonde F7117
Nyakyusa

Initiation, 5, 19, 70, 74-5, 86, 160-2
Kings, 3, 4, 12
Kinship, 14-15, 18, 21, 33, 55, 60, 73-4, 76, 121, 141, 164, 169, 170-1

Language, 7, 2, 4
Land, 20-3, 34-6, 41-2, 44-9, 131, 142-8, 170, 174, 188-92, 254, *see also* Cultivation
Leaders, vii, 13-16, 22-4, 31-4, 42-3, 136-9, 171, 176
Lineage, 14-15, 103, 121, 139, 172

Magic, *see* Medicines
Marriage, 5, 14, 20-1, 28-9, 37, 70, 74-6, 115, 130, 170
m. age, 14, 38, 87, 160
Method of work, v-viii
Medicines, 24-8, 54-5, 123-7, 186-7, 188-9, *see also* Sorcery
Menstruation, 94-5, 219-20
Migrant labour, 18, 62-4, 193, *see also* Employment
Morality, 82-9, 104-8, 124, 129-30
Moving, 28, 35-6, 40, 118-19, 152-7, 267-9

Native Authorities, 38
Nguni, 8

Ordeal, 115-19, 124, 132, 135, 198-205, 211, 239, 241-6

Polygyny, 14-15, 71-2, 160-1, 167, 171
Population, 1, 3, 5
Prayer, 99-101, 239, *see also* Sacrifice; ritual of reconciliation
Pregnancy, 94-5

Ritual of reconciliation, 76, 107, 101, 131, 156, 235-6, 239-40

Sacred grove, 11, 28, 34
Sacrifice, 12
Songs, 8-9
Schools, 17, 63, 128
Shades, 110-3, *see also* Ancestors
Slaves, 9-10, 41
Smithe, 60-1
Social status, 15, 170-2
Sorcery, 53-4, 90, 124-7, 135, 175, 210-11, 248-9
Spitting, 99-100
Symbolism, 26

Theft, 36, 124-5, 138, 150
Trade, 9, 61-3
Tradition, 3-5, 12-13, 159
Twins, 73-4

Ubwangale (the enjoyment of good company), 66-76, 89, 160-3, 170, 176

Values, 66-90
Vengeance magic, 125-6, 135, 212-13, 256
Villages: communal responsibility in, 149-52
composition of, 19-21
establishment of, 19-21
sections, 33-4, 103, 131
size of, 21, 33
solidarity, 107, 171, 174-5
Village headmen, 13, 22-35, 37, 52, 56-7, 95, 104, 111-12, 114-15, 119-22, 126, 131, 137-48, 157, 168, 181-92, 202-4, 206-9, 268-97, 271-4

War, 23-5, 29-31, 40, 59, 80-1, 149-51, 173, 175, 189, 266
Wisdom, 89-90
Witchcraft, 25, 34, 36, 53-4, 57-72, 80, 91-121, 142, 149, 152-7, 163-7, 175, 190, 198, 205, 214-34, 241-3, 246, 251-4, 257-61
Witnesses, 148-9

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

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122

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[p. ii]

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2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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RITUALS OF KINSHIP AMONG THE NYAKYUSA

BY

MONICA WILSON

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TO WHOM DO THEY PRAY?

Abanyafyale, abanyafyale bikwiputa kuga?
Abanyafyale, abanyafyale bikwiputa kuga?
Kubanyuka! Kubanyuka!

Chorus: Alikumwanya! Alikumwanya!

Abanungu, abanungu bikwiputa kuga?
Abanungu, abanungu bikwiputa kuga?
Kumfulanza! Kumfulanza!

Chorus: Alikumwanya! Alikumwanya!

Abalilamu, abalilamu, bikwiputa kuga?
Abalilamu, abalilamu, bikwiputa kuga?
Kwa Mohamedi! Kwa Mohamedi!

Chorus: Alikumwanya! Alikumwanya!

Abaniguwa, abaniguwa, bikwiputa kuga?
Abaniguwa, abaniguwa, bikwiputa kuga?
Kwa Jesu! Kwa Jesu!

Chorus: Alikumwanya! Alikumwanya!

Translation

The chiefs, the chiefs to whom do they pray?
The chiefs, the chiefs to whom do they pray?
To the shades! To the shades!

Chorus: He is above! He is above!

The Europeans, the Europeans to whom do they pray?
The Europeans, the Europeans to whom do they pray?
To money! To money!

Chorus: He is above! He is above!

The Mohammedans, the Mohammedans to whom do they pray?
The Mohammedans, the Mohammedans to whom to they pray?
To Mohammed! To Mohammed!

Chorus: He is above! He is above!

The baptized, the baptized to whom do they pray?
The baptized, the baptized to whom do they pray?
To Jesus! To Jesus!

Chorus: He is above! He is above!

(Song of Nyakyusa Christians)

[p. v]

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2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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1144
122

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School of African Studies
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[p. vii]

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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT page vii

I. INTRODUCTION 1

II. BURIAL RITES 15
(a) The form of burial 15
(b) The terror of death 17
(c) The sacrifice 19
(d) The wailing and dancing 21
(e) Prestige at funerals 31
(f) A particular burial 34

III. FAREWELL TO THE DEAD 37
1. IN SELVA AND MUNGONDE 37
(a) The events 37
(b) The overt purpose and symbolism 46
2. IN KUKWE COUNTRY 63
(a) The events 64
(b) The overt purpose and symbolism 67

IV. THE RITUAL OF PUBERTY AND MARRIAGE 86
1. IN SELVA AND MUNGONDE 86
(a) The events 86
(b) The overt purpose and symbolism 101
2. IN KUKWE COUNTRY 118
(a) The events 118
(b) The overt purpose and symbolism 123

V. THE RITUAL OF BIRTH 130
(a) Taboos of procreation 130
(b) The confinement 143

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

VI. THE RITUAL OF ABNORMAL BIRTH page 152
(a) The events 152
(b) The overt purpose and symbolism 166

VII. RITUALS OF MISFORTUNE 172
(a) Cleansing after spearing 172
(b) Rotting the ropes 173
(c) Protection against sorcery or vengeance magic 176
(d) Prayer to the shades 179
(e) Reconciliation 186

VIII. THE PARTICIPANTS 190
(a) Categories of participants 190
(b) Christians 197
(c) The exchange of gifts 199
(d) The symbolism of participation and exchange 200

IX. THE NYAKYUSA CONCEPTION OF REALITY 205
(a) The symbolic pattern 205
(b) The nature of the shades 210
(c) Belief and behaviour 214

X. THE SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RITUALS OF KINSHIP 222
(a) The symbolic expression of structural relationships 222
(b) The celebration of rituals and the maintenance of the structure 226
(c) Ultimate values and cultural variation 228

SELECT RECORDS

I. REPORTS OF PARTICULAR FUNERALS 234
(a) Farewell to Mwamulenga, son of Mwegama 234
(b) Farewell to Kalata's mother 238

II. LOCAL VARIATIONS IN THE DEATH RITUAL 244
(a) The funeral of Mwampiki and his wife 244
(b) Note on Ndali funeral rites 249

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

III. MARRIAGE NEGOTIATIONS AND GIFTS page 250

IV. MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO THE SHADES 256

V. CAUSES OF MISFORTUNE 258
(a) The death of Katasya 258
(b) Sickness in the lineage of Mwakyusa 265

VI. PARTICIPANTS IN RITUALS ILLUSTRATED BY GENEALOGIES
Table (a) Genealogy of Mwakobela (Twin ritual) facing page 270
(b) Relatives of Mwakobela's wife (Twin ritual) 271
(c) Truncated genealogy of Mwampiki (Death ritual) 272
(d) Genealogy of Mwamulenga III, son of Mwegama (Death ritual) 273
(e) Genealogy of Mwasalimba (Ritual of the gaping cough) facing page 274

INDEX 275

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Sacrifice and drums beside the open grave *facing page* 20

2. Leaping on the newly filled grave 21

3. The beer of the 'gasping cough'. Mwaalemba on the left 84

4. The bride washes with *ikipili* in the doorway of her mother's hut 85

5. Shaving the bride 100

6. The groomsmen dance the stamping dance 101

7. The officiant at a twin ritual anoints a child 164

8. Preparing the meat for the participants to match at a twin ritual 165

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the broken country to the north of Lake Nyasa live the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people who, together with those closely related to them in language and culture, number[1] nearly a quarter of a million. They stretch across the river which divides Tanganyika Territory from Nyasaland and, because they were hemmed in by mountains and swift rivers, they long remained isolated from the outside world. They are skilful herdsmen and cultivators, well fed, and practising a system of green manuring and rotation which allows of fixed cultivation, in contrast to the shifting systems of most of their neighbours. 105 [31]

Their villages are large. Each is occupied by a group of age mates together with their wives and young children. Father and son and grandson *must* live in separate villages and full brothers are commonly separated also. Fathers and young sons are in adjoining villages, but the villages of grown men are scattered about a chiefdom without reference to the genealogical connections of its members. The only kinship relationships common within a village are those of half-brothers and of affines, for a man often marries the daughter or sister of a village mate. But although they live dispersed, agnatic kinsmen are bound together by a strong lineage organization. Property, in the form of cattle, circulates within agnatic lineages, passing from brother to full brother in order of seniority, and thence to the son of the senior brother, who inherits, with the cattle, obligations towards his juniors and a certain authority over them. Half-brothers may also be linked by regular exchanges of cattle—'milking one another's cows', as the Nyakyusa call it. Cattle are given at a marriage by the groom to the bride's father, and distributed by him among his brothers and sons; the bulk of them usually going to one of the bride's full brothers, who retains through life a special responsibility for her and her children. Polygyny is approved. The form most favoured

[1] Throughout this book the present tense refers to the period 1934–8 when the material presented here was collected.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

105 is the marriage of two sisters, or of a woman and her brother's daughter, to the same man; such 'sisters' are closely identified and their children are treated almost as full siblings.

Besides being bound together by a common interest in property —the cattle of the lineage—kinsmen join in the celebration of rituals to their common ancestors; for the very fact of their kinship is held to make them mystically dependent upon one another, and more particularly on the prayers of the most senior among them. At a funeral kinsmen will gather from many of the villages of the chiefdom, and some from other chiefdoms also. The range of kinship recognized varies somewhat with status, but the effective lineage group is normally of a span of three or four generations only, including descendants of a common grandfather or great-grandfather.

105 Traditionally villages were grouped in a number of small in-
571 dependent chiefdoms led by hereditary chiefs. Each chiefdom contained many kinsmen, but there was no fiction of common descent of all the men of a chiefdom, or of chiefs and people. There were thus three types of social group: villages occupied by age-mates, who shared common land rights, and herded and fought together; lineages bound by common interest in inherited cattle and common rituals; and chiefdoms in which the bond was occupation of a common territory and allegiance to a common chief.

105 Relations between the three groups are epitomized in the traditional law relating to theft, adultery, murder, and witchcraft.[1] A man was a member both of a village and of a lineage and both groups were responsible for his behaviour. An adulterer or cattle-thief was speared by the injured party and his kinsmen, if they could catch him. If they could not, they might attack any member of his age-village. This commonly led to war between the villages, but short of this, the kinsmen of the dead man claimed compensation from the thief or adulterer and his kin, not from the avengers. Both lineage and age-village were therefore corporate groups, the members of which were mutually responsible for each other, and it is significant that *both* senior kinsman and village headman of the defendant were required to accompany him when the case came to court. Murder was treated as a private delict, the kinsmen of the dead attacking or claiming compensation from the murderer and his kin, but witchcraft was treated as an offence against the

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company* (1952), p. 150.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

state, and the property of a convicted witch went to the chief. 105
Therefore the lineage was not the unrivalled principle of social grouping among the Nyakyusa as it was among the Tallensi or Nuer, but it was a corporate body.[1]

The existence of three types of groups among the Nyakyusa 105
made for social integration. The divergent interests of villages were 182
checked by the fact that every man had kinsmen in many other villages upon whom he was dependent, economically and ritually; the fissiparous tendencies of lineages were checked by the loyalties of lineage members to different villages; and the villages and lineages were all held to be dependent upon their chief for the fertility of their land, control of the weather, and success in warfare.

Since an account of the Nyakyusa age-villages and an outline 000
of their kinship system have already been published,[2] we may now turn directly to the topic of this book, their religion.

The traditional religion of the Nyakyusa people has three 771
elements: First, there is a lively belief in the survival of the dead 105
and in the power of senior relatives, both living and dead, over their descendants; secondly, there is a belief in medicines, that is, in a mystical power residing in certain material substances which is used by those who have the requisite knowledge; thirdly, there is a belief in witchcraft, that is, an innate power to harm others exercised by certain individuals, and in the mystical power of fellow villagers to punish wrongdoers. This last power, 'the breath of men', is akin to witchcraft. It may be objected that a belief in witchcraft is in no sense 'religious', but to exclude discussion of it in an account of Nyakyusa religion is comparable to excluding a reference to the devil in a discussion of Christianity. Evil is a reality which must be interpreted in one fashion or another in every cosmology.

The belief in the survival of the dead and the power of senior relatives, is expressed in a series of elaborate rituals, one set of which concern only kinsmen and are directed towards the im-

[1] There appear to be many gradations between a society with no corporate lineages, such as the Lozi, and one like the Tallensi in which the lineage is the basis of all important social groups, just as there are gradations between a stateless society in which all offences are treated as quarrels between groups of kinsmen, and a primitive state in which any serious assault is an offence against the state.

[2] Monica Wilson, op. cit. and 'Nyakyusa kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, ed. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde (1951).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

771 mediate ancestors of the participants, and another set which con-
105 cern chiefdoms and groups of chiefdoms, and are directed towards the immediate ancestors of ruling chiefs and certain distant ancestors of the chiefs' line, heroes in Nyakyusa history. The name of one of these heroes, Kyala, has been used by the missionaries to translate the word 'God', but all the evidence available goes to show that Kyala was, traditionally, but one of several distant ancestors to whom regular sacrifices were made on behalf of a large group of chiefdoms. All the rituals of this type—those directed to family shades, the chiefs' ancestors, and the heroes—are concerned with that which is beneath (*pasi*), not that which is above. Men look to the earth where corpses are buried, not to any sky god.

121 The theme of the present volume is the rituals celebrated by
771 kinsmen at death, at the puberty and marriage of a girl (the last two events usually coinciding), at birth, especially twin birth, and in misfortune. A further volume will deal with the communal rituals celebrated before the annual break of the rains; whenever public misfortune such as drought, flood, famine, or plague occurs or threatens; before battle; and when a chief is succeeded by his sons, and the younger generation take over power from their elders.
[881] There is no circumcision or initiation of men other than the 'coming out' ceremony, when a whole generation takes over responsibility for the administration and defence of the chiefdom from their fathers. Some reference to three of the heroes—Kyala, Lwembe, and Mbasi—is made in texts on the rituals of kinsmen, but our discussion of them is postponed to the second book in which the rituals directed to them are described.

775 A section of the Nyakyusa people is Christian and its influence
177 on pagan thought and practice is appreciable; however, discussion
128 of this is also postponed to the second book, since it is most evident in the changing concept of Kyala. There, too, the connections between change in ritual and other aspects of the social structure between 1934 and 1955 are analysed.

121 The Nyakyusa cult of senior relatives (like any ancestor cult) is
771 not intelligible or significant apart from a study of kinship, and it may be argued that this material should be presented only as part of an analysis of Nyakyusa kinship, but we cannot discuss everything at once and some measure of abstraction is necessary. No one ritual among the Nyakyusa is fully intelligible without reference to the whole series of rituals. The principle, propounded forty-five years ago by Professor Radcliffe-Brown, that a symbol

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

recurring in a cycle of rituals is likely to have the same significance /21
in each, holds good for the Nyakyusa: certain symbols of shaving, 771
washing, eating, spreading banana leaves, scattering grain, and so forth were similarly interpreted by our informants in the different rituals of the cycle, and their full significance is only apparent when a comparison of their various uses is made. In this book, therefore, attention is focused on the ritual cycle. A comparison of numerous rites reveals a *symbolic pattern*, the counterpart, in the emotional aspect, of kinship organization in the practical aspect; and the comments of the more self-conscious Nyakyusa on the rites indicate the *intellectual system* linked with this pattern.

As already mentioned, the religious conceptions of the Nyakyusa 771
include the belief in medicines, in 'the breath of men', and in witchcraft, as well as in the power of senior relatives. The importance of medicines in the rituals directed to the shades will be evident in every chapter of this book. References to witchcraft and the 'breath of men' are not so frequent, since these form what is on the whole a separate system of beliefs, and refer to a different set of relationships. The ancestor cult is concerned *solely* with the relationships of kinsmen, and of the chiefs and their peoples; witchcraft and 'the breath of men' *mainly* with the relationships of fellow villagers—i.e. age mates and their wives—though it also impinges on kinship and political relationships. Only in the relationship of spouses, and that between chief and village headmen, do the two sets of beliefs constantly overlap. An account of the Nyakyusa conception of witchcraft and 'the breath of men' has [578]
already been published, and it has been shown that accusations of witchcraft occur most frequently between fellow villagers and, nowadays, between fellow employees, that is, between non-relatives; they are also fairly frequently directed against wives and co-wives; but accusations of witchcraft against kinsmen of the same lineage are very rare.[1] Antagonism between kinsmen occurs and is expressed in accusations of practising sorcery, as well as in fear of the power of senior relatives, but most misfortunes are attributed to the lust and envy of neighbours or wives rather than to the malice of kinsmen. Evil is conceived of as having a personal cause, but as originating generally outside the circle of kin. The mystical power of senior relatives (living and dead) can never be used irresponsibly—it cannot operate unless the cause is just—and therefore misfortune emanating from the shades is always a just

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 102–4; 198–205.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

771 retribution, not an irresponsible assault, like that made by witches.

The religion of the Nyakyusa is expressed in ritual rather than in dogma. Everyone participates, at some time or another, in a variety of rituals; a great deal of time and energy is devoted to them, and they are elaborate. By comparison, the dogma and myth are limited both in content and in influence. Many more people participate in rituals than are fully conscious of dogma and myth; many more people can describe rituals than interpret them. In this analysis, therefore, the rituals are first described and the principal dogmas are deduced from the Nyakyusa interpretation of them.

121 The stress is on the Nyakyusa interpretation of their own rituals,
771 for anthropological literature is bespattered with symbolic guessing, the ethnographer's interpretation of the rituals of other people. Now it seems probable that certain symbols are universal in the sense that they express the same ideas in all societies. Many other symbols are emotionally intelligible when interpreted—the following pages are full of examples—but it is foolish to imagine that an individual schooled in one culture can understand the symbolism of another without instruction. For this reason, and at the risk of wearying the reader, many of the texts on which this interpretation is based are quoted. The interpretations of even the most self-conscious Nyakyusa, such as Kasitile the rain-maker, Mwandisi the old blind historian, Mwasalemba, Lyandileko and Kakune the doctors, do not, of course, reveal the whole truth about Nyakyusa rituals, but *any analysis not based on some translation of the symbols used* by people of that culture is open to suspicion. The texts were recorded in the Nyakyusa language by Godfrey or Monica Wilson, or one of our two Nyakyusa clerks, Mwaikambo and Mwaisumo, and the informants most often quoted were selected for their special knowledge. And very many others discussed rituals with us.[1]

Not all Nyakyusa are conscious of all the interpretations given. A few symbols, such as the association of different types of banana with male and female respectively, are known to everyone; but the meaning of many of the events in the rituals was obscure to young men and women. Most of the interpretations quoted have, however, been given by more than one informant (as is shown in the text and documents) and may be taken as *common*, i.e. current in

[1] For the methods of field-work cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. vii–ix.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the group. In the few cases in which our informant may have been |21
giving his own individual interpretation, 'putting a bucket down 771
into his subconscious and pulling it up', it was at least a Nyakyusa subconscious, and the interpretation is in terms of the culture. It is with common, not individual, symbols that we are concerned: what is offered in this book is a sociological, not a psychological, analysis.

Similarities between the symbolism of Nyakyusa rituals and the |71
symbolism of dreams and neuroses in Western society will be |21
obvious to readers. That preoccupation with anal and oral func- 771
tions, with 'nakedness' (though the Nyakyusa habitually wore the most exiguous of coverings), with death, coition, and birth, with mastery ('overstepping') and incest, which is characteristic of the rituals we describe, is evident also in any textbook of psychoanalysis dealing with Western Europeans and Americans; and certain symbols such as a house, a doorway, a spear, seed, and so forth are common to both cultures; but here we are not concerned to trace these similarities. Our business is to lay bare the symbolic pattern of the Nyakyusa without reference to the Western tradition.

The material used for the sociological analysis of ritual consists |28
of two types: observation or description of events, and statements |21
about associations. The greatest difficulty in presenting it has been to choose between a chronological account of each ritual, followed by the Nyakyusa translation or interpretation of the symbolism, and then by the sociological analysis; and an integrated account combining the interpretation and analysis with the description. The advantage of the first method is that the validity of both interpretation and analysis can be more easily judged since the evidence on which it is based is fully set out; the disadvantage is that the description itself implies interpretation and analysis. The symbolism is often implicit in the description of events, and the separation of description from interpretation involves repetition; at the same time the classification of events and symbols is itself a form of analysis, and the separation of description from analysis tends to conceal this. The present study is a compromise between the two approaches. Where events and their symbolism are fairly straightforward, the interpretation accompanies the description; but where, as in the rituals of farewell to the dead, puberty and marriage, and abnormal birth, they are complicated, and the interpretation may well be questioned, accounts of the events are separated from detailed evidence on symbolism. Analysis is neces-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

121 sarily implied all through, but since the argument can only be un-
128 folded step by step (for no one ritual can be fully analysed until all are described) a discussion of it is reserved to the concluding chapters. In interpreting the symbolism, cross reference between the different rituals of the cycles would be too frequent to give in the text. Readers wishing to follow up references to the symbolism of bananas, for example, or *ikipiki* medicine, should use the index.

771 The link between religious beliefs and morality (in the sense of
577 right behaviour) is very clear among the Nyakyusa. Many misfortunes are attributed to sin, that is, wrong-doings (*inongwa*) thought to be supernaturally punished. Indeed, to the Nyakyusa the idea of the wicked man 'spreading himself like a green bay tree'[1] is inconceivable, and the disciples' question: 'Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'[2] cold common sense. Here we are concerned with the form of morality[3] sanctioned by Nyakyusa religion, with the conception of good and evil, and with
[128] the relation between belief and behaviour.[4] A table of private misfortunes attributed to the anger of senior relatives is included in this volume; public misfortunes will be discussed in the succeeding one; and a table of misfortunes attributed to witchcraft, sorcery, and the legitimate anger of neighbours ('the breath of men') has been given in the study of Nyakyusa age-villages already published.[5] While the Nyakyusa lay great emphasis on the correct performance, in every detail, of certain rituals, their very performance implies co-operation between kinsmen, and not only co-operation but amity. For 'anger in the heart', if unconfessed, may bring misfortune. Thus though the outward form is stressed, the inward and spiritual is not totally ignored.

121 We proceed on the assumption that men express in ritual what moves them most; that the form of expression is conventional and obligatory, and that therefore in ritual the values of a group (as opposed to those of individuals) are revealed.

[1] Psalm xxxvii: 35. [2] John ix, 2.

[3] I cannot accept Professor Radcliffe-Brown's definition of morality as the control of conduct by 'public opinion and conscience' as opposed to control by religion. Nor do I accept Professor Macbeath's argument that primitive man has an idea of good quite apart from religion. A. E. Taylor's view of morality comes much closer to the facts as shown in Nyakyusa society.

cf. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*, p. 172; A. Macbeath, *Experiments in Living*, Gifford Lectures 1948–9; A. E. Taylor, *The Faith of a Moralist*, Gifford Lectures 1926–8.

[4] The germ of the book is Godfrey Wilson's 'An African morality', *Africa*, 1936.

[5] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 198–213.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

By *ritual* we mean a primarily religious action, that is, action directed to securing the blessing of some mystical power or powers. The action may be a negative, i.e. an avoidance or taboo, as well as a positive one. Symbols and concepts are employed in rituals but are subordinated to practical ends. Ritual is distinguished from *ceremonial*, which is an elaborate conventional form for the expression of feeling, not confined to religious occasions; any emotional situation, whether religious or secular, may be clothed in ceremony, and a ceremony is not enforced by mystical sanctions, only by conventional ones. In short, a ceremony is an appropriate and elaborate form for the expression of feeling; but a ritual is action believed to be efficacious.[1] Confusion between the two arises in our own society, for what is ritual to some (e.g. a rite of baptism or marriage) is but ceremonial to others. In Nyakyusa society the distinction is fairly clear-cut: *ubunyago*, which is translated here as *a ritual*, means a series of actions directed towards the shades or heroes, and enforced by mystical sanctions, as opposed to action which is merely customary and conventional (*ulwiho*). At a burial, some actions are only *ulwiho*, others are also *ubunyago*. A negative ritual, that which is taboo, is *mwiko*.

Ubunyago is applied as a noun, and in its verbal form, *ukunyagula* (to perform a ritual), to funeral rites, especially that part of such rites in which only immediate relatives participate (*ubunyago bwa bufyele*); to the girls' puberty and marriage ritual (*ubunyago bwa busungu*), to the ritual at birth (*ubunyago bwa bufiwe*), especially at twin birth (*ubunyago bwa mapasa*); to the rituals performed on behalf of the country for rain and fertility (*ubunyago bwa kisu*); to the treatment of the young chief and village headmen when authority is handed to them by the older generation (*ubunyago bwa busoka*); and, nowadays, to the sacraments of the Christian Church. *Unyago* is the specialist who knows the right medicines and observances and conducts the ritual. The word is translated as 'officiant' or 'priest'.

By a *symbol* is meant something which typifies or represents something else. Our Nyakyusa informants spoke of *ififwani*—likenesses (the word is also used for photographs)—and in expounding rituals they repeatedly said of an object or action: 'This means (*kokuti*) such and such.' Symbolism is always based on an association, a feeling of likeness between things. The intrinsic quality of an object, or relationship, or event, is expressed in terms of another

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, 1939.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

121 object or action which it is felt to resemble. The images men use,
811 the things they feel to be alike, are determined in a general way by the form of the society, and Nyakyusa images are in terms of bananas, staple grains, cattle, smithing on a primitive forge, lineage organization and so on. There are cultural idioms, accepted forms of expression, which frequently recur, but the particular associations are not predictable any more than the associations made by a poet in our own society—the priest and the doctor are indeed in one aspect poets.

771 The essence of Nyakyusa ritual is that things which are felt to
813 be alike are taken as causally connected. Both positive actions and
843 avoidances or taboos are based on the assumption that like objects or actions react on one another. This was clearly recognized by an informant who remarked: 'avoidances come from resemblances.' The basis is invariably the *feeling* of likeness, but mixed up with this there is often exact observation, as in the following taboo. The husband of a pregnant woman may not hunt big game because, it is said, they will be unusually fierce and attack him particularly. The association made is between a pregnant woman who is irritable, 'fierce' (*nkali*), and the game which is fierce. The husband is identified with his wife, 'and', the Nyakyusa say, 'lion *always* attack a cow in calf'. Sometimes like things are felt to be antagonistic, as 'seed in the belly' and seed in the ground, and sometimes sympathetic. Sometimes like is thought to produce like—a pregnant woman is forbidden to sit close to someone lest she bears twins—and sometimes men mime a misfortune as a prophylactic against it.

789 The rituals are magical in the sense that efficacy is held to lie in
184 the particular material form,[1] but they vary in detail with the
771 cultural group, just as the language does.[2] The rituals of the Lakeshore plain in Tanganyika (MuNgonde) and of Selya are almost identical, but those of the Kukwe, the Lugulu, the Saku, the Ndali, the Penja, and the people of Ngonde in Nyasaland are all somewhat different. Differences in ritual are directly connected by the people themselves with differences in lineage, and the principle is maintained that every individual follows the ritual of his or her father's lineage, though a married woman will follow that of her

[1] For a discussion of this characteristic of magic cf. G. & M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change* (1945), pp. 72–3; 88–95.

[2] An account of the various cultural groups included under Nyakyusa, and of related peoples, is given in *Good Company*, pp. 1–5.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

husband when at her husband's home. Kakune, a doctor, explained: 'The ritual for a woman is that of her husband's group, always. My mother was Lugulu, but at her death we did the Kukwe ritual. If my daughter marries a Sangu and dies, they will do the Sangu ritual; she has moved.' We attended a death ritual which was actually performed in two slightly different ways by two sets of mourners. A member of a Sangu family, long established in Selya, had died; sons and daughters of the family performed what was said to be the Sangu ritual, but the children of daughters married to Selya men performed the Selya ritual. Whether the Sangu ritual is really so similar to the Selya ritual as this celebration suggests is doubtful—it seems unlikely, since the Sangu are very different from the Nyakyusa in other respects and their languages are not mutually intelligible—but some sort of adjustment had been made by this foreign family living in Selya and by others in a like position. Our informants *expected* to find parallels to the events of their own rituals in the rituals of neighbouring groups, and they expected also to find *minor* differences. Any variations are explained by the phrase 'that is the custom in their lineage', and the officiant is the final arbitrator as to what is correct. A number of informants also pointed out that the staple foods were used in the death ritual and that these varied somewhat with the area. 'We eat the principal food of the country—it differs with different people. The Kisi and Ngonde (of Nyasaland) use fish, the Ndali use goats, we Nyakyusa cannot use rice but the Swahili would. Our food is bananas.[1] The pumpkin, which we also use, is a very old vegetable and is still much eaten; it is one of the best vegetables.' The Sangu use millet porridge, the Penja maize and beans.

In this book are described the rituals of the main cultural groups of the Nyakyusa—those of the people of Selya and Masoko and the Lake-shore plain (MuNgonde)[2] which are similar, and those of the Kukwe which are different, and a few references are made to other variations. The variations are suggestive, for though the details differ, the values and attitudes expressed are identical. There are also minor differences between families of the same cultural group, and in the practice of different officiants, but their

[1] The Nyakyusa use *amatoki* as a general word for plantains and bananas, though *itoki* is properly one variety of plantain. 'Bananas' is used here to include all varieties of bananas and plantains.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 2.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

128 184 771 interpretations scarcely differ. Thus the commonly accepted idea that ritual forms are more stable than the interpretation of symbolism[1] does not hold for the Nyakyusa.

128 764 The account of the ritual cycle begins with an analysis of funeral rites, for of all the family rituals they involve the greatest emotional tension and are the most elaborate, as well as being performed far more frequently than any others. Moreover, in them are adumbrated symbolic patterns which recur again and again throughout the cycle; in them is apparent that preoccupation with fertility characteristic of the cycle—they are a rite of creation as well as a farewell to the dead—and in them lies the key to an understanding of the conception of the *abasyuka*, 'those who have risen from the dead', that is, the shades.

128 771 The principal participants in the rituals are immediate kin—parents and children, siblings, grandparents and grandchildren—but the circle included varies with the particular ritual concerned and more distant relatives and neighbours are involved in varying degrees. In order to bring out these differences and avoid repetition, the detailed discussion of who takes part is deferred until after all the rituals have been described.

000 Should any Nyakyusa, reading this, feel that matters have been revealed which should remain secret, I would remind them that the interpretation of traditional ritual reveals a profound similarity in the phantasies of the Nyakyusa and those of other races; and such understanding of the dark places of men's minds as the *abanyago* possess may swell that body of knowledge which is the heritage of men of all races and cultures.

[1] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (1952), pp. 155–7; A. N. Whitehead, *Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effects* (1928), p. 75.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER II

BURIAL RITES[1]

(a) *The form of burial*

WHENEVER a death takes place, whether of man, woman, or child, 764
a series of funeral rites lasting a month or more begins. The first of the series is the burial (*ifwa*) which, in the case of most adults, lasts three or four days, though for a rich man it may continue for a week, and for a child it is over in a day. For the sake of convenience the account of burial is given mainly in reference to the burials of men; those of women are very similar and occasional references are made to them; but the constant qualifications of statement that would be necessary to give a complete description of both would be wearisome and are unnecessary for our purpose.

As soon as death occurs the women who are present begin wail- 763
ing and messages are sent to the chief, the village headman, and 764
the dead man's kinsmen and affines, to announce the fact and bid them to the burial. The first message is sent to the father, or to a senior brother, if one is still alive, or failing them to the heir of the dead man, and he it is who sends out the other messages. If the father or a senior brother is alive the burial may take place at his homestead, the body being carried there at once; otherwise the dead man is buried at his own home: the choice rests with his father. A married woman is buried at her husband's home if she has borne children, otherwise at her father's; an elderly widow is buried by her son.

Messages must be sent to all the fathers-in-law and all the sons- 602
in-law both of the dead man and of the senior kinsman who 763
buries him, to all the dead man's full and half-brothers, to the husbands of his sisters, to any classificatory brothers with whom he exchanged cows, to his mother's father or brother, to the full and half-brothers of his father, and to his sons. If any one of these

[1] This description is an amended version of that published by Godfrey Wilson in 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, 1939. The theoretical analysis differs somewhat from that offered in the paper, for the ritual element appears to me to be dominant at the burial as well as in the later 'farewell to the dead'. Between us we attended thirty funerals, in whole or in part.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

602 763 is forgotten he will be angry: 'It happens sometimes that a kinsman comes in later, after the man is buried, and is very angry because no message was sent to him; he comes in a passion, and perhaps he beats his brother [the one who should have sent him a message]. Then the others catch hold of him and say: "Why do you not come soberly and greet us decently with the appropriate words? Come now, why?" And if he does not stop they beat him.'

602 764 These kinsmen and affines, with their wives and children, are under obligation to come to the burial, unless they are sick. Young children under the age of 10 or 11 are not obliged to come, though they often do, but older children must do so. One reason for the continuance of the burial ceremonies for three or four days is that this gives time for relatives from a distance to receive the messages and come. Deliberately to refuse to send a message or, on the [578] other side, to refuse to come to a burial for no good reason, is a symbolic breaking of the bond of kinship and no one ever does either, unless there is a serious quarrel and all economic and social relations are being broken off between the two families concerned.

621 764 577 The village neighbours also are obliged to come to every burial in the village. They normally wish to do so, but, even if they do not, they still come for shame or for fear of being accused of witchcraft if they stay away. Where there is friendship the neighbours come in grief and sympathy and quarrels are softened by the fact of death, but, if the memory of enmity still persists, then the last sanctions are shame and fear: 'Some people mourn more than others.' 'The men who knew him say: "Let us go and mourn him."' 'Those who did not know him intimately mourn because each thinks: "He has died, my neighbour, and so will it be with me one day."' 'If I have quarrelled with my neighbour and he dies, I go to his burial for I say to myself: "It is true that while he lived we quarrelled, but now he is dead and we shall never meet again. I too will go to his burial and mourn him."' 'If a village neighbour does not come to a burial we say he is unkindly and unsociable.' 'And if a man does not go to his neighbour's burial then at once people say: "It was you who bewitched him. Why else do you not come to bury him?"' Several of the accusations of witchcraft recorded had been occasioned by a man's absence from a village neighbour's funeral. For it is believed that witches are chary of going to the burials of their victims lest the dead should rise and denounce them.

643 764 A chief normally goes to all burials in his own country, except

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

those of very young children. 'He goes because it is his subject who has died: he is like the senior kinsman of the whole country, he rules all.' 'If a chief omits to go to a burial people say nothing, they know that he is always going to burials and they think that perhaps he has some urgent business. But if he constantly misses burials then people say that he has no affection for his people, that he does not come to bury them as is fit; and if a chief hears them saying this then he is ashamed.' Sometimes a chief who is busy will send a son to represent him. And he sends the drums to beat the lament. 'The drum *is* the chief . . . they cannot beat the drum before the chief has spoken.'

Besides the chief, the villagers, the relatives, and the drummers, there come also personal friends of the dead man from other villages and chiefdoms. And beyond all these there often come others who are attracted not so much by grief and sympathy, nor even by the obligation to express these feelings, but rather by the dancing, the crowds and the possibility of getting some meat to eat. Not all those who come stay the whole three or four days, while the relatives who live at a distance often do not arrive until the second or third day.

The Nyakyusa believe that in order to protect the living and avenge the dead it is most important to discover the cause of death. To do this they summon a doctor to perform an autopsy,[1] an operation fearful and repugnant, but felt to be necessary. The symptoms are interpreted in terms of witchcraft or sorcery, or other supposed causes of disease.

On the first, or early on the second, day after death, the burial takes place. The grave is dug in the swept and beaten earth that immediately surrounds the huts. The first spit of earth is always turned by the eldest son of the one who has died. At one burial we saw the young eldest son of a dead man being helped to do this. He was too small to manage a hoe by himself so he caught the handle near the blade while an older relative held it behind to steady it for him. The digging after the first spit is done by a skilled grave-digger, who may be a kinsman or not, with the help of others. The grave is ten or more feet deep with a cave at the bottom to one side. Some graves are oblong, some round or oval,

[1] This is certainly traditional, cf. D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater Lakes North of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, V (1895), p. 119. The custom is also reported for the Nyamwanga. For a description of the autopsy, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 247-50.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 according to lineage custom. In the round and oval graves the body is placed in the cave in a sitting position; in the oblong graves lying at full length on one arm; but in both the dead man is set to face the direction from which he and his people have [173] traditionally come. The bulk of the Nyakyusa say that they came from the east, eight or ten generations ago, down the Livingstone Mountains into their present country; and it is to the east that they face in death. Those in the north of the district, whose local name is Kukwe, face in death towards their most recent centre of dispersion near Rungwe Mountain, although they have traditions going farther back to a migration from the Livingstone Mountains through the present Sangu country.

Digging a grave is traditionally a dangerous activity, but nowadays it is no longer so much feared as it used to be. Formerly only mature men helped to dig a grave and they were given a whole leg of the burial meat to eat by themselves. Nowadays young men —often Christians—do it.

Before the burial the body is carried in procession round the homestead. The chief mourners surround it wailing, and the dead man's cattle are driven in front. 'We do this to honour the dead man.' Then one of the cattle of the lineage is taken 'to look into the grave'. Two or three people get down into the grave to receive and bury the body. In the case of a man, his chief wife, his sister, and a male kinsman or village neighbour usually bury him. These three line the cave with mats and cloths which are passed down to them; then the body, previously washed and shaved[1] and now wrapped in cloths, is handed down, and they put it in position in the cave together with a few personal possessions such as a pipe, an eating-pot, a little calabash of ointment, and one of beer; nowadays also a looking-glass and perhaps a pencil and a cup. 'He goes with them to the place of the shades.' A woman is given bark-cloth belts and rouge, and a winnowing basket in place of the pipe and pot. They take off the strings of such utensils as are normally hung up. 'If the strings are left on the utensils will still be hanging up and he will be looking for them.' More cloths and mats are then put in with the body, and the cave is closed either with a stiff mat or with the door of the dead man's house, in accordance with local custom. Often there are hot disputes be-

[184] [1] The Kukwe wash the body just before death, the Nyakyusa and Penja after. The Kukwe fear lest their children should die of 'water in the stomach' if they wash a corpse.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tween the kinsmen about the amount of property to be destroyed. 764
Once we saw the sons of a dead man tugging at two fine mats which his sister was folding into the cave. She wished to put them in but the sons opposed her, saying: 'Why should we spend all the mats? We have buried him, he is dead.'

It is held to be most important that earth should not touch the corpse's face, but once the cave has been closed the chief mourners each push a few handfuls of earth into the grave, the rest of the earth is filled in, and the dancers stamp it hard. Soon no sign of the grave remains.

(*b*) *The terror of death*

Death to the Nyakyusa is a fearful thing. They believe that the 761
spirit (*unsyuka*) of a dead man survives underground (*pasi*) in the 775
place of the shades (*ubusyuka*) and that it can and does visit sur- 765
viving relatives in dreams and materially affect their destinies. The shades of the dead are one of the final causes with which their religion deals. But contact with them is feared and the function of the ritual at the funeral is 'to drive the shade away'. This ritual begins during the burial (*ifwa*) and continues in a series of rites which last for a month or longer. At the burial itself people's attention is mainly concerned with the death as an emotional event, with the fact that a father, a mother, a kinsman or a neighbour has died; but into the emotional quality of death their religious beliefs enter. With the shades they desire no close contact, for the most usual dreams of the dead are those in which they reproach a man for some sin, or foretell his death; their commonest activity is believed to be the sending of madness and misfortune upon sinful men. Nor is it desirable to join the shades oneself. The place of the shades is a vague and shadowy land where no certain happiness is traditionally believed to be. 'No one', said an old man, 'has ever been there and come back to tell us about it. When the dead come to us in dreams they do not show us where they live nor tell us about their life. We do not know what we shall find there. But we do not think that we shall have happiness, or friendly intercourse.' 'He has died and we shall never meet again,' said another man of his dead neighbour. Some old men, however, have definite theories about the place of the spirits, and all agree that wealth is important there; but these theories have no certainty: 'We are just guessing.' It is certain that the dead continue to live somehow, for they are believed to affect

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

761 765 775 the lives and enter the dreams of their kinsmen; but the nature of their survival is uncertain.

775 765 A man, when he dies, is believed to join his ancestors. Until the end of the funeral rites, they say, he is on the way and if the ritual is not properly performed he does not reach them, but troubles the dreams and lives of the survivors until he is properly driven away. 'If you do not perform the ritual for your father or mother you may go mad or else have a slow and lingering death.'

177 775 797 Many of the younger pagans, however, are affected by Christian belief. Young men spoke confidently of going after death 'to a fine country with dancing and feasting and a chief to rule us'. But many old men scoff at such beliefs. 'They have learnt them from the missionaries—how do they know, have they been there to see?' Among some of the younger men also the ritual of death is less important than it used to be. As one Christian said: 'The pagans no longer fear to die away from home—they used to fear very much to die in a strange country (and many still do), they thought: "If I die far from home I shall never reach my ancestors, for people will not bury me properly." Nor do all the young men now fear if they fail to attend a father's funeral ritual.' 'We no longer believe in the old rituals,' said a sophisticated young pagan, 'because we see that the Christians do not do these things and nothing happens to them.'

761 753 754 An additional reason for fearing death is the Nyakyusa belief in the contagious character of many diseases. Death is thought to be caused sometimes by witchcraft, and sometimes by one of a variety of diseases. Of these diseases some are held to be hereditary and to run in families, and they are usually non-contagious; others, and they are usually contagious, are believed to be due to the sorcery of enemies. And the contagion is thought to be spread by an autopsy. It is especially dangerous to relatives; other people do not fear these diseases unless they actually hold the corpse in their arms, or dig the grave, or help to bury it, but all relatives are afraid.

764 Besides the contagion of specific diseases, the corpse itself is held always to have a vaguely defined, but none the less fearful, contagion of its own. And, because of this, all who have had any close contact with the body go to bathe immediately after the burial. Those of the chief mourners who hold the body in their arms, the grave-diggers and those who get down into the grave to bury it, all go to bathe. 'Even when death is no due to a contagious disease

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

it seems as if there was another disease in the corpse itself, it is a 764
stinking mass of disease.' Traditionally they use two medicinal plants to wash with, but in some chiefdoms near mission stations they now wash without them. The chief of one such country explained: 'In the old days they feared very much to eat before bathing—but now sometimes they just wash their hands and eat. [177]
Of old they feared death, they feared lest the disease should spread, they wished to rid themselves of the contamination of the corpse. They used to wash with two plants—as medicine. Now they just bathe in the stream or sometimes only just wash their hands.' But, [184]
particularly in chiefdoms at a distance from the centres of European influence, the fear of the contagion of death is still very strong.

Death then is, for the majority of pagan Nyakyusa, a fearful as 761
well as a grievous event; less fearful than it used to be to their 184
fathers, but more fearful by far to them than it is to their Christian neighbours.

(c) *The sacrifice*

At all except the very poorest burials one or more head of cattle 764
are killed. Cows are provided whenever possible, but, if no cows are available, bulls may be used instead. If the man who has died left cattle of his own, one at least of his herd is killed; if he has left none, his family make every effort to buy or borrow one, or else they provide one themselves from their own herds. If the dead man was rich, several of his cows will be killed. If his senior son has cattle of his own, he should kill one for his father (*ikumbamba*) and if there are a number of grown-up sons the senior of each group of full brothers will offer a cow.

Not only the immediate family of a dead man but also the 764
fathers (or brothers) of his wives and the husbands of his full 602
sisters and daughters are expected to provide cows for killing at his burial, and if he is buried at his 'father's' place then his 'father's' affinal relatives also are expected to bring cattle or cloths. When a married woman dies, her husband and her own 'father' are expected each to provide a cow or a bull. Occasionally other affines of her husband bring calves, but less usually. More cattle are killed for men than for women. For a young child nothing is killed.

The cattle are killed either by the dead man's 'father' or by his 764
heir; if a woman has died, then by her husband. At a man's burial 768

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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342
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1. *Sacrifice and drums round the open grave*

[facing p. 20]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 the killing has a legal implication, for the death of a man involves
768 the transfer of his wives and property to another. If the inheritance is quite clear and disputes are unlikely, then a 'father' of the dead man tells the heir to kill the burial cattle. All the people present see him do this and know that he is the heir. And if the inheritance is, after all, denied him later, then the fact that he killed the cattle at his brother's (or father's) funeral gives him a strong *prima facie* claim to its recovery in the courts. If the inheritance is doubtful then a 'father' of the dead man kills the cattle. It is known that he himself cannot inherit and his killing of the cattle is an assertion of his authority to decide who shall do so.

643 When a man of the chief's lineage dies, a live cow is buried with
764 him and the more general custom of taking a cow or bull to look into the grave is interpreted as being 'like burying the cow'. The cattle used in this way must be of the lineage stock and are reserved for sacrifice.

764 All the cattle killed are thought to go with the shade to the land
775 of the dead (*abuke nasyo kubusyuka*) and it is believed that if he goes without any cattle he may be rejected by his kinsmen there. Tales are told of meeting dead men in the bush with their cattle which were killed for them. A cloth is a substitute for a cow and cloths which are buried likewise go with the dead. 'We will meet in the land of the shades and he will be wearing these cloths.' At one burial we saw, the dead man had left no cows of his own but his brothers killed two cows for him, three beasts were brought by affines, and sixteen cloths were brought by kinsmen, affines, and friends. 'Why', we asked, 'do you spend so much wealth at death?' 'Because, we say, as the owner has died let him take his wealth with him to the place of the shades. If he dies in lonely poverty he goes with nothing.' At another burial two beasts were brought by kinsmen, six by affines and one by a friend. There were thirty-two cloths, fifteen brought by kinsmen, twelve by affines, and five by friends. 'The bringing of cloths is to express sympathy (*kukuti ndaga*); we bury many of them with the corpse, and some we leave over, which we bind on as mourning belts (*amakiba*). Of old, people brought the cloth the Safwa weave, and brass body-rings. It means: "May our fellow go with them; may he swagger with them—with the cloth and body-rings (*ko kuti umwinetu abukege nafyo, a mogege nafyo*)." And we pour out food that he may take it with him.'

764 During the course of the war-dance (described below) the young
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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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342
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2. *Leaping on the newly filled grave*

[facing p. 21]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

men cut down some of the bananas which surround the huts and the open place in front of them. 'The owner has died, it is a sign to men that someone has died there.' 'We do it so that it should not seem as if he was still alive; if the bananas were not cut but all stood they would cause us to remember that he was recently alive.' 'We wish the dead man to take them with him to the land of the shades.' And for exactly the same reasons some of the calabashes and pots of a dead woman are broken at her burial, and saplings of the *ficus* used for making bark-cloth are cut down. We have seen older men get up and check the dancers from destroying too many bananas. They told us that 'in the old days we used to cut down all the bananas of a dead man and any crops that were growing near the house also; but now we think that if we destroy all the food his children will die of hunger! So we just cut down a few bananas.' This destruction of food is connected with the belief that a man, when he dies, takes the fertility of the land with him, and this loss of fertility can only be avoided by the proper performance of the funeral ritual. The present moderation of the ritual destruction of food is, we think, an index of the decline of the power of the old belief; for the fear of future hunger, which now restrains them, used to encourage them to a greater sacrifice.

764 [535] [177]

(*d*) *The wailing and dancing*

From the time of the death until the end of the three or four days of the burial rites, wailing continues intermittently. 'We weep because we grieve and tremble with fear.' The old women are the most persistent, next come the men and boys. 'The women weep all the time; even at night they only sleep a little, weeping and sleeping and then weeping again! But we men weep just once, when we first arrive, we do not go on and on.' The chief mourners (*abenemfiva*: lit. owners of the death) among the women, that is the mother, stepmothers, wives, sisters, daughters, and brothers' wives, spend most of the time inside one of the huts, which is the centre of the wailing. The other women spend some time inside the hut, wailing with the chief mourners, but then they move to make way for others and sit just outside. On the plain and in Selya they sit packed close together and sway rhythmically as they wail in chorus, following a leader who stands in their midst. Tears roll down her face as she chants short phrases ending in the high-pitched wail: 'Alas father! Alas! Aaaaaaaaaaaa! Farewell! Go So-and-so, farewell . . .' we long for you, Father, farewell!' In the

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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 hills the women who are outside do not bunch together, and the
184 wailing is both less rhythmical and less abandoned. The people of the plains laugh at them for not wailing properly. 'In the hills their funerals do not go well; each one wails separately. Here we listen to one another.' 'In Selya they lament a death properly; here [in the hills] they do not; they wail higgledy-piggledy, each one on her own. But we of Selya, and the people of MuNgonde and Masoko, we lead the wailing properly. There is always one person as leader and others follow her. If a woman does not follow, the leader will drive her away from the funeral saying "Wail alone". And if a widow wails out of time, they reprove her also saying: "Friend, we have come to lament at your funeral, but if you want to wail alone we will go and leave you with your husband." Then she agrees. . . . The leader speaks of the childhood and adult life of the deceased and concludes: "And then you died, farewell!" '

764 The chief mourners among the men—father, brothers, sons—go into the hut at first and wail with the women, but then they come out and sit with the men. Other male relatives, neighbours, and friends, as they arrive, go to the door of the hut, or just inside, and greet the women sympathetically; then they go and greet the chief mourners among the men and sit down with them. We asked the reason for the sympathetic greeting and were told: 'It is the custom at a burial; and when I die they will come to greet me also.' No exact line of division can be drawn between the wailing of the chief mourners and others, for some of the more distant male relatives go right inside and spend some time wailing and shedding tears. And both among the chief mourners and others the extent to which grief is thus expressed varies considerably.

In the groups of men and boys there is no wailing. The group of women outside wail intermittently at first, but later their attention is diverted to watching the burial dance. Those within the hut wail continuously before and for several hours after the burial, and on succeeding days they begin again each time new arrivals come into the hut to sympathize, and at nightfall as the crowds move off home.

Before the actual burial the body is kept in the hut and the chief women mourners hold it in their arms. One man expressed the opinion that, if a death occurred late in the evening or at night, the body should not be buried before noon the next day, so as to give people time 'to weep and assuage their grief, for they always wail more before the body is buried, when they can see the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

dead man'. Sometimes, immediately after the burial, the chief mourners, both men and women, wail outside near the newly-filled grave. 764

Very many of the women relatives, a few of the men relatives, and some of the neighbours smear their heads and faces with mud or pot-black as a sign of grief (*kyo kesa*). Such an expression of grief is thought extravagant by the Christians who have themselves abandoned the custom. One Christian explained: 'The pagans smear themselves with mud because they tremble with fear at a death—but we do not tremble; the pagans are very sorrowful because they say: "Our friend has vanished from our eyes and we shall never meet him happily again."' 764 177

It is also the custom for the women relatives to bind one another's bellies with strips of bark-cloth, and for their woman friends to bind them also. These bark-cloth belts are called *amakiba* and symbolize the fearful grief and mutual sympathy of the mourners, and the sympathy of their friends. One women, who was taking two belts to tie up the bellies of two mourning friends whose husband had died, explained: 'I give them these to tie round their bellies because they are all a-tremble, they are full of fear.' And when she was asked why men did not thus support one another, she replied: 'They are not afraid like women, they do not tremble much.' But there is evidence that, before the coming of the Europeans, men also wore *amakiba* 'and even now if a chief dies his men often wear *amakiba* for one day'. The Christian women have kept the custom, but they emphasize more the aspect of sympathy and less that of fear. 'If a woman wears many belts at a burial that means she has many friends; her passionate grief is comforted by their friendship.' 292 764 [177] [572]

Sometimes on the first day, and usually on the last two or three days of a burial, there is dancing as well as wailing. Dancing begins late in the morning to the accompaniment of three or four drums, in the swept courtyard of the dead man's homestead; gradually it attracts more and more dancers, more and more of the attention of the onlookers, until the wailing is confined to the chief women mourners inside the hut, and the dance is the most conspicuous part of the proceedings. It is led by young men dressed in a special costume of ankle-bells and cloth skirts and, traditionally, bedaubed with red and white clay. All hold spears and leap wildly about, stamping down the soft earth of the grave as they dance. There is little common movement, each dances 535 764 [292] [302]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 alone as if fighting a single combat. Among the men some of the
535 women move about, singly or in twos and threes, calling the war-cry and swinging their hips in a kind of rhythmical walk. Under a tropical sun in a damp heat, with the thermometer often over 90° F. in the shade, they dance for hours. In the dust and noise and excitement there are no very apparent signs of grief; and yet if you ask the onlookers what it is all about they reply: 'They are mourning the dead.'

764 This burial dance is traditionally a dance of war; now, as also
535 in former times, it provides those men who are most affected by
721 grief and fear with a violent and passionate means of expres-
177 sion, in which their feelings are assuaged by the touch of life; for the others it was, in the old days, an assertion of their own and their dead neighbour's warlike quality, and this significance is still vividly present to their minds; but, after a generation and more of peace, its content is changing and the sexual element, always present in it, is rapidly dominating the old memories.

764 'This war-dance (*ukukina*)', said an old man, 'is mourning, we
535 are mourning the dead man. We dance because there is war in
721 our hearts. A passion of grief and fear exasperates us (*ilyojo likutusila*).' Since this statement is the clue to both the present and the traditional meaning of the war-dance for the chief mourners, we must examine the language carefully. *Ilyojo* means a passion of grief, anger or fear; *ukusila* means to annoy or exasperate beyond endurance. In explaining *ukusila* one man put it like this: 'If a man continually insults me then he exasperates me (*ikusila*) so that I want to fight him.' Death is a fearful and grievous event that exasperates those men nearly concerned and makes them want to fight. The chief mourners and personal friends among the women assuage their feelings in the wailing, among the men in the war-dance. 'A kinsman, when he dances, assuages his passionate grief (*ilyojo*); he goes into the house to weep and then he comes out and dances the war-dance; his passionate grief is made tolerable in the dance (lit. he is able to endure it there, in the dance), it bound his heart and the dance assuages it.'

This exasperated and fearful grief was linked in traditional expression with a general salute to the warlike quality of man. Those of old said: 'The dead man was a lively dancer in battle, and now he is dead we dance for him, he too was a fighting dancer!' 'He was a warrior (lit. a man of the spear), we dance now, as he danced himself, the dance of war.' And this salute at the same time gave

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

to the dancers a heightened sense of their own warlike quality: 764
'We used not actually to fight at burials so much as to dance and 535
become conscious of our strength for future wars against other 721
chiefdoms, when, on another day, we would go to raid their cows.'

But although an actual fight was not a necessary part of the 578
funeral it very frequently occurred; and burials are still one of 764
the most usual occasions of spearing. 'In the old days, before the 721
country was at peace, we men often fought at burials; we ran in 535
front spearing one another, while our wives ran behind calling the war-cry and watching the prowess of their husbands.' So far from rituals having the sole function of promoting social integration, as [182] some would have us believe, the burial rites of the Nyakyusa were occasions on which existing antipathies continually found overt expression in fighting and new antipathies arose; but the quarrels were not within the mourning lineage.

The fights normally followed the lines of division between chiefdom and chiefdom, village and village. Kinship and affinity have always for some men extended beyond the single chiefdom; and to the burials of these people, if they are in any way eminent, the young men of other chiefdoms often come to dance. And while today, with a well-established tradition of peace, there are fewer smouldering enmities between chiefdoms, forty or fifty years ago it was scarcely possible for the young men of two chiefs to meet peaceably; cattle-raids, abductions of women, defeats and victories in battle were too hot in the memory. Sometimes an accidental jostling, sometimes a deliberate insult was the occasion for a running fight.

At burials there was often war. If the men of two chiefdoms were there together at a burial they would quarrel and fight. Sometimes the fight began when one hurled his spear into the ground and then pulled it up so as to pitch earth on to another man. Perhaps there would be only a few men dancing at first and many sitting down; but when a neighbouring chief was heard coming with his men, and the sound of the trumpet and flute[1] came to us, then we said: 'If we sit still they will say there were no men but only women at that burial, let us dance too!' So we would get up and dance, and then if the others did anything there would be war.

And fights sometimes occurred between two villages of the same chief.

[1] The trumpet of horn and the bamboo flute which used to accompany the war-dance. They are now seldom heard; drums have superseded them.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 Besides fighting, the dancers indulge in an orgy of destruction,
535 slashing at the bananas and *ficus* saplings (which surround the
721 swept courtyard) with their spears.

764 The dance was thus, traditionally, a common form for the ex-
535 pression by the dancers of a considerable range of emotions, vary-
152 ing from an intolerable burden of grief and fear to a recognition of and salute to the warlike quality of the dead man and a vivid consciousness of their own. And this last feeling passed easily into actual fighting.

764 To-day it is not so much into the excitements of warfare that
534 the feelings turn, but rather into those of love. Burial dances are
832 the occasions of much sexual display, of the beginning of some love affairs and the consummation of others, and this is nothing new. 'At a death people did not want war (though it came sometimes), they wanted love-making: they displayed the pride of their strength!' 'We speared one another . . . our wives called the war-cry when they saw the strength of their husbands.'

177 Dances of sexual display, on occasions other than burials, are
535 traditional among the Nyakyusa; but all our informants are
837 unanimous in declaring that both these other dances and the dances of burial are far more frequently followed by lovers' meetings than they used to be. For the enforcement of peace among the Nyakyusa has been accompanied by the prohibition of violence of any kind; and this has freed sexual passion from its rigid tradi-
[684] tional bonds. Girls are married young and engaged younger; and while formerly any man who seduced or even flirted with another man's betrothed or wife was speared or tortured by the husband and his friends if they caught him, such punishments are now illegal and the present fine of cattle is a far less effective deterrent. 'In the old days love-making only went on in secret; if a man stood and talked to a woman he expected to be speared. But now the Europeans have introduced the custom of making love openly!' (i.e. by forbidding the previous penalties.)

764 For all the younger men and women, save the chief mourners
535 and close friends, the quality of the burial dance is now pre-
832 dominantly and openly sexual. But the older people are, on the one hand, more conscious of its warlike associations and, on the other hand, inclined to regard the whole occasion more soberly than their juniors. 'There are two reasons for coming to a burial: the old men come to mourn their friend, they say: "Let us go and mourn him"; but the young men say: "Let us follow the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tradition of the leaping dance and show ourselves to the girls!" 764
And so it is with the women, some of the young women do not 535
come to mourn but to call the war-cry to the boys! Those who 832
come to mourn go into the hut and weep and weep. The young men say that they dance by reason of the women. The old men say that in the past it was different, it was war; the women ran behind the fighters watching the battle and calling the war-cry. And we all say that the present custom of dancing is the softer custom of a peaceful land.'

As the old significance of the dance to the majority of the participants was a lively salute to the dead man's fighting quality and a heightened sense of their own, so now it is his sexual quality which they honour and their own which they enjoy. 'Why', we asked a young man, 'do you dance nowadays at burials? There is little or no warfare and the dead man was never a fighter!' His answer came almost in the traditional form of words: 'We think that he too danced before the women, he was a brave dancer (*mogi*), and so we too dance (*ukukina*) at his death.'

'He too was a brave dancer (*mogi*).' The word *mogi* is from the 535
verb *ukumoga* which refers to the ordinary dances of sexual display 764
in contrast to the war-dance (*ukukina*). It is the war-dance which 721
is still normally danced at death. Not only, however, is its signi- 832
ficance being assimilated to that of the ordinary dances of recre- 177
ation, as this quotation clearly shows, but these other dances are now often performed at burials. Near Rungwe Mission the pagans dance the war-dance on the first day of a burial and sometimes on the second day as well, but always on the third day the dance is changed. The men abandon cloth skirts, spears, and ankle-bells [292]
and put on their best clothes, an ample white toga being particularly fashionable; the women adorn themselves with great care and some put roses in their hair. The dance is no longer a wild mêlée, but is slow and graceful; and its sexual significance is now apparent, not only in the faces of the dancers and the comments of the bystanders, but also in the forms of movement.

This custom is new. None of the chief mourners takes part in the 535
dance, though they watch it. In the war-dance, however, the chief 764
mourners among the men are expected to participate, and some 721
of them always do so. 'The (men) relatives dance if they have 177
strength, they weep first and then dance. For if they all sit still and no one of them dances we others say that they have not mourned him properly.' But they do not all dance. One old man whose

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

535 764 721 177 brother had just been buried said: 'Those who are really sad sit quite still and silent.' But he was an old man with little strength for dancing; on the first day of his brother's burial he sat still, but on the second day he danced a little.

As for the women who participate in the war-dance, running about among the men and calling the war-cry, their behaviour is clearly distinguished in accordance with their relationship to the dead man. 'The distant (women) relatives dance in their dirt, they cannot adorn themselves much, but non-relatives adorn themselves. The wives and sisters of a dead man and the nearer women relatives are the chief mourners and they cannot dance at the burial. They are truly grieved. If a wife danced we'd say she did not love her husband—well, perhaps she might wander round distraught to the sound of the drums, but with grief on her face and without looking at the young men! If she looked at the young men we'd say she did not love her husband. If a brother's wife danced we should laugh at her and say she was no kinswoman of the dead man! But for a man it is different, he dances with his grief to enable his heart to bear it. In the old days, if there was a fight, the chief women mourners did not follow and call the war-cry, but the others; all the men went to fight but not all the women to watch.'

535 764 177 832 727 Our observation shows that there is just as much dancing at the burials of women as at those of men. Here too the dance, as now performed, combines the two functions: assuaging the fearful grief of some people and providing a sexual display in honour of the dead: 'We dance at her burial, for she too was a brave dancer (*mogi*).' But in the old days also there was dancing at women's burials: 'For a woman', one old man explained, 'bears us men, so that she too is a warrior.' 'In the past,' said another old man, 'we did dance at women's burials, only a little, not so much as at men's; we said that she was only a woman, but that none the less she also was concerned in war.'

The change in the quality of the burial dance is one of emphasis only; in the past also the sexual element was present: 'We danced so that the women should see our strength'—but it was not dominant. And the warlike quality which was then dominant has by no means disappeared; we heard of many spear-fights at burial dances. At one of them the chief, in order to prevent its continuance, made the dancers abandon the war-dance and finish the funeral with the ordinary dances of sexual display.

781 764 The emotional quality of mourning (*ukulila*) is different in

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

 781 764

Nyakyusa pagan society from its quality in England. The word *ukulila* in other contexts means to cry, weep, or complain aloud; at burial it is used to refer specifically to the wailing, and by extension to the whole of the ritual. The quality of Nyakyusa mourning is both more openly terrified and grief-stricken and also more lively than in England. And these two qualities of fearful grief and vivacity are very closely connected.

That some at least of those who attend a Nyakyusa burial are moved by grief it is easy to establish. We have heard people talking regretfully in ordinary conversation of a man's death; we have seen a man whose sister had just died walk over alone towards her grave and weep quietly by himself without any parade of grief; and we have heard of a man killing himself because of his grief for a dead son. But, even among the chief mourners, they are not all grieved: 'There are some men', said an old woman, 'who have no sorrow when their wives die. J., when his wife died, was quite unmoved; and some women are not much upset when they lose their husbands. L. was not when her husband died; perhaps she was thinking of marrying again, for she was quite young. But old women are always grieved for they cannot marry again.'

Whatever their private feelings may be, however, the chief mourners and other relatives are obliged for very shame to show [576] signs of grief. The chief women mourners, as we have seen, may not dance; the more distant women relatives may not adorn themselves; and all the chief mourners, both men and women, are expected to weep and shed tears. We have seen an old man weeping at his half-brother's burial, although the two had, notoriously, been on very bad terms and had hardly spoken to each other for years. And all relatives, however distant, who come to a burial are expected to greet the chief mourners sympathetically. Very many non-relatives do so too, but they may omit the greeting without offence, if there is a great crowd present.

We have plenty of evidence that the grief at death is largely mixed with fear. It is, indeed, probable that the fear of death (fear of their own future death, fear of the shades, fear of the contagion of the corpse) touches some people at a burial more deeply than grief. Be this as it may, it is clear that the mourning is, for some, an expression of real fears. And it is the relatives, above all, who are afraid. Neither contagious diseases nor subsequent affliction by the shades, nor the vague contagion of the corpse concern any non-relatives, except those who dig the grave and bury the dead

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

781 man; but all kinsmen and affines fear contagion, and the family
764 fear spiritual afflictions as well.

[811] These fears are dealt with in two ways: fear is an immediate state of feeling which the Nyakyusa, on this occasion, express and make tolerable in the wailing, the dancing, and so on; but their terror is also rationalized[1] as a fear of certain specific events proceeding from religious causes, and thus is pacified by various ritual actions which are believed effectively to prevent those happenings. The killing of cows, the washing with magical plants, the subsequent ritual of protection—all these are designed to check the occurrence of fearful events.

781 But still the fear, as an actual state of feeling at the time of a
764 death, has to be expressed in some tolerable form. Its expression
721 in the wailing associated with grief is already clear; and it is also
535 proved that the war-dance is, for the men most affected, both an expression and an alleviation of their terrified grief: 'There is war in our hearts—a passion of fear and grief exasperates us—it is made tolerable in the dance.'

781 It is the attitude of the chief mourners that is the clue to the
764 whole ritual; and the contrast between terrified wailing and lively dancing, which seems very strange at first to a European observer, is explained by it. The fear and sorrow of death are only emotionally tolerable if their expression is followed by, or combined with, an assertion of life. This is certainly true of the Nyakyusa, and possibly it is universally true. Having no confident expectation of happiness in a future life, these pagan Africans turn at burial to a realization of present life in its most intense quality, to the war-dance, to sexual display, to lively talk, and to the eating of great quantities of meat.

And to this emotional reaction of the chief mourners the sympathetic vivacity of other people is essential. The Nyakyusa were astonished to hear of the sobriety of an English funeral: 'We talk and dance to comfort the relatives. If we others sat sad and glum, then the grief of the relatives would far exceed ours. If we just sorrowed what depths of grief would they not reach? And so we sit and talk and laugh and dance until the relatives laugh too.' And they were even more surprised at the suggestion that anyone might wish for privacy. 'We are quite different: we keep people company, when a relative has died, to cheer them. I am com-

[1] The word 'rationalize' properly implies neither truth nor falsehood of thought, but simply the fact of its existence.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

forted, I think people follow the custom, many have come to see me.'

There is no criticism of men or women who come to a burial to dance rather than to weep: 'They are not relatives—it is our custom of mourning.' They are saluting the dead and 'seeing him on his way', they are helping 'to comfort the relatives'. The presence of non-relatives at a burial is variously determined by feelings of affection and grief, of respect and sympathy for the family, by a sense of shame, by fear of being accused of witchcraft, and finally by the attraction of the crowds, the lively conversation, the dancing, and the meat.

At the burial of a Nyakyusa Christian there is little unrestrained wailing and no dancing; instead the young men of the congregation gather round the grieving relatives and sing cheerful hymns, full of the certainty of Heaven, 'to accompany him on his way to God' and 'to comfort the mourners'.

(*e*) *Prestige at funerals*

As has already been indicated, the length of the mourning depends upon the status of the deceased. It is short for a child—there is no sacrifice and no crowd; for a rich man it is longer than for a poor man; for the kinsman of a chief longer than for a commoner. Mwaikambo explained:

> Many conceal their position (*ubufumuke*), it only appears at death. People may never know that a man is rich—only those who build close to him will know—but when he dies many know; many people come to the funeral. For a commoner, an ordinary person, the drums usually play a lament for two days only, sometimes for three, but for a village headman they play the lament for four days, or perhaps a week, and also for a man who has married a chief's daughter it continues for four days or a week. Then people ask why the drums are playing for so long and the reply comes: 'He married into the chief's family. The chief honours him in kinship.' Drums follow the importance of a man.
>
> Those who stay longest at a funeral are kinsmen. If a man has many kinsmen then the funeral will last long because his kinsmen do not return home quickly. A chief has many kinsmen, more than anyone else, because the people of his chiefdom are all like kinsmen. With a village headman also the people who build with him are somewhat like kinsmen, and his funeral lasts a long time.

The size of the crowd at a funeral depends very largely upon the amount of meat provided, and this in turn depends upon the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 wealth of the family in cattle and the number of its affines. There
556 is a direct relationship between the number of cattle killed and the number of people who come to a burial. On one occasion we were told: 'There are not many people here because there is little meat; they only killed one bull!' And this connection can be observed at any burial; hundreds of people come to mourn the rich, only a few to mourn the poor. And if no meat is killed there is usually no dancing at all. But once a crowd has gathered it is in itself an inducement to others to come. When men were dancing the funeral dance in the rain a neighbour commented: 'They will say there is no rain for many women are present.' We have seen a crowd of 2,000 or more at a funeral, with 100 men dancing at once.

The meat is divided among the chief, the relatives, the neighbours, and the non-relatives from a distance. To the chief of the country is given the breast and ribs of one beast: 'This is to honour him.' To each affine who brings a beast a whole leg is returned to be eaten. To the various groups of non-relatives from other chiefdoms is given sometimes a side, sometimes a leg, and the rest of the meat is divided between the relatives and neighbours who have come from the same or adjoining villages. At large funerals, where many cows are killed and where people gather from all the villages of the chiefdom, a portion of the meat is presented to each of the various village headmen to eat with his men; at smaller funerals the division is made less formally.

'A man's very own cow, that of his lineage, is eaten by the people of the country, not the relatives, because the people [non-relatives] always looked at it thinking: "It's ours." ' A picture of ghoulish expectation? That indeed is an element of Nyakyusa thought. While we were in the country a number of chiefs forbade the
[754] offering of funeral meat to non-relatives, for, it was believed, gluttonous neighbours sometimes killed a man by witchcraft[1] in order to feast at his funeral.

The kinsmen of the dead man gain prestige from a lavish funeral. They are compelled to sacrifice by fear lest the anger of the shades, or the 'breath' of their neighbours, should bring misfortune upon them, and they are rewarded by the admiration of men when they do so.

764 Social pressure is not always exerted upon the members of the
626 dead man's family to provide cattle themselves. If he left sufficient cattle to sustain the family dignity they only kill from his own

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 93.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

herd. But if he has not left sufficient, then they are ashamed not to 764
make good the deficiency. 'If no cows are killed at a burial we 626
others [non-relatives] say that it was a mean burial, that the dead man was a pauper without kin, for if he had had kinsmen they would have killed cows for him. So then the relatives grieve their poor griefs alone, we others don't go to that burial.' To a poor burial the members of the same village do in fact come, as they are obliged to do; but few other people come, and there is seldom any dancing.

There is one other situation in which a member of the family is 764
under obligation to kill. If the dead man is buried by his 'father' at his 'father's' place, then one of his 'father's' cows must be killed. But if his 'father' does not choose to exercise his privilege of carrying the body to his place for burial (and he need not do so unless he wishes), then there is no such obligation.

Upon affines, however, the obligation is absolute, unless they actually have not got a cow or bull available. 'If a father-in-law brings no beast to his son-in-law's burial, then his daughter is estranged from him, she asks angrily why he does not bring one, seeing that her husband has died.' 'If a son-in-law does not bring a cow to his father-in-law's burial, though he has one that he might have brought, he is ashamed before men. They say to him: "Your wife's father has died, why did you not bring a cow? Perhaps you think you have a father-in-law still alive (i.e. the dead man's heir, to whom all previous obligations are due, and with whom the relationship of affinity continues very much as before), but he himself, your own father-in-law, has died."' And thus, if insufficient cows are killed to maintain the family dignity, both the family and the affines are made to feel ashamed.

Occasionally a friend of the dead man, who is no relative, brings a bull to kill, as a sign of friendship and affection, but he [572]
has no obligation to do so.

Social position, both in its practical aspect of authority and in 764
its emotion aspect of prestige, depends primarily, among the 556
Nyakyusa, on the generous use of wealth, or, to put it more simply, on feeding people. The Nyakyusa insisted on this again and again in explaining the relative status of different people: one man is great and distinguished (*nsisya*) because he feeds people, another who feeds people less is less distinguished. At a lavish funeral, where many people gather and eat meat, they go home in

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 the evening saying with admiration that it was a most impressive
556 (*nsisya*) burial; months or years afterwards it is still remembered and described with pride by the family, with admiration by the neighbours. What is chiefly remembered is the number of cattle killed and the number of people present; sometimes the vigour of the women's wailing and of the men's dancing is also described.

(*f*) *A particular burial* (recorded by G. W.)

764 It is the second day; the man, who was quite young, died yesterday afternoon and was buried early this morning. I arrive at 7.30 a.m. to find that the wailing is the dominant activity. The dead man's house is full of weeping men and women, shedding tears and wailing in the conventional high-pitched voice. His sister, his young wife, a stepmother, a classificatory brother and two half-brothers, with many other women, are inside the house. The noise is considerable. The rest of the women, fifty or more, are seated just outside, in and around an unfinished bamboo house which he died leaving half-built; they too are weeping and wailing. A few men are seated in a group on the opposite side of the swept place facing the women; they are either silent or talking soberly.

764 The emotional pitch is very high. The classificatory brother leaves
781 the house and walks about round the new grave with his hands to his head, shedding tears and calling: 'Alas! Alas! What kin are left? Alas! What kin are left?' He is a mature man about forty years old. Then he takes by the hand a half-sister of the dead man, a woman of thirty or more, smothered in mud and pot-black, her belly supported by many bark-cloths, and with a baby on her back; together they walk over the grave weeping and wailing, addressing each other in words that I fail to distinguish, and stumbling about as though blind with grief. The baby sleeps quietly all the time. Then comes an old woman, stepmother of the dead man, leading a daughter in each hand (his half-sisters), all wailing, shedding tears and calling out indistinguishable words. They sit down on the newly-filled grave with their arms on one another's shoulders rocking to and fro and weeping. More people keep arriving and in the background now is the insistent wailing of seventy or a hundred women in and outside the house.

For the first hour after my arrival the drums are only occasionally beaten, and a few young men rush across the grave brandishing spears, but only spasmodically.

The two half-brothers, after wailing in the house, come outside and walk up and down together still weeping. Then they each take a spear and run back and forth several times wailing the dead man's name.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

One of the half-sisters, meanwhile, rolls over and over in the fresh earth 764
of the grave in passionate contortions, with the tears running down her 781
cheeks. Gradually a group of women relatives collects on the grave, eight or nine of them; they sit huddled up together with their arms on one another's shoulders wailing. One woman, before she sits down, makes a series of trembling gestures towards the grave, crying out 'Avaunt!' in fearful grief.

Then, at last, the drums begin in earnest and the young men start to 764
dance. The insistent vital rhythm of the drums contrasts sharply with 535
the grief and despair of the wailing. The situation begins to change. Still in the house the wailing is loud and continuous, but the women on the grave give place to the dancers and return to the house, while the group of women outside gradually ceases wailing and turns all its attention to the dance. The conversation among the men changes also, none are silent now and the talk is more eager than before. Soon the dancers begin to cut the bananas; one stem falls full on a young man's head, causing loud laughter among the onlookers. But at first the dance, though always lively, is by no means wholly gay. The male kinsmen dance with grief in their looks, calling out 'Alas!' as each shakes his spear.

No women are yet dancing at all; two or three kinswomen wander about distraught, and one of the half-sisters in particular seems quite blind to the dancers, who have to get out of her way. The situation is, however, a lively one, and it becomes livelier still as the young men from another village come to join in, bringing three more drums with them. Six drums are now being beaten and about thirty young men are dancing. Two hours have passed since I first arrived.

At 4.30 p.m. I am back again to find the scene changed once more. There is no sound of wailing, not even inside the house. About a hundred men are either dancing or standing round looking on, with a number of girls walking rhythmically about among the dancers. These girls are non-relatives and adorned with great finish.

The young men leap and dance, some with more agility than others; 764
they stamp, roll on the ground, leap in the air, turn somersaults, hurl 535
their spears into the earth and fight invisible enemies. All the spectators, 781
save the chief women mourners and one or two of the men, seem lively and excited. I see the young wife of the dead man looking tired and sad, and she and the other women chief mourners spend most of the time in the house; but one of the half-brothers, on the other hand, who appeared to be so greatly affected seven or eight hours before, is laughing gaily as he dances.

Two cows have been killed and are now being cut up. As the sun 764
sinks and the dancers go away home, taking their meat with them, the relatives and near neighbours gather round fires and begin to roast and eat the meat. Some is given separately to the groups of friends from

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 other chiefdoms; and by the next morning the whole of the two cows is finished. Wailing and dancing continue for two days more. 'It was a grand burial' people say afterwards, 'we have seen him on his way (to the land of shades) properly.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

CHAPTER III

FAREWELL TO THE DEAD

After spending three or four days weeping, and feasting, and 765
dancing, the main body of mourners scatter to their homes, but the close kinsmen remain for a week or two sleeping at the home of the deceased, awaiting the ritual of farewell. The Nyakyusa themselves distinguish three main events in it: the 'picking up of pumpkin-seeds' (*ukusala inyungu*) when the chief mourners first begin to wash; the 'shaving of the sprouting hair' (*ukutemela ilitemelo*) when the beer of inheritance is brewed and the estate divided; and the 'ritual of the gasping cough' (*ingotolo*) when the widows, having lain with the heir, go to visit their parents. The details differ appreciably between Selya and MuNgonde on the one hand, [184] and Kukwe country on the other, and we describe them separately.

I. IN SELYA AND MUNGONDE

(*a*) *The events*

i. '*Picking up pumpkin-seeds.*' The picking up of pumpkin-seeds 768
begins with the formal recognition of the heir, if the deceased was a 765
married man. The heir and widows are suddenly seized and hustled, 796
resisting, into the mourning hut. If they go willingly 'it seems as if they wished their relative to die'. The officiant smears their chests with ash and puts a strand of the *ilingolongofwa* creeper on each one's right shoulder. These are both signs of mourning, and the creeper is also 'a sign that we have given him the inheritance'. After a few minutes the heir and widows are formally summoned to come out of the hut, and they go off to wash away the ash and creeper in the stream. But first, the flowering head of a banana is buried in the courtyard near the door of the mourning hut and the grave of the deceased. If he was not a married man and there are no widows to be inherited, the ritual begins with this. The banana flower is explicitly identified with the corpse: it must face in the direction from which the ancestors came, as the corpse does; if the deceased is a male the flowering head is from a plantain (*itoki*); if a female from a sweet banana (*injali* or *indefu* or

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

765 *iselya*); and it is wrapped in a leaf (of the same species as the
768 flower) which represents a blanket. The symbolism is interpreted
796 in terms of the habit of growth. A trunk of plantain or sweet banana flowers and fruits only once, then dies and is pruned away, being replaced by a sucker from the same root, hence the association between the flower and the corpse. *Ilitoki* is a large variety of
[262] plantain, eaten when it is green and hard; *injali* is a smallish banana eaten when it is ripe and sweet, and it takes nine months to develop. 'When an *injali* stem forms and a woman conceives a child at the same time, the bananas will be ripe and the woman bear her child together.' No one hesitated about this identification of plantain with male, sweet banana with female; it is as obvious in Nyakyusa as the associations of 'breeches' and 'petticoats' in English.

765 The officiant sprinkles a powdered medicine on to the earth of the grave and all the participants (that is, the heirs, widows, children, and certain siblings of the deceased) rub themselves in it. They rub forehead, right elbow, right knee, and right toe in the pile of earth. Only chiefs and their close relatives and twins refrain, for they have been drinking medicines, and such close contact with a corpse would 'spoil their medicine': 'The medicine would go rotten if they touched the grave which contains medicine,' so the chief's forehead, etc., must not touch the grave. He merely touches the earth with a finger-tip.

783 Having touched the earth, all the participants go to wash in a
765 stream, and when they return they wash again ritually in the doorway of the mourning hut, the doctor pouring out medicated water from a small calabash and each participant catching the water in his hands and rubbing them and his mouth and knees with it. Then they oil themselves. Until this ritual they must remain dirty and dishevelled with the mud and ash of mourning on them, and any who steal away to wash are fined by the other relatives.

765 Next the officiant takes roasted bananas and sticks into each one or more pumpkin-pips (*inyungu*) and one or more lentils (*inandala*).[1] She half-buries these in the earth at the doorway of the hut, or sits in the doorway holding a banana near the ground, and each participant approaches in turn and stoops and bites off the banana, and eats it.

The *ulufumbo* (the litter of dry banana leaves on which the

[1] Some also add cowpeas (*imbange*), others oil-seeds (*ipemba*).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Ma Ngonde

mourners sat) is sprinkled with powdered medicine and carried 765
out by the officiant and burnt, or thrown away under the bananas. If the deceased has been buried elsewhere still a bunch of banana leaves representing the *ulufumbo* is taken out. 'Until then the rubbish (*imindu*) is kept in the house and not swept out because they are grieving—a person cannot be clean, it would seem as if he did not grieve.'

Next the officiant takes an old pot and, holding it, circles round the hearth while her assistant drops pumpkin-seeds, beans, lentils and cowpeas into it and the participants sing: 'The croaking bird, the croaking bird (*ilinwanwa*).' The food is transferred to another pot and put on the fire and the officiant touches the hearth with different parts of her body (or makes gestures as if to do so), she and the participants saying as she does so: 'The knee is also put on (the fire), the heel is also put on, the backs of the knees are also put on, the loins are also put on, the belly is also put on, the back of the head is also put on.' Then she stamps noisily on the hearth, and the participants sing: 'It startles him. . . .'

Relatives and village neighbours are expected to bring small [43]
gifts of millet at this ritual and these are formally received by the officiant, who sits outside the mourning hut with two large baskets beside her and acknowledges each gift as it is brought and emptied into one or other of them. The one is for the millet of kinsmen, the other for that of neighbours. She addresses each giver in terms of his or her relationship to the deceased, announcing: 'Your grandchild has brought a measure, your daughter has brought a measure, your fellow (i.e. neighbour) has brought a measure, etc. . . .' This is spoken of as 'measuring the measures' (*ukugela imigelo*); it is 'to greet the shade', and if millet is not available at the time the ritual is performed it is done symbolically.

A fresh piece of bark is stripped from the species of *ficus* used for making bark-cloth, hammered a little and placed on a fresh banana leaf and sprinkled with powdered medicine. A grindstone is lifted on to it and the officiant grinds some of the millet just presented and allows it to fall on the bark. During the grinding the officiant says: 'The knee is also ground, the heels are also ground,' and so on, mentioning the belly and loins. From the time of the death until this ritual, hammering of bark-cloth in the home [196]
of the deceased is taboo (*mwiko*), for hammering bark-cloth is a [784
symbol of sexual intercourse and 'the hammer belonged to him 83]
who died'. The first millet ground is made into a paste and later

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

765 smeared on the heads of the participants as a preparation for shaving 'the hair of the corpse' (*inwili sya mfimba*), the rest is made into porridge.

The participants stand in a line in the mourning hut while the officiant sweeps the dust (*imindu*) on to their legs, and they begin to wail and sing the farewell dirge: 'Good-bye, So-and-so, good-bye. . . .' The other mourners join in the dirge and the women weep. The participants are then told to stand with their legs apart and the officiant pushes a winnowing basket of millet, mixed with a few pumpkin-seeds and lentils,[1] between their legs. She crawls along the ground to do this and then puts the basket on to the head of each participant in turn, and a pinch of the millet flour on each one's shoulder. She takes banana leaves and, after touching her own body in various places with them, she girds them round the waists of the participants. She puts down a stem of bananas[2] and a hen (or a bunch of feathers representing a hen) and each participant in turn sits on them. She holds a banana sapling across the doorway and as each participant passes out of the hut, stooping, he bumps his head against it. Another line is formed in the courtyard and again the basket of millet is put on the head of each participant. Some grains of millet are thrown over them and some sprinkled on the ground. They sing a song, the leader starting: 'The rubbish (*ilindu*) . . .' and the others replying in chorus: 'The rubbish, we were startled at the rubbish (*tunyomwike ilindu*)' and they dance the stamping dance for a few minutes.

Then they go off to bathe, taking with them the stem of bananas and the hen and the bark on which the millet was ground. The leaves they wear and the bananas are thrown away in the stream; the bark and hen are dipped in the stream and taken home by the officiant as her perquisite. They separate to bathe, the men from the women, the older from the younger.

Returning home, they all run into the mourning hut and out again, one by one, as the officiant pours water, mixed with powdered medicine, on the thatch above the doorway, and the water drops on their bodies. Then each sits down in the doorway and is washed again with water and medicine by the officiant.

A mash of beans and banana is made, and a few pumpkin-seeds and lentils are mixed in. Some of it is salted, some left unsalted. A little of the unsalted mash is handed to each participant to eat,

[1] Some also add beans. [2] i.e. the whole fruiting head.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

but the salted is mixed in a ball with the millet porridge previously 765
prepared, and plastered against the wall of the hut and on the hearthstones, whence the participants must bite it off. They compete for it, jostling one another. Sometimes the officiant also puts some watery porridge in a leaf of the bark-cloth tree and squeezes it into a basket. Again the participants fight to take a little each.

Some of the millet paste, previously prepared, is smeared on the head of each participant in the form of a cross, drawn from the forehead and the nape of the neck to the crown, and from each ear to the crown. The officiant then shaves each of them, beginning with the lines along which she smeared them. As she does so she says: 'Alas, he (or she, if the deceased was a woman) stole. . . . They cut his head.'

If the family is wealthy at least one cow is killed by the heir—Kasitile insisted that a sacrifice is essential at the pumpkin-seed ritual—and the authority of the heir is acknowledged at the same time. Lubalelo, discussing the funeral of his kinsman Mwafyuma, remarked that, at the ritual of the pumpkin-seeds, when they had called together all the dead man's children, his son would kill cows. 'Then when he has killed the cows the children will be told "He is your father", and all of them will fall down before him clapping their hands to say: "Thanks be! Father has risen from the dead (*Ndaga! Ndaga! Asyukile tata*)."'

ii. '*Shaving the sprouting hair.*' The remaining millet brought by relatives and neighbours is usually put to soak immediately and, when it has sprouted, the wives of relatives and village neighbours are called to come and help grind it for beer. The women of the village bring firewood to boil water for the beer and, when the brewing is ripe, 'those whose wives came to grind' come to drink. The participants are given some of the beer mixed with *ikipiki* and a powdered medicine in a small calabash at the grave. Then the officiant smears their faces with soot and draws lines on the head of each with a piece of banana stalk dipped in the lees of the beer to which the *ikipiki* and powdered medicine have been added. Again the lines are drawn from forehead and nape of neck to the crown and from each ear to the crown. She shaves the sprouting [302]
hair on the forehead and at the nape of the neck of each of them, and also makes some small cuts in these places and rubs in the lees of the beer. Or she may do this for the senior participant only, who then does it for his juniors. This is 'the shaving of the sprouting hair' (*ukutemela ilitemelo*) and implies the lifting of a ban. If the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

765 deceased was a man and wealthy, the heir kills a bull or cow for a feast.

765 According to one account, 'the heir kills a cow saying: "This is
184 your cow, Father." Then he takes the praying calabash and fills it with beer and goes to the banana grove. The others sit in the courtyard watching from afar. He blows beer and then pours out a little, several times, mentioning the dead man's name and those of three or four prominent dead relatives, and prays for children, health, and food. He takes his own senior son (or the son of his dead brother) with him to see what he does, for he (the son) will do it after his death. Then they come back and the meat is eaten and beer drunk.' But we never saw this happen nor was the prayer in the banana grove mentioned by other informants.

782 If the millet put to soak fails to sprout, however, there must be
765 prayer. It is thought that there has been disagreement among the mourners and the shades are angry and have spoilt the millet. The kinsmen gather to confess their quarrels and pray before preparing another batch.

765 At the shaving of the sprouting hair (or some other time during the death ritual) the sisters of the dead man formally admonish his widows on their behaviour as wives. One admonition recorded lasted two hours, and the main theme was the stinginess of the widows in entertaining their sisters-in-law when the latter had come to visit.

765 On the morning after 'the shaving of the sprouting hair' the par-
768 ticipants shave their whole heads and are anointed with ointment by
587 the officiant. In the evening comes the formal handing over of the inheritance, if the deceased was a married man. The heir sits in the doorway of the mourning hut and the senior wife of the deceased hands him a bill-hook, such as is used for pruning bananas. He is adjured by his relatives, his village headman, and his neighbours to care for the children of the deceased as if they were his own, and the widows are told: 'This is your husband who
[428] will hoe for you always.' If there is any division of property it is formally made on this occasion, the dead man's sisters and the village headman being primarily responsible for a just allocation. And though, traditionally, women were given no choice about inheritance, this was in fact the occasion on which their protests and preferences were expressed. Then the heir is thrown into the hut with the women he has inherited 'on to the ashes' (*umfwandelo*), and must have intercourse with all of them that night. One of

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

them knocks on the wall when he has succeeded, and the officiant 765
raises the *akalulu*, the trill of applause and triumph[1] which is also 768
the war-cry, and shakes a basket of seeds by the door shouting:
'Ours, ours, we marvel at the thing!' Until this ritual connection 587
the heir and the widows remain continent, and great importance is attached to the success of the heir in having intercourse with all the widows. Should a widow refuse the heir after touching the ash it is said that she will either die herself or cause any man she lies with to die of 'the ash'; but if she escapes before being smeared with ash then she is safe. The heir is also in danger if a widow should refuse him after he has touched the ash.

The morning after the ritual union the heir is formally summoned out of the hut by a man knocking on the door and crying: 'Come out, war has come (*Soka! ubwite bwisile*),' i.e. sexual intercourse has begun. He sits on a stool in the doorway of the hut and is greeted by the children of the deceased: 'Good morning, Father.'

iii. '*The gasping cough.*' Each of the inherited women goes off to 783
her own father's homestead with the filth (*indafu*) of intercourse 768
on her. She does not even wash her hands, and she takes with her 587
cooked bananas which she has smeared with her husband's semen and her own emission. This she buries in the banana grove in her father's homestead in which he prays to his ancestors. She takes meat to her father if an animal has been killed at the 'shaving of the sprouting hair'. The heir similarly goes to his father's homestead (or that of his father's heir) with cooked bananas to be buried in his father's sacred grove. Each wife drinks beer mixed with medicine with her father and other close relatives. From the time when the heir sleeps with the widows until this ritual is per- [574]
formed, they cannot visit their parents nor can their children do so (though usually children come and go freely in the home of their mother's people) and, more particularly, a widow must not drink from her mother's cup, or eat with her, or sit over her fire, or touch her hand. It is believed that, if the ritual is neglected, those for whom it should have been performed will be seized with a racking cough (*ingotolo*) and diarrhœa. Even Christians, who eschew the other parts of the death ritual, often participate in the *ingotolo*.

When a woman has died she should be replaced by a sister or 587
brother's daughter, just as the dead man is by a brother or son. 834

[1] The closest equivalent in our society is cheering, but the *akalulu* is raised by women.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

587 and the widower should refrain from sexual intercourse with his
834 other wives until the ritual union with the 'wife who replaces the dead' (*unsasi*) at the 'shaving of the sprouting hair'. Nowadays, however, widowers do not keep this taboo strictly, and many lie with their other wives after the 'picking up of pumpkin-seeds'.

765 Before the 'shaving of the sprouting hair' for a dead woman her brother (or, if he is dead, his heir) goes to cut down the bananas at her former husband's home, as a sign that kinship between them is at an end, but he is persuaded to desist. Mwakwelebeja, an elderly man who had just performed it after the death of his sister Seba, the wife of the chief Mwaipopo, in company with his neighbour Mwaiselage and his wives, thus described the ritual:

We arrived and our wives and the wives of Mwaipopo went into the house to wail, and we men went in too and cried: 'Alas father! Alas father!' Then we seized my *umwipwa*, the girl Ijonga, the daughter of Seba, and went off with her. The women, the chief's wives, fought with us and cried: 'Bring a cloth, bring a cloth!' They gave us a cloth and we left the girl. Then I seized a bill-hook and began to cut down the banana grove. I cut indeed! They cried: 'Not the banana grove!' and gave me another cloth.

QUESTION: What does this mean?

MWAKWELEBEJA: When we seize the girl it is as if we said: 'My child has died, the kinship is finished, it is finished here, I'll be off with my sister's children (*abipwa*), they are *my* children.' And when they give me a cloth they pay saying: 'Father, we pray you, don't! There is still kinship, Father, you are not a stranger! Do not terminate the kinship, it is still there.' And when I cut the banana grove it means the same; it means my child has died here, it is finished here, the kinship has ended. And when they give me a cloth, they beseech me saying: 'Not the banana grove, Father, the kinship is not yet finished, it still exists!' Formerly, if they were rich they gave a bull. . . . We were unfortunate, Mwaipopo paid us nothing.

After I had cut the grove I gave bananas and meat (from a cow I had brought to kill) to all my sisters' children, on the roadway (outside the homestead). I stood with my back to them and handed the bananas and meat over my shoulder. They came up behind me one by one, and took the food in their mouths. [This was demonstrated, dramatically.] Yes, it is a ritual. If we do not give them bananas and meat, their legs swell up, they fall ill and become mad.

765 Some of our informants maintained that this ritual of cutting
184 the bananas was performed only when the deceased's family had no girl to send in her place. Mwakwelebeja and Mwaiselage, how-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

ever, insisted that it was performed whether there was a girl to 765
send or not, but if several sisters were married to the same man it 184
was carried out only for the eldest of them.

We do this whether we are substituting another woman or not, but we do it only for the senior sister. There were three Sebas married to Mwaipopo, and when the two junior ones died we did not go to cut the bananas, but now the senior Seba has died, we do cut the bananas.

Mwaiselage explained that his brother-in-law would come to 765
cut bananas when his senior wife, Lyandileko, died, whether she died before or after her junior sister who is her co-wife, but the brother would not cut bananas at the death of the junior sister.

MWAKWELEBEJA: We cut the banana grove again when all the children of those women, the kinswomen married to one man, are dead. That is, their mother's brother's son (*untani*) does it, for their mother's brother will be dead by then. It means the same thing: 'The kinship is finished.' They pay to say: 'No, Father, it still continues.'

A woman to replace the dead is asked for even though her 587
husband has predeceased her. X, describing the ritual added: 765

And when my mother dies (if my father has died first) still her relatives, my *abipwa*, come to cut the banana grove. I throw them a cloth crying: 'Not the bananas.' Also they bring me another woman. If they do not, I go to them and say: 'Give me another mother to look after me.' They give me a girl whom I give to a half-brother (as his wife). If there is no girl they give me a cow, saying: 'That's your mother.'

Ibaso and Mwaijamba explained:

If, when a woman has died, her people are poor, having no child to replace her, they say: 'We are sorry, but there is nothing at all here, this cow is for drawing water with.' And formerly they returned all the cattle later on; but now, since we have stopped claiming calves, we divide the cows. . . . But when there is a daughter and they give her to me, the husband, we give marriage cattle again. Kinship does not [602]
come to an end.

To recapitulate, the main events of the ritual of death are the 765
formal recognition of the heir (if the deceased was a married man); 768
the burial of a flowering head of bananas and the rubbing in earth from the grave; washing; a ritual eating of bananas with certain seeds; sweeping out the mourning hut; circling the hearth and putting an old pot on the fire with various foods; the presentation of millet by relatives and friends, and a ritual grinding; a second

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

765 washing and the throwing away of a stem of bananas and leaves in a
768 stream, and bringing back a hen and bark-cloth; eating a mash on the hearth; the brewing of beer with the millet presented; a ritual drinking and further shaving when this is ripe; an admonition of the heir on his duties and acknowledgement of him as 'father' by the children of the deceased; sexual intercourse between the heir and the widows he inherits; the burial by each inherited woman of some of the fluids from that intercourse in her father's banana grove, and a ritual drinking of beer with her father and other close relatives.

If the deceased is a woman her brother comes to cut her husband's banana grove and seize her children, as a sign that kinship between the lineages has ceased, but he is dissuaded with gifts, and treats his sister's children with medicines. A sister is sent to replace the dead woman, the widower has intercourse with her at 'the shaving of the sprouting hair', and she returns home to bury some of the fluids in her father's grove, and drink beer with him ritually.

An account of one of the rituals which we attended in Selya which is quoted in the documents (p. 234) may give some reality to this stark outline.

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

765. When asked why the ritual of death is performed the first reply
764 of Nyakyusa informants was that they were driving away (*ukukaga*)
828 the dead and that if it were neglected those for whom it should have been performed would go mad (*ukubopa ikigili*). Angombwike explained: 'In the death ritual they drive away the shade (*unsyuka*) saying: "Why are you always at me, nagging at me, in dreams?" It is to swear at him (the shade) and drive him away.'

Another informant explained: 'The touching of the earth is the expression of the wish that he will not come into our dreams and thoughts any more, and he does not!' Another confirmed this saying: 'The powdered medicine and touching the earth are alike;
765 they wish to stop him (the deceased) coming into our dreams.'
764 And an Ndali informant said: 'Shaving is to get rid of the shade
775 which was on their bodies.'

There is also the implication of speeding the deceased on his way to the land of the shades, for it is believed that if the ritual is not performed he will not be welcomed by his dead kinsmen and will continue to haunt the living. Of an unfinished death ritual

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

people say: '*Tukali ukunkesya unsyuka* (We have not yet bidden farewell to the shade),' *ukukesya* being the word used for bidding a courteous farewell to departing guests. Mwaisumo elaborated the point. He said: 'The death ritual is a saying good-bye, it is to see off the dead man accompanying him on his way (*ukunsindikela*); to demonstrate that we have buried him indeed, and to pray that forgetfulness may now come on us.' Another informant explained: 'Touching the earth is to say "Good-bye, friend." '

The danger of madness was given as the reason both for the whole ritual and for many separate actions in it. 'You go mad if you do not shave after a death,' said the wife of the chief Mwaihojo. 'You go mad if you keep the hair of the corpse (*inwili sya mfimba*),' said Mwandisi, the old blind historian, and he went on: 'Yes, much madness comes from the shades if you have neglected the death ritual for a wife or for parents, and the ritual at puberty also. Madness comes from the shades and from Kyala. And if a woman refuses to perform the ritual for her husband who has died, and refuses to lie down with the heir, she also goes mad.' If someone does go mad the cause is usually said to be neglect of the death ritual or some mistake in its performance.

Other types of illness are also attributed to neglect of the death ritual. Kasitile was ailing and thought that his illness was due partly to the fact that he had not completed the death ritual for a relative. Mwilabe said of the sweeping in the ritual: 'They sweep round their legs lest their bodies become swollen and sick. It is said that their bodies will swell if they attend the ritual of someone else and this is done and they themselves have not been swept over.' Several informants mentioned 'a lingering and painful death' (a terror often spoken of by the Nyakyusa) as the penalty for neglecting a ritual, and the last part of the ritual is expressly interpreted as a prophylactic against the 'gasping cough'.

Finally, it is said that the crops will not flourish if the ritual is neglected. Kakuju, a village headman of Selya, was explicit on the point: 'If you do not bury your father properly the food will disappear. They (the diviners) will tell you to find something and when beer has been left overnight outside in the banana grove you pray to the shade.' The fear that the crops will not flourish is not mentioned so frequently as the danger of madness, but it is a general notion.

The danger of madness or other illness coming on one is thought to be greatest if a man tastes the ritual food or beer, or is sprinkled

2: Wilson [redacted]-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764 by the dust, at some other funeral without having completed the
765 ritual for his own parents, and the danger of the 'gasping cough'
828 exists only when a widow, having lain with the heir, eats or drinks with her own relatives.

796 Everyone knows the connection between madness and the performance of the whole ritual and between coughing and the final act, but not everyone is conscious of the symbolism of the various events. For example, Mwakisisile, a middle-aged pagan man whom we knew well, could not interpret the details of the symbolism and he explained: 'Some ask about these things in the ritual, some do not ask. I have not asked. We only know, many of us, that in the ritual we drive the shade, who is here, away from the body, and that if we do not drive him away we run mad. But we do not understand the details of the ritual such as straining water through a leaf, or passing the baskets between the legs, so as to be able to say: "This detail means this." ' Those most conscious of the symbolism are the *abanyago*, the officiants at the family rituals and the priests of the communal rituals. Kasitile, the hereditary rain-maker of Selya, who was a close friend of Godfrey Wilson's, and formally presented him to his dead ancestors urging them 'not to be startled at a white face', was our foremost authority on the symbolism of the Selya ritual. He was more conscious of the symbolism than most people, but his interpretation was confirmed at almost every point by others. Kasitile was not paid for
[124] information—none of our informants was—but he and Godfrey Wilson exchanged gifts from time to time in the manner customary among the Nyakyusa, and he often had a meal with us. Mwandisi, a very old blind chief living on the Lake-shore plain (MuNgonde) who was regarded by the Nyakyusa themselves as an authority on history and custom, was also a friend prepared to expound the
[184] rituals. His interpretation contradicted Kasitile's on one point only—he denied that one purpose of the ritual was to bring back the shade into the house. Other informants, though less coherent, corroborated Kasitile's interpretation, which may therefore be taken as a general, not a personal one.

764 There are nine main themes in the ritual: first, the driving away
765 of the dead from the dreams of his close kinsmen, and measures to
796 prevent him 'brooding over them' (*ukobatela*)—the word is that used of a hen brooding over her chickens. Widows, in particular, must be separated from the shade of their husband before the heir (or any other man) dare have intercourse with them. Secondly, the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

identification of the mourners with the corpse and the separation 764
of the shade from both of them. 'What they do to the participants 765
they do to the deceased. . . . If they are not cleansed he is still 796
muddy. . . . We throw away the corpse, the contamination of death, into the river . . . we drive the shade away off our bodies to join his fellows . . . we separate the corpse and the shade.' Thirdly, bringing back the shade as a beneficent spirit into the home. 'In the ritual we tell the shade to go away and join his fellows, and then to come back with them and warm himself by the fire in our house. . . . At first the shade is in our bodies, we cast him out . . . at first it is as if we were still holding the corpse in our arms, but we throw the corpse away into the river . . . the shade we bring back into our house.'

Fourthly, a miming of the actions of a madman in eating excrement as a prophylactic against behaviour of that sort. The dead, if not separated from the living, bring madness upon them, and simulating madness is a protection against it.

Fifthly, the corpse and faeces are identified: 'The corpse is filth, it is excrement. And so when a madman for whom they have not performed the ritual eats filth that is the corpse, he is still holding it, they have not done the ritual for him.'

Sixthly, the shades are identified with semen and seeds and their control over potency and fertility is recognized. The Nyakyusa [789 think that they are always present in sexual intercourse, and sym- 842] bols of sexual intercourse are interpreted as a means of driving out the shade from the participants' bodies.

Seventhly, 'the food which he hoed' is symbolically 'given to the shade' of the man who has just died and he is urged to be satisfied: 'You, shade, do not think there was little food at your ritual. . . . The food which we have eaten you have eaten . . . do not create hunger.'

Eighthly, the shade is acknowledged as a kinsman by eating with him food and beer mixed with *ikipiki*—the symbol of agnatic kinship—before he is driven away.

Lastly, a dead man is formally replaced by his heir, a woman by her sister or her brother's daughter.

These conceptions are expressed in the following texts which are given as they were recorded by Godfrey Wilson. No attempt has [128] been made to systematize Kasitile's or Mwandisi's arguments, but the statements made during numerous sessions have been placed in sequence, and are separated only by dots.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

764 i. *Kasitile's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. in Nyakyusa and
765 translated by him shortly afterwards.)[1]
775

KASITILE: We go to bathe wearing leaves, we throw them away, we bathe, then we come back and shave our hair. This means we are driving away the shade (*unsyuka*), for at first he is in our bodies. Our fathers told us: 'When I die I shall not reach the place of the shades unless you do the ritual for me; those who preceded me will drive me back saying: "You are not one of us, you cannot come, they have not yet done your ritual." For the shades linger on the way at first, they do not reach their place.' We do the ritual so as to tell the shade: 'We have given you everything, now go away and may your fellow shades receive you, do not come here.'

764 When we return from bathing we put a banana in the ground with
765 a pumpkin-seed and a lentil in it. We stoop and bite a piece off, and then we shave the hair. There is much idiocy (*ubulema*) if you do not
828 perform the ritual, and madness (*ikigili*), or perhaps you will have a lingering death. The shade is in the body, he causes madness (*ikigili*), he says: 'Why have you not done the ritual?' The shades pound and stamp the body.

Mwambuputa (a village headman) joining in the conversation said:

775 All this round us [with a sweeping gesture] is the place of the shades.
764 What we have buried is only the body, to prevent it stinking, but the heart (*indumbula*) stays here.

KASITILE: The banana which we bite in the ground is like the
764 sausages of porridge of the Kukwe, it is excrement, it is filth; because
765 I think that if I do not perform the ritual I may run mad and eat filth.
828 Also before this they beat up a mash of cowpeas, they take it with a spoon and put it against the wall, and one by one we come and eat. This also is eating filth so that we may escape and be clean.

[177] Madness (*ikigili*)[2] is of two kinds, one comes from Kyala (but we used to say from Mbasi, we did not say Kyala) and one from ritual. Mwaipopo (the chief) had the madness (*ikigili*); it is in his family on his mother's side. This is the madness of Mbasi, they do their rituals all right. Mbasi is he who lived with my father here. He called 'Kanjuki! Kanjuki!' from the hillside; then my mother would cook him some food
764 and my father would put something out for him.[3] When we perform
765 the rituals the shades are very pleased to see it; of old you might hear
775 them clapping their hands in the evening here, after we had finished a ritual. But they have gone away now. . . . Yes, the shades are filthy
826

[1] I have made minor changes in the translation.
[2] Distinguished from a trance or epileptic fit, *ukukoma amalago*.
[3] See *Communal Rituals among the Nyakyusa* (in preparation).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

(*banyali*), they are in the body at first, they shake it and you fall ill; 764
they say: 'You are still muddy, you have not done the ritual.' . . . 765
When a man dies his heart (*indumbula*) and his body (*umfimba*) separate, 775
they are divorced, the heart with the blood (*ililopa*) and the shadow 828
(*ilisyungulu*) are separated from the corpse which rots in the ground. The corpse is filth, it is excrement. And so when a madman, for whom they have not performed the ritual, eats filth, that is the corpse, he is still holding it, they have not done the ritual for him. If they have not done the ritual for the shade his fellows drive him back and say: 'You cannot come yet, you are still muddy, they have not bathe you in the river.' . . .

Yes, that which they do to my body, to me the heir (or the relative) they do to the shade himself. He, the corpse, is earthy, muddy. That is why we smear ourselves with mud, we mourners; it is this earth that we drive away in the ritual, it is mud, it is the corpse. . . .

The hair of the mourners which we shave in the ritual is one with the hair of the corpse, it is his. We wash and shave and anoint him and he goes to his own place. . . .

First we bite the banana with the seeds stuck into it in the ground, and then we eat bananas and seeds in the usual way. It is the food which he, the shade, ate. . . .

They seize the heir and widows at the pumpkin-seed ritual. The officiant is there, she smears ashes on their chests and puts a strand of [837
ilingolongofwa creeper on their necks, then if the woman refuses the man 681]
later there is a case and she must pay the fine for adultery. If she refuses before this there is no case, and she does not pay. The ashes and creeper are signs of death, of mourning, of the corpse—they cast them away into the river.

QUESTION: The rubbing in earth—what does it represent?

KASITILE: The banana flower is the corpse. We are saying to him: 'You corpse, we have finished with you, do not come here again, it is finished for ever, do not look towards us, go away.' This earth is the same as the mud with which we smear ourselves at the burial. We bathe, we cast it away.

QUESTION: The washing at the door with medicine?

KASITILE: We wash with powdered medicine at the door because we are just going to take filth (*indafu*) in our hands—to take the bananas and pumpkin-seeds. We bathe, we wash, and then they give us the bananas. It is taboo (*mwiko*) to eat before washing. The calabash used for this washing is hung up in the porch and used for the beer later, the beer which they drink on the path after anointing themselves.

QUESTION: The bananas and lentils and pumpkin-seeds?

KASITILE: At the eating of bananas and pumpkin-seeds we do not separate them, everything is then pressed together in one place; but the banana flower we bury is separate, that is the corpse. And at the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

764 water when we bathe we make a separation—they take a stem of
765 bananas, and a bark-cloth, and a hen to the water. The bananas they
775 throw away—that is the corpse; the hen and the bark-cloth they bring
828 back to the homestead and the officiant takes them home with her—
that is the shade, is not the shade in the house with us? Do we not pray to him?

QUESTION: Putting food into the pot?

KASITILE: This food is the filth of the body. We say: 'We cast you from us, let our hearts be purified; the mud we smeared on our faces we cast it away, all our body casts you away. We are not corpses; we are putting you to rights and shaving your hair, go away to your fellows.' We begin to get rid of the earth we had on our faces so that we may anoint ourselves again. In our lineage we eat only bean mash, not bananas and millet porridge, we differ in our rituals.

QUESTION: The sweeping of rubbish on to legs and the weeping?

KASITILE: This means: 'We begin to cast you off wholly, let all the ritual that is left come to us, we throw it away.' The measures of millet are to tell the shade that So-and-so has brought millet and is doing his ritual. 'Do not think he is angry with you,' we tell him, 'he has brought this millet.' The throwing of millet from the winnowing basket on to the participants' heads as they stand in a line outside means that we cast him away, we are taking him to the river—at the river we throw away the corpse. They throw away the leaves and the stem of bananas.

QUESTION: Hitting the heads with a banana sapling in the doorway?

KASITILE: They hit the participants on the head, that is the *ndweka* disease of the dead man,[1] we are setting them to rights.

QUESTION: The stem of bananas, hen, and bark-cloth?

KASITILE: The stem of bananas is the corpse, they leave it in the water with the leaves; the bark-cloth and hen are the shade which they bring into the house.

QUESTION: The circling with the pot and putting in of food?

KASITILE: This is the shade whom they bring into the house (*bikumbeka*) when they have brought him from the water. The banana flower they bury is the same as the leaf they wear, it is the corpse which they throw away in the water.

Yes, we separate the corpse and the shade with all our might, the earth we rub our bodies in is the corpse, we throw it into the water and the shade we bring back to the house. The eating of the bean mash on [177] the wall (the old custom) and on the hearth (both old and contemporary) that is the shade in the house. He warms himself by the fire in the house, we pray to him. Putting food into the pot means: 'Leave our

[1] Not clear to me.—M. W.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

bodies altogether, go away to your friends, sit here by the hearth and warm yourself.' 764 765 775 828

QUESTION: The grinding of millet flour on to bark and the subsequent anointing of the participants with this flour in a paste, before shaving?

KASITILE: This means: 'This is your food that you ate, we give it to you.' And the smearing on the hair means: 'We have finished your ritual for you, we have left nothing out, bear us no grudge.'

QUESTION: The sweeping of rubbish (*imindu*) on to the participants' legs?

KASITILE: The rubbish is the rubbish of death, it is dirt. 'Let it come now,' we say. 'Let it not come later, may we never run mad.' The wailing (during sweeping) means: 'Go away, farewell!' We have finished the burial now, it will never be done again save once more at the beer.

QUESTION: The basket of millet between legs and over heads?

KASITILE: That is to drive him away, to tell him: 'Do not return to these your relatives here, you were in their bodies, now you are separate, we have driven you away, you are no relative of ours!' All that we do in the house there means that he is in our bodies and we are going to cast him out. The flour on the shoulder is like the flour paste in the hair, this is the corpse, we throw it away.

QUESTION: The song 'We are startled by the shade' (*Tunyomwike ilindu*)?

KASITILE: The *ilindu* is the shade, we are startled.

QUESTION: How startled?

KASITILE: Ha! Are you not startled when you run mad?[1] The heart is terribly startled, it curls upwards; when they say this phrase: 'We are startled by the *ilindu*' they quiet the heart and make it lie down again. Let him go away and be startled with his fellows!

QUESTION: The word *ilinwanwa* (the croaking bird)?

KASITILE: That is the shade that broods on the body. 'Friend,' we say to him, 'we have put you to rights, do not come to us, oh croaking bird.'

QUESTION: The ritual as a whole?

KASITILE: It means: 'We have given you everything, we have eaten filth on the hearth'—for if one runs mad one eats filth, faeces. . . .

QUESTION: What is the symbolism of pouring water on the thatch and running through the drops?

KASITILE: The ritual has many parts. We teach a person that he should do it properly and not leave out anything. Do we not fear (*ukutila*) the water for washing, the water of the corpse? When heavy rain falls do we not flee from the downpour and enter the house? That is how it is then. We mimic what he did when he was alive. . . .

[1] *Ukunyomoka ilindu* is used also for an epileptic fit.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya/MuNgonde

768 It is forbidden for the heir to lie with the dead man's wives before
[784] the ritual[1] is over. But at the time of the beer, when the drinking is
finished, we put him into the house and he lies with them. If he has
[833] lain with them previously the semen refuses to come. . . . But if all goes well the officiants raise the cry of triumph (*akalulu*) and shake a winnowing basket of seeds by the door and cry: 'Ours, ours, we marvel at the thing, we marvel at the thing (*ifyitu, ifyitu, tunyomwike ilindu*).' If he fails they go to divine and the diviner says: '*Mindu* (sickness from the shades), he has forestalled the ritual (*akindile ubunyago*).' Then they pray in the bananas. He must have intercourse with all the women he is inheriting; yes, however old they may be, he must lie with them that night or else they will lose their strength of body or mind, or else their legs will swell. With the old ones he will never lie again! He drinks
[831] fresh milk to give him strength beforehand! Fresh milk gives strength, it produces semen.

The next morning each of the wives goes off to her father with *ilibalaga* and with meat; the first is buried in the bananas, it goes to the place of the shades, the meat is eaten. And the man too goes with his *ilibalaga* to his own father. Each wife makes her *ilibalaga* by wiping her own and her husband's genitals with her hands and then taking cooked bananas in them. He himself does likewise at the end.

768 The *ilibalaga* goes to the place of the shades, it is to drive away the
775 shade of the dead man; before this he had not reached the place of shades but was on the way. In this manner we tell the shade that we have put another in his place, we tell him to go and join the other shades now and to come back with them to warm themselves by the fire in his old house.

[643] QUESTION: How can a chief who inherits many wives lie with them all in one night?

643 KASITILE: I do not know how. Kyala gives him strength! . . . He has
768 intercourse with them all. Yes, really this does happen. . . . But if the
833 man is old and fails to lie with them all, perhaps the wives will conceal the fact. He lies on one side of a partition wall with his wives and the people (for many come to sleep in his house that night) on the other. Then if he fails altogether . . . no one beats the partition with a stick, they all stay quiet till morning; but if he succeeds at first, and fails at the last few, they may perhaps conceal it. One of the wives is told by the officiant to beat the partition with a stick when he has lain with all his wives. When she does this the officiants who are in the doorway shake up lentils and millet and pumpkin-seeds in a winnowing basket and call out: 'Ours, ours! We marvel at the thing!' If he fails altogether they stay quiet and next day go to divine; the diviner says: '*Mindu*.' Then they pray and pray, and praise all the shades of old, and that night he tries again and the semen comes.

775 The seeds of lentil, millet and pumpkin are symbols of the shades, the
768
833

[1] [i.e. the farewell to the dead.—Analyst]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

lentil is the shade, the millet is the shade, the pumpkin-seed is the 775
shade. The doctor takes them away home and eats them, that means 768
that the shades have gone away. The words they say: 'Ours, ours! We 833
marvel at the thing!' mean: 'The semen is ours, the shades have supported him, they have given us the semen, they have not bound it.' For if the shades are angry they bind him and the semen does not come. . . . If the heir and his dead father (or brother) were on bad terms then, although the ritual is correctly done, yet still the shades will bind his semen at the end of the ritual. Fertility (*imbapo*) does not belong to the shades but to Kyala, but if the shade is angry he binds it. [842]

There are three symbols: the banana is the corpse and the seed is the shade. It is the filth which madmen catch hold of, it is the faeces which they eat. And the banana is the body of the man and the seed is his semen. Eating is sexual intercourse. It is this he has done during his lifetime. It is to send him away and say that we are about to put another in his homestead. It is the body and semen of him who has died. Also when a woman has died the husband eats . . . it [the banana and seed] is what we did. . . .

The seed is the shade, and it is the blood for creating a person [i.e. the semen] because the shade and the semen are brothers.[1]

Yes, they are intermingled, all are together in the ritual: the corpse, and the shade, and the body of the man [i.e. his penis] and the blood [semen] and the filth of madness; all are intermingled. You understand, Mwaipaja (G. W.), you are a priest now, you are a real priest. . . .

When they shake up the millet and lentils and pumpkin-seeds at the beer when he has finished coitus with the women it also has a double symbolism (*fyope fyo fifwani fibili*); the seed is the blood [semen]—Ours, ours—and it is the shade who has gone. Also at puberty it is like this. . . .

Those who say the *ikipiki* is one and the same for birth, puberty and the death ritual are right. It is one only. . . . The *ikipiki* is our blood, it is kept in the house of the senior wife. It pertains both to men and to the shades, for when we marry we do a ritual with it, so the shade says: 'I have eaten it during my life, I was born with it (for it went into his stomach), I married a woman with it (we wash and shave our hair with it at marriage), now that I am dead they perform the ritual with it.' It is one and the same. The *ikipiki* is our intestine.[2] It is one and the same in all lineages.

One day at a funeral roasted bananas were brought. A man 764
started scraping the ash off his with a spear. Kasitile asked him: 'Do you scrape bananas?' He answered: 'Yes, but if there were the litter in the house we would avoid doing so.'

[1] cf. *Ulukungu*: semen; *ipungu*: pumpkin-seed.
[2] *Ulula lwa kikolo*: 'the intestine of the lineage'; the large intestine.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

764 Then they explained to me that formerly it was forbidden to
177 scrape bananas at a death, you eat them with the ash on, for if you scrape you will scrape your body also, that is, you will scratch and scratch. But now that custom is finished. Three men were scraping away.

784 Mwaikambo said: 'In all rituals it is forbidden to scrape bananas —in the puberty and twin rituals also.'

184 KASITILE: It is forbidden to scrape bananas only at a death ritual,
784 not at other rituals. If you scrape bananas you scrape your own body. It is the corpse. We have died, we are the corpse. . . .

604 The mother's brother (*umuiptwa*) hands bananas and meat over his
781 shoulder to the children who are treated, then he goes off home and they go home without looking back at one another. If they do look
764 back at one another the child will grow feeble and go mad. If the mother's brother does not come to cut the banana grove and do this, if the child sees others eating that banana it becomes feeble and goes mad. The banana and the meat are the filth which madmen take hold of, they are filth. Yes, it is like the banana which they eat at the pumpkin-seeds ritual.

QUESTION: Why the mother's brother?

KASITILE: Who should give it to them? Their kinsman (*unkamu*) should give it to them, he who looks after everything for them.

ii. *Mwandisi's interpretation.*[1]

764 QUESTION: What do you do in the death ritual, what does it mean?

MWANDISI: When a child has died I do not approach the women, my wives, until we have finished the ritual. On the night of the day we drink the beer then we come together. It is a ritual! Yes, the coming
[833] together of man and woman is a ritual (*bo bunyago*). If we come together before the beer then we overstep our child, Lubabelo, he will be impotent and not beget children. No, his children are not relatives (*bo bandu*) they are my comrades (*bobinangu*) but if Lubabelo forestalls (*ukukinda*) the ritual with his wife then he oversteps (*ukukinda*) his children. And when we have finished the ritual Lubabelo begins[2] and goes first to his wife. We follow him at our home. If we begin we would overstep him, it is taboo (*musiko*). At the ritual of pumpkin-seeds, we drive away the shade, we say: 'Do not rise from the dead and come to us, go to the land of the shades, that we may bear and beget another child, you prevent us doing so!'

[1] His son Lubabelo, who was with us during the earlier part of the conversation, left so that we could speak freely. There was no difficulty about Mwandisi's wife being present.

[2] Mwandisi was referring to a ritual performed on the death of his son Lubalelo's child.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764

QUESTION: The banana and the pumpkin-seeds?

MWANDISI: These are the ritual which we—I the man, and she the woman—perform at the end, they are the sexual intercourse. The pumpkin-seed and the lentil and the millet are the blood of the man, the banana is his procreative power (*mbapo jakz*). The pumpkin-seed ritual is important—when we have finished it then I go to my wife and do not fear her, but Lubabelo begins. Before the pumpkin-seed ritual it is completely taboo.

QUESTION: And the beer?

MWANDISI: That is not important, but the pumpkin-seed ritual is. But when a man has died then his wife must not approach the heir until the beer ritual.

QUESTION: Then the lust for copulation always comes from the shades?

833

MWANDISI: Yes, desire comes from the shades. If they are angry you 775
are impotent and cannot beget a child; and sometimes also you are 842
impotent because the umbilical cord (*ululela*) has fallen on your mother.

MWANDISI'S WIFE: When my husband says in his heart: 'I shall go to my wife', that comes from the shades.

QUESTION: The umbilical cord?

MWANDISI'S WIFE: It is completely taboo for it to fall on the loins, then the child will not develop, it will be sterile and not bear (or beget) a child. And the mother herself will not bear again, she will not conceive again. . . . A woman cries a great deal with the pain in her belly until the cord comes away: when it has come away then she is filled with wonder and does not cry.[1]

MWANDISI: Pumpkin-seeds are used by us and the people of Selya; 764
the Kukwe perform the ritual with beans, and the people of Ngonde with fish and beer. . . .

QUESTION: Why do the heir and wife appear to refuse when caught in the ritual?

MWANDISI: Because someone has died. Should they rejoice therefore? If they rejoice it seems as if they wished their relative to die.

QUESTION: Do they fear the dead will harm them if they appear to rejoice?

MWANDISI: No, they fear those above [i.e. the living] lest they laugh at them. They are ashamed. But sometimes a woman really refuses. She fights and fights, and struggles and struggles, and says: 'No.' Her friends (the women) hit her and put her in the house, then when she has come out of the house she runs off, she flees.

QUESTION: The ashes and the *iliagolongofiwa* creeper?

MWANDISI: They are signs of mourning, they give them to the

[1] The umbilical cord, *ululela*, is literally the 'cord of weeping'.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764 heir. It is the ritual we are performing, they are signs of widowhood (*fya bufwele*), of lamentation (*kyo kesa*). The ashes are a sign of lamentation and the *ilingolongofwa* creeper is a sign of lamentation. Yes, all these things are part of the ritual, we cannot leave them out, it is taboo. (If we did) those below [i.e. the shades] would be angry and say: 'They have startled me and caused me pain in the heart; they have injured the ritual by foreshadowing evil.'

✓768 At the end the heir sleeps with the women in the house—before the
764 beer. He performs the ritual with them, the officiants wait for them and ask them: 'How was it?' If he says 'No,' they say: 'Kyala does not
[787] stand in the house.' They go and divine at a doctor's who says:' So-and-so is angry.'

QUESTION: Kyala does not stand in the house (*Kyala akema nnyumba*)?

MWANDISI: It is the shades, they say Kyala does not give support. Then again he performs the ritual (*ikunyagula*, i.e. he attempts to have coitus) and they ask him: 'How was it?' They say: 'Yes, they (the shades) have stood with us, Kyala has stood with us.' [He gave both forms as alternatives: *batwemile* and *Kyala emile*.] Then they clap their hands and raise the shout of triumph (*akalulu*).

QUESTION: Is that the cry: 'Ours, ours!'?

✓[]84 MWANDISI: No, that's the cry of the hill people. With us it's taboo.
✓784 Then in the morning someone shouts: 'War has come.' They come out immediately and run away to the pasture-lands.

764 QUESTION: Is this 'coming out' (*ukusoka*) the same as that in the coming out of chiefs (*ubusoka*) and in the twin ceremony?

MWANDISI: Yes, they run because their legs were heavy (*nsito*) in the house, now they have grown lighter and are strong; because in the twin ceremony the seclusion in the house lasts four months, at the coming out of chiefs two months, and that is hard, but at death it is only one, so it is light. But at death and the birth of twins it is the war (*ubwite*)
[833 of the mats. Is it not war with women? [*ubwite* is used here for sexual
795] intercourse.] Then when they have come out they give one another beer to drink in the doorway. The heir takes beer in his mouth and
[753] spits it out and hands the vessel on to his wives and children. Each does the same. They do not swallow it. To do so causes diarrhœa. The man and his wives are burning. They have come from the bed. This giving one another to drink, when each spits and does not swallow, happens after the eating of sausages of porridge on the road.[1] It is the same in the twin ritual except that whereas it is only the principals who give one another to drink at the death ritual, in the twin ritual not only they, but all relatives, and even non-relatives do it as well!

QUESTION: How about the eating of millet porridge with powdered medicine on the road?

[1] No other informant mentioned this in the MuNgonde death ritual.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

MWANDISI: The sausages of porridge stuck in the ground and sprinkled with powdered medicine which each stoops and bites mean that you should be heavy in your belly (*musito munda*) and not have diarrhœa, it is to make faeces hard (not watery). Some we leave and bury [the end of each sausage of porridge is left in the ground]; that means that people should step over it and take away the disease, may they have diarrhœa at their homes! They will get it really! 764 [753]

QUESTION: Why do the dead man's sisters admonish their sisters-in-law, his widows? 607 764

MWANDISI: Because we have all met together. They say: 'Do not grudge him food, go on cooking for him. He dies of hunger! Begin again! And why do you not cook for us when we come? You grudge us food!' We scold them very much and they weep tears.

QUESTION: They say in Selya that you both drive away a shade and bring him back to the house. 764

MWANDISI: No, we drive him away, we do not bring him back to the house. 775

QUESTION: But you go to the stream with a stem of bananas, a hen and a fresh strip of bark, the bananas you throw away, but you come back with the hen and the bark. Is that the shade?

MWANDISI: These do not come back home. The officiant has them and takes them to her house. . . .

The stem of bananas we throw in the stream, it is sickness, it is the corpse, it goes to Kyala there. The hen and the bark we give to the doctor, the officiant, because it is she who caught hold of the sickness. She is always an unrelated person, not a relative; we pay her. If we have not performed the ritual we run mad, the shades have not come out, they are still there within.

QUESTION: You performed the ritual for Lubabelo's child yourselves? 764

MWANDISI: Yes, she was our grandchild. We grandparents don't matter, we carry out the ritual but it's not important; if, however, it is our own child [who has died] then it is taboo. It is taboo up to the point that connections are not relatives. [A grandchild in this context—though not in other contexts—is treated as not a relative]. The ritual *must* be performed for all *relatives* (*abakawa*). . . . [603]

First the stem of bananas and then the millet and pumpkin-seeds are passed between the straddled legs of the principals. The winnowing basket (containing millet and seeds) is pushed along with the officiant's elbow. In performing this ritual we finish the mating of man and woman, for that which comes out of the man in front [i.e. the semen] is the shades, when the participants have spat out we drive the shades away. If we have not performed the ritual we go mad. The shades have not come out but are still within. When, however, we have finished, then they have come out of the body. But they come again, we always have them. (*Apa tukuyagula tukumsleya mbolsli munyambala munkikulu, po*

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764 *ifi fikusoka kukyeni nunyambala bo basyuka, bo baputile abasyuka tukubakaga: lenga tukanyagwila tukubopa ikigili! Abasyuka bo bakasokaga bikujamo; papo lenga tumalile po basokile munda. Loli bikwandesya kangi tukuja nabo bwila!*)

842 What we do comes from the shades and from Kyala himself. The
831 blood is theirs and his together. Those who create (*ukubumba*) a child say: 'I am just eating at a woman,' but Kyala creates a child! If Kyala and the shades do not 'cook' [i.e. do not cause desire] you will do nothing, the penis is flaccid, but if Kyala has 'cooked' then you really do something, your heart (*indumbula*) is full of desire. Always the shades are there and we drive them away, they are there and we drive them away. . . .

775 A shade is resurrected in the body of his child (*Unsyuka ikusyuka itolo mumbeli gwa mwanake*). . . .

764 Passing the basket of pumpkin-seeds, millet, and lentils between the
775 legs and on to the head and throwing to one side means: 'Here between the legs there is work, may they go out in intercourse, and from the head where we dream, may they go out also.' Because in the ritual we say: 'Let them come into the body' at first, then we drive them away. Rubbing ourselves in the earth and passing millet between the legs means: 'May they come';[1] throwing millet and so on to one side it is to drive them away, that they may go out.

QUESTION: Which shade do you drive away?

MWANDISI: He who has just died, we drive him away.

QUESTION: What about the first ancestor?

MWANDISI: He is there at their place [the place of the shades], we drove him away long ago, he just receives him [the newly deceased].

QUESTION: Why the pumpkin-seeds in the bananas?

MWANDISI: It is the semen (*ulukungu*) for begetting children. . . .

QUESTION: Do the shades always come when a man dies?

MWANDISI: Yes, they always come, they receive their fellow. Yes, even though he has died from sorcery they come and receive him, and even though he has died from witchcraft they come, the shades receive him, and if it is from illness he has died they also come. There is no
✓ [761] death without the shades, they always come to receive their fellow.

When the witches have 'eaten' someone the shades come to receive
764 him. No, the witches eat him alone, but the shades receive him. Some-
775 one may get up in the morning and say: 'I dreamed they ate me and I
763 was with the shades!' Then he is about to die. Sometimes someone
828 dreams and says: 'In the night I was in the land of the shades with so-and-so, I left him there, I escaped myself and came home.' Then his friend is about to die.

764 If you do not perform the ritual you go mad (*kukyembela ikigili*) or
775 perhaps you get very thin, and are unable to die, you are ailing and do

[1] i.e. the participants identify themselves with the deceased.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

not die. That comes from the shades when they are angry and say: 'We shall see!' It is to be finished off. 764 775

QUESTION: So the shades always come at death?

MWANDISI: Yes. See, Mwafyuma who died [the old Mwafyuma, a classificatory brother of Mwandisi, died the day before yesterday]. I dreamed at night of Mwakalukwa [a classificatory son of Mwandisi who died about 1932] and in the morning I told X here [his son-in-law who lives near was sitting with us and at once assented, 'Yes, he told me'] that I had dreamed of Mwakalukwa, and there were many deaths in the country—the people of Kisale were mourning and the peopleof Ndemba and that Mwakalukwa had said to me: 'Where are we dead to care for those who come?' And I said to X: 'If someone comes from Mwaya you will see that someone has died.' That very day my son here [Pugana his son was sitting near] came and said: 'Mwafyuma has died.' 764 775 828

This dream of Mwandisi's was cited as a proof that the shades come to receive a man at death. They came to Mwandisi in a dream—the shade of Mwakalukwa came, which he took to mean that the death was to be in Mwakalukwa's country, not Mwakalinga's.

QUESTION: You said the shades come to receive a man killed by witches. Have they no power to drive away witches? 764 775

MWANDISI: No, the shades have not the power to drive away the witches but Kyala drives them away. 754

QUESTION: Kyala? You mean the headman of the village!

MWANDISI: Yes, the headman drives them off, Kyala gave him the power (or duty).

iii. *Evidence of other informants*

KISOULE: We begin by burying the flowering head of an *ilitoki* banana—that is a person—then we rub forehead, elbow, and knee in the earth there and go to bathe. We push away the earth, that means our business above here (in the world of the living) is finished, we have really buried you, do not come here above, go to your place (below), in the world of the shades. 764

MWAILAPE (a Christian): They throw the stem of bananas into the water and the bark and feathers, but if it is a fowl and the bark is good, they take them back and they belong to the officiant. Throwing away the stem of bananas means: 'We are driving you (the shade) away. Be off!' The millet which is tossed in the faces of the participants is also thrown away in the water. Tossing it in their faces means: 'This is your food which you cultivated, go away with it.'

MWAKISHILE AND OTHERS: The touching of the ground is the ex-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764 pression of the wish that he will not come into our dreams and thoughts any more, and he does not.

QUESTION: Why the medicine?

MWAKISISILE: It is a ritual, a custom. The medicine and the touching of the ground are the same thing, they wish to stop him coming into our dreams.

QUESTION: Why do you eat bananas?

MWAKISISILE: We eat the main food of the country.

QUESTION: Why the fighting for the porridge?

MWAKISISILE: This is still to wish him good-bye, it is the end of the ritual. We must finish or he, the dead man, will not go away, half of him will still be there.

QUESTION: Why the beer?

MWAKISISILE: Beer is the drink of the country just as bananas are the food. The drinking is to finish saying good-bye. When we have eaten and drunk then we have done with him altogether. Before this he comes time after time into our dreams. If you do not perform the ritual some people say that when you get sick you will never die, but always be sick. If you are sick they will remember and say: 'Let us make beer for ritual.' That is why all must bring some millet to the ritual to ensure a quiet and easy death. Eating and drinking like this is the custom. Something bad will happen to the lineage if it is not done. To refuse to participate is to separate from your lineage.

MPOGO: At the ritual there should be many foods. The bean is there and we eat it; the lentil is there and we eat it; millet is there and the
764 banana and pumpkin-seed. That means: 'You shade, do not think that
775 there was little food at your ritual; the food which we have eaten with you, you have eaten.' Yes, the shade himself eats. We sprinkle on the earth (*pasi*)[1] whither you (the shade) have gone, meaning: 'Do not create hunger, bless the children that they may eat food and not just wander about.' If we do not perform the ritual properly the children will get thin, the shade says: 'You have not unloosed me, I am just on the road.' There should be many foods which means that we have given you (the shade) all the food which we men eat. The banana in which we put seeds is the corpse. The shades eat food, we dream that we eat with them, and if they are angry the beer in the house goes bad, and the milk goes bad.

764 Angombwike (the Christian son of a famous doctor) agreed, in answer to questions, that 'the eating of filth by madmen is like the filth of death, those faeces are the corpse'.

764 MWANDEM'S FRIEND (a man of 35 or 40): We perform the ritual that
775 Kyala may receive him, that the shades may receive him, because the

[1] *Pasi*: below and implies both on the ground and underground.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde
KuKwe

ritual is powerful. If you do not perform the ritual for your father or 764
perhaps that of your wife then you won't be a person, your body 775
comes to an end and you die, but you are present, you are still alive, you do not die when the body comes to an end, you take faeces as in the ritual. But when they bring millet and say: 'This is so-and-so's, and this so-and-so's' (naming him whose ritual you have omitted) and brew beer and drink it, then you die.

QUESTION: How do the dead appear to us?

ANSWER: They appear before our eyes at night. You dream and in the morning say: 'I was with the so-and-so's in the night, with the so-and-so's!

QUESTION: Where do you go (at death)?

ANSWER: When we die we go above. [177]

QUESTION: That's a new thing?

ANSWER: Yes, indeed, formerly we said we went below; our fathers and grandfathers said that. But we now say we go below to rot and stink only but since we look toward home when they bury us perhaps the heart (*indumbula*) goes above (*kumwanya*) and that is home. We have seen this in European times in books. No, I am not a Christian and I cannot read, I've just learnt this. . . .

KALUNDA (a doctor) AND MWAIJUMBA: The *ikipiki* medicine put into the beer and lees at 'the shaving of the sprouting hair' is the same medicine as that which we eat at the pumpkin-seed ritual. The *ikipiki* of the death ritual and the puberty ritual and the birth ritual is one and the same, but the medicine for twins is different. . . . There is one *ikipiki* used in all the three rituals—puberty, birth, and death—but to it is added another medicine which is different for each of the three. *Ikipiki* is our kinship, it is our blood (*ikipiki bo bukamu buetu, lyo ilopa lyetu*); when my wife has borne a child and no one wipes its mouth with [85] the *ikipiki* it means it is not my child, it is just a bastard from the veld, it is no relative of mine but a stranger. In the puberty ritual it is [88] the same, we treat the girl with the *ikipiki* of her husband. She moves from our lineage, from that of her father, she is now a stranger, not their relative (*ikusama nkikolo kyetu, kubagwise, mundu leleno, aka nkamu gwabo*). When someone has died it is the same. We eat food together with the deceased, the shade, and his blood. It is like the Swahili custom of eating each other's blood to create kinship. It means: 'You were our [171] kinsman from afore-time, but now it is finished, you are a stranger.' But the medicine for the twin ritual is separate, it is quite different.

2. IN KUKWE COUNTRY

The Kukwe ritual of death differs in detail from that of Selya 764
and MuNgonde, but it is performed with the same overt purpose: 184
to drive away the dead from the bodies and dreams of the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

764 mourners, to prevent him 'brooding' over them, lest they run mad
184 or become feeble in mind and body; to speed him on his road to the land of the shades and bring him back as a beneficent spirit in the house. The power of the shades over potency and fertility is acknowledged and the widow goes to her father's house with the 'filth' of intercourse with the heir on her and there drinks beer ritually, lest her relatives die of a gasping cough. In short, the themes which characterize the Selya ritual occur also in the Kukwe ritual.

Many of the symbols employed in the Selya ritual are employed by the Kukwe also: the elaborate washing with medicine and shaving and anointing to separate the mourners from the corpse, the casting away of leaves they wear in the stream, the sweeping out of the litter in the mourning hut, the miming of the action of a madman in eating faeces as a prophylactic against becoming mad, the use of the *ikipiki*—the medicine representing kinship—all these are common to both rituals. But each has distinctive symbols also.

(*a*) *The events*

764 The ritual begins in the evening, four or five days after the death. The participants wash with *nyasati* medicine in the doorway of the mourning hut, and lick lumps of porridge off the mid-rib of a banana leaf. The porridge is prepared by the officiant who grinds the millet at the doorway and then puts the mixture on two banana leaves, one of plantain (*itoki*), the other of sweet banana (*indifu* or *iselya*), which are used throughout as male and female symbols respectively. After sunset, a pot with medicine in it is put on the fire, and each participant in turn throws in a few beans mixed with medicine, and then some water, saying as he or she does so: 'This is the ritual of my mother' (or father, etc., as the case may be). A stem of plantains is 'stolen' from a friend's banana plantation (he having agreed beforehand that it should be taken), then the participants gather round the hearth and bid farewell to the deceased. They circle round the hearth to the music of a harp and sing. As they circle, the participants crumble pods of oil-seed (*inyemba*). Sometimes they also sing: 'It's the twisting up,' and twist up cloths as they do so. Then they dance the stamping dance, (*ukukanya nganya*,) and raise the cry of triumph (*akalulu*). When daylight comes they eat the beans which have stood overnight in the hut and sweep out the rubbish (*imindu*) with a medicine (*imitwati*) and throw it in the banana grove. This is 'clearing out the litter'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

(*ukusosya ulufumbo*). Rich people kill a cow 'to clear out the litter' 764
which, like those killed at the burial, is said to go with the deceased [556]
to the land of the shades.

Some time later (the date varies from one ritual to another) they 764
build a little hut at the intersection of two paths—cross-roads—or, 346
if there is no cross-roads near, on the path to the stream, and in this hut they make a hearth with fire-bricks (*amafiga*); a fire is lighted and each participant in turn puts oil-seeds from the *unsyunguti* tree into a potsherd on the fire, saying as he does so: 'This is the death of my mother (etc.).' The seeds are mixed with 764
medicine and, when they are roasted, are ground for ointment. Then beans are put on with water in the same fashion, each participant pouring a little water and saying: 'This is the ritual of my mother (etc.).' Next, the participants are made to sit down on a bark-cloth. The officiant draws lines on the head of each with a bunch of *ikisajelo* grass dipped in the lees of beer, and as she shaves him she mocks him saying: 'Poor fool, it found its mother was dead, went stealing, and they have speared it on the head.' Then the participants go to wash, each wearing two banana leaves round his loins and two round his neck. One of each pair is a plantain, and it is put on first, the other is a sweet banana and it comes on top. And each participant sticks a plantain into his (or her) waistband in front, and a sweet banana behind. When they [783]
come to the stream each participant sits down in it and the officiant puts pebbles between his fingers and toes, in the crooks of his elbows and knees, in his mouth and ears, and on his head. These, and the leaves and bananas he wore, are allowed to flow away in the water. They return to the temporary hut carrying flowers, *kalengelenge* and *kakesefu*, which they throw on to the roof, and the officiant pours water she has brought in a little calabash on to the thatch above the doorway, while each participant in turn runs through the drops, out at a back door, in again and out through the drops. As they come home millet is scattered on the ground before them, then they eat roasted bananas with lentils (and sometimes pumpkin-seeds) stuck in them as in the Selya ritual, boiled bananas and beans, a bean mash, and roasted chicken or, sometimes, meat. The bananas are from the plantain stem they stole and from a sweet banana stem provided by the family, and some of the food is salted, some unsalted. As they eat they look in the direction from which their lineage came, then the officiant anoints them with ointment (made from the oil-seeds

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

764 prepared earlier) and ties a strip of medicated banana bark round the neck of each, and with these necklaces on they must sleep. In one lineage they take little horns and blow into them and walk round calling out: 'We are driving you away, you are a stranger to us, do not come in dreams repeatedly.'

Next morning sausages of millet porridge mixed with medicine are half-buried in the earth at the cross-roads—or somewhere on the pathway—and each participant in turn bends down and bites off a piece, leaving some in the ground. They take off their bark necklaces and throw them into the little hut, which is then destroyed. After they have bathed again the officiant strokes each one on the forehead with a razor.

768 When a married man has died the heir is formally recognized,
587 and the widows are asked whether they accept him as their husband, at some point during the ritual; when Mwaikambo's father died the recognition of the heir preceded the whole ritual; more often it follows it and there is a formal drinking of 'the beer of inheritance'. In any case the first intercourse between the heir and the widows is always delayed for some months and, until it has taken place, the widows may meet their relatives; after it each widow returns to the homestead of her father (or his heir) for the 'ritual of the gasping cough' (*ingotolo*). Old Fibombe, a Christian elder, described it vividly:

768 The parents of the girl brew beer and call her to the beer of *ingotolo*.
177 They also call their relatives. She brings a hoe or a goat (or now a cloth
587 or 1s.). First of all she lifts up the pot of beer into which an officiant has put powdered medicine (*imbondanya*) and takes a mouthful, stirring the rest, then she hands it to another participant and when he has taken a mouthful she spits out, then she stirs and hands it on, and when the next has taken a mouthful she spits, and so it continues until all present have done this. Nowadays people do not take the beer in their mouths, they simply stir and pass it on. Pride prevents them. They say people will laugh at them if they do the things of old. Time is passing and things are like *Mambo Leo* [the Swahili newspaper] now. All
[184] pagans, however, still do this ritual in a modified form, only the Christians leave it undone.

768 This informant omitted two significant points in the ritual
587 which we saw for ourselves: the widow brings a spear belonging to her new husband and thrusts it into the earth outside her father's house. It stands beside the vessel of beer while her kinsmen drink until her brother plucks it out and takes it into the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

house. Then she goes in and steals a piece of firewood from the 768
loft[1] and runs off with it, laughing. The officiant pursues her and 587
makes her drop it and gives her medicine, while the company cry: 'A thief, a thief!' She takes the firewood back to her husband's home. 'It is a sign that she has entered her father's house, just as the spear is a sign that she has entered the house of another husband.' In rich families the new husband sends a bull which is [556]
killed and eaten at the ritual.

Our informants were agreed that 'there is no fear of the gasping cough if a woman runs away from her husband and goes to a lover', and in practice no ritual is performed when she visits her father after divorce and re-marriage, but it is perhaps significant [586
that such a situation could scarcely have arisen in the past, since 177]
divorce by agreement rarely, if ever, occurred. An adulterer fled, [684]
if he could, with his lover to another chiefdom, breaking off all
relations with her kin.

(b) The overt purpose and symbolism

Now we turn to the Kukwe interpretation of events. Our two 115
principal informants here were Mwasalemba, an elderly pagan man, brother to the chief Porokoto, whose wife, Syungu, acted as officiant at rituals in the chief's family, and Kakune, a young doctor who had learnt the medicines from his mother. Mwasalemba was much more coherent than Syungu herself, and his interpretation was confirmed by Kakune and numerous other informants. Again I give the interpretation of the two principal informants without any editing other than placing consecutively statements made on different occasions.

i. *Mwasalemba's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. and translated 158
by him soon afterwards.)

MWASALEMBA: Perhaps a youth, perhaps a girl, runs mad; he runs about naked so that we say: 'He's mad, why doesn't he cover himself?' He goes to the place of defaecation and takes filth and eats it: he goes into people's houses and takes things, he might even take some things from you, from a European, without fear; he knows not what he does. Sometimes, after a visit to a doctor, he recovers altogether and never has the fit again—that is the lesser kind of madness. But sometimes he 158
recovers and then the fit takes him again later—that is the more serious 757

[1] The loft (*pijulu*) consists of horizontal beams running at wall level across a portion of the hut. Here every married woman keeps a supply of dry firewood. It is her private store-place which may not be touched without her permission. [422 417]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

158 kind. We take such a one [either type] to a doctor, tying a rope round
757 his waist on the way. For if we leave him free he goes and drowns himself in the lake. So then the doctor says 'His heart has suddenly turned over', and gives him a powdered medicine to eat from a bark-cloth. Then when he has eaten the medicine the doctor puts a finger at the back of his tongue to make him vomit, again and again. So then the filth comes out of him. Then the doctor says: 'Don't eat meat or fish until I give you other medicine later.' Then he ties some of the same medicine in two bark-cloths and ties one round his neck, one round his loins. . . .

158 Sometimes a man in the mad fit finds a woman, then he takes the
684 leaves off his waist, catches hold of her and, forcing her to the ground, has intercourse with her. Then when the woman returns home she complains that a man in the mad fit has caught and raped her. Then her husband says: 'Well, it's all over now. If he'd been in normal health I'd have sued him for a cow for adultery before the chief, but seeing he is mad there's no point in my doing so, it's all over now!' . . .

158 Sometimes madness comes by itself, although no ritual has been
775 omitted, sometimes because they have not performed a ritual. The symptoms of the two kinds are exactly the same, their cause is different. The one connected with ritual comes because the shades are angry: 'Why have you left that child untreated, without putting stones on its head . . . ? It seems it is of no account.' And then the child goes mad.

757 When madness comes of itself the doctor takes the patient to a
755 waterfall and lets the water tumble on his head; then he makes him vomit, and the vomit is carried away in the water. But that which comes from ritual they don't treat in this way; they make him vomit at home, and then perform the ritual for him.

158 Sometimes madness brings visions (*injosi*)—the man lets everything
787 come in his speech and says of people: 'What sort are they? They are witches!' And if there is a gathering he speaks out: 'You are a witch—you bewitch your neighbour's cows!' So then people ask what he means by letting everything come in his speech like this, and they are told he has the mad fit on him. The madness gives him power to see the witches, he sees them surely. And of old if a madman with the fit on
[683] him accused you of witchcraft you would go at once to drink the ordeal. And if the ordeal accused you too then your house was burnt over you!

764 QUESTION: Why the washing and eating porridge?

MWASALEMBA: If we don't do this then the children will vomit a watery fluid.

I put a direct question to him about the sausages of porridge and he admitted with a smile, rather an embarrassed one: 'Yes, well, you have understood it; yes, it is a symbol of eating excrement . . . we do it at night.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

764

QUESTION: The water dripping from the little hut?

MWASALEMBA: If we omit this then the children when young don't go mad, but they vomit a watery fluid, and people say that we have not performed the ritual of water for them.

QUESTION: The meaning of leaves and fruit of bananas?

MWASALEMBA: Yes, it is because those who run mad throw away their clothes and wear leaves. So in the ritual we make them wear leaves; we think that if we don't do this they will have the madness and throw away their clothes. The leaves of plantain belong to the man (the father), those of sweet banana to the woman (the mother). They signify the completion of the ritual, both of their father and of their mother. We make them wear both kinds of leaf, even if one parent is still alive, because they begot them together, their blood is one, the man's blood and the woman's blood. The plantain fruit which they insert in the leaves in front is the procreative power of the father, it is like his penis; the sweet banana which they insert behind is the fertility of the mother, it is like a bark-cloth. We throw them away in the water so that they may float away, it is a sign of death; the blood of our parents which was one is finished now!

QUESTION: The leaves on the neck?

MWASALEMBA: When they run mad people do this, they wear leaves on head and neck.

QUESTION: The stones on the head, in ears, mouth and fingers?

MWASALEMBA: That is a symbol of death. Does not the corpse resemble a stone? It neither speaks nor hears; it does not hoe, or work with its hands at all. He whom we have buried is like a stone. We throw his death away into the stream.

QUESTION: The little hut?

MWASALEMBA: That is for cooking food in; we don't cook for him [the dead man] in the house because we did not bury him there but outside, so we cook for him outside. . . . We grind millet in the doorway [778] because the doorway belongs to the shade. We say: 'Receive us, oh shade, since a person has died, receive us!' Because if we enter into the house we are with the shade, and when we come out we are with him, the doorway is the shade's (*ikifigo kya nsyuka*). It is like the pouring of water on the thatch; when we have come from bathing, we enter and come out again, the doorway is the shade's. And at other times, if someone is ill and the shade has been brooding over him, he stands in the doorway and prays to the shade (*ikumputa unsyuka*). Yes, when a man dies the shade broods over (*ikutobatela*) us living.

QUESTION: Does death come from the shades? [761]

MWASALEMBA: Yes, when I have lain down at night, in the morning 763
I tell my children: 'So-and-so and so-and-so came to me, I have eaten their food, they came to carry me off.' Then there is sickness and they say: 'The shades have brooded over you, you will die.' It is death in-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

763 deed. We wash at the eating of millet to say: 'You shade, this millet which we eat comes to you because you brooded over us.' We wash our hands and mouths.

764 QUESTION: Why do you eat millet?

775 MWASALEMBA: The millet belongs to the shade. When we brew beer we put some in a calabash cup, but it is not drunk, it is left for five days and becomes lees [i.e. the liquid dries up], then we say: 'The shade has drunk it.'[1] We pray to him and say: 'He is angry.' We brew beer and pour it out in the banana grove, and say: 'You shade, what are you angry about, why have you brooded over the beer?' (They go first to divine.) We speak in the evening in the banana grove and all the children listen, and my wife in the house.

Similarly, if a cow calves and then does not take to its calf, does not lick it, then doctors say: 'The shades have caught hold of the cow, they have brooded over it. Then I pray with water only [in the other case there is both blowing out water and pouring of beer], and I speak as before. Then in the evening the cow takes to its calf and we say: 'The shades refused to let it recognize its calf.' That beer stays for two days —it's not strong!

764 QUESTION: The licking porridge off the mid-rib of the banana leaf?

MWASALEMBA: We eat porridge and he [the shade] eats. We eat off the mid-rib of the banana leaf because the banana grove is the shade's. When someone has died we cut the banana grove, and in the banana grove we pray. It is the shade's own.

764 QUESTION: Throwing beans into the pot?

775 MWASALEMBA: We say: 'You shade! We are eating these beans. Since you have brooded over our fellow who has died, receive him.' For we do not pray to him who has died now, but to that first one who died first. If we do not give him beans then the beans dry up, they shrivel in the fields and people say: 'The shade is angry. We have made a mistake in not giving him beans, we have not taken care of our fellow, his child.' Because the shade creates the beans. Yes, he, the shade, creates all foods, millet and maize and all.

764 QUESTION: The stealing of bananas?

MWASALEMBA: The millet and beans used are those of the house, but the stem of bananas must come from the house of a friend because bananas belong to the shade. Do you pray to him in the hoed fields? In the millet? You pray to him in the banana grove! Because of this you seek another's banana stem!

764 QUESTION: Circling round the fire to the harp and singing?

775 MWASALEMBA: The first shade who has died we have within us, he has brooded over us, we make him circle round, we are with him.

[1] At the drinking of the beer of inheritance in the Ndali ritual the shades are called upon. 'If the beer froths up that means the shades have heard', and the calabash cup is dashed to pieces on the hearth.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

QUESTION: Where is the one who has just died? 764

MWASALEMBA: It is him the shade has brooded over. We say: 'You 775
shade, look after this child of yours, care for him and don't abandon him. He also should be a shade, let the others speak to him in the future.' When we sing 'Farewell . . .' we lament him who has died.

QUESTION: And the trampling dance (*ukukanya inganya*)?

MWASALEMBA: We say: 'You shade, care for your fellow, don't desert him, may he be with you in your body.' We trample the ground because the shade is in the ground, he is within the body, he is underground, everywhere.

QUESTION: What do you mean by 'in your body'?

MWASALEMBA: Because the shade has created us, we came from him, we die, we go there to him; not to others, but to him.

QUESTION: The two leaves and beating and saying: '*Syeku, syeku* of father, *syeku, syeku* of mother'?

MWASALEMBA: Syeku is the name we have been given for the shade. We say: 'The shade, the shade of father, the shade, the shade of mother!' because since a woman has died we speak to the shade as if the husband was 'father' (*tata*) who brooded over his wife. He has brooded over all us living, both me and my wife. That is what these leaves are [i.e. the husband and wife]. We speak to that man who was first buried, saying: 'Perhaps you are within, perhaps you are beneath, oh shade!' We speak to that first man who was the first to die.

Sweeping the house is that it may be clean (*muvelu*). Before that it is [783]
dirty. . . .

The shade brooded both over the dead and over me, the living; he brooded over the dead who is with him and over me who am alive; I am in him—we all are. . . .

QUESTION: Why the water on the roof? 764

MWASALEMBA: If we neglect this then a child will go mad, he runs 753
off to the water and the water comes into his nose [i.e. he drowns] because we have not given him water in the doorway of the little hut there. If we neglect something then the child goes mad and runs off and catches hold of faeces, he smears faeces on his body and urinates into his hands and washes with the urine.

QUESTION: Why does the shade want him to do these filthy things? 764

MWASAMELMA: Because if we do not perform the ritual for him and 775
do not care for him we do not remember him, then he says: 'Since you do not remember me this child will also get dirty, because I have got dirty underground, I am dead. See, you buried me! The earth has entered my mouth and eyes, why do you not care for me?'

QUESTION: But even if you do treat him ritually, still the earth is in his mouth! How is he satisfied?

MWASALEMBA: Because this shadow (*isyungulu*) [pointing in explanation to the shadows of the banana trees] is what we care for, it is the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Ku Kwe

775 764 shade (*jonyuka*)! That (which was buried) is just earth, the body has rotted, it is the shade that we care for.

QUESTION: And the necklace of banana bark?

764 MWASALEMBA: We sleep with them. In the morning we bathe again and throw them in the water. . . . Yes, indeed, some throw them away in the little hut. It is the shade, we perform the ritual and throw him away. . . . If we do not perform the ritual we do not sleep, then we pray in the banana grove and are startled.

QUESTION: Why the banana bark?

MWASALEMBA: It is with the banana that we perform the ritual: the plantain is what we steal and the sweet banana what we cut at home, and in the banana grove we pray.

When a man dies his wives sit in a row on a bark-cloth. It's at the shaving of the hair, the doctor shaves them on the bark-cloth. It's a new one because we say: 'You must throw away the bark-cloths which your husband who has died caught hold of, and wear other cloths.' So they sit on a new one.

QUESTION: What do they do with it?

MWASALEMBA: They throw it away on the litter.

QUESTION: Where?

MWASALEMBA: In the little hut. It means: 'Here we have mourned; let us throw away everything, let us wear others.' If a woman has died we men do not sit on the bark-cloth, but if I have died then my wife sits on the bark-cloth and throws away her old ones, and also when a son has died the mother throws away her old bark-cloths, but she does not sit on the bark-cloth! No! And she does not throw away her bark-cloth for the death of a small son, nor for a daughter, even though she be grown up. No! See, she is also a woman and wears a bark-cloth in front. But for a grown son a mother throws away her bark-cloths, saying: 'Because he was my child, I bore him, he sucked my breasts, so I throw away the bark-cloths.' Only for a grown son who has wives in his house does the mother throw away her bark-cloth, not for a bachelor.

764 QUESTION: The stones between the fingers?

775 MWASALEMBA: We throw him away. It is the shade.

QUESTION: Is the first intercourse after a death a ritual or not?

764 MWASALEMBA: No, it is not a ritual; we begin to have intercourse 768 when the ritual is finished. But among the Penja when someone has 171 died and the ritual has been performed and is finished, the husband takes a cow and gives it to the father of his wife, saying: 'I take the woman.' Then he has intercourse with her. But we do not, except in the case of twins.

833 QUESTION: And ordinary intercourse?

775 MWASALEMBA: The shade is together with the heart (*alinajo indumbula*); it is he who is roused and goes to a woman, it is he who stiffens

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

us in front, we men, and the woman is also roused. If you have not the 833
shade in you (*ukanaje unyuka*)[1], then you are sterile, you are impotent, 775
you do not copulate with women; we say that the shades have brooded over you. Why do they not rouse him to go to women? He just looks at them. Because the shade rouses within a man and says: 'Ha!' It rouses a man to copulate with a woman. If it has brooded on him then it does not rouse him; it is within him, it does not wish to come out.

QUESTION: Why do you let the hair grow in the death ritual?

MWASALEMBA: The hair is very important, it's very important. 764

Mwasalemba identified growing hair after spearing a man, and after the birth of twins and later shaving, with growing hair and shaving in the death ritual.

QUESTION: So letting the hair grow at an ordinary death is part of the ritual?

MWASALEMBA: It [the hair] is the corpse's. We have not yet driven *him away. At the shaving we drive him off.*

Syungu (wife of Mwasalemba) told me that stones were placed 764
between the toes, not only of the participants in the death ritual, 775
but also of a bride (*unungu*)[2] and that the stones are children (*amabwe bo bana*). The girl should bear six or ten children to her husband.

'But', I said, 'at the death ritual you throw away the corpse, the shade.'

Syungu answered: 'Yes, it is so, children are born by the power [842]
of the shades (*mmaka ga bayuka*).'

Mwasalemba himself, when asked about this, said: 'The stones are the shade, we throw him away so that when he has gone the girl may bear children.'

SYUNGU: When a girl does not bear children we say: 'Perhaps 842
the shades are angry, the husband has not finished giving marriage- 775
cattle.'

QUESTION: And madness?

SYUNGU: If she goes mad we say, if we have not treated her: 'We 158
have neglected the ritual, we have not treated her!' The girl runs about 755
aimlessly, she smears herself with filth. But when we have treated her and she goes mad then we say: 'Perhaps Kyala has deserted me, see nothing remains, we have treated her.'

[1] He used both the phrases *ukanaje kuja unyuka* (to be without the shade) and *unyuka ikumukatala* (the shade broods on him) for the same phenomenon.

[2] *Unungu*: a girl who has reached puberty but has not yet borne a child; one undergoing the puberty-marriage ritual (*ukwungu*).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

764 QUESTION: What are the stones in the clefts of hands and toes?
773 MWASALEMBA: Kyala when he created men said: 'At the death ritual do this, it is the shade, it is the body.'

775 Mwasalemba went on to discuss the puberty ritual and attributed sexual desire and diarrhœa to the shades. He explained that faeces (which are buried) 'go below to the land of the shades' (*vide* p. 127; 210 ff.).

764 SYUNGU: If we leave out something a child runs off to Mwibonde
[158] [wild pasture-land] and catches hold of that which is bad and pants with madness (*ikigili*). Some go to Mwibonde and gather faggots and put them on their heads then throw them away again.

QUESTION: How is it that people ever omit a ritual?

SYUNGU: Some omit some of it. They make mistakes out of ignorance.

QUESTION: But do any omit it altogether?

[184] SYUNGU: No, only the Christians. No pagan neglects it altogether.

QUESTION: But those who have run away and are not there (e.g. women who have eloped with lovers)?

SYUNGU: Yes, indeed, it is they who neglect it, but those who are at home perform the ritual.

QUESTION: How about stealing the banana bunch?

SYUNGU: Yes, we steal it, but we tell the owner beforehand, and when we eat the mash we mix the stolen with the home-grown, that which is stolen is always a plantain and that from home is a sweet banana. The plantain is the man's and the sweet banana the woman's. And when we bathe we wear a plantain leaf, which has been stolen, in front, and a sweet banana leaf, which comes from home, behind.

MWASALEMBA:[1] The girl brought the spear of her husband and stuck it in the ground. At the end Losi (my eldest son and her full brother) pulled it up and it will always be on my wall. The spear is an essential part of the ritual; without it the ritual would go wrong. If she came with no spear we should send her back again to fetch one.

764 We drink the medicine because, when our son-in-law has died and
587 our daughter lies with another who has not been our son-in-law before, if she comes and gives us food with the filth (*indafu*) on her then we gasp and cough with *ingotolo*. It is quite different if she runs away from her husband when he is alive. Then we drink no medicine. Yes, then she comes, with *indafu* on her, and gives us food and nothing happens.
[828] I don't know why. Kyala made us black people like this. It is when her husband dies that we drink. We drink as soon as she lies with her new husband, not after she becomes pregnant. If we see that she is pregnant before she comes we are angry. She should come first to the ritual and then conceive. She does not wait until her periods stop before coming

[1] Referring to the *ingotolo* ritual for his daughter described on p. 66.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

764
587

for the ritual. We think that when she has slept with her new husband she is full (*nsito*) and if she gives us food it will make us ill.

MWANGWANDA: The new husband gives us relatives a disease by impregnating the girl, he who is no relative of ours, the new husband. [753] *Ingotolo* is an illness.

ii. *Kakune's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W.)

764

KAKUNE: Yes, if we do not perform the ritual the children run mad. They speak foolishly and deliriously, they run about wildly wearing leaves, they eat filth. But they do not fight with their fellows—that is what those do who have the madness of Kyala. It is these of whom we say: 'Perhaps Kyala loved them.' [158]

QUESTION: Why the first washing?

KAKUNE: That is to get rid of the disease, the filth, for they held the corpse in their hands. They do not eat the ritual food until they have washed.

QUESTION: Why the eating of porridge?

KAKUNE: Because of the tears we have wept. We have mourned him; now let us eat and strengthen our bodies again.

QUESTION: Why are beans thrown into the pot in the evening?

KAKUNE: These beans, which we throw into the pot, saying: 'This is my father's death', are an ending of the ritual. They remain all night in the house after they have been cooked, and the shades come and eat. In the morning the doctor [*unganga*, i.e. the officiant] washes us again with powdered medicine and we eat the beans and finish them. We use beans in the ritual for that is the food which our father hoed. We think: 'Our father has died, he will never hoe for us again', and so we say: 'This is the death of my father.' So then the shade of our father comes at night and tastes the food and says to us: 'I, your father, have died, you have mourned for me; live you yet awhile, do not come quickly to death; and may you hoe plenty of food and have no hunger.' If we leave out this ritual with the beans the fertility of our gardens [789] disappears and we have great hunger, we eat nothing.

QUESTION: Why the circling to the harp and crumbling oil-seeds?

KAKUNE: The ointment (made from the oil-seeds) is to finish the ritual. The song (*ukalende*) is to say good-bye, to the shade, it means 'farewell', it is to drive him away. We circle round because our father was an active man, he walked round seeing his friends, he danced; that is why we circle round the fire. [In Kakune's family they do not cry the war shout of triumph, they only dance to the harp.] [84]

QUESTION: Why the pebbles? [I told him what Mwasalemba had said and he agreed heartily.]

KAKUNE: Yes, that's it! We throw them away, this means 'We have driven you away now.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

764 QUESTION: Why the leaves and bananas?

KAKUNE: If you do not wear these and throw them away your own children [i.e. children of the participant] will die soon after birth; you beget a daughter and she dies, a son and he dies, then people say: 'See, you did not perform the ritual.' . . .

QUESTION: What is the meaning of the death ritual?

KAKUNE: Because the deceased has died on us (*atufwelile mumbeli*), if we do not treat him, he looks on us, we are together with him, he does not move away at all, so then, we drive him off.

He then described the acts of the ritual in great detail exactly checking what Mwaikambo and I saw when Kalata's mother died (cf. pp. 238–44) except that he did not mention grinding ointment [184] at the circling round. I asked about this and he thought it was not done in his lineage but was not sure.

QUESTION: The stones between the toes?

KAKUNE: It is to make a separation, it is our separation, we are driving him off; we go into the water with pebbles and throw them away, they are the deceased, we drive him off.

QUESTION: And what about running through the house letting the water drip on you after bathing?

KAKUNE: Yes, indeed, we come from the stream carrying water which we have drawn, and flowers in our hands, and we throw the flowers on the thatch.

QUESTION: What does it mean?

764 775 KAKUNE: It is because we have come from the stream, we have driven him away in the stream, but we bring back water we have drawn and flowers—they are the deceased. It means we are with him for he has not moved (*akasama*); let us drive him out again. We throw away the flowers on the thatch and we pour water on the thatch and it trickles down on the body. It is he [the deceased] whom we receive. If we drive him away altogether at the water what will he say to us?

QUESTION: You receive him and drive him off again?

[828] KAKUNE: We drive him off so that his whole body should not be seen, because we fear to see the dead . . . and at the same time we do *not* drive him away, he will come in dreams to tell us of misdeeds (*ukutubula inongwa*).

When we receive him we drive him away again at the anointing with ointment. The doctor anoints us on the toe, knee, elbow, stomach, and forehead, and says: 'I have finished them, anoint yourselves.' Then we anoint ourselves and say: 'You have moved to another village.' But at the same time we do not throw him away altogether, we pray to him

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKuse

and say: 'You, father, stand by me.' We bring him back when we have bathed. He also bathed there, he is present![1] 764 775

QUESTION: The meaning of the shaving?

KAKUNE: The doctor takes a bunch of *ikisajelo* grass and a little millet beer and then makes two cross lines in the hair before shaving, and he shaves us.

QUESTION: Why?

KAKUNE: It is the ritual, we drive him off.

Being unable to get any more I then suggested that the *ikisajelo* and beer represented the shade and that they took him on to their bodies in order to throw him off.

Kakune: 'Yes, that's it, you are very intelligent for you understand it! That's it!'

QUESTION: And is the *ikisajelo* grass the shade's which the seers uproot? [824]

KAKUNE: Yes, we have heard that long ago there were three seers (*abakuguluka*), X and Y and Z [I missed the names], who went with two village headmen to look; one seer uprooted the *ikisajelo* grass to look beneath at the land of the shades and he called the village headmen to look. When they shrank back and said 'He!' he said it was a homestead such as those above.

QUESTION: Did this happen in the day-time?

KAKUNE: It happened in the day-time, in the open, not in a dream. But later on, when one village headman had gone he said: 'Let me look again.' He tried to uproot it but the *ikisajelo* grass was stuck, it would not come up. But all that happened a long time ago; seers are not seen nowadays. And when we have finished everything, at the time of destroying the ritual house, the doctor touches us all with the razor, that is the tuft (*itemele*).

QUESTION: Is this before the beer of inheritance? 764

KAKUNE: Yes, before the beer, on the day of bathing. It means that letting the 'hair of the corpse' grow is finished, we have finished. You may drink freely. And have we written about the roasted chicken and the bananas?[2]

G. W.: No.

KAKUNE: What? No? But we all eat these with our fellow villagers—and a bull if we have killed one, for we kill a bull if we have it—at the bathing in the stream. And in the evening the doctor prepares the

[1] The statement above was not made quite so straightforwardly as it is written down; at certain points Kakune stopped and I prompted him either with: 'And then?' or 'What does that mean?' There were no leading questions and I took down his words exactly.

[2] Our best informants often asked whether what they told us was properly recorded.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

764 porridge—sausages of porridge are buried in the ground and bitten off by the principals who stoop down to do it.

QUESTION: What does it mean?

KAKUNE: It means that we are about to honour them; they eat, and he whom we have buried also remains below, he also eats, we bury the sausage in the earth and we say we are burying him also, then he will fear to come to the house.

QUESTION: And this porridge is a symbol of the filth which those who run mad eat?

KAKUNE (laughing): Yes, because if we omit to do these things the children become feeble, their hearts say 'He! he!' [panting and excited] and they rush off to the road and eat dirt (*imindo*).

QUESTION: Why should the shades do this to them? How are they interested in dirt (*imindo*)?

KAKUNE: I don't know. We say it is because we have not accompanied them on the road and on account of this the shade is very angry and says: 'We shall see whether their children flourish!' He has bewitched them (*abalogile*).

QUESTION: And what about the circling round with the harp and the trampling at the fire?

KAKUNE: That is not very important, Mwaipaja [G. W.], it is because he cultivated food and danced at beer drinks when he was alive, so we dance for him now that he is dead. . . . A widow must lie
[587 with her husband the night before she comes to do the (*ingotolo*) ritual,
833] and she comes with his filth on her, she does not wash. If she comes without having lain with him the night before then we all get the
[753] disease. The disease comes from the new husband, it comes from his seed, the seed that begets us men. When his seed enters her womb then she is heavy (*ezito*) and if she eats or drinks out of our dishes and pots while we are empty (*bwari*), before we have stopped ourselves with medicines, then she gives us the disease. She has not given us the protective medicine (*imbeyo*).

764 If a woman changes from one husband to another and both are
753 alive, there is no danger and no ritual. It is death that brings the danger, because that man [her first husband] has died; he has died and rotted below, and from that disease comes. The disease only comes from this situation. If no relative has died there is no *ingotolo*. But if my wife has run off with another man and then comes back to me with his semen in her, then I take some powdered medicine and eat some and throw a little on the fire, and if I do not do this then my legs will hurt, I shall be unable to walk properly, and my body will become weak. Neither she nor her relatives take medicine, nor does her new husband, if she goes to him and he pays for her and takes her. He just marries her.

764 If the widow is left with a sucking child and is empty [*bwari*: i.e. her
581

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

new husband has not been sleeping with her], then at first, before she 764
lies with him, we (her relatives) eat with her. But when the child leaves 587
the breast and her husband begets another then she comes to perform the ritual. Otherwise we cannot eat with her. And so with a pregnant widow—at first we eat with her but when the child is born and has been weaned and her new husband begets another she comes to perform the ritual.

The new husband must send a bull or a sheep with his spear, and we who drink the beer divide the meat, saying: 'Thank you, you have nourished us.' Yesterday he sent 30s., and I, the doctor, got 1s. If it had been a bull I would have got some meat. The husband does not come himself, but he sends a friend to bring the woman. This friend does not eat or drink the medicine, but he drinks the beer without medicine and the cassava we cook. [In the ritual just completed] Mwasalemba provided three pots of beer—we drank one before and two after the ceremony. That was what the men were waiting for.

No, it never happens that one who has drunk the medicine of 764
ingotolo falls sick of it afterwards, never. 753

The spear is taken and kept by the girl's brother at the command of 587
her father, who says: 'Take this spear, your sister has brought it.' It is 602
a symbol (*ikimanyilo*) of kinship, it is like the spear with which a girl was betrothed in the old days. At the betrothal the lover would stick the spear in the ground, the girl pulled it up and took it to her father, sticking it into the ground before him, and he, if he agreed, told her brother to take it up. And if there is any dispute later about cattle then the spear is proof of agreement. It has the same significance at betrothal and at the *ingotolo* ritual. Sometimes the heir has to bring cattle that have not yet been paid by the dead man. When the woman's brother takes the spear into the house at the *ingotolo* ritual, that means: 'Now you[1] have entered into the house—your house—so we bring you in.' And then she can go in.

The calling out of 'Thief' is a custom in the ritual, but it is like a 764
song, it's not important. The firewood is shown to the woman and a bean and a grain of maize are put into a crack of the wood. That means that the ritual is complete.

No, there is no extra safety in coming to the ceremony; those who drink at home are equally protected!

iii. *Evidence of other informants*

CURRENT TALK: Some people have been told by those who have run 158
mad, that they see a man who comes to them sometimes. When that 828
man is with them then they lose the sense of what they are doing. The

[1] It was not clear from the context whether 'you' referred to groom or bride. The symbolism suggests the act of marriage but of this we have no direct evidence.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

158 man tells them 'Go there', and then the victim goes; perhaps he says
828 'Run', and then he runs where he is told. Some say that smoke comes out of the ground, rises, and goes to the bush, and that they run to the bush where the smoke ended. They say that the smoke rises from the ground and goes with great speed to the place at which it comes to an end.

And those who run mad say: 'When you fellows catch hold of me and I overcome you though you are many, it is not that I fight alone by myself with my own strength, but there are four men with me who help me. And when you tie me up they help me to loose the rope.'

MWAIKAMBO: A boy of my own age ran mad; when he recovered he told us some of what he had seen in his madness (*mumbepo syake sya kigili*). He said he had seen lots of black cows, all entering the ground, going one by one into a hole; and that he had thereupon become unconscious and run wildly about.

A Christian told me that he had a relative (a non-Christian) who ran mad and who constantly told them how the fit started in him. He said that it was when he saw in the spirit (*mumbepo syake*) a very old person wearing ragged clothes, then he ran mad. The Christian who old me this added that he thought himself that perhaps it was Satan that his kinsman saw.

[24] Those who run mad eat filthy things—mud, cowdung, human faeces, all kinds of frogs and so on. When you ask them about this they say they do not know what they are doing. And they often run about naked.

MWASANILA AND MWALIPOSA (two old men).

Madness takes two forms: one comes from Kyala, one from the ritual. When a man has the madness from Kyala his actions are filthy. He eats filthy things without discrimination, he loses his own sense of humanity and the sense of his friends' humanity also, he loses the sense of his own actions. This is one way of telling that a man has the madness from Kyala. Another way is this: they catch the madman and go to a doctor to treat him with medicines; well, when the doctor gives him the emetic the patient vomits butterflies. When they have made him vomit and given him another medicine too he either recovers altogether or perhaps he goes mad again later. But even if he recovers, his body is different from that of other men, and when he is angry his heart seems to be full of madness again. The madness of Kyala is the most serious.

The madness of ritual is the less serious kind; people who have it do not act in a filthy way. Their madness is like a passionate anger (*ilyejo*), that is all. When you catch such a man and take him to a doctor for the emetic we find no butterflies in the vomit. Again, if he has taken the medicine and recovered, his body is perfectly healthy and it seems as

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

if he never was mad at all; not like those with the madness of Kyala, 158
their bodies are changed i.e. the internal state of the body, the heart. 828

Another way of diagnosing the madness of ritual is this: people catch it from the food of other people's ritual; if a man who has not completed the ritual of his family [who has not been through the ritual at the deaths of both his father and his mother] eats the ritual food of another family, then madness falls on him or on his children, and the victim speaks like an idiot.

Then if the man's children die the doctors see signs of the madness of ritual; it may be due to infection from other people's ritual food or from omitting the ritual of their own family. They give the surviving children medicines to drink which look towards the ritual and also they begin to perform the ritual.

The actions of those with the madness of Kyala are these: they eat filth, run about unconscious of what they are doing, and speak foolish things. In their mad state (*mombepo syabo*) they tell us that they lose the sense of being people and of the humanity of others also. If it is madness of ritual, the cure is to perform the ritual and also to give them the medicine of the ritual. If it is of Kyala, to give them the medicine of madness.

Asombwile (a doctor): Madness (*ikigili*) is of two sorts: one comes from Kyala and one from ritual. The symptoms are alike; all eat filth and throw off their clothes. But when a patient is brought to a doctor, he knows, when he has made him vomit, whether they have neglected a ritual or not.

Mwamewiga: Madness is of two sorts: one comes from we know not where, the other from the ritual. When a man has the first sort he throws off his clothes and eats filth; but the sort which comes from the ritual does not make him eat filth and he does not throw off his clothes; but he just talks nonsense.

Angombwike: There are two sorts of madness: one is from Kyala, in which no one eats filth, they just run about wildly; and the other from the ritual, in which all eat faeces and filth.

Umbokeke and his Wife, Jenala (Christians): In the state of madness the man's head seems to himself to be empty. When he sits or stands there is a giddy whirling before his eyes; he seems to see people and they speak with him and then, when he answers them, we others think he is talking to himself. Sometimes these people seem to be a long way off, then they call out his name, he answers, and then he begins to be mad.

Mad people see a man, very terrible, and when he comes to them they flee from him. They say he is Mbasi. This about Mbasi and about the empty head and giddiness is common report; we heard it from no particular madman.

Another way of knowing the madness of ritual is this: if a man runs

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

158 and fashions earth with his fingers, tying some up in leaves and rolling
828 some up between his palms, if he does things which they do in the ritual, then they perform the whole ritual. Saga, Jenala's grandmother, did these things, but then they began to perform the ritual and at once she recovered. She just talked to herself and went on moulding earth. She could not throw her clothes away for she was sick, her death was very near. As soon as they had done the ritual and she had recovered, she died. The reason they had not performed a complete ritual for her was because she had been away at the time it was performed. She had run off with a lover. It was the ritual of her mother which was not performed for her.

It is clear that, though informants were not agreed about the distinguishing features of the two types of madness, they were agreed about its general characteristics, and that one form was connected with neglect of rituals.

764 QUESTION: Why the little hut?
346 MWAMULENGA (an old chief): When performing the ritual they build a little hut in which to carry it out. This hut tells us of the man's behaviour when alive, he lived in a house. So that now he is dead we kill his home too, and that is why they destroy the hut at the end of the ritual. They perform the ritual in a house because he lived in a house.

764 QUESTION: Why the stealing of the stem of plantains?

MWAMULENGA: This tells us about driving the disease away, that the disease which killed him should leave our homestead. The stem of bananas is a symbol (*ikimanpilo*) of the disease. We do not know where the disease came from. When we steal the bananas we think that the disease came from some other place and killed him, it has not always been in our house. That is why we go to another homestead to steal the stem of bananas. But when we are driven away with the bananas that is a symbol of driving the disease away again, we drive the disease away. Sometimes the householders come out and drive us away, sometimes they stay still, and we who have come with the thief drive him away. We arrange with the householder beforehand. The meaning is the same in either case.

QUESTION: Why the food?

MWAMULENGA: The salted and unsalted food, the mash, the beans and bananas which they take out separately, the chicken, the roast bananas, those in which they put lentils and pumpkin-seeds—all these they eat, for they are afraid that if they do not, but leave one of them out, then when they eat, in the ritual of other people, some of those they omitted, the ritual will infect them. So that is why they eat everything. If a man doesn't eat any chicken he will catch the disease afterwards from the very smell of a ritual chicken!

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Ku Kwe

764

QUESTION: Why the sitting on a bark-cloth?

MWAMULENGA: The bark-cloth shows death, particularly the death of the woman, it is a sign of grief.

QUESTION: Why drawing lines and mocking?

MWAMULENGA: Sometimes people in a mad fit do the most laughable things. They do not attend to their bodies at all, or perhaps they shave their hair in a most ugly way so that people laugh at them. In the ritual we laugh at the participants and say: 'Poor fool, it found its father dead, went stealing and they speared it on the head!' And then we think that he, as it were, has run mad after his father's death.

QUESTION: Why the flowers?

MWAMULENGA: The holding of a flower (and grass) also shows the actions of madmen. For sometimes the madman goes into the grassland and plays games with the flowers and grass and then, coming home, throws them on the thatch.

MWAIKAMBO: People talk about what madmen do, but I have never seen a mad person, I have only heard what people say. They say a mad person talks to himself like someone in a passion of grief, or anger, or fear, and moulds earth!

Mwafula (the village headman) does the Sangu ritual and did not know why the banana is stolen, though he understood the main function of the ritual. His wife, a Kukwe, did not know, nor did either of the two others. 'The old people have always told us: "If you leave something out of the ritual you will go mad, or perhaps someone will die. You will find the ritual (*ubuyago*) in the belly [at the autopsy]." But they never explained all the details, saying: "This means such and such, and that such and such." We do not know all the ramifications. As for finding the ritual in the stomach of a dead child, they find half-digested food and say: "It is the ritual (*buyago*)." '

QUESTION: Why do you go and steal another's banana in the ritual?

NIYANI: It means that if your comrade's father has also died he [your comrade] may eat because they have mocked him, he can eat because he has finished; we say: 'Are you not going to take someone else's sickness on you (*utisukakombela ifya bangi*)?'[1] Because those who have not been treated do not eat.

QUESTION: So you act stealing and eating the food in another's ritual?

NIYANI: Yes, indeed [with a gesture of emphatic assent]. So here we mock the mourners, saying: 'That's a thief!' and we steal someone

[1] *Ukukombela*: to catch someone else's sickness, or to take another's quarrel on oneself.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764
291
264
415

3. The beer of the 'gasping cough.' Mwasalemba on the left

[Facing p. 84]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

764 else's stem of bananas symbolizing that we may eat other people's food, we have finished the ritual. Because during the ritual those who have not completed it eat apart. If they eat ordinarily we say of them: 'You so-and-so, you!' And at the last beer of the death ritual, when they have mixed the beer, we . . . say to the women: 'Where will you go?' 'We will find his cattle.' 'Very well.' Then we drink. But if the widows agree, according to custom, then we give them to our comrade, saying: 'These are your wives.' He sleeps with them in the house and we drink.

QUESTION: What does circling with the harp mean?

NSYANI: We spoke of that before. He who plays the harp is just someone who makes us go in line, they have finished him, he was brooded over. He says: 'Let me help my friend and play the harp for him and make him circle round.'

QUESTION: And what does the stamping dance (*ukukanya inganya*) mean?

[789] NSYANI: It is to drive away sickness, to drive him away, to say: 'Go away with your sickness'.

QUESTION: But how exactly?

NSYANI: Because he who has died trampled the ground long ago when his father died, and we trample now that he has died, and his father trampled for his grandfather, and his grandfather for an ancestor. It means: 'We have finished with you, go away.' And at the bathing we put pebbles between our fingers and let them fall into the stream. . . [He performed a dramatic pantomime of sitting down in the water and falling first one way and then the other, and pushing his hands away so that they let the stones fall out. As he let them fall he said: 'We have driven you away, we have finished with you!']. . .

QUESTION: Why the shelling oil-seeds during the circling round?

NSYANI AND MWANGWANDA: We do not do it, we differ in our rituals. But we do the stealing of the banana bunch and throwing things in the pot at the fire, and hitting the ground and saying: '*Syeku, syeku.*'

QUESTION: Why?

NSYANI AND MWANGWANDA: Because if we don't do it our children run into the pasturage and make balls of rubbish (*ifisaka fya mindu*) and eat; then they become weak and foolish; but if we perform the ritual then they are fine children.

QUESTION: Why the throwing into the pot?

NSYANI AND MWANGWANDA: It means that we have finished with him [with a gesture of throwing away].

QUESTION: Why the washing at first?

MWAPULA: If we do not wash them they become weak and foolish, so we treat them and wash them and give them porridge, and then they recover. If we leave them they go off to the rubbish heap and make dirt (*bipelile mindo*); they take the dirt from the rubbish heap, they

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764
301
341

4. The bride washes with ikipiki *in the doorway of her mother's hut*

[Facing p. 85]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

even defaecate in the house. And at the inheritance, when I have inherited the women, they go to their own homes with a bull if I am wealthy, or perhaps three shillings. They go back to their fathers with the dirt on them—*ingotolo*! 764

QUESTION: Where does the *ingotolo* come from when you do not treat them?

MWAFULA: Kyala is startled and you gasp with *ingotolo*, your breath is short.

QUESTION: Does the husband also go to his place?

MWAFULA: Yes, he always returns to his father's.

QUESTION: Why the two leaves representing a man and a woman at the hitting the ground and saying: '*Syeku, syeku*'?

MWAFULA: Because we are two [holding up two fingers], a man and a woman. Formerly when someone died as a bachelor they took a leaf of the sweet banana and said: 'It is your wife.' They buried it with him, saying: 'Go to the land of the shades because you were never married.'

QUESTION: What does the mocking at shaving mean?

MWAFULA: It is one with stealing the plantain stem. We mock them meaning, may they escape, and not take rubbish from the rubbish heap. And at the shaving of the hair we drive him away, saying: 'Go to your fellows.' He has been alone, he was on the road, may he go.

Porokoto the Chief admitted that the wearing of leaves and 842
bananas in the rituals of death and of puberty were symbols of 881
fertility (*ifimanyilo fya mbapo*); the plantain represents the penis, the sweet banana represents the clitoris, 'for in the old days they wore leaves only, no cloths'. In the puberty ritual the wearing of leaves and bananas is the same. It is a sign of fertility: 'the ritual is now finished and the girl is someone's wife.'

Mwaijumba, who provided the beer of inheritance for the ritual 273
of Njobe Nani, explained to us as he drank: 'We drink beer to 764
drive away our friend. It means that everything is finished: "Come to your house frequently now. It is finished! May the fathers [i.e. the other shades] receive him! May he not return! We have poured out this beer for you, it is finished."'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

CHAPTER IV

THE RITUAL OF PUBERTY AND MARRIAGE

I. IN SELYA AND MUNGONDE

(a) *The events*

881 585 584 836 THE puberty ritual for girls among the Nyakyusa is fused with the marriage ritual. Girls are usually betrothed well before puberty and they may live with their 'husbands' for some time before they grow up, for the view of most Nyakyusa is that a girl should become accustomed to her husband gradually and that it is good for her to visit him from time to time, sweeping his house, cleaning the byre, drawing water and cooking for him, and learning the art of love-making with him and no one else. While she is still very immature it is insisted that he should only have intercourse with her *inter crura*, but when she is approaching puberty he often has full intercourse with her. No legal case can be brought against him in court if he does so, provided that he has not forced or frightened her, but his friends may tell him he is foolish, and is 'teaching his wife adultery', since now he can have no proof, in the physical examination at puberty, that she has not slept with other men. No stigma attaches to the girl; if it is her husband who has deflowered her she is acclaimed in the ritual as a virgin. In some pagan families, however, notably those of chiefs, girls are not allowed to visit their husbands before puberty. The girl's father has the right to [171] refuse it, for before the ritual a wife is only 'borrowed'. Unlike the neighbouring Bemba, the Nyakyusa are not anxious lest the girl should conceive before her first menstruation—if she should do so the ritual is performed in the ordinary way—but many fathers dislike letting their daughters go before the main bulk of the marriage cattle have been handed over. Opposition on the part of the missions and the Administration to early marriage also influences the more sophisticated. The period of betrothal is long, for pagan [145] girls are commonly engaged from about 8 years old onwards, and the average age of puberty appears to be between 15 and 16.[1]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

and the average age of puberty appears to be between 15 and 16.[1] [145]

With the onset of first menstruation the ritual (*ubunyago bwa-busungu*) starts immediately: it is begun even for a girl not yet betrothed, though for her it cannot be completed. The main acts are a treatment of the 'bride' (*unsungu*) with medicines to fortify her against the dangers of menstruation and intercourse; seclusion at her father's homestead and a driving of the shades of his lineage from her body that she may conceive by her husband; instruction in the duties of a wife; examination for virginity; and the exchange of feasts between her husband's family and her own to celebrate her maturity and virginity. 881

The first treatment is with a medicine called *undumila*. 'If the girl grows up at her father's place we, her mothers, treat her at once; if at her husband's she is sent home to us, if it is near, but if it is far away, her husband's mothers treat her there.' She must take the medicine before she tastes any food after the onset of menstruation. A pungent-tasting root is pushed through the tip of a funnel or 'cup' made of a leaf of the bark-cloth tree, and salt is poured into the cup. The girl takes the tip of the root in her mouth and pulls it inward with her teeth, thus causing the salt to trickle into her mouth. Her mother also makes millet porridge and adds to it a medicine, *ikipiki*, and gives a little to her, burying the rest under the hearth of the hut.

She is then secluded in her mother's hut. Her girl friends who have not yet reached puberty prepare a litter of banana leaves for her to sit and sleep upon, and they keep her company (*ukupanja*), hence their name, *abapanji*. They come 'to cheer their fellow that she should not be left alone'. They sleep with her on the litter, and spend the greater part of their days there, learning to depilate and adorn themselves and, some say, to stretch the vagina by manual manipulation. Food for them is provided by the bride's mother, and on the litter they entertain the young men of neighbouring boys' villages, singing and dancing, and cuddling. In a bride's hut intercourse *inter crura* is permitted, and no 'husband' can claim [836] damages if his betrothed wife lies with another young man there, unless penetration has taken place. On moonlight nights the girls

[1] Information from Christian women who knew the exact ages of their daughters and of pagan contemporaries of their daughters. Cases of first menstruation ranging from the ages of 12 to 18 were cited, but those under 14 years old were regarded as unusually young. The mothers' information was confirmed by a woman missionary who ran a school for Christian adolescent girls in the district. [145]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

881 On moonlight nights the girls
524 play special games in the courtyard, such as 'Knock, knock, little man'; they put bits of banana leaves in the forks of the fingers and toes and sing: 'Knock, knock, little man; knock, knock, little woman!' Then they spread wide their arms and legs and fingers and toes and knock them together. The leaves that fall out when they do so are collected and hidden some distance away. Then they all separate and hunt for them, singing:

> 'We look for our fellow the barren one.
> I don't know where she is, the barren one.'

When they find the leaves they pile them up and then each snatches one, singing:

> 'Here she is, here she is!'

Then the game ends.

Another traditional song goes:

'Little mouth, little mouth, She-who-makes-her-friends-quarrel.'

But many of the songs the maids sing with the young men are just current popular songs.

881 'The maids are friends for the bride to amuse herself with. They
883 amuse themselves with young men, singing, and if some other bride is secluded at the same time, they go and compete against her and her maids in singing.' At the seclusion of Mwaihojo's daughter described below, a dozen girls, all a little younger than herself, kept her company. Five were her own half-sisters, one was a wife of her father who had not yet reached puberty, one a daughter of her father's sister, and four were daughters of her father's neighbours.

864 Although a bride's hut is the centre for sex play, women who are
881 sleeping with their husbands and are therefore 'heavy' (*nsito*) with semen, do not enter it and may not cook for her, for any contact with them is felt to be dangerous to her. Her own mother refrains from intercourse until her daughter has gone to her husband.

881 The bride is not confined to the hut (as among many other African peoples) but is free to move about the immediate neighbourhood. Her movements are, however, limited by the taboo on crossing a stream, the need to avoid sexually active women, and the avoidance of her father and other men of his village, as well as her in-laws. When she leaves her hut she is accompanied by her

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

maids and always carries a mat or cloth to screen her face from 881
her father and his contemporaries, her father's full sisters, her older brothers,[1] and her 'mothers-in-law' (*abakamwana*).[2] These she must fear and respect (*ukutila*) and so avoid. Her father-in-law and his brothers she avoids altogether from the time of her engagement, or at least after she has reached the age of 8 or 9. Her companions do not *ukutila* with her, though those of them who are already betrothed will, of course, avoid their own fathers-in-law.

During the period of seclusion the girls have two specific tasks: to weave the fine mats used as beds, and to fetch firewood. Every [285]
bride should take to her husband's home at least one fine mat (*ubunyasa*) which she has made herself, as well as several coarse ones (*imitefu*),[3] and weaving a fine mat is a lengthy task, occupying a skilful woman a month. Each girl weaves for herself, but the firewood that each must fetch is stacked in the bride's mother's loft. The bride also occupies herself hammering out bark-cloth, [287]
pleating it for the strip worn between the legs, and decorating bark-cloth belts (*vide* plate 5), so that she may have the fresh ones required during the ritual, and a supply to take with her to her husband's; but this work is not emphasized as an obligation: rather it is a recreation. Women take great pride in the decora- [531]
tion of their belts—we watched several brides making them and handing them round for the admiration of their fellows. The maids may work in the fields if required to do so, but the bride herself does not, and 'she gets fat because she does not have much work to do'. The whole ritual normally lasts about three months, but if, for some reason such as a pressing need to go out to work, the husband is in a hurry for its completion, various acts may be telescoped. The time-table depends primarily on when the marriage-cattle and food for the various feasts are ready.

From the time of first menstruation until she does it ritually, a 881
bride should neither wash nor oil herself. The prohibition is felt 515
to be a very onerous one and some girls now break it, but women 177
said 'in the old days we did not wash'. 'Girls nowadays are more cunning. We were afraid.'

[1] Some informants denied that she avoided father's sisters or brothers. Others insisted that she must avoid them because 'brothers are fathers, and father's full sisters are father'. [184]

[2] i.e. her husband's own mother and other women he calls mother. In this account the plural 'mothers' indicates own and classificatory mothers. [601]

[3] Nyakyusa beds are made of layers of mats laid on rollers between two logs at head and foot. One chief's bed we noted was made up of sixty-eight mats. [352]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

783 If a bride is her husband's first or second wife[1] (but not if she is
881 a junior wife) she washes with him ritually at his homestead. The officiant (*sayage*), who may be her husband's own mother or some other mature woman chosen by her, pours out medicated water, and groom and bride wash together, his hands being above and hers below. This usually takes place about a month after her seclusion, but neither it nor the following events are timed to coincide with periods.

881 In one ritual we watched, that of the daughter of Chief Mwai-
584 hojo, the go-between in the marriage and the brother of the groom
[431] came to fetch the bride for the ritual washing (*ukusukusula*), bringing her a small gift of 10 cents, four weeks after her first menstruation. She washed in medicated water with her husband at his house and returned to her father's the same night (May 19). Next day, about 3 p.m., the groom's 'mothers' (*abakamwana*), twelve of them, and one girl, arrived carrying six stems of bananas and four enormous pots of curds for the ritual of *ukwingesia*, 'putting her in'. They approached, singing two of the ritual songs:

Litubuke, litubuke,
Tubuke mwailugula.
Let us go, let us go,
Let us go for ever and never return.

and

Akayungusi kambagila
Paliti po pabuko bwangu.
The *syungusi* tree suited me,
The place is like that of my own in-laws.

The bride was carried first by one and then by another of her 'mothers' (*abasaa*)[2] while a compact group of mothers and maids, with the bride raised high in their midst, danced to and fro. And all the time she held a mat to shield her head and face. After five minutes or so the dancing stopped and the 'mother-in-law' sat down in the shade, as Kyobwe (a senior wife of Mwaihojo who acted in place of the bride's own mother who was divorced) came to greet them formally and receive their gifts of food. Meanwhile the bride herself knelt on the ground beside Kyobwe's hut, her head covered with a mat, and surrounded by her maids. Presently

[1] Informants differed on this [illegible]. Some maintained that chiefs alone washed with two wives, commoners with one only. Others insisted that commoners also washed with two.

[2] I.e. her father's wives, and wives of his brothers and neighbours.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selyn, Mu Ngonde

the groom's mothers began to dance again. They approached the 881
group of girls and the groom's own mother took the mat off the 584
kneeling bride and spread a large scarlet cloth over her. Then she lifted her on to her shoulders and danced with her. The two parties coalesced and danced together, singing the ritual song *Tukulelela akela* (We sing a dirge). Everyone was smiling and joyful despite the song. By 3.40 the dancing was over and a large mat was spread for the 'mothers-in-law' to sit down in the shade. The bride knelt again with bent head covered by her mat and surrounded by her maids.

At this point Mwaihojo, her father, began scolding angrily because the groom's party had not brought a bull. 'Always when people come to marry my daughters they bring a bull, always. It looks as if the girl had been to visit her husband and you had found fault with her and did not like her.' The groom's mothers replied: 'We are poor.'

Mwaihojo: 'How can you say you are poor? You can find the marriage-cattle, you say. Why didn't you bring some of them? Then I would have killed one to eat now. See, I have killed a bull already. If I had known that you were not going to bring one I'd have killed another.'

The groom's mothers sat with downcast heads. For a com- 881
moner's daughter bananas and milk are adequate for the *uk-* 584
wingeria feast, but a chief has the right to expect a bull. 643

Presently the groom's own mother and one of her companions 881
entered Kyobwe's hut to roast bananas and grind some of the 584
bark of a tree they had brought for medicine. The powder was put into a small calabash with water. The bride knelt in the doorway of Kyobwe's hut and, as her mother-in-law poured out the medicated water, she washed her hands and wrists and mouth in it. The bride's half-brother, a lad of 15 or 16 years, was washed also, standing by the doorway of Kyobwe's hut, though he was most reluctant to co-operate. He kept looking towards his elder brother Lazarus, a Christian, and did not submit until Lazarus said: 'All right, go ahead!' Kyobwe, seeing his reluctance, said: 'You need not wash if you don't wish to, it doesn't matter. Perhaps we'll [177]
leave it out as it's European times now.' Then finally she said: 'Well, just hold out one hand,' and she washed it. Had the bride been the eldest daughter of either of her father's two senior wives he would have washed in place of her brother, and had her own mother not been divorced she would have washed also.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

881 584 One of the women of the groom's party then fetched two banana leaves, one of sweet banana and one of plantain, and put them down in Kyobwe's hut. Meantime the mother of the groom changed the bride's belt and the bark-cloth worn between the legs, dressing her in new ones, and burying the old cloth, soiled by first menstruation, in a bundle of dry banana leaves. These she placed on top of the fresh leaves already mentioned, covered the pile with a small rough mat, and sprinkled it with powdered medicine. The bride knelt on the mat and, with head bent, ate roast bananas also sprinkled with the powdered medicine, which her mother-in-law handed to her. Her young brother who had washed with her also shared the bananas. After this the bride is free to wash, but not yet to oil herself.

The groom's mothers were feasted on meat and bananas—two large and two small basketfuls—and returned home. The atmosphere all through the ritual was one of rejoicing, and it was markedly a women's affair. The chief and several other men were present but, apart from his scolding of the women for not bringing a bull, the chief played no part at all.

[431] According to strict custom the groom's mothers should have come a second time with gifts of food (*ukusumbulela*)[1] to cement the friendship, but since the groom was in a hurry to get to work on the Lupa gold-fields this act was omitted. 'They brought the two lots of food together,' we were told, 'some of the milk and bananas were for the *ukwingesia* and some for the *ukusumbulela*.'

583 535 Three weeks later (June 14) the groom, with his go-between and other friends, brought the main body of marriage-cattle (*ukukwa*), and they danced the stamping dance (*ukukanya nganya*) in the bride's father's courtyard and on the litter of the seclusion hut, brandishing their spears as they stamped to the war rhythm. The bride's companions and mothers danced in a separate group, one mother carrying the bride on her shoulders. A lavish feast of cooked food was set before the groom and his friends, and they in their turn scattered pieces of meat and cents which the bride's [578] maids and 'mothers' scrambled for. Meantime a quarrel broke out between the bride's father and her brothers over the distribution of the marriage-cattle.

881 584 Six weeks after the *ukwingesia* (July 29) the bride, accompanied by two of her father's wives, two of her maids, and a third girl invited because she was a good singer, went to wash ritually again

[1] *Ukusumbulela*: to give a present for the first time to a new friend.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

at the groom's home (*ukusukunula*). The party was given a hen when they arrived and a second the next morning. The groom and some of his friends spent the night with the bride and her friends. (He and she lie together on this occasion but do not yet have full intercourse.)[1] In the morning the mother-in-law shaved the bride's head, eyebrows, and eyelashes, leaving only a small tuft on the nape of her neck. Then she mixed water with powdered medicine and poured it for groom and bride to wash. The groom washed his hands and mouth only, the bride her hands and mouth and whole body. During her seclusion she might not use oil or the red powder favoured as a cosmetic by Nyakyusa women,[2] but after this third washing she was free to do so, and she oiled herself meticulously. Meantime the groom was shaved by one of his friends.

On the same day the bride returned to her father's homestead with her own party and seven 'mothers' of the groom who brought five stems of bananas, a pot of water, and a small bull for the ritual of 'clearing out the litter' (*ukusosya ulufumbo*). She herself was wearing the skin of a bull over her head—'she wears any skin she can get hold of'. One of the groom's party shaved off the last tuft of her hair and buried it carefully in the *ulufumbo*, the litter of banana leaves on which she had slept and sat during her seclusion. Had her own mother been present she would have shaved also and so should the brother, but he did not do so. The groom's mother and Kyobwe (representing the bride's mother) carried out the litter to the edge of the banana plantation surrounding the homestead. As they did so they whispered to each other. Kyobwe said the bride was a little liar. Her husband had offered her 1s. to take to her mothers and she had refused it saying: 'No, they swear at me and grudge me food.' 'She's your child,' said the mother-in-law. 'No,' said Kyobwe, 'she's another woman's child, she's a foolish child.' Every scrap of litter in the hut was carefully collected and a little of the soil below it scraped off and carried out with the leaves. All who had helped with the clearing washed their hands carefully.

Then the groom's mother made a basin of two banana leaves close to the pile of litter. Into it she poured the water her party had brought with them, and sprinkled in powdered medicine in

[1] One or two informants maintained that 'she must not refuse him now or he will refuse to wash with her, saying: "She is not my wife."' But others were insistent that according to strict custom only intercourse *inter crura* was allowed. Full intercourse at this time would make nonsense of the *ilibelaga* ritual which follows.

[2] Formerly also by men: cf. V. Giraud, *Les Lacs de l'Afrique Equatoriale* (1890), p. 176.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selm, MuNgonde

881 the form of a cross. The bride knelt down and carefully washed
584 her whole body. When she had done so the groom's mother told one of her party to light the pile of litter. As it blazed up, the bride leapt across it. Three of her maids and a married half-sister had plucked banana suckers, of the sort used for propagating bananas, and they struck her with them as she leapt back and forth over the fire. She was nervous, though the jump was easy, and her maids jeered at her. Then she returned to Kyobwe's hut and dried herself in the sun. Now that the litter was burnt she had come out of her seclusion and was free to sleep on ordinary mats; from the entering of seclusion to the coming out, she could only sleep on the litter, except for the night preceding the burning which she spent with her husband.

584 The mothers of the groom were feasted on sweet potatoes and
585 curds provided by the bride's family, and there was a discussion as to whether the bull the groom's party had brought was 'milk to eat with the bananas' for the bride's family, or 'the bull of virginity'. The bride's father insisted that it was only a relish for the feast and he did not prepare the beer for the final act of the ritual. Two weeks later the bride eloped with her husband because he had not got another bull to bring her father, and the final rites were never performed for her.

584 On the night before the ritual of 'clearing the litter' the bride's father should put millet to soak for beer, and when it is ready the groom's mothers come for the *ilitemele* and *ulufundo*, that is, to 'shave the sprouting hair' and instruct the bride; but for the daughter of Mwasofu, for whom we watched it performed, it was long delayed. She had reached puberty seven months previously and before that had lived for three months with the man who had first betrothed her, but he had been unable to find sufficient cattle for the marriage, and the ritual was completed with another man.

585 The groom's 'mothers' arrived about one-thirty, by which time everyone was getting impatient. The men had nearly finished their beer and grumbled that the groom's party was late, and the bride herself was begging her mother to be allowed to go and bathe. Her mother replied emphatically: 'No, no, how can you go? The mothers-in-law will wash you and dress you in brass body-rings. That's the ritual.' Six women came in the groom's party—his own mother, his sister, two 'village mothers', and two young married women of the groom's village. A large mat was spread for

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Malgonde

them and polite greetings were exchanged. The bride herself 585
crouched down with her head covered with a cloth, but after the greetings were completed she sat up and chatted with them. Then one of the groom's 'village mothers', who was the officiant in the ritual, his sister, and two young women from his village, took the bride to the stream to wash. The officiant told the young women to carry her, which they did for a few yards, then they put her down. Her maids sang and she herself danced a few steps. Women came out of the houses as we passed, dancing and clapping. At the stream the bride took off her old bark-cloth and bathed with her maids. As she finished she stepped into a flat winnowing basket (*ulusolo*) for a minute, then stepped out, and her husband's sister decked her with four brass body-rings (*ndele* plate 7) and a [301]
folded cloth (*umpepe*) hanging down from the rings behind like a tail. The bride shook the 'tail' and the others laughed and cried: '*Kipetule*[1] *tukusepeka*[2] (It is turned over! We clothe her with the male genital covering!)' They walked back again laughing, and when they reached the first houses one of the party said: 'We should carry her now.' Another demurred: 'Let's go a little further, she's heavy.' Then a woman of the village came along and called: 'Carry her! Carry her!' They arrived at her mother's house singing: '*Niya, Niya, Niya*! (Put me down!)' The groom's 'mothers', the bride herself, and her maids, all sang this. The rest of the groom's party joined in and they walked up and down the courtyard carrying her and singing '*Niya, Niya*.' The groom's own mother carried a winnowing basket on her head and the bride's 'mothers' rushed out and threw into it small bowlfuls of millet, maize, pumpkin-seeds and lentils.[3] This grain goes to the groom's 'mothers': 'The mother-in-law drinks beer made from the millet.' Then the bride was made to sit down in the doorway of her mother's hut; the officiant sat behind her, shaved a little of the sprouting hair from the front of her head, and smeared her head, [302]
arms, legs, and stomach with ointment and red powder supplied by her own mother. Powdered medicine supplied by the groom's mother was added to the shaving water.

When her toilet was completed, the women called the men to come and give their gifts. The bride and her maids crouched down and the cloth removed from her buttocks was spread

[1] *Okupetule*: to turn over.
[2] *Okusepeka*: to clothe, from *ikisepe*: male genital covering.
[3] Beans, cowpeas and ground-nuts are also mentioned as being given at this time.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

585 over her and the maids closest to her. Her father, Mwasofu, and four or five other men, his village mates, came to give her gifts to break the taboo (*ukubonola*). Her father came first and asked: 'Which is she?' She was pointed out to him and he gave her 10 cents, greeted her with the words 'Good morning, my child', and shook hands. At the same time he admonished her saying: 'If you ever go away from your husband who has married you, then you have a case against you, you have a great case against you.'

The other men followed: 'Good morning, good morning, you have recovered.' They gave some cents and shook hands and repeated her father's warning. One, having no cents, brought a spearhead which he said he would redeem later for 50 cents.

585 Then over the girl's head the father spoke to the officiant:
583 'Where are the bull and the other cow?'

Officiant: 'I am poor. Thank you for giving us your daughter, thank you.'

Father: 'Pay a bull. See, my child has stayed at home a long time. It is seven months since she grew up and it is not right that she should stay here always. Bring the bull!'

Officiant: 'Yes, we all regret that, but I am very poor.'

A mother: 'You know very well that our child is pure [i.e. a virgin].'

Father: 'See, she is the eldest daughter, and there is someone here with a case against him. My brother has expectations from her, he is claiming cattle. If her husband comes to carry her off we will beat him, we will beat him, we will take cattle.'

585 Then the men went away and the women, 'mothers' and 'mothers-in-law', together began to admonish (*ukufunda*) her. 'Yesterday evening she was a child, now she has grown up, she is a woman, let us tell her about womanhood.' Her father's second wife, and an elderly woman of her father's village, talked most, but advice was shouted at her by several women at once and it was impossible to take it down verbatim. The following points were mentioned: She must cook for her children. (This was repeated with emphasis.) She must cook for her husband; she must be gentle (*mololo*) to her children; she must welcome and cook for her mothers when they come to see her.

One mother said: 'If your husband has built in a boys' village and his fellows come wanting water to drink don't say: "There is

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selyn, Mu Ngonde

no water." Don't let your in-laws say to us: "You did not bring 585
her up properly, she behaves proudly." '

Another whispered: 'When your husband comes to lie with you do not fight him, but accept him. If you avoid him you have a case against you,' and she laughed as she said it.

There was also whispered advice about menstruation: 'You wait three or four days. . . . When a child appears look after yourself.' During the instruction the bride sat with her maids crouching round her, their heads covered by cloths, all giggling a little. None of the mothers made any attempt to hit the bride, though in discussing the ritual a number of informants insisted that 'the mothers do not teach her by word of mouth only, they also beat her' and 'they scold her for all the things which she has hitherto done wrong at her husband's house'. Old Kasitile explained that: 'If the girl is a good wife, then the husband tells the mothers, saying: "You must not swear at my wife, she always listens to me." Then no one beats her. . . . But if she is proud at her husband's then they beat her.' 'The mother who bore her husband says: "She has been proud towards me, she's a harsh (*nkali*) girl," and they hit her with their fists.'

The teaching as described by a number of women may be summed up thus: the bride is told to fetch relish from the fields, draw water, sweep the house, tend the fire, fetch firewood ('if you do not draw water or fetch firewood you are a fool') and prepare food for her husband when he comes in from hoeing at midday and again in the evening; she must never be proud (*namatingo*) when her husband calls for water or anything else, but always answer with the submissive *taa* and not just say *eh*; she must be hospitable to her husband's friends and her own mothers when they come to visit; she must cook for children and be gentle to them. She must look towards her mother-in-law now—her own mothers are 'just people'. 'We have sent you to your husband's house and if we hear of quarrels there you are no child of ours.' She is told to wipe her husband after intercourse, to wash her own [333]
body often and to be careful to attend to herself properly when she is menstruating and to wash her hands frequently and not allow her husband to approach her then. She is told not to reject her husband at other times ('if you refuse him he will demand his cattle back'), and she is warned not to flirt with other men. Most
instruction in the art of love-making (including demonstration of 364
the correct body movements) comes informally from girl friends a

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

864 little older than herself, rather than at the formal admonition by her mothers, though a little is given then also.[1] She is especially [302] warned to depilate herself regularly. 'If she is hairy her husband will complain to the mothers and they will beat her.' The maids listen to the instruction along with the bride, and since every girl keeps several of her immediate seniors company before she grows up herself, no young woman can be left in doubt as to her duties as a wife.

881 585 At the shaving of the sprouting hair the 'bull of puberty' (*ingambako jabusungu*) should be killed if the bride is found, on examination by her mothers and those of the groom, to be a virgin, or if the husband has told the women that he himself has deflowered her. Mwasofu's complaint at the ceremony just described was that the groom's party had not brought the bull though his daughter was a virgin, and he insisted that the bride could not go to her husband until it had been provided.

At another puberty ritual which we attended, the bull was duly brought and, after examining the girl, the mothers announced her virginity with the cry of triumph (*akalulu*), and shouted: 'It is ours, it is ours.' They rushed through the courtyard dancing and applauding. Before the examination the bull had been tied up near the mothers, and immediately the joyful announcement was made it was killed. The meat of this bull is divided between the bride's mothers, her father's kinsmen with whom he exchanges cattle, and his immediate neighbours. The ritual portion, the *ijammapa*, cut from the top of the right foreleg, is taken by her father to his ritual grove of bananas and there he prays, saying: 'You, so-and-so (naming his father), since I have eaten the food of others (non-relatives) may she flourish at her husband's.' Another informant's version of the prayer was: 'I am eating the bull for my daughter, may she bear children!' A third said: 'Here is the meat! I have eaten the food of others, come out a little, may she bear a child at her husband's!'

If the bride is not a virgin the bull is not killed. It must be returned. Informants repeatedly implied, in talking of the ritual, that everyone knew beforehand whether the bride was virgin or not. 'If she is not a virgin we only do a little ritual, there is but one

[532] [1] Our informants maintained that clay images were not used as a medium of instruction, as among the Bemba, though Nyakyusa girls moulded stylized dolls out of clay almost identical with one shown for the Kisi in F. Fülleborn, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, Band IX, Atlas, plate no. 68, 30, 31, 32.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

vessel of milk and two stems of bananas. We do not carry her in triumph. The mothers-in-law do not bring the powdered medicine.' One informant maintained that the bride was always examined before she washed with her husband (if she was a chief wife) and we once saw the bride examined at the *ukwingusia* ritual, but the examination before handing over the bull is the only one mentioned by most people. What is certain is that virginity must be publicly demonstrated in the ritual and that it is honoured. 881 585

After the shaving and instruction, the bride goes round her father's village visiting the men who have not already given her a gift. She is accompanied by the wife of the go-between who represented her father in the marriage negotiations. Each of her father's fellow villagers (as well as her elder brothers and her father's full sisters) should give her something—a bark-cloth, a chicken, a calabash, a spearhead, or some coins, as he greets her. These the bride divides between her maids, the officiant who treated her in the ritual, her husband, and herself; to the wife of the go-between is due one pot of the beer brewed for the shaving ritual, to take home to her husband. 585 431

If the agreed number of marriage-cattle have been handed over, the bride's father puts millet to soak for beer immediately after the rite of instruction has been completed and the bull of puberty eaten. When the brewing is ready the bride is formally taken to her husband's house (*ukumbeka*) by a 'mother' and one or two of her maids. Her own mother never goes—the woman of the party is usually a junior wife of the bride's father or the wife of the go-between. They take with them one or two pots of beer, a basketful of plantains to roast for her husband, two or three cooking pots, a log of firewood, a calabash of light ointment (*inyemba*), and a little pot of brown ointment (*imbala*) for anointing her husband and his friends in the village. 'What the wife brings when she comes for the first time is for all the men of the village to use to anoint themselves. They come every day to use it until it is finished.' These ointments are brought by every wife but they are especially important if the bride is her husband's first wife, and it is his bachelor neighbours who mostly use them. The bride also brings the fine mat and several coarse ones which she has woven during her seclusion, bark-cloths she has made for herself, and three hearth bricks (*amafiga*) carefully moulded for her by her mother out of clay and manure mixed with medicines. These are set up in her [273] 585 584 354

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

585
245
482
341

5. Showing the bride

[facing p 100]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

585 354 new home, and her mother-in-law provides her with fire and a pot.

783 After the bride has had full intercourse with her husband she cannot return home, or see her own parents, until she has taken them the ritual *ilibalaga*. After sexual intercourse she wipes her husband's genitals with her hands, then wipes them on a fowl and some millet: these together form the *ilibalaga*. In the morning she goes off without washing—'with the filth of intercourse on her'—to her parents' house, taking the fowl and millet with her. The fowl is killed on a path and cooked with *ikipiki* medicine and, if the bride is the eldest daughter of one of the father's first two wives, her father and mother eat it together. Her mother eats alone if she is a younger daughter, or the mother is a junior wife. If the father is a chief the husband may kill a young bull and beef is sent in place of the hen.

834 After eating the *ilibalaga* her parents resume intercourse[1] which has been taboo from the time the girl first menstruated. If no hen is brought because the husband is poor, the parents still resume sexual intercourse, but the bride, when she visits her home, must not take water from her mother's pot. Someone else draws for her and she drinks it outside from a separate calabash. If she drinks [753] inside, or if her mother uses the calabash she has used, it is believed that her mother will get diarrhœa. She also avoids her father's bed and stool.

606 With the ritual of marriage must be included the negative ritual of avoidance between a woman and her husband's father and between those identified with him or her. The taboo applies from the time of betrothal or, if the girl has been betrothed as an infant, from well before she reaches puberty, and forbids father-in-law and daughter-in-law ever to look at one another or meet face to face on the pathway, or enter the same house, much less speak together. As we have seen, a similar taboo applies between the bride and her own father during her seclusion, but is relaxed when he [184] has given her a gift. Between a woman and her father-in-law, however, it is never relaxed, except among the more sophisticated 773 Christians. A myth of origin tells of a case of incest between father-606 in-law and daughter-in-law which led to the establishment of the 811

[1] Kasiile maintained that if the mother has not reached the menopause the parents do not lie together until the daughter's pregnancy is apparent. 'For the mother to conceive before the daughter is forbidden, but old women are fruits sucked dry.' Mwakisonde denied any danger in mother conceiving before daughter.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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6. *The groomsmen dance the stamping dance*

[facing p. 101]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

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taboo, and the practical difficulties of observing the taboo if fathers 773
and sons live in the same village is cited as a reason for the age- 811
village organization.[1]

The marriage ritual may be said to finish with the eating of the 585
ilibalaga, but avoidance of father-in-law and daughter-in-law con- 606
tinues until death and no clear line can be drawn between the marriage ritual proper and the rituals of pregnancy and birth which follow.

It is plain from the events described that the *ubunyago bwa-* 881
busungu is a marriage as well as a puberty ritual and that the hus- 585
band and his family play an essential part in it, but if a girl is not betrothed before puberty a curtailed ritual is still performed for her when she grows up. She drinks the *undumila* medicine, she washes with a brother, and her mothers put her formally into the hut of seclusion. They cook for the various feasts, and they tell her brothers to call their friends to help dance the stamping dance. The litter is cleared by her mothers in due course, and she is shaved and instructed. When she is eventually married, only the rites of slaughtering the bull of virginity, taking her to her husband, and returning with the *ilibalaga* are performed. She does not wash with him ritually.

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

The avowed purpose of the *ubusungu* ritual is to protect the 782
physical and mental health of the girl and to ensure her fertility. 755
'If the ritual is not performed the girl will fall ill, go mad, or not 881
bear children.' Numerous informants were agreed on this point. Angombwike expanded it, saying: 'It is said that if they do not perform the ritual of *ubusungu* the bride will go mad. When she is sick of the madness they perform the ritual. If the doctor says: "Those below are angry," then the father of the girl takes water and prays in the banana grove saying: "My father and my grandfather, let the child recover from her sickness." Sometimes the doctor says: "The so-and-so's (naming a village) have cursed her"; then the father seeks a bull and they eat it. It is the curse which comes from the mouths of people when many whisper saying: "Why have they not performed the ritual? Why have they not performed it?" It comes from their evil breath.' Neglect of the puberty ritual is therefore thought both to anger the shades and to shock the neighbours, who expect to feast on this occasion.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 82-6.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

881 The first act of the ritual, the giving of the *undumila*[1] medicine
751 to the girl, is a symbol of sexual intercourse, and it is thought to be a prophylactic against pain in intercourse, frequent or painful periods, and injury from contact with those who are 'heavy'. 'It is given so that her belly may not be painful,' said Mwaisumo's mother, an elderly woman. Kasitile's wife explained: 'The pungent root is the penis of the husband, the cup is her vagina, the salt, also pungent, is the semen of her husband. Biting the root and eating the salt is copulation.' Mwakionde's wife gave a similar interpretation:

841 The *undumila* is put through the leaf of a bark-cloth tree, shaped into
751 a cup, and it is a sign of man and woman, the penis in the vagina. It is similar to the plantains which we give her when we wash her. The plantains are a symbol of the husband. If we do not give her the *ikipiki* medicine the blood never dries up, and it is the same with the *undumila*. If it is not given she constantly has periods and is barren. Yes, some have a period twice in one month—those who have rotted. Only a few are like this, not many. . . . The *undumila* is given to the girl at once, in the mouth as soon as she grows up, so that she can go about without fear; otherwise, if she washes without having had it, then a heavy one may walk over her footprints, that is overstep her, and she will not bear a child, she menstruates continually.

Kasitile's wife said much the same: 'If the heavy ones have overstepped her, her body rots. The man is not sterile, but the woman is; the man's semen is fertile, but the woman has painful periods. It is the pain of periods we symbolize in the sharpness of the *undumila* and salt.'

827 The heavy ones (*abasito*), feared both during the puberty ritual
834 and by a mother with a new-born child, are those who sleep with their husbands. They include women both before and after conception. 'When the pregnancy is advanced and the husband has left off sleeping with his wife, then she is not heavy and she can keep a mother with a new-born baby company and hold the baby. A man who is sleeping with a woman is also heavy. They say: "He will overstep us."' This was the statement of Mwakionde's wife and Kasitile, questioned separately, confirmed every point. We then asked Kasitile: 'How is the heaviness (*ubusito*) from lying with a man dangerous to those going through puberty and childbirth?'

Kasitile: 'Because those who are with their husbands are heavy, they are strong, their fellow the bride (*unsungu*) is empty, light in

[1] *Undumila* is derived from *ukulumila*: to bite, to be painful.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

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front. See, the man ejects semen! Does it not go inside? The woman 834
becomes heavy and oversteps the bride.'

Even after she has been treated, the bride avoids any close con- 834
tact with those who are 'heavy'; in particular they are excluded 833
from her hut. Her own mother 'does not sleep with the father at all from the time the girl grows up until she goes to her husband, and begins intercourse with him. It is taboo. She says to her husband: "See, I am keeping my child company." ' But the 'play' of her companions does not matter, for intercourse *inter crura* does not make anyone heavy; it is the semen of a man in a woman's belly which makes her heavy, and her husband also, through contact with her.

The second medicine used at the puberty ritual is the *ikipiki*,[1] 789
made from the bark of certain small-leafed forest trees. The same species is used by many Nyakyusa families, but the identity of the person who provides it is very important, for it is identified with the blood (*ililopa*) of the family. In the puberty-marriage ritual the groom's mother provides the *ikipiki* with which the bride washes at her husband's (if she is a senior wife), at the rite of 'putting her in' (*ukwingesia*), at the second washing with her husband, at the shaving, and at the washing before jumping over fire. The same medicine is used each time. It is also sprinkled on the bananas she eats at the *ukwingesia*. The bride's own mother, however, provides the *ikipiki* which is added to her porridge and buried under the hearth the day she first menstruates, and that used for washing her father, or brother, and mother at the *ukwingesia*. Also, should it be known that the bride is not a virgin, the mother-in-law will refuse to bring her *ikipiki* and it must be provided for each rite by her mother. The medicine is in itself awesome (*nsisya*). Kasitile's wife remarked one day that the bride slept with one of her maids in front of her, 'at her stomach', and one behind. We asked why. She replied: 'That *ikipiki* medicine! It's awesome. She 789
fears to be alone.' 'If someone has not given her the *ikipiki* to drink 841
and heavy ones cook food and give it to her she goes bad, she has periods without cessation.' 'The mother gives porridge with *ikipiki* to the girl and buries some under the hearth. That means may she be heavy in her stomach, for if heavy ones warm themselves at the fire in the house, she is in danger of going bad, she will have a continuous issue of blood.' 'If the *ikipiki* were not given, her period

[1] *Um-piki*: a tree of any species. *Iki-piki*: medicine made from the bark of certain species (one is a Mussaenda) and used in the rituals of death, puberty, and birth. [824]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

789 would never dry up.' Kasitile said: 'The work of the *undumila* and
841 *ikipiki* are the same, they are together. The heavy ones will overstep the girl, they are going to injure her so that she is barren, constantly menstruating, with painful periods.' Lyandileko, a woman doctor, and exceptionally intelligent, said: 'The bride
[753] uses the *ikipiki* medicine because she is empty (*bwasi*). So she washes and eats bananas with *ikipiki*. If she does not wash with it she will have diarrhœa.'

789 The *ikipiki* is also said to make a bride 'patient and polite'. 'If
577 the girl did not wash with the powdered medicine (*ikipiki*) she might be rude and proud when she went to her husband's home and insult men there.' This was the statement of Mwakwelebeja, an old commoner particularly well versed in matters of ritual, and it was separately confirmed both by his wife and by Lyandileko, the woman doctor, but not everyone knew the connection. Mwaihojo, the chief, who was present when Mwakwelebeja gave his explanation, said: 'Really! I never knew that!' and his wives, when applied to, said: 'We don't know. The mothers have died' (this though some of them were past middle age).

613 Angombwike identified the *ikipiki* medicine with the blood of a
789 lineage and a bride's treatment with it with the union in marriage.
581 He said:

> As soon as a girl grows up people begin to think about her bearing children. They say: 'The molten iron is discharged, the blood for bearing children has come.' When they grind and brew beer in her honour, they do it in honour of her 'iron' [i.e. menstrual blood]. They give her medicines for disciplining her in the lineage of her husband. When the mothers hear they cry: 'Ours, ours, it has fruited! (*Ifyeto, ifyeto, fipele*).' The girl is given a bundle of the medicine, powdered, and is made to wear a belt of bark-cloth with the powder in it; the medicine is brought from the husband's home by his mothers. The husband, as it were, says: 'That is my blood [or semen] which I have sent to her.' The little bundle is the symbol (*ikimanyilo*) of the child she will bear, the belt with medicine on it means that the molten 'iron' belongs to the blood of that husband. The powdered medicine is brought by the husband's mother. A man's chief wife always has a bamboo flask or a pot full of medicine of their lineage (*ja kikololo kyabo*), powdered ready for use. If she dies it goes to the second wife, if the husband dies to the first wife of the eldest son, and by her it is distributed at need. The powdered medicine is the blood (*imbondanya*[1] *lyo ilopa*).

[1] i.e. the powder made from the *ilipiki*.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

The bundle of medicine and the belt are burnt with the litter at the 789
coming out. And whenever a child is born, every time, not only at the [846]
birth of the first or second, it is washed by the husband's mother with 581
this same powdered medicine from the store in her pot. If this is not done they fear that perhaps the child will go mad or something dreadful will happen. They say of the powdered medicine: 'It is our kinship, it is our blood (*Bo bukamu bwetu, lyo ilopa lyetu*).' And if a girl runs off with a lover in the veld they mock her and say: 'Who has given you powdered medicine? You are no relative.' They say: 'She is not our relative, she has not got our blood. . . .' The medicine is to create relationship (*ubukamu*). Using it means that the bride is now of my lineage (*ikikolo*). [602]
You know that burial customs differ. When they have used the medicine they will bury my wives as they bury me, either sitting up or lying down, as the case may be. We Christians do not do this because we have another way. We take hands before the priest and say: 'This is my [775]
relative (*unkamu gwangu*).'

Another informant (a pagan), questioned separately, gave a similar interpretation. He said: 'Washing with the medicine means, "my wife has come. She is now my relative (*nkamu gwangu*)." '

As already indicated, the act of washing with her husband pro- 788
claims the seniority of a wife. Washing with her own mother and 602
her father or young brother, is to proclaim kinship. 'The girl washes with a brother to show that she has brothers and sisters. If she does not do so it shows that she is a poor person without relatives.' 'She has washed at her husband's place, then she comes home and her father honours her by looking for a boy, not an old one but a young one, to wash with her. Then the girl thinks: "I have fathers, I am no bastard." But if she washed alone she would think: "Perhaps I am not their child, perhaps I have no relatives." ' Kasitile said: 'If she washes with me, her father, it means: "She is my child, I begot her myself, she is my first-born." ' Mwakionde, after discussing the circumstances under which a father washes, said: 'To wash is to admit that I have lived and borne a child and grown up.' 'And if a brother does it?' we asked. 'It means: "You young man, you are her father." If they ever quarrel the brother says: "Why do you not respect me, your father? We washed together in water." ' A young brother is chosen 'because the grown-up boys are going about. They want one who has not made love to girls.'

Standing in the doorway of her mother's hut (or of the woman 602
acting in place of her mother if the latter is dead or divorced) is 585

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

602 585 again an acknowledgment of kinship. 'If she washed outside it would mean that she was not the daughter of her father.'

585 833 The two fresh leaves of plantain and sweet banana on which the officiant places her soiled bark-cloth, and on top of which she kneels to eat bananas are, as already stated, symbols of male and female. Everyone understood this. Fewer people were aware of the symbolism of eating the banana, but Kasitile and one or two others were fully conscious of it and forthright in discussion. He said:

> At the 'putting her in' (*ukwingenia*) the mothers-in-law bring a new bark-cloth and dress her in it; the old one is thrown away on the litter. They mix together bananas and *ikipiki* medicine which she receives. Don't you understand? They treat her. The plantain is the symbol of the man, of his penis, we are treating her, may she 'cook well' for her husband [i.e. be proficient in intercourse], may she bear children. She eats on that bark-cloth which means may the blood go to make children, this is your husband. Eating is a symbol (*ikimapile*) of sexual intercourse. She eats the plantain, meaning she has intercourse with her husband.

He connected this with the admonition at the end of the ritual. When she eats the banana nothing is said, it is only implied, but [842] at the drinking of beer they teach her, saying: "Look after your husband well; if you are sweeping the house and he catches hold of you don't be startled, accept him, and catch hold of him also. . . . Men when they do this beget children." '

783 881 585 The second washing at the groom's, which is performed for every wife and not only for a senior one, is interpreted as a cleansing ritual. In the morning the officiant calls the husband and wife and says: 'Come and wash now and clean off the filth.'

Shaving is both a purification and a sign of the completion of the ritual. 'The hair of a girl who has reached puberty is the filthiness of puberty, of the menstrual blood which she produces then. She throws it away.' Mwakwelebeja and his wife said: 'The shaving is to show that she has awakened to puberty (*alembwike ubunungu*). During the ritual she did not shave. We perform the rite of shaving that she may begin to shave again, and to let her smear herself with brown ointment. It is like a burial. If a man's close relative [765] dies he does not shave or wash.' Mwaibojo said: 'The shaving is to show that the *ubunungu* ritual is finished.'

Clearing the litter which is 'filthy', contaminated with the menstrual blood of the girl, is also a symbol of purification. The washing in a leaf basin into which *ikipiki* medicine had been

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-193^)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

sprinkled in the form of a cross was interpreted by Lyandileko (the woman doctor already quoted) as the means by which the taboo on a bride crossing a stream was removed. 'We give her *ikipiki* to wash with that she may not fear streams. It is taboo to cross water while she is in the puberty ritual. Here I give her the *ikipiki* so that she may cross. If she crosses before she has been treated she grows thin. She will be like a stream [i.e. her periods will be very heavy].' Another informant remarked that if a bride crossed water before she was treated, the flow of menstrual blood would be excessive. Kasitile interpreted this rite rather differently. He said: 'It is to tell her not to break the commandment with the man. . . . "Do not break the commandment, do not step over him. When you lie down, let the man get up first." It is taboo (*mwiko*) for the woman to get up first and step over (*ukukilanya*) me, the man. My legs would swell up immediately. Sprinkling medicine thus [in a vertical line] is the man. He must get up first. Sprinkling thus [in a horizontal line] is the woman. She must follow.' Probably there is a double symbolism, as in several other rites. Both Lyandileko and Kasitile were experts on ritual and open in conversation with us.

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Lyandileko explained the jumping over fire in a whisper: 'It means, Kagile (M. W.), that she will never begin again. She is going to do this at her husband's.' Angombwike said:

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> It is to give the girl fire, to say: 'Do not burn there at your husband's.' It means: 'Now you have grown up, you are a woman. I have made fire for you (*ngapele umuto*).' For when a girl has run off as a child and been deflowered, then her mothers say: 'When shall we make fire for you? We cannot give it to you properly.' And at cooking she burns her hands, perhaps the water for the porridge spills over her hands and burns them. We hear that formerly they gave her fire, a torch of burning grass, to take to her husband's and kindle fire there, but they have left that. She jumps over fire, that is to give it to her.

The rite was also interpreted as a test of virginity. 'If a bride clears the fire she is virgin, if she falls in she has been foolish with men.'

The symbolism here is doubtless complex, but of the various informants Lyandileko, by reason of her status and personality, carries most weight, and I think it is probably correct to regard the jumping over fire both as a *rite de passage* and as a symbol of intercourse.

The cloth put on the bride like a tail after she has washed

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

881 at the stream comes from the girl's father.[1] He spits on it and
585 gives it to her mothers to dress her in at the stream.' (Kasitile.) Angombwike explained further:

> Dressing her in it means her father has made her grow up. It means: 'Now she is a woman let her act like a woman.' They symbolize the genitals (*ikisepe*) of the man, because among us, according to Nyakyusa custom, in front is a woman and behind a man. They tell her, saying: 'You have grown up, you have work [i.e. intercourse] with a man.'
>
> QUESTION: *Kipetule?*
>
> AGOMBWIKE: *Kipetule* is very old. It's to bless her and say: 'You have grown up. When you go to your husband it will not be painful. Have intercourse.' If the woman is no longer a virgin they do not speak of it. They say she knows already, she has learnt on the veld.

834 *Kipetule*, like *undumila*, is a word not used in mixed company. Once Kasitile whispered, when inquiry had been made, unwittingly, before other people: 'No, Mwaipaja (G. W.), there are children present, and my senior, that is bad. But when there are only cross-cousins (*batani*), then . . .' So the conversation changed.

881 The washing at the stream is a final purification. Lyandileko
585 said:

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> We give the bride brass body-rings because she was not wearing good things (*inuna*), she was filthy during the puberty ritual. We wash her and put on body-rings and a cloth, and she stands in the winnowing basket, because now she must not step on dirt (*ububibi*).

881 The earth, it will be remembered, is associated with faeces,
585 corpses, and the shades. Then comes the triumphal return to her father's house, the girl carried high, and the women dancing. 'Crying "*Niya*" and carrying the girl, on return from bathing, is for display.' Lyandileko, asked the reason for throwing millet in the winnowing basket, replied:

> It's to say it [the food, i.e. the meat of the bull of puberty] is ours. We examine the girl at the river. If she is rubbish (*longa linda*) we do not rejoice. The mothers of the girl give gifts (*ukabonela*). It's a rejoicing because it's ours, it's ours, the girl is virgin.

Niya, the word the women repeat as they carry and dance with the bride on the return from the stream, was interpreted by Angombwike as meaning: 'Put me down.'[2] 'It is traditional and

[1] Mwakisunde denied this, *vide infra*, p. 109.
[2] *Ukaniya*: to put down behind (as opposed to in front).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selyn, MuNgonde

means: Since you have carried me, put me down, mother, I am a woman,' i.e. this is the symbolic ending of childhood.

Mwakwelebeja's wife interpreted stepping into the winnowing basket as being 'in order that she may cook well for her husband and serve his food nicely'. Kasitile, when asked about it, replied:

> They honour the fearful ones (*abipaya*) themselves, saying: 'This is your child, she is Kyala, we are performing the ritual for her.' If they honour an *amipaya* on the ground Kyala is startled, the child runs mad, she is ill. . . . In these customs we come together to teach the child. Kyala said: 'Shake the winnowing basket for a daughter and say: "We have sent you to your husband; if we hear of cases at your husband's you are no child of ours." ' The mothers of the village instruct the girl. She ought to look towards her mothers-in-law (as they do so) and, if she does not, they beat her again, saying: 'Those are your mothers there, we are not relatives, look to them over there.'

Mwakionde, a doctor, interpreted most of the events in the same way. Asked about the cloth hung over the bride's buttocks, he replied:

> It is because during the puberty ritual she does not wear iron [i.e. metal] or a good bark-cloth. . . . Then the cloth comes from the husband [*sic.*] with the three body-rings. It is a way of saying: 'She's my wife.' They carry her and say: *Niya*.
>
> QUESTION: Why?
>
> MWAKIONDE: Because she has grown up. Until now she was a child. A while ago we bore and begot her, now she has grown up herself and is honoured, she herself begins to bear a child. It is to finish and say: 'Go to your husband and bear your own children.' Her mothers and the women of her father's village throw millet and maize and pumpkin-seeds. It is a rejoicing. Our child has flourished, she has grown up. They give the seed to her mother-in-law, the mother of the groom, and she takes it away.
>
> QUESTION: Is it not a ritual?
>
> MWAKIONDE: No, it is only a rejoicing.

Mwalhojo's daughter, asked why millet was thrown into the basket, replied simply: 'It is shaken, we are rejoicing greatly,' and indeed the basket is shaken in time to the dance, almost like a tambourine.

The theme of rejoicing recurs again and again in the course of the ritual. At the 'putting her in' her mothers dance with her on their shoulders 'to honour her because my child has grown up';

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

881 her mother-in-law covers her head with a red cloth 'for display'.
585 'We are rejoicing because our child has grown up,' and she too takes her on her shoulders and dances with her. When the 'husbands' come to dance the stamping dance: 'It too is a rejoicing. It shows I have married a wife now.' All through there is rejoicing over the fine food, and the celebration and feasting is primarily among the women. The culmination comes when the girl is publicly shown to be a virgin and the mothers can claim the bull crying in exultation: 'It's ours, it's ours.'

881 An interesting sidelight on the attitude of girls towards the ritual
585 came from a young man, a Christian, who was betrothed to a
184 pagan girl and had forbidden her to go through the ritual. He
795 said:

> Once my wife, when she had reached puberty, asked me why I objected to her undergoing the puberty ritual. I said it was forbidden for us Christians to participate in it, and I asked her if she wished to do so. She said 'Yes', and I asked why. She said: 'When the ritual is performed for us we are famed. People tell each other that so-and-so's daughter has grown up and people from far away come to sing songs, so we become very well known. See, now I have grown up, but no one sees that I have done so. Only you know.' Then I said: 'We Christians also have the custom of celebrating growing up at the handing over of marriage-cattle to the father (*ukukwa*). We do not hand over cattle when girls are still small, so everyone sees that a girl has grown up when we do so.' She agreed and said: 'I, also, have seen a little of the handing over of cattle among Christians.'

In fact, the *ukukwa* is the occasion for a great feast among Christians to which many young men and girls come to sing and dance.

881 The giving of presents to the bride by her father and his con-
585 temporaries is interpreted as part of the rejoicing.

431 To give presents (*ukukwala*) is to rejoice. It's an occasion for display and rejoicing, because the girl has grown up. The father gives her a present because he rejoices that she has grown up. He says to her: 'Congratulations, you have grown up, you are going away to your husband, you are going away to gain a child!'

881 During the period of seclusion the girl's father is spoken of as
585 her father-in-law (*ukamwana*). She must *ukutila* (respect and
602 avoid) him:

> Because he is her father who begot her. She thinks: 'I must respect

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Ma Ngonde

my father-in-law, father.'[1] She says: 'I have grown up finally, I am a woman.' 'As I have grown up, I am a daughter-in-law (*ukukamwana*).' 'If a girl looks at her father (during the ritual) she is proud (*ukumatiage*).' 'She used to be beaten if she looked at her father's friends. She is proud if she does. Her mothers will beat her.' She also fears ridicule—'We *ukutila* because we laugh at one another'—and mystical sanctions. 'If she does not *ukutila* (her father) she gets thin and brown. Since she has grown up she must avoid people.' 'She would become light in colour if she did not *ukutila* during the ritual.' 'She will grow thin and her body will be brown instead of black. We think that ugly.' 881 585 602

Mwandini (the old blind chief), asked why a bride should *ukutila* her father, replied:

> She avoids him and he gives her a gift to break the taboo. During puberty it is taboo. Kyala has created us so. Because if her father looks at her she grows thin, those below [i.e. the shades] are angry.
>
> QUESTION: And those above?
>
> MWANDINI: Yes! Do they not injure them? Do they not give those who throw out the litter a bull that they may eat?

Mwakionde (the doctor), asked the same question, replied:

> It is because of the in-law relationship (*ukukamwana*). If I, the father, look at her she will grow thin and waste away, but at the beer we give her gifts of bark-cloth to break the taboo and say: 'You have come out (*ukukile*). You have come out, my child. I am sorry about the fire, I am sorry.' Then she looks at us. She avoids me, the father, and my younger brothers and my fellows in the age-village who are all, according to our custom, her fathers. [601]

Ukutila of her mother-in-law (shielding her face with a mat or skin) was interpreted by Mwakionde in this way:

> It is on account of the dignity of her mother-in-law who says: 'She is my child, see, she respects and avoids me, saying: "She bore my husband." I am her superior. She acknowledges my dignity. She is wise, she respects me, her mother.'

Everyone was agreed that 'the bull of puberty' (*ingambala jakwesunga*) is both a sacrifice to the shades, who are asked to bless the girl and make her fertile, and a feast for the mothers and that, strictly, it is only brought if the girl is virgin. 'We throw the *ijisunga* meat in the banana grove and put a stone on top of it so that those below may eat, and we pray that the girl may bear a 585 881

[1] Some aspects of father-in-law and daughter-in-law avoidance are discussed in *Good Company*, pp. 83-6.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

585 881 child at her husband's.' Neglect to kill the bull may result in sterility. Mwaseba, a middle-aged man, said:

If the officiants, the mothers of the girl, have not eaten, and the father also, the girl will not bear a child, these people are angry and the shades are angry, they (the shades) help them (the living). And if you do not perform the other customs of the litter the shades are angry, the fathers and the mothers. They say: 'What! Have you not treated the child!'

Mwakionde, the doctor, explained:

[843] When a woman conceives and has a miscarriage, it is *minda*, the shades are angry. Perhaps if we have not killed the bull of puberty we buy one. The shades are angry, saying: 'Why have we not received a libation of blood poured on the ground for our grandchild? They have done wrong towards us, we who created them.' The girl does not bear a child because pouring out the blood of a beast (bull or cow) is to pray (*ukwa ililopa lya nombe ko kuiputa*).

Mwakobela, our neighbour, said:

If we have not eaten the bull of puberty, they bewitch us (*bikwedega*), the child does not bear a child. Our fellows in the lineage bewitch us, they say: 'We have not eaten the puberty meat.' Then, later on, the husband brings the bull and we eat, and the *ija mmapa* meat we throw in the banana grove, and we pray and pray and the girl conceives.

842 715 The fertility of the girl is believed to depend upon driving away the shade of her father's lineage from her body. We have already quoted (p. 98) the prayer: 'Here is the meat! I have eaten the food of others, *come eat a little*, may she bear a child at her husband's.' Mwainilage explained this conception:

Those of old said: 'We drive away Kyala and the shades, may she bear at her husband's.' She moves to others, to a different lineage. May that lineage rise up from the dead (*kiryakega ikikola kila*). If we do not treat the girl she will not bear a child at her husband's.

To understand this it is necessary to understand the Nyakyusa theory of conception. It is held that sexual desire in both men and women comes from Kyala and the shades, and without their support a man is impotent, a woman barren. Kasitile was quite explicit on the matter:

Kyala is in the belly. He causes the blood of a woman which forms a child to flow and the blood of the man also. We say that Kyala is in the belly; he watches over us at the conception of a child. But our fathers,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mulgonde

Mwakanjoki and his fellows, said that Lwembe is there (in the belly), they did not speak of Kyala. Did you not hear at Lubaga?[1] What did I ask for? 842/775

G. W.: You asked for a child!

KASITILE: Yes, I asked for a child. The menstrual blood is that which we discharge when lying together. I, the man, discharge, and the woman also discharges. If Kyala does not support us, then that blood degenerates, it becomes blood which flows out at the period. 842 841

G. W.: But the girl has periods before intercourse?

KASITILE: Yes, indeed, that is her blood. Does a woman not discharge? If she sleeps alone, as a bachelor, her blood just flows out, it does not create a child. In intercourse we try to discharge together. If I see that the woman is gasping I try to discharge with her. If I am gasping and wish to discharge, I wait for the woman. Yes, there is choice. We are all like that. But our fathers feared that if the woman discharges first she will bear a girl, and if I, the man, discharge first she will bear a boy! The shades of her fathers are there in the body of a girl, and we drive them away. It is like the case of a widow; the situations are just alike. We treat the girl and say: 'Now the woman is free.' At the eating of the bull we seem to say: 'You shade, be present and look upon us. This meat is for you to go away a little. May she bear children.' [833] 842 775

G. W.: So if the shade is in the girl she cannot bear children?

KASITILE: What can the shade go away with if you do not pray?

QUESTION: What happens if she washes and performs all the ritual with a man, a husband, and then leaves him, without having had full intercourse, for another man?

KASITILE: It does not matter. She is freed from the lineage of her father, she has moved to another lineage, so they do not treat her again. (*Sika mbombo, abwiis akikolo kya gwiin, asumile akikolo ikingi, papapo katitutindekinya kangi.*)

On another occasion Kasitile said that intercourse took place 'when Kyala and the shades have gathered there. They come out in the woman and her belly sprouts [i.e. she conceives].'

Kasitile was not offering a personal interpretation when he talked about conception. Conversation with a number of people showed that the ideas he put forward were generally held. Mwandini, the old blind chief, when asked where the blood to beget children came from, replied:

It is from him who makes us all do things, Kyala and the shades together.

[1] Rituals are performed on behalf of the country at Lubaga. Kasitile was a hereditary priest. See *Communal Rituals among the Nyakyusa* (forthcoming).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

841 QUESTION: And menses?
775 MWANDISI: When the shades are angry a woman is constantly menstruating and does not bear a child; if they are not angry she conceives.

833 And on another occasion he said:
842
775 Lust comes from the shades; if they are angry with you you are impotent; you cannot beget a child.

His wife added: 'My husband says in his heart: "Let me go to my wife." It is the shade that makes him.'

One informant after another mentioned *both* Kyala (or Lwembe) *and* the shades as being present in intercourse. Mwakionde, after [843] talking of miscarriages being due to the anger of the shades, went on:

Kyala has created the bowel of desire. If a man is impotent we say Kyala has not given him breath to beget a child.

KAKUJU: If my child runs off with a man, whether a stranger or her husband, before she has reached puberty and I continue angry, if Kyala has helped me she does not bear a child. Then it is said 'her father was angry'. They come to me bringing the remaining marriage-cattle and I pray and she bears a child.

QUESTION: If the husband asked for her properly and deflowered her before puberty?

KAKUJU: There is no case, it was all right, even long ago. I said: 'Finish paying the cattle.' Perhaps he begged me, saying: 'I am poor, Father,' and I was satisfied.

842 No pagan questions the power of the shades over fertility, and
775 this power is believed to be exercised by the mother's lineage, as well as that of the father. Angombwike, the Christian, said:

[881] The pagans fear that if they do not perform the puberty ritual when a girl reaches puberty, she will dry up. The blood will not come again even though she is not pregnant. Then, if her periods do not come for two or three months, like this, she will never bear a child. They say the shades are angry and have bound her fertility. And if she does not reach puberty at all, if menstruation does not begin, her father prays in the banana grove, saying: 'You, fathers, what are you angry about?' And if the girl's mother's brother is angry on account of cattle—perhaps her father has not given marriage-cattle properly for her mother—he, the mother's brother, binds a wisp of the litter (*sigfundo*) from her puberty ritual in the loft, then the girl will not bear a child. Inquiry is made of a diviner who says: 'The mother's brother has bound her.' The father takes a cow to him and says: 'I am sorry, I have done wrong. I

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

have thought of it now, this is the cow.' Then, in the evening, the mother's brother blows out water in the banana grove and prays much to the fathers. And when he has prayed he says: 'Send the girl to a doctor to drink medicine.' Then the girl bears a child. The pagans say of us Christians when we have children without performing the ritual: 'You have a medicine, you are baptized with a medicine.' 842 776

Mwakobela confirmed that the mother's brother, like the father, may prevent a girl bearing a child.

Yes, it is so, if I do not give marriage-cattle for my wife our child will not bear. We go to divine and the oracle catches hold of my wife saying that the fathers are angry. We ask what they are angry about, and the answer is 'cattle'. Then I, the father of the girl, go with a cow and leave it and return. My wife and daughter remain there. They pray and pray and the girl conceives.

It is clear, therefore, that the shades are present in intercourse and control conception. At marriage the shade of her father must 'move aside a little' so that the bride may conceive, and she herself becomes dangerous to her mother (and in a lesser degree to her father) because she has mingled her blood with that of another lineage. Mingling the blood of different lineages is dangerous and a bride can safely meet her mother only after performing a ritual in which her parents, as well as herself, become 'one flesh' with her husband. 'When a bride brings a hen and millet to her mother it is to say: "Mother, I have wiped my husband's genitals, I have grown up."' All our informants were agreed that this *ilihalaga* or *ilihala* (both words are used) is to safeguard the mother's health, particularly to prevent her suffering from diarrhoea. Mwandisi's statement was clear: 842 833 775 [753 751]

In the puberty ritual, when a bride has come from her husband, having lain with him, she catches hold of a little millet and a fowl without washing herself and carries them to her mother. The mother eats it with the fowl that her belly may be firm. If the daughter does not bring these things, then, when she drinks from the same calabash as her mother, she oversteps her mother, who has diarrhoea. Yes, the illness comes from the shades because she has come hot from the bed. . . . This diarrhoea comes from the belly when those below are angry and those above also. They say: 'The mother has overstepped the child' or 'The child has overstepped the mother'. If a girl has reached puberty we, the parents, do not come together until she has gone to her husband and lain with him. If we have intercourse we 881 585 783 753 834

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mulungwe

881 585 overstep our child, she will be barren and not bear children, but when she has lain with her husband then we two lie together again.

783 753 834 Kasitile identified the hen with the body of the girl, the millet with the seed of her husband, and a daughter going to the back of her mother's hut (*kasifu*), or drinking out of the common calabash, as meeting with her mother.

If she does this before she has brought a fowl she soils her mother. Her mother develops diarrhœa. That is getting rid of the dirt (*kakusuya ubupali*). . . . The mother's diarrhœa is like that from adultery. If my wife lies with a man in the bush, and I lie with her also, she soils the food which I eat with her, it is dirty, and I have diarrhœa, it is to get rid of the filth. . . . Yes, even though we do not lie together, I get a little diarrhœa, the filth of my wife.

QUESTION: Is the *ilibalaga* to drive away the shade again?

KASITILE: No, it is something else. It is to save the mother that she may not have diarrhœa and may not become weak.

881 585 The explanation given of the Kukwe *ilibala* rite makes clear that it is a symbolic mingling of 'the blood' of son-in-law and mother-in-law, which makes contact between them (through the bride) safe.

881 585 753 Failure to bring the *ilibalaga* is thought sometimes to result in very serious illness. One of the wives of our neighbour, Mwakobela, was delirious. We asked what the cause was. He replied:

Her daughter reached puberty and went to her husband, but refused to drink with her mother. She just came and took water in the calabash cup, she brought nothing from her husband. . . . If the husband is poor a girl brings a fowl for drinking with her mother. . . . The divination said: 'It's the girl.'

QUESTION: Why did she not bring a hen from her husband?

MWAKOBELA: He is not a man of wisdom, he's very harsh, and a fool.

881 585 606 After the *ilibalaga* has been eaten by her parents a bride is no longer dangerous to them, and she, fortified by the various treatments with *undwila* and *ikipiki* medicines, no longer fears the 'heavy ones'. The critical periods of first menstruation and first intercourse are past. But the rule of avoidance between her and her father-in-law (and those identified with him) continues through life and is directly associated by the Nyakyusa with the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

danger of incest. They account for the rule by a myth which tells 581
how a certain chief looked on his son's wife and saw that she 585
was beautiful and took her, and men were shocked, and forbade a 606
father-in-law and daughter-in-law ever to see one another again. And this taboo, they say, is the reason why fathers and sons must live in separate villages. To avoid (*ukutila*) is 'to fear, to show respect'. Avoidance occurs between women in a limited degree—a girl shows respect to her father's sister, a daughter-in-law to her mother-in-law and her husband's father's sister by not looking at them directly or touching their backs; but these women are in some measure identified with father and father-in-law, and the taboos are most stringent regarding things or actions which are associated with sexual activity. The behaviour of Nyakyusa women suggests very strongly that the fundamental idea in *ukutila* is avoidance of incest.[1] Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is the primary rule of good manners and morals in domestic relations, and is constantly expressed in everyday activities.

Besides being a celebration of the change from childhood to 581
womanhood, and of movement from the lineage of her father to 585
that of her husband, the puberty—marriage ritual includes a legal 584
contract. Either at the betrothal, or when the bulk of the marriage-cattle are handed over, the groom's go-between thrusts a spear into the earth of the swept courtyard and there, publicly, before her kinsfolk and neighbours, the bride must pluck it out and hand it to her father, in token of her consent to the marriage. 'It means: "With this spear you may slay me if I run away from my husband." And her father keeps the spear and may kill her if she does—some fathers did so in the old days.'

After taking the spear the father plucks a banana leaf and hands his daughter the mid-rib with which she strikes one of the cows brought by her husband, and all the women of the homestead acclaim her. Thus her acceptance of the marriage is demonstrated. And each time an instalment of the marriage-cattle is handed over, the go-between of her father and the go-between of the husband must both be present as witnesses; and they notify their sons of the contracts they have so witnessed so that the sons may give evidence after the death of their fathers if necessary.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 85-6, 106, 123, 180-1; 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde, p. 127-8.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

2. IN KUKWE COUNTRY

(a) *The events*

585 The puberty and marriage ritual performed by the Kukwe
581 differs in detail from that performed by the Nyakyusa proper, but
184 the main elements—the seclusion of the bride and avoidance of her fathers and brothers, the laying of a ritual litter, the meeting of maids and young men on the litter, the avoidance of water, the treatment with *ikipiki* medicine, shaving and ceremonial purification, the instruction, the celebration of maturity and virginity by the exchange of feasts between the bride's parents and those of the groom, the slaughter of the bull of virginity provided by her husband, and the taking of a fowl to her mother after first intercourse —all these recur. And the overt purpose of the ritual is again that the girl may be fertile, and healthy in mind and body. The main differences are in the symbols used for intercourse and purification, and in the location of the rites. Among the Nyakyusa proper most of the ritual is performed at the bride's home, whereas among the Kukwe most of it is performed at the groom's home.

585 When a Kukwe girl first menstruates her father sends his go-
581 between in the marriage (*umfaya*) to inform her husband that she has grown up. If she has been visiting her husband, and is at his house when the first period begins, she runs home to her father's, and the formal message is despatched to her husband. He sends back a hen with the message: 'Thank you, you have nourished my wife,' and some time later sends a second hen by his go-between summoning her to come and wash. A party of two or three 'mothers' (her own mother does not go) and ten or a dozen maids takes her to her husband's, and there (if she is a senior wife) she washes with him in water mixed with powdered *ikipiki* medicine. The officiant pours the water which the husband catches in his hands, and the wife holds her hands below his. Then they kindle fire together by friction (*ukupegesa ukupenda*), husband and wife both twirling the stick (his hands are again above hers) and the officiant holding the horizontal trough. On the fire they have kindled porridge is cooked, which they eat together. A junior wife washes and kindles fire and eats porridge, not with her husband, but with his younger brother.

After the ritual meal 'mothers-in-law' cut banana leaves and spread the litter for the bride at their homestead, not at her father's. The officiant sprinkles powdered medicine over the floor on one side of the hut and makes two girls lie down with the bride

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

between them. These two remain with the bride all through the period of seclusion, never leaving her, but the other maids may come and go if called away to perform other duties. 585 881

From the onset of menstruation until the ritual washing a girl may neither cross a stream nor wash; after it she crosses streams and washes her hands and feet, but does not yet bathe her whole body. She sleeps on the litter with her companions for about a month and 'by day and by night the young men sing songs with the girls. . . . The play in the puberty hut resembles adultery—we call it love-making (*ukugasiya*).' 'The groom visits his bride on the litter.' 'Gifts of beer and firewood are brought by the bride's mothers (*ukusambulela*) and, after her second period has passed, the rite of *ukusiya* (bringing out) is performed.'

The litter is swept out and burnt. Bride and groom are shaved and go separately to bathe. 'The women carry the girl and the man's fellows carry him.' The girl is examined to prove her virginity and the women return with her rejoicing, and make her and her husband run in and out of the doorway of a hut over which they pour water. Then follows the admonition.

At the *ukusiya* (bringing out) rite the officiants drink a special brewing of beer made in the following fashion: the chief officiant puts a little millet, mixed with powdered medicine, into a flat winnowing basket, makes the bride stand in it and, loosening her bark-cloth soiled by first menstruation, lets it fall into the millet.[1] Then she shreds and burns it, lest an enemy, wishing to prevent the bride conceiving, should get hold of it. The bride's fresh bark-cloth is sprinkled with medicines to make her 'heavy', the ashes of the old one are treated with medicines to ensure her fertility, and the millet is put to soak and brewed into beer in the hut in which she lies secluded on the litter. [842] [789]

We saw the Kukwe *ukusiya* rite performed only once. The girl, a daughter of a chief, was not yet married or betrothed, so there was no groom to play his part, and the whole ritual was carried out in her father's homestead, her own mother going through it with her. She herself appeared most reluctant, and there were various modifications due to the pressure of new ideas. We quote the account to show the manner of washing, and of entering and leaving the hut—rites which were described in detail by a number of informants, and which are characteristic of the Kukwe ritual cycle. 881

[1] It was not made clear by Kukwe informants exactly when this happened.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

Record of M. W., 13 September 1936

881 789 I arrived at nine o'clock in the morning to find Syungu, the elderly wife of the chief's senior brother, who acts as officiant in all the rituals for the chief's family, grinding and cooking *ipembe* together with a powdered medicine and red pigment, to make an ointment. I asked the purpose of the medicine. She replied: 'It's *ikipiki* that she may be heavy, that she may bear children and not be barren.'

273 789 Some of the chief's wives gave me beer—ordinary beer. They themselves were drinking from a pot which had stood in the inner part of the house (*kusufo*) and to which medicine had been added. They explained that it might be drunk only by themselves, the chief's wives. A strange woman, a Penja, came along and, though warned that this pot was not for her, insisted on drinking some of it. She explained how Penja [71] ritual differed from that of the Kukwe—they kill sheep for the puberty ritual. Usually this beer stands to brew in the seclusion hut 'on the litter'.

881 The women were preparing a dish of beans and bananas cooked together, and when it was ready a little was given to the officiant, some was put aside for the girl (*usungu*),[1] and the remains were offered to the guests. One of the cooks threw away the central stem of the head of bananas used, but was told by the officiant to fetch it back, as all the rubbish must be cleared away together at the end of the rite.

After midday the officiant shaved some hair from the girl's temples and the back of her neck, and then she shaved the mother completely. I asked why the girl was not shaved completely and was told: 'Her fellows would laugh at her if she had no hair.' The officiant prepared four banana leaves, stripping each off on one side of the mid-rib and shredding the other half so as to make a rough fringe. Standing with her back to the girl, she touched herself over the genitals, breasts, and forehead, then handed the leaf back over her head, telling the girl to fasten it round her waist. She repeated the performance with the second leaf, telling the girl to fasten it round her neck. The girl complied with the first leaf but refused the second, saying: 'I have a cloth,' and she pulled her breast cloth round her shoulders. The officiant followed the same procedure with the girl's mother, who fastened both leaves round herself. Then one of the chief's wives took the mother on her shoulders and carried her round the corner of the house. The bride followed on foot, and three other wives of the chief, singing:

Kyanala
Kyatiko
Kyanalue
Kyatiko.

[28] [1] Usually we have translated *usungu* by 'bride', but in this case she was not betrothed: cf. footnote 2, p. 73.

2; Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

The words 'refer to the cries of the mother in labour'—'they symbolize 881
the adolescence of the bride and the toil of the mother in labour.'

They went together to the stream, the girl's mother walking after they were past the homesteads. The girl and her mother sat down on the bed of the stream, facing down-stream. The other women made them hold out their hands, and between each finger and toe, and behind each ear, they placed a small pebble. Flowers and grass, twisted together, were placed on their heads, with stones on top. Then both were made to lie down in the water. The girl was pushed down and slapped gently. She protested a little and was told: 'You are proud.' The women and girls on the bank laughed. She was told to take off her clothes and wash herself and, looking rather embarrassed, she went a little way up-stream into the shelter of some bushes. The women said said she was shy of me. Her mother took off her cloth and washed it, and all the chief's wives present, a younger sister of the *ŋwangu*, and another little girl did so also. The *ŋwangu* slipped on a fresh dry cloth, her mother a fresh bark-cloth, and each was given a little bunch of ferns and flowers to carry. One woman filled a small calabash with water and the party returned to the mother's house. Mother and daughter were told by the officiant to throw their flowers on to the roof of the hut just above the doorway; she herself poured some of the water brought from the stream on to the thatch and made the girl enter the doorway as the water dripped down. Again she poured water and made the girl come out. The rite was repeated for the mother. Then the officiant took the red ointment she had prepared with medicine, and touched herself with it on the left toe, the left knee, the navel, the left temple, and left elbow. She touched the girl with it in the same places, smeared it on her legs, arms, shoulders, and head, and did the same for the mother, and for the small sister who had washed.

Next she cleared away the banana-skins and bean-shells left by the women who had cooked earlier and, along with this refuse, she burnt a bark-cloth strap taken off the girl when she washed. There was no litter (*ulufumbo*), though the women said it was usual for there to be one. Then the girl ate some of the cooked bananas, beans, and mash of beans and bananas prepared, and drank some of the medicated beer with her mother, and the curtailed rite was at an end.

Usually, we were told, the mothers sing: 'Put me down, Mother, 585
put me down,' as they carry the bride back from the stream after 881
examining her, and throw gifts of grain into a winnowing basket, as they do in Selya, but there was no such rejoicing for this girl. It seemed likely, from the events omitted, that she was known not to be a virgin, but we had no proof of this. When the *ŋwangu* is betrothed, her husband also shaves and washes, is car-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

595 ried to the stream, runs in and out under the dripping water, is
881 anointed with red ointment, shares the mash of beans and bananas, and drinks medicated beer with her from the same calabash. In
[77] the old days it was taboo for either bride or groom to set foot to the ground on their way to the stream.

For a senior wife, the mother-in-law moulds hearth-bricks with powdered medicine, and sets them up in the groom's hut. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest daughter if the daughter is her first-born, or with her senior daughter-in-law if her eldest child is a boy. 'If they do not do this they go mad.'

As in Selya, an admonition of the bride by her 'mothers', in the presence of her in-laws, concludes the full 'bringing out' ritual. We never heard it in Kukwe country, but the points mentioned by informants were similar to those emphasized in Selya. Kajinga, Porokoto's second wife, summed up the teaching thus:

> Obey your husband when he calls you. Fetch water and wood. Don't say: 'First let me fetch firewood' if your husband wants you to do something else. Do what your husband says first, then to-morrow go for wood. It is forbidden to refuse when your husband wants to sleep with you. In the morning get up and wash. Wash first, then light the fire and give your husband food. Don't say: 'There isn't any food.'

585 Next day, on her return home, the bride is given presents by the
881 people of her home village (*ukugwa*), her father making the first
431 gift. The groom brings the bull of puberty on which all the 'mothers' feast, but the meat from the top of the right foreleg (*ijamapa*) is reserved for the bride's own parents who sing as they eat it:

Kyatile, Kyatile, Kyatipwe

Some days later a party of 'mothers' takes her formally to her husband's house (*ulwendeka*) with gifts of beer and food and firewood, and are feasted by the groom's people and given chickens and shillings.

585 When she is finally living with her husband, before she can visit
881 or greet her parents, the bride must put milk and a fowl (some use
783 a live fowl, others a cooked one) under her bed at night. After having had intercourse with her husband 'she takes the fowl and milk and gives them to her parents with the filth of intercourse still on her. This is called the *ililula*. If she does not do this her mother will fall ill and have diarrhoea.' 'When they take the food

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

(from under the bed) in the morning it has the filth of intercourse 585 on it, then the father and mother should eat it. If this is not done 881 they will fall ill with diarrhœa. If the hen is taken alive some eat 783 it and others do not.'

After discussing this rite Mwasalemba went on:

You know, also, that when a girl has gone through the puberty 784 ritual at her husband's the must not take firewood from her mother's 842 rafters (*kusijala*) until she is obviously pregnant. Before then, while she is lying with her husband, she must not. We say: 'How can you take your mother's firewood when you are sleeping with your husband?' It is just the same whether the mother is old or young. If the bride goes through the ritual without sleeping with her husband that is all right; it is when she begins to sleep with him that she begins to avoid her mother's loft. At that time I, the father, may meet her mother and [834] sleep with her, but with *coitus interruptus*. I must not make her pregnant. The daughter must begin. As soon as she is pregnant then we parents can begin to conceive a child again. If we do so before our daughter, then she will never bear a child at all, and others will say: 'How could you overstep your daughter?'

Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is ob- 606 served as in Selya, but is slightly less strict. 184

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

As has already been indicated, the symbolism of the Kukwe 585 ritual of puberty is similar to that of Selya. The same actions are 881 interpreted in exactly the same way and, where actions differ 184 somewhat, they are still interpreted as expressing the same general conceptions. For example, the Kukwe bride and groom make fire together by friction and eat porridge cooked on it, whereas a bride in Selya eats bananas with powdered medicine, but both actions are symbols of sexual intercourse. Both in Selya and in Kukwe country the bride is purified and, as part of the process of purification, the shade of her father's lineage is driven from her body; but only among the Kukwe is this symbolized by sitting in a running stream and allowing the water to wash away pebbles from between her fingers and toes.

That there may be no doubt about the interpretation of the 585 Kukwe ritual we again quote a number of statements by Nyakyusa 881 informants. These refer specifically to the Kukwe form of the puberty ritual.

Chief Porokoto's wives, discussing the ritual together, were em-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

585 phatic that 'if the bride does not wash with powdered medicine
881 she will go mad and she will bury children'.

Syungu, the officiant for all the rituals in Porokoto's lineage, said:

[158] If a girl goes mad, we say, if we have not treated her: 'We neglected the ritual, let us treat her.' She runs about aimlessly and makes bundles of filth. But if we have treated her we say: 'Perhaps Kyala has gone away from me. See! Nothing has been omitted, we have treated her.' And if she does not bear a child at her husband's her in-laws say to her: 'Did your father and mother not treat you?'

[753] MUNGAALWA (a middle-aged pagan): It is said that if she eats food with her fellows who sleep with their husbands they will harm (overstep) her, and she has diarrhœa. When she has been given powdered medicine, then she eats with them. . . . To lie on powdered medicine which has been sprinkled on the ground is to give the bride weight (*ubunite*), because if it is not done those who are with their husbands will overstep her and she will have diarrhœa.

[177] POROKOTO'S WIVES: In the old days we put medicine in her porridge so that she would not run away from her husband . . . not now. It's European times now.

[882] QUESTION: In Selya it is said that if she is not given powdered medicine she will be proud.

WIVES: Yes, here too. And if the girl is proud we beat her.

MUNGAALWA: Washing and catching in her hands the water that falls from her husband's hands has two meanings. In some families the husband and wife wash separately, in others they wash together. In either case the first meaning is present, in the second both meanings.

[753] It is said that when someone has not washed in the puberty ritual his or her children will die, for that water (with which he neglected to wash) will enter the child's stomach and kill it. The water is in the child's stomach but its symptoms are those of diarrhœa. The nubile girl catching water in her hands teaches us that the woman will receive

[833] everything. The man is like the upper grindstone, the woman like the nether grindstone (we speak of intercourse), which means that the women receives the semen which comes from the man.

Making fire by friction is a symbol of procreation.[1] If the fire does not kindle we say the couple are sterile. Two fire-sticks are used, one is the man the other the woman, and the fire is the child. The sawdust made by the rubbing is the semen.

KAJINGA: If the fire does not come the man is sterile and the girl will quarrel with her husband and perhaps run away. It does not mean she will be barren with other men.

[1] *Ukupepa*: to make fire by friction; *ukupepa*: to masturbate.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

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MUNGASALWA: The bride does not cross water for it is said that the blood which began to flow when she reached puberty will not dry on her body if she does.

To sleep on the litter and to refuse to sleep on sleeping-mats is a sign of childhood (for during childhood girls do not think much about cleanliness, but are dirty); it means that they leave behind them [literally 'come out from'] childish things. The litter is burnt because if it has not been burnt the children take bits of it to make a fire and cook food, then, when they have eaten that food, their bodies are sick. We say the body becomes unhealthily fat (*ukujegejala*). Food is collected for a bride because if, later, a woman, who has not had food collected for her, eats food collected for another bride going through the puberty ritual, she will fall sick and her body will grow unhealthily fat. Bringing food for the *ukusumbulila* and giving gifts at the *ukugwa* are to congratulate the bride because she has grown up, she is now an adult. [863]

X: The wearing of banana leaves [at the bringing out] is a sign of fertility. The ritual is finished, the girl is someone's wife now. . . . The plantain represents the penis, the sweet banana the clitoris. [831]

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Sitting in a stream and letting water carry away pebbles placed between fingers and toes is a symbol of purification and separation from the shade. The first element—purification—was mentioned by most informants: 'The rite means that the dirt is finished,' said Porokoto's wife; but the more self-conscious identified 'dirt' with the shade. Mwasalemba made the matter quite clear. When asked why pebbles were placed in the clefts of fingers and toes, he replied: 'Kyala, when he created men, said: "At death throw it away, it is the shade, it is the body."'

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QUESTION: In the puberty ritual?

MWASALEMBA: It is to say that the shade has brooded over the child, since he created blood we throw him away. May the shade go with these stones, then may she bear children; if he does not go, if you do not treat the girl, then Kyala broods over her and she does not bear children.

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QUESTION: Why does she avoid her father at this time?

MWASALEMBA: Because I, the father, and her mother, perform the ritual for our child. Our shade has entered into her, has brooded over her, therefore we do not come together on the mat until we have finished treating our child; when we have finished, and have treated her, then we do what we will on the mat. If I want to lie with my wife [during the ritual] she refuses, saying: 'Our child has not yet finished, she is still undergoing the puberty ritual.' But if she agrees and we lie together, then our child will never bear. When we have finished the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

831 When we have finished the
834 ritual I come together with my wife again, but if our child is unmarried
[833] it is taboo to procreate a child, we practise *coitus interruptus*, the semen falls on the mat. . . . This is until the girl goes to her husband, until she is married. If my wife wears a bark-cloth I say to her during our daughter's puberty ritual: 'Arrange your bark-cloth carefully lest I, the man, desire you, I shall catch hold of you and we will cause the shade to make our child barren.' When she has gone to her husband we say our shade has finished, he has gone away in the water. Our child has gone to another shade. Yes, she also has intercourse with her husband at his home, but that does not matter, I have intercourse with my wife.

834 He was emphatic that the parents begin full intercourse as soon as the girl goes to her husband, it is not necessary to wait for her to become pregnant.

833 QUESTION: What do the spirits do in intercourse?
775 MWASALEMBA: The shade causes my penis to stand up and says: 'Go to the woman, there.' And also the woman's shade says: 'Your husband comes into you.' It is the shades which create desire, then we have intercourse, the shades meet together, hers—the woman's—and mine. If I do not go to my wife the shade says: 'Why, what's wrong with my place? Are there thorns? Why do you not enter?' They brood over (*bikebatela*) us both, both me and my wife.

QUESTION: What do they want?

MWASALEMBA: They want to create a child.

838 QUESTION: Why then do men desire masturbation and sodomy? [At
775 first when I asked this he said: 'No, the shade is a woman,' but then he
839 corrected himself].

MWASALEMBA: It is the shade which creates this desire, we have it within. A youth masturbates, the semen falls on the ground—perhaps two youths; it's also the shade. And a woman also masturbates. . .

775 QUESTION: You perform the rituals for many reasons?
771 MWASALEMBA: Yes, if we do not perform the rituals the shade broods on us and we do not bear children. Perhaps he broods on the crops, and they do not grow well but poorly, perhaps we run mad.

On another occasion Mwasalemba said:

775 The shade is in the heart. It is the shade which desires to go to a
833 woman, which causes us men to have erections and excites desire in women. If you have not got the shade you are impotent, you do not go to women. We say: 'The shade has brooded over this man, why do they not rouse him to go to women?' He just looks at women. Then the shade rouses up in the belly and says: 'Ha!' It rouses up and the man has intercourse with a woman. If it has brooded over him, it does not

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Ku Kwe

rouse him, it does not wish to come out. And although the faeces are 775
firm they are the corpse. Because we bury a corpse underground, and 833
faeces also go underground to the shades. They disappear by night, that is the shade. If someone excretes faeces and finds it in the grass we say: 'The shade has caught hold of him.' 514

QUESTION: Are faeces associated with sexual intercourse? 775

MWASALEMBA: Yes, the shade does both things, he causes diarrhoea 833
and sexual intercourse. If you defaecate firm stools that is not the shade, that is the food we eat, but watery diarrhoea which troubles you repeatedly at night—that is the shade. If you have diarrhoea for three days people say: 'The shades have hammered you' or 'The shade has caught hold of you.'

QUESTION: Madness? 158

MWASALEMBA: That is the shade because it says: 'Since you have me 775
in your belly, and they have not treated you, I cause this—these faeces 514
are the corpse. A madman defaecates and catches hold of his faeces, perhaps he eats them, perhaps he binds it up in the grass and catches hold of it. It is the corpse.'

Kakune, the doctor, also interpreted the puberty ritual as being, 833
in one aspect, the transference of a girl from her father's group to 775
her husband's and, like Kasitile and Mwasalemba, he identified 831
sexual desire and potency with the shades. He said:

At puberty a girl has left her father's and has gone to others; if she dies he to whom she has gone buries her.

QUESTION: Where does the blood of a woman come from?

KAKUNE: If the girl is unmarried, from her shades; they create her blood, but in the ritual we treat her so that she moves to my place, she comes to my shades; the blood of a married woman is created by my shades and hers together. And the 'blood' of a man [i.e. semen] also comes from the shades.

QUESTION: Do the shades reveal themselves at birth?

KAKUNE: Yes, because if I am angry or my father is angry I do not beget a child, but when he has prayed I do so. If I am angry with the woman and she has caught hold of me and injured me, then we do not have a child. The ordeal (*mwaafi*) convicts the woman. She goes to [227]
her father who prays. Then we have a child.

QUESTION: Where does the power to bear and beget children come 772
from? 775

KAKUNE: From the shades, you have the shades in your belly. If [881]
they are not there you are all like women in the house, you cannot have an erection, but when the shades work, you have an erection. 833

QUESTION: Whose shades are present at intercourse? 775

KAKUNE: Mine, the man's and the woman's, we both have them,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

833 775 they both work in us, they are not only in one partner. They work in the woman and in the man, they work in both of us.

885 Mwangwanda, an elderly pagan, explained the symbolism of the new hearth-brick at some length:

> We take a new hearth-brick and plant it by the hearth in the bride's house. It means: 'You have grown up, you are a woman, you must always cook a pot,' and she cooks on that hearth-brick. . . . It means: 'You have grown up, the food that your mother sent will come no more, you must cook for your husband yourself.' It is planted for the senior wife only, not for others. If I find that my first wife is not a virgin we do not plant a brick for her—she has lain with another. But if she has a younger sister and she brings her as a junior wife and she is a virgin and I deflower her myself, then the first sister is still the senior wife and we plant a brick for her and her child will inherit as the senior son, for another shut up her womb [i.e. made her virgin again]. If she has no younger sister I may marry her, but she will not be my chief wife. The next one I marry will be my senior wife and for her the brick will be planted and her son will inherit.

881 585 There is also an association, not made explicit by our informants, between a log of firewood and a marriageable woman. One of the tasks of the bride and her maids is to fetch heavy logs of firewood which are stored in her mother's loft. At least one log goes with her when she is taken by her 'mothers' to her husband, and this she keeps all her life, taking it with her if she moves. From it the shades are said to chip splinters when they wish to warm themselves at the dying fire at night. After she has gone to her husband and before she conceives, a bride is forbidden to touch the firewood in her mother's loft, and in the funeral ritual, when a widow returns home for the *ingetolo* she steals a log of firewood from her mother's loft and takes it to her husband's. Into the cracks of this log the officiants press seeds. It seems probable that the reddish log represents a woman in her reproductive capacity, which is formally transferred to her husband and segregated from the reproductive activities of her mother. This, we repeat, is our own interpretation, not formulated by any Nyakyusa.

783 784 The taboo on a bride who has slept with her husband approaching her mother until she has brought the ritual *ilibuke* is associated with the danger of mixing the bloods of different lineages.

> A bride avoids dipping water out of a pot and drinking from a calabash belonging to her relatives for the following reasons: A girl is of one blood (*ililipa*) with her mother, and when she goes to her husband, the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Ku Kuse

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blood of another lineage mingles with hers, but it has not reached her mother because they have not met. To drink water together from one calabash is to meet. Then the mother has diarrhœa because her body is not accustomed to the blood of another lineage. To have diarrhœa is [753] to go bad, to expel (*ulusaya*) the filth. The *ilibale* of the fowl is the body of the groom which mingles with the body of the girl's parents that they may be one blood with him.

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Thus, not only husband and wife, but also parents and son-in-law become one flesh.

As in Selya, a direct connection is made between the parents receiving a bull for the bride's virginity, and her bearing a child to her husband. Mwasalemba explained: 'Kyala together with the shades have made the girl grow up. If the girl runs off with her husband and I, the father, have not received cattle, then the earth is angry, the shades say: "We shall see if she will flourish there." Then the girl does not conceive, and the diviner says: "The shades are angry." The groom's people bring cattle, then I, the father, pray for my child and she conceives, her belly swells.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

THE RITUAL OF BIRTH[1]

842 KYALA (or Lwembe) and the shades create desire in men and women and control conception; when the shades are angry women do not conceive—this is one of the main tenets of pagan Nyakyusa cosmology, and it is combined with a limited knowledge of physiology. It is clearly understood that conception cannot take place without intercourse, and that gestation in humans lasts for nine months, but it is believed that repeated intercourse is necessary [837] for conception, and formerly, if a man found his wife pregnant after having lain with her only once, he accused her of adultery.

(a) *Taboos of procreation*

[181] The procreation of children is an ultimate value of Nyakyusa society and the accepted end of marriage, but it is regarded as 842 dangerous under certain conditions and is hedged about with 753 taboos. These are enforced so that both parents and children may be healthy; a breach of them is thought to result in violent diarrhœa, as well as monstrously swollen legs and weakness in men, general debility in children, and miscarriage or an excessive menstrual flow in women. The onus of observing them falls primarily on women, though their husbands must also co-operate, and a breach of taboo is treated as immoral, for it is believed to endanger the life, or health, or property of others.

831 Certain general conceptions underlie the taboos. The first is that of *ubusyali*, filth, which is held to come from the sex fluids, menstruation, and childbirth, as well as from a corpse, and the blood of a slain enemy. All these are felt to be both disgusting and dangerous, and the sex fluids are held to be particularly dangerous to an infant, hence the taboo on husband and wife resuming intercourse very soon after childbirth.

846 At first, when the child is very young, we think it very bad for the parents to sleep together at all, because when the child is very young

[1] This account came from a score or more women not cited individually, as well as from our regular informants on ritual whose names are mentioned.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the women has constantly to handle it and if, just after intercourse, she 846
has to do this without time to wash first, then the child, we think, will
get diarrhœa or grow thin. Women[1] always wash very carefully in the [512]
mornings after intercourse, both for the sake of the children and the
husband. If the woman touches food unwashed after intercourse we
think it will make her husband sick, and he will get unhealthily fat. If [753]
a child is old enough to play by itself . . . so that the wife can wash
properly before attending to it, then it is all right for the couple to have
intercourse, but not for the woman to become pregnant again yet. She
should not do that until the child is weaned![2]

Contact with menstrual blood or a menstruating woman is held 841
to be dangerous to a man, more particularly to a warrior, hence
there is an absolute taboo on intercourse during menstruation (for
five to eight days) and restrictions on cooking for a man. A men-
struating woman does not blow up the fire on which her husband's
food is cooking, or squeeze the food to test whether it is ready, or
scrape ash off bananas or sweet potatoes she has roasted, or serve
food, for 'her breath comes from her belly and it is dirty; her belly
is dirty on account of the menstrual blood. All her body is dirty.
She does not wash. When she washes, you, the husband, think that
the flow has dried up and catch hold of her!' So a woman who is
menstruating fans the fire instead of blowing it, and calls a co-
wife or a child to serve the food she has cooked. She does not even
crouch over the fire to warm herself, lest she contaminate it; and
she neither uses the common calabash cup for drinking nor scoops
water from the household water jar with her hand, but fashions a
cup for herself from a leaf, or has her own little water-pot. She
avoids passing behind or shaking hands with a man; she avoids a
new-born infant; she keeps well away from cattle, neither passing
behind them when they are in the homestead nor clearing out
dung from the byre; she avoids touching medicines or entering the
house of a doctor; and she avoids eating pumpkin or pumpkin
leaves, or picking them. These taboos are enforced lest she injure
men or infants or cattle or medicines, for 'she is dirty' and her
'dirt' is thought to cause purging and to rot medicines, and she,

[1] The 'filth' is on the milk because she cleanses her husband with her hands.

[2] Coitus interruptus is practised until the mother is ready to conceive again. 'Formerly [833]
it was taboo to make a woman pregnant before her previous child was four or five
years old. Her husband's sisters made a great case about it. The child must know
how to run before a younger brother was born. We said: "How can a woman carry
two children?" Now she becomes pregnant again when the elder is two. Of those who
bear again before that it is said: "They kill the elder child." ' (Statement of Ninjigwa,
an elderly man.)

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

841 for her part, fears lest the medicines with which men protect themselves and their cattle may injure her, causing her menstrual flow to 'last a whole month'. She avoids pumpkins lest she suffer from a small growth in the vagina called a 'pumpkin' and bear sickly children. 'It is said that this disease is due to women picking or eating pumpkins when they are menstruating . . . the menstrual blood resembles the pumpkin and they fight together.'

841 586 If a wife fails to warn her husband that she is menstruating and permits him to have intercourse with her, he will be furiously angry and may even divorce her saying: 'You are soiling me, get out!'

841 753 Any contact with a menstruating woman is believed to cause him suffering. 'His legs become swollen and painful and he is very tired.' 'Strength leaves the man.' 'He sits back weakly; he has no speed in running.' Kasitile explained:

> The danger of menstrual blood is that it is filthy; it is an illness. Formerly, if a foolhardy man took his wife when she was menstruating, when he went to war, he fell. We others said: 'Why were you vanquished? Did you enter when your wife was unwell? Do you not know that it is a very serious illness?'

Angombwike added:

> Formerly, the fear was greater than it is to-day. If a man made love to a menstruating woman they said he would fall ill of *indela*, an illness for which there was no remedy. His belly ached and his body grew red; he just lay down. His face swelled and his legs ached. Now pagans are not so much afraid of menstruation; they have listened to the Christians.

Asked why sleeping with a menstruating woman should make a man weary, informants linked the danger from menstrual blood with the danger that besets a husband when his wife commits adultery, and the 'blood' of two men mixes in the woman's womb. Menstrual blood is not so dangerous to a husband as the 'blood' of another man, but yet it is 'filthy'. One of Mwakionde's wives said:

> My husband gets tired if he sleeps with me when I am menstruating because he has given us our menstrual blood; it is that which has entered into me; there are two bloods, his and mine.

Mwambuputa, a village headman, elaborated further:

> [137] If my wife has committed adultery and cooks my food or draws water for me, then my legs are weary and I also have diarrhoea. If she

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

scrapes bananas when she is menstruating, or conceals that she is menstruating and we have intercourse, then my legs are tired, but I do not have diarrhœa, because it is *my* blood; she is my relative (*akamu gwanga*), she is my wife, her blood and mine are one. But when she has lain with a man in the bush there is his blood; I have diarrhœa to get rid of it; the food which she cooks for me is dirty, she has made it filthy, I have diarrhœa and get rid of it, she oversteps me. And also if she has concealed that she is menstruating and we have intercourse, I am overstepped. To overstep is to insult—but since the blood is mine I do not get rid of it. That menstrual blood is very dirty! 841 753

If I have always been all right and strong, and I find that I get tired walking and hoeing, I think: 'What is it? See, always I was all right, and now I am very tired.' My friends say: 'It is women, you have lain with one who was menstruating.' And if I eat food and start diarrhœa they say: 'It's women, they have committed adultery.' My wives deny it. We go to divine, and one is caught; if she agrees that's that, but if she denied it, formerly we went to the poison ordeal. The woman drank alone, not I. If she vomited then I was defeated, the woman was good, but if it caught her then her father paid one cow. [127]

What we feared greatly in the old days, Mwaipaja, was war. We feared to die. For if my fellow in the village committed adultery with my wife then, when we went to war, we both died; if we went to fight at Mwangomo's [a neighbouring chiefdom], both he and I would be speared. Then people were astonished and said: 'Why, have so-and-so and so-and-so died? Perhaps they both lay with the same woman.' For this reason we drove adulterers from the village, and for this reason the chief was angry with an adulterer, saying: '"This is my place! Why do you kill my people!"' 684 721

Others confirmed Mwambuputa's statement that adultery led to death in battle:

Formerly, when there was war, if your fellow made love to your wife in secret and you all went to fight, you died on one day on account of the woman.

Mwandisi linked the disquiet in a man's belly with the anger of the shades seated there. 837 753

If a woman has gone behind the house with another man and comes and cooks food for her husband, blowing up the fire and cooking for him, then the food turns round in his stomach and says: 'Is this my kinsman?' She made friends with others behind the house and cooked for them [i.e. committed adultery]. So then the man develops diarrhœa because the food turned round in his stomach. He falls down on the road, he falls down in battle.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

837 QUESTION: The spirits are angry?
753 MWANDISI: Yes, they say: 'That woman for whom we gave marriage-
775 cattle has overstepped her husband.' Yes, it is the shades who are angry in his belly.

842 Kakune, a doctor, made it clear that the danger to the husband
837 when his wife committed adultery came from the semen of another
753 man entering her.

> If your wife commits adultery you get very tired on a journey, you suffer from diarrhoea; in the old days we fell in war.
>
> QUESTION: What if the adulterer practises *coitus interruptus*?
>
> KAKUNE: Yes, if the man is clean he withdraws and the semen falls to the ground. If he always withdraws when he has intercourse with my wife, then I escape, nothing happens. The woman is like a child. See, when your wife who has not yet reached puberty plays with young men on the veld it is no matter. Do they create a child with her? No! But if she is an adulteress he is there in her, and I am there in her, and Kyala says: 'Ha! Are there two?' And he spears you, the owner of the woman. You are soiled by going to the woman; that is filth. But if I catch an adulterer with my wife, even if he has practised *coitus interruptus*, I am angry and kill him—there is jealousy! But as for diarrhoea, I do not suffer from it.

937 The most dangerous adultery of all, according to the Nyakyusa,
684 is that of a man with his father's wife. Angombwike explained:

> If a man dies and his son has been lying with his wives in secret, whether with or without his permission, the son is very much afraid to approach his father's place. If he goes near or touches the corpse he will himself die, for he is one flesh with his father; their blood has mingled in the woman's belly. He keeps a long way away and so do the wives with whom he has lain. The leading men of the village are told
> [783] about it and a doctor is fetched and the son and the wives involved are taken to a waterfall and treated there. If he is the eldest son a younger brother kills the cows meanwhile. Then he comes back to the homestead and kills a cow himself. While you were away in Europe I saw a case of this with my own eyes. A man died whose son had been lying with his wives. As soon as the son approached his father's place he fell down sick to death. People picked him up and rushed him away to a distance. Then he began to breathe a little easier. They took him to a
> [783] waterfall and treated him and he recovered, more or less. He is still unwell from time to time. It is not madness, just illness. And if, before the father's death, such a son approaches his father, the old man gets very ill indeed and the elder wives turn the son out of the house. There is none of this trouble if a brother [either a full brother or a half-brother]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

has lain with the dead man's wives. A brother will approach the corpse 837
without fear. But there is another trouble: if a man seduces his brother's 684
wife the husband may have diarrhoea perhaps with bloody stools. Many people do not come to their fathers' funerals before the burial. And also if the father is ill, and they see he is near death, they run away, returning when he has been buried. Because it is said that a man will die if he has slept with his mother, his father's wife, and sees his father or sees the corpse, as did Jones, the son of Kisokora. He slept with his mothers in secret. When his father died (in a different village from that in which Jones lived) Jones seized his father's cattle and ran away with them. When they had buried his father he came to mourn. The women with whom he had slept told on him because he had given them syphilis.

A wife who commits adultery with her husband's son is held to be in great danger also. Mwandisi said:

If they conceal it and approach the grave both the son and the wife will die. Both are washed naked, under a waterfall. The officiant washes them together with a fowl.

QUESTION: Why the waterfall and the nakedness?

MWANDISI: The water is to take away the sickness. Being naked is so 837
that the case may go away and you, the man, may be empty (*kwasi*) 684
and the woman may be empty. For if such a son looks into the grave 783
and approaches to weep, the shades and Kyala are angry and say: 'Are you a relative? How can you look into the grave? It is you who have killed him, by causing him diarrhoea.' And if the woman approaches and holds her dead husband in her arms, then she dies. Those below are angry and say: 'Is she your relative?' And she dies. But if she has committed adultery with someone who is no relation she approaches and does not fear, and the adulterer does not fear either, but approaches.

For a woman, adultery is held to be dangerous also in child- 845
birth: 684

If she has had lovers, she has a difficult delivery and the child 783
refuses to come out until she confesses. Sometimes she confesses three, then the child comes, it comes out. . . . She confesses the name and takes a bit of stick and spits on it and throws it away, and you will be surprised to see that she gives birth at once. If she is very bad she will tell you three names and throw away three sticks.

Any contact with childbirth is held to be even more dangerous 844
to men than contact with menstruation. It also is thought to cause weakness, and it is warriors who are most affected. Traditionally,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Traditionally
844 no man entered the confinement hut in which a woman remained
[177] until the cord had dropped off the new-born child and she had purified herself, and she did not normally resume cooking for her husband for some weeks; but these taboos are less strictly observed than formerly, partly, our informants insisted, because the country has been pacified and men do not fear to die in battle if they neglect them.

The obvious interpretation here is that a man is felt to partake of the weakness of a menstruating or confined woman if he comes into association with her. 'His legs become swollen and painful and he is very tired'; 'strength leaves him'; 'he has no speed in running'; 'his belly aches and his body grows red'. . . . The picture is surely one of a *woman's* physical weakness: a man is identified with his *wife* during pregnancy, observing the taboos she observes, and during menstruation and confinement he must isolate himself as far as possible from her lest he share her weakness; but none of our informants make a connection between the weakness of the woman and the weakness of the man—the interpretation is ours. The Nyakyusa were obsessed with the idea of 'filth' emanating from menstruation and childbirth; indeed, the feeling that women, by reason of their physiology and the taboo on washing during menstruation, are dirty, is cited by men as one of the reasons for not eating with them or sitting to chat with them. Only in this limited sense is the conception of ritual impurity linked with social
[171 status. Here the contrast with a Hindu society, in which states of
785] ritual impurity (basically very similar to those of the Nyakyusa) are linked with caste differences, is marked.[1]

842 The second general conception underlying the taboos of procreation is that of *ubusite*, heaviness, a condition associated with sexual intercourse, pregnancy, the python of witchcraft, and medicines.[2] A 'heavy' (*usite*) person is dangerous to an 'empty' (*kwasi*) one, hence women sleeping with their husbands, and pregnant women avoid mothers with infants and brides in seclusion, who are 'empty'; and the 'empty' are treated to prevent diarrhœa and give them weight. Diarrhœa and 'emptiness' are closely associated.

842 The great specific against 'emptiness' is *ikipiki* medicine, used
789 in the puberty, birth, and death rituals, and even used to protect cattle against a menstruating woman. 'If a woman is the only wife

[1] cf. M. N. Srinivas, *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India* (1952).
[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 95.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

her husband may give her *ilipiki* to rub on her hands and on a 842
stick with which she touches each of the cattle. She gives them 789
ilipiki that they may not be "empty". Then she can clean out the byre at any time.'

A third idea that recurs, again and again, is that of *ukulilaya*, 842
overstepping, which is used in both a literal and a metaphorical 784
sense. It is taboo for a woman to step over her husband in any way, hence there are explicit rules (taught during initiation) on posture in intercourse. If she should step over him it is said that 'his legs will swell' and he has grounds for divorcing her. It is taboo for an adult to step over a child and for a woman who is having intercourse to step over one who is not, though a child may step over an adult and a virgin or youth who is not having intercourse may step over a married person of the same sex who is not. In a society [516]
in which everyone sits on the ground, often with legs outstretched, observance of the taboo necessitates care.

In its metaphorical sense *ukulilaya* is used for a 'heavy' person 195
coming into close contact with an 'empty' one, as, for example, a woman who is sleeping with her husband entering the hut of a woman with a new-born child, or the mother of a bride resuming intercourse before her daughter has had intercourse, or a bride who has not yet brought the *ilibalaga*, the symbol of her union with her husband, to her parents, drinking from her mother's calabash, or entering the inner part of her hut; or a wife who has committed adultery cooking for her husband. It is used, too, of a woman who continues to bear children after the marriage of her son for, it is said, if she does so the son's wife will never conceive at all, or will be long in conceiving, or her child will not walk, on account of a curse.

MWAIKAMBO: It is not customary for mother and son both to have 842
infants. Women mostly begin to stop intercourse when their sons marry. 834
They say it is not good that both mother and son should have small children, because the mother of the young man now thinks of helping her daughter-in-law in nourishing her children. If mother and son both have babies, people are much astonished and say it is not a good custom; they create a curse (*ikigaw*) and the fertility of the son and his wife rots. [789]

Mwailojo's wife put it this way:

I leave off having children when my son is married for I should receive my grandchild in my arms, and care for my grandchildren, and be with them in the house.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

195 *Ukulinda* means to pass, to surpass, and *ukulinaya* (overstepping), in its metaphorical use, implies that 'one has power and the other is weak, so the powerful one does some injury to the weak one'.

934 Fourthly, as was made apparent in the puberty ritual, it is held
942 to be dangerous to 'mix bloods'. Adultery is not only an infringe-
[753] ment of the exclusive rights of a husband, but it may injure him directly, causing him to have diarrhoea, which is a 'getting rid of the filth' due to contact with a strange 'blood'. It was implied that intercourse with a menstruating woman was in some sense 'mixing bloods' also, and the danger to parents of contact with a newly-married daughter before a precautionary ritual has been performed, stems from the same thing; the parents, through their daughter, are brought into contact with the blood of another lineage, that of the new son-in-law.

843 Besides being 'heavy' and therefore liable to 'overstep' others, a pregnant woman is thought to reduce the quantity of any grain she approaches, for the foetus within her is voracious and snatches it. Therefore neither she nor her husband (who participates in her condition) may approach other people's millet[1] or beans or oil-seeds spread out to dry, or speak to those who are reaping or grinding or stamping or brewing, without making a gesture of good-will by spitting on a pebble or knotting a leaf, and throwing it into the heap of grain. The sanction is fear of a miscarriage, for the owners of the food may have used medicines 'so that the food may be much and people be astonished'. Her own crops a pregnant woman may handle freely, and a chief's wife does not observe the taboo in her own village.

Two or three quotations will make these conceptions clearer:

ANGOMBWEE: When my wife has conceived they say we are both 'heavy', both my wife and I. Then, if oil-seeds or millet are out drying in the sun, they tell us not to speak. 'You are heavy ones,' they say. So we are silent. They say that if there is talking we will catch hold of the oil-seeds or millet, and it will diminish. Yes, I must avoid the grain even though I am alone, because I am heavy.

KASYILE: Maize does not vanish but millet and beans. The child which is being made bewitches them; they disappear. . . . The child has opened its mouth wide, its jaws gape.[2] It is that child which is being

[184] [1] Some held that millet was the only grain affected; others maintained that maize was also.

[2] *Umunwa ugumbulile ulupanda ulumwa.* *Ulupanda* is used of the gaping jaws of a crocodile.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

created in the belly which snatches millet and beans. These are the 843
foods that Kyala said are important.

MWAIKAMBO: When a woman is pregnant she fears to pass people who are at work planting, smithing, milking, or brewing beer, because they say the child in the belly, the weight (*abanite*), is like a witch, it will damage food like witchcraft; beer is spoiled and tastes nasty, food does not grow, the smith's iron is not easily worked, the milk is not good. If a pregnant woman comes across her fellows planting she stops them for a few minutes while she passes. If they are brewing they give her a little beer to taste.

ANOOMBWIKE: As for avoiding food, a woman avoids especially when she has been pregnant for one or two months. It is said that if she passes through the gardens, perhaps when people are planting, or when they have already planted but the seed has not yet sprouted, the child in the belly tries to snatch the millet, and it meets the medicine (for people plant millet with a medicine, saying: 'May my millet not rot in the ground'), then perhaps the mother has a miscarriage. If the child in her belly has sprouted then she does not fear much . . . and if the millet has sprouted she does not fear much, but when it has not yet sprouted then the medicine is fierce.

Besides the symbol of the foetus with 'jaws agape' snatching food, there is a symbol of 'seed within' fighting 'seed without'. Mwaikambo was careful to point out that this interpretation was a personal one, assented to, but not volunteered, by others he consulted; however, it was later confirmed by Kasitile.

MWAIKAMBO: A pregnant woman should avoid those planting beans and millet, or straining ointment, sunning millet, or brewing beer, because there is kinship (*ubukamu*) between the child in her belly and food, we call all of them seed (*mbeju*). The seed in her belly and that outside fight; that within is fierce and overcomes that outside. To help them plant is to make friends; to knot a leaf is to bind the anger of the human seed. All those with whom I have discussed the matter agreed that this is so, but they have agreed when I began to explain it to them; none of them understand the other symbols. I discussed it with about eleven men.

KASITILE: The taboo against a pregnant woman passing millet and other seed spread out to dry is because these seeds fight with the child inside. It is seed, it defeats them; it is seed, it is water, it is blood. To bind a leaf is to bind that blood within, that it may not kill the seeds out drying. If someone else's food is being planted and a pregnant woman approaches, and does not bind a leaf and throw it in the grain basket, then the seed is insufficient to plant.

A general principle of Nyakyusa thought is the opposition of 828
772

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

like activities; things which are felt to be alike are often felt to be antagonistic. We have shown that certain of the pregnancy taboos are interpreted in terms of the opposition between seed in plants and seed in the womb, and between pumpkins in the field and pumpkins in the vagina, and we have touched on the opposition between procreation and war. Sexual intercourse, 'the war of the mats', is directly compared with war; the two are felt to be alike and therefore incompatible. Association with a menstruating or parturient woman is felt to be weakening to a warrior; continence of a warrior before battle is enjoined—'men feared to die quickly if they slept with their wives just before war.' Moreover, a menstruating wife never touches her husband's weapons lest they be weakened.

Hunting is classed with war and the same taboos apply. Added to them is the notion that, since a pregnant woman is often angry, the animals her husband hunts will be angry also, and he is in much greater danger than an ordinary hunter.

ANOGEBWIKE: If you go into the bush and you have left your wife heavy, at home, if you meet a lion it will not run off, but will injure you, maul you. And if you are many, a leopard or a lion will attack you, the heavy one, not the others.

QUESTION: Why?

ANOGEBWIKE: It is as if there was much anger. And we've noticed something else, if a lion attacks cattle it always attacks a cow in calf. And another thing. If a woman is heavy she is very bad-tempered (*skali*), it's like a passion. Perhaps the woman is bad-tempered or perhaps good, and you, the husband, are bad-tempered. Pregnancy shows in many ways. . . .

A pregnant woman has a great fire in her body, she sweats a lot and is passionate (*selyejo*), she is fierce (*skali*). That fire is strong; we all flee from the woman, we all dislike her. And when pregnancy begins the animals in the bush wish to kill you, the husband. That fierceness [the fire] makes them hate you; you are like a twin. A first-born child is very fierce (*skali*), so a woman is very passionate and sweats a great deal.

His wife's pregnancy puts a man in danger from wild animals, and so does a quarrel with her, quite apart from the pregnancy which tends to produce such quarrels. Mwainumo said: 'If I go hunting after quarrelling with my wife it is very dangerous, I might be killed by a wild animal.'

Besides the idea that animals will *attack* the husband of a preg-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

nant woman there is a notion that they will *flee* from him, and therefore he will be hopelessly unsuccessful in hunting. Isaiah, who persisted in hunting while his wife was pregnant and rarely brought in anything, was the laughing-stock of his neighbours. Lyandileko, the woman doctor, explained: 'The animals flee because the man smells. He smells because his wife is pregnant.' 843 224 772

Procreation and smithing are also felt to be in opposition because they are felt to be alike. A pregnant woman usually avoids a forge altogether, lest she miscarry, and her husband, if he approaches one, remains silent until he has picked up a piece of charcoal, spat on it, and thrown it into the fire. If he neglects to do so, the iron does not coalesce. Kasitile explained the taboo very clearly: 326 843 772

> If a woman is pregnant she and her husband both fear to go near a forge lest either the iron or the foetus is spoiled. The foetus is spoiled only because medicines are used on the forge; that is to say, the medicine of the forge spoils the iron in the belly of a woman, and she has a miscarriage. But if there is no medicine then the iron is spoiled; it is difficult to work until the smith has sought a doctor to treat it with medicine; then the iron is all right again.

Kasitile speaks of 'the iron in the belly of the woman' and the details of this symbolism are instructive. Angombwike said:

> When a smith forges a spear he does not sleep with his wives[1] because, we say, when a woman conceives the fire blazes within her to forge a person, and the woman's fire and the smith's fire fight. When a smith comes with the fire of his smithy on his body and lies with a woman, the woman has a miscarriage.
>
> The iron of a woman is that within which receives the seed [i.e. the womb]. And we ordinary people who are not smiths, we fear the smith's fire. We do not fear to injure a woman, no, but we fear *ilipondolo*, the disease of the forge, in children. If a man sits talking with a smith at his forge and catches hold of the iron being forged there, if his wife at home bears a child, the child will cough: 'He, he.' It's like the cough of *ingotolo*, but we call it 'the forge'. Then people say: 'The forge! Indeed, you, the father, must have sat with a smith at the forge.' Then the father thinks, and he remembers, and takes the child to that smith with whom he sat, and the smith lets his bellows play on the child's body

[1] All informants were agreed that a forge is dangerous to a pregnant woman or her husband, but a smith consulted denied that he observed any sex taboos himself. 'The fire is mine.' 'But,' he said, 'if my wife is pregnant or has given birth to twins, when I go to someone else's forge I myself, with the wisdom of a smith, spit on a piece of charcoal and throw it in the fire.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

843 and that cures him. So, when a man comes to a smith's forge for the
326 first time, he always takes a piece of charcoal from the fire and spits on
772 it and throws it into the fire. This means: 'I have come to your forge, smith, may this fire not come on my body.'

And sometimes the smith's iron does not glow and sparkle well. Then he is angry, saying: 'Heavy ones are present. Some of you have pregnant wives, you are spoiling my fire.' We all pick up pieces of charcoal and spit on them and throw them into the fire again. Then the fire blazes up well and the iron glows and sparks.

Mwambuputa, the village headman, confirmed this:

When my wife is pregnant I fear the smithy. I spit on a piece of charcoal. Until she gives birth I fear, but when we just play together on the mat, and she has not yet conceived, I do not fear. . . . Only when it is seen that the 'iron' is there do I fear.

QUESTION: The iron?

MWAMBUPUTA: It's the blood of the man. The man is the smith. He forges iron there with the woman. The woman is the bellows. The smithing flourishes because of the sweat. Sometimes a woman conceives if I have lain with her two or three times—if Kyala gives us a child—but some delay, and I sleep with them a whole month.

QUESTION: The woman is a bellows?

[833] MWAMBUPUTA: Yes, because when she is having intercourse she gasps: 'He, he, he!'

QUESTION: And the man?

MWAMBUPUTA: Yes, but where do we find the fire? In the body of the woman! It's a great fire. Hence we say the bellows is the woman. It's smithing. Women are the anvil. Is there not fire in their bodies? Therefore I hammer there.

The primary taboo is on the pregnant woman approaching the smithy lest she injure it, but it is also thought that, like grain and cattle, it may be treated with strong medicines which will cause her to miscarry if she breaks the taboo. Hence the Nyakyusa dictum: 'She who has a miscarriage is she who is proud (*samatinge*).'

784 The conception that like things are antagonistic, and that the
772 sexual activities of different couples must not be mixed, is clearly shown in the taboos relating to fire and the calabash cup used for water. An elderly councillor of Ngonde, himself a Christian, explained it:

It is taboo for married people to blow up the fire in someone else's house, or to drink from the calabash cup; if they do they will bring a

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

coughing disease to the owners of the house. . . . Pagans used to fear to let those who are sleeping together touch the hearth-bricks or blow up the fire in their house for, if they do so, then the owners of the house, both man and woman, fall sick coughing. They say it is the disease of fires (*upete*). . . . But when a woman has borne a child and is suckling it, and her husband is not with her, then it is not taboo. 784 772

Making fire by friction and, in more general terms, fire, are symbols of sexual intercourse, and 'the fire of the body and the fire of the house fight'. Drinking from a calabash cup is perhaps also a symbol of intercourse—the shape of the cup suggests it—but there is no direct evidence of such an association. 831 772 [372]

The taboo on mixing the sex activities of different couples is pushed to the point that women avoid for a day the milk of a cow that has been with the bull. 'They say: "We will harm the cow. It will abort." They compare it with themselves as women.' 834 772

Two last pregnancy taboos may be noted which turn, not on the feeling that like things are antagonistic, but that like produces like. Things felt to be alike are treated as causally related. We quote Mwambuputa, the village headman: 843 772

> Women fear to stand in a doorway when they are pregnant. They say: 'How should the child stand in the doorway? It will refuse to come out.' Because if birth is delayed, it is as if the child refused to come out of the house. That is the symbol. And I, the husband, feared also [to stand in a doorway]. Now we men do not fear; it is finished; but women still fear.
>
> And another thing, when a woman was pregnant we feared to sit close together, I, the husband, and my child. It was taboo. And for my wife and another woman to sit close together was taboo. It was said that she would bear twins, because we had sat together. Now we men do not fear, but women still do.

(*b*) *The confinement*

A first confinement, like first menstruation, is the occasion for elaborate ritual, and though at later confinements (as at later menstrual periods) certain taboos must be observed, they are less numerous and less strictly enforced than those connected with the birth of the first child, *umwana gwa bunange*. 844

A first child should be born at the husband's mother's house, 'and if the first child is a girl they will tell her to come again for the second, saying: "Come that we may treat our husband [i.e. grandson]." ' The woman lies, during labour, on a heap of leaves

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

844 behind the huts, moving inside after delivery, on to a litter of banana leaves spread for her. Her mother-in-law attends her and treats her and the new-born child with *ikipiki* medicine. She washes them in a basin made of two banana leaves, one sweet banana, one plantain, and is particularly careful to wash the infant's mouth and the mother's vagina. Powdered *ikipiki* is sprinkled in the water in the form of a cross. This is done 'that the mother and child should not have diarrhœa'. The cross is a symbol of overstepping (*lukukilyana kuno, kukukilanya kuno*, demonstrating a cross) and is made 'because heavy ones, those who are with their husbands on the bed, will come and overstep the mother and child if they are not treated'. Mother and child are also given a roasted banana with powdered *ikipiki* sprinkled on it. In bringing the *ikipiki* the husband's mother acknowledges the legitimacy of the child. 'If someone does not give a child *ikipiki* it is a bastard. It is as if the husband said: "Why do you insult your husband by committing adultery with others? Others have created this foetus; it is not mine!" '

[851 845]

The cord is tied with a shred of bark-cloth and then cut with a bamboo knife. 'An iron knife is taboo, it's a spear, other children will die from the spear disease (*ulukuwgo*); to use a spear is like killing someone.' The after-birth is buried in the banana plantation with a piece of the cord sticking up, and later the litter is burnt at the same place. 'Only officiants (*abayage*) eat of these bananas growing over the burying place—no young person may do so for it's the banana grove of the litter.' The cord must be buried upright or 'the mother will not bear again'.

845 775 A delayed delivery is most commonly attributed to the woman's adultery,[1] and she is pressed by the midwife to confess the name of her lover or lovers, but it is also believed that it may be due to *imisidu*, that is the shades. The husband consults a diviner who indicates whether the *imisidu* is on his side or that of the woman's father and the one who is thus indicated should pray. 'Sometimes the woman herself tells of a quarrel which would lead to *imisidu* and then her husband or father goes to pray.'

846 Mother and child remain in confinement until the navel cord drops off, sheltered from 'heavy ones', who should not enter or even greet the mother from the doorway, and from men, to whom both mother and child are dangerous. 'Men must not see a tiny

[71] [1] Unlike certain other Central African peoples, the Nyakyusa do not attribute difficulty in childbirth to the adultery of the husband.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

child, the beauty of the body, the blackness, has not yet come. It's dirty (*syali*); even after it's come out it's dirty.' 'The confinement is not now feared by men, they just go in, because European times have come. There is no war now, but long ago they feared to enter, they feared to see the hair and the navel cord. They said: "We will get weary in the legs." ' 'When they went to war their legs became tied up.' During her seclusion the mother eats alone off leaves or out of special dishes, and even after she comes out of the hut she is careful not to eat with women who are 'heavy', or allow her dishes to be used by men. She has her own water-pot and calabash cup for several months.

To the Nyakyusa, the most dangerous point in the confinement is the loosening of the cord, and the baby is watched, day and night, to make sure that the cord does not fall between its mother's legs (*mmage*) for if that happens it is believed that the child will be sterile. As soon as the cord is safely off, mother and child are washed and shaved with *ikipiki* medicine 'to get rid of the filth', and anointed with ointment. They are given a millet porridge mixed with *ikipiki* which has been buried after dark at a cross-roads and left overnight. 'They say people will overstep the child. If they have not made porridge for him he will have diarrhœa.' The porridge is administered to the infant in the doorway of the hut. Then 'they throw out the rubbish (*ifiadu*)', the litter is burnt, the hut smeared, and mother and child 'come out'. In some families the husband kills a bull, especially to make a carrying skin for the baby, but whether he kills specially or not the baby is slung in a skin which conceals it from men.

Angombwike made it perfectly clear that the use of *ikipiki* in the ritual of birth has a double significance: it is to 'close up' the bowels of the child and the womb of the woman, and it is to acknowledge kinship between the mother and the new-born baby on the one hand, and the father's lineage on the other.

When a child is in the belly it is said that 'it's a person (*munu*, i.e. a non-relative)'. When it is newly-born and has not yet eaten the *ikipiki* it is called *kanunulo*, which means that it is not yet our relative, we do not know it. The child is called *kanunulo* until the umbilical cord falls off and it eats the *ikipiki*, and comes out of the house. If an infant (*kanunulo*) dies in the house people do not mourn, they just say: 'The woman had a miscarriage.' They come to her and say: 'Have you recovered?' They do not say a child has died, and they don't say anything to relatives at a distance. As for the ritual, the mother undergoes a ritual alone, or with

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

846 her older child, only the two of them [i.e. the mother and the immedi-
789 ately preceding child]. Before a child has eaten the *ikipiki* they make it of no account, calling it *kanewele*. . . .

When the child is born both mother and child are treated with *ikipiki*, and powdered *ikipiki* is sprinkled on the heap of leaves on which delivery took place. When it is a first child they wash the mother's breasts in the skin for carrying the baby, that is to put the child to the breast for the first time that they (the breasts) may participate in kinship (*gejo ge bakowa*). But for a second child they only wash off the dirt, they do not wash the breasts in the carrying skin, they say: 'We did it for the first child.'

Then they bring mother and child into the house (*bikadiagenya*). To a visitor they say: 'Friend, you are a month pregnant, do not come in. You are heavy.' And if a woman is eight months pregnant she also does not come in, she is heavy. If a heavy one comes and wishes to enter, the mother of the newly-born child refuses at the doorway; the heavy one takes earth from her footprint and rubs it on the child on the litter. She receives him on her lap and the others say: 'Thank you, you have met with him.' Then the pregnant one can speak to or about the child without fear, she has met it.

When the cord has fallen off they bury *ikipiki* on the road; it remains overnight, and in the morning they dig it up and bring it and make millet porridge for the mother, not for the child. How can a tiny child eat? To the child they give powdered *ikipiki* in a little water. The woman and child eat together—it is as we, in our ritual, eat together the blood of Jesus, the *ikipiki* of the pagans is their blood. And when a child has eaten the *ikipiki* they say it is their relative now, 'it has entered into our *ikipiki* (*ingila ikipiki kpetu*)'. The mother when she eats the millet porridge closes herself up because much water and blood comes out of the womb. It is said heavy ones must not overstep her.

Then they shave the hair of the child. They anoint its head with *ikipiki* and shave it—not the mother. If she chooses she also shaves, it is customary, but they don't anoint her with medicine. If she does not choose she does not shave. They sprinkle fine ash from the fire on the child's head.

789 The *ikipiki* at puberty is one and the same, and at death, it is one and the same. If a woman had reached puberty and washed with a man, and then leaves him and comes to me, we do not give her *ikipiki*, we say: 'Let her eat the *ikipiki* of kinship in the birth ritual, when she has borne a child.'

Kasitile made the same points about the function of *ikipiki*:

789 Yes, the *ikipiki* of the birth, puberty, and death rituals is one; that of
846 the twin ritual is different. When a child is born they spread a litter for

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

him. They fear that if heavy ones come and speak, those who are preg- 789
nant, the child will suffer, it will become weak and exhausted on the 846
litter, and will have constant diarrhœa. So they go to the cross-roads and mix millet flour and powdered *ikipiki* with the feather of a chicken, they give the child some in his mouth to make the motions firm, and close the bowels. They do this[1] at the cross-roads that those who pass may step over it and take the disease away. That medicine closes the bowel, it saves the stomach and bowel when heavy ones come, those who are pregnant. If we do not treat it the child becomes exhausted with diarrhœa, though the mother is all right.

It is taboo to give birth in the house, a woman bears a child outside 844
on a pile of leaves; when she has borne the child they sprinkle powdered *ikipiki* on those leaves, but if I, the father, am angry about the child I refuse the *ikipiki*, saying: 'It's not my child, it's a bastard.' That is of old though. Now, in European times, they treat all children. Yes, [77]
now all are my children; formerly there were bastards. The *ikipiki* is our blood, it is kept in the senior wife's house.

There was some disagreement on this point. Nsyani, an elderly 848
man who was already married before Europeans came to the country, when asked: 'Do you perform rituals for bastards?' replied: 'Yes, they are born with[2] my cattle (*Bapapiguw mumumbe ryangu*).' Four other men who discussed the matter together, agreed that—

When a woman has borne an illegitimate child we know that the child is the child of her husband because it was born with his cattle (*mumumbe ryake*). Whether the child is a boy or a girl, whether the genitor is known or unknown, and whether he has paid damages or not, the children belong to the woman's lord (*mumw nkikale*). When an illegitimate child is born to an unmarried girl her fathers perform the ritual, for that 'man of the long grass' is like a bull. For an illegitimate child born to a married woman the rituals are performed by the husband, for the 'man of the long grass' is like a bull or a cock. Who is going to give a calf to a man alone, the bull who begot it?

But Lyandileko who, as a doctor and a grandmother, was intimately concerned in such matters, insisted:

If a woman has committed adultery and we do not know the man, we give her earth; it's just rubbish. If I give her medicine she and the child will die. If she has borne the child in the long grass and her father refuses to let her enter the house, non-relatives give it to her. If I, the mother, am there I give her this earth [touching the ground].

[1] The baby is not taken to the crossroads, only the *ikipiki* and millet flour.
[2] Literally within.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 If a woman has difficulty in labour we officiants tell her: 'Speak!
847 With whom did you commit adultery?' and the child comes down. When she has spoken it is born. We do not give her medicine. We give her earth.

848 QUESTION: What if an illegitimate boy dies, do you perform the ritual with *ikipiki*?

LYANDILEKO: No, because he was a child of the long grass [i.e. illegitimate], we only treat the mother. We do not perform the ritual with the *ikipiki* of the husband. If it is a girl, and she to whom we gave earth grows up, the father [i.e. her mother's husband or, if the mother was unmarried, her father] says: 'Let the husband perform the ritual, because the cattle are mine, she is my child, and that is the custom.' If they give a child of the long grass the medicine it will die, because it is not its medicine. . . . I know about it because I give children the medicine.

There is no question about the legal rights over an illegitimate child, and Nsyani and the other men held that ritual and legal control went together. Lyandileko and Kasitile, both specialists in this field, held that traditionally, at least, the *ikipiki* could only be used for a legitimate child: to do otherwise was dangerous.

So important is this acknowledgement of legitimacy that in many Christian families, where other traditional rituals are ignored, the husband's mother still brings *ikipiki* for his child.

851 As soon as the child is born a fowl—a cock for a boy, a hen for a girl—is sent to the young wife's parents, to notify them of the birth. Then her 'mothers' come 'to keep her company' (*ukumpanja*) during her confinement, and at the end of it they take her home with them for a visit of a month or more. They bring her back to her husband, formally, with gifts of beer, food, and mats (*ukumdeka*), just as they did after the puberty ritual. We met one party, taking back a young mother to her husband, in which there were twenty-one women carrying baskets with food or pots of beer. The grandmother was happy and excited and, dancing up to greet us, she said, breathlessly: '*That's* the owner of this beer [pointing to her daughter], all these pots!' The feast was unusually lavish on this occasion. Two pots of beer, two stems of bananas, a vessel of milk, and a mat, were taken by the daughter of Chief Mwaipopo when she returned to her husband after the birth of her first child, and that seems to be the ordinary standard. The husband kills a bull calf for meat for his guests, or gives them a shilling or two.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Lugulu

Even after her return a wife may delay before cooking or drawing water again for her husband. Mwaisumo said: 846

> Some men do not let their wives cook for them until the child's body has gone black and it laughs. . . . This is mainly due to the mockery of friends, for some people refuse to come and eat with a man if the food is cooked by a woman who has recently borne a child, even though she has come out of confinement. They laugh at him and say: 'Why do you eat food prepared by a newly delivered woman? Have you no sense of disgust?' And her friends laugh at the woman, too, saying: 'Look you, the child has not yet grown at all!'
>
> MWAISUMUTA: Formerly a woman with a new-born child did not cook food. We said she was filthy. What food that she had overstepped would anyone eat? Until two months had passed she avoided cooking, then she cooked.[1] And she hid the child. Men should not see it for two months. It was taboo.

This is the full ritual performed for a first-born child and, some say, for the first-born of each sex. For others there is no sending a fowl to the girl's parents, or bringing her back with gifts, and it does not matter where the child is born; but still the seclusion of mother and infant, treatment with *ilipili* medicine brought by the husband's mother, and shaving are felt to be important. 851

We did not find any significant differences between the rituals of birth in Selya and in Kukwe, but there is one rite peculiar to the Lugulu people and regarded by other Nyakyusa with somewhat shocked amusement, which is interesting because it expresses, in crude terms, a conflict between the groom and the bride's family repeatedly suggested in the ritual of Selya and Kukwe, but never openly acknowledged. We did not see this rite ourselves, but quote the account of Kakune, the doctor, whose mother was Lugulu. Though himself a Kukwe, he speaks in the first person as if he were Lugulu—a dramatic device common enough in Nyakyusa. 184

> KAKUNE: When my daughter goes to her husband, and first becomes pregnant, they tell us: 'She is pregnant.' And we say: 'Oh, she is pregnant? She is pregnant! War has come!' When she has borne her child, the go-between in the marriage representing the husband comes to her parents with a hen to tell them. Then later they send the go-between a message, saying: 'Come'. Meanwhile they have prepared huge quantities of food: porridge, and curds, and beer. And then the girl's husband calls his friends of the age-village (he does not calll his relatives, but his [843] 851

[1] A menstruate eats with his friends in the age-village, or is provided for by his mother, like a bachelor.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Lugulu

851 brothers he will call if they are near) and they come with a bull. They arrive at nightfall.

The girl's parents meanwhile have called all their relatives (but it does not matter if some relatives do not come; it brings them no trouble) and friends of the age-village, and the boys come too. And they shut the door fast and start drinking the beer. 'They have come, they have come, let us close the door', they say. Then the go-between outside calls to us: 'We have come,' but we are silent. We answer never a word. At last we answer and ask: 'What have you brought?' And he answers: 'A bull.'

'What-sized bull?' 'A little bull.' 'He! What do you mean by bringing a little bull only?' 'Well, it's a nice big bull!'

851 578 Then they come and bang on the door and we hold it shut and they bang, and bang, and then we begin insulting one another. We accuse them of filthiness, saying: 'They defaecate, they urinate!' And of incest, saying: 'You have intercourse with your mother'; and of foolishness, [514] and they accuse us likewise. At last they burst in and the insults continue inside. They actually defaecate in the house.[1]

851 But soon we call out: 'They have entered, let us make peace, friends,' and we all sit down. Then I (the father of the girl) call on the go-between, and he sits down opposite us. I and my wife, the girl's mother, sit by the fire. Then I ask him: 'What have you brought?' 'I have brought a bull!' 'Oh! Eh!' 'I am hungry, give me some food.'

Then we discuss this for a time and agree, and we give them the food to eat and some beer. They eat, the young men snatching food over there, and our young men here, and we, the elders, eating sedately at the back.

851 578 Then, when they have eaten, we begin to insult one another again over the cattle that have been paid, the laziness and slovenliness of the bride, the dirty cooking of her mother. They scold us and we scold them. Then after a time, with insults flying, and the young men stamping and stamping, we call out: 'Silence, silence,' and the noise subsides.

851 Then our son-in-law comes to the fire at the summons of the go-between, who says: 'Praise your father,' and he says: 'You of so-and-so, son of so-and-so (he mentions all my names), our true father.' Then the go-between says: 'Praise your mother!' and he praises her: 'You, so-and-so, daughter of so-and-so, our true mother!' and he goes back and sits down. Then the bride is called by the go-between and she is made to praise first her father and then her mother. And if there is any man who eloped with the bride from her husband's, but she later returned to her husband, the lover comes too. He fears to go blind

[1] Angumbwike confirmed this saying, when the rite was mentioned, whether we had been told these details.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Lugulu

if he does not. He does not enter the home. There would be fighting if he did! But he stands outside, and when he hears them praising he praises the parents too. No one hears him, he does it to save his sight. He comes with two or three friends but gets no food. 851

Then we give them beer, and they drink and we drink till dawn. And dawn finds many in drunken sleep. Then the go-between says: 'Dawn has come, friends, let us go!' And they go off and we bid them farewell. And my son, the bride's brother, goes off with them. The husband goes home with his friends, and then the go-between and my son and daughter (these three only) come back. Then our go-between [representing the bride's father] who is on the look-out for them, says: 'They come!' and we go out and call: 'Why do you come here again?' And we throw clubs at them and drive them off. Then the go-between goes home and the two come back and we greet them and say: 'Have you slept?' And food is cooked and they eat. Then that same day the girl goes off to her husband, alone, with food that her mothers have cooked. [273]

QUESTION: What is the reason for the custom?

KAKUBE: They have made the custom to gain wealth—that bull. The porridge (*ikyende*) and relish (*ikisale*) must be called *ninyama*. If I, the father, or the mother, or the husband, call it porridge, then the one who does so will go blind. We Kukwe do not do this, but if one of us marries one of the people who observe it, that is, a daughter of the Lugulu, he must avoid or else he will lose his sight.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VI

THE RITUAL OF ABNORMAL BIRTH

845 TWIN birth is a fearful event to the Nyakyusa. The parents of twins, and twins themselves, are *abipasya*,[1] 'the fearful ones', felt to be very dangerous to their relatives and immediate neighbours, and to cattle, causing them to suffer from diarrhœa or purging, and swollen legs, if any contact takes place. Therefore the parents are segregated and an elaborate ritual is performed, in which a wide circle of kinsmen and neighbours and the family cattle participate. The infants are naturally segregated with their mother, but it is the danger from the parents rather than from the twins themselves that is emphasized. *Ilipasa* is commonly used to mean 'twins', 'twin birth', but it is more accurately translated as 'abnormal birth', for it is used of a child born feet foremost (*unsolola*) as well as for any multiple birth, and the same ritual is performed whatever the type of *ilipasa*.[2]

(*a*) *The events*

The ritual has four phases: first the building of temporary huts or shelters, one for each parent of the twins, in which traditionally they lived and ate, each in isolation, never raising their voices above a whisper, and each speaking only to an attendant. The woman is attended by her mother, the man by a young son or daughter. The second stage is the 'induction' (*ukwingisia*) or 'washing' (*ukusukusula*), when a ritual litter is spread for the parents and kinsmen and immediate neighbours wash their hands

[1] *Ukupasya*: to be afraid.

[2] *Ilipasa* or *ipasa* (pl. *ama-*): twin, twin birth, abnormal birth.

Ukupasa: to bear or beget twins or an abnormally born child.

'*Ilipasa* is of two sorts, to have two children is *ipasa* and to have one child when it comes out at birth feet foremost is *ipasa* also; they say it is a fearful child born feet foremost (*umwana mwipasya ubusolola*), so in both cases they speak of *ukupasa ilipasa*.'

Abapasa ipasa: parents of twins; *ulupaso* or *uluvho lwa ipasa*: twin ritual; *ukupasana*: to branch from one root.

We have no information on the incidence of twin births or breach delivery among the Nyakyusa, but even supposing it to be higher than in western Europe, it is still the exception, not the rule. cf. M. D. W. Jeffreys, 'Twin births among Africans', *S.A. Journal of Science*, v. 50, 4 (1953).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

with medicines and have their legs splashed with a scalding concoction. Visitors to this ritual bring gifts of millet which is put to soak for beer. When it is brewed the 'bringing out' (*ukusosya*) rite is celebrated. The temporary huts are burnt and a new shelter is erected in which the parents have ritual intercourse. Parents, twins, and relatives are shaved and anointed with medicated ointment, and together with their neighbours again have their legs splashed with scalding medicine, this time by the father of the twins. The children are given sausages of medicated porridge which they must eat from the ground. The parents of the twins burst out of their hut and rush towards the pasture land, the father brandishing his spears. Then all the participants snatch some of the meat of a sheep or small bull which has been killed. The rest of the meat is reserved for the fourth, and final, stage of the ritual. A mess of cooked bananas, meat, and medicine is taken by the mother of the twins into her hands, immediately after the ritual intercourse. Her husband takes some of this to bury in his father's banana grove, or to throw in the direction of his father's grave; the rest the woman takes to her own parents, to be buried in her own father's grove. She drinks beer ritually with her parents, and 'steals' things from her mother's house, then returns to meet her husband and drink beer ritually with him.

845

So far as our information goes[1] the form of the ritual among the Kukwe scarcely differs from that of Selya and the plain and we describe it as we saw it performed in Selya for our neighbours, Mwakobela and his wife. Mwakobela was a junior half-brother of the chief, Mwaipopo. (See Tables (a) and (b).)

[84]

12 May 1935

i. *The birth of twins.* (Record of G. and M. W.)

Twins were born about eight-thirty this morning. We visited them at 5 p.m. in company with Mwaiswelo III (linked half-brother of Mwakobela) and Kikuku, who was representing Mwaipopo. Mwaipopo is 'owner' of the ritual because he is their 'father' (i.e. their senior brother). Mwaipopo did not go, though he was quite near, at our place. We found the woman with the two new-born infants sitting outside under the bananas, accompanied by the mother who bore her, and her mother's elder sister. The men seated by the house were the father, Mwakobela (Mwaiswelo II), his half-brother Mwakalendile and four friends from near by.

[1] We did not see the full ritual in Kukwe country, but had several accounts of it.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 'To-day there is no ritual, we have come to express sympathy (*ukuti ndaga*).'[1]

845 The two grown sons of Mwakobela were building a little hut of
342 saplings and had finished the main structure, but had not yet thatched it. 'She will sleep there to-night. They will put leaves on top.' Kikuku brought a message from Mwaipopo, to whom they had previously sent to tell him of the twin birth: 'If the hut is not finished she may sleep in the house, I agree to that. But Mwakobela said:

845 No, the hut is finished, she can sleep there. [To me]: To-night she will just sleep there, then the doctor will come [it is Mwaipopo's business to find the doctor] and will induct her (*ukummwingisya*), and then we shall lay the litter. The woman and her mother sleep there for a month with the twins—no others—the mother alone keeps her company (*ikumpanja*); then the doctor will come again to bring her out (*ukunsosya*). The ritual is in two parts, the induction and the bringing out.

They tie up the cord of the first twin to be born with a shred of plantain bark, and of the second with a shred of sweet banana bark, the plantain bark is a sign of seniority.

The woman may not cook while she is in the hut—it's taboo. But the other wives cook food for her and bring it to prevent her dying of hunger. Also her friends of the village will come with food and firewood to greet her. The pot in which food is cooked for the parents of twins must not be covered when it is on the fire, and if plantains are cooked only the middle bunches on the stem are used, not the ends; those at the ends are thrown away. When they are eating the wife may not begin until the husband has received his and put some in his mouth, then she too may eat.

845 It is wholly taboo for the mother of twins to call for anything she
784 wants. She knocks with a stick to summon the one who brings her food. . . . If her husband wants anything he calls to his wives, it is not taboo, but he does not shout loudly, he must be careful not to make too great a noise, for if he shouts his children's hearts are startled and, it is said, they will die.

Traditionally, when the mother had to leave the hut to relieve herself, she walked backwards and hid her face with a piece of mat, to prevent herself from looking at the front of anyone. She avoided cows at pasture, and if she caught sight of anyone in the distance she waved a hand to warn them to let her pass.

May 13

845 Mwaiswelo III (Mwakobela's brother) came to fetch us at ten-

[1] This phrase can imply either condolence or congratulation.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

forty-five to come and eat. 'Yesterday we just conversed, you did not eat. Now we have come to fetch you.' The mother and infants were in the little hut. Mwakobela was sitting and eating with us. They explained that of old he would not have done so. 'The people in the old days were greatly afraid—the father of twins did not meet and converse with other people, no, they were much afraid. He waited in the bananas. But since the Europeans came we do not fear. The Europeans took the twins in their arms and said: "Don't be afraid." In the old days the father of twins would take a spear and shield and dance the war-dance, and cry the war-cry, but we have dropped this custom nowadays.' 845 845 177

May 14

We visited Mwakobela and found him sitting alone making a hoe-handle. His wife was in the hut with the infants, attended by her mother. 845

May 22

We found Mwakobela hoeing a garden for beans. He told us that the elder of the twins had died two nights ago and had been buried early yesterday morning. . . .

No one came to the infant's burial; we buried him ourselves. But had he been a big child then people would have come. The doctor has not come yet [for the induction]. I have not got the millet yet. [766]

July 7

ii. *The induction* (*ukwingisia*)

We arrived about 11 a.m. and found Mwakobela and his brother sitting outside the house with several guests. They were cutting a hide to make thongs for tying up cattle. By noon there were present twelve men, twenty-two married women, three adolescent girls, six 'daughters-in-law' sitting apart, and a crowd of children.[1] The doctor, a middle-aged woman and a distant connection of Mwakobela, arrived about noon. With the help of Mwakobela's wives she built a fire outside and cooked a pot of medicines. The women sat round this fire chatting; the little girls built themselves a separate fire, and the small boys yet another. Tiny children were with their mothers. At two-fifteen the doctor started the washing. She took a little powdered medicine from a bamboo flask and put it into a calabash of cold water. She made

[1] The identity and kinship connections of those who participated are discussed in Chapter VIII.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 the boys form a queue and bend forward, holding out their hands while she poured water over the hands of each of them. After washing, each took a mouthful of water and spat it out. They were warned not to spill it on their legs as they washed and spat. Some young men washed with the boys, and women watching shouted advice, but a number of the boys went off without taking a mouthful of water or without spitting. After the boys came the girls, and then the women and babies and some more small boys who had arrived late. We counted twenty-six boys and young men, twenty-six girls and babies, and twenty-four women washing.

Then came the splashing of legs. The doctor shredded a banana sucker to make a tail. All the company gathered round the boiling pot of medicine, and the doctor, dipping the tail into the pot, splashed the boiling liquid on to their legs. Children screamed; women hopped with the pain, but shouted to their children to come and be treated. Frightened small children were hauled back by men, women, and elder children—a full sister of the twins, about 9 years old, was dragged in yelling. Mothers were especially careful to see that their babies were splashed, and pulled up the cloths binding them to their backs, so that their legs might be exposed. Mwakobela and his brother came to be splashed but some of the young men hurried away immediately after washing, disregarding the women who shouted to them that it was taboo for them to leave before they had been splashed. The women took [183] the whole ritual much more seriously than the men, and they were very particular to see that their children were treated. One old woman who had helped a child to wash, holding its hands, came back again to wash herself. The doctor and other women shouted that she had already washed. She replied: 'Oh, I just helped the child. Have I really finished?' The mother and remaining twin did not stir from the hut—she looked dirty and dishevelled. The doctor was elegant; she wore five brass body-rings [301] and her body was well oiled and rouged. She organized everyone with great confidence and was treated with respect, a mat being spread for her to sit upon (no other woman had a mat), and her assistant fetching and carrying everything she required.

845 431 Many of the women relatives had brought gifts of millet and after the treatment was over they tipped their small basketfuls into a big grain basket. Then they had a snack of roasted plantains (Mwakobela provided three stems) and went home.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

23 July 1935

iii. *The bringing out* (*ukusosya*)

Seventeen days after the induction the 'bringing out' took 845
place.[1] The hut had been burnt last night and a new one built in a new place. Mwakobela was inside it and when we went to greet him he only put his head out, saying: 'I am not coming out.' The doctor had slept at the homestead and a small bull had been killed yesterday evening. Mwakobela had provided it because the sheep which Mwaiteteja (his brother) had got from the hills had died. Twenty-one men were present and there were two pots of beer, of which we were given one. Mwaisumo (our clerk) left (as we had told him to do if he wished) and the men remarked: 'He is baptized, he only looks on, it's taboo for him to participate, it's taboo for him to drink the ritual beer.'

The meat was being cooked by Mwakobela's wives and the doctor was preparing the medicine. There were two lots of medicine: a fine powder (*imbondanya*) made of *kabombelo* and *ikipiki*, and a rough sort (*unkota*) made of *kajenja*[2] and *nkunguni*. The doctor explained: 'The powder is used for smearing on the forehead to enable people to meet the parents of the twins; it is not very important, it prevents the belly swelling. It is also drunk in beer at midday, for the same purpose, by the parents of the twins, and then by all their relatives. The second medicine is used for splashing on the legs with hot water; it prevents the legs from swelling. If anyone does not come to-day and his legs or belly swell, he will come to me, the doctor, and I will put hot medicines on his legs and give him powder to drink in beer. I will not smear his forehead then, no. . . . The non-relatives have their legs splashed but do not anoint their faces or drink the medicated beer.' Mwanyoso remarked: 'Our wives often do not come. Then we take home a little of the lees of the beer for them to drink.' Thirty-six people who had not washed at the induction washed now.

From the time we arrived at 7.30 a.m. the women were busy 845
shaving each other and all the small girls except one. She was not 302
shaved for she was in mourning—her mother had died recently. After shaving, the women and girls washed and anointed and rouged themselves. The mother of the twins (Masobesi) was in the new hut with her surviving twin and her husband. All were

[1] It was delayed three days to oblige us, as we had another engagement.

[2] *Kajenja* gives a yellow dye used traditionally to decorate bark-cloth, and nowadays also used as a relish like curry, 'but this is a new Swahili custom'.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 freshly shaved and anointed; the mother and child were also
302 rouged, and both husband and wife had on new cloths. The women explained: 'The filth is finished now', and, in answer to a question about why they shaved, they replied: 'We throw away the hair in the long grass because it is filthy.' The little girls picked up scraps of hair carefully and disposed of it in the long grass. Mwaiteteja (brother of Mwakobela) said of the shaving:

> All the children, Mwakobela's and mine, boys and girls, and our wives, shave. I, Mwaiteteja, do not. Mwakobela shaved last night. At an ordinary birth only the mother shaves. Mwanyilu and other grandsons of Mwaipopo are 'just people' [i.e. not relatives for this purpose] and do not shave, but they are treated with the hot medicines.
>
> MWANYOSO: The anointing is part of the ritual. The shaving and anointing are to show that the ritual is over. Since the birth of the twins neither the women nor the children have shaved or anointed themselves, nor we men either, but we don't anoint ourselves very much anyway. We shall all shave to-day or to-morrow, but I have shaved already because of the funeral ritual of Mwakisisi which took place two days ago.

845 Husband and wife in the hut spoke in whispers, and not even the doctor entered: 'They fear the legs.'

The doctor ranged everyone in a rough circle and she and her assistant went round smearing the forehead of each with the powder mixed with ointment. The circle soon broke up and people came up to her of their own accord to be smeared. She just dabbed a line on the forehead of each.

Then the banana suckers were cut and frayed at the end. A regular circle was formed. Mwakobela rushed out of the hut (washed, shaved and wearing a new cloth), seized two of the suckers and dipped them in the hot medicine, and splashed it on to the circle. The people yelled and ran away, only to return. He splashed them thus two or three times and then returned to the hut. The doctor continued the splashing.

Then Mwanyoso went up to the hut with a pruning hook and cut it open, crying: 'War has come!' Mwakobela and his wife and the child rushed out 'in the direction of Mwaijonga's place' [Mwakobela's father's home], followed by the whole crowd shouting: 'We are pure (*Tuli belu*).' They ran thirty or forty yards only
[177] and came back laughing and talking. Mwakobela said: 'In the old days I'd have taken a spear and shield and danced, alone!'

Two banana leaves were spread on the ground and the doctor

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

emptied out the two pots which had been cooking, one of meat alone, the other of meat and plantains. She and her assistant divided the meat into smallish portions. Meanwhile all the younger people gathered round and, at a sign from the doctor, fell on the meat, each trying to secure a piece. Some people even took sticks and beat their way into the seething scrimmage. 845

Then a pot of beer was brought. The doctor added powdered medicine to it and Mwakobela stirred it. All drank in turn, some from the pot directly, some dipping in little pots or cups of leaves. Mwakobela himself did not drink. Mwanyoso, Jane (Kasitile's wife) and others took beer in leaf cups for those at home.

iv. *Showing him the way home*

Mwanyoso was just going off when the doctor called him back: 'You are the *unyago*, you must show him the way home.' Mwanyoso then called to Kasitile's son: 'Come, Kasitile, and we will show him the way home.' The doctor, the two *abanyago*, Mwakobela and four or five others walked about fifty yards in the direction of the sacred grove of the dead chief, Mwaijonga, Mwakobela's father. Then the doctor said to Mwanyoso: 'Tell him where his home is.' So Mwanyoso pointed in that direction and said: 'That is the way to your house, the house of Mwaijonga.' Then Mwakobela took a packet wrapped in banana bark from the doctor, walked a few paces in that direction, turned round and threw the packet over his shoulder towards Mwaijonga's place. It fell in the grass behind him. 'So now we have finished,' said the doctor.

Meanwhile the mother of the twins with her surviving baby, the doctor's assistant, ten other women and twenty-three children set off to her 'father's place' about a quarter of a mile distant in Kibonde, with a calabash of beer. Her father is dead and her brother, Mwaipopo (not the chief), has inherited. The women and children all sat down at the edge of the homestead while the doctor's assistant went ahead. She ranged all the relatives present, twenty in all, in a line with their backs to the oncoming party and smeared their foreheads with powder and ointment. Then Masobesi's party approached, walking backwards, and when they were quite close the doctor's assistant said to the people of the homestead: 'Turn round and say: "We are pure."' They turned and shouted: 'We are pure!' laughing; and at the same time Masobesi's party turned too.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 Then the doctor called for water, added powder to it, and took Mwaipopo, the owner of the homestead, off to the edge of the bananas, some way from the house, to wash. He scratched a hole with his hands under a banana stem, and buried a packet (just like the one thrown over his shoulder by Mwakobela) which the doctor gave him. Then she poured the water for him and he washed his hands and mouth, as the others had done at Mwakobela's place. The doctor took the mother of twins off to the edge of the swept place, some distance away, and poured water for her to wash her hands and mouth likewise. All this was quietly and seriously done.

[273] A calabash of beer was then brought out of the house, the doctor put powder in, the mother of the twins stirred it, Mwaipopo drank first, and all the others in turn. Likonyela was present and took part in all this. He took off some medicated beer to take to his sister, Kipesile, who lives in Ipande. 'She is sick and I want to go to see her, so I shall take the medicine to her myself.' I asked him why he was not at Mwakobela's (being a classificatory son of Mwakobela). He replied: 'Well, they never sent me a message, to call me, so I came here.' He and Mwaipopo, the head of this homestead, are sons of two sisters. Likonyela's wives were not here—'They are sick'; but one of his children was here carried by a younger sister of one of his wives.

Some medicated beer was also taken by a man, Kikaja, son of Nokile, a cross-cousin (*untani*). 'His father was our mother's brother.'

Then the mother of twins went into the house and took out three baskets of cooked food and one pot of beer prepared for her. Each time she took up a basket the women of the house shouted: 'Ha! The child is snatching food, that is taboo!' She also took out a little pot of ointment and one of rouge. Then she cut at a growing stem of bananas with a spear, while the women of the homestead shouted: 'The child is cutting a banana stem, it is taboo!' The stem was finally severed by a boy with a hoe—she did not cut it through. Then the women of the homestead rushed at the mother of twins and greeted her and pressed round the infant excitedly. One of them explained to me: 'We, his mothers, are greeting him [the twin], we say to him: "We have never seen you before, how are you standing up to the cold?" ' They also tied little pieces of string to the twin's wrists. 'It's to greet him and break the taboo (*ko kumbonola*),' they said.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

All the women present, and Mwaipopo himself, had shaved 845
to-day.

We stayed forty minutes there and some of the food was eaten on the spot. The rest of the food, the pot of beer, and the ointment and rouge, we carried back with us to Mwakobela's. The beer was given to Mwakobela who drank it with eleven other men, his kinsmen and neighbours. The food and ointment and rouge went to the women.

26 July 1935

The women had intended to go and visit the maternal relatives 845
(*abipwa*) of the mother of twins yesterday, but her 'father' (Mwai- 574
popo) had sent a message to say: 'Do not come yet, they are all away, some in Mwandosia's country, others planting potatoes.' Mwakobela, asked about his own mother's relatives, replied: 'My own *abipwa* have all died, and even if they had not, it would be too far to go, for they lived in Kukwe country. I did not throw medicine into the grass for them, no, we never do.

'The doctor is coming soon to sprinkle the cattle, all our herd 845
here, my cattle and my neighbours', with medicine.' There are 783
two herd groups in the village.

28 July 1935 (Sunday)

v. *Treating the cattle*

We were called to Mwakobela's place. He told us:

The doctor brought medicine last night, just before dark, and she said to me: 'Sprinkle the cattle yourself.' 'Perhaps it is taboo for me to do so?' I replied: 'No, not at all, you sprinkle them; I am going off to church to-morrow, to the catechumen's class.' Her elder sister is baptized already and she herself intends to be baptized. So I asked her: 'To whom shall we go for medicine then?' She replied: 'I am giving the medicine to my daughter, the wife of Mwakisisile, the son of Mwaihojo.'

When we arrived at about 1.15 p.m. Mwakobela's cattle and some others were standing round a smoky fire, as usual, during the midday hours.[1] The pot of medicine was steaming on another fire at a little distance. 'How do the cattle fall sick, if you do not treat them?' we asked. 'They purge continually. . . .'

Mwakobela's wife said: 'We should send to Mwampona and let his cattle be treated too.' Mwakobela (to us): 'Mwampona herds his cattle with Mwakikato, in a separate herd from ours;[2] she says they should come too; certainly when Mwampona had twins our

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 34. [2] op. cit., p. 56.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 cattle went up to be treated.' (To his wife): 'All right, they shall
783 come,' and he sent off a boy with a message.

Mwampona came to inquire about the message sent to him and then went back to fetch his and Mwakikato's cattle. Six banana suckers were prepared. The cattle present were splashed by Mwakobela and two of his wives, each holding two banana tails. They were the cattle of Mwakobela himself and those of seven neighbours who herd with him. Then the other herd of the village came in (the cattle of five men) and was splashed. Mwakalobo II and Mwakikato (neighbours) both came up at the end and had their legs splashed with the remains of the medicine. They had both been splashed before—we had seen Mwakikato being splashed —so we asked: 'Why again?'

Mwakalobo II replied: 'We were a great crowd the first time, and I did not get properly splashed.' Mwakikato: 'I feel a pain.'

15 February 1937

845 Mwakobela and his wife told us that she had been to her mother's people (*abipwa*) after we left Isumba, but that he did not go to his *abipwa* and will not do so.

vi. *The ilibalaga*

We only saw the twin ritual enacted right through once, but the different events mentioned here were repeatedly described to us, and the ritual for Mwakobela's twins may be taken as typical. Two essential actions are, however, omitted from this account, viz. the eating of sausages of porridge from the ground and the ritual intercourse.[1] We describe these in the words of Mwakatage of the plain, a middle-aged Christian, himself the younger brother of twins, who gave a very detailed account of the whole ritual. He said that at the 'bringing out' rite, besides being smeared with medicine and splashed, children are given medicated porridge.

The women cook porridge for the children, medicated porridge, outside on the road. To this cooking and eating of porridge they only take children who are unmarried. The reason that they eat porridge is this: it is a ritual which they do so that when the parents of twins come out of their house, we may not just greet them, but that they may be one with us, we whose bellies are heavy (*tungisakuponanyaga itolo nagwe, fikuti ajege na nuswe tali basito munda*). To eat this porridge they fashion little balls or sausages, one for each child, smear them with ointment

[1] This rite was also described by a Kukwe doctor who had just supervised it in a twin ritual.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845

and stick them in the ground; then each one in turn kneels down and bites his sausage of porridge. . . . The parents of twins are still in the house, with those that accompany them. Then they kill a bull and cook most of the meat outside, because that is for everybody to snatch. But the portion of meat that is for those in the house of twins is put on the fire to cook by the doctor in their hut, for it is the meat of *ilibalaga*, that is of the most important rite. The doctor then approaches the twins' house and tells the man to come out. He obeys . . . and takes the frayed banana sucker heavy with water, and scatters the water in front, and to the sides, and all round, ending up by scattering it behind him, in the direction from which he came, then he runs back into his hut. The doctor goes into the hut too . . . he prepares a bed for the husband and wife and tells them to lie with each other, and they do so. Then he puts powdered medicine into the tiny pot of meat and bananas, which is there in the hut, lets the pot cook, and pours the contents out on to a leaf. He takes a little of this mixture and divides it into four portions, two for the man, two for the woman. Then he brings these to the parents who have had intercourse, before they have washed, while the filth is still on them. He tells the woman to take the food into her hands; she does so and smears filth on to it. Then the doctor makes two[1] little parcels, one for the man, one for the woman, and this it is that is called *ilibalaga* and is the most important element in the ritual.

After this the couple wash their hands and they eat. They eat the food, which the doctor left aside [i.e. which was not touched with soiled hands] and into which he has put a little powdered medicine. The man and his wife eat together. It is to bring them together again and let them eat together after they have been eating separately. The doctor then takes a little beer in a calabash cup and mixes it with water for them and gives it to them in the hut; they drink together there, the man and his wife. At dawn on the morrow the doctor says: 'Put on the fire some bananas and the uncooked meat left over.' He adds powdered medicine to it and it cooks, then he divides it into two portions, one for the man, one for the woman, and each portion is bundled up for the man and woman to take to their respective relatives. The doctor tells them to go each to their grandparents[2] with the filthy *ilibalaga* which he did up into parcels the day before. They take the parcels of meat which he did up this morning—the uncontaminated meat—and

[1] Probably four, two for each of them.

[2] According to Mwakatage an *ilibalaga* is taken by the father of twins to his parents and to his mother's people, and by the mother of twins to her parents and her mother's people, and at each meeting the same rite is performed. As we have seen, Mwakobela threw his *ilibalaga* in the direction of his father's grave, but did not visit any of his mother's people, and he denied that it was customary even to throw an *ilibalaga* in their direction.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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301
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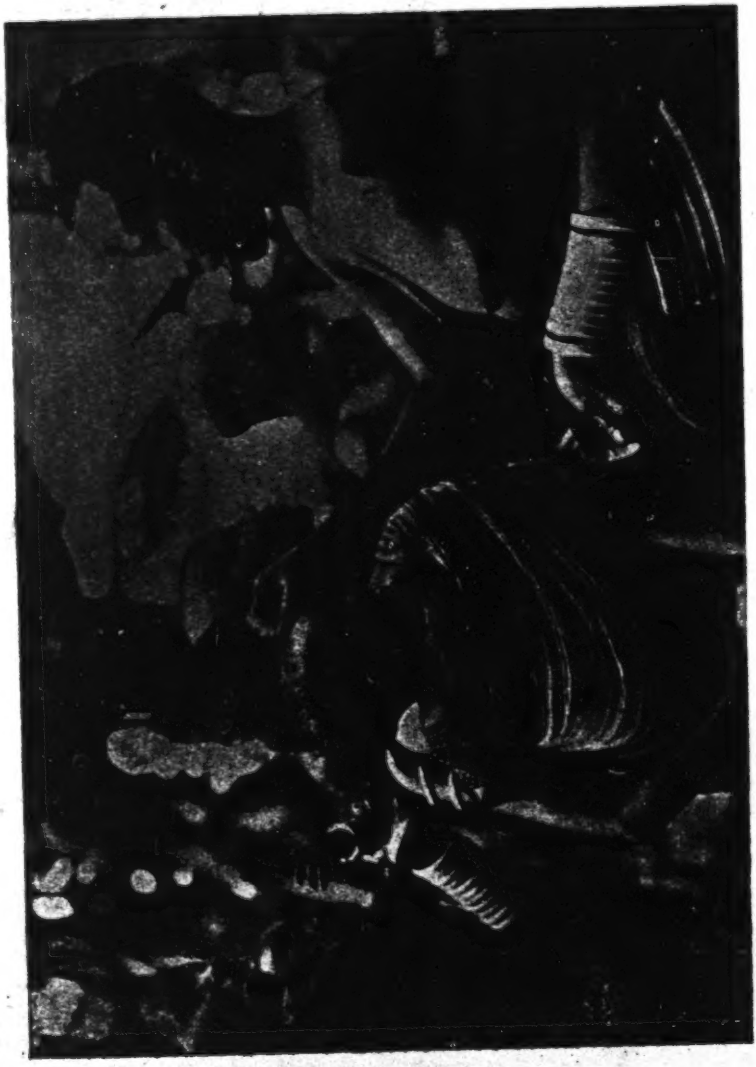
142



7. The officiant at a twin ritual anoints a child

[facing p. 164]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 this is eaten by the relative who receives the *ilibalaga*, after he has buried it. He who receives the *ilibalaga* buries it, and while he is doing so he looks up country to the origin of the Nyakyusa, who moved down to the plain (MtuNgonde); the officiant then tells them all to look up country. . . . The mother of twins meets her family and it means: 'I am all right now, I am clear, I am your friend, Kyala had bound me. . . .' On reaching home the woman waits on the path . . . her husband (who has been with the *ilibalaga* to his people) likewise waits for his wife. . . . Then they both advance together and meet, and go into their house [not the temporary hut] and eat and drink together. This eating and drinking together means that their ritual is finished; they say: 'We have survived that rubbishy Kyala who had bound us (*tuponile kwa lyaKyala ili lya tupinile*).'[1] They eat the food which has come from their two families together, first drinking together the beer. This is the end of the twin ritual as it has always been performed. People avoid the parents of twins for they say: 'He brings disease into our family.'

845 From the time the twins are born until he meets their mother
834 ritually, intercourse with any woman is taboo to the father of twins. After the ritual he may live with the mother (though she should not conceive again until the twins are running about), but he cannot visit his other wives. Only when she has given birth again—and had a normal delivery—is he free to live with his
[753] other wives. Should he break this taboo it is believed that the wife with whom he breaks it will fall grievously ill with swelling of the legs and belly, and her father is entitled to claim a cow as damages. Some polygynists are said to circumvent the taboo in this way:

> The husband will go to the father of one of his wives and will take a cow to him and say: 'I have got twins, I petition for your daughter.' Then he can take her into his house and sleep with her, but with his other wives he cannot sleep until she has borne a child. When she does so, then he goes to the fathers of his other wives, taking a bull to each, and says: 'I have had a twin birth but now it is finished, and I am taking your daughters.' If the first wife thus taken bears no child, then he must take a cow to the father of another and try with her.

But several of our informants held that no father in his senses would permit his daughter to be taken by her husband after he had fathered twins, until the mother of twins had herself borne a normal child.

845 The isolation of the parents of twins from cattle also continues for some time. The father of twins does does not milk or enter a

[1] Mwaikambo, commenting on the text, said: 'It is as if Kyala was *lindu* (rubbish).' The concord implies *ilindu* not a person, as is usual with the proper name Kyala.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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301
291

8. Preparing the meal for the participants to snatch at a twin ritual

[facing p.165]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

byre or strike a beast with a stick 'until the twins had grown up' 845
(an elastic phrase), 'but if he has no sons to milk a doctor comes and gives him a medicine to drink in the house, then he can milk the cows outside. To enter the byre is altogether taboo.' He and his attendant during his seclusion drink the milk of one cow only, which has been specially treated. All his wives avoid milk until the end of the ritual and the mother of twins herself 'can only begin to clean the byre after she has borne at least one other child'—some say two or three other children. If a cow is given her for milk (after the end of the ritual) it is taboo for others to share that milk. If these taboos are broken it is said that the cattle will purge and die, or their legs will swell.

It is also taboo for a parent of twins to pass behind people—he (or she) must always pass in front. 'They fear that if he passes behind, he (the parent) will always have twins.'

Twins, and their parents who have been through the full ritual, are thereafter immune from the danger of twin birth and may even go in to greet a mother of twins—Mwakobela's sister, who herself had borne twins, entered his wife's seclusion hut. There are, however, two or three taboos which apply to twins in later life. It is taboo for one of a pair of twin girls to get married without the 584
other. Angombwike explained:

> If a man comes wooing the first he must do it secretly, and when he [761]
> speaks to her father he must do it secretly, he may bring cows but no one knows about it; if it becomes known they say the younger might curse herself (*ukwibuna*) and die. Then when another has come wooing the other, secretly, the father tells them both to come wooing openly *on the same day*. They come with cows. Then the father summons all his children, and the twin girls, and tells them: 'These men have come to marry you, do you like them?' And he asks the elder (*mbasa*): 'Which do you like?' She chooses. Even if she chooses the man who came for her sister he must accept, and if he tries to protest people will hush him up at once, for it is the custom for the elder to get married first. Then the younger (*musindaka*) says she likes the other one and their father takes the cattle. If either one is wooed secretly before the other she must stay quietly at home till a wooer comes for her sister. If she did not (whichever way it happened) the other might die. It is common knowledge in the boys' village here that of X's twin daughters a lover has only come for the younger, none for the elder. And so both are still unmarried.

Twins and their parents, the fearful ones (*abipasya*), and other 264
people who have been treated with medicines, eat first-fruits of 789

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

264 millet, beans and pumpkin with medicines. 'We fear lest the
789 medicines we have drunk will turn round in the belly';[1] and they must be buried in a hut. 'If they are buried outside there will be drought and famine.'

845 (*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

842 The overt purpose of the twin ritual is plain to all Nyakyusa. Twin birth is thought to be contagious, causing other twin births, and also to make men and cattle ill. The ritual is to prevent this. Mwambelike, a middle-aged pagan, was explicit on the point:

> People are afraid to go to the house of a man with twins. They think that they will have twins themselves if they do, and we do not like twin births; they are taboo in the country. Or perhaps their legs will swell, or their bellies, or faces, if they go to his house. So we go to a doctor and he comes and sprinkles all the people in the village, even tiny children, and all the cattle. He takes a banana stalk to burn the twin birth (*pakokya ipasa*). He burns us because of the twin birth. The water is hot and medicated. He sprinkles us all with it and when we have all been treated we say we have been burnt because of the twin birth.

753 When a man has begotten twins we are in awe of this Kyala (*tukukeba Kyala uju*). . . . If people drink out of the same vessel as the parents of twins, or if the father of twins sleeps with his other wives, this makes the disease increase, the disease of swelling legs and stomach; men catch it, the wives catch it, the children and fathers of the wives catch it. There is also a twin ceremony for cattle; if a cow drops twin calves we fear the same things. You, your wife and children drink medicines, and the cows are all sprinkled with medicine—but not your other relatives, or neighbours.

Mwakobela himself said:

> If I did not wash and went to eat with my relatives, my legs would swell, I should pant and gasp. Swelling of the legs is due to our shades (*imindv gyetu*) or perhaps Kyala beneath is angry (*Kyala pasi akalele*).

845 References to Kyala as the cause of twins are frequent:

> KASITILE: The shades are in twin birth, and Kyala is there—it is he who gives two children. We drive them away. Kyala and the shades are together. When we bury the *ilibalaga* in the banana grove I say: 'Kyala, leave my bellows (which means my wife) for me, you shades leave it for me.' If the shades are angry perhaps my penis is broken in copulation.
>
> MWAIKAMBO: I have not heard people speak of the shades in twin

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 54.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

birth but they commonly say: 'This illness has come from Kyala, in the 845
ritual we drive away Kyala (*tukankaga Kyala*).'

MWANDISI (asked about the meaning of the phrase 'War has come' in relation to twin birth): It means the war of Kyala, of the twins, the illness. We bring out Kyala. Let him get out of the body, Kyala has caught hold of him, has brooded over him, has given him twins. 'Go out therefore! (*Saka panja lalo*).' At first he was taboo. Kyala was in the house; he could not come out. So then we bring him out, saying: 'We have fought the war there, he has come out.'

NJORAKOSA (another elderly man—also said that the ritual was to to 'drive off Kyala'): He [the father of twins] comes out, he takes a spear and shield and runs, and we run. One snatches up a shield, and another, and another. Then we give each other beer to drink, and food, and meat, snatching it from one another; we drive off Kyala. When the father of twins comes out of the hut we say: 'You hit us!' He replies: 'I am innocent (*sunelu*, lit. white) because he has been black (*atita*) on account of having twins.'

MWANDISI: If the ritual is not completed [i.e. if copulation does not take place], then they go to divine. It is said: 'The shades are angry.' Are the shades not with Kyala?

ANGOMBWIKE: I remember when I was a child, when I had one younger brother who was just beginning to walk, my father had twins. I remember the people sitting round the beer praying that his first ritual copulation should be successful. They began with Mbasi. 'You, Mbasi,[1] support us! (*Gwe Mbasi utwemele*). You, Kyala, support us!' Then they came to the shades. And I have heard that they always said both Mbasi and Kyala but began with Mbasi.

The parents of twins have been singled out by Kyala or Mbasi and therefore remain somewhat fearful all their lives. Angombwike said:

The parent of twins (*umwiparya*) seems like a great person (*alete mundu fijo*), he is not like us, his relatives. See, he has gained two people, he is the child of Mbasi, he is with Kyala, he has seen Kyala. You know that [262]
pagans do not eat twin bananas, they fear, saying: 'These are twins (*mapasa*).' They give them to small children. (What I speak of is Nyakyusa custom, not the custom of the baptized.) And the parents of twins (*abiparya*) do not eat the bananas on the sides of the bunch, only those in the middle. When a girl has brought a bunch of bananas to them in the temporary hut . . . they say to her: 'Take away those at the sides,' and she takes away here one, and there one.

[1] There were hints of some special connection between the hero Mbasi and twins (*amapasa*), the elder of whom is *Mbasa*. The younger twin is *Mizindela*, the following [551]
child is *Syala*, the next *Kamba*, and the next *Kamlukila*.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 QUESTION: Why?

ANGOMBWIKE: Because they say you are a middle one, Mbasi goes with you. We others are on the sides, you are on the open space between (*mpulo*);[1] he has drawn you apart, you are a man of Mbasi now; no one drives you away; no one makes you move aside to make way for someone who comes later. No one makes Mbasi, the fearful one (*umwipasya*), move aside; he is someone who is not moved aside.

He went on to explain that a father of twins must never move aside for a woman passing on the path; should he do so she would fall ill with swollen legs. 'The man looks at the woman and says: "I am here, I am someone, move aside," then she moves aside, she knows that he is *mwipasya*.'

Kyala creates twins, but they are not part of the natural order which he himself created. 'Kyala made us to have one child, so when we have twins it is like an illness.' Mwaikambo held that twins are both unnatural and animal-like.

The man who has borne twins we liken to an animal, because Kyala has created things so that we human beings bear just one child; it is only animals which have many young at one time. So when our fellow has twins we fear to sleep with him in the house because he is like an animal now, therefore we build for him a little hut at some distance, that his badness (*ububibi bwake*) may not move on to us. We seek a medicine for greeting him with, when he comes into the house. . . . He fears to call out because he is following the customs of animals which do not speak. . . . Snatching food is eating like animals. . . . The parents of twins avoid cattle because they are like animals which bear many cubs in a litter. And the blood in the parent of twins is much and fierce (*ililopa lya gwa ipasa lingi, kangi ikali*); it will make the cattle purge, and their legs swell.

A number of other men assented to this interpretation that twins are like animals, saying: 'Yes, it is so,' but no one else volunteered it. The feeling that twins are unnatural is general.

Part of the fearful quality of twins is their heaviness (*ubusito*), and friends and relatives drink medicines that they may be heavy also, and able to meet them.

When twins are born we drink medicine before we meet the parents, it is as if we were light, our bodies have not strength to escape their illness. So we treat ourselves with medicines that we also may be heavy in the belly, that we may have strength to escape their illness.

[1] *Umpulo*: the open swept place between lines of houses in a village.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The *ilibalaga* is to make the mother's relatives one blood with 845
the daughter's children. 'The food which each of the parents brings to relatives is the blood of the lineage (*lyo ilopa lya kikolo kyabo*) that they may have one body (*ukuti baje mbili gumo*). They do not look at one another when they take the *ilibalaga* because the blood [of the two lineages] has not yet met.'

The statements of two doctors, the one from Selya and the other a Kukwe, throw a little more light on the symbolism of the various actions. Mwakionde (of Selya) replied to a question about why the parents of twins only eat the middle bananas in a bunch:

> Those of the sides belong to Kyala, because the twin was with Kyala; Kyala brooded over him, he came to them and gave them two children. After two days they throw away those bananas on the side, they throw them behind the huts, where they throw the rubbish of twins. . . . That means: may Mbasi be driven away when he comes to look at the children, may he be driven away to the rubbish heap behind the huts.
>
> QUESTION: Why are the parents not allowed to call out?
>
> MWAKIONDE: When we give each other medicines to drink? Since you have borne twins we do not meet one another. It's taboo to call out.
>
> QUESTION: Snatching food from one another?
>
> MWAKIONDE: They spread meat and cooked bananas on leaves of plantain and sweet banana. The doctor sprinkles powdered medicine, then we all snatch. Then the doctor gathers up the rubbish (*imindu*), those leaves, and throws them away behind the huts.
>
> QUESTION: But why the snatching?
>
> MWAKIONDE: If we do not snatch from one another our legs swell.
>
> QUESTION: The running to the pasture?
>
> MWAKIONDE: I myself have borne twins, you are my relative. When they have shaved my hair in the house, when you come with a shield to the doorway, 'Come out, Mwakionde,' you cry. 'War has come!' Then I go out. You give me the shield at the doorway. I run off with it. Another comes and snatches it, and another and another. It's to help the legs. Women do it afterwards, and then cry the war-cry. If I just meet a twin then Mbasi is angry and says: 'Why do you kill your fellow by just meeting him?' I am ill, I have diarrhœa, my legs swell, and my face swells, but sometimes the sickness returns to the parent of twins and he himself is ill.

KAKUNE (a Kukwe): In European times we do not fear; we drink [177]
medicine, that is all; but of old we feared very much. At the coming out 845
(*ukusoka*) beer is brewed and the people and relatives drink it, and then 833
in the night the man and wife, secluded in the hut, have intercourse,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 and the doctor stands outside at the door. The doctor asks: 'Is it suc-
833 cessful? [i.e. can you have intercourse with her?]' and the man says: 'No, it is not successful.' Then all we *abanyago* (priests, officiants), the fathers of the girl who are there, and the fathers of the man, pray, in words only [i.e. without blowing out water], saying: 'Father, support us, Grandfather, support us, Kyala, support us, let not the ritual go on for ever.' And then the man is able to eject, and he tells the doctor: 'It's all right now.'

845 The disease comes from the twin birth (*ilipasa*) when a couple have
753 had twins (*bapasile*). If the relatives speak with them or tread in their footsteps when they [the relatives] are empty (*bwasi*), not having drunk medicine, then their legs will swell up and they will have diarrhœa. No, they do not say that the private parts will swell, only the legs. The refusal of the seed to come is due to the shades (*imindu*). If a man has angered his father or mother who are alive, or if they are dead and he gives nothing to his sister, then those below, *balungu*, are angry. *Imindu* catches hold of them and then when he begets twins he will have trouble at the ritual.

845 The semen refuses to come also if the girl has angered her parents,
833 or if her husband has angered them. It's *imindu*. This copulation is an essential part of the ritual. If the parents of twins do not do this and you meet them afterwards, your legs will swell and dysentery will set in. The fearful ones [the parents of twins] have a fire and create sickness in us. We say: 'Kyala has loved [*sic*] you, he has created you so that you bear twin children. Now we speak with you.'

845 Yes, the old people said: 'Kyala and those below.' They said those below beg Kyala to give them two children. This was said of old, before the Europeans came. One who has himself had twins will not fear his relative who has twins for he says: 'I also am heavy (*ndi nsito*), I am a fearful one, a parent of twins myself.' No one fears the twins themselves, but their parents are feared.

The child that follows twins (*ndili*), does not anoint himself at any later twin ritual. It is said that he finished before because he followed twins.

When the parents of twins leave the hut they run with a lighted piece of thatch,[1] followed by all the friends and relatives; the friends and relatives call out: 'You hit us with fire [i.e. you give us the disease].' They reply: 'We are pure (*tuli belu*) [i.e. we have no disease, it is finished]. Kyala has prayed for us.'

845 And at the death of a parent of twins the relatives fear to touch the
764 corpse until the twin doctor comes and puts a medicine in the hand of the corpse and sprinkles hot medicine on the legs of the relatives—then

[1] This was not seen or mentioned in the Selya ritual.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

they take hold of the corpse. But they wait for the doctor; if they do not do so the same disease will come—a swelling of legs and diarrhœa. An ordinary corpse is not feared in this way. 845 764 [753]

Yes, a man fears to take his other wives. He says: 'If I just go to them I shall give them the disease of the twins that I begot with this wife.' The wife he takes without precaution will swell in the legs and stomach, and pass blood with her stools. He first tries to have a child with the wife who bore twins, waiting till the twins are walking about. He lies with the mother of the twins but withdraws, and then, when the children are grown, he impregnates her. He does not go to the other wives. And if he asks for another wife before trying to impregnate the mother of the twins her father will refuse. If he takes her without asking, her father will make him pay a cow. He can only ask for another wife if the mother of the twins does not conceive. For one month[1] the husband refrains altogether from intercourse, then after the ritual he goes to his wife (the mother of the twins) but does not impregnate her. . . . A man is supposed to tell the twin doctor before he begets another child with his wife. He must do it openly, and not in secret. It is taboo to do it secretly. Nothing happens, but the doctor is angry, saying: 'Why did you not tell me, the doctor, the owner of the body?' 845 842 [834]

Themes already familiar from the death and puberty–marriage rituals recur again here. The parents of twins are isolated and cleansed like mourners and nubile girls. Contact with them is held to be dangerous because 'those below'—in this case Kyala and Mbasi rather than the shades—have brooded over them, and must be driven off before normal procreation can be resumed. After their isolation the *ilibalaga*—the symbol of their ritual union—must be offered to the shades of both lineages, that of the man and that of the woman. There is also the eating of balls of porridge, the symbol, in the other rituals, of the actions of a madman, but the fear of madness was not adduced by our informants as the purpose of the twin ritual; rather it is the formidable potency which produces two children instead of one, that is the danger—'the parents of twins have a fire'—and men protect themselves against it by burning themselves with hot medicines. They 'burn the twin birth'. 845 783

[1] Presumably longer when the seclusion and ritual lasted longer.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VII

RITUALS OF MISFORTUNE

845 An abnormal birth is the most dangerous misfortune that can befall a family in Nyakyusa society, and the ritual to ward off its expected results is the most elaborate, but there are lesser misfortunes also, which may be averted by simpler rituals.

753 (*a*) *Cleansing after spearing*

682 When one man has speared another and killed him, even though the action was legitimate (as slaying an enemy in battle, or a cattle thief or an adulterer caught *in flagrante delicto*), the slayer and his relatives dare not eat together with the relatives of the slain, or enter their houses, lest they themselves, and the kinsmen of the slain also, fall ill, coughing, spitting blood, and wasting away. This sickness is known as *ulukwego*, 'the disease of spearing'.[1] Both parties are thought to suffer primarily from contact with each other and both protect themselves by drinking medicines, but they drink separately, each engaging a doctor to treat them. We were told:

[763] If one man kills another it does not finish. He begets children and they die; an autopsy is performed and reveals fighting with spears (*isengene*)[2] The disease may not injure the slayer or his children, but the relatives with whom he eats and drinks, and so also on the other side; it may not hurt the children of the dead man, but those relatives with whom his children eat and drink.

We all fell ill, especially the brothers of the slain. The murderer always remembered to drink the medicine because he knew that he had killed someone, but when your brother was slain perhaps you forgot to drink the medicine. Then, afterwards, if you drank beer with someone, not knowing that it was he who had killed your brother, you fell ill.

783 The manner of treatment is as follows:

If I have killed someone they take me to a waterfall and make me

[1] *Ingwego*: a spear. [2] *Ukusegana*: to fight together with spears.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

vomit by tickling the back of my throat with a hen's feather, while I 783
am standing under the fall with the water coming down on my head. The blood of him you have killed is in the waterfall. May it not come! May it all go out of the body! You vomit because it is there in the body. May it go out! Then a medicine is cooked and the legs of the slayer and his relatives are scalded with it. It is the medicine of twins: the twin medicine and the spearing medicine are one because they are a rejection of the blood. When people's legs have been splashed then we all shave; that is to drive away him whom we have killed.

But even after such treatment the kin of the slayer and the slain 783
fear to eat together. 'We remain enemies. If we eat with them it 602
makes us thin.'

Those who drink protective medicines are the agnatic kin of the slayer and the slain, their mothers' kin (*abipwa*) and their wives, but not their affines. 'Those who must be treated are wives, and blood relatives but not affines. Affines are of different blood, but wives are of your flesh.'

The spearing ritual is not a joint ritual in which a large group 783
of kin participate; married men, even brothers, make their own arrangements for taking protective medicine.

We do not meet together with all our relatives, the descendants of one man, no, it is not like the twin ritual. We drink it each man with his wives and children in his house. If I have a married brother he also goes to a doctor to ask for medicines for himself. He seeks his own doctor, not the one to whom I went. We drink separately, we do not meet together when we drink.

Only if a daughter had been given in compensation for a murder 783
(as sometimes happened) and later he who married her took mar- 682
riage cattle to her father to establish kinship, then, our informants said, the two parties should drink the 'medicine of spearing' (*umkota gwa lukwego*) together.

(*b*) *Rotting the ropes*

A man who has been bound with ropes (*ingoje*), or has committed 753
suicide by hanging,[1] or raided cattle and tethered them, is also 681

[1] What the incidence of suicide is among the Nyakyusa we do not know. The Rev. Merensky, one of the first Europeans to live in the area, speaks of it being 'not uncommon'. We recorded two cases: one of a man whose wife and children had died; the other a woman forced to leave her lover and marry against her will. X, a Christian whom we knew well, swore to his pagan elder brother that he would commit suicide if his brother insisted on the pagan practice of performing an autopsy on the body of their dead sister. [762]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

753 681 believed to be a danger to his kin and descendants, but in a manner somewhat different from the one who has killed another. The sickness is thought to come from the ropes and is called *ingoje* after them.

Mwaikambo explained:

[783] If one member of a family commits suicide by hanging then his surviving relatives, if they do not drink a medicine, will die of the 'ropes', always. If a man hangs himself all his relatives fear; if a woman only her children.

Kasitile's wife, Kiluleli, had borne ten children, but all save one had died. He said:

It is because of the ropes of her father. They bound him at Tukuyu; he died in gaol; it is those ropes which are killing my children. I said to her father [i.e. the heir]: 'Let us go to divine,' but he has not yet agreed to do so.

The death of Mukwabila, a junior kinsman of the Chief Mwaipopo, whose funeral we attended, was attributed to the ropes used to tether cattle raided by his grandfather. Kasitile, himself a distant agnatic kinsman, explained this case also:

One of the fathers of Mukwabila was killed by the hill people. They seized him on the road. So in revenge Mwamusiku, the father of [317] Mukwabila, took twenty cows belonging to the hill people as they passed north, coming from the salt lick. This was long ago. Then Mukwabila's father omitted to kill a cow for those who had helped him to secure the cows. So they were angry and brought *ingoje*—the disease of ropes—upon him. After seizing the cattle he moved to Mwambebule's country in the hills and he was quite well, but then he came back to live here, first sending two cows to the Chief Mwaipopo, but killing none for the people, who were angry and said: 'Why does he not kill for us? What sort of chief is he?' He got weak and fell ill and died. They [763] did not perform an autopsy, saying it was forbidden to do it on a chief, and his son died also and was not examined, but now when the younger son died, Mwaipopo said: 'Let us examine him so that we may know.' And it is that old *ingoje*. . . .

The sickness of ropes (*ingoje*) is of three sorts coming from: (1) the suicide (by hanging) of a relative long ago; (2) the binding of a man by other people, as distinct from a man binding himself; and (3) the shocked astonishment of men and their breath. In dreams they put the sickness of ropes into his stomach, they say: 'May the sickness of ropes [828] come into his stomach.' The sickness of ropes lies in wait for an heir. A man dies and the sickness comes on his heir, others are all right; so it

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

goes on. Mwamusiku was never bound, but we say it was that sickness 753
of the ropes of the cattle that he seized from the hill people. Perhaps the 681
people of that country were shocked, and the sickness is due to their breath, to witchcraft. Perhaps the owners of the cattle took the ropes they had used for tying up the cattle which were stolen, to a doctor to be cooked with medicine. We have not discovered the details yet, we [787]
have not yet been to divine; the divination will tell us, however. But the medicine for rotting the ropes (*imbasyo*) is the same for all these illnesses from ropes, so we cook it immediately, before going to divine. We divine when we clear away the litter. The cooking of medicine at the grave now is to rot him who has died that the sickness of ropes (*ingoje*) may not come on us. Yes, only the heir fears to die, but we others fear lest we fall ill, coughing. The sickness of ropes does not kill us, but makes us ill and thin. Yes, I drank and ate the medicine myself. After the divination we drink another medicine, in beer, not the *itemelo* beer. They brew another lot just for the medicine.

We saw the drinking of medicine 'to rot the ropes' at Mukwa- 783
bila's funeral. He was buried at Kasitile's homestead and Kasitile 764
was organizing the proceedings. The doctor dug a hole at the foot of the grave and put into it a length of green wood which projected a foot or so above the level of the ground. On this was balanced a pot, and a fire was lighted beneath it. In the pot she boiled certain leaves and roots. She took a large drinking calabash, put in some ash from a fire-brand, added some of the same species of leaves as had gone into the pot, and stirred up the mixture with water. This mixture was drunk by the relatives present and fifteen or twenty leaf cups were made to send to those who had not come. Medicated porridge was also made and some was eaten by the relatives present.

Then the pot was taken off the fire. We were told: 'We are praying (*tulipakwiputa*). We want to take the pot off the fire.' No words were said, but the medicines were taken out of the pot by the deceased's father's sister (the oldest surviving member of the lineage) to prepare more porridge for those relatives who had not attended, and the officiant poured the water into a hole which she made in the middle of the grave. She covered it again with earth.

While the officiant was preparing the medicine at the grave, Kasitile, who was helping her, said to a half-brother of the deceased:

Pray earnestly with this medicine, be on good terms with others.
HALF-BROTHER: Me? What case was there against me?

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 KASITILE: You sons of Musika had a case against you . . . you fought.
764 HALF-BROTHER: But that case concerned a woman.

A discussion of the case followed.

KASITILE: Friend, we pray here. Listen carefully.
HALF-BROTHER: I have spoken and not concealed anything.
KASITILE: That's what I say, let us pray well.
HALF-BROTHER: I performed the ritual for him. Let him die with his hair.
SISTER: Let us confess [lit. vomit] we were angry.
HALF-BROTHER: Yes, it is so, we were angry. The cow made us angry.

783 Mwaisumo described a treatment with *imbosyo* medicines which differed slightly from the one we saw and involved the slaughter of a sheep; according to his account the medicines are coiled in the pot like ropes, and the participants are washed under a waterfall, though they are not made to vomit like the relatives of a murderer. Doubtless the details vary with the officiant, but the principle that medicines are used to rot the ropes remains constant.

754 (c) *Protection against sorcery or vengeance magic*
789 Sickness caused by sorcery or vengeance magic is believed to
783 spread among kinsmen in much the same way as sickness due to the shedding of blood or binding with ropes, and the ritual performed as a protection against it is very similar to the ritual for 'rotting the ropes' just described. We saw it performed after the death of E. who died on 23 March 1935. Her elder brother (heir to her father) and her husband, who were pagans, wished to perform an autopsy, but her younger brother, a Christian, prevented their doing so. Soon after her burial her mother and husband fell very ill and three weeks later (April 13) the five-year-old son of her elder brother M. died. An autopsy was performed on the child and the diagnosis was that his mother's father, after quarrelling with M., his son-in-law, had drunk medicines to bring death to M's children. M. explained: 'My wife has already buried two
[763] children. This boy is the third. Previously we found evidence of *ilyepa*[1] at the autopsy, and this time it is the same. The disease
000 comes from my wife's father.' However, when M. went to confirm

[1] *Ilyepa* is a medicine alleged to be drunk by a senior relative, when he is angry, which, if his anger is justified, will cause his junior relative to suffer in his own person or that of his children.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

However, when M. went to confirm
the cause of both deaths with a famous diviner, Sambo, he was 787
told that the boy's death was due to the anger of neighbours who 754
had not been feasted as they should have been, but E's death was due to the sorcery of her first husband. M's report of the divinations is worth quoting:

I have just been to Sambo in the country of Swebi, he has divined and he tells me that the death of E. was due to the sorcery (*ubutege*) of Mwakyusa, her first husband. He also told me the name of the doctor from whom Mwakyusa got the medicine to kill her, the man is K.; he is both a doctor and a smith in the country of X. He told me that Mwakyusa was angry because, when he tore her mouth, he paid to us a cow in damages; he said: 'I have paid the cow, I should have my wife. But they have taken her back and eaten my cow.' E. had left all her things in his house, her bark-cloths, her cloths, everything. Sambo tells me that Mwakyusa took all these things to K. and spoke four names, saying: 'I wish E. my wife, M., and one of M's wives [mother of the dead child] to die. If these die I shall be happy.' So the doctor prepared a medicine which he put into a calabash. He did this while saying the names, and he addressed the names to the cloths, as if one of them was E., one was me, and so on. If E. had left nothing behind he would have had to send a man up with medicine to our place.

He told me to go to Mwakionde, who is a great doctor. Mwakionde 783
will come to my place and cook medicine, we shall all drink it, not only the three people named but all my distant relatives will collect to drink it, N., E's second husband will come too. About the child, Sambo denies that it is *ilyepa*, he says it is due to the wrong-doing of her father. At first my wife was married when very young, but her husband went away and left her, she never lived with him. So when she grew up she said: 'I am tired of being alone, I am going to get married.' So she came to me. I paid five cows to Mwandosia (the chief) who is the mother's brother of her father. Her own father is dead. She has a father by inheritance, but Mwandosia had looked after her a great deal, so I sent the cattle to him, and he sent them on to the elder brother of her first husband. But her father's heir said: 'That finishes the cows to be paid to her husband, but I want one for myself to make six.' Well, at first I was involved in a lawsuit and did not bring the cow, so her father was angry; he came and took her back home; then after a time I found the cow and took it to him, and he sent her back to me, but he did not, as the custom is, cook food for my friends of the village. He should have cooked some chickens and brewed some beer, so that my friends would be happy and say 'Thank you'. So now my friends are angry, they say: 'Why does he not bring his daughter back properly? Perhaps he is not her father!' The breath comes from my friends, they

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 are angry because of food. If I had not given him the cow it would have been his anger, now it is that of my friends. At the other deaths the doctors diagnosed *ilyepa*, but Sambo denies this. It is just the offence to my neighbours. He says I am to send the woman to him, and he will put her right himself.

A month after E's death (April 25) Mwakionde, the doctor, came to her elder brother's home to perform the ritual of protection. He and her second husband were next-door neighbours. The preparation and drinking of medicines was at her brother's homestead, but they moved to her husband's (where she was buried) to treat the grave. Beer had been prepared and the doctor added medicine to it. The mother of E., and one of her brother's wives, ground millet from their own crop, letting it fall on freshly-cut leaves of the sweet banana. This millet was used for the medicine. Meantime, one of the doctor's assistants opened the grave, digging down until he reached the cave in which the corpse had been placed. Then medicine to cause rotting (*imbosyo*), made with the lees of the beer, was poured in and eight pots of water. Mwakionde explained that 'opening the grave is to rot the poison in the body' and the water is put in that it may reach the corpse—the amount depends on the depth of the grave. Then the grave was filled in again and three small lengths of root, anointed with red pigment, were stuck into the fresh earth. These, Mwakionde said, were 'to close the way so that if the medicine comes again it will be turned back'. 'All three pieces of root are to close the way so that if that man comes again to work sorcery we shall escape, if Kyala keeps us.'

Then the doctor prepared a pot with about twenty roots, two varieties of spiny cactus, one impaled on the other, six packets of medicine, and water, and set it to boil on a fire made near the doorway of her brother's hut. The fire was lighted by friction by the male kinsmen, and the old fire was cleared out of the hut. A small bull was killed and its blood added to the brew. Porridge was made from this and the specially ground millet, and eaten by the participants. Then each of them, beginning with her elder brother, was scarified on the back, arms, legs, and feet and medicine from a horn rubbed in.

783 All through Mwakionde spoke only of *protection*, but others,
764 speaking of the rite of filling the grave with water, explained it as a means of making the sorcery recoil on the sender, causing his death, and there is little doubt that this was one object of the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ritual, though not openly admitted. The younger brother pro- 783
tested at the inclusion of the cactus stems and it is likely that they 754
were an ingredient intended to injure the sender of sorcery.

(*d*) *Prayer to the shades*

Misfortune is also believed to come from the anger of senior 578
relatives, living and dead. If a junior has angered his senior kins- 775
man the senior is said to 'mutter over the fire'. 'He is so angry 754
that he cannot speak intelligible words, he murmurs and mumbles to himself. . . .' 'I crouch over the fire in the evening and mutter to myself in a low voice: "I am astonished and hurt at my son. Did I not provide marriage-cattle for him? And he does this to me!" ' Then the shades hear him and the wrong-doer falls ill, or is sterile, or his crops or fishing fail. 'No man has the power of making the shades hear like this save Father (*tata*)—he mutters alone and the shades hear him—all of us, pagans and Christians alike, believe in the power of Father to mutter, because whenever a man wrongs his father something always happens to him—he finds blessing nowhere.' The 'father' is a man's own father who begot him, or his heir, or, in a lesser degree, his father's elder full brother, or any kinsman who has given marriage-cattle on his behalf. 'If a man has given me cattle for marriage then he has authority over me (*jo mpala gwangu*)[1] for cattle are important (*imbala*).'

If a senior is at fault (for example, an heir who neglects his wards) the shades may, in theory, punish him also, but more often any misfortune that befalls him is attributed to the just wrath of his neighbours who watch over the interests of the dead man's children. The idea that misfortunes spring from the anger of the living is strong; indeed, one of our best informants, Angombwike, maintained that 'the shades never act alone', and Mwakwelebeja, an old man, said: 'It is really we who get angry, but the shades help a little because they are always with us; we always dream of them.'

The shades are 'the fathers' (*batata*), and prayers are addressed 775
primarily to the men of the lineage, but a father's sister is also 782
classed as a 'father'. Some informants denied that a mother could bring sickness on her children:

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Women never murmur against their children, only the father, the 775

[1] Literally, 'he is my great one'.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 man. Women murmur but it only makes them sick themselves
775 [laughter]. But my father's sister (*unnasenga*) can murmur, she is a man like my father. . . . If my mother is old and I do not care for her she will murmur and fall sick herself, she will never make me sick. My mother is no relative in my homestead, she is no relative to the shades.

However, Mwakwelebeja (a very old and conservative man) held that 'People sometimes say: "My mother beneath is angry" though it's not common', and Kasitile was quite positive that a mother was also a shade with power to inflict misfortune, as the following conversation shows:

QUESTION: What shades influence a man or woman?

KASITILE AND HIS YOUNGEST WIFE: *Imindu* of father is there, and *imindu* of mother. Yes, indeed, *imindu* of mother exists. Once I had not put beer in the house and I fell ill. The divination said: 'It is *imindu* of your mother. She is angry not to find anything in your house.' Because we chiefs always put beer in a little calabash in the house, it stays there always.

QUESTION: When it goes bad?

KASITILE: We put some more. There is a little millet flour there now. Sometimes we put flour, sometimes beer. And when I come to die they bury beer with me. . . . Once the offering was not there, and my mother who was dead came to look and did not find anything. Then she went to father, who was dead, and said: 'I went to our child. His house was without anything.' Then father said: 'Let us go and look!' They did not find anything, then they shook me up. Then the oracle said: 'It is the *imindu* of your mother.'

QUESTION: And a wife?

KASITILE: Both her father and her mother punish [lit. hit] her at their place, even though she is with me, also they punish her.

QUESTION: But your shades?

KASITILE: How can they punish in-laws? They do not punish her, but the child whom she has borne, their grandchild, him they punish.

[593] Though Kasitile and others denied that the husband's shades could punish a wife, nevertheless she suffers from their anger through the child, through a difficult labour, or through the beer she brews going bad.

578 PYAGILAMO: It is said that when a woman who has quarrelled with
775 her husband is brewing beer and it goes bad, that means the shades are angry. The shades of the husband have made the beer go bad. The husband has murmured and the shades have heard. When a wife is
[845] pregnant it is taboo for her to quarrel with her husband; she will have a difficult labour. The husband murmurs and the shades hear. The

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

difficult labour is from this, not from adultery. And in a case of difficult labour her husband does pray to his shades.

All were agreed that a woman is in the power of the shades of her father's lineage and if her father is angry with her, or with his son-in-law her husband, his shades afflict her, causing her to be barren or to have miscarriages, or ailing children. Hence a woman who is barren or ill, or whose children are sickly, often returns to her father's homestead so that he may pray for her, and she sleeps there on the night of the ritual, for the shades come by night. More rarely, if she has quarrelled with her father, she goes outside her husband's homestead and, facing towards her father's home, she prays herself on the pathway. But in all the cases we traced in which a woman's ancestors were believed to have made her, or her child, ill, there was a dispute between her father (or his heir) and her husband over marriage-cattle or the bull of puberty; and we were told that her father's shades 'are angry only if marriage-cattle have not been paid, and for no other reason', thus it seems that the control of her father's shades over a married woman is in fact somewhat limited.

The characteristic illness sent by the shades is sores round the mouth, and fever—an illness which is not acute and clears up quickly. These symptoms are immediately interpreted as *imindu*, affliction from the shades. Beer going sour before it is mature is also *imindu*, usually thought to be caused by quarrels between husband and wife. But almost any misfortune, mild or serious, is interpreted as *imindu* if members of the lineage are conscious of quarrels between themselves, or with their spouses or fathers-in-law.

The ritual consists in the reconciliation of the living in the presence of the dead and, if the misfortune is serious, a sacrifice of flesh, fish, or fowl. The junior begs pardon of his senior who acknowledges his anger and expresses forgiveness by taking a mouthful of water from his calabash cup (*ulupindi*) and blowing it out (*ukwiputa*) in his sacred banana grove. For the patient to recover, or the blight on crops or fish-traps to be removed, *the senior kinsman must confess his anger*, and spitting, or blowing out water, is a symbol of confession and forgiveness. Mwaisumo was explicit on the matter: 'If a father is angry with his son or daughter he may say, some day: "I forgive you now" and spit on the ground: all the anger that is in him comes out like spit.' *Ukuswa* means both 'to

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 spit' and 'to forgive'. *Ukuputa* means 'to blow out water' and *ukwiputa* (the reflexive form) means 'to pray', with the implication of confessing whatever anger or grudge a man may have in his heart. Full confessions both by the wrongdoer and by seniors who have been angry are held to be essential to the lifting of the misfortune.

775 The man who prays represents the living members of the lineage
783 and he calls on his immediate seniors, who are dead, for support.
613 'You, Father, you my elder brother, you so-and-so (his grandfather) stand by me, help me, do not be angry, here I am, your child, your younger brother. I am above here, it was not I who killed you but Kyala alone.'

He may also remonstrate with the shades, asking why they should afflict the living. *Ukwikemesya* (lit. 'to cause oneself to blame', from the root *ukukemela* 'to scold' or 'to blame') is used to mean 'to sacrifice', and the conception of remonstrating with, or scolding, troublesome shades is an element of Nyakyusa sacrifice.

783 If beer has been prepared, a libation is poured out either on the
782 hearth-bricks or in the banana grove nearest the door of the house, which is used by the owner as his sacred grove (*ikijinja kyake ikikemo*). If an animal is sacrified the blood must soak into the earth for, as already indicated, the 'earth is the shade's'. Furthermore, the rest of the beer or the fish and the *ija mmapa* meat from the foreleg of the beast[1] is left overnight on the ground in the sacred grove, more rarely under the officiant's bed, and eaten or drunk in the morning by young boys of the lineage, grandsons[2] of the last deceased, for they are 'the comrades of the shades'. Other people may finish up the beer or meat, but wives of the lineage may not touch it: they seclude themselves in their huts and remain silent during the ritual, for 'they fear their fathers-in-law (*bikutila abakamwana*)'.

783 The proper person to approach the shades is (among com-
613 moners) the senior member of a lineage of three generations; but if he lives at a considerable distance—perhaps twenty miles or more away—then a junior may pray on his own account, only asking help from his senior in cases of serious illness. 'If father and son, or brothers, live far apart, as here in Selya and at Mwaya

[171] [1] The cut is the same as the Xhosa *intsonyama* which is sacred in a Pondo sacrifice. cf. M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 249. Nyakyusa informants denied that the gall is of importance in their ritual as it is among the Nguni and Nuer.

[2] One case was recorded of a son of the last deceased, still a small child, drinking the sacrificial beer.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(forty miles away), then, if a child is a little ill, you pray yourself, 783
but if it is very ill you send a message to your elder.' The senior 613
knows the shades (*agimenye imindu*) and prays alone.

The wives of a lineage avoid everything connected with offerings to the shades in the same way as they avoid a father-in-law, even though their husband's father is not yet dead and they do not avoid his living grandfather: 'If a cock has grown up at my homestead my wives do not eat it. It is taboo. It is the shades'. But my wives may eat a hen. When the cock crows it rouses the house. If a wife eats it she will die soon and people will say: "She has eaten a cock." ' A wife also avoids bananas from the sacred grove, and sacrificial meat and beer, and milk from a cow that has looked into a grave; she must stay silent and secluded in her hut when prayer is made in the grove, and is forbidden to sleep by the hearth at night.

Mwaisumo's account of 'prayer when a child is ill' and descrip- 783
tions of four particular rituals will make the procedure clearer. 775

MWAISUMO: Our regular custom here, when a child is ill with sores on the mouth from *imindu*, is to pray to the shades (*ukwiputa kubasyuka*), especially to my father, or my elder brother if I have inherited from him. Before I pray I go to a diviner. We consult the oracle, and he tells [787] me: 'It is *imindu*, your fathers are angry because you have not performed such and such a ritual, perhaps because you have not killed cattle at the funeral of your brother, or your mother's brother, perhaps you have not performed the later death ritual for them.' So when I come home I tell my relatives and wives all the diviner has told me. Then they complain (*ukwijaja*) saying: 'Why are they angry? Take water and complain in the evening.'

So at dusk, when the cattle come home, I take my calabash cup (*ulupindi*), and water, and a live coal from the fire, and put it in the calabash. I go out to the banana grove of my father where I always pray. I take a mouthful of water, I blow it out and say: 'You, Father, you so-and-so, you so-and-so, why are you angry, Father? Since you left me I have nourished the children. How have I wronged you? Even though I have wronged you, forgive me, Father, may the child recover. Stand by me.' When I have finished I enter the house, and next day I may find the child a little better.

Before I pray, if the diviner has told me that they are angry because I have stinted a certain brother of something, I go to tell him and beg his pardon for neglecting him, my brother. Sometimes, if it is a serious case concerning a cow that I have not given him, I seek for a cow with which to ask his forgiveness.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 The diviner does not divine by himself, but he who goes to inquire of him says: 'Perhaps it is so-and-so who is angry, perhaps it is so-and-so because I did not give him such and such a thing, perhaps it is so-and-so, I have heard a rumour that he is angry.' Then if he mentions someone whom the diviner has also heard say that he is angry because his brother has not given him something, the diviner assents, saying: 'Yes, it is that.'

783 MWAISELAGE (a middle-aged pagan): When I inherited from Mwakisisile, my elder brother, I was just about puberty, and my senior brother [i.e. half-brother], Mwakasoule, took me to his place with all the wives, to bring me up. He was there in Mwangomo's country. I went to his home and two years running I hoed millet and it refused to grow. Then my sister said: 'Consult an oracle and see why it is.' So I went to the diviner who said: 'Your elder brother is angry because you left his grave, because you do not sweep his grave.' So I asked what to do and he told me to get millet and brew beer. So I brewed beer and left a little in a calabash overnight in the banana grove, and prayed with water. Also I left a cock. I killed a cock because I had no bull, and I left all the meat there also overnight. Then the next day the children, Angombwike and others [Angombwike was a son of the deceased] drank the beer and ate the cock. They ate all the cock, and took the first drink of the beer, and I finished it off. The diviner had told me to let the children begin first. Then next year the millet was very plentiful. I never did it again because I have never had trouble over food. If the crops had not grown I would have done it again.

593 AMBILIKILE (a Christian teacher): When I was a boy my mother's
783 brother once went to fish and caught two fish in his trap. He gave them to two of his wives, the third being absent. When she came back she was angry, saying: 'They have stinted me of food'. For a long time after that he found no fish in his traps. At last he consulted an oracle. The oracle attributed it to the third wife, because she had been angry. People said that she had been angry, and that the shades of her husband were angry too, and had stopped the fish entering the trap. So my mother's brother went to the wife and said: 'The oracle attributed it to you, were you angry?' She admitted it, saying: 'I was angry, but now I am satisfied. It's all right.' So then my mother's brother took his calabash cup and went in the evening to the banana grove and prayed with water. Next morning, before noon, when men always go to examine the fish traps, he found his traps full and overflowing with fish: they were leaping about inside. Indeed, it was very remarkable. I was there, for I grew up at my mother's brother's home.

Yes, the shades hear wives, though wives never pray to them; they listen to their anger.

The first catch after such a prayer is offered to the shades.

783 MWANDISI: The fish, when they have been cooked, remain overnight

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

in the banana grove. No one eats any. Then in the morning the children 783
go there and eat. Are they not the comrades of the shades? But for us grown people it is taboo. We eat later on. That is the old custom. And formerly no one dried the fish which first entered the trap. They cooked and ate them in the house with the children. . . . If they put them to dry in the sun the shades were angry, saying: 'Where are the fish we gave you? We do not see them in the house.'

KASITILE: Sometimes it is her father's anger which prevents a girl 842
from becoming pregnant. Perhaps she runs off with men repeatedly, 578
then her father is angry with her. He says: 'She is squandering my cattle.' He complains (*ikwibunesya*) with his wives at the hearth and calls to mind his fathers, the shades. Then the girl does not conceive.

If later on the father forgives her, he sends a messenger to her hus- 783
band, saying: 'Send me your wife, let her come and we will pray.' 842
Then, after calling his fellows and killing a bull, he takes meat from the top of the foreleg (*mmapa*) and cuts it into pieces and puts a piece into the mouth of the girl, and she eats. They say that it is to drive the shades from the body of the girl, the shades who have caught hold of her fecundity. Some of the meat from the *mmapa* is thrown down, and the children pick it up and eat it. It is taboo for others to take and eat it.

FIBOMBE (a Christian elder): Perhaps your father has died and people 842
have come to marry your sister; and perhaps the sister of your father 578
(*unyokosenga*) claims one cow, saying: 'I am your father, give me one.' 783
If you grudge it, then there is much murmuring which is heard by the shades, by your brother and your father who died. And so if your sister does not conceive people say: 'They grudged the father's sister, the shades are angry.' Then you seek a fowl and beer, and send them to your father's sister, and she puts the fowl under her bed that the shades may know it. She speaks, saying: 'Indeed I was angry.' The shades hear. That fowl opens the door; she knows that the cow is near, it is coming. She confesses everything (*ikusosya syosa*) on receiving the fowl; this she speaks in her house. You go later with the cow to bring your sister to your father's sister. Then if the girl bears at her husband's everyone says: 'Indeed it was so.'

And if your sister has run off with a man and you are angry, the shades hear. You say: 'I do not know if she will conceive there.' Then she does not bear and people say: 'Let her take her husband to her brother.' If the husband is rich perhaps he seeks two cows and a bull calf, but the cows for bringing back are not sent first, a hen is sent first with a message, saying: 'I come on such and such a day.' The hen is put under the bed. The shades know about it. I, the brother, who was angry, pray, and she bears a child. But this does not happen among Christians; there is nothing of it.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 One minor quarrel occurred at a funeral we attended. Kasitile
578 was given only a little meat and he complained, saying: 'Why do
783 you give me a leg, I the owner of the funeral?' He took umbrage and left the funeral with his wives. Then they went to his home to say: 'We are in the wrong, we made a mistake in dividing.' Then Kasitile was satisfied and prayed over a medicine (*nkota*) which they cooked to eat. If he did not pray the medicine would go bad and would not cook. He said in his prayer: 'I have no case against them, let the medicine cook, the young men just played with the meat, it is not a serious case, may the medicine cook at once.'

(*e*) *Reconciliation*

828 A distinction is made by the Nyakyusa between misfortune due
783 to the anger of senior relatives and that due to the anger of neighbours,[1] and the rituals performed are theoretically distinct, though in practice they merge into one another.

578 A man fears the anger of his fellow villagers who murmur
783 against him when he has offended them, and whose cold breath is believed to fall upon him and chill him with fever or cause a paralysis. Mature men or women fear only the anger of their own neighbours, but a young man and his wife also fear their parents' neighbours. The ritual performed to lift the curse of neighbours consists in acknowledging guilt and making an offering of beer or meat for them to feast upon; then, while they eat or drink, they *admit their anger* and express goodwill.

The doctor comes beforehand and gives the sick man medicine to drink. A cow is killed. People are there and say: 'May this medicine help our child.' To drink without people there is like continuing the quarrel. People are there and they speak (*ukwijaja*), saying: 'Someone was angry, but no one is angry now. May this medicine help you.' They drink beer and eat meat saying: 'We are not angry now.' Those who were angry are present and they are satisfied. *Ukwijaja* is to speak many things, and it is like praying (*ukwiputa*) but without actually taking water and spitting.

578 Sometimes responsibility is fixed squarely on *either* shades *or*
775 neighbours, but since neighbours are said to 'help a father to
783 murmur' against an erring son, and since they may share in beef or beer offered to the shades, the rituals merge into one another, and some offerings seem to be intended to pacify *both* the shades and the neighbours, though in Nyakyusa theory the sources of

[1] Discussed in relation to the age-village in *Good Company*, pp. 96–108.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

misfortune and the rituals are distinct. In theory, when the shades 578
are angry the essential offering is that made in the sacred banana 775
grove or on the hearth; it is eaten by the grandsons of the most 783
recently dead, and whether neighbours partake or not depends upon the generosity of the officiant; whereas when neighbours are angry there is no offering in the grove or at the hearth, the neighbours are feasted, admit anger and express forgiveness.

However, neighbours are slow to admit responsibility (for to 789
curse someone comes close to witchcraft) and in some cases there is both a formal feast for the neighbours and a prayer to the shades, and it is left uncertain where final responsibility rests. The following texts illustrate this:

MWAIKAMBO: It is the custom among us Nyakyusa to marry many 595
wives, mature ones and young ones, so if a man has sons at his home it 837
sometimes happens that one of them makes love to one of his father's wives. Perhaps they commit adultery in secret, perhaps he runs off with her to a distant chiefdom. Then the father breaks off relations with him.

The son, wherever he is, learns that he has been cursed by his father 593
and his body becomes like goose flesh. If the son is wise he gathers his 789
property and returns to his father. He takes a friend with him and goes 783
into the house of one of his father's neighbours. His friend and his 621
father's neighbour speak together. 'I have come to return unto my father because I have done wrong.' He tells the neighbour what they have brought to offer the father—usually a cow and a bull. Then that neighbour seeks three comrades or perhaps four or five, and they go to pacify their irate fellow, saying: 'Our child has returned. He knows that he has done wrong towards you, but we have received him because he has confessed humbly and begged forgiveness.' His father refuses furiously and almost spears himself in his passion. His fellows pacify him for the whole day, or perhaps two or three days, then at last he agrees. Then the young man and his fellows bring the cow and the bull. The father also calls together many of his fellows and he seeks beer and 593
cooks food. They gather together at the father's homestead and the 789
father says: 'My son has come and admitted that he has done wrong, 783
asking that I forgive him and saying: 'I did not know what I was doing, these are the cattle which I have brought', and the others agree. Then they kill the bull. They roast some meat. The father catches one side of it, the son the other and the village headman cuts it in the middle, and the father and son each eat their piece. This is the blessing (*ulusajo*), meaning that there is kinship between them now. They eat together. Then all the people eat. Also with the beer it is like this. The village headman picks a straw and puts it in the beer, hands it to the father who drinks, and then to the son. Then other people drink, and they

Z: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

593 789 783 send the son into his father's house. He walks through the whole house and the mothers acclaim him. This is the sign to show everybody that he has entered his father's house. The women call the *akalulu*. They are rejoicing because he has entered.

There are, however, some who do not return to their fathers. They remain strangers [*abandu* as opposed to *abakamu*] until their death. There is a young man at my home who took his father's wife. Where he fled to no one knows because he is still in hiding. His father separated from him altogether.

A son must always bring something and the father must collect his friends. If they just agree with one another and people do not eat anything, then the son will not be settled in well. He will be ill. They say [753] that the illness comes from the shades. If the father is angry he mutters (*ikwiburwiya*) and they hear. At first the people are not angry, but later on, when they have heard from the father about the matter, they also are angry. It is as if they help the father to mutter. Their shades are not there, only those of the father's lineage, but his shades have regard to the people. If the people do not eat anything and are not present, they are not satisfied even though the father is satisfied. The father prays to his shades alone in the evening with water in his mouth, and they pour out beer on the hearth-bricks.

764 586 783 KASITILE: If a rich commoner has died and the heir buries him with only one cow, the shades and people are angry with the heir, breath falls on his body; perhaps he falls ill, or perhaps his child falls ill. But they do not meet; people, the witches, are angry and the shades are angry; the shades because they have buried him with only one cow, people because they have not eaten meat, but the shades and people are independent of each other. The oracle says: 'The shades are angry,' it does not speak of people. It knows that people also are angry, but it speaks only of the shades. And when he makes amends he prays in the evening; the next day he calls people and kills a cow and he throws the *ijia mnapa* meat in the banana grove and says: 'Here it is, Father,' and people say: 'Indeed, he did wrong, his father was angry.' But they do not confess, saying: 'We were angry.' No, they say: 'The shades were angry.'

754 783 Another type of case is that in which 'the breath of men' is believed to have fallen on an infant because of its mother's disrespectful behaviour towards her husband's parents or husband's father's sister. When a child is thin and ailing with *ingoto*, the cure is for the mother to confess to the doctor who comes to treat the child all the rude things she has said, and provide beer (exceptionally a bull) to offer to her injured parents-in-law. They drink the beer with their neighbours and wish her well. Ambilikile's wif

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

cited a case she had seen in which the doctor smeared the child 754
with medicine and beer, and the mothers-in-law and fathers-in- 783
law of the erring woman drank the beer and said: 'All right.' T. (a Christian woman) quoted another case:

> One of my mother's co-wives swore at her mother-in-law. . . . When she bore a child it was very thin and ill, so they sought a doctor, and beat the mother and she confessed all she had said in swearing at my grandmother, her mother-in-law. She and the child were treated by the doctor and when her father saw that the child did not recover quickly he brought a cow in payment . . . it is still at my home. From that time the child recovered. If anyone says there is no such thing as the illness of *ingoto* they lie because I have seen it with my own eyes.[1]

When a junior comes to beg pardon of a senior it is the business 783
of the latter's neighbours to persuade him to receive the prodigal. 621
That was indicated in Mwaikambo's account quoted above and reaffirmed by Mwakwelebeja who cited the case of his wife's father, a youngest brother, who had run off with three of his eldest brother's widows allocated to the middle brother, *after* they had been smeared with ash and the heir had slept with them.

> When they had performed the death ritual and finished it and the widows had slept with the heir in the house and had taken the *ilibalaga* to their fathers, . . . then three of the widows ran off with the younger brother. He fled with them to Masoko and to the hills, where he lived a long time and begot children with them. Then later on he brought 'the cow of the ashes (*inombe ja mfwandelo*)' to return to his senior brother. The senior received it and killed it and poured out beer. We ate.
>
> QUESTION: Do people not refuse to receive such a cow, sometimes?
>
> MWAKWELEBEJA: No, they fear to do so, they fear people, because the wrongdoer has come to them and it is they, the neighbours, who tell the senior kinsman: 'He has come, forgive him.' If the senior refuses they will be angry with him. Also we tell him: 'See, that man has strength to beget children with these women, you will eat the cattle.' Then he agrees and says: 'Let us make friends.'

The illness that falls on a widow who rejects the heir after being smeared with the ash is 'like a curse from the ash'. Her lover, 'if he is strong and has medicines he will escape, but if he is not strong he will fall ill . . . because he takes men's lips with him [i.e. suffers from their breath].'

[1] A third case, in which the beer was brought to the woman's husband, is quoted in *Good Company*, p. 256.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VIII

THE PARTICIPANTS

(a) *Categories of participants*

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THE people who take part in rituals have been referred to repeatedly and now it is possible to define who they are. They fall into four categories: the principals, the minor actors, the congregation, and the officiants or priests. The principals are those who undergo the full ritual lest they go mad; they are always close kin, but what category of kin depends on the type of ritual and the status of the person for whom it is performed. After a death, those who *must* perform the ritual to drive away the shade are the children and grandchildren of the deceased—all of them, the widows and the heir, if a man has died, or, if it is a woman and a senior wife, the widower and her related co-wife if she has one.[1] A man does not perform the ritual for a junior wife or one he has inherited. Children of a related co-wife are treated, for the purposes of ritual, as her own children, and all must undergo the ritual, but only some of the children of other co-wives are selected to perform it. When a man dies the children of the heir perform it, but only some of the children of his other brothers and half-brothers. 'We choose some and leave the others until their own father dies.' The genealogy given on p. 273 to show who performed the ritual on a particular occasion illustrates this. A mother (unless she has been divorced) performs the ritual for all her own children, and the children of a sister who is a co-wife. A divorced woman may come to mourn her dead child at her former husband's homestead but she takes no part in the ritual. 'I, the husband, perform the ritual alone; the woman comes to weep and returns to her new husband. I, the husband, say: "The blood is mine; that bag was bought (*alyokigwa*) with cattle; she was divorced and bought with cattle again."' A man performs the ritual for a son and daughter of each wife, and grandparents perform it for some, but not all, grandchildren.

[1] Probably also the younger sister or brother's daughter who replaces her as a wife, but we have no conclusive evidence on this point.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Certain siblings perform the ritual, but not all of them. We 788
have referred already to the heir, who is commonly a dead man's 593
younger brother, and who must perform it whether he is a full brother or half-brother, and to a woman's related co-wife who may be either a younger sister or a brother's daughter. The brother or sister 'who followed at the mother's breast', i.e. the sibling immediately younger, must always perform it. Nyakyusa find it very difficult to formulate the rules—there were lively arguments between well-informed people when the question was posed —but these principles emerge from a study of those who actually participated in eight funeral rituals.

Since the funeral ritual is directed to the shades, men can only 764
perform it in the homesteads of their agnatic kinsmen, or of their 602
maternal grandfather or his heir: they can never perform it at the homestead of affines (*kubuko*) for there they are not kinsmen (*abakamu*) but in-laws (*abako*). Hence a husband performs the ritual for his senior wife at his own homestead and her father (or his heir) at his. 'According to custom "the husbands" (*abalume*) perform the ritual, then, when they have done so, she whom we have put in place of the dead comes to us and says: "Fathers, we have performed the ritual, perform it yourselves." ' We never saw a ritual of farewell to a dead woman at her father's house but believe it to be a modified form of the ritual performed at her husband's.

Because of the rules of avoidance, a father-in-law and daughter- 606
in-law cannot, together, go through a ritual which involves the 764
close proximity of the principals. When, therefore, a man performs the death ritual for a son or son's child, he performs it at his own home, and the daughter-in-law concerned does so at her husband's homestead. The widow or parents must begin, and the father or grandparents follow. Thus when Mwandisi's son's son died, the parents of the child first performed the ritual at their home and Mwandisi and his wife then followed at theirs. But in a twin ritual, where participants can be secluded, father-in-law and daughter-in-law may attend the same performance.

A woman can perform a ritual either at her father's or her hus- 788
band's (as well as at her mother's father's) and she may even per- 593
form it according to two different forms, following that of her father's lineage when she is visiting him, and that of her husband's lineage when she is performing it at his homestead.

It is possible that, on the death of a man, his sisters' children 764
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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 sometimes perform the ritual, but we lack conclusive evidence.
602 One case in which a sister's daughter of the deceased man performed the ritual was recorded, but at other funerals girls in the same relationship did not. Kakune, the doctor, asserted that a boy would perform the ritual for his mother's brother for 'he is mother, the brother of mother (*jo juba ulilumbu gwa juba*)', but in a number of cases we observed women performing the rituals for their brothers though their sons did not. A man's children may possibly perform the ritual for his sister but we traced no case of their doing so.

768 Those who drink the ritual beer when a widow returns to her
602 father's house after her union with the heir are her father and the men of his lineage—brothers, half-brothers, sons, and some of his brother's sons; the wives and children of these; and daughters of the lineage, her own sisters and half-sisters, and sisters of her father, but *not* the husbands or children of daughters of the lineage. At one *ingotolo* ritual we attended there were present eleven men of the lineage, eighteen daughters, and thirty-two wives, as well as numerous children (cf. genealogy, Table (e)).

764 When a woman has died those who come to cut the banana
593 grove and give medicated meat to her children are the *abipwa*—her brother (or his heir) and his wives.

764 The principals at a death ritual, then, are children and grand-
602 children, parents and grandparents, spouses, and certain siblings of the deceased, together with some of their children. If a woman dies, or a widow is inherited, her agnatic kin and their wives are concerned as well.

845 The group which takes protective medicine after an abnormal
602 birth is larger. All the wives and children and grandchildren of the father of twins must come, his full siblings with their children
751 and grandchildren, and the wives of his brothers, but not the husbands of his sisters; some of his half-brothers, with wives and children, some of the children of his father's brothers' sons (but not of father's brothers' daughters) and of his father's sisters' sons. On the mother's side her father, or his heirs, must take part with his wives and children, and her sisters. At the ritual for Mwakobela and his wife, previously described, we counted 136 relatives taking part, of which 24 were men, 19 boys, 33 women, 12 girls, and 35 babies (cf. genealogy, Table (a)).

845 When the mother of twins took the *ilibalaga* back to her 'father',
602 her brother (heir to her father), with his wives and children, her

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sister immediately older than herself, the sister's daughter, and the 845 602
sister immediately younger than herself, took part.

At the ritual of spearing, the principals are the children and 783
grandchildren of the slayer and the slain, their brothers, their 602
mother's kin (*abipwa*) and their wives. We were not able to watch 682
any case of treatment against *ulukwego* and are not certain exactly how far the infection is thought to spread. Our informants were agreed that the number of kinsmen concerned is less than in a twin ritual, but we traced one case in which a minor chief, Mwaisumo (B.), forbade the father of a man who had killed S., the great grandson of Mwaisumo's mother's sister, to enter his country lest he spread disease among his relatives.

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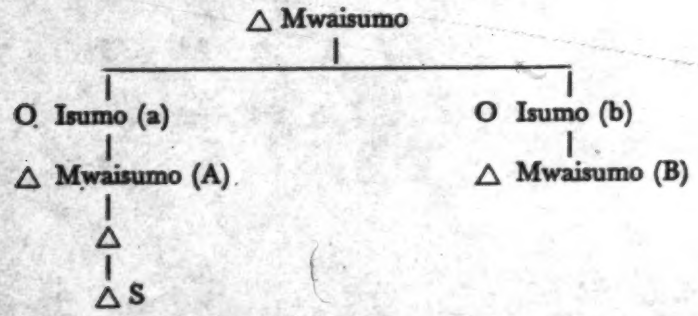

At a ritual to 'rot the ropes' those concerned are the descendants 783
of the one who has been bound and their wives, siblings and sib- 602
lings' children. At the one ritual we saw there were present 27 members of the dead man's own lineage (3 sons, 2 younger half-brothers, 1 full sister, 4 half-sisters, 3 sons, 5 daughters, 2 grandsons, 7 granddaughters), one wife, the wives of 4 sons, one father's sister's son, one son and 6 daughters of his sisters or half-sisters.

The ritual for protection against sorcery which we attended was 789
performed at the home of the senior brother (heir to his father) of 602
the dead woman. There were present her two brothers, their 754
wives and children; her father's brother's daughter; two wives and one daughter of her sister's sons; her mother, two of her mother's brothers with their wives and children; two of her mother's sisters and the daughters of one of them. Her husband (who lived next door) could not take the medicine at his in-law's house, but some was sent for him to use at his home with his wives and kinsfolk.

In the simple ritual of prayer to the shades the senior kinsman 782
who offers the prayer and blows out water acts alone but, if there 602

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Nyakyusa

782 has been a quarrel in the family, those members of the lineage
602 who have been at variance must attend and share the meat or beer, and bless one another. Grandchildren, 'comrades of the shades', must eat the offering left overnight in the banana grove.

593 If a son has quarrelled with his father and comes to beg pardon
621 the father calls his *neighbours* who must be present and partake of a
783 feast and bless the young men. 'If father and son just agree with one another and people do not eat anything, then the son will not be settled in well.'

585 At a puberty–marriage ritual the principals are the nubile girl
881 and her father or brother, her husband, and sometimes her mother
602 or mother-in-law. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest son's wife, or with her eldest daughter, if she is initiated at home. At an ordinary birth the principals are the mother and infant.

764 Besides these principals who undergo the full ritual there are
602 many minor actors. At a funeral there are the grave-diggers who,
621 traditionally among the Nyakyusa, were mature men, relatives or village neighbours.[1] They wash after the burial and are rewarded with a special leg of the funeral beef. As we have seen, the affines (*abako*), that is the fathers-in-law and sons-in-law of the deceased or of 'the owner of the funeral', come with cattle to kill or cloth. When a woman dies, her husband and her father, or her brother, kill cattle, and their affines bring cloths or, occasionally, cattle. Kinsmen—members of the lineage and their wives—and neighbours bring gifts of food to cook for the crowd of mourners, and small gifts of millet which are presented to the shade and used for making the ritual beer. After an abnormal birth, village neigh-
845 bours have their legs splashed with scalding medicine but do not
621 drink medicines or shave. The cattle of the village are also splashed. At the puberty ritual the bride's maids keep her com-
881 pany during her seclusion. The co-wives and neighbours of her
621 mother and mother-in-law assist in instructing her, and the neigh-
602 bours of her father join with him first in avoiding her and then in giving her gifts. Her father-in-law is identified with his brothers and his father's brothers' sons, whom she avoids, as well as his sisters, and her mother-in-law's brothers, and sisters' husbands. They, in turn, avoid her sisters, as well as herself.

621 By the 'congregation' we mean those who attend rituals to ex-
788 press sympathy, and whose presence is felt to be necessary to the

[1] In Ngonde they are *abatani*, cross-cousins.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

success of the ritual, but who do not play any specially defined 621
part. As we have seen, all who are reckoned kinsmen and all fellow 788
villagers *must* attend a funeral, and a large crowd enhances the status of the kinsmen of the deceased. At a puberty and marriage ritual the 'congregation' is much smaller but is nevertheless important, as is shown by the complaint of the girl marrying a Christian that if she were not initiated she would not be famed. At other rituals all who attend are actors.

The officiants (*abanyago*) for death, puberty and marriage, and 791
birth rituals are almost always elderly women who, by their own choice, have learnt the medicines and observances from some older *unyago* by acting as her assistant. We came across only one man who acted as *unyago* in death and puberty rituals, though at the rituals of spearing, binding with ropes, and protection against sorcery men are more common than women. Often all the elderly women are referred to as '*abanyago*' for 'they help the *unyago*', but the one who has been called upon to provide the medicines and organize the proceedings, and who is paid for her trouble, is clearly recognized. Sometimes she is a kinswoman of the 'owner' of the ritual—if a member of the lineage knows the medicines she will carry out the rituals for all her kin, as did Syungu, wife of Chief Porokoto's half-brother—but she is not necessarily a relative. It is knowledge, not kinship connections, that qualify her. She is the final arbitrator on procedure, and is insistent on exact observance of the details. Because knowledge of medicines is so important Nyakyusa often refer to the officiant at a ritual as *unganga*, a doctor, but *unyago* is the more precise word since *unganga* has other applications.

On the occasion of prayer in sickness, and in the ritual of recon- 791
ciliation, no specialist *unyago* is necessary. The senior kinsman of a 782
lineage prays to his shades direct, and a father and his neighbours 783
receive and bless an erring son without the mediation of any priest; but the doctor called in to treat a sick man may press the kinsmen to confess their anger and bless one another (as Mwakionde did in the case quoted) and come very close to organizing a ritual of reconciliation.

At a marriage ritual there is a 'go-between' (*umfusya*) represent- 585
ing the bride's father and one representing the groom, and, besides
their legal function as witnesses to the passage of cattle, they help [675]
the officiant to organize the ritual, and are specifically responsible for conveying invitations to the feasts. The wife of the groom's 'go-

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Nyakyusa

585 between' accompanies 'the mothers-in-law' when they go to induct or instruct the bride, and the wife of her father's 'go-between' is one of the group of mothers which takes the bride to her husband. The duties of a 'go-between' do not end at marriage: the [851] groom's 'go-between' is responsible for taking to the bride's people the hen to announce the birth of the first child, and, among the Lugulu, the 'go-between' of the father is master of ceremonies at the ritual of vituperation.

789 The ideas that emerge from this analysis are, that in the *protec-* 602 *tive* rituals—after death, twin birth, spearing, binding with ropes, and death from sorcery—the parents, children, grandchildren, and some siblings, and siblings' children of the person primarily affected undergo the ritual. Links through females as well as males are recognized—daughters' children as well as sons' children attend—but they are not traced so far, and a brother's or half-brother's children attend far more often than a sister's children. Moreover, children of an unrelated co-wife perform the death ritual for a woman rather than her sister's children.

593 Wives always attend rituals in which their husbands are concerned—indeed, they often come with their children when their husbands stay away—but when the wife is concerned as a sister or daughter, her husband never accompanies her.

593 The closest relatives, such as own children, children of the heir 602 or of a related co-wife, and proximate full siblings, must *all* participate, but the more distant relatives select representatives.

602 The range of relations concerned varies with the particular ritual—it is widest in the twin ritual and narrowest for an ordinary birth—and is also modified by proximity, for relatives who live near come when those in the same category living twenty miles away do not.

Affines (*abako*) never perform a ritual together even when they are next-door neighbours and close friends, but *abako* in one generation are *abipwa* (mother's kin) in the next, and a man and his *abipwa* can participate together, as in the protection against sorcery described. More often, however, the members of each lineage act separately.

602 Our Nyakyusa informants distinguished the officiants—*abanyago* 621 —from those undergoing a ritual but they did not make distinc- 613 tions of the sort attempted here between principals and kin who do not undergo the ritual. The distinctions they drew were between kinsmen and neighbours and between lineages. At a death

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Nyakyusa

ritual they distinguish *abakamu* (kinsmen) from *abandu itolo* (non-relatives) or *abapakipanga* (villagers), and *abakikolo* (those of the lineage of a dead man) from *abako* (affines) and mother's relatives (*abipwa*). These categories have different functions.

(*b*) *Christians*

The performance of family rituals is complicated by the fact that 16 per cent of the Nyakyusa are professing Christians, and in almost every lineage there are individuals who withdraw from the full performance of traditional rituals at death, puberty, and marriage, birth, and misfortune. In most cases such a withdrawal is treated tolerantly by the pagan kinsmen: the Christian kinsmen come to mourn, to congratulate the bride, to express sympathy with the parents of twins; and their non-participation in the washing and shaving and avoidance of ritual meat and beer is accepted. At the funeral of Mwamulenga his preceding full brother, who should have been a principal in the death ritual, was a Christian, and he took no part, though his children went through it. At the funeral of Mwampiki (p. 248) one boy was left untreated on the ground that he was a Christian and a Christian 'should not have two gods'. At the puberty ritual of Mwaihojo's daughter (p. 91) the brother called to wash with her was influenced by Christians and was reluctant to take part, though he finally did so.

Only when a son who is heir to family wealth, or to the office of chieftainship or priesthood refuses the inheritance of widows (as a Christian must do) is there very strong pressure on him to conform to traditional custom: the union of the heir with the widows is held essential to their health. Sometimes also there is acute conflict between different members of the family over the performance of an autopsy, the pagans pressing for it and the Christians opposing it. This we saw in the death of E. when her pagan senior brother wished to examine her, and her Christian junior brother opposed him vehemently.

That Christians cannot take part in certain of the rituals[1] and do not suffer if they omit them is generally accepted. The farewell to the dead at the homestead of the deceased, and the treatment of kinsmen of twins, fall into this category. About certain other rituals, such as the ritual of the gasping cough and the protection against sorcery, opinions are divided. Some of our Christian friends insisted that 'the gasping cough is a real illness' and cited

[1] There are minor differences in the rules of the different missions.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

795 the case of a Christian who had stayed away from a ritual in his
184 family and 'as soon as he met his relatives he fell sick and coughed
788 like an animal. So they got some of the lees of the beer and gave it to him and he recovered.' A number of Christian kinsmen, leaders in the Church, did not come to the gasping-cough ritual which we attended, but others did come and sipped the beer, or had the lees sent to them at their homes. In the ritual for protection against sorcery which we watched a Christian brother and his wife took part.

And some Christians, though they deny the necessity of many of the pagan rituals for themselves as Christians, still believe them to be necessary to their pagan kinsmen. Hence the anomalous (and to the missionaries the highly unorthodox) position of a woman professing Christianity and acting as officiant in a pagan ritual, as did N. in the death ritual for Kalata's mother (p. 239). N., it will be remembered, came by night. The officiant who performed the ritual for Mwakobela's twins was under instruction as a Christian and was proposing to hand on her medicines to her daughter, a pagan, when she herself was received into the Church. She explained this when Mwakobela (her patient) asked her: 'And what shall we do for twin medicine when you become a Christian?' And we had little doubt that she believed in the efficacy of her medicine for pagans.

Though Christians cannot go through pagan rituals as principals they do not withdraw altogether: they often help their pagan neighbours as grave-diggers at a funeral and in the provision of food for guests at funerals and marriages; and the young men and girls may dance as a separate group, singing their own
[578] songs or hymns and ignoring the drums. Sometimes acute rivalry between the two groups of dancers is apparent.

771 The effect of Christian teaching on pagan ritual is not limited
177 to the partial withdrawal of professing Christians. In those villages most influenced by missions, such as Ilolo, near Rungwe, there is considerable scepticism among pagans, and many of them curtail the rituals in their families, or do not attend them. The Christian view is that 'the pagans see that the Christians disregard the rituals and nothing happens to them, so they begin to ignore them too'. 'Pagans fear much less than they used to do.'

177 Men who are in European employment either inside or outside
464 the district cannot attend all the rituals. Their case is partially met by keeping the lees of the ritual beer with which to treat them

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

on their return home, but the general effect of modern conditions 177
is that the solidarity of the kinship group expressed in gatherings 464
at rituals is weakened. These changes will be discussed at length in the volume on the communal rituals after the differences between the pagan and Christian conceptions of God have been analysed.

(c) *The exchange of gifts*

All the family rituals are occasions for the exchange of gifts 431
which pass primarily between lineages linked by marriage. The exchanges at different rituals are connected, and acceptance of a gift at a marriage may necessitate a return gift at a funeral. Thus the groom gives cattle for his bride at the marriage and at a funeral sons-in-law and fathers-in-law must bring cattle to kill so that they may accompany the deceased, and these are counted among the marriage-cattle given or returned. They may be kept and not killed if there are sufficient cattle to kill otherwise, but they must be offered. The obligation of affines to 'bury one another' by providing cattle for each other's funerals is even mentioned in the marriage negotiations. If a bride is not sent to replace a dead woman, marriage-cattle must be returned by her father, or at least one beast representing 'a mother to draw water for you'. So strong is the feeling that acceptance of a gift implies the obligation to make a return, that cattle offered for a marriage or funeral feast may be refused, on the ground that the family concerned do not wish to commit themselves to returning them. Angombwike described how he sweated and could eat little of a very lavish marriage feast, at which he acted as the groom's 'go-between', for he was wondering how he could make adequate return (cf. p. 253).

The greatest gifts are cattle; but fowls, cloth, beer, curds, bananas, pots, mats, firewood, ointment, cooked food and, nowadays, cash play a subsidiary part. At a funeral affines of the dead man who have no cattle, affines of the 'owner of the funeral', and close friends bring cloths. After the consummation of a marriage, or the inheritance of a widow, the new husband must give his wife a fowl, or meat, or cash representing a fowl, to take to her parents, and when she bears a child he sends another fowl. The wife's people, for their part, bring beer, ointment, firewood, mats, pots, and bananas when they take a bride or young mother back to her husband. There are also three or four exchanges of feasts

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

431 between the groom's lineage and that of the bride during the puberty–marriage ritual.

431 613 Within a lineage, also, there is some circulation of property. A young man is provided with marriage-cattle by his father, or father's heir; a father kills a cow at his son's funeral, a son does likewise for his father; and if a son offends his father he begs pardon with a gift. A daughter is given a gift by her father at the close of the puberty ritual, and he or his heir kills a cow at her funeral.

431 621 Village neighbours are closely identified with the father, and feast on the bull of puberty and the offering provided by an erring son, and give gifts to a daughter when she reaches maturity.

431 Kinsmen and neighbours are expected to help provide food, and firewood on which to cook it, for the guests at a funeral or marriage or at a twin-birth ritual. On the first day of a funeral guests are fed on food provided by the bereaved household, on the following day on that provided by their kinsmen, and on the third day on that provided by the village neighbours. Before the marriage-cattle are brought for his daughter, a man asks his kinsmen and immediate neighbours to help him cook for 'the husbands'—not to ask for such help is unfriendly. Kinsmen and neighbours also bring gifts of millet at a funeral and after an abnormal birth, which is used for brewing the ritual beer.

(*d*) *The symbolism of participation and exchange*

431 602 What is implied by undergoing a ritual or offering gifts? Participation in a ritual implies close kinship. We see, in the rituals performed after death, or spearing, or binding with ropes, the unity of the group composed of parents, children, grandparents, and siblings; the acknowledgement of a closer link between some siblings than between others; a recognition that wives are of 'one blood' with their husbands; and a separation between kinsmen and affines who are of another blood. In the twin ritual the limits of recognized kinship are expressed by participation and in the death ritual they are expressed by attendance. Observance of the taboo of avoidance, like attendance at rituals, is taken as evidence of kinship.

554 602 The difference in the status of senior and junior wives, and of eldest and junior daughters and sons, also appears in the rituals at puberty and marriage and at death. The unity between living and dead agnatic kin and, in a lesser degree, mother's kin, is ex-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

pressed again and again in the pagan rituals. The Christian withdrawal from them implies a partial break with the closed circle of kin, a movement from the nexus of kinship to that of association, from the kinship group to the congregation of believers. 554 602

The passage of cattle at marriage implies first the establishment of a bond of kinship with the wife for whom they are given. 'Kinship is cattle' (*ubukamu syo ngombe*) and a woman for whom cattle have not been given is never kin (*unkamu*) to her husband. 431 602

The passage of marriage-cattle determines the legal position of the children borne by the woman for whom they have been given. Whoever has given the cattle controls the children; and, if no cattle have passed, the girl's father (or brother) can claim them. If the woman for whom cattle have been given leaves the lineage which gave them, the cattle (traditionally all of them, together with their progeny) must then be returned, even though her original husband is dead; and when she dies she should be replaced. Kinship between lineages once linked by marriage should ideally be permanent, and the link is reasserted in the ritual in which, when a woman dies, her brother goes to cut down the bananas at her husband's homestead and to seize her children, and has to be persuaded with a gift to desist. The identification made between women and cattle exchanged is suggested in the phrase conventionally used when no girl is available to take the place of a dead wife and a cow is offered in her place 'for drawing water with'.

The killing of cattle at a funeral, and the burial of cloths and other goods, is an expression of the idea that the dead take wealth with them. When a man requires cattle to pay compensation for some wrong committed and has not sufficient stock to do so, he turns for help to his affines, his sons-in-law and fathers-in-law, and so, when he dies, and is in need of cattle, it is felt appropriate that they should help him. 775 764 431

But the gifts offered at rituals have many other implications. Men take cattle and cloths to a funeral '*ukuti ndaga*'—to express sympathy—and gifts are given to a bride also '*ukuti ndaga*', which then implies congratulation rather than condolence. And gifts are used when begging pardon—a son who has sinned against his father first sends a hen and later offers a bull; and a daughter-in-law who has looked at her father-in-law or sworn at her mother-in-law must offer beer or a bull. Lastly, they are used in lifting a ban, putting an end to an avoidance. When a girl's father and his 431

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

431 neighbours give her gifts after her initiation it is that she may 'cease to avoid them', and a woman may give a small gift to her husband's father's sister, and thereafter look at her. Nowadays, a [606] father-in-law, in exceptional cases, kills a bull for his daughter-in-law so that she may look at him.[1]

556 Great prestige attaches to generosity, particularly generosity 577 with food. A chief or village headman is one who *feeds* people, and generosity is displayed both in informal feasts for neighbours and on the formal occasions of ritual. A father who is generous in the feasts provided for his daughter at her initiation and marriage gains prestige; if he is stingy his affines and his neighbours comment on it; he both loses their respect and fears lest he may even fall ill from 'the breath of men'. If the groom's family fail to provide sufficient, the bride's father does not hesitate to scold them for it, and they reply with humility which may be so exaggerated as to verge on boasting. It is conventional for the groom to plead poverty but at the same time he and his kin compete with the bride's family in preparing quantities of fine food. The pride and excitement over feasts is clearly brought out in the comments on funerals, the remarks of a mother on the return of her daughter to her husband after the birth of the first child, and Angombwike's account of marriage negotiations and gifts (pp. 31–4, 148, 253–5). The principals in any ritual are the centre of attention and may gain prestige from its performance, as a bride does, but what concerns the Nyakyusa much more is the reputation of the family serving the feast. Here the emphasis is very different from what it [171] is in the Pondo ritual for the initiation of diviners, or the Lunda rituals of misfortune.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 85.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IX

THE NYAKYUSA CONCEPTION OF REALITY

(a) *The symbolic pattern*

AFTER these lengthy descriptions and interpretations of family 796
rituals, we at last approach our goal, viz. an analysis of the symbolic pattern of the Nyakyusa people. Contrary to the commonly held theory that ritual is always more constant than interpretation, we find variations in the details of ritual related to variation in descent, but the conceptions expressed vary very little. Some symbols (such as the plantain representing a male and the sweet banana representing a female) occur in all the rituals; others are peculiar to one or other of the cultural groups, but recur in all, or several, of the rituals of that group. Our informants constantly made cross-references between different rituals; the more conscious were aware both of a recurrent symbolic pattern in the rituals of their own dialect group and of a common content with the rituals of other groups. It is clearly recognized, for example, that the foods used in ritual vary with the resources of the area; that the Kukwe cast away the shade by allowing pebbles placed between their fingers and toes to wash down-stream and by burning grass necklaces in which they have slept, while the Nyakyusa do it by throwing away a stem of bananas; in short, that differing ritual idioms express common sentiments.

The framework of all the rituals (save those of misfortune) is the *induction* with a formal laying of the litter of banana leaves in a hut into which the participant is brought to live apart from other people; the retreat or *seclusion* during which he lives and eats apart and is regarded as filthy, for he is 'brooded over' by the shades; and the *bringing out* when the shades are driven away and he is purified. During the seclusion not only is the participant filthy, but he *may* not wash or shave or use cosmetics; in the death ritual he embraces the corpse, smears himself with mud and ash, and mimes the actions of a madman, eating filth, casting off his clothes, and, in the Kukwe version, being mocked at as a fool. The madman is filthy like a corpse and mourners accept identi-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

796 fication both with corpse and shade. In other rituals the identification is with the shade alone, but still the participant is felt to be filthy and close to madness. The symbols of purification are
796 many: clearing and burning the litter, burning the clothes or
783 leaves worn during the seclusion, elaborate and repeated washing and shaving, and anointing the body with rouge and oil. One aspect of purification is the driving away of the 'filthy' shade symbolized first by throwing away pebbles or a stem of bananas into a running stream; and, secondly, by casting seeds into a pot which is put on the fire, grinding millet in the doorway and letting it fall on bark-cloth, putting various parts of the body on the fire symbolically and grinding them symbolically, passing a winnowing basket of millet between the legs, scattering millet, and dancing the trampling dance. The second group of symbols all represent sexual intercourse. Seed or grain is identified with semen, fire with intercourse, bark-cloth and the round winnowing basket—a woman's basket *par excellence*—represent the woman, and putting seeds on the fire, grinding, passing the basket of millet between the legs, and probably also the trampling dance[1] represent the sex act. The shade is thought to be ejected from the body as semen, and therefore intercourse is a means of driving the shade from the body.

796 An element of the death ritual is the separation of corpse and
775 spirit, the final disposal of the corpse, and the bringing of the new shade back 'to warm himself with the other shades' at the family hearth: he is received as the water which drips from the doorway of the hut, and welcomed to the hearth with music; but the distinction between the corpse which is got rid of and the shade which is welcomed is not maintained systematically. Repeatedly our informants spoke of the shade (*unsyuka*) being driven away from dreams and waking thought, and from men's bodies, as well as being separated from the corpse. The aim of Nyakyusa ritual is not that union with God constantly sought in Christian ritual, but a separation both from the shades and the heroes; for close association with the pagan gods spells madness and death, not fullness of life. A measure of separation from the shades is a condition of fertility as well as of sanity. Intercourse cannot be fruitful until the shades of her father's lineage have 'moved aside a little' from the nubile girl, the shade of a deceased husband from his widow.

[1] The action of the trampling dance and the contexts in which it occurs at death and puberty suggest this, but such an interpretation was not explicitly given.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

We interpret the induction, seclusion, and bringing out as symbols of death and rebirth. There can be no doubt that the induction and seclusion represent death. Strewing leaves—or laying a litter—which is an essential act in every induction is a sign of misfortune and death;[1] and at the induction of a bride her 'mothers' sing: 'Go, go and never return', and 'We wail a dirge'. The mourners, the nubile girl, the mother of a new-born child, and the parents of twins are all 'filthy' and one with the dead; Kasitile said of mourners: 'We have died, we *are* the corpse.' The period of seclusion implies a sojourn with the shades, and our hypothesis is that it represents *both* death and gestation. The hut appears as a symbol of the womb in the pregnancy and 'gasping cough' rituals, and the doorway which 'belongs to the shades' is a symbol for the vagina. In the pregnancy ritual, passing through the doorway is explicitly interpreted as a symbol of birth, and in the death ritual mourners come out of the doorway stooping, and bump their heads against an obstruction. In the 'bringing out' in the death and puberty rituals, the mourners and the nubile girl run in and out of the doorway and water drops from the thatch. Kakune, the doctor, interpreted this as a symbol of the mourners' receiving the shade back on to their bodies. We interpret it, rather more widely, as a symbol of rebirth. Both men and spirit are reborn, the shade in the bodies of the participants. 796

All through the rituals the connection of the shades with potency and fertility is emphasized. They cause menstruation and sexual desire; they are present in intercourse and ejected as semen; they control conception; they control fertility in the fields. 'The shade and the semen are brothers.'[2] 'When they shake the millet and pumpkin-seeds (after ritual connection) the seed is semen . . . and it is the shade. . . .' The symbols of male and female, plantain and sweet banana, recur repeatedly. The wearing of them is explicitly interpreted as a symbol of fertility, and laying them together under the litter is perhaps a symbol of the marriage union, like eating the banana with *ikipiki* medicine. Intercourse between husband and wife is the culmination of the rituals of death, puberty, and twin birth, and is held to be essential to the health of 796 775 831

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 232.

[2] cf. Bhaca, *idlozi*: shade, semen (W. D. Hammond-Tooke, *A General Ethnographic Survey of the amaBhaca*. Unpublished thesis presented for the degree of Ph.D. in the University of Cape Town); Xhosa, *idlozi*: semen virile (A. Kropf, *Kaffir-English Dictionary*); Zulu, *idlozi*: departed spirit (C. M. Doke and Vilikazi, *A Dictionary of the Zulu Language*). [171 196]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

796 the wife or the widow (even though she be old), as well as proof of
775 the support of the shades for the husband or heir. A symbol of the
831 ritual connection, the *ilibalaga*, is offered to the shades of both lineages. Indeed, the rituals of death and twin birth, as well as the ritual of puberty and marriage, may be interpreted as a celebration of the union of husband and wife. For the parents of twins the end of the ritual marks the resumption of married life after a break during which contact between them was felt to be dangerous; for a widow and the heir of a dead man the end of the death ritual marks the beginning of their union.

796 The admonition of a widow or the mother of twins on her proper behaviour as a wife,[1] like a girl at her first marriage, underlines the fact that the death and twin-birth rituals are, in a sense, also marriage rituals.

592 The parts of the homestead connected with the shades are: first,
775 those associated with the procreative activities of husband and wife—the hearth, the bed, and the doorway of the hut. Prayer may be made at the hearth, and offerings are poured out on the hearth-bricks, or left overnight under the bed. 'The doorway is the shades' and much of the action in ritual takes place there. As has already been shown, the hearth is explicitly associated with the sexual life of husband and wife: hearth-bricks are planted at marriage, making fire by friction is a symbol of the marriage union, firewood is associated with a woman's reproductive capacity, and the hearth must not be approached by sexually active people other than the owner of the hut and her husband. The bed is the marriage bed. The doorway is identified with the vagina. Secondly, a defined grove of bananas, usually those nearest the doorway of the chief wife's hut, is thought to be frequented by the shades. It has been shown that plantains and sweet bananas are the symbols of male and female in all the rituals: in the sacred banana grove only plantains are grown. Bananas are propagated by suckers and the symbolism implied (but never explicitly stated) is that the root at which the offering of meat to the shades is placed represents the lineage which continually reproduces itself. What is explicit is that
[778] the banana grove is sacred, and that offerings are placed or buried at the root of a banana plant. We were told: '*ilikemo*[2] *lyabatata*

[1] We did not see this at the twin ritual observed, but were told that the mother of twins was sometimes admonished by her husband's sisters.

[2] *Ilikemo*: a single banana plant from the sacred banana grove, a ritual killing of cattle in the sacred grove of a chief; *isyikemo*: sacrificial meat; *ifikemo*: Holy Communion (modern usage).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

 592

kijenja, ko bikwiputa, the sacred place of the fathers is the banana 775
grove, there they pray.'

The virility of a lineage is symbolized by the *ikipiki* medicine, 796
interpreted as 'our blood' or 'semen'. With it mourners, menstru- 602
ating girls, bride and groom, the new-born babies and their 789
mothers are treated. To provide it or use it is to acknowledge agnatic kinship: husband and wife wash with it together in acknowledgement that the wife is now 'one blood' with her husband; the grandmother gives it to her son's child in acknowledgement of its legitimacy; in the death rituals the mourners eat food with it acknowledging their kinship with the shade. To belong to a lineage is to be protected practically and spiritually, and the *ikipiki* medicine is held to protect those who are 'empty' and weak—the 'hollow men'—from those who are 'heavy' with real semen or medicines.

The shade, *unsyuka*,[1] 'he who is risen from the dead', may be 796
interpreted as the principle of life, but at the same time he is 'the 775
one beneath', *ugwa pasi*, filthy, and fearful. What men worship is life; what they fear is death, corruption; and for the pagan Nyakyusa, as for the Christian,[2] the two are inextricably mingled. *Imindu* (sing. *ilindu*) means dirt, dust, rubbish, the litter of the seclusion hut, and also the shade. When '*mindu*' is cited as the cause of some disease it is the shades (as things rather than persons) which are meant: 'dust to dust' is an image of pagan as of Christian theology. We have spoken of the Nyakyusa disgust for filth (*ubunyali*), which is associated with a corpse, menstruation, childbirth, intercourse, faeces, and all these are identified in some fashion with the shade. Faeces 'go below to the land of the shades'. The hair of a corpse is the shade's, the hair of a girl at puberty is 'the filth of her menstrual blood'. In all the rituals the filth is [783]
buried, shaved off, burnt, washed away, and at the death ritual 'he who is risen' is brought 'to warm himself' at the family hearth, but yet he dwells in the earth and is 'dirty'.

The conception of impurity, uncleanness, associated with phy- 783
siological functions of coition, excretion, menstruation, childbirth and death is, as we have already suggested, a very widespread one.

[1] *Ukuyuka*: to rise from the dead. For the noun the personal class is most commonly used, but some of the old men always spoke of *imiyuka* rather than *abayuka*. A young man, commenting on this, explained: 'The shades are not people like us, but *imindu*', i.e. they are things—dust—not persons.

[2] 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' John xii, 24.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 The Nyakyusa perhaps emphasize it[1] more than their neighbours
[17] (though not more than the Jews or the Hindus), and their pre-
occupation with purification in the rituals is paralleled by the
emphasis laid on cleanliness (*ubwifyusi*) in person, in house and
courtyard, in cooking, and in disposal of excrement. Their ex-
treme cleanliness, in contrast with their neighbours, was remarked
upon by all the early travellers in the area and is still obvious.[1]
Houses and courtyards are swept and garnished; pots and dishes
scoured, food scrupulously covered with fresh banana leaves when
it is served at feasts; a good housewife is *umwifyusi*, she who is
clean. Men wash daily in running water and children are trained
to take a hoe with them when they go to defaecate, and to bury
the faeces.

783 The horror of 'filth' is very closely associated with the fear of
158 madness, which is at the same time a fear of too close association
828 with the dead. It is when the dead have not been driven away, but
return in dreams; when the necessary separation of living and
dead has not been achieved, that men go mad. Madness is most
often spoken of as the penalty for neglect of the death ritual, but
it is not, in theory, confined to that: 'All the rituals are the same,
if they are neglected, men will become mad.' Besides madness,
men fear sterility, debility, swollen limbs ('an unhealthy fatness')
and diarrhoea 'to get rid of the filth in the belly' if the rituals are
neglected, or taboos broken.

796 That a common symbolic pattern expressing common senti-
ments recurs in all the rituals is clear, but it is also true that each
ritual is characterized by peculiar sentiments and symbols. The
funeral rites are first and foremost an expression of grief—kinsmen
and neighbours gather to weep for the dead. Their grief is sym-
bolized by the stylized wailing, the passionate dancing, the smear-
ing with mud and ash, wearing mourning belts, and the song of fare-
well at the hearth. It is true that, in the later stages of the funeral,
friends seek to comfort the chief mourners with cheerful songs and
dances, and in one aspect the funeral ritual is an assertion of life,
but grief not joy is its dominant note. By contrast, the ritual of
puberty and marriage is a rejoicing—rejoicing 'because our child
has grown up', because she is virgin, because there is feasting,
because there is a marriage.

881 Elements peculiar to the puberty ritual are the celebration of
virginity by killing a bull, and the prayer for blessing when its

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 77-8.

1 [i.e., the conception of impurity associated with physiological functions.— Analyst]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

meat is offered in the bride's father's grove; the two symbols of 881
first intercourse—treatment with *undumila* medicine and jumping over fire; the recognition of the end of childhood by calling on the bride's mother to put her down off her back; the insistence that she show modesty before her father and his fellows as before a father-in-law; and the taboo on crossing water lest her menstrual flow become like a river.

The twin ritual is characterized by the fear of infection from too 845
great potency, and the treatment with scalding medicines to 'burn' the twin birth.

Sometimes our informants gave different interpretations of the 796
same symbol and there was no agreement between them, as with 184
the stem of bananas stolen in the Kukwe death ritual, and the bunch of flowers brought back from the stream. Nsyani said stealing the bananas symbolized that 'we may now eat other people's food', and Mwamulenga that it was a symbol of driving away disease. Kakune, the doctor, interpreted the bunch of flowers brought back from the stream as a symbol of the shade which was brought home; Mwamulenga saw picking and carrying flowers as yet another symbol of the actions of a madman. Though there was general agreement over the interpretation of many symbols, it is possible that some have no commonly accepted meaning, but suggest different things to different people. It is clear, however, that with the Nyakyusa, as with ourselves, one symbol has often several associations for the same person, and Kasitile and the more self-conscious of our informants were aware of this. For Kasitile the banana in the death ritual is the corpse and the pumpkin-seeds in it the shade; it is also faeces which madmen eat; it is also, in the puberty ritual, the male organ and the seeds are the semen. Eating a banana is a symbol *both* of copulation and of the actions of a madman. Conversely, the same object or action is symbolized in many different ways—there are nine or ten symbols of sex intercourse, and twenty of driving away the shade, recorded in the texts quoted above.

When an action recurs in different rituals, informants almost always interpreted it in the same way in each context: the exception was the trampling dance (*ulukaya ingaya*) interpreted as a way of 'driving away the shade' in the death ritual and a 'rejoicing' in the puberty ritual. It was always explained as 'customary'. 'Father and grandfather did it.'

This brings us to the ultimate explanation given for all the 829

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

829 rituals: 'they are customary' (*luluiho*), 'they come to us from long ago', 'our fathers and grandfathers performed them'; and established in the nature of the universe: 'Kyala made us black people like that.'

(*b*) *The nature of the shades*

775 The nature of the shades is revealed in Nyakyusa rituals, and
619 we are now in a position to summarize their attributes.

The shades, 'those who have risen from the dead', are the dead members of a lineage and, unless they were ruling chiefs when alive, they have power only over their own kinsmen, and are concerned only with behaviour between members of the lineage, not with behaviour towards outsiders. As we have seen, the shades of her father's lineage 'move aside a little' from a woman when marriage-cattle and the bull of puberty have been given for her but, if these are still owing, it is thought that her child as well as she herself may be made ill by her father's shades. Membership of a lineage is determined by the passage of marriage-cattle: a child belongs to the group which provided cattle for its mother. Therefore, it is argued, the shades of the lineage which provided the cattle, and they alone, if the payment has been made in full, have power over children. If no cattle have been given the child is in the power of the mother's shades. But there are difficulties over the *ikipiki* medicine, for only that of the genitor's lineage can safely be used, and its use implies membership of the lineage that provides it. There is a further idea that shades only have power over those living in a homestead of their lineage. 'A child is never made ill by the mother's shades when it is in the father's homestead, only when it is with its mother's people.'

775 The dead dwell beneath (*pasi*), in 'the land of the shades' (*kubusyuka*), which is a shadowy reflection of the land of the living, with homesteads and gardens, wives and cattle, villages and chiefdoms.

MWAIKAMBO: People think that in the land of the shades they build homes like we do, they marry wives, they have children, they plant food and build houses. I heard this always from old men, but they only guess. They say: 'Perhaps it is nice, perhaps horrible.' They do not know very much. They fear to die. I have never met any old pagan man who wanted to die, they always fear. Property is important: People are much taken up with the idea that riches are there in the land of the shades. They say: 'If a man dies his fathers come to receive

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

him, but if they find he has no cows with him they are angry, they do 775
not receive him with rejoicing. If they do not kill some cattle at the burial of a dead man without doubt illness will come to the home. I they consult an oracle then the oracle says: 'Your fathers beneath are angry because you did not kill cattle for the burial of So-and-so.' So then they go and kill a beast. When they kill cattle at a death they do not kill for the mourners to eat, no, but they say it is that the fathers may receive him well, that they may not be angry.

The shades manifest themselves to the living in dreams or as snakes, and they come by night to the homestead to eat food set aside for them in the sacred grove or the senior wife's hut.

Whenever food is cooked a little is left for the shades. It is said that the shades come by night to eat the food. Some people say that they have seen the shades when they come to warm themselves by the fire in the house. If the fire of the shades blazes up, and I look, it is extinguished immediately, and if someone turns round the hut is quite dark. People eat the food which they put for the shades, they do not throw it away. Sometimes, if the food rots, they say it is because the shades have eaten from it. People say that if they do not put aside food the shades will take away the fertility of the fields and we will not have much food.

The hearth is a shrine: the food and beer are left overnight 775
beside the hearth or on the hearth-bricks. Every good housewife 778
has a log of firewood which she keeps by her all her life: she takes it with her when she moves and it is burnt at her funeral. 'It is the shades'. The shades [of her husband] pick bits from it when they want to warm themselves at the fire.' And the wife herself must keep out of the way: 'Some men refuse to let their wives sleep near the fire at night, saying: "You will drive away the shades." '

The association of a small grove of bananas in each homestead with the shades has already been stressed. There meat and beer offered in sacrifice are left. There is also a connection, most obvious among chiefs, but occurring among commoners also, between the shade and a chosen tree. In Ngonde Mwenefumbo said:

The fathers prayed at the grave of their father. If a man moved he 775
took *iliada*, a branch of the tree at the grave, and carried it to his new 778
home and there put it in a tree he had chosen, saying: 'Now you have 166
arrived, Father.' He poured out beer and flour there and invoked all his fathers and grandfathers and ancestors, saying: 'May I sleep! Gather and eat these things! May the children sleep.' Then he blew out water and finished.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

775 Among the Nyakyusa men spoke often of the obligation of the
764 heir to keep the grave of his father swept and tended. Graves are in the open courtyard of the homestead and the meticulous weeding and sweeping of this space by the owner and his young sons is thus an act of piety, as well as a means of achieving 'dignity' in the homestead.[1]

775 The shades are also identified with the earth—'the earth *is* the shades (*umfu bo basyuka*)'—and offerings to them are buried, or laid upon, or poured out on it. To say 'the earth is angry' means: 'the shade is angry.' Stories are told of prophets (*abasololi*) who have descended to the land of the shades and returned, and of others who have seen men in the land of the shades while they are yet alive. That is a sure sign of their future death, though it may be delayed. And there are tales of those who have seen the dead with the cattle killed at his funeral. 'We say those are the shadows (*imisyungulu*) which go to the land of the shades.'

A soft, tufty grass, used as bedding for cattle, is called 'blessed' (*ikisajelo*) and is known as 'the doorway of the shades' (*ikifigo kya basyuka*). The tale of three prophets who uprooted a tuft of it and saw the land of the shades beneath has already been related (p. 77).

ANOCABWIKE: As a child at my grandfather's I heard that the water from the blessed grass reaches the land of the shades, and that if the shades wish to come to our place they stand there in the blessed grass and where they have stood there is no dew. Indeed, there is never dew on the blessed grass.

At this point in the conversation one of us went to examine the blessed grass and called back: 'But there is dew on it.' Another man who was listening broke in indignantly: 'Is there much dew? There is very little!' and, indeed, there was less than on other types of grass.

But though the shades dwell beneath and visit the homesteads of their kinsmen seeking food and warmth, they are also *within* men—*munda* (in the belly)—they create desire, they control conception, and are ejected in intercourse as semen. 'If you have not got a shade you are impotent, sterile, you do not go to women.'

The shades delight in cattle, and though they demand certain sacrifices they are unwilling that cattle of the lineage should die unnecessarily. Mwakwelebeja told us:

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 77.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

My bull was wounded. When I tried to kill it, it troubled me, it did 775
not die. I took a banana sapling and chewed it and prayed to my 782
fathers, saying: 'This bull has been wounded because it was destroying people's crops. I am killing it because the people are angry with me and they might spear me in the night if I don't kill it.' My son struck it the third time, then it bellowed and I said: 'Yes, they have heard my prayer,' and it fell down and died. The shades were preventing it dying because they liked it to be alive. The whole country liked this bull because of its beautiful bellowing.

The shades are very real to an old man like Mwakwelebeja: 775

We live with the shades, constantly the fathers come to us, and also a wife who has died. The shades rise and come to us. In the morning I wake up and tell my wife the shades came to me, I slept with them, and with the wife who has died.

QUESTION: Why do they come?

MWAKWELEBEJA: You just dream. Sometimes they speak something, 775
and in the morning I tell my wife they said so-and-so. Sometimes they 828
bring food. If a sick man dreams that he eats their food he will die. If he dreams that he visits them and they drive him away he will recover. Sometimes I dream of my father or of my mother, sometimes of the villagers, So-and-so, and So-and-so. Yes, we fear to dream of the shades, even if we don't eat food. We fear that if they come often we will follow them.

And even to young men like Kititu they seem near:

Yes, the shades come to us in dreams at night. Perhaps I dream of my father who has died, he appears, he gives me a cow, I wonder, it seems that I have gained that cow. I rejoice and am glad. This is all in a dream. Perhaps my mother has died and I dream of her. She gives me food as it were on this table. I eat, I drink beer with her. Our grandfathers used to dream of war. When the Ngoni were in the country they would dream that they and the shades, the fathers who had died, were fighting with the Ngoni; in the dream they would spear them and the blood would appear. All men dream, but those whose dreams come true we call *abasilali*—prophets. These men sometimes [791] dream of public matters, as well as private, they go to Kasitile [the priest] and say: 'Hunger is coming, carry out the ritual in the sacred grove.' Then they take a cow, bananas, and milk to the sacred grove as Kasitile says. Then there are those who fall into a fit and the friends of such a man go to Kasitile and tell what he said.

Perhaps I dream of my father or grandfather, and he comes and gives me food. I know him by his appearance in the dream. Perhaps my grandfather died while I was still a child, but I know him by his dress

P

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

775 and appearance—the mind of a child is tenacious. If one comes whom
828 I never knew, I note his appearance in the dream and next day I tell my friends and relatives about it. Then perhaps an old woman, my grandmother, will say: 'That is how So-and-so used to look.' Perhaps I dream of someone wearing brass body-rings, with a plume nodding on his head. Then the older ones know him and tell me it is So-and-so. In the old days, in the days of our mothers, if we dreamed of eating food like this my relatives would say: 'They have come to fetch him; he will get disease and die soon; he has eaten the food of the shades.'
775 But in European times now it is different. . . . Our mothers fear such
828 dreams; there is a medicine to put on the walls. If I always dream like
177 this they bring it and say: 'It's forbidden to dream of the shades.'

QUESTION: And now?

KITITU: Now if dreams come true we say that the man who had dreamed is a prophet.

828 QUESTION: Are all dreams pregnant with trouble?

KITITU: Yes, dreams usually mean trouble. Suppose I love a girl and want to marry her, and then I dream of marriage, of having the cattle and going and being accepted by her fathers who are all present [in the dream], then I rejoice and I hope.[1] Then I begin to think of going to earn the cattle, and I go to work and come back with three or four cattle and go to hand over the marriage-cattle. All ends happily, but it might not. Perhaps they will accept me, perhaps not.

At work I dream that a sister has died, and I find it is true, then I think other dreams will be true. . . . I fear that perhaps my death is near. I go to a doctor and say I want a medicine, he gives me some to put under my head and sleep on. He grinds a medicine and tell me to sprinkle it in the room.

775 It is generally agreed that dreams of the dead are not welcomed:
828 If I speak of the recently dead others will say: 'Don't speak of them, they are dead.' Then I take a coal from the fire and say: 'Do not come in dreams.' If the shade comes it always means trouble.

And the only occasions of prayer to the shades are when men are in trouble and anticipate misfortune.

We never pray except when there is trouble. No, we never pray to give thanks. Why should we? There is nothing to grumble at!

673 (*c*) *Belief and behaviour*

753 In the Nyakyusa view there is a direct and immediate link be-
777 tween misfortune and wrong-doing. When illness befalls a man,

[1] Kititu's father delayed long in providing him with marriage-cattle. The following year he eloped with a girl.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

or his crops fail, or his cattle die, he reflects on any quarrels he may have had with kinsmen or affines or neighbours, and on any rituals he should have performed and has omitted wholly or in part. He may be quite clear in his own mind that the misfortune is due to some particular wrong-doing (*inongwa*)—perhaps a quarrel with a brother, or neglect to kill for his new neighbours on his inheritance from his father—and proceed directly to patch up the quarrel and perform the neglected ritual. More often he thinks of several possible causes and lays them before the oracle, relying upon it to select betwern them. How several possible causes of misfortune occurred to the chief sufferers, their kinsmen and neighbours, is shown in the cases of Enesi, Katasya, Mwambuputa and Mpoma quoted at the end of the book (pp. 258 ff.).

No linguistic distinction is made between an offence punished by the courts and one thought to be punished by the shades; both are wrong-doings (*inongwa*), and there is no sharp distinction between an offence against a living kinsman and an offence against a dead one. In short, there is no clear conception of 'sin' as opposed to 'tort' or 'crime'.

There are two themes constantly recurring in Nyakyusa theology: firstly, men must observe the traditional rituals (both positive and negative) or they will go mad; and secondly, the anger of senior relatives and neighbours will injure unless it is confessed and goodwill expressed.

The first conception is a magical one:[1] what is required is the performance or avoidance of particular acts in a particular form on particular occasions; the second is sacramental, it is 'anger in the heart' that is dangerous, and no ritual is held to be efficacious without a change of heart.

Often the two conceptions are not consciously related to one another: again and again one is told: 'The rituals must be performed or men will go mad,' and there is no reference to the state of mind of the performers; but on certain occasions they overlap explicitly, as when Kasitile adjured his kinsmen to confess all while they were performing the ritual to 'rot the ropes'; and always there is a symbolic connection, for the rituals themselves express the value of amity between kinsmen, of respect for seniors and obligation towards juniors.

The neglect of the marriage ritual is itself an expression of disrespect for parents or parents-in-law, and a breach of the sex code,

[1] In the sense defined by G. & M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 89-95.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[585] of which the basic rule is the separation of the reproductive
834 activities of successive generations.

If my wife goes to the inner part of my mother's house, it is a wrong. Perhaps she will bear a thin and sickly child. She has gone to the inner part of her in-law's house and my mother is angry with her for going where my father goes. Perhaps, when she is first pregnant, my wife goes to the back of her own mother's house. That is a wrong, too. Perhaps she will have a difficult labour. The trouble in both cases comes from the anger of the elders, my mother's in the first case, her mother's in the second. It is said that if my wives have seen my father by inheritance, then, when I die, the fathers who are dead will not receive me because I have injured ('kept back') their younger brother. I think, for my part, that the pagans honour this custom [of avoidance] very much because they say that the shades will be angry if it is neglected.

775 Apart from the neglect of rituals, the types of behaviour com-
673 monly believed to be directly punished by the shades are (1) quar-
578 rels between father and son or between brothers, turning on the
681 seduction of a senior's wife by his junior, on the sharing of marriage-cattle or, nowadays, on the sharing of the earnings of a young man working for wages, or on his seduction of women which necessitates the payment of fines by his father; (2) quarrels between father and daughter or father-in-law and son-in-law turning on the handing over of marriage-cattle by the son-in-law and the provision of gifts for his daughter by the father; (3) quarrels between husband and wife; (4) quarrels between relatives of all sorts over failure to attend, or to invite to, rituals; and (5) the neglect of his wards by the heir.

578 Cases of family quarrels over seduction leading to misfortune
775 have already been quoted (pp. 134–5; 187–8). One concerning cattle and earnings was cited by Mwakwelebeja. A young man, X., went out to work and left the cattle he earned with his elder full brother. When he married he took all these cattle and gave them to his father-in-law. His elder brother was very angry. X. said: 'I take all the cattle for you have never given me any of yours.' His brother replied: 'How could I give you cows? I have no children.' Then all the cattle X. had given to his father-in-law died and had to be replaced. 'The shades were angry because when the younger brother took the cows his elder brother complained very much.' And if a young man goes out to work and gives his father no share of his earnings the shades are angry: 'Perhaps I will fall ill; perhaps when I look for work I shall not

2: Wi 5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

find it. There are many cases like that. My friends in the age-village will go to a diviner who will declare that the shades are angry because I do not care for my father.' If a daughter makes a runaway marriage her father is angry and it is believed that either she may not conceive or her baby may be ailing until the marriage-cattle and bull of puberty have been given by her husband and accepted by her father. 578 775

The respect and obedience due to a father is due to his heir, and in certain circumstances to his sister also; while on his part the heir has the same obligations to his juniors as the deceased had. Fibombe cited the example, already quoted, of a man quarrelling with his dead father's sister over the distribution of the marriage-cattle for his own sister, and the girl failing to conceive because of the anger of her father's sister. If a son, whose parents are dead, neglects to provide his sister with the customary gifts of food when she returns to her husband after a visit to her 'father', he may become impotent: 'Those below are angry and when he has begotten twins he will have trouble at the ritual.' Or the girl may fall ill. 'She thinks: "Who is my father? This is my father, but he does not care for me." ' The mystical power of a senior relative is linked directly with his obligation to give gifts: 593 688 602 431

My father's elder half-brother has power over me only if he has given marriage-cattle for my father or nurtured him. If he has given him cattle to marry a wife then he has power over him. . . . My superior (*mbala gwangu*) is he who gives me everything.

Favouritism in a polygynous family, shown in the unfair division of milk or meat or fish by the husband between his wives, is thought to anger the shades, which cause his cows to bleed from the udder when milked, or prevent fish entering his traps, and so do the bad temper and insulting language of a quarrelsome wife. Mwakwelebeja explained that: 595 775 578 [825]

If a woman is bad-tempered when she is making beer the beer goes sour. If my wife and I quarrel my shades are angry and the beer is spoiled. I say to my wife: 'You have spoiled the beer because you do not listen to what I say.'

Neglect of his wards by the heir is a wrong-doing frequently mentioned. 686

It is said that if I neglect my brother's children he and my father will be very angry, they will not come to meet me when I die, as the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

686 shades usually do, and I shall wander a long time on the way to the land of the shades because I shall have no relatives to show me the way. And then when I get there I shall still have trouble. They will drive me away from them, and I shall live alone, apart from them, quite separate.

775 More rarely a shade is said to be angry because his grave has
764 been left unswept, or he has not been buried where he asked to be.

621 The kinds of behaviour believed to be punished by 'the breath
681 of men' are very similar to those thought to be punished by the anger of senior kinsmen; and, indeed, as we have seen, kinsmen and neighbours may murmur together against a son who has seduced his father's wife, a girl who has behaved insultingly to her parents-in-law, either verbally or by a breach of avoidance, and an heir who has neglected his wards or has neglected the customary ritual for his father, more particularly the customary killing of a cow when he enters into his inheritance. It is said that neglect to provide them with certain customary feasts infuriates neighbours more than anything else.[1]

The misfortunes that threaten from the neglect of rituals, and from the anger of kinsmen and neighbours, are loss of sanity, of life or health or fertility; a difficult labour or a lingering death; repeated miscarriages; loss of beauty (a wicked woman goes bald or turns reddish); scanty crops or sick herds, or, nowadays, unemployment—the man whose father is angry does not find a job. Only rarely is it suggested that punishment may be postponed until after death and then what is feared is that the shades of the lineage will not receive their kinsman.

775 When Nyakyusa talk about their religion they speak mostly of
771 external things, of the rituals, of the angry words spoken by kins-
688 men or neighbours and of the fearful effects upon one against whom this anger is directed. Misfortune is said to be brought down on a man by his parents muttering in anger over the fire, by people murmuring against him (the word used is that for the humming of a hive of bees). The emphasis is on outspoken complaint or criticism. But it is also thought that 'the shades see what is within a man': if he stints one wife of fish, then 'even though the woman herself has not said anything, the shades hear the thought of the belly'. Sleeplessness and an unquiet mind are taken as evidence of the anger of the shades or the attacks of witches.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 105–6.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'*Tutigona* (we do not sleep),' is the formal phrase with which the village headman and other responsible people notify the chief that all is not well with the country, or with which a woman or a junior kinsman prefaces the troubles brought to the notice of the head of the homestead, when these troubles have not obviously materialized in sickness. Anger is dangerous first and foremost to the person against whom it is directed, but there is also the suggestion that it may react on the person who is angry. We have already quoted the remark: 'A woman never murmurs against anyone. If she does she falls sick herself.'

How the fear of the shades is inculcated in a child is shown in the following text:

I began by learning the word or name: *unsyuka*, and to know that the shade (*unsyuka*) was someone who had died, and people said that they were like flickering shadows (*imisyungulu*). Also people said a shade is someone very awesome (*nsisya*) if he appears to you. When I began to think of the shades at night I could not sleep because I feared the awfulness (*ubusisya*) of which they spoke. And this was specially told: 'If a person dies to-day, and perhaps you have not heard, then that dead man appears to you with cattle. He is smeared with earth on his face and forearms and knees. Then, because you do not know anything, you say: "Friend," and talk with him, saying: "Where are you going with the cattle?" He says: "I am going to my in-laws." Then if you go home and find they are wailing a death, and you tell your tale, they say: "So-and-so has died, you met him." They say you also will die. But you must be silent, and only speak after they have buried him.' So in my belly, in my thought, the shades appeared very fearful. Many people compare the awfulness of the shades with that of wild animals, and say the awfulness of the shades is greater. If a shade is standing here, and a wild animal there, you will flee towards the animal. So I also thought. But later I changed my mind, and said I would go towards the shade.

Once when there was some sickness at home I heard it said that the shades were angry, perhaps because there had been a quarrel, perhaps because he [*sic*] had not killed a cow for a relative's funeral. Once when I was ill with sores round the mouth, people said: '*Mindu*, the shades have created them'—that was to be 'beaten' by the shades. So, when they had consulted an oracle, they poured a little beer on the fire-bricks and prayed. Then the illness disappeared very quickly. When I asked my mother about it she said: 'The shades were angry, so you were ill. It was because your father was angry, or perhaps on some other account.' Thus I learnt the work of the shades, little by little, from illnesses among my parents and stories of my elders.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

577 There is much more talk among the Nyakyusa of misfortune
777 from the shades or the anger of neighbours, than of blessing, but
556 there is an idea, somewhat vague but real, that generosity and kindliness will bring blessing (*ulusajo*). Ambilikile, a Christian teacher who had grown up in a pagan home, said:

> My mother tells me that my father was in the habit of feeding people, those who were not his relatives. People went to a distance and brought medicines for fertility and gave them to him, hence they said: 'He is very kind; food never grows short at his home.' She also told me that my father died very old. He did not die of disease, but of old age, no breath being left in him. This was because men were always saying: 'May they stand by him, may they bless him (*bammwemelege, bansajege*),' not to his face but to others. They said that he lived long because of the blessing of men. Yes, they say that the food of a kindly man never gets finished, that of a stingy man finishes; he himself suffers hunger.

763 Mwaisumo described a father on his death-bed blessing a favourite son, allocating cattle to him, and telling him:

> Care for the children I have left, keep on good terms with them, then you will be rich in everything like your father. I cared for my children, I was not harsh (*nkali*), so complain to me of anything that troubles you. If you are like this the property in your home will be plentiful, people will be astonished and say: 'He is like his father.'

431 Of a man given a cow by the chief, it was sometimes said: 'The
775 shades have blessed him; he has a righteous (*ngolofu*) shade.'

Although our Nyakyusa informants talked a great deal about
754 the danger of neglecting rituals and angering senior relatives,
673 living and dead, the number of cases of misfortune attributed to
621 their anger is small in comparison with the number attributed to witchcraft or 'the breath of men'. (Ten as compared with sixty-three.) There is no reason to suppose that one type of case was concealed when the others were reported to us, and it is clear that the Nyakyusa prefer to make neighbours in the age-village, rather than kinsmen, the scapegoat for their misfortunes. Even when the wrong done is against a kinsman it is often the neighbours, rather than the shades, who are said to have brought punishment on the wrong-doer.

777 At the same time, we were assured by one informant after an-
621 other that people blame the shades or Kyala for misfortune when it is really the neighbours who are responsible! Angombwike argued that men fear to accuse the neighbours, who are slow to

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

admit their anger, and prefer to blame the shades and conciliate the neighbours by feasting. For example: 777 621

When someone is ill of a curse the owners of the village do not agree that it is they who have bewitched him. No, that is what others say. . . . When they bless such a person they pray to the shades. As, for example, with M. [informant's father, a wealthy man]. If he falls ill with a disease of the legs, and goes to a diviner, and the diviner says: 'They have bewitched you,' then he goes home and seeks a bull and calls the men of the village, saying: 'Let us enjoy ourselves with this bull.' They say: 'Is it the legs?' He denies it, saying: 'No, I am just giving you something to eat, something with which to enjoy ourselves.' They say: 'Are you a chief to feast us on a bull?' He says: 'I just thought I would like to enjoy myself with you.' He conceals the cause because if he speaks of the illness they will say: 'Ha, he is catching us for witchcraft.' They eat, and at the beer they say: 'You, M., take this stick and stand up. Walk!' And when they go home each prays to his shades, saying: 'Stand by him, may he recover from his sickness!'

In short, the Nyakyusa speak of the danger of angering senior relatives, but they attribute most of their misfortunes to their neighbours, and they say that more misfortunes are due to neighbours and fewer to the shades than is openly admitted!

Perhaps the most striking feature of the family cult among the Nyakyusa is the narrowness of its range. Neighbours are concerned with the fulfilment of family obligations as well as obligations to themselves, but the shades are concerned solely with behaviour between kinsmen. 'If I wrong a kinsman I fear the shades, but not if I wrong another.' 769 621

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER X

THE SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RITUALS OF KINSHIP

613 (*a*) *The symbolic expression of structural relationships*

THE rituals of kinship express, first and foremost, the ifferentiation and the unity of agnatic lineages. In all the rituals we have discussed members of a lineage act together as a distinct group, bound together by common 'blood' which is symbolized by the *ikipiki* medicine. 'It is our kinship, it is our blood.' A member of the lineage is protected by it, and illegitimate children who are not of the lineage may not share it. The new-born infant drinks it with his mother whose breasts are washed with it; the nubile girl washes with her father or brother, thinking: 'I have fathers, I am no bastard.' Its use is an acknowledgement of agnatic kinship and legitimacy.

A lineage includes the living and dead, who have communion together, sharing *ikipiki* medicine and food and beer, in most of the rituals of the cycle. 'All the food which we have eaten you have eaten.' And the dead receive the dying of their lineage. 'The shade has created us, we come from him, we die, we go there to him; not to others, but to him.' The shades cause menstruation and sexual desire, and men and women cannot produce children without their support. Therefore reproductive power is controlled by the lineage, and virginity is something valuable to it.

A woman is a member of two lineages. At marriage she is partly transferred to her husband's lineage. She washes with *ikipiki* medicine with her husband and 'using it means that the bride is now of his lineage'. When the bull of puberty has been handed over the shades of her father must 'move aside a little' that she may conceive by her husband, but still the bond with her father's lineage is not severed. 'The blood' of a married woman is created by her shades and those of her husband together. Both sets control procreation, though the inference is that her father's shades cease to have control when *all* the marriage-cattle have been handed over.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Yet still she remains a daughter of her father's lineage and shares in its rituals as well as in those of her husband's. 613

Lineages are linked by marriage and kinship between them is established by the passage of cattle. The son-in-law becomes 'one blood' with his parents-in-law when they drink the beer brewed or eat the chicken killed at the consummation of the marriage; some of his semen is buried in his father-in-law's grove, and his spear is placed in his father-in-law's hut. The significance of the link is magnified by the thicket of taboos which surrounds 'mixing bloods', and once forged the link should be, and commonly is, retained long after the deaths of the individuals by whom it was created, for each is replaced, the husband by a brother or son, the wife by a sister or brother's daughter. For each heir the ritual of 'mixing bloods' is performed afresh reminding them of their separation and union. 613 581

Cattle are closely identified with men and therefore with lineages. The shades watch over them. Like men, they are in danger from women who are ritually impure; at the death of their owner they, too, mourn; and kinship relationships are established and expressed by their transfer from one lineage to another. 'Kinship is cattle.' 613

The distinction and opposition of lineages is apparent in the ritual of puberty and marriage which expresses both hostility and conciliation. The two lineages dance in rivalry, haggle over cattle, and exchange feasts. Among the Nyakyusa, the opposition is not between men and women, as suggested by some recent writers on rituals elsewhere,[1] but between lineages; though the men and the women, both of the groom's party and the bride's, act separately. The hostility and conciliation reach their culmination in the ritual of vituperation among the Lugulu, when groom's group and bride's insult each other by word and in action and then, at the instance of the master of ceremonies, praise each other and feast together. 613 585 881 578

Among the Nyakyusa there is no clan organization and no common name for a lineage of many generations like the Pondo *isiduko*, which identifies agnatic kinship within a large group. A common name is used by members of a lineage of three or four generations at the most, and among commoners there is no invocation of a distant ancestor as among the Pondo. The hero [614 171] 613

[1] E. Fromm, *The Forgotten Language*; M. Gluckman, 'The Role of the Sexes in Wiko Circumcision Ceremonies', in *Social Structure*, edited by M. Fortes (1949).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

613 referred to is not necessarily an ancestor of those who speak of him. In the rituals the participants look towards the direction from which their ancestors came, and the details vary both with the cultural area and with the particular lineage, but similarity in ritual observance is no ground for claiming kinship. The one recognized bond is common participation—attending one another's funerals and observing the rules of avoidance.

The segmentation of lineages is by houses. Ties between full siblings are closer than those between half-siblings and this is immediately apparent in the attendance at, and participation in rituals, as the genealogy of Mwakobela (Table (a)) shows. Full siblings, particularly successive and linked siblings, are closely identified. The most important link between men or women is inheritance. The heir takes the name and social position of the deceased, succeeding to his or her rights and obligations, and observing the same avoidances. 'A shade is resurrected in the body of his child.' The heir is a junior[1] man or woman of the lineage, preferably a full brother or sister, but possibly a half-brother or sister, or parallel cousin, or a son, or brother's son, or brother's daughter.

613 When the heir is a son, or brother's son or daughter, the separa-
601 tion so strictly maintained between generations is bridged for that individual only; he or she changes generation and a man is treated by his former comrades as a 'father' and referred to by his wives as 'father-in-law', even though they are still his wives and live with him.

The identification of alternate generations is expressed in calling grandchildren ('the comrades of the shades') to eat the sacrificial meat or fish, or take the first sip of beer, as well as in the absence of taboos between affines of such alternate generations. A woman does *not* avoid her husband's grandfather. Thus, though the lineage is treated in some respects as a unit, one man (or woman) of it being able to replace another and override the distinction between successive generations, the unity is not pushed as far as among
[171] many other peoples, such as the Pondo, where the form of behaviour appropriate to a father-in-law applies to *all* senior members of his lineage irrespective of generation.

613 Differences in status within the lineage are clearly shown in the
554 rituals. In their observance seniors precede juniors, men precede

[1] If there is no junior full brother, a senior full brother may inherit provided that he has not previously inherited from his father and so become 'father'.

[Category 116, facing p. 270. – Analyst]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

women, daughters of the lineage precede wives. Seniority, of course, does not depend solely on age, and we once saw a little boy precede his father in the performance of a ritual for his grandmother, with whose generation he was identified. The relative status of husband and wife is expresed in the taboo on a woman 'overstepping' her husband physically or metaphorically, and 'overstepping' is symbolized (oddly to a Christian) by the sign of a cross. The precedence of the chief wife is very marked. In commoner families she alone washes with her husband using the *ikipiki* medicine, and he performs the death ritual for her only. A chief may do this for two wives. In Selya a father washes in the puberty ritual with his senior daughter, and among the Kukwe a woman washes with her daughter or eldest son's first wife. 'To wash is to admit that I have lived, and borne a child, and grown up.'

All the rituals celebrate a change in status, and danger lies in not recognizing or admitting the change, in clinging to the past. This is most obvious in the death ritual, which is directed to the separation of the living and the dead. The mourners have the corpse 'on their bodies', they may not separate themselves from him by washing till the appropriate moment, and they share their food and *ikipiki* medicine with the shade, thereby recognizing him as a kinsman; but in due course they drive him off: 'You were our kinsman before but now it is finished, you are a stranger.' 'You are no relative of ours.' 'We are not corpses.' And at the same time they bring him back transformed, as a beneficent spirit in the home. The pattern is a common one in Bantu Africa: the Nyakyusa peculiarity is (1) the speed with which the transformation is achieved (commonly the 'bringing back' of the spirit is delayed a year, whereas the Nyakyusa may delay only a month); and (2) the close correspondence between the change in status of the dead and the change in status of the older generation, who 'move aside' at the 'coming out'. Each generation has its day and must give place to the next.

All through the rituals the dominance of the agnatic lineage is evident, but it does not exclude the recognition of kinship in the female line. Daughters' children *must* perform the ritual at death, twin birth, spearing, and binding with ropes, for their grandparents, while some sisters' children, and father's sisters' sons, may do so also. What is clear from the genealogies is that kinship links in the female line are not traced as far as in the male line and,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

613 602 though wives are assimilated to their husbands' lineages for ritual purposes, men play no part in the rituals of their wives' lineages.

613 577 The second fundamental principle expressed in the rituals of kinship is that a moral law holds within the lineage. Senior kinsmen, living and dead, have a mystical power over their juniors, but their anger is dangerous only if it is just. They cannot mutter irresponsibly. Kinsmen are 'members of one another' in the sense that the life and death of one affect the others. The sins of a father are visited on his children, his juniors in the lineage (though a woman's sins affect only her own husband and children), and the very fact of kinship makes a mystical bond between agnatic kin, descendants of a common great-grandfather, and a man and his daughters or sister's children. The moral law is thought to operate also within the age-village, where the just are protected and the evil punished by 'the breath of men'; but within both lineage and village irresponsible and malicious injury by witches or sorcerers is possible.

777 787 When misfortune occurs the sufferer, and his kinsmen and neighbours, seek an explanation in conflicts and ritual omissions, and interpret the misfortune in terms of these, putting the possible alternatives before the oracle. Thus the danger of conflict with kinsmen and neighbours, and of neglect of ritual, is constantly before men's minds. In practice, there is a strong tendency to push the blame for misfortune outside the lineage of living and dead on to the neighbours.

000 (*b*) *The celebration of rituals and maintenance of the structure*

In any society the practical, intellectual, and emotional aspects are mutually dependent; the practical organization is dependent upon, and at the same time supports, an intellectual system—certain cosmological ideas—and attitudes. It has been argued very cogently that these ideas and attitudes are maintained by their expression in myth and rite[1] but little evidence for this has been published. Can objective evidence be collected? The anthropologist cannot look into men's minds; he is not concerned with personal religion—with the varieties of religious experience. Can he observe any effect of participation in ritual upon the behaviour of groups and categories of people? It must be admitted that our evidence here is thin.

[1] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Andaman Islanders* (1922), pp. 236 ff.; *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (1952), pp. 157 ff.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

182

It has been shown that participation in rituals compels the gathering together and co-operation of kinsmen and of affines, most of whom live dispersed in different villages; it compels the provision of lavish feasts; it compels respectful behaviour to senior kinsmen and, more particularly, affines; it compels an erring son to beg forgiveness of his father, and the father to receive him; it compels confession of anger and formal forgiveness between kinsmen. In short, the rituals compel outward conformity to an approved system of co-operation and respect; the expression of certain sentiments is compulsory whatever the individual may feel. It is clearly understood that not all feel the sentiments they express: Nyakyusa women commented on the fact that certain widows were not really grieved at their husbands' deaths, though they wailed and smeared themselves with mud: but the corporate expression *tends* to induce the appropriate feelings. Even to an outsider the pressure of the ritual is strong; the sense of terror and grief in a throng of women, close packed, and weeping and wailing, is intense. Moreover, though the emphasis is on outward conformity, there is constantly the suggestion that inward attitudes are significant: anger 'in the heart' is dangerous; the medicine will injure any who do not indeed forgive their kinsmen (p. 182, 266 ff.). It is because they think inward attitudes matter that the Nyakyusa lay so much stress on confession (*ukusosya*), admission of a grudge or anger, as the essential preliminary to reconcilation.

This brings us to the next point: the rituals provide for the public expression of anti-social attitudes or tendencies, and their public rejection. The Nyakyusa hold that merely to suppress grief or hatred is useless, and likely to increase it, and they constantly press on one another the need to *ukusosya*, to 'bring out', to confess, that which is within.[1] The admission of anger against kinsmen and affines is the prelude to reconcilation; the open expression of antagonism between two lineages, which are then reconciled by the exchange of gifts and feasts in the Lugulu ritual of vituperation, is but the most dramatic instance of a common theme. The violent expression of grief and anger in the death ritual precedes an assertion of life, and joy in living. The miming of the actions of a madman, and identification with the shades, in the rituals at death, puberty, and twin birth, may be interpreted as an expression of the desire to wallow in filth and the desire for death, preceding purification and rebirth. In short, the rituals are both

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 99–100.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

182 affirmative and cathartic: they express certain attitudes and make explicit and reject others. But how far the catharsis is efficient, how far the rituals cleanse man of anti-social attitudes, we do not know. In many religions there is liable to be a gap between attitudes expressed in ritual and everyday behaviour: between the rejection of anger, hate, envy, and neglect in the ritual, and brotherly co-operation between the worshippers in secular affairs. A pagan Nyakyusa may share the sacrificial flesh with his brother but quarrel over cattle and work sorcery against him; just as we white South Africans may take Communion with a fellow Christian who is black, yet compel him to live in squalor far separate from us; but the very reluctance of most whites in South Africa to take Communion along with blacks is evidence that the symbolic act is not without significance.

(*c*) *Ultimate values and cultural variation*

121 There are certain general hypotheses about the nature of ritual in society, which the analysis of Nyakyusa rituals and comparison with other societies suggest.[1]

First, those things are treated as sacred which are necessary to the survival of the group. In every society we find the *means of subsistence* sacralized (whether it be crops, cattle, hunting, or fishing, or a combination of these) together with fire and shelter. The reproductive cycle is always treated as sacred, the primary relationships of parents and children and siblings, the group or community as a whole, and significant changes in status within it. Law is holy in the sense that right behaviour (or morality) is always linked to religion.

As economy and social structure vary, the particular items treated as sacred vary. This is clearly recognized by the Nyakyusa themselves, as the texts quoted show: the foods used in the rituals are commonly the staple foods of the local area. And if a number of Bantu-speaking groups are compared it is plain that the location of the altar varies with the economy. Among the Nyakyusa it is the earth of the banana grove; among the pastoral Nguni it is the cattle byre; among Lunda hunters it is a tree or branch adorned with trophies of the chase.[2] The exception is when rituals

[1] My debt to Professor Radcliffe-Brown will be obvious to all students of anthropology.

[2] V. W. Turner, 'Lunda Rites and Ceremonies', *Occasional Papers of the Rhodes-Livingstone Museum*, No. 10, 1953.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

spread and the foods and altars traditional in them continue to be used: thus Nyakyusa Christians use wheaten bread and wine from the grape, whereas their pagan neighbours use bananas and millet beer, and their altar is a table set at the east end of a consecrated building, not the earth of a banana grove. |21|

Nyakyusa ideas of physiology are those of a strongly patrilineal society, in marked contrast with those of the Bemba who are matrilineal:[1] to the Nyakyusa a woman is a 'bag' which the husband fills with his 'blood' and so creates a child, while the Bemba believe that 'blood' is passed through the woman, not the man. The taboos of pregnancy also have a patrilineal slant. A difficult labour is commonly attributed, among the Nyakyusa, to the wife's adultery, never to that of her husband, as among the Bemba. §27 |7|

Differences in ritual vary in general form with the differences in economy and structure, but there remains a relative autonomy between them. Not only do symbols spread beyond the economy within which they were coined but, as we showed earlier, poetic licence exists, and the particular associations made by priest and poet are not predictable. Ritual idioms are linked to language, but how closely we do not know. What evidence there is from Bantu Africa suggests a similarity in symbols over a wide area, connected with the similarity in language, but such a hypothesis has yet to be established. |21|

Secondly, the expression of sentiments reaffirms them. Treating food, and reproduction, and family relationships, and the community as sacred, expresses the importance of these things to the group concerned, and at the same time breeds respect for them. Treating them as important in ritual makes people feel that they are important. In Whitehead's phrase, 'the object of symbolism is the enhancement of the importance of what is symbolized'.[2] Rituals are also cathartic in that they express and explicitly reject anti-social attitudes, such as anger, terror, and the wish for death.

Thirdly, the general attitudes expressed in Nyakyusa rituals are necessary to the continuance of any society; they are conditions of social living; and the particular attitudes are necessary to the maintenance of the particular Nyakyusa structure.

Every society, if it is to survive, must value fertility in some |21|

[1] A. I. Richards, 'Some types of family structure amongst the Central Bantu' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by Radcliffe-Brown and Forde, p. 207; 'Mother-right among the Central Bantu' in *Essays Presented to C. G. Seligman*, edited by Evans-Pritchard, Firth, Malinowski, Schapera, p. 276.

[2] A. N. Whitehead, *Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effect* (1927), p. 74.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

121 degree. Sir Charles Darwin has suggested that those societies
842 which put a premium on fertility will ultimately be dominant, by the weight of numbers,[1] but the evidence from Africa suggests that those societies which have in fact survived have regulated reproduction. Of the concern of the Nyakyusa with fertility there can be no doubt. The gods *are* the reproductive principle expressed in the idiom of a patrilineal society—'the shade and the semen are brothers'. One of the express purposes of the rituals of kinship, as well as of the communal rituals, is to secure fertility; one of the major sanctions of religion is the fear of the loss of it. And further than this, all their major activities are expressed in terms of the reproductive cycle and thought to be linked to it. The association of crops, and cattle, and hunting, and war with pregnancy and menstruation in women has already been indicated, and a more general connection between fertility in crops, and cattle, and men will be shown in the account of communal rituals. The two principal crafts, iron smelting and bark-cloth making, are associated with the act of coition. So also are fire-making, grinding, cooking, and eating; and the hearth and hut are identified with the union of husband and wife, and with childbirth. Whether such a preoccupation with fecundity, and the tendency to express all activities in terms of the reproductive cycle, are stronger among the Nyakyusa than among most other peoples we do not yet know, but at least they do not minimize its importance. It is the more significant therefore that, though maximum fertility of soil and stock was sought, there was a limitation of the human reproductive rate by deliberate spacing, and by limiting a woman's period of child-bearing to the years before her son's marriage. The Nyakyusa appear to have been an expanding people in relatively empty country, and the six or seven births per woman which this system allowed, combined with an infant mortality of perhaps 50 per cent, did not cause undue pressure upon their resources.

121 The particular form of limitation was linked to the structure of
182 age-villages. The very wide spacing, with four to five years between pregnancies, and the taboo on a woman bearing after the marriage of her eldest son, ensured that, as a general rule, full brothers built in different villages. Thus the most closely-knit kinship group, that of full brothers and their sons, did not coincide with the local group, and the fissiparous tendency of lineages was checked by village loyalties. A group of full brothers and their

[1] Charles Darwin, *The Next Million Years*, p. 131 *et passim*.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sons, between whom economic and religious bonds were strong, 121
might be liable to isolate themselves, but could not do so when 182
each brother and son lived in a different village. As among the northern Nguni and Tswana, who were organized in age regiments,[1] the principle of generation balanced the lineage principle, each holding the other in check.

Every society values co-operation: 'mutual aid' of one sort or another is a condition of social survival. The Nyakyusa rituals of kinship constantly reaffirm the mutual dependence of members of a lineage. They are 'members of one another' by virtue of their common blood, and what injures one may injure all. This is very clearly expressed in the rituals of death, twin birth, spearing, rotting the ropes, and protection against sorcery. The desire for health and plenty is the lever used to compel co-operation.

The elementary family of parents and children exists in every 121
society of which we have evidence and may be taken as an institu- 594
tion necessary to survival, biological and social, though its form varies. In the death, and puberty, and birth rituals the close character of the bonds between parents and children, between siblings, and between spouses, is expressed; and the polygynous form of the Nyakyusa family, the closer bonds between a man and his first wife and those of the same 'house', and the identification of alternate generations, are also manifested. Thus the importance of the primary ties of parents and children, and of the 'house' within the polygynous family, is enhanced.

Differences in status exist in every society and must do so since 121
leadership is necessary. Individuals move from one position to 554
another during the course of their lives, and all societies celebrate such changes, thereby compelling public acceptance of them, and impressing on the individuals concerned their new duties and responsibilities. These are expressed very pointedly in the Nyakyusa admonition to a bride, or widow, or the mother of twins; in the greeting accorded to the heir to the father of a family; and in the oration to the shade. The rituals are a symbolic weaning from childhood, from the bride's father's lineage, from a former marriage, or from deceased parents, and compel acceptance of a new position; clinging to the old spells madness and death. The conception of being 'born again' and making a new start, is directly

[1] Among the Pedi it was taboo for full brothers to be initiated into the same regiment. G. M. Pitje, 'Traditional systems of male education among the Pedi', *African Studies*, 9 (1950), p. 109.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

121 554 linked to the physiological cycle of individuals and their close kin, and cannot be detached from it as in Christianity.

121 626 Law is a condition of social survival; no society can exist without it; and in so far as religion helps to maintain law and order it fulfills a necessary social function. Among the Nyakyusa (and perhaps in all societies) order is maintained partly by fear of supernatural sanctions. The rituals we have described both enhance fear and relieve it. They harness fear to social ends.

121 771 The preceding chapters are full of the pagan fear of death, menstruation, childbirth, and shedding blood. The rituals express the fear and teach men what they must do to be saved. They teach them to co-operate with their kinsmen and to follow traditional custom, for in that alone does salvation lie. The fear of madness or sterility compels each generation to follow traditional custom as ordained for them by the heroes: thus is the dependence of man upon his society instilled. The death ritual illustrates this most dramatically. In every society men must overcome death emotionally, they must turn to life. In the death ritual the mourners are distraught, terrified; they express their grief and put it behind them; their relatives and neighbours gather round them, share their sorrow, and help them to overcome it. The dead is replaced. Death is associated with fecundity and so made tolerable. It is no accident that the Nyakyusa interpret all the rituals, and especially the death ritual, as a protection against going mad, against the disintegration of the personality. And safety is assured to the living by following minutely the traditions of their lineage.

[[84] That the nature of men's fears is culturally determined is clear from the Nyakyusa evidence, for Christians and pagans alike are agreed that 'the Christians fear much less' than do pagans, and the Christians do in fact ignore taboos which the pagans feel to be binding. But the rituals do not create fear out of nothing. All the situations in which they are performed—birth and death, marriage, and misfortune—are situations of emotional tension in all societies. The rituals heighten the emotions and canalise them. They both teach men to feel, and teach them what it is proper to feel.

771 783 Many writers have shown us that the conception of sacred includes both the idea of holiness and of pollution;[1] that the awful, the fearful, may be conceived both as pure and as filthy. In

[1] See particularly W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (1889), pp. 152, 446–54 (1914 ed.); R. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (1923).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Nyakyusa thought the emphasis is almost exclusively on the filthy. 771
Awe is expressed in terms of pollution. As we have seen, there is a 783
clear conception of resurrection, of separation between rotting corpse and shade, but still the shades are 'filthy', and the mourner, or the bride, or the mother and newborn child, who is identified with them, is filthy too. There is a conception of purity, innocence, whiteness (*suwela*), which is applied to those free from witchcraft or other crime, and to virgins, but it is not cited as an attribute of the shades or of the heroes; indeed, it is those who have been *separated* from the shades or Kyala who are pure.

Nyakyusa religion is characterized by two things: the general 771
linking of misfortune with sin—the conception that if someone falls ill physically or mentally it is usually because he or his kinsman has done wrong—and the preoccupation with pollution. These are connected. The chief sins are neglect of ritual and quarrelling between kinsmen. Now neglect of ritual is, in essence, failure to purify oneself—failure to separate from the filthy shade —therefore sin and pollution are linked, though not identified. The connection between pollution and quarrelling between kinsmen is less direct but it exists, for rituals, the means of purification, are also the occasion for composing quarrels, and cleansing oneself of anger by confession—spitting it out—is a condition of their efficacy.

That the Nyakyusa are dogged by the sense of guilt is clear, but 850
whether it is more overwhelming in their society than in others, or merely more openly expressed, is arguable. Why some people look down to earth, to the rotting corpse and bodily excretions which are buried in the earth, and express their awe in terms of pollution, corruption, and others look to the sky and express it in terms of light and purity; why some people seek union with God and others separation from Him, we do not know. The answer to these, as to many questions regarding Nyakyusa religion, lies beyond the field of this investigation.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya

SELECT RECORDS

I. REPORTS OF PARTICULAR FUNERALS

(a) *Farewell to Mwamulenga III,*[1] *son of Mwegama (Selya)*

Record of G. W. 10/9/37

764 Mwamulenga III hanged himself seventeen days ago, after the
[762] death of one of his wives and his only child. This ritual was held at his own house in Katumba but he was buried at the place where his father, Mwegama, had lived, and the mourning was carried out in the hills by Mwakapesa, the head of the family, who has moved there. The litter was at Mwakapesa's and was taken out about a week ago.

Mwalkambo and I arrived about 10 a.m. with Sikatula (wife of Gwamungonde), who is a cross-cousin (*ustasi*) of the family. The women were gathered inside the house wailing dirges—words were clearly audible but not, to me, distinguishable: one woman was the leader. There was more wailing than singing. The dirge was punctuated by slow handclaps. Mpogo, the eldest full brother of the dead man, and the heir, told me: 'It is the custom to wail just before the ritual, like this.'

764 Food was brought out about 11 a.m. The women had come close to
515 talk to me; when food came out the men told them to go away. I asked why. 'We wash constantly, but women only wash a little, also they look after children and their bark-cloth belts are dirty. When they cook they wash, but for eating they wash little.'

764 I asked who would perform the ritual.

MPOGO: 'Kalukwa (the widow) will perform the ritual, also each of his brothers and half-brothers will select one or two children to do it too. The rest of our children just look on, for we ourselves are not yet dead.'

KANA NSAMBA: 'It is our custom to leave some people over, not to perform it on all.'

Later I asked why Bapala (Kana Lwesi) did the ritual and not Kana Ipalu whose relationship to the dead man was exactly the same. 'We leave some out, they will do it at some other later death.' Actually thirteen people performed it. 'Mwamaloba (son of Mwegama II) will not do the ritual when he returns—it does not matter; but if he'd been a son of the dead man then he would do so. The wives of the dead man's brothers never do the ritual. The ritual for Lukosa (dead wife of

[1] cf. Genealogy on p. 273.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya

the dead man) has been done already; that of to-day is for the dead man 764
and his child together.'

c. 11.30 a.m. The women left the house empty; suddenly the men fell 764
on Mpogo and dragged him struggling into the empty house; the 768
women likewise dragged in Kalukwa—still smeared in ashes. The pair were left alone there with the officiant but, as I heard afterwards, they made no attempt to mate now, it is taboo until the beer. After three or four minutes Kana Nsambe called Mwaipalu (see genealogy) to summon them (*ukabanya*). He went with a stick to the door and pushed it open. Each then came out with a string of green creeper (*ukalomusa*) over the right shoulder. 'This is the sign that we have given him the inheritance.' 'They do not have intercourse, however, until the beer.' Each went to bathe, separately, escorted by friends of the same sex—'to keep them company'.

The two chief officiants were non-relatives, Sikabile, wife of Mwene- 764
nganga, and her assistant Mwanyengenye; but the older female relatives assisted them too, and were referred to as *abayaya*.

Sikabile brought a plantain flower, carefully wrapped in a plantain leaf, into the swept place near the door. She dug a little grave and buried it. There was a discussion about the right direction, and it was decided that the point represented the legs of the corpse and must be set to face BuKinga. The leaf was not buried. 'They take a plantain flower because the deceased was a man. If it had been a woman, they would have taken a sweet banana.' Then, one by one, the principals came and rubbed forehead, right elbow, right hand, and right toe in the pile of earth there—once facing BuKinga and then, all over again, facing the other way. Then they went to bathe. One infant was touched with earth in the correct places by the officiant. Boys and their father bathed separately—'it is always taboo for them to bathe together'.

Mpogo told me that he lives in the hills at Mwakilema's, but all the ritual, including the drinking of beer, will be done here. 'If there was millet available,' he said, 'we would start the brewing now; as it is, we must wait for the new millet. We have sown all our millet.'

After all had bathed, the officiant poured water for them with powdered medicine in it, at the doorway. One by one they stood in the doorway and she outside, and they washed hands, and mouth, and both knees; then her assistant handed her for each a banana, roasted and uncrapped, with the end broken off and with a pumpkin-seed and a lentil, stuck in it, and some powder on it. The officiant held it near the ground and each stooped to bite it, then took hold of it and ate it—some bit first without touching with the hand, some caught hold of it. To each she gave more roast bananas and seeds separately too. In all the ritual Kalukwa (the widow) came last and Mpogo usually last but one. Now he was last but one.

The women then all gathered inside the house and the sisters of

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
SelyA

764 Mpogo began to admonish the wives. This went on for two hours or more. I heard one of the sisters remark: 'The wives tremble now, their husband has died, their Kyala has died.' There was a great noise. Mpogo said to me: 'Our sisters are men, those our wives have married. It is the custom to admonish the wives because our sisters have been angry.' 'And at a twin ritual?' 'Yes, then also.'

764 602 I was told later: 'Mpogo's sisters punished all their sisters-in-law because when they had gone to their brothers the sisters-in-law did not receive them well, they were stingy to them with food. One said: "I went to my brother's home. When I was approaching I passed through a sweet potato garden; I took a potato without fearing because I said to myself: 'It's the garden of my mother.' When I arrived with the one sweet potato I had dug up she said: 'Who are you with a sweet potato?' And she began to shout, saying: 'Whose is it? You do not listen.' My body began to shrink and I said to myself: 'Ha! Why does she not come to look closely? She says a thief comes by day.' And I sat down." And so they went on.'

764 While this continued the principals were all given ointment (*inyemba*) by the officiant and smeared themselves. 'This is the first time they've done so since the death.' Then at the other door of the hut all the principals were collected 'to see the litter (*ukuketa ulufumbo*)'. They watched while the officiant sat inside the door, took some dry banana leaves handed to her, and sprinkled powder on them in the form of a cross. Then she went out of the door holding the leaves and rubbed them lightly on the ground in the form of a cross, and put them outside to be thrown away.

At last the admonitions of the brothers' wives stopped.

Then came the putting of food into the pot. The officiant held an old pot in her hand and circled round the hearth-bricks with it while her assistant dropped in food and all the women sang '*Ilinwawa*'. The food was transferred to another pot and put on the fire. The officiant then touched the hearth-bricks with different parts of her body, or made gestures as if to do so, while she and they said: 'The foot is also put on the fire,' and so on. For all the parts the prefix *un* was used, implying 'his'. The officiant also said, stamping: 'You pass by me, I your wife, your friend.'

Then came a symbolic pouring out of millet into a basket. The gifts of millet were not available, so a little, provided by the family, was used symbolically. Two small winnowing baskets were emptied into a large grain basket by the officiant, while another woman said names—of relatives for the first basket and of neighbours for a second: 'So-and-so and So-and-so has brought millet'—ending up with 'all' in each case. 'This,' they said, 'is a symbol (*ikimanyilo*), we shall each bring our gift of millet later.'

Four stems of bananas had been brought and were now divided up—

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya

one by the wife of Mwabufugo (she had returned home the day before yesterday), one by the wife of Mwamgobole, one by Sikatula, one by Kana Ipalu (cf. genealogy). 764

A fresh bark-cloth was taken from the tree and hammered a little: 'Until this moment it was taboo to hammer bark-cloth, the hammer belonged to the dead man.' The bark-cloth was placed on a fresh banana leaf beneath a grindstone and a little millet ground into it. Then leaf and bark-cloth were taken away. This flour was used for the shaving. Another leaf was put under and more flour ground for porridge.

Roast plantains were handed round for eating. There was a discussion about shaving the 'hair of the corpse'. As it was late, Mpogo wanted to leave it until the gifts of millet were brought, but the others overruled him: 'It must be done now.' They decided to smear their heads with millet paste in preparation for shaving now, and to shave to-morrow.

Kalukwa has to avoid Kana Nsambe (her husband's father's sister) [606] as an in-law. Once, when she came close for eating of mash, Kana Nsambe put a cloth over her head. But when Kalukwa was in the hut at a distance (e.g. standing in a line) no precaution was taken. Kana Nsambe said: 'It is I who buried Mwegama, she avoids me.' Mpogo explained that 'She avoids, but only a little, if she gives a gift to Kana Nsambe she can look at her'.

Then all the principals stood in a line, the assistant officiant crawled round them sweeping the dust on to their legs, while they, and the other women, began to wail a dirge: 'Farewell, Mwaikono!' The women, cheerful a moment before, were weeping at once. This continued for five minutes or so. The principals stood with legs apart while the officiant pushed a flat basket of millet, pumpkin-seeds, and lentils, between the legs of each in the row—she crawled along doing so and then dragged the basket back to the right side. Then she put it on the head of each in turn, and she put a pinch of millet flour on the left shoulder of each.

A stem of bananas and a bunch of feathers (representing a hen) were brought out, and each of the principals in turn sat on the feathers. Kalukwa who, as always, was last, picked it up and put it over her shoulder on a string. The officiant took a leaf for each principal, touched her own body in various places with it, and then put it round the wrist of the principal—to each in turn she did this. As they came out of the hut she held a banana sapling across the doorway so that as each stooped coming out his head collided with it.

Another line was formed outside, facing BuKinga (as in the hut), and again the basket was put by the officiant on the head of each, but this time she threw a few seeds out over their left shoulders and the basket rested for a moment on their heads. They then went to bathe, and Kalukwa threw away the bananas and feathers in the stream.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya
Kukwe

764 A mash made of beans, lentils and pumpkin-seeds was salted, to be eaten with millet porridge; one unsalted was prepared to be eaten with bananas. Each principal then washed again with water and powdered medicine at the doorway. The unsalted mash and bananas were handed to each of the principals to eat. The salted mash and porridge (in one ball) was placed on one of the hearth-bricks and each one came and stooped and bit (as with the bananas before outside), then took [177] away the mouthful to eat. 'We used to put it up on the wall, we have abandoned the custom nowadays.' Mpogo begged for 'only a little'. Finally, each principal sat in the doorway and the officiant smeared a cross on his head with a paste of millet flour (previously ground on the bark-cloth) and water.

It was 6 p.m., the sun sinking, as I left.

The kinsmen present are marked on the genealogy on p. 273. There were also three neighbours one of whom was a younger full brother of the village headman, Mwambuputa. The headman was not there himself.

(*b*) *Farewell to Kalata's mother* (*Kukwe*)

Record of G. W. 6/11/36

Kalata's mother died on Monday evening, November 2, and was buried the next day.

KALATA: They will perform the ritual on me and my younger brother and on my son; if we had a sister alive they would do it for her too, but we have none. . . . The officiant is Sijele, wife of Mwainombola. He is a relative of ours, our mothers avoided him. He was their 'father-in-law'. . . . My father is already dead.

[824] A young man present had gone for the *ikipiki* medicine to wash with and brought back a plant, *nyasati*, but the officiant (Sijele) had seen it and gone for another, saying 'that is the *ikipiki* of the Sangu'. However, two older men and the dead woman's younger sister disagreed with her and said *nyasati* was right.

There were present one classificatory father of Kalata with a small son, Kalata's own small son, Kalata's younger brother, Kalata himself, a young man *untani* to Kalata (son of the dead woman's brother) and a small son; the wife and the sister of the *untani*, a younger sister of the dead woman, and another young woman, all with mourning belts tied round them. A fifth young woman had no belt.

The sister's daughter began to grind millet. A young woman went off to look for medicines for sweeping out the rubbish (*imindu*). Everyone gave her advice as to where to find them. Sijele came in with a bunch of twigs for sweeping, and a separate one for washing. There was more discussion of *nyasati*. Sijele said that *nyasati* was for bathing with after the burial, not for washing with now.

A young woman began to clear the rubbish (*akasaya imindu*) with the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

764

bunch of twigs and to carry them into the bananas. Sijele took over the grinding of the millet.

K's younger brother went off to fetch the wife of M. (who himself died the day before yesterday). As soon as she arrived she insisted on the grinding stone being moved opposite the door (it had been to one side of the door). 'That's the ritual,' she said. She changed two other things: first she said that *nyasati* was the correct plant to wash with, and they accepted her judgement; then she was furious that they'd begun to sweep out the hut: 'You must not do that, to-night you have to dance to the harp on the litter. Actually, you should have started yesterday washing and eating porridge, and swept to-day, now you must sweep to-morrow.' After much discussion it was decided to eat the porridge now, dance to-night, and sweep to-morrow. Some of the litter was still left inside unswept.

M's wife, N., went away again. Kalata told me: 'She is a Christian, she is our officiant, she also is related to us, she and Sijele are those we get to perform the ritual for us.' He also said: 'The rubbish (*imindu*) or litter (*ulufumbo*) is sickness.' The three young men—K., his brother, and *untani*—all took the women's argument over the ritual as a great joke.

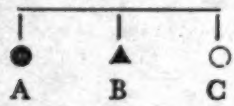
The millet porridge had now been cooked. Kalata's son (aged about 4 years) was stood by the door and a little piece of twig, *nyasati*, put between his hands. Three times the officiant poured water on his hands; and twice she made him hold it in his hand, suck it into his mouth and spit. Then K. and his younger brother in turn each did likewise, washing hands three times and mouth once and spitting. Two leaves were put on the ground, one of sweet banana, one of plantain, on top of each other, in front of the door. Sijele put porridge on them and then, taking a leaf-rib of *isegs* she gave a little to each twice in turn, in the same order. To each she gave once when he stood to the west, once when he stood to the east, of the door. She shoved the porridge in great lumps into their mouths amid laughter. The porridge has no medicine in it. The rest of the porridge was finished by 'the officiants'—i.e. Sijele and the dead woman's elderly sister.

I asked the reasons for all this.

'Our ritual is of great importance. When anyone dies they treat us, the children, ritually; they make us lick porridge, they make us wash—for if they don't treat me thus then, if I go to eat other men's ritual food, the disease falls upon me. There are many kinds of ritual; in our Kukwe ritual we eat mash (*ikufuge*). If I come across other people eating maize with beans, as the Ngumba and the Penja do, or anything else but mash, then I don't eat that food, I avoid it and don't go near, I say this is a different ritual. But if I find people eating mash then I eat too. Even then, however, if I haven't had all the ritual performed for me, both of father and of mother, the disease will fall upon me.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

764 'We perform the ritual upon the immediately-following younger brother of a man, on his wife, children, and grandchildren. On the husband, the immediately-following younger sister of a woman, children, and grandchildren. My mother's sister here did not immediately follow her, therefore she does not have the ritual done for her.'



B. died first. A. performed the ritual for him. A. has now died and C. does not perform the ritual.

K. has no wife with him, she's left him.

I returned the same evening just before sunset, as they told me to. We waited a long time. K's classificatory mother asked him: 'What about the stem of bananas?' And he went off to arrange with a neighbour that he should cut and 'steal' a particular stem. As the light faded from the sky, Sijele, the officiant, arrived, walking as she always does with the help of a stick. Still we waited for N., and by the time she came it was full night.

From the moment of Sijele's arrival there was a prolonged discussion as to whether or not we should include maize in this evening's ritual food, or whether beans alone were correct. Precedents were quoted from previous rituals, including that of the dead woman's husband and those of the local chief's family. Sijele left declaring that to include maize was a Sangu custom. After N. arrived, the argument continued and it was finally decided that beans alone were correct. For about half an hour after we were all gathered ready in the hut, round the fire, the talk continued. N. and S. described, with immense enjoyment, the rest of the ritual, particularly the bathing with stones. Although, as [781] we shall see later, the stones symbolize death and the corpse, there was no atmosphere of awe about the description—it was vigorous and expressive and punctuated by the laughter of the listeners. There was no solemnity; no evident sense of awe; the two officiants, the principals, and the rest of us laughed and talked all the time. It was clearly thought most important to perform the ritual correctly, but not, apparently, the least important to spread a 'religious atmosphere' over it.

'Who shall begin? Let the young gentleman (*ulifumu*) begin!' The child was made to begin, K. followed and K's younger brother came last. Kalata held his son's hands open to receive the beans and powdered medicine, in front of the fire. A pot was put on the fire and beans brought in calabash spoons. Sijele began by opening her little packet of powdered medicine and putting a pinch into the pot with a few beans, then she poured in some water from a drinking calabash. As she did each of these activities she said: 'This is the ritual of my wife.' (N.B. she was speaking for the child, grandsons call their grandmothers 'my wife'.) Then the child was helped to do the same thing. Sijele put

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

medicine and beans into his two hands and K. helped him to throw 764
them into the pot. As he did so K. and N. both said for him: 'This is the ritual of my grandmother.' Then Sijele gave him the water calabash and K. helped him to pour, while the same words were said for him again. Sijele did the same for K. and his brother in turn. She began each time by putting powder and beans and pouring water into the pot, and then K. followed suit, and his brother after him. For K. she said: 'This is the ritual of my mother,' and he repeated: 'This is the ritual of my mother, Sandumi'; for the brother she said: 'This is the death of my mother,' and he repeated the same words.

The ritual was interrupted once or twice by discussion. The child's hands got burnt in throwing the beans into the pot and there was a pause for comment and comfort. When Sijele said for the child: 'This is the ritual of my wife,' N. said: 'Let him say "of my grandmother".' Neither of the young men was very serious, and each laughed as he finished his words.

We went quietly (by pre-arrangement) to a neighbour's homestead, stumbling in the darkness, and cut a stem of banana. We made a noise doing so but the householder stayed quiet. K's younger brother picked up the stem from the ground and ran off home with it, while the rest of us set up a hue and cry, following him at a run and calling: 'Thief, thief, he's stolen a banana stem!' Still the householder stayed quiet. This is the custom, the owners say nothing, it is the party of the 'thief' that pursue him. This stem, they told me, would be kept and used later.

So we entered the house again. Kalata had previously borrowed a [534]
harp (*ilipango*) of four strings and asked a neighbour to come and play 764
it. The three principals, Sijele, and the player, stood up and began to 535
circle round the fire slowly, stepping rhythmically and saying: 'Good-bye, go to father! Good-bye, go to mother!' Sijele and N. had previously told them the words and the tune. The fire burned up brightly and flickered on the circling figures, the leader crouching to his harp, while the beans steamed in the pot. Sijele held a winnowing basket full of dry pods of oil-seeds (*inyemba*) in her hands. The three principals reached into the basket as they circled and crushed them in their fingers till the seeds fell out. Then N. called out: 'Now then, stamp the stamping dance (*ukukanya inganya*)!' The harp-player stopped playing while the three principals stamped and stamped near the fire calling the war-cry as they did so. No words were spoken.

Two leaves were then placed on the ground, one sweet banana, one 764
plantain, on top of each other. Sijele and the three principals knelt 533
round them, and N. told them the words and the tune. Then these four beat the leaves as if they were hand drums, singing: 'The ritual of my father (*syaku, syaku*), the ritual of my mother: the ritual of Mwaijagila, Mwalibuti, Malambaiaga, Kisinile, Lambwe (these are the praise-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

533 names of their father); Sananbi, Mwilwa, Maluhajegila (these are the
764 praise-names of their mother). The next day they explained their song: 'It is to perform the ritual (*ukusyekula*). They call it *isyekula* (i.e. the ritual) and they say that if they don't perform it the child will be like an idiot, he will run about naked and mad.' In all the songs Sijele acted as leader and the principals as chorus.

Then, finally, a grain basket was brought and turned upside down. Sijele and the principals beat on it with a new rhythm, but still syncopated, singing: 'The two ways of the parent! The two ways of the parent!' And so it finished.

764 I was told that the next morning early the three principals would eat the beans which had now been cooked, but that they must stay for a night first in the hut.

Kalata commenting later said: 'We Kukwe circle and dance the stamping dance, but we beat neither the ground nor the basket. Beating the basket is a Sangu custom.' Kalata is a Kukwe but his mother was a Sangu.[1] 'We Kukwe sing farewell and "*Syeku, syeku*", and we dance round to the harp; but we don't sing "the two ways of the parent" at all!'

November 7

I arrived at 8 a.m. to find that the beans had been eaten. 'We came out in the morning cold very early, we washed our hands and ate the beans. Then Sijele, who had slept the night with us, swept out the rubbish (*imindu*) with the bunch of medicine twigs.' When I arrived Kalata was finishing the sweeping outside with an ordinary broom.

November 16 *Record of Mwaikambo*

764 They began by building a little hut on the pathway that goes through
342 the bananas to the stream, near the house. The path went right through the hut, which was built only by the officiants, not by the others. After they had finished building they planted hearth-bricks inside and lit a fire; then, taking some dry oil-seeds and powdered medicine, they called out to summon those for whom the ritual was being performed. When they came into the hut the officiants gave powdered medicine and oil-seeds to the child who received them in both hands and poured them into a potsherd on the fire, saying as he did so: 'This is the death of my grandmother.' They gave them to the two young men likewise, who said: 'This is the death of my mother' (that is to say: 'This is the ritual of my mother'). And then the officiant took all the rest of the oil-seeds and put them in the potsherd to roast.

764 When the seeds were roasted the officiant ground them up and began to prepare ointment. Meanwhile the principals poured water into a

[1] Strictly the ritual should have been Kukwe since a wife follows the ritual of her husband.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

small pot for cooking the beans; each poured a little in turn, as they 764
had done with the oil-seeds, and said the same words as before. The officiants then picked the flowering head of a banana and selected a petal or two to use as a basin to prepare the ointment in. The beans, however, they did not throw into the pot, because they had done this before, they just put some in to cook. When the beans were all ready for making the mash, but before they took them off the fire, the officiants shaved the principals' hair. The officiants made them sit down on a bark-cloth spread on the ground and drew lines where they were going to shave with a bunch of grass called '*ifisajelo*', which had been dipped in some lees of beer. They began by shaving along the lines marked with the lees, one from forehead to neck, one from ear to ear over the crown. Then, as they shaved each in turn, they mocked him, saying: 'Poor fool, it found its mother (grandmother) was dead. Went stealing and they've speared it on the head!' After the officiant had shaved the lines and mocked them they helped each other to finish shaving their heads.

The mash was made by mixing the beans with the plantain that they had stolen previously, and with a sweet banana which they cut for the occasion. The plantain they say is the man, the sweet banana the woman. While mixing the mash together they took out of it a bean, a plantain and a sweet banana for each of the principals. And to some of the mash they added salt, to some not.

Then they went to bathe. They cut leaves of plantain and of sweet banana. First they tied the plantain leaves round the principals' loins and then the sweet banana leaves on top, and round their necks they tied one plantain leaf also. Then they stuck one plantain in front, and a sweet banana behind, and went to bathe. The principals wore cloths under the leaves because of the women present.

When we reached the stream the principals sat down in the water looking downstream. The doctor twisted grass into pads and put a pad on each one's head with a pebble on the pad. Then she put pebbles in the forks of all their fingers and toes, and in their mouths and ears, and made them hold a flower in each hand. They lay down in the water looking first upstream, for that is the direction of BuKukwe, and then finally downstream again. Stones, leaves and bananas fell into the water and then they bathed themselves in the ordinary way, each still wearing a cloth.

On the way back the doctor picked a kind of water grass (*ulukeke*) and a certain flower called *utungengelenge* and made each of the principals [824] hold some grass in one hand and a flower in the other. When we reached the little hut (in the path between house and river) the principals threw the grass and the flower on to its thatch. Also they had brought water in a calabash from the stream, and this they poured on the thatch where they had thrown the flower. As the water dripped

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 down from the thatch to the ground, a principal ran through the doorway so that the water trickled on to his body, then they poured more and he ran out again. Each of the three principals did this twice.

One officiant had been left behind to roast a chicken and some plantains, and when they had run through the drips they ate the food. They began with the roasted plantains in which they had stuck cooked lentils, then the boiled plantains and the beans which they had left separate from the mash, then the unsalted mash and finally the salted mash. When they had finished the officiants smeared patches of ointment on themselves and on all the principals—on the little toe, the navel, the forehead and the elbow—and then each anointed his whole body. Then the officiant took some banana bark, twisted it up and smeared it all over with powdered medicine. This she first made as if to tie round her own neck but did not, and then she tied it round the neck of the first principal. She put similar necklaces on the other two and they slept with these necklaces on.

November 17

Early in the morning when they first woke up the officiant brought some medicated millet porridge which they moulded into little sausages, then they went to the path some way off from the village, and there, on the path, they dug little holes into which they inserted the sausages. Then they bent down and put their lips to them, biting a piece off and leaving a piece in the ground, and this they buried. Returning to the little hut, they took off the necklaces and threw them inside, and they pulled down the hut and destroyed it. Then they went to bathe and washed off the ointment they had put on the day before. When they got home the officiant stroked each on the forehead with a razor but made no cut. So it was over.

They said that if any detail was omitted or done wrong the principals would go mad.

II. LOCAL VARIATIONS IN THE DEATH RITUAL

764 (*a*) *The funeral of Mwampiki and his wife* (see Table (c) p. 272.)
184 This document illustrates the differences between lineages in the details of ritual, and the adjustments made for the children of married daughters. Mwampiki, whose funeral is described, was of a Sangu family, doctors of the chiefdom for the 'coming out', who had lived for two generations in Selya.

Record of G. W. 16/3/37

Kakuju, the village headman, called me to the funeral of 'the wife of Mwampiki' in Ijesi village. Mwampiki (Mwamwenembanga) himself is dead but his homestead and several wives have been inherited by a

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

younger half-brother, Mwaisalwa. The dead woman is a wife of Mwalemba (Kanjesi) another half-brother. Kanjesi was an old inhabitant of this village but he moved to Masebe. His wife was on a visit to her 'fathers' at Mwakalobo's place in the hills. She went to a funeral there and fell sick and died there yesterday. The corpse was brought here this morning. It is now 10 a.m. and the grave is half-dug. The owner of the homestead, Mwampiki II (Mwaisalwa), is not here, he is sick at Masoko where he had gone for a case. The husband is not yet here either; they have sent for him to Masebe. The dead woman's elder sister and co-wife is here, and their mother. 764 184

They went to fetch a doctor to perform an autopsy, offering him 20 cents, but came back without him. 'He refused,' they said. 'Well then,' said Kakuju, 'take him a cloth, doctors do not agree to come for just a little.' So they took him a cloth. [763 435]

Kakuju told the women to come out of the house as it was too small to hold them all. The corpse was carried out into the shade of an *unyunguti* tree. All the women gathered round wailing, about seventy of them, and about twenty men.

No cows have been killed yet as neither the husband nor Mwampiki II are here. No drums are here yet either. The grave was finished about 11 a.m. I asked Kakuju about dancing at death. He agreed that in the old days they had only danced the war-dance. 'That was our old custom. Formerly we fought and killed people—the men of Mwangomo (another chief) who came to the funeral!' Mwambuga (the husband of the dead woman's husband's sister), who had been quite cheerful heretofore, suddenly began weeping and crying. He walked over to the women and joined in the wailing. Some small and naked children started climbing joyfully on the piled-up earth from the grave. [177]

Now it is noon and there are thirty-five to forty men present and ninety to one hundred women. A doctor has agreed to come (to perform the autopsy) but has not yet arrived. Although the corpse was outside male mourners went into the house on their arrival to weep. An older woman got up and led a dirge. I heard her say a number of names, among which 'Mwampiki' was distinguishable. Clapping followed her words. Often she just called the war-cry (*akalulu*). The others wailed and joined in the war-cry. She accompanied her wailing with rhythmic movements of the body and arms. After a time she sat down but continued to lead the wailing.

Mwakalabela (Mbalakatela) arrived with a cow. His daughter is married to young Mwaijumba, the son of Mwampiki. The autopsy followed (for description see *Good Company*, pp. 247–9).

17/3/37

Angombwike told me at breakfast that now Mwampiki himself was dead. He died yesterday at Masoko and was carried here last night.

R

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 They arrived with him in the middle of the night. The message reached
184 Kakuju at cock-crow. I arrived at 9 a.m. to find the grave finished and one cow (a young one) killed. 'It was his own, and slept with the children'—i.e. it was stabled in his long house in the compartment in which the herdboys, his sons, sleep at night. The drums were being beaten—I heard them begin as I approached—but there was no dancing as yet. The corpse was being held upright (wrapped and hidden in cloths) by the women chief mourners, under the *unyunguti* tree, in the middle of about 150 women. Wailing was in full progress. Two women were standing up to lead the dirges; one was the one who led yesterday. She called out: 'Mwampiki, Mbembela . . .' and other words. She stretched her hands towards the circle of women, towards the men and called out: 'You men, you young men . . .' and she called the villages by name: '. . . Lupondo, Njesi, Bujege, Bujenga'. I asked about this because Angombwike had told me that the Mwampiki family were Sangu and did not wail at a funeral. 'Yes, indeed,' I was told, 'they have changed now, but at the beginning [of the funeral] they did not wail, they were silent, they dug the grave and finished it, they killed a cow, and have only begun to wail now.' Two men stood by the corpse (among the women) wailing, his own eldest son and his brother-in-law. About seventy men were present. Dancing was begun by Mwaisyelage of Ibale who seized a spear and shouted the war-cry and danced. Half a dozen men followed him and several bananas were cut. Kakuju began to shout out words as he sat and then leapt up and joined in the dance. After five minutes the dancing died down and the drums stopped.

The grave, like that of yesterday, is an unusual shape. The hole is small and square and the cave is much bigger than usual. The corpse is laid down with the forehead pointing to Sangu country. 'Yes, the woman was buried just like this,' I was told in reply to my question. 'For though she is a Nyakyusa by birth, since she married a Sangu she looks towards Sangu country.'

A cow was brought by Mwakibilingwa whose daughter is the wife of one of Mwampiki's sons. 'Have you accepted the cow?' I asked. 'No one can yet,' said Mwaisumba, 'the real owner of the cattle is her child, the "owner" of the woman. Mwampiki's younger brother should not receive the cattle. No! But her child, the owner of the woman. If he wishes he will receive it and tell us. If he does not wish he will drive it away and tell us "I am killing my own cow." We do not know yet.'

The corpse was carried with shouts and the war-cry and wailing about 100 yards, and the dead man's cattle were driven by the side (six full-grown beasts and two calves). 'It is to do honour to him here where he walked about, now that he has died. We do it for all senior people like him, not for juniors. Yes, and for women too, and even

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

though there are no cattle they carry him thus.' The corpse was then 764
taken to be washed. 'We do not examine him; yesterday's corpse we 184
did indeed examine but not this one. He was a senior, a chief,' said his
son, and Kakuju confirmed it. 'We do not examine him. We refuse
because he was a senior person.' More cattle appeared—'those of his [643]
son at Masoko'. 'It is the custom,' I was told. 'All the cattle come to
mourn. These are the cattle of Mwansasu, the first lot were Mbembela's own. Most (or all of them) were kept by Mwaipungu, the eldest son.'

The drums began again and dancing recommenced. The drums had
been warmed up by a fire. About 200 women and 100 men were [536]
present.

Mbasuke, father-in-law of Mwansasu, brought a heifer calf. Three cows were killed, two after the burial, all belonging to Mbembela and his sons. The heads of the cows killed point towards Sangu country. There was a dispute about one of these cows. They had killed one already which had come for the marriage of a daughter of the family, and they had taken another from the same son-in-law. There was objection, some saying: 'No, we should take one which came from another son-in-law.' All the cattle of Mwansasu and of the deceased were driven through the homestead together, a herd of twenty or so. Then they were gathered at the side, facing the grave. The corpse was carried out to the side of the grave. The chief mourners stood holding the corpse and all the men and women stood up to watch. The noise of wailing was terrific. A son seemed entirely to have lost control. 'Alas Father! Alas Father!' he cried, his body trembling and sweating, the tears running down his face, his hand pointing, shaking, towards the corpse and the grave. A friend was wailing, holding his head with his hands: 'My friend, my friend!' The corpse was laid down by the women and wrapped in more cloths. This took about half an hour. Still we stood and watched while the women began to sit down. Two men (Mwaisalwa III and a half-brother) and one woman (his widow) got into the grave—a tight fit. The corpse was buried with a new pot (a small one, used for serving food), several calabashes including a calabash cup, and a calabash of beer. Some of the beer was taken out just beforehand and left above ground. 'That means he should not go with all our fertility.' A huge calabash had been smashed before this by a son, in an ecstasy of grief. Now another was brought but it was decided not to bury it.

Kisiza explained about the beer: 'Always, when a person has drunk beer during his illness before his death, the remains are buried with him. If he has not drunk beer during his illness none is sought.'

No door was available so a cloth was fixed across the opening of the cave. The women got out of the grave while the men remained in to stamp down the earth. Many people threw handfuls of earth.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Farewell to Mwampiki 2/4/37

764 Women began to wail about 9 a.m. I saw some arrive with bananas.
184 They stopped wailing after ten minutes or so. Imilanwa (Mwaisalwa) was present. Mwaijumba had not yet come. I met Kakuju on the way. He had not yet been told of the ritual. Mbapa and Maleja (widows of Mwalingo) did most of the work, with Ijumba, widow of Mwampiki. Isalwa sat near and watched while Maleja ground up the ointment. Seeds for making ointment were put on the fire. This was the ointment for anointing oneself in the ritual. Beans were brought in a flat basket. 'We mourn', they said, 'with bean mash and the meat of a cow.'

There was some discussion about killing the cow and a dispute between Imilanwa and Simeni. Just as the cow was about to be killed a woman came and made them bring it to the side of the swept court
[262] away from the graves. 'If you kill it near the father-in-law's grave the wives will fear to eat the meat.' The cow was killed by Imilanwa. He then called the men of the family to discuss whether or not they should kill a bull also. One had been sent by the Chief Mwaipopo who is 'our son-in-law. He married a daughter of Maleja'. Imilanwa said: 'Let us kill it,' and they agreed. Only thirteen men were present so far.

[171 The meat from the fork of the right foreleg (*ija nnapa*) was taken to
177] eat with the mash. This is a Sangu not a Nyakyusa custom. The men of the family follow the Sangu custom. The women, daughters of Sangu, do likewise, and the women who are wives of Sangu, but the children of daughters who are married to Nyakyusa men from Selya do the Selya custom. If the daughter of a Sangu marries a Selya man then, if her father dies, she does the Sangu ritual at his place, but if her husband dies she does the Selya ritual at his place even if she has borne him no children, and even if she is herself a child or an infant who has not yet been to him. But her children always do the Selya ritual both at their father's home and at their mother's.

The burying of the banana flower and rubbing in earth is a Selya custom and is only done by the children of Selya men. I saw five or six children do it. Then more children came to rub in earth. One was under instruction at the mission. The women told him to rub himself but Mwaijumba broke in: 'If he is a Christian he ought not to perform the ritual.' 'He's under instruction.' 'Very well, he does not perform the ritual, for a Christian should not have two gods (*ba Kyala babili*).' The bull was killed a little way off among the bananas. Mwaijumba explained: 'It is just for meat, it's not for the ritual, the further off one. Christians will eat it.'

Shaving of the sprouting hair *Record of Mwaikambo, 22/4/37*

First the men and women began drinking beer separately. Then they began the ritual. They went to the grave with beer in a small calabash.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Ndali

The officiant prepared some beer mixing it with powdered medicine, 764
and they came one by one to drink. The other officiant made as if to 184
shave them, taking a little hair from the forehead and the neck. When she had done this she put her hands between her legs. Thus the people of Selya perform the ritual. In another calabash they put the lees of the beer that had been drunk, with two pots of water. These lees are poured on to their heads and the water runs over their bodies. When the officiant has done this she puts her hands and the calabash between her legs. They look towards Sangu country. Then they shave their hair. When they have finished they throw away the cloths and bark-cloth which they wear when they wash. Then they anoint themselves with oil, and sleep with it on them, and wash in the morning. The people of Selya shave in the morning; at this time they do not really shave, they only cut the sprouting hair.

In the evening there is the ceremony of handing over the inheritance. The heir sits on a banana stump in the doorway and the chief wife hands him a billhook. Then they say: 'Care for these children whom your elder brother left as if you had begotten them yourself, do not be hard, be kindly as he was.'

And at night he will sleep with the widows. In the morning the chief wife goes to her father without washing off the filth and gives her fathers beer, then they greet one another. Ndingania also goes to his mother's people. They said one woman did not go because her fathers did not know the custom, they are Lugulu. There were only these two women, one grown up and one a girl, to be inherited.

Mwaijumba told me that for Kanyosa their affines will not cut the banana grove for they have no girl to give in her place. 'They will give us cattle, we divide (the marriage-cattle) with them.'

(*b*) *Ndali funeral rites* *Record of Mwailambo*

When someone has died the Ndali mourn for five days, and the 764
sixth day they sweep and shave the hair. When they are shaving it they 302
take a potsherd and put in it all the hair that is shaved off. When they 184
have finished they choose one senior woman, the chief wife, and they hand her this hair and they go to throw it away at the cross-roads. Giving the woman the hair means that the shade should be at his place and leave others. Shaving is to get rid of the shade which was on their bodies (*ukusuwa ko kwanyya uuyuka ujw kali nagwe na mbili*). And the people who held the corpse in their arms and dug the grave step over a trench of fire when they have come from the bathing. The doctor gives them medicines to bathe with. They say that if they do not step over fire it is as if they had the dead on their bodies (*kalinagwe mumbili umfwe*), and he will always come in dreams, so they drive him away.

When some considerable time has passed—a whole year—they do the 765
ijyengule. This word comes from straining beer. To strain the *ijyengule*

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Nduli

765 they seek two or three officiants, and they build a temporary hut behind the living huts where they strain three pots of beer, which they call 'the beer of the shades'. These officiants do not bathe their bodies because they say: 'Let us be with the shade when we make the beer (*tujoje nagwe ungwake bo nalabombe abasalwe*).' The rest of the beer is strained in the house.

When they have brewed it they take one potful from the temporary hut and pour the contents on top of the grave; then they dig a hole on the grave and place in it a little pot of beer. What is left in these two pots they drink, together with the rest of the beer, and there is much drumming.

766 After a long time has passed, perhaps two years, if there has been sickness in the home, they think that the deceased is making them giddy, is causing them to be ill. So they dig up the corpse and take all the bones and finger and toe nails. If one is left the sickness is not cured. When Mulage, the grandchild of Mwakafunga, was ill they dug up the corpse and the illness ceased very quickly. They pile up the bones which have been dug up.

III. MARRIAGE NEGOTIATIONS AND GIFTS

584 ANGOMBWIKE: One of our comrades in Kabembe heard that there was an unmarried girl at the Chief Mwasumbwe's, so one Monday he said to three of us: 'Don't go away, friends, we are going to woo the chief's daughter at Mwasumbwe's.' So we put on our best clothes, those we wear to church, and we went to the home of the father of the girl. He was the younger brother of the Chief Mwasumbwe by the same mother, and he told us: 'I am not the father (*agwise*). She is my own child, but the father is the chief. Go to him' [i.e. authority over his daughter rested with his elder brother]. The girl had reached puberty. Someone else had married her, but her father had received only one cow, so the elder brother, the chief, was angry and took away the girl from her husband. My friend had never met her, never. He had just heard that there was an unmarried girl at that place, because the custom of making love to girls in the long grass is not a traditional one: a girl used to stay at her father's house. A young man went to the father before he spoke with the girl; he never spoke to her in secret. Then the father would send the girl to speak with the young man. She came and sat down and the young man looked at her closely and his friends who [177] accompanied him helped him. Formerly a young man did not wear [291] many clothes, he only wore one cloth in front, and a brass body-ring, so that his whole belly might be seen, and she might look closely. Also [516] he sits high on a stool, while his fellows sit on the ground, that he may be seen by the girl.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

be seen by the girl. Then the girl asks his fellows: 'What is he like, 584
friends?' And they reply: 'He's a real man.' Then she agrees to the 'go-between', saying: 'Indeed, I love them [*sic*].' But if she does not like them she refuses, and the young men go away. Yes, indeed, the girl always had power to refuse; no one ever compelled her to agree, even though the man had many cattle. The fathers always agreed for their part, saying: 'My daughter is good, she refuses at my house, and tells me (i.e. she does not accept and then run away, which is bad).' And if the girl has refused the young men go away, but others laugh and jeer at them, saying: 'So-and-so's daughter refused.'

'Oh!'

'Yes. Indeed, they are horrible young men, their bodies are very ugly.'

And the young men also look closely at the girl, they look very closely, and if they see that her breasts are thin, and her face is ugly, then they go and tell her father's friend, saying: 'We are leaving her, tell her father that we will not marry his daughter. Then he tells her father, who just says: 'All right, let them leave her.' But the custom of wooing in secret first, before a man has been to the father, began among Christians. The Christians say: 'It is good to woo in secret [77] first,' but pagan fathers still object, saying: 'We will not eat the cattle properly.'

So when the father of the girl had told us thus, we went to the chief's place, and sat down under a tree. The chief's wives sat down at a distance. Then we trembled and sweat came on our bodies. I said to my fellows: 'Do we just sit? Let us ask.' And I got up and asked the chief's wives: 'Is the chief at home?'

'Oh! Do you wish the chief?'

'Yes, we wish to see him.'

'But he is at another's wife's place. Shall we call him?'

'Please.'

'Where have you come from?'

'We come from Kalembe.'

Then I returned to my friends and the chief's wives called him, saying: 'Four young men from Kalembe have come and want to see you about something.'

Then the chief came with three of his men, and they greeted us. . . . Then the chief called to his wives: 'Bring some food for them to eat,' and he got up himself to cut a stem of bananas.

Then I said to my fellows: 'Friends, do we just chat to the chief without asking him? One should get up and tell the councillor that we had come to ask for a girl.'

Then they all said: 'You are brave, Angumbwike, you get up.' 'No, I am ashamed to get up twice, let So-and-so get up.' He got up and told one of the chief's men: 'We have something to discuss; we

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

584 have heard that there is a girl who is unmarried here, it is about this we wished to see the chief, there is nothing else. But we are poor, we know that we have not got cattle.'

'Oh! But here there is no girl. There is a nubile girl at the home of the younger brother of the chief, across the stream.'

'It is she we want, indeed.'

Then they told the chief this, and he came and sat among his men, and I went with my fellow who had told the councillor, and we sat down with them.

Then the chief said: 'You have come to seek a girl?'

We: 'Yes, indeed, Chief, it is for this that we wished to see you. There is not anything else. But we beg you, we know that we are very poor. We have not got cattle. That we know. But we will make ourselves your servants, and hoe for you.'

Then he said: 'Who are you?'

'Do you ask our names before we have agreed? I am a son of Syelage.'

'That Mwaisyelage who has built in Bulindanajo in the country of Mwaipopo?'

'Yes.'

'Indeed, you are like your father, and Linolemu[1] himself, you are like him, we were friends, they were always clever fellows. But who wants the girl?'

He asked all our names, then I pointed out the suitor and told him his name.

Then he said to his councillor: 'Tell them that M. (his younger brother) has many funerals in his family, his children die frequently. Perhaps it will create quarrels later on if the girl dies. We have lazy people in our lineage.' So he told us. Then I replied and said: 'We are all like that. . . . We have come to create kinship, we want funerals, to bury one another. If one has died, let his fellow come to mourn at his place.'

'Yes, but some of us exceed in dying.'

'That is what we want, funerals, and burying one another.'

'All right, I agree.' (To the councillor): 'Call the girl and let them speak with her.'

And he went to call her.

Then we put our fellow, the suitor, on a stool, and I and my friend and the councillor, the go-between of the father, went closer to the girl than the others to hear what she said. Then I spoke to the girl, saying: 'We sought you, we want something else of you, we love you. It is L. M. there who wishes to marry.' . . . We spoke with her. . . . Then she agreed and said: 'Indeed, I love them, he is my husband, I love him. I am startled looking at him, I am startled indeed.' Then the coun-

[1] Angensbwike's grandfather who was dead.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

cillor said: 'Give the girl a betrothal gift.' The groom gave her 3s., and I gave the councillor 1s. Then the councillor told the chief, saying: 'The girl has agreed.' 'Thank you, tell them that they must bring four cows.' 584 [465]

Then they called us to eat. They put us in a house which they had prepared with many fine mats, and we sat down. They gave us four calabashes of curds, and a wooden spoon, and we were four. Then we trembled and sweat came on our bodies, especially I, because I knew that they would come to me, the go-between, and I thought 'cleverness is bad!' [i.e. his ready tongue had put him in the most prominent position]. I trembled, thinking: 'When they come to my place what shall I give them?' But the others ate joyfully. I only ate a little and with fear. Then we saw much food. Indeed, very much. What should we do? We called our wife [*sic*] and gave her one big calabash. Then we gathered together and looked at the food. What should we do? Then we called the councillor with whom we had spoken and said: 'Help us, we are defeated.'

'No. The chief will be angry, saying: "Why are you depriving them of their food?"'

Then I went to the chief and said: 'We beg people to help us, the food is so much we are overcome.' He laughed, all of them laughed. 'Are you overcome, Mwaisyelage?'

'Yes.'

Then he gave us four of his people, and they entered the house, and we gave them the curds and went off quickly because we feared lest they compel us to eat more and we should be ill. I put 50 cents in the basket which the chief's wives had brought us with calabashes. It was my 50 cents because the groom had finished what he had; he had only brought 4s. But it was not really mine, it belonged to my mother who had given it to me to buy groundnuts but I asked all of them, saying: 'Friends, who has fifty cents?' None of them had it, so I thought: 'How about this? Will my mother beat me? Is she not my mother? According to custom I will give it.' And the chief's wives accompanied us on the road and praised us, saying we were men of wisdom, because we had put 50 cents in their basket.

So on Thursday we went with four very good cows, some of them in milk. Because it is the work of the go-between to give the owner of the woman wise advice, saying: 'Choose good cattle to begin with, the weaker ones will follow.' And I told them: 'Let us be many friends; the first time he defeated us with his food; let us be many.' So ten of us went, and when they arrived they gave us six calabashes of curds with the whey drained off. They praised us because the cows were very good, but I told them: 'There is another which is sick at home, it will come when you have called your people to hoe, you will kill it to rejoice them.' All laughed and said: 'Let him bring it, it is Lindemu

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

584 indeed, as Lincolemu always was with his cunning. And they are alike in their shortness.' [Angombwike was short of stature.]

Then they told us: 'Bring five marriage-cattle (*alakwa*), then we shall agree to hand over the girl. We will send a messenger to call you.' And we went off.

Then the husband sought four cows, because we always took less than they asked, even though there was another available, we did not take it because they would say: 'They are rich, they boast of their property,' and ask for further cattle, more than they would otherwise have done.

One day we were surprised by a messenger, saying: 'Come tomorrow for the *alakwa*.' Many of us went, people from Mwangomo's country and from Mwaipopo's, many Christians and many pagans. The pagans danced and the Christians sang songs. The groom had relatives in both countries. Before his conversion he had lived in Mwaipopo's country, but after it he moved to Kabembe, to Mwangomo's country, so he brought his fellows, the sons of Mwaipopo, and those of Mwangomo. And I, the go-between, brought my fellows from Mwaipopo's country, for it is always customary for the go-between to have a following.

When we arrived the older ones among us told me, saying: 'Cut the banana grove!' I said: 'How can I cut the banana grove?' 'Cut.' Then I cut. That is to show 'We have come, we sons-in-law of the chief (*balenge*), we marry the daughter of a chief (*wadenge*).' Then my fellows said: 'We will marry another, we will come to marry a sister, a daughter of the chief again.' And I cut another.[1] Then the chief's wives sang: 'Is there only one? Is there only one?' (meaning: 'Have we borne only once? Are there not other little daughters?'). For our part, the pagans danced and danced the war-dance, and thrust their spears in the ground, and sang: 'We shall marry her little sister, she has a little sister.'

And the Christians sang hymns.

Then the go-between of the chief called me, and I went to the chief. There they told me: 'See, we are shouting you have brought few cattle, bring what we mentioned.' And the chief's wives also sang: 'We are shouting, *Mwambandele*, we are shouting!'

Then I crouched down and said: 'Indeed, I told you, I am a poor man; indeed, you did mention the number of cattle, and I have not brought them, and about those which I brought at first I do not boast at all, they were as good as none.'

'But you know that I have many sons who are crying out, who wish to marry wives.'

'Indeed, but I told you that we are poor, if one cries out I will hoe

[1] In other contexts cutting bananas is a symbol of death. It is possible that here the symbol is of a girl dying to her father's lineage, at marriage, but this is only a guess.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for him, let him cut a garden and call me to hoe, I will come, I will make myself his servant.' 584

'But to hoe for a man and to bring him cattle are different things; you hoe for a man when he has married a wife. Who hoes for a bachelor?'

All the time the young men who came with us danced and sang: 'We have brought many cattle, all together they are eight, we have given marriage-cattle indeed.' . . . That is Nyakyusa custom.

And I replied: 'Yes, indeed, I am a child. You correct my childishness. I have no wisdom at all, you told me to bring cattle and I did not bring them. Also my comrade, the bridegroom, you correct his youth, I am like a fly which is killed by your milk, it dies because of it!'

Then he was satisfied and gave us a spear. We grasped the spear and danced with it: 'We are sons-in-law of the chief, we have married the daughter of a chief.' And we brought us. to beg for the girl (ukwaima) but they refused, saying: 'We chiefs eat a bull.'

Then they brought us food: great quantities of food; and we were many. No one counted us. They brought twelve grain baskets of meat and bananas, sixteen calabashes of milk, and eight grain baskets or basins of banana and chicken, and much food which I have not mentioned; I have only told of the fine food. There was porridge and relish and milk, much of it. And I, the go-between, was like a chief, I divided it to my fellows, all was brought to me and I told my fellow Enoch (he who went with me to speak to the girl when we wooed her), saying: 'Take this to the So-and-so's and the So-and-so's.' Because it is not proper that I should carry the food, but another. We called our wife [sic] to receive the choicest food, which she ate with her sisters-in-law—the sisters of the groom had also come with us. And I chose the choicest food for the groom too. We three who had gone with him the first time to woo the girl ate with him, and we each called a friend to join us.

During the feast they showed us a cow, saying: 'Eat it.' But we refused, saying: 'We are poor men.' Then they showed us a bull which we also refused: 'We are poor men, we have plenty with what you have cooked.' Because we feared that if we ate it they would ask for another cow later on. Then we left, but there followed us fifteen grain baskets of food which they had not brought out at first.

On a later day I went with one friend, just the two of us (the groom did not come) to give fa. to take (ukwaima) the girl. They received it. There was much food, but we ate only a little because we were only two. Before they came to bring the girl to her husband I began working for you, so I told my friend Enoch to see to everything, and I told them to go to his house.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO SHADES

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Ref.	Category of sufferer	Misfortune	Category of shade	Alleged sin	Investigation	Ritual performed
1.	Man. Katanya	(a) Crops did not grow (b) Katanya died	'Alangani'	Quarrelling with kinsmen	Autopsy disproved this. Found to be sorcery	Killed a bull for family
2.	Children of village headman	Death of several children	Father of village headman	Village headman moved to father's homestead though told by father's neighbours he should remain in young man's village where he was headman	Autopsy	Prayer
3.	Cattle	Cattle died at father-in-law's (and would have to be replaced)	Shades were angry. His brother complained very much when he took all the cattle	Younger brother took all cattle he had from elder full brother to whom they had been handed on his return from work, and gave them for his marriage	—	—
4.	Two girls	Girls died	—	A wrong (mangwa) not specified	Autopsy Divination	—
5.	Younger brother	Died	Elder brother	Elder brother not buried where he asked to be	Divination	Buried where elder brother had asked

Ref.	Category of sufferer	Misfortune	Category of shade	Alleged sin	Investigation	Ritual performed
6.	Son	Millet crop cultivated by son failed	Father	Had moved from father's homestead. Left grave unswept	Divination	Prayer
7.	Husband	No fish in traps	—	Stinted one wife of fish	Divination	Prayed in banana grove. Wife confessed her anger
8.	Kasitile	Kasitile fell ill	Mother	Neglected to leave flour or beer in his hut for shades	Divination	—
9.	Married woman (wife of Mwakobola)	Woman delirious		Her newly-married daughter returned from husband without bringing a hen or anything, and drank from mother's calabash cup	Divination	—
10.	Child	Death of child	Father's sister?	Father neglected death ritual of his sister	Autopsy. "The ritual entered the stomach of the child"	Neglected death ritual performed

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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

V. CAUSES OF MISFORTUNE

761 (*e*) *The death of Katasya*

The following account of the death of Katasya is quoted in full [128] because it illustrates how several possible causes of misfortune were considered. Possible causes mentioned were:

(a) The anger of his junior kinsmen
(b) The witchcraft of his wives
(c) The anger of his shades
(d) The anger of his neighbours because he had given them too small a cut of a bull killed as a sacrifice to his shades
(e) The adultery of his son with three of his wives
(f) The sorcery of his half-brother's son, Mwamukinga, with whom there was a long-standing quarrel over inheritance and whom he had accused of killing his (Mwamukinga's) full brother
(g) The sorcery of the Chief Mwaihojo, for Katasya, a man of the neighbouring Chief Mwaipopo, had built and cultivated on land claimed by both Mwaihojo and Mwaipopo

Record of G. W., 4/1/38

761 Angombwike told me at midday that Katasya had died. He was a village headman of Mwaipopo, the fellow of Mwainyopolela. His case (*isangwe*) was thus:

The millet did not grow in his field, so he called all his children to 782 his homestead and killed a big bull for them, saying: 'Perhaps my children are angry at home. Perhaps my wives have worked witchcraft.' But to the neighbours he gave one leg and the children at home ate the rest. He did not, however, live long. He died immediately. It is said that the meat is still there. They have not eaten it. Such is the case of his death.

Kasitile, when I called on him yesterday, was out and his wife said he had gone to see Katasya who was ill.

Later in the day—4.1.38. Likuyila came in and I asked about Katasya's death.

But he has not died, he is still just alive. We heard that the millet [787] failed in his field and the maize and beans in all his gardens. They all failed. One of his wives went into a trance repeatedly. She said: 'Those beneath are angry. Seek a bull and kill it.' Then he sought one, but 761 now they have killed him. Perhaps he stinted his fellows in the village 578 of meat, because if a man kills his animal alone and his fellows hear

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

that he has killed, they are astonished and say: 'He should have called us. Does he perform ritual alone?' 761 578

QUESTION: But why were those beneath angry in the first place? They are not angry without cause.

LUKUFYILA: Indeed, they are never angry without cause. There is always some wrong. But we do not know what it is in this case. If you do not kill cattle for your father's burial they are always angry. But we do not know what wrong Katasya committed to make them angry.

Later Mwanifu came in. He told me that Katasya is still alive, but perhaps he will die this evening. We do not speak with him. He is just breathing. We only ask his wives: 'Does he sleep?' The case is thus: the millet failed in his field and he said: 'I shall pray to my shades and it will grow again.' Then he went to a certain man to get his big bull and gave him a cow in calf, saying: 'Take this and give me your bull,' and later they will give him a little calf worth 30s. The bull was very big. He killed it. Before he did so he was already slightly ill, but when he had killed it the illness became very much worse. We say they have bewitched him because he stinted his fellows in the village. But they themselves deny it, saying: 'But we always kill and eat ourselves alone. I, Mwainyopolela, killed my animal and ate it alone. Have I died therefore? According to the custom, if I have killed my beast as a sacrifice (*jukuipatela*) then I give my fellows one leg.' 754 782 [437] 782

QUESTION: Did Katasya not do so?

MWANIFU: No, Katasya did not give them any. He ate alone. Some wise men give the chief the breast because the chief is the owner of the country. Katasya did not give him that. Yes, if someone dies then the chief is usually given the breast. But when a beast is killed for sacrifice, no one having died, then many eat by themselves. The mourner gives to the chief.

QUESTION: Did he inquire of a diviner or not?

MWANIFU: We do not know. Some inquire of a diviner. Some think for themselves that the fathers are shaking them. Concerning his death, *we are only speculating, saying: 'Perhaps they have bewitched him.* They were angry on account of the meat.' But perhaps it is sorcery. See, he was sweating very much on his face. Let him die. We will look in his belly. Perhaps he has been speared. They have bewitched him. Perhaps it is sorcery. We only speculate. 787 754 761

In the morning Mwaipopo (the chief) was very, very angry. He said: 'Why have you gathered together, you people? Go off home. Do you want to finish off a dying man? It is taboo to gather together. First let a man die, then come to lament the death.' 763

QUESTION: Is it a Nyakyusa custom to be angry if people gather together at a sick man's house? Is it as if they bewitch him?

MWANIFU: Yes.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

763 QUESTION: Why the gathering?

MWANIFU: We were startled to hear that he had died. They raised the lament of death in the morning and his cattle went home when Kasitile and I were on the pasture land. We were startled to see Katasya's cattle going home and said: 'He has died.' But his relatives saw that he had not died. They said it is taboo to lament when someone is still alive.

QUESTION: Why do cows come home when a man dies?

MWANIFU: It is a form of mourning. They should also weep and say farewell. He had property. For if I, Mwanifu, die, though I do not have cattle myself, yet because I am the son of Mwaipopo cattle are
764 killed at the funeral. It is impressive. But if I were a commoner and
556 had no cattle, then the funeral would be a flop. There would be no meat and people would say: 'He has not yet died, he has left one head.' They count the cattle to kill. If an important commoner dies, one who has cattle, then his funeral is impressive. People dance at his homestead and say: 'Our fellow, who has died, was a strong man who danced the war-dance in the homesteads.' And if he was tough in disputes, if he always got the better of them and no one ever got his cow, then they say: 'A tough fellow has died. May he leave a son as tough as himself. He died with his toughness.' They praise him.

782 QUESTION: Tell me about the killing of Katasya's bull.

MWANIFU: He killed the bull without telling his neighbours, but when he poured out the beer he called Mwainyopolela and Kapuguso and two others. There were four. He had built in Busikali village in which there are ten homesteads, but, customarily, we do not call all the neighbours, only those who are nearest. Only if I have killed a full-grown beast do I call them all and give them a leg. Yes, it was a big bull and perhaps it is on account of that that they are angry. When they came they were startled, saying: 'They are drinking beer! And there is meat lying outside!' They entered and drank a little. Then Katasya divided the meat for his relatives and took his own. He gave to Mwainyopolela and his fellows three ribs. Then M. said to his three fellows: 'Let us go home. I will not take this little piece of meat.' So they all went away. The other three ate the meat, only M. did not.

QUESTION: So they were angry?

754 MWANIFU: Perhaps! We say sometimes: 'They were angry and ate
787 him.' But perhaps it was sorcery, because just now three snakes entered the house of his chief wife—the *iselesi* snakes. One entered and they killed it. Another entered and they killed it. Then they caught the third to take to a doctor, the son of Mwakanyamale. The doctor said: 'This snake is sorcery,' and he will find a medicine to give them to drink that the illness may be slight. But he has not yet done so.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

QUESTION: When he says it is sorcery, does he mean that the snakes 754
have been sent by someone?

MWANIFU: Yes, Mwaipaja (G. W.), you understand.

5/1/38

Katasya died during the night. I came to the burial with the doctor, 764
Mwakańamale, meeting Mwamalunda on the road. They told me that the son, Mwakanjwike, had fled from the funeral. 'It is said that he had made love to three of his father's wives. They all fled, the three women and the young man. Yes, they will take them to a waterfall to cleanse them.'

I sat by Mwaipopo, the chief. There was a dispute about the autopsy. 763
Kasitile came to the chief to say: 'They are refusing to examine him.' 'Why are they refusing? There is much illness about. Let us examine him and *know*.' Mwaipopo spoke with heat. Then a relative came and told him: 'Katasya said: "Do not examine me when I die."' Mwaipopo: 'Why? There is that case of the son (incestuous adultery) or perhaps it is sorcery, or perhaps, if the neighbours refuse to examine him, it is a confession that they have bewitched him. Let us examine him. It will trouble us later on. Also, he was praying to the shades, saying: "The millet failed." Then he died! Let us examine him and know.'

Five cows and a bull were killed. About twenty cattle were standing 764
in the herd. The corpse was carried around with wailing and drum- 763
ming and the cattle were driven round also. Then followed the autopsy. I went with Mwanyoso, with Kasitile's relative, Mwakasenga, and with the brother of the dead man. A woman doctor performed it with a bamboo knife. Another woman kept a hand on the head of the dead man meanwhile. 'You brave ones!' was the comment of the other women, two or three of whom stood watching. The doctor hesitated, as if in fear, before the first cut. Mwanyoso encouraged her: 'Go ahead!' As she pulled out the bowels we all crowded round to look. Mwanyoso said: 'Ropes,' but no one else took this up, and he did not 763
mention it again. They looked into the chest and found something 754
wrong. 'He is burned within! It is sorcery!'

MWANYOSO: We chiefs do not fear the commoners, we look for wounds and speak if they are there. But there are none. Look well! If he had been speared there would be much blood, and wounds. But he is burned within. They have worked sorcery against him with Mwangwala. That is the name of the medicine which some Nyakyusa plant. [824]
It's sorcery! Then is that of the country (i.e. witchcraft) not there?

It is not there.

How about the son?

That we do not find. He just has diarrhœa.

Mwanyoso then told Mwaipopo (the chief): 'We have examined him, it is sorcery.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

763 As we came away various people stopped us and asked: 'Have you examined him?' 'Yes, it is sorcery.' Great interest was shown by all in the cause of death.

764 When we first arrived, we found the son a little distance from the funeral and he did not, so far as I know, come near at all. He did not go near the grave when the corpse was buried. I asked Kasitile about bathing at the waterfall. 'They will wash him to-night. Katasya died in the afternoon. At night the son and three women fled. They will wash them at night.'

6/1/38

Kasitile came in to see us at breakfast time. I asked why the son of Katasya had not come near the burial though they had bathed him at the waterfall.

KASITILE: It is forbidden, but they have made a mistake. They have washed him irregularly. According to custom they should first have buried the dead, then, on the evening after the burial, they take them to the waterfall to wash them. When they come from washing, then the son takes a torch of burning grass, he throws it down on the grave, and jumps over the grave. Then they say: 'Let him strike the cattle.' He kills one of his own because he does not eat of those which they have killed previously. This is what they did yesterday afternoon, so it is finished now.

QUESTION: What does it symbolize?

KASITILE: It means it is I who overstepped you.

QUESTION: And when he steps over the grave and the fire?

KASITILE: It is the fire which the women kindled for him who has died.

QUESTION: Do they know who worked sorcery against him?

578 KASITILE: Yes, it is the son of Mwaikilaja whose name is Mwamu-
754 kinga, because when their father, Mwakyandwike, died, the elder brother, Katasya, was a child, and the son of the second wife, Mwaikilaja, inherited. But when Katasya grew up they refused to be on good terms with him and quarrelled with him. But they never worked sorcery against each other. So then when Mwaikilaja died, his sons inherited. Katasya lost the inheritance because they said: 'You are not on good terms with your kinsmen. Let the sons inherit.' So he said: 'I, Katasya, agree.' But later on he was on good terms with those sons of his brother. There were three of them. But the eldest and the youngest quarrelled. The youngest, Mwamukinga, worked sorcery against the eldest, so Katasya told them: 'Do not be friendly with Mwamukinga who is working sorcery against you. Let him be at a distance.' Then Mwamukinga was angry and said: 'Is that wretched elder (ilala ali) never going to die?' and he worked sorcery against him. This is the case.

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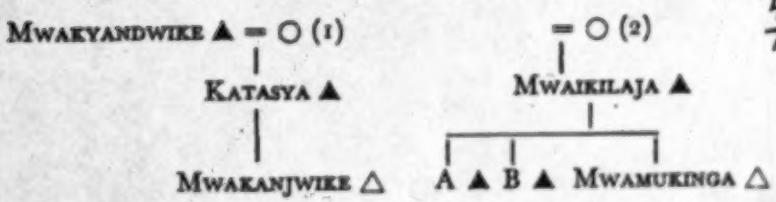


Mwaikilaja, the son of the junior wife, inherited, because when their father, Mwakyandwike, died, Katasya, the son of the senior wife, was a child. Mwamukinga is accused of killing Katasya by sorcery.

Mwakwelebeja came in to take me to the funeral of Katasya. 'It is 764
not the day of burial to-day, but the day of war. On the day of burial they weep very much and it does not go well (*jikanoga*) but to-day it will be well performed.' He was eager and excited at the prospect of good dancing. 'The chief Mwabuga from Masoko, his son-in-law, is coming. He is coming with his drums. The people of Masoko dance well.' At first I refused to go, but he would take no refusal. 'You must come,' he insisted, so finally I went.

On the way we discussed the cause of death. Some say the witches 761
have eaten him. They say that Mwainyopolela is angry on account of the meat. Some say it is the sorcery of Mwaihojo (the chief) because Katasya (a man of Chief Mwaipopo) hoed a big area in the disputed ground. He built a temporary hut and lived there. But we say no. If they had roused up a war between the witches, would they not have gone to Mwakagile (Chief Mwaipopo) and his fellows? But we have not done that. We argue and say: 'Why are you taking our country?' but we are only fighting with words.

QUESTION: The war of the witches?

MWAKWELEBEJA: Yes, the war when they call the witches of a chief- 754
dom by night to fight against those of another chiefdom. But Katasya 721
was indeed wrong to stint his neighbours in Busikali of meat. If he had 689
been wise he would have given them a leg. Mwainyopolela is very generous. Always when he kills a beast he shares the meat with his fellows.

We arrived at the funeral. The women were packed together under a 764
tree to the left, where they had sat with the corpse yesterday. The girls and young women stood watching the dance and occasionally strolling rhythmically out into the midst of it. The errant son was with the other men to-day. The son-in-law from Masoko came with all his cattle (seven cows, one bull and five calves) of which one will be killed and the others returned. The bull was unusually large with an enormous hump and it caused comment. It was well known. They told each other how, when his father, Mwakabulwa, died, this bull was quiescent. It did not move about at all, and it was a very small calf. It was quiescent

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 and sniffed at the grave. When this son-in-law arrived, the chief women mourners got up from under the tree and went with him into the hut to wail. They came out all wailing. The women under the tree were wailing all the time with a leader standing up in the middle. But the wailing was drowned by the drums of which there were three sets.

764 Three young men were got up with white clay spots and some had
535 bells on their ankles and loin-cloths. They held spears, and danced and
302 leapt wildly. 'What', I asked Kasitile, 'is the meaning of the white clay?'

KASITILE: It is war paint. During war we painted ourselves with white clay formerly. Then if I saw one with white clay I did not spear him. It was my comrade. But he whom I saw without it was an enemy and I speared him. It was the sign.

725 QUESTION: But did the other side not use it?

KASITILE: We took them by surprise.

Mwanyoso came to visit me in the evening.

764 QUESTION: And what steps are they taking about Katsaya's death
789 from sorcery?

MWANYOSO: They sought the doctor, Mwangolombe, for the burial yesterday. He pounded a medicine and burnt it on the grave. Then they buried the dead man and danced on the grave. That means they destroyed the sorcery. The dead man should take it away with him.

QUESTION: And has the doctor given them medicines to drink?

MWANYOSO: He has not yet done so. They will fetch him again to cook the medicine at the home.

QUESTION: What about the payment?

759 MWANYOSO: For yesterday they did not pay anything, now, but when they have fetched him to their home, then they will pay some shillings. But if many people have died, then they fetch a famous doctor such as Mwakionde. Then he comes with all the protective medicines (*amapinge*) and treats them. Then such a doctor gets a cow. The famous doctors in this country are Mwakionde and Kapugano and Mwakanyamale.

787 QUESTION: Will they consult an oracle?

MWANYOSO: Why should they consult an oracle? They know what it is. It is the sorcery of their brothers!

754 QUESTION: But it might be the sorcery of another. Some say of Mwalhojo (the chief).

MWANYOSO: They are liars. See, Katsaya had just come from his brothers. He got the illness at their place. It is they. If it was from Mwalhojo and his people, they would have speared him by night. We would have found wounds and much blood, but we did not find them.

QUESTION: He came from his brothers?

MWANYOSO: Yes, there was a ritual because their father, Mwalkilaje, had died. Their senior brother inherited and he also died. Katsaya

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

went to catch the junior brother who was there, but from that time he has been ill. 754

QUESTION: Did Mwamukinga (the sorcerer) come to the funeral and did they give him meat? 754 764

MWANYONO: Yes, he came.

QUESTION: Is he not ashamed? Do people agree that they have worked sorcery against someone?

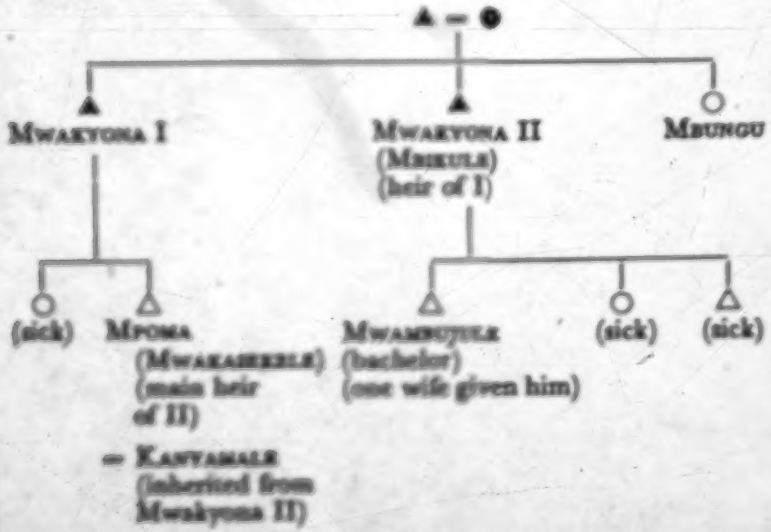
MWANYONO: They deny it.

QUESTION: Did they give him meat?

MWANYONO: Yes, they gave it to him.

(*b*) *Sickness in the lineage of Mwakyusa*

The following case also illustrates how several possible causes of misfortune were considered—sorcery between kinsmen who were quarrelling over inheritance, the anger of the shades, and the jealousy of neighbours were mentioned. It shows, further, how expression of goodwill by those thought to be injuring a man is necessary for his recovery. The doctor treating the patient made the kinsmen confess their anger and gave them a medicine guaranteed to kill anyone working sorcery. 753



MWAMBENO: When Mwakyusa died, his younger brother, Mwakyusa the younger, whom they call Mbikule, inherited. But Mbikule also died, so they sought Mwakionde (the doctor and brother of the chief) and they asked him: 'To whom shall we give the inheritance?' The village elders, their fathers—those of the house—and their father's sisters, were those who saw to the matter of the inheritance. Then 428

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

428 Mwakionde let Mpoma (Mwakasekele) take the inheritance because he is the eldest. Mwakionde said: 'Let him be their father.' But when they gave the inheritance to Mpoma, they talked to one another and said that Mwambujule should take one wife because he did not have any wife. He was a bachelor. So they gave him one wife, but four wives of the father were inherited by Mpoma. After a little time Mwambujule said: 'My fellow has made a mistake with the property and he has
498 not given me anything.' So he strove to attract the mothers. He said:
578 'Come to me and let me inherit you myself.' The mothers agreed, they ran away and came to his place. Mpoma was angry and went to Mwakionde to tell him that Mwambujule had attracted the mothers and taken them to his house. Mwakionde said: 'Do not make a case.' The village headman went to Mwambujule to admonish him together with the mothers. Then he returned them to Mpoma.

754 Later on, illness appeared. The sister of Mpoma fell ill. They gave
787 her medicines to drink and she recovered. Then the brother of Mwambujule fell ill and the doctors said it was sorcery (*ulwitege*), that is, Mwakionde thinks it is sorcery. This is also a common rumour. But, as will be seen later, the diviners, when appealed to, said: '*Mindu*,' that is, the shades.

755 When Mwakionde saw the sick man, he called together all of them
754 that they might grumble (*bijumuse*) and drive away the illness, because it is said that when people pray (*ukwipute*) the sickness from sorcery gets less. It is said if one has worked sorcery against his fellow he always hides himself, he does not appear at his friend's home, because, if he appears, if he comes and says: 'I am sorry for the illness (*ndaga ulwilwe*),' even without praying at all, the illness disappears. Also, if a sick man has died, he does not go or he will die soon. It is said that the dead rise. Yes, it is the same in the case of witchcraft. Then also they say that if someone has 'eaten' his fellow he does not go to him, he hides himself at his own home, and if his fellow has died he does not go or he will die very quickly. The dead rise. In the prayer they especially drive away the shades, because it is said that sickness from the shades comes from us living. If, for example, I have done something bad to my fellow, and the shades are angry, but if he forgives me, they also forgive. He must express forgiveness openly in wordsof prayer (*amaye gawe ga lwipute*). If he forgives me only in his heart, the shades do not forgive. This prayer that we heard during the day had power both against sorcery and against the shades, they spoke of both. In the evening it was completed.

754 Mwakionde called them all together and said: 'Friends, I am astonished that the illness has come again.' The people: 'Hu; this illness puzzles us very much.'

MWAKIONDE: 'For what reason does this man fall ill in the summer, and that man fall ill in the summer, and the other fall ill?'

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Nyakyusa

MPOMA: 'I am ashamed, and also I am very angry, because people 754
say it is I who am working sorcery against them, although when they 578
were ill I carried them to my house.'[1]

Mpoma turned back on the road when they sent medicine for the sick man (i.e. he did not go to the sick man).

A WOMAN: 'Why do they work sorcery against one another when they are both left?'

ANOTHER WOMAN: 'The wives of Mbilule say Mpoma says: "Let me be alone, let me kill all of them and get everything for myself by cunning."'

MWAMBUJULE: 'Since I carried him to my place I said the illness would not be serious. He also sent a message to *your* place, Mpoma, saying that he was ill, and asking for some milk, but you did not send any.'

MPOMA: 'No one told me.'

THE WOMAN: 'The widows fight with Mpoma. They say: "You have eaten a medicine to work sorcery against your fellows."'

KANYAMALE: 'Also they speak of his wrongdoing, in not approaching the sick man.'

ANOTHER WOMAN: 'Yes, and also you are angry.'

MPOMA: 'See, when they said the present patient was still ill, I prayed, I said aloud: "What am I doing? Get away, what am I doing?" and I sent a medicine and he recovered.'

A WOMAN: 'We consulted an oracle, it said: "It is Mwakyona who 787
is angry," but I said: "What is he angry about?" The oracle said: "He is angry on account of cattle." He says: "Why does he fear me when he has taken cattle?" So we said: "Mwakyona is angry because he has taken cattle."'

THE MBUNGUE (Mwakyona's sisters): 'We like him (the shade), let 753
him come.'

WOMAN: 'They are jealous of the sick man [i.e. a third cause suggested. The unreasonable jealousy of his neighbours]. He dies like his father. People say: "He eats meat in our houses, he borrows our cloths," and he dies of their unreasonable jealousy (*akabbi*)!'

The women and the men said: 'Thank you, Mwakionde, because you have made us think of these things [he had taken the initiative in prayer]. You make us make friends, and make us love one another, and bless one another.'

Mwakionde spoke, saying: 'There are many, many roads on which people travel and there is one road through which illness enters.' They 782
say that if many people are with a sick man then the illness spreads.

They also prayed, confirming their anger in the case of Kanyamale, [783]

[1] 'It is the custom to carry people to the "father", the head of the family, when very sick. This is not supposed to cure them, but it is customary (*ibilile*). That is where we all are ill, at their father's place.'

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782 the wife of Mpoma, but about this I do not know much. When they
[783] stopped speaking Kanyamale was ill. Then her husband charged her
with witchcraft and she said: 'What is the case about? I have been ill
764 since we came from confusing anger.' Then Kanyamale grew sulky
and gathered up her mats and went with them to her child's place.
Mpoma said: 'I must follow her,' but his fellows soothed him and he
turned back. Then he borrowed a spear from his fellows and went to
drive off the game which were eating his crops. When he found no
animals he went home. On his return, when he was still outside, he
heard the wives whispering about some case. He asked them to open
the door for him, but they were silent and did not open the door of the
hut. Then he pushed it open. When he entered the hut he closed it and
he cross-examined the wives, asking what they were talking about. One
said: 'I was just asleep.' He said: 'With whom were you speaking?
You are hiding a man in this house.' One woman got up immediately
and opened the door. Mpoma cross-examined them hotly. He said:
'Why did you open the door if indeed there is no man in the hut?'
Mpoma got in a passion and went elsewhere. He returned again and
said: 'Marry the child. I will not destroy him,' and he went away alone.
[527] He took the case to Mwakiniya, the village headman, and lost it. Then
the court said: 'You get the children. Let them come here, though their
mother is not here.'

757 Later on it was like this: Mwakionde went to attend to the medicines
754 to give to the sick man to drink; they began by putting powdered medi-
cines in a pot, then they put in some water, then they put in three sorts
of powdered medicine, one black and two red. Mwakionde, because
he was the doctor, began; he put in the water first. Mpoma, the senior,
followed him, then all the others. When the water boiled, they stirred
up porridge with a spoon, then they gave the sick man some to drink,
and the relatives drank. If there were one who was working sorcery
against his fellows, he would die when he drank that medicine. But the
sick man, before he drank this medicine, drank something else. When
the water boiled, they mixed a medicine and scarified themselves all
over their bodies.

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VI. PARTICIPANTS IN RITUALS ILLUSTRATED BY GENEALOGIES

[p. 269]
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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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601
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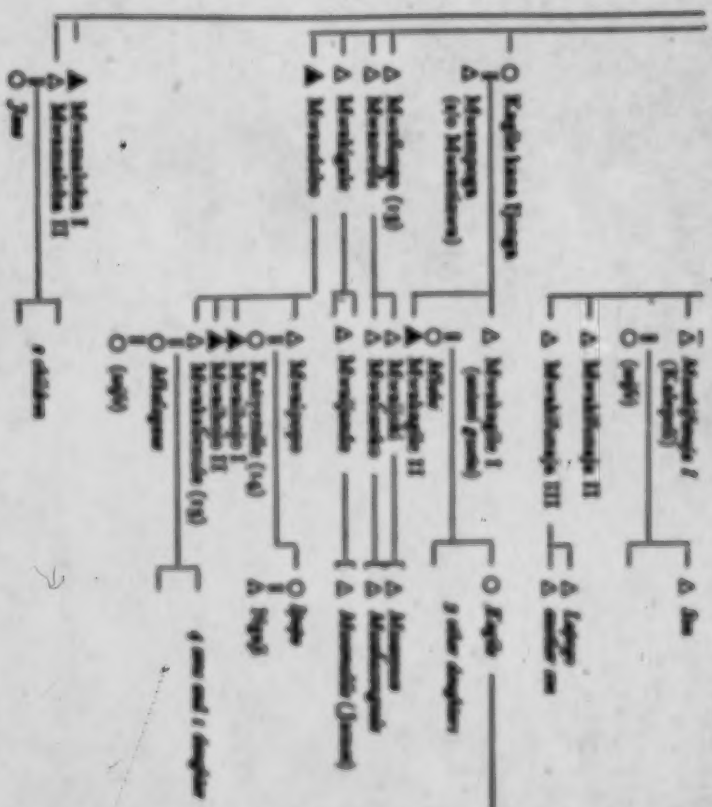

[facing p. 270(A)]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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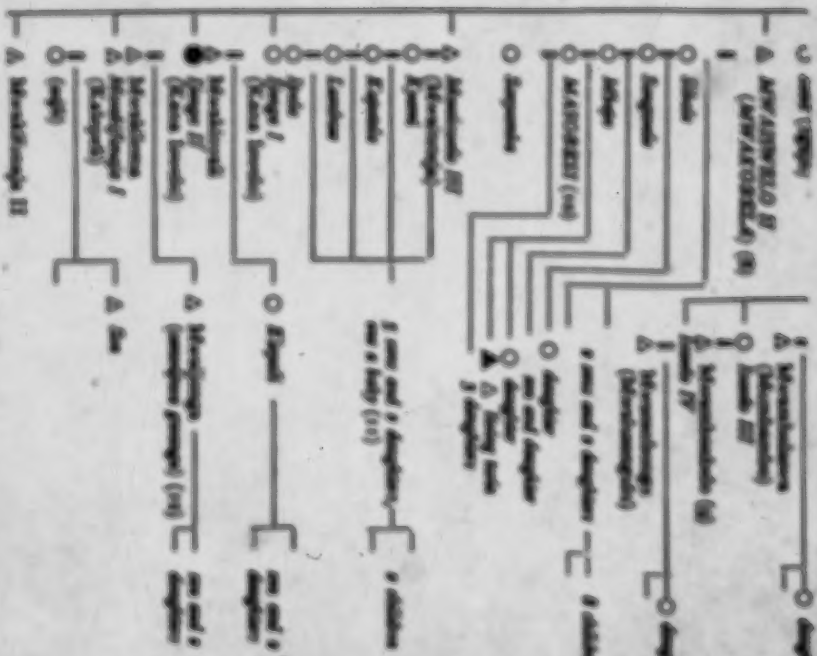

[Facing p. 270 (8)]

TABLE (a) *See pp. 153—162.*

GENEALOGY OF MWAKOBELA
(TWIN RITUAL)

2: Wilson E-3 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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601
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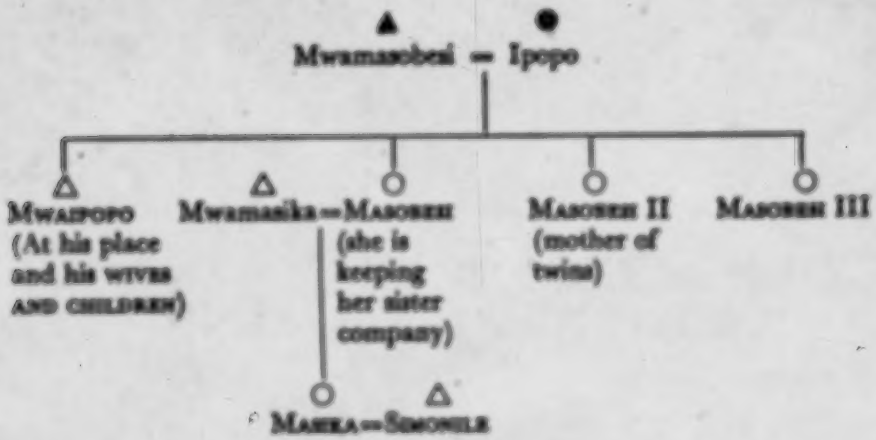
[facing p.270(c)]

THE RELATIVES OF MWAKOBELA'S WIFE



2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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601

TABLE (c) *See pp. 244–250.*

TRUNCATED GENEALOGY OF MWAMPIKI TO SHOW RELATIONSHIP OF PERSONS MENTIONED IN TEXT

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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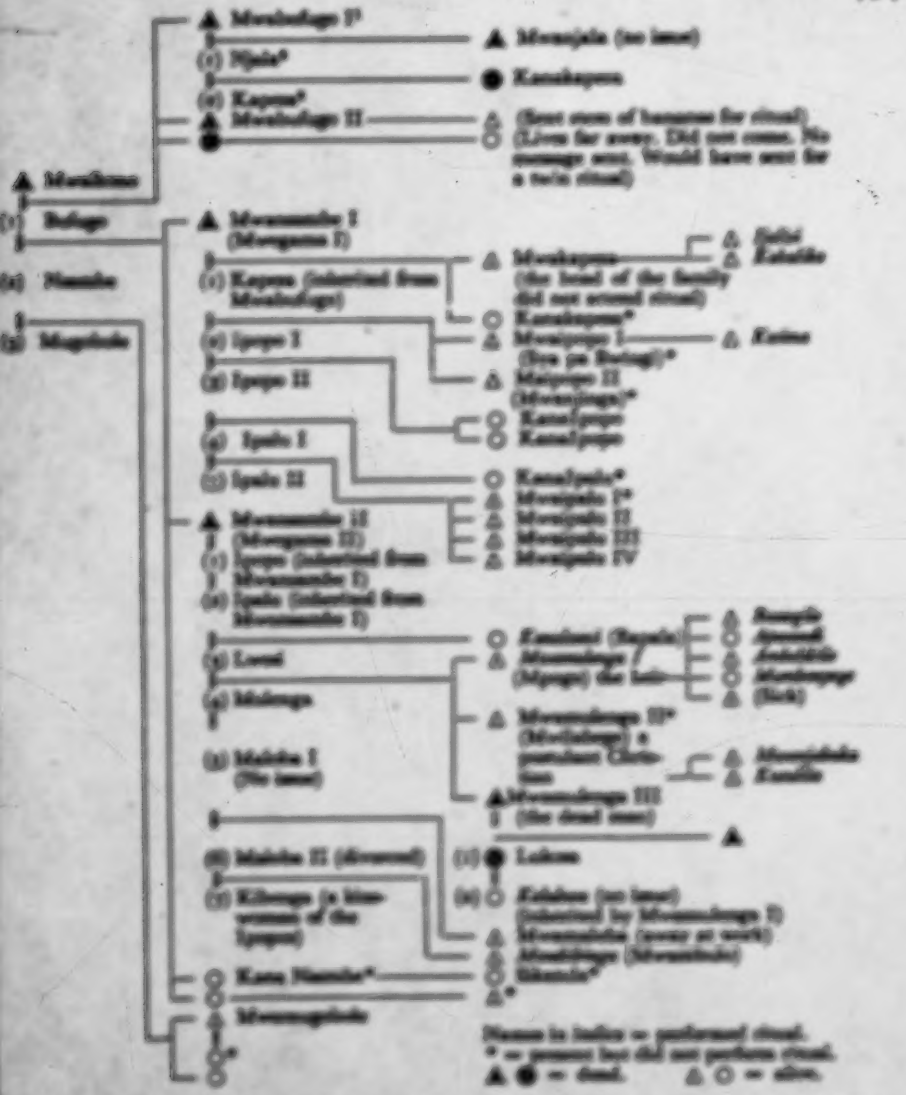
TABLE (d)

GENEALOGY OF MWAMULENGA III, SON OF MWEGAMA (DEATH RITUAL)



* Mwalubuge I was a village headman. The people refused Mwalubuge II (his eldest heir) as headman and the office fell to Mwamunsile.
* Njale was disowned. His cattle went to Mwalubuge II.
* Kapwa refused Mwalubuge II and went to Mwamunsile.
Note. Inheritance by an elder brother was possible in this case because he had not inherited from his father.

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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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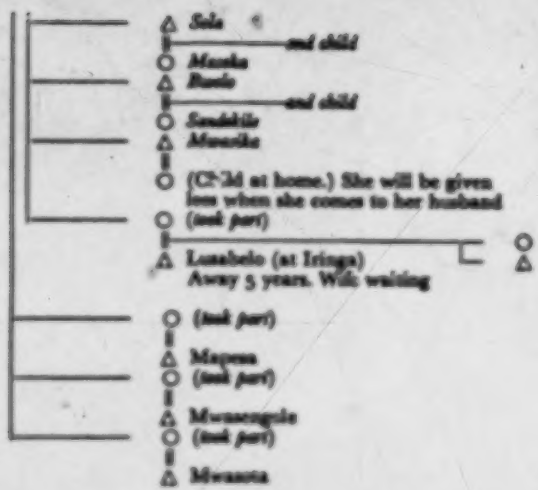

Key: △ ○ = alive. ▲ ● = dead.

Name in capitals = Widow inherited. Names in italics = participated in ritual. † = Christian.

Participants:

Men of lineage	11	Father + his full brother + 4/6 his half-brothers + widow's 2 full brothers + 2/3 half-brothers; son of half-brother.
Daughters of lineage	18	6/8 half-sisters (1 Christian, 1 away), 8/10 father's half-sisters (1 Christian, 1 away did not), 4 unmarried daughters of half-brother.
Wives	32	Mother, 2 co-wives of mother, 2 wives of father's brother, 13 wives of father's half-brothers (including chief) (1 sick, drunk at home), 3 Christian did not come, 4 wives of own full brothers, 3 wives of half-brothers, 1 widow of grandfather, 4 wives of father's half-brother's sons.
Children		of brothers, of father's brothers, and half-brothers.

N.B. Sons-in-law do not participate.

[Facing p. 274 (A)]

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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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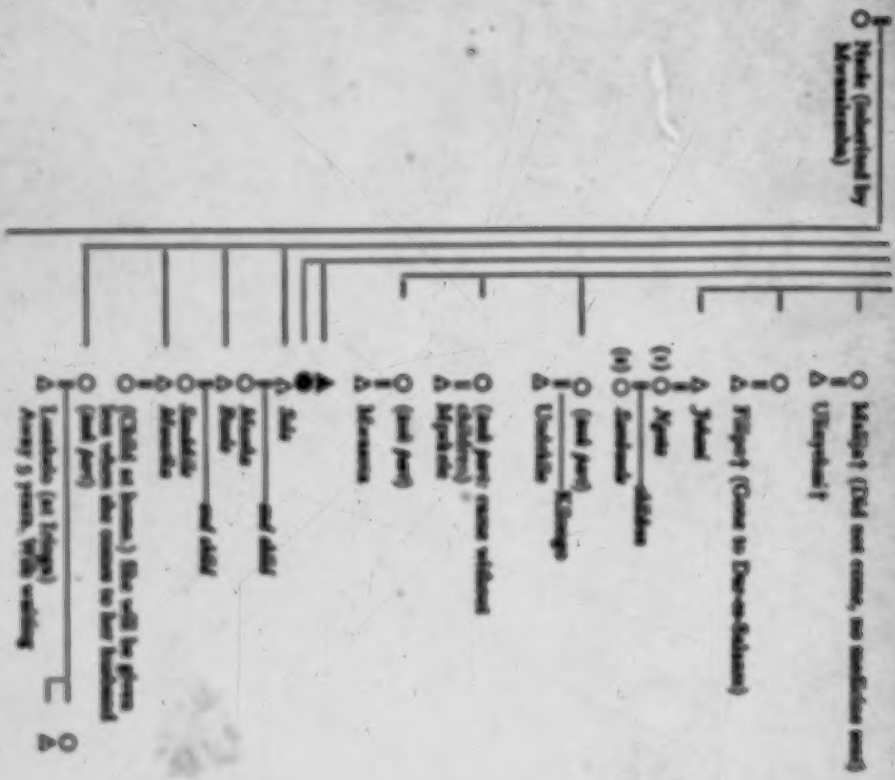

[facing p.274 (B)]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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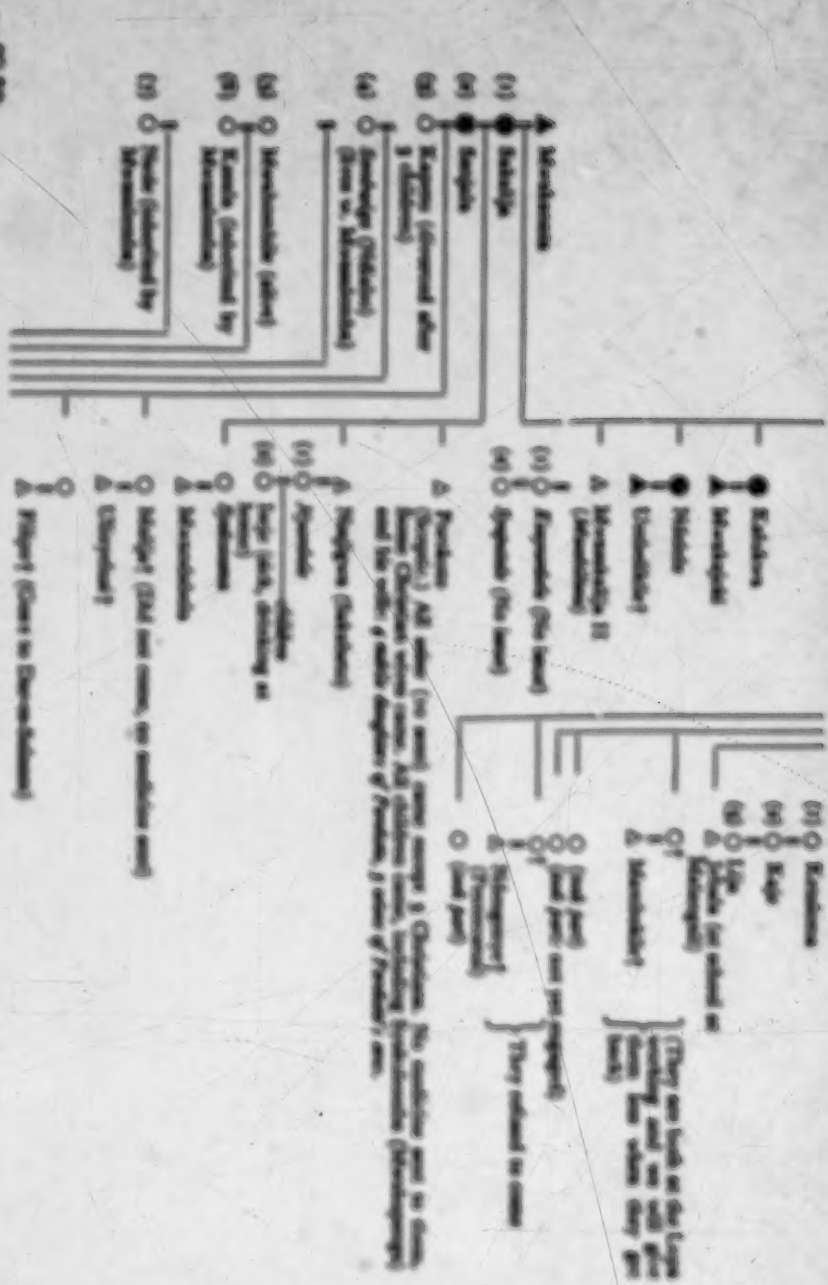

[facing p. 274 (c)]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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TABLE (c) (*See pp.* 45, 190).

GENEALOGY OF MWASALEMBA (RITUAL OF THE GASPING COUGH)

[Facing p. 274(D)]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

INDEX

Admonition, 59, 96-8, 106, 111, 206, 231, 238
Adultery, 2, 116, 130-5, 138, 144, 147-8, 183, 238, 261
Affines, 1, 13-14, 19, 30-3, 131, 136-7, 139-200, 202, 215, 227, 243
Age-village, 1, 2, 3, 19-23, 137, 221, 226, 230, 248
Altar, 208, *see also* Banana grove
Ancestor cult, 4, 3, *see also* Shades
Antipathy, 13, 83, 243, 261
Avoidance, 88-9, 100-1, 110-11, 123, 125, 131, 134, 200-2, 216, 224, 237

Banana grove, 43, 44, 46-7, 70, 72, 98, 101, 144, 182, 183-4, 187, 206-7, 211, 228, 234
Bananas, 3, 8, 11, 21, 37-8, 40, 50, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 61, 64-5, 69, 70, 72, 77, 80-4, 85, 87, 96, 99, 106, 120-1, 125, 133, 148, 152, 154, 160, 178, 190, 203, 205, 208, 209, 235, 236-7, 239-44, 246-7, 249
Back-cloth, 21, 23, 39, 41, 52, 69, 72, 83, 89, 96, 109, 230, 237, 243
Beans, 11, 40, 60, 65, 70, 138-9, 166, 239-41, 244, 248, 258
Beer, 41-3, 60, 66, 70, 77, 83, 119, 122, 148, 153, 169, 180, 182, 186, 188-9, 190, 198, 200, 211, 217, 224, 235, 243, 247-50, 260
Beersfield, 86, 101, 117, 233-5
Birth, 3, 130-71, 198, 207, 230
Blood, 51, 55, 69, 103, 110-14, 123, 127-9, 148, 169, 180, 190, 200, 202, 229
Blowing water, 70, 180-2, 211
Bonds of man, 3, 5, 188, 202, 220, 226, *see also* Neighbours
Bride, 86, 87-123, 130-1, 138, 200, 223

Bringing out, 93-5, 119-23, 137-9, 160-4, 223
Brother, 1, 13, 15, 20, 34, 51, 105, 170, 183, 190-5, 201, 215, 217, 223, 230, 234, 238, 240, 264-5
Burial, 10-38

Cachexia, 228-9, *see also* Confusion
Cattle, 1, 2, 13, 20, 31, 73, 91, 96, 117, 123, 131, 147-8, 152, 160-2, 164-5, 183, 190, 194, 198, 200-1, 212-13, 216, 220, 223, 228, 230, 246-8, 251, 253, 260, 262-3
Ceremonial, 9
Chief, 2-3, 13-15, 230-4, 238, 261, 263
Childless, 2
Christians, 4, 16, 17, 23, 80, 110, 148, 161, 197-201, 230, 248, 251, 254
Cloth, 16, 20
Coal (*of fire*), 141, 214
Cock, 183-4
Communal Rituals, 7
Confusion, 8, 41, 176, 187-8, 192, 215, 217, 233, 263, 266-8
Cooking, 69, 108, 142, 154, 230, 234
Corpse, 19, 51, 52, 62-9, 73
Court, 215
Crops, 47
Cross-cousin, 108, 160, 234, 238
Cross-roads, 63-6, 143, 248

Dancing, 21-31, 34-6, 64, 71, 84, 208, 209, 240, 248, 254-5, 260
Daughter, 33, 175, 190, 198, 200, 216, 223-6
Death, 4, 13-63, 170, 190, 197-8, 201, 205, 208, 230, 234-50, 259-60
Diviner, 183-4, 233
Dogma, 8
Doorway, 40, 63, 69, 105, 143, 208, 212, 238, 239, 249

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Dreams, 46-60, 63, 76, 211, 213-14, 243
Drums, 13, 23, 24, 34, 245, 263

Earth, 46-7, 51, 61, 62, 71-2, 108, 211, 235, 255

Farewell to the dead, 37-83
Father, 13, 19, 33, 43, 63, 83, 91, 96, 105, 108, 114-15, 125, 129-30, 164-5, 179-81, 183, 187, 191, 194, 200-2, 204, 205, 214, 216-17, 220, 235, 250, 263
Father-in-law, 19, 84, 110-11, 191, 194, 196, 201, 205, 216, 223
Father's sister, 117, 179, 263
Fertility, 21, 33
Filth, *see* Pollution
Fire, 140, 142, 170-1, 211, 242
making, 32, 70, 118, 124, 143
stepping over fire, 107, 243, 262
Firewood, 63, 79, 89, 119, 122, 123, 128, 139, 208, 211
Fish, 11, 37, 184-5, 218, 224
Fowl, 139, *see* also Cock, Hen
Funeral rites, 2, 19-63, 234-50, 252, 260, 263

Gasping cough, 43-6, 54, 66-7
Generation, 224, 251
Gifts, 46, 56, 59, 110-11, 122, 139-200, 235, 253
Go-between, 30, 92, 117-18, 149-50, 193-6, 232-3
God, 4, 139, *see* also Kyala
Grandchild, 39, 131, 182, 189-94, 200, 224, 242
Grandfather, 242, 242
Grandparent, 39, 130
Grave, 13-17, 135, 211-12, 218, 243-5, 250, 260

Hearth, 40, 64, 70, 78, 208, 211
-bricks, 39, 122, 128, 143, 188, 208, 238, 238, 242
Heaviness, 34, 120-5, 126-24, 136, 144-5, 182, 268
Hair, 10, 33, 40-6, 51, 54, 55, 75, 79, 179, 183, 190-2, 206, 213, 218, 223, 224, 234, 242
Hen, 40, 50, 59, 63, 113-16, 118, 237
Heron, 4
Hoe, 235
House, 224, 251
Hunting, 140, 208, 250
Husband, 19, 33, 63, 78, 83, 86, 91, 96-8, 104-5, 109, 113, 123, 128, 143, 148, 150-1, 155, 164, 180-1, 183, 191, 198, 200, 204, 207, 213, 221, 222, 227, 243, 250
Hut (temporary), 63-6, 69, 71, 132-4, 137-8, 183, 187-70, 240, 244, 250

Itipki, 8, 33, 63-4, 100, 113-5, 118, 136-7, 143-9, 207, 210, 222, 238
Ituda (pl. *Imituda*), 39, 40, 53, 54, 164, 180-1, 183, 213, 238-9, 242, *see* also Shades
Illegitimacy, 147-8
Incest, 3, 100-1, 134-5, 183, 238, 262
Initiation, 90-2, 118, 132, 133-6, 203
Iron, 109, 141-3, 230

Kimbiji, 73, 132, 143, 201, 232, *see* also *Itipki*
Kinship, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 12, 13-14, 31, 35, 132, 173, 179-81, 191, 194, 197, 200, 213, 221, 226-7, 238, 238, 262, 263
Kyala, 4, 33, 38, 39, 61, 62, 73, 80-1, 109, 110-14, 129-30, 132, 164, 168-70, 210, 220, 233, 248

Lineage, 1, 2, 3, 20, 31, 35, 62, 103, 123, 129, 169, 190, 193, 197, 200, 204, 207, 210, 222-6, 230, 231, 244, 250
Liver, 38-9, 33, 64, 87, 91, 93, 94, 108, 114, 118-21, 123, 148, 170, 238, 239

Madness, 46-54, 67-83, 100, 124, 127, 208, 213, 227, 230
Magic, 10, 213
Maize, 11, 30, 35, 109, 138, 239-40, 258

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Marriage, 69-109, 146, 230-5
cattle, 35, 110, 214, 115, 147-8, 179, 186, 201, 214, 216-17, 220, 225, 232-5
Milent, 4, 81, 167-9
Medicines, 3, 5, 19, 38-9, 41, 45, 46, 66, 74, 80-1, 87, 90, 95, 99, 100-5, 113-16, 118, 120, 124, 130-2, 136, 144-8, 153, 155-9, 163-6, 169-70, 173-9, 203
Menstruation, 5, 132-5, 140, 202, 207, 230, 232
Millet, 11, 32, 39-40, 56, 63, 70, 87, 95, 109, 113, 138-9, 146, 152, 156, 166, 178, 200, 233, 236-8, 238
Mishenen, 8, 170-89, 213-21, 233, 236-68
Morality, 8, 206, 208
Mother, 21, 87, 90, 92-3, 103, 105, 109, 119-20, 133, 135, 164, 180, 190-4, 209, 235, 241-2, 245
Mother-in-law, 89, 90, 95, 97, 99, 109, 119-21, 122, 145, 189, 201
Mother's brother, 56, 114-15, 184
kin, 134, 136-5, 200
Murder, 2
Myth, 6

Neighbours, 152, 179, 188-9, 194, 200, 202, 215, 220-1, 226, 238, 241, 256, 260, 263, 267, *see also* Age-villages

Officiant, 9, 32, 90, 99, 118-19, 136, 155, 238, 240
Oil, 38, 89, 95, 240, *see also* Ointment
Oil-seeds, 64, 65, 75, 84, 138, 241-2
Ointment, 63, 75, 86, 101, 139, 145, 158, 180-1, 190, 236, 244, *see also* Oil
Oracle, 116, 117, 188, 213, 216, 264, *see also* Diviner
Overstepping, 3, 56, 107, 124, 133-8, 140, 263

Participants, 130-200
Pebbles, 63, 73-4, 76, 84, 101, 125, 207
Pollution, 18-19, 49-53, 64, 67, 71, 74, 80-1, 84-5, 116, 123, 125, 127, 129, 130-6, 145, 149, 163-4, 203-5, 207-8, 233, *see also* Washing
Polygyny, 217
Prayer, 34, 70, 98, 101, 112, 175-6, 179-89, 193-5, 206, 214, 266-8
Pregnancy, 136-43, 146, 149, 230
Prestige, 32-4
Priest, 9, 98, *see also* Officiant
Prophet, 77, 210
Puberty, 86-129
ball of, 98-9, 108, 111-12, 122, 125, 222
Pumpkin, 11, 131, 140, 166
seeds, 37-41, 51, 54-7, 59, 82, 205, 235, 237-8

Religion, 3, 6
Reproductive rites, 230
Ritual, 6-12 *et passim*
Ropes, 173-6, 261

Sacred, 232
Sacrificial, 19-21, 32, 111, 182, 211, 214, 238
Seclusion, 87-93, 144-6, 152, 203
Seed, 42, 54-5, 78, 109, 128, 139, 237
Seer, 77
Shaden, 3, 12, 17-18, 20, 46-7, 49, 50, 52, 54-5, 58, 59, 60, 62, 69-72, 101, 111, 119-23, 125, 125-7, 133, 166, 179-89, 203-4, 207, 210-21, 222, 230, 249-50, 256-8, 263-6
Shadow, 32, 71, 210
Shaving, 3, 18, 41-3, 46, 51, 53, 63, 93-5, 98, 108, 119-20, 146, 158, 161, 169, 173, 203, 207, 243, 249
Sin, 8, 213, 233
Sister, 1, 13, 19, 21, 34-5, 59, 165, 183, 190-3, 203, 206, 238, 240, 243, 254
Sister-in-law, 40, 59
Smithing, 141-2
Snakes, 211, 260-1

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Son, 19, 137, 154, 187–8, 190–4, 196, 216, 220, 223, 230–1, 238, 254, 260, *see also* Father, Mother
Son-in-law, 150–1, 199, 216, 254–5, 263
Sorcery, 5, 176–9, 193, 258, 260–8
Spear, 23, 66–7, 74, 79, 92, 117, 254–5, 264, 268
Spearing, cleansing after, 172–3, 193
Spitting, 66, 135, 141, 156, 181–2, *see also* Blowing water
Status, change in, 223, 231
Stones, 65, 69, 72, 73–4
Symbol, Symbolism, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 46–63, 67–85, 101–17, 123–49, 166–71, 173, 178, 181–3, 200–10, 229, 262

Thatch, 40, 55, 65, 69, 76
Tree (associated with Shade), 211, 228
Twin birth, 58, 63, 152–71, 192, 220

Village headman, 42, 61, 202, 238
Virgin, 98–9, 107, 110, 119, 121, 128–9, 208, 233
Vituperation, ritual of, 149–51, 223, 227
Vomit, 68–9, 172–3, 176

Walling, 20–31, 34–6, 234, 246
War, 2, 25, 43, 58, 135, 140, 145, 149, 158, 167, 169, 230, 263–4
War-dance, 20–8, 213, 260
Washing, 18–19, 38, 40, 68, 89, 90–3, 105, 124, 152, 154, 203, 207, 234, 238–9, 243–4, 247, 249, 262
Water, 55, 71
Waterfall, 135, 172–3, 262
Widow, 37, 43–6, 48, 51, 58–9, 78–9, 189, 190–2, 204, 234, 245, 267
Wife, 21, 78, 90, 104–6, 109, 164, 180, 183–4, 187, 190, 196, 200, 207, 217, 226, 234, 240, 251, 253, 255, 258, 260, 268
Witchcraft, 2, 3, 5, 14, 59, 68, 112, 139, 220–1, 233, 238, 261, 263, 266, 268

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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THE SPIRIT-RIDDEN KONDE

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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

THE SPIRIT-RIDDEN KONDE

008

A RECORD OF THE INTERESTING BUT STEADILY VANISHING CUSTOMS & IDEAS GATHERED DURING TWENTY-FOUR YEARS' RESIDENCE AMONGST THESE SIX DISTRICTS OF THE LAKE NYASA REGION, FROM WITCH-DOCTORS, DIVINERS, HUNTERS, FISHERS & EVERY NATIVE SOURCE

BY

D. R. MACKENZIE, F.R.G.S.

WITH MANY ILLUSTRATIONS & A MAP

London
Seeley, Service & Co. Limited
196 Shaftesbury Avenue
1925

[p. vii]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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[Frontispiece]

291
301
411
Sf

AN ITINERANT ENTERTAINER.

He is dressed in rice and leather head-dress, armlets, skin belt, and leafy chaps, the number of which latter indicates his social position. He carries, as professional properties, a spear, a skin pouch, rattles, horns, bells, and a unique musical instrument.

[facing p. vii]

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008

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

[p. viii]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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450

TO

MY WIFE

[p. ix]

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Preface

THIS book is not an attempt to depict the daily life of the Konde people; it rather aims at indicating, so far as an outsider can, the leading ideas and practices which make up the background, leaving to others the task of bringing the foreground into proper relief. And, after many years' residence and work among the Konde, I feel increasingly how much the fact of being a foreigner among them limits one's understanding of the people whose ideas he attempts to set down on paper. The task has been undertaken largely at the request of some of the leading men of the tribe, who are alive to the fact that the old days are passing, even among the conservative Konde, and that, if a record is to be made at all, it must be made without delay. 121

There is no one to whom I must acknowledge indebtedness to the same extent as I must, and now do, to native chiefs and common people, educated and otherwise; to doctors, diviners, hunters, fishers; every kind of native in fact, from whom I have caught hints, in sudden and unintentional flashes of revelation, or in sustained conversation, of what is in the Bantu mind. And therefore I have, in most chapters, aimed at using language which indicates the native attitude to the various beliefs dealt with; an attitude in most cases of unquestioning faith. BK

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800 The photographs I owe almost entirely to others: to Major J. Stuart Wells, C.B.E., lately of the Tanganyika Civil Service; Capt. Perkins, 1st King's African Rifles, and Mr. E. C. Richards, Administrative Officer, and the Rev. M. H. Faulds, of Isoko. To the Rev. D. M. Brown, M.D., of Itete, I am indebted for the map which accompanies the book.

I have again and again drawn upon my wife's knowledge of the people, especially of the women and children, and to her suggestions I owe very much. By permission of the Editor of the *Expository Times* use has been made of part of the material of an article on "Christianity and the African Mind" which I contributed to that magazine some years ago.

D. R. MacKenzie.

Kyimbila, Tanganyika Territory,
February, 1925.

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

Contents

CHAPTER I
THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE . . . . . PAGE 17

CHAPTER II
VILLAGE LIFE 26

CHAPTER III
KOWBE CHILDREN 41

CHAPTER IV
HUSBAND AND WIFE 55

CHAPTER V
THE CHIEF AND HIS COUNSELLORS 68

CHAPTER VI
LAW AND CRIME 80

CHAPTER VII
THINGS FORBIDDEN 95

CHAPTER VIII
DOMESTIC ANIMALS: AGRICULTURE 109

CHAPTER IX
EATING AND DRINKING 122

CHAPTER X
HUNTING AND FISHING 132

CHAPTER XI
ARTS AND CRAFTS 146

CHAPTER XII
AMUSEMENTS AND RELAXATIONS 156

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XIII
Kondo Wafare . . . . . PAGE 167

CHAPTER XIV
The Supreme Being 178

CHAPTER XV
The Ancestral Spirits 190

CHAPTER XVI
The Worship of the Spirits 200

CHAPTER XVII
The Foretellers 215

CHAPTER XVIII
Divination and the Lot 225

CHAPTER XIX
Omens and Portents 237

CHAPTER XX
The Powers of Evil: I. Witchcraft 251

CHAPTER XXI
The Powers of Evil: II. Destructive Agencies . 265

CHAPTER XXII
Sickness and Medicine 270

CHAPTER XXIII
Wonder Medicine 286

CHAPTER XXIV
Death and Burial 292

CHAPTER XXV
The Brave Days of Old 303

Index 311

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

List of Illustrations

000

An Itinerant Entertainer . . . . . *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

A Konde Village, Lake Shore Type . . . 32

Tobacco Smoking 64

A Young Woman 64

A Professional Dancer 80

Salt Factory at Lake Rukwa 80

A Public Dance 96

A Banana-Leaf Umbrella 112

Sifting 128

Grinding 128

Game Traps for Small Animals 136

Calico-Making 136

House-Building 152

Men's Dance 160

A Konde Hut 176

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

000

PAGE PAGE

Lion Hunting 176

In the Kinga Mountains 208

Dancing at a Feast 240

A Prohibitionist 272

A Death Dance 288

Various Movements in the Death Dance (1) . 296

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

The Spirit-Ridden Konde

CHAPTER I

The Land & the People

UNGONDE, as the Konde people call their country, lies around the north end of Lake Nyasa. Northwards of that point it stretches for about fifty miles, and southwards for roughly the same distance. Like all their neighbours, the Konde belong to the great Bantu race, which occupies Africa from the Cape to the Congo, and beyond. 131 144

The lake shore plain is narrow, fertile, and populous, with its centre at Karonga, where there is a British Magistrate, some trading stores, and a station of the Livingstonia Mission of the United Free Church of Scotland. Beyond the plain the tribe, under various local names, reaches up into the mountains on both sides of the lake. Outside of Nyasaland, and northwards across the Songwe, it covers a large area in what was once German East Africa, but is now known as Tanganyika Territory. Here, too, the plain is hot, fertile, and populous as at Karonga. Northwards of the plain lie the healthy uplands of Mwamba and 131 133 [797]

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131 Bukuwe, culminating, so far as the peopled regions
133 are concerned, in Tukuyu, five thousand feet above sea-level, the residence of the Administrative Officer and his staff, with Post and Telegraph Offices, and a large Government Hospital. Here also are many small trading stores, conducted by Indians and Somali; and a little to the south is the Kyimbila
[191] Station of the Scottish Churches Mission, carrying on the work of the exiled German missionaries. Still further to the south, and less elevated, is the British military post of Masoko.

The population of these fertile and healthy high-
361 lands is dense. From Tukuyu or Kyimbila, looking
101 south and west, numerous villages, each hidden in its banana grove, fill the view westwards to the Bundali Hills, where the Kibira River is marked out by a morning mist, and southwards towards the lake, thirty miles distant. In this region the people call themselves Nyakyusa, with a number of local names indicating no difference of origin or language. The
241 soil is so fertile, and the rain usually so abundant, that in many places two crops are taken annually of some foodstuffs, while of the others the single crop is so great that scarcity, no uncommon occurrence in some parts of Central Africa, is rarely experienced.

133 The Bundali Hills close in this happy valley (for in
101 spite of its elevation the country has the appearance of a valley) on the west; and beyond them, after a most exhausting march, over lofty summits, through deep ravines threaded by bridgeless rivers, one comes to the home of the Bandali, a race of hardy

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

highlanders closely related to the Konde. Here, at Ikuku, is another station of the Scottish Churches Mission. 133 101 [797]

Eastwards of the Tukuyu uplands lie the Kings Mountains, better known as the Livingstone Range, near the foot of which lies the Itete Station of the Scottish Churches Mission. From here one gets a view of lake and mountain, river and plain, which may well be regarded as one of the finest of the kind in Africa. The evening sun, shining upon the great mountain mass, reveals hundreds of crevices and folds in which lie tiny houses, beside waterfalls or rapidly dashing streams; while up to the summits stretch the wheat-fields, green or golden yellow in the evening light. At one's feet sleep the countless villages, banana hidden; and away in the distance Lake Nyasa reflects the last gleams of departing day. 133 [797]

Over the mountains lies the country of the Kings people, a land indescribably rough and mountainous, but here and there well watered, with fertile valleys producing wheat, oats, peas, in abundance, besides the usual African products. Here the cold is so great that during part of the year many of the people sleep in pits hollowed out of the ground, and heated by fires which are extinguished at bed-time. 133 101

Northwards the upland valley is bounded by the Igale Hills, from the top of which one looks to the lofty Mbeye Mountain, which from one point of view presents an astonishing likeness to Arthur's Seat and the Salisbury Crags at Edinburgh. Beyond Igale live the Sango and the Safwa, the former a vigorous

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133 and warlike tribe, the latter until recently their
101 oppressed subjects and slaves.

173 The earliest traditions go back to a time when the Konde dwelt in Malongo, in the area now known as
[173] Mahenge. There their god Ngeketo, roused to wrath by three attempts to destroy him, abandoned them, and is now the God of the white men. Whether on this account, or for some other reason, a great migration brought them to the country north of the Songwe River, where they settled down, no doubt conquering older inhabitants. At some unknown time, but before the Angoni reached so far north in their great march from Zululand, the Sango, neighbours of the Konde northwards, were driven out of their homes by intertribal warfare. They broke down over the intervening mountains, and overcame the unwarlike Konde, among whom they settled down as chiefs, retaining until now the tradition of their Sango ancestry. Whether at the same or another time, the Kinga, probably for the same reason—pressure from behind—swarmed down the steep mountain passes, and established themselves in the Nserya region.

One of the leading Kinga chiefs was Mwangonde, who, under the name of Chungu, occupied land at Kabari, near the Mwakeleli Mission Station. His son, Kyabara Chungu, setting out with an armed force in search of more fertile garden land, met with varying fortunes, until he was finally obliged to cross the Songwe into what later became Nyasaland. In this region Chungu seems to have made easy con-

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quests. He passed through the mountain region 173
north and west of Karonga, receiving the submission of the chiefs as he went; thence he descended into the plain at Karonga, finally establishing himself at Mpande, where his descendants still live.

The legends which have gathered around the 173
person of Chungu reveal him as a man of impressive 177
personality. One legend states that having established himself at Karonga, he cast longing eyes on the regions on the other side of Lake Nyasa. With a great following he went down to the lake, smote the water with his sceptre, and crossed on dry land. Receiving the submission of the people, he returned as he went; followed later, but in canoes, by a great multitude of people, who wished to settle under the shadow of so great a chief. The European attitude towards this event is shared by native Christians, but quite intelligent pagans meet scepticism, quietly and gravely, with the statement that "Chungu is the man who speaks with God." The incident, or whatever event it represents in its present form, can only be satisfactorily accounted for by regarding it as what the Higher Critics call a "later accretion"; for the Angoni, with their own story of a similar crossing of the Zambesi, had not yet arrived, the Arabs were still in the distance, and direct Christian influence did not begin for many years afterwards.

It is needless to give in detail the history of his 173
successors. One lost much land to rival chiefs; another was deposed because he could not give rain in a time of drought. The country fell into confusion.

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173 Prophets arose who foretold the coming of the Angoni and the Arabs to work havoc on land and people. Then from the lake would come the strange white man who would overcome Angoni and Arab, and give peace to the land. To this race the people were directed to submit themselves when they came. So deep and sure would the peace be, that men would go armed only with sticks, all need for spear and shield having passed away.

173 177 But the peace was still in the future. Arab and Angoni came and fulfilled their destiny. The Henga or Kamanga people, fleeing before the latter, were received by the Konde, and were at first friendly to their hosts, but later, when the Arabs arrived as traders and slavers, made an alliance with them against the harassed Konde. Into this confusion entered, very dramatically, the white man, of whose coming the natives give graphic accounts. The approach of the *Ilala*, the tiny steamer of the Livingstonia Mission, then operating from Cape Maclear, far to the south, struck the people with terror. "It is God," they said, "He walks on the water." As the little vessel drew near the land, the people fled into the bush. A white man landed. A few strong-hearted natives ventured to approach, and saw his white skin. "It is surely God," they said, "He has come to us in the likeness of men." When he ate some bananas in their presence, they said, "No, not God, but a friend of His."

175 In 1887 the African Lakes Corporation of Glasgow

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opened a trading store at Karonga, under Mr. Monteith Fotheringham, a man of great vigour and capacity. His presence aroused the hostility of the Arabs, who feared the loss of their slaving profits, and a period of fighting followed, in which the Konde took sides with the white man as their one hope. After a great encounter with their enemies, the defeated Konde took refuge in the Kambwe lagoon, the dry reeds on the margin of which were set on fire by the victors. The helpless natives leaped into the water, where many were drowned, and numbers were taken by the crocodiles which swarmed in the lagoon. In 1895 a small force was moved up by Sir Harry Johnston, High Commissioner for the newly formed British Protectorate, and the Arabs were defeated, and their leader, Mlozi, hanged the same day. From that time the Konde have progressed in peace under the influence of Government, Trade, and Missions.

One incident, very striking in itself, may be given as indicating the influence of Chungu. On one of her trips the *Domira*, the steamer of the African Lakes Corporation, went ashore on the sands near Karonga. Vigorous but unsuccessful efforts were made, with the help of great gangs of natives, to float her; and at length Chungu was asked to lend his powerful aid. This was Chungu Mwakasungula II. Taking with him a white cock, he went with his councillors to where the stranded steamer lay helpless on the sand. The following prayer, which he offered, was given to

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175 me by the son of one of the councillors who stood
782 near him:
643

> "Art Thou angry with me, O God, who didst redeem me from slavery? The Angoni mocked me, the Arabs mocked me; then didst Thou cause me to see these mighty ones (the Europeans); and I said, 'Rejoice, for God has heard my prayers.' Who, then, of my ancestors is angry? Against whom have I sinned? For it is they who are my helpers in speaking to Thee. Many of them died by the spear; they saw their families destroyed; they suffered hunger again and again, before the mighty ones came. Now, O God, be merciful, and let the feet of these men come up out of the water."

Then taking water in his mouth he squirted it north and south saying, "I am lord of that country, I Magemo: I am lord of that country, I Kyabara," to which the assembled councillors responded, "E! Magemo; E! Kyabara." Then whirling the cock over his head and dipping it in the water, he gave the signal to the men hanging on the ropes to pull. And the steamer floated off into the water!

175 Meantime in the north internal warfare went on
177 intermittently, but no man of outstanding capacity arose to give cohesion to the various families of the
[197] Nyakyusa. Before the arrival of the Moravian missionaries in the area in 1891, various Europeans visited the district. Hunters came and went, and for a brief space there was a station of the Livingstonia Mission not far from Tukuyu. In 1893 the German

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Government established a station at Lumbira on the 175
lake shore, but removed later to Tukuyu. On the 177
whole the new Government was well received. A rising in 1897 was so mercilessly dealt with that any discontent which might be felt was suppressed by the fear of the German machine-guns. Very slowly the district is being merged in the general progress arising out of European domination.

Around the lake shore cotton is being successfully 241
cultivated by natives and Europeans. On the uplands near Tukuyu there are some coffee plantations, and the suitability of the soil for the cultivation of flax is being tested. Coal has been found in the hills to the 135
west, but its commercial value has still to be proved; and a small quantity of mica is also being digged. Up in the north, on the Lupa River, but outside the Konde region, gold has been discovered, but apparently only in modest quantities. There are at present about three score of miners at work there.

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CHAPTER II

Village Life

361 THE typical Konde village has very little in common with a European one. Here and there one will come on villages neatly laid out in streets or rows, usually with the ends, rather than the sides, facing the road; frequently with a clump of bananas separating one house from another. But much more common is the village in which each house is hidden in its own banana grove; or where at one point one may find three or four huts grouped together, at another perhaps a solitary hut, yonder, again, two or three are near each other; but everywhere surrounded by bananas growing close up to the houses. Or, in a few places, the tall maize conceals the houses from view in the growing season, leaving them exposed, after the harvest, to the eye of all passers-by.

512 From a distance nothing is seen but the wide spreading banana leaves. In the early morning from hundreds of huts smoke rises into the still air, as the sleepers rouse themselves and lay fresh wood on the fire which has been smouldering all night, unless some one has wakened and stirred the dying embers. One by one the villagers emerge from the houses, and

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One by one the villagers emerge from the houses, and sit in the sun, greeting neighbours with a polite 572
"Have you slept well?" if there are any neighbours [576]
near. Then the husband milks the cattle, and the boys come to drive them out to the pasture, where they will remain until the early afternoon, when they are again milked.

Generally the cattle sleep in the same house as their 231
owners, tied up to stakes fixed deep in the floor; but 592
where there are grown-up sons not yet married, a separate house is built in which the parents sleep with the little ones, while the young men guard the cattle from raiding thieves.

The bed is frequently no more than a mat spread 573
on the mud floor, with a single blanket for covering, and no pillow, unless it is a piece of roughly trimmed wood. The more prosperous natives, earning good pay in the employment of Europeans, have well-made beds fully equipped, in many cases even with mosquito nets hung from the roof. The poorer consider that they have made a great step forward if they have been able to save up enough money to buy a single blanket, and not seldom even that belongs to the father, the mother and children having to be content with meagre coverings of calico or grass mats. But [354]
the house is warm, often too warm, for the fire is always burning, the door is closed, there are no windows, and there is no ventilation in the roof; and all the inmates sleep with their feet to the fire, which is in the middle of the floor.

Here and there one will come upon rows of tiny 342
houses, each built and occupied by two or three small 561

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342 boys, who have grown too big to occupy any longer
561 the single-roomed hut in which their parents dwell. They are slender erections of reed and grass, and look as if a strong wind might carry them away; but the children live a happy, and not always innocent, life in these huts until they are able to build bigger ones for themselves.

291 Dress is more conspicuous by its absence than by its presence. During the day the women wear little but a long strip of bark cloth hanging down almost to the ground before and behind. The children usually have nothing at all, unless they have the good fortune to get a strip of cloth from a grandparent. They go about quite naked for the first few years of life, and a mission school usually reveals rows of children who consist of long legs and arms and smiling faces, wholly unconscious of need if they have a tiny rag strung in front, often not more than a few square inches in size. But the men who are earning money may be well dressed. The richer wear trousers and jacket, a shirt, a collar and tie, boots, if they are able to afford them, and a helmet. Their wives and children wear long robes of highly coloured cloths, and are no doubt observed with envy by their less fortunate sister-women, with little but a piece of bark-cloth to hide their nakedness. The average man, however, goes to church or market with a single garment, unsewn, flung over his shoulders, and covering, more or less completely, his whole body; but he goes to work in a scanty waist cloth, which leaves him uncovered below the knees and above the waist. Men

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Men
of social position are known by the number of *manyeta* 291
(body rings worn on the waist) which they wear: [301
one for a man or woman just "above the common"; 554]
six or seven for a man of high standing. A few women have begun, to their own great discomfort, to wear the immense coils of brass or iron on wrists or ankles which are so popular among other tribes.

Clothes, says an acknowledged authority on the 291
subject, make the man. Not among the Konde. 643
Chungu is a great chief, but his greatness does not 554
depend on what he wears, although there are occasions when he dresses more carefully than at other times. This almost naked man is regarded with a reverence greater than is granted to any but a very few Europeans, and out of all recognition greater than is felt for the native who swaggers about in boots and helmet and white man's clothes. The respect which is accorded to a European depends to-day (though it did not in the past) upon his personal character, his control of resources, the authority which has been bestowed upon him by others. But Chungu, with hundreds of other chiefs throughout Bantu Africa, has a respect which is gained in a totally different fashion. He is in close touch with unseen powers. His prayers have a compelling power, his benediction is priestly, his curse of fearful validity. He is a channel through which may come weal or woe upon the land; and hence his authority depends in no degree upon such an accident as dress.

By almost all who know them the Konde are re- 461
garded as lazy. And to the bustling, and perhaps

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461 unobservant European, village life affords abundant justification for the charge; while even the most observant and sympathetic must admit that they are, to put it mildly, a people with a large amount of unimproved leisure on their hands. There is, in truth, a good deal of idle lounging in the sun, and it is thoroughly enjoyed; and so long as it remains unproved that the restless energy of the white man has succeeded in securing the best possible conditions for the great masses of his race, just so long will some white men, and a vast majority of black, decline to admit that the African is altogether on the wrong path, and the European altogether on the right.

If the year has been a good one, the father has very little care upon his shoulders: his barns are well filled, and hunger is not likely to trouble him and his family; his children are healthy, and perhaps doing well at the little mission school; he has paid his tax, and the precious certificate, signed by the magistrate, is carefully laid away in some place of safety; his house is re-thatched, and will keep out the rain; his cattle and sheep and goats are away with the village herd, and looked after as part of the village property. If he wants a little money for immediate use, he can go to the nearest white man with a sheep or a goat for sale, or perhaps his wife will go with fowls or eggs, or a bunch of bananas. Finally, if he is religiously inclined, whether he is a Christian or not, he has probably been to church on Sunday, a fact which adds to his sense of personal well-being during the

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week. He has, then, no reason for doing any more work. Work has yielded him all that he requires, and he may lie in the sun and chat lazily, or move about strumming his *pango* (stringed instrument) with that supreme unconsciousness of being an idler, which is to some so irritating, to others so charming, a characteristic of the African. 461

All this, however, is ideal, and seldom corresponds to the actual fact. The year may have been a bad one; ill-health may have overtaken himself or his family; his cattle may be dying; or he may have failed to find employment after long trekking in search of it, and consequently his tax is unpaid and trouble is hanging over him. But a normal year, neither unusually prosperous nor unusually disastrous, will reveal how the Konde fill in their time. Let it be understood that they see nothing but folly in working for what they do not want. Working for what other people want is a high form of altruism to which only a small number of Konde have risen. That work increases the wealth of the country is a doctrine of high economics which they do not understand: wealth is increased by good harvests and by increase of live-stock.

The whole life of the community centres round the hoeing season. During the great heat which usually precedes the rains, the people move languidly about, incapable of anything like exertion. The men gather in groups and lie idly in the shade, talking languidly, droningly; an illness or a death; a 461 521 522

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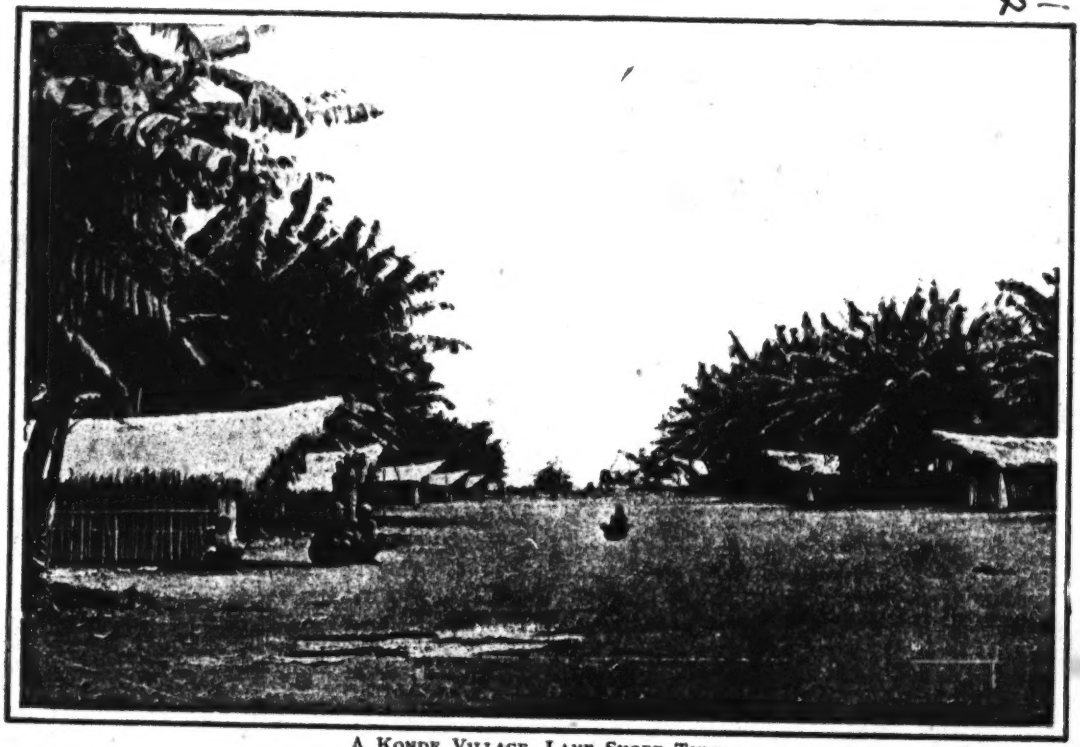

A KONDE VILLAGE, LAKE SHORE TYPE.

The slender houses are of reeds and grass, shaded by overhanging banana leaves, and usually unplastered to admit every straying breeze. As cattle stealing s a very common crime, the cattle sleep in the houses with their owners.

[facing p. 32]

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461 marriage settlement; the wealth some one has
521 brought from the South; or perhaps they exchange
522 impressions of Europeans they have worked for—a subject into which a great deal of humour can be packed; for it must not be imagined that the white man is taken too seriously. His little foibles, his often none too good temper, his haste to get a job done, and above all his cool assumption of unquestioned superiority, supply endless fun to the village joker. "Bantu as she is spoke" by some Europeans gladdens the weary hours for many a humorously inclined native.

241 Should the rains be late, the situation may be
512 serious, for not only does the heat continue, but the harvest will be correspondingly late, and there is dark fear lest the supplies in the barns, intended to last until March, should have to do until April is well on.
[783] Public prayer is offered, led by the chief. The preliminary ceremonies have been attended to, and as soon as the first rains fall all sally out with the first streak of dawn to begin the year's work. From a score of small crofts one may hear the long happy shout of the men, and the shrill call of the women, as they toil in the early morning; but as the day advances and the heat increases, the shouting dies away, and every one puts the last ounce of energy into the task in hand. Henceforward, for about three months, the native gives all his attention to his crops; for as the season advances, and the grain begins to grow, the weeds come up also in wild profusion, and

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241 sheer hard work makes men and women look thin and
512 haggard. Work stops about noon; the women go home to attend to the food, the men to see to the cattle which the smaller boys have been looking after
231 during the day. The milking is always done by the
512 [462] men; it is not women's work as with us. If there are flies about, and there usually are, the cows need no invitation to thrust their heads into the column of acrid smoke that arises from a dung fire, kindled for the purpose. The rest of the afternoon is filled either with small duties, basket mending, net work, some slight repairs to a canoe, rope making, house repairing; or it may be there is a lawsuit to be settled, and every idler will make a point of being present.

512 By the time food is over, night has closed in. If the night is dark, one after another slips away with a
[576] friendly "May you sleep well," and silence reigns until morning. Unless it is suddenly broken by the roar of a lion or the growl of a leopard; and then the young men, who sleep with the cattle, rush out with spears and clubs and wild shouting to drive off the intruder, while the others raise a weird cry within the houses. Should the lion take refuge in a thicket and refuse to be driven off, a small party may slip round to the nearest white man, if he is not too far away, to beg him either to lend them a rifle, or to
512 come himself to their aid. In the warm moonlight
535 nights, however, other noises fill the ear. The young people gather for a dance, and the drum fills the night air with its interminable tum tum tum, now soft and

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512 535 low, again rising to a perfect fury of rapid sounds, not without a certain rhythm, but with rasping effect upon the nerves of Europeans tossing sleeplessly in the warm humid air.

[221] 484 464 [609] After harvest comes the house-building; and when that is finished the men are free to go out to seek work. They usually set out in companies, for the Konde dislikes being alone on a journey. Like all home-loving people, they are suspicious of strangers, and if they have to pass through another tribe, they take great care to guard their small possessions; seldom more than they are wearing, and a spear or a club to guard them from the more obvious dangers of the way. There will be a few youths going out for the first time, with a wild flutter at the heart, of fear and expectancy. Fear, for they have heard strange tales of the white men and their ways; expectancy, because of the wonderful things they will see: the great houses, steamers, trains, motors; and what must seem countless white men to those who have been accustomed only to the missionary, the magistrate, and the storekeeper, and even these perhaps some days' journey from home. And who knows but he will come back with money in his pocket, wearing gorgeous raiment, a helmet perhaps, and, above all other things to be desired, a pair of boots! Those who stay long [431] come back with the spoils of civilisation; highly coloured cloths, cheap clocks, melodeons, mouth-organs, worthless pocket-knives, which they deal out to admiring friends and acquaintances.

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Life is never dull for the African. There are marriages and funerals here as elsewhere; the former always a joyous occasion, the latter not always or necessarily the reverse. A walk through a populous village will bring one upon net making, pot making, basket or cloth weaving, and one may hear the sharp tap-tap of the bark cloth worker, or, in an iron-working district, the clang of the blacksmith's stone hammer, beating out hoes or spears upon a rough stone anvil. And many drive dullness away with beer. Sometimes it is a small party. A few friends gather in a house, and sit around a pot or two of beer provided by the wife of the host. They drink to the strumming of a *pango* or the beating of a small drum, for they like to have music at their feasts, even when only a few are gathered. But if it is a village feast, given by the chief, it may go on all night with terrific noise, shouting, singing, and drumming; and not always does the feast end without fighting.

Sometimes the villagers receive visitors. The native evangelist on his rounds is always hospitably welcomed. The tax collector is not exactly welcomed—who ever welcomes a tax collector?—but he is received well enough, for his coming has at least this advantage, that those who are ready to pay the sum demanded will not have to go later and pay at the *boma* (magistrate's office), which may be a long distance away. Sometimes a native trader comes along, his packs carried by attendants, for he never carries them himself, even when beginning on a small scale. Visitors

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

574 of more importance are the magistrate and the missionary, whose coming is usually heralded afar, by the report that he is already in the district, and is now perhaps only a day's journey off, slowly making his way from village to village, and dealing with whatever matters require his attention as magistrate or missionary. His coming is a matter of importance, for he will have a number of men with him who will need food, by the sale of which the villagers hope to make a few honest pence; though abundance of food is often given freely as a token of welcome. As the great man approaches the village, all the younger people come out to meet him with shouts of welcome, and if he is travelling in a *machilla*, the men will take the pole from the bearers, and with tremendous noise enter the village and deposit him at the school or the chief's house.

182 And the sadder side? Sickness, epidemics, the per-
561 petual fear of witchcraft and of evil dreams fore-
578 shadowing ill, theft with its ever-present possibility of accompanying murder, quarrels that will not heal, forced marriages, and all the hidden cruelty that so rarely comes to the surface. Most pathetic of all, perhaps, the feud between old and young; the young all for to-day and to-morrow, for the new ideas, the hope of progress; the old for yesterday with its stability and ordered life; the young going in crowds to church, the old going secretly, and no doubt sadly, to worship at the ancient shrines, guarding the approaches lest the levity of youth should desecrate the place of terror, and evil come upon all the land; the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

young gathering around the white man, and lending themselves to his purposes, the old even to-day approaching him with reluctance, if at all, for to them he still retains much of the awe and hidden power with which he was credited in the earlier days.

The individual Konde is not so popular with white men as are members of other tribes; indeed there are employers who will not knowingly give work to a Konde at all. As workmen, it must be acknowledged that they are both less active and less reliable than surrounding tribes; they are neither so intelligent nor so loyal to contract. The Konde soon wearies of effort, and longs to get back to the lowing of his cattle and his pretty little hut in its banana grove. He loves his children, and the hope of being able to clothe them if he works well, does not compensate him for prolonged absence. Loyalty, as the Henga, Angoni, and Yao are loyal, does not distinguish the Konde, who show loyalty rather to chief and to tribal custom, than to the white man with his problematical benefits. They have never attached themselves to the European, as many of the surrounding tribes have done; for the Konde are less convinced than others that the one hope of Africa is the European and his influence; less convinced, be it added, that Africa stands so desperately in need of saving. That may be due to their unawakened condition—and, again, it may not. Educationally, too, they are less advanced than other tribes. Only a few of them are to be found in Government offices, or doing the skilled work which commands such good pay from Europeans; nor have they supplied,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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in any numbers, the trained assistants in Mission work who form one of the principal successes of Missions among other tribes.

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But this does not imply that the Konde are without virtues. They are very shy, and respectful to authority, the latter a characteristic that atones for many defects in the minds of those who consider subserviency the primary virtue in a native of Africa. Their conservative nature prevents them being too free with strangers, and they will not greet a passing European, either until he takes the initiative, or until long friendship has convinced them that it will not be regarded as an undue liberty. Once their confidence has been gained, they are found to be merry, laughing, and bright. The friendliness of children is an attractive feature of the tribe. And the adults are most willing to be friendly also, provided the first advances are made by the European. When one begins to know them intimately, it becomes obvious that their backwardness is not due to lack of capacity, but to an unyielding conservatism, which leads them to think long—and some have been thinking for a generation—before committing themselves to anything new. "We will think about it" is a common response to invitations to take their place alongside the more progressive tribes. Yet with it all they are a lovable people, responsive to friendliness, deeply attached to each other, and to all who rightly claim the name of friend.

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Slavery is, formally at least, a thing of the past. It is asserted by natives that some men and women are still in slavery, but while that is not impossible, no one

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

has ever been able, or willing, to give me the name of 567
either slave or owner in a single case. Yet such is the terrifying influence which some natives exert over others, that it is not difficult to believe that here and there throughout the country there may be individuals to whom continued slavery is a smaller evil than the wrath of an exposed owner, and therefore the fact of their bondage is not reported to the authorities.

Many circumstances might combine to make the 567
freeman a slave, and the slave a freeman. A man who 681
led astray the wife of a chief, if discovered, paid a son or daughter to the husband. So also, one found stealing from a garden was similarly penalised. Mocking at a lame man was a crime which could only be atoned for by the same kind of payment; and a man who could not pay just debts might himself be taken by the creditor. Prisoners of war, it need hardly be 567
added, were slaves. On the other hand, the owner might find himself obliged by circumstances to restore children so obtained; if not, he was obliged to find wives or husbands for them. A slave might be a member of the council, and there are cases where slaves acquitted themselves so well in battle that they were granted their freedom. So long as it remained purely domestic, it was not an altogether intolerable condition. There was an ex-slave living at Karonga not long ago, who supported as long as she lived the old woman who was once his owner, and that, as he assured me, from genuine affection. On the other hand, a man, not yet beyond the prime of life, was present when a slave was buried alive along with the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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body of his late owner. And another knew of a slave, bound and weighted with stones, thrown into the lake to feed the crocodiles. Such things may with reason be assumed to be impossible to-day, whether it be true or not that slavery still exists.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER III

Konde Children

THE small Konde boy or girl stands gazing with frightened eyes at the *unsungu* (white man), and the little heart can be seen beating through the dark soft skin, while the breath comes and goes in rapid motion, and the tiny legs are ready to run at the first sign of a too near approach. For the white man is the bogey of the Konde child. From earliest infancy he has been taught to fear him, to regard him as a possible source of dreadful danger. "The white man will get you" is as common a threat as its parallel of the dreadful black man, with which foolish people at home inflict injury upon their children. The first impulse of a child in arms, approached in the most kindly fashion by a European, is to scream, and clasp its mother by the neck in an agony of fear. But once gain the confidence of these tiny black folks, and you find them as friendly, as delightful, as charming, as white children of the same age. Possibly the charming period passes sooner, for the Konde child begins to know good and evil at an age when the white man's child is still a mere prattler. Little black, or rather brown, folks are of a quick intelligence, ready to learn, full of

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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

861 romping glee; and the musical jingle of the tiny bells that most of them wear on their ankles up till three or so is pleasant to the European, and rings with a thrilling response in the heart of the adoring mother, who sits on the ground watching the gambols of her little one.

843 The unborn child is treated with great care, and surrounded with superstitions. The mother must submit to restrictions in regard to diet, and indications of the sex of the coming child are given by the preferences she shows for permitted foods. She must not eat hot food, for that would burn the child's head; nor beans, for they might cause the disease called *ilyulu*. An expectant mother who drinks much milk will bear a son; if she has a great desire for flesh foods, a daughter is known to be coming. A scolding woman need not be surprised if her child is a boy, especially if her husband is the victim of her language. Some women will not eat rice, perhaps because it is a new food, all the possibilities of which have not yet been fully explored.

844 The worst possible place for a woman to have her child born is at her own father's house, unless it is with the consent of her husband; for every one will assume that the child has an unknown father. If an [757] expectant mother suspects her husband of sorcery she will take care to have her child born at a distance, so that it may not inherit its father's undesirable powers, these being transmissible only at close quarters, and only after birth. With heathen women, the birth, if in the daytime, takes place mostly in the open

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

air, as much privacy as possible being secured in the universal banana groves: and always in a sitting, not a lying position. 844

A difficult birth is a serious misfortune for the mother. Births are normally easy, and difficult labour indicates the wrath of the spirits for evil done. Medicine is in all cases given to facilitate delivery, and if this fails other means must be tried. A message is sent to the husband and the father of the woman, and prayer, without ceremony, for the matter is urgent, is offered by both men: 845 782

> "Ye fathers and ancestors, and ye who are of the far past, let this child be born safely. If I have sinned, be merciful; and if ye will not be merciful, kill me, but let the woman and the child live."

While thus praying he has been chewing the pith of a banana leaf, and at the end he takes water into his mouth, which he squirts out, saying, "Let my sin be carried away," and throws on the roof the chewed pith; for if he is not by birth the representative of the family he has no natural right to pray, but the ceremony of chewing and throwing on the roof averts evil consequences.

If all this fails it is clear that the woman has sinned; and her only hope of life for herself and her child lies in confession. The midwife takes a number of small sticks which she throws on the ground one by one, inviting the suffering woman to name the men with whom she has consorted. Natives assert emphatically that birth becomes easier after confession; 845 783

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

845 and the statement cannot be altogether devoid of
783 truth. The influence of the mind upon the body is universally admitted: may it not be that the consciousness of guilt has the effect of contracting the muscles, and the relaxation which follows confession renders birth less painful? And may it not be that even a false confession, wrung from a despairing sufferer, brings a momentary relief sufficient to bring the child to the birth? One is glad to add, however, that many women have the courage to refuse altogether to submit to this shameful ordeal, insisting that their trouble is due, not to the wrath of the spirits, but to other causes, and that they will die rather than confess what is not true.

When birth has taken place, the cord is cut with a
844 bamboo knife, and the placenta buried in the family
846 place of prayer, a small part protruding to leave a connection which insures further children. All this time no one in the house may swallow saliva. The father calls out to know the sex of the child, but he must not yet enter (for the party have entered the house as soon as possible after the birth). After a few days the mother is anointed with oil and shaved, along with her child, and powdered with medicine. Meantime intimation has been sent to the grandparents; a cock if a boy, a hen if a girl, telling them all that they wish to know. The mother may now resume her household duties.

But in about a week she goes to show the child to
851 her own parents, and at the end of her visit, which
603 lasts some weeks, great preparations are made by both
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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

sets of grandparents. The mother sets out from her 851
father's house with a train of friends carrying food, 603
and a very special friend who carries the baby. Arrived 431
at the paternal grandfather's, the food is laid down, and the child is taken by the grandfather, who presents a hoe to the maternal grandmother; and then, with the child in his arms, goes to the *ikiyinja* (the family place of prayer). He spits into the palm of his hand, and, laying it in blessing upon the child's head, he prays:

> "May it be well with you, my child. Ye spirits, be not surprised at this child of yours whom I present to you. I am old: let him take my place. Care for him in this world of sickness. I was alone, and ye have multiplied me and made me a company. Be not angry, but bless the child; and in the sight of God let him be acceptable."

The mother sits with head covered, for she must [606]
not be seen by her father-in-law. The parties now exchange gifts of food, and eat separately, after which the grandfather gives the child a gift, usually now a small coin, over which the little hand is closed. Next, the grandmother takes the infant and hands it to its mother, who, with a pot of beer on her head, goes off with her husband to their home. Arrived there, but not till then, the father takes the child in his arms, and thanks it for the gift it has brought, a foretoken of more yet to be earned.

Lingering here and there in certain families are 846
strange customs, probably belated survivals from

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

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earlier days. The family of Lugulu at Mwakeleli wear blinders of leaves for weeks after a birth. At the end of the period a feast of beer and ill-cooked food is prepared, and both sets of families spend the night in open reviling of each other, and ceaseless tramping of the feet the livelong night. In the morning good food is eaten, and both parties go their ways with mutual good will. This is called *ukutila indila*, to fear the fears; to endure the terrors. No explanation of what the terrors are has reached me.

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The birth of twins is regarded as one of the greatest of misfortunes, and is followed by ceremonies intended to cleanse the parents from the stain which has come upon them, and to prevent its spread to others. A hut is built outside the village, with a partition in the middle, on either side of which the parents live, but they must speak to each other only in whispers, and to others not at all. The doctor sprinkles all the relatives with medicine, and kindles a fire, in the smoke of which every one must stand for a moment. The parents are shut up in the hut, but may leave it for a few moments at night, and no one may see them. After about a month the doctor comes again, with beating drums and shaking rattle, and brings the parents out of their house of restraint. A second sprinkling of medicine upon each relative being made, the doctor takes a bunch of grass from the roof, kindles it, and hands it to the father, who, holding it in one hand, crawls out of the house, and runs, followed by the crowd. He returns, however, and receives their

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

salutations with his hand upon his mouth. Beer mixed 845
with medicine is handed to him, and, all the others 783
drinking one by one from a calabash, he takes a little into his mouth and squirts it upon each as he or she drinks. The final stage comes about a month later, when, in the presence of the doctor, without whom nothing can be done, all the grandparents and both parents drink beer amid a circle of shouting villagers, and then, laying hold of the calabash, break it in pieces. After one more sprinkling of all, the doctor departs, taking with him a cow as fee for his many exertions. But until another child is born, the parents must eat alone, or with other parents of twins; and the mother may not pass behind anyone without warning them and receiving their consent, signified by clapping the hands.

The naming of the child. The Konde child pos- 551
sesses a varied selection of names. When he is grown he will offer a European employer one or another, sometimes in perfect honesty, sometimes with intent to hide the fact that under a previously given name he had a bad character. But the names are all genuine. Descent is through the father, and the new-born child [611]
takes the personal name of its paternal grandfather, let us say Ambangire. But his mother must never refer to her father-in-law by name, nor may she use the name in referring to any other person who bears it; her son therefore takes her own name; if she is called Kalukwa, he will be named Mwakalukwa; next he takes the family name of his father, say Mwakasungula.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

551 He is now Ambangire Mwakalukwa Mwakasungula; but his mother usually has a pet name for him, which no one else uses; and, finally, at marriage he takes yet another name, used only by his wife. But only one name is used at a time. When the personal name, Ambangire, is used, he is among familiar friends; when he is called Mwakalukwa he is being referred to as his mother's son; and when it is desired to honour or humour him he is given his title of Mwakasungula.

Girls take the personal name of the paternal grandmother, but are sometimes referred to by their father's family name.

857 For boys, the work of life begins at about five. It is a greatly longed-for promotion, for at that age many of them go out with the bigger boys to herd the village cattle. One may see almost anywhere a couple of infants, with long sticks, looking after herds of fifteen to twenty head of cattle, and having a thoroughly good time of it. In the low-lying plains they do not begin till they are eight, for there the grass is longer, and the ever-present dangers of the bush are more difficult to guard against. The boys, big and little, get together in groups, and there is no kind of evil that growing boys can learn that they do not learn during that period; but they learn also much that is [872] good, and useful in after life. About eight to ten thousand children of all ages attend the Mission schools, but with many attendance is spasmodic, and the great school of life is the bush. The majority of parents follow the educational principles of Mr. Samuel

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Weller, senior, and turn their children out into the 857
bush to learn whatever the companions they find there have to teach them.

They play at "grown-ups," having their own chiefs and headmen; build houses, pay taxes, learn various useful and many injurious things. Their "chiefs" demand taxes, and there is no pretence about it. A boy must steal, even if it be from his own parents, whatever his chief wants, and pay it to him as tax. More serious thieving is often attempted, and the chief, who is usually the biggest bully of the crowd, will bring to trial and punishment the very boys whom he sent out to steal. Mimic battles are fought in good temper, but they sometimes end in serious injury to some of the warriors. The great achievement which [526]
all boys burn to excel in is the high leap, and a thrashing may be the portion of the unlucky one who is weakest. Tricks of many kinds are indulged in, one [522]
of the favourites being to send a mere child off on some errand, and on his return direct him to sit in a place where a fire has been kindled, and the ashes removed in his absence; or he is ordered to sit where thorns have been placed for him. No boy dares to disobey such orders.

Mimicry is a favourite amusement. I have seen 857
remarkably good imitations of motor-bicycles made by 524
quite small boys, even the "phut-phut" being reproduced by another boy running along with a bent reed touching the ground. Lanterns are made out of pumpkins, as boys at home make turnip lanterns. Hats and shoes are fashioned out of leaves, and tiny

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

857 canoes of maize leaves are sent floating down stream, with shouting and racing competition between the owners.
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857 Girls help their mothers, and at a very early age look after their younger brothers or sisters. It is a common sight to see a small girl staggering along under weight of a fat baby brother strapped to her back.

855 In the hotter regions boys go naked till ten or twelve, wearing nothing but a piece of string on the
291 waist and a charm on neck or wrist. Girls begin to wear bark-cloth waistbands at five or six, adding more as circumstances permit. Their clothing is provided by the father; but boys, at whatever age they begin to wear any kind of garment, have to earn it for themselves, for it is not the business of their fathers to clothe them. They often, however, get a fowl or two, or even a goat or a sheep, from a grandparent, with the proceeds of which they buy a yard or two of cloth.

855 In the great majority of families there is a cruel difference in the treatment of boys and girls. The boys are uncared for, dirty, unoiled, not too well fed; while the girls are kept clean and oiled, well fed, and as far as possible clothed at an early age. The reason is not far to seek. Girls are a source of wealth, and a dirty, ill-cared-for girl will command few head of cattle when the time comes to think of her marriage. Boys, on the other hand, have value only as representatives of the family when the father has passed to the spirit world, and that value is not dependent on external circumstances. A change is being effected,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

however, by the fact that, in the neighbourhood of Europeans, boys can earn money, and so help the family exchequer. 855

Puberty is reached at about fifteen, and boys pass that stage without ceremony. Girls are segregated, usually in groups. They lie on leaves spread on the floor, and must not be seen by boys, unless they are the daughters of chiefs, who are permitted to see boys at night. The initiate receives instruction, usually from her mother, though there are plenty of willing advisers besides, in household matters. When this is over, the wife of the *mfusya* (the man who was go-between at her parents' marriage) comes, with others, to inquire about the girl's character, to which a favourable answer is given by the mother: she cooks for strangers, has never known a man, and is of good temper. Then she is examined, and if she is found to be impure (as she is; there is practically no exception), she is put up into the rafters, where she is half-choked in the fumes of a smoky fire specially kindled. Here she remains until permitted to come down, a severe beating following upon any attempt to escape. (The cleansing power of smoke is to be noted also in connection with twins.) The children of Christian parents are examined in the same way. Happily the situation is improving, though very slowly. After being thoroughly smoked, the girl is washed and oiled, and the *banyago* (older women) come to instruct her in all her duties to husband and children when she has them. 881

Immediately after the initiation rites the betrothal 584

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

584 ceremonies begin; indeed, the one passes into the other. Girls are sometimes betrothed before birth, but this is usually done only when a wife has died, and the father, being obliged to supply another, offers the widower the next child to be born if it is a girl. He sends a boy to the man as a guarantee of good faith, but the boy remains only a week or so, and then returns to his home.

883 It may be accepted as certain that no boy comes through the dangers of adolescence unharmed. Fathers are said to warn their growing sons about these dangers, and sometimes they threaten to refuse to find wives for them if the warning goes unheeded; but nothing more is done, and the threat is never carried out.

524/526 Children's games are much too numerous for anything but a mere reference. For quiet moments, puzzles; or guessing what is in the hand of another; or what object, out of sight, is being touched. A favourite river- or lake-side sport is diving and staying under water while some one counts. Walking on the hands or on stilts is very popular.

526 *Yangilo* is a ball game, with sides, the ball being thrown from one to another on the same side, while the other side endeavours to get and keep it a given number of throws, without letting it fall to the ground or into the hands of the opponents. *Inguba* is a game not unlike our hockey, a ball being struck about, and kept as far as possible within one's own side. *Ngulya* is played with sides sitting at a distance from a small object set up in the middle, while any round thing is thrown at it from side to side, the winning side

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

being the one that hits the object a given number of 526
times in succession.

Ingaramu, the lion, is a piece of banana cord at- 524
tached to a string and whirled round the head, when it makes a noise remotely resembling the growling of a lion. *Ifula*, rain, is our bull-roarer; old people still believe that it stops the rain; but even they admit that no well-disposed spirit takes any notice of child's play. *Bandu* is a kind of top, spun by twirling it between the palms and letting it go. Whip-tops are [177]
in use, but are of European origin. A kind of mimic ammunition is supplied by the seeds of the *unsyunguti* tree, which are thrown at the enemy, and all who are hit are "killed," and carried off the field.

Konde children are perfectly happy. Those who 857
go to school hail the dismissal hour with the same shouts of joy as little people at home. The boys will climb a tree perhaps, with the more glee if the teacher's prohibition has added a whiff of danger to the exploit. Or they will chase an unfortunate goat around; though the goat, having been handled from earliest kidhood very much as we handle pet dogs, probably enjoys the sport as much as the boys do. A couple of boys may get astride a young bullock, and go careering along the road; or more likely the whole troop will make a rush for the nearest water in river or lake, and with terrific noise splash about in joyous excitement. No doubt those who are utterly unclad look with envy on the scraps of clothing worn by their more fortunate fellows, but that does not silence the shout of glee which fills the air as boys and girls are let loose

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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from school. Where there is no school there is not the joy of being " let out " ; but other joys exist, for the Konde child is just as much an adept at finding outlets for his energy as European children are when left to themselves.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER IV

Husband & Wife

DOES the African buy his wife? The answer must be ambiguous, because the situation is so. I put the question to two highly educated natives, and both, independently, gave an immediate and emphatic "Yes." I put it to some elderly men of no education at all in our sense of the term, and they indignantly answered "No." There are, too, educated Africans, of many tribes, who resent as an outrage the suggestion of purchase. And wives, whatever the implication may be, take pride in the number of cattle paid for them, much as a girl at home might regard with satisfaction the amount of dowry she brought to the common purse. Some years ago a bride went to her husband, with the full consent of her father, no cattle, or any other goods, having been given for her, but the experiment was disastrous. The other married women regarded her with contempt, as a person of no consideration. A most unhappy life followed, and in a very short time the home was broken up. Such an attitude, however, is obviously not permanent. The Christians of the Tonga tribe gave up, some time ago, the whole custom, with, I understand, no evil results.

No Konde youth can get a wife if he, or his family

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

583 on his behalf, cannot find the requisite number of cattle to hand over to the relatives of the bride; but the idea of purchase is not present to the minds of any of the numerous relatives on both sides who take part in the discussion; and in point of fact nothing corresponding to our idea of purchase takes place. The wife is in no sense a slave. She belongs to her husband only in the sense in which the wife of a white man belongs to him. The cattle are, indeed, a *quid pro quo*, for the man who has got a wife has got a good thing, and it is, say the Konde, right that the parents, who had all the trouble of bringing his wife up for him, should get some return for their toil. The father, in receiving the cattle, guarantees the conduct of his daughter in all that is expected of a wife, but in nothing that is expected of a slave. She is not a chattel, as our own laws once declared a wife to be. If she goes astray, the cattle, with the increase, are returned to the husband. On the other hand, if the husband is divorced, he will not get back all the cattle when his wife leaves him. The father and brothers retain always the rights of guardianship, and may remove the wife if they think it necessary to do so, the number of cattle, if any, to be returned being decided in open discussion. But if the marriage takes place, as it often does, before the whole of the goods have been handed over, the first daughter goes to the maternal grandfather or his heirs, and if she reaches marriageable age before the full amount has been paid, the cattle for her marriage belong, not to her father, but to her maternal grandfather.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Even apart from the question of payment, a native marriage is a complicated business, involving prolonged negotiations; inquiries into the character and health of the parties, the prospects of the young man, the proposed place of residence, the quality of the gardens, and many other considerations, which are seriously gone into. 584

The first formal approach to the girl is made by a friend of the boy; but as this is bad form, it is afterwards denied. Next, a neighbour of the girl's father is visited.

"My friend here," says the *mfusya* (go-between), "needs some one to carry water for him."

"There is no one here to carry water for him," says the neighbour.

"O yes, there is," comes the reply; "the daughter of so-and-so would do very well."

The father of the girl is now visited by the whole party, and gives a non-committal consent, receiving a hoe as a token that negotiations have begun. Next day a council of the whole family discusses the proposal, and decides the number of cattle to be paid if everything else is satisfactory, with the pleasant prospect of a feast in the evening. The bridegroom and his friends then bring the first of the cattle, usually only one at this stage. The young men are oiled, painted, or adorned with leaves and flowers, and approach the bride's home at a run, leaping and shouting, and waving spears or clubs. The go-between lays on the ground a spear and a hoe, and invites the girl to come and take them. If she does so she signifies her

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

584 consent to the marriage, but it should be noted that she has the right of refusal, though it is seldom exercised. Two brides recently refused in church (they were both Christians) to marry the men who stood beside them; and a young girl a few months ago was with difficulty rescued from a hateful marriage, and is now pluckily living her own life, rather than submit to the unsavoury fate which her guardians had ordained for her. In case of refusal, however, the father may wash his hands of the whole matter, and decline to take any steps to find another husband for his disobedient daughter.

To return, the girl takes the hoe, and with the haft smites the cow which is standing there, in token that she accepts the obligations which the payment of the cattle involves. Then she lifts the spear, and hands it to her father, saying, "Slay me with this spear if I am unfaithful to my husband"; and the father, with a grim assurance that he will not fail, lays up the spear in the house, where it will be seen by the ancestral spirits.

584 About a week after the feast which follows, the bride, with one girl friend, and a "mother," but not
585 the mother who bore her, goes to the house of the go-between, who gives the mother a fowl, and the bride a piece of bark-cloth, and leads them to the husband's house. With a gift from the husband, the mother now retires, and a succession of small gifts induces the bride to take up her duties: a fowl persuades her to enter the house; some other gift, probably a few cents, induces her to kindle a fire, a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

third to cook food, and a final gift is required to make her lie down on the mat along with her girl friend, who stays with her for a few days. This ceremony of the gifts is never omitted in heathen marriages, and each successively binds the girl to her husband. 584 585

If the bride is a twin, the doctor must be present, to sprinkle medicines over house and bedding, and to give the couple a decoction supposed to prevent the occurrence of twins in the new family. 789

Except the daughters of Christian parents, all Konde girls are married before they arrive at puberty, and what has been described above applies to child wives, who stay with their husbands for about a month, and then go home. 582 177

The child wife having grown to womanhood, however, further ceremonies have to be observed. The husband arrives at her father's house with an ox for the feast, and a mock struggle for possession of the bride takes place. The women of her family barricade themselves in the house, which is attacked by the women of the other family. Payment of a shilling opens the door, and the further struggle which takes place in the house is brought to an end by the formal presentation of the ox. The husband and his friends enter, and engage in a weird dance, a mere tramping of the floor in unison, with shouting and waving of spears, no doubt a survival of what was once marriage by capture. 583

The washing and shaving of the bride follows, and her bark-cloth is burned, and a new one given her, and then comes the feast of beef and beer, the materials 585

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

585 for the latter having been previously collected from house to house, with a snatch of song at each door. After the feast the bride goes in procession to her husband's house, accompanied by a number of girl friends. The happy couple are chased along the road, beaten with sticks as they go, and advised to treat each other as becomes husband and wife. At the door of her future home a final ceremony has to be performed: the wife of the go-between pours water over the husband's hands, and the bride, kneeling at his feet, receives the water as it falls, and washes her own hands therewith.

582 There are strict rules regarding selection. A man may not take a wife from the family either of his father or of his mother, using the word "family" in the native sense, implying the whole circle of relatives from which each originally came. But there are countless bye-laws. A man has two wives from different families; the son of one wife may take a wife from the family of the other, the two families not being related; but a man may not marry the daughter of his paternal uncle, for the latter is his "father," and the girl is his "sister." The daughter of his maternal uncle, again, is his cousin, and he may not marry her, though there is nothing to hinder his father marrying her. The chief Koloso married his father's sister, to the great scandal of his people, although the "father" was really a very distant relative, according to European ideas.

684 The marriage tie is sacred and binding; how binding on the wife may be judged from the laying up of

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

the spear which is to slay her if she disregards it. The injured husband, too, has the right to inflict death upon the paramour. This is no mere tale of the past, but a grim fact of to-day. Just a very short time ago, two of my workmen asked a day's leave of absence to go and bury a relative who had suffered the extreme penalty at the hands of an outraged husband. Cases of this nature are very numerous, and are necessarily treated by British law as murder; but native law still looks upon them as a just reprisal by the husband. 684

Divorce is granted only for approved reasons. The husband, when he believes he has ground for divorce, requests his go-between to take up the case; but the latter will do so only if he is satisfied that the evidence is sufficient to secure a verdict in his client's favour. The woman's father fixes a day for the public hearing of the case, himself as judge, for there is an appeal to the chief only if either party is dissatisfied with the decision arrived at. The finding of the court is in all cases reported to the chief. 586

The commonest cause is unfaithfulness of the wife, which being proved or admitted, there is no further discussion, although the trouble is sometimes patched up by the gift of a cow to the husband. If a wife has conceived, and does not tell her husband, it is a very grave matter indeed, for she is assumed to be trying to hide from him what is not his, and an action for divorce may follow. Barrenness, if known to be of the wife, is a cause of divorce; but not seldom the wife retorts the charge upon her husband, and cases are not unknown where, by mutual agreement, both [842]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

586 parties brought the dispute to the test of intercourse with others. Again, if daughters die one after another, their death is assumed to be due to the [753] disease called *kitasya* in the mother, and she is divorced. A wife who goes out in the morning while her husband is still abed, is doing a very foolish thing, for there is at least the possibility that she is providing ground for divorce. General laziness and uselessness, inability or refusal to carry out the ordinary household duties, if persisted in, lead to divorce.

On the other hand, while ordinary unfaithfulness in the husband gives the wife no ground for an appeal for divorce, no woman will tolerate incest by her husband, but will demand instant release. Beating a wife and starving her will bring down father or brothers in wrath to demand the release of their ward; but beating alone only if merciless and persistent. The right of a husband to beat his wife within reason is not questioned. There are other grounds on which the wife may claim divorce, and also the husband, but in both cases they are such as cannot appear in print.

When a husband's demand for divorce has been granted, all the cattle given to the woman's father are returned, along with the increase which has taken place. British justice, with more fairness, deducts one-fifth or one-quarter of the number of cattle (plus increase) for each child born, the remainder going back to the husband. The children belong to the father, to whom belong also children unborn or too young to leave the mother. When the time comes,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

he takes such children away, leaving a cow as payment 586
to his late wife for bringing them up. The frantic appeals of the mother, when her child is being taken away from her, make a most distressing scene. I have been implored by mothers, kneeling at my feet, or rolling on the ground in agony, to intercede for them; but native and British law here coincide, and, apart from an appeal to the husband to forego his rights, nothing can be done. And any interference is inadvisable for the child's own sake, for there is reason to suspect that fathers deprived of what they consider their rights, take measures quietly to put the children to death. In the past the acknowledged [848]
child of adultery was openly put to death; to-day the husband may claim it if it is a girl, for a girl is "cattle"; but a boy he, in most cases, entirely ignores.

There is formally no limit to the number of wives 595
a man may have, except the limit of his ability to part with cattle. But while polygamy was always lawful, it was not always expedient: warriors were often monogamous in practice until they reached an age when but little fighting was likely to be expected of them. And there were always men who never had more than one wife, two being a very common number for others. While there is a sentiment among some women in favour of monogamy, it is a very slow growth. There are women who will not marry Christians, because the wife of a Christian, being alone, has to do all the work, whereas in the other case, many wives make light work for each.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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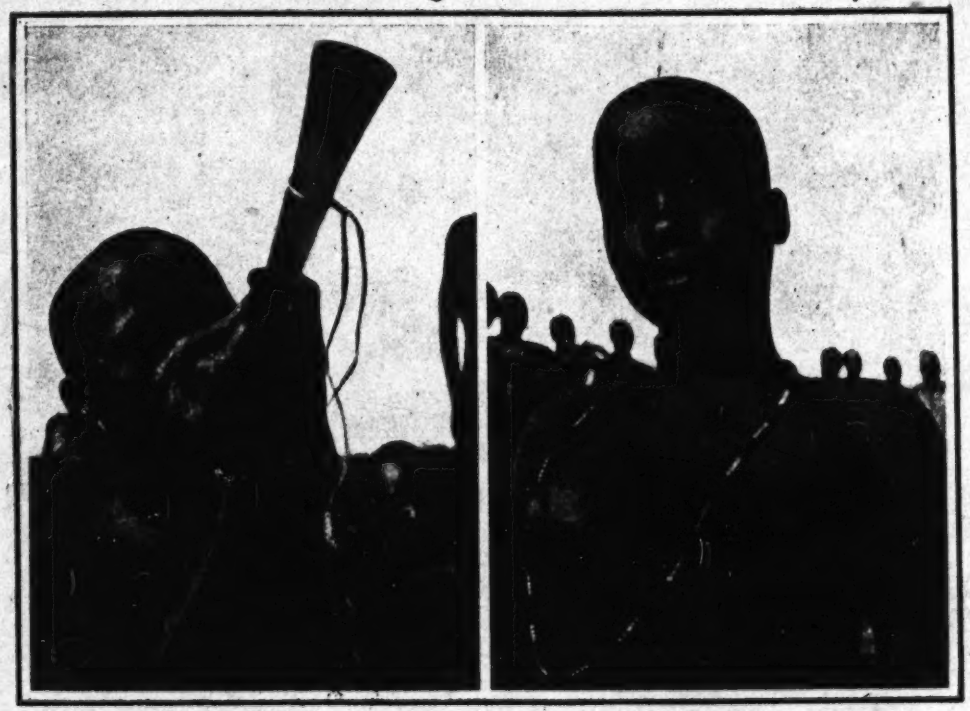

TOBACCO SMOKING.

There may be only one pipe for a dozen smokers. Each takes one long pull, and slowly exhales after he has handed the pipe to his neighbour. Many grow their own tobacco, and often take it in the form of snuff.

A YOUNG WOMAN.

Young women are not always so simply dressed, many wear quantities of beads on their neck and arms, and some are weighted down on neck, arms and ankles with coils of copper wire. The clean shaven head, however, is common to all girls who wish to be smart.

[facing p. 64]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

595 There are a few heathen women who do not wish their husbands to take other wives, but many who urge them to do so. Another wife is like a servant in the house, and the position of the principal wife (who is not necessarily the first) is improved when her husband adds to the number of her more or less obedient juniors. Formally they are her sisters; in reality they are her servants, and must always answer her demands with the polite response "*ta*." The husband also gains in importance as he acquires one wife after another. When the children are grown up, they are dispersed to various villages, and the father is always "feared" in such places, because he has sons or daughters who will see to it that he is properly honoured when he pays them a visit.

553 585 Husband and wife take new names at marriage; but they are for private use only, the old names being used by their friends. The new names, which are given in the presence of witnesses, indicate that the old life is past, and that new duties and privileges now bind the couple to each other.

593 422 The position of the wife is guarded in many ways. Her father and brothers are always ready to take up her quarrel, even to the extent of fighting her husband [586] if need be. She owns property, but she retains it only so long as she is a wife: divorce separates her from husband and children, and also from all the household goods of which she is otherwise mistress. The husband hoes the garden, but the produce belongs to the wife; he may not take anything without her consent, even to feed his friends. If one wife

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

593 refuses point blank to feed his visitors, he appeals to
422 another; but it will be obvious that continued churlishness on the part of a wife would lead to trouble. Bananas, rice, and malesi belong to the husband; bananas, because he alone attends to them; rice, because it came from the Europeans; and malesi, because from this cereal beer is made, and the husband is lord of the beer pot once the beer is brewed. Fowls belong to the wife, but though the profits of sale are hers, she usually lays them out in small household necessities, such as salt. She often gets a cow from her father, and her husband may make her a similar gift; and he must not use the milk without her consent, though if it is sold, the money is laid by to pay the tax. All household utensils are hers, except the small dish from which her husband eats; but she leaves everything behind should she be divorced, except the cow she received from her father.

587 If a wife dies while still capable of child-bearing,
765 her father must give another daughter to the widower; or, if he has none, a cow, dressed with flowers, is sent with an apology, and a promise that as soon as possible the dowry cattle will be returned. If the father hopes that another daughter may yet be born to him, an arrangement may be come to by which she will go to the widower. Widows become the "family" of the heir. They wear anklets of cow-skin, and let their hair grow, mixing it with clay. These signs of mourning they wear for about a year. Girls wear similar tokens of mourning if either parent is dead, but not boys.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

583 The dowry cattle are usually found by the father of the bridegroom; if he does not own them himself, the boy's uncles come to his aid; and in the event of divorce, they are re-distributed, with the increase, in the proportion in which each contributed. The father of the bride, who receives the cattle, as a rule divides them among his relatives, one going, in the case of the first daughter to be married, to the village headman.

593 562 It is usual to commiserate the sad lot of the African wife. I am not sure that much commiseration is called for. If the husband converts his duties of natural guardian into those of oppressor, he will answer to her father and brothers. As I have indicated, she owns property in a small measure; she is mistress in her own house; even her husband seldom interferes with her decisions, and no one else ever does. She has to work hard, it is true, working up till old age at tasks that would quickly kill a European woman. But she is not unhappy; indeed one sees more happy faces among them than unhappy; and she is blessed beyond imagination in comparison with the horrible conditions in which some women in our own country lived during the earlier part of the Industrial Revolution; and large numbers of them are happy in their husbands and children. Although many girls are married before they know what is happening to them, and many are unhappily yoked, as revealed by the great numbers who run away later with young men of their own age; yet there are countless happy families, where deep affection binds

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

husband and wife by strong ties; and where a possibility of parting faces them, as in the case of men wishing to join the Christian Church, and so having to put away all wives except the first, it brings with it in very many cases a pain, keen and poignant, such as one might imagine would be felt by Europeans in similar circumstances. I know not a few cases where a young husband and wife began their married life by serious quarrelling; but after a while not only became reconciled, but discovered that something had happened to them not unlike falling in love with each other. And, while there are too many instances of the opposite, it is further true that at least in the presence of strangers, husband and wife treat each other with a mutual courtesy and dignity, which would form no inappropriate model for peoples of higher development.

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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER V

The Chief & his Counsellors

643 THE Chungu of to-day is but a poor shadow of his great ancestors. European power has deprived him of many of his prerogatives, and stripped his person and his office of much that was picturesque, and might well have been preserved. But even in the heyday of their glory, the Chungus were but priest-kings, hampered in their divinity, hedged in their kingship by advisers, limitations, customs, which could not be set aside.

643 To-day Chungu is but one chief among many; but
622 in the past chiefs of all ranks in the Karonga district were subject to him; acknowledging his superiority, but yet asserting for themselves a considerable amount of independence, even to the extent of making war. First are the chiefs proper, chiefs of the snake, so called because their insignia of office is a buffalo or zebra tail, in which is a powerful medicine made from the flesh of a fabulous flying serpent, and which is believed to give its possessor great influence and authority. Next in rank, and subordinate to chiefs, are the *amafumu*, men who possess a less powerful medicine; and finally men of still less importance, who exercise a strictly local authority.

643 Chungu himself, however, was, and still is, "the man who speaks with God"; and as such he is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

hedged with a real divinity, which the limitations to which he has to submit, and the independence of the once-subordinate chiefs, have not yet destroyed. He remains pre-eminently the man of prayer, who carries to the ancestral spirits the petitions of the community, and speaks to them with an authority which no other possesses. 643

Far excelling in power and authority even the greatest of the chiefs were, and, shorn of much of their glory are, the *amakambara*, the councillors of Chungu. These men are in many cases chiefs of high rank, but even when they are not so, their position endows them with great influence and authority. The principal duties of the councillors were to put the reigning Chungu to death when he became seriously ill, a duty which has necessarily lapsed under British rule; to select, with the help of divination, his successor; to instruct him in his duties, to advise him in all matters which demand decision; and to depose him if he is unsatisfactory. 643 645

The health of the priest-king and the welfare of the whole community were inseparably bound up together. A Chungu in health and vigour meant a land yielding its fruits, rain coming in its season, evil averted. But a weak and ailing Chungu meant disasters of many kinds. Smaller illnesses Chungu, very excusably, concealed from his councillors, hoping that his ancestors would hear the prayers which he offered secretly by night. But when serious illness overtook him, the councillors were called to a full meeting by those who were about the person of the 643 645 771

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 chief. For Chungu must not die a natural death;
645 the land would be turned into water should such a
771 calamity be allowed to happen. Having decided that the illness is really grave, the councillors, one by one, give their voice in the formula, "*Siku na mwaka*," literally, day and year; but actually meaning, "Does God die?" In solemn procession these terrible persons enter the house, and, having turned out the chief's wives, lay him down on the floor. Two keep him in that posture, while a third stops his breath by holding his mouth and nostrils, a fourth meanwhile gently slapping him all over the body until the life has gone out of him.

643 No announcement of the death was made. One of
645 the councillors lived in the royal dwelling, so that if
766 any came to consult Chungu a response might be given, and as he was rarely seen by common men, it was easy to keep up the deception. The councillors with their own hands digged the grave, and on their shoulders, at midnight, carried the body, anointed with lion fat, and enswathed in cloth, to the place of
[567] burial. Six or eight slaves, who did not return, went
[782] with them. Four went down into the grave to receive the body of their dead master, two at the head and two at the feet, and, in sitting position, held him in their arms. The remaining slaves being placed on the top, the soil was filled in on living and dead.

After the lapse of about a month, a big iron drum, now lost, was beaten, and it conveyed only one message to the people. "*Kutebite ku Mphande*," Mphande (the royal residence) has done its work;

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Chungu is dead. Then the chiefs and their men, fully armed, gathered to the mourning. Weeping there was none, for Chungu must not be wept for; and women were not present, for the mourning for Chungu is war; quarrels may break out among the men, and there may be many deaths before the mourning is over. The chiefs bring oxen for the feast, and gifts of ivory to be laid up in the house where Chungu goes to pray when he prays alone.

The councillors now address themselves to the task of selecting a successor. There are no candidates; for not only must Chungu himself be helped out of the world, but all his sons, born after his accession, are put to death at birth. Daughters are allowed to live, and sons born before their father attained to the chief dignity, are not under the ban. Here again British rule steps in, but British rule has not yet been able to sweep all fear of the past out of the minds of the people. From among the *Bakerenge*, a circle of families within which the new Chungu must be found, name after name is presented to the spirits by the diviner, and when the divining rod indicates that the right name has been presented, the formula is uttered, "*Abapasi bitike*," the underworld has spoken.

At a great feast, at which all men of royal blood must be present, Mulwa, one of the councillors, by hereditary right offers prayer to the spirits, as if the selection had not already been made:

> "Ye chiefs, we pray you to show us our lord, who shall be our leader in all things. Let him be the man of your appointing, not of our desire; to

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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whom all the land shall look; who shall go to the holy place to pray for us, who shall guard the sacred objects of lordship. Let him be our food and our shield; let his name be safety for all. I pray to you, chiefs of the past, ye who kill or save alive."

Mulwa, carrying in his hand the "rod of lordship," stands out and looks around on the assembled chiefs. Suddenly he throws the rod at the man selected. Immediately he is seized, with a shout of triumph, "He is our food and our shield." The wailing of his female relatives, who weep as for a dead man, is drowned in the shouting and drumming with which the new Chungu is brought to the sacred house, where he is anointed with lion fat, and seated on the lion skins with which the house is carpeted. In this house are kept all the objects of which he is guardian, the tails of eland, zebra, buffalo, elephant, containing the medicine made from the body of the great snake *inyifwira;* skins and heads of lions; ivory, cloth, and the rod of lordship.

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After about three months of strict seclusion, during which his health is carefully noted, lest, being a weakling, he should be a menace to the land, the new ruler is brought to the dwelling which in the meantime has been built for him, and his reign is fairly begun.

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The person of Chungu was regarded with extraordinary reverence. He was not approached by the common people, who were not allowed even to see the man who speaks with God. An immense

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

enclosure surrounded his dwelling of many houses, 643
where he lived with his wives and slaves, and, always 644
present, some of his councillors. The arrival of visitors was announced by the young men who kept the gates; but only visitors of very high standing were actually admitted to the presence of the chief. If Chungu left the enclosure wearing his crown of black cloth with long streamers, the people hid themselves. When he went on a journey, the older people claimed the right of seeing him, and even saluting him as he passed; the younger were rigorously kept out of the way. When he crossed a river the men who carried him must not allow his feet to touch water, which he himself must never touch with his foot, for a flood would follow which would do much damage to the country.

To maintain his dignity, the chief received taxes 643
in kind. His gardens were hoed, and his houses built, 651
by the people. If an elephant was killed its tusks, and part of the flesh, were brought to him. Buffalo was royal game, and the whole carcase was his; his, too, were skins and tails of lion, leopard, and zebra; tusks of hippopotamus, horns of rhinoceros. Once in two years each chief brought him a young cow; and a portion of all spoils of war in prisoners, cattle, and other things, was his due.

Out of his abundance Chungu gave gifts to 643
favourites or valued servants. He received and 644
entertained distinguished visitors, though not all were admitted to his presence. They arrived with horns blowing and drums beating, the leader shouting,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 "Ho, ho, ho, we go to him who kills and saves alive."
644 On arrival, such as had the honour of a personal interview, received his blessing, "May God be gracious to you"; the visitor lying on his back and clapping hands. At parting, perhaps a month later, he was pressed to stay, but the parting benediction was given: "God be with you. May lion and leopard and hyena, snake and tree and personal enemy, be still before you. May you find your family in health." Then taking water, and squirting it from his mouth, he prayed the spirits to care for the departing guest.

643 The duties and powers of Chungu, as they were in the past, and, in diminished glory and extent, still are, may be briefly stated.

1. First and foremost, Chungu is the man who speaks with God, and offers up the prayers of the community in time of war, pestilence, drought, or famine.

[787] 2. Dreams by the official dreamers were brought to him by the councillors, and measures taken to meet the approaching evil by offerings at the graves of his ancestors, and by personal intercession.

3. After consulting his ancestors, he decided questions of peace or war.

643 4. Along with his councillors he heard important
645 lawsuits, and appeals against the decisions of other chiefs.

5. He confirmed in their position subordinate chiefs when recommended by his council to do so.

6. The whole land being his, he gave possessions to

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

new-comers, and drove out undesirables; but always with the concurrence of the council. 643 645

7. He gave periodical feasts to all chiefs and their followers.

8. In general, it was the duty of Chungu to keep the land in peace; but no decision of his was valid without the approval of his council.

In the north, across the Songwe, the failure to attain unity of control had as its natural consequence the failure to attain the same imposing ceremonial as at Karonga. The chiefs each retained his independence, and what has now to be said applies equally to the independent chiefs of the north, and to those of the south who were at one time under the dominion of Chungu. 643

A convenient starting-point is the installation of the heir and successor of a chief. The installation of Reuben, which began on 18th September, and ended on 19th November, 1921, is typical of all, and the description which follows was given to me by himself. 643 644 796

On the appointed day he left his home, and accompanied by eight young men who were to be his subordinate chiefs, and official dreamers, and all the young men of his father's principal village, he went to the place which was to be the site of his own village. There good huts were built for him and the eight young chiefs, and mere shelters for the others. The first item in a long ceremonial was the tree-planting. The medicine man took two pots into which he put two *imbigita* (lion-making medicines), and having filled the pots with earth, he planted a young

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 644 796 seedling in each, *indola* in one, and *imbandapanda* in the other. Pits to receive the pots were digged by the doctor, and held in position by the two most important of the subordinate chiefs, who, with closed eyes, filled in the soil all around. The two *imbigita* become later the two lions of the young chief. Every chief has these mysterious lions, which are quite harmless except to evil-doers; if any common person creates or controls a lion, it is the duty of these two to slay it. No one may eat food at harvest time until a portion has been set aside for these lions. The two trees in time provide the shade under which the chief's court will sit, and as long as they stand his residence must not be removed from their neighbourhood.

The doctor now took a broom, and swept the dust into the faces of Reuben and his subordinates, praying that the men under them would be in number as the dust of the earth. All the old fires were extinguished, [372] and new fire was made by the young chief and his fellows; at present from two pieces of wood rubbed together, but in the past, the lower was the bone of a leopard or lion specially dried for the purpose. In the old warlike days this fire kindled the courage of the chiefs, but with the peace that has been brought in by the white men such courage is not called for. From the fire thus made, brands were given out to all householders in the district, and no ashes from old fires were allowed to remain in any house.

Next came the great medicine drinking, which was to give authority to the new chiefs. It is indeed a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

fearsome mixture: ground flesh of *inyifwira* (the flying serpent); heart and nose of hyena, which enables one to see danger ahead; heart of hawk, giving power to see danger from behind; and heart of the fish-eagle, which swoops down upon its prey. Thus furnished the young rulers can foresee the future, deal with the present, and be a terror to all evil-doers. This powerful medicine is drunk by all chiefs at their installation, and spread under the beds to make them see in dreams what is coming in the future. But never may the chief eat food that is not freshly cooked, for that would take away all virtue even from these potent drugs.

From that time until the 19th November, the young men led a happy, care-free life. Their food was daily provided; cattle were set apart for them; they did not shave all that time, and no girls were allowed to go near them. On the closing day of the ceremonial, the fathers of all the young rulers came and stood at a distance, and the younger brother of Reuben was given a spear with which he knocked on the closed door of the hut in which Reuben and his companions were waiting, and called out, "There is war outside; come out." Immediately all rushed to where the elders were standing, and after greetings, the company formed itself into a boundary commission, to fix the limits of Reuben's authority. Finally, the same day, the new chief was married to the two girls whose offspring will be his successors. They must be daughters of men of note, not cowards in battle, of no reproach in the tribe; and the girls

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 582 themselves must be free from any kind of blemish. They drink a medicine weaker than that taken by their husband, but sufficiently potent to make them respected by all the other women of the district.

The death of a chief, like that of Chungu, is a 622 great event. An immense crowd of men and women 766 gather on these occasions. At the death of Mwafongo, near Karonga, in 1913, fifty head of cattle were killed for the feast. Of these perhaps thirty were the property of the dead chief; the rest were brought by the mourners as a token of respect for the dead man; but for each animal so killed, an equivalent, an ox for an ox, a cow for a cow, was given to the donor from the dead man's herd, so that the herd left by Mwafongo was reduced by fifty at his death. Intense emotion is generated at these gatherings, frequently leading to death. And in the past it was the rule that a chief should not go to his fathers alone. If therefore fighting broke out, and men were killed, it was only right and fitting that this should be so. In 1897 there was a small rising against the Germans, in which the chief Mwakalinga and many of his people were killed. The chief having been killed, it was not surprising that there should be a heavy death-roll among his men. The death of Mwasulama in 1918 was followed, quite naturally, by the influenza which carried off so many of his people.

622 About a month after the death of the chief, the feasting is resumed, this time with immense quantities of beer which has been prepared in the interval. The new chief is now anointed with oil, and the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

shout is raised, "He is our food and our shield." 622
The successor may refuse to act as chief, in which case another is chosen by the *amafumu* (subordinate chiefs).

The duties and privileges of chiefs are similar to those of Chungu. They cannot be deprived of their position, but if a chief proves himself thoroughly unsatisfactory, his people may leave him, and come under another, who will willingly receive them. The position is not always an enviable one. A chief whose people leave him loses position among his fellow-chiefs. And he is not always sure of the respect of his people. In 1923 a decision given by a lake-shore chief so roused the wrath of some of his people that they cut down his bananas, a deadly form of insult, which in this case has not yet been avenged, because the actual perpetrators, though known to many, have not been disclosed. Under the British Government, the chief is responsible for the payment of the taxes by his people; he must see to the upkeep of the roads in his district, to the supply of carriers for the Government when asked to do so; and to the general good behaviour of his people. He gets three to four per cent of the taxes paid in his district.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

535

317

A Professional Dancer.

Note the wristlets and anklets, which make a jingling noise as he leaps about. He is stripped to the waist. His audience is in front of him. He has thrown his one-little shield into the air and will catch it as it falls.

Salt Factory at Lake Rukwa.

Large quantities of salt are manufactured every year, under Government supervision. The heavily impregnated water is evaporated, and the remaining deposits purified, and separated into grades, before being offered for sale.

Tfacing p. 307

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER VI

Law & Crime

LAW, morals, and religion are inseparably bound up together. The old idea, still hard to kill, that in the native mind morals and religion have no connection with each other, is the reverse of the truth; but African ideas of morality do not always coincide with European, and to this disparity may be traced the belief that there is no morality in African religion. The sinless man is the man who has broken no law. He is said to be *mwera*, without offence. Now as law and custom are one, and as the spirits are jealous for the retention of all customs that were in force while they were on earth, the man who is assured of a good reception in the underworld is he who has either broken no law of custom, or, having broken the law, has made the required atonement to the injured person.

Everything was settled in the long distant past by the fathers, and all one has to do is to conform. For the long domination of ancient custom in law, morals, and religion, meant that life had attained to a condition of stable equilibrium, before the coming of the white man set all in confusion again for many of the people. The ancient equilibrium was disturbed by

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

671 law-breaking, and the balance was restored when the law was vindicated. The idea that stable equilibrium means stagnation is alien to the Konde mind. To disturb the balance in order to advance to new conditions is a European, not a Bantu idea, and wherever the European stimulus has been removed, the wheels of custom drag heavily again.

692 A native court is not, to a white man, an imposing
695 spectacle; though no doubt it is fearsome enough to some trembling rascal, who has little reason to hope that his misdeeds will escape their due reward. The court meets under the village tree, or, if the weather is bad, on the verandah of the chief or judge. There the chief sits with his headmen if the case is an important one, and there are usually a few old men present also, in whose memories are stored up records of previous cases which may have some bearing on the one in hand. The persons concerned are among the audience, which sits facing the court; and when called upon, they rise in turn, and conduct the case from where they stand. The native is a keen disputer. I have known a clever man fight his case with amazing skill and perseverance; even after it was clear that the evidence against him was complete, he would go on adducing fact after fact with a dialectical skill that would not disgrace a European lawyer at cross-examination. If the judge is a man with a
[522] sense of humour, he often announces his decision by relating some well-known story, the point of which is taken by all, as, with expressions of approval or otherwise, they rise and go. Execution of sentence

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

692 does not delay, but is carried out immediately. The
695 loser may, however, appeal to another judge for a rehearing of the case. Compensation in some form, usually cattle, or hoes, or, in a few cases, a daughter, is the sentence.

674 *Theft.*—The extraordinary boldness and skill of the Nyakyusa thieves are widely known. Outside their own country their reputation is perhaps greater than they deserve, great though that is. At one place guards are doubled when it is known that Nyakyusa carriers have arrived. No European house has escaped their attentions, to the greater or smaller loss of the owner. They break through brick walls, enter by door or window, conduct their operations by day or night, with equal indifference and success; and the speed with which recognizable goods are disposed of, adds to the mystery of their methods.

A white man was recently robbed while reading in bed with dogs beside him, the thieves quietly lifting and carrying off a heavy trunk, which they believed to contain a large amount of cash, before the owner knew that they were in the room. Another had the whole of his kit taken while he himself was in the next room; a medical man had his hand-bag taken from his bedroom at about five in the afternoon; in yet another case the sum of two hundred shillings was quietly carried off from a table while three Europeans were sitting in the next room at breakfast. Sheets have been taken off beds, and the owners knew nothing of their loss until bed-time revealed the fact. Rifles and accoutrements have been removed from

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

beside sleeping native soldiers, and blankets taken 674
from under sleeping men. A few months ago all the contents of a native house were taken off at midday; and a workman of mine, returning to his home at five in the evening, found that everything had been taken in his absence, though his house is in a village of considerable size. Considerations of meanness never hinder a thief when an opportunity presents itself. One Saturday, some time ago, an old widow, in preparation for the Sunday service in the Mission Church, washed her one garment, and spread it out on a bush to dry. Having nothing else to wear, she lay down behind another bush; and presently along came a man who snatched off the garment and ran, pursued by the shrill objurgations of the disconsolate widow, the only punishment he ever received.

The thieving community forms a kind of federation, and gangs are made up from many different districts. There is a family some distance from here which boasts that they were thieves before the white man came and taught them! The thieves are known in the villages to which they belong, but they are never betrayed, either because of the fear which they undoubtedly inspire; or, in some cases, because the chiefs get a share of the proceeds of the industry. The number of thieves, and the amount of thieving, has greatly increased since the British occupation of Tanganyika Territory, to the disgust of honest men, who openly express their admiration for other aspects of British rule, but are very frank in their criticism of what they call our softness in dealing with evil-doers.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

674 The complaint is not seldom made that in this respect they were better off under the Germans, for the Germans had a vigorous way with rascals, while now criminals are cared for in comfortable prisons, while honest men suffer loss for which they get no compensation. Professional thieves openly jeer at the sentences imposed: good feeding, houses, fires, blankets, and back to your "work" in fatter and fitter condition than when you left it!

So openly, so far as their own immediate neighbourhoods are concerned, are thieving operations [787] carried on, that both the doctor and the diviner (the two offices are often combined in one person) are consulted; the former to find out whether the proposed plans will be successful, the latter to supply the necessary medicines. Watchers being stationed [789] to give the alarm, medicine is thrown on the roof of the house to be robbed, to make sure that the inmates shall sleep soundly; and on the door, to make it open of itself, as many seriously believe. On entering, the first man in begins by handing out all weapons, so rendering the owner defenceless should he awaken; then a brand from the fire, which is always burning in every house, is waved about to fill the place with smoke; and a third medicine is placed under the heads of the sleeping people of the house. If the thieves dig in, as they often do, the work is performed with remarkable silence. When the hole is big enough, a large banana leaf is thrust in and moved about, to test if the inmates are really sleeping. Then one man goes in feet first, for a spear-wound in the foot from a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

watchful householder is less serious than the thrust through the chest which ended the life of an incautious robber a year ago. 674

When everything has been handed out to confederates, the doors are opened, and the cattle taken out; for the latter sleep in the same house as their owners; a custom which is attributed to the conviction that in no other way is there any chance at all of defending their property. If the owner has been killed in the house, the cattle, I am assured, will refuse to move; but they will pass over the dead body if placed in the doorway, and give no further trouble. Murder is a not infrequent accompaniment of cattle stealing. A woman was killed with a blow of an axe, not five miles from my house, because she awoke and cried out when thieves were making off with their booty. There is a story, which has been only partially confirmed by the police, that in 1923 six persons were killed by the owners of cattle with which they were making off. The cattle lowed while being removed, the owners were roused, and overtook the thieves, who were killed in the fight which ensued.

Old stories say that thieves possess medicine which make it impossible for them to be recognized should the victim waken up while they are still in the house. They ask him if he knows who they are; and as death may be the penalty of an affirmative answer, it is easy to believe that it is rarely given. So confident are the thieves of the power of the drug, that they sometimes coolly arouse their victims, and compel 674 789

3: Macke e M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

674 789 them to [illegible] for them. One brave man, thus occupied, suddenly thrust a blazing brand into the face of one of his spoilers, whereupon he and his confederates bolted.

685 The native law of reprisal is the same as the old American law of horse stealing—death on the spot if caught. The chief did not interfere in such cases. On the contrary, he was indignant if criminals of this kind were brought to him. He refused to look at them, and reminded the captors that it was their duty to kill them where they were caught: let them be taken off and dealt with according to the law without further parley. Hanging on a tree was the commonest mode of disposing of captured thieves.

But the Konde loves his cattle, and not all the fear of the thieves and their medicines will hinder some individuals from doing all in their power to recover their property. An old man came some time ago to ask the loan of forty shillings. He explained that he had been robbed, and that his plan was to go through the country offering to buy a cow, in the hope that the thieves, not recognizing him, would offer him his own animal. It is pleasing to relate that the old man's plan was completely successful. *Per contra*, thieves sometimes bring intelligence, of a kind, to bear upon their profession, and cases are known where they have actually charged the real owner with having stolen their cattle, and had them awarded to them.

674 In strong contrast to the Nyakyusa of the north, the people of Karonga, though they steal from each other, do not steal from Europeans. During five years

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

residence there, I never locked my doors, and the only 674
theft of which I had to complain was the pendulum of a clock taken from an open building!

Murder.—Murder is, from the native point of view, 682
a much less serious crime than cattle stealing. But it 673
should be remembered that British law calls crimes murder which are not so called by the Konde. A man who kills his wife's paramour has not committed murder: he has exacted a just revenge, and no more. In a case of real murder, the murderer or his friends usually pay a fine, or rather a compensation, of up to ten head of cattle; and the loss to the family of the murdered man is further made good by the other family handing over a daughter. This girl must never be spoken of as a substitute, for that would cause her children, when she has them, to die. It is needless to add that under British law compensation of any kind to the family of the murdered person does not acquit the murderer. What follows, therefore, is purely native law, which, if administered at all, is administered only when there is reason to believe that the police will never come to hear of it.

When a murder was committed, the chief directed 627
the friends of the murderer to bring him for trial, but 783
if they chose to put him to death themselves, the case was ended. Should it be impossible to discover the murderer, a friend of his, it hardly mattered who, was put to death, and a wide-extending vendetta might be the result. When the law is satisfied, a formal reconciliation between the two families takes place. Under the guidance of the medicine man, who is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

627 master of ceremonies on all such occasions, a sheep,
783 provided by the family of the murderer, is killed, and taken hold of by the parties, while the doctor divides the carcase into two parts, each side taking its share. Medicine is poured into a pot, and a red-hot spear is plunged into it. The carcase of the sheep, cooked with this medicine, is placed upon banana leaves, and the feast of reconciliation is partaken of, along with beer which also has been doctored. The reconciliation, however, is not complete until the girl has been handed over: until that is done, the feast has only stayed action on the part of the murdered man's relatives. If the murderer is not known, the relatives of the victim drink a medicine, without which, if they happened unwittingly to drink water in the culprit's house, they would themselves also die.

682 The murder of a pregnant woman is a very serious
673 matter, for it is really a double murder, and the chief has to be compensated for the loss of dependents. It is more heinous to murder a woman than a man, for the woman, being dead, bears no more children, and loss to the community results.

682 For accidental death there are numerous regulations.
672 If a man dies, or is killed, while in the employment of another, or on a journey with him, compensation must be paid to the relatives. There is no feast of reconciliation, for the thing was not done in malice. When a person is killed by an ox or a cow, the owner pays a cow, and kills the offending animal, lest it lead him into further trouble and expense of the same kind. If one is cutting down a tree, and some one is killed by

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

its fall; or if one sends another up a tree to get fruit, or for any other purpose, and the person falls down and is killed, a cow must be paid in compensation; if he is only injured, some smaller payment is made. If I permit a suicide to take place in my house, I must pay a cow, for I ought to have taken better care of my house. If a man kills himself with my spear I come under a similar penalty, and for the same reason. If a woman suckles another woman's child and it dies, the law of compensation holds good, and a cow must be paid. Very many regulations of this kind, which it would be a weariness to repeat, exist among the Konde people. 682 672

The spear with which a murder has been committed is cut off short at the haft, and the blade bent over with a stone, and it is then hung up in the roof of the house of a relative of the murderer.

Murder is frequently committed by means of poison and by witchcraft; and in either case it is difficult to trace the criminal. As an instance: a man is very quarrelsome in his village, an intolerable nuisance in fact. After a while he goes off to work somewhere, and now is the opportunity to get rid of him. In a few months news comes that he has been killed in a quarrel; but the quarrel was brought on by witchcraft. His fellow-villagers went to a sorcerer, and persuaded him to stir up the quarrelsome one to some disagreement in his new home, which would be sure to end in his death. No British magistrate would consider a charge of murder in such a case, except against the actual murderers, but the Konde will not 682 754

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

682 754 be convinced that the real facts are otherwise than as I have stated. The clumsy methods of murder favoured by the cleverest of European criminals take an inferior place before the successful malignity of this kind of thing.

683 754 627 *Witchcraft.*—No crime is regarded with so much abhorrence among Bantu peoples as the crime of witchcraft. It is a crime against the whole community, anti-social, destructive; and the punishment, in many cases, was death. That punishment cannot now be inflicted, but a recent Ordinance against pretended witchcraft has given much satisfaction to the people, even although the punishment is less than they think the crime demands. To them there is no pretence about it; it is a grave reality. If the poison cup proved a person guilty, he was immediately attacked with any weapon that came handy, and as a rule he was dead before he reached the end of the gauntlet; but if, as now and again happened, he got off alive, he lost no time in getting away to another district. In the not so very remote past, the guilty person was burned to death in his own house, and not always did his family escape a like fate. A special punishment was reserved for witchcraft by crocodile. This particular crime consists in bewitching a crocodile to kill an enemy. The criminal, when discovered, was put into the water in a large fish-trap, and left there until a crocodile came and made an end.

684 *Adultery.*—This offence is said to have increased greatly since the coming of the white man, who will not permit the death penalty to be inflicted. But the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Konde does not resign what he considers his natural right on that account, and will take his chance of the white man's justice, if he can first get in with his own. Dramatically enough, a case occurred while I was working at the first draft of this chapter. A man came into my office, sweating at every pore, excitement in his eyes, and his whole bearing indicating something very unusual. 684

"Well," I said, "who are you? What is your name?"

"I am Mwandobero of Mwakete," he said. "I have killed a man."

"So! And what do you expect me to do about it?"

"Tie me up, and send me to the police."

"It's not my business," I said, "to tie men up. Go to the police yourself."

"Can a man go to the police himself with a story like that?"

"Well," I said, "I will give you a letter, which you can take to the superintendent."

"Thank you, Bwana."

A few questions brought out the facts, which were what I expected them to be. His wife had that morning gone off with another man. The husband pursued the runaway couple, overtook them somewhere in the bush, made a fierce pass at the man with his spear, and then ran the five miles between the scene of the crime and my house. A few hours later I met him, in charge of an armed policeman, going to discover what had actually taken place. He grinned a friendly

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

684 greeting, and passed on, without constraint of any kind. It turned out that the man was only slightly wounded; but most husbands in such circumstances "mak' siccar."

684 If the guilty paramour escapes, he goes to another chief, who receives and protects him, unless his co-
622 sinner is the wife of a chief, in which case the man is sent back to meet whatever punishment awaits him. The woman, as I have already said, is liable to the extreme penalty also, but I know of no case in which it has been inflicted, and I think it is of very rare occurrence. An alternative punishment was to have her ears cut off. There is a woman living in the neighbourhood who, along with her paramour, suffered this penalty lately, but the chief by whose orders it was done was heavily fined by the administrative officer. Other punishments are still in use, which will not bear
[586] the light of print. A wife found guilty is divorced without further question, and the cattle returned to the husband. Divorce is often sought for very trivial reasons, but native courts will not seriously consider ill-supported claims.

685 *Arson.*—There is a general rule that accidental burning of another man's goods must be compensated for, by replacing all that is lost, whether that be a mere shilling's worth, or a house and all its contents. Arson proper, however, is a much more serious crime, and in the past involved the enslavement of the criminal and all his family. Not a few cases of arson are among the crimes that are common to-day. The church at Karonga was burned down in 1921, probably as an act of revenge against a Christian; but a common

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

explanation among the heathen is that it was the work of an ex-Christian who had died the previous day, and took the earliest opportunity, in his new state, of being revenged on those who had expelled him from the Church. In any case the act cost the Christian community at Karonga a large sum of money. Burning a house is a method frequently resorted to of "getting one's own back" from one's enemy, and detection is extremely difficult. 685

The Land Laws.—All the land belongs to the chief, who divides it among his various headmen, and they in turn give it out to their immediate followers. Newcomers are admitted and given lands by the headmen, but the grant must be confirmed by the chief, without whose consent no arrangement is final. This ownership by the chief is not mere theory, but, on the other hand, the individual has practically permanent rights in his property. He cannot be turned out at the mere caprice of anyone, and he hands on his lands to his heirs. Absence, even for many years, does not affect ownership, provided that wife or friends cultivate the land in the meantime. 423

The law of trespass was very severe in the past, and would remain so if the natives had their way. Trespass, however, does not mean merely walking over another man's ground; in that sense there is no trespass. It means annexation with the hoe; and if, in the fight which followed discovery, the trespasser was killed, a charge of murder did not lie against the owner; but if the owner was killed, the trespasser was indicted for murder. If the case was remitted to the 685 682

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

685 chief, a cow was paid in compensation, for the man
682 could not be put to death in cold blood.

A thief caught in a garden stealing growing crops
685 is stripped of his *manyeta* (body rings) if he has them: otherwise whatever he has is taken. This law is still nominally in force, but the culprit often prefers to take his trial at the hands of the administrative officer. And the owner has no choice, for if he takes possession by force of what native law considers his rights, he is likely to find himself accused of an illegal act.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER VII

Things Forbidden

784

WHEN the Konde wish to say that a certain thing is prohibited, they call it *mwiko*, a word which includes all that is more popularly known as *tabu*, prohibitions connected with religion, good manners, medicines; in short there is a code of regulations which might well be called the laws of life, were it not that they are in all cases prohibitions, and never injunctions directing one what to do. What is *mwiko* is what is forbidden, and it is forbidden because it is disgraceful, wicked, improper, inconvenient. No decent person ever breaks these laws intentionally, but the punishment for unwitting breach is the same as for the most wicked intention; it is in most cases automatic, falling indifferently upon the well- and the ill-intentioned. But while this is so, the punishment is by no means inevitable; medicines, ceremonies, payments, can avert most of them, leaving little except the curse of a father, and one or two other things, against which there is no protection.

The native has no explanation of these prohibitions, except that they were handed down from the fathers. They are all the more valid for that; buried deep in the past, and coming upon each individual with all

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

535
291

A PUBLIC DANCE.

Usually dances take place at night, and many of them are morally evil, but daylight dancing is not uncommon, and is usually free from objectionable accompaniments. What is shown is a kind of solo dance, but commonly a circle is formed into which dancers advance, one or two at a time, to an accompaniment of drums, singing and hand clapping.

[facing p. 96]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

184 the authority and mystery of the ages, he accepts them unquestioningly; nor would his faith be at all weakened if he knew that in some cases punishment had failed to follow transgression. He would conclude that protection had in some acknowledged way been found, but he had not happened to hear of it. To break a *tabu* in order to see what would happen is an act of folly so extreme that only a few men can afford to risk it.

Anything like a complete account of the endless prohibitions which hedge the life of the Konde is not attempted here. He meets them when he first opens his eyes upon the world, and parts from them only when he goes to the land of spirits, where, no doubt, another set of laws awaits him. While he lives he has to be on the watch for prohibitions referring to God and the spirits; to persons, acts, words, places, animals, and in some degree to time itself.

Thus it is *mwiko* to use the name of God unnecessarily in taking an oath; nor may the name of the chief be used with too much freedom, *tata*, father, being his more common appellation. A wife may never speak of her father-in-law by name, nor a husband of his mother-in-law. Some parts of the body are *mwiko*, and are not named. Animals, again, especially dangerous animals, are more dangerous if their names are used, for the name calls the owner to the place where it is heard. A lion or leopard known to be prowling about at night is referred to as *tata*, father; and if the animal is being hunted, one coming in later to join in the hunt must not ask, "Where is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

784 it?" even although he avoids the name. If a woman about to go for water or firewood hears anyone use the word for lion, she will not go. An elephant in the garden is referred to, very strangely, as *ikisu*, the world; a crocodile is *ikya mmisi*, the thing in the water; and a snake is referred to as "the thing from the grass." The name of a dead person is not used by relatives.

Again, it is *mwiko* to see certain persons. Chungu, in the past, must not be seen by young people, though I have been unable to learn that anything very dreadful happened to them if they did. On the other hand, children are still kept away from great doctors, whose glance has power to kill them; nor may anyone watch a doctor making up his medicines.

784 Growing crops and food being cooked must not be
783 approached by unclean persons, for the uncleanness would pass over and affect the food or the crops; as it would affect other persons if they came near the unclean. Uncleanness is transmissible, and the full ceremonial of the original uncleanness must be gone through by the one to whom it has been transmitted, lest it should desecrate the whole community with its living *tabu*.

784 Prohibited places are numerous, chief among them being graves, which are *mwiko* to all except the families to which they belong. It is forbidden to work when a dead person is being mourned for, but I cannot learn that a breach of this rule would imply anything except disrespect to the dead.

If we try to classify the prohibitions we shall find

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

784 that the classes tend to shade into each other, leaving no clear line of demarcation between one class and another; but there are some that are quite definitely religious, and with these we may begin.

It is forbidden to mock at the lame, the deaf, the blind, the dumb, or persons otherwise unfortunate. The wrath of God is aroused, and the offender will suffer the disability he laughs at in others. "Who mocks an orphan," says an old proverb; "let him beware; God is watching him." To insult one's father is a crime so great that nothing can avert the curse which follows, and follows automatically. The prohibition against the use of names, too, has in some cases certainly, in others probably, a religious sanction. It is *mwiko* for anyone but the family representative to pray to the spirits; though, in a case known to me, where a Christian prayed in an assembly of chiefs and others gathered for the purpose, and the rain asked for duly came, the older people acknowledged that the event justified the breach of custom.

764 Omission of the customary funeral rites is disgraceful, and the dead man will not fail to avenge himself upon the offender. A case came to my knowledge quite recently where a son refused to perform the usual ceremonies for his just-departed father, and the life of his own son was barely saved, so every one believed, by a timely surrender. It is an interesting fact that no opprobrium attaches to a Christian who omits these rites, nor does any visitation follow from the spirit land, while upon a heathen the punishment

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

falls automatically. If the family "priest" becomes 764
a Christian, and therefore ceases to pray to the spirits, no one will take up his religious duties until he has been publicly appointed by the family to do so.

To offer a blemished animal in sacrifice, to eat the 784
blood of a sacrificed animal, to eat animals that do not divide the hoof, are all forbidden; though the double qualification, to divide the hoof and chew the cud, is not insisted upon. This has direct religious sanction, but whether the prohibition against eating beasts of prey is so founded, I do not know. The Bandali even now will eat lion's flesh, and at Karonga long ago, though not now, the crocodile was eaten.

Night belongs to the spirits, and certain things must not be done then. If a woman sweeps out the house at night, her husband will indignantly ask her why she is driving off his ancestors! The spirits cut their hair at night, therefore living men must not. If bark-cloth is beaten out at night, the cattle will die; and if food is pounded or firewood cut up, leopards will come, and kill cattle, and perhaps people. It is *mwiko* to clap the hands at night (except openly in the dance), for the spirits do so, and imitation might be regarded by them as mockery, not flattery. A fire should not be kindled at night, nor should one lie on his back if lightning is playing around, for the lightning gets at one more easily in that position. To sit in the doorway at night is to usurp the place of the spirits when ceremonies are being performed.

Animals in which the spirits dwell, frogs, lizards,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

784 snakes, lions, crocodiles, must not be carelessly killed. Kill a frog, and you will become a leper; the spirit that lived in the frog will see to that. Not that a spirit dwells in every frog; but why take unnecessary risks! As for the lizard, what harm has it ever done to anyone? The stronger and more dangerous animals can take care of themselves; but again, not every one of these is inhabited by a spirit; one that kills people may be safely killed. The two-headed snake, *Ndumirakosa*, may be the temporary dwelling of God Himself, and must not be killed. The owl is perhaps in a different category: it is a favourite dwelling of sorcerers; and some insist on killing it for that very reason, while others say that to kill it is *mwiko*.

Hair must not be swept up, but picked up, and all foreign matter separated; else death may follow, either by witchcraft, or by the action of the spirits. It must not be left lying about, lest goats should eat it; in which case the late owner will assuredly become bald! The hair on the chest again, must not be cut, for one's children will die. All this no doubt had a religious sanction in the past; but no Konde will admit that it is any more than a custom handed down, and for that reason to be carefully observed.

763 784 The jealousy of the spirits demands that a child dying during the life of its paternal grandfather, be buried at the house of the latter, not at its own father's; that the child of a second wife be buried at the house of the principal wife; and that a man who would die well, should die at the house of his

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

first wife, for it is there only that the spirits meet him; and if he becomes ill anywhere else, he has himself removed as soon as possible to the place where it is proper for him to die, if die he must. 763 784

A man who has been falsely reported dead in a far land, must not, on his return home, enter the village without ceremony. Letters sent on ahead to assure his relatives that he is alive, are not enough; his father comes out to meet him; but he takes care not to see his son until assurance has been given that he is a true man, not a spirit; whereupon the father throws some food over his son's head, and both enter the village in peace. 784

It is *mwiko* to kill a python unless one is sure that it is dangerous. If it is found in the feeding ground, and the cows that day give a specially good milking, then it has been herding the cattle, and is not to be sought for afterwards with hostile intent. But the boys who saw it must go to the doctor to get medicine. Further, God Himself may be in it, or the spirit of a dead chief, and therefore it must be watched for assurance of its friendliness. If it enters a house a fowl is thrown to it, with which, if it makes off, all is well.

Very interesting are some of the prohibitions connected with the white man; and it is obvious that these are of recent growth, so that we actually see *tabu* in the making. It is *mwiko* to go into a white man's house, for the pictures on his walls are the spirits of his ancestors, who are specially dangerous at night, when they may launch an unseen spear at 784 177

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

784 the unlucky wight who has had the temerity to enter
177 so dangerous a place. Further, a man dying of that invisible spear-wound will almost certainly have his portion with the spirits of white men, than which there is no more undesirable fate. Did he not have enough of the white men here on earth? This fear of the white man is passing; but there are still old men and women who will not approach him, for they insist that he is God, and it is *mwiko* to see God. An old man died recently at Karonga, who had always refused to see a white man, lest the sight should smite him down. One of the teachers at the Mission at Ipyana told me that his own mother will not go near him when he has on a white garment, for that, she knows, is the sign that he is going to speak to God, and even a native is dangerous at such a time, for the power of God may break through to destruction. There is a curious belief still lingering among old people, that Europeans are forbidden to sleep in houses, but must come out at night, and sleep in pools, their native element being water; for they are water spirits in origin, a belief no doubt due to the widespread story that we came from the sea itself, rather than from some place beyond it. White people are supposed to hold it *mwiko* to weep for the dead; and indeed why should they, seeing their dead arise at once and appear on the walls?

784 Some great chiefs must not tell if they have been wounded in battle. These remarkable men have power to remove a wound from a fatal to a non-fatal spot, and so recover. When Mwakalinga, in a fight

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

with the Germans, was struck in the forehead by a 784
bullet, he immediately removed the wound to his leg, where it was harmless. His *amafumu* (subordinate chiefs), however, sternly ordered him to replace it; for he had been toying with Christianity, to the disgust of his subordinates, who, seeing a chance to get rid of him, eagerly seized it, and Mwakalinga passed to his fathers. Mwafongo at Karonga has the same power, and there may be others.

War is attended with so many religious ceremonies 784
that the *tabus* connected with it are best taken under 703
this head. Cowardice in battle is *mwiko*, and the coward gets no share of the spoils. There is a beer feast as part of the preparation for war; but drunkenness before a battle is strictly forbidden. At the approach of war, husbands and wives must not live together, and he who is guilty of illegal intercourse will be killed at the first spear throw, before he has had time to throw his own spear; while a chief who is given to such acts will be defeated, and his men slain.

Prohibitions due to fear of infection are very 784
numerous. One must not pass over the outstretched 753
legs of another, for the offender will be "caught" by any disease from which the offended may be suffering; but a slight nip in the leg of the other by the offender wards off evil consequences. It is *mwiko* to throw a spear at a hyena, for the animal may escape with a wound, and barrenness will result for the offender, unless he goes at once to get counteracting medicines. If your father comes to visit you, you

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

784 must not give him your own mat to sit on; he sits on
753 a leaf, which is thrown away when he leaves you; otherwise your wives will become thin, and will have no children. It is *mwiko* for an aunt to pat a nephew or niece on the buttocks, lest any disease she has may pass over to them. A man in an epileptic fit must not be roused; he who rouses him will himself become epileptic!

784 The saliva is sacred, and is often used in religious ceremonies; but to spit upon a man is *mwiko*, and may bring itch and scab if payment is not made. The kidneys of an animal may be eaten only if given to you by a chief, or handed on the point of a spear; death of your children is the penalty of neglect of this precaution. Disease clings to the drug that is used to cure it; what is left must be thrown away where no one passes, lest a chance passer-by touching it with his foot be smitten by the disease. For possibly similar reasons, the family of a murdered man must not have friendly relations with the family of the murderer until the necessary ceremonies have been attended to: the spear that killed their friend may kill them too: that is to say, they may be smitten with a disease which reasonable men will trace to their folly in being friendly with hostile persons. The leaves upon which a man sat while his case was being tried have mysterious powers in them; a sorcerer may make deadly medicine out of them: therefore it is *mwiko* not to throw them carefully away.

The blood of a lion killed in the hunt must not be

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

allowed to escape; it has *ifingira*, the most powerful 784
of all drugs, and is divided between the chief and the great doctors, who alone may cut up a lion's carcase. Another very powerful drug is *ilibobwe*, which, if cast into a doctor's house, destroys the virtue of all his medicines; and if carried through a garden will wither up all crops; it is therefore *mwiko* to possess it unless one is a doctor.

The code of manners includes prohibitions against 576
speaking with the mouth full in the presence of elders; the elders will curse the offender with dire results; against spitting, for sorcerers only are great enough to dare, and one may be accused of sorcery. If a great man is passing, one must sit right down on the ground to salute him; to sit on a chair or any kind of seat is grossly bad manners, and is *mwiko;* it is followed by the unspoken but unfailing curse. Nakedness, even among the unclothed Konde, is a serious offence; at the least a small apron of leaves must be worn, for sorcerers go naked at night, and a charge may lie against anyone found unclad. If a stranger, notwithstanding the prohibition against it, asks for food, it must not be refused: how do you know that he is not a friend of Kabeta, who will send lions to punish you for churlishness! A woman must [264]
not eat while the males of her family are eating; if she does, her husband will talk to her presently. When on a journey, the young men must go first to face the dangers of the road; it is *mwiko* for the elders or chiefs to be in front. If two companies meet, they must not mix; each keeps its own side of

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

576 the road, and all spears must be lowered from the "ready" position, as must axes or other weapons. It is *mwiko* to attend to one's personal comfort in a public place.

843 784 The prohibitions connected with women are very numerous, and only a selection is given. A pregnant woman may not go near food in any condition, growing, being threshed, or being cooked; nor may she go near beer that is being prepared. If she goes out of the house, she must not turn back in the doorway; the ancestors are there; she must go right out, and if she needs to go in again, she must do it from a pace or so from the door. The penalty is the death of the child she is carrying. An interesting prohibition is that against going behind anyone, and it applies specially though not exclusively to women. The incised medicine of the person behind whom she passes loses its virtue; but the evil may be averted by the person turning round to face her. A woman must not sweep rubbish out of the house; she must lift it out; to sweep it out is to scatter her husband's wealth.

595 The younger wife must not begin sowing or planting until the elder has begun; she must not sleep at night nearer the fire than the elder; she must carry loads for the elder wife, and be generally in a subordinate position. There is no reluctance on the part of the first wife to see her husband taking others; the more he has the greater is her position. A singular prohibition is that which forbids a man to take his widowed mother home to care for her; he must care

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

for her where she is, or at any rate at a distance from his own house. 595

Twins are among the greatest of misfortunes; and along with twins are counted children born feet first. This subject is dealt with separately, and it needs only to be noted that parents are segregated, must not speak even to each other except in whispers, must not drink milk, lest the cow should dry up, or give only water. The mother must not pass behind anyone without asking for permission, which is given by clapping hands; nor may she pass her own father without a ceremony in which she throws dust over his head. This goes on until another child is born, or until about five years have elapsed. 845 784

It is *mwiko* for a dog to drink the milk of a cow that has recently calved; the cow will dry up. The same result will follow if strangers go into the house while cows are being milked. It is forbidden to common people to eat new season's food until chiefs and village headmen and twins have eaten first; and even they eat only when the first fruits have been mixed with medicine by the doctor. The first fish of the season must not be taken to the village. It is eaten at the river by the boys. It belongs to the spirits. To make a sucking noise with the lips is *mwiko*, being a token of impudence; it may also lead to accusation of witchcraft. Never steal from a blacksmith; the scraps of iron you steal will produce a noise in your throat like the noise of his bellows, and presently you will die. 784

For a man to see his daughter-in-law, no matter 606

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

606 how unwittingly, is one of the gravest of misfortunes. "He will never die," say some; but this apparently startling fate means no more than he will fall into one sickness after another, and finally will die in a weak and undesirable old age. Others believe in a different kind of ill-luck. The man will be accursed, and will be unable to stand upright, but will be obliged to crawl on his buttocks all his life, scourged by an evil spirit which dwells in him. If the daughter-in-law [576] sees her husband's father, she has merely committed a breach of good manners, and suffers no evil in consequence.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER VIII

Domestic Animals: Agriculture

AMONG the Konde the cow is queen. The 231
people are reasonably musical, but no sound strikes more pleasantly upon their ears than the raucous bellowing of cow and calf as they return from the pasturelands in the early afternoon. No Irishman ever rejoiced in his pigs as the Konde do in their cattle. The young men sleep with them; the children play with them. The cow pays the tax and finds the wife; she compensates for injuries and wipes out insults. Feuds and bonds are based on and settled by cattle. They are the cause of three-quarters of the crimes, and three-quarters of the virtues of the people; they are prolific in lawsuits before the European magistrate and the native chief. Indeed, the song of the cow and the Konde might be extended to the dimensions of a small epic. The great majority of the men invest all their spare cash in cattle, convinced that they get at once greater security and higher interest than in any other investment open to them. The total number possessed by the tribe is not less than one hundred thousand head.

Every animal in a herd answers to its own name,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

231 and will follow the caller wherever he goes. They come to be milked morning and evening, and no cow moves until her name is called. The greatest insult that can be offered to a man is to sprinkle milk on the road behind him as he passes, suggesting, "You are too incompetent to provide yourself and your family with milk to drink; I can spare some to mock you with." And each man is jealous of the quality of his herd. A year or two ago, a wedding party went to [579] pay over a cow to the bride's father. It was not a high-class animal: a bystander threw a taunt, and in the fight which followed, two men were killed, and a number wounded.

422 The man is the owner of the cattle as a rule. It is rare for the wife to own any; but sometimes a father will make his daughter a present of a cow, which becomes hers absolutely, to pass, with its increase, to her son at her death or his marriage. The husband also may set a cow apart for his wife, but it returns to him in case of divorce.

231 857 During the day the cattle are herded by the village boys, each family sending one or two in turn to the work. They have a thoroughly good time, though for the smaller boys it is rather a testing time of moral and muscle, for they have a severe apprentice-234 ship to serve. Cows are milked by the owner usually twice a day. No one ever salutes a man while so engaged; if the milk stops, he will be accused of witchcraft. A visitor arriving at milking time will sit down and wait, neither he nor his host taking any notice of each other until the cow that is being milked

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

is finished; then the host will offer a greeting, but 234
no further conversation takes place until all the milking is over. Even his wife will not talk to a man milking. And women themselves do not milk as a rule. I was once called to see an old woman who had been terribly mauled by an enraged cow, which she had attempted to milk during her husband's illness. What enraged the cow I do not know, but the Konde believe that it was the sex of the milker, though men also are sometimes injured by enraged animals, usually a cow suckling her first calf.

Milk that is not drunk fresh is put into large pots, [252]
and the milk of five to ten days added day by day. It is covered over very carefully, and eaten, when thick, along with potatoes, bananas, or other food. The whey, which is poured off when the pot is full, is also [757]
drunk for its cathartic properties. The pots, of which a family with a large herd may have up to ten, are thoroughly cleansed after use with boiling water, and then laid on the fire for perfect disinfection. Sometimes the milk is further hardened by being allowed to drip from a closely woven basket for several days, when it becomes hard and slightly tough, with a flavour like that of milk cheese.

I have more than once proved the sustaining quali- 000
ties and pleasant taste of thick milk prepared in the Konde fashion. On one occasion I was separated from my carriers, and, about two in the afternoon, having tramped since six in the morning, I stumbled into a village, and dropped exhausted under a great spreading tree. The chief, observing my exhausted condi-

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

291

A Banana-Leaf Umbrella.

In April there is an average rainfall of 36 inches. Children go to school, men and women go about their duties, protected—more or less—from the downpour, by a leaf taken from the native banana stem.

[facing p. 112]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

000 tion, brought me a grass mat to lie on, and then ran to fetch a great dish of *amasula*, as the thick milk is called. Only once have I eaten more welcome food; when, having been obliged to make a long detour, I lost touch with my food boxes, and got two cobs of soft, juicy maize from a garden I was passing through. That, I think, was the most delicious meal I ever made.

231 Polling of cattle is practised, but only for special reasons; if the animal is bad-tempered, or if the horns grow into the face, or if it is desired to give the cow a youthful appearance with a view to a good sale. The polling is done by specialists, but the cow, carefully bound, is held by the owner himself. Fine-looking horns are scraped to preserve their appearance. There is no gelding of bullocks, as the animals are never used for work of any kind; though European planters and others have proved that they respond well to training.

232 A people so keen on cattle rearing have naturally developed some skill in the treatment of the various ills that afflict their stocks. Sympathetic magic plays a considerable part in the treatment. If a cow drops one bull-calf after another, the doctor will give the owner a medicine made into four great pills. Then, if his own wife did not have a daughter as her first-born, the owner engages the services of a woman who did. This daughter she takes upon her back, and, while the owner forcibly opens the mouth of the cow, she drops the pills into it. Taking another supply in her hand, she passes it over the back of the cow from

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

232 neck to tail, saying, "You will now give a cow-calf." What remains of the medicine is put into the stall, and the next calf will be a female. A cow that kills her calf in dropping it is given a medicine which will prevent the recurrence of the fatality. Medicine is also given if the milk is not satisfactory in quantity; and by rubbing in a medicine from tail to neck specialists claim to be able to tell whether a calf in the womb is male or female.

232 754 A disease which does not yield to treatment is the work either of the spirits or of a sorcerer. Divination is resorted to, and the particular spirit operating having been discovered, the appropriate offerings are made, and the disease will now yield to treatment. If it is due to witchcraft, the chief is informed, and he publicly announces that if the animal is not well by next day, he will have the poison test applied to discover the culprit. This, however, if done at all to-day, is done in secrecy, for the chief who permits the poison cup to be administered is liable to severe penalties. But so universal is the belief in witchcraft that the suppression of the poison cup is adduced as the cause of a great increase in the number of sorcerers, and consequently of the general insecurity.

696 Cattle are sometimes deliberately poisoned. A man has a case at court, and it goes against him, although he is convinced that he is in the right. He is ordered [278] to pay a cow to his antagonist; which he does, but he first poisons it with a slow-working drug, and the animal will die in a few days. The successful litigant, although he knows perfectly the cause of the death,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

696 rarely appeals, convinced, though without reason, that the magistrate will pooh-pooh his story.

231 754 In 1920 a lake-shore chief was fined a large number of cattle ; and the animals, removed to the hills where the veterinary officer lived, did not thrive. The reason is no doubt to be found in the different climate ; but the natives give two quite different ones : many of them were bewitched ; and others were given a slow-working poison by owners who resented the fine. But the fact that many natives willingly bought them when offered for sale seems to indicate not all held the two theories referred to.

231 157 When an epidemic carries off large numbers of cattle, the Konde assume a fatalistic attitude. There is nothing to be done : why worry ? In 1894 immense numbers of cattle died of rinderpest. After learning by divination that neither spirits nor sorcerers had anything to do with it, the people put it down to *Mwanjebe*, a troublesome godlet of the neighbouring Kamanga tribe, against whom there was no appeal, and no protection. They assume the same fatalistic attitude to the interference of the white man, and a supreme distrust of all kinds of injections has arisen in their minds, since the widespread injections of 1918, when many of their cattle died. The chiefs are credited with saying on that occasion, " If the white man wishes to inject, let him inject ! Why make him angry ? Let the cattle die rather." If this is true, it is a testimony to the immense personal prestige of the white man, but is hardly flattering to his veterinary skill. A warning was issued that the flesh of cattle

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

killed by rinderpest should not be eaten, but the injunction was disregarded, with fatal results, and again the fatalistic attitude in the presence of the all-powerful white man revealed itself: "If we die, that is the white man's affair. They wish to kill us." It is useless to point to the recent increase of cattle in the district. The reply always is that the deterioration in quality, which began with the coming of the white man, and has continued ever since, more than balances the increase in numbers. 231 157

In comparison with cattle, other animals are of small importance. Sheep and goats are reared in small numbers, and belong to the man, very much as cattle do. Fowls belong to any member of the family, and each owns what he sells them for. There are many breeds of dogs, formerly used for hunting, but now mostly as watchdogs, in view of the prevalence of thieving. Dogs are as a rule treated with neglect, and pick up a living as best they can from the garbage around the doors. With a few exceptions they are cowardly brutes, possibly a natural result of their vile treatment. Occasionally one will come upon a man who has well-fed, well-cared-for dogs, and is very proud of their intelligence and courage, either in keeping off thieves or in tending cattle. The story of the two dogs which were shown the limits within which their master's cattle might feed, and kept them strictly within bounds, is not, perhaps, without parallel in other lands. 231 [422]

There is a very remarkable tradition that in the old days of war, and especially during the Angoni raids,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

231 a cow about to be delivered of a calf was rushed down to running water, and the calf, when delivered, immediately submerged. Then cow and owner ran for their lives, and when the scourge had passed over, the owner, if he survived, took the calf out of the water, resuscitated it, and let it go. The explanation given to me by a medical colleague of the conditions under which such a thing is possible, render it highly probable that if ever it occurred at all, it must have been very rarely, and even less in times of war than in times of peace. What is interesting, however, is the fact that the physiological possibility of it is known to the natives. I have not met anyone who has seen it done.

241 771 *Agriculture.*—St. Paul would almost certainly have told the Konde that they were "too religious"; not because he would have seen tokens of their religiousness in the streets and villages; no mere passer-by, and no indifferent foreigner, ever sees that. One must look deep, and live long among them, before that side of their life reveals itself to him with any fulness. There is hardly an act of theirs that is not accompanied by a ceremony of some kind, if that is religion, and to them it undoubtedly is. Agriculture is a highly religious occupation on that view, but hardly more so than many others. Leaving native Christians aside, the great majority of the people consult a diviner before beginning to hoe. He may say that all is well; or he may discover that some spirit stands in the way of a good crop, and must be propitiated; or that a certain piece of ground is bewitched, and no good will come of hoeing it until the spell has been removed.

[187] 241 782

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

If a spirit is to be propitiated, beer is poured out and petition made as follows: 241 782

> "Ye fathers, I am about to sow my seed. How can it grow if ye kill what I put into the ground? If ye are gracious to me, let me see the harvest."

Finishing his oblations with the usual squirting of water from the mouth, he next day sows his seed in confidence. If there are no obstacles from the spirits he does not pray. Why should he? There is nothing to pray about.

The ceremonies are practically the same all over the Konde country, but many chiefs have special practices of their own. A very picturesque ceremony is that of the chief Mwaisumo. When the early rains have fallen, and the ground has been hoed, chief and people go to the grave of the ancestral chiefs, carrying their shields of ox-hide. The chief and his headmen, standing in rows, raise their shields above their heads, and Mwaisumo, taking water into his mouth, squirts it upwards, and prays for a good harvest. Immediately all the people break out into rejoicing, dancing, shouting, blowing bamboo whistles, and drumming. The seed may now be sown. 241 782 622

The first hoeing is *ukusebera*, gathering the heaps of dry rubbish and burning them. But even this is not done without ceremony. Every man goes to the doctor to get medicine, which is put into the biggest heap in his garden; then, when the wife of the village headman has set fire to one of the heaps, which must not be one of those in her husband's garden, all the 241 789

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

241 789 other women take fire from the lighted heap, and kindle their own, first setting the torch to the large heap which contains the medicine, the virtue of which is carried to all the other heaps as they are set alight one by one.

There is a custom, now passing away, but still followed by a few, of throwing medicine into the ground as one hoes. Many use manure for fertilisation, but the medicines I am speaking of have no manure qualities. They are *unkota*, something possessing mysterious powers, the virtues of which are known by experience, but are not open to rational explanation. One of the best-known medicines of this kind is elephant manure, dried and set on fire, and the smoke allowed to spread over the garden. Where this is used it insures a bumper crop.

Not even yet, however, is all ready, for the seed must be doctored before being sown. A medium-sized basket is taken, and plastered on the inside with the drug, which, of course, has been obtained from the local doctor, who at this season does a roaring trade. Into the basket the seed is put, mixed with more medicine, and then sown. The object in this case is not, however, to secure a good crop, but to prevent the yield being interfered with. If even a sorcerer steals from that garden, he will sicken, and probably die; or a disease will eat up his lips, and he will stand revealed to all men for what he is, a garden thief, and, it may be, a sorcerer as well.

241 476 Working parties are often formed for the hoeing, the group spending one day in each garden, and being

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

fed by the owner in each case. When a headman's 241
garden is being done, beer is provided, and the chief 476
usually kills an ox when he has a party hoeing for him. The main crops are maize, cassava, millet, sweet potatoes, peas, beans, ground nuts, but many other food-stuffs are cultivated. Every village is hidden in groves of bananas, which need regular tending. Rice is grown for the market, and in the Kinga Mountains large quantities of wheat are cultivated. Every man owns his clump of bamboos; many have a few kapok trees, some mangoes, one or two lemon trees; and some European fruits are slowly spreading to native gardens. A few cultivate kitchen vegetables, but only for sale to the white man.

In a few places I have seen intelligently conceived 312
irrigation, but never on a large scale, each man attending to his own needs in the matter.

Growing crops must be protected from numerous 241
pests. Boys are stationed by day to drive off monkeys; straying cattle eating the crops involve their owner in damages: elephants, no rare visitors in some districts, are driven off by drum and horn and wild shouting when they pay no attention to the small sticks which are placed in a corner of the garden to keep them away. Pigs are very fond of growing maize; and where they are numerous, small huts, elevated on poles, are built in the gardens, and there the young men sleep and keep an open ear for the grunting which betrays the presence of the spoilers. Then one may hear the long shout of the watchers, who add to their shouting the rattling of dried gourds strung on cords

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

241 stretched across the garden, and presently the pigs clear off, and there is silence again. Many kinds of game get part at least of their living out of human industry, and have to be laboriously guarded against.

For smaller pests additional aid must be sought. Field mice and rats, *indafu*, a small locust-like creature, grubs, wireworms, and moles, work great injury, and ordinary methods of dealing with them are vain. Take, at sunset, a brand from the fire, and walk over the garden with it, singing "*Kuki Kyaubili?*" Where is the Unseen God? and the pests will clear out.

241 The first maize cobs are taken to the chief; then
622 each head of a family presents a few cobs to his own
769 ancestors; twins also must be presented with early cobs, and it is only then that common people are safe if they begin to eat the new season's crops. When the chief makes an offering to his ancestors, it is usually laid at the *lupande*, the place where the village trees stand. The maize is eaten by mice, but it is credited to the "lion" which is the chief's guardian (Chap. V). In some districts a perhaps more primitive ceremony is observed. With a following of little children, the doctor goes to the grave of the chief's ancestors, and there roasts a few maize cobs, which he divides among the children; on their return, intimation is made that all may now eat the new crops.

251 The food stocks in the barns are protected by a medicine, but this practice is falling out of use, though many still follow it. If a man is too poor to buy the medicine, he begs a handful of the protected grain from his better-off neighbour, confident that the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

protective powers of the drug are securely transferred to his own stock. 251

A man who does not hoe is held in supreme contempt, but he does not starve. His neighbours give him food, seizing the opportunity to add much sound advice. But lazy men are held in suspicion, for it is highly probable that they will become garden thieves. 577

When there is reason to anticipate a general scarcity of food, the spirits are invited to confirm or dissipate fears. The chief orders a collection of *maleni* (millet) to be made, each village headman bringing the contribution of his people in a small basket. One headman is selected whose wife makes the beer, the behaviour of which indicates the spirit's answer to the question put. The beer is poured into a large calabash, and thence into two cups, which are placed at the *masyeto* (graves of the dead chiefs). There they are left for the night, and if in the morning the beer is found to have risen in the cups, filling them to the top, the harvest will be good; otherwise it will be bad. If the signs are good, all care is cast away, beer is made in great quantities, and drinking and feasting take the place of the previous anxiety. But when the spirits foretell a bad harvest the utmost economy is practised, and the chief is bound to see that no one makes prodigal use of his resources. 261 787

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER IX

Eating & Drinking

WHEN the white man travels he has a number of men who carry his pots and pans, his plates and spoons, and all the paraphernalia of his travelling kitchen. His two dozen or so Konde carriers are well provided for if they have a couple of pots between them, or a piece of tin, usually a flattened-out food tin, on which to roast their maize as they squat chattering round the evening fire. What the white man wants with all that he gives them to carry, they do not know, and are not always interested. I was once seated in a remote village having breakfast, and a very simple breakfast at that; but I heard one of the villagers, numbers of whom were looking on from a distance, ask my boy, "How do you know what to give him next?" What the boy replied I did not hear, but the interest in his operations was great.

The carriers take no food for themselves. It is their business to look after the white man; it is his to look after them; and I have always found that if he takes reasonable care to see that they are well fed and bestowed, they will not stint themselves in service to him. If nothing else is obtainable, they will be

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

content with maize roasted on a piece of tin, or a few potatoes roasted in the fire. I have known them, too, going perforce for a long time and quite uncomplainingly, without salt, or any kind of relish for their food. For all these drawbacks are fully compensated for when the white man kills game; then they gorge; then the astonishing capacity of the native to take in food is seen at its best, or worst. A friend of mine once, far up in the mountains, killed an eland, and, leaving his men to deal with the carcase, went to his camp. His men kindled a fire at the ndkill, a sat down to feast; when they returned to camp in the early hours of the morning, one man was missing, and his dead body was found where he fell, killed by his own immense greed, aided by a heavy rain which set in during the night. 261

But while feeding arrangements "on safari" are primitive in the extreme, the ordinary household arrangements are by no means so. The housewife operates with a great variety of pots, baskets, calabashes, and some women are celebrated cooks. A possibly mythical story of olden times tells how two chiefs went to war for the possession of a great woman, who was the wife of one of them, and was widely distinguished for wisdom and sagacity, and for her unusual culinary skill. She was secured by the attacking chief, and lived with him quite happily as his chief wife; an unusual honour, for it is a rule that captured wives never attain to that distinction. 415 252

The Konde, like most Bantu peoples, are noisy 264

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

264
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eaters. The loud smacking of many pairs of lips round the camp fire makes a quite surprising noise; to which is added, especially if there is *nyama* (flesh), a sustained conversation carried on in a loud voice, making a din which is only ended by an angry shout from the European, who has himself long ago finished his repast, and cannot sleep in the uproar of the feast.

If their table manners in this respect leave much to be desired, in others they are beyond reproach. They carefully wash their hands before, and their mouths after eating. For the hand, the right hand, which is the "eating" hand, is almost their only implement; but I have often watched my carriers make spoons of folded leaves, with which they neatly scooped up the cooked maize, or whatever else they were eating; and I have myself frequently drunk water scooped from a passing stream with a similarly folded leaf.

The one great meal a day is a mighty feast, and one's girth is considerably increased when it is over. Little children literally protrude in front, and their entire nakedness makes the protrusion very obvious. But while the Konde look forward to the evening meal as the event of the day, the practice of eating twice, or even thrice, is growing; and I have never known anyone being averse from eating, and that heartily, at any hour of the twenty-four. Eating by families is unknown, would indeed be bad manners, for the men eat first, and the women only after their lords are satisfied. A few Christian families are beginning to

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

A few Christian families are beginning to [177]
eat *en famille*, but the practice is not looked upon 264
with favour. The open air meal in good weather of course gives way to the meal in the house when it rains.

The far-stretching banana groves in which the 262
villages are hidden indicate one of the favourite foods 252
of the people. There are many kinds of banana, from the tiny "Lady's Fingers" to the great plantains, half an arm long; and they are eaten in almost as many ways. Some are eaten direct from hand to mouth, peeled and corded, for even the small cords which adhere to the fruit after the skin is removed, are meticulously attended to; other kinds are cut up and cooked; some are ground into flour, of which porridge is made, or it is added to the flesh pot to give flavour to the soup.

Maize is cooked in many ways: whole, mashed, or ground; boiled or roasted; mixed with other foods, or alone. The porridge made from maize flour is a greyish sticky-looking mess, wholly repulsive to a white man, and is often eaten without relish of any kind. Cassava, with the poison washed out by three days' soaking in running water, then dried and ground into flour; beans, with the skins removed by parboiling, and pressed between finger and thumb; peas cooked without preparation; potatoes, often eaten with milk; these are main food-stuffs, but very many small herbs are used, especially for seasoning, and some very pleasant dishes are often served up to feed sick and well alike.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

251 Fish provide many a dainty dish. The bulk of the
262 fish caught is half roasted over a slow fire for preservation; and in that condition it will keep for many weeks. A great dainty is the *ususu* fish, which is roasted and ground to flour, and hung up in grass bags in the roof, to be used as required.

262 But the Konde is happiest of all when he has flesh
252 to eat; perhaps because it is a rather uncommon event. His cattle are not primarily for killing; primarily they are wealth stored up and increasing year by year. But he kills when there is a birth or a marriage or a death; for all these are occasions when one must not think of expense; and a number of Christians now hold birthday feasts for their children in addition to the occasions I have named. Generally the meat is preferred "high"; and it is then cooked with banana flour, salt, animal fat, pepper, the latter an Arab introduction. A kind of pie is sometimes made, by cutting the meat into slices, and putting it in layers in a pot, the layers being separated by *mbwiga* leaves, a plant which has a curry-like flavour; and the bottom of the pot is covered with maize to prevent the pie being burned.

251 The Nyakyusa practise a method of preserving flesh which I have not heard of as in use elsewhere, though it may really be quite common. Besides the universal method of roasting the freshly killed meat over a slow fire, there is the running water method. The fresh meat is placed in a sandy patch of running water, and left for about three months; but it may be visited

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

daily for supplies, provided it is again quickly covered 251
up with both sand and flowing water. All this must be done at night lest the hiding-place be revealed to others, and the flesh stolen.

Bread is made of twice-ground maize with salt 252
added. It is kneaded into loaves of about three inches thick, and placed in layers, interleaved with banana leaf, in a pot with maize in the bottom. This bread is often taken on a journey, and will keep for five or six days. Eggs are "scrambled," with milk [177]
and salt, in a broken pot, but this is a European introduction. No young girl will eat hard-boiled eggs; [842]
they produce a snake in the abdomen, which, of course, in turn produces barrenness.

Very unpleasant to our minds are some of the 262
delicious foods the Konde rejoice in: flying ants eaten alive as they are picked up where they fall from their brief honeymoon in the air; crawling white ants, a horrible mass of moving life; the Kungu fly, found on Lake Nyasa, whence it comes ashore in dense clouds, settles on bush and tree, and is shaken off into small baskets, to be taken home and baked into cakes while it is still fresh. In Bundali it is said that some still eat lion's flesh, and once upon a time the crocodile was eaten at Karonga. Sorcerers are accused of [754
devouring human flesh. A new grave is sprinkled 266]
with a powerful medicine which makes the corpse come up without disturbing the soil, and the ghoulish feast is enjoyed without leaving a trace of the deed behind.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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SIFTING.

A turning motion of the basket brings the chaff and dust to the top, and a skilful throw rids it out, leaving the flour, which is now ready for cooking.

GRINDING.

An evening approaches, the rasping sound of stone on stone with the grist between, may be heard all over the village, as the housewives begin to prepare the evening meal. The flour falls into the basket in front, and more grain is taken from the one at the side.

[facing p. 128]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

262 To-day there are many, even among the heathen, who say grace before food; only the older men now follow the ancient custom of laying aside a small portion of every meal for the spirits. But there are many superstitions nevertheless among young and old. There is a family at Itete which eats neither flesh nor fish, nor ground nuts, any of which cause violent vomiting. Others will eat fish but not flesh, and *vice*
262 *versa*. Eland and bushbuck bring on leprosy in some
753 families; goat brings ringworm; rhinoceros gives people a white skin; and hippo is very dangerous in the neighbourhood of lepers; for lepers are buried in ant-hills, but they soon remove and betake themselves to the water, and enter the body of a hippo; so, if you eat hippo, you may be eating leper! Nyakyusa women will not eat a fowl, for fowls in the night cry out the names of ancestors! But a cock which gives a faint cry in the early morning is quite safe. There are many who have abandoned all these beliefs, but the vast majority of the people still cling to them.

273 *Drinking.*—Beer is drink for men and gods; or if not for gods, it is a drink urgently demanded by the spirits. With few exceptions, it is offered at all religious ceremonies, but there is no special way of making the beer for the offering; it differs from ordinary beer only in that the cereal (*malesi*) from which it is made is contributed by all the people, while that used at an ordinary feast is made from *malesi* provided by the entertainer. Even at these feasts, however, a little is spilled on the ground

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

by each drinker as an offering to his individual ancestors. 273

Great crops of millet (*malesi*) are grown every year for beer; but if the other food-stuffs threaten to give out before the new crops are ready, the chief issues a prohibition against beer making, and the crop is used for ordinary food. Licences are now required for beer making and selling; but this regulation can only be enforced in the neighbourhood of a magistrate, and drinking goes on without restriction throughout the district.

To make the full-bodied strong beer, *malesi* is put into a closely woven basket and placed in water for a night. In the morning, swollen to twice its previous size, it is put into a number of smaller baskets, and covered with banana leaf. In a few days it sprouts, and is taken out and spread in the sun, and when dry it is pounded into flour. Over the flour, again divided into a number of baskets, is poured boiling water, and the *unkese*, as it is now called, is left to cool; it then stands for four or five days, when the final mixing with boiling water takes place. An expert comes to taste it when cool, and if he pronounces it good, the guests are called to the feast. The women, in long procession, carry the beer to the place of feasting, and sometimes drink along with the men, more often by themselves.

As the night goes on prodigious quantities are consumed, and the noise becomes terrific. Drumming, shouting, singing, tramping of feet are the accompaniments; and at Karonga I have had to get out of

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

273 bed at midnight to break up drunken revels, and drive to bed men who, though sternly refused permission to finish the beer, vowed themselves, in drunken sentimentality, my eternal friends. But not always do beer feasts end so happily. As in other lands, some men become jocular in drink, others quarrelsome, and [579] many a Konde beer feast has ended in a spear fight. Beer is an accompaniment of feasts given at births, marriages, and deaths; but occasion of that sort need not be waited for. The chief may give a feast at any time; or a man who has been long away from home celebrates his return; or the hoeing season provides an excuse; but with or without occasion, an immense amount of beer is drunk every year.

Light beer is made in many ways. A favourite is 272 made from sweet potatoes laid out to dry, pounded into flour, and mixed with flour of maize, cassava, or other material, cooked, and drunk when cool. Groundnuts shelled and ground, put into small baskets with water, and allowed to drip dry, then mixed with *malesi* flour, and cooked, is a common drink; as is also a light drink made from the juice of sugar-cane similarly mixed and cooked. All these are non-intoxicating, and are taken along with food, or at any other time as a refreshing drink.

733 Many of the more progressive chiefs are alive to the injury done by heavy drinking, and do all in their power to stop it; and native Christians who take any part in a beer feast are excluded from the sacraments. By the action of the Government in exercising control over beer, of some of the better chiefs, and of the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Christian Church, a more enlightened public opinion is gradually being formed on the subject; but it is necessarily a slow growth. There are a few chiefs who are opposed to drinking; there are others who are almost continually in a state of intoxication, and their example does much to perpetuate a ruinous evil. 733

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER X

Hunting & Fishing

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782

STRICT game laws have made hunting a thing of the past; or at best it is done secretly, when it is not a wild, excited scramble after some unfortunate animal that has wandered into the gardens in search of food. Before the white man took over the country, however, hunting was an important and regular part of the year's work. The diviner fixed upon a favourable day for setting out, and the whole community met for the preliminary ceremonies, when prayer was offered to the spirits, and through them to God. All quarrels must be made up before the hunters set out, and there must be no sin or strife in the village while they are absent, else they will not all come back alive. In hunting, as in every important act of his life, the Konde must be sure of the goodwill of the spirits, for a single angry spirit may spoil a whole season's work, and render abortive every effort of the hunter, just as he may bring to nothing every other kind of activity. This permanent possibility of interference from the underworld is one of the fundamental facts of the inner life of the people, and real understanding of the native mind does not begin until this elementary fact has been grasped.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nothing was left to chance. The spirits having been placated, the natural skill of the hunters must be reinforced by medicines. Indeed it is not improbable that the native would say that the whole of his skill and success is due to medicines and ceremonies. The warrior goes out to battle armed and protected by prayers, drugs, and a good conscience; equally for the hunter good morals, good medicines, are as important as reliable weapons and a steady nerve. *Unkota wa wyango*, to ensure a good spear-throw, or a straight aim with the ancient rifle which some hunters carried, was rubbed into flesh cuts in the hands; and *burungo*, to make sure that the animal died quickly and without a long chase, was incised into the arms; but more frequently, and more effectively for this purpose, *bulembe* was attached to the spear. This latter is a deadly poison, happily, perhaps, known only to a very few, for a single scratch is said to be fatal. It is said that the Germans tried unsuccessfully to secure the secret of its manufacture. The poison is attached, in a leaf, to the blade of the spear, and the thrust into the flesh of the animal releases it, so that it enters the blood, and causes a speedy death.

224 789 [278]

Women must not touch or go near hunting weapons, which are kept in the roof of the house. The spears must not be placed near the fire, lest the game, sniffing in the breeze the smell of smoke, deduce the presence of mankind, and make off. The hunters must eat only freshly cooked food, for cold food destroys, as it does also for chiefs, the virtue of their medicines. Fatal results are sure to follow contact

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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

224 784 with their wives before setting out; and a wife who sins in her husband's absence, will cause his death on the hunting ground. The smell of clothes, like the smell of fire, would drive the game away, and therefore leaves only are worn while actually on the chase. Hunters thus fully equipped are called *abarumba*, the rank and file being mere *abafwimi* (drivers). The hunt might last for four to eight weeks, and as the men did not return to their homes until it was over, huts were built in which they slept. The boy who did the cooking was not allowed to hunt, for his close contact with the fire would be fatal to success.

224 Thus protected, the hunters went fearlessly to their work. In ordinary hunting there is no danger to speak of, though wounded animals sometimes turn furiously upon their hunters. But who can tell what sudden dangers the bush will spring upon one? I have passed within sound of the snoring of a gorged lion, and being unarmed, I could only pass on; I have been charged by enraged elephant and buffalo, and only barely escaped; and not once or twice lions have crossed the path not far from where I was. Such dangers the native hunters faced, armed only with spears or old breech-loading rifles, no doubt further strengthened by the consciousness of the numerous medicines by which they were protected. These, however, are incidental dangers: the actual hunting involved dangers knowingly and unflinchingly faced. I have myself been present when a native speared a wounded buffalo at a distance of a yard or two, dancing, waving his spear, and singing a song of

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

triumph before finally thrusting his weapon into the 224
massive body, and then pushing it over with his hands. It should be added, however, that more than one bullet from my rifle had previously brought the great brute very near his death. A keen man will go close up, as indeed he must, to an elephant, before spearing it.

Each tribe had its own hunting ground, and poaching was very keenly resented; sometimes, in the long past, even leading to tribal war. The feeding ground of the village cattle was practical sanctuary for game, as hunting among cattle was not allowed, lest it should lead to quarrels with the owners.

The commonest method of hunting was (and is) to dig pits into which the game was driven, and killed on the spears planted in the bottom. A great circle was formed, and the animals slowly driven into the area in which the pits awaited them, and those which did not fall into them were easily speared as they attempted to break through the ring of hunters. Traps baited with salt or other bait, are still in use. The trap is made of strong saplings, the uprights held in place by cross-beams, and bound together with bark rope. Over the entrance is suspended a heavy beam, the ropes supporting it being so arranged that the entrance of the animal releases the beam, and either closes the door or disables the animal. Open traps are set on game paths without bait of any kind. The animal pushes through the cords supporting a beam; the beam drops, and the victim may lie in agony for days, before the hunters return to see what has happened.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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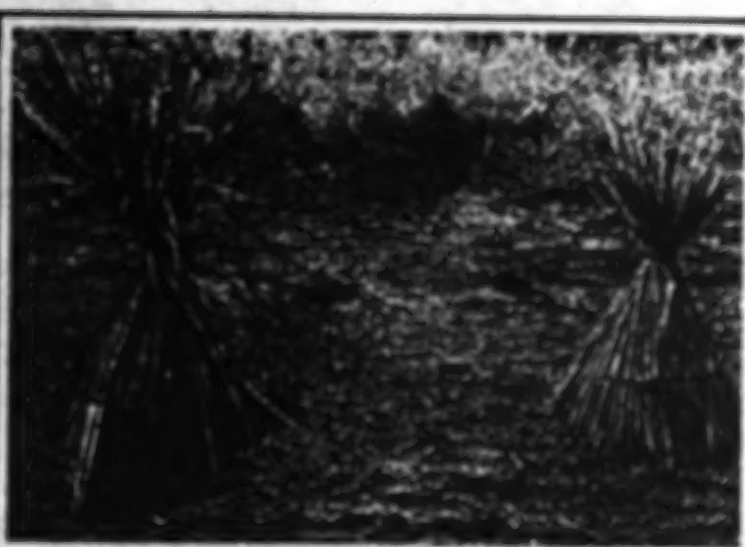

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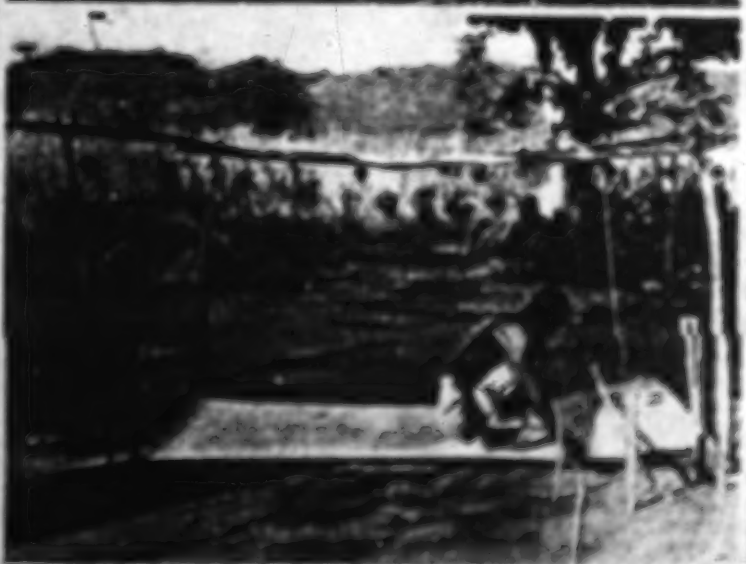

GAME TRAPS FOR SMALL ANIMALS.

The cords holding the door are so arranged, that the animal, on entering, closes itself in, and escape is impossible. Dangerous animals are trapped in strong timber enclosures, the bait a sheep, or a goat, or sometimes an ox.

CANOE-MAKING.

Canoe-making practised by the Kondé, but now almost obsolete. The native produces in canoes and dugouts. Dyeing in black and red is also practised.

[FACING p. 136]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

224 For very small game, an even more cruel form of trap is used, which may often be seen in the bush. A stout branch is bent down, and held in place by cords which are released at a touch, and the unfortunate animal is suspended by the neck, to struggle until death comes to its relief, or the hunter who set the trap returns to secure the reward of his skill. For elephant and other large game, a heavily weighted spear was so fixed, high up in a great tree, that the game passing under it released the fastenings, and the spear dropped between its shoulders. Great care was taken to set the spear exactly perpendicular; a little water was poured upon it, and the shaft moved until the drip from the point was in exact line. The hunters were watching at a safe distance, and immediately set out in pursuit of a wounded animal; occasionally, too, a man was stationed in the tree itself, to drop the spear with his hands as his quarry passed. Women must not go near such traps.

Hippo were often killed in pits, digged near the lake shore or river banks, into which they fell as they wandered about in search of food. A more exciting game was to hunt them in canoes with spears and harpoon. The harpoon was so made that when plunged straight down on the passing hippo, the shaft was released, and the toothed blade, with a rope attached, was firmly imbedded in the flesh. Then followed a scene which closely resembled whale hunting stories. The hippo rushes off, then turns on its hunters, only to be driven off with spears as it comes close up to the canoe, charge and repulse being

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

repeated until finally the great brute succumbs, 24
perhaps far out on the lake, whence it is towed ashore, to be received with the triumphant rejoicings of the waiting crowd, which has been watching the fight from the beginning. But if the hippo comes up right under the canoe, the chase is over, and the death wail takes the place of the expected rejoicings.

The bolder hunters lie in wait for the game, by water pools or game paths; or follow the spoor over miles of bush. The leader is usually the most skilful man in the company. He knows the ways of all the animals, and the dangers that are likely to be met with; it is his privilege, when the game has been overtaken, to throw the first spear; it is his duty to be the last to run when danger threatens; he must see to the safety of the others before he thinks of himself. Many years ago, in 1912 I think, I was following up a wounded buffalo, with two native trackers. When the brute charged, as it did three times, I urged them to get on ahead, but they refused. "No," they said, "you are wearing heavy boots; our feet are light; we will keep behind you."

A favourite method with some hunters is to lie in the water where the animals come to drink; or if it is not deep enough, they dig a pit in which they lie, covered over with leaves and branches; when the game comes to drink, it is speared by the unseen hunter.

All the flesh belonged to the hunters; but a substantial share was given to the chief, who claimed all elephant tusks as his special property. The leading

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

224 hunter received a cow, not as compensation for the tusks, but as a reward for his skill; the chief took the tusks without question; they were his *umwana* (child).

224 251 The flesh was roasted on the field, over a slow fire. Stakes were fixed in the ground, and a kind of trestle made, perhaps about two feet high, under which a great fire was kindled, and the flesh, cut into long strips, placed over it. In this condition it keeps good for months, but it requires prolonged cooking when it is to be eaten. This method of preserving the flesh is used to-day, when a European makes a good kill.

224 Dogs were employed for hunting pigs and smaller animals. The dog chased the game, which, after a little, turned and chased the dog, and was led to where the hunters were waiting with spears. Dogs were used also for tracking, and are said to follow all but the largest animals. There are large dogs of European breed, which chase leopards, usually in couples, but not always do both dogs return from the chase, and sometimes neither.

224 787 782 An unsuccessful hunting season was a matter for careful inquiry; for there must have been a cause, and it was the duty of the diviner to find it. Generally it was due to the never-failing trouble in the spirit-land, and when the diviner discovered the names of the individual spirits to whose meticulous ill-temper the hunting fiasco was to be attributed, arrangements were made for their propitiation. Beer was made, and each hunter took a small piece of the flesh of the animal he was specially expert in killing; and the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

whole company repaired again to the hunting ground, 224
where they built a hut under a large tree. The leader 787
cooked native porridge, which was eaten along with 782
beer and honey, when the spirits had had their due. A small heap of the porridge was set down with a little honey poured over it, and a small piece of flesh was laid beside it. Each ancestor was named, as his portion was laid out, and prayer was offered:

> "Ye fathers, we have brought this beer and food for you. Why are you angry? Neither pig, nor bushbuck, nor any other animal falls into our traps. Give them to us, ye who give us all. In our gardens there is maize and millet and all things else. Why then do you hinder us now? Why are our traps empty? Be merciful to us. God be merciful to us, and go to the Basango" (a neighbouring tribe).

After this ceremony, the hunt is resumed with fresh courage and new hopes, and possibly a great success.

Lion and leopard hunting is not, of course, pro- 224
hibited by the game laws, and they are hunted or trapped with frequent success. A short time ago a leopard skin was brought to me, evil-smelling, and ruined by the spear-holes which marked a fierce encounter; and one of the hunters, showing me where the leopard had leaped upon him, begged for a little medicine to apply to his wounds. The idea that his adventure made him an interesting person was not in all his thoughts.

When a trap is used, it is made of very strong timber, and divided into two portions. In one the live bait is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

224 pot, usually a sheep or a goat; the lion or leopard enters at the other end, and in doing so releases a beam which closes the entrance. The bait is quite safe, if it does not die of fright, for it may be some time before the villagers come with spears to kill the caged carnivore. But more exciting methods are in use. In 1922 a leopard killed a number of children near Ipyana. Traps proving useless, the chief called for a great hunt, from which his men must not return without the body of the leopard. The brute was tracked, and encircled by a great multitude of men, armed with *isengo*, a kind of hooked axe, with which they mowed down the grass as they slowly worked towards the centre of the ring where the leopard lay. With a great spring it escaped when they came near, but was again surrounded. This time it sprang at one of the hunters, seizing him by the arm, but in an instant all the others were upon it, seized it by legs, neck, body, wherever they could get a grip, and held it tightly upon the ground while others beat it to death with their clubs.

Lions are killed in the same unflinching manner. In the same year, 1922, a lion killed many people near the lake shore. A hunt was organized, and the men, primed with much beer, followed the spoor. Infuriated by two spear-wounds, the lion turned and seized one of its pursuers, but a third spear-wound drove it off. Again it was surrounded, and the order was given not to retire. Once again a man was seized, but the lion was surrounded by his companions, and killed as the leopard was. It hardly needs to be said

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

that lives were lost in these dangerous adventures, 224
but no compensation was given to the relatives, as the risk was taken by command of the chief for the good of all. A great feast was given by the chief on the return from the hunt with the carcase of the lion or leopard. If no one was killed, the rejoicing was great; if there were casualties, the grief of a few was not allowed to damp the joy of the others, for a powerful public enemy had been disposed of, and it was an occasion for rejoicing.

Bird hunting is sport for boys, not for grown men. 223
A knobkerry skilfully thrown at a sitting bird sometimes brings it down; but bow and arrow, which are used almost exclusively for this sport, secure a heavier bag. Where bird life is plentiful, bird-lime is smeared on trees, and numbers are caught in this way. Loop traps, similar to those used for small animals, may be found anywhere in the bush, not seldom with a rotting victim still hanging in them. Drop traps, of a construction similar to that used by boys at home, are also used. A broken pot or a small basket is supported precariously by an upright; bait is placed within, and the bird, hopping on to a small platform, upsets the balance, and finds itself a prisoner. In suitable places small lakes are formed, and covered over with a network of loop traps, in which numbers of duck are caught.

Two interesting methods are followed by the boys. In the evening, when the birds are returning to roost, half a dozen boys stand with branches over their heads, while others wave smoky torches, to avoid

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

223 which the birds settle on the branches and are skilfully caught. The other method is to throw dust in the air, where birds are numerous, just after the young begin to leave the nests. The birds, "thinking it is rain," settle on the ground and are easily caught.

224 *Fishing.*—Fishing remains an important part of the year's work for those living near river or lake. For river fishing, huts are built in the vicinity of the place where the traps are to be set, for the fishers live there as long as the season lasts. Ceremonies similar to those observed before the hunters set out for the bush, must be performed. Sometime in May, when the river is in flood, the chief fisher of the Mbaka dreams of fish, a sign that the time has come to begin
[278] the year's work. A great quantity of *unkonda*, fish poison, is prepared, each fisher, and there may be as many as fifty, preparing his own. When all are ready, led by the chief fisher, they go to the water, and trample the poison leaves into the bottom of the river. The poison sickens the fish, which are then easily caught in the traps which are set for them with
[189] the mouth opening upstream. As soon as all the traps are set, the men lie down on their backs on the bank, and proceed to invoke the aid of sympathetic magic. They open and close their mouths, gasp, in imitation of dying fish. The probability of a good season is greatly enhanced by this process, which, though omitted now by many, is still widely followed.

The traps are laid in rows right across the river, and are in the form of immense baskets with gradually

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

narrowing mouths, so arranged that when a fish is once in, it cannot get out again. Others are open above, so that leaping fish fall into them, and cannot escape. In the smaller rivers weirs or dams are formed, and the water diverted, with much labour, into another channel, in which the traps can more easily be set; this is the case especially in streams with stony bottoms. Fish spears are used, either for thrusting at random in the water, when fish are plentiful, or for stalking individual fishes. The spear is formed with a long thin shaft, and small blades with two or three spikes. When a fish is caught, it is pulled off the whole length of the shaft, for the spikes would tear the flesh if it were taken off at the blade end.

Fish hooks are mostly pre-European, and barbless, though some are now made with barbs. The bait is fish, flesh, potatoes or bean mash, which many kinds of fish are said to take readily. The line as a rule is very long, perhaps as much as a hundred yards, and is supported by small sticks placed upright at intervals in the ground. Where crocodiles are numerous, the bait is thrown far out into the water, and the fisher retires to a place of safety, where he awaits the pull which indicates a fish at his hook. If he would secure it he must be smart, for the barbless hook will not hold it long. This sport is indulged in mostly at night, a fire being kindled to attract the fish; but as crocodiles and serpents may also be attracted, it is supposed to be somewhat dangerous, and to call for constant watchfulness.

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

226 Women have dipping baskets without top or bottom, which they dip at random, and when fish is plentiful they get a good catch. Boys prepare bunches of worms fastened to a cord and thrown into the stream. Sitting down on the banks, they sing or whistle to attract the fish. A sharp pull when a nibble is felt lands the unwary fish.

Nets large and small are in use on the lake. The larger are furnished with stone sinkers and wood floats, and are operated very much as in Europe, a canoe feeding out the net, which is hauled in from both ends with the catch enclosed. The smaller nets are sometimes operated by one man, heavier ones requiring two; and there are tiny dipping nets, of which a man will sometimes have one in each hand. Nets must be treated with medicine before being used. The Abakisi, a small tribe living at Matema near the north end of the lake, stalk the fish under water, and are said to catch all kinds in this way.

226 782 In many places the first fish caught is not sent to the village, but is cooked and given to little children to eat, the bones being thrown back into the water. The idea is that this is one way of giving the spirits their portion; I have already pointed out that beer offered to the spirits is in some families poured into the hands of children, who drink it, though adults may not do so. And flesh offered at the family place of prayer (the *ikiyieja*) is similarly given next day to children, who are told that it is the gift of their grandfather.

251 The remainder of the catch is dried over a slow

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

fire, in the same way as the flesh is treated by the 251
hunters, and is carried by hawkers over the uplands, where they get a good price for it. River and lake supply a great variety of edible fish. My list, which is not complete, has the names of thirty-two species.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XI

Arts & Crafts

346
177

AS I write there is a church being erected at Kyimbila to seat about seven hundred and fifty people. It has fifteen windows, each with three Gothic arches, and six doors each with its Gothic arch. This work was done, with only amateur supervision, by native workmen, of whom only one has had any kind of training, all the rest being young men, some of whom had never handled a trowel, and the best of them had not had more than a few months now and again at similar work. A good deal of pulling down and rebuilding had to be done, but the building, as it stands, with its buttresses and arched doors and windows, has a dignified and satisfying appearance. The carpentry is being done with the assistance of a trained man from Nyasaland, all the other carpenters being men with a training, or lack of it, similar to that of the bricklayers. The church is cruciform in shape, and the placing of the crown couples, if that is correct designation, was a triumph of ingenuity and patience.

176 Now there is nothing in Konde arts and crafts to lead one to think all this a natural development of what they did before. For the remarkable thing

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

about these arts and crafts is their failure to develop 176
at all. Hints and suggestions were there continually;
yet nothing ever came of them. Iron was digged, 325]
smelted, and made into tools, yet no better tool for
digging the ironstone itself was thought of than the
hoe. Cloth was widely made on native looms before [286
the advent of inferior trade goods, and needles, with 291]
eyes, for sewing mats; but the idea of sewn garments
did not penetrate the native mind. Burned clay pipes [326]
were made to direct the wind from the skin bellows
into the blacksmith's fire, but no one received from
these pipes a hint of other possibilities. The idea of [401]
the wheel, with its boundless possibilities, did not
suggest itself to the Konde mind, nor, so far as I know,
to the Bantu mind anywhere, although hints of it
were lying about, especially in the round tree trunks
which were used as rollers when a canoe had to be
dragged some distance from the forest to the water.

At every point the native mind seems to have been 177
waiting for the stimulus which was to come with the
white man, and which has led to an awakening, the
full extent of which is not realized except by thoughtful persons. For already, after the comparatively brief tuitional period of fifty years, Central Africans are replacing Indians as Government clerks, as hospital assistants, as engineers on river steamers, as telegraphists; they do all kinds of printing and bookbinding, carpentry, and building; and they fill positions of trust which a generation ago no one thought they would ever be capable of filling. The Konde have not yet taken more than a small share in

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

177 all this progress; but they have made a beginning, and they will go on.

326 Among the purely native arts that of the black-
522 smith is held in highest esteem; and the blacksmith himself is a man feared as well as honoured; and joked about as much as he is feared. I think if there were a local "Punch" here, jokes about the blacksmith would take the place of jokes about the plumber which in times past found so frequent favour with the editors of the actual "Punch." He steals both your time and your materials. He tells you that your hoe will be ready on a given day; you get your hoe days afterwards, and he has not used more than half the material you gave him; the rest will go to make another hoe, which he will sell, perhaps to yourself. "As great a thief as a blacksmith," "as big a liar as a blacksmith," are gross insults, not to the blacksmith, but to the man who is compared with him. "The blacksmith gets rich out of other men's property," is another saying indicating the morals of the great
326 artificer. Yet he is feared also, and such jokes are never made in his presence, for he is in touch with mysterious powers, and his ancestor blacksmiths have their own ways of conveying information to him. Quite recently a native friend of mine was talking to his chief, when a messenger came in hot haste to say that a hoe had broken in the blacksmith's hands. The blacksmith had gone at once to consult a diviner, and learned that the spirits were angry because no one was worshipping. "Go at once, therefore, and tell Mwaikuyu (the chief). Do you think heaven is

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

empty?" Mwaikuyu said. "Why should we die? 326
I will call the people to worship."

The most important products of the smithy are 411
hoes and spears. Of the latter there are about a 412
dozen different kinds, for war, hunting, fishing; with broad or narrow blades; plain or with one, two, or three prongs; with long or short hafts. Axes are made for cutting down trees, digging out canoes, and all heavy work; some are slightly bent, and are used adze-wise; a small one, very sharp, is used for smoothing woodwork and finishing it off. There is also the *isenge*, a kind of cross between a hooked axe and a small scythe, used mostly for clearing bush land; and a long-bladed axe, carried by chiefs over the shoulder, and serving only as an ornament.

Knives are made of many patterns and sizes, with or without sheaths. A long spear-bladed knife is used for grass cutting, and a neat small strip of iron, sharpened at one end, not along the blade, is used as a razor. Arrows are not much used, as the Konde are not given to the use of the bow except for killing birds. Fish hooks were originally barbless, but some are now made on the European pattern. Needles are made for sewing mats; smaller ones for sewing breaks in calabashes, and others for sewing basketwork. Cow bells, tiny bells worn by little children [301]
on the ankles, anklets, and bracelets for women, complete the list.

For lake-shore people, and those living near the 501
larger rivers, the most important wood-working art is canoe making, and the average Konde canoe is a

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

501 fearsome thing. It is sometimes hollowed out, by burning and hewing, miles from the shore, even up
[483] in the hills, and has to be dragged down by long-stretching teams, who will be entertained to a beer feast when the canoe is launched. The tree selected is not necessarily a straight one. A bend does not seem to matter, and some amazing things are afloat on the lake, and in regular use. But the Konde are not sailors, and compared, for example, with the Atonga, half-way down the lake, the number of canoes is very small indeed. The Konde catch their
226 fish by setting lines of traps across the rivers; only a few bolder spirits venture out on the lake with nets.

505 Many years ago I was travelling with a team of hill-men, and not knowing the men I had to deal with, I crossed a deep river, swarming with crocodiles, by the first canoe that offered, leaving the men to follow, as I had no doubt they would readily do. But I had miscalculated. Not a man would enter the canoe, nor had the jeers of the villagers any effect whatever upon them. Finally I called for the canoe to ferry me back, with the intention of driving my reluctant highlanders, willy nilly, into it; but the threat was sufficient, and four or five ventured, planting their feet in the bottom, and stooping down to hold on to the sides with their hands. Half-way over, the canoe capsized, the men struggled, blowing and shouting, to my side of the river, and one or two villagers plunged in to retrieve my bed which was floating gracefully down the stream. The rest of my carriers,

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

notwithstanding the accident, accepted the inevitable, 505
and were ferried safely across.

For the rest, the variety of woodwork includes 322
carved walking-sticks, with straight, knobbed, or bent 352
handles; chairs, stools, pillows, musical instruments, and wooden platters. In the Bundali district remarkably good Rurkee chairs are made on the European pattern, with perfectly smoothed spars, and perfectly burned-out holes for fitting the parts together. The one in my possession might quite well have been made in a carpenter's shop, but the only tools used were an axe and a knife, and a piece of iron for boring the holes. Toothed hair ornaments and [301
small wooden dolls represent the finer work; and 524
bamboo cups are decorated with pleasing patterns in 415]
poker work.

More important than the woodwork is the ancient 323
craft of the potter. There is, of course, no potter's 415
wheel, everything, from the immense pots, three feet high, down to the smallest eating dish, being formed by hand, built up, as regards the larger ones, by successive layers of clay, and finally hardened, after drying in the sun, by being put on a fire, while another fire is kindled inside. There is a great variety of pots, both in shape and in size. The very large ones are used for storing grain or flour; and some Europeans employ them for storing water. A well-stocked house will have up to twenty pots, for water carrying, for cook- 323
ing porridge, fish, beans, flesh; and special ones are 415
kept for beer making and drinking. The best clay is 317
found at the north end of the lake, and from there

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

342

HOUSE-BUILDING.

Among the Konde this is a woman's process. Here, one remained from other tribes who assemble in depth, and the workers put of her weeks to other duties. The men cut the cross and cover the walls, which the women plaster. The roofing grass is brought in by the women, but thatching is men's work.

[facing p. 152]

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

323 one will sometimes meet with long strings of men and
445 women, carrying ten to a dozen pots, hawking them
317 round the upland villages, or offering them for sale at the local market at Tukuyu. The pots made at
[531] Matema are smeared on the outside with a dull red ochre, and the more artistic potters work patterns in red, with thin lines around the protruding middle, and herring-bone or crossed patterns from thence to lip and base.

353 I once slept in a native house in which there was a double row of pots, one on top of the other, along two walls. I was told that they were there for ornamental purposes, "just as you white men have pictures on your walls."

285 Basket work is done everywhere, and a great variety
448 of baskets are made. Immense *ifisuka*, for storing grain, up to four feet high, and perhaps ten feet in girth, are to be found in almost every family. Smaller baskets for carrying goods of all kinds; wide shallow baskets for sifting grain; others for serving food, and yet others for drinking beer. The latter are so closely woven that they will hold water, and are made from a fine grass, which is found only in certain regions. A new development of this industry is the making of articles to European, or native, order; hats, table mats, baskets with hinged lids and divisions inside, almost anything can be made if a specimen is given to the maker as a sample from which he may copy what is wanted. Basket work includes also the large and small fish traps in use at the lake or on the rivers.

286 Net making is naturally confined to the lake shore

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

286 and the river banks. Large nets, with wide or fine mesh, are made with floats and sinkers attached, pulled at both ends by means of ropes. *Ilitimbile* is [226] a net used only at night, when the water is beaten with flat sticks to drive the fish into it. There are also small hand nets, and special nets made for catching special kinds of fish.

Weaving is a very ancient craft, and may have begun with the weaving of mats, which are at present made from banana fibre, grass, reeds, palm leaf, and the tough outer skin of palms. These mats are used for sleeping on, laying out grain to dry in the sun, straining pounded maize, and a dozen other uses. [231] Long grass or palm leaf mats are used by Europeans as carpets; and there is a good trade in palm leaf bags for carrying rice, and great mats for packing cotton for the European market.

Very good cloth is still woven in the Igale district by the Safwa. The art was formerly universal among the Konde, but has now died out before inferior trade goods. At Igale the cloth is either plain white, or mixed black and white, though dyes for other colours are known. These cloths make excellent bath towels, and a trade could be developed if encourage-
287 ment were given. Bark-cloth is very extensively made, and there has been a recent revival of this industry consequent on the exorbitant price of European goods since the war. Women wear the long *ilyabi* or loin cloth of bark, and nothing else; but, especially in the Igale district, complete suits are now made for men, wonderfully cut and sewn shorts and jackets, and

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

287 sometimes long coats. They look well for a few weeks and then take on a dirty depressing appearance, and it is safe to say that with the reduction in price of Home goods bark-cloth will go out of favour.

281 [154] Leather work has not developed to any great extent. Women use undressed skins for carrying babies; and men, in remote districts, use them as aprons. In Poloto skins are sewn together to form garments, and in the Kings Mountains the skins worn by the women are pleasingly decorated with shells, while the leg skins are skilfully cut into strips and used as ties, by which to bind the skin on the back. They are seldom worn in front, and the Kings women go in furs as to their backs, while a small bunch of grass alone clothes the front. Shields, wide and narrow; blacksmith's bellows of undressed goat skin; tobacco and snuff pouches, waist belts, caps, sandals; and long strips of hide for binding purposes, such as the haft of a spear, are all or nearly all the uses that are made of leather, if indeed the term leather should be used at all, as most of the articles named are made from unprepared skins.

301 Beads are strung into pleasing patterns by using various colours, and are worn in strings or broad bands, on neck, forehead, arms, ankles, shoulders. [291] Children often go clad only in a tiny apron of beadwork, and girls in the Kings Mountains wear similar aprons until marriage.

532 One European house in my neighbourhood is decorated with a frieze of crude representations of men on foot or on horseback, motor-cars, cycles, birds,

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

animals, snakes, in astonishing variety, done in black or red on white ground by two native artists from Rungwe. Whether the ideas were supplied to them by the white man who owned the house, I cannot tell, but the execution is entirely native, and, although the total effect is weird rather than pleasing, it indicates possibilities which might be worth developing. 532

If housebuilding be included in arts and crafts, then the Konde people take a high place. There are at present some remarkably good houses at Karonga, of four, five, or six apartments, built on the European model, with properly made doors and windows; and there is, not far from Tukuyu, a house at present being built, with two storeys, T-shaped, the only materials used being the ordinary wood and clay. But the common Konde hut is a very high-class thing compared with the rude erections of tribes which have surpassed the Konde in other respects. Whether it be the older round type, or the newer square, there is a neatness and cleanliness in the Konde homestead that is sadly lacking in tribes that are wealthier, and more ambitious, but whose ambitions are only slowly reaching out towards improved dwellings. 342

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XII

Amusements & Relaxations

517 I HAVE already said that the average African is a man with an abundance of spare time on his hands, and the situation suits him exactly. But even with him it may pall, and something more than mere lying in the sun must be found to fill the idle hours. A full account of the numerous games and amusements would fill a small volume, and a few examples must suffice.

526 Association football is now very popular in many parts of Africa, and Konde youths take up the game with zest; but it can be enjoyed only at Mission schools, or at Government stations, or wherever there is a white man sufficiently interested to provide a ball, and to give some instruction in the game. They kick from the ball of the great toe, as direct kicking with bare feet is impossible. To score a goal is "to give the egg" to the losers, a phrase taken from one of their own games, where a rubber ball is knocked about with sticks by two sides, to attain a given objective, when the losing side is said to get "the egg."

545 I was once present at a school concert to which audience and performers gathered from many different villages. The programme, when presented to me by

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

the committee, contained no less than eighty-one 545
items. I asked the committee to reduce it by at least a half, but after earnest wrestling with the problem, they returned and said that I must do the reduction myself. By the simple method of drawing my pencil through every second item, I reduced the programme to forty-one, but I did it to the mournful head-shakings of the committee. The performance was a mixture of native songs, games, dances, and Christian hymns, and dragged its weary length far into the afternoon. But there was compensation. Eight or ten boys of [522]
about ten years old came on to the platform, and gave a "show" of a European doctor examining people for signs of sleeping sickness, regarding which there was a great scare at the time. The little fellow who acted the doctor was nothing less than an imitative genius, the kick with which he finally dismissed the examinees being done "to the life," and it never failed to raise uproarious laughter in the great audience.

Of purely native games and amusements the number 524
is legion.

Ingongwe is the large purple lump at the end of a growing bunch of bananas. It is rolled on the ground and pursued by yelling boys, armed with pointed sticks, each jabbing at it as it rolls, until one lifts it triumphantly on his stick.

Ikimbenengwa. Two pounding sticks are laid parallel to each other. One boy holds a third across, lifting and lowering it rhythmically, while another tries to hold it down by putting his foot on it. If he

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

534 fails, the moving pounding stick comes down upon his foot, which is held between the two parallel ones.

Ikyula, the frog. Two sides at a small distance from each advance to meet, hopping like frogs, and, circling round each other, return to their places. Any who fail through exhaustion are the captives of the other side, and the game goes on until one side is captured, or all are tired out.

Eya kalenda. Children form a ring, with one in the middle. All bend forward, hands on knees, and move round in a shuffling manner in a circle. The one in the middle acts as leader; if he turns to the right the others do the same; if to the left they follow suit. The leader sings "*eya kalenda*," and the others respond with "*eyama we*." After a little the leader claps hands over his head, the others following and singing the while.

"*Turwe na Babemba*": let us fight the Abemba. Two rows of boys kneel facing each other, hands on ground, heads down; all sing "*Turwe na Babemba*" twice, beating the ground with their hands. At the second singing one side advances on hands and knees, growling, to drive back the enemy; then the other side advances to fight the first, and so on.

Pamba usilili is not unlike "See the robbers passing by" or "Oranges and Lemons." Two of the tallest children stand facing each other, hands raised and meeting to form an arch, a gentle clapping being kept up all the time. The others form in line according to height, and sing "*E! yuba usilili*"; the two forming the arch respond with "*Pamba usilili*."

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Then the line advances and passes under the arch singing. The last to pass through is usually held, but sometimes escapes. 524

Of such games there is almost no end, and new ones are continually being invented, many of them imitative of something introduced by the white man, European peculiarities being specially liable to this hilarious form of flattery. I have seen boys imitate the peculiar walk of Europeans, to the intense joy of the onlookers. For, let it be repeated, to the younger generation the white man is no longer a little tin god, or any other kind of god. He is fully respected for all that the native considers worthy of respect (and their ideas do not always harmonize with ours), but if he is laughable for any reason, he need not doubt that he is laughed at. 524 177 522

Dancing is the principal relaxation of the Konde, if the violent exercise which it sometimes involves may be called relaxation. It is indulged in with great zest, and, as the night advances, with complete abandon, moral and physical. There is not much that can be called religious dancing: a children's rain dance, a pestilence dance, and the wild leaping and shouting, with horn and drum, which young and old engage in at times of eclipse or earthquake. But anything may be made the occasion of an impromptu dance: the arrival of a European, especially if he is popular; the killing of lion or leopard; the killing of much game by a European; the return of friends from a journey; or a score of other reasons, some of them trivial, such as the laying down of a load which 535

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

535 a man has been carrying until he is almost exhausted; but he has always enough strength in hand to enable him to give a few leaps of joy when he is at last set free from its weight.

The ordinary dance usually takes place at night. The dancers are summoned by the sound of the drum, which is an invitation to all who care to join. The general characteristics of all dances are movements and posturings of the body, usually two or more dancers, sometimes only one, advancing to the centre, making a few posturings or leaps, and retiring to give place to others, while the drums sound continuously, and the shouts of the dancers increase in vigour as the movement reaches its climax, until the noise becomes terrific and indescribable. And yet the older people, long past the dancing age, sleep soundly through the din; though occasionally an angry man will get up and drive away a few boys and girls who have got up an impromptu dance after their elders are in bed.

Ikimbimbi dance. Men and women stand in opposing lines, the men carrying spears, the women rods. Two or three drums are beating, and at a signal all break out into a song, while simultaneously the lines advance to meet each other, and then fall back. Two men and two women dance into the centre, retire, and give place to others, until all have danced. The dancing is a mere shuffling of the feet with posturings, but the men and women do not touch each other. The singing is a recitative, with shouts intervening, and the drums beat softly or furiously in harmony with the singing.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

535 *Inguata.* Two lines as before, men and women advancing and retiring, while all the others keep up a continuous tramping more or less in time with the drums.

Amasere. Each dancer has half a dozen reeds filled at the top with sand, which they beat on the ground, while the lines advance and retire, and a man and a woman approach the centre, dance round each other, and give place to the next couple, singing and shouting as before.

Ikindundulu. In this dance there are no drums, but the opposing lines keep up a continuous shouting or singing; two men advance to the women's line, one of whom comes out to meet them, selects the more handsome, and retires with him to her own line, which dances round him, laughing the while at the other, and later dancing round him with mocking songs. Two more men face the ordeal, until all have been through it.

Ikinanda. No drums, but each dancer has tiny calabashes, filled with sand, on the ankles, and two streamers of bark rope flowing out behind. The line advance and retire, giving place to couples who dance in the centre, while the others shout and clap hands.

Ikisepe. Each dancer has pieces of cloth or bark rope, one before, the other behind, and a reed in the hand; the dance consists of heaves of the body which cause the streamers to be thrown out before and behind, while the drums beat and the song goes on, as each couple fills the centre for a moment.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

535 *Ihikwela.* This a highly objectionable dance, better not too minutely described. There are four drums and uproarious singing and shouting. The dance is of recent introduction among the Konde, and is held late at night. The chiefs try to put it down, but without much success; and there are other very evil dances, which no decent people will have anything to do with. Such dances usually come like an epidemic, spread rapidly over a whole district, and lead to great moral injury, until they are put down by vigorous chiefs, or die out of themselves, until the epidemic comes round again. Very frequently these evil performances go on the whole night, with terrific noise, and so determined are the dancers, that respectable people are afraid to interfere, lest an unmerciful handling should send them back to their homes bruised and bleeding. But the approach of a white man sends the dancers rushing off to hide in the bush, as I have often found at all hours of the night.

524 Of games of skill the most important is a kind of draughts game, an Arab introduction. Thirty-six holes are made in the ground; the players, two or four in number, have small stones which they move from hole to hole, until one side is declared winner. I do not understand the game, and shall not attempt to describe it; but a very complete description is given in "The Ila-speaking Peoples," by Smith and Dale.

538 A favourite intellectual exercise is the propounding of riddles, of which there is a large stock, and new

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

ones are always being added. The following are a few examples: 538

My house has no doors? An egg.

My hen lays her eggs among thorns? A pineapple.

When I returned from my walk, I took the cow by the tail? A long-handled drinking calabash.

By day or by night, by hill or by plain, it is hard work? Walking on slippery ground.

I hoed a large garden, but when I gathered the crop it did not fill my hand? Haircutting.

All my children have red hats? The finger-nails.

It has neither feet to walk with, nor hands to seize with, yet it devours everything? Fire.

The chief's cup is empty? In comparison with the lake, which is always full.

Feet which have no toe-nails? The feet of a table.

The "wisdom of the fathers" is expressed in short pithy parables, of which the following are a few examples:

A familiar road needs no sign-posts.

If one fish (in a basket) rots, they all rot. (Beware of evil company.)

The tongue has no bones. (Beware of talkative people.)

The liar has only a short way to go. (Your sin will find you out.)

Righteousness injures no one.

Little by little, and the cup is filled. (Much dropping wears away stones.)

Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

538 A hired man eats his own share and that of others. (Be self-reliant.)

The right hand does not cut off the left. (Be consistent.)

There is no blessing in hurry. (Think before you leap.)

If you would get something from under the bed, you must kneel down. (Honour to whom honour is due.)

If you would get honey, you must use fire. (Take the bull by the horns.)

538 522 Tales told to the children, and to adults, are as numerous as proverbs and riddles, or even more so. Many of them have come down the generations, but others are of quite recent origin; those which contain references to Europeans being necessarily late compositions, though in a few cases they may be old stories revised to suit modern conditions. At the concert referred to at the beginning of this chapter, one of the items was a hugely comic account of a native's adventures among Europeans, which quite convulsed the audience, though the white man was not always represented as getting the worst of the situation. The reciter, however, modestly disclaimed authorship, and assured me that he had received it from others. In any case the ability to tell a vivid story, and to show the humorous side of life, was quite striking.

538 These stories cover every aspect of life, and each one has a morall, not always obvious to the European listener, but apparently quite clear to the people

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

themselves. They form part of the education of every child, and of the admonitory stock-in-trade of all parents of growing boys and girls. A judge will use one to give point to his decision; a man pleading his case at the native court will illustrate his plea with an apt story. There are men and women whose large stock of tales, and skill in relating them, make them welcome in every gathering; but anyone, on occasion, will tell one. 538

The Tortoise and the Hedgehog

Once upon a time, when there was a famine, the Tortoise went to a far country to buy food. He found it in abundance, and made up a load; but on his way home he came upon a tree which had fallen across the path. So he laid down his load on the path, and followed the tree to see how big it was. When he was satisfied, he returned to pick up his load, but found that the Hedgehog had carried it off. Then the Tortoise said, "My friend Hedgehog, why have you taken off my load?" "Your load!" said the Hedgehog. "Why did you leave your load on the path? No, I have beaten you." The Tortoise went at once to the judge, who summoned the Hedgehog; and when he heard the facts he gave judgment for the latter. The judge said to the Tortoise, "You have lost the case. Why did you leave your load on the path? You are a fool." So the Tortoise went home, and the Hedgehog went off with the load of food. 539

After a long time hunters went out to hunt the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

539 Hedgehog, who, to escape from them, backed into a hole in the ground. And in that hole who was there but the Tortoise, who when he saw the tail of the Hedgehog coming in, promptly bit it off close to the bone, and said, "Now I've got you!" The Hedgehog was terribly angry, and went off to the judge. The judge summoned the Tortoise, who said, "Why did he separate himself from his tail in that way? The rest of us are all of a piece." And the judge said, "You are a fool, Hedgehog. Why don't you go like other people? You have lost the case."

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XIII

Konde Warfare

THE men of Munsoso were hunting, and came to the land of Mwakarobo with their "bag." Mwakarobo's men crept up while the tired hunters were resting in the shade of the trees, and carried off the birds. 121

"Why do you steal our birds?" demanded the angry hunters.

"We don't talk with fools," sneeringly replied the others, as they went off with the booty; "get off home, or one man of us will chase the lot of you."

Home the hunters went, and great was the uproar in the village when the tale was told. "I am an old man," cried the indignant chief, "but we must fight."

"Don't speak of it," said his sons, "let the spear talk."

Next day the fighting men went forth at dawn, and burned a few huts in Mwakarobo's village, from which the defenders, unable to prepare a defence, had removed all the women and cattle. A few days later, having made an alliance with some neighbouring chiefs, Munsoso attacked in force, and drove Mwakarobo out of his country, which to this day he has never recovered.

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

721 Not all Konde wars arose from such trivial causes, or had results so trifling; but much of it was of this petty nature: wife stealing, cattle stealing, insults, civil war to drive out an unpopular chief, were among the causes. More important were the wars waged to acquire new territory, as in the wars of the first Chungu, and the conquests made by the Sango and Kings chiefs some generations ago. There were, properly speaking, no religious wars, nor was there any desecration of sacred places; but there is an interesting tradition of a tribe which determined to accept Mbasi as God, contrary to the decision of the other tribes, and was severely defeated in battle; and Mbasi, about whom more will be said in another chapter, has ever since been regarded as a deceiver. If there is anything in the tradition, it indicates a certain amount of loose cohesion among the tribes.

721 787 Approaching war was foretold by prophecy and by portent. The *abakangulaka* (prophets) declared that for the sins of the people war was coming; the same terror was foretokened if the horns of the new moon were not of equal length, or if the cattle bellowed at night without obvious cause. But when a chief wished to go to war he held secret council with his headmen and official advisers, the objective of the war being almost always to "eat" the cattle of another chief. Usually it was agreed literally to sleep upon it. If one of the dreamers had a war-dream, as he might very well have, he told the others, and all together went to inform the chief. In these dreams, the progress of the fight was foreseen, and the result,

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

including the individuals killed, was told to the chief. 721
If the dream was favourable, confirmation was sought. 787
The chief took his zebra tail of office, poured oil into it, and hung it up in the house of his chief wife. If during the night it exuded cattle dung and blood, the sign was good; if blood only, it was bad. Blood indicated the death of men, but that was of secondary importance if the dung was there which indicated spoil in cattle as the result of victory. Along with the tail was hung up the chief's spear, which now gleamed and glittered like fire in the night, while the tail moved about with a swishing sound, indicating that the spirits urged battle. All this took place in the presence of the chief and the principal medicine man only; and their report was published in the morning, when the blowing of a horn summoned all males to the meeting-place. "My children," says the chief, "we are hungry. Let us eat the cattle of so and so." But he gives the name, not of the real point of attack, but of some other chief living in another direction; for there was always the possibility of traitors in the community, who would carry warning to the enemy.

A wild scene of hurry followed. Spears were 726
collected and sharpened, defects attended to, new 789
hafts attached. The shields were examined and strengthened if necessary. If there was a blacksmith in the village he was besieged by warriors whose weapons had become rusty or useless, all eager to equip themselves for the spoil. But man and weapon are alike useless until they have been given power and

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

726 protection by the medicine man; and the armed
789 warriors, standing in rows or circles, were sprinkled with medicine from a huge pot, rendering them and their weapons irresistible. In the rising of 1906 in the Songea area, it is said that the fighting men were so confident of the power of the drugs that they rushed up to the mouths of the German guns, only to perish there by the bullets which they believed would be turned into water.

Besides the publicly administered medicine, a more powerful drug was to be had for a fee; and the chief himself was armed and protected at all points in this way. One medicine ensured that his spear would find the heart of an enemy; another that the enemy's spear would fall short; a third he chewed as the fight went on; and a few very great chiefs possess a medicine which enables them to remove a fatal wound to a non-fatal spot. Those who could obtain it attached another medicine to the spear handle, and some carried a charm on their shields.

Fighting men carried spears numbering from six
726 up to twenty; and the greater the number the
714 bolder the hero, for a large number of spears indicated a determination not to run until every weapon available had been thrown at the enemy, or otherwise
[567] disposed of. Great heroes were followed by slaves who carried additional supplies of weapons. Some had wide shields of ox-hide, and others had narrow strips strengthened by slim bamboos. On their heads they wore the *ikipubili*, a plume of red and black feathers, the capture of which from an enemy was

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

the great ambition of every warrior. Arms, legs, and waist were partially covered by strips of hide with the hair attached, but these were meant to give a wild appearance, not to protect the body. 726 714

No man went out to battle with an unsettled quarrel hanging over him; the ancestors of the other party to the quarrel would see to it that he did not return. And the chief must be free from offence. One who proposed to go to war with other men's wives on his conscience, was sternly told by his councillors that his conduct made victory impossible, and he must make such amends as the law demanded. Except in cases of hurried attacks, such as the march of Munsoso to avenge an insult, all household fires were extinguished, and new fire obtained by rubbing. The women threw away their old bark-cloths, and used new ones. Just before setting out the chief went to the house of his first wife and prayed to his ancestors to grant him success. The war dance which followed the sprinkling with medicine might last for two or three days, and finally, armed and protected by weapons, medicines, prayers, and a good conscience, the warriors went forth. 726

The fighting began when the opposing forces came within a spear's throw of each other. Here and there a great hero stood out to hurl insulting language at the enemy, challenging them to "come on," and be scattered by his single arm. When the fighting became close, stabbing took the place of throwing, and if a very few were killed on either side, the losing side retired. But only for a short distance; for a

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

535

Photo: Author

Mary's Dance.

The men's dance in which a procession with banner and drums, and moving hobbyhorses, passing slowly in a circle. An individual will stand out and indulge in a wild jig, while the others move round.

[facing p. 160]

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

726 hero stood out, and called the others to rally round him, and a few desperate men would drive back the enemy. And so the battle swayed to and fro, until one chief considered that his men had had enough, and made his submission; or perhaps the fight was renewed next day when the tired men had rested. But so long as the chief went on blowing his *isiba* (usually a small horn), the battle went on. The great war horn was blown continuously, and the *ililonge*, a bamboo whistle with a penetrating note, made itself heard above the din.

Behind the fighting-line were the old men, one of whom held the *lusero*, a basket with a great selection of powerful medicines, very sacred, and of vital importance. If it was taken by the enemy, it was hoisted up for all to see, and if it was finally held by them, the dynasty to which it originally belonged died out. It was shaken by the old man who held it, and was carried forward or drawn back, according as the enemy retired or advanced. If the chief was an old man he did not enter the battle, but took his place in the rear, praying; if he was defending his home, he prayed to God and to the spirits; if he was the aggressor, he left out the prayer to the Deity!

722 After the men went out to fight, the women sat silent and unwashed in the villages until they returned, carefully avoiding quarrels, which would kill the husbands of the participants. They were stripped quite naked, "to give lightness of foot" in case the enemy forced an entrance. Women were never killed

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in war, for the victors were enriched with the cattle 722
that went to redeem all captured wives or daughters. Nor were they taken as wives by the victors, although there is at least one well-known case where a woman was the sole objective of a war.

The dead might be buried where they fell, or 727
brought home. The return of the host was awaited by the women in silence if the result of the fighting was not known to them. Each wife or mother recognized husband or son among the returning brave, but if one was told that her husband was coming on behind in another company, she knew that he was dead, and that his body was being brought home. If all returned in safety, and that sometimes happened in these far from desperate encounters, the women and girls set up their shrill cry, as exciting to an African as the pibroch to a Scot, and ran alongside, clapping and shouting in joy. The night was given up to feasting. The captured cattle were divided by the chief, lions' shares going to those who distinguished themselves in the fighting. The defeated chief, if he had any cattle left, also gave his men a feast, for they must not be allowed to lose heart over a single failure, and no doubt there was much boasting on both sides. If the sacred *lusero* with its medicines was taken from the enemy, it was put into the house in which the victorious chief kept his *ifingira*, the very powerful medicines by which his authority was (and is) upheld.

Cowards were held in supreme contempt. But a 703
coward is not a man who runs away; all do that as the struggle sways to and fro; a coward is a man who

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

703 does not enter the battle at all, but hangs in the rear with the old men, afraid to take his part in the fight; or who fails to answer the rallying cry and help to turn the tide of battle. Tokens of contempt were heaped upon him. He got no share of the spoils. When the feast was going on, a piece of roasted flesh was handed to him on the burned end of a stick taken out of the fire; if he dropped it he was beaten, the final disgrace. In very bad cases, his house was pulled down and his wives given to other men. But one who was ordered by the chief to keep out of the battle was not disgraced in this way. He did what he was told.

727 The spoils of war, which were practically always cattle, belonged to the chief. If a man captured ten head, the chief might give him back five or less according to favour or valour. From a headman he would take only one or two; and out of all that fell to him he gave rewards to those who had distinguished themselves in the fighting, but had not taken cattle. No prisoners were taken, and the seriously wounded were killed. To let them live was to increase the number of future enemies, and to gain a reputation for softness which did not make for security against attacks from other quarters. And yet there was a pleasant kindness too; a man who had a friend killed on the other side went freely to the enemy's country to mourn for him, and no one thought of molesting him. The frightful orgies of slaughter in which it would appear that some Bantu tribes indulge, are unknown in Konde warfare. The interminable death-

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

roll of the Great War was a terrifying revelation of the unyielding nature of the Europeans in a quarrel. 727

Individual chiefs had special methods of securing victory. Mwamakula's wife, when her husband marched out with his forces, sat on a live sheep as long as the fighting went on: so assuring good luck to her husband in taking cattle, and preventing them running away when taken. Another wife sat on a cooking pot, to keep the enemy in a state of security while the warriors were closing in on them. They would go about as usual, unaware of danger, cooking and eating, until the storm burst, and there was no hope of defence. His sister had a *lusero* similar to the one carried into battle; and one of his old men lay down on the path, each soldier stepping over him as he passed on. While the fight was being waged, this old man sat on his haunches and pulled himself forward in that position, the effect being to make the enemy run. The *lusero* was carried hereditarily by Mfwimi, and when he laid it down it moved forward of itself as the enemy retired. 726 789

In the north there was a great prophet, whose presence in the battle always assured the victory to his own side; but if he retired, even for a moment, the battle turned, and he was brought back, by force if necessary. 726 792

Two great wars still stand out in the minds of the people: the victorious march of the Angoni, and the slaving invasion of the so-called Arabs. Both these enemies brought with them methods of fighting unknown to the Konde, who fled before the Angoni, 721

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

231
342
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A Konde Hut.

Leisureliness is the key note of Konde life, and there is always time to sit down for the welcome chat about cattle, crops, children, or the white man, whose strange ways are of unfailing interest.

Lion Hunting.

The presence of a lion in a district causes a great scare, and the chief may call up all able-bodied men, armed with spears, clubs and bows, to the hunt. The lion—or leopard—is sometimes seized alive and clubbed or speared to death. The presence of a white man with a rifle gives increased courage to the hunters.

[Facing p. 176]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

721 driving cattle and carrying what they could carry: men and women flying naked for greater swiftness: until the great Sango chief Merere, who is said to have had three hundred guns, inflicted a severe defeat on the invaders. After that the Konde made a few feeble attempts to stand, but they came to nothing, and the Angoni passed like a scourge through the land. Against the Arabs a better fight was made, but it was with the help of the white men who at that time began to enter the Konde country.

The Konde were and are a timid people. The terror of the Arabs has passed, but the fear of the Angoni is probably a present fact. In August, 1914, some of the leading men at Karonga came to me. "All you white men," they said, "will be summoned to fight in your own country, and we shall be left without protection from the Angoni." I tried to reassure them, but without success. "No," they said, "three days after you go they will be upon us, and take away all our cattle as they did before." Possibly a more courageous spirit now obtains. A band of Angoni were enlisted for special work at Karonga in the early months of the war, and showed themselves so averse from anything like danger, that the reputation of the whole tribe, quite undeservedly, went down to zero. "The fear of the Angoni," said some Konde to me at that time, "is gone. If they were to come upon us now, we would fight them." But it may be doubted whether any but a few have really lost their old fears.

726 The Konde were never organized for war, and there was no military caste. Everything connected with

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

726 war was haphazard, or nearly so. Mostly a sudden rush to arms of untrained and unprepared men, with not even, in the less important cases, a declaration of war; though in the more important outbreaks a broken spear was sent as a token of hostility. This was the first intimation the Germans had in 1897 that the lake-shore chiefs were determined to fight. Such training as the men had was gained in the open-air sports of the cattle-tending stage; running (a very important accomplishment for a Konde warrior), leaping, spear throwing and stabbing. The only idea of formation was the straight, or rather straggling, line; the only conception of strategy was the sudden night or early morning attack. The man best prepared for battle was the man who had the greatest variety of medicines in or on him; nor can there be any doubt that these protective drugs and charms gave a sense of security which in turn generated a very real courage. Like so many other Bantu tribes, the Konde are a pastoral and agricultural community, so untrained in the arts of war that they did not even have stockades for protection, so common among most of their neighbours. The idea of a standing organization for defence or attack did not rise above their mental horizon, and when war came a wild rush to arms was their only resort.

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XIV

The Supreme Being

776 OF the Supreme Being there is little that can be said with certainty beyond that He was believed in prior to the coming of the white man and the teachings of Christianity. The existence of this belief cannot be doubted. Indications of it are found everywhere in the native mind inextricably intertwined with life and thought and language, with prayer and sacrifice, with birth and death, with famine and pestilence and sword. For the rest, there is much confusion. That a developed [779] theology does not exist, hardly needs to be said. What one informant will give as common belief, another will say he never heard of; it belongs, he will tell you, to another district, but it was not the belief of his fathers.

776 538 Many parables and proverbs, of the pre-European origin of which there can be no doubt, give evidence of the belief in a Supreme Being. "Who mocks at orphans," says an old proverb, "let him beware: God is watching him." "God will judge between us and the white man," a common saying at funerals, is necessarily of recent origin; but there are scores of other sayings which are certainly ancient. Many

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

of these are expressed in archaic language, which is not in use at all to-day, except in these and similar sayings. Thus we have, "*Chikulu ku nsi*," the Great One is everywhere; "*Gwende munono*," go where you will (you will hear of God). "*Imbwa yikurwa pa lwigi*," literally means, the dog is fighting at the door, but the actual meaning is, God is within you. Expressions like these are very numerous, and, even in their archaic form, are in common use every day. 176 538

The names in use for the Deity give some indication of how He is regarded. The name most commonly used in Konde is *Kyala*, but although it is now almost exclusively used in public worship, in the translation of the Scriptures, and in hymns, it is, perhaps, the weakest of all the Divine names. For it may be applied to persons in whom the Deity dwells, or to men who, though they lived on earth, were yet *Kyala*. The name is sometimes applied to white men, who are dangerous because they are believed to have closer relations with the source of all power than common men have. Other names are *Tenende*, the Owner of all things; *Nkurumuke*, the Undying One; *Chata*, the Originator; *Kyaubiri*, the Unseen; *Kalesi*, He who is everywhere present. The name *Ndorombwike* is the one used on solemn occasions, and comes from the verb *kutoromboka*, to create in a sense in which God only can. *Mperi*, again, is the Maker, applied to God only, though the verb from which it is derived may be applied to men also. 176

Prayer is addressed directly to the ancestral spirits, who in many cases are conceived as having power of 782

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

782 themselves to grant a petition; but more frequently they are entreated to carry the petitions to God, who alone can give what is asked for. "Why do you ask me for rain?" says Chungu, when his impatient people come to him, "God owns the rain, and only He can give it." "But," reply the people, "common men cannot pray. Pray you to your ancestors, and let them carry your prayer to God." There is, however, also direct address in the formula, "Be gracious to us, O God, and hear the prayers of those whom we have named," the reference being to the spirits, to whom the main body of the petition is addressed. At birth, prayer is offered for the welfare of the child, "May God be gracious to you, my son." The dead are with God, and the spirits who were in the underworld before the entrance there of the souls of men, see His face, "for these are they who see God." Sickness also may be a divine infliction, though it may also be due to the wrath of an offended spirit. A heathen chief who came to see me during an illness, said, "You will recover if it is God's will," words which might well be a mere echo of what he had heard from Christian teachers; but the impression they made on me was that he was expressing a pious thought from the depths of his own being.

When I was told that Chungu had once crossed the 776 lake on dry land, and asked how that could be, the answer, quietly and seriously given, was that "Chungu is the man who speaks with God"; why therefore should the statement be doubted? God gives to prophets their dream-visions, and to others their

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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inspired moments. He is the Maker of sorcerers as well as of common people. "Why do you kill me?" demanded an agonized sorcerer from within the house where they were burning him to death. "Did God not make me as well as you?" "Yes," was the grim reply, "but He also made the grass we burn in November."

The Supreme Being reveals Himself "in divers manners." What is specially great of its kind; a great ox, or even a he-goat; a very big tree, or any other specially impressive object, is called *Kyala*, by which is probably meant that God takes up a temporary abode in them. In a great storm God is walking on the lake. A waterfall, when it is unusually noisy, is His voice. In 1921 God called from a waterfall in the Nserya district during the night, and the message, interpreted by the *abakomwa malago* (inspired persons), was that all must die because of the evil that was rampant in the district. The earthquake is His mighty footstep, and the lightning is *Lesa*, God coming down in anger, when all rational people sit silent or speak in whispers, lest "the anger," hearing them, should smite them down. He sometimes comes in the body of a lion or a snake, and in such a form "He walks among men to see their doings."

He is a God of righteousness, though the Konde idea of righteousness does not always coincide with ours. Unrighteousness is an offence against God, even though they do not always know why, and He never comes except when evil is prevalent, and punishment is needed, a point of view from which it is easy to

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

776 understand that the chief desire of the people is to induce Him to go away again. "Go far hence, O God, to the Sango, for Thy House is very large," is a prayer which is not seldom heard, when it is believed [821] that He is near. An eclipse is a special visitation, and is met with wild drumming and shouting, confession of sins, and entreaties, for the consciousness of sin is by no means absent from their minds. Offerings are brought to the spirits to induce them to intercede, but no offerings are made to *Ndorombwike* Himself, for nothing can be offered that has any value for Him. "God is calling in the waterfall," "God has kindled a fire in the pool," are cries of dread alarm to this day, only in a small degree comparable to the fear that is inspired when it is declared that a spirit, of however great a man, is angry. God is an ever present terror, and the idea of communion with Him for any purpose, is one that has not entered the Konde mind. He is *Tenende*, the Owner of the world, and it is for men [673] to see that He is not offended. Of the many sins which bring the wrath of God and the spirits on the community, the most important are widespread sexual sin, and neglect of sacrifices.

And yet God is *Tata Twesa*, the Father of us all, from whom help may be expected when men deserve it. The remarkable incident of the floating of the *Domira*, referred to in Chapter I, bears its own evidence of native thinking about the Deity. "Then I said, Rejoice, for God has heard my prayers." It does not seem open to reasonable doubt that Chungu was casting himself upon unseen powers, making, in

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

fact, what Christians call the venture of faith; and his men, believing that he was in touch with God, knew that he could give additional strength to their arms, and they pulled successfully. 776

Nevertheless, it is important to guard against exaggerated ideas of the Supreme Being as He is conceived by the Konde. It is not to be supposed that the African idea of Omnipotence has much in common with the Christian and Philosophic ideas on the subject. God is a magnified human being, a being anthropomorphically conceived. Omnipotence is an idea limited by the native capacity to conceive of powers beyond power to do without limit what he himself can do within limits. The vastness of time and space, and the illimitable forces acting throughout the universe, are unrepresented in the native mind, and therefore the conception of a Supreme Being is severely limited. But the point is, that such as He is, He is supreme over men and spirits, and over the forces of Nature as these are understood; and that is sufficient in the minds of the Konde, as it is sufficient in the minds of more highly developed peoples, to place God in a category by Himself, in a position which He shares with no other being.

Do the Konde recognize minor deities? The question is not easy to answer. An old man with whom I was conversing on the subject recently, looked at me with surprise when I brought the conversation round to "other gods." "There is only one *Kyala* (God)," he said with great emphasis, and other old men gave the same decided reply; nor do the younger

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

776 men admit that their fathers ever acknowledged more than one God. And yet, as I have already indicated, the name *Kyala* is by no means restricted to the Supreme Being; and there are legends of human gods which go far back into the past. The Henga, a neighbouring tribe, freely acknowledge the worship, in the past, of a number of minor deities, and belief in them is common among the Bantu peoples generally. This is, perhaps, the point at which the confusion in the Konde mind reveals itself most decidedly, for it is the border line between the spirits of great chiefs still active in the underworld, minor deities, and the Supreme Being Himself.

773 In the land of Marongo, from which the Konde originally came, so say the fathers (who in the same breath will deny the existence of more than one God), there were three gods, *Lyambilo*, *Mbasi*, and *Ngeketo*. Of *Lyambilo* all that need be said is that he is still the god of the Kinga. *Ngeketo* was the youngest of the three, and one day he went with his boy friends to herd the cattle on the plain. While they were there *Ngeketo* took maize and planted it, and lo! it grew, and the same day they ate it roasted in the fire. When the elders of the people and the other two gods heard of it, they were jealous and slew *Ngeketo*. He lay dead for three days, and on the third day he arose, but was killed again in exceeding great anger. Again he arose, and was seen by some, but disappeared, and it was said that he went to the coast, where he became the God of the white man. The older men say that this story has not been modified by Christian influence

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

and it may be so, but there is a variant, which is free 773
from suspicion, in which the God came back to life in the form of a serpent, was cut to pieces by his fellow-gods and the elders, who, when he again came back, served him as before, upon which he went to the white man, who to this day prays to him. At Karonga the old people used to say, "We have smitten the Son of God in the neck," but I have not been able to trace the origin or connection of the saying, except that it is not Christian, and may be connected with traditions of *Ngeketo*.

The story of *Mbasi* is very different. He is the 776
evil one, to whom deceit and wickedness are a pleasure. 792
Europeans are still living who have seen the great stores of ivory and cloth which were offered to him by terror-inspired people, and laid up in a cave at Matema on the lake shore. The cave has now been robbed of its contents, as *Mbasi* himself has been of whatever of dread his name inspired in the past. It is not very long ago that the last prophet of *Mbasi* died. He lived near Masoko, and within living memory he climbed a small eminence there, and proclaimed that *Mbasi* demanded cattle to be sent to him without delay, the prophet himself being the guardian appointed by the God. And the cattle were sent in goodly numbers!

Long ago, says a legend, when *Mbasi* walked 773
the earth, he had men who were always with him. 776
Mwasómola went with him to his friend Mwakanyamata. *Mbasi* told them many things, of witchcraft, of hunger, of diseases that were to come, of the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

773 776 approach of the Angoni warriors, and where to flee for safety when they arrived. He asked for *bhang* and a pipe, and these were laid on the ground, and soon smoke was seen issuing from the earth. For *Mbasi* was not seen; they only heard his voice. Then he became communicative. "The Angoni are coming now," he told them, "go at once to Masoko with your wives and children and cattle." The unfortunate Mwakanyamata did as he was advised, only to be robbed of all his cattle by another friend of *Mbasi*, to whom the deceitful God sent word to have no mercy on the cattle of a fool like Mwakanyamata, who believed what he was told! And to this day Mwakanyamata is laughed at as the man who allowed himself to be deceived by the wiles of *Mbasi*.

According to another version, *Mbasi* was a rival claimant to Divine honours with *Ndorombwike* Himself. Originally he was a serpent, killed in the dim past by the chief Mwakibinga. *Mbasi* returned to earth as a spirit, seeking to persuade men to worship him, offering them wealth in cattle if they agreed. But men refused, "for the dead do not return." One chief, Mwatonoka, accepted the false God, but was defeated in battle by Mwakarobo, a final proof that *Mbasi* was a deceiver.

776 782 Stories of *Mbasi* and his activities are numerous. He used to do some of his own work; that is to say, instead of sending one of his prophets to demand what he wanted, he shouted from the great *ilisyeto* (grave of a chief; place of prayer) at Lubaga in Nserya, and made his own demands. Milk, beer,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

bananas, were placed at the door of Mwakindingo his prophet, and if in the morning the quantity was found to be less, it was clear to all that *Mbasi* had come to receive the offerings. 776 782

But the trick worked too often. As the fear of *Mbasi* diminished, men began to take advantage of their still credulous neighbours, and to demand in the name of the fading divinity cattle, beer, food supplies, to be sent to the places indicated by the impersonator of the God. This became so common that the Germans, who then ruled the country, interfered and put it down.

Very long ago there lived near Karonga a man called Firaguli, who after his death became a godlet, and lived on the mountain which now goes by his name. There was also a great man called Kambwe, who entered the ranks of the gods or godlets at his death, and lived in the pool a few miles from Karonga, to which in like manner he has given his name. To both of these divinities the people prayed in long-past times; and both, though able to see to the general welfare of the people, were not strong enough to punish them when evil was prevalent. When punishment was necessary, they called in the help of Mwanjebe, a minor deity of the neighbouring Henga people. Firaguli went south on a favouring breeze to invite his more powerful neighbour to come to his help; and Mwanjebe, who lived in a pool at the foot of a waterfall near the Overtoun Institution, came up on a floating island. Then smallpox broke out among the people, and if a visit to Kambwe showed 776 753 755

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

776 that the pool was bubbling, it was evident that
753 Mwanjebe was there, and must be got rid of as soon
755 as possible. Prayers and promises of repentance were offered, and if that did not satisfy the god, more drastic measures were taken. A great stone was heated and tumbled into the pool, around which gathered a great multitude of people, stabbing fiercely at the water with spears and reeds, to drive off the unwelcome deity. The cessation of the bubbling showed that he had gone, and the fact was still further proved when the smallpox ceased. All three godlets are now mere memories, and, except as memories, they have completely vanished, leaving the field clear for the ancestral spirits and the Supreme Being.

771 There was in the worship, if indeed a determined effort to drive off the deity could be called worship, "no stimulus to the realization of the riches which are given to man in his own nature." The gods presented no problems, for all problems were solved long ago by the fathers; and hence man's relation to them contained nothing upon which the faculties might work and be developed. The religion was stagnant, and the people were stagnant with it.

There was no art; not even rude representations of the gods; no poetry arising out of a feeling of devotion, for devotion there was none. In the case of the godlets I have mentioned, even the qualities which caused them to take rank as gods after death have been forgotten. It may be that the stories of "the brave days of old," to be related in a later chapter, afford us a hint of how the process of deifica-

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

tion, now probably at an end for ever, went on in the past. But the Konde, in common with all Bantu peoples, made the great transition from a vague ill-conceived "power behind an object or an act, to the free being conceived with human attributes and feelings," who can interfere in the affairs of the community, even if it be also true that such gods roused themselves into activity only when evil demanded punishment, remaining quiescent except under such stimulus.

771

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XV

The Ancestral Spirits

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THE importance of the spirits in the everyday life of the Konde can hardly be overestimated. From the day that the month-old infant is presented by the head of the family to the spirits of its ancestors—though this ceremony is dying out at Karonga—until the day of death, when the spirit is directed to go in peace and confidence to meet his forefathers, living and dead are mingled in one stream of life, form one community, and are dependent upon each other for many of the best things "above" on earth here, and "below" where the spirits are. Yet it is by no means easy to define the relation of the living man to the spirits of his fathers who are ever about him. It is, perhaps with more facility than the facts warrant, usually defined as an attitude of worship; but there are at least indications that the attitude is incompletely expressed by the idea of worship.

Sacrifices, or offerings, are made to the spirits; and this, it need not be doubted, is an act of worship. The word used is *ukwikemesya*, which is used by British and German missionaries to denote an act of worship offered to God. On the other hand, the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

food, beer, and other things placed at the graves, are 769
intended to maintain in some way the life of the spirits, to keep them in countenance in their own world. For as men are dependent on the goodwill of the spirits for the best things of life, so do the spirits depend upon their descendants on earth for much of what they require in the other world.

The dead are conceived as obtaining a great access 775
of power on passing into the spirit world, power for 769
good or evil, and to placate them is one of the chief preoccupations of Konde life. But while it would not be true to say that compulsion can be brought to bear upon the spirits, that once the appropriate ceremonies are performed, the spirit must fulfil the prayer of the petitioners, yet so complete is the faith of the common man in the power of these ceremonies, that it may be suggested that prayer and answer are inseparably bound up together; if compulsion is too strong a word, obligation, if milder, is perhaps sufficient.

The spirits are called *basyuka*. The verb *kusyuka* 775
means to rise from the dead, to resume ordinary bodily activities; but the noun formed from this verb, *unsyuka* (of which the plural is *basyuka*), means the inner man, the life of which is independent of the body. Now when the *unsyuka* leaves the body, it does not die, it goes to *ubusyuka*, the land of spirits, where in all respects except that of having a body, it retains its humanity. The spirits are not, however, called *abandu* men; though the related term *imindu*, which, applied to living men, is an insult, is often

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

775 given to them. There is no conception more firmly fixed in the Konde mind than that "the dead do not return"; they do not resume earthly life in bodily form; though they do return in spirit form, and sometimes exert themselves very energetically. The dead are with God: this is a conviction so universal that it cannot be the result of Christian teaching. And God is not above, as in our cosmology, but below. "*Kumwanya kuno malabasya*," is a frequent expression on the lips of some people. *Kwirabasya* means to be idle when one might be working; and the meaning of the phrase is that man's permanent home is not "above" on earth, but "below," very much as in the statement of St. Paul, "our citizenship is in heaven."

764 At death, or rather at burial, the head of the family, calling for silence from the wailing women, addresses the spirits by name, praying them to receive their friend. Then addressing the dead man directly, he says:

> "And you, friend, go to the land of spirits. Go in peace. Go to meet all whom we have named. They will recognize you. Salute them all. Tell them that we are paying taxes, that those men are an affliction to us. It was not we who killed you. Nay, we weep for your death."

The words, "these men are affliction to us," refer to the Europeans, and are still in use, though of recent years they have been gradually dropping out of the valedictory address at the grave. Another expression

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

still sometimes used, is "God will judge between us and the white man," a clear indication that the white man is not received everywhere as an unmixed blessing. 764

The entrance to the spirit world is the grave; and all that is done there is intended to give the dead man a favourable entrance upon his new state; well dressed, well supplied with all the necessaries of life; for he goes to God. The conditions of life below are the same as those above. The chief is a chief still, and the slave a slave. The rich man continues to be rich, and the poor goes on in his poverty. The wife goes to her husband, children to their parents. There is no retribution, no righting of wrongs. The judgment of God against the white man will be manifested here on earth, not in the future state. The unmarried man remains unmarried, and his body is smeared with charcoal, so that he may not, on arrival, be mistaken for a married man. Cattle are there, but they need no tending; bananas, but they require no cultivation. There is bush for the hunter, and streams for the fisher. But everything is small: cattle, houses, crops, even the spirits themselves, are *sekere*, thin, unsubstantial. 764 775

Prior to the arrival of the first human spirits, the place was inhabited by the owners of the land; and "these are they who see God, for God is a Spirit." Therefore human beings going there are strangers, but are well received, and given all necessaries, including land. 775 776

Although the dwelling of the spirits is below, they 775

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

115

are by no means confined to that region, but come up frequently, especially at night, when they sit on the graves and chat, or go to the houses of their descendants seeking food or beer, and to assure themselves that there is still a "fire" there, and fire means descendants. In the house they make a noise, *hu*, *hu*, *hu*, heard by the people within, and morning reveals soiled food and beer grown thick, evidence that cannot be gainsaid of a spirit-visitor. Spirits are sometimes visible, but if addressed by name they will disappear. They cannot be seen in bright moonlight, and fire renders them invisible: a fireless house at night is still a terror to little children. A visit from a spirit is most unwelcome, especially to women and children, though the men claim that they are not afraid. Specially terrifying is a recently dead person who has been buried near the house. "*Pasisya panja*" (there is terror outside) they say on a dark night, for the spirit of the dead man may be sitting on the mound which marks his grave. No one willingly passes the grave of a dead chief at night, for one may hear his name called; then woe to the man who looks behind, for he will die; or if he hears his name, but has the will not to look, some lesser evil will overtake him.

Wood noises in a wind, the moaning of the trees, is the voice of a spirit in the tree. If a branch snaps, and the passer-by looks round, evil will come; and if his name is called it is a sign that "his number is up," he has not long to live. But it may happen that the snapping of the branch is quite harmless, being

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

merely intended to make him look round, so that the spirit may get a good view of him, and see if he is his "child." 775

The spirits return to earth for many reasons, but chiefly for two. The first is to assure themselves that they still have descendants on earth; for if the family dies out it is a dreadful calamity for the ghosts: they become frogs. The second reason is to make sure that they are not forgotten by the living, for the spirit to whom no attention is paid by the living becomes of no account in the underworld. Hence the illness or other misfortune which overtakes the living; stern reminder of duty to the dead, who will not permit neglect.

By night the spirits, when they are visible at all, take human form; but by day they come in the form of birds, serpents, lions; and they come as small red or black ants to eat the flesh offered in sacrifice at the grave of a chief. When the spirit takes the form of a serpent, he is testing the loyalty of his descendants: if they try to kill him, it is a bad sign; they ought to know who it is, for such "occupied" snakes never bite anyone. Only chiefs enter into lions, going about to see how the people are behaving. God Himself also comes in this form, and for the same reason; and the lion, like the serpent, is harmless. The idea, common in some parts of Bantu Africa, that a child who resembles his dead grandfather is that grandfather come back to life, is scoffed at by the Konde. The child is like his grandfather, and that is all.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 Of the persons officially connected with the spirits,
622 the most important is the chief. It has already been
782 said that " Chungu is the man who speaks with God " ;
he is also the man who speaks with authority to the spirits. He, and all other chiefs, approach the spirits for the general good, but as heads of families they have the right to offer private prayers as well. Each head of a family may also pray for his own people ; but no man may pray so long as his father or elder brother is alive. Next, every chief has an official who may be called a priest ; he is the *unnyago*, the man whose duty it is to go daily at the order of the chief to present an offering at the grave where the last chief is buried. He does not pray ; he simply lays the offering, usually a few maize cobs, on the grave and departs. When the chief goes in person to pray, as he sometimes does, without any public ceremony, this man goes with him, hears the prayers, and knows the ritual ; and it is he who will teach the new chief his duties when the time comes for him to perform them. When, however, the chief dies, the *unnyago* is in great danger, for the spirits take possession of his person, a danger which can only be averted by a powerful medicine supplied by the doctor, and taken as soon as the chief has died. If this is not done, he becomes mad, lives in the bush, gibbering and naming all the dead chiefs of the past, including names known to no living person, but supposed to be those of long-dead chiefs, uttered by themselves through him.

778 With regard to places of worship : the " high place " is always at the grave of the dead chief ; and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

it is there that prayer for the community at large is 778
offered by the living chief. All over the land there are more or less important graves, where local chiefs pray with their people; but the most important is naturally the one at Mphande, near Karonga, where Chungu goes to pray. At the house of every head of a family there is the *ikiyinja*, the sacred banana grove, where the family ceremonies are performed. This grove is never cut down, and the wife must not eat the fruit of it, for the spirit of her father-in-law is there if he is dead; if not, of ancestral fathers-in-law. The decay of the spirit hut, a small erection covering the grave of a chief, is attended with great danger to all the people, for the dead chief will some day visit his resentment upon his unworthy successor, whose duty it is to keep the hut in order; and when the chief suffers, his land suffers with him. A sheep or goat is tied up at the place, and if it is found there in the morning, all is well, it is killed, and the hut is rebuilt. But if it has been killed by some prowling [787]
beast of prey, the dead chief is very angry, and the diviner must say what else must be done to appease him, before another animal is found for the sacrifice, and the hut rebuilt.

Here and there are to be found traces of non- 776
human spirits. They are not called *basyuka*, but *mapiri*, a word which in the neighbouring Henga dialect means hills, but the Konde use it in invocation when crossing water. Their dwelling is in the water; and they are pre-human, spirits that were in the world when the whole earth was covered with

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

776 water. When, later, men came, more favoured of God, the waters retired to the lakes and pools, and there these spirits exist to this day, at enmity with men, whom they seek to destroy. On the lake, during [782] a storm, they are still to be heard, demanding a victim to be thrown to them whom they may "eat." In the past, if a canoe was overtaken by a storm, one of the rowers was thrown into the water, whereupon the storm ceased, and the others arrived in safety.

At many places all over the district there are pools in which these spirits dwell. The most interesting is at Kisyombe, and about it many stories are told, and believed, which throw an interesting light on the Konde mind. When the chief of three generations ago was a very old man, it was prophesied that at his death the lake would recede, the fish would die, bush would grow where water was, and a great disease would carry off many of the people. And it all happened. But the lake, as it receded, left a pool in which some spirits were imprisoned. It is now partly silted up with sand, and treacherous to walk upon. If a man finds himself sinking as he walks over it, he calls out that he belongs to Kisyombe, whereupon he is pushed up from below by the water-spirits, who own Kisyombe's power. A boy who sank right through, but was returned, was directed by the spirits to give a report of all that he saw, and particularly he must insist that these spirits are *abandu* (human beings). If no sacrifice is offered the spirits take their due, by snatching at passing children; but it is long since the last child was taken. The pool at Rungwe is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

distinguished for the drastic action of the people, who, exasperated by the frequent disappearance of children, tumbled an immense heated stone into the pool, and so drove out the spirits, who to this day dwell in a pool in the Sango country, "where the white men go to see them." 776

Yet another class are the mountain or hill spirits. Offerings are made to them by people climbing steep hill-sides. A stone is picked up, breathed upon, and laid upon a large flat stone, or in the fork of a tree, with the prayer, "May my feet be light." These stones are to be seen to-day in small heaps on many a steep ascent. Sometimes more valuable offerings were made, though these have now ceased. A fowl, a sheep, or a goat, was brought, and left alive to meet whatever fate might be in store for it. These spirits, like those of the water, are pre-human, and hostile to mankind, upon whom they bring many diseases. Belief in them is dying out, and the younger people know little or nothing about them. [753]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XVI

The Worship of the Spirits

771 THE Konde are either a deeply religious, or a deplorably spirit-ridden people; and, having regard to some of the prayers given in this chapter and throughout the book, I am inclined to think that religious is the more correct term. It is true that the prayers are in all cases for material goods, such as health and good fortune, for rain and crops, for protection against pestilence; but if religion means a sense of dependence upon unseen powers, then it cannot be denied that the Konde are religious.

782 776 On all great occasions, prayer and offerings are made; but also when a spirit is believed to be angry: if there is quarrelling in the family; if a man beats his wife; if a girl has arrived at puberty, or a marriage has been arranged, without their being consulted; if a woman has been unfaithful to her husband; if a man neglect his parents; if ceremonies are neglected; or the 776 spirits themselves forgotten. Their wrath is shown very specially by a disease of the lips breaking out on the guilty person, and by fever; but also in many other ways; by the failure of the beer to ferment, by sickness, by a storm in which some one is drowned, by

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

failure of crops, of increase of livestock, of children, 776
by too little or too much rain, or by ill-success in hunting or fishing; and, very emphatically, by a sudden death.

The prayer and ceremony at the presentation of a 782
new-born child have already been given. More pathetic is the prayer offered when a child is ill. Standing at the sacred banana grove, the family representative prays:

> "... and now this little one whom I hold in my hands, be gracious to him. He [she] has come into a world of sickness, of cold, of all the troubles that you yourselves were familiar with. Let him lie in peace. Let none in the spirit-land be angry with him. To-morrow he will be full-grown, and he will bring you beer, flesh, flour. Pray to God for him. O God, who art Lord of all, let thy breath be cool upon him (liti, Let thy spittle be cool upon him)."

Then, spitting on the child's breast and back, he says:

> "And thou child, may there be life in thee. God be gracious unto thee. Live in peace and be not wearied."

Not all diseases are due to the anger of the spirits; [753]
a natural illness is one that yields to treatment. It is the act of God, and when the right medicine has been used, cure will follow, for God does not need to be entreated as the spirits do. Yet the spirits carry their petitions to God, as if He did need to be entreated,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

782

but the Konde see no contradiction there. If a diviner has to be consulted, the process is long, and the result not certain, at least at first. The omission of a name from the list of ancestors may cause delay, for the omitted one will refuse to go to God with the petition, and unanimity is of the very essence of prayer. Or, again, the wrong person may offer the prayer and offerings which follow upon discovery, by the diviner, of the offended spirit; this is so important that I have known a man go a hundred and forty miles to his elder brother, to have his prayers correctly offered.

The *umputi* (person who prays; the name is now applied to all clergymen) goes to the graveside, or he stands at the banana grove set apart for the purpose, or on the verandah of his house, and prays:

> "My fathers, I have come to you because I have found that you have caused the illness of my friend. You are angry with him because he has given you no beer. Now the *malesi* (cereal from which beer is made) is here; behold it, all of you, with your eyes, and when it is made I will bring it to you and you shall be satisfied. Then let the sickness leave the body of our friend."

Then taking water into his mouth, he squirts it out, *pu* (*puta*, pray).

When the beer has been made, he goes again to pray:

> "You, and you, and you [naming them], come to the feast. You who died by a crocodile, who

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

were killed by a tree, who were killed in war, by lightning, by lion or leopard, I call you all to come; and whosoever has been forgotten, let him come. I pray to you all, let my dog be well, let him lie down in peace. He is the saliva of God. O God, be merciful, and turn back the disease." 782

The beer that he brought and laid on the ground before him, is now poured into the palms of little children, who drink it in that way. If a flesh offering is also made, it is laid down in small pieces, and each ancestor is named as his portion is laid down. When ants come out to feast on it, it is known that the spirits have accepted the offering, and all present run away lest the spirits should work evil upon them.

Little children are affectionately referred to as dogs, especially when they commit a fault, which the father apologizes for. "How can you be angry with the little one? He has no more sense of what is fitting than a dog." But to call a person a dog in any other connection is a great insult, and must be atoned for. Spitting on a person is another insult, but when done ceremonially, it is believed to have great virtue, and is no doubt connected with the idea of the "Spittle of God" referred to above. 576

If the sick person does not recover, the fault is not in the system. Some mistake has been made, the diviner is unskilful, his wife is "unclean," or some other cause prevents the expected result from following; for, when the proper ceremonies have been performed, the patient recovers. But a final cause of failure is always kept in hand; it is the will of God 761

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

761 that the sick man should die, and there is nothing more that can be done. Numerous instances have been cited to me of recovery of sick persons when all had been correctly performed; and scepticism on the subject was received with almost incredulous amazement. And there is no reason to doubt that in many cases recovery did follow; for the conviction in the mind of the patient that the wrath of the offended spirit had been averted, would, according to modern ideas of psychology, have a healing effect also upon his body.

753 Smallpox is the disease most dreaded by the people, and its approach was accompanied with most elaborate
782 ceremonies. The subject is dealt with again under "Witchcraft" and "Medicine." It might come either through the action of the spirits or through
[787] witchcraft. In either case its approach is foreseen by the *abakunguluka* (prophets) in dreams, and the chief and his subordinates go to the grave of the ancestors, and there, by night, a black ram is killed. The lungs and liver are roasted, and laid in little heaps on the grave, each ancestor being named as his portion is laid down, and prayer is offered:

"Ye fathers, look upon us in mercy. Drive away from us this plague, lest our children die, and none be left in the land. Send it to the Basango or the Basafwa, but save us. Pray to God for us. Hear, O God, the words of those we have named. And go to the west, O God, or to the Basango."

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

The flesh is now eaten roasted, and the stomach of the animal, filled with medicines not known to me, is given to an old man, and the skin placed on his back; with these he goes, by night, through the whole district covered by the prayer. If the journey is not finished in one night, he lies in a village until it is dark again, care being taken that he is seen by none, and completes his circuit. On his return, the chief calls all the people together, and declares that if the disease is the work of witchcraft, the evil ones will certainly be discovered and punished; but if it is the work of the spirits, "we have prayed to them to send it far hence to the Basango." Family ceremonies, of a similar nature, follow, each head of a family offering a little beer to his ancestors. At Karonga this latter ceremony has almost entirely been abandoned. There, however, the prophet to whom the coming of smallpox has been revealed goes about the villages, crying, "*ilibofu, ilibofu, ilibofu*" (smell, of dead bodies), a dreadful cry, which brings the people in a mass to the chief to demand the performance of the ceremonies. Similar prayers are offered when mumps, dysentery, or widespread eye disease visits the community.

When a man is about to set out on a journey, his father gives him his blessing, and prays to the spirits for him, adding:

> "May lion and leopard and hyena, crocodile and snake and falling tree, be far from you, and may you return in peace."

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

782 A person involved in a lawsuit was similarly prayed for:

> "Be merciful, and let his case be good. May he escape and return to us; for those men are gods; whom they imprison they imprison, and whom they kill they kill."

The men referred to are the European Administrative Officers, before whom cases are heard. If the case is tried by a native chief, the clause is omitted. A man who has been away at work, in the employment of a white man, gives, on his return in safety, a piece of cloth to the family representative, who, after it has been laid up in the house for a time, asks the permission of the spirits to wear it, for it is theirs; and, taking their permission for granted, leaves a tiny rag to represent it. Less careful persons wear it at once, the rag being enough to keep the spirits in good temper. The numerous other occasions on which worship is offered are described in the appropriate chapters.

Greatest of all Konde ceremonies is the prayer for rain. And around this ceremony much erroneous information has collected; for the so-called "rain-maker" does not make the rain; his duties are quite different. The rain is the gift of God; it is His to give or withhold as He sees fit. All that living men can do is to pray to the spirits, who, in turn, present the petition to God; and God, if there is no obstacle among men themselves, will grant the petition.

782 778 Of sacred objects connected with rain ceremonies, the most important is the *mulima* (an old word meaning *the world*), which is never seen by anyone except

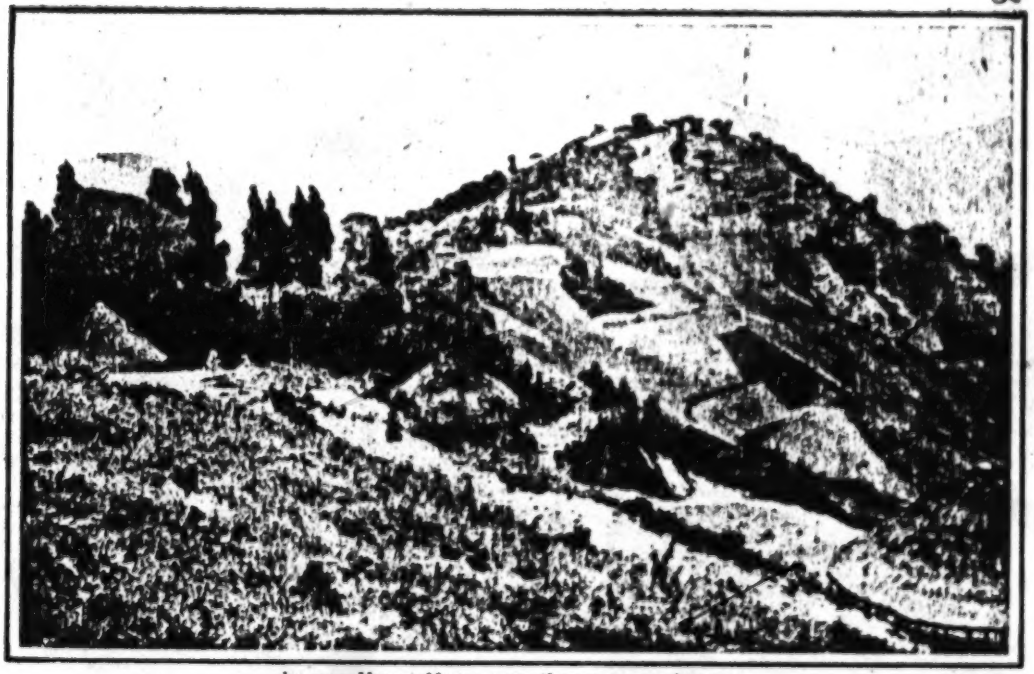
3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

its guardian, and very rarely even by him. It was originally in the possession of Chungu, but some generations ago was passed secretly by the reigning Chungu to a son who was hated by the people, and not in the least likely to succeed to royal dignity. It is at present guarded by a man called "Tom," though, fortunately perhaps, the honorific name of *Mwakabanga* is used in direct address. As no one sees it, descriptions must be received with caution, and there are many natives who disbelieve in its existence, regarding the whole story as the invention of men who wished to gain honour for themselves. It is commonly described as about the size of a man's fist, with *maso* (eyes) all over it, of the size and colour of a red bean. When the eyes open, rain is coming, when they close it is being withheld. But, as the *mulima* is kept buried in the ground, it is not quite clear how it is known whether the eyes are closed or open. So long as the stone, if it is a stone, is kept in the ground rain will fall normally, but if the guardian has a quarrel with another chief, he will dig it up, a signal to the spirits that something is wrong, which must be dealt with before they go to God to ask for the rain.

Prayer for rain is offered, either when it becomes clear that "God's rain," that is to say, rain that comes without prayer, is not to fall; or when the official dreamers declare that they do not see the rain where they always see it. Numerous variations in the actual words and ceremonies are found, almost every chief having some special form of his own; but what is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

133



IN THE KINGA MOUNTAINS (LIVINGSTONE RANGE.)

The cold is so great during part of the year, that the people sleep in pits, heated by fires which are extinguished at bedtime, and the openings carefully closed. Many of the little children emerging naked into the frosty morning air, die of pneumonia, and the pits are gradually being abandoned.

[facing p. 208]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

782 here given is obtained from descriptions by persons who were actually present at prayer offered by Chungu. [643] The decision to pray does not originate with the chief himself; it comes from the people, who approach Chungu through the subordinate chiefs, and Chungu, after reminding them that only God can give rain, consents to pray.

In the past a human sacrifice was offered, and the flesh of the victim, burned and ground to powder, was distributed over the district as a "medicine" guaranteed to ensure a good crop. This has long ceased at Karonga; the last known occurrence of it farther north was in 1907, when a boy of about ten was sacrificed; and in 1917 a boy mysteriously disappeared, not without suspicion that he was offered in sacrifice. I have been told that human sacrifice is offered in the Kinga Mountains even now; but, except for repeated statements, I have no evidence. The victim, always a boy, is made to drink beer until he dies, when his body is burned and ground to powder for distribution. The child is selected in secret conclave by the chiefs, and no one knows that the tragedy has taken place until public announcement has been made, except the parents of the boy, whose disappearance must have been known to them. Weeping for the victim is prohibited.

For the ordinary sacrifice offered to-day, a black or white ox or cow, preferably the latter, has to be found, and brought to Chungu. The owner must be paid, and there is a case known where refusal to do so led to the failure of the whole ceremony. When the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

782 animal is found Chungu and his councillors go to the river to wash, and must not return to their wives until the whole ceremony is over. Arrived at the *ilisyeto* (burial place), the chief and those who are with him salute the dead by lying prone on their backs, then turning to the right, and finally assuming a sitting position, a soft hand-clapping accompanying these movements. Chungu then, sitting on the ground, and with his eyes open, addresses his ancestors :

> "Hear me, ye who were before us [naming them]. I have brought this ox for the whole people. We cry to you. Why are you angry with us? Why do you not go to God to pray for us? Our children are dying. Pray for us. Thou who art not seen with the eyes of men, hear the petitions of those whom we name unto thee."

The animal is then killed by a blow on the back of the neck with an axe, and the flesh laid in little heaps upon the grave, each ancestor being named as his portion is laid down. The chief and his followers also feast until the ants come out and attack the portions laid down for the spirits, when all flee, for the spirits have come to accept the sacrifice, and it is well not to be too near them. For three days those who took part in the ceremony remain in their houses, for they have been in contact with unseen powers, and are dangerous until the effect has passed off. If the animal brought for sacrifice breaks its halter and gets away during the prayers, it is a token that something is wrong, and all proceedings are stayed until the wrong is discovered and righted.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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Now begin the duties of the person who is called the rainmaker. In the Misukn Hills there is a rain forest, the trees of which drop moisture. Word is sent to the local chief that the spirits have accepted the prayers of Chungu; and a quantity of rain-tree twigs is sent and delivered to the rainmaker. This official, known as the *unsusi*, goes to the lake by night to fetch water, which is placed in a pot along with the twigs, and some small smooth black or white stones, the pot being now covered with banana leaves, and placed near a small bush "where God stores the rain." The rainmaker now goes into his house, where he prays, lying on his face; a position which he retains until rain has actually fallen. Chungu also continues in prayer.

The rainmaker is a quite inferior official. In the past he might be a slave, or any other unimportant person appointed for the duty. His function seems to be that of a "conductor," through whose person, or acts, or abstinence from action, the continuance of the rain granted at the prayer of the chief is assured. He must not cut his hair during the rainy season, for the heavens would dry up if he did. He must not wash in water, for that would bring on a flood; in June he may begin cautiously to wash himself, and later he may indulge in the luxury of a full bath, and at the same time he may cut, but not shave, his hair. He must not be angry or scold during the rains, lest he bring on a lightning storm with fatal effects to some one. Further, during all those months he may not roast maize or ground-nuts, the leaping of which

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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while being roasted is like the play of lightning, and 791
would bring on a fatal stroke from the sky.

In 1912 "God's rain" fell as usual in December; 782
but in January came drought which continued into 731
February. Urgent messages were sent to Chungu, who replied that he was helpless, as the *mulima* was lost. After diligent inquiry, it was found to be in possession of Mwandosya, who refused to act, because in the distribution of the cattle of a deceased relative another chief, Kasikula, had taken more than his share. Kasikula was ordered by Chungu to restore the balance, but he refused, and only agreed when the men present took up clubs to thrash him into obedience. Prayer was then offered in the usual way, and Mwandosya announced that God had commanded him to forgive the offender. "Rain," he said, "will come at once. You Karonga, will be overtaken by it before you can reach home." And so it fell out. Rain came in torrents, preceded by a great storm which overthrew a number of trees in a neighbouring estate, and greatly injured the fine avenue leading to the Mission House.

Now for some days there had been much thunder, 782
and dark clouds covered the sky; anyone could tell that the rain was near. But for the Konde that was just the point. The rain was there, and it was quite obviously being withheld. Why else did it not fall? And it did fall when the wrong was righted, and the prayers offered. Who but a white man could doubt the relation of cause and effect?

One or two local variations are worth noting. At Karonga an offering of black cloth is made along with

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

782 the other things presented. In many places a pot half filled with beer is left all night at the grave where the offerings are made, and if the beer is found in the morning to have risen to the top, and filled the pot, it is a sign that the spirits have agreed to go to God with the petition. If it has not risen there is something wrong, and the wrong must be made good. It sometimes happens that the animal sacrifice is not killed, but is kept by the guardian of the grave, and belongs thenceforth, with all its issue, to the spirits. It is used just like any other cow, but it must not be sold.

An old custom seldom now followed is the children's rain dance. Boys and girls, carrying ashes in pots in one hand, and a small branch in the other, go to the cross-roads, with a leader who carries a fowl. They move with a kind of hopping and leaping dance, and, arrived at the cross-roads, they gather around the leader, who sings:

> "Let all old things fly away; we get new things from God. His house is great. He has room for everything."

Ashes and branches are now thrown in a heap, and the fowl left there, while the children return as they went, with song and dance.

782 789 It is remarkable that while rain is often so difficult to bring on, it is in the power of anyone, who has just cause, to stop it. But just cause he must have, and he must secure the co-operation of the spirits. This being done by prayer, offered by the family

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

representative, or by the chief if he can be induced to do so, the person who wishes the rain to stop, ties a bunch of feathers to his spear, dips the feathers in red ochre, and sets the spear upright in his garden. Or if he wishes the prohibition to act over a wide area, the spear with the feathers is set up in some hidden place among the reeds on the lake shore. The rain will presently stop. One man well known to me, takes a small piece of polished blackthorn in his hand, and wherever he goes the rain stops. His own faith in his powers, and the faith of many others, is quite beyond dispute. There is an old man not far from me whose family has possessed for many generations the power of causing the wind to blow, or to cease blowing, at will. The old man I speak of is believed to have exercised his powers quite successfully in 1923.

A very few Europeans are believed to possess power over the rain. In 1908 a house was being built at the Overtoun Institution, Livingstonia, the residence of the Scottish missionary, the Rev. Robert Laws, C.M.G. The house was still unfinished when the rains were due, and no rain fell. At last, some time in January, the roofing was finished, and next day rain fell in torrents. Dr. Laws had removed the embargo! Similar powers are ascribed to another well-known missionary, the Rev. Dr. Elmslie of Angoniland. And still, if the rain is too much or too little, the people say, "Ah! it is the Great One at Livingstonia. Why is he doing this?"

Prayer for rain is offered in one place or another

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

782 practically every year; but it is now done in secret, an idea having got abroad that the white man disapproves of such practices. Do forbidden acts still find a place in these ceremonies? Who can tell? In some matters the native is as secret as the grave and the European who claims to know "all about it" is a deluded man.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XVII

The Foretellers

AMONG primitive peoples all over the world, 000
the power of certain individuals to foretell events, to anticipate the future, is profoundly believed in. Western science has so organized life that such methods of meeting the future are needless and foolish. Smallpox is met at a distance, as are many other diseases, by quarantine regulations, by isolation, by skilful treatment when it comes. Hunger is warded off by foresight, by careful distribution, by skilful farming. The terror of heavenly bodies visiting our skies is neutralized by the calculations of astronomers published long beforehand.

The Konde have their own way of meeting these 741
emergencies. Smallpox is warded off in dreams by 787
the prophets. Hunger, in not a few cases, is anticipated by prophetic warning that rain will not fall at the usual time, and therefore food stocks must be carefully guarded. Eclipses, and even earthquakes, are foretold, not by the scientific methods of the West, but by the foretellers, whose information is as confidently trusted by the Konde, as are the calculations of science in more advanced lands.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

781 It cannot be asserted that Konde prophecy contains much that is dramatic. It is true that those who were doomed to die in battle were known beforehand to the chief and one or two others; but such dramatic events as the bloody spectre foretelling death at Ticonderoga, at the time an unknown place; or the visions of Highland seers in Scotland; or the no less dramatic forecasts of some Hindu priests, are not to be found here. Konde prophecy, if one may give it that name, was more of an everyday affair, not so much concerned with the fate of individuals, as with the general welfare.

791 There are two classes of foretellers. First are the persons already referred to as *abakunguluka*. Their initiation into office has already been described, and it is enough to say that the medicines taken, and the ceremonies undergone, at the time of their installation as subordinate chiefs, gives them power to see in dreams all danger to the chief or the community. The verb *kukunguluka* means to go, or fall, down; to sink deep; and the *unkunguluka* is the man who goes down, in dreams, to the underworld, to obtain there the word that he is to deliver to the chief. *Kusololoka*, with its noun *unsololi*, has the same meaning.

The primary duty of these men was to guard the person of the chief from unseen dangers. Anything that threatened was seen in dreams, and measures taken to ward it off. Witchcraft, illness, poison, danger from animals, from falling trees, were thus foreseen. But in order effectively to protect him, they must know where he is, and what he is doing at

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

a given time. The young chief, Reuben, the account 791
of whose installation is given in the chapter on the chieftainship, told me that on his return home his prophets would tell him that he had been talking with me, and would demand an account of all that passed between us. These men, it may be here noted, would not give me any information about themselves or their methods; that was *mwiko* (forbidden); but they had no objection at all to the chief telling me all I wished to know. Practically all that is here said about them, therefore, is derived from various chiefs, and whatever is not so derived is common knowledge, which anyone may pick up.

When the message came to a prophet, he went to 791
tell his fellow-prophets, and all together went to the 787
chief, to whom all such dreams must be related, before publication to the common people, and the steps decided upon which are to be taken to ward off whatever danger threatens. War was seen, down to its smallest details. The dreamer was actually, in dreams, present at the fight, and saw both the killed and the wounded. The names were given to the chief, who, when he marched out with his forces, left behind any of these whom he wished to save. The people very confidently affirm that just the persons named, and no others, were killed. The incredulity of the white man is regarded as an entirely uncalled for slight upon upright men discharging a duty about which, to the Konde, there is no mystery at all.

The German defeat at Karonga in September, 1914, was very clearly foretold by Njuli and Mwandisi,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

791 both still living near the lake shore ; but the Germans
787 knew nothing of the prophecy. The effect of it, however, was that no local carriers could be recruited, and most of the carriers employed were found among the Basango to the north. Next, it was asserted that the Germans would evacuate Neu Langenburg without fighting, which is what actually happened ; and, finally, about the same time, it was declared that the "first-comers" would become lords of the country. These first-comers were Mr. Moir of Glasgow and his companions, who hunted elephant north of the Songwe River in the early eighties. Dr. Laws of Livingstonia visited the north end of the lake much earlier, but that visit did not make the same impression as the more prolonged stay of Mr. Moir and his fellow-hunters.

791 Smallpox is the most dreaded scourge in the district. It is believed to come from the south, pass
753 through the land, and finally to disappear among the
754 Basango to the north, to whom the Konde consigned, with much gusto, all the evils that they were threatened or afflicted with. Its coming was foretold by the prophets, who declared that it was an act of God in punishment of wickedness. But smallpox was sometimes brought by the sorcerers. These enemies of society were caught in the act—in dreams—by the prophets, who also, in dreams, went out to meet and repel them. If the evil-doers were caught and beaten, their bodies next day would betray them, for the dream-fight is a stern reality, and the body bears the marks of battle. If the prophets succeeded in

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

driving out all the sorcerers, no one would die of 791
smallpox, but one remaining sorcerer could work 753
unlimited mischief so long as he remained undis- 754
covered.

In a community which practises "subsistence 791
agriculture," it is important to know beforehand 261
when the rains will be late, and it is the duty of the prophets to let the chief know, and through him the people, when this will happen. In such a contingency, the chief issues instructions, varying in minuteness, regulating the kinds of food which are to be used, and warning against greed. Punishment used to follow disregard of the prohibition, but the chiefs, although they still issue orders as before, do not now venture to punish offenders, or at any rate they punish none who would be likely to report them to the Administration.

Famine, however, was not always the result of 731
drought. It was often, in the past, the result of war. When a powerful enemy approached, the people left the villages and took refuge in the bush, sometimes for long periods, leaving all that they could not carry to fall into the hands of the invader. The last occasion on which such a famine was foretold was when the Angoni passed through the land seeking a habitation. The people fled before them, and a famine resulted which is still traditionally remembered. With such a powerful enemy approaching, the prophets had an easy task in foreseeing famine.

The death of chiefs is also foretold. The prophets 622
see in dreams the house of a chief being built in the 787

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

622 spirit-world, and they know that when it is finished
787 the person for whom it is intended must very soon go and occupy it. This vision is not told to the chief, but to those who have the duty of choosing his successor, who quietly make their arrangements while the living chief is still among them. He himself has forewarnings also, for he sees his ancestors beckoning him, and knows that his hour is near. Common people die in the common way.

787 No prophecies are more interesting than those which concern the European. They are found over a wide area in Bantuland, and among the Konde they were very detailed and definite. Many versions of these prophecies are still current, the most detailed being that ascribed to Mwakipesire of Masoko. With a great multitude of people the prophet climbed a small hill near Masoko, and there delivered his message.

> "A man will come from the lake, white in body, and he will be lord of the whole country. War he will bring to an end, the Angoni he will conquer, the Arab he will expel. He will bring us cloth, and we shall throw away our garments of leaves. Our way of worship will come to an end, for he will tell us how to go direct to God Himself; but he will not come until all who are here to-day have gone to the spirits."

Maseke of Karonga added that the white man would come in a canoe that sent out smoke, that the peace would be so great that none would carry a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

spear, and that the land would be filled with wonders 787
of which no man had ever heard.

How far the original form of these prophecies has been modified by experience, I do not undertake to say. All who pretend to knowledge of the subject vigorously deny any modification. Whether the actual performances of the white man have satisfied the expectations aroused by the prophecies, is a question susceptible of more than one answer. The great mass of the people would certainly not rejoice at the departure of the Europeans; nevertheless there are some who would be glad to see the last of them. Long before the Great War, prophecies were freely circulating among the people, that the Germans would go away, and be succeeded by white men of another land. Just now similar prophecies are being made about the British, who are to be succeeded by another white race as yet unknown. The fact, which is well known to many people, that some "doctors" are seeking for a medicine which will cause the white man to disappear, is significant.

There is a tradition that a series of forecasts was made long ago: the Great War, the influenza which followed it, the great earthquake of 1919, and finally a great darkness which is still to come.

The progress of Christianity has not destroyed the 791
faith, especially of the heathen, in the local prophets; [797]
and it is not improbable that Christians still retain a conviction that these men were not wholly without Divine guidance. The chief Swebe, when I asked him whether in all cases smallpox foretold had actually

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

791 come, answered with an emphatic affirmative, and with an intonation which clearly meant, "Why should it be doubted?" The spirits form a link between men and God, and there is, in the native mind, no reason at all to doubt that God can make the future known to certain individuals when it is His will to do so. The darkness of mind, so often attributed to the heathen, is not absolute, and they themselves, while readily acknowledging the superiority of Christianity, do not admit that they were wholly without guidance in the past.

The second class of foretellers are the *abakomwa malago*, a phrase which may be roughly translated as spirit-possessed persons, trance-seers, inspired persons. They foretell the future by means of an indwelling spirit, but the occupation is always temporary. The possessed person runs about calling, "Listen, listen, listen." His friends seek to restore him by pouring water on his head, but if he resists they let him alone, believing that he has a message. He breaks away, followed by his friends, who carefully note all he says. One man known to me climbed, in that condition, a mountain of two thousand feet, and on recovering consciousness was in an exhausted condition, though he showed no signs of exhaustion while in the trance.

791 These seers, if we may use a short name for them,
789 announce very much the same things as the prophets, but they seem to have made the forecasting of animal visitations their special province. In 1920 a woman called Nakaniere declared that a lion would come

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

and kill many people. The chief, Mwenemusuku, 791
protected his land in the manner described in the 789
chapter on "The Powers of Evil," and none of his people were killed, though the total killed by a lion in that year in neighbouring districts was very large. A letter in my possession puts the number at forty, while others say fifty. Where the chief protected his land in the traditional way, the people were safe; where this was not done, the toll of human lives was great.

In 1922 the same woman predicted that, for the sins of the people, a spotted hyena would kill many. Again the chief protected his land, and again no one was killed; while in a neighbouring and unprotected land, the death-roll was considerable. In the same year leopards were predicted in the Nserya district. The chief was urged to sacrifice an ox, but refused. Six people were killed, and a number of mauled men and women were treated by Dr. Brown at the Mission at Itete.

To the Konde, as I have already said, there is no 787
difficulty in connecting prediction and fulfilment. 811
The inspiration of the foretellers is not doubted; the animals came as foretold; why should reasonable men refuse to acknowledge a relation between the two events? At any rate it may be presumed that the native will go on seeing a connection, while the white man will fall back upon the ever-ready doctrine of coincidence, and refuse upon any terms to acknowledge any other relation.

There is, however, spirit possession of another kind, 755
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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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which is still a terror to many people: sheer evil spirits, who seek to take possession of a human being as a dwelling-place. Possessed children hide themselves, crying out, "*Abandu, abandu*" (men, men). Adults reveal their possession by dashing about, dancing, shouting. If the possessed makes for water, it is known that a water spirit has entered into him; if he goes to the hills, it is a mountain spirit. In either case the patient is taken by the medicine man to a waterfall, "where God dwells," and given medicine to drink. If he resists, force is used, but frequently the doctor is impressive enough to succeed without it. A bell is rung; the doctor speaks, "We have found you. Come out of the man." Then he takes water into his mouth and squirts it on the breast and back of the afflicted person, striking him at the same time with the calabash from which he took the water, and holding it for a little over the patient's head. Next he sprinkles the whole body with flour, and the party returns to the village, where every one is required to drink a medicine administered by the doctor; for when the spirit goes out of its present victim, he will seek another dwelling, but the medicine protects all who drink it from invasion. The patient must not shave his head for six to eight months, nor may he eat flesh of any kind. When the period prescribed is over, the doctor comes to shave the head of the patient, who has now recovered, and eats part of a fowl which has been treated with yet another medicine.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XVIII

Divination & the Lot

THE fact of death is not regarded by the tribes of Central Africa as forming a barrier between the living and the dead. The two form one community, and the means of communication between them are naturally therefore well developed. Living and dead are mutually dependent, and a certain amount of goodwill must necessarily exist between them. What the dead cannot do for themselves, the living must do for them; and what the living must know, but do not, the dead can tell them if properly interrogated. It is upon this fact that divination depends, as do omens also to some extent. The use of charms and amulets, however, depends upon the other, and perhaps closely related fact, that Nature is not a fixed system of laws pursuing its way regardless of human needs, but is pliable, responsive, and will advise, protect, injure, according to the means used by those who possess the power.

The idea that the whole system of consultation of the spirits, of the interpretation of omens, and of the use of charms and amulets, is based upon conscious deception—a few clever men in each community

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

taking advantage of the credulity of the masses—can be entertained only by those who have acquired no insight into the native mind and its working. It is impossible to maintain that a system, as wide as a continent, and as persistent as the centuries, should be the outcome of an age-long conspiracy to cheat. The human mind does not work in that way. The system is involved in the world-view; it is woven into the mind-texture of the people, and the honesty of the "practitioners" is, in many cases, as indubitable as the faith of the people.

The prayer for rain, for instance, is offered with a simple sincerity, as honest as any petition ever offered in a Christian church. I am not asserting that the prayer brings the rain; nor yet that it does not. Nor do I suppose that the diviner is in touch with fact, when he uses what he considers to be means of getting into communication with the spirits. I am arguing only for the honesty, in a great majority of cases, of the men who do these things. They are men with a conviction.

The diviner usually hands on his knowledge and his office to one of his own family; but an outsider may learn his secrets by paying an ox or a cow. I am not aware that there is any serious attempt to guard the secrets of the profession, though the various drugs used are not made known except to those who are willing to pay the fee. The only form of initiation is the incising of medicines into the arms or wrists of the initiate, and this incision may be renewed should occasion require it.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Divining is resorted to primarily in cases of illness: to find the cause and suggest the cure. But it is used on many other occasions; indeed almost anything that one wants to know, he may bring to the diviner. One may require information about lost or stolen goods; another may want to know whether a thieving expedition will be successful; and the diviner's art is at the service of both. Success in hunting or fishing may be inquired about; news of absent friends may be had; the reason why the gardens yield a poor crop; will the inquirer get work from the European to whom he purposes applying, and will the pay be good? These and numerous other matters are brought for answer to the diviner. 781

In 1922 the store of an unusually intelligent native trader was burned down, and cash to the amount of £170 was stolen. The trader went to a diviner, and paid him a fee of five pounds, in return for which he was informed that after a certain time had passed his money would all be restored. About the middle of October, 1923, the whole had been paid in, but whether the date corresponded with the time given by the diviner, I do not know; and it should be added that the local magistrate at Karonga took up the case with great vigour, a fact which no doubt had its effect.

I was present in 1902 at an act of divination of which I was myself the subject. During the course of a long journey I had entered a village with only two men, all the other carriers having fallen behind. The villagers took me for an "undesirable," and refused the usual salutations; but when my men arrived,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

781 they realized that an error had been committed. The diviner was called to find out whether I would wish to wipe out the insult, and I had the opportunity of seeing the process. The diviner, a middle-aged man, sat on the ground with a flat stone in front of him, and in his hand a short stick about six inches long, which he grasped in the middle, while the top was held by a lanky youth, evidently anyone chosen at random for the purpose. The diviner moved the stick up and down, striking it sometimes on the stone, sometimes on the ground to right or left of the stone, repeating at the same time words of which all I understood were the word for "God," and that for "white man." I smiled at the performance, and in a little the diviner declared that the spirits refused to speak, a result which, as I afterwards learned, was due to my incredulous smiles. The same afternoon he and I went out together to hunt; he with bow and arrows, I with a modern rifle; and the same ill-success attended the efforts of both.

The methods of divining are many, and only a few of them can be given here. The general outline, however, is the same, or nearly so, in all cases. Eliminating questions are asked, gradually limiting the range of possibility, until the correct answer has been found. Is the sick man going to die? If not, what is the disease due to? God? A spirit? Who? His father? Elder brother? etc. etc. What is the disease? Is it this, or that, or the other? What does the offended spirit want? a cow, sheep, goat? and is it to be killed or not? One illustration must suffice. The

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

father of a sick child went a few months ago to a 787
diviner, who told him that the illness was due to his own folly in not sacrificing a cow at the funeral of his father, who had died recently. "Go and pray," said the diviner, "I will give you no medicine." After prayer, a cow was killed, and due observance made of the ritual demanded, after which the child recovered. If the sickness is due to the anger of a living person, who has persuaded his ancestors to avenge him for some wrong done, the diviner directs that an appropriate offering be brought to the offended man, who thereupon requests the spirits to remove their anger, and the patient recovers.

A few of the methods may now be briefly described.

I. *Ikipiki*, the stick, or cup. A hollowed-out, cup-shaped piece of wood, perhaps three inches long, is moved backwards and forwards over a piece of banana stalk, the open end of the cup downwards, and questions are asked as described. When the cup refuses to move, the right question has been asked, and the answer thereby given. In the act of divination that I saw here a few months ago, the diviner seemed honestly unable to move the cup, though in my own hand it moved easily.

II. *Isiba*. The horn of a small buck is filled with medicines, and placed with its base on the ground. When questions are asked, it begins to sway, and stands still again when the right question has been put.

III. *Isyabwe* is a recent importation from another 787
district. The diviner, having drunk a medicine called 177
musika, sits on the dark side of the door, having in his

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

hand a small calabash partly filled with sand; the inquirer sits on the other side of the door. The diviner shakes his calabash, saying, "Speak, Mulambya, who dwellest by the clear waters; tell me what disease this man is suffering from." He soon begins to feel a rising in the throat, which causes him to speak in a falsetto voice, "*He, tata.*" The falsetto now gives way to the natural voice, in which the questions are put, the answer, coming in falsetto, being the response of the spirit. It would be interesting to know whether the *musika* medicine has qualities which cause the throat to contract so as to produce a falsetto voice, but the point is one upon which I have no information.

IV. *Wa m'maboko*, the hands. When an inquirer chooses this method, the diviner goes to the bush, whence he takes a *kilago*, a rush-like grass about eighteen inches in length. Detaching the rootlets, he chews them carefully, and spits the juice into his hands. The palms being rubbed smoothly over each other, the questions are put, and when the hands stick, the answer has been given.

V. *Kayamba*, the tortoise. The intestines of the tortoise are removed, and a cord passed through the mouth and the anus. The cord is held upright by the left hand, while the tortoise is lifted with the right as each question is put. When the right question is asked, the tortoise, instead of falling to the ground, stops half-way on the string. This form of divination is very widely known among the tribes around Lake Nyasa.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

VI. *Indeko*, the pot. An axe-head is fixed upright in the ground, and a pot containing water and medicine is balanced on the edge. If the pot falls and breaks, the patient will not recover; if it keeps its balanced position, he will soon be well. The diviner Mwankosore, who showed me this method, added that in the case of an illness discovered by this method to be due to witchcraft, he gave his walking-stick to the patient, who immediately got up and walked, perfectly whole. I shall have occasion again to refer to recoveries of this nature.

When the diviner is consulted with regard to theft, a different procedure is followed.

I. *Ikifwani*, the image. This savours more of magic than of divining, but it is placed here because it is called by the latter name by those who practise it. An incident which took place in 1918 will make the method clear. In that year there was scarcity of food, and consequent theft from gardens and storehouses. One man went to the diviner, and asked him to find the goods and the thief. The diviner took a small image of a man, about two feet in height, made from a block of wood. In the head was a cavity, into which medicine was put, and the cavity closed. The party went to the garden from which the food had been stolen, and, the image being laid on the ground, the diviner prayed to it to lead them to the thief. It was then taken up in the right hand of a strong man, and presently began to shake violently, so that it could with difficulty be held. In a little it swayed in one direction, and the holder moved thither, the whole

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

party following, until the shaking of the image ceased in a garden. Digging at that spot, the stolen food was discovered; and the image, being asked now to find the thief, led them to a certain house, the owner of which at once confessed the theft, and paid a cow as fine. A similar incident occurred in 1919, when a number of hoes were stolen. The person accused by the image vigorously denied guilt, but gave in when threatened with the poison test, and paid a cow as fine. In this case the confession, as indeed in both cases, may have been due to fear of what would happen in the poison ordeal, and the fine paid rather than undergo further trials, even although the accused persons were not really guilty.

II. *Ulupembe*, the horn. Recently a cow was stolen, and the owner went to a diviner for help, taking with him a piece of the halter by which the cow had been tethered in the house. The diviner made a fire by rubbing two sticks together, and as the smoke ascended, he added to the smouldering fire tiny bits of the rope, along with some of his own medicines, and as the smoke increased, the diviner directed it to go towards the village where the thief lived. Noting the direction in which the smoke moved, he told the owner to wait until some one died in that village, at the same time bidding him on no account weep for the dead man, for then the medicine would kill him also. If the bladder of the first person to die showed signs of blackness, there need be no doubt that he was the thief, and his friends would be obliged to pay over a cow. For the nearest relative of the dead man would go

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

to the diviner to find out the cause of the discoloration, and would of necessity make reparation. 787

III. A few years ago a policeman had his goods stolen at Mwaya. Instead of reporting to the proper quarters, he went to a diviner, who sprinkled the policeman's house with medicine, which he publicly declared would kill the thief, and in a short time the goods were brought to the chief of the district. The deception in this case is too obvious to call for comment.

Inquiries regarding hunting and fishing, and every other kind of question, are conducted in ways similar to those already given. Employment with a white man is evidently still a matter for careful consideration, and it is entirely possible that the diviner prevents many a man from going to work who would otherwise be glad to go. "Shall I find work?" "Shall I find peace?" "Shall I get good wages?" The second question is much the most important, and means, "Shall I be employed by a white man who is not a perpetual scold?" the kind of European whom the native hates and fears more than anything else.

The fee paid to the diviner varied from about a [791] halfpenny to an ox or a cow.

While there is undoubtedly deliberate cheating and charlatanry, these should be regarded, not as the essence of the system, but its excrescence. In many cases, if not in all, the diviner has subconsciously decided what answer shall be given; in the region of the subconscious his mind is made up, and, there being no opposing idea, the "mental process issues in

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 a conation which passes over into the physical motor response" (Tansley). The image in the mind, of the divining rod acting in the manner conceived, tends to become a physical fact, and the rod comes to a halt in obedience to a previously formed decision, of which the operator is, in most cases, not consciously aware. Nevertheless the opportunities for deception are many.

Ifipendo, the lot. The lot is resorted to in a variety of cases, but its application is much more limited than that of divination.

787 I. When divination has decided that an illness is due to poison, the lot is invoked to find the poisoner.
627 Little pieces of dough are kneaded into as many tiny cups as there are persons suspected. Into each is put a small quantity of *mwafi* (the poison used for the ordeal), and the suspected persons are then invited to take each the cup that he selects for himself, the preparations having been made, of course, in their absence. The guilty person is he who takes the cup in which the poison remains unabsorbed into the dough, the others being assumed to have vomited. This might just as well be called a way of undergoing the poison ordeal, but as it is called *ifipendo* it is included here.

II. In cases of disputed inheritance no poison is put into the cups, but a little dry flour. The claimant who selects the cup in which the moisture from the dough has penetrated to the dry flour is declared to be the rightful heir.

787 When the rain stops, and no natural cause can be assigned, it is assumed to be the act of some person

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

unknown. Now when a common man stops the rain, 787
he must first have obtained the assistance of his chief; and the chief, being discovered by the method just described, must take measures to have the evil undone.

III. If a question arises as to the ownership of some article, small sticks are set upright in the ground. The claimants sit each opposite his own stick, and he whose stick first falls, if it falls towards him, is the rightful owner. But if the stick falls towards another person, then that person is declared the owner. Finally, if goods of any kind are divided into lots, one lot for each of a number of persons, sticks are taken, marked to correspond with the lots. Each shareholder picks out a stick, the marks, of course, not being shown to him, and gets the goods which correspond to the marks. There is no appeal, the decision of the lot is final.

The poison ordeal, though now prohibited, and 787
administered only in secret, was, until European 627
government began to put it down, so common that a description of it comes in appropriately in any chapter dealing with native life; and as it has been referred to here already, the method of administering to individuals will be given now, leaving administration to a whole community for the chapter on "Witchcraft." The ordeal was applied for reasons grave or trivial, from an accusation of murder down to a petty family quarrel of no importance except in a moment of ill-temper. Both parties to a quarrel or an accusation went to the doctor, and stated their case. He took a piece of bark of the mwafi tree for each, raised it a little in

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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his hand and let it fall to the ground; if one turned round in falling and the other fell without turning, the doctor knew beforehand which was the guilty person—he whose bark turned round in falling. The poison was then prepared from the bark by the doctor, by whom it was administered next day. The one who vomited was in the right, the other in the wrong.

Assuming that the poison was honestly administered, that is to say, that the doctor did not give a strong mixture to one and a weak to another, which he very probably did in many cases, must it be assumed that the result was merely fortuitous? Is it not a psychological possibility that the consciousness of guilt in the one case, and of innocence in another, causes the poison in the stomach to act in the way that generations of belief in its efficacy has led the whole community to expect that it would act? I do not suggest that this happened in all cases. No doubt the generations have seen countless cases of tragic miscarriage of justice; on the other hand, so many confessions have followed conviction under the ordeal, that it is difficult to believe that in all cases the discovery of the guilty person was a mere fortuity.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XIX

Omens & Portents

TO us the universe is continually offering the gift of knowledge. The earth and the starry heavens, all that goes on in the human mind, and all men's actions, are subjects of inquiry. But our gift has to be received with toil of heart and brain, for it is granted only to men of mental vigour.

To the Konde, on the other hand, what the universe offers is not so much knowledge as foreknowledge; information rather than education. Prescience, perhaps because the Konde is so distrustful of his own unaided powers, is more to him than the heaped-up lore of the centuries. Everything is in the hands of unseen powers, and it is important for weak men to know beforehand what is the attitude of these powers to any undertaking he may have in mind.

Nature is not, to the African, a fixed system of laws that cannot be interfered with; men can and do interfere with it; stop the rain, injure the crops, make serpents, call up lions and leopards, and many other things. Now it might almost *a priori* be asserted that such a system will not stop at being controllable: it will also be predictive, it will give signs and tokens

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

772 of what is coming. But these signs and tokens are not the act of an impersonal universe; they are the act of God, a revelation of His care for men.

781 In Konde omens and portents the dramatic element is slight. I can retail nothing to equal in creepiness the cry of the Irish banshee, or Highland dogs barking at an invisible funeral, or the family ghost clanking its chain in an old English mansion. But a Konde dog howls at night, and sudden silence falls upon the previously laughing and chatting company sitting around the fire, or out in the cool moonlight. Who is going to die? And when? And of what sickness? Or a branch creaks in the forest as one is passing through it at night; and the belated traveller hastens his steps without looking backward, for that way lies death. The bold man who passes the grave of a chief at night, and hears his name called, takes to his heels, eyes front for his very life, for the backward look is death, though to the closed eye there is little danger that cannot be averted.

Omens are offered by nature; they come spontaneously, so far as men are concerned. There are cases in which the omens are consulted, or taken, but generally the information is given by events, rather than discovered by experiment, as with the ancient Roman augurs. And although some men know more about them than others, there are no specialists to whom a fee has to be paid for the interpretation of the omen.

The rough classification which is here attempted, makes no pretence of being exhaustive. Life is full

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

of hints and tokens of the goodwill or illwill of the unseen powers, and the wise man is he who profits by them where that is possible; where it is not possible, he is the wise man who quietly awaits the event, thankful that at least the misfortune does not take him at unawares, and that, if he cannot ward off the danger, he can meet it with an equanimity impossible to one upon whom the blow falls suddenly. 787

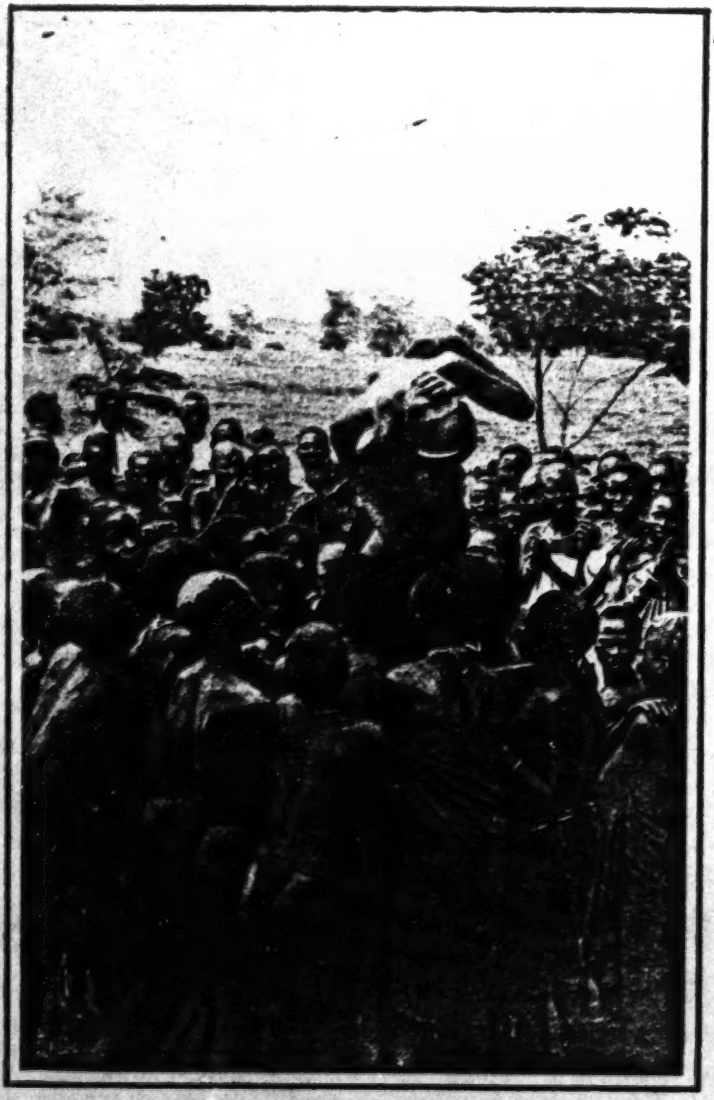
1. Weather lore is strangely absent, perhaps because in the tropics there is a regularity about the weather which renders prognostication as unnecessary as barometers. If, on a rainy evening, the crow caws on a high note, it will be hot the next day, with a cloudless sky; if on a low note the rain will continue. Another token of rain is given when the long-necked, long-legged birds, *mwankusye*, fly in a line abreast towards the lake. 787 821

2. Of bad news there are countless indications; of good news only a very few hints have come to light. Twitching of the upper eyelid indicates good fortune of some kind undefined; but if the twitching is in the lower lid, death is near, of the person whose eye twitches, or of a friend. 787 827

3. Before the settlement of the country by the Europeans, long journeys were rarely undertaken, and omens on the way were carefully watched for, and as carefully heeded when they were given. Serpents are the most trusted mediums and great significance is attached to their movements. A serpent lying on one side of the path, and slipping into the bush on that side as the travellers approach, indicates a clear 787 825

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

535



DANCING AT A FEAST.

The dance includes striking contortions, supported in the air, as this woman is. Boys standing on the ground will bend backward until their heads come near their thighs. Walking on the hands, throwing a somersault, doing a catherine wheel are all in the native mind dancing, and may be indulged in at any moment, as it occurs to the dancer.

[facing p. 240]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 825 path. But if the serpent crosses to the other side and into the bush, the way is closed, and the travellers will return to their homes, no matter how near their destination they may be. What will happen if they continue their journey is not clear; some undefined evil will overtake them. Parties on the war-path heeded this warning, for it was an omen of defeat if they went on, which, naturally, they never did. If [763] the snake escapes into a hole, it indicates a death at the nearest village; and if a python is seen on the road, the travellers, whose path is not closed, may expect to find the death-wail going on at the first village they come to.

A two-headed snake, whatever that may be, is a [763] sure sign of death at the place one is going to; and two snakes fighting indicate coming evil, which can only be averted by returning to the place whence one has set out. A tree falling across a path, is another warning, which no man disregards; but the tree must fall within view of the person to whom the hint is given; trees that have fallen otherwise have no significance. But it is worth noting that natives travelling with white men pay no heed to any omens. They are protected by the power of the European, and any significance the omens may have is his affair.

787 825 4. Travellers have their tokens on the way: the people to whom they go have foretokens of their approach. If the fire "speaks," if it makes a burring noise in the flame; if the hens go about uttering low cries; if *amayogobera*, small black birds with white

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 breasts, sit on a tree near the house; if *mwanjala*,
[825] little black and white birds of another species, hop about twittering; the approach of strangers is fore-
[574] told. Hospitality to strangers is a primary virtue among the Konde, and food is prepared at once; but
[576] it is not cooked until they actually arrive. To offer them food already cooked, is to offer a cold welcome, and possibly to do an injury; for cold food must not be eaten by chiefs, nor by hunters, nor by doctors, for in all these cases the effect would be to destroy the power of the medicines by virtue of which they are assured of success in their various callings.

787 5. Omens having reference to food are numerous, and a few examples must suffice. If a fly goes into
262 one's mouth, it is a sure sign that the person will soon be eating flesh, a rare treat for the Konde, who seldom eat flesh, unless there is an occasion for it: a birth, a marriage, or a death. But the fly indicates none of these; the flesh hinted at is a pure gift with no kind of condition attached. The same good fortune is suggested if a child eats cinders from the fire-place. A leopard crying all night in the neighbourhood is giving information that some one has broken a food prohibition. New season's food has been eaten before the chief has laid an offering of the first-fruits of that particular food-stuff at the grave of his ancestors, and the dwellers in the underworld are angry at the insult offered them. The chief is informed of the crying of the leopard, and the diviner is called in to find the culprit.

787 There is a common grass called *ditika*, which in

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 appearance is not unlike *malesi*, from which beer is made. If anyone eats this while there is abundance of proper food, it is an omen of famine to come. If the offender is a child, he is not beaten; but if he is grown up, he is mercilessly dealt with. It is not pretended that the beating averts the evil, nor has the man's action in eating the *ditika* anything to do with the coming famine, except to foretell it. If one asks, Why then is he beaten? the answer is simply that having foretold evil he deserves to be beaten. This unpalatableness of plain truth (if it is plain truth) is not unknown among other races than the Bantu.

787 224 825 6. Elephants while being hunted impart a great deal of varied information to the hunters. As elephant hunting by natives has long been prohibited, the omens afforded are no longer available, but that does not affect the belief in them. "The elephant does not lie" is an assured conviction in the minds of the hunters, and when an omen was given, the hunt was abandoned until the matter was investigated.

If, as the hunters approach, elephants are found leaping upon each other, a halt is called; both because in that condition they are specially dangerous, and because the omen is otherwise bad. There is sin among the hunters, and the whole party returns to the *fitembe*, the temporary quarters erected for the hunting period. There the case is gone into. Some one has wronged his neighbour in the manner suggested by the action of the elephants, and nothing can be done until it is put right. To go on with the hunt would be the extremest folly, and if no one

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

confesses, the party returns to the village, and the diviner is called to discover the culprit. 787 224

If two elephants are found kneeling and facing each other, some one's wife has erred in his absence, and the hunt is stopped until justice is done. An elephant taking up dust with his trunk and offering it to another, shows that some one has offered snuff to another man's wife, a most significant action, demanding immediate satisfaction. If an elephant is seen touching the teats of another, a similar action has been committed in the village, and again the hunt stops for inquiry and punishment. Trumpeting elephants are a sign of quarrelling in the village, and one plastering its face with mud is a sign of death, for the women at the death-wail cover their faces with mud or chalk. The hunters return, and do not resume until all is clear again. It is most important that not only the hunters should be free from evil, but their friends also, for evil brings them into danger, and it is the duty of all in the village to see that the natural dangers of the hunt are not increased by unnatural evil in their homes. 825

7. War was foretold by the prophets, but confirmatory signs were usually not wanting. If the horns of the new moon were of unequal length, an enemy was known to be approaching; necessarily an enemy from a distance, for the phenomenon must have been visible over a wide area. The same terror was announced by a cow bellowing at night, if there was no known cause for its outcry. This, naturally, is a thing of the past, as war, at least native war, has 787 721

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 ceased. What significance would now be attached to
721 these omens, I do not know. The buffalo, like the
[825] elephant, does not lie, and wise men heed its warnings. Many years ago a man called Masapa went to the Kinga region, where he quarrelled with the people, and barely escaped with his life. His chief, Mwaisumo, took up the quarrel, and prepared to invade the enemy's territory, undeterred by the predictions of defeat which came in dreams to his prophets, until, on the way, one of his men was killed by a buffalo, and this was a warning not to be disregarded. On their return home, they were received by their women folks, not with contempt and mocking, but as wise men, who were too wary to tempt "Providence" by foolish action. One more war omen. If a man, on the point of leaving for the field of battle, was suddenly, but accidentally, seized by the wrist by his wife, he laid down his weapons, and quietly stayed at home; not for him the joy of battle; he would have been killed, and no one thought the worse of him for heeding the omen.

781 8. Foretokens of death are so numerous that it is
763 difficult even to classify them. Whatever is rare, or unnatural, or sudden, may be taken as a warning of approaching death. A mole seen by day, is a rare event, and full of dread. A Christian living near me saw this wonder in February, 1923, and in the same month he got news of the death of a friend a hundred miles away! No connection? He thought there was. To see the *kasuchi*, a small aquatic animal, is to see something so rare that its appearance must be the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
fN17 Ngonde FN17

foretoken of widespread death; but no one known to me has had the misfortune to see it. Foxes are said to have increased so greatly since the advent of the white man, that no significance is now attached to their crying; but a generation ago it announced the approaching death of a great chief. There was an interesting recrudescence of this belief in 1914. In July of that year there was a great barking of foxes in the neighbourhood of the Overtoun Institution (outside the Konde country). The news spread far, and the general anticipation of widespread disaster was held to have been amply justified when the first intimation of the Great War was received. A dog howling at night, surely nothing uncommon, still predicts death, and the dog is beaten, not because its howling brings on the evil, or because the beating can avert it; it foretells misfortune, and the forecast is unwelcome, and the unfortunate retailer of information must suffer for lack of common sense.

A cock crowing at night, when no cock should crow, is a foretoken of death, and in the first place of its own; no second time would that cock be the harbinger of news so unwelcome. Sudden things, again, an unexpected collapse of a house which looks strong, or of a tree which shows no sign of decay; or of a grave which is being digged, or a pot of beer which falls without obvious cause; these are all of dreadful omen, indicating the death of a chief. The father of the present chief Kabeta, living near Rungwe, was a great planter of trees. As he lay dying, all the trees which he had planted in his youth

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

781 fell one after another, and when Kabeta went to his
763 fathers, he had no more trees to his credit than when he was born. The fall of the village tree, planted at the installation of the chief, shows that he in whose honour it was planted is about to go to the spirit-land.

781 9. The heavens give very few signs. If the full moon is red, with a red circle around it, plague is
821 coming. If the sun "builds a house" (*nimbus*), some woman is about to give birth to twins. Worst of all, naturally, is an eclipse. "*Kyala asambwike*," they say, "God has lost patience, He is going to kill us all," and they go out with drums and wild shoutings to induce the Supreme Being to go away to the Basango.

781 What has been described in the foregoing paragraphs is called *kusura*, to foreshadow, forecast, the agent being entirely unconscious of the significance of the action. There is another class of actions which also forecast; but although the difference is not very obvious, a different word is used, *kusikura*, which sometimes means to insult, but commonly to act as a pointer to coming evil. Such actions are mostly unnatural; many of them are in themselves evil, and their occurrence is regarded as a portent.

1. Unnatural anger. Anger in a child is a phenomenon of awe. If a grown-up person arouses it—not in his own child—that person has received warning that his death is near. How this comes about is not clear. Some natives say that the anger is a sign, which cannot be explained; others that the child

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

has a disease, from which he does not himself suffer, 787
but which passes over to the person who arouses the wrath.

At Karonga, if two old men fight with their fists, 787
and tear each other's garments, they have forecasted 579
death for each other. The death of a friend of one or the other will shortly take place. Among the Banyakyusa to the north, the fight of any two, young or old, with fists only, is a portent of the same significance. Such anger blazes up suddenly, and the two men fly at each other in blind fury, unable to restrain themselves sufficiently to go and fetch the weapons with which reasonable men fight. The fist as a weapon of war is not highly regarded by Africans generally, however dear it may be to others.

2. Unnatural actions. To invite an old man to 787
climb a tree may seem to us more laughable than 578
deadly; but to the Konde it is a dreadful combination of insult and forecast; it is a forecast, because such a thing is an insult so great as to be in itself a portent. The number of things that come under this head is legion; but generally, to ask an old person to do what is unnatural for an old person to do, is *kusikura*. Little girls quite innocently removing their scanty covering in the presence of an old man, have unwittingly warned him that his days are near an end. Perhaps under the same category we may include an invitation given by a child to an old man to come and eat; to us it could not come in a more charming way; but the old Konde would turn his back indignantly on the ill-bred brat who

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 so insulted him. This does not apply to an invitation
578 to drink beer, but no one can explain why there is a difference.

3. Accusations against a man of good character come under the same heading. Some evil has been done, and the wrong-doer has not been discovered. Then, perhaps in joke, or it may be out of personal dislike, some one says that so and so did it. The person referred to knows that his days will not be long in the land. "Did I ever do a thing like that?" he asks indignantly. "Why, then, am I accused?" It can only be *kusikura*, and he expects to die, at the best, within a year or two.

787 4. If the spirits, in dreams, offer food, it must not
828 be accepted, even in the dream: to accept it means death.

Connected with the foregoing, but having a
787 different name among the Konde, are insults or
578 injuries to parents. A man who fights with his father,
593 and throws him down, has achieved the final wickedness. Whether the old man was right or wrong in the matter in dispute is of no consequence; the whole community expresses its abhorrence of the deed. "Has this man reached even to God?" that is to say, does he consider himself the equal of God, that he does such things? Word is sent to the chief, and the whole district is informed of the evil thing that has been done. There is no formal denunciation, no spoken curse; but the *ikugana*, the curse of all fathers, and of all ancestors, is upon the son. He becomes lame; then unable to stand upright; finally he

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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crawls about on his buttocks, a helpless object. The curse has taken effect.

After a time good-natured people try to bring father and son together again. The son is persuaded to make his father an offering of an ox or a cow in token of repentance. If the father agrees, a day is fixed, and the whole community, including the little children, assembles at the house of the injured father. Beer is prepared, the ox is killed, the son publicly expresses his repentance, and the father his acceptance thereof. Then the people, having heard all the details of the crime,* express their feelings in a prolonged groan. A dose of medicine is now given to the son, a stick is put into his hands, and he is bidden to rise and walk, which he does in the presence of all! A similar curse falls upon the man who does evil with one of his father's wives; and there are a very few other crimes which automatically bring on the same punishment. 578 593 783

It is not difficult, from the point of view of modern mental science, to explain the facts. The disability is due to the conviction in the mind of the younger man, strengthened by a similar conviction in the mind of the whole community, that such results always follow deeds like his. Similar phenomena are by no means unknown among Europeans, where the response to each other of mind and body is not so immediate as it is among the more unsophisticated Konde. The man bearing his sin is mentally, perhaps, rather than physically, unable to stand upright; and the conviction having been removed from his mind, 000

* [Fighting and throwing down one's father—Analyst]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

the disability naturally leaves his body. Relax the conviction, and the disease will be relaxed; destroy it, and the disease will vanish, having no objective reality.

But how do the people regard the whole event? What has caused the disability, and what has removed it? There can be no doubt as to the answer. Sin and its consequences in the one case; reconciliation and consequent removal of the penalty in the other. This explanation, though held by native Christians, is also held by the heathen; and in any case it is not the teaching of Christianity to-day that diseases due to sin are removed immediately reconciliation between God and man has taken place, so that even a knowledge of Christian doctrine would not explain the presence of the conviction in the native mind. The idea, if not the form of words, is found, at least in germ, in every act of propitiation offered to offended spirits; the appropriate offering having been made, and reconciliation effected, the penalty passes away.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XX

The Powers of Evil: I. Witchcraft

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BELIEF in witchcraft is not among the things that are passing away. So universal is the belief in its malign powers that anyone, except a Christian, who dares to express doubts on the matter, is himself in danger of being denounced as a practiser of the black art. It fills the whole outlook of the common people. If one is persistently ill, and medicines do not cure him, he suspects some one of practising against him; if children die one after the other, both parents cannot escape suspicion, one or other is guilty; if cattle do not give a normal quantity of milk, some one has bewitched them. And there is not a house in all heathen Kondeland that is not, in one way or another, or in many ways, protected by charms and medicines against the power of witchcraft.

Witchcraft in Europe is a power gained by traffic with the Evil One, and used by the possessor either for his or her own ends, or hired out for payment. Now among the Konde an *undosi*, witch or wizard, is as much the creation of God as other men are. "God has made men in many images," and upon a few He has bestowed those mysterious and evil powers

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

754 in the presence of which common men, if unprotected, are so helpless.

While common men dread nothing so much as an accusation of witchcraft, there are swaggering fellows, great doctors and others, who boast openly of their powers; and so great is the dread in which they are held, that no one dares to cross them, or to have them brought to trial. All chiefs of any standing are credited with the power of witchcraft, but in their case it is supposed to be a special endowment to enable them to maintain their position against evil-doers.

Witchcraft is hereditary; men and women are born with it; born with two *isota*, serpents, in the stomach, by the power of which they can leave the body, and go about at night, unseen, to work their evil will on man and beast. If a parent is *undosi*, the children will be also; but if an expectant mother knows that her husband is a wizard, she will take care to have her child born at a distance, so that it cannot inherit its father's undesirable powers. If inherited from the mother, it is of peculiar virulence; but if from the father, the powers sometimes lie quiescent, and do no harm to anyone. If the *post mortem* reveals tokens of witchcraft on the left side, it has come from the mother; if on the right, from the father.

The Konde recognize three degrees of power, or of wickedness, in witchcraft. There are the comparatively harmless persons who drink the milk of cows at night, but do no other harm; their punishment, if discovered, is to herd the cattle the whole of the next

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

day; next, those who destroy men and cattle, and 754
everything else, by means of their hidden powers; and finally, the creators of lions, leopards, crocodiles, and eagles, who are the worst enemies of society, but who are held in such fear that they are seldom molested. The official dreamers, already frequently referred to, have one *isota*, serpent, in the stomach, but they are not called wizards; they are witch destroyers, or at least discoverers, for they have the power of seeing in dreams what these evil men are doing, and in dreams going out to fight them. And if, in the dream, the dreamer kills the snake with which he fights, the owner will be found dead in the morning.

Perhaps one of the commonest charges of witch- 754
craft is made in connection with the milk supply. As 685
a rule, in December, the chief sends out word that he expects the milk supply to be good for the year; if it turns out to be less than was expected, and if there has been no drought, it is obvious that there has been undue interference, and that on a great scale, with the cattle. The whole of the people of the affected district are summoned to the chief's village, and put to the test; each person bringing all the cattle he possesses. There are two tests: by the ear, and by the stomach, that is to say by poison. The people sit in a great circle, and one after another comes up to the doctor, who bores the ear with a sharp instrument; if the ear is easily bored, the person is innocent: if the skin is tough, and resists, he is guilty, and is ordered to sit on one side, where he is joined by all others who are found out in the same way.

FN17 Ngonde FN17

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But each person who is declared innocent goes at once, without further parley, to take charge of the cattle which he brought to the meeting. From the guilty persons everything is taken away: cattle, hoes, cooking pots, food stocks; and men are sent at once to burn down their houses. The live stock is the property of the chief, and it is mostly killed on the spot, and eaten, or dried, before the assembly departs; while the wretched criminals are sent out into the world, homeless and in poverty. They are not always expelled from the district, but they usually prefer to go to another chief.

The poison test has the same results for the guilty; but every individual is not necessarily tested. From each village one man is taken, and he drinks for the whole of that community. If he vomits, not only he, but all the village which he represents is innocent. If he does not, it does not follow that he is himself the guilty person, but only that the criminal (or criminals) will be found in his village. They are taken individually, and the poison administered, the innocent vomiting, and the guilty failing to do so. The decoction is never strong enough among the Konde to kill, and therefore other punishments must be found. Not infrequently a dog or a cock is made to take the poison, the results being credited or debited to the person for whom it stands.

The "smelling out" of witches is not generally practised; but there is a woman at Tukuyu, a stout young woman with a hearty laugh, who has the power of picking out the innocent when a general accusation

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

of witchcraft is made. The people are assembled by 754
order of the chief, and the woman walks slowly round 695
the circle, gazing into the eyes of each person, and eliminating the innocent one by one, using no other test than the look in the individual's eyes. Those who remain are guilty.

Prosperity in another arouses all the evil passions of 754
witches and wizards. But prosperity in itself was, 578
until lately, evidence that the prosperous person was himself a wizard. There is a woman living not far from me who was accused before the British magistrate of pretending to exercise witchcraft, and to obtain cattle and other goods by threatening violence. She was dismissed on technical grounds, but ordered not to return to her own district. In conversation with her after the trial she told me that it was only the presence of the white man that saved her from being burned alive as a witch; the evidence against her being the rapid increase of her live stock. But the increase, she assured me, was "the gift of God."

Death by burning was the ancient penalty when [683]
that was inflicted publicly; but when the witches or 754
wizards themselves undertook to kill a fellow-sorcerer in jealousy, they did it in another way. Leaving their bodies behind them, they go to the house of the victim, enter by the roof, disturbing nothing; and finally enter the stomach of the sleeping person. Thence they wander about to lungs, heart, or liver, and wound him with their "secret spears." Next day the man is ill, and the day following he dies. If the *post mortem* reveals ulcers on heart, lungs, or liver,

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

754 it is entirely satisfactory evidence that death was due to witchcraft. The whole population is called up, and the chief directs the application of the poison test, in the manner already described. If the culprits are not discovered, they bring the body of the victim to the surface without disturbing the soil (an art the secret of which is now confined to a very few persons), and indulge in a ghoulish cannibal feast. At Karonga in 1913 a suspicion arose that this had happened, and men who had enjoyed the benefits of many years' training at the Overtoun Institution told me that they did not believe that such things happened now, since Christ had destroyed the powers of evil, but they had no doubt whatever that they happened frequently in the past.

Smallpox is popularly supposed to be due, in many cases, to witchcraft. The witches go to Karonga, or elsewhere, and bring the disease back in a goatskin bag. But not unseen: the ever-watchful dreamers see them, and go out to fight them; but it would seem that there must be occasions when the powers of good are overcome or outwitted by the powers of evil; for smallpox does get in; and the question arises, has it been sent by God, or brought in by wicked persons? The question is soon answered, for plagues brought in by Divine agency never show a long death-roll: God does not do such things. It is the work of the witches, and the test is administered, and the evil-doers punished. It need hardly be added that the poison test is prohibited, and also the ear test, by European government, and that if it is resorted to

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

at all, it is done in secret. But other methods are in 754
use that are not so easy to detect. A suspected person is mercilessly beaten, and there are many who have, under stress of such thrashings, confessed their guilt, lest the thrashing end in death. In the good old days, before the Europeans began to interfere, guilty persons might be burned to death with all their family. To-day, if the chief is afraid to take more 754
drastic steps, the suspected person is warned to 627
depart. Coming out in the morning he finds at his door a banana stem, with leaves tied to the top; and if he refuses the hint, he may be mobbed the same day. Native law gives him the privilege of challenging the poison test, and the unhappy chief in that case must either agree and risk being denounced to the magistrate, or refuse to apply the test and withdraw the charge. The lot of the chief who has to steer his way between native and British law is not always a happy one. In the case I am supposing, if he agrees to the poison test in the hope of escaping the attentions of the police, he may find himself with two deaths on his hands, for both accuser and accused must take the test, and although the poison is usually administered in a weak decoction, still accidents have been known to happen.

A plague of mice is also brought on by witchcraft. 754
At Karonga, a man called Ndambasya, still living at Mfuru, on the Rukuru River, possesses this gift. His grandfather was put to death for the offence, but Ndambasya pursues his nefarious practices under the ægis of the British Government, which is far too

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

754 intelligent to believe such nonsense. The method is to take a male and a female mouse, cover them up in a pot with medicines, and when they have bred they are sent out into the gardens, where they multiply exceedingly. The British method of dealing with this plague is to pay so much for every dead mouse brought in; the Konde believe in getting at the sources of things, and as the source in this case is Ndambasya, he, if left to the tender mercies of his fellows, would die. There was a recrudescence of the plague in the year 1924, and I suspect Ndambasya did not feel too comfortable, for the patience of the people has a habit of coming to a sudden end at times.

The methods by which witches and warlocks work their evil will are many. By the power of the evil eye they stop the milk of cattle, bring illness on children, and cause various kinds of misfortunes to come upon their enemies. One may kill a man by making a wax effigy, and letting it slowly melt before the fire. He will die when the whole has been melted. Pneumonia is brought on by making a small circlet of the leaves or roots from which various kinds of medicines are made, and sticking a wooden pin through it. A banana leaf pinned in four places will lead to the death of the victim, and the *post mortem* will reveal four internal wounds. Certain medicines put into a hole in the ground will turn a blood-red colour. Cover the hole carefully from sight, and in due time your man will cease to trouble you. A sure specific for causing the death of an enemy is made from hair clippings, nail parings, the spittle, earth gathered from

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

the footprints of the victim, and the banana or other 754
leaf on which he sat, mixed with medicines of various kinds. The mixture is not administered to the victim. It is enough that it has been compounded.

One more method of operating will be sufficient, though there are many others. The witch or wizard, stark-naked, goes, at night, after all are in bed, to the house of the person he wishes to injure, and there dances the dance called *kuyinga*, and then goes silently away. In the morning a child becomes sick, and shortly dies. Or, if it is not desired to be so unforgiving, the harvest of the victim will be blighted. The wise householder, however, is not without defence. He secures himself and his family, and his gardens, from this kind of thing by placing medicine in the roof of his house, which roots to the spot the dancing wizard, who is found there in the morning, and dealt with.

There is a very complete system of protection, 754
which has been developed during the ages, guarding 789
the person and the community against all kinds of evil, forming, as one writer has remarked, an insurance against accidents and evil powers. The protection against witchcraft is especially complete.

First, there is the risk of discovery by revelation, as in the dreams already referred to; or by experiment, as when the doctors apply their tests. But although the dreamer sometimes makes his discovery before any evil has been done, he perhaps as frequently fails; and the doctor is never called in until the evil demands drastic treatment.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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Therefore it must be anticipated by the use of powerful medicines, which would probably be called charms in Europe; but as the Konde call them medicines, I prefer to use that term. There is communal protection, and individual. For the former certain herbs are taken, burned into an ash, and mixed with oil. The mixture is put into two horns, one of which is placed in the rafters inside the chief's house, and the other under the eaves outside, and behind. No one may approach the chief's house from behind, for the medicines would destroy him. But, wheels within wheels, another drug is known which can destroy the efficacy of the drugs in the horn, and therefore anyone seen approaching the house from behind would be suspected of trying to nullify the measures taken to ensure public safety. To make this nullifying drug, the leaves of *malimbalimba* and *undurusya* are taken, and their extract added to what is in the horn, which thereupon loses its virtue, and the public are exposed to danger.

To protect individual houses, the leaves of certain trees are taken, and laid on the fire, so that the smoke, spreading through the house, may ensure the safety of the inmates. Then the same leaves, pounded and mixed with water, are sprinkled on the floor; and finally the root of another herb is buried under the doorstep, and will effectually prevent the entrance of witch or warlock. When a new house is being built, this same root is placed in various positions in the foundation, and the house is now protected from turret to foundation-stone, and the inmates dwell in

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

security. As already said, no heathen house is without 789
this protection. Gardens and cattle kraals are pro- 754
tected in similar ways.

But witchcraft spreads its nets far and wide, and it is not enough to protect the house, for a man may be attacked outside. To meet this menace, other measures must be taken. Each person drinks a decoction, and swallows a tiny white stone, found only in the Malila district. The effect of this is to enable him to see in dreams any dangers which threaten him personally from witchcraft; and to make assurance doubly sure, some persons wear charms on neck or wrist or ankle.

No one knows when danger will come upon him. One who looks you steadily in the face is probably a wizard; why else should he look at you so? One who does not return your salutation, or returns it half-heartedly; one who denies the reality of witchcraft; one who is a notorious invader of the rights of husbands; all such men (or women) are to be avoided, for they are all probably dangerous.

And the reproach of witchcraft follows one after 754
death. If the *post mortem* shows marks on the internal 763
organs, the person has died of witchcraft; but if the bowels are swollen or blackened, either to the right or to the left, the dead man was beyond doubt himself a wizard; the swollen condition indicates clearly the presence of the two serpents which were the source of his secret powers. Any suspicion that was formerly entertained against him is now confirmed, and his heirs may find themselves involved in demands for reparation.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

754 789 In 1922 a sorcerer got into the house of the chief Kaloso, near Mwaya. The medicine which is always there brought him to a halt, and when Kaloso rose in the morning, he found him there in the form of an owl! Kaloso is one of the most intelligent chiefs I know; but he sent out word, and his people came in great numbers to see with their own eyes the owl which was a sorcerer caught in the act. The owl was not killed, for who knew what evil might be brought on the district if that were done? I suggested that it was an ordinary owl, which somehow had got into the house the previous evening. But ordinary owls, I was told, do not go into houses, while every one knows that wizards can be changed into owls by the medicine in the chief's house.

754 Sorcerers have naturally means of self-defence not available for common men. One wounded in a fight licks the wound and recovers; or if the wound is inaccessible to his lips, he takes the blood with his hand and swallows it, with the same result. One who has fallen sick of smallpox licks the pustules and recovers.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XXI

The Powers of Evil: II. Destructive Agencies

THE attack upon Society, if one may so describe it, is not confined to the kind of witchcraft dealt with in the preceding chapter. More terrifying perhaps, and certainly more dramatic, is the power which enables certain persons, also called *Abalosi* (witches, wizards), to call up lions, crocodiles, and other agencies of death, and to direct their operations. When a crocodile secures a human victim, it leaves a part for its "father," the witch or wizard. A person killed by a crocodile, but rescued when too late, is not at once buried; the body is watched to see if any token of attack by witchcraft can be detected.

More important, however, is the *umperangalamu*, the lion-maker. Let it be again noted that, as in the cases of smallpox, a long death-roll of people killed by a lion is not the act of God; God does not do such things. It is the work of an evil agent, operating for hire, or to serve his own purposes.

Sir Harry Johnston in his "British Central Africa," tells that when an attack was planned by the British forces upon a certain slave-raiding chief, a friend of

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

754 the latter, unable to send help in men, sent his son to raise all the lions and leopards in the country against the invaders. So confident were the people of the power of this man, that they did not even go out to fight until the British force was upon them; and even then they made but a faint resistance, believing that the lions and leopards would ultimately come to their aid.

At least three men who claim, or are believed to possess, this power, are alive to-day in or near the Konde country. At Deep Bay, Kayiparule is popularly supposed to have it, and at Fulirwa, not far off, Nkurunganga; both of whom now disclaim knowledge of the secret, though they boast that their fathers knew it.

Kabeta of Musomba village, in the Isoko district, is perhaps the most famous of these men. In 1920 he was hired by a man called Mwamswero to kill men, women, and children in the Nyondo district in Nyasaland. The chief Nyondo was believed to have killed the brother of Mwamswero, and had paid only three cows instead of five to the family of the murdered man. The injured family, having no remedy against the chief, determined to call in other resources, and hence the employment of Kabeta. In the year indicated, a lion killed several people in seven different villages, all belonging to the chief Nyondo, and Kabeta demanded payment. Mwamswero offered him four cows, but the lion-maker demanded five, otherwise Mwamswero himself would be the next victim. In a public inquiry, Kabeta acknowledged

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

having received the cattle, but admitted that he was 754
deceiving the people.

There is a medicine which protects those who have 754
it against these lions. Kabeta himself, on the occa- 789
sion referred to, gave medicine to the people of Chinunka, and to the son of Nyondo. To Mwakapalira of Chinunka he gave charms to put on his neck, and a rod to carry in his hand, with the assurance that these gave perfect protection to whoever carried them. One Sunday, Mwakapalira sent his two wives to the garden to get *malesi* to make beer; on the way they met some Christians, who told them that it was Sunday, and they should not do such work; but the women replied that God did not stop working on Sunday, and in any case they were adequately protected. One of the women was killed within an hour by a lion, and belief in Kabeta's charms against his own lions fell to zero.

Individual protection, however, is not enough, and when such visitations threaten, the chief usually takes measures for the public safety. The following is the method practised by the chief Mwenemusuku: his doctor takes the heart and claws of a lion, which he boils together with the flesh of the dread flying-serpent *inyifiwira;* the chief eats the heart of the lion, and is assured by the doctor that he is now himself a lion. The rest of the medicine is powdered and sent to all the headmen. These send out men to "walk the marches," bearing some of the medicine, and praying as they go:

"Ye spirits, be gracious to us. This evil that is coming upon us, we know not whence it is. If it

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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is the act of God, let it work, His house is great. But if it is the act of men, let it go where the sin is. I and mine have done nothing amiss."

As they go, they chew, for their own protection, the leaves of a shrub called *munyekomaso*, putting the chewed leaves into a small sack at the side. The common people are warned to go in certain directions only for wood and water as long as the lion is known to be about. When it approaches a village, the local headman speaks:

"You lion, if you have been sent out by men, follow where your prey leads you; if you are from God, His house is great, go where you will."

Just how much effect this has on the lion, need not, perhaps, be too closely investigated.

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There are numerous stories, which, if they do nothing else, illustrate the naïve faith of native Christians in the protecting care of God. A school inspector, going his rounds in 1920, when Kabeta's lion was about, was offered the use of the protecting drugs, but refused. "God Himself," he said, "is my protector." In 1913 an evangelist was followed for some distance by a lion, and at last turned on the brute:

"You lion," he said, "you have no master. I have a Master, Jesus Christ. I do not fear you. Do not follow me; get off in another direction";

which the lion, after roaring angrily, did! In the same year a lion was moving about on the lake shore,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

but the Christians, secure in their faith, refused to be 781
kept from their gardens. No one, so far as I heard, 797
either Christian or heathen, was killed at that time. A Christian man, walking alone through the bush, was chased by an elephant. "And God said, 'Look,' and I looked, and behold a pit; and I went down into it, and the elephant passed me by; and again God said 'Look,' and I looked, and behold in the pit a very evil snake." There the written report ends; but as I had myself seen this man holding "a very evil snake" alive in his hand, I have no reason to doubt that he acted with promptitude in the pit.

The *inguluka* is a whitish snake, about four feet 754
long, with a deadly bite. That it should exist at all 789
is bad enough; but there are sorcerers who create it for their own purposes. Mwankosore, who lives about two miles from me, is believed to possess this power. He takes the roots of the *pusi* tree, which he puts into a pot along with a powerful medicine, and in a little time a snake emerges. The secret of this medicine is known to a very few, and is guarded by word and by spell. The intending purchaser must face a guard of other snakes sent out to kill him by the makers of the drug; should he, however, kill the snakes, he is acknowledged to be a great doctor, and a supply of the medicine is given to him, for which he pays a cow.

When a sorcerer wishes to kill an enemy, he takes 754
in his hand the snake he has created, and drops it at the house of his intended victim. It immediately makes for the doomed man, strikes, and returns with

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

754 all speed to its "father." Should the victim have the good fortune to kill it, it will return to its original elements, and appear before him as a mere root of a tree.

The next class of people who possess destructive powers are the poisoners. Direct evidence is naturally hard to get, for the poisoner must act in secret. The poison need not be administered directly, though that is often done; if placed where the victim will touch it, it is enough; over the door, where it will drip on his head, or on the threshold, where he will touch it with his foot. Death will follow. In 1905 a man called Ulukamba had a quarrel with a neighbour, and sent his son to place medicine in the doorway of his enemy. Two days later a son of the latter died suddenly. The boy who placed the medicine gave away the secret, by telling some one, and Ulukamba was put to the poison test, which condemned him, and he was ordered to pay over two cows. He refused, threatened to inform the magistrate that the chief had consented to the poison ordeal, and the case had to be dropped. But the belief that he killed the boy is still firmly held by all the people of his village. There was no case against the boy who placed the medicine, as he was obeying orders issued by his father.

828 593 The destructive power of anger is firmly believed in by the Konde. To speak the name of a brother in anger, is strictly forbidden, for it may lead to his death. The process is rationalized thus: the spirits hear the words of anger, and, assuming that there is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

good reason for it, send a disease, or engineer an accident, which kills the person named. A well-known doctor, named Mwenekasangamara, now dead, was credited with wider powers. If he spoke in anger the name of any person within his family, and that was a very wide circle, that person would die. But he had the privilege of withdrawing, and so neutralizing the effect of his anger. The underlying idea is that it is contrary to God's law to speak evil of dignities; if the person spoken against, like Mwenekasangamara, heard of it, his anger would be aroused, and the spirits would come to his support.

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A daughter who despised her father, might be punished with barrenness if her father so desired. Mwenekasangamara imposed this punishment on a married daughter, and the curse was not removed until she had made proper atonement, and soon afterwards her infirmity was corrected. Another well-known case is that of a man called Songwe, living at Lupembe, whose daughter aroused his wrath to such a degree that he called upon his ancestors to destroy her. She became ill the same day, and died the next. This was in December, 1912. In the light of modern psychological beliefs, there is nothing impossible in the story.

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XXII

Sickness & Medicine

757 THE Konde possess a surprisingly wide knowledge of the uses of herbs. I have in my possession a collection of over a hundred specimens of leaves and roots, brought to me by the doctors who used them, and who described to me the disease for which each was a cure, and the manner of applying the drug. Knowledge of these plants is handed down from generation to generation. In a prayer to be given presently, the doctor pleads that he has not departed from the knowledge of his ancestors, as a reason why he should be assisted now; an attitude which is not, perhaps, a guarantee of progress, but certainly is a guarantee of honesty. The knowledge is quite real so far as it goes. I was myself in 1912 cured instantaneously of a raging toothache by an old native doctor, and two years passed before the trouble returned. The old man boiled in water some rootlets of a tree which grows in the neighbourhood, and the liquid, when cool, was applied to the tooth with a leaf, when the pain vanished as by magic. A few years later another doctor undertook to cure me of a severe attack of neuritis, but I preferred the attentions of a European doctor; a decision which I

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

have often regretted, not because the European did not cure me, but because I missed an opportunity of testing the native. 757

A European well known in the country told me recently that in 1901 he was cured of black-water fever by a native doctor on the Zambesi. Water boiled with roasted rice was given him in large quantities, and a small sack, filled with boiled leaves of a tree not known to me, was bound around the abdomen. His recovery was rapid, and he has himself successfully used the same cure in other cases. Another European was cured of persistent dysentery by an old native doctor.

Doubtless there is much pretence; drugs are administered without real knowledge; but in the main the doctors are honourable men, fulfilling an important place in the life of the community, relieving much pain, and achieving striking successes, which are too well authenticated to admit of doubt. That in many cases they ruin the patient for life, is unfortunately also only too true. But however that may be, they have not forfeited the confidence of the people. The advent of the scientifically trained European doctor has diminished indeed, but by no means destroyed, the influence of his African confrère in science. Hundreds still consult the native doctor, many in preference to, and not a few after having tried, the white man's medicine. A medical friend of mine tells a good story against himself. He was asked by one of his own employees for the loan of two shillings; but the applicant was most unwilling to tell what the 759

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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A PROHIBITIONIST.

When food runs low, it is the duty of the chief to prevent undue consumption. The man in the picture has been sent out to prohibit the eating of bananas before a fixed date. He is wearing bamboo beaver and calabashes. Sun-shade he carries a wooden club and a bandolier.

[FACING p. 272]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

759 money was to be used for. It came out, however, that it was to pay a native doctor, to whom he was taking his wife for consultation! The native's fee was two shillings. The fee at the dispensary would not have been one-tenth of that sum, but the patient preferred the high fee and the unqualified adviser. Nor is this surprising, when it is remembered that so much of the troubles which afflict the native, are believed to be due to the interference of spirits, with which the European doctor will have nothing to do; while the Konde doctor will consult them as part at least, if not the whole, of his diagnosis. Hence the confidence in him. He is in touch with the sources of the trouble.

759 And this same conviction, that the native doctors
789 are in touch with the sources of the trouble, leads to some of the most foolish beliefs of the common people, and of the most mischievous practices of the doctors. It is the source of the absurd confidence in the power of medicine to turn bullets into water, for example. In 1897 medicine was prepared which would cause the white man, in what was then the Neu Langenburg area, to disappear. It is believed by many natives with whom I have been in touch, that some doctors are seeking for a "formula" to-day, which will succeed where the previous one so obviously failed; suggestive of a state of mind similar perhaps to that of our own alchemists of centuries ago; but suggestive also of a desire, at least in some quarters, to see the last of the white man.

759 Both the gathering of herbs, and the administration
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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

757 782 of the medicine, is a religious act. Mwenekasangamara, the doctor referred to in the previous chapter, used the following prayer, when gathering herbs; it was given to me by his son, who got it from his father. And Mwenekasangamara claimed that it had descended through many generations in his family.

> "Be merciful to me, thou Creator. The medicine which I am seeking is the same that my fathers sought, and it was Thou that didst open their eyes. Show me the roots, and I shall know them. But if my patient is not to recover, hide them from me, and I shall know that it is Thy will."

The following, used when medicine is being administered in a case of ulcer that has resisted treatment, is rather a statement than a prayer:

> "If this disease has come from God, medicine will heal it; for God, who made us, made also the trees, and gave us intelligence to know their properties. But if it has come from men, I cannot heal it."

The last sentence means that witchcraft or the anger of a spirit is at the root of the trouble, and steps must be taken to discover the facts. Then, but only then, the ulcer will yield to treatment.

789 But behind both the prayer and the medicine, or at any rate in addition to them, there is something else. There are certain medicines which are never administered to patients; their function is to give power to the doctor himself; administered to a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 patient, they would almost certainly kill him, for it is very probable that a patient who believed that he had taken one of these by mistake or otherwise, would die of sheer fright.

825 278 The *isyifuira* is a fiery flying-serpent, which lives in pools, and turns the waters red; climbs trees, which thereupon break out into flame, but are not consumed; chases its prey for five miles, and lucky is he whose heels are light enough to escape; and finally, when dead, its body is made into the most powerful drug in the Konde Pharmacopœia. It gives authority to chiefs, and skill to doctors and diviners, and the common man who obtains possession of a tiny quantity is assured of success and riches. To tell the ordinary heathen Konde that all this is fable, is like telling very good and not necessarily unintelligent persons of a few generations ago, that there was no devil, with horns and hoofs and a tail!

Only the biggest doctors undertake to kill this monster when a fresh supply is called for. And even they, before beginning, protect themselves and their assistants with a great variety of other drugs, not so dangerous to obtain. The creature having been located in some pool or other, a small hut is built at a great distance, into which in the past a slave was put, to-day a sheep or a goat. The hut is now clayed over, and closed on all sides, the clay being thickly planted with sharp knives, and the whole sprinkled plentifully with a powdered food, of which the snake is very fond. All being ready, a swift runner is sent to the pool, a bell in his hand, the ringing of which attracts the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

825
278

snake. It emerges from the pool, with a *hu hu* sound, and the runner flies for his life towards the hut, pursued by the snake. Attracted by the sprinkled food, it climbs all over the hut, and is cut to pieces on the knives. After a little, and usually at night, the doctor in charge goes out to reconnoitre, and, finding the dead body, sends to tell all the surrounding chiefs and big doctors; who come, protected by a powerful prophylactic, for even the dead *isyifwira* can kill the unprotected. Each chief gets a portion of the flesh, a large share going to Chungu, who in turn distributes it to his leading subordinates and doctors. The blood is collected and sold, a small portion for a cow, to smaller men, who have no natural right to it.

The dread in which this medicine (*ifingira* it is now called) is held by the common people, is extraordinary. At Karonga in 1923 a man was accused of attempting to poison another. On his person was found a small packet done up in bark-cloth, which no native in the court would touch; and when the magistrate took it into his hands and proceeded to open it, the court was cleared in an instant. Whether it was the medicine made from the *isyifwira* snake, I do not know; but it undoubtedly belonged to that class of medicines.

Illnesses may be due to natural causes, which the native calls God. They yield to treatment without any ceremony. The prayer already quoted indicates the Konde attitude to such diseases. Secondly, illness may be due to witchcraft, and then there is no hope of cure until the sorcerer has been outwitted by 753

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

753 the use of both drugs and ceremonies. Next, the action of the spirits brings on diseases, and until the cause of their anger has been dealt with, no doctor will undertake to cure the patient. Wounds or injuries in battle, by falling trees, by attack of animals, or by any other means, may be due to any of the above causes.

759 The doctor may be a man or a woman. The fee varies from about a farthing to a sixty shilling cow, and the manner of payment varies also. In some cases payment precedes treatment; in others, it follows; and in still others the degree of cure effected decides the amount to be paid.

757 In what follows, no attempt is made at scientific classification; rather a rough grouping of symptoms guides the sequence of items. Medicines are usually administered in beer or in milk, hot or cold, according to the disease which is being treated. And the place where the decoction is drunk is very important; in snake bite, for instance, it is fatal for the patient to go inside the house before the medicine has been taken which it is hoped will save his life. A native Christian was, in 1913, suspended from ordinances for drinking medicine while seated on a banana stem at a place where two paths met.

828 Mental troubles of various kinds are treated, and
757 not, I am assured, without success in some cases.
278 *Maya* is grief, due to any cause. It is treated by giving an infusion of a plant called *ssalv*, not unlike parsley in appearance. The result is great cheerfulness in the patient, due, no doubt, to exhilarating qualities in

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

the plant. *Ipingu* is sadness, or anger. The parents or relatives of an absent friend, having no news of him for some time, give way to grief or anger, and the emotion causes illness in the absent one. The latter goes to the diviner to learn why he is ill, and is told. The leaves of a plant called *inyekenyeke* are pounded and boiled in water, and the infusion drunk, the patient saying in the presence of the doctor:

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> "Let the words of those people fall back upon them. I have spoken no evil; I am not a hard man. God and the spirits behold me. May I get sleep."

Minyenya is nightmare. The actual meaning of the word is *ancestors*, and the bad dreams are due to their action. It is cured by an infusion of the plant *kateteya*, taken while repeating the incantation: "We drive you away, you who trouble us. Leave our friend that he may sleep." *Amabelu* is disobedience to parents or relatives. Take the fruit of *imbangala* and *manyu*, and add the flesh of the fish *ingumba*; reduce to a powder, and mix with beer in a small calabash. This the disobedient one is forced to drink three or four times, nothing being left in the calabash. I have no doubt at all that most children find obedience less obnoxious than the mixture. Similar success attends the use of a drug made from the *mulombwa* tree. The *kasoka* is a tiny creature which covers itself with scraps of grass, and moves by using its head as a lever. It is a sovereign remedy, when mixed with other drugs, for madness, as well as for that form of madness which

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

828 makes a woman unfaithful to her husband. For
757 *impulamutu*, a brain trouble which makes the sufferer
278 strike his head against trees or other hard objects, there is a cure, but I have not discovered what it is. For dizziness, an infusion is made from the roots of the *kalemerera* plant, and the patient first drinks, then washes his face with, the infusion. Epilepsy is treated with a mixture made from the roots and leaves of many plants. The mouth is forced open if necessary when the drink is being administered. Natives assert that cures are effected, but I know of no cases that have been cured.

757 There is no disease more common among the
278 Bantu peoples than ulcers, sores, abscesses. The common *kironda* is treated with a wash made from the infusion of pounded *burungo* leaves. If it does not yield to treatment, it is due to witchcraft or spirits, and in either case the necessary preliminaries must be gone through. A special form of this disease is found when the ulcers break out on the breast or in the mouth. The diseased part is washed with an infusion of *indobo* bark, and another infusion is taken internally twice a day for a few days. A more malignant form is called *ndoroka*, for which the leaves of the plant *kanga* are infused, and applied as for *kironda*, with the same ceremonies, if a cure is not effected within a reasonable time. *Mpenga* is a slightly different form of *ndoroka*. *Kabimba* is something of the nature of an inside tumour which must be let out. Roots of the *tubimba* shrub are reduced to a dry powder, spread on the leaf of the *sutugutu* tree, and bound to

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

the place with a cord made from fibre of *kabumbu*; 757
in about ten minutes the swelling will burst and the 278
matter escape. The same results follow from binding the place with cord made from *unguluka* shrub. Gourds are often used instead of leaves, and are tied on with cords passing through holes bored in the sides of the gourd. For syphilis (*kasuendi*) the roots of the *indabi* shrub are infused and drunk, and a powder made from *indobo* shrub is rubbed into the wounds or sores.

Kitasya is intussusception of the bowels, found mostly in children, and usually fatal. When one child after another in a family dies, an examination is made of the bowels, bamboo knives being used for the operation. If *kitasya* is indicated, the parents drink an infusion made from the leaves of a creeper called *inguiuka*, which is taken with beer. Then the bed is turned so that the head is where the feet were. The woman wears on her neck, tied up in a piece of bark, a section of the plant from which the infusion is made. But in giving this medicine, as in many others, the doctor will say, "This medicine is not mine; it is God's; He must work in you." When another child is born, the doctor is called to give it medicine, and to shave its head. The fee is a cow; and a hoe is paid when the child reaches the age of three.

For other internal conditions, a mere enumeration 757
must suffice. Internal pains, dysentery, diarrhœa, constipation, worms, vomiting, indigestion, and wasting diseases are all treated in similar fashion, each having its own specific drug or mixture of drugs.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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278

Fever, if due to natural causes, is treated with the infusion of the leaves of *amafumbo;* if due to the action of the spirits, a prayer for mercy is added. *Sekema* is malaria with headache. The patient must sit in the open, where he can see the sun, and drink from a closely woven basket an infusion of *lusisigembe;* and in some cases the extracted juice of *moromoro* is put into one ear. There is a "general sickness" called *bukanya*, due to witchcraft. To neutralize the witchcraft, the whole body is washed with an infusion of *ulukanganunya*, and a drink is given made from the leaves of the *mungwina* tree. Severe burning is generally believed to be the work of the spirits if it occurs at night, and it is at night that most burns occur. The native is a heavy sleeper, and he lies with his feet stretched out towards the fire. A brand falls upon a foot, and he is burned before he has properly awakened; but it was the work of the spirits, who have now to be placated with cloth, or a goat, or a fowl. Then the burned parts are smeared with the honey of a small insect called *umunya*, and washed with the infusion of the leaves of the *kasambanya* shrub. Scalding is treated with castor oil.

Muscular pains like *ikiraso* and *ilyuru*, which are probably pneumonia and rheumatism, are treated first as due to natural causes, and if this fails, witchcraft is assumed to be the cause, and steps taken accordingly. Prayer is offered, if the following can be called prayer:

"You *kiraso*, if you have come from God, the medicine will cure you. If you have been sent by

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

men, are not they also flesh? They fail, they die; but first they kill us. Let this disease fly away from me." 757 278

An infusion of the roots of *indobo* tree already mentioned, is now given to the patient.

Diseases of the eyes, ears, teeth, gums are also treated. A list would be tedious, and a detailed statement there is no space for. Enough to say that a person qualified for the task could write a good-sized book on the subject of native medicine. There are, however, still some diseases and practices of which some brief account must be given.

Snake bite. Naturally in a land where snakes are numerous, antidotes are in use, and are claimed to be successful. The roots of *kisongora* infused and drunk, are said to be a sure remedy, if taken in time. A rich man, however, would not be advised to take this alone, for his riches bring him under suspicion of being a sorcerer, and the snake may have bitten him by command of his jealous fellow-sorcerers. To overcome this an incantation must be used.

"May you be defeated! The goods I have, I stole from no man. They are my own. This is true, as God sees me."

Another remedy is the root of *kitumbo*, the infusion mixed with soot from the inside of the house. The mixture must be drunk outside, for if the patient goes in he will die. A method favoured by other doctors is to hold the part bitten over a fire to which has been added the leaves of the *nukwesi*, a large tree. Presently

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

757 the fang will drop out, and the man will be saved!
278 There are men living near me who claim to have seen this being done.

844 The birth of children is accompanied by loving care, gross superstition, and much medical treatment, useful or otherwise. All women at that time are given a drink of *indobo* leaves, pounded and mixed with water. If the placenta has not come away satisfactorily, castor oil is given. And if pain supervenes, the bark of *indobo* is again given, pounded and mixed with water. For a child weak at birth, roots of *unsuba* and *mungwina* are taken, pounded, mixed with water, and the child is washed in the
842 mixture. Sterility in man or woman can be removed by the right drugs; and when a woman is getting on in years and wishes no more children, a mixture is in
847 use which will have the desired effect. Medicines for producing abortion are widely known, and
832 frequently used, as also are love potions.

757 Steaming is resorted to in cases of great pain or weakness. Water is cooked in a large pot, with the bark of *mparampara* added. When the pot has boiled, it is taken off the fire, and the patient, covered with a mat, kneels over it, supported if very weak, for about ten minutes. Massaging also is employed when one is very tired, the leaves of *muyoka* being pounded to give a juice for lubrication, or, as the people themselves say, to get into the body through the pores. Cupping is employed for headache and rheumatic pains. Eight cuts are made in two lines, on each side of the head; a small horn is put over the cuts; a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

vacuum is created by suction, and the hole in the horn closed with beeswax. In about a quarter of an hour the cup is removed. Pain in the eyes, legs, back, is so treated.

Smallpox, the most dreaded of all scourges, has already been dealt with under "Worship" and "Witchcraft," and all that is here necessary is to indicate what is done for the cure of patients. An infusion made from the roots of *ikanganunya* and *sambwe* is given to drink, and the body is washed with the same mixture. The pustules are opened with the thorns of *unsuba*. But more important than the medicine is a clear conscience in the patient; and prayer to the spirits and confession of sins must be made before the medicine is administered. The father, in the presence of all the family, says: "My son has smallpox; let us be at peace; whoever has anything against him, let him declare it." Any matters against the sick man are now inquired into. It may be a debt, or a quarrel, or a charge of impudence in the case of a boy. The sick man is also questioned, and makes his confession, usually of misconduct with girls, who are forbidden to approach the house. If married women are involved, neither they nor their husbands may come near. A prayer for the removal of the disease is now offered by the family representative, at the door of the house in which the patient lies, and the prayer is accompanied by the usual squirting of water from the mouth, which is never omitted. The medicine may now be administered to the sick man. A prophylactic is used by all the other members of the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

755 family who have not had smallpox, but it is evidently not greatly trusted, for it is used with the formula, "Protection against smallpox is unknown, but let us try. If God and the spirits agree we shall be safe." After this ceremony there must be no quarrelling. Peace in the village is a condition of immunity from the disease.

757 In a considerable number of cases incisions are made in the skin, and powdered medicine rubbed in. This is done for general pains, rheumatism, backache, elephantiasis, toothache, spleen. For toothache, if the pain is in the right side of the face, incisions are made between the great and second toes of the left foot, and the powder rubbed in; if the pain is in the left, the powder goes in the same way into the right foot.

763 *Post mortems* are still conducted in all cases where there is any doubt as to the cause of death. Until quite recently no one was buried without examination, and in some districts that is still the case. The operation is performed at the graveside by the friends of the dead man, the actual operator being as a rule a near relative. If a black substance is found in the gall-bladder, a diviner is consulted, to find out who brought on the disease. If the examination of the gall-bladder yields no result, the heart is examined. Ulcers on that organ indicate witchcraft as the cause of death; fat indicates leprosy. Next, the intestines are examined; if *mafira* (pus) is found there it indicates a kind of rheumatism accompanied with boils. The examination being over, the parts removed are

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

restored to their places, and the body is buried; and 763
all who had any part in the operation drink medicine to protect them from the disease from which the man died.

For wounds in battle an infusion of the roots of 752
kamemena is given to cause vomiting, in case there is 278
blood in the stomach. The wounds are washed with an infusion of *impigi* roots, and bound with leaves of *untugutu*, fresh dressings being applied every day until the wounds are healed.

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XXIII

Wonder Medicine

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NOT that the Konde wonders; he wonders at the achievements of the European; but his own far greater marvels do not rouse his curiosity. They are part of the order of Nature, and no more matter for surprise than the effects of medicine administered directly to a patient. Through long generations they have known men who had power to stop the rain, or to cause the wind to blow, or to do other things which common men cannot do. Where is the difficulty in believing these things? Is it true that the white man does not even believe what he sees taking place before his eyes? "*Imbulabuta ye syala*," the ear is a deceiver, indeed, but you must either believe what you see *before you, or give up all* pretence of sanity. Coincidence! It is just as easy to say God, and a great deal more sensible; for it is God who gives to each man his powers; to one, power to cause the wind to blow; to another, power to bring lions and leopards; to another, power of witchcraft, and so on. In every case medicine is used, but, to repeat what was said in the preceding chapter, "God, who made man, made also the trees, and gave us intelligence to know their properties."

One of my native friends, when on a journey,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

chews, as he goes, a certain root; and he fears no wild animal, for none will come near him. The secret has been in his father's family for generations, and not one of them was ever killed by a wild animal. Another incises powdered medicine into his wrists and ankles, and he is absolutely free from danger of snakes. Nor has it ever been heard of that a man wearing certain charms on his ankles while crossing a river, has been taken by a crocodile. Men have been taken by crocodiles from time to time, but they were either too poor to buy this charm, or too foolish to wear it. It is all law, though the Konde knows nothing about what we call law. Get the right medicine, and the desired result is sure: that is law. Perform the correct ceremonies, and what you ask for will come, as sure as water will come through an open pipe: that also is law. But it does not follow that the native will accept anything that is offered him as a charm. He must know who made it, where the maker got his knowledge, what is his ancestry. Any proof will not do. It must be proof that will satisfy the Konde; and that is by no means what would satisfy a white man. But the obstinacy with which the white man refuses to believe in things that to the African are so obvious as hardly to call for explanation, is part of the reason why still the latter has doubts as to the perfect sanity of the European. One who does not comprehend the obvious is mentally below par.

In preceding chapters native beliefs and practices in regard to various illnesses, agriculture, war, lions, hunting and fishing, have been indicated.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

535
764

A Death Dance

The dance is in honour of the dead person, and is not seldom an over-strained copy of exercises let loose. If spear and shield are carried, fighting may take place, ending in wounds and death, especially if the funeral of a chief, who should not go to his ancestors unattended.

[facing p. 288]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 One of the commonest charms is called *isigita*, and is worn on neck, wrist, or ankle, as a protection against snakes, crocodiles, lions, or leopards. It guards also against sore eyes, ulcers, evil spirits. This powerful charm, the description of which reads like a patent medicine advertisement, is made as follows: take dry *papaw* or *mphiyi* roots, reduce to powder, add powdered head of *kitumbi* snake, and a piece of *mphiyi* root; set the whole to boil on the fire in a broken pot. Then cut the roots into four pieces, string them on cords, leave two such cords in the house, and carry another wherever you go. If bitten by a snake, chew quickly at the charm, and then bind it on the wound.

When crossing a river, this charm, strung as before, is tied to the legs, the four pieces in this case hanging at about three inches from each other. Numerous other charms are used for the same purpose, but the one I have described is the favourite.

[755] Children suffering from mumps take small bundles of firewood, and lay them at the cross-roads, where the first passer-by will pick up the disease, and the children will immediately recover.

A youth who finds himself unpopular with maidens, goes to the doctor, who incises a powder between the eyes in the forehead. His unpopularity will assuredly pass away, as will that of a girl similarly treated. An older man who is disliked or distrusted by his fellows, has a different medicine incised into the same place, and with equal success. But, more valuable still, a man who is involved in a lawsuit, before either the magistrate or the local chief, or who wishes to gain

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 the favour of the white man for any reason, can be supplied with a charm which will secure the end he has in view. For a few moments after the interview begins, he chews at the charm, then removes it from his mouth, trusting for the rest to what has been incised in his forehead. A favourable result may be confidently expected.

789 Thieving charms are also in use, and men who operate under such protection are called *balebi*. A
674 drug unknown to me is tied up in a leaf, and thrown on to the roof of the house to be robbed, and also at the door, to make the inmates sleep. The thieves enter, either by opening the now facile door, or by digging; and immediately place another drug under the heads of the sleeping owners of the house. "May they sleep heavily; may they dream dreams," is their incantation. Another medicine is worn on the wrists. So bold are the robbers thus protected that, when they have removed everything they wish, they awaken the sleepers, and demand food (which is given to them), without fear of being recognized; but it is not perhaps surprising, considering the fear in which these criminals are held, that the victims never admit that they recognize the thieves.

The house, however, may be protected. Powdered root of *ikitobo* is spread all over the house, and any thief who enters will have sores breaking out on his lips, a thing which happens only to thieves who have ignored this charm.

789 Kondeland should be a paradise for debtors, for the
426 man who knows the ropes can arrange to put off pay-

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 ment so often that finally it is either not paid at all,
426 or paid when it is quite convenient for the debtor to do so. To secure this desirable result the debtor, when he learns that his creditor is coming to demand payment, slips out into the bush, where he gets the roots of a plant called *butini*, which he chews as the creditor approaches. A most amiable conversation ensues, at the end of which the creditor begs his friend on no account to disturb himself about the small matter that lies between them: any other time will do just as well, and he will be delighted to call again in a couple of months or so. The same end is attained by incising a powder into the forehead between the eyes.

789 Hunting medicines have already been referred to.
224 One is incised along the bone from the thumb to the elbow; another is taken internally, but this latter is
763 dangerous, because it leads to a lingering death. When death draws on, instead of dying as common men do, the whole body of the hunter who drinks this medicine becomes helpless; the heart keeps going, the lips move and talk; death does not come. Then his friends come and sing to him: "*Ndembo ryaya mmiyembo*," the elephants are among the trees. The sick man, puffing out his cheeks, emits breath with a whirring sound, which is supposed to resemble a sound made by elephants, and presently he breathes his last.

755 But there are few ills, imaginary or otherwise, for which there are no cures, imaginary or otherwise: and the cautious hunter, finding old age creeping on him, and his hunting days becoming a thing of

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

memories and yarns, eats food made from the flour of a pumpkin, which destroys the virtues of his hunting medicines, and at the same time takes away all probability of his death being the prolonged weariness it would otherwise be.

Fishing nets are drugged to ensure a good catch; but here again caution must be exercised, for a very great catch is an omen of a very large family, which is not always an ambition held by the Konde people.

The mother who has just given birth to a child must not cook food, nor may she warm herself at the common fire; a small fire is kindled for her at which she sits by herself; and when the child goes out of the house for the first time a medicine is put into its mouth to guard it against the ills of the world into which it has come.

Christians do none of these things; but Christians are not as other people. They have passed away from the fear of spirits and from the dread of a world in which anything may happen at any moment; and the fact that they escape the consequences of failure to follow custom is having its effect on the common people, many of whom are cautiously experimenting to see whether they too may live a freer and more unshadowed life; but the belief in the protective powers of such things as I have been describing dies hard.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XXIV

Death & Burial

761 AMONG the Konde, as among other Bantu peoples, no man dies "unwept, unhonoured, or unsung." However contemptible he may have been in life, he has now passed to a sphere in which he is clothed with fresh powers, which, for good or ill, he can direct upon his living descendants, who take care to give no cause of offence. He cannot, however, punish them for any evil they may have done him while alive; only *post mortem* sins can be visited upon them: neglect of ceremonies, refusal of beer at the funeral, omission of his name when prayer is made, and other tokens of forgetfulness. And the power for harm of each spirit is limited to his own descendants; but chiefs, naturally, can bring misfortune upon the whole of the community over which they ruled in life.

763 765 Immediately a man has died, his eldest child, son or daughter, unless an infant, begins the mourning.

"Alas, my father, I too have met trouble!" Then the women, "Ah! trouble comes to you as to others." Next the leader, "My father, my lion, my leopard," naming all the strong and fierce animals to which the dead man is compared; the women say, "Now indeed you are poor"; and the boy replies, "Yes, my

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

mothers, my strength is gone, my hope is broken. 763
How poor am I among men!" If he is a boy he is 765
now taken by a kindly relative and put outside, and told not to weep like a woman. During all this time, and perhaps for three days to come, the drum is beating; a slow tum tum at first, but rising later to a more furious noise, which goes on night and day until the mourning is over.

The women now take up the tale, and one goes 765
over all the virtues of the dead, a long wail from the others following upon each statement. Day by day this goes on, as new parties come to the mourning. The women smear their bodies and their faces with clay, and wear bands of banana fibre or of palm leaf on ankles, wrists, and forehead. The men, at the death of an important person, carry spear and shield.

In the meantime some relatives have gone to dig 764
the grave, and others are dressing the dead man for burial. The body is washed, a man's body by men, and woman's by women, and dressed in *mawyta* (body rings), anklets, wristlets, and finally swathed in as much cloth as his relatives can afford to buy, only the eyes being left uncovered. Before the dressing, however, the body is oiled, and if the dead man was a warrior, his *isambanjusi* (feather head-dress) is placed on his head.

The women now take up the body, and carry it 763
through the village, wailing as they go. Having shown the dead man for the last time around the familiar haunts of his life, they lay him down near the grave, where mats are spread to receive him. Now the *poet*

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

763 *mortem* takes place, though in the neighbourhood of Missions and Magistracies the practice is beginning to die out. Only the operators are present, and when it is over the others approach again. The brothers or 764 near relatives of the dead man go down into the grave and receive the body from other relatives who hand it to them. It is not placed in the bottom of the grave, but in a cavity dug into the side, the entrance to which is closed with a bamboo door, before the soil is filled in. The body faces towards the original home of the dead. If the dead man possessed cattle, a curious ceremony now takes place. A cow is brought, and made to look into the grave where her late owner lies, her head being forcibly bent if necessary. The cow is now the property of the spirits, and must never be given away or sold out of the family. Little children of the dead man are handed across the grave, and older children leap over it, and then pull themselves, in a sitting position, over the soil which is presently to be filled in. If this ceremony is properly performed, the dead parent will not disturb the children by nightmares. Its omission is an insult to the dead; but the practice is being abandoned by the more progressive sections of the community. It is at this point that the parting address, given in the chapter on "The Spirits," is spoken. When the soil is filled in, a cutting of *indala* tree is placed at head and foot, to mark the grave.

764 All who took any part in the burying must now 763 wash in running water, which carries off the pollution; and carries off also the danger of the disease

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which killed the man passing over to those present 764
at the funeral. Those who performed the *post mortem* [783]
take medicine as well. The funeral ox or cow is now killed, and the flesh divided among the various groups. The next stage is to "disinherit" the dead man, to cut him off from all connection with earthly matters. His mats were buried with him; now his bananas are cut down, his hoes are taken to the grave and the hafts broken, while all baskets and pots are destroyed and left to rot there. His cattle go to his heirs, and his [587]
wives build themselves huts in which they live for a year, "covering the footsteps of the dead man"; after which they also go to the heirs. (Much of this is now falling into disuse, especially around Karonga.) The dead man has been dissociated from the living: the bananas grow again, but they are not his; his house may be occupied, but he has only the rights of a ghost in it; and in many places the house is left to decay as soon as the funeral is over, and the wives have built themselves huts not far off. But the belief also prevails, side by side with the desire to cut off the dead man from the living, that by destroying his goods they go with him to the land of spirits.

The Konde have a strange belief, that a dead body [775]
casts no shadow; if it does, it is a sign that the spirit 766
still lingers around, and if he is not driven off, another member of the family will die soon. The most effective way of despatching him to his proper abode is to burn his body. If the diviner finds that a second death in the family is due to the reluctance of the first to go to his fathers, the body is dug up, and

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765
535

VARIOUS MOVEMENTS IN THE DEATH DANCE.

The performers advance at a run in a fixed line, then retire, waving spears, or clubs, dancing and singing, while the drums beat and their passions run high. Individuals with shout, shaw, brandishing weapons, and other movements are leaving the death song in or near the house of the deceased.

[facing p. 296]

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

766 medicine placed in the empty grave, which attracts the lizard into which the soul of the dead man has entered. It is thus caught and burned in the grave. The parents or near relatives drink medicine, and the body is carried off by the doctor to be burned in the bush. Among the Bandali, all bodies are dug up after the flesh has rotted away, and the bones are taken into the forest, where they are placed in a sitting position against a tree and left there. A much more gruesome custom, which prevails among the Bandali, is that of keeping the bones on the verandah of the heir's house, done up in banana leaves, which are renewed as required, the bones being occasionally anointed with oil. Here and there throughout Kondeland are places called *Itage*, so named from the verb *kutaga*, to cast away. In the long past, when a man was dying, and all hope of recovery had been abandoned, he was carried to the *Itage*, placed in a sitting position, and left to die. After death the flesh was devoured by birds or beasts. Nowhere, so far as I have discovered, is this repulsive practice now followed.

765 The death dance begins as soon as the first wailing
535 is over, and continues as long as people continue coming in to mourn. The men carry spears or sticks, if the dead man was of any importance; the women have leaves or tails. When the dance has fully developed, the men form one line, and the women another, facing them. The two lines approach each other, the men raising their spears and shields, the women waving the leaves or tails; at about a yard apart they retire again, shouting or singing as the drum

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

765 beats out its monotonous noise. In the meantime
535 there may be uncontrolled persons running about, leaping, waving spears, not seldom casting a taunt, which is quickly taken up, and spears are thrown, and wounds, and even death, may be the result.

765 Sometimes the wailing takes place in the house, or in the open, just outside. It is interesting to watch
152 men and women approach the place of mourning: they come with all appearance of *sang-froid*, but suddenly emotion grips them, and they take up the wail with streaming tears. It does not occur to anyone that he should restrain himself; it was not for that that he came. Yet the recovery from this high-pitched emotion is just as rapid. There is a sudden hush, some one addresses to the widow the old, world-old, world-wide comfort, that all must die; and, amazing to relate, this is often received with laughter, not mocking laughter, but laughter intended to relieve the strain which all are feeling. Sometimes too, jesting, and even obscene language, are indulged in, with the same end in view. And as emotion rises
765 again, and this especially among the dancers, free rein
137 is given to looseness of language and gesture, and more definite evil follows in the darkness.

It is affirmed that all this looseness has arisen since the coming of the white man; but statements of the harm done by the latter are so common among the Konde and other tribes, that one may well be sceptical. The explanation given is that European government will not permit the old death penalty for adultery, and therefore it has become more common; or that

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

765 the number of cattle has increased so greatly since
837 European administration commenced, that there are many who can pay the fine imposed; or again, that since civilized government will not permit the fighting that used to take place, the emotion generated has to find other outlets.

765 As parties from a distance come to the mourning, they go first to the "owner" of the dead, and offer their sympathies. In return they are given a long account of the progress of the disease, and of the measures that were taken by relatives to prevent death. A man approaching a widow, will sit at a distance of about a yard to offer his condolences, but a woman throws her arms around the neck of the bereaved.

762 The Konde do not attach the same value to life as we do, and suicide is not uncommon. I have known of suicide due to small money troubles, loss of a lawsuit, continued poverty, prolonged illness, leprosy, quarrels at home, and finally to disappointment in love; this last, I am told, only on the part of the man; a woman disappointed in love does not commit suicide. For people who die by their own act, there is less mourning than for an ordinary death, and the parting words at the graveside are not the same; "since it was by your own desire that you went." The spirits require an explanation from every one who comes to them in this way; but any answer seems to satisfy them. Ordinarily the new-comers are received with the words, "Come and rest." This information comes from persons who "died" and returned, though a more common belief is that the dead do not return.

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

Lepers are now buried like ordinary persons. But in the not very distant past, they were placed in a sitting position against a tree, and so left to be devoured. No one of those who carried the body looked behind, lest he also should be "caught" by the disease. 766

About a month after the funeral, the beer feast takes place. A small quantity is taken to the grave, and the dead man is addressed, and bidden again to go to his ancestors. "Take this beer as an offering to them. The ox that we have killed is also for them." The day is given up to eating and drinking, with intervals of wailing, the men in the open, the women in the house of the heir, or near relative of the dead man. 765

The ceremonies for women and children are similar to those described. A small chief, near Karonga, who was utterly neglectful of his mother during her life, impoverished himself in the splendour of her funeral. The grave was completely lined with expensive cloths, and the body was decked out as it never had been in life. The man's grief was genuine; or if it was not grief, it was fear of what the old lady, with her renewed powers, might do, if he did not attend to her now that she was dead. 764

When the mourning is over, all the friends of the dead man shave their heads. Omission of this ceremony involves the careless one in a quarrel with the departed. 765 302

Here and there throughout the country ancient customs survive which have been dropped by the majority of the people. In many places the entrance of the heir upon his new position is accompanied by 768

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

768 strange ceremonies. He is taken hold of by the men, and the wives of the dead by the women, and put into the house, the women being told that this man is now their husband. Presently they come out again, and the man is garlanded with leaves, and his head covered with ashes. When all have washed in running water or in the lake, another ceremony must be gone through. Bananas and small beans are roasted, and the company, led by the doctor, move out on their hips to the road, where the doctor digs a small hole, into which he inserts a banana, and into the banana a bean. One by one the people come up, and stooping down, eat the banana without touching it with their hands, a fresh banana being placed for each until all have eaten. Next, with a white fowl and a bunch of bananas, all go to the stream or the lake, where the fowl and the bananas are dipped twice, and each goes in on hands and knees, completely submerged, turns right round, and comes out again. The wives now go each to her father, to inform him that they have a new husband, and the latter sends to each of his fathers-in-law a gift of a hoe.

In the family of the Nyangomale, the heir washes all the children of the deceased, big or little, by pouring water upon their outstretched hands, himself keeping as far off as he can, for none of the water must touch him. He and his new wife, or wives, are now bound together by the thumbs with bark-cloth, and go to the stream, where they wash, and throw away the bark-cloth which bound them. A feast follows.

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

The Bakifuna go to the stream to wash, garlanded with flowers, and carrying a small stone. Flowers and stone are thrown into the stream after the washing, and the company re-enter the house. The doctor takes water and pours it on the roof, upon which all come out one by one, the water dripping on each as he or she passes. Anointed with oil, they all go to the place of burial, where, resting on elbows and knees, they draw themselves along the grave, slightly disturbing the soil as they go. The hair is then cut, and the feast follows. 768

When a chief is *in articulo mortis*, his headmen and his wives are present, and he is addressed, while still living, as common men are addressed at the graveside. "Go to God and the spirits; go to your fathers (naming them). Rest there, and tell them what is happening here above." 766 643 622

After he is dead, the nails of his fingers and toes are clipped, and his hair cut, and given to the doctor, who will make medicine with them to prevent the disease which killed the chief passing over to others. The dead man is now dressed as common men are dressed for burial, but much more elaborately, and, if he is a relative of Chungu, he is placed in a sitting position in the house, where his wives and headmen embrace him for the last time. If he is a very important chief, like Chungu, his death is not yet announced to the people.

Meantime a cow has been killed at the place where the body is to be buried, and the headmen dig the grave, usually by night, if intimation has not been

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

766 made that the chief is dead. The body is brought
to the grave by the headmen, and the dead cow is
643 lowered in first; then the chief, in a sitting position,
622 facing the Sango country, if that was his original home.
Torches are used if the night is dark. When the grave
is filled in, all partake of the medicine made from the
dead man's nails and hair. The washing ceremonies
are the same as for common men; but the widows
will not go near the men who placed the body in the
grave until the latter have given them a gift of some
kind, though the exact function of the gift is not clear.

No chief of any importance dies a natural death:
643 that is to say, however and whenever a chief dies, it is
761 assumed that some one was responsible. It is believed
that chiefs die more easily than common men, and
are more open to evil influences; but, on the other
hand, they have more powerful medicines to protect
them. When Kabeta died in 1922, all his sons and his
headmen were put to the poison test, and those who
did not vomit were compelled to pay a fine in cattle,
a token that complete confidence in the belief in evil
influences is passing away; for in earlier times the
culprit so discovered would have been attacked as he
ran, and would probably have paid the forfeit of his
own life. The easier punishment may, however, have
been due to fear of the police.

766 Twins were not exposed; but if one of them died,
the body was cast into the bush, and wailing was not
permitted, for it would cause the death of the other.
To-day the body of a twin is buried in the ordinary
way, but without wailing.

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XXV

The Brave Days of Old

LIKE the Romans and Greeks, and like many peoples at an elementary stage of civilization, the Konde place their great days in the past. It is, perhaps, a little strange that this should be so; for there can be no doubt that the presence of the white man has stirred the African everywhere to the thought of a new day for his race. But they are at the same time conscious that great things were done in the past, and among the demands made upon me by natives whom I have consulted, and who have helped me with this book, there is none more insistent than that I should include the portentous happenings of an older day.

Old and middle-aged men speak gleefully of the days of their youth; of the great deeds they did when they were boys; how they trapped more skilfully, caught bigger fish, ran faster, leaped higher than the young men of to-day. And the deterioration, they assert very emphatically, is due to the presence of the white man. Not that the latter discourages sport; on the contrary he spurs it on; but in his own way, and that is not the Konde way. The white man's way is to give prizes to the winner; the Konde

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

177 way is to give the lash to the duffers; and they claim
168 that theirs is the more effective method of bringing all up to a high standard. But thrash the ninny to-day, and he is off to the Administrative Officer to lodge his complaint, which the latter must inquire into. And hence much deterioration.

173 But these are not the facts of which they wish a
173 permanent record to be made. There are other things; things which the pagan native profoundly believes, and which Christians also believe and take pride in, though they think that the missionary will object to their holding what he probably calls silly ideas. These stories include most of the typical tales of olden times: the hero-warrior, the defier of tyrants, the mighty medicine man, the great prophet, the man who has obtained lordship over Nature in some form, and the man who controls the spirits. All these, and many more, are included among the Konde tales, and I do not place them among folk tales, for the people regard them quite differently. A folk tale is to-day, whatever it may have been in the past, either a mere diversion to pass away an idle moment, or a moral for children, or a warning for adolescents. The tales which I am thinking of are, in the native mind, records of facts, facts which they believe to be no longer achievable, but indubitably fact in the past; and no study of the native mind can be complete which does not take this into account.

I. The hero-warrior. Chungu, in his early wanderings in search of a home, came near the hill Mphande, the seat of the Simbove rulers of that day.

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

Like the English King Alfred, he determined to be his own intelligence department, and, scouting around for the best point of attack, he came upon a woman working alone in the fields, gathering *malula*, heaps of grass to be burned before the hoeing.

"Who," he asked the woman, "are the dwellers on that hill?"

"Are you a stranger here," she replied, "that you do not know that that is the hill of the Simbove?"

"I am going there now," said Chungu; "if they pursue me I will come to you, and you shall hide me in the grass heap. If they ask for me you shall say that you know nothing, and if they put you to the poison test, you will be acquitted."

Setting out again, Chungu crept up the stronghold of which he was soon to be master; but he was observed, and presently came rushing back to claim the woman's help. Scarce was the grass well over him ere his enemies broke in with threatening spears, demanding the immediate surrender of the spy. The woman boldly kept her secret, and the poison test having acquitted her, the Simbove set fire to the grass heap by which they were standing, and in which Chungu lay concealed, and went on in their pursuit. How Chungu escaped from the fire must be left to conjecture, but one remembers that he was "the man who speaks with God."

He now brought up a herd of elephants, which when the Simbove saw, they crowded out with spears to the kill; and the invading chief drove the elephants far off, so that all the men of warrior age were drawn away

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

113
773

from the defence. Next he brought up a flock of guinea-fowl, and all the old and the feeble, and the women and children, went out after them, only to be drawn away as the men were. Chungu now gave the signal to his warriors, who rushed upon the place, seized it without opposition, and beat the great drum to apprise the whole land that a new lord ruled at Mphande.

II. The defier of tyrants. Long ago there was a chief called Mwambagi. When he killed an ox, he called up all his people, bidding them cut up the animal, and cook the feast in great pots. But when all was ready, he ordered them off to their homes, and sat down to devour the food with his favourites, while the hungry people, with the savour of the well-cooked feast in their nostrils, went sadly to their homes. Next day the tyrant went round among his people.

"I hope you enjoyed the feast yesterday," he leered.

"O yes, sir," they answered, "it was very good indeed."

But there was one man, Kasunda by name, who refused to be humbugged any longer; and when one day, after the people had suffered this grievous disappointment, the chief came round to receive their hungry and disgusted plaudits, the trouble began.

"Did you enjoy the feast yesterday," demanded the chief.

"What feast?" boldly asked Kasunda. "When did you give us a feast?"

"I feasted you yesterday," said the angry tyrant.

"You may have feasted others," was the reply, "but I came back hungry."

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

The enraged bully ordered his men to arrest and bind the rebel, and throw him over a precipice called "Ikiyo." But as he was falling over, Kasunda found that the ropes that bound him untied of their own accord; and as he rolled downwards, the precipice became a gently sloping descent, over which he fell without harm. The chief was amazed. 173 773

"How has he escaped?" he anxiously asked his attendants. But they merely shrugged their shoulders.

"Call to him," said the chief, "and tell him that I have erred."

So Kasunda, unharmed by his adventure, walked up the sloping ascent, which had been a precipice, and which became a precipice again as soon as he reached the top, where the chief and his attendants awaited him. To settle the quarrel, the chief gave his daughter to Kasunda, along with four cows, and no more demanded praise for good deeds not done. "And all the people praised Kasunda, saying, 'Thank you.' Such was the cruelty of Mwambagi, and such the courage of Kasunda."

III. The people take a pride in the great doctors of the past; for it is the doctors, and not the prophets, who are the miracle workers. The Hebrew prophets sometimes appeared to control Nature, but in all cases it was the act of God, who intervened at the prayer of the prophet. In the Konde stories the doctor does not pray for Divine intervention, nor are his acts regarded as anything but the expression of his own powers.

There were two great doctors, Kasekenye and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F717 Ngonde F717

173
773

Gwasa, of equal skill, and deadly rivals in their art. One day at a beer feast, a dispute arose, in the presence of the two, as to which of them was the greater, and a challenge was issued. Gwasa made medicine, and called upon the people to observe the result. Presently the sun began to sink towards the earth, and the people cried out in terror; but at a sign from Gwasa it retreated again, and resumed its accustomed place in the heavens. It was now Kasekenye's turn. Plucking a shrub from the ground, he revealed to the astonished gaze of the people a beautiful village of the underworld, men going about, or lying in the sun, cattle feeding in the meadows, trees and rivers, hills and valleys, just as the fathers had told them of the life of the underworld. He replaced the shrub, and the vision vanished. And no man could tell which of these two wonders was the greater, that of Gwasa, or that of Kasekenye.

But trouble came upon the community. The cattle became thin, sorcerers abounded, and evil fell upon all the people; and the chief called upon the two doctors for help. Each sprinkled the ground with his chosen medicine; but Kasekenye, hoping to steal a march upon his rival, sprinkled another medicine by night. But he was punished. His body broke out into sores, and he was fain to call in his rival to cure him, and the superiority of Gwasa was acknowledged. But one minor chief was not satisfied. He called upon Gwasa to come and cure him of a pretended illness. The angry doctor, immediately perceiving the trap, threw his medicine bag against the wall of his patient's

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

house, where it stuck, and he stalked wrathfully off. 173
The gift of an ox calmed his wounded spirit, and he 773
removed the medicine bag from the wall. "Then did all men know that Gwaza was a great doctor."

IV. Occasionally others besides doctors controlled aspects of Nature. Ntindi was a great prophet, without whose advice his chief would do nothing. If he told the chief to pray, the people were called, and the sacrifices offered. If he foretold smallpox, nothing could avert it, except prayer and repentance. When he foretold war, the people got ready for fight or flight as he advised. He was unlike all other men. Biting ants left him alone; bees never stung him; snakes cleared from his path. Every one admired him. From birth to death his hair was never cut, and no word of his ever fell to the ground. To this day the people protect their houses from biting ants by sprinkling earth from his grave all around, and no ant will pass that sacred barrier, for Ntindi is their lord.

Such stories are very numerous. How did they 000
arise? It may be a vain inquiry; but at any rate they are more than mere words; they witness to something lying deep in the native mind. Were the people, or some of them, convinced that life is bigger potentially than it is in actual fact? and did they invent these stories to satisfy a craving for redemption from the commonplace? Or did they believe that there is power available for certain persons, which is denied to common men? Perhaps uncommon incidents did occur, which were worked up into their present form by unconscious literary genius. It may

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

be that we have here the dim beginnings of great works of imagination, or early forecasts of control over Nature by other forces than those of mere magic. "Trailing clouds of glory" behind them, these men have vanished from the daily life of the Konde; but they went with a reputation that not even the greater glory of the white man has been able wholly to overshadow.

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Index

Abdiki mode of fishing, 144
Abscesses, 278
Accidental death, compensation for, 88
Adultery, 90
African Lakes Corporation, 21
Agriculture, 97 ff.
Ailments and cures, 277
Amusements and games, 49, 156 ff.
Ancestors, see Spirits
Anger, 246, 268
Angoni, the, 20, 175, 176, 219
Animal flesh as food, prohibited, 99
Animals, 86, 103, 181
Ants, 127, 203, 209, 309
Arabs, the, 21, 175, 176
Arrow, 90
Arts, 147 ff.
Association football, 156
Axes, 149

Backward look, danger of the, 238
Banana grove, sacred, 197
Bananas, 19, 26, 113, 115, 158, 295, 300
Bandali, the, 18, 296
Bark-cloth, 153
Barren-cows, 62
Baskets and basket work, 142, 144, 152
Beads, 154
Beds, 27
Beer, 35, 121, 128, 144
Beer feast, 199
Bells, 149
Benediction, 74, 205
Betrothal, 51
Bird hunting, 141
Birth, 41, 182, 250
Blacksmith, the, 35, 107, 148
Boys, names of, 47
Boys' work, 48
Bread, 127
British rule, 61, 69, 71, 79, 81, 221, 255
Buffalo, 73, 134
  omens with reference to, 244
Bukukwe, 18
Bundali Hills, 18
Burial, 70, 78, 98, 173, 193, 199
  of a chief, 302
  of Chungu, 70
  prayer at, 192
Burning of church at Karonga, 92
Burning of witches, the, 255

Cannibalism, 127
Canoes, 149
Carriers, 122
Cassava, 125
Cattle, 17, 33, 56, 62, 63, 86, 109, 115, 126, 252, 294
Cattle, poisoned, 113
Ceremonies:
  betrothal, 52
  birth of twins, 46
  fishing, 142
  maize cobs, 120
  marriage, 59, 60
  war, 103, 117
Character, 30, 37
Charm, a powerful, 288

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

000 Charms, 170 ff.
Charms against lions, 265
Cheerfulness, 51, 53
Chief, the, 68
Chief, privileges and duties of a, 79
Chiefs, 19, 75
Children, 18, 38, 50, 63, 108, 111, 179, 199
attractiveness of, 41
treatment of, 50
Children's clothes, 50
Chinga, 13, 19, 68, 168, 180, 207, 304
Church at Kyimbila, the, 146
Clapping the hands, 47, 74, 99, 107, 173
Cloth, native, 147, 153
Clothes, 19, 50, 53, 134
Coal, 15
Cock crowing at night, omens, 245
Coffee, 15
Compensation, 82
Compensation for murder, 87
Concert, a, 136
Cooking, domestic, 103
Cotton, 15
Councillors, Chinga's, 69
Court, a native, 81
Cowardice, 103, 173
Cows, 107, 109
Crafts, 146
Crime, 80 ff.
Crocodile, witchcraft by, 90
Crocodiles, charms against, 287
Crops, 18, 19, 119
Cupping, 182
Cures for ailments, 177
Curses, 148

Dance, war, 171
Dances:
Amawe, 161
Ilikwete, 162
Ilimbimbi, 160
Ilimunda, 161
Dances—
Itindandale, 161
Itiwpe, 161
Ingwete, 161
Dancing, 33, 159
Dangers of the bush, 134
Daughter, punishment of a, 169
Daughter-in-law, the, 107
Dead, condition of the, 193
power of the, 191
Death, 65, 78, 88, 150, 219, 225, 240, 298
of a chief, the, 78
dance, 196
of chiefs, foretelling the, 219
Debtors, 189
Debtor of tyranny, the, 306
Deities, minor, 183
Diet, items of, 128
"Dishcloth" a dead man, 295
Disobedience, 177
Dizika, 241
Divination, 215 ff.
the author as a subject of, 227
in cases of poisoning, 235
in cases of theft, 231
methods of, 219
Diviner, the, 116, 226
Divorce, 61, 92
Doctor and his fees, 176
Doctors, 97
honesty of, 171
of old times, 307
Dog howling, omen, 245
Dogs, 115, 138, 207
Dowera, floating of the, 23, 181
Dowry, 55 ff.
Dowry cattle, 66
Dreamers, official, 74, 168, 233, 259
Dreams, 216, 248
Drum, 18
Drinking, 129
Drugs and charms, protective, 177
Drugs, powerful, 195

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Drums, 33, 35, 70, 109
Divine and powers of Chaugh, 73, 74
Dying, the, 100

Earthquakes, 115
Eating, 122 ff.
Eclipse, 182, 246
Education, 37
Eggs, 127
Elephant traps, 136
Elephants, 118, 135, 190
omens with reference to, 242
make the chief's perquisite, 138
Elmslie, Rev. Dr., 223
Epilepsy, 104, 178
European Administrative Officers, 206
Europeans, 190
prophecies concerning, 220
Evil eye, the, 238

Famine, 103, 242
Fetishes, 114
Father, the, 27, 42, 56, 96, 152
Feasts, 35, 46
beer, 103, 109
marriage, 59
of reconciliation, 88
of succession, 71
Fees for divination, 233
Fertility of the land, 18
Fever, 179
Fighting, 171
Finger-nails, 158
Firegoll, god, 187
Fires, ceremony of lighting new, 76, 95, 133, 171, 240
First fruits, 120, 242
Fish, 126
bait, 143
feet, 107
hooks, 143
nets, 144
traps, 142
Fishing, 142
nets, dragging, 131
Flies, 25
Flesh food, 126
preserving, 138
Flying serpent, fabulous, 62
Food, 32, 35, 76, 93, 101, 133
omens with reference to, 242
Forbidden things, see Prohibitions
Forewellers, 215 ff., 222
Fothringham, Monteith, 23
Fowls, 115, 245
Foxes, 245
Frogs, 120

Game laws, 135
pits, 135
Gamon, 32
football, 136
Ikimbamagwa, 137
Ilyala, 138
Ingangan, 137
Iyo kalonda, 138
Fumla wolili, 138
"*Tawa na Kalonda*," 138
of skill, 162
Garden pests, 119
chief, the, 94
Germans, the, 25, 177, 185, 207
Girl initiates, 51
Girls, occupations of, 50
names of, 48
Goats, 115
God, 24, 96, 98, 176 ff., 182 ff., 184, 224, 228, 246
Gods, minor, 185
"God's rain," 221
Gold, 25
Grandparents, 44
Graves, the, 97, 194
of dead chief, 196
Graves, as places of worship, 197
Great War, forecasts of the, 221
Greetings, 27
Grief, 176

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F7417 Ngonde F7417

Hair, cutting the, 44, 55, 100, 104, 158
Headache, 182
Heat, 17, 31
Heaven, the, 146
Hair, 20, 300
Hengo, the, 184
Herbs, knowledge of, 270
Herding cattle, 48, 109
Hero-warrior, the, 304
Hill spirits, 190
Hippo hunting, 136
Hoeing, 117
Hospitality, 245
House-breaker, 84
Housebuilding, 115
Houses, 16, 134, 180, 183
Human sacrifice, 208
Hunters, 133, 137
Hunting, division of the bag, 137
medicines, 290
season, an unsuccessful, 138
weapons, 133

Igale Hills, 19
Ikimbinde dance, 180
Ilala, the, 20
Illness, 175
Initiation, 184
Ingulube, the, 267
Insignia of chiefs, 68
Installation of a chief's successor, 71
Insults to parents, 148
Isyifuwa, the, 174
Iron, 147
Irrigation, 119
Isoko, 19
Ituna, 152
Itutu, 19

Johnston, Sir H., 13, 263
Journey, 105, 205
omens concerning a, 137

Kabura, 105, 145, 163
death of, 300
lion-maker, 164
Kalonga, chief, 280
Kamanga, the, 11
Kambwe, god, 187
legend, 13
Karonga, 17, 21, 176
chiefs, 66
Kawala, the, a cure for madness, 277
Kawelu, the, 144
Kibira, R., 18
Kidneys, 104
Kings, the, 19
chiefs, 168
Mountains, 19, 208
Kiyombo, pool at, 198
Knives, 149
Kungu fly, 107
Kyabwa Chungu, 20
Kyimbila Station, 18

Land laws, 93
Law, Gu E., 267
Lewis, Rev. R., 113
Lewuzi, 188
Lezinzu, 19
Leather work, 154
Leopard hunting, 139
Leopards, 141
Lepers, 299
Leprosy, 184
Lightning, 99, 162
Lion hunting, 140
Lion-maker, the, 163
Lions, 35, 70, 97, 100, 104, 117, 139, 195, 237
Livingstonia Mission, 17
Lizard, 200
Lot, the, 154
Lozwe or medicine leader, 172, 173, 175

Magistrate, 36
Maize cobs, 120, 125

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Malaria, 208
Manners, 105
Marengo, land of, 184
Marriage by capture, 55
  gifts, 58
  negotiations, 57
Married life, 66
Mawlo, prophet, 220
Mawlo, 18
Mbani, 168, 185
Mbeye Mountain, 19
Meals, 124
Medicine, 88, 102, 118, 133, 169, 170, 260, 276
  basket, 172
  drinking, ceremony of, 76
  used by thieves, 84, 85
  against witchcraft, 259
Mental troubles and their treatment, 276
Merere, Sango chief, 176
Mice, plague of, due to witchcraft, 257
Midwife, the, 45
Milk, 111
Milk and witchcraft, 253
Milking, 53, 110
Millet, 129
Mimicry, 49, 159
Mlozi, 23
Moir, Mr., 218
Moon, the, omen, 246
Morality, 44, 52
Morality and religion, 80
Mother, the, 42, 45, 48
  care of a, 106
Mourning, 250, 257
  for Chungu, 72
Mphande, 22, 197, 304
Mulima, the, 206
Mumps, 288
Mumsen, 167
Murder, 85, 87, 89, 104
Music, 158
Mwafongo, chief, 78, 203
Mwaisumo, chief, 117
Mwakalinga, chief, 102
Mwakaribo, 267
Mwakipesile, prophet, 220
Mwamba, 17
Mwandisi, prophet, 217
Mwangonde or Chungu, chief, 20
Mwanjebe, god, 187
Mwenkomere, sorcerer, 267
Mwenkusungumara, doctor, 269
"Mwiko," 95 ff.

Nakanjere, seer, 221
Nakelimo, 105
Names, 49
  marriage, 64
  in use for the Deity, 179
Naming the child, 47
Needles, 149
Net making, 152
Nets, 144
News, good or bad, indications of, 239
Ngoleto, god, 20, 184
Night, 33
  prohibitions connected with, 99
Nightmare, 177
Njuli, prophet, 217
Nsenya region, the, 20
Ntindi, a great prophet, 309
Nyakyusa, the, 18
Nyakyusa thieves, 82
Nyasa, L., 17

Occupations, 35
Offerings to spirits, 199
Omens and portents, 194, 237 ff.
  cock-crowing, 245
  death, 244
  dog howling, 245
  elephants, 242
  fowl, 241
  mole, 244
  moon, 246
  serpents, 239
  sun, 236

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Omens and portents—
tree falling, 240
war, 243
Omission, sins of, 98
Omnipotence, Konde idea of, 183
Overtown Institution, 187, 213
Owl, 100
Ownership of land, 93

Pango or stringed instrument, 32
Parents, insults to, 248
Penalties, 39
Pipes, burned clay, 147
Poison, a deadly, 133
for fish, 142
murder by, 89
ordeal, 113, 235, 254
Poisoners, 268
Pulling of cattle, 112
Pollution, 194
Polygamy, 63
Pools inhabited by spirits, 158
Porridge for spirits, 139
Portents, 240 ff.
of war, 168
Possessed persons, 224
Post mortem marks as evidence of witchcraft, 261
Post mortems, 284
Pottery, 151
Prayers, 24, 42, 45, 71, 74, 117, 131, 133, 179, 196, 201, 204, 205, 206, 209, 265, 266, 273, 277, 280, 281
Prayer at burial, 192
Predictions concerning wild beasts, 223
Pregnant woman, murder of a, 88
Preserving meat, method of, 126
Priest, 196
"Priest," the family, 99
Priest-kings, 68
Prisoners, 174
Prohibited animals as food, 99
degrees, 60
names, 97
Prohibited places, 97
acts, 98
Prohibitions, 95
Prophecies, 22
Prophecy, 168, 216
Prosperity, 255
Proverbs, 178
Puberty, 51
Punishments for adultery, 90
Purification by smoke, 51
Python, killing a, 101

Quarrels, 62, 130, 171

Rain ceremonies, 206
dance, children's, 212
forest, a, 210
stopping, 212
Rainmaker, the, 210
Rains, 32
Reconciliation, 249
Relaxations, 156 ff.
Religion of the Konde, 116
Religious people, the Konde, 200
Reprisal, the law of, 86
Reuben, chief, 217
Rheumatism, 282
Riddles, 163
Righteousness, Konde idea of, 181
Rinderpest, 114
"Rod of lordship," the, 72
Rungwe, pool at, 158

Sacrifices, 95, 190, 209
Safwa, the, 19
Saliva, the, 44, 104, 105, 203
Salutations, 105
Sango, the, 19
chiefs, 168
Seers, 222
Serpent, fiery flying, 274
Serpents' movements as omens, 239
Shadow of dead, 295

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Sheep, 115
Shields, 170
Sickness, 56, 105, 106, 227, 270 ff.
Sincerity, 226
Skill, games of, 162
Slavery, 58
Smallpox, 204, 218, 283
due to witchcraft, 256
"Smelling out" of witches, 254
Smoke, 46, 52, 231
Snake bite, treatment of, 276, 281
Snake, two-headed, 100
Snakes, 155, 200, 237, 259, 252, 267
Songwe, R., 17
Sorcerers, 127, 218
Sorcerers' means of self-defence, 262
Sores, 281, 288
Spears, 57, 84, 149, 169, 170
fish, 143
Spirit forms, 195
lost, the, 197
Spirits, 43, 179, 190 ff.
non-human, 197
anger, evidences of, 200
Spitting, ceremonial, 203
Successor, choosing a, 71
Suicide, 298
Sun, the, omen, 246
Supreme Being, see God
Sympathetic magic, 111, 142
Syphilis, 279

Table manners, 124
Tabu, 95 ff.
Tales, 164
Tax-collector, 35
Taxes, Changa's, 73
Theft, 81 ff., 94, 227
Theft, divination in case of, 231
Thieves' charms, 289
Tie, marriage, 60
Timidity of the Konde, 176
Tokens of a coming traveller, 240
Toothache, 270
Traditions, early, 20
Traps, 135
for birds, 141
fish, 143
for leopards, 139
Tree falling, as an omen, 240, 248
planting, ceremony of, 75
Troopers, law of, 93
Tukuyu, 18
Twins, 46, 59, 107, 322
Two-headed snake, 240
Tyrants, defeat of, 326

Ulcers, cure of, 273, 284
Umpati, or person who prays, 202
Unborn child, the, 42
Uncleanness, 97
Unfaithfulness, 56, 62, 87
Unnatural actions, forecast of, 247

Vegetable food, 115
Victory, methods of securing, 175
Villages, Konde, 26
Virtues, 58
Visitors, 35, 73, 107
Voracity, 123

Wailing, 71, 292, 297
War, 102
causes of, 168
dreams, 168
omens with reference to, 243, 245
portents, 168
prophecy, 168
religious ceremonies of, 103
Water spirits, 197
Weapons, 170
Weather lore, 239
Weaving, 147, 153
Wheels, absence of, 147
White man, 30, 32, 34, 102, 122, 192, 267, 272, 304, 310
fear of the, 42

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

White man—
prohibitions connected with the, 102
prophecies, 22, 220
stimulus of the, 147
Widower, the, 65
Widows, 65
Wife, position of the, 64
Witchcraft, 90, 251 ff.
degrees of power, 251
destructive agencies of, 263
punishments for, 257
quarrel brought on by, 89
Witches and warlocks, methods of, 255, 258
Wives, 52, 55 ff., 87, 106
purchase of, 55
Women, 244
prohibitions connected with, 106, 133, 136, 172
Wonder medicine, 266 ff.
Wood axiom, 194
Woodwork, 151
Worship, 190
place of, 196
Wounded, the, 174
Wounds, treatment of, 283

Zebra tail of office, 169

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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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Map for "The Spir

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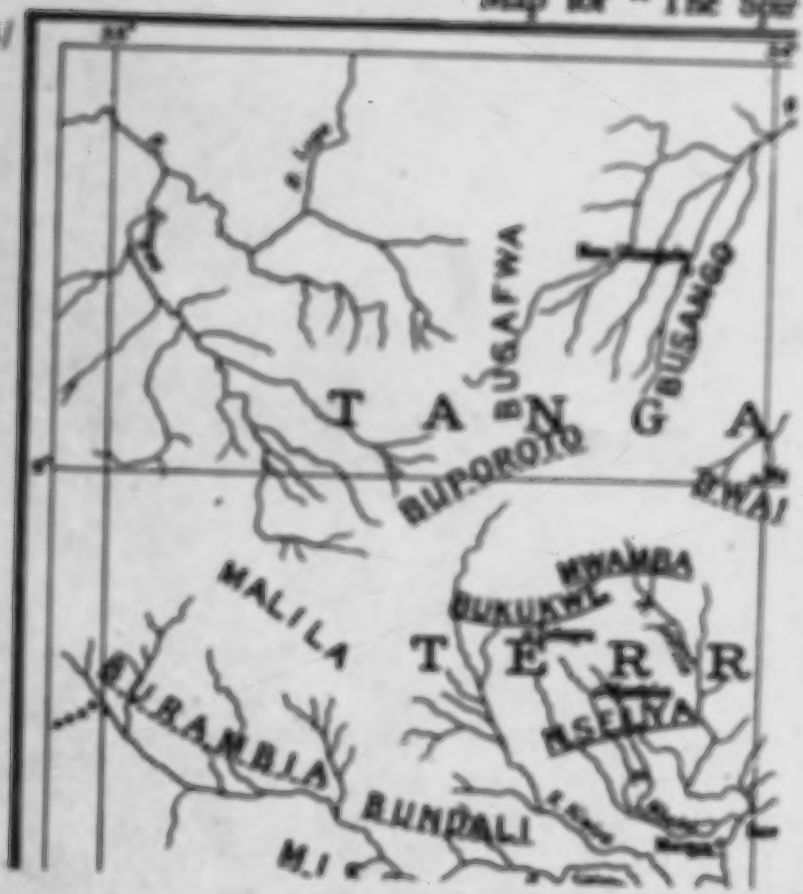

[End Map (A)]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Spirit Ridden Konde."

(3)

[End Map (B)]

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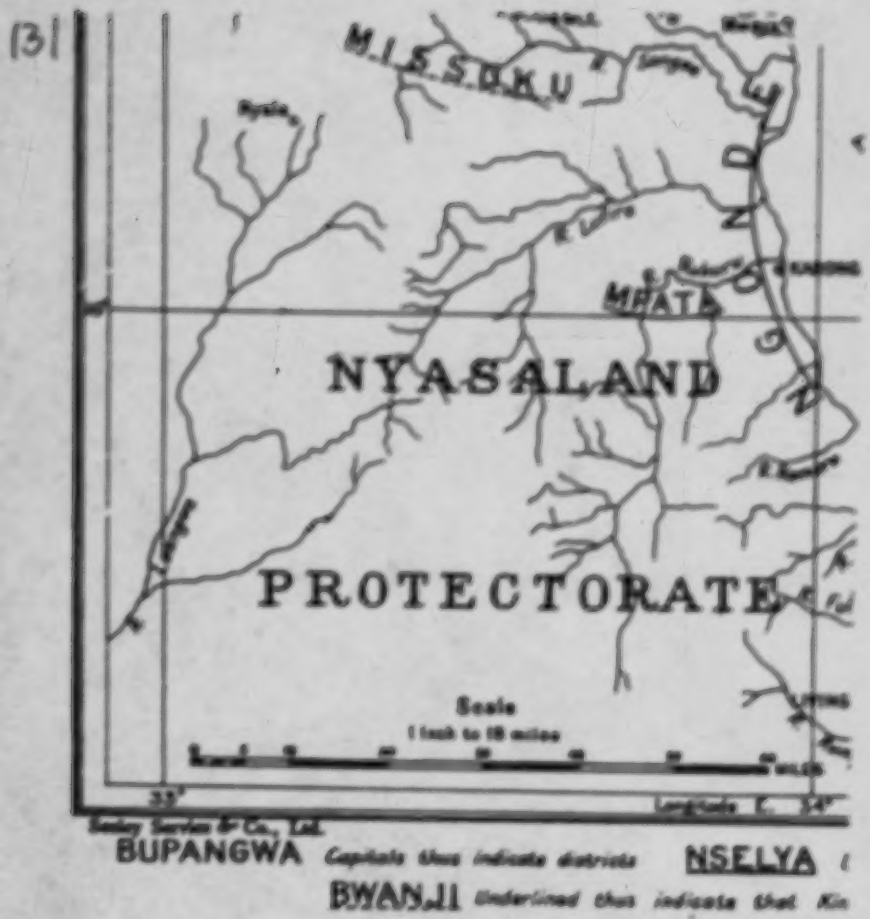

[End Map (C)]

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

131

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YA Underlined thus indicate Konde speaking districts at Kingonde is displacing the local dialect

[End Map (D)]

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ugande FN17

ETHNOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF AFRICA
EDITED BY DARYLL FORDE

EAST CENTRAL AFRICA
PART I

PEOPLES OF THE LAKE NYASA REGION

BY

MARY TEW

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4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

IV. NORTH NYASA REGION

NGONDE, NYAKYUSA, KINGA

TRIBAL AND SUB-TRIBAL GROUPINGS AND DEMOGRAPHY

[D]

Nomenclature

The whole group of Nyakyusa and related peoples were formerly called *Mwede*.[1] The *Ngonde* people are sometimes spoken *Mwede*, and once at least have been referred to as the 'Chungu',[2] presumably meaning the people of Chungu (the title of their paramount chief). The *Nyakyusa* are sometimes spoken *Nkhkhwe* and sometimes referred to by the names of some of their branches, e.g. *Sovia* (also spoken *Selya*, *Selyai*) or *Mwambo*. They are also called *Sukuma* (or *Sukuma*). Some other members constituting this group have names with variant spellings which will be indicated below.

Origins

The *Ngonde* and *Nyakyusa* are immigrants from the east into the area they now inhabit. By tradition they are offshoots of the same stock as the *Kinga* in the Livingstone mountains. From this stock the *Iwa* (or *Ba*) and the *Nyamwanga* (*Mwamwanga* or *Nimwanga*) chiefs are also said to derive. The *Kinga* are thought to be related to the *Wangi* of the north and to the *Pangwa* in the Pangwa mountains. The *Matengo*, south of the Rukuhu river, are probably related to the Pangwa.

(a) *Kinga* inhabit the Livingstone mountains on the eastern shores of Lake Nyasa in Njombe district, Tanganyika.

(b) *Nyakyusa* are in Tanganyika in Rungwe district, with a recent immigrant section in Mbeya district. They inhabit the northern shores of Lake Nyasa, the western as far as the Songwe river, and the eastern as far as the Livingstone mountains. The *Mwambo* (also called *Langulo*) in Rungwe district are a branch of the Nyakyusa. The name Nyakyusa covers three sections: *Nyakyusa* proper, *Kukwe*, and *Selya*.[3]

(c) *Ngonde* are in Nyasaland, in the plain on the west lake shore, between the lower reaches of the north Rukuru river and the Songwe.

(d) *Nyamwanga* and *Iwa* live in Abercorn and Kasama districts, Northern Rhodesia. The Nyamwanga in the hills at the north-eastern sources of the Chambezi river, and spreading into Tanganyika Territory; the Iwa on the watershed between Chambezi and the Lunangwa river sources.

In addition to these five tribes, who claim historically to be of one stock, there are numerous small groups, living in semi-isolated conditions in the surrounding mountains east and west of the north end of Lake Nyasa. These areas have never been surveyed. It is not certain when the *Ngonde* came into their present country,[4] but they came as immigrants into already inhabited land; according to Wilson, their neighbours, the

[1] Kaye-Cross, 1891.
[2] Stewart, 1881.
[3] Wilson, J., 1938, p. 19.
[4] Wilson, J., 1938, p. 11, makes no attempt to date their first arrival; Murray, 1932, p. 208, says that they appear to have inhabited the country as far back as can be traced with any degree of historical accuracy.

[p. 71]

4: Tew K-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Sukwa, *Wenye*, *Lambya*, are politically subordinate, but culturally distinct.[1] They are probably remnants of the original inhabitants of the country. But Wilson also mentions elsewhere that the *Ndali* and *Lambya* of the upper Songwe river are two cultural groups closely related to the Nyakyusa.[2] We know that many of the small independent neighbours of the Ngonde are related to each other (*Tumbuka*, *Wandya*, and *Pangwe*),[3] their political independence being mainly due to the mountainous nature of their country.[4] Many of their names, which we take to represent distinct tribes, are merely locality names,[5] and some of the names which appear on the Tribal Map of East Africa represent only very small groups of people: for example, the *Tumbuka*, between the Iwa and the Lusangwa river, were estimated in 1911 to be only 500 altogether.[6] These peoples are most probably remnants of the original Tumbuka[7] cluster, and through them belong to the Nyanja-Cewa group; some of them may possibly have been forerunners of the *Bisa-Senga* immigration from the Congo, or they may have affiliations with the tribes of Tanganyika, *Fipa* or *Safwa*. It is unpredictable, on the existing information, to speculate on their original ethnic grouping, and impossible, without a survey in the country itself, to discover their present cultural affiliation. At present their geographical position is the only reason for grouping them together in the Ngonde cluster. The *Henga* to the south of the Ngonde are an exception. Their arrival in the country is a matter of historical knowledge,[8] and they certainly belong, not to the Ngonde, but to the Tumbuka cluster.

Similar difficulties are found on the east side of Lake Nyasa. The *Wangi* and *Perete* north of the Kinga, the *Pangwe* and *Matengo* on the south, and small tribes on the lake coast, the *Kisi*, *Sowdia*, *Mpoto*, &c., appear as names on the maps, but little else is known of them.

Dr. Meinhard considers that the Nyamwanga and Iwa on the west, and the Kinga and Pangwe on the east, are culturally too dissimilar to be counted in the same group with the Ngonde and Nyakyusa.[9] However, information about these peoples is so scanty that it has been necessary in any case to base this report on the Ngonde and Nyakyusa, which have been studied by Godfrey Wilson.

History

As far as available information is concerned, only the history of the Ngonde has been recorded, and it would also seem as if this is the only one of the related groups which has developed a centralized political system, except the Nyamwanga and Iwa. The Nyakyusa, as they spread westwards, were ruled by a number of petty chiefs, each of whom was succeeded by two or more sons, who carved out separate chiefdoms in the area into which they were expanding. There was no paramount political authority, but a number of tiny chiefdoms, some of which to-day exceeds 3,000 adult males, and most of which are far smaller than that. To-day about 100 traditionally

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 7.

[2] On the other hand, the *Mbeya District Handbook* records that the Lambya are related to the Nyakyusa, and the Nyika have affinities with the Lambya, but the Ndali are of a different origin.

[3] Cardinall, 1914, pp. 3 and 38.

[4] Ngonde, 1931 (Interview by Young, T. C.).

[5] See Young, T. C., 1, 1932, p. 60: 'Far back in the hills . . . there exists still a Nyika people whose speech has been much less interfered with by the incomers, and which apart from distinctivity in tone and accent, is not far removed from Tumbuka-Kamanga speech.'

[6] Leggard, 1893, vol. i, p. 91.

[7] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 10.

[8] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 10.

[9] Professor M. Wilson corroborates this.

4: Tew E.4 (no date) 1950 F3:17 Ngonde F3:17

175 631 independent chiefs have been grouped into eleven court districts, with one chief as President of the Native Court in each. These chiefs, with two presidents of the Nkhi and Lambya courts, are federated, and possess one Appeal Court and joint Native Treasury between them.[1]

The following is a summary of the history of the Ngonde, south of the Songwe river:

173 Ngonde tradition records that about one years ago a chief of the Kinga, Ngohowe, had two grandsons, Lwembe (from whom descended the Nyakyusa) and Chaware (from whom came the Ngonde, the Iwa, and the Nyamwanga).[2] Chaware left Ukinga and wandered west and south so far as Nkamanga, the capital of the Tumbuka country, returning thence to capture Mbande from Simbowe, the indigenous chief.[3] After this the local chiefs accepted him as their overlord, and he confirmed their status with public gifts of cloth, much as Mbowoka had done with the Tumbuka. There is little information about these earlier inhabitants, but it seems likely that they were similar to the Tumbuka, before the latter were conquered by Mbowoka.[4] There is an old tradition that Mbowoka and Chaware knew each other in their former home, and that their meeting at Nkamanga was as one between equals, at which the boundaries between their territories were formally arranged. According to Tonga traditions certain details of the accompanying ritual and the fact of his prior arrival show Mbowoka to have been recognized by Chaware as a higher authority, but this interpretation together with the circumstantial evidence are repudiated by the Ngonde traditions.[5]

175 Opinions differ as to the actual date of the arrival of the first Ngonde ruler, Kyungu. He came accompanied by five leading men, and was accepted as overlord by the local chiefs. The latter, with the immigrants, formed a class of hereditary nobles, *amafumbwale*, who divided into two groups according to whether they lived at Mbande (the nobles of Ngonde)[6] or whether they lived at a distance (territorial nobles).[7] later immigrants joined one or the other group. These nobles ruled the country. The Kyungus, enriched by the ivory trade, were credited with divine powers, and lived in strict religious seclusion. Most of their male children were killed at birth by the nobles of Ngonde, and if they themselves fell sick they were killed. A constitutional change took place after the accession of the tenth Kyungu, Mwangonde: the killing of the sons of the Kyungu was stopped, and such was the prestige of the royal blood that they began to displace the territorial nobles as rulers. The sons of the Kyungu became hereditary chiefs, *amayifumbe*, each of whom was succeeded by two or more sons, who divided the territory between them as the Nyakyusa do. Each territorial noble was succeeded by only one heir. The effect of this branching of new chiefdoms was to create a number of hierarchies of small chiefdoms under one head, the great chief.[8] The relation of these political units to each other, and to the central authority at Mbande, will be considered in the section on Social Organization.

When the Ngoni first attacked the Ngonde, Mwakasungula was the first Kyungu

[1] Wilson, J., 1938, pp. 10-13, gives seven districts, but the number has been increased.
[2] Ibid., J., 1939, p. 9; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 20-3; Young, T. C., c. 1930, p. 38.
[3] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 325-6. [4] Young, T. C., c. 1930, pp. 60-1.
[5] Ibid., pp. 37-60; Young also believes that they originally came from the River Chisi, near Lake Chuai (1931, p. 3).
[6] Wilson's terminology. [7] Wilson, J., 1939, p. 9; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 26-

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

175 to take up arms and lead the people to fight. The Ngoni were temporarily beaten off, but at a later attack the Ngonde, under Gwa Sapasi, submitted. By 1875 he had been succeeded by Mwafongo, who was Kyungu at the time of the first visit of the Europeans. By that time, Arab slave- and ivory-traders had established themselves in Ngonde, and for the next twenty years they disputed the territory with the Europeans. After Dr. Law's voyage to Ngonde in 1875 a Free Church of Scotland Mission station and a post of the African Lakes Corporation were set up at Karonga. The Arabs sometimes traded with the Ngonde and sometimes fought them. In one fight the Kyungu Mwafongo was killed and Mwakolembo was elected in his place. The agent of the African Lakes Corporation tried to protect the people against the Arabs, and barely succeeded in maintaining his own position, until in 1889 H. H. Johnston made treaties with the chiefs and Arabs in Ngonde, and the country came into the sphere of influence of the British South Africa Company. In 1895 Mlozi, the leading Arab, who had not accepted British rule, was caught and hanged, and Ngonde was incorporated in the British Protectorate of Central Africa.

The inter-territorial boundary between Nyasaland and German East Africa (now Tanganyika Territory) cut across the area of the Kyungu's influence, which used to extend some fifteen miles north of the Songwe river, and some of the western territories were included in Northern Rhodesia.

The new government forbade elephant hunting without licence, and so killed the ivory trade, a main source of revenue; taxes were collected, and small subsidies paid out of them to selected chiefs and nobles. Mwakalunga, who became Kyungu in 1904, was the first Kyungu to sit with his people judging their cases. After his death the nobles chose Mwangalaba to succeed him, and in his reign the custom of hoeing (*mulimo*) for the Kyungu lapsed till 1927, when it was revived in a modified form by the next Kyungu, Peter. The latter was the younger brother of Mwangalaba, and acted as his assistant in 1912 and as regent in 1927, succeeding to the full position of Kyungu in 1932. He had made a private fortune in industry and used it consistently to maintain his public position. He left Mbande, the traditional capital which had been dominated by the nobles of Ngonde, and built a new one at Bwiko, half-way between Mbande and the government Boma at Karonga.[1]

DEMOGRAPHY

161 *Ngonde.* In 1931 the Ngonde population had increased from 18,852 in 1921 to 30,731, or by 63 per cent. In 1945 it again doubled itself, reaching the figure of 62,136. The average density in the district is under fifteen per square mile.[2]

Nyakyusa country is thickly populated in the south around the lake-shore plain. Its density is about six times as great as that of Ngonde country.[3]

161 In recent years there has been a large movement of Nyakyusa from Rungwe district into Mbeya district, into the areas east and west of Mbeya, where the average density is over 200 persons to the square mile, with a maximum of over 400 to the square mile in one village near Mbeya.[4]

[1] Wilson, S. 1930, pp. 67-9; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 23-5; Monahan, 2, 1929, pp. 7 and 134-42; Livingstone, 1901, pp. 257 ff.; Laws, 1894, pp. 100-09; Du Plessis, 1929, pp. 196-201; Johnston, 1897, pp. 70-6; Legard, 1893, vol. i, pp. 41-54, and 130-2; Duff, 1905, p. 10.

[2] 1931 and 1945 Census, p. 15.

[3] *Handbook of Common East Africa*, p. 68; Wilson, S. 1930, p. 7.

[4] Hall, 1945.

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The *Nyamwanga* and *Iwa* of Abercorn and Masama districts, Northern Rhodesia, are in areas where the density is between 4 and 7 per square mile, and they number less than 20,000.[1]

Tanganyika Peoples[2]

Tribe	District	Total population	Total children	Percentage of children to adults	Percentage of males to females		Increase since 1921
					Adults	Children	
Kukwe	Rungwe	68,197	29,934	74	51	110	..
Seria	Mbeya	10,755	..	..	..	..	..
Nyakyusa	Rungwe	80,092	37,799	..	..	..	..
	Mbeya	2,957	1,030	..	..	..	..
	Other districts	775	551	87	57	102	34.57%

Populations of less than 50,000 Persons

Tribe	District	Total population
Kinga	Njombe	27,036
Lambya	Rungwe	12,403
Ndali	Rungwe	22,834
Nyamwanga	Mbeya	10,147
Nyika	Mbeya and Ufipa	25,179
Pangwa	Njombe	20,533
Wanji	Njombe	20,397
Wanda	Mbeya and Ufipa	5,754

LINGUISTIC DATA

According to Doke's classification *Ngonde* is one of the five important languages of the east central sub-zone of Bantu languages, and is spoken in Tanganyika to the north end of Lake Nyasa, where it is known as *Nyakyusa*.[3] In language as well as culture, the Ngonde of Nyasaland are identical with the Nyakyusa of Tanganyika.[4] According to Guthrie's classification, many of the tribes, whose affiliation is not known on cultural or historical grounds, may be attached, on linguistic grounds, to speakers of the Tumbuka group of languages: *Wenya*, *Lambia*, and *Wandia*.[5]

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The *Kinga* inhabit the inaccessible heights of the north and west portion of the Livingstone mountains, which rise to 10,000 ft.[6]

Nyakyusa country is bounded on the south by Lake Nyasa and the Songwe river, on the east by the wall of the Livingstone range, and on the west by the Ndali hills. They live between the two walls of the Great Rift valley. In the north the rift is interrupted and closed by the extinct volcano Rungwe (10,000 ft.), from whose base the land drops in hills and little plateaux to the lake-shore plain. The soil is not very rich,

[1] Orde Brown, 1, 1938, maps.
[2] *Census of the Native Population*, 1931, Tables VI and VII.
[3] Doke, 1945, p. 66.
[4] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 8.
[5] Guthrie, 1948, p. 81.
[6] Du Plessis, 1929, p. 323.

4 Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

137 especially in the north, but as between 100 and 130 in. of rain usually falls annually, the country is one of the most fertile parts of Tanganyika. Two crops a year are often [132] grown on the same patch of ground. There is no tsetse, and cattle flourish. Parts of the country are stony and mountainous, others, especially the lake-shore plain, are of deep soil. On the higher ground there are many old volcanic craters filled with rich, moist soil, more fertile than the surrounding land.[1]

131 *Ngonde* country is bounded by Lake Nyasa on the east and by the Misuko hills on the west. It is mountainous except for a belt of low-lying country, about 6–10 miles 132 wide, along the lake shore. The whole district is well watered and well wooded except for some of the higher peaks and the lake plains. Banana-trees are cultivated throughout the district. Game is plentiful. Average annual rainfall at Karonga in 1922–32 was 41·2 in. Average mean temperature was 74° F., seldom rising above 95° F.[2]

MAIN FEATURES OF ECONOMY

CULTIVATION

000 The *Kinga* are agriculturists, cultivating wheat, peas, and potatoes, and latterly also oats and barley. They own a moderate amount of cattle, and many sheep and goats. They are skilful smiths.[3] The *Kisi* and *Sandia* around the north-west coast of the lake are fishermen and agriculturists, growing some millet and maize.[4] The *Nyika* are agriculturists and cattle-rearers; the *Lambia* do not rear much cattle; the *Ndali* have large herds, and cultivate bananas in the valleys.[5] The *Nyamwanga* keep sheep and goats and grow maize, beans, and millet.[6]

The *Matengo* have a system of hill-side cultivation of their own, which prevents erosion. When forced into concentrations in the caves in Litembo and Langiro to escape the Ngoni raids, they developed the pit-system of hoeing: the grass is cut and laid in 2-ft. wide lines in a grid of 6-ft. squares. The hole in the middle of the square is hoed by a woman, who throws up the earth on to the grass squares. The crops are planted in the raised beds and weeds are thrown into the pit to rot, forming compost for the following year. After one season the pit becomes the raised bed and the beds the pit, and the system is repeated in following years. With proper succession of crops the gardens may be kept in use for ten years before fertility begins to fail. Maize, millet, and wheat flourish; root crops do not thrive under this system, nor does tobacco. The pit-system is now found mainly at Litembo, and is being abandoned elsewhere.[7]

241 The *Ngonde* and *Nyakyusa* are primarily cattle-rearers and banana-cultivators. They have a very similar culture, but only the latter has been described in detail. Consequently the following summary refers to the Nyakyusa, unless the contrary is indicated.

The Nyakyusa practise subsistence agriculture by intensive cultivation with rotation of crops. As wide shifting cultivation is not practised, villages are relatively stable. They grow a great quantity of crops—maize, millet, sweet potatoes, beans, ground-nuts, cow-peas, cassava, and rice in the plain. Grass is hoed in for manure. The *Sukuma*, in the Misuko hill area (Ngonde country), grow field-peas and wheat on a small scale.[8]

[1] Wilson, 3, 1938, pp. 5–6.
[2] *Handbook of German East Africa*, p. 64.
[3] Ibid., pp. 66–7.
[4] Murray, 1932, pp. 201–3; Dixey, 1928.
[5] Ibid., pp. 62–3.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Pike, 1938.
[8] Murray, 1932, p. 207.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241 The use of cattle dung as manure is a novelty now used in the cultivation of coffee, but not on gardens unless land is beginning to be scarce. Banana cultivation is a characteristic feature of Ngonde as well as of Nyakyusa economic life.[1] Each homestead in a village includes the houses of a man and his wives, his banana groves, coffee-trees planted under the bananas, and also plots of beans, ground-nuts, &c. The main gardens of the household lie at some distance. Each year different types of gardens are hoed together by groups of villagers, millet in one place, maize and beans in another, so that the main gardens of any particular household are scattered. The clearing and hoeing fall to the man and his sons, and the wives are then given portions of their own to plant. Traditionally women never used to hoe at all.

The rights of a woman to dispose of her crops vary. Millet and rice, the two most valuable crops, are stored by the man and belong to him. The woman is the effective owner of all other crops on her plot, and stores them in her own house. Crops are used for food, beer, and hospitality, for making gifts, as well as for sale or barter, to obtain salt, pots, clothes, and cattle. There is a sharp division of property between co-wives. Not only garden land, but also banana-trees are divided between them. The husband often keeps a separate plot of bananas and cassava over which he has full rights of ownership. The farming unit is the family, but communal hoeing parties are organized two or three times a year, food and beer being offered to the workers.[2]

243 On the lake-shore plain rice is cultivated. The Ngonde plain is the main rice-growing area of Nyasaland. Floods in the rainy season make possible the cultivation of lowland rice, or paddy, which is superior in yield to upland grown crops. The most fertile areas are usually flooded during the rainy period of December–April, so as to be unfitted for the cultivation of other food crops at that time. But the Ngonde construct huge mound-like ridges in their newly harvested rice gardens, and plant on them subsidiary crops—maize, beans, sweet potatoes, cassava, or cotton. When these are harvested the garden is levelled again in readiness for another rice crop. Harvesting of rice and winnowing is usually women's work.[3] The crops are stored when threshed but unhulled, or unthreshed. They are milled by pestle and mortar. The rice is marketed with Indian traders in Blantyre and Limbe townships.[4]

Cattle

231 Cattle take a foremost place in *Ngonde* economy, and milk is an important article of diet. Ngonde herdsmen were much in request in Shire province.[5]

Nyakyusa cattle are tied up at night in the dwelling houses,[6] and are herded in the day by small boys. Milking is invariably done by the men; the women are not allowed to have anything to do with cattle.[7] Every year at the end of the dry season, in October or November, some of the pastures are fired to bring out the new shoots at the first rains. This is the only use of burning in their economy.[8] The rinderpest outbreak of 1896 decimated the herds,[9] but since then the number of cattle has increased considerably, numbering over 33,000 head in 1931 and about 40,000 head in 1938,

[1] Murray, 1932, p. 202.
[2] Barker, 1934.
[3] Wilson, 3, 1938, pp. 16–29.
[4] Murray, 1932, p. 206.
[5] Johnston, 1897, p. 431; Murray, 1932, pp. 205 and 209.
[6] Murray, 1932, p. 209, states that Ngonde cattle and herdsmen sleep together in long rectangular huts.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Wilson, 3, 1938, p. 8.
[9] Johnston, 1897, p. 431.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

231 according to the *Bell Report*. Cattle and hides are exported to Tanganyika.[1] The *Nyamwanga* herds were reduced, partly by Bemba raids, and partly by rinderpest.[2]

Domestic Architecture

341 *Ngonde* homesteads are famous in Nyasaland for their peculiar style and neatness
361 of execution. They are made of bamboos, specially grown for the purpose. They are oblong, with the ends slightly tapering upwards so that they present a ship-like appearance. The huts are erected in two lines facing each other, at a distance of about 30 yards. This centre street is kept scrupulously clean.[3] The *Nyakusa* live in round or long huts of bamboo or grass.[4] *Kinga* homesteads are scattered; they live in round huts of bamboo and straw.[5] The *Iwa* formerly lived in large stockaded villages, but these are now broken up.[6]

Specialization and Trade

326 The Ngonde were accomplished iron-workers; iron was dug, smelted, and made into hoes and spears.[7] The Iwa were formerly noted as iron-workers. Both they and the Nyamwanga grow tobacco on a large scale.[8]

286 A rough kind of cloth was made on native looms. The Ngonde made hollowed
501 canoes, but were not good sailors. In fishing they used poison, hooks, nets, and traps.
226 Pottery and basket-making were carried on.[9]

[77] The Ngonde were the most civilized of this cluster of tribes, owing to their closer
437 contact with Arab and Swahili traders who used the lake as a waterway.[10] The Nyam-
643 wanga also had opportunities of contact with Arab and Swahili traders at the south end of Lake Tanganyika,[11] but information about the effect of this on their economic life is lacking. By comparison with the Ngonde the Nyakyusa were isolated from contact with the outside world,[12] and this is probably true of the other tribes of the group. Among the Ngonde, in spite of the political hierarchy and central religious authority of Kyungu, economic links between separate local groups were few. The ivory trade was a source of wealth for the Kyungu and for the nobles of Ngonde at Mbande, but its benefits had a strictly limited effect on the rest of the people. The economic links between the capital and the chiefdoms followed the lines of the political system The income of Kyungu in slaves and cattle depended on the judicial process and on warfare. He had a semi-monopoly of the ivory of the country (the right tusk of every elephant killed was his). His expenditure consisted of entertainment for all important visitors to the capital, and gifts of cloths, obtained through the ivory trade, to nobles and chiefs. The first Kyungu gave head-cloths to the indigenous rulers, who, in accepting them, accepted his overlordship, and the practice was continued every time a new chief or territorial noble succeeded to office. The nobles of Ngonde got cloths every time the Arab traders came. Chiefs bringing food to Mbande, the capital, were

[1] *Bell Report*, pp. 100–3; Aplin, 1931.
[2] Kerr-Cross, 1894; Murray, 1932, pp. 210–11.
[3] Ibid., p. 64.
[4] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 146–8; Kerr-Cross, 1894, p. 189.
[5] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[6] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 44.
[7] Cotthead, 1914, p. 44.
[8] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[9] *Handbook of German East Africa*, p. 68.
[10] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[11] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 148, 149, 151–2.
[12] Ibid., 3, 1938, p. 15.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

439 given a slave or cow in return. Those who performed hoeing service, *milasa*, were
643 entertained with food and beer.

The ivory trade, although it bound the local rulers to the capital, involved no tribal
622 organization of elephant hunts, and scarcely touched the common people, who never
437 obtained the imported cloths exchanged for ivory, but continued to dress in bark-cloth or in their coarse home-woven cloth. Between each chief and his people economic links were determined on the one hand by his power of requisitioning food, and his greater wealth derived from the higher bride-price given for his daughters, and on the other by his people's expectation of entertainment from him in return for their food. Economic links between local chiefdoms were tenuous. Subsistence agriculture was practised by each family with the help of village neighbours and a few friends and kin; marriage with its economic exchanges was usually within the chiefdom. Of the few specialized craftsmen, representatives of each were usually found in each local group.[1]

439 Under modern economic conditions, Ngonde country is the only part of north
433 Nyasaland which cannot be called the 'Dead North', and does not suffer from excessive migration. The soil is fertile and at present there is no land shortage, though there is likelihood of one developing in the near future. Food is cultivated for export to the Lupa goldfields in Tanganyika, which is the natural market for Ngonde produce. Rice, cattle, and hides are also exported there. Parts of the lake littoral are suitable for cotton cultivation, which was revived in 1934. Ninety tons were sold in 1936. Out of the total effective male population of 12,000, 3,000 grow 'economic crops', and 7,000 grow cash crops only.[2] There are two European coffee estates in the Misuku hills, but they are handicapped by the long dry season.[3] Money is also derived from the fishing industry. An attempt to develop a ghee industry from native butter for sale to Indians in Nyasaland collapsed owing to the apathy of the Ngonde, their neglect of quality, and their insistence on too high a price for their inferior product. The main cash income of the district is derived from emigration to the Lupa goldfields, so that 90 per cent. of the money in circulation in the district is East African currency, which is accepted by the Nyasaland local government, surplus balances being remitted to the District Officer at Tukuyu, Tanganyika.[4]

Periodic Migrations

167 Long-distance labour migration is not a serious problem among the Ngonde, as they are able to earn their main cash income by working in the nearby Lupa goldfields, or by supplying that market with agricultural produce. In north Nyasa district (Ngonde), of 12,052 adult males fit to work for wages, only 11·6 per cent. are labour emigrants, and of these in 1937 only 100 were counted as 'lost ones' (i.e. not heard of since 1930).[5] In Abercorn and Kasama districts, Northern Rhodesia, where the Nyamwanga and Iwa live, 50 per cent. of the able-bodied male adult population is absent.[6]

A local migration of Nyakyusa does constitute a problem for the Tanganyika administration. Up to 1935 some 2,000 families had migrated from Rungwe district to tribal lands in the neighbouring chiefdoms of Mbeya district. By 1941 the figure had increased to 3,000. The immigrants now total 17 per cent. of the whole population

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 39–50.
[2] Murray, 1932, p. 206.
[3] *Bell Report*, 1938, Appendix A.
[4] *Bell Report*, 1938, pp. 100–3.
[5] Smith, 1937, p. 21.
[6] Orde Browne, 1, 1938, maps.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

167 of the new area. Their culture differs from that of the indigenous tribes, so that they remain largely unassimilated. The cause of the exodus is partly shortage of land;[1] the Nyakyusa are skilled cultivators; the active soil-conservation campaign promoted by the Agricultural Department in Rungwe district involved farmers in additional effort, so that land in Mbeya was attractive in so far as the soil conservation scheme only started there two years later. The main motive, however, was to shorten the transport haul between the farmer and the market at Lupa. The demand for supplies of beans and grain from Rungwe district was decreasing even before the 1939 war, partly because production on the goldfields was declining, and partly because the produce of Mbeya district was increasing (largely through the work of the immigrant Nyakyusa farmers). The main problems for the administration arising from the Nyakyusa immigration into Mbeya district is the lack of control by the Native Authorities and congestion in the river valleys. The Safwa, who vacated the valleys of the Nsofwe and Mbalizi rivers after their wars with the Sangu, retreated into the hills before the flood of Nyakyusa immigrants, who now populate the valleys almost exclusively with their own compact endogamous groups.[2]

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Kinship and Local Grouping

621 (The following section is compiled from information applying equally to Nyakyusa
561 and Ngonde.)

The distinctive feature of the social organization is the system of age-villages. An age-village consists of a male age-group with wives of any age and children. When a man dies his heir may come to live in his village, and strangers applying for land are never refused on grounds of age, but the original constitution of the village is based on the principle of identity of age. Up to the age of ten years the small boys herd cattle in groups. Then they start to hoe for their fathers, and leave their fathers' houses to go to sleep with friends. After two or three years they build for themselves in an age-village of young men. They continue to hoe the fields and eat the food of their mothers until marriage, after which they hoe mainly for themselves, on land adjacent to their own huts.[3]

602 If a young man, instead of hoeing, goes out to work, he is expected to bring back tax-money for his father. By his service he earns the right to be given cattle for marriage. A young man whose father is poor in cattle will often attach himself to the household of a rich kinsman, brother of his father or mother, and hoe regularly for him, eventually receiving from him a large portion of his marriage cattle.[4] Sons-in-law are expected to bring their friends now and again to hoe for their father-in-law, who will afterwards entertain the workers.[5]

[611] Descent and inheritance are patrilineal, but there are no clans, and no descent group with a common name and definite membership.[6] The sons of a group of effective kinsmen are not all themselves effective kinsmen, and in the third generation the bonds of kinship may often have been forgotten. Cattle exchanges signalize the most

[1] Wilson, 3, 1938, p. 7.
[2] Wilson, 1, 1936, p. 78.
[3] Ibid., p. 28.
[4] Hall, 1945.
[5] Ibid., p. 29.
[6] Ibid., 2, 1936, p. 267; 4, 1939, p. 2.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

602 important relationships of kinship and affinity. Marriage cattle are not kept by the bride's father, but are distributed by him among her brothers for their marriages, and among his own brothers and half-brothers, who in turn give him cattle when their own daughters marry.

595 Half-brothers do not generally exchange cattle, but unless they do so there are no strong bonds of kinship between them. A polygynist usually creates the relationship of 'milking each other's cows', between his senior son and the eldest of each group of full-brothers by his other wives. He gives some of the marriage cows received for a daughter to one of her half-brothers, the latter being placed under an obligation to return the cows to the girl's eldest full brother some day from the marriage cattle of a sister or daughter of his own. The exchange once begun usually continues as sisters and daughters marry, and only lapses in the third generation, unless the principals quarrel and take legal action for 'separation'. Then a balance is drawn up of the cows exchanged from the beginning of the relationship, and the kinship is broken. The two thus 'separated' have no mutual obligations and do not attend each other's funerals.

602 428 Half-brothers may be linked by blood if their mothers are close kin; they may also be linked by cattle exchanges. The laws of inheritance make the full brothers of a man his first heirs, then his half-brothers linked by blood, then those linked by cattle have precedence over other half-brothers.[1]

604 The bond between a man and his mother's brother is expressed in terms of the passage of cattle. As the mother's brother married with the mother's cattle, her eldest son has the right to make free with his property in his lifetime, the right to receive one cow to set up a herd of his own, and a residuary right of inheritance; if the mother's brother dies without heir, her son can claim the particular wife obtained with and the particular progeny of the cattle given for his own mother.

606 There is a strict custom of father and daughter-in-law avoidance. A woman may never speak to, approach, or look at her husband's father, on pain of death through the witchcraft of indignant neighbours. The prohibition is extended from her own father-in-law to all his classificatory brothers, and is the basis of the age-village system.[2] A man must also avoid his mother-in-law, but this prohibition is relaxed after the birth of a child.[3] The affinal relationship is also expressed by the obligation of a man to bring a cow to the funeral of his wife's father or brother, and to give one at the death of his own son-in-law. The former may count as part of his marriage payments in case of a claim for refund.[4]

601 The main kinship terms are as follows:

Ndamu = brother-in-law or sister-in-law; used by a man for all husbands of his 'sisters', all 'brothers' of his wives, and for the son of his wife's brother, since he has a right to marry that man's sister; by a woman for all wives of her 'brothers' and all 'sisters' of her husband.

Nhogho = parent-in-law or child-in-law; used for the husband of a daughter, or for the parent of a wife or husband (a daughter-in-law is called by the special name of *Nhamwamu*). The wife of the wife's brother is called *Nhogho*, as she is the mother of a potential wife, and of a brother-in-law.

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 265; 4, 1939, p. 2.
[2] Ibid., 2, 1936, pp. 267–8; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 45 and 106.
[3] Sanderson, 3, 1923, p. 454.
[4] Wilson, 4, 1939.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

601 *Mwinukulu* = grandparent or grandchild; but a man addresses his male grandparents as *Mwinangu* (my compeer) and his female grandparents as *Nkasi* (wife). A woman addresses her male grandparents as *Ndume* (husband) and her female grandparents as *Mwinangu* (my compeer).

Ndume = husband, extended for a woman to include the husbands of 'sisters', male grandparents, male grandchildren, husbands of female grandparents or grandchildren; all 'brothers' of a husband, husband of a father's sister, and grandfathers of a husband, and finally, the husband's sister's son.

Nkasi = wife; for a man it includes the wives of 'brothers', female grandparents and grandchildren, or wives of male ones; all sisters of wife, daughters of wife's brothers, wives of grandsons by marriage, the 'grandmothers' of a wife, and the wife of a maternal uncle.[1]

605 The Ngonde do not seem to distinguish cross-cousins from ortho-cousins as clearly as do the Maravi, or the Yao, Makua, and Makonde peoples.

MARRIAGE

582 There are no exogamous clans, but the descendants of a common grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are forbidden to marry.[2] The descendants of a common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry, but sometimes they do so before the relationship is discovered; they then simply drink a special medicine, but do not break the marriage. The old men speak of a now abandoned custom of preferential cross-cousin marriage.[3] The husband of the eldest girl of a family has the prior right to marry her full sisters, and such marriages are very common. A man also has the right to marry the daughter of his wife's brother, therefore the wife of the wife's brother is classed as a parent-in-law in kinship terminology.[4]

583 The passage of cattle makes children of a marriage legitimate. A child of a man who has given no cattle belongs either to the mother's husband or to her father. Cattle are in rapid circulation. Few men possess more than six cows at any time, yet marriage payments range from four to thirty cows (formerly only one or two were given). Marriage involves considerable expenditure and months of preliminary economic activity.[5] The cattle are seldom handed over all at once, but in ones or twos over a period of years. Full brothers have a claim to the cattle of their sister's marriage, and at the marriage of his eldest daughter the father hands one of the cows to the village headman.[6]

584 A girl commonly goes to visit and sleep with her betrothed husband for several years before she finally sets up house for him. The ideal procedure is by negotiation with the girl's father, but a man without cows may run off with a girl and satisfy her father with cows later on, or a man with cattle may seduce a married woman and pay her husband the adultery fine of two cows, plus the cows originally given for her marriage. A girl may be betrothed before puberty, and may visit her husband, but she is supposed to be virgin at her initiation ceremony, and is generally not allowed to

[1] Sanderson, 3, 1923.
[2] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 55.
[3] See Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 267; but according to Sanderson, 3, 1923, p. 453, cross-cousins are classed as sisters, and all first cousins are unmarriageable; according to Johnston, 1897, p. 415, and to Mackenzie 1925, p. 55, cousin marriage was not allowed.
[4] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 262; Sanderson, op. cit., p. 451.
[5] Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 11.
[6] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 65.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

584 live with her husband until at least three cows have been given. One of the bulls is only given if the girl is virgin at her initiation rite, and this bull is given to her mother. The laws of inheritance and the system of marriage by cattle payments ensures that cattle will be in the hands of the older men. In general polygynists are men over forty-five.[1]

595 The first wife married is the chief wife, and is entitled to respect and obedience from her co-wives. Her first son is her husband's ultimate heir. A man cannot lightly divorce his first wife during the lifetime of his own father who provided the cattle
586 with which she was married. Divorce is effected by the return of the marriage cattle. Usually the woman has a lover who will pay cows to redeem her; if she refuses to go back to her husband there is no means of compelling her to do so, though in pre-European times her father and the chief might send her back. In such a case the husband would be entitled to his original payments plus their increase.[2] Men do not demand divorce for adultery unless it is persistent.[3] Divorce is often sought for very trivial reasons.[4] If the paternal uncles have helped the groom to collect his marriage cattle, the beasts are redistributed to their original donors after they have been returned to the husband.[5]

587 A man whose wife dies can claim a substitute or the refund of his cattle. When a man dies his widows pass to his heir who takes them all as wives, if he is a brother of
768 the dead man; if the heir is a son he takes all except his own mother and the wives who are her close kin. Inherited wives have the same land rights as others.[6]

Inheritance

428 Brothers inherit before sons, then half-brothers (linked half-brothers before other half-brothers). When all the brothers are dead the property and wives of each pass to each one's eldest son.[7] This rule also applies to the Nyamwanga and Iwa.[8] The heir assumes the full obligations of father to his younger brothers and is responsible for their marriages; they hoe for him and are fed by his wives as are unmarried sons.[9] The sister's son only inherits if all near patrilineal kinsmen are dead or are infants.[10]

The above applies to commoners' inheritance only. For chiefs, succession and inheritance may follow different principles. For instance, in succession to local chiefdoms, two or more sons would divide the chiefdom. Among the Ngonde the Kyungu and the great chiefs were not chosen according to strict genealogical right, but were selected from the appropriate families according to their wealth, generosity, and courage. In the succession to the great chiefdoms, there was formerly a difference of procedure in the two royal lines: that of Ngelenge, where the nobles of Ngonde were sent by the Kyungu to help to select the successor; that of Ngana, the line of the female side, where the nobles of Ngonde merely summoned the great commoners to discuss with them who was to succeed. Nowadays the difference between the two lines has disappeared, and the Ngelenge custom is followed for both. If the genealogical heir

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, pp. 257–9.
[2] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 263.
[3] Ibid., p. 65.
[4] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 55.
[5] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 92.
[6] Wilson, 3, 1938, p. 27.
[7] Ibid., 2, 1936, pp. 264–6; Sanderson, 3, 1923, p. 453.
[8] Cotthead, 1914, p. 45.
[9] Wilson, 3, 1938, pp. 11 and 28; Johnston, 1897, p. 472.
[10] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 55.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

428 was set aside in succession, his right to inherit the property and widows was none the less undisputed.[1]

SLAVERY (AMONG THE NGONDE)

567 Slaves were obtained by the Kyungu and chiefs in warfare and as fines for offences. The Kyungu gave women slaves to his important chiefs, thus strengthening the kinship bonds between them and himself, for the recipient would regard the Kyungu as his father-in-law if he took the woman to wife, and her children would be counted as grandchildren of the Kyungu. The owner of a slave was obliged to find a spouse for him or her, and a male slave could rise to positions of importance.[2]

LAND TENURE

423 No individual can own land unless he himself either works it or is a full member of the local community. Rights to land are only rigorously defined in cases of scarce and
425 valuable land. Owing to witchcraft beliefs, movement from one place to another is constant. In taking up new land after a move, a stranger is granted land by the villagers acting through their great commoners, the chief being merely informed. Both chiefs and villagers welcome new-comers. If a man returns after absence to his own village he has a claim to enter into possession of his old building site and gardens. The claim varies in strength according to his relations with the villagers and the chief. If a man goes to a neighbouring village within a chiefdom, he can go on hoeing his old gardens, ownership depending on effective use.

Land suitable for bean and maize plots is the most valuable, as it is hoed continuously for years. Land for other crops is plentiful, so that if a man leaves a garden fallow for only two years anyone may cultivate it. The most scarce and valuable land is in the bottom of old volcanic craters, and in these cases rights are insisted upon, so that if a man moves to a new chiefdom, his next of kin claims his crater land. In other cases, when a man moves from a chiefdom, his old gardens revert to the joint ownership of villagers and chief. When a man dies his heir takes his wives, cattle, and movable property, but not his land, unless he comes to live in the village.

Rights in trees differ according to the types of trees and according to local custom. In some cases rights in trees are lost when a man moves away, in others the rights to valuable trees are claimed by the nearest kinsman in the neighbourhood. Now that chiefdoms are no longer in a state of potential war with each other, the group within which property is held is wider. Coffee-trees have been declared by the Federation of Chiefs to be the property of the original planter, even though he may have moved to another chiefdom. The Agricultural Officer takes over abandoned coffee-trees to tend them for pest control.

423 Pasture is jointly owned by the whole village group, no individual having exclusive rights in it.

No direct charge is made for the right to build or cultivate. Certain obligations are owed to a chief in view of his over-lordship, e.g. providing cooked food for ceremonies of the chief's own immediate family, but this obligation is reciprocal, the chief being expected in return to kill beasts to feed the people.[3]

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 52–4.
[2] Ibid., p. 46; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 38–40.
[3] Wilson, 3, 1938, pp. 30–48; Mackenzie, 1925, p. 93.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

000 Only the *Ngonde*, the *Nyamwanga*, and the *Iwa* seem to have had any paramount authority. Of these, only that of the Ngonde has been described in detail. The Nyamwanga had a paramount chief, the Mukoma, living over the border in Tanganyika. Under him the Northern Rhodesian Nyamwanga were always ruled by his sister, the Waituika; directly under her were the headmen of villages. The Mukoma used to appoint his own sons or selected friends to be headmen of the larger villages. A nominal tribute, mainly fish, was sent by the Waituika to the Mukoma, and the latter could also command annual labour in his gardens. The Iwa also had a paramount chief, Kafwimbi, who recognized common ancestry with the Mukoma but paid him no tribute. His country was divided into two sections, under two sub-chiefs, Mpanga and Terefya. The succession to the chieftaincy is normally the same as commoner succession, i.e. brothers, then sons of the deceased, but the order need not be rigidly adhered to.[1]

Ngonde Traditional System

643 The section on history briefly indicated the position of the Kyungu. He was wealthy,
565 owing to the ivory trade, and used his wealth to maintain political links with the chiefs
622 and nobles of the country. At the same time he was kept in strict religious seclusion,
631 and the real government of the country was in the hands of the nobles of Ngonde, a group of hereditary nobles, descendants of the original companions of the first Kyungu. The relations of the great chiefs (descendants of sons of Kyungus) and the territorial nobles to the capital allowed of considerable local autonomy, the Kyungu's prestige being mainly religious. Each territorial noble was succeeded by one son; each chief was succeeded by two or more sons, so that the chiefdoms tended to supplant the territorial nobles in importance and number, and the junior branches of the house of any one great chief formed a hierarchy based on descent. The great chiefs, at their accession, were recognized by the Kyungu with gifts of cloth, and they brought the junior chiefs of their house to perform hoeing service, *milasa*, for the Kyungu. Afterwards the junior chiefs performed *milasa* for their great chief, and were similarly rewarded with entertainment. The great chief might invite the territorial nobles in his neighbourhood to accompany him in performing *milasa*, but he could not command them as he could his junior chiefs. Apart from recognizing a certain authority of superior chiefs in judicial matters, and the right of the latter to command them to hoe, or in war, the junior chiefs had almost complete autonomy in their chiefdoms.[2]

622 Each chief had a traditional right to demand from his own subjects milk and bananas if he needed them, and to evict any man he pleased if he desired the site for his personal use or to give to a kinsman (not to a commoner), offering the evicted tenant another site.[3]

622 The chiefdom[4] consisted of a number of age-villages, older and younger men living
631 apart with their own contemporaries. At the head of each age-village was a headman
624 (called 'great commoner' by Wilson) chosen from among the villagers by the chief

[1] Cochrane, 1914, pp. 44–5.
[2] Wilson, 3, 1939, p. 24.
[3] Ibid., 3, 1938, pp. 48–9.
[4] In the absence of information I do not know whether the following description of Ngonde and Nyakyusa chiefdoms and age-villages is capable of a wider application.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN

622 and the great commoners of the most senior villages. The constitution of a chiefdom
624 was that of a limited monarchy, for the chief was dependent on his great commoners
631 for his authority. All the way up the scale, with the exception of the Kyungu himself, each chief had his own great commoners and people directly subordinate to him. The organization of families and villages within the chiefdoms was the same as that of the Nyakyusa, but the organization of a territory ruled by a noble differed in that although there were always at least two age-villages, there were no great commoners.[1]

361 Villages vary in size, and average from forty to fifty households. In the first instance
621 a boys' village is built on ground allotted to them by the village of their fathers, but a new allotment is made ceremoniously at the 'coming out', *ubusoka*, ceremony of the young chiefs, when the old chief and his great commoners formally allot a tract of land to each village of young men, and redraw the boundaries.

621 In every generation each chiefdom was divided into two (they were originally immigrant groups expanding their territory, and incorporating previous inhabitants).
622 The chief at his accession, or 'coming out', married two 'great wives', whose eldest
631 sons would each be one of his two heirs, and divide his chiefdom. The number of villages which 'came out' with each young chief varied between four and eight. If he was later reduced to a minor position he might be left with only one village of adult men, and one of their sons, as people tended to move away from minor chiefdoms. This was the system which obtained among the Nyakyusa and also among the Ngonde.[2] A summary of the 'coming out' ritual is given here, instead of in the section on ritual, as it indicates some of the features of the political organization.

621 Usually eight age-villages 'came out' at the same time, four under each of the young
622 chiefs. At this occasion, some thirty years after the old chief's accession, eight new
624 great commoners were chosen. The two young chiefs were secluded for a few hours in the hut of the old chief's first wife, and received magical treatment. Then they
583 'came out'. The boundaries of the age-villages were freshly drawn. After the 'coming out', each young chief, whether he was already married or not, married his two great wives, whose first sons would be his heirs. Girls who had not yet reached puberty were carried off from other chiefdoms with a show of force by the chief's men, who later sent cows of their own to regularize the position. The girls stayed at the home of one of the old chief's men until their first menstruation. They were initiated together, not at the house of their fathers, but in the country of their husbands; the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the retiring chief) played the part usually played by the girl's parents and neighbours; the chief and his young men playing the usual part of the husband and his friends. After the ceremonies the girls were given as wives to the young chiefs, and separate huts were built for them in the two senior age-villages of the chiefdom. Wives married subsequently were attached in order of seniority to one or other of the two 'sides' of the chiefdom. Thus the four age-villages normally attached to a young chief were, from the first days of his official marriage, divided into two. If one of the two great wives bore no sons, the succession for that side of the chiefdom would pass to the son of the next senior wife of that side.

Between the 'coming out' of two young chiefs and the death of their own father, a
622 delicate balance of prestige and power was maintained, secular power over their own age-villages passing to each young chief, while the old chief retained control over the

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 22–4.

[2] Ibid., 3, 1938, pp. 12–15.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

622 secular affairs of his own age-villages and full supremacy in religious matters over all. Appeals in difficult cases might be taken from either of the young chiefs to the old chief and his great commoners. After his death, the wives and cows of the old chief were inherited by his full-brother, to whom also his religious authority passed. Full [624] political power over their separate chiefdoms then went to the two sons. The great commoners of the old chief, relinquishing their secular functions to their successors, [793] then entered on their religious duties as priests of the dead chief; this priesthood they handed on to their sons. When all the old chief's full-brothers were dead, the religious functions of chiefship passed to the young chiefs, who were then fully emancipated. The boundaries between their chiefdoms, settled at the 'coming out' ceremony, were sometimes modified by warfare.[1] The age-village is still the chief field of friendship, members recognizing greater obligations to each other than to outsiders; before the European administration the village was also a military unit.[2]

624 The great commoner of every village was very powerful, and measures existed to check his influence; for instance, no kinsman of a chief or son of a great commoner could be elected to that office. His duties were to be hospitable to the villagers, judge their cases, lead them in war, and officiate at their ceremonies. He represented their wishes to the chief, and through him and in consultation with him the chief gave his orders. Each great commoner was believed to be able to protect his own villagers from witchcraft.

Warfare

721 A state of war—actual or potential—always existed among the various Nyakyusa chiefdoms. Among the Ngonde, also, civil war was endemic, the Kyungu neither preventing it nor taking any part. In tribal warfare he did not remain impartial, but gave orders and told the chiefs to pray. They first called on the sacred groves of the buried Kyungus, and then each great chief called on his own predecessors for help. Although the territorial nobles also fought, they did not pray to their ancestors, for tribal war was carried on under royal auspices alone. War was an important source of revenue in cattle and slaves. The recurrent civil wars of the period before the Ngoni invasion show that in spite of the heirarchical façade the centralized political organization was not strong enough to overcome the local autonomy of the chiefdoms, except in the face of a common danger, such as the threat of Bemba or Ngoni invasion.[3]

Justice under the Traditional System of the Ngonde

692 There was no central court of appeal at Mbande to which the ordinary man could bring cases direct, or appeal against the decisions of his local chiefs. At the capital the only cases dealt with by the nobles of Ngonde were cases of treason against the Kyungu (mainly adulterous approach to his wives), which were summarily punished by death. They also used the Kyungu's authority in punitive expeditions against insubordinate chiefs. Each noble of Ngonde decided the cases in his own field. Each great chief held an appeal court to which cases from all the chiefdoms of his house came, for of all the descendants of the Kyungu the great chiefs alone had power to administer the poison ordeal. Some of the territorial nobles also had the power. It was resorted to not only in witchcraft cases, but in appeal cases when evidence for a legal decision was lacking.

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, pp. 278–82. [2] Ibid., p. 276. [3] Ibid., 5, 1939, pp. 59–63.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

692 Many cases were of course decided by the common people among themselves, others by their great commoners, and others by the local chiefs sitting with their great commoners. Although there was no centralized judicial system, the political hierarchy of chiefdoms sometimes could be used to obtain redress in the case of a quarrel between men of different chiefdoms. The weakness of the system is indicated by the fact that restitution for wrong done was often obtained by the method of capturing a hostage.[1]

681 Witchcraft was punished by death. An adulterer, if caught, was killed by the husband. Deliberate murder required compensation up to ten head of cattle and the transfer of a woman, followed by a feast of reconciliation. If the murderer could not be caught a blood feud would be started, ending with a feast of formal reconciliation under the guidance of a diviner. Accidental homicide required compensation, but no feast of reconciliation, as there had been no malice. A cattle-thief caught red-handed might be killed on the spot; arson was settled by payment of compensation.[2]

MODERN GOVERNMENT

622 (a) *Ngonde*. The British Government in Nyasaland at first applied the system of direct rule. Chiefs and nobles were recognized as 'village' or 'principal' headmen, 642 performing executive duties for the Administration. The Kyungu was one of the 'principal' headmen, but was not recognized as Paramount. In 1924 the system was 643 modified by the setting up of advisory councils in association with the headmen and the District Resident. The members of the councils were nominated and removable by the Government, and there was no intention of reviving tribal government.

In 1933 the system of Indirect Rule was introduced. The Kyungu was recognized as paramount chief, with an appeal court and five sub-chiefs under him. Of these, one, Kilupula, was over the northern part of the Ngonde plain, another ruled the Lambya in the extreme north-west, and the three others were distant territorial nobles ruling groups of alien stock in the hills. The nobles of Ngonde, with twelve prominent nobles and six other assessors, were recognized as members of the Kyungu's court and given nominal salaries. Those of the great chiefs of Ngonde who were not made sub-chiefs were officially termed 'important' headmen, and given nominal salaries. The other chiefs and territorial nobles were still termed 'village' headmen as before 1933. The Kyungu and the five sub-chiefs were each given an area and a court for the area. Village and important headmen could arbitrate in small cases but had no power to execute judgements. That power belonged to the courts alone. The Kyungu's court was also a court of appeal for the whole of Ngonde. A Native Treasury was established, into which one-twelfth of the tax was paid, but this was almost entirely expended on personal emoluments.

The full traditional constitution cannot be revived, as the religious beliefs which supported it have been superseded. Forty-five per cent. of the population profess Christianity, and even the belief in witchcraft, which operated in certain cases as a constitutional check, is less persistent than before. The native rulers are no longer believed to control the rain and the health and fertility of their people, so they stand or fall by the performance of their secular duties alone. Since the Kyungu has come out of religious seclusion the nobles of Ngonde are relegated to advisory status. The secularization of the constitution tends in this respect to make it more autocratic, both

[1] Wilson, S. 1939, p. 48–59.

[2] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 82–90.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

622 in the relations between the Kyungu and the nobles, and in those between the local
642 chiefs and their great commoners. On the other hand, there has been a reversal in the
643 relative wealth of commoners and chiefs. The latter have had small salaries substituted for the proceeds of the ivory trade, food tribute, and the booty of war. The decline of polygyny has also reduced the relative wealth of the chiefs. The Kyungu's total official salary in 1937 was £72, and the salaries of sub-chiefs from £4. 10*s*. to £12 per annum. The nobles of Ngonde were paid from 10*s*. to 15*s*. per annum except Mulwa, who got 30*s*. These salaries do not permit of lavish entertainment and gifts to subordinates, and the rulers suffer a consequent loss of prestige. Each village headman is allowed 3*d*. in the tax paid by every adult male subject, and, in addition, the 'important' headmen (former great chiefs) receive subsidies averaging about 10*s*. per annum. These payments have replaced the traditional right to requisition food. Commoners are frequently richer than their rulers. The head clerk in the Boma got £52 in 1937, and fifty-three other government employees got £12 or more. Young men from the goldmines and native Christian ministers now earn more than do the former great chiefs.

By using his private fortune the present Kyungu has been able to maintain the prestige of his office. He revived the *milasa*, hoeing custom, in 1927 on a new basis. To each chief who hoed for him he presented a cow, bought out of the proceeds of the sale of the produce of their labours. The *milasa* profit also enabled him to buy cloth for funeral gifts, a custom which he extended considerably, giving cloths not only at the death of the chiefs, but also to everyone who dies in his part of the plain of Ngonde. The present constitution of Ngonde is more autocratic and more centralized than the old, and thanks to his wealth the Kyungu's secular power is greater than that of his predecessors, in relation to the nobles of Ngonde, and to the chiefs and territorial nobles.

The 'coming out' has ceased since 1913, owing to the smallness of all the present chiefdoms, and the impossibility of finding enough land and followers for two successors to any local chief. Each chief is now succeeded by a brother or one son only. Subjects are still free to move away from the area of an unpopular headmen, thereby reducing his salary by 3*d*. per annum.[1] Although the Nyasaland–Tanganyika boundary cuts his sphere of influence, the Kyungu is still often consulted on tribal affairs across the border.[2]

622 (*b*) *Nyakyusa*. The government of Tanganyika Territory has grouped the 100 or so
642 traditionally independent chiefs into eleven court districts, with one chief as President of the Native Court in each. These eleven chiefs, together with the two presidents of the Ndali and Lambya courts, are federated, and have an appeal court and joint Native Treasury of their own. In the eleven native courts most of the traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their great commoners, and assist the President and his great commoners in the hearing of cases. The bulk of the legal business previously transacted by each chief in his own country is now taken to court, but the power of the great commoners to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages is still the basis of the legal system. A poll tax, fixed at 9*s*. per annum (1938) for adult males, was introduced, and chiefs are paid small salaries, ranging from 5*s*., 10*s*., or 20*s*. a month for ordinary chiefs, to 80*s*. or 100*s*. a month for court presidents.[3]

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 69–85.
[2] *Native Affairs Report*, 1933, p. 6.
[3] Wilson, 3, 1938, p. 15.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

MAIN CULTURAL FEATURES

Religion

769 The ancestor cult was the main feature of Ngonde religion. As long as a man had alive a father, father's full brother, or a senior brother, this senior kinsman dealt with the ancestral spirits, not only on his behalf, but also on behalf of his wives and children. In the absence of sickness or misfortune no appeal was made to the spirits. If the diviner diagnosed anger of the ancestors as cause, the senior kinsman had to pray for the sick one. If the half-brothers lived at a distance from each other after the death of their father and uncles, each might pray to the spirits to cure a little sickness, but if it persisted a message had to be sent to the senior kinsman. Wrongs which aroused the anger of the spirits were usually breaches of family morality, insult to a father, neglect of responsibilities by an heir. Offerings consisted of a bull, hen, or beer in the case of commoners, a cow in the case of a chief. The worship of dead chiefs as such was not connected with everyday morality. On the offering of cows by chiefs to their immediate ancestors depended the food and health of the chiefdom and the fertility of women and cows.[1]

769 Each Kyungu was buried in the valley around Mbande, and the grave was planted with trees, making a sacred grove. In times of drought and widespread sickness, sacri-
643 fices were made at the groves under the guidance of a diviner.[2] An insult to the living Kyungu was believed to cause a drought. Each chief or noble was believed to be able to avert local misfortunes for his own people, and the head of every family participated in the divinity of his own ancestors. The great commoners of each chief were believed to have independent access to his ancestral spirits, and so to have a hold upon him. The nobles of Ngonde had a similar power over the Kyungu.

643 As the Kyungu's health was bound up with the welfare of the community, elaborate precautions to maintain his health and to protect him from the danger of sexual impurity were taken, and when he ailed he was killed by suffocation.[3]

778 Sacred lagoons by the lake were associated not with the ancestors, but with a vague supreme deity, *Mbamba*.[4]

796 There were two important annual rituals for the whole tribe in addition to the special sacrifices to avert misfortune. One was the clearing out of the ashes each year after the break of the rains, which was performed on the order of the Kyungu, given through the nobles of Ngonde. The second was the elaborate first-fruits ceremony: fruits were offered by the nobles of Ngonde, in the grove of the last dead Kyungu, and then by the great chiefs, each in the grove of his own predecessor. The nobles and the chiefs of the hills had similar rituals, but they were not synchronized with those of the plain.[5]

Witchcraft

754 The Ngonde believe that certain men and women have the power of harming their neighbours and neighbours' cattle without taking any overt action. The witchcraft is
626 hereditary, and of particular virulence if inherited through the mother.[6] Witches exert their influence at night in dreams. There are two kinds of witches, *wumanga*, defender

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, pp. 256–7; 1, 1936, p. 84; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 191 and 196, also Ch. VII.
[2] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 29–30.
[3] Ibid., pp. 34–6.
[4] Ibid., p. 34; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 178–97.
[5] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 29–34.
[6] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 250–69.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

754 witches, who use their power beneficently and spend their dreams in efforts to counter-
626 act the aggressor witches, *avalosi*, who use their power maliciously. The great commoner is the strongest of the former type, and the 'defender of the village'. A man who earns universal unpopularity is subject to a spiritual attack from the 'defenders', and is liable to fall sick from the blast of unpopularity. Belief in this efficacy of the 'breath of men' is one of the sanctions of the accepted social order.[1]

Only magic is believed to have power to punish wrongdoers who are neither kinsmen nor members of the same chiefdom. Magic exerts an influence on the behaviour of kinsmen and affines. The witchcraft of a neglected wife may cause a man to fall sick, or that of his father-in-law may harm his children.[2] The power of witchcraft never acts between relatives, though it might between husband and wife.[3]

754 An aggressor witch was reported in the old days by the great commoner to the chief,
627 who ordered the poison ordeal. If the accused failed to vomit (the dose was seldom fatal), he was proved guilty and killed or exiled, all his cows and property being taken by the chief and the victims of his aggressive witchcraft. If a private individual accused another, both were put to the ordeal; if both vomited, the accuser had to pay two cows to the other for slander; if either failed to vomit he was punished as guilty. The ordeal is now illegal, but men accused of aggressive witchcraft still find it best to fly the chiefdom. Great commoners normally used their witchcraft powers to protect their chief from attack, but if he erred they would join in the attack on him; the nobles of Ngonde had power to exert a similar constitutional check on the Kyungu.[4]

763 If death by aggressive witchcraft was suspected, it was proved or disproved by a routine post-mortem examination and by subsequent consultation with the diviner.[5]

Birth

344 A child should be born in its own father's house. A difficult birth is a sign of the
345 guilt of adultery, and is eased by confession.[6] A few days after the birth the mother is anointed, shaved, and resumes her household duties. She later goes on a visit of some
351 weeks to show the child to her own parents, returning to her husband after celebration by both sets of grandparents, and exchanges of food and hoes. The birth of twins was a great misfortune, requiring the segregation and ritual purification of both parents.[7]

Initiation

881 There was no puberty or initiation rite for boys. The initiation of a girl was really a pre-marriage rite. She went through a complicated rite to ensure fertility, in which the husband took part. The initiation lasts some months, and includes several exchanges of food between the families of the girl and her betrothed husband, and ceremonies in which her girl friends of the same village and his friends of his village take part. The girl is tested for virginity during the ceremonies. If she is not betrothed before puberty the initiation is carried out in a modified form, but the full significance is lost.[8]

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 277. [2] Ibid., p. 256. [3] Ibid., 1, 1936, p. 91.
[4] Ibid., 5, 1939, p. 38. [5] Johnston, 1897, p. 443.
[6] Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 10; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 42–3.
[7] Ibid., pp. 44–8. According to H. H. Johnston, if the children died in succession the father was expected to kill himself, but it is possible that he is recounting a custom of the Southern Tumbuka (1897, p. 417).
[8] Ibid., 1925, p. 51; Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 11; Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 258.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

BURIAL

764 The death of any ordinary commoner and those of less important great commoners were announced to their local chiefs. On the death of a chief or noble or of a prominent great commoner, a hen was sent to the Kyungu to announce the death, and he returned one of the cloths obtained from the Arabs. If a prominent commoner or great commoner died, the great chief got a hen and sent a cloth. The funeral of the Kyungu was secretly carried out by the nobles of Ngonde.[1]

Attendance at ceremonies is a constituent factor of kinship and affinity. Attendance at burial is obligatory for members of the same village. Messages are sent to all the fathers-in-law and all the sons-in-law of the dead man, and of the senior kinsman who buries him, to all the dead man's full and half-brothers, to the husbands of his sisters, to any classificatory brothers with whom he has exchanged cows, to his mother's father, or brother, and to full and half-brothers of his father, and to his sons. These, with their wives and older children, are obliged to come. A chief normally goes to all burials in his chiefdom (excepting those of very young children), and a special part of the burial meat is given to him.

The ceremonies last about a month, starting with the burial ceremonies of three or four days. Any contact with the dead body is considered to be magically dangerous, and to require special purification. A few personal possessions are buried with the body. The funeral rites are believed to enable a man to join his ancestors. To decide the cause of death by studying the condition of the intestines, a post-mortem examination was formerly always made, the diagnosis afterwards being checked by the diviner. The ceremonies end with war dances (now become rather dances of sexual display), and with the killing of cattle to feed the mourners and honour the dead.

At all except the poorest burials, one or more head of cattle is killed. Not only the immediate family, but also the fathers of the dead man's wives and the husbands of his full-sisters and daughters are expected to provide cows for killing, and if he is buried at his father's place, the father's affinal relations are expected to bring cows. More cows are killed for a man than for a woman, but her husband and father are both supposed to provide a cow for her burial. The heir, when the inheritance is settled, should kill the beasts, and thereby establish his claim if doubt arises later. Many relatives and friends bring cloths, some of which are buried with the dead; others are kept by his family. The banana groves of the dead are in part destroyed. A month after the funeral there is a commemorative beer feast and some beer is taken to the grave as an offering. After mourning all relatives and friends of the dead shave their heads.[2]

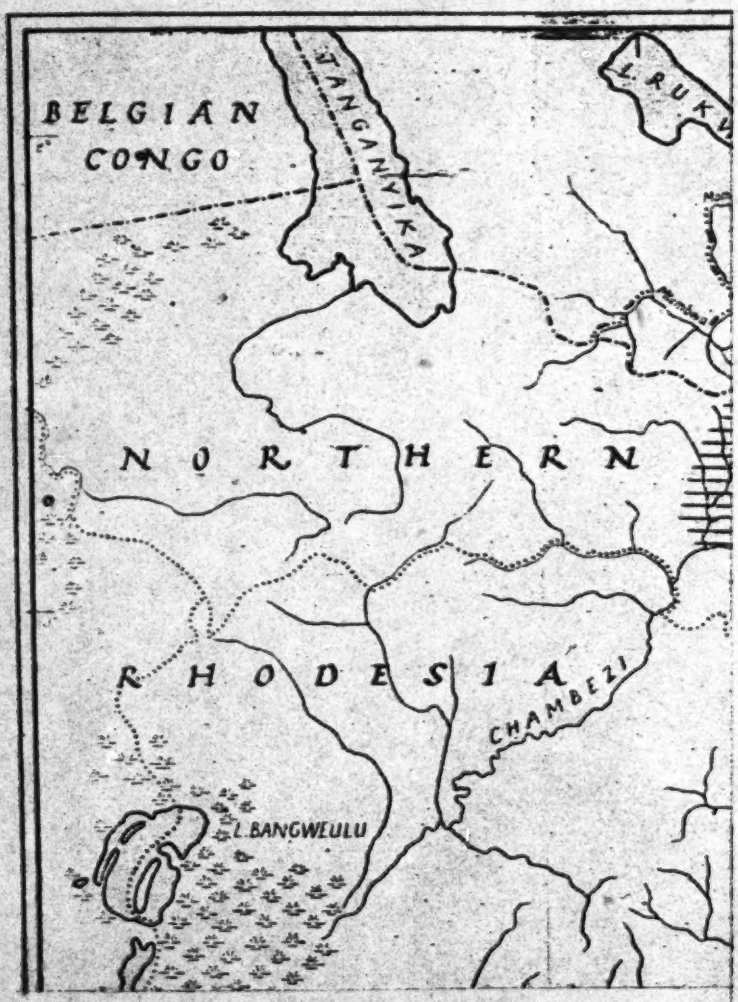
UTANI 1/1

764 602 According to Moreau, the Nyakyusa can cite three or more tribes having *utani* alliances with them. They also have *utani* relations between clans and between individuals. When a burial takes place, every *utani* within reach is under at least as strong an obligation as any relative to attend the funeral and to contribute to the expenses.[3]

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 66. According to Dr. Kerr-Cross, 1894, p. 189, the Ngonde used to bury people alive with the Kyungu.
[2] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 292 ff.; Wilson, 4, 1939; Johnston, 1897, pp. 443-5.
[3] Moreau, 1941, pp. 5-6.

1/1 [A type of joking relationship.— Analyst]

131



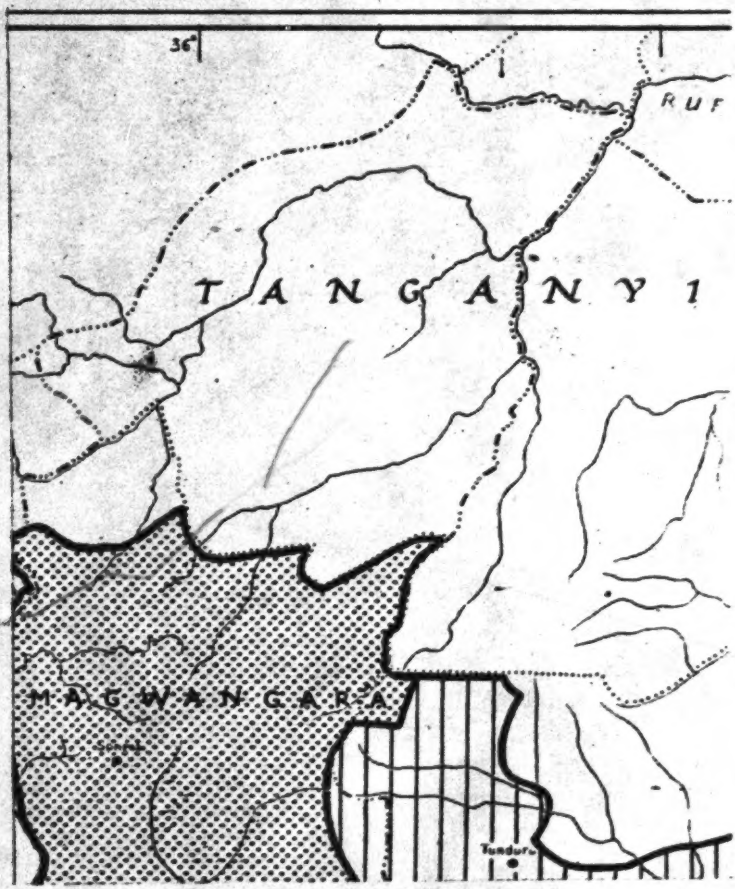
[End paper map A]

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

131

[End paper map B]

131



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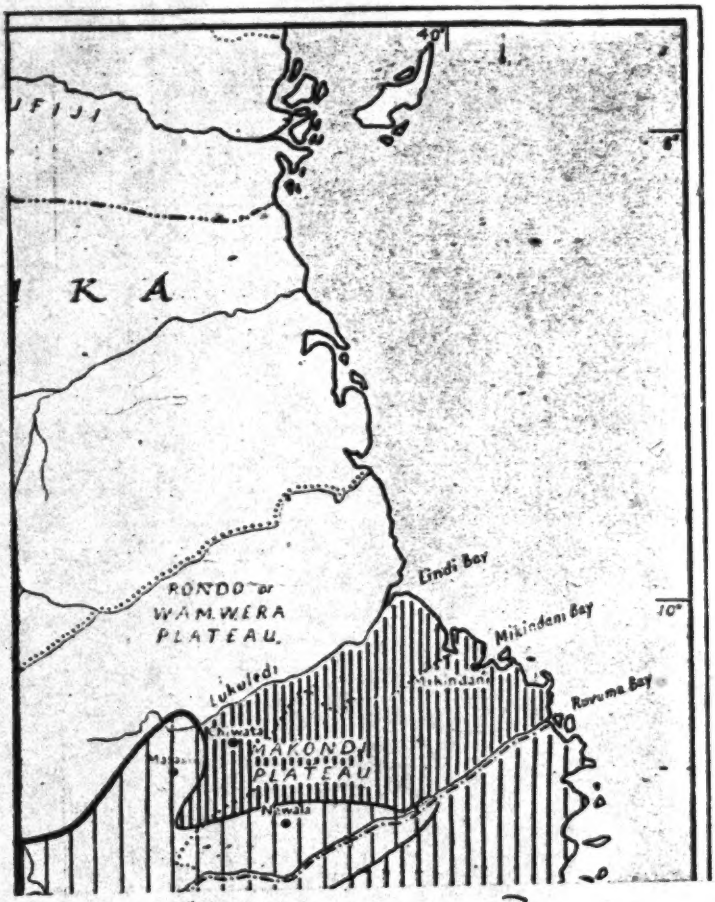
4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

131



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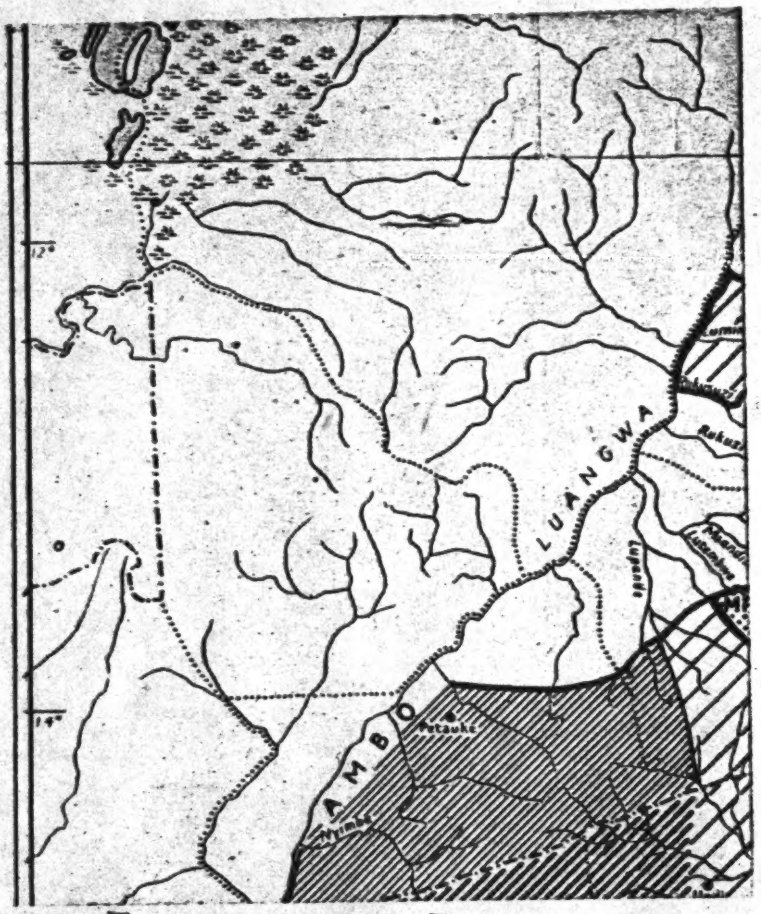
131



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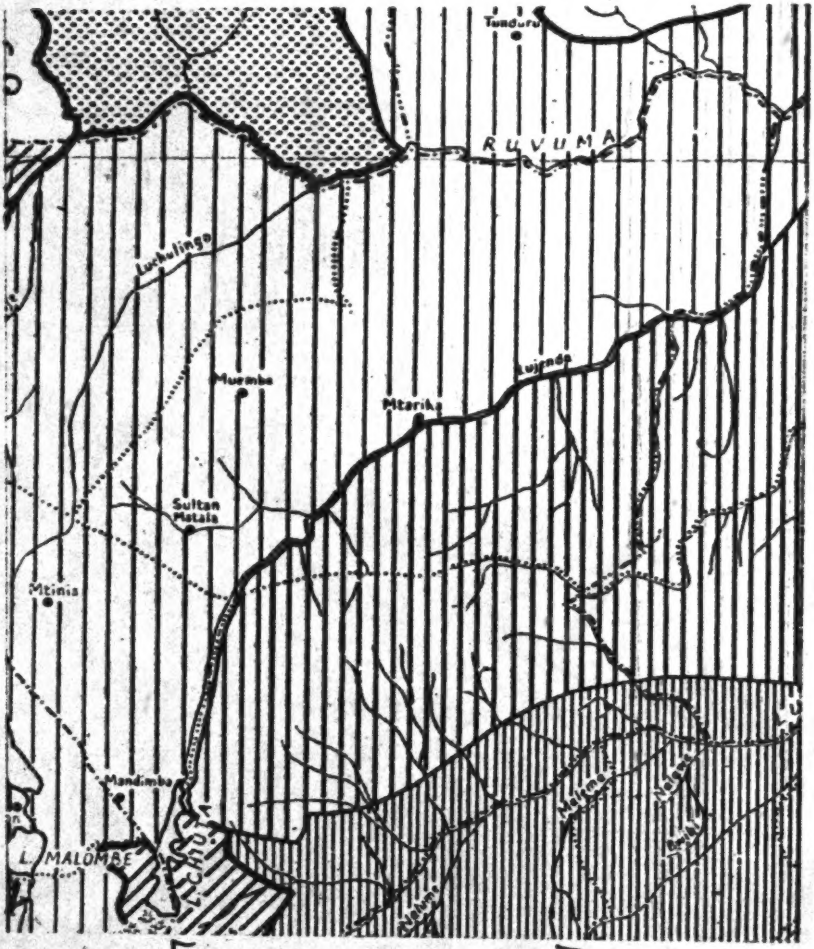

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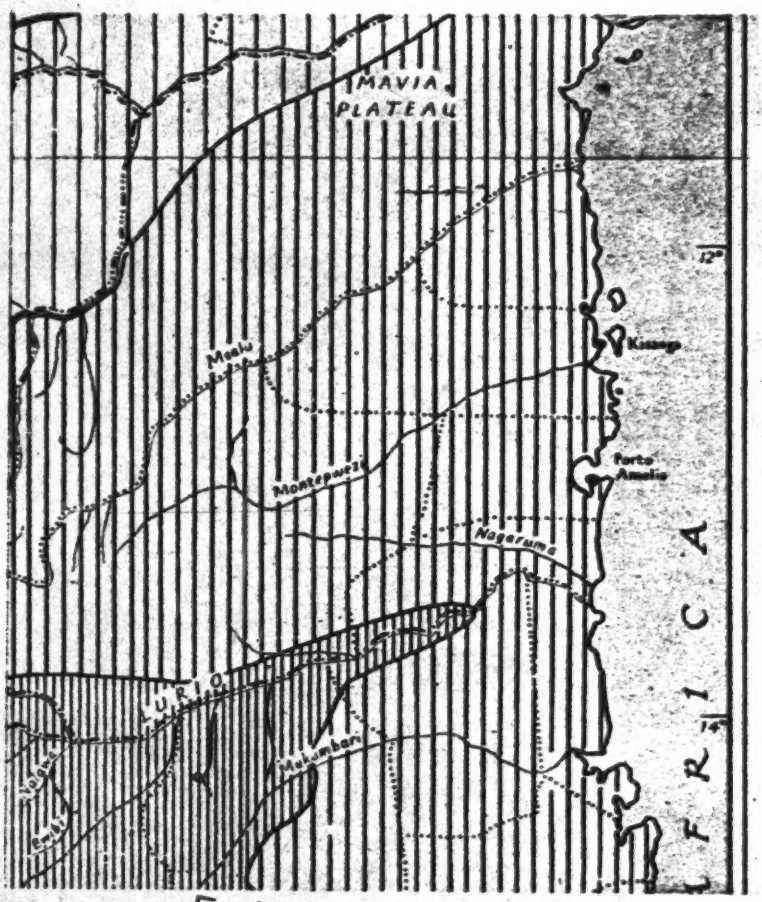

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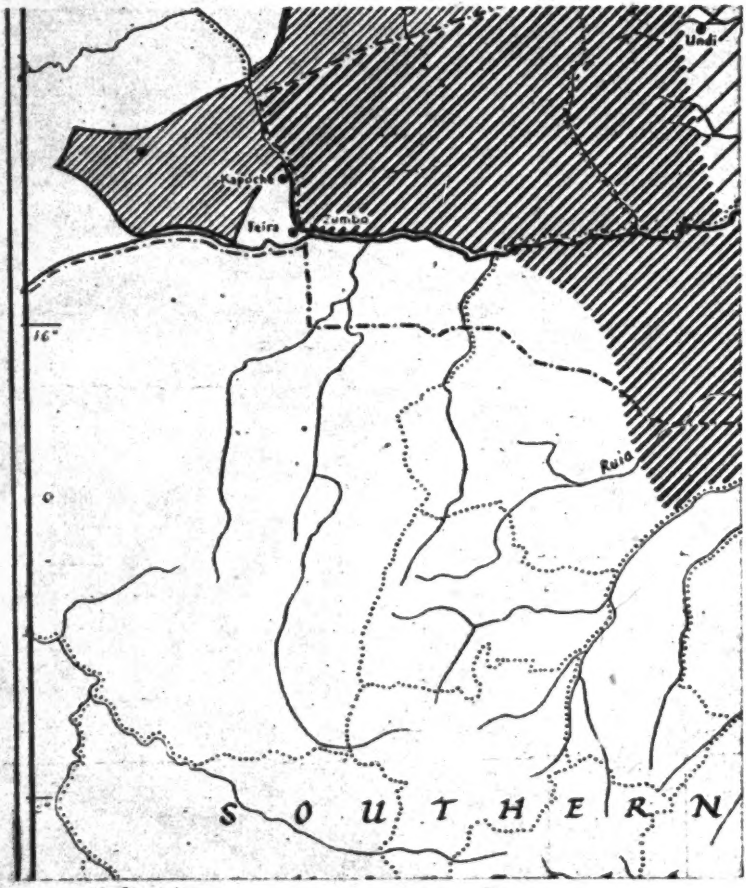

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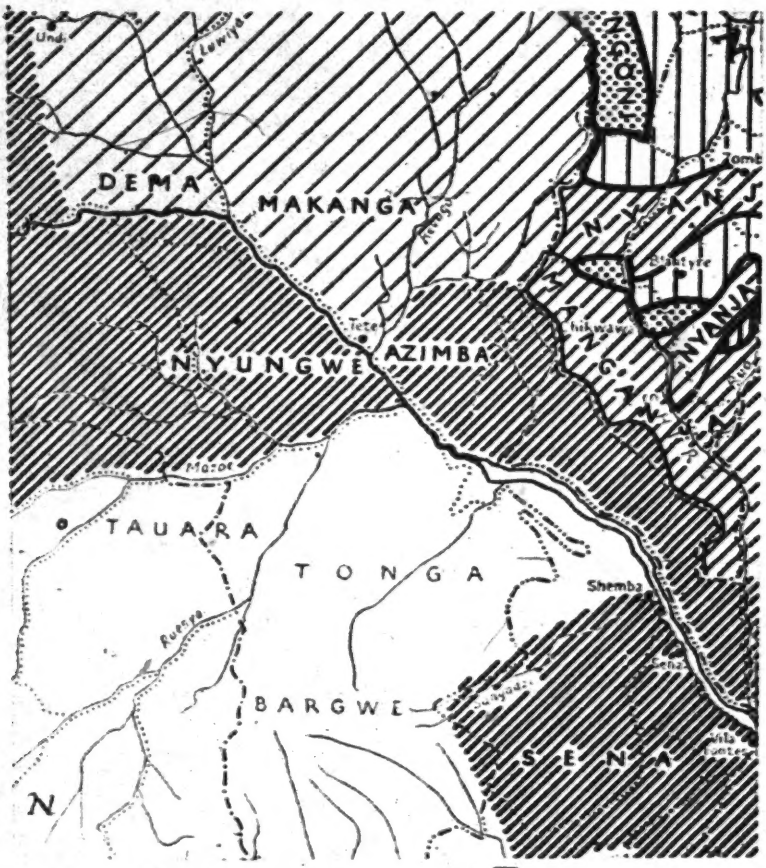

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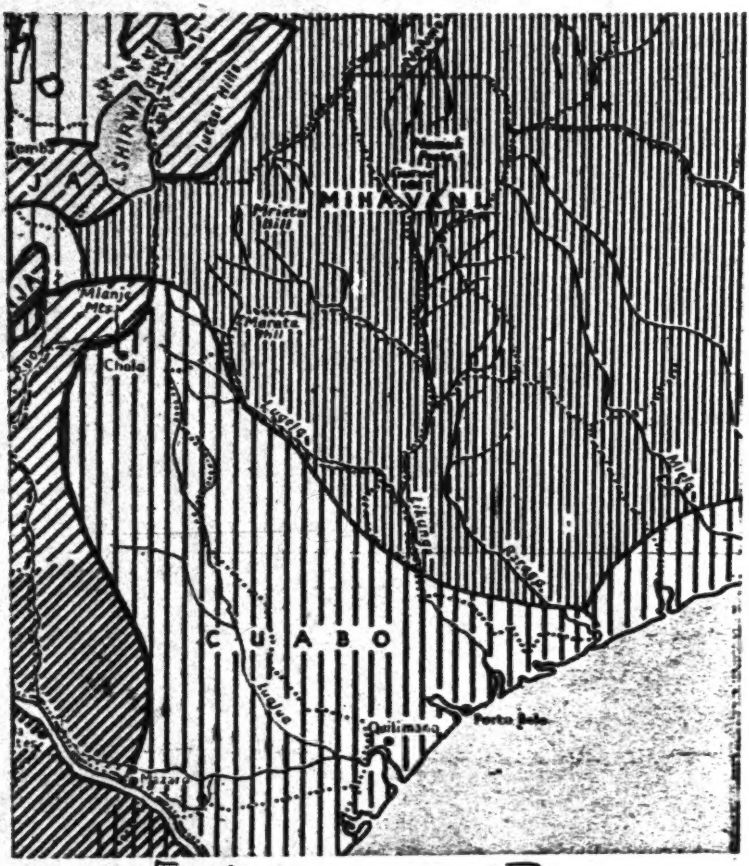

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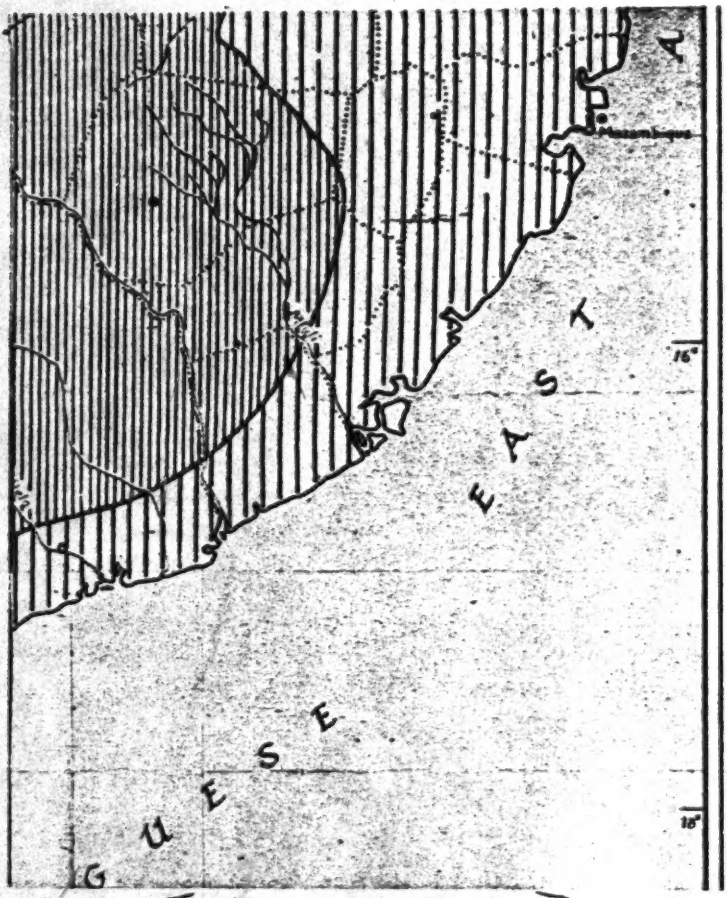

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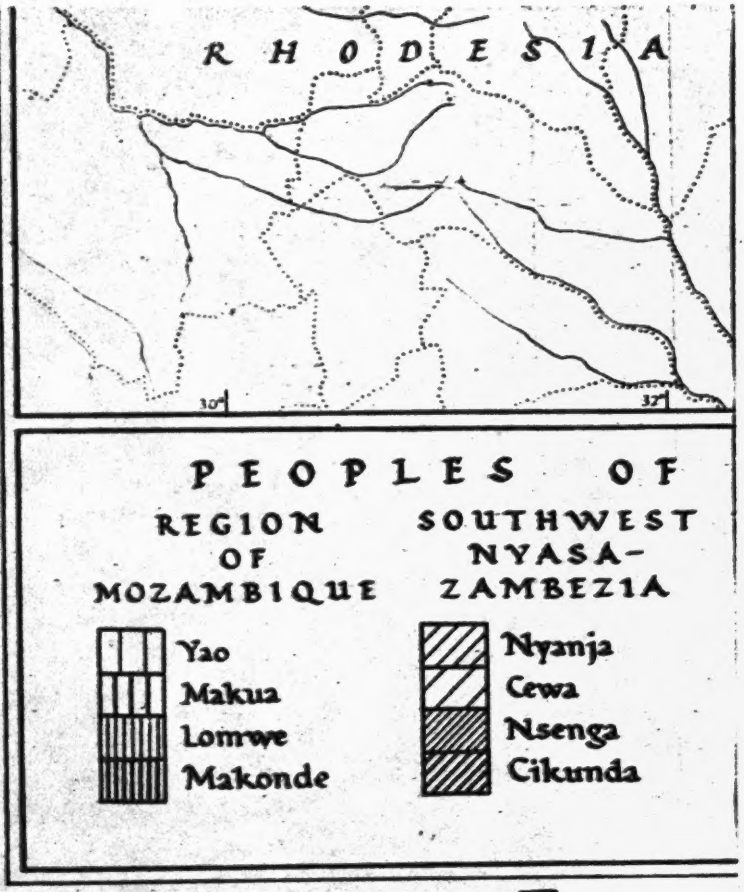

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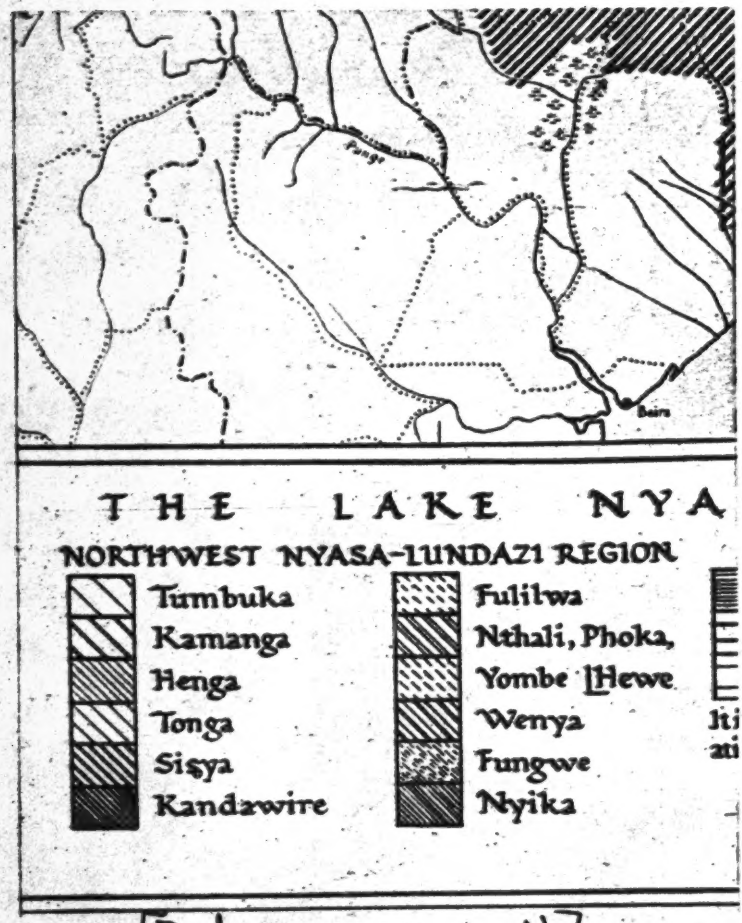

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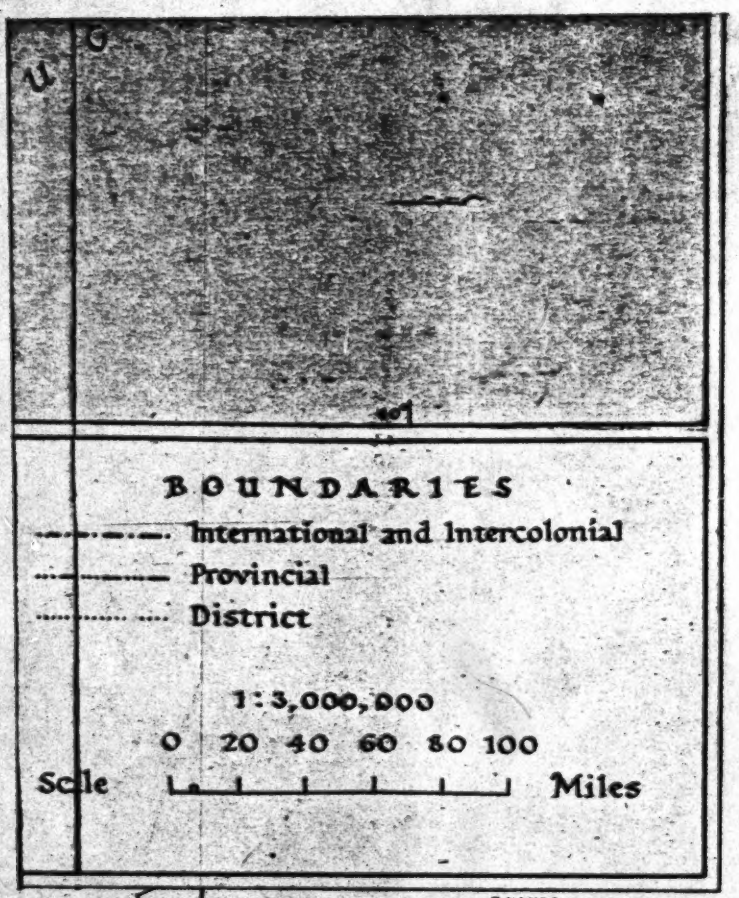

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5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

THE RHODES—LIVINGSTONE PAPERS NUMBER ONE

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THE LAND RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS AMONG THE NYAKYUSA

BY

GODFREY WILSON

[r1]

Two Shillings

THE RHODES—LIVINGSTONE INSTITUTE, LIVINGSTONE,
NORTHERN RHODESIA
1938

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

THE RHODES-LIVINGSTONE PAPERS

121 This series is designed to increase the sum of exact information upon the sociology of Central Africa at that most interesting of all historical periods, the present day. The sudden establishment of relationships between the civilized peoples of Europe and the primitive peoples of Africa is one of the greatest events of human history; we are in the midst of it, and it makes upon us all, both Africans and Europeans, far-reaching demands for emotional and practical adjustment. Nor without understanding can we either control our destiny or properly enjoy its rich complexity.

Understanding, however, is hard to come by in the bewildering diversity of facts. Human society is everywhere complex and especially so in Central Africa where the variety of cultural tradition, both amongst Africans and Europeans, and of local economic and climatic conditions prevents our minds from grasping at all easily the general nature and movement of the situation in which we live. We must needs proceed patiently and step by step. And so the majority of these papers will deal each with one limited area and one particular aspect of social life alone. Only in this piecemeal fashion can we ever reach true understanding.

In this, the first of the series, an attempt is made to describe the property in land which individual Africans possess to-day within a particular tribal group in the south-west of Tanganyika. As this group was until fifty years ago among the most isolated and primitive groups in the whole of Africa, there is perhaps a more than local interest in seeing that it ranks unquestionably among those "indigenous peoples," to quote a famous judicial document, "whose legal conceptions, though differently developed, are hardly less precise than our own. When once they have been studied and understood they are no less enforceable than rights arising under English law."

GODFREY WILSON,
Director, Rhodes-Livingstone Institute.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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THE LAND-RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS AMONG THE NYAKYUSA

1. Introduction 5
2. Physical Conditions 5
3. The Uses and Value of Land 6
4. The Form of Nyakyusa Society 10
5. Individual Rights within the Household .. 17
6. Individual Rights in relation to Village Group and Chief 29
7. Conclusion 52

[4]

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

1. *INTRODUCTION*

Land everywhere is the basis of social life, that upon which men move and rest; it is both in itself the most important raw material of economic activity and the location of all other materials such as minerals, wood and water; it is a universal condition of human action, an object of human understanding and feeling. And everywhere the use of land is defined and limited by a system of tenure, a series of laws, moral rules and conventions without which no orderly life at all would be possible upon it. This paper is an attempt to describe in part one such system of land tenure, that which I found to obtain among the Nyakyusa, a Bantu people of South Tanganyika, during the years 1934-1938. |2|

I have here described in detail the land-rights of individuals only, both in relation to one another and to the villages and chiefdoms of which they are members, and have left the rights of these groups in relation to one another for a further publication.

The Nyakyusa system of land-tenure is determined by three main factors: firstly by the physical conditions of life in this part of Central Africa, that is by the nature of the soil and its topography, by the climate and by the density of the human population; secondly by the particular practical uses to which land is put and the techniques employed therein; and thirdly by the form of Nyakyusa society, the groups and relationships into which it is articulated. But in considering these three main determinants we shall have to take into account intellectual and emotional factors also, the understanding of their land which the Nyakyusa possess and their feelings about it.

2. *PHYSICAL CONDITIONS*

The Rungwe District of the Southern Highlands Province of Tanganyika, in which the Nyakyusa live, is situated some 9° south of the Equator and is a part of the Great Rift Valley formation. The country of the Nyakyusa is bounded on the south by Lake Nyasa and the Songwe river, on the east by the almost sheer wall of the Livingstone Mountains (which rise to 10,000 feet), and on the west by the lower Ndali hills which, although included in the same administrative district, are inhabited not by Nyakyusa but by two cultural groups closely related to them, the Ndali and the Lambya. |3| |33|

The Nyakyusa live then between the two walls of the Rift, but their country is not itself all of an equal altitude. In the north the Rift is here interrupted and closed by the extinct Rungwe volcano (10,000 feet) from whose base (5,000 feet) the land drops for twenty-five miles in a cascade of hills and little plateaux to level out in a lake-shore plain fifteen or

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

131 twenty miles from Lake Nyasa (1,500 feet). A little compact country,
133 secluded until very recently from any effective external contacts, slightly over 1,000 square miles in extent.[1]

132 The soil, particularly that of the higher ground in the north of the
134 Nyakyusa country, is not in itself very rich, but, as between 100 and 130 inches of rain usually fall each year, the district is one of the most fertile
[161] in the whole of Tanganyika; two crops a year are often grown on the same patch of ground, and the African population is over eighty to the square
[234] mile. There is no infected tsetse fly and cattle are the most prized possession of the Nyakyusa.

631 For historical reasons, which we will discuss in a later section, the Nyakyusa have never been united under any one paramount chief of their own, but live in a number (nearly 100 at the present day) of tiny but traditionally independent chiefdoms. For these chiefdoms the numerous streams which run down from the north into Lake Nyasa and the crests of the ridges of land between them, form natural boundaries.

133 The country, of course, is not all of equal economic value, parts of it
134 are stony and mountainous, other parts, and particularly the plain in the south, consist of deep and level soil; and the population is heavier on the plain than on the higher ground. Further, on the higher ground, there exist numerous old volcanic craters filled with rich moist soil and these, being more fertile than the surrounding land, are particularly valued by
[241] the Nyakyusa. Again, of the two chief economic crops of this district, one, coffee, can only be grown on the higher ground while the other, rice, can only be grown on or near the plain. And at every point their system of land tenure is partially determined by such physical factors as these.

3. *THE USES AND VALUE OF LAND*

311 The Nyakyusa use their land for building on, for agriculture, for pasture, for hunting and fishing; they collect firewood, reeds, thatching-grass, mushrooms and other wild vegetables there; they draw water from its streams and bathe daily in them; on their land they grow bamboos, bananas, *imiyunguti* trees[2] and coffee; they keep bees; they dance, they fight, they walk and lie down upon it; their land is both the receptacle of refuse and the location of religious ritual, while their doctors continually wander over its surface in search of magical medicines.

Not all these uses of land give rise to laws, moral rules or conventions, but only those uses which tend to lead men into conflict with one another or into mutual embarrassment. The only reasons for the existence of

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[1] The whole of Rungwe District is 1,866 square miles, but this includes the hills of the Ndali and Lambya as well.

[2] I have not been able to discover the botanical name of this tree.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

rules of land tenure are firstly to prevent, as far as possible, such conflicts and embarrassments from arising, and secondly, to facilitate their resolution when aroused. If, then, there is no danger of conflict or embarrassment neither is there a need for any rule at all. A Nyakyusa doctor wandering in the uncultivated bush looking for medicines cannot harm any man's interest, cannot hurt any man's feelings, and he is therefore free to gather what and where he will. 311

In many of its uses, however, land is scarce and so leads men into competition for it. When, in any society, land, or some other material of action, is scarce, we say that it has economic value; and whenever anything has economic value then, of necessity, its use *must* always be effectively limited and defined by rules of law or of morality or by convention, for only by such limitations of human action can anarchy be kept at bay and ordered human society continue to exist.

The scarcity or economic value of land is, in most of the Nyakyusa chiefdoms, more a matter of quality than of mere quantity. In some few chiefdoms there is, however, already threatening an actual lack of arable land, and it is almost certain that there will in time be a general shortage. The natural increase of population is to some extent counterbalanced by ever-increasing emigration into neighbouring, less densely populated districts; but rapidly changing economic and technical conditions will of themselves, in all probability, bring about a shortage of land. Ploughs (over 100 of them) are already in use and are multiplying many times over the area which one man can cultivate, while the recent development of an external market for surplus food is stimulating many men to greater effort even with the hoe. An area amply sufficient, with primitive subsistence agriculture, for about 100,000 persons may well prove quite insufficient when ploughs are employed and when to the 100,000 mouths are added, through the medium of the market, many thousand more. Rungwe District is already one of the main sources not only of labour but also of food for the nearby Lupa gold fields, while its rapidly increasing crop of Native-grown coffee now finds its way to Europe. In 1936 produce to the value of some £24,000[1] was sold by this district to the outside world. 311 241 [167] [439]

At the moment, however, there is no general shortage of land. It is the *best* ground which is scarce, not land as such. The best building sites, the best plots of arable ground and the best pastures have economic value and their use is precisely defined and limited in the Nyakyusa system of land-tenure. 311

[1] Figure estimated for the whole district (Nyakyusa, Ndali and Lambya, about 150,000 persons in all) on the basis of information supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Office, Tukuyu.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

000 Before passing on to consider how it is that the Nyakyusa distinguish between " better " and " worse " plots and pastures we must dwell for a moment longer on the technical aspect of their present use of land.

241 The *chitemene* system of agriculture so common in Central Africa has never been practised by the Nyakyusa, indeed the density of 231 the population makes it impossible; they follow instead a system of intensive cultivation with rotation of crops. Villages are thus relatively stable and a man may, if he chooses, hoe the same ground year after year for a whole generation, letting each plot lie fallow in its turn. The great variety of crops which can be grown helps to determine the success of the Nyakyusa rotation system—maize, millet, sweet-potatoes, beans, ground-nuts, cow-peas, cassava and, in the plain, rice being their staple products. The men hoe deeply, using a long-handled iron hoe, the women weed with the aid of a short-handled wooden digging stick; different crops are planted at different seasons and most men do some hoeing in every month of the year. Every now and again a whole block of garden land that has been worked for some years may be allowed by common consent to revert to pasture. In the pasturing of cattle the most noteworthy point is the burning of the grass-lands; at the end of each short dry season in October or November, some of the pastures are fired so as to bring new shoots of tender grass with the first rains. The houses of a village are normally all built close together, each surrounded by bananas, with the main garden lands at some distance from them. The cattle are tied up at night in the houses and their dung is removed each morning and thrown down among the banana trees by the women of the household. The deliberate use of dung as manure is a novelty but is now general in the cultivation of coffee; on the gardens cattle dung is not used save in that one part of the district where land is beginning to be absolutely scarce, but the grass, which in this climate grows so quickly over them, is hoed in each year as green manure.

242 The first consideration which, in the case of arable land, leads the Nyakyusa to value some pieces of ground above others is a scientific[1] knowledge of the properties of different kinds of soil. " The men who are skilled in choosing ground for hoeing are those who have been long familiar with the soil. They know how soils differ and that one soil is best for maize, another for sweet-potatoes, one for peas, another for beans, one for ground-nuts another for pumpkins, one for millet, another for yams. And they can tell from the grass also, that where a certain

[1] By " scientific " knowledge is meant an intelligent understanding of fact based upon observation or experiment and which is not directly determined by any ultimate religious beliefs, save only the one belief that facts are intelligible.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

kind of grass grows there maize will do well, or maybe ground-nuts. 242
Some grass-lands have very poor soil in which no crop at all will grow properly, the one we call *kyusi* for example, or again the one we call *unnyegesi* ("the ant"); no one hoes these lands. Some gardens we hoe on the higher ground, others near the streams, either right in the mud by the water or else in ground that is merely moist. On the higher ground we hoe millet, peas, sweet-potatoes, cassava and some other crops; in the muddy places by the water we hoe yams, building huge ridges for them called *fibimbika*; and there too we sometimes put in (during the dry season) the shoots of sweet potatoes that we shall later plant elsewhere. If the soil is only a little muddy and is mixed with sand, then we plant maize there. The right soil for beans we call *kibumba*—a red soil which is sometimes mixed with sand. Ground-nuts we either plant in the *kibumba* (if it is the sandy kind) or else just in sand. Whenever a man is hoeing a field for millet or ground-nuts or sweet-potatoes, he can tell just from the soil whether his crop will do well or not."[1]

And so also the Nyakyusa well understand the different qualities of 232
pasture. The cattle are herded by small boys but on most mornings one of the men also goes out with the herd to show the boys where to pasture it and what grass-land to avoid.

Into the value of arable land sentiment also enters and men like, 311
ceteris paribus, to hoe their gardens where they themselves or their fathers and brothers have hoed before. So too the value of building plots is 769
determined both by practical and emotional considerations: large and relatively level sites on which bananas grow well are preferred to narrow or steeply sloping ones or to sites where bananas do badly, but, on the other hand, of two equally convenient sites that with family associations is normally preferred. And in the case of building sites religious considerations may also enter. A friend of mine told me that, when his father died, he did not move but left his father's site vacant with the new grave upon it; a year or two later his millet crop unaccountably failed and [787]
the diviner told him that his father's spirit was angry that no one had "swept his grave," i.e. that the plot had been left vacant. My friend did not actually move, even then, for he preferred his own site; he compromised by the performance of a ritual sacrifice to his father's spirit. But in such cases a man will often move to his dead father's site for fear of further misfortunes.

We have discussed briefly the purposes for which and the techniques 000
by means of which the Nyakyusa use their land, and we have indicated a few of the main considerations which lead them to value some particular

[1] Text written for me by a literate Nyakyusa.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

pieces of ground above others. We must now pass to the third great determinant of the system of Nyakyusa land-tenure—the form of their society.

4. *THE FORM OF NYAKYUSA SOCIETY*

178 When we speak of " Nyakyusa society " to-day we refer to one small area within a world society, to a group of men distinguished from the rest of the world by the possession of a unique cultural idiom of their own but none the less bound to it by the strongest ties. Two generations ago Nyakyusa society was, unknown to our grandfathers, almost a world in itself, a world moreover which was split up into a number of tiny units in the shape of independent chiefdoms whose relationships with one another were of the loosest kind. The sons of men for whom society (that is effective relationship) was normally confined to two or three thousand families, all or nearly all consisting of personal acquaintances, now find their own destinies inextricably entangled with those of 1,600,000,000 people. To the Nyakyusa of to-day fluctuations in the world price of gold and coffee, the policies and incomes of the missionary Churches of Europe, the political relationships between Great Britain, her Dominions, the League of Nations and Germany are matters of some importance.

Nyakyusa society at the present moment thus includes a number of complicated relationships between the Nyakyusa group and the outside world which, in the recent past, had no existence at all. And the presence of these new relationships has profoundly modified the social forms which traditionally obtained within the group itself. And as, with the spread of Christianity, Islam and cilivised education, with the increase of skill and wealth and with the taking of new responsibilities, the Nyakyusa participate ever more and more fully in the life of the world society, so will their relationships with one another continue to change in form. For they still have upon them a primitive stamp, they still to some extent proceed from assumptions of isolation.

182 423 The relationships of Nyakyusa society to-day fall into four main categories. There are, firstly, relationships of blood, marriage and affinity, secondly there are the various bonds of village life, thirdly there are those which subsist between members of the same chiefdom and, finally, there are those which bind the Nyakyusa to still wider groups, to the tribal group, the Territory, the World. And these relationships, as they are limited and defined, amongst other things, by rules of land-tenure, so also are they among the sources of these rules. Land is held in society and the form of society largely determines the manner of its holding.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Nyakyusa are, predominantly, a patrilineal people, for inheritance normally follows the male line. They differ, however, from the patrilineal peoples of Europe in that brothers inherit before sons. Inherited wealth is thus mainly kept in the hands of the older men, though they are under certain obligations towards their " sons " (whether own or classificatory) in their use of it. Marriage involves a transfer of anything from four to thirty head of cattle from the bridegroom to his father-in-law, and consequently the chief obligation which an older man has, both to his own sons and to the sons of any kinsman from whom he has inherited, is to provide them, in due time, with cattle for marriage. But this obligation is not an absolute one, it depends, in part, upon the due fulfilment by each " son " of his filial duties, which are, firstly, to hoe his father's fields diligently and, secondly, to maintain a respectful bearing towards him. Unmarried men have no gardens of their own, they work their fathers' land and eat the produce of it which their mothers cook. 611 428 583 593

Under modern conditions money for tax and clothes is necessary both to father and son, and very many young men visit the nearby Lupa gold fields regularly, for periods of a few months at a time, to earn it. A youth who always brings back to his parents after each spell of absence tax money and some presents is held to have done all his duty and he will be given marriage cattle just as soon and as readily as if he had spent all his time hoeing at home. And if he earns more, sufficient to purchase some of his marriage cattle for himself, still his father benefits, for the old man has then to spend fewer beasts from his own stock. But the Lupa needs food as well as labour and some unmarried men stay continuously at home and engage in the production of crops; after the family needs have been met the surplus is sold and from the proceeds the father pays his own tax and his sons' and buys clothes for them as well. 167 593

Hoeing, which is the hardest part of Nyakyusa cultivation, is normally done by men, planting; weeding, reaping and cooking by women. But some women nowadays do some hoeing too—if their husbands are away at work or if for any other reason they find it difficult to get enough ground prepared for them. Traditionally, I was told, women never used a hoe at all. 241 462

Polygyny is the rule rather than the exception among middle-aged men, and in a polygynous household, as we shall see, each wife has her own garden plots. The institution of polygyny has many other elements besides the economic, but the economic is not the least important of them: the taking of additional wives is the best capital investment which is open to an ordinary, uneducated, Nyakyusa peasant. A Nyakyusa wife is not her husband's property, she is his wife; but as family relationships are, among the Nyakyusa, the basis of economic activity, so the more wives 595

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

595 and children a man has to assist him the more wealth he can produce. The man and his unmarried sons hoe, his wives and young daughters plant, weed and harvest, fetch water, cut firewood and cook the food ; and in other practical activities there is equally fruitful co-operation within the household group.

591 621 882 When a man marries he takes his wife from her father's village to his own where he lives with a group of contemporaries. Each village is in origin an age-group, formed by the sons of some village of adult men who leave home one by one as they reach the age of ten to twelve years and build together on ground set aside for them by their fathers. It is not decent, the Nyakyusa maintain, for a boy to sleep at home after any vigorous interest in sexual activity has awakened in him ; and so, for the fifteen years or more between leaving home and marriage, he sleeps with bachelor friends in a boys' village. He and a group of friends go round in turn to the houses of their respective parents for meals, and each hoes his own parents' fields, but all return to the boys' village at night.

621 882 361 As the members of the boys' village grow older, younger boys just leaving home begin to be refused admittance to it and so either start a fresh village of their own nearby or else join a village of their own contemporaries which has already been started. Boys' villages are thus forever hiving off from the villages of men. At first a boys' village covers but little ground for, as its members are unmarried, the houses are small and close together and there are no garden lands attached to it. But as the young men marry one by one the village expands, houses are built bigger and further apart and some adjacent ground is brought under cultivation, until at last it assumes the normal aspect of a village of adult men.

621 A village thus consists of a male age-group with wives and children attached. Wives may be of any age and there is no such formal age grouping among them as among the men. And, as time goes on, some men too may enter the village who are not exact contemporaries of its other members. When a man dies his heir, either a younger brother or a son, often comes to live in his village ; nor are strangers who apply for land in a village ever, I think, refused on the ground of unsuitable age. Villages vary considerably in size but average forty to fifty households.

At first a village of boys, as we have said, is built on ground allotted to it by the village of their fathers ; but a new allotment is made ceremonially at the " coming out " (*ubusoka*) of the young chiefs.

631 622 Every generation each chiefdom of the Nyakyusa is divided into two halves, a fact which is hard to understand until it is realized that the Nyakyusa consist of a number of immigrant groups which have, until very recently, been expanding their territory within the district and

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

incorporating the previous inhabitants. Now saturation point has been reached; their chiefdoms cover nearly all the available land and include in their membership all the indigenous people; and the custom of dividing chiefdoms into two is doomed. At the moment, however, it is still a vital part of their constitutional law. The division of a chiefdom is apparent from the moment that a ruling chief marries his two great wives, for he builds their houses separately, one in each "side" (*ulubafu*) of his chiefdom. The son of each great wife inherits that side of the chiefdom in which his mother's house is built. 631 622

When the ruling chief begins to get old the two heirs are ceremonially "brought out" and recognized as chiefs, though they do not assume full powers until their father's death. And their "coming out" is also the "coming out" of all the young men, of all the boys' villages which have been built by the sons of the old chief's men. At the "coming out" each such village is formally given land by the old chief and his great-commoners, often in a new place. 622 621

In every village there is a headman whose title, *ulifumu*, is simply a specialized use of the general term for a member of an old family who is not a chief. Every commoner is called an *ulifumu* in his home chiefdom.[1] These two uses of the term I distinguish by calling the village headman a "great-commoner." Great-commoners, then, are selected for their wealth and ability by the older great-commoners of the chiefdom and hold office for life. In the boys' villages before the "coming out" they are chosen by the older great-commoners—those in charge of their fathers' villages—on that side of the chiefdom. If they prove satisfactory their appointments are confirmed by all the great-commoners of the old chiefdom at the "coming out," if not new ones are then selected. 621 624

At the "coming out" the young great-commoners are ritually treated with medicines to give them the power of witchcraft which they are expected to use in the interests of morality, while the young chiefs are treated with medicines to make them fierce and impressive themselves and to ensure the fertility of their land and the prosperity of the people under them. [754] [789]

Traditionally the young chiefs assumed authority, each in the young men's villages which composed his own new chiefdom, immediately after the "coming out" and in the old villages in one side of his father's chiefdom when his father died. To-day the position differs for the Administration does not recognize the young chiefs at all until their father is dead. 621 622

The separation of chiefdoms established at the "coming out" is often modified subsequently. In the old days brother chiefs frequently

[1] Vide infra p. 33.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 fought each other and one was sometimes reduced to a subordinate position by the other. Such subordinate or minor chiefs did not always
622 lose all power, some men often continued to live with them, but not many, for they were poor and could not afford the feasts that prosperous and powerful chiefs gave to their warriors. Nowadays the junior of the two young chiefs, in the majority of cases, becomes subordinate to his brother immediately, for the Administration normally recognizes the senior of the two only, and a salary is paid to him alone on the old chief's death.

The number of villages which "come out" with each young chief usually varies between four and eight. But if a chief is subsequently reduced to a minor position he will often end his life with one village only of adult men and one village of their sons. For people move from minor [624] chiefdoms and the depleted villages that are left gradually coalesce under the leadership of one of the great-commoners. The son of a minor chief may succeed to his father's position, but only one son will do so; a minor chiefdom is too small to be divided and has no formal "coming out" of its own; its young men attend the "coming out" of the superior chiefdom.

621 So much in outline for the political constitution of the separate
423 Nyakyusa chiefdoms. Some account of it was a necessary preface to the discussion of individual land rights, since it is within this political structure that they have validity. If, for example, the boundaries of a village are changed at the "coming out"—and they very frequently are—then no individual rights to village land can be maintained outside the new boundaries.

631 Prior to the arrival of the Europeans there was no paramount political authority among the Nyakyusa, but a number of tiny independent chiefdoms side by side, with minor chiefdoms in some cases attached to them. Of these traditionally independent chiefdoms there is none, I think, which to-day exceeds 3,000 adult male members, and most of them are far smaller than that. This smallness of scale, which is difficult at first for a European to grasp, is the fundamental characteristic of primitive society, in the organization of which personal relationships are predominant, wherein social relationships, that is, mainly subsist between personal acquaintances. In the old Nyakyusa polity impersonal relationships, effective social bonds linking together men who were personally unknown to one another, though they existed had relatively little importance.

648 Just south of the Nyakyusa, in what is now North Nyasaland, live
184 the Ngonde[1] people, whose language and culture was and is very similar to that of the Nyakyusa. They were, however, slightly more civilized in that they were in closer contact with Arab and Swahili ivory traders; and

[1] Better known to Europeans as *Konde*.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the wealth derived from this trade enabled one of their chiefs, Kyungu, to maintain himself as paramount over all Ngonde. Among his people impersonal relationships thus had a greater importance. And it was, I believe, the historical isolation of the Nyakyusa from any considerable commercial contact with the outside world which prevented the rise among them of a paramount chief. 648 184

To-day the Nyakyusa are in process of integration with the civilized society of the world and the independence of their minute chiefdoms has inevitably passed away. The traditionally sovereign chiefs have been grouped in seven court districts with one chief as President of the Native Court in each; and these seven chiefs together with the two Presidents of the Ndali and Lambya Courts are federated, with an Appeal Court and joint Native Treasury of their own. In the seven Native Courts most of the traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their great-commoners, and assist the President and his great-commoners in the hearing of cases. The bulk of the legal business previously transacted by each chief in his own country is now taken to Court, but the power of great-commoners to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages is still the basis of the legal system. 178 622 692

A poll tax, now (1938) fixed at 9/- per annum for adult males with no additional tax for plural wives, has been introduced and chiefs are paid small salaries ranging from 5/-, 10/- or 20/- a month for ordinary chiefs to 80/- or 100/- a month for the Court Presidents. 651 622

The Nyakyusa, as we have previously mentioned, consist of a number of immigrant groups who have spread among and incorporated an indigenous population. The main immigrant groups were three in number and are distinguished to-day by the names of "Nyakyusa," "Kukwe" and "Selya." As all these three groups together (including those who are now incorporated in them) call themselves "Nyakyusa" to the outside world, I distinguish the one group to which the name more particularly belongs as the "Nyakyusa proper." The Nyakyusa proper live in the plain of Mungonde and up on the higher ground as far north as Tukuyu, the Kukwe live north of them around the base of Rungwe Mountain while the Selya live in the east of the district, between the Nyakyusa proper and the Kukwe, right under the wall of the Livingstone Mountains. Between the three groups there are minor differences of dialect and custom. 563

The extent to which the indigenous groups retain any separate identity varies in accordance with the number of the immigrants and the date at which they reached them, but over a large part of the district fusion has been complete.

We have already discussed the economic relations between the Nyakyusa and the Lupa gold fields which provides them with a market 471

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

471 for labour and food. There are also a few small plantations owned by Europeans inside the district which fulfil a similar function. 26,000 acres only of land have been alienated in Rungwe District by the two Governments which have in turn controlled it; and it is the declared intention of the present Government to alienate no more. Of the alienated land only 2,200 acres is at the moment in use.

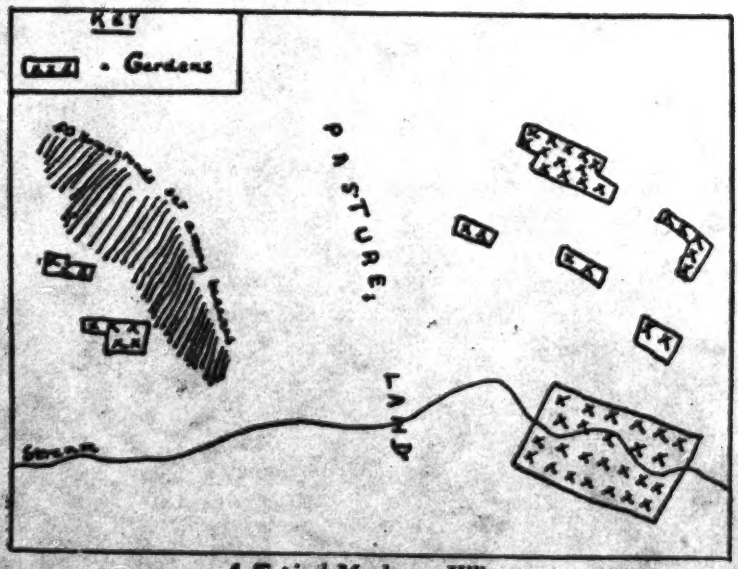
797 Missionaries of the Berlin Lutheran and the Moravian missions have been in the district since 1891, and a substantial proportion, about 16%, of the population now professes Christianity. The Christians live, some in separate Christian villages, some scattered about among their pagan neighbours. In the Christian villages the traditional age grouping usually prevails, with elders and deacons taking the place of great-commoners.

Such in outline is the form of society within which individual Nyakyusa hold property in land.

5. *INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD*

361 A village, as we have seen, usually consists of a group of houses built fairly close together with one or more blocks of garden land at some distance from them, while the village cattle graze the adjoining grass lands in various different herds.

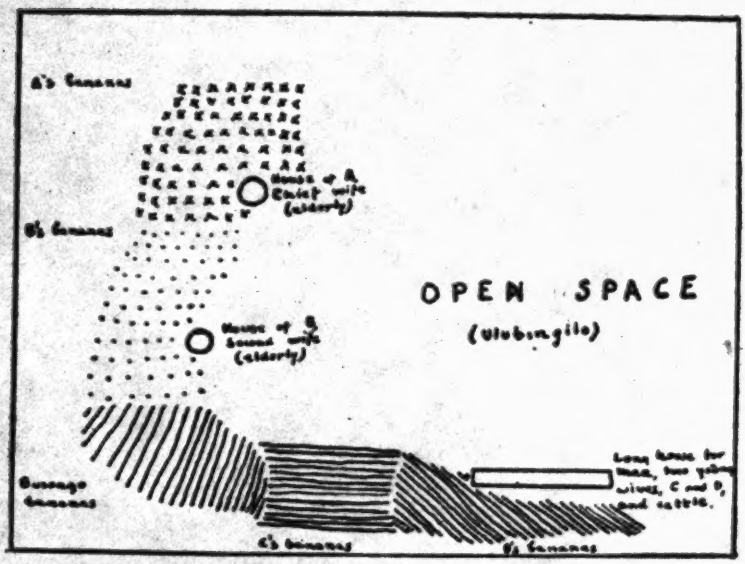
Plan A



A Typical Myakyusa Village

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Plan B



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The Homestead of a Rich Man

Each married man has at least one house and, if he is a polygynist, he often has several; young wives may sometimes share a house, older wives normally have one apiece. The land immediately surrounding a man's houses belongs to him and his wives and will be referred to in this paper as their " building site " or " homestead " (*akaja*). Each homestead is sufficient in size to hold not only the houses of one man but also his bananas and, maybe, a few small plots of beans, ground-nuts or some other crop as well; and it is there, under the bananas, that coffee trees are planted. But there is no room on it for the main gardens of the household. In the centre of every homestead is an open space (*ulubingilo*) carefully weeded and swept by the owner and his wives, who usually take great pride in thus keeping it clean. 592 423

At some distance from the homestead—a distance varying from a few yards to two miles or more—lie the main gardens (*imigunda*) of the household, near those of other people. Each year different types of gardens are hoed together by groups of villagers; millet in one place, potatoes in another, maize and beans in another; so that the gardens of one particular household are scattered in different spots. 241

After the man and his sons have hoed the gardens, clearing the ground first if necessary, his wives are each given portions of their own to plant, weed and reap. In hoeing for any particular crop the land is 241 592 421

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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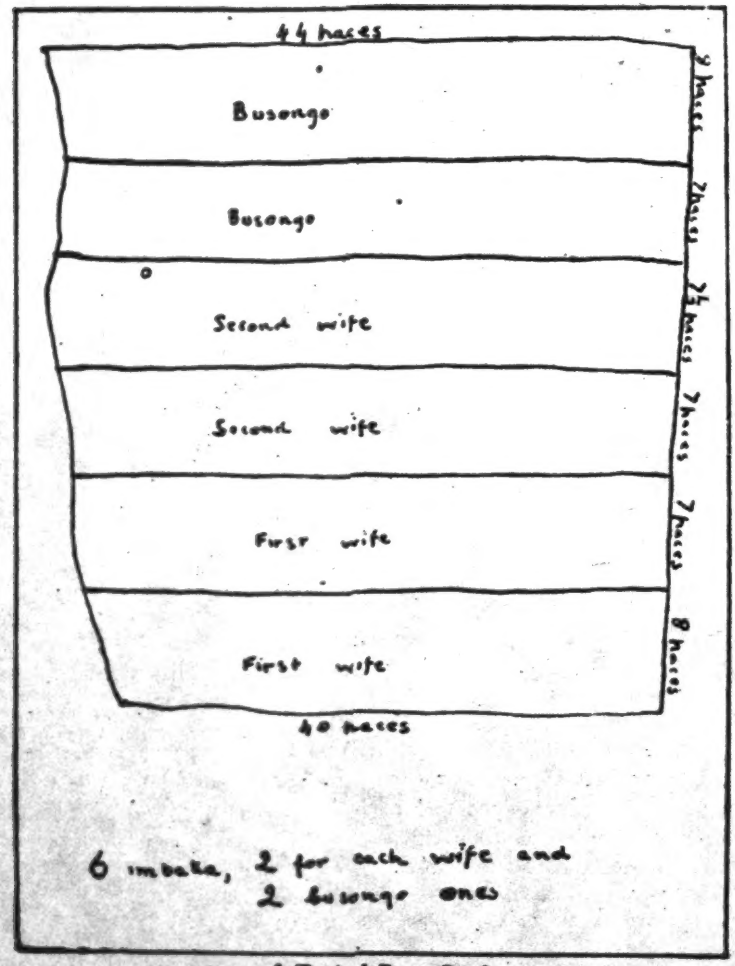
divided up into separate plots (*imbaka*) all roughly of the same size, and one or two of these plots are assigned to each wife. There is no standard size for a plot (*ulupaka*), the only important thing being that there should be equality between the several wives of one man in the areas allotted to them.

The rights of a woman to dispose of the crops of her own gardens (*imigunda*), that is of the plots (*imbaka*) allotted to her by her husband,

Plan C



A Typical Bean Garden

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

vary in different circumstances. Millet and rice, the two most valuable 241
crops, belong to the man and are stored by him; so that the division of a 592
millet or rice garden into plots and their assignment to different wives is
rather a division of labour than of property. But of all other crops the 421
woman on whose plots they have grown is an effective owner. She stores them herself in her own house and no other wife of her husband can touch them; it is only with him that her rights are in any way shared.

The main use of the crops which the Nyakyusa grow is to provide 592
food for each separate household group. Next in importance is the 593
provision of food and beer for hospitality, and for the making of gifts both 374
in everyday life and on special ceremonial occasions. And, finally, there is [437]
the barter or sale of surplus crops to obtain salt, pots, clothes, cattle and to pay tax. Each married woman, therefore, first uses her own crops to feed her husband, her own children and herself. If she is the only wife then she cooks for her husband every day, but, even if she is one of many, she is yet careful to cook for him frequently, in order to keep his affection and the various advantages which go with it.

When cooking for her husband she must, when necessary, prepare 593
sufficient for guests, for a man very often has friends and neighbours
eating with him; and if he wishes to make a gift of cooked food, she cooks [574]
it for him from her own store. To provide meals for him and his guests and cooked food for gifts is an obligation which she normally fulfils quite willingly, as we have hinted above; she may be fond of him; it is in any case to her interest to play her part in the co-operative relationship which binds them together and from which both alike benefit. He hoes for her and builds her house, he gives her a share of the household milk, which he himself controls, he sleeps with and is gentle to her; he has, without the aid of any legal, moral or conventional sanctions, a great hold over her, as she, on her side, has over him. But, if either fails to play their part in willing co-operation, then there are, for both alike, these other sanctions to fall back upon. A quarrel develops between them and leads to violence, [627]
perhaps he strikes her, perhaps she viciously repels him, one night, from her bed; and then the immediately injured party appeals to the neighbours for support. They discuss the matter, censure one or the other, and try to make it up between them; if they fail to do so the case may go to Court and one will then have to pay compensation to the other. Or it [626]
may happen, without any violent quarrel, without any formal appeal to the neighbours, that one of them becomes aware that his conduct is provoking their mockery and criticism; and then in shame he mends his ways. Or, finally, one of them may fall sick and suspect that wrong-doing on his [754]
part has been followed by spiritual retribution in the form of witchcraft.

A woman, then, uses her stores of food to cook not only for herself

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

A woman, then, uses her stores of food to cook not only for herself
421 and her children but also for her husband, and his guests and for gifts; she
593 has, however, every right both to entertain her own women friends to meals
595 and to make gifts of food to her relatives, and she does so when she chooses wihtout consulting her husband. Co-wives entertain one another if they are on friendly terms and even sometimes make a habit of taking their meals together; but this is entirely a matter of personal inclination, it is in no way necessarily inherent in their relationship; there is no community of property between them.

421 This sharp division of property between fellow wives is well exempli-
595 fied in the following story from a Kukwe family. I was discussing with a young man what happened if, in a polygynous household, the crops of one wife were a failure. He assured me that no action could possibly be taken to compel the others to give her a share of their crops, either for food or for seed; if they did give her a share it was kindness and good-will alone that would prompt their doing so: "I saw it happen once," he continued, "in my own father's house. He had three wives and had hoed maize plots for them and divided them up, and each had planted her own maize. But, when it began to grow, that on one wife's plot was very poor while that on the others' plots was abundant, and at the harvest the one wife reaped very little maize indeed. So when the harvest was all gathered my father asked the other two whether, as they had plenty of maize, they would not give some of it to their fellow. At first they refused emphatically to give her any, saying that it had just happened so, they had reaped plenty and she had reaped little or none, but it was not their custom to divide up their crops and she, if she had reaped plenty and they had reaped little or none, would certainly not have given any of her crop to them. And they asked whether she was his favourite that he made such a suggestion. Let him, they said, spend a shilling or two on buying food for her himself. My father entreated them but still they refused.

"But day after day for a long time he went on entreating and persuading them, pointing out that she had children to feed and asking if they wished her to die of hunger; he, he said, was not in any way compelling them to hand over their food, it was entirely for them to decide whether they would not each give her a little; if they disliked doing so, well there was no more to be said. And at last they began to be persuaded, they discussed it all, the two of them together, and the fact that she had children to feed, and each gave her a portion of her own crop. And later, when this maize had all been consumed, they gave her seed also for the next year's planting."

I then asked if the one whose crop had failed was, in fact, his father's favourite wife or not. "No, she was not, one of the other two was his

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

favourite. What they said about her being, perhaps, his favourite was just their way of putting it." 421 595

Before passing to the discussion of the disposal of surplus crops we must dwell a little on the importance of a fair division of land between the several wives of a polygynist. Not only garden plots but also the bananas growing on the homestead are divided between them. Each wife is allotted a number of banana stems and is responsible for keeping their roots clear of weeds and she is also expected to weed and sweep the adjacent portion of the open space (*ulubingilo*). In the sweeping her husband will often assist her, her fellow wife will not. The bunches which grow on her own banana stems are her property and not even her husband will cut them without consulting her, save in exceptional circumstances. In every polygynous household, then, a division of garden plots and bananas is made between the wives, and, as it is made by the husband, it is a most important element of their relationships with one another.

For every man with more than one wife has a favourite, and, if he allows his affection for her to express itself in an inequitable division of land, then there is trouble in store: "Each wife is the owner of a plot (*ulupaka*) and each harvests and weeds it and keeps the food separately. The wives help each other if friendly but each wife must have her own plot—a maize plot, a bean plot, a cassava plot, a plot of sweet-potatoes, and so on. The bananas also are divided between the wives.

"A polygynist when he hoes his gardens is always afraid to give to any one wife a bigger plot than to another. For it is thought that the wife [754] who gets the smaller plot will whisper complaints of her husband among the people; and whispering complaints of a man brings witches to kill him. It is feared that in such a case, either the husband or else the favoured wife will be killed (by witchcraft). In consequence a man is always exceedingly careful, in dividing his garden into plots, to treat his wives fairly. But even so he will perhaps give to the wife whom he loves the plot with the best soil! And it happens sometimes that a polygynist's wife, when given a smaller plot than her co-wives, will sulk and refuse to [627] plant: 'Why,' she asks, 'do you give me such a small garden plot? Did I not cook for you while you were hoeing?' And, if her husband then loses his temper and strikes her, she will make a case before the neighbours. And they will say to him: 'Friend, you should make a just division, you will only set your wives against one another by not doing so and make them kill one another.' By this they mean that if one wife is angered she will bring the witches to kill her fellow wives!

"And if a woman is restless with her husband and is herself considering leaving him then she will be forever going and complaining to her 586

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

586 mothers[1] in secret that she is in trouble and that her husband has no regard for her, that he grudges her garden plots and gives her only small ones. Then maybe her mothers will take the initiative in suggesting that she should leave this man who is no husband and who loves her not. And they will tell their husband, her father, that his child is in trouble and—only think of it !—has scarcely a ridge[2] to call her own. So that if the girl does then find life with her husband intolerable and leaves him, her father will not be too hard on his daughter, he will not compel her to go back to him ; for he knows that she was in trouble."

421 626 754] This statement, written by an educated Nyakyusa, brings out very clearly both the fact that men do at times divide their land unfairly and the nature of some of the sanctions which operate against such injustice. The faith in witchcraft provides a moral sanction of which, if the man is fool enough to disregard it, he is very likely explicitly reminded in the course of the subsequent legal proceedings ; the injured wife has an immediate hold over him in virtue of the relationship of practical co-operation and emotional intimacy in which they stand to each other, a hold which, if he attempts to break it by recourse to violence, is strengthened and given a legal form by the support of their neighbours. The support of her kin is an alternative legal force[3] which an injured wife

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[241] [1] i.e. her father's wives.

[2] For many crops the ground is hoed into ridges.

[3] Some readers may be puzzled by and somewhat critical of the meaning with which the concept of law is employed in this paper. This is not the place to meet their criticisms, but, in order to avoid misunderstanding, it is necessary to define that meaning precisely. Law, then, is here distinguished alike from morality with its religious sanctions, from convention with its constraining sense of shame and from the reciprocity dictated by self-interest —with all of which it is in fact inextricably intertwined. Law is here taken to be that normal or customary form of action in society which is kept in being by the inherent necessities of systematic cooperation among its members. The particular form of law varies in different areas of society in accordance with the particular conditions of each area ; but some normal form of action there must be everywhere if social life is to continue ; anarchy is, in the strictest sense of the word, impracticable. A breach of law is a course of action, on the part of some individual or minority group, which is inconsistent with the normal and accepted form of cooperative action, and which would therefore, if unchecked, make continued relationship between the lawbreakers and the other members of their society wholly impossible ; it threatens to dissolve society into anarchy. But breaches of law are always in fact checked, as they must be, by the actions of those with whom the lawbreakers are in practice related ; and it is these actions which are the sanctions of law.

If law is to be preserved it is necessary that the actions which sanction it should have an irresistible force, the lawbreaker must normally be helpless before them ; and they are only thus irresistible if the great majority of those people with whom the lawbreaker is effectively related do in fact either participate in or at least approve of them. Now in civilised areas of society, in which vast numbers of people are related, legal sanctions must be applied by a central authority if they are to be effective, for only such a central

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

may call in against her husband, if she desires divorce. And, it is hinted, this particular force may sometimes be successfully invoked by a plausible woman even without good cause. 421 626

In disposing of the surplus of their crops and bananas the respective rights of a married woman and her husband vary in detail, though little in substance, according as he has or has not made a formal division between them. It is not infrequent for a man to reserve for his own use one or two plots and some banana stems, which are then called *busongo* plots or bananas (*imbaka* or *ifijinja fya busongo*). In the planting, weeding and reaping of the *busongo* plots all the man's wives co-operate if he has several, but the final product is absolutely his own, it is stored by him and they have no part in it. Conversely, however, the rights of each woman to dispose of the surplus crop of the plots allotted to her are thereby greatly increased, for her husband cannot then touch it at all. 421 593

In any case, whether or not *busongo* plots and bananas have been set aside, a woman's obligations to provide food for her husband's con-

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authority can possibly either act over the whole area or command general approval and support for its actions.

But in primitive society it is otherwise. In a small and isolated group largely composed of personal acquaintances it is difficult to escape from one's friends; while the facts of every dispute, of every breach of law, are soon widely known; and in consequence, it is there perfectly possible at times for legal sanctions to be effective without the intervention of any central authority at all. The neighbours, or the kinsmen, or the affines of a lawbreaker are in themselves a large and important section of his society, and he can only with difficulty escape their authority; he can not lose himself in a great city as can his civilised counterpart. And so the typical method of legal procedure in a primitive society is for action to be taken against a lawbreaker by those more nearly concerned, supported by general public approval. And it frequently happens that the only effective action is taken singlehanded by the injured party; nevertheless if that action is supported and strengthened by any generally expressed approval we can not deny that it possesses a legal form.

In a primitive group any request which an individual may make to his kinsmen or neighbours for practical assistance against a lawbreaker, any appeal to their opinion in a dispute is a legal procedure, for it is an appeal to authority. It is they upon whom he is in practice most dependent. Nor is it only in "private life" that he depends upon them, for, owing to the smallness of the group, the distinction between "public" and "private life" hardly exists. In many situations they hold in their hands the whole force of his society; their actions and opinions are checked or supported by the informal but nonetheless effective jury of widespread public discussion; and if they are against him he has nowhere else to turn.

Now Nyakyusa society to-day is no longer isolated and primitive, neither has it yet fully taken its place in the social system of the world; it is in process of transition. Legal procedure is, quite inevitably, becoming everyday more and more an affair of the central territorial authorities, of the Governor in Council and the High Court of Tanganyika and of their appointed deputies: the local Magistrates, the District Officers and the Native Courts. But the process is not complete. In many situations of social life the new impersonal relationships with the great world are still, for the moment, more or less irrelevant and in them the old primitive sanctions retain their power. [178-692]

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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sumption, for hospitality and for gifts are very much the same ; but there, if he has *busongo* plots and bananas of his own, her obligations cease. Bananas demanded by the chief, money for tax and for his own clothes he provides for himself by making use of his *busongo* crops, and he may even keep some of them as a security against possible famine ; and so he leaves her free to dispose of her own surplus as she pleases. If, however, he has reserved no plots for himself then the surplus of each wife's plot is jointly owned by her and her husband. Neither can rightly dispose of it, in any large quantity, without consulting the other ; neither can be denied the right to dispose of it, after consultation with the other, for any urgent need.

Sometimes however a division is made by the husband between himself and his wife not of land but of crops ; after the harvest he takes a portion of the crop of her plots for his own use, leaving the bulk of it to her for cooking and for her own needs. In that case, once the division is made, their respective rights are just the same as if the portion kept for himself had been grown on a *busongo* plot.

The following words of a young Kukwe man make these points clear. I had asked him about the respective rights of husband and wife to dispose of maize and beans for cash : "Normally," he replied, "if the man has not kept any *busongo* plot separate and the crop is in consequence their common property, he will speak to his wife and ask her to take some of the beans and sell them and buy him a cloth with the proceeds. But an inconsiderate husband may just take them without consultation. So with the woman, if she wants a cloth she tells her husband and suggests taking some beans and selling them in order to buy one ; and her husband agrees that she should, because there has been no division made, the crop is their common property. And if the man is in trouble for tax money he consults his wife about selling some maize or beans and she agrees, for otherwise he would be arrested. If, however, the man has kept a *busongo* plot separate then he takes and sells his own food and his wife hers, without consulting one another ; because a division has been made."

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"And supposing," I asked, "that a man has three wives, whom does he consult about selling food, if there is no *busongo* plot ?" "In that case," he replied, "if, maybe, he wants to procure tax money and has no *busongo* plot, then he speaks to his chief wife and tells her that they must assist him or he will be arrested and she suggests that they all consult together. So he calls his wives to him and they agree to give each so much from her store of food ; maybe he shows them a basket for each to fill once ; and then he puts it all together and sells it and pays his tax."

"This custom of keeping a *busongo* plot," he volunteered," is only rarely followed nowadays in Bukukwe in the case of maize and beans, but it is quite common with cassava and with bananas."

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

421 543 [261]

"Why with cassava?" I asked "Because the husband thinks of cassava as a security against famine; if a famine comes he takes his *busongo* cassava and gives some to each of his wives."

"And why with bananas?" "Because if he has bananas of his own then when the chief sends the great-commoner round to collect bananas for guests, or to send to the hospital in Tukuyu, the man cuts one of his bananas. He realizes that, as he has two wives, if he takes a banana bunch from one of them she will be angry and wonder why he cut her bunch and not that of her fellow wife."

"So it is only polygynists who keep separate *busongo* bananas?" "Certainly, no monogamist would ever do so."

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"A man named Mwaisaka," he told me later, "once disputed with his wife over the selling of maize. They had just begun harvesting the crop when the woman told her husband that she intended to take some of the maize to the shops and sell it and buy some cloths; for her child was naked and she had neither cloth nor skin to carry him in on her back, she had to hold him in her arms. Mwaisaka, however, told her to wait a little until all the maize was harvested, when he would divide it up. His wife thereupon protested that the crop was their joint property and that he himself could take some for sale whenever he wished, so why not she also; and she pointed out that many other people had already begun to sell their maize and buy cloths. So they quarrelled and Mwaisaka struck his wife, who then ran complaining to the great-commoner. The great-commoner heard the case and judged that Mwaisaka was in the wrong because his wife had no skin for carrying her baby and was in trouble therefore. If, he said, she had not been in such trouble over carrying the child they would have given their opinion against her for refusing to agree with her husband's proposal to wait and finish harvesting first, but as it was they thought that Mwaisaka was in the wrong; no division of plots or crop had been made and the food was their common property. And Mwaisaka admitted that he was wrong." "Did he pay his wife any compensation for the blow?" I asked. "No, they reconciled them to one another."

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"And if a man," I enquired further, "takes some of the food which belongs to himself and his wife jointly and sells it without telling her, will she make a case against him?" "She may, but if she is a gentle wife she argues it out alone with her husband; she asks him why he did not consult her, for there is now but little left and she wonders what they will eat. And her husband, if he is a sensible man, agrees with her and admits that he was in fault. But if, instead, the man makes out that he had every right to take it, for the food is as much his as hers, and if he is indignant at her protest then that attitude will bring a quarrel between them."

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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The most important reason which traditionally impelled men to reserve *busongo* plots and bananas was, so the old men told me, the frequent lack of affection and generosity in women towards their married step-children. If one of his wives had died or left him, then a man might find that his children by her, when they came to visit him, received but scanty entertainment from his other wives and went away home empty-handed. So to obviate this state of affairs he would set aside *busongo* plots and bananas, and take food and gifts for these motherless children thence. In the old days married children nearly always lived within a mile or two of their father's house and visits were frequent. Nowadays this reason, which still continues to operate, tends to be overshadowed by the desire on the man's part to have a definite portion of the crop marked out for sale to the Indian traders. Nevertheless many men prefer community of property to an anti-harvest contract with their wives and so do not keep any *busongo* plots at all.

"What," I asked an elderly man in Selya, "is a *busongo* plot?" "The word *busongo*, used either of bananas or of garden plots, means that they belong only to me, not to my wives; so that when my daughter comes I cut for her a banana bunch of my own and give her my own food. Not all men keep *busongo* plots; some like the customs but others do not. I myself have only one wife and no *busongo* plots, all my bananas are hers and all my gardens too."

And another elderly man, also of Selya, said to me one day: "Some men like to have *busongo* plots, others do not. Nowadays these plots are used to grow crops for sale, but in the old days they were for feeding a man's children. I myself divide up all my gardens amongst my wives (he has three living with him at present). Even though three of my wives have died and one has left me, even so I do not keep a *busongo* plot; when my children come to visit me they are given food by Jane (his chief wife, who is also his favourite). At first I divided up the children (i.e. the grown-up children whose mothers had either died or left him, and who in consequence had no special claim on any one of his present wives) assigning some to one, some to another of my wives, but the others grudged them food so now they all come to Jane." He here suggests that the meanness of two of his wives and the existence of many motherless children gave him good reason to reserve *busongo* plots and bananas, but he did not do so, he preferred to rely on the generosity of his favourite wife.

And besides providing entertainment for adult but motherless children, besides providing a definite portion of the crop for the husband to sell, *busongo* plots and bananas are also useful, as we have seen, to meet the demands of the chief and to secure the household against a shortage of food.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Unmarried children have the right to food partly in virtue of their general relationship to their parents, partly because they themselves assist in the work of the household. From the age of about six years boys herd cattle, from about eleven years they begin to hoe; while girls help their mothers in field work, in the fetching of wood and water and in the care of infants. And, owing to their practical usefulness, there seems to be less difficulty in getting motherless[1] children regularly fed before they marry than in getting them entertained afterwards. Each such child is allotted to one wife and is mainly fed by her. 592 857 241

In some households unmarried sons hoe only the particular plots of their own mothers; but in others the man and his sons work together as a team, hoeing each plot in turn. In ten neighbouring polygynous households I found that in three cases the sons confined themselves to the plots of their own mothers, in seven the man and his sons worked always together. Meals followed the same pattern as the hoeing. In the three cases the mother of each boy alone provided him with food, but in the other seven cases his step-mothers did also.

This variation of custom between different households was thus explained to me: "The custom of hoeing separately, each boy for his own mother only, is sometimes determined by lack of friendship between the women, sometimes by the slackness of their husband in hoeing. If he is slack about hoeing then it falls to the women to organize it, and each calls on her own son to hoe for her alone; and, in that case, if one wife has no son she will just have to enlist the services of other people to hoe for her (rewarding their efforts with food at the end of each day). Sometimes too the custom arises in this way—a boy finds that his step-mothers are reluctant to cook food for him when he comes in from hoeing, he complains that while his own mother cooks for him generously they do not, and so he begins to hoe for his mother alone.

"The custom of hoeing together, on the other hand, is determined by the will of the man, who himself organizes it. And whenever a man is vigorous in hoeing there you will find that he and his sons all hoe together. It is only when a man is slack that the custom of hoeing separately arises from the orders of the women, and if the man is vigorous in hoeing his wives are never reluctant and ungenerous about cooking, they bow to his will just as his sons do."

When their husband dies women pass to his heir. If the heir is a brother of the dead man then he takes them all to wife, if a son he takes 768 587

[1] The custom of marrying two sisters and that of substituting a dead woman's sister or niece in her place considerably reduces the number of such "motherless" children, for the sister of a dead woman treats the latter's children as her own.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

768 587 [42] all except his own mother, whom he either builds for at a little distance and looks after, or else gives to a half-brother.[1] Inherited wives have the same land rights as others, and a mother for whom a son builds and hoes is treated by him, in the matter of land, just like a wife.

737 And a married man often supports an old woman—a mother, mother-in-law or elder sister—whose husband, though still alive, is incapable of hoeing and who has no unmarried sons. He may either hoe for her on her own husband's land or else assign to her a plot or two of his own.

241 476 The gardens of a household are not only worked by its members, other people assist them from time to time. Each married man usually invites a group of his village neighbours to help him with a day's hoeing two or three times a year, entertaining them to food and beer after the work is over. A married woman likewise is often assisted by women friends from neighbouring households in the planting, weeding or reaping of her crops and them she rewards simply with a luxurious meal in the evening, without any beer. Again, as we have seen, a married woman sometimes engages a young man to hoe for her regularly, for a month or more at a time, and pays him by feeding him well for that period.

241 464 But although this last custom is still common it is beginning to decline; fewer men each year are willing to work for any length of time except for money, and already in some of the more prosperous households young men are found to be employed in hoeing at the rate of 2/- a month in addition to their food. The young men who thus accept employment in hoeing are always the poor ones, those for whom (whether because their fathers are poor in cattle or because they have many elder brothers before them) the prospect of getting married is too distant to stimulate them to any great diligence at home. In the plain of Mungonde, however, where ploughs are extensively used, the owners of ploughs make a considerable profit by hiring themselves out with their ploughs at 2/- a plot (*ulupaka*).

241 592 602 606 Kinsmen and affines also often assist in a household's hoeing. When a man inherits his dead father's wealth then he assumes the position of father towards his own younger brothers and is responsible for the marriages of any who are bachelors; they then hoe for him and are fed by his wives just as unmarried sons do. Sons-in-law, again, are expected to bring their friends now and then to help their father-in-law in hoeing and they often do so, more particularly if they are behindhand with the marriage-cattle. After the day's work is over, however, they are entertained just as sumptuously as an ordinary work-party of neighbours.

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[1] And any kinswoman of his mother (sister or niece) whom his father has married is treated likewise.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Further, if a young man's own father is poor in cattle, he will often attach himself to the household of a rich kinsman, a brother of his father or of his mother, and hoe regularly for him. This is far more paying than hiring himself out to a mere neighbour, for he thereby places his rich kinsman *in loco parentis* and eventually gets from him a substantial proportion of his marriage cattle. 464 602

6. *INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS IN RELATION TO VILLAGE GROUP AND CHIEF*

Land is not owned in any absolute sense either by the man and his household who live on and cultivate it, or by the village group, or by the chief, but by all of them together. Land tenure among the Nyakyusa is a coherent system of rights in which the chief as overlord, the age-village under the leadership of its great-commoner, the individual male holder, his wives and children all participate. In this the Nyakyusa are in no way peculiar, for "absolute ownership" of land is a fiction nowhere realized; even in Western Europe the use of land is hedged by state and municipal regulations while the security of every owner's tenure is dependent upon political conditions which are not necessarily permanent. Everywhere, whether in civilized or in primitive society, the holding of land is "communal" in the sense that the individual's rights are dependent upon his social relationships, upon his membership of some group with a definite cultural idiom and social organization of its own; everywhere the holding of land is "individual" in the sense that particular people have, at any one moment, definite rights to participate in the use and to share the produce of particular pieces of ground. 423

There is however at the present time a difference of type between the land-tenure systems of Western Europe and those of the Central African tribes. Rapidly though these latter groups are being integrated with the world-wide organization of modern civilization, the process is not yet complete; and these systems of land-tenure still have some characteristics of the old primitive state wherein small and isolated groups were worlds unto themselves. For in some respects they are still isolated. The Nyakyusa, for example, are 400 miles from the nearest railway and, with the exception of a few small missions and plantations, they remain in occupation of all that traditional tribal land. Now in small and isolated social groups personal relationships necessarily dominate the holding of land for there are few or no impersonal relationships within their society at all. In the land-tenure systems of the vast social organizations of civilized society, on the other hand, impersonal relationship necessarily play an important part, though the precise legal emphasis which is laid 000

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

upon them differs in different areas. In Western Europe, at present, they entirely dominate the holding of land and the personal relationships of small local groups have there little or no legal significance. But in the U.S.S.R. the emphasis is different.[1]

As it is with the Western European groups that the Nyakyusa are, at present, most closely bound up, it might seem probable that their system of land-tenure would develop in time into something resembling the familar forms of Western Europe. But it is not certain; it is possible that, as ever more effective integration with world society increases the new legal importance of impersonal relationships, on the one hand, so a deliberate policy may preserve something of the old legal importance of personal relationships on the other. At the moment, such a policy is in fact active. For indirect rule through the Native Courts ensures that, in general, only such legal changes are made in the system of land-tenure as are strictly inevitable under modern conditions; and modern conditions do not in any way inevitably demand Western European forms.

The contrast between the Nyakyusa system and the English, for example, is still very great. In his tenure of land the Englishman, no less than the Nyakyusa, is bound by social obligations; but, while for the Englishman these obligations are largely of a general and impersonal kind, binding him directly to the huge State of which he is a citizen, for the Nyakyusa they still bind him most directly to a small group of neighbours, the majority of whom he meets every other day. In England a man may, if he complies with the law of the State in doing so, permanently own land in a village where none of his other interests lie, where none of his time is spent and in which he is only a name. In the tiny villages of the Nyakyusa no African Native can own land[2] unless he himself either works it or is a full and effective member of the local community.

There is another great difference too between the English and the Nyakyusa systems of land-tenure contingent upon the different economic value which land has in the two areas. In England, with its elaboration and diversity of practical techniques, all kinds of land are exceedingly scarce and valuable and, in consequence, the various land rights of individuals and groups are everywhere precisely defined in theory and rigorously insisted upon in practice. Among the Nyakyusa, on the other hand, only some kind of lands are sufficiently scarce and valuable to be treated thus. When we turn to examine the less valuable kinds, we find a vagueness of definition and a lack of insistence even upon admitted rights which will continue to puzzle us until we realize that it is only in so

[1] cf. S. and B. Webb *Soviet Communism*, second edition, volume 1, pp. 233-284.
[2] It is, however, possible under modern condition to own certain trees without these restrictions. cf. pp. 44-5.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

far as as men compete for land that rules of tenure are developed among them. And where competition is weakest there the rules are least strict.

In Nyakyusa society every married man holds land of his own for building and agriculture, for there is still enough for all, and pastures his cattle on the grasslands of some village group. His land rights, in which, as we have seen, his wives and children participate, are conditioned at every point by his membership of a particular village, his allegiance to a particular chief and by the particular cultural idiom of his tribal group. 423

Before the " coming out " a boy's village, as we have seen, is built on land assigned for the purpose by the parent village. A block of land for building is set aside by the great-commoner in consultation with the other men as their sons begin to reach the age of leaving home, and there the boys are often joined later by contemporaries, sons of other villages of men. At first building sites alone are needed, but later, as the boys grow up and get married, they need gardens too and bring the adjacent ground under cultivation. In doing so they are careful not to infringe upon their fathers' land rights, they either hoe land which was previously unowned[1] or else that which has been specifically granted to them by the parent village. Into the nature of such grants of garden land before the " coming out "—whether they are block grants by the parent village as a whole to the boys' village as a whole, or separate grants by individuals to individuals—I omitted to enquire. 361 425

At the " coming out " a whole tract of land is formally allotted to each village of young men by the old chief and his great-commoners and within this tract individuals take up garden land by hoeing it. At the " coming out " it is said that " everything is made new," boundaries are redrawn and the new chiefdoms and villages of the young men are ceremonially incorporated.

The situation in which individual land rights in relation to the village group and the chief are clearest to an observer is that of the taking up of land after a move, for it is in this situation that disputes are most frequent. 423

Mainly owing to their religious beliefs movement from one place to another is constant among the pagan Nyakyusa. If a man or his wife or child falls sick and does not respond quickly to medical treatment the witchcraft of neighbours is at once suspected as a possible cause ; there are always other possible causes too so diviners are consulted in order to decide between them ; but if the suspicion of neighbourly witchcraft is confirmed then the cure for the sickness is held to lie in moving. In every village " some people " are vaguely believed to have the power of 166 754

[1] Vide infra, pp.41-2.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 754 witchcraft, which consists in the ability to translate evil impulses into effective though immaterial actions and thus to cause sickness and death; but it is never clearly known who all these people are. And so the coincidence of an obstinate illness with any quarrel or social tension of any kind between neighbours gives rise to a suspicion that witchcraft is at work. If the diviners support this theory then almost the only thing to be done nowadays is to move and get out of range; for witchcraft cannot act at a distance. In the old days an alternative course of action was [695] open to the sick man, he might identify the witch with the aid of the *mwafi* ordeal and get him expelled from the chiefdom. Expulsions for witchcraft still occur to-day, but only rarely, for the *mwafi* ordeal, the most certain detector of witches, is no longer legal. There is, however, nothing to prevent a man who thinks himself bewitched from moving. Now this fact of constant movement is of the utmost importance in determining the Nyakyusa system of land tenure since it tends to prevent the development of any exclusive attachment to particular pieces of ground. And the cause of this constant movement is mainly, though not entirely, the fear of witchcraft.

For ordinary commoners only their immediate neighbours are believed to be dangerous and sick men therefore sometimes move only from one village to another of the same chiefdom; but very many move right outside to another chiefdom altogether, preferring to make assurance doubly sure and to put a long distance between themselves and their spiritual persecutors. And in the case of certain men of a high social status, for whom a wider circle is dangerous, it is held to be quite essential to leave the chiefdom.

166 I have no detailed statistics on moving but I estimate that, among the pagan Nyakyusa, at least 80% of the married men have, at some time or other, moved from the chiefdoms in which they first cultivated gardens of their own. They may stay away for a few weeks only, they may stay away for thirty years or they may never return at all. If, however, the chiefdom from which they first moved is the one which they regard as home then they usually do return to it in the end. A man's home chiefdom is pre-eminently the one in which his father lives, or, if dead, spent most of his life and is now buried. And this is normally the one in which he himself also was born and brought up and in which he first took up land.

166 621 When a man moves from his home chiefdom, his village neighbours there, in the majority of cases, follow him within two months and ceremonially invite him back with a show of force by seizing his belongings and carrying them off home to his old village. They may really like and respect him and if, as is usually the case, he has moved because of sick-

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ness, they are most anxious to prove to him that his tacit suspicions are unfounded, they wish to rid themselves of the slur of witchcraft. To invite him back is to express affection for him and so to demonstrate that he could not have been bewitched for, see, everyone likes him! 166 621

Such an invitation is often, but by no means always accepted. If the man refuses the first time then the villagers may or may not go again later to ask him back; but if he was an important member of the village—the great-commoner, a noted doctor, the son of an old family—the invitations may go on being repeated for years; and he will then almost certainly return in the end. Whether or not he accepts a particular invitation depends again largely upon his own health and that of his family and upon his relations with his new neighbours at the time it is made. Sickness and suspected witchcraft, or quarrels and insults in the new village will incline him to go home. And a man can always return, even without an invitation, unless he was originally expelled for being himself a witch.

I asked a young man of Selya whether of those who moved from their home chiefdoms the majority came back again or not. "The majority do come back, only a few stay permanently away. Some move for better food, the great majority because they fall sick and wish to recollect themselves in the tranquillity of another chiefdom—this is the main reason for moving; but they come back in the end. Whenever a man is slighted in the country to which he has gone, whenever he falls sick there—back he goes home! For when he is slighted he remembers that in his own country he belongs to an old family and that it is not as if he had moved under suspicion of being a witch, he only moved because he fell sick, and now he will return home. A man does not lose his affection for home, for there is his sacred grove, his fathers' graves. But the real reason for returning is that in every other place a man is less respected than at home, he is made light of; but in his own country he is known to belong to an old family and is treated with great respect, his neighbours call to mind the days when he and they herded cows together as boys and the fact that his father is buried among them. That is why people go home again." [609]

"And what of those who move to find better food?" I enquired. "They come back too; if they are slighted in the place to which they have moved they come back home."

"For example there was a man who built here in the village of Igembe, he prospered greatly and his house was very long; we young men grew up to find him here and thought he was one of our own people, we had no idea that he belonged to Masoko. And then one day he was insulted, and immediately he moved and went home. He had lived with us for many, many years."

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 425 In discussing the taking up of land after a move it is therefore necessary to distinguish clearly between men who move to villages in which they are newcomers and those who return, after a period of absence, to their home villages.

166 425 622 624 621 Normally land for building and gardens is granted to a stranger by the villagers concerned acting through their great-commoner, not by the chief, who is usually informed but seldom interferes. Only if a member of the chief's own family is moving within the chiefdom from one village to another or if a very important stranger comes from outside, he may go to the chief and ask for a building plot, and the chief may then exercise his right of overlordship and grant the request. But this is a special and unusual case. Village land is primarily governed by village relationships. It is villagers who grant land to an ordinary newcomer and thereby accept him as one of themselves. His own wishes are taken into account whenever possible ; if he sees a piece of ground which attracts him and no one else has a claim to it then it will be his.

An old Kukwe great-commoner thus explained the granting of land to a stranger : " First the stranger from another country comes to a friend in this village and says that he wishes to build here, then the friend brings him to me, the great-commoner,—or he may come directly to me in the first place ; and I go and tell the chief. Then the chief, according [43] to the old custom, would say ' Good ! Go and cut a banana bunch for him,' and I would cut a banana bunch from my own homestead, not from anyone else's, and the chief would send one of his wives to me with cooked food for our guest the stranger. This custom is now no longer followed in our country but in the more remote chiefdoms they still cut bananas and cook food in such cases ; here the stranger now just comes and is not given anything. And again when he wishes to begin building we go and tell the chief, who tells us to give him a plot to build on, and then my friends and I choose a place for him." " Does not the chief have a say in choosing the plot ? " I enquired. " No, not the chief ; does he know the details of our land-rights ? He does not. It is we who choose the place for the newcomer. But if he does not like the plot we give him and has himself seen a place which he prefers he will ask us for it and maybe we will give it him." " Do not people sometimes go directly to the chief to ask for land ? " " No, they always come first to us, the commoners, not to the chief ; how should a man presume to approach the chief by himself ? No, a newcomer always approaches us, and it is we who inform the chief. I, the great-commoner, may go alone to tell the chief or I may take the stranger with me, as I please." And a young Kukwe chief confirmed this, with perhaps a shade more emphasis on the part played by the chief : " The stranger goes first to the great-commoner

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and makes his request for land, then the great-commoner goes to the chief and informs him that so and so has come with a request for land, and he asks his opinion as to which piece to give the stranger. Then the chief suggests that perhaps the great-commoner knows of a suitable plot. So the chief and the great-commoner discuss it together and decide. Then the great-commoner shows the plot to the stranger." 166 425 621 622 624

It is quite clear in my evidence that, though the normal custom is to consult the chief when a newcomer is given land, yet the newcomer's title is in no way invalidated if the great-commoner omits to do so at the time and simply tells the chief later after the grant has been made.

So much for the initial reception of a stranger and the grant of a building plot, the next step is the grant of garden land. But before discussing this we must emphasize the willingness with which strangers are received both by the villagers and the chief. Men are still scarcer than land in most places and the prestige and prosperity of villages and chiefdoms is increased by each addition to their membership. Strangers are always given a house to sleep in while building their own and are usually given food as well, both formally by the chief and great-commoner and informally by the neighbours. The great-commoner who told me that the formal custom of giving food had lapsed in his country belongs to the chiefdom which adjoins Rungwe mission, a small chiefdom to which very considerable immigration has taken place in the last forty years; there the relative scarcity of land is reflected in a decline of hospitality to newcomers, though none have yet been refused land. But the usual custom still is to receive them generously. "It is an ancient custom amongst us to welcome strangers, so that the chiefdom may increase and flourish." [431]

In giving garden-land to a newcomer the procedure differs slightly according to the value of the land in question. The great-commoner takes him out and shows him, if the land is scarce and valuable, an exactly demarcated piece, if it is cheap and plentiful, a vaguely defined area within which he can hoe where he likes. In the upland chiefdoms, for example, the best maize and bean plots are scarce; men hoe the same ground year in year out, planting maize and beans alternately in it or, sometimes, maize only with an interval of a few months fallow each year; and in this case the boundaries of each man's ground are precisely marked. But for the growing of sweet-potatoes and millet there is plenty of good land available and men hoe more or less where they please. "A stranger named Tusekelege," I was told, "came to the village of Ibungila (in Kukwe country). Amongst other things he asked for a maize-garden, so they gave him the ground of a man Mwasumbi who had moved to Masoko. They told Tusekelege that he could hoe only the same extent of ground 166 425 621 624

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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as Mwasumbi had, because there were some other maize-gardens adjoining it. The other land he asked for was not near anyone else's gardens, so he was told that he could hoe just where he liked."

Such is the custom of giving land to a newcomer, whether he comes from a different chiefdom altogether or from another village of the same chiefdom. He has no claim to any particular land but the villagers welcome him gladly and give some to him. If, however, a man returns after a period of absence to his home village then he has a claim, varying in strength in different circumstances, to enter again into possession of his old building site and gardens. But his claim is never an absolute one, it depends upon his relationship to the villagers and to the chief; they it is who decide it.

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Let us first consider building sites. If a man moves from his home village leaving his house standing there and another is given the site, and if he returns before the house has fallen into disrepair, before it has had to be rebuilt, then the occupier will be evicted in his favour, the villagers will always admit his claim to that site. But only, of course, if they are in general prepared to have him back in the village; if he has been expelled for witchcraft or some other serious crime he has no possible claim at all.

When men move and leave their houses behind it usually but not always implies an intention to return in a few months. If they move because of sickness and the suspicion of witchcraft men are often invited back, as we have seen, and sometimes they accept the first invitation; and then, if they and their families remain healthy, all is well. If a more protracted absence is intended from the first then the normal custom is to pull down the house and to carry the bamboos with one.

A young Kukwe great-commoner gave me from his own experience an example of the eviction of a man in occupation of another's house: "While my father was alive I fell sick and moved to Mwankenja's country leaving my house behind without taking it down. And I returned quite soon again, I was not a year away. But meanwhile, when I first moved, a stranger came and was put into my house, he was not told that I might be returning; so he went into my house—but as he was a bachelor the house was too big[1] for him. Afterwards my friends remembered me and went to bring me back, and I came with them; and I said that as another man had been put into my house and as I was myself an owner of the soil (i.e. he was the son of an old family and so had the right to choose any unoccupied plot for himself anywhere he pleased) I would build elsewhere. But they would not hear of it and said that I must go back to my own house. So they informed the newcomer that the owner had returned and gave him another place."

[1] This is a boast, irrelevant to the main argument.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17 Nyakyusa

Again if the villagers expect a man to return and if they themselves wish him to do so, then his homestead is normally kept for him. If he refuses their first formal invitation to return they may give his homestead to a newcomer meanwhile, but only provisionally ; and if he does return later, whether by another formal invitation or on his own initiative, then the newcomer is moved elsewhere. 166 423 621

The difficulty arises when a man comes back unexpectedly to find that a newcomer has been given his site unconditionally. Perhaps the villagers are indifferent to his return and so have omitted to keep his site for him ; but far more frequently it is that he has been many years away and has refused several invitations to return, and so has led the villagers to think that he is never going to come back at all. But, whatever the reason, if his site has been given unconditionally to a newcomer, who has then built his own house upon it, the villagers cannot possibly evict the newcomer in his favour ; his only chance of getting the old site back lies in an indirect and tactful approach to the chief. The chief, as overlord, has the power to evict the newcomer if he chooses, but he may not choose to do so. And, if he does not, then the man will have to build elsewhere. 166 423 425 621 [622]

I was discussing these points with one of our servants whose father had recently moved from Bulindanajo, his home village in Mwaipopo's chiefdom in Selya, to a village in the adjoining chiefdom. I asked him to explain to me his father's potential rights, if he were to return later to his home village, to enter again into possession of his old homestead.

" If a man, like my father for instance, has moved and his friends wish him to return they go to fetch him back, but if he then at first refuses to return they may put in a stranger on his homestead. But in doing so they inform the stranger that the owner of the homestead is away in such a country, that he, the stranger, is just eating the bananas meanwhile (i.e. is only in temporary possession) and that, when the owner returns, he will have to leave this place and build on another site which they will then give him for his own. In that case when my father returns, if he wishes for his old site, his friends will move the newcomer away, because they have told him beforehand, and my father will have his own old site.

" As it happens, however, when my father did actually move recently they did not put any newcomer on to his site, but Mwakyoma . . . . one of his neighbours chose to build there himself. And him they do not inform of my father's rights, for he is already aware of them. If my father returns later his friends will turn Mwakyoma out telling him to go back to his own old site. For it always happens with a good homestead on which bananas do well that people covet it, and when the owner moves,

[1] This is a boast, irrelevant to the main argument.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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someone, coveting the vacant place, goes and builds there. But if it is a neighbour he knows that it is not his own and when the owner returns he relinquishes it and goes back to where he was before.

"It may happen, however, that the owner of a homestead moves and lives many years away; his friends go to fetch him but he continually refuses to return, until they begin to think that he has moved finally and forever. And, in that case, they may, perhaps, put a man in there without informing him of the existence of any other owner. The newcomer builds a house and thrives. And if the previous owner then after all comes back they do not evict the newcomer; shame prevents them, for they never told him of any such possibility. Then the old owner, as it were my father for example, seeing that another is in occupation of his site goes to a different village in the same chiefdom and asks for a site. But the great-commoner to whom he goes asks him why he is approaching him—'It is true,' my father then answers, 'that I have a place in Bulindanajo and the graves of my family and my trees are there, but another man has built upon it.' Then the great-commoner gives him a site, but he also goes to tell the chief what has happened. Then the chief, Mwaipopo, summons the men of Bulindanajo and asks them why they have driven my father away, on his return to the country, from the site that was always his. The villagers admit their mistake but explain to the chief that, as they thought my father was never going to return at all, they put in another man. So they discuss the matter; and the chief, if he so wishes, may summon the present occupier and tell him that his friends deceived him by omitting to inform him of the probable return of the owner of that site and that now, as the owner has returned, they will have to move him and give him another site; and thus the chief evicts the present holder. But such an action must come from the chief, his neighbours cannot evict the occupier, for they gave him no initial warning. So then my father would return to his own old site. But maybe in such a case my father would himself prefer to build elsewhere, he would say to his friends that, as another had built on his site, he would be content to watch over his family graves from afar and to build in a different place."

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As for his old garden-land, to that too a man has a title on returning to his home village, but it is only scarce and valuable ground that he will ever trouble to claim if others are in possession. At first, when he moves from the village, his fellows, if they intend to invite him back, keep his gardens for him just as they keep his house site; but if he refuses to return at first then maybe the ground is given to others. But he can always recover it later when he does return. It is easier to get old gardens back than it is to get a house site, for no great hardship is involved for an

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

evicted man. And it is even possible sometimes to make good a claim to the old gardens of one's father, even although one has never hoed them at all oneself; this is more difficult however, the claim may be refused or alternatively a compromise may be effected by dividing the land in question between the claimant and the present possessors. 166 423 425 621

As an example of the keeping of gardens vacant for a man who is expected to return we may cite the story of Nyambo, a Kukwe, as it was told to me by a young man who lived near him. This case is of particular interest as it brings out two points to which we have not yet referred; firstly that the chief himself sometimes takes the initiative in inviting a man back, and that his doing so widens the invitation to include all the villages of the chiefdom, not only the man's old home village; and secondly that it possible to build in one village of a chiefdom and own gardens in another. This second point will be discussed again later. 166 423 621 622

" A man named Nyambo moved because eight of his cows all died in quick succession and he thought that his neighbours, maybe, had bewitched them; but he moved without telling people of this reason. After he had spent eight months away, however, the chief sent his great-commoner to enquire of him why he had moved and left his chief wondering, and Nyambo replied that he had moved because of the death of eight of his cows all within a few days of one another, a fact which had led him to suspect that his neighbours hated him; and he would never, he told the great-commoner to inform the chief, be persuaded to return. So the great-commoner reported all this to the chief. Whereupon the chief suggested that it would be a good thing to go and fetch Nyambo back forcibly. And he, the chief, went in person with a crowd of men from Nyambo's old village and they just seized upon his furniture and drove off his cows and took them all home. But even so Nyambo refused to return and spent another two days where he was. Then they sent again to urge him to come back and at last he agreed because the chief himself had begged him to do so; he said, however, that he would prefer not to build in his old place, because his cows had died there, but rather across the river in the village of a different great-commoner. And so he did. None the less he continued to hoe his old gardens, and he still does so. They had left his gardens vacant because they had always meant to fetch him back. Now that he has returned and gone to live in another village they have given his old building site to a newcomer from Masoko, but his gardens are still his own."

The story of Kalonga, another Kukwe, exemplifies a man's right to reclaim his own old gardens. It will be noticed that the ground which he reclaimed was of particular value. 166 423 425

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 423 425 "Kalonga had moved from the country of Kissokola to Masoko and other people had taken his ground and hoed it. It is the kind of ground which we call *umfweje*, rich soil near water. Kalonga had moved because of illness, several of his children had fallen sick and more than one had died. After he moved his neighbours never went to invite him back.

166 423 425 622 "Now Kalonga himself did not come back to live, but he brought back his mother. She had gone with him, but then she began to complain that he had taken her to an unpleasant country and she would prefer to go home; so he came back just to build a house for her. He did not build for her in his old village but asked another great-commoner (of the same chiefdom) for a site; he did however go to the chief to reclaim his old garden (the *umfweje* to which we have already referred). Now four men had divided the ground between them; they had approached the great-commoner and asked for it and he had referred them to the chief, fearing that he might be blamed for giving the ground away if Kalonga should return subsequently. And the chief agreed that they should take it, so as not to let it lie idle.

"So when Kalonga came and reclaimed it the chief pointed out that he had moved and left the country (and so had no claim to the land). But no, Kalonga replied, he had not moved, for see he had brought back his mother and built a house for her, which was exactly equivalent to living in the chiefdom himself. And the chief admitted his argument and agreed that, so soon as the present holders had reaped their standing crops, he should re-enter into possession of his own ground. So now Kalonga comes regularly with his younger brothers and they hoe the land quickly (being many) for their mother and go home again. Kalonga is of an old family and his father is buried in that chiefdom."

166 423 425 622 624 And finally the story of Enoch the son of Mwakajileke, another Kukwe, well illustrates the more limited rights of a son to claim his father's old gardens which he himself has never hoed.

"Mwakajileke built in the village of Ibungila, and he died there in 1925. He had three sons, all of whom moved after his death; one of these sons, whose name was Enoch, went and built at Kyimbila; and meanwhile the chief gave the garden-land of Mwakajileke to other people. Part of this land was cultivated by a commoner named Gwaselya but he too, later on, moved into another chiefdom and the land was left unused. Then Enoch returned to the country to find that no one was now hoeing the ground which his father had used to hoe, so he approached Mwangokile, the great-commer, and asked for it: 'As no one is hoeing your father's land,' Mwangokile replied, 'you may go and hoe it yourself, but there are some other men who want it and they have already asked me for it, so I must divide it between you.' So he went with them and marked

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 out boundaries, drawing lines on the ground; he divided the land into
423 three portions, one for each. The others were strangers to the chiefdom
425 but had taken a fancy to that piece of land."

622 The sentence in this story "The chief gave the garden land of
624 Mwakajileke to other people" deserves remark for it in no way implies any other custom than the one we have previously described. And it illustrates the dangers of relying too much on verbal statements of custom. When a stranger is given land by a great-commoner after reference to the chief he is commonly said to have been given it by the chief. The chief, from one point of view, is the overlord and the great-commoner acts for him. But, and this is an essential qualification, the great-commoner nearly always so acts for the chief and, save exceptionally, it is wholly incorrect for the chief to grant land directly. The great-commoner acts not only for the chief but also as the representative and leader of the villagers; and in relation to them the chief cannot exercise his rights of overlordship save occasionally and in particular circumstances.

166 The old Kukwe great-commoner whom we have already quoted
423 explained this to me very clearly: "Occasionally one of his own men will
425 ask a chief to give him ground to hoe in another village, 'If indeed you
621 say that the land is yours!' (challenging the chief to assert his right of
622 overlordship). Then the chief agrees that all the land is most certainly his; but still, if it is possible, he tells the man to go to the commoners of that village and ask them for land. If the chief does not do this (but makes a direct grant of land) we blame him for not being a true chief: 'Who is it,' we ask him, 'that has built up this country? Did you do it all by yourself? It is we the commoners who have built it up! And how is it, then, that you give this man land without consulting us?'" [754 Nor is the censure of his people mere idle talk for a Nyakyusa chief, he
626] fears that they may bewitch him, that the witches among them, led by the great-commoners of the several villages, may come in dreams at night and cause him to sicken or to die.

166 So much for the initial grants of land to newcomers and the rights of
423 men returning to their home chiefdoms. If a man goes back, after moving, to a chiefdom which is in no sense his home, where, that is to say, he is not a member of an old family but in which he has himself spent some years, he is treated as a newcomer. He is welcomed but he has no rights to the ground, whether building-site or gardens, which he previously occupied.

423 Once established in a village, however, any man can hoe any unowned
425 ground within its borders and thereby make it his own. A newcomer for

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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the first few years, until he has become familiar with the details of the rights of the other villagers, will normally ask for more land as he requires it, in order to avoid unwitting trespass ; but an old member asks nobody. If, however, it is desired to hoe land to which some other villager has a prior claim then his permission, as the owner, must first be asked. Any previously unowned land that an ordinary commoner once hoes is his property, all informants agree, so long as he remains a full member of the village. Within the village there is thus a theory of continuing ownership but, as we have seen in discussing the reclaiming of land after a move, it is only to the more valuable ground that it is strictly applied. A valuable garden may be left fallow for years but, so long as the owner is a member of the village, no one can take it without asking his permission ; nor is he under any kind of obligation to give it away when asked. "If a stranger comes," a great-commoner told me, "and we commoners of the village want to give him some old gardens of one of our number we ask the owner to give the ground to the stranger ; but if he refuses we cannot insist."

Many gardens, however, are not in fact continuously owned ; men not infrequently hoe less valuable ground that has been left two or three years fallow without asking the permission of the previous holders, as they should strictly do. So long as the ground is relatively plentiful no objection is usually raised, but it always may be ; and the increasing scarcity of land under modern conditions is already prompting some men to a new insistence upon their rights.

"In our country," a young Kukwe told me, "it is the maize and bean plots which are the most valuable, because we hoe them continuously, year after year. . . . Land for other crops is plentiful, so much so that if a man leaves one of these gardens fallow only for two years then anyone else who wishes can come and hoe it. Nowadays, however, the custom is changing a little and some men like to keep the same gardens continuously for all their hoeing."

In the case of the most scarce and valuable ground of all, that in the bottom of old volcanic craters, the principle of continuous ownership is carried furthest. Rights in it have always been insisted upon and whenever a holder of such land moves from the chiefdom then the nearest kinsman of his who lives there steps in and claims it. And here the village group ceases to be of any importance. It may be that long ago the land in each particular crater was owned solely by the members of some particular village but now it is held by old families scattered all over the chiefdom in which it lies. Apart from the craters, however, all arable land can be truly said to belong to some village or other.

It is, none the less, quite possible to hold garden-land in a village without being a member of it, but only if the land is kept in effective use.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

We have already seen in two examples that a man, when returning to the chiefdom from which he has moved, may recover his old gardens even though he builds in a different village. And it frequently happens also that a man comes to a village and asks for garden-land only, continuing to live in another village, or even in another chiefdom. Such requests the villagers always, so far as I know, grant willingly, for once a man has taken up land in a new village there is every prospect that he will one day move altogether and build there. In case of sickness he is more likely to move to the group where he is already half-established and sure of a warm welcome than anywhere else. 423 425

When a man moves he has the right to reap the crops standing in his old gardens so soon as they ripen, but after that the ground, save in the case of craters, reverts to the joint ownership of villagers and chief. And his building plot and bananas revert to them immediately. The next-door neighbours on either side keep the bananas clean and eat the fruit themselves until the plot and the bananas are given by the villagers, with the chief's approval, to another man. If the previous holder has moved to a place without bananas and not very far away he may, in the first year, send to his late neighbours and ask to be allowed to cut and carry away some of the banana fruit "for my bananas in my new plot have not yet grown." But his request is of grace and not of right, it may be refused. If the villagers like and respect him and hope to persuade him to return later it will always be granted, but if they dislike him and are glad to be rid of him then it will not. If the plot is a separate one without immediate neighbours then no one keeps the bananas clean and, unless someone else is given the plot soon, they get choked with weeds and die.

When a man dies the heir takes his wives, his cattle and his moveable property, and, if he comes to live in the dead man's village, his land also. But if the heir remains in his own old village[1] he has no rights over the dead man's land. The situation is then exactly comparable to that which obtains when a man moves from one village to another, his land rights in the old village lapse. 423 428

Rights in trees differ in some respects from rights in land and they differ also for different kinds of trees; and here, as an added complication, we are also faced with a difference of local custom. 423

Prior to the introduction of new trees by Europeans the only ones of any great value to the Nyakyusa were the bamboo (*ilikai*) and the *unyungati* tree, whose botanical name I have been unable to find out. Bamboos 423 824

[1] Owing to the age grouping among villagers and the long period which traditionally separated one pregnancy from another in a woman's life it is unusual to find full-brothers in the same village.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 are used for house building, while the *ryunguti* produces a fruit (*indilolo*)
824 which is both delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment (*ieyumba*). Of the two trees the bamboo is the more valuable.

423 Now among the Kukwe and Selya groups rights in these trees are
425 somewhat similar to rights in the valuable crater plots. When a man
621 moves, his bamboos and *ryunguti* trees, unlike his bananas, do not revert to the villagers; normally they continue to belong to his nearest kinsman in that chiefdom, who cuts and uses the bamboos and picks the fruits of the *ryunguti* trees. If the villagers give the site to another man then the newcomer has no rights over these trees unless the kinsman himself gives them to him. But it sometimes happens that, where only *ryunguti* trees and not bamboos are involved, the kinsfolk do not bother to exercise their rights; then the trees are treated like bananas, picked by the neighbours until a newcomer is given that plot, and then by him.

423 If however, among the Selya and Kukwe groups, a man moves
425 leaving no kinsfolk near at hand, then the chief (*umalafyale*) as the supreme
622 overlord has a right to his trees, and if they are near the chief's own place this right is exercised; he cuts and uses the bamboos and his wives pick the *ryunguti* trees. If another man is given the land by the villagers to build on then he goes and asks the chief to allow him some of the *ryunguti* trees, and his request is usually granted, the chief gives him two or three of the trees, keeping two or three for himself. But the bamboos, being more valuable, are usually kept altogether by the chief. If, however, the ownerless trees are at a distance from the chief's place then he normally does not trouble to claim the *ryunguti* trees but only the bamboos. The former are at first picked by the neighbours and later given by the villagers to a newcomer together with the site. And, even with the bamboos, if they are a long way from the chief's place a "good chief," they say, will allow the newcomer to cut some of them without payment; but it is wholly within the chief's power to keep them all for himself if he wishes, and "bad chiefs" do so. Furthermore a chief does occasionally also exercise his right to claim an ownerless *ryunguti* tree at a distance. If one of his wives comes and complains to him that she has no *ryunguti* tree of her own, then he takes her to a site from which someone has recently moved leaving ownerless trees behind and there he gives her one of the trees; the rest he leaves as usual to the villagers and so to the newcomer.

423 Bamboos are men's property and only a man can claim them but
621 *ryunguti* trees can be claimed by a kinswoman, a sister or a daughter, of the old owner if none of his near kinsmen have troubled to do so.

423 We must here take note of a most significant modern development.
178 In the old days rights in trees could only be exercised by members of the

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

same chiefdom in which the trees were growing; for between chiefdoms an actual or potential state of war always existed, and a man coming from a hostile group to claim property would have been driven away violently. But to-day under European rule it is now customary for a man to cut his own bamboos, if he is living in a neighbouring chiefdom, instead of leaving them to his resident kinsfolk. The group within which property can be held is gradually widening. 423 178

Such is the custom among the Kukwe and Selya groups; their rights in bamboos and *syunguti* trees are not normally lost when a man moves provided there are kinsfolk left nearby to exercise them. The one exception to this rule is in the case of expulsion for witchcraft or other serious crime. Then even if the man expelled has left kinsfolk behind him, still the chief takes his trees. 423 681

Among the Nyakyusa proper, on the other hand, the *syunguti* trees are treated like bananas. When a man moves he loses all rights in them and, unless the chief steps in to take them, as he always may, they are granted by the great-commoner, together with the soil, to the newcomer who is put on that site. Bamboos, as in Selya and Kukwe country, continue to belong to the kinsman of the man who has moved.[1] 423 425 621

Trees introduced by the Europeans, of which coffee trees are the most valuable, have been declared by the Federation of Chiefs to be the property of the planter, even although he has moved to a different chiefdom. This law was made after much anxious discussion between the chiefs, the Administration and the Agricultural Department and is, of course, subject to revision if it is found after trial to be impracticable. In the case of coffee it has inevitably been modified in practice since coffee must be tended continuously if it is to remain free from pests and to bear fruit, and any man who actually looks after coffee trees has a generally admitted claim to the crop unless he is paid by the planter for his labour. The planter, however, in surrendering the trees to him may compel him to pay something for their initial value. 423 177 245

Further, as the Agricultural Officer has the right to uproot any untended coffee trees and must exercise it if pests are to be kept under control, the practice has grown up of his taking over any large number of abandoned trees and keeping them clean with labour paid by the Native Treasury; the trees are subsequently sold to some other man and the proceeds paid into the Native Treasury again. If, however, a planter of coffee trees makes arrangements, when he moves, for the cleaning of his coffee then the trees remain his own.

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[1] Some informants deny this and insist that they always pass to the chief. I was not myself long in Mungonde among the Nyakyusa proper and I lack conclusive evidence on the point.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 The legal practice in this matter is still in process of formation and I quote the most recent account of it which I have in my notes without claiming that it is either complete or wholly accurate.

" If a coffee-planter who has moved," I was told, " either keeps the coffee trees clean himself or sends people to do so, then the trees are his ; if, however, he does not keep them clean and another man builds on that site and looks after them then they belong to the latter, for he it is who keeps them clean. But if both men concerned (both the planter who has moved and the newcomer on that site) want to have the trees then they belong to the planter, and no one can take them from him.

423 425 " Or, alternatively, if there are a great many coffee trees and their owner has moved (without making arrangements for cleaning) then the Government takes them and looks after them and sells them subsequently to some other man who can afford to buy. And if, maybe, a newcomer on that site has been keeping some of the trees clean, but not all, then the Government leaves some to him and takes the rest.

" And if a planter who has moved wishes later to come back to his old site then great pressure is put upon him to make a payment to the man who has kept the trees clean meanwhile.

" Aswile, for example, had planted coffee in his home in Kissokola's country but then he moved away and went to work (for Europeans) ; and when he returned from work he built at Kyimbila Mission. Meanwhile Mwankungili had succeeded to his site in Kissokola's country and had been looking after the coffee trees ; but no sooner did he begin to pick the coffee than Aswile came and wanted to know who was daring to pick his coffee. Mwankungili explained that he was doing so because he had spent a great deal of time and energy in keeping the trees clean ; and the two men disputed each other's claims. So Aswile took the case to Mwangoka's court, and it appeared that there were seventy-five trees in bearing with other younger ones as well, and that Mwankungili had looked after the trees, hoeing round them, for nine months. The court enquired of Aswile whether he had not moved ; but he denied having done so and maintained that his absence was only temporary, that he had every intention of returning soon. Mwankungili then pointed out that he had built a house at Kyimbila and actually planted some more coffee there ! And that was a proof that he had really moved. So the court sent a messenger to Kyimbila to see, and his report confirmed what Mwankungili had said. The court then asked Aswile whether he had given instructions to any relative to look after his coffee trees ; but no, he had not. So he was then told that he must pay Mwankungili for his labour ; but this he refused to do. The final judgment was that he must either pay Mwankungili for his labour or else leave the coffee trees to him.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

"Aswile thereupon appealed to Mpuguso (the appeal court of the Federation of chiefs); he absolutely refused to pay Mwankungili any money at all, but finally he agreed to give him some of the coffee trees. So he went with Mwankungili and a court messenger—and a crowd of people went with them to see this new custom—and divided up the trees, keeping the bulk for himself but giving some to Mwankungili in repayment for his hoeing. And Mwankungili accepted the division. Now Aswile's younger brother, who lives nearby, is looking after Aswile's trees and Mwankungili is looking after his own." 423 425

The same informant also told me of another case: "A man who had lived in Kissokola's country moved to Mbalisi (in Mbeya District) and died there later. Now while living in Kissokola's country he had planted forty-five coffee trees; all of which were now (at the time of the case which is being related) very large; and there were also some smaller trees as well. So then his heir, a brother, came back to the country to find that another man had built on that site meanwhile. But when he raised the question of the coffee, the occupier answered him amicably and said that he would buy it; and he paid 35/50c. for the trees. And then the heir took up land elsewhere in the same chiefdom. He had not wanted to claim the old site, only the coffee trees."

But still there remain difficulties of practice of which the fundamental one is that of owning *and tending* trees on another man's ground. *Syunguti* trees can be owned on another's homestead without difficulty for they require no attention, but it is hard to draw the line between the ordinary weeding and sweeping of the open space (*alubingilo*) and bananas and the weeding of coffee trees that grow there. "Am I not to be allowed to sweep under my own bananas?" one man said indignantly when he returned to an old site of his to find coffee growing upon it. Where the coffee trees are still young the difficulty is sometimes got over—to the great displeasure of the Agricultural Officer—by transplanting them. But with older trees this is impossible.

Pasture, unlike garden land, is jointly owned by the whole village group and no individual has any exclusive rights to any portion of it. The detailed discussion of grazing-rights thus falls outside the scope of this paper, but two points must be noted here. In the first place every member of a village has the right to graze his cattle on the village pastures and this right may also be granted to an outsider by the great-commoner in consultation with his neighbours. And, in the second place, when any member of a village takes up new garden land by hoeing it he must not, in so doing, encroach unduly on the village pastures. 423

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 In his tenure of land every Nyakyusa man is related to some chief
622 who is his overlord. But their relationship is not confined to the single element of land-tenure, it is just as many-sided and complex as is any other human relationship; and even as we abstract from it the particular set of facts that immediately concerns us here we must at once refer them again to it if they are to be intelligible.

166 When a newcomer is received into a village and given land the chief,
423 as we have seen, is normally a party to the villagers' action, and in most cases he himself ceremonially welcomes the newcomer if he comes from
622 outside the chiefdom by sending to him a present of cooked food. He has gained a new subject and his power and prestige are thereby increased.
[427] As men are quite free to move from one tiny chiefdom to another and as land is still relatively plentiful the phenomenon of rent does not exist among the pagan Nyakyusa, there is no direct charge ever specifically made in return for the right to build and cultivate. Nevertheless a chief is a chief and his subjects' land is his as well as theirs and they are under certain obligations to him.

622 Among these obligations that of providing cooked food for the
554 ceremonies of the chief's own immediate family is probably the most
[585] important. When a chief's daughter, for example, is getting married women from all over the chiefdom bring food to entertain the bridegroom and his friends on the day that they bring the bulk of the cattle. The obligation to bring food, though not a legal one, is both reciprocal and conventional. The chief is expected to kill one or two of the beasts to feed his people and if he is mean about this, killing one where he should have killed two, then on the next occasion his people are more reluctant
[626] to bring food. But there is also the sense of shame constraining individuals. If the majority of households in a village provide food for a chief on such an occasion, and the majority I think nearly always do so, then the shameful meanness and unconventionality of defaulters is the subject of adverse comment among them.

A chief also has the traditional right, still widely admitted to-day, to send and take food, especially milk and bananas, from his subjects if he has need of it. And we have seen already that men with more than one wife are prompted to retain *busongo* bananas for themselves in order to meet his demands without upsetting the peace of their households. This
[177] traditional right however is known not to be admitted by the European Administration, on the grounds that a salary has taken its place, and is therefore beginning to fall into disuse. Chiefs, I was told, often fear to exercise it lest some man refuse obedience and take a complaint to the *Boma*, nor are they willing to confine their demands to those men of whose compliance they are certain. As the salary of an ordinary chief,

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

paid out of the Native Treasury from the taxes, rarely exceeds 10/- a month it may be doubted whether modern conditions are not in this, as in other respects, impoverishing the Nyakyusa chiefs. 622 554

A chief had the right traditionally to evict any man he pleased if he desired his site for his own personal use, giving him another in exchange. But this right is no longer effective: "It is now at an end," as a chief's kinsman told me, "for the man evicted will go to Tukuyu (the administrative capital of the district) and complain that his chief is turning him out of his home without good cause." It is however still perfectly possible for a chief to take any *unoccupied* site he pleases without reference to the local villagers. He may take it for himself or he may give it to a kinsman, and no objection to such an action on his part is ever raised. It is only if he gives it to an ordinary commoner that his people will criticize him. 622 425 178

Land once held by the kinsman of a chief at the latter's gift is more secure to him than any land can be which is granted in the ordinary way by a great-commoner; for no one but the chief himself can ever finally take it from him. If he moves and the villagers wish to give the site to a newcomer then they must either send a message after him and ask his permission to do so or else get explicit permission from the chief, if the newcomer's title is to be in any way secure. 622 425

A case within my own knowledge well illustrates these points: Mwakobela, half-brother of chief Mwaipopo, had been given land in the village of Ipoma by Mwaipopo himself. Subsequently he had moved to Kibonde, a minor chiefdom under the jurisdiction of Mwaipopo, and had spent many years there; and when I first met him he was living there still. But then he fell sick and, suspecting witchcraft, decided to return to Ipoma, only to find his old building-site occupied. For the great-commoner of Ipoma, thinking he had moved for good, had given it to a newcomer. 622 425 624

This grant of land to the newcomer had been irregular in more ways than one: firstly Mwakobela's permission had not been asked, secondly no reference at all had apparently been made to Mwaipopo, who subsequently denied any part in the grant and, thirdly, the great-commoner had not even consulted his fellow villagers; if he had done so they would, so one of them told me in discussing the case, have reminded him of the necessity of first asking Mwakobela's permission. The newcomer however had been given the site unconditionally and when Mwakobela reclaimed it he refused to move; but the rights of Mwakobela were unquestionable and he had no difficulty at all in getting him evicted.

I went to visit Mwakobela a few weeks after he had taken possession of the site and he told me about the eviction: "I approached the great-commoner and asked him who had given Mwangusiye (the newcomer)

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

425 622 624

permission to build on my plot, perhaps, I suggested, it was Mwaipopo (the chief). But no, he told me, it was not Mwaipopo but he himself who had given the permission, and he said, further, that Mwangesisye would have to move, as I wished to come back, and that he would give him another site. But Mwangesisye refused to move and said that the place was his. So the next thing was that, at a funeral . . . . . I asked Mwaipopo who it was that had given my plot to this Mwangesisye who now claimed it as his own and made as if I had never built there, perhaps Mwaipopo himself had given it to him. And all that Mwaipopo replied was no, he had not done so.

"Then I simply brought my sons with bamboos and told them to begin building. Off goes Mwangesisye to Mwaipopo! 'Mwakobela,' he complains, 'is driving me away from my home!' 'Who gave you the plot?' asks Mwaipopo. 'The great-commoner gave it me.' 'And what does he say now?' 'He says I must move.' 'Well then you had better move!'

"And then, next morning, Mwangesisye came to me and said 'My friend I was wrong, the place was always yours, I will move; but the hanging bananas and the coffee trees I shall take with me.' 'Why certainly,' I replied, 'you may cut the banana bunches and transplant your coffee trees, I shall not object.' Thereupon the great-commoner offered him another site with bananas already growing on it, but he refused and said that he intended to return to live in the chiefdom from which he originally came.—And now his sons have carried away his house and there is only left that one hut over there (pointing) which they will take away shortly, and then later they will transplant his coffee trees also."

It was made abundantly clear to me that the important point was the fact that Mwakobela had originally been given the land directly by Mwaipopo, the chief; had he been given it in the ordinary way by the great-commoner with Mwaipopo's concurrence he would have had no claim on it at all. A member of the village of Ipoma explained this to me very lucidly: "If, in the first instance, Mwaipopo had not made the grant, if Mwakobela had approached the great-commoner and said that, as the plot was vacant, he would like to build there and if the great-commoner had agreed to this, then had Mwakobela later moved (as he did) to Kibonde and spent many years there and had the plot meanwhile been given by the great-commoner to Mwangesisye—Mwaipopo all the time being in no way involved—then, if Mwakobela had returned and claimed the plot, the great-commoner would not have admitted his claim. If, in that case, Mwakobela had come to Mwangesisye and tried to evict him Mwangesisye would have complained to the great-commoner, who would then have addressed Mwakobela in some such terms as these:

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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622
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'You, sir, are a chief' (Mwakobela is one of the ruling chiefs' kinsmen, all of whom are entitled 'chiefs,') how then is it that you wish to drive men away? (For chiefs always desire to attract men to them!) Do you wish the two of us, you and I, to live together alone without any men? In the first instance you simply came to me and said that you wished to build here and I agreed that you should; but then you moved and I saw myself that you had built a new house and planted banana trees in another village and I supposed you had moved for good. Nor did you ever tell me that you might be coming back nor ask me to keep your site for you, you only told me that you were moving. So I cannot, as great-commoner, agree to evict Mwangesisye, I will find another site for you...'

"But as it was," my informant continued, "the site had been granted by Mwaipopo himself. Mwaipopo had simply informed the great-commoner that he had given Mwakobela a certain vacant plot in his village. And then the great-commoner was at fault in that he gave the place to Mwangesisye without consulting his neighbours;[1] had he consulted us about it, and had he sent a message to Mwakobela to ask his permission to give the vacant site to another man, and had Mwakobela given the permission (he could hardly have refused it unless he were himself intending to return shortly), then again Mwakobela would have had no power at all to evict Mwangesisye. The great-commoner would have disallowed his claim, pointing out that he had been informed at the time and had agreed to Mwangesisye's building there. It was owing to the failure to inform Mwakobela at the time that he now has power to evict Mwangesisye."

"And supposing," I enquired, "that Mwakobela had not been the younger brother of Mwaipopo, the ruling chief, but just a commoner, a stranger from another chiefdom, and supposing that none the less he had approached Mwaipopo in the first instance and asked for land, instead of going to the great-commoner, how would that have affected this case?" —"Well, in the first place, *Mwaipopo would have brought the stranger to the great-commoner* and the two of them, the chief and the great-commoner would have discussed together where to give him land and decide to give him a certain vacant plot." "And then," I asked, "if the stranger had moved to Kibonde and the great-commoner had given the plot to Mwangesisye, without informing him, could he then have returned later and evicted Mwangesisye, or not?" "No, he could not do so; had he attempted it the great-commoner would have disallowed the claim, asking

[1] It is, of course, never correct for a great-commoner to grant land without consulting his fellow villagers, but the point here is that, had he consulted them, they would have reminded him of the necessity of sounding Mwakobela before making this particular grant.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

425 him if it was his idea that the village should die out and leave him, the
622 great-commoner, without men ? As he had moved, the great-commoner
624 would have continued, the place was presumably distasteful to him and it had now been allotted to another man. The claim would certainly have been disallowed ! "

425 The examples in this paper have been taken almost entirely from
797 pagan families. For Christians the situation is very much the same except where they live actually on mission land, there they are tenants of
427 the Mission concerned and pay rent to it. And Christians, wherever they live, tend to be more stable in their occupation of land, since they are not forever moving in fear of witchcraft.

7. *CONCLUSION*

178 I have striven in this paper to make the individual land-rights
423 possessed by Nyakyusa to-day intelligible to the European reader and to demonstrate to him their determining factors. Of these factors the following are the most important. The Nyakyusa were until recently an isolated and primitive people and so bring with them into the modern world a legal tradition based upon small social groups. This tradition is being inevitably modified both in theory and practice under modern conditions, but not out of all recognition ; for they are still a relatively isolated people and the system of indirect rule secures them, in general, against arbitrary legal changes. Within their legal system individuals have, as in any system they must have, certain precisely defined and enforceable rights—among them rights in land.

Many kinds of land, however, are plentiful, though less so than of old owing to the growth of population, the opening of new markets for food and the recent introduction of ploughs. And this cheapness of land is reflected at times in a lack of rigour in the enforcement of rights in it which is unfamiliar to the European observer. Sufficient land for all is a fundamental condition of Nyakyusa society in its present form, which has no place for a landless man.

✓[166 And, finally, the habitual movement of men with their families from
681] one village to another to escape the witchcraft of their neighbours leads to a constant transfer of homesteads and gardens and is the main cause of difficulty in the administration of their laws of property in land and trees. This difficulty is greatest in the case of the newly introduced coffee trees which need continuous tending.

6: Wilson

643, 622

Ngonde FN 17
Nyakyusa

[Since the Ngonde and the Nyakyusa peoples have slightly different political systems, for the purpose of this file, the Kyungu of the Ngonde people is marked for 643, and the chiefs of the individual chiefdoms for 622; however, when the text is referring to the Nyakyusa people, the chiefs of the individual chiefdoms are marked for 643, and the village headmen for 622.]

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116 TEXTS--a full set of pages from each processed source, arranged in page order, as a means of establishing the context for any particular slip. Sets are arranged in the numerical order of the sources. See also:

Literary texts 539

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

THE RHODES—LIVINGSTONE PAPERS NUMBER THREE

THE CONSTITUTION OF NGONDE

BY

GODFREY WILSON

[p. 1]

Two Shillings

THE RHODES—LIVINGSTONE INSTITUTE, LIVINGSTONE,
NORTHERN RHODESIA
1939

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

131

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6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

131

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6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

600 This, the third Rhodes-Livingstone Paper, is a description of the traditional political constitution of a Bantu tribe in the extreme north of Nyasaland, and of the profound changes which modern conditions have made in that constitution. The most important of the changes are inevitable, given the general conditions of contact between Africans and Europeans in Central Africa; and this brings us to a realization of the inescapable limits within which any policy of Indirect Rule must be carried out. But all the changes are also dependent in detail upon local conditions and upon the decisions of the Government and the present Native rulers.

The general picture presented can be paralleled in many parts of Central Africa. Here is a recently primitive people whose life was lived within very narrow horizons of space, whose religion combined faith in the powers of dead ancestors with magic and witchcraft, who practised subsistence agriculture and pastoralism but had slight external economic contacts also; whose judical institutions were decentralized and among whom civil war was endemic, but who possessed a paramount chief round whom the whole district rallied for tribal ritual and war. Today it is part of a world civilization, half its members are Christians, many grow crops for export or work for Europeans digging gold, while tribal and civil wars have been effectively stopped and judical procedure has been centralized. Through these changes a certain continuity is apparent, in the constitutional sphere, but a very much slighter one than writers on Africa usually assume.

122 Acknowledgments are due the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures and to the Rockefeller Foundation, under whose joint auspices my wife and I collected the material here published, and also to Dr. Max Gluckman, whose critical comments on the first draft of this paper particularly assisted me in bringing out the local autonomy in primitive Ngonde.

GODFREY WILSON,
Director, Rhodes-Livingstone Institute.

Livingstone,
Northern Rhodesia,
September, 1939.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

THE CONSTITUTION OF NGONDE.

1. A Comparative Problem 7

2. The Chronicle of Ngonde (to 1875) 9
   (a) The Early Kyungus 9
   (b) A Turning Point 16
   (c) The Middle Kyungus: Constitutional Change 18
   (d) The Middle Kyungus: Civil Wars 25
   (e) The Middle Kyungus: The Ngoni Wars .. 28

3. Religious Elements (Middle Period) 29
   (a) The Theistic Element 30
   (b) The Magical Element 35
   (c) The Element of Witchcraft 38

4. Economic Elements (Middle Period).. 39
   (a) The Income of Mbande and other authorities .. 39
   (b) The Expenditure of Mbande and other authorities 45
   (c) The Significance of the Ivory Trade 47

5. Legal Elements (Middle Period) 48
   (a) Constitutional Law: Treason etc. 48
   (b) Constitutional Law: Succession 52
   (c) Common Law 56

6. Warfare (Middle Period) 60
   (a) Civil War 60
   (b) Tribal War 61
   (c) Warfare and Autonomy.. 63

7. Political Ceremonial (Middle Period) 64

8. The Chronicle of Ngonde Completed (1875-1937) .. 66

9. The Present Constitution of Ngonde 71
   (a) Change and Continuity.. 71
   (b) From God to Magistrate 76
   (c) Peter the Fortunate 77
   (d) Constitutional Law 83
   (e) Conclusion 85

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

THE CONSTITUTION OF NGONDE.

1. *A COMPARATIVE PROBLEM.*

Ngonde is a district at the north end of Lake Nyasa; its centre is fixed, its boundaries vague. The centre of Ngonde is the sacred hill Mbande which stands in a bend of the Lukulu River eight miles from the lake. Here is the traditional home of the Kyungus, the paramount chiefs of Ngonde.[1] But its boundaries cannot be so easily defined. A man moving from any direction and almost any distance towards Mbande will say he is going "to Ngonde." One man may start five miles from Mbande and proceed to its base, another may, in the north at least, start far away among the Nyakyusa in Tanganyika and stop fifteen miles short of the Songwe, where alone the Kyungu's supremacy begins to be effective, and yet both alike say they are going "to Ngonde." But in this paper the name Ngonde is used to refer to the area of the Kyungu's present political paramountcy alone, an area defined in the north by the Songwe River, which is also the boundary between Nyasaland and Tanganyika, in the east by Lake Nyasa, in the west by the Nyasaland—Northern Rhodesia boundary and in the south by the borders of Chief Mwafulira's country some twenty-five miles from Mbande; an area of 2,687 square miles. 131

The population of Ngonde, thus defined, is 40,000, with a density of just under fifteen to the square mile; while the rainfall averages 45" per annum. It is thus very different from the country of the Nyakyusa across the Songwe, where the average rainfall is more than twice and the density of population about six times as great. 161 132

The people of Ngonde are not homogeneous in language and culture. The dominant group lives on the strip of plain which stretches along the shores of the Lake, north and south from Mbande, and the district is here referred to as "the plain," "the Ngonde plain" or "Ngonde proper." Behind them, in the hills which rise westwards to the borders of Northern Rhodesia, live small groups of Lambya, Sukwa, Wenya, Henga and Mambwe. They, while politically subordinate to the Kyungu, differ considerably from the inhabitants of Ngonde proper in their ways of life and speech. These upland groups we did not visit and, unless the contrary is specifically stated, all references here to the culture or customs of Ngonde should be taken to refer to the plain alone. 101

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[1] I use the forms Kyungu, Ngonde, Mbande now used by the young men and officially accepted. The old men speak of Chungu, Nkhonde, Mpkande.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

114 My wife and I were engaged in researches among the Nyakyusa from
121 September 1934 to January 1938; and our informants constantly told us of
642 the general similarity between their own customs and those of the Ngonde plain. They made it clear, however, that while they and the men of the Ngonde plain shared an otherwise almost identical culture they yet differed markedly in their political systems. The Nyakyusa, when the Europeans reached them, were organized in small independent chiefdoms, the people of Ngonde possessed a paramount chief, the Kyungu. More recently, among the Nyakyusa, a sustained attempt by the Tanganyika Administration to set up two paramount chiefs had failed; in Ngonde, on the other hand, where the Kyungu's supremacy had, until recently, been officially unrecognized by the Nyasaland Administration, his position seemed to be quite secure. The contrast was an interesting one and demanded investigation. Nor was this the only difference between the Nyakyusa political system and that of Ngonde; besides a paramount chief Ngonde possessed a group of hereditary nobles (*amakambala*) which was apparently quite unparalleled among the Nyakyusa.

114 So in July 1937 we crossed the Songwe and spent some time in
121 Ngonde studying these differences. Our visit confirmed the fact that
642 the traditional culture and social system of the Ngonde plain was in
171 almost all respects identical with that of the Nyakyusa. The patrilineal kinship organization with marriage by cattle, the age-villages each with its great-commoner or headman (*ulifwmu*), the little chiefdoms each consisting of a group of age-villages united under a hereditary chief (*umalafyale*), all were there.[1] The descriptions we were given of the traditional rituals at death, at girls' puberty, at the birth of twins and at the "coming out" of young chiefs seemed to be identical in general significance and almost identical in detail with the rituals we knew among the Nyakyusa. Language also was similar, though here the similarity had been less close in former times. And yet there were the two great differences: at the apex of the political system of Ngonde was the Kyungu, while a group of hereditary nobles formed an integral part of it. Again and again our informants confirmed this general identity, these specific differences: "Everything is just the same among us as among the Nyakyusa, only in the case of the Kyungu and his nobles (*amakambala*) is there any dissimilarity." How then was this dissimilarity to be accounted for?

[1] This social system is discussed in the first paper of this series—*The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa* (1938), and also in papers contributed to *Bantu Studies*, one in September 1936—"An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society," another in April 1939—"Nyakyusa Burial Ceremonies."

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

It is unusual for a sociologist to find such a simple problem for analysis as this and it was not long before the answer was plain. The Nyakyusa, until a few decades before the coming of the Europeans, had been largely isolated from any vigorous external contacts; Ngonde, on the other hand, had been effectively related to the outside world for generations. The Nyakyusa actually possessed in the Lwembea, the hereditary chiefs of Lubaga, a line of spiritual paramounts or high priests, whose religious functions were remarkably similar to those of the Kyungus in Ngonde; but, poor and isolated as they were, they had never developed any secular paramountcy at all. The reasons for the greater elaboration of the traditional political system of Ngonde were to be found above all in the ivory trade and in the constant influx of immigrant groups. 642 177

And it further became clear that the prestige which the present Kyungu enjoys in the changed conditions to-day is due in large part to his having followed the mercantile traditions of his predecessors, mastered the business methods of the Scots, made a fortune, and then kept up his position out of his own private means.

2. *THE CHRONICLE OF NGONDE (TO 1875).*

In studying the present constitution of Ngonde and the profound changes now taking place in it, we cannot find any point of time at which the process of change began. In its present radical form social change in Ngonde arises from the ferment of a host of new social conditions imported by European missionaries, traders and Government officials. But the Arabs also brought change to Ngonde and before the Arabs the Ngoni, while before the coming of the Ngoni there is evidence to suggest that changes had arisen, on more than one occasion, in the normal behaviour of the men of Ngonde which were stimulated, not by any new contacts with the outside world, but simply by accidents of their own internal history. Social change in Ngonde, as far as we can see, has always been going on. 177 178

In this section the political history of Ngonde is described in outline from the its beginnings to the coming of the Europeans in 1875, in so far as it can be recovered from the oral tradition. In later sections a systematic analysis is attempted, first of the constitution of Ngonde just prior to that date, and then of the changes in it which have since taken place. 173

(a) *THE EARLY KYUNGUS.*

It is generally agreed that the ancestors of the Kyungus, the present hereditary chiefs of Ngonde, came from the Livingstone Mountains in 173 693

[The dissimilarity between the Ngonde and the Nyakyusa political systems. — Analyst]

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173
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the north east; that they passed westwards near Rungwe Mountain and out into "the country of the Bisa," only to turn eastwards again to the Songwe River. Then they journeyed southwards through the hills to the present Kamanga and finally turned back to Mbande.

In the Livingstone Mountains, the country of the Kinga, the first name which the men of Ngonde remember is that of Ngulube;[5] and from him not only the Kyungus but also the chiefs of the Nyakyusa and of the Kinga are said to be descended. While on his tortuous journey from the Livingstone Mountains to Mbande the Kyungu is said to have started out with three brothers and a sister, and to have left them all behind at different places. One brother founded a line of Inamwanga chiefs, another of Ibu chiefs, while the third, Mwenembaku, together with their sister, followed the Kyungu to the Lambya near the upper Songwe and stayed there. Mwenembaku had a son Kameme and his sister had a son Nyundo, and still to-day there is rivalry between their two houses for the leadership of this group of Lambya.

On reaching Mbande the Kyungu found it already occupied by Simbobwe.[6] "Simbobwe built on Mbande before the Kyungu; he was a clever hunter. He found that elephants were very plentiful here and so built on Mbande. He was a Fipa by birth and had come from the north." Then the Kyungu drove Simbobwe from Mbande back to the land of the Fipa and captured a great deal of ivory. The usual version of this story is full of miraculous incident, telling, first, how he hid from Simbobwe in a tiny pile of grass and, then, how he took Mbande without a blow by creating elephants, buffaloes and guinea-fowl for Simbobwe and his people to hunt, and climbing the hill when it was deserted. Once on top he beat his drum and the men of Simbobwe heard it and fled. Miraculous power and the possession of ivory—

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[5] One of our best informants in history, the late Reuben Mwenifumbo, took the legend further back still: "He came from the country of the Kinga, yes, but originally he came from the north; his body was pale and he came to the land of the Kinga and took it; and men said 'ha! a pig! (ngulube)' because his body was pale. He spoke the language of the *Abalungwana* (Arab or half-Arab traders). Then they gave him the name Ngulube (or pig) and then married in Kinga country and begot Lwambelo."

No one else directly supported this, but Peter, the present Kyungu, told us: "In the sacred grove of the old Kyungus there used to be iron implements of an unusual pattern—knives, razors, and spears. The Kyungu brought them with him from the north when he first came. I have seen them myself . . . . but now the hard boys have stolen them all. And on the hill Mbande I have seen very old pottery." And he also maintained, as we shall see, that the early Kyungus used to trade ivory northwards from Ngonde. And Reuben Mwenifumbo said that the first Kyungu brought cloth with him when he came. Thus, though proof is impossible, there is a suggestion in the legends of Ngonde that the chiefs in this part of the world are direct descendants of early Arab or half-Arab traders from the East African coast.

[6] The similarity of this name to "Zimbabwe" appears to be accidental.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

already in the earliest legends are reflected the twin sources of the Kyungus' supremacy, for, as we shall see, they combined divine kingship with wholesale ivory trading. 173 643

The Kyungu who took Mbande was not alone, he brought with him into Ngonde five leading men whose names are still borne by their descendants: Kasenga, Mulwa, Kyumba, Mboma and Ngoei. Nor did he find the country empty; besides Simbobwe, who was himself a recent immigrant, there were Musyani, Mwenendeka, Mwenekaluma, Mwenekisindile, Mwenifumbo and others; they all had men of their own, and, with the exception of Simbobwe who fled, they all accepted the Kyungu as their overlord. To this day some of their names also survive in Ngonde. The Kyungu, according to the late Mwenifumbo,[1] brought cloth with him and used it to consolidate his position: "Then the Kyungu gave headcloths to us nobles, to Mwenekaluma, Mwenifumbo and the others; and he said to us: 'You are the priests, you the indigenous owners of the land, do you pray for me that I, the chief, may sleep in peace.'"

I make no attempt here to date the arrival of the Kyungu in Ngonde, for to do so would require a careful collation of this tradition with those of neighbouring tribes. The present Kyungu is said to be about the eighteenth of that title in Ngonde, but, as the reigns of many Kyungus were very short and as some early names have probably been forgotten, this fact alone tells us little.

For the period from the coming of the first Kyungu to the birth of Mwangonde (who was about the tenth Kyungu in Ngonde) the legends are scanty and vague; but the following facts are generally attested by them. The leading men among the Kyungu's followers, together with the rulers of the indigenous population, came to form a class of hereditary nobles (*amakambala*), within which, as we shall see, two groups were distinguished, those who lived near Kyungu at Mbande and those who did not. Important immigrants with followers of their own continued to enter Ngonde after the coming of the Kyungu and they also became hereditary nobles, either in the one group or in the other. The Kyungus, though credited with divine powers and enriched by the ivory trade, had but limited powers of secular action; they lived a life of religious seclusion, while the nobles ruled the country. Most of the male children of the Kyungu were killed at birth, and they themselves were killed when they fell sick, lest their sickness should spread magically among their people. 173 643 565

These early Kyungus lived with their wives on the top of the hill Mbande, inside a great enclosure. Near them, some on Mbande, some not, lived a group of nobles. This group, which is specifically referred

[1] Kaulwa Mwenifumbo. He has died since we left Ngonde.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173 643 565

to as "the nobles of Ngonde" (*Avangonde*) included, firstly, the successors of those five leading men whom the first Kyungu brought with him[1], secondly the successors of two of the indigenous rulers whom the Kyungu had found in the country and who happened to live near Mbande[2] and, thirdly, seven others who joined the group later.[3] These fourteen nobles lived at Mbande, each with a group of followers and exercised the central power at the Kyungu's command, or at least in his name. The names of all fourteen are still borne as hereditary titles by their successors in Ngonde to-day and, with two exceptions,[4] all their successors still rank as nobles of Ngonde.

Besides the nobles of Ngonde near Mbande there were the other nobles "who lived at a distance," some in the plain, some in the hills. In the language of Ngonde they are simply referred to by the general term "nobles" (*amahambala*) but, in order to distinguish them from the nobles of Ngonde, I shall here call them "territorial nobles."

They consisted, firstly, of those indigenous rulers whom the first Kyungu found in Ngonde but who did not happen to live near Mbande, and, secondly, of important immigrants who constantly arrived in Ngonde with followers of their own and were given land. Some of these immigrants came from the east across the lake, others from the west, from what is now Northern Rhodesia. The present Kyungu gave us a list of thirty-seven families of territorial nobles, of whom only five or six were found in Ngonde by the first Kyungu, the remainder having entered afterwards. How many of these thirty odd immigrants came during the period of the early Kyungus and how many later we do not know.

In the middle period of Ngonde's history, as we shall see, two tendencies are manifest: the Kyungus begin to emerge from their religious seclusion and slightly to increase their secular power at the expense of the nobles of Ngonde, while the "sons of the Kyungu" increase in numbers, set up hereditary chiefdoms under him and gradually oust the territorial nobles from the Ngonde plain. But in this early period the nobles were the only effective rulers. At Mbande the nobles of Ngonde

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[1] Katenga, Muiwa, Kyumba, Mboma and Ngosi.

[2] Musyani and Mwenendeka.

[3] Mwambila and Kyabinga were both of the same line as Musyani but attained prominence later as heads of junior branches of it and both became nobles of Ngonde. And two others from the line of Mwenendeka—Kyiju and Mwenkinemb;—did the same. Besides these, three of the later immigrants became nobles of Ngonde. There was Mwenenimba who, says legend, "was a good drum player and so was sent for by the Kyungu to come and live at Mbande;" there was Mwenenikibombwe, who came from Mbala (Abercorn), and there was Kipaka, whose histories we do not know.

[4] The two exceptions are Kyumba and Kipaka. Once one of the Kyumbas seduced a wife of the Kyungu and had to flee for his life across the Songwe; while Kipaka's descendants have become just ordinary commoners for some reason unknown to us.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

mediated between the divine Kyungus and the outer world, while both in the hills and in the plain the territorial nobles governed each his own people without royal rivals—for most of the sons of the Kyungus were killed at birth.

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The exact conditions which led to this state of affairs are beyond our knowledge; there is no detailed evidence to explain just how the descendants of a wandering adventurer who succeeded to the camp and the ivory of "a great elephant hunter" should have become divine kings jealously controlled by their subordinates. All we can do is to set down in all its vagueness and uncertainty, such information as the tradition offers us.

The three crucial facts were, firstly the wealth of the Kyungus, which gave the other rulers a secular interest in them, secondly the constant immigration of important men, which kept up the numbers of these other rulers, and, thirdly, the killing of most of the sons of the Kyungus at birth; a custom whereby the territorial nobles were rid of possible rivals and the nobles of Ngonde were rid of possible supporters of the Kyungus against themselves. Reuben Mwenifumbo told us: "They feared that, if the Kyungu had many sons, they might seduce his wives and so bring sickness on him himself and on the country.[5] And they also feared that, if many of the Kyungu's sons grew up, they might destroy the nobles, they might ask, when the Kyungu died, how it was that he had died so suddenly!—I refer to his being killed when he fell sick or cut himself.—If there were only a few sons they could not protest (being only few), but if there had been many then all the nobles might have had their throats cut. So they kept two sons only alive. This was told me by the old Mulwa,[6] the father of the present Mulwa. He knew a great deal about the things of old. I asked him one day why the sons of Kyungu had been killed and he answered what I have just told you." Two reasons are given here: first the magical danger to the Kyungu (and through him to his people) of infidelity on the part of his wives, for his sons would naturally have more access to the sacred enclosure than other men; and second the danger that his sons might prevent his being killed when sick. The danger that they would supplant the territorial nobles is not mentioned, but it is hard to believe that the nobles were not conscious of it.

The nobles, both territorial and of Ngonde, still speak of themselves to-day as a single group with common interests opposed, to some extent, to those of the Kyungu and the chiefs; and, when we compare Ngonde with the Nyakyusa, it seems probable that there was some causal connection between the wealth of the Kyungus and the constant increase

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[5] Vide infra Section 3 (d).
[6] Mulwa is the premier noble of Ngonde.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 in the nobles' numbers by immigration, on the one hand, and the close
565 hold maintained by the nobles of Ngonde over the family life of the early Kyungus, on the other. The Lwembe of Lubaga was, like the Kyungu an immigrant into his district and he also had a group of hereditary priests living with him who, both in their origins and their religious functions exactly corresponded to the nobles of Ngonde; and they used to kill the Lwembe when he fell sick. But they neither developed many secular functions themselves nor ever prevented the royal family of the Lwembe from increasing. The sons of the Lwembe founded hereditary chiefdoms from the first. There had been indigenous rulers among the Nyakyusa prior to the coming of the Lwembe, but they were soon displaced by his sons and did not maintain themselves within the constitution. But then the Lwembe was poor, and among the Nyakyusa there was not the constant immigration of important men unrelated to the Lwembe[3] as there was into Ngonde of important men unrelated to the Kyungu. The comparison thus suggests very strongly a causal connection between these facts; but the exact mechanism of the causation is obscure.

173 The reasons for the killing of the Kyungu himself will be fully dis-
643 cussed in section three. But it must be mentioned here that the history
565 of Ngonde is full of refusals on the part of prospective heirs to accept the position of Kyungu, and that one of the reasons for refusal was the short life that a Kyungu so often had. In order to refuse it was usually necessary to flee, for an heir once forcibly seized by the nobles of Ngonde and set on the stool of the Kyungus could not abdicate; if he did it was believed he would die. And thus was founded the house of Katamba (or Mwenitete) in the plain north of Songwe River. One of the early Kyungus died and "two of his sons, Katamba and a younger brother, fled across the Songwe to Itete, to their grandfather; for the name Mwenitete is in origin a noble not a royal name, the Kyungu had married the daughter of the noble Mwenitete. They fled because they feared to die on Mbande!"

In Itete the house of Katamba became hereditary chiefs and began to spread their power through all the surrounding plain. But later the Nyakyusa came down from the hills and drove them back across Songwe. The boundaries of Ngonde[4] in this early period, were thus wider than they are to-day. The plain north of the Songwe (which the

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[3] There was another immigration into the district of the Nyakyusa, but it was led, so says tradition, by a close kinsman of the Lwembe, whose sons, like the Lwembe's own, became hereditary chiefs. (The Kukwe are ignored in this footnote.)

[4] Using "Ngonde" always in the sense of the area of the Kyungu's supremacy.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa chiefs afterwards conquered, but which is still known as "Mu-Ngonde") was certainly included in it. And the men of Ngonde also claim that Mwembe of the Ndali hills, and Mujombe and others in the present Northern Rhodesia were nobles of the Kyungu and sent him tribute. 173 565 643

How much secular power the Kyungus and nobles of Ngonde then had we cannot know; but, as in the later period it can be proved to have been more effective in the plain near Mbande than in the hills, it is not unreasonable to suppose that so it was in the early period also.

Trade with the outer world there was, so legend says, from the first, and this trade went north. The present Kyungu told us: "The Kyungus used to send ivory to the coast, they sent men over the hills of the Ndali; the ivory that they took from Simlobwe went that way. And the men used to come back with cloths and iron goods and white crockery. This I heard from Mwakalengula who died as a very, very old man in the year 1900 or perhaps it was 1901." 173 439

In later times the central power of the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde can be proved to have rested on the twin bases of religious faith and the control of great wealth; as these two conditions seem both to have been present in the early period we can assert with some confidence that then also they were the real bases of the central power. 173 565 643

(b) *A TURNING POINT.*

"Kyungu Magemo had a sister who was married to Katenga, one of the nobles of Ngonde. And one day when the other nobles of Ngonde went to Ngana (a district of Ngonde) to fish—for fish were plentiful in Ngana—this woman followed them, and there she married Mwakasekele a man of Ngana. So the nobles returned and told Magemo that his sister had been taken to wife in Ngana, and all he said was, 'very well.' Later she bore a son to Mwakasekele and Kyungu Magemo named him Kasyombe." 173 643

Now Magemo himself when he died left only one son, Mwangonde, and he had only survived by an accident. Mwangonde's mother came from Butambo (in the present Northern Rhodesia) and was a distant relative of Mulwa, another noble of Ngonde. Her delivery was unexpected and took place in the house of one of Mulwa's near kinsmen so Mulwa hid her and the child, and then sent her away to Butambo. The other nobles of Ngonde accused him of having done so and were angry, for they wished to kill the child if it were a boy. Mulwa denied his action, but afterwards they heard that the child was a boy and alive. Now but for Mulwa the direct line of the Kyungus would have died out,

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173
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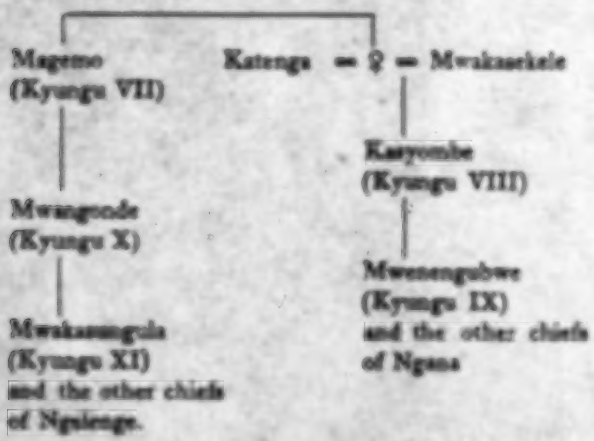
for apparently those sons of Magemo who had been kept alive died[5] before him, and Mwangonde was his only surviving son. But even so Mwangonde was far too young to inherit when Magemo died, he was only an infant; and so the nobles of Ngonde took Kasyombe both to inherit Magemo's wives and to be the Kyungu.

The Early Kyungus



This was a turning point in Ngonde's history: Kasyombe's descendants are the "chiefs of Ngana," or "the cousins" (*Anatani*), Mwangonde's descendants are the "chiefs of Ngulenge,"[6] the direct line; and Ngonde's history from this time on is full of their rivalry. Not only did two royal houses result from this event but other momentous political changes as well. For Kasyombe when he succeeded had an adult son, Mwafongo, who had been brought up in Ngana and was not afraid of the nobles at Mbande.[8] "When they took Kasyombe to be the

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[5] It is also said that Magemo "went mad and killed his own children."

[6] "These are territorial and not family (or clan) names. Kasyombe and his descendants are called chiefs of Ngana because his mother's husband, the commoner Mwakasekele, lived in Ngana. And so too Mwangonde, when he returned from the hills, settled in Ngulenge and begot children there before he was taken to be Kyungu. And so his sons are called chiefs of Ngulenge."

[8] The point is this: the two sons of the Kyungu who had been carefully allowed to survive, in the early period, were brought up at Mbande to respect and fear the nobles of Ngonde as their "fathers" and do not seem to have many personal followers of their own. Moreover if both survived their own father, the Kyungu, then both would be prospective successors and each would be far too much concerned with his own destiny to worry about anything else (*cf.* the story of Katumbu on page 14). But Mwafongo was an outsider and so had a far greater freedom of action; and he seems to have had followers of his own.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173
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Kyungu his son Mwafongo approached the nobles and said that if they killed either his father or any of his brothers then he would kill them all. And thus it was that the chiefs of Ngana increased so greatly. But as for killing the Kyungu, the nobles did so in spite of Mwafongo's threats! And when Mwangonde succeeded, the chiefs of Ngana came again to the nobles and forbade them to kill his sons; so thus the chiefs of Ngelenge increased also. And yet, seeing that there were only a few sons of Mwangonde and many daughters we think that, after all, some of his sons were put away! When one of Mwangonde's wives whose father was an important man bore a son, then they would let him live, fearing lest the chiefs of Ngana be told; but if her father was a man of no great weight then they would kill her son."

On the wives of Magemo Kasyombe begot Mwenengubwe, Kalambo, Kilupula, Mwabulambo and other sons too; while Mwangonde, when he grew up begot Kalonga, Mpeta, Mwansele, Mboma and so on. The killing of the sons of Kyungu was, if not quite abandoned, at least limited; and from that time onwards the power of the nobles began to lessen.

There seems no reason to doubt the accuracy of this story, which is universally current in Ngonde to-day; and if we can accept it we have here one of those historical events in which chance circumstances have radically altered the customary behaviour of a group of people. Had Mwangonde not been saved by Mulwa the line of Ngana would have succeeded alone and finally[3] to the Kyunguship, had Mwangonde been older when Magemo died it would not have succeeded at all; and in neither case would two royal houses have been set up. Had Kasyombe not happened to have a determined and forceful son, the killing of the sons of Kyungu would not then have been stopped. But, as it was, the existence of the two lines of chiefs, together with the continual increase of both led to a transformation of Ngonde's constitution.

And there is another minor change which tradition traces to this same event. In the times of the early Kyungus, we are told, Katenga was the premier noble of Ngonde; but after his wife left him for Mwakasekela, without protest from his royal brother-in-law, he retired for a time from public life and Mulwa, who soon afterwards gained fame as the saviour of the Ngelenge line, took his place. And Mulwa is still the premier noble of Ngonde to-day.

[3] But what of the line of the Katumbwe? There is here an old constitutional principle involved which we did not sufficiently study. It appears that once a son of the Kyungu had fled from succession his descendants could never succeed again. (cf. The case of Kalonga pp. 27-8). But this principle no longer operates to-day, for both the present Kyungu and his predecessor were sons of Mulwa, who himself fled from the succession (cf. p. 67).

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173
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(c) *THE MIDDLE KYUNGUS: CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE.*

When Kasyombe died Mwenengubwe succeeded, for Mwangonde, though now grown up, was still living in Butambo. Mwenengubwe was the eldest of those sons whom Kasyombe had begotten on the wives of Magemo, and he began that process of gradual emergence from religious seclusion which the present Kyungu has completed. The early Kyungus had all lived on the top of Mbande, cut off from the outside world not only by their enclosure but also by the steep sides of the hill; Mwenengubwe and his successors lived in the plain at its foot, by the Lukulu River. This change appears to have been connected with the unsuccessful effort of the chiefs of Ngana to control the killing of the Kyungus. Three of the present nobles of Ngonde took me up Mbande and explained on the way: "At first all the Kyungus were installed on the summit of the hill, but Mwenengubwe came down to the valley; Kasyombe was the last to live on the summit. The Kyungus came down to the valley because they were afraid to live on the hill, they thought that no Kyungu ever lived long on Mbande, always they died quite soon. And so, after Mwenengubwe had come down from the hill, they installed his successors in the valley, in the house of the Kyungu." But still they lived at Mbande in the midst of the nobles of Ngonde, and still their houses were surrounded with an enclosure that only the nobles of Ngonde might freely enter.

On the death of Mwenengubwe, Mwangonde succeeded.[1] From now onwards the traditions of Ngonde are full of warfare, civil and tribal; but more important than the wars themselves are the accompanying constitutional and commercial changes of which we get occasional glimpses.

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About this time the direction of the trade in ivory changed. The present Kyungu told us: "Later, after the first Kyungus, Mwangonde and his successors used to exchange the ivory with Marabi who came from across the lake; the men of Mwela rowed them across. These traders brought cloths, red and white and dark cloths. But when the first Kyungu arrived in Ngonde there was no trade-route across the lake at all." And one of the Kyungus about this time is said to have "struck the lake and walked over to Mwela to marry a woman, Mapunda." And the present Kyungu told us that, besides the trade with these Marabi, there had also been trade with the men of Mwela

[1] "When Kasyombe died Mwenengubwe inherited the position of Kyungu. Mwangonde refused it and continued living with his mother's family in Butambo. But the nobles discussed together and decided it was not fitting that Mwangonde should live in another country and they went to invite him back. He agreed to come; at first he only paid a short visit to Ngonde and went back again, but the second time he came and stayed. So when Mwenengubwe died they set Mwangonde on Mbande."

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

themselves, and with the Kisi. With the people of Mwela they exchanged canoes for hoes. And from the Kisi also they got hoes, which the Kisi in their turn had got in exchange from the Kinga. 173 643 439

Then, during the reigns of Mwangonde and his successors "the sons of the Kyungu" began more and more to displace the territorial nobles as rulers of the various districts of the Ngonde plain. They became hereditary chiefs (*avanyafyale*), each of whom was succeeded by two or more sons, who divided his country and tried to extend it. And thus the number of ruling chiefs now began to increase at a great rate. Each of the territorial nobles, on the other hand, was only succeeded by a single heir. Houses of chiefs were set up and a new hierarchy appeared, for the senior chief in each house ranked as the "father" of his juniors. The name of the founder of each house was preserved as a hereditary title borne by each head of that house in turn. Thus to-day we find in the Ngonde plain the house of the Katambas, (or Mwenitetes),[1] the house of the Kalongas, the house of the Mwakasungulas and so on, and, among the chiefs of Ngana, the house of the Mwafongos, the house of the Mwenengubwes, the house of the Kalombos, the house of the Kilupulas and so on. The heads of these houses were the great chiefs of Ngonde, subordinate to the Kyungu and each with a number of junior chiefs traditionally subordinate to him. Most of these great titles can be traced back to some important son either of Mwangonde or of Kasyombe; but in some cases junior branches also have acquired sufficient importance to be distinguished by hereditary titles which are borne by their heads[2]. Whenever the bearer of one of these great titles became the Kyungu, his old title was at once taken by a successor in his house. 173 643 565 622

The chiefs supplanted the territorial nobles and took their subjects for their own in this way: "A great many territorial nobles have lost their power, for the Kyungus were in the habit of sending their sons to build with them in their countries. A Kyungu would send one of his sons (i.e. a chief) to a certain noble saying 'I send this your son to build with you, his father'—for the nobles were called 'father' by the sons of the Kyungu—, so the noble would welcome him. But in after years the people would give their affection to the son of the Kyungu and the noble would lose his power. And yet, even so, in the old days the two of them, chief and noble, would remain on friendly terms." . . . . "Some of the nobles lost their power through the cunning of the chiefs. For example the noble Mwenifumbo used to have a country of his own,

[1] This house, as we have seen, dates from the early period.
[2] The first Malema, for instance, was a son of Mwakasungula, the first Kajuni of Mwenengubwes.

[text continues on p. 21]

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

but then he was given a young chief, Mwakijule, to look after as a child. The father of Mwakijule (who was not the Kyungu) asked Mwenifumbo to bring him up; but then when he grew up he became the ruler of the country!" And others lost their power to young chiefs who had married their daughters and then come to live near them. 173 643 565 622

Now all informants agree on three points: Firstly that it was the prestige of the royal blood which was responsible for this loss of power, secondly that the process was a gradual one and thirdly that the chiefs and the dispossessed nobles generally continued to live together on amicable terms. "The people gave their affection to the son of the Kyungu," but not all at once; some men at first would continue to regard themselves as the noble's men while others looked more to the chief. The noble acquiesced in this process and became in the end but the most important and respected commoner of the new chiefdom. For the chiefs apparently always treated such nobles with the greatest consideration, continued to call them "father" and to defer to their advice. The nobles retained all their religious functions and their right to participate in the selection of Kyungus and great chiefs, while their own titles continued to be handed on with due ceremony to their successors. All that they lost was leadership in war, the power of requisitioning food, together with the main responsibility for feasting the common people, and the formal position of chief justice. But in actual fact a noble's opinion on a law case was probably seldom disputed by the chief who had asked for it.

We have already suggested that during this middle period the balance of secular power between the nobles of Ngonde and the divine Kyungu himself began to change, and we have noted his descent from Mbande and the stopping of the killing of his sons as undoubted examples of this. But the nobles of Ngonde still had the real power at Mbande: "they alone conversed with the Kyungu; no one else saw him except when they went in to make obeisance. All orders came from them. Even with the *masemo*, the wives of the Kyungu, it was the nobles of Ngonde who put each one into the house of the Kyungu for a week at a time and then took her out and put in another. No one else built their houses near the Kyungu except these nobles (and their own immediate followers.)" 173 643 565

Such incidents as the going to war of Kyungu Mwakasungula, and the abandonment of the custom of building an enclosure (*ulupaso*) in the reign of Mwambolo[1] seem significant in the light of modern developments; but we cannot be sure that any very radical constitutional change would

[1] Vide Index pp. 22-3.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173 643 565 necessarily have followed from them, had modern conditions been different. The evidence is inconclusive.

565 642 622 Now not all territorial nobles in the Ngonde plain have been supplanted by "the sons of the Kyungus" even to-day; while in the hills inland they have mostly retained their power. And so in discussing the political system of Ngonde under the middle Kyungus, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between four different kinds of political unit: (1) the chiefdoms in the plain, each ruled by a hereditary chief related to the Kyungu; (2) the fiefs (if I may adapt this word from a feudal to a primitive context) in the plain, ruled by hereditary nobles unrelated to the Kyungu; (3) the fiefs in the hills inland, also ruled by hereditary nobles, but differing in many ways from the fiefs in the plain, and (4) the chiefdoms of the houses of Nyondo and Kameme in the hills.

642 622 This paper is mainly concerned with chiefdoms and fiefs of the plain. There each of the chiefdoms consisted, as among the Nyakyusa, of a group of age-villages, older and younger men living apart with their own contemporaries. At the head of each village was a headman, or great-commoner (*ulifumu*) chosen for life from among the villagers by the chief and the great-commoners (*amafumu*) of the senior villages of the chiefdom. Except in the case of very small chiefdoms each chief was succeeded by two or more sons who divided the villages among them. The transference of power from the old chief to his sons normally began in his lifetime at the "coming out" (*wousoka*) when they were formally shown to the country as chiefs and magically treated. The constitution of every chiefdom was that of limited monarchy, for the chief was dependent upon his great-commoners, who advised and, in many ways, controlled him. In the status of chief and great-commoners religious elements played an important part.

642 622 643 565 But, whereas among the Nyakyusa each chiefdom, save the very small ones, was, in secular matters, quite independent of its neighbours and each chief was a sovereign, in Ngonde, on the other hand, the wealth of the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde made them the apex of a political hierarchy. And thus, while among the Nyakyusa the senior of two brother chiefs could only command his junior in religious matters, when they sacrificed to their common father's spirit, in Ngonde he could occasionally command him in other ways also, he could, for example, summon him to war or to hoe,[1] and he had a certain slight judicial authority.[2] Of two brother chiefs the junior was subordinate to the senior; in each of the great houses all other chiefs were subordinate to the head of the house, the great chief with a hereditary title;

[1] Vide infra sections 4 and 6.
[2] Vide infra section 5.

[text continues on p. 24]

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

642 the great chiefs themselves were subordinate to Kyungu. But every
622 ruling chief right up the scale, except the Kyungu himself, had also his
643 own great-commoners and people directly subordinate to him. More-
565 over the subordination of some chiefs to others and of all to Mbande was a very different thing from the subordination of authorities in a civilized state. It was still above all a religious and ceremonial subordination, but in matters of secular justice and administration there was a very large measure of local autonomy.

Within the chiefdom the organization of families and villages was more or less[1] the same as that described in the first paper of this series, and need not be further described here.

642 Among the fiefs of the plain there was another hierarchy, depend-
643 ing not upon seniority of birth but upon priority of arrival in Ngonde.
565 For each important immigrant who entered the country with followers of his own went first to an already established territorial noble, not straight to Mbande; and it was the already established noble, who then acted as his sponsor, took him to Mbande and told the nobles of Ngonde and the Kyungu of his request for land. The normal procedure then was for the nobles of Ngonde to be sent by the Kyungu to arrange with his sponsor where to settle him. And thereafter he ranked, at least for ceremonial purposes, as his sponsor's junior. Thus the territorial noble Kasyombe was junior to his sponsor Mwenekibuta, and so on. But no ruling noble was subordinate to any chief save the Kyungu. The nobles, both territorial and of Ngonde, describe themselves as "the great-commoners (*amafumu*) of the Kyungu," likening the relationship of the fiefs and the Kyungu to that of the villages of a single chiefdom and their chief.

642 The organization of each single fief seems to have resembled in
565 many ways that of a small chiefdom, each was divided into at least two age-villages, so that old men and their sons should live separately; for it was taboo in all the Ngonde plain, as among the Nyakyusa, for father and daughter-in-law ever to meet. *Kinship*, however, was more emphasized as a reason for living together than in the chiefdoms, and we are told that the inhabitants of the fiefs were usually related, either as kinsmen or affines, to the territorial noble concerned; while the age-villages of a fief had no great-commoners at their head. Otherwise the customs which obtained in the plain, both in the fiefs and the chiefdoms, were, on the whole, homogeneous.

Each of the nobles of Ngonde had a few subject commoners of his own living at Mbande with him, divided up into two age-villages; so

[1] The climatic differences determine certain differences in the system of land-tenure of Ngonde and of the Nyakyusa, but of these we have made no study.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

that the organization of Mbande may be described either as a group of small fiefs clustered together or as the capital chiefdom of the Kyungu, in which the nobles of Ngonde acted as the great commoners, each in two small age-villages. 642 565

Besides the nobles of Ngonde and their own followers there lived at Mbande men called *walukuta*, who acted as the personal messengers and police of the Kyungu. They were not hereditary officials but chosen for their speed by the nobles of Ngonde, who also gave them their orders. Anyone might become a messenger, the son of a chief, or of a commoner, or even a slave. 624 202

Of the customs of the hill fiefs and of the chiefdom, of the houses of Nyondo and Kameme we know very little; but it is certain that in many of them different dialects were spoken from that of the plain and that their inhabitants called themselves (as they still do to-day) Sukwa, Wenya, Lambya, and so on, rather than "men of Ngonde." And these upland groups were much more loosely attached[3] to the central power at Mbande than were the people of the plain. 642 565

There is some evidence to show that, even in the early period, the the nobles of Ngonde did not always take the most immediate heir of a dead Kyungu to succeed him; during the middle period it is certain that they did not. The Kyungu had to be taken from the royal family but, within limits, the most suitable man might be chosen. And with the increase in the numbers of the chiefs the area of selection grew constantly wider. The constitutional methods of selection will be discussed in section five.

(d) *THE MIDDLE KYUNGUS: CIVIL WARS.*

We must now turn to the rivalry between the chiefs of Ngelenge and Ngana. "Mwangonde begot Kalonga, Mpeta,[4] and Mwansele. And they, when they grew up, quarrelled with the sons of Kasyombe: 'Let them *move further off, they are only* commoners, we object to their proximity!' So they made war on them and drove them fleeing out of Ngana with only a few men. Before this war began their father Mwangonde had forbidden them to fight and commanded them to be friends." We notice here a point, which will be discussed later in section five, that the Kyungus, though not themselves involved in the civil wars, yet had little or no power to keep the peace. 173

"Then the sons of Kasyombe went to the Ndali to make allies of them and they returned together and fought the sons of Mwangonde

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[3] cf. Section 3.
[4] Mpeta (male infix) later took the name of Mwakasungula.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173 in Ngelenge. And in that war both Kalonga and Mwansele were killed, only Mpeta (that is Mwakasungula) was left. He went to tell the Kyungu, his father, that two of his sons were dead and his father said: 'Even so, did I not forbid you to fight?' And the Kyungu called together Mpeta and the chiefs of Ngana and blessed them and made peace between them at Mbande. He gave the chiefs of Ngana the lands of Ngelenge and Mpata..... His son Mpeta he sent to Kisaku." The second civil war thus ended in a decisive defeat for the chiefs of Ngelenge; and the peace-making of Kyungu Mwangonde was but an acquiescence in that defeat. Mpeta was sent into exile, for Kisaku is a little district at the north-east corner of the lake, beyond the plain which the Nyakyusa had now taken. Ngelenge has been held by the chiefs of Ngana ever since, and Kilupula has it still. And Mpata, which is close to Mbande on the North, is still theirs also.

While in exile Mpeta led the men of Kisaku to war against a Nyakyusa chief from the hills, named Mwakasungula; he killed him and took his name; and thereafter he is always referred to in tradition by it.

The return of Mwakasungula from exile was caused by a drought, combined with the faith which the men of Ngonde had in the rainmaking powers of their royal family. They went to Kyungu Mwangonde and asked what they had done to deserve a drought. He denied the implication that he had caused it himself but suggested, none the less, that the exile of his son Mwakasungula might have something to do with it; perhaps it was Mwakasungula who was angry. "So they went to Mwakasungula, the chiefs of Ngana and everyone, and told him that in Ngonde they were dying of drought—he replied that he would follow them. And so he did, he passed through Ngelenge and came as far as Kyimbwe and the people heard that he had come. And that very day the rain came, heavy rain, and the Lukulu, which had dried up, filled up again—while Mwakasungula was still on the way, before he had even arrived at Mbande. And all men, when they saw this miracle, were astonished and urged the chiefs of Ngana to respect Mwakasungula, for they had all but perished. And Mwangonde summoned Mwakasungula and his cousins (the chiefs of Ngana) and commanded them to live together in friendship and never to fight again. And he gave Mwakasungula land on the coast by the lake." And this land the house of Mwakasungula still holds.

And then, after the return of Mwakasungula from exile, there was a great campaign fought against the Bemba in the country of Mujombe in the hills. The Bemba chief Kyepele had invaded that country, and Mujombe, so say the traditions of Ngonde, sent to the Kyungu for

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

help. Mwakasungula led the forces of Ngonde and was the hero of the war; he defeated the Bemba and killed Kyepele, returning to Ngonde with a host of Bemba captives who were there enslaved.[1] 173

MIDDLE AND MODERN KYUNGUS. 173

Line of Ngelenge.	*Line of Ngama.*
Magemo.	
	Kasyombe.
	Mwenengubwe.
Mwangonde.	
Mwakasungula.	
Mwambelo.	
	Gwa Sapasi.
	Mwafongo.
(The Europeans arrive 1875).	
	Mwabulambo (deposed 1894).
Mwakabanga (1894-1904).	
Mwangalaba (1904-1932).	
Peter (the reigning Kyungu).	

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When Mwangonde died Mwakasungula was taken as the Kyungu, but not until Kalonga had refused the position for himself. The first holder of the name "Kalonga," as we have seen, had been killed in civil war. But after his death one of his younger half-brothers, Mboma (or Kanyigi), inherited his name and his wives. Now, as the first Kalonga had been the senior son of Mwangonde, so Mboma, by inheriting from him, became the senior in his turn. Though much younger than Mwakasungula he ranked above him. But when the nobles of Ngonde tried to install him as the Kyungu "he himself refused the position, he smeared ash on his body and refused, he foresWore the position saying 'I do not desire the name of Kyungu; my brother Mwakasungula here was our father's companion for many years and all the medicines of chieftainship are in his possession; how is it that you take me instead 173

[1] *Bemba tradition.* The present Bemba chief Mwamba told me that this campaign took place in the reign of the Citimukulu Cepele, Cepele did not himself go to fight but his brother, Mwamba, did and was defeated by the men of Ngonde. He died of his wounds on his way home.

It thus appears that the country of Mujumba was then just on the boundary between the Bemba sphere of influence and that of Ngonde.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173 of him? And it is he that has done the fighting not I!' And so they caught Mwakasungula to be the Kyungu." Thereafter, though the house of Kalonga has always been recognized as a senior branch of the royal family, no member of it has ever been made Kyungu.

After the succession of Mwakasungula there was a third and final war between the rival lines: "When the sons of Mwakasungula grew up they remembered that the chiefs of Ngana had killed their fathers and wished for revenge. So they fought and killed two of them. And then the chiefs of Ngalenge were satisfied and declared the quarrel at an end; for as the chiefs of Ngana had killed their fathers so now they in their turn had killed some chiefs of Ngana, the old score was paid." Whether the chiefs of Ngana would have acquiesced in this "settlement of scores" we cannot tell, for now Ngonde had to meet the challenge of the Ngoni.

(e) *THE MIDDLE KYUNGUS: THE NGONI WARS.*

Before the reign of Mwakasungula no Kyungu, says tradition, had ever gone to war, "but when the Ngoni came their enmity was like that of the lions and their number like that of the ants, and so Kyungu Mwakasungula, seeing his people were terrified, took up arms in person and said he would die fighting. And his people heard with awe and astonishment that he himself had come to fight and they determined to to die with him." Thus, under the pressure of extraordinary circumstances, a man who had often fought before broke through the traditional privacy of his divine office. Though the step was never repeated[1] yet its occurrence made a great impression on his people and it is still cited as one of the stages in the emergence of the Kyungus from their religious seclusion.

The course of the Ngoni wars, in the tradition of Ngonde, was briefly as follows: the first appearance of the Ngoni in Ngonde took place during the reign of Mwakasungula; he himself led his people against them and killed their chief Kwakumbwe-Kalila; they fled and he pursued them out of the country. And again they came and again the men of Ngonde repulsed them.

"Then they took counsel together and decided that we men of Ngonde were too skilful with our spears ever to be beaten by daylight, but we might be surprised at night." So the next attack was a raid on Mbande by night; Mwakasungula, alone and unaided, slew six Ngoni and they fled; but he himself was left fatally wounded.

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[1] One of our informants, however, maintained that Kyungu Mwakasungula fought the Ngoni twice in person.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Mwambelo, younger brother of Mwakasungula, succeeded and abandoning the enclosure at Mbande, went to live by the lake shore.[1] And so yet another step was taken from the traditional religious seclusion. His successors returned to Mbande; but the custom of building an enclosure round the houses of the Kyungu was not resumed. 173

In his reign Mwafulilwa, chief of the next tribe to the south of Ngonde, sought aid against the Nguni and the men of Ngonde responded and won a battle. But the Nguni then replied with another night raid in which they found Mwambelo alone in his house and killed him and returned home. Another attack followed before a new Kyungu had been installed, but it was repulsed, "for this time they had come by day!"

"And then the nobles of Ngonde made Gwa Sapasi Kyungu; he was a son of Kalambo, a chief of Ngona; for they said that, as so many of the chiefs of Ngelenge had been killed by the Nguni, they would now take one of their cousins again as the Kyungu." And now at last Ngonde submitted to the Nguni. Gwa Sapasi, with the concurrence of all the chiefs and all the nobles save one[2] sent a tusk of ivory to the Nguni chief Mtwalo. "And from that time forwards the Nguni never fought with us again."

A few years later, in 1873, after Gwa Sapasi had died and been succeeded by Mwafongo, the Europeans first visited Ngonde. Arab slaves traders established themselves there about the same time, and with the struggle between the two races for the possession of Ngonde the modern period begins. 175

3. *RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

The traditional status of the Kyungus had in part a religious basis.[3] The ruling Kyungu and the spirits of his dead predecessors were believed to form one divine company, the anger of any one of whom had terrible effects: while in his own flesh and in some of his possessions magical power was believed to reside. But the Kyungu was not alone in his religious potency, he was but the greatest of many. The nobles of Ngonde and the territorial nobles, the chiefs both great and small, professional rainmakers and doctors, the great-commoners of the villages, heads of families and even ordinary men and women—all alike were believed to have some access to, some dealings with divine or 643 769 789

[1] These nobles of Ngonde, in recounting this story, maintained that Mwambelo was mad.

[2] He was Mwanikwanga, whose story is omitted here for lack of space.

[3] As this paper is concerned only with political institutions no full analysis of the tribal religions of Ngonde is here attempted, only those aspects of it are dealt with which have political significance.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

693 761 789 magical powers. And the faith alike in ancestors and in witchcraft gave to every group of subjects a religious hold over their rulers.

(a) *THE THEISTIC ELEMENT.*

693 764 778 Though the early Kyungus had lived on the stony top of Mbande none of them had been buried there, for "the ground was too hard to dig graves in." They and their successors were all buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. Thus Kyungu Mwangonde is referred to as "He of Bwiba," Kyungu Mwakasungula as "He of Ipota," and so on.

693 731 787 782 Now drought and widespread sickness were believed to be caused by the anger either of some dead Kyungu or of the living one. "In time of drought they (the nobles of Ngonde) would go to a diviner to enquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would tell them that it was so and so. So they would tell the (living) Kyungu. And he would give them either a bull or a sheep, together with some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own house, one of the pots which were continually brought by his people as tribute.[1] And he would give them some flour and some cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove. Now the diviner would have told them that he (the dead Kyungu) was angry because they had omitted (for so long) to build his house. So they would begin by building his house in the grove, they would build a miniature hut with rafters.[2] Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fix some of the pieces to the house in the grove—an action which they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And, finally, they would pour out (some of) the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a house in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

693 731 787 "But occasionally if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any of them: 'No—no.'

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[1] Vide infra section 4.

[2] This is the custom traditional in the sacred groves of all important chiefs, both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa. We have seen it done among the Nyakyusa. The hut which we saw built was between two and three feet high.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173
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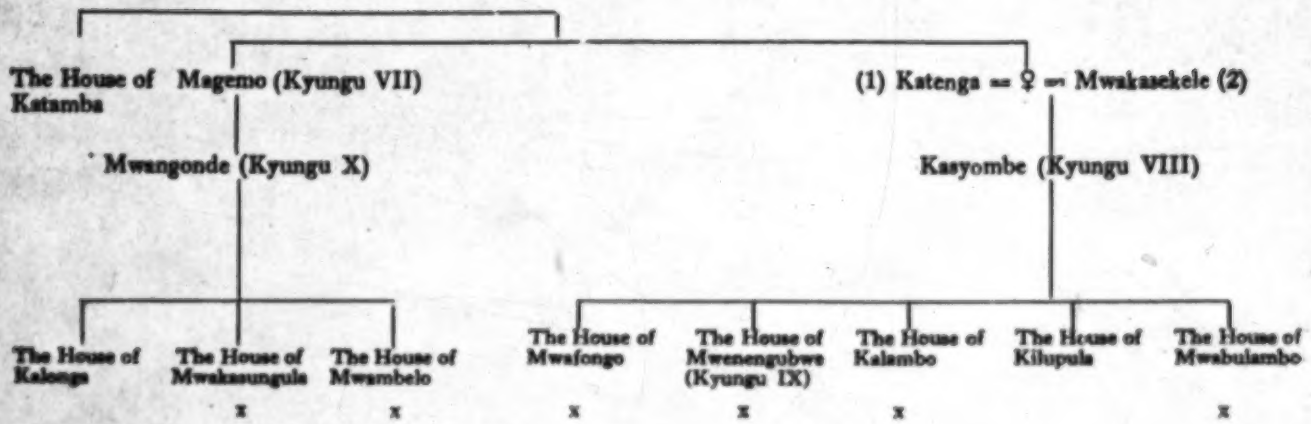
THE TWO ROYAL LINES (MIDDLE PERIOD).

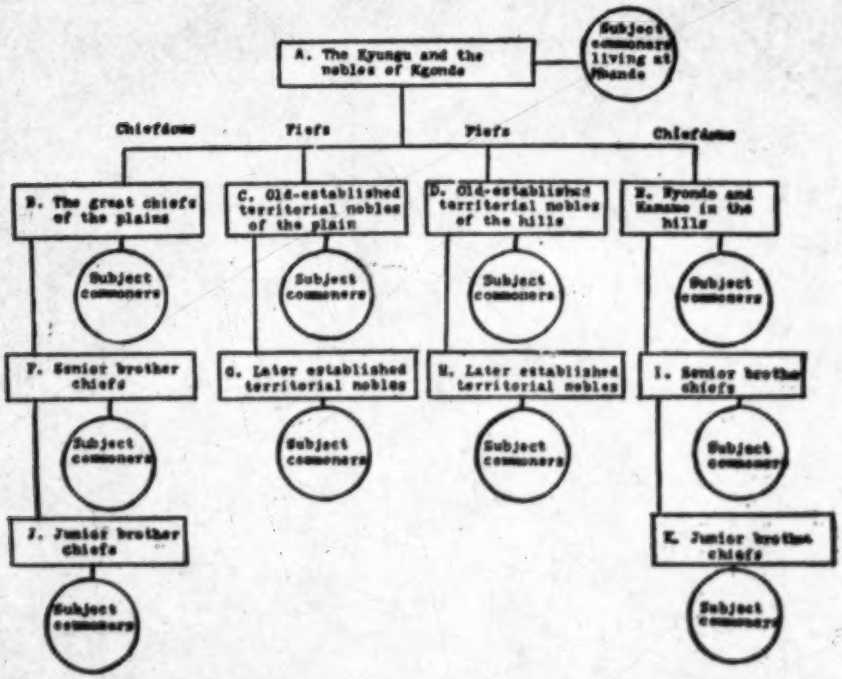
THE EARLY KYUNGUS



x = Houses which actually provided Kyungus in the middle period.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

THE CONSTITUTION OF NGONDE IN THE MIDDLE PERIOD



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642

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

And at length he would tell them that it was the living Kyungu who was angry because so and so had insulted him. Then there would be no sacrifice in the grove at all, but the nobles of Ngonde would go to the one who had insulted the Kyungu and charge him with it, asking him what he meant by thus killing them all, would not the whole land starve! And so the wrongdoer would take a cow to the Kyungu who, thereupon, would address the nobles of Ngonde, saying: 'If it was my anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been some one (of the dead Kyungus) whom you forgot to ask about.' And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again! 643 731 787

"If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would; and then the diviner would tell them that it was so and so (one of the dead Kyungus), and they would go and sacrifice in his grove."

Thus the belief in the power of the dead Kyungus, a power in which their living successor participated, was one of the factors of the central political institutions of Ngonde. The Kyungu did not himself sacrifice in the sacred groves but the nobles of Ngonde did so, with materials provided by him, and from these sacrifices the whole plain was believed to benefit. While to insult the Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. And we have already seen, in the story of Mwakasungula's return from exile,[1] that other prominent members of the royal family also were believed to share this power. 643 769 782 731

The absence of central political institutions among the Nyakyusa was, as we shall see, mainly due to economic causes; but in part also this difference can be traced to the climatic difference acting upon similar religious faiths. The Nyakyusa had in the Lwembes, the hereditary chiefs of Lubaga, a line of religious paramounts. Chiefs from all over the district sent gifts to them to ask for health and rain. That they never achieved any secular paramountcy at all was mainly because they were poor. But the difference of rainfall was important too. Droughts in Ngonde occurred frequently, and each one made the people remember their Kyungu's power. North of the Songwe droughts were rare and slight. 643 731

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[1] p. 27.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 Nor were rain and health the only blessings which were sought in
769 the sacred groves round Mbande, general fertility, the peace of the
778 country, the absence of rats and the success of the ivory trade were believed to depend in part on the favour of the dead Kyungus. And we have a little evidence that some of these other blessings also were believed to be withheld by the anger of a living Kyungu.

The religious powers of dead and living Kyungus, however, were only believed to be effective in the Ngonde plain; the fiefs of the hills, certainly, and, as far as we know, the chiefdoms of the Nyondos and Kamemes also, were unaffected by them. And this fact is correlated with the slighter secular hold which Mbande had over the hills as compared with the plain.

769 Two notable religious rituals of the plain must now be mentioned.
It was customary, first, to clear out the ashes (*ukujola ifikungu*) each
776 year after the break of the rains. In traditional belief the spirits of the ancestors, whether of chiefs or of commoners, were closely associated with the fires in the houses of their descendants; and so it was only by clearing out the old fires regularly that the spirits and their potential anger could be driven away. Every religious ritual which deals with the ancestors, whether in Ngonde or among the Nyakyusa, has the function of driving them away. For, while the Christians believe that sustained communion with God may be a blessed state, the pagans in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa believe that sustained communion
[787] with the ancestral spirits is always terrible and dangerous; prophecy may flow from it, but if the communion is not broken, if it continues too long, then evil will result; and prophecy is nearly always prophecy of evil. In pagan belief the spirits of the dead come constantly to "brood" on man and his works and have constantly to be satisfied and driven away by ritual.

"Always they used to clear-out the ashes at the new year, at the first hoeing, at the break of the rains in December. They feared that death and disease would spread through the land if they continued living with the old fires, that the spirits in the ground, both the spirits of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry; let them drive the spirits away and hoe in peace. They always remembered to do so each new year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually, they never forgot. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to clear out the ashes; and then they would hoe in peace. And at other times too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the ashes again."

The nobles of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave the order to clear out the ashes; messages were sent to the great chiefs and

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

the senior territorial nobles of the plain, and they told their juniors. A sacrifice was made in one of the sacred groves of the Kyungu and all fires in the whole Ngonde plain were put out. And then "all the chiefs from every country near Mbande and the nobles and all the great-commoners and all the ordinary men and the women too went to Kyimbwe." At Kyimbwe, which is a cross-roads in the bush, they threw away the ashes of their old fires; while those few people who could not get to Kyimbwe threw them away near their own houses on the same day as the others. At Kyimbwe new fire was made with fire-sticks by the nobles of Ngonde and distributed to the whole plain in order. Great chiefs and senior nobles took it first and passed it to their juniors, chiefs passed to great-commoners, and in each group the common people got it from their own ruling noble or their own great-commoner. 769 796

And then, later in the year when the first maize and the first pumpkin leaves were ready to eat, an elaborate first-fruit ceremony was carried out. The first-fruits were offered by the nobles of Ngonde in the grove of the previous Kyungu, the one who had last died. "Then the great chiefs would do so next—Kalongs, Mwakasungula, Mwembelo, Katumba and the chiefs of Ngana also, each in his own sacred grove (i.e. at the grave of his own predecessor in the title). . . . . And then after them everyone, both chiefs and people, each at his father's grave. All offered first-fruits to their own spirits. And finally they would eat themselves, each with his chief wife. But beforehand they would not eat for fear of angering the spirits."

These two rituals concerned the plain alone; the nobles and chiefs of the hills are said to have had similar rituals of their own but they were not synchronized with or dependent upon those of the plain.

In time of tribal war also the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde led the people in prayer. All chiefs and nobles were summoned from the plain and the great ones entered the Kyungu's house to receive their instructions: "When he had finished speaking he would tell them to go to pray. So they would leave his house and gather all together, all chiefs and men, and pray. The premier noble of Ngonde would begin, asking each of the sacred groves of the Kyungu in turn to bless them in the fight. And then the great chiefs would pray after them" (each addressing his own predecessors in his title). The territorial nobles did not pray, for it was the royal family alone whose spirits were then addressed. Here again it was the plain alone that was concerned. 643 565 732 726

Now this organization of religious ritual in the Ngonde plain was both a factor of and itself determined by the general political

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17
NyaKyusa

structure. We shall see in later sections how many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions. But the reverse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular content at all, the organisation of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle were sent to Lubaga by the other chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and health; but the "clearing out of the ashes" was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruit ritual at all;[1] while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

Besides the Kyungu the great chiefs of Ngonde also were believed to be able to avert local droughts and misfortunes in their districts by offerings to their own immediate ancestors; and the lesser chiefs likewise and the territorial nobles—each in his own little area. While among the territorial nobles, the original owners of the land had wider powers. It will be remembered that to them the first Kyungu is said to have given head-cloths and asked for their prayers. Sometimes people would prophesy future misfortune "at Kisindile", or "at Kalumba" or "at Ifumbo," or would prophesy of present misfortunes that such was their source. Then the territorial noble concerned[2] would be formally visited by the nobles of Ngonde, and he and they together would offer sacrifice to his ancestors on behalf of all Ngonde.

And then also there were sacred lagoons near the lake—Nthole, Kambwe, Kibondo, Mulale and Katindi. They were associated not with ancestral spirits at all but with a vaguely defined supreme deity named Mbamba. And beside them also prayers and sacrifices were made from time to time by the nobles of Ngonde.

Over these other spiritual powers we need not linger, save to notice one most significant fact. The participation by the Kyungu in the divinity of his ancestors was no isolated phenomenon in Ngonde. The head of every family in the country, whether of chiefs or commoners, was similarly placed; in his own family and, in the case of a chief or noble, in his own area too, he was both a priest and a demi-god; he dealt with the spirits and by virtue of his relation to them shared their powers; his anger could curse. The Kyungu were but the greatest of many divinities. And thus there was in theistic ritual a high degree of local and family autonomy; local or family misfortunes

[1] Particular people among the Nyakyusa carried it out; reigning chiefs, senior great-commoners, prophets, and any person whose birth was held to be due to magical treatment of a previously barren woman. But only they.

[2] Mwene-Kisindile, Mwene-Kalumba, Mwene-Ifumbo etc.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

were dealt with by the local rulers or by the family-heads, not by the central authorities. It was only occasionally that general fears or misfortunes turned all men's thoughts together to Mbande. 771 643 565

Now the great-commoners of every chief were believed to have independent access to his ancestral spirits and this gave them a spiritual hold over him. If they compared him too unfavourably with his predecessors then, it was believed, those predecessors might hear and afflict him in various ways. And so it was also with the nobles of Ngonde and the reigning Kyungu. But as this belief was intimately linked with the belief in witchcraft it will be more conveniently analysed in that context.[1] 622

(b) *THE MAGICAL ELEMENT.*

Magic (the belief that certain particular objects, events, words or actions, involving particular people in particular situations, possessed in themselves an extraordinary power) was an essential ingredient of the old pagan religion of Ngonde. While the greatest magical object in the country was, traditionally, the body of the Kyungu. And the fact that the central political authority of Ngonde was so largely vested in the nobles of Ngonde was due above all to their responsibility for controlling this magical object in the public interest. 789 643

If the Kyungu cut himself, and more particularly if his blood fell to the ground, then it was the duty of the nobles of Ngonde to kill him, lest the whole land be afflicted with disease; and if he was ill likewise. "They considered that if his blood fell to the ground that was his life falling. And they likened him to a god, considering it taboo for a god to be wounded; they thought that if his blood fell to the ground it would turn into a sickness and all the people would die. And so, when the Kyungu was wounded, they thought it best to put him out of the way and start afresh with a new one. They thought it taboo for him to have even the tiniest wound on his body. And it was equally taboo for him to fall ill; everyone else, it was believed, would fall ill too; it was better to put him out of the way so that the people should keep well." 789 643 789 753

In consequence of this belief elaborate precautions were taken to maintain the Kyungu's health. Sexual impurity was believed to be magically dangerous to health in many ways and so the Kyungu, above all men, must be guarded from it. It was not considered safe even for his own wives to cook his food, lest one of them touch it during a menstrual period, and so young boys who had not yet reached puberty 789 643 834

[1] *Vide infra* paragraph 3 (a).

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 cooked it instead. One of the reasons for killing most of his sons, as we
643 have seen, was to lessen the danger of his wives committing adultery
834 with them, for adultery was a magical cause of sickness. His wives themselves were jealously guarded.

643 Then again a Kyungu might not wade across the river lest the act
784 of doing so should magically bring a deluge of rain from heaven, he
821 had always to be carried.

And the breath and the growing parts of a Kyungu's body—his
789 hair and nails and the constantly replaced mucus of his nose—were
643 believed to be magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde
764 plain. When he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was
826 buried "with breath in his body"; while portions of his hair and nails and of his nasal mucus were taken from him beforehand and buried later by the nobles of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This action was believed to "close up the land, to keep it rich and heavy and fertile, as it was when he himself lived in it."

789 Now the Lwembe of Lubaga had equally magical flesh, but the other chiefs of Ngonde and the Nyakyusa had not. They could wade
622 across rivers, fall ill and be wounded without endangering their sub-
826 jects. But of all alike the breath and the hair and nails had a magical importance. Every ruling chief in both areas had his nostrils stopped by his great-commoners when nearing death, while portions of his hair and nails[1] were taken from him when living and buried after his death in a special place. The hair and nails were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops. "You see these nails of yours," said the man who explained the symbolism to us, "if you cut them do they not grow again?" (They do.) "And where does their growth come from? Does it not come from within the body?" (It does.) "Well then that is the reason, the great-commoners take power of growth from the chief in the form of his nails and hair."

789 Besides his magical body the Kyungu had a host of magical
possessions. There was the iron stool *Kiumbi* on which he was set at
782 his accession; once he had sat upon it he could not flee the position or he would die. There was the drum *Mwesekelwa* whose note was believed to be heard by the most distant of the Kyungu's subjects. When it was beaten "all the little nobles from afar off would hear and obey the summons; they would all come together. Then we would tell them that so and so had not brought any ivory for a long time! Then they would come with tusks as tribute, to pay worship to the Kyungu." But sometimes the drum would refuse to sound and they would kill a

[1] We were only told about the nasal mucus in the case of the Kyungu.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

sheep over it; if it still refused they would kill a cow; and if it still refused then they would kill a human being, the child of a commoner. 789 782

Then there was *Malima*, a porous piece of iron "like a mouth organ," which the Kyungu used to make rain. If he held it up out of doors with its holes clear, so that he could see right through them, then it would be fine, but if he stopped up the holes and then held it up out of doors the sky would at once become overcast and rain would fall. And there were his zebra tails set in horn handles, with medicine in the handles, which his people carried to war to give them victory; and his spear *Kamisa*, and so on. 789

There is no sharp distinction in the pagan religion of Ngonde and the Nyakyusa between its magical and its theistic elements. Sometimes the magical, sometimes the theistic predominates, but often they are inextricably mixed. In the prayers and sacrifices to the ancestors magic enters at every turn: particular people, a particular place, particular materials and gestures, particular words are held to be essential to their success. Nor are the more permanent and obvious magical objects always free from divine associations. When we asked, for example, why the drum *Mwanakelwa* had needed occasional human sacrifices to make it work properly we got this answer: "It was because their god[5] had given this drum to the Kyungu saying: 'I alone am war, there is none other war save me.' It (the human sacrifice) was like a prayer. The refusal of *Mwanakelwa* to sound was like the prophetic fit that falls on people (from the spirits) commanding sacrifice (in the groves)." Or, again, it is clear from our evidence that the living Kyungu's power of causing a drought was believed to arise both from his relationship to the spirits and from his possession and use of *Malima* together. His magical body and possessions, being inherited from his predecessors, were part of his relationship to them. 789 771

Now one of the material facts which had magical significance in Ngonde was that of general social status. The magical powers of the Kyungu not only contributed to the general political authority of Mbande but were, in part, magically derived from it. Only the greatest in the land could possess the greatest magic without endangering his life. There were, for example, a number of chiefs' medicines (*fingile*), and if a chief used a medicine which was above his status then it was believed that, on meeting the Kyungu or some great chief, to whose 789 559 643

[5] The phrase "their god" (*Kyala gwabo*) is normally used by pagans nowadays to mean the ancestral spirits, or some one among them. The term *Kyala*, which originally referred only to one of the most influential Nyakyusa spirits, has now been identified either with the Christian God or with divinity in general throughout all this area.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 554 643 status it rightly belonged, he would at once fall down dead. And many stories are still told of such happenings in the past.

And besides this there was the fact that the Kyungu, being the richest man in Ngonde and in the most intimate contact with the ivory traders, could secure medicines from a distance, which had a greater reputation than local ones.

789 771 554 But, as in the theistic aspect of the religion of Ngonde there was considerable local and family autonomy, so also was there in the magical aspect; and here there was individual autonomy also. Lesser rulers had lesser magic than Mbande, but still it was magic. Ordinary chiefs, for instance, had magically filled zebra tails which gave their people military success. And every individual could go to a doctor and exchange a little of his surplus food for magic. Success in love and hunting, in warfare and legal disputes, good crops and good health—all alike, it was believed, magic could give.

(c). *THE ELEMENT OF WITCHCRAFT.*

754 622 624 Both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa it was believed that certain commoners had snakes in their stomachs which gave them the power of witchcraft (*wualosi* or *amangu*[1]) and among those who had this power were the great-commoners of every chiefdom. Normally a ruling chief was spiritually protected by his great-commoners from the malicious attacks of other witches, but, if he did wrong, then the great-commoners, so it was held, would cease to protect him and join in the attack.

Now in many circumstances the great-commoners' power of witchcraft and the power of the chief's dead predecessors were believed to act together. The anger of witches and that of the ancestors were sharply distinguished in theory, but in practice they often coincided. The great-commoners, for example, not only had the power of bewitching their chief but also of appealing to his predecessors to punish him for wrong-doing; and on particular occasions they were often believed to do both at once.[2] And the nobles of Ngonde had similar powers in relation to the Kyungu.[3]

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[1] *Uwalosi* is normally used when the act of witchcraft is disapproved of and *amangu* when it is approved of by the speaker.

[2] A point of considerable theoretical interest is raised by the repeated statements of our best informant on these matters that it was because they were witches that the great-commoners had this power of influencing the chief's ancestors, that they went to the chief's ancestors in their capacity of witches and in the manner of witchcraft (i.e. by means of the snakes in their stomachs). But our evidence on this point is not yet conclusive.

[3] So we were told when we put the question; but it was never volunteered. It was the hold which the nobles of Ngonde had over the Kyungu in consequence of his magical fools which was the more emphasised.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

These twin religious powers of the great-commoners in relation to their chief (or of the nobles of Ngonde in relation to the Kyungu) were important for the balance of the constitution, for they provided a most effective check upon the actions of the chiefs. If a chief kept within the bounds of constitutional usage then any illness that he had would be attributed by the diviners to some such cause, as the infidelity of his wives or the breach of a taboo; but if he broke some constitutional usage then that would be taken to be the cause of his next illness; the great-commoners, it would be held, were angry and so had made him ill. 759 622 624 642

It is hardly necessary to stress the local and individual autonomy implicit in the faith in witchcraft. Not only were the great-commoners as a group believed to have an irresistible power through their witchcraft over their chief, but so were the great-commoner and the leading witches of every village believed to have an irresistible power over other individuals within that village. And in both cases their powers were strictly limited, save exceptionally, by the bounds of chiefdom or village. Moreover witches did not always act as a group, an individual witch might maliciously cause another individual to fall ill. In all this the political hierarchy was irrelevant. But it was not irrelevant in dealing with accusations of malicious witchcraft; there proof rested with the poison ordeal and a journey had to be made to a great chief or a leading noble.

4. *ECONOMIC ELEMENTS (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

We have suggested in the previous section that the traditional religious paramountcy of the Kyungu and his nobles of Ngonde was an important factor of their secular power. But comparison with the Nyakyusa shows us that their control of wealth was equally important. The religious paramountcy furnished a mould into which the stiffening stream of wealth could run and there be minted into the form of sovereignty. Much of the wealth which reached Mbande did not stay there; it was passed back piecemeal to the local rulers of Ngonde, stamped with the divine impress of the Kyungu.

(a) *THE INCOME OF MBANDE AND OTHER AUTHORITIES.*

Now the traditional income of Mbande consisted of ivory, food, labour, slaves and cattle. Of ivory the Kyungu had a semi-monopoly in the plain and received tribute from the territorial nobles in the hills. Food was brought to him by the chiefs and territorial nobles of the plain, who also, with their men, hoed his public gardens (*mulasa*). Slaves and cattle accrued to him from tribal wars and from his offending 643 652

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 652 subjects. The great bulk of this income was employed for public purposes, but no exact line can be drawn between his public and his personal expenditure[1].

643 651 224 "The right tusk of an elephant was called the *royal*, the left the common tusk. All royal tusks were the Kyungu's but common tusks belonged to the hunter who killed the elephant. Whenever a hunter here in the Ngonde plain killed an elephant he would take the royal tusk to his own chief (or noble) who would then tell him to bear it to the lord of the country, and so he would take it to the Kyungu. But in the distant hills the local ruler[2] would keep the royal tusks and so cheat the Kyungu. He might come to visit him from time to time, bringing two or three tusks only; and in that case the Kyungu would not claim the others from him. If, however, the Kyungu had heard that many elephants had been killed in so and so's country, and if no subsequent visit had been made to him, he would get angry and send a messenger, and then the territorial noble would come in haste to visit him. But very many tusks they stole and never brought." Whether the commoner from the plain who brought the ivory to Mbande received a gift from the Kyungu in return we do not know; he was not conducted into the sacred enclosure, and he left the tusk with the nobles of Ngonde. But the distant territorial nobles who brought ivory were royally entertained, and even entered the presence of the Kyungu.

Now the sanction for bringing to Mbande the royal tusks of the plain was a moral one, arising from religious faith. It was believed that any huntsman in the plain who had killed an elephant and kept both tusks, instead of taking the right to his own chief or noble and thence on to Mbande, would never kill another; for the spirits of the dead Kyungus would be angry and frustrate his best efforts. It was believed that this would be so even though the living authorities at Mbande had been successfully hoodwinked; it was impossible to hoodwink the dead.

But in the distant hills the sanction was entirely different. The Kyungu and his ancestors were only local divinities, they were only believed to control the fate of the plain. In the hills what was feared was military force. If Nthalile or Mwanewanya refused to obey a summons to Mbande then the Kyungu would order his *vona*, the chiefs, to go and "burn him out" for insolence[3]. The sanction of force, however, was not the only reason for their acquiescence; it was predis-

[1] No such line can be drawn in England either. We distinguish the King's Civil List from the rest of the budget, but then the sum which His Majesty keeps has a public significance.
[2] i.e. the territorial noble.
[3] Vide infra section 3 (e).

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

able also for distant nobles to bring ivory to Mbande, since they were given in return valuable gifts of cloth which they could not easily get elsewhere. And besides this it is said that "they desired the Kyungu's favour and to have their importance recognised by him." 643 651 224

Of the tusks which were retained by the hunters in the plain a good many were bought up afterwards by the Kyungu or by the chiefs in return for cloths or cattle or slaves.

Food was brought both by the chiefs and the territorial nobles of the plain, either on their own initiative or in answer to a royal command; and sometimes the less distant nobles of the hills brought food also. Mwenemisuku, for example, was called upon for the beans for which his country is still famous to-day. But, as the following quotation shows, not all the food brought reached the personal possession of the Kyungu. 643 651

"In the old days the nobles of Ngonde had most cunning ways, they would send a message to some territorial noble by the lake to say that the Kyungu desired fish and he must bring him some. Whereupon the noble would bring maybe ten or twenty baskets of fish. He would bring it to the nobles of Ngonde, who would then go and inform the Kyungu that so and so had come bringing fish. And the Kyungu would bid them thank him and tell them to give him a hoe. They would do so and the visiting noble would go home. And then the nobles of Ngonde would bring two baskets of fish in to the Kyungu, dividing the remainder among themselves.

"So likewise they would send to Mwenemisuku for beans and to other nobles for maize or millet; and always they would tell Kyungu of these nobles' arrival; but he would never see what they had brought with them! Sometimes the Kyungu might tell them to send one away without any gift, to another he might give something, just as the fancy took him. But always the nobles of Ngonde would keep the bulk of what had been brought for themselves and bring a little of it only into Kyungu's house. When sending thus for food they sent the nalukata who were their messengers."

And the lesser authorities likewise, great chiefs, local chiefs and territorial nobles, took a certain tribute from their own subjects; they could not take the royal tusks, but they could and did take food. Every ruler in Ngonde (and also among the Nyakyusa) had the power of sending at need to any of his subjects and taking some food—bananas, milk, beer and so on. This power was correlated with the view that the local rulers, in relation to their people, were the ultimate owners of the land which their people used. And so also in the relation of the Kyungu with the local rulers, the view that he had given (or allowed them to retain) their land was correlated with the tribute of food.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 The gardens of the Kyungu were divided traditionally into public
652 (*imilesa*) and private ones (*imigunda gya masano*). The produce of the first was mainly devoted to the entertainment of important guests—chiefs, territorial nobles and the ivory traders from over the lake. That of the second to the personal needs of the Kyungu and his household.
643 The public gardens were hoed and weeded by the great chiefs and the
651 nobles of the Ngonde plain with their subordinates and followers, the private ones by the nobles of Ngonde with theirs.

The hoeing of his public gardens by the chiefs and nobles of the plain was as intimately connected with the religious status of the Kyungu as was the bringing of royal tusks to him, for the belief in his rain-making powers provided a moral sanction for it. Drought and disease, as we have seen, were often attributed to the displeasure of the living Kyungu; and the failure of some ruler to bring his people to work the public gardens was, so we were told, the most usual way of displeasing him. The wealth and the divinity of the Kyungu were inextricably linked. Nor without these public gardens could the lucrative ivory trade have been maintained. In the primitive world of Ngonde there were no "purely business relations;" tributaries and buyers alike had to be royally feasted.

643 In the hoeing of the public gardens the political hierarchy of
651 Ngonde was made evident, for each great chief came separately to hoe,
565 accompanied both by the local chiefs of his own house and by those
622 territorial nobles who lived near him. At an appropriate time either the great chief or one of his noble neighbours would suggest going to Mbande to hoe, and the former would then summon all his local chiefs. But he could not summon the nobles; with them it was a polite arrangement between equals. "When they went to hoe for the Kyungu it might be a neighbouring noble and not the great chief at all who made the first suggestion; and then the two of them would go together with their followers. For the nobles are not subjects of the great chiefs but only of the Kyungu."

651 The main crop grown in the public gardens was millet (*amalesi*) for
241 beer. And at some time during the year all the chiefs and nobles[1] who
476 had brought men to hoe[2] them were summoned to taste "the beer of
273 the *amalesa*." So we see that, in one aspect, the hoeing of the public gardens of the Kyungu was but an extension on a large scale of the

[1] It is clear from our notes that each chief and noble brought to this beer-drink some of his people; but it is not clear whether he brought all those who had worked or only the more important among them.

[2] I speak of "hoeing" and "men." It is fairly certain that the women also came to weed afterwards and that they participated in the beer. We omitted, however, to find this out.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

ordinary custom of hoeing parties which is still followed by every chief and commoner in this whole area. Every man, two or three times a year, invites his neighbours to hoe for him and rewards them with a beer-drink in the evening. Where the hoeing of the Kyungu's public gardens differed from this custom was in the religious sanction behind it and in its political organization. 651 241 476 273

After the local chiefs had finished the *mulasa* for the Kyungu they would next return and hoe a small garden for their great chief who had led them to Mbande. But in this the territorial nobles took no part. Such gardens were not called *milasa* and there was no distinction made between them and the great chief's private ones. For this custom also there was a moral sanction; for the great chiefs, we remember, also participated in divinity. "If his people forgot to hoe for Mwakasungula then perhaps a little local epidemic of some kind would break out and the diviners, when questioned, would attribute it to their forgetfulness. Or perhaps a prophetic fit would fall on some one and he would tell them to go and hoe (or they would rue it!)" 651 565

And, still lower in the hierarchy, among a group of chiefs who were half-brothers, the senior chief used sometimes to summon his juniors to bring their men and hoe; but "their acquiescence depended on their friendship for him"; it seems to have had no effective moral sanction.

The private gardens of the Kyungu were traditionally very small indeed, for the constant income of food from the plain made them all but unnecessary. Such as they were, they were worked by the people of Mbande, i.e. the nobles of Ngonde and their followers. The wives of the Kyungu lived like ladies and had all the normal work of a woman, including weeding, done for them. 643 651

The income of the Kyungu in slaves and cattle cannot be understood save in the context of judicial procedure and warfare with which we have not yet dealt[1]. 643 652

The income of Mbande reached others besides the Kyungu and his wives. We have already seen how the nobles of Ngonde took their share of the food which was brought in; and some of it they gave to their messengers, the *nakakata*. Neither the nobles of Ngonde nor the messengers, according to the present Kyungu, used to have any large gardens of their own; they also were maintained at the public expense. And the nobles of Ngonde shared also in the proceeds of the ivory.

With the exception of a pile of tusks upon which the Kyungu slept, most of the ivory which reached Mbande, from the time of Mwangonde 439

[1] Vide infra sections 5 and 6.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

439 until the settlement of the Arabs and Europeans in Ngonde, was exchanged "for cloths and rings" with the *Langwani* (i.e. Arab or half-caste) traders, who regularly crossed the lake from Mwela.

Now the Kyungu of Mbande when compared with their divine-cousins the Lwembes of Lubaga, were fortunate in their geographical position. The conditions which kept them in contact with a market in the early period are beyond our knowledge, we only know the bare fact. But with the opening of the trade route from the east the greater accessibility of Mbande is at once obvious. Mbande is only eight miles from the shores of the lake, Lubaga is forty. Moreover the plain between Lubaga and the lake was occupied in this middle period by Nyakyusa chiefs only distantly related to the Lwembe. Our evidence suggests that, in any case, the traders from Mwela did not reach the north end of the lake in their travels till some time after reaching Ngonde. And it is undoubted that when they did so they traded with the chiefs on the shore one by one and never journeyed inland to Lubaga. To Lubaga the lake shore chiefs sent cows to beg for rain and health, but they sent no ivory; from Lubaga they believed they received their rain and health; but it was from the traders direct that they got the coveted cloth. Ivory was but dry bones without a market, so that the Lwembes had no inducement to claim it.

In Ngonde the Langwani traders bought relatively little ivory from others save the Kyungu; he alone held large stocks and to him they came first. They gave him red, white and dark cloths and rings also in exchange for the tusks, eating and drinking at his expense during their stay.

Some of the cloths and rings were at once given by him to the nobles of Ngonde, on each occasion that the traders came; others were used as clothes by himself and his household; others were stored for future gifts; while still others he exchanged, either for hoes with the men of Mwela and the Kisi, or with his own people for ivory or slaves.

556 Polygyny and a differential bride-price were important sources of
583 wealth for all the rulers of Ngonde. The numbers of cattle given to great-commoners, nobles or chiefs at the marriages of their daughters were greater than the numbers given to ordinary men. This was a matter of prestige. Moreover girls married younger than boys, so that all fathers usually had an interval between receiving cattle at the marriages of their daughters and giving them away again at the marriages of their sons; during this interval the cattle increased and the increment accrued to them. Now chiefs, nobles and great-commoners usually gave away more cattle at the marriages of their sons than did ordinary men; this again was a matter of prestige. But it did not alter the fact that greater numbers of cattle than usual passed through their hands; and

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

so the increment that accrued to them was also greater than usual. And thus they normally had more cattle than ordinary men. 556 583

Some of these extra cattle they expended in marrying more wives of their own, who bore them more children. The girl children later brought in more marriage-cattle, and meanwhile the wives and unmarried children worked in the fields and so enabled the rulers to entertain more often and more lavishly than their less married subjects. And it was by lavish entertainment above all that the prestige of a ruler was maintained.

(b) *THE EXPENDITURE OF MBANDE AND OTHER AUTHORITIES.*

All important guests at Mbande, whether traders or subordinates, were, as we have seen, entertained at the Kyungu's expense. Now the entertainment of guests and subordinates is a quite indispensable function of every primitive political authority; power and prestige cannot possibly be maintained without it. Its importance in primitive constitutions has recently been pointed out by Richards in a paper[1] on the constitution of the Bemba tribe in Northern Rhodesia; and the facts of Ngonde tradition bear out her conclusions. Chiefs and nobles were given food and beer when they visited Mbande and the position of Mbande could not otherwise have been maintained. And the Kyungu, like the Citimukulu of the Bemba, also gave to his subordinates gifts of more permanent value. 652

Cloths were given both to chiefs and nobles. We remember that the very first Kyungu at Mbande is said to "have given headcloths to the indigenous rulers" who, in accepting them, accepted also his overlordship; and from that time onwards the practice continued. Whenever a territorial noble died the nobles of Ngonde came from the Kyungu and formally presented his successor with a dark headcloth, which he then wore turban-fashion as a symbol of his status. And other gifts of cloths were made to them also, from time to time. The nobles of Ngonde likewise were formally presented with dark headcloths on succession and, as we have seen, got gifts of cloth each time the traders came. 652 731

And the custom grew up in the middle period of giving cloths to the chiefs also, the sons of the Kyungu. When the chiefs heard that the Kyungu had been buying cloths they used to come, each alone with one man, and be given some. Our evidence does not make clear whether

[1] Audrey Richards "Tribal Government in Transition." Supplement to *J.R.A.I.* Oct. 1939.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

652 this was done by all chiefs or only by the great chiefs; but it is certain
931 that the great chiefs possessed more of these cloths than their juniors.

652 But perhaps the most important traditional use of cloth by the
931 Kyungu was for funeral gifts.[1] The social significance of funeral
764 ceremonial in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa is hard to exaggerate;[2] for both the economic and the emotional aspects not only of kinship but also of village and political relationships are given formal expression most frequently at funerals. And a gift at a funeral carries greater weight than one on any other occasion.

652 Then, again, chiefs and nobles who brought food to Mbande
931 were often given either a beast or a woman slave in return. "When
567 one of the chiefs had caught a great many fish . . . . . he would
583 gather his men and go to Mbande . . . . . Then the Kyungu would tell one of the nobles of Ngonde to go and fetch a beast or, if no beast were available—and cattle were scarce in the old days—he would give him a woman. And if the chief liked her he would take her in marriage and she would become his lady,[3] but if he did not, then he would take her to his own country and sell her there for a cow." (We expressed some surprise at the rate of exchange.) "Yes, truly, for one cow only, cows were very scarce in those days." And sometimes, in order to make sure he would like her, the visiting chief would be allowed to choose his own girl. "When one of his sons came to visit him the Kyungu would sometimes give orders that he should be shown all the (slave) girls and choose the one he liked best; and so the chief would choose a local girl[4] and marry her. And he could never then sell her, once he had chosen her in love."

Now the gift of a woman slave had many social implications. If she was taken to wife the recipient regarded the Kyungu thereafter as his father-in-law, as well as his "father." She herself became free and her children spoke of the Kyungu as their grandfather. And these gifts did more than any others to strengthen the bonds of kinship between the Kyungu and his subordinate chiefs.

652 To his commoner subjects also, if they had deserved well of him, the
931 Kyungu would ceremonially give either cloths or a woman or a cow; and the great chiefs of Ngonde likewise and even ordinary chiefs and nobles did the same. And these subordinate authorities, as we have seen, also used to entertain their own subjects generously with food

[1] Vide infra section 3.
[2] Cf. Wilson, "Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial," *Bantu Studies*, March 1939.
[3] I use "lady" here to translate "mwale" which is the title of honour used for a chief's wife; the implication is that she then ceased to be a slave.
[4] Slaves were of two kinds, the relatives of criminals and war captives (vide infra sections 3 and 6). It was apparently customary to choose one of the first kind on such occasions.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

and beer; their position depended upon doing so. Up and down the hierarchy the stream of wealth travelled and this stream, in its ebb and flow, was the lifeblood of the old constitution. 652 431

(c) *THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE IVORY TRADE.*

Now it was the scarce and valuable cloths derived from the ivory trade which enabled Mbande to bind the subordinate chiefs and nobles to it in secular matters. Lubaga, lacking this wealth, had no such secular power. But it is very easy to exaggerate the secular power which Mbande had. Personal loyalty to the Kyungu and the great chiefs was enforced throughout Ngonde,[1] the nobles of Ngonde participated in the selection of territorial nobles and great chiefs,[2] tribal war was organized from Mbande,[3] but that was all. In everyday life the sovereignty of the local rulers was scarcely limited. Civil war was endemic in Ngonde,[4] and secular justice had no central organization[5]. 613 439

The central power of Mbande rested on the combination of divine kingship with wealth derived from the ivory-trade. But both in religious and economic matters there was a very high degree of local autonomy. We have already discussed the local autonomy in religion[6] and must now discuss it in the economic sphere.

The economic relations of men in the middle period of Ngonde's history were largely confined to the little local groups of chiefdom and fief. Subsistence agriculture was practised by each family, with the assistance of village neighbours and of a few friends and relatives who normally lived in the same chiefdom or fief. Marriage, with all the exchanges of cattle and food which marriage involved, was usually a local matter also; men only occasionally went beyond the chiefdom or the fief for their wives; while of the few specialised craftmen, such as smiths, a representative was usually to be found in each such local group. Economic links between the local groups existed: men moved from one chiefdom or fief to another leaving relatives behind, some marriages took place across the local boundaries, famous craftmen or doctors attracted clients from far afield. But these links were far fewer in number than those which obtained between the members of each separate local group. 433

And the ivory trade added little to the economic links between the local groups. It involved no tribal organization of elephant hunts, or anything of the kind; it touched the common people only slightly. Commoners and chiefs however did occasionally exchange tusks either 439

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[1] Vide infra 1 (a)
[2] Vide infra 1 (b)
[3] Vide infra 1 (c)
[4] Vide infra 6 (a)
[5] Vide infra 5 (a)
[6] Vide supra 3

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

439 direct with the ivory traders or with the Kyungu, for cloths or cattle or slaves. And groups of chiefdoms and fiefs co-operated in hoeing the millet.

Nor did the ivory trade enter very deeply into the economic relations of [291] the local rulers with their subjects. The common people usually dressed in exiguous pieces of bark cloth or of a coarse cloth which they manufactured themselves from a kind of cotton; the scarce imported cloths, which came through Mbande, were normally used by chiefs and nobles only. They added to the prestige of the chiefs and nobles by linking them visibly with the opulence of Mbande, but did not much increase their own subjects' economic dependence on them. Though here again we must note the occasional exchanges of ivory and other wealth between [652] commoners and chiefs or nobles. The important economic links between local rulers and their subjects were determined, on the one hand, by the differential bride-price, by polygyny and by their power of requisitioning food, and, on the other hand, by their position as chief hosts to their people.

The ivory-trade, in fact, enabled Mbande to bind the local rulers to it in a kind of permanent hierarchical alliance, but neither the constitution of the local groups nor their autonomy in relation to one another was very much affected thereby.

5. *LEGAL ELEMENTS (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

0000 We now come to a third element of the central power of Mbande, the traditional part which it played in the maintenance of law. We will take this topic in two parts: first, the ways in which Mbande maintained its own authority and that of its subordinates, and, second, the part played by Mbande and those lesser authorities in maintaining the common law of Ngonde.

(a). *CONSTITUTIONAL LAW: TREASON ETC.*

687 Treason against the Kyungu was summarily punished with little or 567 no legal argument. The commonest form of treason seems to have been too near an approach to one of his wives. We remember that his wives were very closely guarded from all men, for their adultery might magically bring sickness on him, and if he fell ill then the whole land was magically endangered. One side of the hill Mbande is precipitous, and over this cliff (*Ipongo*) all traitors were thrown, including such as had looked on his wives naked; while many members of the traitors' families were subsequently enslaved.

"If a man had looked on the wives of the Kyungu bathing, he himself would be killed by being thrown over the cliff and all his

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

children and relatives would be apprehended and brought to the Kyungu by the messengers. The Kyungu, or rather the nobles of Ngonde, would select the best-looking girls and let the others go. And then it was all over, any kinsfolk who had fled could return in safety to their homes. For in the old days when a man did wrong there was no legal argument and no trial. All his kinsfolk were terrified and the men fled, but the women, not having the strength to flee far, would be apprehended. The messengers would apprehend not only his full siblings and their children but his half siblings and their children too." Not only girls but boys also were sometimes kept as slaves. One of our informants made it clear, however, that it was always possible for a rich family to redeem them later, both boys and girls, by giving one or two beasts in exchange for each. 687 567

Our enquiries about the statement that "in the old days there was no legal argument and no trial" brought a clear distinction between ordinary cases and cases of treason either against the Kyungu or against the great chiefs: "In cases between two ordinary men, whether commoners or junior chiefs, there was indeed real legal procedure: a chief would take the case, one would pay damages to the other and smooth relationships would be re-established between them. But what we meant was that when a man wronged the Kyungu or one of the great chiefs then there was no sort of legal argument at all!" 687 695

It is not relevant here to enter into any full account of the institution of slavery in Ngonde; but it must be pointed out that it was a very different thing from that introduced by the Arabs in the late 19th century. Few of these early slaves appear to have been sold outside Ngonde, and the Longwani traders carried away white ivory alone. Nor was there any impassable barrier between slave and free. All our informants maintain that slaves were treated rather as younger sons and daughters than as chattels, with the one exception that they could be sold to another man. A woman slave married by a free man herself at once became free, and the children of two married slaves were free also. 567

Another form of treason against the Kyungu, we were told, was to insult him by whispered criticism. The present Kyungu said that in the old days a Kyungu used occasionally to be insulted by one of his sons, the chiefs, and that then, "if the Kyungu was a fierce man," he would send the other chiefs against him and have all his cows and wealth taken and his houses burnt. The way in which the Kyungu might be insulted was this: after the election of a new Kyungu perhaps one of the other chiefs would begin to ask secretly why on earth they had chosen such an unsuitable man for the position, and suggest that he had none of the qualities of a chief; then if the Kyungu heard of 687

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

687 this he might have him punished. The booty of such a punitive expedition was divided up by the nobles of Ngonde; some going to the Kyungu, some to the chiefs who had done the fighting. (We asked who was in fact summoned to do the fighting.) "He would summon Kalonga and Kalambo and Kilupula. . . . ." ("The Chiefs of Ngona would come too, would they?") "Yes, certainly, they would obey the summons, indignant that anyone should insult the Kyungu; they would carry off the offender's cattle and burn his houses." (We asked for a case of such a punitive expedition:) "I have never heard that any particular chief insulted the Kyungu and so had all his cattle driven off. But I have always heard that this was the custom."

And similar action was taken, so it is said, against any chief or noble who had harmed one of the *nalubala*, the personal messengers of the Kyungu.

Moreover the authority of Mbande is said to have been used to maintain the hierarchical subordination among the lesser chiefs. "The ordinary chiefs obeyed their father, the great chief. If any of them showed himself insolent and disobedient to the great chief then the case would go to Mbande and he would be fined a cow. And if he still refused then the Kyungu would summon all the chiefs to burn him out." We asked for cases of such punitive expeditions, but once again none could be quoted. "We've not heard of any particular cases, for the chiefs were generally far too much afraid to be insolent."

In discussing these occasional punitive expeditions we are on the boundary between legal and military (or violent) procedure,[1] and it is of some importance to draw the distinction correctly. The practicability of organizing our modern world for peace depends, in part, upon doing so. Theoretically the distinction is clear, but there will always be particular cases which are at first sight difficult to place certainly on either side of the line. For a punitive action to be legal it is necessary, in the first place, that it fall within an area of established legal order, which meets with no sustained resistance from any social group, and that it be taken by some authority which is there generally recognized as competent;[2] it is necessary, in the second place, that it take a form generally approved by the responsible leaders of the community; and it is necessary, in the third place, that it be directed, not to the destruction, impoverishment or harming of particular persons or groups as such, but solely to the punishment or prevention of particular breaches of

[1] Violence in the more general concept and may be purely individual; violence is usually organized violence.

[2] Such an authority need not necessarily be political; in the old days in Ngonde fathers-in-law were in many situations competent to enforce the laws of marriage on their daughters and sons-in-law.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

the accepted law. In so much as any punitive action falls outside this definition, so far it is military (or violent) in character. 687

Now the punitive expeditions of the other chiefs of the Ngonde plain against one of their number who had insulted the Kyungu or a great chief were, so far as we can tell from this slight and rather dubious evidence, of a truly legal character. At first glance they appear to be military, but further reflection will convince us they were not. The Ngonde plain was not, indeed, an area of well established legal order in all situations of life; local chiefs, as we have already seen, not infrequently went to war with one another and Mbande was powerless to prevent them. Nevertheless, in the constitutional relationship of the local chiefs to the Kyungu legal order was well established. No cases of sustained rebellion against the Kyungu have come down to us in the chronicle of Ngonde, and the evidence suggests that all the other chiefs alike were indignant at any insult to him; for their rain and health, we remember, were believed to be dependent upon his good will. The expeditions, again, were ordered by the Kyungu himself; while once the insolence had been punished, it appears that no further action was taken.

It is, of course, difficult to believe that any great discrimination was shown in the process of punishment, that any careful enquiries were made into the guilt of the various subjects of the chief concerned, or that only the houses of "the guilty" were burned. But this, even if it were proved, would not necessarily divest the punishment of its legal character. We must not be misled by differences between our own conceptions of legal propriety and those of primitive Ngonde. For us careful discrimination between persons is always essential to justice, but in Ngonde this was not so. The children of a commoner who had seen the wives of the Kyungu naked participated in his guilt and might lawfully be enslaved. So too the subjects of a guilty chief may well have been held guilty also and their houses burnt with perfect propriety. We continued, however, to settle this point with certainty.

But what of the punitive expeditions to the hills, which we have noted in the previous section, to enforce the tribute in ivory from the distant territorial nobles? Was this a recognized legal procedure or was it war? Were these distant nobles really included in the area of constitutional order or not? Here our evidence is tentative and one-sided. It is clear that these distant nobles and their people were in many ways less closely attached to Mbande than the chiefs, nobles and people of the plain; but the present authorities at Mbande declare that these nobles "had been given their land by the Kyungu" and that, in general they accepted his overlordship without resistance; it was

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

687 profitable to them and it increased their sense of importance. And Mbande further maintains that the nobles of Ngonde themselves went to their funerals and took part in the selection of their successors.[1] But, as we did not travel to the hills to get their own account, the official account of Mbande must be accepted with caution.

The details of these punitive expeditions, however, were, in all except the occasion, similar to those of a tribal war and will be discussed in that context.

(b) *CONSTITUTIONAL LAW: SUCCESSION.*

643 But the punishment of traitors, insubordinate juniors and tribute-defaulters is only, as it were, the negative side of the maintenance of a constitution. It is also necessary to have some orderly machinery by which the places of authority can be filled. And Mbande derived part of its own authority from its constitutional functions in the appointment of its subordinates.

In the middle period, with which we are dealing, none of the great offices in Ngonde were filled in accordance with purely genealogical right. The Kyungship and the great chiefdoms passed, on the death of their holders, to men constitutionally chosen from the appropriate families; they did not necessarily pass to the holders' own immediate heirs. And so it was also with the fiefs, both in the plain and the hills. In filling the local chiefdoms the strictly genealogical principle was more emphasised in theory but even there it was often in practice modified.

The Kyungu might be taken from any of the great houses of Ngonde which traced their descent either to Mwangunde or Kanyembe, with the one exception of the house of Kalonga. It was usual to take one of the great chiefs themselves, it was essential to take a generous ruling chief. The traditional procedure, which still continues, is as follows: "When a Kyungu dies it is the nobles of Ngonde, those who live near Kyungu, who initiate the discussion of a successor. They confer among themselves and agree that so and so of such and such a house is a suitable man and should be caught as the Kyungu. When they have thus conferred they then call a meeting of all the nobles (of the plain) and discuss the matter again with them. And then, when all are agreed, they go and tell Kalonga and discuss it all over again with him, because he is the senior of all." ("Has Kalonga the power of vetoing their agreed choice, then?" we asked). "Yes, if he considers that the man they suggest is unsuitable he says so and the discussion begins again. So then they catch the chosen man. In the old days they used to go with him to the hill Mbande but nowadays they go to the Government

[1] *Vide infra*, p. 54.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

and say 'This is the new Kyungu.' And when they make obeisance to Kyungu all the rest, both the chiefs and nobles, fall to the ground, but Kalonga alone remains seated, for he is the senior of the whole line." 643

In the succession to the great chiefdoms there was formerly a difference of procedure in the two royal lines, that of Ngelenge and that of Ngana. When a great chief of Ngelenge died, the nobles of Ngonde were sent by the Kyungu, both to the funeral and, later, to assist in the selection of a successor. "With the great chiefs of Ngelenge it is we, the nobles of Ngonde, who have always caught their successors. We catch Kalonga, Mwakasungula Mwambelo, Katumba (or Mwenitete) and Mwandungu.[1] But we have never gone to catch the successors of the lesser chiefs, nor used we to catch the chiefs of Ngana either, for they are of the female line.... When a great chief (of Ngelenge) has died we go and consult secretly with the great-commoners and then, if one of the dead man's immediate heirs is suitable we catch him, but if not we may pass them over and take someone else who is, it maybe, quite junior in that house but who entertains his people generously. Him we hit with a dry stick saying, we have you, you are M—(title of the great chief) now! .... The chosen man we set upon a stool; this is the ancient custom. We always (used to) select mature men for these positions, not just youths[2]." 622 565

"The great titles among the Ngana chiefs" we were told "are five: Mwenengubwe, Mwadongo, Kalambo, Kilupula and Mwabulambo. In the old days the nobles of Ngonde did not go to catch them, because they were only the female line; they would summon their great-commoners to Mbande and enquire who was to succeed and, when they had discussed it with them, tell them to go and catch the selected man to be the new chief. Then the great-commoners would return and discuss it with the other four great chiefs of Ngana, after which they would catch the chosen man." 554

The qualities looked for both in a Kyungu and a great chief were the same, with one exception: he had to be "a ruling chief.... elderly man....one who was respectful in his manner to the leading commoners.....a wise chief who knew how to feed his people." The emphasis on generosity in entertainment is most striking, every informant stresses it above all other qualities. Generosity and the possession of abundance of food were the supreme traditional marks of a chief both in Ngonde, among the Nyakusa and in many other parts of Africa as 643 622 554

[1] The house of Mwandungu was originally a junior branch of that of Katumba.
[2] Informantsdika and Kyukinga. Other informants make it clear that not only the nobles of Ngonde but the territorial nobles of the plain also participate in the selection of these great chiefs.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

693 well. The one additional qualification of a great chief was bravery in
622 war; the Kyungu never fought and so in their case bravery was less
659 important.

515 The succession of the nobles of Ngonde, of the territorial nobles of the plain and of the territorial nobles of the hills was similar to that of the great chiefs: the nobles of Ngonde themselves went and discussed with the leading men of the dead noble which member of his family to appoint in his place; and the immediate heirs were passed over if unsuitable.[1] But in the case of the territorial nobles the successor of the original noble sponsor or protégé of that family also took part in the discussions. It will be remembered that there was an, at least ceremonial, hierarchy among the territorial nobles, depending upon the priority of their arrival in Ngonde and the fact that a later arrival was always introduced at Mbande by some established noble and given land near him. And the relationship then established between the fiefs continued to manifest itself at every subsequent succession.

"Mwenelupembe was a Nyika but then he came here to Ngonde and the Kyungu gave him land by the lake. Then later Mwalugali came from Mwela, and Mwenelupembe told the Kyungu that he had come; whereupon the Kyungu sent the nobles of Ngonde with Mwenelupembe to give him land. And still, when a Mwalugali dies it is Mwenelupembe and the nobles of Ngonde who discuss with his men the choice of a successor. Then, still later, Kasembe came to Mwalugali who told Mwenelupembe, who told the Kyungu. Kasembe came without men; he came from Mwela like Mwalugali but was not a kinsman of his. So the Kyungu said that Kasembe should build with Mwalugali. Then last of all came Songwe with some of his relatives, to Mwalugali. Now Songwe was a kinsman of Kasembe's. Mwalugali told Mwenelupembe who, in his turn, told the Kyungu.——And the Kyungu decided that as Songwe and Kasembe were kinsmen they should be given land together, but a little apart from Mwalugali. And still they are associated, all four, and when one of them dies the other three come to the funeral and together send the message to the Kyungu. And the three of them consult with the nobles of Ngonde about the choice of a successor; they, the nobles of Ngonde and the relatives of the dead noble consult together,

622 The succession to the ordinary local chiefdoms of Ngonde was, like

[1] Later in their conversation it was made clear, however, that, in the case of the more distant territorial nobles, both in the plain to the north and in the hills to the west, it was only to the successors of the most important sons that the nobles of Ngonde went in person. When a lesser noble died then the Kyungu would send to the great chief who was nearest (to Kilupula in the west and to Kalembo in the north), asking him to send men of his own to "catch" the successor.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

that to the independent chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa, tied up with the custom of the "coming out" (*ukwimba*). In both areas the two senior sons of the two great wives of each ruling chief were publicly "brought out" about a generation after the "coming out" of their father; and from that time forwards the old chief went into semi-retirement while they divided his country between them. If it was a big country both of them would very likely be prosperous rulers; if it was not then one of them—the most generous rather than the senior—would probably in time attract the bulk of the people to him, leaving his half-brother little but the name of a chief. 622

Now both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa there was a certain tendency for other sons of an old chief, besides the two senior who were formally "brought out," to collect a few men round them and set up chiefdoms of their own. But it was in Ngonde that this tendency was most marked. And so today the chiefdoms of Ngonde are smaller than those of the Nyakyusa, for they have been far more split up. The reason for this difference appears to have lain in the very great prestige of Mbande, and so of all kinsmen of the Kyungu. There is a saying current in Ngonde: "Every son of the Kyungu is a chief." But no such saying is current among the Nyakyusa. And thus it has happened that often in Ngonde the men of an old chief have been divided up among four or five sons, not among two only; and the most successful of these four or five has not always been one of the two senior. If a junior son was a more generous feaster of men than his seniors he would die a greater chief than they, for many of their followers would leave them and join him. So we see that the formal passing over of a mean or poverty-stricken chief in favour of a richer or more generous junior, in the selection of the great chiefs, was but an extension of a principle which already worked less formally among the little local chiefs themselves. 622 559

And, further, it must be emphasized that the principles of succession to high office in Ngonde and the principles by which property is inherited there were, and still are, wholly distinct. When the immediate heir of a Kyungu or a great chief is passed over in the succession he does not thereby lose his inheritance. The wives and property of the dead man are indisputably his. Full-brothers are the first heirs and after them either sons or half-brothers, in accordance with different circumstances; while a sister's son can only inherit if all near patrilineal kinsmen are either still in their infancy or already dead. 428

The traditional laws of succession to the Kyungship, the great chiefdoms and the fiefs of Ngonde thus present the student with a most interesting balance between different principles: heredity was modified 643 622 559

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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by election; the election was made by the central power and the leaders of the local populations in agreement; mature wisdom, courtesy and generosity in the use of wealth were all essential qualifications for office. In arranging the succession to the local chieftains, on the other hand, the central power of Mbande took no active part. All these chiefs were related to the Kyungu, who was informed of every "coming out" as a matter of form, but that was all. In the case of these local chiefs the hereditary principles were modified only by popular choice, acting gradually over a number of years.

(c) *COMMON LAW.*

682

We must beware of letting our civilized preconceptions blind us to the fact that, though some common law must be maintained in every society, it is not always necessary for it to be maintained by a central political authority. In the primitive world of Ngonde Mbande played little or no direct part in the maintenance of common law; the great chiefs, the local chiefs, the territorial nobles, the great-commoners of the villages played a larger part; but even they usually left whole areas of law untouched to be enforced by the common people among themselves. The laws of marriage for example, seem to have been normally enforced by the two families of each married couple concerned, with the advice and assistance of their neighbours.

In a primitive society a man is far more helplessly dependent upon his relatives, friends and neighbours than he is in our own. He cannot normally escape them, for his world is so small. And this fact enables them often to constrain him effectively without calling in the aid of any constituted political authority whatever. Moreover even when it is necessary to call in the aid of political authorities it is often sufficient to call in those that have a local jurisdiction only. Centralized judicial institutions, covering wide areas, are rare in primitive conditions, because widely extensive social relations are rare also. The modern insistence upon the judicial functions of paramount chiefs in Africa is necessitated by the magnitude and complexity of the modern civilized world, in which law can only be maintained by central authorities; but, in many areas at least, this insistence is something new. That many African paramount chiefs had some judicial functions in former times is, of course, a fact, but these functions were often less extensive than they are to-day.

In Ngonde, however, there was traditionally no central court at all in which ordinary men could either bring cases direct or appeal from the decisions of their local authorities. At Mbande only cases of treason and insubordination against the Kyungu or the great chiefs were dealt

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

with, and they were dealt with summarily. Each noble of Ngonde, of course, decided such cases as the members of his own fief might bring him; but for Ngonde as a whole Mbande was not a court of law; it was a shrine, an opulence, a fount of authority and a terror. 692

Each great chief, however, besides taking ordinary cases among the people of his own chiefdom, also held an appeal court of a kind to which cases could be brought from all the chiefdoms of his house; for the great chiefs alone among the sons of the Kyungu had power to administer the poison-ordeal (*mmafi*); some of the territorial nobles had it also, but not the local chiefs. If any case proved difficult of decision, if either party was not satisfied that justice was being done, then appeal might be made to the *mmafi*. And this brought a great chief something of the prestige of a high-court judge, for he could summon defendants from any chiefdom of his own house. And sometimes, as a guarantee of impartiality in a particularly difficult case, he might send the litigants to to a neighbouring great chief, saying: "Let my brother settle this; otherwise they will say that I showed favour to one or the other and that I influenced the *mmafi*!" Thus Mwakusungula is said to have sent cases occasionally to Kalonga. 692 695

Now the poison-ordeal was not only appealed to in witchcraft-cases, though it is with them that it is particularly associated, for without it they could never be decided at all; cases of any difficulty could be taken to it, whatever their nature. Nevertheless the procedure of the poison-ordeal was in itself a purely religious arbitrament; the legal argument was not reopened. An appeal to the *mmafi* was an appeal beyond secular justice altogether, to something that knew men's innermost thoughts and their most secret actions. It was believed that the *mmafi* could be influenced, but only in religious ways. The impartiality of the great chief was important, for he owned it and his attitude might be magically conveyed into it; and it was also possible for its decision to be deflected by magical preparations; but forensic rhetoric left it wholly unmoved. 695

And no cases were ever taken on appeal to the great chiefs to be reopened in a mundane way. Nor among any group of brother chiefs were cases ever taken on appeal from a junior to a senior. In the elaborate political hierarchy which we have described the element of secular judicial procedure was conspicuously slight. Indeed the men of Ngonde had scarcely any greater judicial facilities than the Nyakyusa, with their independent chiefdoms. 692

A great many cases, as we have pointed out, were decided by the common people among themselves, others were taken to the great-commoners of the separate villages of each chiefdom, others to the

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

692 local chiefs themselves, sitting with their great-commoners, others to the territorial nobles. And this was often sufficient, when the two parties both belonged to the same chiefdom or the same fief. The judgments of these local authorities were effective, in the first place, because (and in so far as) they represented the common legal sense of their groups and the common determination not to allow these groups to be disrupted by illegalities. They were effective, in the second place, because, under the primitive conditions of the old Ngonde, individuals were normally helplessly dependent upon these local groups.

694 When the parties belonged to different chiefdoms or fiefs three kinds of legal procedure, other than the poison-ordeal, were open. It was possible, in the first place, "to institute an enquiry" (*ukulahumya*). The plaintiff went to ask the defendant's own chief (or noble) if he would please look into the matter for him; and sometimes satisfaction was obtained in this way. If it was not obtained then appeal could always be made to the *mwafi*.

And, in the second place, if both parties belonged to chiefdoms whose chiefs were closely related, then and only then the political hierarchy did provide a certain judicial assistance. "If one of the men of a junior chief had a case against one of the men of a senior, then the junior chief would go with some of his men to visit his elder brother. On arrival he would bid him not to be surprised at their coming, and explain that one of his men was a thief—' Is he indeed ? '—' Yes ' —' who is it ? '—'So and so '—' You really mean it, he is a thief ? '— ' Certainly ! Why else have we come ? '—Then the senior chief would summon the man concerned and question him until, maybe, he would admit it. And then the senior chief, would send to take what had been stolen and would return it to his brother's subject."

And, again, if the men of two equally junior brother chiefs had a case against each other, the plaintiff's chief might accompany him when he went to institute an enquiry with the defendant's chief; and then both chiefs together would take the case to their elder brother for decision.

It is not certain to what genealogical distance this procedure was effective; our evidence suggests that it normally only obtained between chiefs who were half-brothers.

And, finally, it was possible to catch a hostage and so compel restitution for wrong done. "In the old days if one man had been wronged by another (of a different country) then he would catch and keep the child of some powerful man who lived in the same country as the wrongdoer. Then the father would send to enquire for what reason his child had been caught and would be told that it was because so and

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

so, one of his neighbours, had wronged and defrauded the apprehender. So the father would visit the wrongdoer and tell him that his own child had been caught because of him; and he would enquire into the case and the wrongdoer would pay what was due. After the payment had been made the child would be returned to its father anointed, with its head shaven and bringing a gift." Now this, it must be emphasised, was not a violent but a truly legal procedure. It seems only to have been taken in clear cases when the debt was not seriously disputable at law, and all that was required was machinery to enforce its payment. It was a procedure generally accepted throughout Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa; the father of the child seems not to have resented it, and, being "a powerful man,"[3] he was able to put pressure on his defaulting neighbour. 694

But these forms of procedure were insufficient to keep the peace in Ngonde. In the Ngonde plain at least, much the same law was common to all the fiefs and chiefdoms, but it was only enforced piecemeal in little local areas, or, beyond them, in occasional clear cases by the enquiry or the hostage method. And so quarrels, either between commoners or chiefs, led not infrequently to violence and war. 692

Now this situation requires to be explained. Why did the Kyungu and his subordinates not develop an effective judicial system on the lines of the religious and economic hierarchy? I am not confident that our evidence supplies a certain answer, but there are two facts which, in combination, go some way towards doing so.

The crucial point is that, as we have already noticed, the conditions of life in Ngonde in the middle period, did not necessitate the development of such a system. Most of life for most men was confined to the little local areas, within which law was effectively maintained. There it had to be maintained somehow, or life would have been impossible. But beyond them men had only occasional relationships. War was endemic in the society of Ngonde but did not threaten to destroy it; and it is only that threat that can compel men to set up new machinery. The warfare of Ngonde was sporadic only while fights were matters of an hour or two and casualties were slight. [724]

Nevertheless there were other areas in primitive Africa in which paramount chiefs and their subordinates did maintain law and order with some success, and in which civil war, though it occurred, was treated as a crime. Why was this not done in Ngonde? For, though centralised justice may not have been necessary, it would have had many obvious advantages. I believe that the answer to this question lies

[3] i.e. a rich man with a certain local prestige and authority.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

692 in the religious seclusion of the Kyungu. No Kyungu ever sat in public to judge his people until Mwakabenga, who reigned from 1894 to 1904. And if the nobles of Ngonde, who acted for the Kyungu in most mundane matters, only exercised judicial authority in matters immediately affecting his personal position, that was, I believe, because nothing more would have been tolerated by the chiefs. I cannot prove this point, for it only occurred to us after leaving Ngonde, but it seems probable that only under the presidency of the Kyungu himself could a central court have maintained itself; for the nobles of Ngonde were not of royal blood. Comparative evidence supports this hypothesis, and the ease with which the present Kyungu maintains his central appeal court to-day makes it still more probable.

6. *WARFARE. (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

(a) *CIVIL WAR.*

579 The endemic civil war of Ngonde appears rather to have resembled a series of rugby football matches without referees than the scientific mass-killing of modern Europe. "In the old days we used frequently to engage in little local fights. But always, when some occasion for war arose we used to send a message beforehand to tell the other side that we meant to fight them the next day at a certain time. And perhaps, if we had mentioned the morning, they would refuse and say they preferred the afternoon, and we would agree." (Was this always done?) "Yes, always; for if ever any group attacked suddenly and unexpectedly then everyone used to mock them for their cowardice and compare them with the Ngoni——for it was by unexpected night attacks that the Ngoni overcame us."

"And how did war start?" we asked. "Maybe a couple of boys would begin fighting, just with their fists, and as they fought another would come and join in to help his friend, then another on the other side, ——until at last yet another would join in with a spear and wound someone. Then the wounded man would be taken home bleeding, and the next day there would be war!" (And what was the point of fighting such a war?) "So that the others should be underneath and we on top. We used to fight from infancy onwards: we began as children by using mushrooms, then we took to reeds and finally, as we grew up, to sharpened stakes and spears." Such warfare seldom or never lasted for more than a single day. Cattle might be captured and houses burnt, but there was no acquisition of territory.

669 It was the territorial aim of the wars between the chiefs of Ngelenge and of Ngana which distinguished them from other civil wars; though

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

even here it was rather position than area that was at stake: "We object to their proximity, let them move further off," said the chiefs of Ngulenge. 661

Civil wars varied in size and importance from little local fights between neighbouring villages, fiefs or chiefdoms to more extensive fights between groups or even whole houses of chiefs. And in every case the political organisation took on, for the time, a military character. Great-commoners led their villagers to war, chiefs their great-commoners; the senior of a group of brother chiefs summoned his juniors to help him, while a great chief summoned all the local chiefs of his house. But only the Kyungu himself could summon the territorial nobles.

Now leadership in war is a factor of political authority; the great chiefs, nobles, chiefs and great-commoners derived part of their status from their military functions. But, on the other hand, it is equally true to say that it was the other factors of their status which enabled them to exercise this military authority.

In every war, for instance, there were religious elements. Chiefs had war medicines and prayed to their ancestors for success; while the loyalty of the great-commoners and people to their chief had both a spiritual and an economic importance. Sometimes, in peace, the leading commoners would dream of war and, if they dreamt of running away, then their chief would hastily kill meat for them. Such dreams were witchcraft and, unless promptly dealt with by a feast, were held to be a certain harbinger of future defeat. [789] [787]

"In civil warfare the Kyungu never took any part at all, he remained impartial at Mbande. His sons fought one another by themselves." (But what of the war, between Ngulenge and Ngusa, did he not help his own sons in any way?) "No, he did not. For both 'the cousins' and 'the sons' alike were his children, he was the father of all."

(b) *TRIBAL WAR.*

The procedure of tribal warfare and that of the occasional punitive expeditions against the Kyungu's subordinates was the same. Messages were sent by the *nsubuta* to all chiefs and nobles of the plain to come to Mbande. There the more important of them entered the Kyungu's house and were given their orders by him personally: "And then, when the Kyungu had told them whom to go and fight, he would finish up by saying 'That is all then, go away now and call down blessings on your arms.' So they would leave his house and gather all together, chiefs and their men, and pray." 721 [802]

The premier noble of Ngonde would begin, reciting all the names of the sacred groves of the Kyungu and asking each one to bless them in their fight. Then after him each great chief in turn would pray in like 726

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

726 succeeded to his own predecessors in his title. The territorial nobles, however, did not then pray to theirs, although they went to fight; tribal war was carried on under royal auspices alone. The Kyungu himself remained behind in his house praying for their success. Some of the nobles of Ngonde went with the expedition, carrying the magic war-tails of the Kyungu, his spear *Kawisa* and a magic horn.

The territorial nobles of the hills, we were told, were not summoned
721 to take part in tribal wars or punitive expeditions. And this fact is perhaps the clearest evidence of the relatively slight hold which Mbande had upon them. Nor, even in the plain, were the Kyungu's orders invariably obeyed without question. It is said that when Mujombe appealed for help against the Bemba chief Kyepele (=Cepela) Kyungu Mwangonde at first ordered the chiefs of Ngana to go alone to the war, without Mwakasungula. For Mwakasungula was his only surviving adult son and he feared to lose him. But the chiefs of Ngana refused to start without Mwakasungula, who in the end went with them.

The same warning that preceded a civil war was given by the men
726 of Ngonde in tribal warfare also. "When the Kyungu sent his people against strangers he always forbade any surprise attacks, let there be parley first and explanation; let them point out that they had no wish for war, that it was the others who had forced war on them by wantonly killing one of their men (or whatever the reason was). We never fought like the Ngoni, always we explained our case first, asking why, if the other side had any just cause for their actions, they had not refrained and come and talked it all over with us. And so it was in the war against Kyepele, we explained our case."

727 We have seen already that the booty of punitive expeditions was
567 divided among the chiefs and nobles who had fought and the Kyungu, and so it was in tribal warfare also. War was an important source of revenue for Mbande, bringing in both cattle and slaves. The war against the Bemba Kyepele (=Cepela) is particularly remembered for the number of slaves which Mwakasungula and the other chiefs brought back from it. While discussing slavery with some men of Ngonde one of us remarked that there had been little or no slavery among the Nyakyusa. "Yes, indeed, that is so: there was a lot of slavery here in Ngonde and very little among the Nyakyusa, because here people were captured in war. From Kyepele, for instance, a great host of slaves was captured and every chief at that time had Bemba slaves.

"And it was the custom for every chief to take a certain proportion of the slaves he had captured and hand them over to the Kyungu." (Why?) "Because they thought that it was his prayers for success that had enabled them to fight so well, to rout the enemy and to capture slaves

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

and wealth." Once again we see how closely connected were the religious powers of the Kyungu with his wealth. 727 567

And the military authority of Mbande, like that of the lesser rulers, was correlated both as cause and as effect with the other factors of its general political status. The central power rested in part on its military functions: it was a tribal rallying point for defence against alien attacks, together with the hierarchy which depended upon it, it provided the necessary large-scale organization for military success, its religious powers were never more valued than in wartime, while victory brought wealth and prestige both to the Kyungu and his subordinates. But, as comparison with the Nyakyusa shows,[1] it was only the flow of wealth up and down the hierarchy, in combination with the religious functions of Mbande, that made this large-scale military organization possible. 721

(c) *WARFARE AND AUTONOMY.*

Now warfare is, at one and the same time, an example of order and of disorder in human society. By social order I mean the systematic overcoming of lesser autonomies within existing wider groups: the overcoming of individual autonomy within the family and the local community, the overcoming of family, local and other autonomies within the tribe or state, the overcoming of tribal and state autonomies within still wider groups. By social disorder I mean the temporary overcoming by a lesser autonomy of the forces of some existing wider group. Legal procedure is one of most obvious examples of order, crime is one of the most obvious examples of disorder.

But warfare falls between these two extremes. Seldom are lesser autonomies so completely overcome as they are within a group at war, never is the autonomy of that group more clearly dominant over the forces making for a wider order. And it is of fundamental importance for the understanding of any social field to see which groups within it have both sufficient unity and sufficient autonomy to engage in recurrent warfare with one another. The size of the groups which go to war is one of the marks by which we distinguish primitive from civilized societies ——the smaller the warring groups the more primitive the society.

Now the recurrent civil wars of Ngonde in the middle period of its history show us that, beneath its hierarchical facade, it was a society of the same kind as that of the Nyakyusa across the Songwe; the centralized political organization was too weak permanently to overcome the local autonomies of village, fief and chiefdom. It is true that the mercantile divinity of Mbande gave sufficient unity to Ngonde to enable it to fight as 721 642

[1] *Vide infra p. 64.*

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

721 642 a whole against the Bembe and the Ngoni, and that the poverty-stricken divinity of Lubaga was unable to do this for the Nyakyusa;[5] but neither of them gave their people any high degree of unity among themselves.

For, while in both cases the hierarchical organization touched the common people in its religious and ceremonial aspects, in neither case did it much affect their everyday actions. In Ngonde, as we have seen, the wealth of the Kyungu, which he derived from the ivory trade, enabled him and his nobles of Ngonde to bind the other chiefs and nobles to him, in a way that the Lwembe and his hereditary priests could not do across the Songwe. But this wealth only touched the common people slightly and did not much alter the economic organization of the local groups. Nor had Ngonde any other common activities save tribal wars, religious rituals, and the hoeing of the *mlasa*.

Horizontal as well as vertical relations must bind social groups together if their autonomy is to be permanently overcome, and in Ngonde, no less than among the Nyakyusa, the horizontal relations between the local groups were weak; while the religious seclusion of the Kyungus weakened the vertical relations also. The constitution of Ngonde consisted of a number of small and primitive local groups, all firmly attached to Mbande, but each one capable of swinging free[6] and of breaking the tenuous horizontal bonds that joined them among themselves.

Now a distinction must be made between these civil wars and the tribal wars with the Bembe and Ngoni. The civil wars point us to the disorder of Ngonde, a disorder which existed in spite of unifying factors; the tribal wars point us to lack of order which was hardly opposed by any unifying factors at all. No doubt there were occasional peaceful contacts between Ngonde and these other tribes, but they were clearly very slight indeed.

7. *POLITICAL CEREMONIAL.*

643 644 In every relationship of life there is some ceremonial expression of feeling. And towards the Kyungus of the middle period their subjects frequently expressed the feelings of worship and terror appropriate to an irascible divinity.

"At Mbande the nobles of Ngonde would sit round praising the Kyungu; the drums went '*kindi! kindi!*' And they would praise him in antiphony: 'O Kyungu!—Great Father! Great Father!—

[5] The Nyakyusa were attacked both by Songo and Ngoni but no tribal alliance was formed to meet these attacks.

[6] In the case of the chieftains this metaphor must be qualified by the intervention of the great chiefs between the local chieftains and Mbande, and the occasional unifying effect of this fact upon whole groups of chieftains.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Bearer of men!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Mpete?—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kipone[1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kyabela?—Great Father! Great Father!—O Striker and Stabber! —Great Father! Great Father!—O Mwenumda?—Great Father! Great Father!—O Mpakombwambo?—Great Father! Great Father! —Dweller in the hot sun!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Fish-eater! O Banana-eater!—Great Father! Great Father!'" The general form of this praise-song was identical with that of the prayers in the sacred groves and so it is literally true to say that the nobles of Ngonde worshipped the living Kyungu. 643 644

But the majority of their subjects only worshipped from afar in fear and trembling. At Mbande no ordinary commoner was ever conducted into the sacred enclosure but only the territorial nobles and the elder chiefs, and they only occasionally; while when the Kyungu travelled through his country all men save the very oldest fled from his approach: "In former times we commoners never looked on the face of the Kyungu, we feared him far too much. When he journeyed through Ngonde we all used to flee from him, men, women and children; only the very oldest stayed to watch him as he came; and they would fall down and clap their hands in grateful worship."

Even in speech fearful circumlocutions were used to refer to his journeying—"The country is on the move"—"The great hill is moving"—"The mystery is coming." While it was taboo both for the old men who then stayed to see him and for those who entered the sacred enclosure, ever to greet him in the usual way. Falling down and clapping the hands was the only greeting for the Kyungu, never the ordinary "how-do-you-do?" From the nobles and great chiefs men did not flee; but the great chiefs, at least, were greeted by falling down and handclapping, not in the ordinary way. [195] [576]

From the wives of the Kyungu also men fled in terror, fearing lest they be compromised and thrown over the cliff, and this both added to the atmosphere of terror which surrounded him and was an expression of it.

On the other hand the various gifts of the Kyungu to his subjects were, in their ceremonial aspect, an expression of personal relationship to them, of paternal interest in them; and so also the tribute which they brought to him was, in its ceremonial aspect, an expression of filial respect. As in all primitive groups personal rather than impersonal relationships were dominant in the old Ngonde. The Kyungu was 643 602 [431]

[1] Names of early Kyungus.
[2] Arabic words which I do not understand.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 F917 Ngonde F917

643 "the father of all." All the chiefs were his kinsmen, many of the nobles
602 were related to him by marriage, most of them were personally acquainted with him; and these facts were fundamental in the old constitution of Ngonde.

602 And so also the great chiefs and their subordinates, and the local
764 rulers and their subjects were united by personal bonds which were given
431 frequent ceremonial expression. At every funeral,[1] in particular, whether of chief, noble or commoner, ceremonial gifts of meat, beer, ordinary food, and other gifts also were made along the lines of the political hierarchy.

764 On the death of a chief, a noble or any commoner who had, during
431 his life, had many personal dealings with Mbande, a hen was sent to the
[765] Kyungu to announce the death, and the Kyungu then returned one of the imported cloths. When other prominent commoners or great-commoners died a hen was sent to the great chief of the area, who also returned an imported cloth. The deaths of ordinary commoners and less prominent great-commoners were announced only to the local ruler (chief or noble) without the gift of a hen, and no cloth was returned.

Similarly when cattle were killed at the funeral of any great-commoner or commoner a special portion of the meat of one beast (the breast and ribs) was always given to the local ruler.[2] In the case of a prominent commoner or great-commoner, however, a similar portion might be given to the great-chief as well. "Such an action was taken on the initiative of the family concerned, the great-chief never claimed it as of right." But if he himself came to the funeral it was normally done. The local rulers themselves, with their wives, attended the funerals of their subjects, and their wives brought food with them, to assist the family in its entertainment of the neighbours. And, finally, at the death of a local ruler or of one of his family, his subjects attended the funeral, bringing gifts of food.[3]

8. *THE CHRONICLE OF NGONDE COMPLETED* (1875-1937)

[769] We have now finished our systematic analysis of the constitution of Ngonde as it was before the coming of the Europeans. We have had to rely largely on oral tradition and that by itself is always in some degree suspect. Nevertheless the richness and coherence of what is remembered to-day, together with the observable continuity of modern institutions

[1] This account excludes the funeral of the Kyungu, which was recently carried out by the nobles of Ngonde.
[2] This was certainly so in the childhood, evidence for the fact is here lacking.
[3] Vide Wilson "Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial."

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-:938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

enables us to accept it as broadly accurate. But from 1875 onwards the written records[7] begin to supplement the oral tradition.

A little before 1875 Mwalonge, another chief of Ngoni, had 175
succeeded Gwa Sapani as the Kyungu; and in that year the Europeans
first reached Ngonde. But about the same time Arab slave and ivory M
traders established themselves there also and for the next twenty years
disputed its possession with the Europeans.

In 1875 Dr. Laws and his party made a voyage of exploration in the
"Dido" round the lake and visited Ngonde; and within the next six years [777]
both a Free Church of Scotland mission station and a post of the African
Lakes Corporation were set up there. The site they selected was on the
lake shore in Kalonge's district and so became known by his name.[8] But
the Arab traders were in Ngonde too. The Arabs sometimes traded
with the people of Ngonde, sometimes fought them, while the African
Lakes Corporation Agent tried to combine a lucrative trade with the
Arabs and the protection of the people against them.

During the course of a fight with the Arabs Kyungu Mwalonge was
killed and Mwabulambo, yet another chief of Ngoni, was taken in his
place. The nobles of Ngonde at first wanted to take Malema, a chief of
Ngulonge, but he fled from them; "they asked the Arab Mloni to lend
them men to look for him, but he hid in a tree and escaped them. So
they took Mwabulambo."

It was fourteen years after the arrival of Dr. Laws before the British
made any move to take over Ngonde; and in the interval Monteith
Fotheringham, the African Lakes Agent, only just succeeded in main-
taining himself against the Arabs, owing to the help of Captain F. D.
(now Lord) Lugard. But in 1889 H. H. (afterwards Sir Harry) Johnston
arrived and made treaties both with the chiefs and the Arabs in Ngonde,
and from then until 1896 the country formed part of the "sphere of
influence" of the British South Africa Company. In 1893 Mloni, the
leading Arab, openly refused to accept the new state of affairs and was
hanged. And in the next year Ngonde was incorporated in the British
Protectorate of Central Africa (afterwards renamed Nyasaland).

About this time—the present Kyungu says it was in 1894—the 175
nobles of Ngonde deposed Kyungu Mwabulambo and made Mwakabe-

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[7] Laws and Mwaniaka of Africa. Elmo. 1879.
Adventures in Nyasaland. L. M. Fotheringham. 1891.
The Rise of our East African Empire. F. D. Lugard. 1893.
British Central Africa. H. H. Johnston. 1897.
Fighting the Slave Hunters in Central Africa. A. J. Swann. 1910.
Laws of Livingstonia. W. P. Livingstone. 1921.
After Livingstone. F. L. M. Moir. 1923. Etc.

[8] Spell "Kalonge," the Kyangonde "l" being voiceless.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

175 nga, one of the chiefs of Ngwenge, Kyungu in his stead. "They deposed Mwabulambo because, as they said, the country was once more at peace and so they should take a son of Mwakasungula again as the Kyungu." Mwakabanga was at first installed on the lake shore, but after the death of Mlozi he moved to the traditional capital at the foot of Mbande.

175 177 The demarcation of the interterritorial boundary between Nyasaland and German East Africa (afterwards Tanganyika) cut across the area of Mbande's influence. The majority of the Lambya were separated by the boundary from their chiefs Nyondo and Kanema, while the Ndali who had, so it is said, previously sent regular tribute of ivory to Mbande, now became quite independent. And some of the more remote territorial nobles to the west were included in Northern Rhodesia.

One of the first acts of the new Government was to forbid the hunting of elephants without a license and thus at a blow the main traditional source of the Kyungu's revenue came to an end. Since then the numbers of elephants have been greatly reduced by European hunters, and only a few are left in the Ngonde of to-day. Taxes soon began to be collected, however, and small subsidies to be paid from them to selected chiefs and nobles.

175 179 Now Kyungu Mwakabanga, who died in 1904, after a reign of ten years, "was the first Kyungu to sit with his people judging their cases; he appeared before them at his own homestead. None of his predecessors had done so, only the nobles of Ngonde had seen them." During his [202] reign the Government suppressed the mahakata, on the ground that their methods were too rough, and gave him government-paid messengers instead. And it also forbade the poison-ordeal.

After Mwakabanga's death the nobles of Ngonde chose Mwangulabo, a son of Maisma, to succeed; and early in his reign there were other significant changes of custom. From his predecessors, as we have seen, when they journeyed through their country, all commoners save the very old had fled. The Kyungu was too terrible for ordinary men to look upon. "Not till the succession of Mwangulabo was this custom abandoned." And in the third year of his reign the custom of hoeing millet lapsed, not to be revived till 1927.

Now, as it happened, Mwangulabo had a younger brother, Peter, who was a man of exceptional talents. Starting as a Christian teacher he then became a store capitao of the African Lakes Corporation and of various other firms, and later set up in business for himself with a chain of shops and made a fortune. And when Mwangulabo began to fail in 1912 Peter became his assistant and proved himself to have legal and administrative ability also. A failing Kyungu could not, as in former times, be killed and Mwangulabo lingered on until 1932. In 1927 it became necessary

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

to appoint a regent and, with the consent of the nobles of Ngonde and of Mwangalaba himself, Peter was appointed; and in 1932 he succeeded his brother as the Kyungu. He is still the Kyungu to-day. Both before and after his succession he has used his private fortune without stint to maintain his public position; and the historical accident of his personal ability and wealth has played a very large part in shaping the course of the political and social revolution through which Ngonde is passing. 175 173

It is Peter who has completed the emergence of the Kyungu from their religious seclusion at Mbande. He has, in the first place, abandoned all claims to divinity and, with them, all interest in the traditional prayers and sacrifices to his ancestors which the nobles of Ngonde still occasionally undertake. And in the second place, he has built his capital, not at Mbande with the nobles of Ngonde, but at Swibe, half way between Mbande and the Government Boma at Karonga—a position symbolic of the new age.

The Government of the Protectorate at first applied a system of direct rule. In Ngonde most of the chiefs and ruling nobles were designated either as "Village" or as "Principal Headmen" and officially allowed to exercise executive duties. It appears that traditional rulers only were selected, though, theoretically, anyone at all might have been. The "Principal Headmen" included the Kyungu, but he was not recognized as paramount over the others. "In 1924 certain modifications were made in their position, but it was officially stated 'that the new system is no way intended to revivify or perpetuate governance by Native chiefs.' Under the 1924 system 'Village' and 'Principal Headmen' still had executive duties on behalf of Government, but no authority to administer their people in their own right."[1] With the appointed headmen councils were associated consisting of "members nominated and removable by the Government," and a similar district council was set up "to advise the District Resident in such matters as may come before him." 175 178 142

But in 1933 the system was changed to one of "Indirect Rule" or "Local Self-Government," by which the traditional political institutions of Ngonde were taken as the basis of administration. The Kyungu was now recognized as "Paramount Chief,"[2] with an appeal court and with five "Sub-chiefs"[3] under him. Of these five Kilupula was one of the

[1] The quotations in this paragraph are taken from L. P. Mair's *Native Policies in Africa* pages 114-116.

[2] In order to avoid confusion between traditional and modern titles I shall, from now on, use the former without quotation marks, the latter with them.

[3] These five had all been "Principal Headmen" under the previous ordinance. Since any chief Kilupula, the senior great chief of Ngolenge, has also been made a "Sub-chief."

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

175 great chiefs of Ngana, three others (Mwenemisuku, Mwenewenya, and
178 Nthalile) were distant territorial nobles who ruled groups of alien stock
in the hills, while the last, Nyondo, who was, we remember, traditionally
642 related to the Kyungu, ruled the Lambya group in the extreme north
west. The nobles of Ngonde, together with twelve prominent territorial nobles and six other assessors, were recognized as members of the Kyungu's court and given nominal salaries. Those of the great chiefs of Ngonde who were not made "Sub-chiefs" in the new regime were now officially termed "Important Headmen," and given nominal salaries also. The other chiefs and those territorial nobles who had men of their own under them were still termed "Village Headmen" as they were before 1933.

The Kyungu and the five "Sub-chiefs" each had an area allotted to him, and each was given a court for his area. "Village" and "Important Headmen" might arbitrate in small cases, but had no power to execute judgments; that power belonged to the courts alone. Thus the Ngonde plain was split up into the two areas of the Kyungu (in the south) and of Kilupula (in the north). The Kyungu's court was both a court of first instance for his own area and also a court of appeal for the whole of Ngonde.

The modern title "Village Headman," seems at first to be a particularly confusing one since its bearer rules, not a village, but either a chiefdom or a fief which is itself sub-divided into age-villages. Further in the case of chiefdoms, unless they are very small, each age-village has its own great-commoner; and it is he who is the traditional village headman. But the confusion seems more natural when we realize the number of very small chiefdoms and fiefs which have now come into being by the continual sub-division of the former and the gradual shrinkage of the latter. There are some ruling chiefs and nobles to-day, still recognized as such, who have only half-a-dozen adult male tax payers under them. And it takes a pedantic anthropologist to see in such a group *two* age-villages! It is true that one does find the two or three old men in it still building a little apart from the three or four young ones, but most likely they are now all Christians and no longer observe the father-daughter-in-law taboos; for all practical purposes they constitute but one village-group. In the larger chiefdoms, however, the traditional articulation into age-villages each under its own great-commoner, still survives as a living fact.

175 Like the Nyakyusa, but unlike many other Central African peoples,
178 the people of Ngonde have a fairly easy adjustment to make to modern
economic conditions. It is true that a large proportion of the able-bodied men, estimated by the District Commissioner in 1937 to be 25%, are now

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

always away, but the great majority of these go to the nearby Lupa Gold Fields in Tanganyika and return home regularly after short periods of three or four months at work there. Nor are they by any means solely dependent upon the sale of their labour for the money which is now necessary to them. Cotton and a certain amount of coffee, rice, beans, maize and beeswax are now being produced in Ngonde for sale to the outside world. Of cotton, the most important economic crop of this district, ninety tons were exported in 1936 and brought in, for distribution among the thousand men who had planted it, about a thousand pounds.

The question of the ultimate title to the land of Ngonde at various times since the coming of the Europeans has been the subject of dispute; but in actual fact only a little was ever alienated to European firms or individuals. These alienations were followed, in some cases, by a shifting of the African population off the land taken up, but not on any large scale. And since 1933 Native rights have been secured by law. There are now only three or four small estates occupied by Europeans in Ngonde.

In the constitutional sphere, again, a Native treasury has been set up into which one twelfth of the tax money is paid; but as this money is almost entirely used up in personal emoluments, the new treasury has so far little significance.

The whole scale and perspective of life is now changed. Ngonde is no longer a world in itself but a tiny province in a great empire. The Kyungu is no longer either a god or a sovereign, but a little secular chief visibly supported and controlled by the Nyasaland Government. Nearly half his people profess Christianity. A quarter of his young men are always outside Ngonde working for wages. Mission education in local schools and at the neighbouring central station of Livingstonia, opens to increasing numbers each year the knowledge of a vast new world. The primitive Ngonde was a world of personal relationships; only rarely were people much affected by the behaviour of any save their personal acquaintances. But to-day impersonal relationships are all-important in Ngonde; world markets, imperial policies and world history in general largely determine the behaviour of its people.

9. *THE PRESENT CONSTITUTION OF NGONDE.*

(a) *CHANGE AND CONTINUITY.*

The constitution of Ngonde in the middle period of its history consisted of a mercantile divinity superimposed on a number of relatively autonomous local groups. The central power was mainly determined by the two factors of divine kingship and the ivory trade: the local autonomy was mainly determined by the absence of any large number of

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

642 permanent social relationships beyond the local groups of chiefdom and fief, and by the religious seclusion of the Kyungus. Now every one of these factors has today ceased to operate. And it is worth dwelling on this, for it follows that the constitution of the middle period has ceased to exist and something radically different has been developed in its place. Divine kingship and the ivory trade are dead, a host of complex and permanent relationships now covers Ngonde and links it to the outside world, the Kyungu rules his people in person, under Government. And the continuity which is aimed at by a policy of "indirect rule" is thus only possible in Ngonde to a very limited extent.

On the other hand, as some continuity is inevitable even through the most radical political change, so an acceptance by the Government of that inevitability is itself a factor of political order. It is far easier to rule Ngonde to-day through the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde than it would be, say, through a committee of commoners chosen for their personal ability; for the successors of the traditional rulers still have a status in Ngonde which is continuous, though not identical with that of the past.

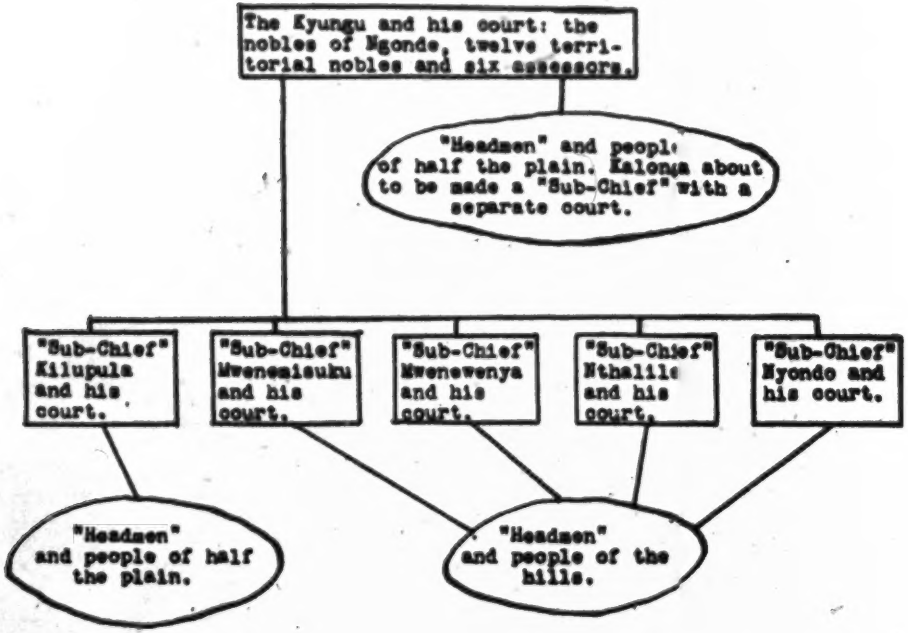
178 Christianity has gained a great hold on Ngonde,[1] and has helped to
771 undermine the old pagan faith even among those who do not profess it.
797 And the whole hierarchically organized system of pagan ritual is almost dead. A few days after our arrival in Ngonde, in July 1937, the nobles of Ngonde organized the clearing out of the ashes, for a special purpose. A bad plague of rats had appeared in the country and an old woman had announced prophetically that it was due to the anger of the spirits. Mulwa did all the organizing, for, as he said to us: "The present Kyungu renounced all interest in these things years ago and told me to manage without him. So I went and told Kalonga and Mwakasungula and Mwenengubwe, who is the senior of the chiefs of Ngana; it is their business to tell their juniors." But of the hundred odd chiefs and nobles in the Ngonde plain only four chiefs and a few nobles responded to the summons to put out their old fires and to bring the ashes to Kyimbwe. How many commoners put out their fires I do not know, for we did not hear of the ritual until it was over. Even this, however, was an exceptional occasion and the regular yearly performance of the ritual has ceased. Neither is the old first-fruit ritual any longer performed.

The Scots Mission in Ngonde concentrated from the first on the conversion and education of the sons of leading men, so that now many of the rulers themselves are either Christians or ex-Christians. The present Kyungu was, as we have seen, a Christian, and, though he has

[1] 45% of the population profess Christianity.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

THE CONSTITUTION OF NGONDE IN 1937



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6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 now abandoned his Christianity and taken a number of wives, he appears
771 to be wholly sceptical of pagan beliefs. "It is I who have killed the
custom of praying in the sacred groves," he told us, "for my brother,
797 Mwangalaba, used to give the nobles of Ngonde cattle for sacrifice; but I
have never once given them a beast, nor do I give them hens, nor beer,
nor flour." He subsequently admitted, however, that he did sometimes give them "a few pence" to buy a hen for sacrifice. Many of the old magical taboos he certainly no longer observes and we have no evidence that he observes any; while the magical possessions of his predecessors are mostly lost.

That the old beliefs survive in the minds of many men in Ngonde, both pagan and Christian, we have certain evidence; but upon those beliefs little public action is now taken. The profession of Christianity is normal among the younger people, and their attitude to the ritual which occurred during our visit was one of amusement. And even the belief in witchcraft, which has proved in many parts of Africa to be most persistent, is beginning in Ngonde to be publicly called in question by some of the pagans themselves.[1]

178 The present Native rulers of Ngonde are thus no longer generally
771 believed to control the destinies of their people; rain, health and fertility
are no longer in their gift. And this brings radical changes into all political relationships. It is by their secular functions alone that the present Native rulers stand or fall. The hoeing of the public gardens of the Kyungu by his people, for instance, was largely kept up in former times because of his rain-making powers; he gave them rain, they gave him service. But, if he is now still able to claim this service from them, it is because he gives them other things than rain.[2]

178 Then again the decline of the old beliefs inevitably alters the balance
642 of power between the different political authorities. The Kyungu is no
longer a magical object carefully secluded and controlled by the nobles of
771 Ngonde; and so he now rules his people in person. It is he himself who
now takes all the major decisions, within the sphere of responsibility allowed him by the Government. The nobles of Ngonde are reduced to a merely advisory status. While the decline of the old theistic and witchcraft beliefs brings a similar change into the relations of every chief with his great-commoners. Many chiefs in Ngonde still fear that they will fall ill if they offend their great-commoners, but some do not,[3] and it

[1] The same cannot be said of the Nyakyusa, among whom, for various reasons, the missions have made far fewer converts in proportion to the total population. Among the Nyakyusa the old rituals and beliefs are still very much alive.

[2] *Vide infra* p. 80

[3] One of the chiefs, for example, is an ordained minister of the Church of Central Africa (Presbyterian).

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

is generally admitted that all chiefs are less affected by this fear than they used to be. The secularization of the constitution tends, in this connection, to make it more autocratic.

On the economic side it is difficult to exaggerate the change in the relative wealth of rulers and people. The change is temporarily obscured by the historical accident of the present Kyungu's personal fortune, but this, when he dies, will go to this own heir, not to his successor in the Kyunguship. The Kyungu's total official salary in 1937 was £72 a year and those of the "Sub-chiefs" varied from about £4 10s. to £12 a year. The nobles of Ngonde all received either 10s. or 15s. a year, with the exception of Mulwa who received 30s. These salaries, which are paid out of the Native Treasurery, are the modern substitute for the profits of the ivory-trade, which the Kyungu shared with his subordinates, together with the regular tribute of food and the proceeds of tribal warfare and of punitive expeditions, all of which sources of income have now dried up. And these salaries do not make possible the giving of any valuable gifts to subordinates and subjects. The local rulers also receive slight financial subsidies from the Native Treasury. Each "Village Headman" is allowed to retain 3d. from the tax of every adult male subject of his own and the "Important Headmen" (great chiefs) receive in addition subsidies ranging from 5s. to 40s. a year. This custom has replaced that of the requisitioning of food; but, owing to the smallness of all the present chiefdoms and fiefs of the plain, few "Village Headmen" receive more than £1 a year from this source.[1]

It is open to commoners, on the other hand, to become as rich or richer than most of their rulers. The head clerk in the Boma in 1937 received £52 a year, and there were fifty-three other Government employees who all received £12 or over; Native Christian Ministers and Evangelists all received many times the salary of Mulwa while young men often returned from the Lupa gold-fields with savings of several pounds.

The decline of polygyny in Ngonde again reduces the relative wealth of the subordinate chiefs and nobles in comparison with their people. Women are increasingly reluctant, for various reasons, to be married by polygynists, and the old style of entertainment is changing. Few chiefs and nobles, save the present Kyungu himself, now have sufficient wives and unmarried children to be able to entertain on a large scale. In the case of ordinary chiefs and territorial nobles (the "Village Headmen" of to-day) this poverty is not in itself very significant, for with the dwindling

[1] The average receipts of the one hundred and twenty-four "Village Headmen" in the Ngonde plain were almost exactly 10/- per annum in 1936. They had, that is, an average of forty tax-payers each.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 in size of the groups they rule, they have fewer subjects to entertain.
565 But the " Sub-chiefs " and the " Important Headmen " cannot cease to entertain largely without losing much of their pre-eminent status.

178 The outlawing by Government of civil and tribal war, combined with the new economic and religious conditions, has enormously extended
692 the normal range of social relationships among the people of Ngonde; and a centralized judicial system has necessarily been developed to deal with the new situation. The old forms of local autonomy have ceased.

178 The continuity which is observable between the present constitution of Ngonde and that of the middle period is mainly determined by three
642 factors. In the first place the Government of the Protectorate deliberately supports in positions of high authority the legitimate successors of some of the old rulers. In the second place the judicial functions of those successors, which have been greatly extended, have replaced, to some extent, the old religious and military functions. And, in the third place, the present Kyungu is, as it happens, a rich man. A decentralized mercantile divinity has been transformed into a centralized Native Authority with some continuity of personnel, with the substitution of new functions for old and with the assistance of a private fortune.

(b) *FROM GOD TO MAGISTRATE.*

178 The first two of these factors of continuity—Government support
692 and the increase of judicial functions—must be discussed together, for it is mainly because of their utility as subordinate magistrates that the Government supports the Native rulers of Ngonde.

Modern conditions, in the sphere of law, bring about two great changes. Firstly the integration of the one-time primitive society of Ngonde with the civilized world greatly increases the range of social relationships among its people, and so renders ineffective much of the traditional legal machinery. And, secondly, the introduction of Christianity, of political control by the British and of European economic enterprise inevitably changes the content of the law. Granted the general conditions of contact between Africans and Europeans in Central Africa a transformation of all its traditional legal systems is seen to be an inescapable necessity.

Common law must now be maintained by a hierarchy of legal authorities reaching far beyond the boundaries of Ngonde, if it is to be maintained among its people at all. As I write these words in Livingstone, a thousand miles by road from Mbande, there is a man of Ngonde working in a shop within a hundred yards of my office. While in Ngonde itself it is no longer true that a man's friends and neighbours, or even his immediate rulers, can ever be sure of constraining him effectively if he

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

breaks a law; they must be able, if necessary, to call in the aid of some central authority or he will escape them. Many men today, for instance, take wives whose homes are fifty miles or more from their own; and such marriages cannot possibly be regulated by the old primitive procedures. Moreover the rapid and radical changes in the content of law which are necessitated by modern conditions could not be worked out in detail by a number of independent courts without much confusion. And so in the Ngonde of to-day common law is maintained both by a centralized police system and by two central appeal courts, a lower one presided over by the Kyungu, a higher one by the District Commissioner.

178 692 [625]

A dispute which took place in 1935 well illustrates both the novelty of a central appeal court in Ngonde and the support which the Kyungu now receives from the Administration. And it also shows that the old rivalry between the lines of Ngelenge and Ngana still survives.

178 643 692

The Kyungu in his new judicial capacity decided a land-dispute between two local chiefs of the house of "Sub-chief" Kilupula, who is now the most powerful, though not the senior, of the chiefs of Ngana. The Kyungu's decision reversed that of Kilupula, who then became angry. The chief who lost the case is reported to have said: "How dare the Kyungu come here and divide up our land among us? He knows nothing about it." And Kilupula is reported to have taken much the same view; the new judicial functions of the Kyungu were resented by him. And Mwafongo, another great chief of Ngana, sympathised with his resentment.

Then Kilupula and Mwafongo between them wrote a letter addressed to the Provincial Commissioner complaining of the Kyungu's conduct of this case. The District Commissioner, who received it first, called them in and advised them to burn it, but they insisted that it should be forwarded. But before this was done the Governor of Nayasaland arrived in Ngonde on tour and the two chiefs then asked that the letter should be handed to him. And so it was. Whereupon the Governor publicly reprimanded them for writing the letter and asked the Kyungu, before all the people, to decide how he would punish them, by fine or imprisonment. And the Kyungu fined them each £5.

No more striking expression could have been given of the Kyungu's present position as a trusted servant of the Government than this incident. While the fact that the dispute arose out of his new judicial-functions and that it was two chiefs of Ngana who stood against him is most illuminating. The Kyungu has exchanged the support of his ancestors for that of the Nyasaland Government, his divinity for a magisterial office. This change, on the whole, has been made easily enough, but a certain temporary friction was inevitable. The chiefs of Ngana are the tradi-

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 tional rivals of those of Ngelenge ; most of the traditional reasons which
643 led them to accept the supremacy of a Kyungu of the house of Ngelenge,
692 whenever one was elected, have now ceased to influence them ; while they themselves, as we shall see in a moment, are now barred from the succession. Moreover the Kyungu's supremacy is now mainly operative in the unaccustomed sphere of law. And so a new reason for admitting that supremacy has had to be more forcibly presented to them than to the other rulers of Ngonde.

Once forcibly presented, however, the new reason seems to have been admitted in place of the old ones without much difficulty. For in 1936, the next year, Kilupula spontaneously led his people to the Kyungu and formally handed over a cow to him, thereby re-establishing friendship and mutual respect between the two of them. The dispute has ended in a manifest harmony.[1]

It is relevant to mention here that in the first five months of 1937 only one case was taken on appeal from the Kyungu's court to that of the District Commissioner.

The general status both of the great chiefs and of the local chiefs
178 and nobles (the " Important " and " Village Headmen,") as also of the
565 great-commoners, has been radically altered by the new legal conditions.
622 Formerly these authorities were the mainstay of a primitive justice, but
624 to-day they could not possibly enforce any legal decisions without the
692 backing of the central Government. And this backing they do not have. Their sphere of influence is so small[2] that it has not been thought worth while to give them any formal judicial authority ; they are now mere arbitrators and all important cases go to court.

178 The modern constitution of Ngonde is thus more centralized than
692 the old. The support of the Government is given to, and effective judicial power is concentrated in the hands of half a dozen men, with their own advisers. The new judicial functions of the Kyungu and the selected " Sub-chiefs " have, in fact, been transferred to them from the local rulers. Some such centralization was inevitable under modern conditions but the details are dependent upon the decisions of the Government.

(c) *PETER THE FORTUNATE.*

643 The wealth of the present Kyungu is not only due to his great personal abilities. For twenty years before his appointment as Regent (when he himself became the Kyungu in all but name) he was the full-

[1] This phrase begs no questions about private feelings, upon which we have no evidence.

[2] This is less true of the great chiefs (the " Important Headmen ") than of the rest ; and possibly an understanding of their status will alter the attitude of the Administration to them.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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brother of the reigning Kyungu, and this fact was half his opportunity. It was a tradition in Ngonde that Mbande was a centre of trade as well as of government, and so when Peter went into trade he had a great advantage over all his rivals. He tells with great gusto the story of how, in 1911 when the price of cotton[1] was high, two firms competed for the crop of the Ngonde plain—and the firm which employed him to buy it secured it all. For as soon as the people heard that the Kyungu's brother was buying cotton they all came to him to sell. And throughout his business career the same factor has operated.

From 1899 to 1912 Peter was a employee of European trading firms, from 1913 to 1918 he worked in partnership with them and from 1919 onwards he worked on his own. Now from 1914 to 1923 trade boomed and this fact was the other half of his opportunity. In 1913 his own capital was about £50, in 1923 it was well over £1,000, and he had four shops of his own.

After the war he employed men to hoe cotton for him also; and here he was greatly assisted by shrewd advice from European friends who watched the market. In 1920 the price of cotton suddenly dropped and he gained nothing, but he was advised to persevere and did so; and in the next two years he made a profit of £120. But in 1923 when the price of cotton dropped again he advisedly planted none.[2]

Now from 1923 onwards the pressure of his administrative duties began to drive him out of business and from 1924 he kept one shop only open. His savings he turned either into cattle or into burnt-brick houses for his wives and so passed safely through the world-wide slump. In 1937 he still had a herd of cattle worth about £400 and six brick houses, whose total cost was £155, together with a small stock of cloth in his one remaining shop. Figures have a purely relative significance, and these figures in Ngonde represent great wealth.[3]

The effect of this private fortune on the present constitution of Ngonde is very great indeed, for it enables the Kyungu to maintain a state comparable to that of his predecessors. Had he only his official salary to rely upon he could not do this and his authority and prestige in Ngonde would be less than they are. His successor and his heir will not be the same man; and it follows inescapably that, if the present rate of salary remains substantially unchanged and if other factors remain equal too, then his successor's authority and prestige will be less than his. [556]

[1] Native cotton planting was early encouraged in Ngonde.

[2] Soon afterwards a boll-weevil scare caused cotton-planting to be suspended in Ngonde for many years.

[3] Very few chiefs or commoners in Ngonde have more than £20 worth of stock in their herds. There are c. 30,000 cattle in Ngonde, which gives an average of c. 3 head per adult male, and 3 head are worth about £4.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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The present Kyungu has gardens hoed for him like his predecessors, and these gardens are still called *milasa* ; but the subtraction of the religious element from this custom has radically altered both its form and its significance. Of old the *milasa* were hoed by the great chiefs and their people because they wanted rain, to-day they go on hoeing them because the Kyungu gives them cattle ; of old they came of themselves fearing drought, to-day they come because he summons them ; of old the produce of the *milasa* was mostly used for the entertainment of guests from a distance, to-day the produce is mostly turned into cash and used in other ways for the maintenance of the Kyungu's position in his own immediate district. But still, as of old, the custom brings him honour.

The late Kyungu, Mwangalaba, is said to have refused to accept this traditional service in the third year of his reign (1907), and certainly for twenty years afterwards no *milasa* were hoed. Mwangalaba is said to have been a timid man, but it is also possible that he was forced to realize that the mere hope of rain would not be sufficient to maintain the custom much longer in the new economic and religious conditions ; he may have preferred to refuse his people's services rather than see them gradually refused to him. For he had nothing but the hope of rain to offer them ; he was a poor man ; he had neither the ivory of his predecessors nor the private fortune of his successor.

But in 1927 when Peter became Regent, the custom was revived on a new basis. The initiative apparently came from the great chiefs, six of whom in that year led their people to hoe *milasa* for Peter,[1] who, as soon as the hoeing was over, gave each of them a cow. Such a return gift was quite unprecedented. And now every year he sends a message to the three or four senior great chiefs, which they pass on to the others, telling them to come and hoe. One or two beasts are always given to each one who comes. In the first half of 1937 three great chiefs had brought their people to hoe *milasa* and to the two who had finished he had given respectively two bulls and a cow and a bull.

The bulk of the produce of the *milasa* he now sells to his people, by the basket, for money, using the money so obtained firstly to buy cattle to replace the ones given to the chiefs and secondly to buy cloths for funeral gifts. The figures which he gave us himself for the year 1927 showed that he was able in that year to replace the cattle expended and in addition to buy £3 or £4 worth of cloths, enough for about a dozen funerals.[2] The custom has become a mildy profitable business enterprise for the Kyungu.

[1] But no such gardens, I think, are now hoed for the great chiefs themselves. Our evidence is here incomplete.

[2] Expenditure on cattle for chiefs=£11 or £12. Proceeds of sale of *milasa* crop =£15. Profit spent on cloths=£3 or £4.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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But it is more than that, for its maintainance establishes a certain continuity of sentiment between present and past. By hoeing the Kyungu's *milasa* the people of Ngonde no longer do worship to an irascible divinity, but they still do honour to their greatest chief. "Where are our manners? Where is our respect?" asked the chief who, in 1927, took the initiative in hoeing Peter's *milasa*. "It seems almost as if they have died in us." And it is worth noting that the one who said this was Kajuni, a chief of Ngana.

Those who have read Richards on the Bemba constitution[1] will wonder how Peter manges at the same time to sell the produce of his *milasa* and also to provide the necessary entertainment for his leading men. The answer is twofold. Distances in Ngonde, in the first place are far shorter than among the Bemba, and the members of Peter's court can attend it regularly while sleeping and eating at home. The main traditional use of the *milasa* in Ngonde was to provide for the distant nobles who brought ivory and for the ivory traders themselves; but nowadays distant guests are rare. Nevertheless his subordinates and leading men are sometimes entertained lavishly by him, and his prestige in part depends upon this. Whether the necessary food and beer is actually taken from the *milasa* or from his private gardens I do not know, but the fact is unimportant as his private gardens are now big enough to provide the necessary surplus by themselves. For he is, in the second place, the possessor of about ten able-bodied wives who, no longer jealously secluded, work in his fields with their children; and he also hires labour to help them, paying for it out of his private fortune.

The nobles of Ngonde only rarely nowadays bring their people to hoe, for their relationship with the Kyungu is less profitable to them than it was in the days of the ivory trade, and the old organization of Mbande has decayed. With the removal of Peter to Bwiba the nobles of Ngonde and their followers began to scatter; only six of them now live at Mbande, with a mere handful of commoners. The other six are dispersed over the Ngonde plain, and only one of them[2] has any considerable personal following.

The requisitioning of food by the Kyungu and the local rulers has now almost ceased, for various reasons. Food can now be turned into cash by sale; and so men are far more reluctant to give their surplus to their rulers than before. Moreover I think that Government has disallowed the custom.[3]

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[1] *Op. cit.*
[2] Ngosi, who ranks as a "Headman" with a few subjects of his own.
[3] We did not investigate this point in Ngonde, but among the Nyakyusa it is certainly so.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 431 643 The present Kyungu maintains his position by a continual distribution of material gifts, as the Kyungus did in the past, but many of the details of this distribution are now altered. Besides the cattle which he now gives the great chiefs he also gives away far more funeral gifts than his predecessors. But on the other hand, the traditional distribution of cloth and ivory, after a visit from the ivory traders, and of slaves and cattle to those who brought tribute in food has now ceased. The traditional procedure of giving a newly elected noble a cloth still continues.

178 431 643 764 Previous Kyungus only sent cloths to the funerals of the most important of their subjects—chiefs, nobles, great-commoners and a few others. But Peter sends a cloth to nearly every funeral in his own half of the Ngonde plain ; though in Kilupula's half and in the hills he only sends cloths to the funerals of chiefs and nobles.

Nearly every family in his own half of the plain now sends a hen (worth 3d.) to Peter to announce a death and he returns a cloth (worth 2s, 3s. or 4s.) as a funeral gift. More important families (chiefs or rich great-commoners) from all over Ngonde send a bull-calf (worth maybe 7s. or 8s.) and to them he returns a cloth or blanket worth anything from 8s. to 12s. In 1934, a year with many deaths, he spent £57 on such funeral gifts and he can hardly have received more than a tenth of that value in hens and calves.

It is this custom above all which gives Peter the status of a paramount chief (as opposed to a subordinate official of the British Administration) in the Ngonde of to-day. And it is only his private fortune which makes it possible. The profits of the *milasa* never reach any such proportions, while, if he spent his official salary on funeral gifts, he would be quite unable to clothe himself, his wives and children.

Now the extension by Peter of the custom of sending cloths to funerals is significant both in relation to the new legal situation and to the present poverty of the other rulers of Ngonde. In his own portion of the plain Peter is the only Native judicial authority who can execute judgments, he is also the only Native ruler who can afford to keep up, on any large scale, the bountiful activities traditionally associated with chieftainship. And he has thus largely replaced the local rulers and the great chiefs, in relation to the common people, both as judge and as plutocrat.

Though we made no intensive study of the areas of the "Sub-chiefs," it is clear that they are not in a position to give any valuable gifts to their people, and that their prestige is in consequence far lower in their own areas than is the Kyungu's in his ; they are but subordinate magistrates with traditional affiliations. Moreover the Kyungu, both through his appeal court and through the sending of funeral gifts to chiefs and nobles is still able to maintain his paramount position in their areas.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Owing to the accident of Peter's private fortune the elements which tend to make the present constitution of Ngonde more autocratic and more centralized than the old are, in his case alone, uncounteracted by the element of poverty. And his secular power is thus far greater in Ngonde than that of his predecessors. The nobles of Ngonde have lost the old religious holds over him, most of the subordinate rulers have lost their judicial functions, he alone is considerably richer than the common people. 178 642 643

Personal links between rulers, subordinates and subjects are not only characteristic of primitive societies. In our own society these links normally take the form of entertainment: The King, cabinet ministers, colonial governors, and the mayors of towns entertain the leading citizens, and their position in part depends upon doing so. And it is thus probable that personal economic links will still be necessary in the Ngonde of the future, when its integration with world society is more complete. Their form may change, but wealth will still have to be expended on their maintenance. Now there are only two ways of assuring that such links will be maintained: either special allowances must be paid to the Native rulers of Ngonde as they are paid to European rulers, to enable them to keep up their position in this way, or else rich men of public spirit must be found to fill these offices. The second solution depends upon the existence of rich men and the constitutional possibility of giving them office; but it is very unlikely indeed that, in the near future, other Peters will be available, who combine wealth both with royal blood and the general eligibility for which the nobles look. Moreover it is worth noting here that quite soon the majority of the Native rulers of Ngonde will probably be Christian monogamists and the old economic resources of polygynous marriage will then no longer exist for them at all. The first solution, however, always remains practicable. 178 642

(d) *CONSTITUTIONAL LAW.*

It is generally accepted in Ngonde to-day that all future Kyungus should be taken from the one house of Mwakasungula and all the three Kyungus since the deposition of Mwabulambo have been members of it. The nobles of Ngonde insist that the chiefs of Ngana were only taken in the middle period *faute de mieux*, when either no suitable chiefs of the Ngelenge line could be found, or it seemed to be dwindling dangerously under the onslaughts of the Ngoni. And the chiefs of Ngana accept this fact. Why the house of Mwambelo has fallen out of the succession I am not sure, but, as the house of Mwakasungula is now very numerous, I suppose it is not considered necessary to look beyond it. 178 643

But still the principle obtains of election within the house. From

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 643 Magemo to Mwakabanga no Kyungu has ever been succeeded by his own immediate heir; the choice of Peter as successor to Mwangalaba was unique, for he was his full brother and the heir to his property, but then Peter's ability and personal wealth were unique also. And in the case of the great chiefs and the nobles also the principle of election is still followed.

178 554 643 The grounds of election have slightly altered. Generosity and wealth are still important, but "wisdom in European ways" is now more looked for than maturity, and shortly before our visit a fairly young man was chosen as Mwakasungula. Bravery in war, of course, no longer matters.

178 565 622 The Administration have so far made little use of any great chiefs except the three who are now "Sub-chiefs;" but the others (the "Important Headmen") could be made into effective local rulers, if their salaries were raised. The ordinary chiefs and nobles (the "Village Headmen") are too numerous and have too few subjects to be very effective links in the chain of modern authority. But many of the great chiefs command the respect of considerable numbers. Moreover the fact that they are already being elected for their "wisdom in European ways" suggests that they will prove competent to deal with modern problems.

The traditional secular procedure of election is still followed, with some exceptions: the nobles of Ngonde are now sent by the Kyungu to participate in the "catching" of the great chiefs of Ngana[1] on the spot; the District Commissioner is informed of the result of every election; while the Kyungu himself, no longer secluded, takes a bigger share in making the choices than his predecessors very well could. And many of the religious elements of the traditional procedure, such as the setting of a new Kyungu on the iron stool *Kisumbi*, have fallen out of use.

The sending by Peter of the nobles of Ngonde to catch the chiefs of Ngana is a sign of the present centralization of power in his hands under Government. When we asked why the old custom had been changed we were told that it was "because now everything is under the control of Government and comes to the Kyungu."

The gradual ousting by chiefs of the few ruling territorial nobles who still remain in the plain has continued in modern times, but the novel conditions have complicated the process and seem to be checking it. A recent quarrel between Kajuni and Mwenelupembe illustrates this. The head of the house of Kajuni, which is a junior branch of the [578]

[1] I think this is also true of the less important territorial nobles of the hills, but am not sure.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Mwenengubwe, has attained more or less the status of a great chief; but his country originally belonged to the noble Mwenelupembe. One of the Kajunis married a daughter of Mwenelupembe and, in the usual way, became the effective ruler of most of the country. But the position was not formally clarified, Kajuni and Mwenelupembe are said to have lived on the best of terms, "and there was no boundary between them." After the arrival of the Europeans Kajuni was recorded in the Government list as the "Headman," for taxation purposes, with the consent of Mwenelupembe. And this meant that Mwenelupembe received no share of the tax money. But then, recently, Kajuni sold some of their land to a European for a tobacco shamba without consulting Mwenelupembe, who was furious, and demanded his own tax register and to have a boundary formally marked out between them. And this has now been done. The present cash value of the status of a ruler has altered the economics of the situation, the decline of the religious status of Mbande lessens the comparative importance of the royal blood, while new occasions of dispute between the rulers are now present.

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The "coming out" (*uvusoka*) has ceased in Ngonde owing to the smallness of all the present chiefdoms, both in area and numbers, and the impossibility of finding sufficient land and followers for two successors to any local chief.[1] There has been no "coming out" since 1913. Each local chief is now succeeded by one younger full-brother (or one son) alone. But still among these "Village Headmen" popular favour determines their position. If his subjects do not like a "Headman", they move away to his neighbours, and every emigration reduces his salary by 3d. a year.

178 622

(e) *CONCLUSION.*

Now the more autocratic form and the greater centralization of the modern constitution of Ngonde is very largely the product of inevitable social forces. Granted the general conditions of contact between Africans and Europeans in Central Africa, a decline of the religion of Ngonde, with the consequential change in the relations of chiefs with their leading commoners, could not possibly be avoided. Nor could the old local autonomy possibly be fitted in unchanged to any modern administrative system. And Ngonde is not unique in this, similar changes, equally inevitable, can be seen in most areas of Central Africa.

178 642

Nor is the relative poverty of the majority of the Native rulers of Ngonde today a unique phenomenon either. Richards[2] has shown the

[1] Owing to the climatic difference land is scarcer in Ngonde than among the Nyakyusa; but the implications of this fact we did not specially study.
[2] *op cit.*

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 same thing among the Bemba and Read among the Ngoni ;[1] and it is, in fact, the wealth of Peter which is unusual. Wealth and chieftainship are
642 no longer normally synonymous terms as they were in the old days ; and this again is largely the result of the operation of inevitable forces.

And wherever an increase of centralization and of autocracy is combined with a decrease of the relative wealth of the Native rulers there the modern constitutions of Central Africa must inevitably become very difficult and, in the end, impossible to work. For a central political power cannot be effectively exercized unless it includes the control of wealth ; nor can able and wealthy commoners be permanently barred from sharing it.

But the policies of the Government, backed by the overwhelming power and wealth at their command, are themselves social forces which, while they cannot prevent the other forces from operating, can counterbalance them. No Government, for instance, can maintain the old tribal religions in being against the forces making for their decay, nor can it now restore the old sources of wealth to the chiefs, nor can it prevent some commoners from becoming wealthy men, nor can it bring back the old small-scale, isolated, relatively autonomous, local communities. But it is possible for a Government to raise the salaries of chiefs and their advisers and deliberately to encourage new forms of local representation and popular control. It is possible ; but whether it is desirable a scientist cannot say.

[1] Margaret Read. Native Standards of Living and Culture Change. Supplement to *Africa*. 1938.

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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[title page]

7: Sanderson 45 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

THE RELATIONSHIP SYSTEMS OF THE WANGONDE AND WAHENGA TRIBES, NYASALAND.

By MEREDITH SANDERSON, M.R.C.S., F.R.G.S.

I.—THE WANGONDE.

1. THE Wangonde are a Bantu tribe inhabiting that part of Central Africa adjacent to the north-west shores of Lake Nyasa. They are a somewhat primitive people, as yet little contaminated by European civilization; they are intensely conservative and their customs differ from those of neighbouring tribes. As a result of this conservatism their system of relationship still bears, in its nomenclature, evidence of its evolution from exogamy in its most primitive form, and of all Nyasaland tribes the Wangonde have probably been least influenced by contact with others. In recent history they were victimised from time to time both by Arab slavers and by the Angoni, but neither appear to have left any trace of their domination. It should be mentioned, however, that the chieftainship was usurped some 10 (?) generations ago by an adventurer who, according to tradition, came from the north-west (towards Tanganyika) and whose descendants still form the ruling caste. It may be that some new customs were introduced at this time, though this is denied by the descendants of the old nobility, who still retain a large share of influence in tribal council.

2. *Definitions.*—ILUMBU = "brother"[1] to "sister," or "sister" to "brother." A man calls his elder "brother" *mkuluwangu*; a younger one *nung'una*: the same terms are used by a woman for her "sisters." All children of uncles and aunts are regarded as "brothers" and "sisters," including those of maternal uncle and of paternal aunt; those of father's elder "brother," of mother's elder "sister," and of mother's "brother," are called *wakulu*, irrespective of age.

The term *wamyitu* is often used, irrespective of sex, as alternative for "brother" or "sister"; its real meaning is rather "kinsman," and it may also be used for any relative or connection except the age-classes immediately above or below that of the speaker (*e.g.*, father or son), as it implies a degree of intimacy not permitted with those degrees. *Wamyitu* means "my" (lit. "our") "kinsman"; the second and third persons are *wamyinu* and *wamyao* respectively: there is no singular form.

[1] The use of inverted commas with English terms of relationship indicates that they are used in the full classificatory sense

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

601 MWINANGU ("my compeer"—other forms, *mwinako*, "thy" or "one's compeer," *mwinake*, *mwinitu*, *mwinitu*, *mwinao*, "his," "our," "your," "their compeer"; plural, *winangu*, etc.). This term is used much as *wamyitu*, but its meaning is slightly different, as it definitely implies equality, and may be applied to a companion as opposed to a relative. When coupled to a term of relationship it has the meaning of "fellow," *e.g.*, *nkasi-mwinangu*, "my fellow-wife"; or it indicates an absence of formality in intercourse with that degree of relationship. Thus *mwisukulu-mwinangu* is always used in preference to *mwisukulu* by itself, and indicates that a grandson is treated as a "brother," a younger "brother," but an equal.

NDAMU is used by a man for men only and by a woman for women only. Of a man the term includes the husbands of his "sisters" and the "brothers" of all women who are his *wakasi*. A woman's *ndamu* are the wives of her "brothers" and the "sisters" of any man whom she calls *ndume*. (See *nkasi* and *ndume*.)

NKOGHO ("thy" or "one's *nko-*") is the husband of a daughter, or the parent, male or female, of a wife or husband. Seeing that a grand-daughter is called *nkasi*, it is possible that a man formerly married the daughter of his daughter, and called the husband of his daughter *nkogho* as a potential father-in-law.[1] If this be so, it would suggest that marriage with a son's daughter was not permitted, as the term *nkogho* may be used for either a man or a woman, and a son's wife is always called *nkamuana*, never *nkogho*. The use of the term *nkasi* for the daughter of a son may have arisen subsequently, by analogy, after marriage with a daughter's daughter had fallen into desuetude. A senior *nkogho* (*e.g.*, parent of wife) is usually addressed as *Tata* or *Yuwa*, and a son-in-law as *mwanangu*.

MWISUKULU = any grand-relation, male or female: it includes grandfather and grandmother, grandson and grand-daughter. A male *mwisukulu* is called *mwinangu* by a man and *ndume* by a woman; a female *mwisukulu* is called *nkasi* by a man and *mwinangu* by a woman. (See also para. 3 (4) below.)

NYENYA (*cf.* the ChiHenga word *nyenye* = "far") is a great grand-relation, male or female, senior or junior.

NKATIKKATI similarly is a great-great-grand-relation of any kind.

NKASI includes wife of a "brother," uterine or otherwise; female *wisukulu*, including wives of "grandsons" and of "grandfathers," but excluding "grand-daughters" of wife; all "sisters" of a wife; daughters of a wife's "brothers"; wives of "grandsons" by marriage, and the "grandmothers" of a wife; wife of maternal uncle; and, of course, own wife.

Similarly NDUME includes husband of a "sister"; male *wisukulu* including husbands of "grand-daughters" and of "grandmothers"; all "brothers" of a husband; sons of all "sisters" of a husband; husband of father's "sister";

[1] Mrs. Seligman called to my notice a similar possibility among the WaYao, and I am indebted to her for the suggestion.

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

601 husbands of "grand-daughters" by marriage (but not "grandsons" by marriage); the "grandfathers" of a husband; and own husband.

TATA includes own father, his "brothers" and "sisters," and the husband of father's "sister"; also husband of mother's sister. By courtesy the term is used for all "fathers" of a wife or husband (instead of *nkogho*), or to any superior in station or age, whether related or not.

YUWA (mother) includes own mother, her "brothers" and "sisters" the wives of the father's "brothers" and the wives of a woman's maternal uncle. The term may also be used for the mothers of a wife or husband, or as a mere term of respect.

These terms (TATA and YUWA) are used only in speaking of one's own fathers or mothers, the possessive adjective, "my" or "our," being invariably omitted. For other persons, the old Bantu words WISE and NYINA are substituted; *e.g.*, *ghuso, uwise, uwisemwe, uwisao* ("thy," "his," "your," "their father"), plurals *awatata, awauso, awawise*, etc. ("my" or "our," "thy," "his fathers," etc.). So *unyoko, unyina, unyinemwe, unyinawo* ("thy," "his," "your," "their mother"), plurals *a'eayuwa, awanyoko, awanyina*, etc. ("my" or "our," "thy," "his mother").

MWANA = son or daughter, including, of course, those of "brothers" and "sisters," and of wife.

NKAMWANA, obviously derived from *nkazi wa mwana* ("wife of a son"), may be used by either a man or a woman for that degree of relationship.

MWEGHANISI (= *mu-egha-na-uswe*, "marry with us," from *kwegha*, "to marry") or KITWASI (= *Ki-twala-na-uswe*, "marry with us," from *kutwala*, "to marry"). [177] The former is said to be a *Kinyakyusa* word,[1] now in general use, and the latter the old *Kingonde* word; either may be used to denote a paramour of one's wife, and as a result the term *mwinangu* is usually added when referring to a husband of the speaker's potential wife, which is its special meaning, in order to deprive it of any suggestion of offence.

NKASI-MWINANGU ("my fellow-wife") is the corresponding term used by a woman for the wife of a potential husband, but it is not generally used among the potential wives of a man, as such. The actual wives of a man, however, refer to each other by means of this term, and to their husband's potential wives.

NASENGE denotes a father's sister of either a man or a woman, and reciprocally a "brother's" child of a woman. It probably has reference to the right of marriage possessed by a man with the daughter of his wife's "brother." (See para. 3 (3) below.)

MWIPWA includes mother's brother and sister's son or daughter of a man, and mother's brother of a woman. A woman calls her sister's son *ndume*. (See para. 3 (6) below.)

[1] The Wanyakyusa are a tribe racially allied to the Wankonde, and inhabiting neighbouring territory.

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

MWIKO is very nearly a translation of the word *tabu*, and may be used either 601
of things or of forbidden degrees of relationship.

3. The following points are noteworthy :—

(1) The wife of a "brother," whether older or younger, uterine or not, is called 601
by the same term (*nkasi*) as a wife. I am informed that sexual intercourse, 602
though not countenanced, is not uncommon, and such cases are apt to 837
be treated leniently should they come to (native) court. This might be regarded as evidence of former "group marriages," but it should be noted that a man's first heir is his brother, who succeeds to the wives in common with the rest of the "property."

The same term (*ndume*) is used by a woman for the "brothers" 601
of her husband as for the husband himself, and their wives are *wakasi-winake* (= "her fellow-wives").

(2) The "sisters" of a wife are also called *nkasi*. The husband of the eldest 601
of a family has a prior right to marry her uterine sisters, and a semi- 595
right to her other "sisters"; such marriages are very common. Any man who marries a woman to whom another has a prior right becomes *mweghanisi* (or *kitwasi*) to the ousted one. (See Definitions.) Reciprocally a woman calls her "sister's" husband *ndume*, even after her marriage to another.

(3) A man has the right to marry the daughter of his wife's "brother" as 582
among the Thonga,[1] and the wife of the wife's "brother" is called 601
nkogho (see Definitions); the son of the wife's "brother" is often called *ndamu* instead of *mwana*. There is a special term for a father's sister, which is reciprocally used by a woman for her "brother's" daughter; the term *nkasi-mwinangu* (= "my fellow-wife") does not appear to be used by her unless and until her husband actually marries the girl. This special term is *nasenge*, and it can hardly be mere coincidence that it so closely resembles the Nandi term *senget* for father's sister [2] (*na-* being a common Bantu prefix, usually honorific, and, on the other hand, the terminal *-t* merely formative).

A woman calls the son of her husband's "sister" *ndume*. (See para. (6) below.)

(4) All "grand-daughters," except those by marriage, are called *nkasi*, but marriage has never been allowed within living memory; the husband of these "grand-daughters" are called *mweghanisi* (*kitwasi*). A "grandson" is not called *ndamu* but (*mwisukulu*) *mwinangu* (= "my compeer");

[1] B. Z. Seligman, "The relationship systems of the Nandi, Masai and Thonga, *Man*, April, 1917, 46 (quoting Junod).

[2] Seligman, *loc. cit.*, quoting Hollis, "The Nandi."

7: Sanderson (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

582 601 his wife is called *nkasi*, like the wife of a "brother," not *nkogho*. This appears to be the result of the law that a man may have to marry his "grandmothers." (See para. 5.)

601 Similarly a woman calls her "grandson" *ndume*, and his wife *nkasi-mwinangu*.

No distinction is made between the offspring of a "son" and that of a "daughter," either by a man or a woman.

"Grand-daughters" by marriage are not called *nkasi* by a man, nor are "grandsons" by marriage called *ndume* by a woman: the term *mwisukulu-mwinangu* is used in either case. It is of interest to note, however, that the wives and husbands of these relations are called *nkasi* [616] and *ndume* respectively, which is evidently a relic of the period when the whole tribe was divided into two classes, marriageable and unmarriageable: since a "grandchild" by marriage belonged to the latter class, his or her spouse must be included in the former.

(5) All "grandmothers" are termed *nkasi*, except perhaps the sisters of the paternal grandfather; some say that these should be classed as "sister," as the sister of one's *mwinangu* (grandfather), because *nkasi* would not be polite to the *nasenge* of one's father. Others deny this and include all grandmothers as *nkasi*, and it is doubtful whether the objection is not modern. The same applies to the "grandmothers" of a wife.

587 A man often has to marry his "grandmothers" on the death of his "grandfather," though if the latter were a chief or a rich man the heir would probably marry them as part of the property. The rule appears to be that it is the duty of any man to marry his "grandmothers" if they are destitute.

[582] 601 A woman calls all her "grandfathers" *ndume*, though actual marriage is not permitted. It is difficult to say whether this is due to analogy with the relationship of a man to his "grandmother," or is the corollary of that to his "grand-daughter." Since marriage with a "grand-daughter" is not uncommon in other tribes, it may be that it was originally the reason for a woman calling her grandfather *ndume* among the Wangonde, but that the persistence of the terminology after such a marriage came to be regarded as incestuous is partly due to analogy.

As a result of the similarity of relationship between grandparents and grandchildren the same term *mwisukulu* is used for both. There was formerly a special term for grandparents (*mbuya*), but it is now obsolete.

601 604 (6) The relationship between mother's "brother" and "sister's" son is peculiar, in that the term is used reciprocally (*mwipwa*). A man calls the wife of his

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

maternal uncle *nkasi*, and she calls him *ndume*. As a sister's son comes very low down in the table of succession, this cannot be due to their prospective relationship should the maternal uncle die, and it may be that the relationship of husband's sister's son is (or was) regarded as analogous to that of wife's brother's daughter. On the other hand, if the father of X exercises his right to marry his wife's brother's daughter, this girl, from being the "sister" of X, becomes his "mother," and her mother (the wife of X's maternal uncle) becomes his "grandmother" and therefore his *nkasi*. 601 604

(7) Cross-cousins are classed as "brothers" and "sisters," and all first cousins are, therefore, unmarriageable. 605 601

(8) It is of interest to note that a kind of marriage by capture is still in vogue among the Wangonde. It may be performed either with or without the consent of the woman, but, except in the case of a woman to whom the man has a right by relationship, her father's sanction is necessary, and at least part of the dowry must be paid beforehand: usually, the woman is aware that the marriage has been proposed. 583

The bridegroom, assisted by some friends, either lies in wait for the woman, on the way to the water-supply for instance, or decoys her out of the village by means of a spurious message, and carries her off to his home. Her relatives would be bound in honour to rescue her if the bridegroom were so maladroit as to make it impossible for them to affect ignorance of the abduction. It is said that the marriage is sometimes consummated by force with the assistance of the companions of the bridegroom: in any case, a small present to the girl personally is necessary before consummation.

4. *Succession.*—The order of succession is liable to modification if the legal heir is considered unsuitable for any reason. The relationships are put in the following order of precedence:— 423

(1) Younger brother by same father and mother.

(2) Younger brother by same father and different mother.

(3) Any younger "brother."

Note.—It would be considered *infra dig.* for an elder "brother" to take the name of his junior, so that, although he has a prior right to the property, he would appoint a younger "brother" to the name. In such a case he may choose which of the "wives" of the deceased he likes, in addition to the cattle.

(4) Eldest surviving son (own begetting).

(5) Eldest son of elder brother (by the same father).

(6) Eldest son of younger brother (by the same father).

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

(7) Eldest *mwipwa*, *i.e.*, eldest son of eldest sister. 428

(8) Eldest son of a younger sister.

(9) Eldest grandson of the father's elder brother.

(10) Eldest grandson of the father's younger brother.

(11) Eldest grandson of the father's sister.

(12) Eldest grandson of the mother's sister.

(13) Eldest grandson of the mother's brother.

(14) Eldest grandson of the eldest brother by the same mother (not father).

(15) Eldest son of own son or daughter.

(16) Eldest grandson of a younger brother.

(17) Eldest grandson of a sister.

5. All *nkogho* must be "feared," *i.e.*, avoided on all occasions; a woman must 606 cover her head if unavoidably in their presence. These rules do not differ greatly from those found in other parts of the world, except that a man's "fear" of his wife's mother is greatly lessened after the birth of a child to the couple. They have to be much more strictly observed by a woman than by a man.

II.—THE WAHENGA.

1. The term WaHenga is somewhat loosely applied to a group of Bantu peoples 000 living to the south of the Wangonde, and is often used as synonymous with WaTumbuka, Wakamanga, and WaPoka. It is adopted here for convenience, though properly only applicable to those living in the valley of the S. Rukuru River, often called the Henga Valley; the word *henga* means "chief" in some Bantu languages, but the valley is said to have been named after a chief who settled in it.

The information detailed here as to relationships has been derived from natives whose birthplace is the Nkhamanga plains to the north of the S. Rukuru River and west of the "Henga Valley," but as far as has been ascertained it applies equally to the rest of the group. These people prefer to be called *Wakamanga*, and they have a tradition that their forefathers came from the East across the Lake (Nyasa); they are now, however, so mixed by inter-marriage with the other small groups mentioned above that the practice of including them all under the term WaHenga has been followed here.

2. *Definitions.*—MDUMBU = "brother" to "sister," or "sister" to "brother." An elder "brother" is MKULU, a younger one MKUNG'UNA, of a man: the same terms are used by a woman of her "sisters." The children of the father's elder brother are called WAKULU irrespective of age, as also those of the mother's elder sister.

MWANAMNYANE ("my fellow-child," other forms MWANAMNYINU, MWANAMNYAKE, etc., "your" "his fellow-child"). This term is often used as equivalent to "brother" or "sister" by either a man or a woman.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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[title page]

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

AN INTRODUCTION TO NYAKYUSA SOCIETY

By GODFREY WILSON

128 This paper is an attempt to give an outline of the pagan culture of the Nyakyusa people of South Tanganyika[1] in relation to the three fundamental groups into which their society is articulated—the family, the age-village and the chiefdom. Every Nyakyusa belongs to some family, to some age-village, to some chiefdom ; and in his membership of these three groups is comprehended most of his behaviour.

121 Sociology is the objective study of human relationships which, as they only exist in men's activities, can only there be studied. The systematic investigation of culture, of the common economic, ceremonial, legal, religious and other activities which obtain among some group of people, is the sole possible method of discovering the system of human relationships which makes of the group a society. It is only by viewing all the facts of culture in the light of the relationships of the people concerned that we can see the full objective significance of those facts, it is only so that we can see the body or actuality of those relationships. For human relationships are the most inclusive facts of social life, they are the form[2] which the sociologist seeks for in the matter of his special field ; whether he is engaged in description, or in the functional analysis of a single culture, or in the comparative analysis of several cultures, human relationships are always his goal, which he must reach if his account of fact is to be coherent, if his explanations are to be complete.

The method adopted in this paper is that of Professor Malinowski and his followers ; it involves a repudiation of the one-sided Durkheimian concept of " social integration " or " solidarity," and a realization that culture, consisting as it does of human behaviour with a human meaning, has a material reality which makes possible and conditions the human relationships that integrate it and give it form. This point is elaborated in the concluding section.

128 In order to make Nyakyusa society into a wholly lucid unit, intelligibly comparable with other societies, it would be necessary to undertake a complete functional analysis, and to explain in detail why it is that different members of this group on different occasions generally conform,

[122] [1] I am greatly indebted to the Rockefeller Foundation for the Fellowship which makes my investigation possible.
[2] By " form " is meant, not a sensible pattern, but an intelligible system of fact.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

128 as they do, in their behaviour and their mutual relationships to a common type. Space forbids such an undertaking here; and it is necessary to emphasize that, although the most significant facts are described in an orderly manner, and although certain reasons for these facts are indicated in their specific character and in their connections with one another, yet these reasons are not fully or systematically worked out, and the result is a description which leaves the facts only half-explained. And, in so far as this society is not here fully analyzed, so it is not yet fully comparable with others. The reader of this paper will detect many points of similarity and of difference between Nyakyusa society and some other with which he is familiar, but the comparison cannot be made to yield any propositions about the nature of human societies in general until the facts of both have been fully explained in terms of their particular social, cultural, and external conditions.

Climate, Cultural Groups, and European Contact.

101 The Nyakyusa live in the Rungwe District of South Tanganyika in
131 the Rift Valley at the head of Lake Nyasa. The valley is dominated and
133 closed at its North end by the recently extinct Rungwe volcano, from whose foot the land, starting as an upland plateau 5,000 ft. above sea-level, tumbles southwards for twenty-five miles in a broken cascade of hills, to level out in a plain fifteen or twenty miles from Lake Nyasa. The Lake is 1200 ft. above the sea. The East wall of the Rift rises to 10,000 ft. or more in the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains, but the West wall is two
[132] or three thousand feet lower. The climate is very wet, for about 130″ of rain fall each year, and, at 9° South of the Equator, is also very hot.
[116 The rain and the sun together make the land extremely fertile; the
731] district is thickly populated (over 100 to the square mile), famine is rare and the Nyakyusa are far better fed than most of their neighbours. Rice
177 was introduced into the plain by Arabs, coffee by the German Missiona-
241 aries in the hills, and these two crops to-day, under the enthusiastic care and guidance of the Government Agricultural Department, bring to many Nyakyusa a small but steadily increasing cash income.

262 Their main foods are bananas, maize, beans, sweet potatoes and a
241 variety of greenstuffs, together with meat and curds from their cattle. Millet is extensively grown and is used both for making beer and for eating in the form of porridge.

101 The name *Nyakyusa* is nowadays used by themselves as a general name for all those who have similar speech and customs and who live in Tanganyika; but formerly it only covered those who live in the South of the district, in the plain and up in the hills as far North as the administra-

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tive capital, Tukuyu, and it is still thus used to distinguish this group 101
from others. This group will here be referred to as " *Nyakyusa proper.*"
Those in the North of the district to the West and East of Mount Rungwe
call themselves *Kukwe* and *Mwamba* respectively, and there is a group of
chiefdoms to the East, under the Livingstone Mountains, called *Selya.*
All these four groups share a common culture, distinguished by minor [184]
local peculiarities of dialect and custom. Immediately bordering the
Nyakyusa to the South West are the *Ngonde* (Europeanized as " *Konde* ")
in Northern Nyasaland ; they belong to the same cultural group but are
distinguished by greater differences of custom and speech than the
others. I have not yet visited them.

In the hills to the West of the Rift live the *Ndali*, who are included
in this administrative district ; and on the plateau under these hills, to the
West of the Kukwe, live the *Penja.* Both these small groups have old
languages of their own which, though related to that of the Nyakyusa are [197]
more or less unintelligible to them ; and they have equally distinct cultures.
But they are now rapidly being assimilated to the Nyakyusa both in [177]
speech and in law.

I use the name Nyakyusa, in accordance with modern usage, to
include the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, Mwamba, and Selya groups,
but to exclude the Ndali, the Penja, and the Konde. The Nyakyusa
together with the Ndali and Penja number 150,000 ; the Konde of Nyasa- [161]
land 30,000.[3]

Members of the Berlin and Moravian Missions were the first Euro- 797
peans to settle in the district, where they have lived now for forty-five 177
years and have made numerous converts. The German Administrators
followed them closely, and later came a few planters. But pronounced
economic change is a matter of the past five to ten years during which
time the Lupa Gold Fields of South Tanganyika have been opened up
and have employed increasing numbers of Africans on the diggings.
During the past few years the young men of the Nyakyusa have developed [166
the habit of going for a few months, now and again, to the Gold Fields to 464]
earn money for tax and clothes. They seldom stay more than six months
at a time, often only one or two ; so that their absence does not cause the
same difficulties in their own community that are found in other areas
where the men spend longer periods away from home.

The Family, together with a sketch of wider Kinship Groupings

The relationships of husband and wife, parent and child, sibling and 593
sibling are continually visible in the culture of the Nyakyusa. The

[3] Government Census figures.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

593 holding of land and the economics of life in general, the rules and procedure of law, the emotional forms of ceremony, the dogma, rite, morality and symbol of religion, the forms of knowledge and opinion—all are interpenetrated by these relationships.

593 The word *family* is used in this paper to mean the organized group
595 of a man, his wife or wives, and their children of any age, but not to include any other relatives. A Nyakyusa family, as we shall see, does not become extinct when the father dies; his younger full-brother or his senior son steps into his place and the group continues very much as before. In this society families are sometimes monogamous, sometimes polygynous; and, in consequence, two more relationships with which we are not familiar in our own culture are included in the Nyakyusa family; one is the relationship of co-wives and the other is that of half-siblings. Within a ploygynous family the different wives and their respective children form groups to some extent distinct from one another; and the term *individual family* is here used to denote the group of a man, one wife and their children, whether that group is part of a polygynous family or forms a complete monagamous family by itself.

593 The Nyakyusa themselves have no separate word for either of these
595 small groups; the word *ekekɔlɔ* is sometimes used in the restricted
601 sense to which we have here confined the word "family," but more usually means the whole of any single person's recognized blood kindred, living or dead, both in the male and female lines; and it is translated in this paper as *kindred*, *kinsfolk*, or *kinsmen*. They also have a word *ovokamu* which includes the whole of any one person's *ekekɔlɔ* together with all his recognized affines, and this is here translated *relatives*. The term *affines* is used to translate the Nyakyusa word *avakɔ*, which is identical in meaning with it.

[585] Marriage is legally effected by the handing over of four to thirty
[435] cows, together with one or two bulls, by the groom to his wife's father.
436 And this transfer of cattle is the key to the whole Nyakyusa system of blood and affinal relationship. Cattle have a very high value because of their production of milk and meat, which are the most highly prized foods, and because of their scarcity; they are in constant circulation, and by their movement from one man to another they forever create and maintain the bonds of kinship and affinity. Cattle circulate rapidly; few except chiefs have more than six cows in their herds at any one time, more often each man has only two or three, while some have no cows at all; and yet every mature man has paid out, for his own and his sons' marriages, five, ten or twenty times the number of cattle that he at

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

present possesses. A young man is given cows by his father and sends 436
them to his father-in-law ; his father's income in cattle is derived partly from the increase of his own stock, but chiefly from the marriages of his own and his brothers' sisters and daughters, for it is the custom for full-brothers and half-brothers to given one another cows as their daughters and sisters get married ; the young man's father-in-law gives the cows which he receives some to his brothers, some to his sons, and some he keeps himself. And thus, continually, the cattle are driven down the paths of human relationship.

The passage of cattle makes the children of a marriage legitimate 585
and members of their father's family; the sons can inherit from their 848
father, and the daughters, when they marry in their turn, bring cattle to him. But if a woman bears a child to a man who has given no cows for her, the child is illegitimate, has no right of inheritance anywhere, and belongs either to her husband or father, not to its own biological sire.

Getting married is not a single event ; the marriage-cattle are seldom 583
handed over all at once, but in ones, twos, or threes over a period of 584
years ; and a girl very commonly goes to visit and sleep with her betrothed 836
husband, from time to time, for several years before she finally sets up house with him and begins to bear his children. There are three ways of getting married : (1) by negotiation with the girl's father (2) by running off with an unmarried girl (3) by running off with a married woman. The first is the ideal, socially approved, method and is not uncommonly followed. The negotiations often begin while the girl is still an infant, sometimes even before she is born ; the man sends one or two cows to her father to bespeak her (*okosingela*). These cows are counted as part of the marriage-cattle (*eyngwela*) and the girl is henceforth called his "wife," but she lives at home with her parents. Sometimes a boy is betrothed by his father while he himself is still young, but always, I think, to a girl several years his junior. Such betrothals are determined by the friendship of the two families. A girl who is bespoken in infancy does not, ideally, go to live altogether with her husband till after she has reached puberty and passed through the elaborate initiation which then takes place. But there is an intermediate period when, from the age of ten or earlier, she is allowed to visit and sleep with her husband from time to time. The man sends a bull or a hen to her father to ask for his wife (*okosombolela*), and the old man agrees to let her go on occasional visits. But she is seldom allowed to go until at least three cows, in all, have been received for her. She is not supposed to be deflowered before puberty and she and her husband always, at first, practise limited intercourse without penetration. Not infrequently, however, full intercourse

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

583 takes place on some occasion and her parents usually find out when it
584 does. In some families the girl's mother examines her after each visit to
836 her husband to see if the hymen is intact, sometimes the girl tells her mother herself. When her father hears about it his action is determined partly by his feelings towards his son-in-law, partly by his need for cattle. Sometimes he does nothing at all; occasionally he sends back the cows he has received for his daughter and breaks off the marriage, and this is particularly likely to happen if the girl has been forced against her will or generally ill-treated. More usually, however, he sends his daughter to live with her husband saying: "You have made her a woman yourself, you must pay the rest of the marriage-cattle quickly."

836 We have no evidence to suggest that the girls in any general way dislike sleeping with their husbands before puberty, rather the reverse; and the men say: "It is good, it accustoms a girl to her husband." But some girls dislike the particular men to whom they are betrothed.

881 The initiation of a girl at puberty lasts for some months and includes several exchanges of food between her family and that of her husband, and a number of ceremonies in which both her girl friends of the same village[4] and her husband's friends from his village[4] participate. If a girl
[584] is not bespoken before puberty the initiation is still carried out in a modified form, but its full significance is lost.

585 Soon after her initiation a girl, if she has been bespoken, goes to live altogether with her husband, to play her part in his economy and to bear him children. If only a few cows have been received for her, her father insists on one or two more being handed over before she is allowed to go. At some time, perhaps during the girl's initiation, perhaps years later, the final marriage ceremony (*okokwa*) takes place. The balance of the marriage-cattle are brought to her father by the husband and his village neighbours,[4] her "mothers" prepare a great deal of food for the guests to eat, there is dancing, feasting and great excitement.

554 The number of cows handed over varies with the wealth and social
583 status of the two families concerned. Six to ten cows is the most usual number, but sometimes as few as four or as many as thirty change hands.

583 The second method of marriage is adopted when a man falls in love with a grown girl, who is not bespoken, and cannot find the cows to satisfy her father at once; he runs off with her and regularizes the position
583 later by sending cattle. The third method is adopted when a man falls
837 in love with a married woman and has cows available; he runs off with

[4] Vide infra "The Age Village" 7/A.
7/A [p.269, cit. 116 — Analyst]

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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837 her and then returns to her first husband the cows he had given for her with two in addition as adultery fine. But this return is usually made only after the first husband has brought a lawsuit against him.

837 Adultery is extremely common now-a-days; when a man runs off
684 with, or is discovered seducing, a married woman and has not enough
177 cows to marry her, he is legally compelled to pay two cows for the adultery to her husband. In pre-European days an adulterer, if caught, was usually punished by the husband and his neighbours with death or extreme torture, and the old men tell me that adultery was then a rarer event.

584 The extent to which a girl is usually allowed to choose whom she
177 will marry is difficult to guage, and varies in different circumstances. Opportunities of meeting and flirting with young men at dances and ceremonies are frequent; and the older men say that, owing to the abolition by the Europeans of the old severe punishments for adultery, girls
[582] are freer now than they used to be, for their lovers no longer fear to run off with them if they are married or bespoken (which is in Nyakyusa law very much the same thing). The custom of betrothing infant girls is, they declare, less common than it used to be; they are now more chary of pledging their daughters "for when they grow up they just run off with someone else." A girl's choice is, however, limited by the necessity of finding a lover who has cows, and few young men have enough to secure her if she is already married, though they may have enough to pay an adultery fine.

[428] Owing, in part, to the laws of inheritance, by which a commoner's[5]
593 full-brother inherits before his son, it is the older men who control the cattle. Every bachelor is largely or wholly dependent on his own father (or his dead father's heir) for the cows for his first marriage, and he must hoe his father's fields for many years before he is given enough to secure a wife and to set up a family of his own. Economic reciprocity is an element in most human relationships, and it enters into the Nyakyusa relationship of father and son. It is well understood, in this society, that
593 after a certain length of time spent hoeing his father's fields a young man
685 is entitled to some cows, if his father has any; and if his father delays too long the young man either stops hoeing for his father or else he takes legal action and enforces his claim. Between father and son such law cases are rare, but they are frequent between a young man and the brother of his father who has inherited his father's wives, property, and position in the family.

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[5] The laws of inheritance for a chief are, in certain respects, different; vide infra, "The Chiefdom."
[Cat. 116 pp. 278ff. --Analyst]

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

583 Normally a bachelor is given cows one by one, over a period of years, and, as we have seen, he sends them, as he receives them, to the father of the girl he wants to marry. One cow is sufficient for betrothal, but not until he has given three can he begin openly to sleep with her. And he cannot usually set up his own economy until he has given at least three cows and she has reached puberty and been initiated. He may of course bespeak an already grown girl, but if he engages himself to a young one he is expected to bring two or more bulls as well, during the course of her initiation.

684 If he chooses to spend his cows in adultery fines, he may, but he will then have to wait longer to get married.

582 561 Thus the system of marriage by a transfer of cattle is, in this society, directly linked with a late marriage age for young men and with a privileged position for older men. When a boy gets cattle he at once gives them to an older man in order to secure his daughter as a wife; the labour of every bachelor helps to increase his father's wealth in food; it is in general the older men alone who can afford more than one wife. And there is an average difference of ten years or more in the initial marriage age of men [162] and girls. The tax registers show in part of the district, among 3,000 adult* men, 34% bachelors, 37% monogamists, and 29% polygynists; and investigation proves that, generally speaking, it is the young men who are bachelors, the men over forty-five who are polygynists.

511 574 Though cattle are their most valued form of wealth, it is on agriculture that the economy of the Nyakyusa is primarily based. Meat and milk are luxuries, and daily bread comes from the fields. Hard work in a fertile country provides food for each family, and the millet beer which is the ordinary material of hospitality. Hospitality brings a man prestige and authority among his fellows; on the possession of sufficient food largely depends the contentment of his wives. And in the production, preparation and eating of food the relationships of the family and of the individual family within it, are clearly visible.

241 512 Hoeing is the work of men, planting, weeding, reaping and cooking is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about four hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a.m., on the upland plateau they begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different

*Presumed to be 18 years or over.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done.

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In a polygynous family each wife has her own fields (*embaka*), hoed by her husband and her own sons, which she plants, weeds and reaps with the help of her own daughters, and the produce of which she uses to cook for her husband, her own children and herself. The relative rights of husband and wife to dispose of produce vary with different crops, but no co-wife has any rights over a woman's food. She may, and often does, ask her co-wives to help in her fields and sends them presents of cooked food from her own fire, she may help them and receive presents in return; but they have no rights over her fields or her food, only her husband and herself. And the fields which are hoed by a bachelor son belong to his own mother, who in her turn cooks food for him to eat.

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Each wife has either a hut to herself, or else a separate alcove in a large hut, and there she has her fire for cooking. She fetches her own firewood and water or sends an unmarried daughter for them.

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At meals the ages and the sexes eat separately; in some polygynous families each wife sends a dish to the husband, in others the wives take it in turns to cook for him. The husband eats alone or with neighbours of his own age[7] to share his dish, the older boys and their friends[7] eat separately from the younger children, and each mother again usually eats with her own daughters, apart.

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In the relationship of husband and wife the chief elements are sexual intercourse, co-operation in work, the procreation of children and factors of personal inclination, character and temperament. By men women are praised for sexual skill, cleanliness and beauty, for good cooking and hard work, for their fecundity, and for gentleness of speech and behaviour, and those with opposite qualities are criticized. Among women men are praised for sexual skill and attentiveness, for vigour in hoeing and skill in house-building, and for kindness; while sexual neglect, laziness, impotence and cruelty are disliked and may cause a woman to leave her husband for another man.

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The birth of children is a most important factor in the marriage relationship, for children are greatly desired both by men and women. They are desired for themselves and also because they bring their parents wealth and prestige; a boy will one day work in the fields of his father and mother, a girl will bring in cattle from her marriage. And the possession of children brings compliments and respect both to man and woman.

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[7] Vide infra "*The Age-Village.*"
[Cat. 116, pp. 269 ff. — Analyst]

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

842 Impotence and barrenness are well known facts, and magic is much used
595 to cure them; but apart from their operation it is believed that each
581 conception directly depends upon the frequency with which a man visits his wife. And thus the bearing of children is, for a woman, a demonstration of her husband's great affection for her. People adduce the number of children that a woman has borne to prove, in conversation, that she is her husband's favourite.

595 Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan Nyakyusa; a plurality of wives is necessary, in this society, for full sexual satisfaction, wives bring a man wealth, prestige and authority, the more wives he has the more children, he thinks, will be born to him.

853 It is believed that any contact with the sexual fluids is dangerous to a
831 young child's health, and so, after a woman has borne a child, her husband is supposed wholly to refrain from intercourse with her for about a year, until the child is old enough to play by itself and allow its mother time to wash in the mornings before touching it. Then he may begin to visit her again, but still she must not become pregnant until the child is weaned, "If she does her breasts become rotten" and the first child is harmed.
[833 As children are not weaned for two or three years, this rule involves the
862] couple in yet another year or more either of *coitus interruptus* or of infrequent intercourse (which also is believed to avoid conception). These taboos on intercourse after a child's birth are to some extent
[595] observed in practice, and are one of the reasons for polygyny among the Nyakyusa.

464 Another reason is the absence of hired labour. With a few minor
595 exceptions the only way a man can increase the supply of labour at his disposal is by marrying more wives. Polygyny is the mark of a wealthy man, conditioned by his control of cattle, conditioning his supply of food. And the cattle spent in marriage come back again with interest as the polygynist's daughters begin to be betrothed and married.

595 It is extremely common for a man to take as his second or third wife the sister, half-sister, or brother's daughter of his first or second wife. By doing so a man pays a great compliment to the wife whose sister, or niece, he takes and to her family; his action implies complete satisfaction with her and friendship with her family. He sends his wife home "to fetch out (her kinswoman) into the open" (*okosakola*); but she will not agree to do so unless she approves of him as a husband, and so, if she does agree, her action likewise compliments him. I know of one case in which a man wished to take his second wife's younger sister in this way,

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

but his wife refused to go and fetch her on the ground that he was a bad 595
husband.

The children of one man and two close kinswomen have almost the 593
relationship of full-siblings, but not quite, and I propose to call their relationship that of *linked half-siblings* (*vide infra*).

In a polygynous family the first wife married, the chief wife (*oŋhasi-* 595
kolo), is in a privileged position; she is entitled to the respect and 586
obedience of her co-wives and her eldest son is her husband's ultimate heir. A man cannot lightly divorce his first wife during his own father's lifetime, for while the other wives he obtains by his own efforts, with his own cattle, she is married with cattle given him by his father, who must be consulted before she is divorced and who is offended if she is sent away without good cause.

Besides the chief wife there is, in most polygynous households a 595
favourite wife (*oŋkondwe*), who in fact has greater privileges. Ideally a man is supposed to be fair to all his wives and to distribute milk, land and sexual attentions equally between them, with perhaps a slight bias in favour of his chief wife. But usually one wife is her husband's favourite and is given by him an undue share of the household's milk supply, and sometimes he hoes more land for her than for the others, as well.

Divorce is legally effected by the return of the marriage-cattle. No 586
pagan woman in this society ever desires to live single, and so when a wife leaves her husband it is always with the intention of marrying some other man. Usually she has a particular man in mind who has been making love to her and who has cows enough to redeem her, but not always. A woman may, as we have described already, run off with a lover and then, as soon as he has returned the marriage-cattle and the adultery fine to her former husband, she becomes his legal wife, and her children by him are legitimate. If she has no lover to run off with, or if her lover wishes to avoid the adultery fine, the woman goes to Court[a] (before 1926 she went to her own chief) and publicly refuses to live with her husband. She may or may not give a reason for leaving him, but if she persistently refuses to go back to him there is now no way of compelling her to do so. The judges say to her: "Well you must find the cattle," and so she stays, either with her father or in the charge of a court official, until some man comes to marry her. Then the cows are returned to her first husband and the divorce is effected. In pre-European times, I am told, such a woman was frequently compelled to return to her husband by

[a] *Vide infra. The Chiefdom.* [cat. 116, pp. 278 ff. — Analyst]

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

586 her own father and the chief. A man has the right to divorce his wife, that is to send her away and demand back his cows, if she is dirty or lazy in housework or if she commits adultery, but men do not often demand a divorce for adultery unless it is persistent. If a man sends his wife away for some such reason she returns to her father and he, if he has cows available, sends back to her husband his marriage-cattle, if he has not got the cows the husband must wait until the girl is remarried.

593 857 Into the relationship of mother and daughter economic co-operation and reciprocity enter. The care of young children is largely in the hands of their elder sisters, and the girls also help their own mothers in field-work and in fetching and carrying. In return their mothers cook for them, teach them how to cook themselves and how to make mats.

585 593 Each mother is responsible also for her own daughter's virginity. One of the bulls which a young man brings during the initiation of his betrothed wife is only given if the girl is found on examination to be still virgin, or if he has deflowered her himself. If it is given this bull belongs to the girl's mother to eat with her own friends. But, in spite of her [864] mother's responsibility for her, a girl learns nothing positive from her mother about sex, but from her own slightly older friends; with them she discusses the tecnique of love-making in detail, but never with her mother.

593 The relationships of siblings are, in general, closer than those of half-siblings, and the eldest son in each individual family is privileged above his brothers. A boy's claim for cattle is, as we have seen, partly based on the time and energy he has put into hoeing his parents' fields; but it also depends, in part, on having full-sisters of his own. When a girl marries the cows come to her father, but her own full-brothers expect to receive these cows, in time, for their own marriages, in the order of their age. Though the father controls the cattle the brothers speak of them as "our cows" and they have an ultimate legal claim to them, which only gross laziness or insult to their father can altogether vitiate. The eldest of a group of full-brothers is the first to draw on these cows and to marry, his juniors wait longer. Full-brothers are bound together in many ways; the eldest, who is privileged, is bound to help his juniors in any way he can, and they in turn respect him and in time give to him some cows from the marriages of their own daughters; 593 and each makes the others' quarrels his own. What chiefly unites them 428 is the law of inheritance, for though the eldest has first right to the cattle from their sisters' marriages, and though the younger ones, later in life, give cattle from their daughters' marriages to him, yet they are his heirs, and all his privileges in time pass to them. When the eldest dies his next

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

full-brother steps into his place, takes his wives, huts, land and cows and 593
looks after his children; after him the next full-brother inherits and so 428
on, until, when all are dead, the property and wives of each pass to each one's senior son.[9]

The heir has exactly the same obligations to his predecessor's children that the dead man had himself while alive, but frequently he has less will to perform them; and his conformity is often only assured by the pressure of legal and religious sanctions.

This rule of inheritance is part of a more general fact, which is that, 768
in Nyakyusa society, death does not break a family and its relationships, but simply alters the particular people between whom these relationships obtain. Only rarely does death leave a man or woman widowed, or a child orphaned; nearly always some one is at once substituted in place of the one who has died. When a woman dies young her parents are bound either to give another daughter to her husband or else to return the marriage-cattle to him so that he can obtain another wife; when a man dies his wives and children are not left alone but taken by his heir. If the heir is a brother he takes all the women as his wives, if a son he builds a separate hut for his own mother and takes the others. And the heir is now "the father" of the dead man's children. Even when a man and all his full-brothers are dead the families of each are still united for some purposes under the leadership of each one's senior son (eldest son of chief wife). The senior son is now called "father" by his siblings and half-siblings, he is religiously responsible for them all (*vide infra*), he normally exchanges cows with the eldest brother in each individual family (*vide infra.*), he is entitled to their respect and obedience.

Half-brothers may, or may not, be linked especially closely together. 593
They may, as we have seen, be linked by blood when their two mothers are either sisters or close kinswomen, they may also be linked by an exchange of cattle, by "milking each other's cows" (*okokamanela*). Each group of full brothers regards the cows that come in from the marriages of their sisters as their own cattle, but the father disposes of these cattle as he wishes. If he gives some of their cows to a half-brother, he thereby creates between the eldest of the group and this man the special relationship of "milking each other's cows;" and it is expected that the cows given will in time be returned by this half-brother from the marriage-cattle either of a full sister or of a daughter of his own. And the exchange once begun goes on; as their sisters and daughters marry

[9] This refers to commoner's inheritance only.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

593 they continually give each other cows; between their respective sons also the exchange usually continues, but between their grandsons it lapses.
593 Reciprocity is expected and can be legally enforced, but it is not insisted
686 upon so long as the two men concerned are friends, and its legal enforcement at once breaks the relationship. If two such half-brothers (or their sons) quarrel, one may take legal action for "separation" (*okolekana*) against the other. The cows that have been handed over by both sides since the beginning of the relationship (perhaps twenty or thirty years before) are counted up, and one or the other is ordered to pay over the balance to make the numbers equal. After this the two are "no longer kinsmen," they have no mutual obligations and do not attend each other's funerals.

593 It is usual for a father to create this relationship between his senior
428 son and the eldest of each group of full-brothers, so that by this exchange of cows the family is held together. The linkage of half-brothers, whether by blood or by "milking each others cows," is important in inheritance. If a man with no full-brother dies and leaves no sons, or sons too young to inherit, then the inheritance passes to a linked half-brother; to a half-brother linked by blood if there is one, if there is not then to one linked by exchange of cows.

771 Religion enters continually into family life and helps to maintain wider kinship bonds also. The Nyakyusa religion falls, broadly, into three parts: The Ancestor cult, Witchcraft and Magic. Taken as a whole their religion, as they believe, secures for them many of the most important values of life, health, good crops and success in various enterprises; it provides an intelligible explanation of death and misfortune by tracing them to the ill-will either of the ancestral spirits or of living men acting through witchcraft or magic; in its rituals it resolves fear and replaces it by hope and confidence; while the believed destructive action of the ancestors and of men is generally, though not entirely, linked with morality.[10] The commonest explanation of misfortune is that some wrong done by the victim, or by his close kinsman, has provoked the spirits or his fellow men to anger.

769 As long as a man has alive a father, a father's full-brother, or a senior
753 brother or half-brother[11] of his own, this senior kinsman deals with the ancestral spirits, not only on his behalf, but also on behalf of his wives and children; and health is the chief value which his prayers are believed to secure for them. In the absence of sickness or misfortune no appeal is

[10] *cf.* Godfrey Wilson. "An African Morality." *Africa.* Jan. 1936.
[11] Provided the relationship between them has not been legally broken (*vide supra.*).

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ever made to the spirits, but when some member of a family or his wife or 769
child falls sick the anger of the spirits is often suspected as a possible 753
cause. There are usually other reasons suspected as well, and so the [787]
sickness is taken to a diviner for diagnosis. Various causes are suggested
to the diviner and he selects one among them. If the anger of the spirits
is selected then this senior kinsman must pray for the one who is sick, if
he is to recover. When half-brothers live at a distance from one another,
after their father and his brothers have died, then each may pray to the
spirits to cure a little sickness in his own family but if the sickness persists
then a message must be sent to the senior kinsman. And, as the anger of
the spirits is due to wrong doing, the sinner must reform his ways as well.

The wrongs which rouse the spirits to anger are usually breaches of 673
family morality. If a son does not respect his father or insults him, if an
heir neglects to feed and provide for the dead man's children, then when
sickness falls on him or his own children it will probably be traced to the
anger of the spirits at his behaviour.

Space does not allow any full analysis of religion in family life and in 754
the relationships of kinsmen and affines. Not only the ancestor cult but 771
witchcraft and magic are factors in them. A man's neglect of a wife or
his cruelty to her may, it is believed, lead to his falling sick through her
witchcraft and that of sympathetic neighbours; his relations with his
father-in-law are affected by the fear that if he offends him, his father-in-
law may, by magical means, kill his children, and so on.

Wider kinship groupings than the family gather at ceremonies and 614
are recognized in the rules against incest. But there are no clans; there
is no descent group continuous down the generations with a common
name and definite membership. Each individual family has its own
penumbra of kinsfolk, the effective kindred of a man and his son, or of
two half-brothers are not all the same, while each single person is especial-
ly related by respect, affection and mutual obligations to particular
kinsmen beyond his own family. Descent, as we have seen, is patrilineal 611
except in the case of illigitimate children. A man asked for his *ekekolo* 614
always recites first the names of his paternal forbears as far as he can [848]
remember. But if he is related through mother or grandmother to a
chief he usually volunteers this fact as part of his *ekekolo*; and questions
always elicit some knowledge of his mother's paternal kinsfolk and a
statement that "they are my *ekekolo* too." Descendants of a common
grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are to-day forbidden to marry, 582
and no case of infringment has come to my notice; descendants of a
common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry but, I am told,

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

582 they sometimes do so before the relationship is discovered, and then simply drink a protective medicine but do not break the marriage. The old men speak of a now abandoned custom of preferential cross-cousin marriage.

604 The bond between a man and his mother's brother (*omwipwa*) is mainly constituted by the passage of cattle. "My real mother's brother," they say "is the one who took the bulk of the marriage-cattle which my father gave for my mother", and it is between this particular brother and a woman's eldest son that the bond is strongest. Because this brother of his mother has taken "our cattle" and married with them the young man has a certain right of making free with his property during his life, the right to receive from him one cow to set up a herd of his own with, and a residuary right of inheritance if this uncle dies childless and leaves no brothers. If his mother's brother does die without other heirs, it is only the particular wife obtained with and the particular progeny of his father's marriage-cattle that the young man can claim.

602 764 Ceremonies, and particularly funerals, are the occasions on which the effective relatives of any one family meet all together, both kinsmen and affines. I have even heard kinship defined by attendance at funerals: One man argued that he was not related to another because, though they were admittedly genealogically related they did not attend the funerals in each other's families and were not therefore really kinsmen at all.

602 572 Known blood-kinship is a common occasion of friendship, but it does not necessarily produce it, while the absence of friendship can render many of the normal kinship bonds quite inoperative. We have seen already that quarrels may destroy the relationship between half-brothers and lead to a judicial separation. On the other hand, I have observed two men meet for the first time, discover a common great-grandfather and at once become friends. A few months later the sister of one of them died and the other went to the funeral and behaved there like a close kinsman.

Proximity is another factor of great importance in the relations of kinsfolk, for while nearness of dwelling does not always make for friendship, yet a considerable distance tends to lessen it and to make attendance at funerals impossible.

606 One of the most stringent taboos in Nyakyusa life is that which separates father and daughter-in-law. A woman may never speak to, approach, or look at her husband's father. If she does it is believed that she will die, through the witchcraft of indignant neighbours, a painful and lingering death. And the taboo is extended from her own father-in-

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

law to all his classificatory brothers. The normal routine of life is 606
constantly interrupted by women's avoidance of these men, they crouch and hide and make wide detours to avoid them, a man comes into a room and a woman runs out hastily, a father cannot enter his son's house while his son's wives are cooking there, ceremonies are duplicated to avoid bringing them in contact. Few people seem to realize the meaning of 606
this taboo, but occasionally a man is found who tells a story which makes 773
its function abundantly clear. It is said that an old chief, long ago before the taboo was instituted, fell in love with his son's wife and took her, and such was the horror of everyone at what he had done that this taboo was instituted. This story expresses the necessity, in a society where the old men are accustomed to take the young women as wives, of guarding in some way against the possibility of a father desiring his own son's wife for himself; more particularly perhaps because the cows for her marriage have come from him.

This taboo, separating father and daughter-in-law is one of the 606
reasons for the age-village system which we must next discuss. For in 621
Nyakyusa society father and son live in different villages.

Age-Villages

The most characteristic relationships of the Nyakyusa people are 621
those which centre in the age-village. Villages and age-groups are 561
common enough in other societies, and are familiar to all of us, but it is rare to find them combined; it is very uncommon to find, as we do among the Nyakyusa, that local groups of contemporaries live together for most or all of their lives.

Age-villages are formed by groups of men, all roughly of the same age, their wives and young children. Women belong to the villages of their husbands, young children to those of their fathers. The number of households in an age-village varies, but thirty is probably a fair average. Girls, as we have seen, live at home until they marry, which they normally do soon after pubery, and then each goes to the house and joins the village of her husband. But boys, who marry later in life, leave home at about the age of ten or eleven and set up villages of their own.

(*a*) *Herd-Boys*

Between the ages of about six and eleven the boys sleep at their 857
fathers' houses and herd their fathers' cattle. This is a full-time if not a very arduous occupation; the cattle are driven out about an hour after sunrise and return to be milked about 1 p.m.; after an hour they are again driven out and do not come back until nearly sunset. The cattle of eight

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

857 to twelve neighbours are usually herded together by their young sons; and so these boys spend all the day together for several years of their lives. This group of boys is the germ of the future age-village; it is a community with a common activity in the herding of the cattle, with a leader and with laws and customs of its own.

"When we herd cows as boys" a friend of mine told me "there is always one who is obeyed by his fellows whatever he says. No one chooses him, he gains his leadership and his prestige by bodily strength. For always, when we are all boys together among the cows, we vie with one another and dispute about going to turn back straying cattle or about fetching fire to cook the food we have brought with us. And so we start fighting, and we go on fighting until one of us beats all his fellows completely and so becomes the leader. And then it is he who sends the others to turn back straying cattle, to fetch fire and to collect firewood. And he is greatly respected. He settles quarrels too. What we quarrel about most as boys is a particular insult; one says to another: 'You are only a child, you are, I am your senior.' This is always happening and then it is the part of the one who is leader to set those two on to fight. We all stand round and watch and the one who first cries is proved the child."

The herd-boys of my own acquaintance, a group of eleven altogether, told me that besides insulting one another like this, boys often cause trouble in their little community by stealing cow-bells from one anothers' cattle and hiding them away for future use. And one day, when I visited the local herd, the leader of the herd-boys told me they had caught two boys drowning a sheep that morning so as to be able to pretend it had drowned itself by accident, and then they would have had some of the meat to eat. "We beat them very much," he told me, and he called one [861] of the culprits to come and exhibit his weals. The leader further explained to me that such cases would not ever be reported at home, unless the culprits themselves complained to their parents that they had been unjustly beaten, "then," he said, "I should explain what they had done, and they would get beaten again!"

The time that is not spent in herding cows, in arranging and watching duels and in punishing wrongdoers, is spent in playing various games, occasionally in pitched battles with neighbouring herd-boys, and in cooking and eating small amounts of food brought from home.

857 572 Friendships formed between members of this group sometimes last a lifetime. An old man once said to me of a friend of his who had died: "We herded cows together when we were boys."

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

As the boys one by one reach the age of ten or eleven, two important 857
changes usually take place in their lives. Firstly they leave the herding 621
of cows to their younger brothers, and themselves begin the business of hoeing the fields which will occupy them until they die; and secondly they no longer sleep in the houses of their fathers but join an age-village of boys. These two changes usually, but not always, take place at the same time and normally at about the age of ten or eleven years, well before puberty. But there are cases where special circumstances put the [184] age of one or both of these changes later; I know one boy who herds his father's cattle although he has reached puberty, because he has no younger brother old enough to take over, and there are only five or six boys in his herd-group altogether. And in general I am told it is not uncommon for some boys who have reached puberty to be found still herding cattle. Again in one age-village the boys leave home a little later than usual because there are leopards about and it is dangerous for small boys to walk from the village of their fathers to that of the boys after dark.

(b) *The Boys' Village*

When a fair number of the sons of a village of married men have 621
reached the right age, their fathers give them a piece of land to one side of 561
the parent village on which to build. There they build little huts of reeds for themselves, sufficiently well-thatched to keep out the heavy rain, and there they sleep. The building of the huts on this land begins, in a playful manner, before the boys move. While they are still herding the cows and sleeping at home they build minature huts there in their spare time, but do not sleep in them. When they move they build slightly more substantial huts with a better thatch. Until he marries each boy hoes his father's fields in his father's village and eats food cooked by his own mother at his father's house. But he sleeps with his friends. Thus between the time when he leaves home and his marriage each is a member of two villages, economically he still belongs to that of his father, socially to that of his own contemporaries. Though bachelors eat at their parents' homes, it is very rarely that they do not eat in the company [264] of their own friends. A bachelor does not simply go home to eat but a group of bachelors, friends of the same boys'-village, go round together eating at the house of each one's mother in turn.

In an age-village of married men there are always several different herds of cattle; and it is not only those from the same group of herd-boys that set up a new village together, but all the sons of the age-village. When a boy leaves the herd-group he joins a larger community, including the friends of his own age who have herded cows with him, but many

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 561 others as well. Any boys' village is found to consist primarily of the sons of the members of some older village who originally gave the land for its building, but as we shall see later sons of other villages live there too.

621 342 At the beginning, when a group of boys starts a new age-village, or when boys join one already formed, they do not all have a hut to themselves, two or three friends share a hut. But later, as they grow older, each builds for himself. The younger ones build their huts of reeds, but the older ones try to get a few bamboos from their fathers or senior relatives and build more solid houses. Married men build entirely of bamboo, but often in a boys' village you will find a compromise between bamboo and reed, both being used in the same house; and the houses of bachelors, even though they be all of bamboo, are smaller than those of married men. The technique of good building is not very difficult, and the older boys instruct and help their juniors, as they join the village, to improve the skill playfully acquired as herd-boys so as to build more substantial huts.

245 262 . The chief food of the Nyakyusa is the banana; men plant bananas immediately round their huts, though their fields are mostly at a distance. And bachelors, while they continue to eat their main meals at their parents' village, plant bananas round their own huts as well. Bananas begin to bear very quickly, sometimes within a year of planting, and so, soon after the establishment of a boys' village, its members have bananas of their own, which they cook for themselves and eat with their friends at odd times during the day. But they have as yet no fields.

864 [881] 577 There is no formal initiation of boys at puberty; but, on the other hand, the custom of leaving home and joining a boys' village is directly connected by the Nyakyusa with their ideas of decency in sexual life. They think it is perfectly all right to discuss sex openly among friends of about the same age but altogether wrong to discuss it either in the presence of, or with, their parents or those of their parents' generation. If a boy learns about love-making, in any way, from his parents the Nyakyusa think that he will not respect them properly and that he himself will be a fool. A boy must learn these things from his immediate seniors and friends. One man said to me: "If a boy after about ten years old stays at home to sleep, he is laughed at by his friends and his own parents send him away. They say: 'If he sleeps at home he will hear what his parents talk about at night, the night is always full of lewd talk; and he may even see them undressing. He will grow up a fool, with little wisdom.' You see at the boys' village" he went on to say, "the older

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love-making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger ones listen to these things and that is all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn. But we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night; and that is very bad, that is foolishness.—But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to listen, that is how children grow up." 864 577

On another occasion when I told this same man that in Europe many people thought it a good thing for boys to get sexual instruction from their parents and teachers he was shocked: "But I think it is impossible" he protested "for parents to go into detail with their children; there is too much shame on both sides. And if they did, it would damage the children's respect for them."

There is thus a correlation in this society between the age-village system at its genesis and the belief that a boy's dawning interest in sex must be informed, not by his parents, but by friends only a little older than himself.

Few men marry before twenty-five years of age, but affairs with girls begin before puberty. All affairs are related in detail to friends in the age-village, and the younger ones learn by listening; and they also learn when the older boys send them as messengers to the girls of their fancy. 582 836 [202]

Besides the more serious love affairs which are carried on in secret, groups of boys from the same age-village commonly flirt with any girls they meet on the way, and it is then that the incest taboos are learnt. If one of the boys is known to be related to one of the girls, either through a common grandfather or great-grandfather, his companions send him away: "Don't you see your sister is here? You cannot come!" 835 867

Contrary to a general belief about "primitive" societies, homosexual intercourse is common in the boys' villages, between close friends, but there is no real perversion; homosexuality is said to be always *faute de mieux*. The older men in discussion dismiss it with the tolerant word "adolescence," it is never continued after marriage, and all except the feeble-minded get married sooner or later. 838

But life in a boys' village also gives its members much information and wisdom unconnected with sex. There, as we have seen, boys perfect their skill in building, and there also they learn to argue and express themselves with adult fluency. It is characteristic of the Nyakyusa legal 621 868 867

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 system that small cases between neighbours are always first discussed and
868 often finally settled in the presence of some friend or friends who act as
867 arbitrators, without recourse to the constituted political authorities. Small disputes about petty theft, the possession of a cloth or some coppers, the ownership of a banana stem and so on, are as frequent in the boys' village as elsewhere, and as elsewhere the people concerned often argue it out to a finish before some friend or neighbour. And by listening to such disputes, or participating in them either as judge or principal, the boys acquire rhetorical skill and some knowledge of law. In some boys' villages there is a recognized leader appointed by the political authorities of the chiefdom to settle graver disputes, in others there is not. The position of such a leader, where there is one, will be discussed later.

577 Above all the boys' village gives to its members the conversation and
621 company of more of their own contemporaries than did the group of herd boys, and company the Nyakyusa hold to be the greatest of educators. In the most explicit discourse I heard on the value of company my informant explained that cleanliness, together with rhetorical and conversational skill, were all learned in company. These are his exact words: "We say that it is by conversing with our friends that we gain wisdom; it is bad to sit quite silent always in men's company. A man who does this seems to us a fool, he learns no wisdom, he has only his own thoughts. And a man who does not spend time with other people is always dirty, he does not compare himself with any friend. We say that we learn cleanliness of body in company, the dirty ones learn from their more cleanly friends. Again if a man is accused to the chief and is unable to defend himself easily and with eloquence we mock at him and say: 'What is the matter with you? Do you live all by yourself? How is it that you are so foolish?' We think that wisdom and cleanliness are the two great things learnt in company. We think it is bad to live alone far from other people, such a man learns nothing; he never learns to express himself well, to converse pleasantly with friends or to argue a case with eloquence. It is better to live with other people."

621 At first the sons of the parent village continue to join the boys'
561 village as they grow up; but after some years, when the senior members of the boys' village are about seventeen or eighteen years old, the younger ones begin to be refused admittance to the village: "they are children." The young ones then either begin a new age-village of their own, or else join a village which has already been started by the sons of a nearby men's village a little junior to that of their own fathers. If you enquire who are the members of such and such a boys' village you are always told that they are the sons of a particular village of men, but detailed investiga-

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tion reveals the presence of some sons of other men's villages as well. 621
Brothers, half-brothers and other relatives are sometimes members of the 561
same village, but more often not; and if they do belong to the same village that is because they are near each other in age, and were born in the same village, not because they are kinsmen.

The members of the boys' village, which is now closed and no longer increases in numbers, continue to grow older, and after a time they begin to get married. Getting married, as we have seen, is often a gradual process; but it is not until he has his wife permanently with him [471] that a young man can have fields of his own and eat their produce at his own place. The cultivation of land requires the co-operation of man and woman, cooking on any elaborate scale is a woman's business.

As the members of a boys' village marry the village does not move but it expands. The houses are built ever bigger and further apart and the adjacent land is brought under cultivation. The boys' village with which I am best acquainted is in this transitional stage; it has fifty-three members altogether, the majority of whom are single, but some few are married, cultivate their own fields with their wives and eat food cooked by their wives in their own houses. Of those who are single some again are betrothed to girls who visit them from time to time, but each still cultivates his father's fields, and eats at his father's home.

(c) *The Men's Village*

It is now necessary to understand the system of men's villages and the general political organization in which the boys' villages finally take their place.

The number of age-villages in one chiefdom, all the members of 631
which are married, varies with different circumstances, but the most 428
usual number is from six to twelve. The age system is only broken by 561
moving or by death; when a man dies his heir usually comes and lives where the dead man was living in his age-village. There he inherits the wives, the huts, the cows and the land of his predecessor, he inherits the dead man's position in the village and often takes his personal name as well. The heir may be many years younger than his new neighbours but he is now treated as their contemporary, he sits with them at ceremonies, he shares their rights at any division of meat. The age system in the villages is also broken by moving, for a stranger may come and be granted land in a village even though he is consideraly older or younger than the bulk of its members. But otherwise members of a village are roughly contemporaries.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 In a village of married men each has one or more bamboo huts for himself and his wives, with bananas round them ; his homestead is close to those of his neighbours, while the main garden-lands of the whole group are at a distance all together. Boundaries between age-villages are not always apparent to a stranger, a solid hundred acres or so of houses and bananas may turn out to consist of two or three villages, each with its own organization, and each having a block of garden-lands separate from the others.

624 In each village of married men, and usually in the older boys' villages as well, there is an appointed leader or great commoner (*olifumu*) who is originally chosen for the position by the great commoners of the senior age-villages of that chiefdom. They try to select a man who is wealthy, who comes from a respected family, who has personal ability in judging cases, who is popular with his fellows, and in the old days they looked also for qualities of courage and the ability to lead men in war. I think, though my evidence for this is as yet only circumstantial, that they also require certain believed spiritual qualities in a man, the power to recognize and to counteract aggressive witchcraft.[12] The qualities which the selectors look for in chosing a new great commoner are the clue to his functions. He is usually extremely hospitable to his neighbours, he judges their cases, he is their leader at ceremonies and in the old days he led them in war also. He represents their desires to the chief and it is through him and in consultation with him that the chief gives orders. Finally each great commoner is believed to protect his own villagers from aggressive witchcraft, to shield people and cattle from the spiritual forces of evil.

So important is this position of great commoner that legal precautions are taken " to prevent the great commoner becoming a chief " as several informants have put it to me. It is illegal to choose a great commoner from among the kinsmen of a chief, it is illegal to elect the son of a great commoner to that office in any age-village of his own contemporaries, though he may perhaps inherit the position in his father's village when his father dies.

621 The relationships which arise from common membership of an age-village are continually apparent in the Nyakyusa culture. Ceremonies and funerals are not only meeting places for relatives but also for the age-villagers ; the great commoner in consultation with members of his village grants land and grazing rights to strangers who ask for them ; and

[12] It is possible that this power is believed to be induced by magic later, I am not sure.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

he settles many legal disputes between his neighbours. The village is, both for men and women, the chief field of friendship, conversation and mutual hospitality; and its members recognize greater obligations towards one another than they do towards those outside. Before the coming of the Europeans the age-village was also a military unit, led by its own great commoner, in the constant fights between chiefdoms.

In most villages there are several herds of cattle which feed separately. The herd boys, as we have seen, thus form separate groups within the village, so also do their fathers; the boys are related in the common activity of herding, the men, owners of the herd, by their joint interest in it and their common fear of witchcraft.

In the relationships of villagers the belief in witchcraft is a constantly recurring factor. It is believed that certain people, both men and women have the power of harming their neighbours and their neighbours' cattle without taking any overt action whatever, without reciting any spells or performing any magical ritual at all.

Their influence, which is exercized at night in dreams, is only fully visible to those who are themselves endowed with this power; and to it is constantly attributed both sickness in men and the failure of cows to give milk. In this belief the elements of actual ill will and quarreling, of actual sickness and the failure of cows to give milk and of actual dream experiences are combined in a significant whole. Witches are of two kinds, they say, those who use their power rightly (*ava maŋga*) and those who use it wrongly (*avalɔsi*). The first kind are said generally to spend their dreams in trying to prevent the others from harming those whom they hate. The good witches are the "defenders of the village," and in each village the great commoner is believed to be the first among them. In each group of men whose cows are herded together there is, again, commonly one man who has the reputation of defender of the herd, who is believed to protect the cows from the witchcraft of disgruntled individuals whether members of that small group or not. But if, at any time, a single person earns a general unpopularity in the village, whether by his pride, his meanness or by wrongdoing, then it is believed that the defenders themselves lead the spiritual attack against him, and he falls sick. Such a blast of unpopularity acting through the power of witchcraft is called the "breath of men" (*embepɔ sya vandu*); and the belief in its efficacy is one of the chief sanctions of the accepted social order of Nyakyusa life.[13]

[13] c.f. Godfrey Wilson "An African Morality" *Africa* Jan. 1936.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Chiefdom and Wider Groups

(*a*) *The "Coming Out"*

128 Space forbids a full description of the relationships of villagers in all their intricate detail, but a short description of the "Coming Out" (*ovosɔka*) which is at the same time the most important legal act and the most exciting ceremonial of Nyakyusa life, will, I hope, make the nature of the age-village completely clear, and will also provide us with an easy transition to the discussion of the organization of the chiefdom (*ekisu*).

622 631 I have never seen a "Coming Out" properly; on one occasion I travelled to see one and arrived just a day late when all the important action and ceremonial was over, but I have had it fully described to me at different times by several people. Every chief (*omalafyule*) is normally succeeded in his chieftainship by two sons, who divide his country between them. There are sometimes exceptions to this: in very large chiefdoms three or even four sons sometimes succeed, each taking a portion of the country; and in minor chiefdoms, that is in small chiefdoms which have come under the dominion of a neighbouring and powerful chief, only one son of the minor chief succeeds to the whole of that country.[14] But the rule is that two sons divide the country of their father. This rule worked well in the old days, for till quite lately the Nyakyusa have been an expanding people in a district too large for their needs; and the combined countries of the two sons nearly always, in the old days, covered a greater area of effective occupation than the country of their father which they had divided. Now saturation point is approaching, or has come, and the rule makes for ever smaller and smaller chiefdoms. Various forces are tending to the alteration of the rule, but it is still a vital part of the constitution. (*vide infra.*)

The "Coming Out" (*ovosɔka*) is a series of legal acts by which the country of an old chief and his great commoners is, with certain reservations, divided and handed over into the possession and control of his two sons and their respective great commoners. These legal acts are accompanied by much pomp and ceremony. It is at once the initiation of all the youth of the old chiefdom into public life, the constitution of two new [796] political units and the proclamation of two new chiefs. The "Coming Out" not only consists of a series of legal acts and public ceremonies, but of religious ritual as well, action is taken to increase the personal qualities appropriate in a chief and his great commoners by magical means.

[14] These minor chiefdoms have nothing to do with the present system of subordinating some chiefs to others (*vide infra.* sec. (b))

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

When the eldest sons of his contemporaries reach the age of about 622
33-35 years the old chief is approached by his great commoners who say : 631
" 'The sons have grown up, let us make the ' Coming Out ' for them."
After a period of delay, for he is unwilling to relinquish his own honour and power, the old chief agrees, and the " Coming Out " takes place. His two heirs, together with all the boys and young men, whether married or single, who are sons of the old chief's contemporaries, are summoned to attend, according to their age-villages, at the old chief's principal house. When they arrive they wait there for two days, while the old great commoners discuss with their chief where to give the young men land, and whom they will select as great commoners of the young villages. We have already noted the principles which guide their choice of leaders. In many of the young village groups there are already leaders who have been previously appointed by the old great commoners, but these leaders are, I am told, only temporary, they are never reappointed at the " Coming Out ; " at the " Coming Out " " everything is made new," the boundaries of the young age-villages are redrawn, and new great commoners appointed in them ; only the groups of young men themselves remain unchanged.

The legal action which now takes place comprizes three events : firstly the public selection of new great commoners, secondly the public appearance and the public recognition of the two young chiefs, and thirdly the giving of land to the young age villages.

When the old men have made up their minds, one of them goes 624
among the crowd of young men and catches hold of those they have chosen in order of their seniority : First the one who is to be leader of the senior village of the first son of the old chief, then the leader of the senior village of his second son, then the leader of the next senior village of the first son, and so on. There are usually eight age-villages of young men, of these four will belong to the chiefdom of the first son, four to that of the second. The eight new great commoners are now publicly known, four in each new chiefdom.

The next stage of the action is the one from which the whole institu- 622
tion takes its name ; the " Coming Out." The two young chiefs are secluded for a few hours in the hut of the old chief's first wife, there they receive various forms of magical treatment and when it is finished, "then," to quote the words of a great commoner who told me about his own [789]
coming out, " the director of ceremonies said : ' Get up ! ' the chiefs got up, and came out of the house to us, and we, the crowd of young men, said : ' Come on ! ' and welcomed them. Then we all ran shouting and calling the war cry towards the next chiefdom. In the old days we would

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

622 have invaded that country for cows and brought them back and eaten them at the new huts which we built next. But that is finished now." In this way the new chiefs are shown to their people.

631 Finally the young men are told exactly where to go and build, and the boundaries between the new chiefdoms and the villages of each are fixed; the old boys' villages are abandoned and the houses gradually pulled down and put up in their new places. At first the men of the four age-villages of each young chief just put up rough shelters to sleep in, all together on the place where the senior age-village of each new chiefdom will later be built, but after a month or two they separate, each village to its own place, and there they build their houses.

The land is now their own, they are no longer members of boys' villages, living on land given them at the side of the parent villages by their fathers, they are owners of the soil, full citizens, with chief and great commoners to rule them.

(b) *Organization and Life of a single Chiefdom*

622 583 A few months after the "Coming Out" each of the two young chiefs marries two wives. He may be married already, but the two whom he now takes rank as his great wives (*avehe avakolombu*) and their sons are his two heirs in the chieftainship. Young girls, daughters of neighbouring chiefs, are carried off with a show of force from their fathers' homes by the young chief's men, who, themselves, later send cows to regularize the position. The two great wives are thus married, not with the cows of their husband, but with those of the men whose sons their sons will one day rule.

622 585 881 Girls are carried off who are just about to reach puberty, and they stay at the house of one of the men of the old chief until their periods begin. When both have reached puberty they are initiated, not at their fathers' houses, but in the country of their husband, both together. At their initiation, the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the old, retiring, chief) play the part normally played by a girl's parents and their neighbours, while the young chief and his men take the usual part of a husband and his friends. And then, after the ceremonies are over, the two girls are given to the young chief as his wives. Houses are built for them separately: in the senior age-village of the new chiefdom for the first wife, in the next senior village for the second wife; and in this separation of dwelling place is already apparent the future division of the chiefdom between their sons.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Within the chiefdom, and among the wives and children of the chief, 622
two " sides " (*embafu*) are recognized. In the normal country there are, 631
at its beginning, two age-villages and half the wives of the chief on either side ; for the junior wives, as they are married, are attached in a recognized order of seniority to one or the other of the two great wives, and have their own houses near them. This distinction of two sides is important in succession. If one of the two great wives bears no son, then the great commoners of the chiefdom often publicly accept the son of the next senior wife on that side as the heir to that half of the country ; and, even if they do not do so during the old chief's lifetime, such a man has always a strong claim to the succession. And the two heirs each rank as head of one side of their father's family when he and his full-brothers are all dead.

Between the time of the two young chiefs' " Coming Out " and their 631
own father's death there is, between him and them, a delicate balance of prestige and power. Each of the three, traditionally, has political authority in his own age-villages, but appeals in difficult cases may be taken from either of the young chiefs and their great commoners to the old chief and his great commoners, while the religious duties of chieftanship are exercized entirely by the old chief. During this transition period the functions of chieftanship are divided between three men, each with his own great commoners to assist him. It is necessary to understand that an old chief is believed usually to die soon after the " Coming Out " of his sons. The " breath " (i.e. witchcraft) of the people is believed to kill him because men love his sons rather than himself. When I asked about one chief (Mwakalukwa) who did not die till about fifteen years after the " Coming Out " of his sons, I was told that his was an exceptional case ; " The people loved him very much because he helped them with the Government." None the less such exceptions are not unusual. But, in any case, it is commonly said that " after his sons' ' Coming Out ' the old chief's power decreases, while that of his sons increases." When he dies his wives and cows are inheried by his full-brother, and to this brother also passes the religious leadership of both the two new chiefdoms, but all general or political power now normally[15] passes to the two sons. The period of transition is over, and the control of the age-villages of old men now passes to the two young chiefs and their great commoners, half to each side. The great commoners of the old chief, relinquishing most of their secular functions to their successors, enter upon new religious duties as priests in the worship of the chief who has just died, and this priesthood, as we shall see, they hand on to their

[15] Certain recent events have altered the working of this rule in some chiefdoms. (*vide infra.*)

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631 sons. To the dead chief's full-brother go his wives and cattle, so that property and power are usually inherited separately; in all the cases which I have investigated however, this brother has himself given some of the cows to the young chiefs, but the reasons for his action are still obscure to me. In so far as the dead chief's brother is still the religious head of both chiefdoms the functions of chieftanship may be said still to be divided; but all the secular functions are now normally exercized by the young chiefs. And the religious functions also fall to them when all their father's full-brothers are dead.

Political authority is the general authority of one or more persons within a community, whether local or nomadic, which goes beyond the bounds of a single family; a leadership confined to no one type of behaviour, but ordering a variety of social activities. Such an authority is wielded by a Nyakyusa chief, together with his great commoners, in his own chiefdom. There a number of legal, economic, religious[16] and ceremonial activities are controlled by them; and there, before the coming of the Europeans, they had military leadership also. But before that event no man had any wide political authority beyond the single chiefdom. The chiefs of Lubaga[17] had a far-reaching religious pre-eminence, but no general or political influence at all beyond their own country.

622a The only extensions of political power beyond a single chiefdom
578 before European times, as far as I know, arose from the rivalry of brother chiefs. The division of an old chief's country into two was not always accepted by the young men concerned; quarrels and fighting between them were common, and the position established at the "Coming Out" was sometimes modified by war. If one of the two decisively defeated the other, he took all his brother's cows and reduced him to a subordinate position. The land of the Nyakyusa is full of such minor chiefdoms; by the clerks who collect tax they are described as "villages," but they are
622 radically different from villages in their constitution. For, while they often consist only of a few score families, they are themselves articulated into age-villages and have at their head, not an elected great commoner (*olifumu*) but a hereditary chief (*omalafyale*). A minor chief marries in the ordinary way, like a commoner, and only one of his sons inherits his chieftanship; while his chiefdom, owing to its small size, is often simply divided into two villages, one for the old, one for the young men. To-day his position carries with it neither wealth nor power; he has some authority over his own people, but less than the great commoners of his powerful

[16] I am now speaking of the position of a chief after his father and all his father's full-brothers are dead, and before his own sons have "come out."
[17] *Vide infra*, sec: (c)

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

kinsman. Though some of the reasons for his subordination are to be found in modern conditions, it is clear that many of the factors have always operated. 622

Wars did not only occur between brothers; but when one chief defeated another who was more distantly related to him, he did not, apparently ever, reduce him to a minor position: He either took his cows and then left him alone, or killed him and set up a brother of his own as an independent though allied chief, or else, more rarely, killed him, took over the country and directly incorporated it in his own. So that, apart from the subordination of a defeated brother and his heirs, political authority always stopped at the boundaries of each separate chiefdom.[16] 622 727

The traditionally independent chiefdoms to-day vary in numbers from 100 to about 3,000 adult men. 631 161

The coming of the German Administration in 1893 introduced a paramount political authority, for the first time, in the persons of European officials; while in 1926, a generation later, the British Administration created new Native Authorities under the District Officer and superior to the chiefs. The traditionally independent chiefs were grouped together in eleven court districts, in each district a "Native Court" was set up, consisting of the various chiefs and their great commoners, under the hereditary presidency of one of the chiefs, who thereby became senior to all the others in that court district. Salaries for chiefs have been introduced, and the senior chiefs receive far higher salaries than the others; while the meetings of each Court are always held in the territory of the senior chief (*omalafyale oŋkolomba*); and to it has now been transferred a great deal of the legal business which, before 1926, was transacted by each chief sitting with his own great commoners in his own chiefdom. The chiefs themselves were consulted in the selection of the Court Presidents, and those chosen were normally the chiefs with the greatest number of men in each particular court district. 636 177 [465]

In this account the term *senior chief* (*omalafyale oŋkolomba*) denotes the President of a Native Court, *chief* (*omalafyale*) means one of the traditionally independent chiefs, while *minor chief* (*omalafyale omnandi*) means one of the subordinate chiefs, often with only 40-60 men under him.

The introduction of Courts and salaries has brought an entirely new element into the relationship between old and young chiefs (*vide* 636 177 578

[16] Among the Konde of Nyasaland, I am told, there was a paramount chief Kyungu, with a far-reaching political authority; but there was no such chief among the Nyakyusa.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

636 *supra*). Only one of them can receive the salary and they commonly
177 dispute about it. Quarrels are particularly frequent over the position of
578 senior chief, for the presidency of a Court carries with it a relatively large salary. Old senior chiefs cling to the position long after their sons have "come out" and when they die their full-brothers still dispute the position with the sons because of the salary involved. Such a situation could not have arisen before 1926, for then there was no comparable issue between them.

636 And the introduction of salaries has also had a most profound effect
622 upon the relative status of the two young chiefs who "come out"
177 together. When an ordinary chief, with a small salary, dies the Government recognizes the first son alone as chief and pays the whole salary to him. This reduces the second son to the position of a minor chief as effectively as a defeat in war might have done in the old days. But, while the action of warfare only occasionally led to the subordination of one of the brothers, this action of the Government does so invariably, and always subordinates the younger brother. When a senior chief dies, on the other hand, the salary is usually divided: the bulk of it goes to the first son, together with the position of senior chief, while to the second son is given the salary of an ordinary chief.

554 As the prestige and authority of a father in his family, or of a man
622 among his neighbours, is closely connected with his wealth on the one hand, and with his believed religious powers on the other, so also the status of a chief among his people. He has more cows, more wives, more food than other men; he is spiritually responsible for the fertility of the land, the women and the cattle of his chiefdom. But he is no autocrat, and all his public functions require for their exercise the co-operation of his great commoners.

622 Polygyny is, above all, the mark of a chief. Few commoners have
595 more than five or six wives, but a chief frequently marries fifteen, thirty, fifty or even more; his wives weed and plant the fields which their unmarried sons hoe, and there is plenty of food for guests. Chiefs themselves hoe when they have time, and often they employ a poor man to hoe for them as well, rewarding him after a year or two with a cow. It is not
[537] possible for one man to satisfy so many women sexually, and it is generally said that every chief's wife, save the five or six who are his favourites, has a lover. But intrigues must be carried on with care, for their discovery means a great public scandal.

The extent of a chief's polygyny is conditioned by his control of cattle, and his income in cattle is derived mainly from inheritance and the

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

marriages of his kinswomen. When his father dies his father's wives 622
and cows pass to his father's full-brother, but they come to him and his 595
brother eventually when this man dies. While, if the young chiefs have "come out" it is common for their father's brother to hand over some, or even the bulk of the cattle, to them before his own death. And in his own half of the family, among his siblings and half-siblings on that side, a chief has far greater rights both of inheritance and of receiving marriage-cattle, than those possessed by the senior son of a commoner. So much is clear from my evidence, but it is not yet sufficiently detailed for an exact statement of rules.

Before 1893 fighting between chiefdoms was common and, except 631
between brother chiefs, the usual aim of fighting was, not conquest, but 721
cows; wars were generally just cattle raids. And a substantial proportion of the cows captured in a successful raid went to increase the herds of the chief. This lost source of income is now supplied by Government 435
salaries, which vary from 5/- to £15 a month.[10] The price of a cow is £2; 466
but many shillings are spent on clothes, bicycles and beer, as well as on cows.

A chief, like any other rich man, maintains his prestige by hospitality, 622
he constantly entertains his more notable subjects with beer, at the 527
ceremonies of his family all his people gather in their age-villages and he kills cattle for them to eat. Chiefs seldom nowadays kill cattle except on ceremonial occasions, but in the old days of warfare they used also, I am told, to entertain their subjects with meat from time to time, in order to keep up their spirits for fighting. History is full of stories of Nyakyusa chiefs who attracted many men to their countries, and so gained great military strength, by the generosity and abundance of their feasts.

Every time a man or woman dies, a message must be sent to the 622
chief, and at the burial he is given the whole breast and ribs (*ahakusa*) of 764
one of the cows which are killed by the family of the dead person at that time. He has the right to take food or milk from any of his subjects if he has need of it; but he cannot take any man's beast without later returning another to him.

Apart from the now abandoned pursuit of cattle raiding the only 631
profitable enterprises in which the members of a whole chiefdom jointly 476
participate are those of hunting and fishing; in some chiefdoms, but not

[10] Salaries above £1 a month are only paid to senior chiefs. No minor chief gets a Government salary, nor do great-commoners. The local value of money is shown (a) by the tax (8/- p.a.), (b) by the wages of unskilled labour (6/- to 8/- p.m.)

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631
476 all, hunting is organized like warfare and fishing is a joint endeavour, both ordered by the chief.

471 Every chief has a title of ownership (*obwene nakyo*) to the land of his
622 chiefdom and can evict any man he pleases, (giving him another plot), if he wishes to build there himself; but his people also have titles of ownership to it, both collectively, under the leadership of the great commoners, and individually, each man to his own ground. It is the great commoners who, in consultation with their neighbours, give to the sons of each village land on which to build; it is they who, together, finally fix the boundaries of the young men's villages at their "Coming Out;" it is they who, again in consultation with their neighbours, grant land to strangers who ask for it, though they must notify the chief and get his approval before doing so.

627 As the single great commoners settle disputes within their own
692 villages so the chief and great commoners together hear and decide cases within the chiefdom. Many of these legal actions are now settled in the Courts, but not all of them; and, even when cases are going to Court, preliminary hearings commonly take place before the chief, first. Cases are conducted and witnesses interrogated by chief and great commoners together, and the decision which the chief pronounces is an expression of their general opinion.

554 Among the great commoners there is an order of seniority. The
624 leaders of the two senior age-villages of the chief's own men play a prominent part at his "Coming Out," they each have a pre-eminent authority in one side of his chiefdom, and the other great commoners rank as their juniors, some on one side, some on the other. In the old days the two senior great commoners each led a whole side of the chiefdom in war.

622 The two most effective checks on the power of a chief are migration
754 and witchcraft. Military strength used to depend upon the number of a chief's adherents, to-day the scale of his salary is similarly dependent; men are quite free to move, and there is a constant flow of adherents from unpopular to popular chiefs. But unpopularity is most feared in its spiritual form of witchcraft. We have seen already that an adverse current of opinion is believed to act invisibly, as the "breath of men," against an unpopular member of a village and to make him sick. So also the adverse opinion of a single village or of a whole chiefdom is believed to have power against a chief, to bring sickness or even death upon him. As in the single village, so in the whole chiefdom the great commoners are the prime sources of this spiritual power; they are believed severally to protect the members of their own villages and jointly to protect their

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

chief from the wanton attacks of witches; but if ever there is a just 622
ground of offence they are believed to join their own power of witchcraft 754
in the general attack. I know one chief who dare not give a judgement in a dispute between two of his villages for fear of the indignant witchcraft of the losing side. And a general unpopularity is believed always to lead, sooner or later to a chief's death.

Chiefs also, like other men, fear the use of sorcery (i.e. destructive magic) against them, and use a number of protective "medicines" (i.e. materials of magic) to protect themselves from it. They also use powerful "medicines" to give themselves personal impressiveness, prestige and authority among their people.

While in the families of commoners an ancestral spirit is only believed 771
to affect the lives of his own descendants, the ancestors of a chief, on the 622
other hand, are supposed to influence, for good or ill, the fortunes of whole chiefdoms. Rain and good crops, the fertility of women and cattle are dependent upon their good will, which in its turn is believed to depend upon a recurrent sacrifice of cows. And for this sacrifice the chiefs, their living descendants, are responsible.[10] But, owing to the continuous division of chiefdoms every generation, several chiefs are concerned in each sacrifice; every dead chief is a source of misfortune or of blessing in the countries of all his direct descendants. And so the discussion of this part of the Nyakyusa religion leads us to the investigation of the groups which extend beyond the boundaries of a single chief-chiefdom.

(c) *Groups wider than the Chiefdom*

When a chief dies he is buried near the house of his senior great wife 778
and trees are planted on his grave. The trees grow and form a sacred 793
grove (*ilinyele*) hedged by taboos. Each of these groves is at first the 764
religious centre of two, later of a number of chiefdoms, and in them the sacrifices are made. Responsibility for finding the cow for sacrifice in a particular grove rests with one of the living chiefs concerned, but responsibility for initiating the ritual and performing it lies not only with the chiefs but also with the hereditary priests (*amayaga*) in each chiefdom. These hereditary priests are descended, some from the great commoners of the dead chief who is buried in that particular grove, some from his half-brothers. The ritual is esoteric, there is no gathering of the people at the sacrifice, and only chiefs and those with hereditary priesthoods [625]

[10] I am speaking here of the religious customs of the Nyakyusa proper and the Ngonde people. I believe those of the Kukwe and Mwamba are very similar, but I have not studied them in detail.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 come to it. But, on the other hand, everyone knows when a sacrifice is
778 taking place, and, in spite of the influence of missions, most people in the
793 pagan community believe in its efficacy.

782 Sacrifices are prompted either by actual misfortune or by prophecies
787 of it. The four sacrifices which I have seen myself were all stimulated by an actual shortage of food, and the hereditary priests have often told me that "now-a-days the chiefs do not listen to us until hunger comes." But, traditionally, sacrifices are said to have been usually prompted by prophecies of coming misfortune which was then averted by them. In each chiefdom the ruling great commoners, the hereditary priests and some private persons as well are believed to have the power of dreaming of misfortune (*okokunguluka*) before it comes. And the chiefs are said always to have listened to these dreams, formerly, and to have acted upon them.

778 Among the groves there is an order of seniority; the older the grove
173 the more chiefdoms are concerned in the sacrifices there. And in Selya is the most important grove of all—Lubaga. All the chiefdoms of Selya, many of the Nyakyusa proper and even some of the neighbouring chiefdoms of the Mwamba are traditionally concerned in its sacrifices. Lubaga, the Nyakyusa say, is the grove of Lwembe, one of the original chiefs who came down the Livingstone Mountains from the East, eight or nine generations ago; and from him all the present Selya chiefs are descended. The ancestor of the chiefs of the Nyakyusa proper was a brother of Lwembe; and though the Kukwe and Mwamba chiefs are not related, yet those of the Mwamba who are nearest to Lubaga used to send cows there for sacrifice as well, because of the great reputation that this grove had.

622 Sacrifices are still made in the country of the chief of Lubaga
782 (Mwakisiya) for all the surrounding chiefdoms, but the full ritual has not been carried out for fourty years. Traditionally each chief of Lubaga was ritually installed into a position somewhat resembling that of Sir James Frazer's "Divine Kings," a position hedged with taboos, in which not only the sacrifices he made to Lwembe but his own health and fertility also were believed to be intimately connected with the prosperity of his own and neighbouring chiefdoms. But the present chief has never been properly installed, nor was his father before him. The sacrifices at Lubaga are believed to benefit not only the Nyakyusa but also the next
[173] tribe to the East, the Kinga, who live on the heights of the Livingstone Mountains; for Lwembe, they say, was born a Kinga and moved down the mountains to Lubaga, taking the fertility of the soil with him. And

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

And every year two hereditary Kinga priests come a three days journey from their own country to participate in the sacrifice of a black cow to the spirits of Lwembe and his descendants.

Down by Lake Nyasa, in the extreme South East of the Nyakyusa district, there is another equally sacred spot where sacrifices were, and believe still are[21] made to Kyala, a younger brother of Lwembe.

The Christians and the Moslems form other religious groups which transcend the boundaries of a single chiefdom, but an examination of the Nyakyusa Christian and Moslem communities is beyond the scope of this paper.

The political group which is constituted by a Court district, though only ten years old, is of great importance in Nyakyusa society; but here again the detailed examination of its organization and the relationships of its members is beyond the scope of this paper.

Conclusion: Culture and Society

The aim of sociology is to describe single forms of society fully and, in comparison with one another, to explain them completely, in so far as reasons can be found within this particular scientific field. Neither full description nor complete explanation of Nyakyusa society has here been attempted: many important facts have been omitted from the account, irregularities of detail have been slurred over, the connections of fact have been only occasionally and sketchily established, and no systematic comparison of this unit with others has been made at all.

But the method of this paper has involved an analysis, summary and general though it has been, of the nature of some of the many institutions in which the Nyakyusa meet, of some of the actual elements in their relationships with one another. It is in their dealings with the earth and their cattle, with the spirits and with men who break the law, in their discussions and arguments, their ceremonial feasts, their giving and receiving, in their loves and hates and in their admiration and mockery of one another that they forever make and remake their own human relationships.

Culture is the matter of which society is the form; inseparable in fact they are only intelligible together. No two men can be related unless they both do something and unless their activities are somehow connected. Nor can either escape relationship with his fellow if what

[21] I have not yet been there to investigate.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

121 one does in any way affects the other's behaviour. "Culture" is but a general term for all the connected activities of a group of people through which they enter into relationships, that is into society, with one another. And since culture is nothing but the activities which bind men wittingly or unwittingly together, it is only through a systematic investigation of culture that we can reach any understanding at all of human bonds.

Every cultural activity must have some point, some meaning, for the actors themselves[22] or they would not undertake it; it must have some value, some emotional appeal, some intellectual significance for them. This meaning is not the sole reason for their behaviour but it is one among other reasons. And, as what they do is an occasion of relationship with one another, so the meaning of what they do is also one of the reasons for the existence of their society in that particular situation.

Now the specific meaning of a cultural activity to the actors is not always a direct interest in one another or in human relationships as such, although sometimes, as in love making or in a movement for social reform, it may be so. In their behaviour men commonly look to some non-social end and create society half unwittingly on the way. When the Nyakyusa sacrifice a cow to the spirits of dead chiefs, or hoe their fields, or drink, or discuss the cause of a sickness, the specific reasons for their behaviour are to be found in values, ideas and feelings connected with health, food, drink, sickness and misfortune in general; and it is, in large part, their concern with these things that leads them to enter into society with one another. Human relationships are largely determined by the consequences, implications, and associations of absorbing pursuits whose immediate interest is not social, they are only in part the specific ends of effort, the direct objects of thought and feeling.

But apart from men's actual pursuits society has no existence anywhere, it can only be found in the material events of culture, at particular places and times; and only through a systematic analysis of the meanings and implications of those events can society be understood.

What we have just said involves a radical criticism of the Durkheimian method in social science; for that method always stops short of any thorough analysis of the manifold meanings and implications of cultural institutions, and so can never reveal the true nature of society which only exists in them. The Durkheimian's "social integration" or "solidarity" is a system of human relationships with only emotional

[22] Not for all the actors, some of whom usually behave under the compulsion of sanctions, but for the majority of those responsible for the activity's continuance.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

elements, void of all intelligible occasions of existence, a bloodless fiction, an insignificant idea.

Since every cultural activity is in part determined by external conditions of biology, climate, geography and historical circumstance, these conditions are also partial determinants of the human relationships involved in it. But the values, opinions and emotions current in any society are very largely independent of external conditions and cannot be deduced from them. And it is these aims, ideas and feelings which, through the activities to which they give point, and through the consequences, associations and implications of these activities provide the cultural conditions for each particular form of human society.

Thus culture, the matter, conditions the form of society which exists in it; but the reverse is equally true, for every cultural activity is itself conditioned and made possible by the system of human relationships of which the society in question consists. Culture has no independent reality, it is always together with and at every moment conditioned by the relationships of people, for it is nothing but their connected behaviour. The form in which men act, in which they express their feelings and understand their world is inevitably and always conditioned by their relationships with one another. Into the meaning of cultural activities human relationships only occasionally enter as the immediate centre of the actors' interest, but they invariably enter as the context in which alone that meaning can exist. When a Nyakyusa hoes his fields he is directly seeking food and his action has thus an interest which is not at that moment specifically social, none the less it is socially conditioned in its entirety. The time and energy he puts into hoeing depend upon his need of food, which in turn largely depends upon the number of his wives and children, his responsibilities to them and the prestige that he has acquired or that he wishes to acquire for hospitality among his neighbours. And his every action, his every statement, his every overt expression of feeling is likewise socially conditioned.

A true sociological method is thus a systematic investigation of the mutual connections of culture and society, an attempt to show how the material and the form of social life forever condition each other. It is only in this way that we can reach understanding of the separate units of human society and of the universal laws which all alike fulfill.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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142
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643

THE KYUNGU, PETER

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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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COMMUNAL RITUALS OF THE NYAKYUSA

MONICA WILSON

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To the BaNyakyusa

with affection and respect

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FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CONTENTS

000

I INTRODUCTORY 1

II THE MYTHOLOGICAL CHARTER 7

III THE 'DIVINE KINGS' 17
(a) Characteristics of 'divine kings'
(b) Lubaga
(c) Mbande
(d) PaliKyala

IV THE RITUAL OF CHIEFTAINSHIP 49
(a) The 'coming out'
(b) The chief's medicines
(c) Death and burial of a chief
(d) The chief and the 'breath of men'
(e) The necessity for harmony

V SACRIFICES AT THE GROVES OF CHIEFS 70
(a) The place, occasion, and form of sacrifice
(b) Sacrifice to Mwaijonga
(c) Sacrifice to Mwakisambwe
(d) Sacrifice at Kabale
(e) Modern changes
(f) The first fruits

VI LAND AND POWER 88
(a) The territorial alignment of chiefdoms and villages
(b) The balance between generations and sections
(c) Ritual and secular bonds

VII CLEANSING THE COUNTRY 102
(a) The rats
(b) The ground hornbill
(c) Smallpox
(d) The wild pig

VIII RAIN-MAKING AND 'SPRINKLING THE HOMESTEADS' 114
(a) Rain magic
(b) Magic of fertility

IX KASITILE THE PRIEST 123

X MEDICINES 142
(a) Types of medicines
(b) Medicines and morality
(c) Doctors
(d) Symbolism

XI NYAKYUSA COSMOLOGY 154

XII PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN 166
(a) The growth of a Christian community
(b) The Christian withdrawal
(c) Christian ritual and dogma
(d) 'Independent' African Churches
(e) The contrast between pagan and Christian

XIII TWENTY YEARS' CHANGE 203

XIV RELIGION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE 216

INDEX 227

[p. v]
[p. iv is blank]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

MAPS, PLANS, AND TABLES

000

1. Map I. Country north of Lake Nyasa — *page* x
2. Chiefs of Lwembe's Line — *facing page* 3
3. Chiefs of the Kukwe Line — " " 27
4. Map II. Nyakyusa valley showing location of chiefdoms — *page* 87
5. Villages of Mwaipopo's chiefdom (1935–55) — *facing page* 91
6. Plan of Mwaipopo's chiefdom (C 24) in 1955 — " " 100
7. Membership of villages
   (*a*) Lupando — *page* 224
   (*b*) Katumba — " 225
   (*c*) Katela — " 226
8. Commoner priests mentioned — " 226

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

The Kyungu, Peter — *frontispiece*
1. Cattle at pasture — *facing page* 14
2. The road to Lwembe — 15
3. Mbande Hill — 22
4*a*. Sacrifice at Lubaga — 23
4*b*. The sacrificial meat — 23
5*a*. Priests of Lubaga (Kinga) — 39
5*b*. Kinga priests with horn and drum — 39
6. Young chief with his trees — 54
7. Heir to a chiefdom (Mwanyilu in 1936) — 55
8. Communion with the shades — 70
9. Shrine in the sacred grove, Mbyanga — 71
10*a*. Kasitile the priest — 118
10*b*. Divination with porridge — 118
11. Rungwe Church — 119
12*a*. Ngemela, founder of a Separatist Church — 166
12*b*. Nyasuru, leader of the African National Church — 166
13. Maria, a Christian elder — 167

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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122
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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

K
N
102
103
133
487
131
101

Map I. Country north of Lake Nyasa

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE peoples with whom this book is concerned, the Nyakyusa and the Ngonde, occupy an area shut in by mountains at the northern end of Lake Nyasa, and enjoy a culture which, though varying locally, clearly springs from a common basis and is traditionally attributed to similar origins. The most conspicuous features of their political organization are (i) the balance of power between chiefs and commoners; (ii) the 'coming out' ritual in which a generation of men which has governed for approximately thirty years retires and hands over the administration to its sons, retaining only ritual functions; and (iii) the system of age-villages.

All are agreed that chiefs and commoners belong to different stocks; the commoners being descended from the original occupants of the country while the chiefs trace their descent to a line of invaders who came down from the Livingstone mountains eight generations ago. According to the myth, they brought with them fire, and cattle, and iron tools, and they found a people who ate their food raw in a land 'without trees'.[1] Commoners are *abatitu*, black people, while Ngulube, an early ancestor of the chiefs, was 'pale'[2] and chiefs (*abanyafyale*) generally are said to have been lighter in colour and 'different in their bodies'. After generations of intermarriage between chiefs and commoners there is no consistent difference in physical type between them, but the range of physical type among the Nyakyusa as a whole is wide.[3]

Nyakyusa and Ngonde historians say that their chiefs are related to those of the Kinga, who live high above the Nyakyusa valley to the east in the Livingstone mountains, whence the chiefs came. The Kinga acknowledge the connexion and join with the Nyakyusa in sacrifice to their common heroes, but culturally the

[1] Possibly the lake-shore plain. The hills until cultivated are covered with either savannah or rain forest.

[2] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3, p. 10 (1939). According to the Ngonde version Ngulube was the *first* ancestor.

[3] cf. F. Fülleborn, *Beiträge zur physischen Anthropologie der Nord-Nyassaländer* (1908). *Das Deutsche Nyasa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet Atlas* (1906).

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

N K 171 [197] N [186] 173

two peoples are distinct. Their languages are not mutually intelligible and the Nyakyusa despise the Kinga as dirty in habit and obsequious in manner. There were two main invasions from BuKinga: (i) that of the 'sons of Lwembe' who settled south and east of Tukuyu, and (ii) that of the 'sons of Ngomale' (or Kukwe), who settled first at Kina below the northern crater of Rungwe volcano, and then at Kabale in the foothills to the south-east. Most of the present chiefs of the Nyakyusa belong to one or other of these two lineages, and the chiefs of Ngonde are claimed by both. The arrival of the chiefs of Lwembe's line may be fixed between 1560 and 1650, i.e. before the settlement at the Cape, but after the death of the first Christian martyr in what is now Rhodesia[1] and the 'sons of Ngomale' followed them some generations later (*vide infra*, genealogies pp. 3, 27; p. 94). Two of the invading heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, became 'divine kings' whose successors claimed spiritual authority over wide areas, and the heirs of Kyungu gradually acquired temporal power also.

N 173 643

N 173

About the first inhabitants of the Nyakyusa valley, the *abilema*, tradition is vague; however, it is clear that they were not one people, but consisted of small, scattered, independent groups, disparate in origin. Some were very early invaders from BuKinga, others came from near Lake Rukwa and were kin to the Bungu of the Rukwa plain. They occupied an almost empty country (as their name indicates) but they found pygmy hunters[2] in the Rungwe forests. The invaders themselves were primarily hunters and honey-gatherers, though some, at least, of them began to cultivate millet, beans, and pumpkins. One group of early inhabitants, the Penja, which was pushed into the north-west corner of the valley, has remained relatively discrete, though for the most part they have fused with the conquerors.

N [241] N [563]

It is clear that nowhere were the invaders allowed to establish themselves as tyrants since, though their descendants rule over the various chiefdoms, their authority is strictly limited by the headmen of the villages who are invariably of commoner stock. Moreover, while the most sacred persons in the country are, or before the coming of the Europeans were, 'divine kings', descendants of the original heroes, chosen by each generation to become their

[622] [643] [563]

[1] In 1561, cf. G. M. Theal, *Records of South-East Africa*, vol. ii, p. 196.

[2] The quality of relations with the Pygmies is summed up in the ironical name for them 'Where did you see me?' (*Umbusenlaga?*) The tale is that they were very sensitive about their size and the first question on meeting a Nyakyusa was always: 'Where did you see me?' The only safe reply was: 'Far, far away!'

9: Wilson
173
643

FN17 Ngonde
Nyakyusa

Chart showing position of sections of chart on "Chiefs of Lwembe's Line." (Facing page 3)

A	B	C
D	E	F
G	H	I

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

living representatives, to take their name, and to sacrifice at their groves, it was commoner priests who chose them and, as will be seen, put them to death when it was expedient for the good of the people. It is clear, too, from what source the commoners drew their power. The invaders were supposed to have brought into the country fire, cattle, crops, and iron; they were creators, the guarantors and preservers of fertility; and it was to foster and increase fertility that men worshipped and sacrificed at the groves of the mythical heroes. The aborigines, on the other hand, without fire, without iron, and feeding on raw meat as the myth depicts them, possessed one weapon of terrible potency, witchcraft, which no chief, not even a priest of the chief's lineage, could withstand or would dare to challenge. To the Nyakyusa the essential nature of the universe, established in history and in the institutions of their society, was reciprocity, a balance between chiefs and commoners, between cattle-owners and cultivators, between the creative power of the heroes and the black anger of the witches. The idea of a chief who was a dictator was as foreign as the idea of a single omnipotent creator. Moreover, there was a multiplicity of chiefs, no single central authority.

The heroic tradition, then, accounts for the differences between the chiefs and commoners and for the remarkable equilibrium that obtains between them. It accounts also, as we shall find, for the 'coming out' ritual, at least in part. It is strangely silent, however, about the origin of what is perhaps the most striking feature of Nyakyusa social life, the system of age-villages. The absence of any link between the myths of the heroes and the founding of age-villages is the more surprising in that the pattern of age-organization almost certainly came into the valley from the north-east. Only in East Africa was government based on age groups and the handing over of power from one generation to the next celebrated by whole communities. If the system of age-villages came in with the eastern invaders why is this contribution to civilized living (for the Nyakyusa regard village life as the essence of civilization) never mentioned? The only explanation we can offer is that the age structure is not necessarily linked with chieftainship, whereas the control of cattle and iron was the basis of power, and making fire was a symbol, not only of a new chieftainship, but of the vital creative force in the body of the chief. The heroic cycle justifies the relations between chiefs and commoners, but is not concerned with other institutions of the society.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173
643

[facing p. 9; section A]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHIEFS OF LWEMBE'S LINE

173
643

24 Mwakajoka — 32 Mwaiseke — 46 Mwakajileke — 63 Mwakilembo — 90 Mwalwembe (Nsamba)* — ?

25 Mwakalukwa (lost country ∵ committed adultery w. father's wives) — 33 Mwankyuse — 47 Mwakasungu — 64 Mwanyombola — 91 Mwakanyamale — ?

34 Mwaiswelo (lost country to Mwakyusa whom men preferred)

48 Mwakipenile — 65 Mwanzanu (buried Mundwanga near Mbaka R.) — 92 Mwanyekule (buried Mbugama) — ?

93 Swebe — ?

66 Mwakalendile — 94 Mwankuga — ?

26 Mwaipopo I (buried Kambasegela) — 35 Mwangulube died while sons young; land to Mwankyuse. Men to Mwakyusa. Descendants are commoners)

36 Mwakilinga (buried Kwakamilo near Mbaka R.) — 49 Mwakalasi — 67 Mwakalobo II — 95 Mwasunabwe — ?

37 Mulangi — 50 Mwakagile — 68 Mwakondela — 96 Mwamasungule?

38 Mwakyusa I (with aid of sons and Saku chiefs drove Kyungu across Songwe) — 51 Mwakanyamale — 69 Mwanyilo — 97 Mwaiumo — ?

70 Mwabulambo — 98 Mwaipani — ?

52 Mwakipenile (Kiputa. A great warrior) — 71 Mwakatundo — 99 Mwakyembe I — ?

100 Mwakyembe II (Mwangamile)

101 Mwaulama — ?

102 Mwakilima — ?

72 Mwankenja — 103 Mwasonda — ?

104 Mwalhambe — ?

[facing p. 3; section B]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

173
643

					Ref. No. of Chieftdom
ho	90 Mwakwembe (Nsamba)*	196 Mwangwala	158 Pemli		C 1
Asia	91 Mwakanyamale	197 Mwaigw enya	159 Mwakinile	189 Mwakilwile (Jack)	C 2
			160 Mwajumbe		
ga in	92 Mwanyekule (buried Mbugruma)	198 Mwakatumbula (buried Mbugruma)	161 Mwaijande (d. shortly after coming out)		C 3
			162 Mwambete? (came out c. 1910, d. 1955)	183 Mwakipesile I d. 1937 184 Mwakpesile II	
		199 Mwambaga II	163 Mwakyusa?		C 4
	93 Swebe	200 Mwandembe	164 Mwacumbi	185 Paul	C 5
Ele	94 Mwaukuge	201 Mwanambwa	165 Mwakilima?		C 6
o II	95 Mwamunbwe	202 Mwakalinga			C 7
ha	96 Mwamazengula?				C 8
	97 Mwaisumo	203 Mwakatundu			C 9
ho	98 Mwaipani	204 Mwanamo	166 Mwandulenya	186 Mwamuwu? (Gordon)	C 10
ha	99 Mwakyembe I	205 Mwakyusa Ruling 1890	167 Mwakitale		C 11
	100 Mwakyembe II (Mwaiganile)				C 12
	101 Mwandawa	206 Mwakaglile?			C 13
	102 Mwakilima	207 Mwakalokwa* (near Songwe)			C 14
	103 Mwacumla	208 Mwakabelafu 'came out' c. 1885	168 Mwalimale	187 Mwakipesile	C 15
	104 Mwalisumbe	209 Mwamuno	169 Mwamazengula	188 Mwakalokwa	C 16

[facing p. 5; section C]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

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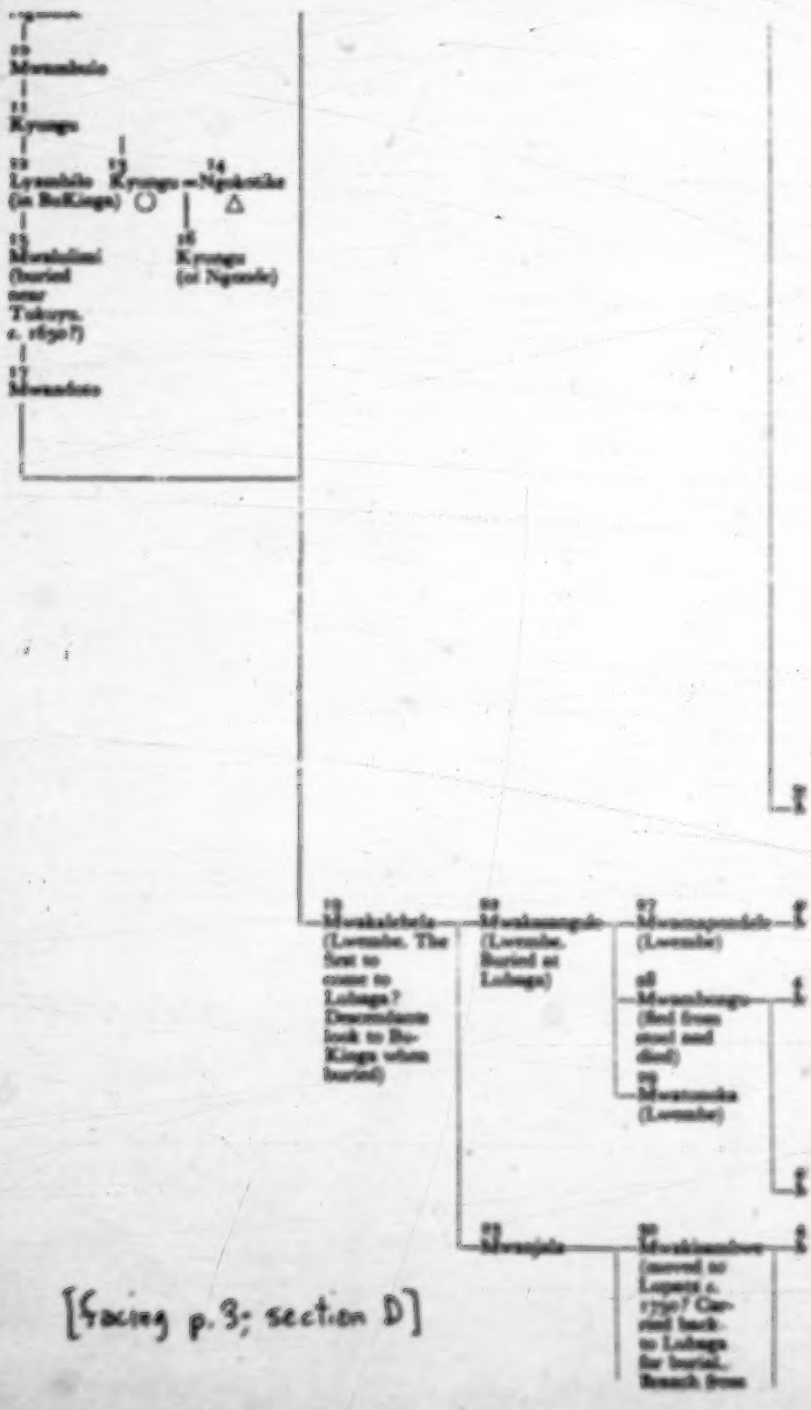

[Facing p. 3; section D]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

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Nyakyusa

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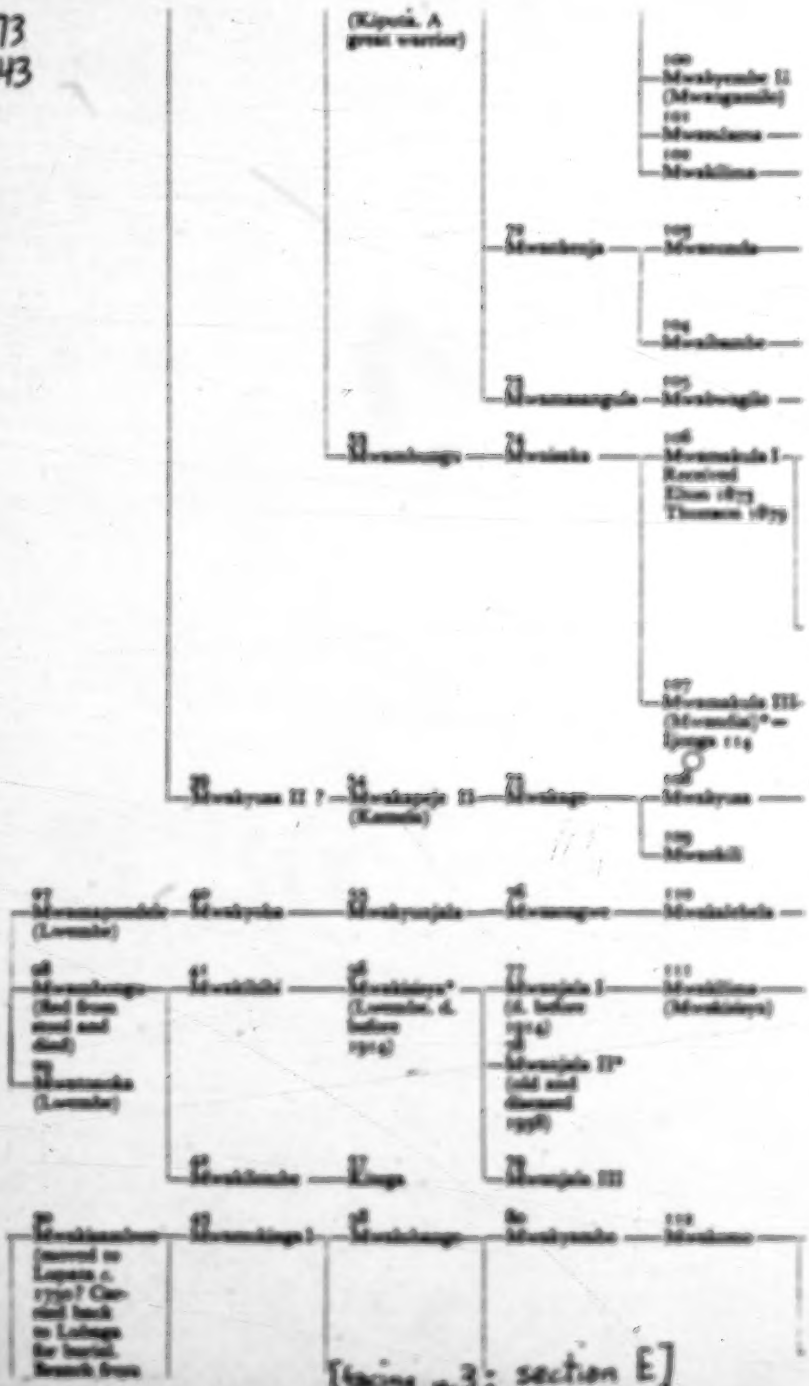

[facing p.3; section E]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

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Ruling 1850

- 100 Mwakyusile II (Mwangamile) — C 12
- 101 Mwaniama — 136 Mwakagile? — C 13
- 102 Mwakilima — 137 Mwakalukwa? (near Songwe) — C 14
- 103 Mwaunde — 138 Mwakabelele 'came out' c. 1883 — 168 Mwalimuir — 187 Mwakipenile — C 15
- 104 Mwahamile — 139 Mwamuto — 169 Mwamawangula — 188 Mwakalukwa — C 16
- 105 Mwabwangile — 140 Mwanyila — NC 17
- 106 Mwamakula I Received Khan 1873 Thomson 1879 — 141 Mwakalukwa — 170 Mwakimile — 189 Mwambaje — C 18
  - 171 Mwakimile III? (Lazarus)
  - 172 Mwakyusa II (Robert)
  - 142 Mwakalinga Died fighting Germans — 173 Mwaimule? (Kornel) — C 19
- 107 Mwamakula III (Mpamila)* m. Ipuga 114 — 143 Mwakalinga — 174 Mwakyambe
- 108 Mwakyusa — 144 Mwakyambile — C 20
- 109 Mwankili
- 110 Mwakalebela — 145 Mwakalinga — C 21
- 111 Mwakilima (Mwakinaya) — 146 Mwakibeta — C 22
- 112 Mwakusuo — 147 Mwakaje (Ruling before 1850, Still alive 1955) — 175 Mwakimile? — 190 Mwaipaga — C 23
  - 148 Mwakyusule d. 1959

[facing p. 3; section F]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

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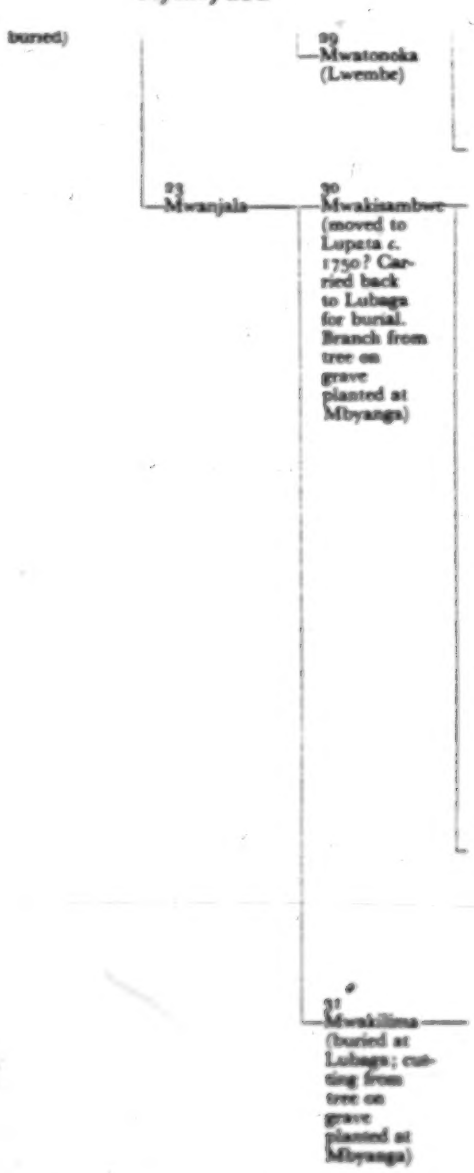

Key

—[=brothers
— =son of
↑ =chief in 1955
• =priest
= =married

Main informants: 90 : 86 : 107 : 116 : 160 : 171 : 148 : 109. 90 & 107 were very old in 1955 and acknowledged authorities.

The seniority of 90's line is questioned by some.

[facing p. 3; section G]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

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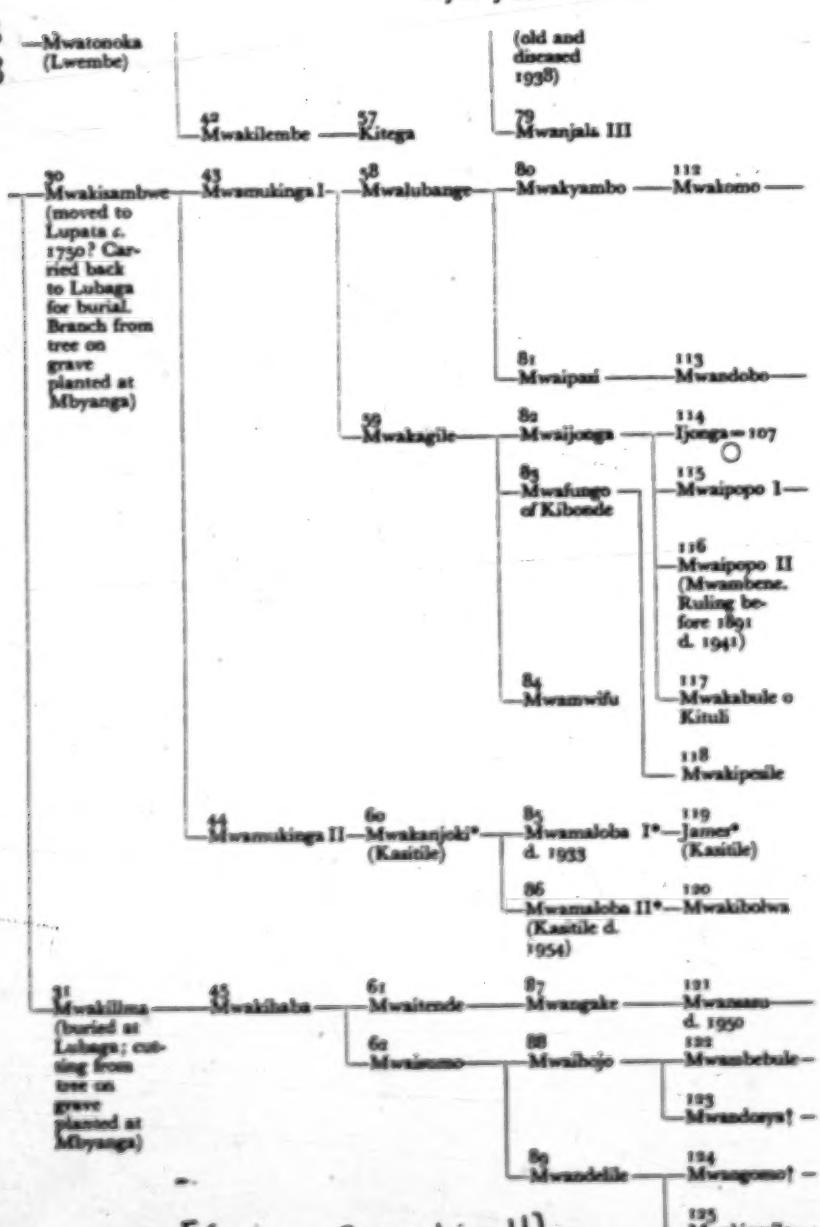

[facing p. 3; section H]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

173
643

III

bo — 112 Mwakomo — 147 Mwaihojo (Ruling before 1891. Still alive 1955) — 175 Mwakisisile† — 190 Mwaijenga — C 23

148 Mwakyonde d. 1952

— 113 Mwandobo — 149 Mwakitalima* — 176 Mwakasula

114 Ijonga = 107

115 Mwaipopo I — 150 Mwankuga I d. 1934 — 177 Mwanyilu† came out 1953 — C 24

178 Mwabungulu came out 1953

116 Mwaipopo II (Mwambene. Ruling before 1891 d. 1941) — 151 Mwankuga II

152 Mwaseba

117 Mwakabule o Kituli

118 Mwakipesile

119 James* (Kasitile)

I* —

120 Mwakibolwa

II* —

121 Mwansasu d. 1950 — 153 Mwaihojo† — C 25

122 Mwambebule — 154 Mwaipungu — 179 Mwangumule — C 26

123 Mwandosya† — 155 Mwamupwa — C 27

124 Mwangomo† — 156 Mwaijonga — 180 Mwamasika — C 28

125 Mwakipesile — 157 Mwanjola† — 181 Mwatonoka — C 29

[facing p. 3; section I]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

561 The age system of the Nyakyusa has been described in detail in
621 *Good Company*,[1] but, since it forms the basis of their social structure, a brief explanation must here be given for the benefit of readers unacquainted with that earlier volume. Within each chiefdom there are a number of villages composed not of kinsmen but of
857 age-mates. Villages begin when small boys of eight or ten years build together at a little distance from their fathers. They are joined by younger brothers, as these reach the age when boys stop sleeping at home, until the eldest are in their middle teens, when
[883] the youngsters will be told to begin another village. The boys of a village have their own leader, a 'natural' leader, not specifically appointed, but they are subject to the headman of their fathers' village, and formerly fought as a group under his direction. But
[622] at the 'coming out' a headman for each village is selected from among its members by the fathers: if he dies, his heir—a younger brother or son—inherits his position, so that sometimes a young man becomes headman of an old men's village, taking the name and social position of his father. Only commoners are eligible as headmen: we knew one candidate who was rejected because his great-grandfather was a chief.

Two villages in each chiefdom are senior to the others and their
[634] headmen are responsible each for half of the country. During the 'coming out' ritual the chief marries two wives, 'mothers of the country', and one is established in each senior village or capital (*ikitangalala*). The eldest sons of these two wives are the heirs, and later divide the old chief's country between them. Most of the chief's junior wives are divided between the capitals but some may be settled in a colonizing village in unoccupied country. All the chief's sons build with commoners in villages appropriate to their age, and all save the two heirs are subject to the commoner headmen of their villages. They are entitled to some respect as 'sons of the chief', and those of strong personality gain a following and settle disputes between their fellows (as may any commoner), but only the two senior sons can claim political authority.

561 Before the 'coming out' the villages of young men and their
621 fathers adjoin, for the boys have built on their fathers' land, on the fringes of their fathers' villages. But at the 'coming out' there
884 is a new deal in land. The young men are established in the centre
423 of the country and their fathers move to the periphery; it is not merely that fathers and sons exchange land, but all the boundaries

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, 1952.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

are redrawn and only the fields in old craters (the most prized and fertile of all) are not re-allotted. Thus the villages of kinsmen of two generations adjoin, and often those of three generations. 561 621 884

On the old chief's death his village headmen become priests of the grove in which he is buried, and, in co-operation with his sons, the new chiefs, sacrifice there on behalf of the two countries into which his old chiefdom is divided. There is a nice balance of power between chief and village headmen in life, and when he dies his two heirs and the headmen (or their heirs) continue to share power, the power which belief in his spiritual force and their ability to guide it gives them. The success or failure of rituals is held largely to depend upon the personal relationships of the leading participants, chiefs and commoner priests. 423 634 793 622

Besides the ordinary commoner priests (the village headmen of a past generation or their heirs) there are priests of the chiefs' lineage, usually belonging to a junior line to which specific ritual functions, such as rain-making, have been entrusted, and whose office is hereditary in the same way as that of a chief. Kasitile (86),[1] the rain-maker, is such a priest: his grandfather was the brother of a ruling chief (43) and had been appointed as rain-maker (*umpelafula*) and priest (*unyago*), the two functions being separate but overlapping. As rain-maker Kasitile tended the rain stones, as priest he initiated the rituals in certain of the sacred groves, though he did not actually officiate himself. Kasitile was a key informant on ritual and a chapter is devoted to his history, since it epitomizes the relationships between chiefs and commoners. 793

As we have shown, most of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde chiefs claim some sort of kinship with one another. Those who are nearly related pray together at the groves of their common ancestors, and those more distantly connected join in sacrifice to their founding fathers, but in the communal rituals kinship is neither the dominant theme nor the exclusive principle of association, as it is in the rituals celebrated by private persons. In the communal rituals most of the priests are commoners unrelated to the dead who are honoured, and the sacrifices are held to benefit not only the descendants of the dead, but all those who live in the countries they once ruled. Nevertheless, the symbolism of the communal rituals constantly recalls that of the rituals of kinship; themes which pervade the death ritual recur again in the rituals of 'coming out' and 'cleansing the country'. This background is 634 796 769

[1] Numerals after a name refer to the genealogy of Nyakyusa chiefs facing p. 3.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

634 accessible in an earlier book, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*,[1]
796 and the details need not be recapitulated here.

769 Perhaps the reader has already noted a certain difficulty over tenses: 'is' tends to merge into 'was'. When we first visited
114 BuNyakyusa in 1934 missionaries of various denominations had
797 already been at work, and a foreign government in control, for
177 forty years past. Between 1934 and my last visit in 1955 the changes have been great, but I use the present tense for things seen at first hand, whether earlier or later, and a separate chapter is devoted to the twenty years' change. It is well to recognize at the outset, however, that in 1934 the sanctity and power of the
[643] 'divine kings' was already questioned and their rituals were
[796] curtailed, and even the pagan cosmology of the Nyakyusa was beginning to exhibit traces of Christian influence. One striking example was the changing, or rather the fluid, connotation of the name *Kyala*.

Two new types of organization developed in BuNyakyusa with the arrival of the Europeans: churches which are based on a principle of association wholly new to the pagan tradition—common belief as opposed to kinship or contiguity; and a centralized system of government. To these have now been added trading concerns, of which the most important are co-operative societies exporting coffee and rice.

121 The subject of this book is (i) the traditional rituals celebrated on behalf of chiefdoms and groups of chiefdoms, and (ii) the changing ideas and values apparent as a section of the Nyakyusa turn from paganism to Christianity. In the concluding chapters an attempt is made to demonstrate the links between the changes in social structure and the changes in ritual.

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*, 1957.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER II

THE MYTHOLOGICAL CHARTER

7

In Nyakyusa mythology the heroes were creators of crops and animals and were driven out from BuKinga by a jealous father (or elder brother) who sought to kill them; but he found, when they had gone, that they had taken the fertility of the country with them, so he sent offerings after them, and still such offerings are brought to their graves in sacrifice. One of the heroes, Kyala (2), created crops alone, and of him it is said that each time his father or elder brother tried to kill him he rose again; another, Lwembe or Mbasi (3 or 15?), created both crops and animals, brought cattle, fire, and iron to the Nyakyusa valley, and left many descendants who spread over the valley as chiefs, ruling a people who had not known chiefs.

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173

The names and events mentioned vary somewhat from one area to another; in some versions there were three brothers, though the eldest, Nkekete (1), being buried in Kisi country, does not concern the Nyakyusa; in another version the brothers had a sister who was the mother of Kyungu (16), the hero of Ngonde; but the general pattern of heroic ancestors who were creators and discoverers, and who brought to the old inhabitants of the valley such good gifts as crops and stock, fire and iron, and the institution of chieftainship, remains the same. They all had miraculous power and are vaguely connected with volcanic disturbance, such as continued in the area until recent times (*vide infra*, p. 16).

Here is an account by Kikungubeja, one of the priests of BuKinga, whence the heroes came:

Nkekete (1) and Kyala (2) were brothers, Mwemusi [the first Kinga chief] killed them. Mwemusi's men tried first to kill them by cutting their throats, then by throwing them into a little lake, then by heating a great stone and throwing it on top of them. Each time Nkekete and his younger brother Kyala rose again. Then they left the country, the two of them, and the earth rumbled as they walked. Nkekete (1) went to Mbela to build; Kyala (2), the younger, to PaliKyala. Then the men of Mwemusi followed Nkekete with a cow to entreat him because he had taken all the food with him. Mwemusi was angry with him and his younger brother Kyala, because they made food and they were

539

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

539 fierce warriors. They were first driven out, then later Lwembe (3) was driven out too. When Lwembe was a child, herding cattle with his fellows, he moulded cattle of clay and they became alive; so with lions and leopards, too; he also took up a handful of earth and it became beans or millet. His fellows told Mwemusi of this and he was astonished. Then Mwemusi sent men to watch; they went early in the morning and hid themselves and watched; they watched him making all these things. Then they wanted to kill him, but the forefather of Mwakalukwa [another Kinga chief] gave him two cows; he was a friend and said: 'Leave the country, they want to kill you, take these cows and eat them on the road.' Lwembe went away with Kissoule and Mwamaloba (Mwamalunguka) and two wives and all his animals.

These three, Nkekete (1), Kyala (2), and Lwembe (3), were driven out by Mwemusi, but Lwembe's younger brothers, the BaMwalukissa (4), were left. When Lwembe went away, Mwemusi's men followed him, wishing to kill him, but they feared his animals, and did not try.

Nkekete (1) set out to the Lake [Nyasa] and went into a stream; he is in the water now, in a stream with pools near the Lake, in Kisi country. Kyala (2) went and built among stones in a cave. When the [177] Europeans came they took rifles and shot at Kyala in the place where he had built, so he moved to a different place. Of old he was in a cave washed by the waters of the Lake, but after the Europeans came he moved to his present cave at the boundary between Kisselelo's and Kisi country. Kyala had fowls there; some saw them in the old days [782] and some did not. Nkekete is in a stream with pools in it; there (at Lumbila in Kisi country) men sacrifice a cow. Kyala's sheep are killed near his cave.

Neither Nkekete nor Kyala had any children, but Lwembe (3), who went off alive, begot many children. We speak with them. Nkekete and Kyala were killed, Lwembe was not. . . . All the Kinga chiefs when praying in the sacred groves say the names of their fathers [782] who have died, and also the names of Nkekete, Kyala, and Lwembe, [769] in that order . . . Lwembe was the youngest of the three brothers . . . Nkekete and Kyala only made crops—millet and beans. We ask for fertility of the soil (*imboto*), and sunshine, and rain from them, but not animals. From Lwembe we ask for milk, and fertility of men and cattle, and snakes, and goats, and sheep, and all crops. Lwembe has everything. We ask for sunshine and rain from Lwembe as well.

When Lwembe went down into Selya he found the hill people (*BaMwamba*) and the people of the plain (Mwakyembe's men)[1] already there. They feared him because he had all things, and they still fear him. He was greater than Nkekete. They cut Nkekete's throat, but they couldn't kill Lwembe. He made the small lakes—all of them. He

[1] In other versions Mwakyembe is a descendant of Lwembe.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

went from Mwemusi's country down the path by Mwakalukwa's to Mwakaleli. He lived a year at Lumbila and found it too cold, and thence he went to Masoko, and thence to Lubaga. All men feared him and his animals. 599

In another version Lwembe's survival is linked with the possession of *ifingila*, the medicine on which still, today, the authority of chiefs is thought largely to depend. [773] [173]

Nkekete had much food and Mwemusi killed him because he had no *ifingila*. He killed him and he rose again. 'Why don't you die?' Mwemusi asked. Nkekete replied: 'I don't know, I have nothing, I am quite alone, I have no *ifingila*.' Mwemusi killed him again and he rose, many times. Then at last Nkekete said, 'I am tired.' And he showed Mwemusi and his men a razor (*ulwembe*) and said 'Kill me by cutting my throat with this', and they did and he stayed dead.

Mwemusi feared to kill Lwembe because he was very 'heavy'. He had *ifingila*, and when they tried to kill him they found his house full of animals, lions and others. . . . Once he turned himself into a stone when they tried to capture him. So Mwemusi told him to go far off, and he went with his two wives and two men, Kissoule and Kimonile. He went off riding on a lion like a donkey, with a lion behind his wives, and men were astonished when they saw him.

It is perhaps significant that Lwembe who survived is 'The Razor', by which Nkekete was killed, and the python from which *ifingila* medicine is made must be killed with razors and in no other way (*vide infra*, p. 60). [789] [825] [278]

It is Lwembe's capacity to make things live and grow which is always emphasized: [773]

Lwembe and another were given millet in their hands; Lwembe's sprouted, but not that of his fellow. He was told, 'You plant here and the other there.' The next day Lwembe's had sprouted, but not that of the other. He and his friend went to a hill in dry weather and wanted water. He just struck the earth and water came out. . . . He created leopards and kept them, and he moulded cattle of clay, he moulded them and they became cows, and his friends did the same and they remained clay.

When the heroes were driven out there was a fearful famine in BuKinga, for they had taken the fertility of the country with them, which is why, the priests say, sacrifices to them were begun by the Kinga. The priests of Lubaga were explicit on the point: [773] [173]

Mbasi (Lwembe 15?) came from BuKinga, he took the road to

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

539 Mwakaleli and came here and died. The Kinga went to BuSangu to buy food, for there was great hunger after Mbasi and Kyala were driven out, and wandering home they came here and met Mbasi. He said, 'Go home, there will be plenty of food, but I want my things.' He had left them at his father's place when he fled with his sister Kyungu. He asked for his leopard and otterskins, his drums, his bows for shooting birds,[1] his harp, mats, a stool, bamboo beer, and twenty hoes. . . . Then the Kinga went back and found their country full of food; and they brought all his things to Mbasi and even things like salt that he had not asked for. . . . This is how the ritual began. . . . Mbasi ruled because he had helped them in their hunger.

173 773 Kasitile (86), the rain-maker, speaking of the same incident, stressed only the hoes. Lwembe 'came to Lubaga and found a good place to settle, then he sent out messengers to Mwemusi (the Kinga chief) and said: "I want my hoes, especially my great, eyed hoe" (*ilikumbulu ilya maso*).' (The old ritual hoes had per-
[778] forations—'eyes'—on the blades comparable to the perforations
[782] on other rain-making instruments.) Still today Kinga priests come to Lubaga to sacrifice to Lwembe (3), and they bring with them hoes.[2]

The hero of Ngonde, the Kyungu (16), was also associated with
[643] iron implements which he had brought with him—a spear, staff, stool, and a sieve used for making rain, which were royal insignia, and razors, spears, and knives of an unusual pattern, which long remained in the groves of the hero and his successors.

In the commonly-told Nyakyusa myth it was Lwembe who
[372] introduced fire to BuNyakyusa—'he found the original occupants eating their food raw'—and the fact that he conferred so great a benefit is the charter for the position of the chiefs, celebrated at every 'coming out'. The Kinga priests push the spread of fire back a little further.

539 Of old in this country [BuKinga] there was no fire, men ate food un-
372 cooked; there were very few men in the country, most of it was forest. This was after Mwemusi came to Kinga country. Then one man, a hunter, went into the forest to hunt buck and otter, and he had dogs. And in the forest he made fire with a drill and cooked his food; and gave his friends cooked food to eat, and they were astonished.

[1] The bow and arrow are not now used among the Nyakyusa, but men in their thirties had used them when boys, for shooting birds.

[2] cf. Ludwig Weichert, *Magihagi i Afrika* / *Kähe unter Afrika* (Berlin, 1927), p. 129, for a photograph of one.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Then the chiefs took it from him and spread it through the Kinga country . . . and to the Mahasi, the Ndali, the Nyakyusa. . . . It was taken to BuNyakyusa before Lwembe went, when he was a child, before the killing of Nkekete and Kyala. 539 372

In the version told by Mwandisi (107), the old blind chief of MuNgonde, the various events of the cycle are rather differently combined; there were three brothers in BuKinga, Lyambilo (12) or Ngutike, Kyala, and Mbasi, and a sister, Kyumba. Lyambilo discovered how to make fire with a fire drill. Kyala was clever at making food—maize and millet—and Mbasi was clever at making animals—cattle, lions, elephants. 173 773

Then Lyambilo, the eldest, was angry that his younger brothers should be so clever; he was jealous. First he made war on Kyala, he wounded him once, but he did not die; then he wounded him again, but still he didn't die; then the third time Lyambilo put a stone in the fire and made it hot and threw it at Kyala, and he died, and was thrown into the Lake. But as soon as he died there was a great famine, no rain fell and no food grew. So they had to pray to Kyala to give them rain, and they killed a cow to sacrifice to Kyala. And as soon as they had done this much food grew. 539

Still Lyambilo was jealous of Mbasi because he could make animals. But when he went to kill him he found so many animals with him, roaring lions, and elephants, that he was afraid and he ran away. And he brought some hoes to Mbasi to say he was sorry for having tried to kill him. Then Mbasi moved from BuKinga to the Nyakyusa hills (Mwambe). . . . Lyambilo stayed in BuKinga. . . . Mbasi came down to the plain on a visit and went back to the hills, but his sister Kyumba stayed down here and married a man and bore a son. Before she came there was no fire here, she brought fire, and so they called her son Kyungu in honour of his mother because she brought fire.

When Mbasi was at Masukulu (in the hills) he made one cow, but it soon died; then he moved to Mbambo and made another cow and this soon died; then he went to Lubaga (which is still called Mbasi) and there he made one cow again which bore many many calves, and he divided his cattle among his sons. . . . Mbasi was Lwembe.

In Ngonde tradition the first Kyungu (16) was a man, descendant of Ngulube the Kinga chief, and he travelled with three brothers and a sister westward [illegible]ing south of Rungwe volcano, where he and his immediate successor were buried, one of them on Kieyo mountain. Their descendants went on to the 'country of the Bisa', then returned eastward to Mbande, the sacred hill which the Kyungu took from a Fipa hunter, Simbobwe. Like Lwembe, 173 773

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173 the Kyungu had a miraculous power of creating animals and it was by making elephants, buffaloes, and guinea-fowl for Sim-
773 bobwe and his men to hunt, and climbing Mbande when it was deserted, that he captured it. Directly he reached the top he struck his drum and 'when Simbobwe heard the drums beaten on the hill he fled to his own country'. This Kyungu's successors on
[643] Mbande became 'divine kings' with miraculous power much like that of the Lwembe at Lubaga. One of his brothers became chief of the Namwanga; another of the Iwa; and a third became the rival of his sister's son for the chieftainship of the Lambya. Such is the Ngonde account. The Kukwe say that the Kyungus of Ngonde come from the same line as the chiefs of Kabale, while the men of Lwembe insist that he was descended from a daughter of their line (*vide supra*, p. 2). What connexion existed between the lineages of Lwembe and Ngomale is uncertain, but the assumption is that they, together with the chiefs of the Pangwa and Kisi, sprang from a common stock in BuKinga.

The commonest story of origin is that all the peoples of the area, save the Sangu, emerged from a 'dark house' (*nyumba nditu*) near the present Njombe, and came to Ilongo (KwiLongo) in the forest, in what is now Bena country. Nsamba, a Nyakyusa priest of the chief's lineage, with a reputation as a historian, spoke of a 'few men' coming from 'a rocky shore to the north-west' (Lake Tanganyika?) and travelling to the east shore of Nyasa, where they increased in numbers, and then spread northwards through BuKinga; Mwenifumbo, a noble of Ngonde, spoke of Ngulube the 'pale' having come to BuKinga 'from the north'.[1] But the Kinga priests knew nothing of the 'rocky shore' or northern origin; and if we take the direction in which the corpse faces when buried (the most certain criterion of the direction of origin) then the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people came from BuKinga, some travelling to the north of Rungwe volcano and some to the south, and the Kinga themselves came from the east.

Other evidence also indicates that the chiefs came from the
[174] east or north-east rather than the north-west. The cattle they brought were the short-horned Zebu type, like those of the Masai and other peoples of central and eastern Tanganyika and Kenya. They are quite different from the long-horned cattle of the Hima

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3, p. 10 (1939). According to the Ngonde version, Ngulube was the *first* ancestor, but Nsamba began the genealogy four generations earlier (*vide* chart, facing p. 3).

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and Tutsi who established conquest states to the north-west.[1] 173

Whatever the origin and adventures of the heroes they were 773
important in Nyakyusa and Ngonde history because their [174]
graves became centres of religious ritual which linked together groups that were otherwise largely independent. The myths about them are the charter for chieftainship. They are depicted as benefactors who brought to uncivilized men not only the institution of chieftainship itself, but fire, cattle, iron, seed, and a creative power resident in their own bodies and those of their anointed heirs. But the myths also justify the power of commoners [778] who first occupied the country and who have witchcraft in their [754] bellies:

The commoners whom Lwembe found here were extraordinary. They 539
were cultivators, but they had not yet got fire, they ate their food raw. It was we chiefs, it was Lwembe, who brought fire and cattle—he came and found the original occupants without cattle; hence the commoners say, 'We are the earth'. Commoners are different from us physically, they are black; they are awe-inspiring, they are witches. Before you Europeans came the chiefs like Mwaipopo (116) were not [777] awe-inspiring, they feared the commoners very much; the commoners [754] hammered the chief with their fists—yes, by daylight. And if the chief [643] cut a man's bananas that man took the chief's. If the commoners were angry with Mwaipopo they fetched Mwangomo (124 whose chiefdom adjoins Mwaipopo's) at night by their witchcraft; he came in the night with his people and seized the cattle, both those of the chief, Mwaipopo, and those of the commoners. The next day the commoners said: 'It is we, we are angry. Why do you not look after us? Why do you not kill cattle for us?' Then Mwaipopo would kill two head of cattle and all the men in the country ate. . . . Mwaipopo and his equals were not awe-inspiring long ago, it is you Europeans who have created chieftainship and awe.

[1] cf. H. H. Curson and R. W. Thornton, 'A Contribution to the Study of African Native Cattle', *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Science and Animal Industry*, vii, 2 [113]
October 1936 (Government Printer, Pretoria). An analysis of the distribution and migration of breeds in Africa.
H. B. Thompson and R. Scott, *Uganda* (1935), pp. 195 ff.
Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 68: 69.
M. Merker, *Die Masai*, pp. 157 ff., 1904, Berlin.
H. H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, 1904, pp. 86, 105 (fairly photographs of Nyoro cattle).
The short-horn type predominates among the Nyakyusa, but some animals suggest an intermixture with Sanga cattle. The hump is regarded as a great delicacy and is [231]
exaggerated in the clay cattle which boys model. Cf. Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 70. The [825]
similarity between the ritual and symbolism of the Nyakyusa and those of the Ganda [532]
as described by Roscoe is marked. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, 1911.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173 The balance between chiefs and commoners is explicit. So
773 also is their dependence on *both* cultivation and herding, and it
[643] should be noted that, though the Nyakyusa speak of themselves
as stock men, they are not pastoralists to the same extent as
[733] the Masai or the Nuer. The number of cattle in Rungwe District
today is less than half the human population, and men traditionally have done the heaviest share of cultivation.

773 In every version of the myth the tension between father and
593 son, or older and younger brother, is stressed. In Nyakyusa
561 society the father (or his eldest son who replaces him) controls
173 the family property and exacts obedience from his juniors who
[769] continue to show their respect after his death by sacrifices. The tale of Kyala and Lwembe celebrates the triumph of the junior. Thus, at the heart of the very ritual which sanctifies seniority there is the assertion of the victory of the son and younger brother. The myth expresses the aspirations of subordinates—of commoners and junior kinsmen—as well as the power of chiefs and seniors.

173 As we have already noted, the heroic cycle makes no reference
773 to the peculiar Nyakyusa institution of age-villages. Their charter
561 is a quite separate myth[1] which tells of a chief who looked on his
621 daughter-in-law and loved her and took her, and this so shocked
606 men that in future fathers and sons built separately, so that a father-in-law should never see his daughter-in-law.

There are other hints of the eternal theme. Besides the saga of
173 Lwembe there is another quite different tale of the origin of fire,
773 which is less often related. In it a girl who had angered her father
372 by breaking his drinking calabash fled from BuKinga to the Nyakyusa valley, where she found people who ate their food raw. She made fire and cooked for them and 'all women came to her to learn to cook'. The long-necked calabash, used as a drinking
[415] vessel and in prayer to the shades, is a man's most personal
[768] possession destroyed at his death, and it stands for a husband, while cooking is a symbol of the sexual activity of women, so the myth is perhaps a drama of incest, but we have no direct evidence of this.

173 This last is the only tale in which a woman appears as a
773 benefactor. In general, the mythology is that of a strongly
562 patrilineal society in which men are dominant. The wives of Lwembe who walked behind their lord, shepherded by a lion,

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 85.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F7617 Ngonde F7617
Nyakyusa

231

1. CATTLE AT PASTURE

[Facing p. 14]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

e remembered, and the names of the two senior wives of a chief 173
e often recited in genealogies because the heirs take their names 173
om their mothers, but she-who-taught-cooking is the only [562]
eroine in her own right.

It is worth noting also that the rituals of kinship are linked either with the heroic tradition nor with primeval incest. We uld trace no myths regarding their beginning, save that conrning the origin of avoidance between father and daughter-inw. The myth of the origin of death is a variation on the theme, familiar in Bantu-speaking Africa, of the two messengers (a eep and a dog in this version) sent to men by 'Kyala', one omising life, the other death. It provides no charter for the tual.

And what of the relation between myth and history? The nquest of cultivators by cattle-keepers is the common theme [174]
traditions in the lacustrine area, and it is quite possible that all groups of invaders, who brought with them iron tools and [177]
apons and cattle, established themselves as chiefs over small organized groups of hunters and cultivators in an isolated lley three or four centuries ago.[1] The Nyakyusa valley and the ain of Ngonde have no iron ore, and the inhabitants were pendent, until the coming of the Europeans, on iron (*ikyala*) elted in the hills to the east for weapons and tools.[2] The original habitants are said to have used wooden hoes exclusively—such es were still in common use in 1938[3]—so the myth of a Lwembe ding to BuKinga for iron hoes has a firm foundation in torical fact. But that the original inhabitants of the valley did t know the use of fire 300 or 400 years ago (when Lwembe rived) is incredible. Here the record of one of the greatest ents in history is fitted into the shallow time-scale of an isolated ople. To them it is not *when* fire arrived that is really important, t *who* brought it; chiefs are chiefs to the Nyakyusa (as to other oples in Africa) by virtue of this great benefit they brought to em.

Nsenwanga tradition (recorded in the Mbeya District Book) tells of the introtion of iron fifteen generations ago. The Sangu tradition says that a tall, pale man m 'Somaliland' first brought iron spear-heads to Bufiengu and his son established egemony by virtue of his superior weapons.

cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 7. The iron deposits on the Tukuyu-Kyela [195]
boundary were recently been investigated by the Colonial Development Corporation. 'Kasulilowa iron mountain' in the south of Ngonde District was found to be 'unsuit-'. Tanganyika: *Annual Report of the Provincial Commissioner*, 1951, p. 31.

Wilson, op. cit., plate VII.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

133
137

5. THE ROAD TO LWEMBE

[Facing p. 15]

FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173 It is surprising to westerners, whose whole framework of
173 reference is shaped by the conception of historical time, that the heroic myth is not more explicitly dated by the volcanic eruptions known to have taken place near Lubaga,[1] but to the Nyakyusa the sequence of events does not appear important except in so far as it determines seniority.

Nowadays, with the changing form of the society, there
177 develops a new mythology. Kyala is described by younger men as a creator, apart and distinct from any hero or ancestor, and they reject any suggestion that he was once on a footing with Lwembe and Kyungu. The more conservative fit Christian names into the heroic myth. One version goes as follows:

> Kyala had two sons, Kyala the elder who was Mbasi or Satano, and Kyala the younger who was Jesus. Kyala the younger made cows, and cattle, and fire, and cooked meat, and men ate; then Mbasi or Satano was furious because his younger brother was outdoing him, and killed him, and became the only one.

Here the traditional theme of the jealousy of the senior is dominant, but generally it is the power of the heroes over fertility, under the old dispensation, that is stressed.

177 Many people tell today of old prophecies concerning the
177 coming of Europeans and of the triumph of a new religion. To the Christians these provide some bridge between the past and the present, for they interpret the words of pagan prophets as evidence of their foreknowledge of a truth they had not yet been taught.

178 [1] D. A. Hobbs, 'The Sorobwe Lava Flow, Kinjo, Rungwe District', *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, September 1955, suggests that the most recent eruption in the district, that of Kinjo, took place about 1800, but this conclusion is based on the description of the eruption by an old man, and the statement that his great grandfather witnessed it. That some ancestor of Andulile Kajigiri witnessed the eruption is likely, but had it taken place only three generations ago it might be expected that other families also would have had a tradition of the event. Kinjo is clearly visible from Mwaipopo's country and had the eruption taken place early in the nineteenth century either the chief Mwakagile (22) or his father Mwamukingo (23) must have observed it. Their descendants are emphatic that there is no tradition of their having done so, though it is commonly known that an eruption of Kinjo occurred in the distant past.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER III

THE 'DIVINE KINGS'

17

(a) CHARACTERISTICS OF 'DIVINE KINGS'

THE heroic myths and genealogies proclaim the origin of chieftainship, and point to a distinction between ordinary chiefs and those we call 'divine kings'. Two remote ancestors who were pre-eminent are worshipped as heroes and creators, their graves are centres at which a large number of chiefdoms join in celebration, and living representatives are selected in every generation bearing their names. These are the 'divine kings', the Lwembe of Lubaga (in the centre of Nyakyusa country) and the Kyungu of Mbande near Karonga in Nyasaland. A third hero, Kyala, is associated with the cave, PalKyala, near Ikombe at the north-east corner of the Lake, and he is worshipped in the same way as the other two, except that the priest of the cave is not his descendant and does not embody him. According to the myth, Kyala was the brother of Lwembe, but died without issue. However, the word for chiefs—*aba-ipu fyala*—is popularly believed to mean 'the sons of Kyala'.[1]

Kyala is one hero among others, but his name is also used in the sense of 'the lord': a chief is *kyala gwala* (his lord) to a commoner, a father is *kyala gwala* to his son or daughter 'because he created him' and a slaveb is *kyala* to his living kinsman (*mgwala ja kyala*). Of one who performs a feat—something difficult—it is said 'he is Kyala'.[2] This usage is said to be very old, but there is yet another meaning of the word which is new. *Kyala* was used by the European missionaries (who first established themselves near PalKyala) as their translation of 'God'. Today these three conceptions are inextricably mixed: Kyala the hero, Kyala 'the

[1] I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Pearce for directing my attention to this point. It is doubtful whether *Kyala* and *fyala* in this sense from the same root. *Fyala* in Hehe means 'the daughter of a chief' (R. C. C. Hodgson, 'Notes Hehe on the Wahehe', *Bantu Studies*, [illegible]); in Ngoni it means 'my husband's father or mother' (R. T. and G. M. Cotton, *Chief of the Ngoni*, p. [illegible]). In Gwere it means 'lady', mistress of a household and guardian (J. Rennie, 'The Gwere', p. [illegible] of Hehe, *fala* 'to hope, to hear' (J. L. Krapf and J. Rebmann, *A Hehe-English Dictionary*, edited by T. H. Spreafico, [illegible]).

[2] cf. F. R. Lehmann, 'Some field notes on the Nyakyusa', *Antiquity*, New Series, [illegible], vol. [illegible], p. [illegible].

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 lord', and Kyala the Christian deity. In the sacrifices at Lubaga
643 and the groves of various chiefs, the name Kyala was mentioned repeatedly, as will be shown. Some may interpret this as evidence of a traditional belief in an overriding deity. We think that in most cases it is used in the sense of Kyala the hero, or Kyala 'the lord', but after forty years[1] and more of missionary activity it is not possible to establish exactly what the traditional conception of Kyala was. Moreover, it will be obvious that many of the speakers
[177] quoted in later chapters now entertain religious notions which have been unconsciously, and sometimes profoundly, modified by Christian ideas, a phenomenon especially noteworthy in their references to Kyala.

All the Nyakyusa proper (that is those of Selya, the Lake plain,
769 and Masoko) send cattle to sacrifice at Lubaga (the grove of
782 Lwembe), and several of the Kinga chiefs send there too. The people of Ngonde send to the Kyungu at Mbande, but not to Lubaga, while the people living north of the Songwe did not ever send to Mbande. Some of the people of the Lake plain (Mu-Ngonde) and various Kinga chiefs send to PaliKyala as well as to Lubaga, but the hill people never send to PaliKyala, nor did the Kisi who lived around PaliKyala send to Lubaga. In other words, Lwembe and Kyala were 'brothers' and it was possible to sacrifice to both, though people living close to one centre did not send to the other. All those living south of the Songwe river looked to Mbande; those north of it to Lubaga or PaliKyala. Lwembe, Kyala, and Kyungu were ancestors, honoured primarily by their own descendants or by those of a brother, but they were also divine heroes who might be appealed to by unrelated people through their priests.

The distinction between a 'divine king' and an early ancestor who established a line of chiefs is not a sharp one, and we have indeed been uncertain whether or not to class Mwangomale (4K),[2] the founder (or at least a notable son) of the Kukwe line, with Lwembe and Kyungu. Sacrifices used to be made to Mwangomale at the grove of Kabale by a number of Kukwe chiefs, but we have no evidence either of the formal installation of a living representative in each generation or of sacrifices by unrelated people, and therefore do not include Mwangomale among the 'divine kings'. The early inhabitants of the Rungwe

[1] Field-work began in 1934.

[2] Numerals followed by K refer to the genealogy of Kukwe chiefs facing p. 27.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

area, the Penja, have a grove, Lukata, where they worship their founding ancestor, and the Nyika living on the west bank of the Kiwira river have their grove, Lubaga, twenty miles or more from the Lubaga in Selya and unconnected with it. A third distinct group, the Saku, who were the first inhabitants of the south-eastern part of Rungwe District, have their own grove, Nkeso, where their progenitors Mwamakula and Mwalukinge were buried. None of these has anything like the prestige and sanctity of the Lwembe or the Kyungu, but they are probably the prototype from which the 'divine kings' developed. 769 782

What circumstances produced a 'divine king' at Lubaga and not (so far as our limited knowledge goes) at Kabale we do not know, but we can show how the 'divine kingship' at Mbande, near the Lake shore, developed rather differently from the originally similar institution at Lubaga which is forty miles from the Lake. The Kyungu gradually acquired political power in a way in which the Lwembe did not. Among the Nyakyusa the 'sons of Lwembe' spread through the country establishing themselves as independent chiefs. They acknowledged the mystical supremacy of the Lwembe, and sent cattle to him to sacrifice, but they were sovereigns in their own territories. Just what this mystical supremacy of Lwembe implied was and still is often a matter of dispute, as we shall see. On the death of a chief his country was normally divided into two independent sections, each ruled by one of his sons. One heir sometimes fought the other and reduced him to a subordinate position, but the number of independent chiefdoms appears to have increased fairly steadily, and their size did not diminish in proportion, for the Nyakyusa chiefs have been expanding their area of occupation over a long period, establishing themselves as rulers over scattered and unorganized peoples with less developed techniques than their own, or colonising unoccupied forest country. Expansion into uncultivated forest is still going on (1955), and were it not for the vigilance of the British Administration it is almost certain that the Safwa people would have been conquered and absorbed like the Penja, Lugulu, and others before them.[1] In 1956 over 100 independent chiefdoms were recognised by the people themselves, and they varied in size from 100 to 9,000 adult men. 769 643 [773] [173] [636] [173] [694]

In Ngonde the development was different. In the early period all the sons of the Kyungu, save two, were killed, and the territorial 173 643

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 4.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173 rulers were not of the royal blood but 'nobles' (*amalembwa*),
643 descendants of the five leading men who had arrived with the Kyungu, of those he found already occupying the country, and of those who arrived after him. Later the slaughter of the Kyungu's
[694] sons ceased, and as they grew up they were established as subordinate chiefs through his territories, gradually taking over power from the commoners who had previously ruled, by a process familiar in other parts of Africa.[1] But the 'nobles' retained considerable power. At Lubaga the descendants of the two men who had arrived with the first Lwembe, and of some of those who were there before him, became priests, and priests only; in Ngonde those of similar origin developed secular, as well as ritual, functions.

The reasons why the office of Kyungu developed into a paramount chieftainship, and that of the Lwembe did not, have been examined in a previous publication,[2] and may therefore be dealt with very briefly here. The most important factor was that
[439] the Kyungu exported ivory and amassed wealth which was used
[556] to bind territorial rulers to him, while the Lwembe remained cut off from the outside world and did not trade at all. The geographical situation largely accounts for this. The ivory of Ngonde first went north, and later south-east, across the Lake, and Mbande was well situated for both routes. It lies eight miles from the Lake and close to a defile which leads from the lakeshore plain to an open table-land stretching north to Lake Tanganyika, the very route which engineers later selected for the Stevenson road. Lubaga, on the other hand, is forty miles from the Lake and the only routes northward lay over broken country and passes 8,000 feet high. Giraud remarks in his journal that the Nyakyusa were the only people he had come across among whom the chiefs did not claim at least one tusk of every elephant killed;[3] they did not claim it, for they had no use for the ivory; but the Kyungu's right to a tusk from every elephant killed was enforced.

The growth of a paramount chieftainship in Ngonde was slow. The early Kyungus lived within an enclosure on Mbande to which only their personal servants and the nobles of Ngonde had

[1] cf. M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 380; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 13-14; I. Schapera, in *African Political Systems* (edited Fortes and Evans-Pritchard), pp. 60-1.
[113]

[2] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3 (1939).

[3] V. Giraud, *Les Lacs d'Afrique Equatoriale* (1890), p. 186.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

accession. It was the nobles who were the effective rulers of the country; the divine Kyungu was the centre, a source of mystical power, a numinous symbol of unity, but not a judge or an administrator. Gradually, however, the Kyungus emerged from seclusion; they descended from the hill of Mbande; later they ceased to live within a stockade; in the crises of the Ngoni invasion the Kyungu in office (a notable warrior before his accession to the stool) broke tradition by himself taking arms. 'When the Ngoni came their enmity was like that of the lions and their number like that of the ants, and so Kyungu Mwakasungula, seeing his people were terrified, took up arms in person, and said he would die fighting. And his people heard with awe and astonishment that he himself had come to fight and they determined to die with him.' The next stage was a development of the judicial functions of the Kyungu until, in the present generation, the transformation from god to magistrate was complete.[1] 173 643

We turn now to the detailed description of the rituals at each shrine.

(b) LUBAGA

Lubaga is a hill dominating the central part of the Nyakyusa valley and on its slopes are signs of old and intensive cultivation. There an early Lwembe (19) lived and was buried, there is the grove where he is worshipped, and there his descendant chosen as 'the living Lwembe' should build. According to tradition the 'sons of Lwembe' spread all over the Nyakyusa valley as chiefs, but two senior lineages, that of Mwampondele (27) and that of Mwakisiya (56), remained near Lubaga, and from them was chosen, alternately, the living embodiment of the 'divine king', the Lwembe. Men feared greatly to be chosen, for they feared to be 'killed by the grove', and indeed the Lwembe rarely lived long. He must not fall ill or all the people of the country would do so likewise; therefore if he ailed he was smothered by his priests who stuffed up his nostrils and other passages of his body. Towards the end of our stay in BuNyakyusa Kasiile made a formal statement on this point in the presence of another priest, Mwamatunda: 778 769 [175] 769 643

The Lwembes were not sick. They said: 'I am going, I have eaten food at home, at the place of the shade', and they died that day; they

[1] The change in the position of the Kyungu from the earliest period is discussed in detail by Godfrey Wilson in *The Constitution of Ngonde*.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

133
137

[915]

3. STRANGE HILL

[facing p. 22]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 were not ill, they were not troubled as we are. For later in the evening,
643 while the Lwembe was still alive, the commoner priests removed his nails and hair; they came near and plucked them off. He shouted: 'Who is snatching at me?' They replied: 'No one', and then they smothered him with cloth in the nostrils and in the anus, and he went away [i.e. he died]. . . . They did it only when he had initiated it himself by saying: 'I have eaten food in the land of the shades'; they
[775] did not begin it themselves. . . . They collected the relics in a little bamboo flask, and a priest treated them so that Lwembe might not go away with the food to the land of the shades, that the fertility of the soil (*ilifuge*), this *ifingila*, might always remain above.

[778] These relics, the hair and the nails, were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops.

While the Lwembe lived he was secluded—ordinary men did
643 not see him—and he was subject to numerous taboos. For example,
[784] he might not tread in water lest the country should be flooded; he never bathed in a stream (as Nyakyusa men do daily) and was carried across any river when travelling; he must not sit on a green banana leaf lest the bananas in the country should fail, but was always provided with a skin to sit upon, and he ate only the middle portion of a banana throwing away the ends for 'if he finished the whole of a banana he would create hunger in the country'. No one might grasp his hand, or drink out of the same calabash as he, save the priests of his own age; if he drank from a calabash when travelling he took it with him, for 'if he left it behind he left hunger in that place'.

The selection of the Lwembe was in the hands of the hereditary priests of Lubaga and the hereditary Kinga priests, who come from BuKinga to sacrifice at Lubaga. The man they choose must be of good character—at the time we were in BuNyakyusa the only willing candidate was rejected because 'he is a bad man, a thief, they refuse to have a thief as priest'—he must exhibit in his own home the power of fertility. 'They don't catch just anyone, but
[842] one with children, and cattle, and fertility of the fields in his own homestead. *If the man taken as chief is not fertile and rich there* will be many sterile people in the homesteads, and much disease and hunger.'

When the priests had decided upon the man of their choice, they seized him and set him upon a sacred skin and a pad of leaves; and it was believed that once he had been set thereon he
[861] would die if he refused office; tales were told of a younger brother

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

231
142
782

4a. SACRIFICE AT LUBAGA

4b. THE SACRIFICIAL MEAT

[facing p. 23]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(28) of Mwampondele (27) who had fled from the stool and had died. 643 [76]

The chosen man was secluded in a hut, lying on a litter with his priests, who kept him company (*ukumpanja*), just as a nubile girl is secluded and lies on a litter with her maids, or a young chief with his village headmen at his 'coming out'. Here is the account of Mwasesi, the oldest of the priests of Lubaga (a man of about seventy-five) who saw the installation of the last Lwembe, Mwakisisya (56).

A skin and a head-pad of leaves (*ingata*)[1] are brought by the Kinga. The priests catch the chief and set him on these; and then he cannot run away, it is taboo. I, Mwasesi, would sit on one side of him and my friend on the other, and force him to sit on them. Then we plead with him and say: 'You are the Lion, the Leopard, the Snake, the Banana, the Bean, the Millet, the Cow Pea, and the Lentil.' (Lentils are very important, you know, because it is with them that we celebrate the ritual, and with cow peas.) Then, after a time, he says: 'Leave me', and he goes to find the cow; this cow is just for the priests to eat that night. Then we take him into a certain house, cut leaves and spread them for a litter; and we keep him company there on the litter for some time. Then he sends messages to Mwakyusa (38), to Mwankyuse (33), and to Mwakisambe (30), and the Kinga [i.e. their descendants]. Each chief who is Lwembe's descendant sends commoner priests . . . they gather to induct him into Lubaga, he who was in the house. It is just like the 'coming out' ritual for a young chief. 643 788

The Lwembe in his own person, and in a lesser degree his 'sons' who are ordinary chiefs, are identified with the power of growth. Not only must the Lwembe not die with the breath still in his body, or with his hair and nails still upon it, but when he is chosen the priests test whether his reign will be long or short (perhaps whether they can permit him to live or not) by taking a little millet, putting it in a banana leaf and watching to see whether it sprouts or not. 'If it sprouts and grows at once he will live long; if it does not, he will be the priest [i.e. divine king] but will die very soon.' 643 [789]

Because the power of making rain, food, milk and children lay in the body of the Lwembe he was fearful and terrible. 'No one built close to him, it was taboo, no one touched Mwakisisya (56) . . . if he wished to make it rain he would make it rain all 643 784

[1] The Kinga priests spoke of a cloth to wear and a mat and an axe which were kept in the inner part of the hut of the Lwembe's grass wife and which no man, save a priest of Lubaga, might see.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 784 round him and sit at home in the middle in the sun. . . . All the old chiefs inspired fear (*bapala*). It used to be taboo to walk near the house of a chief and approach him unless taken by a village headman . . . nowadays men walk about and enter his home and [117] even steal his food.'[1] The power came partly from his position as the living Lwembe, and partly from the medicines with which he was treated, especially the terrible *ifsagila*.

643 [554] The 'divine king' who came as a conqueror bringing iron is also associated with victory in battle. Still today a brave fighter is saluted as 'Lwembe', and an iron spear is one of the emblems of chieftainship.

643 793 782 The Lwembe was himself a priest—he is often referred to as *sapaga*—but he was assisted by commoners. There is a hereditary keeper of the grove of Lubaga named Kissoule who is the descendant of that Kissoule the commoner who fled from BuKinga with Lwembe. It is he who conducts the sacrifices, who daubs the participants with medicines before they enter, and who protects the groves. 'If by mistake the grove was a little burnt then the people here paid a beast to Kissoule, it was his to eat as he liked.' Others of the priests say that Lwembe found their ancestors at Lubaga; they are 'owners of the soil' there, and one of them, Mwaesi, could give us the names of six generations of ancestors who had been priests of Lubaga before him. But the bulk of the commoner priests are not hereditary at all, they are surviving village headmen (or their heirs) of the most recently dead Lwembe.

The success of the sacrifices at Lubaga was held to depend upon the proper co-operation of chiefs and priests: first, on the Lwembe himself (the shortage of food among the Kinga, and of milk among the Nyakyusa, while we were there, was attributed by Kasitile to the fact that there was no living Lwembe); secondly on the commoner priests of Lubaga; thirdly on the commoner Kinga priests; fourthly on Kasitile (86) and certain other priests of Selya; and fifthly on the chiefs of the Nyakyusa and the Kinga who provided the offerings. 'Can a priest celebrate alone?' said Kasitile. 'No, the ritual depends on the chiefs.' The celebrations thus linked together chiefs and people, as well as Kinga and Nyakyusa, and numerous different Nyakyusa chiefdoms. The hereditary Kinga priests live in the country of the Kinga chief Mwakalukwa and

[1] This is inconsistent with Kasitile's statement quoted above. The general opinion was that chiefs were more powerful than formerly, but the living Lwembe lost so.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'Lwembe listens to him'. 'If Kinga messengers went [to Lubaga] without going through Mwakalukwa's country there would be much hunger. . . . Once Mwemusi and Kyelela [Kinga chiefs] conspired together and sent off men with hoes to Lubaga, without reference to Mwakalukwa. They carried ten hoes. But when they got back disease killed many in the country, and they paid Mwakalukwa and did not do it again.' 643 793 782

It is true that an independent Nyakyusa chief *can* send an offering to Lubaga on his own; it is received by the priests of Lubaga and sacrificed in the grove, and such a sacrifice is held to be in some measure efficient, but drought or sickness in the country as a whole is often attributed to one or other of the participating groups failing to play their part. Moreover, such a failure is thought to be dangerous to the chief or priest who neglects his duties, as we shall see in the case of Kasitile. [753] [731]

The priests of Lubaga ministered to the Lwembe but they had also the right and duty of admonishing him if he did wrong, just as village headmen have the right and duty of admonishing their chief. If the Lwembe broke a taboo 'then Kissoule and the other priests would be very angry and reproach him for bathing and making hunger, and he would pay them a bull in recompense.' Even the 'divine king' was subject to the rule of law. All through the political organization and ritual patterns of the Nyakyusa there is this balance and reciprocity between chiefs and commoners and it is here that the Nyakyusa system differs radically from that described by Professor Frankfort for ancient Egypt.[1] The heroes had brought the gift of chieftainship to the Nyakyusa but it had not ousted another, perhaps older, tradition of democratic leadership; instead, the two were welded in a partnership which, to the Nyakyusa, is so much part of the necessary order of the universe that they speak of commoner priests and headmen as 'wives' of the chiefs. The Kissoule in office is 'the wife' of the Lwembe. 643 [793] [784] [642]

In the grove at Lubaga sacrifices of black cattle and sheep and libations of millet beer were offered by the Nyakyusa, while the Kinga brought hoes, bamboo beer, salt, the sacred drum *sgoma*, and *ifile*, that is, marvels whose nature, Kasitile averred, he did not know himself. The shrine of Lubaga, and the actors and actions connected with it, are miraculous and terrible, terrible even to the actors themselves who tremble when they enter the grove, and 782 789 751

[1] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (1948), pp. 30-6.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 dare not greet their children on their return without the safeguard
789 of protective medicines. At a celebration the Kinga priests took
751 medicines, 'powdered medicine which comes from Mwemusi and Mwakalukwa [the Kinga chiefs]', and smeared it on Lwembe's forehead and shoulders 'because the grove is great. If you entered it without this medicine you died'; they gave the Lwembe the medicine 'so that Kyala (*vide* pp. 17-18) might not kill him, that he might show respect and escape'.

783 Another medicine, *imbinga*, which is red in colour, was brought
789 from BuKinga to smear on the foreheads of the children of the Lwembe and Kissoule, the priest, when these two returned home after celebrating in the grove. Their senior wives 'would smear the *imbinga* on the children's foreheads, when they would turn round calling: "You hit us", and Mwakisiya (56) (the Lwembe) and Kissoule (the priest) would both reply: "No, I am innocent (*mwela*)." The medicine was smeared on the children because Mwakisiya and his fellow thought: "How can we meet them, how can they look on our bodies, since we are taboo from the ritual." Yes, the words are the same as in the twin ritual, but the medicine is different.' During one of the rituals we attended, Mwakilima (111) begged the Kinga priests to bring him some of this medicine for the protection of his children.

778 The numinous quality of everything connected with Lubaga
789 can hardly be exaggerated; the Nyakyusa believe that it overcomes even curious Europeans. The most sacred and terrible object of all was the drum which was polished with blood, the blood of children, who, in Nyakyusa thought, had died for the people, that the country might live and be fertile. 'Formerly,
[782] when the Kinga came with a drum, they said: "Catch the child of a commoner, fat and strong, hide him in the drum." In the old days when the Kinga came beating their drum, ping . . . ping . . . [single strokes with long intervals] we of the country used to run away and women would hide their children for fear lest they be snatched up and put in the drum.'[1] The child was strangled

[1] These statements were made by three different groups of informants independently. All had special knowledge of these matters. The *ilibale*, the sacred drum of the Kinga, differs in shape from the Nyakyusa *indingala*. It is made of single wood and ox-hide and is beaten when a ritual is celebrated and to summon men to war. The Kinga do not dance to drums and the Nyakyusa did not do so formerly either, but after the Europeans arrived Nyakyusa chiefs began to buy *indingala* from outside BuNyakyusa, paying a bull for a set—'a mother drum and her children'. Only quite recently have Nyakyusa craftsmen learnt from a Hunga immigrant to make *indingala*.
[554]

9: Wilson
173
643

FN17 Ngonde
Nyakyusa

Chart showing position of sections of chart on "Chiefs of Kukwe's Line." (Facing p. 27)

A	B	C
D	E	F

M Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

and its body taken to Lubaga and added to the 'medicine for fertility' (*ishuta gwa ifuga*) which was sprinkled throughout the country, starting at Lubaga, proceeding to the other sacred groves, and then to the ordinary homesteads. Thus the terror of the grove had objective roots in the fact of human sacrifice, but it is rather a fear of the unknown and miraculous than of death itself; a fight involving casualties was not terrible in the same way as the grove and the throb of the sacred drum. 778 789 [181]

The Kinga priests travelled 'the road of Lwembe', down the escarpment of the Livingstone mountains from Mwakalukwa's country and across Selya, beating their drum. They stopped to sleep at the house of Kaziile the priest, and poured a libation of beer at 'the places where Lwembe had rested': Isumbu, a hill overlooking Kaziile's homestead, Kitoli in Mwaipopo's country, and near the homestead of the priest Mnayoma.[1] 'He [Lwembe] used to shoot on Isumbu, the little hill here, then no one would cut the trees on the hill,' said Kaziile. 'It was one of his resting places; he used to come here to tell my grandfather to go and get a cow for Lubaga, and later to tell my father to do so. . . .' The beer is poured at the base of an *ulugo* tree (a variety of *fig*) at Isumbu, in the long grass in Kitoli, and at the base of an *ulugo* near Mnayoma's homestead. 'They pour [it] out here by the *ulugo*, they beat the drum to say: "We have come", then the people of Mnayoma hide their children—that's of old.' Besides the drum the Kinga travelled with a bude horn[2] (known in battle in BuKinga) and a sacred drum and horn were lodged in the hut of the Lwembe's chief wife. Before they start the Kinga priests make an offering of millet flour and beer in one of their own groves,[3] and leave there overnight the beer and salt and horn which they will take to the Lwembe, 'that the *ulwa-Ngulubile* (g) may see them before they go to Lwembe'. 789 793 782 [778] [554]

At Lubaga there were several places of prayer and offering: the trees planted at the installation of the last living Lwembe (*ulu lufu* pp. 54-5), the trees planted at the installation of a previous 778 782

[1] Probably grandson of the and representative of a junior lineage to which priestly functions had been delegated.

[2] Ubilibo in Kinga, *ngungu* horn in Nyakyusa, cf. plate 38.

[3] Nyamdala, a Kinga chief, and now priests took Godfrey Wilson to a sacrifice in one of their groves. The form of sacrifice is very similar to that among the Nyakyusa here that the cross-offering is placed in the fork of a tree. The priests had gone very early in the morning 'to call Kalulile (the dead chief) "Do not be angry, a foreigner comes to greet you"'.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

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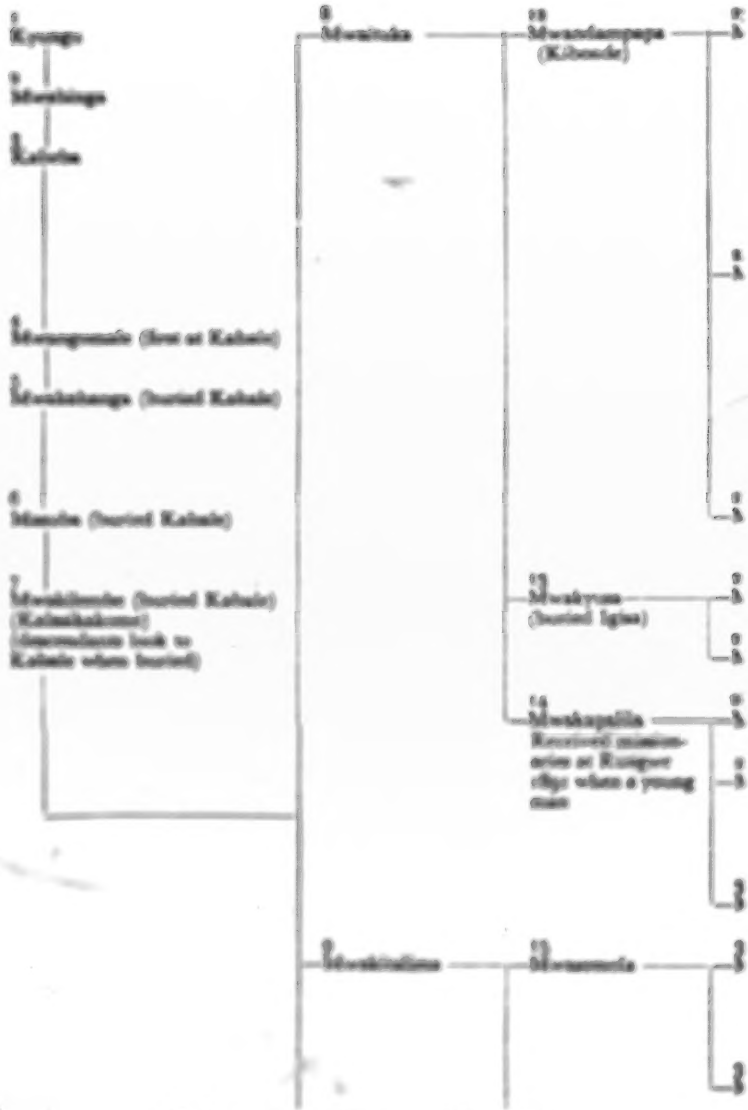

[Facing p.27; section A]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHIEFS OF THE KUKWE LINE

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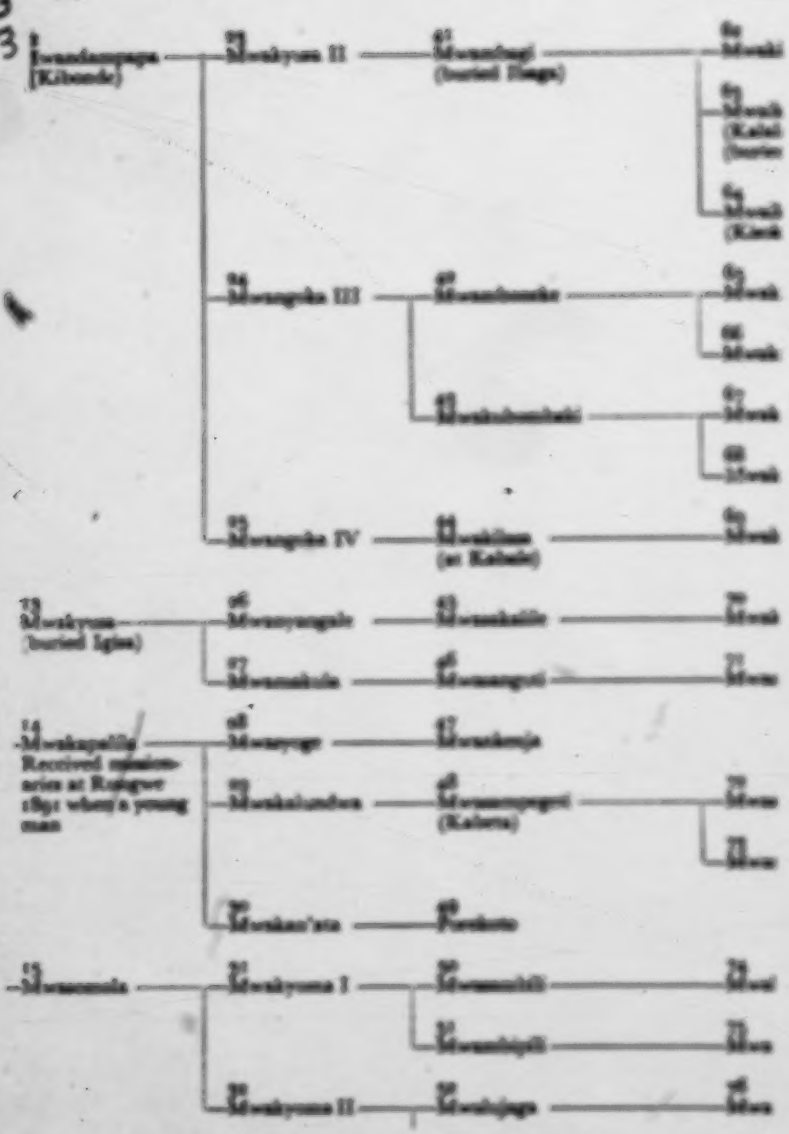

[facing p. 27; section B]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959 -

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

UNWE LINE

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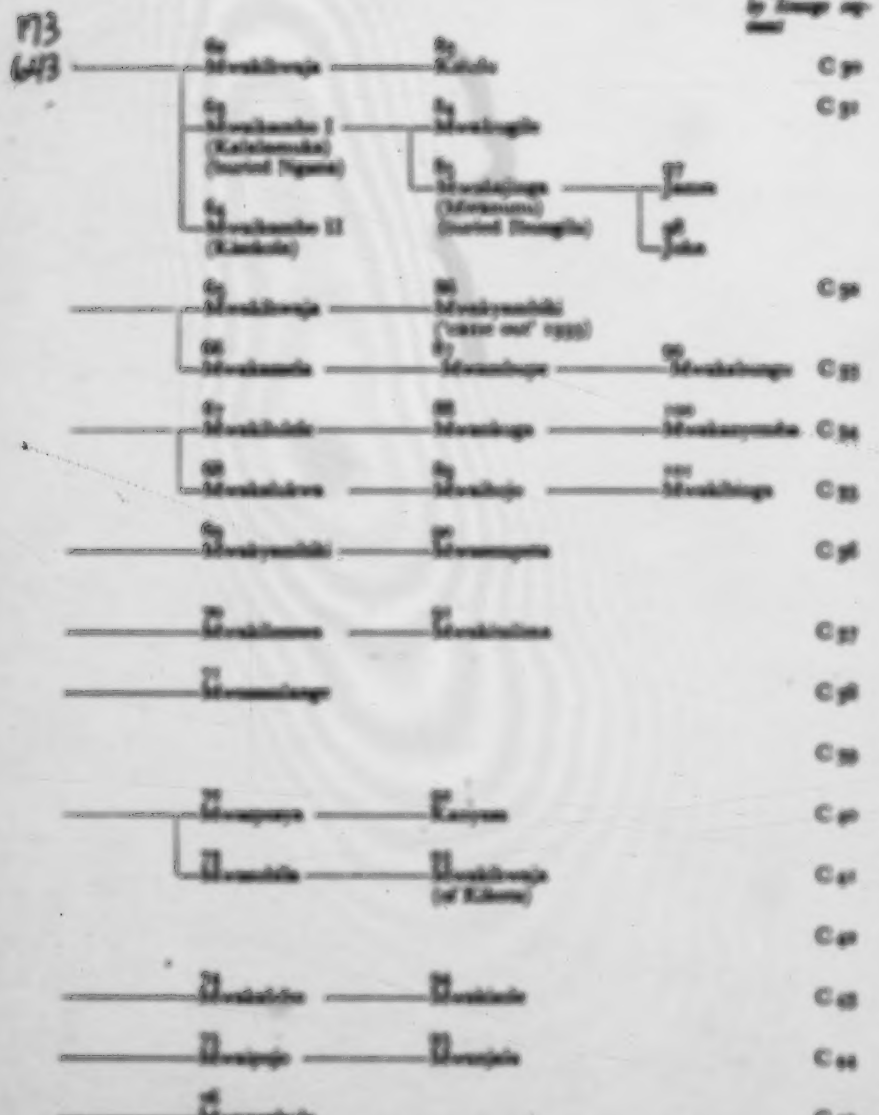

[facing p.27; section C]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

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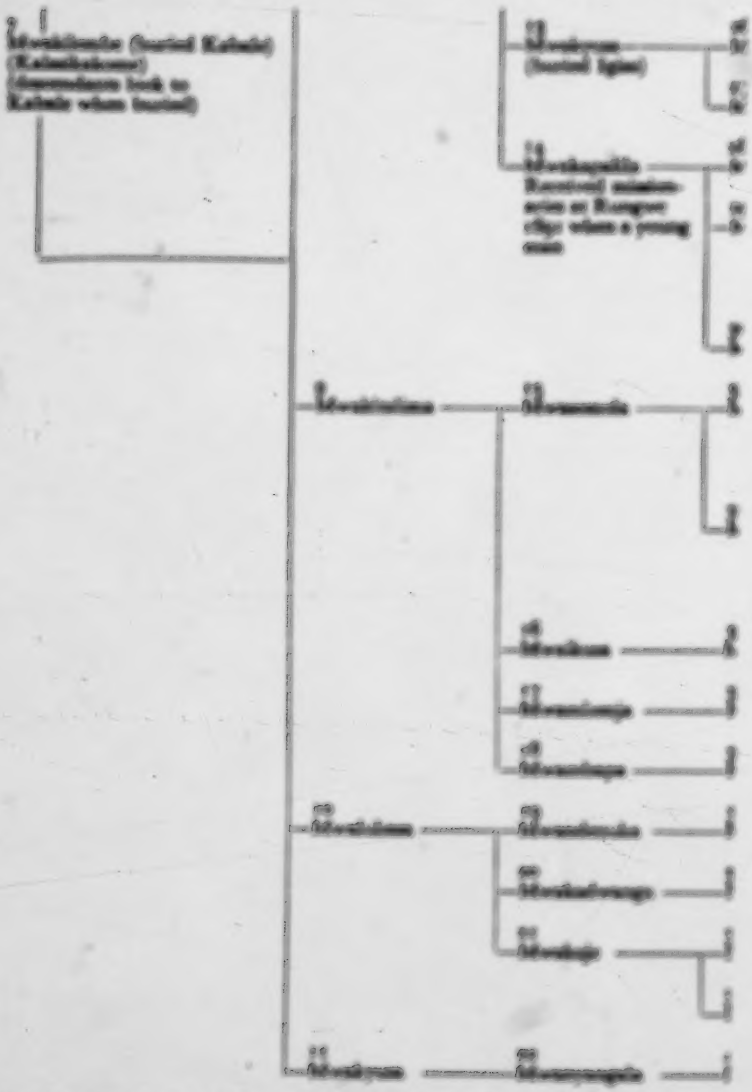

Based on genealogies of Kukwe chiefs kindly given me by Mr. John Mwakisunde. The order and number of women before Mwakisunde is very doubtful. I have not yet

[facing p.27; section D]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

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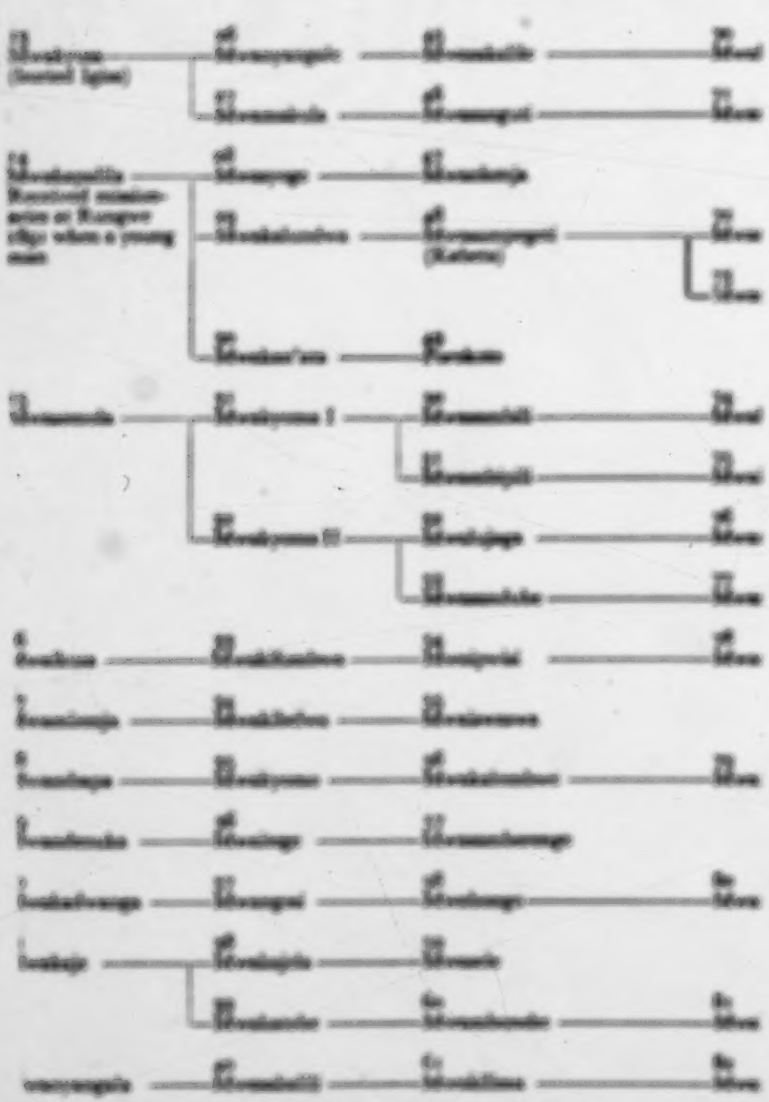
643



Dr. John Mwakisambe (gff) and Mr. Ernest Kyungu, both of whom had made a g[illegible] rudefid. I have not personally checked this genealogy with a member of each line.

[facing p. 27; Section E]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

F7617 Ngonde F7617

Nyakyusa

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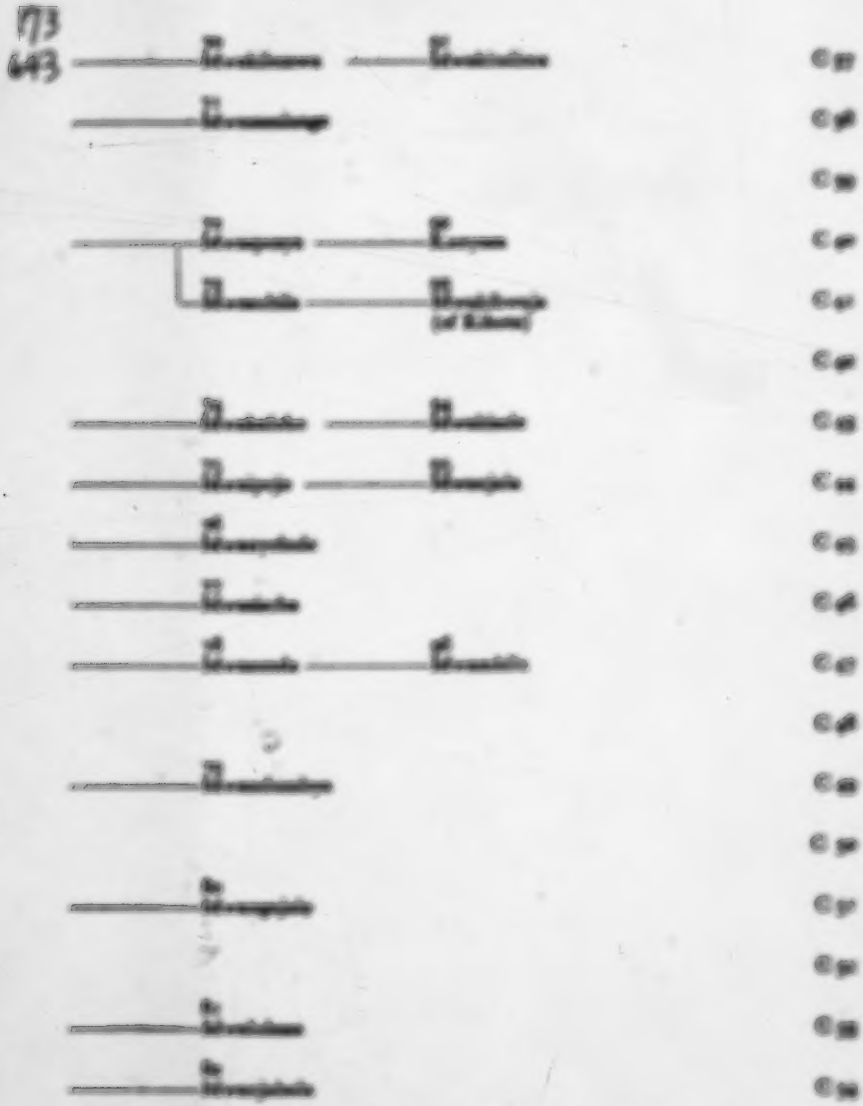

Some had made a special study of the subject. They were not in complete agreement and neither of each line.

[Facing p.27; Section F]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3417 Ngonde F3417
Nyakyusa

778 782 Lwembe, and the grove of the first Lwembe himself, the last being the most sacred. In it stands a miraculous tree from which, the priests ever, sometimes comes sap like water, and sometimes blood. 'If it is watery there will be a plague of ulcers in the country— [753] [755] running sores—if it is blood there will be dysentery. But as soon as the hoes are placed in the grove, or the black bull is killed, then the sick begin to recover.'

768 Godfrey Wilson attended three celebrations at Lubaga, and we heard of five others which occurred during our period of fieldwork. The ritual is esoteric, that is to say, only the representative of Lwembe and his priests participate, and the details are not revealed to others, but its occurrence is widely known and discussed among older men.

[643] [793] [177] The celebrations observed were modified by the fact that no one had been installed as Lwembe since the death of Mwakisiya (56) before 1914. The possible candidates whom the priests had wished to instal had refused—'they feared the grove'; the only one who was said to be willing was rejected on account of his character. The priests gave 'European times' as the reason for there being no Lwembe. 'When the country was ours before you Europeans came' the elected candidate was compelled to accept office. On the death of Mwakisiya, the Kinga priests ordered that his senior son Mwanjala I (77) should take his place, and when Mwanjala I died (three years after his father) his full brother Mwanjala II (78) succeeded. He took a leading part in the rituals observed, but was not an anointed Lwembe. The priests explained: 'We fear, thinking that if a chief is seized [and compelled to sit on the stool] he will complain to the Government and we shall be punished.' During the period of German rule they had been threatened with imprisonment if they continued the ritual . . . 'we feared and stole through the country by night'. . . . And there is still much secrecy about its truncated celebration. Since the journey down 'the road of Lwembe' with the drum traditionally involved human sacrifice, and the Lwembe was smothered when ailing, there is an absolute incompatibility between a full celebration of the ritual and European administration.

177 788 The influence of the Christian minority is also considerable. The view of most Nyakyusa Christians with whom we discussed communal rituals is that they used to be efficient, but are so no longer, since men have been taught a better way of approaching God. 'God said: "They are mistaken but in their hearts they are

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

looking for me", and so if there was much heat he would send rain.' But this no longer happens.

At the same time both pagans and Christians tell a myth of how a European missionary, Rev. — Jauer (Mwaisumo), who visited the grove of Lubaga intending to remove the bees in the grove to demonstrate the falsehood of the ritual, was confounded by a miracle (*ifike*).

Once the missionary Mwaisumo wished to go and see the grove of Lubaga. He was warned that if he entered he would flee because there were many marvels there, and the rain would catch him. He said: 'Oh, I shall go, nothing will happen.' So he went and entered the grove, and he found many bees, some standing up, some lying down, and some of them had 'eyes'. He seized one to take it away, then there was a crash of thunder, and he was afraid and fled. When he ran out of the grove the rain fell in torrents. It is said that he was so frightened he left his jacket behind. From that time people said that indeed there are miracles at Lubaga.

'European times' is given as the reason for sacrifices being less frequent and regular than formerly. The occasions were, and still are: any period of hunger or scarcity, such as the Kings regularly experience during the dry season, and the Nyakyusa also complain of at that time; any irregular misfortune such as a failure of the rains, a plague of locusts or an epidemic; and any prediction of hunger or disease by a prophet (*saudali* or *sadangalaka*). But the chiefs are said to be more reluctant to provide the cattle for sacrifice than formerly, and less quickly influenced by the actual occurrence of hunger or by prophecy that famine is imminent. Nevertheless they still 'treat the earth' (*akatendelaya ansfa*) by sending a black cow to Lubaga when hunger persists.

According to Kasitile (86) and Mwamukunda (his fellow priest) no ritual could be performed in the grove of the first Lwembe when he had no living representative. Formerly, the Kimende in office and another priest penetrated alone, and there bound a live sheep and left it to bleat until a python took it. 'It is Kyala, he turns himself into a python' (*Je kyala: ipala ate*). Here Kasitile used *kyala* in the sense of 'the lord' and he was referring to Lwembe. According to another informant, when the heir to any priesthood connected with Lubaga is installed he should sleep in the grove enclosed in a stout wicker hut, and remain there until the python of the grove comes and licks him. The case was cited of a priest who had lain captive for two weeks

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

and come home 'very thin', but just when this happened was not clear.

We turn now to the account of the three sacrifices witnessed at Lubaga which illustrates (*a*) the occasions of celebration, (*b*) the procedure, and (*c*) the tensions between the participants. In the ritual described on pp. 35-8, Mwakilima (111) complained that most of the chiefs of Selya did not even recognize his ritual supremacy by sending cattle to kill at Lubaga, but Kasitile the priest retorted that Mwakilima himself, in his capacity as a chief, was slow to provide the cattle for sacrifice required by his own priests.

In July 1955, two Kinga priests, Kikungubeja and Neyanigwa, came from the Kinga chief Mwakalukwa to Lubaga, with an offering of bees. A bull, provided by Mwakilima (111) as chief of Lwembe's line, was then killed beside a tree planted at the 'coming out' of Mwakileiya (56), the last Lwembe, on the site on which the house of his second wife, Kinga, was built, and the meat was thrown into the old banana grove close by. At the end of September the same two priests returned (each accompanied by a grandson) bringing bamboo beer and 10s. and a bee with which to buy a bull to sacrifice again, for the Kinga were suffering hunger and a prophet in their country had gone into a trance and prophesied cold, disease, and hunger, and urged the chiefs to pray. No fault had brought the hunger, they said, but 'the shades with a cow. The shades say: "Formerly we ate meat, now you do not kill cows for us, indeed we wish to eat. . . ." Therefore much hunger afflicts our country. It is on this account that we Kinga come with a bull and bees. When the blood of the sacrifice soaks into the earth then the shades are satisfied, and they also receive the meat from the upper fireing (*ijumaga*).'[1]

The initiative came from the Kinga who were suffering most severely, but the Nyakyusa were also complaining of scarcity. The weather was very hot and dry and Mwakilima (108) remarked to Kasitile (86) the priest, who had come up to Lubaga for the sacrifice: 'You have killed us with this sun.' He was referring to the unusually small yield of early maize and beans which had been scorched by the drought. Kasitile replied: 'No, all of us [are responsible], the sun has hated us.' Both men smiled.

Five days after the Kinga reached Lubaga (28th September 1955) the sacrifice was offered up. The men concerned gathered in

[1] The second cow, cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*, p. 36.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

the house of Mwamalungaka, a hereditary priest of Lubaga (whose 782
ancestor came with the first Lwembe (*side* p. 8). There were
present five chiefs of Mwakisiya's (56) line, including Mwanjala
II (58), who represents the Lwembe, but is ailing and has never
been installed; two Kinga priests and a Kinga messenger sent to
escort them; four priests of Lubaga (including Mwamalungaka
himself), Kasitile the priest of Selya, and Godfrey Wilson.

Mwanjala brought a small black bull worth 10s., bought with 782
the money and a bow provided by the Kinga, and sent for a stem 784
of bananas and a flask of fresh milk. A rowdy discussion began
about the procedure: 'In the old days we used to pour whey over
our hands to wash them, and to wash our mouths, and in the
sacred grove we would pour it away. . . .' Then the party went to
a small grove surrounded by cultivated land, and Neyanigwa, the
Kinga priest, stopped at the stump of a tree, still alive, on the
edge of the grove, saying: 'This is the *umpondaponde* tree [a [775]
fever planted at the coming out of a chief] where we used to pour
the beer,' but Mwanjala denied it saying 'No, they have hoed over
it, the tree was here in the bean patch.' After some dispute they
agreed to go right into the grove to sacrifice. The grove is on the
site at which the trees were planted at the 'coming out' of Mwakisiya (56) the last Lwembe, and the house of his senior wife,
Njala, was built. She is buried there, where her swept courtyard
used to be, and during Mwakisiya's lifetime the beer used to be
poured out beside this sacred tree. The last sacrifice here was
when Kimonde was a boy (1885-90), hence the uncertainty as to
the place, but just why the beer sacrifices had all been at the
homestead of Kinga (*side supra*) was not clear.

Neyanigwa (the Kinga priest) asked Mwamalungaka (the priest
of Lubaga) to bring over the three calabashes, one of millet beer,
one of milk and one of bamboo beer, but Mwamalungaka refused
and Neyanigwa had to fetch them himself. It was the Kinga who
had insisted on the Nyakyusa providing millet beer saying: 'If we
first pour out our bamboo beer we will go off with all the fertility [812]
of the country, let them begin with theirs.' Mwanjala, summoned
by Neyanigwa, came and stood at the foot of the tree while
Neyanigwa poured millet beer first into his hands and then at the
foot of the tree, and the priests prayed, Mwanjala and Neyanigwa
in Nyakyusa, Kikungubeja in Kinga:

Oh thou Mwambijili, thou Kimonde, thou Mwamalungaka,[1] thou

[1] Three hereditary priests of Lubaga.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

[762] Lwembe, this is your millet beer, we complain of hunger, oh thou
[766] Mwampondele (?), thou Lwembe.

Then the milk was poured likewise and again they prayed for milk and calves, for children and health:

Here is your milk . . . may the locusts pass, may sickness be slight, may milk be plentiful, may the cows calve!

Finally the bamboo beer was poured out, too, and both the Kinga priests prayed in Kinga speaking of hunger. Mwanjala, instructed by Nyanigwa, took some bamboo beer into his mouth and blew it three times in different directions, saying, between blowing: 'May the rain come.'

The bull was killed by Mwanjande (?). Nyanigwa first gave the axe and knife to Mwanjala saying: 'This axe and knife [an unhafted and very old spearhead] I, Nyanigwa, brought from BuKinga to kill the bull, go and kill it.' Mwanjala asked: 'Shall I not give the axe to my younger brother?' and Nyanigwa replied: 'Yes, give it to him.' So Mwanjala gave it to Mwanjande who killed the bull with one blow at the back of the head. Mwamsana (a commoner priest) cut up the carcass, collecting the first stream of blood in a pot. Then the sacred meat was taken from the fore-
[778] legs, that from the right leg being placed on a plantain leaf, that from the left on a leaf of sweet banana. It was cut up and carried by Kinga (heir of 537), who walked behind Mwanjala and the two Kinga priests, to the tree where they had poured the beer and milk. Mwanjala turned to the group of those sitting talking and shouting and said: 'Friends, a spear will go to the shades
[769] [i.e. the shades will be offended by your noise], be quiet', and they fell silent until the offering of meat was made. Then Mwanjala scraped a hollow in the cleared earth at the root of the tree with his feet and threw into it seven or eight pieces. He and the Kinga prayed, while Kinga stood silently holding the rest of the meat:

Oh thou Lwembe, thou Mwampondele (?), stand by us, this is your bull. . . . Give us children, milk, cattle, food; may sickness be slight . . . stand by us.

All this meat was taken from the plantain leaf—the men's portion. At the end, as they walked away Kinga asked: 'What about the women's meat?' And Mwanjala repeated his question. The Kinga replied: 'Are there two sacred places? No! There is no sacrifice

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

to the women here, but to their husbands.' So Kinga took back to the tree the sweet banana leaf, containing the portion for the women. 792 796

Meanwhile strips of meat had been roasted and were eaten with roast bananas, while the milk was finished up by the Nyakyusa present. All the millet beer had been poured out, but the bamboo beer that remained was finished, part drunk, part blown from the mouth by the two Kinga boys, grandsons of the priests. Then the rest of the meat was divided up, one back leg being given to the Kinga. But they took the head (their traditional right) as well, without being given it. There was some considerable protest at this: 'Do you take twice?' they were asked. And more protest still when they began to go away with it. Neyanigwa (the Kinga priest) replied furiously. 'Let it go, let them take it' was the final comment of the local people, but both parties were angry. Two legs went to the chief, one to the Nyakyusa commoners, and the breast to Mwanjala.

After the meat had been safely disposed of Neyanigwa gave his parting instructions: 'You sirs (*katwe*), thank you, thank you. We remember that it was Mwakalukwa (the Kinga chief) who said "Pray for us"! Thank you! We thank you! Now you must build your chief, Mwanjala (78), a little hut in which to sleep with the breast of beef so that the lord (*kyale*)[1] may eat, and in the morning if *kyale* has eaten let him go to his home. This calf I brought, I Neyanigwa, from BuKinga. Let the knife I brought remain with it too.' Then Neyanigwa went off and his advice was discussed. Mwanjala laughed and said: 'I have no house to sleep in . . . shall I sleep by myself? Outside?' Several suggested that it was the custom for some other man to accompany him. No one knew who should do so, but someone suggested Kisoule. In fact Mwanjala went home with the breast of beef and did not remain overnight in the grove. But he and the priests held apart from their wives and children. Mwamalunguka (the priest) explained: 'We avoid sleeping with our wives for three nights. It is taboo to go to them. We say, "Let us wash and anoint ourselves and be alone until that lord (*kyale*) has gone out of our bodies, since we were in the ritual". We bathe tomorrow and the next day and anoint ourselves, but avoid our wives for three nights. Also our children are anointed on the forehead with medicine—the young [794] [795]

[1] The name *kyale* had not been used in the invocation, and the only reference to him in this ritual were the two just quoted.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

[782] children, not the married ones with wives. Kimosle and I both
[79] have our children anointed now.'

[761] This ritual was not complete because Mwanjala shirked the
[643] crucial act of remaining in the grove until a python licked him.
[793] The Kinga priests were continually nagging at the Nyakyusa for
[177] their failure to provide an acceptable Lwembe, but it is doubtful whether in 1935 Mwanjala II would have been acceptable to any of them since he was old and ailing. It was Mwakilima (111) that men wanted and he steadily refused to be installed.

[787] The next ritual observed at Lubaga was in March 1937. An ordinary commoner of Selya (not a priest) named Kijaja had been prophesying repeatedly: 'I do not sleep, you will not eat the crops you hoe if you do not go to Lubaga.' He was taken to his village headman and thence to the chief Mwaihoje (147) who finally, two years after he had begun prophesying, agreed to find a bull. Word then came to Kasitile (86) who notified the commoner priests of chief Mwaipopo (116) and sent a message to the priests of Lubaga. Kasitile (86), together with three other priests of Selya (Mwalukota, Nyama, Mwamakunda) and Godfrey Wilson, set off early one morning from Kasitile's house to take the bull (brown streaked with black, called *ingombe isinkile*) to Lubaga. On the way they called in at Munyoso's house, where the Kinga stop on their journey to pour a libation of beer (*vide supra*, p. 27). Kasitile asked Munyoso, 'Shall the bull enter?' and he replied, 'Yes, let it come into the house', so it was tied up inside while the party talked with Munyoso. He was sick and did not want to accompany them. The others pressed him, and at first he refused. Whereupon Mwalukota said: 'Very well, then, we are at your place, let the bull return and we will go another day', in other words, refusing to go without him. 'No, that is taboo,' said
[789] Kasitile, 'once the bull has faced towards Lubaga and entered a house here it is taboo for it to turn back. The shades will be angry.' And so Munyoso went with them.

On the way they passed a group of men hoeing hard. One of them called out: 'Where are you going with that bull? Where are you off enjoying yourselves?' 'Ah, you fellows,' answered Kasitile, 'do you ask where we are going? We visit where our fathers always did.' They understood at once. 'Oh thank you, thank you,' they cried. 'You,' went on Kasitile, 'do you call that work? Are you growing your own food? No, you lie still and eat without effort. It is we who exert ourselves for you' (implying

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

that their crop depended upon sacrifices at Lubaga). But five minutes later, as if to illustrate the constant co-existence of dogma and science, of economic and ritual effort, Kasitile commented on a very uneven field of millet saying: 'Its unevenness is due to the rubbish heaps. Where they burnt the rubbish the millet has grown well', as indeed it had.

The party went to the house of Mwakinepile, priest of Lubaga, and after a polite interval for greetings and small talk Kasitile proceeded to explain his business. 'The sky has changed its temper towards us, we do not sleep (*Kamonaya katumulukile, nalilagwa*). Therefore I said to myself, "Let me go to my father, let me go to my mother." I have come to ask for bananas, and for maize.' So the host sent messages to Mwanjala III (79) and the priests Mwamalungulu and Kesa. Mwanjala II (78) and Kimwale the chief priest of Lubaga, were away from home. Kasitile had long been ailing (*vide infra*, pp. 101-4) and Kesa asked after his health. 'The sky has changed its temper towards us', repeated Kasitile, implying that his illness was connected with Lubaga, and hinting at the quarrel between the priests and men of Mwakisiya (56) of Lubaga and the priests and men of the chief Mwaipopo of Selya (*vide infra*, pp. 37-8). Mwakinepile (the host) repeated to Kesa the reason for the visit. 'Mwamukinga (i.e. Kasitile 86),' he said, 'and Mwalukotu and Mwamukonda declare they do not sleep. They have come to ask for bananas and maize and children, and that the cattle may increase.' Kasitile added, 'The sky has made us still and silent. We long for the grove: since Mwakisiya (56) died we have wished for it. We have come to beg. I lie down wrapped in mats but the cold will not leave me. So I said to myself, "Let me go to my father, let me go to my mother." I am hungry. Have I food? The earth is destroyed.'

Then Kesa and Mwakisiya (111) replied: 'We are astonished that the people of Selya don't sleep. We have heard nothing about it. I, Mwakisiya sleep all right. And only Mwakalobo (67 or heir) and Mwankuga (94) these two alone of all the Selya chiefs came to me. Most of the men in Selya insult us! Ask them who has remembered that they should sacrifice here?'

Kasitile answered: 'It was I, Mwakinambwe (90, i.e. Kasitile speaks as his great grandfather) who initiated it.'

Kesa: 'Yes, but who agreed to give you an animal?'

Kasitile: 'It was Mwalubanga, it was Kajula (i.e. the chief Mwalinjo, 143).'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa.

712
796

He also admitted that the people of Selya had insulted the Lwembe. 'But,' he added, 'we have heard that Mwakiniya (111) himself, when someone does not sleep, says "All right", but does not offer a cow.' Thus Kasitile accused the chief of Lubaga who should be Lwembe, to his face, of being reluctant to provide cattle for sacrifice just as the chiefs of Selya were reluctant.

Then Mwalukuta interposed: 'But Kasitile, you admitted that you had injured your father, you had injured your mother.'

Kasitile: 'Yes, indeed it is so, I have injured* my father, I have injured my mother.'

That ended the discussion. Kesa fetched bananas and a large calabash of thick milk for the men of Selya, and Mwalukuta and Mwamukunda started eating at once. Kasitile reproved them: 'What? Do you eat anyhow?' They dropped the bitter bananas hastily. 'Do you not know that you have come here to ask for bananas, to ask for maize? We have come to Mwamonka (95), to Mwakiniya (96), to Mwanjala (97), to Mwamponda (97) to ask for it. Kyala provided the food.' Then he took up his flask of thick milk and two bananas, and went over to the banana grove at a little distance and prayed aloud:

'You, Mwamonka (95), you Mwanjala (97) . . . I have come, I Mwalubunge (98), I Mwakagile (99) [Kasitile represents their descendants] I have come to beg for maize, to beg for bananas.' Then he came back and joined the party. He sent a large flask of milk over to the local priests; they wanted to refuse and leave all the milk for the visitors, eating only roast bananas, but Kasitile said: 'No, Kyala has provided the food, Kyala has provided it, let us all eat and be satisfied.'

During the meal Kesa and Godfrey Wilson discussed steamships and aeroplanes, and the distance and fares to Europe. Mwamulangaka had been to Mbeya and described the wind of an aeroplane coming down and starting, most graphically. Mwanjala (98) wanted very much to go to Europe to see the country. Then Kasitile said: 'Let us go, friends, the rain is coming', so they got up and left, leaving the bull tied to the bananas; the Selya priests had nothing further to do with that; the Lubaga men would kill it at their own convenience.

On the journey back Mwamukunda apologized to Kasitile for having begun to eat before they prayed: 'I am sorry, Mwamukunda (94, addressing Kasitile by his grandfather's name), you have

* Ukusasila: literally suspend, overcoupled, with the implication of injuring.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

instructed us, you have taught us the customs, we did not know them, we thought that when the food came that was all.' 712 716

Kaitile said: 'Yes, I do it as our fathers did it.' Then they discussed the dispute between Mwakinyo and Kaitile and agreed that Kaitile had got the better of Mwakinyo with the reference to his own reluctance to provide cattle for sacrifice.

Kaitile was determined to extract a cow for sacrifice from the chief Mwaipopo (108) also, and presently he said:

Friends, listen, let us report at home that we used hard words, we insulted Mwakinyo, we said there is nothing left to eat though we are not really starving. What has come over me? Why am I ill? Let Mwaipopo pay a cow.

The following day Mwamalungulu, one of the priests of Lubaga, explained what was meant by the complaint of insults from Selya:

The people of Mwaipopo (108) do really insult us, and since the Europeans have given them a Court they have begun to say that Mwakinyo (111) is a priest, not a chief, but just an old priest (mpapi), and we his men are all angry to hear this because Mwakinyo was always the senior. And they do not send us cattle to sacrifice, they say: 'It's European times now, all that is finished.' [177] [178]

But of Kaitile's retort that Mwakinyo himself did not listen to his priests at home, Mwamalungulu said: 'Indeed it is so, that was an excellent reply.'

The party going up to Lubaga and back travelled dry, but on the return journey Kaitile noticed that the road was wet and he remarked, 'The rain follows us again', and it was true, clouds were gathering quickly. An hour and a half after they got home heavy rain began and continued for three or four hours. During the preceding weeks there had been many heavy showers and bright spells, unnoticed and of no particular significance, but the downpour on the day of the sacrifice was immediately connected with it.

Three weeks later the rain had almost stopped and people were talking of drought. Kaitile was quick to link this with the failure to follow up the offering at Lubaga with sacrifices in the groves of the chiefs. On the sixth of April he spoke his mind to Mwamboputa, the senior village headman of Mwaipopo, who both were visiting us. 749 752 756

Where is the rain? [said Kaitile] I am at fault, and my child Mwaipopo (108) also. He ought to provide a cow to kill at Mwaipopo's

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

793
643
291
142
[415]

36. PRIESTS OF LUBAGA (KIGGA)

[534
778]

38. KIGGA PRIESTS WITH HORN AND DRUM

[Facing p. 39]

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

indicated (*vide supra*, p. 35). And, as we shall see later, he also [771]
suspected that his quarrels with the Kings priests and with the [753]
commoner priests of Mwaipopo's chiefdom made him ill. [578]

Chiefs, and even the 'divine king' himself, lived in fear of the
legitimate anger of their people, more particularly of their village [649]
headmen and priests, believing that such anger would bring them [753]
sickness, and this belief gave headmen and priests a very strong [622]
hold over their lord. How it worked was illustrated by an incident
at Lubaga.

Mwanjala II (78) remarked to Mwakilima (111): 'I sent to summon [796]
Mwanzi (a commoner priest) for the ritual tomorrow but he refused
saying: "I shall not come." He is angry because he was not called to
the ritual at your home, nor was he told formally when the Kings
came, or when Mwaipopo [G.W.] came.' Mwakilima (111) asked:
'Will you pay him?' [i.e. admit your mistake and offer him compensation]. Mwanjala replied that he would, and Mwakilima expressed disgust. One of the Kings priests who was listening broke
into the conversation: 'Ignore him if he refuses to come. If it were so
we should leave him and celebrate without him, but you Nyakyusa [794]
are all witches, and you fear to ignore a man who refuses to come to a
ritual saying that he will bewitch you. You are cowards, you are!'

At this Godfrey Wilson asked if there were no witchcraft in BuKinga.
The Kinga priest replied: 'There is some, but if the chief gives orders to
celebrate a ritual and someone refuses to come we ignore him, and
celebrate without him. You Nyakyusa *pay* a man for doing wrong. A
man refuses to come when he should and then you *pay* him! If you are
afraid of witchcraft why not finish the ritual and send his portion of
meat to him afterwards?'

Another priest objected: 'Then he would say it was too small a
piece.'

The commoner priests then could control even the Lwembe (for
Mwanjala II acted in the place of the Lwembe though he was
not installed), but at the same time the mystical power of the
Lwembe was feared both by ordinary chiefs and commoners.
Mwaijonga (81), who ruled before the European occupation,
insulted and fought Mwakileya the Lwembe (56), and killed
some of his men, because 'Lwembe had spoiled the year', but
he sent back the cattle that were seized.

In the old days it did not matter killing the Lwembe's men (in war), but [757]
no one dared to take his cattle, they feared lest he would spoil the year
and send too much rain, and a plague of locusts, and cause the cattle to [789]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

die. . . . People feared very much because the Lwembe had medicines for smearing on his body, which could cause rain, sickness, food, slaves, anything.

And they feared lest they might get slaves if they killed one of Lwembe's men 'on the road'—*i.e.* a traveller. In short, Lwembe's mystical power afforded the first feeble beginnings of a 'king's peace' in a land of warring chiefdoms, where strangers were fair game.

(c) Mbande

Mbande is a hill on the plain of north Nyamland with a commanding view of the surrounding country and well suited to defence. The west side is precipitous and below the scarp edge there used to be a marsh; to the north the hill is protected by a wide reach of the Lukulu river. It is a sacred place and for many generations was the home of the 'divine king', the Kyungu. Like the Lwembe he was the living representative of a hero, and was selected by a group of hereditary nobles from one of two related lineages, the office alternating (if suitable candidates were available) between the two. They sought a big man,[1] one who had begotten children and whose sons were already married, not a young man for, the nobles said, 'young men always want war, and destroy the country'. He must be a man of wisdom (*gwe mabale*) and generous in feeding his people.

The Kyungu's life was governed by taboos even more rigorous than those surrounding the Lwembe. He must not fall ill, or suffer a wound, or even scratch himself and bleed a little, for his ill health, or his blood falling on the earth would bring sickness to the whole country. 'Men feared when Kyungu's blood fell on the ground, they said, "It is his life".' 'If he had a headache his wives (if they loved him) told him not to mention it, they hid his illness; but if the nobles catered and found him ill they dug the grave and put him in it, saying, "He is the ruler (*ntemi*), it's taboo for him to be ill". Then he thought: "Perhaps it is so" (with a gesture of resignation).'

Great precautions were taken to preserve his health. He lived in a separate house with his powerful medicines. His food was prepared by boys below the age of puberty lest a menstruating woman, or a youth who had lain with a woman, should touch it and so bring sickness upon him; and his numerous wives were

[1] Ukumbikile mwanaa. In Ungoni both big physically and important.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

immured in the royal enclosure—a great stockade—and jealously guarded, for any infidelity on their part was thought to make their husband ill, and with him the whole country.

When the Kyungu did fall ill he was smothered by the nobles who lived around him at Mbande, and buried in great secrecy, with a score or more of living persons—slaves—in the grave beneath him, and one or two wives and the sons of commoners above. And in the midst of all this slaughter the nobles brought a sheep to look into the grave that the dead Kyungu might be gentle (*mshole*) like the sheep!

The living Kyungu was thought to create food and rain, and his breath and the growing parts of his body—his hair and nails and the constantly replaced mucus of his nose—were believed to be magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde plain. When he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was buried 'with the breath in his body'; while portions of his hair and nails and of his nasal mucus were taken from him beforehand and buried by the nobles of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This was 'to defend the country against hunger', 'to close up the land, to keep it rich and heavy and fertile as it was when he himself lived in it'.

His death was kept secret—a relatively easy matter since he lived in seclusion—and one of the nobles (*Ngosi*) impersonated him wearing his clothes. After a month or two when the nobles had decided whom to choose as the new Kyungu, the luckless man was summoned to Mbande: 'Your father calls you.' Then he came with his companions and entered the house to make obeisance; they seized him and put the sacred cloth on him and set him on the stool "Kisumbi", saying, "Thou Kyungu, thou art he", and he became the Kyungu. Then they struck the drum, Mwenakulwa, and everyone knew that the Kyungu had died and another had been installed.[1] Men feared greatly to be seized as the Kyungu, just as they feared to be seized as the Lwembe, because the life of a divine king was short. Ngonde historians quote a number of cases of sons of the Kyungu who fled to escape being set on the stool; once they had sat on it they dared not flee lest they die.

Though[1] the early Kyungus had lived on the stony top of Mbande some of them had been buried there, for 'the ground was

[1] The following section is quoted, with additions and amendments, from Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, pp. 14 ff.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

too hard to dig graves in'. They and their successors were all buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. . . . We traced sixteen groves in the plain surrounding Mbande and the nobles who pointed them out remembered participating in celebrations at all except that of the last Kyungu. The ruling Kyungu and the spirits of his dead predecessors were believed to form one divine company, the anger of any one of whom had terrible effects, and both living and dead were placated with offerings.

In time of drought the nobles of Ngonde would go to a diviner to inquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would tell them that it was so and so. They would inform the living Kyungu and he would give them a bull or a sheep, together with some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own house, brought by his people as tribute. And he would give them some flour and cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove and build a miniature hut. Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fasten some of the pieces on to the hut in the grove—an action they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And finally, they would pour out some of the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a hut and make an offering in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

But occasionally, if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any of them: 'No . . . no.' And at length he would tell them that it was the living Kyungu who was angry because so-and-so had insulted him. Then there would be no sacrifice at the grove at all, but the nobles of Ngonde would go to the one who had insulted the Kyungu and charge him with it, asking him what he meant by thus killing them all, would not the whole land starve? And so the wrongdoer would take a cow to the Kyungu who, thereupon, would address the nobles of Ngonde, saying: 'If it was my

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been someone [of the dead Kyungus] whom you forgot to ask about.' 'And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again.' If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry, and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would, and then the diviner would tell them that it was so-and-so (one of the dead Kyungus) and they would go and sacrifice in his grove.

643 [121] [787]

Thus to insult Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. An 'insult' might mean any neglect of the obligations of the chiefs and nobles and commoners of the plain to their lord.

[687] [688]

The people of Ngonde hoed large fields as tribute to the Kyungu and if they failed to do so 'he grew angry and poured all the water out of the pot in which he kept his rain stones' (*vide infra*, p. 114) and 'the sky dried up'. Then the chiefs called their men to hoe. . . . 'They hoed and hoed and hoed and their wives planted, then the rain came in a torrent. . . . Kyungu created much rain.'

[651] [789]

Or if an elephant hunter neglected to send the Kyungu one of the tusks of any elephant he killed he would not kill another. 'The country beneath was angry . . . the shades of the dead Kyungus . . . they were angry saying: "Why do you stint our child?" '

[651] [769]

The rainfall in the Ngonde plain is less than half what it is in the Nyakyusa valley and anxiety about rainfall was constantly shown in the communal rituals; elephant hunting was also a matter of concern in a way in which it was not among the Nyakyusa and this too is reflected in rituals; but there was also the preoccupation with health and fertility, as in the prayers at Lubaga. In the groves circling Mbande the nobles prayed: 'May the sterile bear children, may the cattle and fowls increase, may the children sleep and not cry at night, may the witches not injure anyone.' And as we shall see, it was health and fertility that men had in mind when they cleared out the ashes each year after the break of the rains.

643 132 771 788 [782]

Towards Christmas time, when the first maize and the first

769 796

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

pumpkin leaves were ready to eat, an elaborate first-fruit ceremony was formerly carried out. The new season's food was offered first by the nobles of Ngonde in the grove of the previous Kyungu, the one who had last died.

The great chiefs would do so next, each at his own sacred grove (the grove of his own predecessor in the title). And after them everyone, both chiefs and people, each at his father's grove. All offered first fruits to their own shades. And finally they would themselves eat, each with his chief wife. But they would not eat beforehand for fear of angering the shades.

In time of tribal war also the Kyungu and nobles of Ngonde led the people in prayer. All chiefs and nobles were summoned from the plain and the great ones entered the Kyungu's house to receive their instructions:

When he had finished speaking he would tell them to go and pray. So they would leave his house and gather all together, all the chiefs, and the other men, and pray. The premier noble of Ngonde would begin asking oath of the sacred groves of the Kyungu in turn to bless them in the fight. And then the great chiefs would pray after him.

This organization of religious ritual in the Ngonde plain was both a factor of and itself determined by the general political structure. Many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions, but the reverse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular significance, the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle were sent to Lubaga by the chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and health; but the 'clearing out of the ashes' was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruits ritual at all; while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

The majesty (*ubunye*) of the Kyungu was cultivated in a variety of ways. He smeared himself with ointment made from lion fat, and his bed was built up with elephant tusks and lion pelts. He was enthroned on the sacred iron stool called Kisumbi, he had a spear, Kamisa, and Mulima, a porous piece of iron 'like a mouth organ' used to make rain, all handed down from the first Kyungu. His zebra tails, set with medicines in horn handles, were waved in

Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

war and during prayer to the shades, and he also had the famous drum on which the blood of a child was poured:

The Kyungu had a drum, called Mwenkelwa, which sometimes refused to sound when struck, then they asked: 'What does it wish, friends?' and they killed a sheep and poured the blood over Mwenkelwa; if it refused to sound when they struck it again, they killed a cow and poured the blood over it and if it still refused to sound when they struck it again, they said: 'What does it want now? It wants a man.' And they took the child of a commoner and cut his throat and poured the blood over the drum and struck it and it sounded loudly. If the drum did not sound when struck it was as if it had lowered an order; its silence was like a prayer. The drum was to show the majesty (*ubwingu*) of the Kyungu, that all the little chiefs at a distance might say: 'Something is happening, let us hear what it is.' Then they all gathered and were told to bring ivory. . . . They needed the blood of a man because their Lord (*Kyulu gumbe*, i.e. the Kyungu) had fastened up the drum saying 'I myself am war, there is no other war' . . .

The corpses of those sacrificed to the drum, like those condemned to death, were thrown over the scarp edge of Mbande, to be sucked into the marsh beneath.

Towards the early Kyungus their subjects expressed the feelings of worship and terror appropriate to an invisible divinity.

At Mbande the nobles of Ngonde would sit round praising the Kyungu —the drums were *bindi! bindi!* And they would praise him in antiphony: 'Oh, Kyungu! . . . Great Father! Great Father!—hunter of men!—Great Father! Great Father!—Great Father!—O Mpata![1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kipuna[1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kyubula![1]—Great Father! Great Father! O Stabber and Stabber! Great Father! Great Father! O Mwenendo! Great Father! Great Father! O Mpalombwambo! Great Father! Great Father! Dwelling in the hot sun!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Fish-eater! O Banana-eater!—Great Father! Great Father!'

The general form of this praise-song was identical with that of the prayers in the sacred groves and so it is literally true to say that the nobles of Ngonde worshipped the living Kyungus.

But the majority of their subjects only worshipped from afar in fear and trembling. At Mbande no ordinary commoner was ever conducted into the sacred enclosure, but only the territorial nobles and the elder chiefs, and they only occasionally; while when the Kyungu travelled through his country all men save the

[1] These names are obscure.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1939
F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

693 very oldest fled from his approach. Even in speech fearful circumlocutions were used to refer to his journeying—'The country is on the move'—'the great hill is moving'—'the mystery is coming'. It was taboo both for the old men who stayed to see him, and for those who entered the sacred enclosure, ever to greet him in the usual way. Falling down and clapping the hands was the only greeting for the Kyungu.

From the wives of the Kyungu also men fled in terror, fearing lest they be compromised and thrown over the cliff of Mbande, and this both added to the atmosphere of terror which surrounded him and was an expression of it.

Of the effects of personal relationships upon public events we heard much less in Ngonde than in Selya for we lived there for a much shorter period, but there were indications that, as in Selya, public misfortune was traditionally attributed to quarrels between the nobles of Mbande and within the family of the
[731] Kyungu. One fearful drought was thought to have been caused by the exile of Kyungu's son, Mwakanongola,[1] and men tell how the rain came down in torrents on his return. The nobles also asserted their power of calling on the shades of the Kyungu to
[734] punish him when he did wrong, and rebuking him over beer telling him, 'It was we who caused you to be ill, don't do it again'. Since he was killed by his nobles if he really fell ill their power over him was incurable.

(d) PALIKYALA

778 PalIKyala is a cave at the north-east corner of Lake Nyasa
769 where sacrifices are made to the hero, Kyala (a). It is on the border between Nyakyusa, Kisi, and Kinga country; the chiefs are Nyakyusa, but of Kinga extraction,[2] while many of the commoners are Kisi. Nyakyusa is generally spoken as the first language, Kisi as the second, and Nyakyusa, Kinga, and Kisi all sacrifice to Kyala. As indicated in the myth already quoted (*vide supra*, p. 8) the location of the shrine has changed from one cave to another; according to one version, Kyala was driven out by Europeans; according to another, 'the Lake rose and roared and destroyed all the pots in the cave and the roar was heard in the mountains by the Kinga' and after that Kyala moved.

783 The ritual differs from that at Lubaga and Mbande in that

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, p. 46.
[2] They are one of the lineage of Lwanzabi.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

Kyala has no living representative—in the myth he had no descendants—but only a priest. However, the priest is sometimes referred to as 'Kyala' as were the early missionaries who preached about Kyala.[1] The present priest (1938) is a young man who, by his own account, would be a Christian were it not for his public responsibility in providing food for the country. His grandfather, Mwakinyasa, was a Kisi who came as an immigrant doctor from Ikolegila in Kisi country to the south, and was the first of his family to hold office at PulKyala. Before that the chiefs of the line of Mwampasa themselves celebrated the ritual. According to Mwampasa's descendant, the present chief Mwandala, "We planted food and the crops failed, but when "the owner of food" (Mwakinyasa) came with many medicines it grew, there was much food in the homesteads, hence we said: "Kyala has indeed loved this man, let us give him the duty of sacrificing", so the chiefs gave him cattle of his own and said: "Let the ritual come out of our bodies and go to Mwakinyasa."[2] It was Mwakinyasa who (according to his grandson) introduced a variety of crops—beans, maize, cowpeas and groundnuts—to the people of Ikombe; before that they grew only bananas and millets,[3] so the myth of the hero who brought benefits is linked to the new line of priests. But there is no tradition that the priest of Mwampasa's line was once a 'divine king' like the Lwembe and the Kyungu.

793 643 [778]

Those who sacrifice at PulKyala are the local chiefs (descendants of Mwampasa), the Kinga chiefs Mwakalukwa and Kyelela (to whom Mwampasa was related), and various chiefs of the Nyakyusa plain as far west as Mwandisi (107) near Mbeya. The Kinga priests bring bamboo beer, hens, sheep, and occasionally goats or cattle; the local people offer white fowls, flour, cattle, and, traditionally, pots, which are produced in quantity near by, and which were being sold at the market at Ikombe when the Europeans first arrived in the country.[3] The Nyakyusa of the plain send black (or black and white) cattle and sheep. According to the Kinga priests they themselves offer black animals in Bu-Kinga when they want rain—black clouds—and white animals when they want sun and a clear sky. At Lubaga only dark animals are offered, but at PulKyala white fowls and black, or white (or

792 793 [523]

[1] P. Fülleborn, *Das Deutsche Nyasa und Rovuma-Gebiet*, p. 377.
[2] *Mpondo*—snake in Pogo, but here it is associated with *Mbande* (snake).
[3] Joseph Thomson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back* (1881), v. I, pp. 180-3. [113]
The missionary, Dr. A. Merensky, sent hatchets and chappers, as well as pots, on the floor of the cave. P. Fülleborn, op. cit., p. 300.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

782 793 [791] black and white) animals are killed, with the same symbolism as in BuKinga.[1] 'We kill a white sheep in the dry season that the sun may shine—if we killed a black sheep in summer the wet season would last all the year.'

The Kinga pray for fertility of the fields, that illness may pass, that they 'may sleep at home'; the local people[2] for fertility of the fields and that the pots they make (and on the sale of which they largely depend) may not crack in the firing. The more distant chieftdoms of the Nyakyusa plain sacrifice only in drought or plague—the last sacrifice remembered was during a plague of locusts about 1915, but the Kinga chief Kyelela sent a cow in PuliKyala in July 1957.

779 618 Like the grove of Lubaga, Kyala's cave is fearful. There is a story of two men who took a length of creeper from near it to tie up their canoe, and when they got home both went mad. Godfrey Wilson's guide, a young Christian, refused to enter the cave on the grounds that his pagan half-brother had once entered and taken away a pestleord and 'when he got home he went mad'.

[1] Shorrocks appears to have been misinformed on this point, op. cit., pp. 300-9.

[2] The potters are primarily Kisi, but neighbouring Nyakyusa have taken to this lucrative trade.

[777] [323]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IV

THE RITUAL OF CHIEFTAINSHIP

(a) THE 'COMING OUT'

The ritual which arouses the greatest enthusiasm in BaNyakyusa and in which every man, woman, and child participates, is the 'coming out' when the two heirs of a chief are acknowledged as rulers, and the government of the country is handed over to them and their village headmen.[1] This ritual occurs but once in a generation, when the chief's senior sons are between thirty and thirty-five years old; they, and their slightly older contemporaries and juniors 'come out' together. Should one, or even both heirs of a chief die after their 'coming out' and before their sons are grown up, the ritual is not celebrated again—it cannot be, for it concerns not individuals but a generation. Instead the young chiefs are replaced by their younger 'brothers', full or classificatory. And should a village headman die he also is replaced by his heir; the office does not lapse. Therefore there are two types of change in status: the great communal ritual when the old men retire and their sons take office, and the family ritual when a dead man is succeeded by his younger brother or his son. An individual may inherit from his father, succeeding to his office and moving into his homestead at any time, and when he has done so he is treated formally as a member of his father's generation; but the celebration throughout the chiefdom of sons succeeding fathers only takes place thrice in a century. Each chiefdom celebrates separately. There is no attempt to synchronize with neighbours.

It was usual, traditionally, for two sons to succeed their father, and divide his country between them. The division was foreshadowed at the father's 'coming out' when he married two senior wives and settled them in different sections of his country; but it sometimes happened that a chief had a favourite for whom he built separately, and whose son went through the 'coming out' with his brothers and became independent, unless he was defeated in war and subjugated. Even a son who had no expectation of a

[1] Neither of us saw a 'coming out' in full. Godfrey Wilson saw the conclusion of the coming out of the heirs of Mwangulu (24) in November 1935 and in April 1935 I was able to observe the ceremonial changes brought about by Mwanyile's (115) 'coming out' in December 1935.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

693 separate inheritance sometimes went through the ritual because he might later be required as a chief, and the son of a conquered chief who had retained limited authority over a small area might be permitted to 'come out' with his senior brothers also. The common pattern, then, was for two sons to 'come out' as principals, but for a variety of reasons one or more 'younger brothers' might join them.

In Ngonde, as opposed to BaNyakyusa, several brothers normally went through the ritual as principals and the reason given us was that power should be distributed. They would say, we were told, 'If we bring out only two they will be boastful and ill-use their people, let them be many therefore, then, if a man has a quarrel with his chief, he can flee to another. . . .' In BaNyakyusa
[622] any tendency to tyranny in a chief was effectively curbed by his village headmen; but it is possible that headmen never had as much power in Ngonde as they did in BaNyakyusa.

An analysis of the genealogies of Nyakyusa chiefs shows that very often one half-brother lost power to the other, but occasionally several brothers (e.g. seven sons of Mwaipopo 98) got independent chiefdoms, and a junior brother (e.g. Mwakyusa 38)
[669] might attract a larger following of men than his seniors. Mwakyusa led his men from the hills to the more fertile plain and drove out the Kyungu of Ngonde from the lake-shore north of the Songwe river.

The 'coming out' was traditionally the occasion when authority was handed over by the older generation to the younger. The old
[767] chief retired and he was *expected to die shortly*. In Nyakyusa theory he died because his men no longer loved him: 'A chief did not
[768] live long after the "coming out" of his sons; he died because there was war and people would complain: "He is too old, when we fight we are beaten, he had better die, perhaps the heir will help us." He died of the "breath of men".' But, as will be shown, his headmen had the duty of smothering a chief who seemed likely to die, and they were much more ready to do this after the 'coming out' of his sons than before. It was right that the sons should come out before their father's death, but not right that the period of emergency should be extended, for the division of authority between old and young was uneasy. When the old chief did die his
[793] headmen became the priests (*abapyapi*) responsible for the sacri-
[622] fices in his grove, and the young men were solely responsible for the defence of the country and the administration of justice.

9: Wilson E-5 (1954-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

Since the 'coming out' of his sons spelt not only retirement, but a speedy death to a chief, he was not unnaturally reluctant to hasten it and, we were told, chiefs would try to defer it, but were pressed by their village headmen to celebrate, and had eventually to accept their advice. Indeed we heard of one chief whose illness was attributed to the 'breath' of his sons, angry because he refused to hold the 'coming out' which was due.

Nowadays the situation is radically altered by the fact that chiefs continue to live long after the 'coming out' of their sons, and the administration treats the old chief as the sole authority, or the old men find good reasons for not holding the celebration at all.

Before the ritual there is much speculation and excitement throughout the chiefdom, and private discussions between the old chief and his village headmen about suitable candidates for office. They look for men of wisdom (*amakele*),[1] skilled in settling disputes, conduct (for boundlessness is judged intolerable in a Nyakyusa age-village as it is in an English public school), and given to hospitality. A leader must feed his men and to do so he requires to be relatively wealthy, therefore the poor have little chance of office.

When the old men are agreed among themselves they summon all the young men to the capital. They come dancing and swaggering with all their cattle, and there the old headmen select, one by one, those they have chosen as village headmen for the next generation, beginning with the senior headman for each heir, then the second senior for each, and so on. Usually eight are chosen, four for each young chief. We get a glimpse of what it means to one individual in the following statement by the second headman of the chief, Korwe (173):

I made fire at the 1910 'coming out'. I can't tell much because we who were caught were in fear and trembling. I knew beforehand, because my brother was told to come from Ipyana [mission], but he was a Christian and the missionaries refused to allow him to become a village headman—they feared the medicines. He ran away and came here—he wanted to be a headman and the old men wanted him, but then he changed his mind and went off to be a soldier, and so they took me.

Probably most of who have been chosen as village headmen

[1] For a discussion of the concept of *amakele*, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. [illegible].

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

often leaks out, but in theory the young men must not know, and
[673] these mind always put up a show of resistance before being
[672] bundled into the hut of the senior heir's mother. Once there, no
[796] man dare flee but, like a Lwembe fleeing from the stool, he should
[769] die. The two heirs are mined also and carried into the hut with their headmen. A litter is spread for them, and they remain there in complete seclusion, required to 'talk softly' and avoid quarrelling, guarded by the 'doctor of the coming out' and forbidden to wash except that each of the chiefs and his senior village headman washes with medicines in the doorway of the hut. Each chief also lies down with a commoner and is covered with a black cloth
[769] which, according to Mwandisi (the old blind chief *ex*) is a symbol of clouds and therefore of plenty. 'It means, may it be heavy—cloudy—above, may food be plentiful; may both heirs being fruitfulness.' The commoner who lies with the chief is 'one body with him', 'his wife', and continues through life to share with him certain medicines. Some said that the senior village headman performs this function for his chief: others that it is another man altogether. The whole matter is very secret and our information is limited. The period of seclusion varies. Mwanyilo (1775), who 'came out' in 1933, remained in the hut a month, and he complained most bitterly of the inconvenience of not washing for so long. During this time the young men are admonished by
[671] their fathers' senior village headmen, and told of their faults and their future duties. According to Mwambugwa (Mwankuge's [1791] senior headman who was responsible for bringing out Mwanyilo), he said: 'Listen to the people: they are the real chiefs! Be hospitable! Greet people politely! Don't beat your men!' And the other senior headman, Kalonje, said: 'Do not beat your men, respect them! Feed your people on milk, meat, chickens, beer! Fear your people!'

Then the great moment, from which the ritual takes its name, arrives. Very early in the morning a crowd gathers and a junior kinsman of the chief knocks on the door and shouts: 'Come out! War has come!' Each heir, followed by his senior headman, rushes out and grasps the 'spear of chieftainship' held ready at the
[776] doorway for him, while the headman grasps a medicated zebra tail. The spear has a little horn of medicines bound to it 'to show that the chief has come out', and brandishing it is 'comparable to carrying the chief staff. We show his greatness to the people and acclaim him.' 'The spear of chieftainship is strength, man-

Williams E-5 (1954-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

land.' Some say that it is not the chief himself who grasps the spear but his senior village headman who poses in the doorway calling the war cry and rejoicing. However that may be, the spear represents the authority of a ruling chief. At the 'coming out' of Mwaungulu (177) and his junior brother Mwabungulu (178), both were secluded and rushed out of the hut, but for Mwabungulu there was no spear since the chiefdom of their father was not divided into independent units.

The heirs separate, each going to where his village is to stand, whether it be pasture land or the site of a former village. The young men build temporary shelters for themselves and proceed to the most important rite of all, the making of fire by friction, using a fire borer as the trough of the drill and a reed as the shaft. Each of the two young chiefs starts the process, then his senior village headmen take over, one twirling the shaft and the other holding the trough. It is difficult to make fire with the borer and reed and great importance is attached to success; the senior headman may even be replaced if he fails, for it is taken as a sign that his headmanship will be a failure. If he succeeds, he is known in future as *ulilowa gwa lubugwa*—the headman of the fire-making. All the old fires throughout the chiefdom are put out and each appointed headman, in order of precedence, takes fire from his immediate senior and calls to his men: 'You of such and such a village come to me' and gives fire to them. The men, though crowded together in one or two shelters, split into small groups, each with its own fire, to cook. This is interpreted as a symbol of the ending of the old chieftainship and the establishment of the new. 'That fire means a new chief has come, he brings new fire, we throw away the old fire in the houses. . . .' 'The old chieftainship is coming to an end, the new has come. The fires are put out in all the homesteads, those of the young men and those of the old men, they make new fire which is taken to every home. . . .' 'But why fire?' we asked. 'Because of old . . . we chiefs came with fire, the commoners had not yet got it, they ate raw food only. When we came we slept in men's houses and we lighted fires and cooked food. Men were astonished and said: "Ha! What's this?" They were burned so they said: "These are chiefs because they brought this fire." It is this they remember still.' 'Fire is lordship (*ubutwe*)', therefore a junior chief who goes through the ritual with his brothers does not make fire with his headmen; only those who are to rule do so. In other contexts the lighting of fire by friction is a

9: Wilson E.-5 (1934-1935) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

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6. Ngonde chief with son 1934

[Facing p. 54]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

[611] symbol of potency,[1] and we suggest that this also is an element in
[622] the ritual of the 'coming out', for the fertility of the chiefdom is
[78] thought to be bound up with the virility of the chief.

[574] There are a number of stories about the way in which Mwakyusa (58) surpassed his brothers and one of them tells how each brother made fire and set alight the pasture land (for traditionally parts of the pasture land were fired each season to provide fresh grass for grazing in the early spring), and the fires started by the elder brothers soon died out, but that started by Mwakyusa 'burned for a whole month'. This is interpreted as an omen of his greatness as a chief: fire, potency, lordship are inextricably linked.

At the 'coming out' all things are made new. No matter how [561] crowded the country the young men must move to new sites and the shelters in which they live must be new, though, as will be [854] shown, they do not necessarily move to *unoccupied* country. On their new site the young men live as bachelors, milking their cows and cooking for themselves on their new fires the meat of the cattle they seize, the bananas and grain brought by their wives and mothers. Meat is abundant, for the young chief now rules and has the right to take what cattle he chooses, even from the villages of the old men in his country. 'It was as if there were war, [724] the young men seized cattle, food, and women', and though they did not fight their fathers directly, as the Moru did, they clearly asserted their power. And, as to common further south, the accession of a chief was the occasion for raiding the neighbours: [778] the young men, we were told, went forthwith to test the efficacy of the magic spears and the medicines with which their chief and headmen had been treated. Or the chiefs might lead a hunt to clear the country of wild pig, as Mwakatumbula (Mwambete 160) did directly after his 'coming out'. Well fed and exuberant, the [574] young men dance and display their cattle, and entertain visitors lavishly, for every chief seeks to attract men to his country by his hospitality.

Then they set up the sign and memorial of the chieftainship: [829] they plant cuttings of two species[2] of *ficus*, *indula* which is much used as a shade tree, and *umpundapunda* from which bark-cloth is [823] made. Close to these the first house of the chief and that of his senior village headmen are built, and the trees also mark the

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 124, 143.

[2] When writing *Good Company* I mistakenly thought that two cuttings of the same species were planted. Cf. *Good Company*, p. 27.

Williams E.S (1924-1955) 1939
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

643
291
192

7. NEIN TO A CHIEFTOW
(Mwaipele in 1938)

[Facing p. 55]

St Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

between boundary between the two halves of the chiefdom, where 622
it will split the next generation. They serve as 'witnesses' and are 643
cited as evidence both of the 'coming out' and of the division of 796
land in any later dispute. At the same time the trees are symbols 824
of chieftainship and with their growth the success of the reign is
mystically linked. According to one account, 'few headmen fetch [935]
the cuttings and the young chief stands between them (*ndole* 6) and tells the trees to grow well, and the others say: "We are planting you likewise, we are at the ritual of establishing a new chieftainship, you are a symbol for our chief, spread branches that our young headmen and other people may rest in your shade."'[1] A doctor assists at the planting, burying at the roots a live white sheep and medicines, which, it is said, later turn into the lions or leopards which protect the trees from the impious (*ndole* 1*g*b, p. 38); and he escapes beneath the trees, a symbol of what the senior headmen must do in future, for it is his duty to 'watch over the trees'. In Nyakyusa thought, village headmen are an integral part of chieftainship—it cannot exist without them—and the trees symbolize both the chief and his lady and the two senior headmen. The same informant (well known as a doctor for the 'coming out') told us: 'It means we are planting the chief and his lady; *umpondipondo* is the hard to bend *ndole*, which is the more important. (*Umpondipondo* is the woman, it may dry up, but *ulupondo* (*ndole*) never does; it is the chief, it is feminine (*ulupwe*). not *umpondipondo* is *ntu*', and a moment or two later, 'the *ulupondo* is the senior village headman, *umpondipondo* is the junior headman'. The strength of the chief is associated with the growth of [787]
the trees. If these trees go dry the reign will not be successful, the chief will be defeated in war. If they flourish and grow the reign will be successful, the chief is a ruler. The *ndole* planted for Mwaijonga (Ba) is shown proudly by his great-grandson, and Mwamlomo (16a) who had a long reign and an enormous family counted of the size of his *umpondipondo*—'a great spreading tree'. Ideally the young chief should, in due course, sit in the shade of his *ndole* with his headmen, to settle disputes.

After the trees are planted the young men build their senior 622
headman's house and the doctor sets up his hearth bricks, burying 796
medicine beneath them also. The marriage of the chief follows.[2] 585

[1] cf. D. Kerr-Cross, 'Center-Lake north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, IV (1894), p. 117. [113]

[2] According to more accounts, but *ndole* 1*g*b, p. 38.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

622 He, like many of his men, may have been married long before the
643 'coming out', but his ritual wedding to the mothers of his heirs
796 follows it, and from the time of his seclusion, until his marriage,
585 he, and all his men, should live as bachelors. The brides are chosen by his village headmen and in theory they are carried off by force, whether betrothed or not, but nowadays, since the [177] Administration discountenances forced marriages, the headmen arrange matters with the girls' families beforehand, very privately, but still they come with a show of force to carry off the brides. Girls are chosen who are approaching puberty and they are taken to the house of a commoner contemporary of their future husband. There they live until both have grown up and the puberty ritual can be celebrated. It follows the usual course except that the [554] neighbours of the man in whose house the brides are secluded play the part of the girls' families, cooking for the groom's party at the prescribed feasts. The chief washes with both girls, thereby acknowledging them as his senior wives; the marriage bed is prepared with medicines and there is great rejoicing. The following morning someone knocks at the door of the nuptial chamber crying: 'War has come', and the chief and his brides rush out to the pasture land, just as the parents of twins do at the end of their ritual.[1] Then[2] a long narrow stone (*ulufyo*) is set with medicines [796] in the earth, beside the chief's trees as a symbol of his marriage (*ilimanyile kya bwogi*) to the mothers of his heirs. 'The stone is the chief' (*ulufyo ili je malefyale*). Hearth-bricks (*amafyo*) are then set up for each bride with medicines buried beneath them, and they are given fire from that ritually kindled by their husband and his headman. Finally they are given medicines to drink in order to develop in them 'the dignity of chief's wives' (*ubwaigo bwa bwele*).

No marriage is complete, in Nyakyusa eyes, until cattle have
643 been handed over, and though the chief's brides have been carried
583 off by force, cattle—more than double the normal number—are given to their fathers. The village headmen of the retiring generation should provide these cattle and they or their heirs are recompensed when the eldest daughters born of the two wives are

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 138, 189.

[2] Mwanyile's marriage apparently preceded the planting of his trees and the phallic stone was erected at the same time as the trees were planted, but the marriages of the sons of Mwangoko *followed* the planting of their trees. The order of events seems to vary, and differences are explained as due to the order of the doctor in charge of the ritual. 'Different doctors have different customs.'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

married. Thus, yet another bond is forged between chief and headman, for he who provides marriage cattle is 'father' to him who marries, and the chief's wives acknowledge this by avoiding the village headmen of the senior generation as they do their father-in-law. Once the chief's ritual marriage is complete the sex taboo is lifted and each of his men as are already married are joined by their wives. In theory, though not nowadays in practice, the taboo is observed until the marriage of the chief.

All through the ritual of the 'coming out' the idea of a new beginning is expressed—a new site for the villages, new houses, new fire, new power for the young men. The events of this ritual, the seclusion, the lying on a litter, the prohibition on washing, washing with medicines in the doorway of the hut, the admonition, are directly parallel to the events of the rituals of death and puberty which, we have argued in a previous book,[1] are dramatizations of death and rebirth. There seems little doubt that the 'coming out' is yet another celebration of this theme. The young men enter an enclosed house—that of the senior's mother—and 'come out' (*ukumbe*) renewed as a child 'comes out' (*ukumbe*) of the mother's womb. No Nyakyusa informant volunteered such an interpretation, but, when it was suggested, it was eagerly accepted as expressing the real meaning of 'coming out'.

(f) THE CHIEF'S MEDICINES

Reference has already been made to medicines used by chiefs and by village headmen at the 'coming out' and we must now examine them more closely. The great medicines of chieftainship are *ifagila* and their function is to create *amaaga*, i.e. spiritual power, and *ubuciye*, i.e. dignity, majesty, in order to make the chief fearful 'so that men obey him'. The medicines are comparable to robes of office for they are designed to give their user assurance and fill the commonality with awe. The Nyakyusa also think that chiefs and headmen should be 'heavy' with 'pythons in their bellies' which give them the power to see and fight witches. Without such a 'python' a chief or village headman cannot fulfil his duty of 'watching over the country by day and by night' and if a man is not born with one he may develop it through the proper use of medicines. This notion has been examined elsewhere.[2] The *ifagila* medicines are also thought to give courage and ferocity (*ubugani*) in war, with luck in seizing enemy

[1] op. cit., p. 203. [2] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 97-102.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 778 cattle and protecting one's own, and to attract men to the country.

The two senior sons of a chief are given powdered *ikingila* to 789 drink from early childhood; at the 'coming out' they lie on it and 643 drink it again with their village headmen, some is buried beneath 778 their ritual trees, and the chief's homestead is treated with it periodically. One form of *ikingila* is made of the heart of a lion and the heart of a leopard, together with the scrapings from a charred root, and one of its qualities is to create lions or leopards which guard the trees under which it is buried. 'They make anyone who has cut a branch of one of the trees for firewood tremble at night, he trembles and returns the wood; they do not kill, but they stay roaring there until he repents.' Now part of the dignity (*ubusisya*) of a chief is that lions and leopards attend him; they roam his country; they are his familiars (*imbege*). 'The sons of Lwembe' [776] lack the fearful power of their great ancestor who 'rode a lion like a donkey', but they are believed to command familiars which clear the country of the wild pig that destroy men's gardens, and protect the sacred groves by terrifying any sacrilegious person who dares chop wood where he should fear. But they do not kill men or cattle. That is what distinguishes them from 'God's lions which kill cattle even by day' and the man-eaters made by sorcerers to destroy those they hate. There is no hint of lycanthropy—our [754] informants denied emphatically that chiefs, dead or alive, turned into *imbege*, but they 'follow the chief' when he travels.

A second *ikingila*, sprinkled on the chief's mat when he is secluded, and drunk with his two senior village headmen, is made of red, black, and shining white or yellow pebbles, which are ground up and mixed with *imbinga*, a medicine brought by the Kinga, but the symbolism of these ingredients remains obscure.

The greatest of the *ifingila*, used only for the chief himself, is *inyifwila*, a terrible substance with power perilously like that of witchcraft. When either of the senior wives of a chief gives birth to a son a little is hidden in the litter on which she lies; it is put [844] into the litter on which the heirs lie at the 'coming out'; and into the sacred tails and trumpets which are carried into battle. Like other medicines of chieftainship, *inyifwila* is used to give the chief majesty (*ubusisya*), 'that people who meet him may fear him'; that he and his warriors may appear fierce; that they may be 'heavy and strong' in war; that when the trumpet is blown it

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

may 'make the enemy fearful and sue for peace'; and that even men who have left his country may return to him. And it is so powerful that the dose must be carefully adapted to the individual. If a chief is already 'heavy' with an inherited python he is given the merest fragment, but a gentle fellow thought to be 'light', 'empty', is given more, that his words may carry weight. Too much will make a chief harsh (*nkali*)—'he will always be beating men'—and he must be given an antidote to calm him down. Too much in the tails causes them to 'fly through the air at night, gleaming, and throttle the cows'. This is the danger of *inyifwila*, that it may act like the pythons in the bellies of witches and kill men and cattle. Controlled by a chief it is held to be reasonably safe, though Kalobo, Mwaipopo's (116) second wife, who was grumbling because no tail had been lodged in her house was told that she did not know how lucky she was for '*inyifwila* is very fearful—it enters the belly, it makes itself into familiars'.

The use of *inyifwila* is forbidden to commoners. In Ngonde, with its hierarchy of chiefs, it was the danger of attempting to equal one of superior rank that was emphasized. 'If a commoner sprinkles *inyifwila* on himself saying, "Let me surpass my fellows", and he meets a chief (who is entitled to use it) then he dies immediately because he said to himself, "I also am a chief"'; and 'If an Ngana chief dances and sprinkles his spear with *inyifwila* . . . and then meets Kyungu, he dies.' In the more democratic atmosphere of BuNyakyusa chiefs were 'very angry' if commoners used it, but it was the danger of its acting like witchcraft and throttling men and cattle and, eventually, its owner, that men spoke of most. We heard of half a dozen men—among them the most successful trader of Selya—who were reputed to use it 'to surpass their fellows' and 'get rich' and one case actually came to Court. Mwaipopo, the chief (116), raised the matter himself:

> Why does this thing go about at night? I have seen it myself, it shines, I know it. It is that with which the doctors treat us chiefs to make us impressive [i.e. *inyifwila*]. Do you not know, you commoners, that we chiefs have prohibited its use in our countries? Ask your fellow Mandala! He is bad, he planted this thing, it kills you people.

So two village headmen went and called Mandala who lived near Ngulyo, and brought him to Court. There he was asked: 'Why did you keep this which kills people?' Mandala denied vehemently saying, 'I have not planted this.' But Mwaipopo

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

443 replied: 'Why does he deny it? He told me once: "I have a thing
778 which kills people!"' Then, turning to the man: 'Go and fetch it
789 out into the light.' Mandala went and we heard that he brought
[754] out another medicine, not the one asked for, he brought it to the headmen and Mwaipopo. Mwaipopo (who, being a chief, knew *inyifwila*) rejected the one Mandala brought saying: 'This is not it.' Then Mandala brought out another and again the chief rejected it saying: 'This is not the one we want.' Then he brought out a little bag made of bark-cloth. They sought a doctor to clear it out. All this happened in secret; we heard of it but did not see it. But in Court Mwaipopo turned Mandala out of his country 'because he had admitted that he was wicked', and Mwaipopo reminded the other chiefs in Court of a previous case of a man in Mwangomo's country who had used this medicine.

Inyifwila is made out of a python 'as thick as a man's thigh' which has been killed by crawling over razors. In Ngonde we were told:

> A certain snake they call *ngone* is killed in the hills to the west. They build a hut, closed, with a man inside ringing a cow bell and razors all over the roof. The snake comes and crawls over the roof, trying to get in and so dies. Then the doctors come to 'close it up'. When they have done so they cut it up for medicine—*inyifwila*; some is brought to Kyungu direct . . . some is taken to the doctors, and it is the doctors who give it to the chief.

A similar story was told in BuNyakyusa but they got their
[825] *inyifwila* from the Sangu and Hehe, to the north and east, not from the west, and in their account the trap was baited with a goat, not a man, and it was the blood of the python (*isota*) shed on the surrounding grass and on the trap itself which was used for
[787] medicine. To test the medicine the doctors gave a little to a chicken; if the chicken died the medicine was satisfactory; and the remains of the chicken were burnt and the ashes used as tested *inyifwila*.

'That snake is awful (*nisya fijo*), no one approaches to kill it.
[825] No! If it were speared everyone would die.' And because the python which is so terrible is thought to be linked with the rain-
[821] bow it, too, is disliked. 'We fear the rainbow very much, we say it appears when a python looks up to the sky; if we are near a river we run from it for pythons live near rivers. . . . No, we are not mistaken, it is so.' The essential quality of the python is *ubusisya* (fearfulness, majesty, dignity) and this is what is required

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

in rulers and is thought to be transferred to them in the medicine brewed out of python blood. 643 778 789

It will be noticed that the central mystery of Lubaga and the sources of the most powerful medicine are the same, and the medicine is akin to witchcraft. The shades, medicines, and witchcraft are distinguished and are thought to operate independently, but they are all manifestations of a mystical power which is logically one, though none of our informants saw it as that.

We referred earlier to the function of the chiefs' medicines in giving courage in war and luck in raiding. Certain emblems of chieftainship are carried in war: a sacred spear, a bamboo trumpet (*ililonge*) or a great war-horn (*ingangabwite*), and several giraffe or zebra tails (*imiswigala*), and all of these have little horns filled with *inyifwila* attached to them. Of the trumpet it was said: 'You hear it and your heart swells and a great trembling comes over you and you fight.' 'The chiefs forbid them to be blown now because their blowing always brings war.' Each of the senior village headmen is given a tail at the 'coming out' and he went into battle with it bound on to his upper arm. A notable warrior was sometimes given one also. To lose a tail in battle was comparable to losing the regimental colours and there are epics of their loss and recovery. If the leader who carried it saw that he was surrounded he would try to pass it back, or he might hide it on the ground: [293] [721] [726]

> then that night they would go back to the spot and they would find it because it shone with a light and made a bubbling noise, *burukut, burukut, burukut*. . . . [774]
>
> In the old days the medicine [in the tails] was frequently renewed; for there was war, and it gave the headmen the power of dreaming of the course of war. . . . But now, since you have brought peace to the land, no one renews it, and it has gone rotten.

However, the tails in Mwaipopo's chiefdom *were* thus treated in December 1937, and we saw it done. The four tails, with six tiny medicine horns and a calabash of medicated ointment, were formally handed over to the care of Kalinga, Mwaipopo's (116) chief wife, having previously been in the care of his mother. Mwaipopo himself was there with two kinsmen and the three commoner priests Kissogota, Njobakosa, and Ngulyo, but not Kasitile (86) since he was 'father-in-law' to Kalinga and could not meet her, though he was informed of the ritual. Kalobo, the second senior wife, looked on. Kalinga poured out the ointment

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 and Mwaipopo and Kissogota smeared it over the tails which
778 were then put out with the horns to dry in the sun. Mwaipopo
789 suggested getting Mwaisyelage, the doctor, to treat them further, and the others agreed saying: 'Let Mwaipopo find someone, that the earth may be good, that it be heavy.' Njobakosa had spoken earlier of the cattle giving much milk after the treatment of the tails. And they went on to discuss the fact that the young chief Mwankuga II (151) had begotten no child by the wife inherited from his elder brother (150) whose place he had taken. Thus the function of the chief in creating plenty and [842] fertility was in the priests' minds, and there may be some link between the virility of the chief and success in war—one informant spoke of the chief's senior wives jumping over the tails immediately after the consummation of their marriage—but of this we are not certain. What is common knowledge is that the tails are 'for seizing cattle', and they are associated with 'manure and blood'. We were told at the conclusion of the ritual: 'Formerly we should have gone tomorrow, after this treating of the tails, to fight.'

Besides medicines for majesty, courage, and popularity as rulers, chiefs use medicines to protect themselves against the fearfulness of the groves in which they sacrifice, medicines to 'close the country to hunger', to make their capitals grand, and to cause thieves who have stolen, to walk round and round until caught.

Medicines are regarded as essential to authority, victory, and successful rule, and the kind used and the dose given are adjusted to the status and character of the individual. 'Village headmen [622] do not drink the most important *ikingila*; they drink a lesser one, *imbinga*; the senior headman is given most, the junior less.' And the chief's wives do not drink *ikingila* at all, but only a powder suitable for them. But the use of these medicines has its dangers. The chief, like other people who have been drinking protective medicines, does not eat the new crops grown on fields fertilized [754] by ash without fortifying himself. The danger is said to come from the burnt rubbish heaps, because medicines for defence against witches and sorcerers are burnt in them and, as we have seen, certain of the medicines which the chief uses create a power akin to witchcraft. He tastes the new millet ritually in June, the cow [788] peas in September, and pumpkin leaves in November; and he also tastes the 'new earth' at the break of the rains in October or early November. 'We chiefs fear that the medicines we have drunk will

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

turn round in the belly; people say the earth will go bad in us.' 643
'A child who has drunk medicines will be ill, the smell of the new 778
food or the wet earth goes to the belly.' 789 [788]

The chief eats the first fruits and medicines with the commoner who lies down with him at the commencement of his 'coming out' and 'is his wife to taste with him the first fruits and powdered medicines' and is 'fearful' like the medicines. He is identified with [644] the chief's body and may be compared with the *isithunuu* of the Pondo chief[1] or the *insila* of the Swazi.[2] His function is to protect the chief against the medicines themselves.

(c) DEATH AND BURIAL OF A CHIEF

Both because of a chief's descent, and because of his use of 643 medicines, mystical power resides in his body. 763 766

In the old days a ruling chief was not allowed to die, but was buried while still living, because they feared that if he became unconscious before death he would take away all the food with him, and great hunger would come on us. Men feared *ifingila* medicine in his belly. They said: 'If he dies naturally many of his people will die. . . . He should go alive.' And formerly they buried him with the son of a commoner, also alive, for they said, 'Let him enjoy the company of his man on the road.' When a chief was sick before the coming out of his sons they tried to keep him alive if possible, but if he was clearly going to die then they buried him like this; after the coming out they hastened his death—but only if he were ill. That was why the chiefs fear the 'coming out' of their sons so greatly. Had Mwaipopo lived in the old days and his heir been alive he would have been buried during his last illness.

When a ruling chief was sick the village headmen sent the chief's wives away and looked after him themselves. Then, if they thought he would, or should, die, they tore off all his nails, those of his toes and those of his fingers, and pulled out his hair, and put them in a pot. After that they buried him by night still alive, with a live person, the child of a commoner whom they had seized very secretly. The pot stayed in the house of the senior wife of the chief who had died, and they said, 'It is the chief, we are with him still.' This was the sacred [778] pot for the sacred beer.[3] They kept silence about the death for a month or perhaps two months, saying: 'Let the chief go away first.'

And when a younger brother, a junior chief, died, though he died

[1] M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 390.
[2] H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p. 78.
[3] Kaaitile flatly denied this, *vide infra*, p. 64.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 naturally and was buried dead, and no human was buried with him,
763 yet they buried a live cow with him in imitation of the custom of the
766 senior, because the junior was also a chief, and the cow was like a person. And now in European times the ruling chiefs are buried with a cow, not with a man, in imitation of the custom of the juniors; but still they are buried at night.

Kasitile denied that chiefs were buried before death, but he admitted that they were smothered.

[793] When the chief was very ill we priests came, Njobakosa and Ngulyo, and I. We took his nails and his hair, we tore them off while he was still alive, he started up and we hid ourselves that he should not see us. Then we attended to him.

Here he made a gesture of stopping up the nostrils. That is, they hastened his death as soon as the nails and hair had been stripped off.

And we dug the grave; we buried him by night, when he had died, when he had gone, with a live cow; we did this at night for it was taboo [784] for people to see the burial of a senior chief. We killed a cow in the sacred grove and we ate it, we the priests, before people heard that he had died. The chief Mwakagile (59) when his death was approaching said: 'My body is sick.' After waiting two days, the village headmen said, 'This illness has defeated us', and they tore off his nails—yes, [778] before he died. If they had waited until after his death, would not the *ifingila*, the power of chieftainship, have passed away? But they did not smother him, he just died. . . . His nails and hair were put into a little reed, which they hid beneath an *umwali* (*Chrophora excelsa*) tree at the village headman's, the *umwali* which grew at the homestead of Njobakosa [the grandfather of the present Njobakosa]. They buried it at a commoner's place, as if to say: 'We commoners are the earth, we have [778] taken the power of growth (*ifugo*) from the chief, those nails and the hair are the power of growth of the country (*ifyala fila newili fyo ifugo lya kisu*).

Kasitile took Godfrey Wilson's hand and explained: 'Because, Mwaipaja (G.W.), when you cut these nails of yours do they not grow again?' 'Yes, they grow again.' 'Well, then, where does their growth come from? Does it not come from the body?' 'Yes.' 'Well, so it is, the village headmen take the power of growth (*ilifugo*) from the chief, his nails and his hair.'

On another occasion Kasitile explained that formerly the relics had been kept in a pot in the house, but that when Mwaipopo (116) succeeded

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Njobakosa [the grandfather] ran off with them to Mwaihojo in the hills, where he died so that they disappeared and were never returned to his fellow-priests. Therefore they bury the relics by the *umwali* tree, at his old homestead, lest someone run off with them again. . . . The hair and nails of the chief are buried there, the earth of the chief will always be heavy. All this is very secret. . . . 643 763 766 [778]

Mwandisi (107, the old blind chief) told us that

When a chief dies they take his nails and hair and put them in the house of his wife who buries them with medicine for fertility of the soil (*ifugo*), then at the time of planting the village headmen come and take that medicine to plant the food with. This was done on the death of the chief Mwakalukwa (141) and the chief Mwakalinga (142) and others for, it is said, the chief goes off with our fertility (*imboto yetu*).

Thus, though our informants differed slightly about the details, they were agreed that the power of growth lies in the nails and hair of a chief, and these must be taken from him while he is yet alive, and later used to fertilize the earth.

The burial of a chief's son with a live black calf we saw for ourselves, and the wailing was delayed until after the burial. A distinctive funeral of this sort is accorded to all the sons of a ruling chief and his senior daughter, but not (we were told) to more distant kinsmen. The other mark of a royal funeral is the slaughter of many head of cattle to accompany the deceased and to feed the mourners. At the death of the chief Mwakyembe (99) over 300 head were killed, and Mwaipopo (116) killed thirty head at the funeral of his mother. Since a chief has many wives and daughters he has many affines all of whom must bring cows to kill, and he also has a large herd himself on which to draw. To fail to feed his people at a funeral is to fail as a chief. The whole country mourns for two or three weeks, no one going to work in the fields, or occupying themselves with ordinary business. All smear themselves with mud, as if they were kinsmen, and even the men bind their bellies tightly with mourning belts 'that they may not tremble'. [765]

(*d*) THE CHIEF AND THE 'BREATH OF MEN'

Fruitfulness, the power of growth (*imboto*), lies in the chief's body and the village headmen have no share in it; they only tend it, taking care that it does not disappear with the dead. But the headmen share with the chief and the priests the duty of 'watching 643 778 622

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 over the country by day and by night', and power (*amanga*)
778 to see the enemies of darkness (that is, the witches) is thought to
come to each priest or village headman from a python in his
622 belly. No one can fulfil his duties as a ruler and defender unless he is 'heavy', but to have a python inside one is *also* the mark of a witch. Pressed on the point the Nyakyusa hold that a chief or
[754] village headman only has one python whereas witches have several, but this distinction is not maintained consistently, and many of our informants were agreed that the power of witchcraft and the power to see and fight witches were one and the same. The essential distinction lies in the use to which the power is put; wrongly used it is 'witchcraft' (*ubulosi*); rightly used to defend the village or to punish evil-doers it is 'the breath of men' (*imbepo sya bandu*) and how any particular case is labelled depends upon the viewpoint of the speaker. The victim of a misfortune and his kin will indignantly attribute it to 'witchcraft' when other people regarded it as due to his wrongdoing and a punishment brought about by 'the breath of men'.

Each village headman, together with those of the village who are 'heavy', is thought competent both to defend those of his village whom he judges innocent against witches from outside or within, and to punish wrong-doers, by bringing upon them the chill of fever. Hence those who have angered their neighbours and believe themselves to be attacked by 'witches', take refuge in another village.

The power of witchcraft is believed to be inherited, rarely acquired; but the power of defence is both inherited and increased by drinking medicines, and there seems little doubt that the medicines drunk by chief and village headmen at the 'coming out' to create in themselves *ubusisya*—majesty, awesomeness—also develop *amanga*, the power to see and fight witches. Indeed, one of our Christian informants insisted that *ubusisya bo bulosi*—'awesomeness *is* witchcraft'.

These ideas have been discussed in some detail elsewhere.[1] Here I am only concerned to show the importance of the belief in 'the breath of men' in the relationship between chief and village headmen. Not only do village headmen have the ultimate power of life and death over their chief, but they are thought to bring illness upon him if he acts unconstitutionally or disregards their advice, or fails in his duty of providing beef for his men. He may

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 91-135.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

play one village against another and go to sleep in that section of the country which supports him, but he dare not anger all his headmen. In the same way a village headman dare not anger the main body of his men. In short, public opinion is an effective sanction because those in authority believe that the disapproval of their fellows may bring a fever or paralysis upon them. One of our Christian informants was insistent that, were it not for the belief in the 'breath of men', pagan chiefs and headmen would act tyrannically. 643 778 622

The situations in which a chief or headman fears the breath of men are very varied. We have already referred to the chief who thought his illness was due to his refusal to hold the 'coming out' for his sons when advised to do so.[1] Mwaipopo, before whose court a very bitter land dispute between two of his villages had been brought, refused to give judgement and was careful to sleep in the village that had possession of the land, and therefore less cause for anger.[2] Kasitile, the hereditary priest of the chief's lineage who counted as 'a chief' as opposed to 'a commoner', thought he had angered the village headmen of his generation (who had become priests) by not providing meat for them (*vide infra*, p. 125). [754]

The headmen are responsible for the health of their chief and it is they who go to consult an oracle if he is ill and take him to a doctor. Mwankuga II (151), heir to Mwaipopo's chiefdom, had not begotten a son by any of the wives he inherited from his elder brother who had died. His village headmen[3] went to consult an oracle and were told that it was the wrath (*imindu*) of his father; so they reported the matter to Mwaipopo, who sent a junior kinsman to consult another oracle. The diagnosis was confirmed and Mwaipopo gathered his younger brothers and prayed and told the shades that he had no quarrel with his kinsmen. Then he told the village headmen to take Mwankuga to a doctor for treatment, but this they did not do, so that Mwankuga went to consult a doctor on his own. According to Kasitile it was because the headmen had not taken Mwankuga that the medicine did not work. 'They should take him to the doctor and be present in dreams, to watch over him in dreams.' What the headmen were angry about was not revealed—there was no obvious cause. [842] [753] [787] [782]

[1] *op. cit.*, pp. 134-5. [2] *op. cit.*, pp. 188-90.

[3] Mwankuga I who died had 'come out' before Mwankuga II inherited from him, but Mwaipopo (116) continued to rule as chief and draw a Government salary.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 As we have seen, the chief's fearsome medicine *inyifwila* is
778 thought to be very dangerous, and too much in the tails may cause
622 them 'to fly about throttling men and cattle', but a chief is never
[754] accused of working witchcraft; it is inconceivable to the Nyakyusa that he could be. If the tails have got out of hand they are treated
[789] by a doctor 'to close them up'; no one suggests that the chief should get rid of them. It is commoners, 'black people', who are witches —cannibals, the eaters of raw flesh—as opposed to chiefs who, since the dawn of history, have killed cattle for meat and cooked their food like civilized men. But the distinction does not extend very far; junior kinsmen of the chief are 'commoners' and may well be accused of practising witchcraft.

There was a delicate balance of power in the Nyakyusa con-
[182] stitution between hereditary chief and commoner headmen and the belief in the power of medicines and of witchcraft was an integral part of it. The chief provided fruitfulness by the power of his own body and his medicines; all men depended upon him for their well-being—food, cattle, children, success in war; but he in his turn depended upon the goodwill of his men led by their village headmen; without it he shivered and fell ill, only to be buried by them 'with the breath still in his body' lest the power of growth disappear with his breathless corpse.

Something of the quality of this mutual dependence and fear is conveyed in Kasitile's account of his own illness quoted in Chapter VIII.

(*e*) THE NECESSITY FOR HARMONY

182 The welfare of the chiefdom is thought to depend upon
643 harmony between the chief and his village headmen and priests,
622 and also between the chief and his kinsmen. Any friction between
793 them may result in public misfortune as well as sickness to the individual at fault. The quarrel of Kasitile, the priest, first with
[753] the Kinga priests, and then with the commoner priests of Mwal-
[821] popo's chiefdom was believed to affect the crops and the weather, as well as Kasitile's own health (*vide infra*, pp. 124-41), and
[688] Mwaipopo's failure to tell Kasitile formally of the death of their kinsman led to rain which spoiled the funeral dance. A quarrel between the lineages of two chiefs which should have sacrificed
643 together was said to have been followed by a very poor millet
602 crop (*vide infra*, pp. 79-80, 118, 136).
578 How the personal relationship of a chief with his kinsmen is

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

thought to affect the whole country was illustrated in Mwaihojo's 643
chiefdom where the people were plagued by wild pig destroying 602
their gardens. Mwaihojo (147) had a longstanding quarrel with 578
his half-brother, Mwakyonde (148), whose country he had seized after their 'coming out'. Mwakyonde became famous as a doctor, and he was a great raconteur and beer-drinker, a regular Silenus, [157]
the boon companion of many influential men, whereas his brother was cold and irascible; so although he had lost his chieftaincy, Mwakyonde had considerable power. In February 1937, four lions were seen in the adjoining chiefdom of Mwaipopo (116), and we heard pig squealing as it was killed. Angombwike (whose father lived near Mwakyonde in Mwaihojo's country) explained to us: 'People say that these are Mwakyonde's lions. . . . Lion- [754]
makers have bundles of twigs which they put into the long grass, [789]
and which turn into lions. Long ago Mwakyonde made lions and they came and killed all the pigs, and the country (Mwaihojo's) was at peace, but he quarrelled with Mwaihojo and put his bundles of twigs into his box and locked it up. Then the country was filled with pig, and buck, and elephant, and all the crops were spoiled, and so it is still. Now Mwakyonde has begun to be friendly with Mwaipopo (116); they enjoy each other's company and drink beer together, and so he is making lions again in Kipungu, the land where Mwaipopo is hoeing, to kill the pig for Mwaipopo. They say Mwaipopo has given him a country in secret.' Now Mwaihojo claimed as his the forest country, which Mwaipopo's men had begun to colonize, therefore to aid Mwaipopo there was an effective slap at Mwaihojo. The lions came into Mwaihojo's country—we heard them repeatedly close to our camp—but they did not clear the pig.

Then, in March, Mwakyonde was supposed to be using a new [778]
medicine he had obtained to scare off pig from the fields. We asked him about it. 'Oh, it has failed. The pigs are still there eating. I've done everything I should but without effect. I think [775]
that the pigs are possessed by the shades (*sili nimindu ingulube*).' 'Why?' we asked. 'Because my elder brother (Mwaihojo) and I are not on good terms (*tutikwangala kanunu*) the shades are angry.'

So the destruction of men's gardens was traced to the quarrel between the chief and his brother.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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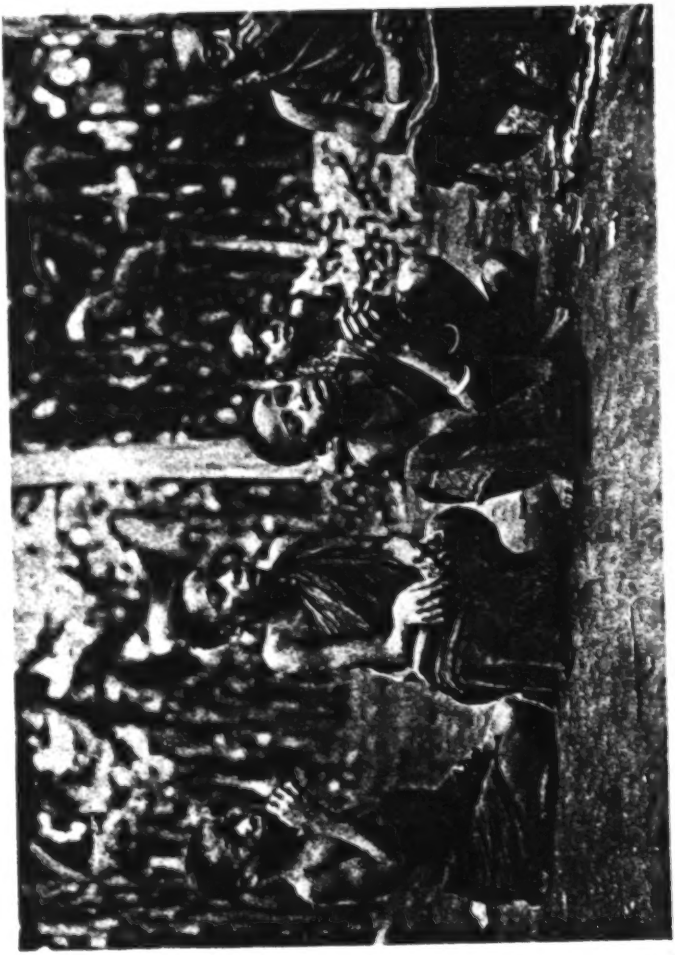

8. COMMUNION WITH THE SHADES

[Facing p. 70]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

SACRIFICES AT THE GROVES OF CHIEFS

(a) THE PLACE, OCCASION, AND FORM OF SACRIFICE

778. 769 [137] A CHIEF is buried near the trees planted at his 'coming out' and around the grave a thicket grows up. It is taboo for men to cu saplings or brushwood there and since trees grow very fast in the climate and soil of the Nyakyusa valley, the thicket soon become a grove, and there sacrifices to the dead chief are made. The priests look for the stone planted at his marriage, and place the offering beside it. How long a chief is so honoured depends on how conspicuous he was as a ruler or warrior, and perhaps also on [782] whether the sacrifices are judged to be efficient in producing rain and health or not. Mbyanga and Kabale, two groves which are particularly honoured, were the shrines of founders of expanding lineages. At Mbyanga was planted a cutting of a tree which sprouted from the grave of Mwakisambwe (30) who had first occupied the country in which Mbyanga is situated. He is often spoken of as having been 'buried' at Mbyanga, in fact he was carried back ten miles to Lubaga, whence he had come, for burial. But he is worshipped at Mbyanga and we attended a sacrifice there for which his great-great-great-grandson, Mwaihojo (147) the chief, provided a cow, and Mwaihojo's grandsons ate the holy food. In contrast to this, the grave of Mwaipopo's (116) younger brother, who had once ruled a country but was defeated in war and whose sons had died, was completely neglected; no one sacrificed there. We knew more than a dozen chiefs' groves at which sacrifices were made, and there must have been a great many more in different parts of BuNyakyusa.

643 769 Since every ruling chief normally had two heirs, sacrifice involved co-operation between independent chiefdoms—two chiefs at the grove of their father, four at that of their grandfather and so on. But if there is friction between the chiefs, some branches of the lineage cease to participate, saying that the connexion is 'too distant', and celebrate at the groves of their nearer ancestors only. This happened at the sacrifice of Mbyanga which we [578] [688] attended (*vide infra*, pp. 79-81). The sanction for co-operation is the belief that quarrelling between kinsmen annoys the shades an

[p. 70]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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9. SHRINE IN THE SACRED GROVE, MBYANGA

[Facing p. 71]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

may nullify any ritual, but often it is not strong enough to overcome the fissiparous tendencies of the lineage. In theory a celebration at the grove of a senior should precede that at the grove of a junior and sacrifices at Lubaga would be followed by sacrifices at the groves of the 'sons of Lwembe' in order of seniority, but this does not happen in practice nowadays and we doubt whether it ever did, since a hierarchy was not organized and maintained by a central authority as in Ngonde. In 1935 a celebration at the grove of Mwaijonga (82) preceded one at the grove of his great-grandfather Mwakisambwe (30) by a month, as we shall see. 643 769 [578] [688]

Sacrifices are made when a drought or flood occurs, or a plague of locusts, or an epidemic among men or cattle; when fishing is poor in the chiefdoms of the plain, or war is imminent. They occur most often during the 'winter' in the hills, when a malaria-sodden people feel the chill of damp mists and cool south winds, and in October, just before the break of the rains, when the country is parched; but they are not confined to these periods. In theory the village headmen and the priests who 'watch over the country' foresee *coming* misfortune in dreams, and avert it by making the appropriate sacrifices. And they are helped by ordinary people who are dreaming repeatedly or falling into a trance or fit, and prophesying evil and jabbering of 'a black cow, a black cow' or some other appurtenance of sacrifice. But in practice the prophecies generally occur when there is hunger or plague in the land, or an omen (such as a python or a ground hornbill behaving oddly) has been seen. [731] [782] [787]

The dreamers are *abasololi* or *abakunguluka*, and, as these names indicate, they are believed to have descended into the land of the shades. *Ukusoloka*[1] means to go down into something, like the roots of a tree into the earth, and *ukukungula ingungula* means to pluck a banana flower which (as was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*) is a symbol for a corpse and is buried; so the *abakunguluka* are those who have been buried in the earth. '*Abakunguluka* go to the land of the shades and return. . . . An *unkunguluka* plucks up the "blessed grass" (*ikisajelo*) in his swept courtyard and goes beneath and sees.[2] . . . He goes down into the earth beneath and takes the chief to the land of the shades when he dies, and he also sees the witches. . . .' More rarely, the *unsololi* or *unkunguluka* is 791 787

[1] *Ukusoloka*—a breach presentation, the implication being that the infant's head is in *kusuka*, but children born in this way are not necessarily prophets. [845]

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 77, 212.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

791 said just to become aware of future events without any dream.
787 *Abakunguluka* are distinguished from those who suffer from fits or fall into trances (*abakem' amalage*), but a woman in a trance may also prophesy and induce the chief and priests to celebrate a ritual, for it is thought that she too is in communication with the shades. Men say 'The shade has entered her' or 'Kyala catches hold of her that she may speak of the matter'. This type of prophecy is something new among the Nyakyusa. Mwandisi (107) told us that 'it [177] did not exist in BuKinga whence we came', but had been introduced from the south, through Ngonde, and it is mainly confined to women, whereas the *abakunguluka* are men.

There are many tales of famous prophecies. Nsamba (90)
787 claimed that his father (63) foretold that 'there will come a white thing on the Lake, and it will land on the shore. That will be the man who will make peace', and Mwakalinga (142) who died fighting the Germans is said to have foretold his own death.[1]

Dreams and revelations of the possessed concerning public matters are reported to the local village headman and referred to the other headmen and priests, and a prophecy is accepted as valid only after formal discussion. As we shall see, Kasitile was sceptical about the revelations of one man who was repeatedly 'possessed', perhaps because he threatened to become a rival in interpreting public misfortune. If there is doubt, suspicions are confirmed or problems elucidated, by divination.

When they judged a sacrifice necessary the village headman and
769 priests went to their chief saying, 'We do not sleep', and it was his
782 obligation to secure an animal for sacrifice. He might provide it out of his own herd, but very often the duty of 'finding' sacrificial cattle was delegated to a junior line—the ruling chief gave cattle to a younger brother charging him and his heirs with the function of providing sacrificial cattle when necessary. Today [177] all the chiefs are reluctant to expend cattle on rituals whose [643] validity is questioned, and there is often friction between the senior and junior lines over who should 'find' the cow or bull required. Their reluctance is illustrated by the following passage from Godfrey Wilson's diary:

Mungu (on the lake shore): 22/12/34

It is still stormy; there has been wind and heavy rain for four days. People are saying: 'We are hungry. It is very bad. We need light rain

[1] According to Mr. Harkin's informant the Saabwe eruption was foretold a year before it occurred. *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, 40 (1955), p. 91.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for planting, but now all the fields are muddy, we can neither hoe nor plant.' Five days ago there was no rain but locusts, and people did not plant for fear lest the locusts should eat the rice and maize as it sprouted. Kissoule tells me: 'Kyala is very angry. . . . Mwandisi (107, the priest-chief) wants to pray to put things right, he has sent Mwalulabosya to ask Mwakisisile (170, the ruling chief) for a cow. Mwalulabosya and Mwakalobo went and the chief agreed saying: "I have not got one now, but I will look for one!" Then Mwalulabosya sent me (Kissoule) to fetch it, but the chief refused saying: "I am busy now." Then Mwandisi (107), who is blind and infirm, went himself, but still there is no cow.'

769 782 [177] [643]

The priests who minister to dead chiefs, like the priests of Lubaga, are of different types. The senior village headmen of a dead chief are responsible for conducting sacrifices at his grove in co-operation with his heir, and when a headman dies his office is taken over by his heir. Where a grove is much honoured this continues for generations and the heirs of one of the village headmen become hereditary keepers of the grove, each incumbent of the office assuming his name. Secondly, there are chiefs of a junior line, who become hereditary priests on whom the ruling chiefs depend for their prayers, but these priest-chiefs do not actually attend the sacrifices; the celebration is delegated to commoner priests and junior kinsmen. Mwandisi (107) mentioned above, Kasitile (86) and Nsamba (90) were all priest-chiefs of this sort. Kasitile prayed at his own home, blowing out water before any celebration in Mwaipopo's country, and he was given the chine of any animal sacrificed on behalf of the country. If this were not done 'all the cattle in the country would die . . . it is the most important part of the meat'. The commoner priests who conducted the ritual always shared the head of the sacrificial beast and the breast went to the chief. With priest-chiefs, as with commoner chiefs, the name of the first incumbent of the office (or an early and famous incumbent) may become a hereditary title, e.g. three generations of priests in Selya have been known as *Kasitile*.

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The essential elements in the ritual are: the sacrifice of a black bull or cow in the grove; the offering up of the blood and pieces of the sacred meat from the forelegs, together with the beer, on the earth close to a sacred stone and near a sacred tree; an invocation calling on the shades to come and feast, and petitions for rain, fertility, and health. One piece of meat is thrown down for

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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 each name mentioned: 'We give this meat to you so-and-so.'
[782] 'May the children sleep, may we all sleep, may it rain, may there be much food, may milk be plentiful.' Then follows a communion in which young 'grand-children' of the dead share the sacred meat and beer. 'The shades eat together, they break off firewood
[775] there from the tree, they rejoice, some clap their hands to give thanks.' Finally, a hut is built for the shades and half-formed bananas and sweet milk are left in it to 'ripen'. It was thought that if the sacrifice were accepted they did so miraculously quickly and the milk increased in quantity, the bananas in size. Among the Kukwe a white and grey cock and a hen were offered as well as the cow or bull. An account of two of the sacrifices we attended will make this clearer.

(*b*) SACRIFICE TO MWAIJONGA

769 In July 1935, two days after the Kinga had sacrificed at
782 Lubaga (*vide supra*, p. 30), the chief Mwaipopo (116) came to tell us that he was going to sacrifice at the grove of his father, Mwaijonga (82). Ngulyo, heir to Mwaijonga's second senior headman and now his priest, came with the chief, and he remarked,

> Kasitile (86) summoned us some time ago. He and Njobakosa and Kissogota[1] and I thought that the hunger was very great indeed, and Kasitile sent us to tell Mwaipopo (116) to look for a cow and sacrifice. Then Mwaipopo agreed, because the hunger is indeed very great; he has not yet found the cow; when he has, we shall inform Kasitile and then kill it in Mwaijonga's grove.

Mwaipopo 'found' the cow at once for next morning Kasitile told us

> Mwambene (Mwaipopo, 116) came with Ngulyo yesterday to say he had found the cow. This evening, after sunset, because there is a moon (second quarter) I shall pray at my place with water; and Mwaipopo will pray at his homestead also with water. Tomorrow morning they will kill the cow. I shall not be there—I never go—I stay at home and they [i.e. the shades] find me at home.

The same evening (10 July 1935) Godfrey Wilson went to Kasitile's homestead just after sunset. Kasitile took a calabash cup hanging under the eaves saying: 'No one ever drinks from this
[778] cup, it is for praying only. At my death it will go to my heir to use for prayer.' He filled the cup from his wife's water-pot, and then

[1] Heirs of two other village headmen of Mwaijonga, also priests of his grove.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

plunged into it a glowing brand from the fire. Then he went to a low tree in the middle of a cultivated field where the byre of his senior brother (85) had been. He took a root of 'blessed grass' with him, and as he stood before the tree he took a couple of bites of the root and two sips of water. Then he blew out the water in a cloud twice and he spoke for twenty minutes and mentioned thirty-five names or more: 'Thou Mwakanjoki (60), . . . thou Kalesi (18), Mwakalebela (19), . . . Mwakirisya (56) and Mwampondele (27), . . . Kikungubeja, Silobwike, Kyamba Kitali, Nsyanigwa,[1] . . . Mwaipaja (21.) He talked about the punishment of 'Mwakagile their child' (i.e. of Mwaipopo (116) who was here identified with his grandfather) . . . 'Kyala is there . . . he sees Mwaipopo. He says "Do this ritual, I am rejoiced".' At another point Kasitile added the name 'Jesus' to a list of ancestors. He prayed for food, children, and cattle. . . . 'Give us bananas, millet, maize, may children be born in the morning and in the evening, may cows calve in the morning and in the evening.' He spoke of the old sacrifices of Mwalubange (58) and others which had been accepted . . .

Now Mwaipopo has found a cow, he has learnt his lesson, he has agreed; receive him tomorrow, grant him food, give food to all in Selya . . . to Mwaisumo (62), Mwaitende (61). . . . You are proud (*uli namatingo*) to send so much hunger. . . . When I went down to the plain men asked me 'Are you taking all the food with you?' I said 'Yes', but now I have come up, the earth has come up. You alone remain and hold back. I ask you to send food again. I alone remain of all the contemporaries of Mwaijonga (82). I alone am Kasitile. All the people of Kyungu (16), of Mwakyusa (38), all know I am Kasitile. I alone remain. The birds say, the snakes say that I am Kasitile. There is trouble all round in BuNdali, BuSangu, BuKinga, but we thought here there would be no trouble in the country of Mwakilima (111) and Mwanjala (77), but there is. They have sacrificed, the Kinga have come to Lubaga. Mwakisisya (111) has begun, Mwakagile [i.e. Mwaipopo, 116, here identified with his grandfather, 59] sleeps with hunger, receive him tomorrow. I 'treat' the earth, all treat their earth, all over the country.

Next morning early the chiefs and priests met near Mwaijonga's grove which is some hundreds of yards from Ipinda, his senior village, where his *indola* tree still stands.[2] The talk turned on the

[1] These four are the Kinga priests with hereditary titles, who serve at Lubaga.

[2] Why the grave was not beside the *indola* tree as it usually is was not made clear to us.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 weather, and the ritual. 'We prayed yesterday at Ipinda, Mwai-
782 popo and all of us, we prayed and prayed. Did you feel the cold as much as usual last night? Did you hear the banana leaves rustle as usual?' 'No.' 'Well, Kyala has heard our prayer.'

At 7.45 a.m. they moved into the grove. A black cow had already been killed. 'We killed it at cock-crow, while it was still dark, we were all there. Mwambene (the chief Mwaipopo 116) handed the axe to Mwanyoso (his junior kinsman *vide* p. 84) who killed the cow.' Bananas were brought and all roasted them and ate, waiting for the other priests, Njobakosa and Kissogata. After a [578] discussion about certain persons who had not come because the last time they got no meat, one of them said: 'Don't talk of what is [784] forbidden in the sacred grove, don't let's make a noise; no, we pray to Mwakagile (59). . . . If we quarrel and make a noise the shades will not hear our prayer.' James (119), Kasitile's heir, was there but not Kasitile (86) himself. Someone asked whether Tandale ought to be summoned. But one said: 'We have never asked this Tandale to come here; we used to ask his father.[1] . . . Tandale lives in the boys' village. He has not the position of Ngulyo and Kissogota,'

Mwaipopo: 'Why do you argue about this today and not before?'

After an hour's delay Njobakosa arrived, and shortly after him Kissogota, who apologized, saying: 'I am late because my child has just died.'

Kissogota and Ngulyo flayed the cow, letting the blood pour out on to the ground. There was some discussion over the division of the meat, and they cut out the chine, saying: 'We send it with the tail to Kasitile—if we sever the tail we have spoiled it.'

Ngulyo took the sacred meat (*isyammapa*) from both forelegs, [778] and with Kissogota's help he chopped off twenty-three small pieces. The rest of this meat was left for the children. At 10.10 all gathered to go to the grave. A sacred stone (*ulufiga*)[2] was found under a tree. Mwaiteteja (Mwaipopo's junior kinsman) cleared the undergrowth with his bill-hook and dug a hole close to the stone, then he threw the meat which Kissogota was holding on two leaves, placed the leaves on top and filled in the earth. Five or six men spoke:

[1] Tandale the senior had buried the previous chief, Mwaipopo I (115).

[2] It was not clear whether this was the one planted at Mwajonga's coming out or not, since his *ifidola* was some hundreds of yards away.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Here is your cow, your food. We pray to Kyala. May theft go away. Give us food and beans and millet, may we eat and be satisfied. . . . It is said that the sweet potatoes are scarce now, help us. You Mwakabule (117), Mwakomo (112). . . . This is your cow Mwaijonga (82). This is your meat. I shall seek another also which we shall give you like this. 769 782

NGULYO: May the locusts go away. It is you who have caused theft because there is hunger.

KISOOOTA: At night since we eat scraps of food our bellies are disquieted . . . may we be satisfied. People are eating millet porridge;[1] when food is plentiful they say it's horrible. When someone eats millet porridge he dies, it kills a man. We pray to him, this Kyala, because we do not know him, so we say: 'You Mwaijonga (82) drive away the hunger. Give all of us, Mwaipopo's people, food, and hear us all.' [262]

Mwaipopo's young sons (not the older ones) ate the rest of the sacred meat (*vide* plate 8). Other boys who approached were chased away: 'They thought because their friends were getting meat they would too.' Then the remainder of the carcass was divided: two legs went to the chiefs, two to the commoners, the chine to Kasitile, the breast to Mwaipopo (the chief) who gave half to his sons and half to his daughters—his wives may not eat it. The head went to the priests Ngulyo and his fellows—and some entrails were sent to Seba, widow of Mwaijonga (82). There was some discussion about the disposal of the head: 'Let it be put in Ngulyo's house', they said. Mwaipopo commenting later, explained: [262]

We leave the head in the house of a commoner near the sacred grove in order that the shades can come and eat it. So also with the chine. . . . Kasitile leaves it so that his shades may eat it. We throw the meat by a tree which was planted long ago. He whom we have buried looks towards it, he sits facing the tree and the meat is thrown beside it.[2] He sees the meat we throw. We offer the meat of the upper forelegs (*ijammapa*), this is the sacred meat, the rest we eat ourselves. The blood pours out on to the ground, it goes beneath, which means that the owners, the shades, receive it, because they are beneath. The shades say: 'We are angry because you have not given us cows to treat the grove, we are angry and send this hunger. Treat the grove frequently!' [775]

Kasitile also discussed the ritual with us later and he remarked:

[1] Millet is ordinarily used only for brewing beer. The Nyakyusa regard millet porridge as very distasteful and eat it only during extreme scarcity. [273]

[2] We omitted to ask why, in this case, a hut had not been built in the grove.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 782 I kept the chine for two nights in my house. The shades came to eat—they left practically nothing. Had I not been ill I would have asked you to come and see since you say they do not eat. . . . The shades come and see that we are celebrating the rituals.

The whole ritual was esoteric. Only the chief with eight of his [793] agnatic kinsmen, four of his young sons (but not his grown-up [643] heir or young grandson), and four priests participated, and we [123] two anthropologists were permitted to look on. Peeping small boys were chased off. The shades were addressed in a conversational tone and, except during the invocation, the priests and [784] chiefs chatted to one another, but arguments and raised voices were taboo. The boys who ate the meat were told:

[869] See, we your fathers are sacrificing, we are making plenty of food. Follow the custom of your fathers when it is your turn to sacrifice. Learn how to do it.

The same evening Kasitile prayed at his tree again. He explained:

I would not usually pray at all tonight, it is finished. Mwaipopo and I prayed yesterday, today the ritual is finished, but that boy of mine [his heir, 119] does not visit me, he's not been to see me and he did not tell me that he was going to the ritual. . . . I am going to pray to tell my fathers not to be startled, to tell them I am not angry, to tell them to send only a little rain, not a lot, to tell them to accept the sacrifice.

He went to the same place, and chewed the root of 'blessed grass' and blew out water as before. He prayed to about thirty persons, especially to Mwamaloba (85, his elder brother) and Mwakanjoki (60, his father), and also to Mwakagile (59), Mwaijonga (82), Mwaipasi (81), Mwakabule (117), Mwamwifu (84), Mwafungo (83), Mwakipesile (118), Mwakapala (?), Lyambilo (12), Mwalubange (58), Mwamukinga (43), Mwaihojo (147?), Mwaitende (61), and Kyala (2). No mention was made of the Lubaga chiefs this time, or of sons of Mwaipaja (21) or of 'Jesus'.

You have received your child Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 59), Mwaijonga (82), you have received the chief, this boy of mine (119) is quarrelling with me, do not be upset, he is a fool, a fool, but let him be . . . go and call your brothers to eat, you Mwaijonga (82), you Mwaipopo (115), and all your younger brothers; call Mwakagile (59) and Mwakanjoki (60) . . . Mwalubange (58) go to eat with your younger brother, let us find food, millet, bananas, children, milk . . . let there be a little rain only, not too much . . . people believe

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

that I can speak, that when I speak food comes tomorrow; let it be so. 769

Three points call for comment here. First, it will be noted that if the crops failed Kasitile had a scapegoat in his heir who was quarrelling with him. The sacrifice was performed correctly but a quarrel between any of the leading actors could destroy its efficacy, and Kasitile made it clear that he was being very forbearing with a difficult 'son'. 782

Secondly, a great many names were mentioned in the prayers, but they were not mentioned in any discernible order. This is obvious if the prayers are compared with the genealogy facing p. 3 [793] And since Kasitile was a famous priest, acknowledged to be an expert in ritual and tradition we must conclude that the order was not thought important: all that was required was to mention the names of dead members of the lineage, including even one (Mwakabule 117) who was junior both to Mwaipopo and Kasitile who were sacrificing.

Thirdly, what did Kasitile imply by his reference to the moon? 769 (p. 74). We omitted to ask Kasitile himself, but a number of informants insisted that there is no necessary connexion between 782 the celebration of a ritual and the phases of the moon. However, 821 rain is expected with the *waning* moon, therefore rituals which are intended to produce rain are usually performed with the waning moon, and the sacrifice to Mwaijonga in which sun and warmth were sought, was performed with the waxing moon. This may or may not be what Kasitile had in mind.

Everyone agreed afterwards that the rituals had been effective [132] for the weather grew slightly warmer. Before the sacrifice at Lubaga on 7th July, the temperature was 62° F. at sunset, but from the 9th onward the cloud cleared, and by the 14th the sunset temperature was 68° F. Whether or not the Kinga priests living high on their mountains with a view down the Lake whence storms come are weatherwise, and time their visits carefully, we do not know. Certainly any change in the weather after a celebration is interpreted as a direct answer to prayer.

(c) SACRIFICE TO MWAKISAMBWE

A month later a sacrifice was made to Mwaijonga's great-great- 769 grandfather Mwakisambwe (30) in the grove Mbyanga. The chief 782 Mwaipopo was not concerned this time, but the senior line of Mwaihojo (147) and a junior line who had traditionally the responsibility of providing cows for celebrations at Mbyanga.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 782 Mwalukuta, the hereditary priest of Mbyanga, had been pressing the chiefs to sacrifice for some time. He had sent messengers in March, April, May, and again in July, saying: 'At Mbyanga things have gone back, it is bad, see hunger kills!' At last, in August, Mwaihojo agreed to provide a cow if Mwaitende of the junior line finally refused. Mwalukuta, the priest of the grove, ex-
[793] plained:

> We went to Mwaitende (121, identified with his grandfather 61) and asked him to sacrifice. He said: 'No, I am not coming; do the work there at Mbyanga yourselves.' We said: 'Why do you refuse to come, to return a cow? Our grandfathers gave you a cow, why don't you return it? They gave you cows on the understanding that you would bring them back, one by one, and kill them in the sacred grove here. Why do you refuse to return them?' It has always been the custom for the junior brothers to find cows for sacrifice. Their seniors give them wealth and appoint them priests to bring cattle to the sacred grove.
> [177] But in European times they refuse to come, each man kills at his own place. . . . I must go and tell Kasitile (86) and also Kifubuka, or rather his son—the father refuses to come he had a lawsuit with Kasitile. . . . Kifubuka used to kill the cow, then Kasitile said Makuli should kill the cow, but now Makuli has refused to come so I go to fetch Kifubuka [the younger]. Makuli was a chief who ate the meat. . . . Mwaitende (61) used to send the cow to him and Mwaluseke to bring to Mbyanga . . . as he now refuses to send the cow they say: 'What should we bring?' and have refused to come here.

[132] There had been another spell of cold weather and the temperature on the night of 8th August was down to 59° F., but fine weather was visibly approaching from the Lake. On the 9th the ritual was to have been held, but not everyone had been formally summoned and it was put off to the 10th.

[793] Only eight men came, Mwalukuta I, the priest of the grove, and his younger brother Mwalukuta II, two other priests (Nyama and Mwakasukula) and Mwakyonde (148), younger brother of Mwaihojo the chief who provided the cow, and three other young men of the chief's lineage. One of the young chiefs was
[291] wearing a red cloth and was scolded by Mwakyonde for doing so: 'It's taboo in the sacred grove.' 'Why?' 'Because it's like a rainbow.'[1] And he took it off.

The mother of Nyama brought a bundle of saplings for building the hut for the shade, and Kisisile, the senior wife of Mwaihojo the

[1] The rainbow is a symbol of misfortune. cf. p. 60.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

chief, brought a bundle of firewood. Mwalukuta I was not expected to enter the grove and he went off soon. His brother and Nyama took a little basket of maize and millet. The chiefs stayed on the edge of the grove and the three commoners entered alone. Mwalukuta II and Nyama built a little hut five feet from the 'grave' with the saplings brought by Nyama's mother. 'We put firewood and food and a little calabash which we have prepared in it, it's for the shades.' The calabash contained millet, maize, pumpkin seeds, ground nuts, and cow peas; and a stem of bananas was put beside it. Mwalukuta swept the 'grave' which was marked by a few small trees, and Mwakasukula killed the cow, which must lie facing east to BuKinga. Mwalukuta spoke the invocation: 'Thou Mwakisambwe (30) . . . Mwakihaba (45) has gone back, but Mwamukinga (44) is here still. . . . Mwakihaba says, "I am no longer a relative, I have gone out." ' Then they took the sacred meat from the forelegs of the cow: that from the right leg was buried near the 'grave', that from the left by an *nkuju* tree (a species of *ficus*) forty paces away. The priests ate some roasted meat and intestines with bananas, and the rest of the meat was divided between them and the chiefs. The head went to Nyama's house and was kept for three nights. The priests explained that they are forbidden to bathe for three days or lie with their wives, but on the fourth day they eat the head and after that they bathe and resume married life.

Eighteen days after the sacrifice Mwalukuta went to look and found the stem of bananas which had been left in the little hut had ripened, and the earth on the grave had been disturbed. This was a good omen. But later his legs began to trouble him—he could scarcely walk—and it was said that certain priests who should have been called to the ritual had not been summoned and were angry and had cursed him. He fled to a distance and sought a bull to kill for his fellows.

(*d*) SACRIFICE AT KABALE

The form of sacrifice among the Kukwe is very similar. We never saw a sacrifice at Kabale—our friends assured us that they had been dropped before 1935—but a description by two of the leading priests of the grove of Kabale demonstrates the similarity between the rituals there and in Selya. The only points of difference were that the Kukwe sacrificed fowls as well as cattle, and granddaughters shared the sacred food with grandsons.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 In this grove of Kabale three chiefs in particular gather together,
782 Mwakilulele (67 K) and his brothers Mwakalukwa (68 K) and Mwangoka (24 K) [or his son], with the younger brothers Mwakamela (66 K) and Mwakilasa (69 K) in whose country the grove is situated. The senior, Mwakilulele, initiates matters; it is he who calls his fellows saying: 'Let us pray in the grove.' Then Mwakilulele seeks a black cow and Mwangoka seeks a black bull, Mwakilasa brews beer and brings two fowls, a black and grey cock, and a black and yellow hen. So they go to the grave with their children, young boys and girls and the junior chiefs who have lost their positions as ruling chiefs—sons of Mwangomale (4 K)—and their village headmen. In the grove they pour
[778] some of the beer over the sacred stones and kill the cattle and take the liver and fat round the stomach and the meat from the upper forelegs (*ijammapa*) and cut it into small pieces and put it on two leaves, sweet banana and plantain. Then they take little pieces of meat and throw them on the ground and pluck out the feathers of the fowls. They praise the shades saying: 'Receive the fowls and beer and meat, may there be fertility of the fields that all the crops may be plentiful.' . . . 'Help us Kyala, thou Ndolombwike (?), thou Kajubili (?), you created us, together with our fathers. Help us that illness may be slight, that we may increase and be many, that all the fowls and cattle may increase and that the fields may be fertile.' When they pluck out the feathers of the hen the praises are for the wives of the chiefs who have died. Then they pick up little pieces of meat and eat them with young children; it is taboo for wives to eat it. Boys drink the beer which is in the calabash cup—they receive it in their hands—and the girls finish the beer in the large calabash. Then the men drink the rest of the beer and divide the meat. . . . The calabash cup and the large calabash and the head are left in the grove overnight . . . then the large calabash
[784] and the cup are taken home and hung under the eaves—it is taboo to put them in the house—women must not approach them. When they have finished and come out of the grove rain pours down immediately and they rejoice saying: 'Kyala has helped us' . . . or 'the fathers have heard'.

Pouring out the beer on the ground and throwing down little pieces of meat, and sticking feathers into the ground means: 'May the fathers beneath receive them, may they bless the crops so that they flourish and food be plentiful. . . .' Children finish the food because they are like the shades—when the children have eaten they say the shades have eaten. They roast the meat at a distance because if they roast it close to the place of sacrifice no shades come there for the smoke drives
[778] them off. . . . The large calabash and cup and head which stay there symbolize fertility (*mboto*), so that when we eat they may help us and
[784] the food may not fail. The taboo on women—wives—eating the sacrificial meat (the *ijammapa*) and drinking the beer in the calabash

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and cup is because this food is sacrified to their fathers-in-law. Those who are not sons of Ngomale do not drink the sacrificial beer or eat the meat either, because they are of other lineages. A *black* cow is used in the grove because groves are always fearful and darkness falls if something improper is done. So it is said that the blackness of the cow matches the fearfulness (*ubusiya*) of the grove. 769 782 [778] [784] [825]

Besides the sacrifices at Kabale and to their more immediate ancestors, Kukwe chiefs sent offerings to the BaNgumba, earlier occupants of the country. Mwamunda explained:

My grandfather prayed in the grove which is across the river on mission land, in the forest; it was the grove of us BaNgumba; we were owners of the soil, the Kukwe chiefs found us here. If ever a chief sent my grandfather and his fellows to pray there they went with an unripe stem of bananas, and sweet milk, and unripe maize, and small sweet potatoes; then they prayed and came home again and the next day, when they went to look they found the stem of bananas had ripened, the maize had hardened, the milk was thick and the sweet potatoes large; everything which was unripe had ripened. Then they said Kyala [that is Kyala and the shades] had stood by us. . . . We spoke of Kyala even before the Europeans had come. . . .[1]

They say that very long ago we BaNgumba, we sons of Kasyapula, had not yet got fire, the chiefs brought it. It is this they commemorate in the 'coming out' ritual. We, the owners of the soil, were always here, the chiefs came and built, and when others came the firstcomers fled. They are like you Europeans who fight wars; we owners of the soil think only of hoeing. [173]

(*e*) MODERN CHANGES

It is quite clear that, though sacrifices to the heroes and at the groves of chiefs were still made while we were among the Nyakyusa (and more frequently than our friends at first admitted), the cycle was attenuated. Not only had human sacrifice probably ceased but the chiefs were reluctant to part with cattle. . . . Kasitile (86) said one day: 769 782 177

Since you [Europeans] came into the country the rituals have disappeared. Mwaipopo (116) never thinks of the rituals now. . . . It is cold and there is hunger; I went to Mwaipopo and told him to tell his

[1] According to the records of the first missionaries, sacrifices on Rungwe were to *Mbamba* but the same passage refers to *Mbamba or K'iala* meaning God. It is not clear whether the two names were equated by Kukwe informants or by the missionary himself, who was in touch with missionaries elsewhere in the district. (*Journal de l'Unité des Frères*, 1894.) I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Fueter for drawing my attention to this valuable Journal.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 priests to sacrifice to his father and elder brother so that fertility may
782 return and men may eat sweet potatoes, but he does nothing.

177 A conversation between Kasitile and Mwanyoso, his fellow priest (*vide* p. 76), was also instructive on this point:

> The soil has changed, we are not like those of old, we are different. Mwakisambwe (30) had power; when he prayed the thunder crashed and rain fell in torrents. In the old days when the Kinga came they came with drums and we all feared them, what they said was done—they did not have to say much—just a few words and it was done. But now they spend all their time explaining things and talking and we do not do anything. . . .
>
> MWANYOSO: I have sent people time and again to Mwaijande (?) for a cow, but he just insults us. . . . I have asked Mwaihojo (147) about celebrating. . . .
>
> KASITILE: What did he say?
>
> MWANYOSO: I don't know . . . if he is wise . . .
>
> KASITILE (*breaking in*): Well, you had better admit that the chiefs do not respect you—the chiefs say: 'It is European times now.'
>
> G.W.: What do they fear? The Government does not affect the ritual, does it?
>
> KASITILE: They are unwilling to part with the cows which I take for sacrifice, they do not like to lose their cows. In the old days they feared, and when we said: 'We do not sleep, celebrate in the grove', they agreed quickly, for they feared that we, their men, would move to another chiefdom.

(*f*) THE FIRST FRUITS

769 No communal ritual of the first fruits is celebrated among the
782 Nyakyusa as in Ngonde,[1] but after the millet harvest a little grain is collected from every homestead and later brewed into beer which
[241] is offered to the shades of the chief. In Mwaipopo's country the offerings of millet were collected by the priest, Ngulyo, who, with
[793] his colleagues Kissogoía and Njobakosa, took it to Kalinga, senior widow of the late chief (113). She was custodian of a sacred pot inherited by the chief from his predecessors, in which the offerings
[778] of millet are stored, and this is the pot which, according to some informants, also contained the power of growth—the nails and hair torn from the dead chief (*vide supra*, pp. 64-5). When the new crop was reaped Kalinga almost emptied the pot, refilled it with the fresh grain, and brewed beer with the old. There had once been a sacred winnowing basket used in preparing the beer, but

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, p. 42.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

it was stolen by Ngoni raiders. When the brewing was ripe, the chief sought a calabash of curds and Kalinga cut a stem of bananas, and the priests ate and drank in her hut, together with junior kinsmen of the chief's family, but not the chief himself. As they drank they prayed: 769 782

Oh thou Mwakagile (59) give us millet, may it be plentiful, and may the milk be plentiful and may the bananas grow.

One pot of beer was due to Kasitile, the priest, and he would leave it overnight in his house.

The shades come and drink a lot, only a little beer is left in the morning. . . . then the bananas flourish and there is much fertility in the homesteads. . . . The sacred pot gives fertility of the soil to the whole country. [775] [778]

A very bitter quarrel flared up while we were in Selya because Kasitile came upon Ngulyo and his colleagues drinking the sacred beer without their having sent him his pot, or even notifying him of the brewing. The repercussions of this are discussed in chapter IX. [578]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Note

643 103 Chiefdoms do not have names which continue indefinitely. They are referred to by the name of the ruling chief or one of his illustrous ancestors, and often several different names are in common use for one chiefdom. To simplify the map we have assigned a number to each chiefdom held by a segment of the Nyakyusa or Kukwe lineages (*vide* genealogies, pp. 3, 27), and these numbers are plotted on the map. The map is based on that of Mr. R. de Z. Hall (sometime D.C., Tukuyu) and includes all, or almost all, the Nyakyusa and Kukwe chiefdoms recognized by the Administration.[1] The Penja, Nyiha, Ndali, Lambya, and Saku chiefdoms on the fringes of the valley are indicated, but not plotted. The map does *not* include all chiefdoms recognized in some fashion by the Nyakyusa themselves, e.g. Mwabungulu (178) 'came out' in 1953 and has been established at some distance from his elder brother with his own senior headman, but he is not recognized by the Administration as a chief and therefore his domain is not included on the map as a separate chiefdom.

[177] [1] Two names listed by Mr. Hall are omitted, Ali Bin Omari because he is an immigrant and Mwakalinga of Kimbila because he is the son of a commoner appointed as headman by the German Administration, and not a member of either royal lineage.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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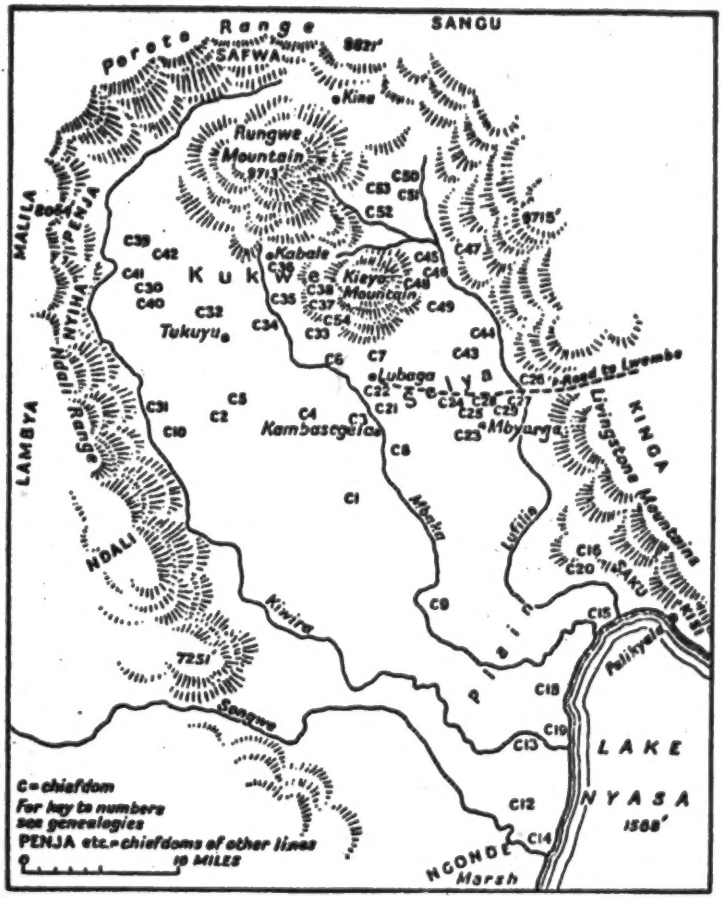

Map II. Nyakyusa valley showing location of chiefdoms

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VI

LAND AND POWER

643 THE crux of the chiefs' 'coming out' was a redistribution of power
561 and of land, and we must pause in our description of the ritual
423 cycle to discuss the relation between chiefdoms and villages and the land, and to consider more closely the balance of power between successive generations.

(a) THE TERRITORIAL ALIGNMENT OF CHIEFDOMS AND VILLAGES

173 Tradition makes it clear that the heroes came to a sparsely
361 occupied country and that their descendants gradually spread out as their numbers increased. The settlers chose to live on hillocks overlooking the surrounding country. Lubaga and
[103] Mbande, the seats of the two 'divine kings' are commanding sites.
[778] The grove of Kabale, where the ancestors of the Kukwe chiefs first established themselves, is on an eminence rising from the plateau, and Kambasekela (near the Mbaka bridge) on which the early chiefs Mwaipaja (21) and Mwaipopo (26) were buried is a hill very like Mbande, overlooking the plain.

361 Unlike most of their neighbours the Nyakyusa show a preference for cleared and cultivated land, planted with bamboos and the
[824] oil-bearing *unsyunguti* trees (*Trichillia supp.*)[1] as well as the great *umwali* (*Chorophora excelsa*) which, in their view, adds dignity to the homestead.[2] A study of the trees planted at the 'coming out' and the sacred groves in Mwaipopo's chiefdom (C 24)[3] shows that for four generations the ruling chiefs (descendants of Mwaijonga 82) have established their principal villages within a quarter of a mile of one another, and for seven generations the descendants of Mwakisambwe (30) have lived within two or three miles of one another (*vide* plan, p. 101), though there were acres of fertile land

[1] I am indebted to Mr. P. B. Nightingale, Forestry Officer, Tukuyu, for giving me the botanical names of these and other trees.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 77-8.

[3] C followed by a number is the reference number of a chiefdom as listed in the genealogies of chiefs.

[p. 88]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

available which are only now being settled. Colonies are established, but usually by junior sons, the seniors remaining near where their fathers built; e.g. the descendants of Mwakasangule (22) remained near Lubaga, but Mwakisambwe (30) the junior heir moved to Mbyanga about 1750 and his senior great-great-great-grandson Mwaihojo (147) lives close to Mbyanga still, while Mwaijonga (82) the junior heir settled two or three miles away. Mwakyusa (38), a junior son not strictly an heir at all, but personally very popular, was defeated by his elder brothers and driven from the hills to the plain, where his descendants now live. It is not an invariable rule that the junior should move away—for example Mwambete (162) of the junior line lives close to Kambasekela where his ancestor Mwaipaja (21) is buried, and not Mwakibwele (182) of the senior line—but most often it is the junior who moves. The tradition is that the junior heir of a chief leads off his men as colonists at his 'coming out', and this may indeed have happened in the past, but the area of colonization in Mwaipopo's country (which we have observed over twenty years) was first opened by private individuals moving into unoccupied savannah forest land in search of virgin soil for cultivation, and lush grazing. The chief Mwaipopo asserted his claim to the area first by establishing a household there with some of his junior wives, and then by sending the son of a subordinate house (who could have no claim to inheritance of the chieftainship) to live there. Nsusa, the second village headman of Mwaipopo's heir Mwankuga (150), also settled in the forest and acted as headman of the men there, but whether his move was primarily to lay claim to the land or because he had quarrelled with his chief, Mwankuga, and the other village headmen, was never very clear.[1] Then in 1953, at the coming out of Mwankuga's heirs, the junior Mwabungulu (178) was established in the colony, and is regarded by the people as 'chief' of that area, though he is not recognized as a chief by the Administration.

When a colony is established several miles are left uncultivated between it and the parent chiefdom. Mwabungulu lives five or six miles from his senior brother Mwanyilu (177) and there is an area without homesteads between them. It seems that, traditionally, each chiefdom was surrounded by a belt of uncultivated land used as pasturage, and very often at the 'coming out' both brothers merely extended their villages on to the adjoining pasture land

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 268-9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

361 leaving a strip of pasture between them, but when the area became
561 crowded the junior heir would establish a colony at some distance.
631 With the increasing density of population, and of the acreage cultivated by each family, the buffer strips between chiefdoms are disappearing.

The more closely related chiefs are the nearer their chiefdoms are likely to be, as will be apparent if the map on p. 87 is compared with the genealogies I and II, but the pattern of splitting and expansion was continually modified by conquest and absorption. For example, the descendants of Mwaipasi (81) of the junior line have no chiefdom, and the descendants of Mwamwifu (84) were defeated and absorbed by Mwaipopo II (116), and the junior house of Mwakisambwe (30) appears never to have established itself. His second son named in the genealogy, Mwamukinga II (44), was a full brother of the senior heir Mwamukinga I (43), not the heir of the second house. And of the descendants of Mwankyuse (33) only one heir appears to have established himself in each generation.

Although a chiefdom was surrounded by pasture land with unoccupied savannah forest beyond it, when the heirs 'came out' their fathers moved. The old men gave the senior heir a site in the centre of the country, not exactly where his father had lived, but somewhere near the senior village of the past generation, and the old men moved aside to make room for the new village. The old men's villages diminished in size for many members had died and not all the heirs had come to live where their fathers had lived, and the homesteads were built on the periphery of the young men's villages. Traditionally most of the cultivated land was reallocated at the 'coming out' also, but that no longer happens. Nowadays, even where the 'coming out' is celebrated, the old men continue to cultivate until their death most of the fields they cultivated before the 'coming out', vacating only their homestead sites and adjoining gardens. The dominance of the younger generation is reflected in their compact villages, forming wide, straight avenues, in central positions in the country, while the villages of older men are often split, and their homesteads scattered without order. The avenues are felt to contribute to the dignity of the ruling generation and the older men are content to withdraw that their sons may 'display themselves' (*ukumoga*).

[602] Age, territorial, and kinship grouping interlock in a complex

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FN17 Ngonde
Nyakyusa

Chart showing position of sections of chart on "Villages of Mwaipopo' Chiefdom." (Facing page 91)

A	B
C	D

M Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

fashion. Each village is occupied by an age-set and men are emphatic that age and friendship, not kinship, are the basis of a village, but the villages of fathers, sons, and grandsons commonly, though not invariably, adjoin one another, as Bujege, Igembe, and Lupando, or Lupondo, Njisi, and Iringa in Mwaipopo's chiefdom (*side* plan, p. 101). Each section of a chiefdom comprises half the ruling generation, and interspersed with their villages are those of their fathers and sons. Men are identified by the name of their village, section, and chief; the village name defines their age-set, the name of section and chief their generation. The section name is always that of the senior village which leads it. Generation succeeds generation in office when their heirs 'come out', but the relative position of villages (age-sets) within a generation remains constant. Since chiefdoms traditionally split each generation at the 'coming out' the men of the retired generation who remained belonged to one section only; those of the other section of their generation were members of another chiefdom. The territorial arrangements reflected in the plan of Mwaipopo's chiefdom on p. 101 are modified by the fact that the chiefdom has not split for four generations. In generation I Kibonde was the portion of the junior heir, Mwafungo (83), but he died young and his land and widow were inherited by the senior brother, Mwaijonga (82). The son of this levirratical union, Mwakipesile (118), went through the 'coming out' in generation II along with Mwaijonga's heirs, Ijonga (114, representing her full brother 115), and Mwakabule (117). Mwakipesile inherited Kibonde and Mwakabule inherited Kituli, but both were later defeated in war by Mwaipopo II and their land incorporated in his chiefdom. Mwakipesile's heir, Likoeyela, and Mwakabule remained as subordinate chiefs. Though the girl Ijonga celebrated the 'coming out' in place of her unborn brother she could not rule, and Mwaisteteja, son of Mwaijonga II (younger full brother of 82) acted for her. He was finally defeated by Mwaipopo II and fled to the periphery of the country. Kabula was his village, and he was subordinate to Mwaipopo, not independent.

In generation III the chiefdom did not split because by that time the British administration was in control, and the territorial division remained much the same, Igembe and Njisi becoming the senior villages in place of Bujege and Lupondo, with Mwankuga (150) and Mwaseba (152) as the young chiefs. Kibonde,

9: Wilson .R.S./1954.1955\1950

FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

VILLAGES OF NWAIPUOPO'S CH

	Gen.	Chief	Village	Headman	Structural Position	Land
643	I	*Mwaijonga* (Ba)	IPENDA	*NJOBAKOSA*	Senior village of Mwaijonga	
622			Ishi	*Kisogwe*		
103			ITEBE	*MGULJO*	Second senior village of Mwaijonga	Moved for Ipe
631			Bubeba			
551			Ismuba			
	II	*Mwaijonga I* (109)	BUJEGE	MWANSAMBE (Mwaponso)	Sons of Ipenda and Ishi	Moved for Lu
		Mwaijonga II (108)				
			Bujinga	Kasolile		Moved for Ipe
			Lupeso		Older section of Bujinga	Moved as one Mwaijonga II.
			Kayu'a			
			Bunikali		Contemporaries of Mwaijonga II	
			Bolindamaje	Mwanta	Much younger sons than those of Bujinga	
			Kihunde	Mwakikwa		
			LUPONDO	*MWAKIOPU*	Sons of Subeba	
			Kyesse	*Kaujeke*		
			Kitule	Mwangoba		
			Kalinde	*Mwakilumage*		
	III	*Mwaijonga I* (rpt)	IGEMBE	MWAMBUPUTA (Mwaijonga) b. c. 1880 active in 1955	Sons of Bujinga	
		Mwaijonga II (rpt) active 1955				
			Kawanda		Younger brothers and a few sons of Ipenda	
			Lugumbo	Nkum (active 1955)		Moved for I members gate
			Ipuma	Kalolile	Sons of Bujinga and Bunikali. Younger sons than in Ipenda	Got land from
			Ndungwi		Younger brothers of Ipuma	Moved south
			Kihunde (junior section)	Mwakilaba	Sons of Kihunde	
			NJEEE	KAKUJU (old & fragile 1955)	Sons of Lugumbo	
			Mpunga	Mwakwilla	Younger sons of Lugumbo	
			Isolia	Mwakisheambe	Younger sons of Lugumbo	
			Lukwenge	Lyamdolo	Sons of Kitule	
			Ndaba	Nyamlenge	Sons of Kalinde	
			Ellod	Kamtule	New village	Colony in for
			Kilaba	Nkum (of Lugumbo)	New village	Colony in for

[facing p. 91; section A]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 OF MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM[1]

	Land	Number (Men or boys) 1955	Comments
622			
103			Widow of Mwaipopo live here
631			Not surviving
551	...ponga Moved for Ipoma	6	
			Not surviving
			Not surviving
	Moved for Lupando	8 (51 wives)	
	Moved for Ipoma		
	Moved at coming out of Mwenkuga II, but not again		
	...II	7 (22 wives)	
	...ne of		First built where Itiki is now. Driven out by Bujoge
			Chiefdom of Mwakipenile
		9	
			Disappeared by 1955
			Chiefdom of Mwakalule
		8 (30 wives)	Mwenkuguta now senior priest of country. 'Brought out' Mwanyika.
	...s of	10	Junior members including Kilaule moved to Lupando. 57 members in 1958.
	Moved for Lupando. Many members gone to forest.		Nsoso now headman of Kiloba, new village in forest.
	Got land from Bujoga		Akimu, son of Mwaipopo II, a former member, moved to forest.
	Moved southward		
			Sub-chief Likungulu
		19 (28 wives)	
		8	
			Mwakilwafi sub-chief
	Colony in forest	48	Akimu, a junior son of Mwaipopo II, was sent to watch over this colony. In 1953 Mwenkuguta was established as sub-chief of the area.
	Colony in forest	158	Possibly subdivided

[facing p.91; section B]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

643
622
103
631
551

		Kibonde (junior section)	*Mmakilaka*	Sons of Kibonde	
		NJESI	KAKUJU (old & fragile 1955)	Sons of Lupondo	
		Mpunga	Mwakatika	Younger sons of Lupondo	
		Isuba	Mwakabumbe	Youngest sons of Lupondo	
		Lukwego	Lyambelo	Sons of Kitule	
		Ndobo	Nyambege	Sons of Kabula	
		Kilosi	Katchule	New village	Colony in fore
		Kiloba	Nzuza (of Lugombo)	New village	Colony in fore
IV	Mwanyilu (177)	Lupondo	KILASILE MWANSASU	Sons of Igembe Married	Occupies site by parts of I and Lugomb out' of Mwaiz some member and some sout make room for members of Ig the headman, and Lugombe
		Nzunga	KILASILE MWANSASU	Section of Lupondo. Younger sons of Igembe and Lugombo. Married.	
		Isiki	KILASILE MWANSASU	Sons of Igembe and Lugombo some married, some c. 14	
		Ndaka	KILASILE MWANSASU	Sons of Igembe and Lugombo. Some married. 12 boys.	
		Bujisi	Paulikii Mwambepo	Sons of Ipoma. Mostly married.	Occupies the Itebe of gro split and has to the north then by Ipo moved some c at 'coming ou Busirkali II have also mov
		Punjula	Bulyumo Mwakasumbula	Sons of Kilbonde III	
		IRINGA	SIKAMBOMBO KIGULEWE	Sons of Njisi. Some married.	Occupies land pied by Njisi
		Mambo	SIKAMBOMBO KIGULEWE	Sons of Mpunga and Njisi	
		Kanda	SIKAMBOMBO KIGULEWE	Sons of Mambo and Mpunga. Younger brothers of Iringa. Ages 15-00 years.	
		Mlimbi	Batungulu Mwamsuala	Sons of Isuba	
		Punjula	Batungulu Mwamsuala	Sons of Isuba. Younger brothers of Mlimbi. Ages c. 10-15 yrs.	
		Kimili		Sons of Lukwego	
		Kabula		Sons of Ndobo	
		Nkaja	Mwanjalile	New village	Colony in for

[1] A more elaborate version of this table appeared in *Good Company*. Certain misspellings and errors
Capitals—senior village of senior headman of chiefdom.
Italics—dead.
Total No. of taxpayers (including migrant labourers) 1955: 833.

[Boxing p. 91; Section C]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

			Sub-chief Likonyela
643		12 (26 wives)	
622		8	
103			
631			Mwakibweli sub-chief
551			
	Colony in forest	48	Akimu, a junior son of Mwaipopo II, was sent to watch over this colony. In 1953 Mwabungulu was established as sub-chief of the area.
	Colony in forest	156	Possibly subdivided
	Occupies site previously held by parts of Bujege, Igembe, and Lugombo. At 'coming out' of Mwanyilu Bujege split, some members moving north, and some south, some west, to make room for Lupando. Some members of Igembe, including the headman, moved south, and Lugombo moved west.	20 (including Nsanga)	Kilasile first built in Katumba. Father was in Igembe. Born *c.* 1912. Made fire at Mwanyilu's 'coming out'. This village has a new name. It was originally called Mpuguso.
sons ried.			These Mwanyilu's mates. He first built here.
some		11	Christian village near school. Mwabungulu (178) first built here but moved to forest. Mwakagile (59) had occupied this site, then Mwaijonga built Itiki I on it.
		25	3 men of Bujege who had to move to make room for Lupando have built at one end of Ndola but this is irregular.
d.	Occupies the site first held by Itebe of generation I which split and has two tiny sections to the north and south, and then by Ipoma III which moved some distance to south at 'coming out' of Mwanyilu. Busirkali II and Bujenga II have also moved southward.		F. of Paulikl in Busirkali. Bujisi also called Ipoma. New name has scarcely been established.
			No son of Likonyela 'came out' with Mwanyilu.
	Occupies land formerly occupied by Njisi	29 (14 wives)	17 men away at work, 12 present. Sikambombo made fire at Mwanyilu's 'coming out'. His father was in Njisi.
		10	
		23	
			Also called Itoba
ses of			
			Names of villages of generation IV not ascertained.
			Names of villages of generation IV not ascertained.
	Colony in forest	156	New village established for second heir Mwabungulu, who is a sub-chief. Possibly subdivided.

Inequilibrium and errors have been corrected and the villages established in generation IV added.

[facing p. 91; section D]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 Kituli, and Kabula still remained somewhat detached. In generation IV the second heir, Mwabungulu (178), has moved out to the
631 forest and the area occupied and ruled by Mwaijonga and Mwai-
561 popo is still one, with a division between Lupando and Iringa. Kibonde is fully absorbed into Lupando, and Kituli and Kabula into Iringa—no descendants of Mwakipesile of Kibonde and Mwakabule of Kituli went through the 'coming out' with Mwanyilu as chiefs. Kibonde, Kituli, and Kabula are subdivided into age-villages of three generations, but these are not shown on the plan. They are spoken of by outsiders by the inclusive names.

To a European the most surprising fact about the age-organiza-
561 tion is that a young man of the ruling generation may still choose
428 to move into the homestead of his deceased father or elder brother. We knew one young man, who had been spoken of as a possible village headman at the coming out of Mwanyilu, but shortly before the 'coming out' he chose to move into the homestead of his deceased father in Lupondo village (where his father in turn had inherited) even though he might have inherited his father's wealth in wives and stock and returned to his own village of Masoko, after completing the ritual of death and inheritance. Our informants insisted that, though the young men might rule, the older generation were the more honoured, and in inheriting from his father this man was classified as a member of his father's generation. Nevertheless many young men do *not* choose to move into the village of the father or elder brother from whom they inherit, and the villages of old men decrease in size and finally disappear altogether.

The relation between kinship and territorial grouping cannot
602 easily be indicated by plans and genealogies for though in theory
361 each village consists of 'sons' of a village of the previous
166 generation (as shown in the table facing p. 91) there is con-
561 siderable movement from one village to another, and the members of any adult village usually prove to have come from a number of
631 different villages, though a boy's village consists of sons of adjoining villages. The table of members of three of the villages of Mwaipopo's chiefdom illustrates this (*vide* pp. 224-6). An analysis of genealogies showing where different members live gives much the same picture. Though the shortage of land in the coffee-growing chiefdoms of the hills and the rice-growing chiefdoms of the plain is tending to obliterate the age-village organization, the old

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

system is still the accepted form in Mwaipopo's chiefdom; the advantages of separating kinsmen in different villages are explicitly stated, and the contrast between the Nyakyusa and their neighbours in this respect emphasized. 'Certainly we do not live with kinsmen here but the Kinga do.' 'It is not good for a son to live close to his father, they will quarrel.' 'When we move to another village we consider friendship not kinship in selecting it.'

631 166 561 361 [183] [602]

(b) THE BALANCE BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND SECTIONS

The ritual cycle of the 'coming out' and the sacrifices in the groves helped to maintain a balance of power between generations, as well as between chiefs and commoners. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) in 1953 it was Mwabuputa, the senior village headman of his father, who took the leading part. He was described as 'the greatest man in the country' who 'brings out the chief' and his manner indicated that he was well aware of his power. During the reign of Mwaipopo (116) the power of his father's village headmen, Njobakosa and Ngulyo, was apparent at every ritual. Spiritual power was shared between chiefs and commoners, but exercised ideally by a virile chief of the ruling generation and the experienced headmen of the retired generation.

643 561 796 [554]

Those chosen as senior village headmen at the 'coming out' are commonly older than the young chief, but village headmen are thought of as surviving their chief—it is they who were responsible for smothering him, and performing the sacrifices in his grove. The headmanship is an *office* and so long as the office is necessary an incumbent is found for it, in the person of the heir of the original holder who is so closely identified with the deceased that most precise inquiry is often necessary to establish whether a given individual is the original holder, the succeeding heir, or a later heir, successor to the successor. The Ngulyo who officiated at the rituals in 1935 was the heir of the original Ngulyo (some said the *grandson*, not the son) and he was criticized by Kasitile as being 'a young man who knew nothing'. The principle, so familiar in Central Africa, of a perpetual office[1] emerges, among the

[622] [782] [554] [769]

[1] I. Cunnison, *Kinship and Local Organization on the Luapula*, Communications of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute No. 5 (1950), pp. 14-15; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), p. 122; A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, O.U.P. (1939), p. 94; 'Some Types of Family Structure among the Central Bantu, in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, p. 224; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, London (1911), p. 3. [113]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 Nyakyusa, when sacrifices are continued in the grove of a dead chief
561 such as Mwakisambwe (30), for an indefinite number of genera-
796 tions, and the heirs of his senior village headmen serve as his
[769] priests, taking the name of the first holder of the office. Most of the
[793] priests of Lubaga held perpetual titles of this sort. The conception of the *corporation sole* is familiar enough in the western tradition, but European observers in Africa are sometimes confused by the use of a personal name and the almost complete identification of each holder with his predecessors, as well as by the practice of treating certain kinship relationships as if they were offices.

Generation was determined among the Nyakyusa by associa-
561 tion with a chief. There was no name for those who 'came out'
796 together other than that of their chief, who was the focus of the
173 ritual. On the other hand, however, a 'coming out' concerned a
634 whole generation, and it could not be held out of season. If the
[611] heir died he was replaced by a brother, as were Mwaipopo I (115) and Mwankuga I (150). If a chief had no male heir of the right age in his senior house his daughter might represent an heir. For example, at the coming out of the sons of Mwaijonga, it was a *girl* Ijonga (114) who performed the leading part in the ritual which fell due before the birth of Mwaipopo I (115). When Mwaipopo I was born and grew up he assumed office, but he died young and was replaced by his younger brother without a further celebration. Because the 'coming out' was thus linked to the maturity of a whole generation we have felt some confidence in assigning approximate dates to the arrival of the heroes. The period between each 'coming out' we estimate at thirty to thirty-five years, though the higher figure is probably more nearly correct. There must in fact have been some flexibility in the timing of the 'coming out' to account for the differences in the number of generations of ruling chiefs in different segments of the lineage. Some of the differences may be due to errors (e.g. it is possible that 70 is an elder brother not the father of 98, and that a generation has been omitted between Mwakapeje (54) and Mwakage (75), but even where there is little possibility of error the number of generations does not always tally.

643 In theory a man always belongs to the generation succeeding
561 that of his father, irrespective of his age, provided he has not
622 inherited from a man of the previous generation and taken his status, but in practice, since men often have sons of very different

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ages, they sometimes build in villages of different generations. When it comes to the selection of village headmen, however, care is taken to ensure that they are indeed sons of men who came out with the previous chief, and a village like Katumba which comprised both younger brothers and sons of Mwankuga's generation breaks up, some members 'coming out' with Mwankuga's son, others acting as 'fathers'. Within a village all the members are equal subject to their headman, but a hierarchy of villages is clear. 561 643 622

The pre-eminence of the two senior village headmen of a chief is marked. They alone make fire with him at the 'coming out'. They alone are handed war tails with which to lead their men in battle. Each is responsible for one half of the country and a dispute not settled by the headman of the village of the defendant is reported to the senior headman in whose side of the country the village lies, and he brings it before the chief. Each senior headman has his own village, the two senior villages of the country, in which the royal ladies live; the senior wife married at the 'coming out' is established close to the senior village headman, the second wife close to the second senior headman. A chief may establish wives in a number of villages, and some at least of those he inherits from his father continue to live in his father's old homestead 'to sweep the graves', but his capitals (*ifitangalala*) are the two senior villages of the country in which his two senior wives and two senior village headmen live[1] and the names of the capitals are used not only for the senior villages but for the half sections of the generation they lead. The importance of the two senior headmen is apparent even when their generation has handed over political authority to their sons. At the sacrifices we have described Njobakosa and Ngulyo, heirs of the senior headmen of the chief Mwaijonga (82) officiated, and at the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) it was Mwambuputa and Kakuju his father's senior headmen who organized the ritual. 631 643 [293] [778]

Each village established at a 'coming out' is a clearly defined unit with its own land, and leader, and name, but villages are also segments of larger units, the half-section of the chiefdom under a senior headman, and the whole chiefdom under the leadership of 621 631 561

[1] Mwanyilu (177), though he had two senior headmen, established his two senior wives in *one* house, close to the house of Kilasile his most senior headman. This was explained as a temporary measure 'because they were young', but it is not the traditional pattern, and may be linked with the fact that the splitting of the country each generation is no longer accepted as the inevitable pattern.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the chief himself. The members of each village co-operate in some measure in cultivation and herding and they form a defensive group against attack 'by day and by night'—i.e. against armed raiders and witches.[1] But there is no great elaboration of ritual for single villages. Such village rituals as occur are connected with defence against witchcraft and involve driving out a supposed witch, or receiving back a member who has fled from fear of witchcraft, or protecting the village fields against witches.[2] Most communal rituals are organized on the basis of the chiefdom or group of chiefdoms, and villages or sections participate as segments of the chiefdom.

The principle of generation and that of section hold one another in check. All those who have 'come out' together have a strong sense of unity as opposed to the generations of their fathers and sons, but every generation is split into two sections each led by an heir of the chief, and these sections have a certain territorial solidarity. It is common in Africa for organized age-groups to cut across kinship and territorial groups. The Nyakyusa peculiarity lies in the territorial unity of age-sets which occupy villages, and the manner in which the fissiparous tendencies within a chiefdom have a constitutional outlet in the rivalry between the sections of a ruling generation which become independent at the 'coming out' of the next generation.

The combination of the hereditary and selective principles of leadership among the Nyakyusa is also somewhat different from that among their neighbours. With many Central African people the heir to the holder of the office of village headman or chief is *selected*, and the most capable member of a given lineage or lineage segment appointed.[3] Among the Nyakyusa succession is precisely defined and there is no selection of a suitable heir except to the supreme and greatly feared office of 'divine king', but the selective principle is given full scope in the 'catching' of leaders for the young men's villages at every 'coming out'. It is this combination of the hereditary and selective principles which binds together chiefs and commoners and successive generations. The rules of

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 44-66, 91-127.

[2] *op. cit.*, pp. 52-4, 109 ff., 154-6, 270-4.

[3] I. Cunnison, 'Headmanship and Ritual of Luapula Villages', *Africa*, xxvi (1956), p. 11; M. G. Marwick, 'The Social Context of Cewa Witch Belief', *Africa*, xxii (1952), pp. 219-22; V. Turner, 'Ndembu Village Structure', *Africa*, xxv (1955), pp. 123-4; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), pp. 157-63.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

inheritance ensure that a limited number of young men are absorbed into the senior generation and live with the older men, sharing their activities and from time to time holding office as headmen or priests of that generation, and the selection in each generation of young men who are *not* the sons of village headmen, or chiefs, or headmen of the past generation, ensures that commoners without office are constantly recruited to the hierarchy of rulers. In short, power is distributed.

(c) RITUAL AND SECULAR BONDS

As in so many societies, economic and ritual links extended, traditionally, further than political links.[1] Selya was dependent upon BuKinga for iron and the Kinga came to fruitful Selya to pray for fertility. The priests who came to pray brought the hoes. The many independent chiefdoms of Selya and the Mbaka valley acknowledged the spiritual overlordship of the Lwembe by sending sacrifices to him, and it was through the network of hereditary priests like Kasitile, Mwamakunda, Mwalukuta, and Nyama of Selya, and the Kinga priests Kikungubeja, Nsyanigwa, Kyamba Kitali, and Silobwike that wider bonds were maintained. Mwaipopo (116) when he was granted a Court which gave him the secular leadership of Selya, failed to make any acknowledgement of Lwembe's traditional power, and it was Kasitile who later urged him to do so. The western chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa still buy medicines and bark-cloth from the Ndali to the west, and have done so for many generations, but no common ritual links them as it does Selya and the plain with BuKinga. The trade was of lesser importance than that to the east, for it does not seem to have included iron, though the Nyiha who share a common culture with the Lambya, the western neighbours of the Nyakyusa, are known to have been skilled smiths.[2] With the Sangu to the

[1] cf. E. Colson, 'The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia' in *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa* (ed. Colson and Gluckman).

A comparison with the frontier in West and South Africa where economic and religious expansion compelled the establishment of Government is instructive. Cf. W. K. Hancock, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs*, vol. ii, part ii, pp. 162-8.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between the Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, vi (1890), p. 289. Elton's suggestion that some of the Nyakyusa iron came from the west is discounted by Cotterill. J. F. Elton, *The Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa* (1879), p. 371 and map, cf. J. Thompson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back*, vol. i, p. 272.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631 north the Nyakyusa were continually at war; they did not trade
782 or pray with them. Thus we conclude that participation in a
[721] common ritual is, in the Nyakyusa case, directly linked with a common origin and essential trade.

643 The divine kings, Lwembe and Kyungu, were regarded as having power over certain areas, a power closely linked with
[789] rainfall. Indeed, one informant argued that the chiefs living
[782] around Masoko had never sent sacrifices to Lubaga, 'because when it rains at Lubaga the rain does not come as far as Masoko'. He
[821] was mistaken in his facts—the chiefs of Masoko did at one time send to Lubaga as Mwambete (162), chief at Masoko, himself admitted—but the argument points to a conception of supernatural power tied to a rainfall area. This notion was not, however, applied consistently.

643 The balance between secular and mystical power has altered
173 during the past ten generations. The founding heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, came as conquerors and must surely have led their men personally; but early in the history of Ngonde the Kyungu was secluded, and power was exercised almost exclusively by the nobles (*vide supra*, pp. 40-46); and the Lwembe also was, at one period, 'not seen by ordinary men' and led a life hedged about with taboos. There is sharp contrast in Nyakyusa tradition between the active chiefs who were warriors, and arbitrators, and worked hard in their fields[1] and the 'divine king' who lived in seclusion. As we have seen, the chiefs often delegated ritual functions, with the taboos involved, to a junior kinsman such as Mwamukinga (44) or Mwakihaba (45) (*vide* pp. 79-81, 114) whose heirs succeeded to the office. It is even possible that the
[178] first Lwembe at Lubaga (Mwakalebela 19) took over ritual functions from his senior brother, Kalesi (18).[2] The present tendency is for the development of secular power and its separation from mystical power. The Kyungu is no longer a god but an administrator: the heir of the Lwembes sits as an elected representative of chiefs on the Local Council. In the traditional
182 Nyakyusa society ritual played an essential part in maintaining
177 the balance between generations, sections, and social strata, and in

[1] In 1955 a young chief was bitterly criticized by his men because he 'never had a hoe in his hands' whereas his father and grandfather had (to our personal knowledge) been diligent in hoeing.

[2] But according to one excellent informant, Mwakisambwe (30) lived secluded while Mwakilima (31) 'fed men'—i.e. entertained.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

linking scattered political units, but that function is disappearing with the growth of trade and a centralized political authority. District Commissioner, Rural and District Councils, and Co-operatives supplant the 'divine king', and limit the power of local chiefs much more narrowly than he ever did.

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177

9: Wilson
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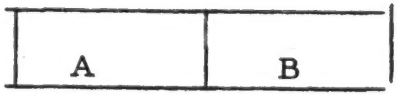
FN17 Ngonde
Nyakyusa

Chart showing position of sections of plan of Mwaipopo's Chiefdom. (Facing p. 100)



9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Note

621 It should be realized that (i) the names of the two senior villages of a
631 generation are well known and clear cut, but those of subordinate
561 villages are more fluid. Furthermore a village often has subdivisions,
distinguished by its members by name, but known to outsiders only by
[103] the general village name. (ii) A village may acquire a new name at the
[796] 'coming out'; the senior village of Mwanyilu's generation used to be called 'Mpuguso' but 'came out' as 'Lupando'. (iii) Some villages die out altogether, e.g. Kyemo II. (iv) Some villages straddle generations. Katela in 1955 is in the same sort of position as Katumba in 1935. It includes eight sons of Mpunga who belong to generation III, but also fourteen sons of men of Masoko who 'came out' with Mwanyilu. In the case of Katumba the members who were sons of men of generation III moved to younger villages and 'came out' with Mwanyilu, among them being his senior headman Kilasile, a man of over forty. But Kilasile's contemporaries who were sons of men of generation II could not 'come out' with Mwanyilu, at least not as a group—and the members of Katumba attended the 'coming out' as 'fathers'. Boys join a village of contemporaries but may move later to a village of younger men who are of their own structural generation.

At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu and Mwabungulu five village headmen were 'caught' and secluded with their chiefs. They represented five clear-cut villages. Kilasile and Sikambombo, Mwanyilu's two senior headmen who made fire are leaders of Lupando and Iringa respectively; Pauliki and Batungulu their juniors are leaders of
[622] Bujisi (or Ipoma) and Mfumbi (or Isuba), and Mwanjotile the single headman of the junior heir, Mwabungulu, has his own village of Nkuyu established on newly settled land in the forest. The young men of Kibonde were included under Kilasile's authority, and those of Kituli and Kabula under Sikambombo's. The names Lupando and Iringa are well known as those of sections of Mwanyilu's chiefdom, but the names Bujisi and Mfumbi are not: the young men of these villages still use the names of their fathers' villages, Ipoma and Isuba, though there is a clear territorial separation between fathers and sons. Taxes
[651] are collected under the names of Igembe, Ipoma, Kibonde, Njisi, Isuba, Kituli, and the three forest villages, Kilosi, Kiloba, and Nkuyu.

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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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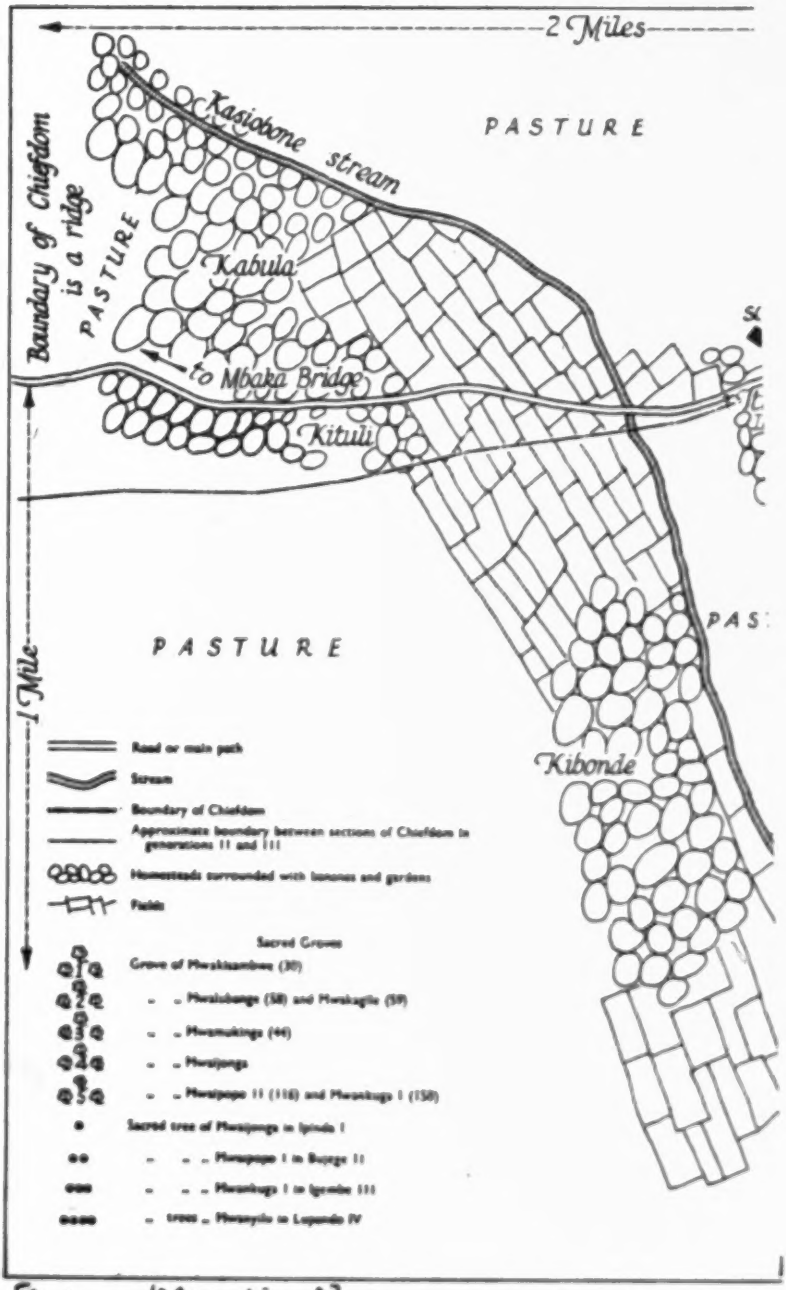

[facing p. 100; section A]

PLAN OF MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

POPO'S CHIEFDOM (C 24) IN 1955 [facing p. 100; section B]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VII

CLEANSING THE COUNTRY

769 SACRIFICES to the heroes and the shades of the chiefs are holy and private—only a handful of priests and chiefs may enter the groves and the details of the rituals are not discussed with other people. But there are other celebrations in which everyone 796 participates; these are the rituals for cleansing the community— 783 'throwing out the rubbish' (*ukujola ikikungu*)—more specifically the *ashes* from all the hearths.

In Ngonde the cleansing is organized for the whole kingdom, from Mbande, but among the Nyakyusa each chiefdom acts independently. Traditionally, we were told, the *ukujola ikikungu* was an annual celebration, observed at the 'new year', after the break of the rains, but it could also take place if there were much sickness in the country, or plague, or prophecies of evil to come. It was celebrated (in an attenuated form and by a section of the community only) in Ngonde in July 1937, to cleanse the country of a plague of rats, and in September of the same year a somewhat similar ritual was performed in Porokoto's chiefdom because a [787] fearful omen had been seen—a ground hornbill had eaten a [178] chicken. The annual celebrations had been dropped both in Ngonde and BuNyakyusa before 1935.

As has been shown in the *Rituals of Kinship* the Nyakyusa believe [769] that too close an association with the shades is dangerous; all the [755] family rituals are designed to drive them away, to drive them out of the bodies of the mourners, or menstruating girls, or parents of twins; and the purpose of 'throwing out the ashes' in all the homesteads is essentially the same. The shades 'come to warm 783 themselves' at the hearths of their descendants, they 'bring sickness [775] to the hearths' and so the old ashes are cleared out and new fire is lighted. The phrase *ukujola ikikungu* is used in Ngonde for clearing out the litter (*ulufumbo*) after a burial, or an initiation ritual, and for shaving after a ritual, as well as for clearing the ashes from all the hearths in the country.

[754] It is also thought that domestic fires are contaminated by [775] witches who may have cooked the human flesh they steal over their victims' own fires. In Ngonde it was the connexion between

[p. 102]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the shades and the hearths which was stressed; in Porokoto's 783
country people talked mostly of the witches; but it seemed clear [754]
that both conceptions were present when men murmured: 'The [775]
hearth bricks are bad' (*amafigo mabibi*) and they sought to cleanse
them by clearing out the old fire and lighting new. 'To clear out
the ashes means they take away all that dirt, the dirt which the
witches have brought and the shades; it is the cause of illness.'
When witches are thought to be active there is also a public
complaint, and a public warning is given 'to whom it may
concern' to desist.[1] This occurred in the ritual after the ground
hornbill had eaten the chicken. Above all, men must admit their [578]
anger to one another: 'they fight that the homesteads may be [681]
peaceful'. The theme so familiar in Nyakyusa rituals—that
quarrels must be confessed if they are to be composed—recurs
yet again. Though we distinguish the rituals for 'cleansing the
country' from sacrifices, on the ground that the whole com-
munity participates in the 'cleansing' while the sacrifice is esoteric,
the two are closely linked, and a sacrifice commonly precedes or
follows the cleansing. We turn now to the detailed accounts of
celebrations for 'cleansing' in Ngonde and among the Kukwe.

(*a*) THE RATS

In Ngonde they used to clear out the ashes at the new year, at the 783
first hoeing (in December) after 'the break of the rains'. They feared 796
that death and disease would spread through the land if they continued [758]
living with the old fires, that the shades in the earth, both the shades [761]
of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry. Let them drive the shades
away and hoe in peace. They always remembered to do so each new
year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually,
they never forgot. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to
clear out the ashes; and then they would hoe in peace. And at other
times, too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the [787]
ashes again. 'It is to drive away the shade with the sickness that he
brings. We throw out the ashes and firebrands because he has come to
warm himself over the fire in our houses, we throw out the pots and
winnowing baskets because he has come to see us eating; let him go
there (to the grove) and eat what he asked for—we say the shades ask
for food—let him eat hens, perhaps a sheep. We say the shades bring [775]
sickness to the fire, hence we throw out the ashes and make new fire
with a drill.'

The nobles of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave [643]

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 109-13.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 the order to clear out the ashes; messages were sent to the great
796 chiefs and the senior territorial nobles of the plain, and they told
[643] their juniors. A sacrifice was made in one of the sacred groves of the Kyungus and all fires in the whole Ngonde plain were put out. And then

> all the chiefs from every country near Mbande and the nobles and all the village headmen and all the ordinary men and women, too, went to Kyimbwe where we threw away the sickness of all the country.

At Kyimbwe, which is the crossroads in the bush, they threw away the ashes of their old fires, and some of the pots and baskets in which food is served; while those *few* people who could not get to Kyimbwe threw them away from their own houses on the same day as the others. At Kyimbwe new fire was made with a
[372] fire-drill by the nobles of Ngonde who

> ran with it without looking back and the people danced alongside them and speared one another! . . . They said, 'Let us dance, let us fight that the homesteads may be peaceful'. . . . 'Let us throw out the ashes that death may leave the homesteads and they be at peace.' It is to bring out war from within (*ulusuye*).

The symbolism is the same as in the rituals of kinship when kinsmen gather to admit their quarrels and press one another to speak out, so that they may cleanse themselves of anger.

The new fire was distributed to the whole plain in order. Great chiefs and senior nobles took it first and passed it to their juniors, chiefs passed to village headmen, and in each group the common people got it from their own ruling noble or their own village headman.

In July 1937, while we were visiting Ngonde, there was a
[731] plague of rats[1] which threatened the food supply, and Bungulu,
[136] the wife of a chief and well known as a prophetess, went into a
[791] trance and revealed that the rats were caused by the anger of the
[787] previous Kyungu and could be got rid of only by a ritual 'throwing out the rubbish' and sacrifice. Her husband reported the matter to Mulwa, the premier noble of Ngonde, to whom the present Kyungu, Peter—at one time a Church member—had long since handed over all responsibility for communal rituals. Mulwa called four of the leading chiefs who were pagan and a number of

[1] Nothing new in Ngonde. Lord (then Captain) Lugard suffered from them in 1888: F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), vol. i, p. 127. In 1927 the country swarmed with rats: in our own camp we killed 70 to 100 each night.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

commoners, and they went together to the grove of Mwangalaba, the last Kyungu (elder brother of Peter), with a white hen and sacrificed it there, and prayed saying: 783 796

Mwangalaba go thou to Mwakasungula your father and let him go to Mwangonde, and he to Mwagemo and he to Kipesa and he to Mpeta and he to Mwendemange and he to Kyalala and he to Syola and he to the Kyungu who lived at Mano and he to Ngulube (9) and Lyambilo (12). May he stand by us, may we sleep, may the rats disappear and illness also, may we sleep. Then when we had finished the invocation [I quote Mulwa] we extinguished the fires in all our houses; in the houses of the chiefs, and of Kyungu's great wife Namwilan'ombe, and of us commoners, we threw water on the ashes, but each took some ash, and a firebrand to the crossroads at Kyimbwe where we collected them all and left them to rot; there we threw away the rats saying: 'Let them fly away to Ngulube (9), let them fly away with the wind, let us sleep.' Then we ran to the pasture land to make new fire with a drill. We all took fire there in the bush, each a firebrand and lighted new fires in our own houses and in the house of the Kyungu, that is of his great wife. We arranged it with our wife Namwilan'ombe, because Kyungu had said 'Work with your husbands there'.

'Throwing away the rats' consisted in enclosing a live rat in two winnowing baskets, opening them at Kyimbwe, and flourishing them first in one direction and then in another, releasing the rat in the process. This had been specifically ordered by Bungulu, the prophetess.

(8) THE GROUND HORNBILL

In the country of Pweakoto (49 K) there was much illness and many deaths (some, at least, from typhoid) during the dry season of 1937, and when a ground hornbill—always a bird of ill-omen among the Nyakyusa—mysteriously attacked a chicken in Syokela village, everyone was horrified. Mwamunda, a village headman, explained what had happened: [164] [165] 787 [525]

The headman of Syokela came with two men to Bwilile (senior village headman of his side) and said: 'Tell the chief that a ground hornbill has eaten a fowl at our place. We ask what this means. And also we do not sleep, we are ill.' Then Bwilile told me and we went together to the chief who said: 'I have heard, let us discuss it.' So we gathered at Nyani's and the headman of Syokela stood up and said: 'My fathers, and friends, and children, and you chiefs, we have come to ask: have you ever before heard of a ground hornbill eating a fowl? (With an air

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 of intense questioning.) We have not, but perhaps you have?' Then we all denied having heard of such a thing; we had no idea what the portent meant and said: 'Let us consult an oracle.' The chief agreed. . . . Then men went to the doctor and the oracle said: 'It is because you have not celebrated at Mwakan'ata's (90 K) place since his death;[1] you must kill a cow and clear the grass at his place. This [775] ground hornbill is your father Mwakan'ata; seek a cow and celebrate and pray, then you will see what will happen.' They told the chief this and he said: 'Must I find a cow then?' But it is we village headmen 783 who have done wrong because some of us said: 'What's a cow for? Let us just pray; why should we throw away a cow?' Others of us said: 796 'Yes, let a cow be found', but the chief listened to those who opposed killing a cow. So we went and prayed without eating anything.

The ritual was put off three times; the first time the people were summoned men of one village had not come; the second time men of another; the third time a headman was missing and also the women had not been called. Finally, on the morning of 28th September, men and women and children gathered on the pasture land just beyond Ilolo village (where we lived). The men and boys sat, with their headmen, by villages, each forming a segment of the great circle round the chief, while the women all crowded together some distance behind him. . . . 'We all go, except the Christians.'

The chief Porokoto, rather nervous in his manner, stood up and addressed the company after one of the headmen had said pointedly: 'We are all women, a man stands in the middle, it is he who speaks.' For women never pray, blowing out water, and commoners in this situation do not pray, only the chief.

PORORONO: The reason I have called you together is this: there is no peace in the country; there is much cold, many people are shivering with fever, let us drink water and drive away Kyala. This concerns all the homesteads; the cold [i.e. fever] is finishing us. What do you say Mwamunda? [to the headman].
MWAMUNDA: Thank you! We rejoice that you chiefs have remembered. May we sleep well, may there not be illness, may the cold pass, may the children grow well, and all the crops. Indeed we are all in great trouble. Kyala help us, may we be pure (*ajisala*)!

Then the chief called on one village headman after another to speak; and his elder brother, Mwasalemba, also spoke.

[1] Porokoto was already suspicious of pagan ritual and has since become a Christian.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

MWAPULA: Indeed, may the illness not be great, may the children not cry by night, may the cattle increase, and the fields be fertile, and the fowls also increase. May children sleep. Our fathers always confessed in the house. Now we are shocked at what is happening. 783 796

MWANTIEWA: We say thank you, chiefs, you do not forget us. Let the sickness pass and go away, may the cattle sleep, and you women, may the children grow. May the fields be fertile; may there not be envy of one another. We are sorry because there is much illness. Our fathers say 'Why have the chiefs turned round?'

MWAMULENGA: Chief, we beg you, we thank you, indeed there is sickness. Is there anyone who says in their quarter there is much sickness (more than elsewhere)? Do we say something about sickness?

MWAMUNDA: No, Mwampiki, all of us who have come here are sick.

KILOMOO: Yes, we are all rotting.

Mwalkambo commenting on this explained:

If there is sickness one may admit and say, 'It is I, I was angry on account of such and such.' Yes, indeed, they confess openly, because he who sees in his belly (—knows in his heart) that 'It is I who have done this' trembles when his fellows speak many words thinking, 'Perhaps they have seen me.' So he confesses. When he confesses he escapes, they only grumble at him saying, 'Don't do it again.' If someone admits the others say, 'It is he, but we have punished him.' I think that even in the old days he was not driven out, because they hope that, if he has confessed, the illness he caused will go away.

MWABALEMBA: Have you ever before heard of a hornbill eating a hen? We are horrified. Even the prophets did not speak of such an event. [787]

ANOTHER: Indeed, it has never before happened, we are glad that our chiefs have taken the initiative with these words.

ANOTHER: For this custom is old, it began long ago in the time of our fathers. It is the custom to give hope in the homesteads, that we may grow strong.

MWAMPIKI: Always, if the chief is ill it is said, 'Where are you, oh people?' All the homesteads watch over the chief when he is ill. [Mwalkambo commenting: It is said that people have the work of watching over their chief that no one may bewitch him, hence when he is ill they reproach people saying: 'Where are you?' Let the old customs be observed now (implying that they have left all the old customs and hence there is much sickness in the country).] [754] [177]

ANOTHER: There are some who say 'Let so-and-so die that I may move into his homestead. Let envy which brings sickness also go away.'

ANOTHER: If sickness appears let us tell the chief that we may all express astonishment together, asking where the illness has come from, then it will be light, if we all grumble together. [Mwalkambo commenting: [753]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 They say that complaining drives away illness, even though the witches
796 are not seen, and do not confess saying, 'It is we' yet they are ashamed
thinking 'People have caught me' and they desist.]
[753] MWAMULENDA: Catch anyone you see in your dreams. If someone is ill should we not all gather?
MWAMUNDA: Countrymen, give thanks that there are the chiefs.

And the company assented.

Then there was a discussion about the direction in which the chief should spit and people run. One pointing towards Tukuyu said: 'We always looked that way.' Another said: 'We always reached the boundary.'

Mwafula (a village headman) came with his young son carrying
[778] a calabash of medicated water. Porokoto took a sip and spat out eastward, 'in the direction of the grove of Kabale, to the shades.'

Mwamulenga shouted: 'Now we have prayed, the sickness is
[755] finished, we are present and watch over the homesteads. If we see anyone bringing sickness we will catch him and crush him on the sleeping mat.' There was a roar from the crowd, then all rushed yelling 300 yards or so eastward to the edge of the fields, and back again. Porokoto ran a little way with them, his malacca cane raised, then stopped, looking self-conscious, and strolled homeward. Everyone else scattered, chattering and laughing. On the way back we were greeted: 'You have prayed! Did you catch witches? Whom did you catch?'

Mwasalemba, senior brother of Porokoto and an expert in ritual, added one or two points in explanation:

In the old days we threw out the ashes, but we have not yet done so this time; we begin with the ritual on the pasture land and throw out the ashes afterwards. In the old days we threw them out of all the houses and put in fresh fire, new ash, saying 'Thou Kyala, thou shade,
[775] receive us, let us sleep here, we throw out the ashes, let sickness be
[753] slight.' Those who are angry now are our shades—those of the chiefs—they have gathered with the shades of the commoners. The medicated water means: 'Thou shade, you fathers, may we sleep, use this water for us if we are ill, may we be strong.' The water goes to the shades with these words.

Q.: Why must the women come?

M.: They call the war cry, we run swiftly, the women follow calling the war cry which means, 'You shade, we call the war cry for you that we may be pure—without anger—in our bellies, make us strong also, thou shade, may we also be pure in our bellies, this is your war cry . . .' The running and calling the war cry is to mock at him, to drive him

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

away. We run with him, we leave him over there, we return and bring him in. We drive him off because he brought sickness; when we have done so we return and bring him again that we may be pure—without anger—and he also may be pure. We are with him all the time; we never throw him away. We always have the old one in the belly, an infant is he, and if I die I am with him, this earth (pointing to the earth of his homestead) never goes away, it is he. So if the crops fail when I have hoed I say: 'The shade is angry, this earth.' (*Pupo abala ndinagwe kwila umude, umdakale ja jaja, ndinaga ngbalile ndinagwe—umfu ngo gwijinaga ndinamo ja jaja—pupo langa ndomile ndinti 'umpaka abalele umfu ngo' ko fabile.*) Yes, in the death ritual also we drive him away with his sickness, and bring him back, always the old one.

After the ritual all have normal intercourse with their wives, but the night before there was no intercourse. How should we do evil on the mats when we have not yet blessed the shade? But when we have blessed him then all of us lie on our mats again. To lie together is to overstep the ritual, the shades are shocked and say, 'How can you do this? You agreed yesterday to bless the shades and you do this, why?' Then later, if a woman bears a child which cries at night, people say, 'You overstepped the ritual, pray for the child.' Or perhaps the woman is barren. We liken the water and the war cry to what we do on the mats—the water is the shade's and the war cry is his, it is his work. When we have spoken to the shade he comes into my belly—then I come together with my wife again.

This interpretation by Mwaalomba indicates that the blowing out of water is a symbol of omission. 'It is what men do.' It has been shown in *Rituals of Kinship* that the shades are driven out of the body in the sex act; that the shade and women are identified; and that driving off the shade is a condition of health and sanity. The fact that blowing out water is also a symbol of confusion—admission of anger, 'bringing out all that is within'—and supplication does not invalidate Mwaalomba's interpretation, for the same act is symbolized in many ways and the same symbol expresses events which are distinct, but associated. As in so many societies, abstinence is felt to be a necessary preparation for the celebration of a ritual, and the union, real or symbolic, of husband and wife the necessary conclusion.[1] All this is intelligible only in terms of the Nyakyusa ideas about procreation discussed in *Rituals of Kinship*. The shade is the vital force in men

[1] cf. I. Gunsilius, 'Blacksmithing and Ritual of Lungulu Villages', *Africa*, xxxi (1961), pp. 3-13; H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (1927), vol. i, pp. [illegible]; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (1911), pp. [illegible]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and women, it is procreative power, fertility. That power is constantly expelled from the belly but returns again and by that expulsion and return men live.

There was a great deal of criticism from the conservatives because no sacrifice had been made.

MWAMUNDA: Now people are talking much saying, 'We have abandoned that which they did formerly, we are doing something else.' People have many dreams (gesture hand on hand as if heavy with anxiety), many say: 'I have dreamed of the dead, they told me to sacrifice a cow, to pray, we did not pray properly, that is useless, it will not effect anything.' So we have told the chief saying: 'Let us kill a cow at the grave of Mwakan'atu,' he has agreed, but the cow has not yet come.

Formerly, on the night following the day of the prayer we should have eaten the sacrificial cow, the chief would have killed two cows and the headmen from different villages would have come and eaten by night, and drunk beer provided by the chief, in the house of the senior wife of the chief. . . . They ate a little meat, raw, the rest they roasted. Then in the morning, when they had eaten and were satisfied, they would go to clear out the house, to throw out the ashes, and to pray, as we prayed now, and to make new fire by friction in the pasture land. The village headman made fire with medicine which the chief gave him, the name of the medicine is Mlamba, it's a tree. To throw out the ashes means to clear out all the filth, the filth which the witches and the shades have brought to us—the filth that is sickness. . . . Do not the witches eat meat at the fire? Human flesh? Some roast at your fires your bodies which they have seized, some go home with the human flesh to their own fires, hence comes the filth of the ashes. The village headmen eat the sacrificial meat at night with the shades, they celebrate for them with the blood which goes beneath. . . .

If the chief has done something wrong, then those above [i.e. the village headmen] pray to those beneath saying, 'Let us help one another to punish him who has strayed, but we do not wish that he should die, let him be ill; perhaps then he will seek something to nourish us.' Again the night before the throwing out of the ashes they combine their anger and say: 'You beneath, this our child (the chief) has remembered us, there is no accusation against him now, may sickness go away from the country, and children sleep, let us all sleep and the cows calve. We greet those beneath.' In my childhood I was repeatedly surprised at night when my father came in, he had a little parcel of meat. 'Where have you been?' I asked. 'We have been praying.' But since I grew up and became a village headman, and was recorded as such [by the administration] we have never seen sacrificial meat.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Mwandisi made a great deal of the fact that at the 'throwing out of the rubbish' the village headmen ate meat raw. 783 796

Formerly . . . we threw away the ashes and charred brands . . . that is to drive away the shades who warm themselves over the hearth in the house; they bring us sickness, let them warm themselves over there in the long grass! Also in the long grass there we killed meat, and the priests ate it raw: no one saw them doing that there in the long grass; we went by day with drums, people from all the homesteads, a moving multitude . . . then we came home . . . the priests remained with their wives, they threw away their bark-cloths, they cut off morsels of meat and ate them raw. Because the priests are witches it is they who ate raw meat before we chiefs came, the priests are witches. . . . The witches and shades gather and bring sickness together, we kill a cow in the grove, we drive them away. No, they do not eat raw meat in the grove, they cook it. But at the capital if the chief has killed a cow for men to eat the priests eat meat raw. We have seen them. I, Mwandisi, have seen Mwajole and Kalambo the senior village headmen eating raw meat at my place and my wives have seen them also. [262] [753] [793]

'Yes', said one of his wives, 'we saw them and we ran away saying: "Well! Fancy doing it openly!"' Mwandisi continued:

The senior village headmen are witches, children of those who ate raw food long ago. Some village headmen only rush to eat a cow we have killed, but some go to eat a person; these are the witches who eat raw meat! [754]

The function of a chief is to feed his men on beef, and in doing so he placates the witches who are commoners and who, like their forefathers, prefer their meat raw. If they do not get beef then the witches eat men.[1] [643]

(c) SMALLPOX

The prayer and 'clearing out of the rubbish', traditionally celebrated before an approaching epidemic, was described by an elderly Christian, Filombe. It illustrates very clearly the combination of practical precaution—isolation—and magical protection, and also the idea that sickness was brought into the country by witches. 783 796 753

When the chief had heard that smallpox was coming, or dysentery, he said, 'Let us pray'. Before my baptism I saw it, in the country of the

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 90-9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

796 Penja chief, Mwalukasa. He called all his people because he heard that
783 smallpox was coming and said: 'Let us pray.' And he called his fellow
chiefs, those of the same lineage, and said: 'Let this illness not come,
753 may it go to other chiefs. . . . Listen! I am the chief! We have heard
that smallpox is approaching, who is here who rejoices at his approach?
Who is here who wishes that it should kill us?'

THE CHIEFS: We, we do not rejoice that it is coming, we reject it, chief Mwalukasa, may it pass by this homestead.

THE COMMONERS: And we also reject it, may it pass by our homesteads.

MWALUKASA: And I, I reject it, may smallpox not come into our country. If there be one who has relatives in a chiefdom where there is smallpox and they come to call him to a funeral let them stay at a distance, and not sleep here, let him not go near until the illness has passed by, at the end of the year. If you witches go to fetch it, you will kill your
[754] fellows with whom you are chatting now. You will not enjoy my company or build with me, the chief, if you go and bring in smallpox and kill your fellows. We pray that it may pass. [For it is believed in this country that the witches go to bring in illness, or wild animals, from a distance.]

THE COMMONERS: Yes, indeed, may it pass by.

MWALUKASA: If you go to bury a brother in a country in which there is smallpox stand afar off, tie the cow you bring to a tree and call to them: 'Here is my cow for killing, come and take it.' Take your cow, but do not go into the homestead.

And the people did as he said. Then he told them to get ready for the ritual. He took his calabash cup and three other chiefs with
[769] calabash cups followed him. They blew water and prayed to Kyala and the shades. Then the people were gathered together; and the chiefs, led by Mwalukasa, ran round facing each group in turn and blowing out water towards them; the men held their shields in front of them and when the chiefs blew they shook their shields violently, as if fighting.

When all was finished then Mwalukasa said: 'When you go home,
[372] throw out the ashes and the fires; all make new fire with drills.' And they all did this.

Finally he had bamboos planted with medicine on the main roads between BuPenja and BuKukwe and BuPenja and BuNyiha. No one
[755] ill with smallpox, or who had lived in contact with smallpox, was allowed to pass, unless he had been ill and recovered. I saw the one bamboo clump on the boundary of Nyiha and Penja country. No one passed it, it was very fearsome (*lusiye fje*).

As in cultivation there was a combination of ritual and science.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(d) THE WILD PIG

Another sort of cleansing, unorganized, but concerning groups of neighbours, not kinsmen, is the 'blessing one another' (*ukusajana*) which takes place if a pig-hunt fails and quarrelling between the hunters is suspected to be the cause. It was described by a Christian, who had called his pagan neighbours to help him in tracking down a pig, which he had wounded during the previous night in his maize garden. It eluded them, hour after hour, though they were close upon it.

783
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224
[578]

The neighbours began to think that the pig was sent by the shades (*sili nemindu*)—they meant themselves. So they stopped hunting and gathered together to express their anger, and they said: 'Our fathers built together and drank beer together, why should this pig trouble us so? We don't suspect our friend who is a Christian for he has shown that he has no quarrel with us. Had he been angry he would not have called us to hunt with him. But if one of the rest of us has a quarrel with his fellow let him speak out, that we may all be free of anger (*tuje belu*) and seize the pig, for if we think hard thoughts about one another we shall not have strength to take the pig.' All said that they were in friendship with their fellows, so first one and then another took his spear and . . . laid it on the ground and said: 'I am without anger (*Une ndimuelu itolo*).' All of them did this. One spoke to his fellow and said: 'Perhaps you are angry over that quarrel we had over beer?' But he replied, 'No.' Then the first man took up his spear from the ground and said, 'Father help us to catch this pig, if there was a quarrel, forgive, do not think of that with which I caused you to be angry. We bless one another, we are without anger.' Then all the others did the same, and they set off again to hunt.

This account, and the commentary of Mwaikambo on it, made it plain that the true translation of *belu* in such a context is 'without anger'. The communal rituals in which a whole chiefdom, or a group of neighbours, participate all have this one end, the cleansing of the group of quarrels by their open expression and explicit rejection.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VIII

RAIN-MAKING AND 'SPRINKLING THE HOMESTEADS'

789 Two activities which are closely linked with sacrifice at the groves of chiefs, but which are distinguished from them because they consist in the manipulation of medicines, rather than prayers and oblations, are 'rain-making' and 'sprinkling the homesteads' to ensure fertility of the soil.

(a) RAIN MAGIC

Rain-makers (*abapelafula*) are men who use perforated instru-
791 ments called 'rain' (*ifula*) to produce rain or sunshine. The heroes were believed to create rain by the virtue in their own bodies, but the Kyungu also had a much prized instrument of iron, perforated
[778] 'like a mouth organ', and several of the chiefs had perforated stones which were used to 'make rain'. In most cases the care of them was delegated to a junior kinsman, a commoner, or (in Ngonde) even a slave, but often the office became hereditary and rain-makers were men of considerable power. Such was Kasitile whose grandfather (44), a younger brother of the chief Mwamukinga (43), had been entrusted with his rain stones. The Kyungu was thought to control the rain in the whole of the Ngonde plain, the Lwembe in an area less clearly defined, but which included Selya, BuKinga, and parts of the Nyakyusa plain, Kyala in the eastern portion of the Nyakyusa plain, and parts of BuKinga and BuKisi. Chiefs were credited with making local rain, in their own countries.

789 The technique of 'making' rain was to seal the holes in the
778 perforated instruments with ointment and immerse them in water.

The rain instrument that helped Kyungu was called Mulima. Its holes were its eyes. If they were empty it would be empty in the sky above also, there would be no clouds; if some were full then there would be a few clouds, if all were full then there would be many clouds and rain. If it were raining and he put it in a tree so that its eyes looked up, then the sun would shine. . . . If he opened its eyes that they might be empty and put it in a tree so that it looked up then the clouds dried up above, the sky also became empty.

[p. 114]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The imagination of the Nyakyusa doctor who invented this magic was near enough to that of Shakespeare to be intelligible to an Englishman. The sun is an 'eye'. Clouds may close it. Holes in a rain instrument are also 'eyes' and if these are closed the 'eye of heaven' will also shut—with clouds. 789 778

The Kyungu seems to have kept Mulima (which was only 'the size of a spectacle case') on him, but the ordinary instruments—stones—were left in the chiefs' groves with potsherds in which they were immersed in water when required.

Kyungu Mwakabange had his rain-makers Mugoma and Komanga. Mugoma was a slave, Komanga a man of Ngonde. When the sky was hard he sent a message to them saying: 'Put them into water.' If there were too much rain he said: 'Take them out.' Each had two potsherds with two stones for each. To make rain they rubbed the stones with mutton fat and a medicine called *ilifugo* (fertility) and put them into the sherds and poured water over them.

Godfrey Wilson was taken by Kasitile to see his rain stones in the grove near his house in April 1935. Kasitile addressed his shades:[1]

My fathers, do not be angry, *Mwakalebela* (19) (he spat), *Mwanjala* (23), *Mwakisambwe* (30), *Mwakilima* (31), *Mwamapondele* (27), *Mwakihaba* (45), *Mwamukinga* (44), Mwalubange (58), Mwakagile (59), Mwandemele (?), Mwakanjoki (60), Mwaijonga (82), Mwafungo (83), Mwamwifu (84), Mwakabule (117), Mwaipopo (115), these are our friends (repeated urgently), you did not know them, you feared them, but now we do not fear them, they have come and met with us as friends. [782]

There was a large broken pot and three stones, two of them with holes an inch or so in diameter. There used to be five stones—two had been stolen by the Ngoni when they raided this country. When he wishes to make rain, water drawn from a waterfall is brought by Kasitile's wife and left overnight in the grove. Then he pours it into the pot and puts in the stones . . . 'the water bubbles; it is cold, but it seems to boil and the *ifula* go whirling and knocking against the sides of the pot.' . . . The bubbling of the water is compared with rain. Kasitile did not know where his stones had come from. Mwakisambwe his great-grandfather had

[1] The names italicised are those G.W. actually heard in the grove; the whole list was given by Kasitile afterwards as names he had mentioned, but in fact he had not mentioned more than eight.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 them first, then his grandfather, and father. Others told us that
778 rain stones always came from Kisi country, a very wet strip of land on the north-east shore of the Lake where the clouds always seem to gather when one looks south from the Nyakyusa valley and plain, and a piece of perforated wood used in Ngonde for making rain came from the hills of Misuku, also a very wet country. Kasitile's stones were of two types, but no direct association of male and female was made. However, the Kukwe spoke of a 'mother' stone having young. 'The rain-maker puts back the stone in the potsherd without water (after rain has come) and going later he finds that it has got young, perhaps seven, with the mother there are eight.'

The rain-makers are subject to certain taboos: during the dry
791 season they may not wash lest they drive away the rain nor do they
[784] shave for 'they compare hair and clouds saying, "Let it be black", they compare a bald pate with sunshine.' And the rain-maker
[262] may not eat roasted maize 'for as the maize crackles in the potsherd when it is roasted, so the thunder will crackle in the sky'. He may not eat green maize (which is reaped during the rains) until the dry weather begins 'because he creates rain, which means he creates all the food which grows with the rain'. If he begins eating too soon he may stop the growth. And when the rain-maker is manipulating his instruments a sex taboo is observed.
[834] 'When I am making rain,' said Kasitile, 'I do not sleep with my wives for two days, it's taboo. How would Kyala help us if I did?'

In theory the rain-maker always works under the direction of
[643] the political authority—the Kyungu or a chief—but he is also thought to wreak vengeance on those who anger him. Kasitile was critical of his colleague in the hills above Isumba: 'He never makes a nice gentle rain, it always destroys food. . . . He is always demanding things from men, and, if they refuse, he brings his rain to destroy things. . . . There is a very strong wind and heavy
[464] rain which takes roofs off homes.' But when Kasitile himself was
[687] angry, because his son was taken as a tax defaulter to work on the roads, the weather grew bad.

789 People say I am angry, that this rain is because they came and beat me because of tax. This time the tax collectors came to my place and beat me and when I thought, 'It is not the custom with our forefathers for the tax collectors to come at all to men like me', I grew angry and prayed. . . . When I was in MuNgonde the country suffered from hunger, all their children were in trouble. . . . Then I came up, and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

began to prepare my rain, and made the country good. Food started to be plentiful. Why should I be treated thus? I asked. And the shades and Kyala heard me, so it rained *heavily* (too much). Do I grow angry by my own power? I do, and I put the rain stones in water, and when Kyala hears me then it rains too much, my anger has results; but if Kyala does not agree then, when I go the next day to the grove, I find there is no water in the potsherd. . . . I work by Kyala's power; when water is in the sherd I know it is he who has helped me. . . . We don't do it ourselves, it rains if the shades and Kyala help us. I cannot say that I do things alone without their help, it is they who give me breath (*imbepo*) and when they help I feel the power, the rain will fall very heavily. . . . 789 [775]

The way in which the weather was connected by the people of Selya with Kasitile is illustrated by the following entry in Godfrey Wilson's note-book:

Mwaipopo the chief had omitted to tell Kasitile formally that their kinsman, Mwaikyambe, had died. Kasitile had come to the funeral in the morning, and gone off in a huff saying, 'They did not tell me.' Mwaipopo then sent Ngulyo (the priest) after him with 1*s.* to pacify him. 'Yes, he paid because he had wronged his father.' Kasitile accepted the 1*s.* and came back. There had been rain during the night, but the early morning was fine. About 11 a.m. it began to rain, softly at first and then hard. I was in Mwaipopo's house drinking beer. They discussed the rain, hinting that it was caused by Kasitile. 'That Kasitile' was the most direct hint I heard. But they discussed the fact that 'this morning it was raining at Kasitile's,' i.e. that the rain began there and spread over the country. The rain was coming from that direction, it was true, but the morning at Kasitile's had been fine. Ngulyo said, 'When I got to Kasitile's place there was rain.' Suddenly there was a hush and someone whispered: 'Ssh! He is at the door, he is coming in', and Kasitile came in. Mwaipopo apologized again, through Ngulyo, for having omitted to call him: 'I had just got back from Tukuyu, I was surprised that no one had told you, Mwakisambwe (identifying Kasitile with his great-grandfather 30). You too, Ngulyo and Kissogota, are at fault, you should have told him. When I got to the funeral this morning and was told that Mwakisambwe had gone away again saying no one had told him then I sent you to tell him.' All this was said in a rather plaintive voice to Ngulyo, Kasitile being next Ngulyo. Kasitile said nothing. At noon, when we got up and went out, the rain had lessened, and it stopped almost at once. On my way back from the funeral later, I heard one of the young men, a son of Mwaipopo, who was with me, say to the other: 'Kasitile has forgiven, but only partially, the rain has spoilt the ritual.' About 1 p.m. the [689]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

793
142
291

10*a*. KASITILE THE PRIEST

516
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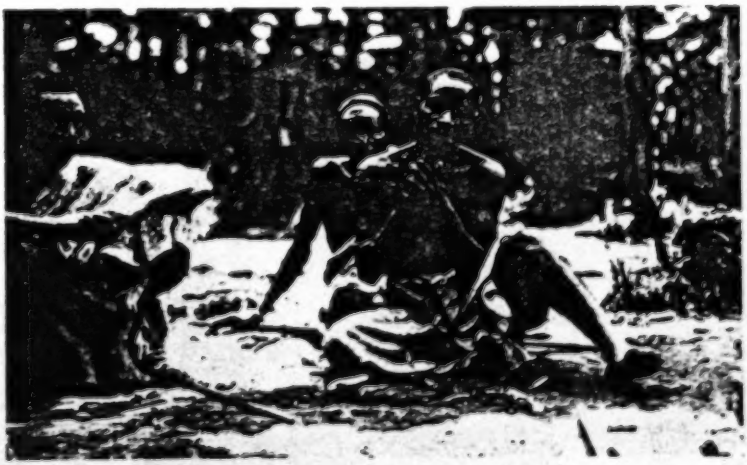


10*b*. DIVINATION WITH PORRIDGE

[Facing p. 118]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 rain started again and it rained for an hour during the division of the meat; then again it lessened and stopped.

A showery and varied day was turned to account by Kasitile. The way he did it was to keep quite silent about the rain and about the insult, but let the others talk. No one directly connected the rain with him in his presence, but they talked about how heavy it was, now and again. If there is too much or too little rain, or Kasitile is known to be angry the weather is noticed and connected with him. The conclusion that Kasitile sometimes deliberately played up to the credulity of his neighbours is irresistible. But when there was a drought he grew very troubled. In January 1938 there was drought in Mwaipopo's country though in some of the neighbouring chiefdoms there had been heavy rain. We went with Kasitile to visit his fellow priest, Mwamakunda, in the bush country. There was discussion about the drought.

KASITILE: I have put in the rain stones, but nothing has happened, I tremble!

[787] THE OTHERS: Kijaja went into a trance and said: 'Let a cow come from Mwakihaba (45), Mwakilima (31) has driven away his senior kinsmen and refused to send a cow, he has refused to return the cow which was given him by his senior brother. Let him return it, instead of saying: "Let the nasty old man (*ikangale*) celebrate there at his place." Then if it comes there will be much rain and food.' [i.e. Kijaja attributes the [688] drought to the refusal of the junior line of chiefs to send the customary cow for the sacrifice at Mbyanga, *vide supra*, pp. 79-80].

[787] KASITILE: Kijaja has gone into a trance and prophesied just recently. Kyala has brooded over him recently, he is a new prophet, but I, Kasitile, have not heard [i.e. have not been formally notified]. Had we been together with Kijaja I would have argued with him and silenced him. See! In Mwakihaba's country it has rained; it has rained heavily there, but not here. I would have said: 'Kijaja you are a new prophet. . . .' But I don't know about this rain. . . . Had I consulted an oracle the cause would have come to light.

MWAMAKUNDA (came and sat down): What about this rain? Have you put them in water?

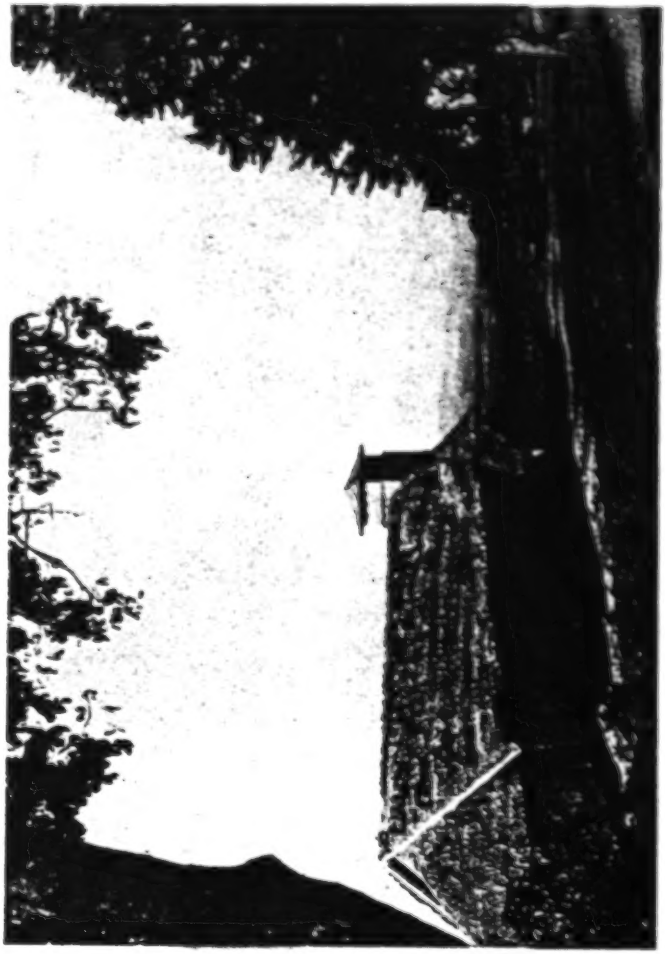
KASITILE: Yes, I have put them in water and nothing happens, I put them in water and nothing happens. I have not consulted an oracle about this rain. . . . I tremble. . . .

MWAMAKUNDA: Yes, indeed! Consult an oracle. . . . Then you did put them in water. . .?

KASITILE: They have lain there two weeks, but the rain refuses to come.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

346



11. RUNOWE CHURCH

[Facing p. 119]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

. . . I put the stones into water, it is as if someone spilt it out, the sherd dries up. . . . Now Kyala has gone away, the shades have fled, formerly they clapped their hands (indicating satisfaction). . . . There is something about which the shade is angry, because in this homestead we were accustomed to pray frequently. . . . If I boast saying: 'It will rain tomorrow', will it rain? 789 [775]

MWAMAKUNDA THE YOUNGER (gravely, and with hesitation): No, not if Kyala does not wish.

WIFE OF MWAMAKUNDA: But formerly it agreed [i.e. the rain came].

A day or two later Kasitile came in, during the evening, with Mwalusanye, a young doctor, the son of doctors.

K.: This rain, do you not ask about it?

G.W.: Have you been to consult the oracle?

K.: Yes. I consulted it the day before yesterday.

G.W.: What did it say?

K.: It said: 'Your fathers are angry, and Kyala and the Holy Spirit (*Nakhepo Mwikwe*)!' [775] [776]

G.W.: What do they say we have done wrong?

K.: Since Mwaipopo received a Court what have the chiefs given us to say 'We did wrong!' Did they give me a cow? They did not. [Here Kasitile was referring to the insult to Lubaga, *vide supra*, pp. 35-8, and he identifies himself with the priests of Lubaga.] In MuNgonde I was a commoner, I ate meat, here I live hungry.

G.W.: And now who will speak out about this matter?

K.: You, you tell Mwaipopo 'Ask Pikumbaba (Kasitile 86) why this rain does not come, what has happened to it?'

G.W. refused and asked: Who should suggest this according to custom?

K.: Mwamakunda.

MWALISANYE: Because according to custom, Mwaipaja (G.W.), if things were as they are with us now, if the rain refused, our fathers came to Kasitile (86), the father of this one, to ask him saying, 'Kasitile what has happened to the rain?' But now that our fathers are dead, we are bad, we do not ask. [177] [688]

And a few days later the chief said: We have thrown away our food, it's drying up in the ground . . . this drought! Kasitile says: 'It has defeated me . . . the shades (*mizimu*) have caught hold of us.' Perhaps they claim a cow, perhaps it is because Mwaibojo (147) and his fellows paid here. . . . But those beneath are angry (pointing downwards and speaking with conviction), the owner is angry.

The rain-maker therefore is not conceived of as working independently; the goodwill of the shades of the chief is necessary, and perhaps also those of the rain-maker himself, though this is not quite clear. Nowadays, at least, Kyala is also invoked. In [775] [777]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 drought, as in illness, a number of possible causes are discussed,
[775] and if one possible cause is dealt with and yet the drought persists,
[177] another will be put forward. A shrewd priest or doctor can turn this to account and find many reasons for the failure of his ritual, as the following case shows.

789 In the wet Nyakyusa valley rain-makers are not concerned
only with drought, but also with flood, and, in the years 1935-8,
791 with the rise in the level of the Lake which inundated many gardens.[1] On the Nyakyusa plain the rise was attributed to the
[821] action of a Kisi doctor, Mwatabi, who had first boasted that he could bring up the Lake and then been commissioned by the chief, Mwakalukwa (141), to do so, 'because there was much grass by the Lake and many mosquitoes, and it was dirty there'. He was told to 'take the Lake up a bit, but not too far' and given a sheep. Then, the following season, in April (a month of torrential rain), Mwakalukwa's son Mwakisisile (170, for Mwakalukwa himself had died) gave him a little bull saying,

[578] Send the Lake back, it has come too far. Then the doctor went home thinking to himself, 'Why does he give me such a little bull?' and he met a headman of the neighbouring chief, Mwakabulufu (138), and said, 'Why should I send the Lake back, Mwakisisile has given me a bull only; had he given me a cow, I'd have done so, but now I am angry.' Then Mwakabulufu heard and sent a message to say he would provide a cow, since Mwakalukwa was dead. But the doctor refused: 'No, Mwakalukwa (the son, 170) is still alive, he must give it.' The following September, before the usual end of the dry season, there was rain on the plain. It is the Kisi's rain. Mwakisisile (170) refused to give him anything, he said he was a liar, but the commoners collected 30s. and a goat, and the Kisi performed a ritual just recently, and said: 'The Lake will go back, but my strength will bring the rain; it will rain during the dry season this month.' We laughed very much in Tukuyu to hear such a prophecy, but it is raining!

The following year—after the Lake had risen again—another reason was given. It was said that a rain-maker at Bojo in Kisi country had died, and just before he died he had thrown a rain stone into the Lake.

(b) MAGIC OF FERTILITY

789 We did not learn very much about 'sprinkling the homesteads';

[1] There is a periodic rise and fall in the level of the Lake. In 1937 the Lake steamer was anchoring in what had been the roof-tops of the District Commissioner's house at Karonga.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

it was something done secretly, at night, and feared by everyone. 789
Ambilikile related how, as a small boy growing up on the plain, he had been severely beaten by his mother when he called out one night, hearing a noise in the bananas, for it was made by the doctor 'sprinkling the homesteads'. The doctor heard and entered their hut angrily, and seized some of the calabashes. The medicine for sprinkling sometimes—probably always—contained human flesh, hence the anxiety of mothers not to draw the attention of the fearful doctor to their children. In Selya, after the sacrifice at Lubaga, the Kinga returned to Kasitile's homestead to sprinkle a medicine which contained the flesh of the child they had killed for the drum, and Mwamakunda (his assistant) went round by night pruning the bananas throughout Mwaipopo's country with a sacred knife, which was kept in Kasitile's homestead and [778] Kasitile put porridge of banana flour, made from a stem of bananas provided by the chief's senior wife, in the grove called Kinyangwa ('the porridge of banana flour') near his house. Then fertility was said to spread from Kasitile's throughout the country. According to Kasitile himself, the medicine contained an ingredient he did not know . . .

My elder brother died without showing me the tree. . . . Mwamakunda does not know it either, he just got it from my father. We hope that it will appear in a dream, but it has not yet been revealed. . . . We dreamed of a cow, and of Mwaipaja (G.W.), but the medicine was not seen. I will seek another from a doctor . . . perhaps from Mlauku.[1]

At this time also, in some—perhaps all—chiefdoms millet was taken from the sacred pot containing the 'power of growth', i.e. [778] the hair and nails of the dead chief: (*side supra*, pp. 64-5) to mix with the millet seed about to be planted.

Besides this secret and fearsome 'sprinkling' on behalf of chiefdoms, there was a much more open use of medicines for fertility by village groups, when they burnt the rubbish heaps in which they planted millet,[2] and by private individuals in their own fields.

During the hot weather a chief sometimes sends to all the 784 villages of his chiefdom a man, curiously dressed in a cap 789 and jerkin of banana leaves, who forbids people to cut their bananas, or even leaves of banana stems that have not

[1] A district famous for its medicines.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 32-9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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789

yet fruited, and tells them to eat beans, sweet potatoes, and cow peas instead. The owner of a grove can cut a stem of bananas only with the permission of the man who proclaims the prohibition (*agwe lamage*), and those who trespass pay him a fine of a hen, a knife, a pot, or their sleeping mats. The avowed purpose is that 'bananas should ripen in all the homesteads and the country appear rich and productive', but there may be further implications which we did not discover.

9: Wilson E-5 (1954-1955) 1959
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Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IX

KASITILE THE PRIEST

We turn now from the description of rituals to a personal document, an account of the illness of Kasitile (M), the leading priest of Selya, the causes suggested for it, and the rituals performed. His case shows: (i) the power of village headmen over children in general, more particularly the power of the commoner priests (village headmen of the previous generation) over hereditary priests of the chief's lineage; (ii) the prominent feeling of misfortune with sin in both public and private life; (iii) the function of divination in selecting between possible causes of disease; (iv) the influences of Christian and Muslim teaching and Western medical science on a conservative who goes so far as to invite a Muslim to cut the throat of the sacrificial animal and speaks of turning Christian in his old age; and (v) the very great importance attached to 'speaking out' (ukunguti) and not bearing anger to smoulder unconfessed. Beer is necessary for such a ritual 'speaking out' and the participants are granted to drink deep, for in wine truth.

The *domestic persons* are:

Kasitile (M) of the chief's lineage, priest of Selya
Lum his senior and favourite wife
Lum's younger sister and co-wife
Kasitile's third wife suspected of bewitching Kasitile
Mwaseko (1st) the chief and senior kinsman of Kasitile
Mwakyusa (1st) the doctor who was treating Kasitile
Kasitile's priests (i.e. Kilungulaje Nyangigwe, Kyambo Kisali, *see pp. 24-34*)
Nsekeko, Nyamkuna, Kasungula — Village headmen of Mwaliungu (Sc) and priests of his grave, *see pp. 74-7, 84-5*
Mwakasitile was also a hereditary priest, senior to Kasitile
Mwakasitile was younger (Mkwanilungulu) son of the elder who often acted in his place

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

793 Nzembwe
755 Nkosi
[551] Nzema
[791] A Sangu
} Diviners consulted by Kasitile

Nzema a kinsman of Kasitile

It will be remembered that, in accordance with the custom of
793 delegating ritual functions to a junior line, Kasitile's grand-
755 father (44) had been appointed rain-maker and priest responsible for receiving the Kinga when they came to sacrifice at Lubaga. Kasitile thus held an important public office. He was living on the plain (where he had inherited the estate of his father's younger brother) where his own elder brother (83) died and he came up into Selya to bury him and succeed to his position. But he failed to notify the Kinga priests of his brother's death and they were
[767] very angry, and told him he would die if he stayed in the homestead, so he fled back to the plain. There he fell ill, and he was carried back to Selya to be treated by the visiting Kinga priests, who told him he was sick 'because he went to the plain in a hurry and they had not given him medicine'. The idea here is that the heir to a chief or priest must cultivate the power that was in his
[778] father's body by drinking medicines: Kasitile was 'losing the *fingile* of his father by not drinking medicines'. Now *fingila* implies both the medicines of chieftainship and the power which they create in the body of a man.

So Kasitile was treated and we quote his own account of what happened:

> The Kinga came to cook medicine by the tree where I pray—it is where the cattle byre of my elder brother was. They put some medicine for Jane [his senior wife] and me in beer . . . and we drank together . . .
> [785] and they boiled medicines in a pot and told us both to wash with the infusion every day for two months. I found a goat and called the priests Ngulya, Njobakwa, and Kimagwa and . . . they and the Kinga priests ate the meat together, and they told me to stay for two months and return to the plain again, and so I did. Then the Kinga sent for me to come back and I've come up to live. I found a cow, and called the priests and killed it at the sacred grove, Kinyangwa, and all the people ate the meat. Then the Kinga told me to move to my father's old homestead, and I did so this very year.

Before we arrived, therefore, Kasitile had been in conflict with
[783] his fellow priests, and he had been very ill, and attributed his

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

illness to neglect of his duty to the Kings. All the time we were in BuNyakyusa he was ailing—possibly he suffered from tuberculosis—and one wrongdoing after another was suggested as the cause of his illness. 793 755 [753]

His case is intelligible only in terms of the conception of 'the breath of men', that is, a power akin to witchcraft thought to be legitimately exercised by village headmen and others to punish wrongdoers, but which is referred to by the victims as 'witchcraft'. This has been discussed at length elsewhere.[1] [754]

On 2nd July 1955, Kasitile had left his own house and was living with a friend in a neighbouring village. His doctor, Mwakyonde, said that he was being 'throttled by the witches' and had invited him to come and recollect himself (*ukwipelekeya*) in the tranquillity of a village of another chiefdom in which there were many people with spiritual power (*ukumanga*) so that 'the witches' could not get at him. This is a common precaution in case of illness, for witches are thought not to have power ordinarily outside their own village and never beyond the chiefdom.[2] 793 754

The cause of the illness was explained as follows: Kasitile had quarrelled with Kisogota, the commoner priest, and others of the principal men of the country, because he had found them drinking the sacred beer (*ukusilema*), brewed after the millet harvest (*vide supra*, pp. 84-5) without telling him, or sending him the pot which was his due. They invited him to drink, but he refused and they each sent him 1*s.* to beg pardon. Kasitile bought beer with one of the shillings and called the senior commoner priest, Ngulyo, and his fellows to drink saying, 'I was angry, friends, you "overstepped" me' (i.e. they had ignored his rights). He himself should have brewed when he confessed his anger, and slaughtered a calf or prepared food for them as well, but he had bought only one shilling's worth of beer and provided nothing himself. Then, when they had drunk, Kasitile fell ill. Hence it was said that the commoner priests were angry and 'ate' (i.e. bewitched) him. Kasitile's own comment was: 'The fault lies with the young priests (Ngulyo, a young man, had inherited his father's position), they are useless as priests . . . I was not told of that ritual beer, yet the medicine comes from me, from this home where I keep it. They should have come to me to get it and put it with the millet in the holy pot. They drank the beer without medicine. It is they who have brought cold and hunger on the country. I think the [578] [753] [687] [731] [759]

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 91-101, 187-9. [2] *op. cit.*, pp. 100-3.

9: Wilson E-S (1934-1935) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

[752] trouble is that Mwaipopo (the chief 116) is getting old. . . .'
[754] Here Kasitile suggested two different causes for the scarcity in the
[751] country: (a) the negligence of the priests, and (b) the senility of the
[749] chief. In the old days Mwaipopo would have been smothered, as Angumbwike explained (*vide supra*, p. 63).

[753] On the 5th, Kasitile, much troubled by his cough at night,
[757] expressed a great desire for the return of the missionary nurse to Kalembe hospital. 'She is killing us by her absence, the black people don't know anything about these things, only the Europeans. Why, I went there and the dresser just gave me an injection without taking my temperature—no European ever does that.'

[758] The following day he sent off his sons with 10 c. to inquire about
[753] his case from a diviner. The diviner said: 'The wives at his home are gossiping to other people about their husband. People want the husband's body to be light. It is not Jane, because she is his favourite, but the others.' Kasitile said:

I shan't do anything. I said 'Let's leave it.' I am still in Bundu [the village to which he moved for safety]. Mwakyunde is giving me medicine for my disease. It drives out the cold which is in my body. Yes, the cold is the breath of the witches coming to throttle me—it's due to my
755 wives' gossip. But it started as a quarrel with other people [non-
753 relations] first. One day I went to drink beer in Bujoge and that night I fell sick; that is how it began. Men are complaining because I, a chief, a senior, do not cook food for them. They throttle me on that account. They say: 'Let us see whether he is really a chief, a senior?' But others say: 'He has done no wrong.' Yes, the sickness took me on the way home from the beer. Perhaps Kyala asked: 'What has he
[776] done?' and found I had done no wrong. If there had not been a Kyala who saves us I would have been dead.

When I consulted a diviner he struck a spear and looked along it,
[787] then he said: 'The disease now is from his wives—the earlier attack was from men, but this one is from his wives. When they gather at the hearth they say: "Come hither, we see him where he sleeps."'

759 'Are the wives witches?' we asked.
753 Kasitile replied:

Yes. They say: 'There is a favourite, we are not beloved.' If a man's wives are good the witches can get into the house, but their cold breath disappears quickly; you are given medicine and recover quickly; but if the wives are bad they gather together the medicine and pour it down, so that it is powerless. One of my wives is very bad, her lineage is bad, it is she who calls to her aid the heavy ones, the witches. The

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

younger one' quarrels with her fellow, she does not go to the witches herself, but just talks to the other wife who calls the witches to her aid. These two wives say: 'The favourite has borne many children to her husband; we are poor' [i.e. the favourite gets an unfair share of her husband's attentions]. 754 753

Kasitile speaks of his wives as 'witches' which, according to Nyakyusa ideas, they were, if they injured him, but he was also in the wrong to have shown his preference for Jane so clearly. As was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*, the shades are thought to punish such favouritism. [775] [669]

Towards the end of August Kasitile went to consult Ndembwe, a diviner and doctor, living nearly a day's journey away in the hills, who used a 'stick in the ground' as a divining rod. On his return Kasitile reported: 791 787

Ndembwe says it's the 'breath of men', not the wives, but the dispute about the beer. I paid him 1s. and drank three preparations of medicine at his place. He is coming here—I have found some beer and I am sending to call him tomorrow. Then Kasitile added confidentially: About the source of the 'breath' I am uncertain. Ndembwe suggested testing my wives. He can see the heavy ones, for in Ndali country he has drunk much medicine to give him spiritual power (*amaga*). He told me to come home, not to go back to Mwakyondo's country, and he is coming to give me medicine to drink and also to sprinkle medicine in the house. He will sleep here and see who it is that comes—he will know if the wives are heavy, or if it is the people of the country. 753 [782] [781] [787]

Kasitile's uncertainty was apparent. The first diviner had stated clearly that the sickness came from the witchcraft of the wives, but Kasitile wanted a further test.

We were away from Selya for some time and did not hear of any further developments in Kasitile's illness until early in 1953. By then a new reason for his ill-health had been put forward, viz. his impiety in cutting all the branches off a tree growing at the entrance to a sacred grove which has sprung up over his father's grave. He cut the tree because it was encroaching on his homestead. Then he fell ill and he went to consult Ndembwe again. 753 668

He asked me: 'Have you done something wrong at home?' I replied: 'No, I have done nothing wrong.' 'But the oracle says you have done wrong at home.' I said: 'Perhaps it is because I cut a tree at the [787]

[1] Sister of the favourite Jane. To accuse Jane's sister would cast a slur on Jane, for witchcraft is normally hereditary.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

[783] entrance to the grove?' Ndembwe told me, 'You will get no cattle',
[68] and indeed the cows are aborting. He told me: 'Brew beer and look
[787] for a sheep' and pray to your grandfather.[1]

782 Kasitile did not find an animal for sacrifice. He slaughtered a kid 'just for meat', killing it near the grove, but without praying or taking any of the meat into the grove, for it is not customary to offer goat's meat to the shades. His health improved a little, for a
787 time, but again he got worse and went off to see another diviner, saying: 'Perhaps there is some other cause; perhaps Ndembwe is mistaken.' He decided to go to consult an oracle some distance away 'because the oracle near home does not convince us; those who live near know all our wrongdoings; those at a distance don't know the affairs of the homesteads here'. This time Godfrey Wilson was invited to accompany him 'since he was his friend'.

Record of G.W. 6/2/35

787 We left Isumba about 7 a.m. and walked for an hour over the hills
753 through the bush. Kasitile had sent his wives, Jane and Kibaleli, on ahead to tell the diviner, Nzeki, that we were coming. . . . He came in
[791] from the fields to meet us and was taken aback by the presence of a
[186] European. Kasitile kept saying: 'Do not be startled, he is from home, he is our friend.' . . . Food was served, then Nzeki's wife brought out some cooked millet porridge for the divination. He broke off a large piece and began to roll it between his hands. He smeared ointment on his hands and added powdered medicine. . . . He rolled and rolled, sometimes throwing the ball up and catching it again, spitting on his hands meanwhile. He murmured as he rolled, then at last he said to Kasitile, 'Speak!' Kasitile called his two wives to come near, and he explained his symptoms and the circumstances, how the sickness had fallen on him just after he had cut the tree in the sacred grove.

Nzeki asked for other possibilities. Kasitile: 'Perhaps the country is
[669] angry—I am a senior there. If it is the fathers who are angry I admit having done wrong. Perhaps my wives have committed adultery in the long grass and they are the cause of the illness.' Nzeki rolled and rolled the ball of porridge speaking aloud: 'It is Kyala above?' (looking up).
[778] Kasitile interrupted him: 'Yes, indeed, Kyala, but Kyala stands where he stood at home, does he stand alone? He stands with the fathers.' Nzeki (as he rolled the porridge): 'Your fathers are angry about that grove?' Then the ball of porridge fractured out in his hands and he broke off . . . 'No, that is not the cause' (side plate roll).

Rolling it into a ball again he went on: 'Your wives have committed

[1] This was Kasitile's own summary. Others told us that he had been advised to look for a ball.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3517 Ngonde F3517
Nyakyusa

adultery?' Again the bell fastened. 'It denies it.'[1] Then Kautile, [767]
obviously disturbed, spoke: 'Nseki, these cows have slipped their [753]
calves at my home, I went to Ndembwe and he said: "Your fathers are
angry, you eat a cow, Mwakimembwe (pl) is angry; seek something".
so I sought a kid and I recovered. Later I took my bill-hook and cut [775]
all round. Now the illness has begun again, and I thought perhaps it
was because I did not go to BuKinga to buy a bull, because I sought
only a kid?' Nseki (no longer rolling the porridge): 'Perhaps my oracle
is mistaken, it denies it, Kyala alone has sent the breath (indaga) to
discipline you. I asked the oracle saying, "Perhaps it is the fathers?" [776]
but no, it denied it.' Kautile: 'No, it is not mistaken.' Then he told all
over again the story of his pouring the grave and of his illness and of
his recovery after killing the kid, concluding 'then I cut again and
fell sick.' Nseki: 'But Kautile, see! There is much illness about, Kyala
has sent it all through the country, to discipline us.'

Shortly afterwards we left. I apologized to Kautile for spoiling his divination for it was obvious, from his face, that it had gone wrong. He assured me that I had done no wrong but agreed that Nseki had been afraid of me. . . . 'He feared your body, Mwaipaja [O.W.], you are impressive (aniga), no one builds together with Europeans, he feared to speak. . . . Do you suppose that Kyala alone sent the fever? [776]
No! He stands with people, he stands with the shades.' I asked him [775]
what he thought. 'Ndembwe's oracle was not mistaken, the shades were indeed angry, but now Nseki's oracle denies it. It really denied it, I saw the porridge with my own eyes, so I think the illness is from another source now. When he spoke of the "breath of Kyala" he meant "most".' Kautile lowered his voice as he said this.

Quarrow: But what quarrel have they with you?

Kautile: None! The oracle denied this. I have done no wrong . . . (lower on) He spoke of the fathers, but he was afraid to speak out—they are angry; I should seek something.

Quarrow: To eat with whom?

Kautile: With the village headmen . . . (lower on) See Mwaipaja, I cut [L48]
the grave and at once I fell ill. If you come from doing something and [775]
fall ill, do you not begin to wonder? The shades are angry.

He was quite incoherent. First he said the 'breath of most', then the shades, then that the oracle denied the shades—'I saw it do so'—then that it denied witchcraft and that anyway he'd given no occasion for it. The one thing clear was that the divination could not be accepted as it stood. Kyala never acts alone in Nyakyusa thought, and Kautile's [776]
conversation reflected the uncertainty of mind which he had gone to Nseki to have resolved and which had not been resolved. His opinion

[1] He explained later that 'if the porridge becomes fluid and soft, that means it agrees to what has been said; if it does not change, it denies it'.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 clearly inclined to the shades as it had before the divination, but as
753 before the certain conviction was lacking.

Four days later (12/2/37) Kasitile went to Nessa in Kitali village to consult the oracle again 'for that of Nzuki went wrong'. He told us afterwards 'This oracle supported the finding of Ndembwe's. It said: [778] Your kinsman who is dead is angry; he says, "Why did you not [779] celebrate the ritual? I am tired of the hair (*Ngende nayo insili*). And what did you offer your father after cutting that tree?"' Here yet another cause of Kasitile's illness is suggested—the neglect of the death ritual of a kinsman. The implication is that the chief mourners have [765] not yet performed the concluding rite of shaving which makes it [302] possible for the deceased to join his fathers. The hair which the mourners shave off is called 'the hair of the corpse'.

QUESTION: What are you going to do then?

KASITILE: I shall charge the young man, son of my dead kinsman, with [688] neglect, and tell him to celebrate the ritual that the shades which have [602] bound me may go out of my body.

QUESTION: And the bull?

KASITILE: If I can find one I shall kill it.

QUESTION: Who will be there?

[793] KASITILE: The priests will be there, Ngulyo, Kimagula, Njobokwa, Mwalukula and Mwakamkula,[1] and also Mwalupepo (116) himself. Were I a commoner I should kill alone with my younger brothers, but since I am a public personage (*adi ululende*) the village headmen are there. (To Mwalkambo, the clerk.) It is good at your home in the hills; here things are bad.

QUESTION: But they also have shades?

KASITILE: But they are not important. Look you, I just cut a tree and [775] they have seized me and dwell in my body. Are there sacred groves in [176] the hills? Do men visit them? There in the hills rituals have died; the puberty ritual and the rituals of the groves are celebrated very little.

On 27th March Kasitile looked in to say that he was going to con-
787 sult a visiting Sukuma doctor 'from very far off' about his cough, but
791 G.W. had better not come lest his presence spoil the divination.
753 Kasitile came again after the consultation, full of excitement. 'What a doctor! That is a doctor indeed! That is a diviner! He took an axe and divined with it; he took coppers which I brought and threw them in a little pot, together with the axe, and ash, and he said: "You also take ash and throw it in" and I did so. Then he looked into the little pot and said: "You built on the plain!" He knew this without being told! I said: "Yes".'

SAMUEL: There was a quarrel there.

[1] The last two are priests of Mbwanga (see p. 81) who did not in fact come. Mwakamkula, Kasitile's cousin, who did come is not mentioned.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

KASITILE: Yes indeed.
SANGU: Now your body is sick, you are coughing. 787
KASITILE: Yes indeed, I am ill, and I am coughing a great deal. 791
SANGU: Yes, it is that quarrel down there. You came with the cough from the plain. 753
KASITILE: Yes, I came with it.
SANGU: You are a priest, you are a senior priest. (He knew this himself)
KASITILE: Yes indeed.
SANGU: But the cough comes from the quarrel in the plain. If you were not a priest you would have died.
KASITILE: Indeed, we quarrelled over land, over the boundaries, on the plain. I hoed someone else's land—the land of a commoner there. [578]
SANGU: They placed something to injure you.
Kasitile paused in his narrative and we asked how the 'something' operated.
KASITILE: In dreams, by means of their witchcraft. [754]
The Sangu told me: 'It is this which causes you to cough continually, but there is something else also, you did not move to the plain from here without trouble.'
KASITILE: No, I moved with an accusation against me.
SANGU: Yes indeed, you did wrong and now your fathers are very angry. [775] [776]
KASITILE: Yes, I cut a tree.
SANGU: Mother! You cut a tree? The fathers and Kyala are brooding over you, Kyala is angry and broods over you. Pray, pray very much. It is you who are throttling the cattle of the country.
We expressed surprise and Kasitile continued: 'Yes, indeed. The Sangu said: "It is your wrongdoing (in cutting the tree) which is causing the cows to abort. I will clear out the thing which came with you from the plain. Bring us tomorrow." He's a great doctor, Mwaipeje.' [658]
The astonishing thing was that Kasitile, a man of considerable intelligence and inclined to query the truth of the revelations of some oracles, was so much impressed by the fact that the foreign doctor (staying in the country) knew that he was a priest and had sojourned in the plain, though to anyone knowing KiNyakyusa well his connexion with the plain was apparent in his speech, and his bearing indicated him as a personage.
Talking of the divination three days later, Kasitile told us the Sangu doctor had said: 'You have done wrong at home. This Kyala (pointing to the little pot into which he was looking) knows that Lwembe and the Kings and your father are angry, your father is very important, he works with Kyala, he is with him.' 755
As a treatment for the cough the doctor put various ingredients with 791

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

some live coals into a small calabash and held them against Kasitile's chest 'to clear out the blood of coughing'. To pacify the shades a pot of medicines in water was put on the fire; the doctor, Kasitile, and his 'senior wife' (actually her younger sister, as Jane was away) each held the pot with a crooked finger. Then Kasitile and all his wives and children were sprinkled with the hot medicines. And the doctor told Kasitile to sacrifice a bull.

During the following week preparations for the sacrifice went ahead. Kasitile walked for some hours through the forest to call Mwamakunda, his fellow priest who always assisted him in the celebrations at Lubaga and 'sprinkling the country'. Mwamakunda is a very old man, contemporary of Kasitile's father, and he asked: 'Are you bringing your European to the sacrifice?'

KASITILE: Yes.

MWAMAKUNDA: But your father Mwakanjoki (60) did not know any Europeans, he feared them, he died without ever meeting one. After your father died, when your elder brother was alive, Europeans came —Germans—and cut down a tree, the *musali* tree in the sacred grove near Kamesu; blood gushed out, it shouted so that it was heard in BuKinga.

Kasitile explained that the Germans had wanted timber. Afterwards Mwaipopo (the chief 116) sought a sheep and they tried to put the grove to rights ('close up') by sacrificing it. This was the tree beside which the sacred meat was always put when they sacrificed in the grove. Now one branch has grown up again from the roots.

Mwamakunda went on: 'But you did wrong at the beginning not to take the European to pray, and to tell Mwakanjoki (60) that he should not be afraid, the European has made himself our friend.' Kasitile, reporting the interview to us said: 'I concealed that we went together to the grove to pray (*vide supra*, p. 115) and Mwamakunda told me: "Let the European take something, let it stay overnight in the house, and go with him, and pray very much. . . . Mwakanjoki has gone off in a huff from your home, you have offended him yourself. Go with the European, take him to your father's home. Now your father has taken offence, he is shaking your body by night because you cut the tree; you have done wrong."' i.e. two causes for the anger of the shades and Kasitile's consequent sickness were given: (i) the cutting of the tree by Mwakanjoki's grave and (ii) Godfrey Wilson's presence at rituals and at Kasitile's homestead. So before the sacrifice of expiation for pruning the grove was performed Godfrey Wilson went to be introduced to Kasitile's shades for the second time.

Record of G.W. 31/6/37

In the evening as the sun was setting, I went to Kasitile's house with a cloth and 2s. He put them in the house, took down the calabash which

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

always hangs under the eaves and is only used for prayer, filled it with 783
water and put into it a stone and a live coal from the fire. Then he 782
took some roots from the roof (previously put there ready) and we
went off to the same spot as before (*vide supra*, p. 115). Kasitile chewed [178]
the root, took water and blew it out, and began to pray:

'Do not be startled, come in your own persons, gather together, [769]
with Mwakanjoki (60). You made friends with him before, now he has entered, he has made himself our friend. Indeed I made a mistake, I have come to enter; I cut you on the head, I have done wrong. The sons of Kagile (i.e. 59 + his descendants) complain of me, saying, "It is he who has gone off with the millet, bananas, and maize; and children cry at night behind the huts; we are barren because he has cut Mwakanjoki." I have sought this cow which you wanted. Mwakanjoki (60), Lwembe (37), Mwakalebela (19), Mwatonoka (29), Mwalubange (58), Mwakagile (59), Mwaijonga (82), Kyala (2), we have come to attend to you (pointing to the grave). Kikungubeja, Nsyanigwa Kyamba Kitali,[1] Lyambilo (12) come to your home if you are at Mwalubange's (58), come if you are at Mwaitende's (61), come Mwakanjoki (60) and the Kinga and Lwembe (3); Mwakalebela (19) come, give me cattle and millet, and the powerful medicine which you had. Since you are brooding over me go out from my body, go out! I pay my debt. We have come to take you to your home since you have gone off in a huff, come! I will never cut your branches again. I fear you and I will respect the branches. Come to your house, that of Mwamaloba (85), of Kanjoki (mother of 60), come. And he (G.W.) is [123]
innocent (*musela*), do not fear him. He is the owner of the ritual, he is Mwamaloba (85), he is my senior, I am the junior. Sometimes I wish to embrace him, sometimes I fear that he is going to imprison me.[2]
May the bananas increase! I am left alone! It is I who am here! Move [789]
out of my body! And give us medicine! May the offering increase overnight, may the cattle increase and the maize, and in the morning let me tell Mwaipaja (G.W.) that the bananas and medicine have increased. If there is anything else you are a liar, if this chill begins again then I have gone, I am not here. Amen! (*sic*).'

Very early the following morning the sacrificial bull was killed. [177]
Kasitile had arranged that our Mohammedan cook should come to cut its throat.[3] Then, later in the morning, the crucial drinking and 'speaking out' began. Kasitile had provided two pots of beer.

[1] These Kinga priests whose names are titles of office.

[2] In the earlier years of our acquaintance Kasitile had denied both the smothering of an ailing chief and human sacrifice for the drum. It is possible that he had co-operated in either one or both of these ritual acts. He himself reported that the Sangoma diviner had told him: 'You have a European as a close friend. . . . You enjoy his company much, but there is something left . . .' (i.e. the friendship is not yet complete). [114]

[3] Ostensibly so that he could partake of the meat, but the reason given seemed inadequate.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Record of G.W. 10/4/37

783 782 I was summoned two hours after sunrise and found at Kasitile's: Mwaipopo (the chief 116), Kissogota, Ngulyo, and Njobakosa the commoner priests; Mwamakunda the younger (his father is too weak to come himself), and a half-wit who has attached himself to Kasitile. Mwaipopo asked me: 'Did you escape the rain yesterday evening?' I said, 'No, I was caught by it, I'd come without a coat, and I thought it quite safe as I lived so near' (a quarter of a mile away). Mwaipopo replied: 'Ah, but you were at prayer. Do they not listen? Did you think you would escape the rain when you were at prayer?' and he laughed at me. During the afternoon it began to thunder close by. Kasitile glanced round and whispered to me out of the corner of his mouth: 'They are listening!'

Drinking continued all day, and all day, with intervals, they discussed the case (*akajoba isungwa*) or spoke out (*akassya*) or prayed (*akwiputa*). This half formal prayer (*akwiputa*) over beer is an essential part of the ritual. They began by discussing the cutting of the tree by [768] Kasitile. 'They are angry, Mwakanjoki (60) is angry, he is startled [769] that Mwamaloba (i.e. Kasitile 86) cut him himself. Mwakanjoki says, 'Who is there?' [i.e. Kasitile did it without formally telling the shades about it]. They (*sic*) went off in a huff . . . we have come to fetch him (*sic*) back.'

Then Kasitile told them about his prayer and how he had admitted his fault saying: 'Indeed, I, your wife, have done wrong, Mwakanjoki (60), indeed I come to enter, I Mwamaloba (86), I am a woman.' 'If you went to Mwalubange's (58) come, if you went to Mwaitende's (61) come.' 'Yes,' Kissogota broke in, 'you are a woman, and also you are a man, take the calabash cup and pray. It is you then (who are at fault).' 'Thank you,' said the others, 'thank you Mwakisambwe (Kasitile is identified with his great-grandfather, 30), thank you Mwakagile (Mwaipopo, 116), is identified with his grandfather, 59), for praying with water.' (Mwaipopo had also prayed at his place.)

So the discussion continued. 'We try everything, a sacred stem of bananas from Kalinga (senior widow of 115) is cut, it goes (to the shades), people milk their cows, they collect millet (*vide* pp. 84-5, 101), we try everything, we try everything.'

Then Mwamakunda started a new topic, the old *umusali* tree: 'But friends, do you say they have gone away now? They went away long ago. Did this *umusali* tree fall when Kasitile (60, father of the present one) was alive?' 'When he was dead,' they agreed. 'Well, then, where has your wisdom disappeared to?' 'Yes indeed,' broke in Kasitile, 'Indeed, but we attended to that. They said, "Mwaipopo seek a sheep." They attended to it again. And when I came from the plain, I killed a cow, the meat went there, we attended to it.'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

All the time there was a constant refrain of questioning, especially [783] from Mwamakunda (who as Kasitile's assistant acts as his mouthpiece [782] to the others: 'But why has Mwakanjoki (60) gone off in a huff? Why?' There was a continuous effort to extract reasons.

The meat from the top of the foreleg (*ijammapa*) was cut up into little portions and some was put aside for the boys, sons of Kasitile. Then Kasitile led the way with a bill-hook and Mwamakunda and I followed. Mwamakunda carried the meat in a leaf. We went to the [778] sacred grove, Kinyangwa. When we reached the edge Kasitile told us to wait and he cut a path into the middle with the bill-hook, then we followed.

Mwamakunda threw the meat slowly, piece by piece, into the rotting stump of an old *mwali* tree, from which a lusty growth had sprung, [769] one shoot being 30 feet high. Kasitile prayed: 'Come Mwakanjoki (60), together with Lwembe (37), Mwakalebela (19), and the Kinga, come, with—with—with—come. We pray of you millet, maize, bananas, all your food.' (Mwamakunda threw a piece of meat at each word.) 'We are still mourning you, we have tears. We finish now, that is all. Bring bananas, bring millet, maize, children, may the cows calve, stand by us Mwakanjoki (60), N—, N—, N— Lwembe (37), Mwakalebela (19), Neyatigwe,[1] Kyamba Kitali,[1] Ngulube (9), N—, N—, N—. Don't come again Mwakanjoki, let us sleep well. This is Mwambagoje [i.e. Mwamakunda the younger. It was his first visit to the sacred grove in place of his father]. I have brought him to you. Do not be startled at this Mwaipaja (G.W.), he is innocent, he is our friend. Move out of my body, let this chill go from my body! We have finished! Amen!'

Kasitile and Mwamakunda gave instructions and suggestions to each other in low voices from time to time during the prayer and throwing of the meat. We went out, Kasitile and Mwamakunda looking ahead, and Kasitile warned me: 'Do not look behind, Mwai- [834] paja.' For the next two days Kasitile said he and Mwamakunda would wash with medicines, and refrain from intercourse with their wives 'because they entered the sacred grove'.

Then we rejoined Mwaipopo and the priests and the meat was cut up. Mwaipopo said: 'Indeed people gossip, where does the whispering go? To whom do the words go? Perhaps they went to you (the com- [689] moner) priests?' Kasitile had something on his mind: 'When I returned from Lubaga who came to say: "Thank you, you have arrived back?" [i.e. no one came to greet him formally on his return]. Njobakosa answered this saying that no offence was meant.

Then Njobakosa turned to Mwaipopo (116) and raised the question [684] of his son, Mwaseba (152) who had seduced Mwaipopo's wife, Mpeta.

[1] The hereditary Kinga priests. [793]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 Why had Mwaipopo refused so long to enter into relationship with
782 Mwaseba? Mwaipopo explained that the delay was on account of
Mpeta. 'Let my wife come first,' he said, and told how, when the case
[654] first came to light, he had taken Mpeta to his kinsman Mwaiteteja,
who took her to Mwaseba's village headman, Kakuju, and he to her
people. She must come back the same way, and has not yet done so.
Ngulyo said that at first he had been inclined to criticize Mwaipopo,
but now saw that he was right. Kasitile spoke of the enormity of
Mwaseba's offence, for Mpeta is a kinswoman of Mwaipopo's wife
[835] Kalobo, and on the death of her son Mwakalobo, Mwaseba was put
in his place, so he has seduced a woman who, by legal fiction, is his
mother, as well as the wife of his father. His act is *doubly* incestuous.

They then spoke of the separation of those who pray at Mbyanga
[686] (*vide supra*, p. 80) and blamed them for it. 'Have they millet though?
Kyala judges them himself.' Then Kasitile reproved Mwaipopo (the
chief) for another matter. 'But you, Mwakagile (116, identified with
his grandfather 59) have little wisdom left. Why did you not give some
of the beer which we drank recently at your house[1] to the people of
Ipinda, the BaKalinga? The food from a distance you should divide.'
And Mwaipopo agreed meekly [i.e. Mwaipopo has built with his
young wives away from his inherited wife Kalinga (senior widow of
115) and is apt to neglect her; he must send some of the 'food from a
distance'—ceremonial presents from affines—to his senior wives, not give
it all to his friends and young wives.]

Then there were mutual compliments and self-depreciation between
Kasitile and Kissogota (the commoner priest). Kissogota pointed to
Mwaipopo and Kasitile, and said: 'You are impressive you, you are
impressive, we are mere cannibals (*kalyabanda*).' Kasitile replied: 'You
are impressive yourself, if I look at you my body changes.'

Suddenly Kissogota got up and pretended to go: 'I am off, friends!'
Ngulyo started to protest: 'We have not yet finished, we are speaking.'
But Kissogota said, 'No, you told me to "be off"!' He went outside but
returned admitting he had been only pretending. Mwaipopo: 'Yes,
do you think we don't know you? Drink! Why do you not drink?'

The Mwamakunda began to ask angrily: 'Why do you shut up
words in the heart? Why? Do you wish that Mwakisambwe (i.e.
Kasitile, 86, identified with his great-grandfather, 30) should become
a fool? Kissogota answered: 'We have not yet done so, Mwambagoje
(Mwamakunda), we have not yet; do you think we are angry? Who
went to fetch Kasitile from the plain? It was we, we went ourselves.'

Njobakosa took up the matter: 'We have power we have, if we
[754] please we can give the chief worms.' (This was said fiercely; Kasitile
and Mwaipopo listened without comments. It was the crucial moment

[1] Sent as a present by Mwaipopo's affines.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

to which all had led up.) Then Mwaipopo (116) spoke: 'We have taken home Mwakanjoki (60), we have taken home Mwakisambwe (30).' And the others agreed: 'We have taken him, we have taken him.' Mwaipopo went on to speak of the tree cutting: 'It was always a swept place, Mwakanjoki (60) built there, let it be a swept place again, let it be clear, let our prayers go beneath to enter the house here [i.e. no matter that the trees have been pruned], prayers go beneath in the swept place. See, we buried our father Mwaijonga (82) in the swept place, was it heavy? [i.e. a sacred grove] No, a tree grew later. So if I like I cut that it may be clear again.' To which Kasitile replied: 'Thank you, Mwakagile' (116, identified with his grandfather 59). Mwaipopo continued: 'Let no one whisper. Who whispered? Where do we all look? Here! It is our earth, here, it is our tree, here, it is our fertility of the soil (*mbeto*), here. No one stirred up Mwakisambwe (30); he stirred up himself.'

So they prepared to go, saying, 'It's getting dark, it's getting dark.' But Kasitile stopped them. 'Wait, there is one thing left, tell Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 59) that he should seek a cow, let us finish.' They took this up: 'Yes, since we have taken your grandfather to his home, let us go to your father, Mwaijonga (82), and to Mwakabule (117), let us finish them.'

Mwaipopo ignored this. 'It's getting dark, let us go.' And Kasitile softened it by addressing Njobakosa and his fellows: 'But Njobakosa have you cattle?' 'Yes!'

'And has Kisogota got some?'

'Yes.'

'Well, then, is it you who will seek this cow?'

'No!'

'Indeed, it hurts Mwakagile' (116, identified with his grandfather 59) [i.e. it hurts him to have to spend his cows].

'Do not "cut leaves at home" [i.e. summon a crowd and discuss the matter publicly], he will be startled, he will swear at us, speak with him privately.'

So they went off. Jane (wife of Kasitile, 86) took the breast of beef to Mwaipopo's (116) place. One leg went to the priests, Njobakosa, Ngulyo, and Kisogota, one to Mwamakunda and Ndisu (Kasitile's kinsman), and another kinsman who was not present, the hump and neck were sent to me; and two legs and the chine were kept for Kasitile himself and his female relatives.

A couple of weeks later, when Kasitile came to visit, he explained one or two points in the ritual. Asked about Mwamakunda's forceful words 'Why do you shut up words in the heart?' and the reply of Kisogota and Njobakosa, he said: 'That is very important. Mwamakunda is my man, he stands by me, he eats meat with me, he compelled

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 them to speak out, because if they do not admit that it is they, then the
782 ritual fails.'

QUESTION: What does that mean?

754 KASITILE: It is witchcraft!

QUESTION: Witchcraft? (in apparent surprise).

KASITILE: Yes, it is their witchcraft, the priests gathered with the shade, they bring a chill on my body.

QUESTION: Pythons? (still in surprise).

KASITILE: Yes, they fly in their witchcraft to come here, they speak
[775] with the shades, saying: 'Punish him! Let him find us something to eat!' They call the shades to help. Hence I sought something for them to eat that they should be satisfied.

QUESTION: But I thought witchcraft and the shades were quite separate? (still in apparent surprise).

KASITILE: No, they are together, look you, did not Kisengota boast? He said, 'Indeed we came, it is us, it is us. Why did you cut that branch? But now there is no accusation against you.' He boasted very much. He said: 'We have power, if we like we can give him worms.' [It is Njobakosa who was heard to say this, but Kasitile's personal quarrel was with Kisengota.] Did I not tell you that I had worms when I came up from the plain? I had them! I went to doctors and the diviners said: 'You are a chief, you were in the plain, why do you not kill a bull on your return?' Then when I killed a bull the worms disappeared! Where did they come from? They came from the priests, they called the shades to their aid. So I admitted to Kisengota, saying: 'Indeed I have done wrong, I your wife, I Malobo' (86, the feminine form of the name is used).

QUESTION: So, a white person (*umuzungu*, *vide infra*, p. 141) cannot be a priest, but only a witch, a heavy one?

KASITILE: Yes, indeed, how can a white person take hold of the ritual? His fellows will drive him away. See! To a ritual do we call everyone?

No!

KASITILE: And is my home near to Kisengota's?

No, he lives at a distance.

KASITILE: Yes, indeed, it is the black ones (*bazile*) whom we call because it is they who punish us chiefs.

QUESTION: Well, then, is the anger of the shades always provoked by
[648] the witches? What about sores (*imisale*) on the mouth?[1] What about
[775] madness if a commoner does not perform the death ritual?

KASITILE: No, I do not lie, that is different. Sores on the mouth come
[753] from the shades, the witches are not there, and if a commoner fails to perform the ritual, madness also comes from the shades, it comes

[1] Cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 180, 219.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

indeed from the whispering of men and the shades here, but people speak openly, saying: 'Why does he not celebrate the ritual?' The witches do not come into it.

Question: Well, when the witches do throttle someone, do they always call shades, or not?

Kasitule: No, sometimes they throttle a man alone, and the shades are not there.

Question: But your sickness?

Kasitule: Now the priests in their witchcraft gathered with the shades. The day after we had celebrated Njobokoma came to my place and said: 'We have finished then?' I replied: 'Yes, my body is better now, but the cough is separate, it is from Kyala.' And did you not hear what Mwalupopo asked in his cups—'How did the doctor (the Saupa) know that you are a priest? And that you had done wrong? Indeed they (Kimagota and his fellows) had told him?'

Question: What did he mean by that?

Kasitule: That they had gone to the doctor in dreams to tell him.

Asked about Kimagota's words: 'You are impumulos, we are cannibals, we are', Kasitule explained: 'It means, "You chiefs kill cattle for us, you are impumulos, that is your impumulosness. Do we kill cattle? No! We eat men, we are witches." Because when we have killed cattle they receive blood, their witchcraft goes away, it stays in its house.'

Question: And your reply, 'You are impumulos, you are'?

Kasitule: I replied: 'You are impumulos, you are, you are witches, if I were alone what would I do? It is you who brought the chilling breath on me and said I had done wrong. Even though I have not done wrong, you wish to eat meat. If I walk about among you, my body shrinks, it fears.'

Mwalupopo (the chief 1:8) had also prayed with water the night before the sacrifice, he helps me in prayer and if he prays at his house, I help him. We pray with water to bring out everything; if I do not pray with water then something is left within. I summon all the gods, all the fathers, and all the shades. (*Apa ndaupite namsi ko kapopo dipa lapa, kaga ndikaupite namsi pa lipale lima ukati. Nikaupule lipale gawa, iste gawa, ukaupule bwa.*)

Question:

Kasitule: Yes, when Kimagota and his fellows came in their witchcraft to call my shades to their aid, I saw them in dreams, I saw them! And if they convert Mwalupopo like this in witchcraft, together with the shades, he sees them; he complies immediately, he seeks a cow. And if they just come to throttle me I see them. It is the village headmen of the country who come to throttle me, the shades are not there, no, only Kimagota and his fellows, they stand with the shades, not the others they come and suck my blood and they go away again. I do not speak,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F7617 Ngonde F7617
Nyakyusa

but I see them. It's taboo to speak. They must seek blood and they
all; we fear them!

Questioner: Why do you chiefs never speak out if you are threatened

Kasungu: If I speak how many would there be to name? Very ma
for us it's taboo to accuse a man of witchcraft, but the commoner
accuse one another. Look you, do few people keep you company?

Many!

Like us chiefs, everyone comes. It's taboo for us to speak out,
fear. Look you, when Mwambene (Mwaipopo 1:6) and I were al
we feared to throw out the beer, we said: 'If we throw it out will
leave?' But when Kimagota came, he said: 'All right, I will throw
out myself.' We fear the fierce great priests, the terrible witches,
are angry.' We shrink when they appear.

The village headmen of the country call on the priests for h
against us, they whisper by the fire, the priests come in their witchcr
they call on my shades saying, 'Let us punish him', also they
together with the shades. Our shades never initiate anything, ne
they look to the priests. But with a commoner the shade may initi
murders himself. Yes, people whisper indeed, but is that witchcr
No! They whisper openly and ask, 'Why did you not perform
ritual?' But even although people are silent, still the shade co
saying, 'Why did you not perform the ritual? I am on the road.'
initiates the thing himself.

Questioner: But don't people eat meat at the ritual of a commoner

Kasungu: Yes, and if he does not celebrate it they accuse him, but
accuse him openly.

Questioner: If the heir buries him with a few cattle?

Kasungu: If a rich commoner dies and the heir buries him with
one cow, the shades are angry and the people also; their chil
breath comes on his body, perhaps he falls ill himself, perhaps
child falls ill, but the people and witches do not meet together, pe
are angry here, and the shades there; all of them and the shades
because he has celebrated with one cow only. People are angry beca
they wish to eat the meat. But the oracle says, 'The shades are ang
It does not speak of people, it knows that people also are angry,
it speaks of the shades. And at the celebration he prays in the cem
the next day he calls people and kills a cow, and throws the me
meat in the banana grove, saying, 'Here is your meat, father.' Pe
say, 'Indeed did wrong, his father was angry', but they do
mention saying, 'It was we', no, they say 'the shades' . . .

We chiefs have bodies which are different, the commoners ar
first in the country, they ate raw food, we fear them saying, 'They
raw food.' It is we who followed and brought fire. To us they co

* Sukuguge [sukuri sukulula]. The verse clause implies size, fecundity, and skillful.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

(their witchcraft); to each other they say: 'It is your father.' Because if they confess to a fellow commoner saying, 'It is we', he says, 'You are "eating" me, drink the ordeal'. The witch is driven out. But to us they admit saying, 'It was we who were angry.' They do not fear us. Commoners are the seniors in the country; they arrived first.

It will be remembered that the commoners are spoken of as 'black people' (abatite) and that the first chiefs were 'pale' (amele) but these words also have moral implications. 'It is said that a person "has a black heart" or "has black blood", or "is black in his face towards us" when he is thought to be a witch, eating his fellows, or when he is a thief, or a liar, or an adulterer, or dirty. Even though his body is light coloured (amele) the word "black" (atite) is used of him metaphorically.' And amele implies innocent, pure, as well as light in colour. The comparable symbolism of 'nigger' and 'white man' is all too familiar in Johannesburg or Charleston.

That Kasitile himself was much afraid of the commoner chiefs and was relieved by the 'speaking out' was clear, and the people of the country as a whole were glad that the ritual had been celebrated, for they expected an increase in fertility. Some days later Mwakyonde (148), came in and said, laughing, but half serious: 'Congratulations, Mwaipaja (G.W.). You have celebrated the ritual, we rejoice greatly, you give us fertility of the soil, you are a great priest.'

In some moods Kasitile was inclined to become a Christian, but he felt an obligation to the country as priest, and believed too strongly in the efficacy of the traditional rituals to abandon them. He said to G.W. one day, over a pot of beer: 'If it were not for the ritual I would get you to speak to the Europeans of the mission, and I would go with my wife Jane, and be baptized. If my son was old enough and had agreed to carry on the ritual I would do it; perhaps I will when I am old. . . . It is good to have one's heart washed clean, we are dirty inside. The Christians say to us: "You with your four wives each, you are all dirty, you love one and squabble with the rest." Well, it is so with me, I love Jane only; I would like to go and be baptized with her. But I fear for the ritual, I fear hunger, the hunger of the people. For I am the food of the country, I am the maker of food.'

We left Selya shortly after this and were not able to observe the effect of the ritual on political relationships in Selya. Kasitile lived another seventeen years, duly performing his functions, and in 1954 he was succeeded by his brother's son, James.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER X

MEDICINES

278 The Nyakyusa regard medicines as an ultimate source of power
789 —given the right ingredients and the 'know how' a man may
755 achieve anything. This conception is integral to their view of reality, moreover the distinctions made regarding the just use of them throw light on the Nyakyusa moral system, and must be examined. But a full analysis of Nyakyusa medicines (imbete) would require a book in itself together with an expert knowledge of botany and of the properties of plants. Here we are concerned only with those aspects of the belief and practice in medicines which touch directly on social relationships or which illuminate the Nyakyusa conception of reality and morality, and their use of symbols.

Already many references have been made to medicines for they are an adjunct of most rituals, but their use is not confined to these; often a private individual is treated alone, and such a treatment is not classed by the Nyakyusa as a ritual (ubupage), so we must stray, for a little time, beyond the limits of our title.

(a) TYPES OF MEDICINES

278 A classification in terms of purpose shows a close conformity
789 with the use of medicines by other peoples in Africa. The use of medicines for protection and cure; for fertility; for success in any chancy undertaking from hunting and fishing to love-making, theft, a court case, or securing a job; for exacting vengeance; and for oracles, is familiar enough. What emerges from a detailed analysis is that the intractability of *persons* is felt to be at least as great a problem as the intractability of *things*, and many treatments are directed towards transforming personalities and developing moral qualities. The medicine given to a bride at puberty is to make her 'patient and pliite' as well as fertile; the medicines given to chiefs and village headmen are to make them dignified and wise. A thief is often treated with medicines by his relations to cure him of his thieving habits; and the famous *gwandonde* medicine is used to control the anger of a husband, a chief, an employer, or a superior officer. (It is said to be much in

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

demand among police and soldiers as well as wives.) Then there are medicines used by men and women to make themselves more attractive and persuasive as lovers, litigants, leaders, clerks, servants, salesmen, and so on.

Certain Nyakyusa medicines are based on observation of cause and effect. Their pharmacopeia includes purges and poisons—for example, castor oil has long been cultivated and used both for making ointment and as an aperient—and some of the drugs administered, and the poultices with hot leaves, may well be therapeutic; we have no systematic knowledge of the plants used and cannot assess them. But the scientific element is demonstrably limited, for a great many medicines are based on the principle of association, a feeling of likeness between things, and things felt to be alike are believed to react on one another, like producing like, or like things being antagonistic.

No distinction is made by the Nyakyusa themselves between those medicines which one trained in western science would say are based on observation of cause and effect (e.g. a purge or a poison), and those which are based on association—indeed our friends constantly cited supposed observations of cause and effect as evidence of the efficacy of all sorts of medicines and charms. Mwakyondo used charcoal, mixed with iron from a forge, as a medicine for protection against lightning, burying a little, and powdering a little, and sprinkling it about a homestead, 'because at the forge they blow the bellows and it says, "*Mali, mali, mali*" (i.e. boom, boom, boom) and the lightning *ikamalele* (boomed). When we blow the bellows at a forge it makes a noise like thunder.' There was no hint that he was aware that electricity might be attracted by iron, but he insisted that where he had buried the charcoal and iron the lightning *never* struck again, and he regarded this as cause and effect. Therefore the distinction we have made between observation and association is ours, not theirs.

That the symbolic element is at least as important as the practical was apparent from Lyandiloko's treatment for sterility, which was famous for its success. She had three patients one morning, all women wanting to bear children. In front of her she ranged seventeen banana petals and mixed four different medicines in them. Then she chose three young banana shoots and bored a hole in each, inserting into it a length of the mid-rib of a banana leaf, slightly hollowed to form a tunnel. She told an onlooker to bring the first petal full of medicine and poured it into the tunnel.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

The patient knelt and received the medicine in cupped hands, guiding it into her mouth. Lyandileko hung a little medicine horn on the runnel before pouring. The patient kept the medicine in her mouth until the runnel was removed and she spat through the hole. Then the hole was filled up with the petal off which the medicine had been poured. Lyandileko smeared the patient on the belly with medicine from a horn, and pushed the horn down under her bark-cloth to the genitals, in front, and on to the buttocks behind. As she did this she said, 'If you are barren the banana will rot, if you are fertile I give you medicine to bear a child.' This was done for each patient in turn. Then the banana suckers were planted and the medicine from the remaining petals poured into bottles (two made of banana leaves, one a Vermouth bottle) for the patients to take home. They were to take a dose each day for a week. As the treatment was proceeding Lyandileko talked of her successes: 'So-and-so drank twice and her belly sprouted. . . . So-and-so drank and she came back to me pregnant. . . .'

After a week the women came back to see whether their banana suckers had sprouted. Lyandileko explained: 'The banana sucker is the child, it sprouts quickly, it is the belly which sprouts quickly. If it dies they consult an oracle—the woman does not conceive.' And her son added, 'If a woman's sucker dies Lyandileko tells her: "Don't say I have not worked for you, don't you see your banana? You are rotten in yourself, indeed they must have allowed your cord to fall between your mother's legs."[1] They rejoice very much if it has grown.' Each petal represents a child; Lyandileko used male and female symbols (plantain and sweet banana petals) alternately for boys and girls. One mother who had no child had asked for ten, another with two already for eight, another with three already for six. Lyandileko's arithmetic had gone wrong for there were only seventeen petals altogether. The horn is the horn of protection (*ulipondo lwa* (*pinge*) and it means here, 'May the "iron" stay nicely within, may it not come out in front or behind, may it stay inside.' (Iron is a symbol for the reproductive capacity of women.) Neither Lyandileko nor her son (who were both forthright in their discussion of ritual) seemed to be conscious of any symbolic enactment of coition, though a knowledge of the symbolism of the death and puberty rituals suggests that.

[1] Cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, p. 129.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 19 .9
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(f) MEDICINES AND MORALITY

Doctors classify most of their medicines in terms of the supposed 278
mystical causes of disease, and the determining factor in diagnosis 753
is what quarrels have occurred in the patient's circle of kinsmen and friends, or what wrongdoing he has on his conscience. The medicines mentioned to us by various doctors were for treatment of sickness caused by 'the breath of men', by sorcery, by vengeance magic, by the protective medicine put on wives, by the anger of the shades or living senior relatives, by incest, by spearing or binding with ropes,[1] or abnormal birth. Only a few of the medicines listed were for the treatment of observable symptoms such as fever, too frequent periods, or swelling after snake-bite, rather than the supposed mystical cause.

The emphasis on discovering the mystical cause and counter- 753
acting it was shown very clearly when Godfrey Wilson accom- 578
panied Mwakyonde, the doctor, to the home of a patient, a young man so weak that he could not lift a limb. Mwakyonde [757]
spent two minutes examining him, and provided leaves with which he was poulticed, and a medicine which was rubbed into cuts made all over his body, but the greater part of the day was devoted to discussing the quarrel between kinsmen, from which his illness was thought to have arisen, to persuading the kinsmen to 'speak out', and to preparing and administering a medicine which would cause the death of any one of them who was working sorcery against another.

Medicine for the treatment of a disease is held to be ineffective —at the best a temporary palliative—unless the underlying cause is discovered and dealt with. For example, doctors spoke of preparing a medicine against *ifupa*, the disease caused by a kinsman to whom a debt in cattle is due, but it is not effective alone. 'The wrongdoer drinks medicine and pays his kinsman. He must pay, for though the medicine may cure him temporarily the disease will come again if he does not pay his debt.'

The ultimate cause of disease is believed to be friction in social relationships—a breach in moral law—and so the study of medicines takes us directly to problems of morality. There is a deep-rooted conviction that medicines will not be effective if there is quarrelling in the family which uses them. This applies not [602]
only to medicines used in sickness, but also to those for protection

[1] op. cit., pp. 179-9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FM17 Ngonde FM17
Nyakyusa

753 and achievement. An account of the treatment of a field for
578 protection against wild pig emphasizes this.

If people wish to protect a crop from wild pig they go to a doctor to
789 ask for medicine. When he gives it to them he tells them that there
241 must be no quarrelling in the home after they have barricaded the
[669] field. Four women go to the field with the husband of the one who cultivates it. They go after sunset. One woman is shaved; her head is a symbol of the garden devastated by pig. A second woman, who keeps
[302] her hair, has a head-pad on her head and carries bananas with medicine. She enters the field and eats the bananas. The husband climbs a hill at a little distance, and two of the women go into the long grass close to the field. The bald pate twists a head-pad and the one with hair smears it with medicine and as they do so they look towards their
[831] husband and abuse him saying, 'You lay with your mother', and he swears at them saying, 'The leather aprons of your fathers' . . . and many other insults. Then the women walk round the edge of the field, sprinkling medicines, and they go out the way they came in. The circular pad is a symbol of the barricade placed round the field. When
[262] they return home they do not eat but go to sleep hungry (though the clever ones eat beforehand). If they quarrel, the pig finishes the food. It is as if quarrelling destroyed the fierceness, the power, of the protective medicine; you must put aside all quarrelling that the medicine may be powerful. If the pigs come it is as if there were a quarrel, as the woman and her husband quarrel in the field mimicking the pig. The husband on the hill is like the pig approaching the field, his wives in the long grass also represent pigs. . . . The husband and his wives quarrel only in the field. If, when the maize is ripe, the husband beats one of his wives for any cause she does not go to pick the maize herself, a friend picks it for her. If she goes in her anger she finds the maize finished, nothing but earth is left.

789 Here the link between medicines and morality is made plain.
689 Quarrelling weakens medicines of all sorts and renders them ineffective. But a mimic quarrel between husband and wives in the fields renders the medicine effective. It represents the battle between the pig and the medicines. There is a suggestion elsewhere (pp. 69, 115) that pigs are *ami* by the shades when kinsmen
[778] or neighbours quarrel, but in the account just quoted it is implied that quarrelling in the home directly injures the medicine.

In themselves, many medicines are neutral. They may be
278 put to good or evil ends, but because they are mysterious and
754 powerful, they are feared, in the same sort of way as atomic
789 energy is feared in contemporary society. Men use medicines themselves 'for purely peaceful purposes', but they are shocked at

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Mgonde F317
Hyakyuss

the prospect of their enemies using them. The notion that medicines are a weapon which may be used rightly or wrongly is very clearly brought out in the attitude towards 'making' animals. If a private individual 'maker' lion, or leopard, or crocodile which kill men that is sorcery—there is no question about it—and we heard of at least one man who had been driven from his home because he was reputed to have made leopards which killed children and cattle,[1] but when Mwakyonde 'made' lions which drove off pig and did not attack men, that was a public service (*vide* p. 62). And when one chief sent lions in his conflict with another the action is felt to be comparable with war, rather than murder. In February 1957, four lions were hunting in a piece of bush country near the salt lick, which two chiefs claimed. Mwamunhwe, a chief from the hills, had sent some of his men to clear fields in the bush, but Mwakaglo (yo, or his heir), the neighbouring chief, objected saying, 'This is my land.' There was a long case and finally the District Officer gave judgement in favour of Mwakaglo and refused Mwamunhwe any compensation for his work in clearing the bush. 'You got a crop for your labour,' he said. Mwamunhwe was incensed by the judgement and grew even more angry when his men elected to remain on the land they had cleared and became men of Mwakaglo. So, everyone said, Mwamunhwe had sought medicines and created these lions. They killed seven cattle in a few days, attacking even by daylight. 'Yes,' we were told, 'there are always lions in the bush, but they do not ordinarily kill cattle as they have done now.'

Another chief who tried the same sort of thing was not so successful. 'Some time ago the chief Mwakila made elephants, he turned his wives into elephants and they are the humans of Malapula, but Malapula said, "Let's try", and he created much rain which poured down on to the elephants and those wives died. Thus Mwakila was defeated. How about you Europeans? Have you this custom? Do you turn a wife into an animal?'

'No!'

[illegible]

lion which roars, it roars and eats people.'[2]

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 104.

[2] This, and the tale of a young man fleeing from justice who obtained a medicine to turn himself into a lion, were the only accounts of lycanthropy we heard—usually the medicines themselves (such as those of a chief) turn into animals, or the young of ordinary lion, leopard, or crocodile 'smell the medicines' and become attached to the 'owner' who feeds and commands them.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F327 Ngonde F327
Nyakyusa

A second class of medicines is not neutral at all, but itself selects between right and wrong. The most famous is the *mwaf* ordeal which is used to reveal the truth. The *mwaf* poison was formerly administered by a doctor,[1] before witnesses, and the innocent were believed to vomit almost immediately, while the guilty did not vomit at all, or were slow to do so, and fell ill, some even dying. Nowadays *mwaf* is administered only in the greatest secrecy, but various minor methods of divination, all of which turn on the correct use of medicines, are in common use. The 'divination with porridge' has been described (*vide supra*, p. 108). The medicine added to it is spoken of as 'a kind of *mwaf*'. Another method is to rub an inverted wooden cup on a smooth board. Questions are posed, as to the porridge. When the answer is 'no' the cup slips; when the answer is 'yes' the cup sticks. Sometimes a stick of mutiki wood is rubbed on the ground in place of the cup on the board, and there are half a dozen other methods using bells, horns, segments of bamboo, a pipe, or boiling water. In each case virtue lies in the medicines added to the porridge or rubbed on to the cup or stick, and into scarifications in the diviner's hands. An ordinary man who has not been treated cannot use the instruments, and porridge without 'mwaf' is useless.

Certain medicines used for protection and to wreak vengeance, are also thought to be selective, and to injure only the guilty. These are horns, owned by doctors. Mwanjesi (who came of a family of doctors) told us:

> My father had a water-buck horn filled with medicines and ointment, as a protection against witches. He used it, like other doctors, for burning the grass, for burning the rubbish heaps before planting millet, and for protecting a child. Where the millet crops are poor, people say the witches have eaten it, and the next year the chief sends for the doctor and his protection horn. . . . He comes and makes fire and covers the cinder with ointment from his horn, and each pile of weeds is lit from that fire. . . . He sends some to the chief to fire the grass for Crab grazing. Then there is much milk, the cows that eat that grass give much milk for the witches may away and neither eat the millet nor disturb the cows, for with a child. If a woman has lost many children and has one left, he calls the doctor to come with his protection medicine (*ifyanga*) and treat the child with medicines from his horn as a protection against witches. My father used the same horn for all these things.

[1] For a description of the procedure, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 113-6, 240-2.

9: Wilson R-5 (1934-1935) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

If a man has quarrelled with a kinsman, or is conscious of having bitter enemies, or hears that someone with whom he has had a dispute has 'gone to the doctors', he is likely to go to a horn doctor for protective medicine, even though he is perfectly well. [317] [178]

'The horn' is believed to discover and punish the guilty whether they are known to the injured or not, but if someone uses it without just cause the medicine will recoil on himself. The seven cases of using the horn reported to us[1] were all used in revenge: two for theft, two for seduction, and three for withholding cattle due. And it is revenge that was emphasized in one account of the treatment: [319] [317] [319]

If someone has stolen my cow I go to a doctor and pay him a bull. Then he prepares the medicine (the horn) and stands facing it, with a spear over his shoulder, pointing towards it, and he speaks aloud saying: 'So-and-so, if you have not taken the cow you will recover, if you have eaten it you will die.' Then the breath (mkupe) goes to the man named and if he has really stolen the cow he dies. . . . [441]

But another informant, listing the contents of a 'horn', stressed the protective element. It contains 'the bile of a crocodile, the skin of a python, and injifiele medicine (*vide* p. 38) which has been used to kill men' . . . [178]

If a witch comes to throttle and kill you then the bile of the crocodile throttles and strikes him (the witch), and the injifiele does the same, it is to kill the witches, it spears those who come to throttle you. The skin of the python means that if people come to throttle you they find you have changed yourself into a python.

Another type of vengeance magic, ifupa, is thought to work only between blood relatives.

If your father-in-law is angry it is your children he kills, not yourself. If the diviner says the disease comes from the woman's side of the family the protective medicine is given only to her, not to the man; if from his side only he is protected, not the wife. The relative who is angry divides a medicine; he puts a barbed spear into the fire and when it is red hot he dashes a banana sucker with it and speaks the name, then the kinsman who is mentioned dies. [178]

A third type is that used to secure property (ubwinga) and more thieves or adulterers; for the exclusive rights of a husband over his wife are treated as property rights. Often a medicated stick is placed in a field to ward off thieves, and some husbands [185] [187]

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. [illegible].

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1939
F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

[76] are said to give their wives a medicine (without their knowledge) which will cause any man who lies with them to fall ill
[77] of gonorrhoea or some other venereal disease. Many Christians
[78] believe in this medicine and some inquired whether Europeans did not use it also. One family of doctors are specialists in it:

[79] The sons of Mbeyela are very famous, they are great doctors. People fear them very much. No one can steal anything belonging to them or run off with their wives. If a man runs off with a wife of theirs, he will return their wife and pay. . . . Because when he has slept with the woman by night they stick in each other's mantle, the woman sticks in the face of the man and he likewise in hers. And if rain falls by night the roof comes off the hut in which they sleep and the rain enters. Perhaps the man quarrels with the woman, perhaps frogs and snakes are numerous, perhaps guards sprout in the house—sometimes they sprout bringing evil. So it is also if a man has run off with the wife of another and the husband goes to the sons of Mbeyela. They agree to work, but he must pay them.

[80] Lyandilako, whose husband's family have owned a 'horn' for generations, was very insistent that vengeance magic maintained law and order for it could injure only the guilty. 'A thief feared to steal lest he be caught by my father-in-law (Mwaisyelage). He feared the horn if he used sorcery. He feared to seize another's cow thinking, "They will go to Mwaisyelage".'
[81] And protective medicines which cause an adulterer to fall ill of gonorrhoea, or a thief to die, are considered perfectly legitimate; the misfortune would not have befallen the man unless he had done wrong.

[82] The prohibition by the government of the *mwafi* oracle has troubled people. Medicines are admittedly dangerous, but it is held that Europeans 'encourage' witches and sorcerers by forbidding the use of the one effective weapon against them, and doctors with vengeance magic or other strong medicines 'fear the face of the *mwafi* doctors'. There is an inescapable contradiction here, the Nyakyusa relying on *mwafi* and vengeance magic as [illegible] and the Europeans punishing any doctor found administering poison, or intimidating people by threats. Furthermore, it is widely believed that Europeans themselves use strong medicines made up with blood. Any Europeans
[83] without an obvious occupation are suspect of being abnormalists, who go around killing people and taking their blood for the Government to use for medicines. One of our European friends,

9: Wilson E-5 (1954-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

a missionary, was warned by her servants before Godfrey Wilson's 759
arrival in her neighbourhood 'not to go out at night as there were 771
abagandalu about, sent by the Government to kill people and take 779
their blood', and women going for firewood made a long detour 116
to avoid his camp. One was overheard asking when she caught sight of him: 'Is that the man who kills people?' Angumbwike explained that, since all really strong Nyakyusa medicines contained human blood, it was argued that European medicines, which were so powerful, must contain it also. 'They follow their own customs.'

It seems obvious to the Nyakyusa that Europeans must have strong medicines because their confidence and success are so great. Moreover, it is held (in theory) that they are immune to attacks from witchcraft. X, who had been a clerk and lost his job, and was bitter, expanded on this:

People say that Europeans have *ingilelela* (*ante* p. 58), see they are brave, they do not fear, if someone seizes a spear they do not fear, they just come to him, they are very brave. And also the witches say that they are unable to choke Europeans. When we hear people boasting of their magical power (*amangi*) we always say to them: 'But if that is so, go and choke a European, show us!' Then they always say, 'Oh no, we can't do that, when we go to a European house at night we find it all lighted up and flaming, we can't get near them.' I think [778]
this is the power of the Holy Spirit which you Europeans have.

He came of a well-known family of doctors and perhaps spoke from first-hand knowledge. He just laughed at the suggestion that the light might come from lamps. But the fact that Europeans were held to be immune did not prevent our servants and friends [755]
attributing our recurring attacks of malaria to witchcraft.

(*c*) DOCTORS

Among the Nyakyusa, as perhaps in every society, the doctors 791
with the greatest reputation are those at a distance, and a high proportion of the practitioners in the country are of foreign lineages, their fathers, or grandfathers, or great-grandfathers having come in, bringing medicines with them, and begun to practise. In fact, we were assured that there were no Nyakyusa doctors who were famous, they were all Sangu, or Kinga, or Kisi, [450]
or from Ngonde or Mlanda in Nyasaland, but detailed investigation proved this to be false. The trade in medicines from a dis- [378]
tance is a very old one and continues today. As we have seen, [459]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

791 (ap)fele comes from west of Ngonde, or east of the Kinga; mwaf
[99] came from 'Nyamland'; medicine for fertility of the fields from
[278] Mtuka which is rich in food; war medicine from the Sangu and
[498] Kinga. Whether neighbouring people get medicines from Ba-Nyakyusa we do not know—no one ever suggested it, but it is likely that they do.

Since foreign doctors and medicines have the highest reputation
[77] new treatments are welcomed. This is where the practice of medicines differs radically from the rituals directed to the shades in which the charter is tradition, and any deviation must be justified. But the willingness to accept something new did not lead to any systematic experiment, or any regard for experiment as such.

791 Anyone who chooses, and can pay the fees, can become a
278 doctor by apprenticing himself to a practitioner of repute, but it is very noticeable that the majority of well-known doctors come from families of doctors, the medicines being passed down from one generation to the next and sometimes taught to wives as well. Lyandilicko, who has often been quoted, was taught certain medicines by her husband, and had a large practice. The diviners we knew were all men, but many women know a number of medicines. Once in practice, a doctor may add to his knowledge by buying a medicine from a fellow practitioner or exchanging medicines with him. One doctor we knew had paid two bulls for the secret of his protective medicine (*umbete gwe ipinge*). The teaching includes what plants or other ingredients to collect and how to 'cook' them, *i.e.* what to mix together and what quantities to use. As elsewhere in Africa, it is the material substance, usually vegetable, which is held to be important in any treatment. The spell—the words addressed to the medicine—is of little significance except that when vengeance magic is prepared the man on whose behalf it is done may say the name of his enemy (if he knows his identity) and state his own innocence in a phrase like the following: 'Return this medicine, thou Kyala, I have done no wrong whatsoever to cause me to be killed; if he says he will kill me let him die.'

The doctor (*ingange*) who 'knows medicines' is distinguished
791 from the priest or officiant (*ungange*) who knows how to conduct a
793 ritual directed to the shades or heroes. The *ungange* uses medicines in celebrating rituals, and he or she may be able to collect and prepare plants himself, but he sometimes has to apply to a doctor

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for an appropriate medicine, and his main function is organizing the observances. 791 793

(d) SYMBOLISM

In the field of medicine imagination runs riot, and associations are unpredictable. The ingredients of most medicines are professional secrets and unknown to the user who takes the concoction on trust from his doctor, and inquires no further. Therefore the study of medicine is not linked to the study of social relationships in the same manner as is the study of ritual, for the symbolism of medicines is individual and free, whereas the symbolism of ritual is common and obligatory. 278 789

Nevertheless, the imagination of doctors works within the general symbolic system, and such knowledge as we have indicates that many of the associations made are similar to those used in ritual. In medicine, as in the rituals of kinship, one type of banana stands for a male, another for a female, a banana sucker represents a kinsman, a sprouting shoot conception. Smithing and [§31] cotton are felt to be alike, and the molten iron that trickles out of a [§26] forge is linked with menstrual blood. Hair stands for growth, and a bald pate a devastated field. A ring, or circumambulation, implies a protecting fence. Pythons, crocodiles, leopards, and lions stand [§25] for power and majesty, spears and thorns for attack; vomiting and [§27] emptiness for innocence, spitting for forgiveness. There is colour symbolism in medicines (though we know little of it save that the [§22] *ikpili* which stands for the blood of the lineage is red, or reddish brown), and auditory symbolism, the rumble of thunder and the groaning of a bellows being identified. Men mime that which they wish to avoid, as well as that which they desire; like things are antagonistic as well as sympathetic. No doubt a laborious study of prescriptions would reveal further general principles of association, as well as the range of individual imagination, but such a task has yet to be undertaken.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XI

NYAKYUSA COSMOLOGY

772 We can now piece together, from myth and ritual, the traditional Nyakyusa view of their universe. They have no elaborated system of ideas and the synthesis which follows is more systematic than any uneducated Nyakyusa would formulate.

773 The origin of men was a 'dark house', located high on the Livingstone plateau, and from here the Nyakyusa themselves, and people familiar to them, are thought to have sprung, but there is a hint of the first of the heroes having come 'from the north', and there is also the contradictory notion that the heroes were creators. 'It was Kyala who made us in the beginning with iron ore'; 'Kyala [774] is the smith who forges us'; 'Mlusi is the smith who forges us'; 'Lwembe made Mumbi out of clay to be the father of commoners'. But all are agreed that Lwembe (or Mlusi) was the ancestor of the chiefs and no clear distinction is made between creator and progenitor.

Crops and animals and fire were distributed by the heroes. Of their first creation or invention there is no tale for, though Lwembe created animals, he was already a herd-boy when he did so. Moreover, the 'owners of the soil' in the Nyakyusa valley had some crops before Lwembe came bringing them others, together with cattle and fire; but which were the indigenous crops of the valley and which the new is not discussed. If contradictions between the various myths are pointed out they are explained, like divergences in ritual, in terms of differing origin: 'It is the Lambya people to the west who say that cattle came out of an anthill, and the Nyakyusa proper who say they were brought by Lwembe', and so on. Differentiation is epitomized and accounted for by the separation of lineages.

775 The heroes had a creative force in their own persons, which is inherited by their descendants, the divine kings, and, in a lesser degree, the chiefs; as in Egypt 'the King's potency is felt in the very body and person of each of his subjects'.[1] That potency is partly innate in the royal line, but it is nourished by the use of medicines of which the greatest are reserved to rulers. Vigour is

[1] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, p. 6n.

[p. 154]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

thought to be embedded in the visibly growing parts of the body of a chief, and the horrifying practice of plucking out the hair and nails of a dying man is an assertion of the value of vitality, energy, force of personality in a leader.

The separate origin of chiefs and people, and the reciprocity between them, are constantly emphasized. Among many primitive peoples a myth of common origin is the charter for unity, and foreign lineages are linked by some fiction to the dominant line; but among the Nyakyusa it is the reciprocity between cultivators and cattle-owners, between 'owners of the soil' who ate their food raw and immigrants who brought with them cattle and fire, which is the basis of unity. The chiefs (like the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers or the Voortrekkers) speak of themselves as having brought civilization to a savage land, but they acknowledge the contribution of the previous 'owners of the soil' in a way in which the white Americans and South Africans do not. Characteristically, the dichotomy of chiefs and commoners is couched in terms of descent, but in fact this is a fiction, for the younger sons of chiefs join the ranks of the commoners, and the mother of a chief is often of commoner origin.

The complementary character of the economies of chiefs and commoners is matched, in belief, by a balance in mystical power. The divine kings have an innate creative power while the commoners have pythons in their bellies with which to destroy their enemies. It sounds like a myth of good and evil put about by the chiefs, but we never heard it expressed in that way even by Kaisile, who so feared and hated the commoner priests. The destructive power of the commoners can be used morally, to maintain the established order, as well as irresponsibly by witches. The constitution was a balance between chiefs and commoners, not a dictatorship. Chiefs maintain their position by feasting their own on beef, and this, the Nyakyusa think, prevents the witches from attacking; saved with meat their pythons 'lie quiet'.

Ultimate power is symbolized by the python, for though the chiefs—like English kings—are commonly associated with lions and leopards, the totem of the grove of Lubaga, and the source of the *ghopla* medicine upon which the potency of divine kings and chiefs depends is a python, like that which lies in the belly of a witch. The most fearful thing of the tropical forest (and the forests on the Livingstone escarpment and Rungwe mountain are but the remains of much greater ones) is a natural symbol for power.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

There is no single supreme power; it lies in the several heroes, in medicines, in witches, and with the shades. Kyala is a hero, a firefather, to whom sacrifices are made, and he is comparable to Lwembe and Kyungu, though he left no direct descendants. The evidence suggests that the names Kyala, Lwembe or Mbasi, Kyungu, and Ngulube were used in the same way in different areas, Kyala being the hero of the north-east shore of the Lake, Kyungu of the north-west, Lwembe of the central Nyakyusa valley, and Ngulube of the scarp edge of the Livingstones. Sometimes informants used Lwembe and Kyala alternatively saying they meant the same thing, although, as we have noted, Lwembe (or Mbasi) was specially associated with cattle, whereas Kyala, who was killed and rose again, only controlled crops, and may perhaps be taken as personifying vegetation. The distinction is in no sense clear-cut, but there is a hint of a cultivating people having been defeated by cattle-keepers with iron weapons, since Kyala was finally killed with a 'razor' (*ulwembe*), and The Razor himself —Lwembe—could not be killed though men tried.

In their creative aspect the heroes and shades are closely identified: 'Kyala creates desire'; 'the shade rouses up in the belly when a woman conceives'; 'Kyala and the shades stand together'. Kasitile said:

> Lwembe . . . makes a child. I lie with a woman; Lwembe is there, he works. Sometimes, if he is angry he works badly and a leg is missing, or the woman has a miscarriage. Sometimes he works well. Lwembe goes about looking upon the mothers; he is in my bellows (i.e. in my will). It is he who came from BuKingo . . . and wished first to build at Nsamba's (i.e. where Nsamba go now lives). He failed there and went to Kasambala's and failed there and he seized Lubaga. All is his. A child is his and a cow, and the iron which the Kings make is his, and food is his. . . . He is in a bull and a man. Where do you get the 'blood' (to beget a child)? Are you alone? . . . No, the Kukwen do not know Lwembe, but the people of the plain do, they are one with us.
>
> QUESTION: And Kyala?
>
> KASITILE: He is there, Kyala and Lwembe are together among us and the people of the plain. It is Lwembe who creates twins. You do not. Who has made your body? Who has created you? Who has given you strength and breath so that you are born, and live, and grow up, and marry? It is Lwembe and Kyala together.[1]

[1] cf. J. Buss, 'Die Dreikinggeburt bei den Nyakyusa', *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, [illegible], pp. 1948; 'Aus dem Leben von Angehörigen Nkolongo', *Zeitschrift für Eingeborenen-Sprachen*, Band xxxv (1944), p. [illegible].

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The shade is the principle of life represented by seed, or the root of a banana, or a tree growing by a grave;[1] the hero embodied a vital force which caused grain to sprout and clay cattle to breathe. The line between a hero, the shade of one of his successors, and the shade of a chief is a very faint one. They all have power over people other than their descendants and are approached by hereditary priests. As some elderly men of Ngonde put it: 'The nobles, not the living Kyungu, go to the groves of the Kyungus to pray; they go because the Kyungus who have died are shades to us all (*bo bapyala bets twese*).' 769 775 [793]

The heroes had miraculous power but it differed in degree, rather than in kind, from that possessed by their descendants. Like that of the divine kings and chiefs it lay both in their own bodies and in medicines, especially the *fagila* which is still used by chiefs. [778]

Kyala and Lwembe dwell 'beneath' (*pasi*) with the shades, as opposed to 'above' (*kumwepe*), which implied traditionally 'on earth' not 'in the sky'. There is no hint of a sky god in the traditional system, and the distinction between black and white offerings, which the early missionaries took to be a distinction between offerings to the shades and to a sky god,[2] was unequivocally interpreted by the priests in another fashion. The white (*mawele*) offering to Kyala or Ngulube is a symbol not of purity, but of an unclouded sky, and the numinous quality of the heroes is conceived of as contamination, not holiness. Like the shades, the heroes must be 'driven off' lest men go mad, and it is when they have driven them away that men are *kala*—white, innocent, free of anger. Men should be *kala* but this is never cited as an attribute of the pagan Kyala. It is the terribleness, not the goodness or purity of God of which the Nyakyusa are aware. This is underlined by the fact that a madman who, 'when he comes home rushes off', and 'does not see that his fellows are human beings,' and who 'has a loose heart' (i.e. is passionate and quarrelsome), or 'whose heart curls up like a leaf in the sun, or turns upside down', is called 'Mlosa' or is said to have been 'caught hold of by Kyala'. 775 769 [753] [828]

Kyala is one hero among others but, as has been shown, the name is also used in the sense of 'the lord'. Kyala as 'the lord' of a commoner or junior kinsman is distinct from Kyala the hero with his own place in a genealogy and his own shrine. The difference

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. [illegible], [illegible] *et passim*.
[2] P. Fülleborn, *Das Deutsche Nyasa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet*, pp. [illegible].

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

is illustrated in the references made by priests to the python which appears in Lwembe's grove as *kyala* (*vide supra*, pp. 29, 31). This python is 'the lord', Lwembe.

Nowadays Kyala is spoken of as a first cause—the origin of death, and of social institutions, as well as the creator of life. The current version of the myth of the origin of death begins: 'When Kyala created the country and the people at the beginning there was no death. Then he thought there should be death and life. He asked people to choose between life and death, and they chose life.' And when men are asked the reason for a custom or ritual they may answer 'Kyala made us so', 'Kyala made us black people like that'.

Since Kyala is nowadays regarded as the creator of the natural order he is often blamed for the intractability of things—the log that splits, the lorry that skids. Once a vendor of very small potatoes said, when the buyer complained of the size, 'Kyala gave them to us like this', only to be jeered at by the onlookers who admonished him: 'Had you cultivated better they would have been larger.'

Much of the material quoted is susceptible of the interpretation that Kyala is an overriding power to which the shades, witches, and medicines are subject. 'The medicine will be effective if Kyala wills'; 'rain will fall when the rain-maker soaks his stones if Kyala wills'; 'when the doctor treats the tails they "vomit" (froth over), then if Kyala has helped us the cattle give much milk'. Even in 1933 conservatives like Kasitile sometimes expressed such beliefs, but they did not do so consistently. Their preoccupation was with other forces and acknowledgment of Kyala seemed to be tacked on almost as an afterthought. This came out very clearly in Kasitile's session with the diviner who, fearing the presence of a European, gave 'Kyala' as the cause of Kasitile's disease, and Kasitile rejected the verdict saying: 'Kyala never stands alone.' The influence of Christian teaching on pagan thought was already considerable in 1933—Kasitile added 'Jesus' and 'the Holy Spirit' to the shades invoked—and we believe the mention of Kyala in many of the pagan prayers at that date to have been due to Christian influence. The idea of a supreme power is accepted very readily as an addition to the belief in the shades, the witches, and medicines, though it does not easily replace them altogether. By 1955 the shift in emphasis was clear. Besides Kyala 'the lord' of a commoner or junior, and Kyala the hero who is worshipped at

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

his cave and who, though a creator, is equalled by other heroes and dwells in the bowels of the earth, there was Kyala an ultimate power and first cause, unique and omnipotent, who dwelt in heaven 'above'. The implications of *hamunepe* (above) have changed along with the implications of *Kyala*.

The new balance between the different elements in pagan thought was reflected in everyday speech. In the 1930's men spoke constantly of the shades (*abapuda*), the witches (*abalosi*), and 'the breath of men' (*imbepo ya bandu*); Kyala did not figure much in the conversation of pagans. But in 1955, from the moment when the bus I arrived in skidded off the road and the passengers began assuring each other that *Kyala alimo* (God is present), because no one had been injured, I heard the name constantly. Such a change is hard to prove, but the impression of a marked shift in emphasis was strong.

The conception of the hero Mbasi has also radically altered. During the years before 1914 a man, with two boys in attendance, posed as Mbasi and went round Selya by night, growling in a gruff voice that he was Mbasi, and seizing cattle and fowls and food. He was eventually taken by night, by some Christians, and died after seven months' imprisonment in Tukuyu. Today the Christians never use 'Mbasi' for God, but sometimes identify him with 'Satan', and the pagans use 'Lwembe' rather than 'Mbasi'.

The range of relationships in space was narrow in the traditional Nyakyusa society, and the range of relationship in time was correspondingly so. Only a limited number of chiefdoms co-operated in sacrifice to a hero (and often they seem to have acted separately, rather than in concert), and all historical time was contained in the genealogies depicted. There was a dawn when men are food raw and lived without fire, or cattle, or cloth, but history began when the heroes descended from the mountains, ten or twelve generations ago. Time was telescoped when all the known world lay within 100 miles.

A social revolution occurred once, with the coming of the cloth, but then time stood still, and ever since the heroic age has remained the pattern of right behaviour. Departure from the rituals laid down spells madness and death, for 'Kyala created us so'. Part of primeval reality is the conflict of generations expressed in the myth of the seduction of a young wife by her husband's father, in the rules of avoidance, and in the ritual of the 'coming out'. There is no conversion of fighting on this last occasion (as

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

among some other peoples with a corresponding ritual), but the young men seize cattle belonging to the older generation, thus asserting their authority. The opposition of generations is taken for granted and given expression in constitutional form: the ritual is a celebration not of 'rebellion' but of growth. For all their reluctance to hand over power the fathers 'rejoice and are glad because their sons have grown up'. Change in the structure of society after the revolution of the heroic age, is not celebrated, and is scarcely admitted, but the process of growth, of death and procreation, is expressed in every ritual. Indeed, the ritual cycle is like a fugue with the theme of death and rebirth constantly recurring.

The pagan universe is just and orderly. There is a sanction attached to spilling blood or binding a man with ropes. The anger of men,[1] or of the shades who are roused by men, is what brings most misfortune, and often, the Nyakyusa think, such anger is justified. Even medicines may be selective, injuring only the guilty. The good man who celebrates the proper rituals, fulfils his kinship obligations, and keeps on good terms with his neighbours, is protected, while the evil-doer falls ill. But some evil men, witches and sorcerers, attack the innocent out of jealousy and spite. Evil to the Nyakyusa, lies primarily within men: it is 'anger in the heart' which materializes as pythons that throttle others. Because they are aware of angry impulses in themselves the Nyakyusa find it difficult to believe that any society without witchcraft can exist; to say that there is no witchcraft is like suggesting that there is no ill will or anger in a community. And since anger brings misfortune there is an obligation on those whose anger might have caused sickness or ill luck to express goodwill by spitting or blowing out water, and saying, 'May the patient recover' or 'I am without anger'. Among commoners the man required to show goodwill is usually a senior relative, rather than a suspected witch (as among the *Ankole*). But a neighbour or friend who might be a witch or sorcerer should also express goodwill when he visits the sick, and fellow hunters who have ill luck may stop to declare their goodwill to one another, as we have seen. If a chief or prince-chief is sick the village headmen and priests must wish him well and confess any anger they have felt towards him. The blowing out of water is a symbol of confession, 'bringing

[1] For a full account of the belief in witchcraft and the 'wrath of man', cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 91-100, 138-60.

Wilson E-5 (1954-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

out all the anger that is within', 'admitting that I have done wrong', begging pardon (*ubupolepe*) and *also a symbol of emission* and so of driving off the shades (*vide supra*, pp. 104, 108-110; 135). Good health depends upon good social relationships, and of one who is ailing it is commonly said: 'It seems as if they (unspecified) had hated her.' Further, the proper working of the natural order is held to depend upon the proper working of the social order. Drought, or 'cold', or pestilence falls on a chiefdom if there is quarrelling between chief and priests, and the anger of the Lwembe with his 'sons' will shrivel the crops of Selya. The heroes, the shades, many of the men of power (*abamanga*), and many medicines help to maintain an orderly universe; only the witches and sorcerers work against it. In short, order and right living are an integral part of Nyakyusa religion as they are of Christianity.

The ultimate good is the power of fertility, of generation, which lies in the heroes and shades; the punishment for evil-doing is ill-health of body or mind and mortality. And towards the heroes and shades, who are both life-givers and avengers, the attitude of men is clearly ambivalent: the shades are driven away—'let them warm themselves over there in the long grass', men say when they throw out the ashes (*vide supra*, pp. 109-14) but they bring them home again to 'warm themselves by the hearth'.

In analysing the rituals of the Nyakyusa, I have been driven to the conclusion that they are, in fact, dogged by a sense of guilt,[1] for this is the only hypothesis on which the linking of misfortune and sin, the preoccupation with 'filth', and the recurring acts of purification can be explained. One of the sources of this sense of guilt is, I suggest, awareness of anger within, for it is believed that such anger injures others. An act of confession is essential to many rituals, and what must be confessed are anger, hard thoughts, ill will against others. The anger is acknowledged to come primarily from men—it is the angry parent who rouses the shades to action by muttering over the fire—but the guilt, the filth, is projected on to the shades or the heroes. It is when they 'bound on' men that men are contaminated. A shade or a man that is upright—good, righteous—is one without a grudge, without anger against anyone, free of witchcraft, and free of sex transgression—'there is no accusation against him'.

[1] Analysed this section, cf. 'Nyakyusa Ritual and Symbolism', American Anthropologist, [illegible] pp. [illegible].

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

Sacrifice is offered that a particular shade, or all the shades of the lineage, may be 'satisfied, assuaged'. The word used is ukukolola which is also used of a man who has been hungry and has eaten well of fine food, of a man who has married a bride who pleases him, and of a living father or father-in-law who has been angry but is now pacified. In its applicative form, ukukolola, means to forgive. And the act of sacrifice is an offering, a gift, to the shade strictly comparable to the gift a young man makes to his father when 'begging pardon' for some offence. A son who has committed the most heinous offence of all, seducing one of his father's wives, can 'beg pardon' only by offering a cow; but many smaller offerings are made by juniors to seniors to beg forgiveness for lesser offences.[1] When a cuckolded father receives his son he kills the cow brought to him and eats with his neighbours. It is held to be essential that the living who are insulted (and a man's neighbours are insulted with him) should share in the meat and express satisfaction.[2]

Other conceptions also are, however, manifest in sacrifices. At the offering to a recently dead chief the sacred cut of the meat is divided between the shade, whose portion is placed on the earth near his grave (ideally beside the stone set up at his marriage), and his young grandsons, who are identified with him. The conclusion that this is a communion between the living and the dead is inescapable. At a sacrifice to Lesumbe it is certain of the hereditary priests, and they alone, who may share the sacred cut. At the sacrifices made by private persons the communion between shades and grandchildren is explicit when an offering of fish is made.[3] It is less clear in the sacrifice at a funeral, but is made plain in the eating of grain or bananas with the *ikipili* medicine which symbolizes the lineage. Then the shade is told 'all th- food we have eaten you have eaten . . . farewell.' The communion of sacrifice is indeed but one manifestation of the identification of the participants in a ritual with the shades for, as has been shown in a previous book, the essential character of all the rituals of kinship is a death and rebirth, a death in which the participants—the kinsmen chiefly concerned—are made one with the shades and born anew,[4] and this theme is repeated in the ritual of the 'running out'.

One paradox remains to be clarified. The shades must be

[1] *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 18-9.
[2] *Rituals of Kinship*, p. 18.
[3] *Chief Component*, pp. 103, 140.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 103-5.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

[713]

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unmarried and men should be *mnala*, pure, innocent, without anger in their hearts. Yet, as has been shown, this quality of purity is the very opposite of spiritual power (*amanga* or *ubulogo*). It is attributed neither to Kyala and the other heroes nor to the priests; according to Kaitila (p. 158) a pure person cannot be a commoner priest and the chiefs themselves, though *mnala*—pale—by comparison with the black commoners who are witches, are also 'heavy' (*nzito*) with the medicines they have drunk. Men become *mnala* by confession; 'speaking out' is a condition of efficacy in sacrifice and the officiant blows out water as a symbol of bringing up all the anger that was in his heart. The parents of twins and the priests of Lubaga, having celebrated their awful rituals emerge, crying, "*Tuli bola*"—we are pure. The very quality which rituals produce in men is the opposite of that which characterizes their heroes, their priests, and their rulers. Goliahad whose 'strength was as the strength of ten because his heart was pure' is wholly foreign to Nyakyusa thought.

Truthfulness was never mentioned as a characteristic of the righteous or the pure, nor is it a quality of the heroes or priests. Men censure one another for *ubutengele* which is commonly translated as 'lying', but means rather 'speaking indiscreetly'. In one Nyakyusa test the child who is told certain ritual secrets by his father and reveals them when he should not is *utengele*, and this is an accepted use of the word. No burning concern with truth or falsehood is apparent in the Nyakyusa tradition though they are passionately interested in what they consider to be right and wrong.

The conception of witchcraft and sorcery implies a freedom, a choice of good or evil, for the individual. Much is determined. In Nyakyusa thought, the sins of the fathers are visited on the children, and a child may fall ill because his great-grandfather shed blood or was bound with ropes, and was not adequately cleansed, or because his father has neglected a ward; moreover, kinsmen are 'members one of another', and a ritual neglected by one may bring suffering to others; but there is also the notion of individual responsibility. A witch or sorcerer acts consciously and voluntarily—our informants scouted the idea of a witch being unaware of his actions—and he may repent and desist. There are now, periodically in Africa, 'revivalist' movements in which a pagan doctor or diviner urges men to throw away their evil medicines and repent from their witchcraft. One such movement

9: Wilson R-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

[76] [71] [77] [166] [78] swept through BuNyakyusa in the early 1900's; perhaps other similar movements preceded it—we do not know. What is clear is that traditionally there was continuous public pressure to overcome hatred within the village and the kinship group; to rid oneself of it by confession and an expression of goodwill. In pagan thought Utopia is a society without witches or sorcerers and, though it was never achieved, everyone is convinced that formerly these evil-doers were fewer than now, because they were restrained by law, whereas 'witches' now go scot-free.

The interests of the Nyakyusa are personal and practical. [15] Health, fertility, and amity between kinsmen and neighbours are what they seek. It is with rain and drought, with the rise of [77] the Lake or the striking of lightning which destroys property, with stock, crops, and the wild animals which prey upon them that the myths are concerned. We could trace no tales of the sun, moon, and stars, and no rituals are directed to them. Reference is made to volcanic disturbance in the myths of the heroes—'the ground rumbled' when Nkolele and Kyala walked, and there are stories of small lakes disappearing and reappearing elsewhere—but the concern shown is surprisingly little if an eruption indeed destroyed villages last century as Mr. Harkin's single informant suggests (*vide supra*, p. 18).

Reality is thought to be revealed to men in dreams, by prophets [76] who 'go down thinking like the roots of a tree' to the world of the [77] shades, and by oracles. What men seek to know are the causes of misfortune—public and private—and the identity of witches. Occasionally, it is said, a prophet has looked into the future and foretold drought, or flood, or the coming of Europeans—'white things on the Lake'—against whom it would be foolish to fight, but for the most part they are concerned with the misfortunes [163] that exist, and urging men to pray to the gods. The contemplative is not honoured in Nyakyusa tradition; the man of spiritual power is a detective—a discoverer of evil-doers—or an administrator whose subjects abide to his authority.

Men are preoccupied with their relationships to other living [15] men—their kinsmen, neighbours, and fellow office-holders—[77] and with their dead fathers. They are not concerned with their relationship to Kyala. The rituals celebrated by kinsmen are directed to the shades not to any supreme God, and it is quarrelling between kinsmen that angers the shades and makes the celebration of certain rituals necessary. The communal rituals are

9 Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

directed towards harvest who are also fertilizers, and it is quarrelling between chiefs and priests or village headmen that disturbs the natural order and causes disease and failure of crops. Kaitile was a famous priest, a man of perception, more than usually aware of the deeper implications of the rituals, but he never spoke of any personal relationship with Kyala, and he brushed aside the diviner's suggestion that his sickness was due to Kyala. He was dogged by a sense of guilt which, in pagan terms, could be redeemed only by sacrifice to his father and persuading his fellow priests to 'speak out' and admit their anger against him. Only when he was referring explicitly to Christian doctrine did he hint at redemption by Kyala (*vide supra*, pp. 108-9, 141). The genius of Nyakyusa religion is an awareness of the corrupting power of 'anger in the heart' and the necessity of confession and reconciliation if men are to be healthy in mind and body; they have no developed conception of God comparable to that of the Nuer. To them it is not 'the first and greatest commandment' which is familiar but 'the second which is like unto it'.

183
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[opp. p. 166]

[illegible], FOUNDER OF A COPERATIVE CHURCH

COÉ. [illegible], LEADER OF THE [illegible] NATIONAL CHURCH

FOR REFERENCE USE ONLY

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Author: [illegible]
Title: [illegible]
Date: [illegible]
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9: Wilson E-S (1934-1935) 1935
F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XII

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

(a) THE GROWTH OF A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

[p. 147] When the arrival of European missionaries at the end of the nineteenth century[1] a new set of religious ideas was introduced and a new form of social grouping established. The early missionaries settled on land which they bought from various chiefs and gathered round them workers and refugees—the survivors of disorder in neighbouring areas—many of whom gradually became converts. In Ba'Nyakyusa a new type of village, a Christian village, was established on mission land and the converts who occupied it were largely withdrawn from the authority of the chief, looking instead to the missionary as their leader. In Ngonde the development was rather different. The converts were not gathered on mission land but stayed in their own villages, where they were expected to spread the gospel among their neighbours. The difference was partly due to a difference in policy between the Scottish mission operating[2] in Ngonde, and the Moravian and Lutheran[3] missions operating in Ba'Nyakyusa, but it was also conditioned by differences in the history of the two areas. In Ngonde the missionaries became the allies of the Ngonde against the Arab slavers, whereas in Ba'Nyakyusa there was no such alliance. The Scottish mission deliberately sought to convert and train the traditional leaders, and so gain the whole community, whereas the Moravians and Lutherans preferred to withdraw their converts from the surrounding pagan community.[4]

[p. 148]

The number of converts increased much more rapidly in Ngonde than in Ba'Nyakyusa, but after forty years of missionary activity the structural pattern was growing similar. More and more

[p. 149]

[1] For an account of the first contacts of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde with Europeans, and bibliography, see L. M. Mentzel Wilson, *Ciwa Cinyanya* (pp. 8-11, 1938).

[2] The Livingstonia Mission of the Free Church of Scotland which later united with the Church of Scotland. I shall refer to it as Ngonde or Free Church.

[3] The Berlin Society (Berlin 1).

[4] For an admirable account of the development of mission policy in East Africa, see Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (1952). Dr. Oliver describes the withdrawal of converts as a mission method as typical of the first phase of mission activity and this is true for the Moravian and Lutheran missions, but Christians in Ngonde were never so withdrawn.

[p. 166]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1935
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142
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N Wilson R-5 (1934-1935) 1959
F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

of the Nyakyusa converts chose to live, not in Christian villages on mission land, but in Christian sections of pagan villages—often grouped round a school—and after the establishment of Indirect Rule in 1928 the independence of Nyakyusa living on mission land from the authority of chiefs was no longer recognized officially, though in practice they were not regarded as chiefs' men in quite the same way as other people when it came to calling up conscripts for labour service. One of the signs of the difference between pagan and Christian in relation to the chief is that Christians are not punctilious about sending to the chief the customary cut (the breast) of every animal killed, as are pagans, and even the most conservative do not fear the 'wrath' of their neighbours if they neglect the tribute.

After the war of 1914-18 three new missions were established in the Nyakyusa valley: the White Fathers, the Benedictines, and the Pentecostal Holiness Association. Two churches of purely African origin emerged: the Last Church of God and His Christ, commonly called the Sabbatarians after its leader, and the African National Church led by Paddy Nyamwi, which flourished in Ngonde and had a few members across the Songwe in Ba-Nyakyusa. And there was a small group of 'Watch Tower' with Nyakyusa leaders, but acknowledging a vague affiliation with a Watch Tower mission in Northern Rhodesia, and corresponding with the Watch Tower office in Cape Town, from which they obtained literature. As the publications were were in English or Nyanja, neither of which the local Watch Tower members could read,[1] and the correspondence was also in English, the link was a tenuous one, but Rutherford's apocalyptic pamphlets, prophesying a speedy judgement on 'the great chief', were carried about enormously.

Therefore, by 1933 there were a number of different religious associations, more or less closely connected. The Moravians, Lutherans, and Church of Scotland worked in different areas and co-operated closely; but between them and the Roman Catholics and Pentecostal and the purely African or 'independent' Churches there was little co-operation and sometimes tension. The great bulk of the Christians (94 per cent) belong to the three long-established missions—Moravian, Lutheran, and Church of

[1] Ellenwell's Witnesses. For an account of the cause and international organization of the denomination, see Harold Horne, Christian Dominion, 1933, p. 1944, pp. 63-8.

[2] The question was called upon a million and a quarter.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

Scotland—and it is with their organization that we are primarily concerned.

Each denomination is divided into congregations, local groups living in villages surrounding a central Church which usually has its own pastor or minister—European or African—in charge, though the shortage of men and funds after 1914 meant that one minister was sometimes in charge of two congregations. For the fifteen congregations of the three Churches mentioned there were eleven ministers in 1935, three of them Africans, and the congregations varied in size from just over five to 3,000 members. They included communicant members—that is, adults who had been baptized, and the children of Christians who, after having been baptized in infancy, were confirmed during adolescence—children of Christians who had been baptized but not yet confirmed; 'hearers' and catechumens who were undergoing a two or three years' period of instruction before baptism, and members under discipline who, because of some serious breach of Church law were not, for the time being, admitted to communion. Women members outnumbered the men by more than three to one in the congregations in Ngonde (where many men were away as labour migrants) and by three to two in the Moravian congregations in Ba-Nyakyusa.

The functions of the congregation are worship, evangelization, religious instruction, and sometimes, general education and welfare. Each congregation chooses elders from among its members and they, together with the minister, form the 'Session' or Church Court which deals with matters of discipline and administration within its area, as well as discussing matters of Church policy which may later be brought up before a higher court or council.

Both men and women are eligible for office as elders, but their duties are somewhat different. Each male elder is in charge of the Christians in a given area, usually those living in one age-village. He organizes services in the village, often taking them himself, and choosing suitable people from among the outsiders to help him. He instructs candidates for baptism, holding the weekly classes for 'hearers' and catechumens; he visits the sick; above all he must try and compose quarrels among his people. It is customary [illegible] parents for a husband and wife who quarrel to take their dispute to a senior kinsman or to a neighbour; among Christians such disputes are usually taken to the elder, since the Church is immediately concerned in maintaining the marriage bond. The

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

elder watches over the morals of his flock and it is his duty to report to the Session any breaches of Church law among his people. Through him the cards entitling members to attend communion are distributed, and cards are withheld from those whom the Session has agreed must be suspended from membership. Each man has, on the average, 125 people to care for. The women elders organize the women's weekly meetings, and take parties of women on preaching tours in pagan villages. They are the leaders in any charitable activities of the congregation and in the instruction of a Christian girl at her marriage. A woman elder settles disputes between two women, and in family quarrels she is often asked by the elder in charge of the village to help him to reconcile the couple. She is also a supervisor of morals and reports to the local elder if she 'hears any woman speaking like a pagan'. Deacons are elected like elders and are primarily responsible for the collection of Church dues and the administration of Church funds, but in a village in which there is no elder a deacon will carry out some of his duties.

In practice, then, each local group—a Christian village or village section—has its chosen leader, a male elder or deacon who conducts daily prayers in the local school house or his own house, and also fulfils many of the functions of an unofficial village headman, arbitrating in disputes and acting as the spokesman of his village section. The traditional organization of the age-villages, in which an individual had some choice as to the village he should join, and was not bound by kinship connections, makes an adaptation to villages in which those of the same faith live together easy. It is noticeable that the Pentecostal and Watch Tower converts build their own village sections apart from Moravians or Lutherans. And since the traditional village leaders are chosen, not hereditary, it is very easy for a leading Christian to become an unofficial headman, more or less formally recognized by the village headman turned at the 'coming out'.

As few the teachers were more directly under the supervision of the missionary than of the congregation, being selected by him and paid by the mission, but in the middle thirties, when funds from Germany ceased owing to the Moravian and Lutheran missions, the payment of village school teachers fell on the congregations of those denominations. Each village wanting a school had to provide a building, and in this pagans and Christians often co-operated, for many pagans also wanted their children to

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

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9: Wilson E.S (1934-1955) 1959
P307 Ngonde P307
Nyakyusa

largely drawn from overseas also, but a conscious attempt was made to teach members to contribute to their Church. In 1955 10s. a year was expected from a man, 5s. a year from a woman, i.e. four to six days' unskilled labour for a man, or a pot of beer for a woman, at the rates then ruling. Ten cents (1d.) a term was charged for each child in the village schools. Members of the congregation also provided labour for Church building.

The organization of Church government varies somewhat with the denomination. The congregations of the Scottish mission have joined with those of some other denominations to form the 'Church of Central Africa' and, following the mother Churches, they are grouped in presbyteries, composed of the ministers* and three elders of each congregation in a particular area. The various presbyteries of the Church of Central Africa in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia are united in a synod which meets every four years and is the final authority in the Church. The organization of the Moravian congregations is similar; but until 1958 the Lutheran congregations were directly under the European Superintendent who was responsible to the Mission Board in Germany.

In the mission churches the universal aspect of the Church is stressed, and there is an awareness of unity with members of the same denomination outside the local area, with mother Churches in Europe, and with certain other denominations, even among the less sophisticated. In sermons in village churches the fact that their congregations were praying together with congregations of other tribes and denominations was repeatedly mentioned by African preachers. By contrast, the two 'independent' African Churches are local Churches without connexions beyond the north Nyasa area, though they do include members from different tribes.

The African National Church began in 1927, the initial impetus coming from a Nyasa, Gordon Nsomba, who had been for some time in South Africa; another of the pastors was Robert Sambo who had worked with Clement Kadalie (formerly a Labonde Tonga) in the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union in South Africa,[9] but the organizer and leader was a Henga, Paddy Nyasuro, who had never travelled far. He was an ex-teacher and elder of the Church of Scotland Mission and had been a clerk in

* European ministers are numerous only, not full members.

[9] cf. Minutes Nyasa, Sambo v. Gregory, G.O.P. (1928), p. 38.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FM17 Ngonde FM17
Nyakyusa

Government service for a number of years. Most of the members of the Church, and all the office-bearers, were Ilenga, some of them living, like Nyasuru himself, in the Kyungu's country, but there were also a few Ngonde and Nyakyusa.

Silwani Ngomela, the leader of 'The Last Church of God and His Christ', was also an ex-teacher and elder of the Church of Scotland Mission. He was of Ngonde lineage, the son of a minor chief, and had been a member of the Watch Tower, but had broken away from it and formed his own Church in 1917—retaining the practice of baptism by immersion 'in Jordan' which he had learnt from the Watch Tower. He, too, had been closely connected with a man, Jordan Mkumba, who had worked in South Africa; indeed some said that Mkumba, who had been for many years in Cape Town, was the real founder of the Church. Most of Ngomela's members were Nyakyusa or Ngonde.

Nyasuru and Ngomela each emphasized the independence of his Church from any other and each was somewhat jealous of his position as a leader. As Ngomela put it, 'The Governor corresponds with me alone'. To his Church all monies go direct to him, and there had already been a quarrel with one 'pastor' who had split off because he said that the Church funds should be lodged in the Bomu and used to build a school. The BuNgomela had no schools and none of their pastors was paid. Nyasuru made a point of the fact that his deacons collected the Church funds and banked them in the name of the Church, and the African National Church did in fact run several schools (one of them within the Ngonde area) and pay the teachers.

Though the membership of the 'independent' African Churches was not very large (in the Nyakyusa-Ngonde area a total membership of 8,577 was claimed in 1958, but some of these probably lived outside this area), yet these Churches are symptomatic of a movement that has been important elsewhere. Nearly a fifth of the Africans who are professing Christians in the Union of South Africa belong to 'independent' Churches,[1] and a substantial number in Kenya. These Churches are a structural expression of the conflict between Europeans and Africans, and of the desire of Africans to be independent leaders, but yet recognized as

[1] Official Year Book of the Union of South Africa, 1959-60, pp. 1031-1033. See the preceding Year Book Bulletin from 1954 pp. 1030 to 1033 for a full list of the total Native population between 1911 and 1946. Official Summary of the Report of the Commission for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bantu Areas within the Union of South Africa (U.G. 61/1955), p. 171.

St Wilson Z-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

Christians. A revealing phrase was used of Ngonde by one of his followers: 'He is our European.'

Two sets of rituals are celebrated in BaNyakyusa, but there are not two communities. Nearly all the Christians have pagan kinsfolk with whom they co-operate in practical affairs, many of the Christians live in pagan villages, though usually in separate sections of them. In the early years of the mission there was clearly some friction—there were accusations of witchcraft against those who learnt to read and write for if they were not witches how could they have learnt? And there was talk of people 'hiding their witchcraft in Christianity'. Pagans averred that in the land of the shades Christians are frogs—a symbol of difference and dislike oddly familiar to Englishmen. But by 1933 it had become almost conventional for a boy who went to school to become Christian, and if he were to become betrothed to a pagan girl, she was expected to join a catechumen's class and be baptized also. The opposition from pagan kinsfolk was small except in the case of an heir to wealth or office. Then there was bitter objection. For if a young man became Christian he could neither inherit his father's wives nor increase the influence of the lineage in the approved fashion by marrying several wives himself, and much of the family wealth would pass to a junior line. If a commoner were heir to a chieftaincy, or likely to succeed his father as village headman, it was felt that he would not be able to maintain his position with only one wife, and succession to a pagan priesthood was totally impossible.

The Christians, for their part, press their pagan relatives to join them in the Church, and a considerable proportion of conversions occur in this way. It is common for a mother to join her son, or a younger brother his elder brother of the same house. For a father, to whom baptism would mean sending away all his wives save one, the step is a much more difficult one and indeed can ground by some missionaries, who are aware of the difficulties of elderly women so divorced. But whether kinsfolk worship together or not, there can still be unity and friendship.

Thus, in addition to the traditional system of chieftaincy and villages with groups of clerk co-operating to perform sacrifices to common ancestors and certain more distant heroes, there are Christian Churches whose members are organized in local congregations, and presbytery or diocese. The traditional religion expresses the unity of lineages and chieftaincy; the new religion

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F907 Ngonde F907
Nyakyusa

expresses the unity of groups of believers who associate in Churches. But the two systems are not wholly exclusive: the Christian still belongs to a lineage and a chiefdom, though he does not worship as a member of either, and thereby impairs their solidarity.

(2) THE CHRISTIAN WITHDRAWAL

What is the attitude of Christian converts to the rituals performed by their pagan kinsmen and neighbours and what replaces the traditional pagan rituals in the Christian community? These questions have already been touched upon in the accounts of pagan rituals, but we must now consider them more fully.

Christians withdraw very largely from the pagan rituals of kinship which, as we drew in a previous book, are directed to the shades. They attend the funerals of pagan kinsmen to weep and comfort the mourners, and they often undertake the work of grave-digging as fruitful to pagans, but they take no part in the 'farewell to the dead' nor do the sexton among them eat of the funeral meat, since the cattle killed are an offering to the shades. Christians do not participate in the twin ritual which brings together such a large number of pagan kinsmen, nor do they dance in the puberty ritual, and they forbid their daughters to keep a pagan bride company during her seclusion. For the most part their withdrawal is accepted tolerantly by their pagan kin who carry on without them, a pagan father even performing the 'farewell to the dead' for a Christian son who has died, but his lineage shades be angered by the omission, but occasionally the non-participation of Christians leads to strained relations, as when pagans refuse to visit or eat with a bride or a remarried widow who has not celebrated with them after her union with her husband, and sometimes a Church member, under pressure from pagan relations or driven by his own fears, celebrates the ritual for a pagan father. The dropping of the elaborate twin ritual creates surprisingly little difficulty considering how much the pagans fear sickness from twins. Their birth is interpreted by Christians as a special blessing —a bounteous increase—rather than 'an illness' as the pagans call it. A Christian woman, asked if a mother of twins was not fearful when the ritual was omitted, gave a classic reply: 'What she thinks in her heart I can't see; what I think in my heart you can't see; but we do see that no one outside her where they meet her face to face.'

9 Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1959
F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

The negative rituals—the taboos which surround the pre-creative functions—disappear rather slowly, but a Christian father will nurse his wife's hut to great lee after she has given birth to a child, and will not feel cooked by her a week or two later, which the pagans think extremely rude. An atmosphere of scepticism and experiment begins to develop; a few Christians spoke of breaking even the deeply-entrenched taboos surrounding menstruation 'to see what happened'. But that many Christians, especially women, feared the old taboos was apparent when one watched the behaviour of Christian daughters-in-law towards their fathers-in-law. In theory Christians disregarded the rules of avoidance if their fathers-in-law are Christian, or avoid 'only a little', but in practice a Christian woman is usually embarrassed and fearful if, by mischance, she meets her father-in-law face to face.*

Christians withdrew from the pagan communal rituals even more completely than they do from the rituals of kinship. No Christian takes any part in the sacrifices to the heroes, or at the graves of chiefs, or in cleansing the country, or in rain-making, or sprinkling the homesteads. As for the ritual of chieftainship, from that also Christians withdrew. At the time we were free in Ba'Nyakyusa only two chiefs were professing Christians, one of whom was already baptized before his installation. The 'coming out' performed for him was much curtailed since he refused to use the traditional medicines and, because of the difficulty over medicines, Christians were not acceptable as village headmen. In Ngonde, where the proportion of Christians was much greater, there were Christian headmen and chiefs, but the ritual of 'coming out' had disappeared altogether, and the Kyungu had delegated the celebration of all pagan rituals to one of his councillors who still believed in them, he himself being a sceptic.

There are tales of the early missionaries visiting the graves to challenge pagan belief. The pagans believe that they were confounded and some of the more conservative Christians also think that the tower of the grave drove the Reverend — Jones from Lufingo (*vide supra*, p. 19) and that because the Reverend — Elves summoned the teachers and school children to a feast in the grave of Mbyungu, and killed 'a black cow' for them there, a season of plenty followed. 'Many people said: "He seems to have been advised by someone, why did he go to Mbyungu and sing

* See an account of such a meeting of Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 8-9.

9:Wilson E-5 (934-1935) 1959
FMU Ngwale FMU
Ngakyusa

[797] [795] [796] there?" And after he went there was much food.' In fact, it appears that he took the teachers and schoolchildren to the grove that they might no longer be afraid of it: the girls gathered firewood there, and everyone entered and made a noise, thus breaking great taboos. But all this happened long ago (the visit to Mbyangu was in 1913 or 1914) and, as was indicated earlier, the common view among Christians is that pagan rituals *used* to be necessary and efficacious, but are so no longer. We were assured by Christians who themselves took no part in twin rituals that 'formerly people fell ill if they did not celebrate'. 'Yes, of course, they were very sick indeed in the old days, the whole body would swell.' Some even maintained that it was still necessary for pagans to celebrate though not for Christians. A Christian chief explained:

[799] [800] [801] The sacred grove of Mwabibuku is just here in my country; . . . In the old days they used to take a little fresh milk and an unripe ears of bananas, and put them in the grove. . . . The next day the calabash was full of milk and the ears was ripe. This was really so in the old days. Kyala loved men and agreed to their requests in this way. We went to ask for rain and food in the grove; the chief would kill a cow and Kyala agreed, food and rain came. Now that the Gospel has spread, since the Europeans have spread the Gospel to us Kyala refuses to agree, he says: 'Since they are proud and refuse to hear the Gospel I will discipline them', and he refuses to agree to the old ways.

Question: What about witchcraft?

[802] Perhaps there were people who were witches in the old days, at any rate I know that when milk was short and a man was accused to the chief of bewitching the cattle, the chief used to take his cattle and drive him out of the country, and then milk was plentiful again. Of that I am sure.

Question: And now?

No, it is not like that now.

[803] Many pagans attribute the decline in fertility which is taking place, and the decrease in the yield of milk, to the decay of the old communal rituals and the subsequent activities of witches.

Nevertheless, as the number of Christians in an area increases, the pagans tend to curtail their rituals more and more. The direct parallel between pagan ambasha, sacrifice, and communion with the shades, and the Holy Communion of the Christian Church is recognized by many, and one is felt to replace the other. Regarding the rituals of kinship we were repeatedly told: 'We see that the Christians, who say the only rituals are the

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F307 Ngoala F307
Hyelyman

Christian sense, do not celebrate and nothing happens to them, as we no longer fear ourselves.' By 1957 the pagan rituals of kinship had been largely dropped in Ngoala, and around Rungwe mission they were disappearing, though in Isiya no pagan dared neglect them. They were taken more seriously by the women than by the men, and many of the young men were openly sceptical. The young men are eclectic in their beliefs, jeering at the rain ritual when they may be fearful of any neglect of the ritual of death; doubting the power of rain-makers, but terrified of a neighbour's sorcery. 777 [778]

(c) CONVERTED RITUAL AND MYTHS

And what are the alternatives to the traditional rituals? Celebrations at death, marriage, and birth continue—probably some sort of ritual on these occasions is universal in human societies. There is no celebration of a girl's puberty, as among the pagans, but the ritual of confirmation is, in one sense, parallel, for it is an acknowledgment of maturity by the acceptance of an individual into the full fellowship of the Church; but maturity in the Church, and the symbolic death and rebirth, are not necessarily linked with physiological developments, as they are in the pagan ritual of cleansing.[1] [781]

All the Christian rituals are communal in the sense that they are centred in the Church—the Christian community; none is primarily a ritual of healing. This is most pointed at a christening, when a child is received into the fellowship of the Church, whereas in the pagan birth ritual it is acknowledged as a member of the father's lineage by being given digibi medicine (which is 'the blood of the lineage') by its paternal grandmother. Sometimes both rituals are celebrated by Christians who interpret the digibi as an acknowledgment of legitimacy, and a medicine necessary to the child's health, but this is frowned upon by the more orthodox. A dying man is comforted by the prime or elders of the Church, and in some communities he receives the sacraments, the symbol of his salvation through Christ and his membership of the community of believers. At a funeral the members of the local Christian congregation take the leading part, conducting the ceremony with prayers and hymns, digging the grave, and burying the dead. The contrast with a pagan funeral, in which cattle are [782] [783] [784]

[1] The pagan rituals referred to in this section are described in *Study of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*.

St Wilson R-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Nyankye FN17
Nyakyusa

killed that the dead man may be received by the shades of his lineage, and his immediate kin eat dipki medicine with him for the last time, is marked.

Marriages and funerals, and in a lesser degree births, are occasions for gatherings of kinsmen in Western society—such a generalizing study of kinship as *The Purple Sage* bears adequate witness to this—but the gathering of kindred is a conventional rather than a ritual.* The attendance of the Pweyte men at Aunt Anna's burial service is in no way essential to the service, though it is felt to be a mark of respect and 'proper feeling' on their part to come. So also at Nyakyusa Christian funerals, the attendance of relatives and fellow villagers is conventional—people are shocked if they do not come—but the peace of the departed is not thought to depend upon his kinsmen filling over at his grave and celebrating the 'farewell'; the ritual element is the concern of his fellow-Christians, led by the priest or elder, irrespective of kinship connections. The conventions are binding, however. Though a kinsman or village neighbour is not accused of having killed his fellow if he fails to come to the funeral, nevertheless it would cause offence if he did not come, being free to do so, and should he go to work in the fields on the day of the funeral of a grown man, a neighbour, his position would be intolerable.

As a Christian funeral the emphasis all through is on resurrection and life. The hymns sung to comfort the mourners and the prayers and words of the burial service stress resurrection: 'This corruption has put on incorruption, this mortality immortality' . . . 'the body of the flesh is buried, but the body of the spirit rises.' . . . 'Our friend is not dead but lineth.' . . . 'Oh death where is thy sting, oh grave (hayade) where is thy victory?' And the weeping, though encouraged to English ears, is much more controlled than among pagans. Again and again we were told by Christians: 'We do not fear death as the pagans do', and certainly fear is not played up as in the pagan ritual. As one Christian put it: 'We Christians mourn himself with mind; only the pagans fear very much at a death, they are desolate, but we do not fear, we say: "Indeed I shall die, but I shall rise again", so we do not mourn somehow with mind and grieve very much. . . . We say: "Why mind? We shall meet with him above."' And there is no hair shaving or other purification, for the mourners are not identified with the corpse.

* For a literature of the distinction, cf. op. cit., p. 9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1935
F307 Ngwalo F307
Nyakyusa

The corpse is buried in a coffin, if the kinsmen can afford one, but it is still placed in a niche dug in the wall of the grave, which is usually in the homestead, for though cemeteries have been marked out in the Christian villages most families prefer to bury their dead at home. The Lutherans kill cattle, some distance from the grave, to feed the mourners but the Moravians and Presbyterians do not, on the grounds that the pagans believe that funeral cattle go with the dead and if Christians kill they seem to support the belief. Relatives, especially sons-in-law, are expected to bring white cloths in place of cattle to show their sympathy and these are used as a shroud, or to bind the chief mourners' bellies, to support them. And the family provide as much fine food—rice, chicken, groundnuts—as they can, for the mourners. But the crowd is smaller than at a pagan funeral for a man of equal standing, because the pagans crowd to funerals to enjoy the feasting and dancing. The Christians sing, and their hymns change from mournful to cheerful soon after the burial, and on the second or third day the young people may dance a little, but without the wild exuberance that succeeds the pagan passion of grief. Often, however, the funeral is a mixed one. Most Christians have pagan relatives and family obligations are not obliterated by differences in faith. So we sometimes heard drumming alternating with Christian hymns, or saw a war dance succeed the burial service, or a pagan woman honouring her Christian sister by dancing with her grain basket, and providing for her future comfort by burying her cooking-pot and cassavas in the grave. All this the Christian elders present take with tolerance: 'It makes no difference if they choose to do it.'

The wedding celebrations of Nyakyusa Christians are in two parts: there is the solemnization of the marriage in Church and registration by a priest or minister who is a marriage officer, or the blessing of the union by an elder of the Church; and there is the handing over of the marriage cattle accompanied by feasting and dancing and certain other elements of the traditional ritual. The Moravian ministrants are reluctant to celebrate a marriage unless they are very certain of the characters of the bride and bridegroom because of the difficulties and expense of securing a legal divorce if the wife is later deserted by her husband. They prefer that a customary marriage should be blessed by an elder who is not a marriage officer, then, if one partner deserts, a legal divorce is easy.

*297 The initiation and display are most often linked, not to the
*298 Church ritual, but to the handing over of marriage cattle. Since
299 the feasts of the puberty ritual are not celebrated, the Christians
300 concentrate their energies on the shabwa, when quantities of food
are provided by the bride's family, and a crowd gathers to sing
and dance. Then, some time after the cattle have been handed
over, the bride is taken to her husband by a party of 'mothers' and
friends, and a feast is provided by the groom. The pattern is very
similar to that of the pagan handing over of marriage cattle
[518] (shabwa) and bringing home the bride (ukuhola), but new songs
[519] and dances replace the somewhat lewdly pagan ones, and the
Christian youths, unlike the pagans, dance without spears. Often
at a Christian wedding pagans also attend, and there are rival
groups of dancers, pagans, and Christians, between whom quarrels
readily flare up. And when the new songs and dances of the
Christians are copied by the pagans, as they sometimes are, then
the Christians drop them, for they wish to be different.

The traditional consummation of the bride by the 'mothers' and
the giving of a bull if she goes to her husband a virgin, are main-
tained in the Christian community. The bull is usually killed as a
feast for the mothers 'to say thank you for nourishing her', but
there is, of course, no offering of the sacred meat to the ancestors,
and sometimes the bull is not killed at all, or the groom brings
shillings instead. As so often happens, a former ritual survives as
ceremonial, an observance felt to be specially appropriate to the
occasion, but no longer regarded as a condition of health or
salvation.

When she is taken to her husband the bride is coloured by her
[519] 'mothers' on her duties as a married woman. The traditional
emphasis on separation from her mother is still there: 'You have
left your mother, your husband is your mother, we have separ-
ated. . . .' And she is coloured to be chaste, to obey her husband
and answer him submissively, to be clean and diligent in her
work, to be hospitable, and above all, as a Christian, to fear 'those
from a distance'. Here the contrast between pagan and Christian
ethics is emphasized: a pagan wife is only obliged to cook for
kinsmen and neighbours, not strangers, but for a Christian to let
a stranger starve is spoken of as a mortal sin.

*297 The sexual festivals of the Church are not so closely parallel to
*298 pagan commercial rituals, for they were developed in a northern
299 and temperate climate with a rhythm very different from the

St Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FMU? Ngonde FMU?
Nyakyusa

succession of 'sun', 'rain' and 'cold' into which the Nyakyusa year is divided; but there are parallels in the traditional prayers for rain, and so sunshine and harvest, which the Christians are quick to point out. What is totally new to the Nyakyusa is the division of a year into weeks, each with a day of rest and worship; but the conception once introduced has been accepted very quickly, and it is common to find pagans as well as Christians refraining from work in their fields on a Sunday. This is partly the effect of experience in European employment where Sunday is a day off, but partly, perhaps, it is because the idea of taboo is deeply [448] embedded in pagan thought, and the teaching of some missionaries and converts has been in terms of taboo—of prohibitions connected with 'the Sabbath'.

In the Christian villages and village-sections, some or least of the converts gather for morning and evening prayer and on Sundays in their little mud Church or school-house, and once a month or once a quarter they gather in the main Church of the district. Besides this, those seeking baptism or preparing for confirmation gather for regular weekly instruction over a period of two or three years. There is thus regular common worship and instruction, and a strong sense of community between fellow Christians, particularly when they are in a small minority in an area.

For though the Christian is a member of a Church and worships in community, the emphasis (at least in the Protestant Churches in Ba'Nyakyusa) tends to be on the individual, and some pagans spoke as if turning Christian implied an abandoning of public duties. Kaatile's remark that if it were not for his responsibility for the ritual he would be baptized, has already been quoted (p. 141), and the young priest of Pali'Kyala said the same. Whether these two were serious in wishing to become Christian is irrelevant here; they both believed that they had duties to their community which could not be fulfilled if they were Christians. The 'individualism' of young Christians is a matter of concern to many missionaries who are struggling to create among Christians that very sense of mystical union which pagan kinship exhibits.

The idea of the corporate nature of the worshipping group, with all that implies in mutual responsibility, is but one example of the profound similarity between the underlying ideas of pagan and [771] Christian ritual that will be apparent to most readers. In the pagan tradition ordination, initiation, and communion are as essential to the necklace at the grave as they are to the Christian eucharist;

marriage is a sacrament, a mystical union of husband and wife who walk together in the 'blood' of the husband's lineage; and so death likewise share a communion with the 'faithful departed'.

We have already touched on the changing conception of *Kyala*. The idea of a supreme power, or creator, distinct from the shades and lesser, is clear enough to Christians and is becoming more and more familiar to pagans, a young priest even insisting that his father and Kaatile could bring rain only 'if God wills' (*vide supra*, p. 103). Christians believe that 'God alone sends rain', and they are profoundly sceptical of the pagan rain-maker.

The Christians also speak of Satan (*Satane*) whom some identify with 'Mbasi' (*Lwembe*) and to whom the more orthodox attribute evil dreams of snakes and lions and fighting, which the pagans attribute to witchcraft. To the pagan the snake is the witch come to attack him; to the Christian it is Satan come to tempt him. The orthodox, following the teaching of missionaries, deny the existence of witchcraft, but more admit to a lively fear of sorcery which is rationalized as 'poisoning', though when the conception is examined it can be shown to include much humble poison put in food or drink. Some of our closest Christian friends admitted their fears. X, the Christian wife of a pagan chief, said one day when we were discussing witchcraft: 'You dissemble like all Europeans, you do not wish to admit belief in witchcraft, you are just pretending.' 'You really think we believe in it?' 'Yes, we all know that Europeans just hide their belief.'

Another chief's wife, Y, also a professing Christian, said: 'We all believe in witchcraft, it really exists.' Then she went on to tell how someone had come to 'choke' her one night recently when she was visiting her own people:

> I woke out of a heavy sleep with a pain in the back of my neck and my head. It was as if someone was stamping on my head. I woke up feeling heavy, I was very heavy. I said: 'If I die, you also will die. Who is outside? Who is choking me? Do they not fear God (*Kyala*)?' Then someone kicked the door and I shouted, 'Mother,, mother!' and I heard footsteps going away.

When asked whether she believed that village headmen protected their people from witchcraft she went on:

> They fight the witches by night, they protect their people, they see the witches and drive them away.
> Question: How do you know that witches really exist, do they admit themselves to be witches?

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

Yes, indeed, they lower, they say threateningly (she put her arms akimbo, and indicated a menacing voice) 'Don't speak to me like that!' 797* 795*

All through this discussion Y was excited and spoke with vehemence. Next day she came in looking worried and said: 754

Almost that choking of which I was telling you, what do you think it is when you wake up with pains like that? I'll tell you how it was. I went to see my sister, and found her very ill. She had had a miscarriage and her in-laws had not looked after her properly; they had not sent her to hospital, and when she was lying ill her mother-in-law even refused to come and cook for her. And so I was very, very angry with them. And that night I woke up feeling as if someone were stamping on my head, and I heard the knocking on the door and the footsteps I told you about. What do you make of such things when you dream someone strikes you or is throttling you?

The conception that misfortune is the result of sin, which dominates pagan thought, is reinterpreted in terms of the changing conception of God and the changing social structure. We found that many Christians believed that misfortune had been brought on certain wrong-doers by the 'curse' (*ifigwe*) of a priest or elder, or the anger of their Christian neighbours. A missionary or elder rebuking a man was repeatedly thought to have 'cursed' him,[1] so that he lost his job, or fell ill, or was eaten by a crocodile, and in one case a young couple who had not had a child were said to have been cursed by their Christian neighbours because the young man had provided no feast at his wedding. The Christians who believe in such a 'curse' explain that the power comes from God who 'hears people who murmur'—a direct parallel to the pagan belief in the power of senior relatives and neighbours to bring misfortune on wrong-doers—and it is the words uttered—the rebuke of one in authority or the murmuring of neighbours—which are held to be dangerous. [688] [578]

How the reproving words of a missionary may be interpreted as a curse is shown in the following case.

The wife of Z was a thief. She stole things from the loft of her mother-in-law's hut. She herself began to say: 'I am tired of my husband', and she began making love to other men. When her husband asked her to do anything she refused. She complained to neighbours, saying: 'My husband is a hard man. He watches me when I am preparing food to

[1] Various cases of this type are recorded in *God Complex*, p. cxp. cf. Monica Hunter, 'An African Christian Morality', *Africa*, x (1937), pp. 474-9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1959
FNI? Ngonde FNI?
Nyakyusa

^797 ^795 794 [685]

cook. I want to leave him.' She said to her husband: 'I want to leave you; I should like to be married to another man. I am not old; I shall not fail to get a husband.' The case went to the Church Session. The husband was called. He said: 'I am astonished. This woman is just making trouble. I have not harmed her. But she is a thief. She steals my mother's things.' She said: 'He is mean. He watches me when I am cooking—either ordinary food or meat. He is a wicked man so I am leaving him.' The Session said: 'Go home and think first.' She came again and said: 'I will leave him.' They said: 'Go and think again.' They sent her home three times. After the third time she came, saying: 'I will leave him.' Then the missionary said: 'We do not find any cause for divorcing your husband. It is astonishing that you, a Christian, wish to go to another man. We find many faults on your side and none on your husband's side. I tell you that the trouble which made you quarrel with your husband will always stay in you. Wherever you go it will follow you.' So she has now become a wanderer, just going about from place to place. People say that this is due to the words of the missionary.

This story shows very clearly how a missionary's insight into a woman's character was interpreted as an external cause of her subsequent misfortunes. The idea that character is a direct cause of misfortune is foreign to the pagan community, and has not been assimilated by many Christians.

On one occasion two Christian teachers and a Christian clerk, who had related several stories in which loss of a job was attributed to a curse, asked our opinion of them. When we explained that we thought that the people mentioned had lost their jobs because they were unsatisfactory servants or teachers our friends expressed surprise. 'I had not thought of that,' said the clerk.[1]

Most of the Nyakyusa Christians we talked to believed in a curse exercised by those in authority in the Church: only a few among the better educated of the leaders scouted the idea. And there were lively arguments about the morality of cursing. Many held it was perfectly justified. Others argued that a Christian should only rebuke his fellow 'openly, to his face', and not curse him but leave the punishment of sinners to God; but, as has just been shown, an open rebuke is often interpreted as a curse.

Often a judgement is thought to be delayed. One young man [684] who committed adultery in particularly offensive circumstances was eaten, seven years later, by a crocodile, and the two facts

[1] Quoted with amendments from 'An African Christian Morality', *Africa*, 8 (1935), pp. 273-6.

were connected. And if the expected judgement does not fall when a son has wronged his father it is said: 'The father loves the child so much that he only complains half-heartedly.'

It is admitted (when the point is pressed) that misfortunes may fall on good men as well as evil, and then they are interpreted as a discipline, a testing, from God, but this is 'a hard saying', scarcely to be believed. The inequities in the fortunes of men demand explanations and Christians, as well as pagans, find it very difficult to believe that they are 'natural'. They always suspect some human intervention; they believe that men manipulate mystical power to buy fortune for themselves. The reality of pythons in the belly may be doubted by the better educated, but belief in 'medicines' has scarcely diminished, and new medicines are constantly coming in from outside, among them costly powerful medicines guaranteed to cure any and every disease, or to make the user popular and successful. Some sort of distinction between medicines which it is permissible for a Christian to use and those, like love-potions and defence against witchcraft, which are not permissible, is attempted, but the line is an arbitrary one. And often there is a conflict in the individual's own mind: as one elderly woman of a chief's family (who would normally have taken the first-fruits medicines) put it: 'It's taboo to use those medicines; even if we do fall ill we say: "No, I will not take it, I look towards God (pointing upwards)."'

Most Christians have pagan kindreds who are quick to interpret misfortunes in pagan terms, and the sort of conflict of ideas that arises is illustrated in the case of a young woman who died in childbirth. She and her father were Moravians; her husband had joined the Pentecostal Church which rejects all Nyakyusa medicines. Her first child was still-born, the second died shortly after its birth, and her father insisted that she should have been taking a medicine which it was customary for women in his lineage (he was a Penja) to drink during pregnancy; the girl herself wished to be treated, for she did not accept the teaching of the Pentecostal Church on this point, but her husband refused. During her third pregnancy she was ill and finally, with her husband's consent, she was carried to a Nyakyusa doctor of her father's choosing; nevertheless she died. Her father and her husband had been on bad terms, the father demanding, rather arbitrarily, the balance of the marriage cattle; and there was a great deal of gossip, some neighbours hinting that her own father had killed

Yr Wilson R-5 (1934-1951) 1959
FMU Uganda FMU
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her by his anger, when that the husband was to blame for
[297] [296] refusing medical treatment earlier on. The girl herself was
reported to have said to her mother-in-law, when she was lying
[79] ill at the doctor's house: 'Are you angry with me and has your
anger caused the trouble? Perhaps I did not help you in collecting
firewood?' But her mother-in-law replied: 'No, I am not angry
with you at all.' And the girl continued: 'I know that my father is
angry. Someone might go and ask him to pray for me.' There was
also trouble with the husband's pagan father who had prevented
that his son was praying for the death of his own children when he
prayed with his Pentecostal friends that God's will be done.
'The Pentecostal people say: "I like to die. I don't take any
medicine . . . if someone dies or not it is all the same thing."'

[297] [296] Nevertheless, it is true to say that the field in which natural
[79] causation is accepted is much wider among Christians than among
pagans. It expands very slowly, but the change is evident.
Even rare cases of 'madness' (akakpa dispil), invariably the
[82/3] symptom of the wrath of the gods in pagan thought, were interpreted to us by a Christian teacher in terms of grief and death.
The first was of a young man whose wife and grandmother (who
lived with him) both died very suddenly, and whose only cow was
taken by other relatives and killed for the funeral feast. The loss
of the cow following the loss of his wife and grandmother was
held to have destroyed him finally—'the lounge was finished'.
The other case was of a mother, devoted to her daughter, who was
[272] [276] distraught when the daughter went off to a distance, accompanying her husband to his place of work. For a daughter to marry
beyond easy visiting distance was traditionally inconceivable.

The vagaries of the weather, attributed by the pagans to the
[297] [296] neglect of sacrifices or quarrels between chiefs and priests, are
explained in scientific terms by some Christians. Heavy rain fell
[79] around Rangwe in October 1957 and prevented people burning
[82] their rubbish heaps to fertilize their millet gardens. The pagans
[132] insisted that such early rain was unheard of and kept asking each
other what could have caused it. A Christian elder assured us that
the early rain was not very unusual in the hill country; he had
seen other seasons like it. And in January of the same year the
people of Mwalupepe's country were 'astonished' because no heavy
rain had fallen and young maize and millet were dehydrating in the
ground. They said: 'It has rained all round' and 'it seems as if we
had offended Kyale'. Kadille went to divine (*vide supra*, p. 119).

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

We consulted a Christian friend, a deacon, that the rains were late. He replied: 'Well, it is not so very unusual. Sometimes rains begin in one part of the country and not in another. Some times we do not get heavy rain down here until the end of January.' In short, the more educated Christians are beginning to think in more general terms: they do not as yet define probabilities statistically in terms of rainfall averages, but they are tending in that direction.

And what of the positive content of Christianity? The supreme attraction, mentioned again and again as the reason for conversion, is: 'There is life' (about India), and it is life in a world in some rather than 'more abundant life' here and now than is spoken of. The contrast is between heaven above and the shadowy world 'beneath' of pagan thought, or a fearful fiery hell in which most Christians believe and to which, some think, all pagans are condemned. Constantly in sermons by Hindu preachers there was stress on life, resurrection, and on the rewards and punishments of the future life, and this theme recurs again and again in the dreams of Christians.

There is a gulf also between the pagan conception of 'driving off' the shades and the barrier lies by 'wounding over' a man, thus bring sunburn and death, and the Christian ideal of union with God, between even the goodness and love of God, characteristics quite foreign to the traditional picture of Kyala.

Something of the quality of Christian thought and feeling may be grasped by an examination of the names taken at baptism—the converts from paganism always choose a new name for himself and the meaning is more immediately obvious to everyone than is is with modern English-Christian name-derived, as they mostly are, from language no longer familiar. Many of the Hindu names express a very direct personal relationship with God, the Redeemer: 'He has looked upon me', 'He has created me', 'He has waited hoping for me', 'He has died for me', 'He gives me courage', 'He has changed me', 'He has chosen me', 'He has comforted me', and a score more of the same type. Some refer to the Gospel: 'Word of Truth', 'The Word has taken hold of me'. A few speak of purification: 'Make me white', 'He has washed me'. Some express that union with God which the pagans so greatly fear: 'We are with him', 'He has come near', 'He has breathed over me', 'Let us approach', and some thanksgiving: 'Let us sing to Him', 'We praise Him', 'We have rejoiced', and some like: 'He is close',

"I have entered into life"; a few express the Christian virtues 'Love', 'Joy', 'Peace', 'Hope'.

Them, then, are the things that the ordinary Nyakyusa complained, he will have been obvious to the reader, we are not concerned to outline the orthodox teaching of the mission Churches: that can be readily found in creeds and catechisms; but it is not so easy to discover how these are interpreted by converts just emerging from a pagan society. Our Nyakyusa friends are unanimous in asserting that degree is never a hindrance to conversion: the only dogmatic conflict that arises is over the Christian denial of traditional pagan belief in the power of the diviner and witches. What hinders people from joining the Church is the difficulty of keeping the rules of life, such as monogamy and chastity. This, we were assured, is the reason why there are more women Church members than men, though most conversions come through the schools and more boys go to school than girls. Many men leave the Church because they marry or inherit a second wife and few middle-aged or elderly men come to be baptized because most of them are polygynists, but the first wife of a polygynist (and in the Moravian and Lutheran congregations all the wives) may be Church members and many women are baptized during middle life and old age.

Most of the early converts to Ba'Nyakyusa were already living and working at the mission stations before their baptism. They came either from groups of refugees from slaving caravans who were rescued by the German Administration and settled at the newly founded mission stations, or from the poorer Nyakyusa who found at the mission an opportunity to earn cloth and cattle which promoted itself nowhere else. Again and again we were told by elderly converts: 'We came to work at the mission and we listened to the preaching and then the word of God took hold of our hearts.' In the early days those who worked at the mission stations and received some instruction there were the only men in the district with any knowledge of western techniques and manner of life. Later, most of the converts came through the schools, and Christianity, education, and the expectation of skilled employment have gone together. There was a strong feeling among Christians in the 1930's that they could expect something better than work as unskilled labourers. In Ngonde the first Christians were not refugees, but there was the same alliance between Christianity and education. At the request of

one of the early missionaries the sons of leading men had been sent to Kondowe to be educated and their influence had been important in gaining the support of the Kyungu and chiefs for the mission. [797] [795]

In the second generation of Christians not nearly all those baptized in infancy come to be confirmed or 'blessed'—an elder in Ngwale put it at about half. There is, therefore, a large group of people who have been Church members and have been struck off the Church register because they have married a second wife or committed adultery or become drunkards, and show no sign of repentance, and of those who have grown up as Christians, but have not maintained any connexion with a Church in later life. [681]

So far we have talked of Christian rituals and dogma in terms of the three mission Churches whose converts form the great bulk of Christians: differences between them are negligible. The doctrinal differences between Protestant and Roman Catholic do not bulk large to the Nyakyusa, and since the Roman Catholic Church had not been operating for any long period among them and had a membership of under 1,000, many of whom were Ngoni from Songea or Kisi, who had settled in Tukuyu district, it was not possible to make any adequate comparison of the differences between Protestant and Catholic groups.

Two small Churches, the Pentecostal Holiness and the Watch Tower, had certain peculiarities. The Pentecostal Holiness Church holds highly emotional services at which members are expected to 'speak with tongues'; during prayers the whole congregation begins to jabber, each man usually being unintelligible to his neighbour, though words of other languages can be distinguished. Our informants maintained that the attraction of the Church was that its members seemed to 'have more of the Holy Ghost', as demonstrated by the 'speaking with tongues', though the more cynical of outsiders mentioned also 'the loaves and fishes'—cheaper Bibles, and the fact that the European leader was the largest employer of labour in the district and those who belonged to his Church got on best with him. Many of the members had formerly been Moravians. Its rules were strict: members were not permitted to smoke or drink, or use any Nyakyusa medicines. [781] [776] [766] [795]

The Watch Tower members emphasized that their Church, through its leader, Judge Rutherford, interpreted prophecy in a way in which no other Church could do. They practised baptism [852]

[97] [98] [99] [100] [101] [102] by innovation and were strict about not eating the flesh of animals without a cloven hoof, and avoiding beer, but made a point of not being subservient and working in their fields on Sundays—these were the things they emphasized to us. They were also pacifist and would not join the Police or King's African Rifles, since Rutherford taught that all Government was evil.

(d) 'INDEPENDENT' AFRICAN CHURCHES

There is a great cleavage between the mission Churches and the 'independent' African Churches, which also claim to be Christian, read the Gospels at their services, and recite the *Apostles'* creed, but whose rules of life are avowedly based on the Old Testament rather than the New (vide p. 191). Both the 'independent' Churches operating in Rufiyakyusa approve polygyny; the [59] both of their members are middle-aged polygynists and they have at least as many men as women among them. Nyasuru's statement on polygyny was interesting:

> When we young men went to join the mission we found that many of our fathers were attracted by it. They said to us: 'If only the Europeans would let us come in with all our wives we would come.' . . . Sometimes it would happen that the son of an old man's second wife would join the mission and become a preacher and he would preach even to his father, saying: 'You pagans do wrong, you marry many women, you must repent, your ways are evil.' Then his father would say to him: 'On the contrary, it is not I who do wrong, if I had married only one wife you would never have been born, and you young men take one wife only and then what happens? You steal other men's wives, continually, to marry, and the country is full of lawsuits about women. It is our custom which is good.' . . . And so we, now, we have our Church and our fathers come in with us. It is our aim to take the old people with us, not ourselves to go forward alone. All the other customs which the missionaries brought to us we think are good, only this European custom of marriage is difficult.

[64]

[98] [99] Nyasuru and Ngonde had both been suspended from the Church of Scotland Mission for marrying second wives, and Nyasuru, a man of fifty-three, had four wives when we knew him. He kindly provided us with a copy of a statement on the beliefs and constitution of the African National Church, which is worth quoting in full:

9/Wilson E-5 (1934-1951) 1959
F307 Ngwale F307
Nyakyusa

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CHURCH

Belief

1. We believe religion is an essential component of man's growth and that man should live according to his religion and not merely be a nominal member of a Church whose rules he cannot carry out. Like all other countries Africa is in need of a Church which would correspond with her God-given customs and manners.

2. We believe the commission of the Christian Church to Africa was to impart Christ and education in such a way as to fit in with manners and customs of the people and not that it should impose on the African the unnecessary and impracticable methods of European countries, such as having one wife, etc., which have no biblical authority.

3. We believe the immorality now prevailing among us are the direct result of the unnatural position into which the African has been driven, coupled by the false and misleading theory that outside one's own Church heathen others can do no good.

4. We believe in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man regardless of colour and creed, and that the African religion with its traditions, laws, and customs was instituted by Him so that the Africans may realise Him by their own observances.

Constitution

1. The name of this Church shall be called the *African National Church*.

2. This Church shall not be antagonistic towards other organised Churches but shall acknowledge and recognise them in their own spheres whether Christian, Jewish, Mohammedan, or Buddhist; and all African religions serving God through their ancestral spirits because all are trying to uplift man towards the love of God, our opinion being that all were given by Him for the guidance of man.

3. As the African National Church is a new movement having no previous laws in Nyasaland, and the first to affect the educated Natives who are outside the other organised Churches by suspension or otherwise, its ministers and other office-bearers shall be elected and ordained by the vote of the whole congregation.

4. The governance of this Church shall be according to European methods, that is to say, it shall have buildings for worship, hold conferences and councils, and keep proper records of its proceedings, funds, etc.

5. Members of the Church shall be people of good character according to the Native traditions, laws, and customs, as contained in the *First Five Books of the Christian Bible*, whether polygamists or not.

6. The Rules of faith shall be based on the said *Five Books of the Christian Bible*, and members shall be suspended only when they break such, our guidance for discipline being the *Ten Commandments*.

THE GENERAL OFFICE OF THE STORYING

The aim of this Church is the uplifting of the African or man-child in to the old people who are at present being left out by religions of the North and to civilization, as well as winning those who are considered bad because of polygamy and drink, and are refused any lower position for doing good any more, to try and restore an atmosphere of a deeply, morally religious life as prevailed in the days of long ago which was manlike in worth as well as death.

Regarding the organization of the Church, it was stated:

Every district requiring a Pastor shall submit its application to the annual General Conference for its approval.

Any novice Pastor elected and ordained by the minister shall not be entitled at his early appointment or nomination to administer the ministerial duties, but shall sit with his Presiding Pastor for at least six months for his qualification as a minister.

If any Church, elders, preachers, deacons or group of Churches shall be found ordaining a Pastor or Pastors without the approval of the Annual General Conference, leaders of such offending Churches shall be brought before the Annual General Conference for trial and if found guilty be suspended or expelled from the organization.

The office bearers of our organization shall be as follows:

(a) The Secretary who is the sole head of the organization.
(b) The Presiding Pastors.
(c) Pastors.
(d) Preachers.
(e) Elders.
(f) Deacons and Deaconesses.

The Society shall be divided into districts over which one Presiding Pastor shall be stationed to supervise a Pastor or Pastors under him in that area.

It shall be the duty of every Pastor to feed his flock and to sit as Chairman of his Kirk Session, to enforce the discipline of the Church and to forward his monthly report to his Presiding Pastor.

It shall be the duty or duties of the Presiding Pastor to visit his Pastor or Pastors showing or teaching them good governance of the Church and to send to the Secretary his quarterly reports of his district activities.

If any of the Presiding Pastors or Pastors shall fail to comply with the rules of this constitution they shall upon conviction thereof by the Annual General Conference, be suspended or expelled from the Church.

It shall be the duties of the Elders to look after their Church members

Williams B-5 (1934-1935) 1935
F307 Ngwaka F307
Nyakyusa

going about visiting them in their homes and leading them in a Christian life and to report to his Station all the offending members.

It shall be the duties of a Preacher to go about preaching the Gospel, to baptisms as well as helping Pastors to encourage members on the Church on Sundays. He should keep records of his itinerary and report the same to his district Pastor.

It shall be the duties of every Deacon whether male or female, to see that all members pay their monthly contribution which is one penny per month and to bring monies or foodstuffs to his or her Pastor at the end of every month, and to bring to the Station those who neglect to pay.

Pastors through the Presiding Pastor are empowered to administer Sacraments—to baptize and dispense Holy Communion and to rebuke or remove any Elder, Preacher or Deacon who neglects his or her duties, and to report their activities to their Presiding Pastor.

To clear away complaints among the people, Christians or non-Christians, Pastor or Pastors in the district if found guilty of misconduct or any one of whatever shall be brought to their Station to be tried, and if found guilty shall be suspended from the ministerial duties until his case is referred to the Annual General Conference by his District Pastor.

Any Presiding Pastor or Pastors found intentionally violating these rules as constituted and approved by the Annual General Conference shall, at the discretion of the said General Conference, be suspended or expelled from the Church.

All monies of the Church shall within three months' time be forwarded to the Secretary of Religion who shall Book same in the Savings Book.

The term of service for Elders and Deacons or Deaconesses shall be for two years only, but an office-bearer may also be suspended before the end of his or her term if:

He or she has committed misconduct.
He or she neglects to fulfill his or her duties.
He or she does not attend Church worship.
He or she is a drunkard.
He or she is unruly.
He or she marries unlawfully against Native law which binds African marriages.

No office-bearer of any rank shall be found preaching when he is drunk, but shall hand the Service over to someone else.

Every member of the African National Church shall bend down when praying. One who is preaching can bend or stand.

Every member of the African National Church shall cease to drink

during worshipping hours, but shall reserve none until evening when worshipping is over.

Any member found contravening these rules shall be dealt with by the Station and if found guilty shall be suspended or expelled from the Church.

The term of Chairman for the Annual Conference shall be two years, but he shall be elected again if required.

The Annual General Conference shall be composed of a body of men chosen from each division, viz. Pastors, Elders, Deacons, and other notable men.

A general confession with words and music composed by one of the Pastors of the African National Church, Robert Sumbe, is used as an alternative to the Ten Commandments. Nyasaye translated it for us from the original Tumbuka.

[78] [p.68] Jehovah God we have come before Thee to worship and to confess our sins which we have done during the week.

Response: May they all go away *(from Malenge)*.[1]

We have sinned before Thee in speaking to people, we have offended Thy countenance, we have spoken bad words, we have grieved their hearts, Father.

May they all go away.

We have sinned against Thee in thoughts coveting the wives and husbands of others; we have broken the Ten Commandments, Father. We have done wrong in our village, Father. Witchcraft, adultery, and hatred, all these are in our village. We pray forgive all, Father.

May they all go away.

Our chiefs do not love one another in their hearts. Take such hearts from them and give them one heart.

May they all go away.

A new commandment you have given unto us all to love one another as in Heaven, where there is no quarrelling. Teach us all to keep Thy Word, Father.

May they all go away.

That our chiefs may be one in loving and ruling their country and their people, and lead us all well. This we pray, father, grant us.

May they all go away.

The child worship is broken down; we have come as wild animals which are without God. Call us again to worship, Father.

May they all go away.

Africa is the land of our forefathers. We have damaged her with our new ways,, by leaving all the ways of our forefathers, ways which gave peace to the country, Father.

[1] The *yphowe* used in the pagan ritual for cleansing the country, cf. p. 109.

May they all go away.

Our Church is calling everyone to come in so that the house of marriage may be filled. It is Thy work to give them all now dowers.

May they all go away.

We are taking beer as wild animals; we forget worship which is our life. Teach us to drink beer moderately, Father.

May they all go away.

We have forgotten all the laws You gave to our forefathers. We have married women by snatching. Turn us to a life of new marriages according to the ways of our forefathers, Father.

May they all go away.

Father, Son and Holy Ghost, One God, now and ever. Do unto us according to what we have said. Amen, amen, amen.

In spite of the assertion in the constitution that the rules of faith are based on the first five books of the Bible, a sermon we heard was based on New Testament parables; candidates at baptism must give their assent to *Apostles' creed*; and the doctrine of the resurrection is preached at funerals, John xi. 23-6, and Job xix. 25-7, being read.

The African National Church has five schools at which half the fees charged in corresponding classes in mission schools are levied, but not all of them succeed in keeping their pupils. In 1937 there was a 'strike' by African National Church parents against sending their children to one school because 'the children of the leaders in this area are attending the Livingstonia schools and never goes to their own National Schools'. [872]

The members of Ngwenla's Church were less sophisticated than those of the African National Church and we heard of no written constitution. The services were also simpler. The only sermon we heard was on repentance.

Repent and repent more; do not delay! Repent in your hearts! There is no virtue in baptism; it is just water; but let your hearts be washed clean. The world is full of things which excite wonder and envy. Many where they see the riches of their fellow say to themselves: 'I will go and steal his things', but we must not do that. Many go and commit adultery in the long grass, but we must not do that. God has sent us the Gospel. These are the words of Christ and some other are his words (holding up the New Testament). Our Fathers had never heard of it, but we have, and Christ calls us to repent. In the old days when a

[1] Referring, Nyakyusa said, to the vices of polygamists. Many women in Ngwenla objected to polygamy on the ground that where there were several wives they were not properly clothed. [595]

[197] [198] [199] [200] [201] [202] [203] [204] [205] [206] [207] [208] [209] [210] [211] [212] [213] [214] [215] [216] [217] [218] [219] [220] [221] [222] [223] [224] [225] [226] [227] [228] [229] [230] [231] [232] [233] [234] [235] [236] [237] [238] [239] [240] [241] [242] [243] [244] [245] [246] [247] [248] [249] [250] [251] [252] [253] [254] [255] [256] [257] [258] [259] [260] [261] [262] [263] [264] [265] [266] [267] [268] [269] [270] [271] [272] [273] [274] [275] [276] [277] [278] [279] [280] [281] [282] [283] [284] [285] [286] [287] [288] [289] [290] [291] [292] [293] [294] [295] [296] [297] [298] [299] [300] [301] [302] [303] [304] [305] [306] [307] [308] [309] [310] [311] [312] [313] [314] [315] [316] [317] [318] [319] [320] [321] [322] [323] [324] [325] [326] [327] [328] [329] [330] [331] [332] [333] [334] [335] [336] [337] [338] [339] [340] [341] [342] [343] [344] [345] [346] [347] [348] [349] [350] [351] [352] [353] [354] [355] [356] [357] [358] [359] [360] [361] [362] [363] [364] [365] [366] [367] [368] [369] [370] [371] [372] [373] [374] [375] [376] [377] [378] [379] [380] [381] [382] [383] [384] [385] [386] [387] [388] [389] [390] [391] [392] [393] [394] [395] [396] [397] [398] [399] [400] [401] [402] [403] [404] [405] [406] [407] [408] [409] [410] [411] [412] [413] [414] [415] [416] [417] [418] [419] [420] [421] [422] [423] [424] [425] [426] [427] [428] [429] [430] [431] [432] [433] [434] [435] [436] [437] [438] [439] [440] [441] [442] [443] [444] [445] [446] [447] [448] [449] [450] [451] [452] [453] [454] [455] [456] [457] [458] [459] [460] [461] [462] [463] [464] [465] [466] [467] [468] [469] [470] [471] [472] [473] [474] [475] [476] [477] [478] [479] [480] [481] [482] [483] [484] [485] [486] [487] [488] [489] [490] [491] [492] [493] [494] [495] [496] [497] [498] [499] [500] [501] [502] [503] [504] [505] [506] [507] [508] [509] [510] [511] [512] [513] [514] [515] [516] [517] [518] [519] [520] [521] [522] [523] [524] [525] [526] [527] [528] [529] [530] [531] [532] [533] [534] [535] [536] [537] [538] [539] [540] [541] [542] [543] [544] [545] [546] [547] [548] [549] [550] [551] [552] [553] [554] [555] [556] [557] [558] [559] [560] [561] [562] [563] [564] [565] [566] [567] [568] [569] [570] [571] [572] [573] [574] [575] [576] [577] [578] [579] [580] [581] [582] [583] [584] [585] [586] [587] [588] [589] [590] [591] [592] [593] [594] [595] [596] [597] [598] [599] [600] [601] [602] [603] [604] [605] [606] [607] [608] [609] [610] [611] [612] [613] [614] [615] [616] [617] [618] [619] [620] [621] [622] [623] [624] [625] [626] [627] [628] [629] [630] [631] [632] [633] [634] [635] [636] [637] [638] [639] [640] [641] [642] [643] [644] [645] [646] [647] [648] [649] [650] [651] [652] [653] [654] [655] [656] [657] [658] [659] [660] [661] [662] [663] [664] [665] [666] [667] [668] [669] [670] [671] [672] [673] [674] [675] [676] [677] [678] [679] [680] [681] [682] [683] [684] [685] [686] [687] [688] [689] [690] [691] [692] [693] [694] [695] [696] [697] [698] [699] [700] [701] [702] [703] [704] [705] [706] [707] [708] [709] [710] [711] [712] [713] [714] [715] [716] [717] [718] [719] [720] [721] [722] [723] [724] [725] [726] [727] [728] [729] [730] [731] [732] [733] [734] [735] [736] [737] [738] [739] [740] [741] [742] [743] [744] [745] [746] [747] [748] [749] [750] [751] [752] [753] [754] [755] [756] [757] [758] [759] [760] [761] [762] [763] [764] [765] [766] [767] [768] [769] [770] [771] [772] [773] [774] [775] [776] [777] [778] [779] [780] [781] [782] [783] [784] [785] [786] [787] [788] [789] [790] [791] [792] [793] [794] [795] [796] [797] [798] [799] [800] [801] [802] [803] [804] [805] [806] [807] [808] [809] [810] [811] [812] [813] [814] [815] [816] [817] [818] [819] [820] [821] [822] [823] [824] [825] [826] [827] [828] [829] [830] [831] [832] [833] [834] [835] [836] [837] [838] [839] [840] [841] [842] [843] [844] [845] [846] [847] [848] [849] [850] [851] [852] [853] [854] [855] [856] [857] [858] [859] [860] [861] [862] [863] [864] [865] [866] [867] [868] [869] [870] [871] [872] [873] [874] [875] [876] [877] [878] [879] [880] [881] [882] [883] [884] [885] [886] [887] [888] [889] [890] [891] [892] [893] [894] [895] [896] [897] [898] [899] [900] [901] [902] [903] [904] [905] [906] [907] [908] [909] [910] [911] [912] [913] [914] [915] [916] [917] [918] [919] [920] [921] [922] [923] [924] [925] [926] [927] [928] [929] [930] [931] [932] [933] [934] [935] [936] [937] [938] [939] [940] [941] [942] [943] [944] [945] [946] [947] [948] [949] [950] [951] [952] [953] [954] [955] [956] [957] [958] [959] [960] [961] [962] [963] [964] [965] [966] [967] [968] [969] [970] [971] [972] [973] [974] [975] [976] [977] [978] [979] [980] [981] [982] [983] [984] [985] [986] [987] [988] [989] [990] [991] [992] [993] [994] [995] [996] [997] [998] [999] [1000]

"many strangers come through the country our fathers lay in wait for him and killed him, but we are learning and have to learn to give him food and a night's shelter. Repent and let your hearts be washed!

We differ from other Christians because we baptize in Jordan, and they baptize in a dish in the church. They say we are wrong, but we say we do what Christ said us to do. They also say we are wrong to marry more than one wife. The words we say are just the same as the creed of those at Kalambo (i.e. Lutherans) with two differences, that of baptism and that of having more than one wife.

Communion services are celebrated half-yearly at each of several different centres by the leaders of the 'independent' Churches, and since they are unable to obtain wine, sweet tea or a light beer are used instead.

The members of Ngoneln's Church contribute to buy a bull and rice and beer, and share a feast together after a communion service, and it is alleged by outsiders, though mostly denied by members, that there are 'love feasts' at which members exchange wives,[1] to show that they are 'one body'. The African National Church also holds feasts after services and some outsiders say these too are 'love feasts', but outside opinion on the African National Church's feasts was much less unanimous than about Ngoneln's feasts. It is certain that in Ngoneln's church men and women drink sitting together in a manner not conventional among the Nyakyusa. Members of the mission Churches spoke of members of the independent Churches as living 'just like pagans' and averred that, despite their polygyny, their members run off with other men's wives and were scarcely disciplined for doing so.

It is also clear that the would-be members are baptized almost immediately, with no period of testing and instruction such as is insisted upon by the mission Churches, that very many of them are members who have been suspended by other Churches, and that the 'pastors' have no special training for their task.

Nyamoto's church attracted more educated people than did Ngoneln's and, in terms of Dr. Sundkler's classification,[2] his was a typical Ethiopian Church with its emphasis on African nationalism. Ngoneln, the son of a minor chief, behaved much like a chief and attracted the less educated. He emphasized 'washing' —baptism by immersion—and repentance, and he was peripatetic

[1] This is also alleged of the Watch Tower in Northern Rhodesia, cf. Ian Cunnison, 'A Watch Tower Assembly in Central Africa', *International Review of Missions*, 41 (1952), p. 48?.

[2] B. G. M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets*, Lutterworth Press (1948), pp. 324

like most of the leaders of Zionist Churches in the south.[*] 797*

It is noticeable that the new 'independent' Churches have a more elaborate form of service than the Church from which their leaders have sprung, and Ngwale habitually wears conspicuous vestments. There is, of course, great variation between different denominations in the emphasis placed on ritual, some Protestants objecting to and turning their very insistence on starkness and simplicity into a ritual in itself—a taboo. There seems to be a clear tendency in Southern Africa for 'independent' Churches to express themselves more and more in ritual and less in dogma. In this way they reduce the gap between themselves and the pagans, for the pagan religion is expressed almostly exclusively in ritual, whereas Christianity is expressed in creeds and confessions as well as in the rituals of the Church. 799* 779 [796]

(c) THE CONTRAST BETWEEN PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

There are certain common elements in the rituals celebrated by pagans and Christians: some of the occasions are the same, and in the conceptions of sacrifice, of death and rebirth, of confession and cleansing, there are similarities; but there are also profound differences. The conception of life, immortality, replaces the preoccupation with fertility, for though most Nyakyusa Christians, like the pagans, regard celibacy as evidence of physical abnormality, and the conventional desire of a woman is to have six children—a quiverful in Nyakyusa eyes—yet fertility is no longer the end of all being, sought in every ritual. There are profound differences, too, in the values expressed in the rituals regarding sex relations, the range of moral obligations, and social change. In pagan thought polygyny is good—a man should have many children. Child marriage is defended on the ground that a girl 'gets accustomed to her husband' if she goes to him early, and homosexual relations between youths and young men are tolerated since they have no wives and cannot marry if the older men are polygynous. What is upheld in the chastity of women, and a total repression of the sex activities of members of successive generations, expressed in the taboos limiting familiarity between mother and son, father and mature daughter, father-in-law and daughter-law. In Christian thought it is the 'pure in heart' who 'see God' and this is interpreted by the mission Churches to imply monogamy. Only in the 'independent' African Churches is it asserted 797* 795* [792] [589] [595] [589] [596] [596] [561] [583] [595]

* The emphasis on healing, so common in the south, is absent.

that polygamy is compatible with Christianity, and indeed sanctioned by the example of many of the heroes of the Old Testament. It is here that the cleavage between pagan and Christian ways of life is felt to be greatest: the desire to marry or inherit a second wife is the main reason for many men leaving the mission Churches. The traditional way for the well-to-do man to expand his capital and maintain his position was to marry again and the wealth of the lineage was concentrated in the senior line through the rule of inheritance of widows.

Again and again in sermons Nyakyusa preachers come back to the problem of polygamy. 'Let not those who leave out the law deceive you saying, "You, Christian, what is one poor little wife? (*Ndibhale Mme Eyosi*) Son, do not your children also die (like those of pagans) and commonly fall ill? Take a second wife." Perhaps the Bu'Ngomolo tell you that God also loves them. If you agree you are upset. What, after all, is a second wife? In Jesus there is life.' (*Ia Yesu ili. ivi.*)

Young men are also caught in a contradiction of values when their fathers have betrothed them while still quite young.

It is very difficult for a man to refuse a girl whom his father has engaged for him. To a pagan man it does not matter very much because, provided he has cattle, he can always marry a girl of his own choice as well, but a Christian cannot. Such was the case of a friend of ours, A, a Christian teacher. When he was a child, before he was baptized, his father, a senior village headman and a powerful and wealthy man, engaged for him B, a little girl who could barely walk. A goes on well at school and when he was growing up the missionary said to him: 'When you marry choose a girl of some education, because it is good for an educated man to marry an educated girl.' A fell in love with C, a Christian, who had learnt to read and write, and sew and launder, and who consequently was one of the best-educated girls in the district. They came to an understanding together, our informant being the 'go-between'. A went to the elders of the congregation and told them he wished to marry C. They replied: 'We, on our part agree; go and ask your father.' Then A's father said: 'Well, no, B is your wife (though she was still a child and the marriage had not been consummated), but you are my eldest son, I have many cattle, I agree to arrange marriages with them both for you at once.' So A thought and thought and went back to the elders and told them saying: 'My father refuses, he won't hear of it unless I marry

N/Wilson B.4 (1934-1935) 1934
F3017 Ngwada F3017
Nyakyusa

them both, but I don't want to leave the Church.' Then the elders supported his father saying, 'We don't like one to be the obedient and the girl will make a good wife for you.' But,' argued A, 'my wife is a child and C is grown up.' The missionary supported him saying: 'We are going to send him to a distance (to train as a teacher), it is better that he get married.' But the elders supported his father, following the Nyakyusa custom. Then a message came to A saying that B had 'grown-up'. He said to us, his friends: 'What can I say now? I can no longer argue that my wife is a child.' And to the missionaries and elders he said: 'Send me away for my training. I must think, I am not at peace.'

While A was still away D (who was a close friend of A's) came back from school, and he was hit in love with C. But before he spoke to her he went to A asking him: 'Have you broken with her, or are you still agreed to marry? Can I make love to her or not?' Then A wrote back: 'Yes, I have broken with her, it is true that I love her, but I cannot square marrying her with Christianity. Go ahead.' So then D came to our informant to ask him to be the go-between again, and to take him to the girl. So they went and showed her A's letter, and asked her if she could love D. Then she was very successful and would give no answer until she had written to A herself. 'Is it true that you have left me?' And A replied: 'Indeed, my dear, I have left you. I love you truly, but what can we do? Perhaps the powers do not wish that we should marry. My father refuses. He says he will arrange a marriage with you, for me, as my second wife, but what of our Christianity? Are we both to leave the Church?' So then she agreed to marry D.

All this time the elders had supported A's father in his refusal saying: 'B also is a proper woman. We are surprised at the young man.' And A's father said to him: 'I betrothed this girl for you when she was quite tiny. *Ejale* has already given you this woman.' But the marriage of A and B proved a failure—they were constantly quarrelling—and later they were divorced.

The 'go-between' of this story was more fortunate in his own marriage. Like A he was the son of a wealthy pagan and two wives had been betrothed for him before he became a Christian. When he decided to be baptized he flatly refused to marry either of them. His father was very angry. 'For a time he treated me as if I were not his son, saying: "Since you refuse these girls I will not give you any cows to marry at all." So I said: "All right," and

[717] [717] went away to work again and in time I earned four cows which I
[717] [717] bid with friends far from home. My father knew nothing about
[583] them. Then I wrote to my father from Mwanda [about twenty
[589] miles from where his father lived] where I was working, saying
that I had found a girl there, the daughter of a Christian, and
pleaded could I have the cows with which to marry her? My
father said: "No, she lives too far away." Then Isaac he found a
Christian girl of whom his father approved and a satisfactory
marriage was arranged.

A common topic of discussion among Christian women was whether parents should choose mates for their children, or leave them free to choose for themselves, for though traditionally a girl had to signify her consent to marriage, she was betrothed very young and her freedom of choice was small. The growing insistence on personal freedom in marriage is symptomatic of a radical change in the attitude towards persons.

[717] [717] The pagan rituals were the main occasions of recreation. It has
[717] been shown, in *Rituals of Kinship*, how pagan funerals and marriages
[726] are the occasion for feasting and dancing and display, and how the
[728] seclusion hut of a nubile girl is the gathering place for the young
[782] men and girls of the neighbourhood. Even a twin ritual is a festival
with beer for the elder men and some meat for everyone. The
sacrifices at the graves were feasts for the leading men of the
country, and the 'coming out' was the occasion of the greatest
feast of the generation, and dances were practised for months
[724] ahead. Partly because of a change in the morality, and partly
[688] because the meat and beer at pagan feasts are offered to the shades,
Christians are largely excluded from these festivals. They may not
participate in pagan dances, or join in the loud songs, or attend
the initiation hut of a girl, and they are partly debarred from the
feasts of the pagans: certain of the Churches (notably the Church
[271] of Scotland and, for a time, the Moravians) forbid Christians to
drink beer at all.

[724] And the Christian rituals, though some of them are 'festivals
of the Church', are scarcely celebrated as such. There has been a
separation between ritual and recreation which has left a gap in
the Christian community. It is true that the Christian young men
[535] and girls sing and dance at funerals and marriages, but the elders,
[689] for the most part, look on with dubious eyes, saying that dancing
leads to adultery, and several of the dances introduced by

N.Wilson E.5 (1934-1955) 1959
F307 Ngoudo F307
Nyakyusa

Christians in Ngoudo (e.g. *mwimwenge*) have been banned by the Kirk Session. The European-style dances, such as are sometimes organized by the educated men in centres like Karonga or Tukuyu, are not attended by these men's wives: respectable women avoid them. While we lived near Rungwe mission there was much discussion among the villagers over what recreations were permissible, and hot arguments between those who wished to permit beer drinking and dancing to Christians and those who wished to ban both. It is the Nyakyusa elders who are most puritan in their views—much more so than many of the missionaries who are very conscious of the need for recreation; indeed, the Livingstonia Presbytery once instructed all its Sessions to look into the matter. The chief outlet for young Christians is in ballads. A good singer is much admired and the composer may even sell his songs, with words and music written out. One of the former missionaries is honoured as the man who first taught the Nyakyusa to read music as well as to sing by ear.

In pagan thought moral obligations are limited to kinsmen and neighbours: they do not extend beyond the chiefdom except to those relatives who may live beyond its bounds. As we have shown, the common moral sanctions are the anger of senior relatives, and 'the breath of men', and these operate only within the lineage and age-village. But Christians have read the parable of the Good Samaritan and taken it to heart. Sermons stress this: 'If a Kinga comes and asks for a place to sleep the night and you refuse you are among the goats.' 'If a traveller from the coast asks for a place to sleep and you refuse, do you show love?' 'We tell a bride she should be hospitable to her neighbours if she can, but she must cook for those from a distance.' It is one of the points on which the Christians are most conscious of a difference between themselves and the pagans. And the exclusiveness of Europeans is one of the reasons why they are distinguished from Christians in the song on the title page of *Rituals of Kinship*. 'If all Europeans made friends with us (*ahampale*) like X and Y', we were told, 'the whole country would have been Christian long ago.'

Linked with the concern for strangers is the obligation to preach the Gospel to others—something strongly stressed in sermons, and finding expression both in preaching in the surrounding villages and in tours of more remote areas, often areas of another language. Such tours implied hardship in travelling and a

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

x 797 x 795 leap in sympathy; as one of our friends explained, she found it hard to accept food from the neighbouring Safwa who were 'so dirty in their cooking'.

[577] Both pagans and Christians pin their faith to resurrection, but the interpretations differ radically. To the pagan the shade is [775] resurrected 'in the body of his child', i. scarcely has any separate existence. To Christians the personality, the individual soul, is something indestructible and continuing. This theological difference is but one facet of a deep cleavage between the pagan view of a man and his relations with his group, and the Christian view.

[183] Because the traditional religion is a cult of the shades, piety consists in doing just as father did. It is neglect of traditional rituals, departure from traditional ways, that is held to bring madness, sterility, or death. But Christianity is revolutionary; it is the yeast working in society to transform it. That is often forgotten in communities with a Christian tradition, but where the Gospel has been preached only for a generation and confessing Christians are but one in six, it is in men's minds all the time. The Nyakyusa could not be unaware that the Gospel implied changing their society.

[796] In the pagan tradition the meticulous performance of the rituals is stressed: the right medicines; the right persons; the right order of [688] events are all important. The attitude of mind of the participants matters also—if they are on bad terms the ritual will be ineffective —but goodwill and forgiveness alone are useless without the performance of the proper ritual. In the Christian tradition, as interpreted to us by Nyakyusa converts, it is the inward and spiritual attitude of the participants that is stressed.

Finally, all the pagan rituals are directed to driving off the [771] shades or the heroes, whereas the Christian rituals are the 'means of grace', of coming near to God. Christians pray that the Holy Spirit should take up his abode within them; they seek to emulate the saints who 'walked with God'. Our Christian friends were quite clear about the contrast here between the pagan and Christian tradition: it is crystallized in the attitude to dreams: if a pagan dreams of converse (*ukwangala*) with shades, he fears death; 'if a Christian dreams of converse with God he rejoices greatly because it means he is gaining strength in Christianity.'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XIII

TWENTY YEARS' CHANGE

How does Christianity interact with other revolutionary forces in the community? It has been possible to observe the changes that have taken place among the Nyakyusa after a lapse of twenty years, and a summary of them is necessary before we proceed to a discussion of the links between religious and secular change. 177

The first thing that strikes a visitor returning to Nyakyusa country after many years, is that the isolation, which was so typical of the valley, has greatly diminished. Buses, filled with [494] Nyakyusa passengers, cross twice daily the high pass that leads out [491] of the valley, and where once travellers died of exposure and starvation there is a hard road fringed with homesteads and fields. The belt of unoccupied country that even twenty years ago separated the Nyakyusa from their neighbours has disappeared, for they themselves have spilled out of the valley to the north and west, and their Kinga neighbours have come down the Living- [166] stone escarpment to the east and cultivate the mountain slopes, for 'they no longer fear that people (i.e. the Nyakyusa) will seize [167] their property'. Men travel abroad to find work and they go [464] much farther and stay away longer than before. In the remotest village there is some man who has visited Burma or Malaya as a soldier, and a dozen lads who will argue the relative merits of the Orange Free State gold mines and the Copper-belt as centres of employment. Many women now accompany their husbands to Rhodesia, or other parts of Tanganyika, and some travel to visit daughters or sisters. The older women enlarge on their journeys and joke about how fearful they used to be.

Travel implies learning another language, most often Swahili, [191] but also Bemba and English and the pidgin of the gold and copper [198] mines called Fanakalo. Thus intellectual isolation is disappearing along with the physical isolation. The numerous 'bush schools' which existed in the Nyakyusa valley in 1938, and at which many 177 of those who attended never even learnt to read and write, have 872 been largely replaced by mission primary schools, state-aided and inspected, and in these and the Native Authority primary and middle schools there are now 9,437 pupils, as against about 500

[p. 203]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 in similar schools in 1938. Less than 40 per cent of the children
[872] between eight and eleven years old[1] are as yet in school in Rungwe District and the demand for places is enormous. Among the most insistent are girls wanting education. During the
[871] 1930's the Education Department was trying, with little success, to coax girls to stay in school long enough to learn to read and write, but today nearly a third of the primary school pupils are girls. A handful of boys and girls go out of the district to attend
[874] middle or secondary schools, and a few candidates for training as teachers and district nurses come in. Thus an educated person, or one who goes out to work, mixes with people whose backgrounds and languages are quite different from his own.

[511] Then people are richer than they used to be, partly because of
[465] the wages earned abroad, and partly because of the coffee and rice grown and exported. There is also some employment within the district on tea estates (especially important to women and girls), and coal and vermiculite mines. The value of peasant crops
[434] exported has risen from about £24,000 in 1936[2] to nearly £578,000 from coffee and rice alone in 1955,[3] and some men have made as much as £150 from their coffee in a year. A coffee cheque of £30 to £60 is common. In addition to the peasant crops there is tea from estates—well over a million pounds of made tea in 1955 as well as a quantity of seed. This increase in wealth has involved a change in the division of labour. Because men are not at home to clear and hoe, their wives, perforce, must clear fields and hoe for themselves, assisted by their young sons, boys who twenty years ago would not yet have stopped herding.

[161] There has been a rapid increase in population, more especially in the hills, due partly to the development of health services and

[1] Number of children in Mission and Native Authority schools in Rungwe District, 1955:

Boys	Girls	Total	No. of children 8-11 years of age (estimated at 10% of total population)
6,592	2,054	8,646	23,639
Middle Schools			
718	73	791	(This total does not include those who are in middle schools *outside* the District, nor does it include those following a professional course *in* the District)

(Figures provided by the courtesy of the Provincial Education Officer, Mbeya.)
Change in Ngonde is not discussed for it was not possible to visit that area in 1955.

[2] *Good Company*, p. 16.

[3] Calculated from figures kindly supplied by the District Commissioner, Mr. Peter Johnston.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

partly to the closer spacing of children. Whereas four years 177
between births was conventional formerly, two or less is now usual.
One of the characteristics of the present population is a dis- [161]
proportion between the sexes, the females outnumbering the [162]
males by 100 to 87·9 even when due allowance has been made for men away at work.[1] This disproportion is characteristic also of African populations in the south[2] and it appears likely that it is due to a wide difference in the survival rate of men and women, but the vital statistics necessary to test this hypothesis are lacking.

The increase in population, and the demand for coffee gardens and rice fields by men who prefer to earn cash by agriculture [311]
rather than as migrant labourers, has led to a shortage of land, already acute in the fertile lake-shore plain, and imminent in the coffee-growing villages of the hills.[3] Much land that was previously pasture land has been taken into cultivation, and signs of overstocking are everywhere apparent. Hillsides that in 1938 were covered with grass, waist high, now have a thin stubble. To aggravate matters, the care of stock is less efficient than it used to be because it is left to very small boys, their seniors being occupied with school and hoeing. Often the cattle are both ill nourished and [231]
covered with ticks—something that was never seen when they were herded by adolescents and carefully hand-dressed. The villagers themselves are as much concerned as the agricultural officers over [232]
the shortage of pasture and the decrease in the milk supply, but [242]
they are not prepared to accept the remedies recommended: namely, reduction of stock and stall-feeding. The advice of Europeans on the growing of rice and coffee crops, which they introduced to the district, is acceptable, but the Nyakyusa argue

[1] The Census figures cannot be taken as exact, but they give some indication of the increase in population, and the disproportion between men and women. In 1931 the population of Rungwe District was given as 195,062. In 1948 it was 236,386. In 1931 the proportion of males to females (Kukwe and Nyakyusa in Rungwe district) was 73·6 : 100 (Tanganyika Territory, *Census of the Native Population 1931*). In 1941 the figure for Tukuyu district as a whole was 80 : 100 (Tanganyika Territory, *East African Population Census, 1948*). Allowing for 8,800 men away without wives (estimate for 1954 less 10 per cent), the proportion is 87·9 : 100 (cf. P. H. Gulliver, Report on the Migration of African Workers to the South from the Southern Highland Province, with special Reference to the Nyakyusa of Rungwe District, February 1955, p. 16). The discrepancy in the figures given for *adults* was 62·2 : 100 in 1948, but the ages of males and females classed as 'adult' are uncertain.

[2] D. H. Houghton and E. M. Walton, *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, Keiskammahoek Rural Survey, vol. ii, pp. 24-6, 51. The sex ratio for Keiskammahoek District is 73·8 males : 100 females.

[3] cf. P. H. Gulliver, *Nyakyusa Land and Population*, 1956.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 that they have always been cattle men and they need no instruc-
[232] tion on cattle. The tension over stock limitation and soil con-
[242] servation, so acute in many parts of Africa, is only just appearing in Rungwe district, but potentially it is serious.

Pressure on land, and the planting of a valuable long-term crop
[311] such as coffee, have undermined the traditional organization of
[361] age-villages. The old men are no longer prepared to move to make way for their sons and, without a new deal in land each
[161] generation, the territorial separation of the generations is blurred. Boys villages are no longer visible in the hills near Rungwe mission, partly because so many young men are away, either at school or in employment, but largely because most of the land is taken up with coffee gardens. Homesteads are being built farther apart as men lay out coffee round their houses, and sons often build on a corner of their father's estate instead of in a separate village. On the plain, also, the pressure of population blurs the boundaries between generations. Only in the least heavily populated middle belt are numerous boys' villages still clearly visible, and here too a 'coming out' has recently been celebrated, with some redistribution of land. The scarcest land, that in old volcanic craters, was always inherited, like cattle, not reallocated each generation, and almost all cultivated land is now treated in this way. In many chiefdoms, therefore, a young man looks to his father or senior brother for land, rather than to the village head-
[428] man, and inheritance is supremely important. But the form of inheritance is changing: property now goes directly from father to son, not as formerly to each of a group of full brothers before reverting to the senior son of the eldest of them. The claims of more distant kinsmen on inherited stock are less than they used to be; such stock becomes the exclusive property of father and sons, rather than property in which members of a lineage of three or
[613] four generations have reciprocal rights. The main economic bond which held the lineage together, the exchange of cattle, is thus broken.

Formerly a marriage was a contract between lineages rather
[583] than between individuals. A girl was betrothed before puberty to a
[581] man of her father's choice and should he die she was still regarded as married to his heir. Should she die a sister replaced her. Ideally a marriage bond between lineages lasted for generations, each man who died being replaced by a brother or son, each woman by a sister or brother's daughter. The choice of a partner in marriage

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

was not an individual one. True, a girl gave her formal consent in the marriage ritual, but the pressure on her to accept the husband selected for her by her kinsmen was almost irresistible. In the thirties Christian women who refused their husband's heir and lived alone, or married an unrelated man of their choice, were regarded by their pagan sisters as very daring, and little girls in pagan families took it as a matter of course that they should replace their dead sisters; today the right of a widow to choose whom she will marry is generally accepted, and the custom of replacing a dead woman by her sister has lapsed. 'Every girl wants her own husband nowadays', the old women say. Thus lineage obligations give way to individual freedom of choice in marriage. At the same time the rituals which emphasized the lineage are dropped or modified. The fearful fecundity of a double birth no longer appals men and the twin ritual which used to bring together all the living members of a lineage of three generations is not celebrated at all. At a puberty ritual a pagan girl may be given the *ikipiki* medicine, the symbol of 'the blood of the lineage' by her mother, but there is no seclusion and elaborate feasting, no sacrifice of the bull of puberty that her father's shades may 'move aside a little' to make way for the shades of her husband's lineage. Only at a funeral do kinsmen still gather and celebrate, for many still fear the shades, and at a funeral the heir is installed and the importance of property and the inheritance of it has not diminished one whit. As we have seen, the traditional religion was formulated in terms of kinship; the gods were senior kinsmen; but today God, *Kyala*, is no ancestor; to pagans as well as to Christians he is separate and supreme. Men are still classified by their lineages, and one of the topics of village questions is how Prince Charles can be heir to the British throne when his father is not of the house of Windsor; but already in the economic field, and increasingly in the religious, it is the family of parents and children which is now dominant, not the lineage.

Divorce is far more frequent than formerly, partly because women claim a greater freedom of behaviour than before, as well as the right of choosing their own husbands, and are supported by the courts. As one village headman put it, 'Formerly a father beat his daughter with a stick if she ran home and sent her back to her husband who also beat her.' The women reject the old pattern of subservience which was expressed in crouching to greet a man, and addressing him in a very deferential fashion; the men observe, and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 some copy, the manners of Europeans towards their wives, but
[586] neither husband nor wife is quite sure what the change in manners implies, and both are often inconsistent in their behaviour. As an educated Nyakyusa put it: 'They do not know what to expect from each other.'

[585] Marriage relationships are complicated by the disproportion
[162] in the numbers of men and women; a disproportion which continues while the rule of monogamy is preached and accepted
[582] by many. The first effect of the increase in wealth in Rungwe district was for the marriage age of women to go down; in Mr. Punch's phrase 'too many cattle were chasing too few wives'; but the combined pressure of missions and Administration, and some acquaintance with the customs of the outside world, has reversed that tendency, and the marriage of girls below puberty, which was general among pagans in 1938, now appears to be exceptional. Many girls are still betrothed before puberty, but
[584] they do not go to their husbands until after that time, and to be still single at puberty with no betrothed to play his part in the ritual is no longer embarrassing to a girl, for the puberty ritual is not celebrated in full. The ruling of the District Council that a man may not recover more than *one* cow given for a girl who has not reached puberty, if the marriage is dissolved, discourages men from giving cattle for girls who have not grown up. At the
[582] same time the marriage age of men is going down. Marriage in the early twenties or even the late teens is common now, for young men who have been to work on the mines can buy marriage cattle for themselves, and Christians who are well-to-do provide for the marriages of young sons instead of taking additional wives. Therefore the gap in the marriage age of men and women is very considerably diminished, but it still exists, and combined with the disproportion in the total number of males and females it means that a considerable proportion of the women (perhaps 30 per cent)[1] must become the junior wives of polygynists or remain unmarried altogether, or live alone as widows.

595 Among pagans polygyny is approved, but young men are irked by their responsibility for elderly widows, a responsibility that was formerly accepted as a matter of course. Able-bodied wives are still economically an asset even now that trade goods are in general use. For Nyakyusa men—pagans—have insisted that as

[1] The masculinity rate is calculated at 87·9 : 100 (*vide supra*) and the *average* difference in the marriage age may well be six years.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

their wives took to wearing cloth they should earn it for themselves 177
by growing and selling millet and brewing beer, and many
women do the clearing and hoeing in their fields, work that used to [595]
fall to men; but it is difficult for a chief to refuse to provide a man [462]
to hoe the ridges in his wife's field, or to refuse an elderly woman a cloth or some salt, and young heirs grumble much about their encumbrances.

In the political field there has been a sustained attempt to make local government more democratic and to include in it the educated [648]
men. Between 1891, when the German Government first assumed control of the area, and 1938, the tendency was for the power of [643]
the chiefs to be increased at the expense of that of the commoners. This was admitted by the chiefs themselves, as we have seen. In 1949 there was established a system of Rural Councils, on [646]
which chiefs, village headmen (*amafumu*), and ordinary commoners are represented. Four[1] of each category are chosen as representatives on the Council in their area by an electoral college itself elected by all taxpayers. Rungwe District is divided into five areas. [643]
The policy of treating some chiefs as senior to others has been [622]
abandoned and each of the seventy-eight recognized rulers (*abatwa*) is eligible for election as a chief's representative on his [646]
local Rural Council. Village headmen (two from each chiefdom) and the ordinary commoners are similarly chosen. The five Rural Councils in turn elect one man of each sort to the District Council.[2] The system allows for, and seems to have achieved, a combination [554]
of men with traditionally high status and those who are conspicuous by reason of their education or success as coffee or rice farmers. The old feeling that education was not necessary to a chief's son, though it might be useful to a poor man, has vanished, and a considerable number of the educated leaders of the district are sons or grandsons of chiefs. The elected president of the District Council, Mr. Gordon Mwansasu (186) is of the Nyakyusa chiefs' lineage, though not of the most senior line. In the Rural Councils the presidents elected have all, with one exception, been ruling chiefs, but it is not necessarily the genealogically senior
who is chosen. There is scope for selection on the grounds of [555]
character and ability.

[1] Five in the populous plain, Ntebela (MuNgonde).

[2] cf. Z. E. Kingdon, 'The Initiation of a System of Local Government by African Rural Councils in Rungwe District of Tanganyika', *Journal of African Administration*, vol. iii, 4 (1951).

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 The office of chieftainship still carries high prestige and the District Council has actually resolved to select a paramount chief. [643] Competition for this position is fierce and it remains to be seen [648] whether the Council will ever agree on a nomination. The persistent suggestion that the Administration should undertake the invidious task and select a paramount is scarcely likely to be acted upon, since the Administration sees no necessity for establishing such an office.

Chiefs, assisted by their village headmen, are the executive officers of the Rural Councils, but they have lost their judicial functions. There are twenty-four recognized courts with a bench [692] of 'courtholders' appointed annually by the Rural Councils, and one superior court, but the annual appointment ceased in 1956 and [648] more permanent appointments were made. The aim is to develop a specialized judiciary independent of the executive. There is also a very important class of full-time civil servants, secretaries of the District and Rural Councils, and clerks of the courts.

The position of village headman is in a fluid state. Where the [622] 'coming out' ritual has been dropped, the traditional occasion for the formal appointment of village headmen no longer arises, and old men continue in office much longer than before. When a headman dies his heir sometimes takes his position or, if neither the heir nor a junior son will accept it, some other man is appointed by the chief. There is evidence that in many chiefdoms men are reluctant to undertake the position, which carries no salary but involves a considerable amount of work and makes it difficult or impossible for a man to engage in paid employment either within or outside the District. As one woman put it, 'Money has killed the office of village headman' (*Indalama sigogile ubufumu*). There is some evidence from the lake-shore plain, however, of men competing for the office, and indeed of a son claiming in the courts the headmanship his father held. Possibly the competition for land on the plain, and the fact that the allocation of land lies with the village headman, account for this. When all the arable land is taken up, it is probable that acquisition will be [622] through inheritance or sale only, and the present headman's [423] power to allocate land is likely to vanish; but one of the most important assets of a village is its pasture-land, and in controlling and developing this the headman may well play a decisive part in the future. Since village headmen are essential executive officers in local administration, and are integrated into the new system of

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Councils, the importance of establishing machinery for their appointment in chiefdoms where the 'coming out' is no longer held is obvious. 177 [622] [423]

The traditional communal rituals have not been dropped altogether, but their celebration is sporadic and not everyone supports them. Careful enquiries suggest that in less than half of the chiefdoms has the 'coming out' been celebrated when it was due. In the most conservative portion of the district, Selya, there were celebrations in 1952 and 1954, but even in that area a number of the ruling chiefs have never 'come out'. The omission is due partly to the desire of the old men to retain office, partly to the increase in population and the planting of coffee which makes any new deal in land unacceptable, and partly to the feeling of many that the old ritual is an anachronism, if not directly incompatible with their new faith in Christianity. Some chiefs who have not 'come out' would welcome a celebration; one such told us that 'if the "coming out" died chieftainship would die'; but a young chief's personal wishes are not decisive in this matter. Sacrifices at the groves of chiefs and heroes are not as frequent as before, but they still occur at some groves in time of drought or other emergency. The Kinga came to Lubaga in 1954, and they were expected to come and instal Kasitile's heir in 1955. In 1954 also there were sacrifices to Mwaijonga (82) and Mwakisambwe (30) for it was a season of scarcity. Rituals for cleansing the country and sprinkling the homesteads occur sporadically 'when occasion demands', but not annually in any chiefdom and never in some. And when celebrations do occur they do not unite the people of a chiefdom as they used to do. Christians oppose them and many non-Christians are also sceptical. [561] [796] [643] [782] [769] [771]

In 1935 the traditional rituals celebrated by lineages and chiefdoms formed a coherent system. They were directed towards the shades and the heroes, as was manifest in the sacrifices and in the dramas of death and rebirth when those secluded 'dwelt with the shades' or were 'caught hold of' by Kyala.[1] The older participants were then conscious, in greater or lesser degree, of the symbolism implicit in the actions they performed. By 1955 the ritual cycle was nowhere celebrated in full: what remained were 'bits and pieces' of ritual, none of them fully intelligible without reference to the complete cycle. The link between the rites and the shades and the heroes was less clear, and the symbolism less [769] [796]

[1] *Vide supra*, pp. 27-48, 70-85; *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 51, 98, 101, 111-13, 205.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 conscious. This disintegration of a former coherence, and a [969] decreasing awareness of the meaning of symbols used, are perhaps [796] characteristic of changing societies in Africa.

Despite the growth of the Christian Church, the great demand for schools, and the dropping of the old rituals directed to family [754] shades and the heroes, belief in the power of medicines flourishes. [778] Probably most deaths and misfortunes are still attributed to an enemy using either witchcraft or sorcery. The traditional belief in witchcraft is rejected by educated people, but belief in the power of medicines is general. Autopsies still take place and occasionally the poison ordeal is administered in secrecy; one case was mentioned which occurred in 1942. As we have seen, medicines have always been regarded as a potential instrument of individual competition. They are used in the rituals of kinship to ensure health, fertility, and good manners and morals; in the ritual of chieftainship to buttress authority, and in 'sprinkling the homesteads' to fertilize the fields; but also by individuals to steal the fertility of their neighbours' fields and to grow rich at the expense of their neighbours, and it is their use as an instrument of individual aggrandisement that is most talked of today. There were many reports of their use by rivals to office as chiefs, and the floods of 1955, which washed away the Mbaka bridge and caused a serious landslide on that river, were interpreted as incidents in a [578] prolonged fight between chiefs who were rivals for the position of paramount. The deaths of the heir of one of them in 1953, and of the other chief himself in 1956, were also attributed to their duel with medicines.

Along with the political changes there has been a development 797 of the Churches, more particularly of the Moravian Church, which is now largely self-supporting, with growing congregations 795 served by African ministers.[1] Until 1938 the two main Protestant 177 missions in Nyakyusa valley, the Moravian and Lutheran, were staffed by Germans and their funds came mainly from Germany. The war meant the withdrawal of the missionaries and the cutting off of funds. After a lapse of three years one Moravian missionary, and later one Lutheran, came to take charge of the missions and they were reinforced by other missionaries after the end of the war, but the whole policy in both missions is to build up self-supporting churches staffed by African pastors.

The work of the White Fathers mission was not interrupted by

[1] Change in Ngonde is not discussed.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the war and the form of its activities has not altered appreciably. Three other missions based elsewhere now have small congregations in the District and a Lutheran pastor under discipline broke away and formed his own 'independent' Church, which differs from the other 'independent' Churches in that the rule of monogamy is enforced. 177 797 795

The total number of converts has increased very considerably, much more than keeping pace with the increase in population; taking the three main missions together, their converts form over 14 per cent of the total population.[1] Figures for the five mission Churches with small congregations in the District—Pentecostal Holiness, Assemblies of God, Seventh Day Adventists, Anglican, and Watch Tower—are not available. Nor do we know the membership of one of the 'independent' African Churches, but supposing the membership of the missions with small congregations in the District to be 2,000 (a conservative estimate) the percentage claiming to be Christian is 24 per cent as against 16 per cent in 1938. Dissimilarities in the response to Christian teaching in different areas are very marked. Around Rungwe, the main Moravian mission-station, the bulk of the population is Christian, and the whole atmosphere is that of a Christian community, whereas in Selya, where mission work began in 1891 as it did in Rungwe, Christians still form a small minority in dominantly pagan chiefdoms. The reasons for this difference are complex. One factor is that Selya is geographically isolated whereas Rungwe is near a main road and within easy reach of the Government and trading centre Tukuyu; but much more important have been differences in mission policy regarding education, and differences in the personalities of missionaries, chiefs, and early converts. [162]

The change from a society based on kinship to one based on voluntary association is apparent in the economic field as well as in the religious. Co-operative societies formed by producers of coffee and rice, which collect and market the crops, and give opportunity 177 474 454

[1] Figures supplied by the courtesy of the missionaries directing each mission and the leaders of two 'independent' Churches were as follows for 1954:

Moravians		29,390
Lutheran		10,000 (approximately)
Roman Catholic		4,700
Last Church (Ngemela) (Also called 'Native Mission')	('independent')	10,721
'African Lutheran Church'	('independent')	200

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 for the local investment of savings are the most important
[474] economic undertaking in the District. The seven coffee co-
[454] operatives handled a crop of 950 tons in 1955, worth about £427,500, and are organized so efficiently as to be able to return over 90 per cent of the price of the coffee on Moshi market to the producer, after the heavy transport costs (14 per cent) have been paid. One Government-paid officer assists these societies.

526 In the educational and recreational field also, associations are
575 emerging: football clubs; companies of Scouts and Guides;
177 'Welfare Centres' with classes in reading for adult illiterates, indoor games, and Saturday-night dances; Women's Clubs for handwork and recreation; and in Tukuyu itself an inter-racial club with its own premises, whose members meet to play games, and get to know one another and discuss common problems. These associations make a visible mark on the face of the country in the shape of new brick Churches, co-operative stores, football fields, and, more rarely, a village club-house.

177 The change from a subsistence to a money economy, and from a
651 system of government through chiefs and village headmen who were dependent primarily on inherited wealth, which secured to them the labour of many able-bodied wives and sons, to a system of government through European officials, chiefs, and clerks paid out of taxes, and assisted by unpaid village headmen, implies the collection and administration of taxes. The District Council has
177 the responsibility for the budgeting and expenditure of over £60,000 per annum. The greater part of it is spent on the salaries
652 of chiefs, secretaries, and clerks engaged in administration, on courts, on schools, dispensaries, and roads. The development of associations with paid officers also implies the collection of dues and budgeting. As in so many countries the difficulty of building
177 up a tradition of honesty in administration is great. Tax clerks,
685 court clerks, council secretaries, and co-operative society secretaries, and even church elders handle sums of money relatively large in proportion to their earnings and one of the tasks of European officials and missionaries is to secure a sound system of accounting and check corruption. In the traditional society stock theft was a capital offence, but money has not the sanctity of cattle, and often the clerk who has appropriated public funds is treated by others as 'unfortunate' rather than immoral. At the same time villagers show great anxiety lest a man entrusted with some common fund should spend it for himself. The risk of theft

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

of public funds is greater than in England, but it should be added that a European may camp in a Nyakyusa village with nothing locked, and never lose so much as a box of matches. 177 [685]

An attempt has been made to describe the sort of changes which are proceeding in BuNyakyusa. They are not peculiar to that area, but will be familiar to most people who have lived in Africa. Now we turn to the sociological analysis.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XIV

RELIGION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

182 In this chapter we shall seek to show how the traditional communal rituals both reflect and maintain the traditional political structure, and to consider in what measure the change from paganism to Christianity compels a change in other aspects of the society, or, alternatively, how far the economic and political changes taking place among the Nyakyusa compel a change in religion.

The heroic myths are the charter for chieftainship. The heroes
182 from whom the chiefs are descended are pictured as creators and
773 benefactors, the authors of fertility and civilized living. But myth
769 and ritual also entrench the rights of commoners and unify people
643 of different stocks by asserting their complementary diversity. No ritual can be celebrated without the participation of commoner priests. They 'speak out' at rituals and bring public opinion directly to bear on the chief, whose own health is held to depend upon their goodwill; at the same time the whole country looks to the chief as the source of fertility in man and beast and field.

Ritual was the integrating force with the widest range in the
182 traditional society. Independent chiefs, even those whose people
643 were culturally as different as the Nyakyusa and Kinga, joined in
796 sacrifice to Lwembe and Kyala and were mystically dependent
782 upon one another. As Kasitile put it 'the Kinga come (to Lubaga) both when there is trouble in our land and in theirs'. In Ngonde the 'divine king', the Kyungu, who controlled a flourishing trade in ivory, developed secular as well as ritual functions and emerged as a paramount chief, but in the Nyakyusa valley the ritual bond had no secular backing save the exchange of iron and salt for food, which linked Kinga and Nyakyusa in a tenuous partnership. The sacrifices to the Lwembe did not exclude war between chiefs who acknowledged him, nor did sacrifice to their common ancestor exclude war between Mwaipopo (116) and Mwaihojo (147), but the necessity of co-operation in sacrifice compelled later reconciliation. Perhaps the insistence on the sacredness of the heroes and their living representatives, the elaborate ritual of

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

chieftainship, and the dependence upon medicines as a means of enforcing law were connected with the ineffectiveness of secular authority. Certainly the Kyungu's emergence from seclusion, and the dropping of the taboos which surrounded him were connected with his acquisition of economic power; but we know too little of the conditions that make for elaboration of ritual to postulate any general connexion between the absence of ritual in public life and the effectiveness of secular authority. 182 643 782 796

The cycle of sacrifices to the heroes and dead chiefs among the Nyakyusa is more than an ancestor cult, for it includes non-relatives among its priests and beneficiaries; but it has many of the features of an ancestor cult, among them the identification of piety with conservatism. A good man follows exactly in the footsteps of his father who becomes his god. This is reconciled with a myth of a new beginning, ten generations ago, when civilized life came to the Nyakyusa valley, and the new beginning is celebrated each generation with the 'coming out' of the young chief and his contemporaries. 182 769 [773]

All Nyakyusa rituals are cathartic in the sense that they make explicit and seek to dissipate, by their very expression and rejection, certain anti-social tendencies. In the Nyakyusa view the root of evil is 'anger in the heart' unadmitted and corrosive, and only by an open confession can it be overcome.[1] Hence in every situation of misfortune, public or private, men are pressed to 'speak out' (*ukusosya*) and admit their anger. At the 'coming out' the conflict of generations is expressed in the prolonged debate over the date of the celebration and the detailed arrangements, and in the dancing and slaughter of cattle, and is finally resolved when authority and land are handed over to the young men by their fathers. The fissiparous tendencies of a chiefdom are made explicit and canalized in constitutional form by the division of the old chief's country into two, under his senior sons; and criticism of the young chiefs is made explicit in the formal admonition by the father's village headmen. The rejection of conflict is clearest at the annual purification when men throw out the ashes contaminated by family bickering and the cannibalism of witches, and *fight* one another 'that the homesteads may be peaceful'. This fighting is 'to bring out war from within (*ukusosya*)', 182 783 796 631

[1] cf. *Good Company*, pp. 99-112. The belief that a witch or sorcerer must *confess* if the patient was to recover was the reason for the torture of witches in many African societies.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

182 and is therefore to be interpreted as 'confession of anger', rather
183 than as 'rebellion'.

776 Sometimes there is an expression of *opposite* tendencies, both
631 implicitly approved. The sacrifices to the heroes and at the
groves of the chiefs emphasize seniority and precedence, and
182 express the dependence of junior on senior kinsmen, but the
769 myth, recalled in every celebration, tells of the surpassing power
783 of the son or younger brother in the beginning of time, and the
561 junior brother of a chief often holds office as a priest. Then there is the drama of driving away the shade and bringing him back transformed, which is so characteristic of the rituals of kinship and appears again at the cleansing of the country. Such contradictions are doubtless expressions of ambivalent attitudes among the participants themselves, and of the attempt in ritual to reconcile conflicting social principles—in these instances authority with the rights and duties of juniors, and change with continuity.

In a society without written records legal certainty depends
182 very largely on publicity. This is apparent in the law relating to
643 marriage contracts and family inheritance,[1] and still more so in
561 the law of the chiefdom. The ritual of 'coming out' celebrates radical changes in social status, and the public recognition of the leaders, members, and territorial boundaries of villages, as well as of the heirs to chieftainship. Thus certainty in these matters is assured. There is no positive value of the co-regency of father and son (as in ancient Egypt),[2] but the installation of the young chiefs before the death of their father serves to mitigate conflicts over the succession. Confusion over village boundaries and village
[423] leadership often appears when the ritual has not been celebrated, for there is no public definition to refer to.

How close is the link between religious belief and practice and
182 social structure? There is no doubt that the sacrifices to the dead
769 chiefs and heroes and the traditional rituals of kinship supported
797 the former political and kinship structure of the Nyakyusa. Their performance compelled co-operation between kinsmen,[3] between neighbouring chiefs, and between chiefs and people. How far then does the change in religion, begun when the first Christian convert professed his new faith, compel a change in the social

[1] Godfrey Wilson, 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Law', *Africa*, vol. ix, 1937, p. 29.
[2] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, pp. 101-2.
[3] cf. *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 190-200, 227.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

structure? And how far does the new economic and political organization produce a change in religion? These theoretical questions can be answered only by a series of comparative studies. Here there is evidence for one area alone, and the connexions which we postulate can be established only if they hold in a whole range of societies. 182 769 797

Christianity implies an emergence from the nexus of kinship, for the worshipping group is two or three believers, not a body of kinsmen, and conversion is a personal choice. This is more obvious in a missionary church than in one long established, for, as we have seen, the convert in a pagan community must withdraw from his kinsfolk to become a Christian,[1] but it remains true, even in a Christian society. The new doctrine implies a body of believers—a Church. The particular form varies, but the Church has appeared wherever the Christian faith has been established. In short, we argue that the change in religion necessarily disrupts an organization based primarily on kinship and establishes a new type of organization based partly on voluntary association. With the change from the ritual of the lineage to the ritual of the Church the authority and leadership of senior kinsmen is diminished; they are replaced by 'elders' and priests or pastors whose basis of authority is not birth, but selection by the Church. Furthermore, association for worship becomes a pattern for association in other fields, and the Church is the training ground among the Nyakyusa, as it has been among so many other peoples, for organizers of other types of societies. 182 797 795 602

And not only is kinship subordinated to faith; the forms of kinship are themselves modified. From the time of their first arrival the missionaries have taught that Christianity implies monogamy and they have baptized no polygynist who does not put away his additional wives. This teaching has been questioned by many Africans and by some European missionaries themselves, who doubt the wisdom of persuading a man already married to send away his wives—or even of countenancing such an action. But the rule of monogamy has remained as a condition of membership in all the Churches with European connexions.[2] It has been rejected, as we have seen, by two of the 'independent' African 182 595 797

[1] *ibid.*, pp. 197-9.

[2] The rule was suspended for a brief period in one mission working not far from the Nyakyusa area, but was later enforced. cf. Lyndon Harries in *Survey of African Marriage and Family Life* (edited by A. Phillips), pp. 341-2.

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Nyakyusa

182 Churches in the area. Nevertheless the bulk of professing Christians
595 are monogamists, though it is still customary and, in Rungwe
797 District, economically profitable, for a rich man who is not a Christian to have more than one wife. The difficulties of establishing monogamy are accentuated by the great disproportion in the numbers of men and women. If the figures available are accurate, a general acceptance of monogamy would mean that only about 70 per cent of the women could be married; therefore the Church is necessarily concerned in seeking an adjustment in the disproportion of the population—in keeping the men alive if our assumption that the shortage of men is due to a heavy male death rate is true.

182 The yeast of the gospel permeates still further. It is taken to
797 imply the freedom of an individual to accept or reject a partner in
584 marriage. This has been maintained from the first in the Nyakyusa Church, and is enforced by the courts, which apply a conception of personal rights springing from the Christian tradition.

182 Most Nyakyusa men attribute the rapid rise in the divorce rate
586 to this new 'freedom' of women. Christian teaching stresses the
797 family and the sanctity of marriage, but it ignores the lineage. In the traditional rituals of kinship the lineage is represented again and again, while in Christian ritual it is the elementary family and the Church that are pictured. The preoccupation with fertility and the reproductive cycle was linked with the glorification of the lineage itself, and it disappears when the lineage ceases to be the basis of social grouping.

How closely linked are symbols to other aspects of a society?
182 Our hypothesis is that they are relatively free, but it can be shown
181 that many of the symbols used in the traditional rituals of the
178 Nyakyusa reflect the economy, and vary somewhat from one area to another, with the staple crops. The development of trade or of new crops is a prerequisite for using the symbols of bread and wine traditional in the Christian rituals, and even the 'independent' African Churches use new foods, not the beer and bananas of the country; thus change in material symbols and change in economy may be directly connected. The imagery changes also with the changing social structure; Kyala ceases to be pictured as a senior kinsman, when the lineage organization begins to weaken; he is God the father of a family rather than an early member of the royal lineage. But there is no evidence that

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Nyakyusa

particular symbols are tied to a particular social structure; the poet makes his choice within the whole range of the familiar.

The impetus to change has come both from the religious field and from the secular. For example, the pressure towards monogamy among the Nyakyusa has been religious; given plentiful land and cash crops additional wives are an economic asset, not a liability. In this respect the contrast with the Ciskei in South Africa, where families are dependent for food on wage-earners in towns, and no man can support two families,[1] is marked. On the other hand, the decay of Nyakyusa age-villages is primarily due to economic pressure, though it is facilitated by the insistence of Christians that there is no danger in father-in-law and daughter-in-law meeting one another. The first generation of Christians living on mission land built villages apart for their sons, despite the teaching that avoidance of a father-in-law by his daughter-in-law was foolish, if not sinful. But a radical change in pagan observance of ritual avoidance is brought about by the general practice of going out to work for long periods, and the competition for coffee and rice-lands, which makes the territorial separation of fathers and sons impossible. As we have shown, young men going to work commonly leave their wives in their fathers' homesteads, valuing the support and supervision given them there above the old stringency of avoidance and, where land is scarce and valuable, fathers do not move aside each generation to make way for their sons. Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law continues only in an attenuated form.

From German times control by a European government has compelled a modification of the traditional sacrifices to the heroes and of the ritual of chieftainship. How the Kinga priests came to Lubaga 'in secret' and how they failed to instal a new Lwembe after the death of Mwakisisya about 1914 has been described. Killing a child to anoint a drum or make medicine for the fields, compelling a man to accept a dangerous office, killing chiefs because they are ailing, or plucking off their nails before they die; all these are actions which are held, and must be held, to be 'contrary to natural justice' by any Western government. Here the change in political organization compels a change in ritual and there is evidence that belief in the traditional forms is much diminished, though not dead. The European government also

[1] Keiskammahoek Rural Survey. Vol. ii, *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, by D. H. Houghton and E. M. Walton; vol. iii, *Social Structure*, by M. Wilson *et al.*

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Nyakyusa

177 found the administration of the poison ordeal, driving out people
648 alleged to be witches, and killing supposed sorcerers 'contrary to
796 natural justice'. Here the change is not in the celebration of a ritual but in the execution of 'justice' based on traditional religious beliefs.

The early missionaries were very important as employers of
797 labour and a market for produce; indeed at one time they were the
177 *sole* source of western trade-goods among the Nyakyusa. For long they provided the only skilled medical attention. They were the source of new learning, teaching, from the start, reading and writing and new manual skills, and the link between learning and religion, so familiar in the history of Europe, is still strong. Therefore acceptance of Christianity *tended* to go along with acceptance of the new economic and political structure, but it was never identified with it. Already in the thirties a popular song contrasted Christians with Europeans, and African nationalism was finding expression in 'independent' Churches.

Secularism fits as well with the new economic and political
178 structure as Christianity, and it has been argued elsewhere that
171 one of the characteristics of the change from a small-scale, isolated,
648 self-sufficient people to a large-scale society is increasing secularism.[1] The evidence from BuNyakyusa does not so far support this, but there is a *separation* of religious and other activities. Religion is not interwoven with the modern political system as it was with the old. Traditionally the fusion between ritual and political activities was almost complete; village headmen became priests as they grew old, and chiefs became gods. Now there is a separation between Church and state, between Government and mission, which co-operate closely only in the organization of schools. It is true that Christian congregations pray regularly for 'those set in authority over us', but for the most part religious ritual does not enter into state functions. The flag is hoisted and saluted at sunrise and sunset at administrative and military centres; certain occasions, such as the Queen's birthday or the visit of the Queen's representative, the Governor, are celebrated with secular ceremonial. Only at the Coronation, to which African representatives from Rungwe district were sent, did the state ceremonial and the Christian ritual merge.[2] Political tension is not now directly

[1] R. Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, Chicago (1941); *A Village that Chose Progress*, Chicago (1950).

[2] 'The entire solemnity of the Coronation, from start to finish, is distinctly a religious rite.' Canon Charles Smyth, 'The Coronation Rite', *The Listener*, 28th May 1953.

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FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

expressed or resolved in ritual. The place for *ukusaya*—speaking out—is the council chamber not the sacred grove or the homestead where the shades gather, and the reconciliation of conflicts between chiefs, or between chiefs and District Commissioner or chiefs and commoners, is sought in a committee rather than a Church. Perhaps the greatest difficulty in modern administration in Africa lies in this very separation of activities, in the *thinness* of the bonds across the colour line, in the cleavage between secular and sacred. Some separation of the different aspects of a society is a concomitant of the increase in scale—it is one manifestation of specialization—but it is greater in Tanganyika with its diversity of religious traditions than it is in Britain with its common Christian history.

That there is a connexion between the form of faith and ritual and the form of social structure few would deny. The concern of the anthropologist is to define it; to plot the limits of autonomy between different aspects within societies. This can be done only by the patient analysis and comparison of many societies and this book is offered as a humble contribution towards such a comparative study.

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Nyakyusa

MEMBERSHIP OF VILLAGES

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162
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(a) *Lupondo* (Senior village of Generation IV)

Members	*Village of father*	*Villages of fathers-in-law*	*Kinsmen in village*
1. Mwanyilu (177)	Igembe	Bujege Itebe Iringa Igembe	Half-brother Half-sister married to headman Father's half-brother
2. Kilasile (headman)	Kituli Father's heir in Kibonde	Igembe Heir in forest village	Married half-sister of chief
3. Ndungundeli Mwaipopo	Igembe	Mwangomo's (C 28) chiefdom	Half-brother of chief
4. Mwasikambo	Bujege. Moved to Kibonde	Another chiefdom	None traced
5. Mwambambale	Bujege	Bujege Moved to Ndola	Married daughter of chief's father's half-brother
6. Mwakalinga	Igembe	Igembe	None traced
7. Mwampora	Kisyero	Igembe	None traced
8. Musika	Ipoma	Ipoma	None traced
9. Mwakipesile	Ipoma	Igembe	None traced
10. Mwakilasa	Kisyero	Igembe	None traced
11. Mwakipokera	Another chiefdom	Mwandosya's chiefdom (C 27)	None traced
12. Mwakipesile	Another chiefdom	Ipoma	None traced
13. Mwakalebela	Mwangomo's chiefdom (C 28)	Mwangomo's chiefdom (C 28) Kabula	None traced
14. Mwambipile	Igembe	Lupondo	None traced
15. Mwakinyolobe	Ipoma	Mwaihojo's chiefdom (C 23)	None traced
16. Mwakasio	Kibonde	Lupondo	None traced
17. Mwajojele	Another chiefdom	Another chiefdom	None traced
18. Mwansale	Itiki	Igembe Kisyero	None traced
19. Kigasya Mwaipopo	Bujege	bachelor	Half-brother of chief's father
20. Mwampise	Kisyero	Igembe	None traced

i.e. out of twenty members, three are close kinsmen, and two are married to kinswomen of these three. The remaining fifteen members are not connected by kinship ties.

[p. 224]

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Nyakyusa

(*b*) *Katumba* (Generation III)

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Members	*Village of father*	*Villages of fathers-in-law*	*Kinsmen in village*	*Kinsmen elsewhere*
1. Gwemelese	Kisyero		Elder brother of 2	Son in Ndola. Elder brother in another chiefdom (C 27)
2. Anganile	Kisyero	Not married	Younger brother of 1	
3. Syapabwingi	Kisyero	Lugombo Kasambala's chiefdom (C 2)		Brother in forest village. Brother in chiefdom (C 2). Brother in plain. (All at first built in Katumba).
4. Kileke	Bujege	(*a*) Bujinga (*b*) Kisyero	Half-brother of 5	Elder brother Igembe, moved to C 28. Brother in Christian village Kabembe (at first built in Katumba). Brother in Mbeya at work. Brother in Itiki (but away at work).
5. Nkokwa	Bujege		Half-brother of 4	
6. Mwalumu	Bujege	(*a*) Kisyero (*b*) Mwangomo's country (C 28) (*c*) Kibonde	Half-brother of 7	No full brothers. 2 half-brothers moved to other chiefdoms, another to Zanzibar. Daughter married Kibonde, another married Ndola.
7. Nsana	Bujege	not married	Half-brother of 6	
8. Nathan	Bujege	Kibonde moved to Igembe		He only son of mother, 2 half-brothers in Ndola.
9. Pabulosi	Another chiefdom (C 23)	Ndupaso		Father's younger brother's son headman of Iringa.
10. Mwalibaki				

i.e. out of ten members, there are one pair of brothers and two pairs of half-brothers, but *all* have close kinsmen (brothers, half-brothers, or father's brother's sons) in other villages or chiefdoms. Katumba has diminished from fifty-three members in 1938 to ten in 1955. Many members have died and many have moved, some to the forest colony, some to the plain to plant rice, four to Lupando.

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(c) *Katala* (Generation IV and V)

621
613
162
551

Boys (none married)		*Father*	*Father's village*
Andulu	full brothers	Mwaseba (152)	Mpunga
Alijesi			
Jestina	half-brothers	Mwaseba (152)	Mpunga
Mololo			
Freda			
Tukafika			
Laseki			
Kimamba			
Abandubandu		Bampolile	Masoko
Andambile		Peteli	Masoko
Lalogwa		Mbukanya	Masoko
Bandadanwile		Imilano	Masoko
Anigwile		Mungile	Masoko
Kofia		Gusike	Masoko
Kaswelile		Mwaiposi	Masoko
Akipwele		Mwankuni	Masoko
Bajeko		Mwangosi	Masoko
Adumile		Gwilliam	Masoko (Inherited in Lupondo)
Kajobene		Mwalusamba	Masoko
Fryin		Anitike	Masoko
Mwitingi		Simeon	Masoko
Ndalwisye		Mwangoje	Masoko
Osijah		Mwaipaja	Mfumbi

i.e. out of twenty-three members, two are full brothers and six others are half-brothers. No other kinship connections were traced.

COMMONER PRIESTS MENTIONED

792
551

Kikungubeja, Kyamba Kitali, Nsyanigwa, Silobwike	Hereditary Kinga priests who come to Lubaga and visit Kasitile on the way
Kissoule, Mwamalunguka, Mwambipili	Hereditary priests of Lubaga
Mwamakunda	Kasitile's assistant priest
Mwalukuta, Nyama	Hereditary priests of Mbyanga, the grove of Mwakisambwe (30)
Kissogota, Ngulyo, Njobakosa	Village headmen of Mwaijonga (82) and priests of his grove
Mwambuputa, Kakuju	Village headmen of Mwankuga (150) and priests responsible for 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177)

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

INDEX

-village, 3, 4, 53, 57, 88-93, 95-6, 106, 164, 169, 201, 208, 210, 218, 221, 224-6, facing 91
ger, 107, 113, 123, 125, 134, 138, 140-1, 160-1, 165, 217-18; cf. Confession, Quarrelling

eath of men', 50-1, 65-8, 125, 129, 159, 167, 201

ttle, plate 1, 1, 3, 7-9, 12-13, 18, 25, 39, 47, 51, 54, 56-8, 62, 72, 83, 128, 155, 205-6, 214; cf. Sacrifice
iefdom, 4, 19, 70, 84, 86-97, 102, 113, 121, 173-4, 201-11, 217-8
iefs, 1, facing 3, 5, 10, 15, 17, 22, 24, 47, 49-85, 88-9, 106-26, 138-41, 155, 159, 167, 209-11, 212-13, 217-18, 221-3
ieftainship, 3, 25, 52, 54-5, 89, 216-7, 221
emblems of, 10, 22-3, 44-5, 52-3, 61; cf. Drums, Tails, Trees
ristians, 16, 28-9, 106, 141, 158, 166-202, 211-13, 218-22
hurch, 6, 171, 173-4, 177, 181, 188, 212-13, 219, 222-3
leansing the country', 5, 102-13
olonies, 89-90
oming-out', 4, 5, 10, 23, 31, 49-57, 63, 83, 88-96, 159-60, 162, 175, 206, 210-11, 217-18
ommoners, 1-4, 13-14, 25, 52, 59, 63, 68, 97, 137-41, 155, 216, 223; cf. Village headmen
onfession, 104, 107, 113, 123, 125, 134-41, 160-1, 164-5, 216-8, 223
ongregation, 168-71, 177, 222
o-operative societies, 123-4
ourt, 37, 59-60, 119
ultivation, 2-3, 14-15, 96, 98, 155
urse, 183-6; cf. 'Breath of men'

ancing, 51, 104, 200-1
eath ritual, 177-9
ivination, 72, 119, 126-31
ivine king', 2, 6, 17-48, 98-9, 154, 216
ivorce, 207, 220

Doctors, 151-3
Drums, 25-8, 41, 45, 84, 111, 221

Elders, 168-9, 200-1, 219

Fertility, 3, 9, 16, 22, 31, 41, 48, 52, 54, 64-5, 77-8, 82, 84-5, 97, 110, 115, 120-2, 137, 161, 176, 195, 212, 220; cf. Life
Fire, 1, 3, 7, 10-11, 14-15, 51-4, 56, 83, 103-5, 112
First-fruits, 43-4, 62-3, 84-5

Grove, *see* Sacred grove
Generation, 91-7, 217; cf. 'Coming-out'

Hair, 22, 41, 63-5, 84, 116, 121, 153
Harmony, 68-71, 104, 106, 165; cf. Confession, Quarrelling
'Heavy', 51, 59, 163
Heir, 4, 15, 41, 49, 89; cf. Inheritance
Heroes, 1-3, 13, 17-18, 25, 40, 47, 83, 88, 102, 154, 156, 161, 202, 211-12, 216, 221; cf. Lwembe, Kyungu, Kyala
History, 2, 15-16, 88-90, 94, 166
Hoes, 10, 15, 25, 27, 29-30, 97
Hunters, 2
Hunting, 10, 54

Ifingila, 9, 24, 57-8, 63, 124, 155
Incest, 14-15, 135
'Independent' churches, 167, 171-3, 219-20, 222
Inheritance, 206-7, 210
Inyifwila, 58-61, 68, 151-2
Iron, 1, 3, 7, 15, 24, 144, 153, 216
Isolation, 203
Ivory, 20, 43-5, 216

Kabale, 1, 18-19, 70, 81-3, 87, 108
Kasitile, plate 10a, 5, 21, 24, 27, 30-1, 34-8, 64, 68-9, 72-80, 83-5, 97, 115-19, 121, 123-41, 158, 165
Kinga, 1-2, 7-12, 23-39, 46-8, 84, 93, 97, 121, 124-5, 131, 203, 211, 221
Kinship, 5, 90-3, 162, 154, 174, 178, 201, 206-7, 213, 218-20

000

[p. 227]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

000

Kyala, 6-8, 14-18, 29, 33, 36, 45-8, 72-3, 76-7, 82-3, 106, 108, 112, 116-19, 128-9, 131, 154, 156-9, 163-5, 182, 186, 188, 207, 211, 220
Kyungu, frontispiece, 2, facing 3, 7, 10-12, 16-21, facing 27, 40-6, 50, 98, 103-5, 114-16, 156-7, 175, 216

Land, 4, 67, 88-101, 131, 166, 205-6, 210-11, 221
Libation, 25, 31-2, 34
Life, 187; cf. Fertility
Lineage, facing 3, facing 27, 68, 71, 78-80, 83, 96, 126, 153, 173-4, 177, 182, 185-6, 201, 206-7, 211, 219-20
Litter, 23, 52, 57
Lubaga, 9, 16-40, 79, 87-8, 119, 121, 211, 216, 221
Lwembe, 2, facing 3, 7-10, 14-23, 97-8, 131, 156-7, 216, 221

Marriage, 179-80, 182, 190, 193-5, 198-200, 206-8, 218-20
of chief, 55-7
Mbande, plate 3, 17, 20-1, 40-6, 88, 104
Mbasi, 7, 10, 11-16, 156-7, 159, 182
Mbyanga, 70, 79-81, 87-9, 136, 175-6
Medicines, 57-63, 68-9, 121, 124-6, 132, 142-54, 156, 185, 212, 217, 221
Missionaries, 6, 126, 166, 175, 201, 212-13, 222
Morality, 145-51, 160-1, 200-1, 212; cf. Confession
Mwela (pl. *bela*) = white, pure, innocent, without anger, 26, 106, 108-9, 113, 135, 138, 141, 157, 163
Myth, 3, 7-17, 47, 216-18

Nails, 22, 41, 63-5, 84, 121
Ngomale, 2, 12, facing 27
Ngulube, 1, facing 3, 12, 27, 105, 156-7
Nobles, 20-1, 40-6, 98, 103-4

Oracle, *see* Divination

PaliKyala, 17-18, 46-8, 87
Political structure, 1-3, 6, 19-21, 44, 49-51, 116, 209-10, 216-19, 222
Polygyny, 173-88, 190-2, 195, 197-8, 208, 219-21
Population, 204-5, 211, 220
Prayer, 31-2, 45, 67, 73-4, 76-85, 97, 105-112, 115, 131-5, 186
Priests, 5, 7, 21-39, 47, 50, 61, 71-3, 78-81, 84-5, 97, 111, 118-20, 123-41, 152, 163, 165, 177, 216-9, 222, 226; cf. Kasitile
Prophets, 16, 29, 34, 71-2, 103-4, 118, 164
Python, 29, 34, 60-1, 66, 133, 135, 158, 160, 185

Quarrelling, 68-9, 76, 80-1, 85, 93, 104, 113, 117-18, 125, 130-1, 161, 164-5; cf. Confession, Anger

Rainbow, 60, 80
Rainmaking, 5, 23, 37-8, 40-3, 44, 46-8, 82, 84, 98, 115-20, 177, 182, 186
Resurrection, 202

Sacred beer, 63, 125
Sacred grove, 21, 25-34, 42-8, 70-85, 93, 101, 127-8, 135, 130, 132, 176, 211, 223, plate 9
Sacrifice, 1, 24-5, 27-8, 30-8, 42, 45, 47-8, 70-85, 95, 98, 102-3, 110, 128, 132, 162, 165, 175, 211, 216-18, 221
Schools, 167, 129-70, 188, 203-4, 211, 222
Shades, 21-2, 30, 61, 69, 72, 74, 77-8, 80, 82-4, 102-3, 108-10, 115, 119, 129-30, 132, 138-40, 156-62, 164, 174, 176, 187, 202, 207, 211-12, 218
'Speaking out', *see* Confession
Symbolism, 143, 153, 211-12, 220-1

Tails (of chieftainship), 61-2, 68, 95
Trees (of chief), 27-8, 54-6, 70, 73, 75
Truthfulness, 163

Village, *see* Age-village
Village headman, 2, 3, 24, 39, 49, 51-69, 71-4, 92-7, 103-11, 165, 169, 206, 209-11, 217, 222, 226
Volcanic eruption, 7, 16, 164

War, 21, 39, 44-5, 52, 54, 95, 104, 216-17
Witchcraft, 3, 13, 39, 59, 61-2, 66, 68-71, 96, 102-3, 107-8, 110-12, 125-31, 138-41, 150-1, 155-6, 158-61, 163-4, 173, 176, 182-3, 188, 194, 222

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[For data on the various Christian sects and their missionary activities, see category 116, pp. 166-202./

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LAND TENURE AND SOCIAL CHANGE AMONG THE NYAKYUSA

by

P. H. GULLIVER

(Government Sociologist, Tanganyika)

[Title Page]
[i]

EAST AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL RESEARCH, KAMPALA, UGANDA

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Nyakyusa

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I	INTRODUCTION	1
II	THE TRADITIONAL SYSTEM	5
	Traditional land tenure	8
III	CHANGING CONDITIONS AND THE PRESENT SITUATION	11
	Population	11
	Cash cropping: paddy cultivation	12
	Arable holdings	14
	Large-sized holdings	17
	The problem of immigrant land-holders	18
IV	THE RESULTS OF LAND SHORTAGE	20
	Inheritance of land	20
	The right to land, and the authority of the village headman	23
	Fragmentation and dispersion of holdings	24
	Security of tenure and disputes over land	26
	The changing village	29
	Cattle and pastoral requirements	34
	The young men: land shortage and labour migration	36
	The modern "chief" and the land	38
V	CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS	41
	Bibliography	46
	Note: The 1957 Population Census	47

TABLES

Table		Page
I	Nyakyusa population	12
II	Sales of rice and paddy, 1932-56	13
III	Arable holdings in eight villages	15
IV	Nyakyusa land disputes: civil cases, 1954	28
V	Districts in Tanganyika where land disputes are common	29
VI	Nyakyusa cattle	34
VII	Young men: land holding and labour migration	37

SKETCH MAPS

	Page
Population Density in the Chiefdoms of the Lake Plains, Rungwe District	*facing* 15
Kapugi Village, Koroso's Chiefdom, 1955	*facing* 29

[p. iii]
[p. iv is blank]

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Nyakyusa

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I

In many areas of Eastern Africa the pressure of peasant populations on their tribal lands is a critical feature of the contemporary scene, and this is most especially so in the more fertile parts where the African has accepted the new cash economy and is beginning to appreciate the potentialities of the modern world. The situation has been highlighted recently in the public mind by the publication of the Report of the East African Royal Commission[1] which examined the economic conditions of our time and made general recommendations.

In Tanganyika the overall density of population is low (22 persons per square mile) and the general scale of economic activity still remains little above subsistence level over vast areas of Territory. There are, however, islands of extremely dense populations scattered through the country, often associated with the mountain areas, where soil is fertile, rainfall is reliable and adequate and the cultivation of crops for sale in world markets has gone ahead fairly easily. These populations still comprise peasant farming communities with little capital and their "natural" impulse is to expand their extensive agricultural system rather than to intensify their cultivation on existing holdings. Serious overcrowding soon results for the favourable areas are limited and surrounded by drier bushlands. African attitudes and legal customs concerning their land do not change quickly and they lag behind new conditions of physical limitation and economic development. Whilst the recommendations of the Royal Commission may be valuable in the establishment of general policy, it is obvious that detailed application through time demands a fairly exact knowledge and understanding of particular local conditions if it is to be reasonably successful. This is particularly the case in so large a country as Tanganyika, with its multiplicity of environments and tribal systems of law, land tenure and agriculture, and the social attitudes which encompass them.

The present essay is an attempt, sponsored by Government, to describe and analyse the land and population conditions in one small area of the Territory where a cash economy is emerging and where the pressure of a peasant population on its land resources has become acute. It is hoped that some of this account may be applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to other similar areas both in Tanganyika and elsewhere, and that the conclusions reached may be helpful in dealing with the problems there; but primarily this is a study of one particular part of the country in order to provide the information upon which detailed policy may be founded.

The Nyakyusa are not entirely typical of many of the Bantu people of East Africa for they have a most distinctive social organisation, peculiar to themselves, based on age-villages and petty, independent chiefdoms. Also, they inhabit a country whose annual rainfall is unusually high, averaging about 100 inches. On the other hand, these people are one of the very few in Tanganyika for whom we have an excellent account of both their pre-European and early European systems of land tenure. Based on this information, obtained *before* modern changes began, we can perceive, analyse

1. *East African Royal Commission* 1953-5, *Report*: H.M.S.O. 1955. Cmd. 9475.

and try to understand the nature and reasons for change. Here, then, is a good opportunity for the study of social change – not only in land tenure as such, but also in village and family organisation, political authority and economic life.

II

The Nyakyusa are a Bantu people inhabiting the main part of the Rungwe District in southern Tanganyika, immediately to the north of Lake Nyasa. In 1948 they numbered about 199,000 in that District, but about 10,000 men were probably at the time temporarily absent from their homes and in employment in the mines and towns of the Rhodesias and South Africa (see Gulliver, 1957), whilst about 20,000 had migrated to live in the adjacent Mbeya District to the north.

The tribal area comprises a confined geographical basin surrounding the northern end of Lake Nyasa. It extends only about 40 miles from the tip of the lake at 1,550 feet above sea level to the Poroto Mountains in the north at 8,000 feet; and from east to west is only about 30 miles, from the almost sheer walls of the Livingstone Mountains (with peaks up to 10,000 feet) to the Ndali Highlands (rising to about 7,000 feet). There are therefore unusually large ecological differences within so small an area. Three major regions are to be distinguished: the "Northern Highlands" over about 4,500 feet, the low-lying "Lake Plains" in the south, and the "Central Region" in between. Everywhere rainfall is reliable and high, averaging at least 100 inches annually[1], and this amply compensates for a certain poverty and misuse of the soil, although (and particularly in the Central Region) it brings dangers of soil erosion. Except in the highest parts the banana is the staple food, supported by maize, beans, finger millet and groundnuts. In the Northern Highlands coffee has become well established as the principal cash crop: in the Lake Plains paddy rice cultivation provides both a food and a cash crop: in the Central Region the country is too low generally for coffee and too high and dry for rice; consequently cash-cropping is considerably inferior and the people's standard of living is rather poorer.

The Nyakyusa and their country tended for a long time to be relatively isolated from the outside world by high mountain walls and rain-soaked roads. In addition, or because of it perhaps, they developed an almost unique culture which was supported by considerable conservatism and high insularity. They still continue to regard their African neighbours beyond the mountains as their social and cultural inferiors. The turmoil of the slave-trade in Central Africa passed them by; in modern times they have not enthusiastically accepted Christianity and they have refused to take up the use of Swahili, the Territorial *lingua franca*. In recent years, and most especially since the end of World War II, they have, however, accepted and pushed forward with vigour a rapid and extensive economic development, involving particularly the production of coffee and paddy as cash crops, and large-scale labour migration to the south in the high-wage mining industries. The multiplicity of petty, often tiny, independent chiefdoms has been reorganised to provide four local government areas, each under a Rural Council, in which the old chiefdoms have become something like parishes[2]. Although much of the old conservatism and narrow parochialism persists, yet there is now an atmosphere of accepted change, of a keen desire for economic development, and a general acceptance of a cash economy.

Probably the most significant feature of modern life in the Nyakyusa country is the increasing scarcity of land for agriculture in relation to the

1. At Tukuyu, in the Northern Highlands, annual rainfall averaged 99.28 inches between 1919 and 1952: at Kyela, in the Lake Plains, the average between 1940 and 1951 was 106.21 inches.
2. Sir Kingdon, Z.E.: The intrusion of a system of local government by African rural councils in the Rungwe District, Tanganyika; *The Journal of African Administration*, iii, 4, October, 1951.

:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

people's needs. The importance of this can scarcely be overemphasised for a peasant people who are adopting a cash economy and are socially and emotionally deeply attached to their land – their single, continuous source of capital and their tribal heritage. Apart from the possibilities of labour migration which, so far at any rate, are taken up only temporarily and by the younger men, there are no economic opportunities and no capital to compete with the land. In non-economic life the land remains supreme as the persisting basis of society.

As late as 1940 the District Commissioner, Rungwe, was able to write that there was most generally sufficient land for the people's needs in all parts of the country, and the only competition was perhaps in respect of the very best and most fertile tracts, as had always been the case. G. Wilson recorded similar remarks in the late nineteen-thirties. That these observations were correct cannot be doubted. It is known, for instance, that until the post-war years in the Lake Plains – where now land shortage is most acute – there was a broad belt of mainly unoccupied, uncultivated bushland, infested with game, extending from the Livingstone Mountains in the east to the Nyasaland border in the south-west. There were extensive, more or less empty areas in almost every chiefdom. The people were subsistence farmers only, and also banana eaters, and in this well-watered country their agricultural requirements were adequately met on very modest holdings, from most of which two harvests a year could be gathered.

In the brief period of little more than ten years the situation has altered radically to the point of a general shortage of land (except for some parts in the north-west), and especially in the Lake Plains the available land is quite insufficient to meet the demands of the inhabitants. This critical change is the result partly of an increasing population, augmented by some immigration from other tribal areas; but more especially it is the result of the demands for larger arable holdings to meet cash crop aspirations – i.e., money earning. Although both coffee and paddy rice cultivation had begun before 1939, and both were encouraged and developed during the War years, it was not until after 1945 that both of these cash crops became well and generally established and the demand for money incomes became universal.

III

It was in order to investigate this new situation, which was beginning to become serious and to cause concern to Government, that I made a sociological survey in 1955. I had already spent some months in the country in 1954 investigating labour migration in order to provide Government with information and to make recommendations to deal with the problems arising. The second period of work occupied about five months. During both enquiries I was extremely fortunate in having the use of the excellent monographs of G. and M. Wilson who had carried out a conventional anthropological study of the Nyakyusa between 1934 and 1938. Without their basic work behind me, neither of my two studies would have been possible in so brief a time, and I must gratefully acknowledge the real value of their writings.

The intention had been that a complete enquiry should be made into Nyakyusa land conditions in all parts of the country, and that it should culminate in a full recording of tribal land law and custom with a view to its possible reform. In the event only the initial enquiry in the field in the Lake Plains was completed and the results of that alone are described in this essay. Whereas in former days there were probably few distinctive differences between the various parts of the country, in modern times with the introduction of different cash crops, with differential population growths and varying demands on the land, important divergences seem to be arising. For example,

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

For example,

In the Northern Highlands there is now a strong tendency for the tight village system to disintegrate as men seek to site their houses, each in his own coffee plot. In the Lake Plains also the structure of the age-village is changing – there the villages persist as such but they come to be inhabited by men of any age and new villages do not emerge with a new chief. No attempt is made here, however, to analyse these variations for they are only now beginning and no satisfactory, detailed information is available for the post-war cash economy of the highland areas.

The Government of Tanganyika has permitted the publication of this essay, and I wish to express my gratitude for its support. The essay is a modified version of my original Report which was presented to Government in January, 1956. The views expressed in it are my own and not those of Government. As usual in my work as Government Sociologist, I have received much valuable assistance, advice and information from officers stationed in the area. The Nyakyusa themselves, as during my first enquiry, were usually cooperative, and at least some of them welcomed my work as a contribution to the easement of their novel difficulties. It would not have been surprising had they remained obdurate and antagonistic towards my enquiries about their land, for like many modern Africans they have a sense of insecurity which is not susceptible to reason. In fact I was able without much difficulty to make any enquiry I wished, to measure sample areas and to discuss the situation in all its aspects. Perhaps it is that an African people welcome a sympathetic enquirer and in their problems genuinely want assistance. The task of a sociologist is of course in some ways rather easier than that of an administrator or technical officer who has to persuade the people actually to accept and practice new ways and to abandon old ways. It is hoped that this essay may be of assistance both to these officers and to the people whom they are attempting to assist and teach.

Finally, I must thank the East African Institute of Social Research which has accepted this essay for publication, and especially Dr. L. A. Fallers who kindly read and criticised the original draft and who drew the two sketch maps.

Note: The term, the "Lake Plains", as used in this essay is to be understood to cover the major part of the modern local government area under the Ntebela Rural Council. Omitted are the small groups of Kisi (Ikombe) and Ndali (Ngana) peoples to the extreme east and west respectively. This area contains the alluvial flood plains surrounding the northern tip of Lake Nyasa, and the lowest foothills to the north where the country begins its steep incline towards the Poroto Mountains. To the south lies the lake and to the south-west, beyond the meandering Songwe river, lie the bushlands of the northern part of the Nyasaland Protectorate. To the east are the towering Livingstone Mountains and to the north live the other Nyakyusa groups in the highlands.

The area comprises a fairly compact social and economic region with a common historical tradition. Several of the indigenous chiefdoms stretch across the intermediate boundary between flood plains and foothills. With but one exception the present chiefs are lineal descendants, in their various houses, of the original Mwakyusa who led the people into this lowland area five generations ago. The modern inhabitants are pre-eminently the Nyakyusa-proper.

0:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER II

THE TRADITIONAL SYSTEM

Although this essay is to be primarily concerned with the modern and changing land and population situation among the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains, it is quite essential first to have an understanding of the traditional system of political and territorial organisation and of land tenure. This is not mere historicism, for despite changes the traditional system remains as the basis of contemporary land-holding and land law. Whilst actual conditions on the ground change, the Nyakyusa appreciation of those changes and their attitudes to land lag significantly behind. In brief, the traditional system was geared to a situation where there was plenty of land. Today the people find real difficulty in adjusting themselves to a high density of population and an acute shortage of land, with the result that this new situation is aggravated by outmoded practices, attitudes and cultural values.

The ancestors of the present group of peoples now known collectively as the Nyakyusa, moved into the Rungwe region from the Ukinga Highlands to the east beyond the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains. According to legend, which is probably substantially true, these newcomers found a sparsely populated country which they easily occupied. Later, following internecine strife, one group under a man called Mwakyusa left the Masoko area in the centre of present-day Rungwe District and moved down into the Lake Plains. There, probably less than 150 years ago, they drove out the Ngonde people and settled. The sons of Mwakyusa took their shares of the country and people and established their independent chiefdoms. The chiefs in 1956 are the lineal descendants, mainly in the fifth generation, of Mwakyusa, and have a well-known genealogy. The only exception to this occurs amongst the group of tiny chiefdoms in the extreme east under the Livingstones, which now form a single administrative chiefdom under Mwakilasa and number some 400 men. They trace descent from pre-Nyakyusa settlers known as the Saku.

Traditionally, as today, the village was the basic unit both in social life generally and in land-holding in particular. The Nyakyusa village was possibly unique in Africa. It was comprised of men of roughly the same age, together with their wives and young children, and it excluded their fathers and sons and also, very often, their elder and younger brothers. Each village consisted of a close group of houses (often centred on a broad "village street"), with arable and pastoral land around it. Each village had fairly well-defined boundaries with its neighbours. The village was represented as a group and acted corporately through its headman, *lifumu*, who was the guardian of villagers' land rights, the arbiter in land problems and disputes, and the controller of unused land. He was also the political and ritual leader of the village, but nevertheless he was a commoner chosen from amongst the villagers themselves, and was not a member of a chiefly lineage.

Land was owned by the village as a group. Every man resident in the village had a clear right to a site for his house and banana plot and to arable land within the village boundaries; he also had a right to graze his cattle in its communal pastures. Residence gave these rights and members of other villages were excluded. A man who left the village automatically gave up these rights, though if he returned he was able to take up his former holding or its equivalent.

631 Age-villages combined to form a chiefdom under the hereditary chief, *malefyale*, but active co-operation between villages thus associated was
628 often slight; indeed in the larger chiefdoms there commonly existed intermittent animosity which might break out in raiding or even civil war. The
[721] integrity of these larger chiefdoms was weak – for example, when the Nyakyusa were attacked by Sangu and Ngoni war-parties, and later by the
[848] Germans, villages of the same chiefdom conspicuously failed to join in common defence. Similarly the land affairs of one village were no concern of any other, and each jealously guarded its own rights.

631 None of the chiefdoms was large; smallness of scale is typical of
162 Nyakyusa political organisation and social attitudes. In 1955 the smallest indigenous chiefdom contained only 36 men. In 1948 55,700 people were divided amongst about 18 indigenous chiefs, but undoubtedly had not the Colonial Government frozen the system there would have been rather more – at least five more. Today there are 12 recognised "administrative chiefs", amongst whom five have each less than 3,000 people under them, and the largest chiefdom contains fewer than 10,000 people – the average is just over 4,000 people.

631 Nevertheless the chiefdom, the collection of villages, was important,
361 because in the creation of the chiefdom villages were created, and in its development the villages developed, matured and died away. A village survived only so long as its members lived and by the nature of the age-organisation there was but little possibility of the recruitment of new members, for villagers' sons left to form their own new villages. Their sons eventually came to comprise the core of the new chiefdoms.

642 In connection with the constitution of a Nyakyusa village and with
643 land tenure, the significant feature of the chiefdom was its establishment, together with the induction of a new chief, at the great "coming-out"
[796] ceremony, *ubusoka*. In brief, each chief was succeeded by two of his sons – the
[898] eldest son of each of the senior houses of the chief, i.e., of his first two wives. At the "coming-out" ceremony, when the sons were still young men and their father was not a particularly old man, the old chiefdom was divided into two, each part coming under one of the new young chiefs. Before this critical occasion – at which much important ritual was performed – the younger men of the old chiefdom had already moved away from their fathers villages and had established their own incipient villages nearby, each one containing a group of coevals. A Nyakyusa boy from the age of about seven years could not continue to live with his father and mother, but, in company with his equals, built his own hut on a site adjacent to the main village as indicated by the fathers' headman. Until the "coming-out" cere-
631 mony these youths' villages came under the control of the old village head-
[342] men; but with the induction of the new chiefs they achieved independent status, each with its own headman appointed from among its members by the old headmen. Each new village was allocated a new building site and a new arable area, and quite commonly the old villages, the older men, moved away a little in order to give the younger men adequate access to the land, for it was considered that the young men's needs for land were paramount.

631 After this wholesale reorganisation of the old chiefdom, when new
178 villages were established and new boundaries demarcated,[1] the old chief
[622] himself, the old headmen and the older men (the "fathers") gradually retired from active public life. The old chief was supposed to commit suicide
643 after a time (or was quietly killed off) in order to leave the field clear for his
888 sons; the old headmen became the religious and ritual leaders of the new chiefdoms, with the flavour of elder statesmanship, and the old men's

1. "As the "saying is of", it is told that "everything is upside down", [illegible] and the new chiefdoms and villages of the young men are [illegible]". Wilson, G., [illegible], p. [illegible].

villages grew over smaller and became extinct as their members gradually died off in old age.

A Nyakyusa village, then, owed its being to this most significant political, social and religious event. Each village had its area approximately demarcated, and each headman was ritually and magically strengthened in order to lead and protect his men and their families.

This particular system operated satisfactorily in the demographic and land-using conditions of the old days. By the process of bifurcation, briefly described above, new chiefdoms and new villages were formed for each generation. Although the population appears to have been increasing rapidly there was always sufficient land to create two chiefdoms where one had existed before, and to create new villages and more villages than had existed before in the old chiefdom. The two new chiefs were able easily to move apart and find sufficient and more than sufficient land for their needs.

The system of bifurcation, the ideal of the Nyakyusa, did not always work out so neatly in practice – at any rate it often did not in the Lake Plains. Sometimes it did work; for example, the present chiefdoms of Lazarus and Koroso are the two parts of their grandfather's single chiefdom, which split up under their respective fathers. Similarly, the present Mwakipesile and Mwamasangula chiefdoms stemmed from a single unit, whilst the Mwakipesile chiefdom itself today is really two indigenous chiefdoms, but the Government would recognise only the senior brother's claim to chiefship and allowed him authority over the whole. Even where a single new chiefdom succeeded the old (frequently as the result of civil war in which one brother subjugated the other) the essential dichotomous arrangement persisted so that the resultant single unit had two distinct halves, each with its own head with his villages and headmen. In any case, whether traditional bifurcation occurred or not, and right down to modern times, new villages have been established at the time of the "coming-out" of the new chief. The basic village system showed greater persistence and remained truer to type than did the chiefdom and the wider political system.

The real authority of a Nyakyusa chief was not in general very great, although individuals here and there achieved personal importance. A chief was accorded a great deal of prestige and honour, and by tribute and gifts he frequently became pre-eminently wealthy. He was supposed to be kept informed by his headmen of all important village affairs and to approve all matters concerning the land; but the village headman was in fact the real land authority, who attended to the details of land allocation and land use within his village. A chief could not do this, and in fact only in so far as he had the support and loyalty of his headmen had he any authority at all. "A chief is a chief because he has headmen," one informant put it to me – he was a prominent chief himself. A villager said: "A chief does not own the chiefdom, or the land. We, the people together, own it." A chief could, without notice or advice, take any unoccupied land for the use of himself or of his kinsmen, but he could not allocate it to others; both headman and villagers would have indignantly and successfully protested had he tried, as some occasionally did. Land disputes, an uncommon feature in a country where land was plentiful, were settled by the headman of the village in question; they were the private affairs of the village and the chief had no right of interference. Inter-village disputes first came before a meeting of the headmen concerned, with perhaps the assistance of the senior headman of the chiefdom. Only if a dispute could not be settled and if it seemed likely to threaten general peace within the chiefdom would the disputants go before the chief himself, who even so relied and had to rely heavily on his headmen to secure a settlement. So delicate was his position that he might be unable to resolve inter-village disputes for fear of witchcraft reprisals against him by the unsuccessful party.

Sometimes a chief who was a powerful personality rode roughshod over his headmen and achieved a measure of autocracy; but most headmen would not allow this and in their opposition they had the full support of their villagers, as well as the moral backing of public opinion. There are remembered cases in pre-European days when a chief was deposed or reduced to a non-entity by his headmen acting together in the face of what they considered to be encroachments on the inviolability of village unity and independence. In any case, however, even the strongest chiefs were little disposed to interfere in the land matters of their villages; few wished to be bothered with the details of land rights. A chief could legitimately complain if he were not kept informed by his headmen, but his approval of their actions – and most especially in land matters – was very largely a formality.

Traditional Land Tenure

As already briefly described, a village comes into formal existence at the time of the formation of a new chiefdom. At that time its building site and arable and pastoral areas were roughly demarcated by the retiring headmen of the old chiefdom. Within the village, members were allocated their house plots and each man tended to take the strip of land stretching behind his plot and make his field there. The land was shared out on a friendly, co-operative basis; the new headman smoothed out any difficulties and settled any disputes. Thus was the pattern of land-holding established. Apart from the relative value of a plot proximate to a man's house, there was little or no cause for dispute as land needs were small and the supply plentiful. An established villager could, without notification or special permission, extend his cultivation to any land which lay vacant – i.e., which was not in use or under fallow by a fellow-villager. There was therefore no need for a man to try at first to grab more land than he immediately required, nor did he need to be jealous of his neighbours' claims.

A villager's rights to the use of his land were quite secure and he had no fear of eviction or of the seizure of part of his holding. It is said that very occasionally a chief might take a man's holding but I think, at least in the Lake Plains, that this must have been most unusual. In fact, of course, so long as a man was allowed to reap his crop there was little value attached to the plot as such when nearly similar ground stood unused. Men sought security not on their plots of land, but in their membership of the village community, which assured them of their continuing rights to adequate opportunity for cultivation over the years. However, virtually every man had an excellent security of tenure on his holding during the mature life of his age-village (i.e. until at least the next "coming-out" ceremony), and if he died his heir, should he wish, could come and live in his house and cultivate his fields without hindrance. The way in which he cultivated, though of course strongly conditioned by custom and convention, was his own affair, and he sub-divided his holding amongst his own family as he thought fit. He could not, however, allocate any of his land to a man living in another village, nor could he permit it to be cultivated by such a stranger.

Through fear of witchcraft, because of persistent illness, misfortune or unfriendliness, in order to live near a relative or friend, or to inherit elsewhere, a man might leave his village and his age-mates. Then he had to give up his land-holding. When a man moved because of witchcraft or illness (much the same thing and a chief cause of movement) his land was normally left idle pending his hoped-for return, and his former neighbours would do all they could to induce him to return to his old home and fields – even to the use of force (see Wilson, G. 1938, pp. 32-3). His departure was an accusation against them, and a disturbance of co-operative unity. If the man consistently refused to return, or if it was known that he had definitely left for good, his

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

land automatically reverted to the common pool. An established villager might decide to use part of it perhaps, but not before prudently gaining the approval of the headman, lest the migrant return later and accuse him of unlawful and unfriendly seizure. If the headman agreed, as he would after a time in most cases, the newly acquired plot became part of that villager's holding with as secure a title as the rest. Such vacated land could also be allocated by the headman to a newcomer or, before the sons' village was established, to the son of a villager. 423 [622]

If a man had more land than he could cultivate – because, for example, his sons had left him to cultivate in their own villages, or his wife had died – he was under no essential obligation to give up any part. The headman might, if the need arose, try to persuade him to release a portion in order to make it available to someone in need; but the land-holder could refuse and the headman had to accept his refusal. As a chief depended on the support of his headmen, so did a headman's position ultimately depend upon at least the passive support of his villagers, from whose ranks he was chosen.

At the next "coming-out" ceremony the men of a village of the old chiefdom might be required to move aside in order to allow the young men, their sons, to take up the better building sites and farming land. This they traditionally did voluntarily and they built new homesteads on one side and cleared new arable plots. Once re-established in this manner, these older men would not be disturbed again and they remained secure in their new holdings. How often in fact such a displacement took place I cannot say, but it certainly seems to have occurred sometimes, for one can still trace old village sites which appear to bear out the common Nyakyusa story. [561]

In all this it must be remembered that the spirit of village unity and coevality was held in far higher esteem than land in such a fertile country where land was plentiful and subsistence farming required but small-sized holdings. Security of tenure and defined rights to particular plots are notions belonging to a different situation and age; when land begins to be scarce and to have an economic value, and when there is danger of men not being able to obtain as much as they need roughly where they need it. [621]

Newcomers were invariably welcomed to a village: they were supplied with a house site and an arable holding and were assisted with food until the first harvest. They were an addition to the numerical size and physical strength of the village, and they increased a headman's prestige. Their rights were no less assured than those of founder-members of the village, although their social position was less secure, at least at first, for they had not shared in the history of the community and had not grown up with the ties of village association and comradeship amounting almost to kinship. [186] [609]

Traditional rights in trees may be mentioned briefly. Trees were inherited without difficulty along with the land on which they stood, and a brother or son would commonly inherit the deceased's valuable trees without bothering to take the arable land around. If a man left his village and thus forfeited his land there, the position was different. Banana trees went with the land and a new occupant simply took them over; bananas are of no great value as they grow so readily and ubiquitously. Bamboos are more valuable (being used extensively in house-building) and any left behind in this way could be claimed in the first instance not by the village but by the chief. If the chief wanted them they became his property, or he could grant them to any man he favoured. Usually a chief was content to leave them: then the local kinsmen of the departed man had first claim, and if they had no use for them, or if no kinsmen were resident in the village, they became village property to be allocated by the headman. *Uzyungutl* trees[1] were regarded in [428] [342]

1. These are valued oil-bearing trees planted by the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains, the botanical name of which I do not know.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 the same way as bananas, to be allocated along with the vacant surrounding land, although sometimes it seems that a chief might successfully lay claim to them. Trees supplying firewood were generally plentiful in the surrounding bushland. A man would not cut wood on another's holding, and standing trees merely went with the land if it was taken up by anyone else, in the same way as useful stands of thatching grass did.

In conclusion of this summary account the following points may be reiterated as important to the understanding of the traditional system:—

(i) Land was plentiful in relation to the people's needs and extensive areas were left untouched.

(ii) Land was owned by the village as a group, acting under its own headman, who was the arbiter and the allocator of fields.

[621] (iii) Land was held in usufructory right only by a resident member of the village, and every resident had the right to a house and banana-grove site, to sufficient arable land and to the use of communal pastures and woodland.

(iv) The individual's security of tenure was good, in so far as this was thought at all important.

[643] (v) The power of the chief was slight in land matters; he had no authority to allocate land.

(vi) Other villages, whether of the same chiefdom or not, had no claim in, or authority over, a village's land and land affairs.

0:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER III

CHANGING CONDITIONS AND THE PRESENT SITUATION

Population

At the African Census in 1948 there were recorded, in their own tribal area, approximately 198,000 Nyakyusa at an average density over the land available for their use of 212 persons per square mile. [161]

In the Lake Plains alone there were, in 1948, 55,700 inhabitants living at an average density of 268 persons per square mile. Population densities in the other Nyakyusa areas were rather lower than this.

These figures do not, however, give the full picture from the point of view of land occupation and use, for large numbers of men, and some women, were at the time of the Census absent from their homes and living temporarily in employment areas abroad – chiefly in the Rhodesias and South Africa. I have estimated elsewhere that approximately 8,000 men would have been away in 1948, of whom 95 per cent. or even more would return to settle down at home, for there was only a very small proportion of men who remained more or less permanently absent. That is to say, these men remained dependent for their land needs on their own tribal territory, and indeed at least some were active land-holders whilst the rest had lesser rights in family holdings. [167]

If, therefore, we include these temporary absentees, the measure of the pressure of population on the land is shown by an average density of population for all Nyakyusa of 220 persons per square mile. At least 3,000 of these migrant labourers (possibly more) had their homes in the Lake Plains, and this number increased the density of population dependent on the land resources of this region to 282 persons per square mile.

The statistically average family in 1948 comprised about five people, and therefore the population density can be restated in the form that for all Nyakyusa there were available about 15 acres of land per family. In the Lake Plains there were about 12 acres of land available. These averages do not, of course, take account of either unusable land such as swamps, steep slopes, infertile tracts, etc., nor of the land necessarily taken up by roads and paths, open spaces in the villages and the like.[1]

These figures indicate that, taking a broad and general view based on averages, the density of Nyakyusa population or their pressure on their tribal lands ranked amongst the highest in Tanganyika in 1948.[2]

Unfortunately census enumerations before 1948 were too unreliable to allow of any satisfactory estimate of the probable rates of population increase, but from general information and internal evidence it is thought not unreasonable to suggest that in the Lake Plains population is increasing perhaps at the rate of one per cent. per annum; and in the rest of the tribal area the annual increase may be one and a half per cent. per annum. The high incidence of malaria and other debilitating diseases in the Lake Plains during the flood period of the wet season each year accounts for the lower estimate of increase there. [114] [164]

1. No account is taken in these calculations of Nyakyusa who were permanently resident in other parts of the Territory. They lived chiefly in Mbeya District (Unyiha, Usafwa and Mbeya Town) where they numbered about 20,000 in 1948.

2. The higher population densities in 1948 were as follows:—Ukara Island (Ukerewe District) 500, Mosbi 257, Ukerewe 200, Lushoto 170, Rungwe (including Nyakyusa, Ndali, Lambia, Kisi, etc.) 161, Mwanza 160, Arusha 154, Kwimba 140. Figures extracted from *Population Density*, Govt. of Tanganyika, 1955.

161 If therefore, pending the next Census to be made in 1957, we assume these rates of increase, then by 1955 it may be estimated that the Nyakyusa numbered about 217,000 at an average density of 233 persons per square mile, allowing 13.7 acres of land per family of five. For the Lake Plains alone, the population in 1955 would have been nearly 60,000 at an average density of 287 persons per square mile, with 11.2 acres per family. If we also include the estimated number of absentee migrant labourers in the base year of 1948, then there were in 1955 perhaps 63,000 people dependent on the land resources of the Lake Plains at an average density of 303 per square mile, though in fact some 6,000 men were temporarily absent from home in that year.

The figures and estimates are given in Table I. These averages do, of course, hide some considerable and significant local variations which are further described at pages 14 ff. below.

TABLE I
NYAKYUSA POPULATION

162

	1948 *Census*			1955 *Estimates*		
	a	*b*	*c*	*a*	*b*	*c*
Lake Plains at increase of 1% p.a.	55,700	268	11.9	59,700	287	11.2
Central Region at increase of 1½% p.a.	48,500	224	14.2	53,800	248	12.9
N.E. Highlands at increase of 1½% p.a.	40,300	183	17.4	44,700	203	15.8
N.W. Highlands at increase of 1½% p.a.	53,200	185	17.3	59,000	205	15.6
NYAKYUSA in tribal area	197,700	212	15.2	217,200	233	13.7

a = population
b = persons per square mile on land available for African use.
c = average acreage available per family of 5 persons.

Assuming that there were in 1948 about 3,000 men temporarily absent from their homes in the Lake Plains but who remained dependent on the land resources of that region, then the following estimate may be made:–

Lake Plains – persons resident at home and temporarily abroad:–

a	*b*	*c*	*a*	*b*	*c*
58,700	282	11.3	62,935	303	10.6

The approximate areas available for African use in the tribal lands (excluding alienated land, forest reserves and main roads) are:–

Lake Plains – 208 sq. miles N.E. Highlands – 220 sq. miles
Central Region – 217 sq. miles N.W. Highlands – 288 sq. miles
BuNyakyusa – 933 sq. miles

In these calculations no account is taken of unusable land such as swamps, steep slopes, thicket, etc.

Cash Cropping: Paddy Cultivation

433 432 This condition of a high density of population exists in a modern economy in which cash-cropping is universally accepted and desired. Under the former subsistence agriculture, because of heavy rainfall and natural annual flooding, quite small-sized holdings were adequate to satisfy a family's food requirements. Two harvests a year are easily obtained in some 241 combination of maize, beans, groundnuts and finger millet, with a few small "luxury" crops; and the banana groves yield continuously. The Nyakyusa were and are extremely fortunate in their food supply, and seldom experience shortages such as occasionally or even commonly afflict many peoples of East Africa.

243 [1171] Rice was first introduced in 1896 by two chiefs who obtained the seed from Nyasaland Arabs; and in 1898 the Moravian Mission and a Swahili

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

trader brought in other seed. The trader himself planted a large plot and his success seems to have stimulated the Nyakyusa to follow suit. There was a slow but gradual development of planting and by 1932 it was estimated that some 500 tons of hand-hulled rice were sold. It had become clear that the alluvial flood plains around the northern tip of Lake Nyasa were ideally suited to paddy growing. Until 1942 the people continued to hand-hull their crop and sell the rice, but in that year they were persuaded to sell the paddy direct to a locally established mill. Following initial difficulties in milling, handling and marketing, the Government built a store capable of holding 14,000 bags and it also took over the whole of the marketing with a seconded District Officer in charge. In 1947 the cultivators formed their first co-operative society. This movement has been encouraged by Government and the local Co-operative Union now deals with storage and marketing with the guidance of a Government Co-operative Officer. 243 [177] [432] [636]

The figures of sales of rice and paddy are given in Table II.[1]

Paddy has become a well-established crop, not only as the single cash crop of the region, but also as a food crop second only (or even equal) to the traditionally staple banana. About four-fifths of all arable holdings are paddy fields – though parts of these are used for dry season crops of maize, beans, etc. Virtually every Nyakyusa land-holder now grows paddy, and the vast majority regard it as their main crop. Cultivation is mainly by ox-plough followed by broadcast sowing and hand-weeding. Government efforts to encourage nurseries and planting out in rows have so far been entirely unsuccessful. Yields and perhaps quality too are thought to be lower than need be; the chief factor in production seems to be the degree of natural flooding during the wet season. [042]

TABLE II

SALES OF RICE AND PADDY, 1932-56* [433]

		tons			tons
1932	..	500	1945	..	1,200
1933	..	600	1946	..	2,700
1934	..	600	1947	..	3,300
1935	..	600	1948	..	2,100
1936	..	700	1949	..	3,700
1938	..	700	1950	..	2,300
1939	..	1,200	1951	..	1,200
1940	..	1,500	1952	..	2,000
1941	..	1,600	1953	..	5,700
1942	..	2,200	1954	..	5,900
1943	..	2,800	1955	..	5,700
1944	..	2,900	1956	..	3,000

*1932-41—hand-hulled rice, estimates only.
1942-47—paddy, sold through Government agency.
1948-56—paddy, sold through cultivators' co-operatives.

The cultivation of paddy requires relatively large-sized holdings due to the nature of the crop and the local extensive method of agriculture – for example, to produce a given income requires a far larger area of paddy in the Lake Plains than of coffee in the Northern Highlands of Nyakyusa country. As paddy cultivation became established, men increased their arable holdings in order to earn their money incomes. Larger holdings, rather than improved agricultural techniques, have become directly connected with higher incomes, and so the demand for more land set in. Assisted by the now general use of ploughs, paddy growing increased rapidly wherever it was found ecologically possible – i.e., within the alluvial flood plains and the coterminous area of annual natural flooding. Before this new demand for land emerged there were, even in the most highly populated parts, extensive areas which were more or [423]

1. Information has been supplied by the Co-operative Officer, Tukuyu.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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POPULATION DENSITY IN THE CHIEFDOMS OF THE LAKE PLAINS, RUNGWE DISTRICT

[Facing p. 14]

243 less uncultivated. These areas can easily be picked out today by the absence
[423] of village sites and banana groves. There was something of a rush to grab land in such areas and in the less densely populated parts of the chiefdoms. Today in my personal experience – for no general survey has been attempted –
[311] there remains little or no unused land within the paddy-growing region which can, by native techniques, be brought under the plough; and indeed men are attempting to grow paddy on unsuitably raised land where inundation is inadequate. Communal cattle pastures have shrunk as arable holdings extended until they remain only where cultivation is profitless.

511 The demand for land has far outrun the physical supply, and in 1955
311 it still seemed to be insatiable. The initial cycle was that a desire for more money to permit of a higher standard of living created a demand for more
434 land on which to produce more cash crops; but the increased level of income then further stimulated money demands to raise standards higher again, thus bringing a renewed demand for land. The cycle has now been halted by the lack of further land to meet the people's needs, but the demand remains nevertheless and is indeed increased by rising costs of living.

511 This economic picture is, of course, oversimplified, but it may serve to illustrate the nature of forces at work in the situation. I would not wish
178 to overemphasise the snowball effect, for the bulk of the population remains still largely content with only a little over earlier standards; but increasing numbers of men and their families are coming to seek something better. Bicycles have become something of a general necessity; a variety of good clothing and shoes is considered quite essential. Only a single decade before
[591] the Nyakyusa women still generally went about in the traditional nudity, whereas in 1955 they must have ranked among the very best-dressed African
[111] women in the Territory. European-type household goods, crockery and utensils are common. The demand for money, that is for a higher standard of living, has also been greatly stimulated by the experiences of the thousands of labour migrants returning from southern towns and mines, and by the cash and goods they bring back with them.[1]

434 It is not possible for me to attempt to suggest what a desirable acreage would be for a contemporary Nyakyusa, because money demands, crop
243 yields and selling prices change and the desire for higher standards of living also alter as the potentialities of the new cash economy are increasingly
511 understood. In 1954 the approximate average of Sh.200/- per paddy cultivator was earned from perhaps two or three acres of arable land, but an indeterminable amount of the crop was kept back for home food requirements. As will be shown later many men's paddy fields could have been little more than an acre, and many men, specifically young men, had no paddy land at all. Certainly there were few who held what they considered, at a reasonable estimate, to be sufficient land.

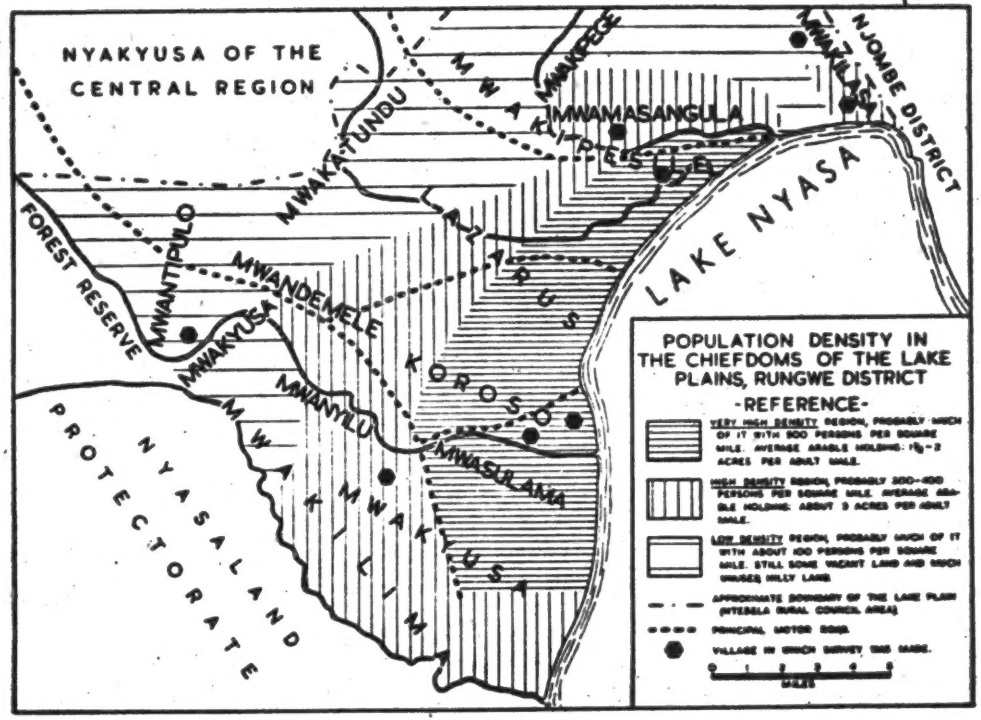
This universal cash crop agriculture and the continuing demand for
[161] higher standards of living, and therefore for higher money incomes, is the real cause of the new and rather sudden pressure of population on the land. Of course this economic process operates within a situation of relatively dense population and in a peasant community where land is almost the only form of capital and alternative enterprise is small. The gradual increase of population, although probably small, further aggravates the difficult situation.

Arable Holdings

511 It was not possible to obtain adequate, satisfactory data to allow the
311 calculation of local population densities, and the detailed results of the 1948
434
[161]

1. In Gulliver, P. H.: 1957, an estimate of the cash income of Nyakyusa in 1954 is given at pp. 51-2. Data on the cash brought back by returning labour migrants are given at p. 55.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa



[Facing p. 15]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Census have never been issued.[1] However in some sample villages I very roughly measured arable holdings, and my results provide new information even though they can be illustrative only of the modern situation.

In each of the eight villages chosen[2] the arable holdings of *all* the adult male members (whether at home or away at work at the time) of the whole village, or occasionally of a distinct section of it, were measured by the simple and rough method of pacing the borders of every separate plot and converting the resultant figures into yards and thus to acreages. The actual pacing was done entirely by myself in order to try to maintain an even stride on all occasions, but in each village I was well supported by a team of four or five villagers, always including the headman and his assistants. The figures obtained relate only to arable holdings and bear no determinate relation either to crop yields or to non-arable land in the villages concerned. The results are summarised in Table III below.

TABLE III
ARABLE HOLDINGS IN EIGHT VILLAGES

Village and chiefdom	*No. of land-holders*	*Average holding in acres*	*No. of men holding more than:—* 5 *acres*	10 *acres*	*Average size of plots in acres*
Kapugi					
Mwamasangula ..	59	3.2	11	1	1
Ikolo Mwakyusa ..	68	3.0	13	0	1.2
Matema Mwakilasa	50	1.9	4	1	0.6
Lugombo Koroso ..	24	1.6	2	0	0.6
Mpunguti					
Mwakipesile ..	63	1.5	1	0	0.5
Kapugi Koroso ..	60	1.3	1	0	0.4
Lusonjo Mwakilasa	12	1.3	0	0	0.6
Busoka Mwantipulo	36	1.0	0	0	0.4
	372 men		32 men (8.6%)	2 men	

From this Table it can be seen that in the chiefdoms of Koroso and Mwakipesile, *in the villages concerned*, the average holding per man was about one and a half acres – and my impression was that in the southern parts of Lazarus's chiefdom and elsewhere immediately surrounding the lake shore similar conditions existed. It may be noted too that in these cases there were large numbers of young men without holdings at all. On the other hand, in the selected villages in the chiefdoms of Mwamasangula and Mwakyusa, the average holdings were about twice as large – three acres; and fewer young men were landless. Note also the cases of the villages in the chiefdoms of Mwantipulo and Mwakilasa in the more northerly parts of the Lake Plains, where the average holdings were one and 1.3 acres respectively, and where yet there was arable land unused and available. In those parts paddy cultivation is very limited because of the higher and hilly country, and the people remain little more than subsistence farmers – perhaps they may be taken as not unlike the traditional, pre-European subsistence cultivators.

Unfortunately I am unable to relate these figues of arable holdings to the total land available in each village, for this would have required survey work beyond my competence. Non-arable land is utilised for village sites with banana groves, roads and paths, pasturage, etc.; but the position is further complicated by varying amounts of unusable land in my sample villages. To give only two examples: within the boundaries of Mpunguti village, Mwakipesile's chiefdom, there are many acres of land adjacent to the Mbaka river which today are unusable because of deep flooding from

1. Population figures of any kind are not available even for the separate chiefdoms, let alone for ecological areas.
2. Their approximate locations are indicated on the accompanying sketch-map.

311 the river in spate during the wet season, although here and there a few plots
[133] are cultivated on slightly raised ground. Similarly in Kapugi village, Koroso's chiefdom, some parts are heavily inundated by the Kiwira river. In both these cases flooding has made unusable ground which was cultivated and even built on a generation ago; the degree of annual flooding seems to be decreasing again now so that very slowly a certain amount of new land is becoming available. This cyclical change appears to be directly connected with the long-term rise and fall of the level of Lake Nyasa. On the other hand, in more fortunate villages such as Ikolo, Mwakyusa's chiefdom, and Kapugi, Mwamasangula's chiefdom, there is rather more common pasturage remaining, and village sites, paths, etc., are noticeably less restricted.

The following arithmetical observations may be noted as permitting, perhaps, some guide to population densities in the Lake Plains:–

[161]

Persons per sq. mile	*Total acreage per family of five*	*Arable holding per family of five if proportion of total land under arable holdings is:—*	
		one-third	*two-fifths*
300	10.7	3.6	4.3
400	8	2.7	3.2
500	6.4	2.1	2.6
600	5.3	1.8	2.1

(N.B. The statistically average family is composed of five people)

It has been suggested by the Agricultural Field Officer, Tukuyu, that for the whole of Rungwe District perhaps 30 per cent. of all land is under cultivation. He was not prepared to place any reliance on this figure, and certainly for the Lake Plains it must be higher.

To summarise my own tentative conclusions and in order to obtain
311 some kind of picture of the current land situation, I suggest the following
134 division into regions:–

A. The flood plains proper

161 1. **Very high-density region** – the arable land available under present conditions amounts to about 1½-2 acres per adult male and the local density of population is probably in the region of 500 persons per square mile: – in most of the chiefdoms of Mwasulama, Koroso and Lazarus, the south-eastern part of Mwakipesile's and the eastern part of Mwakyusa's chiefdoms.

2. **High-density region** – there is available about 3 acres of arable land per adult male and the local density of population is between 300 and 400 persons per square mile: – in the chiefdoms of Mwamasangula, Mwanyilu and Mwakilima, the southern part of Mwakilasa's, the centre of Mwakyusa's and much of Mwandemele's chiefdoms.

B. The remainder of the Lake Plains (Ntebela)

3. **Low-density region** – here there remains much vacant land (some usable, some scarcely usable) and population density is probably little over 100 persons per square mile, and even lower than that in the most northerly parts: – the northern, higher areas comprising the north of Mwakyusa's (Mwisula's) chiefdom, the remainder of Mwandemele's, the whole of Mwantipulo's, Mwakatundu's and Mwakipege's chiefdoms, together with the northern part of Mwakipesile's and of Mwakilasa's chiefdoms.

This summary description is, and can be, only very approximate, taking no account of the complexity of local variations to be seen on the ground. It is illustrated in the accompanying sketch-map.

It may be emphasised that in the two high-density regions practically all available land is in use. In the "high-density region" (No. 2 above) it
[141] may be possible to reduce slightly the non-productive areas taken up by village sites, but nowhere will this be easy or even desirable, and already most
[145] of the vacant spaces between houses are packed with banana groves, small

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

plots of maize, squashes, tobacco, etc., and useful trees (bamboo, citrus, mango, kapok, *uryunguti* and firewood). Artificial drainage would, of course, make more land available along the rivers, but this is in general beyond the abilities and resources of the Nyakyusa without considerable outside assistance.

Finally, in this matter it is to be remembered that in addition to a man's arable holding, each of his wives has a banana plot at her house from which she obtains her staple foodstuff. Such plots amount to perhaps about a tenth of an acre on the average. On the other hand, the Nyakyusa are no longer prepared to tolerate a predominantly banana diet. Rice has, in most areas of the Lake Plains, become almost as important as bananas.

Large-sized Holdings

Some blame for this novel shortage of land and the smallness of the average holding has often been laid upon that minority of Nyakyusa who have exceptionally large holdings, and also upon the immigrants from beyond the Lake Plains who have come to settle there during the past decade.

The occupiers of large-sized holdings are rather fewer than has sometimes been supposed. The notoriety of large land-owners, such as some of the modern chiefs with as much as 25-30 acres, has brought more attention to them than is really warranted. Most chiefs and village headmen have arable holdings of above average size, as a result of their privileged positions in the land allocation system and because of their prestige influence; but they remain a small minority and their number is bound to decrease in the future as inheritance causes sub-division of their holdings, for most of them have also more than the average number of wives and sons. In the two high-density regions it is clearly impossible for any man much to increase his present holding. As will be shown later (see page 24) the modern trend is not unnaturally towards a dangerous fragmentation of holdings.

The data obtained in this matter for my eight village samples are summarised in Table III, page 15. In those villages the two men out of 372 who held more than ten acres were a village headman and the father of a chief.[1] There were seven other headmen and one chief as well as some other locally influential men amongst the people covered by my surveys, but none of them held more than ten acres. There are, of course, some commoners amongst the large land-holders; many of them are close relatives of the chief or headman and have thus received preferential treatment. Some, however, are ordinary villagers who were perspicacious enough to see future trends and to obtain land in the early days before most men realised its new value and when vacant areas were still easily available. Such men are tending to become a new, wealthy class, but on the other hand they are particularly susceptible to the begging of kinsmen and friends who have insufficient land. If they are not to be regarded as unneighbourly or even anti-social (perhaps practising witchcraft) they are virtually compelled to be generous sometimes, both with their land and with their profits.

On the whole this minority of men excites little attention or jealousy among the Nyakyusa, who indeed take it for granted that their chiefs and headmen will have more land than ordinary villagers, as befits their status and prestige. If it be thought that by reducing somehow the size and number of these unusually large holdings then the land shortage might be partly relieved, it is a false hope. I scarcely think that the Nyakyusa would welcome any such attempt at interference by administrative action, but in any case it would only provide minor and temporary relief here and there and would not be worth the executive difficulties involved.

1. This second man should be a chief himself but he was dismissed by Government on his imprisonment for peculation. He still holds much of the prestige and privilege of a chief for his son is only allowed authority in purely local government affairs.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Problem of Immigrant Land-holders

Undue importance has also been given to immigrants, but their numbers are relatively small and only significant locally. Since about 1948, or a little earlier, there has been an influx of Africans into the Lake Plains: – Nyakyusa from the Highlands (chiefly from the Central Region – Pakati), Ndali from the Ndali Highlands of Rungwe District and Kinga from the Njombe District to the east beyond the Livingstones; from northern Nyasaland have come Ndali, Lambia and Sukwa, and there are also small numbers of Bemba and others from Northern Rhodesia. They have been attracted in the modern era, when local movement is easier, by the possibility of obtaining land in the northern Lake Plains, where rainfall is so high and untouched bushland has been available.[1]

These immigrants have been and continue to be almost entirely restricted to the north in the "low-density region" (see map, facing page 15). This contained the outstandingly empty area of the country and still there remain vacant lands to be taken up. Such land is usually of relatively inferior quality, easily subject to erosion and loss of fertility on the slopes of the foothills and unsuitable for paddy cultivation except in small, isolated basins. The immigrants, that is, have settled in areas rejected by most Nyakyusa. There, locally, the newcomers outnumber the indigenous population. In the flood plains, the high-density regions, the proportions of foreigners cannot be more than one or two per cent. of the population, and in most villages there are none at all.

It is true that these newcomers do occupy land which might well be used to relieve the congestion nearer to the Lake; but in practice this would not be at all easy. To take a single example: the newly opened area in the north of the chiefdom of Mwakyusa between the Kiwira and Songwe rivers is being rapidly taken up by Ndali from the north-west, Nyasalanders and Nyakyusa from the Central Region (in that order of numerical importance). A few miles to the south, in the centre of the same chiefdom, the inhabitants of the Ikolo area consistently refuse to move although they manifestly cannot meet their land needs within their present villages. They, and others like them, say with some truth that paddy cultivation is less easy and less profitable in these newer and higher areas, and that poor communications make the disposal of produce more difficult. They also say, but more often leave to inference, that they are unwilling to leave their traditional village areas and begin in new parts, even though the move required is only one of a few miles. They have not yet become sufficiently aware of the permanent gravity of modern land shortage to overcome their parochial inertia. By the time they do become aware of it the opportunity may well be lost, for immigrants continue to arrive in twos and threes, and the last vacant land may be taken. To date, however, some vacant lands remain, albeit of poor quality, into which the densely packed Nyakyusa could move, and the immigrants cannot be blamed, at least not yet, for preventing the expansion and resettlement of the local population.

At the moment the chiefs and headmen in these northerly areas are keen to obtain as many of these immigrants as possible in order to swell the number of their commoners, the size of their villages and thus, directly, their own prestige and importance. Newcomers have every opportunity to be allocated as much land as they wish, where they wish, and many are liberally assisted with food in the traditional way until they harvest their first crop. I heard no complaints from either the local Nyakyusa or the immigrants, and relations seemed to be good. Strangers must conform to Nyakyusa ways of life and to the authority of the headman and chief, although

1. Immigrants from Nyasaland are said to have come following the introduction of new regulations there prohibiting the cultivation of newly cleared hill areas.

in fact they usually settle on the common East African pattern of scattered homesteads, each in its arable area, and not in the tight Nyakyusa village pattern.

I think that the headmen and chiefs concerned would not welcome a restraint on immigration, for it offers them a chance to emulate the numerically produced prestige of their fellows in the flood plains, to whom at the moment they feel inferior. They would, of course, most probably prefer indigenous Nyakyusa, could the latter be persuaded to settle there. As it is, at least some of the Nyakyusa of these northerly villages are trying to move into the flood plains, where they can more easily cultivate paddy and where they can join in a more active and ebullient village life.

One type of foreigner to the Lake Plains is the man (almost invariably a Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who has obtained land but does not settle on it nor in any village. He continues to live in his upland village and comes down to the plains only to cultivate and harvest his paddy field. This is strictly against Nyakyusa land law and custom and, in fact, such an absentee land-holder has often made a substantial monetary gift to the chief or headman for the protection of this extra-legal privilege. These strangers are frequently among the more wealthy upland Nyakyusa, who can afford such payments as these, and often they are of chiefly rank themselves, perhaps having kinship ties with the local chief. There are probably no chiefdoms where such strangers have not obtained paddy fields, though naturally those which contained a good deal of vacant, usable paddy land at the beginning of the cash-cropping era have most.

This does arouse a certain amount of ill-feeling and opposition amongst local villagers who have insufficient land themselves, for they lose land and gain no numerical strength or profit of any kind. The illegal action of the local chief is also condemned, especially as the chiefs should not in any case assume allocatory powers. On the other hand it must be noted that the commoners philosophically accept the supposedly protected prerogatives of their chiefs under European rule and they expect the chiefs to take advantage of them. As with the case of the minority of large land-holders, the actual effect is not particularly great and reformation here would be a minor palliative. Nevertheless in this matter there is a definite and unpopular infringement of villagers' rights and of the local customary law.

One other group of strangers may be noted for the sake of completeness. That is the Kisi, who have for at least two generations been settling along the lake shore itself from Matema in the east to the Songwe river (and beyond) in the south-west. They have come from the north-eastern shores of the lake and in the Nyakyusa area they are principally fishermen who do not, therefore, compete with the indigenous population economically. They cultivate only tiny plots of casava and sometimes of finger millet, although a few of the younger generation are now trying to grow a little paddy also. The total number of Kisi involved cannot be more than a few hundred and they have probably not increased much over the past decades. They follow an almost separate existence from their Nyakyusa neighbours, not intermarrying, and following their own way of life.[1]

1. The main Kisi settlements in Rungwe District are in the Ikombe area, an isolated peninsular south of the Lake Plains, where they number about 1,200. Another 1,000 are scattered on smaller peninsulars and in tiny islands further south along the shoreline. They are widely famed as potters, and they exchange their wares for cereal foods in payment for their fishing.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IV

THE RESULTS OF LAND SHORTAGE

311 As indicated in the short outline of traditional land tenure in Chapter II, the system developed and worked adequately in the old situation (both before and after European conquest) when land was plentiful in relation to the people's demands. Any villager who wanted land had the right to be allocated fields: any established villager who wished to expand his cultivation could do so without difficulty. Movement between villages was easy, and [166] especially after the establishment of European peace, for everywhere newcomers were welcomed to increase the strength and prestige of the village, and land was available for them. The young men in their age-villages were able to obtain sufficient arable land and they were able to establish their economic independence after marriage, if not earlier. Because land was plentiful there was little real concern for security of tenure and disputes over land were both uncommon and unimportant.

By 1955 the basic fact was that there was insufficient land to meet the people's requirements in the alluvial flood plains – as also in many Highland areas – and there remained little or no unused land which could be taken into cultivation.

Inheritance of Land

428 In those earlier and more spacious days, inheritance was chiefly significant in moveable property – cattle pre-eminently, and goats, money and 421 other goods – and also in the matter of widows and the custody of children. The rules of inheritance were the same in principle for all this property. Inheritance was by groups of full-brothers rather than by individuals, and therefore when a man died, his sons, his widows and his wealth were taken by the eldest surviving full-brother; failing a full-brother, a half-brother would inherit (the eldest surviving at the time). Only when all the deceased's brothers were dead, or if they had moved away and severed practical relations, were the dead man's sons able to take up the property in their own right. Then each group of full-brothers tended to inherit as separate, corporate groups. Although the separation into "houses" was not as strong and [593] notable as amongst some African peoples,[1] yet there was a fairly strong solidarity between full-brothers such that, for instance, their cattle were regarded as a distinct and separate herd, over which the senior brother had principal control and in which half-brothers had little direct rights.

Originally land inheritance did not follow this scheme because it was an unimportant matter, for ideally a man obtained his building plot and [423] arable land at the time of the formal establishment of his age-village, and he preferred if possible to continue to live amongst his coevals. Consequently, when a man died, his brothers and his sons and nephews normally had land of their own and did not wish for more elsewhere, especially as the deceased's land would probably be in another age-village. Out of respect for the dead man and his contemporaries, the chief heir often made a token residence at the deceased's homestead and then, after a brief period, would obtain the approval of the villagers to return to his own village and holding again – perhaps at the cost of some beer or a goat. Sometimes the heir or another member of the lineage might take the opportunity to leave his own village

1. See Wilson, M. 1950, pp. 117ff. Cf. also my *The Family Herds*, London, 1955, Chapters 3 and 4, for a description of a strong, corporate 'house' system.

(e.g. for fear of witchcraft) and take up the vacant holding. Nevertheless in general the holding was allowed to lapse and it could be re-allocated by the village headman if need arose; or the elderly widows might be allowed to continue to reside and cultivate as long as they wished. 428 421

Once land began to become scarce and valuable this loose system could no longer continue. Junior brothers and half-brothers were no longer content to permit the chief heir to take the whole of the deceased's holding to do with it as he wished, and a systematised division had to be adopted. At first, naturally enough, land was gradually brought under the same system which controlled the inheritance of other property, but this proved inadequate – inadequate not only in itself as being, perhaps, too complicated and conducive of disagreement and quarrelling in so far as land is concerned, but also because that system itself was already beginning to break down under the impact of individualism. 423 [178] [428]

It was felt that because sons assist their father in his homestead and fields and in their turn rely on him for a share in the cash-and-kind profits of peasant farming, therefore they should have priority in the inheritance of their father's property. Their father's brothers, it was said, would in any case already have their own holdings in which likewise their sons have prime interest. Conversely, older Nyakyusa men began to be reluctant to take a brother's land (and other property too) on his death, for fear that, in their turn, control of their own land would descend at their deaths to their brothers' sons rather than to their own sons.

As a result of these attitudes a strong desire arose to modify the customary laws in this matter, and the Rungwe African District Council, with the approval of the Government, has by formal resolution established a new law under which sons may inherit direct from their own fathers. [646]

This law is not universally accepted by the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains and sons still will sometimes waive their novel rights in favour of the traditional claims of their fathers' brothers. They say that they do not desire to see the break up of the wider lineage which, in effect, this new law encourages; they are also afraid of the anger and jealousy, and thus of the witchcraft, of their uncles. It appears however that the change is accepted by the large majority of the people, for it follows the trend of modern values and kinship sentiments. [754] [578]

The principal heir is now the eldest son, but in general he has little direct control over the property and land of his half-brothers unless they are still young, in which case he has a moral duty to act as guardian and custodian. Sons inherit that part of the paternal holding which had been allocated to their mother by their father in his lifetime, plus any other pieces he might have given to any of them direct as individuals. Each group of full-brothers determines the way in which it divides up its own inheritance. The eldest brother of such a house has a definite obligation to see that his juniors obtain shares of the land in so far as its extent and their number will allow. On the whole it is expected by Nyakyusa that the eldest brother will secure the best holding for himself, as befits his new status, but he cannot deny his younger brothers' claims. Disputes in this matter are not uncommon and the local courts have already shown their determination to support the claims of younger brothers. 423 428 [593]

Very commonly – though it has not yet crystallised as compulsory social behaviour – a father will grant a portion of his holding to his son on the latter's marriage, or as soon after as the son decides to give up labour migration and settle down. It is thought that a married man should be independent economically and that he should be able to maintain his own household; it is realised that there is most likely to be friction in the relations between father and son, especially in this society where it is traditionally [183] [178] [593]

423 428 [693] believed that parents and children should live apart.[1] In the same way, and for similar reasons, an elder brother tries to make provision for his junior when the latter marries if their father is already dead. The practice of the father is not a legally required one, although it is nowadays increasingly common and sons have begun to expect it: the practice of an elder brother is now legally required in the matter of land and probably always has been in the matter of cattle.

The difficulties are obvious when a man dies and leaves several sons [647] but only a small-sized holding. To date no clear ruling has emerged and unfortunately the African District Council did not deal specifically with such details when introducing the new law. How much land an eldest brother can reasonably retain for himself is perhaps not determinable in practice except in specific relation to the nature, locality and fertility of the holding in question, the plots already held by the man himself, the needs and number of the younger brothers and any holdings they may have, and the location of the villages in which they severally live. There is also plenty [578] of scope for disagreement between half-brothers over portions of the paternal holding which had been retained by the father himself for his own use; over portions allocated to a wife who has borne no sons or whose sons have died, and over permanent trees. The situation is still fluid and there has not yet been time enough for a common and generally acceptable solution to be established. Consequently each group of sons tries to solve its own particular problems in this matter as best it can, torn between old values and new attitudes and needs.

593 428 Relations between both full-brothers and half-brothers tend often to be severely tried at times of inheritance. It is not primarily, I think, a case of brothers' greed for valued land tending to overcome bonds of fraternity and co-operation; but it is rather that a father's arable holding is often not able to provide adequate amounts of arable land for each of his sons, and yet they find the very greatest difficulty in obtaining land elsewhere. Already the traditional kin-group comprising the sons and grandsons of a group of [182] full-brothers had begun to break down even before land shortage became serious. Now the group of full-brothers itself tends to be dispersed as men obtain land where they can and it is endangered by dissensions over land rights and land division. Increasingly, it seems, a Nyakyusa man is becoming detached from his brothers and he tends to establish an independent family unit comprising his immediate family alone – that is, himself with his wives and children. We cannot attribute the whole cause of this modern trend to land shortage and economic difficulties, of course, for involved also are new ideas of individualism and of personal effort and reward, and the decreasing need for the consistent support of brothers in social, economic and ritual activities.

578 423 428 Younger brothers may, and sometimes do in fact, agree that the paternal holding is already too small for further sub-division, or that the small parts which can be made available to them are scarcely worth having – especially if they live some distance away. On the other hand, the eldest brother may already have obtained a holding in his own village and is therefore willing to make only a small claim or none at all in the interests of his juniors, and he may then divide the inheritance amongst them alone. Usually, so acute is the dearth of land, the holding is divided between two [311] or more brothers. It is split into small plots so that each brother has a share of paddy, food-crop and banana land, and these are commonly a half acre or even less in size nowadays. As already mentioned, by a kind of modern [696] equity the local African courts generally favour the claims of the younger

1. See Wilson, M., 1951, p. 139 and passim. "The overt purpose (of age-villages) is the separation of sons and mothers, of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law." (*Ibid* p. 142).

brothers, and this is compelling the increasing and continued fragmentation of holdings at time of inheritance. Even so, if there are several brothers (i.e., sons of the deceased) the youngest among them may still be unable to obtain a plot, or at least not one of an economically viable size, and they are then compelled to try to gain admittance to some other village as newcomers, there to be allocated land.

The shortage of land is, therefore, not only making inheritance very considerably more important, but it is assisting in the establishment of new kinship attitudes and a redefining of fraternal relations. The position is most confused at the moment as the old system continues to exist alongside the new, sometimes more or less successfully, but often in intractable opposition. At the present time the observer can only mention general tendencies, for it is impossible as yet to foresee what the eventual result will be, and there are, in any case, many other factors involved besides those of the inheritance of scarce land.

In so far as we are primarily concerned with land problems in this essay, the basic factors are that land is newly scarce, that there is virtually no alternative activity in the country to the arable use of the land, and that therefore each son must try to obtain a share in the often inadequate holding of his father. I suggest that no form of inheritance can deal with such a situation satisfactorily – at least it is highly doubtful if any has yet emerged in an area of land shortage in Eastern Africa – and thus there are bound to be severe difficulties and a deterioration of inter-personal relations between near kinsmen who are most in competition. The new inheritance law of the Nyakyusa has narrowed the range of potential conflict from the patrilineal descendants of a grandfather to the sons of a single father; but if it has obviated possible hostility between the generations and between paternal cousins, it has also removed much of the common interest and mutual inter-dependence between them.

The Right to Land, and the Authority of the Village Headman

Although the traditional principle still exists that every villager has a right to arable land within the village boundaries, yet it is no longer possible to carry it out in practice. Every village headman, in my experience, attempts to ensure that each of his men has land, but he cannot always succeed, and most especially he cannot provide every one with as much land as he would like, because of sheer spatial limitation.

Nowhere any longer does the old principle now hold that an established villager may, without permission or notification, take vacant land into cultivation as part of his holding. When land becomes vacant it must now revert immediately to the village as a group, that is to the common pool from which the headman as village authority makes allocations. There are so many and such varied demands for land nowadays that no man acting on his own can presume to take up vacant land, and only the headman may decide allocation. No person can now obtain land, whether he be an established villager or not, unless he is allocated it by the headman – or, in the many large villages typical of the Lake Plains, by the headman's assistant, *ugwukyiwa*, who is delegated authority in a section of the village.

Land becomes vacant when a man shifts to another village, when a man dies and leaves no active heir who desires to take up the deceased's holding, or (but seldom today) when a man gives up part of his holding due to his inability to use the whole of it. In all these cases the land is immediately re-allocated by the headman, probably not as a single unit any longer, as but he can among a crowd of land-hungry villagers – established men seeking extra land to meet the needs of growing families or for increasing cash-crop

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

622 production, young men seeking their own independent holding, and new-
311 comers to the villages who seek to settle there.

423 The modern shortage of land has therefore considerably increased the authority and the activities of the village headman. Nowadays he is the prime mover in all changes in land-holding, other than by inheritance or temporary loans and gifts. In these latter, and particularly in inheritance, he has necessarily become an important interested party whose influence cannot be ignored, whose approval is desired and whose assistance is frequently sought both as arbiter and witness. Much more than before, and directly because of the scarcity and value of land today, he is the principal controller and allocator of land – though, of course, he remains subject to the state of public feeling and the opinions of his villagers. His position has been further strengthened by his status at the base of the administrative hierarchy in modern local government, whereby he is given executive responsibility for his village and its people. As always, disputes over land are taken before him in the first instance and here he acts not only as a judge but also as the expositor of village opinion and public knowledge. Such disputes are increasing in number, giving him more work and responsibility and also more opportunity for the expression of his status. Meanwhile his traditionally crucial ritual and magical (anti-witchcraft) powers continue, though now in somewhat attentuated form.

Fragmentation and Dispersion of Holdings

423 It has been shown how the inheritance of land, now of increasing
428 importance, results normally in the splitting up of a man's holding.[1] Whether
311 a young man obtains an inherited share of his father's land or he obtains an allocation in another village, its size is likely to be small – smaller than the holdings of his father's generation. Tiny, uneconomic plots are to be seen everywhere in the flood plains.

At the same time a man's holding is tending to comprise a scattered, heterogeneous collection of small plots, as he has obtained land when and where he could. An actual example will illustrate this: a young man had
[341] about a tenth of an acre behind his house on which he was growing maize and beans; he had about a quarter of an acre which was his share of his deceased father's land, and another quarter of an acre which had been
[343] allocated to him by the headman when a vacated holding was split up, and on both of these he cultivated paddy. This man had only small hope of obtaining more land, unless one of his brothers died without sons, for he had already been refused by the headman a share in a recently vacated holding on the grounds that, unlike many of his contemporaries, he already had at least some arable land.

Even amongst older men the holding of scattered plots is common. This is partly the result of the earlier expansion of cultivation when the formerly unused lands were put under paddy, and partly because older men too, lose no opportunity, in the face of scarcity, to take up any land they can. The Nyakyusa ideal is to have a single large holding, preferably stretching away behind the homestead – or alternatively two fields, one for paddy out in the open plains and one for food crops nearer home. This ideal becomes less and less practicable. There seems to be little or no need for this scatter of plots on account of soil and fertility differences, for these are generally few and unimportant within the area of a single village.

311 In my sample villages the average number of separate plots was about
423 three per holding. There was a notable difference between villages in relation to the average size of villagers' holdings. Where land was more plentiful the

1. If there is only one son to inherit the holding, it is most likely that he will have to give way to the pressing demands of his father's brothers' sons if he is not to see himself cut from his lineage.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

number of separate plots per holding was less than where land was scarcer; 311
at the same time the average size of separate plots was smaller in those more 423
land-hungry villages. The reader may refer to Table III (page 15) for some illustrative figures. Though differences are not yet very great, nevertheless there seems to be a fairly clear correlation between the average size of villagers' holdings on the one hand, and on the other the number and size of separate plots, and this is entirely borne out by my general information obtained in villages where actual measurements were not made. The inescapable conclusion must be that increasing scarcity of land in the Lake Plains leads to increasing fragmentation and dispersion of holdings; further, the present land situation and land tenure system can only lead to a continuation of this trend.

To emphasise the actual situation in 1955, let me reiterate the results of my own village surveys in the very high density region. In a village in Koroso's chiefdom only a quarter of the younger men had paddy land of their own, holdings averaging about three-quarters of an acre; in a village in Mwakipesile's chiefdom, only 17 per cent. of the younger men had paddy land and holdings averaged about half an acre (cf. Table VII, page 37). These two examples are taken from the areas of most severe land shortage and are not therefore altogether typical of the whole Lake Plains. Nevertheless, I do not think that they are entirely atypical; more importantly, they indicate the present trend. Within another generation this fragmentation and scatter of holdings may well be the common feature everywhere in the flood plains unless the system of tenure and inheritance is modified. If the increase in population is quickened through improved medical facilities, better diet and housing, and improved conditions generally, then the position will become more acute. Such an increase is only to be expected. The Nyakyusa have decisively entered a money economy and they have learnt to seek higher [433] standards of living. Only from their fields, by cash-cropping, can they expect to earn their livings and the demand for better living will not be [511] curtailed – nor, of course, is it desirable that it should be.

There is another aspect of this whole matter which must be considered. It relates to the movement of individuals between villages. Such movement [166] was, in earlier European days, a crucial factor in the age-village structure, for it was not only exceedingly frequent, but also it tended to undermine the idealised coeval basis of village life. Movement between villages is increasingly difficult now, for a newcomer naturally cannot easily obtain land, nor as much land as he would desire even at a moderate demand. Nevertheless, [754] the reasons for movement persist, and they will do so whilst the fear of [753] witchcraft remains and whilst illness and misfortune are attributable to the unfavourable aura of a place. There remains also the tradition of moving so [626] that a man may escape from bad relations with kinsfolk or neighbours, or from the obloquy resulting from his own disapproved actions. Much social and psychological tension is being created now as a result of the new [152] difficulty of movement, and so far the Nyakyusa have not evolved alternative [578] methods.

On the other hand, so deeply engrained is the notion of the prestige and power which accrues to a village by virtue of the number of its inhabitants, [554] that headmen and villagers alike remain most reluctant to refuse to accept [609] newcomers, even when it inevitably means that the present inhabitants must meet a further decrease in the average amount of land available per family, [622] for a newcomer must be allocated a holding if he is to remain. Consequently, if a holding is for any reason left vacant, a headman tends to refuse to re-allocate some or all of it amongst his villagers and thus to augment their holdings; but instead he keeps it in reserve pending the hoped-for arrival of another newcomer. Men desiring to leave their own village try to get

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[554]
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news of such reserved land elsewhere. Such land is cultivated in the meantime on a kind of year-to-year lease by one or more of the villagers as allowed by the headman.

Even when no vacant plots exist a headman will still accept newcomers. If they are young men they must be prepared to go landless for the time being (i.e., to remain dependent on their father's fields elsewhere) until such time as land becomes vacant. If the newcomer is an older man, then the headman will try to persuade one or more of his villagers to give up portions of their holdings and he will often cede part of his own land. The newcomer is therefore often allocated small strips and plots here and there in the village arable area and he thereafter joins the land-hungry crowd seeking to expand their holdings. In one village in which I worked where land shortage was critical (Kapugi, Koroso's chiefdom), there was not a single patch of usable land unworked; yet here the headman had, with full village approval, accepted three newcomers during the first nine months of 1955. Two of them were young men, one unmarried, and they could not expect to obtain land for some time except for a small banana plot. The third newcomer was a middle-aged man from a village some 12 miles away in another chiefdom. The headman had given him a half-acre plot out of his own paddy field and was laboriously begging pieces of land here and there from his people in order to make up a new holding of perhaps an acre. The headman himself had only about three and a half acres of arable land; he had at least one adult son who had not yet acquired an arable plot and he had other sons and brothers' sons owning only small fields. Yet he favoured this stranger, this newcomer. He was quite firm in his resolution to accept other newcomers in the future and in this he believed that he was acting as a [977] good headman should. As far as I could learn he was supported by his villagers.

This is not, by any means, an isolated or even unusual phenomenon. It is, I feel, important to bear in mind this illustration of contemporary affairs. Firstly, because it shows another way in which holdings are fragmented and dispersed; and secondly, because it demonstrates how, so far, the Nyakyusa have refused to face the situation of land shortage, and how they continue to follow traditional practices and values associated with village prestige. These people complain of their inability to obtain sufficient arable land, but they are not yet prepared to make the mental and social adjustments which might at least partly relieve their new predicament. On the other hand, they themselves understand the need for movement and perhaps they are right in their implied insistence not to discard their cultural ideals. Their insistence on accepting newcomers and their willingness (however dimly perceived and expressed) to share their land with the landless are not discreditable attitudes, even if they are economically untenable.

Security of Tenure and Disputes over Land

As already noted, under traditional land tenure a Nyakyusa had good security in his holding so long as he continued to live in the same village. [561] The only alteration of tenure occurred at the "coming-out" ceremony of a new chief when the older men would, if required, move aside in order to give their sons' generation the best land. This did not invariably happen in any case. Fundamentally, however, security of tenure is not a matter of great importance to a people who have plenty of land, and land which is more or less of the same quality. Indeed, convenience of location in respect of one's own homestead was almost the only value land had as such. Occasionally a more dominant chief might try to seize a commoner's field [661] to allow of his own expanded cultivation; it was most unusual for him to [643] succeed, and even if he did the dispossessed villager suffered little real deprivation, for he could easily obtain another field fairly near at hand.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Security of tenure has continued into European times, and although perhaps weakened slightly in one way through the exaggerated powers which accrue to modern Government-supported chiefs, it has been strengthened by the modern peace and rule of law and the more efficient system of justice provided by the established local courts. According to G. Wilson (Wilson, G., 1938, p. 32) the increase in the movement of individuals between villages in earlier European times (i.e., up to about 1940-45) directly caused a lack of attachment to individual plots, and thus security of tenure was not considered particularly important. 311 423 [182] [167]

The new situation of land shortage does not affect the basic position, or rather, by producing a high scarcity value on land, it has brought about an intensification of individuals' rights over their holdings. No longer dare a chief or headman attempt to commit such illegal acts as the seizure of a villager's field, so long as that villager is not afraid to publicise the affair. A man is not, and cannot afford to be, prepared to lose his field, for he cannot replace it with any certainty, either in a convenient location or elsewhere. A headman may sometimes bring strong pressure to bear on some of the men of his village to try to persuade them to give up portions of their land to assist a newcomer or a landless neighbour, but a villager can and does refuse and there is no legal authority which can override him here. As the land shortage becomes more obvious and more acute so men become less willing to allow their holdings to be touched for any reason, by anyone. The re-allocation at a "coming-out" ceremony appears to have been dropped nowadays[1] and thus a man holds his land undisturbed until his death, when it passes by inheritance to his sons. There are cases now where grandsons of the original holder occupy land through undisturbed and undisputed inheritance. A man can, as he wishes, loan a kinsman or friend a plot in his holding, or he can make an outright gift. The principal restriction which remains is that a man must continue to live in the village in order to retain these rights; he must relinquish them if he permanently goes to live elsewhere. Nevertheless, the land of a well-established villager would be kept for him pending his hoped-for return, for if he has left in umbrage and fear because of suspected witchcraft, then he may be persuaded to come back after a time. The headman and his neighbours should in fact persist in their attempts to persuade him, even to the use of force, for this is not only a moral duty of age-mates and fellow-villagers but is also an effort to remove the implications of their alleged witchcraft and anti-social conduct. [622] [645] [626] [178] [428] [422] [754]

Once, therefore, a man obtains land he has absolute rights in it during his continued residence in the village. Especially today, older men seldom shift their homes and almost all land is now held on a tenure which will be passed on by inheritance.

Boundary disputes are few. Usually, and increasingly, village boundaries are well known, and field boundaries invariably are. During my field measurements in the sample villages, I never met any difficulty with my local teams in quickly establishing the ownership and exact limits of any plot. Boundaries are usually marked by small ridges of accumulated debris or by narrow paths, and these form an intricate and irregular network throughout a village's arable area. They are so well known that there is very little scope for a greedy man to attempt to encroach on a neighbour's holding at hoeing time. If minor disagreements do arise at that season they can be immediately settled – by appeal to neighbours working nearby if necessary – and the headman or his assistant may well not be called in at all. 423 [627]

1. This is the case in the Lake Plains. In some of the more conservative Highland chiefdoms where the male gerontocracy is less advanced and land scarcity is not serious, there still appears to be some re-allocation in favour of the young men in the traditional way. In general, however, it is clear that the traditional age-village system of land allocation is obsolete; see pages 284.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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SKETCH PLAN OF KAPUGI VILLAGE, KOROSO'S CHIEFDOM, 1955.

[Facing p. 28]

423 all. Field boundaries have lost their earlier fluidity, when a plenty of land did not call for precise demarcation, and the only important changes now result from the land being left vacant or by the internal division of established holdings by inheritance or anticipatory inheritance.

In brief, then, the high premium given to land because of its modern scarcity value, and the enhanced authority of the headman in land affairs act together to preserve the individual's rights. The residual rights of the village, as group-owner of all land within the village boundary, do not affect the land-holder during his continued residence there.

[428] [578] The commonest type of dispute in land matters arises in inheritance, where a younger brother sues his senior in order to obtain or increase his share of the paternal holding (see page 21). That is to say, in general only where established holdings are being broken up does dispute arise and then, of course, only between the sons of the dead man. Disputes between neighbours in a village seldom are grave enough to be brought to court or even before the headman.

[593] There are also many petty, semi-domestic cases which faithfully reflect the frequently poor relations between Nyakyusa husbands and wives in modern times.[1]

TABLE IV

NYAKYUSA LAND DISPUTES: CIVIL CASES, 1954

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[61]

	No. of civil cases	*Land cases* No.	*Land cases* %	*Population per land case*	*Density of population*
Lake Plains	1,977	104	5	567	285
N.E. Highlands	965	24	2.5	1,842	199
Central Region	901	13	1.5	4,092	245
N.W. Highlands	1,280	8	0.6	7,300	201

Based on returns of civil cases in local courts of first instance ('B' Courts) for 1954. In 1955 the percentages were almost exactly the same as in 1954.

Several interesting points are suggested by these figures. Firstly, there is the larger proportion of land cases and the much smaller population per case in the Lake Plains, where land shortage is worst in relation to local demand, not only because of the higher density of population as such, but also because of the relatively larger acreages required for paddy cultivation. Secondly, in the Central Region of Nyakyusa country there is also a high density of population, but nevertheless only a few land cases; this may be attributed to the absence of cash-cropping and the absence, therefore, of a keen demand for land. On the other hand, the relatively numerous cases, or small population per case, in the north-eastern Highlands seem to result directly from a particularly densely populated area (Mwakaleli) where coffee cultivation is long established and the demand for land is exceptionally keen. In other words, as far as the figures for 1954 and 1955 show, there is a direct connection between land scarcity and the incidence of land disputes before the local courts (i.e. the more intractable disputes which go beyond the village headmen). General observation supports this conclusion. It may be expected in the future, therefore, that such cases will increase unless administrative action is taken to rationalise the inheritance laws with a view to minimising the area of potential disagreement amongst the sons of a deceased man.

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For comparative interest, in so far as they offer some indication, I append here data on other Districts in the Territory where land disputes are common.

1. In 1954, 68 per cent. of all civil cases in the lowest courts were marital disputes, including divorce suits, and there was one divorce case for every 34 adult males living in the country in that year.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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245
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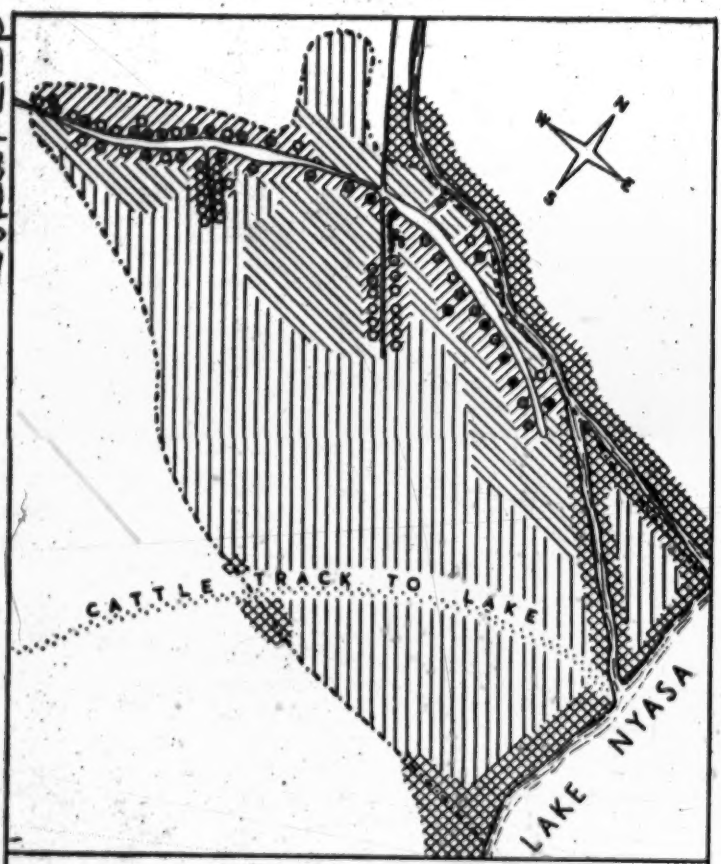

SKETCH PLAN OF KAPUGI VILLAGE, KOROSO'S CHIEFDOM, 1955

-REFERENCE-

HUT OR HOUSEHOLD OF:
MAN OVER 50 YEARS
MAN ABOUT 30-50 YEARS
MAN ABOUT 17-30 YEARS
YOUTH OR GIRL
VILLAGE BOUNDARY
BANANAS AND OTHER TREES (EUTING, MUGOO, FIGWOOD, ETC)
MAIZE AND BEANS
PAMBU (THE PARTS MARKED THE MUGOO-TREES ARE USED IN THE DRY SEASON FOR BEANS, MAIZE)
BUSHES AND DEED THICKET

[Facing p. 29]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

TABLE V

DISTRICTS IN TANGANYIKA WHERE LAND DISPUTES ARE COMMON

1953			No. of land cases	% of total civil cases	Estimated population density	Population per land case
Bukoba District	..	..	1,189	23	69	223
Lushoto Division	..	..	149	12	188	742
Moshi District	..	..	347	25	277	746
Ngara District..	..	..	81	29	125	1,393

The Changing Village

The possibly unique age-village of the Nyakyusa is now undergoing considerable and fairly rapid change in response to the new conditions of land shortage. There is, firstly, an increasing sense of village exclusiveness and, secondly, there has been a breakdown in the essential age-basis of its organisation. That is to say, that whilst the corporate unity of the village as an independent group has been strengthened, yet the social foundation of the village has simultaneously been changed and a different sort of village is emerging. It would take us far beyond the scope of this present essay if a full analysis of the changing village were to be made, nevertheless in so far as these changes are more or less directly the consequences of modern land shortage, land tenure and economic conditions some account is essential. Since the age-village was fundamental in the life and social organisation of these people, the new emerging village is of crucial importance.

Land shortage has definitely exaggerated the unity and exclusiveness of the village in the Lake Plains at a time when, for other reasons, it was beginning to become a more open group. There was always, as we have seen, insistence on the principle that only a member of the village could hold and use village land; but village boundaries were often poorly marked and it was difficult to determine which headman, if any, had genuine jurisdiction over land relatively distant from the established village sites. Nor was it particularly important to be able to do so whilst land was plentiful. As paddy cultivation spread, men began seeking extra fields farther and farther away from home as land nearby was all taken up; and so long as they did not attempt to take land in the immediate vicinity of another village site there was seldom much difficulty in this. The attitudes born of a sufficiency of land persisted and headmen were not disposed to protest against outsiders who sought fields near the limits of their vaguely defined areas. Internecine warfare and raiding had, of course, been abolished as an expression of and a weapon in inter-village rivalries and animosities. With the establishment of general peace and security, and with increasing movement about the country between villages, and chiefdoms, such rivalries and animosities began to die away. Many men came to live in the villages which they themselves had not helped to found; their coevals from their fathers' villages lived elsewhere, many of them widely scattered, and it was not possible to maintain a high degree of village patriotism, and, people began to feel, it was not especially necessary or important any longer.

It began to be possible for a man to hold some of his arable land within the area of another village, so long as members of the second village were not deprived of the opportunity of their own agricultural expansion should they desire it. This was especially the case when a large area of hitherto vacant (i.e. bush) but now valuable paddy land was contained within the approximate boundaries of a village. Outsiders were allowed to acquire fields on the strength of kinship with the headman or with one of the established villagers, or even by giving some small present to the headman (e.g. a little beer or some meat, etc.). Land was still plentiful then, or so it seemed to the Nyakyusa, and future shortages and difficulties were not perceived.

423 Thus beyond the established fields in the vicinity of the village itself, the pattern of land holding tended to become confused. The majority of land-holders were still members of the village who were expanding their cultivation outwards, but there was a considerable number of men from neighbouring villages, and even from farther afield where opportunities were more restricted. Some men even began to have a second house, inhabi-
[591] tated by a junior wife, in another village from which to continue the more easily the cultivation of new holdings.

This sort of development was in the event only a short-term process and, had pressure of population on the land not become so critical, it is not possible to say what would have been the final result upon Nyakyusa social and village organisation. It is, nevertheless, important to note that in the beginnings of the extension of arable holdings, cash-crop cultivation operated in a system in which village exclusiveness was breaking down, when residence was no longer an essential prerequisite of land-holding, and when men were neighbours in the fields as farmers without being coevals of a single village.

Once the Nyakyusa, and particularly the more perceptive headmen, began to realise that land was becoming less plentiful, indeed that it was beginning to be scarce in relation to new demands, this novel tendency was stopped fairly quickly and the old traditional principle of land-holding only by residence was reasserted. In the most recent years this has been strongly insisted on. Headmen and their villagers saw that in order to safeguard their
[622] own rights they must prevent scarce, valuable land being held and used by
[186] outsiders. This reaction appears to have been universal and automatic among the Nyakyusa. There was now insufficient land for everyone's demands and each village therefore looked after what it considered to be its own interests. Outsiders who already held fields could not be deprived of them, but they were not allowed to extend their holdings and every opportunity was, and still is, taken to regain control of their fields for allocation to villagers proper. Inheritance was often disallowed unless the heir agreed to come and live permanently in the village; gifts or loans to outsiders (kin or friends) were no longer permitted and most headmen seized the opportunity to re-allocate to their own villagers any alien-held plots which were not consistently maintained in cultivation.

In response to the new situation, almost everywhere village boundaries were clearly demarcated – not without a certain amount of dispute and a new recognition of inter-village opposition. Nowhere now is it possible for a man to take up land over which there is no firmly established village ownership. The significant principle has now emerged that not only does a village, as a corporate and distinct group, own its own land and is represented in this by its headman; but all land is now owned by some village. Further, at least in the high-density regions, there is no longer any vacant land to be taken up
[622] and any land temporarily falling vacant comes immediately under the allocating authority of the headman.

423 This process, the application of this principle, is not yet quite universal
178 in the Lake Plains, and it is sometimes still possible to see it coming into operation. Still in the northerly parts of the Lake Plains – the low-density region – one may see fields occupied by a variety of outsiders, for there the realisation of the significance of land shortage has been slowest to come. For example, in Mwakipesile's chiefdom in the late 1940s and early 1950s it was the practice of men from the congested villages nearer the Lake to obtain valuable, virgin paddy land in the newly opened areas in the north (near Ipinda) without residential qualifications. Many men reserved their original holdings in their own villages for food crops and had their main paddy fields in this distant area. By 1955, however, it had become virtually impossible for a non-resident to obtain extra land in this way, although still

there remained scattered pieces here and there which could be taken up, and some existing holdings in the area are too large for the agricultural capabilities of their occupiers. The temporary safety valve was shut off. The local headman had become seriously worried over the large-scale alienation of his land resources without any equivalent increase in the number of his villagers, and he also wished to conserve the remaining land against the now better understood needs of his own people. 423 78

The principle of no land without residence also means that a villager who wishes to move must automatically forfeit his land-holding in the village. A little earlier he would most probably have been able to retain at least his fields beyond the immediate vicinity of the houses – in so far as his new residence was not too far away to allow continued cultivation. This has been especially important for younger men who, wishing to take up a vacant holding elsewhere, also desire to retain their share of the paternal holding obtained by inheritance. Conversely, they are now unable to move on to their father's holding and yet retain their fields in their own village. Such men must now make a permanent decision between the utility of, perhaps, two inadequate holdings which, however, combined together might be of satisfactory size.

As a consequence of this, inter-village opposition is probably greater than it has ever been in European times, and no less strong perhaps than it was in the old days. Men feel that the security of their holdings, the future of their sons, and the possibility of increasing their arable cultivation lies wholly within the security and stability of their own village. They tend to see other villages and other villagers as a potential threat to their own land requirements; they often suspect the worst of neighbouring villages who, they think, will, given the chance, seize some of their land. Headmen and villagers would refuse to cross the boundary into another village when they accompanied me during my investigations, lest they be accused of contemplating appropriation of the land there. Such aliens who still retained land in a village were regarded with some animosity. Nyakyusa would not look beyond their own village boundaries in an attempt to make an appreciation of the modern overall land situation. They wished only tenaciously to cling to what they already had and to guard it jealously; they were only too inclined to believe that other villages nearby were better off and to use them as scapegoats for their own difficulties and shortage. It must be said that this renewed insistence on village exclusiveness and the inviolability of village boundaries has in fact tended to make for a certain inequality of land-holding according to the perceptiveness and celerity with which headmen claimed authority over formerly vacant lands. This condition is, however, overexaggerated in men's claims today, and in any case it is tending to disappear under the pressure of inter-village movement. [628]

The Nyakyusa village in the Lake Plains, with its intensified independence and aggressive exclusiveness, and jealous of its believed permanent boundaries, has not at the same time been able to retain its traditional coeval basis. Whereas formerly the youths of a village moved to one side, there to build their own hamlet and eventually to acquire their own fields in association with its establishment as a full village in its own right, now this is no longer feasible or even possible, for the land is not available for this sort of expansion. The young men are driven back on a dependence on the fields already held by their fathers in the old village. They gradually move into their fathers' places and take over the paternal holdings; or, as we have seen, they seek where they may to obtain new allocations in any other village where they can gain admittance. The coeval basis of village living is lost. [181]

The boys and youths still leave their fathers' houses and build their first, small huts together on a site somewhere adjacent to the main village site, [882] [361] [561]

423 as determined by the village headman. But even building sites with the
178 essentially associated banana groves are becoming increasingly scarce and
[882] valuable, for no one desires to decrease the amount of arable by enlarging the
361 built-up areas – rather the reverse. The number of young men's villages is
therefore diminishing and congestion of their huts is increasing to the stage
[56] very often where no more than a narrow passage if left between adjacent
houses. There comes to be a wider age range in the young men's hamlets where, often, a large village provides only one for all its sons. Smaller villages sometimes provide no accommodation at all for their sons, who are thus compelled to seek membership of a neighbouring group. These hamlets are mainly regarded nowadays as temporary residential areas for the young men until such time as they move on to an existing holding – their father's or some other. There is therefore no attempt to provide sufficient space for an adequate banana grove with each young man's house, let alone a food-crop plot behind it. The arable land beyond the congested huts already belongs to inhabitants of the main village. When a young man is able to leave and take up a holding, his vacated site (together, often, with the hut) is taken over by a waiting youth who has probably been sharing with another hitherto.

361 These young men's hamlets do not, any longer, eventually mature and
become villages in their own right with their own headman and arable lands.
311 Formerly, when this occurred, they would probably have taken over a good
deal of the lands of the old village, as the young men exercised the privileges
178 of their new maturity against their elders with the emergence of the new
chiefdom. New chiefdoms, and with them new villages, no longer emerge,
[648] and this is mainly because Government has prohibited the bifurcation of petty
chiefdoms on the death of the old chief, as it is considered inconsistent with the development of stable, modern local government. Additionally, however, the shortage of land can no longer allow of the traditional expanding politico-territorial organisation. The elder men's villages are not now prepared to yield ground to the young men, and the latter cannot expand elsewhere. Thus political requirements and land restriction work together to make the old system obsolete and to freeze the spatial distribution of villages as it existed in early European times. As far as I could ascertain in the chiefdoms of the Lake Plains, probably no new village had emerged in the past 20 or more years, except for a few cases of large ones splitting into two for administrative and social convenience. Many villages there date back to pre-European days often now under the son, or even the grandson, of the original headman (though this is not essential or invariable in any way).

561 The age-basis of the Nyakyusa village is thus disappearing; indeed, in
many villages it has already disappeared in everything but the young men's
178 hamlets. Where the process has gone least far, there is still apparent a rough
428 division of the single village into the old men's sector (men at least 50 years of
age, and many much older); the middle-aged men's sector (men between about 30 and 50 years old, being the younger brothers or elder sons of the old men); and the young men's and youths' sector. On inheritance, sons tend to show a continued reluctance to move and live on their father's house-site and to become immediate neighbours of older men; they avoid it if possible,
178 often allowing a middle-aged man to shift there instead. Nevertheless even
this sort of age-division is rapidly vanishing and in very many villages a
428 man's neighbour may be of any age.

We have seen that inheritance is now one of the chief methods of
[423] obtaining land. Under the new inheritance rules, this means that sons follow their fathers and take up their fathers' arable holdings, building sites and banana groves. Some young men inherit early, others inherit late; there is no longer any notion or possibility of the younger generation entering into its

land en bloc. Young men compete with one another, with their elder brothers and with their fathers for allocations of land left vacant. We also saw, however, that often in the larger families[1] not all the sons are able to get a share of the paternal holding, or at least not a share of practicable size. Thus younger sons are forced to resort to trying to obtain vacant land elsewhere – possibly within the same village, but as often as not outside. Finally, the young man on his new holding may find his neighbours to be of any age; certainly they will not have been members of his own original coeval hamlet.

The way for this changing concept of village life and the new sort of village was prepared in the years before land shortage became important. The changed political system has been briefly noted already, but no less important was the great increase in inter-village movement in earlier European days when peace and personal security had been established. During this period Wilson (1938, page 32) reckoned that perhaps 80 per cent. of Nyakyusa shifted at least once from the place where they first obtained fields. This estimate, whilst perhaps holding good for Highland Nyakyusa amongst whom Wilson mainly worked, was too high for the people of the Lake Plains, where about 40 per cent. is more correct according to my genealogical and village surveys. That is still a relatively high degree of mobility for a mainly subsistence, peasant society such as it was in those years. It is clear that the pseudo-fraternal bond of coevality could not persist as a main element of village life and consciousness, when in fact as many as half of the members of a village were not original coeval founders but had come in from elsewhere. Before the land shortage, movement did not entail the shifting of young men to other young men's villages, or of older men to other older men's villages. It was, at least eventually, promiscuous movement, ignoring age categories. The compulsions of land shortage seem, in retrospect, only to have followed existing lines of village development and to have begun the completion of the process.

In the Lake Plains, therefore, the village persists as a close, territorial, land-owning group and as a specific cluster of homesteads and huts, usually with a village street, the whole closely hemmed in by continuous banana groves. Beyond this lie the arable lands, usually food-crop fields nearby and paddy fields farther off. In jealously protecting what it already holds, the village has gained a new exclusiveness, for the security of the individual land-holder is maintained by the corporate ownership of the village and by excluding outsiders as far as possible. On the other hand, it is no longer an age-village either in fact or intention, and it cannot be, for age-villages were consistent only with an expanding territorial system and a subsistence economy.

This brief analysis of Nyakyusa village organisation in recent times applies only to the Lake Plains. In some parts of both the Central Region and the Northern Highlands the age-basis of Nyakyusa villages had most probably already been seriously weakened in pre-European times.[2] On the other hand, elsewhere, and particularly in the more conservative parts less affected by modern trends and the cash economy, the traditional age-village still exists in something like its old form.

Land shortage has appeared in the Highlands together with a developing cash economy, but the basis of agricultural and economic change lies mainly in coffee cultivation which, of course, requires relatively smaller fields than does paddy in the Lake Plains, but it needs more care and attention from the grower for moderate success. As far as I could see in the course of

1. Polygny is still the norm amongst the older and many middle-aged men, and therefore a father often leaves several sons to inherit.
2. According to elderly informants in Western Kukwa, Mwakaleli and some central chiefdoms, and also the evidence of old village sites.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

311 my earlier labour migration enquiries in the Highlands, the village as a close
433 residential unit is breaking up as the people are increasingly adopting the
245 more common East African pattern of each family building its own homestead in its own land-holding. These northern Nyakyusa say that they must have their coffee plots next to their homesteads for the sake of continuous supervision, and that this is impossible (which is true enough) where men live close together in compact villages. Again, coffee plots, with their standing, permanent trees, have become a valuable item of inheritance; sons lose no opportunity of taking them irrespective of the locations of their coevals or of the identity of their immediate neighbours. The values of land, cash-crops and material progress are placed much higher than the traditional values of coevality; indeed, such traditional values are largely inconsistent with modern wants and aspirations.

561 Thus the Nyakyusa age-village has become almost obsolete and it
361 would seem that it must inevitably vanish altogether even in the remaining
178 conservative areas (e.g., in the east). Furthermore, its disappearance is leading to a distinct divergence between the Lake Plains Nyakyusa and those of the Highlands. How far this divergence will become permanent and basically significant cannot be foreseen as yet in this early stage. Clearly *the compact village is best fitted to an arable economy of rice cultivation* in the Lake Plains, and at least until there is further agricultural change it will persist as a most important social group.

Nevertheless, with its enhanced exclusiveness and relative social isolation and with renewed rivalry with its neighbours, the Lake Plains village is scarcely conducive to the encouragement of agricultural and economic development. Neither is it anything but harmful towards contemporary efforts in the politico-administrative sphere to reduce parochialism and to foster a sense of unity and co-operation beyond the village and the petty traditional chiefdoms. Whilst supervisory control of the land through the
682 headman is in general excellent, reasonable and readily understandable
152 to the people, yet the excess of restrictiveness, the competitive scrambling
182 for vacated holdings and the jealous fears are surely more than merely unfortunate. There needs to be some modification to loosen the over-tight strings of village corporate ownership, to regularise the transfer of vacated holdings and to lessen the fears of village against village. These points are taken up again in Chapter V.

Cattle and Pastoral Requirements

311 Unfortunately, no great accuracy can be presumed for the Rungwe
233 District cattle censuses, but the available figures are summarised in Table VI.

TABLE VI
NYAKYUSA CATTLE

	1955				1951	
	No. of cattle	*Acres per beast*	*Cattle per person*	*Cattle per family of 5*	*No. of cattle*	*Acres per beast*
Lake Plains	31,418	4.1	0.5	2.5	26,822	5.2
Central Region ..	19,380	7.1	0.4	2	19,160	7.2
N.E. Highlands ..	19,095	7.4	0.4	2	17,165	8.4
N.W. Highlands ..	22,974	8.0	0.4	2	16,855	10.9
Total: Nyakyusa.. ..	92,867	6.4	0.4	2	80,002	7.2

The indicated increase in the numbers of cattle may well be attributable only to improved census enumeration by the Veterinary Department.

Although 6.4 acres per head of cattle for all Nyakyusa country, and even 4.1 acres in the Lake Plains, might seem to be adequate in a country so

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

well covered with vegetation and with so reliable and plentiful a rainfall, yet, of course, the actual pasturage available is very considerably less as so much of the land is taken for arable and building purposes. There is in practice a most acute shortage of grazing land everywhere, except in certain parts of the north-west Highlands (Ukukwe). This shortage is most critical during the wet season, for at other times of the year the herds are able to graze over the arable fields, where herbage grows exceptionally rapidly after harvest as a result of the high rainfall. 311 233 [132]

Traditionally, each village had a roughly demarcated area of common pasturage which was not, and could not be, used for arable purposes. With the increased demand for arable land, this commonage has almost everywhere in the Lake Plains been gradually whittled away for permanent arable holdings. Headmen who control these pastures, and many of their chiefs too, are much worried about this process, about the break with tradition and the modern pastoral difficulties; but arable needs are given priority over grazing and the practice continues. In the flood plains, the higher-density regions, common pasturage has by now almost disappeared altogether. The little which remains is largely unusable for cultivation, consisting of infertile or badly drained areas – often the sandy, coastal strips covered with dense thicket and tall sedges which provide very little useful grazing. During the dry season, after the paddy harvest, the situation is fair, but during the cultivation season pasturage is entirely inadequate, and in addition the cattle are compelled to live and graze in extremely arduous conditions of standing water, mud, mosquitoes and flies. They do not obtain enough food then and they lose condition badly. There are many deaths from exhaustion, near-starvation and disease, and this affects the immature stock particularly. Only by obstinate tenacity on the part of both man and beast can the herds be retained at all. There is no tradition of stall-feeding and so far the Nyakyusa have refused to adopt this measure of alleviation. [622] [43]

Yet, as the Nyakyusa are quick to point out, each family has only a few cattle. Most families have a cow or two, and the average is only about two to three head per family – *cf.* Table VI, page 34. Owners of large herds are relatively few, and herds of more than ten cattle in a single family are very uncommon. Although the cattle population is too great for the pasture resources now available, yet the animals are fairly evenly and thinly distributed amongst the dense human population. Goats and sheep are few – about 600 altogether – in the Lake Plains and of no significance. It is important to note that here we do not have a situation of large herds which might be reduced by some form of culling.

Cattle are held in high esteem by all Nyakyusa as a source of valued milk for the daily diet, as the means to marriage (in bridewealth), as a store of capital, as a symbol of prestige and as an essential element in important ceremonial activity. This kind of value system needs no emphasis here as it is common to much of Eastern Africa, but it may be noted that one of the principle uses of the large sums of money saved from wages in mining employment (labour migration)[1] and from the profits of cash-cropping at home is in the purchase of cattle. It is thought that money is best invested, saved and used in that way, once immediate material needs have been met. [556] [454]

Even with the high proportion of deaths from disease and the appalling conditions of the wet season, there are indications that the numbers of cattle are not decreasing and there may well be local increases. Apart from natural increase, there is fairly heavy buying from the Ndali people to the north-west in Rungwe District, and also from farther afield in Northern Nyasaland, and in Nyamwanga and Fipa tribal areas (albeit illicitly). [439]

1. During the course of my earlier labour migration enquiries men would usually estimate their savings for me, when completing routine questionnaires, by the number of cattle they could buy.

311 233 Whereas in the Highland and Central regions the large numbers of cattle – in relation, that is, to the available pasture resources – are causing over-grazing and soil erosion, particularly in the hilly areas so often nowadays relegated to pasturage, on the other hand in the flood plains there does not appear, at least to the layman, to have been any serious effects on the land. [241] The natural manuring of the paddy fields in the dry season is advantageous. In the Lake Plains it is the cattle rather than the land which suffer, but so far the Nyakyusa have done virtually nothing to meet the new conditions, other than to complain bitterly and fruitlessly.

The Young Men: Land Shortage and Labour Migration

423 The younger Nyakyusa men find increasing difficulty in obtaining arable land now that there are no longer vacant areas to be taken up, and the older men are no longer prepared to cede their land rights in favour of the younger generation, as they traditionally did. When occasional fields are left vacant, the young men must take their turn with their elders, who themselves are so chronically short of land – and the headmen commonly favour the older villagers with families as against the younger men. This means that in the high-density regions the majority of men under the age of about 30 years have little or no arable land, nor can they hope for it until the deaths of their fathers. In the congested village sites even their banana plots may be smaller than is desirable for the provision of the staple food.

[593] [178] The young man, then, is compelled to remain dependent on his father's and elder brother's holding; indeed, headmen often justify their refusals to allocate plots to young men on the express grounds that the latter must share their elders' fields. Thus the valued independence of the young Nyakyusa is severely restricted and it seems that tensions and difficulties are beginning [578] to arise between fathers and sons, and between brothers, because of this. Sons are blamed for not doing their fair share in the family cultivation; fathers are blamed for giving their sons inadequate shares in crops and crop incomes. It will be remembered that one of the fundamental principles underlying Nyakyusa society and its age-village organisation is the spatial segregation of parents and children (*cf.* page 22). Now they are inevitably being put into competition with one another over inadequate fields in a single holding.

[434] [543] The young men are severely restricted, if not altogether cut off, from the opportunity to cultivate paddy in their own fields and thus to earn their incomes at home, for paddy-growing is the only way of earning a living in the Lake Plains. Yet it is these younger men whose money demand is greatest; to buy clothing, bicycles and other store-goods, and to buy cattle for marriage payments. They are therefore strongly attracted by the ready opportunities for taking up wage-labour abroad, in the mines of the Rhodesias and South Africa where wages are high (see Gulliver, 1957).

With the best will in the world, when, as in the very high-density region, the average holding is little more than an acre and a half – when, that is, the older men themselves desire larger acreages for their own cultivation needs – it is not possible for a father to allow his son to take large shares in his fields. In some cases a father does give outright to his adult sons strips of his holding, but plots so provided are necessarily small. Quite as frequently a father does not consider it possible to break up his holding in his own lifetime, and sons are expected to assist in the common cultivation and to con- [593] tinue merely to be given a share in the family proceeds at harvest. It is not surprising, therefore, that very large numbers of young men from the Lake [167] Plains migrate abroad to work. Only about one man in 20 has not been away at all before the age of about 25 years. Much higher proportions of men and larger numbers absolutely are temporarily absent from the Lake

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Plains than from any other Nyakyusa area. In the high-density regions, the proportion of young men away at any one time is about 50 per cent. on the average and the proportion has risen concomitantly with the increasing scarcity of land. 423 [169]

It is not, of course, suggested that land shortage is the only factor responsible for contemporary labour migration amongst the Nyakyusa. Elsewhere (*loc. cit.*) I have drawn attention to the very high wages, the increased opportunity to obtain outside employment, the development of transport services and the intensification of recruiting, together with the general desire of the people to gain a higher standard of living as they more thoroughly embrace the new money economy. In fact, wage-labour in the mines is more profitable than growing paddy at home under current agricultural practice, even were land more easily available. Nevertheless, more young men do leave their homes in the Lake Plains than elsewhere in the country, and there is a rough correlation between land availability and the degree of labour migration, which seems to indicate that where men can obtain more land they tend to seek their money incomes at home. The Nyakyusa themselves, with an intensity of tribal patriotism, say that they much prefer to remain at home if they can earn their money there, even if they earn rather less than they might obtain abroad; but, say the young men, it is impossible to earn anything like sufficient when the fields are unobtainable in which to cultivate the cash-crop. 464 169 423 [511]

The data which I have been able to collect are summarised in Table VII. Young men are defined here as those under about 30 years old.

TABLE VII

YOUNG MEN: LAND HOLDING AND LABOUR MIGRATION

Villages and chiefdoms	*Young men having own paddy field*	*Young men away at work*	*Average holding of: Young men who own land*	*Older men in same village*
1. Very high density region				
Mpunguti Mwakipesile ..	17%	53%	0.5 acres	1.9 acres
Kapugi Korono	25%	54%	0.75 acres	1.5 acres
Ndoho Mwakyusa ..	28%	51%	—	—
2. High density region				
Itolo Mwakyusa ..	37%	47%	1.6 acres	3.7 acres
Kapugi Mwamasangula	52%	39%	1.25 acres	4.5 acres

423 169 [464]

There are some young men who have small food-crop plots but no paddy field, but I have chosen to correlate labour migration with paddy cultivation because these are almost the only alternative ways of earning money today, and the people themselves recognise the fact. The number of samples is too small, but the general inference seems to be quite clear nonetheless. My own conclusions in this matter were, however, arrived at independently of these figures, which were only obtained for corroboration. The evidence of the people themselves and their obvious difficulties of earning money at home were overwhelming.

If anything is required to underline the current land shortage and to illustrate the small size of the average holding, it surely lies in the existence of villages in which only about one quarter of the young men have their own paddy fields, and in which the average holding of this minority amounts to less than an acre.

Only in the low-density region can the young men obtain the fields they require. There, as they did traditionally, the young adult sons continue to assist their fathers in the heavier labour in the fields, but gradually before marriage they accumulate and extend their own holdings and so achieve economic independence. Elsewhere in the Lake Plains this process is taking much longer and indeed it now very frequently awaits inheritance at the death [198]

of the father. The old principle that every man had the right to arable land applied no less strongly to the young men, married or bachelors. Today most headmen will refuse to entertain the applications of young bachelors for land, and in this they merely represent general public opinion. But many young husbands likewise cannot obtain land, or only an insufficient amount.

Consequently, the following case-history, which I recorded for one young man, is not unusual. In 1955 he lived in the Mlangali young-men's hamlet, attached to Mpungati village in Mwakipesile's chiefdom, where his father lives. He was about 27 years old and had a wife and one child. Twice he had been to work in the mines and from the profits of this employment he had completed his bridewealth payment and had bought, in addition, three cattle, a bicycle and some good clothing. He thought he would probably go away again. Behind his house his wife had about 300 square yards of bananas and there was a tiny patch of cassava. This man had no other land, but he assisted in the heavy labour on his father's holding (about 1.7 acres in all) and by family convention he normally took for his own use the paddy crop of a small strip there; he insisted, however, that he had not been given this strip outright and that it remained at his father's pleasure. He had an unmarried half-brother about 22 years old who had not obtained even that concession at the time. Their father was about 55 years old and had two other sons who were still boys. The young man himself had been refused an allocation of land by the headman on the grounds that (as the headman well knew) he had the use of this strip of his father's land, and also because, as the eldest son, he would be the principal heir on his father's death. He was clearly worried about his future, for he did not wish to go abroad again and leave his wife and child; but he did not see how he could stay at home without seriously lowering his standard of living to little above subsistence level.

I quote this brief case-history not necessarily as typical – though I think it probably is – but as an actual illustration of the present state of affairs as they affect an individual.

The Modern "Chief" and the Land

Most of the traditional chiefs, *abanyafyale*, have been recognised and salaried under the Native Authority, and they are officially referred to today as *abatwa* (s. *atwa*). Some of the smallest chiefdoms have been absorbed administratively by their larger neighbours, and, although they are still recognised by the people, their *abanyafyale* have lost very much of their earlier prestige and authority. In the Lake Plains the modern chiefdoms are often rather larger than is usual amongst the Nyakyusa,[1] but they are, of course, small in comparison with the size of most African chiefdoms in Tanganyika.

The slightness of the traditional authority of the chief in land matters has already been noted (pages 7-8) and in general this still holds. In European times, however, the recognised chiefs have been given an increased authority and prestige as the local intermediaries between Government and people, and until recent years they were almost the only local instruments of the Government amongst the Nyakyusa. They have been backed by the all-powerful European, who preferred to deal with single, recognised individuals thought to have prime authority in a locality, and the European officer has been encouraged in this notion by an over-enthusiastic policy of indirect rule. Such chiefs were able to assume a degree of power well beyond the traditional limits, and to aggrandize themselves thereby. The ordinary commoner was never quite sure how far his chief was individually claiming more than he

1. On the numerical size of chiefdoms see supra, page 6.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

had authority to claim, or how far the Central Government was permitting or even compelling him to use new powers. Part of this novel power has, not unnaturally, been used to take over land-control responsibilities to which the chief has no traditional tribal right, and it has led to the claims, sometimes heard in the Courts and upheld in the District Commissioner's Appeal Court, that chiefs are the sole, traditional and rightful land authorities. It has led to chiefs assuming, or trying to assume, land allocation and supervisory powers which hitherto were the close right only of the village headmen.

Thus some chiefs have declared that they alone, or at least primarily, have allocatory powers over formerly uncultivated tracts which are relatively distant from the villages and which have now become valuable as paddy fields. Others have come to claim rights of interference in village land affairs, even within the long-established village areas. By the undefined threat of their alleged Government support, by taking advantage of new conditions, they have not infrequently "got away with it". They have insisted that their own nominees be allocated vacant holdings; they have gone over the heads of village headmen and made public their opinion as to who, amongst numbers of aspirants, should receive land in villages; they have insisted that headmen should consult them on the details of allocation. The desire for power and further prestige is one impulse behind this development. Sometimes the chiefs, better educated than many of their headmen, are able to understand the modern land situation better and are impatient of their headmen's conservatism and procrastination. Another factor is the potential profit which may accrue as land becomes scarce and thus a valuable commodity, and this became particularly important when the rush developed to take up the formerly vacant lands for paddy cultivation. Gifts in money and kind became common in return for preferential treatment for the donors. These lands are now all allocated and held by someone, but the chiefs have been reluctant to relinquish their new-found authority.

These remarks do not apply to all the chiefs: some have been notably content to use their influence through the traditional system by judicious co-operation with their headmen. Some, too, have been too imperceptive to bother to take action at all. Again, some have been forestalled by strong village headmen who would not allow any diminution of their own status and rights. In some of the fomerly vacant lands where no headman could reasonably claim traditional jurisdiction, the operations of the chiefs have probably been beneficial in reducing chaotic land-grabbing and jealous rivalry; once, however, these lands are brought under cultivation there seems to be a good case for their inclusion within the normal Nyakyusa land-control system. The continued existence of a supra-headman authority does not necessarily lead to stability or improved control. Certainly it is not in keeping with the people's values and institutions.

For these changes Government must clearly bear some responsibility and often also the blame for indirectly causing alterations in native land law and custom by some administrative attitude or ruling in a related sphere. There has been a good deal of well-intentioned insistence on determining and strengthening the "Land Authority" in tribal areas in the interests of stability and efficiency. In Rungwe District the facile claims of Nyakyusa chiefs have been only too readily accepted without question. In fact the traditional *umalafyale*, chief, only represented his chiefdom as a unit, and his lack of real power corresponded to the lack of cohesion within the chiefdom. The notion of a supreme "Land Authority" is largely incorrect for the Nyakyusa. In a theoretical sense we may perhaps say that the total land of a chiefdom was and is owned by all of the people in that chiefdom – chief, headmen and villagers; and therefore we may perhaps categorise the chief, the single individual representing the group as a whole, as the "land-owner." To

[498 do this is however, seriously to strain the facts and values beyond what the
493 average Nyakusa would understand or allow. The chief does not, as we have
seen, allocate land either to villages as individual units or to the villagers
[643 separately; new, traditional villages obtained their land by allocation from the
old headmen, and individual villagers were and are allocated their holdings
by their own headman. The chief can act as arbitrator between villagers and villages, but his decisions have been notoriously difficult to enforce. Undoubtedly commoners resent the attempts by their chief to interfere in their own village affairs.

Now it may, of course, be desirable to widen and thus facilitate the
[433 scope of land authority, allocatory responsibility and equitable supervision,
especially in the interests of a developing cash economy in a situation of a critical shortage of land. But if this significant change in native land law is to be introduced, it should surely be as a result of a proper appreciation of the facts and the existing law, and it must be in conformity with the interests and desires of the people themselves. It ought not to be a gradual sliding into a new situation as a result of other factors – as a by-product of local government development, for example, or as a matter of administrative convenience unsupported by real understanding. To make the chiefs the executive agents of the local government system does not necessarily mean – or it should not – that they should be passively allowed to usurp the land allocation powers of their headmen. Further, in view of modern Territorial policy aimed at bringing the people and their village leaders into the local government system, it seems perhaps unwise that at the same time chiefs should be allowed to assert non-traditional, autocratic land powers which are resented by villagers and headmen, and which may do little to improve the already difficult situation. When the additional powers of the chiefs are used at least partly, if not mainly, for self-aggrandizement or for personal profit, then it is a trend which needs to be strictly curtailed and controlled.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Briefly to summarise the contemporary land situation: in the Lake Plains it may be said that in the main the traditional land tenure system and land law still continue as the basis of native land holding today. The essential feature in recent years has been the acute land shortage in relation to arable needs under the current system of agriculture. Village unity and village exclusiveness have been increased, and so also has the authority of the village headman in his control and allocation of land rights. Security of tenure has been strengthened, if anything, and one of the most important methods of obtaining land is now by inheritance. The new law establishing inheritance from father to sons, whilst generally acceptable to the people, is producing a number of civil suits which form the greatest proportion of the more important land cases before the local courts.

The shortage of land is principally the result of increased demands for paddy (i.e. cash crop) cultivation, although the population appears to be increasing slowly. In the high density regions almost all men have considerably less land than they could cultivate, especially under the impetus of the ox-plough, with the developing desires for money income. In the low density region of the low foothills there is still some vacant or partly utilised land, though of very inferior quality for paddy cultivation. The shortage hits the younger men severely, and many of them cannot obtain land at all until the death or senility of their fathers. Fragmentation and dispersion of holdings is rapidly becoming serious and without check.

The first question which arises is whether anything can be done to ease the pressure of population on the country by making more land available, or by making its distribution more equitable.

The thinly populated parts of the northern region of the Lake Plains offer a meagre solution only, for the country is raised above the level of the flood plains and is often broken and hilly. Fertility is low, erosion is a constant danger and the paddy yield (if obtainable at all) is poor. Nyakyusa from the densely populated areas to south and east are therefore most unwilling to move there. In any case the available land, which remains safely and economically open to cultivation, is filling up fairly quickly – mainly by immigration. Certainly I do not think that it can supply sufficient space to meet modern needs. There is, however, no reason why immigrants should make a difficult situation worse, and therefore it is suggested that further immigration from outside the Lake Plains should be carefully controlled if not altogether prevented. Indubitably outsiders (almost entirely Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who hold land without permanent residence should be prohibited and their holdings reallocated to local inhabitants.

As I have already indicated (page 17), I do not think that the problem of men who hold unusually large acreages is particularly serious. Such large holdings are relatively few and will be inevitably split up by inheritance on the deaths of the present occupiers.

In the flood plains proper there is, as far as I am aware, extremely little new land which could be brought under cultivation. Mechanical assistance in the clearance of dense reed thickets[1] and in drainage schemes would produce

1. These areas of thicket are heavily inundated in the wet season but, if cleared, could be used for a dry season crop.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

311
423

some more land. How much could be made cultivable is beyond my appraisal, but it would be of valuable local assistance and ought not to be neglected. It does not, on the other hand, appear practicable to decrease further the amount of land used for building and village sites – the people themselves have already done this to some extent, and increased congestion in the villages would probably be undesirable on medical grounds.

There remain the local cases where part or all of a holding is not used (excluding genuine fallowing). An old man, or one who has for some reason lost the labour of his wives or sons, is sometimes unable to cultivate the whole of his fields. This is not common, or if it occurs the occupier is usually approached by his kinsmen, friends and neighbours for a loan or gift. Occasionally such land does remain relatively unutilised and the occupier refuses to release it even at the request of the headman. There is some feeling in the Lake Plains over this matter, and some men have suggested openly that such unused land should compulsorily revert to the village to be re-allocated by the headman.[1] Unless there is overwhelming demand for a new ruling here it would seem not to be a practicable policy and would only weaken security of land-holding and further increase the already over-exaggerated communal claim of the village. It would, of course, be difficult to assess when in fact a man had more land than he could or would cultivate, and it might easily lead to injustice if chiefs or headmen were given powers (however restricted) to interfere in a man's holding. Nevertheless headmen might be encouraged to keep a close watch on unused fields in their villages and to bring pressure to bear either to persuade the occupier to increase his efforts or to make temporary, witnessed loans to a neighbour.

In some cases land is left unused for a period whilst a man is away from home – usually while he is away at work. Where his absence is brief, little can or needs to be done, and already under Nyakyusa law the headman may authorise another villager to cultivate the fields on a year to year tenure: the absentee re-entering his holding on return. Occasionally, however, a young man may, for example, inherit land but then leave it for a number of years whilst he migrates to work in the mines. There is no adequate ruling as to the number of years' absence which should elapse before the absentee forfeits his land as an assumed permanent emigrant from the village. Headmen are reluctant to reallocate unused land for fear of the obvious legal and
[622] social difficulties should the absentee return, although some headmen are more hasty than others in this matter. Neighbours are often reluctant to borrow the land for fear of losing their opportunity of an outright allocation elsewhere in the village in the meantime. In some cases I saw fields which had lain unused for more than four years for these reasons. Like the unused portions of an old man's holding, these few cases arouse a good deal of land-hungry indignation, beyond their real importance in fact. Nevertheless some limit to the period of absence might well be introduced so that at least headmen know what their authority is in this matter, and so that men not prepared to work the land shall not be able to retain it indefinitely. It may be noted that the average length of absence of men in migratory labour is 18-24 months. A period of three years' continuous absence, at least without special cause, might perhaps be taken to indicate the automatic abdication of right of tenure.

If more land cannot be made available – or only relatively little – the obvious solution is a more intensive and profitable use of the existing resources. The Agricultural Department has long urged this policy and is
[649] attempting to put it into effect, pointing out the relatively inferior yields of paddy in the Lake Plains because of poor techniques and inefficient effort.

1. Significantly enough, one of the men to bring this suggestion to my notice was the Nyakyusa Senior Agricultural Instructor in the Lake Plains.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

This is not the province of the Sociologist, and all that can be said here is that it seems the most practical and valuable policy that could be adopted: it should be made the chief line of attack on contemporary problems. Unfortunately the Nyakyusa do not appreciate the value of this sort of solution – at least not yet – and therefore they are not inclined to learn and to increase their efforts and to change their practices in the fields. They have not yet rid themselves of the notion that increased production of crops and thus increased profits from agriculture are correlated only with increased holdings. In view of the critical land shortage a crucial change of attitude and understanding is required. The Nyakyusa must learn that increased production and higher profits can come from new and more efficient techniques – i.e. intensive cultivation. They must also learn what is so difficult for the African, that quality of production is no less important than quantity and that therefore cash incomes and standards of living can be raised by improving the standard of crops to be sold. Indeed, with a tendency for world agricultural prices to fall due to increasing supply, quality of produce is of the greatest importance. This is notably so in the case of rice. Tanganyika African rice is reckoned as of lower quality than that from South-east Asia, which therefore commands not only the better price but also the main share of the keenly competitive market. But it is a difficult idea for the Nyakyusa to grasp. It seems obvious to them, inheriting attitudes of a former subsistence age, that three poor cattle are better than two good ones – and in fact so they were in the hazardous time of their grandfathers. Cash crop production is based on the same premise, but it cannot hold in a modern cash economy and in dealings with world markets. 311 423 181

If, however, the present land shortage continues unchecked by the successful introduction of new attitudes, ideas and techniques there may well be serious social and political repercussions in the not too distant future. Current schemes of tribal development will surely be rendered futile if economic activity is restricted and if land discontent is allowed to become important.

A second agricultural policy, and one of which less is heard, would be to stop the present dangerous monoculture – the persistence with paddy alone – and to attempt on a large scale to introduce second and third cash crops, particularly such crops as require intensive cultivation on small acreages. This may be forced on the people in any case if the gloomy prognostications of world rice prices are borne out in the next few years. Such a development would allow of a more stable economy and a more balanced agriculture, in addition to assisting towards a reduction of land difficulties. Experiments on a small scale in robusta coffee, palm oil and other crops have already been started by the Agricultural Department but, at least from the layman's point of view, they need priority in finance, attention and effort as a main part of an agricultural programme for the Lake Plains. [LAB]

In the time available for my investigations it was not possible to enquire with sufficient care into the details and exact procedure of Nyakyusa land law (c.f. page 3) and therefore I am reluctant to suggest any drastic changes. The new inheritance law (page 21) is a step in the right direction and is clearly in keeping with modern trends, but it is suggested that its detailed operation on the ground and in the courts should be studied by the Native Authority and the Administration in order to attempt to define its meaning more clearly and to reduce the number of disputes. In order to check fragmentation before it has gone too far, it should be considered whether some minimum limit might not be imposed on the size of fields. Voluntary schemes for the consolidation of holdings, which have achieved some success elsewhere in Africa, might also be considered. These would be particularly valuable in the 311 423 [118] [128]

311
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flood plains paddy fields where the ox-plough is in general use today. The general advantages of consolidation require no exposition here.

In view of the domestic, economic and social importance of cattle to the Nyakyusa and their potential value in a mixed intensive economy, and also in view of the fact that cattle are widely held in very small numbers by individual families, it is suggested that further and more urgent attempts be made to encourage stall-feeding, especially during the wet season. It is realized that past efforts in this matter have failed, and therefore a thorough-going scheme of propaganda and demonstration work is needed. Small fodder crops might be grown in the dry season and there is always plenty of banana fodder as makeweight.

[233]

The problem of the landless young men is likely to remain very difficult (see pages 36ff). It has to be remembered of course, that as they get older men do acquire land gradually. Nevertheless the proportion of landless, or virtually landless, men is high and is apparently increasing. The large-scale, post-war labour migration to the Rhodesias and South Africa is undoubtedly one of the more important results of land shortage and economic difficulty, and it is a valuable safety valve. As I have written elsewhere: "The serious and increasing land shortage amongst the Nyakyusa raises real doubts if there is any policy at all which can keep the men at home when there is not enough land for them – for the sake of both economic and general social stability it might be preferable in the long run if the continued pressure on the land resources were released by a degree of permanent emigration."[1] Since writing that and during the course of my land investigations I have only become more convinced of its rightness. I would now go so far as to say that Nyakyusa men should be encouraged to go abroad to work and even to become permanent wage-labourers in the industries and areas which demand labour and offer a higher standard of living. If the Nyakyusa are not to be seriously retarded in their home economic development, based as it must be on agriculture (i.e. on the land), the excess population must find an outlet elsewhere.

[167]

[464]

The general tendency towards greatly increased exclusiveness in the Nyakyusa village, involving renewed emphasis on the principle of land-holding only by residence and the forfeiture of a holding when changing residence, raises wider issues the future significance of which is not easily seen, especially by the Nyakyusa themselves. This narrow village parochialism does little to meet the increasingly difficult problem of land shortage, whilst the isolation it fosters is the antithesis of the wider outlook required by a developing society in a world money economy. I am fully aware of the strong native sentiment attached to the village and to village independence, but this was in fact diminishing in earlier European times before the new land scarcity set in (see pages 29-30). I do not think that this village system and the complex of attitudes and values it fosters is adequate to provide for the future – a future which the Nyakyusa do not yet clearly foresee. With some deference, therefore, I offer the following suggestion: a man who already has a holding should be able to retain it when he moves to live in another village. If his new home is too far away for the continued cultivation of all or part of the holding, or for any other valid reason, he should be able to sell or give it to anyone he wishes. Such gift or sale could be supervised by the headman of the village in which the holding lies. It might well, at first at any rate, be limited to a member of the same village, either an established villager or another man who is willing to come and live there. I think it important that disposal should be outright and not on leasehold terms, for the latter would most propably engender further complications and uncertainty of tenure, which must be avoided.

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1. Gulliver, P. H.: A Report on the Migration of African Workers to the South from the Southern Highlands Province, with special reference to the Employment of Rungwe District Government Administration, Tanganyika, 1955, page A31.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

311
423

Thus men wishing to move could seek to obtain, that is to buy, a holding from another man living in a village to which he is willing to move; a man leaving a village could either retain his holding in cultivation or obtain some compensation for the loss of his holding there. It is not likely that this would produce a rush of land sales, for only a relatively few men would wish to relinquish their holdings. It would, however, facilitate freer movement between villages. Secondly, it would assist younger men to obtain holdings when they have earned and saved money at work.[1] Thirdly, it would assist profit-making cultivators to enlarge their holdings. Fourthly, it would help to bring to the Nyakyusa a realisation of the implications of the new money economy which they have inevitably and irrevocably entered, and it would demonstrate the value of holdings in relation to other commodities and activities. This kind of system would allow the village to retain much of its valued unity and control whilst reducing its excessive and potentially harmful exclusiveness. Such disposals of land, especially if by money sale, could be performed before the headman and other reliable village witnesses and they could be registered formally at the local court. There would need also to be some ruling limiting the maximum size of holdings (to prevent excessive buying) and preventing alienation to Africans from outside the Lake Plains. In this matter the village headman would probably be the executive authority.

[166]

Although the suggestion could be introduced simply as a scheme enabling the buying and selling of land, I am here more concerned with the problem of freer movement and the limitation of the reversionary rights of the headman on behalf of the village, whilst retaining his useful controls. A more general recognition of the economic value of land would probably follow, and if it proved practicable and useful, an extended and refined scheme could be introduced later.

My suggestions are, then, as follows:—

1. (*a*) an immediate restriction of immigration into the Lake Plains from whatever origin, and the encouragement of the movement of people from the congested areas into the lightly populated areas, accompanied by local developement programmes there;

(*b*) the consideration of the practicability of drainage and thicket clearance schemes in order to make more land available;

(*c*) the absolute abolition of land-holding by non-residents and the reallocation through the local headmen of land so held to local inhabitants;

(*d*) the sympathetic encouragement of village headmen to watch unused portions of villagers' holdings with a view to their voluntary and temporary reallocation to neighbours in need.

2. (*a*) a detailed enquiry into the operation and administration of the new inheritance law, with a view to improving its details;

(*b*) an enquiry into the possibility of imposing a minimum limit on the size of holdings and plots;

(*c*) the introduction of local, voluntary schemes for the consolidation of holdings.

3. Covering the whole field of Nyakyusa land problems must necessarily be a progressive agricultural programme aimed, firstly, at a more intensive and a more efficient use of the land by improved cultivation methods, and, secondly, the abolition of monoculture by the introduction of other cash crops. This is, of course, the policy of the Agricultural Department, but it needs more urgent application despite the obvious difficulties raised.

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Stall-feeding of cattle, especially in the wet season, would assist to improve the living conditions of the herds and to increase their domestic and economic value.

1. It would also provide an alternative cash investment to the present purchase of cattle.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

311
423

4. The safety valve of labour migration should not be closed and young Nyakyusa should be encouraged to go away to work whilst wages abroad are relatively high.

5. Finally, with a view to the future as well as the present, it is suggested that an individual's land-holding should be at his own disposal, and, if desired, by money sale. Purchasers should, at first anyway, be limited to members of the village where the holding lies or to men willing to settle there.

These recommendations are to be taken only as a suggested programme for administrative consideration. No attempt can be made here to lay down the details of future policy, for that is the function and responsibility of administrators and technical officers, African and European, and not of the Sociologist.

The Sociologist could, however, with profit participate in the discussions and work preparatory to the development of a satisfactory programme. It is essential that a complete programme be arranged and executed to tackle all or most of the problems concerning the land, economics and agriculture. Tinkering with different aspects here and there is likely to be unfruitful and is unlikely to command the propaganda and drive of a comprehensive scheme. Such a planned scheme should be able to catch the imagination and support of the people themselves, especially if they and their leaders can be brought to see the reasons for it and the value it may bring.

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113

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10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

NOTE

THE 1957 POPULATION CENSUS

Since this Report was originally written there has been a new census of the African population in Tanganyika. This took place in August, 1957, and the first official results have been published by the East African Statistical Department in *Tanganyika African Population Census, 1957. Analysis by sex and age for Province, District and Territorial Census Areas*, March, 1958. 161

In this note are given these latest data relevant to the subject matter of this report. The following Table is set out in the same form as Table I on page 12 in which my original estimates were given. As in that Table, so here, no account is taken of unusable land such as swamp, steep slopes, thicket, etc., in the calculation of densities and available acreages.

NYAKYUSA POPULATION

[162]

	1948 Population	1957 Population	1957 Density per sq. mile	Acres per family of 5	Average annual increase 1948-57
Lake Plains ..	58,700	66,513	330	10.0	2.0%
Central Region ..	48,500	48,305	223	14.3	0.0%
N. W. Highlands	53,300	65,075	226	14.2	2.2%
N. E. Highlands ..	40,300	44,607	203	15.8	1.2%
NYAKYUSA in tribal area ..	197,700	224,500	241	13.3	1.4%

N.B. There are some members of other tribes in the Nyakyusa tribal area who cannot be excluded from these figures.

Assuming that in 1957 there were about 6,000 men temporarily absent from their homes in the Lake Plains but who remained dependent on the land resources of that region, then the following estimate may be made:—

Lake Plains – persons resident at home and temporarily abroad:—

58,700	72,513	349	9.2

The changes in population during this nine-year period, in so far as they are indicated by the results of these two censuses, differ a little from what was suggested in Chapter III. Improved enumeration may well account for some of the increase; but, apart from such mechanical errors, it is clear that there has been a relatively large increase of population in the Lake Plains, and in the North-Western Highlands. I suggest that the natural increase in the Lake Plains has been 1-1½ per cent. a year, and the remaining increase has come from immigration (cf. pages 18 ff). The same is probably true for the North-Western Highlands where immigration has occurred because some land remained in that region which could still be taken up (unlike other parts of the country). It is noteworthy that the population of the relatively poor Central Region, which has no cash crop and easily eroded land, has remained the same at the end of the period. Undoubtedly there has been emigration from this region to the Lake Plains and the North-Western Highlands.

As far as this report is concerned, the population has been increasing more rapidly and the density is greater than my original figures indicated. I am inclined to think now that the population of the "very high density" region of the Lake Plains (page 16) must be well over 500 people per square mile – probably up to 600 people per square mile. Pressure on the land is, therefore, more acute than I reported, and the pressure on the social system of the Nyakyusa is similarly greater. This does not affect the main analysis and argument of the report.

May, 1958.

11: Thwaites C-5 (ca. 1942) 1944FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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11:Thwaites C-5 (ca. 1942) 1944
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P.236 A]

WANYAKYUSA AGRICULTURE

By D. H. Thwaites, Agricultural Assistant, Tanganyika Territory

131 The Wanyakyusa occupy the District of Rungwe in the Southern Highlands Province. The district lies between 9° and 9½° S. latitude
133 at the northern tip of Lake Nyasa. The altitude ranges from 1,500 feet to 9,500 feet. The
631 district is divided into twelve chiefdoms. The Administrative Headquarters are at Tukuyu, which was known before the British occupation as Neu Langenberg.

Inhabitants

101 The local people are not indigeneous to this area. They came, tradition has it, from
[173] Mahenge via Ukinga after many tribal fights. They are akin to the Wahenga in Nyasaland bordering on the Tanganyika boundary. It is
191 estimated that only 10 per cent of the Wanyakyusa speak Kiswahili. According to the 1935
161 census the total poulation was 153,204. The
162 total number of tax-payers in 1942 was 35,304, or 23.04 per cent of the total population.

181 The people themselves are extremely industrious and intelligent. As there are 90 people to the square mile, living conditions are
105 crowded and emigration is continually taking place. The people are partial to litigation over cattle and women. The number of cases heard annually in the Native Courts is about 6,000. There is no one historical and traditional head of the tribe. The twelve Chiefs are, in reality, hereditary Headmen who have been selected by Government to be Chiefs. They are in effect only *primi inter pares* in native eyes, the outlook of the people being unusually democratic for a native tribe.

105 The people live in houses made of wattle and daub or bamboo frame, with thatched
342 roof, and villages are sited mostly along ridges.
361 Rectangular houses are now built instead of the round huts of former days. They often stand in rows with a main street down the middle with bananas in the background. The more progressive natives build with sun-dried or burnt brick. Stock are stalled in the same house owing to the prevalence of thieving, but sleep in separate rooms.

Climate

132 The rainfall of the district varies in the different areas. In Tukuyu itself the annual average for 25 years (1918-1942) is 100.22 inches. On the Lake shore the average is probably higher, but no continuous statistics are available. The heaviest rainfall months are from December to May, but, in most years,

11:Thwaites C-5 (ca. 1942) 1944
FN17 Ngonde FN17
[P.236 B] Nyakyusa

WANYAKYUSA AGRICULTURE

By D. H. Thwaites, Agricultural Assistant, Tanganyika Territory

132 some rain falls every month in the part north of Tukuyu. Very heavy rains occur at times, such as in 1935 when 139 inches are recorded on the lake shore in the month of April. In November, 1942, 12½ inches fell in eighteen hours in Tukuyu. The average mean temperature for Tukuyu is 23.66°C. The range is low while monthly variation average is only 5-6°C.

Soils and Vegetation

134 The district may be divided into three sections according to soil and vegetation types.
[133] The higher altitudes to the north are dominated geologically by the extinct volcanic range extending round Rungwe Mountain. The dark soil, composed of decaying vegetable matter overlying volcanic ash in varying layers, is, generally speaking, fairly fertile, depending on
137 the age of the subsoil. The vegetation is dominated by rain forest, though much of this has been destroyed. Grass (*Hyparrhenia* spp. *Digitaria horizontalis, Setaria*) and *Crotalaria* spp., with high *Sesbania* and *Dodonea* shrub on the slopes of the mountain range, are found with *Milletia, Ficus* and *Cissus* spp., and occasional stretches of bamboo on the hill sides and in the river beds and ravines. To the west of Tukuyu, woodlands of *Brachystegia*, associated with *Albizzia* and *Parkia* spp., cover such areas as are not cultivated and where the grasses (*Hyparrhenia* and *Digitaria* spp.) can only be burnt during October owing to the wet climate.

134 In the medium altitudes south of Tukuyu, the soil is a red clay loam, derived from granite with intrusions of dolorite, diorite, basalt and quartz. It is in the area of these
[135] soils that hot springs, lime, coal and mica occur. This part is heavily wooded with
137 *Brachystegia* associated with *Albizzia, Dalbergia, Ficus, Cissus* spp. and *Chlorophora excelsa*, but is at present being gradually cut out to make room for cultivation. No forests of economic value occur, except for fuel, small quantities of wild rubber vine, *Landolphia* spp., which have become of value in wartime, and some pockets of *Adina microcephala*. Dominant grasses are *Imperata cylindrica, Digitaria*, and *Hyparrhenia* spp.

134 The lower altitudes below 2,000 feet are situated in a wide plain along the northern
[133] and western shores of Lake Nyasa, and this is composed of soils mostly transported from the highlands. These are extremely fertile. The sub-
[137] soil is granite and the top soil varies greatly in thickness.

137 in thickness. This part is devoid of timber except along some river banks—*Albizzia* and *Acacia* spp.—and fuel has to be carried some distance. The dominant herbs are *Crotalaria striata* and *Hyparrhenia* sp., with *Phragmites* and *Pennisetum purpureum* along the rivers.

Methods of Cultivation

241 462 The work of cultivation is equally divided between the sexes. After the plots have been cleared and hand-hoed by the men, it is women's work to plant, clear, harvest, winnow and sell at the market. Men's work consists of clearing, hoeing and looking after the cattle.

242 241 Rotation of crops is practised, as it must be in an area where all land is far from productive. In the highlands, 9,500 feet to 5,000 feet, the rotation in valleys is sweet potatoes, finger millet, groundnuts, finger millet, groundnuts, finger millet and rest for five years, or sweet potatoes, maize for five years and rest for five years. On the hillsides, finger millet and pigeon pea or finger millet alone are sown every fourth year.

In the medium altitudes, between 5,000 feet and 2-3,000 feet, the rotation is finger millet, maize and yams, beans, rested and grazed. Continual planting of rice cannot take place as fertility is so quickly impaired.

In the lower altitudes, below 2,000 feet, rice is planted continuously for some 15 years and the land is then rested and grazed for about 8 years.

Diet and Food Crops

262 No one food is the staple throughout the district, but plantains, maize and sweet potatoes for the higher altitudes and rice on the lake shore are generally eaten, with additions that vary from area to area.

243 Maize is planted both on contoured ridges and on flat land. Holes are drilled generally 3 feet apart and each hole has 3 seeds planted in it. [241] Maize is usually interplanted with beans or Bambarra groundnuts, groundnuts, cowpeas or pigeon peas. Planting takes place in the highlands in July to September and harvesting in February to April. In the medium altitudes, two crops are planted annually, in November to February and again in May to June. In the lower altitudes, however, little maize is grown and this is sown in November to December [251] and harvested in March and April. Maize is stored in mud-covered basket granaries or is [262] sold as soon as it is dried. It is eaten roasted or boiled with beans. The varieties of maize grown vary but they are mostly of the hard flint type.

245 Bananas and plantains are grown all over the district except in the highlands to the north and west. Numerous local varieties abound, with a red plantain and the *Sukari* variety of [262 banana as recent introductions, and are used 273] exclusively for food, no beer being made. They are mostly dried and pounded with pestle and [251] mortar to be used as flour, although they are also eaten whole after roasting.

244 Sweet potatoes are extensively grown. They are planted on contoured ridges from 3-4 feet high. Planting distances vary from 6 inches to 1 foot in either direction. They are planted in March to May and north of Tukuyu take eight months to mature, but south of that place four [252] months is sufficient. Sweet potatoes are eaten boiled or roasted.

243 Finger millet is used more for beer-making than for food. It is always sown broadcast in [262 November to January and harvested in March 273] to May. The land is first hand-hoed and all grass put into heaps and burnt when dry. In the highlands to the west the trees are lopped and branches piled in heaps to be burnt. Contoured ridges are put in at intervals depending on the slope of the land. The harvesting is carried out just before the grain is ripe by cutting off the heads and stacking in the field while ripening proceeds. The heads are then collected into large baskets and steeped in water for a day, after which they are taken out and rubbed with the hands to separate the [251] grain from the chaff. The millet is then dried and stored in earthenware pots or mud-covered baskets until required. It is reported that it can be stored for five or six years by this method, but I have not verified this personally.

244 Beans are nearly always interplanted with 252 maize or sown in banana plantations and the 262 local seed is of mixed varieties. They are eaten boiled as a relish with other food such as maize. The leaves are also eaten dried or fresh.

245 Groundnuts are grown in the medium and 251 lower altitudes. Planted in November to February and harvested in April to July, they are dried in the shell and eaten raw.

243 Rice is grown on the lake shore and also in the neighbouring foothills. It is sown broadcast in November to February and harvested in May to August. Yields are not high in the foothills, being about 6-7 bags of paddy to the acre. Many local varieties are grown, such [252 as Musafiri, Mwangulu, and Marula. The hill 438] rice is eaten boiled, but most is sold hand-hulled in the markets for purely local consumption.

241 Other foodstuffs grown are coca-yams, cow peas, pigeon peas, Bambarra groundnuts, ginger, cardamon, groundnuts, wheat, pumpkins, peppers, citrus, sugar cane and European vegetables, including a quantity of European potatoes. [177]

Economic Crops

245 One of the main cash crops is coffee, which was introduced about 1900 by the Berlin Lutheran Mission, but it was not grown by natives until 1930 when an attempt was made to organize an industry. It had already been tried from 1924 onwards by Europeans but had gradually died out, giving place to tea. 177

245 Native coffee has not been truly successful and many reasons are suspected for this. In effect, the coffee suffers from many pests and diseases and yields are so low as to be almost uneconomical even to a tribe of very low individual annual income. It has become obvious that coffee can only be grown by natives if shaded by bananas and mulched heavily with banana trash. Multiple-stem pruning is gaining favour.

Seedlings are planted out in December and the first crop is obtained four years after. The area planted rose in 1939 to 5,864 acres and the number of native planters to 7,966. Yields, however, are low, varying from 131.4 kg. to 20.4 kg. parchment to the acre. Hemeleia leaf disease and yellow and white borer are prevalent all over the coffee-growing area. Over the period since 1932 the price paid to natives has averaged 44 cents a kg. for parchment. [136]

All coffee is collected and sold by Native Authority after rough grading and, in order to encourage better preparation, much lower payments are made for the inferior grades. A native staff is employed to visit coffee plots and to give instructions, and it is noticeable that the quality of preparation varies with the price. [438] [432]

175 The cultivation of rice on the lake shore was started by Chief Koroso in 1896 with seed obtained from Arab traders in Nyasaland and the Moravian Mission issued further seed in 1898. Being an innovation, rice was not popular and little was grown except for small local sales. In 1917 the Government issued seed and tax was paid in rice instead of money. Interest was hereby aroused and the cultivation of rice was started. In 1932 several other kinds of seed were issued and now sixteen varieties are found. "Faya", which was issued in 1929, gives the best yields and is the variety chiefly grown, other varieties being Bungala, Marula 243 243 [65]

243 and Mapiko, although very little of these is sold. Ploughs have been introduced into the area as it is flat and the total number in use in 1942 is about 400. The first ploughing is carried out in June or July when the ground is still wet, and the second ploughing in October to February. Planting, which is all broadcast, is carried out in November to the middle of March and the harvesting is done in May to September.

256 A first mill was erected at Ipyana on the lake shore in 1942 with a capacity of 9 tons of rice in 15 hours. Another is now on its way from India with a capacity of 14 tons of rice in 15 hours and should be erected some time in 1944.

248 A small acreage of cotton is also sown along the Songwe River boundary, which borders on Nyasaland, with seed obtained from that Colony. Conditions, however, are not suitable on the remainder of the lake shore and expansion is not encouraged.

241 439 A list of exports from the district with approximate weights for 1942 is appended:—

Article	Weight in tons
	Tons
Mixed beans	550
Coffee	50
Groundnuts	50
Maize..	1,500
Onions	20
European potatoes	200
Rice	1,500
Vegetables	40
Fruit	100
Banana flour	300
Cassava flour	50
Finger millet	150
Tea (European produce)	215
Total ..	4,725

Land Tenure and Economics of the People

423 In theory all land belongs to the chiefs or sub-chiefs, but in practice once a man has cultivated a plot, that plot belongs to him until he leaves the area in which he lives. If he leaves, the land reverts to the chief or sub-chief and may be given by him through his headman or elder to anyone in his area who is short of land or to a newcomer who wants a plot. Should a man go away and return after a long period and ask for a plot, he is bound [554 609 651] to be given one but not necessarily the plot he had before he left. Newcomers are welcomed and are given land, as the amount of tax collected in an area is an indication of the importance of a chief.

233 Stock grazing is a problem which is coming more and more to the fore. The number of

N 233 cattle in the district in the 1941 census was about 2.3 head per taxpayer or 55 head per square mile. Certain land is set aside each N [184 year for grazing, where stock is not able to 605] interfere with the produce plots. Compensation for trespass of cattle on cultivated land is only paid among people of the lake shore.

N 656 Parts of the land to the west of Tukuyu have been badly eroded by cultivation and 134 over-grazing, and it is only since 1935 that 185 anti-erosion rules have been made to check the tendency for bad cultivation. Since they 242 were brought in, however, the majority of the tribe have become very keen on seeing the effect that well-controlled cultivation has on crops. The following are the Native Authority Rules concerning anti-erosion:—

"Throughout the Rungwa District, all natives shall follow orders regarding cultivation designed to prevent soil erosion as demonstrated and enjoined by the Agricultural Officer.

(*a*) All ridges and terraces shall be contoured and not follow the slope of the hill.

(*b*) In the case of cultivation done on the flat and not on ridges or terraces, a large ridge and ditch shall be dug at the top of the plot to remain permanently and be repaired from N time to time."

439 The Wanyakyusa have never been dependant on outside sources for any of their food, N but in their own territory there is no iron for [135] making hoes nor clay for making earthenware pots. The former they were accustomed to get from Ukinga, on the eastern boundary of the district in the Livingstone mountains, and the pots were, and are still, made only by about 500 members of the Wakisi tribe living in a K village on the lake shore at the extreme south-439 western point of the district. The Wakisi are 101 really of Ukinga origin and inhabit the eastern, northern and western shores of Lake Nyasa. They grow no food except cassava, and that only recently, and apart from the one village that makes the pots, their only work is as paddlers of canoes and fishermen. Most of N their fish and pots are exchanged for food.

443 Since the Tukuyu District is so thickly populated and the inhabitants concentrated, it has been found necessary to create produce markets at comparatively short distances. N Transport from these markets, during war-438 time, has become difficult. The natural outlet 316 for Tukuyu native foodstuffs is the Lupa Goldfields, which lie about 100 miles to the

(*Received for publication*

438 north. Before the war, the goldfields gave work
316 to about 15,000 natives, chiefly Wanyakyusa,
and most of the foodstuffs from this district
[460] went there. The goldfields are gradually closing
due to difficulties in obtaining spares, and it
has been necessary to look for outlets for
Tukuyu produce elsewhere. Should the gold-
fields open again after the war, and large-
scale mining start, there is a great future for
produce grown in Tukuyu.

434 The main income of the tribe is derived
from agricultural, military, mining and public
works sources, and it is estimated that in 1941
the average annual income per man, woman
and child was about Sh. 10 per year. It has
risen considerably since, as over 4,000 men
have joined the military and a large part of
their salaries comes back to the district in the
form of remittances. The agricultural source,
from which a larger part of the tribal income
[464] accrues, is from sales of rice, maize and other
foodstuffs. A fair number of Wanyakyusa also
work on the tea plantations.

241 The picture sketched above will show that
the district is inhabited by a tribe whose agri-
culture is of great interest, since the variety
of crops, from wheat in the highlands to
paddy and cotton on the lake shore, is perhaps
unrivalled in so small an area elsewhere in
East Africa. It has not been possible to fill in
181 the picture with details of the people's
character, but it is worth mentioning that the
Wanyakyusa are a people difficult to ad-
minister, argumentative, litigious, self-willed
and at times inclined to truculence. Neverthe-
153 less their intelligence is such that they are
willing to be persuaded, and, once convinced
of the benefit of any change, adopt it with
energy. This is instanced by the way they have
in a few years accepted the principles of anti-
erosion to such an extent that now there is
perhaps 90 per cent control in the well-popu-
lated areas. It should, however, be stressed
434 that, though the soil is not being eroded to
241 any great extent, it is still being impoverished,
since increased cultivation for the war effort
has involved breaking a great deal of new land
with a consequent lessening of fallow. Over-
cropping in the hilly country is very great and,
in order to prevent further emigration, it be-
[185] hoves the native planters to learn to put some-
thing back into the soil in the form of mulch
or compost. If care is not taken, a compara-
tively prosperous country will one day become
like so many parts of Africa, where a losing
struggle is fought with Nature to obtain a
sufficiency for the people's needs.

on 21st September, 1943)

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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[Title Page]

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Chagga FN4
Haya FN8

House-types of the Banyakyusa

By Agnete Biegaard

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During a stay in the Southern Highlands in Tanganyika in 1955, I was given the opportunity to inspect—and draw plans of—some of the houses belonging to the local Bantu tribe of the Nyakyusa. In literature they are known also under the name of Konde.

The district in which they live is fairly high above sea level and near the borders of Rhodesia and Nyasaland; the rainfall is fully adequate. Banana and coffee are doing well—the banana trees often forming groves in between which you catch a glimpse of the village houses.

The district invites comparison with other localities in Tanganyika where the country is high, and where precipitation is plentiful. Such localities would be the districts around Kilimanjaro and near Bukoba to the west of Lake Victoria. In the former live the Chagga tribe, in the latter the tribe of the Haya. Even here banana and coffee are plenty—and the I.Q. of both tribes is said to be high, as is the case of the Banyakyusa (plural of Nyakyusa).

Maybe you might therefore expect to find a corresponding standard of dwelling-houses, perhaps even the same type of hut. But in this matter you will be highly surprised; so great are the differences between the three areas. Apart from the original design of the house being round and the roof thatched, no similarity exists between the various houses or their interior lay-outs.

The round, thatched Chagga hut has its roof all way down to the ground. It is not very large and the interior lay-out is quite primitive. A cow or goat lives all its life indoors and is fed there. A short and uncomfortable bed is found near by. Down the centre of the floor is a stone-paved aisle. Everything looks quite simple—especially when you remember that in other aspects the Chagga are quite advanced in their use of modern facilities; for instance they use electricity for the grinding of their maize.

The Haya hut—the old, round type—is a really magnificent thing. I think its centre is seven or eight metres high. In front it has a kind of overhang, maybe you might call it a front room, where people will sit, and where guests will be received. If you are a welcome guest, a straw mat will be rolled out to cover the grass flooring of the hut. The walls of the front room are solid plates made from a kind of reed. The hearth is placed near the centre of the inner room.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Haya FN8

H 342 As indicated above, the floor is covered with grass. Various domestic utensils may be seen, stuck into thin screens of plant material.

H 342 178 But this old, beautiful type of hut is very much on the decline. It is costly to make and to keep in repair, and the thick straw roof is, admittedly, highly inflammable. A flying trip round Lake Victoria clearly shows how the straw roofs in the banana groves are being replaced by corrugated iron. This change may even have another reason, viz. the fact that fodder for cattle is in short supply and that the grass for roofs is hard to come by. No doubt, it is a question of time when the fine old Haya hut will have disappeared.

•

N 114 In the Southern Highlands, where I was given the opportunity to stay for three months at various Danish mission stations, I visited the village round the Rungwe mission, the neighbouring villages of Ilolo and Kikota, and some villages near the Ruteruganio mission station. I made a trip to Lake Nyasa and another to the Pokoto mountains. I must admit to a limited knowledge of drawing technique and of house construction, but I have measured a number of houses and sketched their plan and also the furnishings I found in them. The positioning of the various objects has been established.

N 361 [342] 354 The high standard of dwellings of the Banyakyusa is truly to be wondered at. The houses, clustered in villages, often along a winding street, lie intermingled with bananas and coffee bushes. The houses are large and their interior is clean. Often two or three houses belong to one family, and, if so, will be grouped round a courtyard.

N 342 [824] Even if you could find houses built from sun-dried bricks and fired tiles, most were from bamboo with a grass roofing.

All houses stand on a clay base which, though not very high, no doubt means some protection against penetration of ground moisture during the heavy rains of April–June.

N [824] Besides bamboo, sometimes the bole of tree fern, *makele*, is used in outer walls. Such tree fern stems have not the carrying capacity of bamboo, but they are far more resistant to rot. Among the other common features of the existing types of houses, should be mentioned the mud cloth, the size of cells that from the inside are pressed between the vertical bamboo poles; also, the inner wall is roughcast with a mixture of mud and cow manure; the floor is from tamped clay. In some places you find very fine floors in which a pattern has been rolled into the wet clay; to this end a short length of the stem of the banana cluster has been employed, viz. the length between the seats of the male and the female flowers. Also employed are another plant stem, or an empty corn cob.

N [287] [531]

N 354 In all houses where women live, there are one or more hearths. The presence of two hearths in one house usually means that the husband has two wives, each with having her own hearth, either in the common house or in a house of her own.

N 5[illegible]5 The houses always have a kind of ceiling made from bamboo sticks and carried

N 342

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

by horizontal bamboo joists, at right angles to the principal beams of the ceiling. 342
This ceiling never covers the entire room, but only the greater part, and always
the part directly above the hearth. Up here firewood is placed to dry. A fine [372]
black basket is hung from the ceiling above the fire. Access to the loft is by means
of a ladder.

When you read reports by the 'first' Europeans on these peoples and their houses, they always refer to a round house with reclining walls and a conical roof. Meinsky (1894) mentions and illustrates such a house (pages 141 et seq.). Fülleborn (1906) mentions and illustrates several houses (Text Volume pages 376 et seq., and Atlas, plates 64-67). The inner surface of the walls of the house was decorated with patterns impressed into the mud layer which covers the bamboo poles. The three stones that form the hearth are shown, and also the bed behind [352]
a low permanent partition wall. These were exceptionally fine houses with beautiful, decorated and painted doors. The entrance had relief ornaments, often of coloured clay. Fülleborn notes that the mud houses are the dwellings of married people.

There is no doubt that the round house is the original type of dwelling. In 178
1955, I saw no round houses like the ones described by the above scholars, but I 342
know that formerly they were often seen, at least as late as 1932. Professor Monica Wilson of Cape Town has told me that she saw them everywhere in 1932, but that during a visit to the district in 1955 she found only one single house of this type, in the village of Masuko.

At the time of my visit, round houses could be seen, but not the type having 372
walls inclining towards near the ground, and they were not by far so imposing as the houses mentioned above; and there were not many of them. I had the opportunity to make drawings of three houses, all occupied by old people.

The round house is called an *ilanga*. In one of these *ilanga* there lived an old [592]
man whose wife, Malia, lived across the courtyard in a rectangular hut of the
old Nyakyusa type (see infra). The husband's house was 6.5 metres across, and [353]
was divided in halves by a fence made from sticks. One half was where the man
lived; it had one bed for him, and one for his grandchildren, who would come to [352]
visit him, now and then. Near the wall were two iron chests; also, a board had
been hung at the wall as a rest for the chickens. A hen's nest, a small wicker [231]
basket, was placed about 3 ft. above the floor in the fork of a four or five-pronged stick. These hen's nests are seen in all houses. The ceiling was supported by seven upright posts, seemingly placed entirely at random. The under side of the roof was strengthened by eight circular-running fractions of bamboo. In the centre, a heavy log (not bamboo) reached up to the pointed top of the roof.

The other half of the house was reserved for the cattle, three cows and two [231]
calves; there were five posts to which the cattle were tied at night.

The house had an outer door at each end, but there was no passage from the man's half to that of the cattle.

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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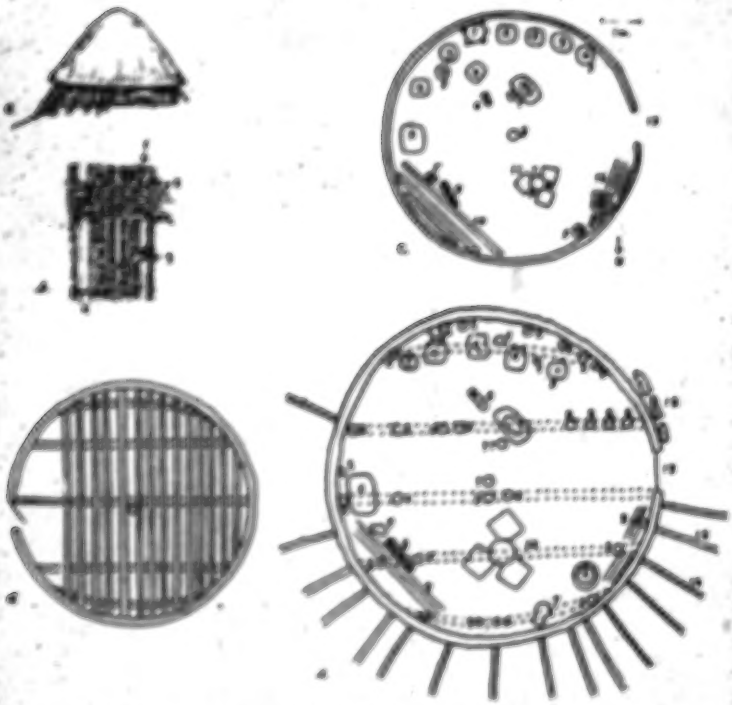

Iringa. Mdidai's house at Ilole near the Rungwe mission station.

a. Elevation showing buttressing posts; to the right of the door is material for thatching.—b. Detail of wall. 1, cow's horn; 2, bark fibre for winding round poles; 3, notch made in bamboo pole that was crooked; 4, bamboo.—c. Plan of house showing furnishings and utensils on the floor, but not the sticks that were lying everywhere (see plan e). 1, hen's nest; 2, basket; 3, jar; 4, newly made basket; 5, calabash; 6, broom; 7, mill-stone and grinder; 8, centre post (here were a couple of bananas for food); 9, sleeping mat; 10, small under-ceiling from sticks tied together, for small things; 11, hearth; 12, heap of mdzio, a kind of grass which looks much like thin bamboo.—d. Construction of ceiling level showing centre post, beams, and joists on which the sticks are placed; the centre post reaches right up to the top of the roof.—e. Plan of house showing beams of the ceiling (dotted lines, cf. d). 1, centre post; 2, other beam-carrying posts; 3, hen's nest; 4, bamboo; 5, calabash; 6, broom; 7, calabash; 8, sleeping mat; 9, small under-ceiling, repository for small things; 10, hearth from three stones; 11, mill-stone and small grinder; 12, thatching material; 13, door; 14, outside buttresses.

342 The round house was standing on somewhat higher ground than the surrounding houses; half the house was buttressed by wooden posts, possibly because the ground was a bit lower there. The walls were from bamboo poles,

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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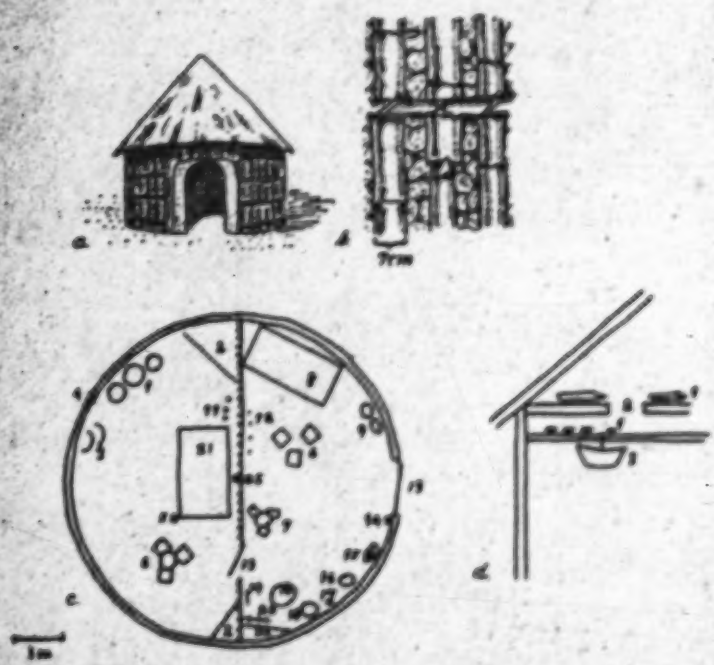

Ilanga. Tufwene's house at Rungwe, Sept. 1955.

a. Elevation, showing doorway with walls drawn too thick; the door itself has been left out.—b. Outside detail of wall showing split cross-bamboos; red clay cobs between poles.—c. Plan. 1, jars; 2, shelves; 3, utensils etc. (an utensil is a flat basket used as a plate); 4, small window; 5, centre post; 6, hearth; 7, water jar; 8, spare bed; 9, banana fibres; 10, hen's nest; 11, sticks; 12, sticks for kitchen utensils; 13, door; 14, post for locking device; 15, stone grinding trough; 16, basket with bananas; 17, pestle; 18, *ilima*; 19, *ulyanga*, mat for collecting flour from grinding stone; 20, bamboo ladder; 21, bed of the woman; 22, roast.—d. Cross-section of bamboo ceiling, with firewood for drying, and a fire basket below.

connected near the ground with tree fern stems which easily fitted into the hollow of the bamboo. Between these tree fern stems, the liquid manure from the cow-house could escape—much to the benefit of the nearby bananas.

The other *ilanga* belonged to the old widow, Tufwene. She lived alone in her house. The walls were bamboo, up to 7 cm in diameter. From the inside, the space between the poles had been filled with 3–5 cm large cobs of red clay. Round the outside were four horizontal bands of split bamboo.

This house, too, was 6.5 metres in diameter, and it was divided into two equal [353]

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 353 parts. The partition wall was bamboo and mud. A doorway gave on to the inner part, where Tufwene had her bed.

354 There were two hearths, one in each room. The front one was not used. In the outer room was a bed for guests—a common feature of all houses. Tufwene was thought to be well off, and she had plenty of carrying rings, used by the 482 women when they carry loads, often very heavy, on their heads. The inner room was used for stores, including a number of earthen jars. She had three very fine, 352 low stools. I saw them outside in the sun, but their usual place was no doubt in the outer room, which had the character of a workroom. Here were the large 412 wooden mortar and its long pestle; also the grinding stone and in a corner the small mat, the ulyanya, which is used to take up the newly ground flour. There 417 was also the ladder, used for fetching down firewood from the loft; you could see 415 the hen's nest, and the large water jar with its pointed bottom placed on three stones.

415 The third *ximpa* belonged to an eighty-year-old woman whose husband had [769] died. She told me how every day she would fill a fine, decorated bamboo mug [53] with milk for him! These mugs, seen in all the houses, mostly have geometrical

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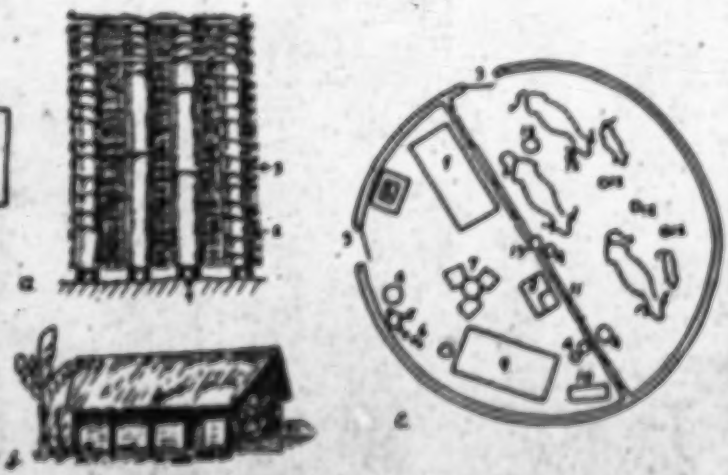

Houses belonging to Mulla Ulwayokaya and her husband.

a. Detail of *ximpa*, outer wall. 1, two hen nests joined to bamboo pole—note apertures for liquid manure; 2, bamboo pole with plant fibre windings; 3, split bamboo.—b, Mulla's *ximpa*.—c. Plan of *ximpa*. 1, bed of the sons; 2, iron chairs for guests; 3, door; 4, posts supporting ceiling; 5, hen's nest; 6, hens and pestle for the outer mortar; 7, hearth; 8, chairs; 9, bed of the grandchildren; 10, cover from hollowed out trunk; 11, hen partitions; 12, posts for tying cattle; 13, erosion gash in top of mud.

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

patterns burned into the bamboo; they are hung upside down so the dust will not settle in them. The *bonjom* is the natural partition of the bamboo cane. 415 531

The house was standing on high, slightly slanting ground, and like the first mentioned house it was buttressed by a great number of thick branches. Incidentally, it seemed to be very old and rickety. Inside, there were a great many posts supporting the horizontal bamboo ceiling and the stores of firewood. All posts were bifurcated and held the beams solidly in place. The diameter of the house was the usual 6.5 metres, but in this case there was no inner partition. As this woman was very poor, she had no bed, but slept on a mat on the floor. Only very rarely is there no bed in the houses; I remember having seen this only three times. 342 [352 556]

The hearth was the usual type: three decorated square stones, rising to a height of 30 cm above the floor, but being sunk 30 cm into the ground. Here they were positioned on one side, to ensure that the centre post would not catch fire, and to make for easy escape of the smoke through the doorway. None of the houses have other means of smoke outlet. 354.

Alongside the wall were calabashes, jars, and baskets; material for the baskets; and a little away from the wall, the large mill-stone and its appurtenant smaller grinding stone. A hen's nest was not missing either. Along one side was fitted a small under-ceiling for the storage of small things. Two or three bananas, meant to be her next meal, were lying on the floor near one of the posts. From the left she reached down a calibbin in which she had been carrying her child. Its inside was of a reddish colour. 352 [234] [482 237]

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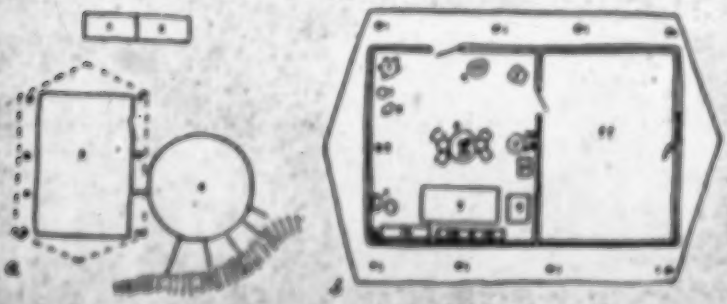

a. Site plan of Mdoka Ulungwakaya's houses. 1, hen-coop; 2, drying-racks for crops; 3, Mdoka's siblings with roof supports along sides; 4, *bingo* belonging to Mdoka's husband, with hen-coop at low ground.—b. Plan of Mdoka's siblings (barred windows in back room). 1, hen's nest; 2, *ibinda* (shelf); 3, posts (these going up to ridge of roof are filled in); 4, large basket; 5, basket; 6, clay base round main posts; 7, Mdoka's bed; 8, chest; 9, wooden chest; 10, table; 11, back room, having bamboo ceiling carried by bamboo cross beam (fourteen posts marked 3); the room is used for storing clothes, etc.; 12, shelves.

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 Another old woman lived in a neighbouring *ninga* close by—if possible even more sparsely furnished than the last mentioned.

Common features of the round houses were: their size, the wooden centre-post, the ceiling covering the greater part of the room, the supporting posts for the beams that carry the bamboo joists and the ceiling proper; the building materials bamboo and mud; and the positioning of the hearth slightly off centre.

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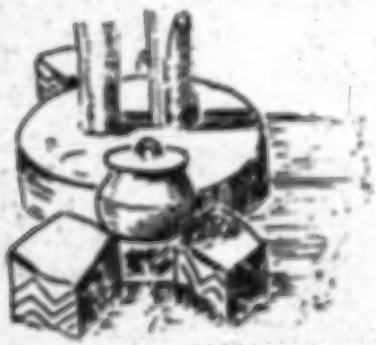


The two hearths of Mpila's house. A clay base surrounds the twin posts, then arcs to forward them. Two hearthstones at either side form the hearths, the clay base acting as the third 'stone'.

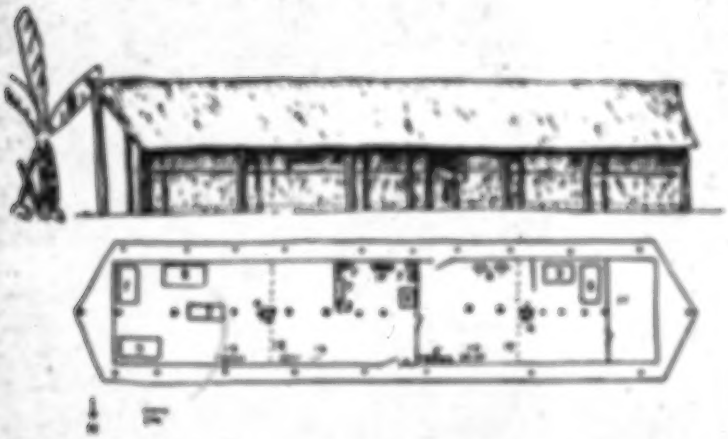
178 The differences between this *ninga* and the original round-type house are: 342 the angle of the wall, here vertical (as opposed to the inclination of the wall of the original house); the entrance (here without ornaments); the door itself also without ornaments; and further the fact that the clay cube placed between the bamboo poles were here not the shape but only the size of rolls. The pictures presented by Fülleborn clearly show the carefully formed clay balls in the wall.

[531] As distinct from the old-type house, this new type of house has no decorations on the inside of the wall, but in some instances decorations are found on the floor.

342 *Another type of house*, again, was rectangular, often very long, with a ridge-beam roof. In most cases, these houses were bottomed along both sides, and were then provided with what you might call two verandahs. Sometimes also the gables of the houses had bottomers. The roof projected over the gables, most near the ridge. The roof sagged in the middle, a fact that was already observed by the scholars mentioned. This may be because the ridge-beam is not dry but freshly cut, where it is mounted in its place. During the subsequent drying process under load it will then be brought to sag—as we know from other types of houses.

This house is called an *ikhaga* and is known to be typical of the Banyakyusa since olden times. Literally, *ikhaga* means stable or cowhouse, thus presumably indicating its original purpose. There is a full description of this house in Fülle-

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 F917 Ngonde F917 Nyakyusa



An dikaya in the village of Kiwandela, the district of Rungwe, belonging to a man with two wives. The rooms have bamboo ceilings from dotted line to either gable. Posts reaching to ridge of roof are filled in. 1, husband's bed; 2, wife's bed; 3, child's bed; 4, hearth; 5, bow' rests; 6, water jar; 7, roost; 8, ladder; 9, table; 10, stools; 11, store-room; 12, dotted lines show limitation of ceiling; 13, small objects; 14, working material; 15, sleeping mat.

horn. On page 353, he reports how the boys, when 7 or 10 years old, will leave their parents' house to live in long, rectangular cowhouse-like houses big or small, in a special youngsters' quarter at the far end of the village. On page 358 he writes: In many cases you do not know for certain whether you are dealing with a youngsters' house or a cowhouse—for the cattle may well be kept in these houses—or the herdsmen may sleep in the cowhouses. However, this mostly holds true of the low-lying Kondé country, while on the other hand, in the high country, the cattle is usually kept in the dwelling houses. On pages 371 and 372, he relates how the cattle is tied up to posts at night, and he shows a picture of a cowhouse.

He also refers (on page 376) to the use of the rectangular house for married men besides the boys. The difference is seen in the fact that these houses are not roughcast with mud, as this work is the province of women. Finally, he reports that, during the last few years of his stay in the Kondé country, he saw Kondé houses being built under increasing influence of the coastal culture, in imitation of the Swahili houses. They were roughcast with mud inside and out, and had a verandah supported by posts.

In 1955, many dokaya could be seen. Some were for the cattle, but most were dwelling houses for married people. (Boys aged 7-10 and upwards until the marriageable age lived in verandahs: boys' houses, the material of which was not bamboo, but a thinner grass, resembling bamboo very much. These houses stood

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 solitary or in a row some distance from the other houses of the village. They were never roughcast with mud).

Nearly all the *ilabaga* had a post-supported verandah. I measured up and drew sketches of two houses of this type, one belonging to the above-mentioned woman called Malia, whose husband lived next door in an *isinga*. She was a Christian—actually a church-elder. On the outside of her bamboo-framed, mud-
342 roughcast wall, she had drawn a church in yellow, red, and black colours, and
532 below she had written the word *Isinia* (church). Apart from a house near Lake Nyasa, of which I took a photograph and which had very modernistic and drastic drawings on its outside wall (crocodiles, a man and his bicycle, a man with his firearm), it is the only instance in which I saw any kind of coloured decoration on a house. Besides impressed patterns in clay on hearth and floor, I saw no decorations on the inside or outside of houses, except fine patterns in the outside wickerwork of the wall.

342 In this house, approximately 8 metres long, there were two vertical supporting posts, reaching to the very ridge of the roof, where presumably they were joined to the ridge beam. However, the beam could not be seen.

354 The hearth was peculiar in that it consisted of two pairs of hearthstones near a clay base that surrounded a supporting post and a shorter post. Thus two hearths were available, at the same time serving as fire-proofing to the posts. Though Malia was a single woman, the house had two hearths. You might think that she had seen a stove and had found that two cooking places would be useful. I saw this arrangement in one more place, in the house of a widow, who—by the way—was also a Christian.

353 A space nearly half the size of the house was partitioned off, the half-wall having a doorway. This room was for stores only, clothes etc.; it had a barred window. Besides the hearths, the living-room had hen's nests, stools, baskets,
[362] Malia's bed (2 m by 1 m), table, wooden shelves, boxes, and a chest. These last-
[197] mentioned objects she had had no difficulty in obtaining from the neighbouring joiner's workshop belonging to the mission.

342 The other *ilabaga* is from quite a different district, that of Rutenganio. It was a very long house, as often seen in this locality, 26 metres long. I was told that

The type of house called *ilaba*, or *isinia*.

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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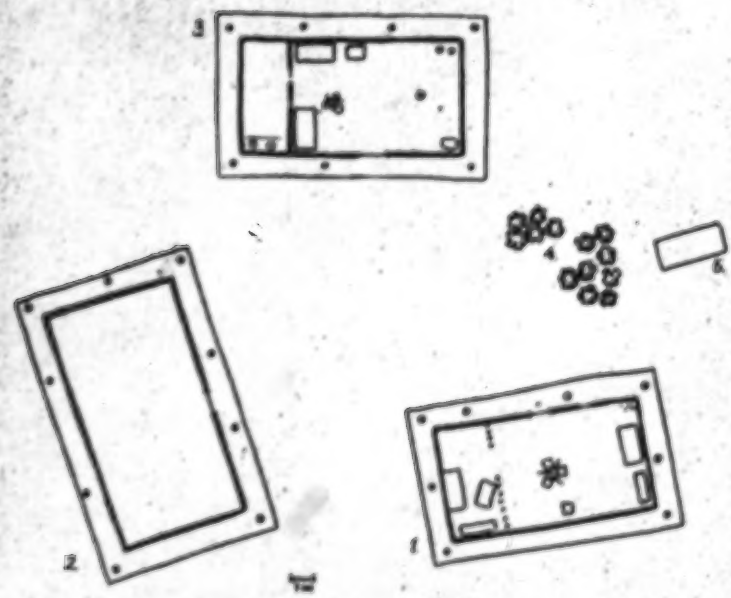

Three houses belonging to one family, situated round a common courtyard; the doors open on to the yard. The village street is along the back of the house at top. 1, Isilina's house; 2, Baba's house; 3, Idina's house; 4, banana plants; 5, hen-coop.

houses existed which were 60 metres in length. It had the same width as Malia's house, approximately 5 metres. The roof was supported by posts along the sides and at the gables.

Two women lived in this house, both married to the same man. Consequently, there were two hearths, the stones of which were cylindrical-conical, broadening slightly at the top. All were decorated. Each woman had her part of the house, both with an outer door, and further there was a door, slightly narrower, between the two parts, and a fourth door to a store-room. No less than twelve posts supported the roof, all reaching to the ridge. The two parts were a bit unequal in size; nearly half of each had the well-known loft for firewood, etc. One part contained beds for the woman and her husband (one bed had 100 straw mats). The children had two beds. The husband had still another house, a short distance away at the foot of a hill, they said. I did not see it. The other woman's room held her bed and a cot.

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The hearths of both rooms were placed in the centres, between two upright posts. Utensils and furnishings did not differ much from the usual: hen's nests,

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12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17 Nyakyusa

352 415 two water jars, baskets, stools, a ladder leading to the loft, and a table. The rooms were large and spacious, 5 m by 14 m, and in two places low partitions were 353 used to effect a sub-division of the rooms. One may well wonder at the great length of these houses, but probably it is quite true what is said, that, when—in 342 177 1891—the Germans took charge of the region and imposed a tax on houses, the Nyakyusa men made their women move in under their own roofs—only at the same time extending the houses, using the technique they already knew from the cowhouses.

648 178 342 Fülleborn reports on this payment of taxes, and finds it reasonable enough, because, he says, "It fosters in the people an understanding of work and discipline," and of the house tax he says, "It works to abolish polygamy, since every woman, following the traditions of her country, has her own house, for which her husband must pay the tax."

But the Banyakyusa seems to have adapted themselves to the new law and have moved their wives to the very long houses, thus escaping part of the taxes...

342 The third type of house was a rectangular house with a hipped roof. This type is called *ikema*, which means tent. It was also called *isiwe*, the meaning of which I have not been able to ascertain; maybe it means chicken-breast, to which it bears much likeness.

This is the modern house-type to which Fülleborn may be referring when he talks about rectangular houses, "... the very rare instances when a hipped roof is seen ..." (page 379).

342 177 According to statements made by people who have lived in the district for a third of a century, this type of house is thought to have come from the south some 90 years ago. I have not visited the Ngonde who live farther south, but Sir Harry Johnston (1897) depicts a group of people called "Wankonde (North Nyasa)" in front of a house which looks very much like the modern *ikema* of the Banyakyusa. It seems therefore reasonable to assume that the roof-construction design of the Ngonde has now reached the district of the Banyakyusa. Johnston also informs us that the rectangular type is not actually the original type in East Africa, but that it was probably introduced by the Arabs.

342 This *ikema* or *isiwe* is shorter than the long *ikibaga*; seldom more than 11 metres in length. But its interior design does not differ. For instance, this holds true of the placing of the hearth, of the equal distance between posts supporting the roof, of the bamboo ceiling covering about half the room, of half-partitions from bamboo and in some cases mud, of store-rooms in the far end of the house, accessible through an inner door.

[592] In an *ikema* I have never seen more than one hearth, which means that the house is inhabited by one woman. A house in the village of Kihota presented an example of the peculiar tradition of the peoples of the Highlands, viz. the tying of the cattle to posts in the dwelling-houses. My drawings are all from the Highlands, where, in the *ikibaga*, as also noted by Fülleborn, the same tradition is

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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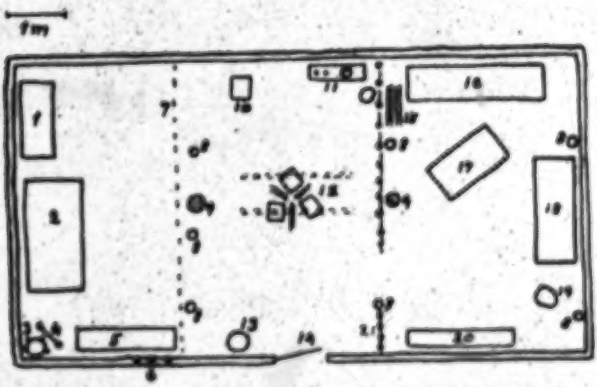

Iwlina's house. 1, cupboard with shelves; 2, children's bed; 3, hen's nest; 4, ladder; 5, roost; 6, barred window; 7, from dotted line towards the right is the bamboo ceiling; 8, from here issue 5 horizontal bamboo sticks on which the bamboo ceiling is supported; 9, Posts supporting roof; 10, chair; 11, low shelf with two bamboo jars and a water jar; 12, hearth with three hearthstones and sticks under ceiling for carrying the fine basket, and corn-cobs hung up to dry, etc.; 13, beer jar; 14, door; 15, mats behind the low partition; 16, shelf for domestic utensils; 17, child's bed; 18, Iwlina's bed; 19, baskets; 20, domestic utensils; 21, low partition between rooms.

found. In the front part of the Kikola house, serving as an entrance room, were four posts called *ifilingi*, to which two cows were tied at night.

This part, which we may call the cowhouse, also housed hen's nests, the roost, [231]
and the mortar to be used for maize, etc.

The hearth, comprising of one square and two round hearthstones, was placed [354]
in the centre of the living-room part. Here were also water jars and the woman's bed. This means that, even if this type of house had a roof of a different shape and was always provided with a verandah with posts supporting its roof, the interior was really designed on the same lines as the short *ifilengi*, but it was [542]
meant to house only one woman, or one man, as we shall see below.

We may imagine that one of the reasons why the type of roof was changed, 342
was the weakness of the pointed roof of the *ifilengi*. It could often be seen to have 178
a tendency to fall in, and had to be supported by a post. Even in Fülleborn's Illustrations, e.g. plate 64 c, a kind of reinforcement can be seen at the edge of the roof. No doubt the roof of the *ilowa* does not suffer to the same extent from this flaw.

New houses were being built to this design, and I suppose that a little more 342
than half the number of the houses were of the *ifilengi* type, and a little than half the *ilowa*.

In the village of Ilolo, I surveyed three houses belonging to one family, a [361]

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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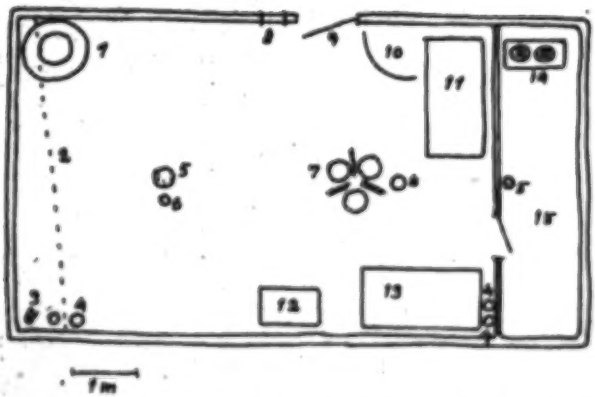


Idina's house. 1, basket; 2, clothes-line; 3, broom; 4, jars, in the back room on low shelf; 5, posts supporting roof; 6, small dimension bamboo poles, supports for the ceiling; 7, hearth with three round hearthstones; 8, shuttered opening through which the bolt may be reached; 9, door; 10, cassava for food; 11, spare bed; 12, table; 13, Idina's bed; 14, shelf for jars; 15, store-room behind mud wall with door.

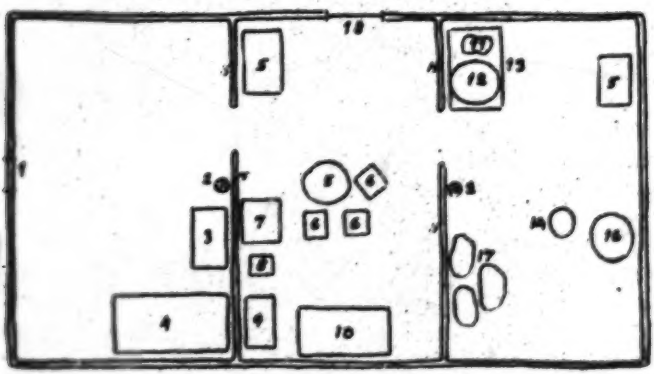
[361] man and his two wives. The houses were grouped round a common courtyard, the doors giving upon this space and not on the nearby village thoroughfare.

The three houses bore the names of Iseliha's house, Idina's house, and Baba's house. The elder wife, Iselina, had several minor children, who slept either near
352 her own bed or in the living area. She owned furnishings as modern as a chair
177 and a cupboard with shelves, besides the usual objects in these houses, baskets, bamboo mugs, hen's nest and roost, ladder and water jars. She also had an earthen-
[415 ware beer jar which, one day when I called on her, was standing on the fire,
293] nearly making the froth boil over. She was preparing beer for her husband's friends, who had just dropped in.

352 The new wife, Idina, had a store-room in her house, and there was also a large heap of cassava, meant for food. As often seen in these houses, she had also
[353 a guest bed. She had a number of jars and baskets, but no hen's nest. Straight
262] across the room she had suspended a line on which she put her clothes. Such an
[246] arrangement was often used, especially by the bachelors; they had a line for their shirts. Clothes-hangers were not in use. You just threw your clothes across the line. A wardrobe was never seen.

342 The interior of Baba's house presented a peculiar picture. It was divided into
352 three rooms, a living-area in the middle; at one side the bed-room, at the other a store-room. The bed-room had only one bed and a wooden chest. There was no hearth in the living-room—for the husband had his meals prepared by one of his wives. But there was a true accumulation of tables, chairs, suitcases, and a

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa



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1 m

Baba's house. 1, barred window; 2, posts supporting roof; 3, wooden chest; 4, Baba's bed; 5, table; 6, chair; 7, cupboard; 8, chair with three suitcases; 9, suitcase; 10, table with bookshelf; 11, bag; 12, large basket, *ikitoke*; 13, low stand for 11 and 12; 14, millet jars; 15, low partitions; 16, *ikitoke* in which the millet is washed; 17, rice in bags.

cupboard. This seemed very strange and a bit disorderly. On a chair were three suitcases on top of each other.

It was interesting to see, in the store-room, the very crops that belong to the man, viz. rice and millet, the most valuable produce. The rice was in bags, and it is quite probable that this man had bought it from the districts near Lake Nyasa, where it thrives well. On higher ground, rice cannot be cultivated. 251 [438 443]

The millet was contained in a basket, 1 m in height, 55 cm broad at the bottom, and narrower, 35 cm, at the top. [415]

Further, there was a large, beautiful earthenware jar, which he had bought. This was intended for the millet. And there was also a cylindrical container for the washing of the millet when it was brought home from the field. This vessel was 55 cm in height and 85 cm across.

All three houses had a small window with bars or shutters. 342

The inside of the houses lay in semi-darkness, as the only light is admitted through the doorway, and in some cases through the diminutive barred window. [354] Nevertheless, the interiors give a nice impression, because of their tidiness, height, size, and cleanness. And how cosy they are, when seen at night; the door is closed, you gather round the fire and delight in perfectly cooked rice, which is the favourite dish at this principal meal of the day. [262]

Johnston says (1897, page 433) that the greater number of the houses are circular in their plan and very much like bee-hives in shape; their walls are wickerwork filled with mud cobs, and they have thatched roofs. He also reports [71]

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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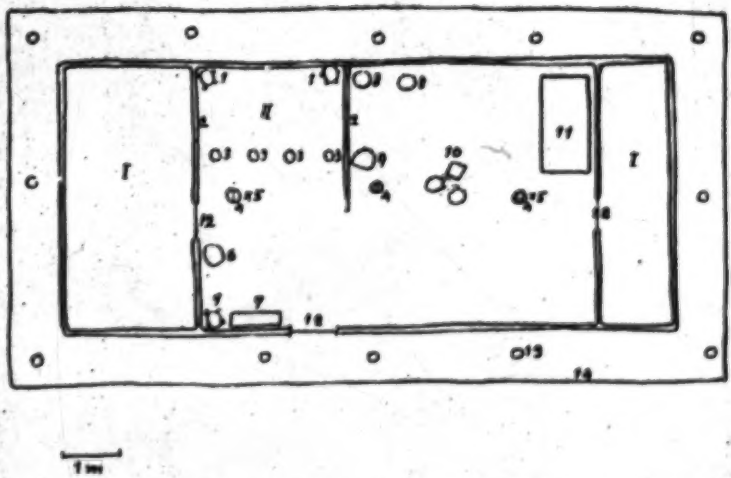

An *ikma* from the village of Kikota. I, store-rooms at either end of the house; II, corner for cattle.—1, hen's nest; 2, low partitions from bamboo; 3, posts for tying two head of cattle; 4, Three posts supporting roof; 5, here bamboo cups, calabashes, etc. were hanging on the posts; 6, wooden mortar for maize; 7, roost from bamboo tied together; 8, water jar; 9, basket; 10, hearth consisting of two round and one square hearthstone; 11, bed of the woman; 12, door; 13, supports for the roof; 14, eaves.—Outer doors from wooden boards; store-room doors from bamboo; bamboo ceiling covers area from half-way partition to the right of cow's corner on to store-room inner wall to the right.

[171] that such houses are found in Africa (a) south of the Zambezi, (b) in all of British Central Africa, (c) in all of East Africa including the Egyptian Sudan,—but not in localities where the Arab influence has introduced the oblong, rectangular building.

342 171 Now, if we look upon the eastern territories of Africa only—what great changes have taken place there since Johnston's day? The round house is being ousted under foreign influence—Arab as well as European.

If you ask a native of Africa, why he changes the plan of his house, his answer will be, that the rectangular house is easier to sub-divide and better in use—which is most probably true. When first the technique has been adopted, people in other parts of Africa will no doubt abandon the circular design and take up the rectangular.

171 342 But nevertheless, the variations in types of but in Tanganyika are truly amazing; they range from e.g. the fine *ikma* of the Banyakyusa,—to the rectangular *ilunda* with nearly flat, clay roof of the Vakimbu,—to the round bee-hives of the Batutsi, which may be built in no time on a frame-work of branches and covered with

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

grass. This last-mentioned type is used by the Batutsi of western Tanganyika as temporary shelter on their perennial wanderings.

Why, then, do not all tribes build to the same design? There are 120 different tribes in Tanganyika alone, and were you to put the question to a member of one of these tribes, he would simply say, "We follow our custom!"—and this is actually the answer. It takes time to be influenced; people will stick to their old customs,—a fact which, as seen from an ethnographical point of view, is really an advantage. Changes should not come too quickly.

At about the time when Johnston wrote the above lines, the history of Johannesburg as a town had just begun. Now, that city is all grey stone colossi and streets criss-crossing at right angles. Even if the gold was behind all that, you never know when a similar fate may befall some part of Tanganyika. What cannot be called forth by the diamonds to the south of Lake Victoria?

Were the African village to disappear entirely,—it would truly be missed. It is interesting to follow the development which is under way in Tanganyika, and which cannot be halted,—to see how it will influence the charming villages and their inhabitants.

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[Title Page]

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951.FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P.53]

Some Field Notes on the Nyakyusa

(Tukuyu District, Tanganyika Territory)

By F. Rudolf Lehmann

The following field notes on the Nyakyusa (Wanyakyusa, Wanyakjusa) represent only a small part of what I wrote down during my residence of about three months among this people in the summer of 1938. The present selected notes refer only to my sojourn in the village of Katumba near Masoko, with an ethnic group of the Nyakyusa who call themselves „Wa-Masoko"[1]. Notwithstanding the short time I had

[1] Cf. R. Thurnwald, p. 48; G. Wilson, Land Rights, p. 38.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

122 for research, I am very grateful for a grant from the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures[3] which enabled me to start my ethnographical field work among these people. I wish also to express my thanks to the Government of the Tanganyika Territory, the Provincial Commissioner of Mbeya, and the District Officer of Tukuyu for all the courtesy I received during my work.

114 123 2. My first step, after my arrival at Katumba near Masoko, was to pay a visit to Mwamasika, the chief (*omalafyale*)[4] of the village and

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The chief Mwamasika with his councillors.

of those adjacent. On the open place near his hut he welcomed me in company with his *amafumu*[4], the influential men of his villages. My attendant, the interpreter and I were asked to sit on chairs, while the *amafumu* sat down on mats or on large banana leaves on the ground; but the chief remained standing. I explained the aim of my visit, and that I would be very glad of his support. The chief promised it, and he kept his promise excellently. On other occasions the chief also sat on a chair. In the afternoon of the first day I sent to the chief some presents. The following he made a return in form of food. This exchange of gifts is named ukubonola, handing over the gift. [431]

123 757 2. In a small village belonging to Mwamasika's chieftainship was the residence of a medicine man, to whom I paid a visit as soon as I could. When I met him he was being consulted by a sick male person who had a stomach complaint (*ugufu*). After some negotiations he allowed me

[3] Cf. Africa. Vol. XI, p. 497.
[4] Cf. Wilson, Introduction, p. 282; Land Rights, p. 44.
[4] Cf. Wilson, Land Rights, p. 13. W. translates *ulifumu* (*ulifumu*) by „great commoner", Introduction, p. 276, 282.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951.FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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The chief Wwamsika and his family after he had received from me my old "Klepper-Mantle" as a gift.

to enter his hut, where the patient was sitting on the ground with his back to the wall. To heal his patient of the pains, the doctor made some small incisions in his skin near the stomach by means of a triangular-shaped knife, and then he rubbed in the incisions a thick black juice taken from the horn of an antelope (the horn was called *kapembe*, pl. *ulupembe*). The juice was prepared from different roots and herbs as a medicine against stomach pains. In the horn were certain divisions for other medicines, and in each of these divisions was stuck a small (black) stick for removing the specific medicine from it. After this treatment the patient declared that he felt severe pains in the region of his stomach. I asked the doctor for some of his medicines, but he was unwilling to give me anything. Then I promised to bring him next day some European medicines hoping to get in exchange some of his medicaments. 123 757 [415 237]

The following morning I returned. On this occasion I did acquire some of his medicines in exchange for various European tablets, especially as he was most fascinated with the kallumpermanganatum,[1] of which I gave him a few crystals, explaining to him the use and the dose; when I dissolved some of the crystals before his eyes, it probably seemed to him to be a mystical process. Among the medicines I received then from him was a medicine for luck, called *kwerusuko*. Some of the inhabitants of the village, who had meantime appeared, were very unwilling for him to give me this medicine, and maintained that I would take with me all the luck of the village. [777]

On this second visit to the medicine-man, there was again a patient present, and I wanted to take a photograph of the scene because it was 123 755

[1] [...a, KMNO4. — Ayolyif]

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

123 755 in the open air and not within the hut as on the previous day. But the patient was unwilling to be photographed. He feared, he said, that by the photo I would take „his inner man together with the medicine just accepted" with me to Europe. I tried to calm him, showing him some pictures of my family, and I also let him look through the view-finder of my camera, so that at last he was satisfied. Then, after feeling more confident, he told me the cause of the pains which led him to come to the doctor. He thought he had been bewitched, as he had met a descendant of a man whom some long time ago had killed one of his own ancestors.

[142 291 516 756]

The Medicine Man and one of his patients. The medicines are spread out on the mat.

756 Then the medicine man also explained to me how he had come to the position of a doctor. He did not inherit his position from his father, but he was instructed in medical practice by another doctor. The circumstances which had led him to this position were the following.

[833] Before his initiation to the medical practice he had entered into forbidden relations with the wife of another man. To protect himself [784] from the magical revenge of the deceived husband and his kin he went to a medicine-man to acquire antidotes against the expected bewitching. He had to pay two cows for this medicine, and as he had paid them, the medicine-man offered to initiate him into the secrets of the practice of a medicine-man. The character of the client, probably, had won his confidence, and indeed, the medicine-man whose guest I now was, made a profound impression on me.

754 He also described some forms of bewitching[3] for vengeance. For this purpose the avenger poisons a fowl in his own village uttering curses

[3] Cf. G. Wilson, Introduction, p. 277 (belief in witchcraft).

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

against the wrong-doer. It is supposed that after this procedure sickness or even death may come to that person. Another method consists of laying a bewitched object on the path usually used by the offender; with the same result. Such bewitching is practised, for instance, when a quarrel has broken out between relatives. With the Nyakyusa any quarrelling with kinsmen is considered a very serious crime, as such a conduct is apt, in their estimation, to destroy the highly-valued family harmony.

3. Another day a ceremony (*ubungaga*)[8] to end mourning was held at Katumba. Some time before an older child had died, and now they were gathered to take leave of the dead[9].

At some distance from the hut, on the open space before it, a square represented the grave, in which the blossom of a banana[10] was interred, representing the dead. The mourners knelt at this grave and touched it with their elbows, knees and foreheads[9]. Each of the chief mourners had to do this, according to the belief of the Natives, lest he should fall into madness.

The next act was performed by the *uwagaga*[11], the leading person of the ceremony, one in full knowledge of the rites. Immediately before the door of the hut of the mourning parents, the *uwagaga* threw the collections of corn, brought by the participants in small baskets in honour of the dead, together into a big basket, and uttered the names of the contributors addressing the dead. The other participants repeated these names.

Then the mourners went into the hut; but, after some moments, they reappeared one by one and each one, as he left the door in a crouching position, was softly struck on his neck by the *uwagaga* with a piece of the trunk of a banana plant. It was explained to me that this ceremony would induce new strength to the mourners, who were weakened by the death of their relative.

The portion of the ceremony which followed, consisted in the forming of a line by the mourners between the hut and the grave. The persons now stood straddle-legged on leaves of banana, the *uwagaga* at the

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[8] Cf. Wilson, *Conventions of Burial*, p. 8, n. 4: *uwagaga*.

[9] Wilson has described burials (*ifwa*, sg.) of adult persons; nevertheless, I think, my description will be of some value.

[10] Cf. my Chaga Notes, Semitic Studies, XV, p. 101.

[11] Cf. *Pilitsbwe*, p. 128.

[12] Cf. *Machemisi*, p. 200; pl. *kawaga*, p. 10; Wilson, Introduction, p. 207, *uwagaga* (hereditary priests).

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngende FN17
Nyakyusa

765 head of the line. She was also the first who crawled between the legs
481 of the others, facing the hut, and followed by the others. This ceremony has the same purpose as the preceding act.

[291]

Scene from the ubunyago-ceremony: The mourners returning from the grave to the house crawling through the legs of the others.

765 Then the hair of the mourners was shaved (ukumuta *intili*, to shave
[BCQ the hair, profane and ritual) and, I was told that a bath would be
595] the last act ending mourning.

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Scene from the ubunyago-ceremony: The shaving of the hair.

765 In the afternoon I sent the father of the dead child a cotton kerchief
123 as a gift, and when I met him later on, he told me I had participated
432 in the burial of his child by that gift, saying, "You have buried my child with me".

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

4. A visit to the chief's father's grave was paid in company with 765
he chief and some of his *amafumu*. It was situated in a banana grove
ilisyeto[11]) not very remote from the chief's hut. The grave of the
resent chief's father was on the ground-floor, about one hundred paces [764]
rom its edge and was characterised by a small sixedged basalt block
bout half a metre in height[12] and about forty centimetres in breadth.
n *indola*-plant was also standing on the grave about one metre from
he basalt block.

On this occasion the chief also told me of the special cases for which 769
acrifices are offered in this grove. These are performed only in cases 782
f very serious accidents, sickness or famine which may overcome the
hieftainship. In such cases a black cow is slaughtered after sunset at
he edge of the grove. In the presence of the chief some pieces of meat
f the slaughtered beast, together with some bananas, are laid down
t the grave. The chief adds a prayer to his ancestors at some distance
rom the grave, referring to the evil by which the chieftainship or some
pecial village of it has been afflicted. He enumerates all the names
f his ancestors and asks them for their help.

The remaining pieces of the meat and other bananas are left in the
grove during the night. When the next day dawns, the *amafumu* return
nd some *abanyago* divide the meat and eat it together. On this
ccasion the chief orders the removal of all remains of ashes from
he huts. The ashes are thrown down in such unclean places as where [766]
eprous persons had been buried. After this has been done, the chief
n conjunction with an *uwanyago*[13] produces a new fire for the huts by [372]
wirling, and all other fires of the village, or villages, must be kindled
new from this "need-fire".

5. The reason for visiting an *uwdaguzi* (diviner)[14] who dwelled in 787
bungu an older age-set village[15] which seemed to the visitor to be
more ancient part of Katumba, was caused by the sickness of the
hief's sister. In accordance with the custom of the Nyakyusa in brin- [164
ing women back to their father's village if they are very sick, the 484]

[11] Cf. Johnston, *Ilisiete*, pl. *amasiete*, p. 430; Mackenzie, *Ilisyeto*, burial place, p. 209; *masyeto*, graves of the dead chiefs, p. 121; Wilson, Introduction, p. 287, *ilisyeto*, sacred grove; *Meronship*, p. 113.

[12] Cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 327.

[13] Cf. n. 5, p. 3.

[14] Cf. *Johnston*, p. 451.

[15] I proposed to call the special form of villages found within the Nyakyusa society, which are erected on the age-set principle, „age-set villages" (African Studies, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 15—16 June 1943), a terminology that does not alter G. Wilsons statements on the "Age Villages" (Introduction, p. 302 ff). [56] 621]

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 sister of the chief had also been brought back to the village of her
[164 brother. I was of the opinion that she was afflicted by a serious
784] tropical ulcer on the ankle of the left foot. The healing of these ulcers commonly takes a very long time, and as this woman had already much suffered, and as the medicine-man consulted seemed to be unable to restore her, she was brought to her brother's village, but there also she had not yet recovered. The chief had, therefore, resolved to ask the diviner, whose name was Mwaigwiaya, for the real cause of her sickness.

After he and his *amafuma* had taken their seats on mats, the chief explained to the diviner the reason of his visit. The diviner then grasped a curved piece of wood about 20 cms. in length with his right hand, after he had spat upon his hands. Then he moved the wood round his head, and finally placed it with one of its ends on the even, cleansed ground before his mat, and waited for the questions of the chief. The single questions, as for instance: "Is the sickness caused by Kyara?", or "Is the sickness caused by this or that person?", etc., were put to the diviner by Lamek Mwainyekule, the son of a chief of another chieftainship[16], now belonging to the *amafuma* of Mwamasika, as he now stayed in his village. Mwainyekule seemed to be not only

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The Séance with the diviner.

[774] the most intimate adviser of Mwamasika, but altogether the most clever man I met among this people. After each of the questions addressed to him the diviner murmured the names of the chief's

[16] A village of this name is to be found on Dr. Kieperts map of 1885, southern to the Kieyo.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

ancestors and of Kyala[17]. At the same time he moved his curved wood 787
to and fro on the ground and when he did so, it indicated a negative [776]
answer from the beings invoked. But when he was asked: "Is the guilt for the sickness to be found in the husband of the chief's sister?", he was unable to move his wood as before; he could only stamp it on the ground, and this meant an affirmative reaction of the invoked spirits. Now, therefore, the meeting had reached its aim.

I asked the diviner to tell me how he had acquired his faculty. He 791
explained that (besides the necessary inner disposition) the payment of a fee for the medical preparation was necessary in order to become a diviner[18]. This outfit consisted in a special vaccination by a learned diviner. For this purpose the neophyte was incised by his master on [304]
different spots on the upper side of the knuckles, and in these small incisions was rubbed a medical powder. By these means the initiate may be inspired by the prophesying spirits. These influences are then felt by the diviner as a power which directs the movements of his hand in the manner described.

8. Near the hut of the chief's principal wife was a "sacred" banana 824
plant, in the grove opposite to the chief's hut and in the grove with 778
the grave of the chief's father already described. At particular times, 782
when any need demands it, the chief offers a prayer in this place to 769
his ancestors[19]. The sickness of his sister, for instance, was such an occasion for him to address the ancestors. I was invited by the chief to witness this act; but I raised objections, telling him that my presence might perhaps rather cause the anger than the help of his ancestors. [23]
In reality, I did not want the chief to stage a theatrical act on my behalf. But the chief rejected my excuses and explained that he would act in the same manner as if I were not present, because he had made up his mind to this prayer. The chief was assisted during this ceremony by Mwainyekule who presented to the chief a calabash of water as he arrived at the banana plant devoted to this purpose. The chief took some mouthfuls of the water and squirted it towards the banana plant. Then he recited the names of his ancestors and begged them to help his sister.

9. During one afternoon, I was told that a ceremony to end the 881
initiation of a (betrothed) girl was going on in a family of the village.

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[17] name of the supreme spiritual being.
[18] Cf. Mackenzie, p. 156.
[19] Mackenzie refers that such a place is named "ikiyinja", "the family place oft prayer" (pp. 144, 197), but without indication of the locality, as Kavanga.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

[88] I went to the place and got permission to enter the hut in which the first part of the ceremony took place. I found there the parents of the girl, the girl sitting enveloped in clothes in one corner of the hut, and some older females, one of whom was the acting *wengaga*. Some male guests were also present[28]. As the girl had had her first catamenia the present ceremony marked at the same time the end of her preparation for marriage.

[273 278] The *wengaga* prepared a beverage of beer in which a light-brown medical powder *(imbondaenya)* was put. First the girl had to drink from it, then the parents followed. This beverage was believed to strengthen *(ukusinya)* the consumers. Then a spear was handed to the girl by her father, and the girl handed it in turn to some relatives of the bridegroom waiting near the hut. These persons had to bring the spear to the girl's bridegroom as a sign that he could now marry the girl[29], but not before he had brought a bull to the girl's father. After this the girl, now sitting in the middle of the hut, was given small gifts from the participants in the ceremony.

[582 583]

[431]

[391 392 516 968 415]

Practical instruction of premature girls in house-hold matters.

[302] Following this the whole body of the girl was anointed before the door of the hut. The *wengaga* began by anointing her legs; then the girl herself continued it. The ointment was prepared from castor oil [278] and a powder of red wood (*Kipimba*, found commonly in the environment of Lake Rukwa). At this moment a male participant in the cere- [606] mony chanced to come out of the hut, and suddenly a young woman

[28] Cf. Wilson, Introduction, p. 250; The Study of African Society, p. 11 (The Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. 3, 1938).

[29] *ukwenga*: to take (also as regards marrying); *ukwengela*: wedding.

13:Lehmann E-5 (0939) 1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

sitting there on the yard got up, as quickly as possible held her hands before her eyes and rushed off. This was because this man was her father-in-law. The strict social taboo in such circumstances is well known[*].

The next act consisted in shaving the girl's hair on her temples by the wengapo; the father was shaved by a younger brother of his in the same manner. (I cannot remember whether it was also the case with the mother of the girl.)

The old fashioned hut of the chief's wife.

Then the further ceremony took place again inside the hut. All the participants sat down on mats, and the wengapo accepted the complaints of the parents on the farmer conduct of their daughter. Sometimes the discussion between these parties, where the wengapo played the role of a mediator as is the case with the unjobi (or speaker) in the court, reached such a pitch of excitement that I thought a serious quarrel had broken out. The outcome was, perhaps, only of a conventional character; I was told, however, that in former times corporal punishment has been inflicted, if, indeed, the girl had shown misconduct in the times before.

Next, the girl was instructed by the wengapo in her duties as a wife. These instructions were of a theoretical or moral nature concerning the correct conduct of the girl towards her parents also after the company and towards her future husband. The practical part of the following instructions comes before the ceremony at the end of initiation. These practical instructions cover the preparing of food

[*] Cf. Marwick, p. 100, Harkness, p. 100 (at Kyungu?). According to Marwick the daughter-in-law has to observe this taboo also towards the brothers of her father-in-law. All these persons are called ipwanaa.

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

881 and other duties applicable to a girl after marriage. The practical
867 instruction takes place in or before a special hut in the village under
868 the leadership of the *abawpago* (*awawpago*). The girl is admonished by the *wawpago* to obey her parents without any delay, to perform the commands of her mother immediately, e. g. to clean the hut, and especially to show obedience when guests are present. Should the mother blame her daughter unjustly, she should not reply. (The girl had been blamed in the earlier discussion that she had not swept the hut when her mother required her to do it). Then her duties and
881 conduct towards her future husband were inculcated. As a wife she
867 must never accept anything from the hands of her husband without
593 kneeling and stretching out both hands, and turning away her face
562 with eyes cast down. Also as a wife she must not hold her head up

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Some of the drummers.

when she is addressed by a man. As a wife she must be anxious to prepare her husband's meal always at the right time, that means, it has to be ready when her husband returns from the field. If she sees her husband coming from the field, then she has to go to meet him, and take his hatchet from him. Should her husband scold her, she is
[356] not to reply; but she may ask her neighbours for help. It is one of her duties to take care of the regular cleaning of the hut[a]. The ashes must always be removed by her from the fireplace. If there are only a few ashes on the fireplace she must remove them with her hands[b].

[364]

[a] The place near the house where the sweepings are thrown down is called *urutaplilo*.

[b] Cf. *Mackenzie*, p. 81, who refers to such moral instructions connected with puberty customs, probably at Karonga; cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 358 (Ngonde plain).

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

After these admonitions, the mats which the girl had manufactured were inspected. During this examination it was told her that a wife should be seen in the possession of as many beautiful mats as possible, made by her for herself and for her husband. Should the girl reveal such conduct as a wife, ubuzangalafu (happiness) would be in her hut. 881 867 285

When the proper ceremony seemed to have come to an end, another discussion followed. The girl had told the uwapago, during the above mentioned admonition, that her parents also sometimes exchanged angry words. Therefore, a new discussion between the father and the mother arose, in which also the uwapago was the "speaker", but the other participants of the ceremony also shared in it, and the discussion too became at times heated. Still, after about 15 minutes, it suddenly came to an end, and the matter in dispute was declared settled. With this the whole ceremony ended. 881 578

8. One day I asked the chief for permission to visit his huts. He dwelt in a rectangular hut (ikibaga). A very beautiful ikitera (bed) was in the main room, composed of many sleeping mats (ubuleli, pl. imileli) and of big round wooden blocks (sections of a tree-trunk), one at the head and a smaller one at the foot of the bed. Each of the four fine mats which lay uppermost had a special name. All the mats rested on sticks of reed laid across beams lying on smaller poles on the floor[11]. These mats were naturally of nearly the same height as the wooden block which formed the head part of the ikitera. In some other old-fashioned and better houses in Nyakyusa villages, similar beds were to be seen, but generally the bedsteads are much more simple. 622 352 [342]

One of the most important permissions granted me by the chief was to enter the "store room", connected with his main room by a door. The objects to be seen here were the same as those to be found in other huts or store-rooms, e. g. the big ifimbe (baskets) for storing grain, up to four feet high, smeared over with cow-dung and clay, and smaller baskets for different purposes. In one corner hung different kinds of dancing fans (urukoye, sg.) made of hairs from the tails of bulls, with fine handles of horn. In the dark opposite corner of the same wall there seemed to hang a similar object, but it was wrapped in banana leaf. This was the real sign of the chief's dignity, the symbol of his authority and power, named ubuwuipala. A long discussion was needed to induce the chief to unveil it. Only by constantly consulting by glances the present uwafuwa the chief slowly unveiled it. He told us that 342 353 622 [251] [237] [778] [295]

[11] Cf. Fülleborn, p. 92.

[1] Kodokogwe I, 1

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 353 622 778 [775] [824]

he had received this object from his ancestors and it must always hang on this spot, as the ancestral spirits (*ubusyuka*)[28] themselves controlled its presence. It consisted of an *unswipura*, i. e. the tail of an ox, but the upper part of it was hollow. In this hollow part medicines (*ifingila*)[29] were kept. Yet another magical medicine, in the shape of a piece of bark of the tree called *Erythrophleum Guineense*[30] was fastened at the upper end of this sign. When my European attendant immediately said to the chief: "And from this piece you make your *mwaji*"[31], the chief exclaimed in astonishment: "*Umne wana Kyara!*" (You are sons of Kyara! i. e. You Europeans know everything.)

After this there was no more delay in revealing to us some more features of this sign of dignity. According to the belief of his fathers this object possessed a special *amaka* (power)[32], e. g. to defeat enemies, if the chief were to hold it directly against them. Also if a thief were to try to enter the room by force, by making a hole beneath the wall of this part of the hut, he would be stricken by power coming from the *ubusiya* and he would have the impression that eyes are directed against him, and so be driven away. [789]

[595] After these interesting communications I went to visit the hut of one of his wives, which still revealed the *isanga*, the old-fashioned round structure of bamboo poles diverging from their upper end and thatched with grass[33].

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9. The frequent walks in company with the chief or some of his *amafumu* gave me several opportunities for enquiries. On one occasion,

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[28] Cf. Wilson, Burial, p. 9: *usuyuka* (Sing.); *Mackenzie*, p. 191: *basyuka* (Karonga).

[29] Cf. *Mackenzie*, p. 373: (*fingira* (Karonga).

[278] [30] The pharmacological substance of the bark (Cortex Erythrophlei, „Sasso-bark") is the alcaloid Erythrophleïn which produces the same typical effects on the heart as the Digitalis-group (cf. *C. G. Sandeman*: Pfeilgiftstudien XII. Arkiv för Botanik 27 A, No. 4, Stockholm 1935, p. 6).

[31] Cf. Wilson, Land Rights, p. 21; *Merensky*, p. 134; *Fillebore*, p. 300.

[32] *amaka* is not a specific expression for „magical" or (religious) „supernatural" power, although, from the European standpoint this meaning may be connected with the word in specific cases, but generally it means any striking expression or effect of a quality of a person or object, e. g. upili ahi ugalimo amaka, in this word is power. This word is, therefore, a parallel to the Austronesian, especially Polynesian word mana, examined in my treatise „Mana. The term of that what is exceedingly striking", Staudinger Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde. I. Reihe. Ethnographie. Vol. 1. Leipzig. 1933. If the Nyakyusa wishes to say that a phenomenon is "supernatural", then he connects it with Kyara, or he names it directly "Kiara" (cf. *Merensky*, p. 110 [191, 218]).

[33] Cf. *Fillebore*, p. 277, fig. 149: Schematical average of a round-hut (as also to be found with the Nyakyusa still today).

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

when we went to a field I saw a stick of a special type upright in the soil. It was made of a reed split at the top, with a small bundle of leaves squeezed in the split. A piece of bark stood out from this bundle. I asked the chief for the significance of this and he explained that it was an ulusiapo, i. e. a tabu sign to prevent anyone from stepping on the field which was an imasibi (yam-field). This sign was believed to possess "magical power", to strike an invader with illness. Each owner of a field has the right to protect his field in such a manner, and a chief especially has the right to command tabus regarding plants which are staple food for the whole chieftainship, as, for instance, maize that is not allowed to be reaped before the chief has given his permission. All such tabus are also named mutiko*. During the time of such a general tabu, visitors, who by chance come through a village under tabu, are not allowed to greet the inhabitants of the village or to speak to them. 241 784 [574]

The chief added that special watchmen are installed during these periods; these men are dressed in a terrifying manner, and have the right to arrest any person transgressing the tabu. The chief may punish the offenders immediately, imposing on them, for instance, a cow as a fine. This was also the case with an ordinary theft in a field, but nowadays such affairs are regulated by the law of the Mandated Government. After the repeal of such a general tabu by the chief, beer will be drunk (e. g. ubwalwa bwa kutapila bwa kutondela, the beer that is poured out at the harvest), and the usual eating community of men will be re-established, for Nyakyusa men like to eat together as comrades, not in families. 241 688 784 [178] [264]

10. When I was in Katumba, dances were held on several days from the afternoon till midnight, very similar in form to that which Mackenzie describes (p. 189) by the name Ikimbombi. 535

The men stood on one side of the open place in several lines, with sticks in their hands; on the opposite side were the women and girls. Between them, more in the background, were the drummers, at the beginning of the dance; then they moved round the place. The principal drummer was a man of great excitability. He performed most extravagant movements with his body and his drumstick, making somersaults, jumping over the drum, treating it as a "living being", running to it and turning just in front of it.

* This word mutiko (forbidden) has the same wide (profane and ritual) meanings as tapu or tabu in the Polynesian Languages (cf. Rud. Lehmann: Die polynesischen Tabu-Sitten. Stuttg. Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde I, 18; Leipzig 1930).

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

535 [832] These dances seemed to be a representation of "sex appeal" or courting. Each new phase of the dance was introduced by the advancing of one or two young women fairly near to the side of the men, then each retreated followed by the whole lines of both the sexes. If the youngest girls present who stood mostly behind the "dancing" line (i. e. the group of the advancing women and older girls) were to come too near the proper dancing place, they were driven back. The older people and the *amafuma* were only spectators.

535 292 The women had no special dancing dress, but the men did. They now wore mostly a sort of tight jackets or sweaters and wide *roben*, coloured or with patterns.

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Synopsis

080 Verfasser legt seine Ermittlungen vor, die er während seines dreimonatigen Aufenthalts im Dorfe der Mambo (die zu den Nyakyusa gehören) sammelte. Sie geben einen Einblick in die damals, 1938, überwiegend traditionsgebundene Lebensweise dieses Stammes, namentlich bezüglich der Medizinmänner und der Behandlung der Kranken. Um im Falle der Schwester des Häuptlings die Ursache der Erkrankung zu ermitteln, wurde ein Wahrsager gerufen, der bei einer Sitzung den Stammes als Urheber bezeichnete. Zur Heilung wurden vom Häuptling Zeremonien am Grabe von dessen Vater angeordnet. Außerdem beschreibt Verfasser aus eigener Erfahrung die Trauerzeremonie nach dem Tode eines Kindes, die Initiation eines verbotenen Mädchens u. a.

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P. 138]

Notes on the daily life of the Nyakyusa (Tanganyika Territory)

Cf. Sociologus 1951, I, 1 S. 53 ff.

By F. Rudolf Lehmann

192 576 *1. Greetings.* The first thing to strike a visitor to the Nyakyusa country north of Lake Nyasa on passing through one of the numerous picturesque villages surrounded by banana groves is the way of greeting customary among these people. "*Ukupowpa*" is the Nyakyusa word for "to greet". In the morning you are greeted with the exclamation: "*ugonile* (pl. *magonile*)", which literally means: "Did you sleep well?" And you may answer in the same way, or, in fuller form as you can hear it from the mouth of the natives: "*ee'e ndapa, ugonile*", or "*ugonile yoyoque*". "*ee'e ndapa*" may be used with all answers, meaning: thanks! At noon or in the afternoon you will hear: "*wombide*", you have worked, or, have you worked? Then, according to the case, you may answer: "*mwombide swanda*", you, men, have worked, or, generally: "*mwangere*", which is equivalent to the Swahili: "*habari gani?*". If you greet a person in the evening with the words: "*ugonaga*", may you sleep well, the person thus addressed will answer: "*kagona!*".

234 [312] *2. Milking.* The first task in the daily life of the Nyakyusa people is for the men to milk the cows. This is done in the morning before the cattle are driven out to graze and again in the evening when they return. But the cattle are also driven back to the village at noon when [237 232] they are usually fumigated standing in the smoke of a fire for which cow dung and banana leaves are used, a process designed to remove vermin from the skin of the cattle. The animals seem to be very fond of this procedure. They stand quietly in the smoke gazing at the passers-by.

241 [462] *3. Hoeing.* "Hoeing is the work of men, planting weeding, reaping is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about four hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a. m., on the upland plateau they

14:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done." (G. Wilson, Introduction, p. 280). 241

The putting of maize-grains as seed into the earth is the women's work, the sowing of millet (*malesi*) of both sexes. If you ask the men after they had come home from their work: "*Mukumbide ifiwanya fya wangi?*", "Whose fields did you hoe?", the answer often may be: "*Tukumbide ifiwanya fya tata!*" We have hoed the fields of our father. [243 462]

In former times, the Nyakyusa had a lot of ceremonies relating to the beginning of the hoeing season and of the beginning of the harvest-work. They are, however, nowadays nearly extinguished under the influence of European culture. [177]

With respect to the beginning of the hoeing season, a very comprehensive ceremony had to be carried out by the chief in community with the *ungwaga* (medicine man) for providing the fields with extraordinary (*-siya*) power (*amaka*): *amaka amasiya*, in this case: fertility. 241 622 [192]

When the crop was ripe, it was (at first) forbidden (*wuiko*) to take anything from the crop before the chief had given the permission. First the oldest male villagers informed the chief that it may be now the just time to give the crop free for the people, saying: "The people is hungry, we will now give them to eat!" Then the chief ordered that 6 or 8 (maize') corn-cobs were brought to him, and he sent these corn-cobs by a messenger to the (holy) offering-grove where they must be put down. After that has been correctly executed, he gave the permission for reaping the new crop. [182]

(NB. It was believed that those corn-cobs put into the offering-grove were eaten especially from the leopards. The powdered bones of the leopards were considered important ingredients of the consecration drink which the chief had to take at his initiation ceremonies and which should give him the strength (*amaka*) of a leopard, so that he also was called "the leopard" or "the leopard chief".) [237 825]

4. *Herding the Cattle and Cleaning the Stable.* The sociological importance of cattle among the Nyakyusa and the specific practice among them of herding the cattle by herdboys, that is also of highly sociological importance for the structure of the Nyakyusa society, is already described by G. Wilson (Introduction, p. 289 f). 233

The cleaning of the stables of which the Nyakyusa possess a great number of very well built ones, which have also sometimes a considerable length — apart from the cattle kraals —, is the task of 283 343 462

14:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

233 the women, but the men are responsible for keeping the floor of the
343 stable in good repair. For this purpose a specific tool is used, called
460 ukutobe indobelu. It is round on top, flattened on the lower side and
[415] provided with a handle.

224 2. *Hunting.* Sometimes the Nyakyusa go out to hunt, but nowadays hunting is much more restricted than in former times as described e. g by Mackenzie in his book: "The spirit-ridden Konde" (London 1925). This record, however, deals mostly with the Ngonde of the environment of Karonga whose interesting social history was unsurpassably revealed to us by Mr. Godfrey Wilson's treatise: "The Constitution of Ngonde" (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, Number Three. Livingstone, Northern Rhodesia 1939.) Hunting in the Nyakyusa country is now [656] curtailed by governmental regulations. Hunting (*ukufuma*), therefore, does not supply an essential part of the food requirements of the [136] natives. The colobus apes on the slopes of the Rungwe volcano and the [656] Poroto Mountains are sometimes killed for their attractive black and white skins, but fortunately this is now forbidden by the government. [439] Otherwise these apes would be exterminated in quite a short time, since the skins of these apes are in great demand with some Europeans for rugs and covers. Naturally, the hunting of lions and especially of leopards, which even nowadays still cause great damage, is not restricted.

224 The hunting of game for food is often done with dogs (*imbwa*) which
231 have small bells (*ingeni*) on collars round their necks. Thereby the hunter (*umfuemi*) always knows the whereabouts of his dog. The chase is continued till the dog or dogs are exhausted. The object of the hunt (*umfuema*) is generally a small type of antelope (*ikanga*), e. g. in the [656] environment of Mwakaleio, as I was instructed. The usual time for hunting is the cooler season, but to-day a permit of the government is also required.

223 Catching birds by means of traps (*untaga*, pl. *imitaga*) is still common in the Nyakyusa area. I have also seen such traps constructed by means of the flicking-gallow's principle also in the vicinity of Utengule among the Safwa. The herd boys especially set traps to catch quails (*imbeni*) when the millet (*mlilet*) harvest is over. Sometimes smaller birds are also snared until they are exhausted and then slain. One day I found a stick vertically put on the soil and with a triangle made of smaller sticks at its top. The horizontal part of which was smeared with an adhesive substance. I was told that this was a trap for birds.

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

but I was astonished that this trap was erected relatively near to my tent on the border of the village of Katumba. 223

6. *Fishing.* Fishing is a much more common practice with the Nyakyusa than hunting. The old-established custom of poisoning fish in their smaller rivers is still widely used. The poison is derived from the wakerudu shrub. Its branches and leaves are broken off, reduced to small pieces between stones and then packed in a covering of grass to resemble a long cigar about 1 meter in length and 25 cm in width. The bundles prepared in such a manner are fixed between two rows of stones placed across the river for this purpose. The poison gradually diffuses into the water, which takes on a green colour. The fish are soon affected by the poison and rise to the surface with gaping mouths. They are then easily caught with a scoop made from bamboo. The open end of a piece of bamboo is split into several sections and the splinters are bent apart and tied together with raffia to form a sort of funnel[1]. The fish are strung through their gills on small pliable sticks and roasted at home over a fire. All people are allowed to join in this fishing which to them is always a festive occasion in the cooler season. 226 [824] [252]

Fishing in broader and deeper rivers, such as the lower Kiwira, is done by means of large fish-traps. They are made and repaired by men on the banks of the river. The traps are attached to poles rammed into the bed and almost invariably boats trying to reach the Lake Nyasa get struck on submerged poles. These large fish-traps strung across the river form quite an impressive sight. Looking up-stream, they look like the bows of little ships standing in a row.

7. *Preparing food.* With the Nyakusa the preparation of food is so exclusively the task of the women, that R. Thurnwald let quite correct when says (Black and White in East Africa, London 1935, p. 137): "Menfolk starve if there are no women to prepare their meals". There is thus a very strong division of labour between the sexes, also noticable in the carrying of loads. For a young man to carry the load of an old woman or his sweetheart, whom perchance he might meet on the road, would be a grave violation of a rigid custom. 252 462 [482]

As the preparation of the food is the women's duty, also the grinding (*ukusiha*) of the corn in a mortar (*ikinali*) with a pestle (*ikitiro*) which is the exclusive task of the female sex. The wife is always the first to rise in the morning to prepare breakfast. Usually, however, this is not [264]

[1] 2/3. They are of the same kind as those of the Hottentots along the Great Fish River in South West Africa. [171]

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

462 252 264 very substantial, the main meal being taken in the evening shortly before sunset.

415 [354] 8. *Manufacture.* The pot for cooking (*indeku*) is placed on three stones which form the hearth (*ikipembere*, hearth stones). The flat bowl made of clay used for the needs of the kitchen is called *ulusugubia* and a pig pot used for storing water *ingumbe*. The pots of clay 415 are manufactured by Kisi women because in their land on the north- 439 eastern shores of Lake Nyassa the best clay is found. In the eastern part of the Nyakyusa country adjacent to Kisi land the women visit the pottery markets of the Kisi, but to the remoter villages, e. g. around the Rungwe volcano the pottery is brought by Kisi men. In this case, owing to the great distance from the Kisi-Land the men carry the loads of eight to ten pots on their head between split poles of bamboo. The Kisi pots I saw in the Rungwe Station were ornamented in [462] a rough way with red ochre and seemed only slightly baked. The [324] hearth stones, however, are made by the Nyakyusa women themselves as I was able to observe near Rutenganio, where widows manufactured them for sale.

285 In many villages of the Nyakyusa I could watch basket-making. This [462] I saw being done by men. In the chief's hut in Katumba I had the opportunity to admire a great number of very big baskets (*ifituba*) for [237] storing grain, smeared with cow dung on the outside. The attractive closely wickered baskets, which are filled with *maiei* (millet) and then [273] placed in water for a night in the process of beer-brewing were originally made by the Bunyi, but nowadays also the Nyakyusa are said to be skilled enough to weave them. I had no opportunity to observe it, but could acquire an excellent specimen of that wicker-work.

264 [315] 9. *The Meal.* At the beginning of each meal the hands are washed, including those of children. The men take their meal separately from the women. The wives only eat when their husbands have been satisfied. Boys under ten years eat with their mothers, but as soon as they begin to live in age-set villages, they eat together with their friends of their own age-set, as described in detail by Mr. G. Wilson in his "Introduction of Nyakyusa Society" (Bantu Studies X, p. 271). The head of the family likes to eat together with his friends.

262 Meat is eaten very seldom, but on special occasions such as marriages, death lamentations, christenings of Christianized natives, enormous [192] quantities are devoured. *Inyama* (Swahili: *nyama*) is the Nyakyusa word for all sorts of meat, *ingumbe* for that of cattle and *ingumbuke* for that of oxen. Near Utengule I saw black pigs (*ingurwe*, pig)

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

grubbing for food outside the stable. Old people also eat the meat of apes (*sulile*, ape) and of jakal (*ingebe*). The Nyakyusa men are generally very fond of eating fowl, indeed: "Wakugusa ingoma *nye* ingaku", they are fond of the flesh of fowl. 262 [192]

Bones are usually given to the children for gnawing. Eight to ten boys may be seen sitting in a circle and alternately gnaw on the same bone, often drinking a little milk (*ulukwa*) the while.

During a boating on Lake Nyasa I saw the well-known columnar clouds formed by the so-called Kungu-flies in the distance above the surface of the water. These flies are also eaten by the peoples on the shore of the Lake. When these insects come shore-wards they are caught, roasted at home and then eaten. But I was told that sometimes they are also caught and eaten out on the Lake, being squeezed into lumps between the hands. [136] [252]

The Nyakyusa eat with the right hand, but when the meal consists of such food as boiled maize and beans (*ingute*) they also use spoons (*ulusiko*) made of folded strips of banana leaves. Nowadays, however, tin spoons and tin plates have come into wide use. The ancient eating-mats (*ukutefu*, diminutive of *urutefu*) are also being more and more displaced. 264 [412] [178 285]

When the meal is over, the vessels and plates are cleaned with the fingers, bent inward, and then licked off. The mouth is rinsed out with water.

16. Diet. The vegetable diet is roughly the following. The light meal in the morning consists mostly of boiled maize-cobs (*ingute*), sweet potatoes (*imbutete*), bananas (*ulutoki*, pl. *amatoki*), roasted bananas; or, *amatifu*, sweet bananas. The main meal in the evening, shortly before sunset, usually consists of flour porridge (*ikiyindi*), beans (*indima*), both often boiled together with maize, peas (*efinyapa*) very often in the form of porridge, maize-corns (*ikiwombe*) and groundnuts (*ingubele*, pl. *amangubele*). These groundnuts are dried in the sun on mats. Bananas, if dried in the same manner, are usually halved lengthwise and spread out sometimes on banana leaves. I have seen this done in the village of Katumbe. Granary stores are very often, e. g. near Utengule (on the border of Nyakyusa and Safwa culture), erected on platforms supported by poles. The container is a big quadrangular basket, roughly three by three meters in length and 1 m in height. The roof has the shape of a large Chinese hat and can be taken off from the lower part of the granary. 262 264 [251] [285 415]

14:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

262 The tender leaves of pumpkins and taro plants (*amasimbi*, leaves of taro), as well as of a number of other plants growing wild (*indeke*) are also used as vegetables. This food is called *iseke*, a word denoting all sorts of green vegetables.

In his treatise on "The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa" (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. 1; 1938, p. 43). G. Wilson points out that the fruit of the *so* — called *uwepunguti* — tree is "both [278] delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment (*ingemba*)", but he adds that he had been unable to find out the botanical name of this useful tree. Perhaps the following passage in the article of Dr. Kerr Cross ("Notes on the Country Lying between Lakes Nyasa and Tanganyika"; Proc. Roy. Geogr. Inst. N.S.Vol. XIII, 1891, p. 98) may be helpful in this connection: "There is a tree of the 314 sycamore family which grows extensively all over the north of the [362] lake called *mwiyungute* by the natives which might be developed. [382] It is a most picturesque tree which produces a food, an oil, and a dye. The oil or fat, when cool, is solid, even at a tolerably high temperature, and is like beeswax. It burns well as a night-light, and with wax might [381] be made into candles. In a rude way I have made candles of it. It might also make an excellent soap."

273 As an adjunct to these foods curdy milk (*ulukoma ulukolu*) is very [272] much esteemed[1], to say nothing of the various types of beer, mostly prepared from millet for the men. Large fields of millet are, therefore, to be seen everywhere in the land of the Nyakyusa. On one occasion I attended a beer drink in the hut of a chief. The conduct of the natives present, the chief and his advisers (*amafumu*), was in every respect [571] praise-worthy. Pleasant and interesting stories were narrated. Not infrequently the invitation of a commoner/who has had some difference with his chief or one of the *amafumu* to such a feast is regarded as a gesture of reconciliation.

243 As in the time of Sir H. H. Johnston so also to-day "all the oozy-meadows are planted with rice." A traveller coming from the hilly region to the north on nearing Lake Nyasa is struck by numerous large fields of rice in the plain at the northern end of the lake.

178 *11. Crafts.* Mackenzie (1925) is certainly justified in complains of the decay of the arts and crafts among the Nyakyusa. The Indian and European influence is to be seen everywhere in the deterioration and final dissolution of these branches of the ancient culture of the Nyaky-

[1] A. Wilson, Introduction, p. 106.

14:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 F907 Ngonde F907
Nyakyusa

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ura. It is true that one still meets blacksmiths on the outskirts of the villages or some distance away from them (as in the case of the Ndali tribe, western to the Nyakyusa area), but they no longer smelt the iron from ore mined by themselves as in former times. The smith of to-day remelt only scrap iron from disused motor-cars and other machines into tools, hatches, and spear-heads, unless, of course, the natives prefer to buy imported iron-ware. As with the Chaga, also the Nyakyusa smith can only be persuaded to submit to being photographed after long negotiation and a change into better clothes. The blacksmiths I met in the Rundali Mountains, however, made no objections whatever to being photographed at their work. Also women were allowed to attend. But one feature of the ancient Nyakyusa blacksmith's culture has been preserved till the present day: the lower part of the bellows through which the air blast is driven into the fire is still made of wood. This feature has been defined by H. Baumann as an element of the "ancient nigritic culture".

12. *Dress.* The cloths of the Nyakyusa have changed to a very considerable degree since the beginning of European influence. A comparison of the earliest pictures and descriptions of inhabitants at the northern end of Lake Nyasa with the dress of modern times brings out this point most forcibly. Originally the Nyakyusa went almost naked, adorned only with rings and belts, but nowadays all degrees of compromise with European fashions of dress are to be found, especially near the European settlements and Mission Stations. The most conservative element are, in this case, the women. It is still possible to-day to observe in each village the preparation of the long strips of bark (*ulpuki*, pl. *amabi*) commonly worn by the women. The so-called *lupundapunda* (Fotheringham: *mlambe*) tree furnishes the dress material. After the bark has been immersed in water, the bast is beaten with wooden instruments and then pulled off from the harder parts of the bark. These tools are like hammers; the flat end of such an implement is furrowed, sometimes with a disk made of horn, and as it produces pattern on the bast it is called "*ubumbe*", that which produces pattern. These long belts, almost reaching the ground, especially in front, are mostly ruby coloured, but the women sitting in front of their huts manufacture also other types with geometrical (triangular) patterns in yellow and brown forming only girdles (*umpango*). In addition to this minimum requirement in the way of dress some women around the waist also wear copper belts (*mangeta*), made of thin copper-wire, spirally wound on a core of hairs from the tails of cows. These

14:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

291 301 belts are also worn by men, nowadays below the other clothing. More and more pieces of cotton with imprinted patterns have come into 291 vogue. They are worn around the lower part of the body or below the 177 shoulders or fastened about one of them, and are bought from Indian [174] shops. That this modern fashion, however, is something new in such places which are a little remoter from direct European influence was demonstrated to me when I came through a small village in the environment of Masoko. There by chance I met some young girls carrying a piece of cloth on the top of a long pole as if it were a banner. On enquiry I was told that this "banner" was nothing other than a [556 piece of cloth newly bought by a woman of that village and that it was 482] hoisted on a pole and carried in procession out of sheer joy that this woman had been able to buy it.

291 Mendolk throughout are fuller dressed, especially when they go dancing. The women, on the other hand, wear their ordinary dress also on such occasions. The dancing costume of the men—only the younger [292 men participate in dancing — consists of a sort of tight-jacket or 556] sweater and wide robes with coloured patterns. The hair is adorned [302 with feathers. At work the men mostly wear only loin cloths or aborts. 237] After work especially the older man wrap their bodies in blankets. It is very seldom nowadays to find even very old men still wearing the former national dress: a bundle of long grass in front and a smaller one behind tied to the waist by means of a string, as I found a man on a military spot near Rungwe Station. Little boys go altogether naked until they are about three years of age. Little girls begin to wear a small *amabi* at an earlier age.

531 *13. Art.* One of the most interesting and striking features in the artistic endowment of the Nyakyusa are the decorations on the outer-walls of their huts. The latter are only painted, however, when the exterior of the framework of bamboo is mud covered, otherwise only the wooden doors (*ikifiqo*, door) of the huts are painted. By no means every hut or house is painted, but only a limited number in each village, probably depending on the presence and industry of an artist as this art is as in other cases an individualistic one. One such artist was introduced to me in a village near Rutengania. The ornaments consist in most cases of geometrical patterns in white and black, seldom in other colours, or they represent different sorts of animals, e. g. elephants, horses, cattle, snakes, etc. The richest designs I found in a long extended village on the right bank of the upper Kiwira. In an other case the names of the animals were written in Swahili below

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the figures. Also bicycles, aeroplanes, motor-cars and other striking 531
objects of the European civilization are to be found represented and [177]
concentric white circles adjacent to these drawings or paintings.

14. Houses. Sometimes the upper portion of the framework of the 342
rectangular houses is not fully plastered with mud leaving broad open areas or stripe horizontally or slopingly to the base-line. This may have its origin in an artistic motive and at the same time be useful in ventilating the interior of the hut. The ancient custom of the Nyakyusa to fill out the spaces between the framework of the walls with flat, oval cakes or clods of clay, supported inside the house by a second framework of bamboo (*uzumange*), has also a decorative effect.

The preparation of those oval sun-dried clay cakes is the work of the [339
women. L. Monteith Fotheringham described this in his "Adventures 462]
in Nyasaland" (London 1891, p. 22) with the following words: "The [113]
women make the bricks in shape like large eggs by pressing the clay between their hands." The building of the framework of the hut and the thatching of the roof is the task of the men. Nyumba means "the house" in Kinyakyusa as wellas in Swahili; *isyenga* is the name for the old-fashioned hut of the Nyakyusa possessing a round baseline and a framework expanding upwards in diameter. The rectangular hut is called *ikibaga* and the smaller rectangular hut used as a store or a fowl pen, *akabaga*. It is interesting to note that there is no special word for roof in Kinyakyusa. This part of the hut or house is simply called "the above" (*iyuru*). In contrast to this fact the different poles of the roof-structure are specially named according to their position parallel to or at right angels to the ridge of the rectangular houses. *Ukutalike* means to bind the different rafters of the roof together; *imbanda* is the name for the supporting poles of the roof, and *isyenge* for the poles of the framework of the walls.

15. Outfit. Inside the house we find besides the bedsteads (*ikitara*, 352
pl. *ifitara*) and the household utensils, the grinding-mill (*uruwara*), [412]
consisting of an upper (smaller) and a lower (broader) stone. The flour falls into a basket placed in front of the mill. Sometimes in a corner [231]
of the hut a nest (*ikitero*) for a sitting hen on top of a pole is to be found. Outside the house is a place for the sweepings (*urutagililo*). The 356
cleaning of the interior of the houses and also the repairing of the mud 462
plaster is the task of the women, but I saw men cleaning the space in front of the huts. At any case, it must be acknowledged that the cleanliness of a Nyakyusa village leaves little to be desired.

14:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

343 Also the stables I saw were very clean; their length is adjusted to the number of cattle which are sheltered therein. Sometimes a wooden hoop is to be found in such a stable, hanging down from the ceiling. [251] The inside of the hoop is filled with a wicker-work whose meshes are dense enough to hold fruits to be dried. If such a hoop is hanging in the stable being out of use, a bag made of leaves containing pumpkin seeds (*isyugu*) for later planting may be fastened to it, and on the beams of 233 the framework of the wall: you may find a plaited leather neckband (*ulukoba*) for cows destined to hold a cow's bell (*ibengala*). The sound of the bells of the cattle gave already great delight to the first European visitors of Nyakyusa and Ngonde Land, as we can read with Fotheringham (p. 24): "It is a pretty sight to see the herd coming into villages in the evening, and pleasant to hear the tinkle of the bells which are suspended from their necks, recalling in homely quietude the peaceful scenes of the Swiss."

184 101 The daily life of the Nyakyusa differs more or less among the different ethnic groups which in former times had been independent units. Nowadays, however, all those groups who have similar speech and customs and share, therefore, a progressing common culture, only distinguished by minor local peculiarities, are called by the common name "Nyakyusa" (Cf. G. Wilson: An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society. Bantu Studies, Vol. X, 1936, p. 254 f).

Synopsis

090 Verfasser beschreibt in diesem zweiten Bericht die verschiedenen Arbeiten aus dem Alltagsleben der Nyakyusa. Die Betreuung der großen Rinderherden, einschließlich des Melkens, ist Männersache, die Frauen reinigen nur die Ställe. Die Männer behacken die Felder, die Frauen säen, reinigen, ernten und bereiten alle Nahrung zu. Diese Arbeitsteilung fand Verfasser 1934 noch unangetastet, dagegen waren die zahlreichen mit Saat und Ernte verbundenen Zeremonien durch den europäischen Einfluß fast verschwunden. Ebenso war der Verfall der traditionellen Künste und Handwerke weit fortgeschritten durch europäische Einwirkungen wie durch die überall verstreuten indischen Händler als Vermittler der sozialindischen Waren. Diese hatten auch die traditionelle Kleidung abgewandelt (als die Europäer kamen, gingen die Eingeborenen noch überwiegend nackt). Die alten geometrischen Muster, die äußere Hüttenwände und Türen schmückten, waren zum Teil mit Zeichnungen von Fahrrädern, Autos, Flugzeugen u. a. durchsetzt. Während früher auch das Alltagsleben der Nyakyusa in deren verschiedenen ethnischen Gruppen deutliche Unterschiede aufwies, sind diese ehemals unabhängigen Einheiten unter den europäischen Einwirkungen mehr und mehr kulturell zusammengewachsen.

121

121 **THEORETICAL ORIENTATION**--research aims and objectives (e.g., complete ethnographic description, study of a particular institution or culture complex, testing of a theoretical hypothesis); general theoretical approach (e.g., historical, functional, psychological); formulation of research program; reasons for choice of particular field site; etc. See also:

General information about the author 104

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Fox-Strangways; the late Mr. Eustace of the Tanganyika Agricultural Department, and Mrs. Eustace; the Rev. and Mrs. Marx of the Moravian mission at Rungwe; the Rev. and Mrs. Faulds of the Church of Scotland mission at Karonga; the Rev. and Mrs. Galbraith of Livingstonia; Mr. Godfried Schuler, a planter, and his wife; and the Officers of the King's African Rifles then stationed at Mbeeko.

When planning work among the Nyakyusa, we were guided by Lord Lugard, who had lively recollections of 'the north-enders', and by the Rev. D. R. and Mrs. MacKenzie, missionaries of the Church of Scotland in the area for many years. Mr. MacKenzie had published *The Spirit-Ridden Konde* in 1925, and was deeply interested in the Nyakyusa-Ngonde people; he lent us manuscript notes on the language and gave us the most generous encouragement.

Godfrey Wilson was concerned to make a general sociological study of the Nyakyusa, while I had been commissioned by the International African Institute to study particularly the effects of Christian missions on the community; in practice we found it profitable each to work primarily with our own sex, though we did not do so exclusively. Nyakyusa men proved better informants than women, largely, we think, because the men all had a training in logic, gained in discussion in the villages and in court. Women lacked this training and, except for doctors and those who had had some schooling, they found it difficult to give an account of their customs. The pagan women were markedly less coherent than conservative Pondo women (among whom I had previously worked[1]), a difference which I attribute to the narrow scope for leadership among the women in the traditional Nyakyusa society. And the difference between conservative pagan Nyakyusa women (doctors excepted) and Christians who had had some schooling was very noticeable.

Material on pagan and Christian, as well as that on men and women, overlapped at every point; and shortly after leaving the field we agreed that to describe pagan and Christian groups separately would distort the facts very seriously, and that we would collaborate in writing three books on Nyakyusa kinship, Nyakyusa villages, and Nyakyusa chiefdoms, including in each of

[1] Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest: Effects of Contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa* (1936).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

128 chiefs and the Administration, and between Nyakyusa workers and their employers, falls outside the scope of this book.

c. The subject of study

121 Nyakyusa society may be viewed as three circles of relationship—the relationships of kinship, village relationships, and relationships within and beyond the chiefdoms. This book is concerned with the second of these circles, that found within and between villages. Such relationships are not fully intelligible apart from the relationships of kinship and of the chiefdom, but a measure of abstraction is necessary—it is not possible to talk about everything at once. A sketch of kinship relationships has already been published;[1] a full account of them and of the relationships of chiefdoms has been planned; and the general theoretical approach has been set forth in *The Analysis of Social Change*[2] and in a paper entitled *Some Possibilities and Limitations of Anthropological Research*.[3]

The fundamental question we pose is *why age-villages?* Why should the Nyakyusa differ from all their neighbours of whom we have knowledge in the form of their villages? Why should they live with contemporaries, rather than kinsmen? The attempt to answer this leads us to discuss the characteristics of Nyakyusa society, which can be shown to be associated with the age-village organization, so that we can reformulate the question thus: *What are the peculiarities of Nyakyusa society not found in neighbouring societies with kinship villages?* We know too little about the neighbouring societies to answer this question fully, but some indication of the Nyakyusa peculiarities is given, and an analysis of these compels us to consider the relation between Nyakyusa values and social structure.

[1] Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde, 1950.
[2] G. and M. Wilson, 1945.
[3] Monica Wilson, 1948.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

771 mediate ancestors of the participants, and another set which con-
105 cern chiefdoms and groups of chiefdoms, and are directed towards the immediate ancestors of ruling chiefs and certain distant ancestors of the chiefs' line, heroes in Nyakyusa history. The name of one of these heroes, Kyala, has been used by the missionaries to translate the word 'God', but all the evidence available goes to show that Kyala was, traditionally, but one of several distant ancestors to whom regular sacrifices were made on behalf of a large group of chiefdoms. All the rituals of this type—those directed to family shades, the chiefs' ancestors, and the heroes—are concerned with that which is beneath (*pasi*), not that which is above. Men look to the earth where corpses are buried, not to any sky god.

121 The theme of the present volume is the rituals celebrated by
771 kinsmen at death, at the puberty and marriage of a girl (the last two events usually coinciding), at birth, especially twin birth, and in misfortune. A further volume will deal with the communal rituals celebrated before the annual break of the rains; whenever public misfortune such as drought, flood, famine, or plague occurs or threatens; before battle; and when a chief is succeeded by his sons, and the younger generation take over power from their elders.
[881] There is no circumcision or initiation of men other than the 'coming out' ceremony, when a whole generation takes over responsibility for the administration and defence of the chiefdom from their fathers. Some reference to three of the heroes—Kyala, Lwembe, and Mbasi—is made in texts on the rituals of kinsmen, but our discussion of them is postponed to the second book in which the rituals directed to them are described.

775 A section of the Nyakyusa people is Christian and its influence
177 on pagan thought and practice is appreciable; however, discussion
128 of this is also postponed to the second book, since it is most evident in the changing concept of Kyala. There, too, the connections between change in ritual and other aspects of the social structure between 1934 and 1955 are analysed.

121 The Nyakyusa cult of senior relatives (like any ancestor cult) is
771 not intelligible or significant apart from a study of kinship, and it may be argued that this material should be presented only as part of an analysis of Nyakyusa kinship, but we cannot discuss everything at once and some measure of abstraction is necessary. No one ritual among the Nyakyusa is fully intelligible without reference to the whole series of rituals. The principle, propounded forty-five years ago by Professor Radcliffe-Brown, that a symbol

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

recurring in a cycle of rituals is likely to have the same significance in each, holds good for the Nyakyusa: certain symbols of shaving, washing, eating, spreading banana leaves, scattering grain, and so forth were similarly interpreted by our informants in the different rituals of the cycle, and their full significance is only apparent when a comparison of their various uses is made. In this book, therefore, attention is focused on the ritual cycle. A comparison of numerous rites reveals a *symbolic pattern*, the counterpart, in the emotional aspect, of kinship organization in the practical aspect; and the comments of the more self-conscious Nyakyusa on the rites indicate the *intellectual system* linked with this pattern. 121 771

As already mentioned, the religious conceptions of the Nyakyusa include the belief in medicines, in 'the breath of men', and in witchcraft, as well as in the power of senior relatives. The importance of medicines in the rituals directed to the shades will be evident in every chapter of this book. References to witchcraft and the 'breath of men' are not so frequent, since these form what is on the whole a separate system of beliefs, and refer to a different set of relationships. The ancestor cult is concerned *solely* with the relationships of kinsmen, and of the chiefs and their peoples; witchcraft and 'the breath of men' *mainly* with the relationships of fellow villagers—i.e. age mates and their wives—though it also impinges on kinship and political relationships. Only in the relationship of spouses, and that between chief and village headmen, do the two sets of beliefs constantly overlap. An account of the Nyakyusa conception of witchcraft and 'the breath of men' has already been published, and it has been shown that accusations of witchcraft occur most frequently between fellow villagers and, nowadays, between fellow employees, that is, between non-relatives; they are also fairly frequently directed against wives and co-wives; but accusations of witchcraft against kinsmen of the same lineage are very rare.[1] Antagonism between kinsmen occurs and is expressed in accusations of practising sorcery, as well as in fear of the power of senior relatives, but most misfortunes are attributed to the lust and envy of neighbours or wives rather than to the malice of kinsmen. Evil is conceived of as having a personal cause, but as originating generally outside the circle of kin. The mystical power of senior relatives (living and dead) can never be used irresponsibly—it cannot operate unless the cause is just—and therefore misfortune emanating from the shades is always a just 771 [578]

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 100–4; 198–205.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

771 retribution, not an irresponsible assault, like that made by witches.

The religion of the Nyakyusa is expressed in ritual rather than in dogma. Everyone participates, at some time or another, in a variety of rituals; a great deal of time and energy is devoted to them, and they are elaborate. By comparison, the dogma and myth are limited both in content and in influence. Many more people participate in rituals than are fully conscious of dogma and myth; many more people can describe rituals than interpret them. In this analysis, therefore, the rituals are first described and the principal dogmas are deduced from the Nyakyusa interpretation of them.

121 The stress is on the Nyakyusa interpretation of their own rituals,
771 for anthropological literature is bespattered with symbolic guessing, the ethnographer's interpretation of the rituals of other people. Now it seems probable that certain symbols are universal in the sense that they express the same ideas in all societies. Many other symbols are emotionally intelligible when interpreted—the following pages are full of examples—but it is foolish to imagine that an individual schooled in one culture can understand the symbolism of another without instruction. For this reason, and at the risk of wearying the reader, many of the texts on which this interpretation is based are quoted. The interpretations of even the most self-conscious Nyakyusa, such as Kasitile the rain-maker, Mwandisi the old blind historian, Mwasalemba, Lyandileko and Kakune the doctors, do not, of course, reveal the whole truth about Nyakyusa rituals, but *any analysis not based on some translation of the symbols used* by people of that culture is open to suspicion. The texts were recorded in the Nyakyusa language by Godfrey or Monica Wilson, or one of our two Nyakyusa clerks, Mwaikambo and Mwaisumo, and the informants most often quoted were selected for their special knowledge. And very many others discussed rituals with us.[1]

Not all Nyakyusa are conscious of all the interpretations given. A few symbols, such as the association of different types of banana with male and female respectively, are known to everyone; but the meaning of many of the events in the rituals was obscure to young men and women. Most of the interpretations quoted have, however, been given by more than one informant (as is shown in the text and documents) and may be taken as *common*, i.e. current in

[1] For the methods of field-work cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. vii-ix.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the group. In the few cases in which our informant may have been [2] giving his own individual interpretation, 'putting a bucket down [7] into his subconscious and pulling it up', it was at least a Nyakyusa subconscious, and the interpretation is in terms of the culture. It is with common, not individual, symbols that we are concerned: what is offered in this book is a sociological, not a psychological, analysis.

Similarities between the symbolism of Nyakyusa rituals and the [7] symbolism of dreams and neuroses in Western society will be [2] obvious to readers. That preoccupation with anal and oral func- [7] tions, with 'nakedness' (though the Nyakyusa habitually wore the most exiguous of coverings), with death, coition, and birth, with mastery ('overstepping') and incest, which is characteristic of the rituals we describe, is evident also in any textbook of psychoanalysis dealing with Western Europeans and Americans; and certain symbols such as a house, a doorway, a spear, seed, and so forth are common to both cultures; but here we are not concerned to trace these similarities. Our business is to lay bare the symbolic pattern of the Nyakyusa without reference to the Western tradition.

The material used for the sociological analysis of ritual consists [28] of two types: observation or description of events, and statements [2] about associations. The greatest difficulty in presenting it has been to choose between a chronological account of each ritual, followed by the Nyakyusa translation or interpretation of the symbolism, and then by the sociological analysis; and an integrated account combining the interpretation and analysis with the description. The advantage of the first method is that the validity of both interpretation and analysis can be more easily judged since the evidence on which it is based is fully set out; the disadvantage is that the description itself implies interpretation and analysis. The symbolism is often implicit in the description of events, and the separation of description from interpretation involves repetition; at the same time the classification of events and symbols is itself a form of analysis, and the separation of description from analysis tends to conceal this. The present study is a compromise between the two approaches. Where events and their symbolism are fairly straightforward, the interpretation accompanies the description; but where, as in the rituals of farewell to the dead, puberty and marriage, and abnormal birth, they are complicated, and the interpretation may well be questioned, accounts of the events are separated from detailed evidence on symbolism. Analysis is neces-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

121 easily implied all through, but since the argument can only be un-
128 folded step by step (for no one ritual can be fully analysed until all are described) a discussion of it is reserved to the concluding chapters. In interpreting the symbolism, cross reference between the different rituals of the cycles would be too frequent to give in the text. Readers wishing to follow up references to the symbolism of bananas, for example, or ikipili medicine, should use the index.

771 The link between religious beliefs and morality (in the sense of
577 right behaviour) is very clear among the Nyakyusa. Many misfortunes are attributed to sin, that is, wrong-doings (*mwaga*) thought to be supernaturally punished. Indeed, to the Nyakyusa the idea of the wicked man 'spreading himself like a green bay tree'[1] is inconceivable, and the disciples' question: 'Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'[2] cold common sense. Here we are concerned with the form of morality[3] sanctioned by Nyakyusa religion, with the conception of good and evil, and with
[128] the relation between belief and behaviour.[4] A table of private misfortunes attributed to the anger of senior relatives is included in this volume; public misfortunes will be discussed in the succeeding one; and a table of misfortunes attributed to witchcraft, sorcery, and the legitimate anger of neighbours ('the breath of men') has been given in the study of Nyakyusa age-villages already published.[5] While the Nyakyusa lay great emphasis on the correct performance, in every detail, of certain rituals, their very performance implies co-operation between kinsmen, and not only co-operation but amity. For 'anger in the heart', if unconfessed, may bring misfortune. Thus though the outward form is stressed, the inward and spiritual is not totally ignored.

121 We proceed on the assumption that men express in ritual what moves them most; that the form of expression is conventional and obligatory, and that therefore in ritual the values of a group (as opposed to those of individuals) are revealed.

[1] Psalm xxxvii: 35. [2] John ix, 2.

[3] I cannot accept Professor Radcliffe-Brown's definition of morality as the control of conduct by 'public opinion and conscience' as opposed to control by religion. Nor do I accept Professor Macbeath's argument that primitive man has an idea of good quite apart from religion. A. E. Taylor's view of morality comes much closer to the facts as shown in Nyakyusa society.

cf. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*, p. 171; A. Macbeath, *Experiments in Living*, Gifford Lectures 1948-9; A. E. Taylor, *The Faith of a Moralist*, Gifford Lectures 1926-8.

[4] The germ of the book is Godfrey Wilson's 'An African morality', *Africa*, 1936.

[5] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 198-213.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

By *ritual* we mean a primarily religious action, that is, action directed to securing the blessing of some mystical power or powers. The action may be a negative, i.e. an avoidance or taboo, as well as a positive one. Symbols and concepts are employed in rituals but are subordinated to practical ends. Ritual is distinguished from *ceremonial*, which is an elaborate conventional form for the expression of feeling, not confined to religious occasions; any emotional situation, whether religious or secular, may be clothed in ceremony, and a ceremony is not enforced by mystical sanctions, only by conventional ones. In short, a ceremony is an appropriate and elaborate form for the expression of feeling; but a ritual is action believed to be efficacious.[1] Confusion between the two arises in our own society, for what is ritual to some (e.g. a rite of baptism or marriage) is but ceremonial to others. In Nyakyusa society the distinction is fairly clear-cut: *ubusyage*, which is translated here as *a ritual*, means a series of actions directed towards the shades or heroes, and enforced by mystical sanctions, as opposed to action which is merely customary and conventional (*ulusiko*). At a burial, some actions are only *ulusiko*, others are also *ubusyage*. A negative ritual, that which is taboo, is *musiko*.

Ubusyage is applied as a noun, and in its verbal form, *ukusyagula* (to perform a ritual), to funeral rites, especially that part of such rites in which only immediate relatives participate (*ubusyage bwa bafiele*); to the girls' puberty and marriage ritual (*ubusyage bwa bwanage*), to the ritual at birth (*ubusyage bwa bafiwe*), especially at twin birth (*ubusyage bwa mapasa*); to the rituals performed on behalf of the country for rain and fertility (*ubusyage bwa kisa*); to the treatment of the young chief and village headmen when authority is handed to them by the older generation (*ubusyage bwa bwaka*); and, nowadays, to the sacraments of the Christian Church. *Usyage* is the specialist who knows the right medicines and observances and conducts the ritual. The word is translated as 'officiant' or 'priest'.

By a *symbol* is meant something which typifies or represents something else. Our Nyakyusa informants spoke of *ififwani*—likenesses (the word is also used for photographs)—and in expounding rituals they repeatedly said of an object or action: 'This means (*kakati*) such and such.' Symbolism is always based on an association, a feeling of likeness between things. The intrinsic quality of an object, or relationship, or event, is expressed in terms of another

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, 1939.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

121 object or action which it is felt to resemble. The images men use,
811 the things they feel to be alike, are determined in a general way by the form of the society, and Nyakyusa images are in terms of bananas, staple grains, cattle, smithing on a primitive forge, lineage organization and so on. There are cultural idioms, accepted forms of expression, which frequently recur, but the particular associations are not predictable any more than the associations made by a poet in our own society—the priest and the doctor are indeed in one aspect poets.

771 The essence of Nyakyusa ritual is that things which are felt to
813 be alike are taken as causally connected. Both positive actions and
843 avoidances or taboos are based on the assumption that like objects or actions react on one another. This was clearly recognized by an informant who remarked: 'avoidances come from resemblances.' The basis is invariably the *feeling* of likeness, but mixed up with this there is often exact observation, as in the following taboo. The husband of a pregnant woman may not hunt big game because, it is said, they will be unusually fierce and attack him particularly. The association made is between a pregnant woman who is irritable, 'fierce' (*skali*), and the game which is fierce. The husband is identified with his wife, 'and', the Nyakyusa say, 'lion *always* attack a cow in calf'. Sometimes like things are felt to be antagonistic, as 'seed in the belly' and seed in the ground, and sometimes sympathetic. Sometimes like is thought to produce like—a pregnant woman is forbidden to sit close to someone lest she bears twins—and sometimes men mime a misfortune as a prophylactic against it.

789 The rituals are magical in the sense that efficacy is held to lie in
184 the particular material form,[1] but they vary in detail with the
771 cultural group, just as the language does.[2] The rituals of the Lakeshore plain in Tanganyika (MuNgonde) and of Selya are almost identical, but those of the Kukwe, the Lugulu, the Saku, the Ndali, the Penja, and the people of Ngonde in Nyasaland are all somewhat different. Differences in ritual are directly connected by the people themselves with differences in lineage, and the principle is maintained that every individual follows the ritual of his or her father's lineage, though a married woman will follow that of her

[1] For a discussion of this characteristic of magic cf. G. & M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change* (1945), pp. 72–3; 88–95.

[2] An account of the various cultural groups included under Nyakyusa, and of related peoples, is given in *Good Company*, pp. 1–5.

2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

182 affirmative and cathartic: they express certain attitudes and make explicit and reject others. But how far the catharsis is efficient, how far the rituals cleanse man of anti-social attitudes, we do not know. In many religions there is liable to be a gap between attitudes expressed in ritual and everyday behaviour: between the rejection of anger, hate, envy, and neglect in the ritual, and brotherly co-operation between the worshippers in secular affairs. A pagan Nyakyusa may share the sacrificial flesh with his brother but quarrel over cattle and work sorcery against him; just as we white South Africans may take Communion with a fellow Christian who is black, yet compel him to live in squalor far separate from us; but the very reluctance of most whites in South Africa to take Communion along with blacks is evidence that the symbolic act is not without significance.

(c) *Ultimate values and cultural variation*

●121 There are certain general hypotheses about the nature of ritual in society, which the analysis of Nyakyusa rituals and comparison with other societies suggest.[1]

First, those things are treated as sacred which are necessary to the survival of the group. In every society we find the *means of subsistence* sacralized (whether it be crops, cattle, hunting, or fishing, or a combination of these) together with fire and shelter. The reproductive cycle is always treated as sacred, the primary relationships of parents and children and siblings, the group or community as a whole, and significant changes in status within it. Law is holy in the sense that right behaviour (or morality) is always linked to religion.

As economy and social structure vary, the particular items treated as sacred vary. This is clearly recognized by the Nyakyusa themselves, as the texts quoted show: the foods used in the rituals are commonly the staple foods of the local area. And if a number of Bantu-speaking groups are compared it is plain that the location of the altar varies with the economy. Among the Nyakyusa it is the earth of the banana grove; among the pastoral Nguni it is the cattle byre; among Lunda hunters it is a tree or branch adorned with trophies of the chase.[2] The exception is when rituals

[1] My debt to Professor Radcliffe-Brown will be obvious to all students of anthropology.

[2] V. W. Turner, 'Lunda Rites and Ceremonies', *Occasional Papers of the Rhodes-Livingstone Museum*, No. 10, 1953.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

spread and the foods and altars traditional in them continue to be used: thus Nyakyusa Christians use wheaten bread and wine from the grape, whereas their pagan neighbours use bananas and millet beer, and their altar is a table set at the east end of a consecrated building, not the earth of a banana grove. |21

Nyakyusa ideas of physiology are those of a strongly patrilineal society, in marked contrast with those of the Bemba who are matrilineal:[1] to the Nyakyusa a woman is a 'bag' which the husband fills with his 'blood' and so creates a child, while the Bemba believe that 'blood' is passed through the woman, not the man. The taboos of pregnancy also have a patrilineal slant. A difficult labour is commonly attributed, among the Nyakyusa, to the wife's adultery, never to that of her husband, as among the Bemba. §27 |71

Differences in ritual vary in general form with the differences in economy and structure, but there remains a relative autonomy between them. Not only do symbols spread beyond the economy within which they were coined but, as we showed earlier, poetic licence exists, and the particular associations made by priest and poet are not predictable. Ritual idioms are linked to language, but how closely we do not know. What evidence there is from Bantu Africa suggests a similarity in symbols over a wide area, connected with the similarity in language, but such a hypothesis has yet to be established. |21

Secondly, the expression of sentiments reaffirms them. Treating food, and reproduction, and family relationships, and the community as sacred, expresses the importance of these things to the group concerned, and at the same time breeds respect for them. Treating them as important in ritual makes people feel that they are important. In Whitehead's phrase, 'the object of symbolism is the enhancement of the importance of what is symbolized'.[2] Rituals are also cathartic in that they express and explicitly reject anti-social attitudes, such as anger, terror, and the wish for death.

Thirdly, the general attitudes expressed in Nyakyusa rituals are necessary to the continuance of any society; they are conditions of social living; and the particular attitudes are necessary to the maintenance of the particular Nyakyusa structure.

Every society, if it is to survive, must value fertility in some |21

[1] A. I. Richards, 'Some types of family structure amongst the Central Bantu' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by Radcliffe-Brown and Forde, p. 207; 'Mother-right among the Central Bantu' in *Essays Presented to C. G. Seligman*, edited by Evans-Pritchard, Firth, Malinowski, Schapera, p. 276. §12

[2] A. N. Whitehead, *Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effects* (1923), p. 74.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

121 142 degree. Sir Charles Darwin has suggested that those societies which put a premium on fertility will ultimately be dominant, by the weight of numbers,[1] but the evidence from Africa suggests that those societies which have in fact survived have regulated reproduction. Of the concern of the Nyakyusa with fertility there can be no doubt. The gods *are* the reproductive principle expressed in the idiom of a patrilineal society—'the shade and the semen are brothers'. One of the express purposes of the rituals of kinship, as well as of the communal rituals, is to secure fertility; one of the major sanctions of religion is the fear of the loss of it. And further than this, all their major activities are expressed in terms of the reproductive cycle and thought to be linked to it. The association of crops, and cattle, and hunting, and war with pregnancy and menstruation in women has already been indicated, and a more general connection between fertility in crops, and cattle, and men will be shown in the account of communal rituals. The two principal crafts, iron smelting and bark-cloth making, are associated with the act of coition. So also are fire-making, grinding, cooking, and eating; and the hearth and hut are identified with the union of husband and wife, and with childbirth. Whether such a preoccupation with fecundity, and the tendency to express all activities in terms of the reproductive cycle, are stronger among the Nyakyusa than among most other peoples we do not yet know, but at least they do not minimize its importance. It is the more significant therefore that, though maximum fertility of soil and stock was sought, there was a limitation of the human reproductive rate by deliberate spacing, and by limiting a woman's period of child-bearing to the years before her son's marriage. The Nyakyusa appear to have been an expanding people in relatively empty country, and the six or seven births per woman which this system allowed, combined with an infant mortality of perhaps 50 per cent, did not cause undue pressure upon their resources.

121 182 The particular form of limitation was linked to the structure of age-villages. The very wide spacing, with four to five years between pregnancies, and the taboo on a woman bearing after the marriage of her eldest son, ensured that, as a general rule, full brothers built in different villages. Thus the most closely-knit kinship group, that of full brothers and their sons, did not coincide with the local group, and the fissiparous tendency of lineages was checked by village loyalties. A group of full brothers and their

[1] Charles Darwin, *The Next Million Years*, p. 171 *et passim*.

2: Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sons, between whom economic and religious bonds were strong, [2] might be liable to isolate themselves, but could not do so when [182] each brother and son lived in a different village. As among the northern Nguni and Tswana, who were organized in age regiments,[1] the principle of generation balanced the lineage principle, each holding the other in check.

Every society values co-operation: 'mutual aid' of one sort or another is a condition of social survival. The Nyakyusa rituals of kinship constantly reaffirm the mutual dependence of members of a lineage. They are 'members of one another' by virtue of their common blood, and what injures one may injure all. This is very clearly expressed in the rituals of death, twin birth, spearing, rotting the ropes, and protection against sorcery. The desire for health and plenty is the lever used to compel co-operation.

The elementary family of parents and children exists in every [2] society of which we have evidence and may be taken as an institu- 574 tion necessary to survival, biological and social, though its form varies. In the death, and puberty, and birth rituals the close character of the bonds between parents and children, between siblings, and between spouses, is expressed; and the polygynous form of the Nyakyusa family, the closer bonds between a man and his first wife and those of the same 'house', and the identification of alternate generations, are also manifested. Thus the importance of the primary ties of parents and children, and of the 'house' within the polygynous family, is enhanced.

Differences in status exist in every society and must do so since [2] leadership is necessary. Individuals move from one position to 554 another during the course of their lives, and all societies celebrate such changes, thereby compelling public acceptance of them, and impressing on the individuals concerned their new duties and responsibilities. These are expressed very pointedly in the Nyakyusa admonition to a bride, or widow, or the mother of twins; in the greeting accorded to the heir to the father of a family; and in the oration to the shade. The rituals are a symbolic weaning from childhood, from the bride's father's lineage, from a former marriage, or from deceased parents, and compel acceptance of a new position; clinging to the old spells madness and death. The conception of being 'born again' and making a new start, is directly

[1] Among the Pedi it was taboo for full brothers to be initiated into the same regiment. G. M. Pitje, 'Traditional systems of male education among the Pedi', *African Studies*, 9 (1950), p. 109.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

121 554 linked to the physiological cycle of individuals and their close kin, and cannot be detached from it as in Christianity.

121 626 Law is a condition of social survival; no society can exist without it; and in so far as religion helps to maintain law and order it fulfills a necessary social function. Among the Nyakyusa (and perhaps in all societies) order is maintained partly by fear of supernatural sanctions. The rituals we have described both enhance fear and relieve it. They harness fear to social ends.

121 771 The preceding chapters are full of the pagan fear of death, menstruation, childbirth, and shedding blood. The rituals express the fear and teach men what they must do to be saved. They teach them to co-operate with their kinsmen and to follow traditional custom, for in that alone does salvation lie. The fear of madness or sterility compels each generation to follow traditional custom as ordained for them by the heroes: thus is the dependence of man upon his society instilled. The death ritual illustrates this most dramatically. In every society men must overcome death emotionally, they must turn to life. In the death ritual the mourners are distraught, terrified; they express their grief and put it behind them; their relatives and neighbours gather round them, share their sorrow, and help them to overcome it. The dead is replaced. Death is associated with fecundity and so made tolerable. It is no accident that the Nyakyusa interpret all the rituals, and especially the death ritual, as a protection against going mad, against the disintegration of the personality. And safety is assured to the living by following minutely the traditions of their lineage.

[184] That the nature of men's fears is culturally determined is clear from the Nyakyusa evidence, for Christians and pagans alike are agreed that 'the Christians fear much less' than do pagans, and the Christians do in fact ignore taboos which the pagans feel to be binding. But the rituals do not create fear out of nothing. All the situations in which they are performed—birth and death, marriage, and misfortune—are situations of emotional tension in all societies. The rituals heighten the emotions and canalize them. They both teach men to feel, and teach them what it is proper to feel.

771 783 Many writers have shown us that the conception of sacred includes both the idea of holiness and of pollution;[1] that the awful, the fearful, may be conceived both as pure and as filthy. In

[1] See particularly W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (1889), pp. 153, 446–54 (1914 ed.); R. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (1923).

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Preface

THIS book is not an attempt to depict the daily life of the Konde people; it rather aims at indicating, so far as an outsider can, the leading ideas and practices which make up the background, leaving to others the task of bringing the foreground into proper relief. And, after many years' residence and work among the Konde, I feel increasingly how much the fact of being a foreigner among them limits one's understanding of the people whose ideas he attempts to set down on paper. The task has been undertaken largely at the request of some of the leading men of the tribe, who are alive to the fact that the old days are passing, even among the conservative Konde, and that, if a record is to be made at all, it must be made without delay.

There is no one to whom I must acknowledge indebtedness to the same extent as I must, and now do, to native chiefs and common people, educated and otherwise; to doctors, diviners, hunters, fishers; every kind of native in fact, from whom I have caught hints, in sudden and unintentional flashes of revelation, or in sustained conversation, of what is in the Bantu mind. And therefore I have, in most chapters, aimed at using language which indicates the native attitude to the various beliefs dealt with; an attitude in most cases of unquestioning faith.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

THE RHODES-LIVINGSTONE PAPERS

121 This series is designed to increase the sum of exact information upon the sociology of Central Africa at that most interesting of all historical periods, the present day. The sudden establishment of relationships between the civilized peoples of Europe and the primitive peoples of Africa is one of the greatest events of human history; we are in the midst of it, and it makes upon us all, both Africans and Europeans, far-reaching demands for emotional and practical adjustment. Nor without understanding can we either control our destiny or properly enjoy its rich complexity.

Understanding, however, is hard to come by in the bewildering diversity of facts. Human society is everywhere complex and especially so in Central Africa where the variety of cultural tradition, both amongst Africans and Europeans, and of local economic and climatic conditions prevents our minds from grasping at all easily the general nature and movement of the situation in which we live. We must needs proceed patiently and step by step. And so the majority of these papers will deal each with one limited area and one particular aspect of social life alone. Only in this piecemeal fashion can we ever reach true understanding.

In this, the first of the series, an attempt is made to describe the property in land which individual Africans possess to-day within a particular tribal group in the south-west of Tanganyika. As this group was until fifty years ago among the most isolated and primitive groups in the whole of Africa, there is perhaps a more than local interest in seeing that it ranks unquestionably among those "indigenous peoples," to quote a famous judicial document, "whose legal conceptions, though differently developed, are hardly less precise than our own. When once they have been studied and understood they are no less enforceable than rights arising under English law."

GODFREY WILSON,
Director, Rhodes-Livingstone Institute.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

1. *INTRODUCTION*

Land everywhere is the basis of social life, that upon which men move and rest; it is both in itself the most important raw material of economic activity and the location of all other materials such as minerals, wood and water; it is a universal condition of human action, an object of human understanding and feeling. And everywhere the use of land is defined and limited by a system of tenure, a series of laws, moral rules and conventions without which no orderly life at all would be possible upon it. This paper is an attempt to describe in part one such system of land tenure, that which I found to obtain among the Nyakyusa, a Bantu people of South Tanganyika, during the years 1934-1938. 121

I have here described in detail the land-rights of individuals only, both in relation to one another and to the villages and chiefdoms of which they are members, and have left the rights of these groups in relation to one another for a further publication.

The Nyakyusa system of land-tenure is determined by three main factors: firstly by the physical conditions of life in this part of Central Africa, that is by the nature of the soil and its topography, by the climate and by the density of the human population; secondly by the particular practical uses to which land is put and the techniques employed therein; and thirdly by the form of Nyakyusa society, the groups and relationships into which it is articulated. But in considering these three main determinants we shall have to take into account intellectual and emotional factors also, the understanding of their land which the Nyakyusa possess and their feelings about it.

2. *PHYSICAL CONDITIONS*

The Rungwe District of the Southern Highlands Province of Tanganyika, in which the Nyakyusa live, is situated some 9° south of the Equator and is a part of the Great Rift Valley formation. The country of the Nyakyusa is bounded on the south by Lake Nyasa and the Songwe river, on the east by the almost sheer wall of the Livingstone Mountains (which rise to 10,000 feet), and on the west by the lower Ndali hills which, although included in the same administrative district, are inhabited not by Nyakyusa but by two cultural groups closely related to them, the Ndali and the Lambya. 131 133

The Nyakyusa live then between the two walls of the Rift, but their country is not itself all of an equal altitude. In the north the Rift is here interrupted and closed by the extinct Rungwe volcano (10,000 feet) from whose base (5,000 feet) the land drops for twenty-five miles in a cascade of hills and little plateaux to level out in a lake-shore plain fifteen or

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

114 121 642

My wife and I were engaged in researches among the Nyakyusa from September 1934 to January 1938; and our informants constantly told us of the general similarity between their own customs and those of the Ngonde plain. They made it clear, however, that while they and the men of the Ngonde plain shared an otherwise almost identical culture they yet differed markedly in their political systems. The Nyakyusa, when the Europeans reached them, were organized in small independent chiefdoms, the people of Ngonde possessed a paramount chief, the Kyungu. More recently, among the Nyakyusa, a sustained attempt by the Tanganyika Administration to set up two paramount chiefs had failed; in Ngonde, on the other hand, where the Kyungu's supremacy had, until recently, been officially unrecognized by the Nyasaland Administration, his position seemed to be quite secure. The contrast was an interesting one and demanded investigation. Nor was this the only difference between the Nyakyusa political system and that of Ngonde; besides a paramount chief Ngonde possessed a group of hereditary nobles (*amahambala*) which was apparently quite unparalleled among the Nyakyusa.

114 121 642 171

So in July 1937 we crossed the Songwe and spent some time in Ngonde studying these differences. Our visit confirmed the fact that the traditional culture and social system of the Ngonde plain was in almost all respects identical with that of the Nyakyusa. The patrilineal kinship organization with marriage by cattle, the age-villages each with its great-commoner or headman (*ulifumu*), the little chiefdoms each consisting of a group of age-villages united under a hereditary chief (*umalafyale*), all were there.[1] The descriptions we were given of the traditional rituals at death, at girls' puberty, at the birth of twins and at the "coming out" of young chiefs seemed to be identical in general significance and almost identical in detail with the rituals we knew among the Nyakyusa. Language also was similar, though here the similarity had been less close in former times. And yet there were the two great differences: at the apex of the political system of Ngonde was the Kyungu, while a group of hereditary nobles formed an integral part of it. Again and again our informants confirmed this general identity, these specific differences: "Everything is just the same among us as among the Nyakyusa, only in the case of the Kyungu and his nobles (*amahambala*) is there any dissimilarity." How then was this dissimilarity to be accounted for?

[1] This social system is discussed in the first paper of this series—*The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa* (1938), and also in papers contributed to *Bantu Studies*, one in September 1936—"An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society," another in April 1939—"Nyakyusa Burial Conventions."

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

AN INTRODUCTION TO NYAKYUSA SOCIETY

By GODFREY WILSON

128 This paper is an attempt to give an outline of the pagan culture of the Nyakyusa people of South Tanganyika[1] in relation to the three fundamental groups into which their society is articulated—the family, the age-village and the chiefdom. Every Nyakyusa belongs to some family, to some age-village, to some chiefdom; and in his membership of these three groups is comprehended most of his behaviour.

●121 Sociology is the objective study of human relationships which, as they only exist in men's activities, can only there be studied. The systematic investigation of culture, of the common economic, ceremonial, legal, religious and other activities which obtain among some group of people, is the sole possible method of discovering the system of human relationships which makes of the group a society. It is only by viewing all the facts of culture in the light of the relationships of the people concerned that we can see the full objective significance of those facts, it is only so that we can see the body or actuality of those relationships. For human relationships are the most inclusive facts of social life, they are the form[2] which the sociologist seeks for in the matter of his special field; whether he is engaged in description, or in the functional analysis of a single culture, or in the comparative analysis of several cultures, human relationships are always his goal, which he must reach if his account of fact is to be coherent, if his explanations are to be complete.

The method adopted in this paper is that of Professor Malinowski and his followers; it involves a repudiation of the one-sided Durkheimian concept of "social integration" or "solidarity," and a realization that culture, consisting as it does of human behaviour with a human meaning, has a material reality which makes possible and conditions the human relationships that integrate it and give it form. This point is elaborated in the concluding section.

128 In order to make Nyakyusa society into a wholly lucid unit, intelligibly comparable with other societies, it would be necessary to undertake a complete functional analysis, and to explain in detail why it is that different members of this group on different occasions generally conform,

[122] [1] I am greatly indebted to the Rockefeller Foundation for the Fellowship which makes my investigation possible.
[2] By "form" is meant, not a sensible pattern, but an intelligible system of fact.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

And. 622
every year two hereditary Kinga priests come a three days journey from 782
their own country to participate in the sacrifice of a black cow to the [574]
spirits of Lwembe and his descendants.

Down by Lake Nyasa, in the extreme South East of the Nyakyusa 778
district, there is another equally sacred spot where sacrifices were, and 1764
believe still are[21] made to Kyala, a younger brother of Lwembe.

The Christians and the Moslems form other religious groups which 795
transcend the boundaries of a single chiefdom, but an examination of the Nyakyusa Christian and Moslem communities is beyond the scope of this paper.

The political group which is constituted by a Court district, though 636
only ten years old, is of great importance in Nyakyusa society ; but here again the detailed examination of its organization and the relationships of its members is beyond the scope of this paper.

Conclusion : Culture and Society

The aim of sociology is to describe single forms of society fully and, 121
in comparison with one another, to explain them completely, in so far as 128
reasons can be found within this particular scientific field. Neither full description nor complete explanation of Nyakyusa society has here been attempted : many important facts have been omitted from the account, irregularities of detail have been slurred over, the connections of fact have been only occasionally and sketchily established, and no systematic comparison of this unit with others has been made at all.

But the method of this paper has involved an analysis, summary and 121
general though it has been, of the nature of some of the many institutions in which the Nyakyusa meet, of some of the actual elements in their relationships with one another. It is in their dealings with the earth and their cattle, with the spirits and with men who break the law, in their discussions and arguments, their ceremonial feasts, their giving and receiving, in their loves and hates and in their admiration and mockery of one another that they forever make and remake their own human relationships.

Culture is the matter of which society is the form ; inseparable in fact they are only intelligible together. No two men can be related unless they both do something and unless their activities are somehow connected. Nor can either escape relationship with his fellow if what

[21] I have not yet been there to investigate.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

121 one does in any way affects the other's behaviour. "Culture" is but a general term for all the connected activities of a group of people through which they enter into relationships, that is into society, with one another. And since culture is nothing but the activities which bind men wittingly or unwittingly together, it is only through a systematic investigation of culture that we can reach any understanding at all of human bonds.

Every cultural activity must have some point, some meaning, for the actors themselves[22] or they would not undertake it; it must have some value, some emotional appeal, some intellectual significance for them. This meaning is not the sole reason for their behaviour but it is one among other reasons. And, as what they do is an occasion of relationship with one another, so the meaning of what they do is also one of the reasons for the existence of their society in that particular situation.

Now the specific meaning of a cultural activity to the actors is not always a direct interest in one another or in human relationships as such, although sometimes, as in love making or in a movement for social reform, it may be so. In their behaviour men commonly look to some non-social end and create society half unwittingly on the way. When the Nyakyusa sacrifice a cow to the spirits of dead chiefs, or hoe their fields, or drink, or discuss the cause of a sickness, the specific reasons for their behaviour are to be found in values, ideas and feelings connected with health, food, drink, sickness and misfortune in general; and it is, in large part, their concern with these things that leads them to enter into society with one another. Human relationships are largely determined by the consequences, implications, and associations of absorbing pursuits whose immediate interest is not social, they are only in part the specific ends of effort, the direct objects of thought and feeling.

But apart from men's actual pursuits society has no existence anywhere, it can only be found in the material events of culture, at particular places and times; and only through a systematic analysis of the meanings and implications of those events can society be understood.

What we have just said involves a radical criticism of the Durkheimian method in social science; for that method always stops short of any thorough analysis of the manifold meanings and implications of cultural institutions, and so can never reveal the true nature of society which only exists in them. The Durkheimian's "social integration" or "solidarity" is a system of human relationships with only emotional

[22] Not for all the actors, some of whom usually behave under the compulsion of sanctions, but for the majority of those responsible for the activity's continuance.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

elements, void of all intelligible occasions of existence, a bloodless fiction, an insignificant idea. 121

Since every cultural activity is in part determined by external conditions of biology, climate, geography and historical circumstance, these conditions are also partial determinants of the human relationships involved in it. But the values, opinions and emotions current in any society are very largely independent of external conditions and cannot be deduced from them. And it is these aims, ideas and feelings which, through the activities to which they give point, and through the consequences, associations and implications of these activities provide the cultural conditions for each particular form of human society.

Thus culture, the matter, conditions the form of society which exists in it; but the reverse is equally true, for every cultural activity is itself conditioned and made possible by the system of human relationships of which the society in question consists. Culture has no independent reality, it is always together with and at every moment conditioned by the relationships of people, for it is nothing but their connected behaviour. The form in which men act, in which they express their feelings and understand their world is inevitably and always conditioned by their relationships with one another. Into the meaning of cultural activities human relationships only occasionally enter as the immediate centre of the actors' interest, but they invariably enter as the context in which alone that meaning can exist. When a Nyakyusa hoes his fields he is directly seeking food and his action has thus an interest which is not at that moment specifically social, none the less it is socially conditioned in its entirety. The time and energy he puts into hoeing depend upon his need of food, which in turn largely depends upon the number of his wives and children, his responsibilities to them and the prestige that he has acquired or that he wishes to acquire for hospitality among his neighbours. And his every action, his every statement, his every overt expression of feeling is likewise socially conditioned.

A true sociological method is thus a systematic investigation of the mutual connections of culture and society, an attempt to show how the material and the form of social life forever condition each other. It is only in this way that we can reach understanding of the separate units of human society and of the universal laws which all alike fulfill.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

634 accessible in an earlier book, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*,[1]
796 and the details need not be recapitulated here.
769 Perhaps the reader has already noted a certain difficulty over tenses: 'is' tends to merge into 'was'. When we first visited
114 BuNyakyusa in 1934 missionaries of various denominations had
797 already been at work, and a foreign government in control, for
177 forty years past. Between 1934 and my last visit in 1955 the changes have been great, but I use the present tense for things seen at first hand, whether earlier or later, and a separate chapter is devoted to the twenty years' change. It is well to recognize at the outset, however, that in 1934 the sanctity and power of the
[643] 'divine kings' was already questioned and their rituals were
[796] curtailed, and even the pagan cosmology of the Nyakyusa was beginning to exhibit traces of Christian influence. One striking example was the changing, or rather the fluid, connotation of the name *Kyala*.

Two new types of organization developed in BuNyakyusa with the arrival of the Europeans: churches which are based on a principle of association wholly new to the pagan tradition—common belief as opposed to kinship or contiguity; and a centralized system of government. To these have now been added trading concerns, of which the most important are co-operative societies exporting coffee and rice.

The subject of this book is (i) the traditional rituals celebrated
● 121 on behalf of chiefdoms and groups of chiefdoms, and (ii) the changing ideas and values apparent as a section of the Nyakyusa turn from paganism to Christianity. In the concluding chapters an attempt is made to demonstrate the links between the changes in social structure and the changes in ritual.

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*, 1957.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

expressed or resolved in ritual. The place for *ukusaya*—speaking out—is the council chamber not the sacred grove or the homestead where the shades gather, and the reconciliation of conflicts between chiefs, or between chiefs and District Commissioner or chiefs and commoners, is sought in a committee rather than a Church. Perhaps the greatest difficulty in modern administration in Africa lies in this very separation of activities, in the *thinness* of the bonds across the colour line, in the cleavage between secular and sacred. Some separation of the different aspects of a society is a concomitant of the increase in scale—it is one manifestation of specialization—but it is greater in Tanganyika with its diversity of religious traditions than it is in Britain with its common Christian history. 171 178 648

That there is a connexion between the form of faith and ritual and the form of social structure few would deny. The concern of the anthropologist is to define it; to plot the limits of autonomy between different aspects within societies. This can be done only by the patient analysis and comparison of many societies and this book is offered as a humble contribution towards such a comparative study. 182 121

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I

In many areas of Eastern Africa the pressure of peasant populations on their tribal lands is a critical feature of the contemporary scene, and this is most especially so in the more fertile parts where the African has accepted the new cash economy and is beginning to appreciate the potentialities of the modern world. The situation has been highlighted recently in the public mind by the publication of the Report of the East African Royal Commission[1] which examined the economic conditions of our time and made general recommendations.

In Tanganyika the overall density of population is low (22 persons per square mile) and the general scale of economic activity still remains little above subsistence level over vast areas of Territory. There are, however, islands of extremely dense populations scattered through the country, often associated with the mountain areas, where soil is fertile, rainfall is reliable and adequate and the cultivation of crops for sale in world markets has gone ahead fairly easily. These populations still comprise peasant farming communities with little capital and their "natural" impulse is to expand their extensive agricultural system rather than to intensify their cultivation on existing holdings. Serious overcrowding soon results for the favourable areas are limited and surrounded by drier bushlands. African attitudes and legal customs concerning their land do not change quickly and they lag behind new conditions of physical limitation and economic development. Whilst the recommendations of the Royal Commission may be valuable in the establishment of general policy, it is obvious that detailed application through time demands a fairly exact knowledge and understanding of particular local conditions if it is to be reasonably successful. This is particularly the case in so large a country as Tanganyika, with its multiplicity of environments and tribal systems of law, land tenure and agriculture, and the social attitudes which encompass them.

The present essay is an attempt, sponsored by Government, to describe and analyse the land and population conditions in one small area of the Territory where a cash economy is emerging and where the pressure of a peasant population on its land resources has become acute. It is hoped that some of this account may be applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to other similar areas both in Tanganyika and elsewhere, and that the conclusions reached may be helpful in dealing with the problems there; but primarily this is a study of one particular part of the country in order to provide the information upon which detailed policy may be founded.

The Nyakyusa are not entirely typical of many of the Bantu people of East Africa for they have a most distinctive social organisation, peculiar to themselves, based on age-villages and petty, independent chiefdoms. Also, they inhabit a country whose annual rainfall is unusually high, averaging about 100 inches. On the other hand, these people are one of the very few in Tanganyika for whom we have an excellent account of both their pre-European and early European systems of land tenure. Based on this information, obtained *before* modern changes began, we can perceive, analyse

1. *East African Royal Commission* 1953-5, *Report:* H.M.S.O. 1955. Cmd. 9475.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and try to understand the nature and reasons for change. Here, then, is a good opportunity for the study of social change – not only in land tenure as such, but also in village and family organisation, political authority and economic life.

II

The Nyakyusa are a Bantu people inhabiting the main part of the Rungwe District in southern Tanganyika, immediately to the north of Lake Nyasa. In 1948 they numbered about 199,000 in that District, but about 10,000 men were probably at the time temporarily absent from their homes and in employment in the mines and towns of the Rhodesias and South Africa (see Gulliver, 1957), whilst about 20,000 had migrated to live in the adjacent Mbeya District to the north.

The tribal area comprises a confined geographical basin surrounding the northern end of Lake Nyasa. It extends only about 40 miles from the tip of the lake at 1,550 feet above sea level to the Poroto Mountains in the north at 8,000 feet; and from east to west is only about 30 miles, from the almost sheer walls of the Livingstone Mountains (with peaks up to 10,000 feet) to the Ndali Highlands (rising to about 7,000 feet). There are therefore unusually large ecological differences within so small an area. Three major regions are to be distinguished: the "Northern Highlands" over about 4,500 feet, the low-lying "Lake Plains" in the south, and the "Central Region" in between. Everywhere rainfall is reliable and high, averaging at least 100 inches annually[1], and this amply compensates for a certain poverty and misuse of the soil, although (and particularly in the Central Region) it brings dangers of soil erosion. Except in the highest parts the banana is the staple food, supported by maize, beans, finger millet and groundnuts. In the Northern Highlands coffee has become well established as the principal cash crop: in the Lake Plains paddy rice cultivation provides both a food and a cash crop: in the Central Region the country is too low generally for coffee and too high and dry for rice; consequently cash-cropping is considerably inferior and the people's standard of living is rather poorer.

The Nyakyusa and their country tended for a long time to be relatively isolated from the outside world by high mountain walls and rain-soaked roads. In addition, or because of it perhaps, they developed an almost unique culture which was supported by considerable conservatism and high insularity. They still continue to regard their African neighbours beyond the mountains as their social and cultural inferiors. The turmoil of the slave-trade in Central Africa passed them by; in modern times they have not enthusiastically accepted Christianity and they have refused to take up the use of Swahili, the Territorial *lingua franca*. In recent years, and most especially since the end of World War II, they have, however, accepted and pushed forward with vigour a rapid and extensive economic development, involving particularly the production of coffee and paddy as cash crops, and large-scale labour migration to the south in the high-wage mining industries. The multiplicity of petty, often tiny, independent chiefdoms has been reorganised to provide four local government areas, each under a Rural Council, in which the old chiefdoms have become something like parishes[2]. Although much of the old conservatism and narrow parochialism persists, yet there is now an atmosphere of accepted change, of a keen desire for economic development, and a general acceptance of a cash economy.

Probably the most significant feature of modern life in the Nyakyusa country is the increasing scarcity of land for agriculture in relation to the

1. At Tukuyu, in the Northern Highlands, annual rainfall averaged 99.28 inches between 1919 and 1952: at Kyela, in the Lake Plains, the average between 1940 and 1951 was 106.21 inches.
2. See Kingdon, Z.E.: The initiation of a system of local government by African rural councils in the Rungwe District, Tanganyika; *The Journal of African Administration*, iii, 4, October, 1951.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

people's needs. The importance of this can scarcely be overemphasised for a peasant people who are adopting a cash economy and are socially and emotionally deeply attached to their land – their single, continuous source of capital and their tribal heritage. Apart from the possibilities of labour migration which, so far at any rate, are taken up only temporarily and by the younger men, there are no economic opportunities and no capital to compete with the land. In non-economic life the land remains supreme as the persisting basis of society.

As late as 1940 the District Commissioner, Rungwe, was able to write that there was most generally sufficient land for the people's needs in all parts of the country, and the only competition was perhaps in respect of the very best and most fertile tracts, as had always been the case. G. Wilson recorded similar remarks in the late nineteen-thirties. That these observations were correct cannot be doubted. It is known, for instance, that until the post-war years in the Lake Plains – where now land shortage is most acute – there was a broad belt of mainly unoccupied, uncultivated bushland, infested with game, extending from the Livingstone Mountains in the east to the Nyasaland border in the south-west. There were extensive, more or less empty areas in almost every chiefdom. The people were subsistence farmers only, and also banana eaters, and in this well-watered country their agricultural requirements were adequately met on very modest holdings, from most of which two harvests a year could be gathered.

In the brief period of little more than ten years the situation has altered radically to the point of a general shortage of land (except for some parts in the north-west), and especially in the Lake Plains the available land is quite insufficient to meet the demands of the inhabitants. This critical change is the result partly of an increasing population, augmented by some immigration from other tribal areas; but more especially it is the result of the demands for larger arable holdings to meet cash crop aspirations – i.e., money earning. Although both coffee and paddy rice cultivation had begun before 1939, and both were encouraged and developed during the War years, it was not until after 1945 that both of these cash crops became well and generally established and the demand for money incomes became universal.

III

It was in order to investigate this new situation, which was beginning to become serious and to cause concern to Government, that I made a sociological survey in 1955. I had already spent some months in the country in 1954 investigating labour migration in order to provide Government with information and to make recommendations to deal with the problems arising. The second period of work occupied about five months. During both enquiries I was extremely fortunate in having the use of the excellent monographs of G. and M. Wilson who had carried out a conventional anthropological study of the Nyakyusa between 1934 and 1938. Without their basic work behind me, neither of my two studies would have been possible in so brief a time, and I must gratefully acknowledge the real value of their writings.

The intention had been that a complete enquiry should be made into Nyakyusa land conditions in all parts of the country, and that it should culminate in a full recording of tribal land law and custom with a view to its possible reform. In the event only the initial enquiry in the field in the Lake Plains was completed and the results of that alone are described in this essay. Whereas in former days there were probably few distinctive differences between the various parts of the country, in modern times with the introduction of different cash crops, with differential population growths and varying demands on the land, important divergences seem to be arising. For example,

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

For example,

in the Northern Highlands there is now a strong tendency for the tight village system to disintegrate as men seek to site their houses, each in his own coffee plot. In the Lake Plains also the structure of the age-village is changing – there the villages persist as such but they come to be inhabited by men of any age and new villages do not emerge with a new chief. No attempt is made here, however, to analyse these variations for they are only now beginning and no satisfactory, detailed information is available for the post-war cash economy of the highland areas.

The Government of Tanganyika has permitted the publication of this essay, and I wish to express my gratitude for its support. The essay is a modified version of my original Report which was presented to Government in January, 1956. The views expressed in it are my own and not those of Government. As usual in my work as Government Sociologist, I have received much valuable assistance, advice and information from officers stationed in the area. The Nyakyusa themselves, as during my first enquiry, were usually cooperative, and at least some of them welcomed my work as a contribution to the easement of their novel difficulties. It would not have been surprising had they remained obdurate and antagonistic towards my enquiries about their land, for like many modern Africans they have a sense of insecurity which is not susceptible to reason. In fact I was able without much difficulty to make any enquiry I wished, to measure sample areas and to discuss the situation in all its aspects. Perhaps it is that an African people welcome a sympathetic enquirer and in their problems genuinely want assistance. The task of a sociologist is of course in some ways rather easier than that of an administrator or technical officer who has to persuade the people actually to accept and practice new ways and to abandon old ways. It is hoped that this essay may be of assistance both to these officers and to the people whom they are attempting to assist and teach.

Finally, I must thank the East African Institute of Social Research which has accepted this essay for publication, and especially Dr. L. A. Fallers who kindly read and criticised the original draft and who drew the two sketch maps.

Note: The term, the "Lake Plains", as used in this essay is to be understood to cover the major part of the modern local government area under the Ntebela Rural Council. Omitted are the small groups of Kisi (Ikombe) and Ndali (Ngana) peoples to the extreme east and west respectively. This area contains the alluvial flood plains surrounding the northern tip of Lake Nyasa, and the lowest foothills to the north where the country begins its steep incline towards the Poroto Mountains. To the south lies the lake and to the south-west, beyond the meandering Songwe river, lie the bushlands of the northern part of the Nyasaland Protectorate. To the east are the towering Livingstone Mountains and to the north live the other Nyakyusa groups in the highlands.

The area comprises a fairly compact social and economic region with a common historical tradition. Several of the indigenous chiefdoms stretch across the intermediate boundary between flood plains and foothills. With but one exception the present chiefs are lineal descendants, in their various houses, of the original Mwakyusa who led the people into this lowland area five generations ago. The modern inhabitants are pre-eminently the Nyakyusa-proper.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER II

THE TRADITIONAL SYSTEM

Although this essay is to be primarily concerned with the modern and changing land and population situation among the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains, it is quite essential first to have an understanding of the traditional system of political and territorial organisation and of land tenure. This is not mere historicism, for despite changes the traditional system remains as the basis of contemporary land-holding and land law. Whilst actual conditions on the ground change, the Nyakyusa appreciation of those changes and their attitudes to land lag significantly behind. In brief, the traditional system was geared to a situation where there was plenty of land. Today the people find real difficulty in adjusting themselves to a high density of population and an acute shortage of land, with the result that this new situation is aggravated by outmoded practices, attitudes and cultural values.

The ancestors of the present group of peoples now known collectively as the Nyakyusa, moved into the Rungwe region from the Ukinga Highlands to the east beyond the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains. According to legend, which is probably substantially true, these newcomers found a sparsely populated country which they easily occupied. Later, following internecine strife, one group under a man called Mwakyusa left the Masoko area in the centre of present-day Rungwe District and moved down into the Lake Plains. There, probably less than 150 years ago, they drove out the Ngonde people and settled. The sons of Mwakyusa took their shares of the country and people and established their independent chiefdoms. The chiefs in 1956 are the lineal descendants, mainly in the fifth generation, of Mwakyusa, and have a well-known genealogy. The only exception to this occurs amongst the group of tiny chiefdoms in the extreme east under the Livingstones, which now form a single administrative chiefdom under Mwakilasa and number some 400 men. They trace descent from pre-Nyakyusa settlers known as the Saku.

Traditionally, as today, the village was the basic unit both in social life generally and in land-holding in particular. The Nyakyusa village was possibly unique in Africa. It was comprised of men of roughly the same age, together with their wives and young children, and it excluded their fathers and sons and also, very often, their elder and younger brothers. Each village consisted of a close group of houses (often centred on a broad "village street"), with arable and pastoral land around it. Each village had fairly well-defined boundaries with its neighbours. The village was represented as a group and acted corporately through its headman, *lifumu*, who was the guardian of villagers' land rights, the arbiter in land problems and disputes, and the controller of unused land. He was also the political and ritual leader of the village, but nevertheless he was a commoner chosen from amongst the villagers themselves, and was not a member of a chiefly lineage.

Land was owned by the village as a group. Every man resident in the village had a clear right to a site for his house and banana plot and to arable land within the village boundaries; he also had a right to graze his cattle in its communal pastures. Residence gave these rights and members of other villages were excluded. A man who left the village automatically gave up these rights, though if he returned he was able to take up his former holding or its equivalent.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Fox-Strangeways; the late Mr. Eustace of the Tanganyika Agricultural Department, and Mrs. Eustace; the Rev. and Mrs. Marx of the Moravian mission at Rungwe; the Rev. and Mrs. Faulds of the Church of Scotland mission at Karonga; the Rev. and Mrs. Galbraith of Livingstonia; Mr. Godfried Schuler, a planter, and his wife; and the Officers of the King's African Rifles then stationed at Masoko.

When planning work among the Nyakyusa, we were guided by Lord Lugard, who had lively recollections of 'the north-enders', and by the Rev. D. R. and Mrs. MacKenzie, missionaries of the Church of Scotland in the area for many years. Mr. MacKenzie had published *The Spirit-Ridden Konde* in 1925, and was deeply interested in the Nyakyusa-Ngonde people; he lent us manuscript notes on the language and gave us the most generous encouragement.

Godfrey Wilson was concerned to make a general sociological study of the Nyakyusa, while I had been commissioned by the International African Institute to study particularly the effects of Christian missions on the community; in practice we found it profitable each to work primarily with our own sex, though we did not do so exclusively. Nyakyusa men proved better informants than women, largely, we think, because the men all had a training in logic, gained in discussion in the villages and in court. Women lacked this training and, except for doctors and those who had had some schooling, they found it difficult to give an account of their customs. The pagan women were markedly less coherent than conservative Pondo women (among whom I had previously worked[1]), a difference which I attribute to the narrow scope for leadership among the women in the traditional Nyakyusa society. And the difference between conservative pagan Nyakyusa women (doctors excepted) and Christians who had had some schooling was very noticeable.

Material on pagan and Christian, as well as that on men and women, overlapped at every point; and shortly after leaving the field we agreed that to describe pagan and Christian groups separately would distort the facts very seriously, and that we would collaborate in writing three books on Nyakyusa kinship, Nyakyusa villages, and Nyakyusa chiefdoms, including in each of

[1] Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest: Effects of Contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa* (1936).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

them an analysis of pagan and Christian differences. Godfrey Wilson died on active service before the writing of these books was begun, and I am thus solely responsible for the form of this volume, but the material is from the field notes of us both. Portions of Chapter I, and a few paragraphs in other chapters have been quoted (with minor emendations) from articles already published by him. Throughout the book the present tense refers to the period 1934–8 when the material was collected.

The problem of combining adequate documentation with lucidity has not yet been solved in anthropology: either monographs are so loaded with texts and case records as to be almost unreadable, or else they are impressionistic, and the student is left wondering just what evidence there is for the author's conclusions. We have attempted to meet this difficulty by publishing certain relevant documents in a separate section. These documents represent only a small selection of the field notes used, but at least they illustrate the type of evidence on which our argument is based. Many of them are translations of texts written in Nyakyusa by Mwaisumu and Mwaikambo from their own knowledge, or at the dictation of others.

The maps have been drawn by my friend and colleague at Rhodes University College, Professor J. V. L. Rennie, to whom I am much indebted for the time and trouble he has lavished on them. The map of Rungwe District is based on one compiled by Mr. R. de Z. Hall, and traced by Mr. G. D. Arthur, which was given me by the courtesy of the Survey Department of Tanganyika.

Finally, I am indebted to Dr. Audrey Richards, Professor Meyer Fortes, and Professor Dover Wilson for reading this manuscript and making many valuable suggestions.

Rhodes University College,
Grahamstown, 1949.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

THE field material on which this study was based was collected under the auspices of the Rockefeller Foundation and the International African Institute.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN1
Nyakyusa

By the same author:

Reaction to Conquest

The Analysis of Social Change (with Godfrey Wilson)

Good Company: A Study of Nyakyusa Age-Villages

122

The publication of this study was made possible by funds granted by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. That Corporation is not, however, to be understood as approving any of the statements made or views expressed therein.

[p. ii]

[p. i contains no textual material]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

114
122

THE material presented here was collected by Godfrey and Monica Wilson under the auspices of the Rockefeller Foundation and the International African Institute between 1934 and 1938. For leisure to complete the writing, and to revisit the Nyakyusa in 1955, I am indebted to the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the University of Cape Town.

MONICA WILSON

School of African Studies
University of Cape Town

[p. vii]

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6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

000 This, the third Rhodes-Livingstone Paper, is a description of the traditional political constitution of a Bantu tribe in the extreme north of Nyasaland, and of the profound changes which modern conditions have made in that constitution. The most important of the changes are inevitable, given the general conditions of contact between Africans and Europeans in Central Africa; and this brings us to a realization of the inescapable limits within which any policy of Indirect Rule must be carried out. But all the changes are also dependent in detail upon local conditions and upon the decisions of the Government and the present Native rulers.

The general picture presented can be paralleled in many parts of Central Africa. Here is a recently primitive people whose life was lived within very narrow horizons of space, whose religion combined faith in the powers of dead ancestors with magic and witchcraft, who practised subsistence agriculture and pastoralism but had slight external economic contacts also; whose judical institutions were decentralized and among whom civil war was endemic, but who possessed a paramount chief round whom the whole district rallied for tribal ritual and war. Today it is part of a world civilization, half its members are Christians, many grow crops for export or work for Europeans digging gold, while tribal and civil wars have been effectively stopped and judical procedure has been centralized. Through these changes a certain continuity is apparent, in the constitutional sphere, but a very much slighter one than writers on Africa usually assume.

122 Acknowledgments are due the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures and to the Rockefeller Foundation, under whose joint auspices my wife and I collected the material here published, and also to Dr. Max Gluckman, whose critical comments on the first draft of this paper particularly assisted me in bringing out the local autonomy in primitive Ngonde.

GODFREY WILSON,
Director, Rhodes-Livingstone Institute.

Livingstone,
Northern Rhodesia,
September, 1939.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

AN INTRODUCTION TO NYAKYUSA SOCIETY

By GODFREY WILSON

128 This paper is an attempt to give an outline of the pagan culture of the Nyakyusa people of South Tanganyika[1] in relation to the three fundamental groups into which their society is articulated—the family, the age-village and the chiefdom. Every Nyakyusa belongs to some family, to some age-village, to some chiefdom; and in his membership of these three groups is comprehended most of his behaviour.

121 Sociology is the objective study of human relationships which, as they only exist in men's activities, can only there be studied. The systematic investigation of culture, of the common economic, ceremonial, legal, religious and other activities which obtain among some group of people, is the sole possible method of discovering the system of human relationships which makes of the group a society. It is only by viewing all the facts of culture in the light of the relationships of the people concerned that we can see the full objective significance of those facts, it is only so that we can see the body or actuality of those relationships. For human relationships are the most inclusive facts of social life, they are the form[2] which the sociologist seeks for in the matter of his special field; whether he is engaged in description, or in the functional analysis of a single culture, or in the comparative analysis of several cultures, human relationships are always his goal, which he must reach if his account of fact is to be coherent, if his explanations are to be complete.

The method adopted in this paper is that of Professor Malinowski and his followers; it involves a repudiation of the one-sided Durkheimian concept of "social integration" or "solidarity," and a realization that culture, consisting as it does of human behaviour with a human meaning, has a material reality which makes possible and conditions the human relationships that integrate it and give it form. This point is elaborated in the concluding section.

128 In order to make Nyakyusa society into a wholly lucid unit, intelligibly comparable with other societies, it would be necessary to undertake a complete functional analysis, and to explain in detail why it is that different members of this group on different occasions generally conform,

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[1] I am greatly indebted to the Rockefeller Foundation for the Fellowship which makes my investigation possible.

[2] By "form" is meant, not a sensible pattern, but an intelligible system of fact.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

THE material presented here was collected by Godfrey and Monica Wilson under the auspices of the Rockefeller Foundation and the International African Institute between 1934 and 1938, and with the aid of a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York in 1955. Publication has been made possible by grants from the University of Cape Town and the International African Institute.

That the book could never have been written without the co-operation of very many friends will be obvious to readers. I wish, however, to thank particularly the chief Coloneli Makan'ata of Ilolo for generous hospitality and help, Mr. John Mwaikambo of Igalamu for friendship and able assistance over more than twenty years, the men and women of Lupata and Ilolo, the missionaries of Rungwe, and Mr. and Mrs. Peter Johnston of Tukuyu who received a stranger so charitably in their homes. Professor Dover Wilson has given himself unsparingly to make the reader's task less difficult and turn the barbarisms of an anthropologist into English.

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13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P.53]

Some Field Notes on the Nyakyusa

(Tukuyu District, Tanganyika Territory)

By F. Rudolf Lehmann

The following field notes on the Nyakyusa (Wanyakyusa, Wanyakjussa) represent only a small part of what I wrote down during my residence of about three months among this people in the summer of 1939. The present selected notes refer only to my sojourn in the village of Katumba near Masoko, with an ethnic group of the Nyakyusa who call themselves „Wa-Masoko"[1]. Notwithstanding the short time I had

[1] Cf. R. Thurnwald, p. 65; G. Wilson, Land Rights, p. 35.

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

122 for research, I am very grateful for a grant from the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures[2] which enabled me to start my ethnographical field work among these people. I wish also to express my thanks to the Government of the Tanganyika Territory, the Provincial Commissioner of Mbeya, and the District Officer of Tukuyu for all the courtesy I received during my work.

114 123 1. My first step, after my arrival at Katumba near Masoko, was to pay a visit to Mwamasika, the chief *(omalafyale)*[3] of the village and

[241 516 622]

The chief Wwamasika with his councillors.

of those adjacent. On the open place near his hut he welcomed me in company with his *amafumu*[4], the influential men of his villages. My attendant, the interpreter and I were asked to sit on chairs, while the *amafumu* sat down on mats or on large banana leaves on the ground; but the chief remained standing. I explained the aim of my visit, and that I would be very glad of his support. The chief promised it, and he kept his promise excellently. On other occasions the chief also sat [431] on a chair. In the afternoon of the first day I sent to the chief some presents. The following he made a return in form of food. This exchange of gifts is named *ukubonola*, handing over the gift.

123 757 2. In a small village belonging to Mwamasika's chieftainship was the residence of a medicine man, to whom I paid a visit as soon as I could. When I met him he was being consulted by a sick male person who had a stomach complaint *(agaju)*. After some negotiations he allowed me

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[2] Cf. Africa. Vol. XI, p. 497.
[3] Cf. Wilson, Introduction, p. 283; Land Rights, p. 44.
[4] Cf. Wilson, Land Rights, p. 13. W. translates *ulifumu (olifumu)* by „great commoner", Introduction, p. 276, 282.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

PREFACE

THE material presented in this book was collected by my late husband, Godfrey Wilson, and myself, between 1934 and 1938; he then being a Fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation, and I a Research Fellow of the International African Institute. Godfrey Wilson was in the field from September 1934 to December 1935 (with one month's break) and again from September 1936 to January 1938; the interval having been spent in London, digesting material. I did not begin work until March 1935, and was invalided out of the Territory with malaria for six months in 1937, so that I only spent a total of twenty months in the field. We had three main centres of work: Mwaya on the Lake-shore plain, Isumba in Selya, and Ilolo on the plateau near the Moravian mission of Rungwe; and either together or singly we stayed for some time in Kinga country on the Livingstone mountains, in Ngonde, at Lubaga, near LiKyala, at the White Fathers' station of Makete, on the Lupa gold-fields, in the Government station of Tukuyu, and at the Church of Scotland mission station, Livingstonia (Kondowe), to which youths from Ngonde and a few from Nyakyusa go to be educated (cf. Maps II and III). At one time or another we walked through almost all the district except for the Ndali hills: that expedition, long planned, was repeatedly prevented by attacks of malaria. At Mwaya and Isumba we were lent disused mission houses close to villages; in Ilolo we lived in a Nyakyusa-style house built for us in the main thoroughfare of the village; when camping we pitched our tent within the village usually near the homestead of the chief or headman. 114

As will be seen, the Nyakyusa are an extremely democratic people, and we lived in democratic fashion with Nyakyusa dropping in to visit, and sharing with us tea, or occasionally more solid meals, at all times of the day. We in turn were welcomed and fed in our friends' houses. After the first few months the atmosphere was extremely cordial, and the Nyakyusa took immense pains to explain their customs and to invite us to events which they thought would interest us. We both learnt to speak Nyakyusa and took notes largely in the language. 123 [126]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

26. THE AUTOPSY

Note.—It was not easy to see an autopsy among the Nyakyusa—one never knew beforehand when such an operation would be held, and since imputations of witchcraft and sorcery are punishable offences, people were often reluctant to perform it when Europeans were there. There was only one European doctor in Rungwe district, and he was a very busy man with a hospital and dispensaries to supervise. All the operations witnessed were performed over twenty-five miles from his headquarters and far off any road. Therefore, we were never able to arrange for a qualified practitioner to be present at a Nyakyusa autopsy, as we wished. The following layman's accounts, though lacking any anatomical detail, explain the method of procedure, and the Nyakyusa reactions. 763 123

Autopsy (ukupandula) *witnessed by G. W.*, 16/3/37.

Funeral of the wife of Mwampiki: Mwampiki himself is dead, but his homestead and wives have been inherited by a younger half-brother, Mwisalwa. The dead woman is a wife of another half-brother, Mwalemba. Kakuju, the village headman, called me to the funeral. 764

The body was carried apart, away from the crowd of women, behind a clump of bananas, by five or six women, who then washed it and put on a bark-cloth and a cloth (folded tight like a bark-cloth) round the loins. Then the young man, Mwaijumba, and I were allowed to come and watch.

The doctor, a woman, had five little knives of bamboo, made for the autopsy, and thrown away with the rubbish afterwards. Before she began to cut the stomach open another woman, a wife of Mwampiki (wearing mourning belts and smeared with mud) came and crouched down with her face close to that of the corpse, and a cloth covering her head and that of the corpse. 'That is the Nyakyusa custom', the young man explained. 'She is helping the doctor. The fearsomeness (*ubusisya*) of a human body is less when someone else is at the head.' 763 764

Then the doctor, using the bamboo knives, made an incision across the stomach, and cut through the flesh until the intestines showed. The stomach was swollen up. Mwantembe, a classificatory brother of Mwampiki, had joined us by this time. He was fetched by Mwaijumba to come and examine the corpse. He urged the doctor to make the incision wider and she did so. Mwantembe also insisted on Mwai- 763

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 782 I kept the chine for two nights in my house. The shades came to eat—they left practically nothing. Had I not been ill I would have asked you to come and see since you say they do not eat. . . . The shades come and see that we are celebrating the rituals.

The whole ritual was esoteric. Only the chief with eight of his [793] agnatic kinsmen, four of his young sons (but not his grown-up [643] heir or young grandson), and four priests participated, and we [123] two anthropologists were permitted to look on. Peeping small boys were chased off. The shades were addressed in a conversational tone and, except during the invocation, the priests and [784] chiefs chatted to one another, but arguments and raised voices were taboo. The boys who ate the meat were told:

[869] See, we your fathers are sacrificing, we are making plenty of food. Follow the custom of your fathers when it is your turn to sacrifice. Learn how to do it.

The same evening Kasitile prayed at his tree again. He explained:

I would not usually pray at all tonight, it is finished. Mwaipopo and I prayed yesterday, today the ritual is finished, but that boy of mine [his heir, 119] does not visit me, he's not been to see me and he did not tell me that he was going to the ritual. . . . I am going to pray to tell my fathers not to be startled, to tell them I am not angry, to tell them to send only a little rain, not a lot, to tell them to accept the sacrifice.

He went to the same place, and chewed the root of 'blessed grass' and blew out water as before. He prayed to about thirty persons, especially to Mwamaloba (85, his elder brother) and Mwakanjoki (60, his father), and also to Mwakagile (59), Mwaijonga (82), Mwaipasi (81), Mwakabule (117), Mwamwifu (84), Mwafungo (83), Mwakipesile (118), Mwakapala (?), Lyambilo (12), Mwalubange (58), Mwamukinga (43), Mwaihojo (147?), Mwaitende (61), and Kyala (2). No mention was made of the Lubaga chiefs this time, or of sons of Mwaipaja (21) or of 'Jesus'.

You have received your child Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 59), Mwaijonga (82), you have received the chief, this boy of mine (119) is quarrelling with me, do not be upset, he is a fool, a fool, but let him be . . . go and call your brothers to eat, you Mwaijonga (82), you Mwaipopo (115), and all your younger brothers; call Mwakagile (59) and Mwakanjoki (60) . . . Mwalubange (58) go to eat with your younger brother, let us find food, millet, bananas, children, milk . . . let there be a little rain only, not too much . . . people believe

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

always hangs under the eaves and is only used for prayer, filled it with 783
water and put into it a stone and a live coal from the fire. Then he 782
took some roots from the roof (previously put there ready) and we
went off to the same spot as before (*vide supra*, p. 115). Kasitile chewed [778]
the root, took water and blew it out, and began to pray:

'Do not be startled, come in your own persons, gather together, [769]
with Mwakanjoki (60). You made friends with him before, now he has entered, he has made himself our friend. Indeed I made a mistake, I have come to enter; I cut you on the head, I have done wrong. The sons of Kagile (i.e. 59 + his descendants) complain of me, saying, "It is he who has gone off with the millet, bananas, and maize; and children cry at night behind the huts; we are barren because he has cut Mwakanjoki." I have sought this cow which you wanted. Mwakanjoki (60), Lwembe (3?), Mwakalebela (19), Mwatonoka (29), Mwalubange (58), Mwakagile (59), Mwaijonga (82), Kyala (2), we have come to attend to you (pointing to the grave). Kikungubeja, Nsyanigwa Kyamba Kitali,[1] Lyambilo (12) come to your home if you are at Mwalubange's (58), come if you are at Mwaitende's (61), come Mwakanjoki (60) and the Kinga and Lwembe (3); Mwakalebela (19) come, give me cattle and millet, and the powerful medicine which you had. Since you are brooding over me go out from my body, go out! I pay my debt. We have come to take you to your home since you have gone off in a huff, come! I will never cut your branches again. I fear you and I will respect the branches. Come to your house, that of Mwamaloba (85), of Kanjoki (mother of 60), come. And he (G.W.) is [123] innocent (*mwelu*), do not fear him. He is the owner of the ritual, he is Mwamaloba (85), he is my senior, I am the junior. Sometimes I wish to embrace him, sometimes I fear that he is going to imprison me.[2] May the bananas increase! I am left alone! It is I who am here! Move [789] out of my body! And give us medicine! May the offering increase overnight, may the cattle increase and the maize, and in the morning let me tell Mwaipaja (G.W.) that the bananas and medicine have increased. If there is anything else you are a liar, if this chill begins again then I have gone, I am not here. Amen! (*sic*).'

Very early the following morning the sacrificial bull was killed. [177] Kasitile had arranged that our Mohammedan cook should come to cut its throat.[3] Then, later in the morning, the crucial drinking and 'speaking out' began. Kasitile had provided two pots of beer.

[1] Three Kinga priests whose names are titles of office.

[2] In the earlier years of our acquaintance Kasitile had denied both the smothering of an ailing chief and human sacrifice for the drum. It is possible that he had co-operated in either one or both of these ritual acts. He himself reported that the Sangu diviner had told him: 'You have a European as a close friend. . . . You enjoy his company much, but there is something left . . .' (i.e. the friendship is not yet complete). [114]

[3] Ostensibly so that he could partake of the meat, but the reason given seemed inadequate.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

122 for research, I am very grateful for a grant from the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures[2] which enabled me to start my ethnographical field work among these people. I wish also to express my thanks to the Government of the Tanganyika Territory, the Provincial Commissioner of Mbeya, and the District Officer of Tukuyu for all the courtesy I received during my work.

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[291 516 622]

The chief Wwamasika with his councillors.

of those adjacent. On the open place near his hut he welcomed me in company with his *amafumu*[4], the influential men of his villages. My attendant, the interpreter and I were asked to sit on chairs, while the *amafumu* sat down on mats or on large banana leaves on the ground; but the chief remained standing. I explained the aim of my visit, and that I would be very glad of his support. The chief promised it, and he kept his promise excellently. On other occasions the chief also sat
[431] on a chair. In the afternoon of the first day I sent to the chief some presents. The following he made a return in form of food. This exchange of gifts is named *ukubonola*, handing over the gift.

123 2. In a small village belonging to Mwamasika's chieftainship was the
757 residence of a medicine man, to whom I paid a visit as soon as I could. When I met him he was being consulted by a sick male person who had a stomach complaint *(agaju)*. After some negotiations he allowed me

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[2] Cf. Africa. Vol. XI, p. 497.
[3] Cf. *Wilson*, Introduction, p. 283; Land Rights, p. 44.
[4] Cf. *Wilson*, Land Rights, p. 13. W. translates *ulifumu (olifumu)* by „great commoner", Introduction, p. 276, 282.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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177
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342
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The chief Wwamasika and his family after he had received from me my old "Klepper-Mantle" as a gift.

to enter his hut, where the patient was sitting on the ground with his back to the wall. To heal his patient of the pains, the doctor made some small incisions in his skin near the stomach by means of a triangular-shaped knife, and then he rubbed in the incisions a thick black juice taken from the horn of an antelope (the horn was called *kapembe*, pl. *ulupembe*). The juice was prepared from different roots and herbs as a medicine against stomach pains. In the horn were certain divisions for other medicines, and in each of these divisions was stuck a small (black) stick for removing the specific medicine from it. After this treatment the patient declared that he felt severe pains in the region of his stomach. I asked the doctor for some of his medicines, but he was unwilling to give me anything. Then I promised to bring him next day some European medicines hoping to get in exchange some of his medicaments. 123 757 [415 237]

The following morning I returned. On this occasion I did acquire some of his medicines in exchange for various European tablets, especially as he was most fascinated with the kaliumpermanganatum[1] of which I gave him a few crystals, explaining to him the use and the dose; when I dissolved some of the crystals before his eyes, it probably seemed to him to be a mystical process. Among the medicines I received then from him was a medicine for luck, called *kwarusako*. Some of the inhabitants of the village, who had meantime appeared, were very unwilling for him to give me this medicine, and maintained that I would take with me all the luck of the village. [777]

On this second visit to the medicine-man, there was again a patient present, and I wanted to take a photograph of the scene because it was 123 755

1 [i.e., KMNO4. – Analyst]

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

123 755 in the open air and not within the hut as on the previous day. But the patient was unwilling to be photographed. He feared, he said, that by the photo I would take „his inner man together with the medicine just accepted" with me to Europe. I tried to calm him, showing him some pictures of my family, and I also let him look through the view-finder of my camera, so that at last he was satisfied. Then, after feeling more confident, he told me the cause of the pains which led him to come to the doctor. He thought he had been bewitched, as he had met a descendant of a man whom some long time ago had killed one of his own ancestors.

[142 291 516 756]

The Medicine Man and one of his patients. The medicines are spread out on the mat.

756 Then the medicine man also explained to me how he had come to the position of a doctor. He did not inherit his position from his father, but he was instructed in medical practices by another doctor. The circumstances which had led him to this position were the following.

[831] Before his initiation to the medical practice he had entered into forbidden relations with the wife of another man. To protect himself [789] from the magical revenge of the deceived husband and his kin he went to a medicine man to acquire antidotes against the expected bewitching. He had to pay two cows for this medicine, and as he had paid them, the medicine-man offered to initiate him into the secrets of the practice of a medicine-man. The character of the client, probably, had won his confidence, and indeed, the medicine-man whose guest I now was, made a profound impression on me.

754 He also described some forms of bewitching[5] for vengeance. For this purpose the avenger poisons a fowl in his own village uttering curses

[5] Cf. G. Wilson, Introduction, p. 277 (belief in witchcraft).

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

765 head of the line. She was also the first who crawled between the legs
48| of the others, facing the hut, and followed by the others. This ceremony has the same purpose as the preceding act.

[291]

Scene from the ubunyago-ceremony: The mourners returning from the grave to the house crawling through the legs of the others.

765 Then the hair of the mourners was shaved (*ukumwa inwili*, to shave
[302 the hair, profane and ritual) and, I was told that a bath would be
515] the last act ending mourning.

[291
516]

Scene from the ubunyago-ceremony: The shaving of the hair.

765 In the afternoon I sent the father of the dead child a cotton kerchief
●123 as a gift, and when I met him later on, he told me I had participated
43| in the burial of his child by that gift, saying, "You have buried my child with me".

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ancestors and of Kyara[17]. At the same time he moved his curved wood 787
to and fro on the ground and when he did so, it indicated a negative [776]
answer from the beings invoked. But when he was asked: "Is the guilt for the sickness to be found in the husband of the chief's sister?", he was unable to move his wood as before; he could only stamp it on the ground, and this meant an affirmative reaction of the invoked spirits. Now, therefore, the meeting had reached its aim.

I asked the diviner to tell me how he had acquired his faculty. He 791
explained that (besides the necessary inner disposition) the payment of a fee for the medical preparation was necessary in order to become a diviner[18]. This outfit consisted in a special vaccination by a learned diviner. For this purpose the neophyte was incised by his master on [304]
different spots on the upper side of the knuckles, and in these small incisions was rubbed a medical powder. By these means the initiate may be inspired by the prophesying spirits. These influences are then felt by the diviner as a power which directs the movements of his hand in the manner described.

6. Near the hut of the chief's principal wife was a "sacred" banana 824
plant, in the grove opposite to the chief's hut and in the grove with 778
the grave of the chief's father already described. At particular times, 782
when any need demands it, the chief offers a prayer in this place to 769
his ancestors[19]. The sickness of his sister, for instance, was such an occasion for him to address the ancestors. I was invited by the chief to witness this act; but I raised objections, telling him that my presence might perhaps rather cause the anger than the help of his ancestors. [23]
In reality, I did not want the chief to stage a theatrical act on my behalf. But the chief rejected my excuses and explained that he would act in the same manner as if I were not present, because he had made up his mind to this prayer. The chief was assisted during this ceremony by Mwainyekule who presented to the chief a calabash of water as he arrived at the banana plant devoted to this purpose. The chief took some mouthfuls of the water and squirted it towards the banana plant. Then he recited the names of his ancestors and begged them to help his sister.

7. During one afternoon, I was told that a ceremony to end the 881
initiation of a (betrothed) girl was going on in a family of the village.

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[17] name of the supreme spiritual being.
[18] Cf. *Mackenzie*, p. 226.
[19] *Mackenzie* refers that such a place is named "ikiyinja", "the familiy place oft prayer" (pp. 144, 197), but without indication of the locality, as Karonga.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764 by the dust, at some other funeral without having completed the
765 ritual for his own parents, and the danger of the 'gasping cough'
828 exists only when a widow, having lain with the heir, eats or drinks with her own relatives.

796 Everyone knows the connection between madness and the performance of the whole ritual and between coughing and the final act, but not everyone is conscious of the symbolism of the various events. For example, Mwakisisile, a middle-aged pagan man whom we knew well, could not interpret the details of the symbolism and he explained: 'Some ask about these things in the ritual, some do not ask. I have not asked. We only know, many of us, that in the ritual we drive the shade, who is here, away from the body, and that if we do not drive him away we run mad. But we do not understand the details of the ritual such as straining water through a leaf, or passing the baskets between the legs, so as to be able to say: "This detail means this." ' Those most conscious of the symbolism are the *abanyago*, the officiants at the family rituals and the priests of the communal rituals. Kasitile, the hereditary rain-maker of Selya, who was a close friend of Godfrey Wilson's, and formally presented him to his dead ancestors urging them 'not to be startled at a white face', was our foremost authority on the symbolism of the Selya ritual. He was more conscious of the symbolism than most people, but his interpretation was confirmed at almost every point by others. Kasitile was not paid for
● [124] information—none of our informants was—but he and Godfrey Wilson exchanged gifts from time to time in the manner customary among the Nyakyusa, and he often had a meal with us. Mwandisi, a very old blind chief living on the Lake-shore plain (MuNgonde) who was regarded by the Nyakyusa themselves as an authority on history and custom, was also a friend prepared to expound the
[184] rituals. His interpretation contradicted Kasitile's on one point only—he denied that one purpose of the ritual was to bring back the shade into the house. Other informants, though less coherent, corroborated Kasitile's interpretation, which may therefore be taken as a general, not a personal one.

764 There are nine main themes in the ritual: first, the driving away
765 of the dead from the dreams of his close kinsmen, and measures to
796 prevent him 'brooding over them' (*ukobatela*)—the word is that used of a hen brooding over her chickens. Widows, in particular, must be separated from the shade of their husband before the heir (or any other man) dare have intercourse with them. Secondly, the

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

PREFACE

THE material presented in this book was collected by my late husband, Godfrey Wilson, and myself, between 1934 and 1938; he then being a Fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation, and I a Research Fellow of the International African Institute. Godfrey Wilson was in the field from September 1934 to December 1935 (with one month's break) and again from September 1936 to January 1938; the interval having been spent in London, digesting material. I did not begin work until March 1935, and was invalided out of the Territory with malaria for six months in 1937, so that I only spent a total of twenty months in the field. We had three main centres of work: Mwaya on the Lake-shore plain, Isumba in Selya, and Ilolo on the plateau near the Moravian mission of Rungwe; and either together or singly we stayed for some time in Kinga country on the Livingstone mountains, in Ngonde, at Lubaga, near LiKyala, at the White Fathers' station of Makete, on the Lupa gold-fields, in the Government station of Tukuyu, and at the Church of Scotland mission station, Livingstonia (Kondowe), to which youths from Ngonde and a few from Nyakyusa go to be educated (cf. Maps II and III). At one time or another we walked through almost all the district except for the Ndali hills: that expedition, long planned, was repeatedly prevented by attacks of malaria. At Mwaya and Isumba we were lent disused mission houses close to villages; in Ilolo we lived in a Nyakyusa-style house built for us in the main thoroughfare of the village; when camping we pitched our tent within the village usually near the homestead of the chief or headman. 114

As will be seen, the Nyakyusa are an extremely democratic people, and we lived in democratic fashion with Nyakyusa dropping in to visit, and sharing with us tea, or occasionally more solid meals, at all times of the day. We in turn were welcomed and fed in our friends' houses. After the first few months the atmosphere was extremely cordial, and the Nyakyusa took immense pains to explain their customs and to invite us to events which they thought would interest us. We both learnt to speak Nyakyusa and took notes largely in the language. 123 [126]

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

usa. It is true that one still meets blacksmiths on the outskirts of the villages or some distance away from them (as in the case of the Ndali tribe, western to the Nyakyusa area), but they no longer smelt the iron from ore mined by themselves as in former times. The smith of to-day remelt only scrap iron from disused motor-cars and other machines into tools, hatches, and spear-heads, unless, of course, the natives prefer to buy imported iron-ware. As with the Chaga, also the Nyakyusa smith can only be persuaded to submit to being photographed after long negotiation and a change into better clothes. The blacksmiths I met in the Bundali Mountains, however, made no objections whatever to being photographed at their work. Also women were allowed to attend. But one feature of the ancient Nyakyusa blacksmith's culture has been preserved till the present day: the lower part of the bellows through which the air blast is driven into the fire is still made of wood. This feature has been defined by H. Baumann as an element of the "ancient nigritic culture".

12. Dress. The cloths of the Nyakyusa have changed to a very considerable degree since the beginning of European influence. A comparison of the earliest pictures and descriptions of inhabitants at the northern end of Lake Nyasa with the dress of modern times brings out this point most forcibly. Originally the Nyakyusa went almost naked, adorned only with rings and belts, but nowadays all degrees of compromise with European fashions of dress are to be found, especially near the European settlements and Mission Stations. The most conservative element are, in this case, the women. It is still possible to-day to observe in each village the preparation of the long strips of bark *(elyabi*, pl. *amabi)* commonly worn by the women. The so-called *impandapanda* (Fotheringham: *mlambe)* tree furnishes the dress material. After the bark has been immersed in water, the bast is beaten with wooden instruments and then pulled off from the harder parts of the bark. These tools are like hammers; the flat end of such an implement is furrowed, sometimes with a disk made of horn, and as it produces patters on the bast it is called "*obosimbe*", that which produces patters. These long belts, almost reaching the ground, especially in front, are mostly ruby coloured, but the women sitting in front of their huts manufacture also other types with geometrical (triangular) patterns in yellow and brown forming only girdles *(umpango)*. In addition to this minimum requirement in the way of dress some women around the waist also wear copper belts *(manyeta)*, made of thin copper-wire, spiraly wound on a core of hairs from the tails of cows. These

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN1 n
Nyakyusa

Fox-Strangeways; the late Mr. Eustace of the Tanganyika Agricultural Department, and Mrs. Eustace; the Rev. and Mrs. Marx of the Moravian mission at Rungwe; the Rev. and Mrs. Faulds of the Church of Scotland mission at Karonga; the Rev. and Mrs. Galbraith of Livingstonia; Mr. Godfried Schuler, a planter, and his wife; and the Officers of the King's African Rifles then stationed at Māsoko.

When planning work among the Nyakyusa, we were guided by Lord Lugard, who had lively recollections of 'the north-enders', and by the Rev. D. R. and Mrs. MacKenzie, missionaries of the Church of Scotland in the area for many years. Mr. MacKenzie had published *The Spirit-Ridden Konde* in 1925, and was deeply interested in the Nyakyusa-Ngonde people; he lent us manuscript notes on the language and gave us the most generous encouragement.

Godfrey Wilson was concerned to make a general sociological study of the Nyakyusa, while I had been commissioned by the International African Institute to study particularly the effects of Christian missions on the community; in practice we found it profitable each to work primarily with our own sex, though we did not do so exclusively. Nyakyusa men proved better informants than women, largely, we think, because the men all had a training in logic, gained in discussion in the villages and in court. Women lacked this training and, except for doctors and those who had had some schooling, they found it difficult to give an account of their customs. The pagan women were markedly less coherent than conservative Pondo women (among whom I had previously worked[1]), a difference which I attribute to the narrow scope for leadership among the women in the traditional Nyakyusa society. And the difference between conservative pagan Nyakyusa women (doctors excepted) and Christians who had had some schooling was very noticeable.

Material on pagan and Christian, as well as that on men and women, overlapped at every point; and shortly after leaving the field we agreed that to describe pagan and Christian groups separately would distort the facts very seriously, and that we would collaborate in writing three books on Nyakyusa kinship, Nyakyusa villages, and Nyakyusa chiefdoms, including in each of

[1] Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest: Effects of Contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa* (1936).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

them an analysis of pagan and Christian differences. Godfrey Wilson died on active service before the writing of these books was begun, and I am thus solely responsible for the form of this volume, but the material is from the field notes of us both. Portions of Chapter I, and a few paragraphs in other chapters have been quoted (with minor emendations) from articles already published by him. Throughout the book the present tense refers to the period 1934–8 when the material was collected.

The problem of combining adequate documentation with lucidity has not yet been solved in anthropology: either monographs are so loaded with texts and case records as to be almost unreadable, or else they are impressionistic, and the student is left wondering just what evidence there is for the author's conclusions. We have attempted to meet this difficulty by publishing certain relevant documents in a separate section. These documents represent only a small selection of the field notes used, but at least they illustrate the type of evidence on which our argument is based. Many of them are translations of texts written in Nyakyusa by Mwaisumu and Mwaikambo from their own knowledge, or at the dictation of others.

The maps have been drawn by my friend and colleague at Rhodes University College, Professor J. V. L. Rennie, to whom I am much indebted for the time and trouble he has lavished on them. The map of Rungwe District is based on one compiled by Mr. R. de Z. Hall, and traced by Mr. G. D. Arthur, which was given me by the courtesy of the Survey Department of Tanganyika.

Finally, I am indebted to Dr. Audrey Richards, Professor Meyer Fortes, and Professor Dover Wilson for reading this manuscript and making many valuable suggestions.

Rhodes University College,
Grahamstown, 1949.

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

first-hand knowledge of them. On the coast they are classed with Nyakyusa and Ngonde as *Sokile*, a nickname derived from the traditional Nyakyusa greeting.

This book is concerned with the Nyakyusa.[1] What it contains is true in general terms for the people of Ngonde, but how far it is applicable to the smaller groups cited we are not certain. The Ndali, Sukwa, and Penja, are said to have long had an age-village organization; and Henga, Nyika and Kisi living intermingled with Ngonde and Nyakyusa have adopted it; but of the customs of the Wenya and Lambya we know little. Dr. Kerr Cross and Monteith Fotheringham, who travelled extensively in the area before 1890, reported that the Ndali and Sukwa (of Misuku) were very similar to the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people, but that the Lambya were different, practising shifting *citemene* cultivation, and living in stockaded villages.[2]

According to their own traditions the Nyakyusa and Ngonde chiefs (who trace descent from common ancestors) came ten generations ago from Kinga country, on the Livingstone mountains, and found the Rungwe and North Nyasa country already occupied. They established themselves as chiefs and have since been increasing the area of their occupation. The Kinga also affirm that their chiefs are related to those of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde, and they join with the Nyakyusa in sacrifice to common ancestors at Lubaga and LiKyala (see Map III), but the Kinga culture is quite distinct from that of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde; we stayed long enough in Kinga country to convince ourselves that the Kinga live in kinship villages and not in age-villages, and that they differ from the Nyakyusa in many other respects.

There seems little doubt that the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people have been expanding in an area not uninhabited, but sparsely inhabited, and that the assimilation of the Penja and other groups now proceeding is no new phenomenon, but part of a process which has long been going on. Within recent years over 2,000

[1] The Nyakyusa as here defined numbered 159,044 in Rungwe district at the 1931 census, and 3,732 outside the district; the Ndali 22,834, the Lambya (within Rungwe district, and not including those in Nyasaland) 12,403, and the Kisi (in Njombe district) 2,115. *Tanganyika Territory, Census of the Native Population*, 1931.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika, *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), p. 286; L. M. Fotheringham, *Adventures in Nyassaland* (1891), pp. 129–33. Nyondo was a Lambya chief, cf. Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 10.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their village headmen, and assist the president and his village headmen in the hearing of cases. Much of the legal business previously transacted by each chief in his own country is now taken to court (*KwiKoroti*); but the power of village headmen to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages is still the basis of the legal system.

Though the Administration has worked through the traditional authorities it has consciously and deliberately modified the traditional system; and, as part of its policy of development, it has established schools, dispensaries, and nurseries for coffee-seedlings and other plants. There are three schools in Rungwe district receiving Government grants: one directly under the Administration, one under the Native Authority, and one a mission school. There are also a great number of 'bush schools', that is, mission village schools under uncertificated teachers giving instruction in the three R's and in religion. Over 19,000 children (12·6 per cent of the population served) are enrolled in the various schools; but 96 per cent of these are in 'bush schools', many of whom never learn even to read and write.

The structure of Nyakyusa society has been further complicated by the conversion of a substantial minority (16 per cent in 1938)[1] of the people to Christianity. The Christians form a group with values radically different from those of the pagans, on whom they react in innumerable ways.[2] The growth of this diversity in the society is a direct effect of its diminishing isolation.

To treat of Nyakyusa villages as if missions, or the Administration, or migrant labour and coffee export did not exist would simplify, but distort our analysis. We have therefore included some account of the differences in behaviour between pagan and Christian, of the effects of centralization on the position of village headmen, and of the influence of trade and migration on economic co-operation in the village. A discussion of the organization of schools and Christian congregations; of the development of courts of record, and 'court districts'; of the relation between

[1] Calculated from figures supplied by the courtesy of the missions and the independent African Churches working in the district.

[2] Moslems are very few and they have little influence on the community as a whole. These few are mostly Swahili traders, Ngoni settlers, or soldiers of the K.A.R. from Nyasaland. We heard of only two or three Nyakyusa who had turned Moslem.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

128 chiefs and the Administration, and between Nyakyusa workers and their employers, falls outside the scope of this book.

e. The subject of study

121 Nyakyusa society may be viewed as three circles of relationship —the relationships of kinship, village relationships, and relationships within and beyond the chiefdoms. This book is concerned with the second of these circles, that found within and between villages. Such relationships are not fully intelligible apart from the relationships of kinship and of the chiefdom, but a measure of abstraction is necessary—it is not possible to talk about everything at once. A sketch of kinship relationships has already been published;[1] a full account of them and of the relationships of chiefdoms has been planned; and the general theoretical approach has been set forth in *The Analysis of Social Change*[2] and in a paper entitled *Some Possibilities and Limitations of Anthropological Research*.[3]

The fundamental question we pose is *why age-villages*? Why should the Nyakyusa differ from all their neighbours of whom we have knowledge in the form of their villages? Why should they live with contemporaries, rather than kinsmen? The attempt to answer this leads us to discuss the characteristics of Nyakyusa society, which can be shown to be associated with the age-village organization, so that we can reformulate the question thus: *What are the pecularities of Nyakyusa society not found in neighbouring societies with kinship villages*? We know too little about the neighbouring societies to answer this question fully, but some indication of the Nyakyusa peculiarities is given, and an analysis of these compels us to consider the relation between Nyakyusa values and social structure.

[1] Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde, 1950.
[2] G. and M. Wilson, 1945.
[3] Monica Wilson, 1948.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

771 mediate ancestors of the participants, and another set which con-
105 cern chiefdoms and groups of chiefdoms, and are directed towards the immediate ancestors of ruling chiefs and certain distant ancestors of the chiefs' line, heroes in Nyakyusa history. The name of one of these heroes, Kyala, has been used by the missionaries to translate the word 'God', but all the evidence available goes to show that Kyala was, traditionally, but one of several distant ancestors to whom regular sacrifices were made on behalf of a large group of chiefdoms. All the rituals of this type—those directed to family shades, the chiefs' ancestors, and the heroes—are concerned with that which is beneath (*pasi*), not that which is above. Men look to the earth where corpses are buried, not to any sky god.

121 The theme of the present volume is the rituals celebrated by
771 kinsmen at death, at the puberty and marriage of a girl (the last two events usually coinciding), at birth, especially twin birth, and in misfortune. A further volume will deal with the communal rituals celebrated before the annual break of the rains; whenever public misfortune such as drought, flood, famine, or plague occurs or threatens; before battle; and when a chief is succeeded by his sons, and the younger generation take over power from their elders.
[881] There is no circumcision or initiation of men other than the 'coming out' ceremony, when a whole generation takes over responsibility for the administration and defence of the chiefdom from their fathers. Some reference to three of the heroes—Kyala, Lwembe, and Mbasi—is made in texts on the rituals of kinsmen, but our discussion of them is postponed to the second book in which the rituals directed to them are described.

775 A section of the Nyakyusa people is Christian and its influence
177 on pagan thought and practice is appreciable; however, discussion
128 of this is also postponed to the second book, since it is most evident in the changing concept of Kyala. There, too, the connections between change in ritual and other aspects of the social structure between 1934 and 1955 are analysed.

121 The Nyakyusa cult of senior relatives (like any ancestor cult) is
771 not intelligible or significant apart from a study of kinship, and it may be argued that this material should be presented only as part of an analysis of Nyakyusa kinship, but we cannot discuss everything at once and some measure of abstraction is necessary. No one ritual among the Nyakyusa is fully intelligible without reference to the whole series of rituals. The principle, propounded forty-five years ago by Professor Radcliffe-Brown, that a symbol

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the group. In the few cases in which our informant may have been giving his own individual interpretation, 'putting a bucket down into his subconscious and pulling it up', it was at least a Nyakyusa subconscious, and the interpretation is in terms of the culture. It is with common, not individual, symbols that we are concerned: what is offered in this book is a sociological, not a psychological, analysis.

Similarities between the symbolism of Nyakyusa rituals and the symbolism of dreams and neuroses in Western society will be obvious to readers. That preoccupation with anal and oral functions, with 'nakedness' (though the Nyakyusa habitually wore the most exiguous of coverings), with death, coition, and birth, with mastery ('overstepping') and incest, which is characteristic of the rituals we describe, is evident also in any textbook of psychoanalysis dealing with Western Europeans and Americans; and certain symbols such as a house, a doorway, a spear, seed, and so forth are common to both cultures; but here we are not concerned to trace these similarities. Our business is to lay bare the symbolic pattern of the Nyakyusa without reference to the Western tradition.

The material used for the sociological analysis of ritual consists of two types: observation or description of events, and statements about associations. The greatest difficulty in presenting it has been to choose between a chronological account of each ritual, followed by the Nyakyusa translation or interpretation of the symbolism, and then by the sociological analysis; and an integrated account combining the interpretation and analysis with the description. The advantage of the first method is that the validity of both interpretation and analysis can be more easily judged since the evidence on which it is based is fully set out; the disadvantage is that the description itself implies interpretation and analysis. The symbolism is often implicit in the description of events, and the separation of description from interpretation involves repetition; at the same time the classification of events and symbols is itself a form of analysis, and the separation of description from analysis tends to conceal this. The present study is a compromise between the two approaches. Where events and their symbolism are fairly straightforward, the interpretation accompanies the description; but where, as in the rituals of farewell to the dead, puberty and marriage, and abnormal birth, they are complicated, and the interpretation may well be questioned, accounts of the events are separated from detailed evidence on symbolism. Analysis is neces-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

121 sarily implied all through, but since the argument can only be un-
128 folded step by step (for no one ritual can be fully analysed until all are described) a discussion of it is reserved to the concluding chapters. In interpreting the symbolism, cross reference between the different rituals of the cycles would be too frequent to give in the text. Readers wishing to follow up references to the symbolism of bananas, for example, or *ikipiki* medicine, should use the index.

771 The link between religious beliefs and morality (in the sense of
577 right behaviour) is very clear among the Nyakyusa. Many misfortunes are attributed to sin, that is, wrong-doings (*inongwa*) thought to be supernaturally punished. Indeed, to the Nyakyusa the idea of the wicked man 'spreading himself like a green bay tree'[1] is inconceivable, and the disciples' question: 'Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'[2] cold common sense. Here we are concerned with the form of morality[3] sanctioned by Nyakyusa religion, with the conception of good and evil, and with
[128] the relation between belief and behaviour.[4] A table of private misfortunes attributed to the anger of senior relatives is included in this volume; public misfortunes will be discussed in the succeeding one; and a table of misfortunes attributed to witchcraft, sorcery, and the legitimate anger of neighbours ('the breath of men') has been given in the study of Nyakyusa age-villages already published.[5] While the Nyakyusa lay great emphasis on the correct performance, in every detail, of certain rituals, their very performance implies co-operation between kinsmen, and not only co-operation but amity. For 'anger in the heart', if unconfessed, may bring misfortune. Thus though the outward form is stressed, the inward and spiritual is not totally ignored.

121 We proceed on the assumption that men express in ritual what moves them most; that the form of expression is conventional and obligatory, and that therefore in ritual the values of a group (as opposed to those of individuals) are revealed.

[1] Psalm xxxvii: 35. [2] John ix, 2.

[3] I cannot accept Professor Radcliffe-Brown's definition of morality as the control of conduct by 'public opinion and conscience' as opposed to control by religion. Nor do I accept Professor Macbeath's argument that primitive man has an idea of good quite apart from religion. A. E. Taylor's view of morality comes much closer to the facts as shown in Nyakyusa society.

cf. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*, p. 172; A. Macbeath, *Experiments in Living*, Gifford Lectures 1948–9; A. E. Taylor, *The Faith of a Moralist*, Gifford Lectures 1926–8.

[4] The germ of the book is Godfrey Wilson's 'An African morality', *Africa*, 1936.

[5] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 198–213.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

husband when at her husband's home. Kakune, a doctor, explained: 'The ritual for a woman is that of her husband's group, always. My mother was Lugulu, but at her death we did the Kukwe ritual. If my daughter marries a Sangu and dies, they will do the Sangu ritual; she has moved.' We attended a death ritual which was actually performed in two slightly different ways by two sets of mourners. A member of a Sangu family, long established in Selya, had died; sons and daughters of the family performed what was said to be the Sangu ritual, but the children of daughters married to Selya men performed the Selya ritual. Whether the Sangu ritual is really so similar to the Selya ritual as this celebration suggests is doubtful—it seems unlikely, since the Sangu are very different from the Nyakyusa in other respects and their languages are not mutually intelligible—but some sort of adjustment had been made by this foreign family living in Selya and by others in a like position. Our informants *expected* to find parallels to the events of their own rituals in the rituals of neighbouring groups, and they expected also to find *minor* differences. Any variations are explained by the phrase 'that is the custom in their lineage', and the officiant is the final arbitrator as to what is correct. A number of informants also pointed out that the staple foods were used in the death ritual and that these varied somewhat with the area. 'We eat the principal food of the country—it differs with different people. The Kisi and Ngonde (of Nyasaland) use fish, the Ndali use goats, we Nyakyusa cannot use rice but the Swahili would. Our food is bananas.[1] The pumpkin, which we also use, is a very old vegetable and is still much eaten; it is one of the best vegetables.' The Sangu use millet porridge, the Penja maize and beans.

In this book are described the rituals of the main cultural groups of the Nyakyusa—those of the people of Selya and Masoko and the Lake-shore plain (MuNgonde)[2] which are similar, and those of the Kukwe which are different, and a few references are made to other variations. The variations are suggestive, for though the details differ, the values and attitudes expressed are identical. There are also minor differences between families of the same cultural group, and in the practice of different officiants, but their

[1] The Nyakyusa use *amatoki* as a general word for plantains and bananas, though *itoki* is properly one variety of plantain. 'Bananas' is used here to include all varieties of bananas and plantains.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 2.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

128 interpretations scarcely differ. Thus the commonly accepted idea
184 that ritual forms are more stable than the interpretation of sym-
771 bolism[1] does not hold for the Nyakyusa.

128 The account of the ritual cycle begins with an analysis of funeral
764 rites, for of all the family rituals they involve the greatest emotional tension and are the most elaborate, as well as being performed far more frequently than any others. Moreover, in them are adumbrated symbolic patterns which recur again and again throughout the cycle; in them is apparent that preoccupation with fertility characteristic of the cycle—they are a rite of creation as well as a farewell to the dead—and in them lies the key to an understanding of the conception of the *abasyuka*, 'those who have risen from the dead', that is, the shades.

128 The principal participants in the rituals are immediate kin—
771 parents and children, siblings, grandparents and grandchildren—but the circle included varies with the particular ritual concerned and more distant relatives and neighbours are involved in varying degrees. In order to bring out these differences and avoid repetition, the detailed discussion of who takes part is deferred until after all the rituals have been described.

000 Should any Nyakyusa, reading this, feel that matters have been revealed which should remain secret, I would remind them that the interpretation of traditional ritual reveals a profound similarity in the phantasies of the Nyakyusa and those of other races; and such understanding of the dark places of men's minds as the *abanyago* possess may swell that body of knowledge which is the heritage of men of all races and cultures.

[1] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (1952), pp. 155–7; A. N. Whitehead, *Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effects* (1928), p. 75.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

identification of the mourners with the corpse and the separation 764
of the shade from both of them. 'What they do to the participants 765
they do to the deceased. . . . If they are not cleansed he is still 796
muddy. . . . We throw away the corpse, the contamination of death, into the river . . . we drive the shade away off our bodies to join his fellows . . . we separate the corpse and the shade.' Thirdly, bringing back the shade as a beneficent spirit into the home. 'In the ritual we tell the shade to go away and join his fellows, and then to come back with them and warm himself by the fire in our house. . . . At first the shade is in our bodies, we cast him out . . . at first it is as if we were still holding the corpse in our arms, but we throw the corpse away into the river . . . the shade we bring back into our house.'

Fourthly, a miming of the actions of a madman in eating excrement as a prophylactic against behaviour of that sort. The dead, if not separated from the living, bring madness upon them, and simulating madness is a protection against it.

Fifthly, the corpse and faeces are identified: 'The corpse is filth, it is excrement. And so when a madman for whom they have not performed the ritual eats filth that is the corpse, he is still holding it, they have not done the ritual for him.'

Sixthly, the shades are identified with semen and seeds and their control over potency and fertility is recognized. The Nyakyusa [789 think that they are always present in sexual intercourse, and sym- 842] bols of sexual intercourse are interpreted as a means of driving out the shade from the participants' bodies.

Seventhly, 'the food which he hoed' is symbolically 'given to the shade' of the man who has just died and he is urged to be satisfied: 'You, shade, do not think there was little food at your ritual. . . . The food which we have eaten you have eaten . . . do not create hunger.'

Eighthly, the shade is acknowledged as a kinsman by eating with him food and beer mixed with *ikipiki*—the symbol of agnatic kinship—before he is driven away.

Lastly, a dead man is formally replaced by his heir, a woman by her sister or her brother's daughter.

These conceptions are expressed in the following texts which are given as they were recorded by Godfrey Wilson. No attempt has [128] been made to systematize Kasitile's or Mwandisi's arguments, but the statements made during numerous sessions have been placed in sequence, and are separated only by dots.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

Record of M. W., 13 September 1936

881 789 I arrived at nine o'clock in the morning to find Syungu, the elderly wife of the chief's senior brother, who acts as officiant in all the rituals for the chief's family, grinding and cooking *inyemba* together with a powdered medicine and red pigment, to make an ointment. I asked the purpose of the medicine. She replied: 'It's *ikipiki* that she may be heavy, that she may bear children and not be barren.'

273 789 Some of the chief's wives gave me beer—ordinary beer. They themselves were drinking from a pot which had stood in the inner part of the house (*kusofo*) and to which medicine had been added. They explained that it might be drunk only by themselves, the chief's wives. A strange woman, a Penja, came along and, though warned that this pot was not for her, insisted on drinking some of it. She explained how Penja [171] ritual differed from that of the Kukwe—they kill sheep for the puberty ritual. Usually this beer stands to brew in the seclusion hut 'on the litter'.

881 The women were preparing a dish of beans and bananas cooked together, and when it was ready a little was given to the officiant, some was put aside for the girl (*unsungu*),[1] and the remains were offered to the guests. One of the cooks threw away the central stem of the head of bananas used, but was told by the officiant to fetch it back, as all the rubbish must be cleared away together at the end of the rite.

After midday the officiant shaved some hair from the girl's temples and the back of her neck, and then she shaved the mother completely. I asked why the girl was not shaved completely and was told: 'Her fellows would laugh at her if she had no hair.' The officiant prepared four banana leaves, stripping each off on one side of the mid-rib and shredding the other half so as to make a rough fringe. Standing with her back to the girl, she touched herself over the genitals, breasts, and forehead, then handed the leaf back over her head, telling the girl to fasten it round her waist. She repeated the performance with the second leaf, telling the girl to fasten it round her neck. The girl complied with the first leaf but refused the second, saying: 'I have a cloth,' and she pulled her breast cloth round her shoulders. The officiant followed the same procedure with the girl's mother, who fastened both leaves round herself. Then one of the chief's wives took the mother on her shoulders and carried her round the corner of the house. The bride followed on foot, and three other wives of the chief, singing:

Kyanalu
Kyatiko
Kyanalwe
Kyatiko

[1] Usually we have translated *unsungu* by 'bride', but in this case she was not betrothed: cf. footnote 2, p. 73.

[28]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

V. CAUSES OF MISFORTUNE

761 (*a*) *The death of Katasya*

The following account of the death of Katasya is quoted in full [128] because it illustrates how several possible causes of misfortune were considered. Possible causes mentioned were:

(a) The anger of his junior kinsmen
(b) The witchcraft of his wives
(c) The anger of his shades
(d) The anger of his neighbours because he had given them too small a cut of a bull killed as a sacrifice to his shades
(e) The adultery of his son with three of his wives
(f) The sorcery of his half-brother's son, Mwamukinga, with whom there was a long-standing quarrel over inheritance and whom he had accused of killing his (Mwamukinga's) full brother
(g) The sorcery of the Chief Mwaihojo, for Katasya, a man of the neighbouring Chief Mwaipopo, had built and cultivated on land claimed by both Mwaihojo and Mwaipopo

Record of G. W., 4/1/38

761 Angombwike told me at midday that Katasya had died. He was a village headman of Mwaipopo, the fellow of Mwainyopolela. His case (*inongwa*) was thus:

The millet did not grow in his field, so he called all his children to 782 his homestead and killed a big bull for them, saying: 'Perhaps my children are angry at home. Perhaps my wives have worked witchcraft.' But to the neighbours he gave one leg and the children at home ate the rest. He did not, however, live long. He died immediately. It is said that the meat is still there. They have not eaten it. Such is the case of his death.

Kasitile, when I called on him yesterday, was out and his wife said he had gone to see Katasya who was ill.

Later in the day—4.1.38. Likusyila came in and I asked about Katasya's death.

But he has not died, he is still just alive. We heard that the millet [787] failed in his field and the maize and beans in all his gardens. They all failed. One of his wives went into a trance repeatedly. She said: 'Those beneath are angry. Seek a bull and kill it.' Then he sought one, but 761 now they have killed him. Perhaps he stinted his fellows in the village 578 of meat, because if a man kills his animal alone and his fellows hear

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Preface

THIS book is not an attempt to depict the daily life of the Konde people; it rather aims at indicating, so far as an outsider can, the leading ideas and practices which make up the background, leaving to others the task of bringing the foreground into proper relief. And, after many years' residence and work among the Konde, I feel increasingly how much the fact of being a foreigner among them limits one's understanding of the people whose ideas he attempts to set down on paper. The task has been undertaken largely at the request of some of the leading men of the tribe, who are alive to the fact that the old days are passing, even among the conservative Konde, and that, if a record is to be made at all, it must be made without delay.

There is no one to whom I must acknowledge indebtedness to the same extent as I must, and now do, to native chiefs and common people, educated and otherwise; to doctors, diviners, hunters, fishers; every kind of native in fact, from whom I have caught hints, in sudden and unintentional flashes of revelation, or in sustained conversation, of what is in the Bantu mind. And therefore I have, in most chapters, aimed at using language which indicates the native attitude to the various beliefs dealt with; an attitude in most cases of unquestioning faith.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

AN INTRODUCTION TO NYAKYUSA SOCIETY

By GODFREY WILSON

128 This paper is an attempt to give an outline of the pagan culture of the Nyakyusa people of South Tanganyika[1] in relation to the three fundamental groups into which their society is articulated—the family, the age-village and the chiefdom. Every Nyakyusa belongs to some family, to some age-village, to some chiefdom; and in his membership of these three groups is comprehended most of his behaviour.

121 Sociology is the objective study of human relationships which, as they only exist in men's activities, can only there be studied. The systematic investigation of culture, of the common economic, ceremonial, legal, religious and other activities which obtain among some group of people, is the sole possible method of discovering the system of human relationships which makes of the group a society. It is only by viewing all the facts of culture in the light of the relationships of the people concerned that we can see the full objective significance of those facts, it is only so that we can see the body or actuality of those relationships. For human relationships are the most inclusive facts of social life, they are the form[2] which the sociologist seeks for in the matter of his special field; whether he is engaged in description, or in the functional analysis of a single culture, or in the comparative analysis of several cultures, human relationships are always his goal, which he must reach if his account of fact is to be coherent, if his explanations are to be complete.

The method adopted in this paper is that of Professor Malinowski and his followers; it involves a repudiation of the one-sided Durkheimian concept of "social integration" or "solidarity," and a realization that culture, consisting as it does of human behaviour with a human meaning, has a material reality which makes possible and conditions the human relationships that integrate it and give it form. This point is elaborated in the concluding section.

128 In order to make Nyakyusa society into a wholly lucid unit, intelligibly comparable with other societies, it would be necessary to undertake a complete functional analysis, and to explain in detail why it is that different members of this group on different occasions generally conform,

[122] [1] I am greatly indebted to the Rockefeller Foundation for the Fellowship which makes my investigation possible.
[2] By "form" is meant, not a sensible pattern, but an intelligible system of fact.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

128 as they do, in their behaviour and their mutual relationships to a common type. Space forbids such an undertaking here; and it is necessary to emphasize that, although the most significant facts are described in an orderly manner, and although certain reasons for these facts are indicated in their specific character and in their connections with one another, yet these reasons are not fully or systematically worked out, and the result is a description which leaves the facts only half-explained. And, in so far as this society is not here fully analyzed, so it is not yet fully comparable with others. The reader of this paper will detect many points of similarity and of difference between Nyakyusa society and some other with which he is familiar, but the comparison cannot be made to yield any propositions about the nature of human societies in general until the facts of both have been fully explained in terms of their particular social, cultural, and external conditions.

Climate, Cultural Groups, and European Contact.

101 131 133 The Nyakyusa live in the Rungwe District of South Tanganyika in the Rift Valley at the head of Lake Nyasa. The valley is dominated and closed at its North end by the recently extinct Rungwe volcano, from whose foot the land, starting as an upland plateau 5,000 ft. above sea-level, tumbles southwards for twenty-five miles in a broken cascade of hills, to level out in a plain fifteen or twenty miles from Lake Nyasa. The Lake is 1200 ft. above the sea. The East wall of the Rift rises to 10,000 ft. or more in the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains, but the West wall is two [132] or three thousand feet lower. The climate is very wet, for about 130″ of rain fall each year, and, at 9° South of the Equator, is also very hot. [161 731] The rain and the sun together make the land extremely fertile; the district is thickly populated (over 100 to the square mile), famine is rare and the Nyakyusa are far better fed than most of their neighbours. Rice 177 241 was introduced into the plain by Arabs, coffee by the German Missionaries in the hills, and these two crops to-day, under the enthusiastic care and guidance of the Government Agricultural Department, bring to many Nyakyusa a small but steadily increasing cash income.

262 241 Their main foods are bananas, maize, beans, sweet potatoes and a variety of greenstuffs, together with meat and curds from their cattle. Millet is extensively grown and is used both for making beer and for eating in the form of porridge.

101 The name *Nyakyusa* is nowadays used by themselves as a general name for all those who have similar speech and customs and who live in Tanganyika; but formerly it only covered those who live in the South of the district, in the plain and up in the hills as far North as the administra-

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Chiefdom and Wider Groups

(*a*) *The "Coming Out"*

128 Space forbids a full description of the relationships of villagers in all their intricate detail, but a short description of the "Coming Out" (*ovosɔka*) which is at the same time the most important legal act and the most exciting ceremonial of Nyakyusa life, will, I hope, make the nature of the age-village completely clear, and will also provide us with an easy transition to the discussion of the organization of the chiefdom (*ekisu*).

622 631 I have never seen a "Coming Out" properly; on one occasion I travelled to see one and arrived just a day late when all the important action and ceremonial was over, but I have had it fully described to me at different times by several people. Every chief (*omalafyale*) is normally succeeded in his chieftainship by two sons, who divide his country between them. There are sometimes exceptions to this: in very large chiefdoms three or even four sons sometimes succeed, each taking a portion of the country; and in minor chiefdoms, that is in small chiefdoms which have come under the dominion of a neighbouring and powerful chief, only one son of the minor chief succeeds to the whole of that country.[14] But the rule is that two sons divide the country of their father. This rule worked well in the old days, for till quite lately the Nyakyusa have been an expanding people in a district too large for their needs; and the combined countries of the two sons nearly always, in the old days, covered a greater area of effective occupation than the country of their father which they had divided. Now saturation point is approaching, or has come, and the rule makes for ever smaller and smaller chiefdoms. Various forces are tending to the alteration of the rule, but it is still a vital part of the constitution. (*vide infra.*)

The "Coming Out" (*ovosɔka*) is a series of legal acts by which the country of an old chief and his great commoners is, with certain reservations, divided and handed over into the possession and control of his two sons and their respective great commoners. These legal acts are accompanied by much pomp and ceremony. It is at once the initiation of all the youth of the old chiefdom into public life, the constitution of two new [796] political units and the proclamation of two new chiefs. The "Coming Out" not only consists of a series of legal acts and public ceremonies, but of religious ritual as well, action is taken to increase the personal qualities appropriate in a chief and his great commoners by magical means.

[14] These minor chiefdoms have nothing to do with the present system of subordinating some chiefs to others (*vide infra.* sec. (b))

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

And every year two hereditary Kinga priests come a three days journey from their own country to participate in the sacrifice of a black cow to the spirits of Lwembe and his descendants.

Down by Lake Nyasa, in the extreme South East of the Nyakyusa district, there is another equally sacred spot where sacrifices were, and I believe still are[21] made to Kyala, a younger brother of Lwembe.

The Christians and the Moslems form other religious groups which transcend the boundaries of a single chiefdom, but an examination of the Nyakyusa Christian and Moslem communities is beyond the scope of this paper.

The political group which is constituted by a Court district, though only ten years old, is of great importance in Nyakyusa society ; but here again the detailed examination of its organization and the relationships of its members is beyond the scope of this paper.

Conclusion : Culture and Society

The aim of sociology is to describe single forms of society fully and, in comparison with one another, to explain them completely, in so far as reasons can be found within this particular scientific field. Neither full description nor complete explanation of Nyakyusa society has here been attempted : many important facts have been omitted from the account, irregularities of detail have been slurred over, the connections of fact have been only occasionally and sketchily established, and no systematic comparison of this unit with others has been made at all.

But the method of this paper has involved an analysis, summary and general though it has been, of the nature of some of the many institutions in which the Nyakyusa meet, of some of the actual elements in their relationships with one another. It is in their dealings with the earth and their cattle, with the spirits and with men who break the law, in their discussions and arguments, their ceremonial feasts, their giving and receiving, in their loves and hates and in their admiration and mockery of one another that they forever make and remake their own human relationships.

Culture is the matter of which society is the form ; inseparable in fact they are only intelligible together. No two men can be related unless they both do something and unless their activities are somehow connected. Nor can either escape relationship with his fellow if what

[21] I have not yet been there to investigate.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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The fine dot stipple indicates the a

[facing p. v (a)]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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MAP I. THE CULTURAL AREA

the approximate area occupied by the Nyakyusa-Ngonde people and groups

[facing p. v (b)]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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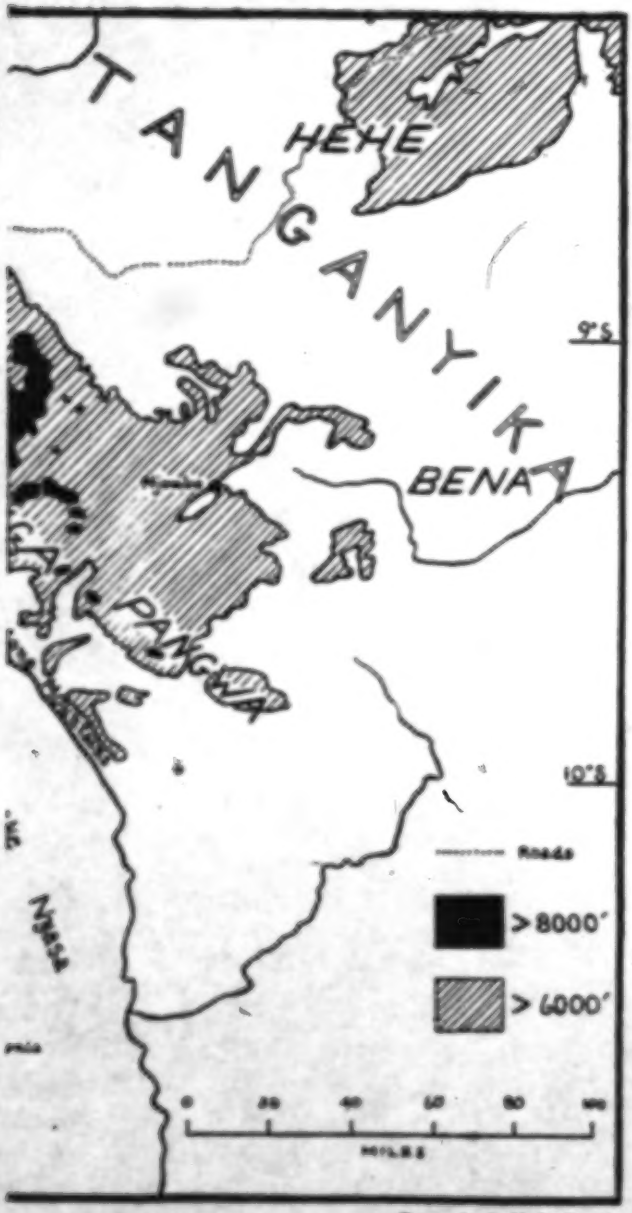

Drawn by J. V. L. Rennie

dominated by them.

[Facing p. v (c)]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

a. *The cultural area*

THE Nyakyusa and Ngonde[1] are a Bantu-speaking people who live at the north-west corner of Lake Nyasa, on the marshy plain at the head of the Lake, and in the hills that rise steeply to the north and west of it. They straddle the Songwe river which divides Tanganyika from Nyasaland. The area is enclosed by the Lake itself, the escarpment of the Livingstone mountains on the north-east and the Poroto mountains on the north-west. To the west the boundaries are less clearly defined, but coincide pretty closely with the boundary of Rungwe district and with the watershed which separates Nyasaland from Northern Rhodesia. To the south the boundary is that of Chief Mwafulira's country, which lies some twenty miles south of Karonga (see Map I). Most of the area is thus situated between 9° and 10° S., and 33° and 34° E. It covers approximately 4,500 square miles and the population is about 235,000.[2]

Within this area there are local differences in language and custom. The dominant groups are the *Nyakyusa*, who live in Tanganyika on the Lake-shore plain and up into the hills as far as Rungwe mission, and the people of *Ngonde* who live on the Lake-shore plain in Nyasaland. These two groups speak dialects which, though differing somewhat in vocabulary and pronunciation, are easily understood by speakers from both, and their social structure is essentially similar. The main difference is that in Ngonde a

[1] The old men say *Nkhonde*, and the name appears in most of the literature as *Konde*.

[2] The area of Tukuyu district is 4,866 square miles, and the area subject to the Kyungu, the paramount chief of Ngonde, is 2,687 square miles. The Tanganyika census of 1931 gives the population of Rungwe district as 195,062: this was believed in the district to be an over-estimate. The population of Ngonde is approximately 40,000. For the southern boundary of the Ngonde people in 1881 see James Stewart, 'Lake Nyassa and the Water Route to the Lake Region of Central Africa', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, New Series*, Vol. III, 1881. He states that nine miles north of Mount Waller is a marsh; south of it are the Tumbukas, north of it the 'Chungu' (i.e. Ngonde).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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MAP II. NGONDE AND

[facing p. 2(a)]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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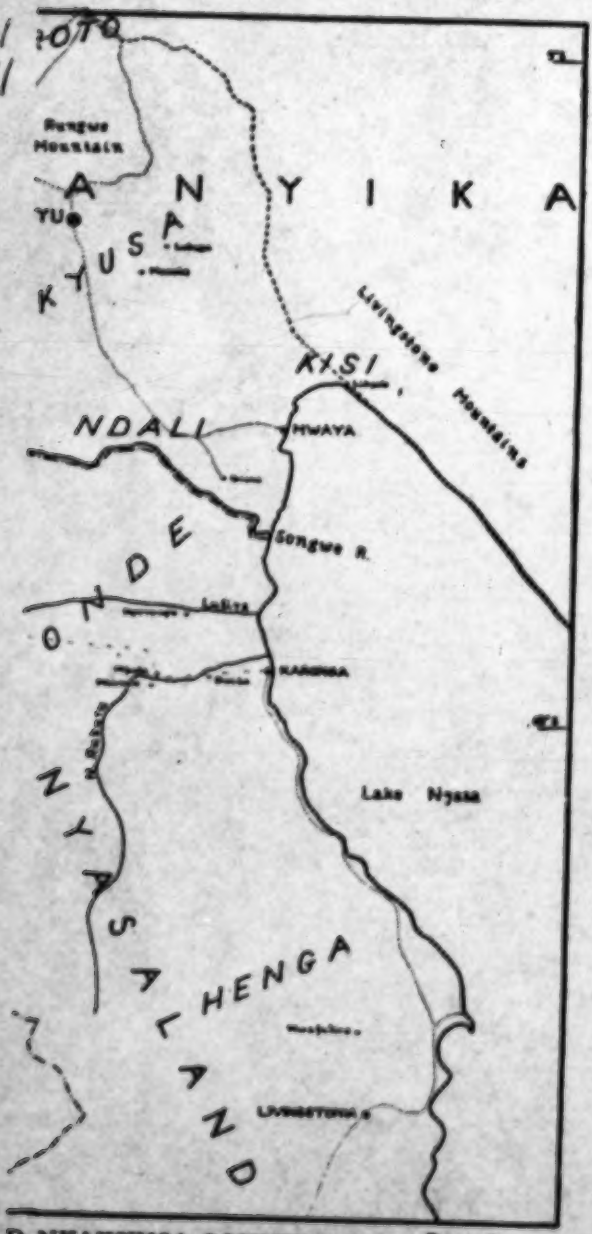

D NYAKYUSA COUNTRY

Drawn by
J. V. L. Rennie

[facing p. 2(b)]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

231 try, and Lugard speaks of 'enormous herds' in 1888[1] which a rinderpest epidemic decimated in 1892.[2] A few Kukwe keep one or two sheep, but we saw no goats at all in Rungwe district,[3] and neither sheep nor goats figure in ritual: cattle and fowls provide flesh for sacrifice. Every woman keeps fowls, as every man seeks to own cattle.

262 With curds and meat from their cattle, with fowls, fish, bananas, grain, pulses, roots and curcurbits, as well as bean tops and pumpkin tops, and—less generally—fruit, the Nyakyusa are exceptionally well fed. Since the dry season is so short and two crops of maize and pulses are grown in the year, there are no 'hunger months' such as the Bemba and many other African [131] peoples experience. Shortages and famine occur, but rarely. All the early travellers comment on the quantities of food available in Nyakyusa country.[4]

c. *Relations with the outside world*

131 171 Perhaps the most significant fact in the history of the Nyakyusa is their long isolation, which is mainly the result of their geographical position. Surrounded on three sides by high mountains, and on the fourth by the stormy head waters of the Lake,[5] the district was largely cut off from the outside world. Slave caravans passed to the north, the west, and the south, but never through Nyakyusa country; and though they were repeatedly attacked by the Sangu, who are said to have raided as far as the Nyasa plain,[6] and several times by the Ngoni, the Nyakyusa repulsed both peoples. Certain of the Kukwe chiefs were forced for a period to pay tribute to the Sangu chief, Merere; but according to their own account none did so for long, and some never paid at all. Kerr-Cross comments on the contrast before 1890 between the unfortified villages of the Nyakyusa and Ndali, and those of the Lambya and Nyika, who, living in open country and harried

[1] Lugard, op. cit., p. 131.
[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa* (1897), p. 430; D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., p. 119.
[3] Fotheringham, op. cit., pp. 1, 25, mentions goats in Ngonde.
[4] See especially, Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 268, 274; Lugard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 131.
[5] In 1946 a Lake steamer, the *Vipya*, sank in a storm near Karonga with heavy loss of life.
[6] Kerr Cross, op. cit., pp. 119–29.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

by the Arabs and Bemba, built their huts within a stockade.[1] 131
According to Thomson, the Nyakyusa were unaware even of the 171
existence of Lake Tanganyika in 1879 and their more distant eastern neighbours, the Pangwa, Bena, and Hehe had no communication with them.[2]

Unlike the Nyakyusa, the people of Ngonde were trading with 439
the coast long before the arrival of the Europeans, a fact which 177
had a profound effect on their political institutions;[3] but even they did not suffer from the attacks of slavers until *after* Euro- 721
peans were established in Karonga.

From the point of view of the Nyakyusa-Ngonde people the 721
Europeans came just in time. It was the establishment of British control in Nyasaland which prevented the complete destruction of the people of Ngonde by the slavers, and it is likely that the Nyakyusa also were saved by European intervention, for the raids of Arab slavers and their Sangu allies were becoming serious in Kukwe country in 1889[4] before the German annexation.

The first Europeans known to have sighted Nyakyusa country 177
were a party from the Livingstonia mission (then established at the south of Lake Nyasa) who circumnavigated the Lake in the mission steamer, the *Ilala*, in 1875. They anchored off the north shore but did not land.[5] Two years later, the same steamer sailed by two famous missionaries, Dr. Stewart (of Lovedale) and Dr. Laws (of Livingstonia), landed Frederick Elton, H.B.M. Consul at Mozambique, and a party near the Mbaka mouth.[6] Elton and his party travelled through Selya and Kukwe country to the fort of the Sangu chief, Merere, and thence started for the coast. Elton died on the road, but some of the others got through.[7] In 1879 Joseph Thomson (aged 20), alone with his carriers, travelled through Hehe and Bena country, crossed the Livingstone moun-

[1] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), pp. 286–7; Fotheringham, op. cit., pp. 13–5; 269.

[2] Thomson, op. cit., pp. 248, 276.

[3] Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., *passim*.

[4] Fotheringham, op. cit., pp. 238–41, 288. The Sangu had previously been occupied in a prolonged war with the Hehe. cf. Elton, op. cit., p. 374; Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 229–34.

[5] E. D. Young, 'On a recent Sojourn at Lake Nyassa', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XXI (1877), pp. 230–1.

[6] J. Stewart, 'The Second Circumnavigation of Lake Nyassa', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, 1879, pp. 289–304.

[7] Elton, op. cit., pp. 318–44; Cotterill, op. cit.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the broken country to the north of Lake Nyasa live the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people who, together with those closely related to them in language and culture, number[1] nearly a quarter of a million. They stretch across the river which divides Tanganyika Territory from Nyasaland and, because they were hemmed in by mountains and swift rivers, they long remained isolated from the outside world. They are skilful herdsmen and cultivators, well fed, and practising a system of green manuring and rotation which allows of fixed cultivation, in contrast to the shifting systems of most of their neighbours. 105 [131]

Their villages are large. Each is occupied by a group of age mates together with their wives and young children. Father and son and grandson *must* live in separate villages and full brothers are commonly separated also. Fathers and young sons are in adjoining villages, but the villages of grown men are scattered about a chiefdom without reference to the genealogical connections of its members. The only kinship relationships common within a village are those of half-brothers and of affines, for a man often marries the daughter or sister of a village mate. But although they live dispersed, agnatic kinsmen are bound together by a strong lineage organization. Property, in the form of cattle, circulates within agnatic lineages, passing from brother to full brother in order of seniority, and thence to the son of the senior brother, who inherits, with the cattle, obligations towards his juniors and a certain authority over them. Half-brothers may also be linked by regular exchanges of cattle—'milking one another's cows', as the Nyakyusa call it. Cattle are given at a marriage by the groom to the bride's father, and distributed by him among his brothers and sons; the bulk of them usually going to one of the bride's full brothers, who retains through life a special responsibility for her and her children. Polygyny is approved. The form most favoured

[1] Throughout this book the present tense refers to the period 1934-8 when the material presented here was collected.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

The Spirit-Ridden Konde

CHAPTER I

The Land & the People

UNGONDE, as the Konde people call 131
their country, lies around the north end 144
of Lake Nyasa. Northwards of that point it stretches for about fifty miles, and southwards for roughly the same distance. Like all their neighbours, the Konde belong to the great Bantu race, which occupies Africa from the Cape to the Congo, and beyond.

The lake shore plain is narrow, fertile, and populous, 131
with its centre at Karonga, where there is a British 133
Magistrate, some trading stores, and a station of the Livingstonia Mission of the United Free Church of [797]
Scotland. Beyond the plain the tribe, under various local names, reaches up into the mountains on both sides of the lake. Outside of Nyasaland, and northwards across the Songwe, it covers a large area in what was once German East Africa, but is now known as Tanganyika Territory. Here, too, the plain is hot, fertile, and populous as at Karonga. Northwards of the plain lie the healthy uplands of Mwamba and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

131 Bukukwe, culminating, so far as the peopled regions
133 are concerned, in Tukuyu, five thousand feet above sea-level, the residence of the Administrative Officer and his staff, with Post and Telegraph Offices, and a large Government Hospital. Here also are many small trading stores, conducted by Indians and Somali; and a little to the south is the Kyimbila
[797] Station of the Scottish Churches Mission, carrying on the work of the exiled German missionaries. Still further to the south, and less elevated, is the British military post of Masoko.

The population of these fertile and healthy high-
361 lands is dense. From Tukuyu or Kyimbila, looking
101 south and west, numerous villages, each hidden in its banana grove, fill the view westwards to the Bundali Hills, where the Kibira River is marked out by a morning mist, and southwards towards the lake, thirty miles distant. In this region the people call themselves Nyakyusa, with a number of local names indicating no difference of origin or language. The
241 soil is so fertile, and the rain usually so abundant, that in many places two crops are taken annually of some foodstuffs, while of the others the single crop is so great that scarcity, no uncommon occurrence in some parts of Central Africa, is rarely experienced.

133 The Bundali Hills close in this happy valley (for in
101 spite of its elevation the country has the appearance of a valley) on the west; and beyond them, after a most exhausting march, over lofty summits, through deep ravines threaded by bridgeless rivers, one comes to the home of the Bandali, a race of hardy

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Map for "The Spir

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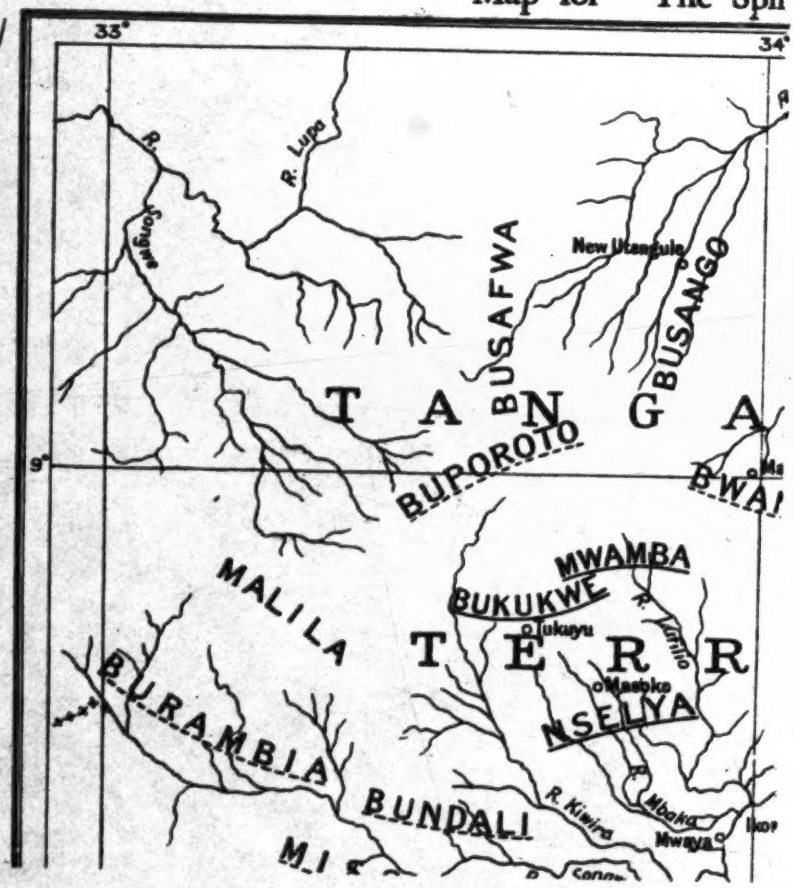

[End Map (A)]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Spirit Ridden Konde."

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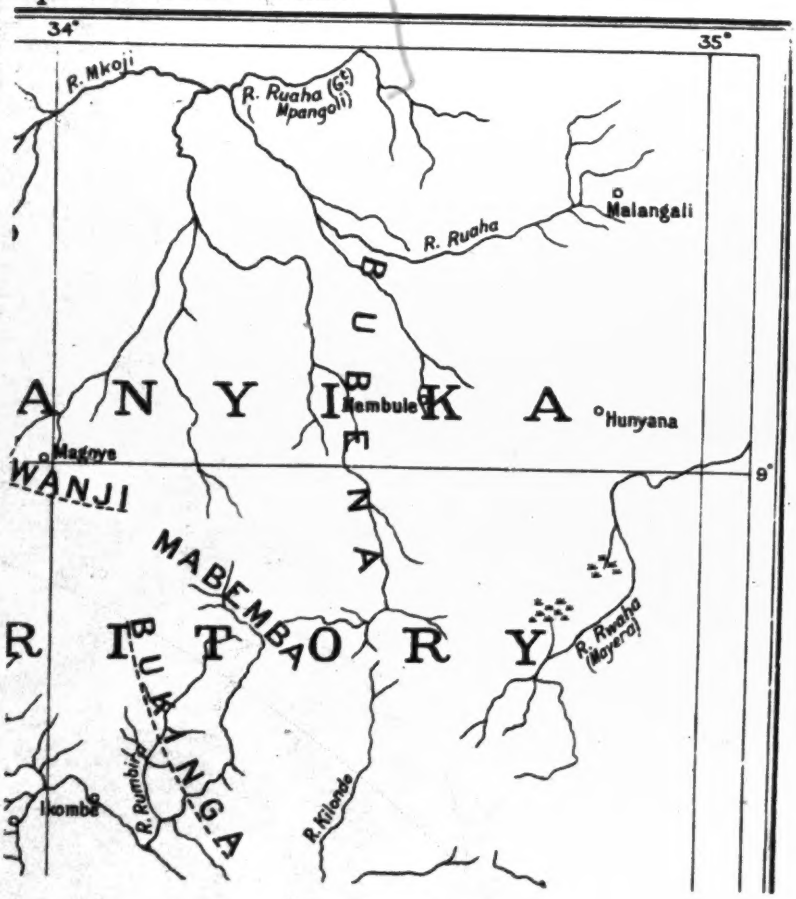

[End Map (B)]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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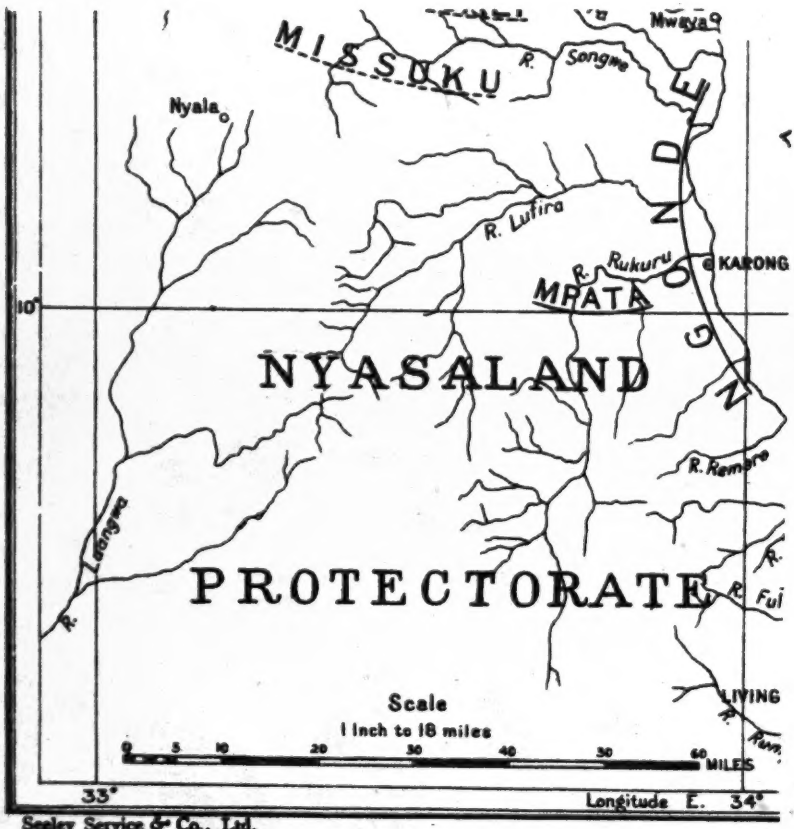

Seeley Service & Co., Ltd.

BUPANGWA *Capitals thus indicate districts* NSELYA

BWANJI *Underlined thus indicate that Kin*

[End Map (C)]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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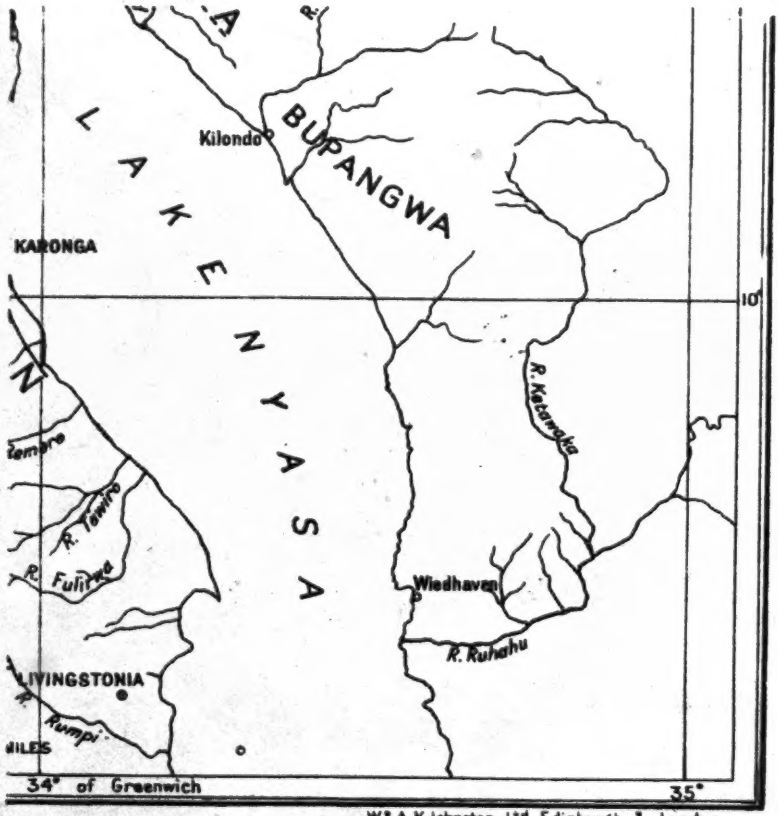

YA Underlined this indicate Konde speaking districts
at Kingonde is displacing the local dialect

[End Map (D)]

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

The *Nyamwanga* and *Iwa* of Abercorn and Mazama districts, Northern Rhodesia, are in areas where the density is between 4 and 7 per square mile, and they number less than 20,000.[1]

161
162

Tanganyika Peoples[2]

Tribe	District	Total population	Total children	Percentage of children to adults	Percentage of males to females		Increase since 1921
					Adults	Children	
Kukwe	Rungwe	68,197	29,934	74	51	110	..
Seria	Mbeya	10,755	..	..	..	..	..
Nyakyusa	Rungwe	80,092	37,799	..	..	..	..
	Mbeya	2,957	1,030	..	..	..	..
	Other districts	775	551	87	57	102	34,576

Populations of less than 50,000 Persons

Tribe	District	Total population
Kinga	Njombe	27,036
Lambya	Rungwe	12,403
Ndali	Rungwe	22,834
Nyamwanga	Mbeya	10,147
Nyika	Mbeya and Ufipa	25,179
Pangwa	Njombe	20,533
Wanji	Njombe	20,397
Wanda	Mbeya and Ufipa	5,754

LINGUISTIC DATA

197 According to Doke's classification *Ngonde* is one of the five important languages of the east central sub-zone of Bantu languages, and is spoken in Tanganyika to the north end of Lake Nyasa, where it is known as *Nyakyusa*.[3] In language as well as culture, the Ngonde of Nyasaland are identical with the Nyakyusa of Tanganyika.[4] According to Guthrie's classification, many of the tribes, whose affiliation is not known on cultural or historical grounds, may be attached, on linguistic grounds, to speakers of the Tumbuka group of languages: *Wenya*, *Lambia*, and *Wandia*.[5]

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The *Kinga* inhabit the inaccessible heights of the north and west portion of the Livingstone mountains, which rise to 10,000 ft.[6]

[130] 137 *Nyakyusa* country is bounded on the south by Lake Nyasa and the Songwe river, on the east by the wall of the Livingstone range, and on the west by the Ndali hills. They live between the two walls of the Great Rift valley. In the north the rift is interrupted and closed by the extinct volcano Rungwe (10,000 ft.), from whose base the land drops in hills and little plateaux to the lake-shore plain. The soil is not very rich,

[1] Orde Brown, 1, 1938, maps.
[2] *Census of the Native Population*, 1931, Tables VI and VII.
[3] Doke, 1945, p. 66.
[4] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 8.
[5] Guthrie, 1948, p. 81.
[6] Du Plessis, 1929, p. 323.

4 Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

137 especially in the north, but as between 100 and 130 in. of rain usually falls annually, the country is one of the most fertile parts of Tanganyika. Two crops a year are often [132] grown on the same patch of ground. There is no tsetse, and cattle flourish. Parts of the country are stony and mountainous, others, especially the lake-shore plain, are of deep soil. On the higher ground there are many old volcanic craters filled with rich, moist soil, more fertile than the surrounding land.[1]

131 *Ngonde* country is bounded by Lake Nyasa on the east and by the Misuko hills on the west. It is mountainous except for a belt of low-lying country, about 6–10 miles 132 wide, along the lake shore. The whole district is well watered and well wooded except for some of the higher peaks and the lake plains. Banana-trees are cultivated throughout the district. Game is plentiful. Average annual rainfall at Karonga in 1922–32 was 41·2 in. Average mean temperature was 74° F., seldom rising above 95° F.[2]

MAIN FEATURES OF ECONOMY

CULTIVATION

000 The *Kinga* are agriculturists, cultivating wheat, peas, and potatoes, and latterly also oats and barley. They own a moderate amount of cattle, and many sheep and goats. They are skilful smiths.[3] The *Kisi* and *Sandia* around the north-west coast of the lake are fishermen and agriculturists, growing some millet and maize.[4] The *Nyika* are agriculturists and cattle-rearers; the *Lambia* do not rear much cattle; the *Ndali* have large herds, and cultivate bananas in the valleys.[5] The *Nyamanga* keep sheep and goats and grow maize, beans, and millet.[6]

The *Matengo* have a system of hill-side cultivation of their own, which prevents erosion. When forced into concentrations in the caves in Litembo and Langiro to escape the Ngoni raids, they developed the pit-system of hoeing: the grass is cut and laid in 2-ft. wide lines in a grid of 6-ft. squares. The hole in the middle of the square is hoed by a woman, who throws up the earth on to the grass squares. The crops are planted in the raised beds and weeds are thrown into the pit to rot, forming compost for the following year. After one season the pit becomes the raised bed and the beds the pit, and the system is repeated in following years. With proper succession of crops the gardens may be kept in use for ten years before fertility begins to fail. Maize, millet, and wheat flourish; root crops do not thrive under this system, nor does tobacco. The pit-system is now found mainly at Litembo, and is being abandoned elsewhere.[7]

241 The *Ngonde* and *Nyakyusa* are primarily cattle-rearers and banana-cultivators. They have a very similar culture, but only the latter has been described in detail. Consequently, the following summary refers to the Nyakyusa, unless the contrary is indicated.

The Nyakyusa practise subsistence agriculture by intensive cultivation with rotation of crops. As wide shifting cultivation is not practised, villages are relatively stable. They grow a great quantity of crops—maize, millet, sweet potatoes, beans, ground-nuts, cow-peas, cassava, and rice in the plain. Grass is hoed in for manure. The *Sukuma*, in the Misuko hill area (Ngonde country), grow field-peas and wheat on a small scale.[8]

[1] Wilson, 3, 1938, pp. 5–6.
[2] Murray, 1932, pp. 201–3; Dixey, 1928.
[3] *Handbook of German East Africa*, p. 64.
[4] Ibid., pp. 62–3.
[5] Ibid., pp. 66–7.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Pike, 1938.
[8] Murray, 1932, p. 207.

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H
I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P

Position chart for end paper map.

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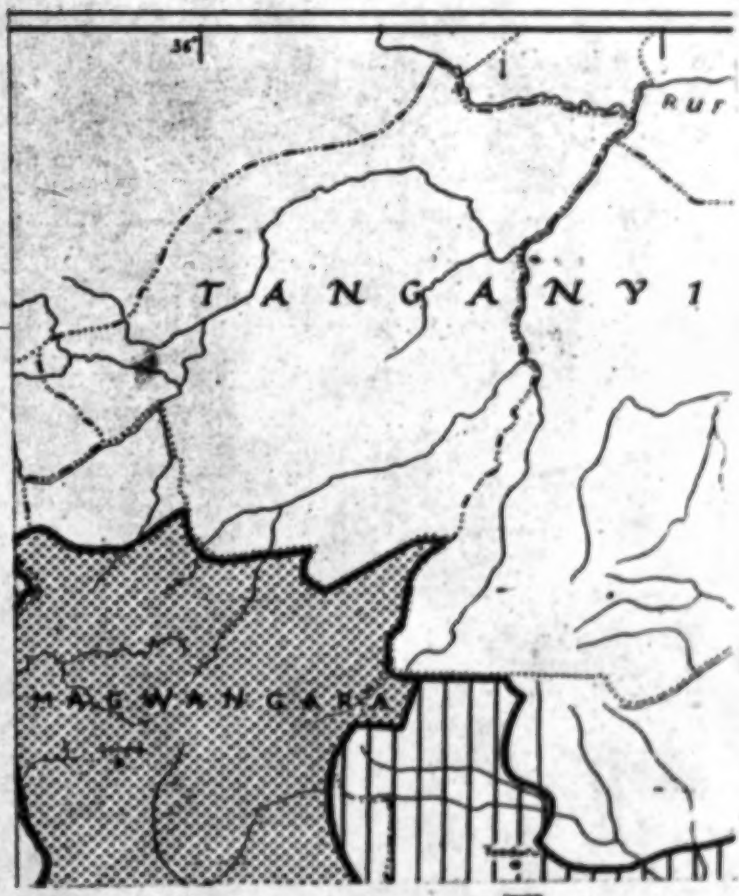
[End paper map A]

●131

[End paper map B]

●131



[End paper map C]

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[End paper map D]

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[End paper map E]

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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[End paper map F]

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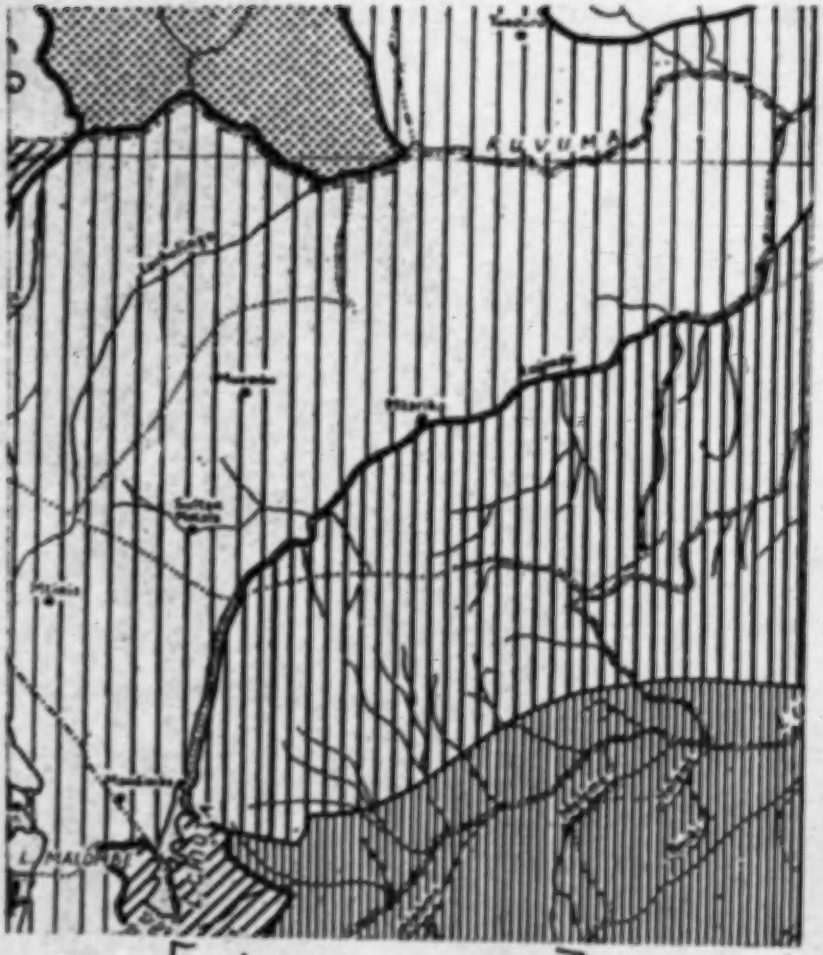

[End paper map G]

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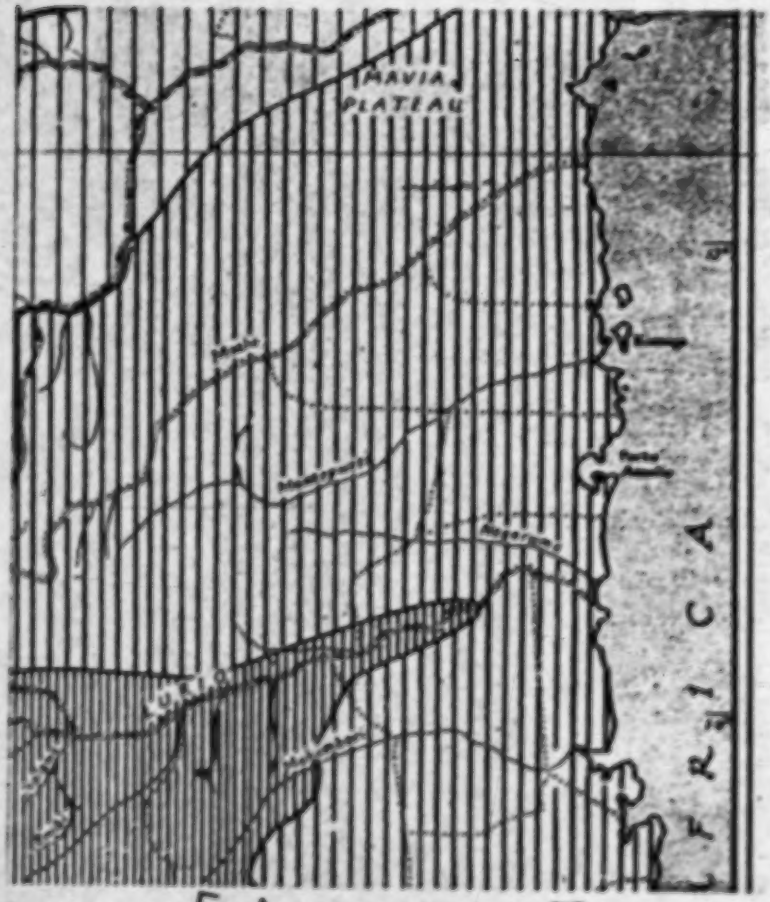

[End paper map H]

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[End paper map I]

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[End paper map J]

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[End paper map K]

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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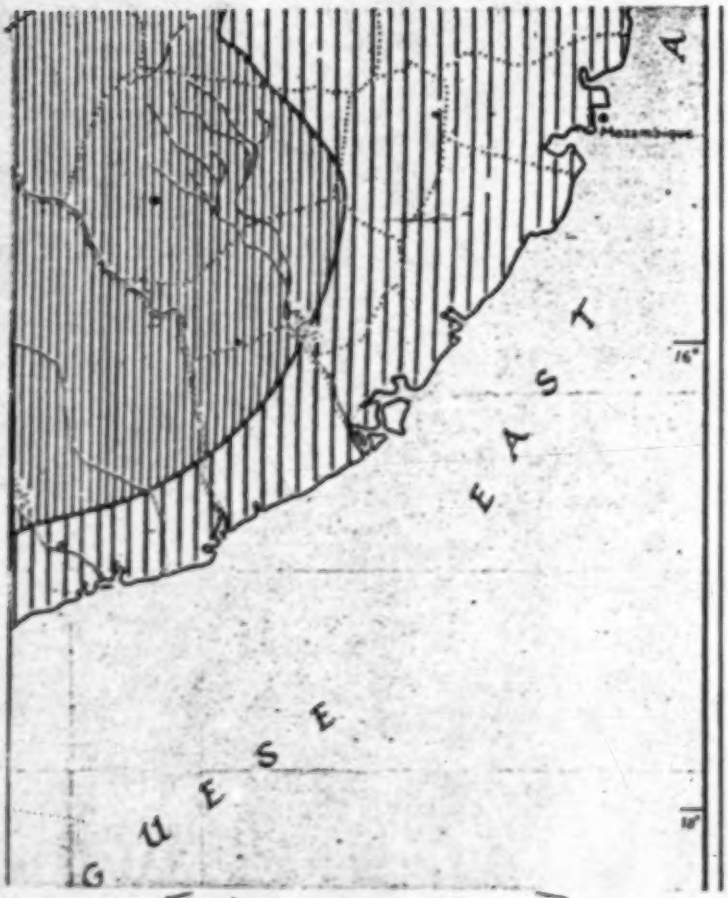

[End paper map L]

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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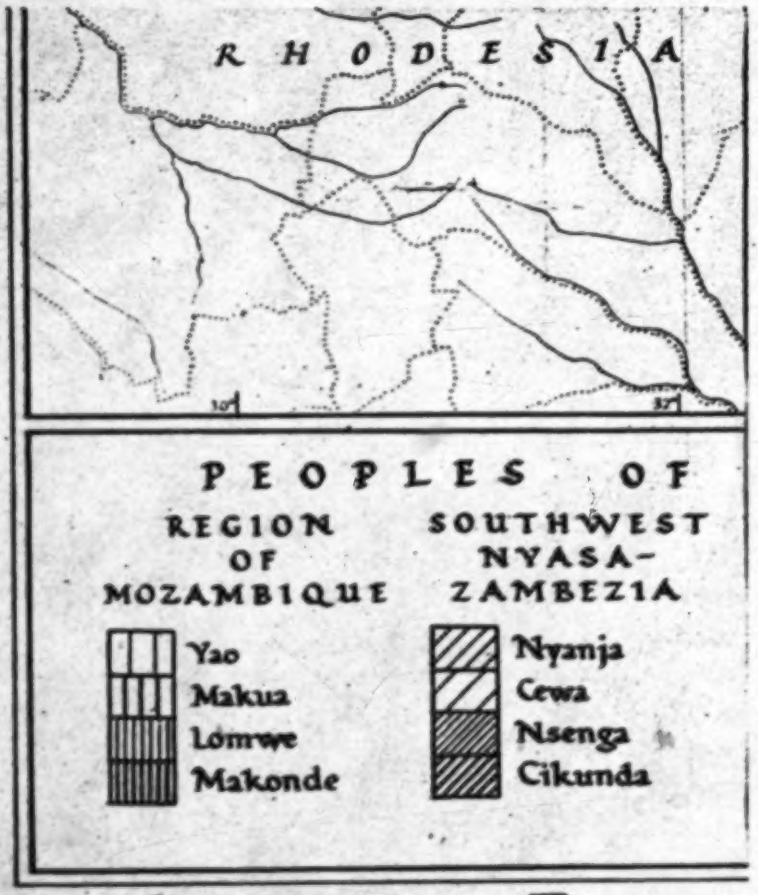

[End paper Map M]

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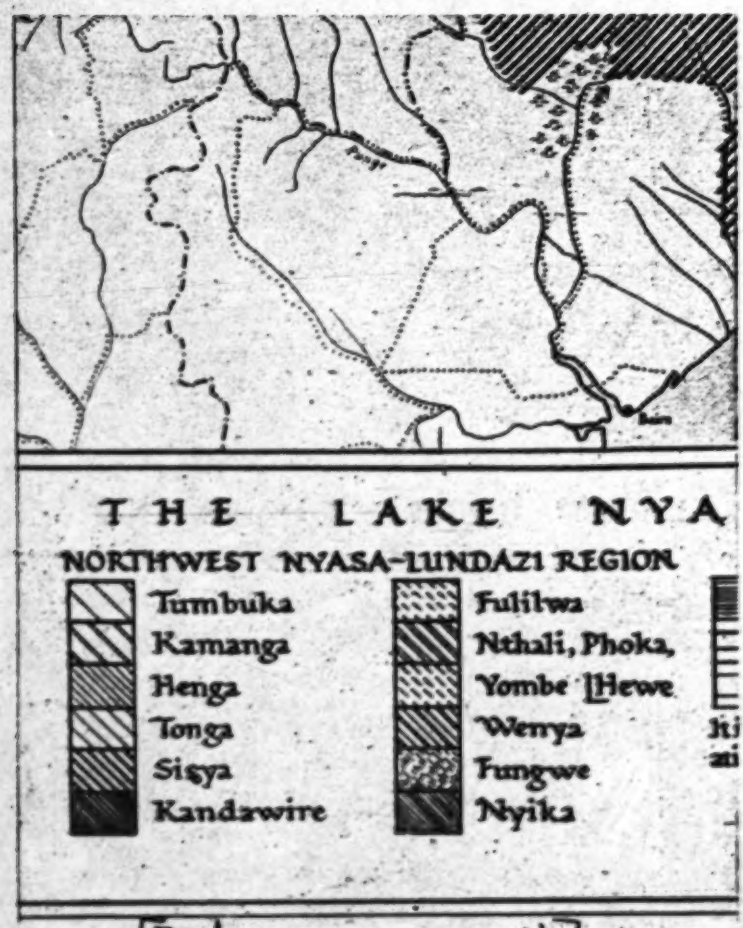

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(3)

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4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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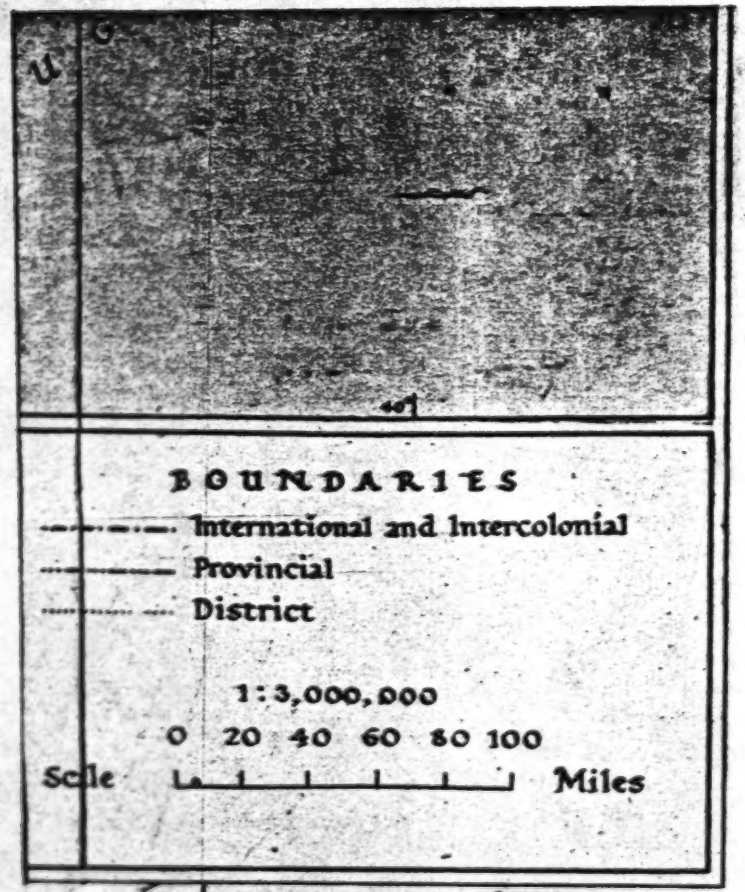

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F. HANDS - DEL ET SCR. - 1949

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

●131

[p.2]

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

1. *INTRODUCTION*

Land everywhere is the basis of social life, that upon which men move and rest; it is both in itself the most important raw material of economic activity and the location of all other materials such as minerals, wood and water; it is a universal condition of human action, an object of human understanding and feeling. And everywhere the use of land is defined and limited by a system of tenure, a series of laws, moral rules and conventions without which no orderly life at all would be possible upon it. This paper is an attempt to describe in part one such system of land tenure, that which I found to obtain among the Nyakyusa, a Bantu people of South Tanganyika, during the years 1934-1938. |2|

I have here described in detail the land-rights of individuals only, both in relation to one another and to the villages and chiefdoms of which they are members, and have left the rights of these groups in relation to one another for a further publication.

The Nyakyusa system of land-tenure is determined by three main factors: firstly by the physical conditions of life in this part of Central Africa, that is by the nature of the soil and its topography, by the climate and by the density of the human population; secondly by the particular practical uses to which land is put and the techniques employed therein; and thirdly by the form of Nyakyusa society, the groups and relationships into which it is articulated. But in considering these three main determinants we shall have to take into account intellectual and emotional factors also, the understanding of their land which the Nyakyusa possess and their feelings about it.

2. *PHYSICAL CONDITIONS*

The Rungwe District of the Southern Highlands Province of Tanganyika, in which the Nyakyusa live, is situated some 9° south of the Equator and is a part of the Great Rift Valley formation. The country of the Nyakyusa is bounded on the south by Lake Nyasa and the Songwe river, on the east by the almost sheer wall of the Livingstone Mountains (which rise to 10,000 feet), and on the west by the lower Ndali hills which, although included in the same administrative district, are inhabited not by Nyakyusa but by two cultural groups closely related to them, the Ndali and the Lambya. |3| ● |33

The Nyakyusa live then between the two walls of the Rift, but their country is not itself all of an equal altitude. In the north the Rift is here interrupted and closed by the extinct Rungwe volcano (10,000 feet) from whose base (5,000 feet) the land drops for twenty-five miles in a cascade of hills and little plateaux to level out in a lake-shore plain fifteen or

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

131 twenty miles from Lake Nyasa (1,500 feet). A little compact country, 133 secluded until very recently from any effective external contacts, slightly over 1,000 square miles in extent.[1]

132 The soil, particularly that of the higher ground in the north of the 134 Nyakyusa country, is not in itself very rich, but, as between 100 and 130 inches of rain usually fall each year, the district is one of the most fertile [161] in the whole of Tanganyika; two crops a year are often grown on the same patch of ground, and the African population is over eighty to the square [231] mile. There is no infected tsetse fly and cattle are the most prized possession of the Nyakyusa.

631 For historical reasons, which we will discuss in a later section, the Nyakyusa have never been united under any one paramount chief of their own, but live in a number (nearly 100 at the present day) of tiny but traditionally independent chiefdoms. For these chiefdoms the numerous streams which run down from the north into Lake Nyasa and the crests of the ridges of land between them, form natural boundaries.

133 The country, of course, is not all of equal economic value, parts of it 134 are stony and mountainous, other parts, and particularly the plain in the south, consist of deep and level soil; and the population is heavier on the plain than on the higher ground. Further, on the higher ground, there exist numerous old volcanic craters filled with rich moist soil and these, being more fertile than the surrounding land, are particularly valued by [241] the Nyakyusa. Again, of the two chief economic crops of this district, one, coffee, can only be grown on the higher ground while the other, rice, can only be grown on or near the plain. And at every point their system of land tenure is partially determined by such physical factors as these.

3. *THE USES AND VALUE OF LAND*

311 The Nyakyusa use their land for building on, for agriculture, for pasture, for hunting and fishing; they collect firewood, reeds, thatching-grass, mushrooms and other wild vegetables there; they draw water from its streams and bathe daily in them; on their land they grow bamboos, bananas, *imiyunguti* trees[2] and coffee; they keep bees; they dance, they fight, they walk and lie down upon it; their land is both the receptacle of refuse and the location of religious ritual, while their doctors continually wander over its surface in search of magical medicines.

Not all these uses of land give rise to laws, moral rules or conventions, but only those uses which tend to lead men into conflict with one another or into mutual embarrassment. The only reasons for the existence of

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[1] The whole of Rungwe District is 1,866 square miles, but this includes the hills of the Ndali and Lambya as well.

[2] I have not been able to discover the botanical name of this tree.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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[p. 2]

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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[p 3]

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6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

THE CONSTITUTION OF NGONDE.

1. *A COMPARATIVE PROBLEM.*

Ngonde is a district at the north end of Lake Nyasa; its centre is fixed, its boundaries vague. The centre of Ngonde is the sacred hill Mbande which stands in a bend of the Lukulu River eight miles from the lake. Here is the traditional home of the Kyungus, the paramount chiefs of Ngonde.[1] But its boundaries cannot be so easily defined. A man moving from any direction and almost any distance towards Mbande will say he is going "to Ngonde." One man may start five miles from Mbande and proceed to its base, another may, in the north at least, start far away among the Nyakyusa in Tanganyika and stop fifteen miles short of the Songwe, where alone the Kyungu's supremacy begins to be effective, and yet both alike say they are going "to Ngonde." But in this paper the name Ngonde is used to refer to the area of the Kyungu's present political paramountcy alone, an area defined in the north by the Songwe River, which is also the boundary between Nyasaland and Tanganyika, in the east by Lake Nyasa, in the west by the Nyasaland—Northern Rhodesia boundary and in the south by the borders of Chief Mwafulira's country some twenty-five miles from Mbande; an area of 2,687 square miles. 131

The population of Ngonde, thus defined, is 40,000, with a density of just under fifteen to the square mile; while the rainfall averages 45" per annum. It is thus very different from the country of the Nyakyusa across the Songwe, where the average rainfall is more than twice and the density of population about six times as great. 161 132

The people of Ngonde are not homogeneous in language and culture. The dominant group lives on the strip of plain which stretches along the shores of the Lake, north and south from Mbande, and the district is here referred to as "the plain," "the Ngonde plain" or "Ngonde proper." Behind them, in the hills which rise westwards to the borders of Northern Rhodesia, live small groups of Lambya, Sukwa, Wenya, Henga and Mambwe. They, while politically subordinate to the Kyungu, differ considerably from the inhabitants of Ngonde proper in their ways of life and speech. These upland groups we did not visit and, unless the contrary is specifically stated, all references here to the culture or customs of Ngonde should be taken to refer to the plain alone. 101

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[1] I use the forms Kyungu, Ngonde, Mbande now used by the young men and officially accepted. The old men speak of Chungu, Nkhonde, Mpande.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

128 as they do, in their behaviour and their mutual relationships to a common type. Space forbids such an undertaking here; and it is necessary to emphasize that, although the most significant facts are described in an orderly manner, and although certain reasons for these facts are indicated in their specific character and in their connections with one another, yet these reasons are not fully or systematically worked out, and the result is a description which leaves the facts only half-explained. And, in so far as this society is not here fully analyzed, so it is not yet fully comparable with others. The reader of this paper will detect many points of similarity and of difference between Nyakyusa society and some other with which he is familiar, but the comparison cannot be made to yield any propositions about the nature of human societies in general until the facts of both have been fully explained in terms of their particular social, cultural, and external conditions.

Climate, Cultural Groups, and European Contact.

101 The Nyakyusa live in the Rungwe District of South Tanganyika in
● 131 the Rift Valley at the head of Lake Nyasa. The valley is dominated and
133 closed at its North end by the recently extinct Rungwe volcano, from whose foot the land, starting as an upland plateau 5,000 ft. above sea-level, tumbles southwards for twenty-five miles in a broken cascade of hills, to level out in a plain fifteen or twenty miles from Lake Nyasa. The Lake is 1200 ft. above the sea. The East wall of the Rift rises to 10,000 ft. or more in the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains, but the West wall is two
[132] or three thousand feet lower. The climate is very wet, for about 130" of rain fall each year, and, at 9° South of the Equator, is also very hot.
[161 The rain and the sun together make the land extremely fertile; the
73] district is thickly populated (over 100 to the square mile), famine is rare and the Nyakyusa are far better fed than most of their neighbours. Rice
177 was introduced into the plain by Arabs, coffee by the German Missiona-
241 aries in the hills, and these two crops to-day, under the enthusiastic care and guidance of the Government Agricultural Department, bring to many Nyakyusa a small but steadily increasing cash income.

262 Their main foods are bananas, maize, beans, sweet potatoes and a
241 variety of greenstuffs, together with meat and curds from their cattle. Millet is extensively grown and is used both for making beer and for eating in the form of poryidge.

101 The name *Nyakyusa* is nowadays used by themselves as a general name for all those who have similar speech and customs and who live in Tanganyika; but formerly it only covered those who live in the South of the district, in the plain and up in the hills as far North as the administra-

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

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Map I. Country north of Lake Nyasa

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE peoples with whom this book is concerned, the Nyakyusa and the Ngonde, occupy an area shut in by mountains at the northern end of Lake Nyasa, and enjoy a culture which, though varying locally, clearly springs from a common basis and is traditionally attributed to similar origins. The most conspicuous features of their political organization are (i) the balance of power between chiefs and commoners; (ii) the 'coming out' ritual in which a generation of men which has governed for approximately thirty years retires and hands over the administration to its sons, retaining only ritual functions; and (iii) the system of age-villages.

All are agreed that chiefs and commoners belong to different stocks; the commoners being descended from the original occupants of the country while the chiefs trace their descent to a line of invaders who came down from the Livingstone mountains eight generations ago. According to the myth, they brought with them fire, and cattle, and iron tools, and they found a people who ate their food raw in a land 'without trees'.[1] Commoners are *abatitu*, black people, while Ngulube, an early ancestor of the chiefs, was 'pale'[2] and chiefs (*abapaqwale*) generally are said to have been lighter in colour and 'different in their bodies'. After generations of intermarriage between chiefs and commoners there is no consistent difference in physical type between them, but the range of physical type among the Nyakyusa as a whole is wide.[3]

Nyakyusa and Ngonde historians say that their chiefs are related to those of the Kinga, who live high above the Nyakyusa valley to the east in the Livingstone mountains, whence the chiefs came. The Kinga acknowledge the connexion and join with the Nyakyusa in sacrifice to their common heroes, but culturally the

[1] Possibly the lake-shore plain. The hills until cultivated are covered with either savannah or rain forest.

[2] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3, p. 10 (1939). According to the Ngonde version Ngulube was the *first* ancestor.

[3] cf. F. Fülleborn, *Beiträge zur physischen Anthropologie der Nord-Nyassaländer* (1906). *Das Deutsche Nyassa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet Afrikas* (1906).

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and try to understand the nature and reasons for change. Here, then, is a good opportunity for the study of social change – not only in land tenure as such, but also in village and family organisation, political authority and economic life.

II

The Nyakyusa are a Bantu people inhabiting the main part of the Rungwe District in southern Tanganyika, immediately to the north of Lake Nyasa. In 1948 they numbered about 199,000 in that District, but about 10,000 men were probably at the time temporarily absent from their homes and in employment in the mines and towns of the Rhodesias and South Africa (see Gulliver, 1957), whilst about 20,000 had migrated to live in the adjacent Mbeya District to the north.

The tribal area comprises a confined geographical basin surrounding the northern end of Lake Nyasa. It extends only about 40 miles from the tip of the lake at 1,550 feet above sea level to the Poroto Mountains in the north at 8,000 feet; and from east to west is only about 30 miles, from the almost sheer walls of the Livingstone Mountains (with peaks up to 10,000 feet) to the Ndali Highlands (rising to about 7,000 feet). There are therefore unusually large ecological differences within so small an area. Three major regions are to be distinguished: the "Northern Highlands" over about 4,500 feet, the low-lying "Lake Plains" in the south, and the "Central Region" in between. Everywhere rainfall is reliable and high, averaging at least 100 inches annually[1], and this amply compensates for a certain poverty and minose of the soil, although (and particularly in the Central Region) it brings dangers of soil erosion. Except in the highest parts the banana is the staple food, supported by maize, beans, finger millet and groundnuts. In the Northern Highlands coffee has become well established as the principal cash crop; in the Lake Plains paddy rice cultivation provides both a food and a cash crop; in the Central Region the country is too low generally for coffee and too high and dry for rice; consequently cash-cropping is considerably inferior and the people's standard of living is rather poorer.

The Nyakyusa and their country tended for a long time to be relatively isolated from the outside world by high mountain walls and rain-soaked roads. In addition, or because of it perhaps, they developed an almost unique culture which was supported by considerable conservatism and high insularity. They still continued to regard their African neighbours beyond the mountains as their social and cultural inferiors. The turmoil of the slave-trade in Central Africa passed them by; in modern times they have not enthusiastically accepted Christianity and they have refused to take up the use of Swahili, the Territorial *lingua franca*. In recent years, and most especially since the end of World War II, they have, however, accepted and pushed forward with vigour a rapid and extensive economic development, involving particularly the production of coffee and paddy as cash crops, and large-scale labour migration to the south in the high-wage mining industries. The multiplicity of petty, often tiny, independent chiefdoms has been reorganised to provide four local government areas, each under a Rural Council, in which the old chiefdoms have become something like parishes[2]. Although much of the old conservatism and narrow parochialism persists, yet there is now an atmosphere of accepted change, of a keen desire for economic development, and a general acceptance of a cash economy.

Probably the most significant feature of modern life in the Nyakyusa country is the increasing scarcity of land for agriculture in relation to the

1. At Tukuyu, in the Northern Highlands, annual rainfall averaged 99.28 inches between 1919 and 1952; at Kyela, in the Lake Plains, the average between 1940 and 1951 was 106.33 inches.
2. See Kingdon, E.R.: The evolution of a system of local government in African rural districts in the Rungwe District, Tanganyika. *The Journal of African Administration*, iii, 4, October, 1951.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

For example,

In the Northern Highlands there is now a strong tendency for the tight village system to disintegrate as men seek to site their houses, each in his own coffee plot. In the Lake Plains also the structure of the age-village is changing – there the villages persist as such but they come to be inhabited by men of any age and new villages do not emerge with a new chief. No attempt is made here, however, to analyse these variations for they are only now beginning and no satisfactory, detailed information is available for the post-war cash economy of the highland areas.

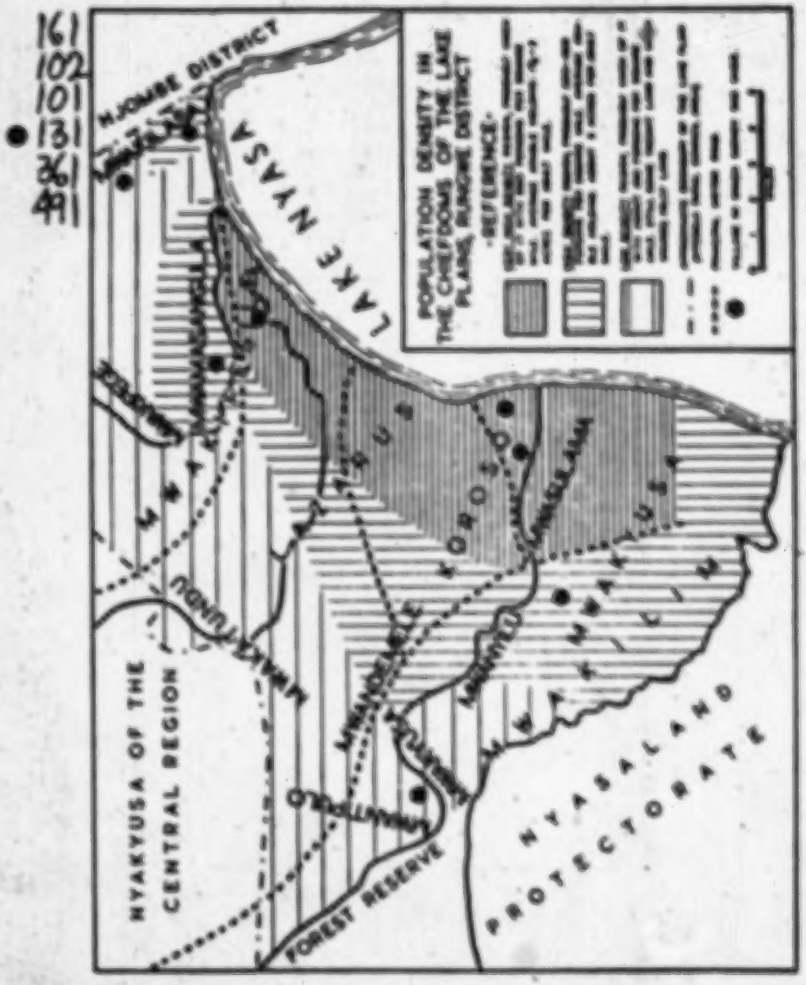
The Government of Tanganyika has permitted the publication of this essay, and I wish to express my gratitude for its support. The essay is a modified version of my original Report which was presented to Government in January, 1956. The views expressed in it are my own and not those of Government. As usual in my work as Government Sociologist, I have received much valuable assistance, advice and information from officers stationed in the area. The Nyakyusa themselves, as during my first enquiry, were usually cooperative, and at least some of them welcomed my work as a contribution to the easement of their novel difficulties. It would not have been surprising had they remained obdurate and antagonistic towards my enquiries about their land, for like many modern Africans they have a sense of insecurity which is not susceptible to reason. In fact I was able without much difficulty to make any enquiry I wished, to measure sample areas and to discuss the situation in all its aspects. Perhaps it is that an African people welcome a sympathetic enquirer and in their problems genuinely want assistance. The task of a sociologist is of course in some ways rather easier than that of an administrator or technical officer who has to persuade the people actually to accept and practice new ways and to abandon old ways. It is hoped that this essay may be of assistance both to these officers and to the people whom they are attempting to assist and teach.

Finally, I must thank the East African Institute of Social Research which has accepted this essay for publication, and especially Dr. L. A. Fallers who kindly read and criticised the original draft and who drew the two sketch maps.

Note: The term, the "Lake Plains", as used in this essay is to be understood to cover the major part of the modern local government area under the Ntebela Rural Council. Omitted are the small groups of Kisi (Ikombe) and Ndali (Ngana) peoples to the extreme east and west respectively. This area contains the alluvial flood plains surrounding the northern tip of Lake Nyasa, and the lowest foothills to the north where the country begins its steep incline towards the Poroto Mountains. To the south lies the lake and to the south-west, beyond the meandering Songwe river, lie the bushlands of the northern part of the Nyasaland Protectorate. To the east are the towering Livingstone Mountains and to the north live the other Nyakyusa groups in the highlands.

The area comprises a fairly compact social and economic region with a common historical tradition. Several of the indigenous chiefdoms stretch across the intermediate boundary between flood plains and foothills. With but one exception the present chiefs are lineal descendants, in their various houses, of the original Mwakyusa who led the people into this lowland area five generations ago. The modern inhabitants are pre-eminently the Nyakyusa-proper.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa



[Facing p. 15]

11/Tkwaimo C-6 (ca. 1962) 1964
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P.236 A]

WANYAKYUSA

By P. H. [illegible]
Revised, [illegible] February

131 The Wanyakyusa occupy the District of Rungwe in the Southern Highlands Province. The district lies between 9° and 9½° S. latitude
133 at the northern tip of Lake Nyasa. The altitude ranges from 1,500 feet to 9,500 feet. The
631 district is divided into twelve chiefdoms. The Administrative Headquarters are at Tukuyu, which was known before the British occupation as Neu Langenberg.

Inhabitants

The local people are not indigenous to this
101 area. They came, tradition has it, from
[173] Mahenge via Ukinga after many tribal fights. They are akin to the Wahenga in Nyasaland bordering on the Tanganyika boundary. It is
191 estimated that only 10 per cent of the Wanyakyusa speak Kiswahili. According to the 1955
161 census the total population was 153,204. The
162 total number of tax-payers in 1942 was 35,304, or 23.04 per cent of the total population.

101 The people themselves are extremely industrious and intelligent. As there are 90 people to the square mile, living conditions are
105 crowded and emigration is continually taking place. The people are partial to litigation over cattle and women. The number of cases heard annually in the Native Courts is about 6,000. There is no one historical and traditional head of the tribe. The twelve Chiefs are, in reality, hereditary Headmen who have been selected by Government to be Chiefs. They are in effect only *primi inter pares* in native eyes, the outlook of the people being unusually democratic for a native tribe.

105 The people live in houses made of wattle and daub or bamboo frame, with thatched
242 roof, and villages are sited mostly along ridges.
241 Rectangular houses are now built instead of the round huts of former days. They often stand in rows with a main street down the middle with bananas in the background. The more progressive natives build with *sun-dried* or burnt brick. Stock are stalled in the same house owing to the prevalence of thieving, but sleep in separate rooms.

Climate

132 The rainfall of the district varies in the different areas. In Tukuyu itself the annual average for 25 years (1918-1942) is 100.22 inches. On the Lake shore the average is probably higher, but no continuous statistics are available. The heaviest rainfall months are from December to May, but, in most years,

12: Blegaard K-5 (1955) 1962 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa
Chagga F914
Haya F918

House-types of the Banyakyusa

By Anspyre Blegaard

During a stay in the Southern Highlands in Tanganyika in 1955, I was given the opportunity to inspect—and draw plans of—some of the houses belonging to the local Bantu tribe of the Nyakyusa. In literature they are known also under the name of Konde.

The district in which they live is fairly high above sea level and near the borders of Rhodesia and Nyasaland; the rainfall is fully adequate. Bananas and coffee are doing well—the banana trees often forming groves in between which you catch a glimpse of the village houses.

The district invites comparison with other localities in Tanganyika where the country is high, and where precipitation is plentiful. Such localities would be the districts around Kilimanjaro and near Bukoba to the west of Lake Victoria. In the former live the Chagga tribe, in the latter the tribe of the Haya. Even here bananas and coffee are plenty—and the I.Q. of both tribes is said to be high, as is the case of the Banyakyusa (plural of Nyakyusa).

Maybe you might therefore expect to find a corresponding standard of dwelling-houses, perhaps even the same type of hut. But in this matter you will be highly surprised; so great are the differences between the three areas. Apart from the original design of the house being round and the roof thatched, no similarity exists between the various houses or their interior lay-outs.

The round, thatched Chagga hut has its roof all way down to the ground. It is not very large and the interior lay-out is quite primitive. A cow or goat lives all its life indoors and is fed there. A short and uncomfortable bed is found near by. Down the centre of the floor is a stone-paved aisle. Everything looks quite simple—especially when you remember that in other aspects the Chagga are quite advanced in their use of modern facilities; for instance they use electricity for the grinding of their maize.

The Haya hut—the old, round type—is a really magnificent thing. I think its centre is seven or eight metres high. In front it has a kind of overhang, maybe you might call it a front room, where people will sit, and where guests will be received. If you are a welcome guest, a straw mat will be rolled out to cover the grass flooring of the hut. The walls of the front room are solid plaster made from a kind of mud. The hearth is placed near the centre of the inner room.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

133 Great Rift valley, walled in on the east by the Livingstone mountains, which rise to 10,000 feet, and on the west by the rather lower Ndali hills. It is blocked to the north-west by Rungwe volcano and the Poroto mountains; the volcano rises from the floor of the Rift to nearly 10,000 feet, and the lowest pass over the Poroto mountains is 8,000 feet. Scattered throughout the hills are a number of small lakes formed in the craters of old volcanoes, each one like a jewel set in the green of field and pasture.

•132 The rainfall in this valley is very heavy, averaging over 100 inches in the year, and innumerable streams rush down the 161 mountain slopes, flooding parts of the plain during the torrential rains of March and April. The dry season is short—it scarcely exists in the hills—and such a rainfall, combined with skilful cultivation and stock-breeding, makes a large population possible. The average density for Rungwe district is over eighty persons to the square mile; the population is most concentrated on the Lake-shore plain, but stretches up into the hills to 6,000 feet. South of the Songwe the rainfall is much less—at Karonga it averages only 45 inches a year—and the country supports a smaller population, the average density for Ngonde being less than fifteen persons to the square mile.

The Nyakyusa grow a variety of crops of which the chief are 24 bananas and plantains, finger millet, maize, cow-peas, coco-yams, cassava, sweet potatoes, ground-nuts, curcurbits and, recently, rice [231] and coffee. They also breed short-horned, humped, cattle which are carefully stalled at night, and hand-dressed to keep them free from ticks. Banana plantations stretch mile upon mile through the plain and along the crests of the ridges.[1] In them are hidden the villages, often so close together that the boundaries between them are not obvious. On the fringes of the bananas are the tilled fields, and beyond the fields the open pasture land. Unlike most of their neighbours in Central Africa the Nyakyusa practise fixed, not shifting, cultivation, and the land is kept in good heart by green manuring, rotation of crops, and periodic fallows.[2] Only in the cultivation of finger millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins,

[1] J. F. Elton, *The Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa* (1879), pp. 330–1, and D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., pp. 285–6, comment on their great extent.

[2] According to the Nyakyusa themselves the productivity of their fields is slowly diminishing. Most of them attribute this to the neglect of traditional rituals. We do not know how far their observations are objective, and how far they are biased by the tendency to glorify the past. D. H. Thwaites, in his article

4 Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

especially in the north, but as between 100 and 130 in. of rain usually falls annually, the country is one of the most fertile parts of Tanganyika. Two crops a year are often grown on the same patch of ground. There is no tsetse, and cattle flourish. Parts of the country are stony and mountainous, others, especially the lake-shore plain, are of deep soil. On the higher ground there are many old volcanic craters filled with rich, moist soil, more fertile than the surrounding land.[1]

Ngonde country is bounded by Lake Nyasa on the east and by the Misuko hills on the west. It is mountainous except for a belt of low-lying country, about 6–10 miles wide, along the lake shore. The whole district is well watered and well wooded except for some of the higher peaks and the lake-plains. Banana-trees are cultivated throughout the district. Game is plentiful. Average annual rainfall at Karonga in 1922–32 was 41·2 in. Average mean temperature was 74° F., seldom rising above 95° F.[2]

MAIN FEATURES OF ECONOMY

Cultivation

The *Kinga* are agriculturists, cultivating wheat, peas, and potatoes, and latterly also oats and barley. They own a moderate amount of cattle, and many sheep and goats. They are skilful smiths.[3] The *Kisi* and *Sandia* around the north-west coast of the lake are fishermen and agriculturists, growing some millet and maize.[4] The *Nyika* are agriculturists and cattle-rearers; the *Lambia* do not rear much cattle; the *Ndali* have large herds, and cultivate bananas in the valleys.[5] The *Nyamwanga* keep sheep and goats and grow maize, beans, and millet.[6]

The *Matengo* have a system of hill-side cultivation of their own, which prevents erosion. When forced into concentrations in the caves in Litumbo and Langiro to escape the Ngoni raids, they developed the pit-system of hoeing: the grass is cut and laid in 2-ft. wide lines in a grid of 6-ft. squares. The hole in the middle of the square is hoed by a woman, who throws up the earth on to the grass squares. The crops are planted in the raised beds and weeds are thrown into the pit to rot, forming compost for the following year. After one season the pit becomes the raised bed and the beds the pit, and the system is repeated in following years. With proper succession of crops the gardens may be kept in use for ten years before fertility begins to fail. Maize, millet, and wheat flourish; root crops do not thrive under this system, nor does tobacco. The pit-system is now found mainly at Litumbo, and is being abandoned elsewhere.[7]

The *Ngonde* and *Nyakyusa* are primarily cattle-rearers and banana-cultivators. They have a very similar culture, but only the latter has been described in detail. Consequently, the following summary refers to the Nyakyusa, unless the contrary is indicated.

The Nyakyusa practise subsistence agriculture by intensive cultivation with rotation of crops. As wide shifting cultivation is not practised, villages are relatively stable. They grow a great quantity of crops—maize, millet, sweet potatoes, beans, ground-nuts, cow-peas, cassava, and rice in the plain. Grass is hoed in for manure. The *Sukuma*, in the Misuko hill area (Ngonde country), grow field-peas and wheat on a small scale.[8]

[1] Wilson, J., 1938, pp. 5–6.
[2] *Handbook of German East Africa*, p. 62.
[3] Ibid., pp. 66–7.
[4] Fiko, 1938.
[5] Murray, 1930, pp. 100–3; Dixey, 1928.
[6] Ibid., pp. 80–3.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Murray, 1930, p. 107.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

131 twenty miles from Lake Nyasa (1,500 feet). A little compact country,
133 secluded until very recently from any effective external contacts, slightly over 1,000 square miles in extent.[1]

●132 The soil, particularly that of the higher ground in the north of the
134 Nyakyusa country, is not in itself very rich, but, as between 100 and 130 inches of rain usually fall each year, the district is one of the most fertile
[161] in the whole of Tanganyika; two crops a year are often grown on the same patch of ground, and the African population is over eighty to the square
[234] mile. There is no infected tsetse fly and cattle are the most prized possession of the Nyakyusa.

631 For historical reasons, which we will discuss in a later section, the Nyakyusa have never been united under any one paramount chief of their own, but live in a number (nearly 100 at the present day) of tiny but traditionally independent chiefdoms. For these chiefdoms the numerous streams which run down from the north into Lake Nyasa and the crests of the ridges of land between them, form natural boundaries.

133 The country, of course, is not all of equal economic value, parts of it
134 are stony and mountainous, other parts, and particularly the plain in the south, consist of deep and level soil; and the population is heavier on the plain than on the higher ground. Further, on the higher ground, there exist numerous old volcanic craters filled with rich moist soil and these, being more fertile than the surrounding land, are particularly valued by
[241] the Nyakyusa. Again, of the two chief economic crops of this district, one, coffee, can only be grown on the higher ground while the other, rice, can only be grown on or near the plain. And at every point their system of land tenure is partially determined by such physical factors as these.

3. *THE USES AND VALUE OF LAND*

311 The Nyakyusa use their land for building on, for agriculture, for pasture, for hunting and fishing; they collect firewood, reeds, thatching-grass, mushrooms and other wild vegetables there; they draw water from its streams and bathe daily in them; on their land they grow bamboos, bananas, *imiyungati* trees[2] and coffee; they keep bees; they dance, they fight, they walk and lie down upon it; their land is both the receptacle of refuse and the location of religious ritual, while their doctors continually wander over its surface in search of magical medicines.

Not all these uses of land give rise to laws, moral rules or conventions, but only those uses which tend to lead men into conflict with one another or into mutual embarrassment. The only reasons for the existence of

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[1] The whole of Rungwe District is 1,866 square miles, but this includes the hills of the Ndali and Lambya as well.

[2] I have not been able to discover the botanical name of this tree.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

THE CONSTITUTION OF NGONDE.

1. *A COMPARATIVE PROBLEM.*

Ngonde is a district at the north end of Lake Nyasa; its centre is fixed, its boundaries vague. The centre of Ngonde is the sacred hill Mbande which stands in a bend of the Lukulu River eight miles from the lake. Here is the traditional home of the Kyungus, the paramount chiefs of Ngonde.[1] But its boundaries cannot be so easily defined. A man moving from any direction and almost any distance towards Mbande will say he is going "to Ngonde." One man may start five miles from Mbande and proceed to its base, another may, in the north at least, start far away among the Nyakyusa in Tanganyika and stop fifteen miles short of the Songwe, where alone the Kyungu's supremacy begins to be effective, and yet both alike say they are going "to Ngonde." But in this paper the name Ngonde is used to refer to the area of the Kyungu's present political paramountcy alone, an area defined in the north by the Songwe River, which is also the boundary between Nyasaland and Tanganyika, in the east by Lake Nyasa, in the west by the Nyasaland—Northern Rhodesia boundary and in the south by the borders of Chief Mwafulira's country some twenty-five miles from Mbande; an area of 2,687 square miles. |3|

The population of Ngonde, thus defined, is 40,000, with a density of just under fifteen to the square mile; while the rainfall averages 45" per annum. It is thus very different from the country of the Nyakyusa across the Songwe, where the average rainfall is more than twice and the density of population about six times as great. |6| |32|

The people of Ngonde are not homogeneous in language and culture. The dominant group lives on the strip of plain which stretches along the shores of the Lake, north and south from Mbande, and the district is here referred to as "the plain," "the Ngonde plain" or "Ngonde proper." Behind them, in the hills which rise westwards to the borders of Northern Rhodesia, live small groups of Lambya, Sukwa, Wenya, Henga and Mambwe. They, while politically subordinate to the Kyungu, differ considerably from the inhabitants of Ngonde proper in their ways of life and speech. These upland groups we did not visit and, unless the contrary is specifically stated, all references here to the culture or customs of Ngonde should be taken to refer to the plain alone. |0|

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[1] I use the forms Kyungu, Ngonde, Mbande now used by the young men and officially accepted. The old men speak of Chungu, Nkhonde, Mpande.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

128 as they do, in their behaviour and their mutual relationships to a common type. Space forbids such an undertaking here; and it is necessary to emphasize that, although the most significant facts are described in an orderly manner, and although certain reasons for these facts are indicated in their specific character and in their connections with one another, yet these reasons are not fully or systematically worked out, and the result is a description which leaves the facts only half-explained. And, in so far as this society is not here fully analyzed, so it is not yet fully comparable with others. The reader of this paper will detect many points of similarity and of difference between Nyakyusa society and some other with which he is familiar, but the comparison cannot be made to yield any propositions about the nature of human societies in general until the facts of both have been fully explained in terms of their particular social, cultural, and external conditions.

Climate, Cultural Groups, and European Contact.

101 The Nyakyusa live in the Rungwe District of South Tanganyika in
131 the Rift Valley at the head of Lake Nyasa. The valley is dominated and
133 closed at its North end by the recently extinct Rungwe volcano, from whose foot the land, starting as an upland plateau 5,000 ft. above sea-level, tumbles southwards for twenty-five miles in a broken cascade of hills, to level out in a plain fifteen or twenty miles from Lake Nyasa. The Lake is 1200 ft above the sea. The East wall of the Rift rises to 10,000 ft. or more in the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains, but the West wall is two or three thousand feet lower. The climate is very wet, for about 130″ of [32] rain fall each year, and, at 9° South of the Equator, is also very hot. [161 The rain and the sun together make the land extremely fertile; the 73] district is thickly populated (over 100 to the square mile), famine is rare and the Nyakyusa are far better fed than most of their neighbours. Rice
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262 Their main foods are bananas, maize, beans, sweet potatoes and a
241 variety of greenstuffs, together with meat and curds from their cattle. Millet is extensively grown and is used both for making beer and for eating in the form of porridge.

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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been someone [of the dead Kyungus] whom you forgot to ask about.' 'And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again.' If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry, and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would, and then the diviner would tell them that it was so-and-so (one of the dead Kyungus) and they would go and sacrifice in his grove. 643 [821] [787]

Thus to insult Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. An 'insult' might mean any neglect of the obligations of the chiefs and nobles and commoners of the plain to their lord. [687] [688]

The people of Ngonde hoed large fields as tribute to the Kyungu and if they failed to do so 'he grew angry and poured all the water out of the pot in which he kept his rain stones' (*vide infra*, p. 114) and 'the sky dried up'. Then the chiefs called their men to hoe. . . . 'They hoed and hoed and hoed and their wives planted, then the rain came in a torrent. . . . Kyungu created much rain.' [651] [789]

Or if an elephant hunter neglected to send the Kyungu one of the tusks of any elephant he killed he would not kill another. 'The country beneath was angry . . . the shades of the dead Kyungus . . . they were angry saying: "Why do you stint our child?"' [651] [769]

The rainfall in the Ngonde plain is less than half what it is in the Nyakyusa valley and anxiety about rainfall was constantly shown in the communal rituals; elephant hunting was also a matter of concern in a way in which it was not among the Nyakyusa and this too is reflected in rituals; but there was also the preoccupation with health and fertility, as in the prayers at Lubaga. In the groves circling Mbande the nobles prayed: 'May the sterile bear children, may the cattle and fowls increase, may the children sleep and not cry at night, may the witches not injure anyone.' And as we shall see, it was health and fertility that men had in mind when they cleared out the ashes each year after the break of the rains. 643 132 771 788 [782]

Towards Christmas time, when the first maize and the first 769 796

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

that I can speak, that when I speak food comes tomorrow; let it be so. 769

Three points call for comment here. First, it will be noted that if the crops failed Kasitile had a scapegoat in his heir who was quarrelling with him. The sacrifice was performed correctly but a quarrel between any of the leading actors could destroy its efficacy, and Kasitile made it clear that he was being very forbearing with a difficult 'son'. 782

Secondly, a great many names were mentioned in the prayers, but they were not mentioned in any discernible order. This is obvious if the prayers are compared with the genealogy facing p. 3 [793] And since Kasitile was a famous priest, acknowledged to be an expert in ritual and tradition we must conclude that the order was not thought important: all that was required was to mention the names of dead members of the lineage, including even one (Mwakabule 117) who was junior both to Mwaipopo and Kasitile who were sacrificing.

Thirdly, what did Kasitile imply by his reference to the moon? 769 (p. 74). We omitted to ask Kasitile himself, but a number of 782 informants insisted that there is no necessary connexion between the celebration of a ritual and the phases of the moon. However, 821 rain is expected with the *waxing* moon, therefore rituals which are intended to produce rain are usually performed with the waning moon, and the sacrifice to Mwaijonga in which sun and warmth were sought, was performed with the waxing moon. This may or may not be what Kasitile had in mind.

Everyone agreed afterwards that the rituals had been effective [132] for the weather grew slightly warmer. Before the sacrifice at Lubaga on 7th July, the temperature was 62° F. at sunset, but from the 9th onward the cloud cleared, and by the 14th the sunset temperature was 68° F. Whether or not the Kinga priests living high on their mountains with a view down the Lake whence storms come are weatherwise, and time their visits carefully, we do not know. Certainly any change in the weather after a celebration is interpreted as a direct answer to prayer.

(c) SACRIFICE TO MWAKISAMBWE

A month later a sacrifice was made to Mwaijonga's great-great- 769 grandfather Mwakisambwe (50) in the grove Mbyanga. The chief 782 Mwaipopo was not concerned this time, but the senior line of Mwaihojo (147) and a junior line who had traditionally the responsibility of providing cows for celebrations at Mbyanga.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 Mwalukuta, the hereditary priest of Mbyanga, had been pressing
782 the chiefs to sacrifice for some time. He had sent messengers in March, April, May, and again in July, saying: 'At Mbyanga things have gone back, it is bad, see hunger kills!' At last, in August, Mwaihojo agreed to provide a cow if Mwaitende of the junior line finally refused. Mwalukuta, the priest of the grove, ex-
[793] plained:

We went to Mwaitende (121, identified with his grandfather 61) and asked him to sacrifice. He said: 'No, I am not coming; do the work there at Mbyanga yourselves.' We said: 'Why do you refuse to come, to return a cow? Our grandfathers gave you a cow, why don't you return it? They gave you cows on the understanding that you would bring them back, one by one, and kill them in the sacred grove here. Why do you refuse to return them?' It has always been the custom for the junior brothers to find cows for sacrifice. Their seniors give them wealth and appoint them priests to bring cattle to the sacred grove.
[177] But in European times they refuse to come, each man kills at his own place. . . . I must go and tell Kasitile (86) and also Kifubuka, or rather his son—the father refuses to come he had a lawsuit with Kasitile. . . . Kifubuka used to kill the cow, then Kasitile said Makuli should kill the cow, but now Makuli has refused to come so I go to fetch Kifubuka [the younger]. Makuli was a chief who ate the meat. . . . Mwaitende (61) used to send the cow to him and Mwalusche to bring to Mbyanga . . . as he now refuses to send the cow they say: 'What should we bring?' and have refused to come here.

There had been another spell of cold weather and the tempera-
● [132] ture on the night of 8th August was down to 59° F., but fine weather was visibly approaching from the Lake. On the 9th the ritual was to have been held, but not everyone had been formally summoned and it was put off to the 10th.

Only eight men came, Mwalukuta I, the priest of the grove,
[793] and his younger brother Mwalukuta II, two other priests (Nyama and Mwakasukula) and Mwakyonde (148), younger brother of Mwaihojo the chief who provided the cow, and three other young men of the chief's lineage. One of the young chiefs was
[291] wearing a red cloth and was scolded by Mwakyonde for doing so: 'It's taboo in the sacred grove.' 'Why?' 'Because it's like a rainbow.'[1] And he took it off.

The mother of Nyama brought a bundle of saplings for building the hut for the shade, and Kisisile, the senior wife of Mwaihojo the

[1] The rainbow is a symbol of misfortune, cf. p. 60.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

her by his anger, others that the husband was to blame for rejecting medical treatment earlier on. The girl herself was reported to have said to her mother-in-law, when she was lying ill at the doctor's house: 'Are you angry with me and has your anger caused the trouble? Perhaps I did not help you in collecting firewood?' But her mother-in-law replied: 'No, I am not angry with you at all.' And the girl continued: 'I know that my father is angry. Someone might go and ask him to pray for me.' There was also tension with the husband's pagan father who had protested that his son was praying for the death of his own children when he prayed with his Pentecostal friends that God's will be done. 'The Pentecostal people say: "I like to die. I don't take any medicine . . . if someone dies or not it is all the same thing."'

Nevertheless, it is true to say that the field in which natural causation is accepted is much wider among Christians than among pagans. It expands very slowly, but the change is evident. Even two cases of 'madness' (*ukulepa ilipili*), invariably the symptom of the wrath of the gods in pagan thought, were interpreted to us by a Christian teacher in terms of grief and shock. The first was of a young man whose wife and grandmother (who lived with him) both died very suddenly, and whose only cow was taken by other relatives and killed for the funeral feast. The loss of the cow following the loss of his wife and grandmother was held to have shattered him finally—'the lineage was finished'. The other case was of a mother, devoted to her daughter, who was distraught when the daughter went off to a distance, accompanying her husband to his place of work. For a daughter to marry beyond easy visiting distance was traditionally inconceivable.

The vagaries of the weather, attributed by the pagans to the neglect of sacrifices or quarrels between chiefs and priests, are explained in scientific terms by some Christians. Heavy rain fell around Rungwe in October 1957 and prevented people burning their rubbish heaps to fertilise their millet gardens. The pagans insisted that such early rain was unheard of and kept asking each other what could have caused it. A Christian elder assured us that the early rain was *not* very unusual in the hill country; he had seen other seasons like it. And in January of the same year the people of Mwaipopo's country were 'astonished' because no heavy rain had fallen and young maize and millet were shrivelling in the ground. They said: 'It has rained all round' and 'it seems as if we had offended Kyala'. Kasitile went to divine (*vide supra*, p. 119).

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

We remarked to a Christian friend, a deacon, that the rains were late. He replied: 'Well, it is not so very unusual. Sometimes rains begin in one part of the country and not in another. Sometimes we do not get heavy rain down here until the end of January.' In short, the more educated Christians are beginning to think in more general terms: they do not as yet define probabilities statistically in terms of rainfall averages, but they are tending in that direction. 797x 795x [821] [132]

And what of the positive content of Christianity? The supreme attraction, mentioned again and again as the reason for conversion, is: 'There is life' (*ubumi bulipo*), and it is life in a world to come rather than 'more abundant life' here and now that is spoken of. The contrast is between heaven above and the shadowy world 'beneath' of pagan thought, or a fearful fiery hell in which most Christians believe and to which, some think, all pagans are condemned. Constantly in sermons by Nyakyusa preachers there was stress on life, resurrection, and on the rewards and punishments of the future life, and this theme recurs again and again in the dreams of Christians. [775] [772]

There is a gulf also between the pagan conception of 'driving off' the shades and the heroes lest by 'brooding over' a man they bring madness and death, and the Christian ideal of union with God. Sermons stress the goodness and love of God, characteristics quite foreign to the traditional picture of Kyala. [769] [755] [776]

Something of the quality of Christian thought and feeling may be grasped by an examination of the names taken at baptism—the convert from paganism always chooses a new name for himself and the meaning is more immediately obvious to everyone than it is with modern English Christian names derived, as they mostly are, from languages no longer familiar. Many of the Nyakyusa names express a very direct personal relationship with God, the Redeemer: 'He has looked upon me', 'He has roused me', 'He has waited hoping for me', 'He has died for me', 'He gives me courage', 'He has changed me', 'He has chosen me out', 'He has comforted me', and a score more of the same type. Some refer to the Gospels: 'Word of Truth', 'The Word has taken hold of me'. A few speak of purification: 'Make me white', 'He has washed me'. Some express that union with God which the pagans so greatly fear: 'We are with him', 'He has come near', 'He has brooded over me', 'Let us approach', and some thanksgiving: 'Let us sing to Him', 'We praise Him', 'We have rejoiced', and some life: 'He is risen', 797x 795x 551 [553] [852]

:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I

In many areas of Eastern Africa the pressure of peasant populations on their tribal lands is a critical feature of the contemporary scene, and this is most especially so in the more fertile parts where the African has accepted the new cash economy and is beginning to appreciate the potentialities of the modern world. The situation has been highlighted recently in the public mind by the publication of the Report of the East African Royal Commission[1] which examined the economic conditions of our time and made general recommendations.

In Tanganyika the overall density of population is low (22 persons per square mile) and the general scale of economic activity still remains little above subsistence level over vast areas of Territory. There are, however, islands of extremely dense populations scattered through the country, often associated with the mountain areas, where soil is fertile, rainfall is reliable and adequate and the cultivation of crops for sale in world markets has gone ahead fairly easily. These populations still comprise peasant farming communities with little capital and their "natural" impulse is to expand their extensive agricultural system rather than to intensify their cultivation on existing holdings. Serious overcrowding soon results for the favourable areas are limited and surrounded by drier bushlands. African attitudes and legal customs concerning their land do not change quickly and they lag behind new conditions of physical limitation and economic development. Whilst the recommendations of the Royal Commission may be valuable in the establishment of general policy, it is obvious that detailed application through time demands a fairly exact knowledge and understanding of particular local conditions if it is to be reasonably successful. This is particularly the case in so large a country as Tanganyika, with its multiplicity of environments and tribal systems of law, land tenure and agriculture, and the social attitudes which encompass them.

The present essay is an attempt, sponsored by Government, to describe and analyse the land and population conditions in one small area of the Territory where a cash economy is emerging and where the pressure of a peasant population on its land resources has become acute. It is hoped that some of this account may be applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to other similar areas both in Tanganyika and elsewhere, and that the conclusions reached may be helpful in dealing with the problems there; but primarily this is a study of one particular part of the country in order to provide the information upon which detailed policy may be founded.

The Nyakyusa are not entirely typical of many of the Bantu people of East Africa for they have a most distinctive social organisation, peculiar to themselves, based on age-villages and petty, independent chiefdoms. Also, they inhabit a country whose annual rainfall is unusually high, averaging about 100 inches. On the other hand, these people are one of the very few in Tanganyika for whom we have an excellent account of both their pre-European and early European systems of land tenure. Based on this information, obtained before modern changes began, we can perceive, analyse

1. East African Royal Commission 1953-5, Report: H.M.S.O. 1955. Cmd. 9475.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and try to understand the nature and reasons for change. Here, then, is a good opportunity for the study of social change – not only in land tenure as such, but also in village and family organisation, political authority and economic life.

II

The Nyakyusa are a Bantu people inhabiting the main part of the Rungwe District in southern Tanganyika, immediately to the north of Lake Nyasa. In 1948 they numbered about 199,000 in that District, but about 10,000 men were probably at the time temporarily absent from their homes and in employment in the mines and towns of the Rhodesias and South Africa (see Gulliver, 1957), whilst about 20,000 had migrated to live in the adjacent Mbeya District to the north.

The tribal area comprises a confined geographical basin surrounding the northern end of Lake Nyasa. It extends only about 40 miles from the tip of the lake at 1,550 feet above sea level to the Poroto Mountains in the north at 8,000 feet; and from east to west is only about 30 miles, from the almost sheer walls of the Livingstone Mountains (with peaks up to 10,000 feet) to the Ndali Highlands (rising to about 7,000 feet). There are therefore unusually large ecological differences within so small an area. Three major regions are to be distinguished: the "Northern Highlands" over about 4,500 feet, the low-lying "Lake Plains" in the south, and the "Central Region" in between. Everywhere rainfall is reliable and high, averaging at least 100 inches annually[1], and this amply compensates for a certain poverty and misuse of the soil, although (and particularly in the Central Region) it brings dangers of soil erosion. Except in the highest parts the banana is the staple food, supported by maize, beans, finger millet and groundnuts. In the Northern Highlands coffee has become well established as the principal cash crop: in the Lake Plains paddy rice cultivation provides both a food and a cash crop: in the Central Region the country is too low generally for coffee and too high and dry for rice; consequently cash-cropping is considerably inferior and the people's standard of living is rather poorer.

The Nyakyusa and their country tended for a long time to be relatively isolated from the outside world by high mountain walls and rain-soaked roads. In addition, or because of it perhaps, they developed an almost unique culture which was supported by considerable conservatism and high insularity. They still continue to regard their African neighbours beyond the mountains as their social and cultural inferiors. The turmoil of the slave-trade in Central Africa passed them by; in modern times they have not enthusiastically accepted Christianity and they have refused to take up the use of Swahili, the Territorial *lingua franca*. In recent years, and most especially since the end of World War II, they have, however, accepted and pushed forward with vigour a rapid and extensive economic development, involving particularly the production of coffee and paddy as cash crops, and large-scale labour migration to the south in the high-wage mining industries. The multiplicity of petty, often tiny, independent chiefdoms has been reorganised to provide four local government areas, each under a Rural Council, in which the old chiefdoms have become something like parishes[2]. Although much of the old conservatism and narrow parochialism persists, yet there is now an atmosphere of accepted change, of a keen desire for economic development, and a general acceptance of a cash economy.

Probably the most significant feature of modern life in the Nyakyusa country is the increasing scarcity of land for agriculture in relation to the

1. In Tukuyu, in the Northern Highlands, annual rainfall averaged 95.38 inches between 1919 and 1950; at Kyela, in the Lake Plains, the average between 1940 and 1951 was 106.35 inches.
2. See Kilington, R.E. "The evolution of a system of local government by African rural councils in the Rungwe District, Tanganyika", *The Journal of African Administration*, III, 4, October, 1951.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

well covered with vegetation and with so reliable and plentiful a rainfall, yet, of course, the actual pasturage available is very considerably less as so much of the land is taken for arable and building purposes. There is in practice a most acute shortage of grazing land everywhere, except in certain parts of the north-west Highlands (Ukukwe). This shortage is most critical during the wet season, for at other times of the year the herds are able to graze over the arable fields, where herbage grows exceptionally rapidly after harvest as a result of the high rainfall. 311 233 [132]

Traditionally, each village had a roughly demarcated area of common pasturage which was not, and could not be, used for arable purposes. With the increased demand for arable land, this commonage has almost everywhere in the Lake Plains been gradually whittled away for permanent arable holdings. Headmen who control these pastures, and many of their chiefs too, are much worried about this process, about the break with tradition and the modern pastoral difficulties; but arable needs are given priority over grazing and the practice continues. In the flood plains, the higher-density regions, common pasturage has by now almost disappeared altogether. The little which remains is largely unusable for cultivation, consisting of infertile or badly drained areas – often the sandy, coastal strips covered with dense thicket and tall sedges which provide very little useful grazing. During the dry season, after the paddy harvest, the situation is fair, but during the cultivation season pasturage is entirely inadequate, and in addition the cattle are compelled to live and graze in extremely arduous conditions of standing water, mud, mosquitoes and flies. They do not obtain enough food then and they lose condition badly. There are many deaths from exhaustion, near-starvation and disease, and this affects the immature stock particularly. Only by obstinate tenacity on the part of both man and beast can the herds be retained at all. There is no tradition of stall-feeding and so far the Nyakyusa have refused to adopt this measure of alleviation. [20] [43]

Yet, as the Nyakyusa are quick to point out, each family has only a few cattle. Most families have a cow or two, and the average is only about two to three head per family – *cf.* Table VI, page 34. Owners of large herds are relatively few, and herds of more than ten cattle in a single family are very uncommon. Although the cattle population is too great for the pasture resources now available, yet the animals are fairly evenly and thinly distributed amongst the dense human population. Goats and sheep are few – about 600 altogether – in the Lake Plains and of no significance. It is important to note that here we do not have a situation of large herds which might be reduced by some form of culling.

Cattle are held in high esteem by all Nyakyusa as a source of valued milk for the daily diet, as the means to marriage (in bridewealth), as a store of capital, as a symbol of prestige and as an essential element in important ceremonial activity. This kind of value system needs no emphasis here as it is common to much of Eastern Africa, but it may be noted that one of the principle uses of the large sums of money saved from wages in mining employment (labour migration)[1] and from the profits of cash-cropping at home is in the purchase of cattle. It is thought that money is best invested, saved and used in that way, once immediate material needs have been met. [55] [54]

Even with the high proportion of deaths from disease and the appalling conditions of the wet season, there are indications that the numbers of cattle are not decreasing and there may well be local increases. Apart from natural increase, there is fairly heavy buying from the Ndali people to the north-west in Rungwe District, and also from further afield in Northern Nyasaland, and in Nyamwanga and Fipa tribal areas (albeit illicitly). [439]

1. [illegible]

11/Tiwaitow C-6 (ca. 1962) 1964
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Nyakyusa

[P.236 A]

WANYAKYUSA

by R. B. Tweedie, Administrative Officer
Mwaitambi, Tanganyika Territory

131 The Wanyakyusa occupy the District of Rungwe in the Southern Highlands Province. The district lies between 9° and 9½° S. latitude
133 at the northern tip of Lake Nyasa. The altitude ranges from 1,500 feet to 8,500 feet. The
631 district is divided into twelve chiefdoms. The Administrative Headquarters are at Tukuyu, which was known before the British occupation as Neu Langenberg.

Inhabitants

The local people are not indigenous to this
101 area. They came, tradition has it, from
[178] Mahenge via Ukinga after many tribal fights. They are akin to the Wahenga in Nyasaland bordering on the Tanganyika boundary. It is
191 estimated that only 10 per cent of the Wanyakyusa speak Kiswahili. According to the 1931
161 census the total population was 153,204. The
162 total number of tax-payers in 1942 was 35,304, or 23.04 per cent of the total population.

The people themselves are extremely in-
101 dustrious and intelligent. As there are 90 people to the square mile, living conditions are
105 crowded and emigration is continually taking place. The people are partial to litigation over cattle and women. The number of cases heard annually in the Native Courts is about 6,000. There is no one historical and traditional head of the tribe. The twelve Chiefs are, in reality, hereditary Headmen who have been selected by Government to be Chiefs. They are in effect only *primi inter pares* in native eyes, the outlook of the people being unusually democratic for a native tribe.

105 The people live in houses made of wattle
202 and daub or bamboo frame, with thatched
204 roof, and villages are sited mostly along ridges. Rectangular houses are now built instead of the round huts of former days. They often stand in rows with a main street down the middle with bananas in the background. The more progressive natives build with sun-dried or burnt brick. Stock are stalled in the same house owing to the prevalence of thieving, but sleep in separate rooms.

Climate

● 132 The rainfall of the district varies in the different areas. In Tukuyu itself the annual average for 25 years (1918-1942) is 100.22 inches. On the Lake shore the average is probably higher, but no continuous statistics are available. The heaviest rainfall months are from December to May, but, in most years,

[1236 B]

VIANYAKYUSA
AGRICULTURE
By D. R. Thomas, Officer-in-Charge
Kyela, Tanganyika Territory

132 some rain falls every month in the part north of Tukuyu. Very heavy rains occur at times, such as in 1935 when 139 inches are recorded on the lake shore in the month of April. In November, 1942, 12½ inches fell in eighteen hours in Tukuyu. The average mean temperature for Tukuyu is 23.66°C. The range is low while monthly variation average is only 5.6°C.

Soils and Vegetation

134 The district may be divided into three sections according to soil and vegetation types.
[133] The higher altitudes to the north are dominated geologically by the extinct volcanic range extending round Rungwe Mountain. The dark soil, composed of decaying vegetable matter overlying volcanic ash in varying layers, is,
137 generally speaking, fairly fertile, depending on the age of the subsoil. The vegetation is dominated by rain forest, though much of this has been destroyed. Grass (*Hyparrhenia* spp. *Digitaria horizontalis*, *Setaria*) and *Crotalaria* spp., with high *Sesbania* and *Dodonea* shrub on the slopes of the mountain range, are found with *Millettia*, *Ficus* and *Cissus* spp., and occasional stretches of bamboo on the hill sides and in the river beds and ravines. To the west of Tukuyu, woodlands of *Brachystegia*, associated with *Albizzia* and *Parkia* spp., cover such areas as are not cultivated and where the grasses (*Hyparrhenia* and *Digitaria* spp.) can only be burnt during October owing to the wet climate.

134 In the medium altitudes south of Tukuyu, the soil is a red clay loam, derived from granite with intrusions of dolerite, diorite,
[135] basalt and quartz. It is in the area of these soils that hot springs, lime, coal and mica occur. This part is heavily wooded with
137 *Brachystegia* associated with *Albizzia*, *Dalbergia*, *Ficus*, *Cissus* spp. and *Chlorophora excelsa*, but is at present being gradually cut out to make room for cultivation. No forests of economic value occur, except for fuel, small quantities of wild rubber vine, *Landolphia* spp., which have become of value in wartime, and some pockets of *Adina microcephala*. Dominant grasses are *Imperata cylindrica*, *Digitaria*, and *Hyparrhenia* spp.

134 The lower altitudes below 2,000 feet are
[135] situated in a wide plain along the northern and western shores of Lake Nyasa, and this is composed of soils mostly transported from the highlands. These are extremely fertile. The sub-
[137] soil is granite and the top soil varies greatly

in Nyakyusa.

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Nyakyusa

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The fine dot stipple indicates the eq

[facing p. v (a)]

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Nyakyusa

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133

MAP I. THE CULTURAL AREA

An approximate area occupied by the Nyakyusa-Ngonde people and groups

[facing p. v (b)]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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131
●133

Drawn by J. F. L. Ramsay

Reproduced by Chas.

[Facing p v (c)]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

from the Inamwanga and Iwa to the north-west and the Henga to the south. The affinities of the Inamwanga and Iwa appear to be with the Mambwe,[1] while the Henga are an offshoot of the Tumbuka-Kamanga people who took refuge from the Ngoni in Ngonde.[2] Of the Phuka who live high up in the hills south-west of Ngonde we know almost nothing, except that they are skilled cultivators, and their language is closely related to Tumbuka. /5/

The cultural group consisting of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people, together with small groups in Rungwe district and Ngonde largely absorbed by them, and including the Nyakyusa immigrants in Mbeya district, probably numbers about a quarter of a million. /6/

Of the more distant cultural affinities of this group we know nothing: there are no consistent similarities in culture between it and any other known group. The elaborate age-organization, and the great ceremony of handing over secular power to the next generation, which is held every thirty years or so, suggest East African connections, while the girls' puberty and marriage ceremony (*ubunungo*) is in many ways similar to the *cinungu* ceremony of the Bemba;[3] and the witchcraft beliefs are like those of the Azande[4] and the Lovale.[5] /7/

8. *Environment and economy*

The Nyakyusa-Ngonde country is fertile, well watered and, to European eyes, spectacularly beautiful, with its arc of high mountains and sparkling lakes. The Nyakyusa valley forms part of the /33●

[1] F. F. R. Bulmer and L. A. Wallace, 'The Nyasa-Tanganyika Plateau', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. XIII (1899); J. C. C. Coulbeaux, 'The Native Tribes of North-Eastern Rhodesia, their Laws and Customs', *Royal Anthropological Institute, Occasional Paper*, No. 5, 1914; C. Gouldsbury and H. Sheane, *The Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia* (1911).

[2] F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), Vol. I, p. 50; M. Sandeman, 'Some Marriage Customs of the Wafungwa, Nyasaland', *Journal of the African Society*, Vol. XXII (1922–3); T. Cullen Young, 'The Wafungwa of North Nyasaland', *Journal of the African Society*, Vol. XXIII (1923–4); 'Tribal Intermixture in Northern Nyasaland', *J.R.A.I.*, Vol. LXIII (1933); 'Habits and Customs of the Olden Days among the Tumbuka-Kamanga People', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. X (1936).

[3] A. I. Richards, *Bemba Marriage and Present Economic Conditions*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. 4, (1940).

[4] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (1937).

[5] C. M. N. White, 'Witchcraft, Divination and Magic among the Balovale Tribes', *Africa*, Vol. XVIII (1948), pp. 81–104.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

●133 Great Rift valley, walled in on the east by the Livingstone mountains, which rise to 10,000 feet, and on the west by the rather lower Ndali hills. It is blocked to the north-west by Rungwe volcano and the Poroto mountains; the volcano rises from the floor of the Rift to nearly 10,000 feet, and the lowest pass over the Poroto mountains is 8,000 feet. Scattered throughout the hills are a number of small lakes formed in the craters of old volcanoes, each one like a jewel set in the green of field and pasture.

132 The rainfall in this valley is very heavy, averaging over 100 inches in the year, and innumerable streams rush down the
161 mountain slopes, flooding parts of the plain during the torrential rains of March and April. The dry season is short—it scarcely exists in the hills—and such a rainfall, combined with skilful cultivation and stock-breeding, makes a large population possible. The average density for Rungwe district is over eighty persons to the square mile; the population is most concentrated on the Lake-shore plain, but stretches up into the hills to 6,000 feet. South of the Songwe the rainfall is much less—at Karonga it averages only 45 inches a year—and the country supports a smaller population, the average density for Ngonde being less than fifteen persons to the square mile.

The Nyakyusa grow a variety of crops of which the chief are
241 bananas and plantains, finger millet, maize, cow-peas, coco-yams, cassava, sweet potatoes, ground-nuts, curcurbits and, recently, rice
[234] and coffee. They also breed short-horned, humped, cattle which are carefully stalled at night, and hand-dressed to keep them free from ticks. Banana plantations stretch mile upon mile through the plain and along the crests of the ridges.[1] In them are hidden the villages, often so close together that the boundaries between them are not obvious. On the fringes of the bananas are the tilled fields, and beyond the fields the open pasture land. Unlike most of their neighbours in Central Africa the Nyakyusa practise fixed, not shifting, cultivation, and the land is kept in good heart by green manuring, rotation of crops, and periodic fallows.[2] Only in the cultivation of finger millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins,

[1] J. F. Elton, *The Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa* (1879), pp. 330–1, and D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., pp. 285–6, comment on their great extent.

[2] According to the Nyakyusa themselves the productivity of their fields is slowly diminishing. Most of them attribute this to the neglect of traditional rituals. We do not know how far their observations are objective, and how far they are biased by the tendency to glorify the past. D. H. Thwaites, in his article

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241
133

I. CULTIVATION IN NYAKYUSA COUNTRY

In the foreground are bananas, coffee, and bamboo; in the middle ridges for crops (potatoes and cassava) for meals. On the extreme right Kingero's village appears. The house is a modern style, and stand for chiefs.

[facing p. 18]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

highlanders closely related to the Konde. Here, at Isoko, is another station of the Scottish Churches Mission. 133 101 [797]

Eastwards of the Tukuyu uplands lie the Kinga Mountains, better known as the Livingstone Range, near the foot of which lies the Itete Station of the Scottish Churches Mission. From here one gets a view of lake and mountain, river and plain, which may well be regarded as one of the finest of the kind in Africa. The evening sun, shining upon the great mountain mass, reveals hundreds of crevices and folds in which lie tiny houses, beside waterfalls or rapidly dashing streams; while up to the summits stretch the wheat-fields, green or golden yellow in the evening light. At one's feet sleep the countless villages, banana hidden; and away in the distance Lake Nyasa reflects the last gleams of departing day. 133 [797]

Over the mountains lies the country of the Kinga people, a land indescribably rough and mountainous, but here and there well watered, with fertile valleys producing wheat, oats, peas, in abundance, besides the usual African products. Here the cold is so great that during part of the year many of the people sleep in pits hollowed out of the ground, and heated by fires which are extinguished at bed-time. 133 101

Northwards the upland valley is bounded by the Igale Hills, from the top of which one looks to the lofty Mbeye Mountain, which from one point of view presents an astonishing likeness to Arthur's Seat and the Salisbury Crags at Edinburgh. Beyond Igale live the Sango and the Safwa, the former a vigorous

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

133 101 and warlike tribe, the latter until recently their oppressed subjects and slaves.

113 The earliest traditions go back to a time when the Konde dwelt in Malongo, in the area now known as [113] Mahenge. There their god Ngeketo, roused to wrath by three attempts to destroy him, abandoned them, and is now the God of the white men. Whether on this account, or for some other reason, a great migration brought them to the country north of the Songwe River, where they settled down, no doubt conquering older inhabitants. At some unknown time, but before the Angoni reached so far north in their great march from Zululand, the Sango, neighbours of the Konde northwards, were driven out of their homes by intertribal warfare. They broke down over the intervening mountains, and overcame the unwarlike Konde, among whom they settled down as chiefs, retaining until now the tradition of their Sango ancestry. Whether at the same or another time, the Kinga, probably for the same reason—pressure from behind—swarmed down the steep mountain passes, and established themselves in the Nsenya region.

One of the leading Kinga chiefs was Mwangonde, who, under the name of Chungu, occupied land at Kabari, near the Mwakileli Mission Station. His son, Kyabara Chungu, setting out with an armed force in search of more fertile garden land, met with varying fortunes, until he was finally obliged to cross the Songwe into what later became Nyasaland. In this region Chungu seems to have made easy con-

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

The Spirit-Ridden Konde

CHAPTER I

The Land & the People

UNGONDE, as the Konde people call their country, lies around the north end of Lake Nyasa. Northwards of that point it stretches for about fifty miles, and southwards for roughly the same distance. Like all their neighbours, the Konde belong to the great Bantu race, which occupies Africa from the Cape to the Congo, and beyond. 131 144

The lake shore plain is narrow, fertile, and populous, with its centre at Karonga, where there is a British Magistrate, some trading stores, and a station of the Livingstonia Mission of the United Free Church of Scotland. Beyond the plain the tribe, under various local names, reaches up into the mountains on both sides of the lake. Outside of Nyasaland, and northwards across the Songwe, it covers a large area in what was once German East Africa, but is now known as Tanganyika Territory. Here, too, the plain is hot, fertile, and populous as at Karonga. Northwards of the plain lie the healthy uplands of Mwamba and 131 133 [797]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

131 Bukukwe, culminating, so far as the peopled regions
133 are concerned, in Tukuyu, five thousand feet above sea-level, the residence of the Administrative Officer and his staff, with Post and Telegraph Offices, and a large Government Hospital. Here also are many small trading stores, conducted by Indians and Somali; and a little to the south is the Kyimbila
[797] Station of the Scottish Churches Mission, carrying on the work of the exiled German missionaries. Still further to the south, and less elevated, is the British military post of Masoko.

The population of these fertile and healthy high-
361 lands is dense. From Tukuyu or Kyimbila, looking
101 south and west, numerous villages, each hidden in its banana grove, fill the view westwards to the Bundali Hills, where the Kibira River is marked out by a morning mist, and southwards towards the lake, thirty miles distant. In this region the people call themselves Nyakyusa, with a number of local names indicating no difference of origin or language. The
241 soil is so fertile, and the rain usually so abundant, that in many places two crops are taken annually of some foodstuffs, while of the others the single crop is so great that scarcity, no uncommon occurrence in some parts of Central Africa, is rarely experienced.

133 The Bundali Hills close in this happy valley (for in
101 spite of its elevation the country has the appearance of a valley) on the west; and beyond them, after a most exhausting march, over lofty summits, through deep ravines threaded by bridgeless rivers, one comes to the home of the Bandali, a race of hardy

IN THE KUNLA MOUNTAINS (LIVINGSTONE RANGE.)

The cold is so great during part of the year, that the people sleep in pits, heated by fires which are extinguished at bedtime, and the openings carefully closed. Many of the little children coughing naked into the frosty morning air, die of pneumonia, and the pits are gradually being abandoned.

[facing p. 208]

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

1. *INTRODUCTION*

Land everywhere is the basis of social life, that upon which men move and rest; it is both in itself the most important raw material of economic activity and the location of all other materials such as minerals, wood and water; it is a universal condition of human action, an object of human understanding and feeling. And everywhere the use of land is defined and limited by a system of tenure, a series of laws, moral rules and conventions without which no orderly life at all would be possible upon it. This paper is an attempt to describe in part one such system of land tenure, that which I found to obtain among the Nyakyusa, a Bantu people of South Tanganyika, during the years 1934-1938. |2|

I have have described in detail the land-rights of individuals only, both in relation to one another and to the villages and chiefdoms of which they are members, and have left the rights of these groups in relation to one another for a further publication.

The Nyakyusa system of land-tenure is determined by three main factors: firstly by the physical conditions of life in this part of Central Africa, that is by the nature of the soil and its topography, by the climate and by the density of the human population; secondly by the particular practical uses to which land is put and the techniques employed therein; and thirdly by the form of Nyakyusa society, the groups and relationships into which it is articulated. But in considering these three main determinants we shall have to take into account intellectual and emotional factors also, the understanding of their land which the Nyakyusa possess and their feelings about it.

2. *PHYSICAL CONDITIONS*

The Rungwe District of the Southern Highlands Province of Tanganyika, in which the Nyakyusa live, is situated some 9° south of the Equator and is a part of the Great Rift Valley formation. The country of the Nyakyusa is bounded on the south by Lake Nyasa and the Songwe river, on the east by the almost sheer wall of the Livingstone Mountains (which rise to 10,000 feet), and on the west by the lower Ndali hills which, although included in the same administrative district, are inhabited not by Nyakyusa but by two cultural groups closely related to them, the Ndali and the Lambya. |3| |33|

The Nyakyusa live then between the two walls of the Rift, but their country is not itself all of an equal altitude. In the north the Rift is here interrupted and closed by the extinct Rungwe volcano (10,000 feet) from whose base (3,000 feet) the land drops for twenty-five miles in a cascade of hills and little plateaux to level out in a lake-shore plain fifteen or

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[31] twenty miles from Lake Nyasa (1,500 feet). A little compact country,
[133] secluded until very recently from any effective external contacts, slightly over 1,000 square miles in extent.[1]

[132] The soil, particularly that of the higher ground in the north of the
[134] Nyakyusa country, is not in itself very rich, but, as between 100 and 130
[141] inches of rain usually fall each year, the district is one of the most fertile in the whole of Tanganyika; two crops a year are often grown on the same patch of ground, and the African population is over eighty to the square
[23] mile. There is no infected tsetse fly and cattle are the most prized possession of the Nyakyusa.

63 For historical reasons, which we will discuss in a later section, the Nyakyusa have never been united under any one paramount chief of their own, but live in a number (nearly 100 at the present day) of tiny but traditionally independent chiefdoms. For these chiefdoms the numerous streams which run down from the north into Lake Nyasa and the crests of the ridges of land between them, form natural boundaries.

133 The country, of course, is not all of equal economic value, parts of it
134 are stony and mountainous, other parts, and particularly the plain in the south, consist of deep and level soil; and the population is heavier on the plain than on the higher ground. Further, on the higher ground, there exist numerous old volcanic craters filled with rich moist soil and these, being more fertile than the surrounding land, are particularly valued by
[24] the Nyakyusa. Again, of the two chief economic crops of this district, one, coffee, can only be grown on the higher ground while the other, rice, can only be grown on or near the plain. And at every point their system of land tenure is partially determined by such physical factors as these.

2. *THE USES AND VALUE OF LAND*

31 The Nyakyusa use their land for building on, for agriculture, for pasture, for hunting and fishing; they collect firewood, reeds, thatching-grass, mushrooms and other wild vegetables there; they draw water from its streams and bathe daily in them; on their land they grow bamboos, bananas, *indyanguti* trees[2] and coffee; they keep bees; they dance, they fight, they walk and lie down upon it; their land is both the receptacle of refuse and the location of religious ritual, while their doctors continually wander over its surface in search of magical medicines.

Not all these uses of land give rise to laws, moral rules or conventions, but only those uses which tend to lead men into conflict with one another or into mutual embarrassment. The only reasons for the existence of

[1] The whole of Rungwe District is 1,000 square miles, but this includes the hills of the Nkali and Lambya as well.
[2] I have not been able to discover the botanical name of this tree.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

128 as they do, in their behaviour and their mutual relationships to a common type. Space forbids such an undertaking here; and it is necessary to emphasize that, although the most significant facts are described in an orderly manner, and although certain reasons for these facts are indicated in their specific character and in their connections with one another, yet these reasons are not fully or systematically worked out, and the result is a description which leaves the facts only half-explained. And, in so far as this society is not here fully analysed, so it is not yet fully comparable with others. The reader of this paper will detect many points of similarity and of difference between Nyakyusa society and some other with which he is familiar, but the comparison cannot be made to yield any propositions about the nature of human societies in general until the facts of both have been fully explained in terms of their particular social, cultural, and external conditions.

Climate, Cultural Groups, and European Contact.

101 The Nyakyusa live in the Rungwe District of South Tanganyika in
131 the Rift Valley at the head of Lake Nyasa. The valley is dominated and
133 closed at its North end by the recently extinct Rungwe volcano, from whose foot the land, starting as an upland plateau 5,000 ft. above sea-level, tumbles southwards for twenty-five miles in a broken cascade of hills, to level out in a plain fifteen or twenty miles from Lake Nyasa. The Lake is 1200 ft. above the sea. The East wall of the Rift rises to 10,000 ft. or more in the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains, but the West wall is two or three thousand feet lower. The climate is very wet, for about 130" of
[32] rain fall each year, and, at 9° South of the Equator, is also very hot.
[161 The rain and the sun together make the land extremely fertile; the
73] district is thickly populated (over 100 to the square mile), famine is rare and the Nyakyusa are far better fed than most of their neighbours. Rice
177 was introduced into the plain by Arabs, coffee by the German Mission-
241 aries in the hills, and these two crops to-day, under the enthusiastic care and guidance of the Government Agricultural Department, bring to many Nyakyusa a small but steadily increasing cash income.

262 Their main foods are bananas, maize, beans, sweet potatoes and a
241 variety of greenstuffs, together with meat and curds from their cattle. Millet is extensively grown and is used both for making beer and for eating in the form of porridge.

101 The name *Nyakyusa* is nowadays used by themselves as a general name for all those who have similar speech and customs and who live in Tanganyika; but formerly it only covered those who live in the South of the district, in the plain and up in the hills as far North as the administra-

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

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Map 1. Country north of Lake Nyasa

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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8. THE ROAD TO LUPEMBE

[Facing p. 15]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

It is surprising to westerners, whose whole framework of reference is shaped by the conception of historical time, that the heroic myth is not more explicitly dated by the volcanic eruptions known to have taken place near Lubaga,[1] but to the Nyakyusa the sequence of events does not appear important except in so far as it determines seniority.

Nowadays, with the changing form of the society, there develops a new mythology. Kyala is described by younger men as a creator, apart and distinct from any hero or ancestor, and they reject any suggestion that he was once on a footing with Lwembe and Kyungu. The more conservative fit Christian names into the heroic myth. One version goes as follows:

> Kyala had two sons, Kyala the elder who was Musai or Satano, and Kyala the younger who was Jesus. Kyala the younger made corn, and cattle, and fire, and cooked meat, and men etc; then Musai or Satano was furious because his younger brother was outdoing him, and killed him, and became the only one.

Here the traditional theme of the jealousy of the senior is dominant, but generally it is the power of the heroes over fertility, under the old dispensation, that is stressed.

Many people till today of old prophecies concerning the coming of Europeans and of the triumph of a new religion. To the Christians these provide some bridge between the past and the present, for they interpret the words of pagan prophets as evidence of their foreknowledge of a truth they had not yet been taught.

[1] D. A. Hoskin, 'The Sawdust Lava Flow, Kirjo, Rungwe District', *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, September 1955, suggests that the most recent eruption in the district, that of Kirjo, took place about 1800, but this conclusion is based on the description of the eruption by one man, and the statement that his great grandfather witnessed it. That some ancestor of Asabilile Kajigiri witnessed the eruption is likely, but had it taken place only three generations ago it might be expected that other families also would have had a tradition of the event. Kirjo is clearly visible from Mwenipupo's country and had the eruption taken place early in the nineteenth century either the chief Mwakagile (72) or his father Mwamukingo (45) must have observed it. Their descendants are emphatic that there is no tradition of their having done so, though it is commonly known that an eruption of Kirjo occurred in the distant past.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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[915]

[facing p. 22]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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Nyakyusa

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133

Map II. Nyakyusa valley showing location of chiefdoms

and try to understand the nature and reasons for change. Here, then, is a good opportunity for the study of social change – not only in land tenure as such, but also in village and family organization, political authority and economic life.

II

The Nyakyusa are a Bantu people inhabiting the main part of the Rungwe District in southern Tanganyika, immediately to the north of Lake Nyasa. In 1948 they numbered about 199,000 in that District, but about 10,000 men were probably at the time temporarily absent from their homes and in employment in the mines and towns of the Rhodesias and South Africa (see Culliver, 1957), while about 20,000 had migrated to live in the adjacent Mbeya District to the north.

The tribal area comprises a confined geographical basin surrounding the northern end of Lake Nyasa. It extends only about 40 miles from the tip of the lake at 1,550 feet above sea level to the Poroto Mountains in the north at 8,000 feet; and from east to west is only about 30 miles, from the almost sheer walls of the Livingstone Mountains (with peaks up to 10,000 feet) to the Ndali Highlands (rising to about 7,000 feet). There are therefore unusually large ecological differences within so small an area. Three major regions are to be distinguished: the "Northern Highlands" over about 4,500 feet, the low-lying "Lake Plains" in the south, and the "Central Region" in between. Everywhere rainfall is reliable and high, averaging at least 100 inches annually[1], and this amply compensates for a certain poverty and misuse of the soil, although (and particularly in the Central Region) it brings dangers of soil erosion. Except in the highest parts the banana is the staple food, supported by maize, beans, finger millet and groundnuts. In the Northern Highlands coffee has become well established as the principal cash crop; in the Lake Plains paddy rice cultivation provides both a food and a cash crop; in the Central Region the country is too low generally for coffee and too high and dry for rice; consequently cash-cropping is considerably inferior and the people's standard of living is rather poorer.

The Nyakyusa and their country tended for a long time to be relatively isolated from the outside world by high mountain walls and rain-soaked roads. In addition, or because of it perhaps, they developed an almost unique culture which was supported by considerable conservatism and high insularity. They still continue to regard their African neighbours beyond the mountains as their social and cultural inferiors. The turmoil of the slave-trade in Central Africa passed them by; in modern times they have not enthusiastically accepted Christianity and they have refused to take up the use of Swahili, the Territorial *lingua franca*. In recent years, and more especially since the end of World War II, they have, however, accepted and pushed forward with vigour a rapid and extensive economic development, involving particularly the production of coffee and paddy as cash crops, and large-scale labour migration to the south in the high-wage mining industries. The multiplicity of petty, often tiny, independent chiefdoms has been reorganized to provide four local government areas, each under a Rural Council, in which the old chiefdoms have become something like parishes[2]. Although much of the old conservatism and narrow parochialism persists, yet there is now an atmosphere of accepted change, of a keen desire for economic development, and a general acceptance of a cash economy.

Probably the most significant feature of modern life in the Nyakyusa country is the increasing scarcity of land for agriculture in relation to the

1. In Tukuyu, in the Northern Highlands, annual rainfall averaged 96.32 inches between 1919 and 1952; at Kyela in the Lake Plains, the average between 1948 and 1952 was 106.32 inches.
2. See Culliver, E.E. The evolution of a system of local government in Rungwe District, Tanganyika, *The Journal of African Administration*, 10, 4, October, 1958.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F'N17 Ngonde F'N17
Nyakyusa

Crops have never been heard! However in some sample villages I very roughly measured arable holdings, and my results provide new information even though they can be illustrative only of the modern situation.

In each of the eight villages chosen[1] the arable holdings of all the able male members (whether at home or away at work at the time) of the whole village, or occasionally of a distinct section of it, were measured by the simple and rough method of pacing the borders of every separate plot and converting the resultant figures into yards and thus to acreages. The actual pacing was done entirely by myself in order to try to maintain as even stride on all occasions, but in each village I was well supported by a team of four or five villagers, always including the headman and his assistants. The figures obtained relate only to arable holdings and bear no determinate relation either to crop yields or to non-arable land in the villages concerned. The results are summarised in Table III below.

TABLE III

ARABLE HOLDINGS IN EIGHT VILLAGES

Village and chiefdom	No. of land holders	Average holding in acres	No. of men holding more than— 5 acres	10 acres	Average size of plots in acres
Kyesa					
Mwenzangala	29	3.2	11	1	1
Bole Mwakyusa	68	5.6	19	4	1.5
Mtoma Mwakisale	36	1.9	4	1	0.8
Lugombo Kanwa	30	1.6	1	0	0.8
Mwaipopo					
Mwakipesile	42	1.5	1	0	0.5
Kanwa Kanwa	46	1.3	1	0	0.4
Lusungo Mwakisale	12	1.1	0	0	0.4
Bwalo Mwaipopo	36	1.0	0	0	0.4
	272 men		37 men (13.7%)	2 men	

From this Table it can be seen that in the chiefdoms of Kanwa and Mwaipopo, in the villages concerned, the average holding per man was about one and a half acres – and my impression was that in the southern parts of Lanyar's chiefdom and elsewhere immediately surrounding the lake shore similar conditions existed. It may be noted too that in these areas there were large numbers of young men without holdings at all. On the other hand, in the selected villages in the chiefdoms of Mwaisongola and Mwakyusa, the average holdings were about twice as large – three acres; and fewer young men were landless. Note also the cases of the villages in the chiefdoms of Mwaipopo and Mwakisale in the more northerly parts of the Lake Plains, where the average holdings were one and 1.3 acres respectively, and where yet there was arable land unused and available. In these parts paddy cultivation is very limited because of the higher and hilly country, and the people remain little more than subsistence farmers – perhaps they may be taken as not within the traditional, pre-European subsistence cultivation.

Unfortunately I am unable to relate these figures of arable holdings to the total land available in each village, for this would have required survey work beyond my competence. Non-arable land is utilised for village sites with houses, graves, roads and paths, pastures, etc.; but the position is further complicated by varying amounts of unusable land in any sample village. To give only two examples: within the boundaries of Mpangali village, Mwakipesile's chiefdom, there are many acres of land adjacent to the Mbaka river which today are unusable because of deep flooding from

1. Population figures of any kind are not available even for the separate chiefdoms, let alone for individual villages.

2. Their approximate locations are indicated on the accompanying sketch-map.

311 the river in spate during the wet season, although here and there a few plots
[133] are cultivated on slightly raised ground. Similarly in Kapugi village, Kaswa's chiefdom, some parts are heavily inundated by the Kiwira river. In both these cases flooding has made unusable ground which was cultivated and even built on a generation ago; the degree of annual flooding seems to be decreasing again now so that very slowly a certain amount of new land is becoming available. This cyclical change appears to be directly connected with the long-term rise and fall of the level of Lake Nyasa. On the other hand, in more fortunate villages such as Ikolo, Mwakyusa's chiefdom, and Kapugi, Mwamasangula's chiefdom, there is rather more common pasturage remaining, and village sites, paths, etc., are noticeably less restricted.

The following arithmetical observations may be noted as permitting, perhaps, some guide to population densities in the Lake Plains:-

[161]

Persons per sq. mile	*Total acreage per family of five*	*Arable holding per family of five if proportion of total land under arable holdings is:—*	
		one-third	*one-fifth*
300	10.7	3.6	4.3
400	8	2.7	3.2
500	6.4	2.1	2.6
600	5.3	1.8	2.1

(N.B. The statistically average family is composed of five people)

It has been suggested by the Agricultural Field Officer, Tukuyu, that for the whole of Rungwe District perhaps 30 per cent. of all land is under cultivation. He was not prepared to place any reliance on this figure, and certainly for the Lake Plains it must be higher.

To summarise my own tentative conclusions and in order to obtain
311 some kind of picture of the current land situation, I suggest the following
134 division into regions:-
161 A. The flood plains proper

1. Very **high-density region** – the arable land available under present conditions amounts to about 1½-2 acres per adult male and the local density of population is probably in the region of 500 persons per square mile: – in most of the chiefdoms of Mwamkuma, Korono and Lazarus, the south-eastern part of Mwakipesile's and the eastern part of Mwakyusa's chiefdoms.

2. **High-density region** – there is available about 3 acres of arable land per adult male and the local density of population is between 300 and 400 persons per square mile: – in the chiefdoms of Mwamasangula, Mwanyilo and Mwakilima, the southern part of Mwakilasa's, the centre of Mwakyusa's and much of Mwandemele's chiefdoms.

B. The remainder of the Lake Plains (Ntebela)

3. **Low-density region** – here there remains much vacant land (some usable, some scarcely usable) and population density is probably little over 100 persons per square mile, and even lower than that in the most northerly parts: – the northern, higher areas comprising the north of Mwakyusa's (Mwisula's) chiefdom, the remainder of Mwandemele's, the whole of Mwantipulo's, Mwakatundo's and Mwakipeg'i's chiefdoms, together with the northern part of Mwakipesile's and of Mwakilasa's chiefdoms.

This summary description is, and can be, only very approximate, taking no account of the complexity of local variations to be seen on the ground. It is illustrated in the accompanying sketch-map.

It may be emphasised that in the two high-density regions practically all available land is in use. In the "high-density region" (No. 2 above) it
[341] may be possible to reduce slightly the non-productive areas taken up by
[245] village sites, but nowhere will this be easy or even desirable, and already most of the vacant spaces between houses are packed with banana groves, small

[P.936 A]

WANYAKYUSA

131 The Wanyakyusa occupy the District of Rungwe in the Southern Highlands Province. The district lies between 9° and 9½° S. latitude
● 133 at the northern tip of Lake Nyasa. The altitude ranges from 1,500 feet to 9,500 feet. The
631 district is divided into twelve chiefdoms. The Administrative Headquarters are at Tukuyu, which was known before the British occupation as New Langenberg.

Inhabitants

101 The local people are not indigenous to this area. They came, tradition has it, from
[172] Malungu via Ukinga after many tribal fights. They are akin to the Wahenga in Nyasaland bordering on the Tanganyika boundary. It is
191 estimated that only 10 per cent of the Wanyakyusa speak Kiswahili. According to the 1931
161 census the total population was 153,204. The
162 total number of tax-payers in 1942 was 35,304, or 23.04 per cent of the total population.

181 The people themselves are extremely industrious and intelligent. As there are 90 people to the square mile, living conditions are
105 crowded and emigration is continually taking place. The people are partial to litigation over cattle and women. The number of cases heard annually in the Native Courts is about 6,000. There is no one historical and traditional head of the tribe. The twelve Chiefs are, in reality, hereditary Headmen who have been selected by Government to be Chiefs. They are in effect only *priest inner power* in native eyes, the outlook of the people being unusually democratic for a native tribe.

105 The people live in houses made of wattle and daub or bamboo frame, with thatched
342 roof, and villages are sited mostly along ridges.
341 Rectangular houses are now built instead of the round huts of former days. They often stand in rows with a main street down the middle with bananas in the background. The more progressive natives build with sun-dried or burnt brick. Stock are stalled in the same house owing to the prevalence of thieving, but sleep in separate rooms.

Climate

132 The rainfall of the district varies in the different areas. In Tukuyu itself the annual average for 25 years (1918-1942) is 100.22 inches. On the Lake shore the average is probably higher, but no continuous statistics are available. The heaviest rainfall months are from December to May, but, in most years,

[1936 B]

VIANYAKYUSA AGRICULTURE

[illegible]
Kambwali, Tanganyika Territory

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Soils and Vegetation

134 The district may be divided into three sections according to soil and vegetation types. The higher altitudes to the north are dominated geologically by the extinct volcanic range extending round Rungwe Mountain. The dark soil, composed of decaying vegetable matter overlying volcanic ash in varying layers, is, generally speaking, fairly fertile, depending on
[133] the age of the subsoil. The vegetation is
137 dominated by rain forest, though much of this has been destroyed. Grass (*Hyparrhenia* spp. *Digitaria horizontalis*, *Setaria*) and *Crotalaria* spp., with high *Sesbania* and *Dodonea* shrub on the slopes of the mountain range, are found with *Milletia*, *Ficus* and *Cissus* spp., and occasional stands of bamboo on the hill sides and in the river beds and ravines. To the west of Tukuyu, woodlands of *Brachystegia*, associated with *Albizzia* and *Parkia* spp., cover such areas as are not cultivated and where the grasses (*Hyparrhenia* and *Digitaria* spp.) can only be burnt during October owing to the wet climate.

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137 occur. This part is heavily wooded with *Brachystegia* associated with *Albizzia*, *Dalbergia*, *Ficus*, *Cissus* spp. and *Chlorophora excelsa*, but is at present being gradually cut out to make room for cultivation. No forests of economic value occur, except for fuel, small quantities of wild rubber vine, *Landolphia* spp., which have become of value in wartime, and some pockets of *Adina microcephala*. Dominant grasses are *Imperata cylindrica*, *Digitaria*, and *Hyparrhenia* spp.

134 The lower altitudes below 2,000 feet are
[135] situated in a wide plain along the northern and western shores of Lake Nyasa, and this is composed of soils mostly transported from the highlands. These are extremely fertile. The sub-
[137] soil is granite and the top soil varies greatly in thickness.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[132] [133] twenty miles from Lake Nyasa (1,500 feet). A little compact country, secluded until very recently from any effective external contacts, slightly over 1,000 square miles in extent.[1]

[132] The soil, particularly that of the higher ground in the north of the Nyakyusa country, is not in itself very rich, but, as between 100 and 130 [134] inches of rain usually fall each year, the district is one of the most fertile [141] in the whole of Tanganyika; two crops a year are often grown on the same patch of ground, and the African population is over eighty to the square [218] mile. There is no infected tsetse fly and cattle are the most prized possession of the Nyakyusa.

[63] For historical reasons, which we will discuss in a later section, the Nyakyusa have never been united under any one paramount chief of their own, but live in a number (nearly 100 at the present day) of tiny but traditionally independent chiefdoms. For these chiefdoms the numerous streams which run down from the north into Lake Nyasa and the crests of the ridges of land between them, form natural boundaries.

[133] [134] The country, of course, is not all of equal economic value, parts of it are stony and mountainous, other parts, and particularly the plain in the north, consist of deep and level soil; and the population is heavier on the plain than on the higher ground. Further, on the higher ground, there exist numerous old volcanic craters filled with rich moist soil and these, being more fertile than the surrounding land, are particularly valued by [241] the Nyakyusa. Again, of the two chief economic crops of this district, one, coffee, can only be grown on the higher ground while the other, rice, can only be grown on or near the plain. And at every point their system of land tenure is partially determined by such physical factors as these.

3. *THE USES AND VALUE OF LAND*

[311] The Nyakyusa use their land for building on, for agriculture, for pasture, for hunting and fishing; they collect firewood, roots, thatching-grass, mushrooms and other wild vegetables there; they draw water from its streams and bathe daily in them; on their land they grow bamboos, bananas, *imiyungati* trees[2] and coffee; they keep bees; they dance, they fight, they walk and lie down upon it; their land is both the receptacle of refuse and the location of religious ritual, while their doctors continually wander over its surface in search of magical medicines.

Not all these uses of land give rise to laws, moral rules or conventions, but only those uses which tend to lead men into conflict with one another or into mutual embarrassment. The only reasons for the existence of

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[1] The whole of Rungwe District is 1,866 square miles, but this includes the hills of the Nkoli and Lambya as well.

[2] I have not been able to discover the botanical name of this tree.

H:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

3/1 the river is quite dry during the wet season, although here and there a few plots
[13] have cultivated on slightly raised ground. Similarly in Kapugi village, Korowe's chiefdom, some parts are heavily inundated by the Kiwira river. In both these cases flooding has made unusable ground which was cultivated and even built on a generation ago; the degree of annual flooding seems to be decreasing again now so that very slowly a certain amount of new land is becoming available. This cyclical change appears to be directly connected with the long-term rise and fall of the level of Lake Nyasa. On the other hand, in more fortunate villages such as Ikuin, Mwakyusa's chiefdom, and Kapugi, Mwaumangale's chiefdom, there is rather more common pasturage remaining, and village sites, paths, etc., are noticeably less restricted.

The following arithmetical observations may be noted as permitting, perhaps, some guide to population densities in the Lake Plains:-

[61]

Persons per sq. mile	*Total acreage per family of five*	*Arable holding per family of five if proportion of total land under arable holdings is:—*	
		one-third	*two-fifths*
100	10.7	3.6	4.3
200	5	1.7	2.1
300	3.6	1.1	1.4
400	2.7	0.9	1.1
500	2.3	0.8	0.9

(N.B. The statistically average family is composed of five people)

It has been suggested by the Agricultural Field Officer, Tukuyu, that for the whole of Rungwe District perhaps 30 per cent. of all land is under cultivation. He was not prepared to place any reliance on this figure, and certainly for the Lake Plains it must be higher.

To summarise my own tentative conclusions and in order to obtain some kind of picture of the current land situation, I suggest the following division into regions:-

3/1
• 134
167

A. The flood plains proper

1. Very high-density region - the arable land available under present conditions amounts to about 1½-2 acres per adult male and the local density of population is probably in the region of 300 persons per square mile: - in most of the chiefdoms of Mwaukisma, Korowe and Lazarus, the south-eastern part of Mwakipesile's and the eastern part of Mwakyusa's chiefdoms.

2. High-density region - there is available about 3 acres of arable land per adult male and the local density of population is between 300 and 400 persons per square mile: - in the chiefdoms of Mwaumangale, Mwanyile and Mwakilasa, the southern part of Mwakilasa's, the centre of Mwakyusa's and much of Mwaukisma's chiefdoms.

B. The remainder of the Lake Plains (Ufuteia)

3. Low-density region - here there remains much vacant land (some usable, some severely usable) and population density is probably little over 100 persons per square mile, and even lower than that in the most northerly parts: - the northern, higher areas comprising the north of Mwakyusa's (Mwinde's) chiefdom, the remainder of Mwandemale's, the whole of Mwaungale's, Mwakatundu's and Mwakipesile's chiefdoms, together with the northern part of Mwakipesile's and of Mwakilasa's chiefdoms.

This summary description is, and can be, only very approximate, taking no account of the complexity of local variations to be seen on the ground. It is illustrated in the accompanying sketch-map.

It may be emphasised that in the two high-density regions practically all available land is in use. In the "high-density region" (No. 2 above) it may be possible to reduce slightly the non-productive areas taken up by village sites, but nowhere will this be easy or even desirable, and already most
[34] of the vacant spaces between houses are packed with banana groves, small
[245]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1956 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

plots of maize, squashes, tobacco, etc., and useful trees (bamboo, citrus-orange, kapok, mvungwi and firewood). Artificial drainage would, of course, make more land available along the rivers, but this is in general beyond the abilities and resources of the Nyakyusa without considerable outside assistance.

Finally, in this matter it is to be remembered that in addition to a man's arable holding, each of his wives has a banana plot at her house from which she obtains her staple foodstuff. Such plots amount to perhaps about a tenth of an acre on the average. On the other hand, the Nyakyusa are no longer prepared to tolerate a predominantly banana diet. Rice has, in most areas of the Lake Plains, become almost as important as bananas.

Large-sized Holdings

Some blame for this novel shortage of land and the smallness of the average holding has often been laid upon that minority of Nyakyusa who have exceptionally large holdings, and also upon the immigrants from beyond the Lake Plains who have come to settle there during the past decade.

The occupiers of large-sized holdings are rather fewer than has sometimes been supposed. The minority of large land-owners, such as some of the modern chiefs with as much as 25-30 acres, has brought more attention to them than is really warranted. Most chiefs and village headmen have arable holdings of above average size, as a result of their privileged positions in the land allocation system and because of their prestige influence; but they remain a small minority and their number is bound to decrease in the future as inheritance causes sub-division of their holdings, for most of them have also more than the average number of wives and sons. In the two high-density regions it is clearly impossible for any man much to increase his present holding. As will be shown later (see page 24) the modern trend is not unnaturally towards a dangerous fragmentation of holdings.

The data obtained in this matter for my eight village samples are summarised in Table III, page 15. In those villages the two men out of 372 who held more than ten acres were a village headman and the father of a chief.[1] There were seven other headmen and one chief as well as some other locally influential men amongst the people covered by my surveys, but none of them held more than ten acres. There are, of course, some commoners amongst the large land-holders; many of them are close relatives of the chief or headman and have thus received preferential treatment. Some, however, are ordinary villagers who were perspicacious enough to see future trends and to obtain land in the early days before most men realised its new value and when vacant areas were still easily available. Such men are tending to become a new, wealthy class, but on the other hand they are particularly susceptible to the begging of kinsmen and friends who have insufficient land. If they are not to be regarded as unneighbourly or even anti-social (perhaps practising witchcraft) they are virtually compelled to be generous sometimes, both with their land and with their profits.

On the whole this minority of men excites little attention or jealousy among the Nyakyusa, who indeed take it for granted that their chiefs and headmen will have more land than ordinary villagers, as befits their status and prestige. If it be thought that by reducing somehow the size and number of these unusually large holdings then the land shortage might be partly relieved, it is a false hope. I scarcely think that the Nyakyusa would welcome any such attempt at interference by administrative action, but in any case it would only provide minor and temporary relief here and there and would not be worth the executive difficulties involved.

1. This unusual man should be a chief himself but he was dismissed by Government on his resignation for peculation, he still holds much of the prestige and privilege of a chief for he was a very efficient assistant to purely local government officer.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 F1017 Ngonde F1017
Nyakyusa

The Problem of Immigrant Land-holders

Undue importance has also been given to immigrants, but their numbers are relatively small and only significant locally. Since about 1948, or a little earlier, there has been an influx of Africans into the Lake Plains: – Nyakyusa from the Highlands (chiefly from the Central Region – Pekati), Ndali from the Ndali Highlands of Rungwe District and Kinga from the Njombe District to the east beyond the Livingstones; from northern Nyasaland have come Ndali, Lambia and Sukwa, and there are also small numbers of Bemba and others from Northern Rhodesia. They have been attracted in the modern era, when local movement is easier, by the possibility of obtaining land in the northern Lake Plains, where rainfall is so high and uncultivated bushland has been available.[1]

These immigrants have been and continue to be almost entirely restricted to the north in the "low-density region" (see map, facing page 11). This contained the astonishingly empty area of the country and still there remain vacant lands to be taken up. Such land is usually of relatively inferior quality, easily subject to erosion and loss of fertility on the slopes of the foothills and unsuitable for paddy cultivation except in small, isolated basins. The immigrants, that is, have settled in areas rejected by most Nyakyusa. There, locally, the newcomers outnumber the indigenous population. In the flood plains, the high-density regions, the proportions of foreigners cannot be more than one or two per cent. of the population, and in most villages there are none at all.

It is true that these newcomers do occupy land which might well be used to relieve the congestion nearer to the Lake; but in practice this would not be at all easy. To take a single example: the newly opened area in the north of the chiefdom of Mwakyusa between the Kiwira and Songwe rivers is being rapidly taken up by Ndali from the north-west, Nyasalanders and Nyakyusa from the Central Region (in that order of numerical importance). A few miles to the south, in the centre of the same chiefdom, the inhabitants of the Ikolo area consistently refuse to move although they manifestly cannot meet their land needs within their present villages. They, and others like them, say with some truth that paddy cultivation is less easy and less profitable in these newer and higher areas, and that poor communications make the disposal of produce more difficult. They also say, but more often leave to inference, that they are unwilling to leave their traditional village areas and begin in new parts, even though the move required is only one of a few miles. They have not yet become sufficiently aware of the permanent gravity of modern land shortage to overcome their parochial inertia. By the time they do become aware of it the opportunity may well be lost, for immigrants continue to arrive in twos and threes, and the last vacant land may be taken. To date, however, some vacant lands remain, albeit of poor quality, into which the densely packed Nyakyusa could move, and the immigrants cannot be blamed, at least not yet, for preventing the expansion and resettlement of the local population.

At the moment the chiefs and headmen in these northerly areas are keen to obtain as many of these immigrants as possible in order to swell the number of their commoners, the size of their villages and thus, directly, their own prestige and importance. Newcomers have every opportunity to be allocated as much land as they wish, where they wish, so, many are liberally assisted with food in the traditional way until they harvest their first crop. I heard no complaints from either the local Nyakyusa or the immigrants, and relations seemed to be good. Strangers must conform to Nyakyusa ways of life and to the authority of the headman and chief, although

1. Immigrants from Nyasaland are said to have come following the introduction of new regulations there prohibiting the cultivation of newly cleared bush areas.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1956 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Briefly to summarise the contemporary land situation: in the Lake Plains it may be said that in the main the traditional land tenure system and land law still continue on the basis of native land holding today. The essential feature in recent years has been the acute land shortage in relation to arable needs under the current system of agriculture. Village unity and village enfeebrement have been increased and so also has the authority of the village headman in his control and allocation of land rights. Security of tenure has been strengthened, if anything, and one of the most important methods of obtaining land is now by inheritance. The new law establishing inheritance from father to sons, whilst generally acceptable to the people, is producing a number of civil suits which form the greatest proportion of the more important land cases before the local courts.

The shortage of land is principally the result of increased demands for paddy (i.e. cash crop) cultivation, although the population appears to be increasing slowly. In the high density regions almost all men have considerably less land than they could cultivate, especially under the impetus of the ox-plough, with the developing desires for money income. In the low density regions of the low foothills there is still some vacant or partly utilised land, though of very inferior quality for paddy cultivation. The shortage hits the younger men severely, and many of them cannot obtain land at all until the death or senility of their fathers. Fragmentation and dispersion of holdings is rapidly becoming serious and without check.

The first question which arises is whether anything can be done to ease the pressure of population on the country by making more land available, or by making its distribution more equitable.

The thinly populated parts of the northern region of the Lake Plains offer a meagre solution only, for the country is raised above the level of the flood plains and is often broken and hilly. Fertility is low, erosion is a constant danger and the paddy yield (if obtainable at all) is poor. Nyakyusa from the densely populated areas to south and east are therefore most unwilling to move there. In any case the available land, which remains safely and economically open to cultivation, is filling up fairly quickly – mainly by immigration. Certainly I do not think that it can supply sufficient space to meet modern needs. There is, however, no reason why immigrants should make a difficult situation worse, and therefore it is suggested that further immigration from outside the Lake Plains should be carefully controlled if not altogether prevented. Indubitably outsiders (almost entirely Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who hold land without permanent residence should be prohibited and their holdings reallocated to local inhabitants.

As I have already indicated (page 17), I do not think that the problem of men who hold unusually large acreages is particularly serious. Such large holdings are relatively few and will be inevitably split up by inheritance on the deaths of the present occupiers.

In the flood plains proper there is, as far as I am aware, extremely little new land which could be brought under cultivation. Mechanical assistance in the clearance of dense reed thicket[1] and in drainage schemes would produce

1. These areas of thicket are heavily inundated in the wet season but, if cleared, could be used for a dry season crop.

WANYAKYUSA AGRICULTURE

[illegible]
[illegible]

132 some rain falls every month in the part north of Tukuyu. Very heavy rains occur at times, such as in 1955 when 120 inches are recorded on the lake shore in the month of April. In November, 1962, 12½ inches fell in eighteen hours in Tukuyu. The average annual temperature for Tukuyu is 23.66°C. The range is low while monthly variation average is only 3.4°C.

Soils and Vegetation

134 The district may be divided into three sections according to soil and vegetation types.
[133] The higher altitudes to the north are dominated geologically by the extinct volcanic range extending round Rungwe Mountain. The dark soil, composed of decaying vegetable matter overlying volcanic ash in varying layers, is, generally speaking, fairly fertile, depending on
137 the age of the subsoil. The vegetation is dominated by rain forest, though much of this has been destroyed. Grass (*Hyparrhenia* spp. *Digitaria horizontalis*, *Setaria* and *Cymbopogon* spp., with high *Imbomo* and *Dodonea* shrub on the slopes of the mountain range, are found with *Milletia*, *Ficus* and *Cissus* spp., and occasional stretches of bamboo on the hill sides and in the river beds and ravines. To the west of Tukuyu, woodlands of *Brachystegia*, associated with *Albizzia* and *Parkia* spp., cover such areas as are not cultivated and where the grasses (*Hyparrhenia* and *Digitaria* spp.) can only be burnt during October owing to the wet climate.

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[135] and western shores of Lake Nyasa, and this is composed of soils mostly transported from the highlands. These are extremely fertile. The sub-
[137] soil is granite and the top soil varies greatly in thickness.

11-Tiverton C-6 pm. 1963) 1964
FN17 Rigmole FN17

[F 039 A]

Wanyakyusa
Kinga FN17

N 233 cattle in the district in the 1941 census was about 2.3 head per taxpayer or 35 head per square mile. Certain land is set aside each year for grazing, where stock is not able to interfere with the produce plots. Compensation for trespass of cattle on cultivated land is only paid among people of the lake shore.

N 656 Parts of the land to the west of Tukuyu have been badly eroded by cultivation and over-grazing, and it is only since 1935 that anti-erosion rules have been made to check the tendency for bad cultivation. Since they were brought in, however, the majority of the tribe have become very keen on seeing the effect that well-controlled cultivation has on crops. The following are the Native Authority Rules concerning anti-erosion:—

"Throughout the Rungwe District, all natives shall follow orders regarding cultivation designed to prevent soil erosion as demonstrated and explained by the Agricultural Officer.

(a) All ridges and terraces shall be contoured and not follow the slope of the hill.

(b) In the case of cultivations done on the flat and not on ridges or terraces, a large ridge and ditch shall be dug at the top of the plot to remain permanently and be repaired from time to time."

N 431 The Wanyakyusa have never been dependent on outside sources for any of their food. But in their own territory there is no iron for making hoes nor clay for making earthenware pots. The former they were accustomed to get from Ukinga, on the eastern boundary of the district in the Livingstone mountains, and the pots were, and are still, made only by about 300 members of the Wakisi tribe living in a village on the lake shore at the extreme south-western point of the district. The Wakisi are really of Ukinga origin and inhabit the eastern, northern and western shores of Lake Nyasa. They grow no food except cassava, and that only recently, and apart from the one village that makes the pots, their only work is as paddlers of canoes and fishermen. Most of their fish and pots are exchanged for food.

N 443 Since the Tukuyu District is so thickly populated and the inhabitants concentrated, it has been found necessary to create produce markets at comparatively short distances. Transport from these markets, during wartime, has become difficult. The natural outlet for Tukuyu native foodstuffs is the Lupa Goldfields, which lie about 100 miles to the

(Received for publication

438 north. Before the war, the goldfields gave work
316 to about 15,000 natives, chiefly Wanyakyusa,
[466] and most of the foodstuffs from this district
went there. The goldfields are gradually closing
due to difficulties in obtaining spares, and it
has been necessary to look for outlets for
Tukuyu produce elsewhere. Should the gold-
fields open again after the war, and large-
scale mining start, there is a great future for
produce grown in Tukuyu.

434 The main income of the tribe is derived
from agricultural, military, mining and public
works sources, and it is estimated that in 1941
the average annual income per man, woman
and child was about Sh. 10 per year. It has
risen considerably since, as over 4,000 men
have joined the military and a large part of
their salaries comes back to the district in the
form of remittances. The agricultural source,
[464] from which a large part of the tribal income
accrues, is from sales of rice, maize and other
foodstuffs. A few number of Wanyakyusa also
work on the tea plantations.

241 The picture sketched above will show that
the district is inhabited by a tribe whose agri-
culture is of great interest, since the variety
of crops, from wheat in the highlands to
paddy and cotton on the lake shore, is perhaps
unrivalled in so small an area elsewhere in
East Africa. It has not been possible to fill in
191 the picture with details of the people's
character, but it is worth mentioning that the
Wanyakyusa are a people difficult to ad-
minister, argumentative, litigious, self-willed
and at times inclined to truculence. Nevertha-
153 less their intelligence is such that they are
willing to be persuaded, and, once convinced
of the benefit of any change, adopt it with
energy. This is instanced by the way they have
in a few years accepted the principles of anti-
erosion to such an extent that now there is
perhaps 90 per cent control in the well-popu-
• 134 lated areas. It should, however, be stressed
that, though the soil is not being eroded to
241 any great extent, it is still being impoverished,
since increased cultivation for the war effort
has involved breaking a great deal of new land
with a consequent lessening of fallow. Over-
cropping in the hilly country is very great and,
in order to prevent further emigration, it be-
[195] hoves the native planters to learn to put some-
thing back into the soil in the form of muck
or compost. If care is not taken, a compara-
tively prosperous country will one day become
like so many parts of Africa, where a losing
struggle is fought with Nature to obtain a
sufficiency for the people's needs.

on 21st September, 1943

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Government established a station at Lumbira on the lake shore, but removed later to Tukuyu. On the whole the new Government was well received. A rising in 1897 was so mercilessly dealt with that any discontent which might be felt was suppressed by the fear of the German machine-guns. Very slowly the district is being merged in the general progress arising out of European domination.

Around the lake shore cotton is being successfully cultivated by natives and Europeans. On the uplands near Tukuyu there are some coffee plantations, and the suitability of the soil for the cultivation of flax is being tested. Coal has been found in the hills to the west, but its commercial value has still to be proved; and a small quantity of mica is also being digged. Up in the north, on the Lupa River, but outside the Konde region, gold has been discovered, but apparently only in modest quantities. There are at present about three score of miners at work there.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

are remembered, and the names of the two senior wives of a chief are often recited in genealogies because the heirs take their names from their mothers, but she-who-taught-cooking is the only heroine in her own right.

It is worth noting also that the rituals of kinship are linked neither with the heroic tradition nor with primeval incest. We could trace no myths regarding their beginning, save that concerning the origin of avoidance between father and daughter-in-law. The myth of the origin of death is a variation on the theme, so familiar in Bantu-speaking Africa, of the two messengers (a sheep and a dog in this version) sent to men by 'Kyala', one promising life, the other death. It provides no charter for the ritual.

And what of the relation between myth and history? The conquest of cultivators by cattle-keepers is the common theme of traditions in the lacustrine area, and it is quite possible that small groups of invaders, who brought with them iron tools and weapons and cattle, established themselves as chiefs over small unorganized groups of hunters and cultivators in an isolated valley three or four centuries ago.[1] The Nyakyusa valley and the plain of Ngonde have no iron ore, and the inhabitants were dependent, until the coming of the Europeans, on iron (*ikyela*) smelted in the hills to the east for weapons and tools.[2] The original inhabitants are said to have used wooden hoes exclusively—such hoes were still in common use in 1938[3]—so the myth of a Lwembe sending to BuKinga for iron hoes has a firm foundation in historical fact. But that the original inhabitants of the valley did not know the use of fire 300 or 400 years ago (when Lwembe arrived) is incredible. Here the record of one of the greatest events in history is fitted into the shallow time-scale of an isolated people. To them it is not *when* fire arrived that is really important, but *who* brought it; chiefs are chiefs to the Nyakyusa (as to other peoples in Africa) by virtue of this great benefit they brought to men.

[1] Namwanga tradition (recorded in the Mbeya District Book) tells of the introduction of iron fifteen generations ago. The Sangu tradition says that a tall, pale man from 'Somaliland' first brought iron spear-heads to BuSangu and his son established a hegemony by virtue of his superior weapons.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 7. The iron deposits on the Livingstone mountains have recently been investigated by the Colonial Development Corporation. A 'titaniferous iron mountain' in the south of Njombe District was found to be 'smeltable'. *Tanganyika: Annual Reports of the Provincial Commissioners*, 1951, p. 51.

[3] Wilson, *op. cit.*, plate VII.

11:Thwaites C-5 (ca.1942) 1944
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P.236B]

WANYAKYUSA AGRICULTURE
BY D.H. Thwaites, Agricultural Assistant, Tanganyika Territory

132 some rain falls every month in the part north of Tukuyu. Very heavy rains occur at times, such as in 1935 when 139 inches are recorded on the lake shore in the month of April. In November, 1942, 12¼ inches fell in eighteen hours in Tukuyu. The average mean temperature for Tukuyu is 23.66°C. The range is low while monthly variation average is only 5-6°C.

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134 In the medium altitudes south of Tukuyu, the soil is a red clay loam, derived from granite with intrusions of dolorite, diorite, basalt and quartz. It is in the area of these
[135] soils that hot springs, lime, coal and mica occur. This part is heavily wooded with
137 *Brachystegia* associated with *Albizzia, Dalbergia, Ficus, Cissus* spp. and *Chlorophora excelsa*, but is at present being gradually cut out to make room for cultivation. No forests of economic value occur, except for fuel, small quantities of wild rubber vine, *Landolphia* spp., which have become of value in wartime, and some pockets of *Adina microcephala*. Dominant grasses are *Imperata cylindrica, Digitaria*, and *Hyparrhenia* spp.

134 The lower altitudes below 2,000 feet are situated in a wide plain along the northern
[133] and western shores of Lake Nyasa, and this is composed of soils mostly transported from the highlands. These are extremely fertile. The sub-
[137] soil is granite and the top soil varies greatly in thickness.

N 233 cattle in the district in the 1941 census was about 2.3 head per taxpayer or 55 head per square mile. Certain land is set aside each N [184 year for grazing, where stock is not able to 635] interfere with the produce plots. Compensation for trespass of cattle on cultivated land is only paid among people of the lake shore.

N 656 Parts of the land to the west of Tukuyu have been badly eroded by cultivation and 134 over-grazing, and it is only since 1935 that 185 anti-erosion rules have been made to check the tendency for bad cultivation. Since they 242 were brought in, however, the majority of the tribe have become very keen on seeing the effect that well-controlled cultivation has on crops. The following are the Native Authority Rules concerning anti-erosion:—

"Throughout the Rungwa District, all natives shall follow orders regarding cultivation designed to prevent soil erosion as demonstrated and enjoined by the Agricultural Officer.

(*a*) All ridges and terraces shall be contoured and not follow the slope of the hill.

(*b*) In the case of cultivation done on the flat and not on ridges or terraces, a large ridge and ditch shall be dug at the top of the plot to remain permanently and be repaired from N time to time."

439 The Wanyakyusa have never been dependant on outside sources for any of their food, N but in their own territory there is no iron for [135] making hoes nor clay for making earthenware pots. The former they were accustomed to get from Ukinga, on the eastern boundary of the district in the Livingstone mountains, and the pots were, and are still, made only by about 500 members of the Wakisi tribe living in a K village on the lake shore at the extreme south-439 western point of the district. The Wakisi are 101 really of Ukinga origin and inhabit the eastern, northern and western shores of Lake Nyasa. They grow no food except cassava, and that only recently, and apart from the one village that makes the pots, their only work is as paddlers of canoes and fishermen. Most of N their fish and pots are exchanged for food.

443 Since the Tukuyu District is so thickly populated and the inhabitants concentrated, it has been found necessary to create produce markets at comparatively short distances. N Transport from these markets, during war-438 time, has become difficult. The natural outlet 316 for Tukuyu native foodstuffs is the Lupa Goldfields, which lie about 100 miles to the

(*Received for publication*

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Hunting for food, like most fishing, is an individual affair. A number of men have shot-guns with which they hunt buck (duiker, bushbuck, and waterbuck) which are scarce, and game birds (guinea fowl, partridge, and duck) which are plentiful. The limiting factor is ammunition, which is relatively expensive, and few men waste a cartridge on birds unless they are sure of getting at least two with one shot. They stalk the sitting birds and fire (at point-blank range) at several birds in a line. One or two chiefs employ men specially to shoot for them, but in the diet of the people as a whole game plays a very small part, and there is no tradition of it ever having been of great importance.

Hunting for the protection of life and property is, on the other hand, a communal concern, organized like war. The chief calls out his men who assemble by villages, each under its own headman, and the chief disposes the groups. Attendance is compulsory and individuals or villages who fail to appear without good reason may be fined. Such communal hunts are still organized to kill wild pig, which devastate the gardens of some chiefdoms. We took part in one to which five village groups consisting of about 160 men and boys came. Formerly they were organized also if lion or leopard or other big game attacked men or cattle. The aim was to surround the animal and spear it, and here the importance of village relations became apparent, for the Nyakyusa argued that a man was less likely to be a coward if, in moments of danger, he stood with his relatives and village neighbours. 'We said that people of different age-villages should not stand together, every man should have his friends or relatives near him, so that if the leopard caught him the others would have to help and not shrink back! So people of the same age-village stood together, or relatives with relatives.'

Towards the end of last century Nyakyusa country abounded in big game.[1] Elephant were purposely shot out before 1935 because they were so destructive of crops, but lion, leopard, buffalo, hippo, and crocodile are still fairly common.

[1] Elton, op. cit., p. 319; D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), p. 282; 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyassa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 119; F. L. M. Moir, *After Livingstone* (1923), pp. 90–119.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 the order to clear out the ashes; messages were sent to the great
796 chiefs and the senior territorial nobles of the plain, and they told
[643] their juniors. A sacrifice was made in one of the sacred groves of the Kyungus and all fires in the whole Ngonde plain were put out. And then

> all the chiefs from every country near Mbande and the nobles and all the village headmen and all the ordinary men and women, too, went to Kyimbwe where we threw away the sickness of all the country.

At Kyimbwe, which is the crossroads in the bush, they threw away the ashes of their old fires, and some of the pots and baskets in which food is served; while those few people who could not get to Kyimbwe threw them away from their own houses on the same day as the others. At Kyimbwe new fire was made with a
[372] fire-drill by the nobles of Ngonde who

> ran with it without looking back and the people danced alongside them and speared one another! . . . They said, 'Let us dance, let us fight that the homesteads may be peaceful'. . . . 'Let us throw out the ashes that death may leave the homesteads and they be at peace.' It is to bring out war from within (*ukusosya*).

The symbolism is the same as in the rituals of kinship when kinsmen gather to admit their quarrels and press one another to speak out, so that they may cleanse themselves of anger.

The new fire was distributed to the whole plain in order. Great chiefs and senior nobles took it first and passed it to their juniors, chiefs passed to village headmen, and in each group the common people got it from their own ruling noble or their own village headman.

In July 1937, while we were visiting Ngonde, there was a
[731] plague of rats[1] which threatened the food supply, and Bungulu,
[136] the wife of a chief and well known as a prophetess, went into a
[791] trance and revealed that the rats were caused by the anger of the
[787] previous Kyungu and could be got rid of only by a ritual 'throwing out the rubbish' and sacrifice. Her husband reported the matter to Mulwa, the premier noble of Ngonde, to whom the present Kyungu, Peter—at one time a Church member—had long since handed over all responsibility for communal rituals. Mulwa called four of the leading chiefs who were pagan and a number of

[1] Nothing new in Ngonde. Lord (then Captain) Lugard suffered from them in 1888: F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), vol. i, p. 127. In 1937 the country swarmed with rats: in our own camp we killed 70 to 100 each night.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

people's needs. The importance of this can scarcely be overemphasised for a peasant people who are adopting a cash economy and are socially and emotionally deeply attached to their land – their single, continuous source of capital and their tribal heritage. Apart from the possibilities of labour migration which, so far at any rate, are taken up only temporarily and by the younger men, there are no economic opportunities and no capital to compete with the land. In non-economic life the land remains supreme as the persisting basis of society.

As late as 1940 the District Commissioner, Rungwe, was able to write that there was most generally sufficient land for the people's needs in all parts of the country, and the only competition was perhaps in respect of the very best and most fertile tracts, as had always been the case. G. Wilson recorded similar remarks in the late nineteen-thirties. That these observations were correct cannot be doubted. It is known, for instance, that until the post-war years in the Lake Plains – where now land shortage is most acute – there was a broad belt of mainly unoccupied, uncultivated bushland, infested with game, extending from the Livingstone Mountains in the east to the Nyasaland border in the south-west. There were extensive, more or less empty areas in almost every chiefdom. The people were subsistence farmers only, and also banana eaters, and in this well-watered country their agricultural requirements were adequately met on very modest holdings, from most of which two harvests a year could be gathered.

In the brief period of little more than ten years the situation has altered radically to the point of a general shortage of land (except for some parts in the north-west), and especially in the Lake Plains the available land is quite insufficient to meet the demands of the inhabitants. This critical change is the result partly of an increasing population, augmented by some immigration from other tribal areas; but more especially it is the result of the demands for larger arable holdings to meet cash crop aspirations – i.e., money earning. Although both coffee and paddy rice cultivation had begun before 1939, and both were encouraged and developed during the War years, it was not until after 1945 that both of these cash crops became well and generally established and the demand for money incomes became universal.

III

It was in order to investigate this new situation, which was beginning to become serious and to cause concern to Government, that I made a sociological survey in 1955. I had already spent some months in the country in 1954 investigating labour migration in order to provide Government with information and to make recommendations to deal with the problems arising. The second period of work occupied about five months. During both enquiries I was extremely fortunate in having the use of the excellent monographs of G. and M. Wilson who had carried out a conventional anthropological study of the Nyakyusa between 1934 and 1938. Without their basic work behind me, neither of my two studies would have been possible in so brief a time, and I must gratefully acknowledge the real value of their writings.

The intention had been that a complete enquiry should be made into Nyakyusa land conditions in all parts of the country, and that it should culminate in a full recording of tribal land law and custom with a view to its possible reform. In the event only the initial enquiry in the field in the Lake Plains was completed and the results of that alone are described in this essay. Whereas in former days there were probably few distinctive differences between the various parts of the country, in modern times with the introduction of different cash crops, with differential population growths and varying demands on the land, important divergences seem to be arising. For example,

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

233 the women, but the men are responsible for keeping the floor of the
343 stable in good repair. For this purpose a specific tool is used, called
462 *ukutoba indobelu*. It is round on top, flattened on the lower side and
[413] provided with a handle.

224 5. *Hunting*. Sometimes the Nyakyusa go out to hunt, but nowadays hunting is much more restricted than in former times as described e. g by Mackenzie in his book: "The spirit-ridden Konde" (London 1925). This record, however, deals mostly with the Ngonde of the environment of Karonga whose interesting social history was unsurpassably revealed to us by Mr. Godfrey Wilson's treatise: "The Constitution of Ngonde" (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, Number Three. Livingstone, Northern Rhodesia 1939.) Hunting in the Nyakyusa country is now [656] curtailed by governmental regulations. Hunting *(ukufuema)*, therefore, does not supply an essential part of the food requirements of the [136] natives. The colobus apes on the slopes of the Rungwe volcano and the [656] Poroto Mountains are sometimes killed for their attractive black and white skins, but fortunately this is now forbidden by the government. Otherwise these apes would be exterminated in quite a short time, [439] since the skins of these apes are in great demand with some Europeans for rugs and covers. Naturally, the hunting of lions and especially of leopards, which even nowadays still cause great damage, is not restricted.

224 The hunting of game for food is often done with dogs *(imbwa)* which
231 have small bells *(inyesi)* on collars round their necks. Thereby the hunter *(umfuemi)* always knows the whereabouts of his dog. The chase is continued till the dog or dogs are exhausted. The object of the hunt *(umfuemu)* is generally a small type of antelope *(akasya)*, e. g. in the [656] environment of Mwakalele, as I was instructed. The usual time for hunting is the cooler season, but to-day a permit of the government is also required.

223 Catching birds by means of traps *(untegu*, pl. *imitegu)* is still common in the Nyakyusa area. I have also seen such traps constructed by means of the flicking-gallow's principle also in the vicinity of Utengule among the Safwa. The herd boys especially set traps to catch quails *(imbesi)* when the *malesi* (millet) harvest is over. Sometimes smaller birds are also coursed until they are exhausted and then slain. One day I found a stick vertically put on the soil and with a triangle made of smaller sticks at its top. The horizontal part of which was smeared with an adhesive substance. I was told that this was a trap for birds,

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

grubbing for food outside the stable. Old people also eat the meat of 262
apes *(salila*, ape) and of jakal *(ingebe)*. The Nyakyusa men are generally [192]
very fond of eating fowl, indeed: "*Wakugana inyama sya inguku*", they are fond of the flesh of fowl.

Bones are usually given to the children for gnawing. Eight to ten boys may be seen sitting in a circle and alternately gnaw on the same bone, often drinking a little milk *(ulukama)* the while.

During a boating on Lake Nyasa I saw the well-known columnar [136]
clouds formed by the so-called Kungu-flies in the distance above the surface of the water. These flies are also eaten by the peoples on the shore of the Lake. When these insects come shore-wards they are [252]
caught, roasted at home and then eaten. But I was told that sometimes they are also caught and eaten out on the Lake, being squeezed into lumps between the hands.

The Nyakyusa eat with the right hand, but when the meal consists 264
of such food as boiled maize and beans *(ingate)* they also use spoons
(uluiko) made of folded strips of banana leaves. Nowadays, however, [412]
tin spoons and tin plates have come into wide use. The ancient eating-
mats *(akatefu*, diminutive of *urutefu)* are also being more and more [178 285]
displaced.

When the meal is over, the vessels and plates are cleaned with the fingers, bent inward, and then licked off. The mouth is rinsed out with water.

10. Diet. The vegetable diet is roughly the following. The light meal 262
in the morning consists mostly of boiled maize-cobs *(ingate)*, sweet 264
potatoes *(imbatata)*, bananas *(ilitoki*, pl. *amatoki)*, roasted bananas; or, *amawifu*, sweet bananas. The main meal in the evening, shortly before sunset, usually consists of flour porridge *(ikiyindi)*, beans *(indima)*, both often boiled together with maize, peas *(efinyaga)* very often in the form of porridge, maize-corns *(ikirombe)* and groundnuts *(isyabala*, pl. *amasyabala)*. These groundnuts are dried in the sun on mats. Bananas, if dried in the same manner, are usually halved lengthwise and spread out sometimes on banana leaves. I have seen this done in [251]
the village of Katunba. Granary stores are very often, e. g. near Uten-
gule (on the border of Nyakyusa and Safwa culture), erected on plat- [285
forms supported by poles. The container is a big quadrangular basket, 415]
roughly three by three meters in length and 1 m in height. The roof has the shape of a large Chinese hat and can be taken off from the lower part of the granary.

241 Other foodstuffs grown are coca-yams, cow peas, pigeon peas, Bambarra groundnuts, ginger, cardamon, groundnuts, wheat, pumpkins, peppers, citrus, sugar cane and European vegetables, including a quantity of European potatoes. [177]

Economic Crops

245 177 One of the main cash crops is coffee, which was introduced about 1900 by the Berlin Lutheran Mission, but it was not grown by natives until 1930 when an attempt was made to organize an industry. It had already been tried from 1924 onwards by Europeans but had gradually died out, giving place to tea.

245 Native coffee has not been truly successful and many reasons are suspected for this. In effect, the coffee suffers from many pests and diseases and yields are so low as to be almost uneconomical even to a tribe of very low individual annual income. It has become obvious that coffee can only be grown by natives if shaded by bananas and mulched heavily with banana trash. Multiple-stem pruning is gaining favour.

Seedlings are planted out in December and the first crop is obtained four years after. The area planted rose in 1939 to 5,864 acres and the number of native planters to 7,966. Yields, however, are low, varying from 131.4 kg. to 20.4 kg. parchment to the acre. Hemeleia leaf disease and yellow and white borer are prevalent all over the coffee-growing area. Over the period since 1932 the price paid to natives has averaged 44 cents a kg. for parchment. [136]

[438] All coffee is collected and sold by Native Authority after rough grading and, in order to [432] encourage better preparation, much lower payments are made for the inferior grades. A native staff is employed to visit coffee plots and to give instructions, and it is noticeable that the quality of preparation varies with the price.

175 The cultivation of rice on the lake shore was started by Chief Koroso in 1896 with seed 243 obtained from Arab traders in Nyasaland and the Moravian Mission issued further seed in 1898. Being an innovation, rice was not popular and little was grown except for small [651] local sales. In 1917 the Government issued seed and tax was paid in rice instead of money. Interest was hereby aroused and the cultivation of rice was started. In 1932 several other kinds of seed were issued and now sixteen varieties 243 are found. "Faya", which was issued in 1929, gives the best yields and is the variety chiefly grown, other varieties being Bungala, Marula

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

The *Nyamwanga* and *Iwa* of Abercorn and Masama districts, Northern Rhodesia, are in areas where the density is between 4 and 7 per square mile, and they number less than 20,000.[1]

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Tanganyika Peoples[2]

Tribe	District	Total population	Total children	Percentage of children to adults	Percentage of males to females		Increase since 1921
					Adults	Children	
Kukwe	Rungwe	68,197	29,934	74	51	110	..
Seria	Mbeya	10,755	..	..	..	..	..
Nyakyusa	Rungwe	80,092	37,799	..	..	..	..
	Mbeya	2,957	1,030	..	..	..	..
	Other districts	775	551	87	57	102	34,576

Populations of less than 50,000 Persons

Tribe	District	Total population
Kinga	Njombe	27,036
Lambya	Rungwe	12,403
Ndali	Rungwe	22,834
Nyamwanga	Mbeya	10,147
Nyika	Mbeya and Ufipa	25,179
Pangwa	Njombe	20,533
Wanji	Njombe	20,397
Wanda	Mbeya and Ufipa	5,754

LINGUISTIC DATA

197 According to Doke's classification *Ngonde* is one of the five important languages of the east central sub-zone of Bantu languages, and is spoken in Tanganyika to the north end of Lake Nyasa, where it is known as *Nyakyusa*.[3] In language as well as culture, the Ngonde of Nyasaland are identical with the Nyakyusa of Tanganyika.[4] According to Guthrie's classification, many of the tribes, whose affiliation is not known on cultural or historical grounds, may be attached, on linguistic grounds, to speakers of the Tumbuka group of languages: *Wenya*, *Lambia*, and *Wandia*.[5]

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The *Kinga* inhabit the inaccessible heights of the north and west portion of the Livingstone mountains, which rise to 10,000 ft.[6]

[130] *Nyakyusa* country is bounded on the south by Lake Nyasa and the Songwe river, on the east by the wall of the Livingstone range, and on the west by the Ndali hills. 137 They live between the two walls of the Great Rift valley. In the north the rift is interrupted and closed by the extinct volcano Rungwe (10,000 ft.), from whose base the land drops in hills and little plateaux to the lake-shore plain. The soil is not very rich,

[1] Orde Brown, 1, 1938, maps.
[2] *Census of the Native Population*, 1931, Tables VI and VII.
[3] Doke, 1945, p. 66.
[4] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 8.
[5] Guthrie, 1948, p. 81.
[6] Du Plessis, 1929, p. 323.

4 Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

especially in the north, but as between 100 and 130 in. of rain usually falls annually, the country is one of the most fertile parts of Tanganyika. Two crops a year are often grown on the same patch of ground. There is no tsetse, and cattle flourish. Parts of the country are stony and mountainous, others, especially the lake-shore plain, are of deep soil. On the higher ground there are many old volcanic craters filled with rich, moist soil, more fertile than the surrounding land.[1]

Ngonde country is bounded by Lake Nyasa on the east and by the Misuko hills on the west. It is mountainous except for a belt of low-lying country, about 6–10 miles wide, along the lake shore. The whole district is well watered and well wooded except for some of the higher peaks and the lake plains. Banana-trees are cultivated throughout the district. Game is plentiful. Average annual rainfall at Karonga in 1922–32 was 41·2 in. Average mean temperature was 74° F., seldom rising above 95° F.[2]

MAIN FEATURES OF ECONOMY

CULTIVATION

The *Kinga* are agriculturists, cultivating wheat, peas, and potatoes, and latterly also oats and barley. They own a moderate amount of cattle, and many sheep and goats. They are skilful smiths.[3] The *Kisi* and *Sandia* around the north-west coast of the lake are fishermen and agriculturists, growing some millet and maize.[4] The *Nyika* are agriculturists and cattle-rearers; the *Lambia* do not rear much cattle; the *Ndali* have large herds, and cultivate bananas in the valleys.[5] The *Nyamwanga* keep sheep and goats and grow maize, beans, and millet.[6]

The *Matengo* have a system of hill-side cultivation of their own, which prevents erosion. When forced into concentrations in the caves in Litembo and Langiro to escape the Ngoni raids, they developed the pit-system of hoeing: the grass is cut and laid in 2-ft. wide lines in a grid of 6-ft. squares. The hole in the middle of the square is hoed by a woman, who throws up the earth on to the grass squares. The crops are planted in the raised beds and weeds are thrown into the pit to rot, forming compost for the following year. After one season the pit becomes the raised bed and the beds the pit, and the system is repeated in following years. With proper succession of crops the gardens may be kept in use for ten years before fertility begins to fail. Maize, millet, and wheat flourish; root crops do not thrive under this system, nor does tobacco. The pit-system is now found mainly at Litembo, and is being abandoned elsewhere.[7]

The *Ngonde* and *Nyakyusa* are primarily cattle-rearers and banana-cultivators. They have a very similar culture, but only the latter has been described in detail. Consequently, the following summary refers to the Nyakyusa, unless the contrary is indicated.

The Nyakyusa practise subsistence agriculture by intensive cultivation with rotation of crops. As wide shifting cultivation is not practised, villages are relatively stable. They grow a great quantity of crops—maize, millet, sweet potatoes, beans, ground-nuts, cow-peas, cassava, and rice in the plain. Grass is hoed in for manure. The *Sukwa*, in the Misuko hill area (Ngonde country), grow field-peas and wheat on a small scale.[8]

[1] Wilson, 3, 1938, pp. 5–6.
[2] Murray, 1932, pp. 201–3; Dixey, 1928.
[3] *Handbook of German East Africa*, p. 64.
[4] Ibid., pp. 62–3.
[5] Ibid., pp. 66–7.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Pike, 1938.
[8] Murray, 1932, p. 207.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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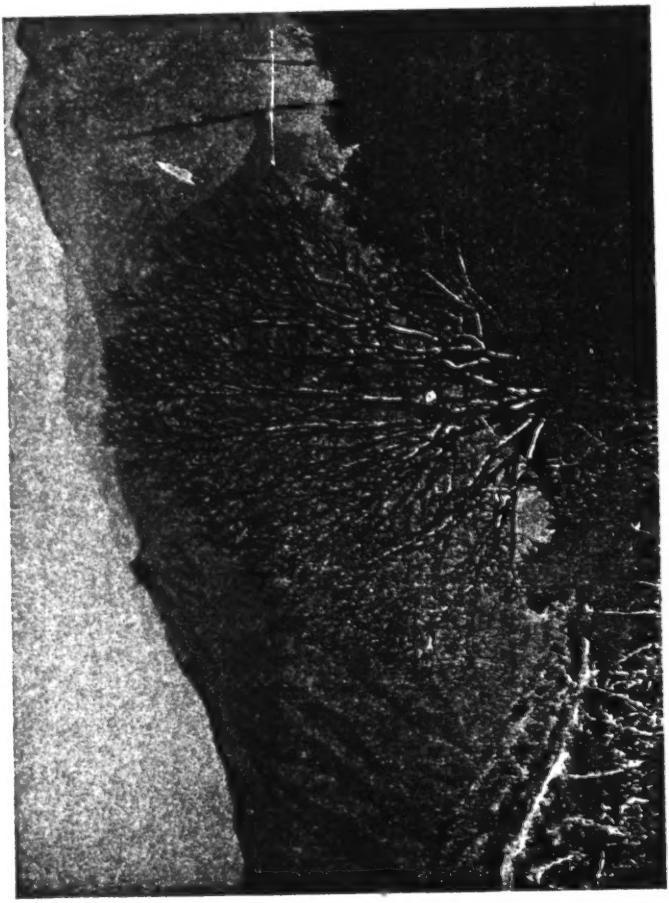

2. THE ROAD TO LWEMBE

[Facing p. 15]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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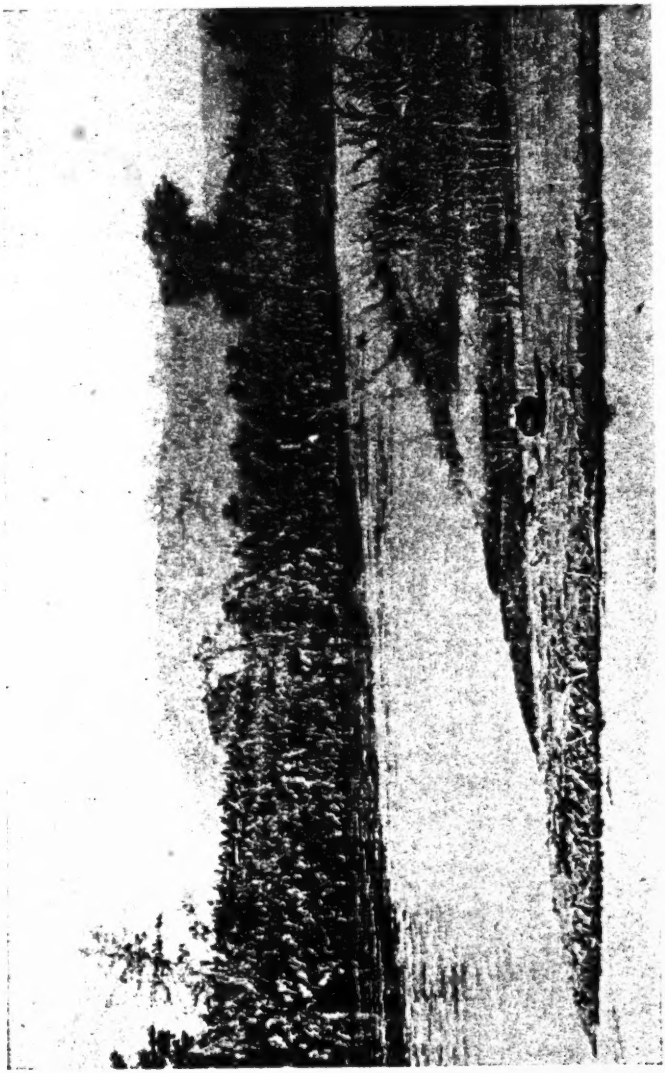

3. MBANDE HILL

[facing p. 22]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

SACRIFICES AT THE GROVES OF CHIEFS

(a) THE PLACE, OCCASION, AND FORM OF SACRIFICE

778. 769 [137] A CHIEF is buried near the trees planted at his 'coming out' and around the grave a thicket grows up. It is taboo for men to cut saplings or brushwood there and since trees grow very fast in the climate and soil of the Nyakyusa valley, the thicket soon becomes a grove, and there sacrifices to the dead chief are made. The priests look for the stone planted at his marriage, and place the offering beside it. How long a chief is so honoured depends on how conspicuous he was as a ruler or warrior, and perhaps also on [782] whether the sacrifices are judged to be efficient in producing rain and health or not. Mbyanga and Kabale, two groves which are particularly honoured, were the shrines of founders of expanding lineages. At Mbyanga was planted a cutting of a tree which sprouted from the grave of Mwakisambwe (30) who had first occupied the country in which Mbyanga is situated. He is often spoken of as having been 'buried' at Mbyanga, in fact he was carried back ten miles to Lubaga, whence he had come, for burial. But he is worshipped at Mbyanga and we attended a sacrifice there for which his great-great-great-grandson, Mwaihojo (147) the chief, provided a cow, and Mwaihojo's grandsons ate the holy food. In contrast to this, the grave of Mwaipopo's (116) younger brother, who had once ruled a country but was defeated in war and whose sons had died, was completely neglected; no one sacrificed there. We knew more than a dozen chiefs' groves at which sacrifices were made, and there must have been a great many more in different parts of BuNyakyusa.

643 769 Since every ruling chief normally had two heirs, sacrifices involved co-operation between independent chiefdoms—two chiefs at the grove of their father, four at that of their grandfather, and so on. But if there is friction between the chiefs, some branches of the lineage cease to participate, saying that the connexion is 'too distant', and celebrate at the groves of their nearer ancestors only. This happened at the sacrifice of Mbyanga which we [578] attended (*vide infra*, pp. 79-81). The sanction for co-operation is [688] the belief that quarrelling between kinsmen annoys the shades and

[p. 70]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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9. SHRINE IN THE SACRED GROVE, MBYANGA

[Facing p. 71]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

people's needs. The importance of this can scarcely be overemphasised for a peasant people who are adopting a cash economy and are socially and emotionally deeply attached to their land – their single, continuous source of capital and their tribal heritage. Apart from the possibilities of labour migration which, so far at any rate, are taken up only temporarily and by the younger men, there are no economic opportunities and no capital to compete with the land. In non-economic life the land remains supreme as the persisting basis of society.

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In the brief period of little more than ten years the situation has altered radically to the point of a general shortage of land (except for some parts in the north-west), and especially in the Lake Plains the available land is quite insufficient to meet the demands of the inhabitants. This critical change is the result partly of an increasing population, augmented by some immigration from other tribal areas; but more especially it is the result of the demands for larger arable holdings to meet cash crop aspirations – i.e., money earning. Although both coffee and paddy rice cultivation had begun before 1939, and both were encouraged and developed during the War years, it was not until after 1945 that both of these cash crops became well and generally established and the demand for money incomes became universal.

III

It was in order to investigate this new situation, which was beginning to become serious and to cause concern to Government, that I made a sociological survey in 1955. I had already spent some months in the country in 1954 investigating labour migration in order to provide Government with information and to make recommendations to deal with the problems arising. The second period of work occupied about five months. During both enquiries I was extremely fortunate in having the use of the excellent monographs of G. and M. Wilson who had carried out a conventional anthropological study of the Nyakyusa between 1934 and 1938. Without their basic work behind me, neither of my two studies would have been possible in so brief a time, and I must gratefully acknowledge the real value of their writings.

The intention had been that a complete enquiry should be made into Nyakyusa land conditions in all parts of the country, and that it should culminate in a full recording of tribal land law and custom with a view to its possible reform. In the event only the initial enquiry in the field in the Lake Plains was completed and the results of that alone are described in this essay. Whereas in former days there were probably few distinctive differences between the various parts of the country, in modern times with the introduction of different cash crops, with differential population growths and varying demands on the land, important divergences seem to be arising. For example,

11:Thwaites C-5 (ca. 1942) 1944
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P.236 B]

WANYAKYUSA AGRICULTURE

By D. H. Thwaites, Agricultural Assistant, Tanganyika Territory

132 some rain falls every month in the part north of Tukuyu. Very heavy rains occur at times, such as in 1935 when 139 inches are recorded on the lake shore in the month of April. In November, 1942, 12½ inches fell in eighteen hours in Tukuyu. The average mean temperature for Tukuyu is 23.66°C. The range is low while monthly variation average is only 5-6°C.

Soils and Vegetation

134 The district may be divided into three sections according to soil and vegetation types.
[133] The higher altitudes to the north are dominated geologically by the extinct volcanic range extending round Rungwe Mountain. The dark soil, composed of decaying vegetable matter overlying volcanic ash in varying layers, is, generally speaking, fairly fertile, depending on
● 137 the age of the subsoil. The vegetation is dominated by rain forest, though much of this has been destroyed. Grass (*Hyparrhenia* spp. *Digitaria horizontalis, Setaria*) and *Crotalaria* spp., with high *Sesbania* and *Dodonea* shrub on the slopes of the mountain range, are found with *Milletia, Ficus* and *Cissus* spp., and occasional stretches of bamboo on the hill sides and in the river beds and ravines. To the west of Tukuyu, woodlands of *Brachystegia*, associated with *Albizzia* and *Parkia* spp., cover such areas as are not cultivated and where the grasses (*Hyparrhenia* and *Digitaria* spp.) can only be burnt during October owing to the wet climate.

134 In the medium altitudes south of Tukuyu, the soil is a red clay loam, derived from granite with intrusions of dolorite, diorite, basalt and quartz. It is in the area of these
[135] soils that hot springs, lime, coal and mica occur. This part is heavily wooded with
137 *Brachystegia* associated with *Albizzia, Dalbergia, Ficus, Cissus* spp. and *Chlorophora excelsa*, but is at present being gradually cut out to make room for cultivation. No forests of economic value occur, except for fuel, small quantities of wild rubber vine, *Landolphia* spp., which have become of value in wartime, and some pockets of *Adina microcephala*. Dominant grasses are *Imperata cylindrica, Digitaria*, and *Hyparrhenia* spp.

134 The lower altitudes below 2,000 feet are situated in a wide plain along the northern
[133] and western shores of Lake Nyasa, and this is composed of soils mostly transported from the highlands. These are extremely fertile. The sub-
[137] soil is granite and the top soil varies greatly in thickness.

137 in thickness. This part is devoid of timber except along some river banks—*Albizzia* and *Acacia* spp.—and fuel has to be carried some distance. The dominant herbs are *Crotalaria striata* and *Hyparrhenia* sp., with *Phragmites* and *Pennisetum purpureum* along the rivers.

Methods of Cultivation

241 462 The work of cultivation is equally divided between the sexes. After the plots have been cleared and hand-hoed by the men, it is women's work to plant, clear, harvest, winnow and sell at the market. Men's work consists of clearing, hoeing and looking after the cattle.

242 241 Rotation of crops is practised, as it must be in an area where all land is far from productive. In the highlands, 9,500 feet to 5,000 feet, the rotation in valleys is sweet potatoes, finger millet, groundnuts, finger millet, groundnuts, finger millet and rest for five years, or sweet potatoes, maize for five years and rest for five years. On the hillsides, finger millet and pigeon pea or finger millet alone are sown every fourth year.

In the medium altitudes, between 5,000 feet and 2-3,000 feet, the rotation is finger millet, maize and yams, beans, rested and grazed. Continual planting of rice cannot take place as fertility is so quickly impaired.

In the lower altitudes, below 2,000 feet, rice is planted continuously for some 15 years and the land is then rested and grazed for about 8 years.

Diet and Food Crops

262 No one food is the staple throughout the district, but plantains, maize and sweet potatoes for the higher altitudes and rice on the lake shore are generally eaten, with additions that vary from area to area.

243 Maize is planted both on contoured ridges and on flat land. Holes are drilled generally 3 feet apart and each hole has 3 seeds planted in it. Maize is usually interplanted with beans [241] or Bambarra groundnuts, groundnuts, cowpeas or pigeon peas. Planting takes place in the highlands in July to September and harvesting in February to April. In the medium altitudes, two crops are planted annually, in November to February and again in May to June. In the lower altitudes, however, little maize is grown and this is sown in November to December [251] and harvested in March and April. Maize is stored in mud-covered basket granaries or is [262] sold as soon as it is dried. It is eaten roasted or boiled with beans. The varieties of maize grown vary but they are mostly of the hard flint type.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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V. THE CHIEF MWAIPOPO

[facing p.50]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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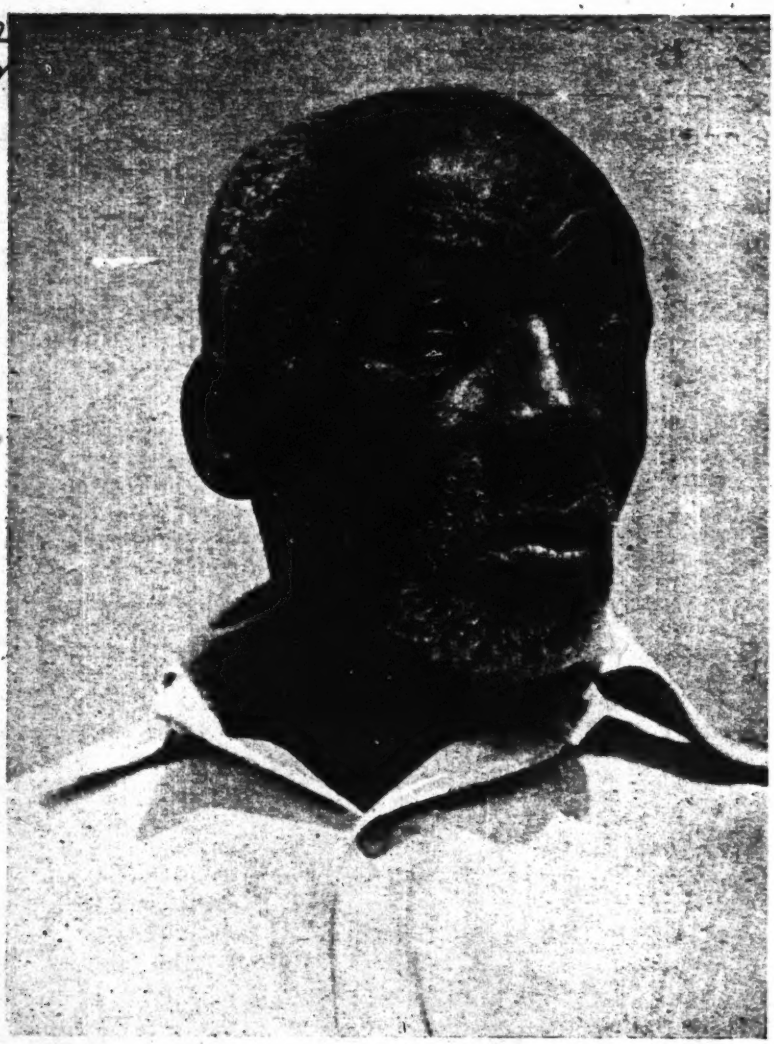

VI. FIBOMBE, A CHRISTIAN ELDER

[facing p. 51]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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XVI. THE FAVOURITE WIFE OF A CHIEF

[facing p. 147]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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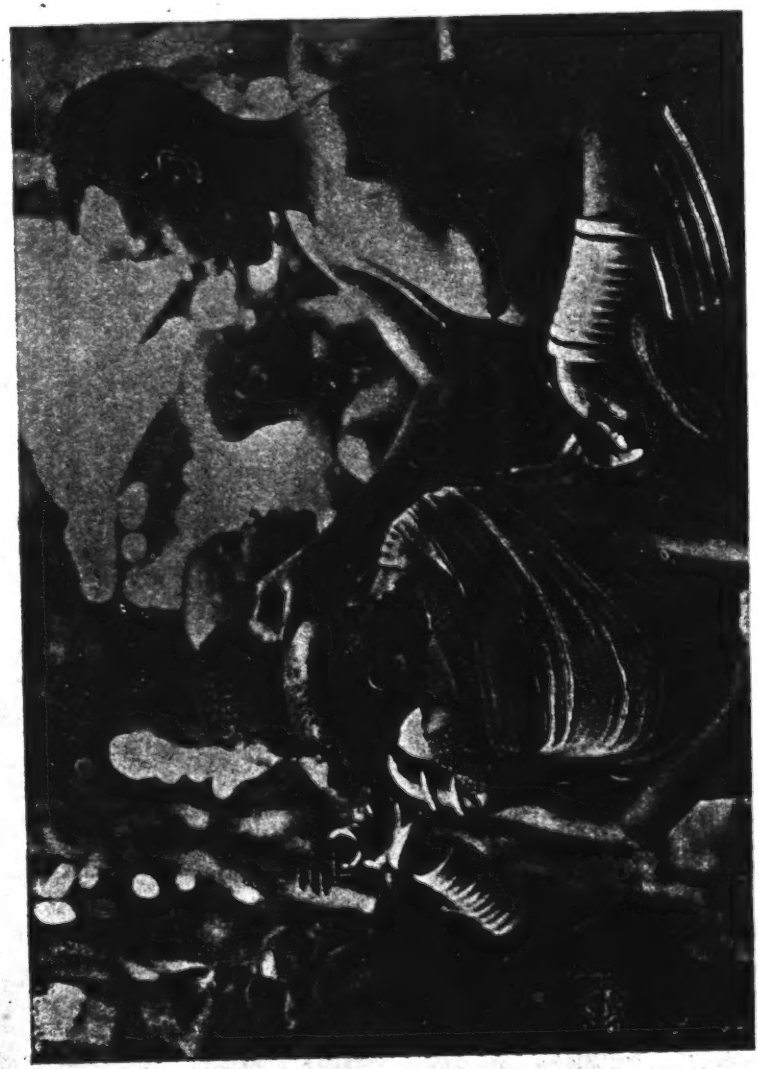

7. The officiant at a twin ritual anoints a child

[facing p. 164]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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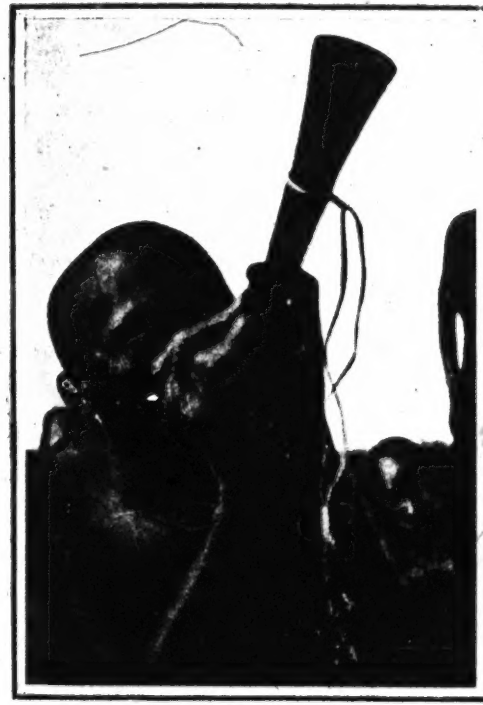
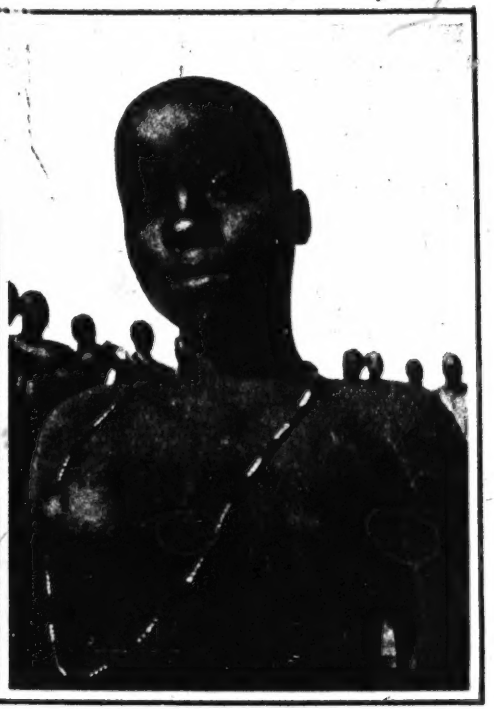


TOBACCO SMOKING.

There may be only one pipe for a dozen smokers. Each takes one long pull, and slowly exhales after he has handed the pipe to his neighbour. Many grow their own tobacco, and often take it in the form of snuff.



A YOUNG WOMAN.

Young women are not always so simply dressed, many wear quantities of beads on their neck and arms, and some are weighted down on neck, arms and ankles with coils of copper wire. The clean shaven head, however, is common to all girls who wish to be smart.

[Facing p. 64]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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THE KYUNGU, PETER

[opposite title page]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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4*a*. SACRIFICE AT LUBAGA

4*b*. THE SACRIFICIAL MEAT

[facing p. 23]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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5*a*. PRIESTS OF LUBAGA (KINGA)

[534
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5*b*. KINGA PRIESTS WITH HORN AND DRUM

[Facing p. 39]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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7. HEIR TO A CHIEFDOM
(*Mwanyilu in 1936*)

[Facing p. 55]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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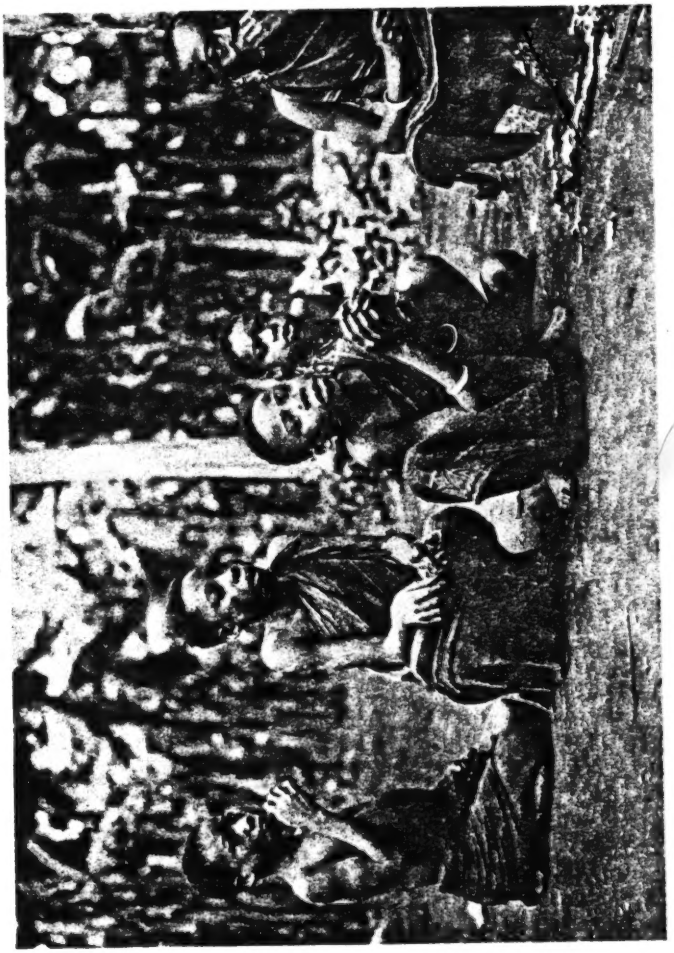

8. COMMUNION WITH THE SHADES

[Facing p. 70]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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10*a*. KASITILE THE PRIEST

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10*b*. DIVINATION WITH PORRIDGE

[Facing p. 118]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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12a. NGEMELA, FOUNDER OF A SEPARATIST CHURCH

12b. NYASURU, LEADER OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CHURCH

[opp. p. 166]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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13. MARIA, A CHRISTIAN ELDER

[opp. p. 167]

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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The chief Wwamasika and his family after he had received from me my old "Klepper-Mantle" as a gift.

to enter his hut, where the patient was sitting on the ground with his back to the wall. To heal his patient of the pains, the doctor made some small incisions in his skin near the stomach by means of a triangular-shaped knife, and then he rubbed in the incisions a thick black juice taken from the horn of an antelope (the horn was called *kapembe*, pl. *ulupembe*). The juice was prepared from different roots and herbs as a medicine against stomach pains. In the horn were certain divisions for other medicines, and in each of these divisions was stuck a small (black) stick for removing the specific medicine from it. After this treatment the patient declared that he felt severe pains in the region of his stomach. I asked the doctor for some of his medicines, but he was unwilling to give me anything. Then I promised to bring him next day some European medicines hoping to get in exchange some of his medicaments. 123 757 [415 237]

The following morning I returned. On this occasion I did acquire some of his medicines in exchange for various European tablets, especially as he was most fascinated with the kaliumpermanganatum[1] of which I gave him a few crystals, explaining to him the use and the dose; when I dissolved some of the crystals before his eyes, it probably seemed to him to be a mystical process. Among the medicines I received then from him was a medicine for luck, called *kwarusako*. [777] Some of the inhabitants of the village, who had meantime appeared, were very unwilling for him to give me this medicine, and maintained that I would take with me all the luck of the village.

On this second visit to the medicine-man, there was again a patient present, and I wanted to take a photograph of the scene because it was 123 755

[1] [i.e., $KMNO_4$. – Analyst]

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

123 755 in the open air and not within the hut as on the previous day. But the patient was unwilling to be photographed. He feared, he said, that by the photo I would take „his inner man together with the medicine just accepted" with me to Europe. I tried to calm him, showing him some pictures of my family, and I also let him look through the view-finder of my camera, so that at last he was satisfied. Then, after feeling more confident, he told me the cause of the pains which led him to come to the doctor. He thought he had been bewitched, as he had met a descendant of a man whom some long time ago had killed one of his own ancestors.

[142 291 516 756]

The Medicine Man and one of his patients. The medicines are spread out on the mat.

756 Then the medicine man also explained to me how he had come to the position of a doctor. He did not inherit his position from his father, but he was instructed in medical practices by another doctor. The circumstances which had led him to this position were the following.

[837] Before his initiation to the medical practice he had entered into forbidden relations with the wife of another man. To protect himself [789] from the magical revenge of the deceived husband and his kin he went to a medicine man to acquire antidotes against the expected bewitching. He had to pay two cows for this medicine, and as he had paid them, the medicine-man offered to initiate him into the secrets of the practice of a medicine-man. The character of the client, probably, had won his confidence, and indeed, the medicine-man whose guest I now was, made a profound impression on me.

754 He also described some forms of bewitching[1] for vengeance. For this purpose the avenger poisons a fowl in his own village uttering curses

[1] Cf. G. Wilson, Introduction, p. 277 (belief in witchcraft).

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

881 and other duties applicable to a girl after marriage. The practical
867 instruction takes place in or before a special hut in the village under
868 the leadership of the *abanyago (avanyago)*. The girl is admonished by the *unnyago* to obey her parents without any delay, to perform the commands of her mother immediately, e. g. to clean the hut, and especially to show obedience when guests are present. Should the mother blame her daughter unjustly, she should not reply. (The girl had been blamed in the earlier discussion that she had not swept the hut when her mother required her to do it). Then her duties and
881 conduct towards her future husband were inculcated. As a wife she
867 must never accept anything from the hands of her husband without
593 kneeling and stretching out both hands, and turning away her face
562 with eyes cast down. Also as a wife she must not hold her head up

[142 291 534]

Some of the drummers.

when she is addressed by a man. As a wife she must be anxious to prepare her husband's meal always at the right time, that means, it has to be ready when her husband returns from the field. If she sees her husband coming from the field, then she has to go to meet him, and take his hatchet from him. Should her husband scold her, she is
[356] not to reply; but she may ask her neighbours for help. It is one of her duties to take care of the regular cleaning of the hut[23]. The ashes must always be removed by her from the fireplace. If there are only a few ashes on the fireplace she must remove them with her hands[24].

[364]

[23] The place near the house where the sweepings are thrown down is called *urutagililo*.

[24] Cf. *Mackenzie*, p. 51, who refers to such moral instructions connected with puberty customs, probably at Karonga; cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 359 (Nygonde plain).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

young ones, the older ones persuade the little ones to lie down with them and to do that which is forbidden with them between the legs. Sometimes two older boys who are friends do it together, one gets on top of his fellow, then he gets off and the other mounts. All this which they do together or with a junior is a small wrong. When their parents find them they reprove them and tell them it is forbidden, they beat them a little. But when a little boy is caught hold of by an older boy against his will, and he tells that so and so caught him and had intercourse (*ukulogwa*) with him then the older boy will be fined, perhaps a bull. 838 [684]

'It is altogether forbidden to do evil to a fellow by night. The boy who has been so treated will be angry and run off to the court, and he who did evil to him will be fined. He will pay one cow, because they say it is forbidden to do evil to your fellow by night. There are some who, when they have dreamed at night of a woman, wake up and catch hold of a friend, and have intercourse with him.'

A and J.

A and J agreed that homosexuality occurred frequently in boys' villages. 'A boy has intercourse with his fellow, but a grown man? No, never, we've never heard of it. They always want women; only when a man cannot get a woman he does this, only in youth. A few men do not marry but they are half-wits who have no kind of intercourse at all. [732]

'And there is one famous case in the hills of a man who, though not mad, dresses as a woman; but he has no intercourse either with men or women.'

A case was also quoted of a doctor in Tukuyu who 'is a woman; she has borne children, now her body has grown the sexual organs of a man and her feelings have changed also; but she keeps it very secret, she is spoken of as a woman.' [143]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

The Spirit-Ridden Konde

CHAPTER I

The Land & the People

UNGONDE, as the Konde people call 131
their country, lies around the north end 144
of Lake Nyasa. Northwards of that point it stretches for about fifty miles, and southwards for roughly the same distance. Like all their neighbours, the Konde belong to the great Bantu race, which occupies Africa from the Cape to the Congo, and beyond.

The lake shore plain is narrow, fertile, and populous, 131
with its centre at Karonga, where there is a British 133
Magistrate, some trading stores, and a station of the Livingstonia Mission of the United Free Church of [797]
Scotland. Beyond the plain the tribe, under various local names, reaches up into the mountains on both sides of the lake. Outside of Nyasaland, and northwards across the Songwe, it covers a large area in what was once German East Africa, but is now known as Tanganyika Territory. Here, too, the plain is hot, fertile, and populous as at Karonga. Northwards of the plain lie the healthy uplands of Mwamba and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE peoples with whom this book is concerned, the Nyakyusa and the Ngonde, occupy an area shut in by mountains at the northern end of Lake Nyasa, and enjoy a culture which, though varying locally, clearly springs from a common basis and is traditionally attributed to similar origins. The most conspicuous features of their political organization are (i) the balance of power between chiefs and commoners; (ii) the 'coming out' ritual in which a generation of men which has governed for approximately thirty years retires and hands over the administration to its sons, retaining only ritual functions; and (iii) the system of age-villages.

All are agreed that chiefs and commoners belong to different stocks; the commoners being descended from the original occupants of the country while the chiefs trace their descent to a line of invaders who came down from the Livingstone mountains eight generations ago. According to the myth, they brought with them fire, and cattle, and iron tools, and they found a people who ate their food raw in a land 'without trees'.[1] Commoners are *abatitu*, black people, while Ngulube, an early ancestor of the chiefs, was 'pale'[2] and chiefs (*abanyafyale*) generally are said to have been lighter in colour and 'different in their bodies'. After generations of intermarriage between chiefs and commoners there is no consistent difference in physical type between them, but the range of physical type among the Nyakyusa as a whole is wide.[3]

Nyakyusa and Ngonde historians say that their chiefs are related to those of the Kinga, who live high above the Nyakyusa valley to the east in the Livingstone mountains, whence the chiefs came. The Kinga acknowledge the connexion and join with the Nyakyusa in sacrifice to their common heroes, but culturally the

[1] Possibly the lake-shore plain. The hills until cultivated are covered with either savannah or rain forest.

[2] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3, p. 10 (1930). According to the Ngonde version Ngulube was the *first* ancestor.

[3] cf. F. Fülleborn, *Beiträge zur physischen Anthropologie der Nord-Nyassander* (1902). *Das Deutsche Njassa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet Atlas* (1906).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

CHAPTER IV

THE RITUAL OF PUBERTY AND MARRIAGE

I. IN SELYA AND MUNGONDE

(a) *The events*

881 585 584 836 THE puberty ritual for girls among the Nyakyusa is fused with the marriage ritual. Girls are usually betrothed well before puberty and they may live with their 'husbands' for some time before they grow up, for the view of most Nyakyusa is that a girl should become accustomed to her husband gradually and that it is good for her to visit him from time to time, sweeping his house, cleaning the byre, drawing water and cooking for him, and learning the art of love-making with him and no one else. While she is still very immature it is insisted that he should only have intercourse with her *inter crura*, but when she is approaching puberty he often has full intercourse with her. No legal case can be brought against him in court if he does so, provided that he has not forced or frightened her, but his friends may tell him he is foolish, and is 'teaching his wife adultery', since now he can have no proof, in the physical examination at puberty, that she has not slept with other men. No stigma attaches to the girl; if it is her husband who has deflowered her she is acclaimed in the ritual as a virgin. In some pagan families, however, notably those of chiefs, girls are not allowed to visit their husbands before puberty. The girl's father has the right to [171] refuse it, for before the ritual a wife is only 'borrowed'. Unlike the neighbouring Bemba, the Nyakyusa are not anxious lest the girl should conceive before her first menstruation—if she should do so the ritual is performed in the ordinary way—but many fathers dislike letting their daughters go before the main bulk of the marriage cattle have been handed over. Opposition on the part of the missions and the Administration to early marriage also influences the more sophisticated. The period of betrothal is long, for pagan [145] girls are commonly engaged from about 8 years old onwards, and the average age of puberty appears to be between 15 and 16.[1]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

and the average age of puberty appears to be between 15 and [145] 16.[1]

With the onset of first menstruation the ritual (*ubunyago bwa-usungu*) starts immediately: it is begun even for a girl not yet betrothed, though for her it cannot be completed. The main acts are a treatment of the 'bride' (*unsungu*) with medicines to fortify her against the dangers of menstruation and intercourse; seclusion at her father's homestead and a driving of the shades of his lineage from her body that she may conceive by her husband; instruction in the duties of a wife; examination for virginity; and the exchange of feasts between her husband's family and her own to celebrate her maturity and virginity.

The first treatment is with a medicine called *undumila*. 'If the girl grows up at her father's place we, her mothers, treat her at once; if at her husband's she is sent home to us, if it is near, but if it is far away, her husband's mothers treat her there.' She must take the medicine before she tastes any food after the onset of menstruation. A pungent-tasting root is pushed through the tip of a funnel or 'cup' made of a leaf of the bark-cloth tree, and salt is poured into the cup. The girl takes the tip of the root in her mouth and pulls it inward with her teeth, thus causing the salt to trickle into her mouth. Her mother also makes millet porridge and adds to it a medicine, *ikipiki*, and gives a little to her, burying the rest under the hearth of the hut.

She is then secluded in her mother's hut. Her girl friends who have not yet reached puberty prepare a litter of banana leaves for her to sit and sleep upon, and they keep her company (*ukupanja*), hence their name, *abapanji*. They come 'to cheer their fellow that she should not be left alone'. They sleep with her on the litter, and spend the greater part of their days there, learning to depilate and adorn themselves and, some say, to stretch the vagina by manual manipulation. Food for them is provided by the bride's mother, and on the litter they entertain the young men of neighbouring boys' villages, singing and dancing, and cuddling. In a bride's hut intercourse *inter crura* is permitted, and no 'husband' can claim [836] damages if his betrothed wife lies with another young man there, unless penetration has taken place. On moonlight nights the girls

[1] Information from Christian women who knew the exact ages of their daughters and of pagan contemporaries of their daughters. Cases of first menstruation ranging from the ages of 12 to 18 were cited, but those under 14 years old were regarded as [145] unusually young. The mothers' information was confirmed by a woman missionary who ran a school for Christian adolescent girls in the district.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 Besides fighting, the dancers indulge in an orgy of destruction,
535 slashing at the bananas and *ficus* saplings (which surround the
721 swept courtyard) with their spears.

764 The dance was thus, traditionally, a common form for the ex-
535 pression by the dancers of a considerable range of emotions, vary-
● 152 ing from an intolerable burden of grief and fear to a recognition of and salute to the warlike quality of the dead man and a vivid consciousness of their own. And this last feeling passed easily into actual fighting.

764 To-day it is not so much into the excitements of warfare that
534 the feelings turn, but rather into those of love. Burial dances are
832 the occasions of much sexual display, of the beginning of some love affairs and the consummation of others, and this is nothing new. 'At a death people did not want war (though it came sometimes), they wanted love-making: they displayed the pride of their strength!' 'We speared one another . . . our wives called the war-cry when they saw the strength of their husbands.'

177 Dances of sexual display, on occasions other than burials, are
535 traditional among the Nyakyusa; but all our informants are
837 unanimous in declaring that both these other dances and the dances of burial are far more frequently followed by lovers' meetings than they used to be. For the enforcement of peace among the Nyakyusa has been accompanied by the prohibition of violence of any kind; and this has freed sexual passion from its rigid tradi-
[684] tional bonds. Girls are married young and engaged younger; and while formerly any man who seduced or even flirted with another man's betrothed or wife was speared or tortured by the husband and his friends if they caught him, such punishments are now illegal and the present fine of cattle is a far less effective deterrent. 'In the old days love-making only went on in secret; if a man stood and talked to a woman he expected to be speared. But now the Europeans have introduced the custom of making love openly!' (i.e. by forbidding the previous penalties.)

764 For all the younger men and women, save the chief mourners
535 and close friends, the quality of the burial dance is now pre-
832 dominantly and openly sexual. But the older people are, on the one hand, more conscious of its warlike associations and, on the other hand, inclined to regard the whole occasion more soberly than their juniors. 'There are two reasons for coming to a burial: the old men come to mourn their friend, they say: "Let us go and mourn him"; but the young men say: "Let us follow the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

765 beats out its monotonous noise. In the meantime
535 there may be uncontrolled persons running about, leaping, waving spears, not seldom casting a taunt, which is quickly taken up, and spears are thrown, and wounds, and even death, may be the result.

765 Sometimes the wailing takes place in the house, or in the open, just outside. It is interesting to watch
●152 men and women approach the place of mourning: they come with all appearance of *sang-froid*, but suddenly emotion grips them, and they take up the wail with streaming tears. It does not occur to anyone that he should restrain himself; it was not for that that he came. Yet the recovery from this high-pitched emotion is just as rapid. There is a sudden hush, some one addresses to the widow the old, world-old, world-wide comfort, that all must die; and, amazing to relate, this is often received with laughter, not mocking laughter, but laughter intended to relieve the strain which all are feeling. Sometimes too, jesting, and even obscene language, are indulged in, with the same end in view. And as emotion rises
765 again, and this especially among the dancers, free rein
837 is given to looseness of language and gesture, and more definite evil follows in the darkness.

It is affirmed that all this looseness has arisen since the coming of the white man; but statements of the harm done by the latter are so common among the Konde and other tribes, that one may well be sceptical. The explanation given is that European government will not permit the old death penalty for adultery, and therefore it has become more common; or that

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 but I see them. It's taboo to speak. They must seek blood and they go
775 off; we fear them!

QUESTION: Why do you chiefs never speak out if you are throttled?

753 KASITILE: If I speak how many would there be to name? Very many!
[689] For us it's taboo to accuse a man of witchcraft, but the commoners
[554] accuse one another. Look you, do few people keep you company?

Many!

Like us chiefs, everyone comes. It's taboo for us to speak out, we fear. Look you, when Mwambene (Mwaipopo 116) and I were alone we feared to throw out the beer, we said: 'If we throw it out will they leave?' But when Kissogota came, he said: 'All right, I will throw it
● [152] out myself.' We fear the fierce great priests, the terrible witches, they are angry.[1] We shrink when they appear.

[622] The village headmen of the country call on the priests for help against us, they whisper by the fire, the priests come in their witchcraft, they call on my shades saying, 'Let us punish him', also they eat,
[793] together with the shades. Our shades never initiate anything, never; they look to the priests. But with a commoner the shade may initiate matters himself. Yes, people whisper indeed, but is that witchcraft? No! They whisper openly and ask, 'Why did you not perform the ritual?' But even although people are silent, still the shade comes
[688] saying, 'Why did you not perform the ritual? I am on the road.' He initiates the thing himself.

QUESTION: But don't people eat meat at the ritual of a commoner?

KASITILE: Yes, and if he does not celebrate it they accuse him, but they accuse him openly.

QUESTION: If the heir buries him with a few cattle?

688 KASITILE: If a rich commoner dies and the heir buries him with only
775 one cow, the shades are angry and the people also; their chilling
774 breath comes on his body, perhaps he falls ill himself, perhaps his child falls ill, but the people and witches do not meet together, people are angry here, and the shades there; all of them and the shades too, because he has celebrated with one cow only. People are angry because
[787] they wish to eat the meat. But the oracle says, 'The shades are angry.' It does not speak of people, it knows that people also are angry, but it speaks of the shades. And at the celebration he prays in the evening, the next day he calls people and kills a cow, and throws the sacred
[783] meat in the banana grove, saying, 'Here is your meat, father.' People say, 'Indeed he did wrong, his father was angry', but they do not confess saying, 'It was we', no, they say 'the shades' . . .

[826] We chiefs have bodies which are different, the commoners arrived
[554] first in the country, they ate raw food, we fear them saying, 'They eat raw food.' It is we who followed and brought fire. To us they confess

[1] *Imipago indosi mikalala.* The noun class implies size, ferocity, and dislike.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

heir witchcraft); to each other they say: 'It is your father.' Because 688
they confess to a fellow commoner saying, 'It is we', he says, 'You 775
e "eating" me, drink the ordeal'. The witch is driven out. But to us 774
ey admit saying, 'It was we who were angry.' They do not fear us. 826
ommoners are the seniors in the country; they arrived first. 554

It will be remembered that the commoners are spoken of as
lack people' (*abatitu*) and that the first chiefs were 'pale' (*mwelu*)
ut these words also have moral implications. 'It is said that a
erson "has a black heart" or "has black blood", or "is black in
is face towards us" when he is thought to be a witch, eating his
llows, or when he is a thief, or a liar, or an adulterer, or dirty.
ven though his body is light coloured (*mwelu*) the word "black"
titu) is used of him metaphorically.' And *mwelu* implies innocent,
ure, as well as light in colour. The comparable symbolism of 'nigger'
nd 'white man' is all too familiar in Johannesburg or Charleston.

That Kasitile himself was much afraid of the commoner chiefs [152]
nd was relieved by the 'speaking out' was clear, and the people [578]
f the country as a whole were glad that the ritual had been
elebrated, for they expected an increase in fertility. Some days
ater Mwakyonde (148), came in and said, laughing, but half 793
erious: 'Congratulations, Mwaipaja (G.W.). You have celebrated 778
he ritual, we rejoice greatly, you give us fertility of the soil, you 183
re a great priest.'

In some moods Kasitile was inclined to become a Christian, but
e felt an obligation to the country as priest, and believed too [177]
trongly in the efficacy of the traditional rituals to abandon them.
He said to G.W. one day, over a pot of beer: 'If it were not for the [797]
ritual I would get you to speak to the Europeans of the mission,
and I would go with my wife Jane, and be baptized. If my son was
old enough and had agreed to carry on the ritual I would do it;
perhaps I will when I am old. . . . It is good to have one's heart
washed clean, we are dirty inside. The Christians say to us: "You
with your four wives each, you are all dirty, you love one and
squabble with the rest." Well, it is so with me, I love Jane only;
I would like to go and be baptized with her. But I fear for the
ritual, I fear hunger, the hunger of the people. For I am the food
of the country, I am the maker of food.'

We left Selya shortly after this and were not able to observe the
effect of the ritual on political relationships in Selya. Kasitile lived
another seventeen years, duly performing his functions, and in
1954 he was succeeded by his brother's son, James.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

number of separate plots per holding was less than where land was scarcer; at the same time the average size of separate plots was smaller in those more land-hungry villages. The reader may refer to Table III (page 15) for some illustrative figures. Though differences are not yet very great, nevertheless there seems to be a fairly clear correlation between the average size of villagers' holdings on the one hand, and on the other the number and size of separate plots, and this is entirely borne out by my general information obtained in villages where actual measurements were not made. The inescapable conclusion must be that increasing scarcity of land in the Lake Plains leads to increasing fragmentation and dispersion of holdings; further, the present land situation and land tenure system can only lead to a continuation of this trend.

To emphasise the actual situation in 1955, let me reiterate the results of my own village surveys in the very high density region. In a village in Koroso's chiefdom only a quarter of the younger men had paddy land of their own, holdings averaging about three-quarters of an acre; in a village in Mwakipesile's chiefdom, only 17 per cent. of the younger men had paddy land and holdings averaged about half an acre (cf. Table VII, page 37). These two examples are taken from the areas of most severe land shortage and are not therefore altogether typical of the whole Lake Plains. Nevertheless, I do not think that they are entirely atypical; more importantly, they indicate the present trend. Within another generation this fragmentation and scatter of holdings may well be the common feature everywhere in the flood plains unless the system of tenure and inheritance is modified. If the increase in population is quickened through improved medical facilities, better diet and housing, and improved conditions generally, then the position will become more acute. Such an increase is only to be expected. The Nyakyusa have decisively entered a money economy and they have learnt to seek higher standards of living. Only from their fields, by cash-cropping, can they expect to earn their livings and the demand for better living will not be curtailed – nor, of course, is it desirable that it should be.

There is another aspect of this whole matter which must be considered. It relates to the movement of individuals between villages. Such movement was, in earlier European days, a crucial factor in the age-village structure, for it was not only exceedingly frequent, but also it tended to undermine the idealised coeval basis of village life. Movement between villages is increasingly difficult now, for a newcomer naturally cannot easily obtain land, nor as much land as he would desire even at a moderate demand. Nevertheless, the reasons for movement persist, and they will do so whilst the fear of witchcraft remains and whilst illness and misfortune are attributable to the unfavourable aura of a place. There remains also the tradition of moving so that a man may escape from bad relations with kinsfolk or neighbours, or from the obloquy resulting from his own disapproved actions. Much social and psychological tension is being created now as a result of the new difficulty of movement, and so far the Nyakyusa have not evolved alternative methods.

On the other hand, so deeply engrained is the notion of the prestige and power which accrues to a village by virtue of the number of its inhabitants, that headmen and villagers alike remain most reluctant to refuse to accept newcomers, even when it inevitably means that the present inhabitants must meet a further decrease in the average amount of land available per family, for a newcomer must be allocated a holding if he is to remain. Consequently, if a holding is for any reason left vacant, a headman tends to refuse to re-allocate some or all of it amongst his villagers and thus to augment their holdings; but instead he keeps it in reserve pending the hoped-for arrival of another newcomer. Men desiring to leave their own village try to get

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

311 my earlier labour migration enquiries in the Highlands, the village as a close residential unit is breaking up as the people are increasingly adopting the
433 more common East African pattern of each family building its own home-
245 stead in its own land-holding. These northern Nyakyusa say that they must have their coffee plots next to their homesteads for the sake of continuous supervision, and that this is impossible (which is true enough) where men live close together in compact villages. Again, coffee plots, with their standing, permanent trees, have become a valuable item of inheritance; sons lose no opportunity of taking them irrespective of the locations of their coevals or of the identity of their immediate neighbours. The values of land, cash-crops and material progress are placed much higher than the traditional values of coevality; indeed, such traditional values are largely inconsistent with modern wants and aspirations.

561 Thus the Nyakyusa age-village has become almost obsolete and it
361 would seem that it must inevitably vanish altogether even in the remaining conservative areas (e.g., in the east). Furthermore, its disappearance is
178 leading to a distinct divergence between the Lake Plains Nyakyusa and those of the Highlands. How far this divergence will become permanent and basically significant cannot be foreseen as yet in this early stage. Clearly the compact village is best fitted to an arable economy of rice cultivation in the Lake Plains, and at least until there is further agricultural change it will persist as a most important social group.

Nevertheless, with its enhanced exclusiveness and relative social isolation and with renewed rivalry with its neighbours, the Lake Plains village is scarcely conducive to the encouragement of agricultural and economic development. Neither is it anything but harmful towards contemporary efforts in the politico-administrative sphere to reduce parochialism and to foster a sense of unity and co-operation beyond the village and the petty
682 traditional chiefdoms. Whilst supervisory control of the land through the
152 headman is in general excellent, reasonable and readily understandable to the people, yet the excess of restrictiveness, the competitive scrambling
182 for vacated holdings and the jealous fears are surely more than merely unfortunate. There needs to be some modification to loosen the over-tight strings of village corporate ownership, to regularise the transfer of vacated holdings and to lessen the fears of village against village. These points are taken up again in Chapter V.

Cattle and Pastoral Requirements

311 Unfortunately, no great accuracy can be presumed for the Rungwe
233 District cattle censuses, but the available figures are summarised in Table VI.

TABLE VI
NYAKYUSA CATTLE

	1955				1951	
	No. of cattle	*Acres per beast*	*Cattle per person*	*Cattle per family of 5*	*No. of cattle*	*Acres per beast*
Lake Plains	31,418	4.1	0.5	2.5	26,822	5.2
Central Region ..	19,380	7.1	0.4	2	19,160	7.2
N.E. Highlands ..	19,095	7.4	0.4	2	17,165	8.4
N.W. Highlands ..	22,974	8.0	0.4	2	16,855	10.9
Total:						
Nyakyusa.. ..	92,867	6.4	0.4	2	80,002	7.2

The indicated increase in the numbers of cattle may well be attributable only to improved census enumeration by the Veterinary Department.

Although 6.4 acres per head of cattle for all Nyakyusa country, and even 4.1 acres in the Lake Plains, might seem to be adequate in a country so

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sitting there on the yard got up, as quickly as possible held her hands before her eyes and rushed off. This was because this man was her father-in-law. The strict social tabu in such circumstances is well know[22]. 881 [606]

The next act consisted in shaving the girl's hair on her temples by the *unnyago;* the father was shaved by a younger brother of his in the same manner. (I cannot remember whether it was also the case with the mother of the girl.) [302]

[342 622]

The old fashioned hut of the chief's wife.

Then the further ceremony took place again inside the hut. All the participants sat down on mats, and the *unnyago* accepted the complaints of the parents on the former conduct of their daughter. Sometimes the discussion between these parties, where the *unnyago* played the role of a mediator as is the case with the *unjobi* (or speaker) in the court, reached such a pitch of excitement that I thought a serious quarrel had broken out. The excitement was, perhaps, only of a ceremonial character; I was told, however, that in former times corporeal punishment has been inflicted, if, indeed, the girl had shown misconduct in the times before. [152] [68]

Next, the girl was instructed by the *unnyago* in her duties as a wife. These instructions were of a theoretical or moral nature concerning the correct conduct of the girl towards her parents also after the ceremony and towards her future husband. The practical part of the initiation instructions sometimes comes before this ceremony at the end of initiation. These practical instructions cover the preparing of food 881 867 868

[22] Cf. *Merensky*, p. 135; *Mackenzie*, p. 108 (at Karonga?). According to *Merensky* the daughter-in-law has to observe this tabu also towards the brethren of her father-in-law. All these persons are named *ukamoana*.

438 north. Before the war, the goldfields gave work
316 to about 15,000 natives, chiefly Wanyakyusa,
[464] and most of the foodstuffs from this district
went there. The goldfields are gradually closing
due to difficulties in obtaining spares, and it
has been necessary to look for outlets for
Tukuyu produce elsewhere. Should the gold-
fields open again after the war, and large-
scale mining start, there is a great future for
produce grown in Tukuyu.

434 The main income of the tribe is derived
from agricultural, military, mining and public
works sources, and it is estimated that in 1941
the average annual income per man, woman
and child was about Sh. 10 per year. It has
risen considerably since, as over 4,000 men
have joined the military and a large part of
their salaries comes back to the district in the
form of remittances. The agricultural source,
from which a larger part of the tribal income
[464] accruss, is from sales of rice, maize and other
foodstuffs. A fair number of Wanyakyusa also
work on the tea plantations.

241 The picture sketched above will show that
the district is inhabited by a tribe whose agri-
culture is of great interest, since the variety
of crops, from wheat in the highlands to
paddy and cotton on the lake shore, is perhaps
unrivalled in so small an area elsewhere in
East Africa. It has not been possible to fill in
181 the picture with details of the people's
character, but it is worth mentioning that the
Wanyakyusa are a people difficult to ad-
minister, argumentative, litigious, self-willed
and at times inclined to truculence. Neverthe-
153 less their intelligence is such that they are
willing to be persuaded, and, once convinced
of the benefit of any change, adopt it with
energy. This is instanced by the way they have
in a few years accepted the principles of anti-
erosion to such an extent that now there is
perhaps 90 per cent control in the well-popu-
lated areas. It should, however, be stressed
134 that, though the soil is not being eroded to
241 any great extent, it is still being impoverished,
since increased cultivation for the war effort
has involved breaking a great deal of new land
with a consequent lessening of fallow. Over-
cropping in the hilly country is very great and,
in order to prevent further emigration, it be-
[185] hoves the native planters to learn to put some-
thing back into the soil in the form of mulch
or compost. If care is not taken, a compara-
tively prosperous country will one day become
like so many parts of Africa, where a losing
struggle is fought with Nature to obtain a
sufficiency for the people's needs.

on 21st September, 1943)

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

b. Dignity

Though the Nyakyusa lay so much stress on geniality, and praise a man for being 'a good mixer', yet they greatly admire dignity (*ubusisya*). To be *nsisya* (dignified, impressive) is one of the attributes of chiefs and village headmen, sought, as we have seen, through medicines; but ordinary men may also aspire to it in their persons and homesteads. Indeed, *ubusisysa bwa nkaja*, the dignity of the homestead, is one of the legitimate channels of ambition to a Nyakyusa, and is something achieved largely through hard work. 156 577

Two styles of huts are traditional—one round, with the wall slanting outwards towards the top, and a conical roof; the other rectangular with perpendicular walls, a pitched roof, and curving gables (cf. Plates X and XI). For a homestead to be dignified the huts must be built of good bamboos, and the space between them packed with oval-shaped mud bricks, carefully worked in patterns. Special pains are taken with the ends of long huts (*ifibaga*) to get a good curve on the roof pole, and a pleasing design of bricks and criss-cross binding on the gable (cf. Plate XI). Inside, the walls are plastered smooth, and house-proud women mould a pattern in the mud with their fingers, which runs round the wall like a frieze. A long hut, showing that the owner has many cattle and young wives to house, adds dignity, but the homestead of a relatively poor man may be *nsisya* if the huts are well built, the open space between them weeded and swept, and the bananas pruned and heavy with fruit; while a shabby long hut and a dirty court are never dignified, no matter how rich the owner. The insistence on cleanliness both within the huts and in the court is very marked;[1] men themselves weed and sweep regularly around their homesteads, and their young sons must help them. The Nyakyusa jibe at their neighbours for being dirty in person, in cooking, and in their homesteads: indeed the dirty habits of the women is given as a main reason for not intermarrying with the Kinga or Poroto; and a Christian confided in 341 577 515 577 515

[1] Thomson, Kerr-Cross, and Lugard were all greatly impressed by Nyakyusa cleanliness; Thomson, op. cit., p. 271; Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyasa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), p. 283; Lugard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 131.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

us that it was a great effort to her to accept food from the Poroto when she went on preaching tours, because their huts and pots were so dirty.

Trees are felt to add to the dignity of a homestead as well as throwing a grateful shade; the beautiful *umwali* trees have long been valued for this purpose, and to-day exotics are much sought after. For example, the old chief Mwaipopo, noticing a fine cypress when he visited us at Isumba (a cottage that had once been a German mission hospital) inquired whether there were not some seedlings under the tree. He himself carefully dug up one and took it away to plant in his 'capital'. Some Nyakyusa even *steal* trees to adorn their homesteads. It is said that jacarandas planted out in an avenue at Tukuyu disappeared within a very short time.

The attributes of dignity in the homestead are changing perceptibly. Well-built huts in the old style, a long *ikibaga*, a well-swept court, fruitful bananas, and fine *umwali* trees are mentioned by the old men; but many of the younger ones prefer hip-roofed houses (a style introduced by Europeans and known, appropriately enough, as 'the partridge') with windows and door of European pattern, beds of flowers, roses, fine coffee and exotic trees. Yet they keep the court well swept; for lawns have not become fashionable.

A fine presence, a well-kept homestead rich in cattle and bananas and shaded with stately trees, are in themselves impressive, but the possessor of them only reaches his full dignity when he acts as host, and uses his fine food and fine home for lavish hospitality. Wealth and an impressive manner, without urbanity and hospitality, may well lead to accusations of witchcraft.

c. Display

Feasts provide opportunity for swaggering parades and dances in which the Nyakyusa delight to display themselves and their possessions; they are the great occasions for *ukumoga*, that is, display in approved forms. Dancing, exhibiting a beautiful body with only a narrow bark-cloth belt to hide it, showing off physical strength and the aggressiveness of a warrior, parading orna-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

156 ments and fine clothes, or a splendid herd of cattle—all these are forms of *ukumoga*.

Traditionally Nyakyusa women wore only a bark-cloth belt 291 tied around the waist and drawn between the legs to fall in 177 streamers in front (cf. Plate XIII), and the pagan women cling to this dress, maintaining that it is only 'Swahili women with dirty diseases' who have to wear clothes to cover their sores, and if a pagan woman has a cloth she will probably wave it like a flag or hang it over one shoulder, when she dances. Except for the Christians, few Nyakyusa women regularly wear clothes. The Christians like a brightly coloured cloth tied under the armpits, and hanging to the knees (cf. Plate IX). Women make their own [287] bark-cloths with great care, and decorate them with geometrical patterns in red and black, the red dye being imported from the Livingstone mountains; they mix this same dye with a fatty [386] ointment made from the seeds of the *unsyunguti* tree, and rub it all over themselves. The most prized ornament (worn by both [301] sexes) are body rings of coiled brass or copper wire (cf. Plate XIII). In the past men went naked except for these body rings[1] but, unlike the women, they have taken enthusiastically to clothes, and swagger around in brilliant loin-cloths or flowing white togas; or, if rather more sophisticated, in freshly pressed shorts and shirts, or lounge suits and topees.

535 The series of ceremonies at a girl's initiation and marriage, and 156 at a funeral, are regular occasions for dancing, and the birth and death rates are so high that these occur very frequently within a chiefdom of 3,000 men. Once in a generation the eagerly anticipated 'coming out' ceremony offers an even greater opportunity for display. Skill in dancing is admired and the young people are encouraged to practise. A bride's mother does a great deal of the heavy work for her daughter, saying '*amoge tasi*', which means literally 'let her display herself first', and implies 'let her have a good time while she can'; and a father may use the same phrase of his son. Angombwike explained: 'The old men used to take 156 great pride in their sons; often a man would say to his son: "Don't 593 you hoe for me, I'll do the hoeing myself, you go and swagger about." Sometimes a man would sell a cow and buy a huge-bladed spear and give it to his son. Then, if he heard that his son

[1] cf. Elton, op. cit., p. 322; H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, p. 18.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

was a fierce man in war, and always quarrelling with and spearing his fellows, he would say with pride: "He is my son!" And if he heard people saying: "The son of so and so is a fierce man", he would rejoice. And if the son wished to marry young his father would refuse him cows, saying: "Swagger first." 'That truculence (*ubukali*) is a form of swaggering for men, is still evident in the funeral dance, when men charge up and down with spears, displaying their strength, and take umbrage at the slightest thing (*vide infra*, p. 151). And marriage was deliberately delayed partly because a bachelor was thought to be a fiercer warrior than a married man.

This admiration of truculence, as shown in the funeral dance, reveals a contradiction in Nyakyusa values. On the one hand urbanity and good temper are praised—they are intrinsic to *ukwangala*—on the other truculence. Is the opposition one between old and new values, or is the contradiction itself traditional? It is obvious that a readiness to fight was a quality valuable to the village in the days of inter-village warfare, and the Nyakyusa tell of murderers and even thieves being reprieved just because they were so useful in war. 'We did not drive away violent men (*abagasi*) in the old days; we said: "They will fight along with us in the future" '; whereas since the pacification of the country, quarrelsome men have become nothing but a liability, likely to get their fellows and their chief into trouble with the Administration. The Christian emphasis, also, is all on the virtue of peaceableness. There has probably been some change in values with the disappearance of war from the villages, but we think that a certain contradiction always existed: swaggering young men were admired, and children were warned not to be quarrelsome (*nkali*) towards their fellows, lest they be accused of practising witchcraft, or rouse the anger of a witch. The contradiction is not, of course, peculiar to Nyakyusa society, and it may be resolved by defining the groups within which fighting is excluded, and those in which it is approved. Most Nyakyusa would hold that in the old days quarrelsomeness within the village was bad, that towards members of another village of the same chiefdom it was allowable, and towards members of another chiefdom it was good. In the wider society of to-day the same distinctions are apparent: the war dance at funerals is limited lest it lead to fighting between villages (*vide infra*, p. 151) but admir-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ing audiences watch their friends in the detachment of the King's African Rifles at bayonet drill in Masoko.[1]

Display is felt to be particularly appropriate to young people, and bachelors were held to be the fiercest warriors, but neither dancing nor fighting was confined to young men. The chief Mwaipopo (Plate V) was famous as a skilful and ardent dancer when over seventy, and the leader in war was the senior headman of the country, who, if not already married when he took office, had to marry almost immediately, since his wife shared in the ritual of establishing his house. Furthermore the villages of married men of the ruling generation fought, as well as the villages of their bachelor brothers and sons.

That the Nyakyusa had some skill in warfare is certain, for they defeated and drove off Ngoni raiders and warriors of the Sangu chief Merere,[2] but they never developed a military kingdom like that of the Bemba to the west, or the Hehe to the east, nor did they raid at large like the Masai and Ngoni. Their geographical position sheltered them very considerably from outside attack, and discouraged raiding abroad. They confined themselves mostly to lifting the cattle of neighbouring chiefdoms.

Cattle, whether they be spoils of war or inherited wealth, are displayed. Not only does a long byre add to the dignity of a homestead, but, when there is some ceremony at the home of a rich man, he shows off his herd by driving it round and round the homestead. At other times his sons gallop it along the village street, the iron bells with which the animals are adorned ringing merrily. Nyakyusa smiths make cow-bells in sets,[3] to chime in harmony, and the aim of a rich man is to own a set of bells which ring a full chime, and a herd large enough to carry them. Nowadays those who own bicycles display them in the same sort of way, riding round and round the homestead at a ceremony, and ringing the bells madly.

Unlike the enjoyment of good company (*ukwangala*), display

[1] This detachment was not supposed to include Nyakyusa who were recruited for a detachment stationed outside the district, but in fact Nyakyusa got in by posing as men from Ngonde, Nyasaland.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 119–20; Lugard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 56, speaks of the Nyakyusa as 'brave in war'.

[3] We deposited a set in the Livingstone Memorial Museum, Livingstone, N. Rhodesia.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(*ukumoga*) is not confined to the company of contemporaries of the same sex. Indeed the liveliest dancing is before members of the opposite sex, and is often the preliminary to love-making; but full opportunity for display is thought to depend upon living in a village, rather than in scattered homesteads. Some Nyakyusa are colonists, cultivating and building out in unoccupied bush country five or six miles from a settled area; but living out in the bush is disliked by most people and is done, we were told, only for gain. Cattle are said to increase very much more quickly out in bush, where grazing is plentiful, than they do on the village pastures, and the yield of virgin fields made in the bush is high. Hence the Nyakyusa dictum: 'People live in the villages for display, in the bush for gain.' And individuals commonly display themselves as members of a group—a group of contemporaries of the same sex, that is, of village-mates.

d. Decency

The basis of Nyakyusa sexual morality is the separation of the sexual activities of successive generations, more particularly the separation of the sexual activities of mothers and sons, and the complete segregation of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

Nyakyusa informants hold that boys are sent out of their parents' village to build apart so that their parents may have privacy. Mwaisumo explained: 'If a boy over ten years old stays at home to sleep, he is laughed at by his friends, and his own parents send him away. They say, "If he sleeps at home he will hear what his parents talk about at night"; the night is always full of lewd talk; and he may even see them undressing. He will grow up a fool, with little wisdom! You see at the boys' village', he went on to say, 'the older boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love-making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger ones listen to these things and that's all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn, but we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night; and that is very bad, that is foolishness. But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to listen, that is how children grow up.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

two senior sons and their respective village headmen. These legal acts are accompanied by much pomp and ceremony. It is at once the initiation of all the youth of the chiefdom into public life, the constitution of two new political units and the proclamation of two new chiefs. It consists not only of a series of legal acts but of religious ritual as well, action being taken to increase the personal qualities appropriate in a chief and his village headmen by treatment with medicines.

The 'coming out' comprises six main events: firstly, the public recognition of a number of age-villages of young men, and the selection of headmen to lead them; secondly, the magical treatment of young chiefs and headmen to make them dignified and powerful; thirdly, the public recognition of the two young chiefs; fourthly, a cattle raid; fifthly, the establishment of the young age-villages on adequate land; and sixthly, the marriage of the young chiefs.

When the eldest sons of his contemporaries reach the age of about thirty-three to thirty-five years the old chief is approached by his village headmen who say: 'The sons have grown up, let us make the "coming out" for them.' After a period of delay, for he is unwilling to relinquish his own honour and power, the old chief agrees, and the 'coming out' takes place. He fears lest he may fall ill from 'the breath of men' should he delay too long (*vide infra*, p. 134). His two heirs, together with all the boys and young men, whether married or single, who are sons of the old chief's contemporaries, are summoned to attend, according to their age-villages, at the old chief's principal house. When they arrive they wait there for several days, while the old village headmen discuss with their chief where to give the young men land, and whom they will select as headmen of the young villages. In many of the young village groups there are already leaders previously appointed by the village headmen of their fathers. If they have proved satisfactory their appointments are confirmed by the old village headmen; if not new ones are selected.

In selecting leaders of the young men's villages the old headmen look for men who are wealthy, who come from respected families, who have ability in judging cases, and are popular with their fellows; in the old days they looked also for courage and the ability to lead men in war. These qualities correspond to the village headman's functions. He should be hospitable to his

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

622 neighbours, he judges their cases; he is their leader at ceremonies
157 and in the old days he led them to war also. He represents their desires to the chief, and it is through him, and in consultation with him, that the chief gives orders. Besides this each headman
[754] (*ulifumu*) is believed to protect his own villagers from witchcraft, 'to watch over the country by night', to shield men and cattle from the spiritual forces of evil.[1] To fit them for this task, village headmen are treated with medicines at the 'coming out' to give them the power of seeing and fighting witches.

622 So important is this position of village headman that legal precautions are taken 'to prevent the village headman becoming a chief', as several informants have put it to us. It is illegal to choose a village headman from among the kinsmen of a chief, and it is illegal to elect the son of a village headman to that office in any age-village of his own contemporaries, though he may perhaps inherit the position in his father's village when his father dies.

622 To return to the 'coming out' ceremony: when the old men
621 have made up their minds, one of them goes among the crowd of young men, and catches hold of those they have chosen in order of seniority: first the one who is to be leader of the senior village of the first son of the old chief, then the leader of the senior village of his second son, then the leader of the next senior village of the first son, and so on. There are commonly eight age-villages of young men; of these four will belong to the chiefdom of the first son, four to that of the second. The eight new village headmen are now publicly known, four in each new chiefdom.

622 The young chiefs, together with the senior headman of each,
789 are then treated with medicines that they may be impressive (*nsisya*). From birth a chief undergoes periodical treatment to
643 make him impressive (*nsisya*) 'that we commoners may tremble before him'. The treatment at the 'coming out' is directed towards the same end: 'We treat him, then he will be altogether a chief, men will respect him!' The village headmen now drink the

[192] [1] The essential meaning of a word in one culture is often illuminated by the meaning of a word from the same stem among neighbouring people. In this connection it is significant that *ifumu* in Bemba and *mfumu* in Nyanja mean 'chief', but in Ankole *abafumu* means 'magicians' (including diviners) (*African Political Systems*, p. 145), and among the Sukuma *bafumu* is used in the same sense (*Africa*, Vol. XIX, p. 14). cf. H. H. Johnston, *A Comparative Study of the Bantu and Semi-Bantu Languages*, Vol. II, p. 270.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

young gathering around the white man, and lending 182
themselves to his purposes, the old even to-day ap- 561
proaching him with reluctance, if at all, for to them 578
he still retains much of the awe and hidden power
with which he was credited in the earlier days.

The individual Konde is not so popular with white 157
men as are members of other tribes; indeed there are
employers who will not knowingly give work to a
Konde at all. As workmen, it must be acknowledged
that they are both less active and less reliable than
surrounding tribes; they are neither so intelligent nor
so loyal to contract. The Konde soon wearies of
effort, and longs to get back to the lowing of his cattle
and his pretty little hut in its banana grove. He loves
his children, and the hope of being able to clothe
them if he works well, does not compensate him for
prolonged absence. Loyalty, as the Henga, Angoni, [177]
and Yao are loyal, does not distinguish the Konde,
who show loyalty rather to chief and to tribal custom,
than to the white man with his problematical benefits.
They have never attached themselves to the European,
as many of the surrounding tribes have done; for the
Konde are less convinced than others that the one hope
of Africa is the European and his influence; less con-
vinced, be it added, that Africa stands so desperately
in need of saving. That may be due to their un-
awakened condition—and, again, it may not. Edu- 872
cationally, too, they are less advanced than other tribes. 797
Only a few of them are to be found in Government
offices, or doing the skilled work which commands such
good pay from Europeans; nor have they supplied,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

872 in any numbers, the trained assistants in Mission work
797 who form one of the principal successes of Missions among other tribes.

157 But this does not imply that the Konde are without virtues. They are very shy, and respectful to authority, the latter a characteristic that atones for many defects *in the minds of those who consider subserviency the* primary virtue in a native of Africa. Their conservative nature prevents them being too free with strangers, and they will not greet a passing European, either until he takes the initiative, or until long friendship has convinced them that it will not be regarded as an undue liberty. Once their confidence has been gained, they are found to be merry, laughing, and bright. The friendliness of children is an attractive feature of the tribe. And the adults are most willing to be friendly also, provided the first advances are made by the European. When one begins to know them intimately, it becomes obvious that their backwardness is not due to lack of capacity, but to an unyielding conservatism, which leads them to think long—and some have been thinking for a generation—before committing themselves to anything new. " We will think about it " is a common response to invitations to take their place alongside the more progressive tribes. Yet with it all they are a lovable people, responsive to friendliness, deeply attached to each other, and to all who rightly claim the name of friend.

567 Slavery is, formally at least, a thing of the past. It is asserted by natives that some men and women are still in slavery, but while that is not impossible, no one

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

696 rarely appeals, convinced, though without reason, that the magistrate will pooh-pooh his story.

231 754 In 1920 a lake-shore chief was fined a large number of cattle ; and the animals, removed to the hills where the veterinary officer lived, did not thrive. The reason is no doubt to be found in the different climate ; but the natives give two quite different ones : many of them were bewitched ; and others were given a slow-working poison by owners who resented the fine. But the fact that many natives willingly bought them when offered for sale seems to indicate not all held the two theories referred to.

231 157 When an epidemic carries off large numbers of cattle, the Konde assume a fatalistic attitude. There is nothing to be done : why worry ? In 1894 immense numbers of cattle died of rinderpest. After learning by divination that neither spirits nor sorcerers had anything to do with it, the people put it down to *Mwanjebe*, a troublesome godlet of the neighbouring Kamanga tribe, against whom there was no appeal, and no protection. They assume the same fatalistic attitude to the interference of the white man, and a supreme distrust of all kinds of injections has arisen in their minds, since the widespread injections of 1918, when many of their cattle died. The chiefs are credited with saying on that occasion, " If the white man wishes to inject, let him inject ! Why make him angry ? Let the cattle die rather." If this is true, it is a testimony to the immense personal prestige of the white man, but is hardly flattering to his veterinary skill. A warning was issued that the flesh of cattle

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

killed by rinderpest should not be eaten, but the injunction was disregarded, with fatal results, and again the fatalistic attitude in the presence of the all-powerful white man revealed itself: "If we die, that is the white man's affair. They wish to kill us." It is useless to point to the recent increase of cattle in the district. The reply always is that the deterioration in quality, which began with the coming of the white man, and has continued ever since, more than balances the increase in numbers.

In comparison with cattle, other animals are of small importance. Sheep and goats are reared in small numbers, and belong to the man, very much as cattle do. Fowls belong to any member of the family, and each owns what he sells them for. There are many breeds of dogs, formerly used for hunting, but now mostly as watchdogs, in view of the prevalence of thieving. Dogs are as a rule treated with neglect, and pick up a living as best they can from the garbage around the doors. With a few exceptions they are cowardly brutes, possibly a natural result of their vile treatment. Occasionally one will come upon a man who has well-fed, well-cared-for dogs, and is very proud of their intelligence and courage, either in keeping off thieves or in tending cattle. The story of the two dogs which were shown the limits within which their master's cattle might feed, and kept them strictly within bounds, is not, perhaps, without parallel in other lands.

There is a very remarkable tradition that in the old days of war, and especially during the Angoni raids,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

thought to affect the whole country was illustrated in Mwaihojo's 643
chiefdom where the people were plagued by wild pig destroying 602
their gardens. Mwaihojo (147) had a longstanding quarrel with 578
his half-brother, Mwakyonde (148), whose country he had seized after their 'coming out'. Mwakyonde became famous as a doctor, and he was a great raconteur and beer-drinker, a regular Silenus, [157] the boon companion of many influential men, whereas his brother was cold and irascible; so although he had lost his chieftaincy, Mwakyonde had considerable power. In February 1937, four lions were seen in the adjoining chiefdom of Mwaipopo (116), and we heard pig squealing as it was killed. Angombwike (whose father lived near Mwakyonde in Mwaihojo's country) explained to us: 'People say that these are Mwakyonde's lions. . . . Lion- [754] makers have bundles of twigs which they put into the long grass, [789] and which turn into lions. Long ago Mwakyonde made lions and they came and killed all the pigs, and the country (Mwaihojo's) was at peace, but he quarrelled with Mwaihojo and put his bundles of twigs into his box and locked it up. Then the country was filled with pig, and buck, and elephant, and all the crops were spoiled, and so it is still. Now Mwakyonde has begun to be friendly with Mwaipopo (116); they enjoy each other's company and drink beer together, and so he is making lions again in Kipungu, the land where Mwaipopo is hoeing, to kill the pig for Mwaipopo. They say Mwaipopo has given him a country in secret.' Now Mwaihojo claimed as his the forest country, which Mwaipopo's men had begun to colonize, therefore to aid Mwaipopo there was an effective slap at Mwaihojo. The lions came into Mwaihojo's country—we heard them repeatedly close to our camp—but they did not clear the pig.

Then, in March, Mwakyonde was supposed to be using a new [778] medicine he had obtained to scare off pig from the fields. We asked him about it. 'Oh, it has failed. The pigs are still there eating. I've done everything I should but without effect. I think [775] that the pigs are possessed by the shades (*sili nimindu ingulube*).' 'Why?' we asked. 'Because my elder brother (Mwaihojo) and I are not on good terms (*tutikwangala kanunu*) the shades are angry.'

So the destruction of men's gardens was traced to the quarrel between the chief and his brother.

158

158 **PERSONALITY DISORDERS**--incidence and distribution of hypertension and of symptoms of neurotic or functional disorders (e.g., hysteria, hypochondria, compulsive behavior, generalized anxiety), of motor disturbances (e.g., tics, stammering), of dissociative behavior (e.g., amnesia, somnambulism), of hallucinations and delusions, of manias (e.g., kleptomania, pyromania), of sadistic and masochistic behavior, of addiction (e.g., to drugs or alcohol), and of severe psychic disturbances (e.g., phobias, manic-depressive psychoses, involutional melancholia, schizophrenia); psychiatric interpretations of mental disorders; etc. See also:

Sexual perversions	93	Alcoholism and drug addiction	730
Socialization	88	Insane asylums	734
Incidence of organic diseases	164	Psychotherapy	755
Conception of conscience	177	Care of the insane	758
Crimes, torts, and sins	673	Suicide	760
Delinquency	674, 736	Ideas about abnormal mental states	809
Feeblemindedness	732	Adolescent problems	863

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KaKwe

house. Then she goes in and steals a piece of firewood from the 768
loft[1] and runs off with it, laughing. The officiant pursues her and 587
makes her drop it and gives her medicine, while the company cry: 'A thief, a thief!' She takes the firewood back to her husband's home. 'It is a sign that she has entered her father's house, just as the spear is a sign that she has entered the house of another husband.' In rich families the new husband sends a bull which is [556]
killed and eaten at the ritual.

Our informants were agreed that 'there is no fear of the gasping cough if a woman runs away from her husband and goes to a lover', and in practice no ritual is performed when she visits her father after divorce and re-marriage, but it is perhaps significant that such a situation could scarcely have arisen in the past, since [556
divorce by agreement rarely, if ever, occurred. An adulterer fled, 177]
if he could, with his lover to another chiefdom, breaking off all [684]
relations with her kin.

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

Now we turn to the Kukwe interpretation of events. Our two 115
principal informants here were Mwasalemba, an elderly pagan man, brother to the chief Porokoto, whose wife, Syungu, acted as officiant at rituals in the chief's family, and Kakune, a young doctor who had learnt the medicines from his mother. Mwasalemba was much more coherent than Syungu herself, and his interpretation was confirmed by Kakune and numerous other informants. Again I give the interpretation of the two principal informants without any editing other than placing consecutively statements made on different occasions.

1. *Mwasalemba's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. and translated 158
by him soon afterwards.)

MWASALEMBA: Perhaps a youth, perhaps a girl, runs mad; he runs about naked so that we say: 'He's mad, why doesn't he cover himself?' He goes to the place of defaecation and takes filth and eats it: he goes into people's houses and takes things, he might even take some things from you, from a European, without fear; he knows not what he does. Sometimes, after a visit to a doctor, he recovers altogether and never has the fit again—that is the lesser kind of madness. But sometimes he 158
recovers and then the fit takes him again later—that is the more serious 757

[1] The loft (*pijulo*) consists of horizontal beams running at wall level across a portion of the hut. Here every married woman keeps a supply of dry firewood. It is her private store-place which may not be touched without her permission. [422 417]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

158 kind. We take such a one [either type] to a doctor, tying a rope round
757 his waist on the way. For if we leave him free he goes and drowns himself in the lake. So then the doctor says 'His heart has suddenly turned over', and gives him a powdered medicine to eat from a bark-cloth. Then when he has eaten the medicine the doctor puts a finger at the back of his tongue to make him vomit, again and again. So then the filth comes out of him. Then the doctor says: 'Don't eat meat or fish until I give you other medicine later.' Then he ties some of the same medicine in two bark-cloths and ties one round his neck, one round his loins. . . .

158 Sometimes a man in the mad fit finds a woman, then he takes the
684 leaves off his waist, catches hold of her and, forcing her to the ground, has intercourse with her. Then when the woman returns home she complains that a man in the mad fit has caught and raped her. Then her husband says: 'Well, it's all over now. If he'd been in normal health I'd have sued him for a cow for adultery before the chief, but seeing he is mad there's no point in my doing so, it's all over now!' . . .

158 Sometimes madness comes by itself, although no ritual has been
775 omitted, sometimes because they have not performed a ritual. The symptoms of the two kinds are exactly the same, their cause is different. The one connected with ritual comes because the shades are angry: 'Why have you left that child untreated, without putting stones on its head . . . ? It seems it is of no account.' And then the child goes mad.

757 When madness comes of itself the doctor takes the patient to a
765 waterfall and lets the water tumble on his head; then he makes him vomit, and the vomit is carried away in the water. But that which comes from ritual they don't treat in this way; they make him vomit at home, and then perform the ritual for him.

158 Sometimes madness brings visions (*injini*)—the man lets everything
787 come in his speech and says of people: 'What sort are they? They are witches!' And if there is a gathering he speaks out: 'You are a witch—you bewitch your neighbour's cows!' So then people ask what he means by letting everything come in his speech like this, and they are told he has the mad fit on him. The madness gives him power to see the witches, he sees them surely. And of old if a madman with the fit on him accused you of witchcraft you would go at once to drink the ordeal.
[153] And if the ordeal accused you too then your house was burnt over you!

764 QUESTION: Why the washing and eating porridge?
MWABALEMBA: If we don't do this then the children will vomit a watery fluid.

I put a direct question to him about the sausages of porridge and he admitted with a smile, rather an embarrassed one: 'Yes, well, you have understood it; yes, it is a symbol of eating excrement . . . we do it at night.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

us in front, we men, and the woman is also roused. If you have not the 833
shade in you (*ukanajo unyuka*)[1], then you are sterile, you are impotent, 775
you do not copulate with women; we say that the shades have brooded over you. Why do they not rouse him to go to women? He just looks at them. Because the shade rouses within a man and says: 'Ha!' It rouses a man to copulate with a woman. If it has brooded on him then it does not rouse him; it is within him, it does not wish to come out.

QUESTION: Why do you let the hair grow in the death ritual?

MWASALEMBA: The hair is very important, it's very important. 764

Mwasalemba identified growing hair after spearing a man, and after the birth of twins and later shaving, with growing hair and shaving in the death ritual.

QUESTION: So letting the hair grow at an ordinary death is part of the ritual?

MWASALEMBA: It [the hair] is the corpse's. We have not yet driven him away. At the shaving we drive him off.

Syungu (wife of Mwasalemba) told me that stones were placed 764
between the toes, not only of the participants in the death ritual, 775
but also of a bride (*unsungu*)[2] and that the stones are children (*amabwe bo bana*). The girl should bear six or ten children to her husband.

'But', I said, 'at the death ritual you throw away the corpse, the shade.'

Syungu answered: 'Yes, it is so, children are born by the power [842]
of the shades (*mmaka ga basyuka*).'

Mwasalemba himself, when asked about this, said: 'The stones are the shade, we throw him away so that when he has gone the girl may bear children.'

SYUNGU: When a girl does not bear children we say: 'Perhaps 842
the shades are angry, the husband has not finished giving marriage- 775
cattle.'

QUESTION: And madness?

SYUNGU: If she goes mad we say, if we have not treated her: 'We 158
have neglected the ritual, we have not treated her!' The girl runs about 755
aimlessly, she smears herself with filth. But when we have treated her and she goes mad then we say: 'Perhaps Kyala has deserted me, see nothing remains, we have treated her.'

[1] He used both the phrases *ukuuita kajo unyuka* (to be without the shade) and *unyuka ukanumbatala* (the shade broods on him) for the same phenomenon.

[2] *Unsungu*: a girl who has reached puberty but has not yet borne a child; one undergoing the puberty-marriage ritual (*ukusungu*).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukue

764 QUESTION: What are the stones in the clefts of hands and toes?
773 MWASALEMBA: Kyala when he created men said: 'At the death ritual do this, it is the shade, it is the body.'

775 Mwasalemba went on to discuss the puberty ritual and attributed sexual desire and diarrhœa to the shades. He explained that faeces (which are buried) 'go below to the land of the shades' (*vide* p. 127; 210 ff.).

764 SYUNOU: If we leave out something a child runs off to Mwibonde
[158] [wild pasture-land] and catches hold of that which is bad and pants with madness (*ikigili*). Some go to Mwibonde and gather faggots and put them on their heads then throw them away again.

QUESTION: How is it that people ever omit a ritual?

SYUNOU: Some omit some of it. They make mistakes out of ignorance.

QUESTION: But do any omit it altogether?

[184] SYUNOU: No, only the Christians. No pagan neglects it altogether.

QUESTION: But those who have run away and are not there (e.g. women who have eloped with lovers)?

SYUNOU: Yes, indeed, it is they who neglect it, but those who are at home perform the ritual.

QUESTION: How about stealing the banana bunch?

SYUNOU: Yes, we steal it, but we tell the owner beforehand, and when we eat the mash we mix the stolen with the home-grown, that which is stolen is always a plantain and that from home is a sweet banana. The plantain is the man's and the sweet banana the woman's. And when we bathe we wear a plantain leaf, which has been stolen, in front, and a sweet banana leaf, which comes from home, behind.

MWASALEMBA:[1] The girl brought the spear of her husband and stuck it in the ground. At the end Losi (my eldest son and her full brother) pulled it up and it will always be on my wall. The spear is an essential part of the ritual; without it the ritual would go wrong. If she came with no spear we should send her back again to fetch one.

764 We drink the medicine because, when our son-in-law has died and
587 our daughter lies with another who has not been our son-in-law before, if she comes and gives us food with the filth (*isdafu*) on her then we gasp and cough with *ingutulo*. It is quite different if she runs away from her husband when he is alive. Then we drink no medicine. Yes, then she comes, with *isdafu* on her, and gives us food and nothing happens.
[328] I don't know why. Kyala made us black people like this. It is when her husband dies that we drink. We drink as soon as she lies with her new husband, not after she becomes pregnant. If we see that she is pregnant before she comes we are angry. She should come first to the ritual and then conceive. She does not wait until her periods stop before coming

[1] Referring to the *ingutulo* ritual for his daughter described on p. 66.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

for the ritual. We think that when she has slept with her new husband she is full (*sisto*) and if she gives us food it will make us ill. 764 587

MWANGWANDA: The new husband gives us relatives a disease by impregnating the girl, he who is no relative of ours, the new husband. *Ingotolo* is an illness. [753]

ii. *Kakune's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W.)

KAKUNE: Yes, if we do not perform the ritual the children run mad. They speak foolishly and deliriously, they run about wildly wearing leaves, they eat filth. But they do not fight with their fellows—that is what those do who have the madness of Kyala. It is these of whom we say: 'Perhaps Kyala loved them.' 764 [161]

QUESTION: Why the first washing?

KAKUNE: That is to get rid of the disease, the filth, for they held the corpse in their hands. They do not eat the ritual food until they have washed.

QUESTION: Why the eating of porridge?

KAKUNE: Because of the tears we have wept. We have mourned him; now let us eat and strengthen our bodies again.

QUESTION: Why are beans thrown into the pot in the evening?

KAKUNE: These beans, which we throw into the pot, saying: 'This is my father's death', are an ending of the ritual. They remain all night in the house after they have been cooked, and the shades come and eat. In the morning the doctor [*usangu*, i.e. the officiant] washes us again with powdered medicine and we eat the beans and finish them. We use beans in the ritual for that is the food which our father hoed. We think: 'Our father has died, he will never hoe for us again', and so we say: 'This is the death of my father.' So then the shade of our father comes at night and tastes the food and says to us: 'I, your father, have died, you have mourned for me; live you yet awhile, do not come quickly to death; and may you hoe plenty of food and have no hunger.' If we leave out this ritual with the beans the fertility of our gardens disappears and we have great hunger, we eat nothing. [789]

QUESTION: Why the circling to the harp and crumbling oil-seeds?

KAKUNE: The ointment (made from the oil-seeds) is to finish the ritual. The song (*ukalende*) is to say good-bye, to the shade, it means 'farewell', it is to drive him away. We circle round because our father was an active man, he walked round seeing his friends, he danced; that is why we circle round the fire. [In Kakune's family they do not cry the war shout of triumph, they only dance to the harp.] [84]

QUESTION: Why the pebbles? [I told him what Mwaasalemba had said and he agreed heartily.]

KAKUNE: Yes, that's it! We throw them away, this means 'We have driven you away now.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

new husband has not been sleeping with her], then at first, before she lies with him, we (her relatives) eat with her. But when the child leaves the breast and her husband begets another then she comes to perform the ritual. Otherwise we cannot eat with her. And so with a pregnant widow—at first we eat with her but when the child is born and has been weaned and her new husband begets another she comes to perform the ritual.

The new husband must send a bull or a sheep with his spear, and we who drink the beer divide the meat, saying: 'Thank you, you have nourished us.' Yesterday he sent 30s., and I, the doctor, got 1s. If it had been a bull I would have got some meat. The husband does not come himself, but he sends a friend to bring the woman. This friend does not eat or drink the medicine, but he drinks the beer without medicine and the cassava we cook. [In the ritual just completed] Mwasalemba provided three pots of beer—we drank one before and two after the ceremony. That was what the men were waiting for.

No, it never happens that one who has drunk the medicine of *ingotolo* falls sick of it afterwards, never.

The spear is taken and kept by the girl's brother at the command of her father, who says: 'Take this spear, your sister has brought it.' It is a symbol (*ikimasyilo*) of kinship, it is like the spear with which a girl was betrothed in the old days. At the betrothal the lover would stick the spear in the ground, the girl pulled it up and took it to her father, sticking it into the ground before him, and he, if he agreed, told her brother to take it up. And if there is any dispute later about cattle then the spear is proof of agreement. It has the same significance at betrothal and at the *ingotolo* ritual. Sometimes the heir has to bring cattle that have not yet been paid by the dead man. When the woman's brother takes the spear into the house at the *ingotolo* ritual, that means: 'Now you[1] have entered into the house—your house—so we bring you in.' And then she can go in.

The calling out of 'Thief' is a custom in the ritual, but it is like a song, it's not important. The firewood is shown to the woman and a bean and a grain of maize are put into a crack of the wood. That means that the ritual is complete.

No, there is no extra safety in coming to the ceremony; those who drink at home are equally protected!

iii. *Evidence of other informants*

CURRENT TALK: Some people have been told by those who have run mad, that they see a man who comes to them sometimes. When that man is with them then they lose the sense of what they are doing. The

[1] It was not clear from the context whether 'you' referred to groom or bride. The symbolism suggests the act of marriage but of this we have no direct evidence.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

158 man tells them 'Go there', and then the victim goes; perhaps he says
828 'Run', and then he runs where he is told. Some say that smoke comes out of the ground, rises, and goes to the bush, and that they run to the bush where the smoke ended. They say that the smoke rises from the ground and goes with great speed to the place at which it comes to an end.

And those who run mad say: 'When you fellows catch hold of me and I overcome you though you are many, it is not that I fight alone by myself with my own strength, but there are four men with me who help me. And when you tie me up they help me to loose the rope.'

MWAIKAMBO: A boy of my own age ran mad; when he recovered he told us some of what he had seen in his madness (*mumbepo cyaka cya kigili*). He said he had seen lots of black cows, all entering the ground, going one by one into a hole; and that he had thereupon become unconscious and run wildly about.

A Christian told me that he had a relative (a non-Christian) who ran mad and who constantly told them how the fit started in him. He said that it was when he saw in the spirit (*mumbepo cyaka*) a very old person wearing ragged clothes, then he ran mad. The Christian who told me this added that he thought himself that perhaps it was Satan that his kinsman saw.

[24] Those who run mad eat filthy things—mud, cowdung, human faeces, all kinds of frogs and so on. When you ask them about this they say they do not know what they are doing. And they often run about naked.

MWASAHILA AND MWALIPOSA (two old men).

Madness takes two forms: one comes from Kyala, one from the ritual. When a man has the madness from Kyala his actions are filthy. He eats filthy things without discrimination, he loses his own sense of humanity and the sense of his friends' humanity also, he loses the sense of his own actions. This is one way of telling that a man has the madness from Kyala. Another way is this: they catch the madman and go to a doctor to treat him with medicines; well, when the doctor gives him the emetic the patient vomits butterflies. When they have made him vomit and given him another medicine too he either recovers altogether or perhaps he goes mad again later. But even if he recovers, his body is different from that of other men, and when he is angry his heart seems to be full of madness again. The madness of Kyala is the most serious.

The madness of ritual is the less serious kind; people who have it do not act in a filthy way. Their madness is like a passionate anger (*ilyeje*), that is all. When you catch such a man and take him to a doctor for the emetic we find no butterflies in the vomit. Again, if he has taken the medicine and recovered, his body is perfectly healthy and it seems as

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

if he never was mad at all; not like those with the madness of Kyala, their bodies are changed i.e. the internal state of the body, the heart. 158 828

Another way of diagnosing the madness of ritual is this: people catch it from the food of other people's ritual; if a man who has not completed the ritual of his family [who has not been through the ritual at the deaths of both his father and his mother] eats the ritual food of another family, then madness falls on him or on his children, and the victim speaks like an idiot.

Then if the man's children die the doctors see signs of the madness of ritual; it may be due to infection from other people's ritual food or from omitting the ritual of their own family. They give the surviving children medicines to drink which look towards the ritual and also they begin to perform the ritual.

The actions of those with the madness of Kyala are these: they eat filth, run about unconscious of what they are doing, and speak foolish things. In their mad state (*mombepo zyabo*) they tell us that they lose the sense of being people and of the humanity of others also. If it is madness of ritual, the cure is to perform the ritual and also to give them the medicine of the ritual. If it is of Kyala, to give them the medicine of madness.

Asombwile (a doctor): Madness (*ikigili*) is of two sorts: one comes from Kyala and one from ritual. The symptoms are alike; all eat filth and throw off their clothes. But when a patient is brought to a doctor, he knows, when he has made him vomit, whether they have neglected a ritual or not.

Mwambwiga: Madness is of two sorts: one comes from we know not where, the other from the ritual. When a man has the first sort he throws off his clothes and eats filth; but the sort which comes from the ritual does not make him eat filth and he does not throw off his clothes; but he just talks nonsense.

Angombwike: There are two sorts of madness: one is from Kyala, in which no one eats filth, they just run about wildly; and the other from the ritual, in which all eat faeces and filth.

Umbokeke and his Wife, Jenala (Christians): In the state of madness the man's head seems to himself to be empty. When he sits or stands there is a giddy whirling before his eyes; he seems to see people and they speak with him and then, when he answers them, we others think he is talking to himself. Sometimes these people seem to be a long way off, then they call out his name, he answers, and then he begins to be mad.

Mad people see a man, very terrible, and when he comes to them they flee from him. They say he is Mbasi. This about Mbasi and about the empty head and giddiness is common report; we heard it from no particular madman.

Another way of knowing the madness of ritual is this: if a man runs

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

158 828 and fashions earth with his fingers, tying some up in leaves and rolling some up between his palms, if he does things which they do in the ritual, then they perform the whole ritual. Saga, Jenala's grandmother, did these things, but then they began to perform the ritual and at once she recovered. She just talked to herself and went on moulding earth. She could not throw her clothes away for she was sick, her death was very near. As soon as they had done the ritual and she had recovered, she died. The reason they had not performed a complete ritual for her was because she had been away at the time it was performed. She had run off with a lover. It was the ritual of her mother which was not performed for her.

It is clear that, though informants were not agreed about the distinguishing features of the two types of madness, they were agreed about its general characteristics, and that one form was connected with neglect of rituals.

764 346 QUESTION: Why the little hut?

MWAMULENGA (an old chief): When performing the ritual they build a little hut in which to carry it out. This hut tells us of the man's behaviour when alive, he lived in a house. So that now he is dead we kill his home too, and that is why they destroy the hut at the end of the ritual. They perform the ritual in a house because he lived in a house.

764 QUESTION: Why the stealing of the stem of plantains?

MWAMULENGA: This tells us about driving the disease away, that the disease which killed him should leave our homestead. The stem of bananas is a symbol (*ikimanyilo*) of the disease. We do not know where the disease came from. When we steal the bananas we think that the disease came from some other place and killed him, it has not always been in our house. That is why we go to another homestead to steal the stem of bananas. But when we are driven away with the bananas that is a symbol of driving the disease away again, we drive the disease away. Sometimes the householders come out and drive us away, sometimes they stay still, and we who have come with the thief drive him away. We arrange with the householder beforehand. The meaning is the same in either case.

QUESTION: Why the food?

MWAMULENGA: The salted and unsalted food, the mash, the beans and bananas which they take out separately, the chicken, the roast bananas, those in which they put lentils and pumpkin-seeds—all these they eat, for they are afraid that if they do not, but leave one of them out, then when they eat, in the ritual of other people, some of those they omitted, the ritual will infect them. So that is why they eat everything. If a man doesn't eat any chicken he will catch the disease afterwards from the very smell of a ritual chicken!

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

585 phatic that 'if the bride does not wash with powdered medicine
881 she will go mad and she will bury children'.

Syungu, the officiant for all the rituals in Porokoto's lineage, said:

[158] If a girl goes mad, we say, if we have not treated her: 'We neglected the ritual, let us treat her.' She runs about aimlessly and makes bundles of filth. But if we have treated her we say: 'Perhaps Kyala has gone away from me. See! Nothing has been omitted, we have treated her.' And if she does not bear a child at her husband's her in-laws say to her: 'Did your father and mother not treat you?'

[753] MUNGASALWA (a middle-aged pagan): It is said that if she eats food with her fellows who sleep with their husbands they will harm (overstep) her, and she has diarrhœa. When she has been given powdered medicine, then she eats with them. . . . To lie on powdered medicine which has been sprinkled on the ground is to give the bride weight (*ubusito*), because if it is not done those who are with their husbands will overstep her and she will have diarrhœa.

[177] POROKOTO'S WIVES: In the old days we put medicine in her porridge so that she would not run away from her husband . . . not now. It's European times now.

[882] QUESTION: In Selya it is said that if she is not given powdered medicine she will be proud.

WIVES: Yes, here too. And if the girl is proud we beat her.

MUNGASALWA: Washing and catching in her hands the water that falls from her husband's hands has two meanings. In some families the husband and wife wash separately, in others they wash together. In either case the first meaning is present, in the second both meanings.

[753] It is said that when someone has not washed in the puberty ritual his or her children will die, for that water (with which he neglected to wash) will enter the child's stomach and kill it. The water is in the child's stomach but its symptoms are those of diarrhœa. The nubile girl catching water in her hands teaches us that the woman will receive

[833] everything. The man is like the upper grindstone, the woman like the nether grindstone (we speak of intercourse), which means that the women receives the semen which comes from the man.

Making fire by friction is a symbol of procreation.[1] If the fire does not kindle we say the couple are sterile. Two fire-sticks are used, one is the man the other the woman, and the fire is the child. The sawdust made by the rubbing is the semen.

KAJINGA: If the fire does not come the man is sterile and the girl will quarrel with her husband and perhaps run away. It does not mean she will be barren with other men.

[1] *Ukujegesa*: to make fire by friction; *akujegesa*: to masturbate.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

775
rouse him, it does not wish to come out. And although the faeces are 833
firm they are the corpse. Because we bury a corpse underground, and faeces also go underground to the shades. They disappear by night, that is the shade. If someone excretes faeces and finds it in the grass we say: 'The shade has caught hold of him.' 514

QUESTION: Are faeces associated with sexual intercourse? 775

MWASALEMBA: Yes, the shade does both things, he causes diarrhœa 833
and sexual intercourse. If you defaecate firm stools that is not the shade, that is the food we eat, but watery diarrhœa which troubles you repeatedly at night—that is the shade. If you have diarrhœa for three days people say: 'The shades have hammered you' or 'The shade has caught hold of you.'

QUESTION: Madness? 158

MWASAMEMBA: That is the shade because it says: 'Since you have me 775
in your belly, and they have not treated you, I cause this—these faeces 514
are the corpse. A madman defaecates and catches hold of his faeces, perhaps he eats them, perhaps he binds it up in the grass and catches hold of it. It is the corpse.'

Kakune, the doctor, also interpreted the puberty ritual as being, 833
in one aspect, the transference of a girl from her father's group to 775
her husband's and, like Kasitile and Mwasalemba, he identified 881
sexual desire and potency with the shades. He said:

At puberty a girl has left her father's and has gone to others; if she dies he to whom she has gone buries her.

QUESTION: Where does the blood of a woman come from?

KAKUNE: If the girl is unmarried, from her shades; they create her blood, but in the ritual we treat her so that she moves to my place, she comes to my shades; the blood of a married woman is created by my shades and hers together. And the 'blood' of a man [i.e. semen] also comes from the shades.

QUESTION: Do the shades reveal themselves at birth?

KAKUNE: Yes, because if I am angry or my father is angry I do not beget a child, but when he has prayed I do so. If I am angry with the woman and she has caught hold of me and injured me, then we do not have a child. The ordeal (*umwafi*) convicts the woman. She goes to [627]
her father who prays. Then we have a child.

QUESTION: Where does the power to bear and beget children come 842
from? 775

KAKUNE: From the shades, you have the shades in your belly. If [931]
they are not there you are all like women in the house, you cannot have an erection, but when the shades work, you have an erection. 833

QUESTION: Whose shades are present at intercourse? 775

KAKUNE: Mine, the man's and the woman's, we both have them,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 The Nyakyusa perhaps emphasize it[2] more than their neighbours
[17] (though not more than the Jews or the Hindus), and their preoccupation with purification in the rituals is paralleled by the emphasis laid on cleanliness (*ubwifyusi*) in person, in house and courtyard, in cooking, and in disposal of excrement. Their extreme cleanliness, in contrast with their neighbours, was remarked upon by all the early travellers in the area and is still obvious.[1] Houses and courtyards are swept and garnished; pots and dishes scoured, food scrupulously covered with fresh banana leaves when it is served at feasts; a good housewife is *umwifyusi*, she who is clean. Men wash daily in running water and children are trained to take a hoe with them when they go to defaecate, and to bury the faeces.

783 The horror of 'filth' is very closely associated with the fear of
•158 madness, which is at the same time a fear of too close association
828 with the dead. It is when the dead have not been driven away, but return in dreams; when the necessary separation of living and dead has not been achieved, that men go mad. Madness is most often spoken of as the penalty for neglect of the death ritual, but it is not, in theory, confined to that: 'All the rituals are the same, if they are neglected, men will become mad.' Besides madness, men fear sterility, debility, swollen limbs ('an unhealthy fatness') and diarrhœa 'to get rid of the filth in the belly' if the rituals are neglected, or taboos broken.

796 That a common symbolic pattern expressing common sentiments recurs in all the rituals is clear, but it is also true that each ritual is characterized by peculiar sentiments and symbols. The funeral rites are first and foremost an expression of grief—kinsmen and neighbours gather to weep for the dead. Their grief is symbolized by the stylized wailing, the passionate dancing, the smearing with mud and ash, wearing mourning belts, and the song of farewell at the hearth. It is true that, in the later stages of the funeral, friends seek to comfort the chief mourners with cheerful songs and dances, and in one aspect the funeral ritual is an assertion of life, but grief not joy is its dominant note. By contrast, the ritual of puberty and marriage is a rejoicing—rejoicing 'because our child has grown up', because she is virgin, because there is feasting, because there is a marriage.

881 Elements peculiar to the puberty ritual are the celebration of virginity by killing a bull, and the prayer for blessing when its

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 77–8.

[2] [i.e., the conception of impurity associated with physiological functions.— Analyst]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

a. The cultural area

THE Nyakyusa and Ngonde[1] are a Bantu-speaking people who live at the north-west corner of Lake Nyasa, on the marshy plain at the head of the Lake, and in the hills that rise steeply to the north and west of it. They straddle the Songwe river which divides Tanganyika from Nyasaland. The area is enclosed by the Lake itself, the escarpment of the Livingstone mountains on the north-east and the Poroto mountains on the north-west. To the west the boundaries are less clearly defined, but coincide pretty closely with the boundary of Rungwe district and with the watershed which separates Nyasaland from Northern Rhodesia. To the south the boundary is that of Chief Mwafulira's country, which lies some twenty miles south of Karonga (see Map I). Most of the area is thus situated between 9° and 10° S., and 33° and 34° E. It covers approximately 4,500 square miles and the population is about 235,000.[2]

Within this area there are local differences in language and custom. The dominant groups are the *Nyakyusa*, who live in Tanganyika on the Lake-shore plain and up into the hills as far as Rungwe mission, and the people of *Ngonde* who live on the Lake-shore plain in Nyasaland. These two groups speak dialects which, though differing somewhat in vocabulary and pronunciation, are easily understood by speakers from both, and their social structure is essentially similar. The main difference is that in Ngonde a

[1] The old men say *Nkhonde*, and the name appears in most of the literature as *Konde*.

[2] The area of Tukuyu district is 1,866 square miles, and the area subject to the Kyungu, the paramount chief of Ngonde, is 2,687 square miles. The Tanganyika census of 1931 gives the population of Rungwe district as 195,062: this was believed in the district to be an over-estimate. The population of Ngonde is approximately 40,000. For the southern boundary of the Ngonde people in 1881 see James Stewart, 'Lake Nyassa and the Water Route to the Lake Region of Central Africa', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, New Series*, Vol. III, 1881. He states that nine miles north of Mount Waller is a marsh; south of it are the Tumbuka, north of it the 'Chungu' (i.e. Ngonde).

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

first-hand knowledge of them. On the coast they are classed with Nyakyusa and Ngonde as *Sokile*, a nickname derived from the traditional Nyakyusa greeting.

This book is concerned with the Nyakyusa.[1] What it contains is true in general terms for the people of Ngonde, but how far it is applicable to the smaller groups cited we are not certain. The Ndali, Sukwa, and Penja, are said to have long had an age-village organization; and Henga, Nyika and Kisi living intermingled with Ngonde and Nyakyusa have adopted it; but of the customs of the Wenya and Lambya we know little. Dr. Kerr Cross and Monteith Fotheringham, who travelled extensively in the area before 1890, reported that the Ndali and Sukwa (of Misuku) were very similar to the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people, but that the Lambya were different, practising shifting *citemene* cultivation, and living in stockaded villages.[2]

According to their own traditions the Nyakyusa and Ngonde chiefs (who trace descent from common ancestors) came ten generations ago from Kinga country, on the Livingstone mountains, and found the Rungwe and North Nyasa country already occupied. They established themselves as chiefs and have since been increasing the area of their occupation. The Kinga also affirm that their chiefs are related to those of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde, and they join with the Nyakyusa in sacrifice to common ancestors at Lubaga and LiKyala (see Map III), but the Kinga culture is quite distinct from that of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde; we stayed long enough in Kinga country to convince ourselves that the Kinga live in kinship villages and not in age-villages, and that they differ from the Nyakyusa in many other respects.

There seems little doubt that the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people have been expanding in an area not uninhabited, but sparsely inhabited, and that the assimilation of the Penja and other groups now proceeding is no new phenomenon, but part of a process which has long been going on. Within recent years over 2,000

[1] The Nyakyusa as here defined numbered 159,044 in Rungwe district at the 1931 census, and 3,732 outside the district; the Ndali 22,834, the Lambya (within Rungwe district, and not including those in Nyasaland) 12,403, and the Kisi (in Njombe district) 2,115. *Tanganyika Territory, Census of the Native Population*, 1931.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika, *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), p. 286; L. M. Fotheringham, *Adventures in Nyassaland* (1891), pp. 129–33. Nyondo was a Lambya chief, cf. Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 10.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

from the Inamwanga and Iwa to the north-west and the Henga to the south. The affinities of the Inamwanga and Iwa appear to be with the Mambwe,[1] while the Henga are an offshoot of the Tumbuka-Kamanga people who took refuge from the Ngoni in Ngonde.[2] Of the Phoka who live high up in the hills south-west of Ngonde we know almost nothing, except that they are skilled cultivators, and their language is closely related to Tumbuka.

The cultural group consisting of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people, together with small groups in Rungwe district and Ngonde largely absorbed by them, and including the Nyakyusa immigrants in Mbeya district, probably numbers about a quarter of a million.

Of the more distant cultural affinities of this group we know nothing: there are no consistent similarities in culture between it and any other known group. The elaborate age-organization, and the great ceremony of handing over secular power to the next generation, which is held every thirty years or so, suggest East African connections, while the girls' puberty and marriage ceremony (*ubusungu*) is in many ways similar to the *cisungu* ceremony of the Bemba;[3] and the witchcraft beliefs are like those of the Azande[4] and the Lovale.[5]

b. Environment and economy

The Nyakyusa-Ngonde country is fertile, well watered and, to European eyes, spectacularly beautiful, with its arc of high mountains and sparkling lakes. The Nyakyusa valley forms part of the

[1] F. F. R. Boileau and L. A. Wallace, 'The Nyasa-Tanganyika Plateau', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. XIII (1899); J. C. C. Coxhead, 'The Native Tribes of North-Eastern Rhodesia, their Laws and Customs', *Royal Anthropological Institute, Occasional Paper*, No. 5, 1914; C. Goldsbury and H. Sheane, *The Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia* (1911).

[2] F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), Vol. I, p. 52; M. Sanderson, 'Some Marriage Customs of the WaHenga, Nyasaland', *Journal of the African Society*, Vol. XXII (1922–3); T. Cullen Young, 'The WaHenga of North Nyasaland', *Journal of the African Society*, Vol. XXIII (1923–4); 'Tribal Intermixture in Northern Nyasaland', *J.R.A.I.*, Vol. LXIII (1933); 'Habits and Customs of the Olden Days among the Tumbuka-Kamanga People', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. X (1936).

[3] A. I. Richards, *Bemba Marriage and Present Economic Conditions*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. 4. (1940).

[4] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (1937).

[5] C. M. N. White, 'Witchcraft, Divination and Magic among the Balovale Tribes', *Africa*, Vol. XVIII (1948), pp. 81–104.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

133 Great Rift valley, walled in on the east by the Livingstone mountains, which rise to 10,000 feet, and on the west by the rather lower Ndali hills. It is blocked to the north-west by Rungwe volcano and the Poroto mountains; the volcano rises from the floor of the Rift to nearly 10,000 feet, and the lowest pass over the Poroto mountains is 8,000 feet. Scattered throughout the hills are a number of small lakes formed in the craters of old volcanoes, each one like a jewel set in the green of field and pasture.

132 The rainfall in this valley is very heavy, averaging over 100 inches in the year, and innumerable streams rush down the ●161 mountain slopes, flooding parts of the plain during the torrential rains of March and April. The dry season is short—it scarcely exists in the hills—and such a rainfall, combined with skilful cultivation and stock-breeding, makes a large population possible. The average density for Rungwe district is over eighty persons to the square mile; the population is most concentrated on the Lake-shore plain, but stretches up into the hills to 6,000 feet. South of the Songwe the rainfall is much less—at Karonga it averages only 45 inches a year—and the country supports a smaller population, the average density for Ngonde being less than fifteen persons to the square mile.

The Nyakyusa grow a variety of crops of which the chief are 24 bananas and plantains, finger millet, maize, cow-peas, coco-yams, cassava, sweet potatoes, ground-nuts, curcurbits and, recently, rice [231] and coffee. They also breed short-horned, humped, cattle which are carefully stalled at night, and hand-dressed to keep them free from ticks. Banana plantations stretch mile upon mile through the plain and along the crests of the ridges.[1] In them are hidden the villages, often so close together that the boundaries between them are not obvious. On the fringes of the bananas are the tilled fields, and beyond the fields the open pasture land. Unlike most of their neighbours in Central Africa the Nyakyusa practise fixed, not shifting, cultivation, and the land is kept in good heart by green manuring, rotation of crops, and periodic fallows.[2] Only in the cultivation of finger millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins,

[1] J. F. Elton, *The Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa* (1879), pp. 330–1, and D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., pp. 285–6, comment on their great extent.

[2] According to the Nyakyusa themselves the productivity of their fields is slowly diminishing. Most of them attribute this to the neglect of traditional rituals. We do not know how far their observations are objective, and how far they are biased by the tendency to glorify the past. D. H. Thwaites, in his article

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

175 to take up arms and lead the people to fight. The Ngoni were temporarily beaten off, but at a later attack the Ngonde, under Gwa Ilapasi, submitted. By 1875 he had been succeeded by Mwafongo, who was Kyungu at the time of the first visit of the Europeans. By that time, Arab slave- and ivory-traders had established themselves in Ngonde, and for the next twenty years they disputed the territory with the Europeans. After Dr. Law's voyage to Ngonde in 1875 a Free Church of Scotland Mission station and a post of the African Lakes Corporation were set up at Karonga. The Arabs sometimes traded with the Ngonde and sometimes fought them. In one fight the Kyungu Mwafongo was killed and Mwabulambo was elected in his place. The agent of the African Lakes Corporation tried to protect the people against the Arabs, and barely succeeded in maintaining his own position, until in 1889 H. H. Johnston made treaties with the chiefs and Arabs in Ngonde, and the country came into the sphere of influence of the British South Africa Company. In 1895 Mlozi, the leading Arab, who had not accepted British rule, was caught and hanged, and Ngonde was incorporated in the British Protectorate of Central Africa.

The inter-territorial boundary between Nyasaland and German East Africa (now Tanganyika Territory) cut across the area of the Kyungu's influence, which used to extend some fifteen miles north of the Songwe river, and some of the western territories were included in Northern Rhodesia.

The new government forbade elephant hunting without licence, and so killed the ivory trade, a main source of revenue; taxes were collected, and small subsidies paid out of them to selected chiefs and nobles. Mwakabaga, who became Kyungu in 1904, was the first Kyungu to sit with his people judging their cases. After his death the nobles chose Mwangalaba to succeed him, and in his reign the custom of hoeing (*milaso*) for the Kyungu lapsed till 1927, when it was revived in a modified form by the next Kyungu, Peter. The latter was the younger brother of Mwangalaba, and acted as his assistant in 1912 and as regent in 1927, succeeding to the full position of Kyungu in 1932. He had made a private fortune in industry and used it consistently to maintain his public position. He left Mbande, the traditional capital which had been dominated by the nobles of Ngonde, and built a new one at Bwiba, half-way between Mbande and the government Boma at Karonga.[1]

DEMOGRAPHY

•161 *Ngonde.* In 1931 the Ngonde population had increased from 18,852 in 1921 to 30,731, or by 63 per cent. In 1945 it again doubled itself, reaching the figure of 62,136. The average density in the district is under fifteen per square mile.[2]

Nyakyusa country is thickly populated in the south around the lake-shore plain. Its density is about six times as great as that of Ngonde country.[3]

161 In recent years there has been a large movement of Nyakyusa from Rungwe district
166 into Mbeya district, into the areas e[illegible] west of Mbeya, where the average density is over 100 persons to the square mile, [illegible]th a maximum of over 400 to the square mile in one village near Mbeya.[4]

[1] Wilson, 5. 1939, pp. 67-9; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 27-4; Maugham, 2. 1900, pp. 7 and 134-41; Livingstone, 1921, pp. 277 sq.; Laws, 1934, pp. 100 sq.; Du Plessis, 1929, pp. 296-322; Johnston, 1897 pp. 72-6; Legard, 1895, vol. i, pp. 42 sq., and 131-2; Duff, 1903, p. 10.

[2] *1931* and *1945 Census*, p. 15.

[3] *Handbook of German East Africa*, p. 68; Wilson, 5. 1939, p. 7.

[4] Hall, 1945.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

The *Nyamwanga* and *Isu* of Abercorn and Mazama districts, Northern Rhodesia, are in areas where the density is between 4 and 7 per square mile, and they number less than 20,000.[1]

Tanganyika Peoples[2]

Tribe	District	Total population	Total children	Percentage of children to adults	Percentage of males to females		Increase since 1931
					Adults	Children	
Kukwe	Rungwe	68,197	50,834	74	51	110	..
Seria	Mbeya	10,755	..	..	..	..	..
Nyakyusa	Rungwe	80,092	37,799	..	..	..	..
	Mbeya	2,057	1,030	..	..	..	..
	Other districts	775	551	87	57	100	34.176

Populations of less than 50,000 Persons

Tribe	District	Total population
Kinga	Njombe	27,036
Lambya	Rungwe	12,403
Ndali	Rungwe	22,834
Nyamwanga	Mbeya	10,147
Nyika	Mbeya and Ufipa	25,170
Pangwa	Njombe	20,533
Wanji	Njombe	20,397
Wanda	Mbeya and Ufipa	5,754

LINGUISTIC DATA

According to Doke's classification *Ngonde* is one of the five important languages of the east central sub-zone of Bantu languages, and is spoken in Tanganyika to the north end of Lake Nyasa, where it is known as *Nyakyusa*.[3] In language as well as culture, the Ngonde of Nyasaland are identical with the Nyakyusa of Tanganyika.[4] According to Guthrie's classification, many of the tribes, whose affiliation is not known on cultural or historical grounds, may be attached, on linguistic grounds, to speakers of the Tumbuka group of languages: *Wenya*, *Lambia*, and *Wandia*.[5]

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The *Kinga* inhabit the inaccessible heights of the north and west portion of the Livingstone mountains, which rise to 10,000 ft.[6]

Nyakyusa country is bounded on the south by Lake Nyasa and the Songwe river, on the east by the wall of the Livingstone range, and on the west by the Ndali hills. They live between the two walls of the Great Rift valley. In the north the rift is interrupted and closed by the extinct volcano Rungwe (10,000 ft.), from whose base the land drops in hills and little plateaux to the lake-shore plain. The soil is not very rich,

[1] Orde Brown, 1, 1938, maps.
[2] *Census of the Native Population*, 1931, Tables VI and VII.
[3] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 8.
[4] Du Plessis, 1929, p. 323.
[5] Doke, 1945, p. 66.
[6] Guthrie, 1948, p. 81.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

131 twenty miles from Lake Nyasa (1,500 feet). A little compact country,
133 secluded until very recently from any effective external contacts, slightly over 1,000 square miles in extent.[1]

132 The soil, particularly that of the higher ground in the north of the Nyakyusa country, is not in itself very rich, but, as between 100 and 130
134 inches of rain usually fall each year, the district is one of the most fertile
●[161] in the whole of Tanganyika; two crops a year are often grown on the same patch of ground, and the African population is over eighty to the square
[231] mile. There is no infected tsetse fly and cattle are the most prized possession of the Nyakyusa.

631 For historical reasons, which we will discuss in a later section, the Nyakyusa have never been united under any one paramount chief of their own, but live in a number (nearly 100 at the present day) of tiny but traditionally independent chiefdoms. For these chiefdoms the numerous streams which run down from the north into Lake Nyasa and the crests of the ridges of land between them, form natural boundaries.

133 The country, of course, is not all of equal economic value, parts of it are stony and mountainous, other parts, and particularly the plain in the
134 south, consist of deep and level soil; and the population is heavier on the plain than on the higher ground. Further, on the higher ground, there exist numerous old volcanic craters filled with rich moist soil and these, being more fertile than the surrounding land, are particularly valued by
[244] the Nyakyusa. Again, of the two chief economic crops of this district, one, coffee, can only be grown on the higher ground while the other, rice, can only be grown on or near the plain. And at every point their system of land tenure is partially determined by such physical factors as these.

3. *THE USES AND VALUE OF LAND*

311 The Nyakyusa use their land for building on, for agriculture, for pasture, for hunting and fishing; they collect firewood, reeds, thatching-grass, mushrooms and other wild vegetables there; they draw water from its streams and bathe daily in them; on their land they grow bamboos, bananas, *imiyuguti* trees[2] and coffee; they keep bees; they dance, they fight, they walk and lie down upon it; their land is both the receptacle of refuse and the location of religious ritual, while their doctors continually wander over its surface in search of magical medicines.

Not all these uses of land give rise to laws, moral rules or conventions, but only those uses which tend to lead men into conflict with one another or into mutual embarrassment. The only reasons for the existence of

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[1] The whole of Rungwe District is 1,866 square miles, but this includes the hills of the Ndali and Lambya as well.

[2] I have not been able to discover the botanical name of this tree.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

THE CONSTITUTION OF NGONDE.

1. *A COMPARATIVE PROBLEM.*

Ngonde is a district at the north end of Lake Nyasa; its centre is fixed, its boundaries vague. The centre of Ngonde is the sacred hill Mbande which stands in a bend of the Lukulu River eight miles from the lake. Here is the traditional home of the Kyungus, the paramount chiefs of Ngonde.[1] But its boundaries cannot be so easily defined. A man moving from any direction and almost any distance towards Mbande will say he is going "to Ngonde." One man may start five miles from Mbande and proceed to its base, another may, in the north at least, start far away among the Nyakyusa in Tanganyika and stop fifteen miles short of the Songwe, where alone the Kyungu's supremacy begins to be effective, and yet both alike say they are going "to Ngonde." But in this paper the name Ngonde is used to refer to the area of the Kyungu's present political paramountcy alone, an area defined in the north by the Songwe River, which is also the boundary between Nyasaland and Tanganyika, in the east by Lake Nyasa, in the west by the Nyasaland—Northern Rhodesia boundary and in the south by the borders of Chief Mwafulira's country some twenty-five miles from Mbande; an area of 2,687 square miles. |3|

The population of Ngonde, thus defined, is 40,000, with a density of just under fifteen to the square mile; while the rainfall averages 45" per annum. It is thus very different from the country of the Nyakyusa across the Songwe, where the average rainfall is more than twice and the density of population about six times as great. |6| |32|

The people of Ngonde are not homogeneous in language and culture. The dominant group lives on the strip of plain which stretches along the shores of the Lake, north and south from Mbande, and the district is here referred to as "the plain," "the Ngonde plain" or "Ngonde proper." Behind them, in the hills which rise westwards to the borders of Northern Rhodesia, live small groups of Lambya, Sukwa, Wenya, Henga and Mambwe. They, while politically subordinate to the Kyungu, differ considerably from the inhabitants of Ngonde proper in their ways of life and speech. These upland groups we did not visit and, unless the contrary is specifically stated, all references here to the culture or customs of Ngonde should be taken to refer to the plain alone. |0|

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[1] I use the forms Kyungu, Ngonde, Mbande now used by the young men and officially accepted. The old men speak of Chungu, Nkhonde, Mphande.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

128 as they do, in their behaviour and their mutual relationships to a common type. Space forbids such an undertaking here; and it is necessary to emphasise that, although the most significant facts are described in an orderly manner, and although certain reasons for these facts are indicated in their specific character and in their connections with one another, yet these reasons are not fully or systematically worked out, and the result is a description which leaves the facts only half-explained. And, in so far as this society is not here fully analysed, so it is not yet fully comparable with others. The reader of this paper will detect many points of similarity and of difference between Nyakyusa society and some other with which he is familiar, but the comparison cannot be made to yield any propositions about the nature of human societies in general until the facts of both have been fully explained in terms of their particular social, cultural, and external conditions.

Climate, Cultural Groups, and European Contact.

101 The Nyakyusa live in the Rungwe District of South Tanganyika in
131 the Rift Valley at the head of Lake Nyasa. The valley is dominated and
133 closed at its North end by the recently extinct Rungwe volcano, from whose foot the land, starting as an upland plateau 5,000 ft. above sea-level tumbles southwards for twenty-five miles in a broken cascade of hills, to level out in a plain fifteen or twenty miles from Lake Nyasa. The Lake is 1200 ft. above the sea. The East wall of the Rift rises to 10,000 ft. or more in the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains, but the West wall is two or three thousand feet lower. The climate is very wet, for about 130" of
[132] rain fall each year, and, at 9° South of the Equator, is also very hot.
[161 The rain and the sun together make the land extremely fertile; the
73] district is thickly populated (over 100 to the square mile), famine is rare and the Nyakyusa are far better fed than most of their neighbours. Rice
177 was introduced into the plain by Arabs, coffee by the German Missiona-
241 ries in the hills, and these two crops to-day, under the enthusiastic care and guidance of the Government Agricultural Department, bring to many Nyakyusa a small but steadily increasing cash income.

262 Their main foods are bananas, maize, beans, sweet potatoes and a
241 variety of greenstuffs, together with meat and curds from their cattle. Millet is extensively grown and is used both for making beer and for eating in the form of porridge.

101 The name *Nyakyusa* is nowadays used by themselves as a general name for all those who have similar speech and customs and who live in Tanganyika; but formerly it only covered those who live in the South of the district, in the plain and up in the hills as far North as the administra-

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tive capital, Tukuyu, and it is still thus used to distinguish this group 101
from others. This group will here be referred to as "*Nyakyusa proper*." These in the North of the district to the West and East of Mount Rungwe call themselves *Kukwe* and *Mwamba* respectively, and there is a group of chiefdoms to the East, under the Livingstone Mountains, called *Selya*. All these four groups share a common culture, distinguished by minor [184]
local peculiarities of dialect and custom. Immediately bordering the Nyakyusa to the South West are the *Ngonde* (Europeanized as "*Konde*") in Northern Nyasaland; they belong to the same cultural group but are distinguished by greater differences of custom and speech than the others. I have not yet visited them.

In the hills to the West of the Rift live the *Ndali*, who are included in this administrative district; and on the plateau under these hills, to the West of the Kukwe, live the *Penja*. Both these small groups have old languages of their own which, though related to that of the Nyakyusa are [197]
more or less unintelligible to them; and they have equally distinct cultures. But they are now rapidly being assimilated to the Nyakyusa both in [177]
speech and in law.

I use the name Nyakyusa, in accordance with modern usage, to include the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, Mwamba, and Selya groups, but to exclude the Ndali, the Penja, and the Konde. The Nyakyusa together with the Ndali and Penja number 150,000; the Konde of Nyasa- [161] ●
land 30,000.*

Members of the Berlin and Moravian Missions were the first Euro- 797
peans to settle in the district, where they have lived now for forty-five 177
years and have made numerous converts. The German Administrators followed them closely, and later came a few planters. But pronounced economic change is a matter of the past five to ten years during which time the Lupa Gold Fields of South Tanganyika have been opened up and have employed increasing numbers of Africans on the diggings. During the past few years the young men of the Nyakyusa have developed [166
the habit of going for a few months, now and again, to the Gold Fields to 464]
earn money for tax and clothes. They seldom stay more than six months at a time, often only one or two; so that their absence does not cause the same difficulties in their own community that are found in other areas where the men spend longer periods away from home.

The Family, together with a sketch of wider Kinship Groupings

The relationships of husband and wife, parent and child, sibling and 593
sibling are continually visible in the culture of the Nyakyusa. The

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*Government Census figures.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

kinsman. Though some of the reasons for his subordination are to be found in modern conditions, it is clear that many of the factors have always operated. 622

Wars did not only occur between brothers; but when one chief defeated another who was more distantly related to him, he did not, apparently ever, reduce him to a minor position: He either took his cows and then left him alone, or killed him and set up a brother of his own as an independent though allied chief, or else, more rarely, killed him, took over the country and directly incorporated it in his own. So that, apart from the subordination of a defeated brother and his heirs, political authority always stopped at the boundaries of each separate chiefdom.[18] 622 727

The traditionally independent chiefdoms to-day vary in numbers from 100 to about 3,000 adult men. 631 161

The coming of the German Administration in 1893 introduced a paramount political authority, for the first time, in the persons of European officials; while in 1926, a generation later, the British Administration created new Native Authorities under the District Officer and superior to the chiefs. The traditionally independent chiefs were grouped together in eleven court districts, in each district a "Native Court" was set up, consisting of the various chiefs and their great commoners, under the hereditary presidency of one of the chiefs, who thereby became senior to all the others in that court district. Salaries for chiefs have been introduced, and the senior chiefs receive far higher salaries than the others; while the meetings of each Court are always held in the territory of the senior chief (*omalafyale oyholumba*); and to it has now been transferred a great deal of the legal business which, before 1926, was transacted by each chief sitting with his own great commoners in his own chiefdom. The chiefs themselves were consulted in the selection of the Court Presidents, and those chosen were normally the chiefs with the greatest number of men in each particular court district. 636 177 [465]

In this account the term *senior chief* (*omalafyale oyholumba*) denotes the President of a Native Court, *chief* (*omalafyale*) means one of the traditionally independent chiefs, while *minor chief* (*omalafyale omundi*) means one of the subordinate chiefs, often with only 40-60 men under him.

The introduction of Courts and salaries has brought an entirely new element into the relationship between old and young chiefs (*vide* 636 177 578

[18] Among the Konde of Nyasaland, I am told, there was a paramount chief Kyungu, with a far-reaching political authority; but there was no such chief among the Nyakyusa.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 in similar schools in 1958. Less than 40 per cent of the children
[872] between eight and eleven years old[1] are as yet in school in Rungwe District and the demand for places is enormous. Among the most insistent are girls wanting education. During the 1930's the Education Department was trying, with little success,
[871] to coax girls to stay in school long enough to learn to read and write, but today nearly a third of the primary school pupils are girls. A handful of boys and girls go out of the district to attend
[874] middle or secondary schools, and a few candidates for training as teachers and district nurses come in. Thus an educated person, or one who goes out to work, mixes with people whose backgrounds and languages are quite different from his own.

[511] Then people are richer than they used to be, partly because of the wages earned abroad, and partly because of the coffee and
[445] rice grown and exported. There is also some employment within the district on tea estates (especially important to women and girls), and coal and vermiculite mines. The value of peasant crops
[434] exported has risen from about £24,000 in 1936[2] to nearly £578,000 from coffee and rice alone in 1955,[3] and some men have made as much as £150 from their coffee in a year. A coffee cheque of £50 to £60 is common. In addition to the peasant crops there is tea from estates—well over a million pounds of made tea in 1955 as well as a quantity of seed. This increase in wealth has involved a change in the division of labour. Because men are not at home to clear and hoe, their wives, perforce, must clear fields and hoe for themselves, assisted by their young sons, boys who twenty years ago would not yet have stopped herding.

[161] There has been a rapid increase in population, more especially in the hills, due partly to the development of health services and

[1] Number of children in Mission and Native Authority schools in Rungwe District, 1955:

Boys	Girls	Total	No. of children 8-11 years of age (estimated as 10% of total population)
6,550	2,054	8,648	23,639
Middle Schools			
718	73	791	(This total does not include those who are in middle schools outside the District, nor does it include those following a professional course in the District)

(Figures provided by the courtesy of the Provincial Education Officer, Mbeya.)
Change in Ngonde is not discussed for it was not possible to visit that area in 1955.

[2] *Good Company*, p. 18.

[3] Calculated from figures kindly supplied by the District Commissioner, Mr. Peter Johnston.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

partly to the closer spacing of children. Whereas four years between births was conventional formerly, two or less is now usual. One of the characteristics of the present population is a disproportion between the sexes, the females outnumbering the males by 100 to 87·9 even when due allowance has been made for men away at work.[1] This disproportion is characteristic also of African populations in the south[2] and it appears likely that it is due to a wide difference in the survival rate of men and women, but the vital statistics necessary to test this hypothesis are lacking.

The increase in population, and the demand for coffee gardens and rice fields by men who prefer to earn cash by agriculture rather than as migrant labourers, has led to a shortage of land, already acute in the fertile lake-shore plain, and imminent in the coffee-growing villages of the hills.[3] Much land that was previously pasture land has been taken into cultivation, and signs of overstocking are everywhere apparent. Hillsides that in 1938 were covered with grass, waist high, now have a thin stubble. To aggravate matters, the care of stock is less efficient than it used to be because it is left to very small boys, their seniors being occupied with school and hoeing. Often the cattle are both ill nourished and covered with ticks—something that was never seen when they were herded by adolescents and carefully hand-dressed. The villagers themselves are as much concerned as the agricultural officers over the shortage of pasture and the decrease in the milk supply, but they are not prepared to accept the remedies recommended: namely, reduction of stock and stall-feeding. The advice of Europeans on the growing of rice and coffee crops, which they introduced to the district, is acceptable, but the Nyakyusa argue

[1] The Census figures cannot be taken as exact, but they give some indication of the increase in population, and the disproportion between men and women. In 1931 the population of Rungwe District was given as 195,062. In 1948 it was 276,388. In 1931 the proportion of males to females (Kukwe and Nyakyusa in Rungwe district) was 73·6 : 100 (Tanganyika Territory, *Census of the Native Population 1931*). In 1948 the figure for Tukuyu district as a whole was 80 : 100 (Tanganyika Territory, *East African Population Census, 1948*). Allowing for 8,800 men away without wives (estimate for 1954 low 10 per cent), the proportion is 87·9 : 100 (cf. P. H. Gulliver, Report on the Migration of African Workers to the South from the Southern Highland Province, with special Reference to the Nyakyusa of Rungwe District, February 1955, p. 18). The discrepancy in the figures given for adults was 62·2 : 100 in 1948, but the ages of males and females classed as 'adult' are uncertain.

[2] D. H. Houghton and E. M. Walton, *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, Keiskammahoek Rural Survey, vol. ii, pp. 24-6, 31. The sex ratio for Keiskammahoek District is 73·6 males : 100 females.

[3] cf. P. H. Gulliver, *Nyakyusa Land and Population*, 1956.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 that they have always been cattle men and they need no instruc-
[232] tion on cattle. The tension over stock limitation and soil con-
[242] servation, so acute in many parts of Africa, is only just appearing in Rungwe district, but potentially it is serious.

Pressure on land, and the planting of a valuable long-term crop
[311] such as coffee, have undermined the traditional organization of
[361] age-villages. The old men are no longer prepared to move to make way for their sons and, without a new deal in land each
[161] generation, the territorial separation of the generations is blurred. Boys villages are no longer visible in the hills near Rungwe mission, partly because so many young men are away, either at school or in employment, but largely because most of the land is taken up with coffee gardens. Homesteads are being built farther apart as men lay out coffee round their houses, and sons often build on a corner of their father's estate instead of in a separate village. On the plain, also, the pressure of population blurs the boundaries between generations. Only in the least heavily populated middle belt are numerous boys' villages still clearly visible, and here too a 'coming out' has recently been celebrated, with some redistribution of land. The scarcest land, that in old volcanic craters, was always inherited, like cattle, not reallocated each generation, and almost all cultivated land is now treated in this way. In many chiefdoms, therefore, a young man looks to his father or senior brother for land, rather than to the village head-
[428] man, and inheritance is supremely important. But the form of inheritance is changing: property now goes directly from father to son, not as formerly to each of a group of full brothers before reverting to the senior son of the eldest of them. The claims of more distant kinsmen on inherited stock are less than they used to be; such stock becomes the exclusive property of father and sons, *rather than property in which members of a lineage of three or*
[613] *four generations* have reciprocal rights. The main economic bond which held the lineage together, the exchange of cattle, is thus broken.

Formerly a marriage was a contract between lineages rather
[583] than between individuals. A girl was betrothed before puberty to a
[581] man of her father's choice and should he die she was still regarded as married to his heir. Should she die a sister replaced her. Ideally a marriage bond between lineages lasted for generations, each man who died being replaced by a brother or son, each woman by a sister or brother's daughter. The choice of a partner in marriage

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I

In many areas of Eastern Africa the pressure of peasant populations on their tribal lands is a critical feature of the contemporary scene, and this is most especially so in the more fertile parts where the African has accepted the new cash economy and is beginning to appreciate the potentialities of the modern world. The situation has been highlighted recently in the public mind by the publication of the Report of the East African Royal Commission[1] which examined the economic conditions of our time and made general recommendations.

In Tanganyika the overall density of population is low (22 persons per square mile) and the general scale of economic activity still remains little above subsistence level over vast areas of Territory. There are, however, islands of extremely dense populations scattered through the country, often associated with the mountain areas, where soil is fertile, rainfall is reliable and adequate and the cultivation of crops for sale in world markets has gone ahead fairly easily. These populations still comprise peasant farming communities with little capital and their "natural" impulse is to expand their extensive agricultural system rather than to intensify their cultivation on existing holdings. Serious overcrowding soon results for the favourable areas are limited and surrounded by drier bushlands. African attitudes and legal customs concerning their land do not change quickly and they lag behind new conditions of physical limitation and economic development. Whilst the recommendations of the Royal Commission may be valuable in the establishment of general policy, it is obvious that detailed application through time demands a fairly exact knowledge and understanding of particular local conditions if it is to be reasonably successful. This is particularly the case in so large a country as Tanganyika, with its multiplicity of environments and tribal systems of law, land tenure and agriculture, and the social attitudes which encompass them.

The present essay is an attempt, sponsored by Government, to describe and analyse the land and population conditions in one small area of the Territory where a cash economy is emerging and where the pressure of a peasant population on its land resources has become acute. It is hoped that some of this account may be applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to other similar areas both in Tanganyika and elsewhere, and that the conclusions reached may be helpful in dealing with the problems there; but primarily this is a study of one particular part of the country in order to provide the information upon which detailed policy may be founded.

The Nyakyusa are not entirely typical of many of the Bantu people of East Africa for they have a most distinctive social organization, peculiar to themselves, based on age-villages and party, independent chiefdoms. Also, they inhabit a country whose annual rainfall is immensely high, averaging about 100 inches. On the other hand, these people are one of the very few in Tanganyika for whom we have an excellent account of both their pre-European and early European systems of land tenure. Based on this information, obtained before modern changes began, we can perceive, analyse

1. East African Royal Commission 1953-5, Report. H.M.S.O. 1955. Cmd. 9475.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and try to understand the nature and reasons for change. Here, then, is a good opportunity for the study of social change – not only in land tenure as such, but also in village and family organisation, political authority and economic life.

II

The Nyakyusa are a Bantu people inhabiting the main part of the Rungwe District in southern Tanganyika, immediately to the north of Lake Nyasa. In 1948 they numbered about 199,000 in that District, but about 10,000 men were probably at the time temporarily absent from their homes and in employment in the mines and towns of the Rhodesias and South Africa (see Gulliver, 1957), whilst about 20,000 had migrated to live in the adjacent Mbeya District to the north.

The tribal area comprises a confined geographical basin surrounding the northern end of Lake Nyasa. It extends only about 40 miles from the tip of the lake at 1,550 feet above sea level to the Poroto Mountains in the north at 8,000 feet; and from east to west is only about 30 miles, from the almost sheer walls of the Livingstone Mountains (with peaks up to 10,000 feet) to the Ndali Highlands (rising to about 7,000 feet). There are therefore unusually large ecological differences within so small an area. Three major regions are to be distinguished: the "Northern Highlands" over about 4,500 feet, the low-lying "Lake Plains" in the south, and the "Central Region" in between. Everywhere rainfall is reliable and high, averaging at least 100 inches annually[1], and this amply compensates for a certain poverty and misuse of the soil, although (and particularly in the Central Region) it brings dangers of soil erosion. Except in the highest parts the banana is the staple food, supported by maize, beans, finger millet and groundnuts. In the Northern Highlands coffee has become well established as the principal cash crop: in the Lake Plains paddy rice cultivation provides both a food and a cash crop: in the Central Region the country is too low generally for coffee and too high and dry for rice; consequently cash-cropping is considerably inferior and the people's standard of living is rather poorer.

The Nyakyusa and their country tended for a long time to be relatively isolated from the outside world by high mountain walls and rain-soaked roads. In addition, or because of it perhaps, they developed an almost unique culture which was supported by considerable conservatism and high insularity. They still continue to regard their African neighbours beyond the mountains as their social and cultural inferiors. The turmoil of the slave-trade in Central Africa passed them by; in modern times they have not enthusiastically accepted Christianity and they have refused to take up the use of Swahili, the Territorial *lingua franca*. In recent years, and most especially since the end of World War II, they have, however, accepted and pushed forward with vigour a rapid and extensive economic development, involving particularly the production of coffee and paddy as cash crops, and large-scale labour migration to the south in the high-wage mining industries. The multiplicity of petty, often tiny, independent chiefdoms has been reorganised to provide four local government areas, each under a Rural Council, in which the old chiefdoms have become something like parishes[2]. Although much of the old conservatism and narrow parochialism persists, yet there is now an atmosphere of accepted change, of a keen desire for economic development, and a general acceptance of a cash economy.

Probably the most significant feature of modern life in the Nyakyusa country is the increasing scarcity of land for agriculture in relation to the

1. At Tukuyu, in the Northern Highlands, annual rainfall averaged 99.28 inches between 1919 and 1952; at Kyela, in the Lake Plains, the average between 1940 and 1951 was 106.23 inches.
2. See Kimambo, I.N.: The extension of a system of local government by African rural councils in the Rungwe District, Tanganyika; *The Journal of African Administration*, iii, 4, October, 1951.

10:Culliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

people's needs. The importance of this can scarcely be overemphasised for a peasant people who are adopting a cash economy and are socially and emotionally deeply attached to their land – their single, continuous source of capital and their tribal heritage. Apart from the possibilities of labour migration which, so far at any rate, are taken up only temporarily and by the younger men, there are no economic opportunities and no capital to compete with the land. In non-economic life the land remains supreme as the persisting basis of society.

As late as 1940 the District Commissioner, Rungwe, was able to write that there was most generally sufficient land for the people's needs in all parts of the country, and the only competition was perhaps in respect of the very best and most fertile tracts, as had always been the case. G. Wilson recorded similar remarks in the late nineteen-thirties. That these observations were correct cannot be doubted. It is known, for instance, that until the post-war years in the Lake Plains – where now land shortage is most acute – there was a broad belt of mainly unoccupied, uncultivated bushland, infested with game, extending from the Livingstone Mountains in the east to the Nyasaland border in the south-west. There were extensive, more or less empty areas in almost every chiefdom. The people were subsistence farmers only, and also banana eaters, and in this well-watered country their agricultural requirements were adequately met on very modest holdings, from most of which two harvests a year could be gathered.

In the brief period of little more than ten years the situation has altered radically to the point of a general shortage of land (except for some parts in the north-west), and especially in the Lake Plains the available land is quite insufficient to meet the demands of the inhabitants. This critical change is the result partly of an increasing population, augmented by some immigration from other tribal areas; but more especially it is the result of the demands for larger arable holdings to meet cash crop aspirations – *i.e.*, money earning. Although both coffee and paddy rice cultivation had begun before 1939, and both were encouraged and developed during the War years, it was not until after 1945 that both of these cash crops became well and generally established and the demand for money incomes became universal.

III

It was in order to investigate this new situation, which was beginning to become serious and to cause concern to Government, that I made a sociological survey in 1955. I had already spent some months in the country in 1954 investigating labour migration in order to provide Government with information and to make recommendations to deal with the problems arising. The second period of work occupied about five months. During both enquiries I was extremely fortunate in having the use of the excellent monographs of G. and M. Wilson who had carried out a conventional anthropological study of the Nyakyusa between 1934 and 1938. Without their basic work behind me, neither of my two studies would have been possible in so brief a time, and I must gratefully acknowledge the real value of their writings.

The intention had been that a complete enquiry should be made into Nyakyusa land conditions in all parts of the country, and that it should culminate in a full recording of tribal land law and custom with a view to its possible reform. In the event only the initial enquiry in the field in the Lake Plains was completed and the results of that alone are described in this essay. Whereas in former days there were probably few distinctive differences between the various parts of the country, in modern times with the introduction of different cash crops, with differential population growths and varying demands on the land, important divergences seem to be arising. For example,

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER III

CHANGING CONDITIONS AND THE PRESENT SITUATION

Population

At the African Census in 1948 there were recorded, in their own tribal area, approximately 198,000 Nyakyusa at an average density over the land available for their use of 212 persons per square mile. [161]

In the Lake Plains alone there were, in 1948, 55,700 inhabitants living at an average density of 268 persons per square mile. Population densities in the other Nyakyusa areas were rather lower than this.

These figures do not, however, give the full picture from the point of view of land occupation and use, for large numbers of men, and some women, were at the time of the Census absent from their homes and living temporarily in employment areas abroad – chiefly in the Rhodesias and South Africa. I have estimated elsewhere that approximately 8,000 men would have been away in 1948, of whom 95 per cent. or even more would return to settle down at home, for there was only a very small proportion of men who remained more or less permanently absent. That is to say, these men remained dependent for their land needs on their own tribal territory, and indeed at least some were active land-holders whilst the rest had lesser rights in family holdings. [167]

If, therefore, we include these temporary absentees, the measure of the pressure of population on the land is shown by an average density of population for all Nyakyusa of 220 persons per square mile. At least 3,000 of these migrant labourers (possibly more) had their homes in the Lake Plains, and this number increased the density of population dependent on the land resources of this region to 282 persons per square mile.

The statistically average family in 1948 comprised about five people, and therefore the population density can be restated in the form that for all Nyakyusa there were available about 15 acres of land per family. In the Lake Plains there were about 12 acres of land available. These averages do not, of course, take account of either unusable land such as swamps, steep slopes, infertile tracts, etc., nor of the land necessarily taken up by roads and paths, open spaces in the villages and the like.[1]

These figures indicate that, taking a broad and general view based on averages, the density of Nyakyusa population or their pressure on their tribal lands ranked amongst the highest in Tanganyika in 1948.[2]

Unfortunately census enumerations before 1948 were too unreliable to allow of any satisfactory estimate of the probable rates of population increase, but from general information and internal evidence it is thought not unreasonable to suggest that in the Lake Plains population is increasing perhaps at the rate of one per cent. per annum; and in the rest of the tribal area the annual increase may be one and a half per cent. per annum. The high incidence of malaria and other debilitating diseases in the Lake Plains during the flood period of the wet season each year accounts for the lower estimate of increase there. [114] [169]

1. The amount is taken in these calculations of Nyakyusa who were permanently resident in other parts of the Territory. They lived chiefly in Mbeya District (Unyika, Usafwa and Mbeya Town) where they numbered about 20,000 in 1948.

2. The higher population densities in 1948 were as follows:—Mbeya Island (Ukerewe District) 300, Mbeya 257, Ukerewe 200, Lushoto 170, Rungwe (including Nyakyusa, Ndali, Lambia, Kyela, etc.) 164, Morogoro 146, Arusha 146, Kwimba 140. Figures extracted from *Population Density*, Govt. of Tanganyika, 1955.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

161 If therefore, pending the next Census to be made in 1957, we assume these rates of increase, then by 1955 it may be estimated that the Nyakyusa numbered about 217,000 at an average density of 233 persons per square mile, allowing 13.7 acres of land per family of five. For the Lake Plains alone, the population in 1955 would have been nearly 60,000 at an average density of 287 persons per square mile, with 11.2 acres per family. If we also include the estimated number of absentee migrant labourers in the base year of 1948, then there were in 1955 perhaps 63,000 people dependent on the land resources of the Lake Plains at an average density of 303 per square mile, though in fact some 6,000 men were temporarily absent from home in that year.

The figures and estimates are given in Table I. These averages do, of course, hide some considerable and significant local variations which are further described at pages 14 ff. below.

TABLE I
NYAKYUSA POPULATION

162

	1948 *Census*			1955 *Estimates*		
	a	*b*	*c*	*a*	*b*	*c*
Lake Plains at increase of 1% p.a.	55,700	268	11.9	59,700	287	11.2
Central Region at increase of 1½% p.a.	48,500	224	14.2	53,800	248	12.9
N.E. Highlands at increase of 1½% p.a.	40,300	183	17.4	44,700	203	15.8
N.W. Highlands at increase of 1½% p.a.	53,200	185	17.3	59,000	205	15.6
NYAKYUSA in tribal area	197,700	212	15.2	217,200	233	13.7

a = population
b = persons per square mile on land available for African use.
c = average acreage available per family of 5 persons.

Assuming that there were in 1948 about 3,000 men temporarily absent from their homes in the Lake Plains but who remained dependent on the land resources of that region, then the following estimate may be made:–

Lake Plains – persons resident at home and temporarily abroad:–

a	*b*	*c*	*a*	*b*	*c*
58,700	282	11.3	62,935	303	10.6

The approximate areas available for African use in the tribal lands (excluding alienated land, forest reserves and main roads) are:–

Lake Plains – 208 sq. miles N.E. Highlands – 220 sq. miles
Central Region – 217 sq. miles N.W. Highlands – 288 sq. miles
BuNyakyusa – 933 sq. miles

In these calculations no account is taken of unusable land such as swamps, steep slopes, thicket, etc.

Cash Cropping: Paddy Cultivation

933 932 This condition of a high density of population exists in a modern economy in which cash-cropping is universally accepted and desired. Under the former subsistence agriculture, because of heavy rainfall and natural annual flooding, quite small-sized holdings were adequate to satisfy a family's food requirements. Two harvests a year are easily obtained in some 241 combination of maize, beans, groundnuts and finger millet, with a few small "luxury" crops; and the banana groves yield continuously. The Nyakyusa were and are extremely fortunate in their food supply, and seldom experience shortages such as occasionally or even commonly afflict many peoples of East Africa.

243 [1491] Rice was first introduced in 1896 by two chiefs who obtained the seed from Nyasaland Acabo; and in 1898 the Moravian Mission and a Swahili

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

less uncultivated. These areas can easily be picked out today by the absence of village sites and banana groves. There was something of a rush to grab land in such areas and in the less densely populated parts of the chiefdoms. Today in my personal experience – for no general survey has been attempted – there remains little or no unused land within the paddy-growing region which can, by native techniques, be brought under the plough; and indeed men are attempting to grow paddy on unsuitably raised land where inundation is inadequate. Communal cattle pastures have shrunk as arable holdings extended until they remain only where cultivation is profitless.

The demand for land has far outrun the physical supply, and in 1955 it still seemed to be insatiable. The initial cycle was that a desire for more money to permit of a higher standard of living created a demand for more land on which to produce more cash crops; but the increased level of income then further stimulated money demands to raise standards higher again, thus bringing a renewed demand for land. The cycle has now been halted by the lack of further land to meet the people's needs, but the demand remains nevertheless and is indeed increased by rising costs of living.

This economic picture is, of course, oversimplified, but it may serve to illustrate the nature of forces at work in the situation. I would not wish to overemphasise the snowball effect, for the bulk of the population remains still largely content with only a little over earlier standards; but increasing numbers of men and their families are coming to seek something better. Bicycles have become something of a general necessity; a variety of good clothing and shoes is considered quite essential. Only a single decade before the Nyakyusa women still generally went about in the traditional nudity, whereas in 1955 they must have ranked among the very best-dressed African women in the Territory. European-type household goods, crockery and utensils are common. The demand for money, that is for a higher standard of living, has also been greatly stimulated by the experiences of the thousands of labour migrants returning from southern towns and mines, and by the cash and goods they bring back with them.[1]

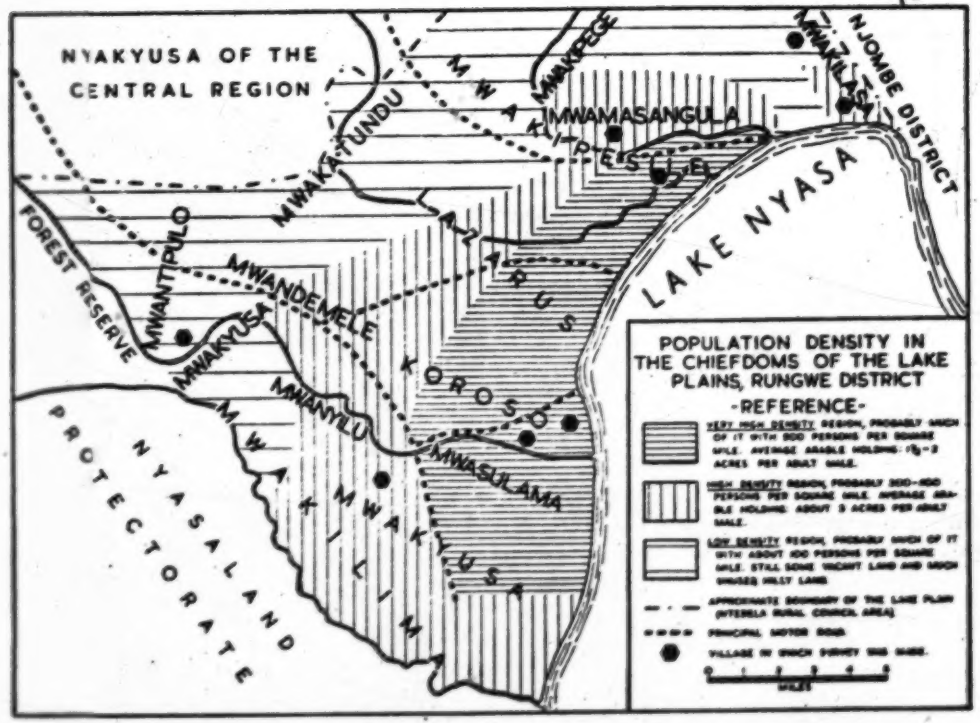
It is not possible for me to attempt to suggest what a desirable acreage would be for a contemporary Nyakyusa, because money demands, crop yields and selling prices change and the desire for higher standards of living also alter as the potentialities of the new cash economy are increasingly understood. In 1954 the approximate average of Sh.200/- per paddy cultivator was earned from perhaps two or three acres of arable land, but an indeterminable amount of the crop was kept back for home food requirements. As will be shown later many men's paddy fields could have been little more than an acre, and many men, specifically young men, had no paddy land at all. Certainly there were few who held what they considered, at a reasonable estimate, to be sufficient land.

This universal cash crop agriculture and the continuing demand for higher standards of living, and therefore for higher money incomes, is the real cause of the new and rather sudden pressure of population on the land. Of course this economic process operates within a situation of relatively dense population and in a peasant community where land is almost the only form of capital and alternative enterprise is small. The gradual increase of population, although probably small, further aggravates the difficult situation.

Arable Holdings

It was not possible to obtain adequate, satisfactory data to allow the calculation of local population densities, and the detailed results of the 1948

1. In Gulliver, P. H., 1957, an estimate of the cash income of Nyakyusa in 1954 is given at pp. 31-2. Data on the cash brought back by returning labour migrants are given at p. 35.


NYAKYUSA OF THE
CENTRAL REGION
MWAKATUNDU
MWAKIPESULE
MWAKIPEGE
IMWAMASANGULA
MWAKILASI
NJOMBE DISTRICT
LAKE NYASA
LAZARUS
MWANDEMELE
KOROSO
MWASULAMA
MWAKYUSA
MWANYILU
MWAKILIM
MWANTIPULO
MWAKYUSA
FOREST RESERVE
NYASALAND
PROTECTORATE
POPULATION DENSITY IN
THE CHIEFDOMS OF THE LAKE
PLAINS, RUNGWE DISTRICT
-REFERENCE-
VERY HIGH DENSITY REGION, PROBABLY MUCH OF IT WITH 500 PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE. AVERAGE ARABLE HOLDING: 1½-3 ACRES PER ADULT MALE.
HIGH DENSITY REGION, PROBABLY 300-400 PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE. AVERAGE ARABLE HOLDING: ABOUT 3 ACRES PER ADULT MALE.
LOW DENSITY REGION, PROBABLY MUCH OF IT WITH ABOUT 100 PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE. STILL SOME VACANT LAND AND MUCH UNUSED VALLEY LAND.
APPROXIMATE BOUNDARY OF THE LAKE PLAIN (INTERELA RURAL COUNCIL AREA)
PRINCIPAL MOTOR ROAD
VILLAGE IN WHICH FURNEY WAS MADE.
0 1 2 3 4 5
MILES

[Facing p. 15]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Census have never been issued.[1] However in some sample villages I very roughly measured arable holdings, and my results provide new information even though they can be illustrative only of the modern situation.

In each of the eight villages chosen[2] the arable holdings of *all* the adult male members (whether at home or away at work at the time) of the whole village, or occasionally of a distinct section of it, were measured by the simple and rough method of pacing the borders of every separate plot and converting the resultant figures into yards and thus to acreages. The actual pacing was done entirely by myself in order to try to maintain an even stride on all occasions, but in each village I was well supported by a team of four or five villagers, always including the headman and his assistants. The figures obtained relate only to arable holdings and bear no determinate relation either to crop yields or to non-arable land in the villages concerned. The results are summarised in Table III below.

TABLE III
ARABLE HOLDINGS IN EIGHT VILLAGES

Village and chiefdom	*No. of land-holders*	*Average holding in acres*	*No. of men holding more than:—* 5 *acres*	10 *acres*	*Average size of plots in acres*
Kapugi					
Mwamasangula ..	59	3.2	11	1	1
Ikolo Mwakyusa ..	68	3.0	13	0	1.2
Matema Mwakilasa	50	1.9	4	1	0.6
Lugombo Koroso ..	24	1.6	2	0	0.6
Mpunguti					
Mwakipesile ..	63	1.5	1	0	0.5
Kapugi Koroso ..	60	1.3	1	0	0.4
Lusonjo Mwakilasa	12	1.3	0	0	0.6
Busoka Mwantipulo	36	1.0	0	0	0.4
	372 men		32 men (8.6%)	2 men	

From this Table it can be seen that in the chiefdoms of Koroso and Mwakipesile, *in the villages concerned*, the average holding per man was about one and a half acres – and my impression was that in the southern parts of Lazarus's chiefdom and elsewhere immediately surrounding the lake shore similar conditions existed. It may be noted too that in these cases there were large numbers of young men without holdings at all. On the other hand, in the selected villages in the chiefdoms of Mwamasangula and Mwakyusa, *the average holdings were about twice as large – three acres;* and fewer young men were landless. Note also the cases of the villages in the chiefdoms of Mwantipulo and Mwakilasa in the more northerly parts of the Lake Plains, where the average holdings were one and 1.3 acres respectively, and where yet there was arable land unused and available. In those parts paddy cultivation is very limited because of the higher and hilly country, and the people remain little more than subsistence farmers – perhaps they may be taken as not unlike the traditional, pre-European subsistence cultivators.

Unfortunately I am unable to relate these figues of arable holdings to the total land available in each village, for this would have required survey work beyond my competence. Non-arable land is utilised for village sites with banana groves, roads and paths, pasturage, etc.; but the position is further complicated by varying amounts of unusable land in my sample villages. To give only two examples: within the boundaries of Mpunguti village, Mwakipesile's chiefdom, there are many acres of land adjacent to the Mbaka river which today are unusable because of deep flooding from

1. Population figures of any kind are not available even for the separate chiefdoms, let alone for ecological areas.
2. Their approximate locations are indicated on the accompanying sketch-map.

311 the river in spate during the wet season, although here and there a few plots
[133] are cultivated on slightly raised ground. Similarly in Kapugi village, Koroso's chiefdom, some parts are heavily inundated by the Kiwira river. In both these cases flooding has made unusable ground which was cultivated and even built on a generation ago; the degree of annual flooding seems to be decreasing again now so that very slowly a certain amount of new land is becoming available. This cyclical change appears to be directly connected with the long-term rise and fall of the level of Lake Nyasa. On the other hand, in more fortunate villages such as Ikolo, Mwakyusa's chiefdom, and Kapugi, Mwamasangula's chiefdom, there is rather more common pasturage remaining, and village sites, paths, etc., are noticeably less restricted.

The following arithmetical observations may be noted as permitting, perhaps, some guide to population densities in the Lake Plains:-

[161]

Persons per sq. mile	*Total acreage per family of five*	*Arable holding per family of five if proportion of total land under arable holdings is:—*	
		one-third	*two-fifths*
300	10.7	3.6	4.3
400	8	2.7	3.2
500	6.4	2.1	2.6
600	5.3	1.8	2.1

(N.B. The statistically average family is composed of five people)

It has been suggested by the Agricultural Field Officer, Tukuyu, that for the whole of Rungwe District perhaps 30 per cent. of all land is under cultivation. He was not prepared to place any reliance on this figure, and certainly for the Lake Plains it must be higher.

To summarise my own tentative conclusions and in order to obtain
311 some kind of picture of the current land situation, I suggest the following division into regions:-
134 A. The flood plains proper
161 1. **Very high-density region** – the arable land available under present conditions amounts to about 1½-2 acres per adult male and the local density of population is probably in the region of 500 persons per square mile: – in most of the chiefdoms of Mwasulama, Koroso and Lazarus, the south-eastern part of Mwakipesile's and the eastern part of Mwakyusa's chiefdoms.

2. **High-density region** – there is available about 3 acres of arable land per adult male and the local density of population is between 300 and 400 persons per square mile: – in the chiefdoms of Mwamasangula, Mwanyilu and Mwakilima, the southern part of Mwakilasa's, the centre of Mwakyusa's and much of Mwandemele's chiefdoms.

B. The remainder of the Lake Plains (Ntebela)

3. **Low-density region** – here there remains much vacant land (some usable, some scarcely usable) and population density is probably little over 100 persons per square mile, and even lower than that in the most northerly parts: – the northern, higher areas comprising the north of Mwakyusa's (Mwisula's) chiefdom, the remainder of Mwandemele's, the whole of Mwantipulo's, Mwakatundu's and Mwakipege's chiefdoms, together with the northern part of Mwakipesile's and of Mwakilasa's chiefdoms.

This summary description is, and can be, only very approximate, taking no account of the complexity of local variations to be seen on the ground. It is illustrated in the accompanying sketch-map.

It may be emphasised that in the two high-density regions practically all available land is in use. In the "high-density region" (No. 2 above) it
[341] may be possible to reduce slightly the non-productive areas taken up by
[245] village sites, but nowhere will this be easy or even desirable, and already most of the vacant spaces between houses are packed with banana groves, small

plots of maize, squashes, tobacco, etc., and useful trees (bamboo, citrus, mango, kapok, *uryungutl* and firewood). Artificial drainage would, of course, make more land available along the rivers, but this is in general beyond the abilities and resources of the Nyakyusa without considerable outside assistance.

Finally, in this matter it is to be remembered that in addition to a man's arable holding, each of his wives has a banana plot at her house from which she obtains her staple foodstuff. Such plots amount to perhaps about a tenth of an acre on the average. On the other hand, the Nyakyusa are no longer prepared to tolerate a predominantly banana diet. Rice has, in most areas of the Lake Plains, become almost as important as bananas.

Large-sized Holdings

Some blame for this novel shortage of land and the smallness of the average holding has often been laid upon that minority of Nyakyusa who have exceptionally large holdings, and also upon the immigrants from beyond the Lake Plains who have come to settle there during the past decade.

The occupiers of large-sized holdings are rather fewer than has sometimes been supposed. The notoriety of large land-owners, such as some of the modern chiefs with as much as 25-30 acres, has brought more attention to them than is really warranted. Most chiefs and village headmen have arable holdings of above average size, as a result of their privileged positions in the land allocation system and because of their prestige influence; but they remain a small minority and their number is bound to decrease in the future as inheritance causes sub-division of their holdings, for most of them have also more than the average number of wives and sons. In the two high-density regions it is clearly impossible for any man much to increase his present holding. As will be shown later (see page 24) the modern trend is not unnaturally towards a dangerous fragmentation of holdings.

The data obtained in this matter for my eight village samples are summarised in Table III, page 15. In those villages the two men out of 372 who held more than ten acres were a village headman and the father of a chief.[1] There were seven other headmen and one chief as well as some other locally influential men amongst the people covered by my surveys, but none of them held more than ten acres. There are, of course, some commoners amongst the large land-holders; many of them are close relatives of the chief or headman and have thus received preferential treatment. Some, however, are ordinary villagers who were perspicacious enough to see future trends and to obtain land in the early days before most men realised its new value and when vacant areas were still easily available. Such men are tending to become a new, wealthy class, but on the other hand they are particularly susceptible to the begging of kinsmen and friends who have insufficient land. If they are not to be regarded as unneighbourly or even anti-social (perhaps practising witchcraft) they are virtually compelled to be generous sometimes, both with their land and with their profits.

On the whole this minority of men excites little attention or jealousy among the Nyakyusa, who indeed take it for granted that their chiefs and headmen will have more land than ordinary villagers, as befits their status and prestige. If it be thought that by reducing somehow the size and number of these unusually large holdings then the land shortage might be partly relieved, it is a false hope. I scarcely think that the Nyakyusa would welcome any such attempt at interference by administrative action, but in any case it would only provide minor and temporary relief here and there and would not be worth the executive difficulties involved.

1. This second man should be a chief himself but he was dismissed by Government on his inauguration for peculation. He still holds much of the prestige and privilege of a chief for his son is only eligible candidate in purely local government affairs.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 all. Field boundaries have lost their earlier fluidity, when a plenty of land did not call for precise demarcation, and the only important changes now result from the land being left vacant or by the internal division of established holdings by inheritance or anticipatory inheritance.

In brief, then, the high premium given to land because of its modern scarcity value, and the enhanced authority of the headman in land affairs act together to preserve the individual's rights. The residual rights of the village, as group-owner of all land within the village boundary, do not affect the land-holder during his continued residence there.

[428] [598] The commonest type of dispute in land matters arises in inheritance, where a younger brother sues his senior in order to obtain or increase his share of the paternal holding (see page 21). That is to say, in general only where established holdings are being broken up does dispute arise and then, of course, only between the sons of the dead man. Disputes between neighbours in a village seldom are grave enough to be brought to court or even before the headman.

[593] There are also many petty, semi-domestic cases which faithfully reflect the frequently poor relations between Nyakyusa husbands and wives in modern times.[1]

TABLE IV

NYAKYUSA LAND DISPUTES: CIVIL CASES, 1954

691 423 [161]

			No. of civil cases	*Land cases* No.	*Land cases* %	*Population per land case*	*Density of population*
Lake Plains ..	..	..	1,877	104	5	567	285
N.E. Highlands	..	..	963	24	2.5	1,842	199
Central Region	..	..	901	13	1.5	4,092	245
N.W. Highlands	..	..	1,300	8	0.6	7,300	201

Based on returns of civil cases in local courts of first instance ('B' Courts) for 1954. In 1955 the percentages were almost exactly the same as in 1954.

Several interesting points are suggested by these figures. Firstly, there is the larger proportion of land cases and the much smaller population per case in the Lake Plains, where land shortage is worst in relation to local demand, not only because of the higher density of population as such, but also because of the relatively larger acreages required for paddy cultivation. Secondly, in the Central Region of Nyakyusa country there is also a high density of population, but nevertheless only a few land cases; this may be attributed to the absence of cash-cropping and the absence, therefore, of a keen demand for land. On the other hand, the relatively numerous cases, or small population per case, in the north-eastern Highlands seem to result directly from a particularly densely populated area (Mwakaleli) where coffee cultivation is long established and the demand for land is exceptionally keen. In other words, as far as the figures for 1954 and 1955 show, there is a direct connection between land scarcity and the incidence of land disputes before the local courts (i.e. the more intractable disputes which go beyond the village headmen). General observation supports this conclusion. It may be expected in the future, therefore, that such cases will increase unless administrative action is taken to rationalise the inheritance laws with a view to minimising the area of potential disagreement amongst the sons of a deceased man.

691 423 191 For comparative interest, in so far as they offer some indication, I append here data on other Districts in the Territory where land disputes are common.

1. In 1954, 40 per cent. of all civil cases in the lower courts were marital disputes, including divorce suits, and there was one divorce case for every 50 adult males living in the country in that year.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Briefly to summarise the contemporary land situation: in the Lake Plains it may be said that in the main the traditional land tenure system and land law still continue as the basis of native land holding today. The essential feature in recent years has been the acute land shortage in relation to arable needs under the current system of agriculture. Village unity and village exclusiveness have been increased and so also has the authority of the village headman in his control and allocation of land rights. Security of tenure has been strengthened, if anything, and one of the most important methods of obtaining land is now by inheritance. The new law establishing inheritance from father to sons, whilst generally acceptable to the people, is producing a number of civil suits which form the greatest proportion of the more important land cases before the local courts.

The shortage of land is principally the result of increased demands for paddy (i.e. cash crop) cultivation, although the population appears to be increasing slowly. In the high density regions almost all men have considerably less land than they could cultivate, especially under the impetus of the ox-plough, with the developing desires for money income. In the low density region of the low foothills there is still some vacant or partly utilised land, though of very inferior quality for paddy cultivation. The shortage hits the younger men severely, and many of them cannot obtain land at all until the death or senility of their fathers. Fragmentation and dispersion of holdings is rapidly becoming serious and without check.

The first question which arises is whether anything can be done to ease the pressure of population on the country by making more land available, or by making its distribution more equitable.

The thinly populated parts of the northern region of the Lake Plains offer a meagre solution only, for the country is raised above the level of the flood plains and is often broken and hilly. Fertility is low, erosion is a constant danger and the paddy yield (if obtainable at all) is poor. Nyakyusa from the densely populated areas to south and east are therefore most unwilling to move there. In any case the available land, which remains safely and economically open to cultivation, is filling up fairly quickly – mainly by immigration. Certainly I do not think that it can supply sufficient space to meet modern needs. There is, however, no reason why immigrants should make a difficult situation worse, and therefore it is suggested that further immigration from outside the Lake Plains should be carefully controlled if not altogether prevented. Indubitably outsiders (almost entirely Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who hold land without permanent residence should be prohibited and their holdings reallocated to local inhabitants.

As I have already indicated (page 17), I do not think that the problem of men who hold unusually large acreages is particularly serious. Such large holdings are relatively few and will be inevitably split up by inheritance on the deaths of the present occupiers.

In the flood plains proper there is, as far as I am aware, extremely little new land which could be brought under cultivation. Mechanical assistance in the clearance of dense reed thicket[1] and in drainage schemes would produce

1. These areas of thicket are heavily inundated in the wet season but, if cleared, could be used for a dry season crop.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

NOTE

THE 1957 POPULATION CENSUS

Since this Report was originally written there has been a new census of the African population in Tanganyika. This took place in August, 1957, and the first official results have been published by the East African Statistical Department in *Tanganyika African Population Census, 1957. Analysis by sex and age for Province, District and Territorial Census Areas*, March, 1958.

In this note are given these latest data relevant to the subject matter of this report. The following Table is set out in the same form as Table I on page 12 in which my original estimates were given. As in that Table, so here, no account is taken of unusable land such as swamp, steep slopes, thicket, etc., in the calculation of densities and available acreages.

NYAKYUSA POPULATION

	1948 *Population*	1957 *Population*	1957 *Density per sq. mile*	1957 *Acres per family of 5*	*Average annual* increase 1948-57
Lake Plains ..	55,700	66,513	330	10.0	3.0%
Central Region ..	48,300	48,305	223	14.3	0.0%
N. W. Highlands	53,200	65,075	236	14.2	2.5%
N. E. Highlands ..	40,300	44,097	203	15.8	1.2%
NYAKYUSA in tribal area ..	197,700	224,590	241	13.3	1.4%

N.B. There are some members of other tribes in the Nyakyusa tribal area who cannot be excluded from these figures.

Assuming that in 1957 there were about 6,000 men temporarily absent from their homes in the Lake Plains but who remained dependent on the land resources of that region, then the following estimate may be made:—

Lake Plains – persons resident at home and temporarily abroad:—

58,700	72,513	349	9.2

The changes in population during this nine-year period, in so far as they are indicated by the results of these two censuses, differ a little from what was suggested in Chapter III. Improved enumeration may well account for some of the increase; but, apart from such mechanical errors, it is clear that there has been a relatively large increase of population in the Lake Plains, and in the North-Western Highlands. I suggest that the natural increase in the Lake Plains has been 1-1½ per cent. a year, and the remaining increase has come from immigration (cf. pages 18 ff). The same is probably true for the North-Western Highlands where immigration has occurred because some land remained in that region which could still be taken up (unlike other parts of the country). It is noteworthy that the population of the relatively poor Central Region, which has no cash crop and easily eroded land, has remained the same at the end of the period. Undoubtedly there has been emigration from this region to the Lake Plains and the North-Western Highlands.

As far as this report is concerned, the population has been increasing more rapidly and the density is greater than my original figures indicated. I am inclined to think now that the population of the "very high density" region of the Lake Plains (page 16) must be well over 300 people per square mile – probably up to 600 people per square mile. Pressure on the land is, therefore, more acute than I reported, and the pressure on the social system of the Nyakyusa is similarly greater. This does not affect the main analysis and argument of the report.

May, 1958.

[P.936 A]

WANYAKYUSA

By D. H. [illegible]
Published, Tanganyika Territory

131 The Wanyakyusa occupy the District of Rungwe in the Southern Highlands Province. The district lies between 9° and 9½° S. latitude
133 at the northern tip of Lake Nyasa. The altitude ranges from 1,500 feet to 9,500 feet. The
631 district is divided into twelve chiefdoms. The Administrative Headquarters are at Tukuyu, which was known before the British occupation as Neu Langenberg.

Inhabitants

101 The local people are not indigenous to this area. They came, tradition has it, from
[173] Mahenge via Ukinga after many tribal fights. They are akin to the Wahenga in Nyasaland bordering on the Tanganyika boundary. It is
191 estimated that only 10 per cent of the Wanyakyusa speak Kiswahili. According to the 1935
● 161 census the total population was 153,204. The
162 total number of tax-payers in 1942 was 35,304, or 23.04 per cent of the total population.

181 The people themselves are extremely industrious and intelligent. As there are 90 people to the square mile, living conditions are
105 crowded and emigration is continually taking place. The people are partial to litigation over cattle and women. The number of cases heard annually in the Native Courts is about 6,000. There is no one historical and traditional head of the tribe. The twelve Chiefs are, in reality, hereditary Headmen who have been selected by Government to be Chiefs. They are in effect only *primi inter pares* in native eyes, the outlook of the people being unusually democratic for a native tribe.

105 The people live in houses made of wattle
302 and daub or bamboo frame, with thatched roof, and villages are sited mostly along ridges.
304 Rectangular houses are now built instead of the round huts of former days. They often stand in rows with a main street down the middle with bananas in the background. The more progressive natives build with sun-dried or burnt brick. Stock are stalled in the same house owing to the prevalence of thieving, but sleep in separate rooms.

Climate

132 The rainfall of the district varies in the different areas. In Tukuyu itself the annual average for 25 years (1918-1942) is 100.22 inches. On the Lake shore the average is probably higher, but no continuous statistics are available. The heaviest rainfall months are from December to May, but, in most years,

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

The *Nyamwanga* and *Iwa of* Abercorn and Mporoma districts, Northern Rhodesia, are in areas where the density is between 4 and 7 per square mile, and they number less than 20,000.[1]

Tanganyika People[2]

Tribe	District	Total population	Total children	Percentage of children to adults	Percentage of males to females		Increase since 1931
					Adults	Children	
Kukwe	Rungwe	[illegible]	[illegible]	74	91	109	..
Sumbwa	Mbeya	[illegible]	..	..	..	..	..
Nyakyusa	Rungwe	[illegible]	[illegible]	..	..	..	..
	Mbeya	[illegible]	[illegible]	..	..	..	..
	Other districts	770	551	87	57	100	34.77%

Populations of less than 50,000 Persons

Tribe	District	Total population
Kinga	Njombe	[illegible]
Lundwe	Rungwe	[illegible]
Ndali	Rungwe	[illegible]
Nyamwanga	Mbeya	[illegible]
Nyika	Mbeya and Ufipa	[illegible]
Pangwa	Njombe	[illegible]
Wanji	Njombe	[illegible]
Wandu	Mbeya and Ufipa	5,734

LINGUISTIC DATA

According to Doke's classification *Ngonde* is one of the five important languages of the east central sub-zone of Bantu languages, and is spoken in Tanganyika to the north end of Lake Nyasa, where it is known as *Nyakyusa*.[1] In language as well as culture, the Ngonde of Nyasaland are identical with the Nyakyusa of Tanganyika.[2] According to Guthrie's classification, many of the tribes, whose affiliation is not known on cultural or historical grounds, may be included, on linguistic grounds, to speakers of the Tumbuka group of languages: *Wenye*, *Lambia*, and *Wandu*.[3]

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The *Kinga* inhabit the inaccessible heights of the north and west portion of the Livingstone mountains, which rise to [illegible] ft.[4]

Nyakyusa country is bounded on the south by Lake Nyasa and the Songwe river, on the east by the wall of the Livingstone range, and on the west by the Ndali hills. They live between the two walls of the Great Rift valley. In the north the rift is interrupted and closed by the extinct volcano Rungwe (10,000 ft.), from whose base the land drops in hills and little plateaus to the lake-shore plain. The soil is not very rich,

[1] Gale Brown, c. 1938, map.
[2] *Census of the Native Population*, 1931, Tables VI and VII.
[3] Wilson, c. 1939, p. 8.
[4] Du Plessis, 1939, p. 305.
[1] Doke, 1943, p. 66.
[2] Gutheie, 1948, p. 81.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

583 Normally a bachelor is given cows one by one, over a period of years, and, as we have seen, he sends them, as he receives them, to the father of the girl he wants to marry. One cow is sufficient for betrothal, but not until he has given three can he begin openly to sleep with her. And he cannot usually set up his own economy until he has given at least three cows and she has reached puberty and been initiated. He may of course bespeak an already grown girl, but if he engages himself to a young one he is expected to bring two or more bulls as well, during the course of her initiation.

684 If he chooses to spend his cows in adultery fines, he may, but he will then have to wait longer to get married.

582 Thus the system of marriage by a transfer of cattle is, in this society,
561 directly linked with a late marriage age for young men and with a privileged position for older men. When a boy gets cattle he at once gives them to an older man in order to secure his daughter as a wife; the labour of every bachelor helps to increase his father's wealth in food; it is in general the older men alone who can afford more than one wife. And there is an average difference of ten years or more in the initial marriage age of men
●[162] and girls. The tax registers show in part of the district, among 3,000 adult* men, 34% bachelors, 37% monogamists, and 29% polygynists; and investigation proves that, generally speaking, it is the young men who are bachelors, the men over forty-five who are polygynists.

511 Though cattle are their most valued form of wealth, it is on agricul-
574 ture that the economy of the Nyakyusa is primarily based. Meat and milk are luxuries, and daily bread comes from the fields. Hard work in a fertile country provides food for each family, and the millet beer which is the ordinary material of hospitality. Hospitality brings a man prestige and authority among his fellows; on the possession of sufficient food largely depends the contentment of his wives. And in the production, preparation and eating of food the relationships of the family and of the individual family within it, are clearly visible.

241 Hoeing is the work of men, planting, weeding, reaping and cooking
512 is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about four hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a.m., on the upland plateau they begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic men sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different

*Presumed to be 18 years or over.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F2617 Ngonde F2617
Nyakyusa

partly to the closer spacing of children. Whereas four years between births was conventional formerly, two or less is now usual. [177] One of the characteristics of the present population is a disproportion between the sexes, the females outnumbering the males by 100 to 87·9 even when due allowance has been made for men away at work.[1] This disproportion is characteristic also of African populations in the south[2] and it appears likely that it is due to a wide difference in the survival rate of men and women, but the vital statistics necessary to test this hypothesis are lacking. [161] [162]

The increase in population, and the demand for coffee gardens and rice fields by men who prefer to earn cash by agriculture rather than as migrant labourers, has led to a shortage of land, already acute in the fertile lake-shore plain, and imminent in the coffee-growing villages of the hills.[3] Much land that was previously pasture land has been taken into cultivation, and signs of overstocking are everywhere apparent. Hillsides that in 1938 were covered with grass, waist high, now have a thin stubble. To aggravate matters, the care of stock is less efficient than it used to be because it is left to very small boys, their seniors being occupied with school and hoeing. Often the cattle are both ill nourished and covered with ticks—something that was never seen when they were herded by adolescents and carefully hand-dressed. The villagers themselves are as much concerned as the agricultural officers over the shortage of pasture and the decrease in the milk supply, but they are not prepared to accept the remedies recommended: namely, reduction of stock and stall-feeding. The advice of Europeans on the growing of rice and coffee crops, which they introduced to the district, is acceptable, but the Nyakyusa argue [311] [231] [232] [242]

[1] The Census figures cannot be taken as exact, but they give some indication of the increase in population, and the disproportion between men and women. In 1931 the population of Rungwe District was given as 135,080. In 1948 it was 236,386. In 1931 the proportion of males to females (Kyela and Nyakyusa in Rungwe district) was 75·6 : 100 (Tanganyika Territory, *Census of the Native Population 1931*). In 1948 the figure for Tukuyu district as a whole was 80 : 100 (Tanganyika Territory, *East African Population Census, 1948*). Allowing for 8,800 men away without wives (estimate for 1954 has 10 per cent), the proportion is 87·9 : 100 (cf. P. H. Gulliver, Report on the Migration of African Workers to the South from the Southern Highland Province, with special Reference to the Nyakyusa of Rungwe District, February 1955, p. 16). The discrepancy in the figures given for adults was 60 : 100 in 1948, but the ages of males and females classed as 'adult' are uncertain.

[2] D. H. Houghton and E. M. Walton, *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, Keiskammahoek Rural Survey, vol. ii, pp. 104, 31. The sex ratio for Keiskammahoek District is 73·6 males : 100 females.

[3] cf. P. H. Gulliver, *Nyakyusa Land and Population*, 1956.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 some copy, the manners of Europeans towards their wives, but
[584] neither husband nor wife is quite sure what the change in manners implies, and both are often inconsistent in their behaviour. As an educated Nyakyusa put it: 'They do not know what to expect from each other.'

[585] Marriage relationships are complicated by the disproportion
[421] in the numbers of men and women; a disproportion which continues while the rule of monogamy is preached and accepted
[582] by many. The first effect of the increase in wealth in Rungwe district was for the marriage age of women to go down; in Mr. Punch's phrase 'too many cattle were chasing too few wives'; but the combined pressure of missions and Administration, and some acquaintance with the customs of the outside world, has reversed that tendency, and the marriage of girls below puberty, which was general among pagans in 1938, now appears to be exceptional. Many girls are still betrothed before puberty, but
[584] they do not go to their husbands until after that time, and to be still single at puberty with no betrothed to play his part in the ritual is no longer embarrassing to a girl, for the puberty ritual is not celebrated in full. The ruling of the District Council that a man may not recover more than *one cow* given for a girl who has not reached puberty, if the marriage is dissolved, discourages men from giving cattle for girls who have not grown up. At the same time the marriage age of men is going down. Marriage in the
[582] early twenties or even the late teens is common now, for young men who have been to work on the mines can buy marriage cattle for themselves, and Christians who are well-to-do provide for the marriages of young sons instead of taking additional wives. Therefore the gap in the marriage age of men and women is very considerably diminished, but it still exists, and combined with the disproportion in the total number of males and females it means that a considerable proportion of the women (perhaps 30 per cent)[1] must become the junior wives of polygynists or remain unmarried altogether, or live alone as widows.

595 Among pagans polygyny is approved, but young men are
irked by their responsibility for elderly widows, a responsibility that was formerly accepted as a matter of course. Able-bodied wives are still economically an asset even now that trade goods are in general use. For Nyakyusa men—pagans—have insisted that as

[1] The [illegible] ratio is calculated as 87:100 (vide supra) and the average difference in the marriage age may well be six years.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

the war and the form of its activities has not altered appreciably. Three other missions based elsewhere now have small congregations in the District and a Lutheran pastor under discipline broke away and formed his own 'independent' Church, which differs from the other 'independent' Churches in that the rule of monogamy is enforced.

The total number of converts has increased very considerably, much more than keeping pace with the increase in population; taking the three main missions together, their converts form over 14 per cent of the total population.[1] Figures for the five mission Churches with small congregations in the District—Pentecostal Holiness, Assemblies of God, Seventh Day Adventists, Anglican, and Watch Tower—are not available. Nor do we know the membership of one of the 'independent' African Churches, but supposing the membership of the missions with small congregations in the District to be 2,000 (a conservative estimate) the percentage claiming to be Christian is 24 per cent as against 18 per cent in 1938. Dissimilarities in the response to Christian teaching in different areas are very marked. Around Rungwe, the main Moravian mission-station, the bulk of the population is Christian, and the whole atmosphere is that of a Christian community, whereas in Selya, where mission work began in 1891 as it did in Rungwe, Christians still form a small minority in dominantly pagan chiefdoms. The reasons for this difference are complex. One factor is that Selya is geographically isolated whereas Rungwe is near a main road and within easy reach of the Government and trading centre Tukuyu; but much more important have been differences in mission policy regarding education, and differences in the personalities of missionaries, chiefs, and early converts.

The change from a society based on kinship to one based on voluntary association is apparent in the economic field as well as in the religious. Co-operative societies formed by producers of coffee and rice, which collect and market the crops, and give opportunity

[1] Figures supplied by the courtesy of the administrative directing each mission and the leaders of two 'independent' Churches were as follows for 1954:

Moravians		[illegible]
Lutherans		[illegible] (approximately)
Roman Catholic		6,500
Last Church (Ngonde)	('independent')	[illegible]
(Also called 'Native Mission')		
'African Lutheran Church'	('independent')	[illegible]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621
613
162
551

MEMBERSHIP OF VILLAGES

(4) *Lupende* (Senior village of Consensus IV)

Headman	*Village of father*	*Village of father's father*	*Women in village*
1. Mwangile (VII)	Igoneba	Bujaga Sofu Isinga Igoneba	Half-brother Half-sister married to headman Father's half-brother
2. Kilindo (headman)	Kilindi Father's hale in Kilondo	Igoneba Hale in home village	Married half-sister of chief
3. Mkongwaleki Mwalipaga	Igoneba	Mwangwana's (C of) chiefdom	Half-brother of chief
4. Mwalisanilo	Bujaga, Moved to Kilondo	Another chiefdom	None traced
5. Mwenkwachale	Bujaga	Bujaga Moved to Nikola	Married daughter of chief's father's half-brother
6. Mwalelinga	Igoneba	Igoneba	None traced
7. Mwangwa	Kinyeno	Igoneba	None traced
8. Mtalim	Igoneba	Igoneba	None traced
9. Mwalipanda	Igoneba	Igoneba	None traced
10. Mwalilam	Kinyeno	Igoneba	None traced
11. Mwalipakowa	Another chiefdom	Mwenkwaya's chiefdom (C of)	None traced
12. Mwalipanda	Another chiefdom	Igoneba	None traced
13. Mwalalilala	Mwangwana's chiefdom (C of)	Mwangwana's chiefdom (C of) Kalinda	None traced
14. Mwenkilgila	Igoneba	Lupende	None traced
15. Mwalimpalalo	Igoneba	Mwalinga's chiefdom (C of)	None traced
16. Mwalanie	Kilondo	Lupende	None traced
17. Mwajipala	Another chiefdom	Another chiefdom	None traced
18. Mwamnie	Isiki	Igoneba Kinyeno	None traced
19. Kinyeno Mwalipaga	Bujaga	Sofu	Half-brother of chief's father
20. Mwanyika	Kinyeno	Igoneba	None traced

In one of twenty members, there are close kinsmen, and two are married to kinsmen of their father. The remaining fifteen members are not connected by kinship ties.

[p. 229]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(3) *Kalembe* (Generation III)

621
613
62
551

Members	*Village of father*	*Village of father's father*	*Kinsmen in village*	*Kinsmen elsewhere*
1. Gwemshaw	Kinyero		Elder brother of 2	Son in Ndola. Elder brother in another chiefdom (C 27)
2. Angwile	Kinyero	Not married	Younger brother of 1	
3. Syapulwangi	Kinyero	Lugumbo Kasumbule's chiefdom (C 2)		Brother in forest village. Brother in chiefdom (C 2). Brother in plain. (All at first built in Katumbe).
4. Kilobe	Bujuge	(a) Bujuge (b) Kinyero	Half-brother of 5	Elder brother Igumbe, moved to C 28. Brother in Christian village Kasumbe (at first built in Katumbe). Brother in Mbeya at work. Brother in Iringa (but away at work).
5. Mkubwa	Bujuge		Half-brother of 4	
6. Mwenkamwa	Bujuge	(a) Kinyero (b) Mwangomo's country (C 28) (c) Kilomelo	Half-brother of 7	No full brothers. 4 half-brothers moved to other chiefdoms, another to Zanzibar. Daughter married Kilomelo, another married Ndola.
7. Nkoma	Bujuge	not married	Half-brother of 6	
8. Nsokwa	Bujuge	Kilomelo moved to Igumbe		He only son of mother, 4 half-brothers in Ndola.
9. Pelichel	Another chiefdom (C 27)	Nihyamo		Father's younger brother's son headman of Iringa.
10. Mwalibali				

In one of our members, there are one pair of brothers and two pairs of half-brothers, but all have close kinsmen (brothers, half-brothers, or father's brother's sons) in other villages or chiefdoms. Katumbe has diminished from fifty-three members in 1938 to ten in 1955. Many members have died and many have moved, some to the forest colony, some to the plain to plant rice, four to Lupembe.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621
613
162
551

(c) *Kitale* (Generation IV and V)

Boy (none married)		*Father*	*Father's village*
Andulu	full brothers	Mwaseka (131)	Mpunga
Alijwi			
Imwa			
Mbilo	half-brothers	Mwaseka (131)	Mpunga
Freda			
Tukufika			
Lawki			
Kimwaba			
Abandebande		Bangwile	Mwaka
Andembile		Pendi	Mwaka
Lalagwa		Mbukanga	Mwaka
Bandudwaile		Imilowa	Mwaka
Anigwile		Mungile	Mwaka
Kafia		Gwile	Mwaka
Kawelile		Mwaipwi	Mwaka
Akigwele		Mwaikwi	Mwaka
Bajelo		Mwangwi	Mwaka
Adumile		Gwilizwa	Mwaka (labouring in Lugenda)
Kajabwa		Mwalwamba	Mwaka
Fryin		Anitile	Mwaka
Mwilingi		Simwa	Mwaka
Ndilwiye		Mwangaje	Mwaka
Ozijak		Mwaipaja	Mlumbi

i.e. out of twenty-three members, two are full brothers and six others are half-brothers. No other kinship connections were traced.

COMMONER PRIESTS MENTIONED

29:
55,

Kikangalaja Kyamba Kitali Nyanjigwa Sikkwaka	Hereditary Kinga priests who come to Lelanga and visit Kaulile on the way
Kimwale Mwamalungulu Mwantiipili	Hereditary priests of Lelanga
Mwamakonda	Kaulile's assistant priest
Mwalikuta Nyoma	Hereditary priests of Mbyanga, the grove of Mwalikuta (30)
Kimagwa Ngulya Njelekwa	Village headmen of Mwaijanga (82) and priests of his grove
Mwambagwa Kalanja	Village headmen of Mwambaga (131) and priests responsible for 'turning out' of Mwangila (172)

and try to understand the nature and reasons for change. Here, then, is a good opportunity for the study of social change – not only in land tenure as such, but also in village and family organisation, political authority and economic life.

II

The Nyakyusa are a Bantu people inhabiting the main part of the Rungwe District in southern Tanganyika, immediately to the north of Lake Nyasa. In 1948 they numbered about 199,000 in that District, but about 10,000 men were probably at the time temporarily absent from their homes and in employment in the mines and towns of the Rhodesias and South Africa (see Gulliver, 1957), whilst about 20,000 had migrated to live in the adjacent Mbeya District to the north.

The tribal area comprises a confined geographical basin surrounding the northern end of Lake Nyasa. It extends only about 40 miles from the *tip of* the lake at 1,550 feet above sea level to the Poroto Mountains in the north at 8,000 feet; and from east to west is only about 30 miles, from the almost sheer walls of the Livingstone Mountains (with peaks up to 10,000 feet) to the Ndali Highlands (rising to about 7,000 feet). There are therefore unusually large ecological differences within so small an area. Three major regions are to be distinguished: the "Northern Highlands" over about 4,500 feet, the low-lying "Lake Plains" in the south, and the "Central Region" in between. Everywhere *rainfall* is *reliable* and high, averaging at least 100 inches annually[1], and this amply compensates for a certain poverty and *misuse of the soil*, although (and particularly in the Central Region) it brings dangers of soil erosion. Except in the highest parts the banana is the staple food, supported by maize, beans, finger millet and groundnuts. In the Northern Highlands coffee has become well established as the principal cash crop; in the Lake Plains *paddy rice* cultivation provides both a food and a cash crop; in the Central Region the country is too low generally for coffee and too high and dry for rice; consequently cash-cropping is considerably inferior and the people's standard of living is rather poorer.

The Nyakyusa and their country tended for a long time to be relatively isolated from the *outside* world by high mountain walls and rain-soaked roads. In addition, or because of it perhaps, they developed an almost unique culture which was supported by considerable conservatism and high insularity. They still continue to regard their African neighbours beyond the mountains as their social and cultural inferiors. The turmoil of the slave-trade in Central Africa passed them by; in modern times they have not enthusiastically accepted Christianity and they have refused to take up the use of Swahili, the Territorial *lingua franca*. In recent years, and more especially since the end of World War II, they have, however, accepted and pushed forward with vigour a rapid and extensive economic development, involving particularly the production of coffee and paddy as cash crops, and large-scale labour migration to the south in the high-wage mining industries. The *municipality of petty*, often tiny, independent chiefdoms has been reorganised to provide four local government areas, each under a Rural Council, in which the *old chiefdoms* have become something like parishes[2]. Although much of the old conservatism and narrow parochialism persists, yet there is now an atmosphere of accepted change, of a keen desire for economic development, and a general acceptance of a cash economy.

Probably the most significant feature of modern life in the Nyakyusa country is the increasing scarcity of land for agriculture in relation to the

1. See Tables in the Northern Highlands, annual rainfall averaged 60.32 inches between 1949 and 1952; at Kyela in the Lake Plains, the average between 1948 and 1951 was 106.32 inches.
2. See Kingdon, E.E., 'The evolution of a system of local government by African rural councils in the Rungwe District, Tanganyika', *The Journal of African Administration*, iii, 3, October, 1951.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 F2017 Ngonde F2017
Nyakyusa

631 628 Age-villages combined to form a chiefdom under the hereditary chief, *omulyale*, but active co-operation between villages thus associated was often slight; indeed in the larger chiefdoms there commonly existed temporary animosity which might break out in raiding or even civil war. The integrity of these larger chiefdoms was weak – for example, when the Nyakyusa were attacked by Sangu and Ngoni war-parties, and later by the Germans, villages of the same chiefdom conspicuously failed to join in common defence. Similarly the local affairs of one village were no concern of any other, and each jealously guarded its own rights.

[721] [348]

631 162 None of the chiefdoms was large; smallness of scale is typical of Nyakyusa political organization and social attitudes. In 1935 the smallest indigenous chiefdom contained only 36 men. In 1948 55,700 people were divided amongst about 18 indigenous chiefs, but undoubtedly had not the Colonial Government frozen the system there would have been rather more – at least five more. Today there are 12 recognized "administrative chiefs", amongst whom five have each less than 3,000 people under them, and the largest chiefdom contains fewer than 10,000 people – the average is just over 4,000 people.

631 361 Nevertheless the chiefdom, the collection of villages, was important, because in the creation of the chiefdom villages were created, and in its development the villages developed, matured and died away. A village survived only so long as its members lived and by the nature of the age-organization there was but little possibility of the recruitment of new members, for villagers' sons left to form their own new villages. Their sons eventually came to comprise the core of the new chiefdoms.

642 643 [776] [608] In connection with the constitution of a Nyakyusa village and with land tenure, the significant feature of the chiefdom was its establishment, together with the induction of a new chief, at the great "coming-out" ceremony, *ubwinka*. In brief, each chief was succeeded by two of his sons – the eldest son of each of the senior houses of the chief, i.e., of his first two wives. At the "coming-out" ceremony, when the sons were still young men and their father was not a particularly old man, the old chiefdom was divided into two, each part coming under one of the new young chiefs. Before this critical occasion – at which much important ritual was performed – the younger sons of the old chiefdom had already moved away from their fathers' villages and had established their own incipient villages nearby, each one containing a group of coevals. A Nyakyusa boy from the age of about seven years could not continue to live with his father and mother, but, in company with his mates, built his own hut on a site adjacent to the main village as indicated by the fathers' headmen. Until the "coming-out" ceremony these youths' villages came under the control of the old village headmen; but with the induction of the new chiefs they achieved independent status, each with its own headman appointed from among its members by the old headmen. Each new village was allocated a new building site and a new arable area, and quite commonly the old villagers, the older men, moved away a little in order to give the younger men adequate access to the land, for it was considered that the young men's seats for land were permanent.

631 [178] [621] [643] [608] After this wholesale reorganization of the old chiefdom, when new villages were established and new boundaries demarcated,[1] the old chief himself, the old headmen and the older men (the "fathers") gradually retired from active public life. The old chief was supposed to commit suicide after a time (or was quietly killed off) in order to leave the field clear for his sons; the old headmen became the religious and ritual leaders of the new chiefdoms, with the favour of elder mammaship, and the old men's

1. "In the 'coming-out' it is said that 'something is given away'. Sacrifices are offered and the new chief-elders and villages of the young men are consecrated." Wilson, G., 1936, p. 36.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

161 If therefore, pending the next Census to be made in 1957, we assume these rates of increase, then by 1955 it may be estimated that the Nyakyusa numbered about 217,000 at an average density of 233 persons per square mile, allowing 13.7 acres of land per family of five. For the Lake Plains alone, the population in 1955 would have been nearly 60,000 at an average density of 287 persons per square mile, with 11.2 acres per family. If we also include the estimated number of absentee migrant labourers in the base year of 1948, then there were in 1955 perhaps 63,000 people dependent on the land resources of the Lake Plains at an average density of 301 per square mile, though in fact some 4,000 men were temporarily absent from home in that year.

The figures and estimates are given in Table I. These averages do, of course, hide some considerable and significant local variations which are further described at pages 14 ff. below.

TABLE I
NYAKYUSA POPULATION

	1948 Census			1955 Estimates		
	a	b	c	a	b	c
Lake Plains at increase of 1% p.a.	55,700	268	11.9	59,700	287	11.2
Central Region at increase of 1½% p.a.	48,500	234	14.2	53,000	248	13.0
N.E. Highlands at increase of 1½% p.a.	40,500	183	17.6	44,700	201	15.8
N.W. Highlands at increase of 1½% p.a.	53,300	185	17.3	58,000	201	15.6
Nyakyusa in tribal area	197,700	212	15.2	215,200	231	13.7

a = population
b = persons per square mile on land available for African use.
c = average acreage available per family of 5 persons.

Assuming that there were in 1948 about 3,000 men temporarily absent from their homes in the Lake Plains but who remained dependent on the land resources of that region, then the following estimate may be made:-

Lake Plains – persons resident at home and temporarily abroad:-

a	b	c	a	b	c
58,700	282	11.3	62,935	303	10.6

The approximate areas available for African use in the tribal lands (excluding alienated land, forest reserves and main roads) are:-

Lake Plains – 208 sq. miles N.E. Highlands – 220 sq. miles
Central Region – 217 sq. miles N.W. Highlands – 288 sq. miles
BoNyakyusa – 933 sq. miles

In these calculations no account is taken of unusable land such as swamps, steep slopes, thicket, etc.

Cash Cropping: Paddy Cultivation

433 432 This condition of a high density of population exists in a modern economy in which cash-cropping is universally accepted and desired. Under the former subsistence agriculture, because of heavy rainfall and natural annual flooding, quite small-sized holdings were adequate to satisfy a family's food requirements. Two harvests a year are easily obtained in some combination of maize, beans, groundnuts and finger millet, with a few small 241 "luxury" crops, and the banana grows yield continuously. The Nyakyusa were and are extremely fortunate in their food supply, and seldom experience shortages such as occasionally or even commonly afflict many peoples of East Africa.

243 [241] Rice was first introduced in 1896 by two chiefs who obtained the seed from Nyasaland Anyie; and in 1898 the Moravian Mission and a Swedish

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

in fact they usually settle on the common East African pattern of scattered homesteads, each in its arable area, and not in the tight Nyakyusa village pattern.

I think that the headmen and chiefs concerned would not welcome a restraint on immigration, for it offers them a chance to emulate the numerically produced prestige of their fellows in the flood plains, to whom at the moment they feel inferior. They would, of course, most probably prefer indigenous Nyakyusa, could the latter be persuaded to settle there. As it is, at least some of the Nyakyusa of these northerly villages are trying to move into the flood plains, where they can more easily cultivate paddy and where they can join in a more active and ebullient village life.

One type of foreigner to the Lake Plains is the man (almost invariably a Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who has obtained land but does not settle on it nor in any village. He continues to live in his upland village and comes down to the plains only to cultivate and harvest his paddy field. This is strictly against Nyakyusa land law and custom and, in fact, such an absentee land-holder has often made a substantial monetary gift to the chief or headman for the protection of this extra-legal privilege. These strangers are frequently among the more wealthy upland Nyakyusa, who can afford such payments as these, and often they are of chiefly rank themselves, perhaps having kinship ties with the local chief. There are probably no chiefdoms where such strangers have not obtained paddy fields, though naturally those which contained a good deal of vacant, usable paddy land at the beginning of the cash-cropping era have most.

This does arouse a certain amount of ill-feeling and opposition amongst local villagers who have insufficient land themselves, for they lose land and gain no numerical strength or profit of any kind. The illegal action of the local chief is also condemned, especially as the chiefs should not in any case assume allocatory powers. On the other hand it must be noted that the commoners philosophically accept the supposedly protected prerogatives of their chiefs under European rule and they expect the chiefs to take advantage of them. As with the case of the minority of large land-holders, the actual effect is not particularly great and reformation here would be a minor palliative. Nevertheless in this matter there is a definite and unpopular infringement of villagers' rights and of the local customary law.

One other group of strangers may be noted for the sake of completeness. That is the Kisi, who have for at least two generations been settling along the lake shore itself from Mwamba in the east to the Songwe river (and beyond) in the south-west. They have come from the north-eastern shores of the lake and in the Nyakyusa area they are principally fishermen who do not, therefore, compete with the indigenous population economically. They cultivate only tiny plots of cassava and sometimes of finger millet, although a few of the younger generation are now trying to grow a little paddy also. The total number of Kisi involved cannot be more than a few hundred and they have probably not increased much over the past decades. They follow an almost separate existence from their Nyakyusa neighbours, not intermarrying, and following their own way of life.[1]

1. [illegible]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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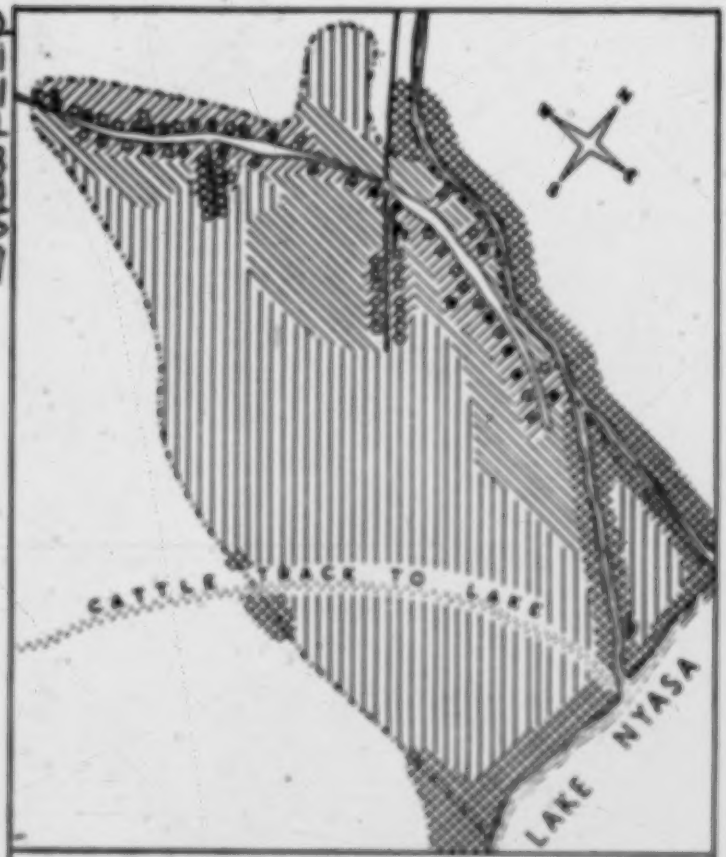

SKETCH PLAN OF KAPUGI VILLAGE
KOROSO'S CHIEFDOM, 1955

-REFERENCE-

[Facing p. 29]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

TABLE V

DISTRICTS IN TANGANYIKA WHERE LAND DISPUTES ARE COMMON

1953			No. of land cases	% of total civil cases	Estimated population density	Population per land case
Bukoba District	..	..	1,189	31	49	223
Lushoto Division	..	..	149	12	188	742
Moshi District	..	..	347	23	277	246
Mpwapa District..	..	..	81	29	125	1,393

The Changing Village

The possibly unique age-village of the Nyakyusa is now undergoing considerable and fairly rapid change in response to the new conditions of land shortage. There is, firstly, an increasing sense of village exclusiveness and, secondly, there has been a breakdown in the essential age-basis of its organisation. That is to say, that whilst the corporate unity of the village as an independent group has been strengthened, yet the social foundation of the village has simultaneously been changed and a different sort of village is emerging. It would take us far beyond the scope of this present essay if a full analysis of the changing village were to be made, nevertheless in so far as these changes are more or less directly the consequences of modern land shortage, land tenure and economic conditions some account is essential. Since the age-village was fundamental in the life and social organisation of these people, the new emerging village is of crucial importance.

Land shortage has definitely exaggerated the unity and exclusiveness of the village in the Lake Plains at a time when, for other reasons, it was beginning to become a more open group. There was always, as we have seen, insistence on the principle that only a member of the village could hold and use village land; but village boundaries were often poorly marked and it was difficult to determine which headman, if any, had genuine jurisdiction over land relatively distant from the established village sites. Nor was it particularly important to be able to do so whilst land was plentiful. As paddy cultivation spread, men began seeking extra fields further and further away from home as land nearby was all taken up; and so long as they did not attempt to take land in the immediate vicinity of another village site there was seldom much difficulty in this. The attitudes born of a sufficiency of land persisted and headmen were not disposed to protest against outsiders who sought fields near the limits of their vaguely defined areas. Internecine warfare and raiding had, of course, been abolished as an expression of and a weapon in inter-village rivalries and animosities. With the establishment of general peace and security, and with increasing movement about the country between villages, and chiefdoms, such rivalries and animosities began to die away. Many men came to live in the villages which they themselves had not helped to found; their coevals from their fathers' villages lived elsewhere, many of them widely scattered, and it was not possible to maintain a high degree of village patriotism, and, people began to feel, it was not especially necessary or important any longer.

It began to be possible for a man to hold some of his arable land within the area of another village, so long as members of the second village were not deprived of the opportunity of their own agricultural expansion should they desire it. This was especially the case when a large area of hitherto vacant (i.e. bush) but now valuable paddy land was contained within the approximate boundaries of a village. Outsiders were allowed to acquire fields on the strength of kinship with the headman or with one of the established villagers, or even by giving some small present to the headman (e.g. a little beer or some meat, etc.). Land was still plentiful then, or so it seemed to the Nyakyusa, and future shortages and difficulties were not perceived.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

NOTE

THE 1957 POPULATION CENSUS

Since this Report was originally written there has been a new census of the African population in Tanganyika. This took place in August, 1957, and the first official results have been published by the East African Statistical Department in *Tanganyika African Population Census, 1957. Analysis by sex and age for Province, District and Territorial Census Areas*, March, 1958.

In this note are given these latest data relevant to the subject matter of this report. The following Table is set out in the same form as Table I on page 12 in which my original estimates were given. As in that Table, so here, no account is taken of unusable land such as swamp, steep slopes, thicket, etc., in the calculation of densities and available acreages.

NYAKYUSA POPULATION

	1948 Population	1957 Population	1957 Density per sq. mile	Acres per family of 5	Average annual Increase 1948-57
Lake Plains ..	55,700	66,313	330	10.0	2.0%
Central Region ..	46,500	48,385	323	14.3	0.0%
N. W. Highlands	55,200	65,073	326	14.2	1.2%
N. E. Highlands ..	40,300	44,697	303	15.8	1.2%
NYAKYUSA in tribal area ..	197,700	224,500	241	13.3	1.4%

N.B. There are some members of other tribes in the Nyakyusa tribal area who cannot be excluded from these figures.

Assuming that in 1957 there were about 6,000 men temporarily absent from their homes in the Lake Plains but who remained dependent on the land resources of that region, then the following estimates may be made:—

Lake Plains – present resident at home and temporarily abroad —

58,700	72,313	349	9.2

The changes in population during this nine-year period, in so far as they are indicated by the results of these two censuses, differ a little from what was suggested in Chapter III. Improved enumeration may well account for some of the increase; but, apart from such mechanical errors, it is clear that there has been a relatively large increase of population in the Lake Plains, and in the North-Western Highlands. I suggest that the natural increase in the Lake Plains has been 1-1½ per cent. a year, and the remaining increase has come from immigration (cf. pages 18 ff). The same is probably true for the North-Western Highlands where immigration has occurred because some land remained in that region which could still be taken up (unlike other parts of the country). It is noteworthy that the population of the relatively poor Central Region, which has no cash crop and easily eroded land, has remained the same at the end of the period. Undoubtedly there has been emigration from this region to the Lake Plains and the North-Western Highlands.

As far as this report is concerned, the population has been increasing more rapidly and the density is greater than my original figures indicated. I am inclined to think now that the population of the "very high density" region of the Lake Plains (page 16) must be well over 500 people per square mile – probably up to 600 people per square mile. Pressure on the land is, therefore, more acute than I reported, and the pressure on the social system of the Nyakyusa is similarly greater. This does not affect the main analysis and argument of the report.

May, 1958.

[P.236 A]

WANYAKYUSA

AGRICULTURE

R.P.B. [illegible]
[illegible]

131 The Wanyakyusa occupy the District of Rungwe in the Southern Highlands Province. The district lies between 9° and 9½° S. latitude
133 at the northern tip of Lake Nyasa. The altitude ranges from 1,500 feet to 9,500 feet. The
631 district is divided into twelve chiefdoms. The Administrative Headquarters are at Tukuyu, which was known before the British occupation as Neu Langenberg.

Inhabitants

The local people are not indigenous to this
101 area. They came, tradition has it, from
[172] Mahenge via Ukinga after many tribal fights. They are akin to the Wahenga in Nyasaland bordering on the Tanganyika boundary. It is
191 estimated that only 10 per cent of the Wanya-
161 kyusa speak Kiswahili. According to the 1957 census the total population was 173,204. The
162 total number of tax-payers in 1942 was 35,304, or 22.04 per cent of the total population.

101 The people themselves are extremely in-
dustrious and intelligent. As there are 90 people to the square mile, living conditions are
105 crowded and emigration is continually taking place. The people are partial to litigation over cattle and women. The number of cases heard annually in the Native Courts is about 6,000. There is no one historical and traditional head of the tribe. The twelve Chiefs are, in reality, hereditary Headmen who have been selected by Government to be Chiefs. They are in effect only *primi inter pares* in native eyes, the outlook of the people being unusually democratic for a native tribe.

105 The people live in houses made of wattle
302 and daub or bamboo frames, with thatched
304 roof, and villages are ideal mostly along ridges. Rectangular houses are now built instead of the round huts of former days. They often stand in rows with a main street down the middle with houses in the background. The more progressive natives build with sun-dried or burnt brick. Stock are stalled in the same house owing to the prevalence of thieving, but sleep in separate rooms.

Climate

132 The rainfall of the district varies in the different areas. In Tukuyu itself the annual average for 23 years (1918-1942) is 100.22 inches. On the Lake shore the average is probably higher, but no continuous statistics are available. The heaviest rainfall months are from December to May, but, in most years,

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

posed action of witches, exercised the right of expelling members thought to be dangerous to it. Nowadays, since a village is no longer held responsible for the torts of its members, men are not often banished for theft or adultery, but supposed witches and sorcerers are still frequently compelled to move. 681

There is also a great deal of voluntary movement, to escape friction in the village. This is commonly expressed in terms of witchcraft—a family moves to avoid the witchcraft of its neighbours; but neighbours are not feared unless there has been a quarrel. It is when the parties to some dispute have *not* been reconciled that fear of witchcraft germinates, and illness precipitates a move. 166 578

Among ordinary commoners only their immediate neighbours are believed to be dangerous and such men therefore sometimes move only from one village to another of the same chiefdom; but very many move right outside to another chiefdom altogether, preferring to make assurance doubly sure and to put a long distance between themselves and their spiritual persecutors. And in the case of certain men of high social status, such as senior village headmen who are the advisers of the chief, and priests, for whom a wider circle is dangerous, it is held to be essential to leave the chiefdom.

We have argued (*vide supra*, p. 36) that movement from village to village has always occurred among the Nyakyusa but that it is increasing. The change is almost certainly a symptom of increasing friction within the village. One traditional mechanism of settling disputes—the ordeal—has lapsed, while fear of one's neighbours' witchcraft continues. It is possible also that the incidence of disease, and hence of suspected witchcraft and sorcery, has increased among the Nyakyusa—tuberculosis and venereal diseases are said to have spread greatly since 1914[1] and, in the opinion of the German missionaries, malaria is much more prevalent at the higher altitudes than it was before 1914; but there 166 578 164

[1] The incidence of tuberculosis in Rungwe district is now thought to be about sixteen per thousand (C. Wilcocks, *Tuberculosis in Tanganyika Territory*, Government Printer, Dar-es-salaam, 1938). Dr. D. Kerr-Cross, in a list of diseases encountered during ten years' practice in north Nyasaland before 1897 reports that he only saw one case of 'pulmonary tubercular phthisis', but syphilis (which the natives called 'the disease of the Arabs'), was very prevalent. Dr. Kerr-Cross was a missionary doctor who travelled extensively in Nyakyusa country. (See his articles already cited and H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, pp. 472-3.)

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 is another reason also for increasing movement. Formerly, to
578 move to a strange chiefdom was hazardous—a refugee might be killed, or his wife or cattle seized by the chief; nowadays it is safe.
164 Even to-day a man's status is lower in the village in which he is a stranger than in his home village. The old families of a village, 'the owners of the soil' (*abilema*), are spoken of as *amafuwa*, which, in its restricted sense, means village headmen who have 'come out' with the chief, but which is also used more widely for commoners of importance. And in the past, we were told, an individual's security of life and property depended upon the support of his neighbours, the *amafuwa*, and a stranger was much less likely to receive this than an 'owner of the soil'. If a chief seized a stranger's wife no one would protest, but if he dared to touch the wife of an 'owner of the soil' the village would rise as one man. Hence the incentive to overcome friction by submission, rather than by moving, was stronger in the old society than it is to-day.[1] It may well become stronger again soon. The present circulation from village to village is possible because men are still scarcer than land in Nyakyusa country, but as the population increases, and the production of crops for sale expands, it is probable that strangers will be less welcome and movement more difficult.

166 To lose a member who has not been expelled is a slur on a
624 village, for the implication is that the man who has moved has suffered from the witchcraft of his neighbours. A good neighbour should persuade a fellow contemplating a voluntary move to stay (*vide infra*, p. 243), and when someone has moved of his own accord (and sometimes even when he has been expelled) his fellows go, after the lapse of a little time, to fetch him back.

'When a man moves from his home chiefdom, his village neighbours there, in the majority of cases, follow him within two months and ceremonially invite him back with a show of force by seizing his belongings and carrying them off home to his old village. They may really like and respect him and if, as is usually the case, he has moved because of sickness, they are most anxious to prove to him that his tacit suspicions are unfounded, they wish to rid themselves of the slur of witchcraft. To invite him back is to express affection for him and so to demonstrate that he could

[1] cf. the modern tendency for Pondo homesteads to break up. Hunter, op. cit., pp. 63, 79.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

commoners, and they went together to the grove of Mwangalaba, the last Kyungu (elder brother of Peter), with a white hen and sacrificed it there, and prayed saying:

Mwangalaba go thou to Mwakasungula your father and let him go to Mwangonde, and he to Mwagemo and he to Kipesa and he to Mpeta and he to Mwendemange and he to Kyabela and he to Syula and he to the Kyungu who lived at Mano and he to Ngulube (9) and Lyambile (10). May he stand by us, may we sleep, may the rats disappear and illness also, may we sleep. Then when we had finished the invocation [I quote Malwa] we extinguished the fires in all our houses; in the houses of the chiefs, and of Kyungu's great wife Namwilan'ombe, and of us commoners, we threw water on the ashes, but each took some ash, and a firebrand to the crossroads at Kyimbwe where we collected them all and left them to rot; there we threw away the rats saying: 'Let them fly away to Ngulube (9), let them fly away with the wind, let us sleep.' Then we ran to the pasture land to make new fire with a drill. We all took fire there in the bush, each a firebrand and lighted new fires in our own houses and in the house of the Kyungu, that is of his great wife. We arranged it with our wife Namwilan'ombe, because Kyungu had said 'Work with your husbands there'.

'Throwing away the rats' consisted in enclosing a live rat in two winnowing baskets, opening them at Kyimbwe, and flourishing them first in one direction and then in another, releasing the rat in the process. This had been specifically ordered by Bungulu, the prophetess.

(8) THE GROUND HORNBILL

In the country of Furokoto (49 K) there was much illness and many deaths (some, at least, from typhoid) during the dry season of 1937, and when a ground hornbill—always a bird of ill-omen among the Nyakyusa—mysteriously attacked a chicken in Syokela village, everyone was horrified. Mwamunda, a village headman, explained what had happened:

The headman of Syokela came with two men to Bwilile (senior village headman of his side) and said: 'Tell the chief that a ground hornbill has eaten a fowl at our place. We ask what this means. And also we do not sleep, we are ill.' Then Bwilile told me and we went together to the chief who said: 'I have heard, let us discuss it.' So we gathered at Neyoni's and the headman of Syokela stood up and said: 'My fathers, and friends, and children, and you chiefs, we have come to ask: have you ever before heard of a ground hornbill eating a fowl? (With an air

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER III

CHANGING CONDITIONS AND THE PRESENT SITUATION

Population

At the African Census in 1948 there were recorded, in their own tribal area, approximately 198,000 Nyakyusa at an average density over the land available for their use of 212 persons per square mile. [161]

In the Lake Plains alone there were, in 1948, 55,700 inhabitants living at an average density of 308 persons per square mile. Population densities in the other Nyakyusa areas were rather lower than this.

These figures do not, however, give the full picture from the point of view of land occupation and use, for large numbers of men, and some women, were at the time of the Census absent from their homes and living temporarily in employment areas abroad – chiefly in the Rhodesias and South Africa. I have estimated elsewhere that approximately 8,000 men would have been away in 1948, of whom 95 per cent. or even more would return to settle down at home, for there was only a very small proportion of men who remained more or less permanently absent. That is to say, these men remained dependent for their land needs on their own tribal territory, and indeed at least some were active land-holders whilst the rest had lesser rights in family holdings. [167]

If, therefore, we include these temporary absentees, the measure of the pressure of population on the land is shown by an average density of population for all Nyakyusa of 220 persons per square mile. At least 3,000 of these migrant labourers (possibly more) had their homes in the Lake Plains, and this number increased the density of population dependent on the land resources of this region to 292 persons per square mile.

The statistically average family in 1948 comprised about five people, and therefore the population density can be restated in the form that for all Nyakyusa there were available about 13 acres of land per family. In the Lake Plains there were about 12 acres of land available. These averages do not, of course, take account of either unusable land such as swamps, steep slopes, infertile tracts, etc., nor of the land necessarily taken up by roads and paths, open spaces in the villages and the like.[1]

These figures indicate that, taking a broad and general view based on averages, the density of Nyakyusa population or their pressure on their tribal lands ranked amongst the highest in Tanganyika in 1948.[2]

Unfortunately census enumerations before 1948 were too unreliable to allow of any satisfactory estimate of the probable rate of population increase, but from general information and internal evidence it is thought not unreasonable to suggest that in the Lake Plains population is increasing perhaps at the rate of one per cent. per annum, and in the rest of the tribal area the annual increase may be one and a half per cent. per annum. The high incidence of malaria and other debilitating diseases in the Lake Plains during the flood period of the wet season each year accounts for the lower estimate of increase there. [164] [169]

1. The amount is taken to show satisfactory of Nyakyusa who were permanently resident in other parts of the Territory. These land claims in Mbeya District (Chunya, Kyela and Mbeya Towns) where they numbered about 12,000 in 1948.

2. The higher population density in 1948 were in Sukuma – Mwanza District (Kwimba District 208, Maswa 227, Geita District 230, Lamadi 239, Bunguni including Nyamalulu, Nassa, Lamadi, Kisesa and Ng'wi, Maswa 240, Jomalo 245, Kwimba 248, Bugoji including Kisesa, Nyamalulu, Nassa, Nyamalulu, Nassa, Nyamalulu, Nass

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

4. A visit to the chief's father's grave was paid in company with the chief and some of his *amafumu*. It was situated in a banana grove (*ilingata*[17]) not very remote from the chief's hut. The grave of the present chief's father was on the ground-floor, about one hundred paces from its edge and was characterised by a small rounded basalt block about half a metre in height[18] and about forty centimetres in breadth. An *indele*-plant was also standing on the grave about one metre from the basalt block. 765 [764]

On this occasion the chief also told me of the special cases for which sacrifices are offered in this grove. These are performed only in cases of very serious accidents, sickness or famine which may overcome the chieftainship. In such cases a black cow is slaughtered after sunset at the edge of the grove. In the presence of the chief some pieces of meat of the slaughtered beast, together with some bananas, are laid down at the grave. The chief adds a prayer to his ancestors at some distance from the grave, referring to the evil by which the chieftainship or some special village of it has been afflicted. He enumerates all the names of his ancestors and asks them for their help. 768 782

The remaining pieces of the meat and other bananas are left in the grove during the night. When the next day dawns, the *amafumu* return and some *abangaga* divide the meat and eat it together. On this occasion the chief orders the removal of all remains of ashes from the huts. The ashes are thrown down in such unclean places as where leprous persons had been buried. After this has been done, the chief in conjunction with an *uwagaga*[19] produces a new fire for the huts by twirling, and all other fires of the village, or villages, must be kindled anew from this "seed-fire". [766] [372]

5. The reason for visiting an *uwagaga* (diviner)[20] who dwelled in Ibungu an older age-set village[21] which seemed to the visitor to be a more ancient part of Katumba, was caused by the sickness of the chief's sister. In accordance with the custom of the Nyakyusa in bringing women back to their father's village if they are very sick, the 787 [164 484]

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[17] Cf. Johnston, Uganda, pl. *amasiata*, p. 450; Mackenzie, Gazette, burial place, p. 300; *mangata*, grove of the dead clans, p. 151; Wilson, Introduction, p. 107, *ilingata*, sacred grove; Marwick, p. 115.

[18] Cf. Pilsbury, p. 317.

[19] Cf. n. 3, p. 5.

[20] Cf. Johnston, p. 451.

[21] I proposed to call the special form of villages found within the Nyakyusa society, which are created on the age-set principle, „age-set villages" (African Studies, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 19—26 June 1943), a terminology that does not alter G. Wilson's statements on the "Age Villages" (Introduction, p. 100 ff). [56] 621

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 sister of the chief had also been brought back to the village of her brother. I was of the opinion that she was afflicted by a serious [164 tropical ulcer on the ankle of the left foot. The healing of these ulcers 484] commonly takes a very long time, and as this woman had already much suffered, and as the medicine-men consulted seemed to be unable to restore her, she was brought to her brother's village, but there also she had not yet recovered. The chief had, therefore, resolved to ask the diviner, whose name was Mwaigwisya, for the real cause of her sickness.

After he and his *amafuma* had taken their seats on mats, the chief explained to the diviner the reason of his visit. The diviner then grasped a curved piece of wood about 20 cms. in length with his right hand, after he had spat upon his hands. Then he moved the wood round his head, and finally placed it with one of its ends on the even, cleansed ground before his mat, and waited for the questions of the chief. The single questions, as for instance: "Is the sickness caused by Kyara?", or "Is the sickness caused by this or that person?", etc., were put to the diviner by Lamek Mwainyekule, the son of a chief of another chieftainship[14], now belonging to the *amafuma* of Mwamasika, as he now stayed in his village. Mwainyekule seemed to be not only

[291 516]

The Séance with the diviner.

[776] the most intimate adviser of Mwamasika, but alltogether the most clever man I met among this people. After each of the questions addressed to him the diviner murmured the names of the chief's

[14] A village of this name is to be found on Dr. Kieperts map (of 1895), southern to the Kieyo.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

commoners, and they went together to the grove of Mwangalaba, the last Kyungu (older brother of Peter), with a white hen and sacrificed it there, and prayed saying: 783 786

Mwangalaba go thou to Mwakasungula your father and let him go to Mwangonde, and he to Mwagomo and he to Kipona and he to Mperta and he to Mwendemunge and he to Kyebela and he to Syula and he to the Kyungu who lived at Mano and he to Ngulube (9) and Lyambila (10). May he stand by us, may we sleep, may the rats disappear and illness also, may we sleep. Then when we had finished the invocation [I quote Mulwa] we extinguished the fires in all our houses; in the houses of the chiefs, and of Kyungu's great wife Namwilan'ombe, and of us commoners, we threw water on the ashes, but each took some ash, and a firebrand to the crossroads at Kyimbwe where we collected them all and left them to rot; there we threw away the rats saying: 'Let them fly away to Ngulube (9), let them fly away with the wind, let us sleep.' Then we ran to the pasture land to make new fire with a drill. We all took fire there in the bush, each a firebrand and lighted new fires in our own houses and in the house of the Kyungu, that is of his great wife. We arranged it with our wife Namwilan'ombe, because Kyungu had said 'Work with your husbands there'.

'Throwing away the rats' consisted in enclosing a live rat in two winnowing baskets, opening them at Kyimbwe, and flourishing them first in one direction and then in another, releasing the rat in the process. This had been specifically ordered by Bongulu, the prophetess.

(8) THE GROUND HORNBILL

In the country of Porokoto (49 K) there was much illness and many deaths (some, at least, from typhoid) during the dry season of 1937, and when a ground hornbill—always a bird of ill-omen among the Nyakyusa—mysteriously attacked a chicken in Syokela village, everyone was horrified. Mwamonda, a village headman, explained what had happened: [164] [165] 787 [525]

The headman of Syokela came with two men to Bwille (senior village headman of his side) and said: 'Tell the chief that a ground hornbill has eaten a fowl at our place. We ask what this means. And also we do not sleep, we are ill.' Then Bwille told me and we went together to the chief who said: 'I have heard, let us discuss it.' So we gathered at Neyani's and the headman of Syokela stood up and said: 'My fathers, and friends, and children, and you chiefs, we have come to ask: have you ever before heard of a ground hornbill eating a fowl? (With an air

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

of a married man is close to those of his neighbours, his banana grove probably adjoining theirs, while the main garden-lands of the whole group are all together at a distance (*vide* Plate III). Boundaries between age-villages are thus not always apparent to a stranger. A solid hundred acres or so of houses and bananas may turn out to consist of two or three villages, each with its own organization, and each having a block of garden-lands separate from the others.

If any question arises about the village a man belongs to, the points discussed are: where he has built and where he cultivates —*i.e.* to what village the land he uses belongs; with whom he herds his cows; and which village headman he goes to in case of a dispute. Membership of a village is therefore defined primarily in terms of economic co-operation and political allegiance.

d. Moving

The age-system is somewhat modified by men moving from one village to another. When a man dies his heir frequently comes and lives where the dead man was living, so becoming a member of his age-village. A man's heir is his full brother next to him in age, and only when all the full brothers of a family have died does the property pass to the eldest son of the eldest brother. The difference in the ages of a man and his heir is often, therefore, only a few years; but even if the difference be great, and the heir many years younger than his new neighbours, he is now treated as their contemporary. He sits with them at ceremonies and he shares their rights at any division of meat.

Were all heirs to remove to the homesteads of those who had died, the villages of old men would, of course, continue to exist indefinitely. In fact they do not. In Mwaipopo's chiefdom there remained only one small village of old men, the grandfathers of the generation which had last 'come out'. Other villages of this grandfathers' generation were remembered by name; the heirs of former members sometimes used the old name; but they did not live together as a group; they were members of other villages of their own generation. Even the heir of the headman of each old village, who acted as a priest, lived in some other village. It was said that these grandfathers' villages would disappear even in name when Mwaipopo, the father of the young chief died. No

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 villages of the great-grandfathers' generation survived, even ritually (*vide* Document, pp. 881–5).[1]

166 Men also move from one village to another and they do not always join a village of their exact contemporaries. A stranger may come and be granted land in a village even though he is considerably older or younger than the bulk of its members. Such movement from one village to another is now very considerable: we estimated that at least 80 per cent of the married men have at some time or other moved from the chiefdom in which they first cultivated gardens of their own. There is also movement from village to village within a chiefdom.

[681] Everyone agreed that moving is not something new. In the past a convicted witch was expelled from his village, and sometimes from the chiefdom; thieves and adulterers were also expelled or fled to take refuge with another chief (*vide infra*, pp. 118–9). But it is probable that movement between villages has increased [689] greatly since the imposition of European control. The main reason for moving nowadays is, as we have said, the fear of witchcraft. Subsidiary reasons are the desire to get suitable land for cultivating cash crops, the desire to be near some centre of employment (such as Tukuyu or Rungwe), and the desire to live with others of like mind, as fellow Christians or fellow pagans, fellow Moravians or fellow adherents of the 'Watch Tower' (*vide infra*, pp. 40–3).

166 Women move from one village to another even more often than men, for, not only do wives move with their husbands, but 591 a girl commonly marries a man of a village other than that in 587 which she grew up, and is later inherited by a kinsman of her dead husband who lives in yet another village. Since first wives are usually ten years younger than their husbands, and junior wives may be forty or fifty years younger, most women are inherited at least once during their lives, and some are inherited [586] several times. The modern high divorce rate accelerates this long-established circulation of women from village to village.

[1] It is possible that the existence of villages of four generations was due to the fact that Mwaipopo continued to live long after the 'coming out' of his heir Mwankuga—a survival not usual in traditional practice (*vide supra*, p. 30).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17 - Nyakyusa

work. The unskilled can always get a job, and frequent moves make little difference to their pay. In the sample taken 81 per cent of the Christian sons of Christians, 40 per cent of the Christian sons of pagans, and 5 per cent of the pagan sons of pagans had had skilled or semi-skilled jobs. These cases are set out in a table on p. 193. Of twenty-eight individuals who remained over a year at a stretch in employment, twenty were in skilled or semi-skilled jobs, and eighteen had had some schooling.

It was very difficult to get adequate information on the proportion of time that young men spent away, for though the periods they spent at work might be accurately remembered, the periods at home were not easily recorded. Ten young Christians (other than those cited in the sample above), whose work histories were carefully investigated, had spent, on the average, eighteen and a half months, out of the twenty-five months preceding their return home, in employment outside Rungwe district. That is, they had spent less than a quarter of their time at home. They are certainly not typical of the whole district, but they are probably not unrepresentative of the young Christians.

Certain points emerge from this study. Firstly, the time spent away from their homes at work by middle-aged and elderly pagans is negligible. Secondly, the middle-aged Christians have all worked for long periods, but during most of that time they have lived with their families in Christian villages attached to missions in the district; they are not migrants in the sense that their sons are, though they move from one mission village to another following employment. Thirdly, the great bulk of the young men work outside the district at some time, and those in skilled jobs (mostly Christians) tend to stay away for much longer periods than the unskilled. The effects of this are noticed by Nyakyusa themselves, who remarked of Kabembe Christian village that: 'There were few nice houses, for so many of the young men are away at work.' Nevertheless, even in Christian villages, the effects of men's absence is much less marked than it is in Ngonde, where the percentage of absentees is estimated at over half the able-bodied men.[1]

[1] It was estimated in 1934 that the total male labour force of the district was approximately 10,000 and that, of these, 500 men were in Southern Rhodesia and the Union, and 5,000 on the Lupa goldfields. (Figures supplied by courtesy of the District Commissioner, Karonga, from District records.)

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(ukumega) is not confined to the company of contemporaries of the same sex. Indeed the liveliest dancing is before members of the opposite sex, and is often the preliminary to love-making; but full opportunity for diop'sy is thought to depend upon living in a village, rather than in scattered homesteads. Some Nyakyusa are colonists, cultivating and building out in unoccupied bush country five or six miles from a settled area; but living out in the bush is disliked by most people and is done, we were told, only for gain. Cattle are said to increase very much more quickly out in bush, where grazing is plentiful, than they do on the village pastures, and the yield of virgin fields made in the bush is high. Hence the Nyakyusa dictum: 'People live in the villages for display, in the bush for gain.' And individuals commonly display themselves as members of a group—a group of contemporaries of the same sex, that is, of village-mates.

d. Decency

The basis of Nyakyusa sexual morality is the separation of the sexual activities of successive generations, more particularly the separation of the sexual activities of mothers and sons, and the complete segregation of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

Nyakyusa informants hold that boys are sent out of their parents' village to build apart so that their parents may have privacy. Mwaisumo explained: 'If a boy over ten years old stays at home to sleep, he is laughed at by his friends, and his own parents send him away. They say, "If he sleeps at home he will hear what his parents talk about at night"; the night is always full of lewd talk; and he may even see them undressing. He will grow up a fool, with little wisdom! You see at the boys' village', he went on to say, 'the older boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love-making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger ones listen to these things and that's all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn, but we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night; and that is very bad, that is foolishness. But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to listen, that is how children grow up.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and they are condemned for doing so. One old man argued in this way: 'Where you Europeans are wrong is in forbidding witchcraft in word only and not in spirit. It does no good to say that witchcraft does not exist; but if you had driven witchcraft out of our hearts that would have been good.' And again: ' "The defenders" still fight the witches, they make great efforts, but they may no longer speak about it. In the old days when a witch went to choke his fellow "the defenders" would see him and turn him back, and then on the morrow they would tell people that he was a witch, and he would have to go to the chief and take the ordeal which would convict him. But now "the defenders" have to be silent because of you Europeans who say there is no witchcraft, so that though the witch is perhaps turned back the first night, the next night he goes again and throttles his fellow.' Many Nyakyusa think that Europeans are hypocrites when they deny belief in witchcraft. One friend, the Christian wife of a chief, said to us: 'You are dissembling like all Europeans, you don't want to admit the reality of witchcraft. You are just dissembling.' Nor are Europeans thought to be immune from witchcraft: the attacks of malaria from which we ourselves suffered were immediately interpreted by our servants and friends as due to witches.

Since most people are sure that evil desires manifesting themselves as witchcraft or sorcery exist, movements of witch-finders partake of the nature of religious revivals. The *Mwakapi* movement, described by Dr. Richards for the Bemba[1] appeared among the Nyakyusa in 1932, and had a brief popularity, dying out again before 1934. The professed aim of the leader was to rid the country of witchcraft and sorcery, and the attitude of most Nyakyusa was expressed in the comment of a Christian friend who said to us: 'He (the witch-finder) did very well because he brought to light all those that killed people and made them hand over the medicines which they had used.'

The sense of insecurity created by a continuing belief in witchcraft along with the prohibition of the traditional means of discovering witches, finds expression in the frequent movement of individuals from village to village. Such movement occurred in the past, and it was often linked with suspicion of witchcraft, but whereas in the old days it was always the individual convicted in

[1] A. I. Richards, 'A Modern Movement of Witch-finders', *Africa*, Vol. VIII (1935), pp. 448–61.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 754 the *mwaafi* ordeal who moved, now it is often the man who suppose himself a victim of witchcraft who flies for his life (*vide infra*, pp. 153 ff.); and it is probable that circulation between villages has in this way increased very considerably.

754 626 673 Denying the reality of witchcraft, the British administration ignores the belief in the legitimate use of 'python power' to enforce law and morality, any disputes arising out of this being classed as 'witchcraft'. One case turning on the belief in 'the breath of men' was heard by the District Officer of Tukuyu while we were in the district. The facts, as given us by the District Officer concerned, and by Nyakyusa informants, were as follows:

Mwankuga, a chief, fell sick and one of his sons-in-law, a clerk, advised him to get treatment from the European doctor then investigating tuberculosis in the district. When Mwankuga's junior half-brother heard this he came to Mwankuga, along with others, advised him not to go to a European doctor, and offered to cure him himself. He said that *he* had made Mwankuga ill—'had closed his stomach'—because Mwankuga had refused to make the 'coming out' ceremony for his sons when pressed by his village headmen to do so. Mwankuga's half-brother said 'the country was angry' because of the delay in the 'coming out' ceremony. He insisted that Mwankuga's illness was due to 'the breath' of the whole country, not to the sorcery (*ubwloge*) of an individual. Mwankuga acknowledged that he had done wrong in refusing to hold the ceremony, and handed over two cows which his half-brother demanded, receiving in turn medicine, which he drank. Five days later Mwankuga gave his half-brother three more cows which were killed at Mwankuga's homestead and eaten by his people. Then, later on, since he did not recover, and one of his sons for whom the 'coming out' should have been held died, Mwankuga reported the matter to a senior chief, Mwakatumbula, president of the court district in which he lived. Mwakatumbula referred the case to the District Officer, and Mwankuga's half-brother was tried for 'obtaining goods by false pretences', under Section 287 of the Penal Code. The accused denied that he had ever said that he was the cause of Mwankuga's illness, and though the latter brought witnesses, the District Officer found that their testimony was 'not sufficiently reliable to substantiate the charge', and 'that there was no reason to suppose that the accused had acted in bad faith'. He referred the

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

powed action of witches, exercised the right of expelling members thought to be dangerous to it. Nowadays, since a village is no longer held responsible for the torts of its members, men are not often banished for theft or adultery, but supposed witches and sorcerers are still frequently compelled to move. 681

There is also a great deal of voluntary movement to escape friction in the village. This is commonly expressed in terms of witchcraft—a family moves to avoid the witchcraft of its neighbours; but neighbours are not feared unless there has been a quarrel. It is when the parties to some dispute have *not* been reconciled that fear of witchcraft germinates, and illness precipitates a move. 166 578

Among ordinary commoners only their immediate neighbours are believed to be dangerous and such men therefore sometimes move only from one village to another of the same chiefdom; but very many move right outside to another chiefdom altogether, preferring to make assurance doubly sure and to put a long distance between themselves and their spiritual persecutors. And in the case of certain men of high social status, such as senior village headmen who are the advisers of the chief, and priests, for whom a wider circle is dangerous, it is held to be essential to leave the chiefdom.

We have argued (*vide supra*, p. 36) that movement from village to village has always occurred among the Nyakyusa but that it is increasing. The change is almost certainly a symptom of increasing friction within the village. One traditional mechanism of settling disputes—the ordeal—has lapsed, while fear of one's neighbours' witchcraft continues. It is possible also that the incidence of disease, and hence of suspected witchcraft and sorcery, has increased among the Nyakyusa—tuberculosis and venereal diseases are said to have spread greatly since 1914[1] and, in the opinion of the German missionaries, malaria is much more prevalent at the higher altitudes than it was before 1914; but there 166 578 164

[1] The incidence of tuberculosis in Rungwe district is now thought to be about sixteen per thousand (C. Wilcocks, *Tuberculosis in Tanganyika Territory*, Government Printer, Dar-es-salaam, 1938). Dr. D. Kerr-Cross, in a list of diseases encountered during ten years' practice in north Nyasaland before 1897 reports that he only saw one case of 'pulmonary tubercular phthisis', but syphilis (which the natives called 'the disease of the Arabs'), was very prevalent. Dr. Kerr-Cross was a missionary doctor who travelled extensively in Nyakyusa country. (See his articles already cited and H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, pp. 473–7.)

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 is another reason also for increasing movement. Formerly, to move to a strange chiefdom was hazardous—a refugee might be 578 killed, or his wife or cattle seized by the chief; nowadays it is safe. 164 Even to-day a man's status is lower in the village in which he is a stranger than in his home village. The old families of a village, 'the owners of the soil' (*abalema*), are spoken of as *amafumu*, which, in its restricted sense, means village headmen who have 'come out' with the chief, but which is also used more widely for commoners of importance. And in the past, we were told, an individual's security of life and property depended upon the support of his neighbours, the *amafumu*, and a stranger was much less likely to receive this than an 'owner of the soil'. If a chief seized a stranger's wife no one would protest, but if he dared to touch the wife of an 'owner of the soil' the village would rise as one man. Hence the incentive to overcome friction by submission, rather than by moving, was stronger in the old society than it is to-day.[1] It may well become stronger again soon. The present circulation from village to village is possible because men are still scarcer than land in Nyakyusa country, but as the population increases, and the production of crops for sale expands, it is probable that strangers will be less welcome and movement more difficult.

166 To lose a member who has not been expelled is a slur on a 624 village, for the implication is that the man who has moved has suffered from the witchcraft of his neighbours. A good neighbour should persuade a fellow contemplating a voluntary move to stay (*vide infra*, p. 243), and when someone has moved of his own accord (and sometimes even when he has been expelled) his fellows go, after the lapse of a little time, to fetch him back.

'When a man moves from his home chiefdom, his village neighbours there, in the majority of cases, follow him within two months and ceremonially invite him back with a show of force by seizing his belongings and carrying them off home to his old village. They may really like and respect him and if, as is usually the case, he has moved because of sickness, they are most anxious to prove to him that his tacit suspicions are unfounded, they wish to rid themselves of the slur of witchcraft. To invite him back is to express affection for him and so to demonstrate that he could

[1] cf. the modern tendency for Pondo homesteads to break up. Hunter, op. cit., pp. 15, 59.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

not have been bewitched, for see, everyone likes him! Such an invitation is often, but by no means always, accepted. If a man refuses the first time then the villagers may or may not go again later to ask him back; but if he was an important member of the village—the headman, a noted doctor, the son of an old family—the invitation may go on being repeated for years; and he will then almost certainly return in the end. Whether or not he accepts a particular invitation depends again largely on his own health and that of his family and upon his relations with his new neighbours at the time it is made. Sickness and suspected witchcraft, or quarrels and insults in the new village will incline him to go home (see Document, p. 267). And a man can always return, even without an invitation, unless he was originally expelled for being himself a witch.'[1]

If an important or popular man is slow to return 'home' his former friends not only go to fetch him, again and again, during the course of years but, if he dies before his return, his corpse may be fetched back to be buried in his original village. He is also summoned to feasts there. The village was a fighting unit, and its strength, like that of the chiefdom, depended upon its numbers; hence the reluctance to lose a man and the readiness to welcome new-comers.

Men who have moved voluntarily usually return 'home' to their original village in the end. As a Selya man explained: 'The majority do come back, only a few stay permanently away. Some move for better food, the great majority because they fall sick and wish to recollect themselves in the tranquillity of another chiefdom—this is the main reason for moving, but they come back in the end. Whenever a man is slighted in the country to which he has gone, whenever he falls sick there—back he goes home. A man does not lose his affection for home, for there is his sacred grove, his fathers' graves. But the real reason for returning is that in every other place a man is less respected than at home, he is made light of; but in his own country he is known to belong to an old family and is treated with great respect, his neighbours call to mind the days when he and they herded cows together as boys, and the fact that his father is buried among them. That is why people go home again.'

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa*, pp. 32-3.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 195: FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 783 A man who has been driven out and then fetched back provides a feast for his friends on his return. This feast is essentially the same as the 'ritual of reconciliation' that takes place when a wrong-doer begs pardon of his own village or that of his father (*vide supra*, p. 101). For a private individual only his own village is concerned, but if the exile happens to be a senior headman then all the villages of the chiefdom participate. A detailed account of such a feast, which we attended, is given on pp. 271–4.

166 785 578 In a civilized society social separation overcomes friction in two ways: first, it separates individuals who are personally incompatible, and secondly, it provides the individual who is a misfit in one group with a choice of groups whose values may be more compatible with his own than those of the group from which he came.[1] In Nyakyusa society villages were formerly all of the same type, with virtually identical group values, therefore the individual only escaped from personal incompatibilities by moving. In the modern society, however, there is a variation of type as between pagan and Christian villages and, among the Christians, as between the several denominations. The convert in a pagan village often moves to a Christian village finding that more compatible, and the son of a Christian, having abandoned Christianity and perhaps married several wives, leaves the Christian village in which he grew up and joins a pagan one with whose members he has more in common.

578 166 754 The Nyakyusa, in their rationalizations about witchcraft, recognize the fact that friction is often personal and may be overcome by moving. Constantly villages receive individuals who have been driven out of some other village for practising witchcraft, and when we inquired whether a man who had once been accused was not feared as a neighbour, the reply was always in the same tenor as that of Mwamunda: 'Perhaps he has bewitched his fellows there, we do not know, but he has not bewitched us.' There is also the implication that quarrels may be forgotten after a temporary separation, since those who have moved because they feared witchcraft, and even some who have been accused of practising witchcraft, are welcomed back.

578 166 When our informants discussed moving and returning to the home village they always emphasized friction with one's fellows (*abasine*) as providing the chief impetus to move, and the desire

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, op. cit., pp. 60–1.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

to rejoin the group in which he is 'known', in which he has 'friends with whom he herded cattle as a boy', as that which provides the chief impetus to return. Never once did an informant suggest friction with the village headman as the reason for moving[1] or loyalty to a former headman as the reason for returning. The Nyakyusa village is in no way the personal following of a headman, as the villages of some other central African peoples (such as the Bemba,[2] Yao, and Nguni[3]) appear to be. It is essentially a group of equals, established before adolescence, whose stability and continuity turn on friendship and co-operation between its members. It is already a corporate group, with very close bonds forged through years between its members, before the permanent leader is chosen, and it continues as a group though its leader dies or moves.

We do not deny that the personality of the village headman—particularly his generosity and his skill in settling disputes between his men—affects the stability and growth of the village; some villages increase noticeably in size after the 'coming out', while others shrink, and headmen (like chiefs) use medicines to attract men to them; but the Nyakyusa themselves imply that it is the character of the villagers rather than the character of the headman which determines movement to and from the village.

The headman, like any private individual in the village, must remain on good terms with the other members lest *he* be driven out. A number of cases were cited in which headmen had moved because they had become unpopular with their men and feared their 'breath' or witchcraft (*vide* pp. 204–8; 268–70) but most of them had returned after the lapse of a little time.

What private individuals and headmen alike fear is not a quarrel with one individual, but the disapproval of the village or village-section as a whole; for 'the breath of men' is but the crystallization of adverse public opinion. The man who has the support of his fellows in a dispute with one neighbour is shielded in 'the war by night'.

[1] Personal friction with a chief occurs (*vide* pp. 191–2).
[2] A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, pp. 110 ff.
[3] M. Gluckman, J. C. Mitchell, and J. A. Barnes, 'The Village Headman in British Central Africa', *Africa*, Vol. XIX (1949), pp. 91, 98, 100.

1. WILson E-5 (1954-1958)1951 FN17 Ngundu FN17
Nyakyusa

Information from men concerned

Category	No. of Men	Married	Average Total Period (Years and months)	Working Life to Time of Interview	Schooling: Elementary	Schooling: Standard Higher School	Skilled and Semi-skilled Jobs (Main working)	Place of Work: In Tanganyika only	Place of Work: Longer Contracts	Place of Work: Out of Tanganyika
Christian, middle-aged and over	[illegible]	[illegible]%	[illegible]	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	[illegible]	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	–	[illegible]%
Christian, middle-aged and over	[illegible]	[illegible]%	[illegible]	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	[illegible]	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	–	[illegible]
Pagan, young	[illegible]	[illegible]%	[illegible]	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	[illegible]%
Christian, born of pagans, young	[illegible]	[illegible]%	–	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	[illegible]
Christian, born of Christians, young	[illegible]	[illegible]%	–	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	[illegible]%
Total	[illegible]	[illegible]%	–	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	[illegible]%	[illegible]%

[illegible] Four worked in other relative studies of the Farmers.

[illegible] In [illegible] of the men we quite young, a record of the total period worked is insignificant. The lack material has on the proportion of time spent at work.

[illegible] This is not a true relative weight for Christians were educated Nyakyusa. Identifying the percentages have no much significance, but a correlation between Christianity, literacy, skilled work, and long-term employment is suggested.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

56. MOVING

Mwanjala.

'Lukama's father had built in the country of the chief, Mwaikuju, and Lukama moved and went to the country of Mwasyika. He returned to Mwaikuju's of his own accord, and when he had been there a considerable time his wife fell ill, so he moved again to Mwasyika's. After three months his fellows came to fetch him, and they put him into his own old house. They told him to choose whether he would go to his own old homestead, or to another, and of his own accord he chose to build on another site, but he occupied his own old house temporarily. After a year and a half had passed, his wife fell very ill again, and he went to Mwasyika's. He had been there a month when his fellows—those from his other age-village (in Mwaikuju country)—came to fetch him. They put him into another man's house and he lived with him there. He ate his own food for he was the owner of the homestead—a stranger eats of the bananas of strangers. After he had been there some time, but before he had built a house, his wife fell ill again, and he went to Mwasyika's country where he is still.' 166 ● 621

In reply to a question: 'It is customary to fetch a man who has moved because people mostly move on account of illness. Hence, the man's fellows say: "If we do not fetch him it appears as if it were we who had driven him away, as if we had done that which caused him to move."'

Kimbulula.

'Mwapelya moved and went to Mwankonja's country. He moved on account of his own illness. Before he had been away long his fellows (i.e. village neighbours) went to fetch him. He was only away perhaps four or five months. When they brought him back they put him into his old house, for no one had taken it. He took his food from where he had cultivated previously, for as he had not been away long there were still sweet potatoes in his field. He came the first time they went to fetch him.'

Details from various informants, in reply to a question about three new huts being built.

'Three young men have just moved from the village of Mwafula to the village of Mwamunda, because someone had accused them, saying 166 684

[p. 267]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 684 "You're making love to my wife", and the man who made the accusation was from the family of the chief. On account of this, they said: "The chief is driving us out. Let us move." All three moved because of this case and are building here. Of the three friends who were supposed to be seducing the minor chief's wife, one had been found at night-time in the suspected woman's hut, and had been fined 12s. for "making love to the woman" though they had not been found together.'

Record of G. W., 20/4/35 (*from various informants*).

754 683 166 'The chief Mwaipopo was sick, and living "in the forest", i.e in a recently settled and cultivated area at a distance from the main population of his chiefdom. Nsusa, one of the headmen of his classificatory son and heir Mwankuga (cf. p. 183) went to see him. On his return Nsusa said to Mwankuga: "Mwaipopo told me that you, Mwankuga, were poisoning him. Mwkanyamale (a doctor) says that your doctors are in the hills, you went to fetch them there." Then Mwankuga went to his father Mwaipopo and asked him: "Is it true that you are accusing me of working sorcery against you? Do you say so yourself?"

'Mwaipopo said: "Who told you of this Mwankuga?"

'Mwankuga: "Nsusa told me."

'Mwaipopo: "It was Nsusa who told me that you were working sorcery against me! Go and ask him about it, and have it out with him."

'So Mwankuga took the case to Mwakisisya (another chief) for arbitration.

'Mwakisisya said: "Nsusa is in the wrong and must pay a cow to his chief Mwankuga."

Nsusa refused.

'So Mwakisysya said: "All right, we shall go to those who know about the case", and he came with all his men to Mwenanganga, Mwaipopo's senior village headman (i.e. the representative of Mwansambe, *vide* p. 181). There a witness gave evidence, saying: "I was with Mwankuga when Nsusa told him that Mwaipopo accused him of sorcery." Nsusa denied it.

'Mwakisisya said: "I, Mwakisisya, I have finished, Nsusa must pay a cow."

'Nsusa still refused.

'Mwankuga: "Your honour the judge, and others. I have cows, I shall not ask for his cow, but let him leave my country and build elsewhere."

'Nsusa replied that he was hoeing near Mwaipopo in the forest, and

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sleeping there, and he refused to move. Then Nsusa wrote a letter (he begged a sheet of paper from the clerk of the court and got a Christian, Mbokigwe, to write for him) and sent it to Tukuyu (i.e. to the District Officer.) All the village headmen were very angry.

754
683
166

'Then one of Nsusa's cows fell into a crater-lake and was drowned. An autopsy was done and "wounds" were found in the animal's stomach. It was said that it had been killed by witchcraft. Nsusa moved to Mbambo, because, he said, "They are killing my cows". Then Mwaipopo fetched him to build in the forest. Nsusa replied that he would prefer to go home, and Mwaipopo agreed, but said he must first pay two cows. "I," said Mwaipopo, "am satisfied, but your friends there are angry, you have done wrong to Mwankuga; you can go if you pay two cows." Nsusa refused and got angry and wrote to Tukuyu again, saying: "Mwaipopo never comes to Court. He spends all his time drinking in the forest, and I, Nsusa, have judged all the cases myself in Court. Now that I am away from Court the cases are not judged; all is silent."

'The clerks at Tukuyu recognized that the stamp and the handwriting were not those of the court clerk, so they wrote to Mwaipopo. He was angry and imprisoned Nsusa for three months. The District Officer advised Mwaipopo not to let Nsusa return to his country, so when he came out of prison Nsusa built in the country of Mwangomo. This was a year or so ago, and the day before yesterday the village headmen went to fetch him. He is here, sleeping in the house of Kasisi, in Igembe. Eight men went to fetch Nsusa, carrying his household stuff and driving back the cattle. (We saw them.) 'Yes, Mwaipopo must have agreed, for if a chief drives away a man no commoner can take the initiative in fetching him back.'

'Nsusa killed a bull and also provided two pots of beer, one for the men of Igembe and one for the men of Lugombo. His own village was Lugombo, together with Itiki (cf. p. 183). He killed the bull at the house of Kasisi where he is staying. He has not yet been given a homestead.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

37. FETCHING HOME A PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL

Ilolo village, 19/9/37.

166
621

Five young men ran past our house (which was on the main village street), carrying mats and calabashes.

Angombwike: 'They have gone to fetch one of Porokoto's men who had moved elsewhere. A son of Porokoto (the chief) went with the others to fetch him back. That is as if the chief had gone himself; he loves him. It is customary for people to seize the mats of the man who has moved. If he objects they do not agree to his objections. They say: "You have spent time here. Let's be off!" They just snatch his mats. The man who has moved agrees and tells them to go, he will follow, and he comes later.

'When he comes they put him in a house where he stays for two or three days; then he asks: "How about a home, friends?" Then they point out a homestead to him. If he does not like it he refuses it and they agree and tell him to choose one for himself, which he does.

'But if he does not agree to come perhaps he sends a son to build here; perhaps he comes but after he has spent two or three days he says: "I am going; I want to return to where I was, so he goes."

'When they go to fetch a man they always run off with his mats.'

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

38. BRINGING HOME A VILLAGE HEADMAN

Mwambuputa's home-coming

Mwambuputa is the senior headman of Mwankuga who had fled to the Lake-shore plain from fear of 'the breath' of his men (cf. pp. 229–30). He was brought back with ceremony. His return also brought to a head an old land dispute (cf. pp. 188–90). For the status of the personalities concerned consult the table of villages and headmen on pp. 181–5. 621 622 166

Record of G. W., 1/5/35.

'I visited Tandale (Mwainyobolela) the village headman of Busikali and the man chosen to bury chiefs. Katolile (the village headman by inheritance of Bujenga, and a brother of Jane, Kasitile's wife) turned up with two others to fetch him to the home-coming of Mwambuputa (Mwafungo)[1] in Igembe. We picked up Kikalango (a junior son of the chief Mwaipopo) on the way and he and Tandale told me the following story: 166

"Mwambuputa went to the Lake-shore plain (MuNgonde). Then Mwankuga I (the young chief), while he was still alive, found a cow and the village headmen went off with it to fetch Mwambuputa home. Mwankuga did not go himself. This cow was kept by Mwambuputa, not eaten. It was to say to him; 'Come back, my headman.' Then Mwambuputa agreed and said: 'I will return, take my son back with you now.' So they came back. Then Mwankuga I died, and Mwambuputa came up to his funeral and put up temporary huts to live in, and he has not since been back to MuNgonde. Yes, he could have built proper houses before this ceremony, had he wished, it is not forbidden."

'Those who come to this gathering are his fathers (i.e. the men of Mwaipopo) and his friends (i.e. the men of Mwankuga), all commoners—no chiefs come to this ceremony. And in fact neither Mwaipopo nor Mwankuga II was there, nor did I see any of Mwaipopo's brothers. Kikalango and Kititu (junior sons of Mwaipopo) came to accompany me. We arrived at Mwambuputa's huts with Ngulyo, about noon. About 100 men were present. I noticed Mwambuputa himself, Kakuju, Ngulyo, Tandale, Katotile, and Mwaseba (Kabolile). 166 183

[1] Some informants used the name 'Mwambuputa', others 'Mwafungo'. To avoid confusion we use only the former.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)195! FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166
783

'I was told: "The meaning of the ceremony is this: Mwambuputa says to us: 'My fathers, you sent for me, I have come'; and then they show him a place to build, saying: 'You, friend, this is your homestead here.'" At noon Kakuju explained: "Now Mwansambe the senior headman of Mwaipopo (actually he has inherited this position and lives in another chiefdom, coming here for cases and ceremonies) has gone to announce to Mwaipopo that: 'Your child has returned'. Mwaipopo will send him back saying to him: 'Thank you for telling me, my headman, do you go and perform the ceremony and ritual (*ukatendekesye*, *ukanyagule*) he is your child, you are his father.' Then he will return here and say: 'I have told Mwaipopo, let us go and show Mwambuputa his new homestead.' These huts of Mwambuputa's are on the old men's side, it is Bujege here. He will be given a homestead in Igembe. He had no place in Igembe, he was a stranger. So after the funeral of Mwankuga I, he went to the old men and was given a homestead, and bananas to eat here. A man named Mwanbenja had them before, but he moved to Mwangomo's country. Now they will go and give him a homestead in Igembe. He did build before in Igembe, but he spent a long time on the plain, and others have built there." (For another version cf. pp. 188–90.)

'Then Kakuju asked Kikalango: "Have they told Mwankuga?" Kikalango replied: "I do not know." Kakuju explained to me: "They should tell him, 'Your man has returned'." Mwansambe (Mwegama) came back and called the old village headmen together for a discussion. Then he led us off to Igembe, to the homestead of Mbuluko Mwaipopo a cross-cousin (*untani*) of the chief. Just before we got there Mwansambe turned to Tandale and the other senior men and said: "Look after Mwambuputa in the war by night, look after him in dreams."

'Kititu and Kikalango explained that "Mbuluko is Mwakalungu and Mwaipopo;[1] now they have come here he will have to move and give place to Mwambuputa. At first he refused, but they pacified him. He cannot refuse, he will move. They just considered where it would be best for the village headman to be." And, previously, on the way, they had told me that to whatever house we came, the householder would have to move and give place.

'Two bulls, one full-grown, and one a little smaller, had been promised by Mwambuputa, and were brought with us. Mwanjinga, son of Mwansambe killed them both. Mwansambe said to the village headmen: "We give Mwambuputa to you, Mwakwese, and you (here he mentioned other village headmen whose names are not in my notes). He was in exile (*ndisu*), he has returned." A woman, wife of the house-

[1] The implication is that Mbuluko inherited through his mother from his grandfather, Mwaipopo I, but we did not pursue this.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166
783

holder, brought out a dish of cooked beans and set them down. The two men nearest took and shared them. The division of meat was carried out by Mwansambe in collaboration with his senior colleagues. It was as follows:

1 ribs and saddle (*akakwa*) to Mwaipopo (chief)
1 ribs and saddle to Mwankuga (young chief)
1 hump to Mwaipopo
1 hump and liver to me (sent with me when I went home).

'It was explained that "If it had been an ordinary killing we would have sent both ribs and saddle to Mwaipopo, one for Kalinga, and one for Kalobo (the two chief wives), now we send one to Mwankuga because it is his ceremony."

1 leg to the men of Bujege
1 leg to the men of Bujenga
1 leg to the men of Nkyemo
1 leg to the men of Ndupando
} 4 senior age-villages of Mwaipopo

1 leg to the men of Igembe
1 leg to the men of Ipoma
2 legs to the men of Njesi and their juniors the men of Mponga
} 4 senior age-villages of Mwankuga

'Mwakatika of Mponga, the headman of the village immediately junior to Njesi had not come, so Kakuju of Njesi divided two legs, one for his own village Njesi, and one for Mponga.

'I went home with Kititu and Kikalango and two children sent to carry my meat. On the way Kititu said: "The leg of Igembe will be divided up at Mwambuputa's place (i.e. where it was killed) into four parts. The four villages of Igembe will each get their share: each of these four groups will have a pot, but the meat will be no further divided.

Igembe, 1 pot
Lugombo, 1 pot
Katumba, 1 pot
Nkibonde, 1 pot ('They eat with the men of Igembe'.)"

'(This was confirmed the following day by a young man of Katumba who had eaten some of the meat.)

'Kabolile Mwaseba of Ipoma came with his younger men also. Mwalisu Mwaijonga is his assistant headman and he was there, but Kabolile cooked all the meat together, in one pot. It was explained that "While in Igembe we have many villages it is not so in Ipoma.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166
783

There is Ndongoti, true, but they always eat with their elders. The men of Igembe are the oldest of all, they are inheriting from the men of Bujege as they die. They are senior to the men of Ipoma who are their juniors. The men of Ipoma did go through the 'coming out', but with their elders. Mwalisu has no separate village."

'About the ceremony I was told "Mwambuputa took the initiative, he sent a message to Mansambe saying: 'I have returned' and Mansambe told the others." And someone else explained that, "Before Mwambuputa killed the bulls we did not see that he had come back; now he has returned." '

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

him, but if they find he has no cows with him they are angry, they do 775
not receive him with rejoicing. If they do not kill some cattle at the burial of a dead man without doubt illness will come to the home. I they consult an oracle then the oracle says: 'Your fathers beneath are angry because you did not kill cattle for the burial of So-and-so.' So then they go and kill a beast. When they kill cattle at a death they do not kill for the mourners to eat, no, but they say it is that the fathers may receive him well, that they may not be angry.

The shades manifest themselves to the living in dreams or as snakes, and they come by night to the homestead to eat food set aside for them in the sacred grove or the senior wife's hut.

Whenever food is cooked a little is left for the shades. It is said that the shades come by night to eat the food. Some people say that they have seen the shades when they come to warm themselves by the fire in the house. If the fire of the shades blazes up, and I look, it is extinguished immediately, and if someone turns round the hut is quite dark. People eat the food which they put for the shades, they do not throw it away. Sometimes, if the food rots, they say it is because the shades have eaten from it. People say that if they do not put aside food the shades will take away the fertility of the fields and we will not have much food.

The hearth is a shrine: the food and beer are left overnight 775
beside the hearth or on the hearth-bricks. Every good housewife 778
has a log of firewood which she keeps by her all her life: she takes it with her when she moves and it is burnt at her funeral. 'It is the shades'. The shades [of her husband] pick bits from it when they want to warm themselves at the fire.' And the wife herself must keep out of the way: 'Some men refuse to let their wives sleep near the fire at night, saying: "You will drive away the shades."'

The association of a small grove of bananas in each homestead with the shades has already been stressed. There meat and beer offered in sacrifice are left. There is also a connection, most obvious among chiefs, but occurring among commoners also, between the shade and a chosen tree. In Ngonde Mwenefumbo said:

The fathers prayed at the grave of their father. If a man moved he 775
took *ilindu*, a branch of the tree at the grave, and carried it to his new 778
home and there put it in a tree he had chosen, saying: 'Now you have 166
arrived, Father.' He poured out beer and flour there and invoked all his fathers and grandfathers and ancestors, saying: 'May I sleep! Gather and eat these things! May the children sleep.' Then he blew out water and finished.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

175 to take up arms and lead the people to fight. The Ngoni were temporarily beaten off, but at a later attack the Ngonde, under Gwa Sapasi, submitted. By 1875 he had been succeeded by Mwafongo, who was Kyungu at the time of the first visit of the Europeans. By that time, Arab slave- and ivory-traders had established themselves in Ngonde, and for the next twenty years they disputed the territory with the Europeans. After Dr. Law's voyage to Ngonde in 1875 a Free Church of Scotland Mission station and a post of the African Lakes Corporation were set up at Karonga. The Arabs sometimes traded with the Ngonde and sometimes fought them. In one fight the Kyungu Mwafongo was killed and Mwabulambo was elected in his place. The agent of the African Lakes Corporation tried to protect the people against the Arabs, and barely succeeded in maintaining his own position, until in 1889 H. H. Johnston made treaties with the chiefs and Arabs in Ngonde, and the country came into the sphere of influence of the British South Africa Company. In 1895 Mlozi, the leading Arab, who had not accepted British rule, was caught and hanged, and Ngonde was incorporated in the British Protectorate of Central Africa.

The inter-territorial boundary between Nyasaland and German East Africa (now Tanganyika Territory) cut across the area of the Kyungu's influence, which used to extend some fifteen miles north of the Songwe river, and some of the western territories were included in Northern Rhodesia.

The new government forbade elephant hunting without licence, and so killed the ivory trade, a main source of revenue; taxes were collected, and small subsidies paid out of them to selected chiefs and nobles. Mwakabaga, who became Kyungu in 1904, was the first Kyungu to sit with his people judging their cases. After his death the nobles chose Mwangalaba to succeed him, and in his reign the custom of hoeing (*milasa*) for the Kyungu lapsed till 1927, when it was revived in a modified form by the next Kyungu, Peter. The latter was the younger brother of Mwangalaba, and acted as his assistant in 1912 and as regent in 1927, succeeding to the full position of Kyungu in 1932. He had made a private fortune in industry and used it consistently to maintain his public position. He left Mbande, the traditional capital which had been dominated by the nobles of Ngonde, and built a new one at Bwiba, half-way between Mbande and the government Boma at Karonga.[1]

Demography

161 *Ngonde.* In 1931 the Ngonde population had increased from 18,852 in 1921 to 30,731, or by 63 per cent. In 1945 it again doubled itself, reaching the figure of 62,136. The average density in the district is under fifteen per square mile.[2]

Nyakyusa country is thickly populated in the south around the lake-shore plain. Its density is about six times as great as that of Ngonde country.[3]

161 In recent years there has been a large movement of Nyakyusa from Rungwe district into Mbeya district, into the areas east and west of Mbeya, where the average density is over 100 persons to the square mile, with a maximum of over 400 to the square mile in one village near Mbeya.[4]

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 67–9; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 23–4; Maugham, 2, 1929, pp. 7 and 134–41; Livingstone, 1921, pp. 237 sq.; Laws, 1934, pp. 100 sq.; Du Plessis, 1929, pp. 296–322; Johnston, 1897 pp. 72–6; Lugard, 1893, vol. i, pp. 42 sq., and 131–2; Duff, 1903, p. 10.

[2] *1931* and *1945 Census*, p. 15.

[3] *Handbook of German East Africa*, p. 68; Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 7.

[4] Hall, 1945.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

far as as men compete for land that rules of tenure are developed among them. And where competition is weakest there the rules are least strict.

In Nyakyusa society every married man holds land of his own for building and agriculture, for there is still enough for all, and pastures his cattle on the grasslands of some village group. His land rights, in which, as we have seen, his wives and children participate, are conditioned at every point by his membership of a particular village, his allegiance to a particular chief and by the particular cultural idiom of his tribal group.

Before the " coming out " a boy's village, as we have seen, is built on land assigned for the purpose by the parent village. A block of land for building is set aside by the great-commoner in consultation with the other men as their sons begin to reach the age of leaving home, and there the boys are often joined later by contemporaries, sons of other villages of men. At first building sites alone are needed, but later, as the boys grow up and get married, they need gardens too and bring the adjacent ground under cultivation. In doing so they are careful not to infringe upon their fathers' land rights, they either hoe land which was previously unowned[1] or else that which has been specifically granted to them by the parent village. Into the nature of such grants of garden land before the " coming out "—whether they are block grants by the parent village as a whole to the boys' village as a whole, or separate grants by individuals to individuals—I omitted to enquire.

At the " coming out " a whole tract of land is formally allotted to each village of young men by the old chief and his great-commoners and within this tract individuals take up garden land by hoeing it. At the " coming out " it is said that " everything is made new," boundaries are redrawn and the new chiefdoms and villages of the young men are ceremonially incorporated.

The situation in which individual land rights in relation to the village group and the chief are clearest to an observer is that of the taking up of land after a move, for it is in this situation that disputes are most frequent.

Mainly owing to their religious beliefs movement from one place to another is constant among the pagan Nyakyusa. If a man or his wife or child falls sick and does not respond quickly to medical treatment the witchcraft of neighbours is at once suspected as a possible cause ; there are always other possible causes too so diviners are consulted in order to decide between them ; but if the suspicion of neighbourly witchcraft is confirmed then the cure for the sickness is held to lie in moving. In every village " some people " are vaguely believed to have the power of

[1] Vide infra, pp.41-2.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 754 witchcraft, which consists in the ability to translate evil impulses into effective though immaterial actions and thus to cause sickness and death; but it is never clearly known who all these people are. And so the coincidence of an obstinate illness with any quarrel or social tension of any kind between neighbours gives rise to a suspicion that witchcraft is at work. If the diviners support this theory then almost the only thing to be done nowadays is to move and get out of range; for witchcraft cannot act at a distance. In the old days an alternative course of action was [695] open to the sick man, he might identify the witch with the aid of the *mwafi* ordeal and get him expelled from the chiefdom. Expulsions for witchcraft still occur to-day, but only rarely, for the *mwafi* ordeal, the most certain detector of witches, is no longer legal. There is, however, nothing to prevent a man who thinks himself bewitched from moving. Now this fact of constant movement is of the utmost importance in determining the Nyakyusa system of land tenure since it tends to prevent the development of any exclusive attachment to particular pieces of ground. And the cause of this constant movement is mainly, though not entirely, the fear of witchcraft.

For ordinary commoners only their immediate neighbours are believed to be dangerous and sick men therefore sometimes move only from one village to another of the same chiefdom; but very many move right outside to another chiefdom altogether, preferring to make assurance doubly sure and to put a long distance between themselves and their spiritual persecutors. And in the case of certain men of a high social status, for whom a wider circle is dangerous, it is held to be quite essential to leave the chiefdom.

166 I have no detailed statistics on moving but I estimate that, among the pagan Nyakyusa, at least 80% of the married men have, at some time or other, moved from the chiefdoms in which they first cultivated gardens of their own. They may stay away for a few weeks only, they may stay away for thirty years or they may never return at all. If, however, the chiefdom from which they first moved is the one which they regard as home then they usually do return to it in the end. A man's home chiefdom is pre-eminently the one in which his father lives, or, if dead, spent most of his life and is now buried. And this is normally the one in which he himself also was born and brought up and in which he first took up land.

166 621 When a man moves from his home chiefdom, his village neighbours there, in the majority of cases, follow him within two months and ceremonially invite him back with a show of force by seizing his belongings and carrying them off home to his old village. They may really like and respect him and if, as is usually the case, he has moved because of sick-

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ness, they are most anxious to prove to him that his tacit suspicions are unfounded, they wish to rid themselves of the slur of witchcraft. To invite him back is to express affection for him and so to demonstrate that he could not have been bewitched for, see, everyone likes him ! 166 621

Such an invitation is often, but by no means always accepted. If the man refuses the first time then the villagers may or may not go again later to ask him back ; but if he was an important member of the village—the great-commoner, a noted doctor, the son of an old family—the invitations may go on being repeated for years ; and he will then almost certainly return in the end. Whether or not he accepts a particular invitation depends again largely upon his own health and that of his family and upon his relations with his new neighbours at the time it is made. Sickness and suspected witchcraft, or quarrels and insults in the new village will incline him to go home. And a man can always return, even without an invitation, unless he was originally expelled for being himself a witch.

I asked a young man of Selya whether of those who moved from their home chiefdoms the majority came back again or not. " The majority do come back, only a few stay permanently away. Some move for better food, the great majority because they fall sick and wish to recollect themselves in the tranquillity of another chiefdom—this is the main reason for moving ; but they come back in the end. Whenever a man is slighted in the country to which he has gone, whenever he falls sick there—back he goes home ! For when he is slighted he remembers that in his own country he belongs to an old family and that it is not as if he had moved under suspicion of being a witch, he only moved because he fell sick, and now he will return home. A man does not lose his affection for home, for there is his sacred grove, his fathers' graves. But the real reason for returning is that in every other place a man is less respected than at home, [609] he is made light of ; but in his own country he is known to belong to an old family and is treated with great respect, his neighbours call to mind the days when he and they herded cows together as boys and the fact that his father is buried among them. That is why people go home again."

" And what of those who move to find better food ? " I enquired. " They come back too ; if they are slighted in the place to which they have moved they come back home."

" For example there was a man who built here in the village of Igembe, he prospered greatly and his house was very long ; we young men grew up to find him here and thought he was one of our own people, we had no idea that he belonged to Masoko. And then one day he was insulted, and immediately he moved and went home. He had lived with us for many, many years."

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

●166 425 In discussing the taking up of land after a move it is therefore necessary to distinguish clearly between men who move to villages in which they are newcomers and those who return, after a period of absence, to their home villages.

166 425 622 624 621 Normally land for building and gardens is granted to a stranger by the villagers concerned acting through their great-commoner, not by the chief, who is usually informed but seldom interferes. Only if a member of the chief's own family is moving within the chiefdom from one village to another or if a very important stranger comes from outside, he may go to the chief and ask for a building plot, and the chief may then exercise his right of overlordship and grant the request. But this is a special and unusual case. Village land is primarily governed by village relationships. It is villagers who grant land to an ordinary newcomer and thereby accept him as one of themselves. His own wishes are taken into account whenever possible ; if he sees a piece of ground which attracts him and no one else has a claim to it then it will be his.

An old Kukwe great-commoner thus explained the granting of land to a stranger : " First the stranger from another country comes to a friend in this village and says that he wishes to build here, then the friend brings him to me, the great-commoner,—or he may come directly to me in the first place ; and I go and tell the chief. Then the chief, according [43] to the old custom, would say ' Good ! Go and cut a banana bunch for him,' and I would cut a banana bunch from my own homestead, not from anyone else's, and the chief would send one of his wives to me with cooked food for our guest the stranger. This custom is now no longer followed in our country but in the more remote chiefdoms they still cut bananas and cook food in such cases ; here the stranger now just comes and is not given anything. And again when he wishes to begin building we go and tell the chief, who tells us to give him a plot to build on, and then my friends and I choose a place for him." " Does not the chief have a say in choosing the plot ? " I enquired. " No, not the chief ; does he know the details of our land-rights ? He does not. It is we who choose the place for the newcomer. But if he does not like the plot we give him and has himself seen a place which he prefers he will ask us for it and maybe we will give it him." " Do not people sometimes go directly to the chief to ask for land ? " " No, they always come first to us, the commoners, not to the chief ; how should a man presume to approach the chief by himself ? No, a newcomer always approaches us, and it is we who inform the chief. I, the great-commoner, may go alone to tell the chief or I may take the stranger with me, as I please." And a young Kukwe chief confirmed this, with perhaps a shade more emphasis on the part played by the chief : " The stranger goes first to the great-commoner

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and makes his request for land, then the great-commoner goes to the chief and informs him that so and so has come with a request for land, and he asks his opinion as to which piece to give the stranger. Then the chief suggests that perhaps the great-commoner knows of a suitable plot. So the chief and the great-commoner discuss it together and decide. Then the great-commoner shows the plot to the stranger." 166 425 621 622 624

It is quite clear in my evidence that, though the normal custom is to consult the chief when a newcomer is given land, yet the newcomer's title is in no way invalidated if the great-commoner omits to do so at the time and simply tells the chief later after the grant has been made.

So much for the initial reception of a stranger and the grant of a building plot, the next step is the grant of garden land. But before discussing this we must emphasize the willingness with which strangers are received both by the villagers and the chief. Men are still scarcer than land in most places and the prestige and prosperity of villages and chiefdoms is increased by each addition to their membership. Strangers are always given a house to sleep in while building their own and are usually given food as well, both formally by the chief and great-commoner and informally by the neighbours. The great-commoner who told me that the formal custom of giving food had lapsed in his country belongs to the chiefdom which adjoins Rungwe mission, a small chiefdom to which very considerable immigration has taken place in the last forty years; there the relative scarcity of land is reflected in a decline of hospitality to newcomers, though none have yet been refused land. But the usual custom still is to receive them generously. "It is an ancient custom amongst us to welcome strangers, so that the chiefdom may increase and flourish." [431]

In giving garden-land to a newcomer the procedure differs slightly according to the value of the land in question. The great-commoner takes him out and shows him, if the land is scarce and valuable, an exactly demarcated piece, if it is cheap and plentiful, a vaguely defined area within which he can hoe where he likes. In the upland chiefdoms, for example, the best maize and bean plots are scarce; men hoe the same ground year in year out, planting maize and beans alternately in it or, sometimes, maize only with an interval of a few months fallow each year; and in this case the boundaries of each man's ground are precisely marked. But for the growing of sweet-potatoes and millet there is plenty of good land available and men hoe more or less where they please. "A stranger named Tusekelege," I was told, "came to the village of Ibungila (in Kukwe country). Amongst other things he asked for a maize-garden, so they gave him the ground of a man Mwasumbi who had moved to Masoko. They told Tusekelege that he could hoe only the same extent of ground 166 425 621 624

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 425 621 624

as Mwasumbi had, because there were some other maize-gardens adjoining it. The other land he asked for was not near anyone else's gardens, so he was told that he could hoe just where he liked."

Such is the custom of giving land to a newcomer, whether he comes from a different chiefdom altogether or from another village of the same chiefdom. He has no claim to any particular land but the villagers welcome him gladly and give some to him. If, however, a man returns after a period of absence to his home village then he has a claim, varying in strength in different circumstances, to enter again into possession of his old building site and gardens. But his claim is never an absolute one, it depends upon his relationship to the villagers and to the chief; they it is who decide it.

166 423 621

Let us first consider building sites. If a man moves from his home village leaving his house standing there and another is given the site, and if he returns before the house has fallen into disrepair, before it has had to be rebuilt, then the occupier will be evicted in his favour, the villagers will always admit his claim to that site. But only, of course, if they are in general prepared to have him back in the village; if he has been expelled for witchcraft or some other serious crime he has no possible claim at all.

When men move and leave their houses behind it usually but not always implies an intention to return in a few months. If they move because of sickness and the suspicion of witchcraft men are often invited back, as we have seen, and sometimes they accept the first invitation; and then, if they and their families remain healthy, all is well. If a more protracted absence is intended from the first then the normal custom is to pull down the house and to carry the bamboos with one.

A young Kukwe great-commoner gave me from his own experience an example of the eviction of a man in occupation of another's house: "While my father was alive I fell sick and moved to Mwankenja's country leaving my house behind without taking it down. And I returned quite soon again, I was not a year away. But meanwhile, when I first moved, a stranger came and was put into my house, he was not told that I might be returning; so he went into my house—but as he was a bachelor the house was too big[1] for him. Afterwards my friends remembered me and went to bring me back, and I came with them; and I said that as another man had been put into my house and as I was myself an owner of the soil (i.e. he was the son of an old family and so had the right to choose any unoccupied plot for himself anywhere he pleased) I would build elsewhere. But they would not hear of it and said that I must go back to my own house. So they informed the newcomer that the owner had returned and gave him another place."

[1] This is a boast, irrelevant to the main argument.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17 Nyakyusa

Again if the villagers expect a man to return and if they themselves wish him to do so, then his homestead is normally kept for him. If he refuses their first formal invitation to return they may give his homestead to a newcomer meanwhile, but only provisionally ; and if he does return later, whether by another formal invitation or on his own initiative, then the newcomer is moved elsewhere. 166 423 621

The difficulty arises when a man comes back unexpectedly to find that a newcomer has been given his site unconditionally. Perhaps the villagers are indifferent to his return and so have omitted to keep his site for him ; but far more frequently it is that he has been many years away and has refused several invitations to return, and so has led the villagers to think that he is never going to come back at all. But, whatever the reason, if his site has been given unconditionally to a newcomer, who has then built his own house upon it, the villagers cannot possibly evict the newcomer in his favour ; his only chance of getting the old site back lies in an indirect and tactful approach to the chief. The chief, as overlord, has the power to evict the newcomer if he chooses, but he may not choose to do so. And, if he does not, then the man will have to build elsewhere. 166 423 425 621 [622]

I was discussing these points with one of our servants whose father had recently moved from Bulindanajo, his home village in Mwaipopo's chiefdom in Selya, to a village in the adjoining chiefdom. I asked him to explain to me his father's potential rights, if he were to return later to his home village, to enter again into possession of his old homestead.

" If a man, like my father for instance, has moved and his friends wish him to return they go to fetch him back, but if he then at first refuses to return they may put in a stranger on his homestead. [1]But in doing so they inform the stranger that the owner of the homestead is away in such a country, that he, the stranger, is just eating the bananas meanwhile (i.e. is only in temporary possession) and that, when the owner returns, he will have to leave this place and build on another site which they will then give him for his own. In that case when my father returns, if he wishes for his old site, his friends will move the newcomer away, because they have told him beforehand, and my father will have his own old site.

" As it happens, however, when my father did actually move recently they did not put any newcomer on to his site, but Mwakyoma . . . . one of his neighbours chose to build there himself. And him they do not inform of my father's rights, for he is already aware of them. If my father returns later his friends will turn Mwakyoma out telling him to go back to his own old site. For it always happens with a good homestead on which bananas do well that people covet it, and when the owner moves,

[1] This is a boast, irrelevant to the main argument.

[This footnote refers to p. 36. – Analyst]

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

●166 423 425 621 someone, coveting the vacant place, goes and builds there. But if it is a neighbour he knows that it is not his own and when the owner returns he relinquishes it and goes back to where he was before.

"It may happen, however, that the owner of a homestead moves and lives many years away; his friends go to fetch him but he continually refuses to return, until they begin to think that he has moved finally and forever. And, in that case, they may, perhaps, put a man in there without informing him of the existence of any other owner. The newcomer builds a house and thrives. And if the previous owner then after all comes back they do not evict the newcomer; shame prevents them, for they never told him of any such possibility. Then the old owner, as it were my father for example, seeing that another is in occupation of his site goes to a different village in the same chiefdom and asks for a site. But the great-commoner to whom he goes asks him why he is approaching him—'It is true,' my father then answers, 'that I have a place in Bulindanajo and the graves of my family and my trees are there, but another man has [622] built upon it.' Then the great-commoner gives him a site, but he also goes to tell the chief what has happened. Then the chief, Mwaipopo, summons the men of Bulindanajo and asks them why they have driven my father away, on his return to the country, from the site that was always his. The villagers admit their mistake but explain to the chief that, as they thought my father was never going to return at all, they put in another man. So they discuss the matter; and the chief, if he so wishes, may summon the present occupier and tell him that his friends deceived him by omitting to inform him of the probable return of the owner of that site and that now, as the owner has returned, they will have to move him and give him another site; and thus the chief evicts the present holder. But such an action must come from the chief, his neighbours cannot evict the occupier, for they gave him no initial warning. So then my father would return to his own old site. But maybe in such a case my father would himself prefer to build elsewhere, he would say to his friends that, as another had built on his site, he would be content to watch over his family graves from afar and to build in a different place."

As for his old garden-land, to that too a man has a title on returning to his home village, but it is only scarce and valuable ground that he will ever trouble to claim if others are in possession. At first, when he moves from the village, his fellows, if they intend to invite him back, keep his gardens for him just as they keep his house site; but if he refuses to return at first then maybe the ground is given to others. But he can always recover it later when he does return. It is easier to get old gardens back than it is to get a house site, for no great hardship is involved for an

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

evicted man. And it is even possible sometimes to make good a claim to the old gardens of one's father, even although one has never hoed them at all oneself; this is more difficult however, the claim may be refused or alternatively a compromise may be effected by dividing the land in question between the claimant and the present possessors. 166 423 425 621

As an example of the keeping of gardens vacant for a man who is expected to return we may cite the story of Nyambo, a Kukwe, as it was told to me by a young man who lived near him. This case is of particular interest as it brings out two points to which we have not yet referred; firstly that the chief himself sometimes takes the initiative in inviting a man back, and that his doing so widens the invitation to include all the villages of the chiefdom, not only the man's old home village; and secondly that it possible to build in one village of a chiefdom and own gardens in another. This second point will be discussed again later. 166 423 621 622

" A man named Nyambo moved because eight of his cows all died in quick succession and he thought that his neighbours, maybe, had bewitched them; but he moved without telling people of this reason. After he had spent eight months away, however, the chief sent his great-commoner to enquire of him why he had moved and left his chief wondering, and Nyambo replied that he had moved because of the death of eight of his cows all within a few days of one another, a fact which had led him to suspect that his neighbours hated him; and he would never, he told the great-commoner to inform the chief, be persuaded to return. So the great-commoner reported all this to the chief. Whereupon the chief suggested that it would be a good thing to go and fetch Nyambo back forcibly. And he, the chief, went in person with a crowd of men from Nyambo's old village and they just seized upon his furniture and drove off his cows and took them all home. But even so Nyambo refused to return and spent another two days where he was. Then they sent again to urge him to come back and at last he agreed because the chief himself had begged him to do so; he said, however, that he would prefer not to build in his old place, because his cows had died there, but rather across the river in the village of a different great-commoner. And so he did. None the less he continued to hoe his old gardens, and he still does so. They had left his gardens vacant because they had always meant to fetch him back. Now that he has returned and gone to live in another village they have given his old building site to a newcomer from Masoko, but his gardens are still his own."

The story of Kalonga, another Kukwe, exemplifies a man's right to reclaim his own old gardens. It will be noticed that the ground which he reclaimed was of particular value. 166 423 425

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 423 425 "Kalonga had moved from the country of Kissokola to Masoko and other people had taken his ground and hoed it. It is the kind of ground which we call *umfweje*, rich soil near water. Kalonga had moved because of illness, several of his children had fallen sick and more than one had died. After he moved his neighbours never went to invite him back.

166 423 425 622 "Now Kalonga himself did not come back to live, but he brought back his mother. She had gone with him, but then she began to complain that he had taken her to an unpleasant country and she would prefer to go home; so he came back just to build a house for her. He did not build for her in his old village but asked another great-commoner (of the same chiefdom) for a site; he did however go to the chief to reclaim his old garden (the *umfweje* to which we have already referred). Now four men had divided the ground between them; they had approached the great-commoner and asked for it and he had referred them to the chief, fearing that he might be blamed for giving the ground away if Kalonga should return subsequently. And the chief agreed that they should take it, so as not to let it lie idle.

"So when Kalonga came and reclaimed it the chief pointed out that he had moved and left the country (and so had no claim to the land). But no, Kalonga replied, he had not moved, for see he had brought back his mother and built a house for her, which was exactly equivalent to living in the chiefdom himself. And the chief admitted his argument and agreed that, so soon as the present holders had reaped their standing crops, he should re-enter into possession of his own ground. So now Kalonga comes regularly with his younger brothers and they hoe the land quickly (being many) for their mother and go home again. Kalonga is of an old family and his father is buried in that chiefdom."

166 423 425 622 624 And finally the story of Enoch the son of Mwakajileke, another Kukwe, well illustrates the more limited rights of a son to claim his father's old gardens which he himself has never hoed.

"Mwakajileke built in the village of Ibungila, and he died there in 1925. He had three sons, all of whom moved after his death; one of these sons, whose name was Enoch, went and built at Kyimbila; and meanwhile the chief gave the garden-land of Mwakajileke to other people. Part of this land was cultivated by a commoner named Gwaselya but he too, later on, moved into another chiefdom and the land was left unused. Then Enoch returned to the country to find that no one was now hoeing the ground which his father had used to hoe, so he approached Mwangokile, the great-commer, and asked for it: 'As no one is hoeing your father's land,' Mwangokile replied, 'you may go and hoe it yourself, but there are some other men who want it and they have already asked me for it, so I must divide it between you.' So he went with them and marked

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 out boundaries, drawing lines on the ground; he divided the land into
423 three portions, one for each. The others were strangers to the chiefdom
425 but had taken a fancy to that piece of land."

622 The sentence in this story "The chief gave the garden land of
624 Mwakajileke to other people" deserves remark for it in no way implies any other custom than the one we have previously described. And it illustrates the dangers of relying too much on verbal statements of custom. When a stranger is given land by a great-commoner after reference to the chief he is commonly said to have been given it by the chief. The chief, from one point of view, is the overlord and the great-commoner acts for him. But, and this is an essential qualification, the great-commoner nearly always so acts for the chief and, save exceptionally, it is wholly incorrect for the chief to grant land directly. The great-commoner acts not only for the chief but also as the representative and leader of the villagers; and in relation to them the chief cannot exercise his rights of overlordship save occasionally and in particular circumstances.

166 The old Kukwe great-commoner whom we have already quoted
423 explained this to me very clearly: "Occasionally one of his own men will
425 ask a chief to give him ground to hoe in another village, 'If indeed you
621 say that the land is yours!' (challenging the chief to assert his right of
622 overlordship). Then the chief agrees that all the land is most certainly his; but still, if it is possible, he tells the man to go to the commoners of that village and ask them for land. If the chief does not do this (but makes a direct grant of land) we blame him for not being a true chief: 'Who is it,' we ask him, 'that has built up this country? Did you do it all by yourself? It is we the commoners who have built it up! And how is it, then, that you give this man land without consulting us?'" [754 Nor is the censure of his people mere idle talk for a Nyakyusa chief, he
626] fears that they may bewitch him, that the witches among them, led by the great-commoners of the several villages, may come in dreams at night and cause him to sicken or to die.

166 So much for the initial grants of land to newcomers and the rights of
423 men returning to their home chiefdoms. If a man goes back, after moving, to a chiefdom which is in no sense his home, where, that is to say, he is not a member of an old family but in which he has himself spent some years, he is treated as a newcomer. He is welcomed but he has no rights to the ground, whether building-site or gardens, which he previously occupied.

423 Once established in a village, however, any man can hoe any unowned
425 ground within its borders and thereby make it his own. A newcomer for

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 In his tenure of land every Nyakyusa man is related to some chief
622 who is his overlord. But their relationship is not confined to the single element of land-tenure, it is just as many-sided and complex as is any other human relationship ; and even as we abstract from it the particular set of facts that immediately concerns us here we must at once refer them again to it if they are to be intelligible.

●166 When a newcomer is received into a village and given land the chief, as we have seen, is normally a party to the villagers' action, and in most
423 cases he himself ceremonially welcomes the newcomer if he comes from
622 outside the chiefdom by sending to him a present of cooked food. He has gained a new subject and his power and prestige are thereby increased.
[427] As men are quite free to move from one tiny chiefdom to another and as land is still relatively plentiful the phenomenon of rent does not exist among the pagan Nyakyusa, there is no direct charge ever specifically made in return for the right to build and cultivate. Nevertheless a chief is a chief and his subjects' land is his as well as theirs and they are under certain obligations to him.

622 Among these obligations that of providing cooked food for the
551 ceremonies of the chief's own immediate family is probably the most
[585] important. When a chief's daughter, for example, is getting married women from all over the chiefdom bring food to entertain the bridegroom and his friends on the day that they bring the bulk of the cattle. The obligation to bring food, though not a legal one, is both reciprocal and conventional. The chief is expected to kill one or two of the beasts to feed his people and if he is mean about this, killing one where he should have killed two, then on the next occasion his people are more reluctant
[626] to bring food. But there is also the sense of shame constraining individuals. If the majority of households in a village provide food for a chief on such an occasion, and the majority I think nearly always do so, then the shameful meanness and unconventionality of defaulters is the subject of adverse comment among them.

A chief also has the traditional right, still widely admitted to-day, to send and take food, especially milk and bananas, from his subjects if he has need of it. And we have seen already that men with more than one wife are prompted to retain *busongo* bananas for themselves in order to meet his demands without upsetting the peace of their households. This
[177] traditional right however is known not to be admitted by the European Administration, on the grounds that a salary has taken its place, and is therefore beginning to fall into disuse. Chiefs, I was told, often fear to exercise it lest some man refuse obedience and take a complaint to the *Boma*, nor are they willing to confine their demands to those men of whose compliance they are certain. As the salary of an ordinary chief,

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

425 him if it was his idea that the village should die out and leave him, the
622 great-commoner, without men ? As he had moved, the great-commoner
624 would have continued, the place was presumably distasteful to him and it had now been allotted to another man. The claim would certainly have been disallowed ! "

425 The examples in this paper have been taken almost entirely from
797 pagan families. For Christians the situation is very much the same except where they live actually on mission land, there they are tenants of
427 the Mission concerned and pay rent to it. And Christians, wherever they live, tend to be more stable in their occupation of land, since they are not forever moving in fear of witchcraft.

7. *CONCLUSION*

178 I have striven in this paper to make the individual land-rights
423 possessed by Nyakyusa to-day intelligible to the European reader and to demonstrate to him their determining factors. Of these factors the following are the most important. The Nyakyusa were until recently an isolated and primitive people and so bring with them into the modern world a legal tradition based upon small social groups. This tradition is being inevitably modified both in theory and practice under modern conditions, but not out of all recognition ; for they are still a relatively isolated people and the system of indirect rule secures them, in general, against arbitrary legal changes. Within their legal system individuals have, as in any system they must have, certain precisely defined and enforceable rights—among them rights in land.

Many kinds of land, however, are plentiful, though less so than of old owing to the growth of population, the opening of new markets for food and the recent introduction of ploughs. And this cheapness of land is reflected at times in a lack of rigour in the enforcement of rights in it which is unfamiliar to the European observer. Sufficient land for all is a fundamental condition of Nyakyusa society in its present form, which has no place for a landless man.

● [166 And, finally, the habitual movement of men with their families from
68[] one village to another to escape the witchcraft of their neighbours leads to a constant transfer of homesteads and gardens and is the main cause of difficulty in the administration of their laws of property in land and trees. This difficulty is greatest in the case of the newly introduced coffee trees which need continuous tending.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tive capital, Tukuyu, and it is still thus used to distinguish this group 101
from others. This group will here be referred to as " *Nyakyusa proper*." Those in the North of the district to the West and East of Mount Rungwe call themselves *Kukwe* and *Mwamba* respectively, and there is a group of chiefdoms to the East, under the Livingstone Mountains, called *Selya*. All these four groups share a common culture, distinguished by minor [184]
local peculiarities of dialect and custom. Immediately bordering the Nyakyusa to the South West are the *Ngonde* (Europeanized as " *Konde* ") in Northern Nyasaland ; they belong to the same cultural group but are distinguished by greater differences of custom and speech than the others. I have not yet visited them.

In the hills to the West of the Rift live the *Ndali*, who are included in this administrative district ; and on the plateau under these hills, to the West of the Kukwe, live the *Penja*. Both these small groups have old languages of their own which, though related to that of the Nyakyusa are [197]
more or less unintelligible to them ; and they have equally distinct cultures. But they are now rapidly being assimilated to the Nyakyusa both in [177]
speech and in law.

I use the name Nyakyusa, in accordance with modern usage, to include the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, Mwamba, and Selya groups, but to exclude the Ndali, the Penja, and the Konde. The Nyakyusa together with the Ndali and Penja number 150,000 ; the Konde of Nyasa- [161]
land 30,000.[3]

Members of the Berlin and Moravian Missions were the first Euro- 797
peans to settle in the district, where they have lived now for forty-five 177
years and have made numerous converts. The German Administrators followed them closely, and later came a few planters. But pronounced economic change is a matter of the past five to ten years during which time the Lupa Gold Fields of South Tanganyika have been opened up and have employed increasing numbers of Africans on the diggings. During the past few years the young men of the Nyakyusa have developed [166 464]
the habit of going for a few months, now and again, to the Gold Fields to earn money for tax and clothes. They seldom stay more than six months at a time, often only one or two ; so that their absence does not cause the same difficulties in their own community that are found in other areas where the men spend longer periods away from home.

The Family, together with a sketch of wider Kinship Groupings

The relationships of husband and wife, parent and child, sibling and 593
sibling are continually visible in the culture of the Nyakyusa. The

[3] Government Census figures.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1939
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 Kituli, and Kabula still remained somewhat detached. In genera-
631 tion IV the second heir, Mwabungulu (178), has moved out to the
561 forest and the area occupied and ruled by Mwaijonga and Mwai-
popo is still one, with a division between Lupando and Iringa. Kibonde is fully absorbed into Lupando, and Kituli and Kabula into Iringa—no descendants of Mwakipesile of Kibonde and Mwakabule of Kituli went through the 'coming out' with Mwanyilu as chiefs. Kibonde, Kituli, and Kabula are subdivided into age-villages of three generations, but these are not shown on the plan. They are spoken of by outsiders by the inclusive names.

To a European the most surprising fact about the age-organiza-
561 tion is that a young man of the ruling generation may still choose
428 to move into the homestead of his deceased father or elder brother. We knew one young man, who had been spoken of as a possible village headman at the coming out of Mwanyilu, but shortly before the 'coming out' he chose to move into the homestead of his deceased father in Lupondo village (where his father in turn had inherited) even though he might have inherited his father's wealth in wives and stock and returned to his own village of Masoko, after completing the ritual of death and inheritance. Our informants insisted that, though the young men might rule, the older generation were the more honoured, and in inheriting from his father this man was classified as a member of his father's generation. Nevertheless many young men do *not* choose to move into the village of the father or elder brother from whom they inherit, and the villages of old men decrease in size and finally disappear altogether.

The relation between kinship and territorial grouping cannot
602 easily be indicated by plans and genealogies for though in theory
361 each village consists of 'sons' of a village of the previous
166 generation (as shown in the table facing p. 91) there is con-
561 siderable movement from one village to another, and the members of any adult village usually prove to have come from a number of
631 different villages, though a boy's village consists of sons of adjoining villages. The table of members of three of the villages of Mwaipopo's chiefdom illustrates this (*vide* pp. 224-6). An analysis of genealogies showing where different members live gives much the same picture. Though the shortage of land in the coffee-growing chiefdoms of the hills and the rice-growing chiefdoms of the plain is tending to obliterate the age-village organization, the old

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

system is still the accepted form in Mwaipopo's chiefdom; the advantages of separating kinsmen in different villages are explicitly stated, and the contrast between the Nyakyusa and their neighbours in this respect emphasized. 'Certainly we do not live with kinsmen here but the Kinga do.' 'It is not good for a son to live close to his father, they will quarrel.' 'When we move to another village we consider friendship not kinship in selecting it.'

631 166 561 361 [183] [602]

(b) THE BALANCE BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND SECTIONS

The ritual cycle of the 'coming out' and the sacrifices in the groves helped to maintain a balance of power between generations, as well as between chiefs and commoners. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) in 1953 it was Mwabuputa, the senior village headman of his father, who took the leading part. He was described as 'the greatest man in the country' who 'brings out the chief' and his manner indicated that he was well aware of his power. During the reign of Mwaipopo (116) the power of his father's village headmen, Njobakosa and Ngulyo, was apparent at every ritual. Spiritual power was shared between chiefs and commoners, but exercised ideally by a virile chief of the ruling generation and the experienced headmen of the retired generation.

643 561 796 [554]

Those chosen as senior village headmen at the 'coming out' are commonly older than the young chief, but village headmen are thought of as surviving their chief—it is they who were responsible for smothering him, and performing the sacrifices in his grove. The headmanship is an *office* and so long as the office is necessary an incumbent is found for it, in the person of the heir of the original holder who is so closely identified with the deceased that most precise inquiry is often necessary to establish whether a given individual is the original holder, the succeeding heir, or a later heir, successor to the successor. The Ngulyo who officiated at the rituals in 1935 was the heir of the original Ngulyo (some said the *grandson*, not the son) and he was criticized by Kasitile as being 'a young man who knew nothing'. The principle, so familiar in Central Africa, of a perpetual office[1] emerges, among the

[622] [782] [554] [769]

[1] I. Cunnison, *Kinship and Local Organization on the Luapula*, Communications of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute No. 5 (1950), pp. 14-15; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), p. 122; A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, O.U.P. (1939), p. 24; 'Some Types of Family Structure among the Central Bantu, in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, p. 224; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, London (1911), p. 3. [113]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XIII

TWENTY YEARS' CHANGE

How does Christianity interact with other revolutionary forces in the community? It has been possible to observe the changes that have taken place among the Nyakyusa after a lapse of twenty years, and a summary of them is necessary before we proceed to a discussion of the links between religious and secular change. 177

The first thing that strikes a visitor returning to Nyakyusa country after many years, is that the isolation, which was so typical of the valley, has greatly diminished. Buses, filled with Nyakyusa passengers, cross twice daily the high pass that leads out of the valley, and where once travellers died of exposure and starvation there is a hard road fringed with homesteads and fields. The belt of unoccupied country that even twenty years ago separated the Nyakyusa from their neighbours has disappeared, for they themselves have spilled out of the valley to the north and west, and their Kinga neighbours have come down the Livingstone escarpment to the east and cultivate the mountain slopes, for 'they no longer fear that people (i.e. the Nyakyusa) will seize their property'. Men travel abroad to find work and they go much farther and stay away longer than before. In the remotest village there is some man who has visited Burma or Malaya as a soldier, and a dozen lads who will argue the relative merits of the Orange Free State gold mines and the Copper-belt as centres of employment. Many women now accompany their husbands to Rhodesia, or other parts of Tanganyika, and some travel to visit daughters or sisters. The older women enlarge on their journeys and joke about how fearful they used to be. [494] [491] [166] [167] [464]

Travel implies learning another language, most often Swahili, but also Bemba and English and the pidgin of the gold and copper mines called Fanakalo. Thus intellectual isolation is disappearing along with the physical isolation. The numerous 'bush schools' which existed in the Nyakyusa valley in 1938, and at which many of those who attended never even learnt to read and write, have been largely replaced by mission primary schools, state-aided and inspected, and in these and the Native Authority primary and middle schools there are now 9,437 pupils, as against about 500 [191] [198] 177 872

[p. 203]

Sometimes a chief who was a powerful personality rode roughshod over his headmen and achieved a measure of autocracy; but most headmen would not allow this and in their opposition they had the full support of their villagers, as well as the moral backing of public opinion. There are remembered cases in pre-European days when a chief was deposed or reduced to a non-entity by his headmen acting together in the face of what they considered to be encroachments on the inviolability of village unity and independence. In any case, however, even the strongest chiefs were little disposed to interfere in the land matters of their villages; few wished to be bothered with the details of land rights. A chief could legitimately complain if he were not kept informed by his headmen, but his approval of their actions – and most especially in land matters – was very largely a formality.

Traditional Land Tenure

As already briefly described, a village comes into formal existence at the time of the formation of a new chiefdom. At that time its building site and arable and pastoral areas were roughly demarcated by the retiring headmen of the old chiefdom. Within the village, members were allocated their house plots and each man tended to take the strip of land stretching behind his plot and make his field there. The land was shared out on a friendly, co-operative basis; the new headman smoothed out any difficulties and settled any disputes. Thus was the pattern of land-holding established. Apart from the relative value of a plot proximate to a man's house, there was little or no cause for dispute as land needs were small and the supply plentiful. An established villager could, without notification or special permission, extend his cultivation to any land which lay vacant – i.e., which was not in use or under fallow by a fellow-villager. There was therefore no need for a man to try at first to grab more land than he immediately required, nor did he need to be jealous of his neighbours' claims.

A villager's rights to the use of his land were quite secure and he had no fear of eviction or of the seizure of part of his holding. It is said that very occasionally a chief might take a man's holding but I think, at least in the Lake Plains, that this must have been most unusual. In fact, of course, so long as a man was allowed to reap his crop there was little value attached to the plot as such when nearly similar ground stood unused. Men sought security not on their plots of land, but in their membership of the village community, which assured them of their continuing rights to adequate opportunity for cultivation over the years. However, virtually every man had an excellent security of tenure on his holding during the mature life of his age-village (i.e. until at least the next "coming-out" ceremony), and if he died his heir, should he wish, could come and live in his house and cultivate his fields without hindrance. The way in which he cultivated, though of course strongly conditioned by custom and convention, was his own affair, and he sub-divided his holding amongst his own family as he thought fit. He could not, however, allocate any of his land to a man living in another village, nor could he permit it to be cultivated by such a stranger.

Through fear of witchcraft, because of persistent illness, misfortune or unfriendliness, in order to live near a relative or friend, or to inherit elsewhere, a man might leave his village and his age-mates. Then he had to give up his land-holding. When a man moved because of witchcraft or illness (much the same thing and a chief cause of movement) his land was normally left idle pending his hoped-for return, and his former neighbours would do all they could to induce him to return to his old home and fields – even to the use of force (see Wilson, G. 1938, pp. 32-3). His departure was an accusation against them, and a disturbance of co-operative unity. If the man consistently refused to return, or if it was known that he had definitely left for good, his

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Problem of Immigrant Land-holders

167 423 311 Undue importance has also been given to immigrants, but their numbers are relatively small and only significant locally. Since about 1948, or a little earlier, there has been an influx of Africans into the Lake Plains: – Nyakyusa from the Highlands (chiefly from the Central Region – Pakati), Ndali from the Ndali Highlands of Rungwe District and Kinga from the Njombe District to the east beyond the Livingstones; from northern Nyasaland have come Ndali, Lambia and Sukwa, and there are also small numbers of Bemba and others from Northern Rhodesia. They have been attracted in the modern era, when local movement is easier, by the possibility of obtaining land in the northern Lake Plains, where rainfall is so high and untouched bushland has been available.[1]

These immigrants have been and continue to be almost entirely restricted to the north in the "low-density region" (see map, facing page 15). This contained [134] the outstandingly empty area of the country and still there remain vacant lands to be taken up. Such land is usually of relatively inferior quality, easily subject to erosion and loss of fertility on the slopes of the foothills and unsuitable for paddy cultivation except in small, isolated basins. The immigrants, that is, have settled in areas rejected by most Nyakyusa. There, locally, the newcomers outnumber the indigenous population. In the flood plains, the high-density regions, the proportions of foreigners cannot be more than one or two per cent. of the population, and in most villages there are none at all.

It is true that these newcomers do occupy land which might well be used to relieve the congestion nearer to the Lake; but in practice this would not be at all easy. To take a single example: the newly opened area in the north of the chiefdom of Mwakyusa between the Kiwira and Songwe rivers is being rapidly taken up by Ndali from the north-west, Nyasalanders and Nyakyusa from the Central Region (in that order of numerical importance). A few miles to the south, in the centre of the same chiefdom, the inhabitants of the Ikolo area consistently refuse to move although they manifestly [166] cannot meet their land needs within their present villages. They, and others like them, say with some truth that paddy cultivation is less easy and less profitable in these newer and higher areas, and that poor communications make the disposal of produce more difficult. They also say, but more often leave to inference, that they are unwilling to leave their traditional village areas and begin in new parts, even though the move required is only one of a few miles. They have not yet become sufficiently aware of the permanent gravity of modern land shortage to overcome their parochial inertia. By the time they do become aware of it the opportunity may well be lost, for immigrants continue to arrive in twos and threes, and the last vacant land may be taken. To date, however, some vacant lands remain, albeit of poor quality, into which the densely packed Nyakyusa could move, and the immigrants cannot be blamed, at least not yet, for preventing the expansion and resettlement of the local population.

At the moment the chiefs and headmen in these northerly areas are 643 keen to obtain as many of these immigrants as possible in order to swell 644 the number of their commoners, the size of their villages and thus, directly, 645 their own prestige and importance. Newcomers have every opportunity to 646 be allocated as much land as they wish, where they wish, and many are 186 liberally assisted with food in the traditional way until they harvest their first crop. I heard no complaints from either the local Nyakyusa or the immigrants, and relations seemed to be good. Strangers must conform to Nyakyusa ways of life and to the authority of the headman and chief, although

1. Immigrants from Nyasaland are said to have come following the introduction of new regulations there prohibiting the cultivation of easily eroded hill areas.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IV

THE RESULTS OF LAND SHORTAGE

311 As indicated in the short outline of traditional land tenure in Chapter II, the system developed and worked adequately in the old situation (both before and after European conquest) when land was plentiful in relation to the people's demands. Any villager who wanted land had the right to be allocated fields: any established villager who wished to expand his cultivation could do so without difficulty. Movement between villages was easy, and especially after the establishment of European peace, for everywhere newcomers were welcomed to increase the strength and prestige of the village, and land was available for them. The young men in their age-villages were able to obtain sufficient arable land and they were able to establish their economic independence after marriage, if not earlier. Because land was plentiful there was little real concern for security of tenure and disputes over land were both uncommon and unimportant. [166]

By 1955 the basic fact was that there was insufficient land to meet the people's requirements in the alluvial flood plains – as also in many Highland areas – and there remained little or no unused land which could be taken into cultivation.

Inheritance of Land

428 421 In those earlier and more spacious days, inheritance was chiefly significant in moveable property – cattle pre-eminently, and goats, money and other goods – and also in the matter of widows and the custody of children. The rules of inheritance were the same in principle for all this property. Inheritance was by groups of full-brothers rather than by individuals, and therefore when a man died, his sons, his widows and his wealth were taken by the eldest surviving full-brother; failing a full-brother, a half-brother would inherit (the eldest surviving at the time). Only when all the deceased's brothers were dead, or if they had moved away and severed practical relations, were the dead man's sons able to take up the property in their own right. Then each group of full-brothers tended to inherit as separate, corporate groups. Although the separation into "houses" was not as strong and notable as amongst some African peoples,[1] yet there was a fairly strong solidarity between full-brothers such that, for instance, their cattle were regarded as a distinct and separate herd, over which the senior brother had principal control and in which half-brothers had little direct rights. [593]

Originally land inheritance did not follow this scheme because it was an unimportant matter, for ideally a man obtained his building plot and arable land at the time of the formal establishment of his age-village, and he preferred if possible to continue to live amongst his coevals. Consequently, when a man died, his brothers and his sons and nephews normally had land of their own and did not wish for more elsewhere, especially as the deceased's land would probably be in another age-village. Out of respect for the dead man and his contemporaries, the chief heir often made a token residence at the deceased's homestead and then, after a brief period, would obtain the approval of the villagers to return to his own village and holding again – perhaps at the cost of some beer or a goat. Sometimes the heir or another member of the lineage might take the opportunity to leave his own village [423]

1. See Wilson, M. 1950, pp. 117ff. Cf. also my *The Family Herds*, London, 1955, Chapters 3 and 4, for a description of a strong, corporate 'house' system.

number of separate plots per holding was less than where land was scarcer; at the same time the average size of separate plots was smaller in those more land-hungry villages. The reader may refer to Table III (page 15) for some illustrative figures. Though differences are not yet very great, nevertheless there seems to be a fairly clear correlation between the average size of villagers' holdings on the one hand, and on the other the number and size of separate plots, and this is entirely borne out by my general information obtained in villages where actual measurements were not made. The inescapable conclusion must be that increasing scarcity of land in the Lake Plains leads to increasing fragmentation and dispersion of holdings; further, the present land situation and land tenure system can only lead to a continuation of this trend.

To emphasise the actual situation in 1955, let me reiterate the results of my own village surveys in the very high density region. In a village in Koroso's chiefdom only a quarter of the younger men had paddy land of their own, holdings averaging about three-quarters of an acre; in a village in Mwakipesile's chiefdom, only 17 per cent. of the younger men had paddy land and holdings averaged about half an acre (cf. Table VII, page 37). These two examples are taken from the areas of most severe land shortage and are not therefore altogether typical of the whole Lake Plains. Nevertheless, I do not think that they are entirely atypical; more importantly, they indicate the present trend. Within another generation this fragmentation and scatter of holdings may well be the common feature everywhere in the flood plains unless the system of tenure and inheritance is modified. If the increase in population is quickened through improved medical facilities, better diet and housing, and improved conditions generally, then the position will become more acute. Such an increase is only to be expected. The Nyakyusa have decisively entered a money economy and they have learnt to seek higher standards of living. Only from their fields, by cash-cropping, can they expect to earn their livings and the demand for better living will not be curtailed – nor, of course, is it desirable that it should be.

There is another aspect of this whole matter which must be considered. It relates to the movement of individuals between villages. Such movement was, in earlier European days, a crucial factor in the age-village structure, for it was not only exceedingly frequent, but also it tended to undermine the idealised coeval basis of village life. Movement between villages is increasingly difficult now, for a newcomer naturally cannot easily obtain land, nor as much land as he would desire even at a moderate demand. Nevertheless, the reasons for movement persist, and they will do so whilst the fear of witchcraft remains and whilst illness and misfortune are attributable to the unfavourable aura of a place. There remains also the tradition of moving so that a man may escape from bad relations with kinsfolk or neighbours, or from the obloquy resulting from his own disapproved actions. Much social and psychological tension is being created now as a result of the new difficulty of movement, and so far the Nyakyusa have not evolved alternative methods.

On the other hand, so deeply engrained is the notion of the prestige and power which accrues to a village by virtue of the number of its inhabitants, that headmen and villagers alike remain most reluctant to refuse to accept newcomers, even when it inevitably means that the present inhabitants must meet a further decrease in the average amount of land available per family, for a newcomer must be allocated a holding if he is to remain. Consequently, if a holding is for any reason left vacant, a headman tends to refuse to re-allocate some or all of it amongst his villagers and thus to augment their holdings; but instead he keeps it in reserve pending the hoped-for arrival of another newcomer. Men desiring to leave their own village try to get

Security of tenure has continued into European times, and although perhaps weakened slightly in one way through the exaggerated powers which accrue to modern Government-supported chiefs, it has been strengthened by the modern peace and rule of law and the more efficient system of justice provided by the established local courts. According to G. Wilson (Wilson, G., 1938, p. 32) the increase in the movement of individuals between villages in earlier European times (i.e., up to about 1940-45) directly caused a lack of attachment to individual plots, and thus security of tenure was not considered particularly important.

The new situation of land shortage does not affect the basic position, or rather, by producing a high scarcity value on land, it has brought about an intensification of individuals' rights over their holdings. No longer dare a chief or headman attempt to commit such illegal acts as the seizure of a villager's field, so long as that villager is not afraid to publicise the affair. A man is not, and cannot afford to be, prepared to lose his field, for he cannot replace it with any certainty, either in a convenient location or elsewhere. A headman may sometimes bring strong pressure to bear on some of the men of his village to try to persuade them to give up portions of their land to assist a newcomer or a landless neighbour, but a villager can and does refuse and there is no legal authority which can override him here. As the land shortage becomes more obvious and more acute so men become less willing to allow their holdings to be touched for any reason, by anyone. The re-allocation at a "coming-out" ceremony appears to have been dropped nowadays[1] and thus a man holds his land undisturbed until his death, when it passes by inheritance to his sons. There are cases now where grandsons of the original holder occupy land through undisturbed and undisputed inheritance. A man can, as he wishes, loan a kinsman or friend a plot in his holding, or he can make an outright gift. The principal restriction which remains is that a man must continue to live in the village in order to retain these rights; he must relinquish them if he permanently goes to live elsewhere. Nevertheless, the land of a well-established villager would be kept for him pending his hoped-for return, for if he has left in umbrage and fear because of suspected witchcraft, then he may be persuaded to come back after a time. The headman and his neighbours should in fact persist in their attempts to persuade him, even to the use of force, for this is not only a moral duty of age-mates and fellow-villagers but is also an effort to remove the implications of their alleged witchcraft and anti-social conduct.

Once, therefore, a man obtains land he has absolute rights in it during his continued residence in the village. Especially today, older men seldom shift their homes and almost all land is now held on a tenure which will be passed on by inheritance.

Boundary disputes are few. Usually, and increasingly, village boundaries are well known, and field boundaries invariably are. During my field measurements in the sample villages, I never met any difficulty with my local teams in quickly establishing the ownership and exact limits of any plot. Boundaries are usually marked by small ridges of accumulated debris or by narrow paths, and these form an intricate and irregular network throughout a village's arable area. They are so well known that there is very little scope for a greedy man to attempt to encroach on a neighbour's holding at hoeing time. If minor disagreements do arise at that season they can be immediately settled – by appeal to neighbours working nearby if necessary – and the headman or his assistant may well not be called in at all.

1. This is the case in the Lake Plains. In some of the more conservative Highland chiefdoms where the cash economy is less advanced and land scarcity is not serious, there still appears to be some re-allocation in favour of the young men in the traditional way. In general, however, it is clear that the traditional age-village system of land allocation is obsolete; see pages 29ff.

land en bloc. Young men compete with one another, with their elder brothers and with their fathers for allocations of land left vacant. We also saw, however, that often in the larger families[1] not all the sons are able to get a share of the paternal holding, or at least not a share of practicable size. Thus younger sons are forced to resort to trying to obtain vacant land elsewhere – possibly within the same village, but as often as not outside. Finally, the young man on his new holding may find his neighbours to be of any age; certainly they will not have been members of his own original coeval hamlet.

The way for this changing concept of village life and the new sort of village was prepared in the years before land shortage became important. The changed political system has been briefly noted already, but no less important was the great increase in inter-village movement in earlier European days when peace and personal security had been established. During this period Wilson (1938, page 32) reckoned that perhaps 80 per cent. of Nyakyusa shifted at least once from the place where they first obtained fields. This estimate, whilst perhaps holding good for Highland Nyakyusa amongst whom Wilson mainly worked, was too high for the people of the Lake Plains, where about 40 per cent. is more correct according to my genealogical and village surveys. That is still a relatively high degree of mobility for a mainly subsistence, peasant society such as it was in those years. It is clear that the pseudo-fraternal bond of coevality could not persist as a main element of village life and consciousness, when in fact as many as half of the members of a village were not original coeval founders but had come in from elsewhere. Before the land shortage, movement did not entail the shifting of young men to other young men's villages, or of older men to other older men's villages. It was, at least eventually, promiscuous movement, ignoring age categories. The compulsions of land shortage seem, in retrospect, only to have followed existing lines of village development and to have begun the completion of the process.

In the Lake Plains, therefore, the village persists as a close, territorial, land-owning group and as a specific cluster of homesteads and huts, usually with a village street, the whole closely hemmed in by continuous banana groves. Beyond this lie the arable lands, usually food-crop fields nearby and paddy fields farther off. In jealously protecting what it already holds, the village has gained a new exclusiveness, for the security of the individual land-holder is maintained by the corporate ownership of the village and by excluding outsiders as far as possible. On the other hand, it is no longer an age-village either in fact or intention, and it cannot be, for age-villages were consistent only with an expanding territorial system and a subsistence economy.

This brief analysis of Nyakyusa village organisation in recent times applies only to the Lake Plains. In some parts of both the Central Region and the Northern Highlands the age-basis of Nyakyusa villages had most probably already been seriously weakened in pre-European times.[2] On the other hand, elsewhere, and particularly in the more conservative parts less affected by modern trends and the cash economy, the traditional age-village still exists in something like its old form.

Land shortage has appeared in the Highlands together with a developing cash economy, but the basis of agricultural and economic change lies mainly in coffee cultivation which, of course, requires relatively smaller fields than does paddy in the Lake Plains, but it needs more care and attention from the grower for moderate success. As far as I could see in the course of

1. Polygny is still the norm amongst the older and many middle-aged men, and therefore a father often leaves several sons to inherit.

2. According to elderly informants in Western Kukwe, Mwakaleli and some central chiefdoms, and also the evidence of old village sites.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Thus men wishing to move could seek to obtain, that is to buy, a holding from another man living in a village to which he is willing to move; a man leaving a village could either retain his holding in cultivation or obtain some compensation for the loss of his holding there. It is not likely that this would produce a rush of land sales, for only a relatively few men would wish to relinquish their holdings. It would, however, facilitate freer movement between villages. Secondly, it would assist younger men to obtain holdings when they have earned and saved money at work.[1] Thirdly, it would assist profit-making cultivators to enlarge their holdings. Fourthly, it would help to bring to the Nyakyusa a realisation of the implications of the new money economy which they have inevitably and irrevocably entered, and it would demonstrate the value of holdings in relation to other commodities and activities. This kind of system would allow the village to retain much of its valued unity and control whilst reducing its excessive and potentially harmful exclusiveness. Such disposals of land, especially if by money sale, could be performed before the headman and other reliable village witnesses and they could be registered formally at the local court. There would need also to be some ruling limiting the maximum size of holdings (to prevent excessive buying) and preventing alienation to Africans from outside the Lake Plains. In this matter the village headman would probably be the executive authority.

Although the suggestion could be introduced simply as a scheme enabling the buying and selling of land, I am here more concerned with the problem of freer movement and the limitation of the reversionary rights of the headman on behalf of the village, whilst retaining his useful controls. A more general recognition of the economic value of land would probably follow, and if it proved practicable and useful, an extended and refined scheme could be introduced later.

My suggestions are, then, as follows:—

1. (*a*) an immediate restriction of immigration into the Lake Plains from whatever origin, and the encouragement of the movement of people from the congested areas into the lightly populated areas, accompanied by local development programmes there;

(*b*) the consideration of the practicability of drainage and thicket clearance schemes in order to make more land available;

(*c*) the absolute abolition of land-holding by non-residents and the reallocation through the local headmen of land so held to local inhabitants;

(*d*) the sympathetic encouragement of village headmen to watch unused portions of villagers' holdings with a view to their voluntary and temporary reallocation to neighbours in need.

2. (*a*) a detailed enquiry into the operation and administration of the new inheritance law, with a view to improving its details;

(*b*) an enquiry into the possibility of imposing a minimum limit on the size of holdings and plots;

(*c*) the introduction of local, voluntary schemes for the consolidation of holdings.

3. Covering the whole field of Nyakyusa land problems must necessarily be a progressive agricultural programme aimed, firstly, at a more intensive and a more efficient use of the land by improved cultivation methods, and, secondly, the abolition of monoculture by the introduction of other cash crops. This is, of course, the policy of the Agricultural Department, but it needs more urgent application despite the obvious difficulties raised.

Stall-feeding of cattle, especially in the wet season, would assist to improve the living conditions of the herds and to increase their domestic and economic value.

1. It would also provide an alternative cash investment to the present purchase of cattle.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

first-hand knowledge of them. On the coast they are classed with Nyakyusa and Ngonde as *Sokile*, a nickname derived from the traditional Nyakyusa greeting.

This book is concerned with the Nyakyusa.[1] What it contains is true in general terms for the people of Ngonde, but how far it is applicable to the smaller groups cited we are not certain. The Ndali, Sukwa, and Penja, are said to have long had an age-village organization; and Henga, Nyika and Kisi living intermingled with Ngonde and Nyakyusa have adopted it; but of the customs of the Wenya and Lambya we know little. Dr. Kerr Cross and Monteith Fotheringham, who travelled extensively in the area before 1890, reported that the Ndali and Sukwa (of Misuku) were very similar to the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people, but that the Lambya were different, practising shifting *citemene* cultivation, and living in stockaded villages.[2]

According to their own traditions the Nyakyusa and Ngonde chiefs (who trace descent from common ancestors) came ten generations ago from Kinga country, on the Livingstone mountains, and found the Rungwe and North Nyasa country already occupied. They established themselves as chiefs and have since been increasing the area of their occupation. The Kinga also affirm that their chiefs are related to those of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde, and they join with the Nyakyusa in sacrifice to common ancestors at Lubaga and LiKyala (see Map III), but the Kinga culture is quite distinct from that of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde; we stayed long enough in Kinga country to convince ourselves that the Kinga live in kinship villages and not in age-villages, and that they differ from the Nyakyusa in many other respects.

There seems little doubt that the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people have been expanding in an area not uninhabited, but sparsely inhabited, and that the assimilation of the Penja and other groups now proceeding is no new phenomenon, but part of a process which has long been going on. Within recent years over 2,000

[1] The Nyakyusa as here defined numbered 159,044 in Rungwe district at the 1931 census, and 3,732 outside the district; the Ndali 22,834, the Lambya (within Rungwe district, and not including those in Nyasaland) 12,403, and the Kisi (in Njombe district) 2,115. *Tanganyika Territory, Census of the Native Population*, 1931.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika, *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), p. 286; L. M. Fotheringham, *Adventures in Nyassaland* (1891), pp. 129–33. Nyondo was a Lambya chief, cf. Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 10.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

167 177 Nyakyusa families have crossed the Poroto mountains and settled in Safwa and Nyika country. They have moved, primarily, to secure good pasture, fertile garden land, and accessible markets; and the accounts of Nyakyusa history which we have suggest that the first two of these motives have long been in operation. There is no sign of these Nyakyusa immigrants being absorbed by the previous occupants of the country. Indeed, were it not for the intervention of the Administration, it seems that the Nyakyusa immigrants might soon dominate the less organized Safwa and Nyika. As it is, certain of the Safwa and Nyika Native Authority Courts are conducting proceedings in Nyakyusa as well as in their own languages,[1] a fact which supports the Nyakyusa boast that all their neighbours are learning their language. Many Kinga, Mahasi, Wanji, and Poroto are said to learn to speak Nyakyusa, though there are few Nyakyusa settlers among them, since they find the language useful in external contacts.[2] The Kinga tell a myth of how they, together with the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, the Ndali, the Ngonde, the Mahasi, the Kisi, the Pangwa, and the Bena came from a place Ilongo (in the present Bena country) which they call 'the dark house' (*nyumba nditu*), and the Penja speak of a centre of dispersion, Kina, to the north of Rungwe mountain, from which they and the Safwa and Poroto came. The people of Ngonde, for their part, trace connections with the Inamwanga and Iwa, saying that their chiefs in their journeyings left sons to rule these people; they also assert that one of their predecessors on the Lake-shore plain was a hunter from Fipa country.[3]

(01) Despite these tenuous links with their eastern, northern, and north-western neighbours, the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people are, as we have said, culturally quite distinct from them. The Nyakyusa themselves are emphatic that their culture differs from the cultures of the Kinga, the Safwa, the Poroto, and the Nyika—a statement which our own observation, and the evidence of other writers, confirm.[4] And the Ngonde differ in many respects both

[1] R. de Z. Hall, 'Local Migration in Tanganyika', *African Studies*, 4 (1945). 2,100 families had moved before 1938; 3,000 by 1941.

[198] [2] This is despite the fact that Swahili is the official vernacular for Tanganyika, being the medium of instruction in Government primary schools, and the language used by the Administration.

[3] Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 10.

[4] E. Kootz-Kretschmer, *Die Safwa* (1926); J. Thomson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back* (1881), Vol. I, pp. 46–52; R. de Z. Hall, op. cit.; D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

562 ship among the women themselves is, moreover, less developed than in many other African societies.

178 The isolation and self-sufficiency of the Nyakyusa are diminishing rapidly, for considerable economic and political develop-
439 ment followed the 1914–18 war. Coffee (first introduced by the German missionaries) has been developed as a native crop for
464 export, and the cultivation of rice (which had been fostered by the British to provide food for their troops) has expanded. Gold-digging began some fifty miles beyond the borders of the Nyakyusa country, on the Lupa river, and there Nyakyusa men have found both employment as labourers and a ready market for much of their produce, so that by 1936 Rungwe district was exporting goods worth £24,000 annually.[1] In addition to this peasant production there are a small number of European estates
[167] producing coffee and tea for export.[2] We estimate the number of Nyakyusa working outside the district as migrant labourers at about 8,000 or 25 per cent of the able-bodied men. There were about 7,000 Nyakyusa men on the Lupa gold-fields in 1937,[3] and a small number on the coffee plantations of Mbozi. These are all within a hundred miles of home; and the Lupa labourers return usually after two or three months' work. A considerable number of Nyakyusa are also at work on the sisal plantations of the coast, and employed as domestic servants or in other semi-skilled jobs through Tanganyika, who remain away for periods up to two or three years. Nyakyusa labourers are regarded by European employers as intelligent and capable of heavy work, but lacking in all the subservient virtues.

642 The system of Indirect Rule was established in 1926, and a consistent attempt has been made to develop a centralized Native
177 Authority for the Rungwe district. The traditionally sovereign chiefs of the Nyakyusa have been grouped in eleven court districts with one chief as president of the Native Court in each (see Map III); these eleven chiefs, together with the two presidents of the Ndali and Lambya courts, belong to a single federation, with an appeal court and joint Native treasury of its own. In the eleven Native Courts (which are courts of record) most of the

[1] Figure estimated on the basis of information supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu.

[2] In 1938 the total area alienated was 26,0¼ ac.; only 2,200 ac. of this was being worked.

[3] Estimate of the Labour Officer on the ¼upa, 4 June 1937.

¼ [Missing on the original - Analyst]

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

439 given a slave or cow in return. Those who performed hoeing service, *milasa*, were
643 entertained with food and beer.

The ivory trade, although it bound the local rulers to the capital, involved no tribal
622 organization of elephant hunts, and scarcely touched the common people, who never
437 obtained the imported cloths exchanged for ivory, but continued to dress in bark-cloth or in their coarse home-woven cloth. Between each chief and his people economic links were determined on the one hand by his power of requisitioning food, and his greater wealth derived from the higher bride-price given for his daughters, and on the other by his people's expectation of entertainment from nim in return for their food. Economic links between local chiefdoms were tenuous. Subsistence agriculture was practised by each family with the help of village neighbours and a few friends and kin; marriage with its economic exchanges was usually within the chiefdom. Of the few specialized craftsmen, representatives of each were usually found in each local group.[1]

Under modern economic conditions, Ngonde country is the only part of north
439 Nyasaland which cannot be called the 'Dead North', and does not suffer from exces-
433 sive migration. The soil is fertile and at present there is no land shortage, though there is likelihood of one developing in the near future. Food is cultivated for export to the Lupa goldfields in Tanganyika, which is the natural market for Ngonde produce. Rice, cattle, and hides are also exported there. Parts of the lake littoral are suitable for cotton cultivation, which was revived in 1934. Ninety tons were sold in 1936. Out of the total effective male population of 12,000, 3,000 grow 'economic crops', and 7,000 grow cash crops only.[2] There are two European coffee estates in the Misuku hills, but they are handicapped by the long dry season.[3] Money is also derived from the fishing industry. An attempt to develop a ghee industry from native butter for sale to Indians in Nyasaland collapsed owing to the apathy of the Ngonde, their neglect of quality, and their insistence on too high a price for their inferior product. The main cash income of the district is derived from emigration to the Lupa goldfields, so that 90 per cent. of the money in circulation in the district is East African currency, which is accepted by the Nyasaland local government, surplus balances being remitted to the District Officer at Tukuyu, Tanganyika.[4]

Periodic Migrations

●167 Long-distance labour migration is not a serious problem among the Ngonde, as they are able to earn their main cash income by working in the nearby Lupa goldfields, or by supplying that market with agricultural produce. In north Nyasa district (Ngonde), of 12,052 adult males fit to work for wages, only 11·6 per cent. are labour emigrants, and of these in 1937 only 100 were counted as 'lost ones' (i.e. not heard of since 1930).[5] In Abercorn and Kasama districts, Northern Rhodesia, where the Nyamwanga and Iwa live, 50 per cent. of the able-bodied male adult population is absent.[6]

A local migration of Nyakyusa does constitute a problem for the Tanganyika administration. Up to 1935 some 2,000 families had migrated from Rungwe district to tribal lands in the neighbouring chiefdoms of Mbeya district. By 1941 the figure had increased to 3,000. The immigrants now total 17 per cent. of the whole population

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 39–50.
[2] Murray, 1932, p. 206.
[3] *Bell Report*, 1938, Appendix A.
[4] *Bell Report*, 1938, pp. 100–3.
[5] Smith, 1937, p. 21.
[6] Orde Browne, 1, 1938, maps.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

167 of the new area. Their culture differs from that of the indigenous tribes, so that they remain largely unassimilated. The cause of the exodus is partly shortage of land;[1] the Nyakyusa are skilled cultivators; the active soil-conservation campaign promoted by the Agricultural Department in Rungwe district involved farmers in additional effort, so that land in Mbeya was attractive in so far as the soil conservation scheme only started there two years later. The main motive, however, was to shorten the transport haul between the farmer and the market at Lupa. The demand for supplies of beans and grain from Rungwe district was decreasing even before the 1939 war, partly because production on the goldfields was declining, and partly because the produce of Mbeya district was increasing (largely through the work of the immigrant Nyakyusa farmers). The main problems for the administration arising from the Nyakyusa immigration into Mbeya district is the lack of control by the Native Authorities and congestion in the river valleys. The Safwa, who vacated the valleys of the Nsofwe and Mbalizi rivers after their wars with the Sangu, retreated into the hills before the flood of Nyakyusa immigrants, who now populate the valleys almost exclusively with their own compact endogamous groups.[2]

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Kinship and Local Grouping

621 (The following section is compiled from information applying equally to Nyakyusa
561 and Ngonde.)

The distinctive feature of the social organization is the system of age-villages. An age-village consists of a male age-group with wives of any age and children. When a man dies his heir may come to live in his village, and strangers applying for land are never refused on grounds of age, but the original constitution of the village is based on the principle of identity of age. Up to the age of ten years the small boys herd cattle in groups. Then they start to hoe for their fathers, and leave their fathers' houses to go to sleep with friends. After two or three years they build for themselves in an age-village of young men. They continue to hoe the fields and eat the food of their mothers until marriage, after which they hoe mainly for themselves, on land adjacent to their own huts.[3]

602 If a young man, instead of hoeing, goes out to work, he is expected to bring back tax-money for his father. By his service he earns the right to be given cattle for marriage. A young man whose father is poor in cattle will often attach himself to the household of a rich kinsman, brother of his father or mother, and hoe regularly for him, eventually receiving from him a large portion of his marriage cattle.[4] Sons-in-law are expected to bring their friends now and again to hoe for their father-in-law, who will afterwards entertain the workers.[5]

[611] Descent and inheritance are patrilineal, but there are no clans, and no descent group with a common name and definite membership.[6] The sons of a group of effective kinsmen are not all themselves effective kinsmen, and in the third generation the bonds of kinship may often have been forgotten. Cattle exchanges signalize the most

[1] Wilson, 3, 1938, p. 7.
[2] Wilson, 1, 1936, p. 78.
[3] Ibid., p. 28.
[4] Hall, 1945.
[5] Ibid., p. 29.
[6] Ibid., 2, 1936, p. 267; 4, 1939, p. 2.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

rules of land tenure are firstly to prevent, as far as possible, such conflicts and embarrassments from arising, and secondly, to facilitate their resolution when aroused. If, then, there is no danger of conflict or embarrassment neither is there a need for any rule at all. A Nyakyusa doctor wandering in the uncultivated bush looking for medicines cannot harm any man's interest, cannot hurt any man's feelings, and he is therefore free to gather what and where he will. 311

In many of its uses, however, land is scarce and so leads men into competition for it. When, in any society, land, or some other material of action, is scarce, we say that it has economic value; and whenever anything has economic value then, of necessity, its use *must* always be effectively limited and defined by rules of law or of morality or by convention, for only by such limitations of human action can anarchy be kept at bay and ordered human society continue to exist.

The scarcity or economic value of land is, in most of the Nyakyusa chiefdoms, more a matter of quality than of mere quantity. In some few chiefdoms there is, however, already threatening an actual lack of arable land, and it is almost certain that there will in time be a general shortage. The natural increase of population is to some extent counterbalanced by ever-increasing emigration into neighbouring, less densely populated districts; but rapidly changing economic and technical conditions will of themselves, in all probability, bring about a shortage of land. Ploughs (over 100 of them) are already in use and are multiplying many times over the area which one man can cultivate, while the recent development of an external market for surplus food is stimulating many men to greater effort even with the hoe. An area amply sufficient, with primitive subsistence agriculture, for about 100,000 persons may well prove quite insufficient when ploughs are employed and when to the 100,000 mouths are added, through the medium of the market, many thousand more. Rungwe District is already one of the main sources not only of labour but also of food for the nearby Lupa gold fields, while its rapidly increasing crop of Native-grown coffee now finds its way to Europe. In 1936 produce to the value of some £24,000[1] was sold by this district to the outside world. 311 241 [167] [439]

At the moment, however, there is no general shortage of land. It is the *best* ground which is scarce, not land as such. The best building sites, the best plots of arable ground and the best pastures have economic value and their use is precisely defined and limited in the Nyakyusa system of land-tenure. 311

[1] Figure estimated for the whole district (Nyakyusa, Ndali and Lambya, about 150,000 persons in all) on the basis of information supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Office, Tukuyu.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Nyakyusa are, predominantly, a patrilineal people, for inheritance normally follows the male line. They differ, however, from the patrilineal peoples of Europe in that brothers inherit before sons. Inherited wealth is thus mainly kept in the hands of the older men, though they are under certain obligations towards their " sons " (whether own or classificatory) in their use of it. Marriage involves a transfer of anything from four to thirty head of cattle from the bridegroom to his father-in-law, and consequently the chief obligation which an older man has, both to his own sons and to the sons of any kinsman from whom he has inherited, is to provide them, in due time, with cattle for marriage. But this obligation is not an absolute one, it depends, in part, upon the due fulfilment by each " son " of his filial duties, which are, firstly, to hoe his father's fields diligently and, secondly, to maintain a respectful bearing towards him. Unmarried men have no gardens of their own, they work their fathers' land and eat the produce of it which their mothers cook. 611 428 583 593

Under modern conditions money for tax and clothes is necessary both to father and son, and very many young men visit the nearby Lupa gold fields regularly, for periods of a few months at a time, to earn it. A youth who always brings back to his parents after each spell of absence tax money and some presents is held to have done all his duty and he will be given marriage cattle just as soon and as readily as if he had spent all his time hoeing at home. And if he earns more, sufficient to purchase some of his marriage cattle for himself, still his father benefits, for the old man has then to spend fewer beasts from his own stock. But the Lupa needs food as well as labour and some unmarried men stay continuously at home and engage in the production of crops ; after the family needs have been met the surplus is sold and from the proceeds the father pays his own tax and his sons' and buys clothes for them as well. 167 593

Hoeing, which is the hardest part of Nyakyusa cultivation, is normally done by men, planting, weeding, reaping and cooking by women. But some women nowadays do some hoeing too—if their husbands are away at work or if for any other reason they find it difficult to get enough ground prepared for them. Traditionally, I was told, women never used a hoe at all. 241 462

Polygyny is the rule rather than the exception among middle-aged men, and in a polygynous household, as we shall see, each wife has her own garden plots. The institution of polygyny has many other elements besides the economic, but the economic is not the least important of them: the taking of additional wives is the best capital investment which is open to an ordinary, uneducated, Nyakyusa peasant. A Nyakyusa wife is not her husband's property, she is his wife ; but as family relationships are, among the Nyakyusa, the basis of economic activity, so the more wives 595

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE peoples with whom this book is concerned, the Nyakyusa and the Ngonde, occupy an area shut in by mountains at the northern end of Lake Nyasa, and enjoy a culture which, though varying locally, clearly springs from a common basis and is traditionally attributed to similar origins. The most conspicuous features of their political organization are (i) the balance of power between chiefs and commoners; (ii) the 'coming out' ritual in which a generation of men which has governed for approximately thirty years retires and hands over the administration to its sons, retaining only ritual functions; and (iii) the system of age-villages.

All are agreed that chiefs and commoners belong to different stocks; the commoners being descended from the original occupants of the country while the chiefs trace their descent to a line of invaders who came down from the Livingstone mountains eight generations ago. According to the myth, they brought with them fire, and cattle, and iron tools, and they found a people who ate their food raw in a land 'without trees'.[1] Commoners are *abatitu*, black people, while Ngulube, an early ancestor of the chiefs, was 'pale'[2] and chiefs (*abanyafyale*) generally are said to have been lighter in colour and 'different in their bodies'. After generations of intermarriage between chiefs and commoners there is no consistent difference in physical type between them, but the range of physical type among the Nyakyusa as a whole is wide.[3]

Nyakyusa and Ngonde historians say that their chiefs are related to those of the Kinga, who live high above the Nyakyusa valley to the east in the Livingstone mountains, whence the chiefs came. The Kinga acknowledge the connexion and join with the Nyakyusa in sacrifice to their common heroes, but culturally the

[1] Possibly the lake-shore plain. The hills until cultivated are covered with either savannah or rain forest.

[2] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3, p. 10 (1939). According to the Ngonde version Ngulube was the *first* ancestor.

[3] cf. F. Fülleborn, *Beiträge zur physischen Anthropologie der Nord-Nyassander* (1906). *Das Deutsche Nyasa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet Atlas* (1906).

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XIII

TWENTY YEARS' CHANGE

How does Christianity interact with other revolutionary forces in the community? It has been possible to observe the changes that have taken place among the Nyakyusa after a lapse of twenty years, and a summary of them is necessary before we proceed to a discussion of the links between religious and secular change. 177

The first thing that strikes a visitor returning to Nyakyusa country after many years, is that the isolation, which was so typical of the valley, has greatly diminished. Buses, filled with Nyakyusa passengers, cross twice daily the high pass that leads out of the valley, and where once travellers died of exposure and starvation there is a hard road fringed with homesteads and fields. The belt of unoccupied country that even twenty years ago separated the Nyakyusa from their neighbours has disappeared, for they themselves have spilled out of the valley to the north and west, and their Kinga neighbours have come down the Livingstone escarpment to the east and cultivate the mountain slopes, for 'they no longer fear that people (i.e. the Nyakyusa) will seize their property'. Men travel abroad to find work and they go much farther and stay away longer than before. In the remotest village there is some man who has visited Burma or Malaya as a soldier, and a dozen lads who will argue the relative merits of the Orange Free State gold mines and the Copper-belt as centres of employment. Many women now accompany their husbands to Rhodesia, or other parts of Tanganyika, and some travel to visit daughters or sisters. The older women enlarge on their journeys and joke about how fearful they used to be. [494] [491] [166] [167] [464]

Travel implies learning another language, most often Swahili, but also Bemba and English and the pidgin of the gold and copper mines called Fanakalo. Thus intellectual isolation is disappearing along with the physical isolation. The numerous 'bush schools' which existed in the Nyakyusa valley in 1938, and at which many of those who attended never even learnt to read and write, have been largely replaced by mission primary schools, state-aided and inspected, and in these and the Native Authority primary and middle schools there are now 9,437 pupils, as against about 500 [191] [198] 177 872

[p. 203]

and try to understand the nature and reasons for change. Here, then, is a good opportunity for the study of social change – not only in land tenure as such, but also in village and family organisation, political authority and economic life.

II

The Nyakyusa are a Bantu people inhabiting the main part of the Rungwe District in southern Tanganyika, immediately to the north of Lake Nyasa. In 1948 they numbered about 199,000 in that District, but about 10,000 men were probably at the time temporarily absent from their homes and in employment in the mines and towns of the Rhodesias and South Africa (see Gulliver, 1957), whilst about 20,000 had migrated to live in the adjacent Mbeya District to the north.

The tribal area comprises a confined geographical basin surrounding the northern end of Lake Nyasa. It extends only about 40 miles from the tip of the lake at 1,550 feet above sea level to the Poroto Mountains in the north at 8,000 feet; and from east to west is only about 30 miles, from the almost sheer walls of the Livingstone Mountains (with peaks up to 10,000 feet) to the Ndali Highlands (rising to about 7,000 feet). There are therefore unusually large ecological differences within so small an area. Three major regions are to be distinguished: the "Northern Highlands" over about 4,500 feet, the low-lying "Lake Plains" in the south, and the "Central Region" in between. Everywhere rainfall is reliable and high, averaging at least 100 inches annually[1], and this amply compensates for a certain poverty and misuse of the soil, although (and particularly in the Central Region) it brings dangers of soil erosion. Except in the highest parts the banana is the staple food, supported by maize, beans, finger millet and groundnuts. In the Northern Highlands coffee has become well established as the principal cash crop: in the Lake Plains paddy rice cultivation provides both a food and a cash crop: in the Central Region the country is too low generally for coffee and too high and dry for rice; consequently cash-cropping is considerably inferior and the people's standard of living is rather poorer.

The Nyakyusa and their country tended for a long time to be relatively isolated from the outside world by high mountain walls and rain-soaked roads. In addition, or because of it perhaps, they developed an almost unique culture which was supported by considerable conservatism and high insularity. They still continue to regard their African neighbours beyond the mountains as their social and cultural inferiors. The turmoil of the slave-trade in Central Africa passed them by; in modern times they have not enthusiastically accepted Christianity and they have refused to take up the use of Swahili, the Territorial *lingua franca*. In recent years, and most especially since the end of World War II, they have, however, accepted and pushed forward with vigour a rapid and extensive economic development, involving particularly the production of coffee and paddy as cash crops, and large-scale labour migration to the south in the high-wage mining industries. The multiplicity of petty, often tiny, independent chiefdoms has been reorganised to provide four local government areas, each under a Rural Council, in which the old chiefdoms have become something like parishes[2]. Although much of the old conservatism and narrow parochialism persists, yet there is now an atmosphere of accepted change, of a keen desire for economic development, and a general acceptance of a cash economy.

Probably the most significant feature of modern life in the Nyakyusa country is the increasing scarcity of land for agriculture in relation to the

1. At Tukuyu, in the Northern Highlands, annual rainfall averaged 99.38 inches between 1919 and 1952; at Kyela, in the Lake Plains, the average between 1940 and 1951 was 106.21 inches.
2. See Kingdon, Z.E.: The initiation of a system of local government by African rural councils in the Rungwe District, Tanganyika; *The Journal of African Administration*, iii, 4, October, 1951.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

people's needs. The importance of this can scarcely be overemphasised for a peasant people who are adopting a cash economy and are socially and emotionally deeply attached to their land – their single, continuous source of capital and their tribal heritage. Apart from the possibilities of labour migration which, so far at any rate, are taken up only temporarily and by the younger men, there are no economic opportunities and no capital to compete with the land. In non-economic life the land remains supreme as the persisting basis of society.

As late as 1940 the District Commissioner, Rungwe, was able to write that there was most generally sufficient land for the people's needs in all parts of the country, and the only competition was perhaps in respect of the very best and most fertile tracts, as had always been the case. G. Wilson recorded similar remarks in the late nineteen-thirties. That these observations were correct cannot be doubted. It is known, for instance, that until the post-war years in the Lake Plains – where now land shortage is most acute – there was a broad belt of mainly unoccupied, uncultivated bushland, infested with game, extending from the Livingstone Mountains in the east to the Nyasaland border in the south-west. There were extensive, more or less empty areas in almost every chiefdom. The people were subsistence farmers only, and also banana eaters, and in this well-watered country their agricultural requirements were adequately met on very modest holdings, from most of which two harvests a year could be gathered.

In the brief period of little more than ten years the situation has altered radically to the point of a general shortage of land (except for some parts in the north-west), and especially in the Lake Plains the available land is quite insufficient to meet the demands of the inhabitants. This critical change is the result partly of an increasing population, augmented by some immigration from other tribal areas; but more especially it is the result of the demands for larger arable holdings to meet cash crop aspirations – i.e., money earning. Although both coffee and paddy rice cultivation had begun before 1939, and both were encouraged and developed during the War years, it was not until after 1945 that both of these cash crops became well and generally established and the demand for money incomes became universal.

III

It was in order to investigate this new situation, which was beginning to become serious and to cause concern to Government, that I made a sociological survey in 1955. I had already spent some months in the country in 1954 investigating labour migration in order to provide Government with information and to make recommendations to deal with the problems arising. The second period of work occupied about five months. During both enquiries I was extremely fortunate in having the use of the excellent monographs of G. and M. Wilson who had carried out a conventional anthropological study of the Nyakyusa between 1934 and 1938. Without their basic work behind me, neither of my two studies would have been possible in so brief a time, and I must gratefully acknowledge the real value of their writings.

The intention had been that a complete enquiry should be made into Nyakyusa land conditions in all parts of the country, and that it should culminate in a full recording of tribal land law and custom with a view to its possible reform. In the event only the initial enquiry in the field in the Lake Plains was completed and the results of that alone are described in this essay. Whereas in former days there were probably few distinctive differences between the various parts of the country, in modern times with the introduction of different cash crops, with differential population growths and varying demands on the land, important divergences seem to be arising. For example,

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER III

CHANGING CONDITIONS AND THE PRESENT SITUATION

Population

At the African Census in 1948 there were recorded, in their own tribal area, approximately 198,000 Nyakyusa at an average density over the land available for their use of 212 persons per square mile. 161

In the Lake Plains alone there were, in 1948, 55,700 inhabitants living at an average density of 268 persons per square mile. Population densities in the other Nyakyusa areas were rather lower than this.

These figures do not, however, give the full picture from the point of view of land occupation and use, for large numbers of men, and some women, were at the time of the Census absent from their homes and living temporarily in employment areas abroad – chiefly in the Rhodesias and South Africa. I have estimated elsewhere that approximately 8,000 men would have been away in 1948, of whom 95 per cent. or even more would return to settle down at home, for there was only a very small proportion of men who remained more or less permanently absent. That is to say, these men remained dependent for their land needs on their own tribal territory, and indeed at least some were active land-holders whilst the rest had lesser rights in family holdings. [167]

If, therefore, we include these temporary absentees, the measure of the pressure of population on the land is shown by an average density of population for all Nyakyusa of 220 persons per square mile. At least 3,000 of these migrant labourers (possibly more) had their homes in the Lake Plains, and this number increased the density of population dependent on the land resources of this region to 282 persons per square mile.

The statistically average family in 1948 comprised about five people, and therefore the population density can be restated in the form that for all Nyakyusa there were available about 15 acres of land per family. In the Lake Plains there were about 12 acres of land available. These averages do not, of course, take account of either unusable land such as swamps, steep slopes, infertile tracts, etc., nor of the land necessarily taken up by roads and paths, open spaces in the villages and the like.[1]

These figures indicate that, taking a broad and general view based on averages, the density of Nyakyusa population or their pressure on their tribal lands ranked amongst the highest in Tanganyika in 1948.[2]

Unfortunately census enumerations before 1948 were too unreliable to allow of any satisfactory estimate of the probable rates of population increase, but from general information and internal evidence it is thought not unreasonable to suggest that in the Lake Plains population is increasing perhaps at the rate of one per cent. per annum; and in the rest of the tribal area the annual increase may be one and a half per cent. per annum. The high incidence of malaria and other debilitating diseases in the Lake Plains during the flood period of the wet season each year accounts for the lower estimate of increase there. [114] [169]

1. No account is taken in these calculations of Nyakyusa who were permanently resident in others parts of the Territory. They lived chiefly in Mbeya District (Unyiha, Usafwa and Mbeya Town) where they numbered about 20,000 in 1948.

2. The higher population densities in 1948 were as follows:—Ukara Island (Ukerewe District) 500, Moshi 257, Ukerewe 208, Lushoto 170, Rungwe (including Nyakyusa, Ndali, Lambia, Kisi, etc.) 161, Mwanza 160, Arusha 154, Kwimba 140. Figures extracted from *Population Density*, Govt. of Tanganyika, 1955.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

plots of maize, squashes, tobacco, etc., and useful trees (bamboo, citrus, mango, kapok, *uryunguti* and firewood). Artificial drainage would, of course, make more land available along the rivers, but this is in general beyond the abilities and resources of the Nyakyusa without considerable outside assistance.

Finally, in this matter it is to be remembered that in addition to a man's arable holding, each of his wives has a banana plot at her house from which she obtains her staple foodstuff. Such plots amount to perhaps about a tenth of an acre on the average. On the other hand, the Nyakyusa are no longer prepared to tolerate a predominantly banana diet. Rice has, in most areas of the Lake Plains, become almost as important as bananas.

Large-sized Holdings

Some blame for this novel shortage of land and the smallness of the average holding has often been laid upon that minority of Nyakyusa who have exceptionally large holdings, and also upon the immigrants from beyond the Lake Plains who have come to settle there during the past decade.

The occupiers of large-sized holdings are rather fewer than has sometimes been supposed. The notoriety of large land-owners, such as some of the modern chiefs with as much as 25-30 acres, has brought more attention to them than is really warranted. Most chiefs and village headmen have arable holdings of above average size, as a result of their privileged positions in the land allocation system and because of their prestige influence; but they remain a small minority and their number is bound to decrease in the future as inheritance causes sub-division of their holdings, for most of them have also more than the average number of wives and sons. In the two high-density regions it is clearly impossible for any man much to increase his present holding. As will be shown later (see page 24) the modern trend is not unnaturally towards a dangerous fragmentation of holdings.

The data obtained in this matter for my eight village samples are summarised in Table III, page 15. In those villages the two men out of 372 who held more than ten acres were a village headman and the father of a chief.[1] There were seven other headmen and one chief as well as some other locally influential men amongst the people covered by my surveys, but none of them held more than ten acres. There are, of course, some commoners amongst the large land-holders; many of them are close relatives of the chief or headman and have thus received preferential treatment. Some, however, are ordinary villagers who were perspicacious enough to see future trends and to obtain land in the early days before most men realised its new value and when vacant areas were still easily available. Such men are tending to become a new, wealthy class, but on the other hand they are particularly susceptible to the begging of kinsmen and friends who have insufficient land. If they are not to be regarded as unneighbourly or even anti-social (perhaps practising witchcraft) they are virtually compelled to be generous sometimes, both with their land and with their profits.

On the whole this minority of men excites little attention or jealousy among the Nyakyusa, who indeed take it for granted that their chiefs and headmen will have more land than ordinary villagers, as befits their status and prestige. If it be thought that by reducing somehow the size and number of these unusually large holdings then the land shortage might be partly relieved, it is a false hope. I scarcely think that the Nyakyusa would welcome any such attempt at interference by administrative action, but in any case it would only provide minor and temporary relief here and there and would not be worth the executive difficulties involved.

1. This second man should be a chief himself but he was dismissed by Government on his imprisonment for peculation. He still holds much of the prestige and privilege of a chief for his son is only allowed authority in purely local government affairs.

The Problem of Immigrant Land-holders

Undue importance has also been given to immigrants, but their numbers are relatively small and only significant locally. Since about 1948, or a little earlier, there has been an influx of Africans into the Lake Plains: – Nyakyusa from the Highlands (chiefly from the Central Region – Pakati), Ndali from the Ndali Highlands of Rungwe District and Kinga from the Njombe District to the east beyond the Livingstones; from northern Nyasaland have come Ndali, Lambia and Sukwa, and there are also small numbers of Bemba and others from Northern Rhodesia. They have been attracted in the modern era, when local movement is easier, by the possibility of obtaining land in the northern Lake Plains, where rainfall is so high and untouched bushland has been available.[1]

These immigrants have been and continue to be almost entirely restricted to the north in the "low-density region" (see map, facing page 15). This contained the outstandingly empty area of the country and still there remain vacant lands to be taken up. Such land is usually of relatively inferior quality, easily subject to erosion and loss of fertility on the slopes of the foothills and unsuitable for paddy cultivation except in small, isolated basins. The immigrants, that is, have settled in areas rejected by most Nyakyusa. There, locally, the newcomers outnumber the indigenous population. In the flood plains, the high-density regions, the proportions of foreigners cannot be more than one or two per cent. of the population, and in most villages there are none at all.

It is true that these newcomers do occupy land which might well be used to relieve the congestion nearer to the Lake; but in practice this would not be at all easy. To take a single example: the newly opened area in the north of the chiefdom of Mwakyusa between the Kiwira and Songwe rivers is being rapidly taken up by Ndali from the north-west, Nyasalanders and Nyakyusa from the Central Region (in that order of numerical importance). A few miles to the south, in the centre of the same chiefdom, the inhabitants of the Ikolo area consistently refuse to move although they manifestly cannot meet their land needs within their present villages. They, and others like them, say with some truth that paddy cultivation is less easy and less profitable in these newer and higher areas, and that poor communications make the disposal of produce more difficult. They also say, but more often leave to inference, that they are unwilling to leave their traditional village areas and begin in new parts, even though the move required is only one of a few miles. They have not yet become sufficiently aware of the permanent gravity of modern land shortage to overcome their parochial inertia. By the time they do become aware of it the opportunity may well be lost, for immigrants continue to arrive in twos and threes, and the last vacant land may be taken. To date, however, some vacant lands remain, albeit of poor quality, into which the densely packed Nyakyusa could move, and the immigrants cannot be blamed, at least not yet, for preventing the expansion and resettlement of the local population.

At the moment the chiefs and headmen in these northerly areas are keen to obtain as many of these immigrants as possible in order to swell the number of their commoners, the size of their villages and thus, directly, their own prestige and importance. Newcomers have every opportunity to be allocated as much land as they wish, where they wish, and many are liberally assisted with food in the traditional way until they harvest their first crop. I heard no complaints from either the local Nyakyusa or the immigrants, and relations seemed to be good. Strangers must conform to Nyakyusa ways of life and to the authority of the headman and chief, although

1. Immigrants from Nyasaland are said to have come following the introduction of new regulations there prohibiting the cultivation of easily eroded hill areas.

in fact they usually settle on the common East African pattern of scattered homesteads, each in its arable area, and not in the tight Nyakyusa village pattern.

I think that the headmen and chiefs concerned would not welcome a restraint on immigration, for it offers them a chance to emulate the numerically produced prestige of their fellows in the flood plains, to whom at the moment they feel inferior. They would, of course, most probably prefer indigenous Nyakyusa, could the latter be persuaded to settle there. As it is, at least some of the Nyakyusa of these northerly villages are trying to move into the flood plains, where they can more easily cultivate paddy and where they can join in a more active and ebullient village life.

One type of foreigner to the Lake Plains is the man (almost invariably a Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who has obtained land but does not settle on it nor in any village. He continues to live in his upland village and comes down to the plains only to cultivate and harvest his paddy field. This is strictly against Nyakyusa land law and custom and, in fact, such an absentee land-holder has often made a substantial monetary gift to the chief or headman for the protection of this extra-legal privilege. These strangers are frequently among the more wealthy upland Nyakyusa, who can afford such payments as these, and often they are of chiefly rank themselves, perhaps having kinship ties with the local chief. There are probably no chiefdoms where such strangers have not obtained paddy fields, though naturally those which contained a good deal of vacant, usable paddy land at the beginning of the cash-cropping era have most.

This does arouse a certain amount of ill-feeling and opposition amongst local villagers who have insufficient land themselves, for they lose land and gain no numerical strength or profit of any kind. The illegal action of the local chief is also condemned, especially as the chiefs should not in any case assume allocatory powers. On the other hand it must be noted that the commoners philosophically accept the supposedly protected prerogatives of their chiefs under European rule and they expect the chiefs to take advantage of them. As with the case of the minority of large land-holders, the actual effect is not particularly great and reformation here would be a minor palliative. Nevertheless in this matter there is a definite and unpopular infringement of villagers' rights and of the local customary law.

One other group of strangers may be noted for the sake of completeness. That is the Kisi, who have for at least two generations been settling along the lake shore itself from Matema in the east to the Songwe river (and beyond) in the south-west. They have come from the north-eastern shores of the lake and in the Nyakyusa area they are principally fishermen who do not, therefore, compete with the indigenous population economically. They cultivate only tiny plots of casava and sometimes of finger millet, although a few of the younger generation are now trying to grow a little paddy also. The total number of Kisi involved cannot be more than a few hundred and they have probably not increased much over the past decades. They follow an almost separate existence from their Nyakyusa neighbours, not intermarrying, and following their own way of life.[1]

1. The main Kisi settlements in Rungwe District are in the Ikombe area, an isolated peninsular south of the Lake Plains, where they number about 1,200. Another 3,000 are scattered on smaller peninsulars and in tiny lakeside basins further south along the Lakeshore. They are widely famed as potters, and they exchange their wares for cereal foods to augment their fishing.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

311 Whereas in the Highland and Central regions the large numbers of
233 cattle – in relation, that is, to the available pasture resources – are causing over-grazing and soil erosion, particularly in the hilly areas so often nowadays relegated to pasturage, on the other hand in the flood plains there does not appear, at least to the layman, to have been any serious effects on the land.
[241] The natural manuring of the paddy fields in the dry season is advantageous. In the Lake Plains it is the cattle rather than the land which suffer, but so far the Nyakyusa have done virtually nothing to meet the new conditions, other than to complain bitterly and fruitlessly.

The Young Men: Land Shortage and Labour Migration

423 The younger Nyakyusa men find increasing difficulty in obtaining arable land now that there are no longer vacant areas to be taken up, and the older men are no longer prepared to cede their land rights in favour of the younger generation, as they traditionally did. When occasional fields are left vacant, the young men must take their turn with their elders, who themselves are so chronically short of land – and the headmen commonly favour the older villagers with families as against the younger men. This means that in the high-density regions the majority of men under the age of about 30 years have little or no arable land, nor can they hope for it until the deaths of their fathers. In the congested village sites even their banana plots may be smaller than is desirable for the provision of the staple food.

[593] The young man, then, is compelled to remain dependent on his father's and elder brother's holding; indeed, headmen often justify their refusals to
[178] allocate plots to young men on the express grounds that the latter must share their elders' fields. Thus the valued independence of the young Nyakyusa is severely restricted and it seems that tensions and difficulties are beginning
[578] to arise between fathers and sons, and between brothers, because of this. Sons are blamed for not doing their fair share in the family cultivation; fathers are blamed for giving their sons inadequate shares in crops and crop incomes. It will be remembered that one of the fundamental principles underlying Nyakyusa society and its age-village organisation is the spatial segregation of parents and children (*cf.* page 22). Now they are inevitably being put into competition with one another over inadequate fields in a single holding.

The young men are severely restricted, if not altogether cut off, from the
[434] opportunity to cultivate paddy in their own fields and thus to earn their incomes at home, for paddy-growing is the only way of earning a living in the
[343] Lake Plains. Yet it is these younger men whose money demand is greatest; to buy clothing, bicycles and other store-goods, and to buy cattle for marriage payments. They are therefore strongly attracted by the ready opportunities for taking up wage-labour abroad, in the mines of the Rhodesias and South Africa where wages are high (see Gulliver, 1957).

With the best will in the world, when, as in the very high-density region, the average holding is little more than an acre and a half – when, that is, the older men themselves desire larger acreages for their own cultivation needs – it is not possible for a father to allow his son to take large shares in his fields. In some cases a father does give outright to his adult sons strips of his holding, but plots so provided are necessarily small. Quite as frequently a father does not consider it possible to break up his holding in his own life-
[593] time, and sons are expected to assist in the common cultivation and to continue merely to be given a share in the family proceeds at harvest. It is not surprising, therefore, that very large numbers of young men from the Lake
[167] Plains migrate abroad to work. Only about one man in 20 has not been away at all before the age of about 25 years. Much higher proportions of men and larger numbers absolutely are temporarily absent from the Lake

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Plains then from any other Nyakyusa area. In the high-density regions, the proportion of young men away at any one time is about 50 per cent. on the average and the proportion has risen concomitantly with the increasing scarcity of land.

It is not, of course, suggested that land shortage is the only factor responsible for contemporary labour migration amongst the Nyakyusa. Elsewhere (*loc. cit.*) I have drawn attention to the very high wages, the increased opportunity to obtain outside employment, the development of transport services and the intensification of recruiting, together with the general desire of the people to gain a higher standard of living as they more thoroughly embrace the new money economy. In fact, wage-labour in the mines is more profitable than growing paddy at home under current agricultural practice, even were land more easily available. Nevertheless, more young men do leave their homes in the Lake Plains than elsewhere in the country, and there is a rough correlation between land availability and the degree of labour migration, which seems to indicate that where men can obtain more land they tend to seek their money incomes at home. The Nyakyusa themselves, with an intensity of tribal patriotism, say that they much prefer to remain at home if they can earn their money there, even if they earn rather less than they might obtain abroad; but, say the young men, it is impossible to earn anything like sufficient when the fields are unobtainable in which to cultivate the cash-crop.

The data which I have been able to collect are summarised in Table VII. Young men are defined here as those under about 30 years old.

TABLE VII

YOUNG MEN: LAND HOLDING AND LABOUR MIGRATION

Village and chiefdom	*Young men having own paddy field*	*Young men away at work*	*Average holding of: Young men who own land*	*Older men in same village*
1. Very high density region				
Mpunguti Mwakipesile ..	17%	53%	0.5 acres	1.9 acres
Kapugi Koroso	25%	54%	0.75 acres	1.5 acres
Ndobo Mwakyusa ..	28%	51%	—	—
2. High density region				
Ikolo Mwakyusa ..	37%	47%	1.6 acres	3.7 acres
Kapugi Mwamasangula	52%	39%	1.25 acres	4.5 acres

There are some young men who have small food-crop plots but no paddy field, but I have chosen to correlate labour migration with paddy cultivation because these are almost the only alternative ways of earning money today, and the people themselves recognise the fact. The number of samples is too small, but the general inference seems to be quite clear nonetheless. My own conclusions in this matter were, however, arrived at independently of these figures, which were only obtained for corroboration. The evidence of the people themselves and their obvious difficulties of earning money at home were overwhelming.

If anything is required to underline the current land shortage and to illustrate the small size of the average holding, it surely lies in the existence of villages in which only about one quarter of the young men have their own paddy fields, and in which the average holding of this minority amounts to less than an acre.

Only in the low-density region can the young men obtain the fields they require. There, as they did traditionally, the young adult sons continue to assist their fathers in the heavier labour in the fields, but gradually before marriage they accumulate and extend their own holdings and so achieve economic independence. Elsewhere in the Lake Plains this process is taking much longer and indeed it now very frequently awaits inheritance at the death

of the father. The old principle that every man had the right to arable land applied no less strongly to the young men, married or bachelors. Today most headmen will refuse to entertain the applications of young bachelors for land, and in this they merely represent general public opinion. But many young husbands likewise cannot obtain land, or only an insufficient amount.

Consequently, the following case-history, which I recorded for one young man, is not unusual. In 1955 he lived in the Mlangali young-men's hamlet, attached to Mpunguti village in Mwakipesile's chiefdom, where his father lives. He was about 27 years old and had a wife and one child. Twice he had been to work in the mines and from the profits of this employment he had completed his bridewealth payment and had bought, in addition, three cattle, a bicycle and some good clothing. He thought he would probably go away again. Behind his house his wife had about 300 square yards of bananas and there was a tiny patch of cassava. This man had no other land, but he assisted in the heavy labour on his father's holding (about 1.7 acres in all) and by family convention he normally took for his own use the paddy crop of a small strip there; he insisted, however, that he had not been given this strip outright and that it remained at his father's pleasure. He had an unmarried half-brother about 22 years old who had not obtained even that concession at the time. Their father was about 55 years old and had two other sons who were still boys. The young man himself had been refused an allocation of land by the headman on the grounds that (as the headman well knew) he had the use of this strip of his father's land, and also because, as the eldest son, he would be the principal heir on his father's death. He was clearly worried about his future, for he did not wish to go abroad again and leave his wife and child; but he did not see how he could stay at home without seriously lowering his standard of living to little above subsistence level.

I quote this brief case-history not necessarily as typical – though I think it probably is – but as an actual illustration of the present state of affairs as they affect an individual.

The Modern "Chief" and the Land

Most of the traditional chiefs, *abanyafyale*, have been recognised and salaried under the Native Authority, and they are officially referred to today as *abatwa* (s. *ntwa*). Some of the smallest chiefdoms have been absorbed administratively by their larger neighbours, and, although they are still recognised by the people, their *abanyafyale* have lost very much of their earlier prestige and authority. In the Lake Plains the modern chiefdoms are often rather larger than is usual amongst the Nyakyusa,[1] but they are, of course, small in comparison with the size of most African chiefdoms in Tanganyika.

The slightness of the traditional authority of the chief in land matters has already been noted (pages 7-8) and in general this still holds. In European times, however, the recognised chiefs have been given an increased authority and prestige as the local intermediaries between Government and people, and until recent years they were almost the only local instruments of the Government amongst the Nyakyusa. They have been backed by the all-powerful European, who preferred to deal with single, recognised individuals thought to have prime authority in a locality, and the European officer has been encouraged in this notion by an over-enthusiastic policy of indirect rule. Such chiefs were able to assume a degree of power well beyond the traditional limits, and to aggrandize themselves thereby. The ordinary commoner was never quite sure how far his chief was individually claiming more than he

1. On the numerical size of chiefdoms see supra, page 6.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Briefly to summarise the contemporary land situation: in the Lake Plains it may be said that in the main the traditional land tenure system and land law still continue as the basis of native land holding today. The essential feature in recent years has been the acute land shortage in relation to arable needs under the current system of agriculture. Village unity and village exclusiveness have been increased and so also has the authority of the village headman in his control and allocation of land rights. Security of tenure has been strengthened, if anything, and one of the most important methods of obtaining land is now by inheritance. The new law establishing inheritance from father to sons, whilst generally acceptable to the people, is producing a number of civil suits which form the greatest proportion of the more important land cases before the local courts.

The shortage of land is principally the result of increased demands for paddy (i.e. cash crop) cultivation, although the population appears to be increasing slowly. In the high density regions almost all men have considerably less land than they could cultivate, especially under the impetus of the ox-plough, with the developing desires for money income. In the low density region of the low foothills there is still some vacant or partly utilised land, though of very inferior quality for paddy cultivation. The shortage hits the younger men severely, and many of them cannot obtain land at all until the death or senility of their fathers. Fragmentation and dispersion of holdings is rapidly becoming serious and without check.

The first question which arises is whether anything can be done to ease the pressure of population on the country by making more land available, or by making its distribution more equitable.

The thinly populated parts of the northern region of the Lake Plains offer a meagre solution only, for the country is raised above the level of the flood plains and is often broken and hilly. Fertility is low, erosion is a constant danger and the paddy yield (if obtainable at all) is poor. Nyakyusa from the densely populated areas to south and east are therefore most unwilling to move there. In any case the available land, which remains safely and economically open to cultivation, is filling up fairly quickly – mainly by immigration. Certainly I do not think that it can supply sufficient space to meet modern needs. There is, however, no reason why immigrants should make a difficult situation worse, and therefore it is suggested that further immigration from outside the Lake Plains should be carefully controlled if not altogether prevented. Indubitably outsiders (almost entirely Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who hold land without permanent residence should be prohibited and their holdings reallocated to local inhabitants.

As I have already indicated (page 17), I do not think that the problem of men who hold unusually large acreages is particularly serious. Such large holdings are relatively few and will be inevitably split up by inheritance on the deaths of the present occupiers.

In the flood plains proper there is, as far as I am aware, extremely little new land which could be brought under cultivation. Mechanical assistance in the clearance of dense reed thicket[1] and in drainage schemes would produce

1. These areas of thicket are heavily inundated in the wet season but, if cleared, could be used for a dry season crop.

311 flood plains paddy fields where the ox-plough is in general use today. The
423 general advantages of consolidation require no exposition here.

In view of the domestic, economic and social importance of cattle to
[233] the Nyakyusa and their potential value in a mixed intensive economy, and also in view of the fact that cattle are widely held in very small numbers by individual families, it is suggested that further and more urgent attempts be made to encourage stall-feeding, especially during the wet season. It is realised that past efforts in this matter have failed, and therefore a thorough-going scheme of propaganda and demonstration work is needed. Small fodder crops might be grown in the dry season and there is always plenty of banana fodder as makeweight.

The problem of the landless young men is likely to remain very difficult (see pages 36ff). It has to be remembered of course, that as they get older men do acquire land gradually. Nevertheless the proportion of landless, or
[167] virtually landless, men is high and is apparently increasing. The large-scale, post-war labour migration to the Rhodesias and South Africa is undoubtedly one of the more important results of land shortage and economic difficulty, and it is a valuable safety valve. As I have written elsewhere: "The serious and increasing land shortage amongst the Nyakyusa raises real doubts if there is any policy at all which can keep the men at home when there is not enough land for them – for the sake of both economic and general social stability it might be preferable in the long run if the continued pressure on the land resources were released by a degree of permanent emigration."[1] Since writing that and during the course of my land investigations I have only
[464] become more convinced of its rightness. I would now go so far as to say that Nyakyusa men should be encouraged to go abroad to work and even to become permanent wage-labourers in the industries and areas which demand labour and offer a higher standard of living. If the Nyakyusa are not to be seriously retarded in their home economic development, based as it must be on agriculture (i.e. on the land), the excess population must find an outlet elsewhere.

[621] The general tendency towards greatly increased exclusiveness in the
[597] Nyakyusa village, involving renewed emphasis on the principle of land-holding only by residence and the forfeiture of a holding when changing residence, raises wider issues the future significance of which is not easily seen, especially by the Nyakyusa themselves. This narrow village parochialism does little to meet the increasingly difficult problem of land shortage, whilst the isolation it fosters is the antithesis of the wider outlook required by a developing society in a world money economy. I am fully aware of the strong native sentiment attached to the village and to village independence, but this was in fact diminishing in earlier European times before the new land scarcity set in (see pages 29-30). I do not think that this village system and the complex of attitudes and values it fosters is adequate to provide for the future – a future which the Nyakyusa do not yet clearly foresee. With some deference, therefore, I offer the following suggestion: a man who already has a holding should be able to retain it when he moves to live in another village. If his new home is too far away for the continued cultivation of all or part of the holding, or for any other valid reason, he should be able to sell or give it to anyone he wishes. Such gift or sale could be supervised by the headman of the village in which the holding lies. It might well, at first at any rate, be limited to a member of the same village, either an established villager or another man who is willing to come and live there. I think it important that disposal should be outright and not on leasehold terms, for the latter would most propably engender further complications and uncertainty of tenure, which must be avoided.

1. Gulliver, P. H.: *A Report on the Migration of African Workers to the South from the Southern Highlands Province, with special reference to the Nyakyusa of Rungwe District.* Provincial Administration, Tanganyika, 1955, page A21.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

from the Inamwanga and Iwa to the north-west and the Henga to the south. The affinities of the Inamwanga and Iwa appear to be with the Mambwe,[1] while the Henga are an offshoot of the Tumbuka-Kamanga people who took refuge from the Ngoni in Ngonde.[2] Of the Phoka who live high up in the hills south-west of Ngonde we know almost nothing, except that they are skilled cultivators, and their language is closely related to Tumbuka. 181

The cultural group consisting of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people, together with small groups in Rungwe district and Ngonde largely absorbed by them, and including the Nyakyusa immigrants in Mbeya district, probably numbers about a quarter of a million. 161

Of the more distant cultural affinities of this group we know nothing: there are no consistent similarities in culture between it and any other known group. The elaborate age-organization, and the great ceremony of handing over secular power to the next generation, which is held every thirty years or so, suggest East African connections, while the girls' puberty and marriage ceremony (*ubusungu*) is in many ways similar to the *cisungu* ceremony of the Bemba;[3] and the witchcraft beliefs are like those of the Azande[4] and the Lovale.[5] 171

b. Environment and economy

The Nyakyusa-Ngonde country is fertile, well watered and, to European eyes, spectacularly beautiful, with its arc of high mountains and sparkling lakes. The Nyakyusa valley forms part of the 133

[1] F. F. R. Boileau and L. A. Wallace, 'The Nyasa-Tanganyika Plateau', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. XIII (1899); J. C. C. Coxhead, 'The Native Tribes of North-Eastern Rhodesia, their Laws and Customs', *Royal Anthropological Institute, Occasional Paper*, No. 5, 1914; C. Goldsbury and H. Sheane, *The Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia* (1911).

[2] F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), Vol. I, p. 52; M. Sanderson, 'Some Marriage Customs of the WaHenga, Nyasaland', *Journal of the African Society*, Vol. XXII (1922–3); T. Cullen Young, 'The WaHenga of North Nyasaland', *Journal of the African Society*, Vol. XXIII (1923–4); 'Tribal Intermixture in Northern Nyasaland', *J.R.A.I.*, Vol. LXIII (1933); 'Habits and Customs of the Olden Days among the Tumbuka-Kamanga People', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. X (1936).

[3] A. I. Richards, *Bemba Marriage and Present Economic Conditions*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. 4. (1940).

[4] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (1937).

[5] C. M. N. White, 'Witchcraft, Divination and Magic among the Balovale Tribes', *Africa*, Vol. XVIII (1948), pp. 81–104.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VII

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN AGE-VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

a. The peculiarity of Nyakyusa villages

621 561 171

VILLAGES in which contemporaries live together permanently have not been reported among any people in Africa other than the Nyakyusa; such villages are not found among their neighbours, and diligent inquiry from Africans of many tribes has not revealed them elsewhere; it is possible that the Nyakyusa system is unique, but we still know too little of Africa to be sure. A similar system might well exist elsewhere without having been noted by Europeans. The fact that Nyakyusa villages were organized on an age basis was not recorded either by the missionaries[1] or the Administration, though the system of Indirect Rule had been in operation for eight years before we began work in the district.

What is common in Africa is for groups of male contemporaries —age-sets—to live together in temporary villages or club houses before marriage. The warrior-villages of the Masai,[2] the regimental barracks of Zulu[3] and Swazi,[4] the cattle posts of Tswana[5] and Pedi,[6] are all occupied by groups of contemporaries; while among the Kikuyu[7] and the Kipisigis[8] local detachments of age-

[1] D. R. MacKenzie, *The Spirit-Ridden Konde*, speaks of 'small boys' living in 'tiny houses' of their own (pp. 27–8); J. T. Hamilton, *Twenty Years of Pioneer Missions in Nyasaland*, says: 'The elder boys live together in long oblong houses at the end of the village. When one of them marries he builds a house near the boys' quarter, and in this manner the village extends in this direction.' (p. 40.) He does not suggest any further separation of the generations.

[2] L. S. B. Leakey, 'Some Notes on the Masai of Kenya Colony', *J.R.A.I.*, LX (1930), pp. 185–209; D. Storrs Fox, 'Further Notes on the Masai of Kenya Colony', *J.R.A.I.*, LX (1930), pp. 447–65.

[3] E. J. Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus*, pp. 261–7.

[4] H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 117–37.

[5] I. Schapera, *Native Land Tenure in the Bechuanaland Protectorate*, pp. 25, 220–9.

[6] G. M. Pitje, *Some Aspects of Male Education among the Pedi and Cognate Tribes*. (Thesis accepted for the M.A. degree in the University of South Africa. Unpublished.)

[7] W. S. and K. Routledge, *With a Prehistoric People*, p. 118.

[8] J. G. Peristiany, *The Social Institutions of the Kipsigis*, pp. 49–51.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sets have club houses in which young men sleep. Among the Cewa, though boys do not move out of the parent village, they have a special hut in which they sleep together from the age of five or six.[1] But among all these people the age-set scatters at marriage, each young man building his permanent home, to which he brings his wife, alongside his kinsmen or, in the case of the Cewa, alongside his wife's kin.

The peculiarity of the Nyakyusa then consists in the fact that contemporaries live together permanently through life, not merely as bachelors: age-villages appear in an isolated area surrounded (so far as we know) by people with no similar institution.

We cannot hope to explain how, or when, age-villages developed among the Nyakyusa: there is no reference to them in such documents as exist, and we could trace no oral tradition regarding their origin. Even the historian Mwandesi (cf. p. vi) had no idea whether age-villages were introduced by the incoming Nyakyusa chiefs, or were found by them among the previous inhabitants of the valley, or were invented after the conquest. We can, however, inquire into the social characteristics associated with age-villages. *What are the peculiarities of Nyakyusa society not found in societies with kinship villages?* In this chapter we attempt to answer that question.

b. Age-villages and incest

The Nyakyusa themselves associate living in age-villages with decency in sex life—the separation of the sex activities of successive generations, and the avoidance of incest. When asked why small boys build apart from their parents they refer to the danger of a growing boy overhearing lewd talk between his parents, or seeing them unclothed (*vide supra*, p. 82); and they enlarge on the difficulties of father- and daughter-in-law avoidance were father and son to live in the same village—an avoidance which is consciously related to the fear of incest between father- and daughter-in-law (*vide supra*, p. 85). We may add also the fear of young men seducing their fathers' junior wives, who are often girls of their own age. Nyakyusa informants did not mention this last point as a reason for living in age-villages, but it is significant

[1] A. G. O. Hodgson, 'Notes on the Achewa and Angoni of the Dowa District of Nyasaland Protectorate', *J.R.A.I.*, LXIII (1933), p. 129.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN1
Nyakyusa

621 that adolescent sons are not permitted to visit their homes after
834 dark, and when they come by day for their meals they are
606 often required to eat in the open court-yard and not 'hide in the bananas or huts' lest they make love to their fathers' wives. They do not sit about in the men's village. Thus, although the villages of fathers and sons adjoin until the sons 'come out', the young men are physically separated from their young 'mothers'.

The feeling that sons should not be cognizant of the sex activities of parents, and that father-in-law and daughter-in-law should avoid one another is not, of course, peculiar to the Nyakyusa; all we seek to show is that the extreme elaboration of these avoidances among the Nyakyusa is dependent upon the existence of age-villages. Whereas a Pondo daughter-in-law must never
• [171] walk across the courtyard of the kinship village in which she lives, or approach the cattle byre or the men's side of her mother-in-law's hut, lest she come too near her father-in-law, yet, living in the same village, she necessarily sees him daily; the Nyakyusa daughter-in-law, living in a separate village, need not (and should not) set eyes on her father-in-law after her marriage. Where the territorial segregation of fathers and sons is blurred (as at Rungwe) there father- daughter-in-law avoidance is less strictly observed. The Nyakyusa regard this extreme form of avoidance as a peculiarity of their culture which has been imparted by them to the small groups (such as Ndali, Penja, and Nyika) whom they are assimilating.

Father- and daughter-in-law incest is clearly a potential danger in a society in which cattle are controlled by middle-aged and elderly men, who frequently have to choose between taking another wife themselves and giving cattle for a son's marriage, and who are accustomed to marrying young girls of an age suitable to be wives to their sons. But we cannot show that the danger is *greater* among the Nyakyusa than it is among other patrilineal cattle people such as the Pondo, Zulu, or Swazi, who do not find it necessary to segregate fathers- and daughters-in-law in different villages.

On the other hand the danger (common to all polygynous societies) of sons seducing their fathers' wives is exaggerated among the Nyakyusa by the absence of circumcision, the late
545 marriage age of men, the very early betrothal and marriage of
582 girls, the high degree of polygyny, and the practice of sons

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the group. In the few cases in which our informant may have been |21
giving his own individual interpretation, 'putting a bucket down 77|
into his subconscious and pulling it up', it was at least a Nyakyusa subconscious, and the interpretation is in terms of the culture. It is with common, not individual, symbols that we are concerned: what is offered in this book is a sociological, not a psychological, analysis.

Similarities between the symbolism of Nyakyusa rituals and the |7|
symbolism of dreams and neuroses in Western society will be |21
obvious to readers. That preoccupation with anal and oral func- 77|
tions, with 'nakedness' (though the Nyakyusa habitually wore the most exiguous of coverings), with death, coition, and birth, with mastery ('overstepping') and incest, which is characteristic of the rituals we describe, is evident also in any textbook of psychoanalysis dealing with Western Europeans and Americans; and certain symbols such as a house, a doorway, a spear, seed, and so forth are common to both cultures; but here we are not concerned to trace these similarities. Our business is to lay bare the symbolic pattern of the Nyakyusa without reference to the Western tradition.

The material used for the sociological analysis of ritual consists |28
of two types: observation or description of events, and statements |21
about associations. The greatest difficulty in presenting it has been to choose between a chronological account of each ritual, followed by the Nyakyusa translation or interpretation of the symbolism, and then by the sociological analysis; and an integrated account combining the interpretation and analysis with the description. The advantage of the first method is that the validity of both interpretation and analysis can be more easily judged since the evidence on which it is based is fully set out; the disadvantage is that the description itself implies interpretation and analysis. The symbolism is often implicit in the description of events, and the separation of description from interpretation involves repetition; at the same time the classification of events and symbols is itself a form of analysis, and the separation of description from analysis tends to conceal this. The present study is a compromise between the two approaches. Where events and their symbolism are fairly straightforward, the interpretation accompanies the description; but where, as in the rituals of farewell to the dead, puberty and marriage, and abnormal birth, they are complicated, and the interpretation may well be questioned, accounts of the events are separated from detailed evidence on symbolism. Analysis is neces-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

those of very young children. 'He goes because it is his subject 643
who has died: he is like the senior kinsman of the whole country, 764
he rules all.' 'If a chief omits to go to a burial people say nothing, they know that he is always going to burials and they think that perhaps he has some urgent business. But if he constantly misses burials then people say that he has no affection for his people, that he does not come to bury them as is fit; and if a chief hears them saying this then he is ashamed.' Sometimes a chief who is busy will send a son to represent him. And he sends the drums to beat the lament. 'The drum *is* the chief . . . they cannot beat the drum before the chief has spoken.'

Besides the chief, the villagers, the relatives, and the drummers, 764
there come also personal friends of the dead man from other vil- 572
lages and chiefdoms. And beyond all these there often come others 571
who are attracted not so much by grief and sympathy, nor even by the obligation to express these feelings, but rather by the dancing, the crowds and the possibility of getting some meat to eat. Not all those who come stay the whole three or four days, while the relatives who live at a distance often do not arrive until the second or third day.

The Nyakyusa believe that in order to protect the living and 763
avenge the dead it is most important to discover the cause of death. To do this they summon a doctor to perform an autopsy,[1] an operation fearful and repugnant, but felt to be necessary. The symptoms are interpreted in terms of witchcraft or sorcery, or other supposed causes of disease.

On the first, or early on the second, day after death, the burial 764
takes place. The grave is dug in the swept and beaten earth that immediately surrounds the huts. The first spit of earth is always turned by the eldest son of the one who has died. At one burial we saw the young eldest son of a dead man being helped to do this. He was too small to manage a hoe by himself so he caught the handle near the blade while an older relative held it behind to steady it for him. The digging after the first spit is done by a skilled grave-digger, who may be a kinsman or not, with the help of others. The grave is ten or more feet deep with a cave at the bottom to one side. Some graves are oblong, some round or oval,

[1] This is certainly traditional, cf. D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater Lakes North of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, V (1895), p. 119. The custom is also reported for the Nyamwanga. For a description of the autopsy, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 247–50. [171]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Ma Ngonde
Kukwe

ritual is powerful. If you do not perform the ritual for your father or 764
perhaps that of your wife then you won't be a person, your body 775
comes to an end and you die, but you are present, you are still alive, you do not die when the body comes to an end, you take faeces as in the ritual. But when they bring millet and say: 'This is so-and-so's, and this so-and-so's' (naming him whose ritual you have omitted) and brew beer and drink it, then you die.

QUESTION: How do the dead appear to us?

ANSWER: They appear before our eyes at night. You dream and in the morning say: 'I was with the so-and-so's in the night, with the so-and-so's!

QUESTION: Where do you go (at death)?

ANSWER: When we die we go above. [177]

QUESTION: That's a new thing?

ANSWER: Yes, indeed, formerly we said we went below; our fathers and grandfathers said that. But we now say we go below to rot and stink only but since we look toward home when they bury us perhaps the heart (*indumbula*) goes above (*kumwanya*) and that is home. We have seen this in European times in books. No, I am not a Christian and I cannot read, I've just learnt this. . . .

KALUNDA (a doctor) AND MWAIJUMBA: The *ikipiki* medicine put into the beer and lees at 'the shaving of the sprouting hair' is the same medicine as that which we eat at the pumpkin-seed ritual. The *ikipiki* of the death ritual and the puberty ritual and the birth ritual is one and the same, but the medicine for twins is different. . . . There is one *ikipiki* used in all the three rituals—puberty, birth, and death—but to it is added another medicine which is different for each of the three. *Ikipiki* is our kinship, it is our blood (*ikipiki bo bukamu buwtu, lyo ilopa lyetu*); when my wife has borne a child and no one wipes its mouth with [85] the *ikipiki* it means it is not my child, it is just a bastard from the veld, it is no relative of mine but a stranger. In the puberty ritual it is [88] the same, we treat the girl with the *ikipiki* of her husband. She moves from our lineage, from that of her father, she is now a stranger, not their relative (*ikasama ukikolo kyetu, kabagwise, mundu leiyo, aka nkamu gwabo*). When someone has died it is the same. We eat food together with the deceased, the shade, and his blood. It is like the Swahili custom of eating each other's blood to create kinship. It means: 'You were our [171] kinsman from afore-time, but now it is finished, you are a stranger.' But the medicine for the twin ritual is separate, it is quite different.

2. IN KUKWE COUNTRY

The Kukwe ritual of death differs in detail from that of Selya 764
and MuNgonde, but it is performed with the same overt purpose: 184
to drive away the dead from the bodies and dreams of the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Ku Kwe

775 764 shade (*jonsyuka*)! That (which was buried) is just earth, the body has rotted, it is the shade that we care for.

QUESTION: And the necklace of banana bark?

764 MWASALEMBA: We sleep with them. In the morning we bathe again and throw them in the water. . . . Yes, indeed, some throw them away in the little hut. It is the shade, we perform the ritual and throw him away. . . . If we do not perform the ritual we do not sleep, then we pray in the banana grove and are startled.

QUESTION: Why the banana bark?

MWASALEMBA: It is with the banana that we perform the ritual: the plantain is what we steal and the sweet banana what we cut at home, and in the banana grove we pray.

When a man dies his wives sit in a row on a bark-cloth. It's at the shaving of the hair, the doctor shaves them on the bark-cloth. It's a new one because we say: 'You must throw away the bark-cloths which your husband who has died caught hold of, and wear other cloths.' So they sit on a new one.

QUESTION: What do they do with it?

MWASALEMBA: They throw it away on the litter.

QUESTION: Where?

MWASALEMBA: In the little hut. It means: 'Here we have mourned; let us throw away everything, let us wear others.' If a woman has died we men do not sit on the bark-cloth, but if I have died then my wife sits on the bark-cloth and throws away her old ones, and also when a son has died the mother throws away her old bark-cloths, but she does not sit on the bark-cloth! No! And she does not throw away her bark-cloth for the death of a small son, nor for a daughter, even though she be grown up. No! See, she is also a woman and wears a bark-cloth in front. But for a grown son a mother throws away her bark-cloths, saying: 'Because he was my child, I bore him, he sucked my breasts, so I throw away the bark-cloths.' Only for a grown son who has wives in his house does the mother throw away her bark-cloth, not for a bachelor.

764 QUESTION: The stones between the fingers?

775 MWASALEMBA: We throw him away. It is the shade.

QUESTION: Is the first intercourse after a death a ritual or not?

764 MWASALEMBA: No, it is not a ritual; we begin to have intercourse 768 when the ritual is finished. But among the Penja when someone has ● 171 died and the ritual has been performed and is finished, the husband takes a cow and gives it to the father of his wife, saying: 'I take the woman.' Then he has intercourse with her. But we do not, except in the case of twins.

833 QUESTION: And ordinary intercourse?

775 MWASALEMBA: The shade is together with the heart (*alisejo indumbula*); it is he who is roused and goes to a woman, it is he who stiffens

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

CHAPTER IV

THE RITUAL OF PUBERTY AND MARRIAGE

1. IN SELYA AND MUNGONDE

(a) *The events*

881 585 584 856 THE puberty ritual for girls among the Nyakyusa is fused with the marriage ritual. Girls are usually betrothed well before puberty and they may live with their 'husbands' for some time before they grow up, for the view of most Nyakyusa is that a girl should become accustomed to her husband gradually and that it is good for her to visit him from time to time, sweeping his house, cleaning the byre, drawing water and cooking for him, and learning the art of love-making with him and no one else. While she is still very immature it is insisted that he should only have intercourse with her *inter crura*, but when she is approaching puberty he often has full intercourse with her. No legal case can be brought against him in court if he does so, provided that he has not forced or frightened her, but his friends may tell him he is foolish, and is 'teaching his wife adultery', since now he can have no proof, in the physical examination at puberty, that she has not slept with other men. No stigma attaches to the girl; if it is her husband who has deflowered her she is acclaimed in the ritual as a virgin. In some pagan families, however, notably those of chiefs, girls are not allowed to visit their husbands before puberty. The girl's father has the right to [71] refuse it, for before the ritual a wife is only 'borrowed'. Unlike the neighbouring Bemba, the Nyakyusa are not anxious lest the girl should conceive before her first menstruation—if she should do so the ritual is performed in the ordinary way—but many fathers dislike letting their daughters go before the main bulk of the marriage cattle have been handed over. Opposition on the part of the missions and the Administration to early marriage also influences the more sophisticated. The period of betrothal is long, for pagan [45] girls are commonly engaged from about 8 years old onwards, and the average age of puberty appears to be between 15 and 16.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

Record of M. W., 13 September 1936

881 I arrived at nine o'clock in the morning to find Syungu, the elderly
789 wife of the chief's senior brother, who acts as officiant in all the rituals for the chief's family, grinding and cooking *inyemba* together with a powdered medicine and red pigment, to make an ointment. I asked the purpose of the medicine. She replied: 'It's *ikipiki* that she may be heavy, that she may bear children and not be barren.'

273 Some of the chief's wives gave me beer—ordinary beer. They them-
789 selves were drinking from a pot which had stood in the inner part of the house (*kasefo*) and to which medicine had been added. They explained that it might be drunk only by themselves, the chief's wives. A strange woman, a Penja, came along and, though warned that this pot was not for her, insisted on drinking some of it. She explained how Penja
• [171] ritual differed from that of the Kukwe—they kill sheep for the puberty ritual. Usually this beer stands to brew in the seclusion hut 'on the litter'.

881 The women were preparing a dish of beans and bananas cooked together, and when it was ready a little was given to the officiant, some was put aside for the girl (*usungu*),[1] and the remains were offered to the guests. One of the cooks threw away the central stem of the head of bananas used, but was told by the officiant to fetch it back, as all the rubbish must be cleared away together at the end of the rite.

After midday the officiant shaved some hair from the girl's temples and the back of her neck, and then she shaved the mother completely. I asked why the girl was not shaved completely and was told: 'Her fellows would laugh at her if she had no hair.' The officiant prepared four banana leaves, stripping each off on one side of the mid-rib and shredding the other half so as to make a rough fringe. Standing with her back to the girl, she touched herself over the genitals, breasts, and forehead, then handed the leaf back over her head, telling the girl to fasten it round her waist. She repeated the performance with the second leaf, telling the girl to fasten it round her neck. The girl complied with the first leaf but refused the second, saying: 'I have a cloth,' and she pulled her breast cloth round her shoulders. The officiant followed the same procedure with the girl's mother, who fastened both leaves round herself. Then one of the chief's wives took the mother on her shoulders and carried her round the corner of the house. The bride followed on foot, and three other wives of the chief, singing:

Kyunula
Kyutika
Kyunulaw
Kyutika

[28] [1] Usually we have translated *usungu* by 'bride', but in this case she was not betrothed: cf. footnote 2, p. 73.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

844 Traditionally, no man entered the confinement hut in which a woman remained [177] until the cord had dropped off the new-born child and she had purified herself, and she did not normally resume cooking for her husband for some weeks; but these taboos are less strictly observed than formerly, partly, our informants insisted, because the country has been pacified and men do not fear to die in battle if they neglect them.

The obvious interpretation here is that a man is felt to partake of the weakness of a menstruating or confined woman if he comes into association with her. 'His legs become swollen and painful and he is very tired'; 'strength leaves him'; 'he has no speed in running'; 'his belly aches and his body grows red'. . . . The picture is surely one of a *woman's* physical weakness: a man is identified with his wife during pregnancy, observing the taboos she observes, and during menstruation and confinement he must isolate himself as far as possible from her lest he share her weakness; but none of our informants make a connection between the weakness of the woman and the weakness of the man—the interpretation is ours. The Nyakyusa were obsessed with the idea of 'filth' emanating from menstruation and childbirth; indeed, the feeling that women, by reason of their physiology and the taboo on washing during menstruation, are dirty, is cited by men as one of the reasons for not eating with them or sitting to chat with them. Only in this limited sense is the conception of ritual impurity linked with social [171] status. Here the contrast with a Hindu society, in which states of 789 ritual impurity (basically very similar to those of the Nyakyusa) are linked with caste differences, is marked.[1]

842 The second general conception underlying the taboos of procreation is that of *ubunito*, heaviness, a condition associated with sexual intercourse, pregnancy, the python of witchcraft, and medicines.[2] A 'heavy' (*nito*) person is dangerous to an 'empty' (*bwani*) one, hence women sleeping with their husbands, and pregnant women avoid mothers with infants and brides in seclusion, who are 'empty'; and the 'empty' are treated to prevent diarrhœa and give them weight. Diarrhœa and 'emptiness' are closely associated.

842 The great specific against 'emptiness' is *ikipiki* medicine, used 789 in the puberty, birth, and death rituals, and even used to protect cattle against a menstruating woman. 'If a woman is the only wife

[1] cf. M. N. Srinivas, *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India* (1952).
[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 95.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

844 behind the huts, moving inside after delivery, on to a litter of banana leaves spread for her. Her mother-in-law attends her and treats her and the new-born child with *ikipiki* medicine. She washes them in a basin made of two banana leaves, one sweet banana, one plantain, and is particularly careful to wash the infant's mouth and the mother's vagina. Powdered *ikipiki* is sprinkled in the water in the form of a cross. This is done 'that the mother and child should not have diarrhœa'. The cross is a symbol of overstepping (*kokukilyana kuno*, *kokukilanya kuno*, demonstrating a cross) and is made 'because heavy ones, those who are with their husbands on the bed, will come and overstep the mother and child if they are not treated'. Mother and child are also given a roasted banana with powdered *ikipiki* sprinkled on it. In bringing the *ikipiki* the husband's mother acknowledges the legitimacy of the child. 'If someone does not give a child *ikipiki* it is a bastard. It is as if the husband said: "Why do you insult your husband by committing adultery with others? Others have created this foetus; it is not mine!" '

[851 848]

The cord is tied with a shred of bark-cloth and then cut with a bamboo knife. 'An iron knife is taboo, it's a spear, other children will die from the spear disease (*ulukwego*); to use a spear is like killing someone.' The after-birth is buried in the banana plantation with a piece of the cord sticking up, and later the litter is burnt at the same place. 'Only officiants (*abasyego*) eat of these bananas growing over the burying place—no young person may do so for it's the banana grove of the litter.' The cord must be buried upright or 'the mother will not bear again'.

845 A delayed delivery is most commonly attributed to the woman's
775 adultery,[1] and she is pressed by the midwife to confess the name of her lover or lovers, but it is also believed that it may be due to *imindu*, that is the shades. The husband consults a diviner who indicates whether the *imindu* is on his side or that of the woman's father and the one who is thus indicated should pray. 'Sometimes the woman herself tells of a quarrel which would lead to *imindu* and then her husband or father goes to pray.'

846 Mother and child remain in confinement until the navel cord drops off, sheltered from 'heavy ones', who should not enter or even greet the mother from the doorway, and from men, to whom both mother and child are dangerous. 'Men must not see a tiny

[71]

[1] Unlike certain other Central African peoples, the Nyakyusa do not attribute difficulty in childbirth to the adultery of the husband.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 spit' and 'to forgive'. *Ukuputa* means 'to blow out water' and *ukwiputa* (the reflexive form) means 'to pray', with the implication of confessing whatever anger or grudge a man may have in his heart. Full confessions both by the wrongdoer and by seniors who have been angry are held to be essential to the lifting of the misfortune.

775 The man who prays represents the living members of the lineage
783 and he calls on his immediate seniors, who are dead, for support.
613 'You, Father, you my elder brother, you so-and-so (his grandfather) stand by me, help me, do not be angry, here I am, your child, your younger brother. I am above here, it was not I who killed you but Kyala alone.'

He may also remonstrate with the shades, asking why they should afflict the living. *Ukwikemesya* (lit. 'to cause oneself to blame', from the root *ukuikemela* 'to scold' or 'to blame') is used to mean 'to sacrifice', and the conception of remonstrating with, or scolding, troublesome shades is an element of Nyakyusa sacrifice.

783 If beer has been prepared, a libation is poured out either on the
782 hearth-bricks or in the banana grove nearest the door of the house, which is used by the owner as his sacred grove (*ikijinja kyake ikikemo*). If an animal is sacrified the blood must soak into the earth for, as already indicated, the 'earth is the shade's'. Furthermore, the rest of the beer or the fish and the *ija mmapa* meat from the foreleg of the beast[1] is left overnight on the ground in the sacred grove, more rarely under the officiant's bed, and eaten or drunk in the morning by young boys of the lineage, grandsons[2] of the last deceased, for they are 'the comrades of the shades'. Other people may finish up the beer or meat, but wives of the lineage may not touch it: they seclude themselves in their huts and remain silent during the ritual, for 'they fear their fathers-in-law (*bikutila abakamwana*)'.

783 The proper person to approach the shades is (among com-
613 moners) the senior member of a lineage of three generations; but if he lives at a considerable distance—perhaps twenty miles or more away—then a junior may pray on his own account, only asking help from his senior in cases of serious illness. 'If father and son, or brothers, live far apart, as here in Selya and at Mwaya

[171] [1] The cut is the same as the Xhosa *intsonyana* which is sacred in a Pondo sacrifice. cf. M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 249. Nyakyusa informants denied that the gall is of importance in their ritual as it is among the Nguni and Nuer.

[2] One case was recorded of a son of the last deceased, still a small child, drinking the sacrificial beer.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

431 neighbours give her gifts after her initiation it is that she may 'cease to avoid them', and a woman may give a small gift to her husband's father's sister, and thereafter look at her. Nowadays, a [606] father-in-law, in exceptional cases, kills a bull for his daughter-in-law so that she may look at him.[1]

556 Great prestige attaches to generosity, particularly generosity 577 with food. A chief or village headman is one who *feeds* people, and generosity is displayed both in informal feasts for neighbours and on the formal occasions of ritual. A father who is generous in the feasts provided for his daughter at her initiation and marriage gains prestige; if he is stingy his affines and his neighbours comment on it; he both loses their respect and fears lest he may even fall ill from 'the breath of men'. If the groom's family fail to provide sufficient, the bride's father does not hesitate to scold them for it, and they reply with humility which may be so exaggerated as to verge on boasting. It is conventional for the groom to plead poverty but at the same time he and his kin compete with the bride's family in preparing quantities of fine food. The pride and excitement over feasts is clearly brought out in the comments on funerals, the remarks of a mother on the return of her daughter to her husband after the birth of the first child, and Angombwike's account of marriage negotiations and gifts (pp. 31–4, 148, 253–5). The principals in any ritual are the centre of attention and may gain prestige from its performance, as a bride does, but what concerns the Nyakyusa much more is the reputation of the family serving the feast. Here the emphasis is very different from what it [171] is in the Pondo ritual for the initiation of diviners, or the Lunda rituals of misfortune.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 85.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

We interpret the induction, seclusion, and bringing out as symbols of death and rebirth. There can be no doubt that the induction and seclusion represent death. Strewing leaves—or laying a litter—which is an essential act in every induction is a sign of misfortune and death;[1] and at the induction of a bride her 'mothers' sing: 'Go, go and never return', and 'We wail a dirge'. The mourners, the nubile girl, the mother of a new-born child, and the parents of twins are all 'filthy' and one with the dead; Kasitile said of mourners: 'We have died, we *are* the corpse.' The period of seclusion implies a sojourn with the shades, and our hypothesis is that it represents *both* death and gestation. The hut appears as a symbol of the womb in the pregnancy and 'gasping cough' rituals, and the doorway which 'belongs to the shades' is a symbol for the vagina. In the pregnancy ritual, passing through the doorway is explicitly interpreted as a symbol of birth, and in the death ritual mourners come out of the doorway stooping, and bump their heads against an obstruction. In the 'bringing out' in the death and puberty rituals, the mourners and the nubile girl run in and out of the doorway and water drops from the thatch. Kakune, the doctor, interpreted this as a symbol of the mourners' receiving the shade back on to their bodies. We interpret it, rather more widely, as a symbol of rebirth. Both men and spirit are reborn, the shade in the bodies of the participants. 796

All through the rituals the connection of the shades with potency and fertility is emphasized. They cause menstruation and sexual desire; they are present in intercourse and ejected as semen; they control conception; they control fertility in the fields. 'The shade and the semen are brothers.'[2] 'When they shake the millet and pumpkin-seeds (after ritual connection) the seed is semen . . . and it is the shade. . . .' The symbols of male and female, plantain and sweet banana, recur repeatedly. The wearing of them is explicitly interpreted as a symbol of fertility, and laying them together under the litter is perhaps a symbol of the marriage union, like eating the banana with *ikipiki* medicine. Intercourse between husband and wife is the culmination of the rituals of death, puberty, and twin birth, and is held to be essential to the health of 796 775 831

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 232.

[2] cf. Bhaca, *idlozi*: shade, semen (W. D. Hammond-Tooke, *A General Ethnographic Survey of the amaBhaca*. Unpublished thesis presented for the degree of Ph.D. in the University of Cape Town); Xhosa, *idlozi*: semen virile (A. Kropf, *Kaffir-English Dictionary*); Zulu, *idlozi*: departed spirit (C. M. Doke and Vilikazi, *A Dictionary of the Zulu Language*). 171 196

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 The Nyakyusa perhaps emphasize it[1] more than their neighbours
●[17] (though not more than the Jews or the Hindus), and their pre-
occupation with purification in the rituals is paralleled by the emphasis laid on cleanliness (*ubwifyusi*) in person, in house and courtyard, in cooking, and in disposal of excrement. Their extreme cleanliness, in contrast with their neighbours, was remarked upon by all the early travellers in the area and is still obvious.[1] Houses and courtyards are swept and garnished; pots and dishes scoured, food scrupulously covered with fresh banana leaves when it is served at feasts; a good housewife is *umwifyusi*, she who is clean. Men wash daily in running water and children are trained to take a hoe with them when they go to defaecate, and to bury the faeces.

783 The horror of 'filth' is very closely associated with the fear of
158 madness, which is at the same time a fear of too close association
828 with the dead. It is when the dead have not been driven away, but return in dreams; when the necessary separation of living and dead has not been achieved, that men go mad. Madness is most often spoken of as the penalty for neglect of the death ritual, but it is not, in theory, confined to that: 'All the rituals are the same, if they are neglected, men will become mad.' Besides madness, men fear sterility, debility, swollen limbs ('an unhealthy fatness') and diarrhœa 'to get rid of the filth in the belly' if the rituals are neglected, or taboos broken.

796 That a common symbolic pattern expressing common sentiments recurs in all the rituals is clear, but it is also true that each ritual is characterized by peculiar sentiments and symbols. The funeral rites are first and foremost an expression of grief—kinsmen and neighbours gather to weep for the dead. Their grief is symbolized by the stylized wailing, the passionate dancing, the smearing with mud and ash, wearing mourning belts, and the song of farewell at the hearth. It is true that, in the later stages of the funeral, friends seek to comfort the chief mourners with cheerful songs and dances, and in one aspect the funeral ritual is an assertion of life, but grief not joy is its dominant note. By contrast, the ritual of puberty and marriage is a rejoicing—rejoicing 'because our child has grown up', because she is virgin, because there is feasting, because there is a marriage.

881 Elements peculiar to the puberty ritual are the celebration of virginity by killing a bull, and the prayer for blessing when its

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 77–8.

1 [i.e., the conception of impurity associated with physiological functions.— Analyst]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Yet still she remains a daughter of her father's lineage and shares in its rituals as well as in those of her husband's. 613

Lineages are linked by marriage and kinship between them is established by the passage of cattle. The son-in-law becomes 'one blood' with his parents-in-law when they drink the beer brewed or eat the chicken killed at the consummation of the marriage; some of his semen is buried in his father-in-law's grove, and his spear is placed in his father-in-law's hut. The significance of the link is magnified by the thicket of taboos which surrounds 'mixing bloods', and once forged the link should be, and commonly is, retained long after the deaths of the individuals by whom it was created, for each is replaced, the husband by a brother or son, the wife by a sister or brother's daughter. For each heir the ritual of 'mixing bloods' is performed afresh reminding them of their separation and union. 613 581

Cattle are closely identified with men and therefore with lineages. The shades watch over them. Like men, they are in danger from women who are ritually impure; at the death of their owner they, too, mourn; and kinship relationships are established and expressed by their transfer from one lineage to another. 'Kinship is cattle.' 613

The distinction and opposition of lineages is apparent in the ritual of puberty and marriage which expresses both hostility and conciliation. The two lineages dance in rivalry, haggle over cattle, and exchange feasts. Among the Nyakyusa, the opposition is not between men and women, as suggested by some recent writers on rituals elsewhere,[1] but between lineages; though the men and the women, both of the groom's party and the bride's, act separately. The hostility and conciliation reach their culmination in the ritual of vituperation among the Lugulu, when groom's group and bride's insult each other by word and in action and then, at the instance of the master of ceremonies, praise each other and feast together. 613 585 881 578

Among the Nyakyusa there is no clan organization and no common name for a lineage of many generations like the Pondo *isiduko*, which identifies agnatic kinship within a large group. A common name is used by members of a lineage of three or four generations at the most, and among commoners there is no invocation of a distant ancestor as among the Pondo. The hero [614 171] 613

[1] E. Fromm, *The Forgotten Language*; M. Gluckman, 'The Role of the Sexes in Wiko Circumcision Ceremonies', in *Social Structure*, edited by M. Fortes (1949).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

613 referred to is not necessarily an ancestor of those who speak of him. In the rituals the participants look towards the direction from which their ancestors came, and the details vary both with the cultural area and with the particular lineage, but similarity in ritual observance is no ground for claiming kinship. The one recognized bond is common participation—attending one another's funerals and observing the rules of avoidance.

The segmentation of lineages is by houses. Ties between full siblings are closer than those between half-siblings and this is immediately apparent in the attendance at, and participation in rituals, as the genealogy of Mwakobela (Table (a)) shows. Full siblings, particularly successive and linked siblings, are closely identified. The most important link between men or women is inheritance. The heir takes the name and social position of the deceased, succeeding to his or her rights and obligations, and observing the same avoidances. 'A shade is resurrected in the body of his child.' The heir is a junior[1] man or woman of the lineage, preferably a full brother or sister, but possibly a half-brother or sister, or parallel cousin, or a son, or brother's son, or brother's daughter.

613 When the heir is a son, or brother's son or daughter, the separa-
601 tion so strictly maintained between generations is bridged for that individual only; he or she changes generation and a man is treated by his former comrades as a 'father' and referred to by his wives as 'father-in-law', even though they are still his wives and live with him.

The identification of alternate generations is expressed in calling grandchildren ('the comrades of the shades') to eat the sacrificial meat or fish, or take the first sip of beer, as well as in the absence of taboos between affines of such alternate generations. A woman does *not* avoid her husband's grandfather. Thus, though the lineage is treated in some respects as a unit, one man (or woman) of it being able to replace another and override the distinction between successive generations, the unity is not pushed as far as among [171] many other peoples, such as the Pondo, where the form of behaviour appropriate to a father-in-law applies to *all* senior members of his lineage irrespective of generation.

613 Differences in status within the lineage are clearly shown in the
554 rituals. In their observance seniors precede juniors, men precede

[1] If there is no junior full brother, a senior full brother may inherit provided that he has not previously inherited from his father and so become 'father'.

1 [Category 116, facing p. 270. – Analyst]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

spread and the foods and altars traditional in them continue to be 121
used: thus Nyakyusa Christians use wheaten bread and wine from the grape, whereas their pagan neighbours use bananas and millet beer, and their altar is a table set at the east end of a consecrated building, not the earth of a banana grove.

Nyakyusa ideas of physiology are those of a strongly patrilineal 827
society, in marked contrast with those of the Bemba who are 171
matrilineal:[1] to the Nyakyusa a woman is a 'bag' which the husband fills with his 'blood' and so creates a child, while the Bemba believe that 'blood' is passed through the woman, not the man. The taboos of pregnancy also have a patrilineal slant. A difficult labour is commonly attributed, among the Nyakyusa, to the wife's adultery, never to that of her husband, as among the Bemba.

Differences in ritual vary in general form with the differences in 121
economy and structure, but there remains a relative autonomy between them. Not only do symbols spread beyond the economy within which they were coined but, as we showed earlier, poetic licence exists, and the particular associations made by priest and poet are not predictable. Ritual idioms are linked to language, but how closely we do not know. What evidence there is from Bantu Africa suggests a similarity in symbols over a wide area, connected with the similarity in language, but such a hypothesis has yet to be established.

Secondly, the expression of sentiments reaffirms them. Treating food, and reproduction, and family relationships, and the community as sacred, expresses the importance of these things to the group concerned, and at the same time breeds respect for them. Treating them as important in ritual makes people feel that they are important. In Whitehead's phrase, 'the object of symbolism is the enhancement of the importance of what is symbolized'.[2] Rituals are also cathartic in that they express and explicitly reject anti-social attitudes, such as anger, terror, and the wish for death.

Thirdly, the general attitudes expressed in Nyakyusa rituals are necessary to the continuance of any society; they are conditions of social living; and the particular attitudes are necessary to the maintenance of the particular Nyakyusa structure.

Every society, if it is to survive, must value fertility in some 121

[1] A. I. Richards, 'Some types of family structure amongst the Central Bantu' in 842
African Systems of Kinship and Marriage, edited by Radcliffe-Brown and Forde, p. 207; 'Mother-right among the Central Bantu' in *Essays Presented to C. G. Seligman*, edited by Evans-Pritchard, Firth, Malinowski, Schapera, p. 276.

[2] A. N. Whitehead, *Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effects* (1923), p. 74.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Farewell to Mwampiki 2/4/37

764 184 Women began to wail about 9 a.m. I saw some arrive with bananas. They stopped wailing after ten minutes or so. Imilanwa (Mwaisalwa) was present. Mwaijumba had not yet come. I met Kakuju on the way. He had not yet been told of the ritual. Mbapa and Maleja (widows of Mwalingo) did most of the work, with Ijumba, widow of Mwampiki. Isalwa sat near and watched while Maleja ground up the ointment. Seeds for making ointment were put on the fire. This was the ointment for anointing oneself in the ritual. Beans were brought in a flat basket. 'We mourn', they said, 'with bean mash and the meat of a cow.'

There was some discussion about killing the cow and a dispute between Imilanwa and Simeni. Just as the cow was about to be killed a woman came and made them bring it to the side of the swept court [262] away from the graves. 'If you kill it near the father-in-law's grave the wives will fear to eat the meat.' The cow was killed by Imilanwa. He then called the men of the family to discuss whether or not they should kill a bull also. One had been sent by the Chief Mwaipopo who is 'our son-in-law. He married a daughter of Maleja'. Imilanwa said: 'Let us kill it,' and they agreed. Only thirteen men were present so far.

[171 177] The meat from the fork of the right foreleg (*ija mmapa*) was taken to eat with the mash. This is a Sangu not a Nyakyusa custom. The men of the family follow the Sangu custom. The women, daughters of Sangu, do likewise, and the women who are wives of Sangu, but the children of daughters who are married to Nyakyusa men from Selya do the Selya custom. If the daughter of a Sangu marries a Selya man then, if her father dies, she does the Sangu ritual at his place, but if her husband dies she does the Selya ritual at his place even if she has borne him no children, and even if she is herself a child or an infant who has not yet been to him. But her children always do the Selya ritual both at their father's home and at their mother's.

The burying of the banana flower and rubbing in earth is a Selya custom and is only done by the children of Selya men. I saw five or six children do it. Then more children came to rub in earth. One was under instruction at the mission. The women told him to rub himself but Mwaijumba broke in: 'If he is a Christian he ought not to perform the ritual.' 'He's under instruction.' 'Very well, he does not perform the ritual, for a Christian should not have two gods (*ba Kyala babili*).' The bull was killed a little way off among the bananas. Mwaijumba explained: 'It is just for meat, it's not for the ritual, the further off one. Christians will eat it.'

Shaving of the sprouting hair *Record of Mwaikambo, 22/4/37*

First the men and women began drinking beer separately. Then they began the ritual. They went to the grave with beer in a small calabash.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

114 My wife and I were engaged in researches among the Nyakyusa from
121 September 1934 to January 1938; and our informants constantly told us of
642 the general similarity between their own customs and those of the Ngonde plain. They made it clear, however, that while they and the men of the Ngonde plain shared an otherwise almost identical culture they yet differed markedly in their political systems. The Nyakyusa, when the Europeans reached them, were organized in small independent chiefdoms, the people of Ngonde possessed a paramount chief, the Kyungu. More recently, among the Nyakyusa, a sustained attempt by the Tanganyika Administration to set up two paramount chiefs had failed; in Ngonde, on the other hand, where the Kyungu's supremacy had, until recently, been officially unrecognized by the Nyasaland Administration, his position seemed to be quite secure. The contrast was an interesting one and demanded investigation. Nor was this the only difference between the Nyakyusa political system and that of Ngonde; besides a paramount chief Ngonde possessed a group of hereditary nobles (*amakambala*) which was apparently quite unparalleled among the Nyakyusa.

114 So in July 1937 we crossed the Songwe and spent some time in
121 Ngonde studying these differences. Our visit confirmed the fact that the traditional culture and social system of the Ngonde plain was in
642 almost all respects identical with that of the Nyakyusa. The patrilineal
171 kinship organization with marriage by cattle, the age-villages each with its great-commoner or headman (*ulifumu*), the little chiefdoms each consisting of a group of age-villages united under a hereditary chief (*umalafyale*), all were there.[1] The descriptions we were given of the traditional rituals at death, at girls' puberty, at the birth of twins and at the "coming out" of young chiefs seemed to be identical in general significance and almost identical in detail with the rituals we knew among the Nyakyusa. Language also was similar, though here the similarity had been less close in former times. And yet there were the two great differences: at the apex of the political system of Ngonde was the Kyungu, while a group of hereditary nobles formed an integral part of it. Again and again our informants confirmed this general identity, these specific differences: "Everything is just the same among us as among the Nyakyusa, only in the case of the Kyungu and his nobles (*amakambala*) is there any dissimilarity." How then was this dissimilarity to be accounted for?

[1] This social system is discussed in the first paper of this series—*The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa* (1938), and also in papers contributed to *Bantu Studies*, one in September 1936—"An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society," another in April 1939—"Nyakyusa Burial Conventions."

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE peoples with whom this book is concerned, the Nyakyusa and the Ngonde, occupy an area shut in by mountains at the northern end of Lake Nyasa, and enjoy a culture which, though varying locally, clearly springs from a common basis and is traditionally attributed to similar origins. The most conspicuous features of their political organization are (i) the balance of power between chiefs and commoners; (ii) the 'coming out' ritual in which a generation of men which has governed for approximately thirty years retires and hands over the administration to its sons, retaining only ritual functions; and (iii) the system of age-villages.

N 101 131 [184] N 642

All are agreed that chiefs and commoners belong to different stocks; the commoners being descended from the original occupants of the country while the chiefs trace their descent to a line of invaders who came down from the Livingstone mountains eight generations ago. According to the myth, they brought with them fire, and cattle, and iron tools, and they found a people who ate their food raw in a land 'without trees'.[1] Commoners are *abatitu*, black people, while Ngulube, an early ancestor of the chiefs, was 'pale'[2] and chiefs (*abanyafyale*) generally are said to have been lighter in colour and 'different in their bodies'. After generations of intermarriage between chiefs and commoners there is no consistent difference in physical type between them, but the range of physical type among the Nyakyusa as a whole is wide.[3]

N 173 N [167] N [569] N 144

Nyakyusa and Ngonde historians say that their chiefs are related to those of the Kinga, who live high above the Nyakyusa valley to the east in the Livingstone mountains, whence the chiefs came. The Kinga acknowledge the connexion and join with the Nyakyusa in sacrifice to their common heroes, but culturally the

N 173 N K 171 [648]

[1] Possibly the lake-shore plain. The hills until cultivated are covered with either savannah or rain forest.

[2] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3, p. 10 (1939). According to the Ngonde version Ngulube was the *first* ancestor.

[3] cf. F. Fülleborn, *Beiträge zur physischen Anthropologie der Nord-Nyassander* (1902). *Das Deutsche Nyasa- und Ruvuma-Gebiet Atlas* (1906).

[113]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

two peoples are distinct. Their languages are not mutually intelligible and the Nyakyusa despise the Kinga as dirty in habit and obsequious in manner. There were two main invasions from BuKinga: (i) that of the 'sons of Lwembe' who settled south and east of Tukuyu, and (ii) that of the 'sons of Ngomale' (or Kukwe), who settled first at Kina below the northern crater of Rungwe volcano, and then at Kabale in the foothills to the south-east. Most of the present chiefs of the Nyakyusa belong to one or other of these two lineages, and the chiefs of Ngonde are claimed by both. The arrival of the chiefs of Lwembe's line may be fixed between 1560 and 1650, i.e. before the settlement at the Cape, but after the death of the first Christian martyr in what is now Rhodesia[1] and the 'sons of Ngomale' followed them some generations later (*vide infra*, genealogies pp. 3, 27; p. 94). Two of the invading heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, became 'divine kings' whose successors claimed spiritual authority over wide areas, and the heirs of Kyungu gradually acquired temporal power also.

About the first inhabitants of the Nyakyusa valley, the *abilema*, tradition is vague; however, it is clear that they were not one people, but consisted of small, scattered, independent groups, disparate in origin. Some were very early invaders from BuKinga, others came from near Lake Rukwa and were kin to the Bungu of the Rukwa plain. They occupied an almost empty country (as their name indicates) but they found pygmy hunters[2] in the Rungwe forests. The invaders themselves were primarily hunters and honey-gatherers, though some, at least, of them began to cultivate millet, beans, and pumpkins. One group of early inhabitants, the Penja, which was pushed into the north-west corner of the valley, has remained relatively discrete, though for the most part they have fused with the conquerors.

It is clear that nowhere were the invaders allowed to establish themselves as tyrants since, though their descendants rule over the various chiefdoms, their authority is strictly limited by the headmen of the villages who are invariably of commoner stock. Moreover, while the most sacred persons in the country are, or before the coming of the Europeans were, 'divine kings', descendants of the original heroes, chosen by each generation to become their

[1] In 1561, cf. G. M. Theal, *Records of South-East Africa*, vol. ii, p. 126.

[2] The quality of relations with the Pygmies is summed up in the ironical name for them 'Where did you see me?' (*Undumelagu?*) The tale is that they were very sensitive about their size and the first question on meeting a Nyakyusa was always: 'Where did you see me?' The only safe reply was: 'Far, far away!'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 found the administration of the poison ordeal, driving out people
648 alleged to be witches, and killing supposed sorcerers 'contrary to
796 natural justice'. Here the change is not in the celebration of a ritual but in the execution of 'justice' based on traditional religious beliefs.

797 The early missionaries were very important as employers of
177 labour and a market for produce; indeed at one time they were the *sole* source of western trade-goods among the Nyakyusa. For long they provided the only skilled medical attention. They were the source of new learning, teaching, from the start, reading and writing and new manual skills, and the link between learning and religion, so familiar in the history of Europe, is still strong. Therefore acceptance of Christianity *tended* to go along with acceptance of the new economic and political structure, but it was never identified with it. Already in the thirties a popular song contrasted Christians with Europeans, and African nationalism was finding expression in 'independent' Churches.

178 Secularism fits as well with the new economic and political
171 structure as Christianity, and it has been argued elsewhere that
648 one of the characteristics of the change from a small-scale, isolated, self-sufficient people to a large-scale society is increasing secularism.[1] The evidence from BuNyakyusa does not so far support this, but there is a *separation* of religious and other activities. Religion is not interwoven with the modern political system as it was with the old. Traditionally the fusion between ritual and political activities was almost complete; village headmen became priests as they grew old, and chiefs became gods. Now there is a separation between Church and state, between Government and mission, which co-operate closely only in the organization of schools. It is true that Christian congregations pray regularly for 'those set in authority over us', but for the most part religious ritual does not enter into state functions. The flag is hoisted and saluted at sunrise and sunset at administrative and military centres; certain occasions, such as the Queen's birthday or the visit of the Queen's representative, the Governor, are celebrated with secular ceremonial. Only at the Coronation, to which African representatives from Rungwe district were sent, did the state ceremonial and the Christian ritual merge.[2] Political tension is not now directly

[1] R. Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, Chicago (1941); *A Village that Chose Progress*, Chicago (1950).

[2] 'The entire solemnity of the Coronation, from start to finish, is distinctly a religious rite.' Canon Charles Smyth, 'The Coronation Rite', *The Listener*, 28th May 1953.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

expressed or resolved in ritual. The place for *ukusosya*—speaking out—is the council chamber not the sacred grove or the homestead where the shades gather, and the reconciliation of conflicts between chiefs, or between chiefs and District Commissioner or chiefs and commoners, is sought in a committee rather than a Church. Perhaps the greatest difficulty in modern administration in Africa lies in this very separation of activities, in the *thinness* of the bonds across the colour line, in the cleavage between secular and sacred. Some separation of the different aspects of a society is a concomitant of the increase in scale—it is one manifestation of specialization—but it is greater in Tanganyika with its diversity of religious traditions than it is in Britain with its common Christian history.

That there is a connexion between the form of faith and ritual and the form of social structure few would deny. The concern of the anthropologist is to define it; to plot the limits of autonomy between different aspects within societies. This can be done only by the patient analysis and comparison of many societies and this book is offered as a humble contribution towards such a comparative study.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 all. Field boundaries have lost their earlier fluidity, when a plenty of land did not call for precise demarcation, and the only important changes now result from the land being left vacant or by the internal division of established holdings by inheritance or anticipatory inheritance.

In brief, then, the high premium given to land because of its modern scarcity value, and the enhanced authority of the headman in land affairs act together to preserve the individual's rights. The residual rights of the village, as group-owner of all land within the village boundary, do not affect the land-holder during his continued residence there.

[428] [578] The commonest type of dispute in land matters arises in inheritance, where a younger brother sues his senior in order to obtain or increase his share of the paternal holding (see page 21). That is to say, in general only where established holdings are being broken up does dispute arise and then, of course, only between the sons of the dead man. Disputes between neighbours in a village seldom are grave enough to be brought to court or even before the headman.

[543] There are also many petty, semi-domestic cases which faithfully reflect the frequently poor relations between Nyakyusa husbands and wives in modern times.[1]

TABLE IV

NYAKYUSA LAND DISPUTES: CIVIL CASES, 1954

691 423 [161]

	No. of civil cases	Land cases No.	Land cases %	Population per land case	Density of population
Lake Plains	1,977	104	5	567	385
N.E. Highlands	965	24	2.5	1,842	199
Central Region	901	13	1.5	4,092	245
N.W. Highlands	1,280	8	0.6	7,300	201

Based on returns of civil cases in local courts of first instance ('B' Courts) for 1954. In 1955 the percentages were almost exactly the same as in 1954.

Several interesting points are suggested by these figures. Firstly, there is the larger proportion of land cases and the much smaller population per case in the Lake Plains, where land shortage is worst in relation to local demand, not only because of the higher density of population as such, but also because of the relatively larger acreages required for paddy cultivation. Secondly, in the Central Region of Nyakyusa country there is also a high density of population, but nevertheless only a few land cases; this may be attributed to the absence of cash-cropping and the absence, therefore, of a keen demand for land. On the other hand, the relatively numerous cases, or small population per case, in the north-eastern Highlands seem to result directly from a particularly densely populated area (Mwakaleli) where coffee cultivation is long established and the demand for land is exceptionally keen. In other words, as far as the figures for 1954 and 1955 show, there is a direct connection between land scarcity and the incidence of land disputes before the local courts (i.e. the more intractable disputes which go beyond the village headmen). General observation supports this conclusion. It may be expected in the future, therefore, that such cases will increase unless administrative action is taken to rationalise the inheritance laws with a view to minimising the area of potential disagreement amongst the sons of a deceased man.

691 423 191 For comparative interest, in so far as they offer some indication, I append here data on other Districts in the Territory where land disputes are common.

1. In 1954, 68 per cent. of all civil cases in the lower courts were marital disputes, including divorce suits, and there was one divorce case for every 24 adult males living in the country in that year.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

TABLE V

DISTRICTS IN TANGANYIKA WHERE LAND DISPUTES ARE COMMON

1953			No. of land cases	% of total civil cases	Estimated population density	Population per land case
Bukoba District	..	..	1,189	23	69	223
Lushoto Division	..	..	149	12	188	763
Mbeki District	..	..	347	23	277	746
Ngara District..	..	..	81	39	138	1,593

The Changing Village

The possibly unique age-village of the Nyakyusa is now undergoing considerable and fairly rapid change in response to the new conditions of land shortage. There is, firstly, an increasing strong of village exclusiveness and, secondly, there has been a breakdown in the essential age-basis of its organisation. That is to say, that whilst the corporate unity of the village as an independent group has been strengthened, yet the social foundation of the village has simultaneously been changed and a different sort of village is emerging. It would take us far beyond the scope of this present essay if a full analysis of the changing village were to be made, nevertheless in so far as these changes are more or less directly the consequences of modern land shortage, land tenure and economic conditions some account is essential. Since the age-village was fundamental in the life and social organisation of these people, the new emerging village is of crucial importance.

Land shortage has definitely exaggerated the unity and exclusiveness of the village in the Lake Plains at a time when, for other reasons, it was beginning to become a more open group. There was always, as we have seen, insistence on the principle that only a member of the village could hold and use village land; but village boundaries were often poorly marked and it was difficult to determine which headman, if any, had genuine jurisdiction over land relatively distant from the established village sites. Nor was it particularly important to be able to do so whilst land was plentiful. As paddy cultivation spread, men began seeking extra fields further and further away from home as land nearby was all taken up; and so long as they did not attempt to take land in the immediate vicinity of another village site there was seldom much difficulty in this. The attitudes born of a sufficiency of land persisted and headmen were not disposed to protest against outsiders who sought fields near the limits of their vaguely defined areas. Intercecine warfare and raiding had, of course, been abolished as an expression of and a weapon in inter-village rivalries and animosities. With the establishment of general peace and security, and with increasing movement about the country between villages and chiefdoms, such rivalries and animosities began to die away. Many men came to live in the villages which they themselves had not helped to found; their coevals from their fathers' villages lived elsewhere, many of them widely scattered, and it was not possible to maintain a high degree of village patriotism, and, people began to feel, it was not especially necessary or important any longer.

It began to be possible for a man to hold some of his arable land within the area of another village, so long as members of the second village were not deprived of the opportunity of their own agricultural expansion should they desire it. This was especially the case when a large area of hitherto vacant (i.e. bush) but now valuable paddy land was contained within the approximate boundaries of a village. Outsiders were allowed to acquire fields on the strength of kinship with the headman or with one of the established villagers, or even by giving some small present to the headman (e.g. a little beer or some meat, etc.). Land was still plentiful then, or so it seemed to the Nyakyusa, and future shortages and difficulties were not perceived.

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Chagga FN4
Haya FN8

House-types of the Banyakyusa

By Auguste Biegaard

During a stay in the Southern Highlands in Tanganyika in 1955, I was given the opportunity to inspect—and draw plans of—some of the houses belonging to the local Bantu tribe of the Nyakyusa. In literature they are known also under the name of Konde.

The district in which they live is fairly high above sea level and near the borders of Rhodesia and Nyasaland; the rainfall is fully adequate. Banana and coffee are doing well—the banana trees often forming groves in between which you catch a glimpse of the village houses.

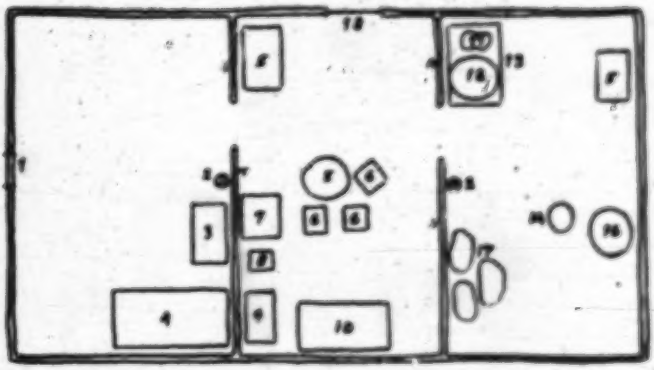
The district invites comparison with other localities in Tanganyika where the country is high, and where precipitation is plentiful. Such localities would be the districts around Kilimanjaro and near Bukoba to the west of Lake Victoria. In the former live the Chagga tribe, in the latter the tribe of the Haya. Even here bananas and coffee are plenty—and the I.Q. of both tribes is said to be high, as is the case of the Banyakyusa (plural of Nyakyusa).

Maybe you might therefore expect to find a corresponding standard of dwelling-houses, perhaps even the same type of hut. But in this matter you will be highly surprised; so great are the differences between the three areas. Apart from the original design of the house being round and the roof thatched, no similarity exists between the various houses or their interior lay-outs.

The round, thatched Chagga hut has its roof all way down to the ground. It is not very large and the interior lay-out is quite primitive. A cow or goat lives all its life indoors and is fed there. A short and uncomfortable bed is found near by. Down the centre of the floor is a stone-paved aisle. Everything looks quite simple—especially when you remember that in other aspects the Chagga are quite advanced in their use of modern facilities; for instance they use electricity for the grinding of their maize.

The Haya hut—the old, round type—is a really magnificent thing. I think its centre is seven or eight metres high. In front it has a kind of overhang, maybe you might call it a front room, where people will sit, and where guests will be received. If you are a welcome guest, a straw mat will be rolled out to cover the grass flooring of the hut. The walls of the front room are solid plates made from a kind of reed. The hearth is placed near the centre of the inner room.

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa



1 m

Baba's house. 1, barred window; 2, posts supporting roof; 3, wooden chest; 4, Baba's bed; 5, table; 6, chair; 7, cupboard; 8, chair with three suitcases; 9, suitcase; 10, table with bookshelf; 11, bag; 12, large basket, *ifinda*; 13, low stand for 11 and 12; 14, millet jars; 15, low partitions; 16, *ifinda* in which the millet is washed; 17, rice in bags.

cupboard. This seemed very strange and a bit disorderly. On a chair were three suitcases on top of each other.

It was interesting to see, in the store-room, the very crops that belong to the man, viz. rice and millet, the most valuable produce. The rice was in bags, and it is quite probable that this man had bought it from the districts near Lake Nyasa, where it thrives well. On higher ground, rice cannot be cultivated.

The millet was contained in a basket, 1 m in height, 55 cm broad at the bottom, and narrower, 35 cm, at the top.

Further, there was a large, beautiful earthenware jar, which he had bought. This was intended for the millet. And there was also a cylindrical container for the washing of the millet when it was brought home from the field. This vessel was 55 cm in height and 85 cm across.

All three houses had a small window with bars or shutters.

The inside of the houses lay in semi-darkness, as the only light is admitted through the doorway, and in some cases through the diminutive barred window. Nevertheless, the interiors give a nice impression, because of their tidiness, height, size, and cleanness. And how cosy they are, when seen at night; the door is closed, you gather round the fire and delight in perfectly cooked rice, which is the favourite dish at this principal meal of the day.

Johnston says (1897, page 433) that the greater number of the houses are circular in their plan and very much like bee-hives in shape; their walls are wickerwork filled with mud cobs, and they have thatched roofs. He also reports

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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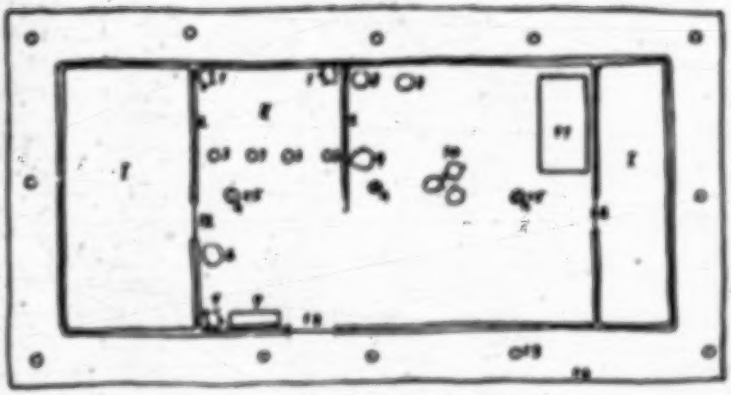

1 m

An dwa from the village of Kikota. I, store-room at either end of the house; II, corners for cattle.—1, hen's nest; 2, low partitions from bamboo; 3, posts for tying two head of cattle; 4, Three posts supporting roof; 5, bow bamboo cups, calabashes, etc. were hanging on the posts; 6, wooden mortar for maize; 7, roast from bamboo tied together; 8, water jar; 9, basket; 10, hearth consisting of two round and one square brawthstone; 11, bed of the woman; 12, door; 13, supports for the roof; 14, cows.—Outer doors from wooden boards; store-room doors from bamboo; bamboo ceiling covers area from half-way partition to the right of cow's corner on to store-room inner wall to the right.

[171] that such houses are found in Africa (a) south of the Zambezi, (b) in all of British Central Africa, (c) in all of East Africa including the Egyptian Sudan,—but not in localities where the Arab influence has introduced the oblong, rectangular building.

342
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Now, if we look upon the eastern territories of Africa only—what great changes have taken place there since Johnston's day? The round house is being ousted under foreign influence—Arab as well as European.

If you ask a native of Africa, why he changes the plan of his house, his answer will be, that the rectangular house is easier to sub-divide and better in use—which is most probably true. When first the technique has been adopted, people in other parts of Africa will no doubt abandon the circular design and take up the rectangular.

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342

But nevertheless, the variations in types of hut in Tanganyika are truly amazing; they range from e.g. the four dwa of the Banyakyusa,—to the rectangular dwa with nearly flat, clay roof of the Vakinda,—to the round bee-hives of the Batutsi, which may be built in no time on a frame-work of branches and covered with

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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gram. This last-mentioned type is used by the Batutsi of western Tanganyika as temporary shelter on their perennial wanderings.

Why, then, do not all tribes build to the same design? There are 120 different tribes in Tanganyika alone, and were you to put the question to a member of one of these tribes, he would simply say, "We follow our custom!"—and this is actually the answer. It takes time to be influenced; people will stick to their old customs,—a fact which, as seen from an ethnographical point of view, is really an advantage. Changes should not come too quickly.

At about the time when Johnston wrote the above lines, the history of Johannesburg as a town had just begun. Now, that city is all grey stone colonnades and streets criss-crossing at right angles. Even if the gold was behind all that, you never know when a similar fate may befall some part of Tanganyika. What cannot be called forth by the diamonds to the south of Lake Victoria?

Were the African village to disappear entirely,—it would truly be missed. It is interesting to follow the development which is under way in Tanganyika, and which cannot be halted,—to see how it will influence the charming villages and their inhabitants.

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113

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ANDREAS BIEGAARD
[illegible]

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

but I was astonished that this trap was erected relatively near to my 223
tent on the border of the village of Katumba.

6. *Fishing.* Fishing is a much more common practice with the 226
Nyakyusa than hunting. The old-established custom of poisoning fish
in their smaller rivers is still widely used. The poison is derived from [324]
the *unkeredu* shrub. Its branches and leaves are broken off, reduced
to small pieces between stones and then packed in a covering of grass
to resemble a long cigar about 1 meter in length and 25 cm in width.
The bundles prepared in such a manner are fixed between two rowes
of stones placed across the river for this purpose. The poison gradually
diffuses into the water, which takes on a green colour. The fish are
soon affected by the poison and rise to the surface with gaping mouths.
They are then easily caught with a scoop made from bamboo. The open
end of a piece of bamboo is split into several sections and the splinters
are bent apart and tied together with raffia to form a sort of funnel[1]. [252]
The fish are strung through their gills on small pliable sticks and
roasted at home over a fire. All people are allowed to join in this
fishing which to them is always a festive occasion in the cooler season.

Fishing in broader and deeper rivers, such as the lower Kiwira, is
done by means of large fish-traps. They are made and repaired by men
on the banks of the river. The traps are attached to poles rammed into
the bed and almost invariably boats trying to reach the Lake Nyassa
get struck on submerged poles. These large fish-traps strung across the
river form quite an impressive sight. Looking up-stream, they look
like the bows of little ships standing in a row.

7. *Preparing food.* With the Nyakusa the preparation of food is so 252
exclusively the task of the women, that R. Thurnwald let quite correct 462
when says (Black and White in East Africa, London 1935, p. 187):
"Mendulk starve if there are no women to prepare their meals". There
is thus a very strong division of labour between the sexes, also noti- [482]
cable in the carrying of loads. For a young man to carry the load of an
old woman or his sweetheart, whom perchance he might meet on the
road, would be a grave violation of a rigid custom.

As the preparation of the food is the women's duty, also the grinding
(*ukusiha*) of the corn in a mortar (*ikimali*) with a pestle (*ikitiwe*) which
is the exclusive task of the female sex. The wife is always the first to [264]
rise in the morning to prepare breakfast. Usually, however, this is not

[1] RB. They are of the same kind as those of the Hottentots along the [171]
Great Fish River in South West Africa.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

101 first-hand knowledge of them. On the coast they are classed with
197 Nyakyusa and Ngonde as *Sokile*, a nickname derived from the traditional Nyakyusa greeting.

128 This book is concerned with the Nyakyusa.[1] What it contains is true in general terms for the people of Ngonde, but how far it is applicable to the smaller groups cited we are not certain. The Ndali, Sukwa, and Penja, are said to have long had an age-village organization; and Henga, Nyika and Kisi living intermingled with Ngonde and Nyakyusa have adopted it; but of the customs of the Wenya and Lambya we know little. Dr. Kerr Cross and Monteith Fotheringham, who travelled extensively in the area before 1890, reported that the Ndali and Sukwa (of Misuku) were very similar to the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people, but that the Lambya were different, practising shifting *citemene* cultivation, and living in stockaded villages.[2]

173 According to their own traditions the Nyakyusa and Ngonde chiefs (who trace descent from common ancestors) came ten generations ago from Kinga country, on the Livingstone mountains, and found the Rungwe and North Nyasa country already occupied. They established themselves as chiefs and have since been increasing the area of their occupation. The Kinga also affirm that their chiefs are related to those of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde, and they join with the Nyakyusa in sacrifice to common ancestors at Lubaga and LiKyala (see Map III), but the Kinga culture is quite distinct from that of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde; we stayed long enough in Kinga country to convince ourselves that the Kinga live in kinship villages and not in age-villages, and that they differ from the Nyakyusa in many other respects.

177 There seems little doubt that the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people have been expanding in an area not uninhabited, but sparsely
167 inhabited, and that the assimilation of the Penja and other groups now proceeding is no new phenomenon, but part of a process which has long been going on. Within recent years over 2,000

[161] [1] The Nyakyusa as here defined numbered 159,044 in Rungwe district at the 1931 census, and 3,732 outside the district; the Ndali 22,834, the Lambya (within Rungwe district, and not including those in Nyasaland) 12,403, and the Kisi (in Njombe district) 2,115. *Tanganyika Territory, Census of the Native Population*, 1931.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika, *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), p. 286; L. M. Fotheringham, *Adventures in Nyassaland* (1891), pp. 129–33. Nyonde was a Lambya chief, cf. Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 10.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631 recognized over 100 chiefdoms, mustering anything from 100 to 3,000 adult men apiece.

Although no centralized political authority existed before the 769 German occupation, certain groups of chiefdoms joined in com-
631 mon rituals directed to common ancestors. We traced four such centres of worship among the Nyakyusa; the most important being Lubaga, in the middle of the valley, where Kinga priests (from the top of the Livingstone mountains) join with many Nyakyusa chiefdoms in sacrifice to Lwembe, who is claimed as the ancestor both of the chiefs of the Nyakyusa proper, and of the Kinga. At LiKyala, on the Lake-shore plain, Kinga also join in sacrifice with the surrounding Nyakyusa chiefdoms. In Ngonde the chief connected with a similar centre of worship, Mbande, developed far-reaching secular as well as religious powers; and by the time the Europeans arrived he was established as a paramount chief with the title of the Kyungu. This development was [439] directly connected with the fact that Ngonde traded with the outside world, and that their Kyungu, through his control of ivory, was able also to control the guns and cloth which came into the country:[1] the Nyakyusa, remaining isolated, remained politically disunited.

Besides sacrificing to a distant ancestor in company with the representatives of a large group of chiefdoms, two or more chiefs who are neighbours participate in a sacrifice at the grove in which their common father, or grandfather, is buried. Thus common worship links both large groups of chiefdoms, whose chiefs are more or less distantly related, and small groups of contiguous chiefdoms whose chiefs are close kinsmen. The sacrifices made are to the chiefs of immediately preceding generations, and to certain great heroes of the distant past, such as Lwembe and Kyala.

All these sacrifices are believed to bring rain and fertility, for 769 the well-being of each chiefdom is thought to be bound up with 789 the health of the chief and the goodwill of his ancestors.

The Nyakyusa are all agreed that their chiefs, *abanyafyale*, are •173 'strangers' who came down from the Livingstone mountains 622 eight or ten generations ago, and found the valley already occu-
563 pied by people who had no knowledge of fire, but ate their food raw. The chiefs brought fire with them—some say, cattle also;

[1] Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., pp. 9, 39-48.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and by virtue of this great benefit were accepted as chiefs. Such is the myth (*vide infra*, p. 26). It is remembered that the chiefs of different groups such as the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, the Lugulu, and the Saku arrived at different times, but of the proportion of the immigrants to the former occupants, and of the proportion of men to women in the invading groups, we learnt nothing. Some suggest that the chiefs were lighter in colour than the previous inhabitants of the valley,[1] and the term *abatitu*, 'black people', is used for commoners as contrasted with chiefs. But chiefs intermarry freely with commoners and there is no observable difference in physical type between them and their people to-day. The Nyakyusa are without a clan system, and though kinship with a chief may be remembered for three (or perhaps even four) generations, the body of 'kinsmen of the chief' is not defined as it is in tribes which have a 'royal clan' like the Bemba or Pondo. Moreover, among the Nyakyusa the chief's advisers are never his kinsmen, but commoners. Sons or grandsons of a chief are ineligible as village headmen, who are the counsellors of the chief, and who had in the past very great control over him. The contrast is made between chiefs, *abanyafyale*, on the one hand, and commoners, *amafumu*, on the other, and the leaders of villages, chosen each generation by their predecessors (*vide infra*, p. 23), are the *amafumu par excellence*.[2] Words from this *-fumu* root mean 'chief' in various central Bantu languages (Bemba, Tumbuka, Nyanja); and it is tempting to suppose that the *amafumu* were the old chiefs conquered by the invading *abanyafyale*, but that is only a supposition. The important point for the contemporary social structure is that the village leaders are *commoners*; that their position is not hereditary, since they are selected afresh each generation; and that formerly they had very great power over the chief. This power has diminished considerably with the development of European administration. The Nyakyusa, indeed, were astounded to be told that the British

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 10 (footnote).

[2] For this reason *ulifumu* was translated by Godfrey Wilson as 'great commoner', in 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. X (1936), and other papers, but this translation has considerable difficulties, and I have preferred to translate *ulifumu* as 'village headman' in the contexts in which it means the leader of the village, and 'commoner' or 'villager' in other contexts. It must be clearly understood that 'village headman' as used in this book means something quite different from 'headman' as used by the Administration (*vide infra*, p. 258).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 according to lineage custom. In the round and oval graves the body is placed in the cave in a sitting position; in the oblong graves lying at full length on one arm; but in both the dead man is set to face the direction from which he and his people have [173] traditionally come. The bulk of the Nyakyusa say that they came from the east, eight or ten generations ago, down the Livingstone Mountains into their present country; and it is to the east that they face in death. Those in the north of the district, whose local name is Kukwe, face in death towards their most recent centre of dispersion near Rungwe Mountain, although they have traditions going farther back to a migration from the Livingstone Mountains through the present Sangu country.

Digging a grave is traditionally a dangerous activity, but nowadays it is no longer so much feared as it used to be. Formerly only mature men helped to dig a grave and they were given a whole leg of the burial meat to eat by themselves. Nowadays young men —often Christians—do it.

Before the burial the body is carried in procession round the homestead. The chief mourners surround it wailing, and the dead man's cattle are driven in front. 'We do this to honour the dead man.' Then one of the cattle of the lineage is taken 'to look into the grave'. Two or three people get down into the grave to receive and bury the body. In the case of a man, his chief wife, his sister, and a male kinsman or village neighbour usually bury him. These three line the cave with mats and cloths which are passed down to them; then the body, previously washed and shaved[1] and now wrapped in cloths, is handed down, and they put it in position in the cave together with a few personal possessions such as a pipe, an eating-pot, a little calabash of ointment, and one of beer; nowadays also a looking-glass and perhaps a pencil and a cup. 'He goes with them to the place of the shades.' A woman is given bark-cloth belts and rouge, and a winnowing basket in place of the pipe and pot. They take off the strings of such utensils as are normally hung up. 'If the strings are left on the utensils will still be hanging up and he will be looking for them.' More cloths and mats are then put in with the body, and the cave is closed either with a stiff mat or with the door of the dead man's house, in accordance with local custom. Often there are hot disputes be-

[184] [1] The Kukwe wash the body just before death, the Nyakyusa and Penja after. The Kukwe fear lest their children should die of 'water in the stomach' if they wash a corpse.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

133 101 and warlike tribe, the latter until recently their oppressed subjects and slaves.

173 The earliest traditions go back to a time when the Konde dwelt in Malongo, in the area now known as [173] Mahenge. There their god Ngeketo, roused to wrath by three attempts to destroy him, abandoned them, and is now the God of the white men. Whether on this account, or for some other reason, a great migration brought them to the country north of the Songwe River, where they settled down, no doubt conquering older inhabitants. At some unknown time, but before the Angoni reached so far north in their great march from Zululand, the Sango, neighbours of the Konde northwards, were driven out of their homes by intertribal warfare. They broke down over the intervening mountains, and overcame the unwarlike Konde, among whom they settled down as chiefs, retaining until now the tradition of their Sango ancestry. Whether at the same or another time, the Kinga, probably for the same reason—pressure from behind—swarmed down the steep mountain passes, and established themselves in the Nserya region.

One of the leading Kinga chiefs was Mwangonde, who, under the name of Chungu, occupied land at Kabari, near the Mwakeleli Mission Station. His son, Kyabara Chungu, setting out with an armed force in search of more fertile garden land, met with varying fortunes, until he was finally obliged to cross the Songwe into what later became Nyasaland. In this region Chungu seems to have made easy con-

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

quests. He passed through the mountain region north and west of Karonga, receiving the submission of the chiefs as he went; thence he descended into the plain at Karonga, finally establishing himself at Mpande, where his descendants still live.

The legends which have gathered around the person of Chungu reveal him as a man of impressive personality. One legend states that having established himself at Karonga, he cast longing eyes on the regions on the other side of Lake Nyasa. With a great following he went down to the lake, smote the water with his sceptre, and crossed on dry land. Receiving the submission of the people, he returned as he went; followed later, but in canoes, by a great multitude of people, who wished to settle under the shadow of so great a chief. The European attitude towards this event is shared by native Christians, but quite intelligent pagans meet scepticism, quietly and gravely, with the statement that "Chungu is the man who speaks with God." The incident, or whatever event it represents in its present form, can only be satisfactorily accounted for by regarding it as what the Higher Critics call a "later accretion"; for the Angoni, with their own story of a similar crossing of the Zambesi, had not yet arrived, the Arabs were still in the distance, and direct Christian influence did not begin for many years afterwards.

It is needless to give in detail the history of his successors. One lost much land to rival chiefs; another was deposed because he could not give rain in a time of drought. The country fell into confusion·

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

173 Prophets arose who foretold the coming of the Angoni and the Arabs to work havoc on land and people. Then from the lake would come the strange white man who would overcome Angoni and Arab, and give peace to the land. To this race the people were directed to submit themselves when they came. So deep and sure would the peace be, that men would go armed only with sticks, all need for spear and shield having passed away.

173 177 But the peace was still in the future. Arab and Angoni came and fulfilled their destiny. The Henga or Kamanga people, fleeing before the latter, were received by the Konde, and were at first friendly to their hosts, but later, when the Arabs arrived as traders and slavers, made an alliance with them against the harassed Konde. Into this confusion entered, very dramatically, the white man, of whose coming the natives give graphic accounts. The approach of the *Ilala*, the tiny steamer of the Livingstonia Mission, then operating from Cape Maclear, far to the south, struck the people with terror. "It is God," they said, "He walks on the water." As the little vessel drew near the land, the people fled into the bush. A white man landed. A few strong-hearted natives ventured to approach, and saw his white skin. "It is surely God," they said, "He has come to us in the likeness of men." When he ate some bananas in their presence, they said, "No, not God, but a friend of His."

175 In 1887 the African Lakes Corporation of Glasgow

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XXV

The Brave Days of Old

LIKE the Romans and Greeks, and like many peoples at an elementary stage of civilization, the Konde place their great days in the past. It is, perhaps, a little strange that this should be so; for there can be no doubt that the presence of the white man has stirred the African everywhere to the thought of a new day for his race. But they are at the same time conscious that great things were done in the past, and among the demands made upon me by natives whom I have consulted, and who have helped me with this book, there is none more insistent than that I should include the portentous happenings of an older day. 173

Old and middle-aged men speak gleefully of the days of their youth; of the great deeds they did when they were boys; how they trapped more skilfully, caught bigger fish, ran faster, leaped higher than the young men of to-day. And the deterioration, they assert very emphatically, is due to the presence of the white man. Not that the latter discourages sport; on the contrary he spurs it on; but in his own way, and that is not the Konde way. The white man's way is to give prizes to the winner; the Konde 177 868

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

177 way is to give the lash to the duffers; and they claim
868 that theirs is the more effective method of bringing all up to a high standard. But thrash the ninny to-day, and he is off to the Administrative Officer to lodge his complaint, which the latter must inquire into. And hence much deterioration.

•173 But these are not the facts of which they wish a
713 permanent record to be made. There are other things; things which the pagan native profoundly believes, and which Christians also believe and take pride in, though they think that the missionary will object to their holding what he probably calls silly ideas. These stories include most of the typical tales of olden times: the hero-warrior, the defier of tyrants, the mighty medicine man, the great prophet, the man who has obtained lordship over Nature in some form, and the man who controls the spirits. All these, and many more, are included among the Konde tales, and I do not place them among folk tales, for the people regard them quite differently. A folk tale is to-day, whatever it may have been in the past, either a mere diversion to pass away an idle moment, or a moral for children, or a warning for adolescents. The tales which I am thinking of are, in the native mind, records of facts, facts which they believe to be no longer achievable, but indubitably fact in the past; and no study of the native mind can be complete which does not take this into account.

I. The hero-warrior. Chungu, in his early wanderings in search of a home, came near the hil Mphande, the seat of the Simbove rulers of that day.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Like the English King Alfred, he determined to be his own intelligence department, and, scouting around for the best point of attack, he came upon a woman working alone in the fields, gathering *makuka*, heaps of grass to be burned before the hoeing. 173 773

"Who," he asked the woman, "are the dwellers on that hill?"

"Are you a stranger here," she replied, "that you do not know that that is the hill of the Simbove?"

"I am going there now," said Chungu; "if they pursue me I will come to you, and you shall hide me in the grass heap. If they ask for me you shall say that you know nothing, and if they put you to the poison test, you will be acquitted."

Setting out again, Chungu crept up the stronghold of which he was soon to be master; but he was observed, and presently came rushing back to claim the woman's help. Scarce was the grass well over him ere his enemies broke in with threatening spears, demanding the immediate surrender of the spy. The woman boldly kept her secret, and the poison test having acquitted her, the Simbove set fire to the grass heap by which they were standing, and in which Chungu lay concealed, and went on in their pursuit. How Chungu escaped from the fire must be left to conjecture, but one remembers that he was "the man who speaks with God."

He now brought up a herd of elephants, which when the Simbove saw, they crowded out with spears to the kill; and the invading chief drove the elephants far off, so that all the men of warrior age were drawn away

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

173
773

from the defence. Next he brought up a flock of guinea-fowl, and all the old and the feeble, and the women and children, went out after them, only to be drawn away as the men were. Chungu now gave the signal to his warriors, who rushed upon the place, seized it without opposition, and beat the great drum to apprise the whole land that a new lord ruled at Mphande.

II. The defier of tyrants. Long ago there was a chief called Mwambagi. When he killed an ox, he called up all his people, bidding them cut up the animal, and cook the feast in great pots. But when all was ready, he ordered them off to their homes, and sat down to devour the food with his favourites, while the hungry people, with the savour of the well-cooked feast in their nostrils, went sadly to their homes. Next day the tyrant went round among his people.

"I hope you enjoyed the feast yesterday," he leered.

"O yes, sir," they answered, "it was very good indeed."

But there was one man, Kasanda by name, who refused to be humbugged any longer; and when one day, after the people had suffered this grievous disappointment, the chief came round to receive their hungry and disgusted plaudits, the trouble began.

"Did you enjoy the feast yesterday," demanded the chief.

"What feast?" boldly asked Kasanda. "When did you give us a feast?"

"I feasted you yesterday," said the angry tyrant.

"You may have feasted others," was the reply, "but I came back hungry."

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

The enraged bully ordered his men to arrest and bind the rebel, and throw him over a precipice called "Ikisyo." But as he was falling over, Kasanda found that the ropes that bound him untied of their own accord; and as he rolled downwards, the precipice became a gently sloping descent, over which he fell without harm. The chief was amazed. 173 773

"How has he escaped?" he anxiously asked his attendants. But they merely shrugged their shoulders.

"Call to him," said the chief, "and tell him that I have erred."

So Kasanda, unharmed by his adventure, walked up the sloping ascent, which had been a precipice, and which became a precipice again as soon as he reached the top, where the chief and his attendants awaited him. To settle the quarrel, the chief gave his daughter to Kasanda, along with four cows, and no more demanded praise for good deeds not done. "And all the people praised Kasanda, saying, 'Thank you.' Such was the cruelty of Mwambagi, and such the courage of Kasanda."

III. The people take a pride in the great doctors of the past; for it is the doctors, and not the prophets, who are the miracle workers. The Hebrew prophets sometimes appeared to control Nature, but in all cases it was the act of God, who intervened at the prayer of the prophet. In the Konde stories the doctor does not pray for Divine intervention, nor are his acts regarded as anything but the expression of his own powers.

There were two great doctors, Kasekenye and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•173
773

Gwasa, of equal skill, and deadly rivals in their art. One day at a beer feast, a dispute arose, in the presence of the two, as to which of them was the greater, and a challenge was issued. Gwasa made medicine, and called upon the people to observe the result. Presently the sun began to sink towards the earth, and the people cried out in terror; but at a sign from Gwasa it retreated again, and resumed its accustomed place in the heavens. It was now Kasekenye's turn. Plucking a shrub from the ground, he revealed to the astonished gaze of the people a beautiful village of the underworld, men going about, or lying in the sun, cattle feeding in the meadows, trees and rivers, hills and valleys, just as the fathers had told them of the life of the underworld. He replaced the shrub, and the vision vanished. And no man could tell which of these two wonders was the greater, that of Gwasa, or that of Kasekenye.

But trouble came upon the community. The cattle became thin, sorcerers abounded, and evil fell upon all the people; and the chief called upon the two doctors for help. Each sprinkled the ground with his chosen medicine; but Kasekenye, hoping to steal a march upon his rival, sprinkled another medicine by night. But he was punished. His body broke out into sores, and he was fain to call in his rival to cure him, and the superiority of Gwasa was acknowledged. But one minor chief was not satisfied. He called upon Gwasa to come and cure him of a pretended illness. The angry doctor, immediately perceiving the trap, threw his medicine bag against the wall of his patient's

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

house, where it stuck, and he stalked wrathfully off. 173 ●
The gift of an ox calmed his wounded spirit, and he 773
removed the medicine bag from the wall. "Then did all men know that Gwasa was a great doctor."

IV. Occasionally others besides doctors controlled aspects of Nature. Ntindi was a great prophet, without whose advice his chief would do nothing. If he told the chief to pray, the people were called, and the sacrifices offered. If he foretold smallpox, nothing could avert it, except prayer and repentance. When he foretold war, the people got ready for fight or flight as he advised. He was unlike all other men. Biting ants left him alone; bees never stung him; snakes cleared from his path. Every one admired him. From birth to death his hair was never cut, and no word of his ever fell to the ground. To this day the people protect their houses from biting ants by sprinkling earth from his grave all around, and no ant will pass that sacred barrier, for Ntindi is their lord.

Such stories are very numerous. How did they 000
arise? It may be a vain inquiry; but at any rate they are more than mere words; they witness to something lying deep in the native mind. Were the people, or some of them, convinced that life is bigger potentially than it is in actual fact? and did they invent these stories to satisfy a craving for redemption from the commonplace? Or did they believe that there is power available for certain persons, which is denied to common men? Perhaps uncommon incidents did occur, which were worked up into their present form by unconscious literary genius. It may

4: Tew E4 (no date) 1950 F317 Ngonde F317

175 631 independent chiefs have been grouped into eleven court districts, with one chief as President of the Native Court in each. These chiefs, with two presidents of the Ndali and Lambya courts, are federated, and possess one Appeal Court and joint Native Treasury between them.[1]

The following is a summary of the history of the Ngonde, south of the Songwe river:

●173 Ngonde tradition records that about 200 years ago a chief of the Kinga, Ngulowe, had two grandsons, Lwembe (from whom descended the Nyakyusa) and Chaware (from whom came the Ngonde, the Iwa, and the Nyamwanga).[2] Chaware left Ukinga and wandered west and south as far as Nkamanga, the capital of the Tumbuka country, returning thence to capture Mbande from Simbowe, the indigenous chief.[3] After this the local chiefs accepted him as their overlord, and he confirmed their status with public gifts of cloth, much as Mlowoka had done with the Tumbuka. There is little information about these earlier inhabitants, but it seems likely that they were similar to the Tumbuka, before the latter were conquered by Mlowoka.[4] There is an old tradition that Mlowoka and Chaware knew each other in their former home, and that their meeting at Nkamanga was as one between equals, at which the boundaries between their territories *were* formally arranged. According to Tonga tradition certain details of the accompanying ritual and the fact of his prior arrival show Mlowoka to have been recognized by Chaware as a higher authority, but this interpretation together with the circumstantial evidence are repudiated by the Ngonde tradition.[5]

175 Opinions differ as to the actual date of the arrival of the first Ngonde ruler, Kyungu. He came accompanied by five leading men, and was accepted as overlord by the local chiefs. The latter, with the immigrants, formed a class of hereditary nobles, *amabandala*, who divided into two groups according to whether they lived at Mbande (the nobles of Ngonde)[6] or whether they lived at a distance (territorial nobles),[7] later immigrants joined one or the other group. These nobles ruled the country. The Kyungus, enriched by the ivory trade, were credited with divine powers, and lived in strict religious seclusion. Most of their male children were killed at birth by the nobles of Ngonde, and if they themselves fell sick they were killed. A constitutional change took place after the accession of the tenth Kyungu, Mwangonde: the killing of the sons of the Kyungu was stopped, and each was the prestige of the royal blood that they began to displace the territorial nobles as rulers. The sons of the Kyungu became hereditary chiefs, *amayyfwale*, each of whom was succeeded by two or more sons, who divided the territory between them as the Nyakyusa do. Each territorial noble was succeeded by only one heir. The effect of this branching of new chieftdoms was to create a number of hierarchies of small chieftdoms under one head, the great chief.[8] The relation of these political units to each other, and to the central authority at Mbande, will be considered in the section on Social Organization.

When the Ngoni first attacked the Ngonde, Mwakanongolo was the first Kyungu

[1] Wilson, 1, 1938, pp. 12-13, gives seven districts, but the number has been increased.
[2] Ibid., 1, 1938, p. 1; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 20-1; Young, T. C., 1, 1932, p. 36.
[3] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 300-6. [4] Young, T. C., 1, 1932, pp. 60-1.
[5] Ibid., pp. 37-60: Young also believes that they originally came from the River Chari, near Lake Chad (1932, p. 1).
[6] Wilson's terminology. [7] Wilson, 1, 1938, p. 1; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 18-20.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

It is unusual for a sociologist to find such a simple problem for analysis as this and it was not long before the answer was plain. The Nyakyusa, until a few decades before the coming of the Europeans, had been largely isolated from any vigorous external contacts; Ngonde, on the other hand, had been effectively related to the outside world for generations. The Nyakyusa actually possessed in the Lwembes, the hereditary chiefs of Lubaga, a line of spiritual paramounts or high priests, whose religious functions were remarkably similar to those of the Kyungus in Ngonde; but, poor and isolated as they were, they had never developed any secular paramountcy at all. The reasons for the greater elaboration of the traditional political system of Ngonde were to be found above all in the ivory trade and in the constant influx of immigrant groups. 642 177

And it further became clear that the prestige which the present Kyungu enjoys in the changed conditions to-day is due in large part to his having followed the mercantile traditions of his predecessors, mastered the business methods of the State, made a fortune, and then kept up his position out of his own private means.

2. *THE CHRONICLE OF NGONDE (TO 1875).*

In studying the present constitution of Ngonde and the profound changes now taking place in it, we cannot find any point of time at which the process of change began. In its present radical form social change in Ngonde arises from the ferment of a host of new social conditions imported by European missionaries, traders and Government officials. But the Arabs also brought change to Ngonde and before the Arabs the Ngoni, while before the coming of the Ngoni there is evidence to suggest that changes had arisen, on more than one occasion, in the normal behaviour of the men of Ngonde which were stimulated, not by any new contacts with the outside world, but simply by accidents of their own internal history. Social change in Ngonde, as far as we can see, has always been going on. 177 178

In this section the political history of Ngonde is described in outline from the its beginnings to the coming of the Europeans in 1875, in so far as it can be recovered from the oral tradition. In later sections a systematic analysis is attempted, first of the constitution of Ngonde just prior to that date, and then of the changes in it which have since taken place. 173

(a) *THE EARLY KYUNGUS.*

It is generally agreed that the ancestors of the Kyungus, the present hereditary chiefs of Ngonde, came from the Livingstone Mountains in 173 693

[The dissimilarity between the Ngonde and the Nyakyusa political system. — Analyst]

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173
643

the north east; that they passed westwards near Rungwe Mountain and out into "the country of the Bisa," only to turn eastwards again to the Songwe River. Then they journeyed southwards through the hills to the present Kamanga and finally turned back to Mbande.

In the Livingstone Mountains, the country of the Kinga, the first name which the men of Ngonde remember is that of Ngulube;[1] and from him not only the Kyungus but also the chiefs of the Nyakyusa and of the Kinga are said to be descended. While on his tortuous journey from the Livingstone Mountains to Mbande the Kyungu is said to have started out with three brothers and a sister, and to have left them all behind at different places. One brother founded a line of Inamwanga chiefs, another of Iba chiefs, while the third, Mwenembaku, together with their sister, followed the Kyungu to the Lambya near the upper Songwe and stayed there. Mwenembaku had a son Kanteme and his sister had a son Nyondo, and still to-day there is rivalry between their two houses for the leadership of this group of Lambya.

On reaching Mbande the Kyungu found it already occupied by Simbobwe.[2] "Simbobwe built on Mbande before the Kyungu; he was a clever hunter. He found that elephants were very plentiful here and so built on Mbande. He was a Fipa by birth and had come from the north." Then the Kyungu drove Simbobwe from Mbande back to the land of the Fipa and captured a great deal of ivory. The usual version of this story is full of miraculous incident, telling, first, how he hid from Simbobwe in a tiny pile of grass and, then, how he took Mbande without a blow by creating elephants, buffaloes and guinea-fowl for Simbobwe and his people to hunt, and climbing the hill when it was deserted. Once on top he beat his drum and the men of Simbobwe heard it and fled. Miraculous power and the possession of ivory—

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[1] One of our best informants in history, the late Reuben Mwenifumbo, took the legend further back still: "He came from the country of the Kinga, yes, but originally he came from the north; his body was pale and he came to the land of the Kinga and took it; and men said 'ha! a pig! (*ngulube*)' because his body was pale. He spoke the language of the *Abalungwani* (Arab or half-Arab traders). Thus they gave him the name Ngulube (or pig) and then married in Kinga country and begot Lyambelo."

[illegible] the sacred graves of the old Kyungus there used to be iron implements of an unusual pattern—knives, razors, and spears. The Kyungu brought them with him from the north when he first came. I have seen them myself . . . . but now the herd boys have stolen them all. And on the hill Mbande I have seen very old pottery." And he also maintained, as we shall see, that the early Kyungus used to trade ivory northwards from Ngonde. And Reuben Mwenifumbo said that the first Kyungu brought cloth with him when he came. Thus, though proof is impossible, there is a suggestion in the legends of Ngonde that the chiefs in this part of the world are direct descendants of early Arab or half-Arab traders from the East African coast.

[2] The similarity of this name to "Zimbabwe" appears to be accidental.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

already in the earliest legends are reflected the twin sources of the Kyungu's supremacy, for, as we shall see, they combined divine kingship with wholesale ivory trading. 173 643

The Kyungu who took Mbande was not alone, he brought with him into Ngonde few leading men whose names are still borne by their descendants: Kasungu, Mulwa, Kyumba, Mbona and Ngosi. Nor did he find the country empty; besides Simbobwe, who was himself a recent immigrant, there were Musyani, Mwenendeka, Mwenekaluma, Mwenekiwindile, Mwenifumbo and others; they all had men of their own, and, with the exception of Simbobwe who fled, they all accepted the Kyungu as their overlord. To this day some of their names also survive in Ngonde. The Kyungu, according to the late Mwenifumbo,[1] brought cloth with him and used it to consolidate his position: "Then the Kyungu gave headcloths to us nobles, to Mwenekaluma, Mwenifumbo and the others; and he said to us: 'You are the priests, you the indigenous owners of the land, do you pray for me that I, the chief, may sleep in peace.'"

I make no attempt here to date the arrival of the Kyungu in Ngonde, for to do so would require a careful collation of this tradition with those of neighbouring tribes. The present Kyungu is said to be about the eighteenth of that title in Ngonde, but, as the reigns of many Kyungus were very short and as some early names have probably been forgotten, this fact alone tells us little.

For the period from the coming of the first Kyungu to the birth of Mwangonde (who was about the tenth Kyungu in Ngonde) the legends are scanty and vague; but the following facts are generally attested by them. The leading men among the Kyungu's followers, together with the rulers of the indigenous population, came to form a class of hereditary nobles (*amakambala*), within which, as we shall see, two groups were distinguished, those who lived near Kyungu at Mbande and those who did not. Important immigrants with followers of their own continued to enter Ngonde after the coming of the Kyungu and they also became hereditary nobles, either in the one group or in the other. The Kyungus, though credited with divine powers and enriched by the ivory trade, had but limited powers of secular action; they lived a life of religious seclusion, while the nobles ruled the country. Most of the male children of the Kyungu were killed at birth, and they themselves were killed when they fell sick, lest their sickness should spread magically among their people. 173 643 565

These early Kyungus lived with their wives on the top of the hill Mbande, inside a great enclosure. Near them, some on Mbande, some not, lived a group of nobles. This group, which is specifically referred

[1] Kaulwa Mwenifumbo. He has died since we left Ngonde.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173
643
565

to as "the nobles of Ngonde" (*Awangonde*) included, firstly, the successors of those five leading men whom the first Kyungu brought with him[1], secondly the successors of two of the indigenous rulers whom the Kyungu had found in the country and who happened to live near Mbande[2] and, thirdly, seven others who joined the group later.[3] These fourteen nobles lived at Mbande, each with a group of followers and exercised the central power at the Kyungu's command, or at least in his name. The names of all fourteen are still borne as hereditary titles by their successors in Ngonde to-day and, with two exceptions,[4] all their successors still rank as nobles of Ngonde.

Besides the nobles of Ngonde near Mbande there were the other nobles "who lived at a distance," some in the plain, some in the hills. In the language of Ngonde they are simply referred to by the general term "nobles" (*amakombola*) but, in order to distinguish them from the nobles of Ngonde, I shall here call them "territorial nobles."

They consisted, firstly, of those indigenous rulers whom the first Kyungu found in Ngonde but who did not happen to live near Mbande, and, secondly, of important immigrants who constantly arrived in Ngonde with followers of their own and were given land. Some of these immigrants came from the east across the lake, others from the west, from what is now Northern Rhodesia. The present Kyungu gave us a list of thirty-seven families of territorial nobles, of whom only five or six were found in Ngonde by the first Kyungu, the remainder having entered afterwards. How many of these thirty odd immigrants came during the period of the early Kyungus and how many later we do not know.

In the middle period of Ngonde's history, as we shall see, two tendencies are manifest: the Kyungus begin to emerge from their religious seclusion and slightly to increase their secular power at the expense of the nobles of Ngonde, while the "sons of the Kyungu" increase in numbers, set up hereditary chiefdoms under him and gradually oust the territorial nobles from the Ngonde plain. But in this early period the nobles were the only effective rulers. At Mbande the nobles of Ngonde

[1] Kyungu, Mdewa, Kyumbe, Mbowe and Ngwi.

[2] Mwenyi and Mwamulaka.

[3] Mwamlala and Kyalunga were both of the same line as Mwenyi but attained prominence later as heads of junior branches of it and both became nobles of Ngonde. And two others from the line of Mwamulaka—Kylio and Mwamlalamba—did the same. Besides these, three of the later immigrants became nobles of Ngonde. There was Mwamulambe who, says Isemel, "was a good drum player and so was sent for by the Kyungu to come and live at Mbande;" there was Mwamulilombwa, who came from Mbala (Abercorn), and there was Kipaka, whose history we do not know.

[4] The two exceptions are Kyambe and Kipaka. Once one of the Kyambes endangered a wife of the Kyungu and had to flee for his life across the Songwe; while Kipaka's descendants have become just ordinary commoners for some reason unknown to us.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

mediated between the divine Kyungu and the outer world, while both in the hills and in the plain the territorial nobles governed each his own people without royal rivals—for most of the sons of the Kyungu were killed at birth.

173 643 565

The exact conditions which led to this state of affairs are beyond our knowledge; there is no detailed evidence to explain just how the descendants of a wandering adventurer who succeeded to the camp and the ivory of "a great elephant hunter" should have become divine kings jealously controlled by their subordinates. All we can do is to set down in all its vagueness and uncertainty, such information as the tradition offers us.

The three crucial facts were, firstly the wealth of the Kyungu, which gave the other rulers a secular interest in them, secondly the constant immigration of important men, which kept up the numbers of these other rulers, and, thirdly, the killing of most of the sons of the Kyungu at birth; a custom whereby the territorial nobles were rid of possible rivals and the nobles of Ngonde were rid of possible supporters of the Kyungu against themselves. Reuben Mwanifumbo told us: "They feared that, if the Kyungu had many sons, they might seduce his wives and so bring sickness on him himself and on the country.[1] And they also feared that, if many of the Kyungu's sons grew up, they might destroy the nobles, they might ask, when the Kyungu died, how it was that he had died so suddenly!—I refer to his being killed when he fell sick or cut himself.—If there were only a few sons they could not protest (being only few), but if there had been many then all the nobles might have had their throats cut. So they kept two sons only alive. This was told me by the old Mulwa,[2] the father of the present Mulwa. He knew a great deal about the things of old. I asked him one day why the sons of Kyungu had been killed and he answered what I have just told you." Two reasons are given here: first the magical danger to the Kyungu (and through him to his people) of infidelity on the part of his wives, for his sons would naturally have more access to the sacred enclosure than other men; and second the danger that his sons might prevent his being killed when sick. The danger that they would supplant the territorial nobles is not mentioned, but it is hard to believe that the nobles were not conscious of it.

The nobles, both territorial and of Ngonde, still speak of themselves to-day as a single group with common interests opposed, to some extent, to those of the Kyungu and the chiefs; and, when we compare Ngonde with the Nyakyusa, it seems probable that there was some causal connection between the wealth of the Kyungu and the constant increase

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[1] *Vide infra* Section 3 (b).
[2] Mulwa is the premier noble of Ngonde.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643
565

in the nobles' numbers by immigration, on the one hand, and the close hold maintained by the nobles of Ngonde over the family life of the early Kyungu, on the other. The Lwembe of Lobaga was, like the Kyungu an immigrant into his district and he also had a group of hereditary priests living with him who, both in their origins and their religious functions exactly corresponded to the nobles of Ngonde; and they used to kill the Lwembe when he fell sick. But they neither developed many secular functions themselves nor ever prevented the royal family of the Lwembe from increasing. The sons of the Lwembe founded hereditary chiefdoms from the first. There had been indigenous rulers among the Nyakyusa prior to the coming of the Lwembe, but they were soon displaced by his sons and did not maintain themselves within the constitution. But then the Lwembe was poor, and among the Nyakyusa there was not the constant immigration of important men unrelated to the Lwembe[5] as there was into Ngonde of important men unrelated to the Kyungu. The comparison thus suggests very strongly a causal connection between these facts; but the exact mechanism of the causation is obscure.

173
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The reasons for the killing of the Kyungu himself will be fully discussed in section three. But it must be mentioned here that the history of Ngonde is full of refusals on the part of prospective heirs to accept the position of Kyungu, and that one of the reasons for refusal was the short life that a Kyungu so often had. In order to refuse it was usually necessary to flee, for an heir once forcibly seized by the nobles of Ngonde and set on the stool of the Kyungus could not abdicate; if he did it was believed he would die. And thus was founded the house of Katumba (or Mwenitete) in the plain north of Songwe River. One of the early Kyungus died and "two of his sons, Katumba and a younger brother, fled across the Songwe to Itete, to their grandfather; for the name Mwenitete is in origin a noble not a royal name, the Kyungu had married the daughter of the noble Mwenitete. They fled because they feared to die on Mbande!"

In Itete the house of Katumba became hereditary chiefs and began to spread their power through all the surrounding plain. But later the Nyakyusa came down from the hills and drove them back across Songwe. The boundaries of Ngonde[6] in this early period, were thus wider than they are to-day. The plain north of the Songwe (which the

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[5] There was another immigration into the district of the Nyakyusa, but it was not, on my tradition, by a close kinsman of the Lwembe, whose sons, like the Lwembe's own, became hereditary chiefs. (The Kukwe are ignored in this discussion.)

[6] Using "Ngonde" always in the sense of the area of the Kyungu's supremacy.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa chiefs afterwards conquered, but which is still known as "Mu-Ngonde") was certainly included in it. And the men of Ngonde also claim that Mwembe of the Ndali hills, and Mujombe and others in the present Northern Rhodesia were nobles of the Kyungu and sent him tribute. 173 565 643

How much secular power the Kyungus and nobles of Ngonde then had we cannot know; but, as in the later period it can be proved to have been more effective in the plain near Mbande than in the hills, it is not unreasonable to suppose that so it was in the early period also.

Trade with the outer world there was, so legend says, from the first, and this trade went north. The present Kyungu told us: "The Kyungus used to send ivory to the coast, they sent men over the hills of the Ndali; the ivory that they took from Simlobwe went that way. And the men used to come back with clothe and iron goods and white crockery. This I heard from Mwakalengula who died as a very, very old man in the year 1900 or perhaps it was 1901." 173 439

In later times the central power of the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde can be proved to have rested on the twin bases of religious faith and the control of great wealth; as these two conditions seem both to have been present in the early period we can assert with some confidence that then also they were the real bases of the central power. 173 565 643

(b) *A TURNING POINT.*

"Kyungu Magemo had a sister who was married to Katenga, one of the nobles of Ngonde. And one day when the other nobles of Ngonde went to Ngana (a district of Ngonde) to fish—for fish were plentiful in Ngana—this woman followed them, and there she married Mwakasekele a man of Ngana. So the nobles returned and told Magemo that his sister had been taken to wife in Ngana, and all he said was, 'very well.' Later she bore a son to Mwakasekele and Kyungu Magemo named him Kasyombe." 173 643

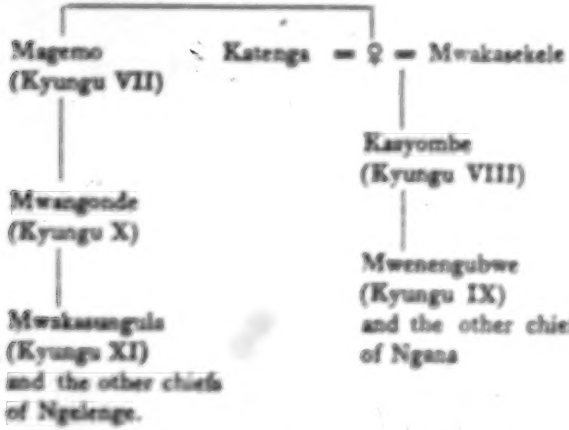
Now Magemo himself when he died left only one son, Mwangonde, and he had only survived by an accident. Mwangonde's mother came from Butambo (in the present Northern Rhodesia) and was a distant relative of Mulwa, another noble of Ngonde. Her delivery was unexpected and took place in the house of one of Mulwa's near kinsmen So Mulwa hid her and the child, and then sent her away to Butambo. The other nobles of Ngonde accused him of having done so and were angry, for they wished to kill the child if it were a boy. Mulwa denied his action, but afterwards they heard that the child was a boy and alive. Now but for Mulwa the direct line of the Kyungus would have died out,

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173
643

for apparently those sons of Magemo who had been kept alive died[1] before him, and Mwangonde was his only surviving son. But even so Mwangonde was far too young to inherit when Magemo died, he was only an infant; and so the nobles of Ngonde took Kasyombe both to inherit Magemo's wives and to be the Kyungu.

The Early Kyungus



This was a turning point in Ngonde's history: Kasyombe's descendants are the "chiefs of Ngana," or "the cousins" (*Anatani*), Mwangonde's descendants are the "chiefs of Ngelenge,"[2] the direct line; and Ngonde's history from this time on is full of their rivalry. Not only did two royal houses result from this event but other momentous political changes as well. For Kasyombe when he succeeded had an adult son, Mwafongo, who had been brought up in Ngana and was not afraid of the nobles at Mbande.[3] "When they took Kasyombe to be the

[1] It is also said that Magemo "went mad and killed his own children."

[2] "These are territorial and not family (or clan) names. Kasyombe and his descendants are called chiefs of Ngana because his mother's husband, the commoner Mwakasekele, lived in Ngana. And so too Mwangonde, when he returned from the hills, settled in Ngelenge and begot children there before he was taken to be Kyungu. And so his sons are called chiefs of Ngelenge."

[3] The point is this: the two sons of the Kyungu who had been normally allowed to survive, in the early period, were brought up at Mbande to respect and fear the nobles of Ngonde as their "fathers" and do not seem to have many personal followers of their own. Moreover if both survived their own father, the Kyungu, then both would be prospective successors and each would be far too much concerned with his own destiny to worry about anything else (cf. the story of Kenondo on page 14). But Mwafongo was an outsider and so had a far greater freedom of action; and he seems to have had followers of his own.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Kyungu his son Mwafongo approached the nobles and said that if they killed either his father or any of his brothers then he would kill them all. And thus it was that the chiefs of Ngana increased so greatly. But as for killing the Kyungu, the nobles did so in spite of Mwafongo's threats! And when Mwangonde succeeded, the chiefs of Ngana came again to the nobles and forbade them to kill his sons; so thus the chiefs of Ngelenge increased also. And yet, seeing that there were only a few sons of Mwangonde and many daughters we think that, after all, some of his sons were put away! When one of Mwangonde's wives whose father was an important man bore a son, then they would let him live, fearing lest the chiefs of Ngana be told; but if her father was a man of no great weight then they would kill her son."

173 643

On the wives of Magemo Kasyombe begot Mwenengubwe, Kalambo, Kilupula, Mwabulambo and other sons too; while Mwangonde, when he grew up begot Kalonga, Mpeta, Mwansele, Mboma and so on. The killing of the sons of Kyungu was, if not quite abandoned, at least limited; and from that time onwards the power of the nobles began to lessen.

There seems no reason to doubt the accuracy of this story, which is universally current in Ngonde to-day; and if we can accept it we have here one of those historical events in which chance circumstances have radically altered the customary behaviour of a group of people. Had Mwangonde not been saved by Mulwa the line of Ngana would have succeeded alone and finally[3] to the Kyungship, had Mwangonde been older when Magemo died it would not have succeeded at all; and in neither case would two royal houses have been set up. Had Kasyombe not happened to have a determined and forceful son, the killing of the sons of Kyungu would not then have been stopped. But, as it was, the existence of the two lines of chiefs, together with the continual increase of both led to a transformation of Ngonde's constitution.

And there is another minor change which tradition traces to this same event. In the times of the early Kyungus, we are told, Katenga was the premier noble of Ngonde; but after his wife left him for Mwakaskele, without protest from his royal brother-in-law, he retired for a time from public life and Mulwa, who soon afterwards gained fame as the saviour of the Ngelenge line, took his place. And Mulwa is still the premier noble of Ngonde to-day.

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[3] But what of the line of the Katembas? There is here an old constitutional principle involved which we did not sufficiently study. It appears that once a son of the Kyungu had fled from succession his descendants could never succeed again. (cf. The case of Kalonga pp. 27-8). But this principle no longer operates to-day, for both the present Kyungu and his predecessor were sons of Mahema, who himself fled from the succession (cf. p. 67).

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173
643

(c) *THE MIDDLE KYUNGUS: CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE.*

When Kasyombe died Mwenengubwe succeeded, for Mwangonde, though now grown up, was still living in Butambo. Mwenengubwe was the eldest of those sons whom Kasyombe had begotten on the wives of Magemo, and he began that process of gradual emergence from religious seclusion which the present Kyungu has completed. The early Kyungus had all lived on the top of Mbande, cut off from the outside world not only by their enclosure but also by the steep sides of the hill; Mwenengubwe and his successors lived in the plain at its foot, by the Lukulu River. This change appears to have been connected with the unsuccessful effort of the chiefs of Ngana to control the killing of the Kyungus. Three of the present nobles of Ngonde took me up Mbande and explained on the way: "At first all the Kyungus were installed on the summit of the hill, but Mwenengubwe came down to the valley; Kasyombe was the last to live on the summit. The Kyungus came down to the valley because they were afraid to live on the hill, they thought that no Kyungu ever lived long on Mbande, always they died quite soon. And so, after Mwenengubwe had come down from the hill, they installed his successors in the valley, in the house of the Kyungu." But still they lived at Mbande in the midst of the nobles of Ngonde, and still their houses were surrounded with an enclosure that only the nobles of Ngonde might freely enter.

On the death of Mwenengubwe, Mwangonde succeeded.[1] From now onwards the traditions of Ngonde are full of warfare, civil and tribal; but more important than the wars themselves are the accompanying constitutional and commercial changes of which we get occasional glimpses.

173
643
439

About this time the direction of the trade in ivory changed. The present Kyungu told us: "Later, after the first Kyungus, Mwangonde and his successors used to exchange the ivory with Marabi who came from across the lake; the men of Mwela rowed them across. These traders brought cloths, red and white and dark cloths. But when the first Kyungu arrived in Ngonde there was no trade-route across the lake at all." And one of the Kyungus about this time is said to have "struck the lake and walked over to Mwela to marry a woman, Mapunda." And the present Kyungu told us that, besides the trade with these Marabi, there had also been trade with the men of Mwela

[1] "When Kasyombe died Mwenengubwe inherited the position of Kyungu. Mwangonde refused it and continued living with his mother's family in Butambo. But the nobles discussed together and decided it was not fitting that Mwangonde should live in another country and they went to invite him back. He agreed to come; at first he only paid a short visit to Ngonde and went back again, but the second time he came and stayed. So when Mwenengubwe died they set Mwangonde on Mbande."

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173
643
439

themselves, and with the Kisi. With the people of Mwela they exchanged canoes for hoes. And from the Kisi also they got hoes, which the Kisi in their turn had got in exchange from the Kinga.

173
643
565
622

Then, during the reigns of Mwangonde and his successors "the sons of the Kyungu" began more and more to displace the territorial nobles as rulers of the various districts of the Ngonde plain. They became hereditary chiefs (*avanyafyale*), each of whom was succeeded by two or more sons, who divided his country and tried to extend it. And thus the number of ruling chiefs now began to increase at a great rate. Each of the territorial nobles, on the other hand, was only succeeded by a single heir. Houses of chiefs were set up and a new hierarchy appeared, for the senior chief in each house ranked as the "father" of his juniors. The name of the founder of each house was preserved as a hereditary title borne by each head of that house in turn. Thus to-day we find in the Ngonde plain the house of the Katambas, (or Mwenitetes),[1] the house of the Kalongas, the house of the Mwakasungulas and so on, and, among the chiefs of Ngana, the house of the Mwafongos, the house of the Mwenengubwes, the house of the Kalombos, the house of the Kilupulas and so on. The heads of these houses were the great chiefs of Ngonde, subordinate to the Kyungu and each with a number of junior chiefs traditionally subordinate to him. Most of these great titles can be traced back to some important son either of Mwangonde or of Kasyombe; but in some cases junior branches also have acquired sufficient importance to be distinguished by hereditary titles which are borne by their heads[2]. Whenever the bearer of one of these great titles became the Kyungu, his old title was at once taken by a successor in his house.

The chiefs supplanted the territorial nobles and took their subjects *for their own in this way:* "*A great many territorial nobles have lost* their power, for the Kyungus were in the habit of sending their sons to build with them in their countries. A Kyungu would send one of his sons (i.e. a chief) to a certain noble saying 'I send this your son to build with you, his father'—for the nobles were called 'father' by the sons of the Kyungu—, so the noble would welcome him. But in after years the people would give their affection to the son of the Kyungu and the noble would lose his power. And yet, even so, in the old days the two of them, chief and noble, would remain on friendly terms." . . . . "Some of the nobles lost their power through the cunning of the chiefs. For example the noble Mwenifumbo used to have a country of his own,

[1] This house, as we have seen, dates from the early period.
[2] The first Maleme, for instance, was a son of Mwakasungula, the first Kajuni of Mwenengubwe.

[text continues on p. 21]

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

but then he was given a young chief, Mwakijule, to look after as a child. The father of Mwakijule (who was not the Kyungu) asked Mwenifumbo to bring him up; but then when he grew up he became the ruler of the country!" And others lost their power to young chiefs who had married their daughters and then come to live near them. 173 643 565 622

Now all informants agree on three points: Firstly that it was the prestige of the royal blood which was responsible for this loss of power, secondly that the process was a gradual one and thirdly that the chiefs and the dispossessed nobles generally continued to live together on amicable terms. "The people gave their affection to the son of the Kyungu," but not all at once; some men at first would continue to regard themselves as the noble's men while others looked more to the chief. The noble acquiesced in this process and became in the end but the most important and respected commoner of the new chiefdom. For the chiefs apparently always treated such nobles with the greatest consideration, continued to call them "father" and to defer to their advice. The nobles retained all their religious functions and their right to participate in the selection of Kyungus and great chiefs, while their own titles continued to be handed on with due ceremony to their successors. All that they lost was leadership in war, the power of requisitioning food, together with the main responsibility for feasting the common people, and the formal position of chief justice. But in actual fact a noble's opinion on a law case was probably seldom disputed by the chief who had asked for it.

We have already suggested that during this middle period the balance of secular power between the nobles of Ngonde and the divine Kyungu himself began to change, and we have noted his descent from *Mbande* and the stopping of the killing of his sons as undoubted examples of this. But the nobles of Ngonde still had the real power at Mbande: "they alone conversed with the Kyungu; no one else saw him except when they went in to make obeisance. All orders came from them. Even with the *mazuwo*, the wives of the Kyungu, it was the nobles of Ngonde who put each one into the house of the Kyungu for a week at a time and then took her out and put in another. No one else built their houses near the Kyungu except these nobles (and their own immediate followers.)" 173 643 565

Such incidents as the going to war of Kyungu Mwakasungula, and the abandonment of the custom of building an enclosure (*ulupaso*) in the reign of Mwambelo[1] seem significant in the light of modern developments; but we cannot be sure that any very radical constitutional change would

[1] Vide infra pp. 28-9.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173 643 565 necessarily have followed from them, had modern conditions been different. The evidence is inconclusive.

565 642 622 Now not all territorial nobles in the Ngonde plain have been supplanted by "the sons of the Kyungus" even to-day; while in the hills inland they have mostly retained their power. And so in discussing the political system of Ngonde under the middle Kyungus, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between four different kinds of political unit: (1) the chiefdoms in the plain, each ruled by a hereditary chief related to the Kyungu; (2) the fiefs (if I may adapt this word from a feudal to a primitive context) in the plain, ruled by hereditary nobles unrelated to the Kyungu; (3) the fiefs in the hills inland, also ruled by hereditary nobles, but differing in many ways from the fiefs in the plain, and (4) the chiefdoms of the houses of Nyondo and Kameme in the hills.

642 622 This paper is mainly concerned with chiefdoms and fiefs of the plain. There each of the chiefdoms consisted, as among the Nyakyusa, of a group of age-villages, older and younger men living apart with their own contemporaries. At the head of each village was a headman, or great-commoner (*ulifwesa*) chosen for life from among the villagers by the chief and the great-commoners (*amafwesa*) of the senior villages of the chiefdom. Except in the case of very small chiefdoms each chief was succeeded by two or more sons who divided the villages among them. The transference of power from the old chief to his sons normally began in his lifetime at the "coming out" (*umusoka*) when they were formally shown to the country as chiefs and magically treated. The constitution of every chiefdom was that of limited monarchy, for the chief was dependent upon his great-commoners, who advised and, in many ways, controlled him. In the status of chief and great-commoners religious elements played an important part.

642 622 643 565 But, whereas among the Nyakyusa each chiefdom, save the very small ones, was, in secular matters, quite independent of its neighbours and each chief was a sovereign, in Ngonde, on the other hand, the wealth of the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde made them the apex of a political hierarchy. And thus, while among the Nyakyusa the senior of two brother chiefs could only command his junior in religious matters, when they sacrificed to their common father's spirit, in Ngonde he could occasionally command him in other ways also, he could, for example, summon him to war or to hoe,[1] and he had a certain slight judicial authority.[2] Of two brother chiefs the junior was subordinate to the senior; in each of the great houses all other chiefs were subordinate to the head of the house, the great chief with a hereditary title;

[1] Vide infra sections 4 and 6.
[2] Vide infra section 5.

[text continues on p. 24]

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

that the organization of Mbande may be described either as a group of small fiefs clustered together or as the capital chiefdom of the Kyungu, in which the nobles of Ngonde acted as the great commoners, each in two small age-villages. 642 565

Besides the nobles of Ngonde and their own followers there lived at Mbande men called *nalubata*, who acted as the personal messengers and police of the Kyungu. They were not hereditary officials but chosen for their speed by the nobles of Ngonde, who also gave them their orders. Anyone might become a messenger, the son of a chief, or of a commoner, or even a slave. 624 202

Of the customs of the hill fiefs and of the chiefdom, of the houses of Nyondo and Kameme we know very little; but it is certain that in many of them different dialects were spoken from that of the plain and that their inhabitants called themselves (as they still do to-day) Sukwa, Wenya, Lambya, and so on, rather than "men of Ngonde." And these upland groups were much more loosely attached[1] to the central power at Mbande than were the people of the plain. 642 565

There is some evidence to show that, even in the early period, the the nobles of Ngonde did not always take the most immediate heir of a dead Kyungu to succeed him; during the middle period it is certain that they did not. The Kyungu had to be taken from the royal family but, within limits, the most suitable man might be chosen. And with the increase in the numbers of the chiefs the area of selection grew constantly wider. The constitutional methods of selection will be discussed in section five.

(4) *THE MIDDLE KYUNGUS: CIVIL WARS.*

We must now turn to the rivalry between the chiefs of Ngolenge and Ngana. "Mwangonde begot Kalongo, Mpeta,[2] and Mwamele. And they, when they grew up, quarrelled with the sons of Kanyombe: 'Let them move further off, they are only commoners, we object to their proximity!' So they made war on them and drove them fleeing out of Ngana with only a few men. Before this war began their father Mwangonde had forbidden them to fight and commanded them to be friends." We notice here a point, which will be discussed later in section five, that the Kyungus, though not themselves involved in the civil wars, yet had little or no power to keep the peace. 173

"Then the sons of Kanyombe went to the Ndali to make allies of them and they returned together and fought the sons of Mwangonde

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[1] cf. Section 3.
[2] Mpeta (slide right) later took the name of Mwakasungula.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

•173 in Ngelenge. And in that war both Kalonga and Mwanacle were killed, only Mpeta (that is Mwakasungula) was left. He went to tell the Kyungu, his father, that two of his sons were dead and his father said: 'Even so, did I not forbid you to fight?' And the Kyungu called together Mpeta and the chiefs of Ngana and blessed them and made peace between them at Mbande. He gave the chiefs of Ngana the lands of Ngelenge and Mpata. . . . . His son Mpeta he sent to Kisaku." The second civil war thus ended in a decisive defeat for the chiefs of Ngelenge; and the peace-making of Kyungu Mwangonde was but an acquiescence in that defeat. Mpeta was sent into exile, for Kisaku is a little district at the north-east corner of the lake, beyond the plain which the Nyakyusa had now taken. Ngelenge has been held by the chiefs of Ngana ever since, and Kilupula has it still. And Mpata, which is close to Mbande on the North, is still theirs also.

While in exile Mpeta led the men of Kisaku to war against a Nyakyusa chief from the hills, named Mwakasungula; he killed him and took his name; and thereafter he is always referred to in tradition by it.

The return of Mwakasungula from exile was caused by a drought, combined with the faith which the men of Ngonde had in the rainmaking powers of their royal family. They went to Kyungu Mwangonde and asked what they had done to deserve a drought. He denied the implication that he had caused it himself but suggested, none the less, that the exile of his son Mwakasungula might have something to do with it; perhaps it was Mwakasungula who was angry. "So they went to Mwakasungula, the chiefs of Ngana and everyone, and told him that in Ngonde they were dying of drought—he replied that he would follow them. And so he did, he passed through Ngelenge and came as far as Kyimbwe and the people heard that he had come. And that very day the rain came, heavy rain, and the Lukulu, which had dried up, filled up again—while Mwakasungula was still on the way, before he had even arrived at Mbande. And all men, when they saw this miracle, were astonished and urged the chiefs of Ngana to respect Mwakasungula, for they had all but perished. And Mwangonde summoned Mwakasungula and his cousins (the chiefs of Ngana) and commanded them to live together in friendship and never to fight again. And he gave Mwakasungula land on the coast by the lake." And this land the house of Mwakasungula still holds.

And then, after the return of Mwakasungula from exile, there was a great campaign fought against the Bemba in the country of Mujombe in the hills. The Bemba chief Kyepele had invaded that country, and Mujombe, so say the traditions of Ngonde, sent to the Kyungu for

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

help. Mwikasungula led the forces of Ngonde and was the hero of the war; he defeated the Bemba and killed Kyepele, returning to Ngonde with a host of Bemba captives who were there enslaved.[1]

173

MIDDLE AND MODERN KYONGS.

173
643

Line of Ngolenge.	*Line of Ngoma.*
Magemo.	
	Kaeyombe.
	Mwenengubwe.
Mwangonde.	
Mwakasungula.	
Mwambwio.	
	Gwa Sapani.
	Mwalungu.
(The Europeans arrive 1875).	
	Mwabulambo (deposed 1894).
Mwakabungu (1894-1904).	
Mwangulubu (1904-1932).	
Peter (the reigning Kyongo).	

173

When Mwangonde died Mwakasungula was taken as the Kyongo, but not until Kalongo had refused the position for himself. The first holder of the name "Kalongo," as we have seen, had been killed in civil war. But after his death one of his younger half-brothers, Mbonta (or Kanyigi), inherited his name and his wives. Now, as the first Kalongo had been the senior son of Mwangonde, so Mbonta, by inheriting from him, became the senior in his turn. Though much younger than Mwakasungula he ranked above him. But when the nobles of Ngonde tried to install him as the Kyongo "he himself refused the position, he smeared ash on his body and refused, he forswore the position saying 'I do not desire the name of Kyongo; my brother Mwakasungula here was our father's companion for many years and all the medicines of chieftainship are in his possession; how is it that you take me instead

[1] *Bemba tradition.* The present Bemba chief Mwamba told me that this campaign took place in the reign of the Citimukulu Cepela. Cepela did not himself go to fight but his brother, Mwamba, did and was defeated by the men of Ngonde. The dead of his wounds on his way home.

It thus appears that the country of Mujumba was then just on the boundary between the Bemba sphere of influence and that of Ngonde.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173 of him? And it is he that has done the fighting out!!' And so they caught Mwakasungula to be the Kyungu." Thereafter, though the house of Kalonga has always been recognized as a senior branch of the royal family, no member of it has ever been made Kyungu.

After the succession of Mwakasungula there was a third and final war between the rival lines: "When the sons of Mwakasungula grew up they remembered that the chiefs of Ngana had killed their fathers and wished for revenge. So they fought and killed two of them. And then the chiefs of Ngelenge were satisfied and declared the quarrel at an end; for as the chiefs of Ngana had killed their fathers so now they in their turn had killed some chiefs of Ngana, the old score was paid." Whether the chiefs of Ngana would have acquiesced in this "settlement of scores" we cannot tell, for now Ngonde had to meet the challenge of the Ngoni.

(c) *THE MIDDLE KYUNGUS: THE NGONI WARS.*

Before the reign of Mwakasungula no Kyungu, says tradition, had ever gone to war, "but when the Ngoni came their enemy was like that of the lions and their number like that of the ants, and so Kyungu Mwakasungula, seeing his people were terrified, took up arms in person and said he would die fighting. And his people heard with awe and astonishment that he himself had come to fight and they determined to to die with him." Thus, under the pressure of extraordinary circumstances, a man who had often fought before broke through the traditional privacy of his divine office. Though the step was never repeated[9] yet its occurrence made a great impression on his people and it is still cited as one of the stages in the emergence of the Kyungu from their religious seclusion.

The course of the Ngoni wars, in the tradition of Ngonde, was briefly as follows: the first appearance of the Ngoni in Ngonde took place during the reign of Mwakasungula; he himself led his people against them and killed their chief Kwakambwe-Kalilo; they fled and he pursued them out of the country. And again they came and again the men of Ngonde repulsed them.

"Then they took counsel together and decided that we men of Ngonde were too skilful with our spears ever to be beaten by daylight, but we might be surprised at night." So the next attack was a raid on Mbande by night; Mwakasungula, alone and unaided, slew six Ngoni and they fled; but he himself was left fatally wounded.

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[9] One of our informants, however, maintained that Kyungu Mwakasungula fought the Ngoni twice in person.

6:Wilson.E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Mwambelo, younger brother of Mwakaungula, succeeded and abandoning the enclosure at Mbande, went to live by the lake shore.[1] And so yet another step was taken from the traditional religious seclusion. His successors returned to Mbande; but the custom of building an enclosure round the homes of the Kyungu was not resumed. 173

In his reign Mwafulilwa, chief of the next tribe to the south of Ngonde, sought aid against the Ngoni and the men of Ngonde responded and won a battle. But the Ngoni then replied with another night raid in which they found Mwambelo alone in his house and killed him and returned home. Another attack followed before a new Kyungu had been installed, but it was repulsed, "for this time they had come by day!"

"And then the nobles of Ngonde made Gwa Sapasi Kyungu; he was a son of Kalambo, a chief of Ngasa; for they said that, as so many of the chiefs of Ngelenge had been killed by the Ngoni, they would now take one of their cousins again as the Kyungu." And now at last Ngonde submitted to the Ngoni. Gwa Sapasi, with the concurrence of all the chiefs and all the nobles save one[2] sent a tusk of ivory to the Ngoni chief Mtwalo. "And from that time forwards the Ngoni never fought with us again."

A few years later, in 1875, after Gwa Sapasi had died and been succeeded by Mwalongo, the Europeans first visited Ngonde. Arab slaves traders established themselves there about the same time, and with the struggle between the two races for the possession of Ngonde the modern period begins. 175

3. *RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

The traditional status of the Kyungu had in part a religious basis.[3] The ruling Kyungu and the spirits of his dead predecessors were believed to form one divine company, the anger of any one of whom had terrible effects: while in his own flesh and in some of his possessions magical power was believed to reside. But the Kyungu was not alone in his religious potency, he was but the greatest of many. The nobles of Ngonde and the territorial nobles, the chiefs both great and small, professional rainmakers and doctors, the great-commoners of the villages, heads of families and even ordinary men and women—all alike were believed to have some access to, some dealings with divine or 643 769 789

[1] These nobles of Ngonde, in recounting this story, maintained that Mwambelo was small.

[2] He was Mwasinongo, whose story is omitted here for lack of space.

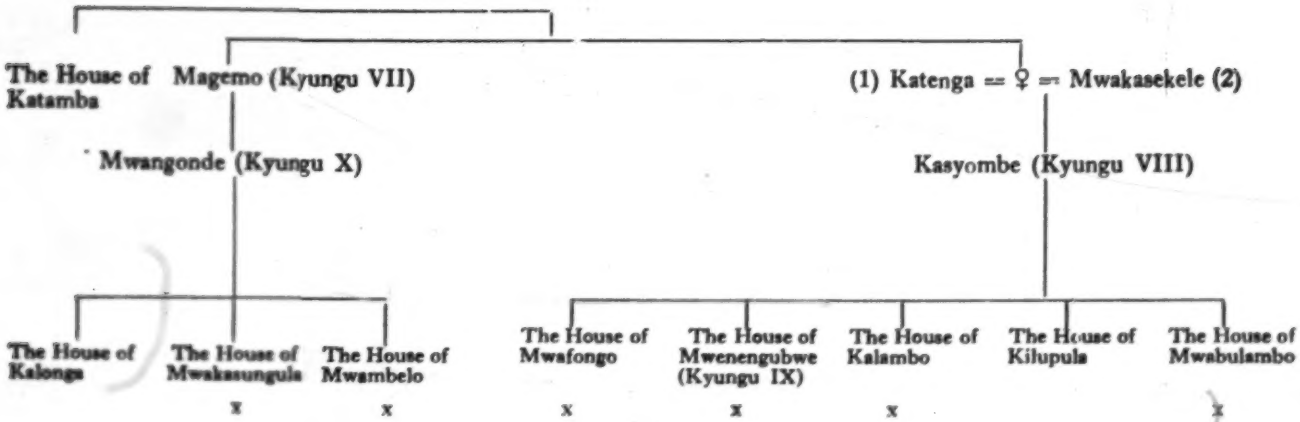
[3] As this paper is concerned only with political institutions no full analysis of the tribal religions of Ngonde is here attempted, only those aspects of it are dealt with which have political significance.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173
643

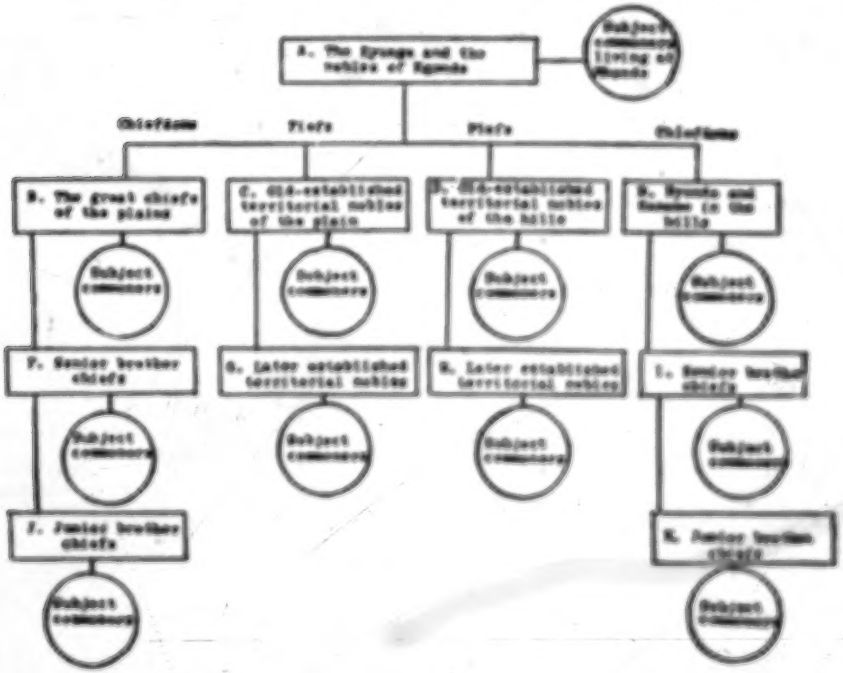
THE TWO ROYAL LINES (MIDDLE PERIOD).

THE EARLY KYUNGUS



x = Houses which actually provided Kyungus in the middle period.

THE CONSTITUTION OF NGONDE IN THE MIDDLE PERIOD



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8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 come to it. But, on the other hand, everyone knows when a sacrifice is
778 taking place, and, in spite of the influence of missions, most people in the
793 pagan community believe in its efficacy.

782 Sacrifices are prompted either by actual misfortune or by prophecies
787 of it. The four sacrifices which I have seen myself were all stimulated by an actual shortage of food, and the hereditary priests have often told me that "now-a-days the chiefs do not listen to us until hunger comes." But, traditionally, sacrifices are said to have been usually prompted by prophecies of coming misfortune which was then averted by them. In each chiefdom the ruling great commoners, the hereditary priests and some private persons as well are believed to have the power of dreaming of misfortune (*ohukangalaka*) before it comes. And the chiefs are said always to have listened to these dreams, formerly, and to have acted upon them.

778 Among the groves there is an order of seniority; the older the grove
173 the more chiefdoms are concerned in the sacrifices there. And in Selya is the most important grove of all—Lubaga. All the chiefdoms of Selya, many of the Nyakyusa proper and even some of the neighbouring chiefdoms of the Mwambo are traditionally concerned in its sacrifices. Lubaga, the Nyakyusa say, is the grove of Lwembe, one of the original chiefs who came down the Livingstone Mountains from the East, eight or nine generations ago; and from him all the present Selya chiefs are descended. The ancestor of the chiefs of the Nyakyusa proper was a brother of Lwembe; and though the Kukwe and Mwambo chiefs are not related, yet those of the Mwambo who are nearest to Lubaga used to send cows there for sacrifice as well, because of the great reputation that this grove had.

622 Sacrifices are still made in the country of the chief of Lubaga
782 (Mwakisiya) for all the surrounding chiefdoms, but the full ritual has not been carried out for fourty years. Traditionally each chief of Lubaga was ritually installed into a position somewhat resembling that of Sir James Frazer's "Divine Kings," a position hedged with taboos, in which not only the sacrifices he made to Lwembe but his own health and fertility also were believed to be intimately connected with the prosperity of his own and neighbouring chiefdoms. But the present chief has never been properly installed, nor was his father before him. The sacrifices at Lubaga are believed to benefit not only the Nyakyusa but also the next
[173] tribe to the East, the Kinga, who live on the heights of the Livingstone Mountains; for Lwembe, they say, was born a Kinga and moved down the mountains to Lubaga, taking the fertility of the soil with him. And

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

The peoples with whom this book is concerned, the Nyakyusa and the Ngonde, occupy an area shut in by mountains at the northern end of Lake Nyasa, and enjoy a culture which, though varying locally, clearly springs from a common basis and is traditionally attributed to similar origins. The most conspicuous features of their political organization are (i) the balance of power between chiefs and commoners; (ii) the 'coming out' ritual in which a generation of men which has governed for approximately thirty years retires and hands over the administration to its sons, retaining only ritual functions; and (iii) the system of age-villages.

All are agreed that chiefs and commoners belong to different stocks; the commoners being descended from the original occupants of the country while the chiefs trace their descent to a line of invaders who came down from the Livingstone mountains eight generations ago. According to the myth, they brought with them fire, and cattle, and iron tools, and they found a people who ate their food raw in a land 'without trees'.[1] Commoners are abatita, black people, while Ngulube, an early ancestor of the chiefs, was 'pale'[2] and chiefs (abangwale) generally are said to have been lighter in colour and 'different in their bodies'. After generations of intermarriage between chiefs and commoners there is no consistent difference in physical type between them, but the range of physical type among the Nyakyusa as a whole is wide.[3]

Nyakyusa and Ngonde historians say that their chiefs are related to those of the Kinga, who live high above the Nyakyusa valley to the east in the Livingstone mountain, whence the chiefs came. The Kinga acknowledge the connexion and join with the Nyakyusa in sacrifice to their common heroes, but culturally the

[1] Possibly the lake-shore plain. The hills until cultivated are covered with either savannah or rain forest.

[2] Geoffrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Nyasaland*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 8, p. 10 (1941). According to the Ngonde version Ngulube was the first ancestor.

[3] cf. F. Fülleborn, *Beiträge zur physischen Anthropologie der Nord-Nyassaländer* (1906). *Der Deutsche Nyasa- und Ruwuma-Grenz Atlas* (1908).

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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Nyakyusa
Kings F917.

two peoples are distinct. Their languages are not mutually intelligible and the Nyakyusa despise the Kinga as dirty in habit and cheapjaw in manner. There were two main invasions from BuKinga: (i) that of the 'sons of Lwembe' who settled south and east of Tukuyu, and (ii) that of the 'sons of Ngonde' (or Kukwe), who settled first at Kitu below the northern crater of Rungwe volcano, and then at Kabale in the foothills to the south-east. Most of the present chiefs of the Nyakyusa belong to one or other of these two lineages, and the chiefs of Ngonde are claimed by both. The arrival of the chiefs of Lwembe's line may be fixed between 1580 and 1640, i.e. before the settlement at the Cape, but after the death of the first Christian martyr in what is now Rhodesia[1] and the 'sons of Ngonde' followed three some generations later (*vide infra*, genealogies pp. 3, 17; p. 34). Two of the invading heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, became 'divine kings' whose successors claimed spiritual authority over wide areas, and the heirs of Kyungu gradually acquired temporal power also.

About the first inhabitants of the Nyakyusa valley, the *abilima*, tradition is vague; however, it is clear that they were not one people, but consisted of small, scattered, independent groups, disparate in origin. Some were very early invaders from BuKinga, others came from near Lake Rukwa and were kin to the Bungu of the Rukwa plain. They occupied an almost empty country (as their name indicates) but they found pygmy hunters[2] in the Rungwe forests. The invaders themselves were primarily hunters and honey-gatherers, though some, at least, of them began to cultivate millet, beans, and pumpkins. One group of early inhabitants, the Penja, which was pushed into the north-west corner of the valley, has remained relatively discrete, though for the most part they have fused with the conquerors.

It is clear that nowhere were the invaders allowed to establish themselves as tyrants since, though their descendants rule over the various chiefdoms, their authority is strictly limited by the headmen of the villages who are invariably of commoner stock. Moreover, while the most sacred persons in the country are, or before the coming of the Europeans were, 'divine kings', descendants of the original heroes, chosen by each generation to become their

[1] In 1580, cf. G. M. Theal, *Records of South-East Africa*, vol. ii, p. 108.

[2] The quality of relations with the Pygmies is summed up in the ironical name for them: 'Where did you are out?' (*Ubukwanalaga?*) The rule is that they were very sensitive about their size and the first question on meeting a Nyakyusa was always: 'Where did you are out?' The only safe reply was: 'Far, far away!'

9: Wilson
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F317 Ngonde
Nyakyusa

Chart showing position of sections of chart on "Chiefs of Lwembe's Line." (Facing page 3)

A	B	C
D	E	F
G	H	I

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

living representatives, to take their name, and to sacrifice at their graves, it was commoner priests who chose them and, as will be seen, put them to death when it was expedient for the good of the people. It is clear, too, from what source the commoners drew their power. The invaders were supposed to have brought into the country fire, cattle, crops, and iron; they were creators, the guarantors and preservers of fertility; and it was to foster and increase fertility that men worshipped and sacrificed at the graves of the mythical heroes. The aborigines, on the other hand, without fire, without iron, and feeding on raw meat as the myth depicts them, possessed one weapon of terrible potency, witchcraft, which no chief, not even a priest of the chief's lineage, could withstand or would dare to challenge. To the Nyakyusa the essential nature of the universe, established in history and in the institutions of their society, was reciprocity, a balance between chiefs and commoners, between cattle-owners and cultivators, between the creative power of the heroes and the black anger of the witches. The idea of a chief who was a dictator was as foreign as the idea of a single omnipotent creator. Moreover, there was a multiplicity of chiefs, no single central authority.

The heroic tradition, then, accounts for the differences between the chiefs and commoners and for the remarkable equilibrium that obtains between them. It accounts also, as we shall find, for the 'coming out' ritual, at least in part. It is strangely silent, however, about the origin of what is perhaps the most striking feature of Nyakyusa social life, the system of age-villages. The absence of any link between the myths of the heroes and the founding of age-villages is the more surprising in that the pattern of age-organization almost certainly came into the valley from the north-east. Only in East Africa was government based on age groups and the handing over of power from one generation to the next celebrated by whole communities. If the system of age-villages came in with the eastern invaders why is this contribution to civilized living (for the Nyakyusa regard village life as the essence of civilization) never mentioned? The only explanation we can offer is that the age structure is not necessarily linked with chieftainship, whereas the control of cattle and iron was the basis of power, and making fire was a symbol, not only of a new chieftainship, but of the vital creative force in the body of the chief. The heroic cycle justifies the relations between chiefs and commoners, but is not concerned with other institutions of the society.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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Nyakyusa

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[facing p. 5; section A]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

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Nyakyusa

CHIEFS OF LWEMBE'S LINE

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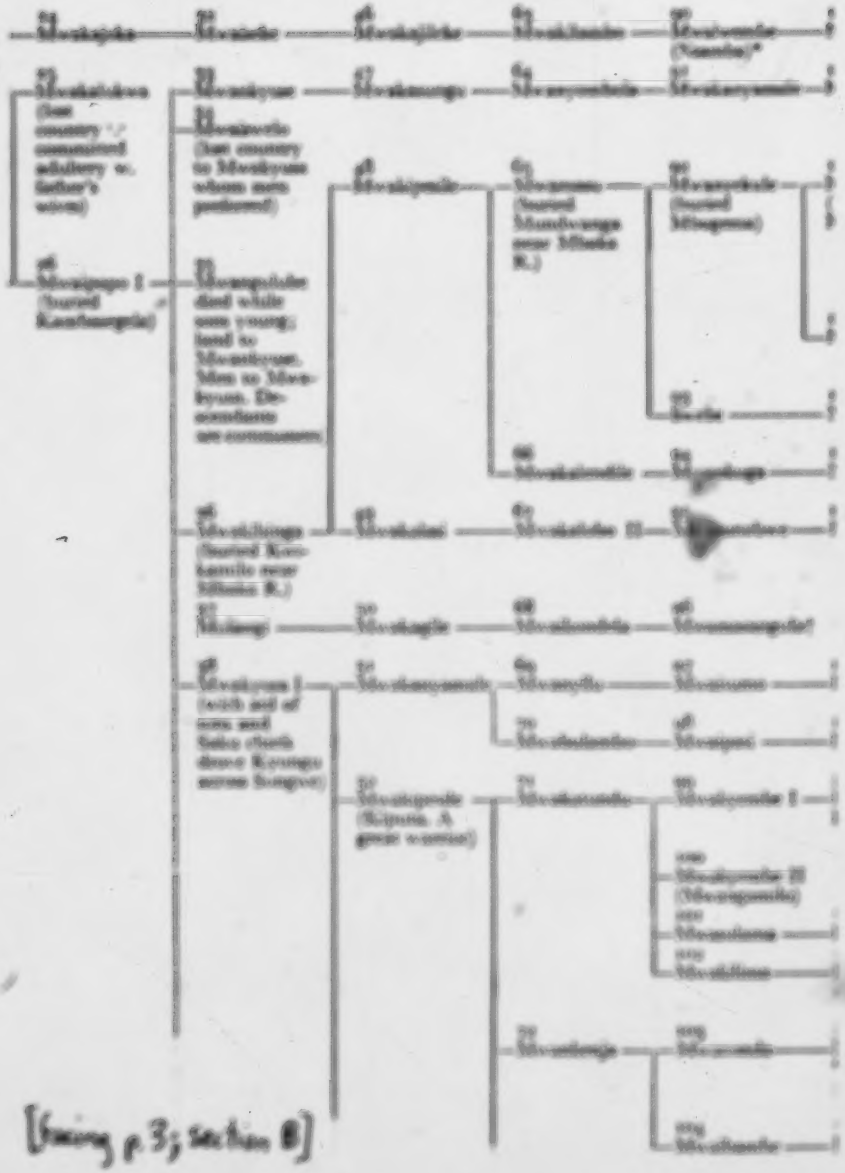

[Going p. 3; Section B]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

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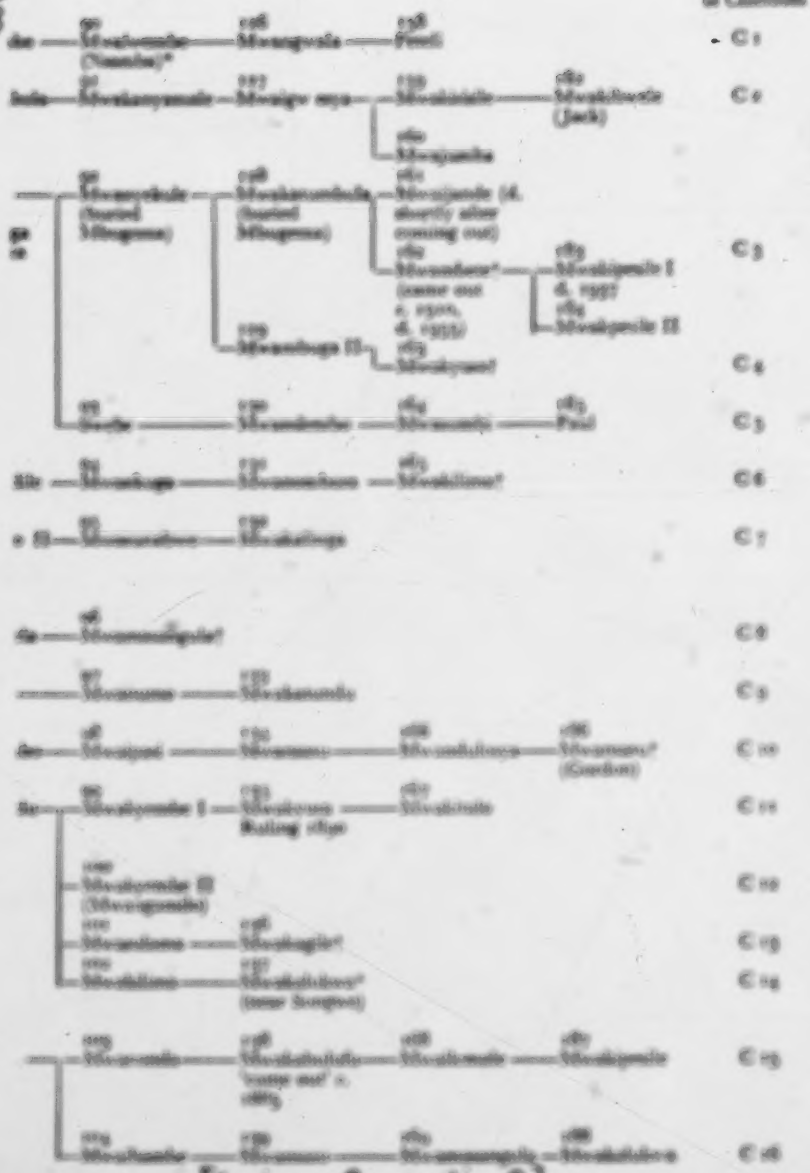

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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

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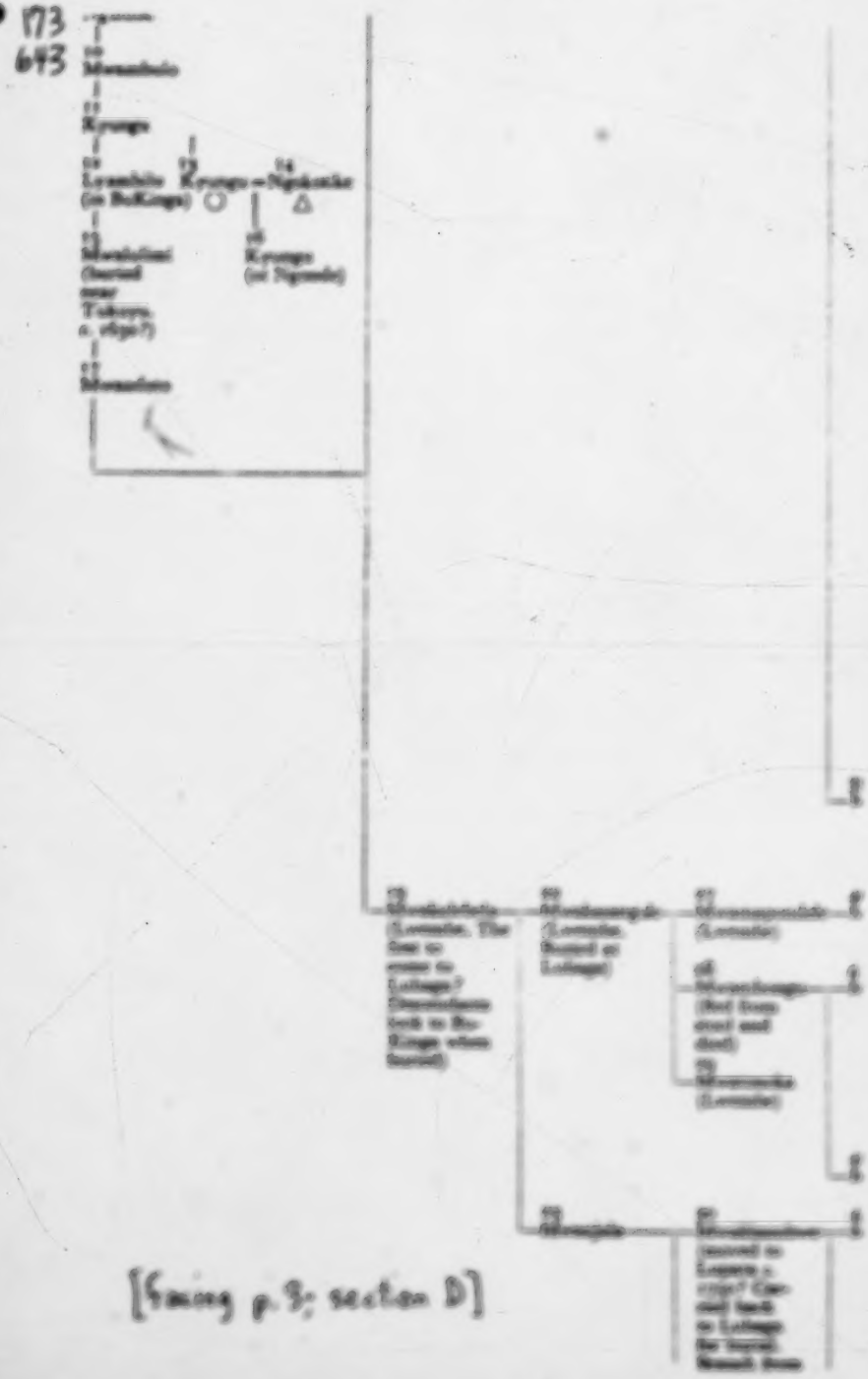

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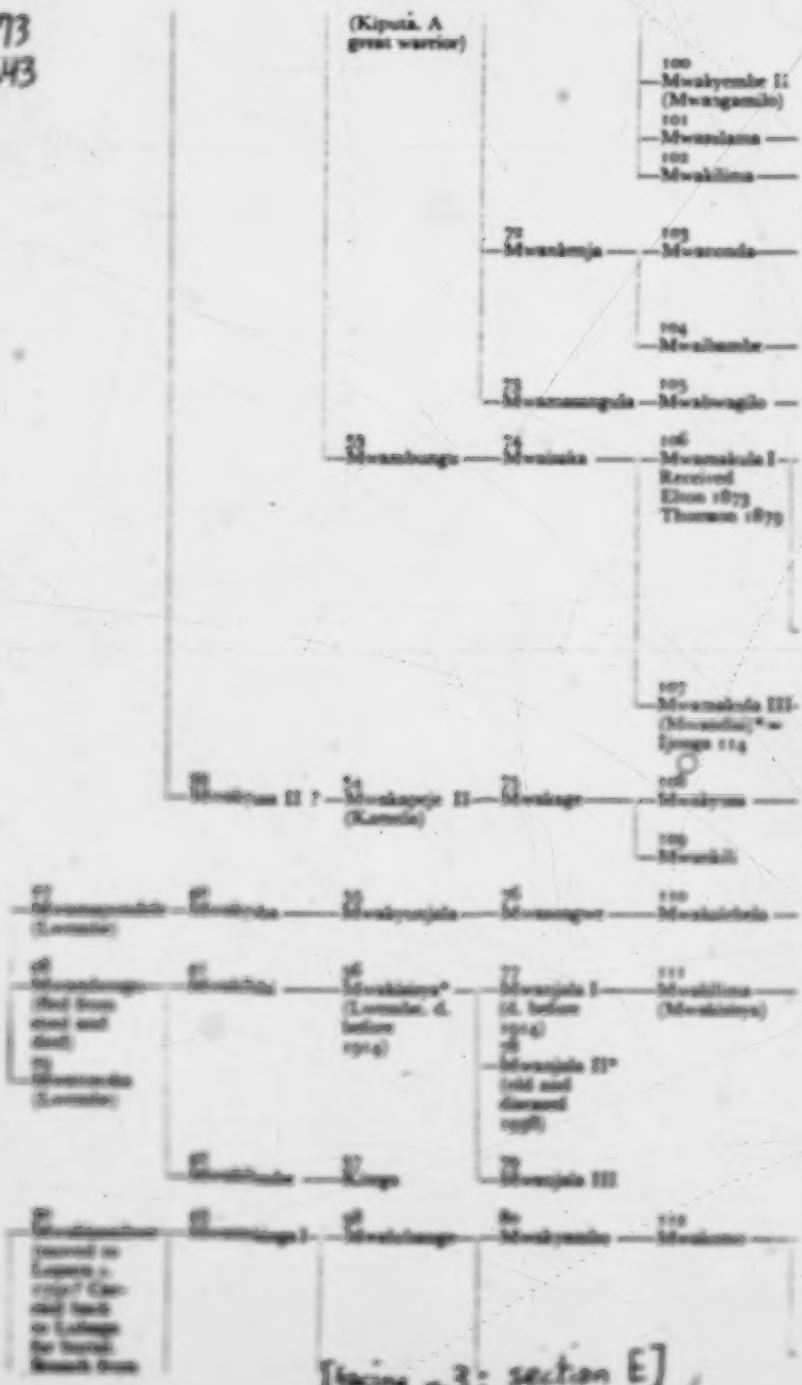

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Nyakyusa

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Ruling chys

100 Mwakyembe II (Mwangamilo) — C 12

101 Mwanalama — 136 Mwakagile? — C 13

102 Mwakilima — 137 Mwakalukwa? (near Songwe) — C 14

103 Mwaseude — 138 Mwakalukulu 'came out' c. 1883 — 168 Mwalimule — 187 Mwakipenile — C 15

104 Mwalumbe — 139 Mwanamo — 169 Mwamawaghula — 188 Mwakalukwa — C 16

105 Mwabwaglio — 140 Mwanyilu — ?C 17

106 Mwamakula I Received Elton 1875 Thomson 1879 — 141 Mwakalukwa — 170 Mwakisile — 189 Mwambeje — C 18

171 Mwakisile III? (Lazarus)

172 Mwakyusa II (Robert)

142 Mwakalinga Died fighting Germans — 173 Mwakisile? (Kowan) — C 19

107 Mwamakula III (Mwandisi)* = Iyunga 114 — 143 Mwakalinga — 174 Mwakyembe

108 Mwakyusa — 144 Mwakyambile — C 20

109 Mwaskili

110 Mwakalebela — 145 Mwakalinga — C 21

111 Mwakilima (Mwakaniya) — 146 Mwakikoba — C 22

112 Mwakisaya — 147 Mwakalaje (Ruling before chys. fell alive 1955) — 175 Mwakisile? — 190 Mwajunga — C 23

148 Mwakyambe c. 1950

[facing p. 3; section F]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

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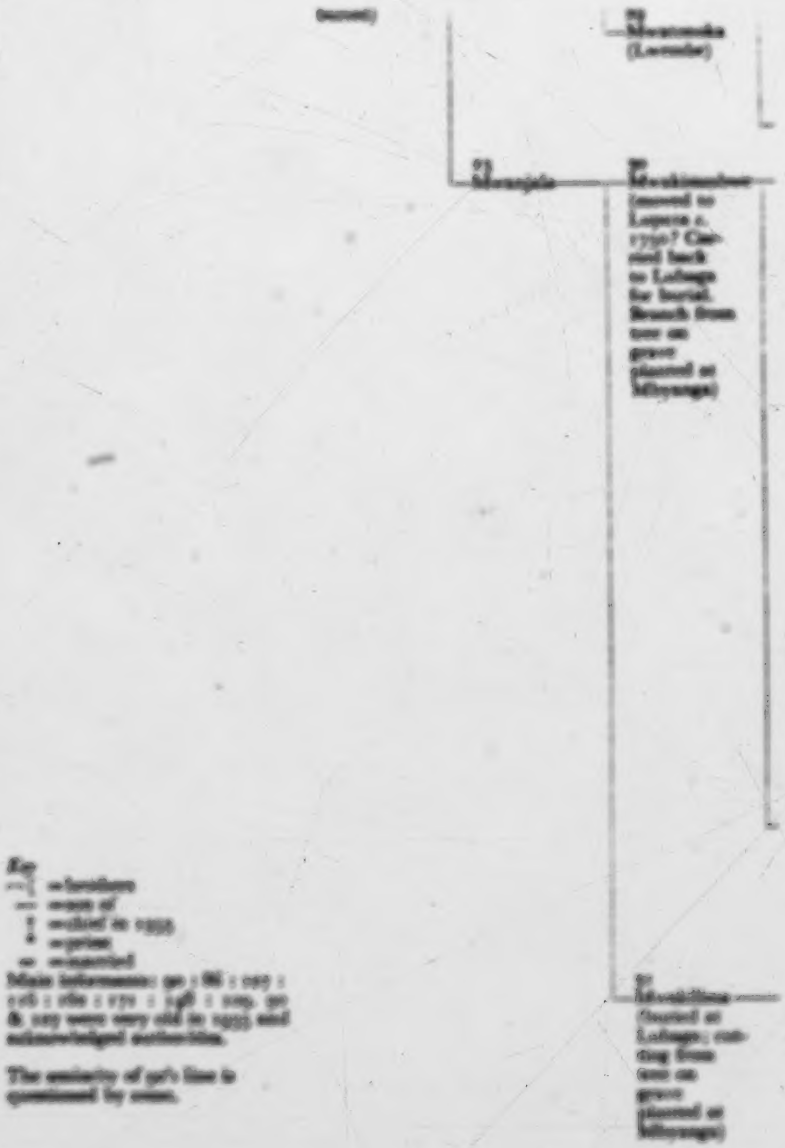

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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

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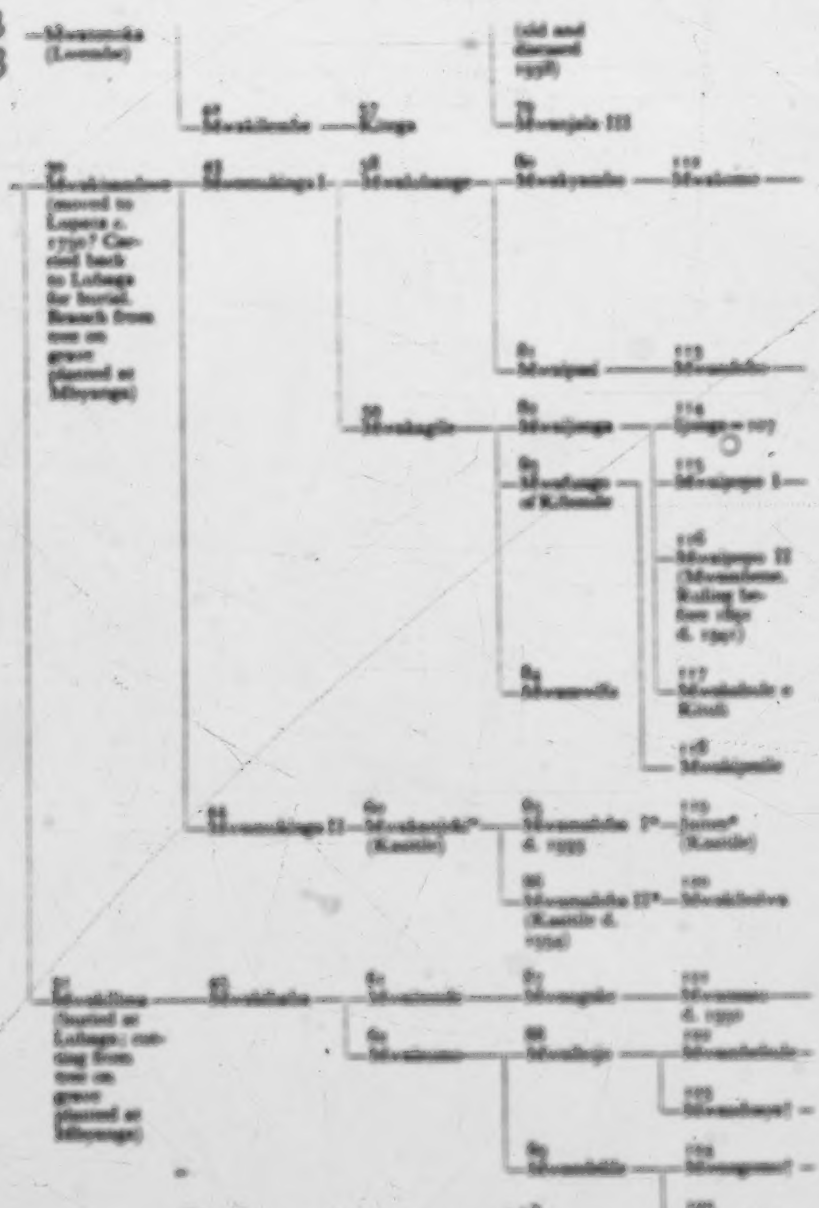

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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

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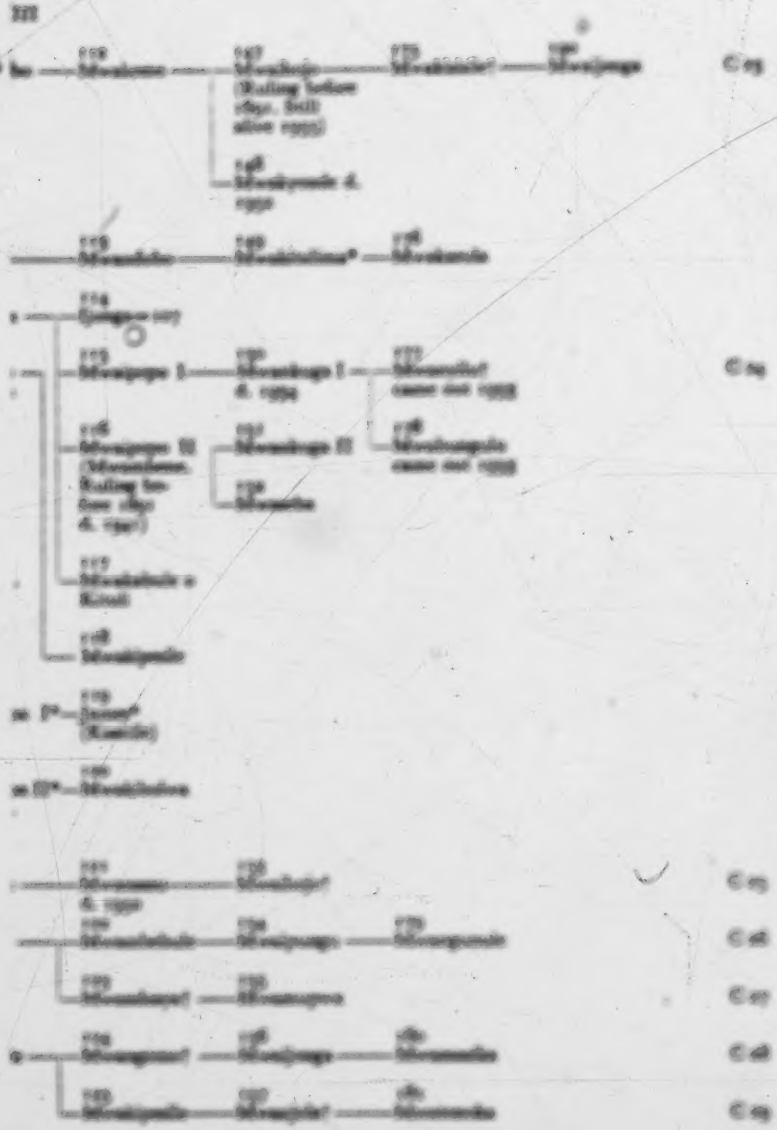

[facing p. 3; section I]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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Nyakyusa

CHAPTER II

THE MYTHOLOGICAL CHARTER

7

In Nyakyusa mythology the heroes were creators of crops and animals and were driven out from BuKinga by a jealous father (or elder brother) who sought to kill them; but he found, when they had gone, that they had taken the fertility of the country with them, so he sent offerings after them, and still such offerings are brought to their graves in sacrifice. One of the heroes, Kyala (2), created crops alone, and of him it is said that each time his father or elder brother tried to kill him he rose again; another, Lwembe or Mlusi (3 or 13?), created both crops and animals, brought cattle, fire, and iron to the Nyakyusa valley, and left many descendants who spread over the valley as chiefs, ruling a people who had not known chiefs.

The names and events mentioned vary somewhat from one area to another; in some versions there were three brothers, though the eldest, Nkekete (1), being buried in Kisi country, does not concern the Nyakyusa; in another version the brothers had a sister who was the mother of Kyungu (16), the hero of Ngonde; but the general pattern of heroic ancestors who were creators and discoverers, and who brought to the old inhabitants of the valley such good gifts as crops and stock, fire and iron, and the institution of chieftainship, remains the same. They all had miraculous power and are vaguely connected with volcanic disturbance, such as continued in the area until recent times (*vide infra*, p. 16).

Here is an account by Kikungulwaja, one of the priests of BuKinga, whence the heroes came:

Nkekete (1) and Kyala (2) were brothers. Mwamusi (the first Kinga chief) killed them. Mwamusi's own wind first to kill them by cutting their throats, then by throwing them into a little lake, then by heating a great stone and throwing it on top of them. Each time Nkekete and his younger brother Kyala rose again. Then they left the country, the two of them, and the earth rumbled as they walked. Nkekete (1) went to Mbeela to build; Kyala (2), the younger, to PulKyala. Then the men of Mwamusi followed Nkekete with a cow to recover him because he had taken all the food with him. Mwamusi was angry with him and his younger brother Kyala, because they stole food and they were

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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Nyakyusa

went from Mwemusi's country down the path by Mwakalukwa's to Mwakaloli. He lived a year at Lumbila and found it too cold, and thence he went to Manko, and thence to Lubaga. All men feared him and his animals. 589

In another version Lwembe's survival is linked with the possession of *fingile*, the medicine on which still, today, the authority of chiefs is thought largely to depend. [773] [171]

Nkekete had much food and Mwemusi killed him because he had no *fingile*. He killed him and he rose again. 'Why don't you die?' Mwemusi asked. Nkekete replied: 'I don't know, I have nothing, I am quite alone, I have no *fingile*.' Mwemusi killed him again and he rose, many times. Then at last Nkekete said, 'I am tired.' And he showed Mwemusi and his men a razor (*ulumbe*) and said 'Kill me by cutting my throat with this', and they did and he stayed dead.

Mwemusi feared to kill Lwembe because he was very 'heavy'. He had *fingile*, and when they tried to kill him they found his house full of animals, lions and others. . . . Once he turned himself into a stone when they tried to capture him. So Mwemusi told him to go far off, and he went with his two wives and two men, Kimonde and Kimonde. He went off riding on a lion like a donkey, with a lion behind his wives, and men were astonished when they saw him.

It is perhaps significant that Lwembe who survived in 'The Razor', by which Nkekete was killed, and the python from which *fingile* medicine is made must be killed with razors and in no other way (*vide infra*, p. 60). [789] [195] [574]

It is Lwembe's capacity to make things live and grow which is always emphasized: [773]

Lwembe and another were given millet in their hands; Lwembe's sprouted, but not that of his fellow. He was told, 'You plant here and the other there.' The next day Lwembe's had sprouted, but not that of the other. He and his friend went to a hill in dry weather and wanted water. He just struck the earth and water came out. . . . He created leopards and kept them, and he moulded cattle of clay, he moulded them and they became cows, and his friends did the same and they remained clay.

When the heroes were driven out there was a fearful famine in BuKinga, for they had taken the fertility of the country with them, which is why, the priests say, sacrifices to them were begun by the Kinga. The priests of Lubaga were explicit on the point: [773] [171]

Mbwi (Lwembe 13?) came from BuKinga, he took the road to

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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539 Mwakalili and came here and died. The Kings went to Bulungu to buy food, for there was great hunger after Mlusi and Kyala were driven out, and wandering home they came here and met Mlusi. He said, 'Go home, there will be plenty of food, but I want my things.' He had left them at his father's place when he fled with his sister Kyungu. He asked for his leopard and crocodile, his drums, his bows for shooting birds,[1] his harp, mats, a stool, bamboo beer, and twenty hoes. . . . Then the Kings went back and found their country full of food; and they brought all his things to Mlusi and even things like salt that he had not asked for. . . . This is how the ritual began. . . . Mlusi ruled because he had helped them in their hunger.

773 773 Kasilile (36), the rain-maker, speaking of the same incident, stressed only the hoes. Lwembe 'came to Lubaga and found a good place to settle, then he sent out messengers to Mwamusi (the Kings chief) and said: "I want my hoes, especially my great, eyed hoe" (*ilikombale ilya mwe*).' (The old ritual hoes had per-
[778] forations—'eyes'—on the blades comparable to the perforations
[782] on other rain-making instruments.) Still today Kings priests come to Lubaga to sacrifice to Lwembe (3), and they bring with them hoes.[2]

The hoes of Ngonde, the Kyungu (18), was also associated with
[649] iron implements which he had brought with him—a spear, staff, stool, and a sieve used for making rain, which were royal insignia, and razors, spears, and knives of an unusual pattern, which long remained in the groves of the hoes and his successors.

In the commonly-told Nyakyusa myth it was Lwembe who
[372] introduced fire to BaNyakyusa—'he found the original occupants eating their food raw'—and the fact that he conferred so great a benefit is the charter for the position of the chiefs, celebrated at every 'coming out'. The Kings priests push the spread of fire back a little further.

539 Of old in this country [BaKings] there was no fire, men ate food uncooked; there were very few men in the country, most of it was forest.
372 This was after Mwamusi came to Kings country. Then one man, a hunter, went into the forest to hunt buck and otter, and he had dogs. And in the forest he made fire with a drill and cooked his food; and gave his friends cooked food to eat, and they were astonished.

[1] The bows and arrows are not now used among the Nyakyusa, but were in their division had used them when boys, for shooting birds.

[2] cf. Ludwig Wirchow, *Mythologie i Afrikas* [illegible] *Afrika* (Berlin, [illegible]), p. [illegible] for a photograph of one.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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Nyakyusa

Then the chief took it from him and spread it through the Kings country . . . and to the Mahasi, the Nilali, the Nyakyusa. . . . It was taken to BaNyakyusa before Lwembe went, when he was a child, before the killing of Nkokwe and Kyala.

539 972

In the version told by Mwandisi (107), the old blind chief of MuNgonde, the various events of the cycle are rather differently combined; there were three brothers in BaKinga, Lyambilo (12) or Ngutiko, Kyala, and Mbasi, and a sister, Kyimba. Lyambilo discovered how to make fire with a fire drill. Kyala was clever at making food—maize and millet—and Mbasi was clever at making animals—cattle, lions, elephants.

173 773

Then Lyambilo, the eldest, was angry that his younger brothers should be so clever; he was jealous. First he made war on Kyala, he wounded him once, but he did not die; then he wounded him again, but still he didn't die; then the third time Lyambilo put a stone in the fire and made it hot and threw it at Kyala, and he died, and was thrown into the Lake. But as soon as he died there was a great famine, no rain fell and no food grew. So they had to pray to Kyala to give them rain, and they killed a cow to sacrifice to Kyala. And as soon as they had done this much food grew.

539

Still Lyambilo was jealous of Mbasi because he could make animals. But when he went to kill him he found so many animals with him, roaring lions, and elephants, that he was afraid and he ran away. And he brought some horn to Mbasi to say he was sorry for having tried to kill him. Then Mbasi moved from BaKinga to the Nyakyusa hills (Mwambe). . . . Lyambilo stayed in BaKinga. . . . Mbasi came down to the plain on a visit and went back to the hills, but his sister Kyimba stayed down here and married a man and bore a son. Before she came there was no fire here, she brought fire, and so they called her son Kyungu in honour of his mother because she brought fire.

When Mbasi was at Mandeko (in the hills) he made one cow, but it soon died; then he moved to Mbande and made another cow and this soon died; then he went to Lubaga (which is still called Mbasi) and there he made one cow again which bore many many calves, and he divided his cattle among his sons. . . . Mbasi was Lwembe.

In Ngonde tradition the first Kyungu (18) was a man, descendant of Ngulube the Kings chief, and he travelled with three brothers and a sister westwards, passing south of Rungwe volcano, where he and his immediate successor were buried, one of them on Kiepe mountain. Their descendants went on to the 'country of the Bisa', then returned eastward to Mbande, the sacred hill which the Kyungu took from a Fipa hunter, Simbalowe. Like Lwembe,

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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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Nyakyusa

the Kyungu had a miraculous power of creating animals and it was by making elephants, buffaloes, and guinea-fowl for Simbabwe and his men to hunt, and climbing Mbundo when it was deserted, that he captured it. Directly he reached the top he struck his drum and 'when Simbabwe heard the drums beaten on the hill he fled to his own country'. This Kyungu's successors on Mbundo became 'divine kings' with miraculous power much like that of the Lwembe at Lubaga. One of his brothers became chief of the Nanwanga; another of the Iwa; and a third became the rival of his sister's son for the chieftainship of the Lambya. Such is the Ngonde account. The Kukwe say that the Kyungu of Ngonde come from the same line as the chiefs of Kabede, while the men of Lwembe insist that he was descended from a daughter of their line (*vide supra*, p. 9). What connexion existed between the lineages of Lwembe and Ngonde is uncertain, but the assumption is that they, together with the chiefs of the Fungwe and Kisi, sprang from a common stock in BuKinga.

The commonest story of origin is that all the peoples of the area, save the Sangu, emerged from a 'dark house' (*ipumba ndite*) near the present Njombe, and came to Ilongo (KwiLonga) in the forest, in what is now Bena country. Nsumba, a Nyakyusa priest of the chief's lineage, with a reputation as a historian, spoke of a 'few men' coming from 'a rocky shore to the north-west' (Lake Tanganyika?) and travelling to the east shore of Nyasa, where they increased in numbers, and then spread northwards through BuKinga; Mwenilumbe, a noble of Ngonde, spoke of Ngulube the 'pole' having come to BuKinga 'from the north'.[1] But the Kinga priests knew nothing of the 'rocky shore' or northern origin; and if we take the direction in which the corpse faces when buried (the most certain criterion of the direction of origin) then the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people came from BuKinga, some travelling to the north of Rungwe volcano and some to the south, and the Kinga themselves came from the east.

Other evidence also indicates that the chiefs came from the east or north-east rather than the north-west. The cattle they brought were the short-horned Zebu type, like those of the Masai and other peoples of central and eastern Tanganyika and Kenya. They are quite different from the long-horned cattle of the Hima

[1] Geoffrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3, p. 10 (1940). According to the Ngonde version, Ngulube was the *first* ancestor, but Nsumba began the genealogy four generations earlier (side chart, facing p. 3).

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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Nyakyusa

and Tutsi who established conquest states to the north-west.[1] 173

Whatever the origin and adventures of the heroes they were important in Nyakyusa and Ngonde history because their graves became centres of religious ritual which linked together groups that were otherwise largely independent. The myths about them are the charter for chieftainship. They are depicted as benefactors who brought to uncivilized men not only the institution of chieftainship itself, but fire, cattle, iron, seed, and a creative power resident in their own bodies and those of their associated heirs. But the myths also justify the power of commoners who first occupied the country and who have witchcraft in their bellies:

773 [174]

[178] [754]

The commoners whom Lwembe found here were extraordinary. They were cultivators, but they had not yet got fire, they ate their food raw. It was we chiefs, it was Lwembe, who brought fire and cattle—he came and found the original occupants without cattle; hence the commoners say, 'We are the earth'. Commoners are different from us physically, they are black; they are awe-inspiring, they are witches. Before you Europeans came the chiefs like Mwaipopo (116) were not awe-inspiring, they feared the commoners very much; the commoners hammered the chief with their fists—yes, by daylight. And if the chief eat a man's banana that man took the chief's. If the commoners were angry with Mwaipopo they fetched Mwangunso (124 whose chiefdom adjoins Mwaipopo's) at night by their witchcraft; he came in the night with his people and seized the cattle, both those of the chief, Mwaipopo, and those of the commoners. The next day the commoners said: 'It is we, we are angry. Why do you not look after us? Why do you not kill cattle for us?' Then Mwaipopo would kill two head of cattle and all the men in the country eat. . . . Mwaipopo and his equals were not awe-inspiring long ago, it is you Europeans who have created chieftainship and awe.

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[177] [754] [643]

[1] cf. H. H. Curson and R. W. Thomson, 'A Contribution to the Study of African Native Cattle', *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Science and Animal Industry*, vii, 2 October 1936 (Government Printer, Pretoria). *An analysis of the distribution and migration of breeds in Africa.*

[113]

H. B. Thompson and R. Scott, *Uganda* (1935), pp. 135 ff.

Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 6b-6g.

M. Merker, *Die Masai*, pp. 131 ff., 1904, Berlin.

H. H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, 1904, pp. 86, 103 (early photographs of Nyoro castle).

The short-horn type predominates among the Nyakyusa, but some animals suggest an intermixture with Sanga cattle. The hump is regarded as a great delicacy and is exaggerated in the clay cattle which have model. Cf. Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 3c. The similarity between the ritual and symbolism of the Nyakyusa and those of the Ganda as described by Roscoe is marked. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, 1911.

[281] [825] [512]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173 The balance between chiefs and commoners is explicit. So
773 also is their dependence on *both* cultivation and herding, and it
[643] should be noted that, though the Nyakyusa speak of themselves
as stock men, they are not pastoralists to the same extent as
[233] the Masai or the Nuer. The number of cattle in Rungwe District
today is less than half the human population, and men traditionally have done the heaviest share of cultivation.

773 In every version of the myth the tension between father and
593 son, or older and younger brother, is stressed. In Nyakyusa
561 society the father (or his eldest son who replaces him) controls
173 the family property and exacts obedience from his juniors who
[769] continue to show their respect after his death by sacrifices. The tale of Kyala and Lwembe celebrates the triumph of the junior. Thus, at the heart of the very ritual which sanctifies seniority there is the assertion of the victory of the son and younger brother. The myth expresses the aspirations of subordinates—of commoners and junior kinsmen—as well as the power of chiefs and seniors.

173 As we have already noted, the heroic cycle makes no reference
773 to the peculiar Nyakyusa institution of age-villages. Their charter
561 is a quite separate myth[1] which tells of a chief who looked on his
621 daughter-in-law and loved her and took her, and this so shocked
606 men that in future fathers and sons built separately, so that a father-in-law should never see his daughter-in-law.

There are other hints of the eternal theme. Besides the saga of
173 Lwembe there is another quite different tale of the origin of fire,
773 which is less often related. In it a girl who had angered her father
372 by breaking his drinking calabash fled from BuKinga to the Nyakyusa valley, where she found people who ate their food *raw*. She made fire and cooked for them and 'all women came to her to learn to cook'. The long-necked calabash, used as a drinking
[415] vessel and in prayer to the shades, is a man's most personal
[768] possession destroyed at his death, and it stands for a husband, while cooking is a symbol of the sexual activity of women, so the myth is perhaps a drama of incest, but we have no direct evidence of this.

173 This last is the only tale in which a woman appears as a
773 benefactor. In general, the mythology is that of a strongly
562 patrilineal society in which men are dominant. The wives of Lwembe who walked behind their lord, shepherded by a lion,

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 85.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

are remembered, and the names of the two senior wives of a chief are often recited in genealogies because the heirs take their names from their mothers, but she-who-taught-cooking is the only heroine in her own right.

It is worth noting also that the rituals of kinship are linked neither with the heroic tradition nor with primeval incest. We could trace no myths regarding their beginning, save that concerning the origin of avoidance between father and daughter-in-law. The myth of the origin of death is a variation on the theme, so familiar in Bantu-speaking Africa, of the two messengers (a sheep and a dog in this version) sent to men by 'Kyala', one promising life, the other death. It provides no charter for the ritual.

And what of the relation between myth and history? The conquest of cultivators by cattle-keepers is the common theme of traditions in the lacustrine area, and it is quite possible that small groups of invaders, who brought with them iron tools and weapons and cattle, established themselves as chiefs over small unorganised groups of hunters and cultivators in an isolated valley three or four centuries ago.[1] The Nyakyusa valley and the plain of Ngonde have no iron ore, and the inhabitants were dependent, until the coming of the Europeans, on iron (*ikyele*) smelted in the hills to the east for weapons and tools.[2] The original inhabitants are said to have used wooden hoes exclusively—such hoes were still in common use in 1938[3]—so the myth of a Lwembe sending to BuKinga for iron hoes has a firm foundation in historical fact. But that the original inhabitants of the valley did not know the use of fire 300 or 400 years ago (when Lwembe arrived) is incredible. Here the record of one of the greatest events in history is fitted into the shallow time-scale of an isolated people. To them it is not *when* fire arrived that is really important, but *who* brought it; chiefs are chiefs to the Nyakyusa (as to other peoples in Africa) by virtue of this great benefit they brought to men.

[1] Namwanga tradition (recorded in the Mbeya District Book) tells of the introduction of iron fifteen generations ago. The Sangu tradition says that a tall, pale man from 'Somaliland' first brought iron spear-heads to Bufungu and his son established a hegemony by virtue of his superior weapons.

[2] *cf.* Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 7. The iron deposits on the Livingstone mountains have recently been investigated by the Colonial Development Corporation. A 'titaniferous iron mountain' in the south of Njombe District was found to be 'unutilisable'. *Tanganyika: Annual Report of the Provincial Commissioners*, 1951, p. 51.

[3] Wilson, *op. cit.*, plate VII.

9: Wilson E-5 (1954-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

It is surprising to westerners, whose whole framework of reference is shaped by the conception of historical time, that the heroic myth is not more explicitly dated by the volcanic eruptions known to have taken place near Lufuga,[1] but to the Nyakyusa the sequence of events does not appear important except in so far as it determines seniority.

Nowadays, with the changing form of the society, there develops a new mythology. Kyala is described by younger men as a creator, apart and distinct from any hero or ancestor, and they reject any suggestion that he was once on a footing with Lwembe and Kyungu. The more conservative fit Christian names into the heroic myth. One version goes as follows:

Kyala had two sons, Kyala the elder who was Mbasi or Satan, and Kyala the younger who was Jesus. Kyala the younger made men, and cattle, and fire, and cooked meat, and corn etc; then Mbasi or Satan was furious because his younger brother was cooking him, and killed him, and became the only one.

Here the traditional theme of the jealousy of the senior is dominant, but generally it is the power of the human over fertility, under the old dispensation, that is stressed.

Many people still today of old prophecies concerning the coming of Europeans and of the triumph of a new religion. To the Christians these provide some bridge between the past and the present, for they interpret the words of pagan prophets as evidence of their foreknowledge of a truth they had not yet been taught.

[1] D. A. Hodkin, 'The Sunflower Lava Flow, Kirjo, Rungwe District', *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, September 1955, suggests that the most recent eruption in the district, that of Kirjo, took place about 1800, but this conclusion is based on the description of the eruption by *one* man, and the statement that his great grandfather witnessed it. That *some* ancestor of Andulile Kajigiri witnessed the eruption in Ibula, but had it taken place only three generations ago it might be expected that other families also would have had a tradition of the event. Kirjo is clearly visible from Mwaipopo's country and had the eruption taken place early in the nineteenth century either the chief Mwakagile (22) or his father Mwamukingo (23) must have observed it. Their descendants are emphatic that there is no tradition of their having done so, though it is commonly known that an eruption of Kirjo occurred in the distant past.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3027 Ngonde F3027
Nyakyusa

area, the Penja, have a grave, Lukata, where they worship their founding ancestor, and the Nyika living on the west bank of the Kiwira river have their grave, Lufungu, twenty miles or more from the Lufungu in Selya and unconnected with it. A third distinct group, the Seke, who were the first inhabitants of the south-eastern part of Rungwe District, have their own grave, Nkome, where their progenitors Mwamakula and Mwalukingo were buried. None of these has anything like the prestige and sanctity of the Lwembe or the Kyungu, but they are probably the prototype from which the 'divine kings' developed.

What circumstances produced a 'divine king' at Lufungu and not (so far as our limited knowledge goes) at Kalule we do not know, but we can show how the 'divine kingship' at Mbande, near the Lake shore, developed rather differently from the originally similar institution at Lufungu which is forty miles from the Lake. The Kyungu gradually acquired political power in a way in which the Lwembe did not. Among the Nyakyusa the 'sons of Lwembe' spread through the country establishing themselves as independent chiefs. They acknowledged the mystical supremacy of the Lwembe, and sent cattle to him to sacrifice, but they were sovereigns in their own territories. Just what this mystical supremacy of Lwembe implied was and still is often a matter of dispute, as we shall see. On the death of a chief his country was normally divided into two independent sections, each ruled by one of his sons. One heir sometimes fought the other and reduced him to a subordinate position, but the number of independent chiefdoms appears to have increased fairly steadily, and their size did not diminish in proportion, for the Nyakyusa chiefs have been expanding their area of occupation over a long period, establishing themselves as rulers over scattered and unorganized peoples with less developed techniques than their own, or colonizing unoccupied forest country. Expansion into uncultivated forest is still going on (1955), and were it not for the vigilance of the British Administration it is almost certain that the Safwa people would have been conquered and absorbed like the Penja, Lugulu, and others before them.[1] In 1936 over 100 independent chiefdoms were recognized by the people themselves, and they varied in size from 100 to 3,000 adult men.

In Ngonde the development was different. In the early period all the sons of the Kyungu, save two, were killed, and the territorial

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 4.

[illegible] 645 rulers were not of the royal blood but 'nobles' (*amalondwe*), descendants of the five leading men who had arrived with the Kyungu, of those he found already occupying the country, and of those who arrived after him. Later the daughter of the Kyungu's sons ceased, and as they grew up they were established as ordinary chiefs through his continuing, gradually taking over power from the commoners who had previously ruled, by a process familiar in other parts of Africa.[1] But the 'nobles' retained considerable power. At Lubaga the descendants of the two men who had arrived with the first Lwembe, and of some of those who were there before him, became priests, and priests only; in Ngonde these of similar origin developed secular, as well as ritual, functions.

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The reasons why the office of Kyungu developed into a paramount chieftainship, and that of the Lwembe did not, have been examined in a previous publication,[2] and may therefore be dealt with very briefly here. The most important factor was that the Kyungu exported ivory and amassed wealth which was used to bind territorial rulers to him, while the Lwembe remained cut off from the outside world and did not trade at all. The geographical situation largely accounts for this. The ivory of Ngonde lies west north, and later south-east, across the Lake, and Mbande was well situated for both routes. It lies eight miles from the Lake and close to a cliffe which leads from the lake-shore plain to an open table-land stretching north to Lake Tanganyika, the very route which engineers later selected for the Stevenson road. Lubaga, on the other hand, is forty miles from the Lake and the only routes northward lay over broken country and power fences five high. Giraud remarks in his journal that the Nyakyusa were the only people he had come across among whom the chiefs did not claim at least one tusk of every elephant killed;[3] they did not claim it, for they had no use for the ivory; but the Kyungu's right to a tusk from every elephant killed was enforced.

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The growth of a paramount chieftainship in Ngonde was slow. The early Kyungus lived within an enclosure on Mbande to which only their personal servants and the nobles of Ngonde had

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[1] cf. M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 36; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 19-24; I. Schapera, in *African Political Systems* (edited Fortes and Evans-Pritchard), pp. 60-1.

[2] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3 (1939).

[3] V. Giraud, *Les Lacs d'Afrique Equatoriale* (1890), p. 186.

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F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

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seem. It was the nobles who were the effective rulers of the country; the divine Kyungu was the centre, a source of mystical power, a numinous symbol of unity, but not a judge or an administrator. Gradually, however, the Kyungus emerged from seclusion; they descended from the hill of Mbande; later they ceased to live within a stockade; in the crises of the Ngoni invasion the Kyungu in office (a notable warrior before his accession to the stool) broke tradition by himself taking arms. 'When the Ngoni came their enmity was like that of the lions and their number like that of the ants, and so Kyungu Mwakisungule, seeing his people were terrified, took up arms in person, and said he would die fighting. And his people heard with awe and astonishment that he himself had come to fight and they determined to die with him.' The next stage was a development of the judicial functions of the Kyungu until, in the present generation, the transformation from god to magistrate was complete.[1]

We turn now to the detailed description of the rituals at each shrine.

(5) LUBAGA

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Lubaga is a hill dominating the central part of the Nyakyusa valley and on its slopes are signs of old and intensive cultivation. There an early Lwembe (19) lived and was buried, there is the grove where he is worshipped, and there his descendant chosen as 'the living Lwembe' should build. According to tradition the 'sons of Lwembe' spread all over the Nyakyusa valley as chiefs, but two senior lineages, that of Mwamponderie (27) and that of Mwakisiya (36), remained near Lubaga, and from them was chosen, alternately, the living embodiment of the 'divine king', the Lwembe. Men feared greatly to be chosen, for they feared to be 'killed by the grove', and indeed the Lwembe rarely lived long. He must not fall ill or all the people of the country would do so likewise; therefore if he ailed he was smothered by his priests who stuffed up his nostrils and other passages of his body. Towards the end of our stay in BuNyakyusa Kasitile made a formal statement on this point in the presence of another priest, Mwamahunda:

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The Lwembes were not sick. They said: 'I am going, I have eaten food at home, at the place of the shade', and they died that day; they

[1] The change in the position of the Kyungu from the earliest period is discussed in detail by Godfrey Wilson in *The Constitution of Ngonde*.

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FN17 Ngonde
Nyakyusa

Chart showing position of sections of chart on "Chiefs of Kukwe's Line." (Facing p. 27)

A	B	C
D	E	F

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

F317 Ngonde F317

Nyakyusa

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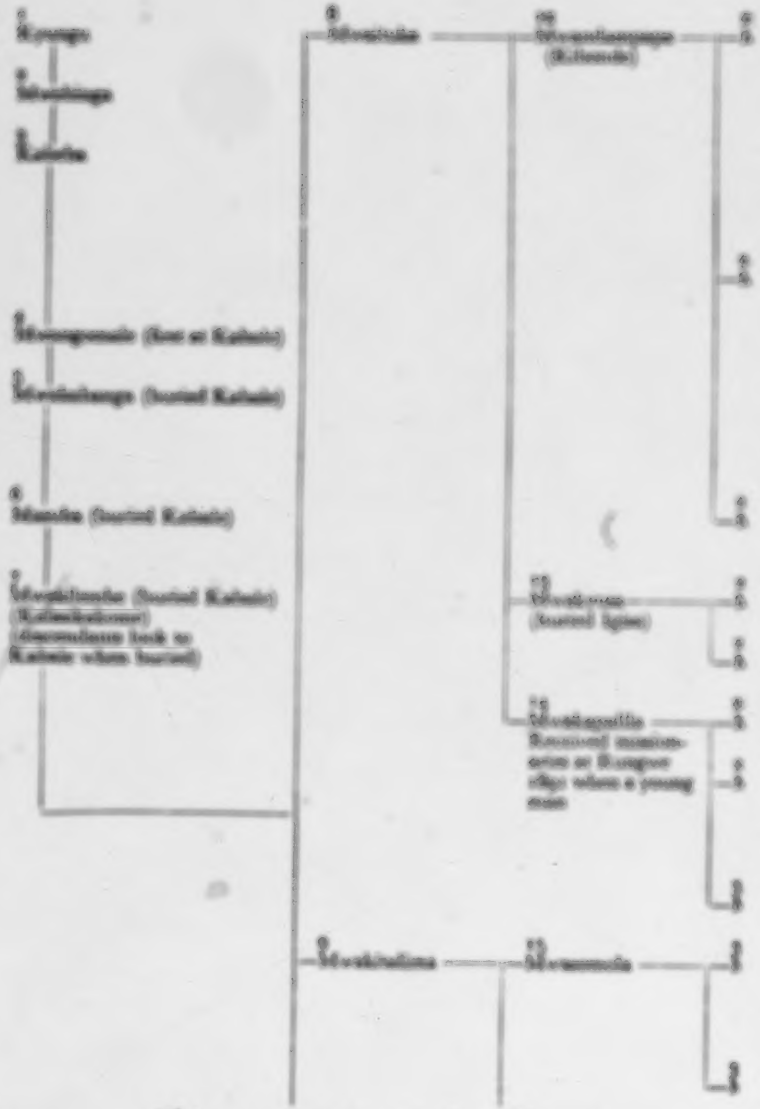

[facing p.27; section A]

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F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

CHIEFS OF THE KYRWA LINE

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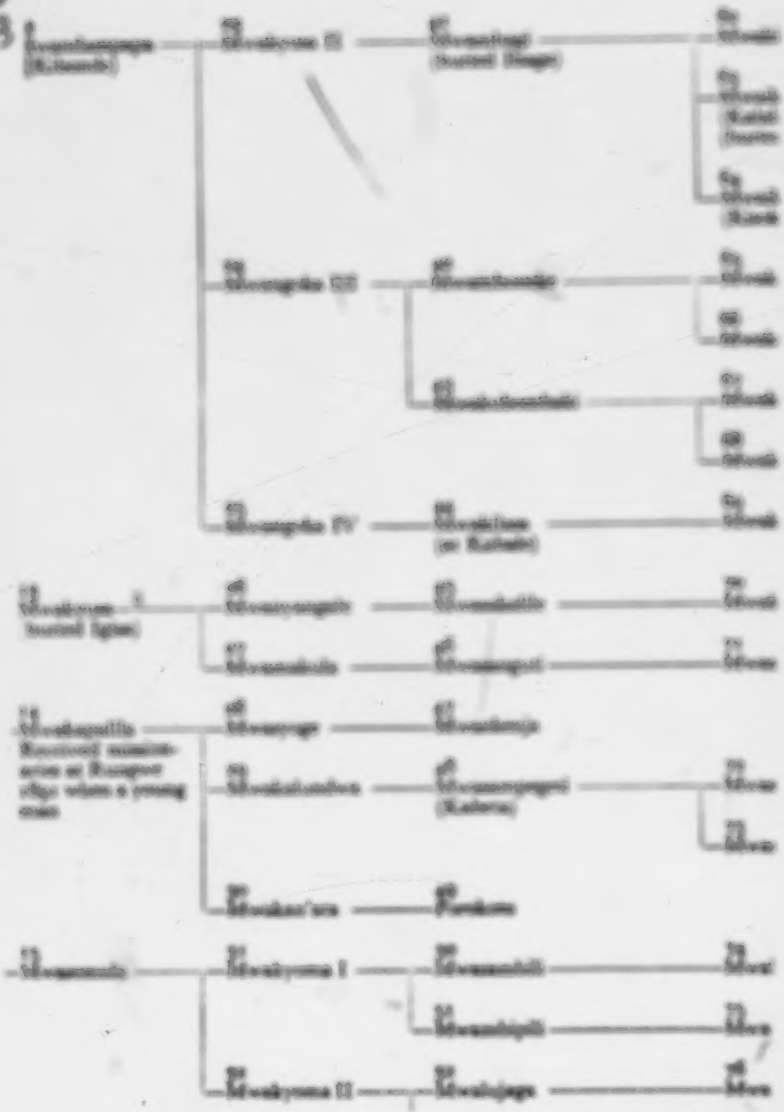

[facing p. 27; section 8]

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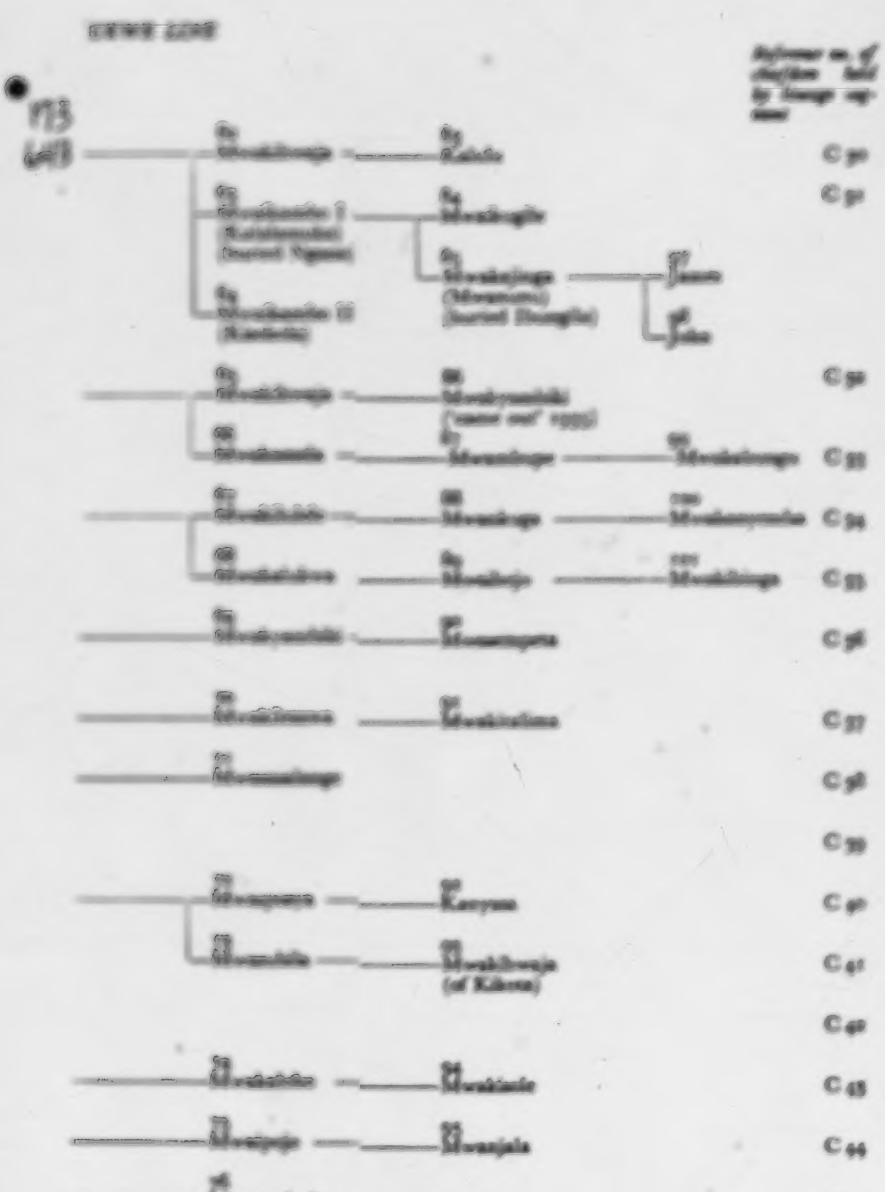
F7617 Ngonde F7617
Nyakyusa



[facing p.27; section C]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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Nyakyusa

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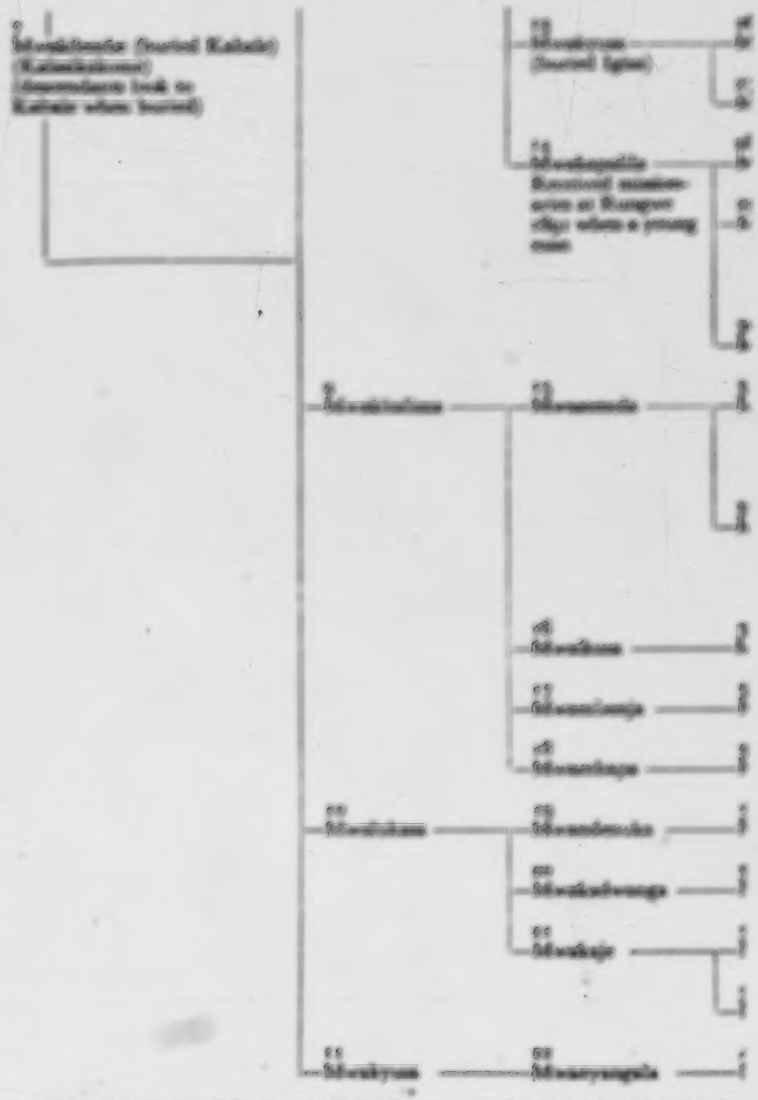


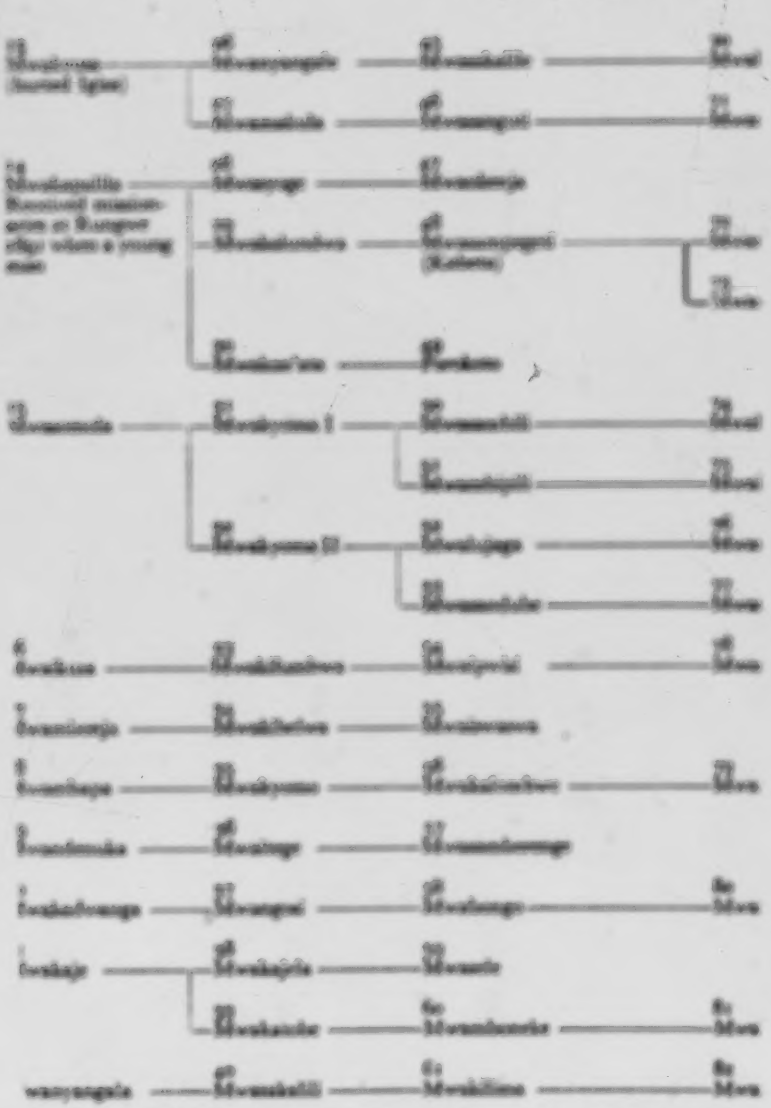
Based on genealogies of Kukwe chiefs kindly given me by Mr. John Mwaikambe the order and number of names before Mwaikimbe is very doubtful. I have not pe

[facing p.27; section D]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

F3017 Ngonde F3017

Nyakyusa



(c. John Mwaikambo (g8) and Mr. Ernest Kyungu, both of whom had made a q
subtitle. I have not personally checked this genealogy with a member of each line.

[Facing p. 27; Section E]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

F3417 Ngonde F3417

Nyakyusa

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Above had made a special study of the subject. They were not in complete agreement and neither of each line.

[Facing p.27; Section F]

9: Wilson E-5 (1924-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Kyala has no living representative—in the myth he had no descendants—but only a priest. However, the priest is sometimes referred to as 'Kyala' as were the early missionaries who preached about Kyala.[1] The present priest (1938) is a young man who, by his own account, would be a Christian were it not for his public responsibility in providing food for the country. His grandfather, Mwakityusu, was a Kisi who came as an immigrant doctor from Ikolojila in Kisi country to the south, and was till five of his family to hold office at PalaKyala. Before that the chiefs of the line of Mwampuna themselves celebrated the ritual. According to Mwampuna's descendants, the present chief Mwandula, "We planted food and the crops failed, but when "the owner of food" (Mwakityusu) came with many medicines it grew, there was much food in the homesteads, hence we said: "Kyala has indeed loved this man, let us give him the duty of sacrificing", so the chiefs gave him cattle of his own and said: "Let the ritual come out of our bodies and go to Mwakityusu."[2] It was Mwakityusu who (according to his grandson) introduced a variety of crops—beans, maize, cowpeas and groundnuts—to the people of Ikombe; before that they grew only bananas and *magonde*,[3] so the myth of the hero who brought benefits is linked to the new line of priests. But there is no tradition that the priest of Mwampuna's line was once a 'divine king' like the Lemba and the Kyungu.

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These who sacrifice at PalaKyala are the local chiefs (descendants of Mwampuna), the Kings chiefs Mwakalebwa and Kyelela (to whom Mwampuna was related), and various chiefs of the Nyakyusa plain as far west as Mwandisi (107) near Mwaya. The Kings priests bring bamboo beer, beer, sheep, and occasionally goats or cattle; the local people offer white fowls, flour, cattle, and, traditionally, pots, which are produced in quantity near by, and which were being sold at the market at Ikombe when the Europeans first arrived in the country.[4] The Nyakyusa of the plain send black (or black and white) cattle and sheep. According to the Kings priests they themselves offer black animals in Bu-Kinga when they want rain—black clouds—and white animals when they want sun and a clear sky. At Lubaga only dark animals are offered, but at PalaKyala white fowls and black, or white (or

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[1] F. Fülleborn, *Das Deutsche Nyasa- und Rovuma-Gebiet*, p. 313.
[2] *Magonde*—maize in Pangwe, but here it is contrasted with *ifimbe* (millet).
[3] Joseph Thomson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back* (1881), v. I, pp. 180-3. The missionary, Dr. A. Merensky, saw butchers and shoppers, as well as pots, on the floor of the cave. F. Fülleborn, op. cit., p. 310.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1935
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

and cup is because this food is sacrificed to their fathers-in-law. Those who are not sons of Ngonde do not drink the sacrificial beer or eat the meat either, because they are of other lineages. A black cow is used in the grove because groves are always fearful and darkness falls if something improper is done. So it is said that the blackness of the cow matches the fearfulness (*ubwiipi*) of the grove.

Besides the sacrifices at Kalinde and to their more immediate ancestors, Kalowe chiefs sent offerings to the BaNgonde, earlier occupants of the country. Mwamunda explained:

My grandfather prayed in the grove which is across the river on mission land, in the forest; it was the grove of us BaNgonde; we were owners of the soil, the Kalowe chiefs found us here. If ever a chief sent my grandfather and his fellows to pray there they went with an unripe ears of bananas, and sweet milk, and unripe maize, and small sweet potatoes; then they prayed and came home again and the next day, when they went to look they found the ears of bananas had ripened, the maize had hardened, the milk was thick and the sweet potatoes large; everything which was unripe had ripened. Then they said Kyala [that is Kyala and the shades] had eaten by us. . . . We spoke of Kyala even before the Europeans had come. . . .[1]

They say that very long ago on BaNgonde, we sons of Kanyapala, had not yet got fire, the chiefs brought it. It is this they commemorate in the 'running out' ritual. We, the owners of the soil, were always here, the chiefs came and built, and when others came the foreigners fled. They are like you Europeans who fight wars; we owners of the soil think only of hoeing.

(c) WHERE CHANGE

It is quite clear that, though sacrifices to the heroes and at the groves of chiefs were still made while we were among the Nyakyusa (and more frequently than our friends at first admitted), the cycle was attenuated. Not only had human sacrifice probably ceased but the chiefs were reluctant to part with cattle. . . . Kamtile (96) said one day:

Since you [Europeans] came into the country the rituals have disappeared. Mwaipopo (116) never thinks of the rituals *dawa*. . . . It is cold and there is hunger; I went to Mwaipopo and told him to tell his

[1] According to the records of the first missionaries, sacrifices on Rungwe were to *Mkanda* but the same passage refers to *Mkanda or Kala* meaning God. It is not clear whether the two names were equated by Kalowe informants or by the missionary himself, who was in touch with missionaries elsewhere in the district. (*Journal de l'Unité des Frères*, 1894.) I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Furse for drawing my attention to this valuable *Journal*.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1939
F3017 Ngonde I N17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VI

LAND AND POWER

The crux of the chiefs' 'coming out' was a redistribution of power and of land, and we must pause in our description of the ritual cycle to discuss the relation between chieftains and villages and the land, and to consider more closely the balance of power between successive generations.

(a) THE TERRITORIAL ALIGNMENT OF CHIEFDOMS AND VILLAGES

Tradition makes it clear that the heroes came to a sparsely occupied country and that their descendants gradually spread out as their numbers increased. The settlers chose to live on hillocks overlooking the surrounding country. Lubaga and Mbande, the seats of the two 'divine kings' are commanding sites. The grove of Kabale, where the ancestors of the Kokwe chiefs first established themselves, is on an eminence rising from the plateau, and Kambawkela (near the Mbaka bridge) on which the early chiefs Mwaipoja (21) and Mwaipopo (26) were buried is a hill very like Mbande, overlooking the plain.

Unlike most of their neighbours the Nyakyusa show a preference for cleared and cultivated land, planted with bamboos and the oil-bearing *ungungati* trees (*Trichilia spp.*)[1] as well as the great *umuali* (*Cheniphora amalae*) which, in their view, adds dignity to the homestead.[2] A study of the trees planted at the 'coming out' and the sacred groves in Mwaipopo's chiefdom (C 24)[3] shows that for four generations the ruling chiefs (descendants of Mwaipopo 89) have established their principal villages within a quarter of a mile of one another, and for seven generations the descendants of Mwakisembwe (90) have lived within two or three miles of one another (*vide* plan, p. 101), though there were acres of fertile land

[1] I am indebted to Mr. P. B. Nightingale, Forestry Officer, Tukuyu, for giving me the botanical names of these and other trees.

[2] *cf.* Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 77-8.

[3] C followed by a number is the reference number of a chiefdom as listed in the genealogies of chiefs.

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F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

Sukiim. Each village is occupied by an age-set and men are emphatic that age and friendship, not kinship, are the basis of a village, but the villages of fathers, sons, and grandsons commonly, though not invariably, adjoin one another, as Bujegu, Igembe, and Lupondo, or Lupondo, Njisi, and Iringa in Mwaipopo's chiefdom (side plan, p. 101). Each section of a chiefdom comprises half the ruling generation, and incorporated with their villages are those of their fathers and sons. Men are identified by the name of their village, section, and chief; the village name defines their age-set, the name of section and chief their generation. The section name is always that of the senior village which leads it. Generation succeeds generation in office when their heirs 'come out', but the relative position of villages (age-sets) within a generation remains constant. Since chiefdoms traditionally split each generation at the 'coming out' the men of the retired generation who remained belonged to one section only; those of the other section of their generation were members of another chiefdom. The territorial arrangements referred to in the plan of Mwaipopo's chiefdom on p. 101 are modified by the fact that the chiefdom has not split for four generations. In generation I Kibonde was the portion of the junior heir, Mwafungo (83), but he died young and his land and widow were inherited by the senior brother, Mwaijonga (82). The son of this levirateral union, Mwakipenile (118), went through the 'coming out' in generation II along with Mwaijonga's heirs, Ijonga (114, representing her full brother 115), and Mwakaboto (117). Mwakipenile inherited Kibonde and Mwakaboto inherited Kitoli, but both were later defeated in war by Mwaipopo II and their land incorporated in his chiefdom. Mwakipenile's heir, Likonyela, and Mwakaboto remained as subordinate chiefs. Though the girl Ijonga celebrated the 'coming out' in place of her unborn brother she could not rule, and Mwaisenja, son of Mwaijonga II (younger full brother of 82) acted for her. He was finally defeated by Mwaipopo II and fled to the periphery of the country. Kabola was his village, and he was subordinate to Mwaipopo, not independent.

In generation III the chiefdom did not split because by that time the British administration was in control, and the territorial division remained much the same, Igembe and Njisi becoming the senior villages in place of Bujegu and Lupondo, with Mwankuga (150) and Mwaseba (152) as the young chiefs. Kibonde,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 Nyakyusa, when sacrifices are continued in the grove of a dead chief
561 such as Mwakisambwe (30), for an indefinite number of genera-
796 tions, and the heirs of his senior village headmen serve as his
[769] priests, taking the name of the first holder of the office. Most of the
[793] priests of Lubaga held perpetual titles of this sort. The conception of the *corporation sole* is familiar enough in the western tradition, but European observers in Africa are sometimes confused by the use of a personal name and the almost complete identification of each holder with his predecessors, as well as by the practice of treating certain kinship relationships as if they were offices.

561 Generation was determined among the Nyakyusa by associa-
796 tion with a chief. There was no name for those who 'came out'
173 together other than that of their chief, who was the focus of the
634 ritual. On the other hand, however, a 'coming out' concerned a
[611] whole generation, and it could not be held out of season. If the heir died he was replaced by a brother, as were Mwaipopo I (115) and Mwankuga I (150). If a chief had no male heir of the right age in his senior house his daughter might represent an heir. For example, at the coming out of the sons of Mwaijonga, it was a *girl* Ijonga (114) who performed the leading part in the ritual which fell due before the birth of Mwaipopo I (115). When Mwaipopo I was born and grew up he assumed office, but he died young and was replaced by his younger brother without a further celebration. Because the 'coming out' was thus linked to the maturity of a whole generation we have felt some confidence in assigning approximate dates to the arrival of the heroes. The period between each 'coming out' we estimate at thirty to thirty-five years, though the higher figure is probably more nearly correct. There must in fact have been some flexibility in the timing of the 'coming out' to account for the differences in the number of generations of ruling chiefs in different segments of the lineage. Some of the differences may be due to errors (e.g. it is possible that 70 is an elder brother not the father of 98, and that a generation has been omitted between Mwakapeje (54) and Mwakage (75), but even where there is little possibility of error the number of generations does not always tally.

643 In theory a man always belongs to the generation succeeding
561 that of his father, irrespective of his age, provided he has not
622 inherited from a man of the previous generation and taken his status, but in practice, since men often have sons of very different

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

north the Nyakyusa were continually at war; they did not trade or pray with them. Thus we conclude that participation in a common ritual is, in the Nyakyusa case, directly linked with a common origin and essential trade.

The divine kings, Lwembe and Kyungu, were regarded as having power over certain areas, a power closely linked with rainfall. Indeed, one informant argued that the chiefs living around Masoko had never sent sacrifices to Lubaga, 'because when it rains at Lubaga the rain does not come as far as Masoko'. He was mistaken in his facts—the chiefs of Masoko did at one time send to Lubaga as Mwambete (162), chief at Masoko, himself admitted—but the argument points to a conception of supernatural power tied to a rainfall area. This notion was not, however, applied consistently.

The balance between secular and mystical power has altered during the past ten generations. The founding heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, came as conquerors and must surely have led their men personally; but early in the history of Ngonde the Kyungu was secluded, and power was exercised almost exclusively by the nobles (*vide supra*, pp. 40-46); and the Lwembe also was, at one period, 'not seen by ordinary men' and led a life hedged about with taboos. There is sharp contrast in Nyakyusa tradition between the active chiefs who were warriors, and arbitrators, and worked hard in their fields[1] and the 'divine king' who lived in seclusion. As we have seen, the chiefs often delegated ritual functions, with the taboos involved, to a junior kinsman such as Mwamukinga (44) or Mwakihaba (45) (*vide* pp. 79-81, 114) whose heirs succeeded to the office. It is even possible that the first Lwembe at Lubaga (Mwakalebela 19) took over ritual functions from his senior brother, Kalesi (18).[2] The present tendency is for the development of secular power and its separation from mystical power. The Kyungu is no longer a god but an administrator: the heir of the Lwembes sits as an elected representative of chiefs on the Local Council. In the traditional Nyakyusa society ritual played an essential part in maintaining the balance between generations, sections, and social strata, and in

[1] In 1955 a young chief was bitterly criticized by his men because he 'never had a hoe in his hands' whereas his father and grandfather had (to our personal knowledge) been diligent in hoeing.

[2] But according to one excellent informant, Mwakisambwe (30) lived secluded while Mwakilima (31) 'fed men'—i.e. entertained.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER II

THE TRADITIONAL SYSTEM

Although this essay is to be primarily concerned with the modern and changing land and population situation among the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains, it is quite essential first to have an understanding of the traditional system of political and territorial organisation and of land tenure. This is not mere historicism, for despite changes the traditional system remains as the basis of contemporary land-holding and land law. Whilst actual conditions on the ground change, the Nyakyusa appreciation of those changes and their attitudes to land lag significantly behind. In brief, the traditional system was geared to a situation where there was plenty of land. Today the people find real difficulty in adjusting themselves to a high density of population and an acute shortage of land, with the result that this new situation is aggravated by outmoded practices, attitudes and cultural values.

The ancestors of the present group of peoples now known collectively as the Nyakyusa, moved into the Rungwe region from the Ukinga Highlands to the east beyond the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains. According to legend, which is probably substantially true, these newcomers found a sparsely populated country which they easily occupied. Later, following internecine strife, one group under a man called Mwakyusa left the Masoko area in the centre of present-day Rungwe District and moved down into the Lake Plains. There, probably less than 150 years ago, they drove out the Ngonde people and settled. The sons of Mwakyusa took their shares of the country and people and established their independent chiefdoms. The chiefs in 1956 are the lineal descendants, mainly in the fifth generation, of Mwakyusa, and have a well-known genealogy. The only exception to this occurs amongst the group of tiny chiefdoms in the extreme east under the Livingstones, which now form a single administrative chiefdom under Mwakilasa and number some 400 men. They trace descent from pre-Nyakyusa settlers known as the Saku.

Traditionally, as today, the village was the basic unit both in social life generally and in land-holding in particular. The Nyakyusa village was possibly unique in Africa. It was comprised of men of roughly the same age, together with their wives and young children, and it excluded their fathers and sons and also, very often, their elder and younger brothers. Each village consisted of a close group of houses (often centred on a broad "village street"), with arable and pastoral land around it. Each village had fairly well-defined boundaries with its neighbours. The village was represented as a group and acted corporately through its headman, *lifumu*, who was the guardian of villagers' land rights, the arbiter in land problems and disputes, and the controller of unused land. He was also the political and ritual leader of the village, but nevertheless he was a commoner chosen from amongst the villagers themselves, and was not a member of a chiefly lineage.

Land was owned by the village as a group. Every man resident in the village had a clear right to a site for his house and banana plot and to arable land within the village boundaries; he also had a right to graze his cattle in its communal pastures. Residence gave these rights and members of other villages were excluded. A man who left the village automatically gave up these rights, though if he returned he was able to take up his former holding or its equivalent.

11:Thwaites C-5 (ca. 1942) 1944
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P.236 A]

WANYAKYUSA AGRICULTURE

By D. H. Thwaites, Agricultural Assistant, Tanganyika Territory

131 The Wanyakyusa occupy the District of Rungwe in the Southern Highlands Province. The district lies between 9° and 9½° S. latitude
133 at the northern tip of Lake Nyasa. The altitude ranges from 1,500 feet to 9,500 feet. The
631 district is divided into twelve chiefdoms. The Administrative Headquarters are at Tukuyu, which was known before the British occupation as Neu Langenberg.

Inhabitants

101 The local people are not indigeneous to this area. They came, tradition has it, from
[173] Mahenge via Ukinga after many tribal fights. They are akin to the Wahenga in Nyasaland bordering on the Tanganyika boundary. It is
191 estimated that only 10 per cent of the Wanyakyusa speak Kiswahili. According to the 1935
161 census the total poulation was 153,204. The
162 total number of tax-payers in 1942 was 35,304, or 23.04 per cent of the total population.

181 The people themselves are extremely industrious and intelligent. As there are 90 people to the square mile, living conditions are
105 crowded and emigration is continually taking place. The people are partial to litigation over cattle and women. The number of cases heard annually in the Native Courts is about 6,000. There is no one historical and traditional head of the tribe. The twelve Chiefs are, in reality, hereditary Headmen who have been selected by Government to be Chiefs. They are in effect only *primi inter pares* in native eyes, the outlook of the people being unusually democratic for a native tribe.

105 The people live in houses made of wattle and daub or bamboo frame, with thatched
342 roof, and villages are sited mostly along ridges.
361 Rectangular houses are now built instead of the round huts of former days. They often stand in rows with a main street down the middle with bananas in the background. The more progressive natives build with sun-dried or burnt brick. Stock are stalled in the same house owing to the prevalence of thieving, but sleep in separate rooms.

Climate

132 The rainfall of the district varies in the different areas. In Tukuyu itself the annual average for 25 years (1918-1942) is 100.22 inches. On the Lake shore the average is probably higher, but no continuous statistics are available. The heaviest rainfall months are from December to May, but, in most years,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173 the Kyungu had a miraculous power of creating animals and it was by making elephants, buffaloes, and guinea-fowl for Sim-
773 bobwe and his men to hunt, and climbing Mbande when it was deserted, that he captured it. Directly he reached the top he struck his drum and 'when Simbobwe heard the drums beaten on the hill he fled to his own country'. This Kyungu's successors on
[643] Mbande became 'divine kings' with miraculous power much like that of the Lwembe at Lubaga. One of his brothers became chief of the Namwanga; another of the Iwa; and a third became the rival of his sister's son for the chieftainship of the Lambya. Such is the Ngonde account. The Kukwe say that the Kyungus of Ngonde come from the same line as the chiefs of Kabale, while the men of Lwembe insist that he was descended from a daughter of their line (*vide supra*, p. 2). What connexion existed between the lineages of Lwembe and Ngomale is uncertain, but the assumption is that they, together with the chiefs of the Pangwa and Kisi, sprang from a common stock in BuKinga.

The commonest story of origin is that all the peoples of the area, save the Sangu, emerged from a 'dark house' (*nyumba nditu*) near the present Njombe, and came to Ilongo (KwiLongo) in the forest, in what is now Bena country. Nsamba, a Nyakyusa priest of the chief's lineage, with a reputation as a historian, spoke of a 'few men' coming from 'a rocky shore to the north-west' (Lake Tanganyika?) and travelling to the east shore of Nyasa, where they increased in numbers, and then spread northwards through BuKinga; Mwenifumbo, a noble of Ngonde, spoke of Ngulube the 'pale' having come to BuKinga 'from the north'.[1] But the Kinga priests knew nothing of the 'rocky shore' or northern origin; and if we take the direction in which the corpse faces when buried (the most certain criterion of the direction of origin) then the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people came from BuKinga, some travelling to the north of Rungwe volcano and some to the south, and the Kinga themselves came from the east.

Other evidence also indicates that the chiefs came from the
● [174] east or north-east rather than the north-west. The cattle they brought were the short-horned Zebu type, like those of the Masai and other peoples of central and eastern Tanganyika and Kenya. They are quite different from the long-horned cattle of the Hima

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3, p. 10 (1930). According to the Ngonde version, Ngulube was the *first* ancestor, but Nsamba began the genealogy four generations earlier (*vide* chart, facing p. 3).

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and Tutsi who established conquest states to the north-west.[1] 173

Whatever the origin and adventures of the heroes they were 773 important in Nyakyusa and Ngonde history because their [174] graves became centres of religious ritual which linked together groups that were otherwise largely independent. The myths about them are the charter for chieftainship. They are depicted as benefactors who brought to uncivilized men not only the institution of chieftainship itself, but fire, cattle, iron, seed, and a creative power resident in their own bodies and those of their anointed heirs. But the myths also justify the power of commoners [778] who first occupied the country and who have witchcraft in their [754] bellies:

The commoners whom Lwembe found here were extraordinary. They 539 were cultivators, but they had not yet got fire, they ate their food raw. It was we chiefs, it was Lwembe, who brought fire and cattle—he came and found the original occupants without cattle; hence the commoners say, 'We are the earth'. Commoners are different from us physically, they are black; they are awe-inspiring, they are witches. Before you Europeans came the chiefs like Mwaipopo (116) were not [177] awe-inspiring, they feared the commoners very much; the commoners hammered the chief with their fists—yes, by daylight. And if the chief [754] cut a man's bananas that man took the chief's. If the commoners were [643] angry with Mwaipopo they fetched Mwangomo (124 whose chiefdom adjoins Mwaipopo's) at night by their witchcraft; he came in the night with his people and seized the cattle, both those of the chief, Mwaipopo, and those of the commoners. The next day the commoners said: 'It is we, we are angry. Why do you not look after us? Why do you not kill cattle for us?' Then Mwaipopo would kill two head of cattle and all the men in the country ate. . . . Mwaipopo and his equals were not awe-inspiring long ago, it is you Europeans who have created chieftainship and awe.

[1] cf. H. H. Curson and R. W. Thornton, 'A Contribution to the Study of African Native Cattle', *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Science and Animal Industry*, vii, 2 [113] October 1936 (Government Printer, Pretoria). An analysis of the distribution and migration of breeds in Africa.

H. B. Thompson and R. Scott, *Uganda* (1935), pp. 195 ff.

Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 68: 69.

M. Merker, *Die Masai*, pp. 157 ff., 1904, Berlin.

H. H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, 1904, pp. 86, 105 (early photographs of Nyoro cattle).

The short-horn type predominates among the Nyakyusa, but some animals suggest [231] an intermixture with Sanga cattle. The hump is regarded as a great delicacy and is [825] exaggerated in the clay cattle which boys model. Cf. Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 72. The [532] similarity between the ritual and symbolism of the Nyakyusa and those of the Ganda as described by Roscoe is marked. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, 1911.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

are remembered, and the names of the two senior wives of a chief are often recited in genealogies because the heirs take their names from their mothers, but she-who-taught-cooking is the only heroine in her own right.

It is worth noting also that the rituals of kinship are linked neither with the heroic tradition nor with primeval incest. We could trace no myths regarding their beginning, save that concerning the origin of avoidance between father and daughter-in-law. The myth of the origin of death is a variation on the theme, so familiar in Bantu-speaking Africa, of the two messengers (a sheep and a dog in this version) sent to men by 'Kyala', one promising life, the other death. It provides no charter for the ritual.

And what of the relation between myth and history? The conquest of cultivators by cattle-keepers is the common theme of traditions in the lacustrine area, and it is quite possible that small groups of invaders, who brought with them iron tools and weapons and cattle, established themselves as chiefs over small unorganized groups of hunters and cultivators in an isolated valley three or four centuries ago.[1] The Nyakyusa valley and the plain of Ngonde have no iron ore, and the inhabitants were dependent, until the coming of the Europeans, on iron (*ikyela*) smelted in the hills to the east for weapons and tools.[2] The original inhabitants are said to have used wooden hoes exclusively—such hoes were still in common use in 1938[3]—so the myth of a Lwembe sending to BuKinga for iron hoes has a firm foundation in historical fact. But that the original inhabitants of the valley did not know the use of fire 300 or 400 years ago (when Lwembe arrived) is incredible. Here the record of one of the greatest events in history is fitted into the shallow time-scale of an isolated people. To them it is not *when* fire arrived that is really important, but *who* brought it; chiefs are chiefs to the Nyakyusa (as to other peoples in Africa) by virtue of this great benefit they brought to men.

[1] Namwanga tradition (recorded in the Mbeya District Book) tells of the introduction of iron fifteen generations ago. The Sangu tradition says that a tall, pale man from 'Somaliland' first brought iron spear-heads to BuSangu and his son established a hegemony by virtue of his superior weapons.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 7. The iron deposits on the Livingstone mountains have recently been investigated by the Colonial Development Corporation. A 'titaniferous iron mountain' in the south of Njombe District was found to be 'smeltable'. *Tanganyika: Annual Reports of the Provincial Commissioners*, 1951, p. 51.

[3] Wilson, *op. cit.*, plate VII.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 There is no single supreme power; it lies in the several heroes,
775 in medicines, in witches, and with the shades. Kyala is a hero, a forefather, to whom sacrifices are made, and he is comparable to Lwembe and Kyungu, though he left no direct descendants. The evidence suggests that the names Kyala, Lwembe or Mbasi, Kyungu, and Ngulube were used in the same way in different areas, Kyala being the hero of the north-east shore of the Lake, Kyungu of the north-west, Lwembe of the central Nyakyusa valley, and Ngulube of the scarp edge of the Livingstones. Sometimes informants used Lwembe and Kyala alternatively saying they meant the same thing, although, as we have noted, Lwembe (or Mbasi) was specially associated with cattle, whereas Kyala, who was killed and rose again, only controlled crops, and may perhaps be taken as personifying vegetation. The distinction is in no sense clear-cut, but there is a hint of a cultivating people having
[174] been defeated by cattle-keepers with iron weapons, since Kyala was finally killed with a 'razor' (*ubwembe*), and The Razor himself —Lwembe—could not be killed though men tried.

In their creative aspect the heroes and shades are closely identified: 'Kyala creates desire'; 'the shade rouses up in the
[842] belly when a woman conceives'; 'Kyala and the shades stand together'. Kasitile said:

> Lwembe . . . makes a child. I lie with a woman; Lwembe is there, he works. Sometimes, if he is angry he works badly and a leg is missing, or the woman has a miscarriage. Sometimes he works well. Lwembe goes about looking upon the mothers; he is in my bellows (i.e. in my wife). It is he who came from BuKinga . . . and wished first to build at Nsamba's (i.e. where Nsamba 90 now lives). He failed there and went to Kasambala's and failed there and he seized Lubaga. All is his. A child is his and a cow, and the iron which the Kinga make is his, and food is his. . . . He is in a bull and a man. Where do you get the 'blood' (to beget a child)? Are you alone? . . . No, the Kukwe do not know Lwembe, but the people of the plain do, they are one with us.
> QUESTION: And Kyala?
> KASITILE: He is there, Kyala and Lwembe are together among us and the people of the plain. It is Lwembe who creates twins. You do not. Who has made your body? Who has created you? Who has given you strength and breath so that you are born, and live, and grow up, and marry? It is Lwembe and Kyala together.[1]

[113] [1] cf. J. Buxe, 'Die Zwillingsgeburt bei den Nyakyusa', *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 73. Jahrgang, pp. 194ff.; 'Aus dem Leben von Asyukile Malango', *Zeitschrift für Eingeborenen-Sprachen*, Band xxxv (1950), p. 210.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I

In many areas of Eastern Africa the pressure of peasant populations on their tribal lands is a critical feature of the contemporary scene, and this is most especially so in the more fertile parts where the African has accepted the new cash economy and is beginning to appreciate the potentialities of the modern world. The situation has been highlighted recently in the public mind by the publication of the Report of the East African Royal Commission[1] which examined the economic conditions of our time and made general recommendations.

In Tanganyika the overall density of population is low (22 persons per square mile) and the general scale of economic activity still remains little above subsistence level over vast areas of Territory. There are, however, islands of extremely dense populations scattered through the country, often associated with the mountain areas, where soil is fertile, rainfall is reliable and adequate and the cultivation of crops for sale in world markets has gone ahead fairly easily. These populations still comprise peasant farming communities with little capital and their "natural" impulse is to expand their extensive agricultural system rather than to intensify their cultivation on existing holdings. Serious overcrowding soon results for the favourable areas are limited and surrounded by drier bushlands. African attitudes and legal customs concerning their land do not change quickly and they lag behind new conditions of physical limitation and economic development. Whilst the recommendations of the Royal Commission may be valuable in the establishment of general policy, it is obvious that detailed application through time demands a fairly exact knowledge and understanding of particular local conditions if it is to be reasonably successful. This is particularly the case in so large a country as Tanganyika, with its multiplicity of environments and tribal systems of law, land tenure and agriculture, and the social attitudes which encompass them.

The present essay is an attempt, sponsored by Government, to describe and analyse the land and population conditions in one small area of the Territory where a cash economy is emerging and where the pressure of a peasant population on its land resources has become acute. It is hoped that some of this account may be applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to other similar areas both in Tanganyika and elsewhere, and that the conclusions reached may be helpful in dealing with the problems there; but primarily this is a study of one particular part of the country in order to provide the information upon which detailed policy may be founded.

The Nyakyusa are not entirely typical of many of the Bantu people of East Africa for they have a most distinctive social organisation, peculiar to themselves, based on age-villages and petty, independent chiefdoms. Also, they inhabit a country whose annual rainfall is unusually high, averaging about 100 inches. On the other hand, these people are one of the very few in Tanganyika for whom we have an excellent account of both their pre-European and early European systems of land tenure. Based on this information, obtained *before* modern changes began, we can perceive, analyse

1. *East African Royal Commission* 1953-5, *Report:* H.M.S.O. 1955. Cmd. 9475.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

173 Prophets arose who foretold the coming of the Angoni and the Arabs to work havoc on land and people. Then from the lake would come the strange white man who would overcome Angoni and Arab, and give peace to the land. To this race the people were directed to submit themselves when they came. So deep and sure would the peace be, that men would go armed only with sticks, all need for spear and shield having passed away.

173 177 But the peace was still in the future. Arab and Angoni came and fulfilled their destiny. The Henga or Kamanga people, fleeing before the latter, were received by the Konde, and were at first friendly to their hosts, but later, when the Arabs arrived as traders and slavers, made an alliance with them against the harassed Konde. Into this confusion entered, very dramatically, the white man, of whose coming the natives give graphic accounts. The approach of the *Ilala*, the tiny steamer of the Livingstonia Mission, then operating from Cape Maclear, far to the south, struck the people with terror. "It is God," they said, "He walks on the water." As the little vessel drew near the land, the people fled into the bush. A white man landed. A few strong-hearted natives ventured to approach, and saw his white skin. "It is surely God," they said, "He has come to us in the likeness of men." When he ate some bananas in their presence, they said, "No, not God, but a friend of His."

• 175 In 1887 the African Lakes Corporation of Glasgow

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

opened a trading store at Karonga, under Mr. Monteith Fotheringham, a man of great vigour and capacity. His presence aroused the hostility of the Arabs, who feared the loss of their slaving profits, and a period of fighting followed, in which the Konde took sides with the white man as their one hope. After a great encounter with their enemies, the defeated Konde took refuge in the Kambwe lagoon, the dry reeds on the margin of which were set on fire by the victors. The helpless natives leaped into the water, where many were drowned, and numbers were taken by the crocodiles which swarmed in the lagoon. In 1895 a small force was moved up by Sir Harry Johnston, High Commissioner for the newly formed British Protectorate, and the Arabs were defeated, and their leader, Mlozi, hanged the same day. From that time the Konde have progressed in peace under the influence of Government, Trade, and Missions.

One incident, very striking in itself, may be given as indicating the influence of Chungu. On one of her trips the *Domira*, the steamer of the African Lakes Corporation, went ashore on the sands near Karonga. Vigorous but unsuccessful efforts were made, with the help of great gangs of natives, to float her; and at length Chungu was asked to lend his powerful aid. This was Chungu Mwakasungula II. Taking with him a white cock, he went with his councillors to where the stranded steamer lay helpless on the sand. The following prayer, which he offered, was given to

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

175 me by the son of one of the councillors who stood
782 near him :
643

> "Art Thou angry with me, O God, who didst redeem me from slavery? The Angoni mocked me, the Arabs mocked me; then didst Thou cause me to see these mighty ones (the Europeans); and I said, 'Rejoice, for God has heard my prayers.' Who, then, of my ancestors is angry? Against whom have I sinned? For it is they who are my helpers in speaking to Thee. Many of them died by the spear; they saw their families destroyed; they suffered hunger again and again, before the mighty ones came. Now, O God, be merciful, and let the feet of these men come up out of the water."

Then taking water in his mouth he squirted it north and south saying, "I am lord of that country, I Magemo: I am lord of that country, I Kyabara," to which the assembled councillors responded, "E! Magemo; E! Kyabara." Then whirling the cock over his head and dipping it in the water, he gave the signal to the men hanging on the ropes to pull. And the steamer floated off into the water!

175 Meantime in the north internal warfare went on
177 intermittently, but no man of outstanding capacity arose to give cohesion to the various families of the
[797] Nyakyusa. Before the arrival of the Moravian missionaries in the area in 1891, various Europeans visited the district. Hunters came and went, and for a brief space there was a station of the Livingstonia Mission not far from Tukuyu. In 1893 the German

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Government established a station at Lumbira on the lake shore, but removed later to Tukuyu. On the whole the new Government was well received. A rising in 1897 was so mercilessly dealt with that any discontent which might be felt was suppressed by the fear of the German machine-guns. Very slowly the district is being merged in the general progress arising out of European domination.

Around the lake shore cotton is being successfully cultivated by natives and Europeans. On the uplands near Tukuyu there are some coffee plantations, and the suitability of the soil for the cultivation of flax is being tested. Coal has been found in the hills to the west, but its commercial value has still to be proved; and a small quantity of mica is also being digged. Up in the north, on the Lupa River, but outside the Konde region, gold has been discovered, but apparently only in modest quantities. There are at present about three score of miners at work there.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Sukwa, *Wenya*, *Lambya*, are politically subordinate, but culturally distinct.[1] They are probably remnants of the original inhabitants of the country. But Wilson also mentions elsewhere that the *Ndali* and *Lambya* of the upper Songwe river are two cultural groups closely related to the Nyakyusa.[2] We know that many of the small independent neighbours of the Ngonde are related to each other (*Tambo*, *Wandya*, and *Fungwe*),[3] their political independence being mainly due to the mountainous nature of their country.[4] Many of their names, which we take to represent distinct tribes, are merely locality names,[5] and some of the names which appear on the Tribal Map of East Africa represent only very small groups of people: for example, the *Tambo*, between the Iwa and the Luangwa river, were estimated in 1911 to be only 500 altogether.[6] These peoples are most probably remnants of the original Tumbuka[7] cluster, and through them belong to the Nyanja–Cewa group; some of them may possibly have been forerunners of the *Bisa–Senga* immigration from the Congo, or they may have affiliations with the tribes of Tanganyika, *Fipa* or *Safwa*. It is unprofitable, on the existing information, to speculate on their original ethnic grouping, and impossible, without a survey in the country itself, to discover their present cultural affinities. At present their geographical position is the only reason for grouping them together in the Ngonde cluster. The *Henga* to the south of the Ngonde are an exception. Their arrival in the country is a matter of historical knowledge,[8] and they certainly belong, not to the Ngonde, but to the Tumbuka cluster. 101

Similar difficulties are found on the east side of Lake Nyasa. The *Wanji* and *Poroto* north of the Kinga, the *Pangwa* and *Matengo* on the south, and small tribes on the lake coast, the *Kisi*, *Sandia*, *Mpoto*, &c., appear as names on the maps, but little else is known of them.

Dr. Meinhard considers that the Nyamwanga and Iwa on the west, and the Kinga and Pangwa on the east, are culturally too dissimilar to be counted in the same group with the Ngonde and Nyakyusa.[9] However, information about these peoples is so scanty that it has been necessary in any case to base this report on the Ngonde and Nyakyusa, which have been studied by Godfrey Wilson.

History

As far as available information is concerned, only the history of the Ngonde has been recorded, and it would also seem as if this is the only one of the related groups which has developed a centralized political system, except the Nyamwanga and Iwa. The Nyakyusa, as they spread westwards, were ruled by a number of petty chiefs, each of whom was succeeded by two or more sons, who carved out separate chiefdoms in the area into which they were expanding. There was no paramount political authority, but a number of tiny chiefdoms, none of which to-day exceeds 3,000 adult males, and most of which are far smaller than that. To-day about 100 traditionally 175 631

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 7.

[2] On the other hand, the *Mbeya District Notebook* records that the Lambya are related to the Nyakyusa, and the Nyika have affinities with the Lambya, but the Ndali are of a different origin.

[3] Cochead, 1914, pp. 3 and 58.

[4] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.

[5] Nyirende, 1931 (footnote by Young, T. C.).

[6] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.

[7] See Young, T. C., 1, 1932, p. 60: 'Far back in the hills . . . there exists still a Nyika people whose speech has been much less interfered with by the incomers, and which apart from dissimilarity in tone and accent, is not far removed from Tumbuka-Kamanga speech.'

[8] Lugard, 1893, vol. i, p. 51.

[9] Professor M. Wilson corroborates this.

4: Tew E4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

175
631

independent chiefs have been grouped into eleven court districts, with one chief as President of the Native Court in each. These chiefs, with two presidents of the Ndali and Lambya courts, are federated, and possess one Appeal Court and joint Native Treasury between them.[1]

The following is a summary of the history of the Ngonde, south of the Songwe river:

173

Ngonde tradition records that about 200 years ago a chief of the Kinga, Nguluwe, had two grandsons, Lwembe (from whom descended the Nyakyusa) and Chawara (from whom came the Ngonde, the Iwa, and the Nyamwanga).[2] Chawara left Ukinga and wandered west and south as far as Nkamanga, the capital of the Tumbuka country, returning thence to capture Mbande from Simbowe, the indigenous chief.[3] After this the local chiefs accepted him as their overlord, and he confirmed their status with public gifts of cloth, much as Mlowoka had done with the Tumbuka. There is little information about these earlier inhabitants, but it seems likely that they were similar to the Tumbuka, before the latter were conquered by Mlowoka.[4] There is an old tradition that Mlowoka and Chawara knew each other in their former home, and that their meeting at Nkamanga was as one between equals, at which the boundaries between their territories were formally arranged. According to Tonga tradition certain details of the accompanying ritual and the fact of his prior arrival show Mlowoka to have been recognized by Chawara as a higher authority, but this interpretation together with the circumstantial evidence are repudiated by the Ngonde tradition.[5]

175

Opinions differ as to the actual date of the arrival of the first Ngonde ruler, Kyungu. He came accompanied by five leading men, and was accepted as overlord by the local chiefs. The latter, with the immigrants, formed a class of hereditary nobles, *amakambala*, who divided into two groups according to whether they lived at Mbande (the nobles of Ngonde)[6] or whether they lived at a distance (territorial nobles);[6] later immigrants joined one or the other group. These nobles ruled the country. The Kyungus, enriched by the ivory trade, were credited with divine powers, and lived in strict religious seclusion. Most of their male children were killed at birth by the nobles of Ngonde, and if they themselves fell sick they were killed. A constitutional change took place after the accession of the tenth Kyungu, Mwangonde: the killing of the sons of the Kyungu was stopped, and such was the prestige of the royal blood that they began to displace the territorial nobles as rulers. The sons of the Kyungu became hereditary chiefs, *avanyfyale*, each of whom was succeeded by two or more sons, who divided the territory between them as the Nyakyusa do. Each territorial noble was succeeded by only one heir. The effect of this branching of new chiefdoms was to create a number of hierarchies of small chiefdoms under one head, the great chief.[7] The relation of these political units to each other, and to the central authority at Mbande, will be considered in the section on Social Organization.

When the Ngoni first attacked the Ngonde, Mwakasungulu was the first Kyungu

[1] Wilson, 3, 1938, pp. 12–13, gives seven districts, but the number has been increased.
[2] Ibid., 5, 1939, p. 9; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 20–3; Young, T. C., 4, 1932, p. 56.
[3] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 305–6.
[4] Young, T. C., 4, 1932, pp. 60–1.
[5] Ibid., pp. 57–60: Young also believes that they originally came from the River Chari, near Lake Chad (1933, p. 7).
[6] Wilson's terminology.
[7] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 9; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 68–7-

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

175 to take up arms and lead the people to fight. The Ngoni were temporarily beaten off, but at a later attack the Ngonde, under Gwa Sapasi, submitted. By 1875 he had been succeeded by Mwafongo, who was Kyungu at the time of the first visit of the Europeans. By that time, Arab slave- and ivory-traders had established themselves in Ngonde, and for the next twenty years they disputed the territory with the Europeans. After Dr. Law's voyage to Ngonde in 1875 a Free Church of Scotland Mission station and a post of the African Lakes Corporation were set up at Karonga. The Arabs sometimes traded with the Ngonde and sometimes fought them. In one fight the Kyungu Mwafongo was killed and Mwabulambo was elected in his place. The agent of the African Lakes Corporation tried to protect the people against the Arabs, and barely succeeded in maintaining his own position, until in 1889 H. H. Johnston made treaties with the chiefs and Arabs in Ngonde, and the country came into the sphere of influence of the British South Africa Company. In 1895 Mlozi, the leading Arab, who had not accepted British rule, was caught and hanged, and Ngonde was incorporated in the British Protectorate of Central Africa.

The inter-territorial boundary between Nyasaland and German East Africa (now Tanganyika Territory) cut across the area of the Kyungu's influence, which used to extend some fifteen miles north of the Songwe river, and some of the western territories were included in Northern Rhodesia.

The new government forbade elephant hunting without licence, and so killed the ivory trade, a main source of revenue; taxes were collected, and small subsidies paid out of them to selected chiefs and nobles. Mwakabaga, who became Kyungu in 1904, was the first Kyungu to sit with his people judging their cases. After his death the nobles chose Mwangalaba to succeed him, and in his reign the custom of hoeing (*milasa*) for the Kyungu lapsed till 1927, when it was revived in a modified form by the next Kyungu, Peter. The latter was the younger brother of Mwangalaba, and acted as his assistant in 1912 and as regent in 1927, succeeding to the full position of Kyungu in 1932. He had made a private fortune in industry and used it consistently to maintain his public position. He left Mbande, the traditional capital which had been dominated by the nobles of Ngonde, and built a new one at Bwiba, half-way between Mbande and the government Boma at Karonga.[1]

DEMOGRAPHY

161 *Ngonde.* In 1931 the Ngonde population had increased from 18,852 in 1921 to 30,731, or by 63 per cent. In 1945 it again doubled itself, reaching the figure of 62,136. The average density in the district is under fifteen per square mile.[2]

Nyakyusa country is thickly populated in the south around the lake-shore plain. Its density is about six times as great as that of Ngonde country.[3]

In recent years there has been a large movement of Nyakyusa from Rungwe district 161 into Mbeya district, into the areas east and west of Mbeya, where the average density 166 is over 100 persons to the square mile, with a maximum of over 400 to the square mile in one village near Mbeya.[4]

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 67–9; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 23–4; Maughan, 2, 1929, pp. 7 and 134–41; Livingstone, 1921, pp. 237 sq.; Laws, 1934, pp. 100 sq.; Du Plessis, 1929, pp. 296–322; Johnston, 1897 pp. 72–6; Lugard, 1893, vol. i, pp. 42 sq., and 131–2; Duff, 1903, p. 10.

[2] *1931* and *1945 Census*, p. 15.

[3] *Handbook of German East Africa*, p. 68; Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 7.

[4] Hall, 1945.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17.

Mwambelo, younger brother of Mwakasungula, succeeded and abandoning the enclosure at Mbande, went to live by the lake shore.[1] And so yet another step was taken from the traditional religious seclusion. His successors returned to Mbande; but the custom of building an enclosure round the houses of the Kyungu was not resumed. 173

In his reign Mwafulilwa, chief of the next tribe to the south of Ngonde, sought aid against the Ngoni and the men of Ngonde responded and won a battle. But the Ngoni then replied with another night raid in which they found Mwambelo alone in his house and killed him and returned home. Another attack followed before a new Kyungu had been installed, but it was repulsed, "for this time they had come by day!"

"And then the nobles of Ngonde made Gwa Sapasi Kyungu; he was a son of Kalambo, a chief of Ngana; for they said that, as so many of the chiefs of Ngelenge had been killed by the Ngoni, they would now take one of their cousins again as the Kyungu." And now at last Ngonde submitted to the Ngoni. Gwa Sapasi, with the concurrence of all the chiefs and all the nobles save one[2] sent a tusk of ivory to the Ngoni chief Mtwalo. "And from that time forwards the Ngoni never fought with us again."

A few years later, in 1875, after Gwa Sapasi had died and been succeeded by Mwafongo, the Europeans first visited Ngonde. Arab slaves traders established themselves there about the same time, and with the struggle between the two races for the possession of Ngonde the modern period begins. 175

3. *RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

The traditional status of the Kyungus had in part a religious basis.[3] The ruling Kyungu and the spirits of his dead predecessors were believed to form one divine company, the anger of any one of whom had terrible effects: while in his own flesh and in some of his possessions magical power was believed to reside. But the Kyungu was not alone in his religious potency, he was but the greatest of many. The nobles of Ngonde and the territorial nobles, the chiefs both great and small, professional rainmakers and doctors, the great-commoners of the villages, heads of families and even ordinary men and women—all alike were believed to have some access to, some dealings with divine or 643 769 789

[1] Three nobles of Ngonde, in recounting this story, maintained that Mwambelo was mad.

[2] He was Mwenisungo, whose story is omitted here for lack of space.

[3] As this paper is concerned only with political institutions no full analysis of the tribal religion of Ngonde is here attempted, only those aspects of it are dealt with which have political significance.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

enables us to accept it as broadly accurate. But from 1875 onwards written records[1] begin to supplement the oral tradition.

A little before 1875 Mwafongo, another chief of Ngana, had succeeded Gwa Sapasi as the Kyungu; and in that year the Europeans first reached Ngonde. But about the same time Arab slave and ivory traders established themselves there also and for the next twenty years disputed its possession with the Europeans.

In 1875 Dr. Laws and his party made a voyage of exploration in the "Ilala" round the lake and visited Ngonde; and within the next six years both a Free Church of Scotland mission station and a post of the African Lakes Corporation were set up there. The site they selected was on the lake shore in Kalonga's district and so became known by his name.[2] But the Arab traders were in Ngonde too. The Arabs sometimes traded with the people of Ngonde, sometimes fought them, while the African Lakes Corporation Agent tried to combine a lucrative trade with the Arabs and the protection of the people against them.

During the course of a fight with the Arabs Kyungu Mwafongo was killed and Mwabulambo, yet another chief of Ngana, was taken in his place. The nobles of Ngonde at first wanted to take Malema, a chief of Ngelenge, but he fled from them; "they asked the Arab Mlozi to lend them men to look for him, but he hid in a tree and escaped them. So they took Mwabulambo."

It was fourteen years after the arrival of Dr. Laws before the British made any move to take over Ngonde; and in the interval Monteith Fotheringham, the African Lakes Agent, only just succeeded in maintaining himself against the Arabs, owing to the help of Captain F. D. (now Lord) Lugard. But in 1889 H. H. (afterwards Sir Harry) Johnston arrived and made treaties both with the chiefs and the Arabs in Ngonde, and from then until 1896 the country formed part of the "sphere of influence" of the British South Africa Company. In 1895 Mlozi, the leading Arab, openly refused to accept the new state of affairs and was hanged. And in the next year Ngonde was incorporated in the British Protectorate of Central Africa (afterwards renamed Nyasaland).

About this time—the present Kyungu says it was in 1894—the nobles of Ngonde deposed Kyungu Mwabulambo and made Mwakaba-

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[1] *Lakes and Mountains of Africa.* Elton. *1879.*
Adventures in Nyasaland. L. M. Fotheringham. *1891.*
The Rise of our East African Empire. F. D. Lugard. *1893.*
British Central Africa. H. H. Johnston. *1897.*
Fighting the Slave Hunters in Central Africa. A. J. Swann. *1910.*
Lions of Livingstonia. W. P. Livingstone. *1921.*
After Livingstone. F. L. M. Moir. *1923.* Etc.

[2] Spelt "Karonga," the KyaNgonde "1" being retroflex.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

175 nga, one of the chiefs of Ngelenge, Kyungu in his stead. "They deposed Mwabulambo because, as they said, the country was once more at peace and so they should take a son of Mwakasungula again as the Kyungu." Mwakabanga was at first installed on the lake shore, but after the death of Mlozi he moved to the traditional capital at the foot of Mbande.

175 The demarcation of the interterritorial boundary between Nyasaland and German East Africa (afterwards Tanganyika) cut across the area of 177 Mbande's influence. The majority of the Lambya were separated by the boundary from their chiefs Nyondo and Kameme, while the Ndali who had, so it is said, previously sent regular tribute of ivory to Mbande, now became quite independent. And some of the more remote territorial nobles to the west were included in Northern Rhodesia.

One of the first acts of the new Government was to forbid the hunting of elephants without a license and thus at a blow the main traditional source of the Kyungu's revenue came to an end. Since then the numbers of elephants have been greatly reduced by European hunters, and only a few are left in the Ngonde of to-day. Taxes soon began to be collected, however, and small subsidies to be paid from them to selected chiefs and nobles.

175 Now Kyungu Mwakabanga, who died in 1904, after a reign of ten years, "was the first Kyungu to sit with his people judging their cases; 178 he appeared before them at his own homestead. None of his predecessors had done so, only the nobles of Ngonde had seen them." During his [202] reign the Government suppressed the *valukuta*, on the ground that their methods were too rough, and gave him government-paid messengers instead. And it also forbade the poison-ordeal.

After Mwakabanga's death the nobles of Ngonde chose Mwangalaba, a son of Malema, to succeed; and early in his reign there were other significant changes of custom. From his predecessors, as we have seen, when they journeyed through their country, all commoners save the very old had fled. The Kyungu was too terrible for ordinary men to look upon. "Not till the succession of Mwangalaba was this custom abandoned." And in the third year of his reign the custom of hoeing *milasa* lapsed, not to be revived till 1927.

Now, as it happened, Mwangalaba had a younger brother, Peter, who was a man of exceptional talents. Starting as a Christian teacher he then became a store capitao of the African Lakes Corporation and of various other firms, and later set up in business for himself with a chain of shops and made a fortune. And when Mwangalaba began to fail in 1912 Peter became his assistant and proved himself to have legal and administrative ability also. A failing Kyungu could not, as in former times, be killed and Mwangalaba lingered on until 1932. In 1927 it became necessary

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

to appoint a regent and, with the consent of the nobles of Ngonde and of Mwangalaba himself, Peter was appointed ; and in 1932 he succeeded his brother as the Kyungu. He is still the Kyungu to-day. Both before and after his succession he has used his private fortune without stint to maintain his public position ; and the historical accident of his personal ability and wealth has played a very large part in shaping the course of the political and social revolution though which Ngonde is passing.

It is Peter who has completed the emergence of the Kyungus from their religious seclusion at Mbande. He has, in the first place, abandoned all claims to divinity and, with them, all interest in the traditional prayers and sacrifices to his ancestors which the nobles of Ngonde still occasionally undertake. And in the second place, he has built his capital, not at Mbande with the nobles of Ngonde, but at Bwiba, half way between Mbande and the Government Boma at Karonga—a position symbolic of the new age.

The Government of the Protectorate at first applied a system of direct rule. In Ngonde most of the chiefs and ruling nobles were designated either as " Village " or as " Principal Headmen " and officially allowed to exercise executive duties. It appears that traditional rulers only were selected, though, theoretically, anyone at all might have been. The " Principal Headmen " included the Kyungu but he was not recognized as paramount over the others. " In 1924 certain modifications were made in their position, but it was officially stated ' that the new system is no way intended to revivify or perpetuate governance by Native chiefs.' Under the 1924 system ' Village ' and ' Principal Headmen ' still had executive duties on behalf of Government, but no authority to administer their people in their own right."[1] With the appointed headmen councils were associated consisting of " members nominated and removeable by the Government," and a similar district council was set up " to advise the District Resident in such matters as may come before him."

But in 1933 the system was changed to one of " Indirect Rule " or " Local Self-Government," by which the traditional political institutions of Ngonde were taken as the basis of administration. The Kyungu was now recognized as " Paramount Chief,"[2] with an appeal court and with five " Sub-chiefs "[3] under him. Of these five Kilupula was one of the

[1] The quotations in this paragraph are taken from L. P. Mair's *Native Policies in Africa* pages 114-116.

[2] In order to avoid confusion between traditional and modern titles I shall, from now on, use the former without quotation marks, the latter with them.

[3] These five had all been " Principal Headmen " under the previous ordinance. Since our visit Kalonga, the senior great chief of Ngelenge, has also been made a " Sub-chief.'

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

175 178 642 great chiefs of Ngana, three others (Mwenemisuku, Mwenewenya, and Nthalile) were distant territorial nobles who ruled groups of alien stock in the hills, while the last, Nyondo, who was, we remember, traditionally related to the Kyungu, ruled the Lambya group in the extreme north west. The nobles of Ngonde, together with twelve prominent territorial nobles and six other assessors, were recognized as members of the Kyungu's court and given nominal salaries. Those of the great chiefs of Ngonde who were not made "Sub-chiefs" in the new regime were now officially termed "Important Headmen," and given nominal salaries also. The other chiefs and those territorial nobles who had men of their own under them were still termed "Village Headmen" as they were before 1933.

The Kyungu and the five "Sub-chiefs" each had an area allotted to him, and each was given a court for his area. "Village" and "Important Headmen" might arbitrate in small cases, but had no power to execute judgments; that power belonged to the courts alone. Thus the Ngonde plain was split up into the two areas of the Kyungu (in the south) and of Kilupula (in the north). The Kyungu's court was both a court of first instance for his own area and also a court of appeal for the whole of Ngonde.

The modern title "Village Headman," seems at first to be a particularly confusing one since its bearer rules, not a village, but either a chiefdom or a fief which is itself sub-divided into age-villages. Further in the case of chiefdoms, unless they are very small, each age-village has its own great-commoner; and it is he who is the traditional village headman. But the confusion seems more natural when we realize the number of very small chiefdoms and fiefs which have now come into being by the continual sub-division of the former and the gradual shrinkage of the latter. There are some ruling chiefs and nobles to-day, still recognized as such, who have only half-a-dozen adult male tax payers under them. And it takes a pedantic anthropologist to see in such a group *two* age-villages! It is true that one does find the two or three old men in it still building a little apart from the three or four young ones, but most likely they are now all Christians and no longer observe the father-daughter-in-law taboos; for all practical purposes they constitute but one village-group. In the larger chiefdoms, however, the traditional articulation into age-villages each under its own great-commoner, still survives as a living fact.

175 178 Like the Nyakyusa, but unlike many other Central African peoples, the people of Ngonde have a fairly easy adjustment to make to modern economic conditions. It is true that a large proportion of the able-bodied men, estimated by the District Commissioner in 1937 to be 25%, are now

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

always away, but the great majority of these go to the nearby Lupa Gold Fields in Tanganyika and return home regularly after short periods of three or four months at work there. Nor are they by any means solely dependent upon the sale of their labour for the money which is now necessary to them. Cotton and a certain amount of coffee, rice, beans, maize and beeswax are now being produced in Ngonde for sale to the outside world. Of cotton, the most important economic crop of this district, ninety tons were exported in 1936 and brought in, for distribution among the thousand men who had planted it, about a thousand pounds. 175 178

The question of the ultimate title to the land of Ngonde at various times since the coming of the Europeans has been the subject of dispute; but in actual fact only a little was ever alienated to European firms or individuals. These alienations were followed, in some cases, by a shifting of the African population off the land taken up, but not on any large scale. And since 1933 Native rights have been secured by law. There are now only three or four small estates occupied by Europeans in Ngonde.

In the constitutional sphere, again, a Native treasury has been set up into which one twelfth of the tax money is paid; but as this money is almost entirely used up in personal emoluments, the new treasury has so far little significance.

The whole scale and perspective of life is now changed. Ngonde is no longer a world in itself but a tiny province in a great empire. The Kyungu is no longer either a god or a sovereign, but a little secular chief visibly supported and controlled by the Nyasaland Government. Nearly half his people profess Christianity. A quarter of his young men are always outside Ngonde working for wages. Mission education in local schools and at the neighbouring central station of Livingstonia, opens to increasing numbers each year the knowledge of a vast new world. The primitive Ngonde was a world of personal relationships; only rarely were people much affected by the behaviour of any save their personal acquaintances. But to-day impersonal relationships are all-important in Ngonde; world markets, imperial policies and world history in general largely determine the behaviour of its people.

9. *THE PRESENT CONSTITUTION OF NGONDE.*

(a) *CHANGE AND CONTINUITY.*

The constitution of Ngonde in the middle period of its history consisted of a mercantile divinity superimposed on a number of relatively autonomous local groups. The central power was mainly determined by the two factors of divine kingship and the ivory trade: the local autonomy was mainly determined by the absence of any large number of 642

[P.238A]

241 Other foodstuffs grown are coca-yams, cow peas, pigeon peas, Bambarra groundnuts, ginger, cardamon, groundnuts, wheat, pumpkins, peppers, citrus, sugar cane and European [177] vegetables, including a quantity of European potatoes.

Economic Crops

245 One of the main cash crops is coffee, which was introduced about 1900 by the Berlin 177 Lutheran Mission, but it was not grown by natives until 1930 when an attempt was made to organize an industry. It had already been tried from 1924 onwards by Europeans but had gradually died out, giving place to tea.

245 Native coffee has not been truly successful and many reasons are suspected for this. In effect, the coffee suffers from many pests and diseases and yields are so low as to be almost uneconomical even to a tribe of very low individual annual income. It has become obvious that coffee can only be grown by natives if shaded by bananas and mulched heavily with banana trash. Multiple-stem pruning is gaining favour.

Seedlings are planted out in December and the first crop is obtained four years after. The area planted rose in 1939 to 5,864 acres and the number of native planters to 7,966. Yields, however, are low, varying from 131.4 kg. to 20.4 kg. parchment to the acre. Hemeleia [136] leaf disease and yellow and white borer are prevalent all over the coffee-growing area. Over the period since 1932 the price paid to natives has averaged 44 cents a kg. for parchment.

[438] All coffee is collected and sold by Native Authority after rough grading and, in order to [432] encourage better preparation, much lower payments are made for the inferior grades. A native staff is employed to visit coffee plots and to give instructions, and it is noticeable that the quality of preparation varies with the price.

●175 The cultivation of rice on the lake shore was started by Chief Koroso in 1896 with seed 243 obtained from Arab traders in Nyasaland and the Moravian Mission issued further seed in 1898. Being an innovation, rice was not popular and little was grown except for small [651] local sales. In 1917 the Government issued seed and tax was paid in rice instead of money. Interest was hereby aroused and the cultivation of rice was started. In 1932 several other kinds of seed were issued and now sixteen varieties 243 are found. "Faya", which was issued in 1929, gives the best yields and is the variety chiefly grown, other varieties being Bungala, Marula

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XI

Arts & Crafts

346
177

AS I write there is a church being erected at Kyimbila to seat about seven hundred and fifty people. It has fifteen windows, each with three Gothic arches, and six doors each with its Gothic arch. This work was done, with only amateur supervision, by native workmen, of whom only one has had any kind of training, all the rest being young men, some of whom had never handled a trowel, and the best of them had not had more than a few months now and again at similar work. A good deal of pulling down and rebuilding had to be done, but the building, as it stands, with its buttresses and arched doors and windows, has a dignified and satisfying appearance. The carpentry is being done with the assistance of a trained man from Nyasaland, all the other carpenters being men with a training, or lack of it, similar to that of the bricklayers. The church is cruciform in shape, and the placing of the crown couples, if that is correct designation, was a triumph of ingenuity and patience.

176 Now there is nothing in Konde arts and crafts to lead one to think all this a natural development of what they did before. For the remarkable thing

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

about these arts and crafts is their failure to develop at all. Hints and suggestions were there continually; yet nothing ever came of them. Iron was digged, smelted, and made into tools, yet no better tool for digging the ironstone itself was thought of than the hoe. Cloth was widely made on native looms before the advent of inferior trade goods, and needles, with eyes, for sewing mats; but the idea of sewn garments did not penetrate the native mind. Burned clay pipes were made to direct the wind from the skin bellows into the blacksmith's fire, but no one received from these pipes a hint of other possibilities. The idea of the wheel, with its boundless possibilities, did not suggest itself to the Konde mind, nor, so far as I know, to the Bantu mind anywhere, although hints of it were lying about, especially in the round tree trunks which were used as rollers when a canoe had to be dragged some distance from the forest to the water.

At every point the native mind seems to have been waiting for the stimulus which was to come with the white man, and which has led to an awakening, the full extent of which is not realized except by thoughtful persons. For already, after the comparatively brief tuitional period of fifty years, Central Africans are replacing Indians as Government clerks, as hospital assistants, as engineers on river steamers, as telegraphists; they do all kinds of printing and bookbinding, carpentry, and building; and they fill positions of trust which a generation ago no one thought they would ever be capable of filling. The Konde have not yet taken more than a small share in

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

first-hand knowledge of them. On the coast they are classed with Nyakyusa and Ngonde as *Sokile*, a nickname derived from the traditional Nyakyusa greeting.

This book is concerned with the Nyakyusa.[1] What it contains is true in general terms for the people of Ngonde, but how far it is applicable to the smaller groups cited we are not certain. The Ndali, Sukwa, and Penja, are said to have long had an age-village organization; and Henga, Nyika and Kisi living intermingled with Ngonde and Nyakyusa have adopted it; but of the customs of the Wenya and Lambya we know little. Dr. Kerr Cross and Monteith Fotheringham, who travelled extensively in the area before 1890, reported that the Ndali and Sukwa (of Misuku) were very similar to the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people, but that the Lambya were different, practising shifting *citemene* cultivation, and living in stockaded villages.[2]

According to their own traditions the Nyakyusa and Ngonde chiefs (who trace descent from common ancestors) came ten generations ago from Kinga country, on the Livingstone mountains, and found the Rungwe and North Nyasa country already occupied. They established themselves as chiefs and have since been increasing the area of their occupation. The Kinga also affirm that their chiefs are related to those of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde, and they join with the Nyakyusa in sacrifice to common ancestors at Lubaga and LiKyala (see Map III), but the Kinga culture is quite distinct from that of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde; we stayed long enough in Kinga country to convince ourselves that the Kinga live in kinship villages and not in age-villages, and that they differ from the Nyakyusa in many other respects.

There seems little doubt that the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people have been expanding in an area not uninhabited, but sparsely inhabited, and that the assimilation of the Penja and other groups now proceeding is no new phenomenon, but part of a process which has long been going on. Within recent years over 2,000

[1] The Nyakyusa as here defined numbered 159,044 in Rungwe district at the 1931 census, and 3,732 outside the district; the Ndali 22,834, the Lambya (within Rungwe district, and not including those in Nyasaland) 12,403, and the Kisi (in Njombe district) 2,115. *Tanganyika Territory, Census of the Native Population*, 1931.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika, *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), p. 286; L. M. Fotheringham, *Adventures in Nyassaland* (1891), pp. 129-33. Nyondo was a Lambya chief, cf. Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 10.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

167 Nyakyusa families have crossed the Poroto mountains and settled in Safwa and Nyika country. They have moved, primarily, to •177 secure good pasture, fertile garden land, and accessible markets; and the accounts of Nyakyusa history which we have suggest that the first two of these motives have long been in operation. There is no sign of these Nyakyusa immigrants being absorbed by the previous occupants of the country. Indeed, were it not for the intervention of the Administration, it seems that the Nyakyusa immigrants might soon dominate the less organized Safwa and Nyika. As it is, certain of the Safwa and Nyika Native Authority Courts are conducting proceedings in Nyakyusa as well as in their own languages,[1] a fact which supports the Nyakyusa boast that all their neighbours are learning their language. Many Kinga, Mahasi, Wanji, and Poroto are said to learn to speak Nyakyusa, though there are few Nyakyusa settlers among them, since they find the language useful in external contacts.[2] The Kinga tell a myth of how they, together with the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, the Ndali, the Ngonde, the Mahasi, the Kisi, the Pangwa, and the Bena came from a place Ilongo (in the present Bena country) which they call 'the dark house' (*nyumba nditu*), and the Penja speak of a centre of dispersion, Kina, to the north of Rungwe mountain, from which they and the Safwa and Poroto came. The people of Ngonde, for their part, trace connections with the Inamwanga and Iwa, saying that their chiefs in their journeyings left sons to rule these people; they also assert that one of their predecessors on the Lake-shore plain was a hunter from Fipa country.[3]

101 Despite these tenuous links with their eastern, northern, and north-western neighbours, the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people are, as we have said, culturally quite distinct from them. The Nyakyusa themselves are emphatic that their culture differs from the cultures of the Kinga, the Safwa, the Poroto, and the Nyika—a statement which our own observation, and the evidence of other writers, confirm.[4] And the Ngonde differ in many respects both

[1] R. de Z. Hall, 'Local Migration in Tanganyika', *African Studies*, 4 (1945). 2,100 families had moved before 1938; 3,000 by 1941.

[198] [2] This is despite the fact that Swahili is the official vernacular for Tanganyika, being the medium of instruction in Government primary schools, and the language used by the Administration.

[3] Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 10.

[4] E. Kootz-Kretschmer, *Die Safwa* (1926); J. Thomson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back* (1881), Vol. I, pp. 46–52; R. de Z. Hall, op. cit.; D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

231 try, and Lugard speaks of 'enormous herds' in 1888[1] which a rinderpest epidemic decimated in 1892.[2] A few Kukwe keep one or two sheep, but we saw no goats at all in Rungwe district,[3] and neither sheep nor goats figure in ritual: cattle and fowls provide flesh for sacrifice. Every woman keeps fowls, as every man seeks to own cattle.

262 With curds and meat from their cattle, with fowls, fish, bananas, grain, pulses, roots and curcurbits, as well as bean tops and pumpkin tops, and—less generally—fruit, the Nyakyusa are exceptionally well fed. Since the dry season is so short and two crops of maize and pulses are grown in the year, there are no 'hunger months' such as the Bemba and many other African [731] peoples experience. Shortages and famine occur, but rarely. All the early travellers comment on the quantities of food available in Nyakyusa country.[4]

c. Relations with the outside world

131 Perhaps the most significant fact in the history of the Nyakyusa is their long isolation, which is mainly the result of their geo- 171 graphical position. Surrounded on three sides by high mountains, and on the fourth by the stormy head waters of the Lake,[5] the district was largely cut off from the outside world. Slave caravans passed to the north, the west, and the south, but never through Nyakyusa country; and though they were repeatedly attacked by the Sangu, who are said to have raided as far as the Nyasa plain,[6] and several times by the Ngoni, the Nyakyusa repulsed both peoples. Certain of the Kukwe chiefs were forced for a period to pay tribute to the Sangu chief, Merere; but according to their own account none did so for long, and some never paid at all. Kerr-Cross comments on the contrast before 1890 between the unfortified villages of the Nyakyusa and Ndali, and those of the Lambya and Nyika, who, living in open country and harried

[1] Lugard, op. cit., p. 131.

[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa* (1897), p. 430; D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., p. 119.

[3] Fotheringham, *op. cit.*, pp. 1, 25, mentions goats in Ngonde.

[4] See especially, Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 268, 274; Lugard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 131.

[5] In 1946 a Lake steamer, the *Vipya*, sank in a storm near Karonga with heavy loss of life.

[6] Kerr Cross, op. cit., pp. 119–29.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

by the Arabs and Bemba, built their huts within a stockade.[1] 131
According to Thomson, the Nyakyusa were unaware even of the 171
existence of Lake Tanganyika in 1879 and their more distant
eastern neighbours, the Pangwa, Bena, and Hehe had no communication with them.[2]

Unlike the Nyakyusa, the people of Ngonde were trading with 439
the coast long before the arrival of the Europeans, a fact which 177
had a profound effect on their political institutions;[3] but even
they did not suffer from the attacks of slavers until *after* Euro- 721
peans were established in Karonga.

From the point of view of the Nyakyusa-Ngonde people the 721
Europeans came just in time. It was the establishment of British control in Nyasaland which prevented the complete destruction of the people of Ngonde by the slavers, and it is likely that the Nyakyusa also were saved by European intervention, for the raids of Arab slavers and their Sangu allies were becoming serious in Kukwe country in 1889[4] before the German annexation.

The first Europeans known to have sighted Nyakyusa country 177
were a party from the Livingstonia mission (then established at the south of Lake Nyasa) who circumnavigated the Lake in the mission steamer, the *Ilala*, in 1875. They anchored off the north shore but did not land.[5] Two years later, the same steamer sailed by two famous missionaries, Dr. Stewart (of Lovedale) and Dr. Laws (of Livingstonia), landed Frederick Elton, H.B.M. Consul at Mozambique, and a party near the Mbaka mouth.[6] Elton and his party travelled through Selya and Kukwe country to the fort of the Sangu chief, Merere, and thence started for the coast. Elton died on the road, but some of the others got through.[7] In 1879 Joseph Thomson (aged 20), alone with his carriers, travelled through Hehe and Bena country, crossed the Livingstone moun-

[1] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), pp. 286–7; Fotheringham, op. cit., pp. 13–5; 269.

[2] Thomson, op. cit., pp. 248, 276.

[3] Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., *passim*.

[4] Fotheringham, op. cit., pp. 238–41, 288. The Sangu had previously been occupied in a prolonged war with the Hehe. cf. Elton, op. cit., p. 374; Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 229–34.

[5] E. D. Young, 'On a recent Sojourn at Lake Nyassa', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XXI (1877), pp. 230–1.

[6] J. Stewart, 'The Second Circumnavigation of Lake Nyassa', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, 1879, pp. 289–304.

[7] Elton, op. cit., pp. 318–44; Cotterill, op. cit.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 tains to the north-east corner of Nyasa, and went on through Nyakyusa country to Lake Tanganyika.[1]

609 Despite the isolation of the Nyakyusa and their own fear of travelling in foreign chiefdoms, they were not inhospitable to these white strangers: Elton and all his party (some of whom were delayed by illness and travelled separately), and later Thomson, walked up the Nyakyusa valley in safety though it was 'teaming with armed warriors', who carried 'most cruel-looking spears'. Elton remarks that 'the people of Konde, though not unfriendly, are passively obstructive, and being in want of nothing are disinclined to render any services whatsoever to strangers'.[2] But Thomson appears to have been on the best of terms with the Nyakyusa he met. The Kukwe fled from their villages at Thomson's approach, but were usually persuaded to return.[3]

177 After these journeys of discovery, mission work and trade
721 developed quickly. The African Lakes Corporation, a company formed to develop legitimate trade in Central Africa as a means of combating the slave trade, established a station at Karonga; and a road was surveyed from Karonga through to Lake Tanganyika.[4] Out-stations of the Livingstonia mission were set up at Chirenji (Mwini Wanda) in the hills north-west of Karonga, and at Kararamuka near Tukuyu.[5] Meantime, an Arab slaver, Mlozi, had settled in Ngonde, and a protracted struggle ensued between him and his Henga allies on the one side, and the people of Ngonde and the Europeans on the other, during which many Ngonde were enslaved or killed and their villages destroyed. Five thousand Nyakyusa spearmen came to the aid of the Europeans but, being more concerned with loot than with the defeat of the Arabs, they returned home with the goods they had taken instead of pursuing Mlozi and his men when they had the chance to do so.[6] Lord (then Captain) Lugard was for some months in command of the exiguous European force and its allies, and nearly

[1] Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 260–86.
[2] Elton, op. cit., p. 332.
[3] Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 281–2.
[4] Fotheringham, op. cit.; F. L. M. Moir, *After Livingstone* (1923).
[5] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI, 1890, pp. 281–93.
[6] Fotheringham, op. cit., pp. 117–23.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

died of wounds and fever. Because the Europeans lacked arms the war dragged on,[1] and the power of the slavers was finally broken only in 1895, when Sir Harry Johnston came up the Lake with a well-armed force.[2]

German missionaries of the Berlin and Moravian missions arrived in 1891, and established themselves at a number of stations in Nyakyusa country.[3] The Songwe had by that time been agreed upon as the boundary between Nyasaland and German East Africa, and the German administration followed hard on the heels of the missionaries.[4] Twenty years later war broke out between England and Germany; there was fighting throughout Rungwe district, and many Nyakyusa were impressed as carriers. The absorption of the Nyakyusa into a world society was considerably accelerated by war.

d. The form of Nyakyusa society

Not only was the Nyakyusa valley long isolated from the outside world, but it was divided into a number of small, independent chiefdoms, whose members had few dealings with people beyond their own chiefdoms and those immediately adjoining. Each family produced for its own needs, so that trade was the merest trickle; and marriage outside the boundaries of the chiefdom was discouraged, since beyond the jurisdiction of one's own chief there was no security for life and property. A plea against a man of a neighbouring chiefdom might not be heard by the defendant's chief. Nyakyusa men enlarged to us on the dangers and difficulties of travelling even twenty miles from home, before the coming of the Europeans; a journey from Selya to Tukuyu (twenty-five miles) was said to take three days, because travellers had to seek cover so often.

The number and size of chiefdoms varied; for a continuous process of splitting, together with periodical conquest and reabsorption, was going on and, as we have seen, the area of Nyakyusa occupation was expanding. In 1938 the Nyakyusa themselves

[1] Lugard, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 51–167.
[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa* (1897), p. 143.
[3] A. Merensky, *Deutsche Arbeit am Njassa* (1894); J. T. Hamilton, *Twenty Years of Pioneer Missions in Nyasaland* (1912).
[4] F. Fülleborn, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, Band IX (1906).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

562 ship among the women themselves is, moreover, less developed than in many other African societies.

178 The isolation and self-sufficiency of the Nyakyusa are diminishing rapidly, for considerable economic and political develop-
439 ment followed the 1914–18 war. Coffee (first introduced by the German missionaries) has been developed as a native crop for
444 export, and the cultivation of rice (which had been fostered by the British to provide food for their troops) has expanded. Gold-digging began some fifty miles beyond the borders of the Nyakyusa country, on the Lupa river, and there Nyakyusa men have found both employment as labourers and a ready market for much of their produce, so that by 1936 Rungwe district was exporting goods worth £24,000 annually.[1] In addition to this peasant production there are a small number of European estates
[167] producing coffee and tea for export.[2] We estimate the number of Nyakyusa working outside the district as migrant labourers at about 8,000 or 25 per cent of the able-bodied men. There were about 7,000 Nyakyusa men on the Lupa gold-fields in 1937,[3] and a small number on the coffee plantations of Mbozi. These are all within a hundred miles of home; and the Lupa labourers return usually after two or three months' work. A considerable number of Nyakyusa are also at work on the sisal plantations of the coast, and employed as domestic servants or in other semi-skilled jobs through Tanganyika, who remain away for periods up to two or three years. Nyakyusa labourers are regarded by European employers as intelligent and capable of heavy work, but lacking in all the subservient virtues.

642 The system of Indirect Rule was established in 1926, and a consistent attempt has been made to develop a centralized Native
177 Authority for the Rungwe district. The traditionally sovereign chiefs of the Nyakyusa have been grouped in eleven court districts with one chief as president of the Native Court in each (see Map III); these eleven chiefs, together with the two presidents of the Ndali and Lambya courts, belong to a single federation, with an appeal court and joint Native treasury of its own. In the eleven Native Courts (which are courts of record) most of the

[1] Figure estimated on the basis of information supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu.

[2] In 1938 the total area alienated was 26,0¼ ac.; only 2,200 ac. of this was being worked.

[3] Estimate of the Labour Officer on the ¾ upa, 4 June 1937.

¾ [Missing on the original – Analyst]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their village headmen, and assist the president and his village headmen in the hearing of cases. Much of the legal business previously transacted by each chief in his own country is now taken to court (*KwiKoroti*); but the power of village headmen to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages is still the basis of the legal system.

Though the Administration has worked through the traditional authorities it has consciously and deliberately modified the traditional system; and, as part of its policy of development, it has established schools, dispensaries, and nurseries for coffee-seedlings and other plants. There are three schools in Rungwe district receiving Government grants: one directly under the Administration, one under the Native Authority, and one a mission school. There are also a great number of 'bush schools', that is, mission village schools under uncertificated teachers giving instruction in the three R's and in religion. Over 19,000 children (12·6 per cent of the population served) are enrolled in the various schools; but 96 per cent of these are in 'bush schools', many of whom never learn even to read and write.

The structure of Nyakyusa society has been further complicated by the conversion of a substantial minority (16 per cent in 1938)[1] of the people to Christianity. The Christians form a group with values radically different from those of the pagans, on whom they react in innumerable ways.[2] The growth of this diversity in the society is a direct effect of its diminishing isolation.

To treat of Nyakyusa villages as if missions, or the Administration, or migrant labour and coffee export did not exist would simplify, but distort our analysis. We have therefore included some account of the differences in behaviour between pagan and Christian, of the effects of centralization on the position of village headmen, and of the influence of trade and migration on economic co-operation in the village. A discussion of the organization of schools and Christian congregations; of the development of courts of record, and 'court districts'; of the relation between

[1] Calculated from figures supplied by the courtesy of the missions and the independent African Churches working in the district.

[2] Moslems are very few and they have little influence on the community as a whole. These few are mostly Swahili traders, Ngoni settlers, or soldiers of the K.A.R. from Nyasaland. We heard of only two or three Nyakyusa who had turned Moslem.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631 In the chiefdom of Mwaipopo, with which we were well acquainted, there are three such minor chiefdoms. In one no heir survived; but the heirs in the other two went through the 'coming out' ceremony with their superior chiefs, and the young men from each of the three formed a separate village, attached to one or other of Mwaipopo's two heirs. How many generations these subordinate chiefdoms survive as separate groups is not certain: the three in Mwaipopo's country were chiefdoms of his junior brothers which had lost their independence to him. In his case four brothers had 'come out' together, and the senior had conquered the others. Probably at the coming out of Mwaipopo's grandson these subordinate chiefdoms will appear only as villages, and no heir from them will be treated as a chief.

This formation of subordinate chiefdoms is a traditional variation of the standard pattern still going on. There are further modifications which are modern.

f. Modern modifications

643 In 1926, as has been noted, the British Administration created new 'Native Authorities'. The traditionally independent chiefs of
●177 the Nyakyusa were grouped together into eleven court districts,[1] and in each district a 'Native Court' was set up, consisting of the various chiefs and their village headmen, under the hereditary presidency of one of the chiefs, who thereby became senior to all the others in that Court district. Salaries for chiefs were introduced, the senior chiefs receiving far higher salaries than the others; the meetings of each Court are now always held in the territory of the senior chief (*umalafyale unkulumba*), and to this Court has been transferred a great deal of the legal business which, before 1926, was transacted by each chief sitting with his own village headman in his own chiefdom. The chiefs themselves were consulted in the selection of the Court presidents, and those chosen were normally the chiefs with the greatest number of men in each particular Court district.

The introduction of salaries has had a profound effect upon the relative status of the two young chiefs who 'come out' together. When an ordinary chief, with a small salary, dies, the Government recognizes the first son alone as chief and pays the whole

[1] There are two other courts in Rungwe district for Ndali and Lambya.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

salary to him. This reduces the second son to the position of a minor chief as effectively as a defeat in war might have done in the old days. But, while the action of warfare only occasionally led to the subordination of one of the brothers, this action of the Government does so invariably, and always subordinates the younger brother. When a senior chief dies, on the other hand, the salary is usually divided; the bulk of it goes to the first son, together with the position of senior chief, while the second son is given the salary of an ordinary chief. 643 177

Nevertheless, whether the junior brother is to become a chief in receipt of a salary or not, he still goes through the 'coming out' ceremony with his brother, and is apportioned villages and headmen. Even in a country in which there are several minor chiefs there still is the division into two, some being regarded as subordinate to the senior heir, and the others to the junior. Division of a chiefdom into two at the 'coming out' is the basic form which is maintained, at least ceremonially, despite all modifications.

The introduction of Courts and salaries has brought a new element into the relationship between the old chief and his heirs. Only one of them can receive the salary and they commonly dispute about it. Quarrels are particularly frequent over the position of senior chief, for the presidency of a Court carries with it a relatively large salary. Old senior chiefs cling to the position long after their sons have 'come out'. There is no compulsory superannuation of chiefs, and the traditional mechanism for getting rid of an old chief when his sons were ready to take over—strangulation by his councillors—no longer operates. The old headmen remain in power along with the old chief. Thus one effect of British Administration in Nyakyusa country has been to maintain the older generation in power much longer than was traditionally usual, and to delay the assumption of full responsibility for government by the younger generation.. 643 177 578

Another modern change which has far-reaching effects is the omission in some chiefdoms of the 'coming out' ceremony. When there is no 'coming out' the old men do not move aside to make room for their sons, and consequently the territorial demarcation between villages of old and young becomes blurred. Among the neighbouring people of Ngonde the 'coming out' ceremony has been dropped. There boys still build apart from their fathers, and the villages of young and old are more or 643 177 621

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

less separate, but as time goes on the demarcation between them becomes less and less clear. In most chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa the ceremony is still observed, but in the country of Porokoto, near Rungwe mission, it has not been performed for a generation, and there the territorial separation between young and old is much less definite than in other chiefdoms. The maintenance of the age-village system is ultimately dependent upon the moving aside of the old men in each generation to make room for their sons.

The reason commonly given for the omission of the ceremony in Ngonde is that since the country has become more densely populated there is no longer room for two chiefs to divide the country of their father. The old system of division was adapted to an expanding population in a relatively empty country; and the two young chiefs ordinarily ruled a greater area, and more men, than their father. Further, it is said, the ritual was in one aspect a preparation for war, and fighting between chiefdoms has ceased. These explanations are obviously not adequate, since the ceremony is still performed in Nyakyusa chiefdoms in which there is neither room for expansion, nor war. Its omission may be related rather to the general abandoning of traditional rituals in Ngonde. Forty-five per cent of the people of Ngonde, including many leading men, are professing Christians, and there is a very general scepticism of the efficacy of traditional rituals. This scepticism extends even to those who are not Church members.

In Porokoto's chiefdom the 'coming out' was omitted partly because of a dispute over the succession; but there, also, many of the traditional rituals are not regularly performed (as they are in other parts of Nyakyusa country), because the proportion of Christians is high since Porokoto's chiefdom adjoins the main Moravian mission station, Rungwe, and because pagan faith in these rituals has therefore been shaken. As Porokoto (who is not a professing Christian himself) put it, when explaining why he had not performed the twin ritual for his own twin daughters: 'We see that nothing happens to the Christians when they omit the rituals, so we begin to say "What value have they?"' Thus not only are Christians forbidden by their Churches to participate in the ritual acts of the 'coming out' but pagans themselves begin to doubt their necessity.

The presence of Christians further complicates the traditional

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

577 us that it was a great effort to her to accept food from the Poroto
515 when she went on preaching tours, because their huts and pots were so dirty.

351 Trees are felt to add to the dignity of a homestead as well as throwing a grateful shade; the beautiful *umwali* trees have long
577 been valued for this purpose, and to-day exotics are much sought after. For example, the old chief Mwaipopo, noticing a fine cypress when he visited us at Isumba (a cottage that had once been a German mission hospital) inquired whether there were not some seedlings under the tree. He himself carefully dug up one and took it away to plant in his 'capital'. Some Nyakyusa even *steal* trees to adorn their homesteads. It is said that jacarandas planted out in an avenue at Tukuyu disappeared within a very short time.

341 The attributes of dignity in the homestead are changing perceptibly. Well-built huts in the old style, a long *ikibaga*, a well-
577 swept court, fruitful bananas, and fine *umwali* trees are mentioned
•177 by the old men; but many of the younger ones prefer hip-roofed houses (a style introduced by Europeans and known, appropriately enough, as 'the partridge') with windows and door of European pattern, beds of flowers, roses, fine coffee and exotic trees. Yet they keep the court well swept; for lawns have not become fashionable.

577 A fine presence, a well-kept homestead rich in cattle and bananas and shaded with stately trees, are in themselves impressive, but the possessor of them only reaches his full dignity when he acts as host, and uses his fine food and fine home for lavish hospitality. Wealth and an impressive manner, without urbanity and hospitality, may well lead to accusations of witchcraft.

c. Display

156 Feasts provide opportunity for swaggering parades and dances in which the Nyakyusa delight to display themselves and their possessions; they are the great occasions for *ukumoga*, that is, display in approved forms. Dancing, exhibiting a beautiful body with only a narrow bark-cloth belt to hide it, showing off physical strength and the aggressiveness of a warrior, parading orna-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

156 ments and fine clothes, or a splendid herd of cattle—all these are forms of *ukumoga*.

Traditionally Nyakyusa women wore only a bark-cloth belt 291 tied around the waist and drawn between the legs to fall in streamers in front (cf. Plate XIII), and the pagan women cling to ●177 this dress, maintaining that it is only 'Swahili women with dirty diseases' who have to wear clothes to cover their sores, and if a pagan woman has a cloth she will probably wave it like a flag or hang it over one shoulder, when she dances. Except for the Christians, few Nyakyusa women regularly wear clothes. The Christians like a brightly coloured cloth tied under the armpits, and hanging to the knees (cf. Plate IX). Women make their own [287] bark-cloths with great care, and decorate them with geometrical patterns in red and black, the red dye being imported from the Livingstone mountains; they mix this same dye with a fatty [346] ointment made from the seeds of the *unsyunguti* tree, and rub it all over themselves. The most prized ornament (worn by both [301] sexes) are body rings of coiled brass or copper wire (cf. Plate XIII). In the past men went naked except for these body rings[1] but, unlike the women, they have taken enthusiastically to clothes, and swagger around in brilliant loin-cloths or flowing white togas; or, if rather more sophisticated, in freshly pressed shorts and shirts, or lounge suits and topees.

535 The series of ceremonies at a girl's initiation and marriage, and 156 at a funeral, are regular occasions for dancing, and the birth and death rates are so high that these occur very frequently within a chiefdom of 3,000 men. Once in a generation the eagerly anticipated 'coming out' ceremony offers an even greater opportunity for display. Skill in dancing is admired and the young people are encouraged to practise. A bride's mother does a great deal of the heavy work for her daughter, saying '*amoge tasi*', which means literally 'let her display herself first', and implies 'let her have a good time while she can'; and a father may use the same phrase of his son. Angombwike explained: 'The old men used to take 156 great pride in their sons; often a man would say to his son: "Don't 593 you hoe for me, I'll do the hoeing myself, you go and swagger about." Sometimes a man would sell a cow and buy a huge-bladed spear and give it to his son. Then, if he heard that his son

[1] cf. Elton, op. cit., p. 322; H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, p. 18.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

606 house, one pouring wet day, when sitting or cooking out of doors was impossible. Mwambelike's wife was cooking for us and other visitors. Suddenly there was a cry from her husband and others, 'Father-in-law!' She ran out of the room, leaving her cooking. The man who came in was a mother's brother's son (*untani*) of Mwambelike's father, and counted as a mother's brother (*umwipa*) to Mwambelike. Mwambelike explained to him that his wife was cooking and asked him to stay 'at the door', so he went out, and the woman came back. She cooked placidly for half an hour. Mwambelike said: 'Tell my daughter to come and help you with the cooking', then, looking round, he said: 'Oh no, she can't, her father-in-law is here too.' This was her betrothed husband's mother's brother. Mwambelike's daughter was about thirteen years old and had not yet reached puberty. Some time later the wife called to this girl to bring her some water. Nothing was said by the men and after three calls the girl scurried in giggling, put the water down, and scurried out. Then the men took notice, the 'father-in-law' said nothing, but Mwambelike said apologetically: 'It's all right; she did not look at him.' When the wife had finished cooking our food she went out, and the men called her 'father-in-law' in. He stayed about five minutes then, realizing that all the men were hungry, he said: 'I will go away. Let her get on with her cooking'; so he went out and she came back and cooked for the other guests.

606 The strength of the feeling against seeing one's father-in-law is apparent in the behaviour of Christian women. The missionaries 177 have taught that avoidance is unnecessary and inconvenient, if 795 not unchristian, and that a daughter-in-law should behave as a daughter to her husband's father. Various Christian women assured us that they 'did not avoid their fathers-in-law', though most admitted to 'avoiding a little'. One day S—, who had volunteered that she did not avoid her father-in-law, had come to tea with us, together with another Christian woman. S—'s father-in-law, a chief, came along the veranda on an unexpected visit. Before he was visible S— leapt up, gasped 'father-in-law!' and hid herself in the corner of the room behind the door, facing the wall with her face buried in her hands. She stood there a few seconds gasping, then came back to her place and pushing away her chair, sat down on the floor, whispering determinedly: 'I *won't* avoid him, I *won't* avoid him.' Her friend also slipped off

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

her chair and sat on the floor. We said to Mwaipopo as he entered: 'There is a daughter-in-law here.' He said: 'That's all right, she is enjoying the company of Kagile (M.W.)', but he was obviously restive, and went outside as soon as food appeared. He said to G.W.: 'That's quite all right, let them go on enjoying each other's company. She (i.e. S—) does not avoid me because M— (a local missionary) brought her to me one day and I killed a bull for them, but let us stay outside now, for they would be ashamed to eat.' The women protested very much saying *they* would go out, but the chief would not agree. As soon as they had drunk their tea they hurried off, and crouching down with their backs towards the men they answered their farewell greetings.

In reply to queries as to why they insist that father-in-law and daughter-in-law avoid one another, the Nyakyusa relate a myth of incest between them: 'Long ago a chief's son married a very beautiful wife. The boy's father saw the girl and after one look desired her, for she was very beautiful, and he said: "She is fit to be a chief's wife (*umwehe*)." Men said this was a very bad thing and agreed that in future they would not look at their daughters-in-law. That is how avoidance began. It was for fear of fathers making love to their sons' wives.' This myth is related with some diffidence, and not everyone knows it, but it was told us, or referred to, repeatedly, and may be taken as current in the society. One informant, a very intelligent woman doctor, also associated seeing a father-in-law with seeing his sexual activities. 'We think that to see your husband's father is very rude, because it is as if you saw him sleeping with your husband's mother. You compare, you see, your husband's body and you see your husband's father's body. It is very bad.'

Age-villages are then associated with the feeling that fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law must be kept completely separate lest they should commit incest, and that adolescent youths should not have any glimpse of the sexual activities of their parents; but the separation of the generations is not complete, for marriage with the daughter of a village neighbour is approved, provided he is not an *immediate* neighbour. Mwakionde explained that in the old days people disliked marriage with the daughter of a next-door neighbour because she was 'like a daughter'—'the fathers ate *embalaga* (a dish made with bananas) together'—but marriage with the daughters of other village-mates was always approved.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

838 villages—they begin among boys of ten to fourteen herding cows, and continue among young men until marriage, but they are said never to continue after that, and are regarded simply as a substitute for heterosexual pleasure. 'A man never dreams of making love to another man'—only of making love to a woman. If a boy's own father, or a village father, finds a son with another youth he will beat him, but provided both parties were willing, there is no court case, and the older men treat the practice tolerantly as a manifestation of adolescence. To force a fellow to [684] have homosexual intercourse against his will is a serious offence, comparable to witchcraft (*vide* Document, p. 196). Lesbian practices are said also to exist, but we have no certain evidence of this: if they do occur it is much more likely to be among the older wives of chiefs and other polygynists than among the girls, who have so much attention from young men.'

864 It is in conversation and play with village contemporaries that some knowledge of sex is acquired. Girls learn about sex from their immediate seniors, and they get some sex experience, along with formal instruction on morals, at the puberty rituals of their seniors in the age-village and at their own initiation. Boys learn from the conversation of their older fellows at night, in the boys' village. Any suggestion that sex education should be given by parents or middle-aged teachers shocks the Nyakyusa profoundly, for they hold that discussion of sex is totally incompatible with the respect due from children to parents. The taboo on sex talk between members of different generations appears to be absolute among men, but is less emphasized among women, for formal instruction on morals is given to a girl by her mother's fellows during the initiation ritual, and a young wife of her father, or of her father's neighbour, may whisper advice on sex matters even although she is classed as a 'mother'.

534 As we have already indicated, there are profound differences between pagans and Christians in their sex code. The Christian 795 dogma that sex relations should only take place between adult married persons excludes the freedom of girls to have external • 177 sex relations before betrothal, or in the 'bride's' hut; it excludes girls visiting their betrothed husbands before puberty; and it excludes homosexuality, which is regarded as a mortal sin. Segregation of successive generations is not a part of the Christian tradition, hence the modifications in the rules of avoid-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ance among Nyakyusa Christians, and the tendency for fathers and sons to build fairly close to one another.

The forms of display approved among Christians are also changing with the change in the sex code. The nakedness of the Nyakyusa shocked the missionaries, and it is insisted that Christian women, as well as men, should wear at least one cloth; also many of the traditional dances and songs are felt by the Nyakyusa converts themselves to be incompatible with the profession of Christianity, consequently at funerals and weddings there is often a group of Christians dancing quite separately from pagans, and singing their own song, which, more often than not, is a hymn. A wedding dance to a hymn does not appear incongruous to Nyakyusa, as it does to European observers.

e. Wisdom

There is a very close connection between the values we have cited, and all save one are coherent with one another. The enjoyment of good company implies observance of the rules of decency; *ukwangala* is between equals, not between parents and children; it merges into neighbourliness, for one who does not help, or seek help from, a neighbour is unfriendly (*atikwangala kanunu*); and it is dependent upon that generous hospitality which is one of the manifestations of dignity (*ubusisya*).

The one value which is not wholly coherent with the others is the value of display (*ukumoga*). Certain forms of display are compatible with urbanity and friendliness between neighbours, but the swaggering truculence of the warrior is not—it is liable to breed quarrels between fellow villagers, as well as with outsiders; and display also ceases to be compatible with other values when it involves adultery. The friends of a woman who has eloped with a lover may greet her with the phrase: '*Ndaga, umogile*!' which literally translated means 'Thank you, you have displayed yourself', and implies, 'Congratulations! Had a good time?' But no Nyakyusa would maintain that to commit adultery was, in general, good.

The all-embracing virtue to the Nyakyusa is wisdom (*amahala*). It includes the enjoyment of company and the practice of hospitality, for no man is wise who is surly, or aloof, or stingy; it includes neighbourly behaviour, dignity, and respect for law and

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

623 795 184 his village headmen. In some villages the 'elder' is both a religious leader and a secular authority, but there is a tendency to separate the two offices and to appoint a 'peacemaker' whose duty it is to settle disputes, collect taxes, and represent the village in its relationships with the chief and the administration, while the 'elder' confines himself to watching over the spiritual welfare of his people. Such division of authority is symptomatic of the growing differentiation of Nyakyusa society.

e. Witchcraft, medicines, and the British administration

754 177 627 Under British administration the use of the *umwafi* ordeal, imputation of witchcraft, intimidation or obtaining goods under false pretences by threats of witchcraft or sorcery, or offers of protection against them, are punishable offences. As we have seen, the ordeal is now administered only in the greatest secrecy, and probably very seldom, but accusations of witchcraft are frequent, and are even heard before the Native Courts, though not recorded (*vide* Document, p. 257). In the villages near the Government station more caution is observed in making accusations than in more remote parts of the district: very often the identity of the witch is only hinted at, or thorns are piled at his door by persons who remain anonymous (*vide supra*, p. 114) so that no individual can be convicted of imputing witchcraft. As one man put it: '"The defenders" see the witches, but cannot name them to anyone.' [763] Autopsies continue in conservative villages but they are no longer performed on every corpse, as is said to have been customary in the old days. The chief Porokoto, himself a sceptic, argued that it was no use performing an autopsy when a charge could not be laid. If the members of a village are all convinced that a particular fellow is a witch he is forced to move, since his unpopularity becomes intolerable to him (*supra*, pp. 110–5). As Mwambuputa put it: 'We don't like him, and he doesn't like us either: he does not enjoy our company (*atikwangala na nuswe*), so he moves.' But if the friction is only between two individuals, the supposed witch may brazen it out, for without resort to the *umwafi* ordeal there is no sure means of deciding between the accuser and the accused.

754 177 The prohibition of witch-finding is not accepted as right and just: the common view is that the Europeans 'protect the witches',

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and they are condemned for doing so. One old man argued in this way: 'Where you Europeans are wrong is in forbidding witchcraft in word only and not in spirit. It does no good to say that witchcraft does not exist; but if you had driven witchcraft out of our hearts that would have been good.' And again: ' "The defenders" still fight the witches, they make great efforts, but they may no longer speak about it. In the old days when a witch went to choke his fellow "the defenders" would see him and turn him back, and then on the morrow they would tell people that he was a witch, and he would have to go to the chief and take the ordeal which would convict him. But now "the defenders" have to be silent because of you Europeans who say there is no witchcraft, so that though the witch is perhaps turned back the first night, the next night he goes again and throttles his fellow.' Many Nyakyusa think that Europeans are hypocrites when they deny belief in witchcraft. One friend, the Christian wife of a chief, said to us: 'You are dissembling like all Europeans, you don't want to admit the reality of witchcraft. You are just dissembling.' Nor are Europeans thought to be immune from witchcraft: the attacks of malaria from which we ourselves suffered were immediately interpreted by our servants and friends as due to witches.

Since most people are sure that evil desires manifesting themselves as witchcraft or sorcery exist, movements of witch-finders partake of the nature of religious revivals. The *Muchapi* movement, described by Dr. Richards for the Bemba[1] appeared among the Nyakyusa in 1932, and had a brief popularity, dying out again before 1934. The professed aim of the leader was to rid the country of witchcraft and sorcery, and the attitude of most Nyakyusa was expressed in the comment of a Christian friend who said to us: 'He (the witch-finder) did very well because he brought to light all those that killed people and made them hand over the medicines which they had used.'

The sense of insecurity created by a continuing belief in witchcraft along with the prohibition of the traditional means of discovering witches, finds expression in the frequent movement of individuals from village to village. Such movement occurred in the past, and it was often linked with suspicion of witchcraft, but whereas in the old days it was always the individual convicted in

[1] A. I. Richards, 'A Modern Movement of Witch-finders', *Africa*, Vol. VIII (1935). pp. 448–61.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

account with other villages of the same chiefdom, and forming a detachment under its own headman in the army of the chiefdom. Before an attack each village was harangued by its headman who urged: 'Keep all your spears together. If you abandon your fellow you have a case against you! All return together!' And, as we have seen, it was held that men of the same village should stand shoulder to shoulder in war and in a hunt, that they might be brave. 621 701

Cattle raids and adultery cases were the prime causes of war—fighting commonly began with a dispute over a woman, or lust for meat. Less frequently it was a quarrel between two villages or two chiefdoms over a boundary that led to war. Hostilities often flared up at a funeral when men danced the war dance with spears (*ukukina*). The Nyakyusa interpret this dancing at funerals as an expression of anger at death, a protest against death.[1] 'Formerly we protested against death, we said: "Our fellow has died, *aje!* Let us put our friend to rest!" We protested with war, we protested with spears, and people died.' Or as another informant put it, 'The war dance is a way of weeping. We dance the war dance because war is in our hearts.' But the anger at death very easily merged into anger against human enemies. 'If the men of two chiefdoms or two villages were present at a burial they would quarrel and fight. The fight began when one hurled his spear into the ground and thus spewed the earth over someone else. Perhaps there would be only a few dancing at first and many sitting down, but when a neighbouring chief was seen approaching with his men, and the sound of the trumpets was heard, those already there would say: "If we sit still they will say there are no men but only women at this funeral. Let us dance too." So they would all get up and dance, and if the others did anything there would be war. Now the custom of the war dance is dying out. We chiefs control it, and when another chief comes to a funeral we tell all our men to sit down while he and his men dance at the grave, because if we do not, the war of old times is liable to break out.' 721 764

In fact peace has been effectively enforced among the Nyakyusa.[2] We neither saw nor heard of a fight in the three years we were there. Thus mutual dependence in war is no longer a strong sanction for village unity. The joint responsibility for certain 721 672 673 177

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939.)

[2] A contrast to Pondoland or Zululand.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde [illegible]
Nyakyusa

721 torts committed by its members has also disappeared. Instead,
672 there is both a great increase in the number of cases treated as
673 offences against the state; murder, manslaughter and grievous
177 bodily injury being no longer treated as offences against a group of kin, but as crimes against the state; and a great extension in the *range* of law. A modern Nyakyusa has no difficulty in suing a debtor, or the seducer of his wife, living in another chiefdom.

621 Nevertheless neighbours still feel a certain obligation for the
672 maintenance of each other's rights. For example, a certain young man eloped with a very young girl, who, though betrothed, had not yet reached puberty. On their way out of the district they were seen by a 'village father' of the girl, who brought them back to her father, and then joined with him and other neighbours in beating the young man and taking him to the chief. The youth admitted his fault in seducing so young a girl and asked the chief to summon his father-in-law (for he was already married) that he might borrow from his father-in-law the cattle with which to pay the fine for seduction. But his father-in-law was a neighbour of the father of the girl he had seduced, and he refused to lend any cattle, saying, 'You have run off with the daughter of my neighbour in the village: that means you have wronged *me*.'

839 And a group of herd-boys are still liable to be treated by their
672 fathers as responsible for one another. One informant, discussing a case of bestiality committed by a herd-boy, remarked that the leader of the group forbade the others to mention it at home on the ground that 'if our fathers know they will say that we all (in this herd group) do it.'

d. Social separation

681 One of the mechanisms for maintaining good relations in Nyakyusa villages (as in all groups) is the separation of the dissident individual from the group.[1] This separation may be compulsory or voluntary. As we have seen, witches, thieves, adulterers, and obstinate debtors were formerly banished from Nyakyusa villages because they were regarded as a danger to their neighbours, liable to harm them directly or to bring retribution upon them. The village, being held responsible for certain actions of its members, and forming a defensive unit against the sup-

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 60-1.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tion is already as important beyond as within the village, and village control over the main cash crops has not been established, as it was over certain food crops. With increasing centralization the village headman, embodiment of the solidarity and relative autonomy of each village, is losing power to the chiefs and courts, on the one hand, and to the specialist agriculturalists, school teachers, elders, and ministers of religion on the other. 621 476 178

Friendships beyond the age-village are fostered by common experiences at a boarding school or a labour centre, and by common interests as members of a church or a coffee co-operative which does not necessarily include fellow villagers. And most important of all, fellow villagers are not bound to one another in resistance to external dangers as they were formerly. Lion, leopard, and buffalo still exist in the district, but we heard of no recent case of a village combining for defence against dangerous (as distinct from destructive) game: if action were necessary a European sportsman was usually glad of the chance of a bag. With the cessation of cattle-raiding and inter-village warfare, the curtailment of the right of self-help, and the development of courts with power to enforce judgement in cases involving members of different chiefdoms, dependence on fellow villagers for protection from material dangers and the responsibility of a village for the actions of its members, virtually cease. A sense of dependence upon neighbours for mystical protection lingers, but as elementary education, belief in Christian dogma, and the solidarity of Christian congregations increase, this supposed dependence upon the *amanga* or mystical power of neighbours also lessens. Many men who fear sorcery (including poisoning) do not fear witchcraft, and it is only against witches that neighbours are believed to protect one. Thus change in the form of beliefs is correlated with the development of more intense relationships beyond the village. 621 178 571 572

An age-village organization is probably dependent upon isolation in another fashion also: by their own account the Nyakyusa feeling that close association between successive generations is improper has been blunted by the example of Europeans and Swahili who do not share this feeling (*vide supra*, p. 69). The missionaries teach that avoidance between father- and daughter-in-law is unnecessary, if not in itself sinful, and the implication is that only 'superstition' maintains the taboo (*vide* 621 177 784 178

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 *supra*, p. 84). The Nyakyusa pattern of avoidance has undoubtedly influenced that of the small groups absorbed by them,
177 but they in turn have been influenced by these groups, and by the
784 example of Christians of neighbouring tribes. In Ilolo avoidance
178 between father- and daughter-in-law is much less strict than in Selya. This was attributed partly to the influence of neighbouring small groups of Nyika and Penja, who had not the same tradition of strict avoidance as the Nyakyusa, and partly to the influence of the Christians, whose number was proportionately greater in Ilolo than in Selya. As Nyakyusa informants argued: the pagans see Christian women disregard avoidance taboos, and they see that nothing dreadful happens to them (as the result of their neglect), so the pagans, too, begin to think that avoidance is of no importance.

621 The relationship between the generations is also modified
561 among the Nyakyusa, as among other African people, by the
178 power of young men to earn money and so command wealth. As we have seen, sons are in a position to *invite* their fathers to drink beer in the father's own homestead. Once fathers and sons have begun to *ukwangala*, drinking beer together, and once the horror of a woman seeing her father-in-law has diminished, then there is much less insistence on the need to buttress separation of the generations by territorial segregation. When convenient, fathers and sons will continue to live apart, but if a building site and arable land near his age-mates is lacking a son may suggest that avoidance does not really matter after all, and his father (if a Christian or a sceptic) may agree to the son building near him.

621 Nyakyusa age-villages still flourish, but they are hardly likely
561 to survive many decades with increasing pressure on land, the
178 planting of coffee and other long-term crops, the development of trade and migration, and a diminishing isolation from the ideas and values of the outside world. Age is no longer the sole basis for village grouping in Rungwe district—common belief and common occupation now provide other grounds for building together. There are Christian villages, an administrative station, a military station, and trading centres such as Mwaya, the Lake port. Tukuyu (the administrative centre) has its police lines, quarters for hospital attendants, traders' quarters, and so on,
000 while Masoko has soldiers' and traders' quarters. This account of age-villages may therefore have some significance as a docu-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

6. CHANGE IN THE RELATION OF FATHERS AND SONS

Record of G. W.

561 Mwambuputa, the headman, was building himself a new house with the help of six other men. He invited us to wait and join in the 177 beer and bananas, which were about to be served.

264 A boy came to call two of the builders to enjoy the company (and food?) of some other friends. They went off. It turned out that these two were from the boys' village, Katumba, one being a 'son' of Mwambuputa, and the other a friend of this 'son'. They had been eating and drinking with the rest of us.

Q.: 'In the old days, would these two have eaten and drunk with you—boys with men? Would you have called them to help you build?'

'No, formerly that was not the custom. Though we should have called them to help us build, they would not have drunk beer, and they would have eaten their calabash of milk separately, over there (pointing to a corner of the hut), while we men were here with our food and beer.'

Q. 'How is it then that the customs have changed, that now you eat, and even drink, with them?'

'You brought it yourselves, you Europeans. You sit down with your children at table and eat together, and the Swahili do the same. So we say: "He! Formerly we hated our children!" We said: "Eat over there." Let us eat with them!'

Q.: 'No, that does not convince us at all. The Europeans are strangers. How many of you have been into a European's house and seen them eating? Only the house-boys!'

Mwambuputa: 'All right, ask the others!'

Mwalubunju: 'Let me speak! In the old days, because there was war, we objected very much to the young men drinking beer with us. If we all drank together and the war cry was raised we should all be defeated. And men did not begin drinking in the morning, never! They began in the late afternoon when the cows came home . . . and in the evening each went home to his own house . . . but now, since the country is at peace, the young men also drink beer.'

Q.: 'Yes, but still I don't see why you drink *with* them. Why not give them a separate pot? And you eat with them, too.'

Mwambuputa: 'Because, as Mwalubunju has said, the country has fallen to you. It is at peace and there is no war, so the young men buy

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

their own beer.[1] Sometimes my son brings his pot to my place and calls his friends, saying: "We will take the pot to mother's house. She will pour in water for us." Then they come to my place and they invite me to drink and I accept and we drink together. How then can I grudge my son beer when I have some? Did he and his friends not entertain me'?

[1] This, of course, is not so much a result of peace as of new opportunities of gaining wealth on the Lupa gold-fields and elsewhere, but to the Nyakyusa the two things go together as 'European times' (*ikisungu*).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

mediate ancestors of the participants, and another set which concern chiefdoms and groups of chiefdoms, and are directed towards the immediate ancestors of ruling chiefs and certain distant ancestors of the chiefs' line, heroes in Nyakyusa history. The name of one of these heroes, Kyala, has been used by the missionaries to translate the word 'God', but all the evidence available goes to show that Kyala was, traditionally, but one of several distant ancestors to whom regular sacrifices were made on behalf of a large group of chiefdoms. All the rituals of this type—those directed to family shades, the chiefs' ancestors, and the heroes—are concerned with that which is beneath (*pasi*), not that which is above. Men look to the earth where corpses are buried, not to any sky god.

The theme of the present volume is the rituals celebrated by kinsmen at death, at the puberty and marriage of a girl (the last two events usually coinciding), at birth, especially twin birth, and in misfortune. A further volume will deal with the communal rituals celebrated before the annual break of the rains; whenever public misfortune such as drought, flood, famine, or plague occurs or threatens; before battle; and when a chief is succeeded by his sons, and the younger generation take over power from their elders. There is no circumcision or initiation of men other than the 'coming out' ceremony, when a whole generation takes over responsibility for the administration and defence of the chiefdom from their fathers. Some reference to three of the heroes—Kyala, Lwembe, and Mbasi—is made in texts on the rituals of kinsmen, but our discussion of them is postponed to the second book in which the rituals directed to them are described.

A section of the Nyakyusa people is Christian and its influence on pagan thought and practice is appreciable; however, discussion of this is also postponed to the second book, since it is most evident in the changing concept of Kyala. There, too, the connections between change in ritual and other aspects of the social structure between 1934 and 1955 are analysed.

The Nyakyusa cult of senior relatives (like any ancestor cult) is not intelligible or significant apart from a study of kinship, and it may be argued that this material should be presented only as part of an analysis of Nyakyusa kinship, but we cannot discuss everything at once and some measure of abstraction is necessary. No one ritual among the Nyakyusa is fully intelligible without reference to the whole series of rituals. The principle, propounded forty-five years ago by Professor Radcliffe-Brown, that a symbol

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

761 765 775 the lives and enter the dreams of their kinsmen; but the nature of their survival is uncertain.

775 765 A man, when he dies, is believed to join his ancestors. Until the end of the funeral rites, they say, he is on the way and if the ritual is not properly performed he does not reach them, but troubles the dreams and lives of the survivors until he is properly driven away. 'If you do not perform the ritual for your father or mother you may go mad or else have a slow and lingering death.'

177 775 797 Many of the younger pagans, however, are affected by Christian belief. Young men spoke confidently of going after death 'to a fine country with dancing and feasting and a chief to rule us'. But many old men scoff at such beliefs. 'They have learnt them from the missionaries—how do they know, have they been there to see?' Among some of the younger men also the ritual of death is less important than it used to be. As one Christian said: 'The pagans no longer fear to die away from home—they used to fear very much to die in a strange country (and many still do), they thought: "If I die far from home I shall never reach my ancestors, for people will not bury me properly." Nor do all the young men now fear if they fail to attend a father's funeral ritual.' 'We no longer believe in the old rituals,' said a sophisticated young pagan, 'because we see that the Christians do not do these things and nothing happens to them.'

761 753 754 An additional reason for fearing death is the Nyakyusa belief in the contagious character of many diseases. Death is thought to be caused sometimes by witchcraft, and sometimes by one of a variety of diseases. Of these diseases some are held to be hereditary and to run in families, and they are usually non-contagious; others, and they are usually contagious, are believed to be due to the sorcery of enemies. And the contagion is thought to be spread by an autopsy. It is especially dangerous to relatives; other people do not fear these diseases unless they actually hold the corpse in their arms, or dig the grave, or help to bury it, but all relatives are afraid.

764 Besides the contagion of specific diseases, the corpse itself is held always to have a vaguely defined, but none the less fearful, contagion of its own. And, because of this, all who have had any close contact with the body go to bathe immediately after the burial. Those of the chief mourners who hold the body in their arms, the grave-diggers and those who get down into the grave to bury it, all go to bathe. 'Even when death is no due to a contagious disease

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

it seems as if there was another disease in the corpse itself, it is a 764
stinking mass of disease.' Traditionally they use two medicinal plants to wash with, but in some chiefdoms near mission stations they now wash without them. The chief of one such country explained: 'In the old days they feared very much to eat before bathing—but now sometimes they just wash their hands and eat. [177]
Of old they feared death, they feared lest the disease should spread, they wished to rid themselves of the contamination of the corpse. They used to wash with two plants—as medicine. Now they just bathe in the stream or sometimes only just wash their hands.' But, [184]
particularly in chiefdoms at a distance from the centres of European influence, the fear of the contagion of death is still very strong.

Death then is, for the majority of pagan Nyakyusa, a fearful as 761
well as a grievous event; less fearful than it used to be to their 184
fathers, but more fearful by far to them than it is to their Christian neighbours.

(c) *The sacrifice*

At all except the very poorest burials one or more head of cattle 764
are killed. Cows are provided whenever possible, but, if no cows are available, bulls may be used instead. If the man who has died left cattle of his own, one at least of his herd is killed; if he has left none, his family make every effort to buy or borrow one, or else they provide one themselves from their own herds. If the dead man was rich, several of his cows will be killed. If his senior son has cattle of his own, he should kill one for his father (*ikumbamba*) and if there are a number of grown-up sons the senior of each group of full brothers will offer a cow.

Not only the immediate family of a dead man but also the 764
fathers (or brothers) of his wives and the husbands of his full 602
sisters and daughters are expected to provide cows for killing at his burial, and if he is buried at his 'father's' place then his 'father's' affinal relatives also are expected to bring cattle or cloths. When a married woman dies, her husband and her own 'father' are expected each to provide a cow or a bull. Occasionally other affines of her husband bring calves, but less usually. More cattle are killed for men than for women. For a young child nothing is killed.

The cattle are killed either by the dead man's 'father' or by his 764
heir; if a woman has died, then by her husband. At a man's burial 768

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

men cut down some of the bananas which surround the huts and the open place in front of them. 'The owner has died, it is a sign to men that someone has died there.' 'We do it so that it should not seem as if he was still alive; if the bananas were not cut but all stood they would cause us to remember that he was recently alive.' 'We wish the dead man to take them with him to the land of the shades.' And for exactly the same reasons some of the calabashes and pots of a dead woman are broken at her burial, and saplings of the *ficus* used for making bark-cloth are cut down. We have seen older men get up and check the dancers from destroying too many bananas. They told us that 'in the old days we used to cut down all the bananas of a dead man and any crops that were growing near the house also; but now we think that if we destroy all the food his children will die of hunger! So we just cut down a few bananas.' This destruction of food is connected with the belief that a man, when he dies, takes the fertility of the land with him, and this loss of fertility can only be avoided by the proper performance of the funeral ritual. The present moderation of the ritual destruction of food is, we think, an index of the decline of the power of the old belief; for the fear of future hunger, which now restrains them, used to encourage them to a greater sacrifice.

764 [535] [177]

(*d*) *The wailing and dancing*

From the time of the death until the end of the three or four days of the burial rites, wailing continues intermittently. 'We weep because we grieve and tremble with fear.' The old women are the most persistent, next come the men and boys. 'The women weep all the time; even at night they only sleep a little, weeping and sleeping and then weeping again! But we men weep just once, when we first arrive, we do not go on and on.' The chief mourners (*abenemfwa*: lit. owners of the death) among the women, that is the mother, stepmothers, wives, sisters, daughters, and brothers' wives, spend most of the time inside one of the huts, which is the centre of the wailing. The other women spend some time inside the hut, wailing with the chief mourners, but then they move to make way for others and sit just outside. On the plain and in Selya they sit packed close together and sway rhythmically as they wail in chorus, following a leader who stands in their midst. Tears roll down her face as she chants short phrases ending in the high-pitched wail: 'Alas father! Alas! Aaaaaaaaaaaa! Farewell! Go So-and-so, farewell . . .: we long for you, Father, farewell!' In the

764 184

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

dead man'. Sometimes, immediately after the burial, the chief mourners, both men and women, wail outside near the newly-filled grave. 764

Very many of the women relatives, a few of the men relatives, and some of the neighbours smear their heads and faces with mud or pot-black as a sign of grief (*kyo kesa*). Such an expression of grief is thought extravagant by the Christians who have themselves abandoned the custom. One Christian explained: 'The pagans smear themselves with mud because they tremble with fear at a death—but we do not tremble; the pagans are very sorrowful because they say: "Our friend has vanished from our eyes and we shall never meet him happily again."' 764 177

It is also the custom for the women relatives to bind one another's bellies with strips of bark-cloth, and for their woman friends to bind them also. These bark-cloth belts are called *amakiba* and symbolize the fearful grief and mutual sympathy of the mourners, and the sympathy of their friends. One women, who was taking two belts to tie up the bellies of two mourning friends whose husband had died, explained: 'I give them these to tie round their bellies because they are all a-tremble, they are full of fear.' And when she was asked why men did not thus support one another, she replied: 'They are not afraid like women, they do not tremble much.' But there is evidence that, before the coming of the Europeans, men also wore *amakiba* 'and even now if a chief dies his men often wear *amakiba* for one day'. The Christian women have kept the custom, but they emphasize more the aspect of sympathy and less that of fear. 'If a woman wears many belts at a burial that means she has many friends; her passionate grief is comforted by their friendship.' 292 764 [177] [572]

Sometimes on the first day, and usually on the last two or three days of a burial, there is dancing as well as wailing. Dancing begins late in the morning to the accompaniment of three or four drums, in the swept courtyard of the dead man's homestead; gradually it attracts more and more dancers, more and more of the attention of the onlookers, until the wailing is confined to the chief women mourners inside the hut, and the dance is the most conspicuous part of the proceedings. It is led by young men dressed in a special costume of ankle-bells and cloth skirts and, traditionally, bedaubed with red and white clay. All hold spears and leap wildly about, stamping down the soft earth of the grave as they dance. There is little common movement, each dances 535 764 [292] [302]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN1
Nyakyusa

764 alone as if fighting a single combat. Among the men some of the
535 women move about, singly or in twos and threes, calling the war-cry and swinging their hips in a kind of rhythmical walk. Under a tropical sun in a damp heat, with the thermometer often over 90° F. in the shade, they dance for hours. In the dust and noise and excitement there are no very apparent signs of grief; and yet if you ask the onlookers what it is all about they reply: 'They are mourning the dead.'

764 This burial dance is traditionally a dance of war; now, as also
535 in former times, it provides those men who are most affected by
721 grief and fear with a violent and passionate means of expres-
177 sion, in which their feelings are assuaged by the touch of life; for the others it was, in the old days, an assertion of their own and their dead neighbour's warlike quality, and this significance is still vividly present to their minds; but, after a generation and more of peace, its content is changing and the sexual element, always present in it, is rapidly dominating the old memories.

764 'This war-dance (*ukukina*)', said an old man, 'is mourning, we
535 are mourning the dead man. We dance because there is war in
721 our hearts. A passion of grief and fear exasperates us (*ilyejo likuturila*).' Since this statement is the clue to both the present and the traditional meaning of the war-dance for the chief mourners, we must examine the language carefully. *Ilyejo* means a passion of grief, anger or fear; *ukurila* means to annoy or exasperate beyond endurance. In explaining *ukurila* one man put it like this: 'If a man continually insults me then he exasperates me (*ikurila*) so that I want to fight him.' Death is a fearful and grievous event that exasperates those men nearly concerned and makes them want to fight. The chief mourners and personal friends among the women assuage their feelings in the wailing, among the men in the war-dance. 'A kinsman, when he dances, assuages his passionate grief (*ilyejo*); he goes into the house to weep and then he comes out and dances the war-dance; his passionate grief is made tolerable in the dance (lit. he is able to endure it there, in the dance), it bound his heart and the dance assuages it.'

This exasperated and fearful grief was linked in traditional expression with a general salute to the warlike quality of man. Those of old said: 'The dead man was a lively dancer in battle, and now he is dead we dance for him, he too was a fighting dancer!' 'He was a warrior (lit. a man of the spear), we dance now, as he danced himself, the dance of war.' And this salute at the same time gave

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 Besides fighting, the dancers indulge in an orgy of destruction,
535 slashing at the bananas and *ficus* saplings (which surround the
721 swept courtyard) with their spears.

764 The dance was thus, traditionally, a common form for the ex-
535 pression by the dancers of a considerable range of emotions, vary-
152 ing from an intolerable burden of grief and fear to a recognition of and salute to the warlike quality of the dead man and a vivid consciousness of their own. And this last feeling passed easily into actual fighting.

764 To-day it is not so much into the excitements of warfare that
534 the feelings turn, but rather into those of love. Burial dances are
832 the occasions of much sexual display, of the beginning of some love affairs and the consummation of others, and this is nothing new. 'At a death people did not want war (though it came sometimes), they wanted love-making: they displayed the pride of their strength!' 'We speared one another . . . our wives called the war-cry when they saw the strength of their husbands.'

177 Dances of sexual display, on occasions other than burials, are
535 traditional among the Nyakyusa; but all our informants are
837 unanimous in declaring that both these other dances and the dances of burial are far more frequently followed by lovers' meetings than they used to be. For the enforcement of peace among the Nyakyusa has been accompanied by the prohibition of violence of any kind; and this has freed sexual passion from its rigid tradi-
[689] tional bonds. Girls are married young and engaged younger; and while formerly any man who seduced or even flirted with another man's betrothed or wife was speared or tortured by the husband and his friends if they caught him, such punishments are now illegal and the present fine of cattle is a far less effective deterrent. 'In the old days love-making only went on in secret; if a man stood and talked to a woman he expected to be speared. But now the Europeans have introduced the custom of making love openly!' (i.e. by forbidding the previous penalties.)

764 For all the younger men and women, save the chief mourners
535 and close friends, the quality of the burial dance is now pre-
832 dominantly and openly sexual. But the older people are, on the one hand, more conscious of its warlike associations and, on the other hand, inclined to regard the whole occasion more soberly than their juniors. 'There are two reasons for coming to a burial: the old men come to mourn their friend, they say: "Let us go and mourn him"; but the young men say: "Let us follow the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tradition of the leaping dance and show ourselves to the girls!" 764
And so it is with the women, some of the young women do not 535
come to mourn but to call the war-cry to the boys! Those who 832
come to mourn go into the hut and weep and weep. The young men say that they dance by reason of the women. The old men say that in the past it was different, it was war; the women ran behind the fighters watching the battle and calling the war-cry. And we all say that the present custom of dancing is the softer custom of a peaceful land.'

As the old significance of the dance to the majority of the participants was a lively salute to the dead man's fighting quality and a heightened sense of their own, so now it is his sexual quality which they honour and their own which they enjoy. 'Why', we asked a young man, 'do you dance nowadays at burials? There is little or no warfare and the dead man was never a fighter!' His answer came almost in the traditional form of words: 'We think that he too danced before the women, he was a brave dancer (*magi*), and so we too dance (*ukukina*) at his death.'

'He too was a brave dancer (*magi*).' The word *magi* is from the 535
verb *ukumaga* which refers to the ordinary dances of sexual display 764
in contrast to the war-dance (*ukukina*). It is the war-dance which 721
is still normally danced at death. Not only, however, is its signi- 832
ficance being assimilated to that of the ordinary dances of recre- 177
ation, as this quotation clearly shows, but these other dances are now often performed at burials. Near Rungwe Mission the pagans dance the war-dance on the first day of a burial and sometimes on the second day as well, but always on the third day the dance is changed. The men abandon cloth skirts, spears, and ankle-bells [292]
and put on their best clothes, an ample white toga being particularly fashionable; the women adorn themselves with great care and some put roses in their hair. The dance is no longer a wild mêlée, but is slow and graceful; and its sexual significance is now apparent, not only in the faces of the dancers and the comments of the bystanders, but also in the forms of movement.

This custom is new. None of the chief mourners takes part in the 535
dance, though they watch it. In the war-dance, however, the chief 764
mourners among the men are expected to participate, and some 721
of them always do so. 'The (men) relatives dance if they have 177
strength, they weep first and then dance. For if they all sit still and no one of them dances we others say that they have not mourned him properly.' But they do not all dance. One old man whose

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

535 764 721 177 brother had just been buried said: 'Those who are really sad sit quite still and silent.' But he was an old man with little strength for dancing; on the first day of his brother's burial he sat still, but on the second day he danced a little.

As for the women who participate in the war-dance, running about among the men and calling the war-cry, their behaviour is clearly distinguished in accordance with their relationship to the dead man. 'The distant (women) relatives dance in their dirt, they cannot adorn themselves much, but non-relatives adorn themselves. The wives and sisters of a dead man and the nearer women relatives are the chief mourners and they cannot dance at the burial. They are truly grieved. If a wife danced we'd say she did not love her husband—well, perhaps she might wander round distraught to the sound of the drums, but with grief on her face and without looking at the young men! If she looked at the young men we'd say she did not love her husband. If a brother's wife danced we should laugh at her and say she was no kinswoman of the dead man! But for a man it is different, he dances with his grief to enable his heart to bear it. In the old days, if there was a fight, the chief women mourners did not follow and call the war-cry, but the others; all the men went to fight but not all the women to watch.'

535 764 177 832 727 Our observation shows that there is just as much dancing at the burials of women as at those of men. Here too the dance, as now performed, combines the two functions: assuaging the fearful grief of some people and providing a sexual display in honour of the dead: 'We dance at her burial, for she too was a brave dancer (*mogi*).' But in the old days also there was dancing at women's burials: 'For a woman', one old man explained, 'bears us men, so that she too is a warrior.' 'In the past,' said another old man, 'we did dance at women's burials, only a little, not so much as at men's; we said that she was only a woman, but that none the less she also was concerned in war.'

The change in the quality of the burial dance is one of emphasis only; in the past also the sexual element was present: 'We danced so that the women should see our strength'—but it was not dominant. And the warlike quality which was then dominant has by no means disappeared; we heard of many spear-fights at burial dances. At one of them the chief, in order to prevent its continuance, made the dancers abandon the war-dance and finish the funeral with the ordinary dances of sexual display.

781 764 The emotional quality of mourning (*ukulila*) is different in

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

764 i. *Kasitile's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. in Nyakyusa and
765 translated by him shortly afterwards.)[1]
775

KASITILE: We go to bathe wearing leaves, we throw them away, we bathe, then we come back and shave our hair. This means we are driving away the shade (*unyuka*), for at first he is in our bodies. Our fathers told us: 'When I die I shall not reach the place of the shades unless you do the ritual for me; those who preceded me will drive me back saying: "You are not one of us, you cannot come, they have not yet done your ritual." For the shades linger on the way at first, they do not reach their place.' We do the ritual so as to tell the shade: 'We have given you everything, now go away and may your fellow shades receive you, do not come here.'

764 When we return from bathing we put a banana in the ground with
765 a pumpkin-seed and a lentil in it. We stoop and bite a piece off, and
828 then we shave the hair. There is much idiocy (*ubulema*) if you do not *perform the ritual, and madness (ikigili), or perhaps you will have a* lingering death. The shade is in the body, he causes madness (*ikigili*), he says: 'Why have you not done the ritual?' The shades pound and stamp the body.

Mwambuputa (a village headman) joining in the conversation said:

775 All this round us [with a sweeping gesture] is the place of the shades.
764 What we have buried is only the body, to prevent it stinking, but the heart (*indumbula*) stays here.

KASITILE: The banana which we bite in the ground is like the
764 sausages of porridge of the Kukwe, it is excrement, it is filth; because
765 I think that if I do not perform the ritual I may run mad and eat filth.
828 Also before this they beat up a mash of cowpeas, they take it with a spoon and put it against the wall, and one by one we come and eat. This also is eating filth so that we may escape and be clean.

• [177] Madness (*ikigili*)[2] is of two kinds, one comes from Kyala (but we used to say from Mbasi, we did not say Kyala) and one from ritual. Mwaipopo (the chief) had the madness (*ikigili*); it is in his family on his mother's side. This is the madness of Mbasi, they do their rituals all right. Mbasi is he who lived with my father here. He called 'Kanjuki! Kanjuki!' from the hillside; then my mother would cook him some food
764 and my father would put something out for him.[3] When we perform
765 the rituals the shades are very pleased to see it; of old you might hear
775 them clapping their hands in the evening here, after we had finished a
826 ritual. But they have gone away now. . . . Yes, the shades are filthy

[1] I have made minor changes in the translation.
[2] Distinguished from a trance or epileptic fit, *ukukwata umulogo*.
[3] See *Communal Rituals among the Nyakyusa* (in preparation).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mungonde

764 water when we bathe we make a separation—they take a stem of
765 bananas, and a bark-cloth, and a hen to the water. The bananas they
775 throw away—that is the corpse; the hen and the bark-cloth they bring
828 back to the homestead and the officiant takes them home with her—that is the shade, is not the shade in the house with us? Do we not pray to him?

QUESTION: Putting food into the pot?

KASITILE: This food is the filth of the body. We say: 'We cast you from us, let our hearts be purified; the mud we smeared on our faces we cast it away, all our body casts you away. We are not corpses; we are putting you to rights and shaving your hair, go away to your fellows.' We begin to get rid of the earth we had on our faces so that we may anoint ourselves again. In our lineage we eat only bean mash, not bananas and millet porridge, we differ in our rituals.

QUESTION: The sweeping of rubbish on to legs and the weeping?

KASITILE: This means: 'We begin to cast you off wholly, let all the ritual that is left come to us, we throw it away.' The measures of millet are to tell the shade that So-and-so has brought millet and is doing his ritual. 'Do not think he is angry with you,' we tell him, 'he has brought this millet.' The throwing of millet from the winnowing basket on to the participants' heads as they stand in a line outside means that we cast him away, we are taking him to the river—at the river we throw away the corpse. They throw away the leaves and the stem of bananas.

QUESTION: Hitting the heads with a banana sapling in the doorway?

KASITILE: They hit the participants on the head, that is the *ndweka* disease of the dead man,[1] we are setting them to rights.

QUESTION: The stem of bananas, hen, and bark-cloth?

KASITILE: The stem of bananas is the corpse, they leave it in the water with the leaves; the bark-cloth and hen are the shade which they bring into the house.

QUESTION: The circling with the pot and putting in of food?

KASITILE: This is the shade whom they bring into the house (*bikumbeka*) when they have brought him from the water. The banana flower they bury is the same as the leaf they wear, it is the corpse which they throw away in the water.

Yes, we separate the corpse and the shade with all our might, the earth we rub our bodies in is the corpse, we throw it into the water and the shade we bring back to the house. The eating of the bean mash on
[177] the wall (the old custom) and on the hearth (both old and contemporary) that is the shade in the house. He warms himself by the fire in the house, we pray to him. Putting food into the pot means: 'Leave our

[1] Not clear to me.—M. W.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

764 Then they explained to me that formerly it was forbidden to
●177 scrape bananas at a death, you eat them with the ash on, for if you scrape you will scrape your body also, that is, you will scratch and scratch. But now that custom is finished. Three men were scraping away.

784 Mwaikambo said: 'In all rituals it is forbidden to scrape bananas —in the puberty and twin rituals also.'

184 KASITILE: It is forbidden to scrape bananas only at a death ritual,
784 not at other rituals. If you scrape bananas you scrape your own body. It is the corpse. We have died, we are the corpse. . . .

604 The mother's brother (*umusipwa*) hands bananas and meat over his
781 shoulder to the children who are treated, then he goes off home and
764 they go home without looking back at one another. If they do look back at one another the child will grow feeble and go mad. If the mother's brother does not come to cut the banana grove and do this, if the child sees others eating that banana it becomes feeble and goes mad. The banana and the meat are the filth which madmen take hold of, they are filth. Yes, it is like the banana which they eat at the pumpkin-seeds ritual.

QUESTION: Why the mother's brother?

KASITILE: Who should give it to them? Their kinsman (*unkamu*) should give it to them, he who looks after everything for them.

ii. *Mwandisi's interpretation.*[1]

764 QUESTION: What do you do in the death ritual, what does it mean?

MWANDISI: When a child has died I do not approach the women, my wives, until we have finished the ritual. On the night of the day we drink the beer then we come together. It is a ritual! Yes, the coming
[833] together of man and woman is a ritual (*bo bunyago*). If we come together before the beer then we overstep our child, Lubabelo, he will be impotent and not beget children. No, his children are not relatives (*bo bunda*) they are my comrades (*bobisangu*) but if Lubabelo forestalls (*ukukinda*) the ritual with his wife then he oversteps (*ukukinda*) his children. And when we have finished the ritual Lubabelo begins[2] and goes first to his wife. We follow him at our home. If we begin we would overstep him, it is taboo (*musiko*). At the ritual of pumpkin-seeds, we drive away the shade, we say: 'Do not rise from the dead and come to us, go to the land of the shades, that we may bear and beget another child, you prevent us doing so!'

[1] His son Lubabelo, who was with us during the earlier part of the conversation, left so that we could speak freely. There was no difficulty about Mwandisi's wife being present.

[2] Mwandisi was referring to a ritual performed on the death of his son Lubalelo's child.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde
Ku Kwe

ritual is powerful. If you do not perform the ritual for your father or 764
perhaps that of your wife then you won't be a person, your body 775
comes to an end and you die, but you are present, you are still alive, you do not die when the body comes to an end, you take faeces as in the ritual. But when they bring millet and say: 'This is so-and-so's, and this so-and-so's' (naming him whose ritual you have omitted) and brew beer and drink it, then you die.

QUESTION: How do the dead appear to us?

ANSWER: They appear before our eyes at night. You dream and in the morning say: 'I was with the so-and-so's in the night, with the so-and-so's!

QUESTION: Where do you go (at death)?

ANSWER: When we die we go above. [177]

QUESTION: That's a new thing?

ANSWER: Yes, indeed, formerly we said we went below; our fathers and grandfathers said that. But we now say we go below to rot and stink only but since we look toward home when they bury us perhaps the heart (*indumbula*) goes above (*kumwanya*) and that is home. We have seen this in European times in books. No, I am not a Christian and I cannot read, I've just learnt this. . . .

KALUNDA (a doctor) AND MWAIJUMBA: The *ikipiki* medicine put into the beer and lees at 'the shaving of the sprouting hair' is the same medicine as that which we eat at the pumpkin-seed ritual. The *ikipiki* of the death ritual and the puberty ritual and the birth ritual is one and the same, but the medicine for twins is different. . . . There is one *ikipiki* used in all the three rituals—puberty, birth, and death—but to it is added another medicine which is different for each of the three. *Ikipiki* is our kinship, it is our blood (*ikipiki bo bukamu bwetu, lyo ilopa lyetu*); when my wife has borne a child and no one wipes its mouth with [85] the *ikipiki* it means it is not my child, it is just a bastard from the veld, it is no relative of mine but a stranger. In the puberty ritual it is [81] the same, we treat the girl with the *ikipiki* of her husband. She moves from our lineage, from that of her father, she is now a stranger, not their relative (*ikusama nkikolo kyetu, kubaguise, mundu leleno, aka nkamu gwabo*). When someone has died it is the same. We eat food together with the deceased, the shade, and his blood. It is like the Swahili custom of eating each other's blood to create kinship. It means: 'You were our [171] kinsman from afore-time, but now it is finished, you are a stranger.' But the medicine for the twin ritual is separate, it is quite different.

2. IN KUKWE COUNTRY

The Kukwe ritual of death differs in detail from that of Selya 764
and MuNgonde, but it is performed with the same overt purpose: 184
to drive away the dead from the bodies and dreams of the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KaKwe

764 prepared earlier) and ties a strip of medicated banana bark round the neck of each, and with these necklaces on they must sleep. In one lineage they take little horns and blow into them and walk round calling out: 'We are driving you away, you are a stranger to us, do not come in dreams repeatedly.'

Next morning sausages of millet porridge mixed with medicine are half-buried in the earth at the cross-roads—or somewhere on the pathway—and each participant in turn bends down and bites off a piece, leaving some in the ground. They take off their bark necklaces and throw them into the little hut, which is then destroyed. After they have bathed again the officiant strokes each one on the forehead with a razor.

768 587 When a married man has died the heir is formally recognized, and the widows are asked whether they accept him as their husband, at some point during the ritual; when Mwaikambo's father died the recognition of the heir preceded the whole ritual; more often it follows it and there is a formal drinking of 'the beer of inheritance'. In any case the first intercourse between the heir and the widows is always delayed for some months and, until it has taken place, the widows may meet their relatives; after it each widow returns to the homestead of her father (or his heir) for the 'ritual of the gasping cough' (*ingotolo*). Old Fibombe, a Christian elder, described it vividly:

768 177 587 The parents of the girl brew beer and call her to the beer of *ingotolo*. They also call their relatives. She brings a hoe or a goat (or now a cloth or 1s.). First of all she lifts up the pot of beer into which an officiant has put powdered medicine (*imbondanya*) and takes a mouthful, stirring the rest, then she hands it to another participant and when he has taken a mouthful she spits out, then she stirs and hands it on, and when the next has taken a mouthful she spits, and so it continues until all present have done this. Nowadays people do not take the beer in their mouths, they simply stir and pass it on. Pride prevents them. They say people will laugh at them if they do the things of old. Time is passing and things are like *Mambo Leo* [the Swahili newspaper] now. All [184] pagans, however, still do this ritual in a modified form, only the Christians leave it undone.

768 587 This informant omitted two significant points in the ritual which we saw for ourselves: the widow brings a spear belonging to her new husband and thrusts it into the earth outside her father's house. It stands beside the vessel of beer while her kinsmen drink until her brother plucks it out and takes it into the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

house. Then she goes in and steals a piece of firewood from the 768
loft[1] and runs off with it, laughing. The officiant pursues her and 587
makes her drop it and gives her medicine, while the company cry: 'A thief, a thief!' She takes the firewood back to her husband's home. 'It is a sign that she has entered her father's house, just as the spear is a sign that she has entered the house of another husband.' In rich families the new husband sends a bull which is [556]
killed and eaten at the ritual.

Our informants were agreed that 'there is no fear of the gasping cough if a woman runs away from her husband and goes to a lover', and in practice no ritual is performed when she visits her father after divorce and re-marriage, but it is perhaps significant that such a situation could scarcely have arisen in the past, since [586
divorce by agreement rarely, if ever, occurred. An adulterer fled, 177]
if he could, with his lover to another chiefdom, breaking off all [684]
relations with her kin.

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

Now we turn to the Kukwe interpretation of events. Our two 115
principal informants here were Mwasalemba, an elderly pagan man, brother to the chief Porokoto, whose wife, Syungu, acted as officiant at rituals in the chief's family, and Kakune, a young doctor who had learnt the medicines from his mother. Mwasalemba was much more coherent than Syungu herself, and his interpretation was confirmed by Kakune and numerous other informants. Again I give the interpretation of the two principal informants without any editing other than placing consecutively statements made on different occasions.

i. *Mwasalemba's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. and translated 158
by him soon afterwards.)

MWASALEMBA: Perhaps a youth, perhaps a girl, runs mad; he runs about naked so that we say: 'He's mad, why doesn't he cover himself?' He goes to the place of defaecation and takes filth and eats it: he goes into people's houses and takes things, he might even take some things from you, from a European, without fear; he knows not what he does. Sometimes, after a visit to a doctor, he recovers altogether and never has the fit again—that is the lesser kind of madness. But sometimes he 158
recovers and then the fit takes him again later—that is the more serious 757

[1] The loft (*pijula*) consists of horizontal beams running at wall level across a portion of the hut. Here every married woman keeps a supply of dry firewood. It is her private store-place which may not be touched without her permission. [422 417]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

maids and always carries a mat or cloth to screen her face from 881
her father and his contemporaries, her father's full sisters, her older brothers,[1] and her 'mothers-in-law' (*abakamwana*).[2] These she must fear and respect (*ukutila*) and so avoid. Her father-in-law and his brothers she avoids altogether from the time of her engagement, or at least after she has reached the age of 8 or 9. Her companions do not *ukutila* with her, though those of them who are already betrothed will, of course, avoid their own fathers-in-law.

During the period of seclusion the girls have two specific tasks: to weave the fine mats used as beds, and to fetch firewood. Every [285]
bride should take to her husband's home at least one fine mat (*ubunyasa*) which she has made herself, as well as several coarse ones (*imitefu*),[3] and weaving a fine mat is a lengthy task, occupying a skilful woman a month. Each girl weaves for herself, but the firewood that each must fetch is stacked in the bride's mother's loft. The bride also occupies herself hammering out bark-cloth, [287]
pleating it for the strip worn between the legs, and decorating bark-cloth belts (*vide* plate 5), so that she may have the fresh ones required during the ritual, and a supply to take with her to her husband's; but this work is not emphasized as an obligation: rather it is a recreation. Women take great pride in the decora- [531]
tion of their belts—we watched several brides making them and handing them round for the admiration of their fellows. The maids may work in the fields if required to do so, but the bride herself does not, and 'she gets fat because she does not have much work to do'. The whole ritual normally lasts about three months, but if, for some reason such as a pressing need to go out to work, the husband is in a hurry for its completion, various acts may be telescoped. The time-table depends primarily on when the marriage-cattle and food for the various feasts are ready.

From the time of first menstruation until she does it ritually, a 881
bride should neither wash nor oil herself. The prohibition is felt 515
to be a very onerous one and some girls now break it, but women 177
said 'in the old days we did not wash'. 'Girls nowadays are more cunning. We were afraid.'

[1] Some informants denied that she avoided father's sisters or brothers. Others [184]
insisted that she must avoid them because 'brothers are fathers, and father's full sisters are father'.

[2] i.e. her husband's own mother and other women he calls mother. In this account [601]
the plural 'mothers' indicates own and classificatory mothers.

[3] Nyakyusa beds are made of layers of mats laid on rollers between two logs at head [352]
and foot. One chief's bed we noted was made up of sixty-eight mats.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

the groom's mothers began to dance again. They approached the 881
group of girls and the groom's own mother took the mat off the 584
kneeling bride and spread a large scarlet cloth over her. Then she lifted her on to her shoulders and danced with her. The two parties coalesced and danced together, singing the ritual song *Tukulelela akela* (We sing a dirge). Everyone was smiling and joyful despite the song. By 3.40 the dancing was over and a large mat was spread for the 'mothers-in-law' to sit down in the shade. The bride knelt again with bent head covered by her mat and surrounded by her maids.

At this point Mwaihojo, her father, began scolding angrily because the groom's party had not brought a bull. 'Always when people come to marry my daughters they bring a bull, always. It looks as if the girl had been to visit her husband and you had found fault with her and did not like her.' The groom's mothers replied: 'We are poor.'

Mwaihojo: 'How can you say you are poor? You can find the marriage-cattle, you say. Why didn't you bring some of them? Then I would have killed one to eat now. See, I have killed a bull already. If I had known that you were not going to bring one I'd have killed another.'

The groom's mothers sat with downcast heads. For a com- 881
moner's daughter bananas and milk are adequate for the *uk-* 584
wingesia feast, but a chief has the right to expect a bull. 643

Presently the groom's own mother and one of her companions 881
entered Kyobwe's hut to roast bananas and grind some of the 584
bark of a tree they had brought for medicine. The powder was put into a small calabash with water. The bride knelt in the doorway of Kyobwe's hut and, as her mother-in-law poured out the medicated water, she washed her hands and wrists and mouth in it. The bride's half-brother, a lad of 15 or 16 years, was washed also, standing by the doorway of Kyobwe's hut, though he was most reluctant to co-operate. He kept looking towards his elder brother Lazarus, a Christian, and did not submit until Lazarus said: 'All right, go ahead!' Kyobwe, seeing his reluctance, said: 'You need not wash if you don't wish to, it doesn't matter. Perhaps we'll [177] leave it out as it's European times now.' Then finally she said: 'Well, just hold out one hand,' and she washed it. Had the bride been the eldest daughter of either of her father's two senior wives he would have washed in place of her brother, and had her own mother not been divorced she would have washed also.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

585 ried to the stream, runs in and out under the dripping water, is
881 anointed with red ointment, shares the mash of beans and bananas, and drinks medicated beer with her from the same calabash. In
[177] the old days it was taboo for either bride or groom to set foot to the ground on their way to the stream.

For a senior wife, the mother-in-law moulds hearth-bricks with powdered medicine, and sets them up in the groom's hut. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest daughter if the daughter is her first-born, or with her senior daughter-in-law if her eldest child is a boy. 'If they do not do this they go mad.'

As in Selya, an admonition of the bride by her 'mothers', in the presence of her in-laws, concludes the full 'bringing out' ritual. We never heard it in Kukwe country, but the points mentioned by informants were similar to those emphasized in Selya. Kajinga, Porokoto's second wife, summed up the teaching thus:

> Obey your husband when he calls you. Fetch water and wood. Don't say: 'First let me fetch firewood' if your husband wants you to do something else. Do what your husband says first, then to-morrow go for wood. It is forbidden to refuse when your husband wants to sleep with you. In the morning get up and wash. Wash first, then light the fire and give your husband food. Don't say: 'There isn't any food.'

585 Next day, on her return home, the bride is given presents by the
881 people of her home village (*ukugwa*), her father making the first
431 gift. The groom brings the bull of puberty on which all the 'mothers' feast, but the meat from the top of the right foreleg (*ijamapa*) is reserved for the bride's own parents who sing as they eat it:

Kyatile, Kyatile, Kyatipwe

Some days later a party of 'mothers' takes her formally to her husband's house (*ukumbeka*) with gifts of beer and food and firewood, and are feasted by the groom's people and given chickens and shillings.

5 When she is finally living with her husband, before she can visit
881 or greet her parents, the bride must put milk and a fowl (some use
783 a live fowl, others a cooked one) under her bed at night. After having had intercourse with her husband 'she takes the fowl and milk and gives them to her parents with the filth of intercourse still on her. This is called the *ilibuko*. If she does not do this her mother will fall ill and have diarrhœa.' 'When they take the food

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

585 phatic that 'if the bride does not wash with powdered medicine
881 she will go mad and she will bury children'.

Syungu, the officiant for all the rituals in Porokoto's lineage, said:

[158] If a girl goes mad, we say, if we have not treated her: 'We neglected the ritual, let us treat her.' She runs about aimlessly and makes bundles of filth. But if we have treated her we say: 'Perhaps Kyala has gone away from me. See! Nothing has been omitted, we have treated her.' And if she does not bear a child at her husband's her in-laws say to her: 'Did your father and mother not treat you?'

[753] MUNGASALWA (a middle-aged pagan): It is said that if she eats food with her fellows who sleep with their husbands they will harm (overstep) her, and she has diarrhœa. When she has been given powdered medicine, then she eats with them. . . . To lie on powdered medicine which has been sprinkled on the ground is to give the bride weight (*ubusito*), because if it is not done those who are with their husbands will overstep her and she will have diarrhœa.

[177] POROKOTO'S WIVES: In the old days we put medicine in her porridge so that she would not run away from her husband . . . not now. It's European times now.

[882] QUESTION: In Selya it is said that if she is not given powdered medicine she will be proud.

WIVES: Yes, here too. And if the girl is proud we beat her.

MUNGASALWA: Washing and catching in her hands the water that falls from her husband's hands has two meanings. In some families the husband and wife wash separately, in others they wash together. In either case the first meaning is present, in the second both meanings.

[753] It is said that when someone has not washed in the puberty ritual his or her children will die, for that water (with which he neglected to wash) will enter the child's stomach and kill it. The water is in the child's stomach but its symptoms are those of diarrhœa. The nubile girl catching water in her hands teaches us that the woman will receive

[833] everything. The man is like the upper grindstone, the woman like the nether grindstone (we speak of intercourse), which means that the women receives the semen which comes from the man.

Making fire by friction is a symbol of procreation.[1] If the fire does not kindle we say the couple are sterile. Two fire-sticks are used, one is the man the other the woman, and the fire is the child. The sawdust made by the rubbing is the semen.

KAJINGA: If the fire does not come the man is sterile and the girl will quarrel with her husband and perhaps run away. It does not mean she will be barren with other men.

[1] *Ukupegesa*: to make fire by friction; *ukwipegesa*: to masturbate.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

844 Traditionally, no man entered the confinement hut in which a woman remained
[177] until the cord had dropped off the new-born child and she had purified herself, and she did not normally resume cooking for her husband for some weeks; but these taboos are less strictly observed than formerly, partly, our informants insisted, because the country has been pacified and men do not fear to die in battle if they neglect them.

The obvious interpretation here is that a man is felt to partake of the weakness of a menstruating or confined woman if he comes into association with her. 'His legs become swollen and painful and he is very tired'; 'strength leaves him'; 'he has no speed in running'; 'his belly aches and his body grows red'. . . . The picture is surely one of a *woman's* physical weakness: a man is identified with his wife during pregnancy, observing the taboos she observes, and during menstruation and confinement he must isolate himself as far as possible from her lest he share her weakness; but none of our informants make a connection between the weakness of the woman and the weakness of the man—the interpretation is ours. The Nyakyusa were obsessed with the idea of 'filth' emanating from menstruation and childbirth; indeed, the feeling that women, by reason of their physiology and the taboo on washing during menstruation, are dirty, is cited by men as one of the reasons for not eating with them or sitting to chat with them. Only in this limited sense is the conception of ritual impurity linked with social
[171] status. Here the contrast with a Hindu society, in which states of
783] ritual impurity (basically very similar to those of the Nyakyusa) are linked with caste differences, is marked.[1]

842 The second general conception underlying the taboos of procreation is that of *ubusito*, heaviness, a condition associated with sexual intercourse, pregnancy, the python of witchcraft, and medicines.[2] A 'heavy' (*nsito*) person is dangerous to an 'empty' (*bwasi*) one, hence women sleeping with their husbands, and pregnant women avoid mothers with infants and brides in seclusion, who are 'empty'; and the 'empty' are treated to prevent diarrhœa and give them weight. Diarrhœa and 'emptiness' are closely associated.

842 The great specific against 'emptiness' is *ikipiki* medicine, used
789 in the puberty, birth, and death rituals, and even used to protect cattle against a menstruating woman. 'If a woman is the only wife

[1] cf. M. N. Srinivas, *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India* (1952).
[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 95.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

child, the beauty of the body, the blackness, has not yet come. It's dirty (*nyali*); even after it's come out it's dirty.' 'The confinement is not now feared by men, they just go in, because European times have come. There is no war now, but long ago they feared to enter, they feared to see the hair and the navel cord. They said: "We will get weary in the legs." ' 'When they went to war their legs became tied up.' During her seclusion the mother eats alone off leaves or out of special dishes, and even after she comes out of the hut she is careful not to eat with women who are 'heavy', or allow her dishes to be used by men. She has her own water-pot and calabash cup for several months. 846 [177]

To the Nyakyusa, the most dangerous point in the confinement is the loosening of the cord, and the baby is watched, day and night, to make sure that the cord does not fall between its mother's legs (*mmago*) for if that happens it is believed that the child will be sterile. As soon as the cord is safely off, mother and child are washed and shaved with *ikipiki* medicine 'to get rid of the filth', and anointed with ointment. They are given a millet porridge mixed with *ikipiki* which has been buried after dark at a cross-roads and left overnight. 'They say people will overstep the child. If they have not made porridge for him he will have diarrhœa.' The porridge is administered to the infant in the doorway of the hut. Then 'they throw out the rubbish (*ilindu*)', the litter is burnt, the hut smeared, and mother and child 'come out'. In some families the husband kills a bull, especially to make a carrying skin for the baby, but whether he kills specially or not the baby is slung in a skin which conceals it from men. [789]

Angombwike made it perfectly clear that the use of *ikipiki* in the ritual of birth has a double significance: it is to 'close up' the bowels of the child and the womb of the woman, and it is to acknowledge kinship between the mother and the new-born baby on the one hand, and the father's lineage on the other. 846 789

When a child is in the belly it is said that 'it's a person (*mundu*, i.e. a non-relative)'. When it is newly-born and has not yet eaten the *ikipiki* it is called *kanenelo*, which means that it is not yet our relative, we do not know it. The child is called *kanenelo* until the umbilical cord falls off and it eats the *ikipiki*, and comes out of the house. If an infant (*kanenelo*) dies in the house people do not mourn, they just say: 'The woman had a miscarriage.' They come to her and say: 'Have you recovered?' They do not say a child has died, and they don't say anything to relatives at a distance. As for the ritual, the mother undergoes a ritual alone, or with

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

him. They fear that if heavy ones come and speak, those who are pregnant, the child will suffer, it will become weak and exhausted on the litter, and will have constant diarrhœa. So they go to the cross-roads and mix millet flour and powdered *ikipiki* with the feather of a chicken, they give the child some in his mouth to make the motions firm, and close the bowels. They do this[1] at the cross-roads that those who pass may step over it and take the disease away. That medicine closes the bowel, it saves the stomach and bowel when heavy ones come, those who are pregnant. If we do not treat it the child becomes exhausted with diarrhœa, though the mother is all right. 789 846

It is taboo to give birth in the house, a woman bears a child outside on a pile of leaves; when she has borne the child they sprinkle powdered *ikipiki* on those leaves, but if I, the father, am angry about the child I refuse the *ikipiki*, saying: 'It's not my child, it's a bastard.' That is of old though. Now, in European times, they treat all children. Yes, now all are my children; formerly there were bastards. The *ikipiki* is our blood, it is kept in the senior wife's house. 844 [177]

There was some disagreement on this point. Nsyani, an elderly man who was already married before Europeans came to the country, when asked: 'Do you perform rituals for bastards?' replied: 'Yes, they are born with[2] my cattle (*Bapapigwe munombe syangu*).' Four other men who discussed the matter together, agreed that— 848

When a woman has borne an illegitimate child we know that the child is the child of her husband because it was born with his cattle (*munombe syake*). Whether the child is a boy or a girl, whether the genitor is known or unknown, and whether he has paid damages or not, the children belong to the woman's lord (*mwene nkikulu*). When an illegitimate child is born to an unmarried girl her fathers perform the ritual, for that 'man of the long grass' is like a bull. For an illegitimate child born to a married woman the rituals are performed by the husband, for the 'man of the long grass' is like a bull or a cock. Who is going to give a calf to a man alone, the bull who begot it?

But Lyandileko who, as a doctor and a grandmother, was intimately concerned in such matters, insisted:

If a woman has committed adultery and we do not know the man, we give her earth; it's just rubbish. If I give her medicine she and the child will die. If she has borne the child in the long grass and her father refuses to let her enter the house, non-relatives give it to her. If I, the mother, am there I give her this earth [touching the ground].

[1] The baby is not taken to the crossroads, only the *ikipiki* and millet flour.
[2] Literally *within*.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

forty-five to come and eat. 'Yesterday we just conversed, you did not eat. Now we have come to fetch you.' The mother and infants were in the little hut. Mwakobela was sitting and eating with us. They explained that of old he would not have done so. 'The people in the old days were greatly afraid—the father of twins did not meet and converse with other people, no, they were much afraid. He waited in the bananas. But since the Europeans came we do not fear. The Europeans took the twins in their arms and said: "Don't be afraid." In the old days the father of twins would take a spear and shield and dance the war-dance, and cry the war-cry, but we have dropped this custom nowadays.' 845 845 177

May 14

We visited Mwakobela and found him sitting alone making a hoe-handle. His wife was in the hut with the infants, attended by her mother. 845

May 22

We found Mwakobela hoeing a garden for beans. He told us that the elder of the twins had died two nights ago and had been buried early yesterday morning. . . .

No one came to the infant's burial; we buried him ourselves. But had he been a big child then people would have come. The doctor has not come yet [for the induction]. I have not got the millet yet. [766]

July 7

ii. *The induction* (*ukwingisia*)

We arrived about 11 a.m. and found Mwakobela and his brother sitting outside the house with several guests. They were cutting a hide to make thongs for tying up cattle. By noon there were present twelve men, twenty-two married women, three adolescent girls, six 'daughters-in-law' sitting apart, and a crowd of children.[1] The doctor, a middle-aged woman and a distant connection of Mwakobela, arrived about noon. With the help of Mwakobela's wives she built a fire outside and cooked a pot of medicines. The women sat round this fire chatting; the little girls built themselves a separate fire, and the small boys yet another. Tiny children were with their mothers. At two-fifteen the doctor started the washing. She took a little powdered medicine from a bamboo flask and put it into a calabash of cold water. She made

[1] The identity and kinship connections of those who participated are discussed in Chapter VIII.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 freshly shaved and anointed; the mother and child were also
302 rouged, and both husband and wife had on new cloths. The women explained: 'The filth is finished now', and, in answer to a question about why they shaved, they replied: 'We throw away the hair in the long grass because it is filthy.' The little girls picked up scraps of hair carefully and disposed of it in the long grass. Mwaiteteja (brother of Mwakobela) said of the shaving:

> All the children, Mwakobela's and mine, boys and girls, and our wives, shave. I, Mwaiteteja, do not. Mwakobela shaved last night. At an ordinary birth only the mother shaves. Mwanyilu and other grandsons of Mwaipopo are 'just people' [i.e. not relatives for this purpose] and do not shave, but they are treated with the hot medicines.
>
> MWANYOSO: The anointing is part of the ritual. The shaving and anointing are to show that the ritual is over. Since the birth of the twins neither the women nor the children have shaved or anointed themselves, nor we men either, but we don't anoint ourselves very much anyway. We shall all shave to-day or to-morrow, but I have shaved already because of the funeral ritual of Mwakisisi which took place two days ago.

845 Husband and wife in the hut spoke in whispers, and not even the doctor entered: 'They fear the legs.'

The doctor ranged everyone in a rough circle and she and her assistant went round smearing the forehead of each with the powder mixed with ointment. The circle soon broke up and people came up to her of their own accord to be smeared. She just dabbed a line on the forehead of each.

Then the banana suckers were cut and frayed at the end. A regular circle was formed. Mwakobela rushed out of the hut (washed, shaved and wearing a new cloth), seized two of the suckers and dipped them in the hot medicine, and splashed it on to the circle. The people yelled and ran away, only to return. He splashed them thus two or three times and then returned to the hut. The doctor continued the splashing.

Then Mwanyoso went up to the hut with a pruning hook and cut it open, crying: 'War has come!' Mwakobela and his wife and the child rushed out 'in the direction of Mwaijonga's place' [Mwakobela's father's home], followed by the whole crowd shouting: 'We are pure (*Tuli bolu*).' They ran thirty or forty yards only
• [177] and came back laughing and talking. Mwakobela said: 'In the old days I'd have taken a spear and shield and danced, alone!'

Two banana leaves were spread on the ground and the doctor

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The *ilibalaga* is to make the mother's relatives one blood with the daughter's children. 'The food which each of the parents brings to relatives is the blood of the lineage (*lyo ilopa lya kikolo kyabo*) that they may have one body (*ukuti baje mbili gumo*). They do not look at one another when they take the *ilibalaga* because the blood [of the two lineages] has not yet met.' 845

The statements of two doctors, the one from Selya and the other a Kukwe, throw a little more light on the symbolism of the various actions. Mwakionde (of Selya) replied to a question about why the parents of twins only eat the middle bananas in a bunch:

Those of the sides belong to Kyala, because the twin was with Kyala; Kyala brooded over him, he came to them and gave them two children. After two days they throw away those bananas on the side, they throw them behind the huts, where they throw the rubbish of twins. . . . That means: may Mbasi be driven away when he comes to look at the children, may he be driven away to the rubbish heap behind the huts.

QUESTION: Why are the parents not allowed to call out?

MWAKIONDE: When we give each other medicines to drink? Since you have borne twins we do not meet one another. It's taboo to call out.

QUESTION: Snatching food from one another?

MWAKIONDE: They spread meat and cooked bananas on leaves of plantain and sweet banana. The doctor sprinkles powdered medicine, then we all snatch. Then the doctor gathers up the rubbish (*imindu*), those leaves, and throws them away behind the huts.

QUESTION: But why the snatching?

MWAKIONDE: If we do not snatch from one another our legs swell.

QUESTION: The running to the pasture?

MWAKIONDE: I myself have borne twins, you are my relative. When they have shaved my hair in the house, when you come with a shield to the doorway, 'Come out, Mwakionde,' you cry. 'War has come!' Then I go out. You give me the shield at the doorway. I run off with it. Another comes and snatches it, and another and another. It's to help the legs. Women do it afterwards, and then cry the war-cry. If I just meet a twin then Mbasi is angry and says: 'Why do you kill your fellow by just meeting him?' I am ill, I have diarrhœa, my legs swell, and my face swells, but sometimes the sickness returns to the parent of twins and he himself is ill.

KAKUNE (a Kukwe): In European times we do not fear; we drink [177] medicine, that is all; but of old we feared very much. At the coming out (*ukusala*) beer is brewed and the people and relatives drink it, and then in the night the man and wife, secluded in the hut, have intercourse, 845 833

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

795 the case of a Christian who had stayed away from a ritual in his
184 family and 'as soon as he met his relatives he fell sick and coughed
788 like an animal. So they got some of the lees of the beer and gave it to him and he recovered.' A number of Christian kinsmen, leaders in the Church, did not come to the gasping-cough ritual which we attended, but others did come and sipped the beer, or had the lees sent to them at their homes. In the ritual for protection against sorcery which we watched a Christian brother and his wife took part.

And some Christians, though they deny the necessity of many of the pagan rituals for themselves as Christians, still believe them to be necessary to their pagan kinsmen. Hence the anomalous (and to the missionaries the highly unorthodox) position of a woman professing Christianity and acting as officiant in a pagan ritual, as did N. in the death ritual for Kalata's mother (p. 239). N., it will be remembered, came by night. The officiant who performed the ritual for Mwakobela's twins was under instruction as a Christian and was proposing to hand on her medicines to her daughter, a pagan, when she herself was received into the Church. She explained this when Mwakobela (her patient) asked her: 'And what shall we do for twin medicine when you become a Christian?' And we had little doubt that she believed in the efficacy of her medicine for pagans.

Though Christians cannot go through pagan rituals as principals they do not withdraw altogether: they often help their pagan neighbours as grave-diggers at a funeral and in the provision of food for guests at funerals and marriages; and the young men and girls may dance as a separate group, singing their own
[578] songs or hymns and ignoring the drums. Sometimes acute rivalry between the two groups of dancers is apparent.

771 The effect of Christian teaching on pagan ritual is not limited
● 177 to the partial withdrawal of professing Christians. In those villages most influenced by missions, such as Ilolo, near Rungwe, there is considerable scepticism among pagans, and many of them curtail the rituals in their families, or do not attend them. The Christian view is that 'the pagans see that the Christians disregard the rituals and nothing happens to them, so they begin to ignore them too'. 'Pagans fear much less than they used to do.'

177 Men who are in European employment either inside or outside
464 the district cannot attend all the rituals. Their case is partially met by keeping the lees of the ritual beer with which to treat them

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

on their return home, but the general effect of modern conditions is that the solidarity of the kinship group expressed in gatherings at rituals is weakened. These changes will be discussed at length in the volume on the communal rituals after the differences between the pagan and Christian conceptions of God have been analysed.

(*c*) *The exchange of gifts*

All the family rituals are occasions for the exchange of gifts which pass primarily between lineages linked by marriage. The exchanges at different rituals are connected, and acceptance of a gift at a marriage may necessitate a return gift at a funeral. Thus the groom gives cattle for his bride at the marriage and at a funeral sons-in-law and fathers-in-law must bring cattle to kill so that they may accompany the deceased, and these are counted among the marriage-cattle given or returned. They may be kept and not killed if there are sufficient cattle to kill otherwise, but they must be offered. The obligation of affines to 'bury one another' by providing cattle for each other's funerals is even mentioned in the marriage negotiations. If a bride is not sent to replace a dead woman, marriage-cattle must be returned by her father, or at least one beast representing 'a mother to draw water for you'. So strong is the feeling that acceptance of a gift implies the obligation to make a return, that cattle offered for a marriage or funeral feast may be refused, on the ground that the family concerned do not wish to commit themselves to returning them. Angombwike described how he sweated and could eat little of a very lavish marriage feast, at which he acted as the groom's 'go-between', for he was wondering how he could make adequate return (cf. p. 253).

The greatest gifts are cattle; but fowls, cloth, beer, curds, bananas, pots, mats, firewood, ointment, cooked food and, nowadays, cash play a subsidiary part. At a funeral affines of the dead man who have no cattle, affines of the 'owner of the funeral', and close friends bring cloths. After the consummation of a marriage, or the inheritance of a widow, the new husband must give his wife a fowl, or meat, or cash representing a fowl, to take to her parents, and when she bears a child he sends another fowl. The wife's people, for their part, bring beer, ointment, firewood, mats, pots, and bananas when they take a bride or young mother back to her husband. There are also three or four exchanges of feasts

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

775 and appearance—the mind of a child is tenacious. If one comes whom
828 I never knew, I note his appearance in the dream and next day I tell my friends and relatives about it. Then perhaps an old woman, my grandmother, will say: 'That is how So-and-so used to look.' Perhaps I dream of someone wearing brass body-rings, with a plume nodding on his head. Then the older ones know him and tell me it is So-and-so. In the old days, in the days of our mothers, if we dreamed of eating food like this my relatives would say: 'They have come to fetch him; he will get disease and die soon; he has eaten the food of the shades.'
775 but in European times now it is different. . . . Our mothers' ear-sons
828 dreams; there is a medicine to put on the walls. If I always dream like
●177 this they bring it and say: 'It's forbidden to dream of the shades.'

QUESTION: And now?

KITITU: Now if dreams come true we say that the man who had dreamed is a prophet.

828 QUESTION: Are all dreams pregnant with trouble?

KITITU: Yes, dreams usually mean trouble. Suppose I love a girl and want to marry her, and then I dream of marriage, of having the cattle and going and being accepted by her fathers who are all present [in the dream], then I rejoice and I hope.[1] Then I begin to think of going to earn the cattle, and I go to work and come back with three or four cattle and go to hand over the marriage-cattle. All ends happily, but it might not. Perhaps they will accept me, perhaps not.

At work I dream that a sister has died, and I find it is true, then I think other dreams will be true. . . . I fear that perhaps my death is near. I go to a doctor and say I want a medicine, he gives me some to put under my head and sleep on. He grinds a medicine and tell me to sprinkle it in the room.

775 It is generally agreed that dreams of the dead are not welcomed:
828 If I speak of the recently dead others will say: 'Don't speak of them, they are dead.' Then I take a coal from the fire and say: 'Do not come in dreams.' If the shade comes it always means trouble.

An'l the only occasions of prayer to the shades are when men are in trouble and anticipate misfortune.

We never pray except when there is trouble. No, we never pray to give thanks. Why should we? There is nothing to grumble at!

673 (*c*) *Belief and behaviour*

753 In the Nyakyusa view there is a direct and immediate link be-
777 tween misfortune and wrong-doing. When illness befalls a man,

[1] Kititu's father delayed long in providing him with marriage-cattle. The following year he eloped with a girl.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya
Kukwe

764 A mash made of beans, lentils and pumpkin-seeds was salted, to be eaten with millet porridge; one unsalted was prepared to be eaten with bananas. Each principal then washed again with water and powdered medicine at the doorway. The unsalted mash and bananas were handed to each of the principals to eat. The salted mash and porridge (in one ball) was placed on one of the hearth-bricks and each one came and stooped and bit (as with the bananas before outside), then took [777] away the mouthful to eat. 'We used to put it up on the wall, we have abandoned the custom nowadays.' Mpogo begged for 'only a little'. Finally, each principal sat in the doorway and the officiant smeared a cross on his head with a paste of millet flour (previously ground on the bark-cloth) and water.

It was 6 p.m., the sun sinking, as I left.

The kinsmen present are marked on the genealogy on p. 273. There were also three neighbours one of whom was a younger full brother of the village headman, Mwambuputa. The headman was not there himself.

(*b*) *Farewell to Kalata's mother* (*Kukwe*)

Record of G. W. 6/11/36

Kalata's mother died on Monday evening, November 2, and was buried the next day.

KALATA: They will perform the ritual on me and my younger brother and on my son; if we had a sister alive they would do it for her too, but we have none. . . . The officiant is Sijele, wife of Mwainombola. He is a relative of ours, our mothers avoided him. He was their 'father-in-law'. . . . My father is already dead.

[828] A young man present had gone for the *ikipiki* medicine to wash with and brought back a plant, *ipasati*, but the officiant (Sijele) had seen it and gone for another, saying 'that is the *ikipiki* of the Sangu'. However, two older men and the dead woman's younger sister disagreed with her and said *ipasati* was right.

There were present one classificatory father of Kalata with a small son, Kalata's own small son, Kalata's younger brother, Kalata himself, a young man *ustesi* to Kalata (son of the dead woman's brother) and a small son; the wife and the sister of the *ustesi*, a younger sister of the dead woman, and another young woman, all with mourning belts tied round them. A fifth young woman had no belt.

The sister's daughter began to grind millet. A young woman went off to look for medicines for sweeping out the rubbish (*imisala*). Everyone gave her advice as to where to find them. Sijele came in with a bunch of twigs for sweeping, and a separate one for washing. There was more discussion of *ipasati*. Sijele said that *ipasati* was for bathing with after the burial, not for washing with now.

A young woman began to clear the rubbish (*akasuya imisala*) with the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

younger half-brother, Mwaisalwa. The dead woman is a wife of Mwalemba (Kanjesi) another half-brother. Kanjesi was an old inhabitant of this village but he moved to Masebe. His wife was on a visit to her 'fathers' at Mwakalobo's place in the hills. She went to a funeral there and fell sick and died there yesterday. The corpse was brought here this morning. It is now 10 a.m. and the grave is half-dug. The owner of the homestead, Mwampiki II (Mwaisalwa), is not here, he is sick at Masoko where he had gone for a case. The husband is not yet here either; they have sent for him to Masebe. The dead woman's elder sister and co-wife is here, and their mother. 764 184

They went to fetch a doctor to perform an autopsy, offering him 20 cents, but came back without him. 'He refused,' they said. 'Well then,' said Kakuju, 'take him a cloth, doctors do not agree to come for just a little.' So they took him a cloth. [763 435]

Kakuju told the women to come out of the house as it was too small to hold them all. The corpse was carried out into the shade of an *mayangati* tree. All the women gathered round wailing, about seventy of them, and about twenty men.

No cows have been killed yet as neither the husband nor Mwampiki II are here. No drums are here yet either. The grave was finished about 11 a.m. I asked Kakuju about dancing at death. He agreed that in the old days they had only danced the war-dance. 'That was our old custom. Formerly we fought and killed people—the men of Mwangomo (another chief) who came to the funeral!' Mwambuga (the husband of the dead woman's husband's sister), who had been quite cheerful heretofore, suddenly began weeping and crying. He walked over to the women and joined in the wailing. Some small and naked children started climbing joyfully on the piled-up earth from the grave. [177]

Now it is noon and there are thirty-five to forty men present and ninety to one hundred women. A doctor has agreed to come (to perform the autopsy) but has not yet arrived. Although the corpse was outside male mourners went into the house on their arrival to weep. An older woman got up and led a dirge. I heard her say a number of names, among which 'Mwampiki' was distinguishable. Clapping followed her words. Often she just called the war-cry (*akalala*). The others wailed and joined in the war-cry. She accompanied her wailing with rhythmic movements of the body and arms. After a time she sat down but continued to lead the wailing.

Mwakalabela (Mbalakatela) arrived with a cow. His daughter is married to young Mwaijumba, the son of Mwampiki. The autopsy followed (for description see *Good Company*, pp. 247–9).

17/3/37

Angombwike told me at breakfast that now Mwampiki himself was dead. He died yesterday at Masoko and was carried here last night.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Farewell to Mwampiki 2/4/37

764 Women began to wail about 9 a.m. I saw some arrive with bananas.
184 They stopped wailing after ten minutes or so. Imilanwa (Mwainalwa) was present. Mwaijumba had not yet come. I met Kakuju on the way. He had not yet been told of the ritual. Mbapa and Maleja (widows of Mwalingo) did most of the work, with Ijumba, widow of Mwampiki. Isalwa sat near and watched while Maleja ground up the ointment. Seeds for making ointment were put on the fire. This was the ointment for anointing oneself in the ritual. Beans were brought in a flat basket. 'We mourn', they said, 'with bean mash and the meat of a cow.'

There was some discussion about killing the cow and a dispute between Imilanwa and Simeni. Just as the cow was about to be killed a woman came and made them bring it to the side of the swept court
[262] away from the graves. 'If you kill it near the father-in-law's grave the wives will fear to eat the meat.' The cow was killed by Imilanwa. He then called the men of the family to discuss whether or not they should kill a bull also. One had been sent by the Chief Mwaipopo who is 'our son-in-law. He married a daughter of Maleja'. Imilanwa said: 'Let us kill it,' and they agreed. Only thirteen men were present so far.

[171 The meat from the fork of the right foreleg (*ifja mmapa*) was taken to
● 177] eat with the mash. This is a Sangu not a Nyakyusa custom. The men of the family follow the Sangu custom. The women, daughters of Sangu, do likewise, and the women who are wives of Sangu, but the children of daughters who are married to Nyakyusa men from Selya do the Selya custom. If the daughter of a Sangu marries a Selya man then, if her father dies, she does the Sangu ritual at his place, but if her husband dies she does the Selya ritual at his place even if she has borne him no children, and even if she is herself a child or an infant who has not yet been to him. But her children always do the Selya ritual both at their father's home and at their mother's.

The burying of the banana flower and rubbing in earth is a Selya custom and is only done by the children of Selya men. I saw five or six children do it. Then more children came to rub in earth. One was under instruction at the mission. The women told him to rub himself but Mwaijumba broke in: 'If he is a Christian he ought not to perform the ritual.' 'He's under instruction.' 'Very well, he does not perform the ritual, for a Christian should not have two gods (*ba Kyala babili*).' The bull was killed a little way off among the bananas. Mwaijumba explained: 'It is just for meat, it's not for the ritual, the further off one. Christians will eat it.'

Shaving of the growing hair *Record of Musikambo, 22/4/37*

First the men and women began drinking beer separately. Then they began the ritual. They went to the grave with beer in a small calabash.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Nanli

765 they seek two or three officiants, and they build a temporary hut behind the living huts where they strain three pots of beer, which they call 'the beer of the shades'. These officiants do not bathe their bodies because they say: 'Let us be with the shade when we make the beer (*tujeje nagwe ungwala be talulombe abwalwa*).' The rest of the beer is strained in the house.

When they have brewed it they take one potful from the temporary hut and pour the contents on top of the grave; then they dig a hole on the grave and place in it a little pot of beer. What is left in these two pots they drink, together with the rest of the beer, and there is much drumming.

766 After a long time has passed, perhaps two years, if there has been sickness in the home, they think that the deceased is making them giddy, is causing them to be ill. So they dig up the corpse and take all the bones and finger and toe nails. If one is left the sickness is not cured. When Mulape, the grandchild of Mwakafunga, was ill they dug up the corpse and the illness ceased very quickly. They pile up the bones which have been dug up.

III. MARRIAGE NEGOTIATIONS AND GIFTS

584 ANOOKEWIKE: One of our comrades in Kabembe heard that there was an unmarried girl at the Chief Mwasumbwe's, so one Monday he said to three of us: 'Don't go away, friends, we are going to woo the chief's daughter at Mwasumbwe's.' So we put on our best clothes, those we wear to church, and we went to the home of the father of the girl. He was the younger brother of the Chief Mwasumbwe by the same mother, and he told us: 'I am not the father (*agwise*). She is my own child, but the father is the chief. Go to him' [i.e. authority over his daughter rested with his elder brother]. The girl had reached puberty. Someone else had married her, but her father had received only one cow, so the elder brother, the chief, was angry and took away the girl from her husband. My friend had never met her, never. He had just heard that there was an unmarried girl at that place, because the custom of making love to girls in the long grass is not a traditional one: a girl used to stay at her father's house. A young man went to the father before he spoke with the girl; he never spoke to her in secret. Then the father would send the girl to speak with the young man. She came and sat down and the young man looked at her closely and his friends who [177 accompanied him helped him. Formerly a young man did not wear 291] many clothes, he only wore one cloth in front, and a brass body-ring, so that his whole belly might be seen, and she might look closely. Also [516] he sits high on a stool, while his fellows sit on the ground, that he may be seen by the girl.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

be seen by the girl. Then the girl asks his fellows: 'What is he like, friends?' And they reply: 'He's a real man.' Then she agrees to the 'go-between', saying: 'Indeed, I love them [*sic*].' But if she does not like them she refuses, and the young men go away. Yes, indeed, the girl always had power to refuse; no one ever compelled her to agree, even though the man had many cattle. The fathers always agreed for their part, saying: 'My daughter is good, she refuses at my house, and tells me (i.e. she does not accept and then run away, which is bad).' And if the girl has refused the young men go away, but others laugh and jeer at them, saying: 'So-and-so's daughter refused.' 584

'Oh!'

'Yes. Indeed, they are horrible young men, their bodies are very ugly.'

And the young men also look closely at the girl, they look very closely, and if they see that her breasts are thin, and her face is ugly, then they go and tell her father's friend, saying: 'We are leaving her, tell her father that we will not marry his daughter. Then he tells her father, who just says: 'All right, let them leave her.' But the custom of wooing in secret first, before a man has been to the father, began among Christians. The Christians say: 'It is good to woo in secret first,' but pagan fathers still object, saying: 'We will not eat the cattle properly.' [77]

So when the father of the girl had told us thus, we went to the chief's place, and sat down under a tree. The chief's wives sat down at a distance. Then we trembled and sweat came on our bodies. I said to my fellows: 'Do we just sit? Let us ask.' And I got up and asked the chief's wives: 'Is the chief at home?'

'Oh! Do you wish the chief?'

'Yes, we wish to see him.'

'But he is at another's wife's place. Shall we call him?'

'Please.'

'Where have you come from?'

'We come from Kabembe.'

Then I returned to my friends and the chief's wives called him, saying: 'Four young men from Kabembe have come and want to see you about something.'

Then the chief came with three of his men, and they greeted us. . . . Then the chief called to his wives: 'Bring some food for them to eat,' and he got up himself to cut a stem of bananas.

Then I said to my fellows: 'Friends, do we just chat to the chief without asking him? One should get up and tell the councillor that we had come to ask for a girl.'

Then they all said: 'You are brave, Angumbwike, you get up.' 'No, I am ashamed to get up twice, let So-and-so get up.' He got up and told one of the chief's men: 'We have something to discuss; we

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

quests. He passed through the mountain region 173
north and west of Karonga, receiving the submission of the chiefs as he went; thence he descended into the plain at Karonga, finally establishing himself at Mpande, where his descendants still live.

The legends which have gathered around the 173
person of Chungu reveal him as a man of impressive 177
personality. One legend states that having established himself at Karonga, he cast longing eyes on the regions on the other side of Lake Nyasa. With a great following he went down to the lake, smote the water with his sceptre, and crossed on dry land. Receiving the submission of the people, he returned as he went; followed later, but in canoes, by a great multitude of people, who wished to settle under the shadow of so great a chief. The European attitude towards this event is shared by native Christians, but quite intelligent pagans meet scepticism, quietly and gravely, with the statement that "Chungu is the man who speaks with God." The incident, or whatever event it represents in its present form, can only be satisfactorily accounted for by regarding it as what the Higher Critics call a "later accretion"; for the Angoni, with their own story of a similar crossing of the Zambesi, had not yet arrived, the Arabs were still in the distance, and direct Christian influence did not begin for many years afterwards.

It is needless to give in detail the history of his 173
successors. One lost much land to rival chiefs; another was deposed because he could not give rain in a time of drought. The country fell into confusion-

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

173 Prophets arose who foretold the coming of the Angoni and the Arabs to work havoc on land and people. Then from the lake would come the strange white man who would overcome Angoni and Arab, and give peace to the land. To this race the people were directed to submit themselves when they came. So deep and sure would the peace be, that men would go armed only with sticks, all need for spear and shield having passed away.

173 177 But the peace was still in the future. Arab and Angoni came and fulfilled their destiny. The Henga or Kamanga people, fleeing before the latter, were received by the Konde, and were at first friendly to their hosts, but later, when the Arabs arrived as traders and slavers, made an alliance with them against the harassed Konde. Into this confusion entered, very dramatically, the white man, of whose coming the natives give graphic accounts. The approach of the *Ilala*, the tiny steamer of the Livingstonia Mission, then operating from Cape Maclear, far to the south, struck the people with terror. "It is God," they said, "He walks on the water." As the little vessel drew near the land, the people fled into the bush. A white man landed. A few strong-hearted natives ventured to approach, and saw his white skin. "It is surely God," they said, "He has come to us in the likeness of men." When he ate some bananas in their presence, they said, "No, not God, but a friend of His."

175 In 1887 the African Lakes Corporation of Glasgow

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

175 me by the son of one of the councillors who stood
782 near him :
643

> "Art Thou angry with me, O God, who didst redeem me from slavery? The Angoni mocked me, the Arabs mocked me; then didst Thou cause me to see these mighty ones (the Europeans); and I said, 'Rejoice, for God has heard my prayers.' Who, then, of my ancestors is angry? Against whom have I sinned? For it is they who are my helpers in speaking to Thee. Many of them died by the spear; they saw their families destroyed; they suffered hunger again and again, before the mighty ones came. Now, O God, be merciful, and let the feet of these men come up out of the water."

Then taking water in his mouth he squirted it north and south saying, "I am lord of that country, I Magemo: I am lord of that country, I Kyabara," to which the assembled councillors responded, "E! Magemo; E! Kyabara." Then whirling the cock over his head and dipping it in the water, he gave the signal to the men hanging on the ropes to pull. And the steamer floated off into the water!

175 Meantime in the north internal warfare went on
•177 intermittently, but no man of outstanding capacity arose to give cohesion to the various families of the
[191] Nyakyusa. Before the arrival of the Moravian missionaries in the area in 1891, various Europeans visited the district. Hunters came and went, and for a brief space there was a station of the Livingstonia Mission not far from Tukuyu. In 1893 the German

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Government established a station at Lumbira on the lake shore, but removed later to Tukuyu. On the whole the new Government was well received. A rising in 1897 was so mercilessly dealt with that any discontent which might be felt was suppressed by the fear of the German machine-guns. Very slowly the district is being merged in the general progress arising out of European domination.

Around the lake shore cotton is being successfully cultivated by natives and Europeans. On the uplands near Tukuyu there are some coffee plantations, and the suitability of the soil for the cultivation of flax is being tested. Coal has been found in the hills to the west, but its commercial value has still to be proved; and a small quantity of mica is also being digged. Up in the north, on the Lupa River, but outside the Konde region, gold has been discovered, but apparently only in modest quantities. There are at present about three score of miners at work there.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

young gathering around the white man, and lending themselves to his purposes, the old even to-day approaching him with reluctance, if at all, for to them he still retains much of the awe and hidden power with which he was credited in the earlier days.

The individual Konde is not so popular with white men as are members of other tribes; indeed there are employers who will not knowingly give work to a Konde at all. As workmen, it must be acknowledged that they are both less active and less reliable than surrounding tribes; they are neither so intelligent nor so loyal to contract. The Konde soon wearies of effort, and longs to get back to the lowing of his cattle and his pretty little hut in its banana grove. He loves his children, and the hope of being able to clothe them if he works well, does not compensate him for prolonged absence. Loyalty, as the Henga, Angoni, and Yao are loyal, does not distinguish the Konde, who show loyalty rather to chief and to tribal custom, than to the white man with his problematical benefits. They have never attached themselves to the European, as many of the surrounding tribes have done; for the Konde are less convinced than others that the one hope of Africa is the European and his influence; less convinced, be it added, that Africa stands so desperately in need of saving. That may be due to their unawakened condition—and, again, it may not. Educationally, too, they are less advanced than other tribes. Only a few of them are to be found in Government offices, or doing the skilled work which commands such good pay from Europeans; nor have they supplied,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

being the one that hits the object a given number of 526
times in succession.

Ingaramu, the lion, is a piece of banana cord at- 524
tached to a string and whirled round the head, when it makes a noise remotely resembling the growling of a lion. *Ifula*, rain, is our bull-roarer; old people still believe that it stops the rain; but even they admit that no well-disposed spirit takes any notice of child's play. *Bandu* is a kind of top, spun by twirling it between the palms and letting it go. Whip-tops are [177] ●
in use, but are of European origin. A kind of mimic ammunition is supplied by the seeds of the *unsyunguti* tree, which are thrown at the enemy, and all who are hit are "killed," and carried off the field.

Konde children are perfectly happy. Those who 857
go to school hail the dismissal hour with the same shouts of joy as little people at home. The boys will climb a tree perhaps, with the more glee if the teacher's prohibition has added a whiff of danger to the exploit. Or they will chase an unfortunate goat around; though the goat, having been handled from earliest kidhood very much as we handle pet dogs, probably enjoys the sport as much as the boys do. A couple of boys may get astride a young bullock, and go careering along the road; or more likely the whole troop will make a rush for the nearest water in river or lake, and with terrific noise splash about in joyous excitement. No doubt those who are utterly unclad look with envy on the scraps of clothing worn by their more fortunate fellows, but that does not silence the shout of glee which fills the air as boys and girls are let loose

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

third to cook food, and a final gift is required to make her lie down on the mat along with her girl friend, who stays with her for a few days. This ceremony of the gifts is never omitted in heathen marriages, and each successively binds the girl to her husband. 584 585

If the bride is a twin, the doctor must be present, to sprinkle medicines over house and bedding, and to give the couple a decoction supposed to prevent the occurrence of twins in the new family. 789

Except the daughters of Christian parents, all Konde girls are married before they arrive at puberty, and what has been described above applies to child wives, who stay with their husbands for about a month, and then go home. 582 177

The child wife having grown to womanhood, however, further ceremonies have to be observed. The husband arrives at her father's house with an ox for the feast, and a mock struggle for possession of the bride takes place. The women of her family barricade themselves in the house, which is attacked by the women of the other family. Payment of a shilling opens the door, and the further struggle which takes place in the house is brought to an end by the formal presentation of the ox. The husband and his friends enter, and engage in a weird dance, a mere tramping of the floor in unison, with shouting and waving of spears, no doubt a survival of what was once marriage by capture. 583

The washing and shaving of the bride follows, and her bark-cloth is burned, and a new one given her, and then comes the feast of beef and beer, the materials 585

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

first wife, for it is there only that the spirits meet him; and if he becomes ill anywhere else, he has himself removed as soon as possible to the place where it is proper for him to die, if die he must. 763 784

A man who has been falsely reported dead in a far land, must not, on his return home, enter the village without ceremony. Letters sent on ahead to assure his relatives that he is alive, are not enough; his father comes out to meet him; but he takes care not to see his son until assurance has been given that he is a true man, not a spirit; whereupon the father throws some food over his son's head, and both enter the village in peace. 784

It is *mwiko* to kill a python unless one is sure that it is dangerous. If it is found in the feeding ground, and the cows that day give a specially good milking, then it has been herding the cattle, and is not to be sought for afterwards with hostile intent. But the boys who saw it must go to the doctor to get medicine. Further, God Himself may be in it, or the spirit of a dead chief, and therefore it must be watched for assurance of its friendliness. If it enters a house a fowl is thrown to it, with which, if it makes off, all is well.

Very interesting are some of the prohibitions connected with the white man; and it is obvious that these are of recent growth, so that we actually see *tabus* in the making. It is *mwiko* to go into a white man's house, for the pictures on his walls are the spirits of his ancestors, who are specially dangerous at night, when they may launch an unseen spear at 784 177

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

784 the unlucky wight who has had the temerity to enter
•177 so dangerous a place. Further, a man dying of that invisible spear-wound will almost certainly have his portion with the spirits of white men, than which there is no more undesirable fate. Did he not have enough of the white men here on earth? This fear of the white man is passing; but there are still old men and women who will not approach him, for they insist that he is God, and it is *mwiko* to see God. An old man died recently at Karonga, who had always refused to see a white man, lest the sight should smite him down. One of the teachers at the Mission at Ipyana told me that his own mother will not go near him when he has on a white garment, for that, she knows, is the sign that he is going to speak to God, and even a native is dangerous at such a time, for the power of God may break through to destruction. There is a curious belief still lingering among old people, that Europeans are forbidden to sleep in houses, but must come out at night, and sleep in pools, their native element being water; for they are water spirits in origin, a belief no doubt due to the widespread story that we came from the sea itself, rather than from some place beyond it. White people are supposed to hold it *mwiko* to weep for the dead; and indeed why should they, seeing their dead arise at once and appear on the walls?

784 Some great chiefs must not tell if they have been wounded in battle. These remarkable men have power to remove a wound from a fatal to a non-fatal spot, and so recover. When Mwakalinga, in a fight

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

A few Christian families are beginning to [777] 264
eat *en famille*, but the practice is not looked upon with favour. The open air meal in good weather of course gives way to the meal in the house when it rains.

The far-stretching banana groves in which the villages are hidden indicate one of the favourite foods of the people. There are many kinds of banana, from the tiny "Lady's Fingers" to the great plantains, half an arm long; and they are eaten in almost as many ways. Some are eaten direct from hand to mouth, peeled and corded, for even the small cords which adhere to the fruit after the skin is removed, are meticulously attended to; other kinds are cut up and cooked; some are ground into flour, of which porridge is made, or it is added to the flesh pot to give flavour to the soup. 262 252

Maize is cooked in many ways: whole, mashed, or ground; boiled or roasted; mixed with other foods, or alone. The porridge made from maize flour is a greyish sticky-looking mess, wholly repulsive to a white man, and is often eaten without relish of any kind. Cassava, with the poison washed out by three days' soaking in running water, then dried and ground into flour; beans, with the skins removed by parboiling, and pressed between finger and thumb; peas cooked without preparation; potatoes, often eaten with milk; these are main food-stuffs, but very many small herbs are used, especially for seasoning, and some very pleasant dishes are often served up to feed sick and well alike.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

daily for supplies, provided it is again quickly covered 251
up with both sand and flowing water. All this must be done at night lest the hiding-place be revealed to others, and the flesh stolen.

Bread is made of twice-ground maize with salt 252
added. It is kneaded into loaves of about three inches thick, and placed in layers, interleaved with banana leaf, in a pot with maize in the bottom. This bread is often taken on a journey, and will keep for five or six days. Eggs are "scrambled," with milk [177]
and salt, in a broken pot, but this is a European introduction. No young girl will eat hard-boiled eggs; [242]
they produce a snake in the abdomen, which, of course, in turn produces barrenness.

Very unpleasant to our minds are some of the 262
delicious foods the Konde rejoice in: flying ants eaten alive as they are picked up where they fall from their brief honeymoon in the air; crawling white ants, a horrible mass of moving life; the Kungu fly, found on Lake Nyasa, whence it comes ashore in dense clouds, settles on bush and tree, and is shaken off into small baskets, to be taken home and baked into cakes while it is still fresh. In Bundali it is said that some still eat lion's flesh, and once upon a time the crocodile was eaten at Karonga. Sorcerers are accused of [254 devouring human flesh. A new grave is sprinkled 266]
with a powerful medicine which makes the corpse come up without disturbing the soil, and the ghoulish feast is enjoyed without leaving a trace of the deed behind.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XI

Arts & Crafts

346
•177

AS I write there is a church being erected at Kyimbila to seat about seven hundred and fifty people. It has fifteen windows, each with three Gothic arches, and six doors each with its Gothic arch. This work was done, with only amateur supervision, by native workmen, of whom only one has had any kind of training, all the rest being young men, some of whom had never handled a trowel, and the best of them had not had more than a few months now and again at similar work. A good deal of pulling down and rebuilding had to be done, but the building, as it stands, with its buttresses and arched doors and windows, has a dignified and satisfying appearance. The carpentry is being done with the assistance of a trained man from Nyasaland, all the other carpenters being men with a training, or lack of it, similar to that of the bricklayers. The church is cruciform in shape, and the placing of the crown couples, if that is correct designation, was a triumph of ingenuity and patience.

176 Now there is nothing in Konde arts and crafts to lead one to think all this a natural development of what they did before. For the remarkable thing

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

about these arts and crafts is their failure to develop 176
at all. Hints and suggestions were there continually;
yet nothing ever came of them. Iron was digged, 325]
smelted, and made into tools, yet no better tool for
digging the ironstone itself was thought of than the
hoe. Cloth was widely made on native looms before [286
the advent of inferior trade goods, and needles, with 291]
eyes, for sewing mats; but the idea of sewn garments
did not penetrate the native mind. Burned clay pipes [326]
were made to direct the wind from the skin bellows
into the blacksmith's fire, but no one received from
these pipes a hint of other possibilities. The idea of [401]
the wheel, with its boundless possibilities, did not
suggest itself to the Konde mind, nor, so far as I know,
to the Bantu mind anywhere, although hints of it
were lying about, especially in the round tree trunks
which were used as rollers when a canoe had to be
dragged some distance from the forest to the water.

At every point the native mind seems to have been 177
waiting for the stimulus which was to come with the
white man, and which has led to an awakening, the
full extent of which is not realized except by thoughtful persons. For already, after the comparatively brief tuitional period of fifty years, Central Africans are replacing Indians as Government clerks, as hospital assistants, as engineers on river steamers, as telegraphists; they do all kinds of printing and bookbinding, carpentry, and building; and they fill positions of trust which a generation ago no one thought they would ever be capable of filling. The Konde have not yet taken more than a small share in

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•177 all this progress; but they have made a beginning, and they will go on.

326 522 Among the purely native arts that of the blacksmith is held in highest esteem; and the blacksmith himself is a man feared as well as honoured; and joked about as much as he is feared. I think if there were a local "Punch" here, jokes about the blacksmith would take the place of jokes about the plumber which in times past found so frequent favour with the editors of the actual "Punch." He steals both your time and your materials. He tells you that your hoe will be ready on a given day; you get your hoe days afterwards, and he has not used more than half the material you gave him; the rest will go to make another hoe, which he will sell, perhaps to yourself. "As great a thief as a blacksmith," "as big a liar as a blacksmith," are gross insults, not to the blacksmith, but to the man who is compared with him. "The blacksmith gets rich out of other men's property," is another saying indicating the morals of the great 326 artificer. Yet he is feared also, and such jokes are never made in his presence, for he is in touch with mysterious powers, and his ancestor blacksmiths have their own ways of conveying information to him. Quite recently a native friend of mine was talking to his chief, when a messenger came in hot haste to say that a hoe had broken in the blacksmith's hands. The blacksmith had gone at once to consult a diviner, and learned that the spirits were angry because no one was worshipping. "Go at once, therefore, and tell Mwaikuyu (the chief). Do you think heaven is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Then the line advances and passes under the arch singing. The last to pass through is usually held, but sometimes escapes. 524

Of such games there is almost no end, and new ones are continually being invented, many of them imitative of something introduced by the white man, European peculiarities being specially liable to this hilarious form of flattery. I have seen boys imitate the peculiar walk of Europeans, to the intense joy of the onlookers. For, let it be repeated, to the younger generation the white man is no longer a little tin god, or any other kind of god. He is fully respected for all that the native considers worthy of respect (and their ideas do not always harmonize with ours), but if he is laughable for any reason, he need not doubt that he is laughed at. 524 177 522

Dancing is the principal relaxation of the Konde, if the violent exercise which it sometimes involves may be called relaxation. It is indulged in with great zest, and, as the night advances, with complete abandon, moral and physical. There is not much that can be called religious dancing: a children's rain dance, a pestilence dance, and the wild leaping and shouting, with horn and drum, which young and old engage in at times of eclipse or earthquake. But anything may be made the occasion of an impromptu dance: the arrival of a European, especially if he is popular; the killing of lion or leopard; the killing of much game by a European; the return of friends from a journey; or a score of other reasons, some of them trivial, such as the laying down of a load which 535

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 192) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

father of a sick child went a few months ago to a diviner, who told him that the illness was due to his own folly in not sacrificing a cow at the funeral of his father, who had died recently. "Go and pray," said the diviner, "I will give you no medicine." After prayer, a cow was killed, and due observance made of the ritual demanded, after which the child recovered. If the sickness is due to the anger of a living person, who has persuaded his ancestors to avenge him for some wrong done, the diviner directs that an appropriate offering be brought to the offended man, who thereupon requests the spirits to remove their anger, and the patient recovers. 787

A few of the methods may now be briefly described.

I. *Ikipiki*, the stick, or cup. A hollowed-out, cup-shaped piece of wood, perhaps three inches long, is moved backwards and forwards over a piece of banana stalk, the open end of the cup downwards, and questions are asked as described. When the cup refuses to move, the right question has been asked, and the answer thereby given. In the act of divination that I saw here a few months ago, the diviner seemed honestly unable to move the cup, though in my own hand it moved easily.

II. *Isiba*. The horn of a small buck is filled with medicines, and placed with its base on the ground. When questions are asked, it begins to sway, and stands still again when the right question has been put.

III. *Isyabwe* is a recent importation from another district. The diviner, having drunk a medicine called *musika*, sits on the dark side of the door, having in his 787 177

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

187 hand a small calabash partly filled with sand; the
177 inquirer sits on the other side of the door. The diviner shakes his calabash, saying, "Speak, Mulambya, who dwellest by the clear waters; tell me what disease this man is suffering from." He soon begins to feel a rising in the throat, which causes him to speak in a falsetto voice, "*He, tata.*" The falsetto now gives way to the natural voice, in which the questions are put, the answer, coming in falsetto, being the response of the spirit. It would be interesting to know whether the *mariha* medicine has qualities which cause the throat to contract so as to produce a falsetto voice, but the point is one upon which I have no information.

IV. *Wa m'maboko*, the hands. When an inquirer
187 chooses this method, the diviner goes to the bush, whence he takes a *kilago*, a rush-like grass about eighteen inches in length. Detaching the rootlets, he chews them carefully, and spits the juice into his hands. The palms being rubbed smoothly over each other, the questions are put, and when the hands stick, the answer has been given.

V. *Kayamba*, the tortoise. The intestines of the tortoise are removed, and a cord passed through the mouth and the anus. The cord is held upright by the left hand, while the tortoise is lifted with the right as each question is put. When the right question is asked, the tortoise, instead of falling to the ground, stops half-way on the string. This form of divination is very widely known among the tribes around Lake Nyasa.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XXV

The Brave Days of Old

LIKE the Romans and Greeks, and like many peoples at an elementary stage of civilization, the Konde place their great days in the past. It is, perhaps, a little strange that this should be so; for there can be no doubt that the presence of the white man has stirred the African everywhere to the thought of a new day for his race. But they are at the same time conscious that great things were done in the past, and among the demands made upon me by natives whom I have consulted, and who have helped me with this book, there is none more insistent than that I should include the portentous happenings of an older day.

Old and middle-aged men speak gleefully of the days of their youth; of the great deeds they did when they were boys, how they trapped more skilfully, caught bigger fish, ran faster, leaped higher than the young men of to-day. And the deterioration, they assert very emphatically, is due to the presence of the white man. Not that the latter discourages sport; on the contrary he spurs it on; but in his own way, and that is not the Konde way. The white man's way is to give prizes to the winner; the Konde

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

177 868 way is to give the lash to the duffers; and they claim that theirs is the more effective method of bringing all up to a high standard. But thrash the ninny to-day, and he is off to the Administrative Officer to lodge his complaint, which the latter must inquire into. And hence much deterioration.

173 713 But these are not the facts of which they wish a permanent record to be made. There are other things; things which the pagan native profoundly believes, and which Christians also believe and take pride in, though they think that the missionary will object to their holding what he probably calls silly ideas. These stories include most of the typical tales of olden times: the hero-warrior, the defier of tyrants, the mighty medicine man, the great prophet, the man who has obtained lordship over Nature in some form, and the man who controls the spirits. All these, and many more, are included among the Konde tales, and I do not place them among folk tales, for the people regard them quite differently. A folk tale is to-day, whatever it may have been in the past, either a mere diversion to pass away an idle moment, or a moral for children, or a warning for adolescents. The tales which I am thinking of are, in the native mind, records of facts, facts which they believe to be no longer achievable, but indubitably fact in the past; and no study of the native mind can be complete which does not take this into account.

I. The hero-warrior. Chungu, in his early wanderings in search of a home, came near the hil Mphande, the seat of the Simbove rulers of that day.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

231 according to the *Bell Report*. Cattle and hides are exported to Tanganyika.[1] The *Nyamwanga* herds were reduced, partly by *Ngoni* raids, and partly by rinderpest.[2]

Domestic Architecture

Ngonde homesteads are famous in Nyasaland for their peculiar style and neatness of execution. They are made of bamboos, specially grown for the purpose. They are oblong, with the ends slightly tapering upwards so that they present a ship-like appearance. The huts are erected in two lines facing each other, at a distance of about 30 yards. This centre street is kept scrupulously clean.[3] The *Nyakusa* live in round or long huts of bamboo or grass.[4] *Kinga* homesteads are scattered; they live in round huts of bamboo and straw.[5] The *Iwa* formerly lived in large stockaded villages, but these are now broken up.[6]

Specialization and Trade

326 The Ngonde were accomplished iron-workers; iron was dug, smelted, and made into hoes and spears.[7] The Iwa were formerly noted as iron-workers. Both they and the Nyamwanga grew tobacco on a large scale.[8]

A rough kind of cloth was made on native looms. The Ngonde made hollowed canoes, but were not good sailors. In fishing they used poisons, hooks, nets, and traps. Pottery and basket-making were carried on.[9]

The Ngonde were the most civilized of this cluster of tribes, owing to their closer contact with Arab and Swahili traders who used the lake as a waterway.[10] The Nyamwanga also had opportunities of contact with Arab and Swahili traders at the south end of Lake Tanganyika,[11] but information about the effect of this on their economic life is lacking. By comparison with the Ngonde the Nyakyusa were isolated from contact with the outside world,[12] and this is probably true of the other tribes of the group. Among the Ngonde, in spite of the political hierarchy and central religious authority of Kyungu, economic links between separate local groups were few. The ivory trade was a source of wealth for the Kyungu and for the nobles of Ngonde at Mbande, but its benefits had a strictly limited effect on the rest of the people. The economic links between the capital and the chiefdoms followed the lines of the political system. The income of Kyungu in *ivory* and cattle depended on the judicial process and on warfare. He had a semi-monopoly of the ivory of the country (the right tusk of every elephant killed was his). His expenditure consisted of entertainment for all important visitors to the capital, and gifts of cloths, obtained through the ivory trade, to nobles and chiefs. The first Kyungu gave head-cloths to the indigenous rulers, who, in accepting them, accepted his overlordship, and the practice was continued every time a new chief or territorial noble succeeded to office. The nobles of Ngonde got cloths every year also from subject chiefs, without swinging, since no ceremonies, this employed, were

[1] *Bell Report*, pp. [illegible]; Aylin, [illegible].
[2] Kerr-Cross, [illegible]; Monson, [illegible], pp. [illegible].
[3] Hall, p. 80.
[4] Mackenzie, [illegible], pp. [illegible]; Kerr-Cross, [illegible], p. [illegible].
[5] Gouldsbury and Sheane, [illegible], p. [illegible].
[6] Wilson, [illegible], p. [illegible].
[7] Gutmann, [illegible], p. [illegible].
[8] Gouldsbury and Sheane, [illegible], p. [illegible].
[9] *Handbook of German East Africa*, p. [illegible].
[10] Gouldsbury and Sheane, [illegible], p. [illegible].
[11] Mackenzie, [illegible], pp. [illegible].
[12] Hall, p. [illegible], p. [illegible].

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

same chiefdom in which the trees were growing; for between chiefdoms an actual or potential state of war always existed, and a man coming from a hostile group to claim property would have been driven away violently. But to-day under European rule it is now customary for a man to cut his own bamboos, if he is living in a neighbouring chiefdom, instead of leaving them to his resident kinsfolk. The group within which property can be held is gradually widening. 423 178

Such is the custom among the Kukwe and Selya groups; their rights in bamboos and *cyangati* trees are not normally lost when a man moves provided there are kinsfolk left nearby to exercise them. The one exception to this rule is in the case of expulsion for witchcraft or other serious crime. Then even if the man expelled has left kinsfolk behind him, still the chief takes his trees. 423 681

Among the Nyakyusa proper, on the other hand, the *cyangati* trees are treated like bananas. When a man moves he loses all rights in them and, unless the chief steps in to take them, as he always may, they are granted by the great-commoner, together with the soil, to the newcomer who is put on that site. Bamboos, as in Selya and Kukwe country, continue to belong to the kinsman of the man who has moved.[1] 423 425 621

Trees introduced by the Europeans, of which coffee trees are the most valuable, have been declared by the Federation of Chiefs to be the property of the planter, even although he has moved to a different chiefdom. This law was made after much anxious discussion between the chiefs, the Administration and the Agricultural Department and is, of course, subject to revision if it is found after trial to be impracticable. In the case of coffee it has inevitably been modified in practice since coffee must be tended continuously if it is to remain free from pests and to bear fruit, and any man who actually looks after coffee trees has a generally admitted claim to the crop unless he is paid by the planter for his labour. The planter, however, in surrendering the trees to him may arrange if he so pay remunerating the whole station vacant. 423 177 245

Further, as the Agricultural Officer has the right to uproot any untended coffee trees and must exercise it if pests are to be kept under control, the practice has grown up of his taking over any large number of abandoned trees and keeping them clean with labour paid by the Native Treasury; the trees are subsequently sold to some other man and the proceeds paid into the Native Treasury again. If, however, a planter of coffee trees makes arrangements, when he moves, for the cleaning of his coffee then the trees remain his own.

[1] Some informants deny this and insist that they always pass to the chief. I was not myself long in Mwaipondo among the Nyakyusa proper and I lack conclusive evidence on the point.

S:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 622 In his tenure of land every Nyakyusa man is related to some chief who is his overlord. But their relationship is not confined to the single element of land-tenure, it is just as many-sided and complex as is any other human relationship; and even as we abstract from it the particular set of facts that immediately concerns us here we must at once refer them again to it if they are to be intelligible.

166 423 622 When a newcomer is received into a village and given land the chief, as we have seen, is normally a party to the villagers' action, and in most cases he himself ceremonially welcomes the newcomer if he comes from outside the chiefdom by sending to him a present of cooked food. He has gained a new subject and his power and prestige are thereby increased. [427] As men are quite free to move from one tiny chiefdom to another and as land is still relatively plentiful the phenomenon of rent does not exist among the pagan Nyakyusa, there is no direct charge ever specifically made in return for the right to build and cultivate. Nevertheless a chief is a chief and his subjects' land is his as well as theirs and they are under certain obligations to him.

622 551 [585] Among these obligations that of providing cooked food for the ceremonies of the chief's own immediate family is probably the most important. When a chief's daughter, for example, is getting married women from all over the chiefdom bring food to entertain the bridegroom and his friends on the day that they bring the bulk of the cattle. The obligation to bring food, though not a legal one, is both reciprocal and conventional. The chief is expected to kill one or two of the beasts to feed his people and if he is mean about this, killing one where he should have killed two, then on the next occasion his people are more reluctant [622] to bring food. But there is also the sense of shame constraining individuals. If the majority of households in a village provide food for a chief on such an occasion, and the majority I think nearly always do so, then the shameful meanness and unconventionality of defaulters is the subject of adverse comment among them.

A chief also has the traditional right, still widely admitted to-day, to send and take food, especially milk and bananas, from his subjects if he has need of it. And we have seen already that men with more than one wife are prompted to retain *bwango* bananas for themselves in order to meet his demands without upsetting the peace of their households. This [177] traditional right however is known not to be admitted by the European Administration, on the grounds that a salary has taken its place, and is therefore beginning to fall into disuse. Chiefs, I was told, often fear to exercise it lest some man refuse obedience and take a complaint to the *Boma*, nor are they willing to confine their demands to those men of whose compliance they are certain. As the salary of an ordinary chief,

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

It is unusual for a sociologist to find such a simple problem for analysis as this and it was not long before the answer was plain. The Nyakyusa, until a few decades before the coming of the Europeans, had been largely isolated from any vigorous external contacts; Ngonde, on the other hand, had been effectively related to the outside world for generations. The Nyakyusa actually possessed in the Lwembes, the hereditary chiefs of Lubaga, a line of spiritual paramounts or high priests, whose religious functions were remarkably similar to those of the Kyungus in Ngonde; but, poor and isolated as they were, they had never developed any secular paramountcy at all. The reasons for the greater elaboration of the traditional political system of Ngonde were to be found above all in the ivory trade and in the constant influx of immigrant groups. 642 177

And it further became clear that the prestige which the present Kyungu enjoys in the changed conditions to-day is due in large part to his having followed the mercantile traditions of his predecessors, mastered the business methods of the Scots, made a fortune, and then kept up his position out of his own private means.

2. *THE CHRONICLE OF NGONDE (TO 1875).*

In studying the present constitution of Ngonde and the profound changes now taking place in it, we cannot find any point of time at which the process of change began. In its present radical form social change in Ngonde arises from the ferment of a host of new social conditions imported by European missionaries, traders and Government officials. But the Arabs also brought change to Ngonde and before the Arabs the Ngoni, while before the coming of the Ngoni there is evidence to suggest that changes had arisen, on more than one occasion, in the normal behaviour of the men of Ngonde which were stimulated, not by any new contacts with the outside world, but simply by accidents of their own internal history. Social change in Ngonde, as far as we can see, has always been going on. 177 178

In this section the political history of Ngonde is described in outline from the its beginnings to the coming of the Europeans in 1875, in so far as it can be recovered from the oral tradition. In later sections a systematic analysis is attempted, first of the constitution of Ngonde just prior to that date, and then of the changes in it which have since taken place. 173

(a) *THE EARLY KYUNGUS.*

It is generally agreed that the ancestors of the Kyungus, the present hereditary chiefs of Ngonde, came from the Livingstone Mountains in 173 693

[The dissimilarity between the Ngonde and the Nyakyusa political systems. — Analyst]

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

enables us to accept it as broadly accurate. But from 1875 onwards written records[1] begin to supplement the oral tradition.

A little before 1875 Mwafongo, another chief of Ngana, had succeeded Gwa Sapasi as the Kyungu; and in that year the Europeans first reached Ngonde. But about the same time Arab slave and ivory traders established themselves there also and for the next twenty years disputed its possession with the Europeans.

In 1875 Dr. Laws and his party made a voyage of exploration in the "Ilala" round the lake and visited Ngonde; and within the next six years both a Free Church of Scotland mission station and a post of the African Lakes Corporation were set up there. The site they selected was on the lake shore in Kalonga's district and so became known by his name.[2] But the Arab traders were in Ngonde too. The Arabs sometimes traded with the people of Ngonde, sometimes fought them, while the African Lakes Corporation Agent tried to combine a lucrative trade with the Arabs and the protection of the people against them.

During the course of a fight with the Arabs Kyungu Mwafongo was killed and Mwabulambo, yet another chief of Ngana, was taken in his place. The nobles of Ngonde at first wanted to take Malema, a chief of Ngelenge, but he fled from them; "they asked the Arab Mlosi to lend them men to look for him, but he hid in a tree and escaped them. So they took Mwabulambo."

It was fourteen years after the arrival of Dr. Laws before the British made any move to take over Ngonde; and in the interval Monteith Fotheringham, the African Lakes Agent, only just succeeded in maintaining himself against the Arabs, owing to the help of Captain F. D. (now Lord) Lugard. But in 1889 H. H. (afterwards Sir Harry) Johnston arrived and made treaties both with the chiefs and the Arabs in Ngonde, and from then until 1896 the country formed part of the "sphere of influence" of the British South Africa Company. In 1895 Mlosi, the leading Arab, openly refused to accept the new state of affairs and was hanged. And in the next year Ngonde was incorporated in the British Protectorate of Central Africa (afterwards renamed Nyasaland).

About this time—the present Kyungu says it was in 1894—the nobles of Ngonde deposed Kyungu Mwabulambo and made Mwakabe-

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[1] *Lakes and Mountains of Africa*, Elton. *1879.*
Adventures in Nyasaland, L. M. Fotheringham. *1891.*
The Rise of our East African Empire, F. D. Lugard. *1893.*
British Central Africa, H. H. Johnston. *1897.*
Fighting the Slave Hunters in Central Africa, A. J. Swann. *1910.*
Lake of Livingstonia, W. P. Livingstone. *1921.*
After Livingstone, F. L. M. Moir. *1923.* Etc.

[2] Spoke "Karonga," the KyuNgonde "l" being retroflex.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

175 nga, one of the chiefs of Ngelenge, Kyungu in his stead. "They deposed Mwabulambo because, as they said, the country was once more at peace and so they should take a son of Mwakasungula again as the Kyungu." Mwakabanga was at first installed on the lake shore, but after the death of Mlosi he moved to the traditional capital at the foot of Mbande.

175 The demarcation of the interterritorial boundary between Nyasaland
177 and German East Africa (afterwards Tanganyika) cut across the area of Mbande's influence. The majority of the Lambya were separated by the boundary from their chiefs Nyondo and Kameme, while the Ndali who had, so it is said, previously sent regular tribute of ivory to Mbande, now became quite independent. And some of the more remote territorial nobles to the west were included in Northern Rhodesia.

One of the first acts of the new Government was to forbid the hunting of elephants without a license and thus at a blow the main traditional source of the Kyungu's revenue came to an end. Since then the numbers of elephants have been greatly reduced by European hunters, and only a few are left in the Ngonde of to-day. Taxes soon began to be collected, however, and small subsidies to be paid from them to selected chiefs and nobles.

175 Now Kyungu Mwakabanga, who died in 1904, after a reign of ten
178 years, "was the first Kyungu to sit with his people judging their cases: he appeared before them at his own homestead. None of his predecessors had done so, only the nobles of Ngonde had seen them." During his
[202] reign the Government suppressed the *malubula*, on the ground that their methods were too rough, and gave him government-paid messengers instead. And it also forbade the poison-ordeal.

After Mwakabanga's death the nobles of Ngonde chose Mwangalabo, a son of Malema, to succeed; and early in his reign there were other significant changes of custom. From his predecessors, as we have seen, when they journeyed through their country, all commoners save the very old had fled. The Kyungu was too terrible for ordinary men to look upon. "Not till the succession of Mwangalabo was this custom abandoned." And in the third year of his reign the custom of hoeing *milma* lapsed, not to be revived till 1927.

Now, as it happened, Mwangalabo had a younger brother, Peter, who was a man of exceptional talents. Starting as a Christian teacher he then became a store capitao of the African Lakes Corporation and of various other firms, and later set up in business for himself with a chain of shops and made a fortune. And when Mwangalabo began to fail in 1912 Peter became his assistant and proved himself to have legal and administrative ability also. A failing Kyungu could not, as in former times, be killed and Mwangalabo lingered on until 1932. In 1927 it became necessary

7: Sanderson 45 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

THE RELATIONSHIP SYSTEMS OF THE WANGONDE AND WAMENGA TRIBES, NYASALAND.

By Meredith Sanderson, M.R.C.S., F.R.G.S.

I.—The Wangonde.

1. The Wangonde are a Bantu tribe inhabiting that part of Central Africa adjacent to the north-west shores of Lake Nyasa. They are a somewhat primitive people, as yet little contaminated by European civilisation; they are intensely conservative and their customs differ from those of neighbouring tribes. As a result of this conservatism their system of relationship still bears, in its nomenclature, evidence of its evolution from exogamy in its most primitive form, and of all Nyasaland tribes the Wangonde have probably been least influenced by contact with others. In recent history they were victimised from time to time both by Arab slavers and by the Angoni, but neither appear to have left any trace of their domination. It should be mentioned, however, that the chieftainship was usurped some 10 (?) generations ago by an adventurer who, according to tradition, came from the north-west (towards Tanganyika) and whose descendants still form the ruling caste. It may be that some new customs were introduced at this time, though this is denied by the descendants of the old nobility, who still retain a large share of influence in tribal council.

2. *Definitions.*—Elsewhere — "brother"[1] to "sister," or "sister" to "brother." A man calls his elder "brother" *mdolosempe*; a younger one *wang'ese*: the same terms are used by a woman for her "sisters." All children of uncles and aunts are regarded as "brothers" and "sisters," including those of maternal uncle and of paternal aunt; those of father's elder "brother," of mother's elder "sister," and of mother's "brother," are called *mdolo*, irrespective of age.

The term *wempito* is often used, irrespective of sex, as alternative for "brother" or "sister"; its real meaning is rather "kinsman," and it may also be used for any relative or connection except the age-classes immediately above or below that of the speaker (*e.g.*, father or son), as it implies a degree of intimacy not permitted with those degrees. *Wempito* means "my" (lit. "our") "kinsman"; the second and third persons are *wempito* and *wempao* respectively: there is no singular form.

[1] The use of inverted commas with English terms of relationship indicates that they are used in the full classificatory sense.

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

601 husbands of "grand-daughters" by marriage (but not "grandsons" by marriage); the "grandfathers" of a husband; and own husband.

TATA includes own father, his "brothers" and "sisters," and the husband of father's "sister"; also husband of mother's sister. By courtesy the term is used for all "fathers" of a wife or husband (instead of *ukwabe*), or to any superior in station or age, whether related or not.

YUWA (mother) includes own mother, her "brothers" and "sisters" the wives of the father's "brothers" and the wives of a woman's maternal uncle. The term may also be used for the mothers of a wife or husband, or as a mere term of respect.

These terms (TATA and YUWA) are used only in speaking of one's own fathers or mothers, the possessive adjectives, "my" or "our," being invariably omitted. For other persons, the old Bantu words WISE and NYINA are substituted; *e.g.*, phose, wise, wisewase, wisese ("thy," "his," "your," "their father"), plurals wesate, esewse, esewsie, etc. ("my" or "our," "thy," "his fathers," etc.). So unyoke, wayise, wayisewase, wayisese ("thy," "his," "your," "their mother"), plurals esayawse, esayayke, esayayise, etc. ("my" or "our," "thy," "his mother").

NWANA = son or daughter, including, of course, those of "brothers" and "sisters," and of wife.

NKAMWANA, obviously derived from *nkasi wa mwana* ("wife of a son"), may be used by either a man or a woman for that degree of relationship.

MWEKANYE (= *mu-ujke-na-ume*, "marry with us," from *kwajka*, "to marry") or KIYWAE (= *Ki-tuulu-na-ume*, "marry with us," from *kutuula*, "to marry"). [77] The former is said to be a *Kinpalyuse* word,[1] now in general use, and the latter the old *Kinpende* word; either may be used to denote a paramour of one's wife, and as a result the term *ewina-ape* is usually added when referring to a husband of the speaker's potential wife, which is its special meaning, in order to deprive it of any suggestion of offence.

NKAM-MWIKANYE ("my fellow-wife") is the corresponding term used by a woman for the wife of a potential husband, but it is not generally used among the potential wives of a man, as such. The actual wives of a man, however, refer to each other by means of this term, and to their husband's potential wives.

NAKEWUE denotes a father's sister of either a man or a woman, and reciprocally a "brother's" child of a woman. It probably has reference to the right of marriage possessed by a man with the daughter of his wife's "brother." (See para. 3 (3) below.)

MWEWWA includes mother's brother and sister's son or daughter of a man, and mother's brother of a woman. A woman calls her sister's son *ndume*. (See para. 3 (6) below.)

[1] The Wanyakyuse are a tribe racially allied to the Wankonde, and inhabiting neighbouring territory.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

as they do, in their behaviour and their mutual relationships to a common type. Space forbids such an undertaking here; and it is necessary to emphasize that, although the most significant facts are described in an orderly manner, and although certain reasons for these facts are indicated in their specific character and in their connections with one another, yet these reasons are not fully or systematically worked out, and the result is a description which leaves the facts only half-explained. And, in so far as this society is not here fully analyzed, so it is not yet fully comparable with others. The reader of this paper will detect many points of similarity and of difference between Nyakyusa society and some other with which he is familiar, but the comparison cannot be made to yield any propositions about the nature of human societies in general until the facts of both have been fully explained in terms of their particular social, cultural, and external conditions.

Climate, Cultural Groups, and European Contact.

The Nyakyusa live in the Rungwe District of South Tanganyika in the Rift Valley at the head of Lake Nyasa. The valley is dominated and closed at its North end by the recently extinct Rungwe volcano, from whose foot the land, starting as an upland plateau 5,000 ft. above sea-level, tumbles southwards for twenty-five miles in a broken cascade of hills, to level out in a plain fifteen or twenty miles from Lake Nyasa. The Lake is 1200 ft. above the sea. The East wall of the Rift rises to 10,000 ft. or more in the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains, but the West wall is two or three thousand feet lower. The climate is very wet, for about 130″ of rain fall each year, and, at 9° South of the Equator, is also very hot. The rain and the sun together make the land extremely fertile; the district is thickly populated (over 100 to the square mile), famine is rare and the Nyakyusa are far better fed than most of their neighbours. Rice was introduced into the plain by Arabs, coffee by the German Missionaries in the hills, and these two crops to-day, under the enthusiastic care and guidance of the Government Agricultural Department, bring to many Nyakyusa a small but steadily increasing cash income.

Their main foods are bananas, maize, beans, sweet potatoes and a variety of greenstuffs, together with meat and curds from their cattle. Millet is extensively grown and is used both for making beer and for eating in the form of porridge.

The name *Nyakyusa* is nowadays used by themselves as a general name for all those who have similar speech and customs and who live in Tanganyika; but formerly it only covered those who live in the South of the district, in the plain and up in the hills as far North as the administra-

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tive capital, Tukuyu, and it is still thus used to distinguish this group 101
from others. This group will here be referred to as "*Nyakyusa proper.*" Those in the North of the district to the West and East of Mount Rungwe call themselves *Kukwe* and *Mwamba* respectively, and there is a group of chiefdoms to the East, under the Livingstone Mountains, called *Selya.* All these four groups share a common culture, distinguished by minor [184] local peculiarities of dialect and custom. Immediately bordering the Nyakyusa to the South West are the *Ngonde* (Europeanized as "*Konde*") in Northern Nyasaland; they belong to the same cultural group but are distinguished by greater differences of custom and speech than the others. I have not yet visited them.

In the hills to the West of the Rift live the *Ndali*, who are included in this administrative district; and on the plateau under these hills, to the West of the Kukwe, live the *Penja.* Both these small groups have old languages of their own which, though related to that of the Nyakyusa are [197] more or less unintelligible to them; and they have equally distinct cultures. But they are now rapidly being assimilated to the Nyakyusa both in [177] speech and in law.

I use the name Nyakyusa, in accordance with modern usage, to include the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, Mwamba, and Selya groups, but to exclude the Ndali, the Penja, and the Konde. The Nyakyusa together with the Ndali and Penja number 150,000; the Konde of Nyasa- [161] land 30,000.[9]

Members of the Berlin and Moravian Missions were the first Euro- 797
peans to settle in the district, where they have lived now for forty-five 177
years and have made numerous converts. The German Administrators followed them closely, and later came a few planters. But pronounced economic change is a matter of the past five to ten years during which time the Lupa Gold Fields of South Tanganyika have been opened up and have employed increasing numbers of Africans on the diggings. During the past few years the young men of the Nyakyusa have developed [166 the habit of going for a few months, now and again, to the Gold Fields to 464] earn money for tax and clothes. They seldom stay more than six months at a time, often only one or two; so that their absence does not cause the same difficulties in their own community that are found in other areas where the men spend longer periods away from home.

The Family, together with a sketch of wider Kinship Groupings

The relationships of husband and wife, parent and child, sibling and 593
sibling are continually visible in the culture of the Nyakyusa. The

[9] Government Census figures.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

583 her and then returns to her first husband the cows he had given for her
837 with two in addition as adultery fine. But this return is usually made only after the first husband has brought a lawsuit against him.

837 Adultery is extremely common now-a-days; when a man runs off
684 with, or is discovered seducing, a married woman and has not enough
177 cows to marry her, he is legally compelled to pay two cows for the adultery to her husband. In pre-European days an adulterer, if caught, was usually punished by the husband and his neighbours with death or extreme torture, and the old men tell me that adultery was then a rarer event.

584 The extent to which a girl is usually allowed to choose whom she
177 will marry is difficult to guage, and varies in different circumstances. Opportunities of meeting and flirting with young men at dances and ceremonies are frequent; and the older men say that, owing to the abolition by the Europeans of the old severe punishments for adultery, girls
[582] are freer now than they used to be, for their lovers no longer fear to run off with them if they are married or bespoken (which is in Nyakyusa law very much the same thing). The custom of betrothing infant girls is, they declare, less common than it used to be; they are now more chary of pledging their daughters "for when they grow up they just run off with someone else." A girl's choice is, however, limited by the necessity of finding a lover who has cows, and few young men have enough to secure her if she is already married, though they may have enough to pay an adultery fine.

[428] Owing, in part, to the laws of inheritance, by which a commoner's[6]
593 full-brother inherits before his son, it is the older men who control the cattle. Every bachelor is largely or wholly dependent on his own father (or his dead father's heir) for the cows for his first marriage, and he must hoe his father's fields for many years before he is given enough to secure a wife and to set up a family of his own. Economic reciprocity is an element in most human relationships, and it enters into the Nyakyusa relationship of father and son. It is well understood, in this society, that
593 after a certain length of time spent hoeing his father's fields a young man
685 is entitled to some cows, if his father has any; and if his father delays too long the young man either stops hoeing for his father or else he takes legal action and enforces his claim. Between father and son such law cases are rare, but they are frequent between a young man and the brother of his father who has inherited his father's wives, property, and position in the family.

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[6] The laws of inheritance for a chief are, in certain respects, different; vide infra, "The Chieftain."
[Cat. th. pp. 278 ff. — Adolph]

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

kinsman. Though some of the reasons for his subordination are to be found in modern conditions, it is clear that many of the factors have always operated. 622

Wars did not only occur between brothers; but when one chief defeated another who was more distantly related to him, he did not, apparently ever, reduce him to a minor position: He either took his cows and then left him alone, or killed him and set up a brother of his own as an independent though allied chief, or else, more rarely, killed him, took over the country and directly incorporated it in his own. So that, apart from the subordination of a defeated brother and his heirs, political authority always stopped at the boundaries of each separate chiefdom.[14] 622 727

The traditionally independent chiefdoms to-day vary in numbers from 100 to about 3,000 adult men. 631 161

The coming of the German Administration in 1893 introduced a paramount political authority, for the first time, in the persons of European officials; while in 1926, a generation later, the British Administration created new Native Authorities under the District Officer and superior to the chiefs. The traditionally independent chiefs were grouped together in eleven court districts, in each district a "Native Court" was set up, consisting of the various chiefs and their great commoners, under the hereditary presidency of one of the chiefs, who thereby became senior to all the others in that court district. Salaries for chiefs have been introduced, and the senior chiefs receive far higher salaries than the others; while the meetings of each Court are always held in the territory of the senior chief (*omulafyale ophokomba*); and to it has now been transferred a great deal of the legal business which, before 1926, was transacted by each chief sitting with his own great commoners in his own chiefdom. The chiefs themselves were consulted in the selection of the Court Presidents, and those chosen were normally the chiefs with the greatest number of men in each particular court district. 636 177 [465]

In this account the term *senior chief* (*omulafyale ophokomba*) denotes the President of a Native Court, *chief* (*omulafyale*) means one of the traditionally independent chiefs, while *minor chief* (*omulafyale omwandi*) means one of the subordinate chiefs, often with only 40-60 men under him.

The introduction of Courts and salaries has brought an entirely new element into the relationship between old and young chiefs (*mide* 636 177 578

[14] Among the Konde of Nyasland, I am told, there was a paramount chief Kyungu, with a far-reaching political authority; but there was no such chief among the Nyakyusa.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

636 *supra*). Only one of them can receive the salary and they commonly
●177 dispute about it. Quarrels are particularly frequent over the position of
578 senior chief, for the presidency of a Court carries with it a relatively large salary. Old senior chiefs cling to the position long after their sons have "come out" and when they die their full-brothers still dispute the position with the sons because of the salary involved. Such a situation could not have arisen before 1926, for then there was no comparable issue between them.

636 And the introduction of salaries has also had a most profound effect
622 upon the relative status of the two young chiefs who "come out"
177 together. When an ordinary chief, with a small salary, dies the Government recognises the first son alone as chief and pays the whole salary to him. This reduces the second son to the position of a minor chief as effectively as a defeat in war might have done in the old days. But, while the action of warfare only occasionally led to the subordination of one of the brothers, this action of the Government does so invariably, and always subordinates the younger brother. When a senior chief dies, on the other hand, the salary is usually divided: the bulk of it goes to the first son, together with the position of senior chief, while to the second son is given the salary of an ordinary chief.

554- As the prestige and authority of a father in his family, or of a man
622 among his neighbours, is closely connected with his wealth on the one hand, and with his believed religious powers on the other, so also the status of a chief among his people. He has more cows, more wives, more food than other men; he is spiritually responsible for the fertility of the land, the women and the cattle of his chiefdom. But he is no autocrat, and all his public functions require for their exercise the co-operation of his great commoners.

622 Polygyny is, above all, the mark of a chief. Few commoners have
595 more than five or six wives, but a chief frequently marries fifteen, thirty, fifty or even more; his wives weed and plant the fields which their unmarried sons hoe, and there is plenty of food for guests. Chiefs themselves hoe when they have time, and often they employ a poor man to hoe for them as well, rewarding him after a year or two with a cow. It is not
637 possible for one man to satisfy so many women sexually, and it is generally said that every chief's wife, save the five or six who are his favourites, has a lover. But intrigues must be carried on with care, for their discovery means a great public scandal.

The extent of a chief's polygyny is conditioned by his control of cattle, and his income in cattle is derived mainly from inheritance and the

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

living representatives, to take their name, and to sacrifice at their groves, it was commoner priests who chose them and, as will be seen, put them to death when it was expedient for the good of the people. It is clear, too, from what source the commoners drew their power. The invaders were supposed to have brought into the country fire, cattle, crops, and iron; they were creators, the guarantors and preservers of fertility; and it was to foster and increase fertility that men worshipped and sacrificed at the groves of the mythical heroes. The aborigines, on the other hand, without fire, without iron, and feeding on raw meat as the myth depicts them, possessed one weapon of terrible potency, witchcraft, which no chief, not even a priest of the chief's lineage, could withstand or would dare to challenge. To the Nyakyusa the essential nature of the universe, established in history and in the institutions of their society, was reciprocity, a balance between chiefs and commoners, between cattle-owners and cultivators, between the creative power of the heroes and the black anger of the witches. The idea of a chief who was a dictator was as foreign as the idea of a single omnipotent creator. Moreover, there was a multiplicity of chiefs, no single central authority.

The heroic tradition, then, accounts for the differences between the chiefs and commoners and for the remarkable equilibrium that obtains between them. It accounts also, as we shall find, for the 'coming out' ritual, at least in part. It is strangely silent, however, about the origin of what is perhaps the most striking feature of Nyakyusa social life, the system of age-villages. The absence of any link between the myths of the heroes and the founding of age-villages is the more surprising in that the pattern of age-organization almost certainly came into the valley from the north-east. Only in East Africa was government based on age groups and the handing over of power from one generation to the next celebrated by whole communities. If the system of age-villages came in with the eastern invaders why is this contribution to civilized living (for the Nyakyusa regard village life as the essence of civilization) never mentioned? The only explanation we can offer is that the age structure is not necessarily linked with chieftainship, whereas the control of cattle and iron was the basis of power, and making fire was a symbol, not only of a new chieftainship, but of the vital creative force in the body of the chief. The heroic cycle justifies the relations between chiefs and commoners, but is not concerned with other institutions of the society.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

accessible in an earlier book, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*,[1] and the details need not be recapitulated here.

Perhaps the reader has already noted a certain difficulty over tenses: 'is' tends to merge into 'was'. When we first visited BuNyakyusa in 1934 missionaries of various denominations had already been at work, and a foreign government in control, for forty years past. Between 1934 and my last visit in 1955 the changes have been great, but I use the present tense for things seen at first hand, whether earlier or later, and a separate chapter is devoted to the twenty years' change. It is well to recognize at the outset, however, that in 1934 the sanctity and power of the 'divine kings' was already questioned and their rituals were curtailed, and even the pagan cosmology of the Nyakyusa was beginning to exhibit traces of Christian influence. One striking example was the changing, or rather the fluid, connotation of the name *Kyala*.

Two new types of organization developed in BuNyakyusa with the arrival of the Europeans: churches which are based on a principle of association wholly new to the pagan tradition—common belief as opposed to kinship or contiguity; and a centralized system of government. To these have now been added trading concerns, of which the most important are co-operative societies exporting coffee and rice.

The subject of this book is (i) the traditional rituals celebrated on behalf of chiefdoms and groups of chiefdoms, and (ii) the changing ideas and values apparent as a section of the Nyakyusa turn from paganism to Christianity. In the concluding chapters an attempt is made to demonstrate the links between the changes in social structure and the changes in ritual.

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*, 1957.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

539 fierce warriors. They were first driven out, then later Lwembe (3) was driven out too. When Lwembe was a child, herding cattle with his fellows, he moulded cattle of clay and they became alive; so with lions and leopards, too; he also took up a handful of earth and it became beans or millet. His fellows told Mwemusi of this and he was astonished. Then Mwemusi sent men to watch; they went early in the morning and hid themselves and watched; they watched him making all these things. Then they wanted to kill him, but the forefather of Mwakalukwa [another Kinga chief] gave him two cows; he was a friend and said: 'Leave the country, they want to kill you, take these cows and eat them on the road.' Lwembe went away with Kimoule and Mwamaloba (Mwamalunguka) and two wives and all his animals.

These three, Nkekete (1), Kyala (2), and Lwembe (3), were driven out by Mwemusi, but Lwembe's younger brothers, the BaMwalukiwa (4), were left. When Lwembe went away, Mwemusi's men followed him, wishing to kill him, but they feared his animals, and did not try.

Nkekete (1) set out to the Lake [Nyasa] and went into a stream; he is in the water now, in a stream with pools near the Lake, in Kisi country. Kyala (2) went and built among stones in a cave. When the
● [177] Europeans came they took rifles and shot at Kyala in the place where he had built, so he moved to a different place. Of old he was in a cave washed by the waters of the Lake, but after the Europeans came he moved to his present cave at the boundary between Kisekelo's and Kisi country. Kyala had fowls there; some saw them in the old days
[182] and some did not. Nkekete is in a stream with pools in it; there (at Lumbila in Kisi country) men sacrifice a cow. Kyala's sheep are killed near his cave.

Neither Nkekete nor Kyala had any children, but Lwembe (3), who went off alive, begot many children. We speak with them. Nkekete and Kyala were killed, Lwembe was not. . . . All the Kinga
[182] chiefs when praying in the sacred groves say the names of their fathers
[769] who have died, and also the names of Nkekete, Kyala, and Lwembe, in that order . . . Lwembe was the youngest of the three brothers . . . Nkekete and Kyala only made crops—millet and beans. We ask for fertility of the soil (indete), and sunshine, and rain from them, but not animals. From Lwembe we ask for milk, and fertility of men and cattle, and snakes, and goats, and sheep, and all crops. Lwembe has everything. We ask for sunshine and rain from Lwembe as well.

When Lwembe went down into Selya he found the hill people (BaMfumbe) and the people of the plain (Mwakyembe's men)[1] already there. They feared him because he had all things, and they still fear him. He was greater than Nkekete. They cut Nkekete's throat, but they couldn't kill Lwembe. He made the small lakes—all of them. He

[1] In other versions Mwakyembe is a descendant of Lwembe.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and Tutsi who established conquest states to the north-west.[1] 173

Whatever the origin and adventures of the heroes they were important in Nyakyusa and Ngonde history because their graves became centres of religious ritual which linked together groups that were otherwise largely independent. The myths about them are the charter for chieftainship. They are depicted as benefactors who brought to uncivilized men not only the institution of chieftainship itself, but fire, cattle, iron, seed, and a creative power resident in their own bodies and those of their anointed heirs. But the myths also justify the power of commoners who first occupied the country and who have witchcraft in their bellies:

773 [174]

[778] [754]

The commoners whom Lwembe found here were extraordinary. They were cultivators, but they had not yet got fire, they ate their food raw. It was we chiefs, it was Lwembe, who brought fire and cattle—he came and found the original occupants without cattle; hence the commoners say, 'We are the earth'. Commoners are different from us physically, they are black; they are awe-inspiring, they are witches. Before you Europeans came the chiefs like Mwaipopo (116) were not awe-inspiring, they feared the commoners very much; the commoners hammered the chief with their fists—yes, by daylight. And if the chief cut a man's bananas that man took the chief's. If the commoners were angry with Mwaipopo they fetched Mwangomo (124 whose chiefdom adjoins Mwaipopo's) at night by their witchcraft; he came in the night with his people and seized the cattle, both those of the chief, Mwaipopo, and those of the commoners. The next day the commoners said: 'It is we, we are angry. Why do you not look after us? Why do you not kill cattle for us?' Then Mwaipopo would kill two head of cattle and all the men in the country ate. . . . Mwaipopo and his equals were not awe-inspiring long ago, it is you Europeans who have created chieftainship and awe.

539

[777] [754] [643]

[1] cf. H. H. Curson and R. W. Thomson, 'A Contribution to the Study of African Native Cattle', *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Science and Animal Industry*, vii, 2 October 1936 (Government Printer, Pretoria). An analysis of the distribution and migration of breeds in Africa.

H. B. Thompson and R. Scott, *Uganda* (1935), pp. 135 ff.

Fitzhoum, *op. cit.*, pl. III: 6a.

M. Merker, *Die Masai*, pp. 135 ff., 1904, Berlin.

H. H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, 1904, pp. 86, 103 (early photographs of Nyoro cattle).

The short-horn type predominates among the Nyakyusa, but some animals suggest an intermixture with Sanga cattle. The hump is regarded as a great delicacy and is exaggerated in the clay cattle which have model. Cf. Fitzhoum, *op. cit.*, pl. 70. The similarity between the ritual and symbolism of the Nyakyusa and those of the Ganda as described by Roscoe is marked. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, 1911.

[113]

[291] [825] [512]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

are remembered, and the names of the two senior wives of a chief are often recited in genealogies because the heirs take their names from their mothers, but she-who-taught-cooking is the only heroine in her own right.

It is worth noting also that the rituals of kinship are linked neither with the heroic tradition nor with primeval incest. We could trace no myths regarding their beginning, save that concerning the origin of avoidance between father and daughter-in-law. The myth of the origin of death is a variation on the theme, so familiar in Bantu-speaking Africa, of the two messengers (a sheep and a dog in this version) sent to men by 'Kyala', one promising life, the other death. It provides no charter for the ritual.

And what of the relation between myth and history? The conquest of cultivators by cattle-keepers is the common theme of traditions in the lacustrine area, and it is quite possible that small groups of invaders, who brought with them iron tools and weapons and cattle, established themselves as chiefs over small unorganized groups of hunters and cultivators in an isolated valley three or four centuries ago.[1] The Nyakyusa valley and the plain of Ngonde have no iron ore, and the inhabitants were dependent, until the coming of the Europeans, on iron (*ilyala*) smelted in the hills to the east for weapons and tools.[2] The original inhabitants are said to have used wooden hoes exclusively—such hoes were still in common use in 1938[3]—so the myth of a Lwembe sending to BuKinga for iron hoes has a firm foundation in historical fact. But that the original inhabitants of the valley did not know the use of fire 300 or 400 years ago (when Lwembe arrived) is incredible. Here the record of one of the greatest events in history is fitted into the shallow time-scale of an isolated people. To them it is not *when* fire arrived that is really important, but *who* brought it; chiefs are chiefs to the Nyakyusa (as to other peoples in Africa) by virtue of this great benefit they brought to men.

[1] Nyamwanga tradition (recorded in the Mbeya District Book) tells of the introduction of iron Hoes generations ago. The Sangu tradition says that a tall, pale man from 'Somaliland' first brought iron spear-heads to Bulungu and his son established a hegemony by virtue of his superior weapons.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Land Company*, p. 5. The iron deposits on the Livingstone mountains have recently been investigated by the Colonial Development Corporation. A 'Gunflinton iron monument' in the south of Njombe District was found to be 'unsuitable'. *Tanganyika: Annual Report of the Provincial Commissioner*, 1951, p. 31.

[3] Wilson, *op. cit.*, plate VII.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

It is surprising to westerners, whose whole framework of reference is shaped by the conception of historical time, that the heroic myth is not more explicitly dated by the volcanic eruptions known to have taken place near Lubaga,[1] but to the Nyakyusa the sequence of events does not appear important except in so far as it determines seniority.

Nowadays, with the changing form of the society, there develops a new mythology. Kyala is described by younger men as a creator, apart and distinct from any hero or ancestor, and they reject any suggestion that he was once on a footing with Lwembe and Kyungu. The more conservative fit Christian names into the heroic myth. One version goes as follows:

> Kyala had two sons, Kyala the elder who was Mbasi or Satano, and Kyala the younger who was Jesus. Kyala the younger made corn, and cattle, and fire, and cooked meat, and men ate; then Mbasi or Satano was furious because his younger brother was outdoing him, and killed him, and became the only one.

Here the traditional theme of the jealousy of the senior is dominant, but generally it is the power of the heroes over fertility, under the old dispensation, that is stressed.

Many people tell today of old prophecies concerning the coming of Europeans and of the triumph of a new religion. To the Christians these provide some bridge between the past and the present, for they interpret the words of pagan prophets as evidence of their foreknowledge of a truth they had not yet been taught.

[1] D. A. Harbin, 'The Northern Lava Flow, Kirjo, Rungwe District', *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, September 1955, suggests that the most recent eruption in the district, that of Kirjo, took place about 1800, but this conclusion is based on the description of the eruption by an man, and the assumption that his great grandfather witnessed it. That some ancestor of Andulile Kajigiri witnessed the eruption is likely, but had it taken place only three generations ago it might be expected that other families also would have had a tradition of the event. Kirjo is clearly visible from Mwasipupo's country and had the eruption taken place early in the nineteenth century either the chief Mwakaglie (75) or his father Mwamukingo (45) must have observed it. Their descendants are emphatic that there is no tradition of their having done so, though it is commonly known that an eruption of Kirjo occurred in the distant past.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F7017 Ngonde F7017
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER III

THE 'DIVINE KINGS'

17

(a) CHARACTERISTICS OF 'DIVINE KINGS'

THE heroic myths and genealogies proclaim the origin of chieftainship, and point to a distinction between ordinary chiefs and those we call 'divine kings'. Two remote ancestors who were pre-eminent are worshipped as heroes and creators, their graves are centres at which a large number of chiefdoms join in celebration, and living representatives are selected in every generation bearing their names. These are the 'divine kings', the Lwembe of Lubaga (in the centre of Nyakyusa country) and the Kyungu of Mbande near Karonga in Nyasaland. A third hero, Kyala, is associated with the cave, PaliKyala, near Ikombe at the north-east corner of the Lake, and he is worshipped in the same way as the other two, except that the priest of the cave is not his descendant and does not embody him. According to the myth, Kyala was the brother of Lwembe, but died without issue. However, the word for chiefs—*aba-nya-fyala*—is popularly believed to mean 'the sons of Kyala'.[1] 713 769 643

Kyala is one hero among others, but his name is *aba* used in the sense of 'the lord': a chief is *kyala gwake* (his lord) to a commoner, a father is *kyala gwake* to his son or daughter 'because he created him' and a shade is *kyala* to his living kinsman (*ungwake je kyala*). Of one who performs a feat—something difficult—it is said 'he is Kyala'.[2] This usage is said to be very old, but there is yet another meaning of the word which is new. *Kyala* was used by the European missionaries (who first established themselves near PaliKyala) as their translation of 'God'. Today these three conceptions are inextricably mixed: Kyala the hero, Kyala 'the 769 643 [715] [171] [197]

[1] I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Forster for drawing my attention to this point. It is doubtful whether *Kyala* and *fyala* in fact come from the same root. *Fyala* in Hehe means the daughter of a chief (A. G. O. Hodgson, 'Some Notes on the Wahehe of Mahenge District', *J.R.A.I.*, lvi (1926), p. 40). In Bena *ipalyana* means 'my husband's father or mother' (A. T. and G. M. Culwick, *Ubena of the Rivers*, p. 156). In Gando *mafyala* means 'lady', mistress of a household and garden (J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, p. 44). cf. Nyika, *fala* 'to forget, to lose' (J. L. Krapf and J. Rebmann, *A Nyika-English Dictionary*, edited by T. H. Spambaur, 1887). [192]

[2] cf. F. R. Lehmann, 'Some field notes on the Nyakyusa', *Sociologus*, New Series, 1951, vol. 3, p. 66. [113]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F2617 Ngonde F2617
Nyakyusa

'lord', and Kyala the Christian deity. In the sacrifices at Lobaga and the groves of various chiefs, the name Kyala was mentioned repeatedly, as will be shown. Some may interpret this as evidence of a traditional belief in an overriding deity. We think that in most cases it is used in the sense of Kyala the hero, or Kyala 'the lord', but after forty years[1] and more of missionary activity it is not possible to establish exactly what the traditional conception of Kyala was. Moreover, it will be obvious that many of the speakers quoted in later chapters now entertain religious notions which have been unconsciously, and sometimes profoundly, modified by Christian ideas, a phenomenon especially noteworthy in their references to Kyala.

All the Nyakyusa proper (that is those of Selya, the Lake plain, and Masoko) send cattle to sacrifice at Lobaga (the grove of Lwembe), and several of the Kinga chiefs send there too. The people of Ngonde send to the Kyungu at Mbande, but not to Lobaga, while the people living north of the Songwe did not ever send to Mbande. Some of the people of the Lake plain (Mo-Ngonde) and various Kinga chiefs send to PaliKyala as well as to Lobaga, but the hill people never send to PaliKyala, nor did the Kisi who lived around PaliKyala send to Lobaga. In other words, Lwembe and Kyala were 'brothers' and it was possible to sacrifice to both, though people living close to one centre did not send to the other. All those living south of the Songwe river looked to Mbande; those north of it to Lobaga or PaliKyala. Lwembe, Kyala, and Kyungu were ancestors, honoured primarily by their own descendants or by those of a brother, but they were also divine heroes who might be appealed to by unrelated people through their priests.

The distinction between a 'divine king' and an early ancestor who established a line of chiefs is not a sharp one, and we have indeed been uncertain whether or not to class Mwangomale (4K),[2] the founder (or at least a notable son) of the Kukwe line, with Lwembe and Kyungu. Sacrifices used to be made to Mwangomale at the grove of Kabale by a number of Kukwe chiefs, but we have no evidence either of the formal installation of a living representative in each generation or of sacrifices by unrelated people, and therefore do not include Mwangomale among the 'divine kings'. The early inhabitants of the Rungwe

[1] Field-work began in 1934.

[2] Numerals followed by K refer to the genealogy of Kukwe chiefs facing p. 23.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

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round him and sit at home in the middle in the sun. . . . All the old chiefs inspired fear (*hepale*). It used to be taboo to walk near the house of a chief and approach him unless taken by a village headman . . . nowadays men walk about and enter his home and even eat his food.[1] The power came partly from his position as the living Lwembe, and partly from the medicines with which he was treated, especially the terrible *ifegila*.

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The 'divine king' who came as a conqueror bringing iron is also associated with victory in battle. Still today a brave fighter is saluted as 'Lwembe', and an iron spear is one of the emblems of chieftainship.

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The Lwembe was himself a priest—he is often referred to as *ngonge*—but he was assisted by commoners. There is a hereditary keeper of the grove of Lubaga named Kimende who is the descendant of that Kimende the commoner who fled from BuKinga with Lwembe. It is he who conducts the sacrifices, who dashes the participants with medicines before they enter, and who protects the grove. 'If by mistake the grove was a little burnt then the people here paid a beast to Kimende, it was his to eat as he liked.' Others of the priests say that Lwembe found their ancestors at Lubaga; they are 'owners of the soil' there, and one of them, *Mwanai*, could give us the names of six generations of ancestors who had been priests of Lubaga before him. But the bulk of the commoner priests are not hereditary at all, they are surviving village headmen (or their heirs) of the most recently dead Lwembe.

The success of the sacrifices at Lubaga was held to depend upon the proper co-operation of chiefs and priests: first, on the Lwembe himself (the shortage of food among the Kinga, and of milk among the Nyakyusa, while we were there, was attributed by Kaitile to the fact that there was no living Lwembe); secondly on the commoner priests of Lubaga; thirdly on the commoner Kinga priests; fourthly on Kaitile (30) and certain other priests of Selya; and fifthly on the chiefs of the Nyakyusa and the Kinga who provided the offerings. 'Can a priest celebrate alone?' said Kaitile. 'No, the ritual depends on the chiefs.' The celebrations thus linked together chiefs and people, as well as Kinga and Nyakyusa, and numerous different Nyakyusa chiefdoms. The hereditary Kinga priests live in the country of the Kinga chief *Mwahalukwa* and

[1] This is inconsistent with Kaitile's statement quoted above. The general opinion was that chiefs were more powerful than formerly, but the living Lwembe less so.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

778 Lwembe, and the grove of the first Lwembe himself, the last being
782 the most sacred. In it stands a miraculous tree from which, the priests aver, sometimes comes sap like water, and sometimes blood. 'If it is watery there will be a plague of ulcers in the country—
[753] running sores—if it is blood there will be dysentery. But as soon
[755] as the hoes are placed in the grove, or the black bull is killed, then the sick begin to recover.'

781 Godfrey Wilson attended three celebrations at Lubaga, and we heard of five others which occurred during our period of fieldwork. The ritual is esoteric, that is to say, only the representative of Lwembe and his priests participate, and the details are not revealed to others, but its occurrence is widely known and discussed among older men.

[695] The celebrations observed were modified by the fact that no one
[795] had been installed as Lwembe since the death of Mwakisinya
[177] (56) before 1914. The possible candidates whom the priests had wished to instal had refused—'they feared the grove'; the only one who was said to be willing was rejected on account of his character. The priests gave 'European times' as the reason for there being no Lwembe. 'When the country was ours before you Europeans came' the elected candidate was compelled to accept office. On the death of Mwakisinya, the Kinga priests ordered that his senior son Mwanjala I (77) should take his place, and when Mwanjala I died (three years after his father) his full brother Mwanjala II (78) succeeded. He took a leading part in the rituals observed, but was not an anointed Lwembe. The priests explained: 'We fear, thinking that if a chief is seized [and compelled to sit on the stool] he will complain to the Government and we shall be punished.' During the period of German rule they had been threatened with imprisonment if they continued the ritual . . . 'we feared and stole through the country by night' . . . . And there is still much secrecy about its truncated celebration. Since the journey down 'the road of Lwembe' with the drum traditionally involved human sacrifice, and the Lwembe was smothered when ailing, there is an absolute incompatibility between a full celebration of the ritual and European administration.

777 The influence of the Christian minority is also considerable. The
788 view of most Nyakyusa Christians with whom we discussed communal rituals is that they used to be efficient, but are so no longer, since men have been taught a better way of approaching God. 'God said: "They are mistaken but in their hearts they are

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

looking for me", and so if there was much heat he would send rain.' But this no longer happens.

At the same time both pagans and Christians tell a myth of how a European missionary, Rev. — Jacot (Mwainumo), who visited the grove of Lubaga intending to remove the bees in the grove to demonstrate the falsehood of the ritual, was confounded by a miracle (*ifke*).

Once the missionary Mwainumo wished to go and see the grove of Lubaga. He was warned that if he entered he would die because there were many marvels there, and the rain would catch him. He said: 'Oh, I shall go, nothing will happen.' So he went and entered the grove, and he found many bees, some standing up, some lying down, and some of them had 'eyes'. He asked one to take it away, then there was a crash of thunder, and he was afraid and fled. When he ran out of the grove the rain fell in torrents. It is said that he was so frightened he left his jacket behind. From that time people said that indeed there are miracles at Lubaga.

'European times' is given as the reason for sacrifices being less frequent and regular than formerly. The occasions were, and still are: any period of hunger or scarcity, such as the Kings regularly experience during the dry season, and the Nyakyusa also complain of at that time; any irregular misfortune such as a failure of the rains, a plague of locusts or an epidemic; and any prediction of hunger or disease by a prophet (*umulili* or *umfungulula*). But the chiefs are said to be more reluctant to provide the cattle for sacrifice than formerly, and less quickly influenced by the actual occurrence of hunger or by prophecy that famine is imminent. Nevertheless they still 'treat the earth' (*ukutendelaga ungfi*) by sending a black cow to Lubaga when hunger pressed.

According to Kasitile (86) and Mwamukundu (his fellow priest) no ritual could be performed in the grove of the first Lwembe when he had no living representative. Formerly, the Kimsale in office and another priest penetrated alone, and there bound a lion sheep and left it to blaze until a python took it. 'It is Kyala, he turns himself into a python' (*Je kyala: ipala ana*). Here Kasitile used *kyala* in the sense of 'the lord' and he was referring to Lwembe. According to another informant, when the heir to any priesthood connected with Lubaga is installed he should sleep in the grove enclosed in a stout wicker hut, and remain there until the python of the grove comes and *kiki* him. The case was cited of a priest who had lain captive for two weeks

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

children, not the married ones with wives. Kimwale and I both have our children anointed now.'

This ritual was not complete because Mwanjala shirked the crucial act of remaining in the grove until a python licked him. The Kinga priests were continually nagging at the Nyakyusa for their failure to provide an acceptable Lwembe, but it is doubtful whether in 1935 Mwanjala II would have been acceptable to any of them since he was old and ailing. It was Mwakilima (111) that men wanted and he steadily refused to be installed.

The next ritual observed at Lubaga was in March 1937. An ordinary commoner of Selya (not a priest) named Kijaja had been prophesying repeatedly: 'I do not sleep, you will not eat the crops you hoe if you do not go to Lubaga.' He was taken to his village headman and thence to the chief Mwaihojo (147) who finally, two years after he had begun prophesying, agreed to find a bull. Word then came to Kasitile (86) who notified the commoner priests of chief Mwaipopo (116) and sent a message to the priests of Lubaga. Kasitile (86), together with three other priests of Selya (Mwalukota, Nyama, Mwamakunda) and Godfrey Wilson, set off early one morning from Kasitile's house to take the bull (brown streaked with black, called *ingombe imbela*) to Lubaga. On the way they called in at Munyoso's house, where the Kinga stop on their journey to pour a libation of beer (*vide supra*, p. 27). Kasitile asked Munyoso, 'Shall the bull enter?' and he replied, 'Yes, let it come into the house', so it was tied up inside while the party talked with Munyoso. He was sick and did not want to accompany them. The others pressed him, and at first he refused. Whereupon Mwalukota said: 'Very well, then, we are at your place, let the bull return and we will go another day', in other words, refusing to go without him. 'No, that is taboo,' said Kasitile, 'once the bull has faced towards Lubaga and entered a house here it is taboo for it to turn back. The shades will be angry.' And so Munyoso went with them.

On the way they passed a group of men hoeing hard. One of them called out: 'Where are you going with that bull? Where are you off enjoying yourselves?' 'Ah, you fellows,' answered Kasitile, 'do you ask where we are going? We visit where our fathers always did.' They understood at once. 'Oh thank you, thank you,' they cried. 'You,' went on Kasitile, 'do you call that work? Are you growing your own food? No, you lie still and eat without effort. It is we who exert ourselves for you' (implying

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

instructed us, you have taught us the customs, we did not know them, we thought that when the food came that was all.' 782 796

Kasitile said: 'Yes, I do it as our fathers did it.' Then they discussed the dispute between Mwakisiya and Kasitile and agreed that Kasitile had got the better of Mwakisiya with the reference to his own reluctance to provide cattle for sacrifice.

Kasitile was determined to extract a cow for sacrifice from the chief Mwaipopo (116) also, and presently he said:

Friends, listen, let us report at home that we used hard words, we insulted Mwakisiya, we said there is nothing left to eat though we are not really starving. What has come over me? Why am I ill? Let Mwaipopo pay a cow.

The following day Mwamalungulu, one of the priests of Lubaga, explained what was meant by the complaint of insults from Selya:

The people of Mwaipopo (116) do really insult us, and since the Europeans have given them a Court they have begun to say that Mwakisiya (111) is a priest, not a chief, but just an old priest (*ipapi*), and we his men are all angry to hear this because Mwakisiya was always the senior. And they do not send us cattle to sacrifice, they say: 'It's European times now, all that is finished.' [177] [578]

But of Kasitile's retort that Mwakisiya himself did not listen to his priests at home, Mwamalungulu said: 'Indeed it is so, that was an excellent reply.'

The party going up to Lubaga and back travelled dry, but on the return journey Kasitile noticed that the road was wet and he remarked, 'The rain follows us again', and it was true, clouds were gathering quickly. An hour and a half after they got home heavy rain began and continued for three or four hours. During the preceding weeks there had been many heavy showers and bright spells, unnoticed and of no particular significance, but the downpour on the day of the sacrifice was immediately connected with it.

Three weeks later the rain had almost stopped and people were talking of drought. Kasitile was quick to link this with the failure to follow up the offering at Lubaga with sacrifices in the groves of the chiefs. On the sixth of April he spoke his mind to Mwanbeputa, the senior village headman of Mwaipopo, when both were visiting us. 769 782 796

Where is the rain? [said Kasitile] I am at fault, and my child Mwaipopo (116) also. He ought to provide a cow to kill at Mwajonga's

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

782 793 [788] black and white) animals are killed, with the same symbolism as in BuKinga.[1] 'We kill a white sheep in the dry season that the sun may shine—if we killed a black sheep in summer the wet season would last all the year.'

The Kinga pray for fertility of the fields, that illness may pass, that they 'may sleep at home'; the local people[2] for fertility of the fields and that the pots they make (and on the sale of which they largely depend) may not crack in the firing. The more distant chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa plain sacrifice only in drought or plague—the last sacrifice remembered was during a plague of locusts about 1915, but the Kinga chief Kyelela sent a cow in PaliKyala in July 1957.

778 689 Like the grove of Lubaga, Kyala's cave is fearful. There is a story of two men who took a length of creeper from near it to tie up their canoe, and when they got home both went mad. Godfrey Wilson's guide, a young Christian, refused to enter the cave on the grounds that his pagan half-brother had once entered and taken away a potsherd and 'when he got home he went mad'.

[1] Mawaddy appears to have been misinformed on this point, op. cit., pp. 301-2.

[2] The persons are primarily Kisi, but neighbouring Nyakyusa have taken to this lucrative trade.

[777] [323]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3417 Ngonde F3417
Nyakyusa

ince the 'coming out' of his sons spelt not only retirement, but [643]
peedy death to a chief, he was not unnaturally reluctant to
ten it and, we were told, chiefs would try to defer it, but were
ged by their village headmen to celebrate, and had eventually
xcept their advice. Indeed we heard of one chief whose illness
attributed to the 'breath' of his men, angry because he [753]
ed to hold the 'coming out' which was due.

lowadays the situation is radically altered by the fact that chiefs
tinue to live long after the 'coming out' of their sons, and the
inistration treats the old chief as the sole authority, or the
men find good reasons for not holding the celebration at all.
efore the ritual there is much speculation and excitement
roughout the chiefdom, and private discussions between the old
f and his village headmen about suitable candidates for office.
ey look for men of wisdom (*umahala*),[1] skilled in settling dis- [183]
es, modest (for boastfulness is judged intolerable in a Nyakyusa [597]
-village as it is in an English public school), and given to
pitality. A leader must feed his men and to do so he requires to
relatively wealthy, therefore the poor have little chance of
ce.

When the old men are agreed among themselves they summon [643]
the young men to the capital. They come dancing and swagger- [622]
with all their cattle, and there the old headmen seize, one by [796]
, those they have chosen as village headmen for the next
eration, beginning with the senior headman for each heir, then
second senior for each, and so on. Usually eight are chosen,
for each young chief. We get a glimpse of what it means to
individual in the following statement by the second headman
he chief, Kwesso (173):

nde fire at the 1900 'coming out'. I can't tell much because we [177]
were caught were in fear and trembling. I knew beforehand,
ause my brother was told to come from Ipyana [mission], but he
a Christian and the missionaries refused to allow him to become a
age headman—they feared the medicines. He ran away and came
e—he wanted to be a headman and the old men wanted him, but
n he changed his mind and went off to be a soldier, and so they
k me.

Probably word of who have been chosen as village headmen

[1] For a discussion of the concept of umahala, cf. Monica Wilson, Good Company, pp.
ff.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

He, like many of his men, may have been married long before the 'coming out', but his ritual wedding to the mothers of his heirs follows it, and from the time of his seclusion, until his marriage, he, and all his men, should live as bachelors. The brides are chosen by his village headmen and in theory they are carried off by force, whether betrothed or not, but nowadays, since the Administration discountenances forced marriages, the headmen arrange matters with the girls' families beforehand, very privately, but still they come with a show of force to carry off the brides. Girls are chosen who are approaching puberty and they are taken to the house of a commoner contemporary of their future husband. There they live until both have grown up and the puberty ritual can be celebrated. It follows the usual course except that the neighbours of the man in whose house the brides are secluded play the part of the girls' families, cooking for the groom's party at the prescribed feasts. The chief washes with both girls, thereby acknowledging them as his senior wives; the marriage bed is prepared with medicines and there is great rejoicing. The following morning someone knocks at the door of the nuptial chamber crying: 'War has come', and the chief and his brides rush out to the pasture land, just as the parents of twins do at the end of their ritual.[1] Then[2] a long narrow stone (*ulufige*) is set with medicines in the earth, beside the chief's town as a symbol of his marriage (*ulimanyile kye kwaya*) to the mothers of his heirs. 'The stone is the chief' (*ulufige ili je malifyale*). Hearth-bricks (*amafige*) are then set up for each bride with medicines buried beneath them, and they are given fire from that ritually kindled by their husband and his headman. Finally they are given medicines to drink in order to develop in them 'the dignity of chief's wives' (*ubunige bwa fwale*).

No marriage is complete, in Nyakyusa eyes, until cattle have been handed over, and though the chief's brides have been carried off by force, cattle—more than double the normal number—are given to their fathers. The village headmen of the retiring generation should provide these cattle and they or their heirs are recompensed when the eldest daughters born of the two wives are

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 138, 189.

[2] Mwangile's marriage apparently preceded the planting of his corn and the *ulufige* stone was erected at the same time as the corn were planted, but the marriages of the sons of Mwangwile followed the planting of their corn. The order of events seems to vary, and differences are explained as due to the order of the diviner in charge of the ritual. 'Different diviners have different customs.'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

said just to become aware of future events without any dream.

Abalangulule are distinguished from those who suffer from fits or fall into trances (*abalam' amalage*), but a woman in a trance may also prophesy and induce the chief and priests to celebrate a ritual, for it is thought that she too is in communication with the shades. Men say 'The shade has entered her' or 'Kyala catches hold of her that she may speak of the matter'. This type of prophecy is something new among the Nyakyusa. Mwandisi (107) told us that 'it did not exist in BuKinga whence we came', but had been introduced from the south, through Ngonde, and it is mainly confined to women, whereas the *abalangulule* are men.

There are many tales of famous prophecies. Nsamba (90) claimed that his father (63) foretold that 'there will come a white thing on the Lake, and it will land on the shore. That will be the man who will make peace', and Mwakalinga (142) who died fighting the Germans is said to have foretold his own death.[1]

Dreams and revelations of the possessed concerning public matters are reported to the local village headman and referred to the other headmen and priests, and a prophecy is accepted as valid only after formal discussion. As we shall see, Kasitile was sceptical about the revelations of one man who was repeatedly 'possessed', perhaps because he threatened to become a rival in interpreting public misfortune. If there is doubt, suspicions are confirmed or problems elucidated, by divination.

When they judged a sacrifice necessary the village headman and priests went to their chief saying, 'We do not sleep', and it was his obligation to secure an animal for sacrifice. He might provide it out of his own herd, but very often the duty of 'finding' sacrificial cattle was delegated to a junior line—the ruling chief gave cattle to a younger brother charging him and his heirs with the function of providing sacrificial cattle when necessary. Today all the chiefs are reluctant to expend cattle on rituals whose validity is questioned, and there is often friction between the senior and junior lines over who should 'find' the cow or bull required. Their reluctance is illustrated by the following passage from Godfrey Wilson's diary:

Mwaipa (on the lake shore): 22/12/34

It is still stormy; there has been wind and heavy rain for four days. People are saying: 'We are hungry. It is very bad. We need light rain

[1] According to Mr. Hartley's informant the Rungwe eruption was foretold a year before it occurred. *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, 40 (1955), p. 10.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for planting, but now all the fields are muddy, we can neither hoe nor plant.' Five days ago there was no rain but locusts, and people did not plant for fear lest the locusts should eat the rice and maize as it sprouted. Kimonde tells me: 'Kyala is very angry. . . . Mwandini (107), the priest-chief) wants to pray to put things right, he has sent Mwalulabwaya to ask Mwakinile (170, the ruling chief) for a cow. Mwalulabwaya and Mwakakobo went and the chief agreed saying: "I have not got one now, but I will look for one!" Then Mwalulabwaya sent me (Kimonde) to fetch it, but the chief refused saying: "I am busy now." Then Mwandini (107), who is blind and infirm, went himself, but still there is no cow.' 769 762 [177] [643]

The priests who minister to dead chiefs, like the priests of Lubaga, are of different types. The senior village headmen of a dead chief are responsible for conducting sacrifices at his grove in co-operation with his heir, and when a headman dies his office is taken over by his heir. Where a grove is much honoured this continues for generations and the heirs of one of the village headmen become hereditary keepers of the grove, each incumbent of the office assuming his name. Secondly, there are chiefs of a junior line, who become hereditary priests on whom the ruling chiefs depend for their prayers, but these priest-chiefs do not actually attend the sacrifices; the celebration is delegated to commoner priests and junior kinsmen. Mwandini (107) mentioned above, Kasinile (86) and Nsambu (90) were all priest-chiefs of this sort. Kasinile prayed at his own home, blowing out water before any celebration in Mwaipopo's country, and he was given the chine of any animal sacrificed on behalf of the country. If this were not done 'all the cattle in the country would die . . . it is the most important part of the meat'. The commoner priests who conducted the ritual always shared the head of the sacrificial beast and the breast went to the chief. With priest-chiefs, as with commoner chiefs, the name of the first incumbent of the office (or an early and famous incumbent) may become a hereditary title, e.g. three generations of priests in Selya have been known as *Kasinile*. 793 622 769

The essential elements in the ritual are: the sacrifice of a black bull or cow in the grove; the offering up of the blood and pieces of the sacred meat from the firedogs, together with the beer, on the earth close to a sacred stone and near a sacred tree; an invocation calling on the shades to come and feast, and petitions for rain, fertility, and health. One piece of meat is thrown down for 769 762

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

Mwalukuta, the hereditary priest of Mbyangu, had been pressing the chiefs to sacrifice for some time. He had sent messengers in March, April, May, and again in July, saying: 'At Mbyangu things have gone back, it is bad, we hunger-kills!' At last, in August, Mwailonjo agreed to provide a cow if Mwaitende of the junior line finally refused. Mwalukuta, the priest of the grove, explained:

We went to Mwaitende (121, identified with his grandfather 61) and asked him to sacrifice. He said: 'No, I am not coming; do the work there at Mbyangu yourselves.' We said: 'Why do you refuse to come, to return a cow? Our grandfathers gave you a cow, why don't you return it? They gave you cows on the understanding that you would bring them back, one by one, and kill them in the sacred grove here. Why do you refuse to return them?' It has always been the custom for the junior brothers to find cows for sacrifice. Their seniors give them wealth and appoint them priests to bring cattle to the sacred grove. But in European times they refuse to come, each man kills at his own place. . . . I must go and tell Kasitile (96) and also Kilolooka, or rather his son—the father refuses to come he had a lawsuit with Kasitile. . . . Kilolooka used to kill the cow, then Kasitile said Makuli should kill the cow, but now Makuli has refused to come so I go to fetch Kilolooka [the younger]. Makuli was a chief who ate the meat. . . . Mwaitende (61) used to send the cow to him and Mwalumba to bring to Mbyangu . . . as he now refuses to send the cow they say: 'What should we bring?' and have refused to come here.

There had been another spell of cold weather and the temperature on the night of 8th August was down to 59° F., but fine weather was visibly approaching from the Lake. On the 9th the ritual was to have been held, but not everyone had been formally summoned and it was put off to the 10th.

Only eight men came, Mwalukuta I, the priest of the grove, and his younger brother Mwalukuta II, two other priests (Nyanza and Mwakamkulu) and Mwakyonde (148), younger brother of Mwailonjo the chief who provided the cow, and three other young men of the chief's lineage. One of the young chiefs was wearing a red cloth and was scolded by Mwakyonde for doing so: 'It's taboo in the sacred grove.' 'Why?' 'Because it's like a rainbow.'[1] And he took it off.

The mother of Nyanza brought a bundle of saplings for building the hut for the shade, and Kisale, the senior wife of Mwailonjo the

[1] The rainbow is a symbol of misfortune, cf. p. 60.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

and cup is because this food is sacrified to their fathers-in-law. Those who are not sons of Ngonde do not drink the sacrificial beer or eat the meat either, because they are of other lineages. A black cow is used in the grove because groves are always fearful and darkness falls if something improper is done. So it is said that the blackness of the cow matches the fearfulness (*ubwipe*) of the grove.

Besides the sacrifices at Kabale and to their more immediate ancestors, Kukwe chiefs sent offerings to the BaNgonde, earlier occupants of the country. Mwamunsile explained:

My grandfather prayed in the grove which is across the river on mission land, in the forest; it was the grove of us BaNgonde; we were owners of the soil, the Kukwe chiefs found us here. If ever a chief sent my grandfather and his fellows to pray there they went with an unripe stem of bananas, and sweet milk, and unripe maize, and small sweet potatoes; then they prayed and came home again and the next day, when they went to look they found the stem of bananas had ripened, the maize had hardened, the milk was thick and the sweet potatoes large; everything which was unripe had ripened. Then they said Kyala [that is Kyala and the shades] had stood by us. . . . We spoke of Kyala even before the Europeans had come. . . .[1]

They say that very long ago we BaNgonde, we sons of Kanyapala, had not yet got fire, the chiefs brought it. It is this they commemorate in the 'coming out' ritual. We, the owners of the soil, were always here, the chiefs came and built, and when others came the firestones fled. They are like you Europeans who fight wars; we owners of the soil think only of hoeing.

(*c*) MODERN CHANGES

It is quite clear that, though sacrifices to the heroes and at the groves of chiefs were still made while we were among the Nyakyusa (and more frequently than our friends at first admitted), the cycle was attenuated. Not only had human sacrifice probably ceased but the chiefs were reluctant to part with cattle. . . . Kasile (86) said one day:

Since you [Europeans] came into the country the rituals have disappeared. Mwaipopo (108) never thinks of the rituals now. . . . It is cold and there is hunger; I went to Mwaipopo and told him to tell his

[1] According to the records of the first missionaries, sacrifices on Rungwe were to *Mbambe* but the same passage refers to *Mbambe or Kyala* meaning God. It is not clear whether the two names were equated by Kukwe informants or by the missionary himself, who was in touch with missionaries elsewhere in the district. (*Journal de l'Unité des Frères*, 1894.) I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Fuerer for drawing my attention to this valuable journal.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

priests to sacrifice to his father and elder brother so that fertility may return and men may eat sweet potatoes, but he does nothing.

A conversation between Kaitile and Mwanyoni, his fellow priest (*ante* p. 76), was also instructive on this point:

> The soil has changed, we are not like those of old, we are different. Mwakisunilwe (30) had power; when he prayed the thunder crashed and rain fell in torrents. In the old days when the Kings came they came with drums and we all feared them, what they said was done—they did not have to say much—just a few words and it was done. But now they spend all their time explaining things and talking and we do not do anything. . . .
>
> Mwaweyoni: I have sent people time and again to Mwaijande (?) for a cow, but he just insults us. . . . I have asked Mwalupo (141) about celebrating. . . .
>
> Kaitile: What did he say?
>
> Mwaweyoni: I don't know . . . If he is wise . . .
>
> Kaitile (*reading it*): Well, you had better admit that the chiefs do not support you—the chiefs say: 'It is European times now.'
>
> G.W.: What do they fear? The Government does not affect the ritual, does it?
>
> Kaitile: They are unwilling to part with the cows which I take for sacrifice, they do not like to lose their cows. In the old days they feared, and when we said: 'We do not sleep, celebrate in the grove', they agreed quickly, for they feared that we, their men, would move to another chiefdom.

(5) THE FIRST FRUITS

No communal ritual of the first fruits is celebrated among the Nyakyusa as in Ngonde,[1] but after the millet harvest a little grain is collected from every homestead and later brewed into beer which is offered to the shades of the chief. In Mwaipopo's country the offerings of millet were collected by the priest, Ngulyo, who, with his colleagues Kimagoto and Njobokoso, took it to Kalinga, senior widow of the late chief (113). She was custodian of a sacred pot inherited by the chief from his predecessors, in which the offerings of millet are stored, and this is the pot which, according to some informants, also contained the power of growth—the nails and hair torn from the dead chief (*ante supra*, pp. 64-5). When the new crop was reaped Kalinga almost emptied the pot, refilled it with the fresh grain, and brewed beer with the old. There had once been a sacred winnowing basket used in preparing the beer, but

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, p. 40.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

NOTE

643 Chiefdoms do not have names which continue indefinitely. They
103 are referred to by the name of the ruling chief or one of his illustrious ancestors, and often several different names are in common use for one chiefdom. To simplify the map we have assigned a number to each chiefdom held by a segment of the Nyakyusa or Kukwe lineages (*vide* genealogies, pp. 3, 17), and these numbers are placed on the map. The map is based on that of Mr. R. de Z. Hall (sometime D.C., Tukuyu) and includes all, or almost all, the Nyakyusa and Kukwe chiefdoms recognized by the Administration.[1] The Penja, Nyiha, Ndali, Lambya, and Saku chiefdoms on the fringes of the valley are indicated, but not plotted. The map does *not* include all chiefdoms recognized in some fashion by the Nyakyusa themselves, e.g. Mwabungule (178) 'came out' in 1933 and has been established at some distance from his *elder* brother with his own senior headman, but he is not recognized by the Administration as a chief and therefore his domain is not included on the map as a separate chiefdom.

[1] Two names listed by Mr. Hall are omitted, Ali Bin Omari because he is an immigrant and Mwakalinga of Kimbila because he is the son of a commoner appointed as headman by the German Administration, and not a member of either royal lineage.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

fashion. Each village is occupied by an age-set and men are emphatic that age and friendship, not kinship, are the basis of a village, but the villages of fathers, sons, and grandsons commonly, though not invariably, adjoin one another, as Bujogo, Igembe, and Lupando, or Lupondo, Njisi, and Iringa in Mwaipopo's chiefdom (side plan, p. 101). Each section of a chiefdom comprises half the ruling generation, and interspersed with their villages are those of their fathers and sons. Men are identified by the name of their village, section, and chief; the village name defines their age-set, the name of section and chief their generation. The section name is always that of the senior village which leads it. Generation succeeds generation in office when their heirs 'come out', but the relative position of villages (age-sets) within a generation remains constant. Since chiefdoms traditionally split each generation at the 'coming out' the men of the retired generation who remained belonged to one section only; those of the other section of their generation were members of another chiefdom. The territorial arrangements reflected in the plan of Mwaipopo's chiefdom on p. 101 are modified by the fact that the chiefdom has not split for four generations. In generation I Kibonde was the portion of the junior heir, Mwafungo (83), but he died young and his land and widow were inherited by the senior brother, Mwaijonga (82). The son of this levirational union, Mwakipenile (118), went through the 'coming out' in generation II along with Mwaijonga's heirs, Ijonga (114, representing her full brother 115), and Mwakabode (117). Mwakipenile inherited Kibonde and Mwakabode inherited Kitoli, but both were later defeated in war by Mwaipopo II and their land incorporated in his chiefdom. Mwakipenile's heir, Likoyela, and Mwakabode remained as subordinate chiefs. Though the girl Ijonga celebrated the 'coming out' in place of her unborn brother she could not rule, and Mwaisenja, son of Mwaijonga II (younger full brother of 82) acted for her. He was finally defeated by Mwaipopo II and fled to the periphery of the country. Kabula was his village, and he was subordinate to Mwaipopo, not independent.

In generation III the chiefdom did not split because by that time the British administration was in control, and the territorial division remained much the same, Igembe and Njisi becoming the senior villages in place of Bujogo and Lupondo, with Mwankuga (150) and Mwaseba (152) as the young chiefs. Kibonde,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

177 Kitoli, and Kabula still remained somewhat detached. In gener-
631 ation IV the second heir, Mwabungulu (178), has moved out to the
561 forest and the area occupied and ruled by Mwaijonga and Mwai-
pepo is still one, with a division between Lupando and Iringa.
Kibonde is fully absorbed into Lupando, and Kitoli and Kabula
into Iringa—no descendants of Mwakipesile of Kibonde and
Mwakabole of Kitoli went through the 'coming out' with Mwan-
yilu as chiefs. Kibonde, Kitoli, and Kabula are subdivided
into age-villages of three generations, but these are not shown
on the plan. They are spoken of by outsiders by the inclusive
names.

561 To a European the most surprising fact about the age-organiza-
428 tion is that a young man of the ruling generation may still choose
to move into the homestead of his deceased father or elder brother.
We knew one young man, who had been spoken of as a possible
village headman at the coming out of Mwanyilu, but shortly
before the 'coming out' he chose to move into the homestead of his
deceased father in Lupando village (where his father in turn had
inherited) even though he might have inherited his father's
wealth in wives and stock and returned to his own village of
Mwaiko, after completing the ritual of death and inheritance. Our
informants insisted that, though the young men might rule, the
older generation were the more honoured, and in inheriting from
his father this man was classified as a member of his father's
generation. Nevertheless many young men do *not* choose to move
into the village of the father or elder brother from whom they
inherit, and the villages of old men decrease in size and finally
disappear altogether.

The relation between kinship and territorial grouping cannot
602 easily be indicated by plans and genealogies for though in theory
361 each village consists of 'sons' of a village of the previous
166 generation (as shown in the table facing p. 91) there is con-
561 siderable movement from one village to another, and the members
of any adult village usually prove to have come from a number of
631 different villages, though a boy's village consists of sons of adjoin-
ing villages. The table of members of three of the villages of
Mwaipopo's chiefdom illustrates this (*vide* pp. 224-6). An analysis
of genealogies showing where different members live gives much the
same picture. Though the shortage of land in the coffee-growing
chiefdoms of the hills and the rice-growing chiefdoms of the plain
is tending to obliterate the age-village organization, the old

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

[63] [782] [721] with the Nyakyusa were continually at war; they did not trade or pray with them. Thus we conclude that participation in a common ritual is, in the Nyakyusa case, directly linked with a common origin and essential trade.

643 [789] [782] [521] The divine kings, Lwembe and Kyungu, were regarded as having power over certain areas, a power closely linked with rainfall. Indeed, one informant argued that the chiefs living around Masoko had never sent sacrifices to Lubaga, 'because when it rains at Lubaga the rain does not come as far as Masoko'. He was mistaken in his facts—the chiefs of Masoko did at one time send to Lubaga as Mwambete (160), chief at Masoko, himself admitted—but the argument points to a conception of supernatural power tied to a rainfall area. This notion was not, however, applied consistently.

643 173 The balance between secular and mystical power has altered during the past ten generations. The founding heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, came as conquerors and must merely have led their men personally; but early in the history of Ngonde the Kyungu was secluded, and power was exercised almost exclusively by the nobles (*vide supra*, pp. 40-46); and the Lwembe also was, at one period, 'not seen by ordinary men' and led a life hedged about with taboos. There is sharp contrast in Nyakyusa traditions between the active chiefs who were warriors, and arbitrators, and worked hard in their fields[1] and the 'divine king' who lived in seclusion. As we have seen, the chiefs often delegated ritual functions, with the taboos involved, to a junior kinsman such as Mwamkinga (44) or Mwakilubo (45) (*vide* pp. 79-81, 114) whose heirs succeeded to the office. It is even possible that the [178] first Lwembe at Lubaga (Mwakalebela 19) took over ritual functions from his senior brother, Kalesi (18).[2] The present tendency is for the development of secular power and its separation from mystical power. The Kyungu is no longer a god but an administrator: the heir of the Lwembes sits as an elected representative of chiefs on the Local Council. In the traditional 182 Nyakyusa society ritual played an essential part in maintaining 177 the balance between generations, sections, and social strata, and in

[1] In 1955 a young chief was bitterly criticized by his own kinsmen because he 'never had a hoe in his hands' whereas his father and grandfather had (to our personal knowledge) been diligent in hoeing.

[2] But according to one excellent informant, Mwakilembwe (92) lived secluded while Mwakilubo (91) 'led men'—i.e. entertained.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

linking scattered political units, but that function is disappearing with the growth of trade and a centralized political authority. District Commissioner, Rural and District Councils, and Co-operatives supplant the 'divine king', and limit the power of local chiefs much more narrowly than he ever did.

182.
177

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

MWAMPILA: Indeed, may the illness not be great, may the children not cry by night, may the cattle increase, and the fields be fertile, and the flock also increase. May children sleep. Our fathers always confessed in the house. Now we are shocked at what is happening. 783 796

MWAMTEMBA: We say thank you, chief, you do not forget us. Let the sickness pass and go away, may the cattle sleep, and you women, may the children grow. May the fields be fertile; may there not be envy of one another. We are sorry because there is much illness. Our fathers say 'Why have the chiefs turned round?'

MWAMLEMBA: Chief, we beg you, we thank you, indeed there is sickness. Is there anyone who says in their quarter there is much sickness (more than elsewhere)? Do we say something about sickness?

MWAMTEMBA: No, Mwamnjiki, all of us who have come here are sick.

KALONGO: Yes, we are all coming.

Mwaikambo commenting on this explained:

If there is sickness one may admit and say, 'It is I, I was angry on account of such and such.' Yes, indeed, they confess openly, because he who sees in his belly (—knows in his heart) that 'It is I who have done this' trembles when his fellows speak many words thinking, 'Perhaps they have seen me.' So he confesses. When he confesses he escapes, they only grumble at him saying, 'Don't do it again.' If someone admits the others say, 'It is he, but we have punished him.' I think that even in the old days he was not driven out, because they hope that, if he has confessed, the illness he caused will go away.

MWAMLEMBA: Have you ever before heard of a hornbill eating a hen? We are horrified. Even the prophets did not speak of such an event. [787]

ANONYMOUS: Indeed, it has never before happened, we are glad that our chiefs have taken the initiative with these words.

ANONYMOUS: For this custom is old, it began long ago in the time of our fathers. It is the custom to give hope in the homesteads, that we may grow strong.

MWAMPILA: Always, if the chief is ill it is said, 'Where are you, oh people?' All the homesteads watch over the chief when he is ill. [Mwaikambo commenting: It is said that people have the work of watching over their chief that no one may bewitch him, hence when he is ill they reproach people saying: 'Where are you?' Let the old customs be observed now (implying that they have left all the old customs and hence there is much sickness in the country).] [754] [177]

ANONYMOUS: There are some who say 'Let so-and-so die that I may move into his homestead. Let envy which brings sickness also go away.'

ANONYMOUS: If sickness appears let us tell the chief that we may all express amazement together, asking where the illness has come from, then it will be light, if we all grumble together. [Mwaikambo commenting: [753]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

833 and women, it is procreative power, fertility. That power is
783 constantly expelled from the belly but returns again and by that
755 expulsion and return men live.

There was a great deal of criticism from the conservatives
177 because no sacrifice had been made.

787 MWAMUNDA: Now people are talking much saying, 'We have abandoned that which they did formerly, we are doing something else.' People have many dreams (gesture head on hand as if heavy with anxiety), many say: 'I have dreamed of the dead, they told me to sacrifice a cow, to pray, we did not pray properly, that is useless, it will not effect anything.' So we have told the chief saying: 'Let us kill a cow at the grave of Mwakan'ata,' he has agreed, but the cow has not yet
783 come.

Formerly, on the night following the day of the prayer we should
796 have eaten the sacrificial cow, the chief would have killed two cows and the headmen from different villages would have come and eaten by night, and drunk beer provided by the chief, in the house of the senior wife of the chief. . . . They ate a little meat, raw, the rest they roasted. Then in the morning, when they had eaten and were satisfied, they would go to clear out the house, to throw out the ashes, and to
[372] pray, as we prayed now, and to make new fire by friction in the pasture land. The village headman made fire with medicine which the chief gave him, the name of the medicine is Mbamba, it's a tree. To throw out the ashes means to clear out all the filth, the filth which the
[754] witches and the shades have brought to us—the filth that is sickness. . . .
[775] Do not the witches eat meat at the fire? Human flesh? Some roast at your fires your bodies which they have seized, some go home with the human flesh to their own fires, hence comes the filth of the ashes. The village headmen eat the sacrificial meat at night with the shades, they celebrate for them with the blood which goes beneath. . . .

If the chief has done something wrong, then those above [i.e. the village headmen] pray to those beneath saying, 'Let us help one another to punish him who has strayed, but we do not wish that he
[754] should die, let him be ill; perhaps then he will seek something to nourish us.' Again the night before the throwing out of the ashes they confess their anger and say: 'You beneath, this our child (the chief) has remembered us, there is no accusation against him now, may sickness go away from the country, and children sleep, let us all sleep and the cows calve. We greet those beneath.' In my childhood I was repeatedly surprised at night when my father came in, he had a little parcel of meat. 'Where have you been?' I asked. 'We have been praying.' But since I grew up and became a village headman, and was recorded as such [by the administration] we have never seen sacrificial meat.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

. . . I put the stones into water, it is as if someone spilt it out, the shard dries up. . . . Now Kyala has gone away, the shades have fled, formerly they clapped their hands (indicating satisfaction). . . . There is something about which the shade is angry, because in this homestead we were accustomed to pray frequently. . . . If I boast saying: 'It will rain tomorrow', will it rain? 759 [775]

MWAMAKUNDA THE YOUNGER (gravely, and with hesitation): No, not if Kyala does not wish.

WIFE OF MWAMAKUNDA: But formerly it agreed [i.e. the rain came].

A day or two later Kasitile came in, during the evening, with Mwalusanye, a young doctor, the son of doctors.

K.: This rain, do you not ask about it?

G.W.: Have you been to consult the oracle?

K.: Yes. I consulted it the day before yesterday.

G.W.: What did it say?

K.: It said: 'Your fathers are angry, and Kyala and the Holy Spirit (*NaMkapo Musilomo*)!' [775] [776]

G.W.: What do they say we have done wrong?

K.: Since Mwaipopo received a Court what have the chiefs given us to say 'We did wrong!' Did they give me a cow? They did not. [Here Kasitile was referring to the insult to Lubaga, *ante supra*, pp. 35-6, and he identifies himself with the priests of Lubaga.] In MuNgonde I was a commoner, I ate meat, here I live hungry.

G.W.: And now who will speak out about this matter?

K.: You, you tell Mwaipopo 'Ask Pikumbalu (Kasitile 86) why this rain does not come, what has happened to it?'

G.W. refused and asked: Who should suggest this according to custom?

K.: Mwamakunda.

MWALUSANYE: Because according to custom, Mwaipaja (G.W.), if things were as they are with us now, if the rain refused, our fathers came to Kasitile (60), the father of this one, to ask him saying, 'Kasitile what has happened to the rain?' But now that our fathers are dead, we are bad, we do not ask. [177] [688]

And a few days later the chief said: We have thrown away our food, it's drying up in the ground . . . this drought! Kasitile says: 'It has defeated me . . . the shades (*imisoli*) have caught hold of us.' Perhaps they claim a cow, perhaps it is because Mwailhojo (147) and his fellows paid here. . . . But those beneath are angry (pointing downwards and speaking with conviction), the owner is angry.

The rain-maker therefore is not conceived of as working independently; the goodwill of the shades of the chief is necessary, and perhaps also those of the rain-maker himself, though this is not quite clear. Nowadays, at least, Kyala is also invoked. In [775] [777]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1939
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

789 drought, as in Ilonga, a number of possible causes are discussed,
[775] and if one possible cause is dealt with and yet the drought persists,
[77] another will be put forward. A shrewd priest or doctor can turn
this to account and find many reasons for the failure of his ritual,
as the following case shows.

789 In the wet Nyakyusa valley rain-makers are not concerned
only with drought, but also with flood, and, in the years 1935-8,
791 with the rise in the level of the Lake which inundated many
gardens.[1] On the Nyakyusa plain the rise was attributed to the
[821] action of a Kisi doctor, Mwotabi, who had first boasted that he
could bring up the Lake and then been commissioned by the
chief, Mwakalokwa (141), to do so, 'because there was much grass
by the Lake and many mosquitoes, and it was dirty there'. He
was told to 'take the Lake up a bit, but not too far' and given a
sheep. Then, the following season, in April (a month of torrential
rain), Mwakalokwa's son Mwakinisile (170, for Mwakalokwa
himself had died) gave him a little bull saying,

[576] Send the Lake back, it has come too far. Then the doctor went home
thinking to himself, 'Why does he give me such a little bull?' and he
met a headman of the neighbouring chief, Mwakalubulu (138), and
said, 'Why should I send the Lake back, Mwakinisile has given me a
bull only; had he given me a cow, I'd have done so, but now I am
angry.' Then Mwakalubulu heard and sent a message to say he would
provide a cow, since Mwakalokwa was dead. But the doctor refused:
'No, Mwakalokwa (the son, 170) is still alive, he must give it.' The
following September, before the usual end of the dry season, there was
rain on the plain. It is the Kisi's rain. Mwakinisile (170) refused to give
him anything, he said he was a liar, but the commoners collected 30s.
and a goat, and the Kisi performed a ritual just recently, and said:
'The Lake will go back, but my strength will bring the rain; it will
rain during the dry season this month.' We laughed very much in
Tukuyu to hear such a prophecy, but it is raining!

The following year—after the Lake had risen again—another reason was given. It was said that a rain-maker at Bojo in Kisi country had died, and just before he died he had thrown a rain stone into the Lake.

(b) MAGIC OF FERTILITY

789 We did not learn very much about 'sprinkling the homesteads';

[1] There is a periodic rise and fall in the level of the Lake. In 1937 the Lake steamer was anchoring in what had been the roof-tops of the District Commissioner's house at Karonga.

9:Wilson K-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IX

KASITILE THE PRIEST

We turn now from the description of rituals to a personal document, an account of the illness of Kasitile (80), the leading priest of Selya, the causes suggested for it, and the rituals performed. 793 755

His case shows: (i) the power of village headmen over chiefs in general, more particularly the power of the commoner priests (village headmen of the previous generation) over hereditary priests of the chief's lineage; (ii) the prominent linking of misfortune with sin in both public and private life; (iii) the function of divination in selecting between possible causes of disease; (iv) the influence of Christian and Muslim teaching and Western medical science on a conservative who goes so far as to invite a Muslim to cut the throat of the sacrificial animal and speaks of turning Christian in his old age; and (v) the very great importance attached to 'speaking out' (*ukuanga*) and not leaving anger to smoulder unconfessed. Beer is necessary for such a ritual 'speaking out' and the participants are pressed to drink deep, for in wine truth. [559] [681] [787] [797] [777] [773]

The *dramatis personae* are:

KASITILE (80) of the chief's lineage, priest of Selya [551]
JAMS his senior and favourite wife
JAMS'S YOUNGER SISTER and co-wife
KILIZELA a third wife suspected of bewitching Kasitile [754]
MWAIPONO (116) the chief and senior kinsman of Kasitile
MWAKYONDE (148) the doctor who was treating Kasitile
KINDA *priests* (i.e. Kikungulwaja Nsyanigwa, Kyambo Kitali, *vide* pp. 24-34)
HOTELIYO, NYOBOKOBA, KIMBOOTA — Village headmen of Mwaijonga (80) and priests of his grove, *vide* pp. 74-7, 84-5
MWAMAKUNDA THE ELDER a hereditary priest, assistant to Kasitile
MWAMAKUNDA THE YOUNGER (Mwambagaje) son of the elder who often acted in his place

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1959
F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

some five ends into a small calabash and held them against Kasitile's chest 'to clear out the blood of coughing'. To purify the shades a pot of medicines in water was put on the fire; the doctor, Kasitile, and his senior wife (actually her younger sister, as Juse was away) each held the pot with a crooked finger. Then Kasitile and all his wives and children were sprinkled with the hot medicines. And the doctor told Kasitile to sacrifice a bull.

During the following week preparations for the sacrifice went ahead. Kasitile walked for some hours through the forest to call Mwamakundu, his fellow priest who always assisted him in the ceremonies at Lubaga and 'sprinkling the country'. Mwamakundu is a very old man, contemporary of Kasitile's father, and he asked: 'Are you bringing your European to the sacrifice?'

KASITILE: Yes.

MWAMAKUNDU: But your father Mwakanjiki (he) did not know any Europeans, he feared them, he died without ever meeting one. After your father died, when your elder brother was alive, Europeans came —Germans—and cut down a tree, the usual tree in the sacred grove near Kamenu; blood gushed out, it shouted so that it was heard in Bulungu.

Kasitile explained that the Germans had wanted timber. Afterwards Mwaipopo (the chief 1:18) sought a sheep and they tried to put the grove to rights ('clean up') by sacrificing it. This was the tree beside which the sacred meat was always put when they sacrificed in the grove. Now one branch has grown up again from the roots.

Mwamakundu went on: 'But you did wrong at the beginning not to take the European to pray, and to tell Mwakanjiki (he) that he should not be afraid, the European has made himself our friend.' Kasitile, reporting the interview to us said: 'I concealed that we went together to the grove to pray (*vide supra*, p. 115) and Mwamakundu told me: "Let the European take something, let it stay overnight in the house, and go with him, and pray very much. . . . Mwakanjiki has gone off in a huff from your home, you have offended him yourself. Go with the European, take him to your father's home. Now your father has taken offence, he is shaking your body by night because you cut the tree; you have done wrong."' i.e. two causes for the anger of the shades and Kasitile's consequent sickness were given: (i) the cutting of the tree by Mwakanjiki's grave and (ii) Godfrey Wilson's presence at rituals and at Kasitile's homestead. So before the sacrifice of explation for pruning the grove was performed Godfrey Wilson went to be introduced to Kasitile's shades for the second time.

Record of G.W. 21/6/37

In the evening as the sun was setting, I went to Kasitile's house with a cloth and so. He put them in the house, took down the calabash which

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

always hangs under the eaves and is only used for prayer, filled it with [753]
water and put into it a stone and a live coal from the fire. Then he [752]
took some roots from the roof (previously put there ready) and we
went off to the same spot as before (*vide supra*, p. 115). Kasitule chewed [778]
the root, took water and blew it out, and began to pray:

'Do not be startled, come in your own persons, gather together, [769]
with Mwakanjoki (60). You made friends with him before, now he has
entered, he has made himself our friend. Indeed I made a mistake, I
have come to enter; I cut you on the head, I have done wrong. The
sons of Kagile (*i.e.* 59 + his descendants) complain of me, saying, "It
is he who has gone off with the millet, bananas, and maize; and child-
ren cry at night behind the huts; we are barren because he has cut
Mwakanjoki." I have sought this cow which you wanted. Mwakanjoki
(60), Lwembe (57), Mwakalebela (19), Mwanonoka (29), Mwalo-
lange (58), Mwakagile (55), Mwaijonga (80), Kyale (2), we have
come to attend to you (pointing to the grave). Kikangubeja, Nyanigwa
Kyamba Kitali,[1] Lyambilo (12) come to your home if you are at
Mwalolange's (58), come if you are at Mwalende's (61), come
Mwakanjoki (60) and the Kinga and Lwembe (3); Mwakalebela (19)
come, give me cattle and millet, and the powerful medicine which you
had. Since you are brooding over me go out from my body, go out!
I pay my debt. We have come to take you to your home since you have
gone off in a huff, come! I will never cut your branches again. I fear
you and I will respect the branches. Come to your house, that of
Mwamaloba (85), of Kanjoki (mother of 60), come. And he (G.W.) is [123]
innocent (*mwele*), do not fear him. He is the owner of the ritual, he is
Mwamaloba (85), he is my senior, I am the junior. Sometimes I wish
to embrace him, sometimes I fear that he is going to imprison me.[2]
May the bananas increase! I am left alone! It is I who am here! Move [789]
out of my body! And give us medicine! May the offering increase
overnight, may the cattle increase and the maize, and in the morning
let me tell Mwaipaja (G.W.) that the bananas and medicine have
increased. If there is anything else you are a liar, if this chill begins
again then I have gone, I am not here. Amen! (*ale*).'

Very early the following morning the sacrificial bull was killed. [177]
Kasitule had arranged that our Mohammedan cook should come to cut
its throat.[3] Then, later in the morning, the crucial drinking and
'speaking out' began. Kasitule had provided two pots of beer.

[1] These Kinga priests whose names are titles of office.

[2] In the earlier years of our acquaintance Kasitule had denied both the smothering of an ailing chief and human sacrifice for the drum. It is possible that he had co-operated in either one or both of these ritual acts. He himself reported that the Songe diviner had told him: 'You have a European as a clear friend. . . . You enjoy his company much, but there is something left . . .' (*i.e.* the friendship is not yet complete). [114]

[3] Ostensibly so that he could partake of the meat, but the reason given seemed inadequate.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F7817 Ngonde F7817
Nyakyusa

(their witchcraft); to each other they say: 'It is your father.' Because if they confess to a fellow commoner saying, 'It is we', he says, 'You are "eating" me, drink the ordeal'. The witch is driven out. But to us they admit saying, 'It was we who were angry.' They do not fear us. Commoners are the seniors in the country; they arrived first.

It will be remembered that the commoners are spoken of as 'black people' (*abatite*) and that the first chiefs were 'pale' (*mwele*) but these words also have moral implications. 'It is said that a person "has a black heart" or "has black blood", or "is black in his face towards us" when he is thought to be a witch, eating his fellows, or when he is a thief, or a liar, or an adulterer, or dirty. Even though his body is light coloured (*mwele*) the word "black" (*atite*) is used of him metaphorically.' And *mwele* implies innocent, pure, as well as light in colour. The comparable symbolism of 'nigger' and 'white man' is all too familiar in Johannesburg or Charleston.

That Kasitile himself was much afraid of the commoner chiefs and was relieved by the 'speaking out' was clear, and the people of the country as a whole were glad that the ritual had been celebrated, for they expected an increase in fertility. Some days later Mwakyonde (148), came in and said, laughing, but half serious: 'Congratulations, Mwaipaja (G.W.). You have celebrated the ritual, we rejoice greatly, you give us fertility of the soil, you are a great priest.'

In some moods Kasitile was inclined to become a Christian, but he felt an obligation to the country as priest, and believed too strongly in the efficacy of the traditional rituals to abandon them. He said to G.W. one day, over a pot of beer: 'If it were not for the ritual I would get you to speak to the Europeans of the mission, and I would go with my wife Jane, and be baptized. If my son was old enough and had agreed to carry on the ritual I would do it; perhaps I will when I am old. . . . It is good to have one's heart washed clean, we are dirty inside. The Christians say to us: "You with your four wives each, you are all dirty, you love one and squabble with the rest." Well, it is so with me, I love Jane only; I would like to go and be baptized with her. But I fear for the ritual, I fear hunger, the hunger of the people. For I am the food of the country, I am the maker of food.'

We left Selya shortly after this and were not able to observe the effect of the ritual on political relationships in Selya. Kasitile lived another seventeen years, duly performing his functions, and in 1954 he was succeeded by his brother's son, James.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

791 *isyifuile* comes from west of Ngonde, or east of the Kinga; *mwaf*
[48] came from 'Nyasaland'; medicine for fertility of the fields from
[278] Mtenko which is rich in food; war medicine from the Sangu and
[454] Kinga. Whether neighbouring people get medicines from Bu-Nyakyusa we do not know—no one ever suggested it, but it is likely that they do.

Since foreign doctors and medicines have the highest reputation
[177] new treatments are welcomed. This is where the practice of medicines differs radically from the rituals directed to the shades in which the charter is tradition, and any deviation must be justified. But the willingness to accept something new did not lead to any systematic experiment, or any regard for experiment as such.

Anyone who chooses, and can pay the fees, can become a
791 doctor by apprenticing himself to a practitioner of repute, but it is
278 very noticeable that the majority of well-known doctors come from families of doctors, the medicines being passed down from one generation to the next and sometimes taught to wives as well. Lyandilelo, whom often been quoted, was taught certain medicines by her husband, and had a large practice. The diviners we knew were all men, but many women know a number of medicines. Once in practice, a doctor may add to his knowledge by buying a medicine from a fellow practitioner or exchanging medicines with him. One doctor we knew had paid two bulls for the secret of his protective medicine (*undete gwe ipiage*). The teaching includes what plants or other ingredients to collect and how to 'cook' them, i.e. what to mix together and what quantities to use. As elsewhere in Africa, it is the material substance, usually vegetable, which is held to be important in any treatment. The spell—the words addressed to the medicine—is of little significance except that when vengeance magic is prepared the man on whose behalf it is done may say the name of his enemy (if he knows his identity) and state his own innocence in a phrase like the following: 'Return this medicine, thou Kyala, I have done no wrong whatsoever to cause me to be killed; if he says he will kill me let him die.'

The doctor (*ingange*) who 'knows medicines' is distinguished
791 from the priest or officiant (*ayange*) who knows how to conduct a
793 ritual directed to the shades or heroes. The *ayange* uses medicines in celebrating rituals, and he or she may be able to collect and prepare plants himself, but he sometimes has to apply to a doctor

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

is illustrated in the references made by priests to the python which appears in Lwembe's grove as *kyala* (*vide supra*, pp. 25, 35). This python is 'the lord', Lwembe.

Nowadays Kyala is spoken of as a first cause—the origin of death, and of social institutions, as well as the creator of life. The current version of the myth of the origin of death begins: 'When Kyala created the country and the people at the beginning there was no death. Then he thought there should be death and life. He asked people to choose between life and death, and they chose life.' And when men are asked the reason for a custom or ritual they may answer 'Kyala made us so', 'Kyala made us black people like that'.

Since Kyala is nowadays regarded as the creator of the natural order he is often blamed for the intractability of things—the log that splits, the lorry that skids. Once a vendor of very small potatoes said, when the buyer complained of the size, 'Kyala gave them to us like this', only to be jeered at by the onlookers who admonished him: 'Had you cultivated better they would have been larger.'

Much of the material quoted is susceptible of the interpretation that Kyala is an overriding power to which the shades, witches, and medicines are subject. 'The medicine will be effective if Kyala wills'; 'rain will fall when the rain-maker make his stones if Kyala wills'; 'when the doctor treats the tails they "vomit" (froth over), then if Kyala has helped us the cattle give much milk'. Even in 1935 conservatives like Kasitile sometimes expressed such beliefs, but they did not do so consistently. Their preoccupation was with other forces and acknowledgment of Kyala seemed to be tacked on almost as an afterthought. This came out very clearly in Kasitile's session with the diviner who, fearing the presence of a European, gave 'Kyala' as the cause of Kasitile's disease, and Kasitile rejected the verdict saying: 'Kyala never stands alone.' The influence of Christian teaching on pagan thought was already considerable in 1935—Kasitile added 'Jesus' and 'the Holy Spirit' to the shades invoked—and we believe the mention of Kyala in many of the pagan prayers at that date to have been due to Christian influence. The idea of a supreme power is accepted very readily *as an addition* to the belief in the shades, the witches, and medicines, though it does not easily replace them altogether. By 1955 the shift in emphasis was clear. Besides Kyala 'the lord' of a commoner or junior, and Kyala the hero who is worshipped at

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

his cave and who, though a creator, is equalled by other heroes and dwells in the bowels of the earth, there was Kyala an ultimate power and first cause, unique and omnipotent, who dwelt in heaven 'above'. The implications of *kumunya* (above) have changed along with the implications of *Kyala*.

The new balance between the different elements in pagan thought was reflected in everyday speech. In the 1930's men spoke constantly of the shades (*abapyale*), the witches (*abalosi*), and 'the breath of men' (*indaga ya bandu*); Kyala did not figure much in the conversation of pagans. But in 1955, from the moment when the bus I arrived in skidded off the road and the passengers began assuring each other that *Kyala alone* (God is present), because no one had been injured, I heard the name constantly. Such a change is hard to prove, but the impression of a marked shift in emphasis was strong.

The conception of the hero Mbasi has also radically altered. During the years before 1914 a man, with two boys in attendance, posed as Mbasi and went round Selya by night, growling in a gruff voice that he was Mbasi, and seizing cattle and fowls and food. He was eventually taken by night, by some Christians, and died after seven months' imprisonment in Tukuyu. Today the Christians never use 'Mbasi' for God, but sometimes identify him with 'Satan', and the pagans use 'Lwembe' rather than 'Mbasi'.

The range of relationships in space was narrow in the traditional Nyakyusa society, and the range of relationship in time was correspondingly so. Only a limited number of chiefdoms co-operated in sacrifice to a hero (and often they seem to have acted separately, rather than in concert), and all historical time was contained in the genealogies depicted. There was a dawn when men are fond raw and lived without fire, or cattle, or chiefs, but history began when the heroes descended from the mountains, ten or twelve generations ago. Time was telescoped when all the known world lay within 100 miles.

A social revolution occurred once, with the coming of the chiefs, but then time stood still, and ever since the heroic age has remained the pattern of right behaviour. Departure from the rituals laid down spells madness and death, for 'Kyala created us so'. Part of primeval reality is the conflict of generations expressed in the myth of the seduction of a young wife by her husband's father, in the rules of avoidance, and in the ritual of the 'coming out'. There is no convention of fighting on this last occasion (as

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

[749] [753]

[577]

[754] [688]

[177]

unmarried and men should be *mwela*, pure, innocent, without anger in their hearts. But, as has been shown, this quality of purity is the very opposite of spiritual power (*amasango* or *abalogo*). It is attributed neither to Kyala and the other heroes nor to the priests; according to Kasitile (p. 138) a pure person cannot be a commoner priest and the chiefs themselves, though *mwela*—pale—by comparison with the black commoners who are witches, are also 'heavy' (*nzito*) with the medicines they have drunk. Men become *mwela* by confession; 'speaking out' is a condition of efficacy in sacrifice and the officiant blows out water as a symbol of bringing up all the anger that was in his heart. The parents of twins and the priests of Lubaga, having celebrated their awful rituals emerge, crying, '*Tuli bela*'—we are pure. The very quality which rituals produce in men is the *opposite* of that which characterizes their heroes, their priests, and their rulers. Galahad whose 'strength was as the strength of ten because his heart was pure' is wholly foreign to Nyakyusa thought.

Truthfulness was never mentioned as a characteristic of the righteous or the pure, nor is it a quality of the heroes or priests. Men censure one another for *ubutangale* which is commonly translated as 'lying', but means rather 'speaking indiscreetly'. In one Nyakyusa text the child who is told certain ritual secrets by his father and reveals them when he should not is *mtangale*, and this is an accepted use of the word. No burning concern with truth or falsehood is apparent in the Nyakyusa tradition though they are passionately interested in what they conceive to be right and wrong.

The conception of witchcraft and sorcery implies a freedom, a choice of good or evil, for the individual. Much is determined. In Nyakyusa thought, the sins of the fathers are visited on the children, and a child may fall ill because his great-grandfather shed blood or was bound with ropes, and was not adequately treated, or because his father has neglected a ward; moreover, sinners are 'members one of another', and a ritual neglected by one may bring suffering to others; but there is *also* the notion of individual responsibility. A witch or sorcerer acts consciously and voluntarily—our informants scouted the idea of a witch being unaware of his actions—and he may repent and desist. There are now, periodically in Africa, 'revivalist' movements in which a pagan doctor or diviner urges men to throw away their evil medicines and repent from their witchcraft. One such movement

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

769 swept through BuNyakyusa in the early 1930's; perhaps other
783 similar movements preceded it—we do not know. What is clear
[771] is that traditionally there was continuous public pressure to
[165] overcome hatred within the village and the kinship group; to rid
oneself of it by confession and an expression of goodwill. In pagan
[778] thought Utopia is a society without witches or sorcerers and,
though it was never achieved, everyone is convinced that formerly
these evil-doers were fewer than now, because they were restrained
by law, whereas 'witches' now go scot-free.

The interests of the Nyakyusa are personal and practical.
185 Health, fertility, and amity between kinsmen and neighbours
are what they seek. It is with rain and drought, with the rise of
773 the Lake or the striking of lightning which destroys property;
with stock, crops, and the wild animals which prey upon them
that the myths are concerned. We could trace no tales of the sun,
moon, and stars, and no rituals are directed to them. Reference is
made to volcanic disturbance in the myths of the heroes—
'the ground rumbled' when Nkhoto and Kyala walked, and there
are stories of small lakes disappearing and reappearing elsewhere—
but the concern shown is surprisingly little if an eruption indeed
destroyed villages last century as Mr. Harkin's single informant
suggests (*side supra*, p. 16).

Reality is thought to be revealed to men in dreams, by prophets
787 who 'go down thinking like the roots of a tree' to the world of the
791 shades, and by oracles. What men seek to know are the causes of
misfortune—public and private—and the identity of witches.
Occasionally, it is said, a prophet has looked into the future and
foretold drought, or flood, or the coming of Europeans—'white
things on the Lake'—against whom it would be foolish to fight,
but for the most part they are concerned with the misfortunes
[183] that exist, and urging men to pray in the groves. The contem-
plative is not honoured in Nyakyusa tradition; the man of
spiritual power is a detective—a discoverer of evil-doers—or an
administrator whose awfulness adds to his authority.

183 Men are preoccupied with their relationships to other living
men—their kinsmen, neighbours, and fellow office-holders—
771 and with their dead fathers. They are not concerned with their
relationship to Kyala. The rituals celebrated by kinsmen are
directed to the shades not to any supreme God, and it is quarrelling
between kinsmen that angers the shades and makes the celebra-
tion of certain rituals necessary. The communal rituals are

Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

The negative rituals—the taboos which surround the procreative functions—disappear rather slowly, but a Christian father will enter his wife's hut to greet her after she has given birth to a child, and will eat food cooked by her a week or two later, which the pagans think extremely rash. An atmosphere of scepticism and experiment begins to develop; a few Christians spoke of breaking even the deeply-entrenched taboos surrounding menstruation 'to see what happened'. But that many Christians, especially women, feared the old taboos was apparent when one watched the behaviour of Christian daughters-in-law towards their fathers-in-law. In theory Christians disregarded the rules of avoidance if their fathers-in-law are Christian, or avoid 'only a little', but in practice a Christian woman is usually embarrassed and fearful if, by mischance, she meets her father-in-law face to face.[1]

Christians withdrew from the pagan communal rituals even more completely than they do from the rituals of kinship. No Christian takes any part in the sacrifices to the heroes, or at the groves of chiefs, or in cleansing the country, or in rain-making, or sprinkling the homesteads. As for the ritual of chieftainship, from that also Christians withdrew. At the time we were first in BuNyakyusa only two chiefs were professing Christians, one of whom was already baptized before his installation. The 'coming out' performed for him was much curtailed since he refused to use the traditional medicines and, because of the difficulty over medicines, Christians were not acceptable as village headmen. In Ngonde, where the proportion of Christians was much greater, there were Christian headmen and chiefs, but the ritual of 'coming out' had disappeared altogether, and the Kyungu had delegated the celebration of all pagan rituals to one of his councillors who still believed in them, he himself being a sceptic.

There are tales of the early missionaries visiting the groves to challenge pagan belief. The pagans believe that they were confounded and some of the more conservative Christians also think that the terror of the grove drove the Reverend — Jauer from Lubaga (*vide supra*, p. 29) and that *because* the Reverend — Kleus summoned the teachers and school children to a feast in the grove of Mbyanga, and killed 'a black cow' for them there, a season of plenty followed. 'Many people said: "He seems to have been advised by someone, why did he go to Mbyanga and sing

[1] For an account of such a meeting, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 84-5.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XIII

TWENTY YEARS' CHANGE

How does Christianity interact with other revolutionary forces in the community? It has been possible to observe the changes that have taken place among the Nyakyusa after a lapse of twenty years, and a summary of them is necessary before we proceed to a discussion of the links between religious and secular change. 177

The first thing that strikes a visitor returning to Nyakyusa country after many years, is that the isolation, which was so typical of the valley, has greatly diminished. Buses, filled with Nyakyusa passengers, cross twice daily the high pass that leads out of the valley, and where once travellers died of exposure and starvation there is a hard road fringed with homesteads and fields. [494] [491]
The belt of unoccupied country that even twenty years ago separated the Nyakyusa from their neighbours has disappeared, for they themselves have spilled out of the valley to the north and west, and their Kinga neighbours have come down the Livingstone escarpment to the east and cultivate the mountain slopes, for 'they no longer fear that people (i.e. the Nyakyusa) will seize their property'. Men travel abroad to find work and they go much farther and stay away longer than before. In the remotest village there is some man who has visited Burma or Malaya as a soldier, and a dozen lads who will argue the relative merits of the Orange Free State gold mines and the Copper-belt as centres of employment. Many women now accompany their husbands to Rhodesia, or other parts of Tanganyika, and some travel to visit daughters or sisters. The older women enlarge on their journeys and joke about how fearful they used to be. [166] [167] [164]

Travel implies learning another language, most often Swahili, but also Bemba and English and the pidgin of the gold and copper mines called Fanakalo. Thus intellectual isolation is disappearing along with the physical isolation. The numerous 'bush schools' which existed in the Nyakyusa valley in 1938, and at which many of those who attended never even learnt to read and write, have been largely replaced by mission primary schools, state-aided and inspected, and in these and the Native Authority primary and middle schools there are now 9,437 pupils, as against about 500 [191] [198] 177 472

[p. 203]

9: Wilson E-5 (1954-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

in similar schools in 1958. Less than 40 per cent of the children between eight and eleven years old[1] are as yet in school in Rungwe District and the demand for places is enormous. Among the most insistent are girls wanting education. During the 1950's the Education Department was trying, with little success, to coax girls to stay in school long enough to learn to read and write, but today nearly a third of the primary school pupils are girls. A handful of boys and girls go out of the district to attend middle or secondary schools, and a few candidates for training as teachers and district nurses come in. Thus an educated person, or one who goes out to work, mixes with people whose backgrounds and languages are quite different from his own.

Then people are richer than they used to be, partly because of the wages earned abroad, and partly because of the coffee and rice grown and exported. There is also some employment within the district on tea estates (especially important to women and girls), and coal and vermiculite mines. The value of peasant crops exported has risen from about £14,000 in 1936[2] to nearly £378,000 from coffee and rice alone in 1955,[3] and some men have made as much as £150 from their coffee in a year. A coffee cheque of £50 to £60 is common. In addition to the peasant crops there is tea from estates—well over a million pounds of made tea in 1955 as well as a quantity of seed. This increase in wealth has involved a change in the division of labour. Because men are not at home to clear and hoe, their wives, perforce, must clear fields and hoe for themselves, assisted by their young sons, boys who twenty years ago would not yet have stopped herding.

There has been a rapid increase in population, more especially in the hills, due partly to the development of health services and

[1] Numbers of children in Mission and Native Authority schools in Rungwe District, 1955:

Boys	Girls	Total	No. of children 8-11 years of age (estimated as 10% of total population)
6,500	2,034	8,546	23,633
Middle Schools			
718	73	791	(This total does not include those who are in middle schools outside the District, nor does it include those following a professional course in the District)

(Figures provided by the courtesy of the Provincial Education Officer, Mbeya.)
Change in Ngonde is not discussed for it was not possible to visit that area in 1955.

[2] *Good Company*, p. 16.

[3] Calculated from figures kindly supplied by the District Commissioner, Mr. Peter Johnston.

Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

partly to the closer spacing of children. Whereas four years between births was conventional formerly, two or less is now usual. One of the characteristics of the present population is a disproportion between the sexes, the females outnumbering the males by 100 to 87·9 even when due allowance has been made for men away at work.[1] This disproportion is characteristic also of African populations in the south[2] and it appears likely that it is due to a wide difference in the survival rate of men and women, but the vital statistics necessary to test this hypothesis are lacking.

The increase in population, and the demand for coffee gardens and rice fields by men who prefer to earn cash by agriculture rather than as migrant labourers, has led to a shortage of land, already acute in the fertile lake-shore plain, and imminent in the coffee-growing villages of the hills.[3] Much land that was previously pasture land has been taken into cultivation, and signs of overstocking are everywhere apparent. Hillsides that in 1938 were covered with grass, waist high, now have a thin stubble. To aggravate matters, the care of stock is less efficient than it used to be because it is left to very small boys, their seniors being occupied with school and hoeing. Often the cattle are both ill nourished and covered with ticks—something that was never seen when they were herded by adolescents and carefully hand-dressed. The villagers themselves are as much concerned as the agricultural officers over the shortage of pasture and the decrease in the milk supply, but they are not prepared to accept the remedies recommended: namely, reduction of stock and stall-feeding. The advice of Europeans on the growing of rice and coffee crops, which they introduced to the district, is acceptable, but the Nyakyusa argue

[1] The Census figures cannot be taken as exact, but they give some indication of the increase in population, and the disproportion between men and women. In 1931 the population of Rungwe District was given as 155,060. In 1948 it was 276,386. In 1931 the proportion of males to females (Kukwe and Nyakyusa in Rungwe district) was 73·6 : 100 (Tanganyika Territory, *Census of the Native Population 1931*). In 1941 the figure for Tukuyu district as a whole was 80 : 100 (Tanganyika Territory, *East African Population Census, 1948*). Allowing for 8,800 men away without wives (estimate for 1954 less 10 per cent), the proportion is 87·9 : 100 (cf. P. H. Gulliver, Report on the Migration of African Workers to the South from the Southern Highland Province, with special Reference to the Nyakyusa of Rungwe District, February 1955, p. 16). The discrepancy in the figures given for adults was 62·2 : 100 in 1948, but the ages of males and females classed as 'adult' are uncertain.

[2] D. H. Houghton and E. M. Walton, *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, Keiskammahoek Rural Survey, vol. ii, pp. 24-6, 31. The sex ratio for Keiskammahoek District is 73·6 males : 100 females.

[3] cf. P. H. Gulliver, *Nyakyusa Land and Population*, 1956.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 that they have always been cattle men and they need no instruc-
[332] tion on cattle. The tension over stock limitation and soil con-
[342] servation, so acute in many parts of Africa, is only just appearing in Rungwe district, but potentially it is serious.

Pressure on land, and the planting of a valuable long-term crop
[311] such as coffee, have undermined the traditional organization of
[361] age-villages. The old men are no longer prepared to move to make way for their sons and, without a new deal in land each
[161] generation, the territorial separation of the generations is blurred. Boys villages are no longer visible in the hills near Rungwe mission, partly because so many young men are away, either at school or in employment, but largely because most of the land is taken up with coffee gardens. Homesteads are being built farther apart as men lay out coffee round their houses, and sons often build on a corner of their father's estate instead of in a separate village. On the plain, also, the pressure of population blurs the boundaries between generations. Only in the least heavily populated middle belt are numerous boys' villages still clearly visible, and here too a 'coming out' has recently been celebrated, with some redistribution of land. The scarcest land, that in old volcanic craters, was always inherited, like cattle, not reallocated each generation, and almost all cultivated land is now treated in this way. In many chiefdoms, therefore, a young man looks to his father or senior brother for land, rather than to the village head-
[428] man, and inheritance is supremely important. But the form of inheritance is changing: property now goes directly from father to son, not as formerly to each of a group of full brothers before reverting to the senior son of the eldest of them. The claims of more distant kinsmen on inherited stock are less than they used to be; such stock becomes the exclusive property of father and sons, rather than property in which members of a lineage of three or
[613] four generations have reciprocal rights. The main economic bond which held the lineage together, the exchange of cattle, is thus broken.

Formerly a marriage was a contract between lineages rather
[583] than between individuals. A girl was betrothed before puberty to a
[581] man of her father's choice and should he die she was still regarded as married to his heir. Should she die a sister replaced her. Ideally a marriage bond between lineages lasted for generations, each man who died being replaced by a brother or son, each woman by a sister or brother's daughter. The choice of a partner in marriage

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

was not an individual one. True, a girl gave her formal consent in the marriage ritual, but the pressure on her to accept the husband selected for her by her kinsmen was almost irresistible. In the thirties Christian women who refused their husband's heir and lived alone, or married an unrelated man of their choice, were regarded by their pagan sisters as very daring, and little girls in pagan families took it as a matter of course that they should replace their dead sisters; today the right of a widow to choose whom she will marry is generally accepted, and the custom of replacing a dead woman by her sister has lapsed. 'Every girl wants her own husband nowadays', the old women say. Thus lineage obligations give way to individual freedom of choice in marriage. At the same time the rituals which emphasized the lineage are dropped or modified. The fearful fecundity of a double birth no longer appals men and the twin ritual which used to bring together all the living members of a lineage of three generations is not celebrated at all. At a puberty ritual a pagan girl may be given the *ilipili* medicine, the symbol of 'the blood of the lineage' by her mother, but there is no seclusion and elaborate fasting, no sacrifice of the bull of puberty that her father's shades may 'move aside a little' to make way for the shades of her husband's lineage. Only at a funeral do kinsmen still gather and celebrate, for many still fear the shades, and at a funeral the heir is installed and the importance of property and the inheritance of it has not diminished one whit. As we have seen, the traditional religion was formulated in terms of kinship; the gods were senior kinsmen; but today God, *Kyala*, is no ancestor; to pagans as well as to Christians he is separate and supreme. Men are still classified by their lineages, and one of the topics of village questions is how Prince Charles can be heir to the British throne when his father is not of the house of Windsor; but already in the economic field, and increasingly in the religious, it is the family of parents and children which is now dominant, not the lineage.

Divorce is far more frequent than formerly, partly because women claim a greater freedom of behaviour than before, as well as the right of choosing their own husbands, and are supported by the courts. As one village headman put it, 'Formerly a father beat his daughter with a stick if she ran home and sent her back to her husband who also beat her.' The women reject the old pattern of subservience which was expressed in crouching to greet a man, and addressing him in a very deferential fashion; the men observe, and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 some copy, the manners of Europeans towards their wives, but
[586] neither husband nor wife is quite sure what the change in manners implies, and both are often inconsistent in their behaviour. As an educated Nyakyusa put it: 'They do not know what to expect from each other.'

[585] Marriage relationships are complicated by the disproportion
[162] in the numbers of men and women; a disproportion which continues while the rule of monogamy is preached and accepted
[582] by many. The first effect of the increase in wealth in Rungwe district was for the marriage age of women to go down; in Mr. Punch's phrase 'too many cattle were chasing too few wives'; but the combined pressure of missions and Administration, and some acquaintance with the customs of the outside world, has reversed that tendency, and the marriage of girls below puberty, which was general among pagans in 1938, now appears to be exceptional. Many girls are still betrothed before puberty, but
[584] they do not go to their husbands until after that time, and to be still single at puberty with no betrothed to play his part in the ritual is no longer embarrassing to a girl, for the puberty ritual is not celebrated in full. The ruling of the District Council that a man may not recover more than *one* cow given for a girl who has not reached puberty, if the marriage is dissolved, discourages men from giving cattle for girls who have not grown up. At the same time the marriage age of men is going down. Marriage in the
[582] early twenties or even the late teens is common now, for young men who have been to work on the mines can buy marriage cattle for themselves, and Christians who are well-to-do provide for the marriages of young sons instead of taking additional wives. Therefore the gap in the marriage age of men and women is very considerably diminished, but it still exists, and combined with the disproportion in the total number of males and females it means that a considerable proportion of the women (perhaps 30 per cent)[1] must become the junior wives of polygynists or remain unmarried altogether, or live alone as widows.

595 Among pagans polygyny is approved, but young men are irked by their responsibility for elderly widows, a responsibility that was formerly accepted as a matter of course. Able-bodied wives are still economically an asset even now that trade goods are in general use. For Nyakyusa men—pagans—have insisted that as

[1] The masculinity rate is calculated at 87·9 : 100 (*vide supra*) and the *average* difference in the marriage age may well be six years.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

their wives took to wearing cloth they should earn it for themselves by growing and selling millet and brewing beer, and many women do the clearing and hoeing in their fields, work that used to fall to men; but it is difficult for a chief to refuse to provide a man to hoe the ridges in his wife's field, or to refuse an elderly woman a cloth or some salt, and young heirs grumble much about their encumbrances.

In the political field there has been a sustained attempt to make local government more democratic and to include in it the educated men. Between 1891, when the German Government first assumed control of the area, and 1938, the tendency was for the power of the chiefs to be increased at the expense of that of the commoners. This was admitted by the chiefs themselves, as we have seen. In 1949 there was established a system of Rural Councils, on which chiefs, village headmen (*amafumu*), and ordinary commoners are represented. Four[1] of each category are chosen as representatives on the Council in their area by an electoral college itself elected by all taxpayers. Rungwe District is divided into five areas. The policy of treating some chiefs as senior to others has been abandoned and each of the seventy-eight recognized rulers (*abatwa*) is eligible for election as a chief's representative on his local Rural Council. Village headmen (two from each chiefdom) and the ordinary commoners are similarly chosen. The five Rural Councils in turn elect one man of each sort to the District Council.[2] The system allows for, and seems to have achieved, a combination of men with traditionally high status and those who are conspicuous by reason of their education or success as coffee or rice farmers. The old feeling that education was not necessary to a chief's son, though it might be useful to a poor man, has vanished, and a considerable number of the educated leaders of the district are sons or grandsons of chiefs. The elected president of the District Council, Mr. Gordon Mwansasu (186) is of the Nyakyusa chiefs' lineage, though not of the most senior line. In the Rural Councils the presidents elected have all, with one exception, been ruling chiefs, but it is not necessarily the genealogically senior who is chosen. There is scope for selection on the grounds of character and ability.

[1] Five in the populous plain, Ntebela (MuNgonde).

[2] cf. Z. E. Kingdon, 'The Initiation of a System of Local Government by African Rural Councils in Rungwe District of Tanganyika', *Journal of African Administration*, vol. iii, 4 (1951).

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 The office of chieftainship still carries high prestige and the District Council has actually resolved to select a paramount chief. [643] Competition for this position is fierce and it remains to be seen [648] whether the Council will ever agree on a nomination. The persistent suggestion that the Administration should undertake the invidious task and select a paramount is scarcely likely to be acted upon, since the Administration sees no necessity for establishing such an office.

Chiefs, assisted by their village headmen, are the executive officers of the Rural Councils, but they have lost their judicial functions. There are twenty-four recognized courts with a bench [692] of 'courtholders' appointed annually by the Rural Councils, and one superior court, but the annual appointment ceased in 1956 and [648] more permanent appointments were made. The aim is to develop a specialized judiciary independent of the executive. There is also a very important class of full-time civil servants, secretaries of the District and Rural Councils, and clerks of the courts.

The position of village headman is in a fluid state. Where the [622] 'coming out' ritual has been dropped, the traditional occasion for the formal appointment of village headmen no longer arises, and old men continue in office much longer than before. When a headman dies his heir sometimes takes his position or, if neither the heir nor a junior son will accept it, some other man is appointed by the chief. There is evidence that in many chiefdoms men are reluctant to undertake the position, which carries no salary but involves a considerable amount of work and makes it difficult or impossible for a man to engage in paid employment either within or outside the District. As one woman put it, 'Money has killed the office of village headman' (*Indalama sigogile ubufumu*). There is some evidence from the lake-shore plain, however, of men competing for the office, and indeed of a son claiming in the courts the headmanship his father held. Possibly the competition for land on the plain, and the fact that the allocation of land lies with the village headman, account for this. When all the arable land is taken up, it is probable that acquisition will be [622] through inheritance or sale only, and the present headman's [423] power to allocate land is likely to vanish; but one of the most important assets of a village is its pasture-land, and in controlling and developing this the headman may well play a decisive part in the future. Since village headmen are essential executive officers in local administration, and are integrated into the new system of

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Councils, the importance of establishing machinery for their appointment in chiefdoms where the 'coming out' is no longer held is obvious. 177 622 423

The traditional communal rituals have not been dropped altogether, but their celebration is sporadic and not everyone supports them. Careful enquiries suggest that in less than half of the chiefdoms has the 'coming out' been celebrated when it was due. In the most conservative portion of the district, Selya, there were celebrations in 1952 and 1954, but even in that area a number of the ruling chiefs have never 'come out'. The omission is due partly to the desire of the old men to retain office, partly to the increase in population and the planting of coffee which makes any new deal in land unacceptable, and partly to the feeling of many that the old ritual is an anachronism, if not directly incompatible with their new faith in Christianity. Some chiefs who have not 'come out' would welcome a celebration; one such told us that 'if the "coming out" died chieftainship would die'; but a young chief's personal wishes are not decisive in this matter. Sacrifices at the groves of chiefs and heroes are not as frequent as before, but they still occur at some groves in time of drought or other emergency. The Kinga came to Lubaga in 1954, and they were expected to come and instal Kasitile's heir in 1955. In 1954 also there were sacrifices to Mwaijonga (82) and Mwakisambwe (30) for it was a season of scarcity. Rituals for cleansing the country and sprinkling the homesteads occur sporadically 'when occasion demands', but not annually in any chiefdom and never in some. And when celebrations do occur they do not unite the people of a chiefdom as they used to do. Christians oppose them and many non-Christians are also sceptical. 561 796 643 782 769 771

In 1935 the traditional rituals celebrated by lineages and chiefdoms formed a coherent system. They were directed towards the shades and the heroes, as was manifest in the sacrifices and in the dramas of death and rebirth when those secluded 'dwelt with the shades' or were 'caught hold of' by Kyala.[1] The older participants were then conscious, in greater or lesser degree, of the symbolism implicit in the actions they performed. By 1955 the ritual cycle was nowhere celebrated in full: what remained were 'bits and pieces' of ritual, none of them fully intelligible without reference to the complete cycle. The link between the rites and the shades and the heroes was less clear, and the symbolism less 769 796

[1] *Vide supra*, pp. 27-48, 70-85; *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 51, 98, 101, 111-13, 205.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 conscious. This disintegration of a former coherence, and a
[769] decreasing awareness of the meaning of symbols used, are perhaps
[796] characteristic of changing societies in Africa.

Despite the growth of the Christian Church, the great demand for schools, and the dropping of the old rituals directed to family
[754] shades and the heroes, belief in the power of medicines flourishes.
[778] Probably most deaths and misfortunes are still attributed to an enemy using either witchcraft or sorcery. The traditional belief in witchcraft is rejected by educated people, but belief in the power of medicines is general. Autopsies still take place and occasionally the poison ordeal is administered in secrecy; one case was mentioned which occurred in 1942. As we have seen, medicines have always been regarded as a potential instrument of individual competition. They are used in the rituals of kinship to ensure health, fertility, and good manners and morals; in the ritual of chieftainship to buttress authority, and in 'sprinkling the homesteads' to fertilize the fields; but also by individuals to steal the fertility of their neighbours' fields and to grow rich at the expense of their neighbours, and it is their use as an instrument of individual aggrandisement that is most talked of today. There were many reports of their use by rivals to office as chiefs, and the floods of 1955, which washed away the Mbaka bridge and caused a serious landslide on that river, were interpreted as incidents in a
[578] prolonged fight between chiefs who were rivals for the position of paramount. The deaths of the heir of one of them in 1953, and of the other chief himself in 1956, were also attributed to their duel with medicines.

Along with the political changes there has been a development
797 of the Churches, more particularly of the Moravian Church,
795 which is now largely self-supporting, with growing congregations
177 served by African ministers.[1] Until 1938 the two main Protestant missions in Nyakyusa valley, the Moravian and Lutheran, were staffed by Germans and their funds came mainly from Germany. The war meant the withdrawal of the missionaries and the cutting off of funds. After a lapse of three years one Moravian missionary, and later one Lutheran, came to take charge of the missions and they were reinforced by other missionaries after the end of the war, but the whole policy in both missions is to build up self-supporting churches staffed by African pastors.

The work of the White Fathers mission was not interrupted by

[1] Change in Ngonde is not discussed.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the war and the form of its activities has not altered appreciably. Three other missions based elsewhere now have small congregations in the District and a Lutheran pastor under discipline broke away and formed his own 'independent' Church, which differs from the other 'independent' Churches in that the rule of monogamy is enforced.

The total number of converts has increased very considerably, much more than keeping pace with the increase in population; taking the three main missions together, their converts form over 14 per cent of the total population.[1] Figures for the five mission Churches with small congregations in the District—Pentecostal Holiness, Assemblies of God, Seventh Day Adventists, Anglican, and Watch Tower—are not available. Nor do we know the membership of one of the 'independent' African Churches, but supposing the membership of the missions with small congregations in the District to be 2,000 (a conservative estimate) the percentage claiming to be Christian is 24 per cent as against 16 per cent in 1938. Dissimilarities in the response to Christian teaching in different areas are very marked. Around Rungwe, the main Moravian mission-station, the bulk of the population is Christian, and the whole atmosphere is that of a Christian community, whereas in Selya, where mission work began in 1891 as it did in Rungwe, Christians still form a small minority in dominantly pagan chiefdoms. The reasons for this difference are complex. One factor is that Selya is geographically isolated whereas Rungwe is near a main road and within easy reach of the Government and trading centre Tukuyu; but much more important have been differences in mission policy regarding education, and differences in the personalities of missionaries, chiefs, and early converts.

The change from a society based on kinship to one based on voluntary association is apparent in the economic field as well as in the religious. Co-operative societies formed by producers of coffee and rice, which collect and market the crops, and give opportunity

[1] Figures supplied by the courtesy of the missionaries directing each mission and the leaders of two 'independent' Churches were as follows for 1954:

Moravians		29,390
Lutheran		10,000 (approximately)
Roman Catholic		4,700
Last Church (Ngemela) (Also called 'Native Mission')	('independent')	10,721
'African Lutheran Church'	('independent')	200

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 for the local investment of savings are the most important
[474] economic undertaking in the District. The seven coffee co-
[454] operatives handled a crop of 950 tons in 1955, worth about £427,500, and are organized so efficiently as to be able to return over 90 per cent of the price of the coffee on Moshi market to the producer, after the heavy transport costs (14 per cent) have been paid. One Government-paid officer assists these societies.

In the educational and recreational field also, associations are
526 emerging: football clubs; companies of Scouts and Guides;
575 'Welfare Centres' with classes in reading for adult illiterates,
177 indoor games, and Saturday-night dances; Women's Clubs for handwork and recreation; and in Tukuyu itself an inter-racial club with its own premises, whose members meet to play games, and get to know one another and discuss common problems. These associations make a visible mark on the face of the country in the shape of new brick Churches, co-operative stores, football fields, and, more rarely, a village club-house.

177 The change from a subsistence to a money economy, and from a
system of government through chiefs and village headmen who
651 were dependent primarily on inherited wealth, which secured to them the labour of many able-bodied wives and sons, to a system of government through European officials, chiefs, and clerks paid out of taxes, and assisted by unpaid village headmen, implies the collection and administration of taxes. The District Council has
177 the responsibility for the budgeting and expenditure of over
652 £60,000 per annum. The greater part of it is spent on the salaries of chiefs, secretaries, and clerks engaged in administration, on courts, on schools, dispensaries, and roads. The development of associations with paid officers also implies the collection of dues and budgeting. As in so many countries the difficulty of building
177 up a tradition of honesty in administration is great. Tax clerks,
685 court clerks, council secretaries, and co-operative society secretaries, and even church elders handle sums of money relatively large in proportion to their earnings and one of the tasks of European officials and missionaries is to secure a sound system of accounting and check corruption. In the traditional society stock theft was a capital offence, but money has not the sanctity of cattle, and often the clerk who has appropriated public funds is treated by others as 'unfortunate' rather than immoral. At the same time villagers show great anxiety lest a man entrusted with some common fund should spend it for himself. The risk of theft

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ublic funds is greater than in England, but it should be added 177 ●
t a European may camp in a Nyakyusa village with nothing [685]
ted, and never lose so much as a box of matches.

n attempt has been made to describe the sort of changes which proceeding in BuNyakyusa. They are not peculiar to that area, will be familiar to most people who have lived in Africa. Now turn to the sociological analysis.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

rticular symbols are tied to a particular social structure; the poet 182
akes his choice within the whole range of the familiar. 181
The impetus to change has come both from the religious field 178
d from the secular. For example, the pressure towards mono-
my among the Nyakyusa has been religious; given plentiful 178
nd and cash crops additional wives are an economic asset, not a 797
bility. In this respect the contrast with the Ciskei in South 795
frica, where families are dependent for food on wage-earners in
wns, and no man can support two families,[1] is marked. On the
her hand, the decay of Nyakyusa age-villages is primarily due
economic pressure, though it is facilitated by the insistence of
hristians that there is no danger in father-in-law and daughter-
-law meeting one another. The first generation of Christians
ving on mission land built villages apart for their sons, despite
e teaching that avoidance of a father-in-law by his daughter-
-law was foolish, if not sinful. But a radical change in pagan
bservance of ritual avoidance is brought about by the general
ractice of going out to work for long periods, and the competition
or coffee and rice-lands, which makes the territorial separation of
athers and sons impossible. As we have shown, young men going
o work commonly leave their wives in their fathers' homesteads,
aluing the support and supervision given them there above the
ld stringency of avoidance and, where land is scarce and valuable,
athers do not move aside each generation to make way for their
ons. Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law [606]
continues only in an attenuated form.

From German times control by a European government has 177
compelled a modification of the traditional sacrifices to the heroes
and of the ritual of chieftainship. How the Kinga priests came to 648
Lubaga 'in secret' and how they failed to instal a new Lwembe 796
after the death of Mwakisisya about 1914 has been described.
Killing a child to anoint a drum or make medicine for the fields,
compelling a man to accept a dangerous office, killing chiefs
because they are ailing, or plucking off their nails before they die;
all these are actions which are held, and must be held, to be 'contrary to natural justice' by any Western government. Here the
change in political organization compels a change in ritual and
there is evidence that belief in the traditional forms is much
diminished, though not dead. The European government also

[1] Keiskammahoek Rural Survey. Vol. ii, *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, by D. H. Houghton and E. M. Walton; vol. iii, *Social Structure*, by M. Wilson *et al.*

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 found the administration of the poison ordeal, driving out people
648 alleged to be witches, and killing supposed sorcerers 'contrary to
796 natural justice'. Here the change is not in the celebration of a ritual but in the execution of 'justice' based on traditional religious beliefs.

797 The early missionaries were very important as employers of
177 labour and a market for produce; indeed at one time they were the *sole* source of western trade-goods among the Nyakyusa. For long they provided the only skilled medical attention. They were the source of new learning, teaching, from the start, reading and writing and new manual skills, and the link between learning and religion, so familiar in the history of Europe, is still strong. Therefore acceptance of Christianity *tended* to go along with acceptance of the new economic and political structure, but it was never identified with it. Already in the thirties a popular song contrasted Christians with Europeans, and African nationalism was finding expression in 'independent' Churches.

178 Secularism fits as well with the new economic and political
171 structure as Christianity, and it has been argued elsewhere that
648 one of the characteristics of the change from a small-scale, isolated, self-sufficient people to a large-scale society is increasing secularism.[1] The evidence from BuNyakyusa does not so far support this, but there is a *separation* of religious and other activities. Religion is not interwoven with the modern political system as it was with the old. Traditionally the fusion between ritual and political activities was almost complete; village headmen became priests as they grew old, and chiefs became gods. Now there is a separation between Church and state, between Government and mission, which co-operate closely only in the organization of schools. It is true that Christian congregations pray regularly for 'those set in authority over us', but for the most part religious ritual does not enter into state functions. The flag is hoisted and saluted at sunrise and sunset at administrative and military centres; certain occasions, such as the Queen's birthday or the visit of the Queen's representative, the Governor, are celebrated with secular ceremonial. Only at the Coronation, to which African representatives from Rungwe district were sent, did the state ceremonial and the Christian ritual merge.[2] Political tension is not now directly

[1] R. Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, Chicago (1941); *A Village that Chose Progress*, Chicago (1950).

[2] 'The entire solemnity of the Coronation, from start to finish, is distinctly a religious rite.' Canon Charles Smyth, 'The Coronation Rite', *The Listener*, 28th May 1953.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I

In many areas of Eastern Africa the pressure of peasant populations on their tribal lands is a critical feature of the contemporary scene, and this is most especially so in the more fertile parts where the African has accepted the new cash economy and is beginning to appreciate the potentialities of the modern world. The situation has been highlighted recently in the public mind by the publication of the Report of the East African Royal Commission[1] which examined the economic conditions of our time and made general recommendations.

In Tanganyika the overall density of population is low (22 persons per square mile) and the general scale of economic activity still remains little above subsistence level over vast areas of Territory. There are, however, islands of extremely dense populations scattered through the country, often associated with the mountain areas, where soil is fertile, rainfall is reliable and adequate and the cultivation of crops for sale in world markets has gone ahead fairly easily. These populations still comprise peasant farming communities with little capital and their "natural" impulse is to expand their extensive agricultural system rather than to intensify their cultivation on existing holdings. Serious overcrowding soon results for the favourable areas are limited and surrounded by drier bushlands. African attitudes and legal customs concerning their land do not change quickly and they lag behind new conditions of physical limitation and economic development. Whilst the recommendations of the Royal Commission may be valuable in the establishment of general policy, it is obvious that detailed application through time demands a fairly exact knowledge and understanding of particular local conditions if it is to be reasonably successful. This is particularly the case in so large a country as Tanganyika, with its multiplicity of environments and tribal systems of law, land tenure and agriculture, and the social attitudes which encompass them.

The present essay is an attempt, sponsored by Government, to describe and analyse the land and population conditions in one small area of the Territory where a cash economy is emerging and where the pressure of a peasant population on its land resources has become acute. It is hoped that some of this account may be applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to other similar areas both in Tanganyika and elsewhere, and that the conclusions reached may be helpful in dealing with the problems there; but primarily this is a study of one particular part of the country in order to provide the information upon which detailed policy may be founded.

The Nyakyusa are not entirely typical of many of the Bantu people of East Africa for they have a most distinctive social organisation, peculiar to themselves, based on age-villages and petty, independent chiefdoms. Also, they inhabit a country whose annual rainfall is unusually high, averaging about 100 inches. On the other hand, these people are one of the very few in Tanganyika for whom we have an excellent account of both their pre-European and early European systems of land tenure. Based on this information, obtained *before* modern changes began, we can perceive, analyse

1. *East African Royal Commission* 1953-5, *Report:* H.M.S.O. 1955. Cmd. 9475.

and try to understand the nature and reasons for change. Here, then, is a good opportunity for the study of social change – not only in land tenure as such, but also in village and family organisation, political authority and economic life.

II

The Nyakyusa are a Bantu people inhabiting the main part of the Rungwe District in southern Tanganyika, immediately to the north of Lake Nyasa. In 1948 they numbered about 199,000 in that District, but about 10,000 men were probably at the time temporarily absent from their homes and in employment in the mines and towns of the Rhodesias and South Africa (see Gulliver, 1957), whilst about 20,000 had migrated to live in the adjacent Mbeya District to the north.

The tribal area comprises a confined geographical basin surrounding the northern end of Lake Nyasa. It extends only about 40 miles from the tip of the lake at 1,550 feet above sea level to the Poroto Mountains in the north at 8,000 feet; and from east to west is only about 30 miles, from the almost sheer walls of the Livingstone Mountains (with peaks up to 10,000 feet) to the Ndali Highlands (rising to about 7,000 feet). There are therefore unusually large ecological differences within so small an area. Three major regions are to be distinguished: the "Northern Highlands" over about 4,500 feet, the low-lying "Lake Plains" in the south, and the "Central Region" in between. Everywhere rainfall is reliable and high, averaging at least 100 inches annually[1], and this amply compensates for a certain poverty and misuse of the soil, although (and particularly in the Central Region) it brings dangers of soil erosion. Except in the highest parts the banana is the staple food, supported by maize, beans, finger millet and groundnuts. In the Northern Highlands coffee has become well established as the principal cash crop: in the Lake Plains paddy rice cultivation provides both a food and a cash crop: in the Central Region the country is too low generally for coffee and too high and dry for rice; consequently cash-cropping is considerably inferior and the people's standard of living is rather poorer.

The Nyakyusa and their country tended for a long time to be relatively isolated from the outside world by high mountain walls and rain-soaked roads. In addition, or because of it perhaps, they developed an almost unique culture which was supported by considerable conservatism and high insularity. They still continue to regard their African neighbours beyond the mountains as their social and cultural inferiors. The turmoil of the slave-trade in Central Africa passed them by; in modern times they have not enthusiastically accepted Christianity and they have refused to take up the use of Swahili, the Territorial *lingua franca*. In recent years, and most especially since the end of World War II, they have, however, accepted and pushed forward with vigour a rapid and extensive economic development, involving particularly the production of coffee and paddy as cash crops, and large-scale labour migration to the south in the high-wage mining industries. The multiplicity of petty, often tiny, independent chiefdoms has been reorganised to provide four local government areas, each under a Rural Council, in which the old chiefdoms have become something like parishes[2]. Although much of the old conservatism and narrow parochialism persists, yet there is now an atmosphere of accepted change, of a keen desire for economic development, and a general acceptance of a cash economy.

Probably the most significant feature of modern life in the Nyakyusa country is the increasing scarcity of land for agriculture in relation to the

1. At Tukuyu, in the Northern Highlands, annual rainfall averaged 99.28 inches between 1919 and 1952: at Kyela, in the Lake Plains, the average between 1940 and 1951 was 106.21 inches.
2. See Kingdon, Z.E.: The initiation of a system of local government by African rural councils in the Rungwe District, Tanganyika; *The Journal of African Administration*, iii, 4, October, 1951.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

people's needs. The importance of this can scarcely be overemphasised for a peasant people who are adopting a cash economy and are socially and emotionally deeply attached to their land – their single, continuous source of capital and their tribal heritage. Apart from the possibilities of labour migration which, so far at any rate, are taken up only temporarily and by the younger men, there are no economic opportunities and no capital to compete with the land. In non-economic life the land remains supreme as the persisting basis of society.

As late as 1940 the District Commissioner, Rungwe, was able to write that there was most generally sufficient land for the people's needs in all parts of the country, and the only competition was perhaps in respect of the very best and most fertile tracts, as had always been the case. G. Wilson recorded similar remarks in the late nineteen-thirties. That these observations were correct cannot be doubted. It is known, for instance, that until the post-war years in the Lake Plains – where now land shortage is most acute – there was a broad belt of mainly unoccupied, uncultivated bushland, infested with game, extending from the Livingstone Mountains in the east to the Nyasaland border in the south-west. There were extensive, more or less empty areas in almost every chiefdom. The people were subsistence farmers only, and also banana eaters, and in this well-watered country their agricultural requirements were adequately met on very modest holdings, from most of which two harvests a year could be gathered.

In the brief period of little more than ten years the situation has altered radically to the point of a general shortage of land (except for some parts in the north-west), and especially in the Lake Plains the available land is quite insufficient to meet the demands of the inhabitants. This critical change is the result partly of an increasing population, augmented by some immigration from other tribal areas; but more especially it is the result of the demands for larger arable holdings to meet cash crop aspirations – i.e., money earning. Although both coffee and paddy rice cultivation had begun before 1939, and both were encouraged and developed during the War years, it was not until after 1945 that both of these cash crops became well and generally established and the demand for money incomes became universal.

III

It was in order to investigate this new situation, which was beginning to become serious and to cause concern to Government, that I made a sociological survey in 1955. I had already spent some months in the country in 1954 investigating labour migration in order to provide Government with information and to make recommendations to deal with the problems arising. The second period of work occupied about five months. During both enquiries I was extremely fortunate in having the use of the excellent monographs of G. and M. Wilson who had carried out a conventional anthropological study of the Nyakyusa between 1934 and 1938. Without their basic work behind me, neither of my two studies would have been possible in so brief a time, and I must gratefully acknowledge the real value of their writings.

The intention had been that a complete enquiry should be made into Nyakyusa land conditions in all parts of the country, and that it should culminate in a full recording of tribal land law and custom with a view to its possible reform. In the event only the initial enquiry in the field in the Lake Plains was completed and the results of that alone are described in this essay. Whereas in former days there were probably few distinctive differences between the various parts of the country, in modern times with the introduction of different cash crops, with differential population growths and varying demands on the land, important divergences seem to be arising. For example,

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

161 If therefore, pending the next Census to be made in 1957, we assume these rates of increase, then by 1955 it may be estimated that the Nyakyusa numbered about 217,000 at an average density of 233 persons per square mile, allowing 13.7 acres of land per family of five. For the Lake Plains alone, the population in 1955 would have been nearly 60,000 at an average density of 287 persons per square mile, with 11.2 acres per family. If we also include the estimated number of absentee migrant labourers in the base year of 1948, then there were in 1955 perhaps 63,000 people dependent on the land resources of the Lake Plains at an average density of 303 per square mile, though in fact some 6,000 men were temporarily absent from home in that year.

The figures and estimates are given in Table I. These averages do, of course, hide some considerable and significant local variations which are further described at pages 14 ff. below.

TABLE I
NYAKYUSA POPULATION

162

	1948 *Census*			1955 *Estimates*		
	a	*b*	*c*	*a*	*b*	*c*
Lake Plains at increase of 1% p.a.	55,700	268	11.9	59,700	287	11.2
Central Region at increase of 1½% p.a.	48,500	224	14.2	53,800	248	12.9
N.E. Highlands at increase of 1½% p.a.	40,300	183	17.4	44,700	203	15.8
N.W. Highlands at increase of 1½% p.a.	53,200	185	17.3	59,000	205	15.6
NYAKYUSA in tribal area	197,700	212	15.2	217,200	233	13.7

a = population
b = persons per square mile on land available for African use.
c = average acreage available per family of 5 persons.

Assuming that there were in 1948 about 3,000 men temporarily absent from their homes in the Lake Plains but who remained dependent on the land resources of that region, then the following estimate may be made:–

Lake Plains – persons resident at home and temporarily abroad:–

a	*b*	*c*	*a*	*b*	*c*
58,700	282	11.3	62,935	303	10.6

The approximate areas available for African use in the tribal lands (excluding alienated land, forest reserves and main roads) are:–

Lake Plains – 208 sq. miles N.E. Highlands – 220 sq. miles
Central Region – 217 sq. miles N.W. Highlands – 288 sq. miles
BuNyakyusa – 933 sq. miles

In these calculations no account is taken of unusable land such as swamps, steep slopes, thicket, etc.

Cash Cropping: Paddy Cultivation

233 232 This condition of a high density of population exists in a modern economy in which cash-cropping is universally accepted and desired. Under the former subsistence agriculture, because of heavy rainfall and natural annual flooding, quite small-sized holdings were adequate to satisfy a family's food requirements. Two harvests a year are easily obtained in some 241 combination of maize, beans, groundnuts and finger millet, with a few small "luxury" crops; and the banana groves yield continuously. The Nyakyusa were and are extremely fortunate in their food supply, and seldom experience shortages such as occasionally or even commonly afflict many peoples of East Africa.

243 [171] Rice was first introduced in 1896 by two chiefs who obtained the seed from Nyasaland Arabs; and in 1898 the Moravian Mission and a Swahili

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

trader brought in other seed. The trader himself planted a large plot and his success seems to have stimulated the Nyakyusa to follow suit. There was a slow but gradual development of planting and by 1932 it was estimated that some 500 tons of hand-hulled rice were sold. It had become clear that the alluvial flood plains around the northern tip of Lake Nyasa were ideally suited to paddy growing. Until 1942 the people continued to hand-hull their crop and sell the rice, but in that year they were persuaded to sell the paddy direct to a locally established mill. Following initial difficulties in milling, handling and marketing, the Government built a store capable of holding 14,000 bags and it also took over the whole of the marketing with a seconded District Officer in charge. In 1947 the cultivators formed their first co-operative society. This movement has been encouraged by Government and the local Co-operative Union now deals with storage and marketing with the guidance of a Government Co-operative Officer.

The figures of sales of rice and paddy are given in Table II.[1]

Paddy has become a well-established crop, not only as the single cash crop of the region, but also as a food crop second only (or even equal) to the traditionally staple banana. About four-fifths of all arable holdings are paddy fields – though parts of these are used for dry season crops of maize, beans, etc. Virtually every Nyakyusa land-holder now grows paddy, and the vast majority regard it as their main crop. Cultivation is mainly by ox-plough followed by broadcast sowing and hand-weeding. Government efforts to encourage nurseries and planting out in rows have so far been entirely unsuccessful. Yields and perhaps quality too are thought to be lower than need be; the chief factor in production seems to be the degree of natural flooding during the wet season.

TABLE II

SALES OF RICE AND PADDY, 1932-56*

		tons			tons
1932	..	500	1945	..	1,200
1933	..	600	1946	..	2,700
1934	..	600	1947	..	3,300
1935	..	600	1948	..	2,100
1936	..	700	1949	..	3,700
1938	..	700	1950	..	2,300
1939	..	1,200	1951	..	1,200
1940	..	1,500	1952	..	2,000
1941	..	1,600	1953	..	5,700
1942	..	2,200	1954	..	5,900
1943	..	2,800	1955	..	5,700
1944	..	2,900	1956	..	3,000

*1932-41—hand-hulled rice, estimates only.
1942-47—paddy, sold through Government agency.
1948-56—paddy, sold through cultivators' co-operatives.

The cultivation of paddy requires relatively large-sized holdings due to the nature of the crop and the local extensive method of agriculture – for example, to produce a given income requires a far larger area of paddy in the Lake Plains than of coffee in the Northern Highlands of Nyakyusa country. As paddy cultivation became established, men increased their arable holdings in order to earn their money incomes. Larger holdings, rather than improved agricultural techniques, have become directly connected with higher incomes, and so the demand for more land set in. Assisted by the now general use of ploughs, paddy growing increased rapidly wherever it was found ecologically possible – i.e., within the alluvial flood plains and the coterminous area of annual natural flooding. Before this new demand for land emerged there were, even in the most highly populated parts, extensive areas which were more or

1. Information has been supplied by the Co-operative Officer, Tukuyu.

less uncultivated. These areas can easily be picked out today by the absence of village sites and banana groves. There was something of a rush to grab land in such areas and in the less densely populated parts of the chiefdoms. Today in my personal experience – for no general survey has been attempted – there remains little or no unused land within the paddy-growing region which can, by native techniques, be brought under the plough; and indeed men are attempting to grow paddy on unsuitably raised land where inundation is inadequate. Communal cattle pastures have shrunk as arable holdings extended until they remain only where cultivation is profitless.

The demand for land has far outrun the physical supply, and in 1955 it still seemed to be insatiable. The initial cycle was that a desire for more money to permit of a higher standard of living created a demand for more land on which to produce more cash crops; but the increased level of income then further stimulated money demands to raise standards higher again, thus bringing a renewed demand for land. The cycle has now been halted by the lack of further land to meet the people's needs, but the demand remains nevertheless and is indeed increased by rising costs of living.

This economic picture is, of course, oversimplified, but it may serve to illustrate the nature of forces at work in the situation. I would not wish to overemphasise the snowball effect, for the bulk of the population remains still largely content with only a little over earlier standards; but increasing numbers of men and their families are coming to seek something better. Bicycles have become something of a general necessity; a variety of good clothing and shoes is considered quite essential. Only a single decade before the Nyakyusa women still generally went about in the traditional nudity, whereas in 1955 they must have ranked among the very best-dressed African women in the Territory. European-type household goods, crockery and utensils are common. The demand for money, that is for a higher standard of living, has also been greatly stimulated by the experiences of the thousands of labour migrants returning from southern towns and mines, and by the cash and goods they bring back with them.[1]

It is not possible for me to attempt to suggest what a desirable acreage would be for a contemporary Nyakyusa, because money demands, crop yields and selling prices change and the desire for higher standards of living also alter as the potentialities of the new cash economy are increasingly understood. In 1954 the approximate average of Sh.200/- per paddy cultivator was earned from perhaps two or three acres of arable land, but an indeterminable amount of the crop was kept back for home food requirements. As will be shown later many men's paddy fields could have been little more than an acre, and many men, specifically young men, had no paddy land at all. Certainly there were few who held what they considered, at a reasonable estimate, to be sufficient land.

This universal cash crop agriculture and the continuing demand for higher standards of living, and therefore for higher money incomes, is the real cause of the new and rather sudden pressure of population on the land. Of course this economic process operates within a situation of relatively dense population and in a peasant community where land is almost the only form of capital and alternative enterprise is small. The gradual increase of population, although probably small, further aggravates the difficult situation.

Arable Holdings

It was not possible to obtain adequate, satisfactory data to allow the calculation of local population densities, and the detailed results of the 1948

1. In Gulliver, P. H.: 1957, an estimate of the cash incomes of Nyakyusa in 1954 is given at pp. 51-2. Data on the cash brought back by returning labour migrants are given at p. 53.

of the father. The old principle that every man had the right to arable land applied no less strongly to the young men, married or bachelors. Today most headmen will refuse to entertain the applications of young bachelors for land, and in this they merely represent general public opinion. But many young husbands likewise cannot obtain land, or only an insufficient amount.

Consequently, the following case-history, which I recorded for one young man, is not unusual. In 1955 he lived in the Mlangali young-men's hamlet, attached to Mpunguti village in Mwakipesile's chiefdom, where his father lives. He was about 27 years old and had a wife and one child. Twice he had been to work in the mines and from the profits of this employment he had completed his bridewealth payment and had bought, in addition, three cattle, a bicycle and some good clothing. He thought he would probably go away again. Behind his house his wife had about 300 square yards of bananas and there was a tiny patch of cassava. This man had no other land, but he assisted in the heavy labour on his father's holding (about 1.7 acres in all) and by family convention he normally took for his own use the paddy crop of a small strip there; he insisted, however, that he had not been given this strip outright and that it remained at his father's pleasure. He had an unmarried half-brother about 22 years old who had not obtained even that concession at the time. Their father was about 55 years old and had two other sons who were still boys. The young man himself had been refused an allocation of land by the headman on the grounds that (as the headman well knew) he had the use of this strip of his father's land, and also because, as the eldest son, he would be the principal heir on his father's death. He was clearly worried about his future, for he did not wish to go abroad again and leave his wife and child; but he did not see how he could stay at home without seriously lowering his standard of living to little above subsistence level.

I quote this brief case-history not necessarily as typical – though I think it probably is – but as an actual illustration of the present state of affairs as they affect an individual.

The Modern "Chief" and the Land

Most of the traditional chiefs, *abanyafyale*, have been recognised and salaried under the Native Authority, and they are officially referred to today as *abatwa* (s. *ntwa*). Some of the smallest chiefdoms have been absorbed administratively by their larger neighbours, and, although they are still recognised by the people, their *abanyafyale* have lost very much of their earlier prestige and authority. In the Lake Plains the modern chiefdoms are often rather larger than is usual amongst the Nyakyusa,[1] but they are, of course, small in comparison with the size of most African chiefdoms in Tanganyika.

The slightness of the traditional authority of the chief in land matters has already been noted (pages 7-8) and in general this still holds. In European times, however, the recognised chiefs have been given an increased authority and prestige as the local intermediaries between Government and people, and until recent years they were almost the only local instruments of the Government amongst the Nyakyusa. They have been backed by the all-powerful European, who preferred to deal with single, recognised individuals thought to have prime authority in a locality, and the European officer has been encouraged in this notion by an over-enthusiastic policy of indirect rule. Such chiefs were able to assume a degree of power well beyond the traditional limits, and to aggrandize themselves thereby. The ordinary commoner was never quite sure how far his chief was individually claiming more than he

1. On the numerical size of chiefdoms see supra, page 6.

241 Other foodstuffs grown are coca-yams, cow peas, pigeon peas, Bambarra groundnuts, ginger, cardamon, groundnuts, wheat, pumpkins, peppers, citrus, sugar cane and European vegetables, including a quantity of European potatoes.
[177]

Economic Crops

245 177 One of the main cash crops is coffee, which was introduced about 1900 by the Berlin Lutheran Mission, but it was not grown by natives until 1930 when an attempt was made to organize an industry. It had already been tried from 1924 onwards by Europeans but had gradually died out, giving place to tea.

245 Native coffee has not been truly successful and many reasons are suspected for this. In effect, the coffee suffers from many pests and diseases and yields are so low as to be almost uneconomical even to a tribe of very low individual annual income. It has become obvious that coffee can only be grown by natives if shaded by bananas and mulched heavily with banana trash. Multiple-stem pruning is gaining favour.

Seedlings are planted out in December and the first crop is obtained four years after. The area planted rose in 1939 to 5,864 acres and the number of native planters to 7,966. Yields, however, are low, varying from 131.4 kg. to 20.4 kg. parchment to the acre. Hemeleia leaf disease and yellow and white borer are prevalent all over the coffee-growing area. Over the period since 1932 the price paid to natives has averaged 44 cents a kg. for parchment.
[136]

[438] All coffee is collected and sold by Native Authority after rough grading and, in order to [432] encourage better preparation, much lower payments are made for the inferior grades. A native staff is employed to visit coffee plots and to give instructions, and it is noticeable that the quality of preparation varies with the price.

175 The cultivation of rice on the lake shore was started by Chief Koroso in 1896 with seed 243 obtained from Arab traders in Nyasaland and the Moravian Mission issued further seed in 1898. Being an innovation, rice was not popular and little was grown except for small [651] local sales. In 1917 the Government issued seed and tax was paid in rice instead of money. Interest was hereby aroused and the cultivation of rice was started. In 1932 several other kinds of seed were issued and now sixteen varieties 243 are found. "Faya", which was issued in 1929, gives the best yields and is the variety chiefly grown, other varieties being Bungala, Marula

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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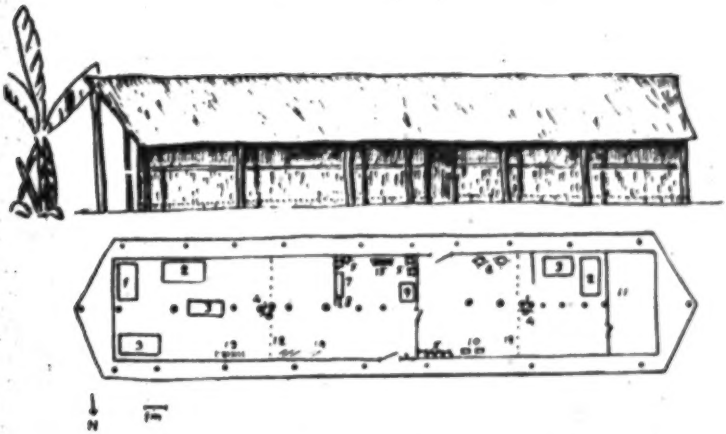

An *ikibaga* in the village of Kisondela, the district of Rutengalo, belonging to a man with two wives. The rooms have bamboo ceilings from dotted lines to either gable. Posts reaching to ridge of roof are filled in. 1, husband's bed; 2, wife's bed; 3, child's bed; 4, hearth; 5, hens' nests; 6, water jar; 7, roost; 8, ladder; 9, table; 10, stools; 11, store-room; 12, dotted lines show limitation of ceiling; 13, small objects; 14, working material; 15, sleeping mat.

born. On page 357, he reports how the boys, when 7 or 10 years old, will leave their parents' house to live in long, rectangular cowhouse-like houses big or small, in a special youngsters' quarter at the far end of the village. On page 358 he writes: In many cases you do not know for certain whether you are dealing with [343] a youngsters' house or a cowhouse—for the cattle may well be kept in these houses—or the herdsmen may sleep in the cowhouses. However, this mostly holds [184 true of the low-lying Konde country, while on the other hand, in the high country, 231] the cattle is usually kept in the dwelling houses. On pages 371 and 372, he relates how the cattle is tied to posts at night, and he shows a picture of a cowhouse.

He also refers (on page 376) to the use of the rectangular house for married [462] men besides the boys. The difference is seen in the fact that these houses are not roughcast with mud, as this work is the province of women. Finally, he reports that, during the last few years of his stay in the Konde country, he saw Konde [177] houses being built under increasing influence of the coastal culture, in imitation of the Swahili houses. They were roughcast with mud inside and out, and had a verandah supported by posts.

In 1955, many *ikibagas* could be seen. Some were for the cattle, but most were dwelling houses for married people. (Boys aged 7–10 and upwards until the [824] marriageable age lived in ramshackle boys' houses, the material of which was not [855] bamboo, but a thinner grass, resembling bamboo very much. These houses stood

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17 Nyakyusa

352 415 two water jars, baskets, stools, a ladder leading to the loft, and a table. The rooms were large and spacious, 5 m by 14 m, and in two places low partitions were 353 used to effect a sub-division of the rooms. One may well wonder at the great length of these houses, but probably it is quite true what is said, that, when—in 342 1891—the Germans took charge of the region and imposed a tax on houses, the ●177 Nyakyusa men made their women move in under their own roofs—only at the same time extending the houses, using the technique they already knew from the cowhouses.

648 178 342 Fülleborn reports on this payment of taxes, and finds it reasonable enough, because, he says, "it fosters in the people an understanding of work and discipline," and of the house tax he says, "it works to abolish polygamy, since every woman, following the traditions of her country, has her own house, for which her husband must pay the tax."

But the Banyakyusa seems to have adapted themselves to the new law and have moved their wives to the very long houses, thus escaping part of the taxes...

342 The third type of house was a rectangular house with a hipped roof. This type is called *ihema*, which means tent. It was also called *istere*, the meaning of which I have not been able to ascertain; maybe it means chicken-breast, to which it bears much likeness.

This is the modern house-type to which Fülleborn may be referring when he talks about rectangular houses, "... the very rare instances when a hipped roof is seen ...," (page 379).

342 177 According to statements made by people who have lived in the district for a third of a century, this type of house is thought to have come from the south some 20 years ago. I have not visited the Ngonde who live farther south, but Sir Harry Johnston (1897) depicts a group of people called "Wankonde (North Nyasa)" in front of a house which looks very much like the modern *ihema* of the Banyakyusa. It seems therefore reasonable to assume that the roof-construction design of the Ngonde has now reached the district of the Banyakyusa. Johnston also informs us that the rectangular type is not actually the original type in East Africa, but that it was probably introduced by the Arabs.

342 This *ihema* or *istere* is shorter than the long *ikibaga*; seldom more than 11 metres in length. But its interior design does not differ. For instance, this holds true of the placing of the hearth, of the equal distance between posts supporting the roof, of the bamboo ceiling covering about half the room, of half-partitions from bamboo and in some cases mud, of store-rooms in the far end of the house, accessible through an inner door.

[592] In an *ihema* I have never seen more than one hearth, which means that the house is inhabited by one woman. A house in the village of Kihota presented an example of the peculiar tradition of the peoples of the Highlands, viz. the tying of the cattle to posts in the dwelling-houses. My drawings are all from the Highlands, where, in the *ikibaga*, as also noted by Fülleborn, the same tradition is

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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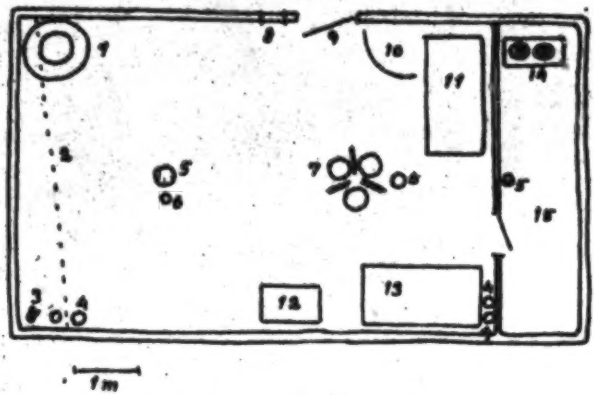

Idina's house. 1, basket; 2, clothes-line; 3, broom; 4, jars, in the back room on low shelf; 5, posts supporting roof; 6, small dimension bamboo poles, supports for the ceiling; 7, hearth with three round hearthstones; 8, shuttered opening through which the bolt may be reached; 9, door; 10, cassava for food; 11, spare bed; 12, table; 13, Idina's bed; 14, shelf for jars; 15, store-room behind mud wall with door.

[361] man and his two wives. The houses were grouped round a common courtyard, the doors giving upon this space and not on the nearby village thoroughfare.

The three houses bore the names of Iseliña's house, Idina's house, and Baba's house. The elder wife, Iselina, had several minor children, who slept either near
352 her own bed or in the living area. She owned furnishings as modern as a chair
●177 and a cupboard with shelves, besides the usual objects in these houses, baskets, bamboo mugs, hen's nest and roost, ladder and water jars. She also had an earthen-
[415 ware beer jar which, one day when I called on her, was standing on the fire,
293] nearly making the froth boil over. She was preparing beer for her husband's friends, who had just dropped in.

352 The new wife, Idina, had a store-room in her house, and there was also a large heap of cassava, meant for food. As often seen in these houses, she had also
[353 a guest bed. She had a number of jars and baskets, but no hen's nest. Straight
262] across the room she had suspended a line on which she put her clothes. Such an
[296] arrangement was often used, especially by the bachelors; they had a line for their shirts. Clothes-hangers were not in use. You just threw your clothes across the line. A wardrobe was never seen.

342 The interior of Baba's house presented a peculiar picture. It was divided into three rooms, a living-area in the middle; at one side the bed-room, at the other
352 a store-room. The bed-room had only one bed and a wooden chest. There was no hearth in the living-room—for the husband had his meals prepared by one of his wives. But there was a true accumulation of tables, chairs, suitcases, and a

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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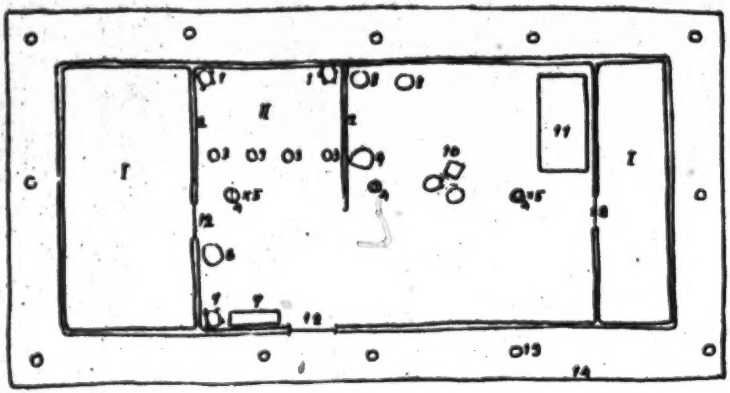

An *ihema* from the village of Kikota. I, store-rooms at either end of the house; II, corner for cattle.—1, hen's nest; 2, low partitions from bamboo; 3, posts for tying two head of cattle; 4, Three posts supporting roof; 5, here bamboo cups, calabashes, etc. were hanging on the posts; 6, wooden mortar for maize; 7, roost from bamboo tied together; 8, water jar; 9, basket; 10, hearth consisting of two round and one square hearthstone; 11, bed of the woman; 12, door; 13, supports for the roof; 14, eaves.—Outer doors from wooden boards; store-room doors from bamboo; bamboo ceiling covers area from half-way partition to the right of cow's corner on to store-room inner wall to the right.

[171] that such houses are found in Africa (a) south of the Zambezi, (b) in all of British Central Africa, (c) in all of East Africa including the Egyptian Sudan,—but not in localities where the Arab influence has introduced the oblong, rectangular building.

342 171 Now, if we look upon the eastern territories of Africa only—what great changes have taken place there since Johnston's day? The round house is being ousted under foreign influence—Arab as well as European.

If you ask a native of Africa, why he changes the plan of his house, his answer will be, that the rectangular house is easier to sub-divide and better in use—which is most probably true. When first the technique has been adopted, people in other parts of Africa will no doubt abandon the circular design and take up the rectangular.

171 342 But nevertheless, the variations in types of but in Tanganyika are truly amazing; they range from e.g. the fine *ihema* of the Banyakyusa,—to the rectangular *itemba* with nearly flat, clay roof of the Vakimbu,—to the round bee-hives of the Batutsi, which may be built in no time on a frame-work of branches and covered with

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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The chief Wwamasika and his family after he had received from me my old "Klepper-Mantle" as a gift.

to enter his hut, where the patient was sitting on the ground with his back to the wall. To heal his patient of the pains, the doctor made some small incisions in his skin near the stomach by means of a triangular-shaped knife, and then he rubbed in the incisions a thick black juice taken from the horn of an antelope (the horn was called *kapembe*, pl. *ulupembe*). The juice was prepared from different roots and herbs as a medicine against stomach pains. In the horn were certain divisions for other medicines, and in each of these divisions was stuck a small (black) stick for removing the specific medicine from it. After this treatment the patient declared that he felt severe pains in the region of his stomach. I asked the doctor for some of his medicines, but he was unwilling to give me anything. Then I promised to bring him next day some European medicines hoping to get in exchange some of his medicaments. 123 757 [415 237]

The following morning I returned. On this occasion I did acquire some of his medicines in exchange for various European tablets, especially as he was most fascinated with the kaliumpermanganatum[1] of which I gave him a few crystals, explaining to him the use and the dose; when I dissolved some of the crystals before his eyes, it probably seemed to him to be a mystical process. Among the medicines I received then from him was a medicine for luck, called *kwarusako*. Some of the inhabitants of the village, who had meantime appeared, were very unwilling for him to give me this medicine, and maintained that I would take with me all the luck of the village. [777]

On this second visit to the medicine-man, there was again a patient present, and I wanted to take a photograph of the scene because it was 123 755

[1] [i.e., KMNO4. – Analyst]

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done." (G. Wilson, Introduction, p. 260). 241

The putting of maize-grains as seed into the earth is the women's work, the sowing of millet *(malesi)* of both sexes. If you ask the men after they had come home from their work: "*Mukumbide ifivanya fya nongi?*", "Whose fields did you hoe?", the answer often may be: "*Tukumbide ifivanya fya tata!*" We have hoed the fields of our father. [243 462]

In former times, the Nyakyusa had a lot of ceremonies relating to the beginning of the hoeing season and of the beginning of the harvest-work. They are, however, nowadays nearly extinguished under the influence of European culture. [177]

With respect to the beginning of the hoeing season, a very comprehensive ceremony had to be carried out by the chief in community whith the *unganga* (medicine man) for providing the fields with extraordinary *(-sisya)* power *(amaka): amaka amasisya*, in this case: fertility. 241 622 [192]

When the crop was ripe, it was (at first) forbidden *(mwiko)* to take anything from the crop before the chief had given the permission. First the oldest male villagers informed the chief that it may be now the just time to give the crop free for the people, saying: "The people is hungry, we will now give them to eat!" Then the chief ordered that 6 or 8 (maize') corn-cobs were brought to him, and he sent these corn-cobs by a messenger to the (holy) offering-grove where they must be put down. After that has been correctly executed, he gave the permission for reaping the new crop. [782]

(NB. It was believed that those corn-cobs put into the offering-grove were eaten especially from the leopards. The powderes bones of the leopards were considered important ingredients of the consecration drink which the chief had to take at his initiation ceremonies and which should give him the strength *(amaka)* of a leopard, so that he also was called "the leopard" or "the leopard chief".) [237 825]

4. *Herding the Cattle and Cleansing the Stable.* The sociological importance of cattle among the Nyakyusa and the specific practice among them of herding the cattle by herdboys, that is also of highly sociological importance for the structure of the Nyakyusa society, is already described by G. Wilson (Introduction, p. 269 f). 233

The cleansing of the stables of which the Nyakyusa possess a great number of very well built ones, which have also sometimes a considerable length — apart from the cattle kraals —, is the task of 233 343 462

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

usa. It is true that one still meets blacksmiths on the outskirts of the villages or some distance away from them (as in the case of the Ndali tribe, western to the Nyakyusa area), but they no longer smelt the iron from ore mined by themselves as in former times. The smith of to-day remelt only scrap iron from disused motor-cars and other machines into tools, hatches, and spear-heads, unless, of course, the natives prefer to buy imported iron-ware. As with the Chaga, also the Nyakyusa smith can only be persuaded to submit to being photographed after long negotiation and a change into better clothes. The blacksmiths I met in the Bundali Mountains, however, made no objections whatever to being photographed at their work. Also women were allowed to attend. But one feature of the ancient Nyakyusa blacksmith's culture has been preserved till the present day: the lower part of the bellows through which the air blast is driven into the fire is still made of wood. This feature has been defined by H. Baumann as an element of the "ancient nigritic culture".

12. Dress. The cloths of the Nyakyusa have changed to a very considerable degree since the beginning of European influence. A comparison of the earliest pictures and descriptions of inhabitants at the northern end of Lake Nyasa with the dress of modern times brings out this point most forcibly. Originally the Nyakyusa went almost naked, adorned only with rings and belts, but nowadays all degrees of compromise with European fashions of dress are to be found, especially near the European settlements and Mission Stations. The most conservative element are, in this case, the women. It is still possible to-day to observe in each village the preparation of the long strips of bark *(elyabi*, pl. *amabi)* commonly worn by the women. The so-called *impandapanda* (Fotheringham: *mlambe)* tree furnishes the dress material. After the bark has been immersed in water, the bast is beaten with wooden instruments and then pulled off from the harder parts of the bark. These tools are like hammers; the flat end of such an implement is furrowed, sometimes with a disk made of horn, and as it produces patters on the bast it is called "*obosimbe*", that which produces patters. These long belts, almost reaching the ground, especially in front, are mostly ruby coloured, but the women sitting in front of their huts manufacture also other types with geometrical (triangular) patterns in yellow and brown forming only girdles *(umpango)*. In addition to this minimum requirement in the way of dress some women around the waist also wear copper belts *(manyeta)*, made of thin copper-wire, spiraly wound on a core of hairs from the tails of cows. These

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

291 301 belts are also worn by men, nowadays below the other clothing. More and more pieces of cotton with imprinted patterns have come into 291 vogue. They are worn around the lower part of the body or below the ●177 shoulders or fastened about one of them, and are bought from Indian [439] shops. That this modern fashion, however, is something new in such places which are a little remoter from direct European influence was demonstrated to me when I came through a small village in the environment of Masoko. There by chance I met some young girls carrying a piece of cloth on the top of a long pole as if it were a banner. On enquiry I was told that this "banner" was nothing other than a [556 482] piece of cloth newly bought by a woman of that village and that it was hoisted on a pole and carried in procession out of sheer joy that this woman had been able to buy it.

291 Menfolk throughout are fuller dressed, especially when they go dancing. The women, on the other hand, wear their ordinary dress also on such occasions. The dancing costume of the men — only the younger [292 535] men participate in dancing — consists of a sort of tight-jacket or sweater and wide robes with coloured patterns. The hair is adorned [302 237] with feathers. At work the men mostly wear only loin cloths or shorts. After work especially the older man wrap their bodies in blankets. It is very seldom nowadays to find even very old men still wearing the former national dress: a bundle of long grass in front and a smaller one behind tied to the waist by means of a string, as I found a man on a solitary spot near Rungwe Station. Little boys go altogether naked untill they are about three years of age. Little girls begin to wear a small *amabi* at an earlier age.

531 *13. Art.* One of the most interesting and striking features in the artistic endowment of the Nyakyusa are the decorations on the outer-walls of their huts. The latter are only painted, however, when the exterior of the framework of bamboo is mud covered, otherwise only the wooden doors (*ikifigo*, door) of the huts are painted. By no means every hut or house is painted, but only a limited number in each village, probably depending on the presence and industry of an artist as this art is as in other cases an individualistic one. One such artist was introduced to me in a village near Rutenganio. The ornaments consist in most cases of geometrical patterns in white and black, seldom in other colours, or they represent different sorts of animals, e. g. elephants, horses, cattle, snakes, etc. The richest designs I found in a long extended village on the right bank of the upper Kiwira. In an other case the names of the animals were written in Swahili below

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the figures. Also bicycles, aeroplanes, motor-cars and other striking 531
objects of the European civilization are to be found represented and [177]
concentric white circles adjacent to these drawings or paintings.

14. Houses. Sometimes the upper portion of the framework of the 342
rectangular houses is not fully plastered with mud leaving broad open areas or strips horizontally or slopingly to the base-line. This may have its origin in an artistic motive and at the same time be useful in ventilating the interior of the hut. The ancient custom of the Nyakyusa to fill out the spaces between the framework of the walls with flat, oval cakes or clods of clay, supported inside the house by a second framework of bamboo *(uvumango)*, has also a decorative effect.

The preparation of those oval sun-dried clay cakes is the work of the [339
women. L. Monteith Fotheringham described this in his "Adventures 462]
in Nyasaland" (London 1891, p. 22) with the following words: "The
women make the bricks in shape like large eggs by pressing the clay [113]
between their hands." The building of the framework of the hut and the thatching of the roof is the task of the men. Nyumba means "the house" in Kinyakyusa as wellas in Swahili; *isyenga* is the name for the old-fashioned hut of the Nyakyusa possessing a round baseline and a framework expanding upwards in diameter. The rectangular hut is called *ikibaga* and the smaller rectangular hut used as a store or a fowl pen, *akabaga*. It is interesting to note that there is no special word for roof in Kinyakyusa. This part of the hut or house is simply called "the above" *(iyuru)*. In contrast to this fact the different poles of the roof-structure are specially named according to their position parallel to or at right angels to the ridge of the rectangular houses. *Ukutalike* means to bind the different rafters of the roof together; *imbanda* is the name for the supporting poles of the roof, and *inyengo* for the poles of the framework of the walls.

15. Outfit. Inside the house we find besides the bedsteads *(ikitara,* 352
pl. *ifitara)* and the household utensils, the grinding-mill *(uruwara)*, [42]
consisting of an upper (smaller) and a lower (broader) stone. The flour
falls into a basket placed in front of the mill. Sometimes in a corner [231]
of the hut a nest *(ikitero)* for a sitting hen on top of a pole is to be
found. Outside the house is a place for the sweepings *(urutagililo)*. The 356
cleaning of the interior of the houses and also the repairing of the mud 462
plaster is the task of the women, but I saw men cleaning the space in front of the huts. At any case, it must be acknowledged that the cleanliness of a Nyakyusa village leaves little to be desired.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

562 ship among the women themselves is, moreover, less developed than in many other African societies.

178 The isolation and self-sufficiency of the Nyakyusa are diminishing rapidly, for considerable economic and political develop-
439 ment followed the 1914–18 war. Coffee (first introduced by the German missionaries) has been developed as a native crop for
464 export, and the cultivation of rice (which had been fostered by the British to provide food for their troops) has expanded. Gold-digging began some fifty miles beyond the borders of the Nyakyusa country, on the Lupa river, and there Nyakyusa men have found both employment as labourers and a ready market for much of their produce, so that by 1936 Rungwe district was exporting goods worth £24,000 annually.[1] In addition to this peasant production there are a small number of European estates
[167] producing coffee and tea for export.[2] We estimate the number of Nyakyusa working outside the district as migrant labourers at about 8,000 or 25 per cent of the able-bodied men. There were about 7,000 Nyakyusa men on the Lupa gold-fields in 1937,[3] and a small number on the coffee plantations of Mbozi. These are all within a hundred miles of home; and the Lupa labourers return usually after two or three months' work. A considerable number of Nyakyusa are also at work on the sisal plantations of the coast, and employed as domestic servants or in other semi-skilled jobs through Tanganyika, who remain away for periods up to two or three years. Nyakyusa labourers are regarded by European employers as intelligent and capable of heavy work, but lacking in all the subservient virtues.

642 The system of Indirect Rule was established in 1926, and a consistent attempt has been made to develop a centralized Native
177 Authority for the Rungwe district. The traditionally sovereign chiefs of the Nyakyusa have been grouped in eleven court districts with one chief as president of the Native Court in each (see Map III); these eleven chiefs, together with the two presidents of the Ndali and Lambya courts, belong to a single federation, with an appeal court and joint Native treasury of its own. In the eleven Native Courts (which are courts of record) most of the

[1] Figure estimated on the basis of information supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu.

[2] In 1938 the total area alienated was 26,0[illegible] ac.; only 2,200 ac. of this was being worked.

[3] Estimate of the Labour Officer on the [illegible]upa, 4 June 1937.

[Missing on the original - Analyst]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Economic co-operation beyond the village has therefore increased enormously, and this is correlated with a decrease in economic co-operation within the village. The change is most obvious in the case of migrant labourers who, while remaining members of their villages (for they are domiciled there) cease, during the period they are at labour centres, to co-operate with their village neighbours in building, herding, hoeing and hunting; and those of their wives who accompany them are also withdrawn from village activities. 476

Of the men in paid employment within the district, some, such as house servants, police, hospital orderlies, and clerks attached to the Government station, are very largely withdrawn from economic co-operation in their villages; and even labourers employed on European estates, who still cultivate for themselves, and those who meet essential expenses by growing cash crops on their own account, co-operate less with their village neighbours than was customary in the old days. 476 464

As we have seen there is no village co-operation in the production of the main cash crops—rice and coffee—such as there was in the cultivation of three of the main food crops; therefore those who grow cash crops spend a smaller proportion of their time working with their neighbours than their fathers did. Moreover, the cultivation of cash crops encourages the development of hired labour at the expense of work parties attended by neighbours. In effect, the cultivation of cash crops involves less village co-operation than did the traditional cultivation of food crops, and in so far as men's energies are directed into producing cash crops, village co-operation becomes relatively less important. 241 476

We argue that while traditionally there was considerable co-operation in production between fellow villagers, that co-operation is diminishing, and its diminution is correlated with employment for wages and the production of crops for sale. The more educated the individual the more time he is likely to spend working outside his village, and the less he co-operates in economic activities with his fellow villagers. 476 178

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

264 husband will not be angry; if he were, he would be mocked at:
562 "Did not your father provide marriage-cattle for this woman for you that she might be the wife (*unkasi*) of us all?" Sometimes, when
574 the woman is cooking, her husband's friends come and take food out of the pot before she has finished cooking. When she protests, saying it is not yet cooked, the men say: "It is your work to cook, ours to eat." Then when her husband comes she tells him that so and so, and so and so, have eaten the food and there is only water left in the pot. . . . But when her husband's friends begin to get married they say to their wives: "That woman is really our wife! Listen to her!" And she has honour among the other women, and when they go to fetch firewood she walks with nothing, another carries her axe and head-pad.' This account cannot be taken literally—the first wife in the village does not provide *all* the food for her husband's friends, who still eat at their mothers' homes, nor do they have any sexual rights over her though they call her 'wife', but she must serve them as far as she can.

571 Sometimes, we were told, men's eating groups last a lifetime,
264 but often friends quarrel or move, and the group breaks up. 'Per-
578 haps one eats at midday and does not summon his friend, but only calls him to the evening meal, then the other, who always calls his friend to the midday meal also, is angry, saying: "He grudges me food", and they separate. They just stop calling each other to eat. Or sometimes one tries to seduce his friend's wife, and on that account they separate.'

264 Eating with contemporaries is still considered right and proper by Nyakyusa men, and it is generally practised by pagans, but the
● 178 old men say that youths are less ready to share food than formerly. 'This custom of eating together is dying.' Certainly in Christian villages the practice has declined markedly. Many unmarried Christians eat with their friends, but the majority of the married men eat at home alone. Out of eight married men living in Rungwe, for example, only two ate together regularly, and the most educated group, the clerks, are notorious in the district for their eating habits. 'People are much shocked at the clerks for eating food alone. They say they are proud.'

264 Apart from eating regularly with certain close friends, well-to-do pagan men are expected to entertain generously, inviting
574 fellow villagers to drink beer, or to a 'dinner party'—an ample meal with delicious dishes, very carefully served—from time to

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

time, and providing meat feasts at funerals and at the initiation and marriage of daughters. 264 574

As it is proper for men to eat with their equals it is improper for them to eat with their juniors, or with women. In the past fathers and sons never ate or drank together. Nowadays they sometimes do so, even though conservative pagans, especially if the fathers and sons have been working together. Three reasons are adduced for the change: first, the example of Europeans and Swahili; secondly, the fact that the country is at peace and it is safe for all the men to drink together, whereas formerly, when there was constant danger of attack, the young men were forbidden to drink at all; and thirdly the fact that young men earn money and buy beer for themselves which they may invite a 'father' to share (*vide* Document p. 194). When the Nyakyusa drink beer they replenish the pot repeatedly with boiling water, and men expect to have the water boiled for them by a woman. As Mwambuputa explained, 'Sometimes my son brings his pot (of beer) to my place and calls his friends saying: "We will take the pot to mother's house and she will pour in water for us." Then they come to my place, and they invite me to drink, and I accept, and we drink together. How can I grudge my son beer when I have some? Did he and his friends not entertain me?' The change turns on the fact that a young man can earn money and buy beer for himself while yet unmarried. Formerly no unmarried man commanded millet for brewing. Now, when he is drinking in his father's homestead he cannot but invite his father to join him. 264 593 178

Women commonly eat alone with their young children and unmarried daughters. Sometimes co-wives who are good friends eat together, but they have no obligation to do so, and in a big homestead perhaps only two wives will eat together and each of the others eat alone. More usually a woman sends a dish of food to each co-wife to eat in her own hut. For a woman to eat food with a man is considered quite impossible. In those families in which men no longer ate with neighbours one or two ate with their young sons, but we heard of none who ate with their wives. The example of Europeans did not influence them to this extent. 264 595

It is admitted that women also enjoy company and profit from it, and it is considered good that they should get on with their fellows, but there is no suggestion that it is a woman's duty to 264 462 574

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

i. Constitutional form

Two other negative points are worth noting. First, the Nyakyusa fought among themselves and honoured a brave warrior, but they never developed a military kingdom, nor did they regard battle as the chief end of man. Emphasis on the value of war is not, then, a necessary concomitant of a developed age-organization, as a study of the Masai, Zulu, Swazi, and Pedi material might suggest. Secondly, the constitutional division of a chiefdom once every generation is not dependent upon the age-village organization, for such a division was common enough among the southern Nguni whose age-organizations were of relatively small importance. Among the Pondo and Xhosa the 'great son' and the 'right-hand son' of a chief very often both became independent; the main condition of their separation and independence being that there should be ample land in which they might live, each with his own followers.[1] Nyakyusa chiefdoms could divide in each generation because the Nyakyusa were an expanding population in relatively empty country.

j. Necessary conditions of age-villages

The limitations of the connections we have attempted to show must be realized. None of the characteristics cited are *correlates* of age-villages, for in each case either the age-villages could exist without them, or they could exist without age-villages: e.g. fathers- and daughters-in-law could not avoid one another completely if they lived in the same village, but the separate villages in which they live need not necessarily be age-villages; age-villages might be established though father- and daughter-in-law did not avoid one another; and so on. We claim only that these characteristics of Nyakyusa society which have been cited *partly* determine, and are themselves partly determined by, the age-village organization.

There are, however, certain other characteristics of Nyakyusa society without which age-villages such as we have described could not exist at all. The first of these is the redistribution of

[1] J. H. Soga, *Ama-Xosa Life and Customs*, pp. 25-49; M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, pp. 379-80.

I: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 561 178 land in each generation. The territorial segregation of fathers and sons is directly dependent upon the shifting of the old men after the 'coming out' ceremony, without which the young men would not have sufficient land to establish themselves as a compact group on land adequate to support their growing families. Where no redistribution of land takes place, as on mission land and in the chiefdoms where the 'coming out' ceremony has been dropped, the territorial division between age groups becomes blurred within a generation.

621 425 423 178 Redistribution of land in each generation depends upon two further conditions: the existence of ample land to support the population, and relatively little development of land. As soon as land becomes scarce those in possession of it are reluctant to agree to redistribution. It is significant that the most valuable land of all in Nyakyusa country—that in old craters—is *not* redistributed at a 'coming out' ceremony, but is retained by an individual until his death, and then inherited by kinsmen. And as soon as improvements are made in the form of planting long-term crops, or building durable and expensive houses, the difficulties of redistribution are increased. Nyakyusa land-law recognized the right of an elder who had moved, or of his son, to the bamboos and *imisyunguti* trees he had planted (*vide supra*, p. 46). But such rights become much more complicated when it is not only an odd clump of bamboos or two or three trees which are at stake, but a large patch of coffee; or when, in place of the old-fashioned long hut (*ikibaga*) built with the co-operation of kinsmen and neighbours, there is a more substantial house with expensive doors and windows made by an expert carpenter. It has been shown that where individual rights over trees or other long-term crops are recognized, and such crops are planted on a large scale, individual tenure of land, as opposed to a temporary right of usufruct, tends to develop.[1]

621 476 178 Secondly, the solidarity of the Nyakyusa age-village, as of kinship villages in other African societies, is a function of a small-scale society. Fellow villagers have been hitherto, and are still in a large measure, dependent upon one another for land, for aid in economic undertakings, for sympathy and good fellowship, and for protection 'by night and by day'. But such mutual dependence is visibly decreasing. In the economic field co-opera-

[1] C. K. Meek, *Land Law and Custom in the Colonies*, p. 28.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tion is already as important beyond as within the village, and village control over the main cash crops has not been established, as it was over certain food crops. With increasing centralization the village headman, embodiment of the solidarity and relative autonomy of each village, is losing power to the chiefs and courts, on the one hand, and to the specialist agriculturalists, school teachers, elders, and ministers of religion on the other.

Friendships beyond the age-village are fostered by common experiences at a boarding school or a labour centre, and by common interests as members of a church or a coffee co-operative which does not necessarily include fellow villagers. And most important of all, fellow villagers are not bound to one another in resistance to external dangers as they were formerly. Lion, leopard, and buffalo still exist in the district, but we heard of no recent case of a village combining for defence against dangerous (as distinct from destructive) game: if action were necessary a European sportsman was usually glad of the chance of a bag. With the cessation of cattle-raiding and inter-village warfare, the curtailment of the right of self-help, and the development of courts with power to enforce judgement in cases involving members of different chiefdoms, dependence on fellow villagers for protection from material dangers and the responsibility of a village for the actions of its members, virtually cease. A sense of dependence upon neighbours for mystical protection lingers, but as elementary education, belief in Christian dogma, and the solidarity of Christian congregations increase, this supposed dependence upon the *amanga* or mystical power of neighbours also lessens. Many men who fear sorcery (including poisoning) do not fear witchcraft, and it is only against witches that neighbours are believed to protect one. Thus change in the form of beliefs is correlated with the development of more intense relationships beyond the village.

An age-village organization is probably dependent upon isolation in another fashion also: by their own account the Nyakyusa feeling that close association between successive generations is improper has been blunted by the example of Europeans and Swahili who do not share this feeling (*vide supra*, p. 69). The missionaries teach that avoidance between father- and daughter-in-law is unnecessary, if not in itself sinful, and the implication is that only 'superstition' maintains the taboo (*vide*

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 *supra*, p. 84). The Nyakyusa pattern of avoidance has un-
177 doubtedly influenced that of the small groups absorbed by them,
but they in turn have been influenced by these groups, and by the
784 example of Christians of neighbouring tribes. In Ilolo avoidance
between father- and daughter-in-law is much less strict than in
178 Selya. This was attributed partly to the influence of neighbouring
small groups of Nyika and Penja, who had not the same tradition
of strict avoidance as the Nyakyusa, and partly to the influence
of the Christians, whose number was proportionately greater in
Ilolo than in Selya. As Nyakyusa informants argued: the pagans
see Christian women disregard avoidance taboos, and they see
that nothing dreadful happens to them (as the result of their
neglect), so the pagans, too, begin to think that avoidance is of
no importance.

621 The relationship between the generations is also modified
among the Nyakyusa, as among other African people, by the
561 power of young men to earn money and so command wealth. As
178 we have seen, sons are in a position to *invite* their fathers to drink
beer in the father's own homestead. Once fathers and sons have
begun to *ukwangala*, drinking beer together, and once the horror
of a woman seeing her father-in-law has diminished, then there
is much less insistence on the need to buttress separation of the
generations by territorial segregation. When convenient, fathers
and sons will continue to live apart, but if a building site and
arable land near his age-mates is lacking a son may suggest that
avoidance does not really matter after all, and his father (if a
Christian or a sceptic) may agree to the son building near him.

621 Nyakyusa age-villages still flourish, but they are hardly likely
to survive many decades with increasing pressure on land, the
561 planting of coffee and other long-term crops, the development of
178 trade and migration, and a diminishing isolation from the ideas
and values of the outside world. Age is no longer the sole basis
for village grouping in Rungwe district—common belief and
common occupation now provide other grounds for building
together. There are Christian villages, an administrative station,
a military station, and trading centres such as Mwaya, the Lake
port. Tukuyu (the administrative centre) has its police lines,
quarters for hospital attendants, traders' quarters, and so on,
COO while Masoko has soldiers' and traders' quarters. This account
of age-villages may therefore have some significance as a docu-

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

pieces of ground above others. We must now pass to the third great determinant of the system of Nyakyusa land-tenure—the form of their society.

4. *THE FORM OF NYAKYUSA SOCIETY*

178 When we speak of " Nyakyusa society " to-day we refer to one small area within a world society, to a group of men distinguished from the rest of the world by the possession of a unique cultural idiom of their own but none the less bound to it by the strongest ties. Two generations ago Nyakyusa society was, unknown to our grandfathers, almost a world in itself, a world moreover which was split up into a number of tiny units in the shape of independent chiefdoms whose relationships with one another were of the loosest kind. The sons of men for whom society (that is effective relationship) was normally confined to two or three thousand families, all or nearly all consisting of personal acquaintances, now find their own destinies inextricably entangled with those of 1,600,000,000 people. To the Nyakyusa of to-day fluctuations in the world price of gold and coffee, the policies and incomes of the missionary Churches of Europe, the political relationships between Great Britain, her Dominions, the League of Nations and Germany are matters of some importance.

Nyakyusa society at the present moment thus includes a number of complicated relationships between the Nyakyusa group and the outside world which, in the recent past, had no existence at all. And the presence of these new relationships has profoundly modified the social forms which traditionally obtained within the group itself. And as, with the spread of Christianity, Islam and cilivised education, with the increase of skill and wealth and with the taking of new responsibilities, the Nyakyusa participate ever more and more fully in the life of the world society, so will their relationships with one another continue to change in form. For they still have upon them a primitive stamp, they still to some extent proceed from assumptions of isolation.

182 423 The relationships of Nyakyusa society to-day fall into four main categories. There are, firstly, relationships of blood, marriage and affinity, secondly there are the various bonds of village life, thirdly there are those which subsist between members of the same chiefdom and, finally, there are those which bind the Nyakyusa to still wider groups, to the tribal group, the Territory, the World. And these relationships, as they are limited and defined, amongst other things, by rules of land-tenure, so also are they among the sources of these rules. Land is held in society and the form of society largely determines the manner of its holding.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the wealth derived from this trade enabled one of their chiefs, Kyungu, to maintain himself as paramount over all Ngonde. Among his people impersonal relationships thus had a greater importance. And it was, I believe, the historical isolation of the Nyakyusa from any considerable commercial contact with the outside world which prevented the rise among them of a paramount chief. 648 184

To-day the Nyakyusa are in process of integration with the civilized society of the world and the independence of their minute chiefdoms has inevitably passed away. The traditionally sovereign chiefs have been grouped in seven court districts with one chief as President of the Native Court in each ; and these seven chiefs together with the two Presidents of the Ndali and Lambya Courts are federated, with an Appeal Court and joint Native Treasury of their own. In the seven Native Courts most of the traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their great-commoners, and assist the President and his great-commoners in the hearing of cases. The bulk of the legal business previously transacted by each chief in his own country is now taken to Court, but the power of great-commoners to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages is still the basis of the legal system. 178 622 692

A poll tax, now (1938) fixed at 9/- per annum for adult males with no additional tax for plural wives, has been introduced and chiefs are paid small salaries ranging from 5/-, 10/- or 20/- a month for ordinary chiefs to 80/- or 100/- a month for the Court Presidents. 651 622

The Nyakyusa, as we have previously mentioned, consist of a number of immigrant groups who have spread among and incorporated an indigenous population. The main immigrant groups were three in number and are distinguished to-day by the names of " Nyakyusa," " Kukwe " and " Selya." As all these three groups together (including those who are now incorporated in them) call themselves " Nyakyusa " to the outside world, I distinguish the one group to which the name more particularly belongs as the " Nyakyusa proper." The Nyakyusa proper live in the plain of Mungonde and up on the higher ground as far north as Tukuyu, the Kukwe live north of them around the base of Rungwe Mountain while the Selya live in the east of the district, between the Nyakyusa proper and the Kukwe, right under the wall of the Livingstone Mountains. Between the three groups there are minor differences of dialect and custom. 563

The extent to which the indigenous groups retain any separate identity varies in accordance with the number of the immigrants and the date at which they reached them, but over a large part of the district fusion has been complete.

We have already discussed the economic relations between the Nyakyusa and the Lupa gold fields which provides them with a market 471

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

may call in against her husband, if she desires divorce. And, it is hinted, this particular force may sometimes be successfully invoked by a plausible woman even without good cause. 421 626

In disposing of the surplus of their crops and bananas the respective rights of a married woman and her husband vary in detail, though little in substance, according as he has or has not made a formal division between them. It is not infrequent for a man to reserve for his own use one or two plots and some banana stems, which are then called *busongo* plots or bananas (*imbaka* or *ifijinja fya busongo*). In the planting, weeding and reaping of the *busongo* plots all the man's wives co-operate if he has several, but the final product is absolutely his own, it is stored by him and they have no part in it. Conversely, however, the rights of each woman to dispose of the surplus crop of the plots allotted to her are thereby greatly increased, for her husband cannot then touch it at all. 421 593

In any case, whether or not *busongo* plots and bananas have been set aside, a woman's obligations to provide food for her husband's con-

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authority can possibly either act over the whole area or command general approval and support for its actions.

But in primitive society it is otherwise. In a small and isolated group largely composed of personal acquaintances it is difficult to escape from one's friends; while the facts of every dispute, of every breach of law, are soon widely known; and in consequence, it is there perfectly possible at times for legal sanctions to be effective without the intervention of any central authority at all. The neighbours, or the kinsmen, or the affines of a lawbreaker are in themselves a large and important section of his society, and he can only with difficulty escape their authority; he can not lose himself in a great city as can his civilised counterpart. And so the typical method of legal procedure in a primitive society is for action to be taken against a lawbreaker by those more nearly concerned, supported by general public approval. And it frequently happens that the only effective action is taken singlehanded by the injured party; nevertheless if that action is supported and strengthened by any generally expressed approval we can not deny that it possesses a legal form.

In a primitive group any request which an individual may make to his kinsmen or neighbours for practical assistance against a lawbreaker, any appeal to their opinion in a dispute is a legal procedure, for it is an appeal to authority. It is they upon whom he is in practice most dependent. Nor is it only in "private life" that he depends upon them, for, owing to the smallness of the group, the distinction between "public" and "private life" hardly exists. In many situations they hold in their hands the whole force of his society; their actions and opinions are checked or supported by the informal but nonetheless effective jury of widespread public discussion; and if they are against him he has nowhere else to turn.

Now Nyakyusa society to-day is no longer isolated and primitive, neither has it yet fully taken its place in the social system of the world; it is in process of transition. Legal procedure is, quite inevitably, becoming everyday more and more an affair of the central territorial authorities, of the Governor in Council and the High Court of Tanganyika and of their appointed deputies: the local Magistrates, the District Officers and the Native Courts. But the process is not complete. In many situations of social life the new impersonal relationships with the great world are still, for the moment, more or less irrelevant and in them the old primitive sanctions retain their power. [178 692]

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 are used for house building, while the *syunguti* produces a fruit (*indilolo*)
824 which is both delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment (*inyemba*). Of the two trees the bamboo is the more valuable.

423 Now among the Kukwe and Selya groups rights in these trees are
425 somewhat similar to rights in the valuable crater plots. When a man
621 moves, his bamboos and *syunguti* trees, unlike his bananas, do not revert to the villagers ; normally they continue to belong to his nearest kinsman in that chiefdom, who cuts and uses the bamboos and picks the fruits of the *syunguti* trees. If the villagers give the site to another man then the newcomer has no rights over these trees unless the kinsman himself gives them to him. But it sometimes happens that, where only *syunguti* trees and not bamboos are involved, the kinsfolk do not bother to exercise their rights ; then the trees are treated like bananas, picked by the neighbours until a newcomer is given that plot, and then by him.

423 If however, among the Selya and Kukwe groups, a man moves
425 leaving no kinsfolk near at hand, then the chief (*umalafyale*) as the supreme
622 overlord has a right to his trees, and if they are near the chief's own place this right is exercised ; he cuts and uses the bamboos and his wives pick the *syunguti* trees. If another man is given the land by the villagers to build on then he goes and asks the chief to allow him some of the *syunguti* trees, and his request is usually granted, the chief gives him two or three of the trees, keeping two or three for himself. But the bamboos, being more valuable, are usually kept altogether by the chief. If, however, the ownerless trees are at a distance from the chief's place then he normally does not trouble to claim the *syunguti* trees but only the bamboos. The former are at first picked by the neighbours and later given by the villagers to a newcomer together with the site. And, even with the bamboos, if they are a long way from the chief's place a " good chief," they say, will allow the newcomer to cut some of them without payment ; but it is wholly within the chief's power to keep them all for himself if he wishes, and " bad chiefs " do so. Furthermore a chief does occasionally also exercise his right to claim an ownerless *syunguti* tree at a distance. If one of his wives comes and complains to him that she has no *syunguti* tree of her own, then he takes her to a site from which someone has recently moved leaving ownerless trees behind and there he gives her one of the trees ; the rest he leaves as usual to the villagers and so to the newcomer.

423 Bamboos are men's property and only a man can claim them but
621 *syunguti* trees can be claimed by a kinswoman, a sister or a daughter, of the old owner if none of his near kinsmen have troubled to do so.

423 We must here take note of a most significant modern development.
178 In the old days rights in trees could only be exercised by members of the

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

same chiefdom in which the trees were growing; for between chiefdoms an actual or potential state of war always existed, and a man coming from a hostile group to claim property would have been driven away violently. But to-day under European rule it is now customary for a man to cut his own bamboos, if he is living in a neighbouring chiefdom, instead of leaving them to his resident kinsfolk. The group within which property can be held is gradually widening. 423 178

Such is the custom among the Kukwe and Selya groups; their rights in bamboos and *syunguti* trees are not normally lost when a man moves provided there are kinsfolk left nearby to exercise them. The one exception to this rule is in the case of expulsion for witchcraft or other serious crime. Then even if the man expelled has left kinsfolk behind him, still the chief takes his trees. 423 681

Among the Nyakyusa proper, on the other hand, the *syunguti* trees are treated like bananas. When a man moves he loses all rights in them and, unless the chief steps in to take them, as he always may, they are granted by the great-commoner, together with the soil, to the newcomer who is put on that site. Bamboos, as in Selya and Kukwe country, continue to belong to the kinsman of the man who has moved.[1] 423 425 621

Trees introduced by the Europeans, of which coffee trees are the most valuable, have been declared by the Federation of Chiefs to be the property of the planter, even although he has moved to a different chiefdom. This law was made after much anxious discussion between the chiefs, the Administration and the Agricultural Department and is, of course, subject to revision if it is found after trial to be impracticable. In the case of coffee it has inevitably been modified in practice since coffee must be tended continuously if it is to remain free from pests and to bear fruit, and any man who actually looks after coffee trees has a generally admitted claim to the crop unless he is paid by the planter for his labour. The planter, however, in surrendering the trees to him may compel him to pay something for their initial value. 423 177 245

Further, as the Agricultural Officer has the right to uproot any untended coffee trees and must exercise it if pests are to be kept under control, the practice has grown up of his taking over any large number of abandoned trees and keeping them clean with labour paid by the Native Treasury; the trees are subsequently sold to some other man and the proceeds paid into the Native Treasury again. If, however, a planter of coffee trees makes arrangements, when he moves, for the cleaning of his coffee then the trees remain his own.

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[1] Some informants deny this and insist that they always pass to the chief. I was not myself long in Mungonde among the Nyakyusa proper and I lack conclusive evidence on the point.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

paid out of the Native Treasury from the taxes, rarely exceeds 10/- a month it may be doubted whether modern conditions are not in this, as in other respects, impoverishing the Nyakyusa chiefs. 622 554

A chief had the right traditionally to evict any man he pleased if he desired his site for his own personal use, giving him another in exchange. But this right is no longer effective : " It is now at an end," as a chief's kinsman told me, " for the man evicted will go to Tukuyu (the administrative capital of the district) and complain that his chief is turning him out of his home without good cause." It is however still perfectly possible for a chief to take any *unoccupied* site he pleases without reference to the local villagers. He may take it for himself or he may give it to a kinsman, and no objection to such an action on his part is ever raised. It is only if he gives it to an ordinary commoner that his people will criticize him. 622 425 178

Land once held by the kinsman of a chief at the latter's gift is more secure to him than any land can be which is granted in the ordinary way by a great-commoner ; for no one but the chief himself can ever finally take it from him. If he moves and the villagers wish to give the site to a newcomer then they must either send a message after him and ask his permission to do so or else get explicit permission from the chief, if the newcomer's title is to be in any way secure. 622 425

A case within my own knowledge well illustrates these points : Mwakobela, half-brother of chief Mwaipopo, had been given land in the village of Ipoma by Mwaipopo himself. Subsequently he had moved to Kibonde, a minor chiefdom under the jurisdiction of Mwaipopo, and had spent many years there ; and when I first met him he was living there still. But then he fell sick and, suspecting witchcraft, decided to return to Ipoma, only to find his old building-site occupied. For the great-commoner of Ipoma, thinking he had moved for good, had given it to a newcomer. 622 425 624

This grant of land to the newcomer had been irregular in more ways than one : firstly Mwakobela's permission had not been asked, secondly no reference at all had apparently been made to Mwaipopo, who subsequently denied any part in the grant and, thirdly, the great-commoner had not even consulted his fellow villagers ; if he had done so they would, so one of them told me in discussing the case, have reminded him of the necessity of first asking Mwakobela's permission. The newcomer however had been given the site unconditionally and when Mwakobela reclaimed it he refused to move ; but the rights of Mwakobela were unquestionable and he had no difficulty at all in getting him evicted.

I went to visit Mwakobela a few weeks after he had taken possession of the site and he told me about the eviction : " I approached the great-commoner and asked him who had given Mwangesisye (the newcomer)

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

425 him if it was his idea that the village should die out and leave him, the
622 great-commoner, without men ? As he had moved, the great-commoner
624 would have continued, the place was presumably distasteful to him and it had now been allotted to another man. The claim would certainly have been disallowed ! "

425 The examples in this paper have been taken almost entirely from
797 pagan families. For Christians the situation is very much the same
427 except where they live actually on mission land, there they are tenants of the Mission concerned and pay rent to it. And Christians, wherever they live, tend to be more stable in their occupation of land, since they are not forever moving in fear of witchcraft.

7. *CONCLUSION*

178 I have striven in this paper to make the individual land-rights
423 possessed by Nyakyusa to-day intelligible to the European reader and to demonstrate to him their determining factors. Of these factors the following are the most important. The Nyakyusa were until recently an isolated and primitive people and so bring with them into the modern world a legal tradition based upon small social groups. This tradition is being inevitably modified both in theory and practice under modern conditions, but not out of all recognition ; for they are still a relatively isolated people and the system of indirect rule secures them, in general, against arbitrary legal changes. Within their legal system individuals have, as in any system they must have, certain precisely defined and enforceable rights—among them rights in land.

Many kinds of land, however, are plentiful, though less so than of old owing to the growth of population, the opening of new markets for food and the recent introduction of ploughs. And this cheapness of land is reflected at times in a lack of rigour in the enforcement of rights in it which is unfamiliar to the European observer. Sufficient land for all is a fundamental condition of Nyakyusa society in its present form, which has no place for a landless man.

[166 And, finally, the habitual movement of men with their families from
681] one village to another to escape the witchcraft of their neighbours leads to a constant transfer of homesteads and gardens and is the main cause of difficulty in the administration of their laws of property in land and trees. This difficulty is greatest in the case of the newly introduced coffee trees which need continuous tending.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

It is unusual for a sociologist to find such a simple problem for analysis as this and it was not long before the answer was plain. The Nyakyusa, until a few decades before the coming of the Europeans, had been largely isolated from any vigorous external contacts; Ngonde, on the other hand, had been effectively related to the outside world for generations. The Nyakyusa actually possessed in the Lwembes, the hereditary chiefs of Lubaga, a line of spiritual paramounts or high priests, whose religious functions were remarkably similar to those of the Kyungus in Ngonde; but, poor and isolated as they were, they had never developed any secular paramountcy at all. The reasons for the greater elaboration of the traditional political system of Ngonde were to be found above all in the ivory trade and in the constant influx of immigrant groups. 642 177

And it further became clear that the prestige which the present Kyungu enjoys in the changed conditions to-day is due in large part to his having followed the mercantile traditions of his predecessors, mastered the business methods of the Scots, made a fortune, and then kept up his position out of his own private means.

2. *THE CHRONICLE OF NGONDE (TO 1875).*

In studying the present constitution of Ngonde and the profound changes now taking place in it, we cannot find any point of time at which the process of change began. In its present radical form social change in Ngonde arises from the ferment of a host of new social conditions imported by European missionaries, traders and Government officials. But the Arabs also brought change to Ngonde and before the Arabs the Ngoni, while before the coming of the Ngoni there is evidence to suggest that changes had arisen, on more than one occasion, in the normal behaviour of the men of Ngonde which were stimulated, not by any new contacts with the outside world, but simply by accidents of their own internal history. Social change in Ngonde, as far as we can see, has always been going on. 177 178

In this section the political history of Ngonde is described in outline from the its beginnings to the coming of the Europeans in 1875, in so far as it can be recovered from the oral tradition. In later sections a systematic analysis is attempted, first of the constitution of Ngonde just prior to that date, and then of the changes in it which have since taken place. 173

(a) *THE EARLY KYUNGUS.*

It is generally agreed that the ancestors of the Kyungus, the present hereditary chiefs of Ngonde, came from the Livingstone Mountains in 173 643

*[The dissimilarity between the Ngonde and the Nyakyusa political systems. — Analyst]

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

175 nga, one of the chiefs of Ngelenge, Kyungu in his stead. "They deposed Mwabulambo because, as they said, the country was once more at peace and so they should take a son of Mwakasungula again as the Kyungu." Mwakabanga was at first installed on the lake shore, but after the death of Mlozi he moved to the traditional capital at the foot of Mbande.

175 The demarcation of the interterritorial boundary between Nyasaland and German East Africa (afterwards Tanganyika) cut across the area of 177 Mbande's influence. The majority of the Lambya were separated by the boundary from their chiefs Nyondo and Kameme, while the Ndali who had, so it is said, previously sent regular tribute of ivory to Mbande, now became quite independent. And some of the more remote territorial nobles to the west were included in Northern Rhodesia.

One of the first acts of the new Government was to forbid the hunting of elephants without a license and thus at a blow the main traditional source of the Kyungu's revenue came to an end. Since then the numbers of elephants have been greatly reduced by European hunters, and only a few are left in the Ngonde of to-day. Taxes soon began to be collected, however, and small subsidies to be paid from them to selected chiefs and nobles.

175 Now Kyungu Mwakabanga, who died in 1904, after a reign of ten years, "was the first Kyungu to sit with his people judging their cases; 178 he appeared before them at his own homestead. None of his predecessors had done so, only the nobles of Ngonde had seen them." During his [202] reign the Government suppressed the *valukuta*, on the ground that their methods were too rough, and gave him government-paid messengers instead. And it also forbade the poison-ordeal.

After Mwakabanga's death the nobles of Ngonde chose Mwangalaba, a son of Malema, to succeed; and early in his reign there were other significant changes of custom. From his predecessors, as we have seen, when they journeyed through their country, all commoners save the very old had fled. The Kyungu was too terrible for ordinary men to look upon. "Not till the succession of Mwangalaba was this custom abandoned." And in the third year of his reign the custom of hoeing *milasa* lapsed, not to be revived till 1927.

Now, as it happened, Mwangalaba had a younger brother, Peter, who was a man of exceptional talents. Starting as a Christian teacher he then became a store capitao of the African Lakes Corporation and of various other firms, and later set up in business for himself with a chain of shops and made a fortune. And when Mwangalaba began to fail in 1912 Peter became his assistant and proved himself to have legal and administrative ability also. A failing Kyungu could not, as in former times, be killed and Mwangalaba lingered on until 1932. In 1927 it became necessary

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

to appoint a regent and, with the consent of the nobles of Ngonde and of Mwangalaba himself, Peter was appointed ; and in 1932 he succeeded his brother as the Kyungu. He is still the Kyungu to-day. Both before and after his succession he has used his private fortune without stint to maintain his public position ; and the historical accident of his personal ability and wealth has played a very large part in shaping the course of the political and social revolution though which Ngonde is passing. 175 178

It is Peter who has completed the emergence of the Kyungus from their religious seclusion at Mbande. He has, in the first place, abandoned all claims to divinity and, with them, all interest in the traditional prayers and sacrifices to his ancestors which the nobles of Ngonde still occasionally undertake. And in the second place, he has built his capital, not at Mbande with the nobles of Ngonde, but at Bwiba, half way between Mbande and the Government Boma at Karonga—a position symbolic of the new age.

The Government of the Protectorate at first applied a system of direct rule. In Ngonde most of the chiefs and ruling nobles were designated either as " Village " or as " Principal Headmen " and officially allowed to exercise executive duties. It appears that traditional rulers only were selected, though, theoretically, anyone at all might have been. The " Principal Headmen " included the Kyungu but he was not recognized as paramount over the others. " In 1924 certain modifications were made in their position, but it was officially stated ' that the new system is no way intended to revivify or perpetuate governance by Native chiefs.' Under the 1924 system ' Village ' and ' Principal Headmen ' still had executive duties on behalf of Government, but no authority to administer their people in their own right."[1] With the appointed headmen councils were associated consisting of " members nominated and removeable by the Government," and a similar district council was set up " to advise the District Resident in such matters as may come before him." 175 178 642

But in 1933 the system was changed to one of " Indirect Rule " or " Local Self-Government," by which the traditional political institutions of Ngonde were taken as the basis of administration. The Kyungu was now recognized as " Paramount Chief,"[2] with an appeal court and with five " Sub-chiefs "[3] under him. Of these five Kilupula was one of the

[1] The quotations in this paragraph are taken from L. P. Mair's *Native Policies in Africa* pages 114-116.

[2] In order to avoid confusion between traditional and modern titles I shall, from now on, use the former without quotation marks, the latter with them.

[3] These five had all been " Principal Headmen " under the previous ordinance. Since our visit Kalonga, the senior great chief of Ngelenge, has also been made a " Sub-chief."

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

175 178 642

great chiefs of Ngana, three others (Mwenemisuku, Mwenewenya, and Nthalile) were distant territorial nobles who ruled groups of alien stock in the hills, while the last, Nyondo, who was, we remember, traditionally related to the Kyungu, ruled the Lambya group in the extreme north west. The nobles of Ngonde, together with twelve prominent territorial nobles and six other assessors, were recognized as members of the Kyungu's court and given nominal salaries. Those of the great chiefs of Ngonde who were not made "Sub-chiefs" in the new regime were now officially termed "Important Headmen," and given nominal salaries also. The other chiefs and those territorial nobles who had men of their own under them were still termed "Village Headmen" as they were before 1933.

The Kyungu and the five "Sub-chiefs" each had an area allotted to him, and each was given a court for his area. "Village" and "Important Headmen" might arbitrate in small cases, but had no power to execute judgments; that power belonged to the courts alone. Thus the Ngonde plain was split up into the two areas of the Kyungu (in the south) and of Kilupula (in the north). The Kyungu's court was both a court of first instance for his own area and also a court of appeal for the whole of Ngonde.

The modern title "Village Headman," seems at first to be a particularly confusing one since its bearer rules, not a village, but either a chiefdom or a fief which is itself sub-divided into age-villages. Further in the case of chiefdoms, unless they are very small, each age-village has its own great-commoner; and it is he who is the traditional village headman. But the confusion seems more natural when we realize the number of very small chiefdoms and fiefs which have now come into being by the continual sub-division of the former and the gradual shrinkage of the latter. There are some ruling chiefs and nobles to-day, still recognized as such, who have only half-a-dozen adult male tax payers under them. And it takes a pedantic anthropologist to see in such a group *two* age-villages! It is true that one does find the two or three old men in it still building a little apart from the three or four young ones, but most likely they are now all Christians and no longer observe the father-daughter-in-law taboos; for all practical purposes they constitute but one village-group. In the larger chiefdoms, however, the traditional articulation into age-villages each under its own great-commoner, still survives as a living fact.

175 178

Like the Nyakyusa, but unlike many other Central African peoples, the people of Ngonde have a fairly easy adjustment to make to modern economic conditions. It is true that a large proportion of the able-bodied men, estimated by the District Commissioner in 1937 to be 25%, are now

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

always away, but the great majority of these go to the nearby Lupa Gold Fields in Tanganyika and return home regularly after short periods of three or four months at work there. Nor are they by any means solely dependent upon the sale of their labour for the money which is now necessary to them. Cotton and a certain amount of coffee, rice, beans, maize and beeswax are now being produced in Ngonde for sale to the outside world. Of cotton, the most important economic crop of this district, ninety tons were exported in 1936 and brought in, for distribution among the thousand men who had planted it, about a thousand pounds. 175 178

The question of the ultimate title to the land of Ngonde at various times since the coming of the Europeans has been the subject of dispute; but in actual fact only a little was ever alienated to European firms or individuals. These alienations were followed, in some cases, by a shifting of the African population off the land taken up, but not on any large scale. And since 1933 Native rights have been secured by law. There are now only three or four small estates occupied by Europeans in Ngonde.

In the constitutional sphere, again, a Native treasury has been set up into which one twelfth of the tax money is paid; but as this money is almost entirely used up in personal emoluments, the new treasury has so far little significance.

The whole scale and perspective of life is now changed. Ngonde is no longer a world in itself but a tiny province in a great empire. The Kyungu is no longer either a god or a sovereign, but a little secular chief visibly supported and controlled by the Nyasaland Government. Nearly half his people profess Christianity. A quarter of his young men are always outside Ngonde working for wages. Mission education in local schools and at the neighbouring central station of Livingstonia, opens to increasing numbers each year the knowledge of a vast new world. The primitive Ngonde was a world of personal relationships; only rarely were people much affected by the behaviour of any save their personal acquaintances. But to-day impersonal relationships are all-important in Ngonde; world markets, imperial policies and world history in general largely determine the behaviour of its people.

9. *THE PRESENT CONSTITUTION OF NGONDE.*

(a) *CHANGE AND CONTINUITY.*

The constitution of Ngonde in the middle period of its history consisted of a mercantile divinity superimposed on a number of relatively autonomous local groups. The central power was mainly determined by the two factors of divine kingship and the ivory trade: the local autonomy was mainly determined by the absence of any large number of 642

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

642 permanent social relationships beyond the local groups of chiefdom and fief, and by the religious seclusion of the Kyungus. Now every one of these factors has today ceased to operate. And it is worth dwelling on this, for it follows that the constitution of the middle period has ceased to exist and something radically different has been developed in its place. Divine kingship and the ivory trade are dead, a host of complex and permanent relationships now covers Ngonde and links it to the outside world, the Kyungu rules his people in person, under Government. And the continuity which is aimed at by a policy of "indirect rule" is thus only possible in Ngonde to a very limited extent.

On the other hand, as some continuity is inevitable even through the most radical political change, so an acceptance by the Government of that inevitability is itself a factor of political order. It is far easier to rule Ngonde to-day through the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde than it would be, say, through a committee of commoners chosen for their personal ability; for the successors of the traditional rulers still have a status in Ngonde which is continuous, though not identical with that of the past.

178 771 797 Christianity has gained a great hold on Ngonde,[1] and has helped to undermine the old pagan faith even among those who do not profess it. And the whole hierarchically organized system of pagan ritual is almost dead. A few days after our arrival in Ngonde, in July 1937, the nobles of Ngonde organized the clearing out of the ashes, for a special purpose. A bad plague of rats had appeared in the country and an old woman had announced prophetically that it was due to the anger of the spirits. Mulwa did all the organizing, for, as he said to us: "The present Kyungu renounced all interest in these things years ago and told me to manage without him. So I went and told Kalonga and Mwakasungula and Mwenengubwe, who is the senior of the chiefs of Ngana; it is their business to tell their juniors." But of the hundred odd chiefs and nobles in the Ngonde plain only four chiefs and a few nobles responded to the summons to put out their old fires and to bring the ashes to Kyimbwe. How many commoners put out their fires I do not know, for we did not hear of the ritual until it was over. Even this, however, was an exceptional occasion and the regular yearly performance of the ritual has ceased. Neither is the old first-fruit ritual any longer performed.

The Scots Mission in Ngonde concentrated from the first on the conversion and education of the sons of leading men, so that now many of the rulers themselves are either Christians or ex-Christians. The present Kyungu was, as we have seen, a Christian, and, though he has

[1] 45% of the population profess Christianity.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 771 797 now abandoned his Christianity and taken a number of wives, he appears to be wholly sceptical of pagan beliefs. "It is I who have killed the custom of praying in the sacred groves," he told us, "for my brother, Mwangalaba, used to give the nobles of Ngonde cattle for sacrifice; but I have never once given them a beast, nor do I give them hens, nor beer, nor flour." He subsequently admitted, however, that he did sometimes give them "a few pence" to buy a hen for sacrifice. Many of the old magical taboos he certainly no longer observes and we have no evidence that he observes any; while the magical possessions of his predecessors are mostly lost.

That the old beliefs survive in the minds of many men in Ngonde, both pagan and Christian, we have certain evidence; but upon those beliefs little public action is now taken. The profession of Christianity is normal among the younger people, and their attitude to the ritual which occurred during our visit was one of amusement. And even the belief in witchcraft, which has proved in many parts of Africa to be most persistent, is beginning in Ngonde to be publicly called in question by some of the pagans themselves.[1]

178 771 The present Native rulers of Ngonde are thus no longer generally believed to control the destinies of their people; rain, health and fertility are no longer in their gift. And this brings radical changes into all political relationships. It is by their secular functions alone that the present Native rulers stand or fall. The hoeing of the public gardens of the Kyungu by his people, for instance, was largely kept up in former times because of his rain-making powers; he gave them rain, they gave him service. But, if he is now still able to claim this service from them, it is because he gives them other things than rain.[2]

178 642 771 Then again the decline of the old beliefs inevitably alters the balance of power between the different political authorities. The Kyungu is no longer a magical object carefully secluded and controlled by the nobles of Ngonde; and so he now rules his people in person. It is he himself who now takes all the major decisions, within the sphere of responsibility allowed him by the Government. The nobles of Ngonde are reduced to a merely advisory status. While the decline of the old theistic and witchcraft beliefs brings a similar change into the relations of every chief with his great-commoners. Many chiefs in Ngonde still fear that they will fall ill if they offend their great-commoners, but some do not,[3] and it

[1] The same cannot be said of the Nyakyusa, among whom, for various reasons, the missions have made far fewer converts in proportion to the total population. Among the Nyakyusa the old rituals and beliefs are still very much alive.

[2] *Vide infra* p. 80

[3] One of the chiefs, for example, is an ordained minister of the Church of Central Africa (Presbyterian).

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

is generally admitted that all chiefs are less affected by this fear than they used to be. The secularization of the constitution tends, in this connection, to make it more autocratic.

On the economic side it is difficult to exaggerate the change in the relative wealth of rulers and people. The change is temporarily obscured by the historical accident of the present Kyungu's personal fortune, but this, when he dies, will go to this own heir, not to his successor in the Kyunguship. The Kyungu's total official salary in 1937 was £72 a year and those of the " Sub-chiefs " varied from about £4 10s. to £12 a year. The nobles of Ngonde all received either 10s. or 15s. a year, with the exception of Mulwa who received 30s. These salaries, which are paid out of the Native Treasurery, are the modern substitute for the profits of the ivory-trade, which the Kyungu shared with his subordinates, together with the regular tribute of food and the proceeds of tribal warfare and of punitive expeditions, all of which sources of income have now dried up. And these salaries do not make possible the giving of any valuable gifts to subordinates and subjects. The local rulers also receive slight financial subsidies from the Native Treasury. Each " Village Headman " is allowed to retain 3d. from the tax of every adult male subject of his own and the " Important Headmen " (great chiefs) receive in addition subsidies ranging from 5s. to 40s. a year. This custom has replaced that of the requisitioning of food ; but, owing to the smallness of all the present chiefdoms and fiefs of the plain, few " Village Headmen " receive more than £1 a year from this source.[1]

It is open to commoners, on the other hand, to become as rich or richer than most of their rulers. The head clerk in the Boma in 1937 received £52 a year, and there were fifty-three other Government employees who all received £12 or over ; Native Christian Ministers and Evangelists all received many times the salary of Mulwa while young men often returned from the Lupa gold-fields with savings of several pounds.

The decline of polygyny in Ngonde again reduces the relative wealth of the subordinate chiefs and nobles in comparison with their people. Women are increasingly reluctant, for various reasons, to be married by polygynists, and the old style of entertainment is changing. Few chiefs and nobles, save the present Kyungu himself, now have sufficient wives and unmarried children to be able to entertain on a large scale. In the case of ordinary chiefs and territorial nobles (the " Village Headmen " of to-day) this poverty is not in itself very significant, for with the dwindling

[1] The average receipts of the one hundred and twenty-four " Village Headmen " in the Ngonde plain were almost exactly 10/- per annum in 1936. They had, that is, an average of forty tax-payers each.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 565 in size of the groups they rule, they have fewer subjects to entertain. But the " Sub-chiefs " and the " Important Headmen " cannot cease to entertain largely without losing much of their pre-eminent status.

178 692 The outlawing by Government of civil and tribal war, combined with the new economic and religious conditions, has enormously extended the normal range of social relationships among the people of Ngonde ; and a centralized judicial system has necessarily been developed to deal with the new situation. The old forms of local autonomy have ceased.

178 642 The continuity which is observable between the present constitution of Ngonde and that of the middle period is mainly determined by three factors. In the first place the Government of the Protectorate deliberately supports in positions of high authority the legitimate successors of some of the old rulers. In the second place the judicial functions of those successors, which have been greatly extended, have replaced, to some extent, the old religious and military functions. And, in the third place, the present Kyungu is, as it happens, a rich man. A decentralized mercantile divinity has been transformed into a centralized Native Authority with some continuity of personnel, with the substitution of new functions for old and with the assistance of a private fortune.

(b) *FROM GOD TO MAGISTRATE.*

178 692 The first two of these factors of continuity—Government support and the increase of judicial functions—must be discussed together, for it is mainly because of their utility as subordinate magistrates that the Government supports the Native rulers of Ngonde.

Modern conditions, in the sphere of law, bring about two great changes. Firstly the integration of the one-time primitive society of Ngonde with the civilized world greatly increases the range of social relationships among its people, and so renders ineffective much of the traditional legal machinery. And, secondly, the introduction of Christianity, of political control by the British and of European economic enterprise inevitably changes the content of the law. Granted the general conditions of contact between Africans and Europeans in Central Africa a transformation of all its traditional legal systems is seen to be an inescapable necessity.

Common law must now be maintained by a hierarchy of legal authorities reaching far beyond the boundaries of Ngonde, if it is to be maintained among its people at all. As I write these words in Livingstone, a thousand miles by road from Mbande, there is a man of Ngonde working in a shop within a hundred yards of my office. While in Ngonde itself it is no longer true that a man's friends and neighbours, or even his immediate rulers, can ever be sure of constraining him effectively if he

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

breaks a law; they must be able, if necessary, to call in the aid of some central authority or he will escape them. Many men today, for instance, take wives whose homes are fifty miles or more from their own; and such marriages cannot possibly be regulated by the old primitive procedures. Moreover the rapid and radical changes in the content of law which are necessitated by modern conditions could not be worked out in detail by a number of independent courts without much confusion. And so in the Ngonde of to-day common law is maintained both by a centralized police system and by two central appeal courts, a lower one presided over by the Kyungu, a higher one by the District Commissioner.

178 692 [625]

A dispute which took place in 1935 well illustrates both the novelty of a central appeal court in Ngonde and the support which the Kyungu now receives from the Administration. And it also shows that the old rivalry between the lines of Ngelenge and Ngana still survives.

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The Kyungu in his new judicial capacity decided a land-dispute between two local chiefs of the house of "Sub-chief" Kilupula, who is now the most powerful, though not the senior, of the chiefs of Ngana. The Kyungu's decision reversed that of Kilupula, who then became angry. The chief who lost the case is reported to have said: "How dare the Kyungu come here and divide up our land among us? He knows nothing about it." And Kilupula is reported to have taken much the same view; the new judicial functions of the Kyungu were resented by him. And Mwafongo, another great chief of Ngana, sympathised with his resentment.

Then Kilupula and Mwafongo between them wrote a letter addressed to the Provincial Commissioner complaining of the Kyungu's conduct of this case. The District Commissioner, who received it first, called them in and advised them to burn it, but they insisted that it should be forwarded. But before this was done the Governor of Nayasaland arrived in Ngonde on tour and the two chiefs then asked that the letter should be handed to him. And so it was. Whereupon the Governor publicly reprimanded them for writing the letter and asked the Kyungu, before all the people, to decide how he would punish them, by fine or imprisonment. And the Kyungu fined them each £5.

No more striking expression could have been given of the Kyungu's present position as a trusted servant of the Government than this incident. While the fact that the dispute arose out of his new judicial functions and that it was two chiefs of Ngana who stood against him is most illuminating. The Kyungu has exchanged the support of his ancestors for that of the Nyasaland Government, his divinity for a magisterial office. This change, on the whole, has been made easily enough, but a certain temporary friction was inevitable. The chiefs of Ngana are the tradi-

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 643 692 tional rivals of those of Ngelenge ; most of the traditional reasons which led them to accept the supremacy of a Kyungu of the house of Ngelenge, whenever one was elected, have now ceased to influence them ; while they themselves, as we shall see in a moment, are now barred from the succession. Moreover the Kyungu's supremacy is now mainly operative in the unaccustomed sphere of law. And so a new reason for admitting that supremacy has had to be more forcibly presented to them than to the other rulers of Ngonde.

Once forcibly presented, however, the new reason seems to have been admitted in place of the old ones without much difficulty. For in 1936, the next year, Kilupula spontaneously led his people to the Kyungu and formally handed over a cow to him, thereby re-establishing friendship and mutual respect between the two of them. The dispute has ended in a manifest harmony.[1]

It is relevant to mention here that in the first five months of 1937 only one case was taken on appeal from the Kyungu's court to that of the District Commissioner.

178 565 622 624 692 The general status both of the great chiefs and of the local chiefs and nobles (the " Important " and " Village Headmen,") as also of the great-commoners, has been radically altered by the new legal conditions. Formerly these authorities were the mainstay of a primitive justice, but to-day they could not possibly enforce any legal decisions without the backing of the central Government. And this backing they do not have. Their sphere of influence is so small[2] that it has not been thought worth while to give them any formal judicial authority ; they are now mere arbitrators and all important cases go to court.

178 692 The modern constitution of Ngonde is thus more centralized than the old. The support of the Government is given to, and effective judicial power is concentrated in the hands of half a dozen men, with their own advisers. The new judicial functions of the Kyungu and the selected " Sub-chiefs " have, in fact, been transferred to them from the local rulers. Some such centralization was inevitable under modern conditions but the details are dependent upon the decisions of the Government.

(c) *PETER THE FORTUNATE.*

643 The wealth of the present Kyungu is not only due to his great personal abilities. For twenty years before his appointment as Regent (when he himself became the Kyungu in all but name) he was the full-

[1] This phrase begs no questions about private feelings, upon which we have no evidence.

[2] This is less true of the great chiefs (the " Important Headmen ") than of the rest ; and possibly an understanding of their status will alter the attitude of the Administration to them.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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The present Kyungu has gardens hoed for him like his predecessors, and these gardens are still called *milasa ;* but the subtraction of the religious element from this custom has radically altered both its form and its significance. Of old the *milasa* were hoed by the great chiefs and their people because they wanted rain, to-day they go on hoeing them because the Kyungu gives them cattle ; of old they came of themselves fearing drought, to-day they come because he summons them ; of old the produce of the *milasa* was mostly used for the entertainment of guests from a distance, to-day the produce is mostly turned into cash and used in other ways for the maintenance of the Kyungu's position in his own immediate district. But still, as of old, the custom brings him honour.

The late Kyungu, Mwangalaba, is said to have refused to accept this traditional service in the third year of his reign (1907), and certainly for twenty years afterwards no *milasa* were hoed. Mwangalaba is said to have been a timid man, but it is also possible that he was forced to realize that the mere hope of rain would not be sufficient to maintain the custom much longer in the new economic and religious conditions ; he may have preferred to refuse his people's services rather than see them gradually refused to him. For he had nothing but the hope of rain to offer them ; he was a poor man ; he had neither the ivory of his predecessors nor the private fortune of his successor.

But in 1927 when Peter became Regent, the custom was revived on a new basis. The initiative apparently came from the great chiefs, six of whom in that year led their people to hoe *milasa* for Peter,[1] who, as soon as the hoeing was over, gave each of them a cow. Such a return gift was quite unprecedented. And now every year he sends a message to the three or four senior great chiefs, which they pass on to the others, telling them to come and hoe. One or two beasts are always given to each one who comes. In the first half of 1937 three great chiefs had brought their people to hoe *milasa* and to the two who had finished he had given respectively two bulls and a cow and a bull.

The bulk of the produce of the *milasa* he now sells to his people, by the basket, for money, using the money so obtained firstly to buy cattle to replace the ones given to the chiefs and secondly to buy cloths for funeral gifts. The figures which he gave us himself for the year 1927 showed that he was able in that year to replace the cattle expended and in addition to buy £3 or £4 worth of cloths, enough for about a dozen funerals.[2] The custom has become a mildy profitable business enterprise for the Kyungu.

[1] But no such gardens, I think, are now hoed for the great chiefs themselves. Our evidence is here incomplete.

[2] Expenditure on cattle for chiefs=£11 or £12. Proceeds of sale of *milasa* crop =£15. Profit spent on cloths=£3 or £4.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178
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But it is more than that, for its maintainance establishes a certain continuity of sentiment between present and past. By hoeing the Kyungu's *milasa* the people of Ngonde no longer do worship to an irascible divinity, but they still do honour to their greatest chief. "Where are our manners? Where is our respect?" asked the chief who, in 1927, took the initiative in hoeing Peter's *milasa*. "It seems almost as if they have died in us." And it is worth noting that the one who said this was Kajuni, a chief of Ngana.

Those who have read Richards on the Bemba constitution[1] will wonder how Peter manges at the same time to sell the produce of his *milasa* and also to provide the necessary entertainment for his leading men. The answer is twofold. Distances in Ngonde, in the first place are far shorter than among the Bemba, and the members of Peter's court can attend it regularly while sleeping and eating at home. The main traditional use of the *milasa* in Ngonde was to provide for the distant nobles who brought ivory and for the ivory traders themselves; but nowadays distant guests are rare. Nevertheless his subordinates and leading men are sometimes entertained lavishly by him, and his prestige in part depends upon this. Whether the necessary food and beer is actually taken from the *milasa* or from his private gardens I do not know, but the fact is unimportant as his private gardens are now big enough to provide the necessary surplus by themselves. For he is, in the second place, the possessor of about ten able-bodied wives who, no longer jealously secluded, work in his fields with their children; and he also hires labour to help them, paying for it out of his private fortune.

The nobles of Ngonde only rarely nowadays bring their people to hoe, for their relationship with the Kyungu is less profitable to them than it was in the days of the ivory trade, and the old organization of Mbande has decayed. With the removal of Peter to Bwiba the nobles of Ngonde and their followers began to scatter; only six of them now live at Mbande, with a mere handful of commoners. The other six are dispersed over the Ngonde plain, and only one of them[2] has any considerable personal following.

The requisitioning of food by the Kyungu and the local rulers has now almost ceased, for various reasons. Food can now be turned into cash by sale; and so men are far more reluctant to give their surplus to their rulers than before. Moreover I think that Government has disallowed the custom.[3]

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[1] *Op. cit.*
[2] Ngosi, who ranks as a "Headman" with a few subjects of his own.
[3] We did not investigate this point in Ngonde, but among the Nyakyusa it is certainly so.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 431 643 The present Kyungu maintains his position by a continual distribution of material gifts, as the Kyungus did in the past, but many of the details of this distribution are now altered. Besides the cattle which he now gives the great chiefs he also gives away far more funeral gifts than his predecessors. But on the other hand, the traditional distribution of cloth and ivory, after a visit from the ivory traders, and of slaves and cattle to those who brought tribute in food has now ceased. The traditional procedure of giving a newly elected noble a cloth still continues.

178 431 643 764 Previous Kyungus only sent cloths to the funerals of the most important of their subjects—chiefs, nobles, great-commoners and a few others. But Peter sends a cloth to nearly every funeral in his own half of the Ngonde plain ; though in Kilupula's half and in the hills he only sends cloths to the funerals of chiefs and nobles.

Nearly every family in his own half of the plain now sends a hen (worth 3d.) to Peter to announce a death and he returns a cloth (worth 2s, 3s. or 4s.) as a funeral gift. More important families (chiefs or rich great-commoners) from all over Ngonde send a bull-calf (worth maybe 7s. or 8s.) and to them he returns a cloth or blanket worth anything from 8s. to 12s. In 1934, a year with many deaths, he spent £57 on such funeral gifts and he can hardly have received more than a tenth of that value in hens and calves.

It is this custom above all which gives Peter the status of a paramount chief (as opposed to a subordinate official of the British Administration) in the Ngonde of to-day. And it is only his private fortune which makes it possible. The profits of the *milasa* never reach any such proportions, while, if he spent his official salary on funeral gifts, he would be quite unable to clothe himself, his wives and children.

Now the extension by Peter of the custom of sending cloths to funerals is significant both in relation to the new legal situation and to the present poverty of the other rulers of Ngonde. In his own portion of the plain Peter is the only Native judicial authority who can execute judgments, he is also the only Native ruler who can afford to keep up, on any large scale, the bountiful activities traditionally associated with chieftainship. And he has thus largely replaced the local rulers and the great chiefs, in relation to the common people, both as judge and as plutocrat.

Though we made no intensive study of the areas of the "Sub-chiefs," it is clear that they are not in a position to give any valuable gifts to their people, and that their prestige is in consequence far lower in their own areas than is the Kyungu's in his ; they are but subordinate magistrates with traditional affiliations. Moreover the Kyungu, both through his appeal court and through the sending of funeral gifts to chiefs and nobles is still able to maintain his paramount position in their areas.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Owing to the accident of Peter's private fortune the elements which tend to make the present constitution of Ngonde more autocratic and more centralized than the old are, in his case alone, uncounteracted by the element of poverty. And his secular power is thus far greater in Ngonde than that of his predecessors. The nobles of Ngonde have lost the old religious holds over him, most of the subordinate rulers have lost their judicial functions, he alone is considerably richer than the common people. 178 642 643

Personal links between rulers, subordinates and subjects are not only characteristic of primitive societies. In our own society these links normally take the form of entertainment : The King, cabinet ministers, colonial governors, and the mayors of towns entertain the leading citizens, and their position in part depends upon doing so. And it is thus probable that personal economic links will still be necessary in the Ngonde of the future, when its integration with world society is more complete. Their form may change, but wealth will still have to be expended on their maintenance. Now there are only two ways of assuring that such links will be maintained : either special allowances must be paid to the Native rulers of Ngonde as they are paid to European rulers, to enable them to keep up their position in this way, or else rich men of public spirit must be found to fill these offices. The second solution depends upon the existence of rich men and the constitutional possibility of giving them office ; but it is very unlikely indeed that, in the near future, other Peters will be available, who combine wealth both with royal blood and the general eligibility for which the nobles look. Moreover it is worth noting here that quite soon the majority of the Native rulers of Ngonde will probably be Christian monogamists and the old economic resources of polygynous marriage will then no longer exist for them at all. The first solution, however, always remains practicable. 178 642

(d) *CONSTITUTIONAL LAW.*

It is generally accepted in Ngonde to-day that all future Kyungus should be taken from the one house of Mwakasungula and all the three Kyungus since the deposition of Mwabulambo have been members of it. The nobles of Ngonde insist that the chiefs of Ngana were only taken in the middle period *faute de mieux*, when either no suitable chiefs of the Ngelenge line could be found, or it seemed to be dwindling dangerously under the onslaughts of the Ngoni. And the chiefs of Ngana accept this fact. Why the house of Mwambelo has fallen out of the succession I am not sure, but, as the house of Mwakasungula is now very numerous, I suppose it is not considered necessary to look beyond it. 178 643

But still the principle obtains of election within the house. From

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 643 Magemo to Mwakabanga no Kyungu has ever been succeeded by his own immediate heir; the choice of Peter as successor to Mwangalaba was unique, for he was his full brother and the heir to his property, but then Peter's ability and personal wealth were unique also. And in the case of the great chiefs and the nobles also the principle of election is still followed.

178 554 643 The grounds of election have slightly altered. Generosity and wealth are still important, but "wisdom in European ways" is now more looked for than maturity, and shortly before our visit a fairly young man was chosen as Mwakasungula. Bravery in war, of course, no longer matters.

178 565 622 The Administration have so far made little use of any great chiefs except the three who are now "Sub-chiefs;" but the others (the "Important Headmen") could be made into effective local rulers, if their salaries were raised. The ordinary chiefs and nobles (the "Village Headmen") are too numerous and have too few subjects to be very effective links in the chain of modern authority. But many of the great chiefs command the respect of considerable numbers. Moreover the fact that they are already being elected for their "wisdom in European ways" suggests that they will prove competent to deal with modern problems.

The traditional secular procedure of election is still followed, with some exceptions: the nobles of Ngonde are now sent by the Kyungu to participate in the "catching" of the great chiefs of Ngana[1] on the spot; the District Commissioner is informed of the result of every election; while the Kyungu himself, no longer secluded, takes a bigger share in making the choices than his predecessors very well could. And many of the religious elements of the traditional procedure, such as the setting of a new Kyungu on the iron stool *Kiumbi*, have fallen out of use.

The sending by Peter of the nobles of Ngonde to catch the chiefs of Ngana is a sign of the present centralization of power in his hands under Government. When we asked why the old custom had been changed we were told that it was "because now everything is under the control of Government and comes to the Kyungu."

The gradual ousting by chiefs of the few ruling territorial nobles who still remain in the plain has continued in modern times, but the novel conditions have complicated the process and seem to be checking it. [578] A recent quarrel between Kajuni and Mwenelupembe illustrates this. The head of the house of Kajuni, which is a junior branch of the

[1] I think this is also true of the less important territorial nobles of the hills, but am not sure.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Mwenengubwe, has attained more or less the status of a great chief; but his country originally belonged to the noble Mwenelupembe. One of the Kajunis married a daughter of Mwenelupembe and, in the usual way, became the effective ruler of most of the country. But the position was not formally clarified, Kajuni and Mwenelupembe are said to have lived on the best of terms, "and there was no boundary between them." After the arrival of the Europeans Kajuni was recorded in the Government list as the "Headman," for taxation purposes, with the consent of Mwenelupembe. And this meant that Mwenelupembe received no share of the tax money. But then, recently, Kajuni sold some of their land to a European for a tobacco shamba without consulting Mwenelupembe, who was furious, and demanded his own tax register and to have a boundary formally marked out between them. And this has now been done. The present cash value of the status of a ruler has altered the economics of the situation, the decline of the religious status of Mbande lessens the comparative importance of the royal blood, while new occasions of dispute between the rulers are now present. 178 565 622 578

The "coming out" (*uvusoka*) has ceased in Ngonde owing to the smallness of all the present chiefdoms, both in area and numbers, and the impossibility of finding sufficient land and followers for two successors to any local chief.[1] There has been no "coming out" since 1913. Each local chief is now succeeded by one younger full-brother (or one son) alone. But still among these "Village Headmen" popular favour determines their position. If his subjects do not like a "Headman" they move away to his neighbours, and every emigration reduces his salary by 3d. a year. 178 622

(e) *CONCLUSION.*

Now the more autocratic form and the greater centralization of the modern constitution of Ngonde is very largely the product of inevitable social forces. Granted the general conditions of contact between Africans and Europeans in Central Africa, a decline of the religion of Ngonde, with the consequential change in the relations of chiefs with their leading commoners, could not possibly be avoided. Nor could the old local autonomy possibly be fitted in unchanged to any modern administrative system. And Ngonde is not unique in this, similar changes, equally inevitable, can be seen in most areas of Central Africa. 178 642

Nor is the relative poverty of the majority of the Native rulers of Ngonde today a unique phenomenon either. Richards[2] has shown the

[1] Owing to the climatic difference land is scarcer in Ngonde than among the Nyakyusa; but the implications of this fact we did not specially study.
[2] *op cit.*

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 642

same thing among the Bemba and Read among the Ngoni ;[1] and it is, in fact, the wealth of Peter which is unusual. Wealth and chieftainship are no longer normally synonymous terms as they were in the old days ; and this again is largely the result of the operation of inevitable forces.

And wherever an increase of centralization and of autocracy is combined with a decrease of the relative wealth of the Native rulers there the modern constitutions of Central Africa must inevitably become very difficult and, in the end, impossible to work. For a central political power cannot be effectively exercized unless it includes the control of wealth ; nor can able and wealthy commoners be permanently barred from sharing it.

But the policies of the Government, backed by the overwhelming power and wealth at their command, are themselves social forces which, while they cannot prevent the other forces from operating, can counterbalance them. No Government, for instance, can maintain the old tribal religions in being against the forces making for their decay, nor can it now restore the old sources of wealth to the chiefs, nor can it prevent some commoners from becoming wealthy men, nor can it bring back the old small-scale, isolated, relatively autonomous, local communities. But it is possible for a Government to raise the salaries of chiefs and their advisers and deliberately to encourage new forms of local representation and popular control. It is possible ; but whether it is desirable a scientist cannot say.

[1] Margaret Read. Native Standards of Living and Culture Change. Supplement to *Africa*. 1938.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631 782 [721] north the Nyakyusa were continually at war; they did not trade or pray with them. Thus we conclude that participation in a common ritual is, in the Nyakyusa case, directly linked with a common origin and essential trade.

643 [789] [782] [821] The divine kings, Lwembe and Kyungu, were regarded as having power over certain areas, a power closely linked with rainfall. Indeed, one informant argued that the chiefs living around Masoko had never sent sacrifices to Lubaga, 'because when it rains at Lubaga the rain does not come as far as Masoko'. He was mistaken in his facts—the chiefs of Masoko did at one time send to Lubaga as Mwambete (162), chief at Masoko, himself admitted—but the argument points to a conception of supernatural power tied to a rainfall area. This notion was not, however, applied consistently.

643 173 The balance between secular and mystical power has altered during the past ten generations. The founding heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, came as conquerors and must surely have led their men personally; but early in the history of Ngonde the Kyungu was secluded, and power was exercised almost exclusively by the nobles (*vide supra*, pp. 40-46); and the Lwembe also was, at one period, 'not seen by ordinary men' and led a life hedged about with taboos. There is sharp contrast in Nyakyusa tradition between the active chiefs who were warriors, and arbitrators, and worked hard in their fields[1] and the 'divine king' who lived in seclusion. As we have seen, the chiefs often delegated ritual functions, with the taboos involved, to a junior kinsman such as Mwamukinga (44) or Mwakihaba (45) (*vide* pp. 79-81, 114) whose heirs succeeded to the office. It is even possible that the [178] first Lwembe at Lubaga (Mwakalebela 19) took over ritual functions from his senior brother, Kalesi (18).[2] The present tendency is for the development of secular power and its separation from mystical power. The Kyungu is no longer a god but an administrator: the heir of the Lwembes sits as an elected representative of chiefs on the Local Council. In the traditional 182 Nyakyusa society ritual played an essential part in maintaining 177 the balance between generations, sections, and social strata, and in

[1] In 1955 a young chief was bitterly criticized by his men because he 'never had a hoe in his hands' whereas his father and grandfather had (to our personal knowledge) been diligent in hoeing.

[2] But according to one excellent informant, Mwakisambwe (30) lived secluded while Mwakilima (31) 'fed men'—i.e. entertained.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VII

CLEANSING THE COUNTRY

769 SACRIFICES to the heroes and the shades of the chiefs are holy and private—only a handful of priests and chiefs may enter the groves and the details of the rituals are not discussed with other people. But there are other celebrations in which everyone 796 participates; these are the rituals for cleansing the community— 783 'throwing out the rubbish' (*ukujola ikikungu*)—more specifically the *ashes* from all the hearths.

In Ngonde the cleansing is organized for the whole kingdom, from Mbande, but among the Nyakyusa each chiefdom acts independently. Traditionally, we were told, the *ukujola ikikungu* was an annual celebration, observed at the 'new year', after the break of the rains, but it could also take place if there were much sickness in the country, or plague, or prophecies of evil to come. It was celebrated (in an attenuated form and by a section of the community only) in Ngonde in July 1937, to cleanse the country of a plague of rats, and in September of the same year a somewhat similar ritual was performed in Porokoto's chiefdom because a [787] fearful omen had been seen—a ground hornbill had eaten a chicken. The annual celebrations had been dropped both in [178] Ngonde and BuNyakyusa before 1935.

As has been shown in the *Rituals of Kinship* the Nyakyusa believe [769] that too close an association with the shades is dangerous; all the family rituals are designed to drive them away, to drive them out [755] of the bodies of the mourners, or menstruating girls, or parents of twins; and the purpose of 'throwing out the ashes' in all the homesteads is essentially the same. The shades 'come to warm 783 themselves' at the hearths of their descendants, they 'bring sickness [775] to the hearths' and so the old ashes are cleared out and new fire is lighted. The phrase *ukujola ikikungu* is used in Ngonde for clearing out the litter (*ulufumbo*) after a burial, or an initiation ritual, and for shaving after a ritual, as well as for clearing the ashes from all the hearths in the country.

[754] It is also thought that domestic fires are contaminated by [775] witches who may have cooked the human flesh they steal over their victims' own fires. In Ngonde it was the connexion between

[p. 102]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 clearly inclined to the shades as it had before the divination, but as
753 before the certain conviction was lacking.

Four days later (12/2/37) Kasitile went to Nsesa in Kituli village to consult the oracle again 'for that of Nsoki went wrong'. He told us afterwards 'This oracle supported the finding of Ndembwe's. It said:
[775] Your kinsman who is dead is angry; he says, "Why did you not
[769] celebrate the ritual? I am tired of the hair (*Ngatele nayo inwili*). And what did you offer your father after cutting that tree?"' Here yet another cause of Kasitile's illness is suggested—the neglect of the death ritual of a kinsman. The implication is that the chief mourners have
[765] not yet performed the concluding rite of shaving which makes it
[302] possible for the deceased to join his fathers. The hair which the mourners shave off is called 'the hair of the corpse'.

QUESTION: What are you going to do then?

KASITILE: I shall charge the young man, son of my dead kinsman, with
[688] neglect, and tell him to celebrate the ritual that the shades which have
[602] bound me may go out of my body.

QUESTION: And the bull?

KASITILE: If I can find one I shall kill it.

QUESTION: Who will be there?

[793] KASITILE: The priests will be there, Ngulyo, Kissogota, Njobakosa, Mwalukuta and Mwakasukula,[1] and also Mwaipopo (116) himself. Were I a commoner I should kill alone with my younger brothers, but since I am a public personage (*ndi nkulumba*) the village headmen are there. (To Mwaikambo, the clerk.) It is good at your home in the hills; here things are bad.

QUESTION: But they also have shades?

[775] KASITILE: But they are not important. Look you, I just cut a tree and they have seized me and dwell in my body. Are there sacred groves in
[178] the hills? Do men visit them? There in the hills rituals have died; the puberty ritual and the rituals of the groves are celebrated very little.

On 27th March Kasitile looked in to say that he was going to con-
787 sult a visiting Sangu doctor 'from very far off' about his cough, but
791 G.W. had better not come lest his presence spoil the divination.
753 Kasitile came again after the consultation, full of excitement. 'What a doctor! That is a doctor indeed! That is a diviner! He took an axe and divined with it; he took coppers which I brought and threw them in a little pot, together with the axe, and ash, and he said: "You also take ash and throw it in" and I did so. Then he looked into the little pot and said: "You built on the plain!" He knew this without being told! I said: "Yes".'

SANGU: There was a quarrel there.

[1] The last two are priests of Mbyanga (*side* p. 80) who did not in fact come. Mwamakunda, Kasitile's assistant, who did come is not mentioned.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

182 Churches in the area. Nevertheless the bulk of professing Christians
595 are monogamists, though it is still customary and, in Rungwe
797 District, economically profitable, for a rich man who is not a Christian to have more than one wife. The difficulties of establishing monogamy are accentuated by the great disproportion in the numbers of men and women. If the figures available are accurate, a general acceptance of monogamy would mean that only about 70 per cent of the women could be married; therefore the Church is necessarily concerned in seeking an adjustment in the disproportion of the population—in keeping the men alive if our assumption that the shortage of men is due to a heavy male death rate is true.

182 The yeast of the gospel permeates still further. It is taken to
797 imply the freedom of an individual to accept or reject a partner in
584 marriage. This has been maintained from the first in the Nyakyusa Church, and is enforced by the courts, which apply a conception of personal rights springing from the Christian tradition.

182 Most Nyakyusa men attribute the rapid rise in the divorce rate
586 to this new 'freedom' of women. Christian teaching stresses the
797 family and the sanctity of marriage, but it ignores the lineage. In the traditional rituals of kinship the lineage is represented again and again, while in Christian ritual it is the elementary family and the Church that are pictured. The preoccupation with fertility and the reproductive cycle was linked with the glorification of the lineage itself, and it disappears when the lineage ceases to be the basis of social grouping.

How closely linked are symbols to other aspects of a society?
182 Our hypothesis is that they are relatively free, but it can be shown
181 that many of the symbols used in the traditional rituals of the
178 Nyakyusa reflect the economy, and vary somewhat from one area to another, with the staple crops. The development of trade or of new crops is a prerequisite for using the symbols of bread and wine traditional in the Christian rituals, and even the 'independent' African Churches use new foods, not the beer and bananas of the country; thus change in material symbols and change in economy may be directly connected. The imagery changes also with the changing social structure; Kyala ceases to be pictured as a senior kinsman, when the lineage organization begins to weaken; he is God the father of a family rather than an early member of the royal lineage. But there is no evidence that

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

particular symbols are tied to a particular social structure; the poet makes his choice within the whole range of the familiar.

The impetus to change has come both from the religious field and from the secular. For example, the pressure towards monogamy among the Nyakyusa has been religious; given plentiful land and cash crops additional wives are an economic asset, not a liability. In this respect the contrast with the Ciskei in South Africa, where families are dependent for food on wage-earners in towns, and no man can support two families,[1] is marked. On the other hand, the decay of Nyakyusa age-villages is primarily due to economic pressure, though it is facilitated by the insistence of Christians that there is no danger in father-in-law and daughter-in-law meeting one another. The first generation of Christians living on mission land built villages apart for their sons, despite the teaching that avoidance of a father-in-law by his daughter-in-law was foolish, if not sinful. But a radical change in pagan observance of ritual avoidance is brought about by the general practice of going out to work for long periods, and the competition for coffee and rice-lands, which makes the territorial separation of fathers and sons impossible. As we have shown, young men going to work commonly leave their wives in their fathers' homesteads, valuing the support and supervision given them there above the old stringency of avoidance and, where land is scarce and valuable, fathers do not move aside each generation to make way for their sons. Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law continues only in an attenuated form.

From German times control by a European government has compelled a modification of the traditional sacrifices to the heroes and of the ritual of chieftainship. How the Kinga priests came to Lubaga 'in secret' and how they failed to instal a new Lwembe after the death of Mwakisisya about 1914 has been described. Killing a child to anoint a drum or make medicine for the fields, compelling a man to accept a dangerous office, killing chiefs because they are ailing, or plucking off their nails before they die; all these are actions which are held, and must be held, to be 'contrary to natural justice' by any Western government. Here the change in political organization compels a change in ritual and there is evidence that belief in the traditional forms is much diminished, though not dead. The European government also

[1] Keiskammahoek Rural Survey. Vol. ii, *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, by D. H. Houghton and E. M. Walton; vol. iii, *Social Structure*, by M. Wilson *et al.*

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 found the administration of the poison ordeal, driving out people
648 alleged to be witches, and killing supposed sorcerers 'contrary to
796 natural justice'. Here the change is not in the celebration of a ritual but in the execution of 'justice' based on traditional religious beliefs.

The early missionaries were very important as employers of
797 labour and a market for produce; indeed at one time they were the
177 *sole* source of western trade-goods among the Nyakyusa. For long they provided the only skilled medical attention. They were the source of new learning, teaching, from the start, reading and writing and new manual skills, and the link between learning and religion, so familiar in the history of Europe, is still strong. Therefore acceptance of Christianity *tended* to go along with acceptance of the new economic and political structure, but it was never identified with it. Already in the thirties a popular song contrasted Christians with Europeans, and African nationalism was finding expression in 'independent' Churches.

Secularism fits as well with the new economic and political
178 structure as Christianity, and it has been argued elsewhere that
171 one of the characteristics of the change from a small-scale, isolated,
648 self-sufficient people to a large-scale society is increasing secularism.[1] The evidence from BuNyakyusa does not so far support this, but there is a *separation* of religious and other activities. Religion is not interwoven with the modern political system as it was with the old. Traditionally the fusion between ritual and political activities was almost complete; village headmen became priests as they grew old, and chiefs became gods. Now there is a separation between Church and state, between Government and mission, which co-operate closely only in the organization of schools. It is true that Christian congregations pray regularly for 'those set in authority over us', but for the most part religious ritual does not enter into state functions. The flag is hoisted and saluted at sunrise and sunset at administrative and military centres; certain occasions, such as the Queen's birthday or the visit of the Queen's representative, the Governor, are celebrated with secular ceremonial. Only at the Coronation, to which African representatives from Rungwe district were sent, did the state ceremonial and the Christian ritual merge.[2] Political tension is not now directly

[1] R. Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, Chicago (1941); *A Village that Chose Progress*, Chicago (1950).

[2] 'The entire solemnity of the Coronation, from start to finish, is distinctly a religious rite.' Canon Charles Smyth, 'The Coronation Rite', *The Listener*, 28th May 1953.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

expressed or resolved in ritual. The place for *ukusosya*—speaking out—is the council chamber not the sacred grove or the homestead where the shades gather, and the reconciliation of conflicts between chiefs, or between chiefs and District Commissioner or chiefs and commoners, is sought in a committee rather than a Church. Perhaps the greatest difficulty in modern administration in Africa lies in this very separation of activities, in the *thinness* of the bonds across the colour line, in the cleavage between secular and sacred. Some separation of the different aspects of a society is a concomitant of the increase in scale—it is one manifestation of specialization—but it is greater in Tanganyika with its diversity of religious traditions than it is in Britain with its common Christian history.

That there is a connexion between the form of faith and ritual and the form of social structure few would deny. The concern of the anthropologist is to define it; to plot the limits of autonomy between different aspects within societies. This can be done only by the patient analysis and comparison of many societies and this book is offered as a humble contribution towards such a comparative study.

and try to understand the nature and reasons for change. Here, then, is a good opportunity for the study of social change – not only in land tenure as such, but also in village and family organisation, political authority and economic life.

II

The Nyakyusa are a Bantu people inhabiting the main part of the Rungwe District in southern Tanganyika, immediately to the north of Lake Nyasa. In 1948 they numbered about 199,000 in that District, but about 10,000 men were probably at the time temporarily absent from their homes and in employment in the mines and towns of the Rhodesias and South Africa (see Gulliver, 1957), whilst about 20,000 had migrated to live in the adjacent Mbeya District to the north.

The tribal area comprises a confined geographical basin surrounding the northern end of Lake Nyasa. It extends only about 40 miles from the tip of the lake at 1,550 feet above sea level to the Poroto Mountains in the north at 8,000 feet; and from east to west is only about 30 miles, from the almost sheer walls of the Livingstone Mountains (with peaks up to 10,000 feet) to the Ndali Highlands (rising to about 7,000 feet). There are therefore unusually large ecological differences within so small an area. Three major regions are to be distinguished: the "Northern Highlands" over about 4,500 feet, the low-lying "Lake Plains" in the south, and the "Central Region" in between. Everywhere rainfall is reliable and high, averaging at least 100 inches annually[1], and this amply compensates for a certain poverty and misuse of the soil, although (and particularly in the Central Region) it brings dangers of soil erosion. Except in the highest parts the banana is the staple food, supported by maize, beans, finger millet and groundnuts. In the Northern Highlands coffee has become well established as the principal cash crop: in the Lake Plains paddy rice cultivation provides both a food and a cash crop: in the Central Region the country is too low generally for coffee and too high and dry for rice; consequently cash-cropping is considerably inferior and the people's standard of living is rather poorer.

The Nyakyusa and their country tended for a long time to be relatively isolated from the outside world by high mountain walls and rain-soaked roads. In addition, or because of it perhaps, they developed an almost unique culture which was supported by considerable conservatism and high insularity. They still continue to regard their African neighbours beyond the mountains as their social and cultural inferiors. The turmoil of the slave-trade in Central Africa passed them by; in modern times they have not enthusiastically accepted Christianity and they have refused to take up the use of Swahili, the Territorial *lingua franca*. In recent years, and most especially since the end of World War II, they have, however, accepted and pushed forward with vigour a rapid and extensive economic development, involving particularly the production of coffee and paddy as cash crops, and large-scale labour migration to the south in the high-wage mining industries. The multiplicity of petty, often tiny, independent chiefdoms has been reorganised to provide four local government areas, each under a Rural Council, in which the old chiefdoms have become something like parishes[2]. Although much of the old conservatism and narrow parochialism persists, yet there is now an atmosphere of accepted change, of a keen desire for economic development, and a general acceptance of a cash economy.

Probably the most significant feature of modern life in the Nyakyusa country is the increasing scarcity of land for agriculture in relation to the

1. At Tukuyu, in the Northern Highlands, annual rainfall averaged 99.28 inches between 1919 and 1952: at Kyela, in the Lake Plains, the average between 1940 and 1951 was 106.21 inches.
2. See Kingdon, Z.E.: The initiation of a system of local government by African rural councils in the Rungwe District, Tanganyika; *The Journal of African Administration*, iii, 4, October, 1951.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER II

THE TRADITIONAL SYSTEM

Although this essay is to be primarily concerned with the modern and changing land and population situation among the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains, it is quite essential first to have an understanding of the traditional system of political and territorial organisation and of land tenure. This is not mere historicism, for despite changes the traditional system remains as the basis of contemporary land-holding and land law. Whilst actual conditions on the ground change, the Nyakyusa appreciation of those changes and their attitudes to land lag significantly behind. In brief, the traditional system was geared to a situation where there was plenty of land. Today the people find real difficulty in adjusting themselves to a high density of population and an acute shortage of land, with the result that this new situation is aggravated by outmoded practices, attitudes and cultural values.

The ancestors of the present group of peoples now known collectively as the Nyakyusa, moved into the Rungwe region from the Ukinga Highlands to the east beyond the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains. According to legend, which is probably substantially true, these newcomers found a sparsely populated country which they easily occupied. Later, following internecine strife, one group under a man called Mwakyusa left the Masoko area in the centre of present-day Rungwe District and moved down into the Lake Plains. There, probably less than 150 years ago, they drove out the Ngonde people and settled. The sons of Mwakyusa took their shares of the country and people and established their independent chiefdoms. The chiefs in 1956 are the lineal descendants, mainly in the fifth generation, of Mwakyusa, and have a well-known genealogy. The only exception to this occurs amongst the group of tiny chiefdoms in the extreme east under the Livingstones, which now form a single administrative chiefdom under Mwakilasa and number some 400 men. They trace descent from pre-Nyakyusa settlers known as the Saku.

Traditionally, as today, the village was the basic unit both in social life generally and in land-holding in particular. The Nyakyusa village was possibly unique in Africa. It was comprised of men of roughly the same age, together with their wives and young children, and it excluded their fathers and sons and also, very often, their elder and younger brothers. Each village consisted of a close group of houses (often centred on a broad "village street"), with arable and pastoral land around it. Each village had fairly well-defined boundaries with its neighbours. The village was represented as a group and acted corporately through its headman, *lifumu*, who was the guardian of villagers' land rights, the arbiter in land problems and disputes, and the controller of unused land. He was also the political and ritual leader of the village, but nevertheless he was a commoner chosen from amongst the villagers themselves, and was not a member of a chiefly lineage.

Land was owned by the village as a group. Every man resident in the village had a clear right to a site for his house and banana plot and to arable land within the village boundaries; he also had a right to graze his cattle in its communal pastures. Residence gave these rights and members of other villages were excluded. A man who left the village automatically gave up these rights, though if he returned he was able to take up his former holding or its equivalent.

631 Age-villages combined to form a chiefdom under the hereditary chief,
628 *amalafyale*, but active co-operation between villages thus associated was often slight; indeed in the larger chiefdoms there commonly existed intermittent animosity which might break out in raiding or even civil war. The integrity of these larger chiefdoms was weak – for example, when the [721] Nyakyusa were attacked by Sangu and Ngoni war-parties, and later by the [648] Germans, villages of the same chiefdom conspicuously failed to join in common defence. Similarly the land affairs of one village were no concern of any other, and each jealously guarded its own rights.

631 None of the chiefdoms was large; smallness of scale is typical of
162 Nyakyusa political organisation and social attitudes. In 1955 the smallest indigenous chiefdom contained only 36 men. In 1948 55,700 people were divided amongst about 18 indigenous chiefs, but undoubtedly had not the Colonial Government frozen the system there would have been rather more – at least five more. Today there are 12 recognised "administrative chiefs", amongst whom five have each less than 3,000 people under them, and the largest chiefdom contains fewer than 10,000 people – the average is just over 4,000 people.

631 Nevertheless the chiefdom, the collection of villages, was important,
361 because in the creation of the chiefdom villages were created, and in its development the villages developed, matured and died away. A village survived only so long as its members lived and by the nature of the age-organisation there was but little possibility of the recruitment of new members, for villagers' sons left to form their own new villages. Their sons eventually came to comprise the core of the new chiefdoms.

642 In connection with the constitution of a Nyakyusa village and with
643 land tenure, the significant feature of the chiefdom was its establishment, together with the induction of a new chief, at the great "coming-out" [796] ceremony, *ubusoka*. In brief, each chief was succeeded by two of his sons – the [798] eldest son of each of the senior houses of the chief, i.e., of his first two wives. At the "coming-out" ceremony, when the sons were still young men and their father was not a particularly old man, the old chiefdom was divided into two, each part coming under one of the new young chiefs. Before this critical occasion – at which much important ritual was performed – the younger men of the old chiefdom had already moved away from their fathers villages and had established their own incipient villages nearby, each one containing a group of coevals. A Nyakyusa boy from the age of about seven years could not continue to live with his father and mother, but, in company with his equals, built his own hut on a site adjacent to the main village as indicated by the fathers' headman. Until the "coming-out" cere-
621 mony these youths' villages came under the control of the old village head-
[342] men; but with the induction of the new chiefs they achieved independent status, each with its own headman appointed from among its members by the old headmen. Each new village was allocated a new building site and a new arable area, and quite commonly the old villages, the older men, moved away a little in order to give the younger men adequate access to the land,
631 for it was considered that the young men's needs for land were paramount.

After this wholesale reorganisation of the old chiefdom, when new
[178] villages were established and new boundaries demarcated,[1] the old chief
[622] himself, the old headmen and the older men (the "fathers") gradually retired from active public life. The old chief was supposed to commit suicide
643 after a time (or was quietly killed off) in order to leave the field clear for his sons; the old headmen became the religious and ritual leaders of the new
888 chiefdoms, with the flavour of elder statesmanship, and the old men's

1. 'As the "coming out" is in said that "everything is made new", boundaries are redrawn and the new chiefdoms and villages of the young men are commonly incorporated'. Wilson, G., 1938, p. 31.

less uncultivated. These areas can easily be picked out today by the absence of village sites and banana groves. There was something of a rush to grab land in such areas and in the less densely populated parts of the chiefdoms. Today in my personal experience – for no general survey has been attempted – there remains little or no unused land within the paddy-growing region which can, by native techniques, be brought under the plough; and indeed men are attempting to grow paddy on unsuitably raised land where inundation is inadequate. Communal cattle pastures have shrunk as arable holdings extended until they remain only where cultivation is profitless.

The demand for land has far outrun the physical supply, and in 1955 it still seemed to be insatiable. The initial cycle was that a desire for more money to permit of a higher standard of living created a demand for more land on which to produce more cash crops; but the increased level of income then further stimulated money demands to raise standards higher again, thus bringing a renewed demand for land. The cycle has now been halted by the lack of further land to meet the people's needs, but the demand remains nevertheless and is indeed increased by rising costs of living.

This economic picture is, of course, oversimplified, but it may serve to illustrate the nature of forces at work in the situation. I would not wish to overemphasise the snowball effect, for the bulk of the population remains still largely content with only a little over earlier standards; but increasing numbers of men and their families are coming to seek something better. Bicycles have become something of a general necessity; a variety of good clothing and shoes is considered quite essential. Only a single decade before the Nyakyusa women still generally went about in the traditional nudity, whereas in 1955 they must have ranked among the very best-dressed African women in the Territory. European-type household goods, crockery and utensils are common. The demand for money, that is for a higher standard of living, has also been greatly stimulated by the experiences of the thousands of labour migrants returning from southern towns and mines, and by the cash and goods they bring back with them.[1]

It is not possible for me to attempt to suggest what a desirable acreage would be for a contemporary Nyakyusa, because money demands, crop yields and selling prices change and the desire for higher standards of living also alter as the potentialities of the new cash economy are increasingly understood. In 1954 the approximate average of Sh.200/- per paddy cultivator was earned from perhaps two or three acres of arable land, but an indeterminable amount of the crop was kept back for home food requirements. As will be shown later many men's paddy fields could have been little more than an acre, and many men, specifically young men, had no paddy land at all. Certainly there were few who held what they considered, at a reasonable estimate, to be sufficient land.

This universal cash crop agriculture and the continuing demand for higher standards of living, and therefore for higher money incomes, is the real cause of the new and rather sudden pressure of population on the land. Of course this economic process operates within a situation of relatively dense population and in a peasant community where land is almost the only form of capital and alternative enterprise is small. The gradual increase of population, though probably small, further aggravates the difficult situation.

Arable Holdings

It was not possible to obtain adequate, satisfactory data to allow the calculation of local population densities, and the detailed results of the 1948

1. In Gulliver, P. H.: 1957, an estimate of the cash incomes of Nyakyusa in 1954 is given at pp. 51-2. Data on the cash brought back by returning labour migrants are given at p. 55.

(e.g. for fear of witchcraft) and take up the vacant holding. Nevertheless in general the holding was allowed to lapse and it could be re-allocated by the village headman if need arose; or the elderly widows might be allowed to continue to reside and cultivate as long as they wished. 428 421

Once land began to become scarce and valuable this loose system could no longer continue. Junior brothers and half-brothers were no longer content to permit the chief heir to take the whole of the deceased's holding to do with it as he wished, and a systematised division had to be adopted. At first, naturally enough, land was gradually brought under the same system which controlled the inheritance of other property, but this proved inadequate – inadequate not only in itself as being, perhaps, too complicated and conducive of disagreement and quarrelling in so far as land is concerned, but also because that system itself was already beginning to break down under the impact of individualism. 423 [178] [428]

It was felt that because sons assist their father in his homestead and fields and in their turn rely on him for a share in the cash-and-kind profits of peasant farming, therefore they should have priority in the inheritance of their father's property. Their father's brothers, it was said, would in any case already have their own holdings in which likewise their sons have prime interest. Conversely, older Nyakyusa men began to be reluctant to take a brother's land (and other property too) on his death, for fear that, in their turn, control of their own land would descend at their deaths to their brothers' sons rather than to their own sons.

As a result of these attitudes a strong desire arose to modify the customary laws in this matter, and the Rungwe African District Council, with the approval of the Government, has by formal resolution established a new law under which sons may inherit direct from their own fathers. [646]

This law is not universally accepted by the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains and sons still will sometimes waive their novel rights in favour of the traditional claims of their fathers' brothers. They say that they do not desire to see the break up of the wider lineage which, in effect, this new law encourages; they are also afraid of the anger and jealousy, and thus of the witchcraft, of their uncles. It appears however that the change is accepted by the large majority of the people, for it follows the trend of modern values and kinship sentiments. [754] [578]

The principal heir is now the eldest son, but in general he has little direct control over the property and land of his half-brothers unless they are still young, in which case he has a moral duty to act as guardian and custodian. Sons inherit that part of the paternal holding which had been allocated to their mother by their father in his lifetime, plus any other pieces he might have given to any of them direct as individuals. Each group of full-brothers determines the way in which it divides up its own inheritance. The eldest brother of such a house has a definite obligation to see that his juniors obtain shares of the land in so far as its extent and their number will allow. On the whole it is expected by Nyakyusa that the eldest brother will secure the best holding for himself, as befits his new status, but he cannot deny his younger brothers' claims. Disputes in this matter are not uncommon and the local courts have already shown their determination to support the claims of younger brothers. 423 428 [593]

Very commonly – though it has not yet crystallised as compulsory social behaviour – a father will grant a portion of his holding to his son on the latter's marriage, or as soon after as the son decides to give up labour migration and settle down. It is thought that a married man should be independent economically and that he should be able to maintain his own household; it is realised that there is most likely to be friction in the relations between father and son, especially in this society where it is traditionally [183] [178] [593]

brothers, and this is compelling the increasing and continued fragmentation of holdings at time of inheritance. Even so, if there are several brothers (i.e., sons of the deceased) the youngest among them may still be unable to obtain a plot, or at least not one of an economically viable size, and they are then compelled to try to gain admittance to some other village as newcomers, there to be allocated land.

The shortage of land is, therefore, not only making inheritance very considerably more important, but it is assisting in the establishment of new kinship attitudes and a redefining of fraternal relations. The position is most confused at the moment as the old system continues to exist alongside the new, sometimes more or less successfully, but often in intractable opposition. At the present time the observer can only mention general tendencies, for it is impossible as yet to foresee what the eventual result will be, and there are, in any case, many other factors involved besides those of the inheritance of scarce land.

In so far as we are primarily concerned with land problems in this essay, the basic factors are that land is newly scarce, that there is virtually no alternative activity in the country to the arable use of the land, and that therefore each son must try to obtain a share in the often inadequate holding of his father. I suggest that no form of inheritance can deal with such a situation satisfactorily – at least it is highly doubtful if any has yet emerged in an area of land shortage in Eastern Africa – and thus there are bound to be severe difficulties and a deterioration of inter-personal relations between near kinsmen who are most in competition. The new inheritance law of the Nyakyusa has narrowed the range of potential conflict from the patrilineal descendants of a grandfather to the sons of a single father; but if it has obviated possible hostility between the generations and between paternal cousins, it has also removed much of the common interest and mutual interdependence between them.

The Right to Land, and the Authority of the Village Headman

Although the traditional principle still exists that every villager has a right to arable land within the village boundaries, yet it is no longer possible to carry it out in practice. Every village headman, in my experience, attempts to ensure that each of his men has land, but he cannot always succeed, and most especially he cannot provide every one with as much land as he would like, because of sheer spatial limitation.

Nowhere any longer does the old principle now hold that an established villager may, without permission or notification, take vacant land into cultivation as part of his holding. When land becomes vacant it must now revert immediately to the village as a group, that is to the common pool from which the headman as village authority makes allocations. There are so many and such varied demands for land nowadays that no man acting on his own can presume to take up vacant land, and only the headman may decide allocation. No person can now obtain land, whether he be an established villager or not, unless he is allocated it by the headman – or, in the many large villages typical of the Lake Plains, by the headman's assistant, *ugwakyimo*, who is delegated authority in a section of the village.

Land becomes vacant when a man shifts to another village, when a man dies and leaves no active heir who desires to take up the deceased's holding, or (but seldom today) when a man gives up part of his holding due to his inability to use the whole of it. In all these cases the land is immediately re-allocated by the headman, probably not as a single unit any longer, as best he can among a crowd of land-hungry villagers – established men seeking extra land to meet the needs of growing families or for increasing cash-crop

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Security of tenure has continued into European times, and although perhaps weakened slightly in one way through the exaggerated powers which accrue to modern Government-supported chiefs, it has been strengthened by the modern peace and rule of law and the more efficient system of justice provided by the established local courts. According to G. Wilson (Wilson, G., 1938, p. 32) the increase in the movement of individuals between villages in earlier European times (i.e., up to about 1940-45) directly caused a lack of attachment to individual plots, and thus security of tenure was not considered particularly important.

The new situation of land shortage does not affect the basic position, or rather, by producing a high scarcity value on land, it has brought about an intensification of individuals' rights over their holdings. No longer dare a chief or headman attempt to commit such illegal acts as the seizure of a villager's field, so long as that villager is not afraid to publicise the affair. A man is not, and cannot afford to be, prepared to lose his field, for he cannot replace it with any certainty, either in a convenient location or elsewhere. A headman may sometimes bring strong pressure to bear on some of the men of his village to try to persuade them to give up portions of their land to assist a newcomer or a landless neighbour, but a villager can and does refuse and there is no legal authority which can override him here. As the land shortage becomes more obvious and more acute so men become less willing to allow their holdings to be touched for any reason, by anyone. The re-allocation at a "coming-out" ceremony appears to have been dropped nowadays[1] and thus a man holds his land undisturbed until his death, when it passes by inheritance to his sons. There are cases now where grandsons of the original holder occupy land through undisturbed and undisputed inheritance. A man can, as he wishes, loan a kinsman or friend a plot in his holding, or he can make an outright gift. The principal restriction which remains is that a man must continue to live in the village in order to retain these rights; he must relinquish them if he permanently goes to live elsewhere. Nevertheless, the land of a well-established villager would be kept for him pending his hoped-for return, for if he has left in umbrage and fear because of suspected witchcraft, then he may be persuaded to come back after a time. The headman and his neighbours should in fact persist in their attempts to persuade him, even to the use of force, for this is not only a moral duty of age-mates and fellow-villagers but is also an effort to remove the implications of their alleged witchcraft and anti-social conduct.

Once, therefore, a man obtains land he has absolute rights in it during his continued residence in the village. Especially today, older men seldom shift their homes and almost all land is now held on a tenure which will be passed on by inheritance.

Boundary disputes are few. Usually, and increasingly, village boundaries are well known, and field boundaries invariably are. During my field measurements in the sample villages, I never met any difficulty with my local teams in quickly establishing the ownership and exact limits of any plot. Boundaries are usually marked by small ridges of accumulated debris or by narrow paths, and these form an intricate and irregular network throughout a village's arable area. They are so well known that there is very little scope for a greedy man to attempt to encroach on a neighbour's holding at hoeing time. If minor disagreements do arise at that season they can be immediately settled – by appeal to neighbours working nearby if necessary – and the headman or his assistant may well not be called in at all.

1. This is the case in the Lake Plains. In some of the more conservative Highland chiefdoms where the cash economy is less advanced and land scarcity is not serious, there still appears to be some re-allocation in favour of the young men in the traditional way. In general, however, it is clear that the traditional age-village system of land allocation is obsolete; see pages 29ff.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

TABLE V

DISTRICTS IN TANGANYIKA WHERE LAND DISPUTES ARE COMMON

1953	No. of land cases	% of total civil cases	Estimated population density	Population per land case
Bukoba District	1,189	23	69	223
Lushoto Division	149	12	188	742
Moshi District	347	25	277	746
Ngara District..	81	29	125	1,393

The Changing Village

The possibly unique age-village of the Nyakyusa is now undergoing considerable and fairly rapid change in response to the new conditions of land shortage. There is, firstly, an increasing sense of village exclusiveness and, secondly, there has been a breakdown in the essential age-basis of its organisation. That is to say, that whilst the corporate unity of the village as an independent group has been strengthened, yet the social foundation of the village has simultaneously been changed and a *different sort of village is* emerging. It would take us far beyond the scope of this present essay if a full analysis of the changing village were to be made, nevertheless in so far as these changes are more or less directly the consequences of modern land shortage, land tenure and economic conditions some account is essential. Since the age-village was fundamental in the life and social organisation of these people, the new emerging village is of crucial importance.

Land shortage has definitely exaggerated the unity and exclusiveness of the village in the Lake Plains at a time when, for other reasons, it was beginning to become a more open group. There was always, as we have seen, insistence on the principle that only a member of the village could hold and use village land; but village boundaries were often poorly marked and it was difficult to determine which headman, if any, had genuine jurisdiction over land relatively distant from the established village sites. Nor was it particularly important to be able to do so whilst land was plentiful. As paddy cultivation spread, men began seeking extra fields farther and farther away from home as land nearby was all taken up; and so long as they did not attempt to take land in the immediate vicinity of another village site there was seldom much difficulty in this. The attitudes born of a sufficiency of land persisted and headmen were not disposed to protest against outsiders who sought fields near the limits of their vaguely defined areas. Internecine warfare and raiding had, of course, been abolished as an expression of and a weapon in inter-village rivalries and animosities. With the establishment of general peace and security, and with increasing movement about the country between villages and chiefdoms, such rivalries and animosities began to die away. Many men came to live in the villages which they themselves had not helped to found; their coevals from their fathers' villages lived elsewhere, many of them widely scattered, and it was not possible to maintain a high degree of village patriotism, and, people began to feel, it was not especially necessary or important any longer.

It began to be possible for a man to hold some of his arable land within the area of another village, so long as members of the second village were not deprived of the opportunity of their own agricultural expansion should they desire it. This was especially the case when a large area of hitherto vacant (i.e. bush) but now valuable paddy land was contained within the approximate boundaries of a village. Outsiders were allowed to acquire fields on the strength of kinship with the headman or with one of the established villagers, or even by giving some small present to the headman (e.g. a little beer or some meat, etc.). Land was still plentiful then, or so it seemed to the Nyakyusa, and future shortages and difficulties were not perceived.

423 Thus beyond the established fields in the vicinity of the village itself, the pattern of land holding tended to become confused. The majority of land-holders were still members of the village who were expanding their cultivation outwards, but there was a considerable number of men from neighbouring villages, and even from farther afield where opportunities were more restricted. Some men even began to have a second house, inhabi-
[591] tated by a junior wife, in another village from which to continue the more easily the cultivation of new holdings.

This sort of development was in the event only a short-term process and, had pressure of population on the land not become so critical, it is not possible to say what would have been the final result upon Nyakyusa social and village organisation. It is, nevertheless, important to note that in the beginnings of the extension of arable holdings, cash-crop cultivation operated in a system in which village exclusiveness was breaking down, when residence was no longer an essential prerequisite of land-holding, and when men were neighbours in the fields as farmers without being coevals of a single village.

Once the Nyakyusa, and particularly the more perceptive headmen, began to realise that land was becoming less plentiful, indeed that it was beginning to be scarce in relation to new demands, this novel tendency was stopped fairly quickly and the old traditional principle of land-holding only by residence was reasserted. In the most recent years this has been strongly insisted on. Headmen and their villagers saw that in order to safeguard their
[622] own rights they must prevent scarce, valuable land being held and used by
[186] outsiders. This reaction appears to have been universal and automatic among the Nyakyusa. There was now insufficient land for everyone's demands and each village therefore looked after what it considered to be its own interests. Outsiders who already held fields could not be deprived of them, but they were not allowed to extend their holdings and every opportunity was, and still is, taken to regain control of their fields for allocation to villagers proper. Inheritance was often disallowed unless the heir agreed to come and live permanently in the village; gifts or loans to outsiders (kin or friends) were no longer permitted and most headmen seized the opportunity to re-allocate to their own villagers any alien-held plots which were not consistently maintained in cultivation.

In response to the new situation, almost everywhere village boundaries were clearly demarcated – not without a certain amount of dispute and a new recognition of inter-village opposition. Nowhere now is it possible for a man to take up land over which there is no firmly established village ownership. The significant principle has now emerged that not only does a village, as a corporate and distinct group, own its own land and is represented in this by its headman; but all land is now owned by some village. Further, at least in the high-density regions, there is no longer any vacant land to be taken up
[622] and any land temporarily falling vacant comes immediately under the allocating authority of the headman.

This process, the application of this principle, is not yet quite universal
423 in the Lake Plains, and it is sometimes still possible to see it coming into
178 operation. Still in the northerly parts of the Lake Plains – the low-density region – one may see fields occupied by a variety of outsiders, for there the realisation of the significance of land shortage has been slowest to come. For example, in Mwakipesile's chiefdom in the late 1940s and early 1950s it was the practice of men from the congested villages nearer the Lake to obtain valuable, virgin paddy land in the newly opened areas in the north (near Ipinda) without residential qualifications. Many men reserved their original holdings in their own villages for food crops and had their main paddy fields in this distant area. By 1955, however, it had become virtually impossible for a non-resident to obtain extra land in this way, although still

there remained scattered pieces here and there which could be taken up, and some existing holdings in the area are too large for the agricultural capabilities of their occupiers. The temporary safety valve was shut off. The local headman had become seriously worried over the large-scale alienation of his land resources without any equivalent increase in the number of his villagers, and he also wished to conserve the remaining land against the now better understood needs of his own people. 423 78

The principle of no land without residence also means that a villager who wishes to move must automatically forfeit his land-holding in the village. A little earlier he would most probably have been able to retain at least his fields beyond the immediate vicinity of the houses - in so far as his new residence was not too far away to allow continued cultivation. This has been especially important for younger men who, wishing to take up a vacant holding elsewhere, also desire to retain their share of the paternal holding obtained by inheritance. Conversely, they are now unable to move on to their father's holding and yet retain their fields in their own village. Such men must now make a permanent decision between the utility of, perhaps, two inadequate holdings which, however, combined together might be of satisfactory size.

As a consequence of this, inter-village opposition is probably greater than it has ever been in European times, and no less strong perhaps than it was in the old days. Men feel that the security of their holdings, the future of their sons, and the possibility of increasing their arable cultivation lies wholly within the security and stability of their own village. They tend to see other villages and other villagers as a potential threat to their own land requirements; they often suspect the worst of neighbouring villages who, they think, will, given the chance, seize some of their land. Headmen and villagers would refuse to cross the boundary into another village when they accompanied me during my investigations, lest they be accused of contemplating appropriation of the land there. Such aliens who still retained land in a village were regarded with some animosity. Nyakyusa would not look beyond their own village boundaries in an attempt to make an appreciation of the modern overall land situation. They wished only tenaciously to cling to what they already had and to guard it jealously; they were only too inclined to believe that other villages nearby were better off and to use them as scapegoats for their own difficulties and shortage. It must be said that this renewed insistence on village exclusiveness and the inviolability of village boundaries has in fact tended to make for a certain inequality of land-holding according to the perceptiveness and celerity with which headmen claimed authority over formerly vacant lands. This condition is, however, overexaggerated in men's claims today, and in any case it is tending to disappear under the pressure of inter-village movement. [628]

The Nyakyusa village in the Lake Plains, with its intensified independence and aggressive exclusiveness, and jealous of its believed permanent boundaries, has not at the same time been able to retain its traditional coeval basis. Whereas formerly the youths of a village moved to one side, there to build their own hamlet and eventually to acquire their own fields in association with its establishment as a full village in its own right, now this is no longer feasible or even possible, for the land is not available for this sort of expansion. The young men are driven back on a dependence on the fields already held by their fathers in the old village. They gradually move into their fathers' places and take over the paternal holdings; or, as we have seen, they seek where they may to obtain new allocations in any other village where they can gain admittance. The coeval basis of village living is lost. [181]

The boys and youths still leave their fathers' houses and build their first, small huts together on a site somewhere adjacent to the main village site, [882] [361] [561]

423 as determined by the village headman. But even building sites with the
178 essentially associated banana groves are becoming increasingly scarce and
[882] valuable, for no one desires to decrease the amount of arable by enlarging the
built-up areas – rather the reverse. The number of young men's villages is
[36] therefore diminishing and congestion of their huts is increasing to the stage
[56] very often where no more than a narrow passage if left between adjacent
houses. There comes to be a wider age range in the young men's hamlets where, often, a large village provides only one for all its sons. Smaller villages sometimes provide no accommodation at all for their sons, who are thus compelled to seek membership of a neighbouring group. These hamlets are mainly regarded nowadays as temporary residential areas for the young men until such time as they move on to an existing holding – their father's or some other. There is therefore no attempt to provide sufficient space for an adequate banana grove with each young man's house, let alone a food-crop plot behind it. The arable land beyond the congested huts already belongs to inhabitants of the main village. When a young man is able to leave and take up a holding, his vacated site (together, often, with the hut) is taken over by a waiting youth who has probably been sharing with another hitherto.

361 These young men's hamlets do not, any longer, eventually mature and
311 become villages in their own right with their own headman and arable lands.
178 Formerly, when this occurred, they would probably have taken over a good deal of the lands of the old village, as the young men exercised the privileges of their new maturity against their elders with the emergence of the new chiefdom. New chiefdoms, and with them new villages, no longer emerge,
[648] and this is mainly because Government has prohibited the bifurcation of petty chiefdoms on the death of the old chief, as it is considered inconsistent with the development of stable, modern local government. Additionally, however, the shortage of land can no longer allow of the traditional expanding politico-territorial organisation. The elder men's villages are not now prepared to yield ground to the young men, and the latter cannot expand elsewhere. Thus political requirements and land restriction work together to make the old system obsolete and to freeze the spatial distribution of villages as it existed in early European times. As far as I could ascertain in the chiefdoms of the Lake Plains, probably no new village had emerged in the past 20 or more years, except for a few cases of large ones splitting into two for administrative and social convenience. Many villages there date back to pre-European days often now under the son, or even the grandson, of the original headman (though this is not essential or invariable in any way).

561 The age-basis of the Nyakyusa village is thus disappearing; indeed, in
178 many villages it has already disappeared in everything but the young men's hamlets. Where the process has gone least far, there is still apparent a rough
428 division of the single village into the old men's sector (men at least 50 years of age, and many much older); the middle-aged men's sector (men between about 30 and 50 years old, being the younger brothers or elder sons of the old men); and the young men's and youths' sector. On inheritance, sons tend to show a continued reluctance to move and live on their father's house-site and to become immediate neighbours of older men; they avoid it if possible, often allowing a middle-aged man to shift there instead. Nevertheless even
178 this sort of age-division is rapidly vanishing and in very many villages a
428 man's neighbour may be of any age.

We have seen that inheritance is now one of the chief methods of
[423] obtaining land. Under the new inheritance rules, this means that sons follow their fathers and take up their fathers' arable holdings, building sites and banana groves. Some young men inherit early, others inherit late; there is no longer any notion or possibility of the younger generation entering into its

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

land en bloc. Young men compete with one another, with their elder brothers and with their fathers for allocations of land left vacant. We also saw, however, that often in the larger families[1] not all the sons are able to get a share of the paternal holding, or at least not a share of practicable size. Thus younger sons are forced to resort to trying to obtain vacant land elsewhere – possibly within the same village, but as often as not outside. Finally, the young man on his new holding may find his neighbours to be of any age; certainly they will not have been members of his own original coeval hamlet.

The way for this changing concept of village life and the new sort of village was prepared in the years before land shortage became important. The changed political system has been briefly noted already, but no less important was the great increase in inter-village movement in earlier European days when peace and personal security had been established. During this period Wilson (1938, page 32) reckoned that perhaps 80 per cent. of Nyakyusa shifted at least once from the place where they first obtained fields. This estimate, whilst perhaps holding good for Highland Nyakyusa amongst whom Wilson mainly worked, was too high for the people of the Lake Plains, where about 40 per cent. is more correct according to my genealogical and village surveys. That is still a relatively high degree of mobility for a mainly subsistence, peasant society such as it was in those years. It is clear that the pseudo-fraternal bond of coevality could not persist as a main element of village life and consciousness, when in fact as many as half of the members of a village were not original coeval founders but had come in from elsewhere. Before the land shortage, movement did not entail the shifting of young men to other young men's villages, or of older men to other older men's villages. It was, at least eventually, promiscuous movement, ignoring age categories. The compulsions of land shortage seem, in retrospect, only to have followed existing lines of village development and to have begun the completion of the process.

In the Lake Plains, therefore, the village persists as a close, territorial, land-owning group and as a specific cluster of homesteads and huts, usually with a village street, the whole closely hemmed in by continuous banana groves. Beyond this lie the arable lands, usually food-crop fields nearby and paddy fields farther off. In jealously protecting what it already holds, the village has gained a new exclusiveness, for the security of the individual land-holder is maintained by the corporate ownership of the village and by excluding outsiders as far as possible. On the other hand, it is no longer an age-village either in fact or intention, and it cannot be, for age-villages were consistent only with an expanding territorial system and a subsistence economy.

This brief analysis of Nyakyusa village organisation in recent times applies only to the Lake Plains. In some parts of both the Central Region and the Northern Highlands the age-basis of Nyakyusa villages had most probably already been seriously weakened in pre-European times.[2] On the other hand, elsewhere, and particularly in the more conservative parts less affected by modern trends and the cash economy, the traditional age-village still exists in something like its old form.

Land shortage has appeared in the Highlands together with a developing cash economy, but the basis of agricultural and economic change lies mainly in coffee cultivation which, of course, requires relatively smaller fields than does paddy in the Lake Plains, but it needs more care and attention from the grower for moderate success. As far as I could see in the course of

1. Polygny is still the norm amongst the older and many middle-aged men, and therefore a father often leaves several sons to inherit.
2. According to elderly informants in Wenera Kukwe, Mwakalili and some central chiefdoms, and also the evidence of old village sites.

311 my earlier labour migration enquiries in the Highlands, the village as a close residential unit is breaking up as the people are increasingly adopting the
933 more common East African pattern of each family building its own home-
245 stead in its own land-holding. These northern Nyakyusa say that they must have their coffee plots next to their homesteads for the sake of continuous supervision, and that this is impossible (which is true enough) where men live close together in compact villages. Again, coffee plots, with their standing, permanent trees, have become a valuable item of inheritance; sons lose no opportunity of taking them irrespective of the locations of their coevals or of the identity of their immediate neighbours. The values of land, cash-crops and material progress are placed much higher than the traditional values of coevality; indeed, such traditional values are largely inconsistent with modern wants and aspirations.

561 Thus the Nyakyusa age-village has become almost obsolete and it
361 would seem that it must inevitably vanish altogether even in the remaining conservative areas (e.g., in the east). Furthermore, its disappearance is
178 leading to a distinct divergence between the Lake Plains Nyakyusa and those of the Highlands. How far this divergence will become permanent and basically significant cannot be foreseen as yet in this early stage. Clearly the compact village is best fitted to an arable economy of rice cultivation in the Lake Plains, and at least until there is further agricultural change it will persist as a most important social group.

Nevertheless, with its enhanced exclusiveness and relative social isolation and with renewed rivalry with its neighbours, the Lake Plains village is scarcely conducive to the encouragement of agricultural and economic development. Neither is it anything but harmful towards contemporary efforts in the politico-administrative sphere to reduce parochialism and to foster a sense of unity and co-operation beyond the village and the petty traditional chiefdoms. Whilst supervisory control of the land through the
682 headman is in general excellent, reasonable and readily understandable
152 to the people, yet the excess of restrictiveness, the competitive scrambling for vacated holdings and the jealous fears are surely more than merely
182 unfortunate. There needs to be some modification to loosen the over-tight strings of village corporate ownership, to regularise the transfer of vacated holdings and to lessen the fears of village against village. These points are taken up again in Chapter V.

Cattle and Pastoral Requirements

311 Unfortunately, no great accuracy can be presumed for the Rungwe
233 District cattle censuses, but the available figures are summarised in Table VI.

TABLE VI
NYAKYUSA CATTLE

	1955				1951	
	No. of cattle	*Acres per beast*	*Cattle per person*	*Cattle per family of 5*	*No. of cattle*	*Acres per beast*
Lake Plains	31,418	4.1	0.5	2.5	26,822	5.2
Central Region ..	19,380	7.1	0.4	2	19,160	7.2
N.E. Highlands ..	19,095	7.4	0.4	2	17,165	8.4
N.W. Highlands ..	22,974	8.0	0.4	2	16,855	10.9
Total: Nyakyusa.. ..	92,867	6.4	0.4	2	80,002	7.2

The indicated increase in the numbers of cattle may well be attributable only to improved census enumeration by the Veterinary Department.

Although 6.4 acres per head of cattle for all Nyakyusa country, and even 4.1 acres in the Lake Plains, might seem to be adequate in a country so

311 233 Whereas in the Highland and Central regions the large numbers of cattle – in relation, that is, to the available pasture resources – are causing over-grazing and soil erosion, particularly in the hilly areas so often nowadays relegated to pasturage, on the other hand in the flood plains there does not [241] appear, at least to the layman, to have been any serious effects on the land. The natural manuring of the paddy fields in the dry season is advantageous. In the Lake Plains it is the cattle rather than the land which suffer, but so far the Nyakyusa have done virtually nothing to meet the new conditions, other than to complain bitterly and fruitlessly.

The Young Men: Land Shortage and Labour Migration

423 *The younger Nyakyusa men find increasing difficulty in obtaining arable* land now that there are no longer vacant areas to be taken up, and the older men are no longer prepared to cede their land rights in favour of the younger generation, as they traditionally did. When occasional fields are left vacant, the young men must take their turn with their elders, who themselves are so chronically short of land – and the headmen commonly favour the older villagers with families as against the younger men. This means that in the high-density regions the majority of men under the age of about 30 years have little or no arable land, nor can they hope for it until the deaths of their fathers. In the congested village sites even their banana plots may be smaller than is desirable for the provision of the staple food.

[593] The young man, then, is compelled to remain dependent on his father's and elder brother's holding; indeed, headmen often justify their refusals to [178] allocate plots to young men on the express grounds that the latter must share their elders' fields. Thus the valued independence of the young Nyakyusa is severely restricted and it seems that tensions and difficulties are beginning [578] to arise between fathers and sons, and between brothers, because of this. Sons are blamed for not doing their fair share in the family cultivation; fathers are blamed for giving their sons inadequate shares in crops and crop incomes. It will be remembered that one of the fundamental principles underlying Nyakyusa society and its age-village organisation is the spatial segregation of parents and children (*cf.* page 22). Now they are inevitably being put into competition with one another over inadequate fields in a single holding.

The young men are severely restricted, if not altogether cut off, from the [434] opportunity to cultivate paddy in their own fields and thus to earn their incomes at home, for paddy-growing is the only way of earning a living in the [545] Lake Plains. Yet it is these younger men whose money demand is greatest; to buy clothing, bicycles and other store-goods, and to buy cattle for marriage payments. They are therefore strongly attracted by the ready opportunities for taking up wage-labour abroad, in the mines of the Rhodesias and South Africa where wages are high (see Gulliver, 1957).

With the best will in the world, when, as in the very high-density region, the average holding is little more than an acre and a half – when, that is, the older men themselves desire larger acreages for their own cultivation needs – it is not possible for a father to allow his son to take large shares in his fields. In some cases a father does give outright to his adult sons strips of his holding, but plots so provided are necessarily small. Quite as frequently a father does not consider it possible to break up his holding in his own life-[593] time, and sons are expected to assist in the common cultivation and to con-tinue merely to be given a share in the family proceeds at harvest. It is not surprising, therefore, that very large numbers of young men from the Lake [107] Plains migrate abroad to work. Only about one man in 20 has not been away at all before the age of about 25 years. Much higher proportions of men and larger numbers absolutely are temporarily absent from the Lake

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Plains than from any other Nyakyusa area. In the high-density regions, the proportion of young men away at any one time is about 50 per cent. on the average and the proportion has risen concomitantly with the increasing scarcity of land. 423 [169]

It is not, of course, suggested that land shortage is the only factor responsible for contemporary labour migration amongst the Nyakyusa. Elsewhere (*loc. cit.*) I have drawn attention to the very high wages, the increased opportunity to obtain outside employment, the development of transport services and the intensification of recruiting, together with the general desire of the people to gain a higher standard of living as they more thoroughly embrace the new money economy. In fact, wage-labour in the mines is more profitable than growing paddy at home under current agricultural practice, even were land more easily available. Nevertheless, more *young men do leave their homes in the Lake Plains* than elsewhere in the country, and there is a rough correlation between land availability and the degree of labour migration, which seems to indicate that where men can obtain more land they tend to seek their money incomes at home. The Nyakyusa themselves, with an intensity of tribal patriotism, say that they much prefer to remain at home if they can earn their money there, even if they earn rather less than they might obtain abroad; but, say the young men, it is impossible to earn anything like sufficient when the fields are unobtainable in which to cultivate the cash-crop. 469 167 423 [511]

The data which I have been able to collect are summarised in Table VII. Young men are defined here as those under about 30 years old.

TABLE VII

YOUNG MEN: LAND HOLDING AND LABOUR MIGRATION

Village and chiefdom	*Young men having own paddy field*	*Young men away at work*	*Average holding of:* *Young men who own land*	*Older men in same village*
1. Very high density region				
Mpungwi Mwakipunde ..	17%	53%	0.5 acres	1.9 acres
Kapugi Kowano	23%	34%	0.75 acres	1.5 acres
Ndabo Mwakyusa ..	28%	31%	—	—
2. High density region				
Ibolo Mwakyusa ..	37%	47%	1.6 acres	3.7 acres
Kapugi Mwamasangula	33%	39%	1.25 acres	4.5 acres

423 169 [469]

There are some young men who have small food-crop plots but no paddy field, but I have chosen to correlate labour migration with paddy cultivation because these are almost the only alternative ways of earning money today, and the people themselves recognise the fact. The number of samples is too small, but the general inference seems to be quite clear nonetheless. My own conclusions in this matter were, however, arrived at independently of these figures, which were only obtained for corroboration. The evidence of the people themselves and their obvious difficulties of earning money at home were overwhelming.

If anything is required to underline the current land shortage and to illustrate the small size of the average holding, it surely lies in the existence of villages in which only about one quarter of the young men have their own paddy fields, and in which the average holding of this minority amounts to less than an acre.

Only in the low-density region can the young men obtain the fields they require. There, as they did traditionally, the young adult sons continue to assist their fathers in the heavier labour in the fields, but gradually before marriage they accumulate and extend their own holdings and so achieve economic independence. Elsewhere in the Lake Plains this process is taking much longer and indeed it now very frequently awaits inheritance at the death [198]

of the father. The old principle that every man had the right to arable land applied no less strongly to the young men, married or bachelors. Today most headmen will refuse to entertain the applications of young bachelors for land, and in this they merely represent general public opinion. But many young husbands likewise cannot obtain land, or only an insufficient amount.

Consequently, the following case-history, which I recorded for one young man, is not unusual. In 1955 he lived in the Mlangali young-men's hamlet, attached to Mpunguti village in Mwakipesile's chiefdom, where his father lives. He was about 27 years old and had a wife and one child. Twice he had been to work in the mines and from the profits of this employment he had completed his bridewealth payment and had bought, in addition, three cattle, a bicycle and some good clothing. He thought he would probably go away again. Behind his house his wife had about 300 square yards of bananas and there was a tiny patch of cassava. This man had no other land, but he assisted in the heavy labour on his father's holding (about 1.7 acres in all) and by family convention he normally took for his own use the paddy crop of a small strip there; he insisted, however, that he had not been given this strip outright and that it remained at his father's pleasure. He had an unmarried half-brother about 22 years old who had not obtained even that concession at the time. Their father was about 55 years old and had two other sons who were still boys. The young man himself had been refused an allocation of land by the headman on the grounds that (as the headman well knew) he had the use of this strip of his father's land, and also because, as the eldest son, he would be the principal heir on his father's death. He was clearly worried about his future, for he did not wish to go abroad again and leave his wife and child; but he did not see how he could stay at home without seriously lowering his standard of living to little above subsistence level.

I quote this brief case-history not necessarily as typical – though I think it probably is – but as an actual illustration of the present state of affairs as they affect an individual.

The Modern "Chief" and the Land

Most of the traditional chiefs, *abanyafyale*, have been recognised and salaried under the Native Authority, and they are officially referred to today as *abatwa* (s. *ntwa*). Some of the smallest chiefdoms have been absorbed administratively by their larger neighbours, and, although they are still recognised by the people, their *abanyafyale* have lost very much of their earlier prestige and authority. In the Lake Plains the modern chiefdoms are often rather larger than is usual amongst the Nyakyusa,[1] but they are, of course, small in comparison with the size of most African chiefdoms in Tanganyika.

The slightness of the traditional authority of the chief in land matters has already been noted (pages 7-8) and in general this still holds. In European times, however, the recognised chiefs have been given an increased authority and prestige as the local intermediaries between Government and people, and until recent years they were almost the only local instruments of the Government amongst the Nyakyusa. They have been backed by the all-powerful European, who preferred to deal with single, recognised individuals thought to have prime authority in a locality, and the European officer has been encouraged in this notion by an over-enthusiastic policy of indirect rule. Such chiefs were able to assume a degree of power well beyond the traditional limits, and to aggrandize themselves thereby. The ordinary commoner was never quite sure how far his chief was individually claiming more than he

1. On the numerical size of chiefdoms see supra, page 6.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Briefly to summarise the contemporary land situation: in the Lake Plains it may be said that in the main the traditional land tenure system and land law still continue as the basis of native land holding today. The essential feature in recent years has been the acute land shortage in relation to arable needs under the current system of agriculture. Village unity and village exclusiveness have been increased and so also has the authority of the village headman in his control and allocation of land rights. Security of tenure has been strengthened, if anything, and one of the most important methods of obtaining land is now by inheritance. The new law establishing inheritance from father to sons, whilst generally acceptable to the people, is producing a number of civil suits which form the greatest proportion of the more important land cases before the local courts.

The shortage of land is principally the result of increased demands for paddy (i.e. cash crop) cultivation, although the population appears to be increasing slowly. In the high density regions almost all men have considerably less land than they could cultivate, especially under the impetus of the ox-plough, with the developing desires for money income. In the low density region of the low foothills there is still some vacant or partly utilised land, though of very inferior quality for paddy cultivation. The shortage hits the younger men severely, and many of them cannot obtain land at all until the death or senility of their fathers. Fragmentation and dispersion of holdings is rapidly becoming serious and without check.

The first question which arises is whether anything can be done to ease the pressure of population on the country by making more land available, or by making its distribution more equitable.

The thinly populated parts of the northern region of the Lake Plains offer a meagre solution only, for the country is raised above the level of the flood plains and is often broken and hilly. Fertility is low, erosion is a constant danger and the paddy yield (if obtainable at all) is poor. Nyakyusa from the densely populated areas to south and east are therefore most unwilling to move there. In any case the available land, which remains safety and economically open to cultivation, is filling up fairly quickly – mainly by immigration. Certainly I do not think that it can supply sufficient space to meet modern needs. There is, however, no reason why immigrants should make a difficult situation worse, and therefore it is suggested that further immigration from outside the Lake Plains should be carefully controlled if not altogether prevented. Indubitably outsiders (almost entirely Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who hold land without permanent residence should be prohibited and their holdings reallocated to local inhabitants.

As I have already indicated (page 17), I do not think that the problem of men who hold unusually large acreages is particularly serious. Such large holdings are relatively few and will be inevitably split up by inheritance on the deaths of the present occupiers.

In the flood plains proper there is, as far as I am aware, extremely little new land which could be brought under cultivation. Mechanical assistance in the clearance of dense reed thicket[1] and in drainage schemes would produce

1. These areas of thicket are heavily inundated in the wet season but, if cleared, could be used for a dry season crop.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

This is not the province of the Sociologist, and all that can be said here is that it seems the most practical and valuable policy that could be adopted: it should be made the chief line of attack on contemporary problems. Unfortunately the Nyakyusa do not appreciate the value of this sort of solution – at least not yet – and therefore they are not inclined to learn and to increase their efforts and to change their practices in the fields. They have not yet rid themselves of the notion that increased production of crops and thus increased profits from agriculture are correlated only with increased holdings. In view of the critical land shortage a crucial change of attitude and understanding is required. The Nyakyusa must learn that increased production and higher profits can come from new and more efficient techniques – i.e. intensive cultivation. They must also learn what is so difficult for the African, that quality of production is no less important than quantity and that therefore cash incomes and standards of living can be raised by improving the standard of crops to be sold. Indeed, with a tendency for world agricultural prices to fall due to increasing supply, quality of produce is of the greatest importance. This is notably so in the case of rice. Tanganyika African rice is reckoned as of lower quality than that from South-east Asia, which therefore commands not only the better price but also the main share of the keenly competitive market. But it is a difficult idea for the Nyakyusa to grasp. It seems obvious to them, inheriting attitudes of a former subsistence age, that three poor cattle are better than two good ones – and in fact so they were in the hazardous time of their grandfathers. Cash crop production is based on the same premise, but it cannot hold in a modern cash economy and in dealings with world markets.

If, however, the present land shortage continues unchecked by the successful introduction of new attitudes, ideas and techniques there may well be serious social and political repercussions in the not too distant future. Current schemes of tribal development will surely be rendered futile if economic activity is restricted and if land discontent is allowed to become important.

A second agricultural policy, and one of which less is heard, would be to stop the present dangerous monoculture – the persistence with paddy alone – and to attempt on a large scale to introduce second and third cash crops, particularly such crops as require intensive cultivation on small acreages. This may be forced on the people in any case if the gloomy prognostications of world rice prices are borne out in the next few years. Such a development would allow of a more stable economy and a more balanced agriculture, in addition to assisting towards a reduction of land difficulties. Experiments on a small scale in robusta coffee, palm oil and other crops have already been started by the Agricultural Department but, at least from the layman's point of view, they need priority in finance, attention and effort as a main part of an agricultural programme for the Lake Plains.

In the time available for my investigations it was not possible to enquire with sufficient care into the details and exact procedure of Nyakyusa land law (*c.f.* page 3) and therefore I am reluctant to suggest any drastic changes. The new inheritance law (page 21) is a step in the right direction and is clearly in keeping with modern trends, but it is suggested that its detailed operation on the ground and in the courts should be studied by the Native Authority and the Administration in order to attempt to define its meaning more clearly and to reduce the number of disputes. In order to check fragmentation before it has gone too far, it should be considered whether some minimum limit might not be imposed on the size of fields. Voluntary schemes for the consolidation of holdings, which have achieved some success elsewhere in Africa, might also be considered. These would be particularly valuable in the

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

by horizontal bamboo joists, at right angles to the principal beams of the ceiling. This ceiling never covers the entire room, but only the greater part, and always the part directly above the hearth. Up here firewood is placed to dry. A fine black basket is hung from the ceiling above the fire. Access to the loft is by means of a ladder. 342 [372]

When you read reports by the 'first' Europeans on these peoples and their houses, they always refer to a round house with reclining walls and a conical roof. Merensky (1894) mentions and illustrates such a house (pages 141 et seq.). Fülleborn (1906) mentions and illustrates several houses (Text Volume pages 376 et seq., and Atlas, plates 64-67). The inner surface of the walls of the house was decorated with patterns impressed into the mud layer which covers the bamboo poles. The three stones that form the hearth are shown, and also the bed behind a low permanent partition wall. These were exceptionally fine houses with beautiful, decorated and painted doors. The entrance had relief ornaments, often of coloured clay. Fülleborn notes that the mud houses are the dwellings of married people. [352]

There is no doubt that the round house is the original type of dwelling. In 1955, I saw no round houses like the ones described by the above scholars, but I know that formerly they were often seen, at least as late as 1932. Professor Monica Wilson of Cape Town has told me that she saw them everywhere in 1932, but that during a visit to the district in 1955 she found only one single house of this type, in the village of Mazoko. 178 342

At the time of my visit, round houses could be seen, but not the type having walls inclining inwards near the ground, and they were not by far as imposing as the houses mentioned above; and there were not many of them. I had the opportunity to make drawings of three houses, all occupied by old people. 342

The round house is called an *isinga*. In one of these *isinga* there lived an old man whose wife, Malia, lived across the courtyard in a rectangular hut of the old Nyakyusa type (see infra). The husband's house was 6.5 metres across, and was divided in halves by a fence made from sticks. One half was where the man lived; it had one bed for him, and one for his grandchildren, who would come to visit him, now and then. Near the wall were two iron chests; also, a board had been hung at the wall as a roost for the chickens. A hen's nest, a small wicker basket, was placed about 3 ft. above the floor in the furcation of a four or five-pronged stick. These hen's nests are seen in all houses. The ceiling was supported by seven upright posts, seemingly placed entirely at random. The under side of the roof was strengthened by eight circular-running fascines of bamboos. In the centre, a heavy log (not bamboo) reached up to the pointed top of the roof. [542] [353] [352] [231]

The other half of the house was reserved for the cattle, three cows and two calves; there were five posts to which the cattle were tied at night. [231]

The house had an outer door at each end, but there was no passage from the man's half to that of the cattle.

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 Another old woman lived in a neighbouring *ilanga* close by—if possible even more sparsely furnished than the last mentioned.

Common features of the round houses were: their size, the wooden centre-post, the ceiling covering the greater part of the room, the supporting posts for the beams that carry the bamboo joists and the ceiling proper; the building materials bamboo and mud; and the positioning of the hearth slightly off centre.

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The two hearths of Malia's house. A clay base surrounds the twin posts thus serves to fireproof them. Two hearthstones at either side form the hearths, the clay base acting as the third 'stone'.

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342 The differences between this *ilanga* and the original round-type house are the angle of the wall, here vertical (as opposed to the inclination of the wall of the original house); the entrance (here without ornaments); the door itself also without ornaments; and further the fact that the clay cube placed between the bamboo poles were here not the shape but only the size of rolls. The pictures presented by Fülleborn clearly show the carefully formed clay balls in the wall.

[531] As distinct from the old-type house, this new type of house has no decoration on the inside of the wall, but in some instances decorations are found on the floor.

342 Another type of house, again, was rectangular, often very long, with a ridge beam roof. In most cases, these houses were buttressed along both sides, and were thus provided with what you might call two verandahs. Sometimes also the gables of the houses had buttresses. The roof projected over the gables, most near the ridge. The roof sagged in the middle, a fact that was already observed by the whalers mentioned. This may be because the ridge-beam is not dry but fresh cut, when it is mounted in its place. During the subsequent drying process under load it will then be brought to sag—as we know from other types of houses.

This house is called an *ifilaga* and is known to be typical of the Banyakyusa since olden times. Literally, *ifilaga* means stable or cowhouse, thus presumably indicating its original purpose. There is a full description of this house in Fülleborn

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

352 two water jars, baskets, stools, a ladder leading to the loft, and a table. The rooms
415 were large and spacious, 5 m by 14 m, and in two places low partitions were
353 used to effect a sub-division of the rooms. One may well wonder at the great length of these houses, but probably it is quite true what is said, that, when—in
342 1891—the Germans took charge of the region and imposed a tax on houses, the
177 Nyakyusa men made their women move in under their own roofs—only at the same time extending the houses, using the technique they already knew from the cowhouses.

648 Fülleborn reports on this payment of taxes, and finds it reasonable enough,
178 because, he says, "it fosters in the people an understanding of work and discipline,"
342 and of the house tax he says, "it works to abolish polygamy, since every woman, following the traditions of her country, has her own house, for which her husband must pay the tax."

But the Banyakyusa seems to have adapted themselves to the new law and have moved their wives to the very long houses, thus escaping part of the taxes...

342 The third type of house was a rectangular house with a hipped roof. This type is called *ikema*, which means tent. It was also called *istwa*, the meaning of which I have not been able to ascertain; maybe it means chicken-breast, to which it bears much likeness.

This is the modern house-type to which Fülleborn may be referring when he talks about rectangular houses, "... the very rare instances when a hipped roof is seen ...." (page 379).

342 According to statements made by people who have lived in the district for a
177 third of a century, this type of house is thought to have come from the south some 50 years ago. I have not visited the Ngonde who live farther south, but Sir Harry Johnston (1897) depicts a group of people called "Wankonde (North Nyasa)" in front of a house which looks very much like the modern *ikema* of the Banyakyusa. It seems therefore reasonable to assume that the roof-construction design of the Ngonde has now reached the district of the Banyakyusa. Johnston also informs us that the rectangular type is not actually the original type in East Africa, but that it was probably introduced by the Arabs.

342 This *ikema* or *istwa* is shorter than the long *ikibaga*; seldom more than 11 metres in length. But its interior design does not differ. For instance, this holds true of the placing of the hearth, of the equal distance between posts supporting the roof, of the bamboo ceiling covering about half the room, of half-partitions from bamboo and in some cases mud, of store-rooms in the far end of the house, accessible through an inner door.

[592] In an *ikema* I have never seen more than one hearth, which means that the house is inhabited by one woman. A house in the village of Kihota presented an example of the peculiar tradition of the peoples of the Highlands, viz. the tying of the cattle to posts in the dwelling-houses. My drawings are all from the Highlands, where, in the *ikibaga*, as also noted by Fülleborn, the same tradition is

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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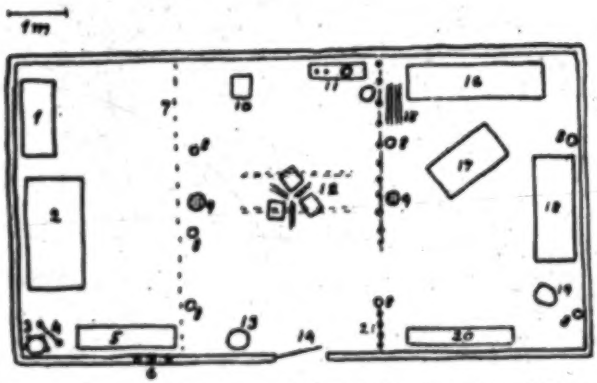

Iselina's house. 1, cupboard with shelves; 2, children's bed; 3, hen's nest; 4, ladder; 5, roost; 6, barred window; 7, from dotted line towards the right is the bamboo ceiling; 8, from here issue 5 horizontal bamboo sticks on which the bamboo ceiling is supported; 9, Posts supporting roof; 10, chair; 11, low shelf with two bamboo jars and a water jar; 12, hearth with three hearthstones and sticks under ceiling for carrying the fine basket, and corn-cobs hung up to dry, etc.; 13, beer jar; 14, door; 15, mats behind the low partition; 16, shelf for domestic utensils; 17, child's bed; 18, Iselina's bed; 19, baskets; 20, domestic utensils; 21, low partition between rooms.

found. In the front part of the Kikoła house, serving as an entrance room, were four posts called *fkingi*, to which two cows were tied at night.

This part, which we may call the cowhouse, also housed hen's nests, the roost, [231] and the mortar to be used for maize, etc.

The hearth, consisting of one square and two round hearthstones, was placed [354] in the centre of the living-room part. Here were also water jars and the woman's bed. This means that even if this type of house had a roof of a different shape and was always provided with a verandah with posts supporting its roof, the interior was really designed on the same lines as the short *ikibaga*, but it was [592] meant to house only one woman, or one man, as we shall see below.

We may imagine that one of the reasons why the type of roof was changed, 342 was the weakness of the pointed roof of the *ikibaga*. It could often be seen to have 178 a tendency to fall in, and had to be supported by a post. Even in Fülleborn's illustrations, e.g. plate 64 c, a kind of reinforcement can be seen at the edge of the roof. No doubt the roof of the *ihema* does not suffer to the same extent from this flaw.

New houses were being built to this design, and I suppose that a little more 342 than half the number of the houses were of the *ikibaga* type, and a little than half the *ihema*.

In the village of Ilolo, I surveyed three houses belonging to one family, a [361]

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

when we went to a field I saw a stick of a special type upright in the soil. It was made of a reed split at the top, with a small bundle of leaves squeezed in the split. A piece of bark stood out from this bundle. I asked the chief for the significance of this and he explained that it was an *ulusingo*, i. e. a tabu sign to prevent anyone from stepping on the field which was an *imasibi* (yam-field). This sign was believed to possess "magical power", to strike an invader with illness. Each owner of a field has the right to protect his field in such a manner, and a chief especially has the right to command tabus regarding plants which are staple food for the whole chieftainship, as, for instance, maize that is not allowed to be reaped before the chief has given his permission. All such tabus are also named *mwiko*[32]. During the time of such a general tabu, visitors, who by chance come through a village under tabu, are not allowed to greet the inhabitants of the village or to speak to them. 241 784 [574]

The chief added that special watchmen are installed during these periods; these men are dressed in a terrifying manner, and have the right to arrest any person transgressing the tabu. The chief may punish the offenders immediately, imposing on them, for instance, a cow as a fine. This was also the case with an ordinary theft in a field, but nowadays such affairs are regulated by the law of the Mandated Government. After the repeal of such a general tabu by the chief, beer will be drunk (e. g. *ubwalwa bwa kutagila bwa kutondelo*, the beer that is poured out at the harvest), and the usual eating community of men will be re-established, for Nyakyusa men like to eat together as comrades, not in families. 241 688 784 [178] [264]

10. When I was in Katumba, dances were held on several days from the afternoon till midnight, very similar in form to that which Mackenzie describes (p. 160) by the name *Ikimbimbi*. 535

The men stood on one side of the open place in several lines, with sticks in their hands; on the opposite side were the women and girls. Between them, more in the background, were the drummers, at the beginning of the dance; then they moved round the place. The principal drummer was a man of great excitability. He performed most extravagant movements with his body and his drumstick, making somersaults, jumping over the drum, treating it as a "living being", running to it and turning just in front of it.

[32] This word *mwiko* (forbidden) has the same wide (profane and ritual) meanings as *tapu* or *tabu* in the Polynesian Languages (cf. *Rud. Lehmann:* Die polynesischen Tabu-Sitten. Staatl. Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde I, 16; Leipzig 1930).

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

grubbing for food outside the stable. Old people also eat the meat of apes *(salila*, ape) and of jakal *(ingebe)*. The Nyakyusa men are generally very fond of eating fowl, indeed: "*Wakugana inyama sya inguku*", they are fond of the flesh of fowl. 262 [192]

Bones are usually given to the children for gnawing. Eight to ten boys may be seen sitting in a circle and alternately gnaw on the same bone, often drinking a little milk *(ulukama)* the while.

During a boating on Lake Nyasa I saw the well-known columnar clouds formed by the so-called Kungu-flies in the distance above the surface of the water. These flies are also eaten by the peoples on the shore of the Lake. When these insects come shore-wards they are caught, roasted at home and then eaten. But I was told that sometimes they are also caught and eaten out on the Lake, being squeezed into lumps between the hands. [136] [252]

The Nyakyusa eat with the right hand, but when the meal consists of such food as boiled maize and beans *(ingate)* they also use spoons *(uluiko)* made of folded strips of banana leaves. Nowadays, however, tin spoons and tin plates have come into wide use. The ancient eating-mats *(akatefu*, diminutive of *urutefu)* are also being more and more displaced. 264 [412] [178 285]

When the meal is over, the vessels and plates are cleaned with the fingers, bent inward, and then licked off. The mouth is rinsed out with water.

10. Diet. The vegetable diet is roughly the following. The light meal in the morning consists mostly of boiled maize-cobs *(ingate)*, sweet potatoes *(imbatata)*, bananas *(ilitoki*, pl. *amatoki)*, roasted bananas; or, *amawifu*, sweet bananas. The main meal in the evening, shortly before sunset, usually consists of flour porridge *(ikiyindi)*, beans *(indima)*, both often boiled together with maize, peas *(efinyaga)* very often in the form of porridge, maize-corns *(ikirombe)* and groundnuts *(isyabala*, pl. *amasyabela)*. These groundnuts are dried in the sun on mats. Bananas, if dried in the same manner, are usually halved lengthwise and spread out sometimes on banana leaves. I have seen this done in the village of Katunba. Granary stores are very often, e. g. near Utengule (on the border of Nyakyusa and Safwa culture), erected on platforms supported by poles. The container is a big quadrangular basket, roughly three by three meters in length and 1 m in height. The roof has the shape of a large Chinese hat and can be taken off from the lower part of the granary. 262 264 [251] [285 415]

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

262 The tender leaves of pumpkins and taro plants *(amasimbi*, leaves of taro), as well as of a number of other plants growing wild *(indeke)* are also used as vegetables. This food is called *iseke*, a word denoting all sorts of green vegetables.

In his treatise on "The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa" (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. 1; 1938, p. 43). G. Wilson points out that the fruit of the so — called *unsyunguti* — tree is "both [278] delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment *(inyemba)*", but he adds that he had been unable to find out the botanical name of this useful tree. Perhaps the following passage in the article of Dr. Kerr Cross ("Notes on the Country Lying between Lakes Nyasa and Tanganyika"; Proc. Roy. Geogr. Inst. N.S.Vol. XIII, 1891, p. 98) may be helpful in this connection: "There is a tree of the 314 sycamore family which grows extensively all over the north of the [262] lake called mwisyungute by the natives which might be developed. [386] It is a most picturesque tree which produces a food, an oil, and a dye. The oil or fat, when cool, is solid, even at a tolerably high temperature, and is like beeswax. It burns well as a night-light, and with wax might [388] be made into candles. In a rude way I have made candles of it. It might also make an excellent soap."

273 As an adjunct to these foods curdy milk *(ulukama ulukafu)* is very [272] much esteemed[2], to say nothing of the various types of beer, mostly prepared from millet for the men. Large fields of millet are, therefore, to be seen everywhere in the land of the Nyakyusa. On one occasion I attended a beer drink in the hut of a chief. The conduct of the natives present, the chief and his advisers *(amafumu)*, was in every respect praise-worthy. Pleasant and interesting stories were narrated. Not [574] infrequently the invitation of a commoner who has had some differences with his chief or one of the *amafumu* to such a feast is regarded as a gesture of reconciliation.

243 As in the time of Sir H. H. Johnston so also to-day "all the oozy-meadows are planted with rice." A traveller coming from the hilly region to the north on nearing Lake Nyasa is struck by numerous large fields of rice in the plain at the northern end of the lake.

● 178 *11. Crafts.* Mackenzie (1925) is certainly justified in complains of the decay of the arts and crafts among the Nyakyusa. The Indian and European influence is to be seen everywhere in the deterioration and final dissolution of these branches of the ancient culture of the Nyaky-

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[2] A. Wilson, Introduction, p. 256.

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

usa. It is true that one still meets blacksmiths on the outskirts of the villages or some distance away from them (as in the case of the Ndali tribe, western to the Nyakyusa area), but they no longer smelt the iron from ore mined by themselves as in former times. The smith of to-day remelt only scrap iron from disused motor-cars and other machines into tools, hatches, and spear-heads, unless, of course, the natives prefer to buy imported iron-ware. As with the Chaga, also the Nyakyusa smith can only be persuaded to submit to being photographed after long negotiation and a change into better clothes. The blacksmiths I met in the Bundali Mountains, however, made no objections whatever to being photographed at their work. Also women were allowed to attend. But one feature of the ancient Nyakyusa blacksmith's culture has been preserved till the present day: the lower part of the bellows through which the air blast is driven into the fire is still made of wood. This feature has been defined by H. Baumann as an element of the "ancient nigritic culture".

12. Dress. The cloths of the Nyakyusa have changed to a very considerable degree since the beginning of European influence. A comparison of the earliest pictures and descriptions of inhabitants at the northern end of Lake Nyasa with the dress of modern times brings out this point most forcibly. Originally the Nyakyusa went almost naked, adorned only with rings and belts, but nowadays all degrees of compromise with European fashions of dress are to be found, especially near the European settlements and Mission Stations. The most conservative element are, in this case, the women. It is still possible to-day to observe in each village the preparation of the long strips of bark *(elyabi*, pl. *amabi)* commonly worn by the women. The so-called *impandapanda* (Fotheringham: *mlambe)* tree furnishes the dress material. After the bark has been immersed in water, the bast is beaten with wooden instruments and then pulled off from the harder parts of the bark. These tools are like hammers; the flat end of such an implement is furrowed, sometimes with a disk made of horn, and as it produces patters on the bast it is called "*obosimbe*", that which produces patters. These long belts, almost reaching the ground, especially in front, are mostly ruby coloured, but the women sitting in front of their huts manufacture also other types with geometrical (triangular) patterns in yellow and brown forming only girdles *(umpango)*. In addition to this minimum requirement in the way of dress some women around the waist also wear copper belts *(manyeta)*, made of thin copper-wire, spiraly wound on a core of hairs from the tails of cows. These

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

THE RITUAL OF BIRTH[1]

842 KYALA (or Lwembe) and the shades create desire in men and women and control conception; when the shades are angry women do not conceive—this is one of the main tenets of pagan Nyakyusa cosmology, and it is combined with a limited knowledge of physiology. It is clearly understood that conception cannot take place without intercourse, and that gestation in humans lasts for nine months, but it is believed that repeated intercourse is necessary [837] for conception, and formerly, if a man found his wife pregnant after having lain with her only once, he accused her of adultery.

(a) *Taboos of procreation*

[181] The procreation of children is an ultimate value of Nyakyusa society and the accepted end of marriage, but it is regarded as 842 dangerous under certain conditions and is hedged about with 753 taboos. These are enforced so that both parents and children may be healthy; a breach of them is thought to result in violent diarrhœa, as well as monstrously swollen legs and weakness in men, general debility in children, and miscarriage or an excessive menstrual flow in women. The onus of observing them falls primarily on women, though their husbands must also co-operate, and a breach of taboo is treated as immoral, for it is believed to endanger the life, or health, or property of others.

831 Certain general conceptions underlie the taboos. The first is that of *ubunyali*, filth, which is held to come from the sex fluids, menstruation, and childbirth, as well as from a corpse, and the blood of a slain enemy. All these are felt to be both disgusting and dangerous, and the sex fluids are held to be particularly dangerous to an infant, hence the taboo on husband and wife resuming intercourse very soon after childbirth.

846 At first, when the child is very young, we think it very bad for the parents to sleep together at all, because when the child is very young

[1] This account came from a score or more women not cited individually, as well as from our regular informants on ritual whose names are mentioned.

7: Sanderson 45 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

THE RELATIONSHIP SYSTEMS OF THE WANGONDE AND WAHENGA TRIBES, NYASALAND.

By MEREDITH SANDERSON, M.R.C.S., F.R.G.S.

I.—THE WANGONDE.

1. THE Wangonde are a Bantu tribe inhabiting that part of Central Africa [101] adjacent to the north-west shores of Lake Nyasa. They are a somewhat primitive [181] people, as yet little contaminated by European civilization; they are intensely conservative and their customs differ from those of neighbouring tribes. As a result of this conservatism their system of relationship still bears, in its nomenclature, [177] evidence of its evolution from exogamy in its most primitive form, and of all Nyasaland tribes the Wangonde have probably been least influenced by contact with others. In recent history they were victimized from time to time both by Arab slavers and by the Angoni, but neither appear to have left any trace of their domination. It should be mentioned, however, that the chieftainship was usurped some 10 (?) generations [563] ago by an adventurer who, according to tradition, came from the north-west (towards Tanganyika) and whose descendants still form the ruling caste. It may be that some new customs were introduced at this time, though this is denied by the descendants of the old nobility, who still retain a large share of influence in tribal council.

2. *Definitions.*—ILUMBU = "brother"[1] to "sister," or "sister" to "brother." [601] A man calls his elder "brother" *mkuluwangu*; a younger one *nung'una*: the same terms are used by a woman for her "sisters." All children of uncles and aunts are regarded as "brothers" and "sisters," including those of maternal uncle and of paternal aunt; those of father's elder "brother," of mother's elder "sister," and of mother's "brother," are called *wakulu*, irrespective of age.

The term *wamyitu* is often used, irrespective of sex, as alternative for "brother" or "sister"; its real meaning is rather "kinsman," and it may also be used for any relative or connection except the age-classes immediately above or below that of the speaker (*e.g.*, father or son), as it implies a degree of intimacy not permitted with those degrees. *Wamyitu* means "my" (lit. "our") "kinsman"; the second and third persons are *wamyinu* and *wamyao* respectively: there is no singular form.

[1] The use of inverted commas with English terms of relationship indicates that they are used in the full classificatory sense.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

married. Thus, yet another bond is forged between chief and headman, for he who provides marriage cattle is 'father' to him who marries, and the chief's wives acknowledge this by avoiding the village headmen of the senior generation as they do their father-in-law. Once the chief's ritual marriage is complete the sex taboo is lifted and such of his men as are already married are joined by their wives. In theory, though not nowadays in practice, the taboo is observed until the marriage of the chief.

All through the ritual of the 'coming out' the idea of a new beginning is expressed—a new site for the villages, new houses, new fire, new power for the young men. The events of this ritual, the seclusion, the lying on a litter, the prohibition on washing, washing with medicines in the doorway of the hut, the admonition, are directly parallel to the events of the rituals of death and puberty which, we have argued in a previous book,[1] are dramatizations of death and rebirth. There seems little doubt that the 'coming out' is yet another celebration of this theme. The young men enter an enclosed house—that of the senior's mother—and 'come out' (*ukusoka*) renewed as a child 'comes out' (*ukusoka*) of the mother's womb. No Nyakyusa informant volunteered such an interpretation, but, when it was suggested, it was eagerly accepted as expressing the real meaning of 'coming out'.

(*b*) THE CHIEF'S MEDICINES

Reference has already been made to medicines used by chiefs and by village headmen at the 'coming out' and we must now examine them more closely. The great medicines of chieftainship are *ifingila* and their function is to create *amanga*, i.e. spiritual power, and *ubusisya*, i.e. dignity, majesty, in order to make the chief fearful 'so that men obey him'. The medicines are comparable to robes of office for they are designed to give their user assurance and fill the commonality with awe. The Nyakyusa also think that chiefs and headmen should be 'heavy' with 'pythons in their bellies' which give them the power to see and fight witches. Without such a 'python' a chief or village headman cannot fulfil his duty of 'watching over the country by day and by night' and if a man is not born with one he may develop it through the proper use of medicines. This notion has been examined elsewhere.[2] The *ifingila* medicines are also thought to give courage and ferocity (*ubugasi*) in war, with luck in seizing enemy

[1] *op. cit.*, p. 205. [2] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 97-102.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

out all the anger that is within', 'admitting that I have done wrong', begging pardon (*ukupelesya*) and *also* a symbol of emission and so of driving off the shades (*vide supra*, pp. 104, 108-110; 139). Good health depends upon good social relationships, and of one who is ailing it is commonly said: 'It seems as if they (unspecified) had hated her.' Further, the proper working of the natural order is held to depend upon the proper working of the social order. Drought, or 'cold', or pestilence falls on a chiefdom if there is quarrelling between chief and priests, and the anger of the Lwembe with his 'sons' will shrivel the crops of Selya. The heroes, the shades, many of the men of power (*abamanga*), and many medicines help to maintain an orderly universe; only the witches and sorcerers work against it. In short, order and right living are an integral part of Nyakyusa religion as they are of Christianity.

The ultimate good is the power of fertility, of generation, which lies in the heroes and shades; the punishment for evil-doing is ill-health of body or mind and sterility. And towards the heroes and shades, who are both life-givers and avengers, the attitude of men is clearly ambivalent: the shades are driven away—'let them warm themselves over there in the long grass', men say when they throw out the ashes (*vide supra*, pp. 109-11) but they bring them home again to 'warm themselves by the hearth'.

In analysing the rituals of the Nyakyusa, I have been driven to the conclusion that they are, in fact, dogged by a sense of guilt,[1] for this is the only hypothesis on which the linking of misfortune and sin, the preoccupation with 'filth', and the recurring acts of purification can be explained. One of the sources of this sense of guilt is, I suggest, awareness of anger within, for it is believed that such anger injures others. An act of confession is essential to many rituals, and what must be confessed are anger, hard thoughts, ill will against others. The anger is acknowledged to come primarily from men—it is the angry parent who rouses the shades to action by muttering over the fire—but the guilt, the filth, is projected on to the shade or the hero. It is when they 'brood on' men that men are contaminated. A shade or a man that is *ngolefu*—good, righteous—is one without a grudge, without anger against anyone, free of witchcraft, and free of sex transgression—'there is no accusation against him'.

[1] I doubted this earlier, cf. 'Nyakyusa Ritual and Symbolism', *American Anthropologist*, v, 56 (1954), pp. 237-8.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

182 Churches in the area. Nevertheless the bulk of professing Christians
595 are monogamists, though it is still customary and, in Rungwe
District, economically profitable, for a rich man who is not a
797 Christian to have more than one wife. The difficulties of establishing monogamy are accentuated by the great disproportion in the numbers of men and women. If the figures available are accurate, a general acceptance of monogamy would mean that only about 70 per cent of the women could be married; therefore the Church is necessarily concerned in seeking an adjustment in the disproportion of the population—in keeping the men alive if our assumption that the shortage of men is due to a heavy male death rate is true.

182 The yeast of the gospel permeates still further. It is taken to
797 imply the freedom of an individual to accept or reject a partner in
584 marriage. This has been maintained from the first in the Nyakyusa Church, and is enforced by the courts, which apply a conception of personal rights springing from the Christian tradition.

182 Most Nyakyusa men attribute the rapid rise in the divorce rate
586 to this new 'freedom' of women. Christian teaching stresses the
797 family and the sanctity of marriage, but it ignores the lineage. In the traditional rituals of kinship the lineage is represented again and again, while in Christian ritual it is the elementary family and the Church that are pictured. The preoccupation with fertility and the reproductive cycle was linked with the glorification of the lineage itself, and it disappears when the lineage ceases to be the basis of social grouping.

How closely linked are symbols to other aspects of a society?
182 Our hypothesis is that they are relatively free, but it can be shown
● 181 that many of the symbols used in the traditional rituals of the
178 Nyakyusa reflect the economy, and vary somewhat from one area to another, with the staple crops. The development of trade or of new crops is a prerequisite for using the symbols of bread and wine traditional in the Christian rituals, and even the 'independent' African Churches use new foods, not the beer and bananas of the country; thus change in material symbols and change in economy may be directly connected. The imagery changes also with the changing social structure; Kyala ceases to be pictured as a senior kinsman, when the lineage organization begins to weaken; he is God the father of a family rather than an early member of the royal lineage. But there is no evidence that

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

particular symbols are tied to a particular social structure; the poet makes his choice within the whole range of the familiar.

The impetus to change has come both from the religious field and from the secular. For example, the pressure towards monogamy among the Nyakyusa has been religious; given plentiful land and cash crops additional wives are an economic asset, not a liability. In this respect the contrast with the Ciskei in South Africa, where families are dependent for food on wage-earners in towns, and no man can support two families,[1] is marked. On the other hand, the decay of Nyakyusa age-villages is primarily due to economic pressure, though it is facilitated by the insistence of Christians that there is no danger in father-in-law and daughter-in-law meeting one another. The first generation of Christians living on mission land built villages apart for their sons, despite the teaching that avoidance of a father-in-law by his daughter-in-law was foolish, if not sinful. But a radical change in pagan observance of ritual avoidance is brought about by the general practice of going out to work for long periods, and the competition for coffee and rice-lands, which makes the territorial separation of fathers and sons impossible. As we have shown, young men going to work commonly leave their wives in their fathers' homesteads, valuing the support and supervision given them there above the old stringency of avoidance and, where land is scarce and valuable, fathers do not move aside each generation to make way for their sons. Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law continues only in an attenuated form.

From German times control by a European government has compelled a modification of the traditional sacrifices to the heroes and of the ritual of chieftainship. How the Kinga priests came to Lubaga 'in secret' and how they failed to instal a new Lwembe after the death of Mwakisisya about 1914 has been described. Killing a child to anoint a drum or make medicine for the fields, compelling a man to accept a dangerous office, killing chiefs because they are ailing, or plucking off their nails before they die; all these are actions which are held, and must be held, to be 'contrary to natural justice' by any Western government. Here the change in political organization compels a change in ritual and there is evidence that belief in the traditional forms is much diminished, though not dead. The European government also

[1] Keiskammahoek Rural Survey. Vol. ii, *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, by D. H. Houghton and E. M. Walton; vol. iii, *Social Structure*, by M. Wilson *et al.*

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and try to understand the nature and reasons for change. Here, then, is a good opportunity for the study of social change – not only in land tenure as such, but also in village and family organisation, political authority and economic life.

II

The Nyakyusa are a Bantu people inhabiting the main part of the Rungwe District in southern Tanganyika, immediately to the north of Lake Nyasa. In 1948 they numbered about 199,000 in that District, but about 10,000 men were probably at the time temporarily absent from their homes and in employment in the mines and towns of the Rhodesias and South Africa (see Gulliver, 1957), whilst about 20,000 had migrated to live in the adjacent Mbeya District to the north.

The tribal area comprises a confined geographical basin surrounding the northern end of Lake Nyasa. It extends only about 40 miles from the tip of the lake at 1,550 feet above sea level to the Poroto Mountains in the north at 8,000 feet; and from east to west is only about 30 miles, from the almost sheer walls of the Livingstone Mountains (with peaks up to 10,000 feet) to the Ndali Highlands (rising to about 7,000 feet). There are therefore unusually large ecological differences within so small an area. Three major regions are to be distinguished: the "Northern Highlands" over about 4,500 feet, the low-lying "Lake Plains" in the south, and the "Central Region" in between. Everywhere rainfall is reliable and high, averaging at least 100 inches annually[1], and this amply compensates for a certain poverty and misuse of the soil, although (and particularly in the Central Region) it brings dangers of soil erosion. Except in the highest parts the banana is the staple food, supported by maize, beans, finger millet and groundnuts. In the Northern Highlands coffee has become well established as the principal cash crop: in the Lake Plains paddy rice cultivation provides both a food and a cash crop: in the Central Region the country is too low generally for coffee and too high and dry for rice; consequently cash-cropping is considerably inferior and the people's standard of living is rather poorer.

The Nyakyusa and their country tended for a long time to be relatively isolated from the outside world by high mountain walls and rain-soaked roads. In addition, or because of it perhaps, they developed an almost unique culture which was supported by considerable conservatism and high insularity. They still continue to regard their African neighbours beyond the mountains as their social and cultural inferiors. The turmoil of the slave-trade in Central Africa passed them by; in modern times they have not enthusiastically accepted Christianity and they have refused to take up the use of Swahili, the Territorial *lingua franca*. In recent years, and most especially since the end of World War II, they have, however, accepted and pushed forward with vigour a rapid and extensive economic development, involving particularly the production of coffee and paddy as cash crops, and large-scale labour migration to the south in the high-wage mining industries. The multiplicity of petty, often tiny, independent chiefdoms has been reorganised to provide four local government areas, each under a Rural Council, in which the old chiefdoms have become something like parishes[2]. Although much of the old conservatism and narrow parochialism persists, yet there is now an atmosphere of accepted change, of a keen desire for economic development, and a general acceptance of a cash economy.

Probably the most significant feature of modern life in the Nyakyusa country is the increasing scarcity of land for agriculture in relation to the

1. At Tukuyu, in the Northern Highlands, annual rainfall averaged 99.20 inches between 1919 and 1952; at Kyela, in the Lake Plains, the average between 1940 and 1951 was 106.33 inches.
2. See Kingdon, E.E.: 'The extension of a system of local government by African rural councils in the Rungwe District, Tanganyika', *The Journal of African Administration*, iii, 4, October, 1951.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

there remained scattered pieces here and there which could be taken up, and some existing holdings in the area are too large for the agricultural capabilities of their occupiers. The temporary safety valve was shut off. The local headman had become seriously worried over the large-scale alienation of his land resources without any equivalent increase in the number of his villagers, and he also wished to conserve the remaining land against the now better understood needs of his own people. 423 78

The principle of no land without residence also means that a villager who wishes to move must automatically forfeit his land-holding in the village. A little earlier he would most probably have been able to retain at least his fields beyond the immediate vicinity of the houses – in so far as his new residence was not too far away to allow continued cultivation. This has been especially important for younger men who, wishing to take up a vacant holding elsewhere, also desire to retain their share of the paternal holding obtained by inheritance. Conversely, they are now unable to move on to their father's holding and yet retain their fields in their own village. Such men must now make a permanent decision between the utility of, perhaps, two inadequate holdings which, however, combined together might be of satisfactory size.

As a consequence of this, inter-village opposition is probably greater than it has ever been in European times, and no less strong perhaps than it was in the old days. Men feel that the security of their holdings, the future of their sons, and the possibility of increasing their arable cultivation lies wholly within the security and stability of their own village. They tend to see other villages and other villagers as a potential threat to their own land requirements; they often suspect the worst of neighbouring villages who, they think, will, given the chance, seize some of their land. Headmen and villagers would refuse to cross the boundary into another village when they accompanied me during my investigations, lest they be accused of contemplating appropriation of the land there. Such aliens who still retained land in a village were regarded with some animosity. Nyakyusa would not look beyond their own village boundaries in an attempt to make an appreciation of the modern overall land situation. They wished only tenaciously to cling to what they already had and to guard it jealously; they were only too inclined to believe that other villages nearby were better off and to use them as scapegoats for their own difficulties and shortage. It must be said that this renewed insistence on village exclusiveness and the inviolability of village boundaries has in fact tended to make for a certain inequality of land-holding according to the perceptiveness and celerity with which headmen claimed authority over formerly vacant lands. This condition is, however, overexaggerated in men's claims today, and in any case it is tending to disappear under the pressure of inter-village movement. [628]

The Nyakyusa village in the Lake Plains, with its intensified independence and aggressive exclusiveness, and jealous of its believed permanent boundaries, has not at the same time been able to retain its traditional coeval basis. Whereas formerly the youths of a village moved to one side, there to build their own hamlet and eventually to acquire their own fields in association with its establishment as a full village in its own right, now this is no longer feasible or even possible, for the land is not available for this sort of expansion. The young men are driven back on a dependence on the fields already held by their fathers in the old village. They gradually move into their fathers' places and take over the paternal holdings; or, as we have seen, they seek where they may to obtain new allocations in any other village where they can gain admittance. The coeval basis of village living is lost. [181] ●

The boys and youths still leave their fathers' houses and build their first, small huts together on a site somewhere adjacent to the main village site, [382] [361] [561]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

This is not the province of the Sociologist, and all that can be said here is that it seems the most practical and valuable policy that could be adopted: it should be made the chief line of attack on contemporary problems. Unfortunately the Nyakyusa do not appreciate the value of this sort of solution – at least not yet – and therefore they are not inclined to learn and to increase their efforts and to change their practices in the fields. They have not yet rid themselves of the notion that increased production of crops and thus increased profits from agriculture are correlated only with increased holdings. In view of the critical land shortage a crucial change of attitude and understanding is required. The Nyakyusa must learn that increased production and higher profits can come from new and more efficient techniques – i.e. intensive cultivation. They must also learn what is so difficult for the African, that quality of production is no less important than quantity and that therefore cash incomes and standards of living can be raised by improving the standard of crops to be sold. Indeed, with a tendency for world agricultural prices to fall due to increasing supply, quality of produce is of the greatest importance. This is notably so in the case of rice. Tanganyika African rice is reckoned as of lower quality than that from South-east Asia, which therefore commands not only the better price but also the main share of the keenly competitive market. But it is a difficult idea for the Nyakyusa to grasp. It seems obvious to them, inheriting attitudes of a former subsistence age, that three poor cattle are better than two good ones – and in fact so they were in the hazardous time of their grandfathers. Cash crop production is based on the same premise, but it cannot hold in a modern cash economy and in dealings with world markets.

If, however, the present land shortage continues unchecked by the successful introduction of new attitudes, ideas and techniques there may well be serious social and political repercussions in the not too distant future. Current schemes of tribal development will surely be rendered futile if economic activity is restricted and if land discontent is allowed to become important.

A second agricultural policy, and one of which less is heard, would be to stop the present dangerous monoculture – the persistence with paddy alone – and to attempt on a large scale to introduce second and third cash crops, particularly such crops as require intensive cultivation on small acreages. This may be forced on the people in any case if the gloomy prognostications of world rice prices are borne out in the next few years. Such a development would allow of a more stable economy and a more balanced agriculture, in addition to assisting towards a reduction of land difficulties. Experiments on a small scale in robusta coffee, palm oil and other crops have already been started by the Agricultural Department but, at least from the layman's point of view, they need priority in finance, attention and effort as a main part of an agricultural programme for the Lake Plains.

In the time available for my investigations it was not possible to enquire with sufficient care into the details and exact procedure of Nyakyusa land law (*c.f.* page 3) and therefore I am reluctant to suggest any drastic changes. The new inheritance law (page 21) is a step in the right direction and is clearly in keeping with modern trends, but it is suggested that its detailed operation on the ground and in the courts should be studied by the Native Authority and the Administration in order to attempt to define its meaning more clearly and to reduce the number of disputes. In order to check fragmentation before it has gone too far, it should be considered whether some minimum limit might not be imposed on the size of fields. Voluntary schemes for the consolidation of holdings, which have achieved some success elsewhere in Africa, might also be considered. These would be particularly valuable in the

11:Thwaites C-5 (ca. 1942) 1944
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P.236 A]

WANYAKYUSA AGRICULTURE

By D. H. Thwaites, Agricultural Assistant, Tanganyika Territory

131 The Wanyakyusa occupy the District of Rungwe in the Southern Highlands Province. The district lies between 9° and 9½° S. latitude
133 at the northern tip of Lake Nyasa. The altitude ranges from 1,500 feet to 9,500 feet. The
631 district is divided into twelve chiefdoms. The Administrative Headquarters are at Tukuyu, which was known before the British occupation as Neu Langenberg.

Inhabitants

101 The local people are not indigeneous to this area. They came, tradition has it, from
[173] Mahenge via Ukinga after many tribal fights. They are akin to the Wahenga in Nyasaland bordering on the Tanganyika boundary. It is
191 estimated that only 10 per cent of the Wanya-
161 kyusa speak Kiswahili. According to the 1935 census the total poulation was 153,204. The
162 total number of tax-payers in 1942 was 35,304, or 23.04 per cent of the total population.

181 The people themselves are extremely industrious and intelligent. As there are 90 people to the square mile, living conditions are
105 crowded and emigration is continually taking place. The people are partial to litigation over cattle and women. The number of cases heard annually in the Native Courts is about 6,000. There is no one historical and traditional head of the tribe. The twelve Chiefs are, in reality, hereditary Headmen who have been selected by Government to be Chiefs. They are in effect only *primi inter pares* in native eyes, the outlook of the people being unusually democratic for a native tribe.

105 The people live in houses made of wattle and daub or bamboo frame, with thatched
242 roof, and villages are sited mostly along ridges.
361 Rectangular houses are now built instead of the round huts of former days. They often stand in rows with a main street down the [illegible] more progressive natives build with sun-dried or burnt brick. Stock are stalled in the same house owing to the prevalence of thieving, but sleep in separate rooms.

Climate

132 The rainfall of the district varies in the different areas. In Tukuyu itself the annual average for 25 years (1918-1942) is 100.22 inches. On the Lake shore the average is probably higher, but no continuous statistics are available. The heaviest rainfall months are from December to May, but, in most years,

438 north. Before the war, the goldfields gave work
316 to about 15,000 natives, chiefly Wanyakyusa,
and most of the foodstuffs from this district
[464] went there. The goldfields are gradually closing
due to difficulties in obtaining spares, and it
has been necessary to look for outlets for
Tukuyu produce elsewhere. Should the gold-
fields open again after the war, and large-
scale mining start, there is a great future for
produce grown in Tukuyu.

434 The main income of the tribe is derived
from agricultural, military, mining and public
works sources, and it is estimated that in 1941
the average annual income per man, woman
and child was about Sh. 10 per year. It has
risen considerably since, as over 4,000 men
have joined the military and a large part of
their salaries comes back to the district in the
form of remittances. The agricultural source,
from which a larger part of the tribal income
[464] accrues, is from sales of rice, maize and other
foodstuffs. A fair number of Wanyakyusa also
work on the tea plantations.

241 The picture sketched above will show that
the district is inhabited by a tribe whose agri-
culture is of great interest, since the variety
of crops, from wheat in the highlands to
paddy and cotton on the lake shore, is perhaps
unrivalled in so small an area elsewhere in
191 East Africa. It has not been possible to fill in
the picture with details of the people's
character, but it is worth mentioning that the
Wanyakyusa are a people difficult to ad-
minister, argumentative, litigious, self-willed
and at times inclined to truculence. Neverthe-
153 less their intelligence is such that they are
willing to be persuaded, and, once convinced
of the benefit of any change, adopt it with
energy. This is instanced by the way they have
in a few years accepted the principles of anti-
erosion to such an extent that now there is
perhaps 90 per cent control in the well-popu-
lated areas. It should, however, be stressed
134 that, though the soil is not being wilfully
241 any great extent, it is still being impoverished,
since increased cultivation for the war effort
has involved breaking a great deal of new land
with a consequent lessening of fallow. Over-
cropping in the hilly country is very great and,
in order to prevent further emigration, it be-
[185] hoves the native planters to learn to put some-
thing back into the soil in the form of mulch
or compost. If care is not taken, a comparat-
ively prosperous country will one day become
like so many parts of Africa, where a losing
struggle is fought with Nature to obtain a
sufficiency for the people's needs.

on 21st September, 1943

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

574 African churches which countenance polygyny. The difficulty is
184 partially overcome in some well-to-do Christian families by hiring labour to work in their fields and to fetch water and wood, and by offering visitors coffee or tea, which are easily prepared, in place of home-brewed beer; nevertheless the conflict between
[182] the value of hospitality (to which pagan and Christian alike subscribe, though they define it rather differently) and the value of monogamy, is often acute.

621 The mutual obligations of neighbours are not confined to feeding one another, for neighbours share with relatives the obligation of giving sympathy and assistance at the various crises in Nyakyusa life; the concept of *ukwangala* includes keeping on good terms with people by being sympathetic and obliging.

764 All the members of a village (except young children) are
621 obliged to attend every burial of an adolescent or adult in that village; they go to mourn the death of a neighbour or condole with one who is burying a 'son', for if a man dies while his father (or father's full brother, or his own senior brother) is yet alive, he is often buried in his 'father's' homestead.[1] Where a youth or man is buried by his 'father', his fellow villagers must attend the funeral also, but boys and young men need not go to a funeral in their fathers' village unless it is a village-mate of their own who is being buried.

[759] Funerals are occasions for feasting and dancing, so the obligation 'to mourn one another' (*ukulelawela*) does not press hardly, and the Nyakyusa feeling is that no one would fail to come unless he were a witch, and fearful lest his victim rise from the grave and denounce him. 'If a man does not go to his neighbour's burial then at once people say: "It was you who bewitched him, [illegible] Failure to come is certain evidence that the truant is 'a harsh man who does not keep on good terms with people (*nkali, atikwangala kwanu nabanda*)'.

764 One neighbour, 'he who went about most with the dead man', is appointed by the headman of the village to help the relatives dig the grave, and village neighbours must also bring small gifts of food and firewood for the entertainment of the many guests.

[1] A married man whose 'fathers' are dead, or do not choose to exercise their right to bury him, is buried at his own home, and a woman who has borne a child is buried at her husband's house.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

was a fierce man in war, and always quarrelling with and spearing his fellows, he would say with pride: "He is my son!" And if he heard people saying: "The son of so and so is a fierce man", he would rejoice. And if the son wished to marry young his father would refuse him cows, saying: "Swagger first." That truculence (*ukukali*) is a form of swaggering for men, is still evident in the funeral dance, when men charge up and down with spears, displaying their strength, and take umbrage at the slightest thing (*vide infra*, p. 151). And marriage was deliberately delayed partly because a bachelor was thought to be a fiercer warrior than a married man.

This admiration of truculence, as shown in the funeral dance, reveals a contradiction in Nyakyusa values. On the one hand urbanity and good temper are praised—they are intrinsic to *ukwangala*—on the other truculence. Is the opposition one between old and new values, or is the contradiction itself traditional? It is obvious that a readiness to fight was a quality valuable to the village in the days of inter-village warfare, and the Nyakyusa tell of murderers and even thieves being reprieved just because they were so useful in war. 'We did not drive away violent men (*abagan*) in the old days; we said: "They will fight along with us in the future" '; whereas since the pacification of the country, quarrelsome men have become nothing but a liability, likely to get their fellows and their chief into trouble with the Administration. The Christian emphasis, also, is all on the virtue of peaceableness. There has probably been some change in values with the disappearance of war from the villages, but we think that a certain contradiction always existed: swaggering young men were admired, and children were warned not to be quarrelsome (*ukali*) [illegible] practising witchcraft, or rouse the anger of a witch. The contradiction is not, of course, peculiar to Nyakyusa society, and it may be resolved by defining the groups within which fighting is excluded, and those in which it is approved. Most Nyakyusa would hold that in the old days quarrelsomeness within the village was bad, that towards members of another village of the same chiefdom it was allowable, and towards members of another chiefdom it was good. In the wider society of to-day the same distinctions are apparent: the war dance at funerals is limited lest it lead to fighting between villages (*vide infra*, p. 151) but admir-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ing audiences watch their friends in the detachment of the King's African Rifles at bayonet drill in Masoko.[1]

Display is felt to be particularly appropriate to young people, and bachelors were held to be the fiercest warriors, but neither dancing nor fighting was confined to young men. The chief Mwaipopo (Plate V) was famous as a skilful and ardent dancer when over seventy, and the leader in war was the senior headman of the country, who, if not already married when he took office, had to marry almost immediately, since his wife shared in the ritual of establishing his house. Furthermore the villages of married men of the ruling generation fought, as well as the villages of their bachelor brothers and sons.

That the Nyakyusa had some skill in warfare is certain, for they defeated and drove off Ngoni raiders and warriors of the Sangu chief Merere,[2] but they never developed a military kingdom like that of the Bemba to the west, or the Hehe to the east, nor did they raid at large like the Masai and Ngoni. Their geographical position sheltered them very considerably from outside attack, and discouraged raiding abroad. They confined themselves mostly to lifting the cattle of neighbouring chiefdoms.

Cattle, whether they be spoils of war or inherited wealth, are displayed. Not only does a long byre add to the dignity of a homestead, but, when there is some ceremony at the home of a rich man, he shows off his herd by driving it round and round the homestead. At other times his sons gallop it along the village street, the iron bells with which the animals are adorned ringing merrily. Nyakyusa smiths make cow-bells in sets,[3] to chime in harmony, and the aim of a rich man is to own a set of bells which ring a full chime, and a herd large enough to carry them. Nowadays those who own bicycles display them in the same sort of way, riding round and round the homestead at a ceremony, and ringing the bells madly.

Unlike the enjoyment of good company (*ukwangala*), display

[1] This detachment was not supposed to include Nyakyusa who were recruited for a detachment stationed outside the district, but in fact Nyakyusa got in by posing as men from Ngonde, Nyasaland.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 119–20; Lugard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 56, speaks of the Nyakyusa as 'brave in war'.

[3] We deposited a set in the Livingstone Memorial Museum, Livingstone, N. Rhodesia.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

 §34 795 177

ance among Nyakyusa Christians, and the tendency for fathers and sons to build fairly close to one another.

The forms of display approved among Christians are also changing with the change in the sex code. The nakedness of the Nyakyusa shocked the missionaries, and it is insisted that Christian women, as well as men, should wear at least one cloth; also many of the traditional dances and songs are felt by the Nyakyusa converts themselves to be incompatible with the profession of Christianity, consequently at funerals and weddings there is often a group of Christians dancing quite separately from pagans, and singing their own song, which, more often than not, is a hymn. A wedding dance to a hymn does not appear incongruous to Nyakyusa, as it does to European observers.

e. Wisdom

There is a very close connection between the values we have cited, and all save one are coherent with one another. The enjoyment of good company implies observance of the rules of decency; *ukwangala* is between equals, not between parents and children; it merges into neighbourliness, for one who does not help, or seek help from, a neighbour is unfriendly (*atikwangala kanunu*); and it is dependent upon that generous hospitality which is one of the manifestations of dignity (*ubunisya*). 182●

The one value which is not wholly coherent with the others is the value of display (*ukumoga*). Certain forms of display are compatible with urbanity and friendliness between neighbours, but the swaggering truculence of the warrior is not—it is liable to [illegible] and display also ceases to be compatible with other values when it involves adultery. The friends of a woman who has eloped with a lover may greet her with the phrase: '*Ndaga, umogile!*' which literally translated means 'Thank you, you have displayed yourself', and implies, 'Congratulations! Had a good time?' But no Nyakyusa would maintain that to commit adultery was, in general, good. [837]

The all-embracing virtue to the Nyakyusa is wisdom (*amahala*). It includes the enjoyment of company and the practice of hospitality, for no man is wise who is surly, or aloof, or stingy; it includes neighbourly behaviour, dignity, and respect for law and 577

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

state, and the property of a convicted witch went to the chief. 105
Therefore the lineage was not the unrivalled principle of social grouping among the Nyakyusa as it was among the Tallensi or Nuer, but it was a corporate body.[1]

The existence of three types of groups among the Nyakyusa 105
made for social integration. The divergent interests of villages were 182
checked by the fact that every man had kinsmen in many other villages upon whom he was dependent, economically and ritually; the fissiparous tendencies of lineages were checked by the loyalties of lineage members to different villages; and the villages and lineages were all held to be dependent upon their chief for the fertility of their land, control of the weather, and success in warfare.

Since an account of the Nyakyusa age-villages and an outline 000
of their kinship system have already published,[2] we may now turn directly to the topic of this book, their religion.

The traditional religion of the Nyakyusa people has three 771
elements: First, there is a lively belief in the survival of the dead 105
and in the power of senior relatives, both living and dead, over their descendants; secondly, there is a belief in medicines, that is, in a mystical power residing in certain material substances which is used by those who have the requisite knowledge; thirdly, there is a belief in witchcraft, that is, an innate power to harm others exercised by certain individuals, and in the mystical power of fellow villagers to punish wrongdoers. This last power, 'the breath of men', is akin to witchcraft. It may be objected that a belief in witchcraft is in no sense 'religious', but to exclude discussion of it [illegible] reference to the devil in a discussion of Christianity. Evil is a reality which must be interpreted in one fashion or another in every cosmology.

The belief in the survival of the dead and the power of senior relatives, is expressed in a series of elaborate rituals, one set of which concern only kinsmen and are directed towards the im-

[1] There appear to be many gradations between a society with no corporate lineages, such as the Lozi, and one like the Tallensi in which the lineage is the basis of all important social groups, just as there are gradations between a stateless society in which all offences are treated as quarrels between groups of kinsmen, and a primitive state in which any serious assault is an offence against the state.

[2] Monica Wilson, op. cit. and 'Nyakyusa kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, ed. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde (1951).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

to the dancers a heightened sense of their own warlike quality: 764
'We used not actually to fight at burials so much as to dance and 535
become conscious of our strength for future wars against other 721
chiefdoms, when, on another day, we would go to raid their cows.'

But although an actual fight was not a necessary part of the 578
funeral it very frequently occurred; and burials are still one of 764
the most usual occasions of spearing. 'In the old days, before the 721
country was at peace, we men often fought at burials; we ran in 535
front spearing one another, while our wives ran behind calling the war-cry and watching the prowess of their husbands.' So far from rituals having the sole function of promoting social integration, as [182] some would have us believe, the burial rites of the Nyakyusa were occasions on which existing antipathies continually found overt expression in fighting and new antipathies arose; but the quarrels were not within the mourning lineage.

The fights normally followed the lines of division between chiefdom and chiefdom, village and village. Kinship and affinity have always for some men extended beyond the single chiefdom; and to the burials of these people, if they are in any way eminent, the young men of other chiefdoms often come to dance. And while today, with a well-established tradition of peace, there are fewer smouldering enmities between chiefdoms, forty or fifty years ago it was scarcely possible for the young men of two chiefs to meet peaceably; cattle-raids, abductions of women, defeats and victories in battle were too hot in the memory. Sometimes an accidental jostling, sometimes a deliberate insult was the occasion for a running fight.

At burials there was often war. If the men of two chiefdoms were there together at a burial they would quarrel and fight. Sometimes the fight began when one hurled his spear into the ground and then pulled it up so as to pitch earth on to another man. Perhaps there would be only a few men dancing at first and many sitting down; but when a neighbouring chief was heard coming with his men, and the sound of the trumpet and flute[1] came to us, then we said: 'If we sit still they will say there were no men but only women at that burial, let us dance too!' So we would get up and dance, and then if the others did anything there would be war.

And fights sometimes occurred between two villages of the same chief.

[1] The trumpet of horn and the bamboo flute which used to accompany the war-dance. They are now seldom heard; drums have superseded them.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

It has been shown that participation in rituals compels the gathering together and co-operation of kinsmen and of affines, most of whom live dispersed in different villages; it compels the provision of lavish feasts; it compels respectful behaviour to senior kinsmen and, more particularly, affines; it compels an erring son to beg forgiveness of his father, and the father to receive him; it compels confession of anger and formal forgiveness between kinsmen. In short, the rituals compel outward conformity to an approved system of co-operation and respect; the expression of certain sentiments is compulsory whatever the individual may feel. It is clearly understood that not all feel the sentiments they express: Nyakyusa women commented on the fact that certain widows were not really grieved at their husbands' deaths, though they wailed and smeared themselves with mud: but the corporate expression *tends* to induce the appropriate feelings. Even to an outsider the pressure of the ritual is strong; the sense of terror and grief in a throng of women, close packed, and weeping and wailing, is intense. Moreover, though the emphasis is on outward conformity, there is constantly the suggestion that inward attitudes are significant: anger 'in the heart' is dangerous; the medicine will injure any who do not indeed forgive their kinsmen (p. 182, 266 ff.). It is because they think inward attitudes matter that the Nyakyusa lay so much stress on confession (*ukusosya*), admission of a grudge or anger, as the essential preliminary to reconcilation.

This brings us to the next point: the rituals provide for the public expression of anti-social attitudes or tendencies, and their public rejection. The Nyakyusa hold that merely to suppress grief or hatred is useless, and likely to increase it, and they constantly press on one another the need to *ukusosya*, to 'bring out', to confess, and affines is the prelude to reconcilation; the open expression of antagonism between two lineages, which are then reconciled by the exchange of gifts and feasts in the Lugulu ritual of vituperation, is but the most dramatic instance of a common theme. The violent expression of grief and anger in the death ritual precedes an assertion of life, and joy in living. The miming of the actions of a madman, and identification with the shades, in the rituals at death, puberty, and twin birth, may be interpreted as an expression of the desire to wallow in filth and the desire for death, preceding purification and rebirth. In short, the rituals are both

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 99-100.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

182 affirmative and cathartic: they express certain attitudes and make explicit and reject others. But how far the catharsis is efficient, how far the rituals cleanse man of anti-social attitudes, we do not know. In many religions there is liable to be a gap between attitudes expressed in ritual and everyday behaviour: between the rejection of anger, hate, envy, and neglect in the ritual, and brotherly co-operation between the worshippers in secular affairs. A pagan Nyakyusa may share the sacrificial flesh with his brother but quarrel over cattle and work sorcery against him; just as we white South Africans may take Communion with a fellow Christian who is black, yet compel him to live in squalor far separate from us; but the very reluctance of most whites in South Africa to take Communion along with blacks is evidence that the symbolic act is not without significance.

(c) *Ultimate values and cultural variation*

121 There are certain general hypotheses about the nature of ritual in society, which the analysis of Nyakyusa rituals and comparison with other societies suggest.[1]

First, those things are treated as sacred which are necessary to the survival of the group. In every society we find the *means of subsistence* sacralized (whether it be crops, cattle, hunting, or fishing, or a combination of these) together with fire and shelter. The reproductive cycle is always treated as sacred, the primary relationships of parents and children and siblings, the group or community as a whole, and significant changes in status within it. Law is holy in the sense that right behaviour (or morality) is always linked to religion.

As economy and social structure vary, the particular items treated as sacred vary. This is clearly recognized by the Nyakyusa themselves, as the texts quoted show: the foods used in the rituals are commonly the staple foods of the local area. And if a number of Bantu-speaking groups are compared it is plain that the location of the altar varies with the economy. Among the Nyakyusa it is the earth of the banana grove; among the pastoral Nguni it is the cattle byre; among Lunda hunters it is a tree or branch adorned with trophies of the chase.[2] The exception is when rituals

[1] My debt to Professor Radcliffe-Brown will be obvious to all students of anthropology.

[2] V. W. Turner, 'Lunda Rites and Ceremonies', *Occasional Papers of the Rhodes-Livingstone Museum*, No. 10, 1953.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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degree. Sir Charles Darwin has suggested that those societies which put a premium on fertility will ultimately be dominant, by the weight of numbers,[1] but the evidence from Africa suggests that those societies which have in fact survived have regulated reproduction. Of the concern of the Nyakyusa with fertility there can be no doubt. The gods *are* the reproductive principle expressed in the idiom of a patrilineal society—'the shade and the semen are brothers'. One of the express purposes of the rituals of kinship, as well as of the communal rituals, is to secure fertility; one of the major sanctions of religion is the fear of the loss of it. And further than this, all their major activities are expressed in terms of the reproductive cycle and thought to be linked to it. The association of crops, and cattle, and hunting, and war with pregnancy and menstruation in women has already been indicated, and a more general connection between fertility in crops, and cattle, and men will be shown in the account of communal rituals. The two principal crafts, iron smelting and bark-cloth making, are associated with the act of coition. So also are fire-making, grinding, cooking, and eating; and the hearth and hut are identified with the union of husband and wife, and with childbirth. Whether such a preoccupation with fecundity, and the tendency to express all activities in terms of the reproductive cycle, are stronger among the Nyakyusa than among most other peoples we do not yet know, but at least they do not minimize its importance. It is the more significant therefore that, though maximum fertility of soil and stock was sought, there was a limitation of the human reproductive rate by deliberate spacing, and by limiting a woman's period of child-bearing to the years before her son's marriage. The Nyakyusa appear to have been an expanding people in relatively empty country, and the six or seven births per woman which this system allowed, combined with an infant mortality of perhaps 50 per cent, did not cause undue pressure upon their resources.

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The particular form of limitation was linked to the structure of age-villages. The very wide spacing, with four to five years between pregnancies, and the taboo on a woman bearing after the marriage of her eldest son, ensured that, as a general rule, full brothers built in different villages. Thus the most closely-knit kinship group, that of full brothers and their sons, did not coincide with the local group, and the fissiparous tendency of lineages was checked by village loyalties. A group of full brothers and their

[1] Charles Darwin, *The Next Million Years*, p. 171 *et passim*.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sons, between whom economic and religious bonds were strong, 121 182 might be liable to isolate themselves, but could not do so when each brother and son lived in a different village. As among the northern Nguni and Tswana, who were organized in age regiments,[1] the principle of generation balanced the lineage principle, each holding the other in check.

Every society values co-operation: 'mutual aid' of one sort or another is a condition of social survival. The Nyakyusa rituals of kinship constantly reaffirm the mutual dependence of members of a lineage. They are 'members of one another' by virtue of their common blood, and what injures one may injure all. This is very clearly expressed in the rituals of death, twin birth, spearing, rotting the ropes, and protection against sorcery. The desire for health and plenty is the lever used to compel co-operation.

The elementary family of parents and children exists in every 121 society of which we have evidence and may be taken as an institu- 594 tion necessary to survival, biological and social, though its form varies. In the death, and puberty, and birth rituals the close character of the bonds between parents and children, between siblings, and between spouses, is expressed; and the polygynous form of the Nyakyusa family, the closer bonds between a man and his first wife and those of the same 'house', and the identification of alternate generations, are also manifested. Thus the importance of the primary ties of parents and children, and of the 'house' within the polygynous family, is enhanced.

Differences in status exist in every society and must do so since 121 leadership is necessary. Individuals move from one position to 554 another during the course of their lives, and all societies celebrate such changes, thereby compelling public acceptance of them, and impressing on the individuals concerned their new duties and responsibilities. These are expressed very pointedly in the Nyakyusa admonition to a bride, or widow, or the mother of twins; in the greeting accorded to the heir to the father of a family; and in the oration to the shade. The rituals are a symbolic weaning from childhood, from the bride's father's lineage, from a former marriage, or from deceased parents, and compel acceptance of a new position; clinging to the old spells madness and death. The conception of being 'born again' and making a new start, is directly

[1] Among the Pedi it was taboo for full brothers to be initiated into the same regiment. G. M. Pitje, 'Traditional systems of male education among the Pedi', *African Studies*, 9 (1950), p. 109.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

574 of more importance are the magistrate and the missionary, whose coming is usually heralded afar, by the report that he is already in the district, and is now perhaps only a day's journey off, slowly making his way from village to village, and dealing with whatever matters require his attention as magistrate or missionary. His coming is a matter of importance, for he will have a number of men with him who will need food, by the sale of which the villagers hope to make a few honest pence; though abundance of food is often given freely as a token of welcome. As the great man approaches the village, all the younger people come out to meet him with shouts of welcome, and if he is travelling in a *machilla*, the men will take the pole from the bearers, and with tremendous noise enter the village and deposit him at the school or the chief's house.

●182 And the sadder side? Sickness, epidemics, the perpetual fear of witchcraft and of evil dreams foreshadowing ill, theft with its ever-present possibility
561 578 of accompanying murder, quarrels that will not heal, forced marriages, and all the hidden cruelty that so rarely comes to the surface. Most pathetic of all, perhaps, the feud between old and young; the young all for to-day and to-morrow, for the new ideas, the hope of progress; the old for yesterday with its stability and ordered life; the young going in crowds to church, the old going secretly, and no doubt sadly, to worship at the ancient shrines, guarding the approaches lest the levity of youth should desecrate the place of terror, and evil come upon all the land; the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

young gathering around the white man, and lending themselves to his purposes, the old even to-day approaching him with reluctance, if at all, for to them he still retains much of the awe and hidden power with which he was credited in the earlier days.

The individual Konde is not so popular with white men as are members of other tribes; indeed there are employers who will not knowingly give work to a Konde at all. As workmen, it must be acknowledged that they are both less active and less reliable than surrounding tribes; they are neither so intelligent nor so loyal to contract. The Konde soon wearies of effort, and longs to get back to the lowing of his cattle and his pretty little hut in its banana grove. He loves his children, and the hope of being able to clothe them if he works well, does not compensate him for prolonged absence. Loyalty, as the Henga, Angoni, and Yao are loyal, does not distinguish the Konde, who show loyalty rather to chief and to tribal custom, than to the white man with his problematical benefits. They have never attached themselves to the European, as many of the surrounding tribes have done; for the Konde are less convinced than others that the one hope of Africa is the European and his influence; less convinced, be it added, that Africa stands so desperately in need of saving. That may be due to their unawakened condition—and, again, it may not. Educationally, too, they are less advanced than other tribes. Only a few of them are to be found in Government offices, or doing the skilled work which commands such good pay from Europeans; nor have they supplied,

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

pieces of ground above others. We must now pass to the third great determinant of the system of Nyakyusa land-tenure—the form of their society.

4. *THE FORM OF NYAKYUSA SOCIETY*

178 When we speak of "Nyakyusa society" to-day we refer to one small area within a world society, to a group of men distinguished from the rest of the world by the possession of a unique cultural idiom of their own but none the less bound to it by the strongest ties. Two generations ago Nyakyusa society was, unknown to our grandfathers, almost a world in itself, a world moreover which was split up into a number of tiny units in the shape of independent chiefdoms whose relationships with one another were of the lowest kind. The sons of men for whom society (that is effective relationship) was normally confined to two or three thousand families, all or nearly all consisting of personal acquaintances, now find their own destinies inextricably entangled with those of 1,600,000,000 people. To the Nyakyusa of to-day fluctuations in the world price of gold and coffee, the policies and income of the missionary Churches of Europe, the political relationships between Great Britain, her Dominions, the League of Nations and Germany are matters of some importance.

Nyakyusa society at the present moment thus includes a number of complicated relationships between the Nyakyusa group and the outside world which, in the recent past, had no existence at all. And the presence of these new relationships has profoundly modified the social forms which traditionally subsisted within the group itself. And as, with the spread of Christianity, Islam and civilised education, with the increase of skill and wealth and with the taking of new responsibilities, the Nyakyusa participate ever more and more fully in the life of the world society, so will their relationships with one another continue to change in form. For they still have upon them a primitive stamp, they still to some extent proceed from assumptions of isolation.

●192 423 The relationships of Nyakyusa society to-day fall into four main categories. There are, firstly, relationships of blood, marriage and affinity, secondly there are the various bonds of village life, thirdly there are those which subsist between members of the same chiefdom and, finally, there are those which bind the Nyakyusa to still wider groups, to the tribal group, the Territory, the World. And these relationships, as they are limited and defined, amongst other things, by rules of land-tenure, so also are they among the sources of these rules. Land is held in society and the form of society largely determines the manner of its holding.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 As we have seen, the chief's fearsome medicine *isyifwila* is
778 thought to be very dangerous, and too much in the tails may cause
622 them 'to fly about throttling men and cattle', but a chief is never
[754] accused of working witchcraft; it is inconceivable to the Nyakyusa that he could be. If the tails have got out of hand they are treated
[789] by a doctor 'to close them up'; no one suggests that the chief should get rid of them. It is commoners, 'black people', who are witches —cannibals, the eaters of raw flesh—as opposed to chiefs who, since the dawn of history, have killed cattle for meat and cooked their food like civilized men. But the distinction does not extend very far; junior kinsmen of the chief are 'commoners' and may well be accused of practising witchcraft.

There was a delicate balance of power in the Nyakyusa con-
[182] stitution between hereditary chief and commoner headmen and the belief in the power of medicines and of witchcraft was an integral part of it. The chief provided fruitfulness by the power of his own body and his medicines; all men depended upon him for their well-being—food, cattle, children, success in war; but he in his turn depended upon the goodwill of his men led by their village headmen; without it he shivered and fell ill, only to be buried by them 'with the breath still in his body' lest the power of growth disappear with his breathless corpse.

Something of the quality of this mutual dependence and fear is conveyed in Kasitile's account of his own illness quoted in Chapter VIII.

(*e*) THE NECESSITY FOR HARMONY

182 The welfare of the chiefdom is thought to depend upon
643 harmony between the chief and his village headmen and priests,
622 and also between the chief and his kinsmen. Any friction between
793 them may result in public misfortune as well as sickness to the individual at fault. The quarrel of Kasitile, the priest, first with
[753] the Kinga priests, and then with the commoner priests of Mwai-
[821] popo's chiefdom was believed to affect the crops and the weather, as well as Kasitile's own health (*vide infra*, pp. 124-41), and
[688] Mwaipopo's failure to tell Kasitile formally of the death of their kinsman led to rain which spoiled the funeral dance. A quarrel between the lineages of two chiefs which should have sacrificed
643 together was said to have been followed by a very poor millet
602 crop (*vide infra*, pp. 79-80, 118, 136).
578 How the personal relationship of a chief with his kinsmen is

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631 782 [721] north the Nyakyusa were continually at war; they did not trade or pray with them. Thus we conclude that participation in a common ritual is, in the Nyakyusa case, directly linked with a common origin and essential trade.

643 [769] [782] [821] The divine kings, Lwembe and Kyungu, were regarded as having power over certain areas, a power closely linked with rainfall. Indeed, one informant argued that the chiefs living around Masoko had never sent sacrifices to Lubaga, 'because when it rains at Lubaga the rain does not come as far as Masoko'. He was mistaken in his facts—the chiefs of Masoko did at one time send to Lubaga as Mwambete (162), chief at Masoko, himself admitted—but the argument points to a conception of supernatural power tied to a rainfall area. This notion was not, however, applied consistently.

643 173 The balance between secular and mystical power has altered during the past ten generations. The founding heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, came as conquerors and must surely have led their men personally; but early in the history of Ngonde the Kyungu was secluded, and power was exercised almost exclusively by the nobles (*vide supra*, pp. 40-46); and the Lwembe also was, at one period, 'not seen by ordinary men' and led a life hedged about with taboos. There is sharp contrast in Nyakyusa tradition between the active chiefs who were warriors, and arbitrators, and worked hard in their fields[1] and the 'divine king' who lived in seclusion. As we have seen, the chiefs often delegated ritual functions, with the taboos involved, to a junior kinsman such as Mwamukinga (44) or Mwakihaba (45) (*vide* pp. 79-81, 114) whose heirs succeeded to the office. It is even possible that the [178] first Lwembe at Lubaga (Mwakalebela 19) took over ritual functions from his senior brother, Kalesi (18).[2] The present tendency is for the development of secular power and its separation from mystical power. The Kyungu is no longer a god but an administrator: the heir of the Lwembes sits as an elected representative of chiefs on the Local Council. In the traditional 182 Nyakyusa society ritual played an essential part in maintaining 177 the balance between generations, sections, and social strata, and in

[1] In 1955 a young chief was bitterly criticized by his men because he 'never had a hoe in his hands' whereas his father and grandfather had (to our personal knowledge) been diligent in hoeing.

[2] But according to one excellent informant, Mwakisambwe (31) lived secluded while Mwakilima (31) 'fed men'—i.e. entertained.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

linking scattered political units, but that function is disappearing with the growth of trade and a centralized political authority. District Commissioner, Rural and District Councils, and Co-operatives supplant the 'divine king', and limit the power of local chiefs much more narrowly than he ever did.

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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

thought to be embedded in the visibly growing parts of the body of a chief, and the horrifying practice of plucking out the hair and nails of a dying man is an assertion of the value of vitality, energy, force of personality in a leader. 773 [778]

The separate origin of chiefs and people, and the reciprocity between them, are constantly emphasized. Among many primitive peoples a myth of common origin is the charter for unity, and foreign lineages are linked by some fiction to the dominant line; but among the Nyakyusa it is the *reciprocity* between cultivators and cattle-owners, between 'owners of the soil' who ate their food raw and immigrants who brought with them cattle and fire, which is the basis of unity. The chiefs (like the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers or the Voortrekkers) speak of themselves as having brought civilization to a savage land, but they acknowledge the contribution of the previous 'owners of the soil' in a way in which the white Americans and South Africans do not. Characteristically, the dichotomy of chiefs and commoners is couched in terms of descent, but in fact this is a fiction, for the younger sons of chiefs join the ranks of the commoners, and the mother of a chief is often of commoner origin. [182]

The complementary character of the economies of chiefs and commoners is matched, in belief, by a balance in mystical power. The divine kings have an innate creative power while the commoners have pythons in their bellies with which to destroy their enemies. It sounds like a myth of good and evil put about by the chiefs, but we never heard it expressed in that way even by Kasitile, who so feared and hated the commoner priests. The destructive power of the commoners can be used morally, to maintain the established order, as well as irresponsibly by witches. The constitution was a balance between chiefs and commoners, not a dictatorship. Chiefs maintain their position by feasting their men on beef, and this, the Nyakyusa think, prevents the witches from attacking; eated with meat their pythons 'lie quiet'. 778 85

Ultimate power is symbolized by the python, for though the chiefs—like English kings—are commonly associated with lions and leopards, the terror of the grove of Lubinga, and the source of the *fingile* medicine upon which the potency of divine kings and chiefs depends is a python, like that which lies in the belly of a witch. The most fearful thing of the tropical forest (and the forests on the Livingstone escarpment and Rungwe mountain are but the remains of much greater ones) is a natural symbol for power. [825]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XIV

RELIGION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

182 In this chapter we shall seek to show how the traditional communal rituals both reflect and maintain the traditional political structure, and to consider in what measure the change from paganism to Christianity compels a change in other aspects of the society, or, alternatively, how far the economic and political changes taking place among the Nyakyusa compel a change in religion.

182 773 769 693 The heroic myths are the charter for chieftainship. The heroes from whom the chiefs are descended are pictured as creators and benefactors, the authors of fertility and civilized living. But myth and ritual also entrench the rights of commoners and unify people of different stocks by asserting their complementary diversity. No ritual can be celebrated without the participation of commoner priests. They 'speak out' at rituals and bring public opinion directly to bear on the chief, whose own health is held to depend upon their goodwill; at the same time the whole country looks to the chief as the source of fertility in man and beast and field.

182 643 796 782 Ritual was the integrating force with the widest range in the traditional society. Independent chiefs, even those whose people were culturally as different as the Nyakyusa and Kinga, joined in sacrifice to Lwembe and Kyala and were mystically dependent upon one another. As Kasitile put it 'the Kinga come (to Lubaga) both when there is trouble in our land and in theirs'. In Ngonde the 'divine king', the Kyungu, who controlled a flourishing trade in ivory, developed secular as well as ritual functions and emerged as a paramount chief, but in the Nyakyusa valley the ritual bond had no secular backing save the exchange of iron and salt for food, which linked Kinga and Nyakyusa in a tenuous partnership. The sacrifices to the Lwembe did not exclude war between chiefs who acknowledged him, nor did sacrifice to their common ancestor exclude war between Mwaipopo (116) and Mwaihojo (147), but the necessity of co-operation in sacrifice compelled later reconciliation. Perhaps the insistence on the sacredness of the heroes and their living representatives, the elaborate ritual of

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

chieftainship, and the dependence upon medicines as a means of enforcing law were connected with the ineffectiveness of secular authority. Certainly the Kyungu's emergence from seclusion, and the dropping of the taboos which surrounded him were connected with his acquisition of economic power; but we know too little of the conditions that make for elaboration of ritual to postulate any general connexion between the absence of ritual in public life and the effectiveness of secular authority.

The cycle of sacrifices to the heroes and dead chiefs among the Nyakyusa is more than an ancestor cult, for it includes non-relatives among its priests and beneficiaries; but it has many of the features of an ancestor cult, among them the identification of piety with conservatism. A good man follows exactly in the footsteps of his father who becomes his god. This is reconciled with a myth of a new beginning, ten generations ago, when civilized life came to the Nyakyusa valley, and the new beginning is celebrated each generation with the 'coming out' of the young chief and his contemporaries.

All Nyakyusa rituals are cathartic in the sense that they make explicit and seek to dissipate, by their very expression and rejection, certain anti-social tendencies. In the Nyakyusa view the root of evil is 'anger in the heart' unadmitted and corrosive, and only by an open confession can it be overcome.[1] Hence in every situation of misfortune, public or private, men are pressed to 'speak out' (*ukusuya*) and admit their anger. At the 'coming out' the conflict of generations is expressed in the prolonged debate over the date of the celebration and the detailed arrangements, and in the dancing and slaughter of cattle, and is finally resolved when authority and land are handed over to the young men by their fathers. The fissiparous tendencies of a chiefdom are made explicit and canalized in constitutional form by the division of the old chief's country into two, under his senior sons; and criticism of the young chiefs is made explicit in the formal admonition by the father's village headmen. The rejection of conflict is clearest at the annual purification when men throw out the ashes contaminated by family bickering and the cannibalism of witches, and *fight* one another 'that the homesteads may be peaceful'. This fighting is 'to bring out war from within (*ukusuya*)',

[1] cf. *Good Company*, pp. 99-115. The belief that a witch or sorcerer must confess if the patient was to recover was the reason for the torture of witches in many African societies.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and is therefore to be interpreted as 'confession of anger', rather than as 'rebellion'.

Sometimes there is an expression of *opposite* tendencies, both implicitly approved. The sacrifices to the heroes and at the groves of the chiefs emphasize seniority and precedence, and express the dependence of junior on senior kinsmen, but the myth, recalled in every celebration, tells of the surpassing power of the son or younger brother in the beginning of time, and the junior brother of a chief often holds office as a priest. Then there is the drama of driving away the shade and bringing him back transformed, which is so characteristic of the rituals of kinship and appears again at the cleansing of the country. Such contradictions are doubtless expressions of ambivalent attitudes among the participants themselves, and of the attempt in ritual to reconcile conflicting social principles—in these instances authority with the rights and duties of juniors, and change with continuity.

In a society without written records legal certainty depends very largely on publicity. This is apparent in the law relating to marriage contracts and family inheritance,[1] and still more so in the law of the chiefdom. The ritual of 'coming out' celebrates radical changes in social status, and the public recognition of the leaders, members, and territorial boundaries of villages, as well as of the heirs to chieftainship. Thus certainty in these matters is assured. There is no positive value of the co-regency of father and son (as in ancient Egypt),[2] but the installation of the young chiefs before the death of their father serves to mitigate conflicts over the succession. Confusion over village boundaries and village leadership often appears when the ritual has not been celebrated, for there is no public definition to refer to.

How close is the link between religious belief and practice and social structure? There is no doubt that the sacrifices to the dead chiefs and heroes and the traditional rituals of kinship supported the former political and kinship structure of the Nyakyusa. Their performance compelled co-operation between kinsmen,[3] between neighbouring chiefs, and between chiefs and people. How far then does the change in religion, begun when the first Christian convert professed his new faith, compel a change in the social

[1] Godfrey Wilson, 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Law', *Africa*, vol. ix, 1935, p. 29.
[2] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, pp. 101-6.
[3] cf. *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 130-200, 217.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

structure? And how far does the new economic and political organization produce a change in religion? These theoretical questions can be answered only by a series of comparative studies. Here there is evidence for one area alone, and the conclusions which we postulate can be established only if they hold in a whole range of societies.

Christianity implies an emergence from the nexus of kinship, for the worshipping group is two or three believers, not a body of kinsmen, and conversion is a personal choice. This is more obvious in a missionary church than in one long established, for, as we have seen, the convert in a pagan community must withdraw from his kinsfolk to become a Christian,[1] but it remains true, even in a Christian society. The new doctrine implies a body of believers—a Church. The particular form varies, but the Church has appeared wherever the Christian faith has been established. In short, we argue that the change in religion necessarily disrupts an organization based primarily on kinship and establishes a new type of organization based partly on voluntary association. With the change from the ritual of the lineage to the ritual of the Church the authority and leadership of senior kinsmen is diminished; they are replaced by 'elders' and priests or pastors whose basis of authority is not birth, but selection by the Church. Furthermore, association for worship becomes a pattern for association in other fields, and the Church is the training ground among the Nyakyusa, as it has been among so many other peoples, for organizers of other types of societies.

And not only is kinship subordinated to faith; the forms of kinship are themselves modified. From the time of their first arrival the missionaries have taught that Christianity implies monogamy and they have baptised no polygynist who does not put away his additional wives. This teaching has been questioned by many Africans and by some European missionaries themselves, who doubt the wisdom of persuading a man already married to send away his wives—or even of countenancing such an action. But the rule of monogamy has remained as a condition of membership in all the Churches with European connexions.[2] It has been rejected, as we have seen, by two of the 'independent' African

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 150-9.

[2] The rule was suspended for a brief period in one mission working not far from the Nyakyusa area, but was later enforced. cf. Lyndon Harries in *Survey of African Marriage and Family Life* (edited by A. Phillips), pp. 341-6.

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F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

182 595 797 Churches in the area. Nevertheless the bulk of professing Christians are monogamists, though it is still customary and, in Rungwe District, economically profitable, for a rich man who is not a Christian to have more than one wife. The difficulties of establishing monogamy are accentuated by the great disproportion in the numbers of men and women. If the figures available are accurate, a general acceptance of monogamy would mean that only about 70 per cent of the women could be married; therefore the Church is necessarily concerned in seeking an adjustment in the disproportion of the population—in keeping the men alive if our assumption that the shortage of men is due to a heavy male death rate is true.

182 797 984 The yeast of the gospel permeates still further. It is taken to imply the freedom of an individual to accept or reject a partner in marriage. This has been maintained from the first in the Nyakyusa Church, and is enforced by the courts, which apply a conception of personal rights springing from the Christian tradition.

182 586 797 Most Nyakyusa men attribute the rapid rise in the divorce rate to this new 'freedom' of women. Christian teaching stresses the family and the sanctity of marriage, but it ignores the lineage. In the traditional rituals of kinship the lineage is represented again and again, while in Christian ritual it is the elementary family and the Church that are pictured. The preoccupation with fertility and the reproductive cycle was linked with the glorification of the lineage itself, and it disappears when the lineage ceases to be the basis of social grouping.

182 161 178 How closely linked are symbols to other aspects of a society? Our hypothesis is that they are relatively free, but it can be shown that many of the symbols used in the traditional rituals of the Nyakyusa reflect the economy, and vary somewhat from one area to another, with the staple crops. The development of trade or of new crops is a prerequisite for using the symbols of bread and wine traditional in the Christian rituals, and even the 'independent' African Churches use new foods, not the beer and bananas of the country; thus change in material symbols and change in economy may be directly connected. The imagery changes also with the changing social structure; Kyala ceases to be pictured as a senior kinsman, when the lineage organization begins to weaken; he is God the father of a family rather than an early member of the royal lineage. But there is no evidence that

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

particular symbols are tied to a particular social structure; the poet makes his choice within the whole range of the familiar.

The impetus to change has come both from the religious field and from the secular. For example, the pressure towards monogamy among the Nyakyusa has been religious; given plentiful land and cash crops additional wives are an economic asset, not a liability. In this respect the contrast with the Ciskei in South Africa, where families are dependent for food on wage-earners in towns, and no man can support two families,[1] is marked. On the other hand, the decay of Nyakyusa age-villages is primarily due to economic pressure, though it is facilitated by the insistence of Christians that there is no danger in father-in-law and daughter-in-law meeting one another. The first generation of Christians living on mission land built villages apart for their sons, despite the teaching that avoidance of a father-in-law by his daughter-in-law was foolish, if not sinful. But a radical change in pagan observance of ritual avoidance is brought about by the general practice of going out to work for long periods, and the competition for coffee and rice-lands, which makes the territorial separation of fathers and sons impossible. As we have shown, young men going to work commonly leave their wives in their fathers' homesteads, valuing the support and supervision given them there above the old stringency of avoidance and, where land is scarce and valuable, fathers do not move aside each generation to make way for their sons. Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law [606] continues only in an attenuated form.

From German times control by a European government has compelled a modification of the traditional sacrifices to the heroes and of the ritual of chieftainship. How the Kings priests came to Lubaga 'in secret' and how they failed to install a new Lwembe after the death of Mwakinsya about 1914 has been described. Killing a child to anoint a drum or make medicine for the fields, compelling a man to accept a dangerous office, killing chiefs because they are ailing, or plucking off their nails before they die; all these are actions which are held, and must be held, to be 'contrary to natural justice' by any Western government. Here the change in political organization compels a change in ritual and there is evidence that belief in the traditional forms is much diminished, though not dead. The European government also

[1] Keiskammahoek Rural Survey, Vol. I, *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, by D. H. Houghton and E. M. Walton; vol. III, *Social Structure*, by M. Wilson *et al.*

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

expressed or resolved in ritual. The place for *shauge*—speaking out—is the council chamber not the sacred grove or the homestead where the shades gather, and the reconciliation of conflicts between chiefs, or between chiefs and District Commissioner or chiefs and commoners, is sought in a committee rather than a Church. Perhaps the greatest difficulty in modern administration in Africa lies in this very separation of activities, in the thinness of the bonds across the colour line, in the cleavage between secular and sacred. Some separation of the different aspects of a society is a concomitant of the increase in scale—it is one manifestation of specialization—but it is greater in Tanganyika with its diversity of religious traditions than it is in Britain with its common Christian history. 171 178 648

That there is a connexion between the form of faith and ritual and the form of social structure few would deny. The concern of the anthropologist is to define it; to plot the limits of autonomy between different aspects within societies. This can be done only by the patient analysis and comparison of many societies and this book is offered as a humble contribution towards such a comparative study. 182 121

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Nyakyusa

For example,

In the Northern Highlands there is now a strong tendency for the tight village system to disintegrate as men seek to site their houses, each in his own coffee plot. In the Lake Plains also the structure of the age-village is changing – there the villages persist as such but they come to be inhabited by men of any age and new villages do not emerge with a new chief. No attempt is made here, however, to analyse these variations for they are only now beginning and no satisfactory, detailed information is available for the post-war cash economy of the highland areas.

The Government of Tanganyika has permitted the publication of this essay, and I wish to express my gratitude for its support. The essay is a modified version of my original Report which was presented to Government in January, 1956. The views expressed in it are my own and not those of Government. As usual in my work as Government Sociologist, I have received much valuable assistance, advice and information from officers stationed in the area. The Nyakyusa themselves, as during my first enquiry, were usually cooperative, and at least some of them welcomed my work as a contribution to the easement of their novel difficulties. It would not have been surprising had they remained obdurate and antagonistic towards my enquiries about their land, for like many modern Africans they have a sense of insecurity which is not susceptible to reason. In fact I was able without much difficulty to make any enquiry I wished, to measure sample areas and to discuss the situation in all its aspects. Perhaps it is that an African people welcome a sympathetic enquirer and in their problems genuinely want assistance. The task of a sociologist is of course in some ways rather easier than that of an administrator or technical officer who has to persuade the people actually to accept and practice new ways and to abandon old ways. It is hoped that this essay may be of assistance both to these officers and to the people whom they are attempting to assist and teach.

Finally, I must thank the East African Institute of Social Research which has accepted this essay for publication, and especially Dr. L. A. Fallers who kindly read and criticised the original draft and who drew the two sketch maps.

Note: The term, the "Lake Plains", as used in this essay is to be understood to cover the major part of the modern local government area under the Ntebela Rural Council. Omitted are the small groups of Kisi (Ikombe) and Ndali (Ngana) peoples to the extreme east and west respectively. This area contains the alluvial flood plains surrounding the northern tip of Lake Nyasa, and the lowest foothills to the north where the country begins its steep incline towards the Poroto Mountains. To the south lies the lake and to the south-west, beyond the meandering Songwe river, lie the bushlands of the northern part of the Nyasaland Protectorate. To the east are the towering Livingstone Mountains and to the north live the other Nyakyusa groups in the highlands.

The area comprises a fairly compact social and economic region with a common historical tradition. Several of the indigenous chiefdoms stretch across the intermediate boundary between flood plains and foothills. With but one exception the present chiefs are lineal descendants, in their various houses, of the original Mwakyusa who led the people into this lowland area five generations ago. The modern inhabitants are pre-eminently the Nyakyusa-proper.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 428 [583] believed that parents and children should live apart.[1] In the same way, and for similar reasons, an elder brother tries to make provision for his junior when the latter marries if their father is already dead. The practice of the father is not a legally required one, although it is nowadays increasingly common and sons have begun to expect it: the practice of an elder brother is now legally required in the matter of land and probably always has been in the matter of cattle.

The difficulties are obvious when a man dies and leaves several sons [647] but only a small-sized holding. To date no clear ruling has emerged and unfortunately the African District Council did not deal specifically with such details when introducing the new law. How much land an eldest brother can reasonably retain for himself is perhaps not determinable in practice except in specific relation to the nature, locality and fertility of the holding in question, the plots already held by the man himself, the needs and number of the younger brothers and any holdings they may have, and [508] the location of the villages in which they severally live. There is also plenty of scope for disagreement between half-brothers over portions of the paternal holding which had been retained by the father himself for his own use; over portions allocated to a wife who has borne no sons or whose sons have died, and over permanent trees. The situation is still fluid and there has not yet been time enough for a common and generally acceptable solution to be established. Consequently each group of sons tries to solve its own particular problems in this matter as best it can, torn between old values and new attitudes and needs.

593 428 Relations between both full-brothers and half-brothers tend often to be severely tried at times of inheritance. It is not primarily, I think, a case of brothers' greed for valued land tending to overcome bonds of fraternity and co-operation; but it is rather that a father's arable holding is often not able to provide adequate amounts of arable land for each of his sons, and yet they find the very greatest difficulty in obtaining land elsewhere. Already the traditional kin-group comprising the sons and grandsons of a group of [182] full-brothers had begun to break down even before land shortage became serious. Now the group of full-brothers itself tends to be dispersed as men obtain land where they can and it is endangered by dissensions over land rights and land division. Increasingly, it seems, a Nyakyusa man is becoming detached from his brothers and he tends to establish an independent family unit comprising his immediate family alone – that is, himself with his wives and children. We cannot attribute the whole cause of this modern trend to land shortage and economic difficulties, of course, for involved also are new ideas of individualism and of personal effort and reward, and the decreasing need for the constant support of brothers in social, economic and ritual activities.

598 423 428 Younger brothers may, and sometimes do in fact, agree that the paternal holding is already too small for further sub-division, or that the small parts which can be made available to them are scarcely worth having – especially if they live some distance away. On the other hand, the eldest brother may already have obtained a holding in his own village and is therefore willing to make only a small claim or none at all in the interests of his juniors, and he may then divide the inheritance amongst them alone. Usually, so acute is the dearth of land, the holding is divided between two [311] or more brothers. It is split into small plots so that each brother has a share of paddy, food-crop and banana land, and these are commonly a half acre or even less in size nowadays. As already mentioned, by a kind of modern [642] equity the local African courts generally favour the claims of the younger

1. See Wilson, M., 1951, p. 109 and passim. "The chief purpose of age-villages is the separation of sons and mothers, of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law." Ibid. p. 110.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Security of tenure has continued into European times, and although perhaps weakened slightly in one way through the exaggerated powers which accrue to modern Government-supported chiefs, it has been strengthened by the modern peace and rule of law and the more efficient system of justice provided by the established local courts. According to G. Wilson (Wilson, G., 1938, p. 32) the increase in the movement of individuals between villages in earlier European times (i.e., up to about 1940-45) directly caused a lack of attachment to individual plots, and thus security of tenure was not considered particularly important.

The new situation of land shortage does not affect the basic position, or rather, by producing a high scarcity value on land, it has brought about an intensification of individuals' rights over their holdings. No longer dare a chief or headman attempt to commit such illegal acts as the seizure of a villager's field, so long as that villager is not afraid to publicise the affair. A man is not, and cannot afford to be, prepared to lose his field, for he cannot replace it with any certainty, either in a convenient location or elsewhere. A headman may sometimes bring strong pressure to bear on some of the men of his village to try to persuade them to give up portions of their land to assist a newcomer or a landless neighbour, but a villager can and does refuse and there is no legal authority which can override him here. As the land shortage becomes more obvious and more acute so men become less willing to allow their holdings to be touched for any reason, by anyone. The re-allocation at a "coming-out" ceremony appears to have been dropped nowadays[1] and thus a man holds his land undisturbed until his death, when it passes by inheritance to his sons. There are cases now where grandsons of the original holder occupy land through undisturbed and undisputed inheritance. A man can, as he wishes, loan a kinsman or friend a plot in his holding, or he can make an outright gift. The principal restriction which remains is that a man must continue to live in the village in order to retain these rights; he must relinquish them if he permanently goes to live elsewhere. Nevertheless, the land of a well-established villager would be kept for him pending his hoped-for return, for if he has left in umbrage and fear because of suspected witchcraft, then he may be persuaded to come back after a time. The headman and his neighbours should in fact persist in their attempts to persuade him, even to the use of force, for this is not only a moral duty of age-mates and fellow-villagers but is also an effort to remove the implications of their alleged witchcraft and anti-social conduct.

Once, therefore, a man obtains land he has absolute rights in it during his continued residence in the village. Especially today, older men seldom shift their homes and almost all land is now held on a tenure which will be passed on by inheritance.

Boundary disputes are few. Usually, and increasingly, village boundaries are well known, and field boundaries invariably are. During my field measurements in the sample villages, I never met any difficulty with my local teams in quickly establishing the ownership and exact limits of any plot. Boundaries are usually marked by small ridges of accumulated debris or by narrow paths, and these form an intricate and irregular network throughout a village's arable area. They are so well known that there is very little scope for a greedy man to attempt to encroach on a neighbour's holding at hoeing time. If minor disagreements do arise at that season they can be immediately settled – by appeal to neighbours working nearby if necessary – and the headman or his assistant may well not be called in at all.

1. This is the case in the Lake Plains, in some of the six to seven-year Highland villages where the rule generally is that all social and land security is also private, there still appears to be some re-allocation at the coming-out ceremony in the traditional way, for example. However, it is clear that the traditional age-village system of land allocation is obsolete, see pages 298.

10:Culliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

311 433 245 my earlier labour migration enquiries in the Highlands, the village as a close residential unit is breaking up as the people are increasingly adopting the more common East African pattern of each family building its own homestead in its own land-holding. These northern Nyakyusa say that they must have their coffee plots next to their homesteads for the sake of continuous supervision, and that this is impossible (which is true enough) where men live close together in compact villages. Again, coffee plots, with their standing, permanent trees, have become a valuable item of inheritance; sons lose no opportunity of taking them irrespective of the locations of their coevals or of the identity of their immediate neighbours. The values of land, cash-crops and material progress are placed much higher than the traditional values of coevality; indeed, such traditional values are largely inconsistent with modern wants and aspirations.

561 361 178 Thus the Nyakyusa age-village has become almost obsolete and it would seem that it must inevitably vanish altogether even in the remaining conservative areas (e.g., in the east). Furthermore, its disappearance is leading to a distinct divergence between the Lake Plains Nyakyusa and those of the Highlands. How far this divergence will become permanent and basically significant cannot be foreseen as yet in this early stage. Clearly the compact village is best fitted to an arable economy of rice cultivation in the Lake Plains, and at least until there is further agricultural change it will persist as a most important social group.

Nevertheless, with its enhanced exclusiveness and relative social isolation and with reserved rivalry with its neighbours, the Lake Plains village is scarcely conducive to the encouragement of agricultural and economic development. Neither is it anything but harmful towards contemporary efforts in the politico-administrative sphere to reduce parochialism and to foster a sense of unity and co-operation beyond the village and the petty traditional chiefdoms. Whilst supervisory control of the land through the headman is in general excellent, reasonable and readily understandable to the people, yet the excess of restrictiveness, the competitive scrambling for vacated holdings and the jealous fears are surely more than merely unfortunate. 680 152 182 There needs to be some modification to loosen the over-tight strings of village corporate ownership, to regularise the transfer of vacated holdings and to lessen the fears of village against village. These points are taken up again in Chapter V.

Cattle and Pastoral Requirements

311 233 Unfortunately, no great accuracy can be presumed for the Rungwe District cattle censuses, but the available figures are summarised in Table VI.

TABLE VI
NYAKYUSA CATTLE

	1955				1951	
	No. of cattle	Acres per head	Cattle per person	Cattle per family of 5	No. of cattle	Acres per head
Lake Plains	31,418	4.1	0.5	2.5	34,833	3.2
Central Region	14,760	7.1	0.4	[illegible]	18,140	7.2
N.E. Highlands	19,095	7.4	0.4	[illegible]	17,245	8.4
N.W. Highlands	22,974	8.0	0.4	[illegible]	14,855	10.9
Total:						
Nyakyusa... ..	92,247	6.4	0.4	2	85,082	7.2

The indicated increase in the numbers of cattle may well be attributable only to improved census enumeration by the Veterinary Department.

Although 6.4 acres per head of cattle for all Nyakyusa country, and even 4.1 acres in the Lake Plains, might seem to be adequate in a country so

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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forted, I think people follow the custom, many have come to see me.'

There is no criticism of men or women who come to a burial to dance rather than to weep: 'They are not relatives—it is our custom of mourning.' They are saluting the dead and 'seeing him on his way', they are helping 'to comfort the relatives'. The presence of non-relatives at a burial is variously determined by feelings of affection and grief, of respect and sympathy for the family, by a sense of shame, by fear of being accused of witchcraft, and finally by the attraction of the crowds, the lively conversation, the dancing, and the meat. [183]

At the burial of a Nyakyusa Christian there is little unrestrained wailing and no dancing; instead the young men of the congregation gather round the grieving relatives and sing cheerful hymns, full of the certainty of Heaven, 'to accompany him on his way to God' and 'to comfort the mourners'.

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(*e*) *Prestige at funerals*

As has already been indicated, the length of the mourning depends upon the status of the deceased. It is short for a child—there is no sacrifice and no crowd; for a rich man it is longer than for a poor man; for the kinsman of a chief longer than for a commoner. Mwaikambo explained:

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> Many conceal their position (*abafumile*), it only appears at death. People may never know that a man is rich—only those who build close to him will know—but when he dies many know; many people come to the funeral. For a commoner, an ordinary person, the drums usually play a lament for two days only, sometimes for three, but for a village headman they play the lament for four days, or perhaps a week, and also for a man who has married a chief's daughter it continues for four days or a week. Then people ask why the drums are playing for so long and the reply comes: 'He married into the chief's family. The chief honours him in kinship.' Drums follow the importance of a man.
>
> Those who stay longest at a funeral are kinsmen. If a man has many kinsmen then the funeral will last long because his kinsmen do not return home quickly. A chief has many kinsmen, more than anyone else, because the people of his chiefdom are all like kinsmen. With a village headman also the people who build with him are somewhat like kinsmen, and his funeral lasts a long time.

The size of the crowd at a funeral depends very largely upon the amount of meat provided, and this in turn depends upon the

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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

at the groom's home (*ukuukuula*). The party was given a hen when they arrived and a second the next morning. The groom and some of his friends spent the night with the bride and her friends. (He and she lie together on this occasion but do not yet have full intercourse.)[1] In the morning the mother-in-law shaved the bride's head, eyebrows, and eyelashes, leaving only a small tuft on the nape of her neck. Then she mixed water with powdered medicine and poured it for groom and bride to wash. The groom washed his hands and mouth only, the bride her hands and mouth and whole body. During her seclusion she might not use oil or the red powder favoured as a cosmetic by Nyakyusa women,[2] but after this third washing she was free to do so, and she oiled herself meticulously. Meantime the groom was shaved by one of his friends. 881 584 [431] [336] [302]

On the same day the bride returned to her father's homestead with her own party and seven 'mothers' of the groom who brought five stems of bananas, a pot of water, and a small bull for the ritual of 'clearing out the litter' (*ukusuya ulufumbo*). She herself was wearing the skin of a bull over her head—'she wears any skin she can get hold of'. One of the groom's party shaved off the last tuft of her hair and buried it carefully in the *ulufumbo*, the litter of banana leaves on which she had slept and sat during her seclusion. Had her own mother been present she would have shaved also and so should the brother, but he did not do so. The groom's mother and Kyobwe (representing the bride's mother) carried out the litter to the edge of the banana plantation surrounding the homestead. As they did so they whispered to each other. Kyobwe said the bride was a little liar. Her husband had offered her 1s. to take to her mothers and she had refused it saying: 'No, they swear at me and grudge me food.' 'She's your child,' said the mother-in-law. 'No,' said Kyobwe, 'she's another woman's child, she's a foolish child.' Every scrap of litter in the hut was carefully collected and a little of the soil below it scraped off and carried out with the leaves. All who had helped with the clearing washed their hands carefully. [302] [153]

Then the groom's mother made a basin of two banana leaves close to the pile of litter. Into it she poured the water her party had brought with them, and sprinkled in powdered medicine in

[1] One or two informants maintained that 'she must not refuse him now or he will refuse to wash with her, saying: "She is not my wife."' But others were insistent that according to strict custom only intercourse *inter crura* was allowed. Full intercourse at this time would make nonsense of the *ilibalaga* ritual which follows. [833]

[2] Formerly also by men: cf. V. Giraud, *Les Lacs de l'Afrique Equatoriale* (1890), p. 176.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 the boys form a queue and bend forward, holding out their hands while she poured water over the hands of each of them. After washing, each took a mouthful of water and spat it out. They were warned not to spill it on their legs as they washed and spat. Some young men washed with the boys, and women watching shouted advice, but a number of the boys went off without taking a mouthful of water or without spitting. After the boys came the girls, and then the women and babies and some more small boys who had arrived late. We counted twenty-six boys and young men, twenty-six girls and babies, and twenty-four women washing.

Then came the splashing of legs. The doctor shredded a banana sucker to make a tail. All the company gathered round the boiling pot of medicine, and the doctor, dipping the tail into the pot, splashed the boiling liquid on to their legs. Children screamed; women hopped with the pain, but shouted to their children to come and be treated. Frightened small children were hauled back by men, women, and elder children—a full sister of the twins, about 9 years old, was dragged in yelling. Mothers were especially careful to see that their babies were splashed, and pulled up the cloths binding them to their backs, so that their legs might be exposed. Mwakobela and his brother came to be splashed but some of the young men hurried away immediately after washing, disregarding the women who shouted to them that it was taboo for them to leave before they had been splashed. The women took [13] the whole ritual much more seriously than the men, and they were very particular to see that their children were treated. One old woman who had helped a child to wash, holding its hands, came back again to wash herself. The doctor and other women shouted that she had already washed. She replied: 'Oh, I just helped the child. Have I really finished?' The mother and remaining twin did not stir from the hut—she looked dirty and dishevelled. The doctor was elegant; she wore five brass body-rings [20] and her body was well oiled and rouged. She organized everyone with great confidence and was treated with respect, a mat being spread for her to sit upon (no other woman had a mat), and her assistant fetching and carrying everything she required.

845 Many of the women relatives had brought gifts of millet and 431 after the treatment was over they tipped their small basketfuls into a big grain basket. Then they had a snack of roasted plantains (Mwakobela provided three stems) and went home.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Since the 'coming out' of his sons spelt not only retirement, but a speedy death to a chief, he was not unnaturally reluctant to hasten it and, we were told, chiefs would try to defer it, but were pressed by their village headmen to celebrate, and had eventually to accept their advice. Indeed we heard of one chief whose illness was attributed to the 'breath' of his men, angry because he refused to hold the 'coming out' which was due. 643 [753]

Nowadays the situation is radically altered by the fact that chiefs continue to live long after the 'coming out' of their sons, and the administration treats the old chief as the sole authority, or the old men find good reasons for not holding the celebration at all.

Before the ritual there is much speculation and excitement throughout the chiefdom, and private discussions between the old chief and his village headmen about suitable candidates for office. They look for men of wisdom (*amahale*),[1] skilled in settling disputes, modest (for boastfulness is judged intolerable in a Nyakyusa age-village as it is in an English public school), and given to hospitality. A leader must feed his men and to do so he requires to be relatively wealthy, therefore the poor have little chance of office. [183] [577]

When the old men are agreed among themselves they summon all the young men to the capital. They come dancing and swaggering with all their cattle, and there the old headmen seize, one by one, those they have chosen as village headmen for the next generation, beginning with the senior headman for each heir, then the second senior for each, and so on. Usually eight are chosen, four for each young chief. We get a glimpse of what it means to one individual in the following statement by the second headman of the chief, Kowao (173): 643 622 796

I made fire at the 1920 'coming out'. I can't tell much because we who were caught were in fear and trembling. I knew beforehand, because my brother was told to come from Ipyana [mission], but he was a Christian and the missionaries refused to allow him to become a village headman—they feared the medicines. He ran away and came here—he wanted to be a headman and the old men wanted him, but then he changed his mind and went off to be a soldier, and so they took me. [177]

Probably word of who have been chosen as village headmen

[1] For a discussion of the concept of *amahale*, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, 77-84, 90.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

system is still the accepted form in Mwaipopo's chiefdom; the advantages of separating kinsmen in different villages are explicitly stated, and the contrast between the Nyakyusa and their neighbours in this respect emphasized. 'Certainly we do not live with kinsmen here but the Kings do.' 'It is not good for a son to live close to his father, they will quarrel.' 'When we move to another village we consider friendship not kinship in selecting it.'

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(3) THE BALANCE BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND SECTIONS

The ritual cycle of the 'coming out' and the sacrifices in the grove helped to maintain a balance of power between generations, as well as between chiefs and commoners. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) in 1933 it was Mwabopoto, the senior village headman of his father, who took the leading part. He was described as 'the greatest man in the country' who 'brings out the chief' and his manner indicated that he was well aware of his power. During the reign of Mwaipopo (116) the power of his father's village headmen, Njobokosa and Ngulyo, was apparent at every ritual. Spiritual power was shared between chiefs and commoners, but exercised ideally by a virile chief of the ruling generation and the experienced headmen of the retired generation.

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[554]

Those chosen as senior village headmen at the 'coming out' are commonly older than the young chief, but village headmen are thought of as surviving their chief—it is they who were responsible for smothering him, and performing the sacrifices in his grove. The headmanship is an office and so long as the office is necessary an incumbent is found for it, in the person of the heir of the original holder who is so closely identified with the deceased that most precise inquiry is often necessary to establish whether a given individual is the original holder, the succeeding heir, or a later heir, successor to the successor. The Ngulyo who officiated at the rituals in 1933 was the heir of the original Ngulyo (some said the grandson, not the son) and he was criticized by Kasitile as being 'a young man who knew nothing'. The principle, so familiar in Central Africa, of a perpetual office[1] emerges, among the

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[769]

[1] I. Cunnison, *Kinship and Local Organization on the Lunguda*, Communications of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute No. 3 (1956), pp. 19–23; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), p. 107; A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, O.U.P. (1939), p. 94; 'Some Types of Family Structure among the Central Bantu', in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, p. 204; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, London (1911), p. 9.

[113]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(their witchcraft); to each other they say: 'It is your father.' Because if they confess to a fellow commoner saying, 'It is we', he says, 'You are "eating" me, drink the ordeal'. The witch is driven out. But to us they admit saying, 'It was we who were angry.' They do not fear us. Commoners are the seniors in the country; they arrived first. 688 775 774 826 554

It will be remembered that the commoners are spoken of as 'black people' (*abatite*) and that the first chiefs were 'pale' (*amwela*) but these words also have moral implications. 'It is said that a person "has a black heart" or "has black blood", or "is black in his face towards us" when he is thought to be a witch, eating his fellows, or when he is a thief, or a liar, or an adulterer, or dirty. Even though his body is light coloured (*amwela*) the word "black" (*atite*) is used of him metaphorically.' And *mwela* implies innocent, pure, as well as light in colour. The comparable symbolism of 'nigger' and 'white man' is all too familiar in Johannesburg or Charleston.

That Kasitile himself was much afraid of the commoner chiefs and was relieved by the 'speaking out' was clear, and the people of the country as a whole were glad that the ritual had been celebrated, for they expected an increase in fertility. Some days later Mwakyonde (148), came in and said, laughing, but half serious: 'Congratulations, Mwaipaja (G.W.). You have celebrated the ritual, we rejoice greatly, you give us fertility of the soil, you are a great priest.' [152] [578] 793 778 183

In some moods Kasitile was inclined to become a Christian, but he felt an obligation to the country as priest, and believed too strongly in the efficacy of the traditional rituals to abandon them. He said to G.W. one day, over a pot of beer: 'If it were not for the ritual I would get you to speak to the Europeans of the mission, and I would go with my wife Jane, and be baptized. If my son was old enough and had agreed to carry on the ritual I would do it; perhaps I will when I am old. . . . It is good to have one's heart washed clean, we are dirty inside. The Christians say to us: "You with your four wives each, you are all dirty, you love one and squabble with the rest." Well, it is so with me, I love Jane only; I would like to go and be baptized with her. But I fear for the ritual, I fear hunger, the hunger of the people. For I am the food of the country, I am the maker of food.' [177] [797]

We left Selya shortly after this and were not able to observe the effect of the ritual on political relationships in Selya. Kasitile lived another seventeen years, duly performing his functions, and in 1954 he was succeeded by his brother's son, James.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 swept through BuNyakyusa in the early 1930's; perhaps other
783 similar movements preceded it—we do not know. What is clear
[177] is that traditionally there was continuous public pressure to
[185] overcome hatred within the village and the kinship group; to rid
oneself of it by confession and an expression of goodwill. In pagan
[178] thought Utopia is a society without witches or sorcerers and,
though it was never achieved, everyone is convinced that formerly
these evil-doers were fewer than now, because they were restrained
by law, whereas 'witches' now go scot-free.

183 The interests of the Nyakyusa are personal and practical.
Health, fertility, and amity between kinsmen and neighbours
are what they seek. It is with rain and drought, with the rise of
773 the Lake or the striking of lightning which destroys property,
with stock, crops, and the wild animals which prey upon them
that the myths are concerned. We could trace no tales of the sun,
moon, and stars, and no rituals are directed to them. Reference is
made to volcanic disturbance in the myths of the heroes—
'the ground rumbled' when Nkekete and Kyala walked, and there
are stories of small lakes disappearing and reappearing elsewhere—
but the concern shown is surprisingly little if an eruption indeed
destroyed villages last century as Mr. Hatkin's single informant
suggests (*vide supra*, p. 16).

787 Reality is thought to be revealed to men in dreams, by prophets
who 'go down thinking like the roots of a tree' to the world of the
791 shades, and by oracles. What men seek to know are the causes of
misfortune—public and private—and the identity of witches.
Occasionally, it is said, a prophet has looked into the future and
foretold drought, or flood, or the coming of Europeans—'white
things on the Lake'—against whom it would be foolish to fight,
but for the most part they are concerned with the misfortunes
[183] that exist, and urging men to pray in the groves. The contem-
plative is not honoured in Nyakyusa tradition; the man of
spiritual power is a detective—a discoverer of evil-doers—or an
administrator whose awfulness adds to his authority.

183 Men are preoccupied with their relationships to other living
men—their kinsmen, neighbours, and fellow office-holders—
771 and with their dead fathers. They are not concerned with their
relationship to Kyala. The rituals celebrated by kinsmen are
directed to the shades not to any supreme God, and it is quarrelling
between kinsmen that angers the shades and makes the celebra-
tion of certain rituals necessary. The communal rituals are

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

directed towards heroes who are also forefathers, and it is quarrelling between chiefs and priests or village headmen that disturbs the natural order and causes disease and failure of crops. Kasitile was a famous priest, a man of perception, more than usually aware of the deeper implications of the rituals, but he never spoke of any personal relationship with Kyala, and he brushed aside the diviner's suggestion that his sickness was due to Kyala. He was dogged by a sense of guilt which, in pagan terms, could be redeemed only by sacrifice to his father and persuading his fellow priests to 'speak out' and admit their anger against him. Only when he was referring explicitly to Christian doctrine did he hint at redemption by Kyala (*vide infra*, pp. 128-9, 141). The genius of Nyakyusa religion is an awareness of the corrupting power of 'anger in the heart' and the necessity of confession and reconciliation if men are to be healthy in mind and body; they have no developed conception of God comparable to that of the Nuer. To them it is not 'the first and greatest commandment' which is familiar but 'the second which is like unto it'.

183 ● 771

[783]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The festivities and display are most often linked, not to the Church ritual, but to the handing over of marriage cattle. Since the feasts of the puberty ritual are not celebrated, the Christians concentrate their energies on the *ukukwa*, when quantities of food are provided by the bride's family, and a crowd gathers to sing and dance. Then, some time after the cattle have been handed over, the bride is taken to her husband by a party of 'mothers' and friends, and a feast is provided by the groom. The pattern is very similar to that of the pagan handing over of marriage cattle (*ukukwa*) and bringing home the bride (*ukukola*), but new songs and dances replace the somewhat bawdy pagan ones, and the Christian youths, unlike the pagans, dance without spears. Often at a Christian wedding pagans also attend, and there are rival groups of dancers, pagans, and Christians, between whom quarrels readily flare up. And when the new songs and dances of the Christians are copied by the pagans, as they sometimes are, then the Christians drop them, for they wish to be different.

The traditional examination of the bride by the 'mothers' and the giving of a bull if she goes to her husband a virgin, are maintained in the Christian community. The bull is usually killed as a feast for the mothers 'to say thank you for nourishing her', but there is, of course, no offering of the sacred meat to the ancestors, and sometimes the bull is not killed at all, or the groom brings shillings instead. As so often happens, a former ritual survives as ceremonial, an observance felt to be specially appropriate to the occasion, but no longer regarded as a condition of health or salvation.

When she is taken to her husband the bride is exhorted by her 'mothers' on her duties as a married woman. The traditional emphasis on separation from her mother is still there: 'You have left your mother, your husband is your mother, we have separated. . . .' And she is exhorted to be chaste, to obey her husband and answer him submissively, to be clean and diligent in her work, to be hospitable, and above all, as a Christian, to feed 'those from a distance'. Here the contrast between pagan and Christian ethics is emphasized: a pagan wife is only obliged to cook for kinsmen and neighbours, not strangers, but for a Christian to let a stranger starve is spoken of as a mortal sin.

The annual festivals of the Church are not so closely parallel to pagan communal rituals, for they were developed in a northern and temperate climate with a rhythm very different from the

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

like most of the leaders of Zionist Churches in the south.[1] 797[x]

It is noticeable that the two 'independent' Churches have a more elaborate form of service than the Church from which their leaders have sprung, and Ngumela habitually wears conspicuous vestments. There is, of course, great variation between different denominations in the emphasis placed on ritual, some Protestants abjuring it and turning their very insistence on starkness and simplicity into a ritual in itself—a taboo. There seems to be a clear tendency in Southern Africa for 'independent' Churches to express themselves more and more in ritual and less in dogma. In this way they reduce the gap between themselves and the pagans, for the pagan religion is expressed almostly exclusively in ritual, whereas Christianity is expressed in creeds and confessions as well as in the rituals of the Church. 795[x] 779 [796]

(v) THE CONTRAST BETWEEN PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

There are certain common elements in the rituals celebrated by pagans and Christians: some of the occasions are the same, and in the conceptions of sacrifice, of death and rebirth, of confession and cleansing, there are similarities; but there are also profound differences. The conception of life, immortality, replaces the preoccupation with fertility, for though most Nyakyusa Christians, like the pagans, regard celibacy as evidence of physical abnormality, and the conventional desire of a woman is to have six children—a quiverful in Nyakyusa eyes—yet fertility is no longer the end of all being, sought in every ritual. There are profound differences, too, in the values expressed in the rituals regarding sex relations, the range of moral obligations, and social change. In pagan thought polygyny is good—a man should have many children. Child marriage is defended on the ground that a girl 'gets accustomed to her husband' if she goes to him early, and homosexual relations between youths and young men are tolerated since they have no wives and *cannot* marry if the older men are polygynists. What is upheld is the chastity of women, and a total separation of the sex activities of members of successive generations, expressed in the taboos limiting familiarity between mother and son, father and mobile daughter, father-in-law and daughter-law. In Christian thought it is the 'pure in heart' who 'see God' and this is interpreted by the mission Churches to imply monogamy. Only in the 'independent' African Churches is it asserted 797[x] 795[x] [842] [589] [595] [584] [838] [836] [561] [183] [595]

[1] The emphasis on healing, so common in the south, is absent.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

x 797 x 795 leap in sympathy; as one of our friends explained, she found it hard to accept food from the neighbouring Safwa who were 'so dirty in their cooking'.

[577] Both pagans and Christians pin their faith to resurrection, but the interpretations differ radically. To the pagan the shade is [775] resurrected 'in the body of his child', it scarcely has any separate existence. To Christians the personality, the individual soul, is something indestructible and continuing. This theological difference is but one facet of a deep cleavage between the pagan view of a man and his relations with his group, and the Christian view.

● [183] Because the traditional religion is a cult of the shades, piety consists in doing just as father did. It is neglect of traditional rituals, departure from traditional ways, that is held to bring madness, sterility, or death. But Christianity is revolutionary; it is the yeast working in society to transform it. That is often forgotten in communities with a Christian tradition, but where the Gospel has been preached only for a generation and confessing Christians are but one in six, it is in men's minds all the time. The Nyakyusa could not be unaware that the Gospel implied changing their society.

[796] In the pagan tradition the meticulous performance of the rituals is stressed: the right medicines; the right persons; the right order of [688] events are all important. The attitude of mind of the participants matters also—if they are on bad terms the ritual will be ineffective —but goodwill and forgiveness alone are useless without the performance of the proper ritual. In the Christian tradition, as interpreted to us by Nyakyusa converts, it is the inward and spiritual attitude of the participants that is stressed.

Finally, all the pagan rituals are directed to driving off the [771] shades or the heroes, whereas the Christian rituals are the 'means of grace', of coming near to God. Christians pray that the Holy Spirit should take up his abode within them; they seek to emulate the saints who 'walked with God'. Our Christian friends were quite clear about the contrast here between the pagan and Christian tradition: it is crystallized in the attitude to dreams: if a pagan dreams of converse (*ukwangala*) with shades, he fears death; 'if a Christian dreams of converse with God he rejoices greatly because it means he is gaining strength in Christianity.'

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F'N17 Ngonde F'N17
Nyakyusa

plots of maize, squashes, tobacco, etc., and useful trees (bamboo, citrus-mango, kapok, mpangwi and firewood). Artificial drainage would, of course, make more land available along the rivers, but this is in general beyond the abilities and resources of the Nyakyusa without considerable outside assistance.

Finally, in this matter it is to be remembered that in addition to a man's arable holding, each of his wives has a banana plot at her house from which she obtains her staple foodstuff. Such plots amount to perhaps about a tenth of an acre on the average. On the other hand, the Nyakyusa are no longer prepared to tolerate a predominantly banana diet. Rice too, in most areas of the Lake Plains, becomes almost as important as bananas.

Large-sized Holdings

Some blame for this novel shortage of land and the smallness of the average holding has often been laid upon that minority of Nyakyusa who have exceptionally large holdings, and also upon the immigrants from beyond the Lake Plains who have come to settle there during the past decade.

The occupiers of large-sized holdings are rather fewer than has sometimes been supposed. The notoriety of large land-owners, such as some of the modern chiefs with as much as 25-30 acres, has brought more attention to them than is really warranted. Most chiefs and village headmen have arable holdings of above average size, as a result of their privileged positions in the land allocation system and because of their prestige influence; but they remain a small minority and their number is bound to decrease in the future as inheritance causes sub-division of their holdings, for most of them have also more than the average number of wives and sons. In the two high-density regions it is clearly impossible for any man much to increase his present holding. As will be shown later (see page 24) the modern trend is not unnaturally towards a dangerous fragmentation of holdings.

The data obtained in this matter for my eight village samples are summarised in Table III, page 15. In those villages the two men out of 372 who held more than ten acres were a village headman and the father of a chief.[1] There were seven other headmen and one chief as well as some other locally influential men amongst the people covered by my surveys, but none of them held more than ten acres. There are, of course, some commoners amongst the large land-holders; many of them are close relatives of the chief or headman and have thus received preferential treatment. Some, however, are ordinary villagers who were perspicacious enough to see future trends and to obtain land in the early days before most men realised its new value and when vacant areas were still easily available. Such men are tending to become a new, wealthy class, but on the other hand they are particularly susceptible to the begging of kinsmen and friends who have insufficient land. If they are not to be regarded as unneighbourly or even anti-social (perhaps practising witchcraft) they are virtually compelled to be generous sometimes, both with their land and with their profits.

On the whole this minority of men excites little attention or jealousy among the Nyakyusa, who indeed take it for granted that their chiefs and headmen will have more land than ordinary villagers, as befits their status and prestige. If it be thought that by reducing somehow the size and number of these unusually large holdings then the land shortage might be partly relieved, it is a false hope. I scarcely think that the Nyakyusa would welcome any such attempt at interference by administrative action, but in any case it would only provide minor and temporary relief here and there and would not be worth the executive difficulties involved.

1. This second man should be a chief himself but he was dismissed by Government on his implacement for punishment. He still holds much of the prestige and privilege of a chief for his son is only allowed authority in purely local government affairs.

(e.g. for fear of witchcraft) and take up the vacant holding. Nevertheless in general the holding was allowed to lapse and it could be re-allocated by the village headman if need arose; or the elderly widows might be allowed to continue to reside and cultivate as long as they wished. [425] [426]

Once land began to become scarce and valuable this loose system could no longer continue. Junior brothers and half-brothers were no longer content to permit the chief heir to take the whole of the deceased's holding to do with it as he wished, and a systematized division had to be adopted. At first, naturally enough, land was gradually brought under the same system which controlled the inheritance of other property, but this proved inadequate – inadequate not only in itself as being, perhaps, too complicated and conducive of disagreement and quarrelling in so far as land is concerned, but also because that system itself was already beginning to break down under the impact of individualism. [423] [79] [424]

It was felt that because sons assist their father in his homestead and fields and in their turn rely on him for a share in the cash-and-kind profits of peasant farming, therefore they should have priority in the inheritance of their father's property. Their father's brothers, it was said, would in any case already have their own holdings in which likewise their sons have prime interest. Conversely, older Nyakyusa men began to be reluctant to take a brother's land (and other property too) on his death, for fear that, in their turn, control of their own land would descend at their deaths to their brothers' sons rather than to their own sons.

As a result of these attitudes a strong desire arose to modify the customary laws in this matter, and the Rungwe African District Council, with the approval of the Government, has by formal resolution established a new law under which sons may inherit direct from their own fathers. [546]

This law is not universally accepted by the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains and sons still will sometimes waive their novel rights in favour of the traditional claims of their fathers' brothers. They say that they do not desire to see the break up of the wider lineage which, in effect, this new law encourages; they are also afraid of the anger and jealousy, and thus of the witchcraft, of their uncles. It appears however that the change is accepted by the large majority of the people, for it follows the trend of modern values and kinship sentiments. [754] [578]

The principal heir is now the eldest son, but in general he has little direct control over the property and land of his half-brothers unless they are still young, in which case he has a moral duty to act as guardian and custodian. Sons inherit that part of the paternal holding which had been allocated to their mother by their father in his lifetime, plus any other pieces he might have given to any of them direct as individuals. Each group of full-brothers determines the way in which it divides up its own inheritance. The eldest brother of such a house has a definite obligation to see that his juniors obtain shares of the land in so far as its extent and their number will allow. On the whole it is expected by Nyakyusa that the eldest brother will secure the best holding for himself, as befits his new status, but he cannot deny his younger brothers' claims. Disputes in this matter are not uncommon and the local courts have already shown their determination to support the claims of younger brothers. [423] [428] [593]

Very commonly – though it has not yet crystallised as compulsory social behaviour – a father will grant a portion of his holding to his son on the latter's marriage, or as soon after as the son decides to give up labour migration and settle down. It is thought that a married man should be independent economically and that he should be able to maintain his own household; it is realised that there is most likely to be friction in the relations between father and son, especially in this society where it is traditionally [183] [196] [593]

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

against the wrong-doer. It is supposed that after this procedure sickness or even death may come to that person. Another method consists of laying a bewitched object on the path usually used by the offender; with the same result. Such bewitching is practised, for instance, when a quarrel has broken out between relatives. With the Nyakyusa any quarrelling with kinsmen is considered a very serious crime, as such a conduct is apt, in their estimation, to destroy the highly-valued family harmony.

3. Another day a ceremony (*ulwengapi*)[8] to end mourning was held at Katumba. Some time before an older child had died, and now they were gathered to take leave of the dead[9].

At some distance from the hut, on the open space before it, a square represented the grave, in which the blossom of a banana[10] was interred, representing the dead. The mourners knelt at this grave and touched it with their elbows, knees and foreheads[9]. Each of the chief mourners had to do this, according to the belief of the Natives, lest he should fall into madness.

The next act was performed by the *uwengapi*[10], the leading person of the ceremony, one in full knowledge of the rites. Immediately before the door of the hut of the mourning parents, the *uwengapi* threw the collections of corn, brought by the participants in small baskets in honour of the dead, together into a big basket, and uttered the names of the contributors addressing the dead. The other participants repeated these names.

Then the mourners went into the hut; but, after some moments, they reappeared one by one and each one, as he left the door in a crouching position, was softly struck on his neck by the *uwengapi* with a piece of the trunk of a banana plant. It was explained to me that this ceremony would induce new strength to the mourners, who were weakened by the death of their relative.

The portion of the ceremony which followed, consisted in the forming of a line by the mourners between the hut and the grave. The persons now stood straddle-legged on leaves of banana, the *uwengapi* at the

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[8] Cf. Wilson, Conventions of Burial, p. 8, n. 4: *uwengapi*.
[9] Wilson has described burials (*lifwa*, sg.) of adult persons; nevertheless, I think, my description will be of some value.
[10] Cf. my Chaga Notes, Bantu Studies, XV, p. 301.
[9] Cf. *Pillsbury*, p. 338.
[10] Cf. *Mackenzie*, p. 289; pl. *bawapu*, p. 31; Wilson, Introduction, p. 287, *uwengapi* (hereditary priests).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

574 by insulting his father, begs pardon of them by bringing a bull
576 which his father may eat with them; or a daughter-in-law, having inadvertently caught sight of her father-in-law, brings beer for him to drink with his neighbours.

574 At all feasts food is allotted in terms of kinship and village affiliation, and this tends to enhance the solidarity of kin groups
264 and villages. For example, funeral meat is first divided between
764 relatives and non-relatives, and that allocated to non-relatives is sub-divided by villages, each village headman present being given a share to divide between his people, men and women. When a relative of the chief has died, and the whole country has come to mourn, the chief allots a cow to each of his senior headmen, who then divide the carcasses between the villages in their respective halves of the chiefdom. The meat at a 'coming out' ceremony, and at the great feasts which were held after battle, was divided in the same way, and we saw a division of this kind when a senior headman who had been in exile was welcomed home (cf. pp. 273–4). Thus the right to share in a feast depends either on kinship with the provider, or on membership of a village.

574 The Christians' code of hospitality differs somewhat from that of the pagans: the latter stress feeding *neighbours*, whether it be in
184 the daily eating together, or at informal beer and dinner parties, or at ceremonies, while the Christians stress feeding strangers, quoting the text 'I was a stranger and ye took me in'[1] and the parable of the Good Samaritan.[2] The pagans jibe at the Christians for being inhospitable because (as the Christians themselves admit) they entertain their neighbours less than pagans do; the Christians point to their wider obligations, and the fact that they do feed and house visitors from a distance, especially fellow Christians gathering for Church festivals. The Christians are very conscious also of the difficulties of hospitality in a monogamous household, for a wife must not only do all the cooking for visitors (and many Nyakyusa dishes require considerable labour to prepare), but she must also help to grow the food. The pagan who can afford to entertain much has several wives who share the work between them, whereas a Christian, no matter how rich, cannot have more than one wife and remain a member of his Church—unless it be one of the two small independent

[1] Matthew xxv. 35.
[2] Luke x. 29.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

574 African churches which countenance polygyny. The difficulty is partially overcome in some well-to-do Christian families by
•184 hiring labour to work in their fields and to fetch water and wood, and by offering visitors coffee or tea, which are easily prepared, in place of home-brewed beer; nevertheless the conflict between
[182] the value of hospitality (to which pagan and Christian alike subscribe, though they define it rather differently) and the value of monogamy, is often acute.

621 The mutual obligations of neighbours are not confined to feeding one another, for neighbours share with relatives the obligation of giving sympathy and assistance at the various crises in Nyakyusa life; the concept of *ukwangala* includes keeping on good terms with people by being sympathetic and obliging.

764 All the members of a village (except young children) are obliged to attend every burial of an adolescent or adult in that
621 village; they go to mourn the death of a neighbour or condole with one who is burying a 'son', for if a man dies while his father (or father's full brother, or his own senior brother) is yet alive, he is often buried in his 'father's' homestead.[1] Where a youth or man is buried by his 'father', his fellow villagers must attend the funeral also, but boys and young men need not go to a funeral in their fathers' village unless it is a village-mate of their own who is being buried.

[784] Funerals are occasions for feasting and dancing, so the obligation 'to mourn one another' (*ukulilanela*) does not press hardly, and the Nyakyusa feeling is that no one would fail to come unless he were a witch, and fearful lest his victim rise from the grave and denounce him. 'If a man does not go to his neighbour's burial then at once people say: "It was you who bewitched him. Why else do you not come to bury him?" ' Failure to come is certain evidence that the truant is 'a harsh man who does not keep ôn good terms with people (*ukali, atikwangala kanunu nabonda*)'.

764 One neighbour, 'he who went about most with the dead man', is appointed by the headman of the village to help the relatives dig the grave, and village neighbours must also bring small gifts of food and firewood for the entertainment of the many guests.

[1] A married man whose 'fathers' are dead, or do not choose to exercise their right to bury him, is buried at his own home, and a woman who has borne a child is buried at her husband's home.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

which witchcraft and 'the breath of men' operate, but their supposed fields of action are relatively distinct.

In the past, the punishment for sorcery was death with torture by impaling, not merely confiscation of property and banishment. Proof of the practice of sorcery depended upon the evidence of the doctor who had supplied the medicine (who was not regarded as implicated in the crime) and upon the *wmwafi* ordeal. The Nyakyusa insist that the practice of sorcery was formerly rare, and that it has increased enormously, much more than the practice of witchcraft. This belief is to be related to two facts. First, Nyakyusa co-operate much more than they formerly did with people who live in different villages. The clerks who work together in Government offices, and who have a fearsome reputation as sorcerers, do not necessarily live in the same village; and being apart at night when the witches fly, they cannot be supposed to bewitch one another. But there is frequent occasion for friction between them and therefore a standing temptation to employ sorcery. So also in other types of employment, in trade and on journeys, individuals are frequently in contact with men of different villages. Secondly, belief in sorcery is felt to be compatible with the acceptance of a scientific explanation of causes of disease in a way that belief in witchcraft is not. *Ubutege* is commonly translated as 'poisoning' by those who speak English, whether the medicine is or is not put into food or drink, or whether it is supposed to affect all who eat it or only the individual against whom it is directed. All types of sorcery tend to be rationalized as 'poisoning'; and many educated Nyakyusa who deny the reality of witchcraft admit to a lively fear of sorcerers.

As the table on pp. 198–213 shows, however, accusations of witchcraft are still much more common than accusations of sorcery in the community as a whole. We heard of thirty-eight cases of supposed witchcraft to eleven of sorcery, and there was no reason to think that our friends were more likely to mention the one type of case than the other.

d. The age-village and Christianity

Since common action against witches, and to punish transgressors through 'the breath of men', is one of the primary functions of an age-village, what happens in a Christian village, or

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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when members of a pagan village embrace Christianity? Orthodox Nyakyusa Christians, that is, those accepting the teaching of the European missionaries of any of the four denominations at work in the area, deny the reality of witchcraft and of 'the breath of men'; they deny the power of any individual to harm another by virtue of 'a python' in the stomach, or to bring illness to his erring neighbour by murmuring with others about him.

As we have already seen, the profession of Christianity and school education tend to coincide among the Nyakyusa, and the educated tend to be sceptical of witchcraft, while believing in sorcery. Such scepticism is directly related to the dogmatic teaching of missionaries, to instruction in physiology in schools, and to the challenge of certain missionaries and Nyakyusa Christians that pagans should prove the existence of witchcraft at autopsies (*vide* Document, p. 254). The suggestion that 'pythons' are really acute tape-worm (*vide supra* p. 92) or an enlarged kidney is typical of the critical attitude of educated Christians to pagan dogma. We have no doubt that belief in witchcraft is weakening, and that this weakening is directly due to mission teaching.

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Nevertheless most Christians continue to have some belief in a mystical power exerted by individuals or groups to the harm of others. For a few the contradiction between the traditional and the Christian dogma involves acute mental conflict; for many the conflict is resolved through the concept of 'the curse' (*ikigume*) of the congregation, led by the priest or pastor and elders, and through emphasis on sorcery rather than on witchcraft. Most Christians believe that the just wrath of those set in authority, and of the faithful members of a congregation, may bring misfortune on a sinner. They argue that the power which punishes the wrong-doer comes from God, not from ancestors or from pythons in men's bellies, but that it is brought upon an individual by the anger and murmuring of men.[1] Further, it is believed that

[1] The phrase 'the breath of men' (*umbepo ya bandu*) is never used with reference to the punishment of sinners in the Christian congregation, but always 'the curse' (*ikigume*), a word which is used to translate certain phrases in the Gospels, and which conveys an idea felt to be compatible with Christian dogma. As already noted (p. 101) the pagans of the plain and of Selya use 'the curse' (*ikigume*) more or less synonomously with 'the breath of men' (*umbepo ya bandu*). For details of cases of misfortune attributed to the curse of Christians see Monica Hunter, 'An African Christian Morality', *Africa*, Vol. X (1937), pp. 283–91.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Christians are only affected by the shocked astonishment of fellow Christians, not by the disapproval of pagans, and the unit within which 'the curse' is commonly spoken of as operating is the congregation. In two of the cases we recorded (*vide* Document, p. 209) it was suggested that illness was due to the anger of neighbours, fellow Christians, over stinginess and greed, but in the other cases it was not village neighbours who were primarily concerned, but the Christian congregation, a group embracing members from many villages.

The type of behaviour believed to be punishable by 'the curse' of fellow Christians also differs somewhat from that thought to be punished by 'the breath of men'. The virtue Christians emphasize most is chastity, and 'the curse' is often said to be a punishment for fornication or adultery. The other sin commonly spoken of as bringing down a curse is disobedience, or disrespectful behaviour to the minister (or priest) or elder of the congregation. Among pagans 'the breath of men' serves also to sanction sexual morals and to sustain respect for those in authority, but their sex code is different. It is incest, or familiarity between father- and daughter-in-law, which they regard as really evil, not sex relations outside marriage. And they emphasize respect to senior relatives and fathers' neighbours rather than to the leaders of any wider group.

Christians lay much less stress on hospitality to neighbours than pagans, and it is generally agreed that they eat alone more than pagans would dare to do. As one Christian put it, a pagan would *always* call his neighbours to share meat or beer when he had it, but a Christian might eat a sheep, or a goat, or even a calf, alone with his family. It is good, the Christians say, to call friends to share a feast, but not an inescapable obligation. Nor do Christians regularly send the saddle and ribs of any animal they kill to the chief, as pagans do; 'for', they say, 'we do not fear "the breath of men".' But hospitality towards strangers is felt to be a condition of salvation. One informant explained that 'If a man is stingy towards his neighbours it does not matter; but if he is stingy towards a stranger from a distance, he might die from lack of food; and that would be the fault of the stingy one. Such a fault would prevent him from entering Heaven.' This statement points to the most striking difference between Christian and pagan morality—the range of moral obligations. A pagan's duties

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

are primarily to kinsmen and fellow villagers, and secondarily to fellow members of his chiefdom; beyond the chiefdom and circle of kinsmen he had, traditionally, no obligations. The Christian definition of 'neighbour' is a much wider one. It is emphasised by the missionaries that the Christian Church is universal, and Nyakyusa Christians themselves are conscious of their unity with, and obligations to, members of other chiefdoms, other cultural groups, and other races. The new sanctions for behaviour operative within the Christian group—the emphasis on Christian duty, the hope of that 'peace which passeth all understanding' and of eternal life; and the fear of suspension or expulsion from the communion of the faithful, and of hell-fire[1]—all these apply to relations beyond, as well as within, the village, the chiefdom, and the circle of kin.

Two other points were mentioned by Christian informants when discussing the differences between pagan and Christian morality: they said that Christian children growing up were liable to be 'proud' (*namatiego*) in their bearing and manner of greeting, because they do not fear 'the breath of men'; and also that Christian men were not afraid to ask many cattle for their daughters at marriage, again because they do not fear their neighbours' disapproval in the way pagans fear it. The implication is that there was insistence upon conformity to a given code among Christians than among pagans; a greater tolerance of diversity of behaviour.

These differences between pagan and Christian dogma are matched by differences between their ritual. There are no Christian rituals in which the village as a group, distinct from other groups, is concerned. The congregation—the group worshipping in one church—is drawn from many villages, and though devout Christians living in the same neighbourhood often gather for morning and evening prayer, such rituals never include a whole village. Even a Christian village on mission land only a small proportion of the villagers attend daily prayer regularly. As we have seen, the members of a pagan village meet from time to time to warn off witches, or to bless a repentant wrong-doer (*vide supra*, pp. 101, 105f.), but since belief in witchcraft or in 'the curse' is not orthodox among Christians, there is no ritual con-

[1] cf. Monica Hunter, 'African Christian Morality', *Africa*, Vol. X (1937), p. 285-92.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

nected with it in a Christian village or village-section. The nearest parallel to the pagan ritual of reconciliation is the formal re-admission of a repentant sinner to the congregation.

The change in belief and ritual tends to weaken village solidarity; for the Christian village is neither a defensive unit, nor is it the group from within which retribution and forgiveness come. A Christian does not feel himself dependent upon village neighbours to the same degree as does a pagan. We argue that the extension of the range of interdependence reduces its intensity in the narrower circles of relationship, and this is evident in the religious as in the economic aspect.[1]

Since the authority of a village headman is largely dependent upon his supposed mystical power, Christians are rarely appointed to this office by the Nyakyusa. We heard of only one Christian headman and he was in the country of a Christian chief. Christians cannot go through the full 'coming out' ceremony which involves treatment with medicines to give *amanga*, and a Christian headman cannot fulfil the traditional ritual functions in relation to the chief and his ancestors. But in Ngonde, where the percentage of Christians is high (46 per cent as opposed to 15 per cent among the Nyakyusa) and the 'coming out' ceremony has been dropped, there are a number of Christian headmen who simply abstain from the performance of any pagan rituals (as does the Kyungu himself) leaving them to those headmen who are pagan and feel the ritual to be important. And pagan informants whom we asked about defence against witchcraft in a village in which the headman was a Christian, replied: 'Others will protect the country from witchcraft,' implying that there are always other 'defenders' in a village besides its leader.

In Christian village-sections the same difficulties do not arise, for assistant headmen are never treated at the 'coming out', nor have they ritual functions, other than the formal reproof of supposed witches (*vide supra*, p. 109). Hence the recognized leader of any group of Christians living in a pagan village is normally a Christian. In Christian villages on mission land the leaders are, of course, always Christian. These villages do not participate in any 'coming out' ceremony and the leaders are appointed by the missionary in consultation with the 'session' (*i.e.* representatives of the congregation), not by the old chief and

[1] *cf.* G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 25-41.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

his village headmen. In some villages the 'elder' is both a religious leader and a secular authority, but there is a tendency to separate the two offices and to appoint a 'peacemaker' whose duty it is to settle disputes, collect taxes, and represent the village in its relationships with the chief and the administration, while the 'elder' confines himself to watching over the spiritual welfare of his people. Such division of authority is symptomatic of the growing differentiation of Nyakyusa society.

e. Witchcraft, medicines, and the British administration

Under British administration the use of the *ummafi* ordeal, imputation of witchcraft, intimidation or obtaining goods under false pretences by threats of witchcraft or sorcery, or offers of protection against them, are punishable offences. As we have seen, the ordeal is now administered only in the greatest secrecy, and probably very seldom, but accusations of witchcraft are frequent, and are even heard before the Native Courts, though not recorded (*vide* Document, p. 257). In the villages near the Government station more caution is observed in making accusations than in more remote parts of the district: very often the identity of the witch is only hinted at, or thorns are piled at his door by persons who remain anonymous (*vide supra*, p. 114) so that no individual can be convicted of imputing witchcraft. As one man put it: '"The defenders" see the witches, but cannot name them to anyone.' Autopsies continue in conservative villages but they are no longer performed on every corpse, as is said to have been customary in the old days. The chief Porokoto, himself a sceptic, argued that it was no use performing an autopsy when a charge could not be laid. If the members of a village are all convinced that a particular fellow is a witch he is forced to move, since his unpopularity becomes intolerable to him (*supra*, pp. 110–5). As Mwambuputa put it: 'We don't like him, and he doesn't like us either: he does not enjoy our company (*atikwangala na nsuse*), so he moves.' But if the friction is only between two individuals, the supposed witch may brazen it out, for without resort to the *ummafi* ordeal there is no sure means of deciding between the accuser and the accused.

The prohibition of witch-finding is not accepted as right and just: the common view is that the Europeans 'protect the witches',

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

121 object or action which it is felt to resemble. The images men use,
811 the things they feel to be alike, are determined in a general way by the form of the society, and Nyakyusa images are in terms of bananas, staple grains, cattle, smithing on a primitive forge, lineage organization and so on. There are cultural idioms, accepted forms of expression, which frequently recur, but the particular associations are not predictable any more than the associations made by a poet in our own society—the priest and the doctor are indeed in one aspect poets.

771 The essence of Nyakyusa ritual is that things which are felt to
813 be alike are taken as causally connected. Both positive actions and
843 avoidances or taboos are based on the assumption that like objects or actions react on one another. This was clearly recognized by an informant who remarked: 'avoidances come from resemblances.' The basis is invariably the *feeling* of likeness, but mixed up with this there is often exact observation, as in the following taboo. The husband of a pregnant woman may not hunt big game because, it is said, they will be unusually fierce and attack him particularly. The association made is between a pregnant woman who is irritable, 'fierce' (akali), and the game which is fierce. The husband is identified with his wife, 'and', the Nyakyusa say, 'lion *always* attack a cow in calf'. Sometimes like things are felt to be antagonistic, as 'seed in the belly' and seed in the ground, and sometimes sympathetic. Sometimes like is thought to produce like—a pregnant woman is forbidden to sit close to someone lest she bears twins—and sometimes men mime a misfortune as a prophylactic against it.

789 The rituals are magical in the sense that efficacy is held to lie in
● 184 the particular material form,[1] but they vary in detail with the
771 cultural group, just as the language does.[2] The rituals of the Lakeshore plain in Tanganyika (MuNgonde) and of Selya are almost identical, but those of the Kukwe, the Lugulu, the Saku, the Ndali, the Penja, and the people of Ngonde in Nyasaland are all somewhat different. Differences in ritual are directly connected by the people themselves with differences in lineage, and the principle is maintained that every individual follows the ritual of his or her father's lineage, though a married woman will follow that of her

[1] For a discussion of this characteristic of magic cf. G. & M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change* (1945), pp. 72–3; 88–95.

[2] An account of the various cultural groups included under Nyakyusa, and of related peoples, is given in *Good Company*, pp. 1–5.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

husband when at her husband's home. Kakune, a doctor, explained: 'The ritual for a woman is that of her husband's group, always. My mother was Lugulu, but at her death we did the Kukwe ritual. If my daughter marries a Sangu and dies, they will do the Sangu ritual; she has moved.' We attended a death ritual which was actually performed in two slightly different ways by two sets of mourners. A member of a Sangu family, long established in Selya, had died; sons and daughters of the family performed what was said to be the Sangu ritual, but the children of daughters married to Selya men performed the Selya ritual. Whether the Sangu ritual is really so similar to the Selya ritual as this celebration suggests is doubtful—it seems unlikely, since the Sangu are very different from the Nyakyusa in other respects and their languages are not mutually intelligible—but some sort of adjustment had been made by this foreign family living in Selya and by others in a like position. Our informants *expected* to find parallels to the events of their own rituals in the rituals of neighbouring groups, and they expected also to find *minor* differences. Any variations are explained by the phrase 'that is the custom in their lineage', and the officiant is the final arbitrator as to what is correct. A number of informants also pointed out that the staple foods were used in the death ritual and that these varied somewhat with the area. 'We eat the principal food of the country—it differs with different people. The Kisi and Ngonde (of Nyasaland) use fish, the Ndali use goats, we Nyakyusa cannot use rice but the Swahili would. Our food is bananas.[1] The pumpkin, which we also use, is a very old vegetable and is still much eaten; it is one of the best vegetables.' The Sangu use millet porridge, the Penja maize and beans.

In this book are described the rituals of the main cultural groups of the Nyakyusa—those of the people of Selya and Masoko and the Lake-shore plain (MuNgonde)[2] which are similar, and those of the Kukwe which are different, and a few references are made to other variations. The variations are suggestive, for though the details differ, the values and attitudes expressed are identical. There are also minor differences between families of the same cultural group, and in the practice of different officiants, but their

[1] The Nyakyusa use *ntumbi* as a general word for plantains and bananas, though *ntumbi* is properly one variety of plantain. 'Bananas' is used here to include all varieties of bananas and plantains.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 6.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

interpretations scarcely differ. Thus the commonly accepted idea that ritual forms are more stable than the interpretation of symbolism[1] does not hold for the Nyakyusa.

The account of the ritual cycle begins with an analysis of funeral rites, for of all the family rituals they involve the greatest emotional tension and are the most elaborate, as well as being performed far more frequently than any others. Moreover, in them are adumbrated symbolic patterns which recur again and again throughout the cycle; in them is apparent that preoccupation with fertility characteristic of the cycle—they are a rite of creation as well as a farewell to the dead—and in them lies the key to an understanding of the conception of the *abagwale*, 'those who have risen from the dead', that is, the shades.

The principal participants in these rituals are immediate kin—parents and children, siblings, grandparents and grandchildren—but the circle included varies with the particular ritual concerned and more distant relatives and neighbours are involved in varying degrees. In order to bring out these differences and avoid repetition, the detailed discussion of who takes part is deferred until after all the rituals have been described.

Should any Nyakyusa, reading this, feel that matters have been revealed which should remain secret, I would remind them that the interpretation of traditional ritual reveals a profound similarity in the phantasies of the Nyakyusa and those of other races; and such understanding of the dark places of men's minds as the *abasyage* possess may swell that body of knowledge which is the heritage of men of all races and cultures.

[1] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (1952), pp. 153–7; A. N. Whitehead, *Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effects* (1928), p. 75.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 according to lineage custom. In the round and oval graves the body is placed in the cave in a sitting position; in the oblong graves lying at full length on one arm; but in both the dead man is set to face the direction from which he and his people have [173] traditionally come. The bulk of the Nyakyusa say that they came from the east, eight or ten generations ago, down the Livingstone Mountains into their present country; and it is to the east that they face in death. Those in the north of the district, whose local name is Kukwe, face in death towards their most recent centre of dispersion near Rungwe Mountain, although they have traditions going farther back to a migration from the Livingstone Mountains through the present Sangu country.

Digging a grave is traditionally a dangerous activity, but nowadays it is no longer so much feared as it used to be. Formerly only mature men helped to dig a grave and they were given a whole leg of the burial meat to eat by themselves. Nowadays young men —often Christians—do it.

Before the burial the body is carried in procession round the homestead. The chief mourners surround it wailing, and the dead man's cattle are driven in front. 'We do this to honour the dead man.' Then one of the cattle of the lineage is taken 'to look into the grave'. Two or three people get down into the grave to receive and bury the body. In the case of a man, his chief wife, his sister, and a male kinsman or village neighbour usually bury him. These three line the cave with mats and cloths which are passed down to them; then the body, previously washed and shaved[1] and now wrapped in cloths, is handed down, and they put it in position in the cave together with a few personal possessions such as a pipe, an eating-pot, a little calabash of ointment, and one of beer; nowadays also a looking-glass and perhaps a pencil and a cup. 'He goes with them to the place of the shades.' A woman is given bark-cloth belts and rouge, and a winnowing basket in place of the pipe and pot. They take off the strings of such utensils as are normally hung up. 'If the strings are left on the utensils will still be hanging up and he will be looking for them.' More cloths and mats are then put in with the body, and the cave is closed either with a stiff mat or with the door of the dead man's house, in accordance with local custom. Often there are hot disputes be-

[184] [1] The Kukwe wash the body just before death, the Nyakyusa and Penja after. The Kukwe fear lest their children should die of 'water in the stomach' if they wash a corpse.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

it seems as if there was another disease in the corpse itself, it is a 764
stinking mass of disease.' Traditionally they use two medicinal plants to wash with, but in some chiefdoms near mission stations they now wash without them. The chief of one such country explained: 'In the old days they feared very much to eat before bathing—but now sometimes they just wash their hands and eat. [177]
Of old they feared death, they feared lest the disease should spread, they wished to rid themselves of the contamination of the corpse. They used to wash with two plants—as medicine. Now they just bathe in the stream or sometimes only just wash their hands.' But, [184]
particularly in chiefdoms at a distance from the centres of European influence, the fear of the contagion of death is still very strong.

Death then is, for the majority of pagan Nyakyusa, a fearful as 761
well as a grievous event; less fearful than it used to be to their 184
fathers, but more fearful by far to them than it is to their Christian neighbours.

(c) *The sacrifice*

At all except the very poorest burials one or more head of cattle 764
are killed. Cows are provided whenever possible, but, if no cows are available, bulls may be used instead. If the man who has died left cattle of his own, one at least of his herd is killed; if he has left none, his family make every effort to buy or borrow one, or else they provide one themselves from their own herds. If the dead man was rich, several of his cows will be killed. If his senior son has cattle of his own, he should kill one for his father (*ikambumba*) and if there are a number of grown-up sons the senior of each group of full brothers will offer a cow.

Not only the immediate family of a dead man but also the 764
fathers (or brothers) of his wives and the husbands of his full 602
sisters and daughters are expected to provide cows for killing at his burial, and if he is buried at his 'father's' place then his 'father's' affinal relatives also are expected to bring cattle or cloths. When a married woman dies, her husband and her own 'father' are expected each to provide a cow or a bull. Occasionally other affines of her husband bring calves, but less usually. More cattle are killed for men than for women. For a young child nothing is killed.

The cattle are killed either by the dead man's 'father' or by his 764
heir; if a woman has died, then by her husband. At a man's burial 768

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

men cut down some of the bananas which surround the huts and the open place in front of them. 'The owner has died, it is a sign to men that someone has died there.' 'We do it so that it should not seem as if he was still alive; if the bananas were not cut but all stood they would cause us to remember that he was recently alive.' 'We wish the dead man to take them with him to the land of the shades.' And for exactly the same reasons some of the calabashes and pots of a dead woman are broken at her burial, and saplings of the *ficus* used for making bark-cloth are cut down. We have seen older men get up and check the dancers from destroying too many bananas. They told us that 'in the old days we used to cut down all the bananas of a dead man and any crops that were growing near the house also; but now we think that if we destroy all the food his children will die of hunger! So we just cut down a few bananas.' This destruction of food is connected with the belief that a man, when he dies, takes the fertility of the land with him, and this loss of fertility can only be avoided by the proper performance of the funeral ritual. The present moderation of the ritual destruction of food is, we think, an index of the decline of the power of the old belief; for the fear of future hunger, which now restrains them, used to encourage them to a greater sacrifice.

764 [535] [177]

(*d*) *The wailing and dancing*

From the time of the death until the end of the three or four days of the burial rites, wailing continues intermittently. 'We weep because we grieve and tremble with fear.' The old women are the most persistent, next come the men and boys. 'The women weep all the time; even at night they only sleep a little, weeping and sleeping and then weeping again! But we men weep just once, when we first arrive, we do not go on and on.' The chief mourners (*abenemfwa*: lit. owners of the death) among the women, that is the mother, stepmothers, wives, sisters, daughters, and brothers' wives, spend most of the time inside one of the huts, which is the centre of the wailing. The other women spend some time inside the hut, wailing with the chief mourners, but then they move to make way for others and sit just outside. On the plain and in Selya they sit packed close together and sway rhythmically as they wail in chorus, following a leader who stands in their midst. Tears roll down her face as she chants short phrases ending in the high-pitched wail: 'Alas father! Alas! Aaaaaaaaaaa! Farewell! Go So-and-so, farewell . . . we long for you, Father, farewell!' In the

764 184

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 hills the women who are outside do not bunch together, and the
184 wailing is both less rhythmical and less abandoned. The people of the plains laugh at them for not wailing properly. 'In the hills their funerals do not go well; each one wails separately. Here we listen to one another.' 'In Selya they lament a death properly; here [in the hills] they do not; they wail higgledy-piggledy, each one on her own. But we of Selya, and the people of MuNgonde and Masoko, we lead the wailing properly. There is always one person as leader and others follow her. If a woman does not follow, the leader will drive her away from the funeral saying "Wail alone". And if a widow wails out of time, they reprove her also saying: "Friend, we have come to lament at your funeral, but if you want to wail alone we will go and leave you with your husband." Then she agrees. . . . The leader speaks of the childhood and adult life of the deceased and concludes: "And then you died, farewell!" '

764 The chief mourners among the men—father, brothers, sons—go into the hut at first and wail with the women, but then they come out and sit with the men. Other male relatives, neighbours, and friends, as they arrive, go to the door of the hut, or just inside, and greet the women sympathetically; then they go and greet the chief mourners among the men and sit down with them. We asked the reason for the sympathetic greeting and were told: 'It is the custom at a burial; and when I die they will come to greet me also.' No exact line of division can be drawn between the wailing of the chief mourners and others, for some of the more distant male relatives go right inside and spend some time wailing and shedding tears. And both among the chief mourners and others the extent to which grief is thus expressed varies considerably.

In the groups of men and boys there is no wailing. The group of women outside wail intermittently at first, but later their attention is diverted to watching the burial dance. Those within the hut wail continuously before and for several hours after the burial, and on succeeding days they begin again each time new arrivals come into the hut to sympathize, and at nightfall as the crowds move off home.

Before the actual burial the body is kept in the hut and the chief women mourners hold it in their arms. One man expressed the opinion that, if a death occurred late in the evening or at night, the body should not be buried before noon the next day, so as to give people time 'to weep and assuage their grief, for they always wail more before the body is buried, when they can see the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

forted, I think people follow the custom, many have come to see me.'

There is no criticism of men or women who come to a burial to dance rather than to weep: 'They are not relatives—it is our custom of mourning.' They are saluting the dead and 'seeing him on his way', they are helping 'to comfort the relatives'. The presence of non-relatives at a burial is variously determined by feelings of affection and grief, of respect and sympathy for the family, by a sense of shame, by fear of being accused of witchcraft, and finally by the attraction of the crowds, the lively conversation, the dancing, and the meat.

At the burial of a Nyakyusa Christian there is little unrestrained wailing and no dancing; instead the young men of the congregation gather round the grieving relatives and sing cheerful hymns, full of the certainty of Heaven, 'to accompany him on his way to God' and 'to comfort the mourners'.

(*e*) *Prestige at funerals*

As has already been indicated, the length of the mourning depends upon the status of the deceased. It is short for a child—there is no sacrifice and no crowd; for a rich man it is longer than for a poor man; for the kinsman of a chief longer than for a commoner. Mwaikambo explained:

> Many conceal their position (*ubufumuke*), it only appears at death. People may never know that a man is rich—only those who build close to him will know—but when he dies many know; many people come to the funeral. For a commoner, an ordinary person, the drums usually play a lament for two days only, sometimes for three, but for a village headman they play the lament for four days, or perhaps a week, and also for a man who has married a chief's daughter it continues for four days or a week. Then people ask why the drums are playing for so long and the reply comes: 'He married into the chief's family. The chief honours him in kinship.' Drums follow the importance of a man.
>
> Those who stay longest at a funeral are kinsmen. If a man has many kinsmen then the funeral will last long because his kinsmen do not return home quickly. A chief has many kinsmen, more than anyone else, because the people of his chiefdom are all like kinsmen. With a village headman also the people who build with him are somewhat like kinsmen, and his funeral lasts a long time.

The size of the crowd at a funeral depends very largely upon the amount of meat provided, and this in turn depends upon the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

CHAPTER III

FAREWELL TO THE DEAD

AFTER spending three or four days weeping, and feasting, and 765
dancing, the main body of mourners scatter to their homes, but the close kinsmen remain for a week or two sleeping at the home of the deceased, awaiting the ritual of farewell. The Nyakyusa themselves distinguish three main events in it: the 'picking up of pumpkin-seeds' (*ukusala inyungu*) when the chief mourners first begin to wash; the 'shaving of the sprouting hair' (*ukutemela ilitemelo*) when the beer of inheritance is brewed and the estate divided; and the 'ritual of the gasping cough' (*ingotolo*) when the widows, having lain with the heir, go to visit their parents. The details differ appreciably between Selya and MuNgonde on the one hand, [184] and Kukwe country on the other, and we describe them separately.

1. IN SELYA AND MUNGONDE

(*a*) *The events*

i. '*Picking up pumpkin-seeds.*' The picking up of pumpkin-seeds 768
begins with the formal recognition of the heir, if the deceased was a 765
married man. The heir and widows are suddenly seized and hustled, 796
resisting, into the mourning hut. If they go willingly 'it seems as if they wished their relative to die'. The officiant smears their chests with ash and puts a strand of the *ilingolongofwa* creeper on each one's right shoulder. These are both signs of mourning, and the creeper is also 'a sign that we have given him the inheritance'. After a few minutes the heir and widows are formally summoned to come out of the hut, and they go off to wash away the ash and creeper in the stream. But first, the flowering head of a banana is buried in the courtyard near the door of the mourning hut and the grave of the deceased. If he was not a married man and there are no widows to be inherited, the ritual begins with this. The banana flower is explicitly identified with the corpse: it must face in the direction from which the ancestors came, as the corpse does; if the deceased is a male the flowering head is from a plantain (*itoki*); if a female from a sweet banana (*injali* or *indefu* or

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

765 deceased was a man and wealthy, the heir kills a bull or cow for a feast.

765 184 According to one account, 'the heir kills a cow saying: "This is your cow, Father." Then he takes the praying calabash and fills it with beer and goes to the banana grove. The others sit in the courtyard watching from afar. He blows beer and then pours out a little, several times, mentioning the dead man's name and those of three or four prominent dead relatives, and prays for children, health, and food. He takes his own senior son (or the son of his dead brother) with him to see what he does, for he (the son) will do it after his death. Then they come back and the meat is eaten and beer drunk.' But we never saw this happen nor was the prayer in the banana grove mentioned by other informants.

782 765 If the millet put to soak fails to sprout, however, there must be prayer. It is thought that there has been disagreement among the mourners and the shades are angry and have spoilt the millet. The kinsmen gather to confess their quarrels and pray before preparing another batch.

765 At the shaving of the sprouting hair (or some other time during the death ritual) the sisters of the dead man formally admonish his widows on their behaviour as wives. One admonition recorded lasted two hours, and the main theme was the stinginess of the widows in entertaining their sisters-in-law when the latter had come to visit.

765 768 587 On the morning after 'the shaving of the sprouting hair' the participants shave their whole heads and are anointed with ointment by the officiant. In the evening comes the formal handing over of the inheritance, if the deceased was a married man. The heir sits in the doorway of the mourning hut and the senior wife of the deceased hands him a bill-hook, such as is used for pruning bananas. He is adjured by his relatives, his village headman, and his neighbours to care for the children of the deceased as if they were his own, and the widows are told: 'This is your husband who [428] will hoe for you always.' If there is any division of property it is formally made on this occasion, the dead man's sisters and the village headman being primarily responsible for a just allocation. And though, traditionally, women were given no choice about inheritance, this was in fact the occasion on which their protests and preferences were expressed. Then the heir is thrown into the hut with the women he has inherited 'on to the ashes' (*umfwandelo*), and must have intercourse with all of them that night. One of

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

587 and the widower should refrain from sexual intercourse with his
834 other wives until the ritual union with the 'wife who replaces the dead' (*unsasi*) at the 'shaving of the sprouting hair'. Nowadays, however, widowers do not keep this taboo strictly, and many lie with their other wives after the 'picking up of pumpkin-seeds'.

765 Before the 'shaving of the sprouting hair' for a dead woman her brother (or, if he is dead, his heir) goes to cut down the bananas at her former husband's home, as a sign that kinship between them is at an end, but he is persuaded to desist. Mwakwelebeja, an elderly man who had just performed it after the death of his sister Seba, the wife of the chief Mwaipopo, in company with his neighbour Mwaiselage and his wives, thus described the ritual:

> We arrived and our wives and the wives of Mwaipopo went into the house to wail, and we men went in too and cried: 'Alas father! Alas father!' Then we seized my *umwipwa*, the girl Ijonga, the daughter of Seba, and went off with her. The women, the chief's wives, fought with us and cried: 'Bring a cloth, bring a cloth!' They gave us a cloth and we left the girl. Then I seized a bill-hook and began to cut down the banana grove. I cut indeed! They cried: 'Not the banana grove!' and gave me another cloth.
>
> QUESTION: What does this mean?
>
> MWAKWELEBEJA: When we seize the girl it is as if we said: 'My child has died, the kinship is finished, it is finished here, I'll be off with my sister's children (*abipwa*), they are *my* children.' And when they give me a cloth they pay saying: 'Father, we pray you, don't! There is still kinship, Father, you are not a stranger! Do not terminate the kinship, it is still there.' And when I cut the banana grove it means the same; it means my child has died here, it is finished here, the kinship has ended. And when they give me a cloth, they beseech me saying: 'Not the banana grove, Father, the kinship is not yet finished, it still exists!' Formerly, if they were rich they gave a bull. . . . We were unfortunate, Mwaipopo paid us nothing.
>
> After I had cut the grove I gave bananas and meat (from a cow I had brought to kill) to all my sisters' children, on the roadway (outside the homestead). I stood with my back to them and handed the bananas and meat over my shoulder. They came up behind me one by one, and took the food in their mouths. [This was demonstrated, dramatically.] Yes, it is a ritual. If we do not give them bananas and meat, their legs swell up, they fall ill and become mad.

765 Some of our informants maintained that this ritual of cutting
184 the bananas was performed only when the deceased's family had no girl to send in her place. Mwakwelebeja and Mwaiselage, how-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

ever, insisted that it was performed whether there was a girl to 765
send or not, but if several sisters were married to the same man it 184
was carried out only for the eldest of them.

We do this whether we are substituting another woman or not, but we do it only for the senior sister. There were three Sebas married to Mwaipopo, and when the two junior ones died we did not go to cut the bananas, but now the senior Seba has died, we do cut the bananas.

Mwaiselage explained that his brother-in-law would come to 765
cut bananas when his senior wife, Lyandileko, died, whether she died before or after her junior sister who is her co-wife, but the brother would not cut bananas at the death of the junior sister.

MWAKWELEBEJA: We cut the banana grove again when all the children of those women, the kinswomen married to one man, are dead. That is, their mother's brother's son (*untani*) does it, for their mother's brother will be dead by then. It means the same thing: 'The kinship is finished.' They pay to say: 'No, Father, it still continues.'

A woman to replace the dead is asked for even though her 587
husband has predeceased her. X, describing the ritual added: 765

And when my mother dies (if my father has died first) still her relatives, my *abipwa*, come to cut the banana grove. I throw them a cloth crying: 'Not the bananas.' Also they bring me another woman. If they do not, I go to them and say: 'Give me another mother to look after me.' They give me a girl whom I give to a half-brother (as his wife). If there is no girl they give me a cow, saying: 'That's your mother.'

Ibaso and Mwaijamba explained:

If, when a woman has died, her people are poor, having no child to replace her, they say: 'We are sorry, but there is nothing at all here, this cow is for drawing water with.' And formerly they returned all the cattle later on; but now, since we have stopped claiming calves, we divide the cows. . . . But when there is a daughter and they give her to me, the husband, we give marriage cattle again. Kinship does not [602]
come to an end.

To recapitulate, the main events of the ritual of death are the 765
formal recognition of the heir (if the deceased was a married man); 768
the burial of a flowering head of bananas and the rubbing in earth from the grave; washing; a ritual eating of bananas with certain seeds; sweeping out the mourning hut; circling the hearth and putting an old pot on the fire with various foods; the presentation of millet by relatives and friends, and a ritual grinding; a second

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764 by the dust, at some other funeral without having completed the
765 ritual for his own parents, and the danger of the 'gasping cough'
828 exists only when a widow, having lain with the heir, eats or drinks with her own relatives.

796 Everyone knows the connection between madness and the performance of the whole ritual and between coughing and the final act, but not everyone is conscious of the symbolism of the various events. For example, Mwakisisile, a middle-aged pagan man whom we knew well, could not interpret the details of the symbolism and he explained: 'Some ask about these things in the ritual, some do not ask. I have not asked. We only know, many of us, that in the ritual we drive the shade, who is here, away from the body, and that if we do not drive him away we run mad. But we do not understand the details of the ritual such as straining water through a leaf, or passing the baskets between the legs, so as to be able to say: "This detail means this." ' Those most conscious of the symbolism are the *abanyago*, the officiants at the family rituals and the priests of the communal rituals. Kasitile, the hereditary rain-maker of Selya, who was a close friend of Godfrey Wilson's, and formally presented him to his dead ancestors urging them 'not to be startled at a white face', was our foremost authority on the symbolism of the Selya ritual. He was more conscious of the symbolism than most people, but his interpretation was confirmed at almost every point by others. Kasitile was not paid for
[124] information—none of our informants was—but he and Godfrey Wilson exchanged gifts from time to time in the manner customary among the Nyakyusa, and he often had a meal with us. Mwandisi, a very old blind chief living on the Lake-shore plain (MuNgonde) who was regarded by the Nyakyusa themselves as an authority on history and custom, was also a friend prepared to expound the
[184] rituals. His interpretation contradicted Kasitile's on one point only—he denied that one purpose of the ritual was to bring back the shade into the house. Other informants, though less coherent, corroborated Kasitile's interpretation, which may therefore be taken as a general, not a personal one.

764 There are nine main themes in the ritual: first, the driving away
765 of the dead from the dreams of his close kinsmen, and measures to
796 prevent him 'brooding over them' (*ukobatela*)—the word is that used of a hen brooding over her chickens. Widows, in particular, must be separated from the shade of their husband before the heir (or any other man) dare have intercourse with them. Secondly, the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

764 Then they explained to me that formerly it was forbidden to
177 scrape bananas at a death, you eat them with the ash on, for if you scrape you will scrape your body also, that is, you will scratch and scratch. But now that custom is finished. Three men were scraping away.

784 Mwaikambo said: 'In all rituals it is forbidden to scrape bananas —in the puberty and twin rituals also.'

184 KASITILE: It is forbidden to scrape bananas only at a death ritual,
784 not at other rituals. If you scrape bananas you scrape your own body. It is the corpse. We have died, we are the corpse. . . .

604 The mother's brother (*umwipwa*) hands bananas and meat over his
781 shoulder to the children who are treated, then he goes off home and
764 they go home without looking back at one another. If they do look back at one another the child will grow feeble and go mad. If the mother's brother does not come to cut the banana grove and do this, if the child sees others eating that banana it becomes feeble and goes mad. The banana and the meat are the filth which madmen take hold of, they are filth. Yes, it is like the banana which they eat at the pumpkin-seeds ritual.

QUESTION: Why the mother's brother?

KASITILE: Who should give it to them? Their kinsman (*unkamu*) should give it to them, he who looks after everything for them.

ii. *Mwandisi's interpretation.*[1]

764 QUESTION: What do you do in the death ritual, what does it mean?

MWANDISI: When a child has died I do not approach the women, my wives, until we have finished the ritual. On the night of the day we drink the beer then we come together. It is a ritual! Yes, the coming
[833] together of man and woman is a ritual (*bo bunyago*). If we come together before the beer then we overstep our child, Lubabelo, he will be impotent and not beget children. No, his children are not relatives (*bo bandu*) they are my comrades (*bobinangu*) but if Lubabelo forestalls (*ukukinda*) the ritual with his wife then he oversteps (*ukukinda*) his children. And when we have finished the ritual Lubabelo begins[2] and goes first to his wife. We follow him at our home. If we begin we would overstep him, it is taboo (*mwiko*). At the ritual of pumpkin-seeds, we drive away the shade, we say: 'Do not rise from the dead and come to us, go to the land of the shades, that we may bear and beget another child, you prevent us doing so!'

[1] His son Lubabelo, who was with us during the earlier part of the conversation, left so that we could speak freely. There was no difficulty about Mwandisi's wife being present.

[2] Mwandisi was referring to a ritual performed on the death of his son Lubalelo's child.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764 heir. It is the ritual we are performing, they are signs of widowhood (*fya bufwele*), of lamentation (*kyo kesa*). The ashes are a sign of lamentation and the *ilingolongofwa* creeper is a sign of lamentation. Yes, all these things are part of the ritual, we cannot leave them out, it is taboo. (If we did) those below [i.e. the shades] would be angry and say: 'They have startled me and caused me pain in the heart; they have injured the ritual by foreshadowing evil.'

768 At the end the heir sleeps with the women in the house—before the
764 beer. He performs the ritual with them, the officiants wait for them and ask them: 'How was it?' If he says 'No,' they say: 'Kyala does not
[787] stand in the house.' They go and divine at a doctor's who says:' So-and-so is angry.'

QUESTION: Kyala does not stand in the house (*Kyala akema nnyumba*)?

MWANDISI: It is the shades, they say Kyala does not give support. Then again he performs the ritual (*ikunyagula*, i.e. he attempts to have coitus) and they ask him: 'How was it?' They say: 'Yes, they (the shades) have stood with us, Kyala has stood with us.' [He gave both forms as alternatives: *batwemile* and *Kyala emile*.] Then they clap their hands and raise the shout of triumph (*akalulu*).

QUESTION: Is that the cry: 'Ours, ours!'?

●[184 MWANDISI: No, that's the cry of the hill people. With us it's taboo.
784] Then in the morning someone shouts: 'War has come.' They come out immediately and run away to the pasture-lands.

764 QUESTION: Is this 'coming out' (*ukusoka*) the same as that in the coming out of chiefs (*ubusoka*) and in the twin ceremony?

MWANDISI: Yes, they run because their legs were heavy (*nsito*) in the house, now they have grown lighter and are strong; because in the twin ceremony the seclusion in the house lasts four months, at the coming out of chiefs two months, and that is hard, but at death it is only one, so it is light. But at death and the birth of twins it is the war (*ubwite*)
[833 of the mats. Is it not war with women? [*ubwite* is used here for sexual
195] intercourse.] Then when they have come out they give one another beer to drink in the doorway. The heir takes beer in his mouth and
[753] spits it out and hands the vessel on to his wives and children. Each does the same. They do not swallow it. To do so causes diarrhœa. The man and his wives are burning. They have come from the bed. This giving one another to drink, when each spits and does not swallow, happens after the eating of sausages of porridge on the road.[1] It is the same in the twin ritual except that whereas it is only the principals who give one another to drink at the death ritual, in the twin ritual not only they, but all relatives, and even non-relatives do it as well!

QUESTION: How about the eating of millet porridge with powdered medicine on the road?

[1] No other informant mentioned this in the MuNgonde death ritual.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde
Kukwe

ritual is powerful. If you do not perform the ritual for your father or 764
perhaps that of your wife then you won't be a person, your body 775
comes to an end and you die, but you are present, you are still alive, you do not die when the body comes to an end, you take faeces as in the ritual. But when they bring millet and say: 'This is so-and-so's, and this so-and-so's' (naming him whose ritual you have omitted) and brew beer and drink it, then you die.

QUESTION: How do the dead appear to us?

ANSWER: They appear before our eyes at night. You dream and in the morning say: 'I was with the so-and-so's in the night, with the so-and-so's!

QUESTION: Where do you go (at death)?

ANSWER: When we die we go above. [177]

QUESTION: That's a new thing?

ANSWER: Yes, indeed, formerly we said we went below; our fathers and grandfathers said that. But we now say we go below to rot and stink only but since we look toward home when they bury us perhaps the heart (*indumbula*) goes above (*kumwanya*) and that is home. We have seen this in European times in books. No, I am not a Christian and I cannot read, I've just learnt this. . . .

KALUNDA (a doctor) AND MWAIJUMBA: The *ikipiki* medicine put into the beer and lees at 'the shaving of the sprouting hair' is the same medicine as that which we eat at the pumpkin-seed ritual. The *ikipiki* of the death ritual and the puberty ritual and the birth ritual is one and the same, but the medicine for twins is different. . . . There is one *ikipiki* used in all the three rituals—puberty, birth, and death—but to it is added another medicine which is different for each of the three. *Ikipiki* is our kinship, it is our blood (*ikipiki bo bukamu bwetu, lyo ilopa lyetu*); when my wife has borne a child and no one wipes its mouth with [851]
the *ikipiki* it means it is not my child, it is just a bastard from the veld, it is no relative of mine but a stranger. In the puberty ritual it is the same, we treat the girl with the *ikipiki* of her husband. She moves [881]
from our lineage, from that of her father, she is now a stranger, not their relative (*ikusama nkikolo kyetu, kubagwise, mundu leleno, aka nkamu gwabo*). When someone has died it is the same. We eat food together with the deceased, the shade, and his blood. It is like the Swahili custom of eating each other's blood to create kinship. It means: 'You were our [171]
kinsman from afore-time, but now it is finished, you are a stranger.' But the medicine for the twin ritual is separate, it is quite different.

2. IN KUKWE COUNTRY

The Kukwe ritual of death differs in detail from that of Selya 764
and MuNgonde, but it is performed with the same overt purpose: 184●
to drive away the dead from the bodies and dreams of the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

764 mourners, to prevent him 'brooding' over them, lest they run mad
184 or become feeble in mind and body; to speed him on his road to the land of the shades and bring him back as a beneficent spirit in the house. The power of the shades over potency and fertility is acknowledged and the widow goes to her father's house with the 'filth' of intercourse with the heir on her and there drinks beer ritually, lest her relatives die of a gasping cough. In short, the themes which characterize the Selya ritual occur also in the Kukwe ritual.

Many of the symbols employed in the Selya ritual are employed by the Kukwe also: the elaborate washing with medicine and shaving and anointing to separate the mourners from the corpse, the casting away of leaves they wear in the stream, the sweeping out of the litter in the mourning hut, the miming of the action of a madman in eating faeces as a prophylactic against becoming mad, the use of the *ikipiki*—the medicine representing kinship—all these are common to both rituals. But each has distinctive symbols also.

(*a*) *The events*

764 The ritual begins in the evening, four or five days after the death. The participants wash with *nyasati* medicine in the doorway of the mourning hut, and lick lumps of porridge off the mid-rib of a banana leaf. The porridge is prepared by the officiant who grinds the millet at the doorway and then puts the mixture on two banana leaves, one of plantain (*itoki*), the other of sweet banana (*indifu* or *iselya*), which are used throughout as male and female symbols respectively. After sunset, a pot with medicine in it is put on the fire, and each participant in turn throws in a few beans mixed with medicine, and then some water, saying as he or she does so: 'This is the ritual of my mother' (or father, etc., as the case may be). A stem of plantains is 'stolen' from a friend's banana plantation (he having agreed beforehand that it should be taken), then the participants gather round the hearth and bid farewell to the deceased. They circle round the hearth to the music of a harp and sing. As they circle, the participants crumble pods of oil-seed (*inyemba*). Sometimes they also sing: 'It's the twisting up,' and twist up cloths as they do so. Then they dance the stamping dance, (*ukukanya nganya*,) and raise the cry of triumph (*akalulu*). When daylight comes they eat the beans which have stood overnight in the hut and sweep out the rubbish (*imindu*) with a medicine (*imitwati*) and throw it in the banana grove. This is 'clearing out the litter'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

764 prepared earlier) and ties a strip of medicated banana bark round the neck of each, and with these necklaces on they must sleep. In one lineage they take little horns and blow into them and walk round calling out: 'We are driving you away, you are a stranger to us, do not come in dreams repeatedly.'

Next morning sausages of millet porridge mixed with medicine are half-buried in the earth at the cross-roads—or somewhere on the pathway—and each participant in turn bends down and bites off a piece, leaving some in the ground. They take off their bark necklaces and throw them into the little hut, which is then destroyed. After they have bathed again the officiant strokes each one on the forehead with a razor.

768 When a married man has died the heir is formally recognized,
587 and the widows are asked whether they accept him as their husband, at some point during the ritual; when Mwaikambo's father died the recognition of the heir preceded the whole ritual; more often it follows it and there is a formal drinking of 'the beer of inheritance'. In any case the first intercourse between the heir and the widows is always delayed for some months and, until it has taken place, the widows may meet their relatives; after it each widow returns to the homestead of her father (or his heir) for the 'ritual of the gasping cough' (*ingotolo*). Old Fibombe, a Christian elder, described it vividly:

768 The parents of the girl brew beer and call her to the beer of *ingotolo*.
177 They also call their relatives. She brings a hoe or a goat (or now a cloth
587 or 1s.). First of all she lifts up the pot of beer into which an officiant has put powdered medicine (*imbondanya*) and takes a mouthful, stirring the rest, then she hands it to another participant and when he has taken a mouthful she spits out, then she stirs and hands it on, and when the next has taken a mouthful she spits, and so it continues until all present have done this. Nowadays people do not take the beer in their mouths, they simply stir and pass it on. Pride prevents them. They say people will laugh at them if they do the things of old. Time is passing and things are like *Mambo Leo* [the Swahili newspaper] now. All
● [184] pagans, however, still do this ritual in a modified form, only the Christians leave it undone.

768 This informant omitted two significant points in the ritual
587 which we saw for ourselves: the widow brings a spear belonging to her new husband and thrusts it into the earth outside her father's house. It stands beside the vessel of beer while her kinsmen drink until her brother plucks it out and takes it into the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

764 QUESTION: What are the stones in the clefts of hands and toes?
773 MWASALEMBA: Kyala when he created men said: 'At the death ritual do this, it is the shade, it is the body.'

775 Mwasalemba went on to discuss the puberty ritual and attributed sexual desire and diarrhœa to the shades. He explained that faeces (which are buried) 'go below to the land of the shades' (*vide* p. 127; 210 ff.).

764 SYUNGU: If we leave out something a child runs off to Mwibonde [158] [wild pasture-land] and catches hold of that which is bad and pants with madness (*ikigili*). Some go to Mwibonde and gather faggots and put them on their heads then throw them away again.

QUESTION: How is it that people ever omit a ritual?

SYUNGU: Some omit some of it. They make mistakes out of ignorance.

QUESTION: But do any omit it altogether?

● [184] SYUNGU: No, only the Christians. No pagan neglects it altogether.

QUESTION: But those who have run away and are not there (e.g. women who have eloped with lovers)?

SYUNGU: Yes, indeed, it is they who neglect it, but those who are at home perform the ritual.

QUESTION: How about stealing the banana bunch?

SYUNGU: Yes, we steal it, but we tell the owner beforehand, and when we eat the mash we mix the stolen with the home-grown, that which is stolen is always a plantain and that from home is a sweet banana. The plantain is the man's and the sweet banana the woman's. And when we bathe we wear a plantain leaf, which has been stolen, in front, and a sweet banana leaf, which comes from home, behind.

MWASALEMBA:[1] The girl brought the spear of her husband and stuck it in the ground. At the end Losi (my eldest son and her full brother) pulled it up and it will always be on my wall. The spear is an essential part of the ritual; without it the ritual would go wrong. If she came with no spear we should send her back again to fetch one.

764 We drink the medicine because, when our son-in-law has died and
587 our daughter lies with another who has not been our son-in-law before, if she comes and gives us food with the filth (*indafu*) on her then we gasp and cough with *ingotolo*. It is quite different if she runs away from her husband when he is alive. Then we drink no medicine. Yes, then she comes, with *indafu* on her, and gives us food and nothing happens.
[828] I don't know why. Kyala made us black people like this. It is when her husband dies that we drink. We drink as soon as she lies with her new husband, not after she becomes pregnant. If we see that she is pregnant before she comes we are angry. She should come first to the ritual and then conceive. She does not wait until her periods stop before coming

[1] Referring to the *ingotolo* ritual for his daughter described on p. 66.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

764
587

for the ritual. We think that when she has slept with her new husband she is full (*nsito*) and if she gives us food it will make us ill.

MWANGWANDA: The new husband gives us relatives a disease by impregnating the girl, he who is no relative of ours, the new husband. [753] *Ingotolo* is an illness.

ii. *Kakune's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W.)

764

KAKUNE: Yes, if we do not perform the ritual the children run mad. They speak foolishly and deliriously, they run about wildly wearing leaves, they eat filth. But they do not fight with their fellows—that is what those do who have the madness of Kyala. It is these of whom we say: 'Perhaps Kyala loved them.' [158]

QUESTION: Why the first washing?

KAKUNE: That is to get rid of the disease, the filth, for they held the corpse in their hands. They do not eat the ritual food until they have washed.

QUESTION: Why the eating of porridge?

KAKUNE: Because of the tears we have wept. We have mourned him; now let us eat and strengthen our bodies again.

QUESTION: Why are beans thrown into the pot in the evening?

KAKUNE: These beans, which we throw into the pot, saying: 'This is my father's death', are an ending of the ritual. They remain all night in the house after they have been cooked, and the shades come and eat. In the morning the doctor [*unganga*, i.e. the officiant] washes us again with powdered medicine and we eat the beans and finish them. We use beans in the ritual for that is the food which our father hoed. We think: 'Our father has died, he will never hoe for us again', and so we say: 'This is the death of my father.' So then the shade of our father comes at night and tastes the food and says to us: 'I, your father, have died, you have mourned for me; live you yet awhile, do not come quickly to death; and may you hoe plenty of food and have no hunger.' If we leave out this ritual with the beans the fertility of our gardens disappears and we have great hunger, we eat nothing. [789]

QUESTION: Why the circling to the harp and crumbling oil-seeds?

KAKUNE: The ointment (made from the oil-seeds) is to finish the ritual. The song (*ukalende*) is to say good-bye, to the shade, it means 'farewell', it is to drive him away. We circle round because our father was an active man, he walked round seeing his friends, he danced; that is why we circle round the fire. [In Kakune's family they do not cry the war shout of triumph, they only dance to the harp.] [84]

QUESTION: Why the pebbles? [I told him what Mwasalemba had said and he agreed heartily.]

KAKUNE: Yes, that's it! We throw them away, this means 'We have driven you away now.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

764 QUESTION: Why the leaves and bananas?

KAKUNE: If you do not wear these and throw them away your own children [i.e. children of the participant] will die soon after birth; you beget a daughter and she dies, a son and he dies, then people say: 'See, you did not perform the ritual.' . . .

QUESTION: What is the meaning of the death ritual?

KAKUNE: Because the deceased has died on us (*atufwelile mumbeli*), if we do not treat him, he looks on us, we are together with him, he does not move away at all, so then, we drive him off.

He then described the acts of the ritual in great detail exactly checking what Mwaikambo and I saw when Kalata's mother died (cf. pp. 238–44) except that he did not mention grinding ointment [184] at the circling round. I asked about this and he thought it was not done in his lineage but was not sure.

QUESTION: The stones between the toes?

KAKUNE: It is to make a separation, it is our separation, we are driving him off; we go into the water with pebbles and throw them away, they are the deceased, we drive him off.

QUESTION: And what about running through the house letting the water drip on you after bathing?

KAKUNE: Yes, indeed, we come from the stream carrying water which we have drawn, and flowers in our hands, and we throw the flowers on the thatch.

QUESTION: What does it mean?

764 KAKUNE: It is because we have come from the stream, we have
775 driven him away in the stream, but we bring back water we have drawn and flowers—they are the deceased. It means we are with him for he has not moved (*akasama*); let us drive him out again. We throw away the flowers on the thatch and we pour water on the thatch and it trickles down on the body. It is he [the deceased] whom we receive. If we drive him away altogether at the water what will he say to us?

QUESTION: You receive him and drive him off again?

KAKUNE: We drive him off so that his whole body should not be [828] seen, because we fear to see the dead . . . and at the same time we do *not* drive him away, he will come in dreams to tell us of misdeeds (*ukutubula inongwa*).

When we receive him we drive him away again at the anointing with ointment. The doctor anoints us on the toe, knee, elbow, stomach, and forehead, and says: 'I have finished them, anoint yourselves.' Then we anoint ourselves and say: 'You have moved to another village.' But at the same time we do not throw him away altogether, we pray to him

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

maids and always carries a mat or cloth to screen her face from 881
her father and his contemporaries, her father's full sisters, her older brothers,[1] and her 'mothers-in-law' (*abakamwana*).[2] These she must fear and respect (*ukutila*) and so avoid. Her father-in-law and his brothers she avoids altogether from the time of her engagement, or at least after she has reached the age of 8 or 9. Her companions do not *ukutila* with her, though those of them who are already betrothed will, of course, avoid their own fathers-in-law.

During the period of seclusion the girls have two specific tasks: to weave the fine mats used as beds, and to fetch firewood. Every [285]
bride should take to her husband's home at least one fine mat (*ubunyasa*) which she has made herself, as well as several coarse ones (*imitefu*),[3] and weaving a fine mat is a lengthy task, occupying a skilful woman a month. Each girl weaves for herself, but the firewood that each must fetch is stacked in the bride's mother's loft. The bride also occupies herself hammering out bark-cloth, [287]
pleating it for the strip worn between the legs, and decorating bark-cloth belts (*vide* plate 5), so that she may have the fresh ones required during the ritual, and a supply to take with her to her husband's; but this work is not emphasized as an obligation: rather it is a recreation. Women take great pride in the decora- [531]
tion of their belts—we watched several brides making them and handing them round for the admiration of their fellows. The maids may work in the fields if required to do so, but the bride herself does not, and 'she gets fat because she does not have much work to do'. The whole ritual normally lasts about three months, but if, for some reason such as a pressing need to go out to work, the husband is in a hurry for its completion, various acts may be telescoped. The time-table depends primarily on when the marriage-cattle and food for the various feasts are ready.

From the time of first menstruation until she does it ritually, a 881
bride should neither wash nor oil herself. The prohibition is felt 515
to be a very onerous one and some girls now break it, but women 177
said 'in the old days we did not wash'. 'Girls nowadays are more cunning. We were afraid.'

[1] Some informants denied that she avoided father's sisters or brothers. Others [184]
insisted that she must avoid them because 'brothers are fathers, and father's full sisters are father'.

[2] i.e. her husband's own mother and other women he calls mother. In this account [601]
the plural 'mothers' indicates own and classificatory mothers.

[3] Nyakyusa beds are made of layers of mats laid on rollers between two logs at head [352]
and foot. One chief's bed we noted was made up of sixty-eight mats.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

585
354 new home, and her mother-in-law provides her with fire and a pot.

783 After the bride has had full intercourse with her husband she cannot return home, or see her own parents, until she has taken them the ritual *ilibalaga*. After sexual intercourse she wipes her husband's genitals with her hands, then wipes them on a fowl and some millet: these together form the *ilibalaga*. In the morning she goes off without washing—'with the filth of intercourse on her'—to her parents' house, taking the fowl and millet with her. The fowl is killed on a path and cooked with *ikipiki* medicine and, if the bride is the eldest daughter of one of the father's first two wives, her father and mother eat it together. Her mother eats alone if she is a younger daughter, or the mother is a junior wife. If the father is a chief the husband may kill a young bull and beef is sent in place of the hen.

834 After eating the *ilibalaga* her parents resume intercourse[1] which has been taboo from the time the girl first menstruated. If no hen is brought because the husband is poor, the parents still resume sexual intercourse, but the bride, when she visits her home, must not take water from her mother's pot. Someone else draws for her and she drinks it outside from a separate calabash. If she drinks [753] inside, or if her mother uses the calabash she has used, it is believed that her mother will get diarrhœa. She also avoids her father's bed and stool.

606 With the ritual of marriage must be included the negative ritual of avoidance between a woman and her husband's father and between those identified with him or her. The taboo applies from the time of betrothal or, if the girl has been betrothed as an infant, from well before she reaches puberty, and forbids father-in-law and daughter-in-law ever to look at one another or meet face to face on the pathway, or enter the same house, much less speak together. As we have seen, a similar taboo applies between the bride and her own father during her seclusion, but is relaxed when he [184] has given her a gift. Between a woman and her father-in-law, however, it is never relaxed, except among the more sophisticated 773 Christians. A myth of origin tells of a case of incest between father-606 in-law and daughter-in-law which led to the establishment of the 811

[1] Kasitile maintained that if the mother has not reached the menopause the parents do not lie together until the daughter's pregnancy is apparent. 'For the mother to conceive before the daughter is forbidden, but old women are fruits sucked dry.' Mwakionde denied any danger in mother conceiving before daughter.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

881 her mother-in-law covers her head with a red cloth 'for display'.
585 'We are rejoicing because our child has grown up,' and she too takes her on her shoulders and dances with her. When the 'husbands' come to dance the stamping dance: 'It too is a rejoicing. It shows I have married a wife now.' All through there is rejoicing over the fine food, and the celebration and feasting is primarily among the women. The culmination comes when the girl is publicly shown to be a virgin and the mothers can claim the bull crying in exultation: 'It's ours, it's ours.'

881 An interesting sidelight on the attitude of girls towards the ritual
585 came from a young man, a Christian, who was betrothed to a
184 pagan girl and had forbidden her to go through the ritual. He
795 said:

> Once my wife, when she had reached puberty, asked me why I objected to her undergoing the puberty ritual. I said it was forbidden for us Christians to participate in it, and I asked her if she wished to do so. She said 'Yes', and I asked why. She said: 'When the ritual is performed for us we are famed. People tell each other that so-and-so's daughter has grown up and people from far away come to sing songs, so we become very well known. See, now I have grown up, but no one sees that I have done so. Only you know.' Then I said: 'We Christians also have the custom of celebrating growing up at the handing over of marriage-cattle to the father (*ukukwa*). We do not hand over cattle when girls are still small, so everyone sees that a girl has grown up when we do so.' She agreed and said: 'I, also, have seen a little of the handing over of cattle among Christians.'

In fact, the *ukukwa* is the occasion for a great feast among Christians to which many young men and girls come to sing and dance.

881 The giving of presents to the bride by her father and his con-
585 temporaries is interpreted as part of the rejoicing.

431

> To give presents (*ukubonola*) is to rejoice. It's an occasion for display and rejoicing, because the girl has grown up. The father gives her a present because he rejoices that she has grown up. He says to her: 'Congratulations, you have grown up, you are going away to your husband, you are going away to gain a child!'

881 During the period of seclusion the girl's father is spoken of as
585 her father-in-law (*unkamwana*). She must *ukutila* (respect and
602 avoid) him:

> Because he is her father who begot her. She thinks: 'I must respect

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

2. IN KUKWE COUNTRY

(a) *The events*

585 The puberty and marriage ritual performed by the Kukwe
881 differs in detail from that performed by the Nyakyusa proper, but
184 the main elements—the seclusion of the bride and avoidance of her fathers and brothers, the laying of a ritual litter, the meeting of maids and young men on the litter, the avoidance of water, the treatment with *ikipiki* medicine, shaving and ceremonial purification, the instruction, the celebration of maturity and virginity by the exchange of feasts between the bride's parents and those of the groom, the slaughter of the bull of virginity provided by her husband, and the taking of a fowl to her mother after first intercourse —all these recur. And the overt purpose of the ritual is again that the girl may be fertile, and healthy in mind and body. The main differences are in the symbols used for intercourse and purification, and in the location of the rites. Among the Nyakyusa proper most of the ritual is performed at the bride's home, whereas among the Kukwe most of it is performed at the groom's home.

585 When a Kukwe girl first menstruates her father sends his go-
881 between in the marriage (*umfusya*) to inform her husband that she has grown up. If she has been visiting her husband, and is at his house when the first period begins, she runs home to her father's, and the formal message is despatched to her husband. He sends back a hen with the message: 'Thank you, you have nourished my wife,' and some time later sends a second hen by his go-between summoning her to come and wash. A party of two or three 'mothers' (her own mother does not go) and ten or a dozen maids takes her to her husband's, and there (if she is a senior wife) she washes with him in water mixed with powdered *ikipiki* medicine. The officiant pours the water which the husband catches in his hands, and the wife holds her hands below his. Then they kindle fire together by friction (*ukupegesa ulupendo*), husband and wife both twirling the stick (his hands are again above hers) and the officiant holding the horizontal trough. On the fire they have kindled porridge is cooked, which they eat together. A junior wife washes and kindles fire and eats porridge, not with her husband, but with his younger brother.

After the ritual meal 'mothers-in-law' cut banana leaves and spread the litter for the bride at their homestead, not at her father's. The officiant sprinkles powdered medicine over the floor on one side of the hut and makes two girls lie down with the bride

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

(from under the bed) in the morning it has the filth of intercourse on it, then the father and mother should eat it. If this is not done they will fall ill with diarrhœa. If the hen is taken alive some eat it and others do not.' 585 881 783

After discussing this rite Mwasalemba went on:

You know, also, that when a girl has gone through the puberty ritual at her husband's she must not take firewood from her mother's rafters (*kwijulu*) until she is obviously pregnant. Before then, while she is lying with her husband, she must not. We say: 'How can you take your mother's firewood when you are sleeping with your husband?' It is just the same whether the mother is old or young. If the bride goes through the ritual without sleeping with her husband that is all right; it is when she begins to sleep with him that she begins to avoid her mother's loft. At that time I, the father, may meet her mother and sleep with her, but with *coitus interruptus*. I must not make her pregnant. The daughter must begin. As soon as she is pregnant then we parents can begin to conceive a child again. If we do so before our daughter, then she will never bear a child at all, and others will say: 'How could you overstep your daughter?' 784 842 [834]

Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is observed as in Selya, but is slightly less strict. 606 184

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

As has already been indicated, the symbolism of the Kukwe ritual of puberty is similar to that of Selya. The same actions are interpreted in exactly the same way and, where actions differ somewhat, they are still interpreted as expressing the same general conceptions. For example, the Kukwe bride and groom make fire together by friction and eat porridge cooked on it, whereas a bride in Selya eats bananas with powdered medicine, but both actions are symbols of sexual intercourse. Both in Selya and in Kukwe country the bride is purified and, as part of the process of purification, the shade of her father's lineage is driven from her body; but only among the Kukwe is this symbolized by sitting in a running stream and allowing the water to wash away pebbles from between her fingers and toes. 585 881 184

That there may be no doubt about the interpretation of the Kukwe ritual we again quote a number of statements by Nyakyusa informants. These refer specifically to the Kukwe form of the puberty ritual. 585 881

Chief Porokoto's wives, discussing the ritual together, were em-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

195 *Ukukinda* means to pass, to surpass, and *ukukilanya* (overstepping), in its metaphorical use, implies that 'one has power and the other is weak, so the powerful one does some injury to the weak one'.

834 Fourthly, as was made apparent in the puberty ritual, it is held
842 to be dangerous to 'mix bloods'. Adultery is not only an infringe-
[753] ment of the exclusive rights of a husband, but it may injure him directly, causing him to have diarrhœa, which is a 'getting rid of the filth' due to contact with a strange 'blood'. It was implied that intercourse with a menstruating woman was in some sense 'mixing bloods' also, and the danger to parents of contact with a newly-married daughter before a precautionary ritual has been performed, stems from the same thing; the parents, through their daughter, are brought into contact with the blood of another lineage, that of the new son-in-law.

843 Besides being 'heavy' and therefore liable to 'overstep' others, a pregnant woman is thought to reduce the quantity of any grain she approaches, for the foetus within her is voracious and snatches it. Therefore neither she nor her husband (who participates in her condition) may approach other people's millet[1] or beans or oil-seeds spread out to dry, or speak to those who are reaping or grinding or stamping or brewing, without making a gesture of good-will by spitting on a pebble or knotting a leaf, and throwing it into the heap of grain. The sanction is fear of a miscarriage, for the owners of the food may have used medicines 'so that the food may be much and people be astonished'. Her own crops a pregnant woman may handle freely, and a chief's wife does not observe the taboo in her own village.

Two or three quotations will make these conceptions clearer:

ANGOMBWIKE: When my wife has conceived they say we are both 'heavy', both my wife and I. Then, if oil-seeds or millet are out drying in the sun, they tell us not to speak. 'You are heavy ones,' they say. So we are silent. They say that if there is talking we will catch hold of the oil-seeds or millet, and it will diminish. Yes, I must avoid the grain even though I am alone, because I am heavy.

KASITILE: Maize does not vanish but millet and beans. The child which is being made bewitches them; they disappear. . . . The child has opened its mouth wide, its jaws gape.[2] It is that child which is being

[184] [1] Some held that millet was the only grain affected; others maintained that maize was also.

[2] *Umwana apambwile ulupambo nkanwa. Ulupambo* is used of the gaping jaws of a crocodile.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Lugulu

Even after her return a wife may delay before cooking or drawing water again for her husband. Mwaisumo said: 846

> Some men do not let their wives cook for them until the child's body has gone black and it laughs. . . . This is mainly due to the mockery of friends, for some people refuse to come and eat with a man if the food is cooked by a woman who has recently borne a child, even though she has come out of confinement. They laugh at him and say: 'Why do you eat food prepared by a newly delivered woman? Have you no sense of disgust?' And her friends laugh at the woman, too, saying: 'Look you, the child has not yet grown at all!'
>
> MWAMBUPUTA: Formerly a woman with a new-born child did not cook food. We said she was filthy. What food that she had overstepped would anyone eat? Until two months had passed she avoided cooking, then she cooked.[1] And she hid the child. Men should not see it for two months. It was taboo.

This is the full ritual performed for a first-born child and, some say, for the first-born of each sex. For others there is no sending a fowl to the girl's parents, or bringing her back with gifts, and it does not matter where the child is born; but still the seclusion of mother and infant, treatment with *ikipiki* medicine brought by the husband's mother, and shaving are felt to be important. 851

We did not find any significant differences between the rituals of birth in Selya and in Kukwe, but there is one rite peculiar to the Lugulu people and regarded by other Nyakyusa with somewhat shocked amusement, which is interesting because it expresses, in crude terms, a conflict between the groom and the bride's family repeatedly suggested in the ritual of Selya and Kukwe, but never openly acknowledged. We did not see this rite ourselves, but quote the account of Kakune, the doctor, whose mother was Lugulu. Though himself a Kukwe, he speaks in the first person as if he were Lugulu—a dramatic device common enough in Nyakyusa. 184●

> KAKUNE: When my daughter goes to her husband, and first becomes pregnant, they tell us: 'She is pregnant.' And we say: 'Oh, she is pregnant? She is pregnant! War has come!' When she has borne her child, the go-between in the marriage representing the husband comes to her parents with a hen to tell them. Then later they send the go-between a message, saying: 'Come'. Meanwhile they have prepared huge quantities of food: porridge, and curds, and beer. And then the girl's husband calls his friends of the age-village (he does not call his relatives, but his [843] 851

[1] A monogamist eats with his friends in the age-village, or is provided for by his mother, like a bachelor.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

with medicines and have their legs splashed with a scalding con- 845
coction. Visitors to this ritual bring gifts of millet which is put to soak for beer. When it is brewed the 'bringing out' (*ukusosya*) rite is celebrated. The temporary huts are burnt and a new shelter is erected in which the parents have ritual intercourse. Parents, twins, and relatives are shaved and anointed with medicated ointment, and together with their neighbours again have their legs splashed with scalding medicine, this time by the father of the twins. The children are given sausages of medicated porridge which they must eat from the ground. The parents of the twins burst out of their hut and rush towards the pasture land, the father brandishing his spears. Then all the participants snatch some of the meat of a sheep or small bull which has been killed. The rest of the meat is reserved for the fourth, and final, stage of the ritual. A mess of cooked bananas, meat, and medicine is taken by the mother of the twins into her hands, immediately after the ritual intercourse. Her husband takes some of this to bury in his father's banana grove, or to throw in the direction of his father's grave; the rest the woman takes to her own parents, to be buried in her own father's grove. She drinks beer ritually with her parents, and 'steals' things from her mother's house, then returns to meet her husband and drink beer ritually with him.

So far as our information goes[1] the form of the ritual among the Kukwe scarcely differs from that of Selya and the plain and we [[84]] ●
describe it as we saw it performed in Selya for our neighbours, Mwakobela and his wife. Mwakobela was a junior half-brother of the chief, Mwaipopo. (See Tables (a) and (b).)

12 May 1935

i. *The birth of twins.* (Record of G. and M. W.)

Twins were born about eight-thirty this morning. We visited them at 5 p.m. in company with Mwaiswelo III (linked half-brother of Mwakobela) and Kikuku, who was representing Mwaipopo. Mwaipopo is 'owner' of the ritual because he is their 'father' (i.e. their senior brother). Mwaipopo did not go, though he was quite near, at our place. We found the woman with the two new-born infants sitting outside under the bananas, accompanied by the mother who bore her, and her mother's elder sister. The men seated by the house were the father, Mwakobela (Mwaiswelo II), his half-brother Mwakalendile and four friends from near by.

[1] We did not see the full ritual in Kukwe country, but had several accounts of it.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ritual they distinguish *abakamu* (kinsmen) from *abandu itolo* (non-relatives) or *abapakipanga* (villagers), and *abakikolo* (those of the lineage of a dead man) from *abako* (affines) and mother's relatives (*abipwa*). These categories have different functions.

(*b*) *Christians*

The performance of family rituals is complicated by the fact that 16 per cent of the Nyakyusa are professing Christians, and in almost every lineage there are individuals who withdraw from the full performance of traditional rituals at death, puberty, and marriage, birth, and misfortune. In most cases such a withdrawal is treated tolerantly by the pagan kinsmen: the Christian kinsmen come to mourn, to congratulate the bride, to express sympathy with the parents of twins; and their non-participation in the washing and shaving and avoidance of ritual meat and beer is accepted. At the funeral of Mwamulenga his preceding full brother, who should have been a principal in the death ritual, was a Christian, and he took no part, though his children went through it. At the funeral of Mwampiki (p. 248) one boy was left untreated on the ground that he was a Christian and a Christian 'should not have two gods'. At the puberty ritual of Mwaihojo's daughter (p. 91) the brother called to wash with her was influenced by Christians and was reluctant to take part, though he finally did so.

Only when a son who is heir to family wealth, or to the office of chieftainship or priesthood refuses the inheritance of widows (as a Christian must do) is there very strong pressure on him to conform to traditional custom: the union of the heir with the widows is held essential to their health. Sometimes also there is acute conflict between different members of the family over the performance of an autopsy, the pagans pressing for it and the Christians opposing it. This we saw in the death of E. when her pagan senior brother wished to examine her, and her Christian junior brother opposed him vehemently.

That Christians cannot take part in certain of the rituals[1] and do not suffer if they omit them is generally accepted. The farewell to the dead at the homestead of the deceased, and the treatment of kinsmen of twins, fall into this category. About certain other rituals, such as the ritual of the gasping cough and the protection against sorcery, opinions are divided. Some of our Christian friends insisted that 'the gasping cough is a real illness' and cited

[1] There are minor differences in the rules of the different missions.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

795 the case of a Christian who had stayed away from a ritual in his
184 family and 'as soon as he met his relatives he fell sick and coughed
788 like an animal. So they got some of the lees of the beer and gave it to him and he recovered.' A number of Christian kinsmen, leaders in the Church, did not come to the gasping-cough ritual which we attended, but others did come and sipped the beer, or had the lees sent to them at their homes. In the ritual for protection against sorcery which we watched a Christian brother and his wife took part.

And some Christians, though they deny the necessity of many of the pagan rituals for themselves as Christians, still believe them to be necessary to their pagan kinsmen. Hence the anomalous (and to the missionaries the highly unorthodox) position of a woman professing Christianity and acting as officiant in a pagan ritual, as did N. in the death ritual for Kalata's mother (p. 239). N., it will be remembered, came by night. The officiant who performed the ritual for Mwakobela's twins was under instruction as a Christian and was proposing to hand on her medicines to her daughter, a pagan, when she herself was received into the Church. She explained this when Mwakobela (her patient) asked her: 'And what shall we do for twin medicine when you become a Christian?' And we had little doubt that she believed in the efficacy of her medicine for pagans.

Though Christians cannot go through pagan rituals as principals they do not withdraw altogether: they often help their pagan neighbours as grave-diggers at a funeral and in the provision of food for guests at funerals and marriages; and the young men and girls may dance as a separate group, singing their own
[578] songs or hymns and ignoring the drums. Sometimes acute rivalry between the two groups of dancers is apparent.

771 The effect of Christian teaching on pagan ritual is not limited
177 to the partial withdrawal of professing Christians. In those villages most influenced by missions, such as Ilolo, near Rungwe, there is considerable scepticism among pagans, and many of them curtail the rituals in their families, or do not attend them. The Christian view is that 'the pagans see that the Christians disregard the rituals and nothing happens to them, so they begin to ignore them too'. 'Pagans fear much less than they used to do.'

177 Men who are in European employment either inside or outside
464 the district cannot attend all the rituals. Their case is partially met by keeping the lees of the ritual beer with which to treat them

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

meat is offered in the bride's father's grove; the two symbols of first intercourse—treatment with *undumila* medicine and jumping over fire; the recognition of the end of childhood by calling on the bride's mother to put her down off her back; the insistence that she show modesty before her father and his fellows as before a father-in-law; and the taboo on crossing water lest her menstrual flow become like a river.

The twin ritual is characterized by the fear of infection from too great potency, and the treatment with scalding medicines to 'burn' the twin birth.

Sometimes our informants gave different interpretations of the same symbol and there was no agreement between them, as with the stem of bananas stolen in the Kukwe death ritual, and the bunch of flowers brought back from the stream. Nsyani said stealing the bananas symbolized that 'we may now eat other people's food', and Mwamulenga that it was a symbol of driving away disease. Kakune, the doctor, interpreted the bunch of flowers brought back from the stream as a symbol of the shade which was brought home; Mwamulenga saw picking and carrying flowers as yet another symbol of the actions of a madman. Though there was general agreement over the interpretation of many symbols, it is possible that some have no commonly accepted meaning, but suggest different things to different people. It is clear, however, that with the Nyakyusa, as with ourselves, one symbol has often several associations for the same person, and Kasitile and the more self-conscious of our informants were aware of this. For Kasitile the banana in the death ritual is the corpse and the pumpkin-seeds in it the shade; it is also faeces which madmen eat; it is also, in the puberty ritual, the male organ and the seeds are the semen. Eating a banana is a symbol *both* of copulation and of the actions of a madman. Conversely, the same object or action is symbolized in many different ways—there are nine or ten symbols of sex intercourse, and twenty of driving away the shade, recorded in the texts quoted above.

When an action recurs in different rituals, informants almost always interpreted it in the same way in each context: the exception was the trampling dance (*ukukanya inganya*) interpreted as a way of 'driving away the shade' in the death ritual and a 'rejoicing' in the puberty ritual. It was always explained as 'customary'. 'Father and grandfather did it.'

This brings us to the ultimate explanation given for all the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

121 554 linked to the physiological cycle of individuals and their close kin, and cannot be detached from it as in Christianity.

121 626 Law is a condition of social survival; no society can exist without it; and in so far as religion helps to maintain law and order it fulfills a necessary social function. Among the Nyakyusa (and perhaps in all societies) order is maintained partly by fear of supernatural sanctions. The rituals we have described both enhance fear and relieve it. They harness fear to social ends.

121 771 The preceding chapters are full of the pagan fear of death, menstruation, childbirth, and shedding blood. The rituals express the fear and teach men what they must do to be saved. They teach them to co-operate with their kinsmen and to follow traditional custom, for in that alone does salvation lie. The fear of madness or sterility compels each generation to follow traditional custom as ordained for them by the heroes: thus is the dependence of man upon his society instilled. The death ritual illustrates this most dramatically. In every society men must overcome death emotionally, they must turn to life. In the death ritual the mourners are distraught, terrified; they express their grief and put it behind them; their relatives and neighbours gather round them, share their sorrow, and help them to overcome it. The dead is replaced. Death is associated with fecundity and so made tolerable. It is no accident that the Nyakyusa interpret all the rituals, and especially the death ritual, as a protection against going mad, against the disintegration of the personality. And safety is assured to the living by following minutely the traditions of their lineage.

[184] That the nature of men's fears is culturally determined is clear from the Nyakyusa evidence, for Christians and pagans alike are agreed that 'the Christians fear much less' than do pagans, and the Christians do in fact ignore taboos which the pagans feel to be binding. But the rituals do not create fear out of nothing. All the situations in which they are performed—birth and death, marriage, and misfortune—are situations of emotional tension in all societies. The rituals heighten the emotions and canalize them. They both teach men to feel, and teach them what it is proper to feel.

771 783 Many writers have shown us that the conception of sacred includes both the idea of holiness and of pollution;[1] that the awful, the fearful, may be conceived both as pure and as filthy. In

[1] See particularly W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (1889), pp. 153, 446–54 (1914 ed.); R. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (1923).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 down from the thatch to the ground, a principal ran through the doorway so that the water trickled on to his body, then they poured more and he ran out again. Each of the three principals did this twice.

One officiant had been left behind to roast a chicken and some plantains, and when they had run through the drips they ate the food. They began with the roasted plantains in which they had stuck cooked lentils, then the boiled plantains and the beans which they had left separate from the mash, then the unsalted mash and finally the salted mash. When they had finished the officiants smeared patches of ointment on themselves and on all the principals—on the little toe, the navel, the forehead and the elbow—and then each anointed his whole body. Then the officiant took some banana bark, twisted it up and smeared it all over with powdered medicine. This she first made as if to tie round her own neck but did not, and then she tied it round the neck of the first principal. She put similar necklaces on the other two and they slept with these necklaces on.

November 17

Early in the morning when they first woke up the officiant brought some medicated millet porridge which they moulded into little sausages, then they went to the path some way off from the village, and there, on the path, they dug little holes into which they inserted the sausages. Then they bent down and put their lips to them, biting a piece off and leaving a piece in the ground, and this they buried. Returning to the little hut, they took off the necklaces and threw them inside, and they pulled down the hut and destroyed it. Then they went to bathe and washed off the ointment they had put on the day before. When they got home the officiant stroked each on the forehead with a razor but made no cut. So it was over.

They said that if any detail was omitted or done wrong the principals would go mad.

II. LOCAL VARIATIONS IN THE DEATH RITUAL

764 (*a*) *The funeral of Mwampiki and his wife* (see Table (c) p. 272.)

184 This document illustrates the differences between lineages in the details of ritual, and the adjustments made for the children of married daughters. Mwampiki, whose funeral is described, was of a Sangu family, doctors of the chiefdom for the 'coming out', who had lived for two generations in Selya.

Record of G. W. 16/3/37

Kakuju, the village headman, called me to the funeral of 'the wife of Mwampiki' in Ijesi village. Mwampiki (Mwamwenembanga) himself is dead but his homestead and several wives have been inherited by a

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

younger half-brother, Mwaisalwa. The dead woman is a wife of Mwal- 764
emba (Kanjesi) another half-brother. Kanjesi was an old inhabitant of 184
this village but he moved to Masebe. His wife was on a visit to her 'fathers' at Mwakalobo's place in the hills. She went to a funeral there and fell sick and died there yesterday. The corpse was brought here this morning. It is now 10 a.m. and the grave is half-dug. The owner of the homestead, Mwampiki II (Mwaisalwa), is not here, he is sick at Masoko where he had gone for a case. The husband is not yet here either; they have sent for him to Masebe. The dead woman's elder sister and co-wife is here, and their mother.

They went to fetch a doctor to perform an autopsy, offering him [763
20 cents, but came back without him. 'He refused,' they said. 'Well 435]
then,' said Kakuju, 'take him a cloth, doctors do not agree to come for just a little.' So they took him a cloth.

Kakuju told the women to come out of the house as it was too small to hold them all. The corpse was carried out into the shade of an *unsyunguti* tree. All the women gathered round wailing, about seventy of them, and about twenty men.

No cows have been killed yet as neither the husband nor Mwampiki II are here. No drums are here yet either. The grave was finished about 11 a.m. I asked Kakuju about dancing at death. He agreed that in the [177]
old days they had only danced the war-dance. 'That was our old custom. Formerly we fought and killed people—the men of Mwangomo (another chief) who came to the funeral!' Mwambuga (the husband of the dead woman's husband's sister), who had been quite cheerful heretofore, suddenly began weeping and crying. He walked over to the women and joined in the wailing. Some small and naked children started climbing joyfully on the piled-up earth from the grave.

Now it is noon and there are thirty-five to forty men present and ninety to one hundred women. A doctor has agreed to come (to perform the autopsy) but has not yet arrived. Although the corpse was outside male mourners went into the house on their arrival to weep. An older woman got up and led a dirge. I heard her say a number of names, among which 'Mwampiki' was distinguishable. Clapping followed her words. Often she just called the war-cry (*akalulu*). The others wailed and joined in the war-cry. She accompanied her wailing with rhythmic movements of the body and arms. After a time she sat down but continued to lead the wailing.

Mwakalabela (Mbalakatela) arrived with a cow. His daughter is married to young Mwaijumba, the son of Mwampiki. The autopsy followed (for description see *Good Company*, pp. 247–9).

17/3/37

Angombwike told me at breakfast that now Mwampiki himself was dead. He died yesterday at Masoko and was carried here last night.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 They arrived with him in the middle of the night. The message reached
184 Kakuju at cock-crow. I arrived at 9 a.m. to find the grave finished and one cow (a young one) killed. 'It was his own, and slept with the children'—i.e. it was stabled in his long house in the compartment in which the herdboys, his sons, sleep at night. The drums were being beaten—I heard them begin as I approached—but there was no dancing as yet. The corpse was being held upright (wrapped and hidden in cloths) by the women chief mourners, under the *unsyunguti* tree, in the middle of about 150 women. Wailing was in full progress. Two women were standing up to lead the dirges; one was the one who led yesterday. She called out: 'Mwampiki, Mbembela . . .' and other words. She stretched her hands towards the circle of women, towards the men and called out: 'You men, you young men . . .' and she called the villages by name: '. . . Lupondo, Njesi, Bujege, Bujenga'. I asked about this because Angombwike had told me that the Mwampiki family were Sangu and did not wail at a funeral. 'Yes, indeed,' I was told, 'they have changed now, but at the beginning [of the funeral] they did not wail, they were silent, they dug the grave and finished it, they killed a cow, and have only begun to wail now.' Two men stood by the corpse (among the women) wailing, his own eldest son and his brother-in-law. About seventy men were present. Dancing was begun by Mwaisyelage of Ibale who seized a spear and shouted the war-cry and danced. Half a dozen men followed him and several bananas were cut. Kakuju began to shout out words as he sat and then leapt up and joined in the dance. After five minutes the dancing died down and the drums stopped.

The grave, like that of yesterday, is an unusual shape. The hole is small and square and the cave is much bigger than usual. The corpse is laid down with the forehead pointing to Sangu country. 'Yes, the woman was buried just like this,' I was told in reply to my question. 'For though she is a Nyakyusa by birth, since she married a Sangu she looks towards Sangu country.'

A cow was brought by Mwakibilingwa whose daughter is the wife of one of Mwampiki's sons. 'Have you accepted the cow?' I asked. 'No one can yet,' said Mwaiumba, 'the real owner of the cattle is her child, the "owner" of the woman. Mwampiki's younger brother should not receive the cattle. No! But her child, the owner of the woman. If he wishes he will receive it and tell us. If he does not wish he will drive it away and tell us: "I am killing my own cow." We do not know yet.'

The corpse was carried with shouts and the war-cry and wailing about 100 yards, and the dead man's cattle were driven by the side (six full-grown beasts and two calves). 'It is to do honour to him here where he walked about, now that he has died. We do it for all senior people like him, not for juniors. Yes, and for women too, and even

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

though there are no cattle they carry him thus.' The corpse was then taken to be washed. 'We do not examine him; yesterday's corpse we did indeed examine but not this one. He was a senior, a chief,' said his son, and Kakuju confirmed it. 'We do not examine him. We refuse because he was a senior person.' More cattle appeared—'those of his son at Masoko'. 'It is the custom,' I was told. 'All the cattle come to mourn. These are the cattle of Mwansasu, the first lot were Mbembela's own. Most (or all of them) were kept by Mwaipungu, the eldest son.'

The drums began again and dancing recommenced. The drums had been warmed up by a fire. About 200 women and 100 men were present.

Mbasuke, father-in-law of Mwansasu, brought a heifer calf. Three cows were killed, two after the burial, all belonging to Mbembela and his sons. The heads of the cows killed point towards Sangu country. There was a dispute about one of these cows. They had killed one already which had come for the marriage of a daughter of the family, and they had taken another from the same son-in-law. There was objection, some saying: 'No, we should take one which came from another son-in-law.' All the cattle of Mwansasu and of the deceased were driven through the homestead together, a herd of twenty or so. Then they were gathered at the side, facing the grave. The corpse was carried out to the side of the grave. The chief mourners stood holding the corpse and all the men and women stood up to watch. The noise of wailing was terrific. A son seemed entirely to have lost control. 'Alas Father! Alas Father!' he cried, his body trembling and sweating, the tears running down his face, his hand pointing, shaking, towards the corpse and the grave. A friend was wailing, holding his head with his hands: 'My friend, my friend!' The corpse was laid down by the women and wrapped in more cloths. This took about half an hour. Still we stood and watched while the women began to sit down. Two men (Mwaisalwa III and a half-brother) and one woman (his widow) got into the grave—a tight fit. The corpse was buried with a new pot (a small one, used for serving food), several calabashes including a calabash cup, and a calabash of beer. Some of the beer was taken out just beforehand and left above ground. 'That means he should not go with all our fertility.' A huge calabash had been smashed before this by a son, in an ecstasy of grief. Now another was brought but it was decided not to bury it.

Kititu explained about the beer: 'Always, when a person has drunk beer during his illness before his death, the remains are buried with him. If he has not drunk beer during his illness none is sought.'

No door was available so a cloth was fixed across the opening of the cave. The women got out of the grave while the men remained in to stamp down the earth. Many people threw handfuls of earth.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Farewell to Mwampiki 2/4/37

764 Women began to wail about 9 a.m. I saw some arrive with bananas.
184 They stopped wailing after ten minutes or so. Imilanwa (Mwaisalwa) was present. Mwaijumba had not yet come. I met Kakuju on the way. He had not yet been told of the ritual. Mbapa and Maleja (widows of Mwalingo) did most of the work, with Ijumba, widow of Mwampiki. Isalwa sat near and watched while Maleja ground up the ointment. Seeds for making ointment were put on the fire. This was the ointment for anointing oneself in the ritual. Beans were brought in a flat basket. 'We mourn', they said, 'with bean mash and the meat of a cow.'

There was some discussion about killing the cow and a dispute between Imilanwa and Simeni. Just as the cow was about to be killed a woman came and made them bring it to the side of the swept court
[262] away from the graves. 'If you kill it near the father-in-law's grave the wives will fear to eat the meat.' The cow was killed by Imilanwa. He then called the men of the family to discuss whether or not they should kill a bull also. One had been sent by the Chief Mwaipopo who is 'our son-in-law. He married a daughter of Maleja'. Imilanwa said: 'Let us kill it,' and they agreed. Only thirteen men were present so far.

[171 The meat from the fork of the right foreleg (*ija mmapa*) was taken to
177] eat with the mash. This is a Sangu not a Nyakyusa custom. The men of the family follow the Sangu custom. The women, daughters of Sangu, do likewise, and the women who are wives of Sangu, but the children of daughters who are married to Nyakyusa men from Selya do the Selya custom. If the daughter of a Sangu marries a Selya man then, if her father dies, she does the Sangu ritual at his place, but if her husband dies she does the Selya ritual at his place even if she has borne him no children, and even if she is herself a child or an infant who has not yet been to him. But her children always do the Selya ritual both at their father's home and at their mother's.

The burying of the banana flower and rubbing in earth is a Selya custom and is only done by the children of Selya men. I saw five or six children do it. Then more children came to rub in earth. One was under instruction at the mission. The women told him to rub himself but Mwaijumba broke in: 'If he is a Christian he ought not to perform the ritual.' 'He's under instruction.' 'Very well, he does not perform the ritual, for a Christian should not have two gods (*ba Kyala babili*).' The bull was killed a little way off among the bananas. Mwaijumba explained: 'It is just for meat, it's not for the ritual, the further off one. Christians will eat it.'

Shaving of the sprouting hair *Record of Mwaikambo, 22/4/37*

First the men and women began drinking beer separately. Then they began the ritual. They went to the grave with beer in a s[illegible]abash.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Ndali

The officiant prepared some beer mixing it with powdered medicine, 764
and they came one by one to drink. The other officiant made as if to 184
shave them, taking a little hair from the forehead and the neck. When she had done this she put her hands between her legs. Thus the people of Selya perform the ritual. In another calabash they put the lees of the beer that had been drunk, with two pots of water. These lees are poured on to their heads and the water runs over their bodies. When the officiant has done this she puts her hands and the calabash between her legs. They look towards Sangu country. Then they shave their hair. When they have finished they throw away the cloths and bark-cloth which they wear when they wash. Then they anoint themselves with oil, and sleep with it on them, and wash in the morning. The people of Selya shave in the morning; at this time they do not really shave, they only cut the sprouting hair.

In the evening there is the ceremony of handing over the inheritance. The heir sits on a banana stump in the doorway and the chief wife hands him a billhook. Then they say: 'Care for these children whom your elder brother left as if you had begotten them yourself, do not be hard, be kindly as he was.'

And at night he will sleep with the widows. In the morning the chief wife goes to her father without washing off the filth and gives her fathers beer, then they greet one another. Ndingania also goes to his mother's people. They said one woman did not go because her fathers did not know the custom, they are Lugulu. There were only these two women, one grown up and one a girl, to be inherited.

Mwaijumba told me that for Kanyosa their affines will not cut the banana grove for they have no girl to give in her place. 'They will give us cattle, we divide (the marriage-cattle) with them.'

(*b*) *Ndali funeral rites* *Record of Mwaikambo*

When someone has died the Ndali mourn for five days, and the 764
sixth day they sweep and shave the hair. When they are shaving it they 302
take a potsherd and put in it all the hair that is shaved off. When they 184
have finished they choose one senior woman, the chief wife, and they hand her this hair and they go to throw it away at the cross-roads. Giving the woman the hair means that the shade should be at his place and leave others. Shaving is to get rid of the shade which was on their bodies (*ukunwa ko kunsosya unsyuka uju bali nagwe mu mbili*). And the people who held the corpse in their arms and dug the grave step over a trench of fire when they have come from the bathing. The doctor gives them medicines to bathe with. They say that if they do not step over fire it is as if they had the dead on their bodies (*balinagwe mumbili umfwe*), and he will always come in dreams, so they drive him away.

When some considerable time has passed—a whole year—they do the 765
ilyengulo. This word comes from straining beer. To strain the *ilyengulo*

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 fought each other and one was sometimes reduced to a subordinate
622 position by the other. Such subordinate or minor chiefs did not always lose all power, some men often continued to live with them, but not many, for they were poor and could not afford the feasts that prosperous and powerful chiefs gave to their warriors. Nowadays the junior of the two young chiefs, in the majority of cases, becomes subordinate to his brother immediately, for the Administration normally recognizes the senior of the two only, and a salary is paid to him alone on the old chief's death.

The number of villages which "come out" with each young chief usually varies between four and eight. But if a chief is subsequently reduced to a minor position he will often end his life with one village only
[624] of adult men and one village of their sons. For people move from minor chiefdoms and the depleted villages that are left gradually coalesce under the leadership of one of the great-commoners. The son of a minor chief may succeed to his father's position, but only one son will do so; a minor chiefdom is too small to be divided and has no formal "coming out" of its own; its young men attend the "coming out" of the superior chiefdom.

621 So much in outline for the political constitution of the separate
423 Nyakyusa chiefdoms. Some account of it was a necessary preface to the discussion of individual land rights, since it is within this political structure that they have validity. If, for example, the boundaries of a village are changed at the "coming out"—and they very frequently are—then no individual rights to village land can be maintained outside the new boundaries.

631 Prior to the arrival of the Europeans there was no paramount political authority among the Nyakyusa, but a number of tiny independent chiefdoms side by side, with minor chiefdoms in some cases attached to them. Of these traditionally independent chiefdoms there is none, I think, which to-day exceeds 3,000 adult male members, and most of them are far smaller than that. This smallness of scale, which is difficult at first for a European to grasp, is the fundamental characteristic of primitive society, in the organization of which personal relationships are predominant, wherein social relationships, that is, mainly subsist between personal acquaintances. In the old Nyakyusa polity impersonal relationships, effective social bonds linking together men who were personally unknown to one another, though they existed had relatively little importance.

648 Just south of the Nyakyusa, in what is now North Nyasaland, live
●184 the Ngonde[1] people, whose language and culture was and is very similar to that of the Nyakyusa. They were, however, slightly more civilized in that they were in closer contact with Arab and Swahili ivory traders; and

[1] Better known to Europeans as *Konde*.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the wealth derived from this trade enabled one of their chiefs, Kyungu, to maintain himself as paramount over all Ngonde. Among his people impersonal relationships thus had a greater importance. And it was, I believe, the historical isolation of the Nyakyusa from any considerable commercial contact with the outside world which prevented the rise among them of a paramount chief.

To-day the Nyakyusa are in process of integration with the civilized society of the world and the independence of their minute chiefdoms has inevitably passed away. The traditionally sovereign chiefs have been grouped in seven court districts with one chief as President of the Native Court in each ; and these seven chiefs together with the two Presidents of the Ndali and Lambya Courts are federated, with an Appeal Court and joint Native Treasury of their own. In the seven Native Courts most of the traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their great-commoners, and assist the President and his great-commoners in the hearing of cases. The bulk of the legal business previously transacted by each chief in his own country is now taken to Court, but the power of great-commoners to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages is still the basis of the legal system.

A poll tax, now (1938) fixed at 9/- per annum for adult males with no additional tax for plural wives, has been introduced and chiefs are paid small salaries ranging from 5/-, 10/- or 20/- a month for ordinary chiefs to 80/- or 100/- a month for the Court Presidents.

The Nyakyusa, as we have previously mentioned, consist of a number of immigrant groups who have spread among and incorporated an indigenous population. The main immigrant groups were three in number and are distinguished to-day by the names of " Nyakyusa," " Kukwe " and " Selya." As all these three groups together (including those who are now incorporated in them) call themselves " Nyakyusa " to the outside world, I distinguish the one group to which the name more particularly belongs as the " Nyakyusa proper." The Nyakyusa proper live in the plain of Mungonde and up on the higher ground as far north as Tukuyu, the Kukwe live north of them around the base of Rungwe Mountain while the Selya live in the east of the district, between the Nyakyusa proper and the Kukwe, right under the wall of the Livingstone Mountains. Between the three groups there are minor differences of dialect and custom.

The extent to which the indigenous groups retain any separate identity varies in accordance with the number of the immigrants and the date at which they reached them, but over a large part of the district fusion has been complete.

We have already discussed the economic relations between the Nyakyusa and the Lupa gold fields which provides them with a market

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tive capital, Tukuyu, and it is still thus used to distinguish this group 101
from others. This group will here be referred to as "*Nyakyusa proper*." Those in the North of the district to the West and East of Mount Rungwe call themselves *Kukwe* and *Mwamba* respectively, and there is a group of chiefdoms to the East, under the Livingstone Mountains, called *Selya*. All these four groups share a common culture, distinguished by minor [184]
local peculiarities of dialect and custom. Immediately bordering the Nyakyusa to the South West are the *Ngonde* (Europeanized as "*Konde*") in Northern Nyasaland; they belong to the same cultural group but are distinguished by greater differences of custom and speech than the others. I have not yet visited them.

In the hills to the West of the Rift live the *Ndali*, who are included in this administrative district; and on the plateau under these hills, to the West of the Kukwe, live the *Penja*. Both these small groups have old languages of their own which, though related to that of the Nyakyusa are [197]
more or less unintelligible to them; and they have equally distinct cultures. But they are now rapidly being assimilated to the Nyakyusa both in [177]
speech and in law.

I use the name Nyakyusa, in accordance with modern usage, to include the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, Mwamba, and Selya groups, but to exclude the Ndali, the Penja, and the Konde. The Nyakyusa together with the Ndali and Penja number 150,000; the Konde of Nyasa- [161]
land 30,000.[3]

Members of the Berlin and Moravian Missions were the first Euro- 797
peans to settle in the district, where they have lived now for forty-five 177
years and have made numerous converts. The German Administrators followed them closely, and later came a few planters. But pronounced economic change is a matter of the past five to ten years during which time the Lupa Gold Fields of South Tanganyika have been opened up and have employed increasing numbers of Africans on the diggings. During the past few years the young men of the Nyakyusa have developed [166
the habit of going for a few months, now and again, to the Gold Fields to 464]
earn money for tax and clothes. They seldom stay more than six months at a time, often only one or two; so that their absence does not cause the same difficulties in their own community that are found in other areas where the men spend longer periods away from home.

The Family, together with a sketch of wider Kinship Groupings

The relationships of husband and wife, parent and child, sibling and 593
sibling are continually visible in the culture of the Nyakyusa. The

[3] Government Census figures.

8:Wilson E-5(1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

As the boys one by one reach the age of ten or eleven, two important 857
changes usually take place in their lives. Firstly they leave the herding 621
of cows to their younger brothers, and themselves begin the business of hoeing the fields which will occupy them until they die; and secondly they no longer sleep in the houses of their fathers but join an age-village of boys. These two changes usually, but not always, take place at the same time and normally at about the age of ten or eleven years, well before puberty. But there are cases where special circumstances put the [184] age of one or both of these changes later; I know one boy who herds his father's cattle although he has reached puberty, because he has no younger brother old enough to take over, and there are only five or six boys in his herd-group altogether. And in general I am told it is not uncommon for some boys who have reached puberty to be found still herding cattle. Again in one age-village the boys leave home a little later than usual because there are leopards about and it is dangerous for small boys to walk from the village of their fathers to that of the boys after dark.

(b) *The Boys' Village*

When a fair number of the sons of a village of married men have 621
reached the right age, their fathers give them a piece of land to one side of 561
the parent village on which to build. There they build little huts of reeds for themselves, sufficiently well-thatched to keep out the heavy rain, and there they sleep. The building of the huts on this land begins, in a playful manner, before the boys move. While they are still herding the cows and sleeping at home they build minature huts there in their spare time, but do not sleep in them. When they move they build slightly more substantial huts with a better thatch. Until he marries each boy hoes his father's fields in his father's village and eats food cooked by his own mother at his father's house. But he sleeps with his friends. Thus between the time when he leaves home and his marriage each is a member of two villages, economically he still belongs to that of his father, socially to that of his own contemporaries. Though bachelors eat at their parents' homes, it is very rarely that they do not eat in the company [264] of their own friends. A bachelor does not simply go home to eat but a group of bachelors, friends of the same boys'-village, go round together eating at the house of each one's mother in turn.

In an age-village of married men there are always several different herds of cattle; and it is not only those from the same group of herd-boys that set up a new village together, but all the sons of the age-village. When a boy leaves the herd-group he joins a larger community, including the friends of his own age who have herded cows with him, but many

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE peoples with whom this book is concerned, the Nyakyusa and the Ngonde, occupy an area shut in by mountains at the northern end of Lake Nyasa, and enjoy a culture which, though varying locally, clearly springs from a common basis and is traditionally attributed to similar origins. The most conspicuous features of their political organization are (i) the balance of power between chiefs and commoners; (ii) the 'coming out' ritual in which a generation of men which has governed for approximately thirty years retires and hands over the administration to its sons, retaining only ritual functions; and (iii) the system of age-villages.

All are agreed that chiefs and commoners belong to different stocks; the commoners being descended from the original occupants of the country while the chiefs trace their descent to a line of invaders who came down from the Livingstone mountains eight generations ago. According to the myth, they brought with them fire, and cattle, and iron tools, and they found a people who ate their food raw in a land 'without trees'.[1] Commoners are *abatitu*, black people, while Ngulube, an early ancestor of the chiefs, was 'pale'[2] and chiefs (*abanyafyale*) generally are said to have been lighter in colour and 'different in their bodies'. After generations of intermarriage between chiefs and commoners there is no consistent difference in physical type between them, but the range of physical type among the Nyakyusa as a whole is wide.[3]

Nyakyusa and Ngonde historians say that their chiefs are related to those of the Kinga, who live high above the Nyakyusa valley to the east in the Livingstone mountains, whence the chiefs came. The Kinga acknowledge the connexion and join with the Nyakyusa in sacrifice to their common heroes, but culturally the

[1] Possibly the lake-shore plain. The hills until cultivated are covered with either savannah or rain forest.

[2] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3, p. 10 (1930). According to the Ngonde version Ngulube was the *first* ancestor.

[3] cf. F. Fülleborn, *Beiträge zur physischen Anthropologie der Nord-Nyassander* (1902). *Das Deutsche Njassa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet Atlas* (1906).

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

inheritance ensure that a limited number of young men are absorbed into the senior generation and live with the older men, sharing their activities and from time to time holding office as headmen or priests of that generation, and the selection in each generation of young men who are *not* the sons of village headmen, or chiefs, or headmen of the past generation, ensures that commoners without office are constantly recruited to the hierarchy of rulers. In short, power is distributed.

(c) RITUAL AND SECULAR BONDS

As in so many societies, economic and ritual links extended, traditionally, further than political links.[1] Selya was dependent upon BuKinga for iron and the Kinga came to fruitful Selya to pray for fertility. The priests who came to pray brought the hoes. The many independent chiefdoms of Selya and the Mbaka valley acknowledged the spiritual overlordship of the Lwembe by sending sacrifices to him, and it was through the network of hereditary priests like Kasitile, Mwanakunda, Mwalukuta, and Nyama of Selya, and the Kinga priests Kikungubeja, Nsyanigwa, Kyamba Kitali, and Silobwike that wider bonds were maintained. Mwaipopo (116) when he was granted a Court which gave him the secular leadership of Selya, failed to make any acknowledgement of Lwembe's traditional power, and it was Kasitile who later urged him to do so. The western chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa still buy medicines and bark-cloth from the Ndali to the west, and have done so for many generations, but no common ritual links them as it does Selya and the plain with BuKinga. The trade was of lesser importance than that to the east, for it does not seem to have included iron, though the Nyiha who share a common culture with the Lambya, the western neighbours of the Nyakyusa, are known to have been skilled smiths.[2] With the Sangu to the

[1] cf. E. Colson, 'The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia' in *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa* (ed. Colson and Gluckman).

A comparison with the frontier in West and South Africa where economic and religious expansion compelled the establishment of Government is instructive. Cf. W. K. Hancock, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs*, vol. ii, part ii, pp. 162-8.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between the Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, vi (1890), p. 289. Elton's suggestion that some of the Nyakyusa iron came from the west is discounted by Cotterill. J. F. Elton, *The Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa* (1879), p. 371 and map, cf. J. Thompson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back*, vol. i, p. 272.

N 233 cattle in the district in the 1941 census was about 2.3 head per taxpayer or 55 head per square mile. Certain land is set aside each N [184 635] year for grazing, where stock is not able to interfere with the produce plots. Compensation for trespass of cattle on cultivated land is only paid among people of the lake shore.

N 656 Parts of the land to the west of Tukuyu have been badly eroded by cultivation and 134 over-grazing, and it is only since 1935 that 185 anti-erosion rules have been made to check the tendency for bad cultivation. Since they 242 were brought in, however, the majority of the tribe have become very keen on seeing the effect that well-controlled cultivation has on crops. The following are the Native Authority Rules concerning anti-erosion:—

"Throughout the Rungwa District, all natives shall follow orders regarding cultivation designed to prevent soil erosion as demonstrated and enjoined by the Agricultural Officer.

(*a*) All ridges and terraces shall be contoured and not follow the slope of the hill.

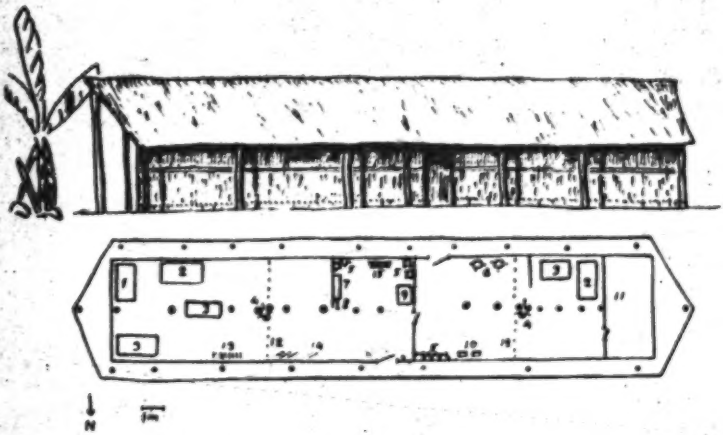
(*b*) In the case of cultivation done on the flat and not on ridges or terraces, a large ridge and ditch shall be dug at the top of the plot to remain permanently and be repaired from N time to time."

N 439 The Wanyakyusa have never been dependant on outside sources for any of their food, N but in their own territory there is no iron for [135] making hoes nor clay for making earthenware pots. The former they were accustomed to get from Ukinga, on the eastern boundary of the district in the Livingstone mountains, and the pots were, and are still, made only by about 500 members of the Wakisi tribe living in a K village on the lake shore at the extreme south-439 western point of the district. The Wakisi are 101 really of Ukinga origin and inhabit the eastern, northern and western shores of Lake Nyasa. They grow no food except cassava, and that only recently, and apart from the one village that makes the pots, their only work is as paddlers of canoes and fishermen. Most of their fish and pots are exchanged for food.

N 443 Since the Tukuyu District is so thickly populated and the inhabitants concentrated, it has been found necessary to create produce markets at comparatively short distances. N Transport from these markets, during wartime, has become difficult. The natural outlet 438 for Tukuyu native foodstuffs is the Lupa 316 Goldfields, which lie about 100 miles to the

(*Received for publication*

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa



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An *ikibaga* in the village of Kisondela, the district of Rutengalo, belonging to a man with two wives. The rooms have bamboo ceilings from dotted lines to either gable. Posts reaching to ridge of roof are filled in. 1, husband's bed; 2, wife's bed; 3, child's bed; 4, hearth; 5, hens' nests; 6, water jar; 7, roost; 8, ladder; 9, table; 10, stools; 11, store-room; 12, dotted lines show limitation of ceiling; 13, small objects; 14, working material; 15, sleeping mat.

born. On page 357, he reports how the boys, when 7 or 10 years old, will leave their parents' house to live in long, rectangular cowhouse-like houses big or small, in a special youngsters' quarter at the far end of the village. On page 358 he writes: In many cases you do not know for certain whether you are dealing with [343] a youngsters' house or a cowhouse—for the cattle may well be kept in these houses—or the herdsmen may sleep in the cowhouses. However, this mostly holds [194 231] true of the low-lying Konde country, while on the other hand, in the high country, the cattle is usually kept in the dwelling houses. On pages 371 and 372, he relates how the cattle is tied to posts at night, and he shows a picture of a cowhouse.

He also refers (on page 376) to the use of the rectangular house for married [462] men besides the boys. The difference is seen in the fact that these houses are not roughcast with mud, as this work is the province of women. Finally, he reports that, during the last few years of his stay in the Konde country, he saw Konde [177] houses being built under increasing influence of the coastal culture, in imitation of the Swahili houses. They were roughcast with mud inside and out, and had a verandah supported by posts.

In 1955, many *ikibagas* could be seen. Some were for the cattle, but most were dwelling houses for married people. (Boys aged 7–10 and upwards until the [824] marriageable age lived in ramshackle boys' houses, the material of which was not [855] bamboo, but a thinner grass, resembling bamboo very much. These houses stood

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

usa. It is true that one still meets blacksmiths on the outskirts of the 178
villages or some distance away from them (as in the case of the Ndali 178
tribe, western to the Nyakyusa area), but they no longer smelt the 325
iron from ore mined by themselves as in former times. The smith of to-day remelt only scrap iron from disused motor-cars and other machines into tools, hatches, and spear-heads, unless, of course, the natives prefer to buy imported iron-ware. As with the Chaga, also the 126
Nyakyusa smith can only be persuaded to submit to being photographed 326
after long negotiation and a change into better clothes. The blacksmiths I met in the Bundali Mountains, however, made no objections what- [184]
ever to being photographed at their work. Also women were allowed to attend. But one feature of the ancient Nyakyusa blacksmith's 178
culture has been preserved till the present day: the lower part of the 325
bellows through which the air blast is driven into the fire is still made of wood. This feature has been defined by H. Baumann as an element of the "ancient nigritic culture".

12. Dress. The cloths of the Nyakyusa have changed to a very con- 291
siderable degree since the beginning of European influence. A 177
comparison of the earliest pictures and descriptions of inhabitants at the northern end of Lake Nyasa with the dress of modern times brings out this point most forcibly. Originally the Nyakyusa went almost naked, adorned only with rings and belts, but nowadays all degrees of compromise with European fashions of dress are to be found, especially near the European settlements and Mission Stations. The most conservative element are, in this case, the women. It is still possible to-day 287
to observe in each village the preparation of the long strips of bark 291
(elyabi, pl. *amabi)* commonly worn by the women. The so-called *impandapanda* (Fotheringham: *mlambe)* tree furnishes the dress material. After the bark has been immersed in water, the bast is beaten with wooden instruments and then pulled off from the harder parts of the bark. These tools are like hammers; the flat end of such an implement is furrowed, sometimes with a disk made of horn, and as it produces patters on the bast it is called *"obosimbe"*, that which produces patters. These long belts, almost reaching the ground, especially in front, are mostly ruby coloured, but the women sitting in front of [531]
their huts manufacture also other types with geometrical (triangular) patterns in yellow and brown forming only girdles *(umpango).* In 291
addition to this minimum requirement in the way of dress some women 301
around the waist also wear copper belts *(manyeta),* made of thin copper- [237]
wire, spiraly wound on a core of hairs from the tails of cows. These

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

343 Also the stables I saw were very clean; their length is adjusted to the number of cattle which are sheltered therein. Sometimes a wooden hoop is to be found in such a stable, hanging down from the ceiling. [251] The inside of the hoop is filled with a wicker-work whose meshes are dense enough to hold fruits to be dried. If such a hoop is hanging in the stable being out of use, a bag made of leaves containing pumpkin seeds *(inyugu)* for later planting may be fastened to it, and on the beams of 233 the framework of the walls you may find a plaited leather neckband *(ulukoba)* for cows destined to hold a cow's bell *(ibangala)*. The sound of the bells of the cattle gave already great delight to the first European visitors of Nyakyusa and Ngonde Land, as we can read with Fotheringham (p. 24): "It is a pretty sight to see the herd coming into villages in the evening, and pleasant to hear the tinkle of the bells which are suspended from their necks, recalling in homely quietude the peaceful scenes of the Swiss."

184 The daily life of the Nyakyusa differs more or less among the 101 different ethnic groups which in former times had been independent units. Nowadays, however, all those groups who have similar speech and customs and share, therefore, a progressing common culture, only distinguished by minor local pecularities, are called by the common name "Nyakyusa" (Cf. G. Wilson: An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society. Bantu Studies, Vol. X, 1936, p. 254 f).

Synopsis

080 Verfasser beschreibt in diesem zweiten Bericht die verschiedenen Arbeiten aus dem Alltagsleben der Nyakyusa. Die Betreuung der großen Rinderherden, einschließlich des Melkens, ist Männersache, die Frauen reinigen nur die Ställe. Die Männer behacken die Felder, die Frauen säen, reinigen, ernten und bereiten alle Nahrung zu. Diese Arbeitsteilung fand Verfasser 1939 noch unangetastet, dagegen waren die zahlreichen mit Saat und Ernte verbundenen Zeremonien durch den europäischen Einfluß fast verschwunden. Ebenso war der Verfall der traditionellen Künste und Handwerke weit fortgeschritten durch europäische Einwirkungen wie durch die überall verstreuten indischen Händler als Vermittler der ausländischen Waren. Diese hatten auch die traditionelle Kleidung abgewandelt (als die Europäer kamen, gingen die Eingeborenen noch überwiegend nackt). Die alten geometrischen Muster, die äußere Hüttenwände und Türen schmückten, waren zum Teil mit Zeichnungen von Fahrrädern, Autos, Flugzeugen u. a. durchsetzt. Während früher auch das Alltagsleben der Nyakyusa in deren verschiedenen ethnischen Gruppen deutliche Unterschiede aufwies, sind diese ehemals unabhängigen Einheiten unter den europäischen Einwirkungen mehr und mehr kulturell zusammengewachsen.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

swept through BuNyakyusa in the early 1930's; perhaps other similar movements preceded it—we do not know. What is clear is that traditionally there was continuous public pressure to overcome hatred within the village and the kinship group; to rid oneself of it by confession and an expression of goodwill. In pagan thought Utopia is a society without witches or sorcerers and, though it was never achieved, everyone is convinced that formerly these evil-doers were fewer than now, because they were restrained by law, whereas 'witches' now go scot-free.

The interests of the Nyakyusa are personal and practical. Health, fertility, and amity between kinsmen and neighbours are what they seek. It is with rain and drought, with the rise of the Lake or the striking of lightning which destroys property; with stock, crops, and the wild animals which prey upon them that the myths are concerned. We could trace no tales of the sun, moon, and stars, and no rituals are directed to them. Reference is made to volcanic disturbance in the myths of the heroes—'the ground rumbled' when Nkekete and Kyala walked, and there are stories of small lakes disappearing and reappearing elsewhere—but the concern shown is surprisingly little if an eruption indeed destroyed villages last century as Mr. Harkin's single informant suggests (*vide supra*, p. 16).

Reality is thought to be revealed to men in dreams, by prophets who 'go down thinking like the roots of a tree' to the world of the shades, and by oracles. What men seek to know are the causes of misfortune—public and private—and the identity of witches. Occasionally, it is said, a prophet has looked into the future and foretold drought, or flood, or the coming of Europeans—'white things on the Lake'—against whom it would be foolish to fight, but for the most part they are concerned with the misfortunes that exist, and urging men to pray in the groves. The contemplative is not honoured in Nyakyusa tradition; the man of spiritual power is a detective—a discoverer of evil-doers—or an administrator whose awfulness adds to his authority.

Men are preoccupied with their relationships to other living men—their kinsmen, neighbours, and fellow office-holders—and with their dead fathers. They are not concerned with their relationship to Kyala. The rituals celebrated by kinsmen are directed to the shades not to any supreme God, and it is quarrelling between kinsmen that angers the shades and makes the celebration of certain rituals necessary. The communal rituals are

N 233 cattle in the district in the 1941 census was about 2.3 head per taxpayer or 55 head per N [184 square mile. Certain land is set aside each year for grazing, where stock is not able to 635] interfere with the produce plots. Compensation for trespass of cattle on cultivated land is only paid among people of the lake shore.

N 656 Parts of the land to the west of Tukuyu have been badly eroded by cultivation and 134 over-grazing, and it is only since 1935 that ● 185 anti-erosion rules have been made to check the tendency for bad cultivation. Since they 242 were brought in, however, the majority of the tribe have become very keen on seeing the effect that well-controlled cultivation has on crops. The following are the Native Authority Rules concerning anti-erosion:—

"Throughout the Rungwa District, all natives shall follow orders regarding cultivation designed to prevent soil erosion as demonstrated and enjoined by the Agricultural Officer.

(*a*) All ridges and terraces shall be contoured and not follow the slope of the hill.

(*b*) In the case of cultivation done on the flat and not on ridges or terraces, a large ridge and ditch shall be dug at the top of the plot to remain permanently and be repaired from N time to time."

439 The Wanyakyusa have never been dependant on outside sources for any of their food, N but in their own territory there is no iron for [135 making hoes nor clay for making earthenware pots. The former they were accustomed to get from Ukinga, on the eastern boundary of the district in the Livingstone mountains, and the pots were, and are still, made only by about 500 members of the Wakisi tribe living in a K village on the lake shore at the extreme south-439 western point of the district. The Wakisi are really of Ukinga origin and inhabit the eastern, 101 northern and western shores of Lake Nyasa. They grow no food except cassava, and that only recently, and apart from the one village that makes the pots, their only work is as paddlers of canoes and fishermen. Most of N their fish and pots are exchanged for food.

443 Since the Tukuyu District is so thickly populated and the inhabitants concentrated, it has been found necessary to create produce markets at comparatively short distances. N Transport from these markets, during wartime, has become difficult. The natural outlet 438 for Tukuyu native foodstuffs is the Lupa 316 Goldfields, which lie about 100 miles to the

(*Received for publication*

438 north. Before the war, the goldfields gave work
316 to about 15,000 natives, chiefly Wanyakyusa,
and most of the foodstuffs from this district
[464] went there. The goldfields are gradually closing due to difficulties in obtaining spares, and it has been necessary to look for outlets for Tukuyu produce elsewhere. Should the goldfields open again after the war, and large-scale mining start, there is a great future for produce grown in Tukuyu.

434 The main income of the tribe is derived from agricultural, military, mining and public works sources, and it is estimated that in 1941 the average annual income per man, woman and child was about Sh. 10 per year. It has risen considerably since, as over 4,000 men have joined the military and a large part of their salaries comes back to the district in the form of remittances. The agricultural source, from which a larger part of the tribal income
[464] accrues, is from sales of rice, maize and other foodstuffs. A fair number of Wanyakyusa also work on the tea plantations.

241 The picture sketched above will show that the district is inhabited by a tribe whose agriculture is of great interest, since the variety of crops, from wheat in the highlands to paddy and cotton on the lake shore, is perhaps unrivalled in so small an area elsewhere in
181 East Africa. It has not been possible to fill in the picture with details of the people's character, but it is worth mentioning that the Wanyakyusa are a people difficult to administer, argumentative, litigious, self-willed and at times inclined to truculence. Neverthe-
153 less their intelligence is such that they are willing to be persuaded, and, once convinced of the benefit of any change, adopt it with energy. This is instanced by the way they have in a few years accepted the principles of anti-erosion to such an extent that now there is perhaps 90 per cent control in the well-popu-
134 lated areas. It should, however, be stressed that, though the soil is not being eroded to
241 any great extent, it is still being impoverished, since increased cultivation for the war effort has involved breaking a great deal of new land with a consequent lessening of fallow. Over-cropping in the hilly country is very great and, in order to prevent further emigration, it be-
[185] hoves the native planters to learn to put something back into the soil in the form of mulch or compost. If care is not taken, a comparatively prosperous country will one day become like so many parts of Africa, where a losing struggle is fought with Nature to obtain a sufficiency for the people's needs.

on 21st September, 1943)

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

N K 171 [197] N [186] 173 two peoples are distinct. Their languages are not mutually intelligible and the Nyakyusa despise the Kinga as dirty in habit and obsequious in manner. There were two main invasions from BuKinga: (i) that of the 'sons of Lwembe' who settled south and east of Tukuyu, and (ii) that of the 'sons of Ngomale' (or Kukwe), who settled first at Kina below the northern crater of Rungwe volcano, and then at Kabale in the foothills to the south-east. N 173 643 Most of the present chiefs of the Nyakyusa belong to one or other of these two lineages, and the chiefs of Ngonde are claimed by both. The arrival of the chiefs of Lwembe's line may be fixed between 1560 and 1650, i.e. before the settlement at the Cape, but after the death of the first Christian martyr in what is now Rhodesia[1] and the 'sons of Ngomale' followed them some generations later (*vide infra*, genealogies pp. 3, 27; p. 94). Two of the invading heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, became 'divine kings' whose successors claimed spiritual authority over wide areas, and the heirs of Kyungu gradually acquired temporal power also.

N 173 About the first inhabitants of the Nyakyusa valley, the *abilema*, tradition is vague; however, it is clear that they were not one people, but consisted of small, scattered, independent groups, disparate in origin. Some were very early invaders from BuKinga, others came from near Lake Rukwa and were kin to the Bungu of the Rukwa plain. They occupied an almost empty country (as their name indicates) but they found pygmy hunters[2] in the Rungwe forests. The invaders themselves were primarily hunters N [241] and honey-gatherers, though some, at least, of them began to cultivate millet, beans, and pumpkins. One group of early N [563] inhabitants, the Penja, which was pushed into the north-west corner of the valley, has remained relatively discrete, though for the most part they have fused with the conquerors.

It is clear that nowhere were the invaders allowed to establish themselves as tyrants since, though their descendants rule over the [622] various chiefdoms, their authority is strictly limited by the headmen of the villages who are invariably of commoner stock. More- [643] over, while the most sacred persons in the country are, or before [563] the coming of the Europeans were, 'divine kings', descendants of the original heroes, chosen by each generation to become their

[1] In 1561, cf. G. M. Theal, *Records of South-East Africa*, vol. ii, p. 126.

[2] The quality of relations with the Pygmies is summed up in the ironical name for them 'Where did you see me?' (*Umbuwenkagu?*) The tale is that they were very sensitive about their size and the first question on meeting a Nyakyusa was always: 'Where did you see me?' The only safe reply was: 'Far, far away!'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

753 entrance to the grove?' Ndembwe told me, 'You will get no cattle',
688 and indeed the cows are aborting. He told me: 'Brew beer and look
[787] for a sheep[1] and pray to your grandfather.'

782 Kasitile did not find an animal for sacrifice. He slaughtered a kid 'just for meat', killing it near the grove, but without praying or taking any of the meat into the grove, for it is not customary to offer goat's meat to the shades. His health improved a little, for a
787 time, but again he got worse and went off to see another diviner, saying: 'Perhaps there is some other cause; perhaps Ndembwe is mistaken.' He decided to go to consult an oracle some distance away 'because the oracle near home does not convince us; those who live near know all our wrongdoings; those at a distance don't know the affairs of the homesteads here'. This time Godfrey Wilson was invited to accompany him 'since he was his friend'.

Record of G.W. 8/2/37

787 We left Isumba about 7 a.m. and walked for an hour over the hills
753 through the bush. Kasitile had sent his wives, Jane and Kiluleli, on ahead to tell the diviner, Nsoki, that we were coming. . . . He came in
[791] from the fields to meet us and was taken aback by the presence of a
186 European. Kasitile kept saying: 'Do not be startled, he is from home, he is our friend.' . . . Food was served, then Nsoki's wife brought out some cooked millet porridge for the divination. He broke off a large piece and began to roll it between his hands. He smeared ointment on his hands and added powdered medicine. . . . He rolled and rolled, sometimes throwing the ball up and catching it again, spitting on his hands meantime. He murmured as he rolled, then at last he said to Kasitile, 'Speak!' Kasitile called his two wives to come near, and he explained his symptoms and the circumstances, how the sickness had fallen on him just after he had cut the tree in the sacred grove.

Nsoki asked for other possibilities. Kasitile: 'Perhaps the country is angry—I am a senior there. If it is the fathers who are angry I admit
[684] having done wrong. Perhaps my wives have committed adultery in the long grass and they are the cause of the illness.' Nsoki rolled and rolled the ball of porridge speaking aloud: 'It is Kyala above?' (looking up).
[775] Kasitile interrupted him: 'Yes, indeed, Kyala, but Kyala stands where he stood at home, does he stand alone? He stands with the fathers.' Nsoki (as he rolled the porridge): 'Your fathers are angry about that grove?' Then the ball of porridge flattened out in his hands and he broke off . . . 'No, that is not the cause' (*vide* plate 10*b*).

Rolling it into a ball again he went on: 'Your wives have committed

[1] This was Kasitile's own account. Others told us that he had been advised to look for a *bull*.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

755 some live coals into a small calabash and held them against Kasitile's
791 chest 'to clear out the blood of coughing'. To pacify the shades a pot of medicines in water was put on the fire; the doctor, Kasitile, and his
[769] 'senior wife' (actually her younger sister, as Jane was away) each held the pot with a crooked finger. Then Kasitile and all his wives and children were sprinkled with the hot medicines. And the doctor told Kasitile to sacrifice a bull.

During the following week preparations for the sacrifice went ahead.
[793] Kasitile walked for some hours through the forest to call Mwamakunda, his fellow priest who always assisted him in the celebrations at Lubaga and 'sprinkling the country'. Mwamakunda is a very old man, contemporary of Kasitile's father, and he asked: 'Are you bringing your European to the sacrifice?'

KASITILE: Yes.

[186] MWAMAKUNDA: But your father Mwakanjoki (60) did not know any Europeans, he feared them, he died without ever meeting one. After
[688] your father died, when your elder brother was alive, Europeans came —Germans—and cut down a tree, the *umwali* tree in the sacred grove
[177] near Kamesu; blood gushed out, it shouted so that it was heard in BuKinga.

Kasitile explained that the Germans had wanted timber. Afterwards
[782] Mwaipopo (the chief 116) sought a sheep and they tried to put the
[783] grove to rights ('close up') by sacrificing it. This was the tree beside which the sacred meat was always put when they sacrificed in the grove. Now one branch has grown up again from the roots.

Mwamakunda went on: 'But you did wrong at the beginning not to take the European to pray, and to tell Mwakanjoki (60) that he should not be afraid, the European has made himself our friend.' Kasitile, reporting the interview to us said: 'I concealed that we went together to the grove to pray (*vide supra*, p. 115) and Mwamakunda told me: "Let the European take something, let it stay overnight in the house, and go with him, and pray very much. . . . Mwakanjoki has gone off in a huff from your home, you have offended him yourself. Go with the
753 European, take him to your father's home. Now your father has taken
769 offence, he is shaking your body by night because you cut the tree; you
688 have done wrong."' i.e. two causes for the anger of the shades and
186 Kasitile's consequent sickness were given: (i) the cutting of the tree by Mwakanjoki's grave and (ii) Godfrey Wilson's presence at rituals and at Kasitile's homestead. So before the sacrifice of expiation for
783 pruning the grove was performed Godfrey Wilson went to be intro-
782 duced to Kasitile's shades for the second time.

Record of G.W. 9/4/37

[778] In the evening as the sun was setting, I went to Kasitile's house with a cloth and 2*s*. He put them in the house, took down the calabash which

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 are said to give their wives a medicine (without their know-
751 ledge) which will cause any man who lies with them to fall ill
754 of gonorrhoea or some other venereal disease. Many Christians
[753] believe in this medicine and some inquired whether Europeans did not use it also. One family of doctors are specialists in it:

[791] The sons of Manyafu are very famous, they are great doctors. People fear them very much. No one can steal anything belonging to them or run off with their wives. If a man runs off with a wife of theirs, he will return their wife and pay. . . . Because when he has slept with the woman by night they stink in each other's nostrils, the woman stinks in the face of the man and he likewise in hers. And if rain falls by night the roof comes off the hut in which they sleep and the rain enters. Perhaps the man quarrels with the woman, perhaps frogs and snakes are numerous, perhaps gourds sprout in the house—sometimes they sprout bringing evil. So it is also if a man has run off with the wife of another and the husband goes to the sons of Manyafu. They agree to work, but he must pay them.

[681] Lyandileko, whose husband's family have owned a 'horn' for generations, was very insistent that vengeance magic maintained law and order for it could injure only the guilty. 'A thief feared to steal lest he be caught by my father-in-law (Mwaisyelage). He feared the horn if he used sorcery. He feared to seize another's cow thinking, "They will go to Mwaisyelage".'
[684] And protective medicines which cause an adulterer to fall ill of gonorrhoea, or a thief to die, are considered perfectly legitimate; the misfortune would not have befallen the man unless he had done wrong.

[648] The prohibition by the government of the *mwafi* oracle has puzzled people. Medicines are admittedly dangerous, but it is held that Europeans 'encourage' witches and sorcerers by forbidding the use of the one effective weapon against them, and doctors with vengeance magic or other strong medicines 'fear the fate of the *mwafi* doctors'. There is an inescapable contradiction here, the Nyakyusa relying on *mwafi* and vengeance magic as a means of discovering criminals, and the Europeans punishing any doctor found administering poison, or intimidating people by threats. Furthermore, it is widely believed that Europeans them-
[186] selves use strong medicines made up with blood. Any Europeans without an obvious occupation are suspect of being *abanyambuta*, who go around killing people and taking their blood for the Government to use for medicines. One of our European friends,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

a missionary, was warned by her servants before Godfrey Wilson's arrival in her neighbourhood 'not to go out at night as there were *abanyambuta* about, sent by the Government to kill people and take their blood', and women going for firewood made a long detour to avoid his camp. One was overheard asking when she caught sight of him: 'Is that the man who kills people?' Angombwike explained that, since all really strong Nyakyusa medicines contained human blood, it was argued that European medicines, which were so powerful, must contain it also. 'They follow their own customs.' 789 751 754 186

It seems obvious to the Nyakyusa that Europeans must have strong medicines because their confidence and success are so great. Moreover, it is held (in theory) that they are immune to attacks from witchcraft. X, who had been a clerk and lost his job, and was bitter, expanded on this:

> People say that Europeans have *inyifwila* (*vide* p. 58), see they are brave, they do not fear, if someone seizes a spear they do not fear, they just come to him, they are very brave. And also the witches say that they are unable to choke Europeans. When we hear people boasting of their mystical power (*amanga*) we always say to them: 'But if that is so, go and choke a European, show us!' Then they always say, 'Oh no, we can't do that, when we go to a European house at night we find it all lighted up and flaming, we can't get near them.' I think this is the power of the Holy Spirit which you Europeans have. [778]

He came of a well-known family of doctors and perhaps spoke from first-hand knowledge. He just laughed at the suggestion that the light might come from lamps. But the fact that Europeans were held to be immune did not prevent our servants and friends attributing our recurring attacks of malaria to witchcraft. [753]

(c) DOCTORS

Among the Nyakyusa, as perhaps in every society, the doctors with the greatest reputation are those at a distance, and a high proportion of the practitioners in the country are of foreign lineages, their fathers, or grandfathers, or great-grandfathers having come in, bringing medicines with them, and begun to practice. In fact, we were assured that there were *no* Nyakyusa doctors who were famous, they were all Sangu, or Kinga, or Kisi, or from Ngonde or Misuku in Nyasaland, but detailed investigation proved this to be false. The trade in medicines from a distance is a very old one and continues today. As we have seen, 791 [439] [278] [438]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The African National Church

Belief

1. We believe religion is an essential component of man's growth and that man should live according to his religion and not merely be a nominal member of a Church whose rules he cannot carry out. Like all other countries Africa is in need of a Church which would correspond with her God-given customs and manners. 797x 795x 779

2. We believe the commission of the Christian Church to Africa was to impart Christ and education in such a way as to fit in with manners and customs of the people and not that it should impose on the African the unnecessary and impracticable methods of European countries, such as having one wife, etc., which have no biblical authority.

3. We believe the immoralities now prevailing among us are the direct result of the unnatural position into which the African has been driven, coupled by the false and misleading theory that outside one's own Church beliefs others can do no good.

4. We believe in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man regardless of colour and creed, and that the African religion with its traditions, laws, and customs was instituted by Him so that the Africans may realize Him by their own observance. [186]

Constitution

1. The name of this Church shall be called the *African National Church.*

2. This Church shall not be antagonistic towards other organized Churches but shall acknowledge and recognize them in their own spheres whether Christian, Jewish, Mohammedan, or Buddhist; and all African religions serving God through their ancestral spirits because all are trying to uplift man towards the love of God, our opinion being that all were given by Him for the guidance of man.

3. As the African National Church is a new movement having no previous form in Nyasaland, and the first to affect the educated Natives who are outside the other organized Churches by suspension or otherwise, its ministers and other office-bearers shall be elected and ordained by the vote of the whole congregation.

4. The governance of this Church shall be according to European methods, that is to say, it shall have buildings for worship, hold conference and counsels, and keep proper records of its proceedings, funds, etc.

5. Members of the Church shall be people of good character according to the Native traditions, laws, and customs, as contained in the *First Five Books of the Christian Bible*, whether polygamists or not.

6. The Rules of faith shall be based on the said *Five Books of the Christian Bible*, and members shall be suspended only when they break such, our guidance for discipline being the *Ten Commandments.*

and try to understand the nature and reasons for change. Here, then, is a good opportunity for the study of social change – not only in land tenure as such, but also in village and family organisation, political authority and economic life.

II

The Nyakyusa are a Bantu people inhabiting the main part of the Rungwe District in southern Tanganyika, immediately to the north of Lake Nyasa. In 1948 they numbered about 199,000 in that District, but about 10,000 men were probably at the time temporarily absent from their homes and in employment in the mines and towns of the Rhodesias and South Africa (see Gulliver, 1957), whilst about 20,000 had migrated to live in the adjacent Mbeya District to the north.

The tribal area comprises a confined geographical basin surrounding the northern end of Lake Nyasa. It extends only about 40 miles from the tip of the lake at 1,550 feet above sea level to the Poroto Mountains in the north at 8,000 feet; and from east to west is only about 30 miles, from the almost sheer walls of the Livingstone Mountains (with peaks up to 10,000 feet) to the Ndali Highlands (rising to about 7,000 feet). There are therefore unusually large ecological differences within so small an area. Three major regions are to be distinguished: the "Northern Highlands" over about 4,500 feet, the low-lying "Lake Plains" in the south, and the "Central Region" in between. Everywhere rainfall is reliable and high, averaging at least 100 inches annually[1], and this amply compensates for a certain poverty and misuse of the soil, although (and particularly in the Central Region) it brings dangers of soil erosion. Except in the highest parts the banana is the staple food, supported by maize, beans, finger millet and groundnuts. In the Northern Highlands coffee has become well established as the principal cash crop: in the Lake Plains paddy rice cultivation provides both a food and a cash crop: in the Central Region the country is too low generally for coffee and too high and dry for rice; consequently cash-cropping is considerably inferior and the people's standard of living is rather poorer.

The Nyakyusa and their country tended for a long time to be relatively isolated from the outside world by high mountain walls and rain-soaked roads. In addition, or because of it perhaps, they developed an almost unique culture which was supported by considerable conservatism and high insularity. They still continue to regard their African neighbours beyond the mountains as their social and cultural inferiors. The turmoil of the slave-trade in Central Africa passed them by; in modern times they have not enthusiastically accepted Christianity and they have refused to take up the use of Swahili, the Territorial *lingua franca*. In recent years, and most especially since the end of World War II, they have, however, accepted and pushed forward with vigour a rapid and extensive economic development, involving particularly the production of coffee and paddy as cash crops, and large-scale labour migration to the south in the high-wage mining industries. The multiplicity of petty, often tiny, independent chiefdoms has been reorganised to provide four local government areas, each under a Rural Council, in which the old chiefdoms have become something like parishes[2]. Although much of the old conservatism and narrow parochialism persists, yet there is now an atmosphere of accepted change, of a keen desire for economic development, and a general acceptance of a cash economy.

Probably the most significant feature of modern life in the Nyakyusa country is the increasing scarcity of land for agriculture in relation to the

1. At Tukuyu, in the Northern Highlands, annual rainfall averaged 99.28 inches between 1919 and 1952: at Kyela, in the Lake Plains, the average between 1940 and 1951 was 106.21 inches.
2. See Kingdon, Z.E.: The initiation of a system of local government by African rural councils in the Rungwe District, Tanganyika; *The Journal of African Administration*, iii, 4, October, 1951.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

land automatically reverted to the common pool. An established villager might decide to use part of it perhaps, but not before prudently gaining the approval of the headman, lest the migrant return later and accuse him of unlawful and unfriendly seizure. If the headman agreed, as he would after a time in most cases, the newly acquired plot became part of that villager's holding with as secure a title as the rest. Such vacated land could also be allocated by the headman to a newcomer or, before the sons' village was established, to the son of a villager. 473 [628]

If a man had more land than he could cultivate – because, for example, his sons had left him to cultivate in their own villages, or his wife had died – he was under no essential obligation to give up any part. The headman might, if the need arose, try to persuade him to release a portion in order to make it available to someone in need; but the land-holder could refuse and the headman had to accept his refusal. As a chief depended on the support of his headmen, so did a headman's position ultimately depend upon at least the passive support of his villagers, from whose ranks he was chosen.

At the next "coming-out" ceremony the men of a village of the old chiefdom might be required to move aside in order to allow the young men, their sons, to take up the better building sites and farming land. This they traditionally did voluntarily and they built new homesteads on one side and cleared new arable plots. Once re-established in this manner, these older men would not be disturbed again and they remained secure in their new holdings. How often in fact such a displacement took place I cannot say, but it certainly seems to have occurred sometimes, for one can still trace old village sites which appear to bear out the common Nyakyusa story. [561]

In all this it must be remembered that the spirit of village unity and coevality was held in far higher esteem than land in such a fertile country where land was plentiful and subsistence farming required but small-sized holdings. Security of tenure and defined rights to particular plots are notions belonging to a different situation and age; when land begins to be scarce and to have an economic value, and when there is danger of men not being able to obtain as much as they need roughly where they need it. [621]

Newcomers were invariably welcomed to a village: they were supplied with a house site and an arable holding and were assisted with food until the first harvest. They were an addition to the numerical size and physical strength of the village, and they increased a headman's prestige. Their rights were no less assured than those of founder-members of the village, although their social position was less secure, at least at first, for they had not shared in the history of the community and had not grown up with the ties of village association and comradeship amounting almost to kinship. [186] [609]

Traditional rights in trees may be mentioned briefly. Trees were inherited without difficulty along with the land on which they stood, and a brother or son would commonly inherit the deceased's valuable trees without bothering to take the arable land around. If a man left his village and thus forfeited his land there, the position was different. Banana trees went with the land and a new occupant simply took them over; bananas are of no great value as they grow so readily and ubiquitously. Bamboos are more valuable (being used extensively in house-building) and any left behind in this way could be claimed in the first instance not by the village but by the chief. If the chief wanted them they became his property, or he could grant them to any man he favoured. Usually a chief was content to leave them: then the local kinsmen of the departed man had first claim, and if they had no use for them, or if no kinsmen were resident in the village, they became village property to be allocated by the headman. *Usyuguti* trees[1] were regarded in [428] [342]

1. These are valued oil-bearing trees planted by the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains, the botanical name of which I do not know.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Problem of Immigrant Land-holders

Undue importance has also been given to immigrants, but their numbers are relatively small and only significant locally. Since about 1948, or a little earlier, there has been an influx of Africans into the Lake Plains: – Nyakyusa from the Highlands (chiefly from the Central Region – Pakati), Ndali from the Ndali Highlands of Rungwe District and Kinga from the Njombe District to the east beyond the Livingstones; from northern Nyasaland have come Ndali, Lambia and Sukwa, and there are also small numbers of Bemba and others from Northern Rhodesia. They have been attracted in the modern era, when local movement is easier, by the possibility of obtaining land in the northern Lake Plains, where rainfall is so high and untouched bushland has been available.[1]

These immigrants have been and continue to be almost entirely restricted to the north in the "low-density region" (see map, facing page 15). This contained the outstandingly empty area of the country and still there remain vacant lands to be taken up. Such land is usually of relatively inferior quality, easily subject to erosion and loss of fertility on the slopes of the foothills and unsuitable for paddy cultivation except in small, isolated basins. The immigrants, that is, have settled in areas rejected by most Nyakyusa. There, locally, the newcomers outnumber the indigenous population. In the flood plains, the high-density regions, the proportions of foreigners cannot be more than one or two per cent. of the population, and in most villages there are none at all.

It is true that these newcomers do occupy land which might well be used to relieve the congestion nearer to the Lake; but in practice this would not be at all easy. To take a single example: the newly opened area in the north of the chiefdom of Mwakyusa between the Kiwira and Songwe rivers is being rapidly taken up by Ndali from the north-west, Nyasalanders and Nyakyusa from the Central Region (in that order of numerical importance). A few miles to the south, in the centre of the same chiefdom, the inhabitants of the Ikolo area consistently refuse to move although they manifestly cannot meet their land needs within their present villages. They, and others like them, say with some truth that paddy cultivation is less easy and less profitable in these newer and higher areas, and that poor communications make the disposal of produce more difficult. They also say, but more often leave to inference, that they are unwilling to leave their traditional village areas and begin in new parts, even though the move required is only one of a few miles. They have not yet become sufficiently aware of the permanent gravity of modern land shortage to overcome their parochial inertia. By the time they do become aware of it the opportunity may well be lost, for immigrants continue to arrive in twos and threes, and the last vacant land may be taken. To date, however, some vacant lands remain, albeit of poor quality, into which the densely packed Nyakyusa could move, and the immigrants cannot be blamed, at least not yet, for preventing the expansion and resettlement of the local population.

At the moment the chiefs and headmen in these northerly areas are keen to obtain as many of these immigrants as possible in order to swell the number of their commoners, the size of their villages and thus, directly, their own prestige and importance. Newcomers have every opportunity to be allocated as much land as they wish, where they wish, and many are liberally assisted with food in the traditional way until they harvest their first crop. I heard no complaints from either the local Nyakyusa or the immigrants, and relations seemed to be good. Strangers must conform to Nyakyusa ways of life and to the authority of the headman and chief, although

1. Immigrants from Nyasaland are said to have come following the introduction of new regulations there prohibiting the cultivation of easily eroded hill areas.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

in fact they usually settle on the common East African pattern of scattered homesteads, each in its arable area, and not in the tight Nyakyusa village pattern.

I think that the headmen and chiefs concerned would not welcome a restraint on immigration, for it offers them a chance to emulate the numerically produced prestige of their fellows in the flood plains, to whom at the moment they feel inferior. They would, of course, most probably prefer indigenous Nyakyusa, could the latter be persuaded to settle there. As it is, at least some of the Nyakyusa of these northerly villages are trying to move into the flood plains, where they can more easily cultivate paddy and where they can join in a more active and ebullient village life.

One type of foreigner to the Lake Plains is the man (almost invariably a Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who has obtained land but does not settle on it nor in any village. He continues to live in his upland village and comes down to the plains only to cultivate and harvest his paddy field. This is strictly against Nyakyusa land law and custom and, in fact, such an absentee land-holder has often made a substantial monetary gift to the chief or headman for the protection of this extra-legal privilege. These strangers are frequently among the more wealthy upland Nyakyusa, who can afford such payments as these, and often they are of chiefly rank themselves, perhaps having kinship ties with the local chief. There are probably no chiefdoms where such strangers have not obtained paddy fields, though naturally those which contained a good deal of vacant, usable paddy land at the beginning of the cash-cropping era have most.

This does arouse a certain amount of ill-feeling and opposition amongst local villagers who have insufficient land themselves, for they lose land and gain no numerical strength or profit of any kind. The illegal action of the local chief is also condemned, especially as the chiefs should not in any case assume allocatory powers. On the other hand it must be noted that the commoners philosophically accept the supposedly protected prerogatives of their chiefs under European rule and they expect the chiefs to take advantage of them. As with the case of the minority of large land-holders, the actual effect is not particularly great and reformation here would be a minor palliative. Nevertheless in this matter there is a definite and unpopular infringement of villagers' rights and of the local customary law.

One other group of strangers may be noted for the sake of completeness. That is the Kisi, who have for at least two generations been settling along the lake shore itself from Matema in the east to the Songwe river (and beyond) in the south-west. They have come from the north-eastern shores of the lake and in the Nyakyusa area they are principally fishermen who do not, therefore, compete with the indigenous population economically. They cultivate only tiny plots of casava and sometimes of finger millet, although a few of the younger generation are now trying to grow a little paddy also. The total number of Kisi involved cannot be more than a few hundred and they have probably not increased much over the past decades. They follow an almost separate existence from their Nyakyusa neighbours, not intermarrying, and following their own way of life.[1]

1. The main Kisi settlements in Rungwe District are in the Ikombe area, an isolated peninsular south of the Lake Plains, where they number about 1,200. Another 3,000 are scattered on smaller peninsulars and in tiny lakeside basins further south along the Lakeshore. They are widely famed as potters, and they exchange their wares for cereal foods to augment their fishing.

423 Thus beyond the established fields in the vicinity of the village itself, the pattern of land holding tended to become confused. The majority of land-holders were still members of the village who were expanding their cultivation outwards, but there was a considerable number of men from neighbouring villages, and even from farther afield where opportunities were more restricted. Some men even began to have a second house, inhabi-
[591] tated by a junior wife, in another village from which to continue the more easily the cultivation of new holdings.

This sort of development was in the event only a short-term process and, had pressure of population on the land not become so critical, it is not possible to say what would have been the final result upon Nyakyusa social and village organisation. It is, nevertheless, important to note that in the beginnings of the extension of arable holdings, cash-crop cultivation operated in a system in which village exclusiveness was breaking down, when residence was no longer an essential prerequisite of land-holding, and when men were neighbours in the fields as farmers without being coevals of a single village.

Once the Nyakyusa, and particularly the more perceptive headmen, began to realise that land was becoming less plentiful, indeed that it was beginning to be scarce in relation to new demands, this novel tendency was stopped fairly quickly and the old traditional principle of land-holding only by residence was reasserted. In the most recent years this has been strongly insisted on. Headmen and their villagers saw that in order to safeguard their
[622] own rights they must prevent scarce, valuable land being held and used by outsiders. This reaction appears to have been universal and automatic among
[186] the Nyakyusa. There was now insufficient land for everyone's demands and each village therefore looked after what it considered to be its own interests. Outsiders who already held fields could not be deprived of them, but they were not allowed to extend their holdings and every opportunity was, and still is, taken to regain control of their fields for allocation to villagers proper. Inheritance was often disallowed unless the heir agreed to come and live permanently in the village; gifts or loans to outsiders (kin or friends) were no longer permitted and most headmen seized the opportunity to re-allocate to their own villagers any alien-held plots which were not consistently maintained in cultivation.

In response to the new situation, almost everywhere village boundaries were clearly demarcated – not without a certain amount of dispute and a new recognition of inter-village opposition. Nowhere now is it possible for a man to take up land over which there is no firmly established village ownership. The significant principle has now emerged that not only does a village, as a corporate and distinct group, own its own land and is represented in this by its headman; but all land is now owned by some village. Further, at least in the high-density regions, there is no longer any vacant land to be taken up
[622] and any land temporarily falling vacant comes immediately under the allocating authority of the headman.

This process, the application of this principle, is not yet quite universal
423 in the Lake Plains, and it is sometimes still possible to see it coming into
178 operation. Still in the northerly parts of the Lake Plains – the low-density region – one may see fields occupied by a variety of outsiders, for there the realisation of the significance of land shortage has been slowest to come. For example, in Mwakipesile's chiefdom in the late 1940s and early 1950s it was the practice of men from the congested villages nearer the Lake to obtain valuable, virgin paddy land in the newly opened areas in the north (near Ipinda) without residential qualifications. Many men reserved their original holdings in their own villages for food crops and had their main paddy fields in this distant area. By 1955, however, it had become virtually impossible for a non-resident to obtain extra land in this way, although still

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XIII

TWENTY YEARS' CHANGE

How does Christianity interact with other revolutionary forces in the community? It has been possible to observe the changes that have taken place among the Nyakyusa after a lapse of twenty years, and a summary of them is necessary before we proceed to a discussion of the links between religious and secular change. 177

The first thing that strikes a visitor returning to Nyakyusa country after many years, is that the isolation, which was so typical of the valley, has greatly diminished. Buses, filled with Nyakyusa passengers, cross twice daily the high pass that leads out of the valley, and where once travellers died of exposure and starvation there is a hard road fringed with homesteads and fields. The belt of unoccupied country that even twenty years ago separated the Nyakyusa from their neighbours has disappeared, for they themselves have spilled out of the valley to the north and west, and their Kinga neighbours have come down the Livingstone escarpment to the east and cultivate the mountain slopes, for 'they no longer fear that people (i.e. the Nyakyusa) will seize their property'. Men travel abroad to find work and they go much farther and stay away longer than before. In the remotest village there is some man who has visited Burma or Malaya as a soldier, and a dozen lads who will argue the relative merits of the Orange Free State gold mines and the Copper-belt as centres of employment. Many women now accompany their husbands to Rhodesia, or other parts of Tanganyika, and some travel to visit daughters or sisters. The older women enlarge on their journeys and joke about how fearful they used to be. [494] [491] [166] [167] [464]

Travel implies learning another language, most often Swahili, but also Bemba and English and the pidgin of the gold and copper mines called Fanakalo. Thus intellectual isolation is disappearing along with the physical isolation. The numerous 'bush schools' which existed in the Nyakyusa valley in 1938, and at which many of those who attended never even learnt to read and write, have been largely replaced by mission primary schools, state-aided and inspected, and in these and the Native Authority primary and middle schools there are now 9,437 pupils, as against about 500 [191] [198] 177 872

[p. 203]

11:Thwaites C-5 (ca. 1942) 1944
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P.236 A]

WANYAKYUSA AGRICULTURE

By D. H. Thwaites, Agricultural Assistant, Tanganyika Territory

131 The Wanyakyusa occupy the District of Rungwe in the Southern Highlands Province. The district lies between 9° and 9½° S. latitude at the northern tip of Lake Nyasa. The altitude 133 ranges from 1,500 feet to 9,500 feet. The 631 district is divided into twelve chiefdoms. The Administrative Headquarters are at Tukuyu, which was known before the British occupation as Neu Langenberg.

Inhabitants

The local people are not indigeneous to this 101 area. They came, tradition has it, from [173] Mahenge via Ukinga after many tribal fights. They are akin to the Wahenga in Nyasaland bordering on the Tanganyika boundary. It is ●191 estimated that only 10 per cent of the Wanyakyusa speak Kiswahili. According to the 1935 161 census the total poulation was 153,204. The 162 total number of tax-payers in 1942 was 35,304, or 23.04 per cent of the total population.

The people themselves are extremely in- 181 dustrious and intelligent. As there are 90 people to the square mile, living conditions are 105 crowded and emigration is continually taking place. The people are partial to litigation over cattle and women. The number of cases heard annually in the Native Courts is about 6,000. There is no one historical and traditional head of the tribe. The twelve Chiefs are, in reality, hereditary Headmen who have been selected by Government to be Chiefs. They are in effect only *primi inter pares* in native eyes, the outlook of the people being unusually democratic for a native tribe.

105 The people live in houses made of wattle and daub or bamboo frame, with thatched 342 roof, and villages are sited mostly along ridges. 361 Rectangular houses are now built instead of the round huts of former days. They often stand in rows with a main street down the middle with bananas in the background. The more progressive natives build with sun-dried or burnt brick. Stock are stalled in the same house owing to the prevalence of thieving, but sleep in separate rooms.

Climate

132 The rainfall of the district varies in the different areas. In Tukuyu itself the annual average for 25 years (1918-1942) is 100.22 inches. On the Lake shore the average is probably higher, but no continuous statistics are available. The heaviest rainfall months are from December to May, but, in most years,

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN1
Nyakyusa

622 neighbours, he judges their cases; he is their leader at ceremonies
157 and in the old days he led them to war also. He represents their desires to the chief, and it is through him, and in consultation with him, that the chief gives orders. Besides this each headman
[154] (*ulifumu*) is believed to protect his own villagers from witchcraft, 'to watch over the country by night', to shield men and cattle from the spiritual forces of evil.[1] To fit them for this task, village headmen are treated with medicines at the 'coming out' to give them the power of seeing and fighting witches.

622 So important is this position of village headman that legal precautions are taken 'to prevent the village headman becoming a chief', as several informants have put it to us. It is illegal to choose a village headman from among the kinsmen of a chief, and it is illegal to elect the son of a village headman to that office in any age-village of his own contemporaries, though he may perhaps inherit the position in his father's village when his father dies.

622 To return to the 'coming out' ceremony: when the old men
621 have made up their minds, one of them goes among the crowd of young men, and catches hold of those they have chosen in order of seniority: first the one who is to be leader of the senior village of the first son of the old chief, then the leader of the senior village of his second son, then the leader of the next senior village of the first son, and so on. There are commonly eight age-villages of young men; of these four will belong to the chiefdom of the first son, four to that of the second. The eight new village headmen are now publicly known, four in each new chiefdom.

The young chiefs, together with the senior headman of each
622 are then treated with medicines that they may be impressive
789 (*nsiya*). From birth a chief undergoes periodical treatment to
643 make him impressive (*nsiya*) 'that we commoners may tremble before him'. The treatment at the 'coming out' is directed towards the same end: 'We treat him, then he will be altogether a chief, men will respect him!' The village headmen now drink the

[192] [1] The essential meaning of a word in one culture is often illuminated by the meaning of a word from the same stem among neighbouring peoples. In this connection it is significant that *ifwa* in Bemba and *nifwa* in Nyanja mean 'chief', but in Ankole *abafwa* means 'magicians' (including diviners) (*African Political Systems*, p. 145), and among the Sukuma *bafwa* is used in the same sense (*Africa*, Vol. XIX, p. 14). cf. H. H. Johnston, *A Comparative Study of the Bantu and Semi-Bantu Languages*, Vol. II, p. 270.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

medicines of power for the first time, and these are thought to create or develop in them *amanga*, that is, the power of seeing and fighting witches (*vide infra*, pp. 96-102). To the senior headman of each young chief is handed a magic horn to attract people to the country. 'The horn is the luck of the chief that many people may come to build.' To each is given also a magic tail, which, it is believed, will enable him to dream of wars that are approaching and which, together with a magic spear, he carries into battle. 'The spear of the chieftainship is to fight battles with, it is manhood, strength.' The horn, the tail, and the spear are emblems of office handed on by the senior village headman of the old chief to the senior headmen of the young chiefs. They were treated periodically by a special doctor and a set was provided for each independent chiefdom at the coming out. The treatment of these emblems is now rarely undertaken—we were fortunate to see it once. The Nyakyusa say that since the country has been pacified, it has become unnecessary; its purpose was to secure success in war.

622 789 643

The next stage in the action is the one from which the whole institution takes its name: 'the coming out' (*ubusoka*). The two young chiefs are secluded for a few hours in the hut of the old chief's first wife, where they receive various forms of magical treatment, and when this is finished someone outside knocks at the door and cries 'Come out!' Then, to quote the words of a village headman who told us about his own 'coming out', 'The director of ceremonies said: "Get up!" The chiefs got up and came out (*basokile*)[1] of the house to us, and we, the crowd of young men, cried "Come on!" and welcomed them. Then we all ran shouting and calling the war cry towards the next chiefdom. In the old days we should have invaded that country to take cattle and to bring them back and eat them at the new huts which we build next. But that is finished now.' The senior headmen of the new chiefdom lead the charge, each grasping his war tail, his

622 643

[1] cf. the traditional Nyakyusa greeting (now archaic) '*Sokile!*' literally meaning 'You have come out (of the house)' i.e. 'Good morning!' This greeting was not confined to those who had been through the *ubusoka* ceremony. [576]

A comparison of the meaning of the root in other Bantu languages is again suggestive. In Xhosa *ukusoka* means 'to install circumcised lads into manhood by giving them presents when they come out from their seclusion and are publicly acknowledged as men by the assembly of men' (Kropf, *A Kafir English Dictionary*); *ukusoka* means bachelorhood, celibacy (of a circumcised man, not a boy). [192]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Nyakyusa generally it is kinship groups, not villages, which eat protective medicines with certain first-fruits. 754

Unlike many other cattle-keeping Bantu the Nyakyusa take great pride in cultivation, men boasting about their strength in hoeing, and praising those who are diligent. Significantly, the vocabulary relating to bananas matches in richness that relating to cattle: we recorded a dozen terms—and there were said to be many more—for varieties of bananas and plantains, which are distinguished by the form and flavour of the fruit, and thirteen terms for types of cattle, distinguished by colour and markings. 241 192

Not only does success in cultivation carry prestige in itself, but it provides the wherewithal for hospitality, on which status in a Nyakyusa community turns. To be respected a man must entertain his neighbours with food and millet-beer. Control of grain and vegetables to do this depends upon his own effort in hoeing, as well as upon having wives and sons to work with him. We have seen how the laggard among the Kukwe believes that the fertility of his gardens will be sapped by his neighbours being ahead. There is thus considerable social pressure compelling both men and women to cultivate diligently. At the same time, however, no individual should be too conspicuous. Each must keep in step in cultivation with his neighbours; and though his fields may be a little larger than the average, they must not be a great deal larger. The area cultivated (visible crops and stubble) by seven compound families on the Lake-shore plain in 1935 averaged 6·13 acres per family; which, divided by the number of members in each family, gave rather over half an acre per head (men, women, and children) or 1·3 acres per adult. The acreage ranged from 1·99 to 0·61 per adult.[1] 574 241 [626]

Cultivation thus involves co-operation primarily within elementary and compound families, but it also involves village co-operation, in that neighbours hold land together, help one another in some measure, and try to carry out each process simultaneously. 471 241

The pressure of neighbours still helps to keep laggards up to the mark, and also to keep the most energetic from getting far ahead. But the village control over cultivation is diminishing for, as we have seen, the custom of keeping in step is no longer strictly insisted upon even among the Kukwe, nor does it apply 241

[1] Monthly report of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu District, July 1933. Figures supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu, 1933.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

or his crops fail, or his cattle die, he reflects on any quarrels he may have had with kinsmen or affines or neighbours, and on any rituals he should have performed and has omitted wholly or in part. He may be quite clear in his own mind that the misfortune is due to some particular wrong-doing (*inongwa*)—perhaps a quarrel with a brother, or neglect to kill for his new neighbours on his inheritance from his father—and proceed directly to patch up the quarrel and perform the neglected ritual. More often he thinks of several possible causes and lays them before the oracle, relying upon it to select between them. How several possible causes of misfortune occurred to the chief sufferers, their kinsmen and neighbours, is shown in the cases of Enesi, Katasya, Mwambuputa and Mpoma quoted at the end of the book (pp. 238 ff.).

No linguistic distinction is made between an offence punished by the courts and one thought to be punished by the shades; both are wrong-doings (*inongwa*), and there is no sharp distinction between an offence against a living kinsman and an offence against a dead one. In short, there is no clear conception of 'sin' as opposed to 'tort' or 'crime'.

There are two themes constantly recurring in Nyakyusa theology: firstly, men must observe the traditional rituals (both positive and negative) or they will go mad; and secondly, the anger of senior relatives and neighbours will injure unless it is confessed and goodwill expressed.

The first conception is a magical one:[1] what is required is the performance or avoidance of particular acts in a particular form on particular occasions; the second is sacramental, it is 'anger in the heart' that is dangerous, and no ritual is held to be efficacious without a change of heart.

Often the two conceptions are not consciously related to one another: again and again one is told: 'The rituals must be performed or men will go mad,' and there is no reference to the state of mind of the performers; but on certain occasions they overlap explicitly, as when Kasitile adjured his kinsmen to confess all while they were performing the ritual to 'rot the ropes'; and always there is a symbolic connection, for the rituals themselves express the value of amity between kinsmen, of respect for seniors and obligation towards juniors.

The neglect of the marriage ritual is itself an expression of disrespect for parents or parents-in-law, and a breach of the sex code,

[1] In the sense defined by G. & M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 89-95.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER III

THE 'DIVINE KINGS'

17

(a) CHARACTERISTICS OF 'DIVINE KINGS'

THE heroic myths and genealogies proclaim the origin of chieftainship, and point to a distinction between ordinary chiefs and those we call 'divine kings'. Two remote ancestors who were pre-eminent are worshipped as heroes and creators, their graves are centres at which a large number of chiefdoms join in celebration, and living representatives are selected in every generation bearing their names. These are the 'divine kings', the Lwembe of Lubaga (in the centre of Nyakyusa country) and the Kyungu of Mbande near Karonga in Nyasaland. A third hero, Kyala, is associated with the cave, PaliKyala, near Ikombe at the north-east corner of the Lake, and he is worshipped in the same way as the other two, except that the priest of the cave is not his descendant and does not embody him. According to the myth, Kyala was the brother of Lwembe, but died without issue. However, the word for chiefs—*aba-nya-fyala*—is popularly believed to mean 'the sons of Kyala'.[1] 773 769 643

Kyala is one hero among others, but his name is *also* used in the sense of 'the lord': a chief is *kyala gwake* (his lord) to a commoner, a father is *kyala gwake* to his son or daughter 'because he created him' and a shade is *kyala* to his living kinsman (*unyuka jo kyala*). Of one who performs a feat—something difficult—it is said 'he is Kyala'.[2] This usage is said to be very old, but there is yet another meaning of the word which is new. *Kyala* was used by the European missionaries (who first established themselves near PaliKyala) as their translation of 'God'. Today these three conceptions are inextricably mixed: Kyala the hero, Kyala 'the 769 643 [775] [177] [797]

[1] I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Fueter for drawing my attention to this point. It is doubtful whether *Kyala* and *fyala* in fact come from the same root. *Fyala* in Hehe means the daughter of a chief (A. G. O. Hodgson, 'Some Notes on the Wahehe of Mahenge District, *J.R.A.I.*, lvi (1926), p. 40). In Bena *nyakifyala* means 'my husband's father or mother' (A. T. and G. M. Culwick, *Ubena of the Rivers*, p. 196). In Ganda *nalyala* means 'lady', mistress of a household and garden (J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, p. 44). cf. Nyika, *fala* 'to beget, to bear' (J. L. Krapf and J. Rebmann, *A Nyika-English Dictionary*, edited by T. H. Sparshott, 1887). [192]

[2] cf. F. R. Lehmann, 'Some field notes on the Nyakyusa', *Sociologus*, New Series, 1951, vol. 5, p. 66. [113]

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P.138]

Notes on the daily life of the Nyakyusa (Tanganyika Territory)

Cf. Sociologus 1951, I, 1 S. 53 ff.

By F. Rudolf Lehmann

•192 576 *1. Greetings.* The first thing to strike a visitor to the Nyakyusa country north of Lake Nyasa on passing through one of the numerous picturesque villages surrounded by banana groves is the way of greeting customary among these people. *"Ukuponya"* is the Nyakyusa word for "to greet". In the morning you are greeted with the exclamation: *"ugonile* (pl. *mugonile)"*, which literally means: "Did you sleep well?" And you may answer in the same way, or, in fuller form as you can hear it from the mouth of the natives: *"ae'e ndaga, ugonile"*, or *"ugonile yoyoque"*. *"ae'e ndaga"* may be used with all answers, meaning: thanks! At noon or in the afternoon you will hear: *"uvombide"*, you have worked, or, have you worked? Then, according to the case, you may answer: *"muvombide avanda"*, you, men, have worked, or, generally: *"mwangere"*, which is equivalent to the Swahili: *"habari gani?"*. If you greet a person in the evening with the words: *"ugonege"*, may you sleep well, the person thus addressed will answer: *"kagone!"*.

234 [312] *2. Milking.* The first task in the daily life of the Nyakyusa people is for the men to milk the cows. This is done in the morning before the cattle are driven out to graze and again in the evening when they return. But the cattle are also driven back to the village at noon when [237 they are usually fumigated standing in the smoke of a fire for which 232] cow dung and banana leaves are used, a process designed to remove vermin from the skin of the cattle. The animals seem to be very fond of this procedure. They stand quietly in the smoke gazing at the passers-by.

241 [462] *3. Hoeing.* "Hoeing is the work of men, planting weeding, reaping is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about four hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a. m., on the upland plateau they

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done." (G. Wilson, Introduction, p. 260). 241

The putting of maize-grains as seed into the earth is the women's work, the sowing of millet *(malesi)* of both sexes. If you ask the men after they had come home from their work: *"Mukumbide ifivanya fya nongi?"*, "Whose fields did you hoe?", the answer often may be: *"Tukumbide ifivanya fya tata!"* We have hoed the fields of our father. [243 462]

In former times, the Nyakyusa had a lot of ceremonies relating to the beginning of the hoeing season and of the beginning of the harvest-work. They are, however, nowadays nearly extinguished under the influence of European culture. [177]

With respect to the beginning of the hoeing season, a very comprehensive ceremony had to be carried out by the chief in community whith the *unganga* (medicine man) for providing the fields with extraordinary *(-sisya)* power *(amaka): amaka amasisya,* in this case: fertility. 241 622 [192]

When the crop was ripe, it was (at first) forbidden *(mwiko)* to take anything from the crop before the chief had given the permission. First the oldest male villagers informed the chief that it may be now the just time to give the crop free for the people, saying: "The people is hungry, we will now give them to eat!" Then the chief ordered that 6 or 8 (maize') corn-cobs were brought to him, and he sent these corn-cobs by a messenger to the (holy) offering-grove where they must be put down. After that has been correctly executed, he gave the permission for reaping the new crop. [782]

(NB. It was believed that those corn-cobs put into the offering-grove were eaten especially from the leopards. The powderes bones of the leopards were considered important ingredients of the consecration drink which the chief had to take at his initiation ceremonies and which should give him the strength *(amaka)* of a leopard, so that he also was called "the leopard" or "the leopard chief".) [237 825]

4. Herding the Cattle and Cleansing the Stable. The sociological importance of cattle among the Nyakyusa and the specific practice among them of herding the cattle by herdboys, that is also of highly sociological importance for the structure of the Nyakyusa society, is already described by G. Wilson (Introduction, p. 269 f). 233 233

The cleansing of the stables of which the Nyakyusa possess a great number of very well built ones, which have also sometimes a considerable length — apart from the cattle kraals —, is the task of 343 462

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

252
264 very substantial, the main meal being taken in the evening shortly before sunset.

415 *8. Manufacture.* The pot for cooking *(indeku)* is placed on three
[354] stones which form the hearth *(ikipembero,* hearth stones). The flat bowl made of clay used for the needs of the kitchen is called *ulwangabia* and a pig pot used for storing water *ingumbe.* The pots of clay
415 are manufactured by Kissi women because in their land on the north-
439 eastern shores of Lake Nyassa the best clay is found. In the eastern part of the Nyakyusa country adjacent to Kissi land the women visit the pottery markets of the Kissi, but to the remoter villages, e. g. around the Rungwe volcano the pottery is brought by Kissi men. In this case, owing to the great distance from the Kissi-Land the men carry the loads of eight to ten pots on their head between split poles of bamboo. The Kissi pots I saw in the Rungwe Station were ornamented in
[462] a rough way with red ochre and seemed only slightly baked. The
[324] hearth stones, however, are made by the Nyakyusa women themselves as I was able to observe near Rutenganio, where widows manufactured them for sale.

285 In many villages of the Nyakyusa I could watch basket-making. This
[462] I saw being done by men. In the chief's hut in Katumba I had the opportunity to admire a great number of very big baskets *(ifituba)* for
[237] storing grain, smeared with cow dung on the outside. The attractive closely wickered baskets, which are filled with *malesi* (millet) and then
[273] placed in water for a night in the process of beer-brewing were originally made by the Buanyi, but nowadays also the Nyakyusa are said to be skilled enough to weave them. I had no opportunity to observe it, but could acquire an excellent specimen of that wicker-work.

264 *9. The Meal.* At the beginning of each meal the hands are washed,
[515] including those of children. The men take their meal separately from the women. The wives only eat when their husbands have been satisfied. Boys under ten years eat with their mothers, but as soon as they begin to live in age-set villages, they eat together with their friends of their own age-set, as described in detail by Mr. G. Wilson in his "Introduction of Nyakyusa Society" (Bantu Studies X, p. 271). The head of the family likes to eat together with his friends.

262 Meat is eaten very seldom, but on special occasions such as marriages, death lamentations, christenings of Christianized natives, enormous
[192] quantities are devoured. *Inyama* (Swahili: *nyama)* is the Nyakyusa word for all sorts of meat, *ingombe* for that of cattle and *ingambaku* for that of oxen. Near Utengule I saw black pigs *(inguruwe,* pig)

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

grubbing for food outside the stable. Old people also eat the meat of apes *(salila*, ape) and of jakal *(ingebe)*. The Nyakyusa men are generally very fond of eating fowl, indeed: "*Wakugana inyama sya inguku*", they are fond of the flesh of fowl.

Bones are usually given to the children for gnawing. Eight to ten boys may be seen sitting in a circle and alternately gnaw on the same bone, often drinking a little milk *(ulukama)* the while.

During a boating on Lake Nyasa I saw the well-known columnar clouds formed by the so-called Kungu-flies in the distance above the surface of the water. These flies are also eaten by the peoples on the shore of the Lake. When these insects come shore-wards they are caught, roasted at home and then eaten. But I was told that sometimes they are also caught and eaten out on the Lake, being squeezed into lumps between the hands.

The Nyakyusa eat with the right hand, but when the meal consists of such food as boiled maize and beans *(ingate)* they also use spoons *(uluiko)* made of folded strips of banana leaves. Nowadays, however, tin spoons and tin plates have come into wide use. The ancient eating-mats *(akatefu*, diminutive of *urutefu)* are also being more and more displaced.

When the meal is over, the vessels and plates are cleaned with the fingers, bent inward, and then licked off. The mouth is rinsed out with water.

10. Diet. The vegetable diet is roughly the following. The light meal in the morning consists mostly of boiled maize-cobs *(ingate)*, sweet potatoes *(imbatata)*, bananas *(ilitoki*, pl. *amatoki)*, roasted bananas; or, *amawifu*, sweet bananas. The main meal in the evening, shortly before sunset, usually consists of flour porridge *(ikiyindi)*, beans *(indima)*, both often boiled together with maize, peas *(efinyaga)* very often in the form of porridge, maize-corns *(ikirombe)* and groundnuts *(isyabala*, pl. *amasyabala)*. These groundnuts are dried in the sun on mats. Bananas, if dried in the same manner, are usually halved lengthwise and spread out sometimes on banana leaves. I have seen this done in the village of Katunba. Granary stores are very often, e. g. near Utengule (on the border of Nyakyusa and Safwa culture), erected on platforms supported by poles. The container is a big quadrangular basket, roughly three by three meters in length and 1 m in height. The roof has the shape of a large Chinese hat and can be taken off from the lower part of the granary.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

764 heir. It is the ritual we are performing, they are signs of widowhood (*fya bufwele*), of lamentation (*kyo kesa*). The ashes are a sign of lamentation and the *ilingolongofwa* creeper is a sign of lamentation. Yes, all these things are part of the ritual, we cannot leave them out, it is taboo. (If we did) those below [i.e. the shades] would be angry and say: 'They have startled me and caused me pain in the heart; they have injured the ritual by foreshadowing evil.'

768 At the end the heir sleeps with the women in the house—before the
764 beer. He performs the ritual with them, the officiants wait for them and ask them: 'How was it?' If he says 'No,' they say: 'Kyala does not
[787] stand in the house.' They go and divine at a doctor's who says:' So-and-so is angry.'

QUESTION: Kyala does not stand in the house (*Kyala akema nnyumba*)?

MWANDISI: It is the shades, they say Kyala does not give support. Then again he performs the ritual (*ikunyagula*, i.e. he attempts to have coitus) and they ask him: 'How was it?' They say: 'Yes, they (the shades) have stood with us, Kyala has stood with us.' [He gave both forms as alternatives: *batwemile* and *Kyala emile*.] Then they clap their hands and raise the shout of triumph (*akalulu*).

QUESTION: Is that the cry: 'Ours, ours!'?

[184 MWANDISI: No, that's the cry of the hill people. With us it's taboo.
784] Then in the morning someone shouts: 'War has come.' They come out immediately and run away to the pasture-lands.

764 QUESTION: Is this 'coming out' (*ukusoka*) the same as that in the coming out of chiefs (*ubusoka*) and in the twin ceremony?

MWANDISI: Yes, they run because their legs were heavy (*nsito*) in the house, now they have grown lighter and are strong; because in the twin ceremony the seclusion in the house lasts four months, at the coming out of chiefs two months, and that is hard, but at death it is only one, so it is light. But at death and the birth of twins it is the war (*ubwite*)
[833 of the mats. Is it not war with women? [*ubwite* is used here for sexual
195] intercourse.] Then when they have come out they give one another beer to drink in the doorway. The heir takes beer in his mouth and
[753] spits it out and hands the vessel on to his wives and children. Each does the same. They do not swallow it. To do so causes diarrhœa. The man and his wives are burning. They have come from the bed. This giving one another to drink, when each spits and does not swallow, happens after the eating of sausages of porridge on the road.[1] It is the same in the twin ritual except that whereas it is only the principals who give one another to drink at the death ritual, in the twin ritual not only they, but all relatives, and even non-relatives do it as well!

QUESTION: How about the eating of millet porridge with powdered medicine on the road?

[1] No other informant mentioned this in the MuNgonde death ritual.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

her husband may give her *ikipiki* to rub on her hands and on a 842
stick with which she touches each of the cattle. She gives them 789
ikipiki that they may not be "empty". Then she can clean out the byre at any time.'

A third idea that recurs, again and again, is that of *ukukilanya*, 842
overstepping, which is used in both a literal and a metaphorical 784
sense. It is taboo for a woman to step over her husband in any way, hence there are explicit rules (taught during initiation) on posture in intercourse. It she should step over him it is said that 'his legs will swell' and he has grounds for divorcing her. It is taboo for an adult to step over a child and for a woman who is having intercourse to step over one who is not, though a child may step over an adult and a virgin or youth who is not having intercourse may step over a married person of the same sex who is not. In a society [516]
in which everyone sits on the ground, often with legs outstretched, observance of the taboo necessitates care.

In its metaphorical sense *ukukilyana* is used for a 'heavy' person 195
coming into close contact with an 'empty' one, as, for example, a woman who is sleeping with her husband entering the hut of a woman with a new-born child, or the mother of a bride resuming intercourse before her daughter has had intercourse, or a bride who has not yet brought the *ilibalaga*, the symbol of her union with her husband, to her parents, drinking from her mother's calabash, or entering the inner part of her hut; or a wife who has committed adultery cooking for her husband. It is used, too, of a woman who continues to bear children after the marriage of her son for, it is said, if she does so the son's wife will never conceive at all, or will be long in conceiving, or her child will not walk, on account of a curse.

MWAIKAMBO: It is not customary for mother and son both to have 842
infants. Women mostly begin to stop intercourse when their sons marry. 834
They say it is not good that both mother and son should have small children, because the mother of the young man now thinks of helping her daughter-in-law in nourishing her children. If mother and son both have babies, people are much astonished and say it is not a good custom; they create a curse (*ikigune*) and the fertility of the son and his wife rots. [789]

Mwaihojo's wife put it this way:

I leave off having children when my son is married for I should receive my grandchild in my arms, and care for my grandchildren, and be with them in the house.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

● 195 *Ukukinda* means to pass, to surpass, and *ukukilanya* (overstepping), in its metaphorical use, implies that 'one has power and the other is weak, so the powerful one does some injury to the weak one'.

834 Fourthly, as was made apparent in the puberty ritual, it is held
842 to be dangerous to 'mix bloods'. Adultery is not only an infringe-
[753] ment of the exclusive rights of a husband, but it may injure him directly, causing him to have diarrhœa, which is a 'getting rid of the filth' due to contact with a strange 'blood'. It was implied that intercourse with a menstruating woman was in some sense 'mixing bloods' also, and the danger to parents of contact with a newly-married daughter before a precautionary ritual has been performed, stems from the same thing; the parents, through their daughter, are brought into contact with the blood of another lineage, that of the new son-in-law.

843 Besides being 'heavy' and therefore liable to 'overstep' others, a pregnant woman is thought to reduce the quantity of any grain she approaches, for the foetus within her is voracious and snatches it. Therefore neither she nor her husband (who participates in her condition) may approach other people's millet[1] or beans or oil-seeds spread out to dry, or speak to those who are reaping or grinding or stamping or brewing, without making a gesture of good-will by spitting on a pebble or knotting a leaf, and throwing it into the heap of grain. The sanction is fear of a miscarriage, for the owners of the food may have used medicines 'so that the food may be much and people be astonished'. Her own crops a pregnant woman may handle freely, and a chief's wife does not observe the taboo in her own village.

Two or three quotations will make these conceptions clearer:

ANGOMBWIKE: When my wife has conceived they say we are both 'heavy', both my wife and I. Then, if oil-seeds or millet are out drying in the sun, they tell us not to speak. 'You are heavy ones,' they say. So we are silent. They say that if there is talking we will catch hold of the oil-seeds or millet, and it will diminish. Yes, I must avoid the grain even though I am alone, because I am heavy.

KASITILE: Maize does not vanish but millet and beans. The child which is being made bewitches them; they disappear. . . . The child has opened its mouth wide, its jaws gape.[2] It is that child which is being

[184] [1] Some held that millet was the only grain affected; others maintained that maize was also.

[2] *Umwana ufumbwile ulupumbo ukamwa. Ulupumbo* is used of the gaping jaws of a crocodile.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Burier of men!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Mpeta![1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kiposa[1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kyabala![1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Striker and Stabber! —Great Father! Great Father!—O Mwesende![2]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Mpolombasambo![2]—Great Father! Great Father! —Dweller in the hot sun!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Fish-eater! O Banana-eater!—Great Father! Great Father!'" The general form of this praise-song was identical with that of the prayers in the sacred groves and so it is literally true to say that the nobles of Ngonde worshipped the living Kyungus. 643 644

But the majority of their subjects only worshipped from afar in fear and trembling. At Mbande no ordinary commoner was ever conducted into the sacred enclosure but only the territorial nobles and the elder chiefs, and they only occasionally; while when the Kyungu travelled through his country all men save the very oldest fled from his approach: "In former times we commoners never looked on the face of the Kyungu, we feared him far too much. When he journeyed through Ngonde we all used to flee from him, men, women and children; only the very oldest stayed to watch him as he came; and they would fall down and clap their hands in grateful worship."

Even in speech fearful circumlocutions were used to refer to his journeying—"The country is on the move"—"The great hill is moving"—"The mystery is coming." While it was taboo both for the old men who then stayed to see him and for those who entered the sacred enclosure, ever to greet him in the usual way. Falling down and clapping the hands was the only greeting for the Kyungu, never the ordinary "how-do-you-do?" From the nobles and great chiefs men did not flee; but the great chiefs, at least, were greeted by falling down and handclapping, not in the ordinary way. [195] [576]

From the wives of the Kyungu also men fled in terror, fearing lest they be compromised and thrown over the cliff, and this both added to the atmosphere of terror which surrounded him and was an expression of it.

On the other hand the various gifts of the Kyungu to his subjects were, in their ceremonial aspect, an expression of personal relationship to them, of paternal interest in them; and so also the tribute which they brought to him was, in its ceremonial aspect, an expression of filial respect. As in all primitive groups personal rather than impersonal relationships were dominant in the old Ngonde. The Kyungu was 643 602 [43]

[1] Names of early Kyungus.
[2] Archic words which I do not understand.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

15. THE ASSOCIATIONS OF *UKULOGA* AND *UKUPITA*

Mwainumo (clerk).

'*Ukuloga* is like *ukupita* but not the same. It is said that when someone is angry with you and has drunk a medicine to give him power to bewitch (*amaka ga kuloga*), he greets you and the word alone has power to bring illness. You will be very ill. 789 754

'It is said that when a woman is pregnant and walks round a person who has many medicines, one of them being a medicine *ukuloga*, she will have a miscarriage. There is no case (against the owner of the medicines). [845]

'It is said that when the owner of pythons, or the owner of medicines, passes when food has been spread out to dry, the food will disappear. He bewitches it (*ukuloga*). It is as if he hankered after the food in his heart; it disappears and becomes less. When a python man ("he of pythons")—they speak much of python men, little of medicine men—passes cattle and hankers after milk, he bewitches the milk (*ukuloga*). It disappears. He does not throttle (*ukupita*) the cattle; no, the milk just disappears.

'It is forbidden to say of a child that it is beautiful. It is all right to a close friend but not among ordinary people. To do so is to bewitch (*ukuloga*) the child. The child will fall ill. It is forbidden to say of a cow that its udder is big. If the owner hears he says: "You are bewitching it" (*ukuloga*), meaning the milk will disappear. Everyone fears to admire children or cows in this way; if such a sign is followed by sickness or failure of milk people swear at the man who has expressed admiration, but do not bring a case.

'The work of pythons is especially to steal away the milk, to throttle (*ukupita*). It is reported that some say: "I am a witch, but I have not got a python. I do not throttle the cows." They might mean they "eat" people but do not steal milk.'

Kakugu (pagan man).

'*Ukupita* is to throttle (with hands round the throat).' 789

In reply to a question as to the further meanings of the word *ukupita*, Kakugu said: 'When my relatives are there I say: "Have you *kupita* with my wife?" But when we are alone I say: "Did you sleep with my wife?" or "Did you have intercourse with her (*gwakgwa* 754 196

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 *nagwe*)?" We only liken intercourse and witchcraft; witchcraft is quite
754 different. When a woman is an adulteress I say: "You are a witch
(*undoni*); you kill me," but it is just a metaphor (*fyo fifwani*). Adultery
196 involves paying for cattle for all of us; it differs from witchcraft. And
when I ask a man: "Why, why did you *kupita* with my wife?" that
means: "You are like a witch." It is just a metaphor. But (he volunteered), if I catch an adulterer with my wife, even if he has practised *coitus interruptus*, I am angry and kill him from jealousy, though I do not suffer from diarrhoea.'

837 An adulteress is spoken of as an *undoni* 'because she brings illness
upon her husband' by her adultery, if intercourse is complete, but
753 not, it is thought, if *coitus interruptus* is practised. The illness commonly thought to be caused by a wife's adultery is diarrhoea.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Ha Ngonde

mourners sat) is sprinkled with powdered medicine and carried out by the officiant and burnt, or thrown away under the bananas. If the deceased has been buried elsewhere still a bunch of banana leaves representing the *ulufumbo* is taken out. 'Until then the rubbish (*imindu*) is kept in the house and not swept out because they are grieving—a person cannot be clean, it would seem as if he did not grieve.' 765

Next the officiant takes an old pot and, holding it, circles round the hearth while her assistant drops pumpkin-seeds, beans, lentils and cowpeas into it and the participants sing: 'The croaking bird, the croaking bird (*ilimwamwa*).' The food is transferred to another pot and put on the fire and the officiant touches the hearth with different parts of her body (or makes gestures as if to do so), she and the participants saying as she does so: 'The knee is also put on (the fire), the heel is also put on, the backs of the knees are also put on, the loins are also put on, the belly is also put on, the back of the head is also put on.' Then she stamps noisily on the hearth, and the participants sing: 'It startles him. . . .'

Relatives and village neighbours are expected to bring small gifts of millet at this ritual and these are formally received by the officiant, who sits outside the mourning hut with two large baskets beside her and acknowledges each gift as it is brought and emptied into one or other of them. The one is for the millet of kinsmen, the other for that of neighbours. She addresses each giver in terms of his or her relationship to the deceased, announcing: 'Your grandchild has brought a measure, your daughter has brought a measure, your fellow (i.e. neighbour) has brought a measure, etc. . . .' This is spoken of as 'measuring the measures' (*ukupela imipela*); it is 'to greet the shade', and if millet is not available at the time the ritual is performed it is done symbolically. 631

A fresh piece of bark is stripped from the species of *ficus* used for making bark-cloth, hammered a little and placed on a fresh banana leaf and sprinkled with powdered medicine. A grindstone is lifted on to it and the officiant grinds some of the millet just presented and allows it to fall on the bark. During the grinding the officiant says: 'The knee is also ground, the heels are also ground,' and so on, mentioning the belly and loins. From the time of the death until this ritual, hammering of bark-cloth in the home of the deceased is taboo (*musiku*), for hammering bark-cloth is a symbol of sexual intercourse and 'the hammer belonged to him who died'. The first millet ground is made into a paste and later

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

We interpret the induction, seclusion, and bringing out as symbols of death and rebirth. There can be no doubt that the induction and seclusion represent death. Strewing leaves—or laying a litter—which is an essential act in every induction is a sign of misfortune and death;[1] and at the induction of a bride her 'mothers' sing: 'Go, go and never return', and 'We wail a dirge'. The mourners, the nubile girl, the mother of a new-born child, and the parents of twins are all 'filthy' and one with the dead; Kasitile said of mourners: 'We have died, we *are* the corpse.' The period of seclusion implies a sojourn with the shades, and our hypothesis is that it represents *both* death and gestation. The hut appears as a symbol of the womb in the pregnancy and 'gasping cough' rituals, and the doorway which 'belongs to the shades' is a symbol for the vagina. In the pregnancy ritual, passing through the doorway is explicitly interpreted as a symbol of birth, and in the death ritual mourners come out of the doorway stooping, and bump their heads against an obstruction. In the 'bringing out' in the death and puberty rituals, the mourners and the nubile girl run in and out of the doorway and water drops from the thatch. Kakune, the doctor, interpreted this as a symbol of the mourners' receiving the shade back on to their bodies. We interpret it, rather more widely, as a symbol of rebirth. Both men and spirit are reborn, the shade in the bodies of the participants. 796

All through the rituals the connection of the shades with potency and fertility is emphasized. They cause menstruation and sexual desire; they are present in intercourse and ejected as semen; they control conception; they control fertility in the fields. 'The shade and the semen are brothers.'[2] 'When they shake the millet and pumpkin-seeds (after ritual connection) the seed is semen . . . and it is the shade. . . .' The symbols of male and female, plantain and sweet banana, recur repeatedly. The wearing of them is explicitly interpreted as a symbol of fertility, and laying them together under the litter is perhaps a symbol of the marriage union, like eating the banana with *ikipiki* medicine. Intercourse between husband and wife is the culmination of the rituals of death, puberty, and twin birth, and is held to be essential to the health of 796 775 831

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 232.

[2] cf. Bhaca, *idlozi*: shade, semen (W. D. Hammond-Tooke, *A General Ethnographic Survey of the amaBhaca*. Unpublished thesis presented for the degree of Ph.D. in the University of Cape Town); Xhosa, *idlozi*: semen virile (A. Kropf, *Kafir-English Dictionary*); Zulu, *idlozi*: departed spirit (C. M. Doke and Vilakazi, *A Dictionary of the Zulu Language*). 171 196

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

a. The cultural area

THE Nyakyusa and Ngonde[1] are a Bantu-speaking people who live at the north-west corner of Lake Nyasa, on the marshy plain at the head of the Lake, and in the hills that rise steeply to the north and west of it. They straddle the Songwe river which divides Tanganyika from Nyasaland. The area is enclosed by the Lake itself, the escarpment of the Livingstone mountains on the north-east and the Poroto mountains on the north-west. To the west the boundaries are less clearly defined, but coincide pretty closely with the boundary of Rungwe district and with the watershed which separates Nyasaland from Northern Rhodesia. To the south the boundary is that of Chief Mwafulira's country, which lies some twenty miles south of Karonga (see Map I). Most of the area is thus situated between 9° and 10° S., and 33° and 34° E. It covers approximately 4,500 square miles and the population is about 235,000.[2]

Within this area there are local differences in language and custom. The dominant groups are the *Nyakyusa*, who live in Tanganyika on the Lake-shore plain and up into the hills as far as Rungwe mission, and the people of *Ngonde* who live on the Lake-shore plain in Nyasaland. These two groups speak dialects which, though differing somewhat in vocabulary and pronunciation, are easily understood by speakers from both, and their social structure is essentially similar. The main difference is that in Ngonde a

[1] The old men say *Nkhonde*, and the name appears in most of the literature as *Konde*.

[2] The area of Tukuyu district is 1,866 square miles, and the area subject to the Kyungu, the paramount chief of Ngonde, is 2,687 square miles. The Tanganyika census of 1931 gives the population of Rungwe district as 195,060: this was believed in the district to be an over-estimate. The population of Ngonde is approximately 40,000. For the southern boundary of the Ngonde people in 1881 see James Stewart, 'Lake Nyasa and the Water Route to the Lake Region of Central Africa', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, New Series*, Vol. III, 1881. He states that nine miles north of Mount Waller is a marshy swamp of it are the Tumbuka, north of it the 'Chungu' (i.e. Ngonde).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

101 centralized chieftainship[1] developed with the development of the ivory trade, whereas among the Nyakyusa (who were geographically much more isolated) nearly a hundred small chiefdoms maintained their independence until the European conquest. In their economy, their kinship system, their age-village organization and their rituals, however, the people of Ngonde are very similar to the Nyakyusa.

101 The Nyakyusa themselves may be sub-divided into those living on the Lake-shore plain (*MuNgonde*), those around *Masoko*, 197 those to the east under the Livingstone mountains in *Selya* and *Saku*, and those to the north, viz. the *Kukwe* and *Lugulu*. The last two groups differ appreciably in dialect and custom from the others, but all speak dialects which are mutually intelligible.[2]

There are also a number of small groups with old langugages of their own which, though related to that of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde, are more or less unintelligible to them; and they have equally distinct cultures. These include the *Penja* on the plateau to the west of the Kukwe; a small group of *Nyika* on the same plateau; the *Ndali* in the hills to the north of the Songwe; the *Sukwa* to the south of them; the *Lambya* and *Wenya* further west; small groups of *Henga* and *Mambwe* on the western border of Ngonde, and the *Kisi*, a people famous as potters and fishermen, who live on the north-east shore of the Lake. Most of these people are now, we are told, being rapidly assimilated to the Nyakyusa and Ngonde in speech and in law, but we have little

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3, 1939.

[2] The term *Nyakyusa* means primarily the people of the Lake plain in Tanganyika, and those around Masoko, but it is now used by extension to include those in Selya and Saku, together with the Kukwe. We use 'Nyakyusa proper', for those on the Lake plain and around Masoko. The terms *Ngonde* and *Mwaseko* are a source of some confusion because their meaning varies with the location of the speaker, and the meaning of Ngonde also varies with the prefix used. The primary meaning of *Aba-Ngonde* is 'the people of the plains' but anyone travelling in the direction of the sacred hill Mbande, on which the Kyungu (the paramount chief of Ngonde) lived is spoken of as going *KuNgonde*, whether he start from nearby, or from as far away as Tukuyu (cf. Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 7). *MuNgonde* is generally used by the Nyakyusa for the Lake-shore plain of Tanganyika. In this book we use *Ngonde* for the area of the Kyungu's supremacy, and avoid *MuNgonde*. *AbaMwaseko* means by derivation 'the hill people', but is generally used for 'the people to the north'. The Ngonde of Karonga call those on the plain around Mwaya *BaMwaseko*, the men of Mwaya apply the name not to themselves, but to the people of Selya, while the people of Selya apply it to those in the hills to the north of them. We therefore avoid the term.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

first-hand knowledge of them. On the coast they are classed with Nyakyusa and Ngonde as *Sokile*, a nickname derived from the traditional Nyakyusa greeting.

This book is concerned with the Nyakyusa.[1] What it contains is true in general terms for the people of Ngonde, but how far it is applicable to the smaller groups cited we are not certain. The Ndali, Sukwa, and Penja, are said to have long had an age-village organization; and Henga, Nyika and Kisi living intermingled with Ngonde and Nyakyusa have adopted it; but of the customs of the Wenya and Lambya we know little. Dr. Kerr Cross and Monteith Fotheringham, who travelled extensively in the area before 1890, reported that the Ndali and Sukwa (of Misuku) were very similar to the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people, but that the Lambya were different, practising shifting *citemene* cultivation, and living in stockaded villages.[2]

According to their own traditions the Nyakyusa and Ngonde chiefs (who trace descent from common ancestors) came ten generations ago from Kinga country, on the Livingstone mountains, and found the Rungwe and North Nyasa country already occupied. They established themselves as chiefs and have since been increasing the area of their occupation. The Kinga also affirm that their chiefs are related to those of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde, and they join with the Nyakyusa in sacrifice to common ancestors at Lubaga and LiKyala (see Map III), but the Kinga culture is quite distinct from that of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde; we stayed long enough in Kinga country to convince ourselves that the Kinga live in kinship villages and not in age-villages, and that they differ from the Nyakyusa in many other respects.

There seems little doubt that the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people have been expanding in an area not uninhabited, but sparsely inhabited, and that the assimilation of the Penja and other groups now proceeding is no new phenomenon, but part of a process which has long been going on. Within recent years over 2,000

[1] The Nyakyusa as here defined numbered 159,024 in Rungwe district at the 1931 census, and 3,732 outside the district; the Ndali 22,834, the Lambya (within Rungwe district, and not including those in Nyamlani) 12,407, and the Kisi (in Njombe district) 2,115. *Tanganyika Territory, Census of the Native Population*, 1931.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyasa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), p. 286; L. M. Fotheringham, *Adventures in Nyamlanda* (1891), pp. 129–33. Nyonde was a Lambya chief, cf. Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 10.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

The *Nyamwanga* and *Iwa* of Abercorn and Mpanda districts, Northern Rhodesia, are in areas where the density is between 4 and 7 per square mile, and they number less than 20,000.[1]

161
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Tanganyika People[2]

Tribe	District	Total population	Total children	Percentage of children to adults	Percentage of males to females		Increase since 1911
					Adults	Children	
Kukwe	Rungwe	[illegible]	[illegible]	34	97	109	..
Sumbe	Mbeya	[illegible]	..	..	..	..	..
Nyakyusa	Rungwe	[illegible]	[illegible]	..	..	..	..
	Mbeya	[illegible]	[illegible]	..	..	..	..
	Other districts	775	551	89	97	[illegible]	34,278

Populations of less than 50,000 Persons

Tribe	District	Total population
Kinga	Njombe	[illegible]
Lambya	Rungwe	[illegible]
Ndali	Rungwe	[illegible]
Nyamwanga	Mbeya	[illegible]
Nyika	Mbeya and Ufipa	[illegible]
Pangwa	Njombe	[illegible]
Wanji	Njombe	[illegible]
Wanda	Mbeya and Ufipa	[illegible]

LINGUISTIC DATA

197 According to Duke's classification, *Ngonde* is one of the five important languages of the east central sub-zone of Bantu languages, and is spoken in Tanganyika to the north end of Lake Nyasa, where it is known as *Nyakyusa*.[3] In language as well as culture, the Ngonde of Nyasaland are identical with the Nyakyusa of Tanganyika.[4] According to Guthrie's classification, many of the tribes, whose affiliation is not known on cultural or historical grounds, may be attached, on linguistic grounds, to speakers of the Tumbuka group of languages: *Wanya*, *Lambia*, and *Wanda*.[5]

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The *Kinga* inhabit the inaccessible heights of the north and west portion of the Livingstone mountains, which rise to [illegible] ft.[6]

[130] 197 *Nyakyusa* country is bounded on the south by Lake Nyasa and the Songwe river, on the east by the wall of the Livingstone range, and on the west by the Ndali hills. They live between the two walls of the Great Rift valley. In the north the rift is interrupted and closed by the extinct volcano Rungwe ([illegible] ft.), from whose base the land drops in hills and little plateaus to the lake-shore plain. The soil is not very rich,

[1] Gale Brown, [illegible], map.
[2] *Census of the Native Population*, 1931, Tables VI and VII.
[3] Wilson, [illegible], p. 8.
[4] De Plessis, [illegible], p. [illegible].
[5] Duke, [illegible], p. 66.
[6] Guthrie, [illegible], p. 81.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tive capital, Tukuyu, and it is still thus used to distinguish this group 101
from others. This group will here be referred to as "*Nyakyusa proper.*" Those in the North of the district to the West and East of Mount Rungwe call themselves *Kukwe* and *Mwamba* respectively, and there is a group of chiefdoms to the East, under the Livingstone Mountains, called *Selya.* All these four groups share a common culture, distinguished by minor [184] local peculiarities of dialect and custom. Immediately bordering the Nyakyusa to the South West are the *Ngonde* (Europeanized as "*Konde*") in Northern Nyasaland; they belong to the same cultural group but are distinguished by greater differences of custom and speech than the others. I have not yet visited them.

In the hills to the West of the Rift live the *Ndali*, who are included in this administrative district; and on the plateau under these hills, to the West of the Kukwe, live the *Penja.* Both these small groups have old languages of their own which, though related to that of the Nyakyusa are [197] more or less unintelligible to them; and they have equally distinct cultures. But they are now rapidly being assimilated to the Nyakyusa both in [177] speech and in law.

I use the name Nyakyusa, in accordance with modern usage, to include the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, Mwamba, and Selya groups, but to exclude the Ndali, the Penja, and the Konde. The Nyakyusa together with the Ndali and Penja number 150,000; the Konde of Nyasa- [161] land 30,000.[3]

Members of the Berlin and Moravian Missions were the first Euro- 797
peans to settle in the district, where they have lived now for forty-five 177
years and have made numerous converts. The German Administrators followed them closely, and later came a few planters. But pronounced economic change is a matter of the past five to ten years during which time the Lupa Gold Fields of South Tanganyika have been opened up and have employed increasing numbers of Africans on the diggings. During the past few years the young men of the Nyakyusa have developed [166 the habit of going for a few months, now and again, to the Gold Fields to 464] earn money for tax and clothes. They seldom stay more than six months at a time, often only one or two; so that their absence does not cause the same difficulties in their own community that are found in other areas where the men spend longer periods away from home.

The Family, together with a sketch of wider Kinship Groupings

The relationships of husband and wife, parent and child, sibling and 593
sibling are continually visible in the culture of the Nyakyusa. The

[3] Government Census figures.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

two peoples are distinct. Their languages are not mutually intelligible and the Nyakyusa despise the Kinga as dirty in habit and obsequious in manner. There were two main invasions from BuKinga: (i) that of the 'sons of Lwembe' who settled south and east of Tukuyu, and (ii) that of the 'sons of Ngomale' (or Kukwe), who settled first at Kina below the northern crater of Rungwe volcano, and then at Kabale in the foothills to the south-east. Most of the present chiefs of the Nyakyusa belong to one or other of these two lineages, and the chiefs of Ngonde are claimed by both. The arrival of the chiefs of Lwembe's line may be fixed between 1560 and 1650, i.e. before the settlement at the Cape, but after the death of the first Christian martyr in what is now Rhodesia[1] and the 'sons of Ngomale' followed them some generations later (*vide infra*, genealogies pp. 3, 27; p. 94). Two of the invading heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, became 'divine kings' whose successors claimed spiritual authority over wide areas, and the heirs of Kyungu gradually acquired temporal power also.

About the first inhabitants of the Nyakyusa valley, the *abilema*, tradition is vague; however, it is clear that they were not one people, but consisted of small, scattered, independent groups, disparate in origin. Some were very early invaders from BuKinga, others came from near Lake Rukwa and were kin to the Bungu of the Rukwa plain. They occupied an almost empty country (as their name indicates) but they found pygmy hunters[2] in the Rungwe forests. The invaders themselves were primarily hunters and honey-gatherers, though some, at least, of them began to cultivate millet, beans, and pumpkins. One group of early inhabitants, the Penja, which was pushed into the north-west corner of the valley, has remained relatively discrete, though for the most part they have fused with the conquerors.

It is clear that nowhere were the invaders allowed to establish themselves as tyrants since, though their descendants rule over the various chiefdoms, their authority is strictly limited by the headmen of the villages who are invariably of commoner stock. Moreover, while the most sacred persons in the country are, or before the coming of the Europeans were, 'divine kings', descendants of the original heroes, chosen by each generation to become their

[1] In 1561, cf. G. M. Theal, *Records of South-East Africa*, vol. ii, p. 126.

[2] The quality of relations with the Pygmies is summed up in the ironical name for them 'Where did you see me?' (*Umbasewakaga?*) The tale is that they were very sensitive about their size and the first question on meeting a Nyakyusa was always: 'Where did you see me?' The only safe reply was: 'Far, far away!'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

167 Nyakyusa families have crossed the Poroto mountains and settled
177 in Safwa and Nyika country. They have moved, primarily, to secure good pasture, fertile garden land, and accessible markets; and the accounts of Nyakyusa history which we have suggest that the first two of these motives have long been in operation. There is no sign of these Nyakyusa immigrants being absorbed by the previous occupants of the country. Indeed, were it not for the intervention of the Administration, it seems that the Nyakyusa immigrants might soon dominate the less organized Safwa and Nyika. As it is, certain of the Safwa and Nyika Native Authority Courts are conducting proceedings in Nyakyusa as well as in their own languages,[1] a fact which supports the Nyakyusa boast that all their neighbours are learning their language. Many Kinga, Mahasi, Wanji, and Poroto are said to learn to speak Nyakyusa, though there are few Nyakyusa settlers among them, since they find the language useful in external contacts.[2] The Kinga tell a myth of how they, together with the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, the Ndali, the Ngonde, the Mahasi, the Kisi, the Pangwa, and the Bena came from a place Ilongo (in the present Bena country) which they call 'the dark house' (*nyumba nditu*), and the Penja speak of a centre of dispersion, Kina, to the north of Rungwe mountain, from which they and the Safwa and Poroto came. The people of Ngonde, for their part, trace connections with the Inamwanga and Iwa, saying that their chiefs in their journeyings left sons to rule these people; they also assert that one of their predecessors on the Lake-shore plain was a hunter from Fipa country.[3]

101 Despite these tenuous links with their eastern, northern, and north-western neighbours, the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people are, as we have said, culturally quite distinct from them. The Nyakyusa themselves are emphatic that their culture differs from the cultures of the Kinga, the Safwa, the Poroto, and the Nyika—a statement which our own observation, and the evidence of other writers, confirm.[4] And the Ngonde differ in many respects both

[1] R. de Z. Hall, 'Local Migration in Tanganyika', *African Studies*, 4 (1945). 2,100 families had moved before 1938; 3,000 by 1941.

[2] This is despite the fact that Swahili is the official vernacular for Tanganyika, being the medium of instruction in Government primary schools, and the language used by the Administration.

[3] Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 10.

[4] E. Kootz-Kretschmer, *Die Safwa* (1926); J. Thomson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back* (1881), Vol. I, pp. 46–52; R. de Z. Hall, op. cit.; D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XIII

TWENTY YEARS' CHANGE

How does Christianity interact with other revolutionary forces in the community? It has been possible to observe the changes that 177 have taken place among the Nyakyusa after a lapse of twenty years, and a summary of them is necessary before we proceed to a discussion of the links between religious and secular change.

The first thing that strikes a visitor returning to Nyakyusa country after many years, is that the isolation, which was so typical of the valley, has greatly diminished. Buses, filled with [494] Nyakyusa passengers, cross twice daily the high pass that leads out [491] of the valley, and where once travellers died of exposure and starvation there is a hard road fringed with homesteads and fields. The belt of unoccupied country that even twenty years ago separated the Nyakyusa from their neighbours has disappeared, for they themselves have spilled out of the valley to the north and west, and their Kinga neighbours have come down the Living- [166] stone escarpment to the east and cultivate the mountain slopes, for 'they no longer fear that people (i.e. the Nyakyusa) will seize their property'. Men travel abroad to find work and they go [167] much farther and stay away longer than before. In the remotest [464] village there is some man who has visited Burma or Malaya as a soldier, and a dozen lads who will argue the relative merits of the Orange Free State gold mines and the Copper-belt as centres of employment. Many women now accompany their husbands to Rhodesia, or other parts of Tanganyika, and some travel to visit daughters or sisters. The older women enlarge on their journeys and joke about how fearful they used to be.

Travel implies learning another language, most often Swahili, [191] but also Bemba and English and the pidgin of the gold and copper [198] mines called Fanakalo. Thus intellectual isolation is disappearing along with the physical isolation. The numerous 'bush schools' which existed in the Nyakyusa valley in 1938, and at which many 177 of those who attended never even learnt to read and write, have 872 been largely replaced by mission primary schools, state-aided and inspected, and in these and the Native Authority primary and middle schools there are now 9,437 pupils, as against about 500

[p. 203]

and try to understand the nature and reasons for change. Here, then, is a good opportunity for the study of social change – not only in land tenure as such, but also in village and family organisation, political authority and economic life.

II

The Nyakyusa are a Bantu people inhabiting the main part of the Rungwe District in southern Tanganyika, immediately to the north of Lake Nyasa. In 1948 they numbered about 199,000 in that District, but about 10,000 men were probably at the time temporarily absent from their homes and in employment in the mines and towns of the Rhodesias and South Africa (see Gulliver, 1957), whilst about 20,000 had migrated to live in the adjacent Mbeya District to the north.

The tribal area comprises a confined geographical basin surrounding the northern end of Lake Nyasa. It extends only about 40 miles from the tip of the lake at 1,550 feet above sea level to the Poroto Mountains in the north at 8,000 feet; and from east to west is only about 30 miles, from the almost sheer walls of the Livingstone Mountains (with peaks up to 10,000 feet) to the Ndali Highlands (rising to about 7,000 feet). There are therefore unusually large ecological differences within so small an area. Three major regions are to be distinguished: the "Northern Highlands" over about 4,500 feet, the low-lying "Lake Plains" in the south, and the "Central Region" in between. Everywhere rainfall is reliable and high, averaging at least 100 inches annually[1], and this amply compensates for a certain poverty and misuse of the soil, although (and particularly in the Central Region) it brings dangers of soil erosion. Except in the highest parts the banana is the staple food, supported by maize, beans, finger millet and groundnuts. In the Northern Highlands coffee has become well established as the principal cash crop: in the Lake Plains paddy rice cultivation provides both a food and a cash crop: in the Central Region the country is too low generally for coffee and too high and dry for rice; consequently cash-cropping is considerably inferior and the people's standard of living is rather poorer.

The Nyakyusa and their country tended for a long time to be relatively isolated from the outside world by high mountain walls and rain-soaked roads. In addition, or because of it perhaps, they developed an almost unique culture which was supported by considerable conservatism and high insularity. They still continue to regard their African neighbours beyond the mountains as their social and cultural inferiors. The turmoil of the slave-trade in Central Africa passed them by; in modern times they have not enthusiastically accepted Christianity and they have refused to take up the use of Swahili, the Territorial *lingua franca*. In recent years, and most especially since the end of World War II, they have, however, accepted and pushed forward with vigour a rapid and extensive economic development, involving particularly the production of coffee and paddy as cash crops, and large-scale labour migration to the south in the high-wage mining industries. The multiplicity of petty, often tiny, independent chiefdoms has been reorganised to provide four local government areas, each under a Rural Council, in which the old chiefdoms have become something like parishes[2]. Although much of the old conservatism and narrow parochialism persists, yet there is now an atmosphere of accepted change, of a keen desire for economic development, and a general acceptance of a cash economy.

Probably the most significant feature of modern life in the Nyakyusa country is the increasing scarcity of land for agriculture in relation to the

1. At Tukuya, in the Northern Highlands, annual rainfall averaged 99.28 inches between 1919 and 1952: at Kyela, in the Lake Plains, the average between 1940 and 1951 was 106.21 inches.
2. See Kingdon, Z.E.: The initiation of a system of local government by African rural councils in the Rungwe District, Tanganyika; *The Journal of African Administration*, iii, 4, October, 1951.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

 622

barricaded his doorway with thorns. On his return he found 627
them, and he moved to Mwaihojo's country (the adjoining 754
chiefdom).'

Often an accusation of witchcraft is made without resort to 787
divination at all: the behaviour of the accused (as in the cases
quoted on pp. 110–13) or the word of 'the defender', is taken 754
as evidence. But if there is doubt as to the identity of the witch,
the patient or his family may consult a diviner (*undagusi*),[1] putting 627
before him the names of persons they suspect. Whatever the 695
grounds of accusation, however, it was normally confirmed by
the *umwafi* ordeal, if the accused did not admit guilt. The chief
might order a suspect to go to the ordeal, or a man or woman
accused by his neighbours would appeal to the ordeal, when
denying the charge. In such a case the accuser and accused first
went to the chief to report and get official witnesses, then,
accompanied by these witnesses and other friends, they went to a
doctor who had a store of a certain medicine, *umwafi*, and there,
at his homestead, they drank the *umwafi* together. Those who
failed to vomit were judged guilty. The procedure was described
by a number of witnesses (*vide* Documents, pp. 241–6). The
accuser and the accused, each accompanied by supporters, go to
the doctor, who warns them not to drink if what they have said is
false. The doctor sprinkles powder into tepid water and gives the
accuser and the accused the infusion to drink. He addresses the
umwafi, and the supporters address each their own friend. Then,
when one vomits his (or her) supporters applaud trilling,[2] [201] ●
and they go home, the man who vomited paying the doctor.
Mwandesi described how after one of the two had vomited the
other would sit tense and miserable, quite still. He would be left
alone awhile, but later the doctor would try to make him bring
up the poison: 'Should a man die?' they said. Only rarely, it
seems, did anyone die of drinking *umwafi*.

If the accuser failed to vomit he was judged guilty of witch- 754
craft himself; if neither vomited both were judged guilty; if both
vomited the accuser was fined, paying two or more cows to the 627
accused in compensation for slander. If he had no cows he might 695
give a girl in marriage.

[1] For the methods of divination see Godfrey Wilson 'An African Morality', *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936), p. 80.

[2] A high-pitched *ulu-ulu-ulu* expressing praise and triumph.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

292
415
202

A PROHIBITIONIST.

When food runs low, it is the duty of the chief to prevent undue consumption. The man in the picture has been sent out to prohibit the eating of bananas before a fixed date. He is wearing bronze brows and calabashes. Sun-visors for carries a wooden club and a tomahawk.

[FACING p. 272]

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

that the organization of Mbande may be described either as a group of small fiefs clustered together or as the capital chiefdom of the Kyungu, in which the nobles of Ngonde acted as the great commoners, each in two small age-villages. 642 565

Besides the nobles of Ngonde and their own followers there lived at Mbande men called **nahakuta**, who acted as the personal messengers and police of the Kyungu. They were not hereditary officials but chosen for their speed by the nobles of Ngonde, who also gave them their orders. Anyone might become a messenger, the son of a chief, or of a commoner, or even a slave. 624 202

Of the customs of the hill fiefs and of the chiefdom, of the houses of Nyondo and Kameme we know very little; but it is certain that in many of them different dialects were spoken from that of the plain and that their inhabitants called themselves (as they still do to-day) Sukwa, Wenya, Lambya, and so on, rather than "men of Ngonde." And these upland groups were much more loosely attached[1] to the central power at Mbande than were the people of the plain. 642 565

There is some evidence to show that, even in the early period, the the nobles of Ngonde did not always take the most immediate heir of a dead Kyungu to succeed him; during the middle period it is certain that they did not. The Kyungu had to be taken from the royal family but, within limits, the most suitable man might be chosen. And with the increase in the numbers of the chiefs the area of selection grew constantly wider. The constitutional metheds of selection will be discussed in section five.

(d) *THE MIDDLE KYUNGUS: CIVIL WARS.*

We must now turn to the rivalry between the chiefs of Ngelenge and Ngana. "Mwangonde begot Kalonga, Mpeta,[2] and Mwansele. And they, when they grew up, quarrelled with the sons of Kasyombe: 'Let them move further off, they are only commoners, we object to their proximity!' So they made war on them and drove them fleeing out of Ngana with only a few men. Before this war began their father Mwangonde had forbidden them to fight and commanded them to be friends." We notice here a point, which will be discussed later in section five, that the Kyungus, though not themselves involved in the civil wars, yet had little or no power to keep the peace. 173

"Then the sons of Kasyombe went to the Ndali to make allies of them and they returned together and fought the sons of Mwangonde

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[1] cf. Section 3.

[2] Mpeta (wide infra) later took the name of Mwakwangonde.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

even here it was rather position than area that was at stake : " We object to their proximity, let them move further off," said the chiefs of Ngelenge. 669

Civil wars varied in size and importance from little local fights between neighbouring villages, fiefs or chiefdoms to more extensive fights between groups or even whole houses of chiefs. And in every case the political organization took on, for the time, a military character. Great-commoners led their villagers to war, chiefs their great-commoners ; the senior of a group of brother chiefs summoned his juniors to help him, while a great chief summoned all the local chiefs of his house. But only the Kyungu himself could summon the territorial nobles.

Now leadership in war is a factor of political authority ; the great chiefs, nobles, chiefs and great-commoners derived part of their status from their military functions. But, on the other hand, it is equally true to say that it was the other factors of their status which enabled them to exercise this military authority.

In every war, for instance, there were religious elements. Chiefs had war medicines and prayed to their ancestors for success ; while the loyalty of the great-commoners and people to their chief had both a spiritual and an economic importance. Sometimes, in peace, the leading commoners would dream of war and, if they dreamt of running away, then their chief would hastily kill meat for them. Such dreams were witchcraft and, unless promptly dealt with by a feast, were held to be a certain harbinger of future defeat. [789] [787]

" In civil warfare the Kyungu never took any part at all, he remained impartial at Mbande. His sons fought one another by themselves." (But what of the war, between Ngelenge and Ngana, did he not help his own sons in any way?) " No, he did not. For both ' the cousins ' and ' the sons ' alike were his children, he was the father of all."

(b) *TRIBAL WAR.*

The procedure of tribal warfare and that of the occasional punitive expeditions against the Kyungu's subordinates was the same. Messages were sent by the *walakata* to all chiefs and nobles of the plain to come to Mbande. There the more important of them entered the Kyungu's house and were given their orders by him personally : " And then, when the Kyungu had told them whom to go and fight, he would finish up by saying ' That is all then, go away now and call down blessings on your arms.' So they would leave his house and gather all together, chiefs and their men, and pray." 721 [202]

The premier noble of Ngonde would begin, reciting all the names of the sacred groves of the Kyungu and asking each one to bless them in their fight. Then after him each great chief in turn would pray in like 726

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

175 nga, one of the chiefs of Ng-lenge, Kyungu in his stead. "They deposed Mwabulambo because, as they said, the country was once more at peace and so they should take a son of Mwakasungula again as the Kyungu." Mwakabanga was at first installed on the lake shore, but after the death of Mlozi he moved to the traditional capital at the foot of Mbande.

175 The demarcation of the interterritorial boundary between Nyasaland
177 and German East Africa (afterwards Tanganyika) cut across the area of Mbande's influence. The majority of the Lambya were separated by the boundary from their chiefs Nyondo and Kameme, while the Ndali who had, so it is said, previously sent regular tribute of ivory to Mbande, now became quite independent. And some of the more remote territorial nobles to the west were included in Northern Rhodesia.

One of the first acts of the new Government was to forbid the hunting of elephants without a license and thus at a blow the main traditional source of the Kyungu's revenue came to an end. Since then the numbers of elephants have been greatly reduced by European hunters, and only a few are left in the Ngonde of to-day. Taxes soon began to be collected, however, and small subsidies to be paid from them to selected chiefs and nobles.

175 Now Kyungu Mwakabanga, who died in 1904, after a reign of ten
178 years, "was the first Kyungu to sit with his people judging their cases: he appeared before them at his own homestead. None of his predecessors had done so, only the nobles of Ngonde had seen them." During his
[202] reign the Government suppressed the *walukata*, on the ground that their methods were too rough, and gave him government-paid messengers instead. And it also forbade the poison-ordeal.

After Mwakabanga's death the nobles of Ngonde chose Mwangalaba, a son of Malema, to succeed; and early in his reign there were other significant changes of custom. From his predecessors, as we have seen, when they journeyed through their country, all commoners save the very old had fled. The Kyungu was too terrible for ordinary men to look upon. "Not till the succession of Mwangalaba was this custom abandoned." And in the third year of his reign the custom of hoeing milana lapsed, not to be revived till 1927.

Now, as it happened, Mwangalaba had a younger brother, Peter, who was a man of exceptional talents. Starting as a Christian teacher he then became a store capitao of the African Lakes Corporation and of various other firms, and later set up in business for himself with a chain of shops and made a fortune. And when Mwangalaba began to fail in 1912 Peter became his assistant and proved himself to have legal and administrative ability also. A failing Kyungu could not, as in former times, be killed and Mwangalaba lingered on until 1932. In 1927 it became necessary

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love-making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger ones listen to these things and that is all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn. But we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night; and that is very bad, that is foolishness.—But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to listen, that is how children grow up." 864 577

On another occasion when I told this same man that in Europe many people thought it a good thing for boys to get sexual instruction from their parents and teachers he was shocked: "But I think it is impossible" he protested "for parents to go into detail with their children; there is too much shame on both sides. And if they did, it would damage the children's respect for them."

There is thus a correlation in this society between the age-village system at its genesis and the belief that a boy's dawning interest in sex must be informed, not by his parents, but by friends only a little older than himself.

Few men marry before twenty-five years of age, but affairs with girls begin before puberty. All affairs are related in detail to friends in the age-village, and the younger ones learn by listening; and they also learn when the older boys send them as messengers to the girls of their fancy. 582 836 [202]

Besides the more serious love affairs which are carried on in secret, groups of boys from the same age-village commonly flirt with any girls they meet on the way, and it is there that the incest taboos are learnt. If one of the boys is known to be related to one of the girls, either through a common grandfather or great-grandfather, his companions send him away: "Don't you see your sister is here? You cannot come!" 835 867

Contrary to a general belief about "primitive" societies, homosexual intercourse is common in the boys' villages, between close friends, but there is no real perversion; homosexuality is said to be always *faute de mieux*. The older men in discussion dismiss it with the tolerant word "adolescence," it is never continued after marriage, and all except the feeble-minded get married sooner or later. 838

But life in a boys' village also gives its members much information and wisdom unconnected with sex. There, as we have seen, boys perfect their skill in building, and there also they learn to argue and express themselves with adult fluency. It is characteristic of the Nyakyusa legal 621 848 867

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

627 some pasturage and the fire destroyed two plots of millet. I gave the owner an iron hoe.'

627 The ideal is settlement by agreement; in practice (at the present time) a large number of cases go (like this one) to the chief, and
692 then on to the Native Court. Thence there are many appeals to the Native Appeal Court, the District and Provincial Officers' Courts, and even to the High Court of Tanganyika. As we have indicated, it is likely that fewer cases are settled by arbitration than formerly; but before the coming of the Europeans, chiefs' courts with power to enforce judgement existed, and were used. There was no 'golden age' in which all cases were settled by agreement.

627 The decision of arbitrators is essentially the judgement of public opinion in the village, or the respective villages, of the
●288 disputants. Cases are heard in public, neighbours drop in and join in the discussion, and a decision cannot be given contrary to their expressed opinions.

b. Witness to contracts

675 Not only do fellow villagers play a part in settling disputes, they also act as official witnesses in various types of legal transaction. The village headman is an essential witness at an autopsy (*vide supra*, p. 116) and at the distribution of the estate of one of his men. Whenever marriage-cattle are handed over, two or more non-relatives are called upon to serve as witnesses,[1] and those chosen are commonly village neighbours of either the groom or his father-in-law. We heard one man censured by his friends because he had neglected to take a village neighbour with him as witness when he went to summon his son-in-law to his daughter's puberty ritual. He had visited his son-in-law's 'best man' (*umfuryu*) as was correct, but had omitted to take a friend with him to witness the conversation that took place. Even in matters that are kept very secret at least one official witness may be summoned. For example, an old man occasionally gives his heir permission to sleep with his wives while he is yet alive, and he does so in the presence of a neighbour or senior relative, for though the affair is very private it is absolutely necessary to have a witness to prove that the right was granted.

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Law', *Africa*, Vol. X (1937).

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

in fact they usually settle on the common East African pattern of scattered homesteads, each in its arable area, and not in the tight Nyakyusa village pattern.

I think that the headmen and chiefs concerned would not welcome a restraint on immigration, for it offers them a chance to emulate the numerically produced prestige of their fellows in the flood plains, to whom at the moment they feel inferior. They would, of course, most probably prefer indigenous Nyakyusa, could the latter be persuaded to settle there. As it is, at least some of the Nyakyusa of these northerly villages are trying to move into the flood plains, where they can more easily cultivate paddy and where they can join in a more active and ebullient village life.

One type of foreigner to the Lake Plains is the man (almost invariably a Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who has obtained land but does not settle on it nor in any village. He continues to live in his upland village and comes down to the plains only to cultivate and harvest his paddy field. This is strictly against Nyakyusa land law and custom and, in fact, such an absentee land-holder has often made a substantial monetary gift to the chief or headman for the protection of this extra-legal privilege. These strangers are frequently among the more wealthy upland Nyakyusa, who can afford such payments as these, and often they are of chiefly rank themselves, perhaps having kinship ties with the local chief. There are probably no chiefdoms where such strangers have not obtained paddy fields, though naturally those which contained a good deal of vacant, usable paddy land at the beginning of the cash-cropping era have most.

This does arouse a certain amount of ill-feeling and opposition amongst local villagers who have insufficient land themselves, for they lose land and gain no numerical strength or profit of any kind. The illegal action of the local chief is also condemned, especially as the chiefs should not in any case assume allocatory powers. On the other hand it must be noted that the commoners philosophically accept the supposedly protected prerogatives of their chiefs under European rule and they expect the chiefs to take advantage of them. As with the case of the minority of large land-holders, the actual effect is not particularly great and reformation here would be a minor palliative. Nevertheless in this matter there is a definite and unpopular infringement of villagers' rights and of the local customary law.

One other group of strangers may be noted for the sake of completeness. That is the Kisi, who have for at least two generations been settling along the lake shore itself from Matema in the east to the Songwe river (and beyond) in the south-west. They have come from the north-eastern shores of the lake and in the Nyakyusa area they are principally fishermen who do not, therefore, compete with the indigenous population economically. They cultivate only tiny plots of cassava and sometimes of finger millet, although a few of the younger generation are now trying to grow a little paddy also. The total number of Kisi involved cannot be more than a few hundred and they have probably not increased much over the past decades. They follow an almost separate existence from their Nyakyusa neighbours, not intermarrying, and following their own way of life.[1]

1. The main Kisi settlements in Rungwe District are in the Ngombo area, an isolated peninsular south of the Lake Plains, where they number about 1,200. Another 1,000 are scattered on smaller peninsulas and in tiny islands farther south along the shoreline. They are widely dispersed as patrons, and they exchange their women for cattle from Nyakyusa chiefs following.

1 William E-5 (1954-1958)1961 JF817 Nigundo JF817
Nyakyusa

5. SUMMARY OF LABOUR HISTORIES

Information from men concerned

Category	No. of Men	Worked	Average Total Period (Years after worked)	Working Out Time and over at a stretch	Schooling		Skilled and Semi-skilled (of those working)	Place of Work		
					Illiterate	Passed Village School		In Tanganyika only	Longer Outside	Out of Province
Pagans: Middle-aged and over	10	90%	6 months	90%	100%	80	10%	10%	–	0%
Christians: Middle-aged and over	10	100%	10 years, 6 months	90%	90%	80	80%	40%	–	80%
Pagans: Young	10	90%	–	10%	40%	0%	0%	10%	10%	80%
Christians: Some of pagans, young	11	91%	–	40%	0%	90%	0%	90%	10%	10
Christians: Some of Christians, young	10	100%	–	90%	0%	90%	0%	0%	90%	90%
Total	50	94%	–	50%	40%	10%	40%	30%	30%	11%

[1] Four worked on other estates outside of the Province.
[2] As many of the men are quite young, a record of the total period worked is insignificant. We lack material here on the proportion of time spent at work.
[3] This is not a true random sample for information was solicited haphazardly. Therefore, the percentages have no exact significance, but a correlation between Christianity, literacy, skilled work, and long-term employment is suggested.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

learn to read and write. In BuNyakyusa none of these village teachers was qualified and none received Government grants; they taught only the three R's in the vernacular and gave religious instruction. In Ngonde, however, some of them were qualified. Besides the village schools there were by 1935 central schools at mission stations, organized by the missions, and some of them drawing Government grants, which took children up to Standard IV; and at Rungwe and Kondowe (Livingstonia) just south of Ngonde, there were mission boarding schools, giving further education and (at Kondowe) training teachers, evangelists, and ministers. The policy of different missions regarding education varied; the Church of Scotland missionaries believed in it wholeheartedly and achieved a relatively high standard in their village schools; but the Lutherans were doubtful how far it was the function of a Church to give anything except religious instruction, and in their village schools children barely learnt to read. Opinion among the Moravians was divided. But despite these differences, all the missions large, in fact, played a great part in education. The first step—the reduction of the language to writing—was the work of the missionaries alone, and village schools have been very closely linked with congregations because, whatever their views on education in general, Protestant missionaries were agreed that to read the Gospels is the making of a Christian, and so literacy is usually required of candidates for baptism. Hence, the same man is often both teacher and elder, and the German missionaries who questioned the value of education laid the foundation of Nyakyusa literature with an admirable translation of the New Testament.

The missions have also been concerned with medical work. From before 1914 there has been a hospital run by the Lutheran mission at Itete, and one run by the Church of Scotland at Kondowe and, for a period, a large leper-settlement was run by the White Fathers at Mwakete. Medical activities are not directly the concern of congregations but Christian women are often drawn in as voluntary helpers in one way or another. In Kabembe the women deacons drew water for the sick and prepared food for a newly confined mother; at Karonga the women's association of the Church made clothes to be distributed through the babies' clinic, and so forth.

The congregations are not wholly self-supporting—the European missionaries are all paid from overseas and, until the middle thirties, funds for paying village teachers and evangelists were

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

512 low, again rising to a perfect fury of rapid sounds,
635 not without a certain rhythm, but with rasping effect upon the nerves of Europeans tossing sleeplessly in the warm humid air.

[221] After harvest comes the house-building; and when
484 that is finished the men are free to go out to seek
464 work. They usually set out in companies, for the Konde dislikes being alone on a journey. Like all
[609] home-loving people, they are suspicious of strangers, and if they have to pass through another tribe, they take great care to guard their small possessions; seldom more than they are wearing, and a spear or a club to guard them from the more obvious dangers of the way. There will be a few youths going out for the first time, with a wild flutter at the heart, of fear and expectancy. Fear, for they have heard strange tales of the white men and their ways; expectancy, because of the wonderful things they will see: the great houses, steamers, trains, motors; and what must seem countless white men to those who have been accustomed only to the missionary, the magistrate, and the storekeeper, and even these perhaps some days' journey from home. And who knows but he will come back with money in his pocket, wearing gorgeous raiment, a helmet perhaps, and, above all other things to be desired, a pair of boots! Those who stay long
[431] come back with the spoils of civilisation; highly coloured cloths, cheap clocks, melodeons, mouth-organs, worthless pocket-knives, which they deal out to admiring friends and acquaintances.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Hunting for food, like most fishing, is an individual affair. A number of men have shot-guns with which they hunt buck (duiker, bushbuck, and waterbuck) which are scarce, and game birds (guinea fowl, partridge, and duck) which are plentiful. The limiting factor is ammunition, which is relatively expensive, and few men waste a cartridge on birds unless they are sure of getting at least two with one shot. They stalk the sitting birds and fire (at point-blank range) at several birds in a line. One or two chiefs employ men specially to shoot for them, but in the diet of the people as a whole game plays a very small part, and there is no tradition of it ever having been of great importance.

Hunting for the protection of life and property is, on the other hand, a communal concern, organized like war. The chief calls out his men who assemble by villages, each under its own headman, and the chief disposes the groups. Attendance is compulsory and individuals or villages who fail to appear without good reason may be fined. Such communal hunts are still organized to kill wild pig, which devastate the gardens of some chiefdoms. We took part in one to which five village groups consisting of about 160 men and boys came. Formerly they were organized also if lion or leopard or other big game attacked men or cattle. The aim was to surround the animal and spear it, and here the importance of village relations became apparent, for the Nyakyusa argued that a man was less likely to be a coward if, in moments of danger, he stood with his relatives and village neighbours. 'We said that people of different age-villages should not stand together, every man should have his friends or relatives near him, so that if the leopard caught him the others would have to help and not shrink back! So people of the same age-village stood together, or relatives with relatives.'

Towards the end of last century Nyakyusa country abounded in big game.[1] Elephant were purposely shot out before 1935 because they were so destructive of crops, but lion, leopard, buffalo, hippo, and crocodile are still fairly common.

[1] Elton, op. cit., p. 319; D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), p. 282; 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyassa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 119; F. L. M. Moir, *After Livingstone* (1923), pp. 90–119.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

that lives were lost in these dangerous adventures, 224
but no compensation was given to the relatives, as the risk was taken by command of the chief for the good of all. A great feast was given by the chief on the return from the hunt with the carcase of the lion or leopard. If no one was killed, the rejoicing was great; if there were casualties, the grief of a few was not allowed to damp the joy of the others, for a powerful public enemy had been disposed of, and it was an occasion for rejoicing.

Bird hunting is sport for boys, not for grown men. 223 ●
A knobkerry skilfully thrown at a sitting bird sometimes brings it down; but bow and arrow, which are used almost exclusively for this sport, secure a heavier bag. Where bird life is plentiful, bird-lime is smeared on trees, and numbers are caught in this way. Loop traps, similar to those used for small animals, may be found anywhere in the bush, not seldom with a rotting victim still hanging in them. Drop traps, of a construction similar to that used by boys at home, are also used. A broken pot or a small basket is supported precariously by an upright; bait is placed within, and the bird, hopping on to a small platform, upsets the balance, and finds itself a prisoner. In suitable places small lakes are formed, and covered over with a network of loop traps, in which numbers of duck are caught.

Two interesting methods are followed by the boys. In the evening, when the birds are returning to roost, half a dozen boys stand with branches over their heads, while others wave smoky torches, to avoid

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

223 which the birds settle on the branches and are skilfully caught. The other method is to throw dust in the air, where birds are numerous, just after the young begin to leave the nests. The birds, "thinking it is rain," settle on the ground and are easily caught.

226 *Fishing.*—Fishing remains an important part of the year's work for those living near river or lake. For river fishing, huts are built in the vicinity of the place where the traps are to be set, for the fishers live there as long as the season lasts. Ceremonies similar to those observed before the hunters set out for the bush, must be performed. Sometime in May, when the river is in flood, the chief fisher of the Mbaka dreams of fish, a sign that the time has come to begin [278] the year's work. A great quantity of *unkonda*, fish poison, is prepared, each fisher, and there may be as many as fifty, preparing his own. When all are ready, led by the chief fisher, they go to the water, and trample the poison leaves into the bottom of the river. The poison sickens the fish, which are then easily caught in the traps which are set for them with the mouth opening upstream. As soon as all the [789] traps are set, the men lie down on their backs on the bank, and proceed to invoke the aid of sympathetic magic. They open and close their mouths, gasp, in imitation of dying fish. The probability of a good season is greatly enhanced by this process, which, though omitted now by many, is still widely followed.

The traps are laid in rows right across the river, and are in the form of immense baskets with gradually

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

233 343 462 [413] the women, but the men are responsible for keeping the floor of the stable in good repair. For this purpose a specific tool is used, called *ukutoba indobelu*. It is round on top, flattened on the lower side and provided with a handle.

224 5. *Hunting*. Sometimes the Nyakyusa go out to hunt, but nowadays hunting is much more restricted than in former times as described e. g by Mackenzie in his book: "The spirit-ridden Konde" (London 1925). This record, however, deals mostly with the Ngonde of the environment of Karonga whose interesting social history was unsurpassably revealed to us by Mr. Godfrey Wilson's treatise: "The Constitution of Ngonde" (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, Number Three. Livingstone, [656] Northern Rhodesia 1939.) Hunting in the Nyakyusa country is now curtailed by governmental regulations. Hunting *(ukufuema)*, therefore, does not supply an essential part of the food requirements of the [136] natives. The colobus apes on the slopes of the Rungwe volcano and the [656] Poroto Mountains are sometimes killed for their attractive black and white skins, but fortunately this is now forbidden by the government. [439] Otherwise these apes would be exterminated in quite a short time, since the skins of these apes are in great demand with some Europeans for rugs and covers. Naturally, the hunting of lions and especially of leopards, which even nowadays still cause great damage, is not restricted.

224 231 The hunting of game for food is often done with dogs *(imbwa)* which have small bells *(inyesi)* on collars round their necks. Thereby the hunter *(umfuemi)* always knows the whereabouts of his dog. The chase is continued till the dog or dogs are exhausted. The object of the hunt *(umfuemu)* is generally a small type of antelope *(akasya)*, e. g. in the [656] environment of Mwakalele, as I was instructed. The usual time for hunting is the cooler season, but to-day a permit of the government is also required.

● 223 Catching birds by means of traps *(untegu*, pl. *imitegu)* is still common in the Nyakyusa area. I have also seen such traps constructed by means of the flicking-gallow's principle also in the vicinity of Utengule among the Safwa. The herd boys especially set traps to catch quails *(imbesi)* when the *malesi* (millet) harvest is over. Sometimes smaller birds are also coursed until they are exhausted and then slain. One day I found a stick vertically put on the soil and with a triangle made of smaller sticks at its top. The horizontal part of which was smeared with an adhesive substance. I was told that this was a trap for birds,

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

but I was astonished that this trap was erected relatively near to my tent on the border of the village of Katumba. 223

6. *Fishing.* Fishing is a much more common practice with the Nyakyusa than hunting. The old-established custom of poisoning fish in their smaller rivers is still widely used. The poison is derived from the *unkeredu* shrup. Its branches and leaves are broken off, reduced to small pieces between stones and then packed in a covering of grass to resemble a long cigar about 1 meter in length and 25 cm in width. The bundles prepared in such a manner are fixed between two rowes of stones placed across the river for this purpose. The poison gradually diffuses into the water, which takes on a green colour. The fish are soon affected by the poison and rise to the surface with gaping mouths. They are then easily caught with a scoop made from bamboo. The open end of a piece of bamboo is split into several sections and the splinters are bent apart and tied together with raffia to form a sort of funnel[1]. The fish are strung through their gills on small pliable sticks and roasted at home over a fire. All people are allowed to join in this fishing which to them is always a festive occasion in the cooler season. 226 [324] [252]

Fishing in broader and deeper rivers, such as the lower Kiwira, is done by means of large fish-traps. They are made and repaired by men on the banks of the river. The traps are attached to poles rammed into the bed and almost invariably boats trying to reach the Lake Nyassa get struck on submerged poles. These large fish-traps strung across the river form quite an impressive sight. Looking up-stream, they look like the bows of little ships standing in a row.

7. *Preparing food.* With the Nyakusa the preparation of food is so exclusively the task of the women, that R. Thurnwald ist quite correct when says (Black and White in East Africa, London 1935, p. 157): "Menfolk starve if there are no women to prepare their meals". There is thus a very strong division of labour between the sexes, also noticable in the carrying of loads. For a young man to carry the load of an old woman or his sweetheart, whom perchance he might meet on the road, would be a grave violation of a rigid custom. 252 462 [482]

As the preparation of the food is the women's duty, also the grinding *(ukutika)* of the corn in a mortar *(ikituli)* with a pestle *(ikitiro)* which is the exclusive task of the female sex. The wife is always the first to rise in the morning to prepare breakfast. Usually, however, this is not [264]

[1] NB. They are of the same kind as those of the Hottentots along the Great Fish River in South West Africa. [171]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

231 find the cleaning of byres in which many cattle are stalled, very
47 arduous. A pagan who has many cattle always has more than one wife.

Thus, herding together was traditionally, and still is, one of the main common activities of neighbours in a village; most cattle are herded with those of neighbours, but there is a measure of co-operation with relatives and personal friends of other villages. It is likely that the practice of placing cattle with friends of other villages is becoming more common.

e. Hunting and fishing

224 From the point of view of village co-operation, hunting and
226 fishing are relatively unimportant, for, in the first place, game and
262 fish provide the Nyakyusa with prized foods to eat as relish with
47 the staple bananas, roots, and cereals, rather than with main items of diet; and secondly, hunting and fishing are not primarily village enterprises.

226 Most fishing is done by men, individually, each keeping his own catch; but groups of herd-boys or young men sometimes co-operate to divert a branch of a stream temporarily, so that they may tickle the fish stranded in the shallow pools. They choose a place where a stream divides naturally, and block one channel with stones; but such enterprises are on a small scale. Periodically however, when fish were plentiful, communal fishing was organized during the dry season. The seeds of a certain legume, grown for the purpose, were thrown into the river to stupefy the fish. Men, women, and children waited some way down the stream with hand-nets, and when, an hour or two after the poison had been put in, the fish began to float down stupefied, they were easily netted. The poisoning was organized by the chief and village headmen and all the villages of the chiefdom participated, as well as those from neighbouring chiefdoms, when their chiefs were on good terms. Friends naturally went together, but the various villages did not act as separate units as they do in a communal hunt. Communal fishing never occurred regularly, for if fish were scarce the chief might forbid it for a number of years, and it is now rare, since poisoning the rivers has been forbidden by the Administration. We heard of only one such fishing during our stay in Nyakyusa country.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Hunting for food, like most fishing, is an individual affair. A number of men have shot-guns with which they hunt buck (duiker, bushbuck, and waterbuck) which are scarce, and game birds (guinea fowl, partridge, and duck) which are plentiful. The limiting factor is ammunition, which is relatively expensive, and few men waste a cartridge on birds unless they are sure of getting at least two with one shot. They stalk the sitting birds and fire (at point-blank range) at several birds in a line. One or two chiefs employ men specially to shoot for them, but in the diet of the people as a whole game plays a very small part, and there is no tradition of it ever having been of great importance. 224 223

Hunting for the protection of life and property is, on the other hand, a communal concern, organized like war. The chief calls out his men who assemble by villages, each under its own headman, and the chief disposes the groups. Attendance is compulsory and individuals or villages who fail to appear without good reason may be fined. Such communal hunts are still organized to kill wild pig, which devastate the gardens of some chiefdoms. We took part in one to which five village groups consisting of about 160 men and boys came. Formerly they were organized also if lion or leopard or other big game attacked men or cattle. The aim was to surround the animal and spear it, and here the importance of village relations became apparent, for the Nyakyusa argued that a man was less likely to be a coward if, in moments of danger, he stood with his relatives and village neighbours. 'We said that people of different age-villages should not stand together, every man should have his friends or relatives near him, so that if the leopard caught him the others would have to help and not shrink back! So people of the same age-village stood together, or relatives with relatives.' 224

Towards the end of last century Nyakyusa country abounded in big game.[1] Elephant were purposely shot out before 1935 because they were so destructive of crops, but lion, leopard, buffalo, hippo, and crocodile are still fairly common. [35]

[1] Elton, op. cit., p. 302; D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyasa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), p. 180; 'Cross-lines south of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 109; F. L. M. Moir, *After Livingstone* (1923), pp. 90–100.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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VIII. MEN ON A PIG-HUNT

[facing p. 67]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

like activities; things which are felt to be alike are often felt to be antagonistic. We have shown that certain of the pregnancy taboos are interpreted in terms of the opposition between seed in plants and seed in the womb, and between pumpkins in the field and pumpkins in the vagina, and we have touched on the opposition between procreation and war. Sexual intercourse, 'the war of the mats', is directly compared with war; the two are felt to be alike and therefore incompatible. Association with a menstruating or parturient woman is felt to be weakening to a warrior; continence of a warrior before battle is enjoined—'men feared to die quickly if they slept with their wives just before war.' Moreover, a menstruating wife never touches her husband's weapons lest they be weakened.

Hunting is classed with war and the same taboos apply. Added to them is the notion that, since a pregnant woman is often angry, the animals her husband hunts will be angry also, and he is in much greater danger than an ordinary hunter.

ANGOMEWEKA: If you go into the bush and you have left your wife heavy, at home, if you meet a lion it will not run off, but will injure you, maul you. And if you are many, a leopard or a lion will attack you, the heavy one, not the others.

QUESTION: Why?

ANGOMEWEKA: It is as if there was much anger. And we've noticed something else. If a lion attacks cattle it always attacks a cow in calf. And another thing. If a woman is heavy she is very bad-tempered (*akali*), it's like a passion. Perhaps the woman is bad-tempered or perhaps good, and you, the husband, are bad-tempered. Pregnancy shows in many ways. . . .

A pregnant woman has a great fire in her body, she sweats a lot and is passionate (*ndyeje*), she is fierce (*akali*). That fire is strong; we all flee from the woman, we all dislike her. And when pregnancy begins the animals in the bush wish to kill you, the husband. That fierceness [the fire] makes them hate you; you are like a twin. A first-born child is very fierce (*akali*), so a woman is very passionate and sweats a great deal.

His wife's pregnancy puts a man in danger from wild animals, and so does a quarrel with her, quite apart from the pregnancy which tends to produce such quarrels. Mwakisumo said: 'If I go hunting after quarrelling with my wife it is very dangerous, I might be killed by a wild animal.'

Besides the idea that animals will attack the husband of a preg-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

nant woman there is a notion that they will *flee* from him, and therefore he will be hopelessly unsuccessful in hunting. Isaiah, who persisted in hunting while his wife was pregnant and rarely brought in anything, was the laughing-stock of his neighbours. Lyandileko, the woman doctor, explained: 'The animals flee because the man smells. He smells because his wife is pregnant.'

Procreation and smithing are also felt to be in opposition because they are felt to be alike. A pregnant woman usually avoids a forge altogether, lest she miscarry, and her husband, if he approaches one, remains silent until he has picked up a piece of charcoal, spat on it, and thrown it into the fire. If he neglects to do so, the iron does not coalesce. Kaitile explained the taboo very clearly:

> If a woman is pregnant she and her husband both fear to go near a forge lest either the iron or the foetus is spoiled. The foetus is spoiled only because medicines are used on the forge; that is to say, the medicine of the forge spoils the iron in the belly of a woman, and she has a miscarriage. But if there is no medicine then the iron is spoiled; it is difficult to work until the smith has sought a doctor to treat it with medicine; then the iron is all right again.

Kaitile speaks of 'the iron in the belly of the woman' and the details of this symbolism are instructive. Angombwike said:

> When a smith forges a spear he does not sleep with his wives[1] because, we say, when a woman conceives the fire blazes within her to forge a person, and the woman's fire and the smith's fire fight. When a smith comes with the fire of his smithy on his body and lies with a woman, the woman has a miscarriage.
>
> The iron of a woman is that within which receives the seed [i.e. the womb]. And we ordinary people who are not smiths, we fear the smith's fire. We do not fear to injure a woman, no, but we fear *ilgwindele*, the disease of the forge, in children. If a man sits talking with a smith at his forge and catches hold of the iron being forged there, if his wife at home bears a child, the child will cough: 'He, he.' It's like the cough of *ingwindele*, but we call it 'the forge'. Then people say: 'The forge! Indeed, you, the father, must have sat with a smith at the forge.' Then the father thinks, and he remembers, and takes the child to that smith with whom he sat, and the smith lets his bellows play on the child's body

[1] All informants were agreed that a forge is dangerous to a pregnant woman or her husband, but a smith consulted denied that he observed any sex taboos himself. 'The fire is mine.' 'But,' he said, 'if my wife is pregnant or has given birth to twins, when I go to someone else's forge I myself, with the spittoon of a smith, spit on a piece of charcoal and throw it in the fire.'

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER X

Hunting & Fishing

224
782

STRICT game laws have made hunting a thing of the past; or at best it is done secretly, when it is not a wild, excited scramble after some unfortunate animal that has wandered into the gardens in search of food. Before the white man took over the country, however, hunting was an important and regular part of the year's work. The diviner fixed upon a favourable day for setting out, and the whole community met for the preliminary ceremonies, when prayer was offered to the spirits, and through them to God. All quarrels must be made up before the hunters set out, and there must be no sin or strife in the village while they are absent, else they will not all come back alive. In hunting, as in every important act of his life, the Konde must be sure of the goodwill of the spirits, for a single angry spirit may spoil a whole season's work, and render abortive every effort of the hunter, just as he may bring to nothing every other kind of activity. This permanent possibility of interference from the underworld is one of the fundamental facts of the inner life of the people, and real understanding of the native mind does not begin until this elementary fact has been grasped.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nothing was left to chance. The spirits having been placated, the natural skill of the hunters must be reinforced by medicines. Indeed it is not improbable that the native would say that the whole of his skill and success is due to medicines and ceremonies. The warrior goes out to battle armed and protected by prayers, drugs, and a good conscience; equally for the hunter good morals, good medicines, are as important as reliable weapons and a steady nerve. *Unkota ma nyango*, to ensure a good spear-throw, or a straight aim with the ancient rifle which some hunters carried, was rubbed into flesh cuts in the hands; and *burungo*, to make sure that the animal died quickly and without a long chase, was incised into the arms; but more frequently, and more effectively for this purpose, *bulembe* was attached to the spear. This latter is a deadly poison, happily, perhaps, known only to a very few, for a single scratch is said to be fatal. It is said that the Germans tried unsuccessfully to secure the secret of its manufacture. The poison is attached, in a leaf, to the blade of the spear, and the thrust into the flesh of the animal releases it, so that it enters the blood, and causes a speedy death.

Women must not touch or go near hunting weapons which are kept in the roof of the house. The spears must not be placed near the fire, lest the game, sniffing in the breeze the smell of smoke, deduce the presence of mankind, and make off. The hunters must eat only freshly cooked food, for cold food destroys, as it does also for chiefs, the virtue of their medicines. Fatal results are sure to follow contact

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

224 784 with their wives before setting out; and a wife who sins in her husband's absence, will cause his death on the hunting ground. The smell of clothes, like the smell of fire, would drive the game away, and therefore leaves only are worn while actually on the chase. Hunters thus fully equipped are called *alarumba*, the rank and file being mere *alafwini* (drivers). The hunt might last for four to eight weeks, and as the men did not return to their homes until it was over, huts were built in which they slept. The boy who did the cooking was not allowed to hunt, for his close contact with the fire would be fatal to success.

224 Thus protected, the hunters went fearlessly to their work. In ordinary hunting there is no danger to speak of, though wounded animals sometimes turn furiously upon their hunters. But who can tell what sudden dangers the bush will spring upon one? I have passed within sound of the snoring of a gorged lion, and being unarmed, I could only pass on; I have been charged by enraged elephant and buffalo, and only barely escaped; and not once or twice lions have crossed the path not far from where I was. Such dangers the native hunters faced, armed only with spears or old breech-loading rifles, no doubt further strengthened by the consciousness of the numerous medicines by which they were protected. These, however, are incidental dangers: the actual hunting involved dangers knowingly and unflinchingly faced. I have myself been present when a native speared a wounded buffalo at a distance of a yard or two, dancing, waving his spear, and singing a song of

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

triumph before finally thrusting his weapon into the 224
massive body, and then pushing it over with his hands. It should be added, however, that more than one bullet from my rifle had previously brought the great brute very near his death. A keen man will go close up, as indeed he must, to an elephant, before spearing it.

Each tribe had its own hunting ground, and poaching was very keenly resented; sometimes, in the long past, even leading to tribal war. The feeding ground of the village cattle was practical sanctuary for game, as hunting among cattle was not allowed, lest it should lead to quarrels with the owners.

The commonest method of hunting was (and is) to dig pits into which the game was driven, and killed on the spears planted in the bottom. A great circle was formed, and the animals slowly driven into the area in which the pits awaited them, and those which did not fall into them were easily speared as they attempted to break through the ring of hunters. Traps baited with salt or other bait, are still in use. The trap is made of strong saplings, the uprights held in place by cross-beams, and bound together with bark rope. Over the entrance is suspended a heavy beam, the ropes supporting it being so arranged that the entrance of the animal releases the beam, and either closes the door or disables the animal. Open traps are set on game paths without bait of any kind. The animal pushes through the cords supporting a beam; the beam drops, and the victim may lie in agony for days, before the hunters return to see what has happened.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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286

Game Traps for Small Animals.

The cords holding the door are so arranged, that the animal, on entering, closes back in, and escape is impossible. Dangerous animals are trapped in strong traps on beams, the bait a sheep, or a goat, or anything else.

Calabashes.

Are widely practised by the Kondi, but are always elastic. The native produce is strong and durable. Dyeing in black and red is also practised.

[FACING p. 136]

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

• 224 For very small game, an even more cruel form of trap is used, which may often be seen in the bush. A stout branch is bent down, and held in place by cords which are released at a touch, and the unfortunate animal is suspended by the neck, to struggle until death comes to its relief, or the hunter who set the trap returns to secure the reward of his skill. For elephant and other large game, a heavily weighted spear was so fixed, high up in a great tree, that the game passing under it released the fastenings, and the spear dropped between its shoulders. Great care was taken to set the spear exactly perpendicular; a little water was poured upon it, and the shaft moved until the drip from the point was in exact line. The hunters were watching at a safe distance, and immediately set out in pursuit of a wounded animal; occasionally, too, a man was stationed in the tree itself, to drop the spear with his hands as his quarry passed. Women must not go near such traps.

Hippo were often killed in pits, dugged near the lake shore or river banks, into which they fell as they wandered about in search of food. A more exciting game was to hunt them in canoes with spears and harpoon. The harpoon was so made that when plunged straight down on the passing hippo, the shaft was released, and the toothed blade, with a rope attached, was firmly imbedded in the flesh. Then followed a scene which closely resembled whale hunting stories. The hippo rushes off, then turns on its hunters, only to be driven off with spears as it comes close up to the canoe, charge and repulse being

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

repeated until finally the great brute succumbs, perhaps far out on the lake, whence it is towed ashore, to be received with the triumphant rejoicings of the waiting crowd, which has been watching the fight from the beginning. But if the hippo comes up right under the canoe, the chase is over, and the death wail takes the place of the expected rejoicings.

The bolder hunters lie in wait for the game, by water pools or game paths; or follow the spoor over miles of bush. The leader is usually the most skilful man in the company. He knows the ways of all the animals, and the dangers that are likely to be met with; it is his privilege, when the game has been overtaken, to throw the first spear; it is his duty to be the last to run when danger threatens; he must see to the safety of the others before he thinks of himself. Many years ago, in 1912 I think, I was following up a wounded buffalo, with two native trackers. When the brute charged, as it did three times, I urged them to get on ahead, but they refused. "No," they said, "you are wearing heavy boots; our feet are light; we will keep behind you."

A favourite method with some hunters is to lie in the water where the animals come to drink; or if it is not deep enough, they dig a pit in which they lie, covered over with leaves and branches; when the game comes to drink, it is speared by the unseen hunter.

All the flesh belonged to the hunters; but a substantial share was given to the chief, who claimed all elephant tusks as his special property. The leading

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

224 hunter received a cow, not as compensation for the tusks, but as a reward for his skill; the chief took the tusks without question; they were his *nwana* (child).

224 251 The flesh was roasted on the field, over a slow fire. Stakes were fixed in the ground, and a kind of trestle made, perhaps about two feet high, under which a great fire was kindled, and the flesh, cut into long strips, placed over it. In this condition it keeps good for months, but it requires prolonged cooking when it is to be eaten. This method of preserving the flesh is used to-day, when a European makes a good kill.

224 Dogs were employed for hunting pigs and smaller animals. The dog chased the game, which, after a little, turned and chased the dog, and was led to where the hunters were waiting with spears. Dogs were used also for tracking, and are said to follow all but the largest animals. There are large dogs of European breed, which chase leopards, usually in couples, but not always do both dogs return from the chase, and sometimes neither.

224 787 782 An unsuccessful hunting season was a matter for careful inquiry; for there must have been a cause, and it was the duty of the diviner to find it. Generally it was due to the never-failing trouble in the spirit-land, and when the diviner discovered the names of the individual spirits to whose meticulous ill-temper the hunting fiasco was to be attributed, arrangements were made for their propitiation. Beer was made, and each hunter took a small piece of the flesh of the animal he was specially expert in killing; and the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

whole company repaired again to the hunting ground, 224
where they built a hut under a large tree. The leader 787
cooked native porridge, which was eaten along with 782
beer and honey, when the spirits had had their due. A small heap of the porridge was set down with a little honey poured over it, and a small piece of flesh was laid beside it. Each ancestor was named, as his portion was laid out, and prayer was offered:

> "Ye fathers, we have brought this beer and food for you. Why are you angry? Neither pig, nor bushbuck, nor any other animal falls into our traps. Give them to us, ye who give us all. In our gardens there is maize and millet and all things else. Why then do you hinder us now? Why are our traps empty? Be merciful to us. God be merciful to us, and go to the Basango" (a neighbouring tribe).

After this ceremony, the hunt is resumed with fresh courage and new hopes, and possibly a great success.

Lion and leopard hunting is not, of course, pro- 224
hibited by the game laws, and they are hunted or trapped with frequent success. A short time ago a leopard skin was brought to me, evil-smelling, and ruined by the spear-hole, which marked a fierce encounter; and one of the hunters, showing me where the leopard had leaped upon him, begged for a little medicine to apply to his wounds. The idea that his adventure made him an interesting person was not in all his thoughts.

When a trap is used, it is made of very strong timber, and divided into two portions. In one the live bait is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•224 put, usually a sheep or a goat; the lion or leopard enters at the other end, and in doing so releases a beam which closes the entrance. The bait is quite safe, if it does not die of fright, for it may be some time before the villagers come with spears to kill the caged carnivore. But more exciting methods are in use. In 1922 a leopard killed a number of children near Ipyana. Traps proving useless, the chief called for a great hunt, from which his men must not return without the body of the leopard. The brute was tracked, and encircled by a great multitude of men, armed with *isenge*, a kind of hooked axe, with which they mowed down the grass as they slowly worked towards the centre of the ring where the leopard lay. With a great spring it escaped when they came near, but was again surrounded. This time it sprang at one of the hunters, seizing him by the arm, but in an instant all the others were upon it, seized it by legs, neck, body, wherever they could get a grip, and held it tightly upon the ground while others beat it to death with their clubs.

Lions are killed in the same unflinching manner. In the same year, 1922, a lion killed many people near the lake shore. A hunt was organized, and the men, primed with much beer, followed the spoor. Infuriated by two spear-wounds, the lion turned and seized one of its pursuers, but a third spear-wound drove it off. Again it was surrounded, and the order was given not to retire. Once again a man was seized, but the lion was surrounded by his companions, and killed as the leopard was. It hardly needs to be said

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

that lives were lost in these dangerous adventures, 224
but no compensation was given to the relatives, as the risk was taken by command of the chief for the good of all. A great feast was given by the chief on the return from the hunt with the carcase of the lion or leopard. If no one was killed, the rejoicing was great; if there were casualties, the grief of a few was not allowed to damp the joy of the others, for a powerful public enemy had been disposed of, and it was an occasion for rejoicing.

Bird hunting is sport for boys, not for grown men. 223
A knobkerry skilfully thrown at a sitting bird sometimes brings it down; but bow and arrow, which are used almost exclusively for this sport, secure a heavier bag. Where bird life is plentiful, bird-lime is smeared on trees, and numbers are caught in this way. Loop traps, similar to those used for small animals, may be found anywhere in the bush, not seldom with a rotting victim still hanging in them. Drop traps, of a construction similar to that used by boys at home, are also used. A broken pot or a small basket is supported precariously by an upright; bait is placed within, and the bird, hopping on to a small platform, upsets the balance, and finds itself a prisoner. In suitable places small lakes are formed, and covered over with a network of loop traps, in which numbers of duck are caught.

Two interesting methods are followed by the boys. In the evening, when the birds are returning to roost, half a dozen boys stand with branches over their heads, while others wave smoky torches, to avoid

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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A Konde Hut.

Lounging is the key note of Konde life, and there is always time to sit down for the welcome chat about cattle, crops, children, or the white man, whose strange ways are of unfailing interest.

Lion Hunting.

The presence of a lion in a district causes a great stir, and the chief may call up all able-bodied men, armed with spears, clubs and bows, to the hunt. The lion—or leopard—is sometimes cornered alive and stabbed or speared to death. The presence of a white man with a rifle gives increased courage to the hunters.

[Facing p. 176]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 appearance is not unlike *malesi*, from which beer is made. If anyone eats this while there is abundance of proper food, it is an omen of famine to come. If the offender is a child, he is not beaten; but if he is grown up, he is mercilessly dealt with. It is not pretended that the beating averts the evil, nor has the man's action in eating the *ditika* anything to do with the coming famine, except to foretell it. If one asks, Why then is he beaten? the answer is simply that having foretold evil he deserves to be beaten. This unpalatableness of plain truth (if it is plain truth) is not unknown among other races than the Bantu.

787 6. Elephants while being hunted impart a great
224 deal of varied information to the hunters. As elephant
825 hunting by natives has long been prohibited, the omens afforded are no longer available, but that does not affect the belief in them. "The elephant does not lie" is an assured conviction in the minds of the hunters, and when an omen was given, the hunt was abandoned until the matter was investigated.

If, as the hunters approach, elephants are found leaping upon each other, a halt is called; both because in that condition they are specially dangerous, and because the omen is otherwise bad. There is sin among the hunters, and the whole party returns to the *fitembe*, the temporary quarters erected for the hunting period. There the case is gone into. Some one has wronged his neighbour in the manner suggested by the action of the elephants, and nothing can be done until it is put right. To go on with the hunt would be the extremest folly, and if no one

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

confesses, the party returns to the village, and the diviner is called to discover the culprit. 787 224 825

If two elephants are found kneeling and facing each other, some one's wife has erred in his absence, and the hunt is stopped until justice is done. An elephant taking up dust with his trunk and offering it to another, shows that some one has offered snuff to another man's wife, a most significant action, demanding immediate satisfaction. If an elephant is seen touching the teats of another, a similar action has been committed in the village, and again the hunt stops for inquiry and punishment. Trumpeting elephants are a sign of quarrelling in the village, and one plastering its face with mud is a sign of death, for the women at the death-wail cover their faces with mud or chalk. The hunters return, and do not resume until all is clear again. It is most important that not only the hunters should be free from evil, but their friends also, for evil brings them into danger, and it is the duty of all in the village to see that the natural dangers of the hunt are not increased by unnatural evil in their homes.

7. War was foretold by the prophets, but confirmatory signs were usually not wanting. If the horns of the new moon were of unequal length, an enemy was known to be approaching; necessarily an enemy from a distance, for the phenomenon must have been visible over a wide area. The same terror was announced by a cow bellowing at night, if there was no known cause for its outcry. This, naturally, is a thing of the past, as war, at least native war, has 787 721

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 ment so often that finally it is either not paid at all,
426 or paid when it is quite convenient for the debtor to do so. To secure this desirable result the debtor, when he learns that his creditor is coming to demand payment, slips out into the bush, where he gets the roots of a plant called *butisi*, which he chews as the creditor approaches. A most amiable conversation ensues, at the end of which the creditor begs his friend on no account to disturb himself about the small matter that lies between them: any other time will do just as well, and he will be delighted to call again in a couple of months or so. The same end is attained by incising a powder into the forehead between the eyes.

789 Hunting medicines have already been referred to.
•224 One is incised along the bone from the thumb to the
763 elbow; another is taken internally, but this latter is dangerous, because it leads to a lingering death. When death draws on, instead of dying as common men do, the whole body of the hunter who drinks this medicine becomes helpless; the heart keeps going, the lips move and talk; death does not come. Then his friends come and sing to him: "*Ndembo syaya mmiyombo*," the elephants are among the trees. The sick man, puffing out his cheeks, emits breath with a whirring sound, which is supposed to resemble a sound made by elephants, and presently he breathes his last.

755 But there are few ills, imaginary or otherwise, for which there are no cures, imaginary or otherwise: and the cautious hunter, finding old age creeping on him, and his hunting days becoming a thing of

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 652 subjects. The great bulk of this income was employed for public purposes, but no exact line can be drawn between his public and his personal expenditure[5].

643 651 224 "The right tusk of an elephant was called the royal, the left the common tusk. All royal tusks were the Kyungu's but common tusks belonged to the hunter who killed the elephant. Whenever a hunter here in the Ngonde plain killed an elephant he would take the royal tusk to his own chief (or noble) who would then tell him to bear it to the lord of the country, and so he would take it to the Kyungu. But in the distant hills the local ruler[6] would keep the royal tusks and so cheat the Kyungu. He might come to visit him from time to time, bringing two or three tusks only; and in that case the Kyungu would not claim the others from him. If, however, the Kyungu had heard that many elephants had been killed in so and so's country, and if no subsequent visit had been made to him, he would get angry and send a messenger, and then the territorial noble would come in haste to visit him. But very many tusks they stole and never brought." Whether the commoner from the plain who brought the ivory to Mbande received a gift from the Kyungu in return we do not know; he was not conducted into the sacred enclosure, and he left the tusk with the nobles of Ngonde. But the distant territorial nobles who brought ivory were royally entertained, and even entered the presence of the Kyungu.

Now the sanction for bringing to Mbande the royal tusks of the plain was a moral one, arising from religious faith. It was believed that any bowman in the plain who had killed an elephant and kept both tusks, instead of taking the right to his own chief or noble and thence on to Mbande, would never kill another; for the spirits of the dead Kyungus would be angry and frustrate his best efforts. It was believed that this would be so even though the living authorities at Mbande had been successfully hoodwinked; it was impossible to hoodwink the dead.

But in the distant hills the sanction was entirely different. The Kyungu and his ancestors were only local divinities, they were only believed to control the fate of the plain. In the hills what was feared was military force. If Nthalile or Mwenewenya refused to obey a summons to Mbande then the Kyungu would order his *vona*, the chiefs, to go and "burn him out" for insolence[7]. The sanction of force, however, was not the only reason for their acquiescence; it was predis-

[5] No such line can be drawn in England either. We distinguish the King's Civil List from the rest of the budget, but does the sum which His Majesty keeps has a public significance.
[6] i.e. the territorial noble.
[7] Vide infra section 3 (iv).

6:Wilson E-5 (1936-1938):1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

able also for distant nobles to bring ivory to Mbande, since they were given in return valuable gifts of cloth which they could not easily get elsewhere. And besides this it is said that "they desired the Kyungu's favour and to have their importance recognised by him." 643 651 224

Of the tusks which were retained by the hunters in the plain a good many were bought up afterwards by the Kyungu or by the chiefs in return for cloths or cattle or slaves.

Food was brought both by the chiefs and the territorial nobles of the plain, either on their own initiative or in answer to a royal command; and sometimes the less distant nobles of the hills brought food also. Mwaninimbo, for example, was called upon for the beans for which his country is still famous to-day. But, as the following quotation shows, not all the food brought reached the personal possession of the Kyungu. 643 651

"In the old days the nobles of Ngonde had most cunning ways, they would send a message to some territorial noble by the lake to say that the Kyungu desired fish and he must bring him some. Whereupon the noble would bring maybe ten or twenty baskets of fish. He would bring it to the nobles of Ngonde, who would then go and inform the Kyungu that so and so had come bringing fish. And the Kyungu would bid them thank him and tell them to give him a hoe. They would do so and the visiting noble would go home. And then the nobles of Ngonde would bring two baskets of fish in to the Kyungu, dividing the remainder among themselves.

"In likewise they would send to Mwaninimbo for beans and to other nobles for maize or millet; and always they would tell Kyungu of these nobles' arrival; but he would never see what they had brought with them! Sometimes the Kyungu might tell them to send one away without any gift, to another he might give something, just as the fancy took him. But always the nobles of Ngonde would keep the bulk of what had been brought for themselves and bring a little of it only into Kyungu's house. When sending them for food they sent the nalubaba who were their messengers."

And the lesser authorities likewise, great chiefs, local chiefs and territorial nobles, took a certain tribute from their own subjects; they could not take the royal tusks, but they could and did take food. Every ruler in Ngonde (and also among the Nyakyusa) had the power of sending at need to any of his subjects and taking some food—bananas, milk, beer and so on. This power was correlated with the view that the local rulers, in relation to their people, were the ultimate owners of the land which their people used. And so also in the relation of the Kyungu with the local rulers, the view that he had given (or allowed them to retain) their land was correlated with the tribute of food.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

(d) THE WILD PIG

Another sort of cleansing, unorganized, but concerning groups of neighbours, not kinsmen, is the 'blessing one another' (*ukwifuna*) which takes place if a pig-hunt fails and quarrelling between the hunters is suspected to be the cause. It was described by a Christian, who had called his pagan neighbours to help him in tracking down a pig, which he had wounded during the previous night in his maize garden. It eluded them, hour after hour, though they were close upon it.

The neighbours began to think that the pig was sent by the shades (*ali wenude*)—they meant themselves. So they stopped hunting and gathered together to express their anger, and they said: 'Our fathers built together and drank beer together, why should this pig trouble us so? We don't suspect our friend who is a Christian for he has shown that he has no quarrel with us. Had he been angry he would not have called us to hunt with him. But if one of the rest of us has a quarrel with his fellow let him speak out, that we may all be free of anger (*tuje bele*) and seize the pig, for if we think hard thoughts about one another we shall not have strength to take the pig.' All said that they were in friendship with their fellows, so first one and then another took his spear and . . . laid it on the ground and said: 'I am without anger (*Une ndimanda ibele*).' All of them did this. One spoke to his fellow and said: 'Perhaps you are angry over that quarrel we had over beer?' But he replied, 'No.' Then the first man took up his spear from the ground and said, 'Father help us to catch this pig, if there was a quarrel, forgive, do not think of that with which I counted you to be angry. We bless one another, we are without anger.' Then all the others did the same, and they set off again to hunt.

This account, and the commentary of Mwalimbo on it, made it plain that the true translation of *bele* in such a context is 'without anger'. The communal rituals in which a whole chiefdom, or a group of neighbours, participate all have this one end, the cleansing of the group of quarrels by their open expression and explicit rejection.

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

233 the women, but the men are responsible for keeping the floor of the
343 stable in good repair. For this purpose a specific tool is used, called
460 ukutebe indebele. It is round on top, flattened on the lower side and
[515] provided with a handle.

224 5. *Hunting.* Sometimes the Nyakyusa go out to hunt, but nowadays hunting is much more restricted than in former times as described e. g by Mackenzie in his book: "The spirit-ridden Konde" (London 1925). This record, however, deals mostly with the Ngonde of the environment of Karonga whose interesting social history was unsurpassably revealed to us by Mr. Godfrey Wilson's treatise: "The Constitution of Ngonde" (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, Number Three. Livingstone, Northern Rhodesia 1939.) Hunting in the Nyakyusa country is now [656] curtailed by governmental regulations. Hunting (*ukufuma*), therefore, does not supply an essential part of the food requirements of the [136] natives. The colobus apes on the slopes of the Rungwe volcano and the [654] Poroto Mountains are sometimes killed for their attractive black and white skins, but fortunately this is now forbidden by the government. [439] Otherwise these apes would be exterminated in quite a short time, since the skins of these apes are in great demand with some Europeans for rugs and covers. Naturally, the hunting of lions and especially of leopards, which even nowadays still cause great damage, is not restricted.

224 The hunting of game for food is often done with dogs (*imbwa*) which
231 have small bells (*ingeni*) on collars round their necks. Thereby the hunter (*umfuami*) always knows the whereabouts of his dog. The chase is continued till the dog or dogs are exhausted. The object of the hunt (*umfuama*) is generally a small type of antelope (*ikanga*), e. g. in the [204] environment of Mwakalolo, as I was instructed. The usual time for hunting is the cooler season, but to-day a permit of the government is also required.

223 Catching birds by means of traps (*umtego*, pl. *imitego*) is still common in the Nyakyusa area. I have also seen such traps constructed by means of the tinking-gallow's principle also in the vicinity of Ubengule among the Safwa. The herd boys especially set traps to catch quails (*imbeni*) when the malesi (millet) harvest is over. Sometimes smaller birds are also coursed until they are exhausted and then slain. One day I found a stick vertically put on the soil and with a triangle made of smaller sticks at its top. The horizontal part of which was smeared with an adhesive substance. I was told that this was a trap for birds.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

23/ 47 find the cleaning of byres in which many cattle are stalled, very arduous. A pagan who has many cattle always has more than one wife.

Thus, herding together was traditionally, and still is, one of the main common activities of neighbours in a village; most cattle are herded with those of neighbours, but there is a measure of co-operation with relatives and personal friends of other villages. It is likely that the practice of placing cattle with friends of other villages is becoming more common.

c. Hunting and fishing

22d 22f 26 47 From the point of view of village co-operation, hunting and fishing are relatively unimportant, for, in the first place, game and fish provide the Nyakyusa with prized foods to eat as relish with the staple bananas, roots, and cereals, rather than with main items of diet; and secondly, hunting and fishing are not primarily village enterprises.

22 Most fishing is done by men, individually, each keeping his own catch; but groups of herd-boys or young men sometimes co-operate to divert a branch of a stream temporarily, so that they may tickle the fish stranded in the shallow pools. They choose a place where a stream divides naturally, and block one channel with stones; but such enterprises are on a small scale. Periodically however, when fish were plentiful, communal fishing was organized during the dry season. The seeds of a certain legume, grown for the purpose, were thrown into the river to stupefy the fish. Men, women, and children waited some way down the stream with hand-nets, and when, an hour or two after the poison had been put in, the fish began to float down stupefied, they were easily netted. The poisoning was organized by the chief and village headmen and all the villages of the chiefdom participated, as well as those from neighbouring chiefdoms, when their chiefs were on good terms. Friends naturally went together, but the various villages did not act as separate units as they do in a communal hunt. Communal fishing never occurred regularly, for if fish were scarce the chief might forbid it for a number of years, and it is now rare, since poisoning the rivers has been forbidden by the Administration. We heard of only one such fishing during our stay in Nyakyusa country.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

223 which the birds settle on the branches and are skilfully caught. The other method is to throw dust in the air, where birds are numerous, just after the young begin to leave the nests. The birds, "thinking it is rain," settle on the ground and are easily caught.

Fishing.—Fishing remains an important part of the 226 year's work for those living near river or lake. For river fishing, huts are built in the vicinity of the place where the traps are to be set, for the fishers live there as long as the season lasts. Ceremonies similar to those observed before the hunters set out for the bush, must be performed. Sometime in May, when the river is in flood, the chief fisher of the Mbaka dreams of fish, a sign that the time has come to begin the year's work. A great quantity of *unkonda*, fish [271] poison, is prepared, each fisher, and there may be as many as fifty, preparing his own. When all are ready, led by the chief fisher, they go to the water, and trample the poison leaves into the bottom of the river. The poison sickens the fish, which are then easily caught in the traps which are set for them with the mouth opening upstream. As soon as all the [78] traps are set, the men lie down on their backs on the bank, and proceed to invoke the aid of sympathetic magic. They open and close their mouths, gasp, in imitation of dying fish. The probability of a good season is greatly enhanced by this process, which, though omitted now by many, is still widely followed.

The traps are laid in rows right across the river, and are in the form of immense baskets with gradually

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

narrowing mouths, so arranged that when a fish is once in, it cannot get out again. Others are open above, so that leaping fish fall into them, and cannot escape. In the smaller rivers weirs or dams are formed, and the water diverted, with much labour, into another channel, in which the traps can more easily be set; this is the case especially in streams with stony bottoms. Fish spears are used, either for thrusting at random in the water, when fish are plentiful, or for stalking individual fishes. The spear is formed with a long thin shaft, and small blades with two or three spikes. When a fish is caught, it is pulled off the whole length of the shaft, for the spikes would tear the flesh if it were taken off at the blade end. 226.

Fish hooks are mostly pre-European, and barbless, though some are now made with barbs. The bait is fish, flesh, potatoes or bean mash, which many kinds of fish are said to take readily. The line as a rule is very long, perhaps as much as a hundred yards, and is supported by small sticks placed upright at intervals in the ground. Where crocodiles are numerous, the bait is thrown far out into the water, and the fisher retires to a place of safety, where he awaits the pull which indicates a fish at his hook. If he would secure it he must be smart, for the barbless hook will not hold it long. This sport is indulged in mostly at night, a fire being kindled to attract the fish; but as crocodiles and serpents may also be attracted, it is supposed to be somewhat dangerous, and to call for constant watchfulness.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

226 Women have dipping baskets without top or bottom, which they dip at random, and when fish is plentiful they get a good catch. Boys prepare bunches of worms fastened to a cord and thrown into the stream. Sitting down on the banks, they sing or whistle to attract the fish. A sharp pull when a nibble is felt lands the unwary fish.

Nets large and small are in use on the lake. The larger are furnished with stone sinkers and wood floats, and are operated very much as in Europe, a canoe feeding out the net, which is hauled in from both ends with the catch enclosed. The smaller nets are sometimes operated by one man, heavier ones requiring two; and there are tiny dipping nets, of which a man will sometimes have one in each hand. Nets must be treated with medicine before being used. The Abakisi, a small tribe living at Matema near the north end of the lake, stalk the fish under water, and are said to catch all kinds in this way.

226 782 In many places the first fish caught is not sent to the village, but is cooked and given to little children to eat, the bones being thrown back into the water. The idea is that this is one way of giving the spirits their portion; I have already pointed out that beer offered to the spirits is in some families poured into the hands of children, who drink it, though adults may not do so. And flesh offered at the family place of prayer (the *ikiyinja*) is similarly given next day to children, who are told that it is the gift of their grandfather.

251 The remainder of the catch is dried over a slow

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F917 Ngonde F917

501 fearsome thing. It is sometimes hollowed out, by burning and hewing, miles from the shore, even up in the hills, and has to be dragged down by long-stretching teams, who will be entertained to a beer feast when the canoe is launched. The tree selected is not necessarily a straight one. A bend does not seem to matter, and some amazing things are afloat on the lake, and in regular use. But the Konde are not sailors, and compared, for example, with the Atongs, half-way down the lake, the number of canoes is very small indeed. The Konde catch their fish by setting lines of traps across the rivers; only a few bolder spirits venture out on the lake with nets.

505 Many years ago I was travelling with a team of hill-men, and not knowing the men I had to deal with, I crossed a deep river, swarming with crocodiles, by the first canoe that offered, leaving the men to follow, as I had no doubt they would readily do. But I had miscalculated. Not a man would enter the canoe, nor had the jeers of the villagers any effect whatever upon them. Finally I called for the canoe to ferry me back, with the intention of driving my reluctant highlanders, willy nilly, into it; but the threat was sufficient, and four or five ventured, planting their feet in the bottom, and stooping down to hold on to the sides with their hands. Half-way over, the canoe capsized, the men struggled, blowing and shouting, to my side of the river, and one or two villagers plunged in to retrieve my bed which was floating gracefully down the stream. The rest of my carriers,

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F7617 Ngonde F7617

286 and the river banks. Large nets, with wide or fine mesh, are made with floats and sinkers attached, pulled at both ends by means of ropes. *Ilinindile* is
•[226] a net used only at night, when the water is beaten with flat sticks to drive the fish into it. There are also small hand nets, and special nets made for catching special kinds of fish.

Weaving is a very ancient craft, and may have begun with the weaving of mats, which are at present made from banana fibre, grass, reeds, palm leaf, and the tough outer skin of palms. These mats are used for sleeping on, laying out grain to dry in the sun, straining pounded maize, and a dozen other uses.
[231] Long grass or palm leaf mats are used by Europeans as carpets; and there is a good trade in palm leaf bags for carrying rice, and great mats for packing cotton for the European market.

Very good cloth is still woven in the Igale district by the Safwa. The art was formerly universal among the Konde, but has now died out before inferior trade goods. At Igale the cloth is either plain white, or mixed black and white, though dyes for other colours are known. These cloths make excellent bath towels, and a trade could be developed if encourage-
297 ment were given. Bark-cloth is very extensively made, and there has been a recent revival of this industry consequent on the exorbitant price of European goods since the war. Women wear the long *ilyabi* or loin cloth of bark, and nothing else; but, especially in the Igale district, complete suits are now made for men, wonderfully cut and sewn shorts and jackets, and

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F317 Ngonde F317

memories and yarns, eats food made from the flour of a pumpkin, which destroys the virtues of his boasting medicines, and at the same time takes away all probability of his death being the prolonged weariness it would otherwise be.

Fishing nets are drugged to ensure a good catch; but here again caution must be exercised, for a very great catch is an omen of a very large family, which is not always an ambition held by the Konde people.

The mother who has just given birth to a child must not cook food, nor may she warm herself at the common fire; a small fire is kindled for her at which she sits by herself; and when the child goes out of the house for the first time a medicine is put into its mouth to guard it against the ills of the world into which it has come.

Christians do none of these things; but Christians are not as other people. They have passed away from the fear of spirits and from the dread of a world in which anything may happen at any moment; and the fact that they escape the consequences of failure to follow custom is having its effect on the common people, many of whom are cautiously experimenting to see whether they too may live a freer and more unshadowed life; but the belief in the protective powers of such things as I have been describing dies hard.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

according to the *Bell Report*. Cattle and hides are exported to Tanganyika.[1] The Nyamwanga herds were reduced, partly by pleuro-pneumonia, and partly by rinderpest.[2]

DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE

Ngonde homesteads are famous in Nyasaland for their peculiar style and neatness of execution. They are made of bamboos, specially grown for the purpose. They are oblong, with the ends slightly tapering upwards so that they present a ship-like appearance. The huts are erected in two lines facing each other, at a distance of about 30 yards. This secret street is kept scrupulously clean.[3] The *Nyakusa* live in round or long huts of bamboo or grass.[4] *Kinga* homesteads are scattered; they live in round huts of bamboo and straw.[5] The *Iwa* formerly lived in large stockaded villages, but these are now broken up.[6]

SMELTING AND TRADE

The Ngonde were accomplished iron-workers; iron was dug, smelted, and made into hoes and spears.[7] The Iwa were formerly noted as iron-workers. Both they and the Nyamwanga grew tobacco on a large scale.[8]

A rough kind of cloth was made on native looms. The Ngonde made hollowed canoes, but were not good sailors. In fishing they used poisons, hooks, nets, and traps. Pottery and basket-making were carried on.[9]

The Ngonde were the most civilized of this cluster of tribes, owing to their closer contact with Arab and Swahili traders who used the lake as a waterway.[10] The Nyamwanga also had opportunities of contact with Arab and Swahili traders at the south end of Lake Tanganyika,[11] but information about the effect of this on their economic life is lacking. By comparison with the Ngonde the Nyakyusa were isolated from contact with the outside world,[12] and this is probably true of the other tribes of the group. Among the Ngonde, in spite of the political hierarchy and central religious authority of Kyungu, economic links between separate local groups were few. The ivory trade was a source of wealth for the Kyungu and for the nobles of Ngonde at Mbande, but its benefits had a strictly limited effect on the rest of the people. The economic links between the capital and the chieftdoms followed the lines of the political system. The income of Kyungu in slaves and cattle depended on the judicial process and on warfare. He had a semi-monopoly of the ivory of the country (the right tusk of every elephant killed was his). His expenditure consisted of entertainment for all important visitors to the capital, and gifts of cloths, obtained through the ivory trade, to nobles and chiefs. The first Kyungu gave head-cloths to the indigenous rulers, who, in accepting them, accepted his overlordship, and the practice was continued every time a new chief or territorial noble succeeded to office. The nobles of Ngonde got cloth every time the Arab traders came. Chiefs bringing food to Mbande, the capital, were

[1] *Bell Report*, pp. 100–3; Aplin, 1931.
[2] *Kerr-Cross*, 1894; Murray, 1930, pp. 100–11.
[3] Ibid., p. 62.
[4] Mackenzie, 1907, pp. 148–8; Kerr-Cross, 1894, p. 189.
[5] Goodchildren and Shaxon, 1911, p. 12.
[6] Wilson, J., 1930, p. 44.
[7] Cotterell, 1914, p. 44.
[8] Goodchildren and Shaxon, 1911, p. 12.
[9] *Handbook of Central East Africa*, p. 68.
[10] Goodchildren and Shaxon, 1911, p. 12.
[11] Mackenzie, 1907, pp. 148, 149, 151–2.
[12] Ibid., J. 1938, p. 13.

14:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 F9G7 Ngonde F9G7
Nyakyusa

but I was astonished that this trap was erected relatively near to my tent on the border of the village of Katumba. 223

6. *Fishing.* Fishing is a much more common practice with the Nyakyusa than hunting. The old-established custom of poisoning fish in their smaller rivers is still widely used. The poison is derived from the ukwende shrub. Its branches and leaves are broken off, reduced to small pieces between stones and then packed in a covering of grass to resemble a long cigar about 1 meter in length and 25 cm in width. The bundles prepared in such a manner are fixed between two rows of stones placed across the river for this purpose. The poison gradually diffuses into the water, which takes on a green colour. The fish are soon affected by the poison and rise to the surface with gaping mouths. They are then easily caught with a scoop made from bamboo. The open end of a piece of bamboo is split into several sections and the splinters are bent apart and tied together with raffia to form a sort of funnel[1]. The fish are strung through their gills on small pliable sticks and roasted at home over a fire. All people are allowed to join in this fishing which to them is always a festive occasion in the cooler season. 226 [324] [252]

Fishing in broader and deeper rivers, such as the lower Kiwira, is done by means of large fish-traps. They are made and repaired by men on the banks of the river. The traps are attached to poles rammed into the bed and almost invariably boats trying to reach the Lake Nyasa get struck on submerged poles. These large fish-traps strung across the river form quite an impressive sight. Looking up-stream, they look like the bows of little ships standing in a row.

7. *Preparing food.* With the Nyakusa the preparation of food is so exclusively the task of the women, that R. Thurnwald let quite correct when says (Black and White in East Africa, London 1935, p. 157): "Menfolk starve if there are no women to prepare their meals". There is thus a very strong division of labour between the sexes, also noticable in the carrying of loads. For a young man to carry the load of an old woman or his sweetheart, whom perchance he might meet on the road, would be a grave violation of a rigid custom. 252 462 [482]

As the preparation of the food is the women's duty, also the grinding *(ukutika)* of the corn in a mortar *(ikituli)* with a pestle *(ikitiro)* which is the exclusive task of the female sex. The wife is always the first to rise in the morning to prepare breakfast. Usually, however, this is not [264]

[1] NB. They are of the same kind as those of the Hottentots along the Great Fish River in South West Africa. [171]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

133 Great Rift valley, walled in on the east by the Livingstone mountains, which rise to 10,000 feet, and on the west by the rather lower Ndali hills. It is blocked to the north-west by Rungwe volcano and the Poroto mountains; the volcano rises from the floor of the Rift to nearly 10,000 feet, and the lowest pass over the Poroto mountains is 8,000 feet. Scattered throughout the hills are a number of small lakes formed in the craters of old volcanoes, each one like a jewel set in the green of field and pasture.

132 The rainfall in this valley is very heavy, averaging over 100 inches in the year, and innumerable streams rush down the 161 mountain slopes, flooding parts of the plain during the torrential rains of March and April. The dry season is short—it scarcely exists in the hills—and such a rainfall, combined with skilful cultivation and stock-breeding, makes a large population possible. The average density for Rungwe district is over eighty persons to the square mile; the population is most concentrated on the Lake-shore plain, but stretches up into the hills to 6,000 feet. South of the Songwe the rainfall is much less—at Karonga it averages only 45 inches a year—and the country supports a smaller population, the average density for Ngonde being less than fifteen persons to the square mile.

The Nyakyusa grow a variety of crops of which the chief are 241 bananas and plantains, finger millet, maize, cow-peas, coco-yams, cassava, sweet potatoes, ground-nuts, cucurbits and, recently, rice and coffee. They also breed short-horned, humped, cattle which [231] are carefully stalled at night, and hand-dressed to keep them free from ticks. Banana plantations stretch mile upon mile through the plain and along the crests of the ridges.[1] In them are hidden the villages, often so close together that the boundaries between them are not obvious. On the fringes of the bananas are the tilled fields, and beyond the fields the open pasture land. Unlike most of their neighbours in Central Africa the Nyakyusa practise fixed, not shifting, cultivation, and the land is kept in good heart by green manuring, rotation of crops, and periodic fallows.[2] Only in the cultivation of finger millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins,

[1] J. F. Elton, *The Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa* (1879), pp. 330–1, and D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., pp. 285–6, comment on their great extent.

[2] According to the Nyakyusa themselves the productivity of their fields is slowly diminishing. Most of them attribute this to the neglect of traditional rituals. We do not know how far their observations are objective, and how far they are biased by the tendency to glorify the past. D. H. Thwaites, in his article

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

planted at the break of the rains, and of the new crop, rice, is a seed-bed of ash prepared, and then it is grass and scrub which is burned; they do not fell or pollard trees to provide ash. For other crops there is no burning; the weeds are hoed in green instead; and, at a second hoeing before planting, the earth is piled into ridges or mounds to ensure drainage. Formerly, it is said, the chiefs insisted that the ridges on slopes should be made contour-wise, and recently this law has been revived. Elton, the first European to travel through the area, observed that there was 'terraced cultivation everywhere';[1] and the ridges do in fact look like terracing from a distance.

Hoeing is the work of men and boys; only quite recently have a few women, whose husbands are away in European employment, begun to hoe for themselves. And most men hoe for three or four hours a day during the greater part of the year, for crops are planted in succession. Neither old age nor high status excuses a man from this duty. Even the chief Mwaipopo, who was already grown up when the Europeans arrived in his country, hoed regularly in his fields during the years 1935–8. Iron hoes were made by Nyakyusa smiths from iron obtained from the Kings,[2] but they were scarce, and some men had to use wooden hoes such as many of the women still have for weeding (*vide* Plate VII). The women are solely responsible for sowing, weeding, and reaping.

Cattle are fairly numerous:[3] few men over twenty-five nowadays own none, and many older men have four or five cows in their stalls. Long ago, we were told, cattle were scarcer, some men having to marry without them, but Cotterill (1876)[4] and Kerr-Cross (1890)[5] both said 'cattle abound' in Nyakyusa coun-

on 'Wanyakyusa Agriculture' (*The East African Agricultural Journal*, April 1944), states that 'though the soil is not being eroded to any great extent it is still being impoverished'.

[1] Elton, op. cit., pp. 326, 330.

[2] Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 272–3. Possibly iron was also obtained from the west. Kerr Cross (op. cit. p. 189) saw large foundries in Nyika country before 1890, cf. Elton, op. cit., p. 321 and map at the end.

[3] No census of the cattle in the district had been taken when we were among the Nyakyusa. D. H. Thwaites, op. cit., states that, 'The number of cattle in the district (Rungwe) in the 1941 census was about 2.3 head per taxpayer or 55 head per square mile'.

[4] H. B. Cotterill, 'On the Nyasa and a Journey from the North End to Zanzibar', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XXII (1878).

[5] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyassa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 119.

I:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

231 try, and Lugard speaks of 'enormous herds' in 1888[1] which a rinderpest epidemic decimated in 1892.[2] A few Kukwe keep one or two sheep, but we saw no goats at all in Rungwe district,[3] and neither sheep nor goats figure in ritual: cattle and fowls provide flesh for sacrifice. Every woman keeps fowls, as every man seeks to own cattle.

262 With curds and meat from their cattle, with fowls, fish, bananas, grain, pulses, roots and curcurbits, as well as bean tops and pumpkin tops, and—less generally—fruit, the Nyakyusa are exceptionally well fed. Since the dry season is so short and two crops of maize and pulses are grown in the year, there are no 'hunger months' such as the Bemba and many other African [131] peoples experience. Shortages and famine occur, but rarely. All the early travellers comment on the quantities of food available in Nyakyusa country.[4]

c. *Relations with the outside world*

131 Perhaps the most significant fact in the history of the Nyakyusa
171 is their long isolation, which is mainly the result of their geographical position. Surrounded on three sides by high mountains, and on the fourth by the stormy head waters of the Lake,[5] the district was largely cut off from the outside world. Slave caravans passed to the north, the west, and the south, but never through Nyakyusa country; and though they were repeatedly attacked by the Sangu, who are said to have raided as far as the Nyasa plain,[6] and several times by the Ngoni, the Nyakyusa repulsed both peoples. Certain of the Kukwe chiefs were forced for a period to pay tribute to the Sangu chief, Merere; but according to their own account none did so for long, and some never paid at all. Kerr-Cross comments on the contrast before 1890 between the unfortified villages of the Nyakyusa and Ndali, and those of the Lambya and Nyika, who, living in open country and harried

[1] Lugard, op. cit., p. 131.
[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa* (1897), p. 430; D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., p. 119.
[3] Fotheringham, op. cit., pp. 1, 25, mentions goats in Ngonde.
[4] See especially, Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 268, 274; Lugard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 131.
[5] In 1946 a Lake steamer, the *Vipya*, sank in a storm near Karonga with heavy loss of life.
[6] Kerr Cross, op. cit., pp. 119–29.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER II

VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

(62) 591 NYAKYUSA villages (*ifipanga*)[1] are formed by groups of boys or men, all roughly of the same age, together with the wives and young children of those who are married. Women belong to the villages of their husbands, young children to those of their fathers. Girls live at home until they are betrothed, after which they visit their future husbands periodically, and soon after puberty each joins her husband in his village. Boys, who marry later in life, leave home at about the age of ten or eleven and set up villages of their own.

a. The genesis of the village

857 Between the ages of about six and eleven boys sleep at their fathers' houses and herd their fathers' cattle. This is a full-time, ●231 if not a very arduous, occupation. The cattle are driven out about an hour or two after sunrise and return to be milked about 1 p.m.; after an hour they are again driven out and do not come back until sunset. The cattle of a group of neighbours, usually five to ten,[2] are herded together by their young sons; and so these boys spend all day together for several years of their lives. This group of boys is the germ of the future age-village; it is a community with a common activity in the herding of the cattle, with a leader and laws and customs of its own.[3]

591 When the boys reach the age of ten or eleven, two important changes usually take place in their lives. Firstly, they leave the 561 herding of cows to their younger brothers, and themselves begin 857 the business of hoeing the fields which will occupy them until they die; secondly, they no longer sleep in the houses of their fathers but join an age-village of boys. Nowadays the two changes usually, but not always, take place at the same time, and well before puberty.

[1] cf. Xhosa *intanga*, 'a company of persons or animals of equal age'.

[2] The herd group is smaller in young men's villages where few are cattle-owners, and a very rich man occasionally herds his cattle alone.

[3] G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 51–3.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

591 Before the establishment of peace by European authority, how-
ever, cattle were commonly herded by young men, armed, and
●231 only the calves were entrusted to boys, who herded them near
857 the homesteads; therefore moving to a boys' village did not coin-
cide with the change of occupation. Even to-day it is not un-
common for some boys who have reached puberty to be found
herding cattle. One we knew herded his father's cattle although
he had reached puberty, because he had no younger brothers old
enough to take over, and there were only five or six boys in his
herd-group altogether. There are also cases where special circum-
stances put the age of moving later. In one age-village the boys
leave home a little later than usual because there are leopards
about and it is dangerous for small boys to walk from the village
of their fathers to that of the boys, after dark.

857 When a number of the sons of a village of married men have
reached the right age, their fathers give them a piece of land to
342 one side of the parent village on which to build. There they build
little huts of reeds for themselves, sufficiently well thatched to
keep out the heavy rain, and there they sleep (*vide* Plate II). The
building of the huts on this land begins in a playful manner,
before the boys move. While they are still herding cows and
sleeping at home they build miniature huts there in their spare
time, but do not sleep in them. When they move they build
slightly more substantial huts with better thatch. At the begin-
ning, when a group of boys starts a new village, or when boys join
one already formed, they do not all have huts for themselves:
two or three friends share a hut. But later, as they grow older,
each builds for himself.

857 Until he marries each boy hoes his father's fields in his father's
village and eats food cooked by his own mother at his father's
264 house, but he sleeps with his friends. Thus between the time
571 when he leaves home and his marriage each is a member of two
villages: economically he still belongs to that of his father;
socially to that of his own contemporaries. Though bachelors eat
at their parents' home, it is very rarely that they do not eat in the
company of their own friends. A bachelor does not simply go
home to eat by himself, but a group of bachelors, friends living
in the same boys' village, go round together eating at the house
of each one's mother in turn.

621 In an age-village of married men there are always several
571

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241 to those crops, production of which is now expanding—beans, groundnuts, coffee and rice—even though the latter is planted like millet in a seed-bed of ash. The cultivation of rice is on a commercial basis. A small number of men own ploughs which they hire out for preparing rice-fields, and the weeding and reaping is also often done by hired labour. For the hulling, grading, [476] and marketing of coffee the Agricultural Department has established a coffee co-operative, to which all native-grown coffee is sold, but in this organization villages as such play no part.

d. Herding

231 857 476 In each village there are, as we have seen, several herd-groups, five to ten neighbours herding their cattle together. This association is voluntary, but it is usual for members of adjoining homesteads to co-operate—special friends in a village tend to build together—and the group is more or less stable. All the boys of appropriate age (six to eleven) go to herd, even though there is one son of their father already in the group, and when a man has cattle, but no sons of an age to herd, he may leave his cattle to be looked after by the sons of neighbours. As one old man put it: 'My cows are herded by other men's sons, but I give them neither milk nor payment, it is not done in this country. When I beget a son he will herd too.' There is thus considerable give-and-take between fellow members of the group. Among Christians, and those pagans who wish their sons to go to school, the herds take shifts, half attending the morning session of school, and half the afternoon session. Formerly, young men armed with spears herded the cattle for fear of raids, while boys herded the calves which grazed near the villages. The same young men used to herd and hoe, taking it in turn, or hoeing in the late afternoon when the cattle grazed near the villages and could be herded by the youngsters. The cattle were trained to follow the call of a herdsman and in case of danger were quickly led away and hidden.[1]

231 476 In the large villages of the plain an assistant headman, one of whose functions is the care of cattle, is connected with each herd-group. In his homestead, under the bananas, a smoky fire is kept going during the heat of the day, and there the cattle of the group

[1] D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., p. 121; F. L. M. Moir, op. cit., p. 93.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

stand protected from insects: hence his title 'he of the heap of hot ashes' (*ngwakyewe*, *vide supra*, p. 34). The protection of their cattle from raiders by day, and witches by night, was one of the main co-operative activities of the village, and each herd-group within the village was particularly concerned with the protection of its own cattle. For the boys of one herd-group the association is very close since they are together on the pasturage for the greater part of the day. Friendships then formed sometimes last a lifetime.

A few rich men choose to herd their cattle separately from those of their neighbours. 'They are the men who have many cattle! They want to show off their herd, so that men may say: "That's the herd of so and so."' Sometimes their sons, against orders, foregather with other herd-boys on the pasturage, but they are careful to bring home the herds separately. We knew three men near Rungwe who were spoken of as herding their cattle separately, though in fact their sons often joined friends in the pasturage. To herd alone is regarded as somewhat ostentatious,[1] and only a few individuals do it.

Many rich men do not even keep all their cattle at their homesteads for fear of the jealous witchcraft of their neighbours. Instead, they disperse their herds among friends in other villages (of their own or neighbouring chiefdoms) believing that the cattle may in that way escape danger. Porokoto explained: 'We place cattle with friends (*ubufafya*) on account of sickness and death. Supposing I have three or four cows, and they all calf, but the calves die, then I place the cows with friends. People say: "The cows will escape in another village or chiefdom." If, when cattle die and are cut up, wounds are found in their stomachs,[2] then the owner places the others with friends.' Not all of them are sent to the same place.

The fear of witchcraft was traditionally, and is still, the main reason for placing out cattle, but nowadays they are sent away for other reasons also: Nyakyusa living around Rungwe often send cattle to friends on the other side of the mountains in Mbeya district, where grazing is particularly good, and wealthy Christians place out cattle because their wives, working single-handed,

[1] A beast which grows others may be herded apart without any imputation of pride to the owner.

[2] Taken as evidence that they have been killed by witchcraft, *vide supra*, p. 116.

1:Wilson E-9(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

find the cleaning of byres in which many cattle are stalled, very arduous. A pagan who has many cattle always has more than one wife.

Thus, herding together was traditionally, and still is, one of the main common activities of neighbours in a village; most cattle are herded with those of neighbours, but there is a measure of co-operation with relatives and personal friends of other villages. It is likely that the practice of placing cattle with friends of other villages is becoming more common.

c. Hunting and fishing

From the point of view of village co-operation, hunting and fishing are relatively unimportant, for, in the first place, game and fish provide the Nyakyusa with prized foods to eat as relish with the staple bananas, roots, and cereals, rather than with main items of diet; and secondly, hunting and fishing are not primarily village enterprises.

Most fishing is done by men, individually, each keeping his own catch; but groups of herd-boys or young men sometimes co-operate to divert a branch of a stream temporarily, so that they may tickle the fish stranded in the shallow pools. They choose a place where a stream divides naturally, and block one channel with stones; but such enterprises are on a small scale. Periodically however, when fish were plentiful, communal fishing was organised during the dry season. The seeds of a certain legume, grown for the purpose, were thrown into the river to stupefy the fish. Men, women, and children waited some way down the stream with hand-nets, and when, an hour or two after the poison had been put in, the fish began to float down stupefied, they were easily netted. The poisoning was organised by the chief and village headmen and all the villages of the chiefdom participated, as well as those from neighbouring chiefdoms, when their chiefs were on good terms. Friends naturally went together, but the various villages did not act as separate units as they do in a communal hunt. Communal fishing never occurred regularly, for if fish were scarce the chief might forbid it for a number of years, and it is now rare, since poisoning the rivers has been forbidden by the Administration. We heard of only one such fishing during our stay in Nyakyusa country.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ing audiences watch their friends in the detachment of the King's African Rifles at bayonet drill in Mwaiko.[1]

Display is felt to be particularly appropriate to young people, and bachelors were held to be the fiercest warriors, but neither dancing nor fighting was confined to young men. The chief Mwaipopo (Plate V) was famous as a skilful and ardent dancer when over seventy, and the leader in war was the senior headman of the country, who, if not already married when he took office, had to marry almost immediately, since his wife shared in the ritual of establishing his house. Furthermore the villages of married men of the ruling generation fought, as well as the villages of their bachelor brothers and sons.

That the Nyakyusa had some skill in warfare is certain, for they defeated and drove off Ngoni raiders and warriors of the Sangu chief Merere,[2] but they never developed a military kingdom like that of the Bemba to the west, or the Hehe to the east, nor did they raid at large like the Masai and Ngoni. Their geographical position sheltered them very considerably from outside attack, and discouraged raiding abroad. They confined themselves mostly to lifting the cattle of neighbouring chiefdoms.

Cattle, whether they be spoils of war or inherited wealth, are displayed. Not only does a long byre add to the dignity of a homestead, but, when there is some ceremony at the home of a rich man, he shows off his herd by driving it round and round the homestead. At other times his sons gallop it along the village street, the iron bells with which the animals are adorned ringing merrily. Nyakyusa smiths make cow-bells in sets,[3] to chime in harmony, and the aim of a rich man is to own a set of bells which ring a full chime, and a herd large enough to carry them. Nowadays those who own bicycles display them in the same sort of way, riding round and round the homestead at a ceremony, and ringing the bells madly.

Unlike the enjoyment of good company (*ukwangala*), display

[1] This detachment was not supposed to include Nyakyusa who were recruited for a detachment stationed outside the district, but in fact Nyakyusa got in by posing as men from Ngonde, Nyasaland.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 119-20; Lugard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 56, speaks of the Nyakyusa as 'brave in war'.

[3] We deposited a set in the Livingstone Memorial Museum, Livingstone, N. Rhodesia.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

usually has a separate hut for its girls, to which, we were told, their lovers come secretly by night.

Nyakyusa informants connected the existence of girls' houses with the marriage age. In Ngonde the marriage age of girls is much higher than it is among the Nyakyusa, partly because there are many more Christians (45 per cent as against 16 per cent) who do not allow polygyny, partly because even the girls from pagan families in Ngonde dislike marrying a polygynist, and partly because a much higher percentage of young men are away at work, than from Nyakyusa country. Formerly, they said, the marriage age was higher among the Nyakyusa also, and then the Nyakyusa had *ikaka*. It is certain that among the Nyakyusa betrothal of a girl has long taken place before puberty, for the husband plays an essential part in the puberty ritual, and there were always some girls who were betrothed when quite tiny; but the evidence is fairly clear that the average age of betrothal among the pagans has been going down. The Nyakyusa view is that no man in his senses, who is able to marry, will engage a little girl of eight if he can find one approaching puberty; and it is the scarcity of wives that makes men 'marry' little girls. It is also clear that the number of cattle in the country, and their rate of circulation, has increased during the last two decades, so there are 'too many cattle chasing too few brides' with the result that the marriage age of girls has fallen, and the number of cattle given at marriage has increased.

Once she is betrothed, a girl's 'husband' has exclusive sexual rights over her, and she cannot entertain lovers in the *ikaka*. The only two occasions on which she may flirt and have external relations with a man other than her husband, are during an initiation ceremony, when the girls of the village who have not yet reached puberty sleep with their fellow who is being initiated, and there entertain young men, and when she accompanies a bride to her husband's house. A bridegroom is expected to have external relations with his wife's two friends, as well as with his wife, on the night they bring her to his house. Love-making at the initiation-marriage ritual is held to be 'part of the ritual' and a means of sex education, and a husband can make no complaint about his 'wife' receiving lovers then, provided that penetration does not take place.

Homosexual practices are said to be very common in the boys'

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

One by one the villagers emerge from the houses, and sit in the sun, greeting neighbours with a polite 572
"Have you slept well?" if there are any neighbours [576]
near. Then the husband milks the cattle, and the boys come to drive them out to the pasture, where they will remain until the early afternoon, when they are again milked.

Generally the cattle sleep in the same house as their 231
owners, tied up to stakes fixed deep in the floor; but 592
where there are grown-up sons not yet married, a separate house is built in which the parents sleep with the little ones, while the young men guard the cattle from raiding thieves.

The bed is frequently no more than a mat spread 573
on the mud floor, with a single blanket for covering, and no pillow, unless it is a piece of roughly trimmed wood. The more prosperous natives, earning good pay in the employment of Europeans, have well-made beds fully equipped, in many cases even with mosquito nets hung from the roof. The poorer consider that they have made a great step forward if they have been able to save up enough money to buy a single blanket, and not seldom even that belongs to the father, the mother and children having to be content with meagre coverings of calico or grass mats. But [354]
the house is warm, often too warm, for the fire is always burning, the door is closed, there are no windows, and there is no ventilation in the roof; and all the inmates sleep with their feet to the fire, which is in the middle of the floor.

Here and there one will come upon rows of tiny 342
houses, each built and occupied by two or three small 561

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

241 sheer hard work makes men and women look thin and
512 haggard. Work stops about noon; the women go home to attend to the food, the men to see to the cattle which the smaller boys have been looking after
231 during the day. The milking is always done by the
512 men; it is not women's work as with us. If there are
[462] flies about, and there usually are, the cows need no invitation to thrust their heads into the column of acrid smoke that arises from a dung fire, kindled for the purpose. The rest of the afternoon is filled either with small duties, basket mending, net work, some slight repairs to a canoe, rope making, house repairing; or it may be there is a lawsuit to be settled, and every idler will make a point of being present.

512 By the time food is over, night has closed in. If the night is dark, one after another slips away with a
[576] friendly "May you sleep well," and silence reigns until morning. Unless it is suddenly broken by the roar of a lion or the growl of a leopard; and then the young men, who sleep with the cattle, rush out with spears and clubs and wild shouting to drive off the intruder, while the others raise a weird cry within the houses. Should the lion take refuge in a thicket and refuse to be driven off, a small party may slip round to the nearest white man, if he is not too far away, to beg him either to lend them a rifle, or to
512 come himself to their aid. In the warm moonlight
535 nights, however, other noises fill the ear. The young people gather for a dance, and the drum fills the night air with its interminable tum tum tum, now soft and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER VIII

Domestic Animals: Agriculture

AMONG the Konde the cow is queen. The people are reasonably musical, but no sound strikes more pleasantly upon their ears than the raucous bellowing of cow and calf as they return from the pasturelands in the early afternoon. No Irishman ever rejoiced in his pigs as the Konde do in their cattle. The young men sleep with them; the children play with them. The cow pays the tax and finds the wife; she compensates for injuries and wipes out insults. Feuds and bonds are based on and settled by cattle. They are the cause of three-quarters of the crimes, and three-quarters of the virtues of the people; they are prolific in lawsuits before the European magistrate and the native chief. Indeed, the song of the cow and the Konde might be extended to the dimensions of a small epic. The great majority of the men invest all their spare cash in cattle, convinced that they get at once greater security and higher interest than in any other investment open to them. The total number possessed by the tribe is not less than one hundred thousand head.

Every animal in a herd answers to its own name,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

231 and will follow the caller wherever he goes. They come to be milked morning and evening, and no cow moves until her name is called. The greatest insult that can be offered to a man is to sprinkle milk on the road behind him as he passes, suggesting, "You are too incompetent to provide yourself and your family with milk to drink; I can spare some to mock you with." And each man is jealous of the quality of his herd. A year or two ago, a wedding party went to [579] pay over a cow to the bride's father. It was not a high-class animal: a bystander threw a taunt, and in the fight which followed, two men were killed, and a number wounded.

422 The man is the owner of the cattle as a rule. It is rare for the wife to own any; but sometimes a father will make his daughter a present of a cow, which becomes hers absolutely, to pass, with its increase, to her son at her death or his marriage. The husband also may set a cow apart for his wife, but it returns to him in case of divorce.

231 857 During the day the cattle are herded by the village boys, each family sending one or two in turn to the work. They have a thoroughly good time, though for the smaller boys it is rather a testing time of moral and muscle, for they have a severe apprentice-234 ship to serve. Cows are milked by the owner usually twice a day. No one ever salutes a man while so engaged; if the milk stops, he will be accused of witchcraft. A visitor arriving at milking time will sit down and wait, neither he nor his host taking any notice of each other until the cow that is being milked

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

000 tion, brought me a grass mat to lie on, and then ran to fetch a great dish of *amasulu*, as the thick milk is called. Only once have I eaten more welcome food; when, having been obliged to make a long detour, I lost touch with my food boxes, and got two cobs of soft, juicy maize from a garden I was passing through. That, I think, was the most delicious meal I ever made.

231 Polling of cattle is practised, but only for special reasons; if the animal is bad-tempered, or if the horns grow into the face, or if it is desired to give the cow a youthful appearance with a view to a good sale. The polling is done by specialists, but the cow, carefully bound, is held by the owner himself. Fine-looking horns are scraped to preserve their appearance. There is no gelding of bullocks, as the animals are never used for work of any kind; though European planters and others have proved that they respond well to training.

232 A people so keen on cattle rearing have naturally developed some skill in the treatment of the various ills that afflict their stocks. Sympathetic magic plays a considerable part in the treatment. If a cow drops one bull-calf after another, the doctor will give the owner a medicine made into four great pills. Then, if his own wife did not have a daughter as her first-born, the owner engages the services of a woman who did. This daughter she takes upon her back, and, while the owner forcibly opens the mouth of the cow, she drops the pills into it. Taking another supply in her hand, she passes it over the back of the cow from

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

696 rarely appeals, convinced, though without reason, that the magistrate will pooh-pooh his story.

231 754 In 1920 a lake-shore chief was fined a large number of cattle ; and the animals, removed to the hills where the veterinary officer lived, did not thrive. The reason is no doubt to be found in the different climate ; but the natives give two quite different ones : many of them were bewitched ; and others were given a slow-working poison by owners who resented the fine. But the fact that many natives willingly bought them when offered for sale seems to indicate not all held the two theories referred to.

231 157 When an epidemic carries off large numbers of cattle, the Konde assume a fatalistic attitude. There is nothing to be done : why worry ? In 1894 immense numbers of cattle died of rinderpest. After learning by divination that neither spirits nor sorcerers had anything to do with it, the people put it down to *Mwanjebe*, a troublesome godlet of the neighbouring Kamanga tribe, against whom there was no appeal, and no protection. They assume the same fatalistic attitude to the interference of the white man, and a supreme distrust of all kinds of injections has arisen in their minds, since the widespread injections of 1918, when many of their cattle died. The chiefs are credited with saying on that occasion, " If the white man wishes to inject, let him inject ! Why make him angry ? Let the cattle die rather." If this is true, it is a testimony to the immense personal prestige of the white man, but is hardly flattering to his veterinary skill. A warning was issued that the flesh of cattle

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

killed by rinderpest should not be eaten, but the injunction was disregarded, with fatal results, and again the fatalistic attitude in the presence of the all-powerful white man revealed itself: "If we die, that is the white man's affair. They wish to kill us." It is useless to point to the recent increase of cattle in the district. The reply always is that the deterioration in quality, which began with the coming of the white man, and has continued ever since, more than balances the increase in numbers.

In comparison with cattle, other animals are of small importance. Sheep and goats are reared in small numbers, and belong to the man, very much as cattle do. Fowls belong to any member of the family, and each owns what he sells them for. There are many breeds of dogs, formerly used for hunting, but now mostly as watchdogs, in view of the prevalence of thieving. Dogs are as a rule treated with neglect, and pick up a living as best they can from the garbage around the doors. With a few exceptions they are cowardly brutes, possibly a natural result of their vile treatment. Occasionally one will come upon a man who has well-fed, well-cared-for dogs, and is very proud of their intelligence and courage, either in keeping off thieves or in tending cattle. The story of the two dogs which were shown the limits within which their master's cattle might feed, and kept them strictly within bounds, is not, perhaps, without parallel in other lands.

There is a very remarkable tradition that in the old days of war, and especially during the Angoni raids,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

231 a cow about to be delivered of a calf was rushed down to running water, and the calf, when delivered, immediately submerged. Then cow and owner ran for their lives, and when the scourge had passed over, the owner, if he survived, took the calf out of the water, resuscitated it, and let it go. The explanation given to me by a medical colleague of the conditions under which such a thing is possible, render it highly probable that if ever it occurred at all, it must have been very rarely, and even less in times of war than in times of peace. What is interesting, however, is the fact that the physiological possibility of it is known to the natives. I have not met anyone who has seen it done.

241 771 *Agriculture.*—St. Paul would almost certainly have told the Konde that they were "too religious"; not because he would have seen tokens of their religiousness in the streets and villages; no mere passer-by, and no indifferent foreigner, ever sees that. One must look deep, and live long among them, before that side of their life reveals itself to him with any fulness. There is hardly an act of theirs that is not accompanied by a ceremony of some kind, if that is religion, and to them it undoubtedly is. Agriculture is a highly religious occupation on that view, but hardly more so than many others. Leaving native Christians aside, the great majority of the people consult a diviner before beginning to hoe. He may say that all is well; or he may discover that some spirit stands in the way of a good crop, and must be propitiated; or that a certain piece of ground is bewitched, and no good will come of hoeing it until the spell has been removed.

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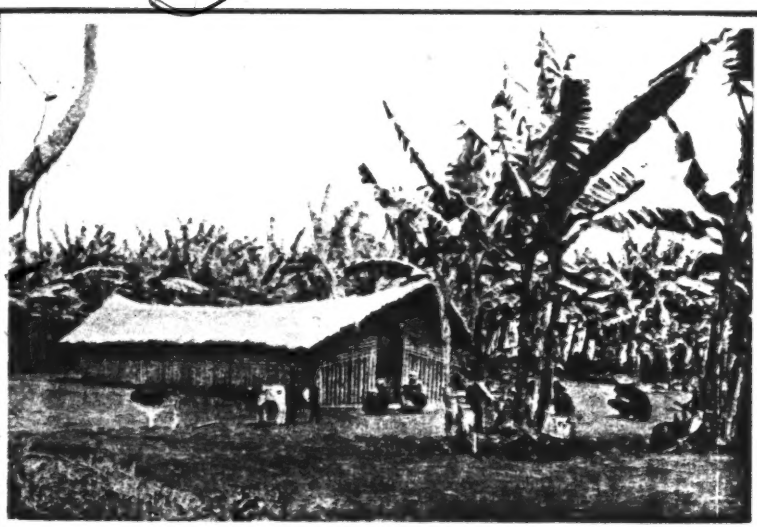
FN17 Ngonde FN17



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411

A KONDE HUT.

Leisureliness is the key note of Konde life, and there is always time to sit down for the welcome chat about cattle, crops, children, or the white man, whose strange ways are of unfailing interest.

LION HUNTING.

The presence of a lion in a district causes a great scare, and the chief may call up all able-bodied men, armed with spears, clubs and bows, to the hunt. The lion—or leopard—is sometimes seized alive and clubbed or speared to death. The presence of a white man with a rifle gives increased courage to the hunters.

[Facing p. 176]

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241 The use of cattle dung as manure is a novelty now used in the cultivation of coffee, but not on gardens unless land is beginning to be scarce. Banana cultivation is a characteristic feature of Ngonde as well as of Nyakyusa economic life.[1] Each homestead in a village includes the houses of a man and his wives, his banana groves, coffee-trees planted under the bananas, and also plots of beans, ground-nuts, &c. The main gardens of the household lie at some distance. Each year different types of gardens are hoed together by groups of villagers, millet in one place, maize and beans in another, so that the main gardens of any particular household are scattered. The clearing and hoeing fall to the man and his sons, and the wives are then given portions of their own to plant. Traditionally women never used to hoe at all.

The rights of a woman to dispose of her crops vary. Millet and rice, the two most valuable crops, are stored by the man and belong to him. The woman is the effective owner of all other crops on her plot, and stores them in her own house. Crops are used for food, beer, and hospitality, for making gifts, as well as for sale or barter, to obtain salt, pots, clothes, and cattle. There is a sharp division of property between co-wives. Not only garden land, but also banana-trees are divided between them. The husband often keeps a separate plot of bananas and cassava over which he has full rights of ownership. The farming unit is the family, but communal hoeing parties are organized two or three times a year, food and beer being offered to the workers.[2]

243 On the lake-shore plain rice is cultivated. The Ngonde plain is the main rice-growing area of Nyasaland. Floods in the rainy season make possible the cultivation of lowland rice, or paddy, which is superior in yield to upland grown crops. The most fertile areas are usually flooded during the rainy period of December–April, so as to be unfitted for the cultivation of other food crops at that time. But the Ngonde construct huge mound-like ridges in their newly harvested rice gardens, and plant on them subsidiary crops—maize, beans, sweet potatoes, cassava, or cotton. When these are harvested the garden is levelled again in readiness for another rice crop. Harvesting of rice and winnowing is usually women's work.[3] The crops are stored when threshed but unhulled, or unthreshed. They are milled by pestle and mortar. The rice is marketed with Indian traders in Blantyre and Limbe townships.[4]

CATTLE

● 231 Cattle take a foremost place in *Ngonde* economy, and milk is an important article of diet. Ngonde herdsmen were much in request in Shire province.[5]

Nyakyusa cattle are tied up at night in the dwelling houses,[6] and are herded in the day by small boys. Milking is invariably done by the men; the women are not allowed to have anything to do with cattle.[7] Every year at the end of the dry season, in October or November, some of the pastures are fired to bring out the new shoots at the first rains. This is the only use of burning in their economy.[8] The rinderpest outbreak of 1896 decimated the herds,[9] but since then the number of cattle has increased considerably, numbering over 33,000 head in 1931 and about 40,000 head in 1938,

[1] Murray, 1932, p. 208.
[2] Wilson, 3, 1938, pp. 16–29.
[3] Barker, 1934.
[4] Murray, 1932, p. 206.
[5] Johnston, 1897, p. 431; Murray, 1932, pp. 205 and 209.
[6] Murray, 1932, p. 209, states that Ngonde cattle and herdsmen sleep together in long rectangular huts.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Wilson, 3, 1938, p. 8.
[9] Johnston, 1897, p. 431.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

231 according to the *Bell Report*. Cattle and hides are exported to Tanganyika.[1] The *Nyamwanga* herds were reduced, partly by Bemba raids, and partly by rinderpest.[2]

Domestic Architecture

341 *Ngonde* homesteads are famous in Nyasaland for their peculiar style and neatness
361 of execution. They are made of bamboos, specially grown for the purpose. They are oblong, with the ends slightly tapering upwards so that they present a ship-like appearance. The huts are erected in two lines facing each other, at a distance of about 30 yards. This centre street is kept scrupulously clean.[3] The *Nyakusa* live in round or long huts of bamboo or grass.[4] *Kinga* homesteads are scattered; they live in round huts of bamboo and straw.[5] The *Iwa* formerly lived in large stockaded villages, but these are now broken up.[6]

Specialization and Trade

326 The Ngonde were accomplished iron-workers; iron was dug, smelted, and made into hoes and spears.[7] The Iwa were formerly noted as iron-workers. Both they and the Nyamwanga grow tobacco on a large scale.[8]

236 A rough kind of cloth was made on native looms. The Ngonde made hollowed
501 canoes, but were not good sailors. In fishing they used poison, hooks, nets, and traps.
226 Pottery and basket-making were carried on.[9]

[177] The Ngonde were the most civilized of this cluster of tribes, owing to their closer contact with Arab and Swahili traders who used the lake as a waterway.[10] The Nyam-
439 wanga also had opportunities of contact with Arab and Swahili traders at the south
643 end of Lake Tanganyika;[11] but information about the effect of this on their economic life is lacking. By comparison with the Ngonde the Nyakyusa were isolated from contact with the outside world,[12] and this is probably true of the other tribes of the group. Among the Ngonde, in spite of the political hierarchy and central religious authority of Kyungu, economic links between separate local groups were few. The ivory trade was a source of wealth for the Kyungu and for the nobles of Ngonde at Mbande, but its benefits had a strictly limited effect on the rest of the people. The economic links between the capital and the chiefdoms followed the lines of the political system The income of Kyungu in slaves and cattle depended on the judicial process and on warfare. He had a semi-monopoly of the ivory of the country (the right tusk of every elephant killed was his). His expenditure consisted of entertainment for all important visitors to the capital, and gifts of cloths, obtained through the ivory trade, to nobles and chiefs. The first Kyungu gave head-cloths to the indigenous rulers, who, in accepting them, accepted his overlordship, and the practice was continued every time a new chief or territorial noble succeeded to office. The nobles of Ngonde got cloths every time the Arab traders came. Chiefs bringing food to Mbande, the capital, were

[1] *Bell Report*, pp. 100–3; Aplin, 1931.
[2] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[3] Kerr-Cross, 1894; Murray, 1932, pp. 210–11.
[4] *Handbook of German East Africa*, p. 68.
[5] Ibid., p. 64.
[6] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[7] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 146–8; Kerr-Cross, 1894, p. 189.
[8] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[9] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 146, 149, 151–2.
[10] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 44.
[11] Ibid., 3, 1938, p. 15.
[12] Coxhead, 1914, p. 44.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

131 twenty miles from Lake Nyasa (1,500 feet). A little compact country,
133 secluded until very recently from any effective external contacts, slightly over 1,000 square miles in extent.[1]

132 The soil, particularly that of the higher ground in the north of the
134 Nyakyusa country, is not in itself very rich, but, as between 100 and 130 inches of rain usually fall each year, the district is one of the most fertile
[161] in the whole of Tanganyika; two crops a year are often grown on the same patch of ground, and the African population is over eighty to the square
[231] mile. There is no infected tsetse fly and cattle are the most prized possession of the Nyakyusa.

631 For historical reasons, which we will discuss in a later section, the Nyakyusa have never been united under any one paramount chief of their own, but live in a number (nearly 100 at the present day) of tiny but traditionally independent chiefdoms. For these chiefdoms the numerous streams which run down from the north into Lake Nyasa and the crests of the ridges of land between them, form natural boundaries.

133 The country, of course, is not all of equal economic value, parts of it
134 are stony and mountainous, other parts, and particularly the plain in the south, consist of deep and level soil; and the population is heavier on the plain than on the higher ground. Further, on the higher ground, there exist numerous old volcanic craters filled with rich moist soil and these, being more fertile than the surrounding land, are particularly valued by
[244] the Nyakyusa. Again, of the two chief economic crops of this district, one, coffee, can only be grown on the higher ground while the other, rice, can only be grown on or near the plain. And at every point their system of land tenure is partially determined by such physical factors as these.

3. *THE USES AND VALUE OF LAND*

311 The Nyakyusa use their land for building on, for agriculture, for pasture, for hunting and fishing; they collect firewood, reeds, thatching-grass, mushrooms and other wild vegetables there; they draw water from its streams and bathe daily in them; on their land they grow bamboos, bananas, *imisyunguti* trees[2] and coffee; they keep bees; they dance, they fight, they walk and lie down upon it; their land is both the receptacle of refuse and the location of religious ritual, while their doctors continually wander over its surface in search of magical medicines.

Not all these uses of land give rise to laws, moral rules or conventions, but only those uses which tend to lead men into conflict with one another or into mutual embarrassment. The only reasons for the existence of

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[1] The whole of Rungwe District is 1,866 square miles, but this includes the hills of the Ndali and Lambya as well.

[2] I have not been able to discover the botanical name of this tree.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

000 Before passing on to consider how it is that the Nyakyusa distinguish between " better " and " worse " plots and pastures we must dwell for a moment longer on the technical aspect of their present use of land.

241 The *chitemene* system of agriculture so common in Central Africa has never been practised by the Nyakyusa, indeed the density of
●231 the population makes it impossible ; they follow instead a system of intensive cultivation with rotation of crops. Villages are thus relatively stable and a man may, if he chooses, hoe the same ground year after year for a whole generation, letting each plot lie fallow in its turn. The great variety of crops which can be grown helps to determine the success of the Nyakyusa rotation system—maize, millet, sweet-potatoes, beans, ground-nuts, cow-peas, cassava and, in the plain, rice being their staple products. The men hoe deeply, using a long-handled iron hoe, the women weed with the aid of a short-handled wooden digging stick ; different crops are planted at different seasons and most men do some hoeing in every month of the year. Every now and again a whole block of garden land that has been worked for some years may be allowed by common consent to revert to pasture. In the pasturing of cattle the most noteworthy point is the burning of the grass-lands ; at the end of each short dry season in October or November, some of the pastures are fired so as to bring new shoots of tender grass with the first rains. The houses of a village are normally all built close together, each surrounded by bananas, with the main garden lands at some distance from them. The cattle are tied up at night in the houses and their dung is removed each morning and thrown down among the banana trees by the women of the household. The deliberate use of dung as manure is a novelty but is now general in the cultivation of coffee ; on the gardens cattle dung is not used save in that one part of the district where land is beginning to be absolutely scarce, but the grass, which in this climate grows so quickly over them, is hoed in each year as green manure.

242 The first consideration which, in the case of arable land, leads the Nyakyusa to value some pieces of ground above others is a scientific[1] knowledge of the properties of different kinds of soil. " The men who are skilled in choosing ground for hoeing are those who have been long familiar with the soil. They know how soils differ and that one soil is best for maize, another for sweet-potatoes, one for peas, another for beans, one for ground-nuts another for pumpkins, one for millet, another for yams. And they can tell from the grass also, that where a certain

[1] By " scientific " knowledge is meant an intelligent understanding of fact based upon observation or experiment and which is not directly determined by any ultimate religious beliefs, save only the one belief that facts are intelligible.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

he settles many legal disputes between his neighbours. The village is, 631
both for men and women, the chief field of friendship, conversation and mutual hospitality; and its members recognize greater obligations towards one another than they do towards those outside. Before the coming of the Europeans the age-village was also a military unit, led by its own great commoner, in the constant fights between chiefdoms.

In most villages there are several herds of cattle which feed separately. 231
The herd boys, as we have seen, thus form separate groups within the 641
village, so also do their fathers; the boys are related in the common activity of herding, the men, owners of the herd, by their joint interest in it and their common fear of witchcraft.

In the relationships of villagers the belief in witchcraft is a constantly 754
recurring factor. It is believed that certain people, both men and women 791
have the power of harming their neighbours and their neighbours' cattle without taking any overt action whatever, without reciting any spells or performing any magical ritual at all.

Their influence, which is exercized at night in dreams, is only fully visible to those who are themselves endowed with this power; and to it is constantly attributed both sickness in men and the failure of cows to give milk. In this belief the elements of actual ill will and quarreling, of actual sickness and the failure of cows to give milk and of actual dream experiences are combined in a significant whole. Witches are of two kinds, they say, those who use their power rightly (*ava ma ŋga*) and those who use it wrongly (*avalɔsi*). The first kind are said generally to spend their dreams in trying to prevent the others from harming those whom they hate. The good witches are the "defenders of the village," and in each village the great commoner is believed to be the first among them. In each group of men whose cows are herded together there is, again, commonly one man who has the reputation of defender of the herd, who is believed to protect the cows from the witchcraft of disgruntled individuals whether members of that small group or not. But if, at any time, a single person earns a general unpopularity in the village, whether by his pride, his meanness or by wrongdoing, then it is believed that the defenders themselves lead the spiritual attack against him, and he falls sick. Such a blast of unpopularity acting through the power of witchcraft is called the "breath of men" (*embepɔ sya vandu*); and the belief in 681
its efficacy is one of the chief sanctions of the accepted social order of Nyakyusa life.[13]

[13] c.f. Godfrey Wilson "An African Morality" *Africa* Jan. 1936.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and Tutsi who established conquest states to the north-west.[1] 173

Whatever the origin and adventures of the heroes they were 773 important in Nyakyusa and Ngonde history because their [174] graves became centres of religious ritual which linked together groups that were otherwise largely independent. The myths about them are the charter for chieftainship. They are depicted as benefactors who brought to uncivilized men not only the institution of chieftainship itself, but fire, cattle, iron, seed, and a creative power resident in their own bodies and those of their anointed heirs. But the myths also justify the power of commoners [778] who first occupied the country and who have witchcraft in their [754] bellies:

The commoners whom Lwembe found here were extraordinary. They 539 were cultivators, but they had not yet got fire, they ate their food raw. It was we chiefs, it was Lwembe, who brought fire and cattle—he came and found the original occupants without cattle; hence the commoners say, 'We are the earth'. Commoners are different from us physically, they are black; they are awe-inspiring, they are witches. Before you Europeans came the chiefs like Mwaipopo (116) were not [177] awe-inspiring, they feared the commoners very much; the commoners [754] hammered the chief with their fists—yes, by daylight. And if the chief [643] cut a man's bananas that man took the chief's. If the commoners were angry with Mwaipopo they fetched Mwangomo (124 whose chiefdom adjoins Mwaipopo's) at night by their witchcraft; he came in the night with his people and seized the cattle, both those of the chief, Mwaipopo, and those of the commoners. The next day the commoners said: 'It is we, we are angry. Why do you not look after us? Why do you not kill cattle for us?' Then Mwaipopo would kill two head of cattle and all the men in the country ate. . . . Mwaipopo and his equals were not awe-inspiring long ago, it is you Europeans who have created chieftainship and awe.

[1] cf. H. H. Curson and R. W. Thornton, 'A Contribution to the Study of African Native Cattle', *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Science and Animal Industry*, vii, 2 [113] October 1936 (Government Printer, Pretoria). An analysis of the distribution and migration of breeds in Africa.

H. B. Thompson and R. Scott, *Uganda* (1935), pp. 195 ff.

Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 68: 69.

M. Merker, *Die Masai*, pp. 157 ff., 1904, Berlin.

H. H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, 1904, pp. 86, 105 (early photographs of Nyoro cattle).

The short-horn type predominates among the Nyakyusa, but some animals suggest [231] an intermixture with Sanga cattle. The hump is regarded as a great delicacy and is [825] exaggerated in the clay cattle which boys model. Cf. Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 72. The [532] similarity between the ritual and symbolism of the Nyakyusa and those of the Ganda as described by Roscoe is marked. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, 1911.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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1. CATTLE AT PASTURE

[Facing p. 14]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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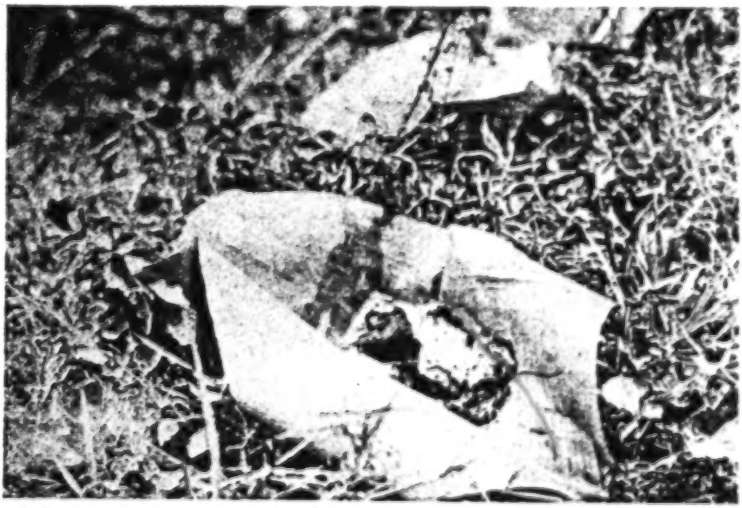
4*a*. SACRIFICE AT LUBAGA



4*b*. THE SACRIFICIAL MEAT

[facing p. 23]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

partly to the closer spacing of children. Whereas four years between births was conventional formerly, two or less is now usual. One of the characteristics of the present population is a disproportion between the sexes, the females outnumbering the males by 100 to 87·9 even when due allowance has been made for men away at work.[1] This disproportion is characteristic also of African populations in the south[2] and it appears likely that it is due to a wide difference in the survival rate of men and women, but the vital statistics necessary to test this hypothesis are lacking.

The increase in population, and the demand for coffee gardens and rice fields by men who prefer to earn cash by agriculture rather than as migrant labourers, has led to a shortage of land, already acute in the fertile lake-shore plain, and imminent in the coffee-growing villages of the hills.[3] Much land that was previously pasture land has been taken into cultivation, and signs of overstocking are everywhere apparent. Hillsides that in 1938 were covered with grass, waist high, now have a thin stubble. To aggravate matters, the care of stock is less efficient than it used to be because it is left to very small boys, their seniors being occupied with school and hoeing. Often the cattle are both ill nourished and covered with ticks—something that was never seen when they were herded by adolescents and carefully hand-dressed. The villagers themselves are as much concerned as the agricultural officers over the shortage of pasture and the decrease in the milk supply, but they are not prepared to accept the remedies recommended: namely, reduction of stock and stall-feeding. The advice of Europeans on the growing of rice and coffee crops, which they introduced to the district, is acceptable, but the Nyakyusa argue

[1] The Census figures cannot be taken as exact, but they give some indication of the increase in population, and the disproportion between men and women. In 1931 the population of Rungwe District was given as 195,060. In 1948 it was 236,386. In 1931 the proportion of males to females (Kukwe and Nyakyusa in Rungwe district) was 73·6 : 100 (Tanganyika Territory, *Census of the Native Population 1931*). In 1941 the figure for Tukuyu district as a whole was 80 : 100 (Tanganyika Territory, *East African Population Census, 1948*). Allowing for 8,800 men away without wives (estimate for 1954 less 10 per cent), the proportion is 87·9 : 100 (cf. P. H. Gulliver, Report on the Migration of African Workers to the South from the Southern Highland Province, with special Reference to the Nyakyusa of Rungwe District, February 1955, p. 16). The discrepancy in the figures given for adults was 60·2 : 100 in 1948, but the ages of males and females classed as 'adult' are uncertain.

[2] D. H. Houghton and E. M. Walton, *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, Keiskammahoek Rural Survey, vol. ii, pp. 24-6, 51. The sex ratio for Keiskammahoek District is 73·8 males : 100 females.

[3] cf. P. H. Gulliver, *Nyakyusa Land and Population*, 1956.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

by horizontal bamboo joists, at right angles to the principal beams of the ceiling. This ceiling never covers the entire room, but only the greater part, and always the part directly above the hearth. Up here firewood is placed to dry. A fine black basket is hung from the ceiling above the fire. Access to the loft is by means of a ladder. 342 [372]

When you read reports by the 'first' Europeans on these peoples and their houses, they always refer to a round house with reflining walls and a conical roof. Merensky (1894) mentions and illustrates such a house (pages 141 et seq.). Fülleborn (1906) mentions and illustrates several houses (Text Volume pages 376 et seq., and Atlas, plates 64–67). The inner surface of the walls of the house was decorated with patterns impressed into the mud layer which covers the bamboo poles. The three stones that form the hearth are shown, and also the bed behind a low permanent partition wall. These were exceptionally fine houses with beautiful, decorated and painted doors. The entrance had relief ornaments, often of coloured clay. Fülleborn notes that the mud houses are the dwellings of married people. [352]

There is no doubt that the round house is the original type of dwelling. In 1955, I saw no round houses like the ones described by the above scholars, but I know that formerly they were often seen, at least as late as 1932. Professor Monica Wilson of Cape Town has told me that she saw them everywhere in 1932, but that during a visit to the district in 1955 she found only one single house of this type, in the village of Masoko. 178 342

At the time of my visit, round houses could be seen, but not the type having walls inclining inwards near the ground, and they were not by far as imposing as the houses mentioned above; and there were not many of them. I had the opportunity to make drawings of three houses, all occupied by old people. 342

The round house is called an *isinga*. In one of these *isinga* there lived an old man whose wife, Malia, lived across the courtyard in a rectangular hut of the old Nyakyusa type (see infra). The husband's house was 6.5 metres across, and was divided in halves by a fence made from sticks. One half was where the man lived; it had one bed for him, and one for his grandchildren, who would come to visit him, now and then. Near the wall were two iron chests; also, a board had been hung at the wall as a roost for the chicken. A hen's nest, a small wicker basket, was placed about 3 ft. above the floor in the furcation of a four or five-pronged stick. These hen's nests are seen in all houses. The ceiling was supported by seven upright posts, seemingly placed entirely at random. The under side of the roof was strengthened by eight circular-running fascines of bamboo. In the centre, a heavy log (not bamboo) reached up to the pointed top of the roof. [592] [353] [352] [231]

The other half of the house was reserved for the cattle, three cows and two calves; there were five posts to which the cattle were tied at night. [231]

The house had an outer door at each end, but there was no passage from the man's half to that of the cattle.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 parts. The partition wall was bamboo and mud. A doorway gave on to the inner
353 part, where Tufwene had her bed.

354 There were two hearths, one in each room. The front one was not used. In the outer room was a bed for guests—a common feature of all houses. Tufwene was thought to be well off, and she had plenty of carrying rings, used by the
482 women when they carry loads, often very heavy, on their heads. The inner room was used for stores, including a number of earthen jars. She had three very fine,
352 low stools. I saw them outside in the sun, but their usual place was no doubt in the outer room, which had the character of a workroom. Here were the large
412 wooden mortar and its long pestle; also the grinding stone and in a corner the small mat, the *ulyanya*, which is used to take up the newly ground flour. There
417 was also the ladder, used for fetching down firewood from the loft; you could see
415 the hen's nest, and the large water jar with its pointed bottom placed on three stones.

415 The third *isinga* belonged to an eighty-year-old woman whose husband had
[769 died. She told me how every day she would fill a fine, decorated bamboo mug
[531] with milk for him! These mugs, seen in all the houses, mostly have geometrical

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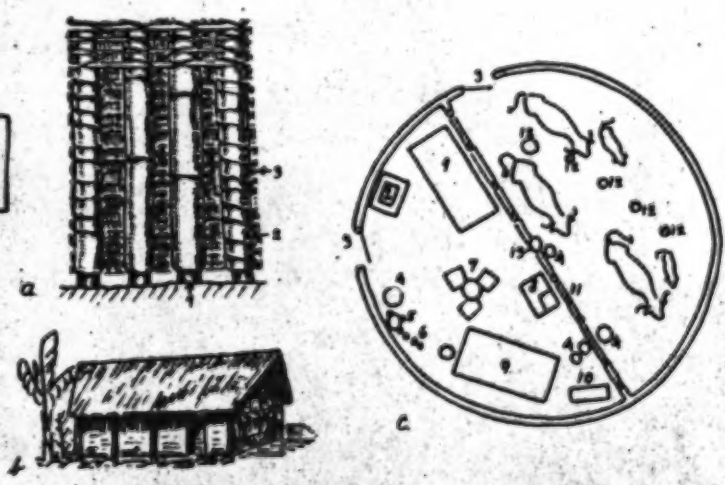

Houses belonging to Malia Ulinyelaya and her husband.

a. Detail of *isinga*, outer wall. 1, tree fern stem joined to bamboo pole—note aperture for liquid manure; 2, bamboo pole with plant fibre windings; 3, split bamboo.—b, Malia's *ifibaga*. —c. Plan of *isinga*. 1, bed of the man; 2, iron chests for garments; 3, door; 4, posts supporting ceiling; 5, hen's nest; 6, hoes and pestle for the maize mortar; 7, hearth; 8, chests; 9, bed of the grandchildren; 10, roost from hollowed out trunk; 11, low partition; 12, posts for tying cattle; 13, centre post to top of roof.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

patterns burned into the bamboo; they are hung upside down so the dust will not settle in them. The bottom is the natural partition of the bamboo cane. 415 531

The house was standing on high, slightly slanting ground, and like the first mentioned house it was buttressed by a great number of thick branches. Incidentally, it seemed to be very old and rickety. Inside, there were a great many posts supporting the horizontal bamboo ceiling and the stores of firewood. All posts were bifurcated and held the beams solidly in place. The diameter of the house was the usual 6.5 metres, but in this case there was no inner partition. As this woman was very poor, she had no bed, but slept on a mat on the floor. Only very rarely is there no bed in the houses; I remember having seen this only three times. 342 [352 556]

The hearth was the usual type: three decorated square stones, rising to a height of 30 cm above the floor, but being sunk 70 cm into the ground. Here they were positioned on one side, to ensure that the centre post would not catch fire, and to make for easy escape of the smoke through the doorway. None of the houses have other means of smoke outlet. 354

Alongside the wall were calabashes, jars, and baskets; material for the baskets; and a little away from the wall, the large mill-stone and its appurtenant smaller grinding stone. A hen's nest was not missing either. Along one side was fitted a small under-ceiling for the storage of small things. Two or three bananas, meant to be her next meal, were lying on the floor near one of the posts. From the loft she reached down a calfskin in which she had been carrying her child. Its inside was of a reddish colour. 352 [231] [482 237]

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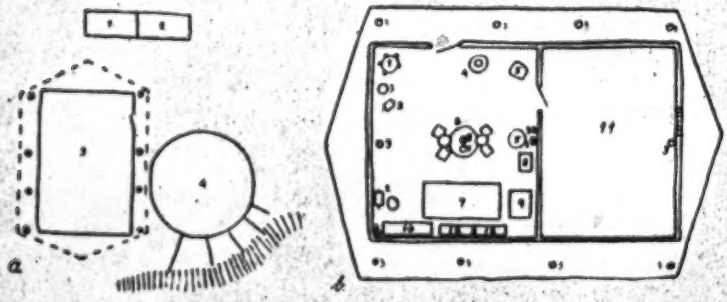

a. Site plan of Malia Ulinyelusya's houses. 1, hen-coop; 2, drying-racks for crops; 3, Malia's *ifilaga* with roof supports along sides; 4, *isiinga* belonging to Malia's husband, with buttresses at low ground.—b. Plan of Malia's *ifilaga* (barred window in back room). 1, hen's nest; 2, *ifiitala* (stool); 3, posts (those going up to ridge of roof are filled in); 4, large basket; 5, basket; 6, clay base round twin posts; 7, Malia's bed; 8, chest; 9, wooden chest; 10, table; 11, back room, having bamboo ceiling carried by bamboo cross beam (between posts marked 3); the room is used for storing clothes, etc.; 12, shelves.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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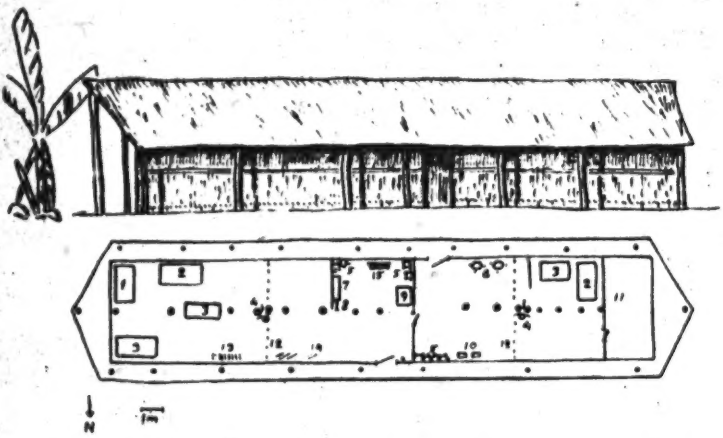

An *ikibaga* in the village of Kisondela, the district of Rutengalo, belonging to a man with two wives. The rooms have bamboo ceilings from dotted lines to either gable. Posts reaching to ridge of roof are filled in. 1, husband's bed; 2, wife's bed; 3, child's bed; 4, hearth; 5, hens' nests; 6, water jar; 7, roost; 8, ladder; 9, table; 10, stools; 11, store-room; 12, dotted lines show limitation of ceiling; 13, small objects; 14, working material; 15, sleeping mat.

born. On page 357, he reports how the boys, when 7 or 10 years old, will leave their parents' house to live in long, rectangular cowhouse-like houses big or small, in a special youngsters' quarter at the far end of the village. On page 358 he writes: In many cases you do not know for certain whether you are dealing with [343] a youngsters' house or a cowhouse—for the cattle may well be kept in these houses—or the herdsmen may sleep in the cowhouses. However, this mostly holds [184 true of the low-lying Konde country, while on the other hand, in the high country, 231] the cattle is usually kept in the dwelling houses. On pages 371 and 372, he relates how the cattle is tied to posts at night, and he shows a picture of a cowhouse.

He also refers (on page 376) to the use of the rectangular house for married men besides the boys. The difference is seen in the fact that these houses are not [462] roughcast with mud, as this work is the province of women. Finally, he reports that, during the last few years of his stay in the Konde country, he saw Konde [177] houses being built under increasing influence of the coastal culture, in imitation of the Swahili houses. They were roughcast with mud inside and out, and had a verandah supported by posts.

In 1955, many *ikabagas* could be seen. Some were for the cattle, but most were dwelling houses for married people. (Boys aged 7–10 and upwards until the [824] marriageable age lived in ramshackle boys' houses, the material of which was not [855] bamboo, but a thinner grass, resembling bamboo very much. These houses stood

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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[352
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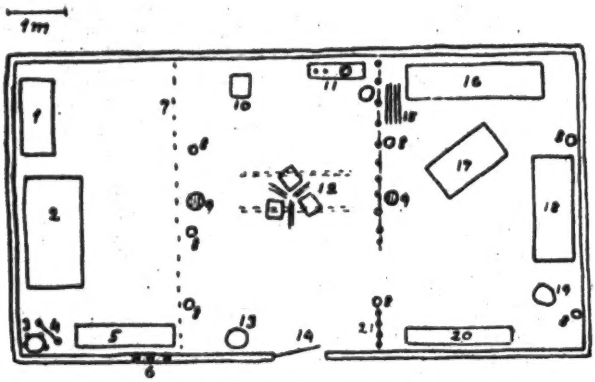

Iselina's house. 1, cupboard with shelves; 2, children's bed; 3, hen's nest; 4, ladder; 5, roost; 6, barred window; 7, from dotted line towards the right is the bamboo ceiling; 8, from here issue 5 horizontal bamboo sticks on which the bamboo ceiling is supported; 9, Posts supporting roof; 10, chair; 11, low shelf with two bamboo jars and a water jar; 12, hearth with three hearthstones and sticks under ceiling for carrying the fine basket, and corn-cobs hung up to dry, etc.; 13, beer jar; 14, door; 15, mats behind the low partition; 16, shelf for domestic utensils; 17, child's bed; 18, Iselina's bed; 19, baskets; 20, domestic utensils; 21, low partition between rooms.

found. In the front part of the Kikoła house, serving as an entrance room, were four posts called *fkingi*, to which two cows were tied at night.

This part, which we may call the cowhouse, also housed hen's nests, the roost, [231] and the mortar to be used for maize, etc.

The hearth, consisting of one square and two round hearthstones, was placed [354] in the centre of the living-room part. Here were also water jars and the woman's bed. This means that even if this type of house had a roof of a different shape and was always provided with a verandah with posts supporting its roof, the interior was really designed on the same lines as the short *ikibagà*, but it was [542] meant to house only one woman, or one man, as we shall see below.

We may imagine that one of the reasons why the type of roof was changed, was the weakness of the pointed roof of the *ikibaga*. It could often be seen to have a tendency to fall in, and had to be supported by a post. Even in Fülleborn's illustrations, e.g. plate 64 c, a kind of reinforcement can be seen at the edge of the roof. No doubt the roof of the *ihema* does not suffer to the same extent from this flaw. 342 178

New houses were being built to this design, and I suppose that a little more than half the number of the houses were of the *ikibaga* type, and a little than half the *ihema*. 342

In the village of Holo, I surveyed three houses belonging to one family, a [361]

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

233 343 462 [413] the women, but the men are responsible for keeping the floor of the stable in good repair. For this purpose a specific tool is used, called *ukutoba indobelu*. It is round on top, flattened on the lower side and provided with a handle.

224 5. *Hunting*. Sometimes the Nyakyusa go out to hunt, but nowadays hunting is much more restricted than in former times as described e. g by Mackenzie in his book: "The spirit-ridden Konde" (London 1925). This record, however, deals mostly with the Ngonde of the environment of Karonga whose interesting social history was unsurpassably revealed to us by Mr. Godfrey Wilson's treatise: "The Constitution of Ngonde" (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, Number Three. Livingstone, Northern Rhodesia 1939.) Hunting in the Nyakyusa country is now [656] curtailed by governmental regulations. Hunting *(ukufuema)*, therefore, does not supply an essential part of the food requirements of the [136] natives. The colobus apes on the slopes of the Rungwe volcano and the [656] Poroto Mountains are sometimes killed for their attractive black and white skins, but fortunately this is now forbidden by the government. Otherwise these apes would be exterminated in quite a short time, [439] since the skins of these apes are in great demand with some Europeans for rugs and covers. Naturally, the hunting of lions and especially of leopards, which even nowadays still cause great damage, is not restricted.

224 The hunting of game for food is often done with dogs *(imbwa)* which ● 231 have small bells *(inyesi)* on collars round their necks. Thereby the hunter *(umfuemi)* always knows the whereabouts of his dog. The chase is continued till the dog or dogs are exhausted. The object of the hunt *(umfuemu)* is generally a small type of antelope *(akasya)*, e. g. in the [656] environment of Mwakalele, as I was instructed. The usual time for hunting is the cooler season, but to-day a permit of the government is also required.

223 Catching birds by means of traps *(untegu*, pl. *imitegu)* is still common in the Nyakyusa area. I have also seen such traps constructed by means of the flicking-gallow's principle also in the vicinity of Utengule among the Safwa. The herd boys especially set traps to catch quails *(imbesi)* when the *malesi* (millet) harvest is over. Sometimes smaller birds are also coursed until they are exhausted and then slain. One day I found a stick vertically put on the soil and with a triangle made of smaller sticks at its top. The horizontal part of which was smeared with an adhesive substance. I was told that this was a trap for birds,

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the figures. Also bicycles, aeroplanes, motor-cars and other striking objects of the European civilization are to be found represented and concentric white circles adjacent to these drawings or paintings.. 531 [177]

14. Houses. Sometimes the upper portion of the framework of the rectangular houses is not fully plastered with mud leaving broad open areas or strips horizontally or slopingly to the base-line. This may have its origin in an artistic motive and at the same time be useful in ventilating the interior of the hut. The ancient custom of the Nyakyusa to fill out the spaces between the framework of the walls with flat, oval cakes or clods of clay, supported inside the house by a second framework of bamboo *(uvumango)*, has also a decorative effect. 342

The preparation of those oval sun-dried clay cakes is the work of the women. L. Monteith Fotheringham described this in his "Adventures in Nyasaland" (London 1891, p. 22) with the following words: "The women make the bricks in shape like large eggs by pressing the clay between their hands." The building of the framework of the hut and the thatching of the roof is the task of the men. Nyumba means "the house" in Kinyakyusa as wellas in Swahili; *isyenga* is the name for the old-fashioned hut of the Nyakyusa possessing a round baseline and a framework expanding upwards in diameter. The rectangular hut is called *ikibaga* and the smaller rectangular hut used as a store or a fowl pen, *akabaga*. It is interesting to note that there is no special word for roof in Kinyakyusa. This part of the hut or house is simply called "the above" *(iyuru)*. In contrast to this fact the different poles of the roof-structure are specially named according to their position parallel to or at right angels to the ridge of the rectangular houses. *Ukutalike* means to bind the different rafters of the roof together; *imbanda* is the name for the supporting poles of the roof, and *inyengo* for the poles of the framework of the walls. [339 462] [113]

15. Outfit. Inside the house we find besides the bedsteads *(ikitara, pl. ifitara)* and the household utensils, the grinding-mill *(uruwara)*, consisting of an upper (smaller) and a lower (broader) stone. The flour falls into a basket placed in front of the mill. Sometimes in a corner of the hut a nest *(ikitero)* for a sitting hen on top of a pole is to be found. Outside the house is a place for the sweepings *(urutagililo)*. The cleaning of the interior of the houses and also the repairing of the mud plaster is the task of the women, but I saw men cleaning the space in front of the huts. At any case, it must be acknowledged that the cleanliness of a Nyakyusa village leaves little to be desired. 352 [42] [231] 356 462

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

000 tion, brought me a grass mat to lie on, and then ran to fetch a great dish of *amasulu*, as the thick milk is called. Only once have I eaten more welcome food; when, having been obliged to make a long detour, I lost touch with my food boxes, and got two cobs of soft, juicy maize from a garden I was passing through. That, I think, was the most delicious meal I ever made.

231 Polling of cattle is practised, but only for special reasons; if the animal is bad-tempered, or if the horns grow into the face, or if it is desired to give the cow a youthful appearance with a view to a good sale. The polling is done by specialists, but the cow, carefully bound, is held by the owner himself. Fine-looking horns are scraped to preserve their appearance. There is no gelding of bullocks, as the animals are never used for work of any kind; though European planters and others have proved that they respond well to training.

• 232 A people so keen on cattle rearing have naturally developed some skill in the treatment of the various ills that afflict their stocks. Sympathetic magic plays a considerable part in the treatment. If a cow drops one bull-calf after another, the doctor will give the owner a medicine made into four great pills. Then, if his own wife did not have a daughter as her first-born, the owner engages the services of a woman who did. This daughter she takes upon her back, and, while the owner forcibly opens the mouth of the cow, she drops the pills into it. Taking another supply in her hand, she passes it over the back of the cow from

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

• 232 neck to tail, saying, "You will now give a cow-calf." What remains of the medicine is put into the stall, and the next calf will be a female. A cow that kills her calf in dropping it is given a medicine which will prevent the recurrence of the fatality. Medicine is also given if the milk is not satisfactory in quantity; and by rubbing in a medicine from tail to neck specialists claim to be able to tell whether a calf in the womb is male or female.

232 754 A disease which does not yield to treatment is the work either of the spirits or of a sorcerer. Divination is resorted to, and the particular spirit operating having been discovered, the appropriate offerings are made, and the disease will now yield to treatment. If it is due to witchcraft, the chief is informed, and he publicly announces that if the animal is not well by next day, he will have the poison test applied to discover the culprit. This, however, if done at all to-day, is done in secrecy, for the chief who permits the poison cup to be administered is liable to severe penalties. But so universal is the belief in witchcraft that the suppression of the poison cup is adduced as the cause of a great increase in the number of sorcerers, and consequently of the general insecurity.

696 Cattle are sometimes deliberately poisoned. A man has a case at court, and it goes against him, although he is convinced that he is in the right. He is ordered [278] to pay a cow to his antagonist; which he does, but he first poisons it with a slow-working drug, and the animal will die in a few days. The successful litigant, although he knows perfectly the cause of the death,

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

kind of grass grows there maize will do well, or maybe ground-nuts. Some grass-lands have very poor soil in which no crop at all will grow properly, the one we call *kyusi* for example, or again the one we call *unnyegesi* ("the ant"); no one hoes these lands. Some gardens we hoe on the higher ground, others near the streams, either right in the mud by the water or else in ground that is merely moist. On the higher ground we hoe millet, peas, sweet-potatoes, cassava and some other crops; in the muddy places by the water we hoe yams, building huge ridges for them called *fibimbika*; and there too we sometimes put in (during the dry season) the shoots of sweet potatoes that we shall later plant elsewhere. If the soil is only a little muddy and is mixed with sand, then we plant maize there. The right soil for beans we call *kibumba*—a red soil which is sometimes mixed with sand. Ground-nuts we either plant in the *kibumba* (if it is the sandy kind) or else just in sand. Whenever a man is hoeing a field for millet or ground-nuts or sweet-potatoes, he can tell just from the soil whether his crop will do well or not."[1] 242

And so also the Nyakyusa well understand the different qualities of pasture. The cattle are herded by small boys but on most mornings one of the men also goes out with the herd to show the boys where to pasture it and what grass-land to avoid. 232

Into the value of arable land sentiment also enters and men like, *ceteris paribus*, to hoe their gardens where they themselves or their fathers and brothers have hoed before. So too the value of building plots is determined both by practical and emotional considerations: large and relatively level sites on which bananas grow well are preferred to narrow or steeply sloping ones or to sites where bananas do badly, but, on the other hand, of two equally convenient sites that with family associations is normally preferred. And in the case of building sites religious considerations may also enter. A friend of mine told me that, when his father died, he did not move but left his father's site vacant with the new grave upon it; a year or two later his millet crop unaccountably failed and the diviner told him that his father's spirit was angry that no one had "swept his grave," i.e. that the plot had been left vacant. My friend did not actually move, even then, for he preferred his own site; he compromised by the performance of a ritual sacrifice to his father's spirit. But in such cases a man will often move to his dead father's site for fear of further misfortunes. 311 769 [787]

We have discussed briefly the purposes for which and the techniques by means of which the Nyakyusa use their land, and we have indicated a few of the main considerations which lead them to value some particular

[1] Text written for me by a literate Nyakyusa.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

partly to the closer spacing of children. Whereas four years between births was conventional formerly, two or less is now usual. One of the characteristics of the present population is a disproportion between the sexes, the females outnumbering the males by 100 to 87·9 even when due allowance has been made for men away at work.[1] This disproportion is characteristic also of African populations in the south[2] and it appears likely that it is due to a wide difference in the survival rate of men and women, but the vital statistics necessary to test this hypothesis are lacking. 177 [161] [162]

The increase in population, and the demand for coffee gardens and rice fields by men who prefer to earn cash by agriculture rather than as migrant labourers, has led to a shortage of land, already acute in the fertile lake-shore plain, and imminent in the coffee-growing villages of the hills.[3] Much land that was previously pasture land has been taken into cultivation, and signs of overstocking are everywhere apparent. Hillsides that in 1938 were covered with grass, waist high, now have a thin stubble. To aggravate matters, the care of stock is less efficient than it used to be because it is left to very small boys, their seniors being occupied with school and hoeing. Often the cattle are both ill nourished and covered with ticks—something that was never seen when they were herded by adolescents and carefully hand-dressed. The villagers themselves are as much concerned as the agricultural officers over the shortage of pasture and the decrease in the milk supply, but they are not prepared to accept the remedies recommended: namely, reduction of stock and stall-feeding. The advice of Europeans on the growing of rice and coffee crops, which they introduced to the district, is acceptable, but the Nyakyusa argue [311] [231] [232] [242]

[1] The Census figures cannot be taken as exact, but they give some indication of the increase in population, and the disproportion between men and women. In 1931 the population of Rungwe District was given as 195,062. In 1948 it was 236,386. In 1931 the proportion of males to females (Kukwe and Nyakyusa in Rungwe district) was 73·6 : 100 (Tanganyika Territory, *Census of the Native Population 1931*). In 1941 the figure for Tukuyu district as a whole was 80 : 100 (Tanganyika Territory, *East African Population Census, 1948*). Allowing for 8,820 men away without wives (estimate for 1954 less 10 per cent), the proportion is 87·9 : 100 (cf. P. H. Gulliver, Report on the Migration of African Workers to the South from the Southern Highland Province, with special Reference to the Nyakyusa of Rungwe District, February 1955, p. 16). The discrepancy in the figures given for *adults* was 62·2 : 100 in 1948, but the ages of males and females classed as 'adult' are uncertain.

[2] D. H. Houghton and E. M. Walton, *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, Keiskammahoek Rural Survey, vol. ii, pp. 24-6, 51. The sex ratio for Keiskammahoek District is 73·8 males : 100 females.

[3] cf. P. H. Gulliver, *Nyakyusa Land and Population*, 1956.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

that they have always been cattle men and they need no instruction on cattle. The tension over stock limitation and soil conservation, so acute in many parts of Africa, is only just appearing in Rungwe district, but potentially it is serious.

Pressure on land, and the planting of a valuable long-term crop such as coffee, have undermined the traditional organization of age-villages. The old men are no longer prepared to move to make way for their sons and, without a new deal in land each generation, the territorial separation of the generations is blurred. Boys villages are no longer visible in the hills near Rungwe mission, partly because so many young men are away, either at school or in employment, but largely because most of the land is taken up with coffee gardens. Homesteads are being built farther apart as men lay out coffee round their houses, and sons often build on a corner of their father's estate instead of in a separate village. On the plain, also, the pressure of population blurs the boundaries between generations. Only in the least heavily populated middle belt are numerous boys' villages still clearly visible, and here too a 'coming out' has recently been celebrated, with some redistribution of land. The scarcest land, that in old volcanic craters, was always inherited, like cattle, not reallocated each generation, and almost all cultivated land is now treated in this way. In many chiefdoms, therefore, a young man looks to his father or senior brother for land, rather than to the village headman, and inheritance is supremely important. But the form of inheritance is changing: property now goes directly from father to son, not as formerly to each of a group of full brothers before reverting to the senior son of the eldest of them. The claims of more distant kinsmen on inherited stock are less than they used to be; such stock becomes the exclusive property of father and sons, rather than property in which members of a lineage of three or four generations have reciprocal rights. The main economic bond which held the lineage together, the exchange of cattle, is thus broken.

Formerly a marriage was a contract between lineages rather than between individuals. A girl was betrothed before puberty to a man of her father's choice and should he die she was still regarded as married to his heir. Should she die a sister replaced her. Ideally a marriage bond between lineages lasted for generations, each man who died being replaced by a brother or son, each woman by a sister or brother's daughter. The choice of a partner in marriage

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P. 138]

Notes on the daily life of the Nyakyusa (Tanganyika Territory)

Cf. Sociologus 1951, I, 1 S. 53 ff.

By F. Rudolf Lehmann

192 576 *1. Greetings.* The first thing to strike a visitor to the Nyakyusa country north of Lake Nyasa on passing through one of the numerous picturesque villages surrounded by banana groves is the way of greeting customary among these people. "*Ukuponya*" is the Nyakyusa word for "to greet". In the morning you are greeted with the exclamation: "*ugonile* (pl. *mugonile)*", which literally means: "Did you sleep well?" And you may answer in the same way, or, in fuller form as you can hear it from the mouth of the natives: "*ae'e ndaga, ugonile*", or "*ugonile yoyoque*". "*ae'e ndaga*" may be used with all answers, meaning: thanks! At noon or in the afternoon you will hear: "*uvombide*", you have worked, or, have you worked? Then, according to the case, you may answer: "*muvombide avanda*", you, men, have worked, or, generally: "*mwangere*", which is equivalent to the Swahili: "*habari gani?*". If you greet a person in the evening with the words: "*ugonege*", may you sleep well, the person thus addressed will answer: "*kagone!*".

234 [512] *2. Milking.* The first task in the daily life of the Nyakyusa people is for the men to milk the cows. This is done in the morning before the cattle are driven out to graze and again in the evening when they return. But the cattle are also driven back to the village at noon when [237] they are usually fumigated standing in the smoke of a fire for which 232 cow dung and banana leaves are used, a process designed to remove vermin from the skin of the cattle. The animals seem to be very fond of this procedure. They stand quietly in the smoke gazing at the passers-by.

241 [462] *3. Hoeing.* "Hoeing is the work of men, planting weeding, reaping is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about four hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a. m., on the u[illegible]lateau they

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173 The balance between chiefs and commoners is explicit. So
773 also is their dependence on *both* cultivation and herding, and it
[643] should be noted that, though the Nyakyusa speak of themselves
as stock men, they are not pastoralists to the same extent as
[233] the Masai or the Nuer. The number of cattle in Rungwe District
today is less than half the human population, and men traditionally have done the heaviest share of cultivation.

773 In every version of the myth the tension between father and
593 son, or older and younger brother, is stressed. In Nyakyusa
561 society the father (or his eldest son who replaces him) controls
173 the family property and exacts obedience from his juniors who
[769] continue to show their respect after his death by sacrifices. The tale of Kyala and Lwembe celebrates the triumph of the junior. Thus, at the heart of the very ritual which sanctifies seniority there is the assertion of the victory of the son and younger brother. The myth expresses the aspirations of subordinates—of commoners and junior kinsmen—as well as the power of chiefs and seniors.

173 As we have already noted, the heroic cycle makes no reference
773 to the peculiar Nyakyusa institution of age-villages. Their charter
561 is a quite separate myth[1] which tells of a chief who looked on his
621 daughter-in-law and loved her and took her, and this so shocked
606 men that in future fathers and sons built separately, so that a father-in-law should never see his daughter-in-law.

There are other hints of the eternal theme. Besides the saga of
173 Lwembe there is another quite different tale of the origin of fire,
773 which is less often related. In it a girl who had angered her father
372 by breaking his drinking calabash fled from BuKinga to the Nyakyusa valley, where she found people who ate their food raw. She made fire and cooked for them and 'all women came to her to learn to cook'. The long-necked calabash, used as a drinking
[415] vessel and in prayer to the shades, is a man's most personal
[768] possession destroyed at his death, and it stands for a husband, while cooking is a symbol of the sexual activity of women, so the myth is perhaps a drama of incest, but we have no direct evidence of this.

173 This last is the only tale in which a woman appears as a
773 benefactor. In general, the mythology is that of a strongly
562 patrilineal society in which men are dominant. The wives of Lwembe who walked behind their lord, shepherded by a lion,

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 85.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

311 my earlier labour migration enquiries in the Highlands, the village as a close residential unit is breaking up as the people are increasingly adopting the
433 more common East African pattern of each family building its own home-
245 stead in its own land-holding. These northern Nyakyusa say that they must have their coffee plots next to their homesteads for the sake of continuous supervision, and that this is impossible (which is true enough) where men live close together in compact villages. Again, coffee plots, with their standing, permanent trees, have become a valuable item of inheritance; sons lose no opportunity of taking them irrespective of the locations of their coevals or of the identity of their immediate neighbours. The values of land, cash-crops and material progress are placed much higher than the traditional values of coevality; indeed, such traditional values are largely inconsistent with modern wants and aspirations.

561 Thus the Nyakyusa age-village has become almost obsolete and it would seem that it must inevitably vanish altogether even in the remaining
361 conservative areas (e.g., in the east). Furthermore, its disappearance is leading to a distinct divergence between the Lake Plains Nyakyusa and those
178 of the Highlands. How far this divergence will become permanent and basically significant cannot be foreseen as yet in this early stage. Clearly the compact village is best fitted to an arable economy of rice cultivation in the Lake Plains, and at least until there is further agricultural change it will persist as a most important social group.

Nevertheless, with its enhanced exclusiveness and relative social isolation and with renewed rivalry with its neighbours, the Lake Plains village is scarcely conducive to the encouragement of agricultural and economic development. Neither is it anything but harmful towards contemporary efforts in the politico-administrative sphere to reduce parochialism and to foster a sense of unity and co-operation beyond the village and the petty traditional chiefdoms. Whilst supervisory control of the land through the
622 headman is in general excellent, reasonable and readily understandable
152 to the people, yet the excess of restrictiveness, the competitive scrambling for vacated holdings and the jealous fears are surely more than merely
182 unfortunate. There needs to be some modification to loosen the over-tight strings of village corporate ownership, to regularise the transfer of vacated holdings and to lessen the fears of village against village. These points are taken up again in Chapter V.

Cattle and Pastoral Requirements

311 Unfortunately, no great accuracy can be presumed for the Rungwe
233 District cattle censuses, but the available figures are summarised in Table VI.

TABLE VI
NYAKYUSA CATTLE

	1955				1951	
	No. of cattle	*Acres per beast*	*Cattle per person*	*Cattle per family of 5*	*No. of cattle*	*Acres per beast*
Lake Plains	31,418	4.1	0.5	2.5	26,822	5.2
Central Region ..	19,380	7.1	0.4	2	19,160	7.2
N.E. Highlands ..	19,095	7.4	0.4	2	17,165	8.4
N.W. Highlands ..	22,974	8.0	0.4	2	16,855	10.9
Total: Nyakyusa.. ..	92,867	6.4	0.4	2	80,002	7.2

The indicated increase in the numbers of cattle may well be attributable only to improved census enumeration by the Veterinary Department.

Although 6.4 acres per head of cattle for all Nyakyusa country, and even 4.1 acres in the Lake Plains, might seem to be adequate in a country so

well covered with vegetation and with so reliable and plentiful a rainfall, yet, of course, the actual pasturage available is very considerably less as so much of the land is taken for arable and building purposes. There is in practice a most acute shortage of grazing land everywhere, except in certain parts of the north-west Highlands (Ukukwe). This shortage is most critical during the wet season, for at other times of the year the herds are able to graze over the arable fields, where herbage grows exceptionally rapidly after harvest as a result of the high rainfall.

Traditionally, each village had a roughly demarcated area of common pasturage which was not, and could not be, used for arable purposes. With the increased demand for arable land, this commonage has almost everywhere in the Lake Plains been gradually whittled away for permanent arable holdings. Headmen who control these pastures, and many of their chiefs too, are much worried about this process, about the break with tradition and the modern pastoral difficulties; but arable needs are given priority over grazing and the practice continues. In the flood plains, the higher-density regions, common pasturage has by now almost disappeared altogether. The little which remains is largely unusable for cultivation, consisting of infertile or badly drained areas – often the sandy, coastal strips covered with dense thicket and tall sedges which provide very little useful grazing. During the dry season, after the paddy harvest, the situation is fair, but during the cultivation season pasturage is entirely inadequate, and in addition the cattle are compelled to live and graze in extremely arduous conditions of standing water, mud, mosquitoes and flies. They do not obtain enough food then and they lose condition badly. There are many deaths from exhaustion, near-starvation and disease, and this affects the immature stock particularly. Only by obstinate tenacity on the part of both man and beast can the herds be retained at all. There is no tradition of stall-feeding and so far the Nyakyusa have refused to adopt this measure of alleviation.

Yet, as the Nyakyusa are quick to point out, each family has only a few cattle. Most families have a cow or two, and the average is only about two to three head per family – *cf.* Table VI, page 34. Owners of large herds are relatively few, and herds of more than ten cattle in a single family are very uncommon. Although the cattle population is too great for the pasture resources now available, yet the animals are fairly evenly and thinly distributed amongst the dense human population. Goats and sheep are few – about 600 altogether – in the Lake Plains and of no significance. It is important to note that here we do not have a situation of large herds which might be reduced by some form of culling.

Cattle are held in high esteem by all Nyakyusa as a source of valued milk for the daily diet, as the means to marriage (in bridewealth), as a store of capital, as a symbol of prestige and as an essential element in important ceremonial activity. This kind of value system needs no emphasis here as it is common to much of Eastern Africa, but it may be noted that one of the principle uses of the large sums of money saved from wages in mining employment (labour migration)[1] and from the profits of cash-cropping at home is in the purchase of cattle. It is thought that money is best invested, saved and used in that way, once immediate material needs have been met.

Even with the high proportion of deaths from disease and the appalling conditions of the wet season, there are indications that the numbers of cattle are not decreasing and there may well be local increases. Apart from natural increase, there is fairly heavy buying from the Ndali people to the north-west in Rungwe District, and also from farther afield in Northern Nyasaland, and in Nyamwanga and Fipa tribal areas (albeit illicitly).

1. During the course of my earlier labour migration enquiries men would usually estimate their savings for me, when completing routine questionnaires, by the number of cattle they could buy.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

311 Whereas in the Highland and Central regions the large numbers of
233 cattle – in relation, that is, to the available pasture resources – are causing over-grazing and soil erosion, particularly in the hilly areas so often nowadays relegated to pasturage, on the other hand in the flood plains there does not appear, at least to the layman, to have been any serious effects on the land.
[241] The natural manuring of the paddy fields in the dry season is advantageous. In the Lake Plains it is the cattle rather than the land which suffer, but so far the Nyakyusa have done virtually nothing to meet the new conditions, other than to complain bitterly and fruitlessly.

The Young Men: Land Shortage and Labour Migration

423 The younger Nyakyusa men find increasing difficulty in obtaining arable land now that there are no longer vacant areas to be taken up, and the older men are no longer prepared to cede their land rights in favour of the younger generation, as they traditionally did. When occasional fields are left vacant, the young men must take their turn with their elders, who themselves are so chronically short of land – and the headmen commonly favour the older villagers with families as against the younger men. This means that in the high-density regions the majority of men under the age of about 30 years have little or no arable land, nor can they hope for it until the deaths of their fathers. In the congested village sites even their banana plots may be smaller than is desirable for the provision of the staple food.

[593] The young man, then, is compelled to remain dependent on his father's and elder brother's holding; indeed, headmen often justify their refusals to
[178] allocate plots to young men on the express grounds that the latter must share their elders' fields. Thus the valued independence of the young Nyakyusa is severely restricted and it seems that tensions and difficulties are beginning
[578] to arise between fathers and sons, and between brothers, because of this. Sons are blamed for not doing their fair share in the family cultivation; fathers are blamed for giving their sons inadequate shares in crops and crop incomes. It will be remembered that one of the fundamental principles underlying Nyakyusa society and its age-village organisation is the spatial segregation of parents and children (*cf.* page 22). Now they are inevitably being put into competition with one another over inadequate fields in a single holding.

The young men are severely restricted, if not altogether cut off, from the
[434] opportunity to cultivate paddy in their own fields and thus to earn their incomes at home, for paddy-growing is the only way of earning a living in the
[543] Lake Plains. Yet it is these younger men whose money demand is greatest; to buy clothing, bicycles and other store-goods, and to buy cattle for marriage payments. They are therefore strongly attracted by the ready opportunities for taking up wage-labour abroad, in the mines of the Rhodesias and South Africa where wages are high (see Gulliver, 1957).

With the best will in the world, when, as in the very high-density region, the average holding is little more than an acre and a half – when, that is, the older men themselves desire larger acreages for their own cultivation needs – it is not possible for a father to allow his son to take large shares in his fields. In some cases a father does give outright to his adult sons strips of his holding, but plots so provided are necessarily small. Quite as frequently a father does not consider it possible to break up his holding in his own lifetime, and sons are expected to assist in the common cultivation and to con-
[593] tinue merely to be given a share in the family proceeds at harvest. It is not surprising, therefore, that very large numbers of young men from the Lake
[167] Plains migrate abroad to work. Only about one man in 20 has not been away at all before the age of about 25 years. Much higher proportions of men and larger numbers absolutely are temporarily absent from the Lake

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

311 flood plains paddy fields where the ox-plough is in general use today. The
423 general advantages of consolidation require no exposition here.

In view of the domestic, economic and social importance of cattle to
[233] the Nyakyusa and their potential value in a mixed intensive economy, and also in view of the fact that cattle are widely held in very small numbers by individual families, it is suggested that further and more urgent attempts be made to encourage stall-feeding, especially during the wet season. It is realised that past efforts in this matter have failed, and therefore a thorough-going scheme of propaganda and demonstration work is needed. Small fodder crops might be grown in the dry season and there is always plenty of banana fodder as makeweight.

The problem of the landless young men is likely to remain very difficult (see pages 36ff). It has to be remembered of course, that as they get older men do acquire land gradually. Nevertheless the proportion of landless, or
[167] virtually landless, men is high and is apparently increasing. The large-scale, post-war labour migration to the Rhodesias and South Africa is undoubtedly one of the more important results of land shortage and economic difficulty, and it is a valuable safety valve. As I have written elsewhere: "The serious and increasing land shortage amongst the Nyakyusa raises real doubts if there is any policy at all which can keep the men at home when there is not enough land for them – for the sake of both economic and general social stability it might be preferable in the long run if the continued pressure on the land resources were released by a degree of permanent emigration."[1] Since writing that and during the course of my land investigations I have only become more convinced of its rightness. I would now go so far as to say that
[464] Nyakyusa men should be encouraged to go abroad to work and even to become permanent wage-labourers in the industries and areas which demand labour and offer a higher standard of living. If the Nyakyusa are not to be seriously retarded in their home economic development, based as it must be on agriculture (i.e. on the land), the excess population must find an outlet elsewhere.

[621] The general tendency towards greatly increased exclusiveness in the
[597] Nyakyusa village, involving renewed emphasis on the principle of land-holding only by residence and the forfeiture of a holding when changing residence, raises wider issues the future significance of which is not easily seen, especially by the Nyakyusa themselves. This narrow village parochialism does little to meet the increasingly difficult problem of land shortage, whilst the isolation it fosters is the antithesis of the wider outlook required by a developing society in a world money economy. I am fully aware of the strong native sentiment attached to the village and to village independence, but this was in fact diminishing in earlier European times before the new land scarcity set in (see pages 29-30). I do not think that this village system and the complex of attitudes and values it fosters is adequate to provide for the future – a future which the Nyakyusa do not yet clearly foresee. With some deference, therefore, I offer the following suggestion: a man who already has a holding should be able to retain it when he moves to live in another village. If his new home is too far away for the continued cultivation of all or part of the holding, or for any other valid reason, he should be able to sell or give it to anyone he wishes. Such gift or sale could be supervised by the headman of the village in which the holding lies. It might well, at first at any rate, be limited to a member of the same village, either an established villager or another man who is willing to come and live there. I think it important that disposal should be outright and not on leasehold terms, for the latter would most propably engender further complications and uncertainty of tenure, which must be avoided.

1. Gulliver, P. H.: *A Report on the Migration of African Workers to the South from the Southern Highlands Province, with special reference to the Nyakyusa of Rungwe District.* Provincial Administration, Tanganyika, 1955, page A21.

243 and Mapiko, although very little of these is sold. Ploughs have been introduced into the area as it is flat and the total number in use in 1942 is about 400. The first ploughing is carried out in June or July when the ground is still wet, and the second ploughing in October to February. Planting, which is all broadcast, is carried out in November to the middle of March and the harvesting is done in May to September.

256 A first mill was erected at Ipyana on the lake shore in 1942 with a capacity of 9 tons of rice in 15 hours. Another is now on its way from India with a capacity of 14 tons of rice in 15 hours and should be erected some time in 1944.

248 A small acreage of cotton is also sown along the Songwe River boundary, which borders on Nyasaland, with seed obtained from that Colony. Conditions, however, are not suitable on the remainder of the lake shore and expansion is not encouraged.

241 439 A list of exports from the district with approximate weights for 1942 is appended:—

Article	Weight in tons
	Tons
Mixed beans	600
Coffee	50
Groundnuts	80
Maize	1,500
Onions	20
European potatoes	200
Rice	1,500
Vegetables	40
Fruit	100
Banana flour	300
Cassava flour	50
Finger millet	150
Tea (European produce)	210
Total ..	4,720

Land Tenure and Economics of the People

423 In theory all land belongs to the chiefs or sub-chiefs, but in practice once a man has cultivated a plot, that plot belongs to him until he leaves the area in which he lives. If he leaves, the land reverts to the chief or sub-chief and may be given by him through his headman or elder to anyone in his area who is short of land or to a newcomer who wants a plot. Should a man go away and return after a long period and ask for a plot, he is bound [559 609 651] to be given one but not necessarily the plot he had before he left. Newcomers are welcomed and are given land, as the amount of tax collected in an area is an indication of the importance of a chief.

233 Stock grazing is a problem which is coming more and more to the fore. The number of

N 233 cattle in the district in the 1941 census was about 2.3 head per taxpayer or 55 head per square mile. Certain land is set aside each N [184 605] year for grazing, where stock is not able to interfere with the produce plots. Compensation for trespass of cattle on cultivated land is only paid among people of the lake shore.

N 656 Parts of the land to the west of Tukuyu have been badly eroded by cultivation and 134 over-grazing, and it is only since 1935 that 185 anti-erosion rules have been made to check the tendency for bad cultivation. Since they 242 were brought in, however, the majority of the tribe have become very keen on seeing the effect that well-controlled cultivation has on crops. The following are the Native Authority Rules concerning anti-erosion:—

"Throughout the Rungwa District, all natives shall follow orders regarding cultivation designed to prevent soil erosion as demonstrated and enjoined by the Agricultural Officer.

(*a*) All ridges and terraces shall be contoured and not follow the slope of the hill.

(*b*) In the case of cultivation done on the flat and not on ridges or terraces, a large ridge and ditch shall be dug at the top of the plot to remain permanently and be repaired from time to time."

N 439 The Wanyakyusa have never been dependant on outside sources for any of their food, N [135] but in their own territory there is no iron for making hoes nor clay for making earthenware pots. The former they were accustomed to get from Ukinga, on the eastern boundary of the district in the Livingstone mountains, and the pots were, and are still, made only by about 500 members of the Wakisi tribe living in a village on the lake shore at the extreme south-K 439 western point of the district. The Wakisi are 101 really of Ukinga origin and inhabit the eastern, northern and western shores of Lake Nyasa. They grow no food except cassava, and that only recently, and apart from the one village that makes the pots, their only work is as paddlers of canoes and fishermen. Most of their fish and pots are exchanged for food.

N 443 Since the Tukuyu District is so thickly populated and the inhabitants concentrated, it has been found necessary to create produce markets at comparatively short distances. N Transport from these markets, during war-438 time, has become difficult. The natural outlet 316 for Tukuyu native foodstuffs is the Lupa Goldfields, which lie about 100 miles to the

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done." (G. Wilson, Introduction, p. 260). 241

The putting of maize-grains as seed into the earth is the women's work, the sowing of millet *(malesi)* of both sexes. If you ask the men after they had come home from their work: "*Mukumbide ifivanya fya nongi?*", "Whose fields did you hoe?", the answer often may be: "*Tukumbide ifivanya fya tata!*" We have hoed the fields of our father. [243 462]

In former times, the Nyakyusa had a lot of ceremonies relating to the beginning of the hoeing season and of the beginning of the harvest-work. They are, however, nowadays nearly extinguished under the influence of European culture. [177]

With respect to the beginning of the hoeing season, a very comprehensive ceremony had to be carried out by the chief in community whith the *unganga* (medicine man) for providing the fields with extraordinary *(-sisya)* power *(amaka): amaka amasisya*, in this case: fertility. 241 622 [192]

When the crop was ripe, it was (at first) forbidden *(mwiko)* to take anything from the crop before the chief had given the permission. First the oldest male villagers informed the chief that it may be now the just time to give the crop free for the people, saying: "The people is hungry, we will now give them to eat!" Then the chief ordered that 6 or 8 (maize') corn-cobs were brought to him, and he sent these corn-cobs by a messenger to the (holy) offering-grove where they must be put down. After that has been correctly executed, he gave the permission for reaping the new crop. [182]

(NB. It was believed that those corn-cobs put into the offering-grove were eaten especially from the leopards. The powderes bones of the leopards were considered important ingredients of the consecration drink which the chief had to take at his initiation ceremonies and which should give him the strength *(amaka)* of a leopard, so that he also was called "the leopard" or "the leopard chief".) [237 825]

4. *Herding the Cattle and Cleansing the Stable.* The sociological importance of cattle among the Nyakyusa and the specific practice among them of herding the cattle by herdboys, that is also of highly sociological importance for the structure of the Nyakyusa society, is already described by G. Wilson (Introduction, p. 269 f). 233

The cleansing of the stables of which the Nyakyusa possess a great number of very well built ones, which have also sometimes a considerable length — apart from the cattle kraals —, is the task of 233 343 462

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

233 343 462 [413] the women, but the men are responsible for keeping the floor of the stable in good repair. For this purpose a specific tool is used, called *ukutoba indobelu*. It is round on top, flattened on the lower side and provided with a handle.

224 5. *Hunting*. Sometimes the Nyakyusa go out to hunt, but nowadays hunting is much more restricted than in former times as described e. g by Mackenzie in his book: "The spirit-ridden Konde" (London 1925). This record, however, deals mostly with the Ngonde of the environment of Karonga whose interesting social history was unsurpassably revealed to us by Mr. Godfrey Wilson's treatise: "The Constitution of Ngonde" (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, Number Three. Livingstone, Northern Rhodesia 1939.) Hunting in the Nyakyusa country is now [656] curtailed by governmental regulations. Hunting *(ukufuema)*, therefore, does not supply an essential part of the food requirements of the [136] natives. The colobus apes on the slopes of the Rungwe volcano and the [656] Poroto Mountains are sometimes killed for their attractive black and white skins, but fortunately this is now forbidden by the government. [439] Otherwise these apes would be exterminated in quite a short time, since the skins of these apes are in great demand with some Europeans for rugs and covers. Naturally, the hunting of lions and especially of leopards, which even nowadays still cause great damage, is not restricted.

224 231 The hunting of game for food is often done with dogs *(imbwa)* which have small bells *(inyesi)* on collars round their necks. Thereby the hunter *(umfuemi)* always knows the whereabouts of his dog. The chase is continued till the dog or dogs are exhausted. The object of the hunt *(umfuemu)* is generally a small type of antelope *(akasya)*, e. g. in the [656] environment of Mwakalele, as I was instructed. The usual time for hunting is the cooler season, but to-day a permit of the government is also required.

223 Catching birds by means of traps *(untepu*, pl. *imitegu)* is still common in the Nyakyusa area. I have also seen such traps constructed by means of the flicking-gallow's principle also in the vicinity of Utengule among the Safwa. The herd boys especially set traps to catch quails *(imbesi)* when the *malesi* (millet) harvest is over. Sometimes smaller birds are also coursed until they are exhausted and then slain. One day I found a stick vertically put on the soil and with a triangle made of smaller sticks at its top. The horizontal part of which was smeared with an adhesive substance. I was told that this was a trap for birds,

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

343 Also the stables I saw were very clean; their length is adjusted to the number of cattle which are sheltered therein. Sometimes a wooden hoop is to be found in such a stable, hanging down from the ceiling. [251] The inside of the hoop is filled with a wicker-work whose meshes are dense enough to hold fruits to be dried. If such a hoop is hanging in the stable being out of use, a bag made of leaves containing pumpkin seeds *(inyugu)* for later planting may be fastened to it, and on the beams of 233 the framework of the walls you may find a plaited leather neckband *(ulukoba)* for cows destined to hold a cow's bell *(ibangala)*. The sound of the bells of the cattle gave already great delight to the first European visitors of Nyakyusa and Ngonde Land, as we can read with Fotheringham (p. 24): "It is a pretty sight to see the herd coming into villages in the evening, and pleasant to hear the tinkle of the bells which are suspended from their necks, recalling in homely quietude the peaceful scenes of the Swiss."

184 The daily life of the Nyakyusa differs more or less among the 101 different ethnic groups which in former times had been independent units. Nowadays, however, all those groups who have similar speech and customs and share, therefore, a progressing common culture, only distinguished by minor local pecularities, are called by the common name "Nyakyusa" (Cf. G. Wilson: An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society. Bantu Studies, Vol. X, 1936, p. 254 f).

Synopsis

080 Verfasser beschreibt in diesem zweiten Bericht die verschiedenen Arbeiten aus dem Alltagsleben der Nyakyusa. Die Betreuung der großen Rinderherden, einschließlich des Melkens, ist Männersache, die Frauen reinigen nur die Ställe. Die Männer behacken die Felder, die Frauen säen, reinigen, ernten und bereiten alle Nahrung zu. Diese Arbeitsteilung fand Verfasser 1939 noch unangetastet, dagegen waren die zahlreichen mit Saat und Ernte verbundenen Zeremonien durch den europäischen Einfluß fast verschwunden. Ebenso war der Verfall der traditionellen Künste und Handwerke weit fortgeschritten durch europäische Einwirkungen wie durch die überall verstreuten indischen Händler als Vermittler der ausländischen Waren. Diese hatten auch die traditionelle Kleidung abgewandelt (als die Europäer kamen, gingen die Eingeborenen noch überwiegend nackt). Die alten geometrischen Muster, die äußere Hüttenwände und Türen schmückten, waren zum Teil mit Zeichnungen von Fahrrädern, Autos, Flugzeugen u. a. durchsetzt. Während früher auch das Alltagsleben der Nyakyusa in deren verschiedenen ethnischen Gruppen deutliche Unterschiede aufwies, sind diese ehemals unabhängigen Einheiten unter den europäischen Einwirkungen mehr und mehr kulturell zusammengewachsen.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

231 and will follow the caller wherever he goes. They come to be milked morning and evening, and no cow moves until her name is called. The greatest insult that can be offered to a man is to sprinkle milk on the road behind him as he passes, suggesting, "You are too incompetent to provide yourself and your family with milk to drink; I can spare some to mock you with." And each man is jealous of the quality of his herd. A year or two ago, a wedding party went to [579] pay over a cow to the bride's father. It was not a high-class animal: a bystander threw a taunt, and in the fight which followed, two men were killed, and a number wounded.

422 The man is the owner of the cattle as a rule. It is rare for the wife to own any; but sometimes a father will make his daughter a present of a cow, which becomes hers absolutely, to pass, with its increase, to her son at her death or his marriage. The husband also may set a cow apart for his wife, but it returns to him in case of divorce.

231 857 During the day the cattle are herded by the village boys, each family sending one or two in turn to the work. They have a thoroughly good time, though for the smaller boys it is rather a testing time of moral and muscle, for they have a severe apprentice-
• 234 ship to serve. Cows are milked by the owner usually twice a day. No one ever salutes a man while so engaged; if the milk stops, he will be accused of witchcraft. A visitor arriving at milking time will sit down and wait, neither he nor his host taking any notice of each other until the cow that is being milked

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

is finished; then the host will offer a greeting, but 234
no further conversation takes place until all the milking is over. Even his wife will not talk to a man milking. And women themselves do not milk as a rule. I was once called to see an old woman who had been terribly mauled by an enraged cow, which she had attempted to milk during her husband's illness. What enraged the cow I do not know, but the Konde believe that it was the sex of the milker, though men also are sometimes injured by enraged animals, usually a cow suckling her first calf.

Milk that is not drunk fresh is put into large pots, [252]
and the milk of five to ten days added day by day. It is covered over very carefully, and eaten, when thick, along with potatoes, bananas, or other food. The whey, which is poured off when the pot is full, is also [757]
drunk for its cathartic properties. The pots, of which a family with a large herd may have up to ten, are thoroughly cleansed after use with boiling water, and then laid on the fire for perfect disinfection. Sometimes the milk is further hardened by being allowed to drip from a closely woven basket for several days, when it becomes hard and slightly tough, with a flavour like that of milk cheese.

I have more than once proved the sustaining quali- 000
ties and pleasant taste of thick milk prepared in the Konde fashion. On one occasion I was separated from my carriers, and, about two in the afternoon, having tramped since six in the morning, I stumbled into a village, and dropped exhausted under a great spreading tree. The chief, observing my exhausted condi-

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P. 138]

Notes on the daily life of the Nyakyusa (Tanganyika Territory)

Cf. Sociologus 1951, I, 1 S. 53 ff.

By F. Rudolf Lehmann

192 576 *1. Greetings.* The first thing to strike a visitor to the Nyakyusa country north of Lake Nyasa on passing through one of the numerous picturesque villages surrounded by banana groves is the way of greeting customary among these people. *"Ukuponya"* is the Nyakyusa word for "to greet". In the morning you are greeted with the exclamation: *"ugonile* (pl. *mugonile)"*, which literally means: "Did you sleep well?" And you may answer in the same way, or, in fuller form as you can hear it from the mouth of the natives: *"ae'e ndaga, ugonile"*, or *"ugonile yoyoque"*. *"ae'e ndaga"* may be used with all answers, meaning: thanks! At noon or in the afternoon you will hear: *"uvombide"*, you have worked, or, have you worked? Then, according to the case, you may answer: *"muvombide avanda"*, you, men, have worked, or, generally: *"mwangere"*, which is equivalent to the Swahili: *"habari gani?"*. If you greet a person in the evening with the words: *"ugonege"*, may you sleep well, the person thus addressed will answer: *"kagone!"*.

234 [312] *2. Milking.* The first task in the daily life of the Nyakyusa people is for the men to milk the cows. This is done in the morning before the cattle are driven out to graze and again in the evening when they return. But the cattle are also driven back to the village at noon when they are usually fumigated standing in the smoke of a fire for which cow dung and banana leaves are used, a process designed to remove vermin from the skin of the cattle. The animals seem to be very fond of this procedure. They stand quietly in the smoke gazing at the passers-by.

[237 232]

241 [462] *3. Hoeing.* "Hoeing is the work of men, planting weeding, reaping is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about four hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a. m., on the upland plateau they

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Haya FN8

H 342 As indicated above, the floor is covered with grass. Various domestic utensils may be seen, stuck into thin screens of plant material.

H 342 178 But this old, beautiful type of hut is very much on the decline. It is costly to make and to keep in repair, and the thick straw roof is, admittedly, highly inflammable. A flying trip round Lake Victoria clearly shows how the straw roofs in the banana groves are being replaced by corrugated iron. This change may even have another reason, viz. the fact that fodder for cattle is in short supply and that the grass for roofs is hard to come by. No doubt, it is a question of time when the fine old Haya hut will have disappeared.

N 114 In the Southern Highlands, where I was given the opportunity to stay for three months at various Danish mission stations, I visited the village round the Rungwe mission, the neighbouring villages of Ilolo and Kikota, and some villages near the Rutenganio mission station. I made a trip to Lake Nyasa and another to the Poloto mountains. I must admit to a limited knowledge of drawing technique and of house construction, but I have measured a number of houses and sketched their plan and also the furnishings I found in them. The positioning of the various objects has been established.

N 361 [342 356] The high standard of dwellings of the Banyakyusa is truly to be wondered at. The houses, clustered in villages, often along a winding street, lie intermingled with banana and coffee bushes. The houses are large and their interior is clean. Often two or three houses belong to one family, and, if so, will be grouped round a courtyard.

N 342 [824] Even if you could find houses built from sun-dried bricks and fired tiles, most were from bamboo with a grass roofing.

All houses stand on a clay base which, though not very high, no doubt means some protection against penetration of ground moisture during the heavy rains of April–June.

N [824] Besides bamboo, sometimes the bole of tree fern, *makeke*, is used in outer walls. Such tree fern stems have not the carrying capacity of bamboo, but they are far more resistant to rot. Among the other common features of the existing types of houses, should be mentioned the mud clods, the size of rolls that from the inside are pressed between the vertical bamboo poles; also, the inner wall is rough-cast with a mixture of mud and cow-manure; the floor is from tamped clay. In some places you find very fine floors in which a pattern has been rolled into the wet clay; to this end a short length of the stem of the banana cluster has been employed, viz. the length between the seats of the male and the female flowers. Also employed are another plant stem, or an empty corn cob.

N [237] [531]

N 354 In all houses where women live, there are one or more hearths. The presence of two hearths in one house usually means that the husband has two wives, each wife having her own hearth, either in the common house or in a house of her own.

5[illegible]5 N 342 The houses always have a kind of ceiling made from bamboo sticks and carried

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

patterns burned into the bamboo; they are hung upside down so the dust will not settle in them. The bottom is the natural partition of the bamboo cane. 415 531

The house was standing on high, slightly slanting ground, and like the first mentioned house it was buttressed by a great number of thick branches. Incidentally, it seemed to be very old and rickety. Inside, there were a great many posts supporting the horizontal bamboo ceiling and the stores of firewood. All posts were bifurcated and held the beams solidly in place. The diameter of the house was the usual 6.5 metres, but in this case there was no inner partition. As this woman was very poor, she had no bed, but slept on a mat on the floor. Only very rarely is there no bed in the houses; I remember having seen this only three times. 342 [352 556]

The hearth was the usual type: three decorated square stones, rising to a height of 30 cm above the floor, but being sunk 70 cm into the ground. Here they were positioned on one side, to ensure that the centre post would not catch fire, and to make for easy escape of the smoke through the doorway. None of the houses have other means of smoke outlet. 354

Alongside the wall were calabashes, jars, and baskets; material for the baskets; and a little away from the wall, the large mill-stone and its appurtenant smaller grinding stone. A hen's nest was not missing either. Along one side was fitted a small under-ceiling for the storage of small things. Two or three bananas, meant to be her next meal, were lying on the floor near one of the posts. From the loft she reached down a calfskin in which she had been carrying her child. Its inside was of a reddish colour. 352 [231] [482 237]

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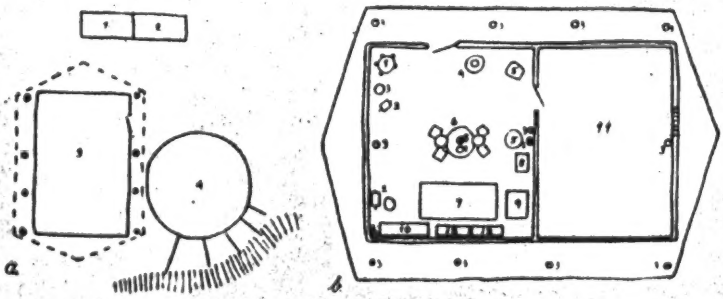

a. Site plan of Malia Ulinyelusya's houses. 1, hen-coop; 2, drying-racks for crops; 3, Malia's *ifibaga* with roof supports along sides; 4, *isiengo* belonging to Malia's husband, with buttresses at low ground.—b. Plan of Malia's *ifibaga* (barred window in back room). 1, hen's nest; 2, *ifitete* (stool); 3, posts (those going up to ridge of roof are filled in); 4, large basket; 5, basket; 6, clay base round twin posts; 7, Malia's bed; 8, chest; 9, wooden chest; 10, table; 11, back room, having bamboo ceiling carried by bamboo cross beam (between posts marked 3); the room is used for storing clothes, etc.; 12, shelves.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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The chief Wwamasika and his family after he had received from me my old "Klepper-Mantle" as a gift.

to enter his hut, where the patient was sitting on the ground with his back to the wall. To heal his patient of the pains, the doctor made some small incisions in his skin near the stomach by means of a triangular-shaped knife, and then he rubbed in the incisions a thick black juice taken from the horn of an antelope (the horn was called *kapembe*, pl. *ulupembe*). The juice was prepared from different roots and herbs as a medicine against stomach pains. In the horn were certain divisions for other medicines, and in each of these divisions was stuck a small (black) stick for removing the specific medicine from it. After this treatment the patient declared that he felt severe pains in the region of his stomach. I asked the doctor for some of his medicines, but he was unwilling to give me anything. Then I promised to bring him next day some European medicines hoping to get in exchange some of his medicaments. 123 757 [415 237]

The following morning I returned. On this occasion I did acquire some of his medicines in exchange for various European tablets, especially as he was most fascinated with the kaliumpermanganatum[1] of which I gave him a few crystals, explaining to him the use and the dose; when I dissolved some of the crystals before his eyes, it probably seemed to him to be a mystical process. Among the medicines I received then from him was a medicine for luck, called *kwarusako*. [777] Some of the inhabitants of the village, who had meantime appeared, were very unwilling for him to give me this medicine, and maintained that I would take with me all the luck of the village.

On this second visit to the medicine-man, there was again a patient present, and I wanted to take a photograph of the scene because it was 123 755

[1] [i.e., KMNO4. – Analyst]

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

After these admonitions, the mats which the girl had manufactured 881
were inspected. During this examination it was told her that a wife 867
should be seen in the possession of as many beautiful mats as possible, 285
made by her for herself and for her husband. Should the girl reveal such conduct as a wife, *ubusangalufu* (happiness) would be in her hut.

When the proper ceremony seemed to have come to an end, another 881
discussion followed. The girl had told the *unnyago*, during the above 578
mentioned admonition, that her parents also sometimes exchanged angry words. Therefore, a new discussion between the father and the mother arose, in which also the *unnyago* was the "speaker", but the other participants of the ceremony also shared in it, and the discussion too became at times heated. Still, after about 15 minutes, it suddenly came to an end, and the matter in dispute was declared settled. With this the whole ceremony ended.

8. One day I asked the chief for permission to visit his huts. He 622
dwelt in a rectangular hut *(ikibaga)*. A very beautiful *ikitara* (bed) was 352
in the main room, composed of many sleeping mats *(ubuleli*, pl. *imileli)* and of big round wooden blocks (sections of a tree-trunk), one at [342]
the head and a smaller one at the foot of the bed. Each of the four fine mats which lay uppermost had a special name. All the mats rested on sticks of reed laid across beams lying on smaller poles on the floor[26]. These mats were naturally of nearly the same height as the wooden block which formed the head part of the *ikitara*. In some other old-fashioned and better houses in Nyakyusa villages, similar beds were to be seen, but generally the bedsteads are much more simple.

One of the most important permissions granted me by the chief was 342
to enter the "store room", connected with his main room by a door. 353
The objects to be seen here were the same as those to be found in other 622
huts or store-rooms, e. g. the big *ifituba* (baskets) for storing grain, up [251]
to four feet high, smeared over with cow-dung and clay, and smaller
baskets for different purposes. In one corner hung different kinds of [237]
dancing fans *(urukope*, sg.) made of hairs from the tails of bulls, with fine handles of horn. In the dark opposite corner of the same wall there seemed to hang a similar object, but it was wrapped in banana bast. This was the real sign of the chief's dignity, the symbol of his [778]
authority and power, named *ubuswigala*. A long discussion was needed to induce the chief to unveil it. Only by constantly consulting by glances the present *amafumu* the chief slowly unveiled it. He told us that [775]

[26] Cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 381.

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P. 138]

Notes on the daily life of the Nyakyusa (Tanganyika Territory)

Cf. Sociologus 1951, I, 1 S. 53 ff.

By F. Rudolf Lehmann

192 576 *1. Greetings.* The first thing to strike a visitor to the Nyakyusa country north of Lake Nyasa on passing through one of the numerous picturesque villages surrounded by banana groves is the way of greeting customary among these people. *"Ukuponya"* is the Nyakyusa word for "to greet". In the morning you are greeted with the exclamation: *"ugonile* (pl. *mugonile)"*, which literally means: "Did you sleep well?" And you may answer in the same way, or, in fuller form as you can hear it from the mouth of the natives: *"ae'e ndaga, ugonile"*, or *"ugonile yoyoque"*. *"ae'e ndaga"* may be used with all answers, meaning: thanks! At noon or in the afternoon you will hear: *"uvombide"*, you have worked, or, have you worked? Then, according to the case, you may answer: *"muvombide avanda"*, you, men, have worked, or, generally: *"mwangere"*, which is equivalent to the Swahili: *"habari gani?"*. If you greet a person in the evening with the words: *"ugonege"*, may you sleep well, the person thus addressed will answer: *"kagone!"*.

234 [312] *2. Milking.* The first task in the daily life of the Nyakyusa people is for the men to milk the cows. This is done in the morning before the cattle are driven out to graze and again in the evening when they return. But the cattle are also driven back to the village at noon when [237 they are usually fumigated standing in the smoke of a fire for which 232] cow dung and banana leaves are used, a process designed to remove vermin from the skin of the cattle. The animals seem to be very fond of this procedure. They stand quietly in the smoke gazing at the passers-by.

241 [462] *3. Hoeing.* "Hoeing is the work of men, planting weeding, reaping is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about four hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a. m., on the upland plateau they

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done." (G. Wilson, Introduction, p. 260). 241

The putting of maize-grains as seed into the earth is the women's work, the sowing of millet *(malesi)* of both sexes. If you ask the men after they had come home from their work: "*Mukumbide ifivanya fya nongi?*", "Whose fields did you hoe?", the answer often may be: "*Tukumbide ifivanya fya tata!*" We have hoed the fields of our father. [243 462]

In former times, the Nyakyusa had a lot of ceremonies relating to the beginning of the hoeing season and of the beginning of the harvest-work. They are, however, nowadays nearly extinguished under the influence of European culture. [177]

With respect to the beginning of the hoeing season, a very comprehensive ceremony had to be carried out by the chief in community whith the *unganga* (medicine man) for providing the fields with extraordinary *(-sisya)* power *(amaka): amaka amasisya*, in this case: fertility. 241 622 [192]

When the crop was ripe, it was (at first) forbidden *(mwiko)* to take anything from the crop before the chief had given the permission. First the oldest male villagers informed the chief that it may be now the just time to give the crop free for the people, saying: "The people is hungry, we will now give them to eat!" Then the chief ordered that 6 or 8 (maize') corn-cobs were brought to him, and he sent these corn-cobs by a messenger to the (holy) offering-grove where they must be put down. After that has been correctly executed, he gave the permission for reaping the new crop. [782]

(NB. It was believed that those corn-cobs put into the offering-grove were eaten especially from the leopards. The powderes bones of the leopards were considered important ingredients of the consecration drink which the chief had to take at his initiation ceremonies and which should give him the strength *(amaka)* of a leopard, so that he also was called "the leopard" or "the leopard chief".) [237 825]

4. *Herding the Cattle and Cleansing the Stable.* The sociological importance of cattle among the Nyakyusa and the specific practice among them of herding the cattle by herdboys, that is also of highly sociological importance for the structure of the Nyakyusa society, is already described by G. Wilson (Introduction, p. 269 f). 233

The cleansing of the stables of which the Nyakyusa possess a great number of very well built ones, which have also sometimes a considerable length — apart from the cattle kraals —, is the task of 233 343 462

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

462 252 264 very substantial, the main meal being taken in the evening shortly before sunset.

415 [354] *8. Manufacture.* The pot for cooking *(indeku)* is placed on three stones which form the hearth *(ikipembero,* hearth stones). The flat bowl made of clay used for the needs of the kitchen is called *ulwangabia* and a pig pot used for storing water *ingumbe.* The pots of clay 415 are manufactured by Kissi women because in their land on the north-439 eastern shores of Lake Nyassa the best clay is found. In the eastern part of the Nyakyusa country adjacent to Kissi land the women visit the pottery markets of the Kissi, but to the remoter villages, e. g. around the Rungwe volcano the pottery is brought by Kissi men. In this case, owing to the great distance from the Kissi-Land the men carry the loads of eight to ten pots on their head between split poles of bamboo. The Kissi pots I saw in the Rungwe Station were ornamented in [462] a rough way with red ochre and seemed only slightly baked. The [324] hearth stones, however, are made by the Nyakyusa women themselves as I was able to observe near Rutenganio, where widows manufactured them for sale.

285 In many villages of the Nyakyusa I could watch basket-making. This [462] I saw being done by men. In the chief's hut in Katumba I had the opportunity to admire a great number of very big baskets *(ifitubu)* for [237] storing grain, smeared with cow dung on the outside. The attractive closely wickered baskets, which are filled with *malesi* (millet) and then [273] placed in water for a night in the process of beer-brewing were originally made by the Buanyi, but nowadays also the Nyakyusa are said to be skilled enough to weave them. I had no opportunity to observe it, but could acquire an excellent specimen of that wicker-work.

264 *9. The Meal.* At the beginning of each meal the hands are washed, [515] including those of children. The men take their meal separately from the women. The wives only eat when their husbands have been satisfied. Boys under ten years eat with their mothers, but as soon as they begin to live in age-set villages, they eat together with their friends of their own age-set, as described in detail by Mr. G. Wilson in his "Introduction of Nyakyusa Society" (Bantu Studies X, p. 271). The head of the family likes to eat together with his friends.

262 Meat is eaten very seldom, but on special occasions such as marriages, death lamentations, christenings of Christianized natives, enormous [192] quantities are devoured. *Inyama* (Swahili: *nyama)* is the Nyakyusa word for all sorts of meat, *ingombe* for that of cattle and *ingombaku* for that of oxen. Near Utengule I saw black pigs *(inguruwe,* pig)

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

usa. It is true that one still meets blacksmiths on the outskirts of the villages or some distance away from them (as in the case of the Ndali tribe, western to the Nyakyusa area), but they no longer smelt the iron from ore mined by themselves as in former times. The smith of to-day remelt only scrap iron from disused motor-cars and other machines into tools, hatches, and spear-heads, unless, of course, the natives prefer to buy imported iron-ware. As with the Chaga, also the Nyakyusa smith can only be persuaded to submit to being photographed after long negotiation and a change into better clothes. The blacksmiths I met in the Bundali Mountains, however, made no objections whatever to being photographed at their work. Also women were allowed to attend. But one feature of the ancient Nyakyusa blacksmith's culture has been preserved till the present day: the lower part of the bellows through which the air blast is driven into the fire is still made of wood. This feature has been defined by H. Baumann as an element of the "ancient nigritic culture".

178 178 325 126 326 [184] 178 325

12. *Dress*. The cloths of the Nyakyusa have changed to a very considerable degree since the beginning of European influence. A comparison of the earliest pictures and descriptions of inhabitants at the northern end of Lake Nyasa with the dress of modern times brings out this point most forcibly. Originally the Nyakyusa went almost naked, adorned only with rings and belts, but nowadays all degrees of compromise with European fashions of dress are to be found, especially near the European settlements and Mission Stations. The most conservative element are, in this case, the women. It is still possible to-day to observe in each village the preparation of the long strips of bark *(elyabi*, pl. *amabi)* commonly worn by the women. The so-called *impandapanda* (Fotheringham: *mlambe)* tree furnishes the dress material. After the bark has been immersed in water, the bast is beaten with wooden instruments and then pulled off from the harder parts of the bark. These tools are like hammers; the flat end of such an implement is furrowed, sometimes with a disk made of horn, and as it produces patters on the bast it is called "*obosimbe*", that which produces patters. These long belts, almost reaching the ground, especially in front, are mostly ruby coloured, but the women sitting in front of their huts manufacture also other types with geometrical (triangular) patterns in yellow and brown forming only girdles *(umpango)*. In addition to this minimum requirement in the way of dress some women around the waist also wear copper belts *(manyeta)*, made of thin copper-wire, spiraly wound on a core of hairs from the tails of cows. These

291 177 287 291 [531] 291 301 [237]

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

291 belts are also worn by men, nowadays below the other clothing. More
301 and more pieces of cotton with imprinted patterns have come into
291 vogue. They are worn around the lower part of the body or below the
177 shoulders or fastened about one of them, and are bought from Indian
[139] shops. That this modern fashion, however, is something new in such places which are a little remoter from direct European influence was demonstrated to me when I came through a small village in the environment of Masoko. There by chance I met some young girls carrying a piece of cloth on the top of a long pole as if it were a banner. On enquiry I was told that this "banner" was nothing other than a
[556 piece of cloth newly bought by a woman of that village and that it was
482] hoisted on a pole and carried in procession out of sheer joy that this woman had been able to buy it.

291 Menfolk throughout are fuller dressed, especially when they go dancing. The women, on the other hand, wear their ordinary dress also on such occasions. The dancing costume of the men — only the younger
[292 men participate in dancing — consists of a sort of tight-jacket or
535] sweater and wide robes with coloured patterns. The hair is adorned
[302 with feathers. At work the men mostly wear only loin cloths or shorts.
237] After work especially the older man wrap their bodies in blankets. It is very seldom nowadays to find even very old men still wearing the former national dress: a bundle of long grass in front and a smaller one behind tied to the waist by means of a string, as I found a man on a solitary spot near Rungwe Station. Little boys go altogether naked untill they are about three years of age. Little girls begin to wear a small *amabi* at an earlier age.

531 *13. Art.* One of the most interesting and striking features in the artistic endowment of the Nyakyusa are the decorations on the outer-walls of their huts. The latter are only painted, however, when the exterior of the framework of bamboo is mud covered, otherwise only the wooden doors (*ikifigo*, door) of the huts are painted. By no means every hut or house is painted, but only a limited number in each village, probably depending on the presence and industry of an artist as this art is as in other cases an individualistic one. One such artist was introduced to me in a village near Rutenganio. The ornaments consist in most cases of geometrical patterns in white and black, seldom in other colours, or they represent different sorts of animals, e. g. elephants, horses, cattle, snakes, etc. The richest designs I found in a long extended village on the right bank of the upper Kiwira. In an other case the names of the animals were written in Swahili below

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

133 Great Rift valley, walled in on the east by the Livingstone mountains, which rise to 10,000 feet, and on the west by the rather lower Ndali hills. It is blocked to the north-west by Rungwe volcano and the Poroto mountains; the volcano rises from the floor of the Rift to nearly 10,000 feet, and the lowest pass over the Poroto mountains is 8,000 feet. Scattered throughout the hills are a number of small lakes formed in the craters of old volcanoes, each one like a jewel set in the green of field and pasture.

132 The rainfall in this valley is very heavy, averaging over
161 100 inches in the year, and innumerable streams rush down the mountain slopes, flooding parts of the plain during the torrential rains of March and April. The dry season is short—it scarcely exists in the hills—and such a rainfall, combined with skilful cultivation and stock-breeding, makes a large population possible. The average density for Rungwe district is over eighty persons to the square mile; the population is most concentrated on the Lake-shore plain, but stretches up into the hills to 6,000 feet. South of the Songwe the rainfall is much less—at Karonga it averages only 45 inches a year—and the country supports a smaller population, the average density for Ngonde being less than fifteen persons to the square mile.

●244 The Nyakyusa grow a variety of crops of which the chief are bananas and plantains, finger millet, maize, cow-peas, coco-yams, cassava, sweet potatoes, ground-nuts, curcurbits and, recently, rice
[231] and coffee. They also breed short-horned, humped, cattle which are carefully stalled at night, and hand-dressed to keep them free from ticks. Banana plantations stretch mile upon mile through the plain and along the crests of the ridges.[1] In them are hidden the villages, often so close together that the boundaries between them are not obvious. On the fringes of the bananas are the tilled fields, and beyond the fields the open pasture land. Unlike most of their neighbours in Central Africa the Nyakyusa practise fixed, not shifting, cultivation, and the land is kept in good heart by green manuring, rotation of crops, and periodic fallows.[2] Only in the cultivation of finger millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins,

[1] J. F. Elton, *The Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa* (1879), pp. 330–1, and D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., pp. 285–6, comment on their great extent.

[2] According to the Nyakyusa themselves the productivity of their fields is slowly diminishing. Most of them attribute this to the neglect of traditional rituals. We do not know how far their observations are objective, and how far they are biased by the tendency to glorify the past. D. H. Thwaites, in his article

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

planted at the break of the rains, and of the new crop, rice, is a seed-bed of ash prepared, and then it is grass and scrub which is burned; they do not fell or pollard trees to provide ash. For other crops there is no burning; the weeds are hoed in green instead; and, at a second hoeing before planting, the earth is piled into ridges or mounds to ensure drainage. Formerly, it is said, the chiefs insisted that the ridges on slopes should be made contour-wise, and recently this law has been revived. Elton, the first European to travel through the area, observed that there was 'terraced cultivation everywhere';[1] and the ridges do in fact look like terracing from a distance.

Hoeing is the work of men and boys; only quite recently have a few women, whose husbands are away in European employment, begun to hoe for themselves. And most men hoe for three or four hours a day during the greater part of the year, for crops are planted in succession. Neither old age nor high status excuses a man from this duty. Even the chief Mwaipopo, who was already grown up when the Europeans arrived in his country, hoed regularly in his fields during the years 1935–8. Iron hoes were made by Nyakyusa smiths from iron obtained from the Kinga,[2] but they were scarce, and some men had to use wooden hoes such as many of the women still have for weeding (*vide* Plate VII). The women are solely responsible for sowing, weeding, and reaping.

Cattle are fairly numerous:[3] few men over twenty-five nowadays own none, and many older men have four or five cows in their stalls. Long ago, we were told, cattle were scarcer, some men having to marry without them, but Cotterill (1876)[4] and Kerr-Cross (1890)[5] both said 'cattle abound' in Nyakyusa coun-

on 'Wanyakyusa Agriculture' (*The East African Agricultural Journal*, April 1944), states that 'though the soil is not being eroded to any great extent it is still being impoverished'.

[1] Elton, op. cit., pp. 326, 330.

[2] Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 272–3. Possibly iron was also obtained from the west. Kerr Cross (op. cit. p. 189) saw large foundries in Nyika country before 1890. cf. Elton, op. cit., p. 321 and map at the end.

[3] No census of the cattle in the district had been taken when we were among the Nyakyusa. D. H. Thwaites, op. cit., states that, 'The number of cattle in the district (Rungwe) in the 1941 census was about 2.3 head per taxpayer or 35 head per square mile'.

[4] H. B. Cotterill, 'On the Nyasa and a Journey from the North End to Zanzibar', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XXII (1878).

[5] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 129.

I:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngende FN17
Nyakyusa

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I. CULTIVATION IN NYAKYUSA COUNTRY

In the foreground are bananas, coffee, and bamboos; in the middle ridges for cover potatoes and mounds for maize. On the extreme right Rungwe volcano appears. The house is a modern style, and raised for drainage.

[facing p. 18]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

different herds of cattle; and it is not only those from the same group of herd-boys that set up a new village together, but all the sons of the age-village. Thus when a boy leaves the herd group he joins a larger community, including the friends of his own age who have herded cows with him, and many others as well. Every boys' village consists primarily of the sons of the member of an older village who originally gave the land for its building, but sons of other villages live there too.

The village begins with perhaps a dozen boys, and their younger brothers join them, one by one; but after some years, when the senior members of the boys' village are between sixteen and eighteen years old, the younger ones begin to be refused admittance to the village: 'they are children.' The young ones then either begin a new age-village of their own, or else join a village which has already been started by the sons of a nearby men's village a little junior to that of their own fathers. If you inquire who are the members of such and such a boys' village you are always told that they are the sons of a particular village of men, but detailed investigation reveals the presence of some sons of other men's villages as well. Brothers, half-brothers and other relatives are sometimes members of the same village, but more often not; and if they do belong to the same village that is because they are near each other in age, and were born in the same village, not because they are kinsmen.

The members of the older boys' village, which is now closed and no longer increases in numbers, begin to marry as they reach the age of about twenty-five. Getting married is often a gradual process; but it is not until he has his wife permanently with him that a young man can have fields of his own and eat the produce at his own place. The cultivation of land requires the co-operation of a man and woman, and cooking on any elaborate scale is a woman's business. As the young men marry their village expands. The site is not changed but the houses are built ever bigger and farther apart, and adjacent land is brought under cultivation. The boys' village with which we are best acquainted is in this transitional stage. It has fifty-three members altogether, the majority of whom are single; but some few are married, cultivate their own fields with their wives and eat food cooked by their wives in their own houses. Of those who are single some again are betrothed to girls who visit them from time to time, but each

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

582 241 621 still cultivates his father's fields and eats at his father's home. In former days, we were told, the marriage age of men was even later than it is at present (*vide infra*, p. 80). 'Perhaps after twenty a boy would be betrothed, but to a young girl, and he would wait eight years before she grew up.'

857 From the time boys begin to herd they recognize one of their number as a leader. 'When we herd cows as boys', a friend told us, 'there is always one who is obeyed by his fellows whatever he says. No one chooses him, he gains his leadership and his prestige by bodily strength. For always, when we are boys together among the cows, we vie with one another and dispute about going to turn back straying cattle, or about fetching fire to cook the food we have brought with us. And so we start fighting, and we go on fighting until one of us beats all his fellows completely and so becomes the leader. And then it is he who sends others to turn back straying cattle, to fetch fire and to collect firewood. And he is greatly respected. He settles quarrels too. What we quarrel about most as boys is a particular insult: one says to another: "You are only a child, you are, I am your senior." This is always happening and then it is the part of the one who is leader to set those two on to fight. We all stand round and watch and the one who first cries is proved the child.'

622 Later, when the boys have built apart from their fathers, one of their number is often appointed by the headman of their fathers' village to settle disputes between them. Some boys' villages have no such appointed leader, but many of them do. Such appointments are, however, temporary. It is only when political authority is transferred to their generation that the young men's permanent leaders are chosen.

b. The 'coming out' ceremony

561 622 621 643 Eight or ten years after the young men of the senior boys' village of the chiefdom have begun to marry, their fathers hand over the government of the country to them. This transfer of authority is effected in an elaborate ceremony called the 'coming out' (*ubusoka*).

The 'coming out' is a series of legal acts by which the country of an old chief and his village headman (*umufumu*) is, with certain reservations, handed over into the possession and control of his

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER III

ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

602 THE primary economic units in Nyakyusa society are the kinship groups—the elementary family, the cattle-owing lineage, and the 476 group of cognates who co-operate in production and exchange many gifts, and among whom cattle circulate.[1] However, fellow villagers also work together, exchange food, and have a common interest in certain property.

a. Land

423 The village is the land-holding group. As we have seen, land 245 is allocated to a boys' village, at its commencement, by the parent village, that is the village to which the fathers of most of the boys belong. Little boys' huts are usually to be seen going up on a strip of pasture-land, adjoining the block of banana groves which shroud their fathers' houses. The boys' land is primarily a building site, but very soon after moving into their huts they turn over the ground and plant banana suckers (*vide* Plate II). Bananas begin to bear very quickly, and so in a little more than a year after the establishment of a boys' village, its members have bananas of their own, which they cook for themselves and eat with their 241 friends at odd times during the day. But they have, as yet, no 423 fields, for the cultivation of fields requires the co-operation of a wife. Bachelors continue to eat their main meals at their parents' village. As the boys grow up and marry they begin to cultivate garden-land adjacent to their village. Some of these gardens are acquired by individuals from their own fathers and fathers-in-law, but whether there may also be a block grant of garden-land by the parent village as a whole to the boys' village as a whole we 423 are not certain. In any case the land of boys' villages is limited, and at the 'coming out' the old men move aside and the young men enter their inheritance. The allotment to each village is

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe Brown and Daryll Forde.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 travellers in the area all comment on the excellently built huts and the cleanness of the villages.[1] Lord Lugard calls their huts 'the neatest and the most wonderfully built of any I have seen in Africa, excepting only the houses of the king and chiefs in Uganda.'[2] This high standard of building necessitates hard work and co-operation between a number of men and women.

c. *Cultivation*

●241 The primary unit in cultivation is the elementary family consisting of a man, his wife and unmarried children or, in the case of a polygynous family, of the house group of a wife and her children, together with her husband, part of whose time is spent in hoeing her fields.[3] There is also, however, some co-operation with other relatives, and with village neighbours.

241 476 Unmarried sons hoe with their fathers and very often they bring one or more village-mates to work with them, making return, in due course, by working with these friends for their respective fathers. The boys who come are fed after hoeing, and should be fed generously, by the woman in whose fields they have [584] worked. After his betrothal a young man comes in the same way with village-mates to hoe for his father-in-law, as well as continuing to hoe for his own father. Once his wife joins him they have their own fields, and the bulk of his time is spent in hoeing for her, but he still hoes one or two strips (*embaka*) for his own father and for his father-in-law. Such help is reciprocal, for his 'mothers' (i.e. his own mother and his father's other wives) and sisters, as well as the 'mothers' and sisters of his wife, will help his wife with her tasks of sowing, weeding, and reaping. From the point of view of village organization the essential fact is that young men working for fathers and fathers-in-law very frequently bring one or two village-mates with them. A typical hoeing group is made up of a man with his sons, and one or two village-mates of the sons.

Larger hoeing parties, to which not only youths, but also older men come, are fairly common, especially among the Kukwe.

[1] Elton, op. cit., p. 323; D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyasa' in *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 116–7.

[2] F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), Vol. I, p. 52.

[3] The respective rights of the husband and of each wife have been analysed by Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., pp. 16–29.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241 476 To these come some of a man's village-mates and male relatives or special friends from other villages, as well as his sons and sons-in-law with their village-mates. At one such party we noted in the morning eight helpers, of which six were men, two being classificatory brothers of the owner and four of them friends. There were also two young sons of the owner working. In the afternoon a son-in-law came with a party of his village-mates. Such hoeing parties are not the concern of the whole village. Only those who have been specially invited, or very close friends of the owner of the field, come (the number usually ranging between ten and twenty), and some of those invited may be from other villages. It is difficult for one to whom an invitation has been sent to refuse. After work the guests are feasted. Traditionally they were given milk with bananas or beans (a prized food), but nowadays beer is expected. For the party noted above two pots of beer were provided, one being given to the older men and the other to the son-in-law with his friends. Christians, many of whom are forbidden to brew beer, provide meat, rice, or milk —all much prized foods. Possibly the proportion of men attending this type of work party has diminished as opportunity for paid employment has increased—we have no certain evidence.

Mutual assistance in cultivation turns on kinship and personal friendship: all the members of a village or a village-section are not obliged to work with a neighbour. But it is insisted that neighbours should keep in step with one another in cultivation. It will be remembered that their garden-lands are together, and each year different types of garden are hoed by groups of villagers—millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins in one place, potatoes in another, maize and beans in another, so that while the gardens of one particular household are scattered, each crop is in one or two blocks. Neighbours cultivating the same crop in adjoining fields should, according to Nyakyusa ideas, begin each process in cultivation together, and the whole village should keep in step. As one informant put it, 'in hoeing and planting one must be neither ahead of nor behind one's neighbours'.

241 476 622 The idea reaches its furthest development among the Kukwe in regard to three crops planted with the first rains, namely, finger millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins. Traditionally, no Kukwe man might begin to clear ground for these crops until his village headman had begun, or, if he lived in the village of a chief or in

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241 476 622 an immediately adjoining village, until his chief had begun. Members of other villages do not regard the chief, but wait only for their village headman to begin. Within the family, junior wives must follow senior wives, but there is no precedence between brothers. If two should live in the same village it does not matter which begins sowing first, provided both follow the leader, nor need a junior age-village wait on a senior one to begin. Not only must the headman of the village begin the clearing, but each process in cultivation must be initiated by him or his senior wife; thus clearing, raking, burning, planting, and reaping, are ceremonially begun, and the wife of the headman should be the first to wash her millet, and he the first to eat of the new crop. Further, once a process is initiated, the villagers should press on with their tasks so that all may finish about the same time.

241 622 Now the cultivation of millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins[1] is peculiar in that the weeds and grass are not turned in for green manure, as they are for all other crops (except rice), but are collected in heaps and burnt, just before the rains break at the end of the dry season. And the fire for this must be lighted [372] ritually by the headman of the village. Using fire-sticks and 'medicine of plenty' (*unkota gwa ifugo*[2]) bought by the Kukwe from the Sangu people, he ignites a special fire in his own field and then, if a great wife of the chief lives in the village, he lights the heaps in her field. All the members of the village take fire from him, or from the field of the chief's wife. To take fire from a house is forbidden, because the owner of the house from which it is taken may be a witch, who will rot the heaps so that the millet does not grow, or will not ripen. Roasting food on a burning heap, or taking a brand to light tobacco is likewise forbidden, lest the person who does so has medicine which will rot the millet.

241 It is thought that if one breaks the rule, beginning a process before the headman, the fields of all the other villagers will suffer. 'If men hoe higgledy piggledy the food in their gardens does not grow, and if they reap higgledy piggledy the yield from all the

[1] Some Kukwe held that these rules about cultivation applied also to maize and to an old root crop, *umbogo*, but the most reliable informants were agreed that the rule was only strictly enforced with regard to the three crops planted 'at the break of the rains, in the new year'.

[2] 'A village headman, *ugwa ifugo*, is one who drives off witches and protects the food.'

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

gardens will be small.' And the crops of one who lags behind, 241
when his fellows have planted together, are also said to suffer. For this reason, if one woman is delayed and unable to work along with them, her friends will plant a corner of her field when they plant their own, so that the fertility of her fields may not be lost.

An educated informant explained that 'those who have learnt agriculture may think that late planting is unsuccessful because it is not the right season—the weather is wrong—but others think the failure is due to not planting at the same time as their neighbours.' Christians living on mission land, with their gardens in a block by themselves, do not trouble about planting simultaneously, but many of those living in mixed villages with fields adjoining the fields of pagans conform 'because if they do not plant with them they do not have pleasant social relations'. In some chiefdoms, however, the custom is dying even among pagans. In Porokoto's country we were told: 'The custom is now dead, men just burn higgledy piggledy. A fire blazes up somewhere. We ask, "Whose is it?" "So and so's" comes the reply. "Oh! All right!" The custom has died because the Christians are many and the chiefs have turned to the Christians; their hearts are with the Christians even though they themselves are not baptized, and about this burning of the rubbish heaps for millet they say: "What is it for? Does it avail anything?" '

Among the people of Selya the rule was traditionally less 241
elaborate than among the Kukwe. It is polite and customary for 576
those whose fields adjoin to call one another so that they may begin each process together. 'We speak to each other saying: "Friends, let us hoe a millet field over there, all of us, hunger comes on us." ' And if a son hoes a field next to his father's his 'mothers' call their daughter-in-law to plant with them, since their fields adjoin. But the only sanctions for keeping in step in hoeing and planting are conventional; there is no suggestion that the laggard's crops will fail. If, however, a man *burns* his millet field before his neighbours have heaped their weeds, they have ground for complaint. They say: 'Why have you harmed our crops?'

Underlying the emphasis on neighbours cultivating simul- 241
taneously is the idea that the fertility of fields and crops in ear 754
can be stolen by witchcraft and sorcery, and that if one man's

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241 crop is conspicuously better than that of his neighbours it is at
754 their expense; he has illegally enticed the fertility or grain from their fields into his own; he has, in the Nyakyusa phrase 'overstepped' his neighbours.

Ideas as to what creates 'overstepping' vary slightly in the different local groups, but everywhere it is insisted that no man should get a start of his neighbours by burning his rubbish heaps with medicines before they are ready to do so. And not only does communal burning prevent individuals 'overstepping' their neighbours, but the medicine used is said to be a direct protection against witches and sorcerers. Dependence upon medicines and the elaboration of taboos are thus associated with a technique of cultivation—burning of weeds—in which fertility diminishes rapidly, much more rapidly than it does with the technique of green manuring practised for other crops.

241 The Nyakyusa have no elaborate communal ritual of the first-fruits, emphasizing precedence, such as plays a great part among many of the Southern Bantu. Significantly, their Ngonde relatives, with a more centralized political organization, forbade any man to eat of the new maize and pumpkin leaves until these had been offered ritually, first at the ancestral grove of their overlord, Kyungu, then at the groves of their chiefs, beginning with the senior, and then to the ancestors of each family. The Kukwe say that the headman of the village should be the first to eat certain of the new crops, just as he is the first to hoe, and plant, and reap, but the people of Selya do not trouble at all about precedence in this matter.

754 Among all the Nyakyusa, however, those who have been drinking the chief's *ifingela* medicine, or medicines for protection against sorcery which return the disease to the sender, must take special precautions when eating food grown on fields fertilized with ash. Now the medicine burnt with the rubbish is said to protect the crops from witches and sorcerers, and both the chief's *ifingela* medicine and retaliatory medicines border on sorcery. The underlying idea seems to be that since those who have been using these dangerous medicines partake in some measure of the nature of sorcerers, they are in danger from food nourished by the ash of that fire.[1] The important point here is that among the

[1] The associations made here will be developed in another book on Nyakyusa symbolism.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Nyakyusa generally it is kinship groups, not villages, which eat protective medicines with certain first-fruits.

Unlike many other cattle-keeping Bantu the Nyakyusa take great pride in cultivation, men boasting about their strength in hoeing, and praising those who are diligent. Significantly, the vocabulary relating to bananas matches in richness that relating to cattle: we recorded a dozen terms—and there were said to be many more—for varieties of bananas and plantains, which are distinguished by the form and flavour of the fruit, and thirteen terms for types of cattle, distinguished by colour and markings.

Not only does success in cultivation carry prestige in itself, but it provides the wherewithal for hospitality, on which status in a Nyakyusa community turns. To be respected a man must entertain his neighbours with food and millet-beer. Control of grain and vegetables to do this depends upon his own effort in hoeing, as well as upon having wives and sons to work with him. We have seen how the laggard among the Kukwe believes that the fertility of his gardens will be sapped by his neighbours being ahead. There is thus considerable social pressure compelling both men and women to cultivate diligently. At the same time, however, no individual should be too conspicuous. Each must keep in step in cultivation with his neighbours; and though his fields may be a little larger than the average, they must not be a great deal larger. The area cultivated (visible crops and stubble) by seven compound families on the Lake-shore plain in 1935 averaged 6·13 acres per family; which, divided by the number of members in each family, gave rather over half an acre per head (men, women, and children) or 1·3 acres per adult. The acreage ranged from 1·99 to 0·61 per adult.[1]

Cultivation thus involves co-operation primarily within elementary and compound families, but it also involves village co-operation, in that neighbours hold land together, help one another in some measure, and try to carry out each process simultaneously.

The pressure of neighbours still helps to keep laggards up to the mark, and also to keep the most energetic from getting far ahead. But the village control over cultivation is diminishing for, as we have seen, the custom of keeping in step is no longer strictly insisted upon even among the Kukwe, nor does it apply

[1] Monthly report of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu District, July 1933. Figures supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu, 1935.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241 to those crops, production of which is now expanding—beans, groundnuts, coffee and rice—even though the latter is planted like millet in a seed-bed of ash. The cultivation of rice is on a commercial basis. A small number of men own ploughs which they hire out for preparing rice-fields, and the weeding and reaping is also often done by hired labour. For the hulling, grading, [474] and marketing of coffee the Agricultural Department has established a coffee co-operative, to which all native-grown coffee is sold, but in this organization villages as such play no part.

d. Herding

231 In each village there are, as we have seen, several herd-groups, 857 five to ten neighbours herding their cattle together. This association is voluntary, but it is usual for members of adjoining home- 476 steads to co-operate—special friends in a village tend to build together—and the group is more or less stable. All the boys of appropriate age (six to eleven) go to herd, even though there is one son of their father already in the group, and when a man has cattle, but no sons of an age to herd, he may leave his cattle to be looked after by the sons of neighbours. As one old man put it: 'My cows are herded by other men's sons, but I give them neither milk nor payment, it is not done in this country. When I beget a son he will herd too.' There is thus considerable give-and-take between fellow members of the group. Among Christians, and those pagans who wish their sons to go to school, the herds take shifts, half attending the morning session of school, and half the afternoon session. Formerly, young men armed with spears herded the cattle for fear of raids, while boys herded the calves which grazed near the villages. The same young men used to herd and hoe, taking it in turn, or hoeing in the late afternoon when the cattle grazed near the villages and could be herded by the youngsters. The cattle were trained to follow the call of a herdsman and in case of danger were quickly led away and hidden.[1]

231 In the large villages of the plain an assistant headman, one of 476 whose functions is the care of cattle, is connected with each herd-group. In his homestead, under the bananas, a smoky fire is kept going during the heat of the day, and there the cattle of the group

[1] D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., p. 121; F. L. M. Moir, op. cit., p. 93.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Economic co-operation beyond the village has therefore increased enormously, and this is correlated with a decrease in economic co-operation within the village. The change is most obvious in the case of migrant labourers who, while remaining members of their villages (for they are domiciled there) cease, during the period they are at labour centres, to co-operate with their village neighbours in building, herding, hoeing and hunting; and those of their wives who accompany them are also withdrawn from village activities. 476

Of the men in paid employment within the district, some, such as house servants, police, hospital orderlies, and clerks attached to the Government station, are very largely withdrawn from economic co-operation in their villages; and even labourers employed on European estates, who still cultivate for themselves, and those who meet essential expenses by growing cash crops on their own account, co-operate less with their village neighbours than was customary in the old days. 476 464

As we have seen there is no village co-operation in the production of the main cash crops—rice and coffee—such as there was in the cultivation of three of the main food crops; therefore those who grow cash crops spend a smaller proportion of their time working with their neighbours than their fathers did. Moreover, the cultivation of cash crops encourages the development of hired labour at the expense of work parties attended by neighbours. In effect, the cultivation of cash crops involves less village co-operation than did the traditional cultivation of food crops, and in so far as men's energies are directed into producing cash crops, village co-operation becomes relatively less important. 241 476

We argue that while traditionally there was considerable co-operation in production between fellow villagers, that co-operation is diminishing, and its diminution is correlated with employment for wages and the production of crops for sale. The more educated the individual the more time he is likely to spend working outside his village, and the less he co-operates in economic activities with his fellow villagers. 476 178

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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VII. A LITTLE GIRL PLANTING SWEET POTATOES IN HER MOTHER'S FIELD

[facing p. 66]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 789 but also on the relationships to which they apply. While witchcraft, 'the breath of men', and the power of 'the defenders' are thought to operate primarily within the village and never beyond the chiefdom, sorcery, retaliatory and protective medicines may operate beyond the village and chiefdom as well as within them. Moreover, while the whole village, led by the headman, joins in defence against witchcraft, protective and retaliatory medicines are used primarily by individuals and families. Medicines of vengeance ('the horn' and *ilyepa*) are directed against kinship groups—members of an agnatic lineage, their spouses, and the children of daughters,-are all held to be in danger—not local groups. The next-door neighbours of a man attacked will be safe so long as they are not kinsmen or affines.

241 789 The one occasion on which the village or village-section, acting as a group, uses medicines, is at the burning of rubbish heaps in the fields, before planting millet and certain other crops (*vide supra*, pp. 51–4). As we have shown, these medicines are supposed to protect the grain from witches and sorcerers, as well as to increase the yield. The Kukwe argue that the headman who lit the medicated fires must also be the first to taste the food grown on the fields, and he takes it with medicines, but this is not insisted upon by all the Nyakyusa; most commonly it is family groups that are careful to eat protective medicines with the first-fruits from their fields.

754 789 Envy is what makes men take to sorcery, the Nyakyusa say, envy of another's riches, or power, or employment. As we have seen, envy is cited as a motive for witchcraft also. But it is not the sole motive. Greed is the primary cause (*vide supra*, p. 92). And while witchcraft can only be used to work off a grudge against a village neighbour, sorcery can be used against anyone. Like witchcraft, the effects of 'the breath of men' are said to be confined to the village. Moreover 'the breath' can only operate against a known sinner—it is the murmuring of neighbours about an individual which causes him to sicken; whereas most retaliatory medicines work against unknown persons, discovering the thief, adulterer, or sorcerer, as well as punishing him. As elsewhere in Africa, the use of sorcery and retaliatory medicines is said to be almost entirely confined to men, though women are often named as witches. In short, the situations in which sorcery and medicines of retaliation are used overlap at one or two points with those in

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

people say: '*Tukali ukunkesya unyuka* (We have not yet bidden farewell to the shade),' *ukukesya* being the word used for bidding a courteous farewell to departing guests. Mwaisumo elaborated the point. He said: 'The death ritual is a saying good-bye, it is to see off the dead man accompanying him on his way (*ukunsindikela*); to demonstrate that we have buried him indeed, and to pray that forgetfulness may now come on us.' Another informant explained: 'Touching the earth is to say "Good-bye, friend."'

The danger of madness was given as the reason both for the whole ritual and for many separate actions in it. 'You go mad if you do not shave after a death,' said the wife of the chief Mwaihojo. 'You go mad if you keep the hair of the corpse (*inwili sya mfimba*),' said Mwandisi, the old blind historian, and he went on: 'Yes, much madness comes from the shades if you have neglected the death ritual for a wife or for parents, and the ritual at puberty also. Madness comes from the shades and from Kyala. And if a woman refuses to perform the ritual for her husband who has died, and refuses to lie down with the heir, she also goes mad.' If someone does go mad the cause is usually said to be neglect of the death ritual or some mistake in its performance.

Other types of illness are also attributed to neglect of the death ritual. Kasitile was ailing and thought that his illness was due partly to the fact that he had not completed the death ritual for a relative. Mwilabe said of the sweeping in the ritual: 'They sweep round their legs lest their bodies become swollen and sick. It is said that their bodies will swell if they attend the ritual of someone else and this is done and they themselves have not been swept over.' Several informants mentioned 'a lingering and painful death' (a terror often spoken of by the Nyakyusa) as the penalty for neglecting a ritual, and the last part of the ritual is expressly interpreted as a prophylactic against the 'gasping cough'.

Finally, it is said that the crops will not flourish if the ritual is neglected. Kakuju, a village headman of Selya, was explicit on the point: 'If you do not bury your father properly the food will disappear. They (the diviners) will tell you to find something and when beer has been left overnight outside in the banana grove you pray to the shade.' The fear that the crops will not flourish is not mentioned so frequently as the danger of madness, but it is a general notion.

The danger of madness or other illness coming on one is thought to be greatest if a man tastes the ritual food or beer, or is sprinkled

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

131 Bukukwe, culminating, so far as the peopled regions
133 are concerned, in Tukuyu, five thousand feet above sea-level, the residence of the Administrative Officer and his staff, with Post and Telegraph Offices, and a large Government Hospital. Here also are many small trading stores, conducted by Indians and Somali; and a little to the south is the Kyimbila
[797] Station of the Scottish Churches Mission, carrying on the work of the exiled German missionaries. Still further to the south, and less elevated, is the British military post of Masoko.

The population of these fertile and healthy high-
361 lands is dense. From Tukuyu or Kyimbila, looking
101 south and west, numerous villages, each hidden in its banana grove, fill the view westwards to the Bundali Hills, where the Kibira River is marked out by a morning mist, and southwards towards the lake, thirty miles distant. In this region the people call themselves Nyakyusa, with a number of local names indicating no difference of origin or language. The
241 soil is so fertile, and the rain usually so abundant, that in many places two crops are taken annually of some foodstuffs, while of the others the single crop is so great that scarcity, no uncommon occurrence in some parts of Central Africa, is rarely experienced.

133 The Bundali Hills close in this happy valley (for in
101 spite of its elevation the country has the appearance of a valley) on the west; and beyond them, after a most exhausting march, over lofty summits, through deep ravines threaded by bridgeless rivers, one comes to the home of the Bandali, a race of hardy

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Government established a station at Lumbira on the 135
lake shore, but removed later to Tukuyu. On the 177
whole the new Government was well received. A rising in 1897 was so mercilessly dealt with that any discontent which might be felt was suppressed by the fear of the German machine-guns. Very slowly the district is being merged in the general progress arising out of European domination.

Around the lake shore cotton is being successfully 241
cultivated by natives and Europeans. On the uplands near Tukuyu there are some coffee plantations, and the suitability of the soil for the cultivation of flax is being tested. Coal has been found in the hills to the 135
west, but its commercial value has still to be proved; and a small quantity of mica is also being digged. Up in the north, on the Lupa River, but outside the Konde region, gold has been discovered, but apparently only in modest quantities. There are at present about three score of miners at work there.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

461 521 522 marriage settlement; the wealth some one has brought from the South; or perhaps they exchange impressions of Europeans they have worked for—a subject into which a great deal of humour can be packed; for it must not be imagined that the white man is taken too seriously. His little foibles, his often none too good temper, his haste to get a job done, and above all his cool assumption of unquestioned superiority, supply endless fun to the village joker. "Bantu as she is spoke" by some Europeans gladdens the weary hours for many a humorously inclined native.

241 512 Should the rains be late, the situation may be serious, for not only does the heat continue, but the harvest will be correspondingly late, and there is dark fear lest the supplies in the barns, intended to last until March, should have to do until April is well on. [783] Public prayer is offered, led by the chief. The preliminary ceremonies have been attended to, and as soon as the first rains fall all sally out with the first streak of dawn to begin the year's work. From a score of small crofts one may hear the long happy shout of the men, and the shrill call of the women, as they toil in the early morning; but as the day advances and the heat increases, the shouting dies away, and every one puts the last ounce of energy into the task in hand. Henceforward, for about three months, the native gives all his attention to his crops; for as the season advances, and the grain begins to grow, the weeds come up also in wild profusion, and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

241 sheer hard work makes men and women look thin and
512 haggard. Work stops about noon; the women go home to attend to the food, the men to see to the cattle which the smaller boys have been looking after
231 during the day. The milking is always done by the
512 men, [illegible] women's work as with us. If there are
[462] flies about, and there usually are, the cows need no invitation to thrust their heads into the column of acrid smoke that arises from a dung fire, kindled for the purpose. The rest of the afternoon is filled either with small duties, basket mending, net work, some slight repairs to a canoe, rope making, house repairing; or it may be there is a lawsuit to be settled, and every idler will make a point of being present.

512 By the time food is over, night has closed in. If the night is dark, one after another slips away with a
[576] friendly "May you sleep well," and silence reigns until morning. Unless it is suddenly broken by the roar of a lion or the growl of a leopard; and then the young men, who sleep with the cattle, rush out with spears and clubs and wild shouting to drive off the intruder, while the others raise a weird cry within the houses. Should the lion take refuge in a thicket and refuse to be driven off, a small party may slip round to the nearest white man, if he is not too far away, to beg him either to lend them a rifle, or to
512 come himself to their aid. In the warm moonlight
535 nights, however, other noises fill the ear. The young people gather for a dance, and the drum fills the night air with its interminable tum tum tum, now soft and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

231 a cow about to be delivered of a calf was rushed down to running water, and the calf, when delivered, immediately submerged. Then cow and owner ran for their lives, and when the scourge had passed over, the owner, if he survived, took the calf out of the water, resuscitated it, and let it go. The explanation given to me by a medical colleague of the conditions under which such a thing is possible, render it highly probable that if ever it occurred at all, it must have been very rarely, and even less in times of war than in times of peace. What is interesting, however, is the fact that the physiological possibility of it is known to the natives. I have not met anyone who has seen it done.

241 771 *Agriculture.*—St. Paul would almost certainly have told the Konde that they were "too religious"; not because he would have seen tokens of their religiousness in the streets and villages; no mere passer-by, and no indifferent foreigner, ever sees that. One must look deep, and live long among them, before that side of their life reveals itself to him with any fulness. There is hardly an act of theirs that is not accompanied by a ceremony of some kind, if that is religion, and to them it undoubtedly is. Agriculture is a highly religious occupation on that view, but hardly more so than many others. Leaving native Christians aside, the great majority of the people consult a diviner before beginning to hoe. He may say that all is well; or he may discover that some spirit stands in the way of a good crop, and must be propitiated; or that a certain piece of ground is bewitched, and no good will come of hoeing it until the spell has been removed.

[787] 241 782

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

If a spirit is to be propitiated, beer is poured out and petition made as follows: 241 782

> "Ye fathers, I am about to sow my seed. How can it grow if ye kill what I put into the ground? If ye are gracious to me, let me see the harvest."

Finishing his oblations with the usual squirting of water from the mouth, he next day sows his seed in confidence. If there are no obstacles from the spirits he does not pray. Why should he? There is nothing to pray about.

The ceremonies are practically the same all over the Konde country, but many chiefs have special practices of their own. A very picturesque ceremony is that of the chief Mwaisumo. When the early rains have fallen, and the ground has been hoed, chief and people go to the grave of the ancestral chiefs, carrying their shields of ox-hide. The chief and his headmen, standing in rows, raise their shields above their heads, and Mwaisumo, taking water into his mouth, squirts it upwards, and prays for a good harvest. Immediately all the people break out into rejoicing, dancing, shouting, blowing bamboo whistles, and drumming. The seed may now be sown. 241 782 622

The first hoeing is *ukusubera*, gathering the heaps of dry rubbish and burning them. But even this is not done without ceremony. Every man goes to the doctor to get medicine, which is put into the biggest heap in his garden; then, when the wife of the village headman has set fire to one of the heaps, which must not be one of those in her husband's garden, all the 241 789

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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other women take fire from the lighted heap, and kindle their own, first setting the torch to the large heap which contains the medicine, the virtue of which is carried to all the other heaps as they are set alight one by one.

There is a custom, now passing away, but still followed by a few, of throwing medicine into the ground as one hoes. Many use manure for fertilisation, but the medicines I am speaking of have no manure qualities. They are *ukuta*, something possessing mysterious powers, the virtues of which are known by experience, but are not open to rational explanation. One of the best-known medicines of this kind is elephant manure, dried and set on fire, and the smoke allowed to spread over the garden. Where this is used it insures a bumper crop.

Not even yet, however, is all ready, for the seed must be doctored before being sown. A medium-sized basket is taken, and plastered on the inside with the drug, which, of course, has been obtained from the local doctor, who at this season does a roaring trade. Into the basket the seed is put, mixed with more medicine, and then sown. The object in this case is not, however, to secure a good crop, but to prevent the yield being interfered with. If even a sorcerer steals from that garden, he will sicken, and probably die; or a disease will eat up his lips, and he will stand revealed to all men for what he is, a garden thief, and, it may be, a sorcerer as well.

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Working parties are often formed for the hoeing, the group spending one day in each garden, and being

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

fed by the owner in each case. When a headman's 241
garden is being done, beer is provided, and the chief 476
usually kills an ox when he has a party hoeing for him. The main crops are maize, cassava, millet, sweet potatoes, peas, beans, ground nuts, but many other food-stuffs are cultivated. Every village is hidden in groves of bananas, which need regular tending. Rice is grown for the market, and in the Kinga Mountains large quantities of wheat are cultivated. Every man owns his clump of bamboos; many have a few kapok trees, some mangoes, one or two lemon trees; and some European fruits are slowly spreading to native gardens. A few cultivate kitchen vegetables, but only for sale to the white man.

In a few places I have seen intelligently conceived 312
irrigation, but never on a large scale, each man attending to his own needs in the matter.

Growing crops must be protected from numerous 241
pests. Boys are stationed by day to drive off monkeys; straying cattle eating the crops involve their owner in damages: elephants, no rare visitors in some districts, are driven off by drum and horn and wild shouting when they pay no attention to the small sticks which are placed in a corner of the garden to keep them away. Pigs are very fond of growing maize; and where they are numerous, small huts, elevated on poles, are built in the gardens, and there the young men sleep and keep an open ear for the grunting which betrays the presence of the spoilers. Then one may hear the long shout of the watchers, who add to their shouting the rattling of dried gourds strung on cords

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

241 stretched across the garden, and presently the pigs clear off, and there is silence again. Many kinds of game get part at least of their living out of human industry, and have to be laboriously guarded against.

For smaller pests additional aid must be sought. Field mice and rats, *indafu*, a small locust-like creature, grubs, wireworms, and moles, work great injury, and ordinary methods of dealing with them are vain. Take, at sunset, a brand from the fire, and walk over the garden with it, singing "*Kuki Kyaubili?*" Where is the Unseen God? and the pests will clear out.

241 The first maize cobs are taken to the chief; then
622 each head of a family presents a few cobs to his own
769 ancestors; twins also must be presented with early cobs, and it is only then that common people are safe if they begin to eat the new season's crops. When the chief makes an offering to his ancestors, it is usually laid at the *lupanda*, the place where the village trees stand. The maize is eaten by mice, but it is credited to the "lion" which is the chief's guardian (Chap. V). In some districts a perhaps more primitive ceremony is observed. With a following of little children, the doctor goes to the grave of the chief's ancestors, and there roasts a few maize cobs, which he divides among the children; on their return, intimation is made that all may now eat the new crops.

251 The food stocks in the barns are protected by a medicine, but this practice is falling out of use, though many still follow it. If a man is too poor to buy the medicine, he begs a handful of the protected grain from his better-off neighbour, confident that the

4 Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

137 especially in the north, but as between 100 and 130 in. of rain usually falls annually, the country is one of the most fertile parts of Tanganyika. Two crops a year are often [132] grown on the same patch of ground. There is no tsetse, and cattle flourish. Parts of the country are stony and mountainous, others, especially the lake-shore plain, are of deep soil. On the higher ground there are many old volcanic craters filled with rich, moist soil, more fertile than the surrounding land.[1]

131 *Ngonde* country is bounded by Lake Nyasa on the east and by the Misuko hills on the west. It is mountainous except for a belt of low-lying country, about 6–10 miles 132 wide, along the lake shore. The whole district is well watered and well wooded except for some of the higher peaks and the lake-plains. Banana-trees are cultivated throughout the district. Game is plentiful. Average annual rainfall at Karonga in 1922–32 was 41·2 in. Average mean temperature was 74° F., seldom rising above 95° F.[2]

MAIN FEATURES OF ECONOMY

Cultivation

000 The *Kinga* are agriculturists, cultivating wheat, peas, and potatoes, and latterly also oats and barley. They own a moderate amount of cattle, and many sheep and goats. They are skilful smiths.[3] The *Kisi* and *Sandie* around the north-west coast of the lake are fishermen and agriculturists, growing some millet and maize.[4] The *Nyika* are agriculturists and cattle-rearers; the *Lambia* do not rear much cattle; the *Ndali* have large herds, and cultivate bananas in the valleys.[5] The *Nyamwanga* keep sheep and goats and grow maize, beans, and millet.[6]

The *Matengo* have a system of hill-side cultivation of their own, which prevents erosion. When forced into concentrations in the caves in Litembo and Langiro to escape the Ngoni raids, they developed the pit-system of hoeing: the grass is cut and laid in 2-ft. wide lines in a grid of 6-ft. squares. The hole in the middle of the square is hoed by a woman, who throws up the earth on to the grass squares. The crops are planted in the raised beds and weeds are thrown into the pit to rot, forming compost for the following year. After one season the pit becomes the raised bed and the beds the pit, and the system is repeated in following years. With proper succession of crops the gardens may be kept in use for ten years before fertility begins to fail. Maize, millet, and wheat flourish; root crops do not thrive under this system, nor does tobacco. The pit-system is now found mainly at Litembo, and is being abandoned elsewhere.[7]

● 241 The *Ngonde* and *Nyakyusa* are primarily cattle-rearers and banana-cultivators. They have a very similar culture, but only the latter has been described in detail. Consequently, the following summary refers to the Nyakyusa, unless the contrary is indicated.

The Nyakyusa practise subsistence agriculture by intensive cultivation with rotation of crops. As wide shifting cultivation is not practised, villages are relatively stable. They grow a great quantity of crops—maize, millet, sweet potatoes, beans, ground-nuts, cow-peas, cassava, and rice in the plain. Grass is hoed in for manure. The *Sukuma*, in the Misuko hill area (Ngonde country), grow field-peas and wheat on a small scale.[8]

[1] Wilson, 3, 1938, pp. 5–6.
[2] *Handbook of German East Africa*, p. 64.
[3] Ibid., pp. 66–7.
[4] Pike, 1938.
[5] Murray, 1931, pp. 207–3; Dixey, 1928.
[6] Ibid., pp. 62–3.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Murray, 1931, p. 207.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241 The use of cattle dung as manure is a novelty now used in the cultivation of coffee, but not on gardens unless land is beginning to be scarce. Banana cultivation is a characteristic feature of Ngonde as well as of Nyakyusa economic life.[1] Each homestead in a village includes the houses of a man and his wives, his banana groves, coffee-trees planted under the bananas, and also plots of beans, ground-nuts, &c. The main gardens of the household lie at some distance. Each year different types of gardens are hoed together by groups of villagers, millet in one place, maize and beans in another, so that the main gardens of any particular household are scattered. The clearing and hoeing fall to the man and his sons, and the wives are then given portions of their own to plant. Traditionally women never used to hoe at all.

The rights of a woman to dispose of her crops vary. Millet and rice, the two most valuable crops, are stored by the man and belong to him. The woman is the effective owner of all other crops on her plot, and stores them in her own house. Crops are used for food, beer, and hospitality, for making gifts, as well as for sale or barter, to obtain salt, pots, clothes, and cattle. There is a sharp division of property between co-wives. Not only garden land but also banana-trees are divided between them. The husband often keeps a separate plot of bananas and cassava over which he has full rights of ownership. The farming unit is the family, but communal hoeing parties are organized two or three times a year, food and beer being offered to the workers.[2]

243 On the lake-shore plain rice is cultivated. The Ngonde plain is the main rice-growing area of Nyasaland. Floods in the rainy season make possible the cultivation of lowland rice, or paddy, which is superior in yield to upland grown crops. The most fertile areas are usually flooded during the rainy period of December–April, so as to be unfitted for the cultivation of other food crops at that time. But the Ngonde construct huge mound-like ridges in their newly harvested rice gardens, and plant on them subsidiary crops—maize, beans, sweet potatoes, cassava, or cotton. When these are harvested the garden is levelled again in readiness for another rice crop. Harvesting of rice and winnowing is usually women's work.[3] The crops are stored when threshed but unhulled, or unthreshed. They are milled by pestle and mortar. The rice is marketed with Indian traders in Blantyre and Limbe townships.[4]

Cattle

231 Cattle take a foremost place in *Ngonde* economy, and milk is an important article of diet. Ngonde herdsmen were much in request in Shire province.[5]

Nyakyusa cattle are tied up at night in the dwelling houses,[6] and are herded in the day by small boys. Milking is invariably done by the men; the women are not allowed to have anything to do with cattle.[7] Every year at the end of the dry season, in October or November, some of the pastures are fired to bring out the new shoots at the first rains. This is the only use of burning in their economy.[8] The rinderpest outbreak of 1896 decimated the herds,[9] but since then the number of cattle has increased considerably, numbering over 33,000 head in 1931 and about 40,000 head in 1938,

[1] Murray, 1932, p. 202.
[2] Barker, 1934.
[3] Johnston, 1897, p. 431; Murray, 1932, pp. 203 and 209.
[4] Murray, 1932, p. 209, states that Ngonde cattle and herdsmen sleep together in long rectangular huts.
[5] Wilson, J., 1938, p. 8.
[6] Wilson, J., 1938, pp. 18–19.
[7] Murray, 1932, p. 208.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Johnston, 1897, p. 431.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

131 twenty miles from Lake Nyasa (1,500 feet). A little compact country,
133 secluded until very recently from any effective external contacts, slightly over 1,000 square miles in extent.[1]

132 The soil, particularly that of the higher ground in the north of the
134 Nyakyusa country, is not in itself very rich, but, as between 100 and 130 inches of rain usually fall each year, the district is one of the most fertile
[161] in the whole of Tanganyika; two crops a year are often grown on the same patch of ground, and the African population is over eighty to the square
[231] mile. There is no infected tsetse fly and cattle are the most prized possession of the Nyakyusa.

631 For historical reasons, which we will discuss in a later section, the Nyakyusa have never been united under any one paramount chief of their own, but live in a number (nearly 100 at the present day) of tiny but traditionally independent chiefdoms. For these chiefdoms the numerous streams which run down from the north into Lake Nyasa and the crests of the ridges of land between them, form natural boundaries.

133 The country, of course, is not all of equal economic value, parts of it
134 are stony and mountainous, other parts, and particularly the plain in the south, consist of deep and level soil; and the population is heavier on the plain than on the higher ground. Further, on the higher ground, there exist numerous old volcanic craters filled with rich moist soil and these, being more fertile than the surrounding land, are particularly valued by
[241] the Nyakyusa. Again, of the two chief economic crops of this district, one, coffee, can only be grown on the higher ground while the other, rice, can only be grown on or near the plain. And at every point their system of land tenure is partially determined by such physical factors as these.

3. *THE USES AND VALUE OF LAND*

311 The Nyakyusa use their land for building on, for agriculture, for pasture, for hunting and fishing; they collect firewood, reeds, thatching-grass, mushrooms and other wild vegetables there; they draw water from its streams and bathe daily in them; on their land they grow bamboos, bananas, *imiyungati* trees[2] and coffee; they keep bees; they dance, they fight, they walk and lie down upon it; their land is both the receptacle of refuse and the location of religious ritual, while their doctors continually wander over its surface in search of magical medicines.

Not all these uses of land give rise to laws, moral rules or conventions, but only those uses which tend to lead men into conflict with one another or into mutual embarrassment. The only reasons for the existence of

[1] The whole of Rungwe District is 1,866 square miles, but this includes the hills of the Ndali and Lambya as well.
[2] I have not been able to discover the botanical name of this tree.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

rules of land tenure are firstly to prevent, as far as possible, such conflicts and embarrassments from arising, and secondly, to facilitate their resolution when aroused. If, then, there is no danger of conflict or embarrassment neither is there a need for any rule at all. A Nyakyusa doctor wandering in the uncultivated bush looking for medicines cannot harm any man's interest, cannot hurt any man's feelings, and he is therefore free to gather what and where he will. 311

In many of its uses, however, land is scarce and so leads men into competition for it. When, in any society, land, or some other material of action, is scarce, we say that it has economic value; and whenever anything has economic value then, of necessity, its use *must* always be effectively limited and defined by rules of law or of morality or by convention, for only by such limitations of human action can anarchy be kept at bay and ordered human society continue to exist.

The scarcity or economic value of land is, in most of the Nyakyusa chiefdoms, more a matter of quality than of mere quantity. In some few chiefdoms there is, however, already threatening an actual lack of arable land, and it is almost certain that there will in time be a general shortage. The natural increase of population is to some extent counterbalanced by ever-increasing emigration into neighbouring, less densely populated districts; but rapidly changing economic and technical conditions will of themselves, in all probability, bring about a shortage of land. Ploughs (over 100 of them) are already in use and are multiplying many times over the area which one man can cultivate, while the recent development of an external market for surplus food is stimulating many men to greater effort even with the hoe. An area amply sufficient, with primitive subsistence agriculture, for about 100,000 persons may well prove quite insufficient when ploughs are employed and when to the 100,000 mouths are added, through the medium of the market, many thousand more. Rungwe District is already one of the main sources not only of labour but also of food for the nearby Lupa gold fields, while its rapidly increasing crop of Native-grown coffee now finds its way to Europe. In 1936 produce to the value of some £24,000[1] was sold by this district to the outside world. 311 241 [167] [439]

At the moment, however, there is no general shortage of land. It is the *best* ground which is scarce, not land as such. The best building sites, the best plots of arable ground and the best pastures have economic value and their use is precisely defined and limited in the Nyakyusa system of land-tenure. 311

[1] Figure estimated for the whole district (Nyakyusa, Ndali and Lambya, about 150,000 persons in all) on the basis of information supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Office, Tukuyu.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

000 Before passing on to consider how it is that the Nyakyusa distinguish between " better " and " worse " plots and pastures we must dwell for a moment longer on the technical aspect of their present use of land.

241 231 The *chitemene* system of agriculture so common in Central Africa has never been practised by the Nyakyusa, indeed the density of the population makes it impossible ; they follow instead a system of intensive cultivation with rotation of crops. Villages are thus relatively stable and a man may, if he chooses, hoe the same ground year after year for a whole generation, letting each plot lie fallow in its turn. The great variety of crops which can be grown helps to determine the success of the Nyakyusa rotation system—maize, millet, sweet-potatoes, beans, ground-nuts, cow-peas, cassava and, in the plain, rice being their staple products. The men hoe deeply, using a long-handled iron hoe, the women weed with the aid of a short-handled wooden digging stick ; different crops are planted at different seasons and most men do some hoeing in every month of the year. Every now and again a whole block of garden land that has been worked for some years may be allowed by common consent to revert to pasture. In the pasturing of cattle the most noteworthy point is the burning of the grass-lands ; at the end of each short dry season in October or November, some of the pastures are fired so as to bring new shoots of tender grass with the first rains. The houses of a village are normally all built close together, each surrounded by bananas, with the main garden lands at some distance from them. The cattle are tied up at night in the houses and their dung is removed each morning and thrown down among the banana trees by the women of the household. The deliberate use of dung as manure is a novelty but is now general in the cultivation of coffee ; on the gardens cattle dung is not used save in that one part of the district where land is beginning to be absolutely scarce, but the grass, which in this climate grows so quickly over them, is hoed in each year as green manure.

242 The first consideration which, in the case of arable land, leads the Nyakyusa to value some pieces of ground above others is a scientific[1] knowledge of the properties of different kinds of soil. " The men who are skilled in choosing ground for hoeing are those who have been long familiar with the soil. They know how soils differ and that one soil is best for maize, another for sweet-potatoes, one for peas, another for beans, one for ground-nuts another for pumpkins, one for millet, another for yams. And they can tell from the grass also, that where a certain

[1] By " scientific " knowledge is meant an intelligent understanding of fact based upon observation or experiment and which is not directly determined by any ultimate religious beliefs, save only the one belief that facts are intelligible.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Nyakyusa are, predominantly, a patrilineal people, for inheritance normally follows the male line. They differ, however, from the patrilineal peoples of Europe in that brothers inherit before sons. Inherited wealth is thus mainly kept in the hands of the older men, though they are under certain obligations towards their " sons " (whether own or classificatory) in their use of it. Marriage involves a transfer of anything from four to thirty head of cattle from the bridegroom to his father-in-law, and consequently the chief obligation which an older man has, both to his own sons and to the sons of any kinsman from whom he has inherited, is to provide them, in due time, with cattle for marriage. But this obligation is not an absolute one, it depends, in part, upon the due fulfilment by each " son" of his filial duties, which are, firstly, to hoe his father's fields diligently and, secondly, to maintain a respectful bearing towards him. Unmarried men have no gardens of their own, they work their fathers' land and eat the produce of it which their mothers cook. 611 428 583 593

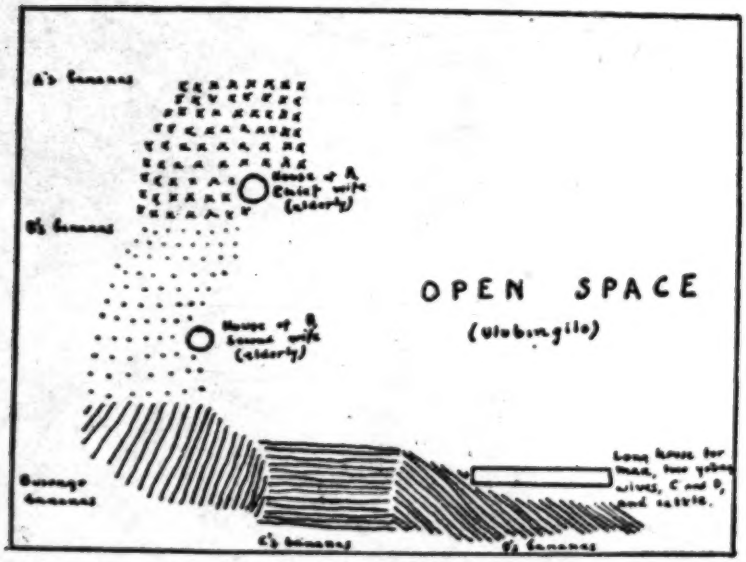
Under modern conditions money for tax and clothes is necessary both to father and son, and very many young men visit the nearby Lupa gold fields regularly, for periods of a few months at a time, to earn it. A youth who always brings back to his parents after each spell of absence tax money and some presents is held to have done all his duty and he will be given marriage cattle just as soon and as readily as if he had spent all his time being at home. And if he earns more, sufficient to purchase some of hismarriage cattle for himself, still his father benefits, for the old man has then to spend fewer beasts from his own stock. But the Lupa needs food as well as labour and some unmarried men stay continuously at home and engage in the production of crops; after the family needs have been met the surplus is sold and from the proceeds the father pays his own tax and his sons' and buys clothes for them as well. 167 593

Hoeing, which is the hardest part of Nyakyusa cultivation, is normally done by men, planting; weeding, reaping and cooking by women. But some women nowadays do some hoeing too—if their husbands are away at work or if for any other reason they find it difficult to get enough ground prepared for them. Traditionally, I was told, women never used a hoe at all. 241 462

Polygyny is the rule rather than the exception among middle-aged men, and in a polygynous household, as we shall see, each wife has her own gardenplots. The institution of polygyny has many other elements besides the economic, but the economic is not the least important of them: the taking of additional wives is the best capital investment which is open to an ordinary, uneducated, Nyakyusa peasant. A Nyakyusa wife is not her husband's property, she is his wife; but as family relationships are, among the Nyakyusa, the basis of economic activity, so the more wives 595

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Plan B



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The Homestead of a Rich Man

Each married man has at least one house and, if he is a polygynist, he often has several; young wives may sometimes share a house, older wives normally have one apiece. The land immediately surrounding a man's houses belongs to him and his wives and will be referred to in this paper as their "building site" or "homestead" (*akaja*). Each homestead is sufficient in size to hold not only the houses of one man but also his bananas and, maybe, a few small plots of beans, ground-nuts or some other crop as well; and it is there, under the bananas, that coffee trees are planted. But there is no room on it for the main gardens of the household. In the centre of every homestead is an open space (*ulubingilo*) carefully weeded and swept by the owner and his wives, who usually take great pride in thus keeping it clean. 592 423

At some distance from the homestead—a distance varying from a few yards to two miles or more—lie the main gardens (*imigunda*) of the household, near those of other people. Each year different types of gardens are hoed together by groups of villagers; millet in one place, potatoes in another, maize and beans in another; so that the gardens of one particular household are scattered in different spots. 241

After the man and his sons have hoed the gardens, clearing the ground first if necessary, his wives are each given portions of their own to plant, weed and reap. In hoeing for any particular crop the land is 241 592 421

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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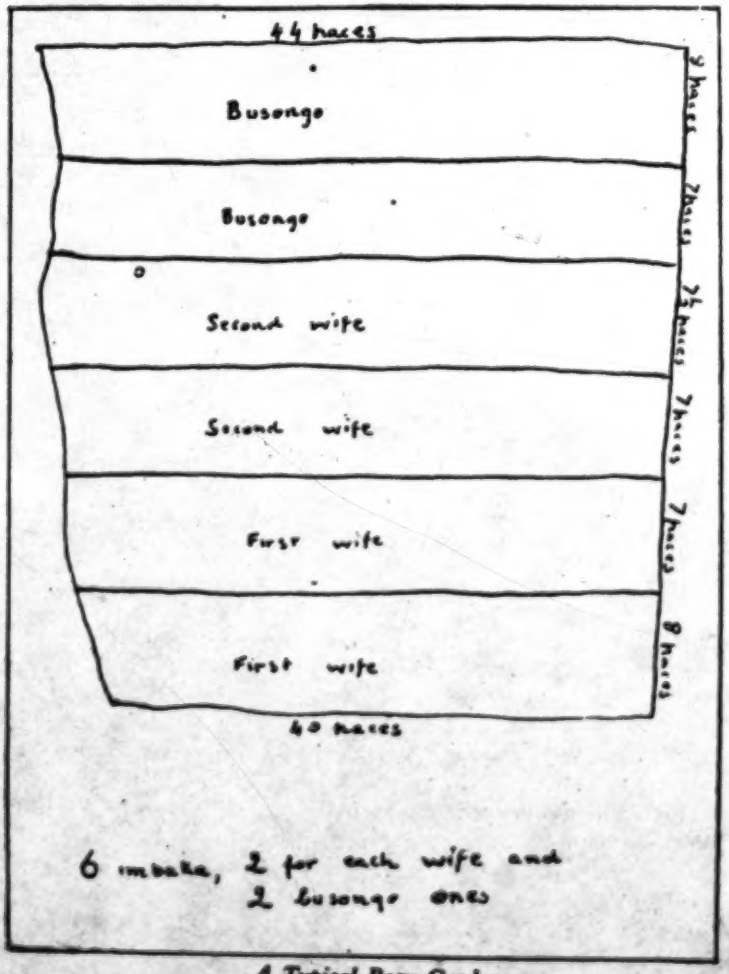
divided up into separate plots (*imbaka*) all roughly of the same size, and one or two of these plots are assigned to each wife. There is no standard size for a plot (*ulupaka*), the only important thing being that there should be equality between the several wives of one man in the areas allotted to them.

The rights of a woman to dispose of the crops of her own gardens (*imigunda*), that is of the plots (*imbaka*) allotted to her by her husband,

Plan C



A Typical Bean Garden

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

vary in different circumstances. Millet and rice, the two most valuable crops, belong to the man and are stored by him; so that the division of a millet or rice garden into plots and their assignment to different wives is rather a division of labour than of property. But of all other crops the woman on whose plots they have grown is an effective owner. She stores them herself in her own house and no other wife of her husband can touch them; it is only with him that her rights are in any way shared. 241 592 421

The main use of the crops which the Nyakyusa grow is to provide food for each separate household group. Next in importance is the provision of food and beer for hospitality, and for the making of gifts both in everyday life and on special ceremonial occasions. And, finally, there is the barter or sale of surplus crops to obtain salt, pots, clothes, cattle and to pay tax. Each married woman, therefore, first uses her own crops to feed her husband, her own children and herself. If she is the only wife then she cooks for her husband every day, but, even if she is one of many, she is yet careful to cook for him frequently, in order to keep his affection and the various advantages which go with it. 592 593 574 [437]

When cooking for her husband she must, when necessary, prepare sufficient for guests, for a man very often has friends and neighbours eating with him; and if he wishes to make a gift of cooked food, she cooks it for him from her own store. To provide meals for him and his guests and cooked food for gifts is an obligation which she normally fulfils quite willingly, as we have hinted above; she may be fond of him; it is in any case to her interest to play her part in the co-operative relationship which binds them together and from which both alike benefit. He hoes for her and builds her house, he gives her a share of the household milk, which he himself controls, he sleeps with and is gentle to her; he has, without the aid of any legal, moral or conventional sanctions, a great hold over her, as she, on her side, has over him. But, if either fails to play their part in willing co-operation, then there are, for both alike, these other sanctions to fall back upon. A quarrel develops between them and leads to violence, perhaps he strikes her, perhaps she viciously repels him, one night, from her bed; and then the immediately injured party appeals to the neighbours for support. They discuss the matter, censure one or the other, and try to make it up between them; if they fail to do so the case may go to Court and one will then have to pay compensation to the other. Or it may happen, without any violent quarrel, without any formal appeal to the neighbours, that one of them becomes aware that his conduct is provoking their mockery and criticism; and then in shame he mends his ways. Or, finally, one of them may fall sick and suspect that wrong-doing on his part has been followed by spiritual retribution in the form of witchcraft. 593 [574] [627] [626] [754]

A woman, then, uses her stores of food to cook not only for herself

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

586 mothers[1] in secret that she is in trouble and that her husband has no regard for her, that he grudges her garden plots and gives her only small ones. Then maybe her mothers will take the initiative in suggesting that she should leave this man who is no husband and who loves her not. And they will tell their husband, her father, that his child is in trouble and—only think of it!—has scarcely a ridge[2] to call her own. So that if the girl does then find life with her husband intolerable and leaves him, her father will not be too hard on his daughter, he will not compel her to go back to him; for he knows that she was in trouble."

421 626 754] This statement, written by an educated Nyakyusa, brings out very clearly both the fact that men do at times divide their land unfairly and the nature of some of the sanctions which operate against such injustice. The faith in witchcraft provides a moral sanction of which, if the man is fool enough to disregard it, he is very likely explicitly reminded in the course of the subsequent legal proceedings; the injured wife has an immediate hold over him in virtue of the relationship of practical co-operation and emotional intimacy in which they stand to each other, a hold which, if he attempts to break it by recourse to violence, is strengthened and given a legal form by the support of their neighbours. The support of her kin is an alternative legal force[3] which an injured wife

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[1] i.e. her father's wives.

[2] For many crops the ground is hoed into ridges.

[3] Some readers may be puzzled by and somewhat critical of the meaning with which the concept of law is employed in this paper. This is not the place to meet their criticisms, but, in order to avoid misunderstanding, it is necessary to define that meaning precisely. Law, then, is here distinguished alike from morality with its religious sanctions, from convention with its constraining sense of shame and from the reciprocity dictated by self-interest—with all of which it is in fact inextricably intertwined. Law is here taken to be that normal or customary form of action in society which is kept in being by the inherent necessities of systematic cooperation among its members. The particular form of law varies in different areas of society in accordance with the particular conditions of each area; but some normal form of action there must be everywhere if social life is to continue; anarchy is, in the strictest sense of the word, impracticable. A breach of law is a course of action, on the part of some individual or minority group, which is inconsistent with the normal and accepted form of cooperative action, and which would therefore, if unchecked, make continued relationship between the lawbreakers and the other members of their society wholly impossible; it threatens to dissolve society into anarchy. But breaches of law are always in fact checked, as they must be, by the actions of those with whom the lawbreakers are in practice related; and it is those actions which are the sanctions of law.

If law is to be preserved it is necessary that the actions which sanction it should have an irresistible force, the lawbreaker must normally be helpless before them; and they are only thus irresistible if the great majority of those people with whom the lawbreaker is effectively related do in fact either participate in or at least approve of them. Now in civilized areas of society, in which vast numbers of people are related, legal sanctions must be applied by a central authority if they are to be effective, for only such a central

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Unmarried children have the right to food partly in virtue of their general relationship to their parents, partly because they themselves assist in the work of the household. From the age of about six years boys herd cattle, from about eleven years they begin to hoe; while girls help their mothers in field work, in the fetching of wood and water and in the care of infants. And, owing to their practical usefulness, there seems to be less difficulty in getting motherless[1] children regularly fed before they marry than in getting them entertained afterwards. Each such child is allotted to one wife and is mainly fed by her. 592 857 241

In some households unmarried sons hoe only the particular plots of their own mothers; but in others the man and his sons work together as a team, hoeing each plot in turn. In ten neighbouring polygynous households I found that in three cases the sons confined themselves to the plots of their own mothers, in seven the man and his sons worked always together. Meals followed the same pattern as the hoeing. In the three cases the mother of each boy alone provided him with food, but in the other seven cases his step-mothers did also.

This variation of custom between different households was thus explained to me: "The custom of hoeing separately, each boy for his own mother only, is sometimes determined by lack of friendship between the women, sometimes by the slackness of their husband in hoeing. If he is slack about hoeing then it falls to the women to organize it, and each calls on her own son to hoe for her alone; and, in that case, if one wife has no son she will just have to enlist the services of other people to hoe for her (rewarding their efforts with food at the end of each day). Sometimes too the custom arises in this way—a boy finds that his step-mothers are reluctant to cook food for him when he comes in from hoeing, he complains that while his own mother cooks for him generously they do not, and so he begins to hoe for his mother alone.

"The custom of hoeing together, on the other hand, is determined by the will of the man, who himself organizes it. And wherever a man is vigorous in hoeing there you will find that he and his sons all hoe together. It is only when a man is slack that the custom of hoeing separately arises from the orders of the women, and if the man is vigorous in hoeing his wives are never reluctant and ungenerous about cooking, they bow to his will just as his sons do."

When their husband dies women pass to his heir. If the heir is a brother of the dead man then he takes them all to wife, if a son he takes 768 587

[1] The custom of marrying two sisters and that of substituting a dead woman's sister or niece in her place considerably reduce the number of such "motherless" children, for the sister of a dead woman treats the latter's children as her own.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

all except his own mother, whom he either builds for at a little distance and looks after, or else gives to a half-brother.[1] Inherited wives have the same land rights as others, and a mother for whom a son builds and hoes is treated by him, in the matter of land, just like a wife.

And a married man often supports an old woman—a mother, mother-in-law or elder sister—whose husband, though still alive, is incapable of hoeing and who has no unmarried sons. He may either hoe for her on her own husband's land or else assign to her a plot or two of his own.

The gardens of a household are not only worked by its members, other people assist them from time to time. Each married man usually invites a group of his village neighbours to help him with a day's hoeing two or three times a year, entertaining them to food and beer after the work is over. A married woman likewise is often assisted by women friends from neighbouring households in the planting, weeding or reaping of her crops and them she rewards simply with a luxurious meal in the evening, without any beer. Again, as we have seen, a married woman sometimes engages a young man to hoe for her regularly, for a month or more at a time, and pays him by feeding him well for that period.

But although this last custom is still common it is beginning to decline; fewer men each year are willing to work for any length of time except for money, and already in some of the more prosperous households young men are found to be employed in hoeing at the rate of 2/- a month in addition to their food. The young men who thus accept employment in hoeing are always the poor ones, those for whom (whether because their fathers are poor in cattle or because they have many elder brothers before them) the prospect of getting married is too distant to stimulate them to any great diligence at home. In the plain of Mungonde, however, where ploughs are extensively used, the owners of ploughs make a considerable profit by hiring themselves out with their ploughs at 2/- a plot (*ulupaka*).

Kinsmen and affines also often assist in a household's hoeing. When a man inherits his dead father's wealth then he assumes the position of father towards his own younger brothers and is responsible for the marriages of any who are bachelors; they then hoe for him and are fed by his wives just as unmarried sons do. Sons-in-law, again, are expected to bring their friends now and then to help their father-in-law in hoeing and they often do so, more particularly if they are behindhand with the marriage-cattle. After the day's work is over, however, they are entertained just as sumptuously as an ordinary work-party of neighbours.

[1] And any kinswoman of his mother (sister or niece) whom his father has married is treated likewise.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 The gardens of the Kyungu were divided traditionally into public
652 (*imilasa*) and private ones (*imigunda gya masewo*). The produce of the first was mainly devoted to the entertainment of important guests—chiefs, territorial nobles and the ivory traders from over the lake. That of the second to the personal needs of the Kyungu and his household.
643 The public gardens were hoed and weeded by the great chiefs and the
651 nobles of the Ngonde plain with their subordinates and followers, the private ones by the nobles of Ngonde with theirs.

The hoeing of his public gardens by the chiefs and nobles of the plain was as intimately connected with the religious status of the Kyungu as was the bringing of royal tusks to him, for the belief in his rain-making powers provided a moral sanction for it. Drought and disease, as we have seen, were often attributed to the displeasure of the living Kyungu; and the failure of some ruler to bring his people to work the public gardens was, so we were told, the most usual way of displeasing him. The wealth and the divinity of the Kyungu were inextricably linked. Nor without these public gardens could the lucrative ivory trade have been maintained. In the primitive world of Ngonde there were no "purely business relations;" tributaries and buyers alike had to be royally feasted.

643 In the hoeing of the public gardens the political hierarchy of
651 Ngonde was made evident, for each great chief came separately to hoe,
565 accompanied both by the local chiefs of his own house and by those
622 territorial nobles who lived near him. At an appropriate time either the great chief or one of his noble neighbours would suggest going to Mbande to hoe, and the former would then summon all his local chiefs. But he could not summon the nobles; with them it was a polite arrangement between equals. "When they went to hoe for the Kyungu it might be a neighbouring noble and not the great chief at all who made the first suggestion; and then the two of them would go together with their followers. For the nobles are not subjects of the great chiefs but only of the Kyungu."

651 The main crop grown in the public gardens was millet (*amalesi*) for
241 beer. And at some time during the year all the chiefs and nobles[1] who
476 had brought men to hoe[2] them were summoned to taste "the beer of
273 the mulasa." So we see that, in one aspect, the hoeing of the public gardens of the Kyungu was but an extension on a large scale of the

[1] It is clear from our notes that each chief and noble brought to this beer-drink some of his people; but it is not clear whether he brought all those who had worked or only the more important among them.

[2] I speak of "hoeing" and "men." It is fairly certain that the women also came to weed afterwards and that they participated in the beer. We omitted, however, to find this out.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

ordinary custom of hoeing parties which is still followed by every chief and commoner in this whole area. Every man, two or three times a year, invites his neighbours to hoe for him and rewards them with a beer-drink in the evening. Where the hoeing of the Kyungu's public gardens differed from this custom was in the religious sanction behind it and in its political organization. 651 241 476 273

After the local chiefs had finished the *malume* for the Kyungu they would next return and hoe a small garden for their great chief who had led them to Mbande. But in this the territorial nobles took no part. Such gardens were not called *milume* and there was no distinction made between them and the great chief's private ones. For this custom also there was a moral sanction; for the great chiefs, we remember, also participated in divinity. "If his people forgot to hoe for Mwakasungula then perhaps a little local epidemic of some kind would break out and the diviners, when questioned, would attribute it to their forgetfulness. Or perhaps a prophetic fit would fall on some one and he would tell them to go and hoe (or they would rue it!)" 651 565

And, still lower in the hierarchy, among a group of chiefs who were half-brothers, the senior chief used sometimes to summon his juniors to bring their men and hoe; but "their acquiescence depended on their friendship for him"; it seems to have had no effective moral sanction.

The private gardens of the Kyungu were traditionally very small indeed, for the constant income of food from the plain made them all but unnecessary. Such as they were, they were worked by the people of Mbande, i.e. the nobles of Ngonde and their followers. The wives of the Kyungu lived like ladies and had all the normal work of a woman, including weeding, done for them. 643 651

The income of the Kyungu in slaves and cattle cannot be understood save in the context of judicial procedure and warfare with which we have not yet dealt[1]. 643 652

The income of Mbande reached others besides the Kyungu and his wives. We have already seen how the nobles of Ngonde took their share of the food which was brought in; and some of it they gave to their messengers, the *nalukota*. Neither the nobles of Ngonde nor the messengers, according to the present Kyungu, used to have any large gardens of their own; they also were maintained at the public expense. And the nobles of Ngonde shared also in the proceeds of the ivory.

With the exception of a pile of tusks upon which the Kyungu slept, most of the ivory which reached Mbande, from the time of Mwangonde 439

[1] Vide infra sections 5 and 6.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

128 as they do, in their behaviour and their mutual relationships to a common type. Space forbids such an undertaking here; and it is necessary to emphasise that, although the most significant facts are described in an orderly manner, and although certain reasons for these facts are indicated in their specific character and in their connections with one another, yet these reasons are not fully or systematically worked out, and the result is a description which leaves the facts only half-explained. And, in so far as this society is not here fully analysed, so it is not yet fully comparable with others. The reader of this paper will detect many points of similarity and of difference between Nyakyusa society and some other with which he is familiar, but the comparison cannot be made to yield any propositions about the nature of human societies in general until the facts of both have been fully explained in terms of their particular social, cultural, and external conditions.

Climate, Cultural Groups, and European Contact.

101 The Nyakyusa live in the Rungwe District of South Tanganyika in
131 the Rift Valley at the head of Lake Nyasa. The valley is dominated and
133 closed at its North end by the recently extinct Rungwe volcano, from whose foot the land, starting as an upland plateau 5,000 ft. above sea-level, tumbles southwards for twenty-five miles in a broken cascade of hills, to level out in a plain fifteen or twenty miles from Lake Nyasa. The Lake is 1200 ft. above the sea. The East wall of the Rift rises to 10,000 ft. or more in the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains, but the West wall is two or three thousand feet lower. The climate is very wet, for about 130" of
[132] rain fall each year, and, at 9° South of the Equator, is also very hot.
[161 The rain and the sun together make the land extremely fertile; the
73] district is thickly populated (over 100 to the square mile), famine is rare and the Nyakyusa are far better fed than most of their neighbours. Rice
177 was introduced into the plain by Arabs, coffee by the German Missionaries in the hills, and these two crops to-day, under the enthusiastic care
241 and guidance of the Government Agricultural Department, bring to many Nyakyusa a small but steadily increasing cash income.

262 Their main foods are bananas, maize, beans, sweet potatoes and a
241 variety of greenstuffs, together with meat and curds from their cattle. Millet is extensively grown and is used both for making beer and for eating in the form of porridge.

101 The name *Nyakyusa* is nowadays used by themselves as a general name for all those who have similar speech and customs and who live in Tanganyika; but formerly it only covered those who live in the South of the district, in the plain and up in the hills as far North as the administra-

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

583 Normally a bachelor is given cows one by one, over a period of years, and, as we have seen, he sends them, as he receives them, to the father of the girl he wants to marry. One cow is sufficient for betrothal, but not until he has given three can he begin openly to sleep with her. And he cannot usually set up his own economy until he has given at least three cows and she has reached puberty and been initiated. He may of course bespeak an already grown girl, but if he engages himself to a young one he is expected to bring two or more bulls as well, during the course of her initiation.

684 If he chooses to spend his cows in adultery fines, he may, but he will then have to wait longer to get married.

582 Thus the system of marriage by a transfer of cattle is, in this society,
561 directly linked with a late marriage age for young men and with a privileged position for older men. When a boy gets cattle he at once gives them to an older man in order to secure his daughter as a wife; the labour of every bachelor helps to increase his father's wealth in food; it is in general the older men alone who can afford more than one wife. And there is an average difference of ten years or more in the initial marriage age of men
[162] and girls. The tax registers show in part of the district, among 3,000 adult* men, 34% bachelors, 37% monogamists, and 29% polygynists; and investigation proves that, generally speaking, it is the young men who are bachelors, the men over forty-five who are polygynists.

511 Though cattle are their most valued form of wealth, it is on agricul-
574 ture that the economy of the Nyakyusa is primarily based. Meat and milk are luxuries, and daily bread comes from the fields. Hard work in a fertile country provides food for each family, and the millet beer which is the ordinary material of hospitality. Hospitality brings a man prestige and authority among his fellows; on the possession of sufficient food largely depends the contentment of his wives. And in the production, preparation and eating of food the relationships of the family and of the individual family within it, are clearly visible.

241 Hoeing is the work of men, planting, weeding, reaping and cooking
512 is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about four hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a.m., on the upland plateau they begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different

*Presumed to be 18 years or over.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done.

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In a polygynous family each wife has her own fields (*ambuka*), hoed by her husband and her own sons, which she plants, weeds and reaps with the help of her own daughters, and the produce of which she uses to cook for her husband, her own children and herself. The relative rights of husband and wife to dispose of produce vary with different crops, but no co-wife has any rights over a woman's food. She may, and often does, ask her co-wives to help in her fields and sends them presents of cooked food from her own fire, she may help them and receive presents in return; but they have no rights over her fields or her food, only her husband and herself. And the fields which are hoed by a bachelor son belong to his own mother, who in her turn cooks food for him to eat.

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Each wife has either a hut to herself, or else a separate alcove in a large hut, and there she has her fire for cooking. She fetches her own firewood and water or sends an unmarried daughter for them.

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At meals the ages and the sexes eat separately: in some polygynous families each wife sends a dish to the husband, in others the wives take it in turns to cook for him. The husband eats alone or with neighbours of his own age[7] to share his dish, the older boys and their friends[7] eat separately from the younger children, and each mother again usually eats with her own daughters, apart.

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In the relationship of husband and wife the chief elements are sexual intercourse, co-operation in work, the procreation of children and factors of personal inclination, character and temperament. By men women are praised for sexual skill, cleanliness and beauty, for good cooking and hard work, for their fecundity, and for gentleness of speech and behaviour, and those with opposite qualities are criticized. Among women men are praised for sexual skill and attentiveness, for vigour in hoeing and skill in house-building, and for kindness; while sexual neglect, laziness, impotence and cruelty are disliked and may cause a woman to leave her husband for another man.

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The birth of children is a most important factor in the marriage relationship, for children are greatly desired both by men and women. They are desired for themselves and also because they bring their parents wealth and prestige; a boy will one day work in the fields of his father and mother, a girl will bring in cattle from her marriage. And the possession of children brings compliments and respect both to men and woman.

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[7] Vide infra "The Age-Villages."
[Cat. 116, pp. 269 ff. — Last pgs]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kings FN12

two peoples are distinct. Their languages are not mutually intelligible and the Nyakyusa despise the Kinga as dirty in habit and obsequious in manner. There were two main invasions from BuKinga: (i) that of the 'sons of Lwembe' who settled south and east of Tukuyu, and (ii) that of the 'sons of Ngomale' (or Kukwe), who settled first at Kina below the northern crater of Rungwe volcano, and then at Kabale in the foothills to the south-east. Most of the present chiefs of the Nyakyusa belong to one or other of these two lineages, and the chiefs of Ngonde are claimed by both. The arrival of the chiefs of Lwembe's line may be fixed between 1560 and 1690, i.e. before the settlement at the Cape, but after the death of the first Christian martyr in what is now Rhodesia[1] and the 'sons of Ngomale' followed them some generations later (*vide infra*, genealogies pp. 3, 97; p. 94). Two of the invading heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, became 'divine kings' whose successors claimed spiritual authority over wide areas, and the heirs of Kyungu gradually acquired temporal power also.

About the first inhabitants of the Nyakyusa valley, the *abilema*, tradition is vague; however, it is clear that they were not one people, but consisted of small, scattered, independent groups, disparate in origin. Some were very early invaders from BuKinga, others came from near Lake Rukwa and were kin to the Bungu of the Rukwa plain. They occupied an almost empty country (as their name indicates) but they found pygmy hunters[2] in the Rungwe forests. The invaders themselves were primarily hunters and honey-gatherers, though some, at least, of them began to cultivate millet, beans, and pumpkins. One group of early inhabitants, the Penja, which was pushed into the north-west corner of the valley, has remained relatively discrete, though for the most part they have fused with the conquerors.

It is clear that nowhere were the invaders allowed to establish themselves as tyrants since, though their descendants rule over the various chiefdoms, their authority is strictly limited by the headmen of the villages who are invariably of commoner stock. Moreover, while the most sacred persons in the country are, or before the coming of the Europeans were, 'divine kings', descendants of the original heroes, chosen by each generation to become their

[1] In 1561, cf. G. M. Theal, *Records of South-East Africa*, vol. ii, p. 108.

[2] The quality of relations with the Pygmies is summed up in the ironical name for them: 'Where did you are out?' (Umbumalinga?) The rule is that they were very sensitive about their size and the first question on meeting a Nyakyusa was always: 'Where did you are out?' The only safe reply was: 'Far, far away!'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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priests to sacrifice to his father and elder brother so that fertility may return and men may eat sweet potatoes, but he does nothing.

A conversation between Kaitile and Mwanyuso, his fellow priest (*vide* p. 76), was also instructive on this point:

> The soil has changed, we are not like those of old, we are different. Mwakisambwe (30) had power; when he prayed the thunder crashed and rain fell in torrents. In the old days when the Kings came they came with drums and we all feared them, what they said was done—they did not have to say much—just a few words and it was done. But now they spend all their time explaining things and talking and we do not do anything. . . .
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> MWANYUSO: I have sent people time and again to Mwaijande (?) for a cow, but he just insults us. . . . I have asked Mwaibojo (147) about celebrating. . . .
>
> KAITILE: What did he say?
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> MWANYUSO: I don't know . . . if he is wise . . .
>
> KAITILE (*breaking in*): Well, you had better admit that the chiefs do not respect you—the chiefs say: 'It is European times now.'
>
> G.W.: What do they fear? The Government does not affect the ritual, does it?
>
> KAITILE: They are unwilling to part with the cows which I take for sacrifice, they do not like to lose their cows. In the old days they feared, and when we said: 'We do not sleep, celebrate in the grove', they agreed quickly, for they feared that we, their men, would move to another chiefdom.

(5) THE FIRST FRUITS

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No ceremonial ritual of the first fruits is celebrated among the Nyakyusa as in Ngonde,[1] but after the millet harvest a little grain is collected from every homestead and later brewed into beer which is offered to the shades of the chief. In Mwaipopo's country the offerings of millet were collected by the priest, Ngulyo, who, with his colleagues Kimagoia and Njobokosa, took it to Kalinga, senior widow of the late chief (113). She was custodian of a sacred pot inherited by the chief from his predecessors, in which the offerings of millet are stored, and this is the pot which, according to some informants, also contained the power of growth—the nails and hair torn from the dead chief (*vide supra*, pp. 64-5). When the new crop was reaped Kalinga almost emptied the pot, refilled it with the fresh grain, and brewed beer with the old. There had once been a sacred winnowing basket used in preparing the beer, but

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, p. 40.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and achievement. An account of the treatment of a field for protection against wild pig emphasizes this.

If people wish to protect a crop from wild pig they go to a doctor to ask for medicine. When he gives it to them he tells them that there must be no quarrelling in the home after they have barricaded the field. Four women go to the field with the husband of the one who cultivates it. They go after sunset. One women is shaved; her head is a symbol of the garden devastated by pig. A second woman, who keeps her hair, ties a head-pad on her head and carries bananas with medicine. She enters the field and eats the bananas. The husband climbs a hill at a little distance, and two of the women go into the long grass close to the field. The bald pate twiers a head-pad and the one with hair smears it with medicine and as they do so they look towards their husband and abuse him saying, 'You lay with your mother', and he swears at them saying, 'The leather aprons of your fathers' . . . and many other insults. Then the women walk round the edge of the field, sprinkling medicines, and they go out the way they came in. The circular pad is a symbol of the barricade placed round the field. When they return home they do not eat but go to sleep hungry (though the clever ones eat beforehand). If they quarrel, the pig finishes the food. It is as if quarrelling destroyed the fierceness, the power, of the protective medicine; you must put aside all quarrelling that the medicine may be powerful. If the pigs come it is as if there were a quarrel, so the woman and her husband quarrel in the field mimicking the pig. The husband on the hill is like the pig approaching the field, his wives in the long grass also represent pigs. . . . The husband and his wives quarrel only in the field. If, when the maize is ripe, the husband beats one of his wives for any cause she does not go to pick the maize herself, a friend picks it for her. If she goes in her anger she finds the maize finished, nothing but earth is left.

Here the link between medicines and morality is made plain. Quarrelling weakens medicines of all sorts and renders them ineffective. But a mimic quarrel between husband and wives in the fields renders the medicine effective. It represents the battle between the pig and the medicines. There is a suggestion elsewhere (pp. 69, 113) that pigs are *sent* by the shades when kinsmen or neighbours quarrel, but in the account just quoted it is implied that quarrelling in the home directly injures the medicine.

In themselves, many medicines are neutral. They may be put to good or evil ends, but because they are mysterious and powerful, they are feared, in the same sort of way as atomic energy is feared in contemporary society. Men use medicines themselves 'for purely peaceful purposes', but they are shocked at

Ilc:Gulliver X-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I

In many areas of Eastern Africa the pressure of peasant populations on their tribal lands is a critical feature of the contemporary scene, and this is most especially so in the more fertile parts where the Africans has accepted the new cash economy and is beginning to appreciate the possibilities of the modern world. The situation has been highlighted recently in the public mind by the publication of the Report of the East African Royal Commission[1] which examined the economic conditions of our time and made general recommendations.

In Tanganyika the overall density of population is low (22 persons per square mile) and the general scale of economic activity still remains little above subsistence level over vast areas of Territory. There are, however, islands of extremely dense populations scattered through the country, often associated with the mountain areas, where soil is fertile, rainfall is reliable and adequate and the cultivation of crops for sale in world markets has grew ahead fairly easily. These populations still comprise peasant farming communities with little capital and their "natural" impulse is to expand their extensive agricultural system rather than to intensify their cultivation on existing holdings. Serious overcrowding soon results for the favourable areas are limited and surrounded by drier hinterlands. African attitudes and legal customs concerning their land do not change quickly and they lag behind new conditions of physical limitation and economic development. While the recommendations of the Royal Commission may be valuable in the establishment of general policy, it is obvious that detailed application through time demands a fairly exact knowledge and understanding of particular local conditions if it is to be reasonably successful. This is particularly the case in so large a country as Tanganyika, with its multiplicity of environments and tribal systems of law, land tenure and agriculture, and the social attitudes which encompass them.

The present essay is an attempt, sponsored by Government, to describe and analyse the land and population conditions in one small area of the Territory where a cash economy is emerging and where the pressure of a peasant population on its land resources has become acute. It is hoped that some of the account may be applicable, mutatis mutandis, to other similar areas elsewhere in Tanganyika and elsewhere, and that the conclusions reached may be helpful in dealing with the problems there; but primarily this is a study of one particular part of the country in order to provide the information upon which detailed policy may be founded.

The Nyakyusa are not entirely typical of many of the Bantu people of East Africa for they have a most distinctive social organization, peculiar to themselves, based on age-villages and party independent chieftaincies. Also, they inhabit a country where annual rainfall is unusually high, averaging about 100 inches. On the other hand, these people are one of the very few in Tanganyika for whom we have an excellent account of both their pre-European and early European systems of land tenure. Based on this information, obtained before modern changes began, we can perceive, analyse

1. East African Royal Commission 1953-5, Report. H.M.S.O. 1955. Cmd. 9475.

161 If therefore, pending the next Census to be made in 1957, we assume these rates of increase, then by 1955 it may be estimated that the Nyakyusa numbered about 217,000 at an average density of 233 persons per square mile, allowing 13.7 acres of land per family of five. For the Lake Plains alone, the population in 1955 would have been nearly 60,000 at an average density of 287 persons per square mile, with 11.2 acres per family. If we also include the estimated number of absentee migrant labourers in the base year of 1948, then there were in 1955 perhaps 63,000 people dependent on the land resources of the Lake Plains at an average density of 303 per square mile, though in fact some 6,000 men were temporarily absent from home in that year.

The figures and estimates are given in Table 1. These averages do, of course, hide some considerable and significant local variations which are further described at pages 14 ff. below.

TABLE 1
NYAKYUSA POPULATION

162

	1948 Census			1955 Estimates		
	a	b	c	a	b	c
Lake Plains at increase of 1% p.a.	55,700	268	11.9	59,700	287	11.2
Central Region at increase of 1½% p.a.	48,500	224	14.2	53,800	248	12.9
N.E. Highlands at increase of 1½% p.a.	40,300	183	17.4	44,700	203	15.8
N.W. Highlands at increase of 1½% p.a.	53,200	185	17.3	59,000	205	15.6
NYAKYUSA in tribal area	197,700	212	15.2	217,200	233	13.7

a = population
b = persons per square mile on land available for African use.
c = average acreage available per family of 5 persons.

Assuming that there were in 1948 about 3,000 men temporarily absent from their homes in the Lake Plains but who remained dependent on the land resources of that region, then the following estimate may be made:-

Lake Plains – persons resident at home and temporarily abroad:-

a	b	c	a	b	c
58,700	282	11.3	62,935	303	10.6

The approximate areas available for African use in the tribal lands (excluding alienated land, forest reserves and main roads) are:-

Lake Plains – 208 sq. miles N.E. Highlands – 220 sq. miles
Central Region – 217 sq. miles N.W. Highlands – 288 sq. miles
BuNyakyusa – 933 sq. miles

In these calculations no account is taken of unusable land such as swamps, steep slopes, thicket, etc.

Cash Cropping: Paddy Cultivation

433 432 This condition of a high density of population exists in a modern economy in which cash-cropping is universally accepted and desired. Under the former subsistence agriculture, because of heavy rainfall and natural annual flooding, quite small-sized holdings were adequate to satisfy a family's food requirements. Two harvests a year are easily obtained in some combination of maize, beans, groundnuts and finger millet, with a few small "luxury" crops; and the bananas grown yield continuously. The Nyakyusa were and are extremely fortunate in their food supply, and seldom experience shortages such as occasionally or even commonly afflict many peoples of East Africa. 241

243 [241] Rice was first introduced in 1896 by two chiefs who obtained the seed from Nyasaland Arabs; and in 1898 the Moravian Mission and a Swahili

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 F'N17 Ngonde F'N17
Nyakyusa

311 the river in spate during the wet season, although here and there a few plots
133 are cultivated on slightly raised ground. Similarly in Kapugi village, Korono's chieftdom, some parts are heavily inundated by the Kiwira river. In both these cases flooding has made unusable ground which was cultivated and even built on a generation ago; the degree of annual flooding seems to be decreasing again now so that very slowly a certain amount of new land is becoming available. This cyclical change appears to be directly connected with the long-term rise and fall of the level of Lake Nyasa. On the other hand, in more fortunate villages such as Ikolo, Mwakyusa's chieftdom, and Kapugi, Mwamasangula's chieftdom, there is rather more common pasturage remaining, and village sites, paths, etc., are noticeably less restricted.

The following arithmetical observations may be noted as permitting, perhaps, some guide to population densities in the Lake Plains:-

Persons per sq. mile	*Total acreage per family of five*	*Arable holding per family of five if proportion of total land under arable holdings is:—* one-third	two-fifths
300	10.7	3.6	4.3
400	8	2.7	3.2
500	6.4	2.1	2.6
600	5.3	1.8	2.1

[161]

(N.B. The statistically average family is composed of five people)

It has been suggested by the Agricultural Field Officer, Tukuyu, that for the whole of Rungwe District perhaps 30 per cent. of all land is under cultivation. He was not prepared to place any reliance on this figure, and certainly for the Lake Plains it must be higher.

To summarise my own tentative conclusions and in order to obtain
311 some kind of picture of the current land situation, I suggest the following
134 division into regions:-
161 A. The flood plains proper

1. Very high-density region – the arable land available under present conditions amounts to about 1½-2 acres per adult male and the local density of population is probably in the region of 500 persons per square mile: – in most of the chieftdoms of Mwaniloma, Korono and Lazarus, the south-eastern part of Mwakipesile's and the eastern part of Mwakyusa's chieftdoms.

2. High-density region – there is available about 3 acres of arable land per adult male and the local density of population is between 300 and 400 persons per square mile: – in the chieftdoms of Mwamasangula, Mwanyile and Mwakilima, the southern part of Mwakilasa's, the centre of Mwakyusa's and much of Mwandemele's chieftdoms.

B. The remainder of the Lake Plains (Nsebela)

3. Low-density region – here there remains much vacant land (some usable, some scarcely usable) and population density is probably little over 100 persons per square mile, and even lower than that in the most northerly parts: – the northern, higher areas comprising the north of Mwakyusa's (Mwisule's) chieftdom, the remainder of Mwandemele's, the whole of Mwanipisile's, Mwakatonde's and Mwakipage's chieftdoms, together with the northern part of Mwakipesile's and of Mwakilasa's chieftdoms.

This summary description is, and can be, only very approximate, taking no account of the complexity of local variations to be seen on the ground. It is illustrated in the accompanying sketch-map.

It may be emphasised that in the two high-density regions practically all available land is in use. In the "high-density region" (No. 2 above) it
341 may be possible to reduce slightly the non-productive areas taken up by
245 village sites, but nowhere will this be easy or even desirable, and already most of the vacant spaces between houses are packed with banana groves, small

plots of maize, squashes, tobacco, etc., and useful trees (bamboo, citrus-mango, kapok, soyagust and firewood). Artificial drainage would, of course, make more land available along the rivers, but this is in general beyond the abilities and resources of the Nyakyusa without considerable outside assistance.

Finally, in this matter it is to be remembered that in addition to a man's arable holding, each of his wives has a banana plot at her house from which she obtains her staple foodstuff. Such plots amount to perhaps about a tenth of an acre on the average. On the other hand, the Nyakyusa are no longer prepared to tolerate a predominantly banana diet. Rice has, in most areas of the Lake Plains, become almost as important as bananas.

Large-sized Holdings

Some blame for this novel shortage of land and the smallness of the average holding has often been laid upon that minority of Nyakyusa who have exceptionally large holdings, and also upon the immigrants from beyond the Lake Plains who have come to settle there during the past decade.

The occupiers of large-sized holdings are rather fewer than has sometimes been supposed. The notoriety of large land-owners, such as some of the modern chiefs with as much as 25-30 acres, has brought more attention to them than is really warranted. Most chiefs and village headmen have arable holdings of above average size, as a result of their privileged positions in the land allocation system and because of their prestige influence; but they remain a small minority and their number is bound to decrease in the future as inheritance causes sub-division of their holdings, for most of them have also more than the average number of wives and sons. In the two high-density regions it is clearly impossible for any man much to increase his present holding. As will be shown later (see page 24) the modern trend is not unnaturally towards a dangerous fragmentation of holdings.

The data obtained in this matter for my eight village samples are summarised in Table III, page 15. In those villages the two men out of 372 who held more than ten acres were a village headman and the father of a chief.[1] There were seven other headmen and one chief as well as some other locally influential men amongst the people covered by my surveys, but none of them held more than ten acres. There are, of course, some commoners amongst the large land-holders; many of them are close relatives of the chief or headman and have thus received preferential treatment. Some, however, are ordinary villagers who were perspicacious enough to see future trends and to obtain land in the early days before most men realised its new value and when vacant areas were still easily available. Such men are tending to become a new, wealthy class, but on the other hand they are particularly susceptible to the begging of kinsmen and friends who have insufficient land. If they are not to be regarded as unneighbourly or even anti-social (perhaps practising witchcraft) they are virtually compelled to be generous sometimes, both with their land and with their profits.

On the whole this minority of men excites little attention or jealousy among the Nyakyusa, who indeed take it for granted that their chiefs and headmen will have more land than ordinary villagers, as befits their status and prestige. If it be thought that by reducing somehow the size and number of these unusually large holdings then the land shortage might be partly relieved, it is a false hope. I scarcely think that the Nyakyusa would welcome any such attempt at interference by administrative action, but in any case it would only provide minor and temporary relief here and there and would not be worth the executive difficulties involved.

1. This second man should be a chief himself but he was dismissed by Government on his appointment. He still holds much of the prestige and privilege of a chief but he lost a very valuable authority in purely local government affairs.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

620 311 423 production, young men seeking their own independent holding, and newcomers to the villages who seek to settle there.

The modern shortage of land has therefore considerably increased the authority and the activities of the village headman. Nowadays he is the prime mover in all changes in land-holding, other than by inheritance or temporary loans and gifts. In these latter, and particularly in inheritance, he has necessarily become an important interested party whose influence cannot be ignored, whose approval is desired and whose assistance is frequently sought both as arbiter and witness. Much more than before, and directly because of the scarcity and value of land today, he is the principal controller and allocator of land – though, of course, he remains subject to the state of public feeling and the opinions of his villagers. His position has been further strengthened by his status at the base of the administrative hierarchy in modern local government, whereby he is given executive responsibility for his village and its people. As always, disputes over land are taken before him in the first instance and here he acts not only as a judge but also as the expositor of village opinion and public knowledge. Such disputes are increasing in number, giving him more work and responsibility and also more opportunity for the expression of his status. Meanwhile his traditionally crucial ritual and magical (anti-witchcraft) powers continue, though now in somewhat attenuated form.

Fragmentation and Dispersion of Holdings

423 428 311 It has been shown how the inheritance of land, now of increasing importance, results normally in the splitting up of a man's holding.[1] Whether a young man obtains an inherited share of his father's land or he obtains an allocation in another village, its size is likely to be small – smaller than the holdings of his father's generation. Tiny, uneconomic plots are to be seen everywhere in the flood plains.

At the same time a man's holding is tending to comprise a scattered, heterogeneous collection of small plots, as he has obtained land when and where he could. An actual example will illustrate this: a young man had about a tenth of an acre behind his house on which he was growing maize and beans; he had about a quarter of an acre which was his share of his deceased father's land, and another quarter of an acre which had been allocated to him by the headman when a vacated holding was split up, and on both of these he cultivated paddy. This man had only small hope of obtaining more land, unless one of his brothers died without sons, for he had already been refused by the headman a share in a recently vacated holding on the grounds that, unlike many of his contemporaries, he already had at least some arable land.

Even amongst older men the holding of scattered plots is common. This is partly the result of the earlier expansion of cultivation when the formerly unused lands were put under paddy, and partly because older men too, have no opportunity, in the face of scarcity, to take up any land they can. The Nyakyusa ideal is to have a single large holding, preferably stretching away behind the homestead – or alternatively two fields, one for paddy out in the open plains and one for food crops nearer home. This ideal becomes less and less practicable. There seems to be little or no need for this scatter of plots on account of soil and fertility differences, for these are generally few and unimportant within the area of a single village.

311 423 In my sample villages the average number of separate plots was about three per holding. There was a notable difference between villages in relation to the average size of villagers' holdings. Where land was more plentiful the

[1] [illegible]

311
233 Whereas in the Highland and Central regions the large numbers of cattle – in relation, that is, to the available pasture resources – are causing over-grazing and soil erosion, particularly in the hilly areas so often nowadays relegated to pasturage, on the other hand in the flood plains there does not appear, at least to the layman, to have been any serious effects on the land.
[24] The natural manuring of the paddy fields in the dry season is advantageous. In the Lake Plains it is the cattle rather than the land which suffer, but so far the Nyakyusa have done virtually nothing to meet the new conditions, other than to complain bitterly and fruitlessly.

The Young Men: Land Shortage and Labour Migration

423 The younger Nyakyusa men find increasing difficulty in obtaining arable land now that there are no longer vacant areas to be taken up, and the older men are no longer prepared to cede their land rights in favour of the younger generation, as they traditionally did. When occasional fields are left vacant, the young men must take their turn with their elders, who themselves are so chronically short of land – and the headmen commonly favour the older villagers with families as against the younger men. This means that in the high-density regions the majority of men under the age of about 30 years have little or no arable land, nor can they hope for it until the deaths of their fathers. In the congested village sites even their banana plots may be smaller than is desirable for the provision of the staple food.

[593] The young man, then, is compelled to remain dependent on his father's
[178] and elder brother's holding; indeed, headmen often justify their refusals to allocate plots to young men on the express grounds that the latter must share their elders' fields. Thus the valued independence of the young Nyakyusa is severely restricted and it seems that tensions and difficulties are beginning
[578] to arise between fathers and sons, and between brothers, because of this. Sons are blamed for not doing their fair share in the family cultivation; fathers are blamed for giving their sons inadequate shares in crops and crop incomes. It will be remembered that one of the fundamental principles underlying Nyakyusa society and its age-village organisation is the spatial segregation of parents and children (*cf.* page 22). Now they are inevitably being put into competition with one another over inadequate fields in a single holding.

The young men are severely restricted, if not altogether cut off, from the
[434] opportunity to cultivate paddy in their own fields and thus to earn their incomes at home, for paddy-growing is the only way of earning a living in the
[303] Lake Plains. Yet it is these younger men whose money demand is greatest, *to buy clothing, bicycles and other store-goods, and to pay cash the marriage payments.* They are therefore strongly attracted by the ready opportunities for taking up wage-labour abroad, in the mines of the Rhodesias and South Africa where wages are high (see Gulliver, 1957).

With the best will in the world, where, as in the very high-density region, the average holding is little more than an acre and a half – when, that is, the older men themselves desire larger acreages for their own cultivation needs – it is not possible for a father to allow his son to take large shares in his fields. In some cases a father does give outright to his adult sons strips of his holding, but plots so *provided* are necessarily small. Quite as frequently a father does not consider it possible to break up his holding in his own lifetime, and sons are expected to assist in the common cultivation and to continue merely to be given a share in the family proceeds at harvest. It is not
[97] surprising, therefore, that very large numbers of young men from the Lake
[107] Plains migrate abroad to work. Only about one man in 20 has not been away at all before the age of about 25 years. Much higher proportions of men and larger numbers absolutely are temporarily absent from the Lake

137 in thickness. This part is devoid of timber except along some river banks—*Albizzia* and *Acacia* spp.—and fuel has to be carried some distance. The dominant herbs are *Crotalaria striata* and *Hyparrhenia* sp., with *Phragmites* and *Pennisetum purpureum* along the rivers.

Methods of Cultivation

*241 462 The work of cultivation is equally divided between the sexes. After the plots have been cleared and hand-hoed by the men, it is women's work to plant, clear, harvest, winnow and sell at the market. Men's work consists of clearing, hoeing and looking after the cattle.

242 241 Rotation of crops is practised, as it must be in an area where all land is far from productive. In the highlands, 9,500 feet to 5,000 feet, the rotation in valleys is sweet potatoes, finger millet, groundnuts, finger millet, groundnuts, finger millet and rest for five years, or sweet potatoes, maize for five years and rest for five years. On the hillsides, finger millet and pigeon pea or finger millet alone are sown every fourth year.

In the medium altitudes, between 5,000 feet and 2-3,000 feet, the rotation is finger millet, maize and yams, beans, rested and grazed. Continual planting of rice cannot take place as fertility is so quickly impaired.

In the lower altitudes, below 2,000 feet, rice is planted continuously for some 15 years and the land is then rested and grazed for about 8 years.

Diet and Food Crops

262 No one food is the staple throughout the district, but plantains, maize and sweet potatoes for the higher altitudes and rice on the lake shore are generally eaten, with additions that vary from area to area.

243 Maize is planted both on contoured ridges and on flat land. Holes are drilled generally 3 feet apart and each hole has 3 seeds planted in it. Maize is usually interplanted with beans [241] or Bambara groundnuts, groundnuts, cowpeas or pigeon peas. Planting takes place in the highlands in July to September and harvesting in February to April. In the medium altitudes, two crops are planted annually, in November to February and again in May to June. In the lower altitudes, however, little maize is grown and this is sown in November to December [261] and harvested in March and April. Maize is stored in mud-covered basket granaries or is [262] sold as soon as it is dried. It is eaten roasted or boiled with beans. The varieties of maize grown vary but they are mostly of the hard flint type.

241 Other foodstuffs grown are coco-yams, cow peas, pigeon peas, Bambarra groundnuts, ginger, cardamon, groundnuts, wheat, pumpkins, peppers, citrus, sugar cane and European vegetables, including a quantity of European potatoes.
[177]

Economic Crops

245 One of the main cash crops is coffee, which was introduced about 1900 by the Berlin Lutheran Mission, but it was not grown by natives until 1930 when an attempt was made to organize an industry. It had already been tried from 1924 onwards by Europeans but had gradually died out, giving place to tea.
177

245 Native coffee has not been truly successful and many reasons are suspected for this. In effect, the coffee suffers from many pests and diseases and yields are so low as to be almost uneconomical even to a tribe of very low individual annual income. It has become obvious that coffee can only be grown by natives if shaded by bananas and mulched heavily with banana trash.* Multiple-stem pruning is gaining favour.

Seedlings are planted out in December and the first crop is obtained four years after. The area planted rose in 1939 to 5,804 acres and the number of native planters to 7,966. Yields, however, are low, varying from 131.4 kg. to 20.4 kg. parchment to the acre. Hemeleia leaf disease and yellow and white borer are prevalent all over the coffee-growing area. Over the period since 1932 the price paid to natives has averaged 44 cents a kg. for parchment.
[136]

[438] All coffee is collected and sold by Native Authority after rough grading and, in order to
[432] encourage better preparation, much lower payments are made for the inferior grades. A native staff is employed to visit coffee plots and to give instructions, and it is noticeable that the quality of preparation varies with the price.

175 The cultivation of rice on the lake shore was started by Chief Kerewe in 1896 with seed
243 obtained from Arab traders in Nyasaland and the Moravian Mission issued further seed in 1898. Being an innovation, rice was not popular and little was grown except for small local sales. In 1917 the Government issued seed and tax was paid in rice instead of money. Interest was hereby aroused and the cultivation of rice was started. In 1932 several other kinds of seed were issued and now sixteen varieties
243 are found. "Faya", which was issued in 1929, gives the best yields and is the variety chiefly grown, other varieties being Bungala, Marula
[65]

243 and Mapiko, although very little of these is sold. Ploughs have been introduced into the area as it is flat and the total number in use in 1942 is about 400. The first ploughing is carried out in June or July when the ground is still wet, and the second ploughing in October to February. Planting, which is all broadcast, is carried out in November to the middle of March and the harvesting is done in May to September.

256 A first mill was erected at Ipyana on the lake shore in 1942 with a capacity of 9 tons of rice in 15 hours. Another is now on its way from India with a capacity of 14 tons of rice in 15 hours and should be erected some time in 1944.

248 A small acreage of cotton is also sown along the Songwe River boundary, which borders on Nyasaland, with seed obtained from that Colony. Conditions, however, are not suitable on the remainder of the lake shore and expansion is not encouraged.

241 439 A list of exports from the district with approximate weights for 1942 is appended:—

Article	Weight in tons
	Tons
Mixed beans	500
Coffee	50
Groundnuts	60
Maize	1,800
Quinine	10
European potatoes	200
Rice	1,800
Vegetables	40
Fruit	100
Banana flour	200
Cassava flour	50
Finger millet	150
Tea (European produce)	310
Total ..	4,770

Land Tenure and Economics of the People

423 In theory all land belongs to the chiefs or sub-chiefs, but in practice once a man has cultivated a plot, that plot belongs to him until he leaves the area in which he lives. If he leaves, the land reverts to the chief or sub-chief and may be given by him through his headman or elder to anyone in his area who is short of land or to a newcomer who wants a plot. Should a man go away and return after a long period and ask for a plot, he is bound to be given one but not necessarily the plot he had before he left. Newcomers are welcomed and are given land, as the amount of tax collected in an area is an indication of the importance of a chief.

[559 609 651]

233 Stock grazing is a problem which is coming more and more to the fore. The number of

438 north. Before the war, the goldfields gave work
316 to about 15,000 natives, chiefly Wanyakyusa,
[464] and most of the foodstuffs from this district
went there. The goldfields are gradually closing
due to difficulties in obtaining spares, and it
has been necessary to look for outlets for
Tukuyu produce elsewhere. Should the gold-
fields open again after the war, and large-
scale mining start, there is a great future for
produce grown in Tukuyu.

434 The main income of the tribe is derived
from agricultural, military, mining and public
works sources, and it is estimated that in 1941
the average annual income per man, woman
and child was about Sh. 10 per year. It has
risen considerably since, as over 4,000 men
have joined the military and a large part of
their salaries comes back to the district in the
form of remittances. The agricultural source,
from which a larger part of the tribal income
[464] accrues, is from sales of rice, maize and other
foodstuffs. A fair number of Wanyakyusa also
work on the tea plantations.

● 241 The picture sketched above will show that
the district is inhabited by a tribe whose agri-
culture is of great interest, since the variety
of crops, from wheat in the highlands to
paddy and cotton on the lake shore, is perhaps
unrivalled in so small an area elsewhere in
181 East Africa. It has not been possible to fill in
the picture with details of the people's
character, but it is worth mentioning that the
Wanyakyusa are a people difficult to ad-
minister, argumentative, litigious, self-willed
153 and at times inclined to truculence. Nevertheless their intelligence is such that they are
willing to be persuaded, and, once convinced
of the benefit of any change, adopt it with
energy. This is instanced by the way they have
in a few years accepted the principles of anti-
erosion to such an extent that now there is
perhaps 90 per cent control in the well-popu-
lated areas. It should, however, be stressed
134 that, though the soil is not being eroded to
241 any great extent, it is still being impoverished,
since increased cultivation for the war effort
has involved breaking a great deal of new land
with a consequent lessening of fallow. Over-
cropping in the hilly country is very great and,
in order to prevent further emigration, it be-
[185] hoves the native planners to learn to put some-
thing back into the soil in the form of mulch
or compost. If care is not taken, a comparat-
ively prosperous country will one day become
like so many parts of Africa, where a losing
struggle is fought with Nature to obtain a
sufficiency for the people's needs.

see 21st September, 1943

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 353 622 778 [775] [824] he had received this object from his ancestors and it must always hang on this spot, as the ancestral spirits (*ubuzuka*)[28] themselves controlled its presence. It consisted of an *uwuzigera*, i. e. the tail of an ox, but the upper part of it was hollow. In this hollow part medicines (*ifingila*)[29] were kept. Yet another magical medicine, in the shape of a piece of bark of the tree called *Erythrophleum Guineense*[30] was fastened at the upper end of this sign. When my European attendant immediately said to the chief: "And from this piece you make your *mwafi*[31], the chief exclaimed in astonishment: "*Uwaz wana Kyara!*" (You are sons of Kyara! i. e. You Europeans know everything.)

After this there was no more delay in revealing to us some more features of this sign of dignity. According to the belief of his fathers this object possessed a special *emaka* (power)[32], e. g. to defeat enemies, if the chief were to hold it directly against them. Also if a thief were [789] to try to enter the room by force, by making a hole beneath the wall of this part of the hut, he would be stricken by power coming from the *ubuziya* and he would have the impression that eyes are directed against him, and so be driven away.

[845] After these interesting communications I went to visit the hut of one of his wives, which still revealed the *ingenga*, the old-fashioned round structure of bamboo poles diverging from their upper end and thatched with grass[33].

● 241 784 9. The frequent walks in company with the chief or some of his *emafumo* gave me several opportunities for enquiries. On one occasion,

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[28] Cf. Wilson, Burial, p. 9: *ensyuka* (Sing.); *Mackenzie*, p. 191: *bunyuka* (Karonga).

[29] Cf. *Mackenzie*, p. 275: *ifingira* (Karonga).

[278] [30] The pharmacological substance of the bark (Cortex Erythrophleii, „Sassa-bark") is the alcaloid Erythrophleïn which produces the same typical effects on the heart as the Digitalis-group: cf. C. G. Sievonen: Pharmakologische Studien XII. Arkiv för Botanik 27 A, No. 4, Stockholm 1935, p. 6.

[31] Cf. Wilson, Land Rights, p. 32; *Mwenalg*, p. 134; *Fülleborn*, p. 368.

[32] *emaka* is not a specific expression for „magical" or (religious) „supernatural" power, although, from the European standpoint this meaning may be connected with the word in specific cases, but generally it means any striking expression or effect of a quality of a person or object, e. g. *ugwi abi ngalimo emaka*, in this wood is power. This word is, therefore, a parallel to the Austronesian, especially Polynesian word *mana*, examined in my treatise „Mana. The term of that what is exceedingly striking". Baessler Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde. I. Reihe, Ethnographie, Vol. 3. Leipzig 1933. If the Nyakyusa wishes to say that a phenomenon is "supernatural", then he connects it with Kyara, or he names it directly "Kiara" (cf. *Mwenalg*, p. 110 [197, 318]).

[33] Cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 377, fig. 149: Educational average of a round-hut (as also to be found with the Nyakyusa still today).

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

when we went to a field I saw a stick of a special type upright in the 241
soil. It was made of a reed split at the top, with a small bundle of 784
leaves squeezed in the split. A piece of bark stood out from this bundle. I asked the chief for the significance of this and he explained that it was an ulusinga, i. e. a tabu sign to prevent anyone from stepping on the field which was an imasilo (yam-field). This sign was believed to possess "magical power", to strike an invader with illness. Each owner of a field has the right to protect his field in such a manner, and a chief especially has the right to command tabus regarding plants which are staple food for the whole chieftainship, as, for instance, maize that is not allowed to be reaped before the chief has given his permission. All such tabus are also named mwiko*. During the time of such a general [574]
tabu, visitors, who by chance come through a village under tabu, are not allowed to greet the inhabitants of the village or to speak to them.

The chief added that special watchmen are installed during these 241
periods; these men are dressed in a terrifying manner, and have the 688
right to arrest any person transgressing the tabu. The chief may punish 784
the offenders immediately, imposing on them, for instance, a cow as a fine. This was also the case with an ordinary theft in a field, but [178]
nowadays such affairs are regulated by the law of the Mandated Government. After the repeal of such a general tabu by the chief, beer will be drunk (e. g. ubwalwa bwa kutaghi bwa kutendele, the beer that is poured out at the harvest), and the usual eating community of [264]
men will be re-established, for Nyakyusa men like to eat together as comrades, not in families.

18. When I was in Katumba, dances were held on several days from 535
the afternoon till midnight, very similar in form to that which Mackenzie describes (p. 189) by the name ikombola.

The men stood on one side of the open place in several lines, with sticks in their hands; on the opposite side were the women and girls. Between them, more in the background, were the drummers, at the beginning of the dance; then they moved round the place. The principal drummer was a man of great excitability. He performed most extravagant movements with his body and his drumstick, making somersaults, jumping over the drum, treating it as a "living being", running to it and turning just in front of it.

* This word mwiko (forbidden) has the same wide (profane and ritual) meanings as tapu or taboo in the Polynesian Languages (cf. Rud. Lehmann: Die polynesischen Tabu-Sitten. Baessl. Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde I, 10. Leipzig 1939).

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

[P.138]

Notes on the daily life of the Nyakyusa (Tanganyika Territory)

Cf. Sociologus 1951, I, 1 S. 33 ff.

By F. Rudolf Lehmann

192
576

1. Greetings. The first thing to strike a visitor to the Nyakyusa country north of Lake Nyasa on passing through one of the numerous picturesque villages surrounded by banana groves is the way of greeting customary among these people. "Ukupoepe" is the Nyakyusa word for "to greet". In the morning you are greeted with the exclamation: "*upoile (pl. mupoile)*", which literally means: "Did you sleep well?" And you may answer in the same way, or, in fuller form as you can hear it from the mouth of the natives: "*ee'e ndape, upoile*", or "*upoile pepepe*". "*ee'e ndape*" may be used with all answers, meaning: thanks! At noon or in the afternoon you will hear: "*uwombide*", you have worked, or, have you worked? Then, according to the case, you may answer: "*muwombide ewende*", you, men, have worked, or, generally: "*muwapere*", which is equivalent to the Swahili: "*habari gani?*". If you greet a person in the evening with the words: "*upoepe*", may you sleep well, the person thus addressed will answer: "*kapona!*".

234
[312]

2. Milking. The first task in the daily life of the Nyakyusa people is for the men to milk the cows. This is done in the morning before the cattle are driven out to graze and again in the evening when they return. But the cattle are also driven back to the village at noon when they are usually fumigated standing in the smoke of a fire for which

[237
232]

cow dung and banana leaves are used, a process designed to remove vermin from the skin of the cattle. The animals seem to be very fond of this procedure. They stand quietly in the smoke gazing at the passers-by.

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[462]

3. Hoeing. "Hoeing is the work of men, planting weeding, reaping is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about four hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a. m., on the upland plateau they

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done." (G. Wilson, Introduction, p. 260). 241

The putting of maize-grains as seed into the earth is the women's work, the sowing of millet (*malesi*) of both sexes. If you ask the men after they had come home from their work: "*Mukumbide ifiwenge fya nengi?*", "Whose fields did you hoe?", the answer often may be: "*Tukumbide ifiwenge fya tata!*" We have hoed the fields of our father. 243 462

In former times, the Nyakyusa had a lot of ceremonies relating to the beginning of the hoeing season and of the beginning of the harvest-work. They are, however, nowadays nearly extinguished under the influence of European culture. [177]

With respect to the beginning of the hoeing season, a very comprehensive ceremony had to be carried out by the chief in community with the *ungenga* (medicine man) for providing the fields with extraordinary (*-siya*) power (*amaka*): *amaka amasiya*, in this case: fertility. 241 622 [192]

When the crop was ripe, it was (at first) forbidden (*mwiko*) to take anything from the crop before the chief had given the permission. First the oldest male villagers informed the chief that it may be now the just time to give the crop free for the people, saying: "The people is hungry, we will now give them to eat!" Then the chief ordered that 6 or 8 (*malesi*) corn-cobs were brought to him, and he sent these corn-cobs by a messenger to the (holy) offering-grove where they must be put down. After that has been correctly executed, he gave the permission for reaping the new crop. [182]

(NB. It was believed that these corn-cobs put into the offering-grove were eaten especially from the leopards. The powdered bones of the leopards were considered important ingredients of the consecration drink which the chief had to take at his initiation ceremonies and which should give him the strength (*amaka*) of a leopard, so that he also was called "the leopard" or "the leopard chief".) 235 825

4. *Herding the Cattle and Cleansing the Stable.* The sociological importance of cattle among the Nyakyusa and the specific practice among them of herding the cattle by herdboys, that is also of highly sociological importance for the structure of the Nyakyusa society, is already described by G. Wilson (Introduction, p. 269 f). 233

The cleansing of the stables of which the Nyakyusa possess a great number of very well built ones, which have also sometimes a considerable length — apart from the cattle kraals —, is the task of 233 343 452

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

planted at the break of the rains, and of the new crop, rice, is a seed-bed of ash prepared, and then it is grass and scrub which is burned; they do not fell or pollard trees to provide ash. For other crops there is no burning; the weeds are hoed in green instead; and, at a second hoeing before planting, the earth is piled into ridges or mounds to ensure drainage. Formerly, it is said, the chiefs insisted that the ridges on slopes should be made contour-wise, and recently this law has been revived. Elton, the first European to travel through the area, observed that there was 'terraced cultivation everywhere';[1] and the ridges do in fact look like terracing from a distance.

Hoeing is the work of men and boys; only quite recently have a few women, whose husbands are away in European employment, begun to hoe for themselves. And most men hoe for three or four hours a day during the greater part of the year, for crops are planted in succession. Neither old age nor high status excuses a man from this duty. Even the chief Mwaipopo, who was already grown up when the Europeans arrived in his country, hoed regularly in his fields during the years 1935–8. Iron hoes were made by Nyakyusa smiths from iron obtained from the Kings,[2] but they were scarce, and some men had to use wooden hoes such as many of the women still have for weeding (*vide* Plate VII). The women are solely responsible for sowing, weeding, and reaping.

Cattle are fairly numerous:[3] few men over twenty-five nowadays own none, and many older men have four or five cows in their stalls. Long ago, we were told, cattle were scarcer, some men having to marry without them, but Cotterill (1876)[4] and Kerr-Cross (1891)[5] both said 'cattle abound' in Nyakyusa coun-

on. 'Wanyakyusa Agriculture' (*The East African Agricultural Journal*, April 1941), states that 'though the soil is not being eroded to any great extent it is still being impoverished'.

[1] Elton, op. cit., pp. 326, 330.

[2] Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 272–3. Possibly iron was also obtained from the west. Kerr-Cross (op. cit. p. 182) saw large foundries in Nyika country below Ukpa, cf. Elton, op. cit., p. 301 and map at the end.

[3] No census of the cattle in the district had been taken when we were among the Nyakyusa. D. H. Thomson, op. cit., states that, 'The number of cattle in the district (Rungwe) in the 1921 census was about 2.3 head per taxpayer or 19 head per square mile'.

[4] H. B. Cotterill, 'On the Nyasa and a Journey from the North End to Bandabar', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XXII (1878).

[5] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Cross-lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 119.

S:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Before passing on to consider how it is that the Nyakyusa distinguish between "better" and "worse" plots and pastures we must dwell for a moment longer on the technical aspect of their present use of land.

The *chitemene* system of agriculture so common in Central Africa has never been practised by the Nyakyusa, indeed the density of the population makes it impossible; they follow instead a system of intensive cultivation with rotation of crops. Villages are thus relatively stable and a man may, if he chooses, hoe the same ground year after year for a whole generation, letting each plot lie fallow in its turn. The great variety of crops which can be grown helps to determine the success of the Nyakyusa rotation system—maize, millet, sweet-potatoes, beans, ground-nuts, cow-peas, cassava and, in the plain, rice being their staple products. The men hoe deeply, using a long-handled iron hoe, the women weed with the aid of a short-handled wooden digging stick; different crops are planted at different seasons and most men do some hoeing in every month of the year. Every now and again a whole block of garden land that has been worked for some years may be allowed by common consent to revert to pasture. In the pasturing of cattle the most noteworthy point is the burning of the grass-lands; at the end of each short dry season in October or November, some of the pastures are fired so as to bring new shoots of tender grass with the first rains. The houses of a village are normally all built close together, each surrounded by bananas, with the main garden lands at some distance from them. The cattle are tied up at night in the houses and their dung is removed each morning and thrown down among the banana trees by the women of the household. The deliberate use of dung as manure is a novelty but is now general in the cultivation of coffee; on the gardens cattle dung is not used save in that one part of the district where land is beginning to be absolutely scarce, but the grass, which in this climate grows so quickly over them, is hoed in each year as green manure.

The first consideration which, in the case of arable land, leads the Nyakyusa to value some pieces of ground above others is a scientific[1] knowledge of the properties of different kinds of soil. "The men who are skilled in choosing ground for hoeing are those who have been long familiar with the soil. They know how soils differ and that one soil is best for maize, another for sweet-potatoes, one for peas, another for beans, one for ground-nuts another for pumpkins, one for millet, another for yams. And they can tell from the grass also, that where a certain

[1] By "scientific" knowledge is meant an intelligent understanding of fact based upon observation or experiment and which is not directly determined by any ultimate religious beliefs, save only the one belief that facts are intelligible.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

kind of grass grows there maize will do well, or maybe ground-nuts. Some grass-lands have very poor soil in which no crop at all will grow properly, the one we call *kyusi* for example, or again the one we call *nnyagesi* ("the ant"); no one hoes these lands. Some gardens we hoe on the higher ground, others near the streams, either right in the mud by the water or else in ground that is merely moist. On the higher ground we hoe millet, peas, sweet-potatoes, cassava and some other crops; in the muddy places by the water we hoe yams, building huge ridges for them called *fibindika*; and there too we sometimes put in (during the dry season) the shoots of sweet potatoes that we shall later plant elsewhere. If the soil is only a little muddy and is mixed with sand, then we plant maize there. The right soil for beans we call *kibumba*—a red soil which is sometimes mixed with sand. Ground-nuts we either plant in the *kibumba* (if it is the sandy kind) or else just in sand. Whenever a man is hoeing a field for millet or ground-nuts or sweet-potatoes, he can tell just from the soil whether his crop will do well or not."[9]

And so also the Nyakyusa well understand the different qualities of pasture. The cattle are herded by small boys but on most mornings one of the men also goes out with the herd to show the boys where to pasture it and what grass-land to avoid.

Into the value of arable land sentiment also enters and men like, *ceteris paribus*, to hoe their gardens where they themselves or their fathers and brothers have hoed before. So too the value of building plots is determined both by practical and emotional considerations: large and relatively level sites on which bananas grow well are preferred to narrow or steeply sloping ones or to sites where bananas do badly, but, on the other hand, of two equally convenient sites that with family associations is normally preferred. And in the case of building sites religious considerations may also enter. A friend of mine told me that, when his father died, he did not move but left his father's site vacant with the new grave upon it; a year or two later his millet crop unaccountably failed and the diviner told him that his father's spirit was angry that no one had "swept his grave," i.e. that the plot had been left vacant. My friend did not actually move, even then, for he preferred his own site; he compromised by the performance of a ritual sacrifice to his father's spirit. But in such cases a man will often move to his dead father's site for fear of further misfortunes.

We have discussed briefly the purposes for which and the techniques by means of which the Nyakyusa use their land, and we have indicated a few of the main considerations which lead them to value some particular

[9] Text written for me by a literate Nyakyusa.

9: Wilson E-S (1934-1935) 1939
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Nyakyusa

partly to the closer spacing of children. Whereas four years between births was conventional formerly, two or less is now usual. [77]
One of the characteristics of the present population is a dis- [141]
proportion between the sexes, the females outnumbering the [162]
males by 100 to 87.9 even when due allowance has been made for men away at work.[1] This disproportion is characteristic also of African populations in the south[2] and it appears likely that it is due to a wide difference in the survival rate of men and women, but the vital statistics necessary to test this hypothesis are lacking.

The increase in population, and the demand for coffee gardens [311]
and rice fields by men who prefer to earn cash by agriculture rather than as migrant labourers, has led to a shortage of land, already acute in the fertile lake-shore plain, and imminent in the coffee-growing villages of the hills.[3] Much land that was previously pasture land has been taken into cultivation, and signs of overstocking are everywhere apparent. Hillsides that in 1938 were covered with grass, waist high, now have a thin stubble. To aggravate matters, the care of stock is less efficient than it used to be because it is left to very small boys, their seniors being occupied with school and hoeing. Often the cattle are both ill nourished and [231]
covered with ticks—something that was never seen when they were herded by adolescents and carefully hand-dressed. The villagers [232]
themselves are as much concerned as the agricultural officers over the shortage of pasture and the decrease in the milk supply, but [242]
they are not prepared to accept the remedies recommended: namely, reduction of stock and stall-feeding. The advice of Europeans on the growing of rice and coffee crops, which they introduced to the district, is acceptable, but the Nyakyusa argue

[1] The Census figures cannot be taken as exact, but they give some indication of the increase in population, and the disproportion between men and women. In 1931 the population of Rungwe District was given as 131,080. In 1938 it was 156,388. In 1931 the proportion of males to females (Kukwe and Nyakyusa in Rungwe district) was 79.6 : 100 (Tanganyika Territory, *Census of the Native Population 1931*). In 1931 the figure for Tukuyu district as a whole was 80 : 100 (Tanganyika Territory, *East African Population Census, 1938*). Allowing for Kibaw men away without wives (estimate for 1934 has no par cent), the proportion is 87.9 : 100 (cf. P. H. Gulliver, Report on the Migration of African Workers to the South from the Southern Highland Provinces, with special Reference to the Nyakyusa of Rungwe District, February 1939, p. 18). The discrepancy in the figures given for adults was 84 : 100 in 1938, but the ages of males and females classed as 'adult' are uncertain.

[2] D. H. Houghton and E. M. Walton, *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, Kokstad: Rural Survey, vol. ii, pp. 198, 31. The sex ratio for Kokstadtown District is 75.6 males : 100 females.

[3] cf. P. H. Gulliver, *Nyakyusa Land and Population*, 1938.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

that they have always been cattle men and they need no instruction on cattle. The tension over such limitation and soil conservation, so acute in many parts of Africa, is only just appearing in Rungwe district, but potentially it is serious.

Pressure on land, and the planting of a valuable long-term crop such as coffee, have undermined the traditional organization of age-villages. The old men are no longer prepared to move to make way for their sons and, without a new deal in land each generation, the territorial separation of the generations is blurred. Boys villages are no longer visible in the hills near Rungwe mission, partly because so many young men are away, either at school or in employment, but largely because most of the land is taken up with coffee gardens. Homesteads are being built farther apart as men lay out coffee round their houses, and sons often build on a corner of their father's estate instead of in a separate village. On the plain, also, the pressure of population blurs the boundaries between generations. Only in the least heavily populated middle belt are numerous boys' villages still clearly visible, and here too a 'coming out' has recently been celebrated, with some redistribution of land. The scarcest land, that in old volcanic craters, was always inherited, like cattle, not reallocated each generation, and almost all cultivated land is now treated in this way. In many chiefdoms, therefore, a young man looks to his father or senior brother for land, rather than to the village headman, and inheritance is supremely important. But the form of inheritance is changing: property now goes directly from father to son, not as formerly to each of a group of full brothers before reverting to the senior son of the eldest of them. The claims of more distant kinsmen on inherited stock are less than they used to be; such stock becomes the exclusive property of father and son, rather than property in which members of a lineage of three or four generations have reciprocal rights. The main economic bond which held the lineage together, the exchange of cattle, is thus broken.

Formerly a marriage was a contract between lineages rather than between individuals. A girl was betrothed before puberty to a man of her father's choice and should he die she was still regarded as married to his heir. Should she die a sister replaced her. Ideally a marriage bond between lineages lasted for generations, each man who died being replaced by a brother or son, each woman by a sister or brother's daughter. The choice of a partner in marriage

137 to thickness. This part is devoid of timber except along some river banks—*Albizia* and *Acacia* spp.—and fuel has to be carried some distance. The dominant herbs are *Cymbopogon citratus* and *Hyparrhenia* sp., with *Pennisetum* and *Pennisetum purpureum* along the rivers.

Methods of Cultivation

241 The work of cultivation is equally divided
242 between the sexes. After the plots have been cleared and hoed-hoed by the men, it is women's work to plant, clear, harvest, winnow and sell at the market. Men's work consists of clearing, hoeing and looking after the cattle.

243 Rotation of crops is practised, as it must be
244 in an area where all land is for from productive. In the highlands, 9,500 feet to 7,000 feet, the rotation is valleys is sweet potatoes, finger millet, groundnuts, finger millet, groundnuts, finger millet and rest for five years, or sweet potatoes, maize for five years and rest for five years. On the hillsides, finger millet and pigeon peas or finger millet alone are sown every fourth year.

In the medium altitudes, between 7,000 feet and 3-5,000 feet, the rotation is finger millet, maize and yams, beans, rested and grazed. Continual planting of rice cannot take place as fertility is so quickly impaired.

In the lower altitudes, below 3,000 feet, rice is planted continuously for some 17 years and the land is then rested and grazed for about 6 years.

Diet and Food Crops

262 No one food is the staple throughout the district, but plantains, maize and sweet potatoes for the higher altitudes and rice on the lake shore are generally eaten, with additions that vary from crop to crop.

243 Maize is planted both on contoured ridges and on flat land. Holes are drilled generally 2 feet apart and each hole has 3 seeds planted
[264] in it. Maize is usually interplanted with beans or Bambara groundnuts, groundnuts, cowpeas or pigeon peas. Planting takes place in the highlands in July to September and harvesting in February to April. In the medium altitudes, two crops are planted annually, in November to February and again in May to June. In the lower altitudes, however, little maize is grown
[261] and this is sown in November to December and harvested in March and April. Maize is stored in mud-covered basket granaries or is
[262] left on cobs as it is dried. It is often roasted or boiled with beans. The varieties of maize grown vary but they are mostly of the hard flint type.

11/Tiwaiwe C-3 (ca. 1962) 1964
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cattle in the district in the (50) census was about 13 head per taxpayer or 17 head per square mile. Certain land is set aside each year for grazing, where stock is not able to interfere with the produce plots. Compensation for trespass of cattle on cultivated land is only paid among people of the lake shore.

Parts of the land to the west of Tukuyu have been badly eroded by cultivation and over-grazing, and it is only since 1955 that anti-erosion rules have been made to check the tendency for bad cultivation. Since they were brought in, however, the majority of the tribe have become very keen on seeing the effect that well-controlled cultivation has on crops. The following are the Native Authority Rules concerning anti-erosion:—

"Throughout the Rungwe District, all natives shall follow orders regarding cultivation designed to prevent soil erosion as demonstrated and explained by the Agricultural Officer.

(a) All ridges and furrows shall be contoured and not follow the slope of the hill.

(b) In the case of cultivation done on the flat and not on ridges or furrows, a large ridge and ditch shall be dug at the top of the plot to remain permanently and be repaired from time to time."

The Wanyakyusa have never been dependent on outside sources for any of their food, but in their own territory there is no iron for making hoes nor clay for making earthenware pots. The former they were accustomed to get from Ukinga, on the eastern boundary of the district in the Livingstone mountains, and the pots were, and are still, made only by about 100 members of the Wakisi tribe living in a village on the lake shore at the extreme south-western point of the district. The Wakisi are really of Ukinga origin and inhabit the eastern, northern and western shores of Lake Nyasa. They grow no food except cassava, and that only sparsely, and apart from the one village that makes the pots, their only work is as peddlers of cassava and fishermen. Most of their fish and pots are exchanged for food.

Since the Tukuyu District is so thickly populated and the inhabitants concentrated, it has been found necessary to create produce markets at comparatively short distances. Transport from these markets, during wet times, has become difficult. The natural outlet for Tukuyu native foodstuffs is the Lake Countries, which lie about 100 miles to the

4: Tew E-1 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241 The use of cattle dung as manure is a novelty now used in the cultivation of coffee, but not on gardens unless land is beginning to be scarce. Banana cultivation is a characteristic feature of Ngonde as well as of Nyakyusa economic life.[1] Each homestead in a village includes the houses of a man and his wives, his banana groves, coffee-trees planted under the bananas, and also plots of beans, ground-nuts, &c. The main gardens of the household lie at some distance. Each year different types of gardens are hoed together by groups of villagers, millet in one place, maize and beans in another, so that the main gardens of any particular household are scattered. The clearing and hoeing fall to the man and his sons, and the wives are then given portions of their own to plant. Traditionally women never used to hoe at all.

The rights of a woman to dispose of her crops vary. Millet and rice, the two most valuable crops, are stored by the man and belong to him. The woman is the effective owner of all other crops on her plot, and stores them in her own house. Crops are used for food, beer, and hospitality, for making gifts, as well as for sale or barter, to obtain salt, pots, chickens, and cattle. There is a sharp division of property between co-wives. Not only garden land, but also banana-trees are divided between them. The husband often keeps a separate plot of bananas and cassava over which he has full rights of ownership. The farming unit is the family, but communal hoeing parties are organized two or three times a year, food and beer being offered to the workers.[2]

243 On the lake-shore plain rice is cultivated. The Ngonde plain is the main rice-growing area of Nyasaland. Floods in the rainy season make possible the cultivation of lowland rice, or paddy, which is superior in yield to upland grown crops. The most fertile areas are usually flooded during the rainy period of December–April, so as to be unfitted for the cultivation of other food crops at that time. But the Ngonde construct huge mound-like ridges in their newly harvested rice gardens, and plant on them subsidiary crops—maize, beans, sweet potatoes, cassava, or cotton. When these are harvested the garden is levelled again in readiness for another rice crop. Harvesting of rice and winnowing is usually women's work.[3] The crops are stored when threshed but unhulled, or unthreshed. They are milled by pestle and mortar. The rice is marketed with Indian traders in Mzuzu and Linda townships.[4]

Cattle

238 Cattle take a foremost place in Ngonde economy, and milk is an important article of diet. Ngonde herdsmen were much in request in Tilize province.[5]

Nyakyusa cattle are tied up at night in the dwelling houses,[6] and are herded in the day by small boys. Milking is invariably done by the men; the women are not allowed to have anything to do with cattle.[7] Every year at the end of the dry season, in October or November, some of the pastures are fired to bring out the new shoots at the first rains. This is the only use of burning in their economy.[8] The rinderpest outbreak of 1896 decimated the herds,[9] but since then the number of cattle has increased considerably, numbering over 35,000 head in 1931 and about 40,000 head in 1938.

[1] Warren, 1931, p. 200.
[2] Barker, 1939.
[3] Johnston, 1897, p. 231; Warren, 1931, pp. 209 and 210.
[4] Warren, 1931, p. 209, notes that Ngonde cattle and herdsmen sleep together in long rectangular byres.
[5] Wilson, J., 1938, p. 8.
[6] Wilson, J., 1938, pp. 18–19.
[7] Warren, 1931, p. 208.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Johnston, 1897, p. 231.

10:Culliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

and try to understand the nature and reasons for change. Here, then, is a good opportunity for the study of social change – not only in land tenure as such, but also in village and family organisation, political authority and economic life.

II

The Nyakyusa are a Bantu people inhabiting the main part of the Rungwe District in southern Tanganyika, immediately to the north of Lake Nyasa. In 1948 they numbered about 190,000 in that District, but about 10,000 men were probably at the time temporarily absent from their homes and in employment in the mines and towns of the Rhodesias and South Africa (see Culliver, 1957), while about 20,000 had migrated to live in the adjacent Mbeya District to the north.

The tribal area comprises a confined geographical basin surrounding the northern end of Lake Nyasa. It extends only about 40 miles from the tip of the lake at 1,550 feet above sea level to the Poroto Mountains to the north at 8,000 feet; and from east to west is only about 30 miles, from the almost sheer walls of the Livingstone Mountains (with peaks up to 10,000 feet) to the Ndali Highlands (rising to about 7,000 feet). There are therefore unusually large ecological differences within so small an area. Three major regions are to be distinguished: the "Northern Highlands" over about 4,500 feet, the low-lying "Lake Plains" in the south, and the "Central Region" in between. Everywhere rainfall is reliable and high, averaging at least 100 inches annually[1], and this amply compensates for a certain poverty and erosion of the soil, although (and particularly in the Central Region) it brings dangers of soil erosion. Except in the highest parts the bananas is the staple food, supported by maize, beans, finger millet and groundnuts. In the Northern Highlands coffee has become well established as the principal cash crop; in the Lake Plains paddy rice cultivation provides both a food and a cash crop; in the Central Region the country is too low generally for coffee and too high and dry for rice; consequently cash-cropping is considerably inferior and the people's standard of living is rather poorer.

The Nyakyusa and their country tended for a long time to be relatively isolated from the outside world by high mountain walls and rain-washed roads. In addition, or because of it perhaps, they developed an almost unique culture which was supported by considerable conservatism and high humility. They still continue to regard their African neighbours beyond the mountains as their social and cultural inferiors. The turmoil of the slave-trade in Central Africa passed them by; in modern times they have not enthusiastically accepted Christianity and they have refused to take up the use of Swahili, the Territorial *lingua franca*. In recent years, and more especially since the end of World War II, they have, however, accepted and pushed forward with vigour a rapid and extensive economic development, involving particularly the production of coffee and paddy as cash crops, and large-scale labour migration to the south in the high-wage mining industries. The multiplicity of petty, often tiny, independent chiefdoms has been reorganised to provide four local government areas, each under a Rural Council, in which the old chiefdoms have become something like parishes[2]. Although much of the old conservatism and narrow parochialism persists, yet there is now an atmosphere of accepted change, of a keen desire for economic development, and a general acceptance of a cash economy.

Probably the most significant feature of modern life in the Nyakyusa country is the increasing scarcity of land for agriculture in relation to the

1. In Tukuyu, in the Northern Highlands, annual rainfall averaged 96.32 inches between 1919 and 1952; at Kyela, in the Lake Plains, the average between 1919 and 1952 was 106.72 inches.
2. See Gulliver, P.H., The adaptation of a system of local government by African cash-crop farmers in the Rungwe District, Tanganyika, The Journal of African Administration, 10, 4, October, 1958.

10;Oulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

161 If therefore, pending the next Census to be made in 1957, we assume these rates of increase, then by 1955 it may be estimated that the Nyakyusa numbered about 217,000 at an average density of 233 persons per square mile, allowing 11.7 acres of land per family of five. For the Lake Plains alone, the population in 1955 would have been nearly 60,000 at an average density of 287 persons per square mile, with 11.2 acres per family. If we also include the estimated number of absentee migrant labourers in the base year of 1948, then there were in 1955 perhaps 63,000 people dependent on the land resources of the Lake Plains at an average density of 302 per square mile, though in fact some 6,000 men were temporarily absent from home in that year.

The figures and estimates are given in Table 1. These averages do, of course, hide some considerable and significant local variations which are further described at pages 14 E. below.

162 TABLE 1
NYAKYUSA POPULATION

	1948 Census			1955 Estimates		
	p	D	c	p	D	c
Lake Plains at increase of 1% p.a.	50,700	250	11.9	58,700	287	11.2
Central Region at increase of 1% p.a.	46,000	224	14.2	53,000	240	13.0
N.E. Highlands at increase of 1% p.a.	40,000	183	17.4	46,700	213	15.0
N.W. Highlands at increase of 1% p.a.	33,000	183	17.3	38,000	211	15.4
Population in tribal area	197,700	212	15.2	217,200	233	13.7

p = population
D = persons per square mile on land available for African use.
c = average average available per family of 5 persons.

Assuming that there were in 1948 about 3,000 men temporarily absent from their homes in the Lake Plains but who remained dependent on the land resources of that region, then the following estimate may be made:-

Lake Plains - persons resident at home and temporarily absent:-

p	D	c	p	D	c
50,700	242	11.3	62,933	303	10.6

The approximate areas available for African use in the tribal lands (excluding alienated land, forest reserves and main roads) are:-

Lake Plains - 208 sq. miles — N.E. Highlands - 230 sq. miles
Central Region - 217 sq. miles — N.W. Highlands - 208 sq. miles
Bulk Nyakyusa - 933 sq. miles

In these calculations no account is taken of unusable land such as swamps, steep slopes, thickets, etc.

Cash Cropping: Paddy Cultivation

233 This condition of a high density of population exists in a modern economy in which cash-cropping is universally accepted and desired. Under the former subsistence agriculture, because of heavy rainfall and natural annual flooding, quite small-sized holdings were adequate to satisfy a family's food requirements. Two harvests a year are easily obtained in some combination of maize, beans, groundnuts and finger millet, with a few small "luxury" crops; and the harvest grows yield continuously. The Nyakyusa were and are extremely fortunate in their food supply, and seldom experience shortages such as occasionally or even commonly afflict many peoples of East Africa.

241

243 Rice was first introduced in 1896 by two chiefs who obtained the seed from Nyasaland Arabs; and in 1898 the Moravian Mission and a Swedish

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1954 FMT Uganda FMT
Nyakyusa

[412]

[77]

under brought in other seed. The trader himself planted a large plot and his success seems to have stimulated the Nyakyusa to follow suit. There was a slow but gradual development of planting and by 1932 it was estimated that some 300 tons of hand-hulled rice were sold. It had become clear that the alluvial flood plains around the northern tip of Lake Nyasa were ideally suited to paddy growing. Until 1942 the people continued to hand-hull their crop and sell the rice, but in that year they were persuaded to sell the paddy direct to a locally established mill. Following initial difficulties in milling, handling and marketing, the Government built a store capable of holding 14,000 bags and it also took over the whole of the marketing with a seconded District Officer in charge. In 1947 the cultivators formed their first co-operative society. This movement has been encouraged by Government and the local Co-operative Union now deals with storage and marketing with the guidance of a Government Co-operative Officer.

[430]

[436]

The figures of sales of rice and paddy are given in Table II.[1]

Paddy has become a well-established crop, not only as the single cash crop of the region, but also as a food crop second only (or even equal) to the traditionally staple bananas. About four-fifths of all arable holdings are paddy fields – though parts of these are used for dry season crops of maize, beans, etc. Virtually every Nyakyusa land-holder now grows paddy, and the vast majority regard it as their main crop. Cultivation is mainly by ox-plough followed by broadcast sowing and hand-weeding. Government efforts to encourage transplanting and planting out in rows have so far been entirely unsuccessful. Yields and perhaps quality too are thought to be lower than used to; the chief factor in production seems to be the degree of natural flooding during the wet season.

[440]

TABLE II

SALES OF RICE AND PADDY, 1950-56[1]

Year	Rice	Paddy
1950	[illegible]	[illegible]
1951	[illegible]	[illegible]
1952	[illegible]	[illegible]
1953	[illegible]	[illegible]
1954	[illegible]	[illegible]
1955	[illegible]	[illegible]
1956	[illegible]	[illegible]

[433]

The cultivation of paddy requires relatively large-sized holdings due to the nature of the crop and the local extensive method of agriculture – for example, to produce a given income requires a far larger area of paddy in the Lake Plains than of coffee in the Northern Highlands of Nyakyusa country. As paddy cultivation became established, men increased their arable holdings in order to earn their money incomes. Larger holdings, rather than improved agricultural techniques, have become directly connected with higher incomes, and as the demand for more land set in, assisted by the new general use of ploughs, paddy growing increased rapidly wherever it was found ecologically possible – i.e., within the alluvial flood plains and the extensive area of annual natural flooding. Before the new demand for land emerged there were, even in the most highly populated parts, extensive areas which were more or

[428]

1. Information has been supplied by the Co-operative Officer, Tukuyu.

Oulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

[363] [428] [361] [431] [434] [511] [511] [518] [54] [57] [424] [511] [511] [61] [511] [514]

low cultivated. These areas can easily be picked out today by the absence of village sites and banana groves. There was something of a rush to grab land in such areas and in the less densely populated parts of the chiefdoms. Today to my personal experience – for no general survey has been attempted – there remains little or no unused land within the paddy-growing regions which can, by native techniques, be brought under the plough; and indeed men are attempting to grow paddy on unsuitably raised land where inundation is inadequate. Communal cattle pastures have shrunk as arable holdings extended until they remain only where cultivation is prohibited.

The demand for land has far outrun the physical supply, and in 1955 it still seemed to be insatiable. The initial cycle was that a desire for more money to permit of a higher standard of living created a demand for more land on which to produce more cash crops; but the increased level of income then further stimulated money demands to raise standards higher again, thus bringing a renewed demand for land. The cycle has now been halted by the lack of further land to meet the people's needs, but the demand remains unsatisfied and is indeed increased by rising costs of living.

This economic picture is, of course, oversimplified, but it may serve to illustrate the nature of forces at work in the situation. I would not wish to overemphasize the snowball effect, for the bulk of the population remains still largely content with only a little over earlier standards; but increasing numbers of men and their families are coming to seek something better. Bicycles have become something of a general necessity; a variety of good clothing and shoes is considered quite essential. Only a single decade before the Nyakyusa women still generally went about in the traditional nudity, whereas in 1955 they must have ranked among the very best-dressed African women in the Territory. European-type household goods, crockery and utensils are common. The demand for money, that is for a higher standard of living, has also been greatly stimulated by the experiences of the thousands of labour migrants returning from southern towns and mines, and by the cash and goods they bring back with them.[1]

It is not possible for me to attempt to suggest what a desirable average would be for a contemporary Nyakyusa, because money demands, crop yields and selling prices change and the desire for higher standards of living also alter as the potentialities of the new cash economy are increasingly understood. In 1954 the approximate average of Sh.200/- per paddy cultivator was earned from perhaps two or three acres of arable land, but an indeterminable amount of the crop was kept back for home food requirements. As will be shown later many men's paddy fields could have been little more than an acre, and many men, especially young men, had no paddy land at all. Certainly there were few who held what they considered, at a reasonable estimate, to be sufficient land.

This universal cash crop agriculture and the continuing demand for higher standards of living, and therefore for higher money incomes, is the root cause of the new and rather sudden pressure of population on the land. Of course this economic process operates within a situation of relatively dense population and in a present community where land is almost the only form of capital and alternative enterprise is small. The gradual increase of population, although probably small, further aggravates the difficult situation.

Arable Holdings

It was not possible to obtain adequate, satisfactory data to allow the calculation of local population densities, and the detailed results of the 1948

[1] In Table no. 5 p. 127, an estimate of the cash income of Nyakyusa in 1950 is given as £21. This is far too high but the reasons for underrating labour migration are given on p. 38.

630 311 423 production, young men seeking their own independent holding, and newcomers to the villages who seek to settle there.

The modern shortage of land has therefore considerably increased the authority and the activities of the village headman. Nowadays he is the prime mover in all changes in land-holding, other than by inheritance or temporary loans and gifts. In these latter, and particularly in inheritance, he has necessarily become an important interested party whose influence cannot be ignored, whose approval is desired and whose assistance is frequently sought both as arbiter and witness. Much more than before, and directly because of the scarcity and value of land today, he is the principal controller and allocator of land – though, of course, he remains subject to the state of public feeling and the opinions of his villagers. His position has been further strengthened by his status at the base of the administrative hierarchy in modern local government, whereby he is given executive responsibility for his village and its people. As always, disputes over land are taken before him in the first instance and here he acts not only as a judge but also as the expositor of village opinion and public knowledge. Such disputes are increasing in number, giving him more work and responsibility and also more opportunity for the expression of his status. Meanwhile his traditionally crucial ritual and magical (anti-witchcraft) powers continue, though now in somewhat attenuated form.

Fragmentation and Dispersion of Holdings

423 458 311 It has been shown how the inheritance of land, now of increasing importance, results normally in the splitting up of a man's holding.[1] Whether a young man obtains an inherited share of his father's land or he obtains an allocation in another village, its size is likely to be small – smaller than the holdings of his father's generation. Tiny, uneconomic plots are to be seen everywhere in the flood plains.

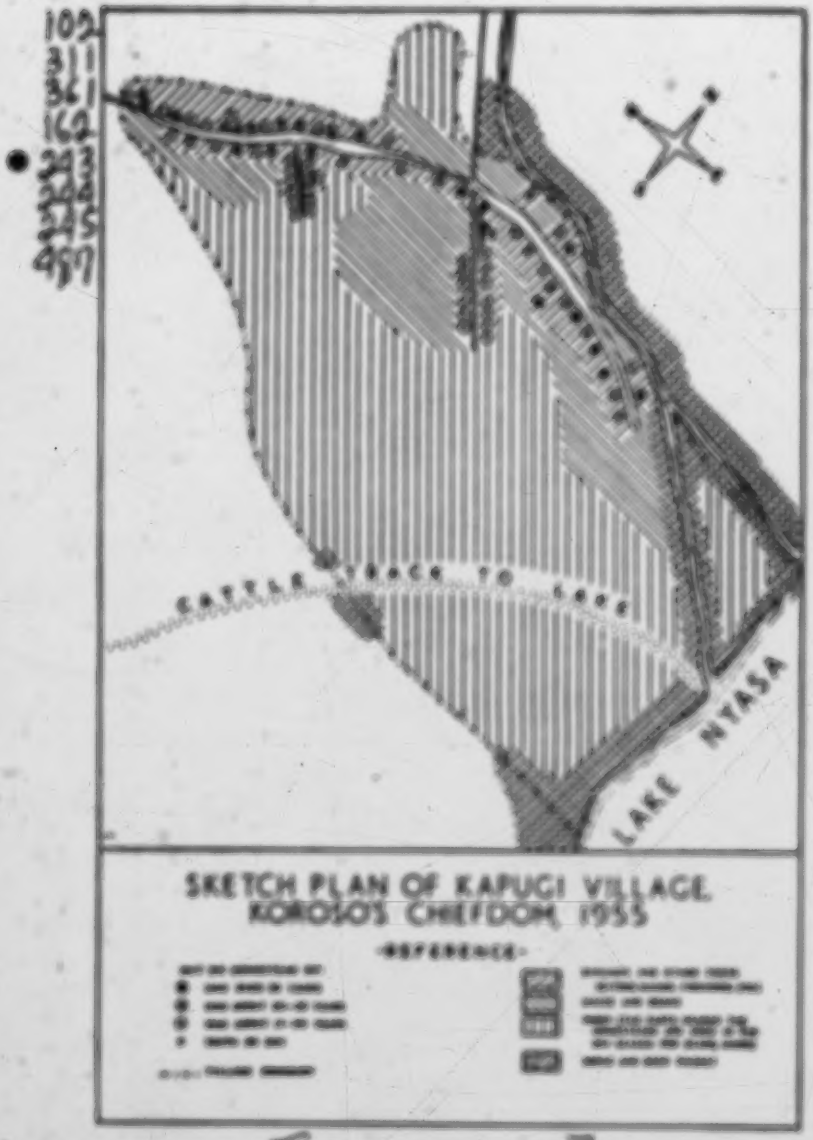
At the same time a man's holding is tending to comprise a scattered, heterogeneous collection of small plots, as he has obtained land when and where he could. An actual example will illustrate this: a young man had [341] where a tenth of an acre behind his house on which he was growing maize and beans; he had about a quarter of an acre which was his share of his deceased father's land, and another quarter of an acre which had been [343] allocated to him by the headman when a vacated holding was split up, and on both of these he cultivated paddy. This man had only small hope of obtaining more land, unless one of his brothers died without sons, for he had already been refused by the headman a share in a recently vacated holding on the grounds that, unlike many of his contemporaries, he already had at least some arable land.

Even amongst older men the holding of scattered plots is common. This is partly the result of the earlier expansion of cultivation when the formerly unused lands were put under paddy, and partly because older men too, lose no opportunity, in the face of scarcity, to take up any land they can. The Nyakyusa ideal is to have a single large holding, preferably stretching away behind the homestead – or alternatively two fields, one for paddy out in the open plains and one for food crops nearer home. This ideal becomes less and less practicable. There seems to be little or no need for this scatter of plots on account of soil and fertility differences, for these are generally low and unimportant within the area of a single village.

311 423 In my sample villages the average number of separate plots was about three per holding. There was a notable difference between villages in relation to the average size of villagers' holdings. Where land was more plentiful the

1. [illegible]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa



[Facing p 29]

10:Oulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

TABLE V

DISTRICTS IN TANGANYIKA WHERE LAND DISPUTES ARE COMMON

	No. of land cases	% of total land cases	Estimated population density	Population per land case
1955				
Bukoba District	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Lushoto District	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Moshi District	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Mpwapwa District	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

The Changing Village

The possibly unique age-village of the Nyakyusa is now undergoing considerable and fairly rapid change in response to the new conditions of land shortage. There is, firstly, an increasing sense of village exclusiveness and, secondly, there has been a breakdown in the essential age-basis of its organization. That is to say, that whilst the corporate unity of the village as an independent group has been strengthened, yet the social foundation of the village has simultaneously been changed and a different sort of village is emerging. It would take us far beyond the scope of this present essay if a full analysis of the changing village were to be made, nevertheless in so far as these changes are more or less directly the consequences of modern land shortage, land tenure and economic conditions some account is essential. Since the age-village was fundamental in the life and social organization of these people, the new emerging village is of crucial importance.

Land shortage has definitely exaggerated the unity and exclusiveness of the village in the Lake Plains at a time when, for other reasons, it was beginning to become a more open group. There was always, as we have seen, insistence on the principle that only a member of the village could hold and use village land; but village boundaries were often poorly marked and it was difficult to determine which headman, if any, had genuine jurisdiction over land relatively distant from the constituted village site. Nor was it particularly important to be able to do so whilst land was plentiful. As paddy cultivation spread, men began seeking extra fields further and further away from home as land nearby was all taken up; and so long as they did not attempt to take land in the immediate vicinity of another village site there was seldom much difficulty in this. The attitude here of a sufficiency of land persisted and headmen were not disposed to protest against outsiders who sought fields near the limits of their vaguely defined sites. Intervillage warfare and raiding had, of course, been abolished as an expression of and a weapon in inter-village rivalries and animosities. With the establishment of general peace and security, and with increasing movement about the country between villages and chiefdoms, such rivalries and animosities began to die away. Many men came to live in the villages which they themselves had not helped to found; their ancestors from their fathers' villages lived elsewhere, many of them widely scattered, and it was not possible to maintain a high degree of village parochialism, and, people began to feel, it was not especially necessary or important any longer.

It began to be possible for a man to hold some of his arable land within the area of another village, so long as members of the second village were not deprived of the opportunity of their own agricultural expansion should they desire it. This was especially the case where a large area of hitherto vacant (i.e. bush) but now valuable paddy land was contained within the approximate boundaries of a village. Outsiders were allowed to acquire fields on the strength of kinship with the headman or with one of the constituted villagers, or even by giving some small present to the headman (e.g. a little beer or some meat, etc.). Land was still plentiful then, or so it seemed to the Nyakyusa, and future shortages and difficulties were not perceived.

311
333 Whereas in the Highland and Central regions the large numbers of cattle – in relation, that is, to the available pasture resources – are causing over-grazing and soil erosion, particularly in the hilly areas as often as overall relegated to pasturage, on the other hand in the flood plains there does not appear, at least to the layman, to have been any serious effects on the land.
349 The natural manuring of the paddy fields in the dry season is advantageous. In the Lake Plains it is the cattle rather than the land which suffer, but so far the Nyakyusa have done virtually nothing to meet the new conditions, other than to complain bitterly and fruitlessly.

The Young Men: Land Shortage and Labour Migration

433 The younger Nyakyusa men find increasing difficulty in obtaining arable land now that there are no longer vacant areas to be taken up, and the older men are no longer prepared to cede their land rights in favour of the younger generation, as they traditionally did. When occasional fields are left vacant, the young men must take their turn with their elders, who themselves are so chronically short of land – and the headmen consequently favour the older villagers with families as against the younger men. This means that in the high-density regions the majority of men under the age of about 30 years have little or no arable land, nor can they hope for it until the deaths of their fathers. In the congested village sites even their bananas plots may be smaller than is desirable for the provision of the staple food.

The young man, then, is compelled to remain dependent on his father's and elder brother's holding; indeed, headmen often justify their refusals to allocate plots to young men on the express grounds that the latter must share their elders' fields. Thus the valued independence of the young Nyakyusa is severely restricted and it seems that tensions and difficulties are beginning to arise between fathers and sons, and between brothers, because of this. Sons are blamed for not doing their fair share in the family cultivation; fathers are blamed for giving their sons inadequate shares in crops and crop income. It will be remembered that one of the fundamental principles underlying Nyakyusa society and its age-village organisation is the spatial segregation of parents and children (cf. page 22). Now they are inevitably being put into competition with one another over inadequate fields in a single holding.

The young men are severely restricted, if not altogether cut off, from the opportunity to cultivate paddy in their own fields and thus to earn their incomes at home, for paddy-growing is the only way of earning a living in the Lake Plains. Yet it is these younger men whose money demand is greatest, to buy clothing, bicycles and other store-goods, and to buy cattle for marriage payments. They are therefore strongly attracted by the ready opportunities for taking up wage-labour abroad, in the mines of the Rhodesias and South Africa where wages are high (see Gulliver, 1957).

With the best will in the world, when, as in the very high-density regions, the average holding is little more than an acre and a half – when, that is, the older men themselves share larger acreages for their own cultivation needs – it is not possible for a father to allow his son to take large shares in his fields. In some cases a father does give outright to his adult sons strips of his holding, but plots so provided are necessarily small. Quite as frequently a father does not consider it possible to break up his holding in his own lifetime, and sons are expected to assist in the common cultivation and to continue merely to be given a share in the family proceeds at harvest. It is not surprising, therefore, that very large numbers of young men from the Lake Plains migrate abroad to work. Only about one man in 20 has not been away at all before the age of about 25 years. Much higher proportions of men and larger numbers absolutely are temporarily absent from the Lake

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137 in dimbows. This part is devoid of timber except along some river banks—*Albizia* and *Acacia* spp.—and fuel has to be carried some distance. The dominant herbs are *Cymbopogon* grass and *Hyperthemia* sp., with *Pennisetum* and *Pennisetum purpureum* along the rivers.

Methods of Cultivation

241 The work of cultivation is equally divided
242 between the sexes. After the plots have been cleared and bunded by the men, it is women's work to plant, clear, harvest, winnow and sell at the market. Men's work consists of clearing, hoeing and looking after the cattle.

243 Rotation of crops is practised, as it must be
244 in an area where all land is far from productive. In the highlands, 5,500 feet to 7,000 feet, the rotation is yellow sweet potatoes, finger millet, groundnuts, finger millet, groundnuts, finger millet and rest for five years, or sweet potatoes, maize for five years and rest for five years. On the hillsides, finger millet and pigeon peas or finger millet alone are sown every fourth year.

In the medium altitudes, between 5,000 feet and 3,000 feet, the rotation is finger millet, maize and yams, beans, rested and grazed. Continual planting of rice cannot take place as fertility is so quickly impaired.

In the lower altitudes, below 2,000 feet, rice is planted continuously for some 15 years and the land is then rested and grazed for about 8 years.

Diet and Food Crops

252 No one food is the staple throughout the district, but plantains, maize and sweet potatoes for the higher altitudes and rice on the lake shore are generally eaten, with additions that vary from area to area.

● 253 Maize is planted both on contoured ridges and on flat land. Holes are drilled generally 2 feet apart and each hole has 3 seeds planted
[254] in it. Maize is usually interplanted with beans or Bambara groundnuts, groundnuts, cowpeas or pigeon peas. Planting takes place in the highlands in July to September and harvesting in February to April. In the medium altitudes, two crops are planted annually, in November to February and again in May to June. In the lower altitudes, however, little maize is grown
[255] and this is sown in November to December and harvested in March and April. Maize is stored in mud-covered baskets granaries or is sold as soon as it is dried. It is never roasted
[256] or boiled with beans. The varieties of maize grown vary but they are mostly of the hard flint type.

245 Bananas and plantains are grown all over the district except in the highlands to the north and west. Numerous local varieties abound, with a red plantain and the Sukari variety of banana as recent introductions, and are used exclusively for food, no beer being made. They are mostly dried and pounded with pestle and mortar to be used as flour, although they are also eaten whole after roasting.

[262] 279 [251]

244 Sweet potatoes are extensively grown. They are planted on contoured ridges from 3-4 feet high. Planting distances vary from 6 inches to 1 foot in either direction. They are planted in March to May and north of Takoyo take eight months to mature, but south of that place four months is sufficient. Sweet potatoes are eaten boiled or roasted.

[252]

243 [262] 278 Finger millet is used more for beer-making than for food. It is always sown broadcast in November to January and harvested in March to May. The land is first hand-hoed and all grass put into heaps and burnt when dry. In the highlands to the west the trees are lopped and branches piled in heaps to be burnt. Contoured ridges are put in at intervals depending on the slope of the land. The harvesting is carried out just before the grain is ripe by cutting off the heads and stacking in the field while ripening proceeds. The heads are then collected into large baskets and soaked in water for a day, after which they are taken out and rubbed with the hands to separate the grain from the chaff. The millet is then dried and stored in earthenware pots or mud-covered baskets until required. It is reported that it can be stored for five or six years by this method, but I have not verified this personally.

[251]

244 262 263 Beans are nearly always interplanted with maize or sown in banana plantations and the local seed is of mixed variation. They are eaten boiled as a relish with other food such as maize. The leaves are also eaten dried or fresh.

245 281 Groundnuts are grown in the medium and lower altitudes. Planting in November to February and harvested in April to July, they are dried in the shell and eaten raw.

243 Rice is grown on the lake shore and also in the neighbouring foothills. It is sown broadcast in November to February and harvested in May to August. Yields are fair high in the foothills, being about 6-7 bags of paddy to the acre. Many local varieties are grown, such as Mundri, Mwangalu, and Marala. The hill rice is eaten boiled, but most is sold husked in the markets for purely local consumption.

[252] 278

[D238A]

241 Other foodstuffs grown are cassava, cow peas, pigeon peas, Bambara groundnuts, ginger, cordamom, groundnuts, wheat, pumpkins, peppers, citrus, sugar cane and European vegetables, including a quantity of European potatoes.

[171]

Economic Crops

245 One of the main cash crops is coffee, which was introduced about 1890 by the Berlin Lutheran Mission, but it was not grown by natives until 1930 when an attempt was made to organise an industry. It had already been tried from 1924 onwards by Europeans but had gradually died out, giving place to tea.

171

245 Native coffee has not been truly successful and many reasons are suggested for this. In effect, the coffee suffers from many pests and diseases and yields are so low as to be almost uneconomical even to a tribe of very low individual annual income. It has become obvious that coffee can only be grown by natives if shaded by bananas and mulched heavily with banana trash.* Multiple-stem pruning is gaining favour.

Seedlings are planted out in December and the first crop is obtained four years after. The area planted rose in 1939 to 1,800 acres and the number of native planters to 7,864. Yields, however, are low, varying from 131.4 kg. to 20.4 kg. parchment to the acre. Shoreless leaf disease and yellow and white borer are prevalent all over the coffee-growing area. Over the period since 1932 the price paid to natives has averaged at cents a kg. for parchment.

[134]

[138] All coffee is collected and sold by Native Authority after rough grading and, in order to [142] encourage better preparation, much lower payments are made for the inferior grades. A native staff is employed to visit coffee plots and to give instructions, and it is noticeable that the quality of preparation varies with the price.

175 The cultivation of rice on the lake shore was started by Chief Kyungu in 1896 with seed obtained from Arab traders in Nyasaland and the Moravian Mission issued further seed in 1898. Being an innovation, rice was not popular and little was grown except for small local sales. In 1917 the Government issued seed and tax was paid in rice instead of money. Interest was hereby aroused and the cultivation of rice was explied. In 1932 several other kinds of seed were issued and now sixteen varieties are found. "Fuyo", which was issued in 1929, gives the best yields and is the variety chiefly grown, other varieties being Bangala, Marala

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297 and Nagika, although very little of these is sold. Ploughs have been introduced into the area as it is flat and the total number in use in 1942 is about 400. The first ploughing is carried out in June or July when the ground is still wet, and the second ploughing in October to February. Planting, which is all broadcast, is carried out in November to the middle of March and the harvesting is done in May to September.

298 A first mill was erected at Iyoyone on the lake shore in 1942 with a capacity of 9 tons of rice in 12 hours. Another is now on its way from India with a capacity of 14 tons of rice in 12 hours and should be erected some time in 1944.

299 A small acreage of cotton is also sown along the Songwe River boundary, which borders on Nyasaland, with seed obtained from that Colony. Conditions, however, are not suitable on the remainder of the lake shore and ginning is not encouraged.

298 299 A list of exports from the district with approximate weights for 1942 is appended:—

Article	Weight in tons
Wood beam	[illegible]
Cotton	[illegible]
Groundnuts	[illegible]
Maize	[illegible]
Cassava	[illegible]
European potatoes	[illegible]
Rice	[illegible]
Vegetables	[illegible]
Fish	[illegible]
Banana flour	[illegible]
Cassava flour	[illegible]
Finger millet	[illegible]
Tea (European produce)	[illegible]
Total	4,700

Land Tenure and Economics of the People

423 In theory all land belongs to the chiefs or sub-chiefs, but in practice once a man has cultivated a plot, that plot belongs to him until he leaves the area to which he lives. If he leaves, the land reverts to the chief or sub-chief and may be given by him through his headman or elder to anyone in his area who is short of land or to a newcomer who wants a plot. Should a man go away and return after a long period and ask for a plot, he is bound to be given one but not necessarily the plot he had before he left. Newcomers are welcomed and are given land, as the amount of tax collected in an area is an indication of the importance of a chief.

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233 Stock grazing is a problem which is coming more and more to the fore. The number of

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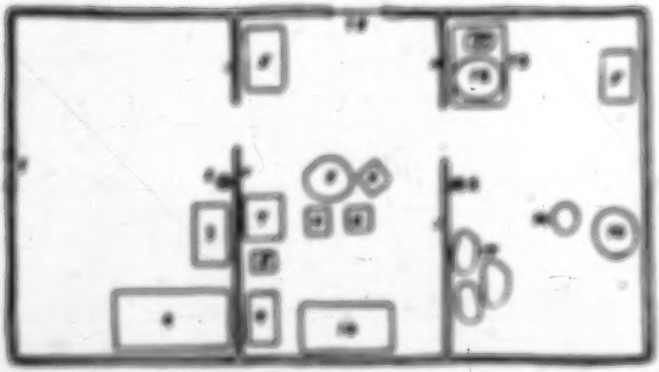

Kalai's house. 1, barred window; 2, post supporting roof; 3, wooden door; 4, Kalai's bed; 5, table; 6, chair; 7, cupboard; 8, chair with three suitcases; 9, suitcase; 10, table with book-shelf; 11, bag; 12, large basket, divider; 13, low stand for 11 and 12; 14, coffee jars; 15, low partitions; 16, divans to which the coffee is washed; 17, rice in bags.

cupboard. This seemed very strange and a bit disorderly. On a chair were three suitcases on top of each other.

It was interesting to see, in the store-room, the very crops that belong to the [35]
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14:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 F707 Ngonde F707
Nyakyusa

begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done." (G. Wilson, Introduction, p. 260). 241

The putting of maize-grains as seed into the earth is the women's work, the sowing of millet (*mulasi*) of both sexes. If you ask the men after they had come home from their work: "*Mukumbide ifwenya fye ungi?*", "Whose fields did you hoe?", the answer often may be: "*Tukumbide ifwenya fye tata*" We have hoed the fields of our father. [243 462]

In former times, the Nyakyusa had a lot of ceremonies relating to the beginning of the hoeing season and of the beginning of the harvest-work. They are, however, nowadays nearly extinguished under the influence of European culture. [177]

With respect to the beginning of the hoeing season, a very comprehensive ceremony had to be carried out by the chief in community whith the *ungonge* (medicine man) for providing the fields with extraordinary (*i-ungu*) power (*amaka*): *amaka amaungu*, in this case: fertility. 241 622 [192]

When the crop was ripe, it was (at first) forbidden (*wuika*) to take anything from the crop before the chief had given the permission. First the oldest male villagers informed the chief that it may be now the just time to give the crop free for the people, saying: "The people is hungry, we will now give them to eat!" Then the chief ordered that 6 or 8 (*malee*') corn-cobs were brought to him, and he sent these corn-cobs by a messenger to the (holy) offering-grove where they must be put down. After that has been correctly executed, he gave the permission for reaping the new crop. [182]

(NB. It was believed that those corn-cobs put into the offering-grove were eaten especially from the leopards. The powdered bones of the leopards were considered important ingredients of the consecration drink which the chief had to take at his initiation ceremonies and which should give him the strength (*amaka*) of a leopard, so that he also was called "the leopard" or "the leopard chief".) [237 825]

4. *Herding the Cattle and Cleansing the Stable.* The sociological importance of cattle among the Nyakyusa and the specific practice among them of herding the cattle by herdboys, that is also of highly sociological importance for the structure of the Nyakyusa society, is already described by G. Wilson (Introduction, p. 269 f). 233

The cleansing of the stables of which the Nyakyusa possess a great number of very well built ones, which have also sometimes a considerable length — apart from the cattle kraals —, is the task of 283 343 462

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 F'017 Ngonde F'017
Nyakyusa

262 The tender leaves of pumpkins and taro plants (*emasimbi*, leaves of taro), as well as of a number of other plants growing wild (*indeke*) are also used as vegetables. This food is called *isoke*, a word denoting all sorts of green vegetables.

In his treatise on "The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa" (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. 1; 1938, p. 43). G. Wilson points out that the fruit of the *so* — called *usupungati* — tree is "both [278] delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment (*ingemba*)", but he adds that he had been unable to find out the botanical name of this useful tree. Perhaps the following passage in the article of Dr. Kerr Cross ("Notes on the Country Lying between Lakes Nyasa and Tanganyika"; Proc. Roy. Geogr. Inst. N.S.Vol. XIII, 1891, p. 98) may be helpful in this connection: "There is a tree of the 314 sycamore family which grows extensively all over the north of the [362] lake called *mwiyungute* by the natives which might be developed. [384] It is a most picturesque tree which produces a food, an oil, and a dye. The oil or fat, when cool, is solid, even at a tolerably high temperature, and is like beeswax. It burns well as a night-light, and with wax might [288] be made into candles. In a rude way I have made candles of it. It might also make an excellent soap."

273 As an adjunct to these foods curdy milk (*ulukoma ulukafu*) is very [272] much esteemed[1], to say nothing of the various types of beer, mostly prepared from millet for the men. Large fields of millet are, therefore, to be seen everywhere in the land of the Nyakyusa. On one occasion I attended a beer drink in the hut of a chief. The conduct of the natives present, the chief and his advisers (*emafumu*), was in every respect praise-worthy. Pleasant and interesting stories were narrated. Not [574] infrequently the invitation of a commoner who has had some differences with his chief or one of the *emafumu* to such a feast is regarded as a gesture of reconciliation.

243 As in the time of Sir H. H. Johnston so also to-day "all the oozy-meadows are planted with rice." A traveller coming from the hilly region to the north on nearing Lake Nyasa is struck by numerous large fields of rice in the plain at the northern end of the lake.

178 *11. Crafts.* Mackenzie (1925) is certainly justified in complains of the decay of the arts and crafts among the Nyakyusa. The Indian and European influence is to be seen everywhere in the deterioration and final dissolution of these branches of the ancient culture of the Nyaky-

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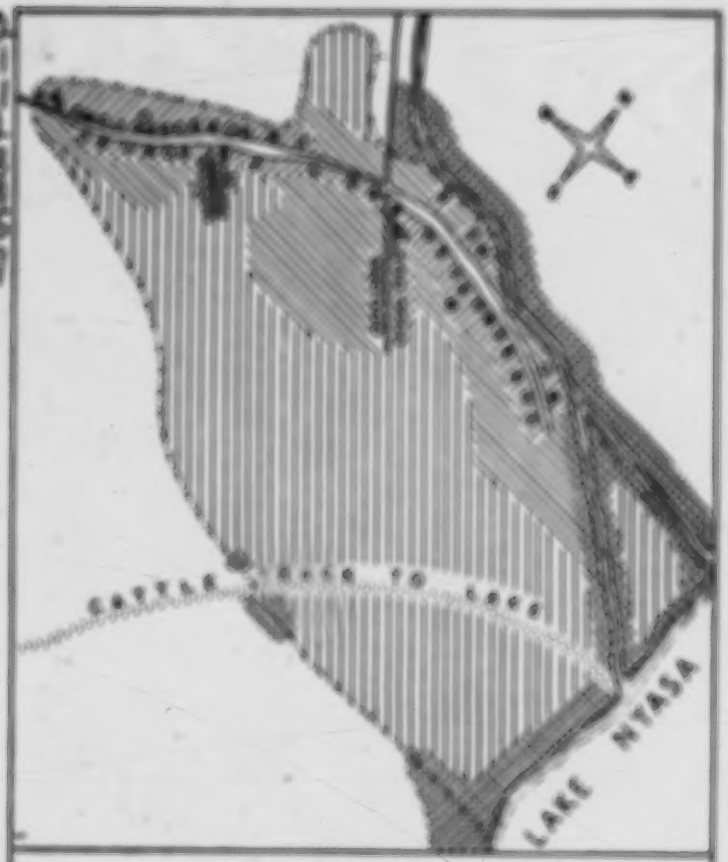
[1] A. Wilson, Introduction, p. 188.



SKETCH PLAN OF KAPUGI VILLAGE
KOROSOS CHIEFDOM, 1955

-REFERENCE-

[Facing p. 29]

of the father. The old principle that every man had the right to enough land
[illegible] to his young men, married or bachelors. Today
most landowners will refuse to entertain the applications of young bachelors
for land, and in this they merely represent general public opinion. But many
young bachelors likewise remain without land, or only on insufficient amounts.

Consequently, the following case-history, which I recorded for one young man, is not unusual. In 1955 he lived in the Mbangali young men's
[illegible] village in Wyangali's chieftdom, where his
father lives. He was about 27 years old and had a wife and one child. Twice
he had been to work in the mines and from the profits of this employment
he had completed his bridewealth payment and had bought, in addition,
three cattle, a bicycle and some good clothing. He thought he would prob-
ably go away again. Behind his house his wife had about 300 square yards of
[illegible] and there was a tiny patch of reserve. This man had no other land,
but he entered in the heavy labour on his father's holding (about 1.7 acres
in all) and by family convention he normally took for his own use the paddy
crop of a small strip there; he insisted, however, that he had not been given
this strip outright and that it remained at his father's pleasure. He had an
unmarried half-brother about 22 years old who had not obtained even that
concession at the time. Their father was about 70 years old and had two
other sons who were still boys. The young man himself had been refused an
allocation of land by the landowner on the grounds that (as the landowner
well knew) he had the use of this strip of his father's land, and also because,
as the eldest son, he would be the principal heir on his father's death. He was
clearly worried about his future, for he did not wish to go abroad again and
leave his wife and child; but he did not see how he could stay at home
without seriously lowering his standard of living to little above subsistence
level.

I quote this brief case-history not necessarily as typical – though I think it probably is – but as an actual illustration of the general work of chiefs as they affect an individual.

The Modern "Chief" and the Land

Most of the traditional chiefs, ebwanyfwale, have been recognized and selected under the Native Authority, and they are officially referred to today as ebwiwa (s. ewwi). Some of the smaller chieftdoms have been absorbed administratively by their larger neighbours, and, although they are still recognized by the people, their ebwanyfwale have lost very much of their earlier prestige and authority. In the Lake Plains the modern chieftdoms are often rather larger than is usual amongst the Nyakyusa,[1] but they are, of course, small in comparison with the size of most African chieftdoms in Tanganyika.

The eligibility of the traditional authority of the chief to land matters has already been noted (pages 7-8) and in general this still holds. In European times, however, the recognized chiefs have been given an increased authority and prestige as the local intermediaries between Government and people, and until recent years they were almost the only local instruments of the Government amongst the Nyakyusa. They have been backed by the all-powerful European, who preferred to deal with single, recognized individuals thought to have prime authority in a locality, and the European officer has been encouraged in this notion by an over-enthusiastic policy of indirect rule. Such chiefs were able to assume a degree of power well beyond the traditional limits, and to aggrandize themselves thereby. The ordinary commoner was never quite sure how far his chief was individually claiming more than he

1. On the numerical size of chieftdoms see supra, page 6.

295 Bananas and plantains are grown all over the district except in the highlands to the north and west. Numerous local varieties abound, with a few plantains and the Kabuni variety of bananas as recent introductions, and are used exclusively for food, no beer being made. They are mostly dried and provided with peels and starter to be used as flour, although they are also eaten whole after roasting.

296 Sweet potatoes are extensively grown. They are planted on contoured ridges from 3-4 feet high. Planting distances vary from 6 inches to 1 foot in either direction. They are planted in March to May and north of Takozo take eight months to mature, but south of that place four months is sufficient. Sweet potatoes are eaten boiled or roasted.

297 Finger millet is used more for beer-making than for food. It is always sown broadcast in November to January and harvested in March to May. The land is first hand-hoed and all grass put into heaps and burnt when dry. In the highlands to the west the trees are lopped and branches piled in heaps to be burnt. Contoured ridges are put in at intervals depending on the slope of the land. The harvesting is carried out just before the grain is ripe by cutting off the heads and stacking in the field while ripening proceeds. The heads are then collected into large baskets and soaked in water for a day, after which they are taken out and rubbed with the hands to separate the grain from the chaff. The millet is then dried and stored in earthenware pots or mud-covered baskets until required. It is reported that it can be stored for five or six years by this method, but I have not verified this personally.

298 Beans are nearly always interplanted with maize or sown in banana plantations and the local seed is of mixed varieties. They are eaten boiled as a relish with other food such as maize. The leaves are also eaten dried or fresh.

299 Groundnuts are grown in the medium and lower altitudes. Planted in November to February and harvested in April to July, they are dried in the shell and eaten raw.

300 Rice is grown on the lake shore and also in the neighbouring foothills. It is sown broadcast in November to February and harvested in May to August. Yields are fair high in the foothills, being about 6-7 bags of paddy to the acre. Many local varieties are grown, such as Mwafri, Mwangulu, and Marula. The hill rice is eaten boiled, but most is sold hand-hulled in the markets for purely local consumption.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER III

ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

The primary economic units in Nyakyusa society are the kinship group—the elementary family, the cattle-owing lineage, and the group of cognates who co-operate in production and exchange many gifts, and among whom cattle circulate.[1] However, fellow villagers also work together, exchange food, and have a common interest in certain property.

a. *Land*

The village is the land-holding group. As we have seen, land is allocated to a boys' village, at its commencement, by the parent village, that is the village to which the fathers of most of the boys belong. Little boys' huts are usually to be seen going up on a strip of pasture-land, adjoining the block of banana groves which shroud their fathers' houses. The boys' land is primarily a building site, but very soon after moving into their huts they turn over the ground and plant banana suckers (*vide* Plate II). Bananas begin to bear very quickly, and so in a little more than a year after the establishment of a boys' village, its members have bananas of their own, which they cook for themselves and eat with their friends at odd times during the day. But they have, as yet, no fields, for the cultivation of fields requires the co-operation of a wife. Bachelors continue to eat their main meals at their parents' village. As the boys grow up and marry they begin to cultivate garden-land adjacent to their village. Some of these gardens are acquired by individuals from their own fathers and fathers-in-law, but whether there may also be a block grant of garden-land by the parent village as a whole to the boys' village as a whole we are not certain. In any case the land of boys' villages is limited, and at the 'coming out'-the old men move aside and the young men enter their inheritance. The allotment to each village is

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe Brown and Daryll Forde.

2: Wilson, E-5 (1936-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

585
245
482
341

5. Shaving the bride

[facing p 100]

5:Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1938 FM17 Mgunda FM17
Nyakyusa

some chiefdom in which the trees were growing; for between chiefdoms an actual or potential state of war always existed, and a man coming from a hostile group to claim property would have been driven away violently. But to-day under European rule it is now customary for a man to cut his own bamboos, if he is living in a neighbouring chiefdom, instead of leaving them to his resident kinsfolk. The group within which property can be held is gradually widening. 423 178

Such is the custom among the Kukwe and Selye groups; their rights in bamboos and *ipangali* trees are not normally lost when a man moves provided there are kinsfolk left nearby to exercise them. The one exception to this rule is in the case of expulsion for witchcraft or other serious crime. Then even if the man expelled has left kinsfolk behind him, still the chief takes his trees. 423 181

Among the Nyakyusa proper, on the other hand, the *ipangali* trees are treated like bamboos. When a man moves he loses all rights in them and, unless the chief steps in to take them, as he always may, they are granted by the great-commoner, together with the soil, to the newcomer who is put on that site. Bamboos, as in Selye and Kukwe country, continue to belong to the kinsman of the man who has moved.[5] 423 425 181

Trees introduced by the Europeans, of which coffee trees are the most valuable, have been declared by the Federation of Chiefs to be the property of the planter, even although he has moved to a different chiefdom. This law was made after much anxious discussion between the chiefs, the Administration and the Agricultural Department and is, of course, subject to revision if it is found after trial to be impracticable. In the case of coffee it has inevitably been modified in practice since coffee must be tended continuously if it is to remain free from pests and to bear fruit, and any man who actually looks after coffee trees has a generally admitted claim to the crop unless he is paid by the planter for his labour. The planter, however, in surrendering the trees to him may compel him to pay something for their initial value. 423 177 245

Further, as the Agricultural Officer has the right to uproot any untended coffee trees and must exercise it if pests are to be kept under control, the practice has grown up of his taking over any large number of abandoned trees and keeping them clean with labour paid by the Native Treasury; the trees are subsequently sold to some other man and the proceeds paid into the Native Treasury again. If, however, a planter of coffee trees makes arrangements, when he moves, for the cleaning of his coffee then the trees remain his own.

[5] Some informants deny this and insist that they always pass to the chief. I was not myself long in Mungonde among the Nyakyusa proper and I lack conclusive evidence on the point.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 others as well. Any boys' village is found to consist primarily of the
664 sons of the members of some older village who originally gave the land for its building, but as we shall see later sons of other villages live there too.

621 At the beginning, when a group of boys starts a new age-village, or
762 when boys join one already formed, they do not all have a hut to themselves, two or three friends share a hut. But later, as they grow older, each builds for himself. The younger ones build their huts of reeds, but the older ones try to get a few bamboos from their fathers or senior relatives and build more solid houses. Married men build entirely of bamboo, but often in a boys' village you will find a compromise between bamboo and reed, both being used in the same house; and the houses of bachelors, even though they be all of bamboo, are smaller than those of married men. The technique of good building is not very difficult, and the older boys instruct and help their juniors, as they join the village, to improve the skill playfully acquired as herd-boys so as to build more substantial huts.

● 245 The chief food of the Nyakyusa is the banana; men plant bananas
262 immediately round their huts, though their fields are mostly at a distance. And bachelors, while they continue to eat their main meals at their parents' village, plant bananas round their own huts as well. Bananas begin to bear very quickly, sometimes within a year of planting, and so, soon after the establishment of a boys' village, its members have bananas of their own, which they cook for themselves and eat with their friends at odd times during the day. But they have as yet no fields.

246 There is no formal initiation of boys at puberty; but, on the other
[31] hand, the custom of leaving home and joining a boys' village is directly
577 connected by the Nyakyusa with their ideas of decency in sexual life. They think it is perfectly all right to discuss sex openly among friends of about the same age but altogether wrong to discuss it either in the presence of, or with, their parents or those of their parents' generation. If a boy learns about love-making, in any way, from his parents the Nyakyusa think that he will not respect them properly and that he himself will be a fool. A boy must learn these things from his immediate seniors and friends. One man said to me: "If a boy after about ten years old stays at home to sleep, he is laughed at by his friends and his own parents send him away. They say: 'If he sleeps at home he will hear what his parents talk about at night, the night is always full of lewd talk; and he may even see them undressing. He will grow up a fool, with little wisdom.' You see at the boys' village" he went on to say, "the older

and try to understand the nature and reasons for change. Here, then, is a good opportunity for the study of social change – not only in land tenure as such, but also in village and family organisation, political authority and economic life.

II

The Nyakyusa are a Bantu people inhabiting the main part of the Rungwe District in southern Tanganyika, immediately to the north of Lake Nyasa. In 1948 they numbered about 199,000 in that District, but about 10,000 men were probably at the time temporarily absent from their homes and in employment in the mines and towns of the Rhodesias and South Africa (see Gulliver, 1957), whilst about 20,000 had migrated to live in the adjacent Mbeya District to the north.

The tribal area comprises a confined geographical basin surrounding the northern end of Lake Nyasa. It extends only about 40 miles from the tip of the lake at 1,550 feet above sea level to the Poroto Mountains in the north at 6,000 feet; and from east to west is only about 30 miles, from the almost sheer walls of the Livingstone Mountains (with peaks up to 10,000 feet) to the Ndali Highlands (rising to about 7,000 feet). There are therefore unusually large ecological differences within so small an area. Three major regions are to be distinguished: the "Northern Highlands" over about 4,500 feet, the low-lying "Lake Plains" in the south, and the "Central Region" in between. Everywhere rainfall is reliable and high, averaging at least 100 inches annually[1], and this amply compensates for a certain poverty and minus of the soil, although (and particularly in the Central Region) it brings dangers of soil erosion. Except in the highest parts the banana is the staple food, supported by maize, beans, finger millet and groundnuts. In the Northern Highlands coffee has become well established as the principal cash crop; in the Lake Plains paddy rice cultivation provides both a food and a cash crop; in the Central Region the country is too low generally for coffee and too high and dry for rice; consequently cash-cropping is considerably inferior and the people's standard of living is rather poorer.

The Nyakyusa and their country tended for a long time to be relatively isolated from the outside world by high mountain walls and rain-soaked roads. In addition, or because of it perhaps, they developed an almost unique culture which was supported by considerable conservatism and high authority. They still continue to regard their African neighbours beyond the mountains as their social and cultural inferiors. The turmoil of the slave-trade in Central Africa passed them by; in modern times they have not enthusiastically accepted Christianity and they have refused to take up the use of Swahili, the Territorial *lingua franca*. In recent years, and more especially since the end of World War II, they have, however, accepted and pushed forward with vigour a rapid and extensive economic development, involving particularly the production of coffee and paddy as cash crops, and large-scale labour migration to the south in the high-wage mining industries. The multiplicity of petty, often tiny, independent chiefdoms has been reorganised to provide four local government areas, each under a Rural Council, in which the old chiefdoms have become something like parishes[2]. Although much of the old conservatism and narrow parochialism persists, yet there is now an atmosphere of accepted change, of a keen desire for economic development, and a general acceptance of a cash economy.

Probably the most significant feature of modern life in the Nyakyusa country is the increasing scarcity of land for agriculture in relation to the

1. At Tukuyu, in the Northern Highlands, annual rainfall averaged 99.23 inches between 1919 and 1952; at Kyela, in the Lake Plains, the average between 1940 and 1951 was 106.31 inches.
2. See Kingdon, E.R.: The evolution of a system of local government by African rural councils in the Rungwe District, Tanganyika; *The Journal of African Administration*, III, 4, October, 1951.

311 the river in spate during the wet season, although here and there a few plots
[13] have cultivated on slightly raised ground. Similarly in Kapogi village, Kaniwa's chiefdom, some parts are heavily inundated by the Kiwira river. In both these cases flooding has made unusable ground which was cultivated and even built on a generation ago; the degree of annual flooding seems to be decreasing again now so that very slowly a certain amount of new land is becoming available. This cyclical change appears to be directly connected with the long-term rise and fall of the level of Lake Nyasa. On the other hand, in more fortunate villages such as Ikoto, Mwakyusa's chiefdom, and Kapogi, Mwamasangula's chiefdom, there is rather more common pasturage remaining, and village sites, paths, etc., are noticeably less restricted.

The following arithmetical observations may be noted as permitting, perhaps, some guide to population densities in the Lake Plains:-

[61]

Persons per sq. mile	*Total acreage per family of five*	*Arable holding per family of five if proportion of total land under arable holdings is —*	
		one third	*two-fifths*
300	10.7	3.5	4.3
400	8	2.7	3.2
500	6.4	2.1	2.6
600	5.3	1.8	2.1

(N.B. The statistically average family is composed of five people)

It has been suggested by the Agricultural Field Officer, Takaya, that for the whole of Rungwe District perhaps 30 per cent. of all land is under cultivation. He was not prepared to place any reliance on this figure, and certainly for the Lake Plains it must be higher.

To summarise my own tentative conclusions and in order to obtain some kind of picture of the current land situation, I suggest the following division into regions:-

311
134
161

A. The flood plains proper

1. Very **high-density region** - the arable land available under present conditions amounts to about 1½-2 acres per adult male and the local density of population is probably in the region of 500 persons per square mile; - in most of the chiefdoms of Mwaulema, Kyoso and Lusaya, the south-eastern part of Mwakipesile's and the eastern part of Mwakyusa's chiefdoms.

2. **High-density region** - there is available about 3 acres of arable land per adult male and the local density of population is between 300 and 400 persons per square mile; - in the chiefdoms of Mwamasangula, Mwanyile and Mwakilima, the southern part of Mwakilesa's, the centre of Mwakyusa's and much of Mwandemele's chiefdoms.

B. The remainder of the Lake Plains (Ntebele)

3. **Low-density region** - here there remains much vacant land (some usable, some scarcely usable) and population density is probably little over 100 persons per square mile, and even lower than that in the most northerly parts: - the northern, higher areas comprising the north of Mwakyusa's (Mwisuda's) chiefdom, the remainder of Mwandemele's, the whole of Mwanisipulo's, Mwakatundu's and Mwakipegi's chiefdoms, together with the northern part of Mwakipesile's and of Mwakilasa's chiefdoms.

This summary description is, and can be, only very approximate, taking no account of the complexity of local variations to be seen on the ground. It is illustrated in the accompanying sketch-map.

It may be emphasised that in the two high-density regions practically all available land is in use. In the "high-density region" (No. 2 above) it may be possible to reduce slightly the non-productive areas taken up by village sites, but nowhere will this be easy or even desirable, and already most of the vacant spaces between houses are packed with banana groves, small

[311]
[145]

Hi:Gulliver E-1 (1954-1955) 1956 FNG7 Ngonde FNG7
Nyakyusa

plots of maize, sunshine, tobacco, etc., and useful trees (bamboo, citrus, mango, kapok, mvungwi and firewood). Artificial drainage would, of course, make more land available along the rivers, but this is in general beyond the abilities and resources of the Nyakyusa without considerable outside assistance.

Finally, in this matter it is to be remembered that in addition to a man's arable holding, each of his wives has a banana plot at her house from which she obtains her staple foodstuff. Such plots amount to perhaps about a tenth of an acre on the average. On the other hand, the Nyakyusa are no longer prepared to tolerate a predominantly banana diet. Rice has, in most areas of the Lake Plains, become almost as important as bananas.

Large-sized Holdings

Some blame for this novel shortage of land and the smallness of the average holding has often been laid upon that minority of Nyakyusa who have exceptionally large holdings, and also upon the immigrants from beyond the Lake Plains who have come to settle there during the past decade.

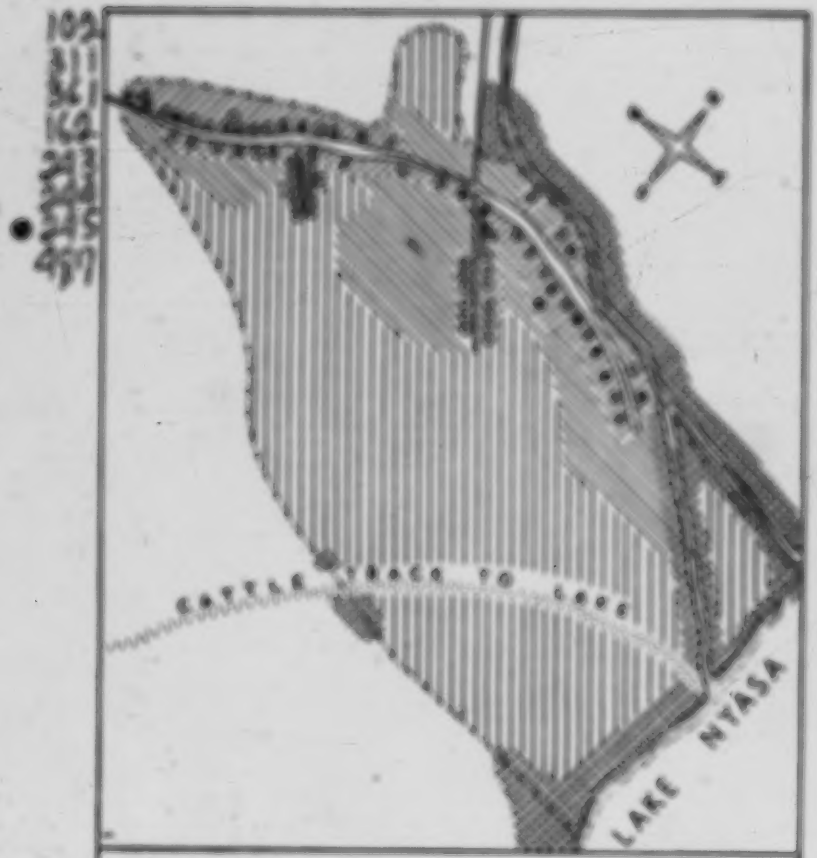
The occupiers of large-sized holdings are rather fewer than has sometimes been supposed. The notoriety of large land-owners, such as some of the modern chiefs with as much as 25-30 acres, has brought more attention to them than is really warranted. Most chiefs and village headmen have arable holdings of above average size, as a result of their privileged positions in the land allocation system and because of their prestige influence; but they remain a small minority and their number is bound to decrease in the future as inheritance causes sub-division of their holdings, for most of them have also more than the average number of wives and sons. In the two high-density regions it is clearly impossible for any man much to increase his present holding. As will be shown later (see page 26) the modern trend is not unnaturally towards a dangerous fragmentation of holdings.

The data obtained in this manner for my eight village samples are summarised in Table III, page 15. In these villages the two men out of 172 who held more than ten acres were a village headman and the father of a chief.[1] There were seven other headmen and one chief as well as some other locally influential men amongst the people covered by my surveys, but none of them held more than ten acres. There are, of course, some commoners amongst the large land-holders; many of them are close relatives of the chief or headman and have thus received preferential treatment. Some, however, are ordinary villagers who were perspicacious enough to see future trends and to obtain land in the early days before most men realised its new value and when vacant areas were still easily available. Such men are tending to become a new, wealthy class, but on the other hand they are particularly susceptible to the begging of kinsmen and friends who have insufficient land. If they are not to be regarded as unneighbourly or even anti-social (perhaps practising witchcraft) they are virtually compelled to be generous sometimes, both with their land and with their profits.

On the whole this minority of men excites little envious or jealousy among the Nyakyusa, who indeed take it for granted that their chiefs and headmen will have more land than ordinary villagers, as befits their status and prestige. If it be thought that by reducing somehow the size and number of these unusually large holdings then the land shortage might be partly relieved, it is a false hope. I scarcely think that the Nyakyusa would welcome any such attempt at interference by administrative action, but in any case it would only provide minor and temporary relief here and there and would not be worth the executive difficulties involved.

1. This second man should be a chief himself but he was dismissed by Government on his inauguration for misdeeds. He still holds much of the prestige and privilege of a chief for he can in only allowed authority in purely local government affairs.

McOuilliver R-5 (1954-1955)1958 F'907 Ngonde F'907
Nyakyusa



SKETCH PLAN OF KAPUGI VILLAGE
KOROSO'S CHIEFDOM, 1955

-REFERENCE-

[Facing p. 29]

McGulloch E-5 (1954-1955) 1954 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

land on Mbo. Young men scrapped with one another, with their older brothers and with their fathers for allocations of land left vacant. We also saw, however, that often in the larger hamlets not all the sons are able to get a share of the parental holding, or at least not a share of practicable size. These younger sons are forced to resort to trying to obtain vacant land elsewhere - probably within the same village, but as often as not outside. Finally, the young man on his own building may find his neighbours to be of any age; certainly they will not have been members of his own original coeval hamlet.

The way for this changing concept of village life and the new sort of village was prepared in the years before land shortage became important. The changed political system has been briefly noted already, but no less important was the great increase in inter-village movement in earlier Europeanized days when peace and personal security had been established. During this period Wilson (1938, page 32) reckoned that perhaps 80 per cent. of Nyakyusa shifted at least once from the place where they first obtained fields. This estimate, while perhaps holding good for Highland Nyakyusa amongst whom Wilson mainly worked, was too high for the people of the Lake Plains, where about 40 per cent. is more correct according to my genealogical and village surveys. That is still a relatively high degree of mobility for a mainly subsistence, peasant society such as it was in those years. It is clear that the pseudo-fraternal bond of coeval residence could not persist as a main element of village life and consciousness, when in fact as many as half of the members of a village were not original coeval founders but had come in from elsewhere. Before the land shortage, movement did not entail the shifting of young men to other young men's villages, or of older men to other older men's villages. It was, at least eventually, promiscuous movement, ignoring age-categories. The compulsions of land shortage were, in retrospect, only to have followed running lines of village development and to have begun the completion of the process.

In the Lake Plains, therefore, the village persists as a close, territorial, land-owning group and as a specific cluster of homesteads and huts, usually with a village street, the whole closely bounded in by continuous banana groves. Beyond this lie the arable lands, usually food-crop fields nearby and paddy fields further off. In jealously protecting what it already holds, the village has gained a new exclusiveness, for the security of the individual land-holder is maintained by the corporate ownership of the village and by excluding outsiders as far as possible. On the other hand, it is no longer an age-village either in fact or intention, and it cannot be, for age-villages were associated only with an expanding territorial system and a subsistence economy.

This brief analysis of Nyakyusa village organization in recent times applies only to the Lake Plains. In some parts of both the Central Region and the Northern Highlands the age-basis of Nyakyusa villages had most probably already been seriously weakened in pre-European times.[1] On the other hand, elsewhere, and particularly in the more conservative parts less affected by modern trends and the cash economy, the traditional age-village will exists in something like its old form.

Land shortage has appeared in the Highlands together with a developing cash economy, but the basis of agricultural and economic change lies mainly in cotton cultivation which, of course, requires relatively smaller fields than does paddy in the Lake Plains, but it needs more care and attention from the grower for moderate success. As far as I could see in the course of

1. Perhaps it will be more amongst the older and more middle-aged men, and therefore a factor often [595] [illegible] in labour.

2. According to oldest informants in Tukuyu Boma, Mwakaleli and some coeval chieftaincies, and also the evidence of old village sites.

311 933 945

any earlier labour migration exploitation in the Highlands, the village as a close residential unit is breaking up as the people are increasingly adopting the more common East African pattern of each family building its own homestead in its own land-holding. These northern Nyakyusa say that they must have their coffee plots next to their homesteads for the sake of continuous supervision, and that this is impossible (which is true enough) where men live close together in compact villages. Again, coffee plots, with their standing, permanent trees, have become a valuable item of inheritance; men lose no opportunity of taking them irrespective of the locations of their cowsds or of the identity of their immediate neighbours. The values of land, cash-crops and material progress are placed much higher than the traditional values of cowsds; indeed, such traditional values are largely inconsistent with modern wants and expressions.

561 561 198

Thus the Nyakyusa age-village has become almost obsolete and it would seem that it must inevitably vanish altogether even in the remaining conservative areas (e.g., in the east). Furthermore, its disappearance is leading to a distinct divergence between the Lake Plains Nyakyusa and those of the Highlands. How far this divergence will become permanent and basically significant cannot be foreseen as yet in this early stage. Clearly the compact village is best fitted to an arable economy of rice cultivation in the Lake Plains, and at least until there is further agricultural change it will persist as a more important social group.

Nevertheless, with its enhanced exclusiveness and relative social isolation and with reserved rivalry with its neighbours, the Lake Plains village is scarcely conducive to the encouragement of agricultural and economic development. Neither is it anything but harmful towards contemporary efforts in the politico-administrative sphere to reduce parochialism and to foster a sense of unity and co-operation beyond the village and the petty traditional chiefdoms. Whilst supervisory control of the land through the headman is in general excellent, reasonable and readily understandable to the people, yet the excess of restrictiveness, the competitive scrambling for vacated holdings and the jealous fears are surely more than merely unfortunate. There needs to be some modification to loosen the over-tight strings of village corporate ownership, to regularise the transfer of vacated holdings and to lessen the fears of village against village. These points are taken up again in Chapter V.

600 152 182

Cattle and Pastoral Requirements

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Unfortunately, no great accuracy can be presumed for the Rungwe District cattle censuses, but the available figures are summarised in Table VI.

TABLE VI
NYAKYUSA CATTLE

	1955				1958	
	No. of cattle	Acres per head	Cattle per person	Cattle per family of 5	No. of cattle	Acres per head
Lake Plains	31,418	4.1	0.5	2.5	26,822	12
Central Region ..	19,380	7.1	0.4	2	19,160	7.2
N.E. Highlands ..	19,095	7.4	0.4	2	17,145	8.4
N.W. Highlands ..	22,974	8.0	0.4	2	14,835	10.9
Total:						
Nyakyusa.. ..	92,867	6.4	0.4	2	80,002	7.2

The indicated increase in the numbers of cattle may well be attributable only to improved census enumeration by the Veterinary Department.

Although 6.4 acres per head of cattle for all Nyakyusa country, and even 4.1 acres in the Lake Plains, might seem to be adequate in a country so

of the father. The old principle that every man had the right to arable land applied no less strongly to the young man, married or bachelor. Today most headmen will refuse to entertain the applications of young bachelors for land, and in this they merely represent general public opinion. But many young bachelors likewise cannot obtain land, or only an inadequate amount.

Consequently, the following case-history, which I recorded for one young man, is not unusual. In 1949 he lived in the Mbangali young-men's hamlet, attached to Mpunguti village in Mwakipesile's chiefdom, where his father lives. He was about 27 years old and had a wife and one child. Twice he had been to work in the mines and from the profits of this employment he had completed his brideweath payment and had bought, in addition, three cattle, a bicycle and some good clothing. He thought he would probably go away again. Behind his house his wife had about 300 square yards of bananas and there was a tiny patch of cassava. This man had no other land, but he assisted in the heavy labour on his father's holding (about 1.7 acres in all) and by family convention he normally took for his own use the paddy crop of a small strip there; he insisted, however, that he had not been given this strip outright and that it remained at his father's pleasure. He had an unmarried half-brother about 22 years old who had not obtained even that concession at the time. Their father was about 35 years old and had two other sons who were still boys. The young man himself had been refused an allocation of land by the headman on the grounds that (as the headman well knew) he had the use of this strip of his father's land, and also because, as the eldest son, he would be the principal heir on his father's death. He was clearly worried about his future, for he did not wish to go abroad again and leave his wife and child; but he did not see how he could stay at home without seriously lowering his standard of living to little above subsistence level.

I quote this brief case-history not necessarily as typical – though I think it probably is – but as an actual illustration of the poorest state of affairs as they affect an individual.

The Modern "Chief" and the Land

Most of the traditional chiefs, *abanyafyale*, have been recognised and salaried under the Native Authority, and they are officially referred to today as *abaweo* (s. *mwei*). Some of the smaller chiefdoms have been absorbed administratively by their larger neighbours, and, although they are still recognised by the people, their *abanyafyale* have lost very much of their earlier prestige and authority. In the Lake Plains the modern chiefdoms are often rather larger than is usual amongst the Nyakyusa,[1] but they are, of course, small in comparison with the size of most African chiefdoms in Tanganyika.

The slightness of the traditional authority of the chief in land matters has already been noted (pages 7-8) and in general this still holds. In European times, however, the recognised chiefs have been given an increased authority and prestige as the local intermediaries between Government and people, and until recent years they were almost the only local instruments of the Government amongst the Nyakyusa. They have been backed by the all-powerful European, who preferred to deal with single, recognised individuals thought to have prime authority in a locality, and the European officer has been encouraged in this notion by an over-enthusiastic policy of indirect rule. Such chiefs were able to assume a degree of power well beyond the traditional limits, and to aggrandize themselves thereby. The ordinary commoner was never quite sure how far his chief was individually claiming more than he

1. On the numerical size of chiefdoms see supra, page 6.

11:Thwaites C-5 (ca. 1942) 1944

FN17 Ngonde FN17

[P. 237B] Nyakyusa

245 Bananas and plantains are grown all over the district except in the highlands, to the north and west. Numerous local varieties abound, with a red plantain and the *Sukari* variety of [262 bananas as recent introductions, and are used 273] exclusively for food, no beer being made. They [251] are mostly dried and pounded with pestle and mortar to be used as flour, although they are also eaten whole after roasting.

244 Sweet potatoes are extensively grown. They are planted on contoured ridges from 3-4 feet high. Planting distances vary from 6 inches to 1 foot in either direction. They are planted in March to May and north of Tukuyu take eight months to mature, but south of that place four [252] months is sufficient. Sweet potatoes are eaten boiled or roasted.

243 Finger millet is used more for beer-making than for food. It is always sown broadcast in [262 November to January and harvested in March 273] to May. The land is first hand-hoed and all grass put into heaps and burnt when dry. In the highlands to the west the trees are lopped and branches piled in heaps to be burnt. Contoured ridges are put in at intervals depending on the slope of the land. The harvesting is carried out just before the grain is ripe by cutting off the heads and stacking in the field while ripening proceeds. The heads are then collected into large baskets and steeped in water for a day, after which they are taken out and rubbed with the hands to separate the [251] grain from the chaff. The millet is then dried and stored in earthenware pots or mud-covered baskets until required. It is reported that it can be stored for five or six years by this method, but I have not verified this personally.

244 Beans are nearly always interplanted with 261 maize or sown in banana plantations and the 262 local seed is of mixed varieties. They are eaten boiled as a relish with other food such as maize. The leaves are also eaten dried or fresh.

245 Groundnuts are grown in the medium and 251 lower altitudes. Planted in November to February and harvested in April to July, they are dried in the shell and eaten raw.

243 Rice is grown on the lake shore and also in the neighbouring foothills. It is sown broadcast in November to February and harvested in May to August. Yields are not high in the foothills, being about 6-7 bags of paddy to the acre. Many local varieties are grown, such [252 as Musafiri, Mwangulu, and Marula. The hill 438] rice is eaten boiled, but most is sold hand-hulled in the markets for purely local consumption.

[P.238A]

241 Other foodstuffs grown are coca-yams, cow peas, pigeon peas, Bambarra groundnuts, ginger, cardamon, groundnuts, wheat, pumpkins, peppers, citrus, sugar cane and European vegetables, including a quantity of European potatoes.
[177]

Economic Crops

245 177 *One of the main cash crops is coffee, which was introduced about 1900 by the Berlin Lutheran Mission, but it was not grown by natives until 1930 when an attempt was made to organize an industry. It had already been tried from 1924 onwards by Europeans but had gradually died out, giving place to tea.*

245 Native coffee has not been truly successful and many reasons are suspected for this. In effect, the coffee suffers from many pests and diseases and yields are so low as to be almost uneconomical even to a tribe of very low individual annual income. It has become obvious that coffee can only be grown by natives if shaded by bananas and mulched heavily with banana trash. Multiple-stem pruning is gaining favour.

Seedlings are planted out in December and the first crop is obtained four years after. The area planted rose in 1939 to 5,864 acres and the number of native planters to 7,966. Yields, however, are low, varying from 131.4 kg. to 20.4 kg. parchment to the acre. Hemeleia leaf disease and yellow and white borer are prevalent all over the coffee-growing area. Over the period since 1932 the price paid to natives has averaged 44 cents a kg. for parchment.
[136]

[438] [432] All coffee is collected and sold by Native Authority after rough grading and, in order to encourage better preparation, much lower payments are made for the inferior grades. A native staff is employed to visit coffee plots and to give instructions, and it is noticeable that the quality of preparation varies with the price.

175 243 The cultivation of rice on the lake shore was started by Chief Koroso in 1896 with seed obtained from Arab traders in Nyasaland and the Moravian Mission issued further seed in 1898. Being an innovation, rice was not popular and little was grown except for small local sales. In 1917 the Government issued seed and tax was paid in rice instead of money. Interest was hereby aroused and the cultivation of rice was started. In 1932 several other kinds of seed were issued and now sixteen varieties are found. "Faya", which was issued in 1929, gives the best yields and is the variety chiefly grown, other varieties being Bungala, Marula
[651]
243

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Chagga FN4
Haya FN8

House-types of the Banyakyusa

By Annette Biegaard

During a stay in the Southern Highlands in Tanganyika in 1955, I was given the opportunity to inspect—and draw plans of—some of the houses belonging to the local Bantu tribe of the Nyakyusa. In literature they are known also under the name of Konde.

The district in which they live is fairly high above sea level and near the borders of Rhodesia and Nyasaland; the rainfall is fully adequate. Banana and coffee are doing well—the banana trees often forming groves in between which you catch a glimpse of the village houses.

The district invites comparison with other localities in Tanganyika where the country is high, and where precipitation is plentiful. Such localities would be the districts around Kilimanjaro and near Bukoba to the west of Lake Victoria. In the former live the Chagga tribe, in the latter the tribe of the Haya. Even here banana and coffee are plenty—and the I.Q. of both tribes is said to be high, as is the case of the Banyakyusa (plural of Nyakyusa).

Maybe you might therefore expect to find a corresponding standard of dwelling-houses, perhaps even the same type of hut. But in this matter you will be highly surprised; so great are the differences between the three areas. Apart from the original design of the house being round and the roof thatched, no similarity exists between the various houses or their interior lay-outs.

The round, thatched Chagga hut has its roof all way down to the ground. It is not very large and the interior lay-out is quite primitive. A cow or goat lives all its life indoors and is fed there. A short and uncomfortable bed is found near by. Down the centre of the floor is a stone-paved aisle. Everything looks quite simple—especially when you remember that in other aspects the Chagga are quite advanced in their use of modern facilities; for instance they use electricity for the grinding of their maize.

The Haya hut—the old, round type—is a really magnificent thing. I think its centre is seven or eight metres high. In front it has a kind of overhang, maybe you might call it a front room, where people will sit, and where guests will be received. If you are a wellcome guest, a straw mat will be rolled out to cover the grass flooring of the hut. The walls of the front room are solid plates made from a kind of reed. The hearth is placed near the centre of the inner room.

N 114 N [107] N 131 N 245 000 G H 342 171 C 342 231 H 342 [574]

243 and Mapiko, although very little of these is sold. Ploughs have been introduced into the area as it is flat and the total number in use in 1942 is about 400. The first ploughing is carried out in June or July when the ground is still wet, and the second ploughing in October to February. Planting, which is all broadcast, is carried out in November to the middle of March and the harvesting is done in May to September.

256 A first mill was erected at Ipyana on the lake shore in 1942 with a capacity of 9 tons of rice in 15 hours. Another is now on its way from India with a capacity of 14 tons of rice in 15 hours and should be erected some time in 1944.

●248 A small acreage of cotton is also sown along the Songwe River boundary, which borders on Nyasaland, with seed obtained from that Colony. Conditions, however, are not suitable on the remainder of the lake shore and expansion is not encouraged.

241 439 A list of exports from the district with approximate weights for 1942 is appended:—

Article	Weight in tons
	Tons
Mixed beans	550
Coffee	50
Groundnuts	50
Maize..	1,500
Onions	20
European potatoes	200
Rice	1,500
Vegetables	40
Fruit	100
Banana flour	300
Cassava flour	50
Finger millet	150
Tea (European produce)	215
Total ..	4,725

Land Tenure and Economics of the People

423 In theory all land belongs to the chiefs or sub-chiefs, but in practice once a man has cultivated a plot, that plot belongs to him until he leaves the area in which he lives. If he leaves, the land reverts to the chief or sub-chief and may be given by him through his headman or elder to anyone in his area who is short of land or to a newcomer who wants a plot. Should a man go away and return after a long period and ask for a plot, he is bound [554 to be given one but not necessarily the plot 609] he had before he left. Newcomers are welcomed and are given land, as the amount of 651 tax collected in an area is an indication of the importance of a chief.

233 Stock grazing is a problem which is coming more and more to the fore. The number of

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

241 stretched across the garden, and presently the pigs clear off, and there is silence again. Many kinds of game get part at least of their living out of human industry, and have to be laboriously guarded against.

For smaller pests additional aid must be sought. Field mice and rats, *indafu*, a small locust-like creature, grubs, wireworms, and moles, work great injury, and ordinary methods of dealing with them are vain. Take, at sunset, a brand from the fire, and walk over the garden with it, singing "*Kuki Kyaubili?*" Where is the Unseen God? and the pests will clear out.

241 The first maize cobs are taken to the chief; then
622 each head of a family presents a few cobs to his own
769 ancestors; twins also must be presented with early cobs, and it is only then that common people are safe if they begin to eat the new season's crops. When the chief makes an offering to his ancestors, it is usually laid at the *lupando*, the place where the village trees stand. The maize is eaten by mice, but it is credited to the "lion" which is the chief's guardian (Chap. V). In some districts a perhaps more primitive ceremony is observed. With a following of little children, the doctor goes to the grave of the chief's ancestors, and there roasts a few maize cobs, which he divides among the children; on their return, intimation is made that all may now eat the new crops.

• 251 The food stocks in the barns are protected by a medicine, but this practice is falling out of use, though many still follow it. If a man is too poor to buy the medicine, he begs a handful of the protected grain from his better-off neighbour, confident that the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

protective powers of the drug are securely transferred to his own stock. 251

A man who does not hoe is held in supreme contempt, but he does not starve. His neighbours give him food, seizing the opportunity to add much sound advice. But lazy men are held in suspicion, for it is highly probable that they will become garden thieves. 577

When there is reason to anticipate a general scarcity of food, the spirits are invited to confirm or dissipate fears. The chief orders a collection of *malesi* (millet) to be made, each village headman bringing the contribution of his people in a small basket. One headman is selected whose wife makes the beer, the behaviour of which indicates the spirit's answer to the question put. The beer is poured into a large calabash, and thence into two cups, which are placed at the *masyeto* (graves of the dead chiefs). There they are left for the night, and if in the morning the beer is found to have risen in the cups, filling them to the top, the harvest will be good; otherwise it will be bad. If the signs are good, all care is cast away, beer is made in great quantities, and drinking and feasting take the place of the previous anxiety. But when the spirits foretell a bad harvest the utmost economy is practised, and the chief is bound to see that no one makes prodigal use of his resources. 261 787

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

251 262 Fish provide many a dainty dish. The bulk of the fish caught is half roasted over a slow fire for preservation; and in that condition it will keep for many weeks. A great dainty is the *unsusu* fish, which is roasted and ground to flour, and hung up in grass bags in the roof, to be used as required.

262 252 But the Konde is happiest of all when he has flesh to eat; perhaps because it is a rather uncommon event. His cattle are not primarily for killing; primarily they are wealth stored up and increasing year by year. But he kills when there is a birth or a marriage or a death; for all these are occasions when one must not think of expense; and a number of Christians now hold birthday feasts for their children in addition to the occasions I have named. Generally the meat is preferred "high"; and it is then cooked with banana flour, salt, animal fat, pepper, the latter an Arab introduction. A kind of pie is sometimes made, by cutting the meat into slices, and putting it in layers in a pot, the layers being separated by *mbwiga* leaves, a plant which has a curry-like flavour; and the bottom of the pot is covered with maize to prevent the pie being burned.

251 The Nyakyusa practise a method of preserving flesh which I have not heard of as in use elsewhere, though it may really be quite common. Besides the universal method of roasting the freshly killed meat over a slow fire, there is the running water method. The fresh meat is placed in a sandy patch of running water, and left for about three months; but it may be visited

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

daily for supplies, provided it is again quickly covered 251 ●
up with both sand and flowing water. All this must be done at night lest the hiding-place be revealed to others, and the flesh stolen.

Bread is made of twice-ground maize with salt 252
added. It is kneaded into loaves of about three inches thick, and placed in layers, interleaved with banana leaf, in a pot with maize in the bottom. This bread is often taken on a journey, and will keep for five or six days. Eggs are "scrambled," with milk [177]
and salt, in a broken pot, but this is a European introduction. No young girl will eat hard-boiled eggs; [842]
they produce a snake in the abdomen, which, of course, in turn produces barrenness.

Very unpleasant to our minds are some of the 262
delicious foods the Konde rejoice in: flying ants eaten alive as they are picked up where they fall from their brief honeymoon in the air; crawling white ants, a horrible mass of moving life; the Kungu fly, found on Lake Nyasa, whence it comes ashore in dense clouds, settles on bush and tree, and is shaken off into small baskets, to be taken home and baked into cakes while it is still fresh. In Bundali it is said that some still eat lion's flesh, and once upon a time the crocodile was eaten at Karonga. Sorcerers are accused of [754
devouring human flesh. A new grave is sprinkled 266]
with a powerful medicine which makes the corpse come up without disturbing the soil, and the ghoulish feast is enjoyed without leaving a trace of the deed behind.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

224 hunter received a cow, not as compensation for the tusks, but as a reward for his skill; the chief took the tusks without question; they were his *umwana* (child).

224 251 The flesh was roasted on the field, over a slow fire. Stakes were fixed in the ground, and a kind of trestle made, perhaps about two feet high, under which a great fire was kindled, and the flesh, cut into long strips, placed over it. In this condition it keeps good for months, but it requires prolonged cooking when it is to be eaten. This method of preserving the flesh is used to-day, when a European makes a good kill.

224 Dogs were employed for hunting pigs and smaller animals. The dog chased the game, which, after a little, turned and chased the dog, and was led to where the hunters were waiting with spears. Dogs were used also for tracking, and are said to follow all but the largest animals. There are large dogs of European breed, which chase leopards, usually in couples, but not always do both dogs return from the chase, and sometimes neither.

224 787 782 An unsuccessful hunting season was a matter for careful inquiry; for there must have been a cause, and it was the duty of the diviner to find it. Generally it was due to the never-failing trouble in the spirit-land, and when the diviner discovered the names of the individual spirits to whose meticulous ill-temper the hunting fiasco was to be attributed, arrangements were made for their propitiation. Beer was made, and each hunter took a small piece of the flesh of the animal he was specially expert in killing; and the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

226 Women have dipping baskets without top or bottom, which they dip at random, and when fish is plentiful they get a good catch. Boys prepare bunches of worms fastened to a cord and thrown into the stream. Sitting down on the banks, they sing or whistle to attract the fish. A sharp pull when a nibble is felt lands the unwary fish.

Nets large and small are in use on the lake. The larger are furnished with stone sinkers and wood floats, and are operated very much as in Europe, a canoe feeding out the net, which is hauled in from both ends with the catch enclosed. The smaller nets are sometimes operated by one man, heavier ones requiring two; and there are tiny dipping nets, of which a man will sometimes have one in each hand. Nets must be treated with medicine before being used. The Abakisi, a small tribe living at Matema near the north end of the lake, stalk the fish under water, and are said to catch all kinds in this way.

226 782 In many places the first fish caught is not sent to the village, but is cooked and given to little children to eat, the bones being thrown back into the water. The idea is that this is one way of giving the spirits their portion; I have already pointed out that beer offered to the spirits is in some families poured into the hands of children, who drink it, though adults may not do so. And flesh offered at the family place of prayer (the *ikiyinja*) is similarly given next day to children, who are told that it is the gift of their grandfather.

251 The remainder of the catch is dried over a slow

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

fire, in the same way as the flesh is treated by the 251 ●
hunters, and is carried by hawkers over the uplands, where they get a good price for it. River and lake supply a great variety of edible fish. My list, which is not complete, has the names of thirty-two species.

137 in thickness. This part is devoid of timber except along some river banks—*Albizzia* and *Acacia* spp.—and fuel has to be carried some distance. The dominant herbs are *Crotalaria striata* and *Hyparrhenia* sp., with *Phragmites* and *Pennisetum purpureum* along the rivers.

Methods of Cultivation

241 462 The work of cultivation is equally divided between the sexes. After the plots have been cleared and hand-hoed by the men, it is women's work to plant, clear, harvest, winnow and sell at the market. Men's work consists of clearing, hoeing and looking after the cattle.

242 241 Rotation of crops is practised, as it must be in an area where all land is far from productive. In the highlands, 9,500 feet to 5,000 feet, the rotation in valleys is sweet potatoes, finger millet, groundnuts, finger millet, groundnuts, finger millet and rest for five years, or sweet potatoes, maize for five years and rest for five years. On the hillsides, finger millet and pigeon pea or finger millet alone are sown every fourth year.

In the medium altitudes, between 5,000 feet and 2-3,000 feet, the rotation is finger millet, maize and yams, beans, rested and grazed. Continual planting of rice cannot take place as fertility is so quickly impaired.

In the lower altitudes, below 2,000 feet, rice is planted continuously for some 15 years and the land is then rested and grazed for about 8 years.

Diet and Food Crops

262 No one food is the staple throughout the district, but plantains, maize and sweet potatoes for the higher altitudes and rice on the lake shore are generally eaten, with additions that vary from area to area.

243 Maize is planted both on contoured ridges and on flat land. Holes are drilled generally 3 feet apart and each hole has 3 seeds planted [241] in it. Maize is usually interplanted with beans or Bambarra groundnuts, groundnuts, cowpeas or pigeon peas. Planting takes place in the highlands in July to September and harvesting in February to April. In the medium altitudes, two crops are planted annually, in November to February and again in May to June. In the lower altitudes, however, little maize is grown and this is sown in November to December [251] and harvested in March and April. Maize is stored in mud-covered basket granaries or is [262] sold as soon as it is dried. It is eaten roasted or boiled with beans. The varieties of maize grown vary but they are mostly of the hard flint type.

245 Bananas and plantains are grown all over the district except in the highlands to the north and west. Numerous local varieties abound, with a red plantain and the *Sukari* variety of [262 banana as recent introductions, and are used 273] exclusively for food, no beer being made. They are mostly dried and pounded with pestle and ●[251] mortar to be used as flour, although they are also eaten whole after roasting.

244 Sweet potatoes are extensively grown. They are planted on contoured ridges from 3-4 feet high. Planting distances vary from 6 inches to 1 foot in either direction. They are planted in March to May and north of Tukuyu take eight months to mature, but south of that place four [252] months is sufficient. Sweet potatoes are eaten boiled or roasted.

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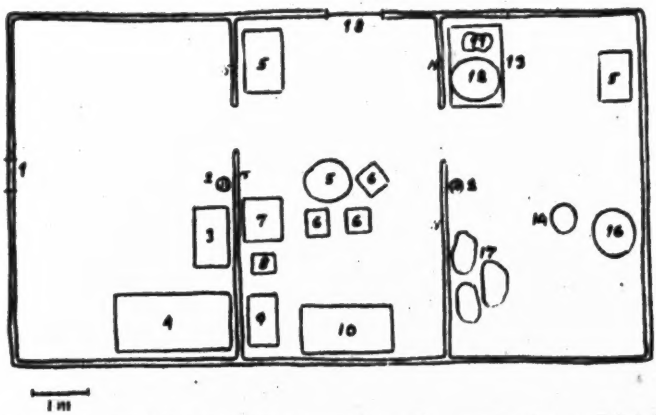
12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa



Baba's house. 1, barred window; 2, posts supporting roof; 3, wooden chest; 4, Baba's bed; 5, table; 6, chair; 7, cupboard; 8, chair with three suitcases; 9, suitcase; 10, table with bookshelf; 11, bag; 12, large basket, *ikiteba*; 13, low stand for 11 and 12; 14, millet jars; 15, low partitions; 16, *ikiuko* in which the millet is washed; 17, rice in bags.

cupboard. This seemed very strange and a bit disorderly. On a chair were three suitcases on top of each other.

It was interesting to see, in the store-room, the very crops that belong to the man, viz. rice and millet, the most valuable produce. The rice was in bags, and it is quite probable that this man had bought it from the districts near Lake Nyasa, where it thrives well. On higher ground, rice cannot be cultivated.

The millet was contained in a basket, 1 m in height, 55 cm broad at the bottom, and narrower, 35 cm, at the top.

Further, there was a large, beautiful earthenware jar, which he had bought. This was intended for the millet. And there was also a cylindrical container for the washing of the millet when it was brought home from the field. This vessel was 55 cm in height and 85 cm across.

All three houses had a small window with bars or shutters.

The inside of the houses lay in semi-darkness, as the only light is admitted through the doorway, and in some cases through the diminutive barred window. Nevertheless, the interiors give a nice impression, because of their tidiness, height, size, and cleanness. And how cosy they are, when seen at night; the door is closed, you gather round the fire and delight in perfectly cooked rice, which is the favourite dish at this principal meal of the day.

Johnston says (1897, page 453) that the greater number of the houses are circular in their plan and very much like bee-hives in shape; their walls are wickerwork filled with mud cobs, and they have thatched roofs. He also reports

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

After these admonitions, the mats which the girl had manufactured 881
were inspected. During this examination it was told her that a wife 867
should be seen in the possession of as many beautiful mats as possible, 285
made by her for herself and for her husband. Should the girl reveal such conduct as a wife, *ubusangalufu* (happiness) would be in her hut.

When the proper ceremony seemed to have come to an end, another 881
discussion followed. The girl had told the *unnyago*, during the above 578
mentioned admonition, that her parents also sometimes exchanged angry words. Therefore, a new discussion between the father and the mother arose, in which also the *unnyago* was the "speaker", but the other participants of the ceremony also shared in it, and the discussion too became at times heated. Still, after about 15 minutes, it suddenly came to an end, and the matter in dispute was declared settled. With this the whole ceremony ended.

8. One day I asked the chief for permission to visit his huts. He 622
dwelt in a rectangular hut *(ikibaga)*. A very beautiful *ikitara* (bed) was 352
in the main room, composed of many sleeping mats *(ubuleli*, pl. *imi-leli)* and of big round wooden blocks (sections of a tree-trunk), one at [342]
the head and a smaller one at the foot of the bed. Each of the four fine mats which lay uppermost had a special name. All the mats rested on sticks of reed laid across beams lying on smaller poles on the floor[28]. These mats were naturally of nearly the same height as the wooden block which formed the head part of the *ikitara*. In some other old-fashioned and better houses in Nyakyusa villages, similar beds were to be seen, but generally the bedsteads are much more simple.

One of the most important permissions granted me by the chief was 342
to enter the "store room", connected with his main room by a door. 353
The objects to be seen here were the same as those to be found in other 622
huts or store-rooms, e. g. the big *ifituba* (baskets) for storing grain, up [251]
to four feet high, smeared over with cow-dung and clay, and smaller [237]
baskets for different purposes. In one corner hung different kinds of dancing fans *(urukope*, sg.) made of hairs from the tails of bulls, with fine handles of horn. In the dark opposite corner of the same wall there seemed to hang a similar object, but it was wrapped in banana bast. This was the real sign of the chief's dignity, the symbol of his [778]
authority and power, named *ubuswigala*. A long discussion was needed to induce the chief to unveil it. Only by constantly consulting by glan- [775]
ces the present *amafumu* the chief slowly unveiled it. He told us that

[28] Cf. Fülleborn, p. 381.

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

grubbing for food outside the stable. Old people also eat the meat of apes *(salila*, ape) and of jakal *(ingebe)*. The Nyakyusa men are generally very fond of eating fowl, indeed: "*Wakugana inyama sya inguku*", they are fond of the flesh of fowl. 262 [192]

Bones are usually given to the children for gnawing. Eight to ten boys may be seen sitting in a circle and alternately gnaw on the same bone, often drinking a little milk *(ulukama)* the while.

During a boating on Lake Nyasa I saw the well-known columnar clouds formed by the so-called Kungu-flies in the distance above the surface of the water. These flies are also eaten by the peoples on the shore of the Lake. When these insects come shore-wards they are caught, roasted at home and then eaten. But I was told that sometimes they are also caught and eaten out on the Lake, being squeezed into lumps between the hands. [136] [252]

The Nyakyusa eat with the right hand, but when the meal consists of such food as boiled maize and beans *(ingate)* they also use spoons *(uluiko)* made of folded strips of banana leaves. Nowadays, however, tin spoons and tin plates have come into wide use. The ancient eating mats *(akatefu*, diminutive of *urutefu)* are also being more and more displaced. 264 [412] [178 285]

When the meal is over, the vessels and plates are cleaned with the fingers, bent inward, and then licked off. The mouth is rinsed out with water.

10. Diet. The vegetable diet is roughly the following. The light meal in the morning consists mostly of boiled maize-cobs *(ingate)*, sweet potatoes *(imbatata)*, bananas *(ilitoki*, pl. *amatoki)*, roasted bananas; or, *amawifu*, sweet bananas. The main meal in the evening, shortly before sunset, usually consists of flour porridge *(ikiyindi)*, beans *(indima)*, both often boiled together with maize, peas *(efinyaga)* very often in the form of porridge, maize-corns *(ikirombe)* and groundnuts *(isyabala*, pl. *amasyabala)*. These groundnuts are dried in the sun on mats. Bananas, if dried in the same manner, are usually halved lengthwise and spread out sometimes on banana leaves. I have seen this done in the village of Katunba. Granary stores are very often, e. g. near Utengule (on the border of Nyakyusa and Safwa culture), erected on platforms supported by poles. The container is a big quadrangular basket, roughly three by three meters in length and 1 m in height. The roof has the shape of a large Chinese hat and can be taken off from the lower part of the granary. 262 264 [251] [285 415]

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

343 Also the stables I saw were very clean; their length is adjusted to the number of cattle which are sheltered therein. Sometimes a wooden hoop is to be found in such a stable, hanging down from the ceiling. [25] The inside of the hoop is filled with a wicker-work whose meshes are dense enough to hold fruits to be dried. If such a hoop is hanging in the stable being out of use, a bag made of leaves containing pumpkin seeds *(inyugu)* for later planting may be fastened to it, and on the beams of 233 the framework of the walls you may find a plaited leather neckband *(ulukoba)* for cows destined to hold a cow's bell *(ibangala)*. The sound of the bells of the cattle gave already great delight to the first European visitors of Nyakyusa and Ngonde Land, as we can read with Fotheringham (p. 24): "It is a pretty sight to see the herd coming into villages in the evening, and pleasant to hear the tinkle of the bells which are suspended from their necks, recalling in homely quietude the peaceful scenes of the Swiss."

184 101 The daily life of the Nyakyusa differs more or less among the different ethnic groups which in former times had been independent units. Nowadays, however, all those groups who have similar speech and customs and share, therefore, a progressing common culture, only distinguished by minor local pecularities, are called by the common name "Nyakyusa" (Cf. G. Wilson: An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society. Bantu Studies, Vol. X, 1936, p. 254 f).

Synopsis

080 Verfasser beschreibt in diesem zweiten Bericht die verschiedenen Arbeiten aus dem Alltagsleben der Nyakyusa. Die Betreuung der großen Rinderherden, einschließlich des Melkens, ist Männersache, die Frauen reinigen nur die Ställe. Die Männer behacken die Felder, die Frauen säen, reinigen, ernten und bereiten alle Nahrung zu. Diese Arbeitsteilung fand Verfasser 1939 noch unangetastet, dagegen waren die zahlreichen mit Saat und Ernte verbundenen Zeremonien durch den europäischen Einfluß fast verschwunden. Ebenso war der Verfall der traditionellen Künste und Handwerke weit fortgeschritten durch europäische Einwirkungen wie durch die überall verstreuten indischen Händler als Vermittler der ausländischen Waren. Diese hatten auch die traditionelle Kleidung abgewandelt (als die Europäer kamen, gingen die Eingeborenen noch überwiegend nackt). Die alten geometrischen Muster, die äußere Hüttenwände und Türen schmückten, waren zum Teil mit Zeichnungen von Fahrrädern, Autos, Flugzeugen u. a. durchsetzt. Während früher auch das Alltagsleben der Nyakyusa in deren verschiedenen ethnischen Gruppen deutliche Unterschiede aufwies, sind diese ehemals unabhängigen Einheiten unter den europäischen Einwirkungen mehr und mehr kulturell zusammengewachsen.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

is finished; then the host will offer a greeting, but 234
no further conversation takes place until all the milking is over. Even his wife will not talk to a man milking. And women themselves do not milk as a rule. I was once called to see an old woman who had been terribly mauled by an enraged cow, which she had attempted to milk during her husband's illness. What enraged the cow I do not know, but the Konde believe that it was the sex of the milker, though men also are sometimes injured by enraged animals, usually a cow suckling her first calf.

Milk that is not drunk fresh is put into large pots, [252]
and the milk of five to ten days added day by day. It is covered over very carefully, and eaten, when thick, along with potatoes, bananas, or other food. The whey, which is poured off when the pot is full, is also [757]
drunk for its cathartic properties. The pots, of which a family with a large herd may have up to ten, are thoroughly cleansed after use with boiling water, and then laid on the fire for perfect disinfection. Sometimes the milk is further hardened by being allowed to drip from a closely woven basket for several days, when it becomes hard and slightly tough, with a flavour like that of milk cheese.

I have more than once proved the sustaining quali- 000
ties and pleasant taste of thick milk prepared in the Konde fashion. On one occasion I was separated from my carriers, and, about two in the afternoon, having tramped since six in the morning, I stumbled into a village, and dropped exhausted under a great spreading tree. The chief, observing my exhausted condi-

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

content with maize roasted on a piece of tin, or a few potatoes roasted in the fire. I have known them, too, going perforce for a long time and quite uncomplainingly, without salt, or any kind of relish for their food. For all these drawbacks are fully compensated for when the white man kills game; then they gorge; then the astonishing capacity of the native to take in food is seen at its best, or worst. A friend of mine once, far up in the mountains, killed an eland, and, leaving his men to deal with the carcase, went to his camp. His men kindled a fire at the ndkill, a sat down to feast; when they returned to camp in the early hours of the morning, one man was missing, and his dead body was found where he fell, killed by his own immense greed, aided by a heavy rain which set in during the night.

But while feeding arrangements "on safari" are primitive in the extreme, the ordinary household arrangements are by no means so. The housewife operates with a great variety of pots, baskets, calabashes, and some women are celebrated cooks. A possibly mythical story of olden times tells how two chiefs went to war for the possession of a great woman, who was the wife of one of them, and was widely distinguished for wisdom and sagacity, and for her unusual culinary skill. She was secured by the attacking chief, and lived with him quite happily as his chief wife; an unusual honour, for it is a rule that captured wives never attain to that distinction.

The Konde, like most Bantu peoples, are noisy

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

A few Christian families are beginning to [777] eat *en famille*, but the practice is not looked upon 264 with favour. The open air meal in good weather of course gives way to the meal in the house when it rains.

The far-stretching banana groves in which the 262 villages are hidden indicate one of the favourite foods 252 of the people. There are many kinds of banana, from the tiny "Lady's Fingers" to the great plantains, half an arm long; and they are eaten in almost as many ways. Some are eaten direct from hand to mouth, peeled and corded, for even the small cords which adhere to the fruit after the skin is removed, are meticulously attended to; other kinds are cut up and cooked; some are ground into flour, of which porridge is made, or it is added to the flesh pot to give flavour to the soup.

Maize is cooked in many ways: whole, mashed, or ground; boiled or roasted; mixed with other foods, or alone. The porridge made from maize flour is a greyish sticky-looking mess, wholly repulsive to a white man, and is often eaten without relish of any kind. Cassava, with the poison washed out by three days' soaking in running water, then dried and ground into flour; beans, with the skins removed by parboiling, and pressed between finger and thumb; peas cooked without preparation; potatoes, often eaten with milk; these are main food-stuffs, but very many small herbs are used, especially for seasoning, and some very pleasant dishes are often served up to feed sick and well alike.

3; Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

251 262 Fish provide many a dainty dish. The bulk of the fish caught is half roasted over a slow fire for preservation; and in that condition it will keep for many weeks. A great dainty is the *unsusu* fish, which is roasted and ground to flour, and hung up in grass bags in the roof, to be used as required.

262 252 But the Konde is happiest of all when he has flesh to eat; perhaps because it is a rather uncommon event. His cattle are not primarily for killing; primarily they are wealth stored up and increasing year by year. But he kills when there is a birth or a marriage or a death; for all these are occasions when one must not think of expense; and a number of Christians now hold birthday feasts for their children in addition to the occasions I have named. Generally the meat is preferred "high"; and it is then cooked with banana flour, salt, animal fat, pepper, the latter an Arab introduction. A kind of pie is sometimes made, by cutting the meat into slices, and putting it in layers in a pot, the layers being separated by *mbwiga* leaves, a plant which has a curry-like flavour; and the bottom of the pot is covered with maize to prevent the pie being burned.

251 The Nyakyusa practise a method of preserving flesh which I have not heard of as in use elsewhere, though it may really be quite common. Besides the universal method of roasting the freshly killed meat over a slow fire, there is the running water method. The fresh meat is placed in a sandy patch of running water, and left for about three months; but it may be visited

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

daily for supplies, provided it is again quickly covered 251
up with both sand and flowing water. All this must be done at night lest the hiding-place be revealed to others, and the flesh stolen.

Bread is made of twice-ground maize with salt 252 ●
added. It is kneaded into loaves of about three inches thick, and placed in layers, interleaved with banana leaf, in a pot with maize in the bottom. This bread is often taken on a journey, and will keep for five or six days. Eggs are "scrambled," with milk [177]
and salt, in a broken pot, but this is a European introduction. No young girl will eat hard-boiled eggs; [842]
they produce a snake in the abdomen, which, of course, in turn produces barrenness.

Very unpleasant to our minds are some of the 262
delicious foods the Konde rejoice in: flying ants eaten alive as they are picked up where they fall from their brief honeymoon in the air; crawling white ants, a horrible mass of moving life; the Kungu fly, found on Lake Nyasa, whence it comes ashore in dense clouds, settles on bush and tree, and is shaken off into small baskets, to be taken home and baked into cakes while it is still fresh. In Bundali it is said that some still eat lion's flesh, and once upon a time the crocodile was eaten at Karonga. Sorcerers are accused of [754
devouring human flesh. A new grave is sprinkled 266]
with a powerful medicine which makes the corpse come up without disturbing the soil, and the ghoulish feast is enjoyed without leaving a trace of the deed behind.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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854
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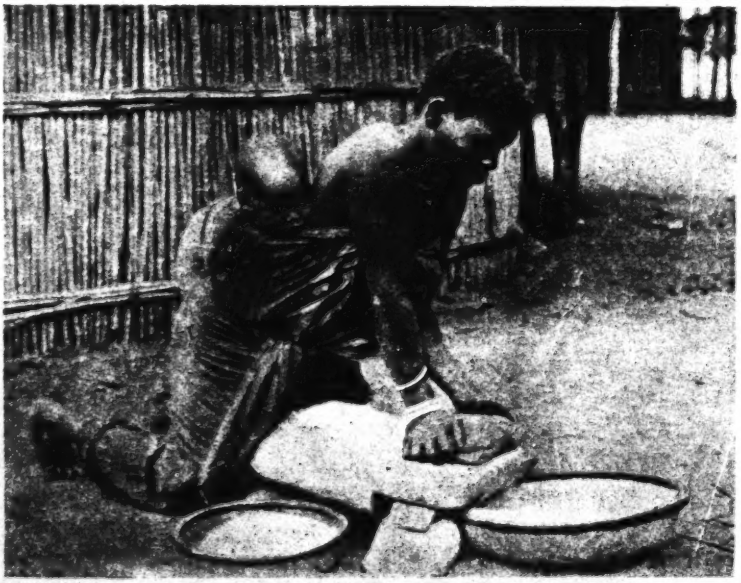

SIFTING.

A turning motion of the basket brings the chaff and dust to the top, and a skilful throw casts it out, leaving the flour, which is now ready for cooking.

GRINDING.

As evening approaches, the rasping sound of stone on stone with the grist between, may be heard all over the village, as the housewives begin to prepare the evening meal. The flour falls into the basket in front, and more grain is taken from the one at the side.

[facing p. 128]

245 Bananas and plantains are grown all over the district except in the highlands to the north and west. Numerous local varieties abound, with a red plantain and the *Sukari* variety of [262 banana as recent introductions, and are used 273] exclusively for food, no beer being made. They are mostly dried and pounded with pestle and [251] mortar to be used as flour, although they are also eaten whole after roasting.

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14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

but I was astonished that this trap was erected relatively near to my 223
tent on the border of the village of Katumba.

6. *Fishing.* Fishing is a much more common practice with the 226
Nyakyusa than hunting. The old-established custom of poisoning fish [324]
in their smaller rivers is still widely used. The poison is derived from the *unkeredu* shrup. Its branches and leaves are broken off, reduced to small pieces between stones and then packed in a covering of grass to resemble a long cigar about 1 meter in length and 25 cm in width. The bundles prepared in such a manner are fixed between two rowes of stones placed across the river for this purpose. The poison gradually diffuses into the water, which takes on a green colour. The fish are soon affected by the poison and rise to the surface with gaping mouths. They are then easily caught with a scoop made from bamboo. The open end of a piece of bamboo is split into several sections and the splinters are bent apart and tied together with raffia to form a sort of funnel[1]. [252]
The fish are strung through their gills on small pliable sticks and roasted at home over a fire. All people are allowed to join in this fishing which to them is always a festive occasion in the cooler season.

Fishing in broader and deeper rivers, such as the lower Kiwira, is done by means of large fish-traps. They are made and repaired by men on the banks of the river. The traps are attached to poles rammed into the bed and almost invariably boats trying to reach the Lake Nyassa get struck on submerged poles. These large fish-traps strung across the river form quite an impressive sight. Looking up-stream, they look like the bows of little ships standing in a row.

7. *Preparing food.* With the Nyakusa the preparation of food is so 252
exclusively the task of the women, that R. Thurnwald ist quite correct 462
when says (Black and White in East Africa, London 1935, p. 157): "Menfolk starve if there are no women to prepare their meals". There is thus a very strong division of labour between the sexes, also noti- [482]
cable in the carrying of loads. For a young man to carry the load of an old woman or his sweetheart, whom perchance he might meet on the road, would be a grave violation of a rigid custom.

As the preparation of the food is the women's duty, also the grinding *(ukutika)* of the corn in a mortar *(ikituli)* with a pestle *(ikitiro)* which is the exclusive task of the female sex. The wife is always the first to [264]
rise in the morning to prepare breakfast. Usually, however, this is not

[1] NB. They are of the same kind as those of the Hottentots along the [171]
Great Fish River in South West Africa.

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

462 ●252 264 very substantial, the main meal being taken in the evening shortly before sunset.

415 [354] *8. Manufacture.* The pot for cooking *(indeku)* is placed on three stones which form the hearth *(ikipembero,* hearth stones). The flat bowl made of clay used for the needs of the kitchen is called *ulwangabia* and a pig pot used for storing water *ingumbe.* The pots of clay 415 439 are manufactured by Kissi women because in their land on the north-eastern shores of Lake Nyassa the best clay is found. In the eastern part of the Nyakyusa country adjacent to Kissi land the women visit the pottery markets of the Kissi, but to the remoter villages, e. g. around the Rungwe volcano the pottery is brought by Kissi men. In this case, owing to the great distance from the Kissi-Land the men carry the loads of eight to ten pots on their head between split poles of bamboo. The Kissi pots I saw in the Rungwe Station were ornamented in [462] a rough way with red ochre and seemed only slightly baked. The [324] hearth stones, however, are made by the Nyakyusa women themselves as I was able to observe near Rutenganio, where widows manufactured them for sale.

285 In many villages of the Nyakyusa I could watch basket-making. This [462] I saw being done by men. In the chief's hut in Katumba I had the opportunity to admire a great number of very big baskets *(ifituba)* for [237] storing grain, smeared with cow dung on the outside. The attractive closely wickered baskets, which are filled with *malesi* (millet) and then [273] placed in water for a night in the process of beer-brewing were originally made by the Buanyi, but nowadays also the Nyakyusa are said to be skilled enough to weave them. I had no opportunity to observe it, but could acquire an excellent specimen of that wicker-work.

264 [515] *9. The Meal.* At the beginning of each meal the hands are washed, including those of children. The men take their meal separately from the women. The wives only eat when their husbands have been satisfied. Boys under ten years eat with their mothers, but as soon as they begin to live in age-set villages, they eat together with their friends of their own age-set, as described in detail by Mr. G. Wilson in his "Introduction of Nyakyusa Society" (Bantu Studies X, p. 271). The head of the family likes to eat together with his friends.

262 Meat is eaten very seldom, but on special occasions such as marriages, death lamentations, christenings of Christianized natives, enormous [192] quantities are devoured. *Inyama* (Swahili: *nyama)* is the Nyakyusa word for all sorts of meat, *ingombe* for that of cattle and *ingambaku* for that of oxen. Near Utengule I saw black pigs *(inguruwe,* pig)

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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The Nyakyusa eat with the right hand, but when the meal consists of such food as boiled maize and beans *(ingate)* they also use spoons *(uluiko)* made of folded strips of banana leaves. Nowadays, however, tin spoons and tin plates have come into wide use. The ancient eating-mats *(akatefu,* diminutive of *urutefu)* are also being more and more displaced. 264 [412] [178 285]

When the meal is over, the vessels and plates are cleaned with the fingers, bent inward, and then licked off. The mouth is rinsed out with water.

10. Diet. The vegetable diet is roughly the following. The light meal in the morning consists mostly of boiled maize-cobs *(ingate),* sweet potatoes *(imbatata),* bananas *(ilitoki,* pl. *amatoki),* roasted bananas; or, *amawifu,* sweet bananas. The main meal in the evening, shortly before sunset, usually consists of flour porridge *(ikiyindi),* beans *(indima),* both often boiled together with maize, peas *(efinyaga)* very often in the form of porridge, maize-corns *(ikirombe)* and groundnuts *(isyabala,* pl. *amasyabala).* These groundnuts are dried in the sun on mats. Bananas, if dried in the same manner, are usually halved lengthwise and spread out sometimes on banana leaves. I have seen this done in the village of Katunba. Granary stores are very often, e. g. near Utengule (on the border of Nyakyusa and Safwa culture), erected on platforms supported by poles. The container is a big quadrangular basket, roughly three by three meters in length and 1 m in height. The roof has the shape of a large Chinese hat and can be taken off from the lower part of the granary. 262 264 [251] [285 415]

243 and Mapiko, although very little of these is sold. Ploughs have been introduced into the area as it is flat and the total number in use in 1942 is about 400. The first ploughing is carried out in June or July when the ground is still wet, and the second ploughing in October to February. Planting, which is all broadcast, is carried out in November to the middle of March and the harvesting is done in May to September.

● 256 A first mill was erected at Ipyana on the lake shore in 1942 with a capacity of 9 tons of rice in 15 hours. Another is now on its way from India with a capacity of 14 tons of rice in 15 hours and should be erected some time in 1944.

248 A small acreage of cotton is also sown along the Songwe River boundary, which borders on Nyasaland, with seed obtained from that Colony. Conditions, however, are not suitable on the remainder of the lake shore and expansion is not encouraged.

241 439 A list of exports from the district with approximate weights for 1942 is appended:—

Article	Weight in tons
	Tons
Mixed beans	550
Coffee	50
Groundnuts	50
Maize..	1,500
Onions	20
European potatoes	200
Rice	1,500
Vegetables	40
Fruit	100
Banana flour	300
Cassava flour	50
Finger millet	150
Tea (European produce)	215
Total ..	4,725

Land Tenure and Economics of the People

423 In theory all land belongs to the chiefs or sub-chiefs, but in practice once a man has cultivated a plot, that plot belongs to him until he leaves the area in which he lives. If he leaves, the land reverts to the chief or sub-chief and may be given by him through his headman or elder to anyone in his area who is short of land or to a newcomer who wants a plot. Should a man go away and return after a long period and ask for a plot, he is bound to be given one but not necessarily the plot he had before he left. Newcomers are welcomed and are given land, as the amount of tax collected in an area is an indication of the importance of a chief.

554 609 651

233 Stock grazing is a problem which is coming more and more to the fore. The number of

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

158 man tells them 'Go there', and then the victim goes; perhaps he says
828 'Run', and then he runs where he is told. Some say that smoke comes out of the ground, rises, and goes to the bush, and that they run to the bush where the smoke ended. They say that the smoke rises from the ground and goes with great speed to the place at which it comes to an end.

And those who run mad say: 'When you fellows catch hold of me and I overcome you though you are many, it is not that I fight alone by myself with my own strength, but there are four men with me who help me. And when you tie me up they help me to loose the rope.'

MWAIKAMBO: A boy of my own age ran mad; when he recovered he told us some of what he had seen in his madness (*mumbepo syake sya kigili*). He said he had seen lots of black cows, all entering the ground, going one by one into a hole; and that he had thereupon become unconscious and run wildly about.

A Christian told me that he had a relative (a non-Christian) who ran mad and who constantly told them how the fit started in him. He said that it was when he saw in the spirit (*mumbepo syake*) a very old person wearing ragged clothes, then he ran mad. The Christian who old me this added that he thought himself that perhaps it was Satan that his kinsman saw.

[261] Those who run mad eat filthy things—mud, cowdung, human faeces, all kinds of frogs and so on. When you ask them about this they say they do not know what they are doing. And they often run about naked.

MWASANILA AND MWALIPOSA (two old men).

Madness takes two forms: one comes from Kyala, one from the ritual. When a man has the madness from Kyala his actions are filthy. He eats filthy things without discrimination, he loses his own sense of humanity and the sense of his friends' humanity also, he loses the sense of his own actions. This is one way of telling that a man has the madness from Kyala. Another way is this: they catch the madman and go to a doctor to treat him with medicines; well, when the doctor gives him the emetic the patient vomits butterflies. When they have made him vomit and given him another medicine too he either recovers altogether or perhaps he goes mad again later. But even if he recovers, his body is different from that of other men, and when he is angry his heart seems to be full of madness again. The madness of Kyala is the most serious.

The madness of ritual is the less serious kind; people who have it do not act in a filthy way. Their madness is like a passionate anger (*ilyojo*), that is all. When you catch such a man and take him to a doctor for the emetic we find no butterflies in the vomit. Again, if he has taken the medicine and recovered, his body is perfectly healthy and it seems as

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

protective powers of the drug are securely transferred to his own stock. 251

A man who does not hoe is held in supreme contempt, but he does not starve. His neighbours give him food, seizing the opportunity to add much sound advice. But lazy men are held in suspicion, for it is highly probable that they will become garden thieves. 577

When there is reason to anticipate a general scarcity of food, the spirits are invited to confirm or dissipate fears. The chief orders a collection of *malesi* (millet) to be made, each village headman bringing the contribution of his people in a small basket. One headman is selected whose wife makes the beer, the behaviour of which indicates the spirit's answer to the question put. The beer is poured into a large calabash, and thence into two cups, which are placed at the *masyeto* (graves of the dead chiefs). There they are left for the night, and if in the morning the beer is found to have risen in the cups, filling them to the top, the harvest will be good; otherwise it will be bad. If the signs are good, all care is cast away, beer is made in great quantities, and drinking and feasting take the place of the previous anxiety. But when the spirits foretell a bad harvest the utmost economy is practised, and the chief is bound to see that no one makes prodigal use of his resources. 261• 787

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER IX

Eating & Drinking

000 WHEN the white man travels he has a number of men who carry his pots and pans, his plates and spoons, and all the paraphernalia of his travelling kitchen. His two dozen or so Konde carriers are well provided for if they have a couple of pots between them, or a piece of tin, usually a flattened-out food tin, on which to roast their maize as they squat chattering round the evening fire. What the white man wants with all that he gives them to carry, they do not know, and are not always interested. I was once seated in a remote village having breakfast, and a very simple breakfast at that; but I heard one of the villagers, numbers of whom were looking on from a distance, ask my boy, "How do you know what to give him next?" What the boy replied I did not hear, but the interest in his operations was great.

261 The carriers take no food for themselves. It is their business to look after the white man; it is his to look after them; and I have always found that if he takes reasonable care to see that they are well fed and bestowed, they will not stint themselves in service to him. If nothing else is obtainable, they will be

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

content with maize roasted on a piece of tin, or a few potatoes roasted in the fire. I have known them, too, going perforce for a long time and quite uncomplainingly, without salt, or any kind of relish for their food. For all these drawbacks are fully compensated for when the white man kills game; then they gorge; then the astonishing capacity of the native to take in food is seen at its best, or worst. A friend of mine once, far up in the mountains, killed an eland, and, leaving his men to deal with the carcase, went to his camp. His men kindled a fire at the ndkill, a sat down to feast; when they returned to camp in the early hours of the morning, one man was missing, and his dead body was found where he fell, killed by his own immense greed, aided by a heavy rain which set in during the night.

But while feeding arrangements "on safari" are primitive in the extreme, the ordinary household arrangements are by no means so. The housewife operates with a great variety of pots, baskets, calabashes, and some women are celebrated cooks. A possibly mythical story of olden times tells how two chiefs went to war for the possession of a great woman, who was the wife of one of them, and was widely distinguished for wisdom and sagacity, and for her unusual culinary skill. She was secured by the attacking chief, and lived with him quite happily as his chief wife; an unusual honour, for it is a rule that captured wives never attain to that distinction.

The Konde, like most Bantu peoples, are noisy

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

driving out all the sorcerers, no one would die of 791
smallpox, but one remaining sorcerer could work 753
unlimited mischief so long as he remained undis- 754
covered.

In a community which practises "subsistence 791
agriculture," it is important to know beforehand 261
when the rains will be late, and it is the duty of the prophets to let the chief know, and through him the people, when this will happen. In such a contingency, the chief issues instructions, varying in minuteness, regulating the kinds of food which are to be used, and warning against greed. Punishment used to follow disregard of the prohibition, but the chiefs, although they still issue orders as before, do not now venture to punish offenders, or at any rate they punish none who would be likely to report them to the Administration.

Famine, however, was not always the result of 731
drought. It was often, in the past, the result of war. When a powerful enemy approached, the people left the villages and took refuge in the bush, sometimes for long periods, leaving all that they could not carry to fall into the hands of the invader. The last occasion on which such a famine was foretold was when the Angoni passed through the land seeking a habitation. The people fled before them, and a famine resulted which is still traditionally remembered. With such a powerful enemy approaching, the prophets had an easy task in foreseeing famine.

The death of chiefs is also foretold. The prophets 622
see in dreams the house of a chief being built in the 787

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

421 543 [261]

"Why with cassava?" I asked "Because the husband thinks of cassava as a security against famine; if a famine comes he takes his *busongo* cassava and gives some to each of his wives."

"And why with bananas?" "Because if he has bananas of his own then when the chief sends the great-commoner round to collect bananas for guests, or to send to the hospital in Tukuyu, the man cuts one of his bananas. He realizes that, as he has two wives, if he takes a banana bunch from one of them she will be angry and wonder why he cut her bunch and not that of her fellow wife."

"So it is only polygynists who keep separate *busongo* bananas?" "Certainly, no monogamist would ever do so."

421 578 593 627

"A man named Mwaisaka," he told me later, "once disputed with his wife over the selling of maize. They had just begun harvesting the crop when the woman told her husband that she intended to take some of the maize to the shops and sell it and buy some cloths; for her child was naked and she had neither cloth nor skin to carry him in on her back, she had to hold him in her arms. Mwaisaka, however, told her to wait a little until all the maize was harvested, when he would divide it up. His wife thereupon protested that the crop was their joint property and that he himself could take some for sale whenever he wished, so why not she also; and she pointed out that many other people had already begun to sell their maize and buy cloths. So they quarrelled and Mwaisaka struck his wife, who then ran complaining to the great-commoner. The great-commoner heard the case and judged that Mwaisaka was in the wrong because his wife had no skin for carrying her baby and was in trouble therefore. If, he said, she had not been in such trouble over carrying the child they would have given their opinion against her for refusing to agree with her husband's proposal to wait and finish harvesting first, but as it was they thought that Mwaisaka was in the wrong; no division of plots or crop had been made and the food was their common property. And Mwaisaka admitted that he was wrong." "Did he pay his wife any compensation for the blow?" I asked. "No, they reconciled them to one another."

421 578 593

"And if a man," I enquired further, "takes some of the food which belongs to himself and his wife jointly and sells it without telling her, will she make a case against him?" "She may, but if she is a gentle wife she argues it out alone with her husband; she asks him why he did not consult her, for there is now but little left and she wonders what they will eat. And her husband, if he is a sensible man, agrees with her and admits that he was in fault. But if, instead, the man makes out that he had every right to take it, for the food is as much his as hers, and if he is indignant at her protest then that attitude will bring a quarrel between them."

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

231 try, and Lugard speaks of 'enormous herds' in 1888[1] which a rinderpest epidemic decimated in 1892.[2] A few Kukwe keep one or two sheep, but we saw no goats at all in Rungwe district,[3] and neither sheep nor goats figure in ritual: cattle and fowls provide flesh for sacrifice. Every woman keeps fowls, as every man seeks to own cattle.

262 With curds and meat from their cattle, with fowls, fish, bananas, grain, pulses, roots and curcurbits, as well as bean tops and pumpkin tops, and—less generally—fruit, the Nyakyusa are exceptionally well fed. Since the dry season is so short and two crops of maize and pulses are grown in the year, there are no 'hunger months' such as the Bemba and many other African [131] peoples experience. Shortages and famine occur, but rarely. All the early travellers comment on the quantities of food available in Nyakyusa country.[4]

c. Relations with the outside world

131 Perhaps the most significant fact in the history of the Nyakyusa is their long isolation, which is mainly the result of their geo- 171 graphical position. Surrounded on three sides by high mountains, and on the fourth by the stormy head waters of the Lake,[5] the district was largely cut off from the outside world. Slave caravans passed to the north, the west, and the south, but never through Nyakyusa country; and though they were repeatedly attacked by the Sangu, who are said to have raided as far as the Nyasa plain,[6] and several times by the Ngoni, the Nyakyusa repulsed both peoples. Certain of the Kukwe chiefs were forced for a period to pay tribute to the Sangu chief, Merere; but according to their own account none did so for long, and some never paid at all. Kerr-Cross comments on the contrast before 1890 between the unfortified villages of the Nyakyusa and Ndali, and those of the Lambya and Nyika, who, living in open country and harried

[1] Lugard, op. cit., p. 131.
[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa* (1897), p. 430; D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., p. 119.
[3] Fetheringham, op. cit., pp. 1, 23, mentions goats in Ngonde.
[4] See especially, Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 268, 274; Lugard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 131.
[5] In 1946 a Lake steamer, the *Vijya*, sank in a storm near Karonga with heavy loss of life.
[6] Kerr Cross, op. cit., pp. 119–20.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

231 find the cleaning of byres in which many cattle are stalled, very
476 arduous. A pagan who has many cattle always has more than one wife.

Thus, herding together was traditionally, and still is, one of the main common activities of neighbours in a village; most cattle are herded with those of neighbours, but there is a measure of co-operation with relatives and personal friends of other villages. It is likely that the practice of placing cattle with friends of other villages is becoming more common.

e. Hunting and fishing

224 From the point of view of village co-operation, hunting and
226 fishing are relatively unimportant, for, in the first place, game and
●262 fish provide the Nyakyusa with prized foods to eat as relish with
476 the staple bananas, roots, and cereals, rather than with main items of diet; and secondly, hunting and fishing are not primarily village enterprises.

226 Most fishing is done by men, individually, each keeping his own catch; but groups of herd-boys or young men sometimes co-operate to divert a branch of a stream temporarily, so that they may tickle the fish stranded in the shallow pools. They choose a place where a stream divides naturally, and block one channel with stones; but such enterprises are on a small scale. Periodically however, when fish were plentiful, communal fishing was organized during the dry season. The seeds of a certain legume, grown for the purpose, were thrown into the river to stupefy the fish. Men, women, and children waited some way down the stream with hand-nets, and when, an hour or two after the poison had been put in, the fish began to float down stupefied, they were easily netted. The poisoning was organized by the chief and village headmen and all the villages of the chiefdom participated, as well as those from neighbouring chiefdoms, when their chiefs were on good terms. Friends naturally went together, but the various villages did not act as separate units as they do in a communal hunt. Communal fishing never occurred regularly, for if fish were scarce the chief might forbid it for a number of years, and it is now rare, since poisoning the rivers has been forbidden by the Administration. We heard of only one such fishing during our stay in Nyakyusa country.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

16. THINGS ASSOCIATED WITH WITCHCRAFT

Mwaisumo (clerk).

1. 'Bestiality. This is associated with witchcraft (*sya bu losi*) because, it is said, witches eat the flesh of human beings which an ordinary person does not eat—ordinary people all avoid human flesh. One who has intercourse with an animal, a thing which an ordinary person does not do but avoids, is like one who eats human flesh.' 754 839

2. 'Intercourse with a very young girl. This is associated with witchcraft because no one desires it, only this person' (i.e. such a desire is abnormal).

3. 'Intercourse with a very old woman. This is associated with witchcraft because no one desires old women.'

4. 'Intercourse between a grown man and a boy. This is associated with witchcraft because grown men always desire women.' 754 838

In reply to a question: 'No, it never happens that two grown men lie together, but youths do. That is not associated with witchcraft; that is adolescence.'

5. 'If a woman takes something very dirty (such as excrement) and puts it on her husband's bed, or in his food, because she hates him, that is associated with witchcraft because it is very, very dirty. No one (normal) does such a thing.' 754

In reply to a question: 'No, if children play with excrement, that is not associated with witchcraft.'

6. 'In Selya we do not eat the meat of a leopard though in Kukwe country they do. If a Selya man tastes it people say: "How can he eat leopard meat which no one eats? It's like witchcraft." Leopard meat is forbidden because leopards kill and eat people. 754 262

'So with the meat of a dog or rat or monkey. A dog is not eaten because it's our friend—a person—and a monkey is a person.'

[p.225]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

765 *iselya*); and it is wrapped in a leaf (of the same species as the
768 flower) which represents a blanket. The symbolism is interpreted
796 in terms of the habit of growth. A trunk of plantain or sweet banana flowers and fruits only once, then dies and is pruned away, being replaced by a sucker from the same root, hence the association between the flower and the corpse. *Ilitoki* is a large variety of [262] plantain, eaten when it is green and hard; *injali* is a smallish banana eaten when it is ripe and sweet, and it takes nine months to develop. 'When an *injali* stem forms and a woman conceives a child at the same time, the bananas will be ripe and the woman bear her child together.' No one hesitated about this identification of plantain with male, sweet banana with female; it is as obvious in Nyakyusa as the associations of 'breeches' and 'petticoats' in English.

765 The officiant sprinkles a powdered medicine on to the earth of the grave and all the participants (that is, the heirs, widows, children, and certain siblings of the deceased) rub themselves in it. They rub forehead, right elbow, right knee, and right toe in the pile of earth. Only chiefs and their close relatives and twins refrain, for they have been drinking medicines, and such close contact with a corpse would 'spoil their medicine': 'The medicine would go rotten if they touched the grave which contains medicine,' so the chief's forehead, etc., must not touch the grave. He merely touches the earth with a finger-tip.

783 Having touched the earth, all the participants go to wash in a stream, and when they return they wash again ritually in the
765 doorway of the mourning hut, the doctor pouring out medicated water from a small calabash and each participant catching the water in his hands and rubbing them and his mouth and knees with it. Then they oil themselves. Until this ritual they must remain dirty and dishevelled with the mud and ash of mourning on them, and any who steal away to wash are fined by the other relatives.

765 Next the officiant takes roasted bananas and sticks into each one or more pumpkin-pips (*inyungu*) and one or more lentils (*inandala*).[1] She half-buries these in the earth at the doorway of the hut, or sits in the doorway holding a banana near the ground, and each participant approaches in turn and stoops and bites off the banana, and eats it.

The *ulufumbo* (the litter of dry banana leaves on which the

[1] Some also add cowpeas (*imbange*), others oil-seeds (*inyemba*).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

birth but they commonly say: 'This illness has come from Kyala, in the ritual we drive away Kyala (*tukunkaga Kyala*).' 845

MWANDISI (asked about the meaning of the phrase 'War has come' in relation to twin birth): It means the war of Kyala, of the twins, the illness. We bring out Kyala. Let him get out of the body, Kyala has caught hold of him, has brooded over him, has given him twins. 'Go out therefore! (*Soka panja lelo*).' At first he was taboo. Kyala was in the house; he could not come out. So then we bring him out, saying: 'We have fought the war there, he has come out.'

NJOBAKOSA (another elderly man—also said that the ritual was to to 'drive off Kyala'): He [the father of twins] comes out, he takes a spear and shield and runs, and we run. One snatches up a shield, and another, and another. Then we give each other beer to drink, and food, and meat, snatching it from one another; we drive off Kyala. When the father of twins comes out of the hut we say: 'You hit us!' He replies: 'I am innocent (*mwelu*, lit. white) because he has been black (*ntitu*) on account of having twins.'

MWANDISI: If the ritual is not completed [i.e. if copulation does not take place], then they go to divine. It is said: 'The shades are angry.' Are the shades not with Kyala?

ANGOMBWIKE: I remember when I was a child, when I had one younger brother who was just beginning to walk, my father had twins. I remember the people sitting round the beer praying that his first ritual copulation should be successful. They began with Mbasi. 'You, Mbasi,[1] support us! (*Gwe Mbasi utwemele*). You, Kyala, support us!' Then they came to the shades. And I have heard that they always said both Mbasi and Kyala but began with Mbasi.

The parents of twins have been singled out by Kyala or Mbasi and therefore remain somewhat fearful all their lives. Angombwike said:

The parent of twins (*umwipasya*) seems like a great person (*alete mundu fijo*), he is not like us, his relatives. See, he has gained two people, he is the child of Mbasi, he is with Kyala, he has seen Kyala. You know that pagans do not eat twin bananas, they fear, saying: 'These are twins (*mapasa*).' They give them to small children. (What I speak of is Nyakyusa custom, not the custom of the baptized.) And the parents of twins (*abipasya*) do not eat the bananas on the sides of the bunch, only those in the middle. When a girl has brought a bunch of bananas to them in the temporary hut . . . they say to her: 'Take away those at the sides,' and she takes away here one, and there one. [262]

[1] There were hints of some special connection between the hero Mbasi and twins (*amapasa*), the elder of whom is *Mbasa*. The younger twin is *Musindeka*, the following child is *Syula*, the next *Kumba*, and the next *Kumbulilu*. [551]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Farewell to Mwampiki 2/4/37

764 184 Women began to wail about 9 a.m. I saw some arrive with bananas. They stopped wailing after ten minutes or so. Imilanwa (Mwaisalwa) was present. Mwaijumba had not yet come. I met Kakuju on the way. He had not yet been told of the ritual. Mbapa and Maleja (widows of Mwalingo) did most of the work, with Ijumba, widow of Mwampiki. Isalwa sat near and watched while Maleja ground up the ointment. Seeds for making ointment were put on the fire. This was the ointment for anointing oneself in the ritual. Beans were brought in a flat basket. 'We mourn', they said, 'with bean mash and the meat of a cow.'

There was some discussion about killing the cow and a dispute between Imilanwa and Simeni. Just as the cow was about to be killed a woman came and made them bring it to the side of the swept court [262] away from the graves. 'If you kill it near the father-in-law's grave the wives will fear to eat the meat.' The cow was killed by Imilanwa. He then called the men of the family to discuss whether or not they should kill a bull also. One had been sent by the Chief Mwaipopo who is 'our son-in-law. He married a daughter of Maleja'. Imilanwa said: 'Let us kill it,' and they agreed. Only thirteen men were present so far.

[171 177] The meat from the fork of the right foreleg (*ija mmapa*) was taken to eat with the mash. This is a Sangu not a Nyakyusa custom. The men of the family follow the Sangu custom. The women, daughters of Sangu, do likewise, and the women who are wives of Sangu, but the children of daughters who are married to Nyakyusa men from Selya do the Selya custom. If the daughter of a Sangu marries a Selya man then, if her father dies, she does the Sangu ritual at his place, but if her husband dies she does the Selya ritual at his place even if she has borne him no children, and even if she is herself a child or an infant who has not yet been to him. But her children always do the Selya ritual both at their father's home and at their mother's.

The burying of the banana flower and rubbing in earth is a Selya custom and is only done by the children of Selya men. I saw five or six children do it. Then more children came to rub in earth. One was under instruction at the mission. The women told him to rub himself but Mwaijumba broke in: 'If he is a Christian he ought not to perform the ritual.' 'He's under instruction.' 'Very well, he does not perform the ritual, for a Christian should not have two gods (*ba Kyala babili*).' The bull was killed a little way off among the bananas. Mwaijumba explained: 'It is just for meat, it's not for the ritual, the further off one. Christians will eat it.'

Shaving of the sprouting hair *Record of Mwaikambo, 22/4/37*

First the men and women began drinking beer separately. Then they began the ritual. They went to the grave with beer in a small calabash.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

A few Christian families are beginning to [177] eat *en famille*, but the practice is not looked upon 264 with favour. The open air meal in good weather of course gives way to the meal in the house when it rains.

The far-stretching banana groves in which the 262 villages are hidden indicate one of the favourite foods 252 of the people. There are many kinds of banana, from the tiny "Lady's Fingers" to the great plantains, half an arm long; and they are eaten in almost as many ways. Some are eaten direct from hand to mouth, peeled and corded, for even the small cords which adhere to the fruit after the skin is removed, are meticulously attended to; other kinds are cut up and cooked; some are ground into flour, of which porridge is made, or it is added to the flesh pot to give flavour to the soup.

Maize is cooked in many ways: whole, mashed, or ground; boiled or roasted; mixed with other foods, or alone. The porridge made from maize flour is a greyish sticky-looking mess, wholly repulsive to a white man, and is often eaten without relish of any kind. Cassava, with the poison washed out by three days' soaking in running water, then dried and ground into flour; beans, with the skins removed by parboiling, and pressed between finger and thumb; peas cooked without preparation; potatoes, often eaten with milk; these are main food-stuffs, but very many small herbs are used, especially for seasoning, and some very pleasant dishes are often served up to feed sick and well alike.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

251 Fish provide many a dainty dish. The bulk of the
262 fish caught is half roasted over a slow fire for preservation; and in that condition it will keep for many weeks. A great dainty is the *unsusu* fish, which is roasted and ground to flour, and hung up in grass bags in the roof, to be used as required.

262 But the Konde is happiest of all when he has flesh
252 to eat; perhaps because it is a rather uncommon event. His cattle are not primarily for killing; primarily they are wealth stored up and increasing year by year. But he kills when there is a birth or a marriage or a death; for all these are occasions when one must not think of expense; and a number of Christians now hold birthday feasts for their children in addition to the occasions I have named. Generally the meat is preferred "high"; and it is then cooked with banana flour, salt, animal fat, pepper, the latter an Arab introduction. A kind of pie is sometimes made, by cutting the meat into slices, and putting it in layers in a pot, the layers being separated by *mbwiga* leaves, a plant which has a curry-like flavour; and the bottom of the pot is covered with maize to prevent the pie being burned.

251 The Nyakyusa practise a method of preserving flesh which I have not heard of as in use elsewhere, though it may really be quite common. Besides the universal method of roasting the freshly killed meat over a slow fire, there is the running water method. The fresh meat is placed in a sandy patch of running water, and left for about three months; but it may be visited

FN17 Ngonde FN17

daily for supplies, provided it is again quickly covered 251
up with both sand and flowing water. All this must be done at night lest the hiding-place be revealed to others, and the flesh stolen.

Bread is made of twice-ground maize with salt 252
added. It is kneaded into loaves of about three inches thick, and placed in layers, interleaved with banana leaf, in a pot with maize in the bottom. This bread is often taken on a journey, and will keep for five or six days. Eggs are "scrambled," with milk [177]
and salt, in a broken pot, but this is a European introduction. No young girl will eat hard-boiled eggs; [842]
they produce a snake in the abdomen, which, of course, in turn produces barrenness.

Very unpleasant to our minds are some of the 262
delicious foods the Konde rejoice in: flying ants eaten alive as they are picked up where they fall from their brief honeymoon in the air; crawling white ants, a horrible mass of moving life; the Kungu fly, found on Lake Nyasa, whence it comes ashore in dense clouds, settles on bush and tree, and is shaken off into small baskets, to be taken home and baked into cakes while it is still fresh. In Bundali it is said that some still eat lion's flesh, and once upon a time the crocodile was eaten at Karonga. Sorcerers are accused of [754
devouring human flesh. A new grave is sprinkled 266]
with a powerful medicine which makes the corpse come up without disturbing the soil, and the ghoulish feast is enjoyed without leaving a trace of the deed behind.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•262 To-day there are many, even among the heathen, who say grace before food; only the older men now follow the ancient custom of laying aside a small portion of every meal for the spirits. But there are many superstitions nevertheless among young and old. There is a family at Itete which eats neither flesh nor fish, nor ground nuts, any of which cause violent vomiting. Others will eat fish but not flesh, and *vice*
262 *versa*. Eland and bushbuck bring on leprosy in some
753 families; goat brings ringworm; rhinoceros gives people a white skin; and hippo is very dangerous in the neighbourhood of lepers; for lepers are buried in ant-hills, but they soon remove and betake themselves to the water, and enter the body of a hippo; so, if you eat hippo, you may be eating leper! Nyakyusa women will not eat a fowl, for fowls in the night cry out the names of ancestors! But a cock which gives a faint cry in the early morning is quite safe. There are many who have abandoned all these beliefs, but the vast majority of the people still cling to them.

273 ·*Drinking.*—Beer is drink for men and gods; or if not for gods, it is a drink urgently demanded by the spirits. With few exceptions, it is offered at all religious ceremonies, but there is no special way of making the beer for the offering; it differs from ordinary beer only in that the cereal (*malesi*) from which it is made is contributed by all the people, while that used at an ordinary feast is made from *malesi* provided by the entertainer. Even at these feasts, however, a little is spilled on the ground

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 breasts, sit on a tree near the house; if *mwanjala*,
[825] little black and white birds of another species, hop about twittering; the approach of strangers is fore-
[574] told. Hospitality to strangers is a primary virtue among the Konde, and food is prepared at once; but
[576] it is not cooked until they actually arrive. To offer them food already cooked, is to offer a cold welcome, and possibly to do an injury; for cold food must not be eaten by chiefs, nor by hunters, nor by doctors, for in all these cases the effect would be to destroy the power of the medicines by virtue of which they are assured of success in their various callings.

787 5. Omens having reference to food are numerous, and a few examples must suffice. If a fly goes into
262 one's mouth, it is a sure sign that the person will soon be eating flesh, a rare treat for the Konde, who seldom eat flesh, unless there is an occasion for it: a birth, a marriage, or a death. But the fly indicates none of these; the flesh hinted at is a pure gift with no kind of condition attached. The same good fortune is suggested if a child eats cinders from the fire-place. A leopard crying all night in the neighbourhood is giving information that some one has broken a food prohibition. New season's food has been eaten before the chief has laid an offering of the first-fruits of that particular food-stuff at the grave of his ancestors, and the dwellers in the underworld are angry at the insult offered them. The chief is informed of the crying of the leopard, and the diviner is called in to find the culprit.

787 There is a common grass called *ditika*, which in

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

128 as they do, in their behaviour and their mutual relationships to a common type. Space forbids such an undertaking here; and it is necessary to emphasize that, although the most significant facts are described in an orderly manner, and although certain reasons for these facts are indicated in their specific character and in their connections with one another, yet these reasons are not fully or systematically worked out, and the result is a description which leaves the facts only half-explained. And, in so far as this society is not here fully analyzed, so it is not yet fully comparable with others. The reader of this paper will detect many points of similarity and of difference between Nyakyusa society and some other with which he is familiar, but the comparison cannot be made to yield any propositions about the nature of human societies in general until the facts of both have been fully explained in terms of their particular social, cultural, and external conditions.

Climate, Cultural Groups, and European Contact.

101 131 133 The Nyakyusa live in the Rungwe District of South Tanganyika in the Rift Valley at the head of Lake Nyasa. The valley is dominated and closed at its North end by the recently extinct Rungwe volcano, from whose foot the land, starting as an upland plateau 5,000 ft. above sea-level, tumbles southwards for twenty-five miles in a broken cascade of hills, to level out in a plain fifteen or twenty miles from Lake Nyasa. The Lake is 1200 ft. above the sea. The East wall of the Rift rises to 10,000 ft. or more in the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains, but the West wall is two [132] or three thousand feet lower. The climate is very wet, for about 130″ of rain fall each year, and, at 9° South of the Equator, is also very hot. [16 73] The rain and the sun together make the land extremely fertile; the district is thickly populated (over 100 to the square mile), famine is rare and the Nyakyusa are far better fed than most of their neighbours. Rice 177 241 was introduced into the plain by Arabs, coffee by the German Missionaries in the hills, and these two crops to-day, under the enthusiastic care and guidance of the Government Agricultural Department, bring to many Nyakyusa a small but steadily increasing cash income.

262 241 Their main foods are bananas, maize, beans, sweet potatoes and a variety of greenstuffs, together with meat and curds from their cattle. Millet is extensively grown and is used both for making beer and for eating in the form of porridge.

101 The name *Nyakyusa* is nowadays used by themselves as a general name for all those who have similar speech and customs and who live in Tanganyika; but formerly it only covered those who live in the South of the district, in the plain and up in the hills as far North as the administra-

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 others as well. Any boys' village is found to consist primarily of the
561 sons of the members of some older village who originally gave the land for its building, but as we shall see later sons of other villages live there too.

621 At the beginning, when a group of boys starts a new age-village, or
342 when boys join one already formed, they do not all have a hut to themselves, two or three friends share a hut. But later, as they grow older, each builds for himself. The younger ones build their huts of reeds, but the older ones try to get a few bamboos from their fathers or senior relatives and build more solid houses. Married men build entirely of bamboo, but often in a boys' village you will find a compromise between bamboo and reed, both being used in the same house; and the houses of bachelors, even though they be all of bamboo, are smaller than those of married men. The technique of good building is not very difficult, and the older boys instruct and help their juniors, as they join the village, to improve the skill playfully acquired as herd-boys so as to build more substantial huts.

245 The chief food of the Nyakyusa is the banana; men plant bananas
262 immediately round their huts, though their fields are mostly at a distance. And bachelors, while they continue to eat their main meals at their parents' village, plant bananas round their own huts as well. Bananas begin to bear very quickly, sometimes within a year of planting, and so, soon after the establishment of a boys' village, its members have bananas of their own, which they cook for themselves and eat with their friends at odd times during the day. But they have as yet no fields.

864 There is no formal initiation of boys at puberty; but, on the other
[881] hand, the custom of leaving home and joining a boys' village is directly
577 connected by the Nyakyusa with their ideas of decency in sexual life. They think it is perfectly all right to discuss sex openly among friends of about the same age but altogether wrong to discuss it either in the presence of, or with, their parents or those of their parents' generation. If a boy learns about love-making, in any way, from his parents the Nyakyusa think that he will not respect them properly and that he himself will be a fool. A boy must learn these things from his immediate seniors and friends. One man said to me: "If a boy after about ten years old stays at home to sleep, he is laughed at by his friends and his own parents send him away. They say: 'If he sleeps at home he will hear what his parents talk about at night, the night is always full of lewd talk; and he may even see them undressing. He will grow up a fool, with little wisdom.' You see at the boys' village" he went on to say, "the older

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Here is your cow, your food. We pray to Kyala. May theft go away. Give us food and beans and millet, may we eat and be satisfied. . . . It is said that the sweet potatoes are scarce now, help us. You Mwakabule (117), Mwakomo (112). . . . This is your cow Mwaijonga (82). This is your meat. I shall seek another also which we shall give you like this.

NGULYO: May the locusts go away. It is you who have caused theft because there is hunger.

KISSOGOTA: At night since we eat scraps of food our bellies are disquieted . . . may we be satisfied. People are eating millet porridge;[1] when food is plentiful they say it's horrible. When someone eats millet porridge he dies, it kills a man. We pray to him, this Kyala, because we do not know him, so we say: 'You Mwaijonga (82) drive away the hunger. Give all of us, Mwaipopo's people, food, and hear us all.'

Mwaipopo's young sons (not the older ones) ate the rest of the sacred meat (*vide* plate 8). Other boys who approached were chased away: 'They thought because their friends were getting meat they would too.' Then the remainder of the carcass was divided: two legs went to the chiefs, two to the commoners, the chine to Kasitile, the breast to Mwaipopo (the chief) who gave half to his sons and half to his daughters—his wives may not eat it. The head went to the priests Ngulyo and his fellows—and some entrails were sent to Seba, widow of Mwaijonga (82). There was some discussion about the disposal of the head: 'Let it be put in Ngulyo's house', they said. Mwaipopo commenting later, explained:

We leave the head in the house of a commoner near the sacred grove in order that the shades can come and eat it. So also with the chine. . . . Kasitile leaves it so that his shades may eat it. We throw the meat by a tree which was planted long ago. He whom we have buried looks towards it, he sits facing the tree and the meat is thrown beside it.[2] He sees the meat we throw. We offer the meat of the upper forelegs (*ijammapa*), this is the sacred meat, the rest we eat ourselves. The blood pours out on to the ground, it goes beneath, which means that the owners, the shades, receive it, because they are beneath. The shades say: 'We are angry because you have not given us cows to treat the grove, we are angry and send this hunger. Treat the grove frequently!'

Kasitile also discussed the ritual with us later and he remarked:

[1] Millet is ordinarily used only for brewing beer. The Nyakyusa regard millet porridge as very distasteful and eat it only during extreme scarcity.

[2] We omitted to ask why, in this case, a hut had not been built in the grove.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Mwandisi made a great deal of the fact that at the 'throwing out of the rubbish' the village headmen ate meat *raw*. 783 796

Formerly . . . we threw away the ashes and charred brands . . . that is to drive away the shades who warm themselves over the hearth in the house; they bring us sickness, let them warm themselves over there in the long grass! Also in the long grass there we killed meat, and the priests ate it *raw*: no one saw them doing that there in the long grass; we went by day with drums, people from all the homesteads, a moving multitude . . . then we came home . . . the priests remained with their wives, they threw away their bark-cloths, they cut off morsels of meat and ate them raw. Because the priests are witches it is they who ate raw meat before we chiefs came, the priests are witches. . . . The witches and shades gather and bring sickness together, we kill a cow in the grove, we drive them away. No, they do not eat raw meat in the grove, they cook it. But at the capital if the chief has killed a cow for men to eat the priests eat meat raw. We have seen them. I, Mwandisi, have seen Mwajole and Kalambo the senior village headmen eating raw meat at my place and my wives have seen them also. [262] [753] [793]

'Yes', said one of his wives, 'we saw them and we ran away saying: "Well! Fancy doing it *openly*!" ' Mwandisi continued:

The senior village headmen are witches, children of those who ate raw food long ago. Some village headmen only rush to eat a cow we have killed, but some go to eat a person; those are the witches who eat raw meat! [754]

The function of a chief is to feed his men on beef, and in doing so he placates the witches who are commoners and who, like their forefathers, prefer their meat raw. If they do not get beef then the witches eat men.[1] [643]

(c) SMALLPOX

The prayer and 'clearing out of the rubbish', traditionally celebrated before an approaching epidemic, was described by an elderly Christian, Fibombe. It illustrates very clearly the combination of practical precaution—isolation—and magical protection, and also the idea that sickness was brought into the country by witches. 783 796 753

When the chief had heard that smallpox was coming, or dysentery, he said, 'Let us pray'. Before my baptism I saw it, in the country of the

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 92-4.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 them first, then his grandfather, and father. Others told us that
778 rain stones always came from Kisi country, a very wet strip of land on the north-east shore of the Lake where the clouds always seem to gather when one looks south from the Nyakyusa valley and plain, and a piece of perforated wood used in Ngonde for making rain came from the hills of Misuku, also a very wet country. Kasitile's stones were of two types, but no direct association of male and female was made. However, the Kukwe spoke of a 'mother' stone having young. 'The rain-maker puts back the stone in the potsherd without water (after rain has come) and going later he finds that it has got young, perhaps seven, with the mother there are eight.'

The rain-makers are subject to certain taboos: during the dry
791 season they may not wash lest they drive away the rain nor do they
[784] shave for 'they compare hair and clouds saying, "Let it be black", they compare a bald pate with sunshine.' And the rain-maker
● [262] may not eat roasted maize 'for as the maize crackles in the potsherd when it is roasted, so the thunder will crackle in the sky'. He may not eat green maize (which is reaped during the rains) until the dry weather begins 'because he creates rain, which means he creates all the food which grows with the rain'. If he begins eating too soon he may stop the growth. And when the rain-maker is manipulating his instruments a sex taboo is observed.
[834] 'When I am making rain,' said Kasitile, 'I do not sleep with my wives for two days, it's taboo. How would Kyala help us if I did?'

In theory the rain-maker always works under the direction of
[643] the political authority—the Kyungu or a chief—but he is also thought to wreak vengeance on those who anger him. Kasitile was critical of his colleague in the hills above Isumba: 'He never makes a nice gentle rain, it always destroys food. . . . He is always demanding things from men, and, if they refuse, he brings his rain to destroy things. . . . There is a very strong wind and heavy
[464] rain which takes roofs off homes.' But when Kasitile himself was
[687] angry, because his son was taken as a tax defaulter to work on the roads, the weather grew bad.

789 People say I am angry, that this rain is because they came and beat me because of tax. This time the tax collectors came to my place and beat me and when I thought, 'It is not the custom with our forefathers for the tax collectors to come at all to men like me', I grew angry and prayed. . . . When I was in MuNgonde the country suffered from hunger, all their children were in trouble. . . . Then I came up, and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

753 and achievement. An account of the treatment of a field for
578 protection against wild pig emphasizes this.

If people wish to protect a crop from wild pig they go to a doctor to
789 ask for medicine. When he gives it to them he tells them that there
241 must be no quarrelling in the home after they have barricaded the
[689] field. Four women go to the field with the husband of the one who cultivates it. They go after sunset. One women is shaved; her head is a symbol of the garden devastated by pig. A second woman, who keeps
[302] her hair, has a head-pad on her head and carries bananas with medicine. She enters the field and eats the bananas. The husband climbs a hill at a little distance, and two of the women go into the long grass close to the field. The bald pate twists a head-pad and the one with hair smears it with medicine and as they do so they look towards their
[831] husband and abuse him saying, 'You lay with your mother', and he swears at them saying, 'The leather aprons of your fathers' . . . and many other insults. Then the women walk round the edge of the field, sprinkling medicines, and they go out the way they came in. The circular pad is a symbol of the barricade placed round the field. When
[262] they return home they do not eat but go to sleep hungry (though the clever ones eat beforehand). If they quarrel, the pig finishes the food. It is as if quarrelling destroyed the fierceness, the power, of the protective medicine; you must put aside all quarrelling that the medicine may be powerful. If the pigs come it is as if there were a quarrel, so the woman and her husband quarrel in the field mimicking the pig. The husband on the hill is like the pig approaching the field, his wives in the long grass also represent pigs. . . . The husband and his wives quarrel only in the field. If, when the maize is ripe, the husband beats one of his wives for any cause she does not go to pick the maize herself, a friend picks it for her. If she goes in her anger she finds the maize finished, nothing but earth is left.

789 Here the link between medicines and morality is made plain.
689 Quarrelling weakens medicines of all sorts and renders them ineffective. But a mimic quarrel between husband and wives in the fields renders the medicine effective. It represents the battle between the pig and the medicines. There is a suggestion else-
[775] where (pp. 69, 113) that pigs are *sent* by the shades when kinsmen or neighbours quarrel, but in the account just quoted it is implied that quarrelling in the home directly injures the medicine.

278 In themselves, many medicines are neutral. They may be
754 put to good or evil ends, but because they are mysterious and
789 powerful, they are feared, in the same sort of way as atomic energy is feared in contemporary society. Men use medicines themselves 'for purely peaceful purposes', but they are shocked at

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The negative rituals—the taboos which surround the pro- 797x
creative functions—disappear rather slowly, but a Christian 795x
father will enter his wife's hut to greet her after she has given [834]
birth to a child, and will eat food cooked by her a week or two
later, which the pagans think extremely rash. An atmosphere of [262]
scepticism and experiment begins to develop; a few Christians
spoke of breaking even the deeply-entrenched taboos surrounding
menstruation 'to see what happened'. But that many Christians,
especially women, feared the old taboos was apparent when one [606]
watched the behaviour of Christian daughters-in-law towards
their fathers-in-law. In theory Christians disregarded the rules of
avoidance if their fathers-in-law are Christian, or avoid 'only a
little', but in practice a Christian woman is usually embarrassed
and fearful if, by mischance, she meets her father-in-law face to
face.[1]

Christians withdraw from the pagan communal rituals even [796]
more completely than they do from the rituals of kinship. No
Christian takes any part in the sacrifices to the heroes, or at the
groves of chiefs, or in cleansing the country, or in rain-making,
or sprinkling the homesteads. As for the ritual of chieftainship,
from that also Christians withdraw. At the time we were first in
BuNyakyusa only two chiefs were professing Christians, one of
whom was already baptized before his installation. The 'coming
out' performed for him was much curtailed since he refused to
use the traditional medicines and, because of the difficulty over
medicines, Christians were not acceptable as village headmen. In
Ngonde, where the proportion of Christians was much greater,
there were Christian headmen and chiefs, but the ritual of
'coming out' had disappeared altogether, and the Kyungu had
delegated the celebration of all pagan rituals to one of his coun-
cillors who still believed in them, he himself being a sceptic.

There are tales of the early missionaries visiting the groves to [177]
challenge pagan belief. The pagans believe that they were
confounded and some of the more conservative Christians also
think that the terror of the grove drove the Reverend — Jauer
from Lubaga (*vide supra*, p. 29) and that *because* the Reverend —
Kleus summoned the teachers and school children to a feast in the
grove of Mbyanga, and killed 'a black cow' for them there, a
season of plenty followed. 'Many people said: "He seems to have [778]
been advised by someone, why did he go to Mbyanga and sing

[1] For an account of such a meeting, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 84-5.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

x 797 by immersion and were strict about not eating the flesh of animals
x 795 without a cloven hoof, and avoiding beer, but made a point of not being sabbatarian and working in their fields on Sundays—
[852] these were the things they emphasized to us. They were also
[262] pacifist and would not join the Police or King's African Rifles,
[688] since Rutherford taught that all Government was evil.
[668]

(*d*) 'INDEPENDENT' AFRICAN CHURCHES

There is a great cleavage between the mission Churches and the 'independent' African Churches, which also claim to be Christian, read the Gospels at their services, and recite the Apostles' creed, but whose rules of life are avowedly based on the Old Testament rather than the New (*vide* p. 191). Both the 'independent'
[595] Churches operating in BuNyakyusa approve polygyny; the bulk of their members are middle-aged polygynists and they have at least as many men as women among them. Nyasuru's statement on polygyny was interesting:

> When we young men went to join the mission we found that many of our fathers were attracted by it. They said to us: 'If only the Europeans would let us come in with all our wives we would come.' . . . Sometimes it would happen that the son of an old man's second wife would join the mission and become a preacher and he would preach even to his father, saying: 'You pagans do wrong, you marry many women, you must repent, your ways are evil.' Then his father would say to him: 'On the contrary, it is not I who do wrong, if I had married only one wife you would never have been born, and you young men take one wife only and then what happens? You steal other men's wives,
> [684] continually, in secret, and the country is full of lawsuits about women. It is our custom which is good.' . . . And so we, now, we have our Church and our fathers come in with us. It is our aim to take the old people with us, not ourselves to go forward alone. All the other matters which the missionaries brought to us we think are good, only this European custom of marriage is difficult.

[595] Nyasuru and Ngemela had both been suspended from the
[688] Church of Scotland Mission for marrying second wives, and Nyasuru, a man of fifty-three, had four wives when we knew him. He kindly provided us with a copy of a statement on the beliefs and constitution of the African National Church, which is worth quoting in full:

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and try to understand the nature and reasons for change. Here, then, is a good opportunity for the study of social change – not only in land tenure as such, but also in village and family organisation, political authority and economic life.

II

The Nyakyusa are a Bantu people inhabiting the main part of the Rungwe District in southern Tanganyika, immediately to the north of Lake Nyasa. In 1948 they numbered about 199,000 in that District, but about 10,000 men were probably at the time temporarily absent from their homes and in employment in the mines and towns of the Rhodesias and South Africa (see Gulliver, 1957), whilst about 20,000 had migrated to live in the adjacent Mbeya District to the north.

The tribal area comprises a confined geographical basin surrounding the northern end of Lake Nyasa. It extends only about 40 miles from the tip of the lake at 1,550 feet above sea level to the Poroto Mountains in the north at 8,000 feet; and from east to west is only about 30 miles, from the almost sheer walls of the Livingstone Mountains (with peaks up to 10,000 feet) to the Ndali Highlands (rising to about 7,000 feet). There are therefore unusually large ecological differences within so small an area. Three major regions are to be distinguished: the "Northern Highlands" over about 4,500 feet, the low-lying "Lake Plains" in the south, and the "Central Region" in between. Everywhere rainfall is reliable and high, averaging at least 100 inches annually[1], and this amply compensates for a certain poverty and misuse of the soil, although (and particularly in the Central Region) it brings dangers of soil erosion. Except in the highest parts the banana is the staple food, supported by maize, beans, finger millet and groundnuts. In the Northern Highlands coffee has become well established as the principal cash crop: in the Lake Plains paddy rice cultivation provides both a food and a cash crop: in the Central Region the country is too low generally for coffee and too high and dry for rice; consequently cash-cropping is considerably inferior and the people's standard of living is rather poorer.

The Nyakyusa and their country tended for a long time to be relatively isolated from the outside world by high mountain walls and rain-soaked roads. In addition, or because of it perhaps, they developed an almost unique culture which was supported by considerable conservatism and high insularity. They still continue to regard their African neighbours beyond the mountains as their social and cultural inferiors. The turmoil of the slave-trade in Central Africa passed them by; in modern times they have not enthusiastically accepted Christianity and they have refused to take up the use of Swahili, the Territorial *lingua franca*. In recent years, and most especially since the end of World War II, they have, however, accepted and pushed forward with vigour a rapid and extensive economic development, involving particularly the production of coffee and paddy as cash crops, and large-scale labour migration to the south in the high-wage mining industries. The multiplicity of petty, often tiny, independent chiefdoms has been reorganised to provide four local government areas, each under a Rural Council, in which the old chiefdoms have become something like parishes[2]. Although much of the old conservatism and narrow parochialism persists, yet there is now an atmosphere of accepted change, of a keen desire for economic development, and a general acceptance of a cash economy.

Probably the most significant feature of modern life in the Nyakyusa country is the increasing scarcity of land for agriculture in relation to the

1. At Tukuyu, in the Northern Highlands, annual rainfall averaged 99.38 inches between 1919 and 1952; at Kyela, in the Lake Plains, the average between 1940 and 1951 was 106.31 inches.
2. See Kingdon, E.E.: The extension of a system of local government by African rural councils in the Rungwe District, Tanganyika; *The Journal of African Administration*, III, 4, October, 1951.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

people's needs. The importance of this can scarcely be overemphasised for a peasant people who are adopting a cash economy and are socially and emotionally deeply attached to their land – their single, continuous source of capital and their tribal heritage. Apart from the possibilities of labour migration which, so far at any rate, are taken up only temporarily and by the younger men, there are no economic opportunities and no capital to compete with the land. In non-economic life the land remains supreme as the persisting basis of society.

As late as 1940 the District Commissioner, Rungwe, was able to write that there was most generally sufficient land for the people's needs in all parts of the country, and the only competition was perhaps in respect of the very best and most fertile tracts, as had always been the case. G. Wilson recorded similar remarks in the late nineteen-thirties. That these observations were correct cannot be doubted. It is known, for instance, that until the post-war years in the Lake Plains – where now land shortage is most acute – there was a broad belt of mainly unoccupied, uncultivated bushland, infested with game, extending from the Livingstone Mountains in the east to the Nyasaland border in the south-west. There were extensive, more or less empty areas in almost every chiefdom. The people were subsistence farmers only, and also banana eaters, and in this well-watered country their agricultural requirements were adequately met on very modest holdings, from most of which two harvests a year could be gathered.

In the brief period of little more than ten years the situation has altered radically to the point of a general shortage of land (except for some parts in the north-west), and especially in the Lake Plains the available land is quite insufficient to meet the demands of the inhabitants. This critical change is the result partly of an increasing population, augmented by some immigration from other tribal areas; but more especially it is the result of the demands for larger arable holdings to meet cash crop aspirations – i.e., money earning. Although both coffee and paddy rice cultivation had begun before 1939, and both were encouraged and developed during the War years, it was not until after 1945 that both of these cash crops became well and generally established and the demand for money incomes became universal.

III

It was in order to investigate this new situation, which was beginning to become serious and to cause concern to Government, that I made a sociological survey in 1955. I had already spent some months in the country in 1954 investigating labour migration in order to provide Government with information and to make recommendations to deal with the problems arising. The second period of work occupied about five months. During both enquiries I was extremely fortunate in having the use of the excellent monographs of G. and M. Wilson who had carried out a conventional anthropological study of the Nyakyusa between 1934 and 1938. Without their basic work behind me, neither of my two studies would have been possible in so brief a time, and I must gratefully acknowledge the real value of their writings.

The intention had been that a complete enquiry should be made into Nyakyusa land conditions in all parts of the country, and that it should culminate in a full recording of tribal land law and custom with a view to its possible reform. In the event only the initial enquiry in the field in the Lake Plains was completed and the results of that alone are described in this essay. Whereas in former days there were probably few distinctive differences between the various parts of the country, in modern times with the introduction of different cash crops, with differential population growth and varying demands on the land, important divergences seem to be arising. For example,

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

plots of maize, squashes, tobacco, etc., and useful trees (bamboo, citrus, mango, kapok, *uyungusi* and firewood). Artificial drainage would, of course, make more land available along the rivers, but this is in general beyond the abilities and resources of the Nyakyusa without considerable outside assistance.

Finally, in this matter it is to be remembered that in addition to a man's arable holding, each of his wives has a banana plot at her house from which she obtains her staple foodstuff. Such plots amount to perhaps about a tenth of an acre on the average. On the other hand, the Nyakyusa are no longer prepared to tolerate a predominantly banana diet. Rice has, in most areas of the Lake Plains, become almost as important as bananas.

Large-sized Holdings

Some blame for this novel shortage of land and the smallness of the average holding has often been laid upon that minority of Nyakyusa who have exceptionally large holdings, and also upon the immigrants from beyond the Lake Plains who have come to settle there during the past decade.

The occupiers of large-sized holdings are rather fewer than has sometimes been supposed. The notoriety of large land-owners, such as some of the modern chiefs with as much as 25-30 acres, has brought more attention to them than is really warranted. Most chiefs and village headmen have arable holdings of above average size, as a result of their privileged positions in the land allocation system and because of their prestige influence; but they remain a small minority and their number is bound to decrease in the future as inheritance causes sub-division of their holdings, for most of them have also more than the average number of wives and sons. In the two high-density regions it is clearly impossible for any man much to increase his present holding. As will be shown later (see page 24) the modern trend is not unnaturally towards a dangerous fragmentation of holdings.

The data obtained in this matter for my eight village samples are summarised in Table III, page 15. In those villages the two men out of 372 who held more than ten acres were a village headman and the father of a chief.[1] There were seven other headmen and one chief as well as some other locally influential men amongst the people covered by my surveys, but none of them held more than ten acres. There are, of course, some commoners amongst the large land-holders; many of them are close relatives of the chief or headman and have thus received preferential treatment. Some, however, are ordinary villagers who were perspicacious enough to see future trends and to obtain land in the early days before most men realised its new value and when vacant areas were still easily available. Such men are tending to become a new, wealthy class, but on the other hand they are particularly susceptible to the begging of kinsmen and friends who have insufficient land. If they are not to be regarded as unneighbourly or even anti-social (perhaps practising witchcraft) they are virtually compelled to be generous sometimes, both with their land and with their profits.

On the whole this minority of men excites little attention or jealousy among the Nyakyusa, who indeed take it for granted that their chiefs and headmen will have more land than ordinary villagers, as befits their status and prestige. If it be thought that by reducing somehow the size and number of these unusually large holdings then the land shortage might be partly relieved, it is a false hope. I scarcely think that the Nyakyusa would welcome any such attempt at interference by administrative action, but in any case it would only provide minor and temporary relief here and there and would not be worth the executive difficulties involved.

1. The second man should be a chief himself but he was dismissed by Government on his employment for punishment. He still holds much of the prestige and privilege of a chief for his son is only allowed authority in purely local government affairs.

137 in thickness. This part is devoid of timber except along some river banks—*Albizzia* and *Acacia* spp.—and fuel has to be carried some distance. The dominant herbs are *Crotalaria striata* and *Hyparrhenia* sp., with *Phragmites* and *Pennisetum purpureum* along the rivers.

Methods of Cultivation

241 462 The work of cultivation is equally divided between the sexes. After the plots have been cleared and hand-hoed by the men, it is women's work to plant, clear, harvest, winnow and sell at the market. Men's work consists of clearing, hoeing and looking after the cattle.

242 241 Rotation of crops is practised, as it must be in an area where all land is far from productive. In the highlands, 9,500 feet to 5,000 feet, the rotation in valleys is sweet potatoes, finger millet, groundnuts, finger millet, groundnuts, finger millet and rest for five years, or sweet potatoes, maize for five years and rest for five years. On the hillsides, finger millet and pigeon pea or finger millet alone are sown every fourth year.

In the medium altitudes, between 5,000 feet and 2-3,000 feet, the rotation is finger millet, maize and yams, beans, rested and grazed. Continual planting of rice cannot take place as fertility is so quickly impaired.

In the lower altitudes, below 2,000 feet, rice is planted continuously for some 15 years and the land is then rested and grazed for about 8 years.

Diet and Food Crops

262 No one food is the staple throughout the district, but plantains, maize and sweet potatoes for the higher altitudes and rice on the lake shore are generally eaten, with additions that vary from area to area.

243 Maize is planted both on contoured ridges and on flat land. Holes are drilled generally 3 feet apart and each hole has 3 seeds planted in it. Maize is usually interplanted with beans [241] or Bambarra groundnuts, groundnuts, cowpeas or pigeon peas. Planting takes place in the highlands in July to September and harvesting in February to April. In the medium altitudes, two crops are planted annually, in November to February and again in May to June. In the lower altitudes, however, little maize is grown and this is sown in November to December [251] and harvested in March and April. Maize is stored in mud-covered basket granaries or is [262] sold as soon as it is dried. It is eaten roasted or boiled with beans. The varieties of maize grown vary but they are mostly of the hard flint type.

245 Bananas and plantains are grown all over the district except in the highlands to the north and west. Numerous local varieties abound, with a red plantain and the *Sukari* variety of [262 273] banana as recent introductions, and are used exclusively for food, no beer being made. They are mostly dried and pounded with pestle and [251] mortar to be used as flour, although they are also eaten whole after roasting.

244 Sweet potatoes are extensively grown. They are planted on contoured ridges from 3-4 feet high. Planting distances vary from 6 inches to 1 foot in either direction. They are planted in March to May and north of Tukuyu take eight [252] months to mature, but south of that place four months is sufficient. Sweet potatoes are eaten boiled or roasted.

243 *Finger millet* is used more for beer-making than for food. It is always sown broadcast in [262 273] November to January and harvested in March to May. The land is first hand-hoed and all grass put into heaps and burnt when dry. In the highlands to the west the trees are lopped and branches piled in heaps to be burnt. Contoured ridges are put in at intervals depending on the slope of the land. The harvesting is carried out just before the grain is ripe by cutting off the heads and stacking in the field while ripening proceeds. The heads are then collected into large baskets and steeped in water for a day, after which they are taken out and rubbed with the hands to separate the [251] grain from the chaff. The millet is then dried and stored in earthenware pots or mud-covered baskets until required. It is reported that it can be stored for five or six years by this method, but I have not verified this personally.

244 Beans are nearly always interplanted with 262 maize or sown in banana plantations and the local seed is of mixed varieties. They are 262 eaten boiled as a relish with other food such as maize. The leaves are also eaten dried or fresh.

245 Groundnuts are grown in the medium and 251 lower altitudes. Planted in November to February and harvested in April to July, they are dried in the shell and eaten raw.

243 Rice is grown on the lake shore and also in the neighbouring foothills. It is sown broadcast in November to February and harvested in May to August. Yields are not high in the foothills, being about 6-7 bags of paddy to the acre. Many local varieties are grown, such [252 438] as Musafiri, Mwangulu, and Marula. The hill rice is eaten boiled, but most is sold hand-hulled in the markets for purely local consumption.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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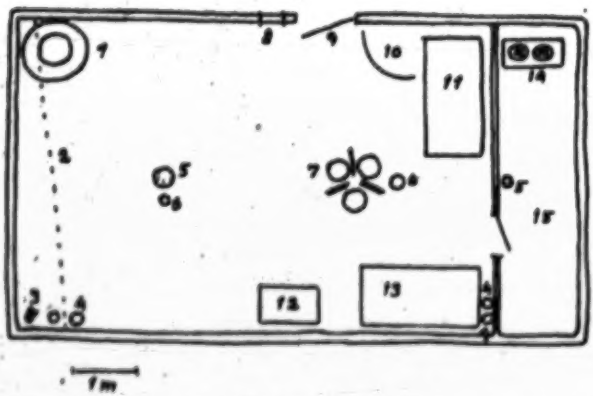


Idina's house. 1, basket; 2, clothes-line; 3, broom; 4, jars, in the back room on low shelf; 5, posts supporting roof; 6, small dimension bamboo poles, supports for the ceiling; 7, hearth with three round hearthstones; 8, shuttered opening through which the bolt may be reached; 9, door; 10, cassava for food; 11, spare bed; 12, table; 13, Idina's bed; 14, shelf for jars; 15, store-room behind mud wall with door.

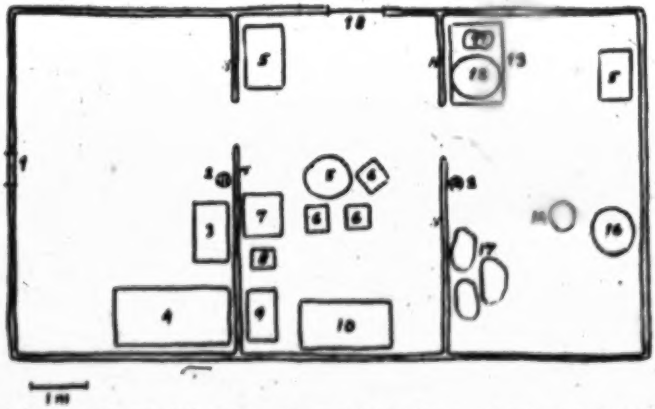
[361] man and his two wives. The houses were grouped round a common courtyard, the doors giving upon this space and not on the nearby village thoroughfare.

The three houses bore the names of Iseliña's house, Idina's house, and Baba's house. The elder wife, Iselina, had several minor children, who slept either near
352 her own bed or in the living area. She owned furnishings as modern as a chair
177 and a cupboard with shelves, besides the usual objects in these houses, baskets, bamboo mugs, hen's nest and roost, ladder and water jars. She also had an earthen-
[415 ware beer jar which, one day when I called on her, was standing on the fire,
273] nearly making the froth boil over. She was preparing beer for her husband's friends, who had just dropped in.

352 The new wife, Idina, had a store-room in her house, and there was also a large heap of cassava, meant for food. As often seen in these houses, she had also
[353 a guest bed. She had a number of jars and baskets, but no hen's nest. Straight
262] across the room she had suspended a line on which she put her clothes. Such an
[296] arrangement was often used, especially by the bachelors; they had a line for their shirts. Clothes-hangers were not in use. You just threw your clothes across the line. A wardrobe was never seen.

342 The interior of Baba's house presented a peculiar picture. It was divided into three rooms, a living-area in the middle; at one side the bed-room, at the other
352 a store-room. The bed-room had only one bed and a wooden chest. There was no hearth in the living-room—for the husband had his meals prepared by one of his wives. But there was a true accumulation of tables, chairs, suitcases, and a

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa



Baba's house. 1, barred window; 2, posts supporting roof; 3, wooden chest; 4, Baba's bed; 5, table; 6, chair; 7, cupboard; 8, chair with three suitcases; 9, suitcase; 10, table with bookshelf; 11, bag; 12, large basket, *ilitoka*; 13, low stand for 11 and 12; 14, millet jars; 15, low partitions; 16, *ilinda* in which the millet is washed; 17, rice in bags.

cupboard. This seemed very strange and a bit disorderly. On a chair were three suitcases on top of each other.

It was interesting to see, in the store-room, the very crops that belong to the man, viz. rice and millet, the most valuable produce. The rice was in bags, and it is quite probable that this man had bought it from the districts near Lake Nyasa, where it thrives well. On higher ground, rice cannot be cultivated.

The millet was contained in a basket, 1 m in height, 55 cm broad at the bottom, and narrower, 35 cm, at the top.

Further, there was a large, beautiful earthenware jar, which he had bought. This was intended for the millet. And there was also a cylindrical container for the washing of the millet when it was brought home from the field. This vessel was 55 cm in height and 85 cm across.

All three houses had a small window with bars or shutters.

The inside of the houses lay in semi-darkness, as the only light is admitted through the doorway, and in some cases through the diminutive barred window. Nevertheless, the interiors give a nice impression, because of their tidiness, height, size, and cleanness. And how cosy they are, when seen at night; the door is closed, you gather round the fire and delight in perfectly cooked rice, which is the favourite dish at this principal meal of the day.

Johnston says (1897, page 433) that the greater number of the houses are circular in their plan and very much like bee-hives in shape; their walls are wickerwork filled with mud cobs, and they have thatched roofs. He also reports

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

very substantial, the main meal being taken in the evening shortly before sunset.

8. Manufacture. The pot for cooking *(indeku)* is placed on three stones which form the hearth *(ikipembero*, hearth stones). The flat bowl made of clay used for the needs of the kitchen is called *ulwangabia* and a pig pot used for storing water *ingumbe*. The pots of clay are manufactured by Kissi women because in their land on the north-eastern shores of Lake Nyassa the best clay is found. In the eastern part of the Nyakyusa country adjacent to Kissi land the women visit the pottery markets of the Kissi, but to the remoter villages, e. g. around the Rungwe volcano the pottery is brought by Kissi men. In this case, owing to the great distance from the Kissi-Land the men carry the loads of eight to ten pots on their head between split poles of bamboo. The Kissi pots I saw in the Rungwe Station were ornamented in a rough way with red ochre and seemed only slightly baked. The hearth stones, however, are made by the Nyakyusa women themselves as I was able to observe near Rutenganio, where widows manufactured them for sale.

In many villages of the Nyakyusa I could watch basket-making. This I saw being done by men. In the chief's hut in Katumba I had the opportunity to admire a great number of very big baskets *(ifitubo)* for storing grain, smeared with cow dung on the outside. The attractive closely wickered baskets, which are filled with *malesi* (millet) and then placed in water for a night in the process of beer-brewing were originally made by the Buanyi, but nowadays also the Nyakyusa are said to be skilled enough to weave them. I had no opportunity to observe it, but could acquire an excellent specimen of that wicker-work.

9. The Meal. At the beginning of each meal the hands are washed, including those of children. The men take their meal separately from the women. The wives only eat when their husbands have been satisfied. Boys under ten years eat with their mothers, but as soon as they begin to live in age-set villages, they eat together with their friends of their own age-set, as described in detail by Mr. G. Wilson in his "Introduction of Nyakyusa Society" (Bantu Studies X, p. 271). The head of the family likes to eat together with his friends.

Meat is eaten very seldom, but on special occasions such as marriages, death lamentations, christenings of Christianized natives, enormous quantities are devoured. *Inyama* (Swahili: *nyama)* is the Nyakyusa word for all sorts of meat, *ingombe* for that of cattle and *ingambaku* for that of oxen. Near Utengule I saw black pigs *(ingurwe*, pig)

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

grubbing for food outside the stable. Old people also eat the meat of apes *(salila*, ape) and of jakal *(ingebe)*. The Nyakyusa men are generally very fond of eating fowl, indeed: "*Wakugana inyama sya inguku*", they are fond of the flesh of fowl. 262 [192]

Bones are usually given to the children for gnawing. Eight to ten boys may be seen sitting in a circle and alternately gnaw on the same bone, often drinking a little milk *(ulukama)* the while.

During a boating on Lake Nyasa I saw the well-known columnar clouds formed by the so-called Kungu-flies in the distance above the surface of the water. These flies are also eaten by the peoples on the shore of the Lake. When these insects come shore-wards they are caught, roasted at home and then eaten. But I was told that sometimes they are also caught and eaten out on the Lake, being squeezed into lumps between the hands. [136] [252]

The Nyakyusa eat with the right hand, but when the meal consists of such food as boiled maize and beans *(ingate)* they also use spoons *(uluiko)* made of folded strips of banana leaves. Nowadays, however, tin spoons and tin plates have come into wide use. The ancient eating-mats *(akatefu*, diminutive of *urutefu)* are also being more and more displaced. 264 [412] [178 285]

When the meal is over, the vessels and plates are cleaned with the fingers, bent inward, and then licked off. The mouth is rinsed out with water.

10. Diet. The vegetable diet is roughly the following. The light meal in the morning consists mostly of boiled maize-cobs *(ingate)*, sweet potatoes *(imbatata)*, bananas *(ilitoki*, pl. *amatoki)*, roasted bananas; or, *amawifu*, sweet bananas. The main meal in the evening, shortly before sunset, usually consists of flour porridge *(ikiyindi)*, beans *(indima)*, both often boiled together with maize, peas *(efinyaga)* very often in the form of porridge, maize-corns *(ikirombe)* and groundnuts *(isyabala*, pl. *amasyabala)*. These groundnuts are dried in the sun on mats. Bananas, if dried in the same manner, are usually halved lengthwise and spread out sometimes on banana leaves. I have seen this done in the village of Katunba. Granary stores are very often, e. g. near Utengule (on the border of Nyakyusa and Safwa culture), erected on platforms supported by poles. The container is a big quadrangular basket, roughly three by three meters in length and 1 m in height. The roof has the shape of a large Chinese hat and can be taken off from the lower part of the granary. 262 264 [251] [285 415]

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

262 The tender leaves of pumpkins and taro plants *(amasimbi*, leaves of taro), as well as of a number of other plants growing wild *(indeke)* are also used as vegetables. This food is called *iseke*, a word denoting all sorts of green vegetables.

In his treatise on "The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa" (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. 1; 1938, p. 43). G. Wilson points out that the fruit of the so — called *unsyunguti* — tree is "both [278] delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment *(inyemba)*", but he adds that he had been unable to find out the botanical name of this useful tree. Perhaps the following passage in the article of Dr. Kerr Cross ("Notes on the Country Lying between Lakes Nyasa and Tanganyika"; Proc. Roy. Geogr. Inst. N.S.Vol. XIII, 1891, p. 98) may be helpful in this connection: "There is a tree of the 314 sycamore family which grows extensively all over the north of the [262] lake called mwisyungute by the natives which might be developed. [386] It is a most picturesque tree which produces a food, an oil, and a dye. The oil or fat, when cool, is solid, even at a tolerably high temperature, and is like beeswax. It burns well as a night-light, and with wax might [388] be made into candles. In a rude way I have made candles of it. It might also make an excellent soap."

273 As an adjunct to these foods curdy milk *(ulukama ulukafu)* is very [272] much esteemed[1], to say nothing of the various types of beer, mostly prepared from millet for the men. Large fields of millet are, therefore, to be seen everywhere in the land of the Nyakyusa. On one occasion I attended a beer drink in the hut of a chief. The conduct of the natives present, the chief and his advisers *(amafumu)*, was in every respect praise-worthy. Pleasant and interesting stories were narrated. Not [574] infrequently the invitation of a commoner who has had some differences with his chief or one of the *amafumu* to such a feast is regarded as a gesture of reconciliation.

243 As in the time of Sir H. H. Johnston so also to-day "all the oozy-meadows are planted with rice." A traveller coming from the hilly region to the north on nearing Lake Nyasa is struck by numerous large fields of rice in the plain at the northern end of the lake.

178 *11. Crafts.* Mackenzie (1925) is certainly justified in complains of the decay of the arts and crafts among the Nyakyusa. The Indian and European influence is to be seen everywhere in the deterioration and final dissolution of these branches of the ancient culture of the Nyaky-

[1] A. Wilson, Introduction, p. 256.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

591 Before the establishment of peace by European authority, how-
231 ever, cattle were commonly herded by young men, armed, and
only the calves were entrusted to boys, who herded them near
857 the homesteads; therefore moving to a boys' village did not coin-
cide with the change of occupation. Even to-day it is not un-
common for some boys who have reached puberty to be found
herding cattle. One we knew herded his father's cattle although
he had reached puberty, because he had no younger brothers old
enough to take over, and there were only five or six boys in his
herd-group altogether. There are also cases where special circum-
stances put the age of moving later. In one age-village the boys
leave home a little later than usual because there are leopards
about and it is dangerous for small boys to walk from the village
of their fathers to that of the boys, after dark.

857 When a number of the sons of a village of married men have
reached the right age, their fathers give them a piece of land to
342 one side of the parent village on which to build. There they build
little huts of reeds for themselves, sufficiently well thatched to
keep out the heavy rain, and there they sleep (*vide* Plate II). The
building of the huts on this land begins in a playful manner,
before the boys move. While they are still herding cows and
sleeping at home they build miniature huts there in their spare
time, but do not sleep in them. When they move they build
slightly more substantial huts with better thatch. At the begin-
ning, when a group of boys starts a new village, or when boys join
one already formed, they do not all have huts for themselves:
two or three friends share a hut. But later, as they grow older,
each builds for himself.

857 Until he marries each boy hoes his father's fields in his father's
village and eats food cooked by his own mother at his father's
● 264 house, but he sleeps with his friends. Thus between the time
when he leaves home and his marriage each is a member of two
571 villages: economically he still belongs to that of his father;
socially to that of his own contemporaries. Though bachelors eat
at their parents' home, it is very rarely that they do not eat in the
company of their own friends. A bachelor does not simply go
home to eat by himself, but a group of bachelors, friends living
in the same boys' village, go round together eating at the house
of each one's mother in turn.

621 In an age-village of married men there are always several
571

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

829 876 *ukwangala* is only possible between contemporaries[1] they must build with contemporaries. The value set on *ukwangala* is thus related to the age-village; male contemporaries build together, and the company of, and good fellowship with, his age-mates is what creates a man of wisdom and character. Such is the Nyakyusa view of society.

576 For conversation to flow merrily and discussion to be profound there must be *ifyakwangalela*—'the wherewithal for good fellow-
● 264 ship', that is, food and drink—and very great stress is laid on sharing these. Men and boys are expected to eat regularly with
572 age-mates. Traditionally, fathers and sons never ate or drank together—to do so was held to be incompatible with the respect due from son to father—and men sought the company of equals at meals. From the time a small boy begins to herd he is encouraged to bring home two or three friends to eat with him, and in turn he visits each of them. Since boys have no fields of their own until they marry, but co-operate in cultivation with their parents, it is to their own mothers they go for food, and parents are proud of a son bringing many friends. 'Perhaps', said Angombwike, 'a son will come with his friends and cut a huge bunch of bananas, and take thick milk and eat with them. When the father comes back his wives will tell him: "Your son has eaten all the thick milk and cut a banana bunch!" Then he will ask: "How many men were with my son?" "Six!" "Ah, he's a chief!" the old man
[861] will say, smiling proudly.' 'And formerly if a young man came home often alone to eat, his father would beat him, or even take a spear and wound him, and when people asked why he would say: "This great fool comes *alone* to my place, again and again." It is good to eat with friends, for boys to go round in groups of four or five.'

264 After marriage each man is cooked for by his own wife, but he continues to eat with his friends, bringing them to his home or
562 going to their's .The first wife to come to a young men's village
574 is said to have a hard life. 'She has to draw water and cook for all the young men of the village—they come to drink, and to wash, and they beat her with a stick if she refuses them. No, the

[1] *Ukwangala* is sometimes used with reference to relatives as well as to village-mates, as in the phrase '*atikwangala kamunu nabakamu bake*', meaning 'he is not on good terms with his relatives'; but in its fullest sense it can only be used with reference to contemporaries.

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

264 husband will not be angry; if he were, he would be mocked at:
562 "Did not your father provide marriage-cattle for this woman for
you that she might be the wife (*unkasi*) of us all?" Sometimes, when
574 the woman is cooking, her husband's friends come and take food out of the pot before she has finished cooking. When she protests, saying it is not yet cooked, the men say: "It is your work to cook, ours to eat." Then when her husband comes she tells him that so and so, and so and so, have eaten the food and there is only water left in the pot. . . . But when her husband's friends begin to get married they say to their wives: "That woman is really our wife! Listen to her!" And she has honour among the other women, and when they go to fetch firewood she walks with nothing, another carries her axe and head-pad.' This account cannot be taken literally—the first wife in the village does not provide *all* the food for her husband's friends, who still eat at their mothers' homes, nor do they have any sexual rights over her though they call her 'wife', but she must serve them as far as she can.

571 Sometimes, we were told, men's eating groups last a lifetime,
264 but often friends quarrel or move, and the group breaks up. 'Per-
haps one eats at midday and does not summon his friend, but only
578 calls him to the evening meal, then the other, who always calls his friend to the midday meal also, is angry, saying: "He grudges me food", and they separate. They just stop calling each other to eat. Or sometimes one tries to seduce his friend's wife, and on that account they separate.'

264 Eating with contemporaries is still considered right and proper
by Nyakyusa men, and it is generally practised by pagans, but the
178 old men say that youths are less ready to share food than formerly. 'This custom of eating together is dying.' Certainly in Christian villages the practice has declined markedly. Many unmarried Christians eat with their friends, but the majority of the married men eat at home alone. Out of eight married men living in Rungwe, for example, only two ate together regularly, and the most educated group, the clerks, are notorious in the district for their eating habits. 'People are much shocked at the clerks for eating food alone. They say they are proud.'

264 Apart from eating regularly with certain close friends, well-to-
do pagan men are expected to entertain generously, inviting
574 fellow villagers to drink beer, or to a 'dinner party'—an ample meal with delicious dishes, very carefully served—from time to

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

time, and providing meat feasts at funerals and at the initiation and marriage of daughters.

As it is proper for men to eat with their equals it is improper for them to eat with their juniors, or with women. In the past fathers and sons never ate or drank together. Nowadays they sometimes do so, even though conservative pagans, especially if the fathers and sons have been working together. Three reasons are adduced for the change: first, the example of Europeans and Swahili; secondly, the fact that the country is at peace and it is safe for all the men to drink together, whereas formerly, when there was constant danger of attack, the young men were forbidden to drink at all; and thirdly the fact that young men earn money and buy beer for themselves which they may invite a 'father' to share (*vide* Document p. 194). When the Nyakyusa drink beer they replenish the pot repeatedly with boiling water, and men expect to have the water boiled for them by a woman. As Mwambuputa explained, 'Sometimes my son brings his pot (of beer) to my place and calls his friends saying: "We will take the pot to mother's house and she will pour in water for us." Then they come to my place, and they invite me to drink, and I accept, and we drink together. How can I grudge my son beer when I have some? Did he and his friends not entertain me?' The change turns on the fact that a young man can earn money and buy beer for himself while yet unmarried. Formerly no unmarried man commanded millet for brewing. Now, when he is drinking in his father's homestead he cannot but invite his father to join him.

Women commonly eat alone with their young children and unmarried daughters. Sometimes co-wives who are good friends eat together, but they have no obligation to do so, and in a big homestead perhaps only two wives will eat together and each of the others eat alone. More usually a woman sends a dish of food to each co-wife to eat in her own hut. For a woman to eat food with a man is considered quite impossible. In those families in which men no longer ate with neighbours one or two ate with their young sons, but we heard of none who ate with their wives. The example of Europeans did not influence them to this extent.

It is admitted that women also enjoy company and profit from it, and it is considered good that they should get on with their fellows, but there is no suggestion that it is a woman's duty to

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

264 cultivate her mind by conversation, or to eat regularly in com-
462 pany. In more formal hospitality there is the same difference; a
574 woman never invites her friends to drink beer with her, or to a 'dinner party', as her husband must do if he is to have prestige with his neighbours. Women only share the ritual feasts at initiation and marriage, and at death.

585 There are local variations in Nyakyusa rituals, notably between the Kukwe and Nyakyusa proper. But everywhere there is an
764 obligation to provide feasts at the funerals and marriages of de-
574 pendants. When his wife or unmarried child dies, a man must kill cattle for his relatives and neighbours to feast at the burial,[1] while an heir provides a feast for his relatives, and the neighbours of the 'father' from whom he has inherited. At these feasts equal portions of meat are allotted to relatives and neighbours—or were so allotted until the rights of neighbours to meat at funerals were formally limited (*vide infra*, p. 93). An heir must also brew beer, or kill a bull, to feast the deceased's neighbours when he begins to cohabit with his widow, or moves the property from his village. At the initiation and marriage of a girl there is a series of feasts (five in Selya), the food for which is provided partly by the groom's family and partly by the bride's; and if, as is usual, the bride is still a virgin or has been deflowered by the groom himself, he must provide a bull in thanks for her virginity (*engambako jabusungu*), which is killed to feast the neighbours and relatives of her parents. The carcass is divided into three portions, one for the immediate neighbours of her father (men), one for 'those relatives with whom the father is on good terms and exchanges cattle', and one for the 'mothers' of the bride. Women as well as men eat meat and other fine food at all the marriage and funeral feasts.

574 The third occasion on which a feast for the village neighbours is thought to be essential is when a man or woman has offended
576 his (or her) neighbours, or the neighbours of a 'father'. Thus a woman who has shirked her duty of advising on the division of her brother's inheritance, and is disapproved of by her neighbours on this account, begs pardon of them over a brewing of beer (*vide infra*, pp. 107, 236); a son, having insulted his father's neighbours

[1] For the circumstances under which other relatives must provide cattle for funeral feasts see Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939), p. 18.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

574 by insulting his father, begs pardon of them by bringing a bull
576 which his father may eat with them; or a daughter-in-law, having inadvertently caught sight of her father-in-law, brings beer for him to drink with his neighbours.

574 At all feasts food is allotted in terms of kinship and village affiliation, and this tends to enhance the solidarity of kin groups
●264 and villages. For example, funeral meat is first divided between
764 relatives and non-relatives, and that allocated to non-relatives is subdivided by villages, each village headman present being given a share to divide between his people, men and women. When a relative of the chief has died, and the whole country has come to mourn, the chief allots a cow to each of his senior headmen, who then divide the carcasses between the villages in their respective halves of the chiefdom. The meat at a 'coming out' ceremony, and at the great feasts which were held after battle, was divided in the same way, and we saw a division of this kind when a senior headman who had been in exile was welcomed home (cf. pp. 273–4). Thus the right to share in a feast depends either on kinship with the provider, or on membership of a village.

574 The Christians' code of hospitality differs somewhat from that of the pagans: the latter stress feeding *neighbours*, whether it be in
184 the daily eating together, or at informal beer and dinner parties, or at ceremonies, while the Christians stress feeding strangers, quoting the text 'I was a stranger and ye took me in'[1] and the parable of the Good Samaritan.[2] The pagans jibe at the Christians for being inhospitable because (as the Christians themselves admit) they entertain their neighbours less than pagans do; the Christians point to their wider obligations, and the fact that they do feed and house visitors from a distance, especially fellow Christians gathering for Church festivals. The Christians are very conscious also of the difficulties of hospitality in a monogamous household, for a wife must not only do all the cooking for visitors (and many Nyakyusa dishes require considerable labour to prepare), but she must also help to grow the food. The pagan who can afford to entertain much has several wives who share the work between them, whereas a Christian, no matter how rich, cannot have more than one wife and remain a member of his Church—unless it be one of the two small independent

[1] Matthew xxv. 35.
[2] Luke x. 29.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 to bring all the herds of the village for treatment. The father of these twins explained that neighbours would suffer less than 783 relatives, if left untreated, but 'their legs would ache a little 621 *because we eat with them*'. And here we come to an idea which appears in many situations in Nyakyusa life, the idea that con- [264] tagion is spread through eating together. Relatives of parents of twins are not thought to be in danger until they eat or drink with one of the parents: the ritual is performed so that they may eat together safely. Similarly a murderer and his relatives are thought to be in magical danger from the relatives of the murdered man only if they should eat or drink with them. So too, the bond between neighbours which puts them in danger from the impurity of one of them is the sharing of food.

881 At the initiation and marriage of a girl, neighbours again assist and identify themselves with the principals. When she reaches 621 puberty a girl is secluded, and her companions in the village—the girls who are her immediate juniors, for the older ones will have joined their husbands—keep her company. Some are her own younger sisters and half-sisters, others are not related at all. Should one girl of the village not join them she is not accused of witchcraft, but it is unusual for one to stay away; to do so would show 'pride' (*amatingo*). These companions (*abapanji*) sleep and eat with the 'bride' (*unsungu*)[1] and share her tasks and lessons, fetching firewood, making mats, learning songs, and listening to the instruction of 'the mothers'. They and the 'bride' go about together as a group and, accompanied by one or two 'mothers', may visit a 'bride' and her maids in another village, the two [572] groups competing in dancing and singing. So keen is the rivalry that formerly, we were told, the visits sometimes led to fighting between the maids and 'mothers' of each 'bride', particularly when the competing groups came from different chiefdoms. At the end of the ritual two of the maids accompany the bride to her [864] husband's house, and spend a few days with her there, sharing the attentions of her husband at night (*vide infra*, p. 87).

During her seclusion the bride avoids her father, whom she refers to as 'father-in-law', and she avoids also all his contem-

[1] *Unsungu* means a girl who has reached puberty but has not yet borne a child. She is usually, though not invariably, betrothed, and her 'husband' has a part in the puberty ritual. There is no exact English translation, and we think that 'bride' is the least misleading in this context.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

6. CHANGE IN THE RELATION OF FATHERS AND SONS

Record of G. W.

561 Mwambuputa, the headman, was building himself a new house
with the help of six other men. He invited us to wait and join in the
177 beer and bananas, which were about to be served.

264 A boy came to call two of the builders to enjoy the company (and food?) of some other friends. They went off. It turned out that these two were from the boys' village, Katumba, one being a 'son' of Mwambuputa, and the other a friend of this 'son'. They had been eating and drinking with the rest of us.

Q.: 'In the old days, would these two have eaten and drunk with you—boys with men? Would you have called them to help you build?'

'No, formerly that was not the custom. Though we should have called them to help us build, they would not have drunk beer, and they would have eaten their calabash of milk separately, over there (pointing to a corner of the hut), while we men were here with our food and beer.'

Q. 'How is it then that the customs have changed, that now you eat, and even drink, with them?'

'You brought it yourselves, you Europeans. You sit down with your children at table and eat together, and the Swahili do the same. So we say: "He! Formerly we hated our children!" We said: "Eat over there." Let us eat with them!'

Q.: 'No, that does not convince us at all. The Europeans are strangers. How many of you have been into a European's house and seen them eating? Only the house-boys!'

Mwambuputa: 'All right, ask the others!'

Mwalubunju: 'Let me speak! In the old days, because there was war, we objected very much to the young men drinking beer with us. If we all drank together and the war cry was raised we should all be defeated. And men did not begin drinking in the morning, never! They began in the late afternoon when the cows came home . . . and in the evening each went home to his own house . . . but now, since the country is at peace, the young men also drink beer.'

Q.: 'Yes, but still I don't see why you drink *with* them. Why not give them a separate pot? And you eat with them, too.'

Mwambuputa: 'Because, as Mwalubunju has said, the country has fallen to you. It is at peace and there is no war, so the young men buy

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

their own beer.[1] Sometimes my son brings his pot to my place and calls his friends, saying: "We will take the pot to mother's house. She will pour in water for us." Then they come to my place and they invite me to drink and I accept and we drink together. How then can I grudge my son beer when I have some? Did he and his friends not entertain me'?

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[1] This, of course, is not so much a result of peace as of new opportunities of gaining wealth on the Lupa gold-fields and elsewhere, but to the Nyakyusa the two things go together as 'European times' (*ikisungu*).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

11. WITCHCRAFT AND LUST FOR MEAT AND MILK

Mwainumo (*clerk*).

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'Some "defenders" (*abamanga*), when they smell something delicious in the house of a relative or a close friend, say: "The meat (if it's meat) smells nice, give me a little to eat, I am a witch, the pythons will rouse up and carry me off to throttle someone." This can only be said (and it is said quite seriously) in the house of a relative or great friend because in no other house can a man ask for meat. Shame prevents him. People think a man who asks for food is a fool.

'Some people, when they have eaten a little and finished, say: "Give me a little more, if we witches are grudged food the pythons rouse up!" It is said that throttling is in order to eat delicious food (*ukupita ko kulya ifiñafu*). The witches say human flesh is delicious, and the milk of cows is also delicious.

Some people will eat cooked food which has been left over-night; others refuse it, and when asked why, say: "It is forbidden for us witches to eat cooked food which has stood over-night." I have heard this said often. "The defenders" say it spoils their pythons. Chiefs do not eat kept food either; it is said to spoil their *ifingela* medicine. People say that it is bad for chiefs or witches or "defenders" to eat left-over food because it has been touched by the ancestors at night. This is often said by "defenders" as well as others.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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3. The beer of the 'gasping cough.' Mwasalemba on the left

[Facing p. 84]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

byre or strike a beast with a stick 'until the twins had grown up' 845
(an elastic phrase), 'but if he has no sons to milk a doctor comes and gives him a medicine to drink in the house, then he can milk the cows outside. To enter the byre is altogether taboo.' He and his attendant during his seclusion drink the milk of one cow only, which has been specially treated. All his wives avoid milk until the end of the ritual and the mother of twins herself 'can only begin to clean the byre after she has borne at least one other child'—some say two or three other children. If a cow is given her for milk (after the end of the ritual) it is taboo for others to share that milk. If these taboos are broken it is said that the cattle will purge and die, or their legs will swell.

It is also taboo for a parent of twins to pass behind people—he (or she) must always pass in front. 'They fear that if he passes behind, he (the parent) will always have twins.'

Twins, and their parents who have been through the full ritual, are thereafter immune from the danger of twin birth and may even go in to greet a mother of twins—Mwakobela's sister, who herself had borne twins, entered his wife's seclusion hut. There are, however, two or three taboos which apply to twins in later life. It is taboo for one of a pair of twin girls to get married without the 584
other. Angombwike explained:

> If a man comes wooing the first he must do it secretly, and when he speaks to her father he must do it secretly, he may bring cows but no [761]
> one knows about it; if it becomes known they say the younger might curse herself (*ukuilusa*) and die. Then when another has come wooing the other, secretly, the father tells them both to come wooing openly *on the same day*. They come with cows. Then the father summons all his children, and the twin girls, and tells them: 'These men have come to marry you, do you like them?' And he asks the elder (*mkasa*): 'Which do you like?' She chooses. Even if she chooses the man who came for her sister he must accept, and if he tries to protest people will hush him up at once, for it is the custom for the elder to get married first. Then the younger (*mwindeka*) says she likes the other one and their father takes the cattle. If either one is wooed secretly before the other she must stay quietly at home till a wooer comes for her sister. If she did not (whichever way it happened) the other might die. It is common knowledge in the boys' village here that of X's twin daughters a lover has only come for the younger, none for the elder. And so both are still unmarried.

Twins and their parents, the fearful ones (*abipaya*), and other 264
people who have been treated with medicines, eat first-fruits of 789

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

264 789 millet, beans and pumpkin with medicines. 'We fear lest the medicines we have drunk will turn round in the belly';[1] and they must be buried in a hut. 'If they are buried outside there will be drought and famine.'

845 842 *(b) The overt purpose and symbolism*

The overt purpose of the twin ritual is plain to all Nyakyusa. Twin birth is thought to be contagious, causing other twin births, and also to make men and cattle ill. The ritual is to prevent this. Mwambelike, a middle-aged pagan, was explicit on the point:

> People are afraid to go to the house of a man with twins. They think that they will have twins themselves if they do, and we do not like twin births; they are taboo in the country. Or perhaps their legs will swell, or their bellies, or faces, if they go to his house. So we go to a doctor and he comes and sprinkles all the people in the village, even tiny children, and all the cattle. He takes a banana stalk to burn the twin birth (*pakokya ipasa*). He burns us because of the twin birth. The water is hot and medicated. He sprinkles us all with it and when we have all been treated we say we have been burnt because of the twin birth.

753 When a man has begotten twins we are in awe of this Kyala (*takakeba Kyala uju*). . . . If people drink out of the same vessel as the parents of twins, or if the father of twins sleeps with his other wives, this makes the disease increase, the disease of swelling legs and stomach; men catch it, the wives catch it, the children and fathers of the wives catch it. There is also a twin ceremony for cattle; if a cow drops twin calves we fear the same things. You, your wife and children drink medicines, and the cows are all sprinkled with medicine—but not your other relatives, or neighbours.

Mwakobela himself said:

> If I did not wash and went to eat with my relatives, my legs would swell, I should pant and gasp. Swelling of the legs is due to our shades (*imindu gyetu*) or perhaps Kyala beneath is angry (*Kyala pari akalele*).

845 References to Kyala as the cause of twins are frequent:

> KASITILE: The shades are in twin birth, and Kyala is there—it is he who gives two children. We drive them away. Kyala and the shades are together. When we bury the *ilibalaga* in the banana grove I say: 'Kyala, leave my bellows (which means my wife) for me, you shades leave it for me.' If the shades are angry perhaps my penis is broken in copulation.
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> MWAIKAMBO: I have not heard people speak of the shades in twin

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 54.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

allowed to escape; it has *ifingira*, the most powerful 784
of all drugs, and is divided between the chief and the great doctors, who alone may cut up a lion's carcase. Another very powerful drug is *ilibebwe*, which, if cast into a doctor's house, destroys the virtue of all his medicines; and if carried through a garden will wither up all crops; it is therefore *mwiko* to possess it unless one is a doctor.

The code of manners includes prohibitions against 576
speaking with the mouth full in the presence of elders; the elders will curse the offender with dire results; against spitting, for sorcerers only are great enough to dare, and one may be accused of sorcery. If a great man is passing, one must sit right down on the ground to salute him; to sit on a chair or any kind of seat is grossly bad manners, and is *mwiko*; it is followed by the unspoken but unfailing curse. Nakedness, even among the unclothed Konde, is a serious offence; at the least a small apron of leaves must be worn, for sorcerers go naked at night, and a charge may lie against anyone found unclad. If a stranger, notwithstanding the prohibition against it, asks for food, it must not be refused: how do you know that he is not a friend of Kabeta, who will send lions to punish you for churlishness! A woman must [244]
not eat while the males of her family are eating; if she does, her husband will talk to her presently. When on a journey, the young men must go first to face the dangers of the road; it is *mwiko* for the elders or chiefs to be in front. If two companies meet, they must not mix; each keeps its own side of

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

content with maize roasted on a piece of tin, or a few 261
potatoes roasted in the fire. I have known them, too, going perforce for a long time and quite uncomplainingly, without salt, or any kind of relish for their food. For all these drawbacks are fully compensated for when the white man kills game; then they gorge; then the astonishing capacity of the native to take in food is seen at its best, or worst. A friend of mine once, far up in the mountains, killed an eland, and, leaving his men to deal with the carcase, went to his camp. His men kindled a fire at the ndkill, a sat down to feast; when they returned to camp in the early hours of the morning, one man was missing, and his dead body was found where he fell, killed by his own immense greed, aided by a heavy rain which set in during the night.

But while feeding arrangements "on safari" are 415
primitive in the extreme, the ordinary household 252
arrangements are by no means so. The housewife operates with a great variety of pots, baskets, calabashes, and some women are celebrated cooks. A possibly mythical story of olden times tells how two chiefs went to war for the possession of a great woman, who was the wife of one of them, and was widely distinguished for wisdom and sagacity, and for her unusual culinary skill. She was secured by the attacking chief, and lived with him quite happily as his chief wife; an unusual honour, for it is a rule that captured wives never attain to that distinction.

The Konde, like most Bantu peoples, are noisy 264

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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eaters. The loud smacking of many pairs of lips round the camp fire makes a quite surprising noise; to which is added, especially if there is *nyama* (flesh), a sustained conversation carried on in a loud voice, making a din which is only ended by an angry shout from the European, who has himself long ago finished his repast, and cannot sleep in the uproar of the feast.

If their table manners in this respect leave much to be desired, in others they are beyond reproach. They carefully wash their hands before, and their mouths after eating. For the hand, the right hand, which is the "eating" hand, is almost their only implement; but I have often watched my carriers make spoons of folded leaves, with which they neatly scooped up the cooked maize, or whatever else they were eating; and I have myself frequently drunk water scooped from a passing stream with a similarly folded leaf.

The one great meal a day is a mighty feast, and one's girth is considerably increased when it is over. Little children literally protrude in front, and their entire nakedness makes the protrusion very obvious. But while the Konde look forward to the evening meal as the event of the day, the practice of eating twice, or even thrice, is growing; and I have never known anyone being averse from eating, and that heartily, at any hour of the twenty-four. Eating by families is unknown, would indeed be bad manners, for the men eat first, and the women only after their lords are satisfied. A few Christian families are beginning to

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

A few Christian families are beginning to [777] 264

eat *en famille*, but the practice is not looked upon with favour. The open air meal in good weather of course gives way to the meal in the house when it rains.

The far-stretching banana groves in which the villages are hidden indicate one of the favourite foods of the people. There are many kinds of banana, from the tiny "Lady's Fingers" to the great plantains, half an arm long; and they are eaten in almost as many ways. Some are eaten direct from hand to mouth, peeled and corded, for even the small cords which adhere to the fruit after the skin is removed, are meticulously attended to; other kinds are cut up and cooked; some are ground into flour, of which porridge is made, or it is added to the flesh pot to give flavour to the soup. 262 252

Maize is cooked in many ways: whole, mashed, or ground; boiled or roasted; mixed with other foods, or alone. The porridge made from maize flour is a greyish sticky-looking mess, wholly repulsive to a white man, and is often eaten without relish of any kind. Cassava, with the poison washed out by three days' soaking in running water, then dried and ground into flour; beans, with the skins removed by parboiling, and pressed between finger and thumb; peas cooked without preparation; potatoes, often eaten with milk; these are main food-stuffs, but very many small herbs are used, especially for seasoning, and some very pleasant dishes are often served up to feed sick and well alike.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done.

In a polygynous family each wife has her own fields (*embaka*), hoed by her husband and her own sons, which she plants, weeds and reaps with the help of her own daughters, and the produce of which she uses to cook for her husband, her own children and herself. The relative rights of husband and wife to dispose of produce vary with different crops, but no co-wife has any rights over a woman's food. She may, and often does, ask her co-wives to help in her fields and sends them presents of cooked food from her own fire, she may help them and receive presents in return; but they have no rights over her fields or her food, only her husband and herself. And the fields which are hoed by a bachelor son belong to his own mother, who in her turn cooks food for him to eat.

Each wife has either a hut to herself, or else a separate alcove in a large hut, and there she has her fire for cooking. She fetches her own firewood and water or sends an unmarried daughter for them.

At meals the ages and the sexes eat separately; in some polygynous families each wife sends a dish to the husband, in others the wives take it in turns to cook for him. The husband eats alone or with neighbours of his own age[7] to share his dish, the older boys and their friends[7] eat separately from the younger children, and each mother again usually eats with her own daughters, apart.

In the relationship of husband and wife the chief elements are sexual intercourse, co-operation in work, the procreation of children and factors of personal inclination, character and temperament. By men women are praised for sexual skill, cleanliness and beauty, for good cooking and hard work, for their fecundity, and for gentleness of speech and behaviour, and those with opposite qualities are criticized. Among women men are praised for sexual skill and attentiveness, for vigour in hoeing and skill in house-building, and for kindness; while sexual neglect, laziness, impotence and cruelty are disliked and may cause a woman to leave her husband for another man.

The birth of children is a most important factor in the marriage relationship, for children are greatly desired both by men and women. They are desired for themselves and also because they bring their parents wealth and prestige; a boy will one day work in the fields of his father and mother, a girl will bring in cattle from her marriage. And the possession of children brings compliments and respect both to man and woman.

[7] *Vide infra* "The Age-Village."

[Cat. 116, pp. 259 ff. —Analyst]

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

As the boys one by one reach the age of ten or eleven, two important 857
changes usually take place in their lives. Firstly they leave the herding 621
of cows to their younger brothers, and themselves begin the business of hoeing the fields which will occupy them until they die; and secondly they no longer sleep in the houses of their fathers but join an age-village of boys. These two changes usually, but not always, take place at the same time and normally at about the age of ten or eleven years, well before puberty. But there are cases where special circumstances put the [184] age of one or both of these changes later; I know one boy who herds his father's cattle although he has reached puberty, because he has no younger brother old enough to take over, and there are only five or six boys in his herd-group altogether. And in general I am told it is not uncommon for some boys who have reached puberty to be found still herding cattle. Again in one age-village the boys leave home a little later than usual because there are leopards about and it is dangerous for small boys to walk from the village of their fathers to that of the boys after dark.

(b) *The Boys' Village*

When a fair number of the sons of a village of married men have 621
reached the right age, their fathers give them a piece of land to one side of 561
the parent village on which to build. There they build little huts of reeds for themselves, sufficiently well-thatched to keep out the heavy rain, and there they sleep. The building of the huts on this land begins, in a playful manner, before the boys move. While they are still herding the cows and sleeping at home they build miniature huts there in their spare time, but do not sleep in them. When they move they build slightly more substantial huts with a better thatch. Until he marries each boy hoes his father's fields in his father's village and eats food cooked by his own mother at his father's house. But he sleeps with his friends. Thus between the time when he leaves home and his marriage each is a member of two villages, economically he still belongs to that of his father, socially to that of his own contemporaries. Though bachelors eat at their parents' homes, it is very rarely that they do not eat in the company [264] of their own friends. A bachelor does not simply go home to eat but a group of bachelors, friends of the same boys'-village, go round together eating at the house of each one's mother in turn.

In an age-village of married men there are always several different herds of cattle; and it is not only those from the same group of herd-boys that set up a new village together, but all the sons of the age-village. When a boy leaves the herd-group he joins a larger community, including the friends of his own age who have herded cows with him, but many

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

when we went to a field I saw a stick of a special type upright in the soil. It was made of a reed split at the top, with a small bundle of leaves squeezed in the split. A piece of bark stood out from this bundle. I asked the chief for the significance of this and he explained that it was an *ulusingo*, i. e. a tabu sign to prevent anyone from stepping on the field which was an *imasibi* (yam-field). This sign was believed to possess "magical power", to strike an invader with illness. Each owner of a field has the right to protect his field in such a manner, and a chief especially has the right to command tabus regarding plants which are staple food for the whole chieftainship, as, for instance, maize that is not allowed to be reaped before the chief has given his permission. All such tabus are also named *mwiko*[32]. During the time of such a general tabu, visitors, who by chance come through a village under tabu, are not allowed to greet the inhabitants of the village or to speak to them. 241 784 [574]

The chief added that special watchmen are installed during these periods; these men are dressed in a terrifying manner, and have the right to arrest any person transgressing the tabu. The chief may punish the offenders immediately, imposing on them, for instance, a cow as a fine. This was also the case with an ordinary theft in a field, but nowadays such affairs are regulated by the law of the Mandated Government. After the repeal of such a general tabu by the chief, beer will be drunk (e. g. *ubwalwa bwa kutagila bwa kutondelo*, the beer that is poured out at the harvest), and the usual eating community of men will be re-established, for Nyakyusa men like to eat together as comrades, not in families. 241 688 784 [178] [264]

10. When I was in Katumba, dances were held on several days from the afternoon till midnight, very similar in form to that which Mackenzie describes (p. 160) by the name *Ikimbimbi*. 535

The men stood on one side of the open place in several lines, with sticks in their hands; on the opposite side were the women and girls. Between them, more in the background, were the drummers, at the beginning of the dance; then they moved round the place. The principal drummer was a man of great excitability. He performed most extravagant movements with his body and his drumstick, making somersaults, jumping over the drum, treating it as a "living being", running to it and turning just in front of it.

[32] This word *mwiko* (forbidden) has the same wide (profane and ritual) meanings as *tapu* or *tabu* in the Polynesian Languages (*cf. Rud. Lehmann:* Die polynesischen Tabu-Sitten. Staatl. Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde I, 18; Leipzig 1930).

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

but I was astonished that this trap was erected relatively near to my tent on the border of the village of Katumba. 223

6. *Fishing.* Fishing is a much more common practice with the Nyakyusa than hunting. The old-established custom of poisoning fish in their smaller rivers is still widely used. The poison is derived from the *unkeredu* shrup. Its branches and leaves are broken off, reduced to small pieces between stones and then packed in a covering of grass to resemble a long cigar about 1 meter in length and 25 cm in width. The bundles prepared in such a manner are fixed between two rowes of stones placed across the river for this purpose. The poison gradually diffuses into the water, which takes on a green colour. The fish are soon affected by the poison and rise to the surface with gaping mouths. They are then easily caught with a scoop made from bamboo. The open end of a piece of bamboo is split into several sections and the splinters are bent apart and tied together with raffia to form a sort of funnel[1]. The fish are strung through their gills on small pliable sticks and roasted at home over a fire. All people are allowed to join in this fishing which to them is always a festive occasion in the cooler season. 226 [324] [252]

Fishing in broader and deeper rivers, such as the lower Kiwira, is done by means of large fish-traps. They are made and repaired by men on the banks of the river. The traps are attached to poles rammed into the bed and almost invariably boats trying to reach the Lake Nyassa get struck on submerged poles. These large fish-traps strung across the river form quite an impressive sight. Looking up-stream, they look like the bows of little ships standing in a row.

7. *Preparing food.* With the Nyakusa the preparation of food is so exclusively the task of the women, that R. Thurnwald ist quite correct when says (Black and White in East Africa, London 1935, p. 157): "Menfolk starve if there are no women to prepare their meals". There is thus a very strong division of labour between the sexes, also noticable in the carrying of loads. For a young man to carry the load of an old woman or his sweetheart, whom perchance he might meet on the road, would be a grave violation of a rigid custom. 252 462 [482]

As the preparation of the food is the women's duty, also the grinding *(ukutika)* of the corn in a mortar *(ikituli)* with a pestle *(ikitiro)* which is the exclusive task of the female sex. The wife is always the first to rise in the morning to prepare breakfast. Usually, however, this is not [264]

[1] NB. They are of the same kind as those of the Hottentots along the Great Fish River in South West Africa. [171]

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

462 252 264 very substantial, the main meal being taken in the evening shortly before sunset.

415 [354] *8. Manufacture.* The pot for cooking *(indeku)* is placed on three stones which form the hearth *(ikipembero,* hearth stones). The flat bowl made of clay used for the needs of the kitchen is called *ulwangabia* and a pig pot used for storing water *ingumbe.* The pots of clay 415 439 are manufactured by Kissi women because in their land on the north-eastern shores of Lake Nyassa the best clay is found. In the eastern part of the Nyakyusa country adjacent to Kissi land the women visit the pottery markets of the Kissi, but to the remoter villages, e. g. around the Rungwe volcano the pottery is brought by Kissi men. In this case, owing to the great distance from the Kissi-Land the men carry the loads of eight to ten pots on their head between split poles of bamboo. The Kissi pots I saw in the Rungwe Station were ornamented in [462] [324] a rough way with red ochre and seemed only slightly baked. The hearth stones, however, are made by the Nyakyusa women themselves as I was able to observe near Rutenganio, where widows manufactured them for sale.

285 In many villages of the Nyakyusa I could watch basket-making. This [462] I saw being done by men. In the chief's hut in Katumba I had the opportunity to admire a great number of very big baskets *(ifitubo)* for [232] storing grain, smeared with cow dung on the outside. The attractive closely wickered baskets, which are filled with *malesi* (millet) and then [273] placed in water for a night in the process of beer-brewing were originally made by the Buanyi, but nowadays also the Nyakyusa are said to be skilled enough to weave them. I had no opportunity to observe it, but could acquire an excellent specimen of that wicker-work.

264 [515] *9. The Meal.* At the beginning of each meal the hands are washed, including those of children. The men take their meal separately from the women. The wives only eat when their husbands have been satisfied. Boys under ten years eat with their mothers, but as soon as they begin to live in age-set villages, they eat together with their friends of their own age-set, as described in detail by Mr. G. Wilson in his "Introduction of Nyakyusa Society" (Bantu Studies X, p. 271). The head of the family likes to eat together with his friends.

262 Meat is eaten very seldom, but on special occasions such as marriages, death lamentations, christenings of Christianized natives, enormous [192] quantities are devoured. *Inyama* (Swahili: *nyama)* is the Nyakyusa word for all sorts of meat, *ingombe* for that of cattle and *ingambaku* for that of oxen. Near Utengule I saw black pigs *(inguruwe,* pig)

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

grubbing for food outside the stable. Old people also eat the meat of apes *(salila*, ape) and of jakal *(ingebe)*. The Nyakyusa men are generally very fond of eating fowl, indeed: "*Wakugana inyama sya inguku*", they are fond of the flesh of fowl. 262 [192]

Bones are usually given to the children for gnawing. Eight to ten boys may be seen sitting in a circle and alternately gnaw on the same bone, often drinking a little milk *(ulukama)* the while.

During a boating on Lake Nyasa I saw the well-known columnar clouds formed by the so-called Kungu-flies in the distance above the surface of the water. These flies are also eaten by the peoples on the shore of the Lake. When these insects come shore-wards they are caught, roasted at home and then eaten. But I was told that sometimes they are also caught and eaten out on the Lake, being squeezed into lumps between the hands. [136] [252]

The Nyakyusa eat with the right hand, but when the meal consists of such food as boiled maize and beans *(ingate)* they also use spoons *(uluiko)* made of folded strips of banana leaves. Nowadays, however, tin spoons and tin plates have come into wide use. The ancient eating-mats *(akatefu*, diminutive of *urutefu)* are also being more and more displaced. 264 [412] [178 285]

When the meal is over, the vessels and plates are cleaned with the fingers, bent inward, and then licked off. The mouth is rinsed out with water.

10. Diet. The vegetable diet is roughly the following. The light meal in the morning consists mostly of boiled maize-cobs *(ingate)*, sweet potatoes *(imbatata)*, bananas *(ilitoki*, pl. *amatoki)*, roasted bananas; or, *amawifu*, sweet bananas. The main meal in the evening, shortly before sunset, usually consists of flour porridge *(ikiyindi)*, beans *(indima)*, both often boiled together with maize, peas *(efinyaga)* very often in the form of porridge, maize-corns *(ikirombe)* and groundnuts *(isyabala*, pl. *amasyabala)*. These groundnuts are dried in the sun on mats. Bananas, if dried in the same manner, are usually halved lengthwise and spread out sometimes on banana leaves. I have seen this done in the village of Katunba. Granary stores are very often, e. g. near Utengule (on the border of Nyakyusa and Safwa culture), erected on platforms supported by poles. The container is a big quadrangular basket, roughly three by three meters in length and 1 m in height. The roof has the shape of a large Chinese hat and can be taken off from the lower part of the granary. 262 264 [251] [285 415]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

daily for supplies, provided it is again quickly covered 251
up with both sand and flowing water. All this must be done at night lest the hiding-place be revealed to others, and the flesh stolen.

Bread is made of twice-ground maize with salt 252
added. It is kneaded into loaves of about three inches thick, and placed in layers, interleaved with banana leaf, in a pot with maize in the bottom. This bread is often taken on a journey, and will keep for five or six days. Eggs are "scrambled," with milk [177]
and salt, in a broken pot, but this is a European introduction. No young girl will eat hard-boiled eggs; [842]
they produce a snake in the abdomen, which, of course, in turn produces barrenness.

Very unpleasant to our minds are some of the 262
delicious foods the Konde rejoice in: flying ants eaten alive as they are picked up where they fall from their brief honeymoon in the air; crawling white ants, a horrible mass of moving life; the Kungu fly, found on Lake Nyasa, whence it comes ashore in dense clouds, settles on bush and tree, and is shaken off into small baskets, to be taken home and baked into cakes while it is still fresh. In Bundali it is said that some still eat lion's flesh, and once upon a time the crocodile was eaten at Karonga. Sorcerers are accused of [754
devouring human flesh. A new grave is sprinkled 266]
with a powerful medicine which makes the corpse come up without disturbing the soil, and the ghoulish feast is enjoyed without leaving a trace of the deed behind.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

273 bed at midnight to break up drunken revels, and drive to bed men who, though sternly refused permission to finish the beer, vowed themselves, in drunken sentimentality, my eternal friends. But not always do beer feasts end so happily. As in other lands, some men become jocular in drink, others quarrelsome, and [579] many a Konde beer feast has ended in a spear fight. Beer is an accompaniment of feasts given at births, marriages, and deaths; but occasion of that sort need not be waited for. The chief may give a feast at any time; or a man who has been long away from home celebrates his return; or the hoeing season provides an excuse; but with or without occasion, an immense amount of beer is drunk every year.

Light beer is made in many ways. A favourite is •272 made from sweet potatoes laid out to dry, pounded into flour, and mixed with flour of maize, cassava, or other material, cooked, and drunk when cool. Groundnuts shelled and ground, put into small baskets with water, and allowed to drip dry, then mixed with *malesi* flour, and cooked, is a common drink; as is also a light drink made from the juice of sugar-cane similarly mixed and cooked. All these are non-intoxicating, and are taken along with food, or at any other time as a refreshing drink.

733 Many of the more progressive chiefs are alive to the injury done by heavy drinking, and do all in their power to stop it; and native Christians who take any part in a beer feast are excluded from the sacraments. By the action of the Government in exercising control over beer, of some of the better chiefs, and of the

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

262 The tender leaves of pumpkins and taro plants *(amasimbi*, leaves of taro), as well as of a number of other plants growing wild *(indeke)* are also used as vegetables. This food is called *iseke*, a word denoting all sorts of green vegetables.

In his treatise on "The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa" (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. 1; 1938, p. 43). G. Wilson points out that the fruit of the so — called *unsyunguti* — tree is "both [278] delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment *(inyemba)*", but he adds that he had been unable to find out the botanical name of this useful tree. Perhaps the following passage in the article of Dr. Kerr Cross ("Notes on the Country Lying between Lakes Nyasa and Tanganyika"; Proc. Roy. Geogr. Inst. N.S.Vol. XIII, 1891, p. 98) may be helpful in this connection: "There is a tree of the 314 sycamore family which grows extensively all over the north of the [362] lake called mwisyungute by the natives which might be developed. [386] It is a most picturesque tree which produces a food, an oil, and a dye. The oil or fat, when cool, is solid, even at a tolerably high temperature, and is like beeswax. It burns well as a night-light, and with wax might [388] be made into candles. In a rude way I have made candles of it. It might also make an excellent soap."

273 As an adjunct to these foods curdy milk *(ulukama ulukafu)* is very [272] much esteemed[1], to say nothing of the various types of beer, mostly prepared from millet for the men. Large fields of millet are, therefore, to be seen everywhere in the land of the Nyakyusa. On one occasion I attended a beer drink in the hut of a chief. The conduct of the natives present, the chief and his advisers *(amafumu)*, was in every respect praise-worthy. Pleasant and interesting stories were narrated. Not [574] infrequently the invitation of a commoner who has had some differences with his chief or [illegible] of the *amafumu* to such a feast is regarded as a gesture of reconciliation.

243 As in the time of Sir H. H. Johnston so also to-day "all the oozy-meadows are planted with rice." A traveller coming from the hilly region to the north on nearing Lake Nyasa is struck by numerous large fields of rice in the plain at the northern end of the lake.

178 *11. Crafts.* Mackenzie (1925) is certainly justified in complains of the decay of the arts and crafts among the Nyakyusa. The Indian and European influence is to be seen everywhere in the deterioration and final dissolution of these branches of the ancient culture of the Nyaky-

[1] A. Wilson, Introduction, p. 356.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

even defaecate in the house. And at the inheritance, when I have inherited the women, they go to their own homes with a bull if I am wealthy, or perhaps three shillings. They go back to their fathers with the dirt on them—*ingotolo*! 764

QUESTION: Where does the *ingotolo* come from when you do not treat them?

MWAFULA: Kyala is startled and you gasp with *ingotolo*, your breath is short.

QUESTION: Does the husband also go to his place?

MWAFULA: Yes, he always returns to his father's.

QUESTION: Why the two leaves representing a man and a woman at the hitting the ground and saying: '*Syeka, syeka*'?

MWAFULA: Because we are two [holding up two fingers], a man and a woman. Formerly when someone died as a bachelor they took a leaf of the sweet banana and said: 'It is your wife.' They buried it with him, saying: 'Go to the land of the shades because you were never married.'

QUESTION: What does the mocking at shaving mean?

MWAFULA: It is one with stealing the plantain stem. We mock them meaning, may they escape, and not take rubbish from the rubbish heap. And at the shaving of the hair we drive him away, saying: 'Go to your fellows.' He has been alone, he was on the road, may he go.

Porokoto the Chief admitted that the wearing of leaves and 842
bananas in the rituals of death and of puberty were symbols of 881
fertility (*ifemayilo fya mbape*); the plantain represents the penis, the sweet banana represents the clitoris, 'for in the old days they wore leaves only, no cloths'. In the puberty ritual the wearing of leaves and bananas is the same. It is a sign of fertility: 'the ritual is now finished and the girl is someone's wife.'

Mwaijumba, who provided the beer of inheritance for the ritual 273
of Njobe Nani, explained to us as he drank: 'We drink beer to 764
drive away our friend. It means that everything is finished: "Come to your house frequently now. It is finished! May the fathers [i.e. the other shades] receive him! May he not return! We have poured out this beer for you, it is finished."'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

vessel of milk and two stems of bananas. We do not carry her in triumph. The mothers-in-law do not bring the powdered medicine.' One informant maintained that the bride was always examined before she washed with her husband (if she was a chief wife) and we once saw the bride examined at the *ukuingenis* ritual, but the examination before handing over the bull is the only one mentioned by most people. What is certain is that virginity must be publicly demonstrated in the ritual and that it is honoured.

After the shaving and instruction, the bride goes round her father's village visiting the men who have not already given her a gift. She is accompanied by the wife of the go-between who represented her father in the marriage negotiations. Each of her father's fellow villagers (as well as her elder brothers and her father's full sisters) should give her something—a bark-cloth, a chicken, a calabash, a spearhead, or some coins, as he greets her. These the bride divides between her maids, the officiant who treated her in the ritual, her husband, and herself; to the wife of the go-between is due one pot of the beer brewed for the shaving ritual, to take home to her husband.

If the agreed number of marriage-cattle have been handed over, the bride's father puts millet to soak for beer immediately after the rite of instruction has been completed and the bull of puberty eaten. When the brewing is ready the bride is formally taken to her husband's house (*ulambeka*) by a 'mother' and one or two of her maids. Her own mother never goes—the woman of the party is usually a junior wife of the bride's father or the wife of the go-between. They take with them one or two pots of beer, a basketful of plantains to roast for her husband, two or three cooking pots, a log of firewood, a calabash of light ointment (*isyemba*), and a little pot of brown ointment (*imbale*) for anointing her husband and his friends in the village. 'What the wife brings when she comes for the first time is for all the men of the village to use to anoint themselves. They come every day to use it until it is finished.' These ointments are brought by every wife but they are especially important if the bride is her husband's first wife, and it is his bachelor neighbours who mostly use them. The bride also brings the fine mat and several coarse ones which she has woven during her seclusion, bark-cloths she has made for herself, and three hearth bricks (*amafigo*) carefully moulded for her by her mother out of clay and manure mixed with medicines. These are set up in her

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

Record of M. W., 13 September 1936

881 789 I arrived at nine o'clock in the morning to find Syungu, the elderly wife of the chief's senior brother, who acts as officiant in all the rituals for the chief's family, grinding and cooking *ipemba* together with a powdered medicine and red pigment, to make an ointment. I asked the purpose of the medicine. She replied: 'It's *ikipiki* that she may be heavy, that she may bear children and not be barren.'

● 273 789 Some of the chief's wives gave me beer—ordinary beer. They themselves were drinking from a pot which had stood in the inner part of the house (*kanyo*) and to which medicine had been added. They explained that it might be drunk only by themselves, the chief's wives. A strange woman, a Penja, came along and, though warned that this pot was not for her, insisted on drinking some of it. She explained how Penja [71] ritual differed from that of the Kukwe—they kill sheep for the puberty ritual. Usually this beer stands to brew in the seclusion hut 'on the litter'.

881 The women were preparing a dish of beans and bananas cooked together, and when it was ready a little was given to the officiant, some was put aside for the girl (*nsonga*),[1] and the remains were offered to the guests. One of the cooks threw away the central stem of the head of bananas used, but was told by the officiant to fetch it back, as all the rubbish must be cleared away together at the end of the rite.

After midday the officiant shaved some hair from the girl's temples and the back of her neck, and then she shaved the mother completely. I asked why the girl was not shaved completely and was told: 'Her fellows would laugh at her if she had no hair.' The officiant prepared four banana leaves, stripping each off on one side of the mid-rib and shredding the other half so as to make a rough fringe. Standing with her back to the girl, she touched herself over the genitals, breasts, and forehead, then handed the leaf back over her head, telling the girl to fasten it round her waist. She repeated the performance with the second leaf, telling the girl to fasten it round her neck. The girl complied with the first leaf but refused the second, saying: 'I have a cloth,' and she pulled her breast cloth round her shoulders. The officiant followed the same procedure with the girl's mother, who fastened both leaves round herself. Then one of the chief's wives took the mother on her shoulders and carried her round the corner of the house. The bride followed on foot, and three other wives of the chief, singing:

Kyusala
Kyatiko
Kyusalaw
Kyatiko

[28] [1] Usually we have translated *nsonga* by 'bride', but in this case she was not betrothed: cf. footnote 2, p. 75.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Lugulu

if he does not. He does not enter the home. There would be fighting if 851
he did! But he stands outside, and when he hears them praising he praises the parents too. No one hears him, he does it to save his sight. He comes with two or three friends but gets no food.

Then we give them beer, and they drink and we drink till dawn. [273]
And dawn finds many in drunken sleep. Then the go-between says: 'Dawn has come, friends, let us go!' And they go off and we bid them farewell. And my son, the bride's brother, goes off with them. The husband goes home with his friends, and then the go-between and my son and daughter (these three only) come back. Then our go-between [representing the bride's father] who is on the look-out for them, says: 'They come!' and we go out and call: 'Why do you come here again?' And we throw clubs at them and drive them off. Then the go-between goes home and the two come back and we greet them and say: 'Have you slept?' And food is cooked and they eat. Then that same day the girl goes off to her husband, alone, with food that her mothers have cooked.

QUESTION: What is the reason for the custom?

KAKUWE: They have made the custom to gain wealth—that bull. The porridge (*ikyende*) and relish (*ilisele*) must be called *misyama*. If I, the father, or the mother, or the husband, call it porridge, then the one who does so will go blind. We Kukwe do not do this, but if one of us marries one of the people who observe it, that is, a daughter of the Lugulu, he must avoid or else he will lose his sight.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 Then the doctor called for water, added powder to it, and took Mwaipopo, the owner of the homestead, off to the edge of the bananas, some way from the house, to wash. He scratched a hole with his hands under a banana stem, and buried a packet (just like the one thrown over his shoulder by Mwakobela) which the doctor gave him. Then she poured the water for him and he washed his hands and mouth, as the others had done at Mwakobela's place. The doctor took the mother of twins off to the edge of the swept place, some distance away, and poured water for her to wash her hands and mouth likewise. All this was quietly and seriously done.

[273] A calabash of beer was then brought out of the house, the doctor put powder in, the mother of the twins stirred it, Mwaipopo drank first, and all the others in turn. Likonyela was present and took part in all this. He took off some medicated beer to take to his sister, Kipesile, who lives in Ipande. 'She is sick and I want to go to see her, so I shall take the medicine to her myself.' I asked him why he was not at Mwakobela's (being a classificatory son of Mwakobela). He replied: 'Well, they never sent me a message, to call me, so I came here.' He and Mwaipopo, the head of this homestead, are sons of two sisters. Likonyela's wives were not here—'They are sick'; but one of his children was here carried by a younger sister of one of his wives.

Some medicated beer was also taken by a man, Kikaja, son of Nokile, a cross-cousin (*untani*). 'His father was our mother's brother.'

Then the mother of twins went into the house and took out three baskets of cooked food and one pot of beer prepared for her. Each time she took up a basket the women of the house shouted: 'Ha! The child is snatching food, that is taboo!' She also took out a little pot of ointment and one of rouge. Then she cut at a growing stem of bananas with a spear, while the women of the homestead shouted: 'The child is cutting a banana stem, it is taboo!' The stem was finally severed by a boy with a hoe—she did not cut it through. Then the women of the homestead rushed at the mother of twins and greeted her and pressed round the infant excitedly. One of them explained to me: 'We, his mothers, are greeting him [the twin], we say to him: "We have never seen you before, how are you standing up to the cold?" ' They also tied little pieces of string to the twin's wrists. 'It's to greet him and break the taboo (*ko kambonola*),' they said.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Life is never dull for the African. There are marriages and funerals here as elsewhere; the former always a joyous occasion, the latter not always or necessarily the reverse. A walk through a populous village will bring one upon net making, pot making, basket or cloth weaving, and one may hear the sharp tap-tap of the bark cloth worker, or, in an iron-working district, the clang of the blacksmith's stone hammer, beating out hoes or spears upon a rough stone anvil. And many drive dullness away with beer. Sometimes it is a small party. A few friends gather in a house, and sit around a pot or two of beer provided by the wife of the host. They drink to the strumming of a *pango* or the beating of a small drum, for they like to have music at their feasts, even when only a few are gathered. But if it is a village feast, given by the chief, it may go on all night with terrific noise, shouting, singing, and drumming; and not always does the feast end without fighting.

Sometimes the villagers receive visitors. The native evangelist on his rounds is always hospitably welcomed. The tax collector is not exactly welcomed—who ever welcomes a tax collector?—but he is received well enough, for his coming has at least this advantage, that those who are ready to pay the sum demanded will not have to go later and pay at the *boma* (magistrate's office), which may be a long distance away. Sometimes a native trader comes along, his packs carried by attendants, for he never carries them himself, even when beginning on a small scale. Visitors

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

by each drinker as an offering to his individual ancestors. 273

Great crops of millet (*malesi*) are grown every year for beer; but if the other food-stuffs threaten to give out before the new crops are ready, the chief issues a prohibition against beer making, and the crop is used for ordinary food. Licences are now required for beer making and selling; but this regulation can only be enforced in the neighbourhood of a magistrate, and drinking goes on without restriction throughout the district.

To make the full-bodied strong beer, *malesi* is put into a closely woven basket and placed in water for a night. In the morning, swollen to twice its previous size, it is put into a number of smaller baskets, and covered with banana leaf. In a few days it sprouts, and is taken out and spread in the sun, and when dry it is pounded into flour. Over the flour, again divided into a number of baskets, is poured boiling water, and the *wukesi*, as it is now called, is left to cool; it then *stands for four or five days, when the final mixing* with boiling water takes place. An expert comes to taste it when cool, and if he pronounces it good, the guests are called to the feast. The women, in long procession, carry the beer to the place of feasting, and sometimes drink along with the men, more often by themselves.

As the night goes on prodigious quantities are consumed, and the noise becomes terrific. Drumming, shouting, singing, tramping of feet are the accompaniments; and at Karonga I have had to get out of

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

262 To-day there are many, even among the heathen, who say grace before food; only the older men now follow the ancient custom of laying aside a small portion of every meal for the spirits. But there are many superstitions nevertheless among young and old. There is a family at Itete which eats neither flesh nor fish, nor ground nuts, any of which cause violent vomiting. Others will eat fish but not flesh, and *vice versa*. Eland and bushbuck bring on leprosy in some
262 753 families; goat brings ringworm; rhinoceros gives people a white skin; and hippo is very dangerous in the neighbourhood of lepers; for lepers are buried in ant-hills, but they soon remove and betake themselves to the water, and enter the body of a hippo; so, if you eat hippo, you may be eating leper! Nyakyusa women will not eat a fowl, for fowls in the night cry out the names of ancestors! But a cock which gives a faint cry in the early morning is quite safe. There are many who have abandoned all these beliefs, but the vast majority of the people still cling to them.

• 273 *Drinking.*—Beer is drink for men and gods; or if not for gods, it is a drink urgently demanded by the spirits. With few exceptions, it is offered at all religious ceremonies, but there is no special way of making the beer for the offering; it differs from ordinary beer only in that the cereal (*maizi*) from which it is made is contributed by all the people, while that used at an ordinary feast is made from *maizi* provided by the entertainer. Even at these feasts, however, a little is spilled on the ground

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

273 bed at midnight to break up drunken revels, and drive to bed men who, though sternly refused permission to finish the beer, vowed themselves, in drunken sentimentality, my eternal friends. But not always do beer feasts end so happily. As in other lands, some men become jocular in drink, others quarrelsome, and [579] many a Konde beer feast has ended in a spear fight. Beer is an accompaniment of feasts given at births, marriages, and deaths; but occasion of that sort need not be waited for. The chief may give a feast at any time; or a man who has been long away from home celebrates his return; or the hoeing season provides an excuse; but with or without occasion, an immense amount of beer is drunk every year.

Light beer is made in many ways. A favourite is 272 made from sweet potatoes laid out to dry, pounded into flour, and mixed with flour of maize, cassava, or other material, cooked, and drunk when cool. Groundnuts shelled and ground, put into small baskets with water, and allowed to drip dry, then mixed with *malesi* flour, and cooked, is a common drink; as is also a light drink made from the juice of sugar-cane similarly mixed and cooked. All these are non-intoxicating, and are taken along with food, or at any other time as a refreshing drink.

733 Many of the more progressive chiefs are alive to the injury done by heavy drinking, and do all in their power to stop it; and native Christians who take any part in a beer feast are excluded from the sacraments. By the action of the Government in exercising control over beer, of some of the better chiefs, and of the

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 The gardens of the Kyungu were divided traditionally into public
652 (*imilasa*) and private ones (*imigunda gya masano*). The produce of the first was mainly devoted to the entertainment of important guests—chiefs, territorial nobles and the ivory traders from over the lake. That of the second to the personal needs of the Kyungu and his household.
643 The public gardens were hoed and weeded by the great chiefs and the
651 nobles of the Ngonde plain with their subordinates and followers, the private ones by the nobles of Ngonde with theirs.

The hoeing of his public gardens by the chiefs and nobles of the plain was as intimately connected with the religious status of the Kyungu as was the bringing of royal tusks to him, for the belief in his rain-making powers provided a moral sanction for it. Drought and disease, as we have seen, were often attributed to the displeasure of the living Kyungu; and the failure of some ruler to bring his people to work the public gardens was, so we were told, the most usual way of displeasing him. The wealth and the divinity of the Kyungu were inextricably linked. Nor without these public gardens could the lucrative ivory trade have been maintained. In the primitive world of Ngonde there were no "purely business relations;" tributaries and buyers alike had to be royally feasted.

643 In the hoeing of the public gardens the political hierarchy of
651 Ngonde was made evident, for each great chief came separately to hoe,
565 accompanied both by the local chiefs of his own house and by those
622 territorial nobles who lived near him. At an appropriate time either the great chief or one of his noble neighbours would suggest going to Mbande to hoe, and the former would then summon all his local chiefs. But he could not summon the nobles; with them it was a polite arrangement between equals. "When they went to hoe for the Kyungu it might be a neighbouring noble and not the great chief at all who made the first suggestion; and then the two of them would go together with their followers. For the nobles are not subjects of the great chiefs but only of the Kyungu."

651 The main crop grown in the public gardens was millet (*amalesi*) for
241 beer. And at some time during the year all the chiefs and nobles[1] who
476 had brought men to hoe[2] them were summoned to taste "the beer of
273 the *mulasa*." So we see that, in one aspect, the hoeing of the public gardens of the Kyungu was but an extension on a large scale of the

[1] It is clear from our notes that each chief and noble brought to this beer-drink some of his people; but it is not clear whether he brought all those who had worked or only the more important among them.

[2] I speak of "hoeing" and "men." It is fairly certain that the women also came to weed afterwards and that they participated in the beer. We omitted, however, to find this out.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

ordinary custom of hoeing parties which is still followed by every chief and commoner in this whole area. Every man, two or three times a year, invites his neighbours to hoe for him and rewards them with a beer-drink in the evening. Where the hoeing of the Kyungu's public gardens differed from this custom was in the religious sanction behind it and in its political organization. 651 241 476 273

After the local chiefs had finished the *mulasa* for the Kyungu they would next return and hoe a small garden for their great chief who had led them to Mbande. But in this the territorial nobles took no part. Such gardens were not called *milasa* and there was no distinction made between them and the great chief's private ones. For this custom also there was a moral sanction; for the great chiefs, we remember, also participated in divinity. "If his people forgot to hoe for Mwakasungula then perhaps a little local epidemic of some kind would break out and the diviners, when questioned, would attribute it to their forgetfulness. Or perhaps a prophetic fit would fall on some one and he would tell them to go and hoe (or they would rue it!)" 651 765

And, still lower in the hierarchy, among a group of chiefs who were half-brothers, the senior chief used sometimes to summon his juniors to bring their men and hoe; but "their acquiescence depended on their friendship for him"; it seems to have had no effective moral sanction.

The private gardens of the Kyungu were traditionally very small indeed, for the constant income of food from the plain made them all but unnecessary. Such as they were, they were worked by the people of Mbande, i.e. the nobles of Ngonde and their followers. The wives of the Kyungu lived like ladies and had all the normal work of a woman, including weeding, done for them. 643 651

The income of the Kyungu in slaves and cattle cannot be understood save in the context of judicial procedure and warfare with which we have not yet dealt[1]. 643 652

The income of Mbande reached others besides the Kyungu and his wives. We have already seen how the nobles of Ngonde took their share of the food which was brought in; and some of it they gave to their messengers, the *nalakata*. Neither the nobles of Ngonde nor the messengers, according to the present Kyungu, used to have any large gardens of their own; they also were maintained at the public expense. And the nobles of Ngonde shared also in the proceeds of the ivory.

With the exception of a pile of tusks upon which the Kyungu slept, most of the ivory which reached Mbande, from the time of Mwangonde 439

[1] Vide infra sections 5 and 6.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Here is your cow, your food. We pray to Kyala. May theft go away. Give us food and beans and millet, may we eat and be satisfied. . . . It is said that the sweet potatoes are scarce now, help us. You Mwakabule (117), Mwakomo (112). . . . This is your cow Mwaijonga (82). This is your meat. I shall seek another also which we shall give you like this: 769 782

NGULYO: May the locusts go away. It is you who have caused theft because there is hunger.

KMOOOTA: At night since we eat scraps of food our bellies are disquieted . . . may we be satisfied. People are eating millet porridge;[1] when food is plentiful they say it's horrible. When someone eats millet porridge he dies, it kills a man. We pray to him, this Kyala, because we do not know him, so we say: 'You Mwaijonga (82) drive away the hunger. Give all of us, Mwaipopo's people, food, and hear us all.' [262]

Mwaipopo's young sons (not the older ones) ate the rest of the sacred meat (*vide* plate 8). Other boys who approached were chased away: 'They thought because their friends were getting meat they would too.' Then the remainder of the carcass was divided: two legs went to the chiefs, two to the commoners, the chine to Kasitile, the breast to Mwaipopo (the chief) who gave half to his sons and half to his daughters—his wives may not eat it. The head went to the priests Ngulyo and his fellows—and some entrails were sent to Seba, widow of Mwaijonga (82). There was some discussion about the disposal of the head: 'Let it be put in Ngulyo's house', they said. Mwaipopo commenting later, explained: [262]

We leave the head in the house of a commoner near the sacred grove in order that the shades can come and eat it. So also with the chine. . . . Kasitile leaves it so that his shades may eat it. We throw the meat by a tree which was planted long ago. He whom we have buried looks towards it, he sits facing the tree and the meat is thrown beside it.[2] He sees the meat we throw. We offer the meat of the upper forelegs (*ijammapa*), this is the sacred meat, the rest we eat ourselves. The blood pours out on to the ground, it goes beneath, which means that the owners, the shades, receive it, because they are beneath. The shades say: 'We are angry because you have not given us cows to treat the grove, we are angry and send this hunger. Treat the grove frequently!' [775]

Kasitile also discussed the ritual with us later and he remarked:

[1] Millet is ordinarily used only for brewing beer. The Nyakyusa regard millet porridge as very distasteful and eat it only during extreme scarcity. [273]

[2] We omitted to ask why, in this case, a hut had not been built in the grove.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IX

KASITILE THE PRIEST

We turn now from the description of rituals to a personal document, an account of the illness of Kasitile (86), the leading priest of Selya, the causes suggested for it, and the rituals performed. His case shows: (i) the power of village headmen over chiefs in general, more particularly the power of the commoner priests (village headmen of the previous generation) over hereditary priests of the chief's lineage; (ii) the persistent linking of misfortune with sin in both public and private life; (iii) the function of divination in selecting between possible causes of disease; (iv) the influences of Christian and Muslim teaching and Western medical science on a conservative who goes so far as to invite a Muslim to cut the throat of the sacrificial animal and speaks of turning Christian in his old age; and (v) the very great importance attached to 'speaking out' (*ukunyya*) and not leaving anger to smoulder unconfessed. Beer is necessary for such a ritual 'speaking out' and the participants are pressed to drink deep, for *in vino veritas*.

The *dramatis personae* are:

KASITILE (86) of the chief's lineage, priest of Selya
JANE his senior and favourite wife
JANE'S YOUNGER SISTER and co-wife
KILULELE a third wife suspected of bewitching Kasitile
MWAIPOPO (116) the chief and senior kinsman of Kasitile
MWAKYONDE (148) the doctor who was treating Kasitile
KINGA *priests* (i.e. Kikungubeja Nyanigwa, Kyamba Kitali, *vide* pp. 24-34)
NOULUVO, NJOROKOSA, KIBOOOTA — Village headmen of Mwaijonga (82) and priests of his grove, *vide* pp. 74-7, 84-5
MWAMAKUNDA THE ELDER a hereditary priest, assistant to Kasitile
MWAMAKUNDA THE YOUNGER (Mwambagoje) son of the elder who often acted in his place

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

x 797 x 795 583 584 went away to work again and in time I earned four cows which I hid with friends far from home. My father knew nothing about them. Then I wrote to my father from Mwasebe [about twenty miles from where his father lived] where I was working, saying that I had found a girl there, the daughter of a Christian, and please could I have the cows with which to marry her? My father said: "No, she lives too far away." ' Then later he found a Christian girl of whom his father approved and a satisfactory marriage was arranged.

A common topic of discussion among Christian women was whether parents should choose mates for their children, or leave them free to choose for themselves, for though traditionally a girl had to signify her consent to marriage, she was betrothed very young and her freedom of choice was small. The growing insistence on personal freedom in marriage is symptomatic of a radical change in the attitude towards persons.

x 797 x 795 The pagan rituals were the main occasions of recreation. It has been shown, in *Rituals of Kinship*, how pagan funerals and marriages are the occasion for feasting and dancing and display, and how the [764] [585] seclusion hut of a nubile girl is the gathering place for the young men and girls of the neighbourhood. Even a twin ritual is a festival [782] with beer for the older men and some meat for everyone. The sacrifices at the groves were feasts for the leading men of the country, and the 'coming out' was the occasion of the greatest feast of the generation, and dances were practised for months [796] [688] ahead. Partly because of a change in sex morality, and partly because the meat and beer at pagan feasts are offered to the shades, Christians are largely excluded from these festivals. They may not participate in pagan dances, or join in the lewd songs, or attend the initiation hut of a girl, and they are partly debarred from the feasts of the pagans: certain of the Churches (notably the Church [273] of Scotland and, for a time, the Moravians) forbid Christians to drink beer at all.

[796] And the Christian rituals, though some of them are 'festivals of the Church', are scarcely celebrated as such. There has been a separation between ritual and recreation which has left a gap in the Christian community. It is true that the Christian young men [535] [684] and girls sing and dance at funerals and marriages, but the elders, for the most part, look on with dubious eyes, saying that dancing leads to adultery, and several of the dances introduced by

245 Bananas and plantains are grown all over the district except in the highlands to the north and west. Numerous local varieties abound, with a red plantain and the *Sukari* variety of [262 banana as recent introductions, and are used 273] exclusively for food, no beer being made. They are mostly dried and pounded with pestle and [251] mortar to be used as flour, although they are also eaten whole after roasting.

244 Sweet potatoes are extensively grown. They are planted on contoured ridges from 3-4 feet high. Planting distances vary from 6 inches to 1 foot in either direction. They are planted in March to May and north of Tukuyu take eight months to mature, but south of that place four [252] months is sufficient. Sweet potatoes are eaten boiled or roasted.

243 Finger millet is used more for beer-making than for food. It is always sown broadcast in [262 November to January and harvested in March 273] to May. The land is first hand-hoed and all grass put into heaps and burnt when dry. In the highlands to the west the trees are lopped and branches piled in heaps to be burnt. Contoured ridges are put in at intervals depending on the slope of the land. The harvesting is carried out just before the grain is ripe by cutting off the heads and stacking in the field while ripening proceeds. The heads are then collected into large baskets and steeped in water for a day, after which they are taken out and rubbed with the hands to separate the [251] grain from the chaff. The millet is then dried and stored in earthenware pots or mud-covered baskets until required. It is reported that it can be stored for five or six years by this method, but I have not verified this personally.

244 Beans are nearly always interplanted with 252 maize or sown in banana plantations and the local seed is of mixed varieties. They are 262 eaten boiled as a relish with other food such as maize. The leaves are also eaten dried or fresh.

245 Groundnuts are grown in the medium and 251 lower altitudes. Planted in November to February and harvested in April to July, they are dried in the shell and eaten raw.

243 Rice is grown on the lake shore and also in the neighbouring foothills. It is sown broadcast in November to February and harvested in May to August. Yields are not high in the foothills, being about 6-7 bags of paddy to the acre. Many local varieties are grown, such [252 as Musafiri, Mwangulu, and Marula. The hill 438] rice is eaten boiled, but most is sold hand-hulled in the markets for purely local consumption.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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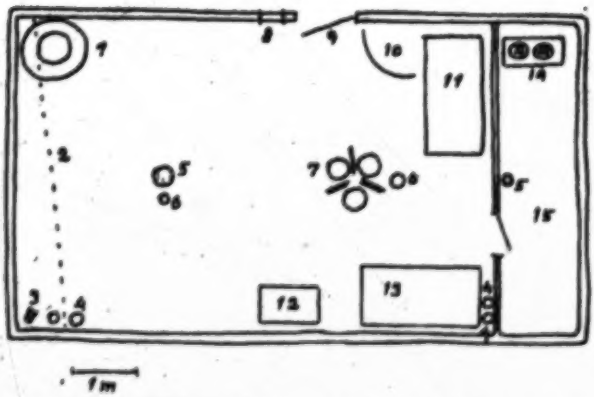

Idina's house. 1, basket; 2, clothes-line; 3, broom; 4, jars, in the back room on low shelf; 5, posts supporting roof; 6, small dimension bamboo poles, supports for the ceiling; 7, hearth with three round hearthstones; 8, shuttered opening through which the bolt may be reached; 9, door; 10, cassava for food; 11, spare bed; 12, table; 13, Idina's bed; 14, shelf for jars; 15, store-room behind mud wall with door.

[361] man and his two wives. The houses were grouped round a common courtyard, the doors giving upon this space and not on the nearby village thoroughfare.

The three houses bore the names of Iseliña's house, Idina's house, and Baba's house. The elder wife, Iselina, had several minor children, who slept either near
352 her own bed or in the living area. She owned furnishings as modern as a chair
177 and a cupboard with shelves, besides the usual objects in these houses, baskets, bamboo mugs, hen's nest and roost, ladder and water jars. She also had an earthen-
[415 ware beer jar which, one day when I called on her, was standing on the fire,
273] nearly making the froth boil over. She was preparing beer for her husband's friends, who had just dropped in.

352 The new wife, Idina, had a store-room in her house, and there was also a large heap of cassava, meant for food. As often seen in these houses, she had also
[353 a guest bed. She had a number of jars and baskets, but no hen's nest. Straight
262] across the room she had suspended a line on which she put her clothes. Such an
[296] arrangement was often used, especially by the bachelors; they had a line for their shirts. Clothes-hangers were not in use. You just threw your clothes across the line. A wardrobe was never seen.

342 The interior of Baba's house presented a peculiar picture. It was divided into
352 three rooms, a living-area in the middle; at one side the bed-room, at the other a store-room. The bed-room had only one bed and a wooden chest. There was no hearth in the living-room—for the husband had his meals prepared by one of his wives. But there was a true accumulation of tables, chairs, suitcases, and a

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

88| I went to the place and got permission to enter the hut in which the first part of the ceremony took place. I found there the parents of the girl, the girl sitting enveloped in clothes in one corner of the hut, and some older females, one of whom was the acting *unnyago*. Some male guests were also present[20]. As the girl had had her first catamenia the present ceremony marked at the same time the end of her preparation for marriage.

[273 278] The *unnyago* prepared a beverage of beer in which a light-brown medical powder *(imbondanya)* was put. First the girl had to drink from it, then the parents followed. This beverage was believed to strengthen *(ubusisya)* the consumers. Then a spear was handed to the girl by her father, and the girl handed it in turn to some relatives of the bridegroom waiting near the hut. These persons had to bring the [582 583] spear to the girl's bridegroom as a sign that he could now marry the girl[21], but not before he had brought a bull to the girl's father. After [431] this the girl, now sitting in the middle of the hut, was given small gifts from the participants in the ceremony.

[291 342 516 868 415]

Practical instruction of premature girls in house-hold matters.

[302] Following this the whole body of the girl was anointed before the door of the hut. The *unnyago* began by anointing her legs; then the [278] girl herself continued it. The ointment was prepared from castor oil and a powder of red wood *(Kipimba,* found commonly in the environment of Lake Rukwa). At this moment a male participant in the cere- [606] mony chanced to, come out of the hut, and suddenly a young woman

[20] Cf. Wilson, Introduction, p. 258; The Study of African Society, p. 11 (The Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. 2, 1939).

[21] *ukwega:* to take (also as regards marrying); *ubwega:* nuptials.

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

462 252 264 very substantial, the main meal being taken in the evening shortly before sunset.

415 [354] *8. Manufacture.* The pot for cooking *(indeku)* is placed on three stones which form the hearth *(ikipembero*, hearth stones). The flat bowl made of clay used for the needs of the kitchen is called *ulwangabia* and a pig pot used for storing water *ingumbe*. The pots of clay 415 are manufactured by Kissi women because in their land on the north- 439 eastern shores of Lake Nyassa the best clay is found. In the eastern part of the Nyakyusa country adjacent to Kissi land the women visit the pottery markets of the Kissi, but to the remoter villages, e. g. around the Rungwe volcano the pottery is brought by Kissi men. In this case, owing to the great distance from the Kissi-Land the men carry the loads of eight to ten pots on their head between split poles of bamboo. The Kissi pots I saw in the Rungwe Station were ornamented in [462] a rough way with red ochre and seemed only slightly baked. The [324] hearth stones, however, are made by the Nyakyusa women themselves as I was able to observe near Rutenganio, where widows manufactured them for sale.

285 In many villages of the Nyakyusa I could watch basket-making. This [462] I saw being done by men. In the chief's hut in Katumba I had the opportunity to admire a great number of very big baskets *(iftuba)* for [237] storing grain, smeared with cow dung on the outside. The attractive closely wickered baskets, which are filled with *malesi* (millet) and then [273] placed in water for a night in the process of beer-brewing were originally made by the Buanyi, but nowadays also the Nyakyusa are said to be skilled enough to weave them. I had no opportunity to observe it, but could acquire an excellent specimen of that wicker-work.

264 [515] *9. The Meal.* At the beginning of each meal the hands are washed, including those of children. The men take their meal separately from the women. The wives only eat when their husbands have been satisfied. Boys under ten years eat with their mothers, but as soon as they begin to live in age-set villages, they eat together with their friends of their own age-set, as described in detail by Mr. G. Wilson in his "Introduction of Nyakyusa Society" (Bantu Studies X, p. 371). The head of the family likes to eat together with his friends.

262 Meat is eaten very seldom, but on special occasions such as marriages, death lamentations, christenings of Christianized natives, enormous [192] quantities are devoured. *Inyama* (Swahili: *nyama)* is the Nyakyusa word for all sorts of meat, *ingombe* for that of cattle and *ingombekwa* for that of oxen. Near Utengule I saw black pigs *(ingurwe*, pig)

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

262 The tender leaves of pumpkins and taro plants (*amasimbi*, leaves of taro), as well as of a number of other plants growing wild (*indeke*) are also used as vegetables. This food is called *iseke*, a word denoting all sorts of green vegetables.

In his treatise on "The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa" (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. 1; 1938, p. 43). G. Wilson points out that the fruit of the so — called *unsyunguti* — tree is "both [278] delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment (*inyemba*)", but he adds that he had been unable to find out the botanical name of this useful tree. Perhaps the following passage in the article of Dr. Kerr Cross ("Notes on the Country Lying between Lakes Nyasa and Tanganyika"; Proc. Roy. Geogr. Inst. N.S.Vol. XIII, 1891, p. 98) may be helpful in this connection: "There is a tree of the 314 sycamore family which grows extensively all over the north of the [362] lake called mwisyungute by the natives which might be developed. [386] It is a most picturesque tree which produces a food, an oil, and a dye. The oil or fat, when cool, is solid, even at a tolerably high temperature, and is like beeswax. It burns well as a night-light, and with wax might [388] be made into candles. In a rude way I have made candles of it. It might also make an excellent soap."

273 As an adjunct to these foods curdy milk (*ulukama ulukafu*) is very [272] much esteemed[9], to say nothing of the various types of beer, mostly *prepared from millet for the men. Large fields of millet are, therefore,* to be seen everywhere in the land of the Nyakyusa. On one occasion I attended a beer drink in the hut of a chief. The conduct of the natives present, the chief and his advisers (*amafumu*), was in every respect praise-worthy. Pleasant and interesting stories were narrated. Not [574] infrequently the invitation of a commoner who has had some differences with his chief or one of the *amafumu* to such a feast is regarded as a gesture of reconciliation.

243 As in the time of Sir H. H. Johnston so also to-day "all the oxy-meadows are planted with rice." A traveller coming from the hilly region to the north on nearing Lake Nyasa is struck by numerous large fields of rice in the plain at the northern end of the lake.

178 *11. Crafts.* Mackenzie (1925) is certainly justified in complains of the decay of the arts and crafts among the Nyakyusa. The Indian and European influence is to be seen everywhere in the deterioration and final dissolution of these branches of the ancient culture of the Nyaky-

[9] A. Wilson, Introduction, p. 286.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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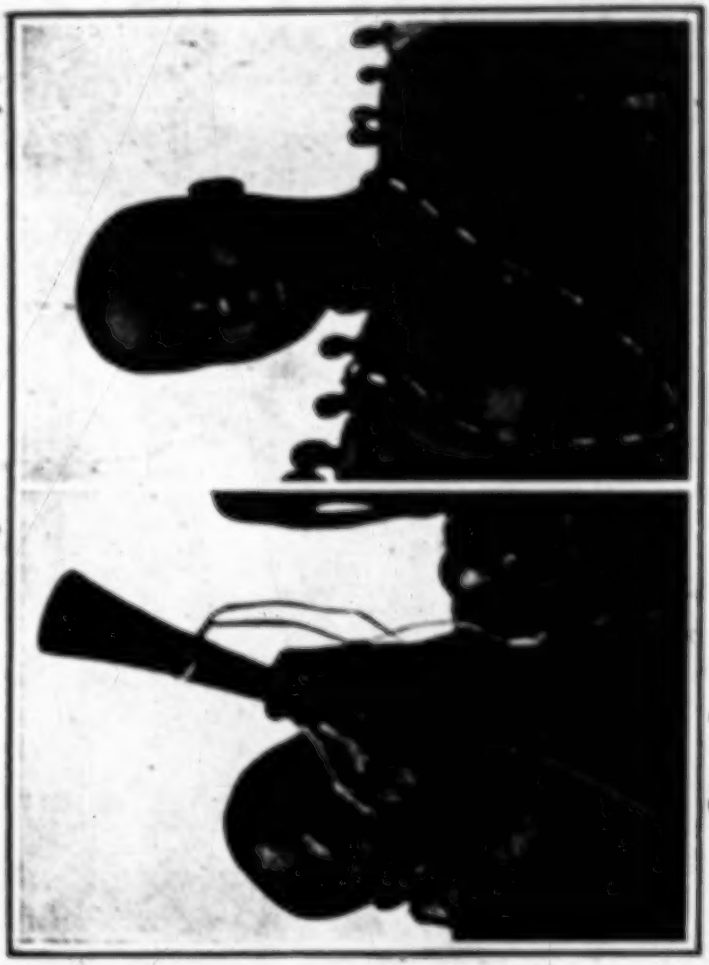

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TOBACCO SMOKING.

Some may be easily seen pipe for a dress smokers. Each takes one long puff, and slowly exhales after he has handed the pipe to his neighbour. Many pure their own tobacco, and often take it in the form of snuff.

A YOUNG WOMAN.

Young women are not always so simply dressed, many wear quantities of beads on their necks and arms, and some are weighted down on neck, arms and ankles with coils of copper wire. The clean shaven head, however, is a distinction to all girls who wish to be smart.

[Facing p. 64]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

232 neck to tail, saying, "You will now give a cow-calf." What remains of the medicine is put into the stall, and the next calf will be a female. A cow that kills her calf in dropping it is given a medicine which will prevent the recurrence of the fatality. Medicine is also given if the milk is not satisfactory in quantity; and by rubbing in a medicine from tail to neck specialists claim to be able to tell whether a calf in the womb is male or female.

232 754 A disease which does not yield to treatment is the work either of the spirits or of a sorcerer. Divination is resorted to, and the particular spirit operating having been discovered, the appropriate offerings are made, and the disease will now yield to treatment. If it is due to witchcraft, the chief is informed, and he publicly announces that if the animal is not well by next day, he will have the poison test applied to discover the culprit. This, however, if done at all to-day, is done in secrecy, for the chief who permits the poison cup to be administered is liable to severe penalties. But so universal is the belief in witchcraft that the suppression of the poison cup is adduced as the cause of a great increase in the number of sorcerers, and consequently of the general insecurity.

6% Cattle are sometimes deliberately poisoned. A man has a case at court, and it goes against him, although he is convinced that he is in the right. He is ordered • [578] to pay a cow to his antagonist; which he does, but he first poisons it with a slow-working drug, and the animal will die in a few days. The successful litigant, although he knows perfectly the cause of the death,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nothing was left to chance. The spirits having been placated, the natural skill of the hunters must be reinforced by medicines. Indeed it is not improbable that the native would say that the whole of his skill and success is due to medicines and ceremonies. The warrior goes out to battle armed and protected by prayers, drugs, and a good conscience; equally for the hunter good morals, good medicines, are as important as reliable weapons and a steady nerve. *Unketa ua nyanga*, to ensure a good spear-throw, or a straight aim with the ancient rifle which some hunters carried, was rubbed into flesh cuts in the hands; and *burunga*, to make sure that the animal died quickly and without a long chase, was incised into the arms; but more frequently, and more effectively for this purpose, *bulembe* was attached to the spear. This latter is a deadly poison, happily, perhaps, known only to a very few, for a single scratch is said to be fatal. It is said that the Germans tried unsuccessfully to secure the secret of its manufacture. The poison is attached, in a leaf, to the blade of the spear, and the thrust into the flesh of the animal releases it, so that it enters the blood, and causes a speedy death.

224 789 [278]

Women must not touch or go near hunting weapons, which are kept in the roof of the house. The spears must not be placed near the fire, lest the game, sniffing in the breeze the smell of smoke, deduce the presence of mankind, and make off. The hunters must eat only freshly cooked food, for cold food destroys, as it does also for chiefs, the virtue of their medicines. Fatal results are sure to follow contact

224 784

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

223 which the birds settle on the branches and are skilfully caught. The other method is to throw dust in the air, where birds are numerous, just after the young begin to leave the nests. The birds, "thinking it is rain," settle on the ground and are easily caught.

226 *Fishing.*—Fishing remains an important part of the year's work for those living near river or lake. For river fishing, huts are built in the vicinity of the place where the traps are to be set, for the fishers live there as long as the season lasts. Ceremonies similar to those observed before the hunters set out for the bush, must be performed. Sometime in May, when the river is in flood, the chief fisher of the Mbaka dreams of fish, a sign that the time has come to begin the year's work. A great quantity of *sakonda*, fish poison, is prepared, each fisher, and there may be as many as fifty, preparing his own. When all are ready, led by the chief fisher, they go to the water, and trample the poison leaves into the bottom of the river. The poison sickens the fish, which are then easily caught in the traps which are set for them with the mouth opening upstream. As soon as all the traps are set, the men lie down on their backs on the bank, and proceed to invoke the aid of sympathetic magic. They open and close their mouths, gasp, in imitation of dying fish. The probability of a good season is greatly enhanced by this process, which, though omitted now by many, is still widely followed.

The traps are laid in rows right across the river, and are in the form of immense baskets with gradually

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 patient, they would almost certainly kill him, for it is very probable that a patient who believed that he had taken one of these by mistake or otherwise, would die of sheer fright.

825 The *inyifuira* is a fiery flying-serpent, which lives in pools, and turns the waters red; climbs trees, which thereupon break out into flame, but are not consumed; chases its prey for five miles, and lucky is he whose heels are light enough to escape; and finally, when dead, its body is made into the most powerful drug in the Konde Pharmacopœia. It gives authority to chiefs, and skill to doctors and diviners, and the common man who obtains possession of a tiny quantity is assured of success and riches. To tell the ordinary heathen Konde that all this is fable, is like telling very good and not necessarily unintelligent persons of a few generations ago, that there was no devil, with horns and hoofs and a tail!

Only the biggest doctors undertake to kill this monster when a fresh supply is called for. And even they, before beginning, protect themselves and their assistants with a great variety of other drugs, not so dangerous to obtain. The creature having been located in some pool or other, a small hut is built at a great distance, into which in the past a slave was put, to-day a sheep or a goat. The hut is now clayed over, and closed on all sides, the clay being thickly planted with sharp knives, and the whole sprinkled plentifully with a powdered food, of which the snake is very fond. All being ready, a swift runner is sent to the pool, a bell in his hand, the ringing of which attracts the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

snake. It emerges from the pool, with a *hu hu* sound, and the runner flies for his life towards the hut, pursued by the snake. Attracted by the sprinkled food, it climbs all over the hut, and is cut to pieces on the knives. After a little, and usually at night, the doctor in charge goes out to reconnoitre, and, finding the dead body, sends to tell all the surrounding chiefs and big doctors; who come, protected by a powerful prophylactic, for even the dead *isyifwira* can kill the unprotected. Each chief gets a portion of the flesh, a large share going to Chungu, who in turn distributes it to his leading subordinates and doctors. The blood is collected and sold, a small portion for a cow, to smaller men, who have no natural right to it.

825 278

The dread in which this medicine (*ifingira* it is now called) is held by the common people, is extraordinary. At Karonga in 1923 a man was accused of attempting to poison another. On his person was found a small packet done up in bark-cloth, which no native in the court would touch; and when the magistrate took it into his hands and proceeded to open it, the court was cleared in an instant. Whether it was the medicine made from the *isyifwira* snake, I do not know; but it undoubtedly belonged to that class of medicines.

Illnesses may be due to natural causes, which the native calls God. They yield to treatment without any ceremony. The prayer already quoted indicates the Konde attitude to such diseases. Secondly, illness may be due to witchcraft, and then there is no hope of cure until the sorcerer has been outwitted by

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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde_FN17

753 the use of both drugs and ceremonies. Next, the action of the spirits brings on diseases, and until the cause of their anger has been dealt with, no doctor will undertake to cure the patient. Wounds or injuries in battle, by falling trees, by attack of animals, or by any other means, may be due to any of the above causes.

759 The doctor may be a man or a woman. The fee varies from about a farthing to a sixty shilling cow, and the manner of payment varies also. In some cases payment precedes treatment; in others, it follows; and in still others the degree of cure effected decides the amount to be paid.

757 In what follows, no attempt is made at scientific classification; rather a rough grouping of symptoms guides the sequence of items. Medicines are usually administered in beer or in milk, hot or cold, according to the disease which is being treated. And the place where the decoction is drunk is very important; in snake bite, for instance, it is fatal for the patient to go inside the house before the medicine has been taken which it is hoped will save his life. A native Christian was, in 1913, suspended from ordinances for drinking medicine while seated on a banana stem at a place where two paths met.

828 Mental troubles of various kinds are treated, and not, I am assured, without success in some cases.
757 *Maya* is grief, due to any cause. It is treated by giving
●278 an infusion of a plant called *nsale*, not unlike parsley in appearance. The result is great cheerfulness in the patient, due, no doubt, to exhilarating qualities in

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

the plant. *Ipingu* is sadness, or anger. The parents or relatives of an absent friend, having no news of him for some time, give way to grief or anger, and the emotion causes illness in the absent one. The latter goes to the diviner to learn why he is ill, and is told. The leaves of a plant called *inyekenyeke* are pounded and boiled in water, and the infusion drunk, the patient saying in the presence of the doctor: §28 757 278

> "Let the words of those people fall back upon them. I have spoken no evil; I am not a hard man. God and the spirits behold me. May I get sleep."

Minyenya is nightmare. The actual meaning of the word is *ancestors*, and the bad dreams are due to their action. It is cured by an infusion of the plant *katetya*, taken while repeating the incantation: "We drive you away, you who trouble us. Leave our friend that he may sleep." *Amaleiu* is disobedience to parents or relatives. Take the fruit of *imbangala* and *mseya*, and add the flesh of the fish *ingumba*; reduce to a powder, and mix with beer in a small calabash. This the disobedient one is forced to drink three or four times, nothing being left in the calabash. I have no doubt at all that most children find obedience less obnoxious than the mixture. Similar success attends the use of a drug made from the *malembwa* tree. The *kasuka* is a tiny creature which covers itself with scraps of grass, and moves by using its head as a lever. It is a sovereign remedy, when mixed with other drugs, for madness, as well as for that form of madness which

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

makes a woman unfaithful to her husband. For *impulamutu*, a brain trouble which makes the sufferer strike his head against trees or other hard objects, there is a cure, but I have not discovered what it is. For dizziness, an infusion is made from the roots of the *kalemerera* plant, and the patient first drinks, then washes his face with, the infusion. Epilepsy is treated with a mixture made from the roots and leaves of many plants. The mouth is forced open if necessary when the drink is being administered. Natives assert that cures are effected, but I know of no cases that have been cured.

There is no disease more common among the Bantu peoples than ulcers, sores, abscesses. The common *kironda* is treated with a wash made from the infusion of pounded *burungo* leaves. If it does not yield to treatment, it is due to witchcraft or spirits, and in either case the necessary preliminaries must be gone through. A special form of this disease is found when the ulcers break out on the breast or in the mouth. The diseased part is washed with an infusion of *indobo* bark, and another infusion is taken internally twice a day for a few days. A more malignant form is called *nderoka*, for which the leaves of the plant *kanga* are infused, and applied as for *kironda*, with the same ceremonies, if a cure is not effected within a reasonable time. *Mpenga* is a slightly different form of *nderoka*. *Kabimba* is something of the nature of an inside tumour which must be let out. Roots of the *tubimba* shrub are reduced to a dry powder, spread on the leaf of the *untaguta* tree, and bound to

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

the place with a cord made from fibre of *kabumbu*; 757
in about ten minutes the swelling will burst and the 278
matter escape. The same results follow from binding
the place with cord made from *wagulaka* shrub.
Gourds are often used instead of leaves, and are tied
on with cords passing through holes bored in the
sides of the gourd. For syphilis (*kazuwadi*) the roots
of the *indabi* shrub are infused and drunk, and a
powder made from *indabo* shrub is rubbed into the
wounds or sores.

Kitarya is intussusception of the bowels, found mostly in children, and usually fatal. When one child after another in a family dies, an examination is made of the bowels, bamboo knives being used for the operation. If *kitarya* is indicated, the parents drink an infusion made from the leaves of a creeper called *ingwinka*, which is taken with beer. Then the bed is turned so that the head is where the feet were. The woman wears on her neck, tied up in a piece of bark, a section of the plant from which the infusion is made. But in giving this medicine, as in many others, the doctor will say, "This medicine is not mine; it is God's; He must work in you." When another child is born, the doctor is called to give it medicine, and to shave its head. The fee is a cow; and a hoe is paid when the child reaches the age of three.

For other internal conditions, a mere enumeration 757
must suffice. Internal pains, dysentery, diarrhœa,
constipation, worms, vomiting, indigestion, and wasting diseases are all treated in similar fashion, each having its own specific drug or mixture of drugs.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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Fever, if due to natural causes, is treated with the infusion of the leaves of *amafumbo;* if due to the action of the spirits, a prayer for mercy is added. *Sekema* is malaria with headache. The patient must sit in the open, where he can see the sun, and drink from a closely woven basket an infusion of *lusisigembe;* and in some cases the extracted juice of *mavemove* is put into one ear. There is a "general sickness" called *bukawya*, due to witchcraft. To neutralize the witchcraft, the whole body is washed with an infusion of *ulukanganawya*, and a drink is given made from the leaves of the *mangwina* tree. Severe burning is generally believed to be the work of the spirits if it occurs at night, and it is at night that most burns occur. The native is a heavy sleeper, and he lies with his feet stretched out towards the fire. A brand falls upon a foot, and he is burned before he has properly awakened; but it was the work of the spirits, who have now to be placated with cloth, or a goat, or a fowl. Then the burned parts are smeared with the honey of a small insect called *amawya*, and washed with the infusion of the leaves of the *kasambawya* shrub. Scalding is treated with castor oil.

Muscular pains like *ikirasu* and *ilyaru*, which are probably pneumonia and rheumatism, are treated first as due to natural causes, and if this fails, witchcraft is assumed to be the cause, and steps taken accordingly. Prayer is offered, if the following can be called prayer:

"You *kirasu*, if you have come from God, the medicine will cure you. If you have been sent by

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

men, are not they also flesh? They fail, they die; 757
but first they kill us. Let this disease fly away 277
from me."

An infusion of the roots of *indobo* tree already mentioned, is now given to the patient.

Diseases of the eyes, ears, teeth, gums are also treated. A list would be tedious, and a detailed statement there is no space for. Enough to say that a person qualified for the task could write a good-sized book on the subject of native medicine. There are, however, still some diseases and practices of which some brief account must be given.

Snake bite. Naturally in a land where snakes are numerous, antidotes are in use, and are claimed to be successful. The roots of *kisongwa* infused and drunk, are said to be a sure remedy, if taken in time. A rich man, however, would not be advised to take this alone, for his riches bring him under suspicion of being a sorcerer, and the snake may have bitten him by command of his jealous fellow-sorcerers. To overcome this an incantation must be used.

"May you be defeated! The goods I have, I stole from no man. They are my own. This is true, as God sees me."

Another remedy is the root of *kitumbo*, the infusion mixed with soot from the inside of the house. The mixture must be drunk outside, for if the patient goes in he will die. A method favoured by other doctors is to hold the part bitten over a fire to which has been added the leaves of the *sakwani*, a large tree. Presently

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

757 the fang will drop out, and the man will be saved!
278 There are men living near me who claim to have seen this being done.

844 The birth of children is accompanied by loving care, gross superstition, and much medical treatment, useful or otherwise. All women at that time are given a drink of *indobo* leaves, pounded and mixed with water. If the placenta has not come away satisfactorily, castor oil is given. And if pain supervenes, the bark of *indobo* is again given, pounded and mixed with water. For a child weak at birth, roots of *nerubo* and *nanguina* are taken, pounded, mixed with water, and the child is washed in the mixture. Sterility in man or woman can be removed
842 by the right drugs; and when a woman is getting on in years and wishes no more children, a mixture is in use which will have the desired effect. Medicines
847 for producing abortion are widely known, and
832 frequently used, as also are love potions.

757 Steaming is resorted to in cases of great pain or weakness. Water is cooked in a large pot, with the bark of *mparampara* added. When the pot has boiled, it is taken off the fire, and the patient, covered with a mat, kneels over it, supported if very weak, for about ten minutes. Massaging also is employed when one is very tired, the leaves of *mayuka* being pounded to give a juice for lubrication, or, as the people themselves say, to get into the body through the pores. Cupping is employed for headache and rheumatic pains. Eight cuts are made in two lines, on each side of the head; a small horn is put over the cuts; a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

vacuum is created by suction, and the hole in the horn 757
closed with beeswax. In about a quarter of an hour the cup is removed. Pain in the eyes, legs, back, is so treated.

Smallpox, the most dreaded of all scourges, has 757
already been dealt with under "Worship" and 278
"Witchcraft," and all that is here necessary is to indicate what is done for the cure of patients. An infusion made from the roots of *ikanganunya* and *sambwe* is given to drink, and the body is washed with the same mixture. The pustules are opened with the thorns of *unuba*. But more important than the medicine 755
is a clear conscience in the patient; and prayer to the spirits and confession of sins must be made before the medicine is administered. The father, in the presence of all the family, says: "My son has smallpox; let us be at peace; whoever has anything against him, let him declare it." Any matters against the sick man are now inquired into. It may be a debt, or a quarrel, or a charge of impudence in the case of a boy. The sick man is also questioned, and makes his confession, usually of misconduct with girls, who are forbidden to approach the house. If married women are involved, neither they nor their husbands may come near. A prayer for the removal of the disease is now offered by the family representative, at the door of the house in which the patient lies, and the prayer is accompanied by the usual squirting of water from the mouth, which is never omitted. The medicine may now be administered to the sick man. A prophylactic is used by all the other members of the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

restored to their places, and the body is buried; and all who had any part in the operation drink medicine to protect them from the disease from which the man died. 763

For wounds in battle an infusion of the roots of *kamemena* is given to cause vomiting, in case there is blood in the stomach. The wounds are washed with an infusion of *impigi* roots, and bound with leaves of *untugutu*, fresh dressings being applied every day until the wounds are healed. 752 278

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

went from Mwemusi's country down the path by Mwakalukwa's to Mwakaleli. He lived a year at Lumbila and found it too cold, and thence he went to Masoko, and thence to Lubaga. All men feared him and his animals. 589

In another version Lwembe's survival is linked with the possession of *ifugila*, the medicine on which still, today, the authority of chiefs is thought largely to depend. [773] [173]

Nkekete had much food and Mwemusi killed him because he had no *ifugila*. He killed him and he rose again. 'Why don't you die?' Mwemusi asked. Nkekete replied: 'I don't know, I have nothing, I am quite alone, I have no *ifugila*.' Mwemusi killed him again and he rose, many times. Then at last Nkekete said, 'I am tired.' And he showed Mwemusi and his men a razor (*ulusende*) and said 'Kill me by cutting my throat with this', and they did and he stayed dead.

Mwemusi feared to kill Lwembe because he was very 'heavy'. He had *ifugila*, and when they tried to kill him they found his house full of animals, lions and others. . . . Once he turned himself into a stone when they tried to capture him. So Mwemusi told him to go far off, and he went with his two wives and two men, Kisonde and Kimsenile. He went off riding on a lion like a donkey, with a lion behind his wives, and men were astonished when they saw him.

It is perhaps significant that Lwembe who survived is 'The Razor', by which Nkekete was killed, and the python from which *ifugila* medicine is made must be killed with razors and in no other way (*vide infra*, p. 60). [789] [825] [278]

It is Lwembe's capacity to make things live and grow which is always emphasised: [773]

Lwembe and another were given millet in their hands; Lwembe's sprouted, but not that of his fellow. He was told, 'You plant here and the other there.' The next day Lwembe's had sprouted, but not that of the other. He and his friend went to a hill in dry weather and wanted water. He just struck the earth and water came out. . . . He created leopards and kept them, and he moulded cattle of clay, he moulded them and they became cows, and his friends did the same and they remained clay.

When the heroes were driven out there was a fearful famine in BuKinga, for they had taken the fertility of the country with them, which is why, the priests say, sacrifices to them were begun by the Kinga. The priests of Lubaga were explicit on the point: [773] [173]

Mlosi (Lwembe 137) came from BuKinga, he took the road to

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER X

MEDICINES

278 789 755 THE Nyakyusa regard medicines as an ultimate source of power —given the right ingredients and the 'know how' a man may achieve anything. This conception is integral to their view of reality, moreover the distinctions made regarding the just use of them throw light on the Nyakyusa moral system, and must be examined. But a full analysis of Nyakyusa medicines (imiketa) would require a book in itself together with an expert knowledge of botany and of the properties of plants. Here we are concerned only with those aspects of the belief and practice in medicines which touch directly on social relationships or which illuminate the Nyakyusa conception of reality and morality, and their use of symbols.

Already many references have been made to medicines for they are an adjunct of most rituals, but their use is not confined to these; often a private individual is treated alone, and such a treatment is not classed by the Nyakyusa as a ritual (ukuyaga), so we must stray, for a little time, beyond the limits of our title.

(a) TYPES OF MEDICINES

278 789 A classification in terms of purpose shows a close conformity with the use of medicines by other peoples in Africa. The use of medicines for protection and cure; for fertility; for success in any chancy undertaking from hunting and fishing to love-making, theft, a court case, or securing a job; for exacting vengeance; and for oracles, is familiar enough. What emerges from a detailed analysis is that the intractability of *persons* is felt to be at least as great a problem as the intractability of things, and many treatments are directed towards transforming personalities and developing moral qualities. The medicine given to a bride at puberty is to make her 'patient and polite' as well as fertile; the medicines given to chiefs and village headmen are to make them dignified and wise. A thief is often treated with medicines by his relatives to cure him of his thieving habits; and the famous guambinde medicine is used to control the anger of a husband, a chief, an employer, or a superior officer. (It is said to be much in

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

demand among police and soldiers as well as wives.) Then there are medicines used by men and women to make themselves more attractive and persuasive as lovers, litigants, leaders, clients, servants, salesmen, and so on. 278 789

Certain Nyakyusa medicines are based on observation of cause and effect. Their pharmacopia includes purges and poisons—for example, castor oil has long been cultivated and used both for making ointment and as an aperient—and some of the drugs administered, and the poulticing with hot leaves, may well be therapeutic; we have no systematic knowledge of the plants used and cannot assess them. But the scientific element is demonstrably limited, for a great many medicines are based on the principle of association, a feeling of likeness between things, and things felt to be alike are believed to react on one another, like producing like, or like things being antagonistic. 278 (789)

No distinction is made by the Nyakyusa themselves between those medicines which one trained in western science would say are based on observation of cause and effect (e.g. a purge or a poison), and those which are based on association—indeed our friends constantly cited supposed observations of cause and effect as evidence of the efficacy of all sorts of medicines and taboos. Mwakyonde used charcoal, mixed with iron from a forge, as a medicine for protection against lightning, burying a little, and powdering a little, and sprinkling it about a homestead, 'because at the forge they blow the bellows and it says, "*Mali, mali, mali*" (i.e. boom, boom, boom) and the lightning *ikamulaka* (booms). When we blow the bellows at a forge it makes a noise like thunder.' There was no hint that he was aware that electricity might be attracted by iron, but he insisted that where he had buried the charcoal and iron the lightning *never* struck again, and he regarded this as cause and effect. Therefore the distinction we have made between observation and association is ours, not theirs. (751) (721)

That the symbolic element is at least as important as the practical was apparent from Lyandileko's treatment for sterility, which was famous for its success. She had three patients one morning, all women wanting to bear children. In front of her she ranged seventeen banana petals and mixed four different medicines in them. Then she chose three young banana shoots and bored a hole in each, inserting into it a length of the mid-rib of a banana leaf, slightly hollowed to form a runnel. She told an onlooker to bring the first petal full of medicine and poured it into the runnel. 842 278

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

279 §42 The patient knelt and received the medicine in cupped hands, guiding it into her mouth. Lyandileko hung a little medicine horn on the runnel before pouring. The patient kept the medicine in her mouth until the runnel was removed and she spat through the hole. Then the hole was filled up with the petal off which the medicine had been poured. Lyandileko smeared the patient on the belly with medicine from a horn, and pushed the horn down under her bark-cloth to the genitals, in front, and on to the buttocks behind. As she did this she said, 'If you are barren the banana will rot, if you are fertile I give you medicine to bear a child.' This was done for each patient in turn. Then the banana suckers were planted and the medicine from the remaining petals poured into bottles (two made of banana leaves, one a Vermouth bottle) for the patients to take home. They were to take a dose each day for a week. As the treatment was proceeding Lyandileko talked of her successes: 'So-and-so drank twice and her belly sprouted. . . . So-and-so drank and she came back to me pregnant. . . .'

After a week the women came back to see whether their banana suckers had sprouted. Lyandileko explained: 'The banana sucker is the child, it sprouts quickly, it is the belly which sprouts quickly. [78] If it dies they consult an oracle—the woman does not conceive.' And her son added, 'If a woman's sucker dies Lyandileko tells her: "Don't say I have not worked for you, don't you see your banana? You are rotten in yourself, indeed they must have allowed your cord to fall between your mother's legs."[1] They rejoice very much if it has grown.' Each petal represents a child; Lyandeliko used male and female symbols (plantain and sweet banana petals) alternately for boys and girls. One mother who had no child had asked for ten, another with two already for eight, another with three already for six. Lyandileko's arithmetic had gone wrong for there were only seventeen petals altogether. The horn is the horn of protection (*ulupanda lwa* (*pinge*) and it means here, 'May the "iron" stay nicely within, may it not come out in front or behind, may it stay inside.' (Iron is a symbol for the reproductive [80] capacity of women.) Neither Lyandileko nor her son (who were both forthright in their discussion of ritual) seemed to be conscious of any symbolic enactment of coition, though a knowledge of the symbolism of the death and puberty rituals suggests that.

[1] Cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, p. 145.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(5) MEDICINES AND MORALITY

Doctors classify most of their medicines in terms of the supposed mystical causes of disease, and the determining factor in diagnosis is what quarrels have occurred in the patient's circle of kinsmen and friends, or what wrongdoing he has on his conscience. The medicines mentioned to us by various doctors were for treatment of sickness caused by 'the breath of men', by sorcery, by vengeance magic, by the protective medicine put on wives, by the anger of the shades or living senior relatives, by incest, by spearing or binding with ropes,[1] or abnormal birth. Only a few of the medicines listed were for the treatment of observable symptoms such as fever, too frequent periods, or swelling after snake-bite, rather than the supposed mystical cause. 278 753

The emphasis on discovering the mystical cause and counteracting it was shown very clearly when Godfrey Wilson accompanied Mwakyonde, the doctor, to the home of a patient, a young man so weak that he could not lift a limb. Mwakyonde spent two minutes examining him, and provided leaves with which he was poulticed, and a medicine which was rubbed into cuts made all over his body, but the greater part of the day was devoted to discussing the quarrel between kinsmen, from which his illness was thought to have arisen, to persuading the kinsmen to 'speak out', and to preparing and administering a medicine which would cause the death of any one of them who was working sorcery against another. 753 578 [757]

Medicine for the treatment of a disease is held to be ineffective—at the best a temporary palliative—unless the underlying cause is discovered and dealt with. For example, doctors spoke of possessing a medicine against *ilyepa*, the disease caused by a kinsman to whom a debt in cattle is due, but it is not effective alone. 'The wrongdoer drinks medicine and pays his kinsman. He must pay, for though the medicine may cure him temporarily the disease will come again if he does not pay his debt.'

The ultimate cause of disease is believed to be friction in social relationships—a breach in moral law—and so the study of medicines takes us directly to problems of morality. There is a deep-rooted conviction that medicines will not be effective if there is quarrelling in the family which uses them. This applies not only to medicines used in sickness, but also to those for protection [602]

[1] *op. cit.*, pp. 179-9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and achievement. An account of the treatment of a field for protection against wild pig emphasizes this.

If people wish to protect a crop from wild pig they go to a doctor to ask for medicine. When he gives it to them he tells them that there must be no quarrelling in the home after they have barricaded the field. Four women go to the field with the husband of the one who cultivates it. They go after sunset. One women is shaved; her head is a symbol of the garden devastated by pig. A second woman, who keeps her hair, ties a head-pad on her head and carries bananas with medicine. She enters the field and eats the bananas. The husband climbs a hill at a little distance, and two of the women go into the long grass close to the field. The bald pate twists a head-pad and the one with hair smears it with medicine and as they do so they look towards their husband and abuse him saying, 'You lay with your mother', and he swears at them saying, 'The leather aprons of your fathers' . . . and many other insults. Then the women walk round the edge of the field, sprinkling medicines, and they go out the way they came in. The circular pad is a symbol of the barricade placed round the field. When they return home they do not eat but go to sleep hungry (though the clever ones eat beforehand). If they quarrel, the pig finishes the food. It is as if quarrelling destroyed the fierceness, the power, of the protective medicine; you must put aside all quarrelling that the medicine may be powerful. If the pigs come it is as if there were a quarrel, so the woman and her husband quarrel in the field mimicking the pig. The husband on the hill is like the pig approaching the field, his wives in the long grass also represent pigs. . . . The husband and his wives quarrel only in the field. If, when the maize is ripe, the husband beats one of his wives for any cause she does not go to pick the maize herself, a friend picks it for her. If she goes in her anger she finds the maize finished, nothing but earth is left.

Here the link between medicines and morality is made plain. Quarrelling weakens medicines of all sorts and renders them ineffective. But a mimic quarrel between husband and wives in the fields renders the medicine effective. It represents the battle between the pig and the medicines. There is a suggestion elsewhere (pp. 69, 113) that pigs are *sent* by the shades when kinsmen or neighbours quarrel, but in the account just quoted it is implied that quarrelling in the home directly injures the medicine.

In themselves, many medicines are neutral. They may be put to good or evil ends, but because they are mysterious and powerful, they are feared, in the same sort of way as atomic energy is feared in contemporary society. Men use medicines themselves 'for purely peaceful purposes', but they are shocked at

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

the prospect of their enemies using them. The notion that medicines are a weapon which may be used rightly or wrongly is very clearly brought out in the attitude towards 'making' animals. If a private individual 'makes' lion, or leopard, or crocodile which kill men that is sorcery—there is no question about it—and we heard of at least one man who had been driven from his home because he was reputed to have made leopards which killed children and cattle,[1] but when Mwakyonde 'made' lions which drove off pig and did not attack men, that was a public service (*ante* p. 69). And when one chief uses lions in his conflict with another the action is felt to be comparable with war, rather than murder. In February 1937, four lions were hunting in a piece of bush country near the salt lick, which two chiefs claimed. Mwanaumbwe, a chief from the hills, had sent some of his men to clear fields in the bush, but Mwakagile (so, or his heir), the neighbouring chief, objected saying, 'This is my land.' There was a long case and finally the District Officer gave judgment in favour of Mwakagile and refused Mwanaumbwe any compensation for his work in clearing the bush. 'You got a crop for your labour,' he said. Mwanaumbwe was incensed by the judgment and grew even more angry when his men elected to remain on the land they had cleared and became men of Mwakagile. So, everyone said, Mwanaumbwe had sought medicines and created these lions. They killed seven cattle in a few days, attacking even by daylight. 'Yes,' we were told, 'there are always lions in the bush, but they do not ordinarily kill cattle as they have done now.'

Another chief who tried the same sort of thing was not so successful. 'Some time ago the chief Mwakila made elephants, he turned his wives into elephants and they are the bananas of Malapula, but Malapula said, "Let's try", and he created much rain which poured down on to the elephants and those wives died. Then Mwakila was defeated. How about you Europeans? Have you this custom? Do you turn a wife into an animal?'

'No!'

'We have it, if I choose I give my wife *isipita* and she becomes a lion which roars, it roars and eats people.'[2]

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 114.

[2] This, and the tale of a young man fleeing from justice who obtained a medicine to turn himself into a lion, were the only admissions of lycanthropy we heard—usually the medicines themselves (such as those of a chief) turn into animals, or the young of ordinary lion, leopard, or crocodile 'smell the medicines' and become attached to the 'owner' who feeds and commands them.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

787 A second class of medicines is not neutral at all, but itself
[278] selects between right and wrong. The most famous is the *mwaf* ordeal which is used to reveal the truth. The *mwaf* poison was formerly administered by a doctor,[1] before witnesses, and the innocent were believed to vomit almost immediately, while the guilty did not vomit at all, or were slow to do so, and fell ill, some even dying. Nowadays *mwaf* is administered only in the greatest secrecy, but various minor methods of divination, all of which turn on the correct use of medicines, are in common use. The 'divination with porridge' has been described (*vide supra*, p. 128). The medicine added to it is spoken of as 'a kind of *mwaf*'. Another method is to rub an inverted wooden cup on a smooth board. Questions are posed, as to the porridge. When the answer is 'no' the cup slips; when the answer is 'yes' the cup sticks. Sometimes a stick of *mutka* wood is rubbed on the ground in place of the cup on the board, and there are half a dozen other methods using bells, horns, segments of bamboo, a pipe, or boiling water. In each case virtue lies in the medicines added to the porridge or rubbed on to the cup or stick, and into scarifications in the diviner's hands. An ordinary man who has not been treated cannot use the instruments, and porridge without '*mwaf*' is useless.

791 Certain medicines used for protection and to wreak vengeance,
759 are also thought to be selective, and to injure only the guilty.
789 These are horns, owned by doctors. Mwanjisi (who came of a family of doctors) told us:

[770] My father had a water-buck horn filled with medicines and ointment, as a protection against witches. He used it, like other doctors, for burning the grass, for burning the rubbish heaps before planting millet, and for protecting a child. When the millet crops are poor, people say the witches have eaten it, and the next year the chief sends for the doctor and his protective horn. . . . He comes and makes fire and treats the tinder with ointment from his horn, and each pile of weeds is lit from that fire. . . . He sends some to the chief to fire the grass for fresh grazing. Then there is much milk, the cows that eat that grass give much milk for the witches stay away and neither eat the millet nor plunder the cows. So with a child, if a man has lost many children and has one left, he calls the doctor to come with his protective medicine (*ifipango*) and treat the child with medicines from his horn as a protection against witches. My father used the same horn for all these things.

[1] For a description of the procedure, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 113-6, 191-6.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

If a man has quarrelled with a kinsman, or is conscious of having bitter enemies, or hears that someone with whom he has had a dispute has 'gone to the doctors', he is likely to go to a horn doctor for protective medicine, even though he is perfectly well. 751 [578]

'The horn' is believed to discover and punish the guilty whether they are known to the injured or not, but if someone uses it without just cause the medicine will recoil on himself. The seven cases of using the horn reported to us[1] were all used in revenge: two for theft, two for seduction, and three for withholding cattle due. And it is revenge that was emphasized in one account of the treatment: 789 751 754

If someone has stolen my cow I go to a doctor and pay him a bull. Then he prepares the medicine (the horn) and stands facing it, with a spear over his shoulder, pointing towards it, and he speaks aloud saying: 'So-and-so, if you have not taken the cow you will recover, if you have eaten it you will die.' Then the breath (*indepe*) goes to the man named and if he has really stolen the cow he dies. . . . [685]

But another informant, listing the contents of a 'horn', stressed the protective element. It contains 'the bile of a crocodile, the skin of a python, and *ipyfiola* medicine (*side* p. 58) which has been used to kill men' . . . [278]

If a witch comes to throttle and kill you then the bile of the crocodile throttles and strikes him [the witch], and the *ipyfiola* does the same, it is to kill the witches, it spears those who come to throttle you. The skin of the python means that if people come to throttle you they find you have changed yourself into a python.

Another type of vengeance magic, *ifyepa*, is thought to work only between blood relatives.

If your father-in-law is angry it is your children he kills, not yourself. If the diviner says the disease comes from the woman's side of the family the protective medicine is given only to her, not to the man; if from his side only he is protected, not the wife. The relative who is angry drinks a medicine; he puts a barbed spear into the fire and when it is red hot he slashes a banana sucker with it and speaks the name, then the kinsman who is mentioned dies. [578]

A third type is that used to secure property (*ukuinepa*) and more thieves or adulterers, for the exclusive rights of a husband over his wife are treated as property rights. Often a medicated stick is placed in a field to ward off thieves, and some husbands [685] [684]

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 210-38.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

a missionary, was warned by her servants before Godfrey Wilson's arrival in her neighbourhood 'not to go out at night as there were *abasyambuta* about, sent by the Government to kill people and take their blood', and women going for firewood made a long detour to avoid his camp. One was overheard asking when she caught sight of him: 'Is that the man who kills people?' Angombwike explained that, since all really strong Nyakyusa medicines contained human blood, it was argued that European medicines, which were so powerful, must contain it also. 'They follow their own customs.' 789 751 754 186

It seems obvious to the Nyakyusa that Europeans must have strong medicines because their confidence and success are so great. Moreover, it is held (in theory) that they are immune to attacks from witchcraft. X, who had been a clerk and lost his job, and was bitter, expanded on this:

People say that Europeans have *isyifwila* (*vide* p. 58), see they are brave, they do not fear, if someone seizes a spear they do not fear, they just come to him, they are very brave. And also the witches say that they are unable to choke Europeans. When we hear people boasting of their mystical power (*amasye*) we always say to them: 'But if that is so, go and choke a European, show us!' Then they always say, 'Oh no, we can't do that, when we go to a European house at night we find it all lighted up and flaming, we can't get near them.' I think this is the power of the Holy Spirit which you Europeans have. [778]

He came of a well-known family of doctors and perhaps spoke from first-hand knowledge. He just laughed at the suggestion that the light might come from lamps. But the fact that Europeans were held to be immune did not prevent our servants and friends attributing our recurring attacks of malaria to witchcraft. [753]

(c) DOCTORS

Among the Nyakyusa, as perhaps in every society, the doctors with the greatest reputation are those at a distance, and a high proportion of the practitioners in the country are of foreign lineages, their fathers, or grandfathers, or great-grandfathers having come in, bringing medicines with them, and begun to practice. In fact, we were assured that there were *no* Nyakyusa doctors who were famous, they were all Sangu, or Kinga, or Kisi, or from Ngonde or Misuku in Nyasaland, but detailed investigation proved this to be false. The trade in medicines from a distance is a very old one and continues today. As we have seen, 791 [439] [278] [438]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

791 *ipi/uile* comes from west of Ngonde, or east of the Kinga; *umuji* 'came from 'Nyasaland'; medicine for fertility of the fields from [497] Misuku which is rich in food; war medicine from the Sangu and [278] Kinga. Whether neighbouring people get medicines from Bo- [458] Nyakyusa we do not know—no one ever suggested it, but it is likely that they do.

Since foreign doctors and medicines have the highest reputation [177] new treatments are welcomed. This is where the practice of medicines differs radically from the rituals directed to the shades in which the charter is tradition, and any deviation must be justified. But the willingness to accept something new did not lead to any systematic experiment, or any regard for experiment as such.

791 Anyone who chooses, and can pay the fees, can become a 278 doctor by apprenticing himself to a practitioner of repute, but it is very noticeable that the majority of well-known doctors come from families of doctors, the medicines being passed down from one generation to the next and sometimes taught to wives as well. Lyandileko, who has often been quoted, was taught certain medicines by her husband, and had a large practice. The diviners we knew were all men, but many women know a number of medicines. Once in practice, a doctor may add to his knowledge by buying a medicine from a fellow practitioner or exchanging medicines with him. One doctor we knew had paid two bulls for the secret of his protective medicine (*umlete gwa ijinga*). The teaching includes what plants or other ingredients to collect and how to 'cook' them, i.e. what to mix together and what quantities to use. As elsewhere in Africa, it is the material substance, usually vegetable, which is held to be important in any treatment. The spell—the words addressed to the medicine—is of little significance except that when vengeance magic is prepared the man on whose behalf it is done may say the name of his enemy (if he knows his identity) and state his own innocence in a phrase like the following: 'Return this medicine, thou Kyala, I have done no wrong whatsoever to cause me to be killed; if he says he will kill me let him die.'

The doctor (*isangage*) who 'knows medicines' is distinguished 791 from the priest or officiant (*usyage*) who knows how to conduct a 793 ritual directed to the shades or heroes. The *usyage* uses medicines in celebrating rituals, and he or she may be able to collect and prepare plants himself, but he sometimes has to apply to a doctor

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

for an appropriate medicine, and his main function is organising the observances. 791 793

(d) SYMBOLISM

In the field of medicine imagination runs riot, and associations are unpredictable. The ingredients of most medicines are professional secrets and unknown to the user who takes the concoction on trust from his doctor, and inquires no further. Therefore the study of medicine is not linked to the study of social relationships in the same manner as is the study of ritual, for the symbolism of medicines is individual and free, whereas the symbolism of ritual is common and obligatory. 278 789

Nevertheless, the imagination of doctors works within the general symbolic system, and such knowledge as we have indicates that many of the associations made are similar to those used in ritual. In medicine, as in the rituals of kinship, one type of banana stands for a male, another for a female, a banana sucker represents a kinsman, a sprouting shoot conception. Smithing and coition are felt to be alike, and the molten iron that trickles out of a forge is linked with menstrual blood. Hair stands for growth, and a bald pate a devastated field. A ring, or circumambulation, implies a protecting fence. Pythons, crocodiles, leopards, and lions stand for power and majesty, spears and thorns for attack; vomiting and emptiness for innocence, spitting for forgiveness. There is colour symbolism in medicines (though we know little of it save that the *ikipiki* which stands for the blood of the lineage is red, or reddish brown), and auditory symbolism, the rumble of thunder and the groaning of a bellows being identified. Men mime that which they wish to avoid, as well as that which they desire; like things are antagonistic as well as sympathetic. No doubt a laborious study of prescriptions would reveal further general principles of association, as well as the range of individual imagination, but such a task has yet to be undertaken. [131] [126] [125] [127] [122]

9: Wilson E-5 (1954-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

were connected. And if the expected judgement does not fall when a son has wronged his father it is said: 'The father loves the child so much that he only complains half-heartedly.'

It is admitted (when the point is pressed) that misfortunes may fall on good men as well as evil, and then they are interpreted as a discipline, a testing, from God, but this is 'a hard saying', scarcely to be believed. The inequalities in the fortunes of men demand explanations and Christians, as well as pagans, find it very difficult to believe that they are 'natural'. They always suspect some human intervention; they believe that men manipulate mystical power to buy fortune for themselves. The reality of pythons in the belly may be doubted by the better educated, but belief in 'medicines' has scarcely diminished, and new medicines are constantly coming in from outside, among them costly patent medicines guaranteed to cure any and every disease, or to make the user popular and successful. Some sort of distinction between medicines which it is permissible for a Christian to use and those, like love-potions and defence against witchcraft, which are not permissible, is attempted, but the line is an arbitrary one. And often there is a conflict in the individual's own mind: as one elderly woman of a chief's family (who would normally have taken the first-fruits medicines) put it: 'It's taboo to use those medicines; even if we do fall ill we say: "No, I will not take it, I look towards God (pointing upwards)."'

Most Christians have pagan kindfolk who are quick to interpret misfortunes in pagan terms, and the sort of conflict of ideas that arises is illustrated in the case of a young woman who died in childbirth. She and her father were Moravians; her husband had joined the Pentecostal Church which rejects all Nyakyusa medicines. Her first child was still-born, the second died shortly after its birth, and her father insisted that she should have been taking a medicine which it was customary for women in his lineage (he was a Penja) to drink during pregnancy; the girl herself wished to be treated, for she did not accept the teaching of the Pentecostal Church on this point, but her husband refused. During her third pregnancy she was ill and finally, with her husband's consent, she was carried to a Nyakyusa doctor of her father's choosing; nevertheless she died. Her father and her husband had been on bad terms, the father demanding, rather arbitrarily, the balance of the marriage cattle; and there was a great deal of gossip, some neighbours hinting that her own father had killed

[88] I went to the place and got permission to enter the hut in which the first part of the ceremony took place. I found there the parents of the girl, the girl sitting enveloped in clothes in one corner of the hut, and some older females, one of whom was the acting wowaga. Some male guests were also present[28]. As the girl had had her first catamenia the present ceremony marked at the same time the end of her preparation for marriage.

[277] [278] The wowaga prepared a beverage of beer in which a light-brown medical powder (mbondenga) was put. First the girl had to drink from it, then the parents followed. This beverage was believed to strengthen (ukwinga) the consumers. Then a spear was handed to the girl by her father, and the girl handed it in turn to some relatives of the bridegroom waiting near the hut. These persons had to bring the spear to the girl's bridegroom as a sign that he could now marry the girl[29], but not before he had brought a bull to the girl's father. After this the girl, now sitting in the middle of the hut, was given small gifts from the participants in the ceremony.

[582] [583] [431]

[391] [392] [916] [968] [415]

Practical instruction of premature girls in house-hold matters.

[302] Following this the whole body of the girl was anointed before the door of the hut. The wowaga began by anointing her legs; then the girl herself continued it. The ointment was prepared from castor oil [279] and a powder of red wood (Kipowbo, found commonly in the environment of Lake Rukwa). At this moment a male participant in the ceremony chanced to, come out of the hut, and suddenly a young woman [606]

[28] Cf. Wilson, Introduction, p. 256; The Study of African Society, p. 11 (The Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. 2, 1939).

[29] ukwega: to take (also as regards marrying); ukwegia: nuptials.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 353 622 778 [775] [324]

he had received this object from his ancestors and it must always hang on this spot, as the ancestral spirits (*abanyaka*)[29] themselves controlled its presence. It consisted of an *unenigara*, i. e. the tail of an ox, but the upper part of it was hollow. In this hollow part medicines (*ifingila*)[30] were kept. Yet another magical medicine, in the shape of a piece of bark of the tree called *Erythrophlæum Guineense*[31] was fastened at the upper end of this sign. When my European attendant immediately said to the chief: "And from this piece you make your *mwafi*"[32], the chief exclaimed in astonishment: "*Umaa wana Kyara!*" (You are sons of Kyara! i. e. You Europeans know everything.)

After this there was no more delay in revealing to us some more features of this sign of dignity. According to the belief of his fathers this object possessed a special *amaka* (power)[33], e. g. to defeat enemies, if the chief were to hold it directly against them. Also if a thief were [789] to try to enter the room by force, by making a hole beneath the wall of this part of the hut, he would be stricken by power coming from the *ubunigu* and he would have the impression that eyes are directed against him, and so be driven away.

[595] After these interesting communications I went to visit the hut of one of his wives, which still revealed the *ingungu*, the old-fashioned round structure of bamboo poles diverging from their upper end and thatched with grass[34].

241 784

9. The frequent walks in company with the chief or some of his *amafumu* gave me several opportunities for enquiries. On one occasion,

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[29] Cf. Wilson, Burial, p. 9: *unenyaka* (Sing.); Mackenzie, p. 191: *banyaka* (Karonga).

[30] Cf. Mackenzie, p. 275: *ifingira* (Karonga).

[278] [31] The pharmacological substance of the bark (Cortex Erythrophloei, „Sassa-bark") is the alcaloid Erythrophleïn which produces the same typical effects on the heart as the Digitalis-group (cf. C. G. Santesson: Pfeilgiftstudien XII. Arkiv för Botanik 27 A, No. 4, Stockholm 1935, p. 6).

[32] Cf. Wilson, Land Rights, p. 32; Meyenesky, p. 134; Fillebore, p. 309.

[33] *amaka* is not a specific expression for „magical" or (religious) „supernatural" power, although, from the European standpoint this meaning may be connected with the word in specific cases, but generally it means any striking expression or effect of a quality of a person or object, e. g. *upiki eki ugalimo amaka*, in this wood is power. This word is, therefore, a parallel to the Austronesian, especially Polynesian word *mana*, examined in my treatise „Mana. The term of that what is exceedingly striking". Staatliches Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde. I. Reihe. Ethnographie. Vol. 2. Leipzig. 1922. If the Nyakyusa wishes to say that a phenomenon is "supernatural", then he connects it with Kyara, or he names it directly "Kiara" (cf. Meyenesky, p. 110 [197, 215]).

[34] Cf. Fillebore, p. 277, fig. 140: Schematical average of a round-hut (as also to be found with the Nyakyusa still today).

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

262 The tender leaves of pumpkins and taro plants (*amasimbi*, leaves of taro), as well as of a number of other plants growing wild (*indeke*) are also used as vegetables. This food is called *iseke*, a word denoting all sorts of green vegetables.

In his treatise on "The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa" (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. 1; 1938, p. 43). G. Wilson points out that the fruit of the so — called *uuyungudi* — tree is "both [278] delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment (*ingemba*)", but he adds that he had been unable to find out the botanical name of this useful tree. Perhaps the following passage in the article of Dr. Kerr Cross ("Notes on the Country Lying between Lakes Nyasa and Tanganyika"; Proc. Roy. Geogr. Inst. N.S.Vol. XIII, 1891, p. 98) may be helpful in this connection: "There is a tree of the 314 sycamore family which grows extensively all over the north of the [262] lake called *mwinyungute* by the natives which might be developed. [380] It is a most picturesque tree which produces a food, an oil, and a dye. The oil or fat, when cool, is solid, even at a tolerably high temperature, and is like beeswax. It burns well as a night-light, and with wax might [381] be made into candles. In a rude way I have made candles of it. It might also make an excellent soap."

273 As an adjunct to these foods curdy milk (*ulukama ulukafu*) is very [272] much esteemed[1], to say nothing of the various types of beer, mostly prepared from millet for the men. Large fields of millet are, therefore, to be seen everywhere in the land of the Nyakyusa. On one occasion I attended a beer drink in the hut of a chief. The conduct of the natives present, the chief and his advisers (*amafumu*), was in every respect praise-worthy. Pleasant and interesting stories were narrated. Not [574] infrequently the invitation of a commoner who has had some differences with his chief or one of the *amafumu* to such a feast is regarded as a gesture of reconciliation.

243 As in the time of Sir H. H. Johnston so also to-day "all the cozy-meadows are planted with rice." A traveller coming from the hilly region to the north on nearing Lake Nyasa is struck by numerous large fields of rice in the plain at the northern end of the lake.

178 *11. Crafts.* Mackenzie (1925) is certainly justified in complains of the decay of the arts and crafts among the Nyakyusa. The Indian and European influence is to be seen everywhere in the deterioration and final dissolution of these branches of the ancient culture of the Nyaky-

[1] A. Wilson, Introduction, p. 258.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

287 sometimes long coats. They look well for a few weeks and then take on a dirty depressing appearance, and it is safe to say that with the reduction in price of Home goods bark-cloth will go out of favour.

281 [354] Leather work has not developed to any great extent. Women use undressed skins for carrying babies; and men, in remote districts, use them as aprons. In Poloto skins are sewn together to form garments, and in the Kinga Mountains the skins worn by the women are pleasingly decorated with shells, while the leg skins are skilfully cut into strips and used as ties, by which to bind the skin on the back. They are seldom worn in front, and the Kinga women go in furs as to their backs, while a small bunch of grass alone clothes the front. Shields, wide and narrow; blacksmith's bellows of undressed goat skin; tobacco and snuff pouches, waist belts, caps, sandals; and long strips of hide for binding purposes, such as the haft of a spear, are all or nearly all the uses that are made of leather, if indeed the term leather should be used at all, as most of the articles named are made from unprepared skins.

301 Beads are strung into pleasing patterns by using various colours, and are worn in strings or broad bands, on neck, forehead, arms, ankles, shoulders. [291] Children often go clad only in a tiny apron of beadwork, and girls in the Kinga Mountains wear similar aprons until marriage.

532 One European house in my neighbourhood is decorated with a frieze of crude representations of men on foot or on horseback, motor-cars, cycles, birds,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

maids and always carries a mat or cloth to screen her face from [881]
her father and his contemporaries, her father's full sisters, her older brothers,[1] and her 'mothers-in-law' (*abakamwana*).[2] These she must fear and respect (*akatile*) and so avoid. Her father-in-law and his brothers she avoids altogether from the time of her engagement, or at least after she has reached the age of 8 or 9. Her companions do not *akatila* with her, though those of them who are already betrothed will, of course, avoid their own fathers-in-law.

During the period of seclusion the girls have two specific tasks: to weave the fine mats used as beds, and to fetch firewood. Every [255] bride should take to her husband's home at least one fine mat (*ahanyuso*) which she has made herself, as well as several coarse ones (*amingh*),[3] and weaving a fine mat is a lengthy task, occupying a skilful woman a month. Each girl weaves for herself, but the firewood that each must fetch is stacked in the bride's mother's loft. The bride also occupies herself hammering out bark-cloth, [257] pleating it for the strip worn between the legs, and decorating bark-cloth belts (*vide* plate 5), so that she may have the fresh ones required during the ritual, and a supply to take with her to her husband's; but this work is not emphasized as an obligation: rather it is a recreation. Women take great pride in the decora- [531] tion of their belts—we watched several brides making them and handing them round for the admiration of their fellows. The maids may work in the fields if required to do so, but the bride herself does not, and 'she gets fat because she does not have much work to do'. The whole ritual normally lasts about three months, but if, for some reason such as a pressing need to go out to work, the husband is in a hurry for its completion, various acts may be telescoped. The time-table depends primarily on when the marriage-cattle and food for the various feasts are ready.

From the time of first menstruation until she does it ritually, a 881
bride should neither wash nor oil herself. The prohibition is felt 515
to be a very onerous one and some girls now break it, but women 177
said 'in the old days we did not wash'. 'Girls nowadays are more cunning. We were afraid.'

[1] Some informants denied that she avoided father's sisters or brothers. Others insisted that she must avoid them because 'brothers are fathers, and father's full sisters are father'. [184]

[2] I.e. her husband's own mother and other women he calls mother. In this account the plural 'mothers' indicates own and classificatory mothers. [601]

[3] Nyakyusa beds are made of layers of mats laid on rollers between two logs at head and feet. One chief's bed we noted was made up of sixty-eight mats. [352]

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

323 one will sometimes meet with long strings of men and
415 women, carrying ten to a dozen pots, hawking them
317 round the upland villages, or offering them for sale at the local market at Tukuyu. The pots made at
[531] Matema are smeared on the outside with a dull red ochre, and the more artistic potters work patterns in red, with thin lines around the protruding middle, and herring-bone or crossed patterns from thence to lip and base.

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286 Net making is naturally confined to the lake shore

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

After these admonitions, the mats which the girl had manufactured were inspected. During this examination it was told her that a wife should be seen in the possession of as many beautiful mats as possible, made by her for herself and for her husband. Should the girl reveal such conduct as a wife, *ubuzengulufu* (happiness) would be in her hut. 881 867 285

When the proper ceremony seemed to have come to an end, another discussion followed. The girl had told the *uwepapo*, during the above mentioned admonition, that her parents also sometimes exchanged angry words. Therefore, a new discussion between the father and the mother arose, in which also the *uwepapo* was the "speaker", but the other participants of the ceremony also shared in it, and the discussion too became at times heated. Still, after about 15 minutes, it suddenly came to an end, and the matter in dispute was declared settled. With this the whole ceremony ended. 881 578

8. One day I asked the chief for permission to visit his huts. He dwelt in a rectangular hut (*ikibaga*). A very beautiful *ikitara* (bed) was in the main room, composed of many sleeping mats (*ubulili*, pl. *imilili*) and of big round wooden blocks (sections of a tree-trunk), one at the head and a smaller one at the foot of the bed. Each of the four fine mats which lay uppermost had a special name. All the mats rested on sticks of reed laid across beams lying on smaller poles on the floor[16]. These mats were naturally of nearly the same height as the wooden block which formed the head part of the *ikitara*. In some other old-fashioned and better houses in Nyakyusa villages, similar beds were to be seen, but generally the bedsteads are much more simple. 622 352 [342]

One of the most important permissions granted me by the chief was to enter the "store room", connected with his main room by a door. The objects to be seen here were the same as those to be found in other huts or store-rooms, e. g. the big *tjitube* (baskets) for storing grain, up to four feet high, smeared over with cow-dung and clay, and smaller baskets for different purposes. In one corner hung different kinds of dancing fans (*urukope*, sg.) made of hairs from the tails of bulls, with fine handles of horn. In the dark opposite corner of the same wall there seemed to hang a similar object, but it was wrapped in banana bast. This was the real sign of the chief's dignity, the symbol of his authority and power, named *ubuswipala*. A long discussion was needed to induce the chief to unveil it. Only by constantly consulting by glances the present *amafumu* the chief slowly unveiled it. He told us that 342 353 622 [251] [237] [778] [715]

[16] Cf. Fülleborn, p. 381.

462 252 264 very substantial, the main meal being taken in the evening shortly before sunset.

415 [354] *8. Manufacture.* The pot for cooking (*indeba*) is placed on three stones which form the hearth (*ikipembera*, hearth stones). The flat bowl made of clay used for the seeds of the kitchen is called *ulwengubia* and a pig pot used for storing water *ingumba*. The pots of clay 415 are manufactured by Kisi women because in their land on the north- 439 eastern shores of Lake Nyassa the best clay is found. In the eastern part of the Nyakyusa country adjacent to Kisi land the women visit the pottery markets of the Kisi, but to the remoter villages, e. g. around the Rungwe volcano the pottery is brought by Kisi men. In this case, owing to the great distance from the Kisi-Land the men carry the loads of eight to ten pots on their head between split poles of bamboo. The Kisi pots I saw in the Rungwe Station were ornamented in [462] a rough way with red ochre and seemed only slightly baked. The [324] hearth stones, however, are made by the Nyakyusa women themselves as I was able to observe near Rutenganio, where widows manufactured them for sale.

285 In many villages of the Nyakyusa I could watch basket-making. This [462] I saw being done by men. In the chief's hut in Katumba I had the opportunity to admire a great number of very big baskets (*ifituba*) for [237] storing grain, smeared with cow dung on the outside. The attractive closely wickered baskets, which are filled with maiest (millet) and then [273] placed in water for a night in the process of beer-brewing were originally made by the Buanyi, but nowadays also the Nyakyusa are said to be skilled enough to weave them. I had no opportunity to observe it, but could acquire an excellent specimen of that wicker-work.

264 *9. The Meal.* At the beginning of each meal the hands are washed, [515] including those of children. The men take their meal separately from the women. The wives only eat when their husbands have been satisfied. Boys under ten years eat with their mothers, but as soon as they begin to live in age-set villages, they eat together with their friends of their own age-set, as described in detail by Mr. G. Wilson in his "Introduction of Nyakyusa Society" (Bantu Studies X, p. 271). The head of the family likes to eat together with his friends.

262 Meat is eaten very seldom, but on special occasions such as marriages, death lamentations, christenings of Christianized natives, enormous [192] quantities are devoured. *Inyama* (Swahili: *nyama*) is the Nyakyusa word for all sorts of meat, *ingombe* for that of cattle and *ingombaku* for that of oxen. Near Utengule I saw black pigs (*ingurusue*, pig)

14:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 F367 Ngonde F367
Nyakyusa

grubbing for food outside the stable. Old people also eat the meat of apes (*sulile, apa*) and of jakal (*ingebe*). The Nyakyusa men are generally very fond of eating fowl, indeed: "Wakugusa ingama nya ingoku", they are fond of the flesh of fowl. 262 [142]

Bones are usually given to the children for gnawing. Eight to ten boys may be seen sitting in a circle and alternately gnaw on the same bone, often drinking a little milk (*ulukwa*) the while.

During a boating on Lake Nyasa I saw the well-known columnar clouds formed by the so-called Kungu-flies in the distance above the surface of the water. These flies are also eaten by the peoples on the shore of the Lake. When these insects come shore-wards they are caught, roasted at home and then eaten. But I was told that sometimes they are also caught and eaten out on the Lake, being squeezed into lumps between the hands. [136] [252]

The Nyakyusa eat with the right hand, but when the meal consists of such food as boiled maize and beans (*ingate*) they also use spoons (*ulwiko*) made of folded strips of banana leaves. Nowadays, however, tin spoons and tin plates have come into wide use. The ancient eating-mats (*ukatefu*, diminutive of *urwisefu*) are also being more and more displaced. 264 [412] [178 285]

When the meal is over, the vessels and plates are cleaned with the fingers, bent inward, and then licked off. The mouth is rinsed out with water.

10. Diet. The vegetable diet is roughly the following. The light meal in the morning consists mostly of boiled maize-cobs (*ingate*), sweet potatoes (*imbatata*), bananas (*ilitoki*, pl. *amatoki*), roasted bananas; or, *amatufu*, sweet bananas. The main meal in the evening, shortly before sunset, usually consists of flour porridge (*ikiyindi*), beans (*indima*), both often boiled together with maize, peas (*efinyapa*) very often in the form of porridge, maize-corns (*ikirombe*) and groundnuts (*inyabala*, pl. *amanyabala*). These groundnuts are dried in the sun on mats. Bananas, if dried in the same manner, are usually halved lengthwise and spread out sometimes on banana leaves. I have seen this done in the village of Katumba. Granary stores are very often, e. g. near Utengule (on the border of Nyakyusa and Safwa culture), erected on platforms supported by poles. The container is a big quadrangular basket, roughly three by three meters in length and 1 m in height. The roof has the shape of a large Chinese hat and can be taken off from the lower part of the granary. 262 264 [251] [285 415]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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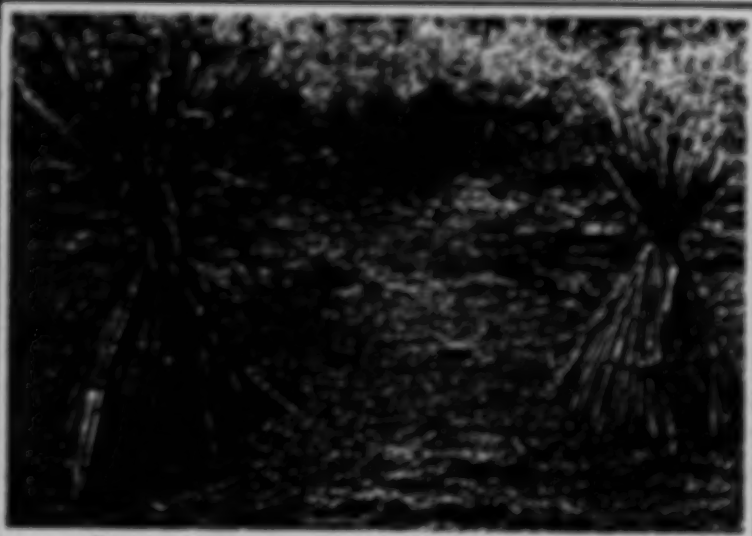

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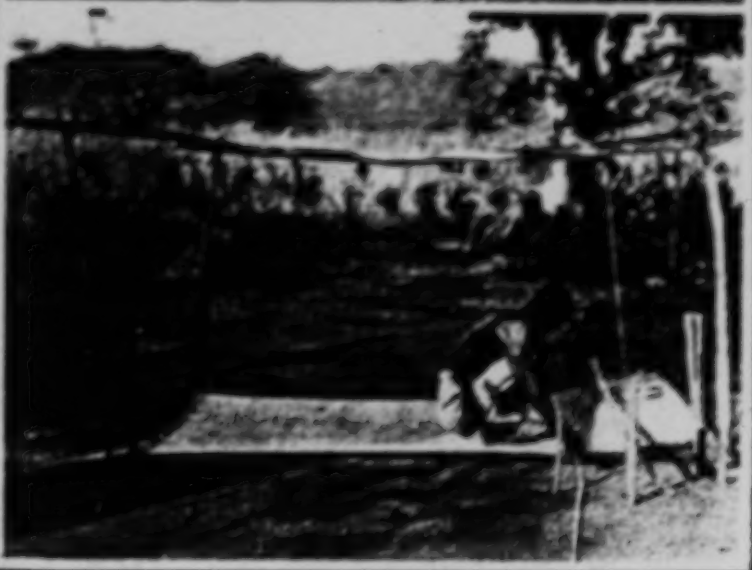

GAME TRAPS FOR SMALL ANIMALS.

The cords holding the door are so arranged, that the animal, on entering, closes itself in, and escape is impossible. Dangerous animals are trapped in strong timber enclosures, the bait a sheep, or a goat, or sometimes an ox.

CALICO-MAKING.

Once widely practised by the Konde, but now almost obsolete. The native product is strong and durable. Dyeing in black and red is also practised.

[facing p. 136]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

about these arts and crafts is their failure to develop 176
at all. Hints and suggestions were there continually;
yet nothing ever came of them. Iron was digged, 325]
smelted, and made into tools, yet no better tool for
digging the ironstone itself was thought of than the
hoe. Cloth was widely made on native looms before [286
the advent of inferior trade goods, and needles, with 291]
eyes, for sewing mats; but the idea of sewn garments
did not penetrate the native mind. Burned clay pipes [324]
were made to direct the wind from the skin bellows
into the blacksmith's fire, but no one received from
these pipes a hint of other possibilities. The idea of [401]
the wheel, with its boundless possibilities, did not
suggest itself to the Konde mind, nor, so far as I know,
to the Bantu mind anywhere, although hints of it
were lying about, especially in the round tree trunks
which were used as rollers when a canoe had to be
dragged some distance from the forest to the water.

At every point the native mind seems to have been 177
waiting for the stimulus which was to come with the
white man, and which has led to an awakening, the
full extent of which is not realized except by thought-
ful persons. For already, after the comparatively
brief tuitional period of fifty years, Central Africans
are replacing Indians as Government clerks, as hos-
pital assistants, as engineers on river steamers, as
telegraphists; they do all kinds of printing and
bookbinding, carpentry, and building; and they fill
positions of trust which a generation ago no one
thought they would ever be capable of filling. The
Konde have not yet taken more than a small share in

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

323 415 317 one will sometimes meet with long strings of men and women, carrying ten to a dozen pots, hawking them round the upland villages, or offering them for sale at the local market at Tukuyu. The pots made at [531] Matema are smeared on the outside with a dull red ochre, and the more artistic potters work patterns in red, with thin lines around the protruding middle, and herring-bone or crossed patterns from thence to lip and base.

353 I once slept in a native house in which there was a double row of pots, one on top of the other, along two walls. I was told that they were there for ornamental purposes, "just as you white men have pictures on your walls."

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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•286 and the river banks. Large nets, with wide or fine mesh, are made with floats and sinkers attached, pulled at both ends by means of ropes. *Ilitimbilo* is [226] a net used only at night, when the water is beaten with flat sticks to drive the fish into it. There are also small hand nets, and special nets made for catching special kinds of fish.

Weaving is a very ancient craft, and may have begun with the weaving of mats, which are at present made from banana fibre, grass, reeds, palm leaf, and the tough outer skin of palms. These mats are used for sleeping on, laying out grain to dry in the sun, straining pounded maize, and a dozen other uses. [438] Long grass or palm leaf mats are used by Europeans as carpets; and there is a good trade in palm leaf bags for carrying rice, and great mats for packing cotton for the European market.

Very good cloth is still woven in the Igale district by the Safwa. The art was formerly universal among the Konde, but has now died out before inferior trade goods. At Igale the cloth is either plain white, or mixed black and white, though dyes for other colours are known. These cloths make excellent bath towels, and a trade could be developed if encouragement were given. 287 Bark-cloth is very extensively made, and there has been a recent revival of this industry consequent on the exorbitant price of European goods since the war. Women wear the long *ilyabi* or loin cloth of bark, and nothing else; but, especially in the Igale district, complete suits are now made for men, wonderfully cut and sewn shorts and jackets, and

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

231 according to the *Bell Report*. Cattle and hides are exported to Tanganyika.[1] The *Nyamwanga* herds were reduced, partly by Bemba raids, and partly by rinderpest.[2]

Domestic Architecture

341 *Ngonde* homesteads are famous in Nyasaland for their peculiar style and neatness
361 of execution. They are made of bamboos, specially grown for the purpose. They are oblong, with the ends slightly tapering upwards so that they present a ship-like appearance. The huts are erected in two lines facing each other, at a distance of about 30 yards. This centre street is kept scrupulously clean.[3] The *Nyakusa* live in round or long huts of bamboo or grass.[4] *Kinga* homesteads are scattered; they live in round huts of bamboo and straw.[5] The *Iwa* formerly lived in large stockaded villages, but these are now broken up.[6]

Specialization and Trade

326 The Ngonde were accomplished iron-workers; iron was dug, smelted, and made into hoes and spears.[7] The Iwa were formerly noted as iron-workers. Both they and the Nyamwanga grow tobacco on a large scale.[8]

286 A rough kind of cloth was made on native looms. The Ngonde made hollowed
501 canoes, but were not good sailors. In fishing they used poison, hooks, nets, and traps.
226 Pottery and basket-making were carried on.[9]

[177] The Ngonde were the most civilized of this cluster of tribes, owing to their closer
439 contact with Arab and Swahili traders who used the lake as a waterway.[10] The Nyam-
643 wanga also had opportunities of contact with Arab and Swahili traders at the south end of Lake Tanganyika,[11] but information about the effect of this on their economic life is lacking. By comparison with the Ngonde the Nyakyusa were isolated from contact with the outside world,[12] and this is probably true of the other tribes of the group. Among the Ngonde, in spite of the political hierarchy and central religious authority of Kyungu, economic links between separate local groups were few. The ivory trade was a source of wealth for the Kyungu and for the nobles of Ngonde at Mbande, but its benefits had a strictly limited effect on the rest of the people. The economic links between the capital and the chiefdoms followed the lines of the political system The income of Kyungu in slaves and cattle depended on the judicial process and or warfare. He had a semi-monopoly of the ivory of the country (the right tusk of every elephant killed was his). His expenditure consisted of entertainment for all important visitors to the capital, and gifts of cloths, obtained through the ivory trade, to nobles and chiefs. The first Kyungu gave head-cloths to the indigenous rulers, who, in accepting them, accepted his overlordship, and the practice was continued every time a new chief or territorial noble succeeded to office. The nobles of Ngonde got cloths every time the Arab traders came. Chiefs bringing food to Mbande, the capital, were

[1] *Bell Report*, pp. 100–3; Aplin, 1931.
[2] Kerr-Cross, 1894; Murray, 1932, pp. 210–11.
[3] Ibid., p. 64.
[4] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[5] *Handbook of German East Africa*, p. 68.
[6] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[7] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 146–8; Kerr-Cross, 1894, p. 189.
[8] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[9] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 146, 149, 151–2.
[10] Wilson, 3, 1939, p. 44.
[11] Ibid., 3, 1938, p. 15.
[12] Coxhead, 1914, p. 44.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

156 ments and fine clothes, or a splendid herd of cattle—all these are forms of *ukumoga*.

Traditionally Nyakyusa women wore only a bark-cloth belt 291 tied around the waist and drawn between the legs to fall in streamers in front (cf. Plate XIII), and the pagan women cling to 177 this dress, maintaining that it is only 'Swahili women with dirty diseases' who have to wear clothes to cover their sores, and if a pagan woman has a cloth she will probably wave it like a flag or hang it over one shoulder, when she dances. Except for the Christians, few Nyakyusa women regularly wear clothes. The Christians like a brightly coloured cloth tied under the armpits, and hanging to the knees (cf. Plate IX). Women make their own [287] bark-cloths with great care, and decorate them with geometrical patterns in red and black, the red dye being imported from the Livingstone mountains; they mix this same dye with a fatty [386] ointment made from the seeds of the *unsyunguti* tree, and rub it all over themselves. The most prized ornament (worn by both [301] sexes) are body rings of coiled brass or copper wire (cf. Plate XIII). In the past men went naked except for these body rings[1] but, unlike the women, they have taken enthusiastically to clothes, and swagger around in brilliant loin-cloths or flowing white togas; or, if rather more sophisticated, in freshly pressed shorts and shirts, or lounge suits and topees.

535 The series of ceremonies at a girl's initiation and marriage, and 156 at a funeral, are regular occasions for dancing, and the birth and death rates are so high that these occur very frequently within a chiefdom of 3,000 men. Once in a generation the eagerly anticipated 'coming out' ceremony offers an even greater opportunity for display. Skill in dancing is admired and the young people are encouraged to practise. A bride's mother does a great deal of the heavy work for her daughter, saying '*amoge tasi*', which means literally 'let her display herself first', and implies 'let her have a good time while she can'; and a father may use the same phrase of his son. Angombwike explained: 'The old men used to take 156 great pride in their sons; often a man would say to his son: "Don't 593 you hoe for me, I'll do the hoeing myself, you go and swagger about." Sometimes a man would sell a cow and buy a huge-bladed spear and give it to his son. Then, if he heard that his son

[1] cf. Elton, op. cit., p. 322; H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, p. 28.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

maids and always carries a mat or cloth to screen her face from her father and his contemporaries, her father's full sisters, her older brothers,[1] and her 'mothers-in-law' (*abakamwana*).[2] These she must fear and respect (*ukutila*) and so avoid. Her father-in-law and his brothers she avoids altogether from the time of her engagement, or at least after she has reached the age of 8 or 9. Her companions do not *ukutila* with her, though those of them who are already betrothed will, of course, avoid their own fathers-in-law. 881

During the period of seclusion the girls have two specific tasks: to weave the fine mats used as beds, and to fetch firewood. Every bride should take to her husband's home at least one fine mat (*ubunyasa*) which she has made herself, as well as several coarse ones (*imitefu*),[3] and weaving a fine mat is a lengthy task, occupying a skilful woman a month. Each girl weaves for herself, but the firewood that each must fetch is stacked in the bride's mother's loft. The bride also occupies herself hammering out bark-cloth, pleating it for the strip worn between the legs, and decorating bark-cloth belts (*vide* plate 5), so that she may have the fresh ones required during the ritual, and a supply to take with her to her husband's; but this work is not emphasized as an obligation: rather it is a recreation. Women take great pride in the decoration of their belts—we watched several brides making them and handing them round for the admiration of their fellows. The maids may work in the fields if required to do so, but the bride herself does not, and 'she gets fat because she does not have much work to do'. The whole ritual normally lasts about three months, but if, for some reason such as a pressing need to go out to work, the husband is in a hurry for its completion, various acts may be telescoped. The time-table depends primarily on when the marriage-cattle and food for the various feasts are ready. [285] [287] [531]

From the time of first menstruation until she does it ritually, a bride should neither wash nor oil herself. The prohibition is felt to be a very onerous one and some girls now break it, but women said 'in the old days we did not wash'. 'Girls nowadays are more cunning. We were afraid.' 881 515 177

[1] Some informants denied that she avoided father's sisters or brothers. Others insisted that she must avoid them because 'brothers are fathers, and father's full sisters are father'. [184]

[2] i.e. her husband's own mother and other women he calls mother. In this account the plural 'mothers' indicates own and classificatory mothers. [601]

[3] Nyakyusa beds are made of layers of mats laid on rollers between two logs at head and foot. One chief's bed we noted was made up of sixty-eight mats. [352]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

287 sometimes long coats. They look well for a few weeks and then take on a dirty depressing appearance, and it is safe to say that with the reduction in price of Home goods bark-cloth will go out of favour.

281 [854] Leather work has not developed to any great extent. Women use undressed skins for carrying babies; and men, in remote districts, use them as aprons. In Poloto skins are sewn together to form garments, and in the Kinga Mountains the skins worn by the women are pleasingly decorated with shells, while the leg skins are skilfully cut into strips and used as ties, by which to bind the skin on the back. They are seldom worn in front, and the Kinga women go in furs as to their backs, while a small bunch of grass alone clothes the front. Shields, wide and narrow; blacksmith's bellows of undressed goat skin; tobacco and snuff pouches, waist belts, caps, sandals; and long strips of hide for binding purposes, such as the haft of a spear, are all or nearly all the uses that are made of leather, if indeed the term leather should be used at all, as most of the articles named are made from unprepared skins.

301 Beads are strung into pleasing patterns by using various colours, and are worn in strings or broad bands, on neck, forehead, arms, ankles, shoulders. [291] Children often go clad only in a tiny apron of beadwork, and girls in the Kinga Mountains wear similar aprons until marriage.

532 One European house in my neighbourhood is decorated with a frieze of crude representations of men on foot or on horseback, motor-cars, cycles, birds,

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

usa. It is true that one still meets blacksmiths on the outskirts of the villages or some distance away from them (as in the case of the Ndali tribe, western to the Nyakyusa area), but they no longer smelt the iron from ore mined by themselves as in former times. The smith of to-day remelt only scrap iron from disused motor-cars and other machines into tools, hatches, and spear-heads, unless, of course, the natives prefer to buy imported iron-ware. As with the Chaga, also the Nyakyusa smith can only be persuaded to submit to being photographed after long negotiation and a change into better clothes. The blacksmiths I met in the Bundali Mountains, however, made no objections whatever to being photographed at their work. Also women were allowed to attend. But one feature of the ancient Nyakyusa blacksmith's culture has been preserved till the present day: the lower part of the bellows through which the air blast is driven into the fire is still made of wood. This feature has been defined by H. Baumann as an element of the "ancient nigritic culture".

12. Dress. The cloths of the Nyakyusa have changed to a very considerable degree since the beginning of European influence. A comparison of the earliest pictures and descriptions of inhabitants at the northern end of Lake Nyasa with the dress of modern times brings out this point most forcibly. Originally the Nyakyusa went almost naked, adorned only with rings and belts, but nowadays all degrees of compromise with European fashions of dress are to be found, especially near the European settlements and Mission Stations. The most conservative element are, in this case, the women. It is still possible to-day to observe in each village the preparation of the long strips of bark *(elyabi*, pl. *amabi)* commonly worn by the women. The so-called *impandapanda* (Fotheringham: *mlambe)* tree furnishes the dress material. After the bark has been immersed in water, the bast is beaten with wooden instruments and then pulled off from the harder parts of the bark. These tools are like hammers; the flat end of such an implement is furrowed, sometimes with a disk made of horn, and as it produces patters on the bast it is called "*obosimbe*", that which produces patters. These long belts, almost reaching the ground, especially in front, are mostly ruby coloured, but the women sitting in front of their huts manufacture also other types with geometrical (triangular) patterns in yellow and brown forming only girdles *(umpango)*. In addition to this minimum requirement in the way of dress some women around the waist also wear copper belts *(manyeta)*, made of thin copper-wire, spiraly wound on a core of hairs from the tails of cows. These

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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V. THE CHIEF MWAIPOPO

[facing p. 50]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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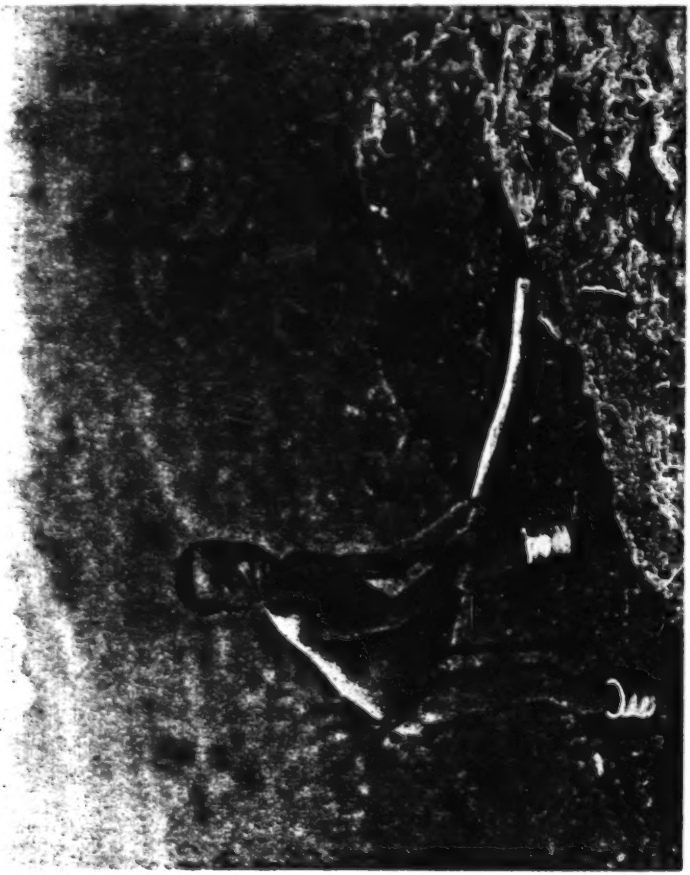

VII. A LITTLE GIRL PLANTING SWEET POTATOES IN HER MOTHER'S FIELD

[facing p. 66]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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VIII. MEN ON A PIG-HUNT

[facing p. 67]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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IX. NDIMBOMI, A CHRISTIAN WOMAN, STOOPING TO GREET A MAN

[FACING P. 70]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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XII. 'THE DIGNITY OF THE HOMESTEAD'— NEW STYLE
Chief Porokoto's main house in Ilolo village

[facing p. 79]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

156 ments and fine clothes, or a splendid herd of cattle—all these are forms of *ukumoga*.

Traditionally Nyakyusa women wore only a bark-cloth belt
291 tied around the waist and drawn between the legs to fall in
177 streamers in front (cf. Plate XIII), and the pagan women cling to this dress, maintaining that it is only 'Swahili women with dirty diseases' who have to wear clothes to cover their sores, and if a pagan woman has a cloth she will probably wave it like a flag or hang it over one shoulder, when she dances. Except for the Christians, few Nyakyusa women regularly wear clothes. The Christians like a brightly coloured cloth tied under the armpits, and hanging to the knees (cf. Plate IX). Women make their own
[387] bark-cloths with great care, and decorate them with geometrical patterns in red and black, the red dye being imported from the Livingstone mountains; they mix this same dye with a fatty
[386] ointment made from the seeds of the *unsyunguti* tree, and rub it all over themselves. The most prized ornament (worn by both
[301] sexes) are body rings of coiled brass or copper wire (cf. Plate XIII). In the past men went naked except for these body rings[1] but, unlike the women, they have taken enthusiastically to clothes, and swagger around in brilliant loin-cloths or flowing white togas; or, if rather more sophisticated, in freshly pressed shorts and shirts, or lounge suits and topees.

535 The series of ceremonies at a girl's initiation and marriage, and
156 at a funeral, are regular occasions for dancing, and the birth and death rates are so high that these occur very frequently within a chiefdom of 3,000 men. Once in a generation the eagerly anticipated 'coming out' ceremony offers an even greater opportunity for display. Skill in dancing is admired and the young people are encouraged to practise. A bride's mother does a great deal of the heavy work for her daughter, saying '*amoge tasi*', which means literally 'let her display herself first', and implies 'let her have a good time while she can'; and a father may use the same phrase of his son. Angombwike explained: 'The old men used to take
156 great pride in their sons; often a man would say to his son: "Don't
593 you hoe for me, I'll do the hoeing myself, you go and swagger about." Sometimes a man would sell a cow and buy a huge-bladed spear and give it to his son. Then, if he heard that his son

[1] cf. Elton, op. cit., p. 322; H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, p. 18.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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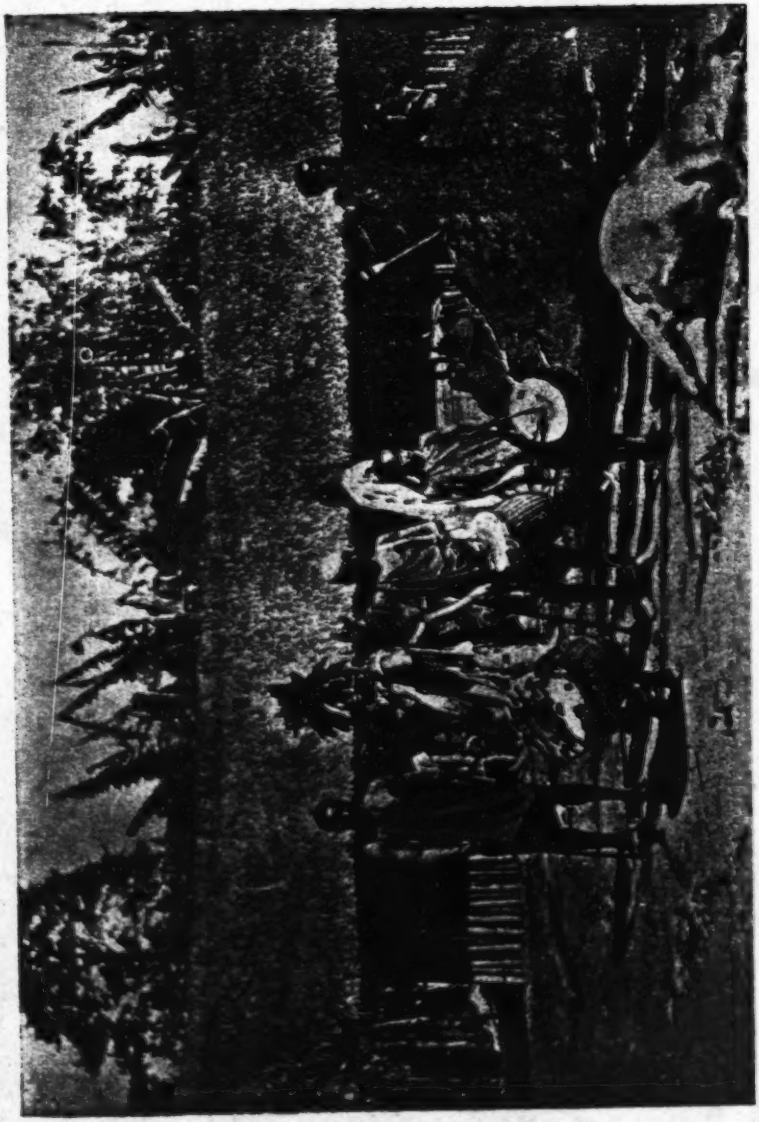

1. *Sacrifice and drums round the open grave*

[facing p. 20]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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a. Leaping on the newly filled grave

[facing p. 21]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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3. *The beer of the 'gasping cough.' Mwasalemba on the left*

[facing p. 84]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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8. *Preparing the meal for the participants to snatch at a twin ritual*

[facing p.165]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Ndali

765 they seek two or three officiants, and they build a temporary hut behind the living huts where they strain three pots of beer, which they call 'the beer of the shades'. These officiants do not bathe their bodies because they say: 'Let us be with the shade when we make the beer (*tujege nagwe unsyuka bo tukubomba ubwalwa*).' The rest of the beer is strained in the house.

When they have brewed it they take one potful from the temporary hut and pour the contents on top of the grave; then they dig a hole on the grave and place in it a little pot of beer. What is left in these two pots they drink, together with the rest of the beer, and there is much drumming.

766 After a long time has passed, perhaps two years, if there has been sickness in the home, they think that the deceased is making them giddy, is causing them to be ill. So they dig up the corpse and take all the bones and finger and toe nails. If one is left the sickness is not cured. When Mulape, the grandchild of Mwakafunga, was ill they dug up the corpse and the illness ceased very quickly. They pile up the bones which have been dug up.

III. MARRIAGE NEGOTIATIONS AND GIFTS

584 ANGOMBWIKE: One of our comrades in Kabembe heard that there was an unmarried girl at the Chief Mwasumbwe's, so one Monday he said to three of us: 'Don't go away, friends, we are going to woo the chief's daughter at Mwasumbwe's.' So we put on our best clothes, those we wear to church, and we went to the home of the father of the girl. He was the younger brother of the Chief Mwasumbwe by the same mother, and he told us: 'I am not the father (*ugwise*). She is my own child, but the father is the chief. Go to him' [i.e. authority over his daughter rested with his elder brother]. The girl had reached puberty. Someone else had married her, but her father had received only one cow, so the elder brother, the chief, was angry and took away the girl from her husband. My friend had never met her, never. He had just heard that there was an unmarried girl at that place, because the custom of making love to girls in the long grass is not a traditional one: a girl used to stay at her father's house. A young man went to the father before he spoke with the girl; he never spoke to her in secret. Then the father would send the girl to speak with the young man. She came and sat down and the young man looked at her closely and his friends who [177 accompanied him helped him. Formerly a young man did not wear 291] many clothes, he only wore one cloth in front, and a brass body-ring, so that his whole belly might be seen, and she might look closely. Also [516] he sits high on a stool, while his fellows sit on the ground, that he may be seen by the girl.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

[frontispiece]

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AN ITINERANT ENTERTAINER.

He is dressed in skin and feather head-dress, armlets, skin kilt, and body rings, the number of which latter indicates his social position. He carries, as professional properties, a spear, a skin pack, rattles, horns, bells, and a stringed musical instrument.

[facing p. vii]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

342 561 boys, who have grown too big to occupy any longer the single-roomed hut in which their parents dwell. They are slender erections of reed and grass, and look as if a strong wind might carry them away; but the children live a happy, and not always innocent, life in these huts until they are able to build bigger ones for themselves.

• 291 Dress is more conspicuous by its absence than by its presence. During the day the women wear little but a long strip of bark cloth hanging down almost to the ground before and behind. The children usually have nothing at all, unless they have the good fortune to get a strip of cloth from a grandparent. They go about quite naked for the first few years of life, and a mission school usually reveals rows of children who consist of long legs and arms and smiling faces, wholly unconscious of need if they have a tiny rag strung in front, often not more than a few square inches in size. But the men who are earning money may be well dressed. The richer wear trousers and jacket, a shirt, a collar and tie, boots, if they are able to afford them, and a helmet. Their wives and children wear long robes of highly coloured cloths, and are no doubt observed with envy by their less fortunate sister-women, with little but a piece of bark-cloth to hide their nakedness. The average man, however, goes to church or market with a single garment, unsewn, flung over his shoulders, and covering, more or less completely, his whole body; but he goes to work in a scanty waist cloth, which leaves him uncovered below the knees and above the waist. Men

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Men
of social position are known by the number of *manyeta* 291
(body rings worn on the waist) which they wear: [301
one for a man or woman just "above the common"; 554]
six or seven for a man of high standing. A few women have begun, to their own great discomfort, to wear the immense coils of brass or iron on wrists or ankles which are so popular among other tribes.

Clothes, says an acknowledged authority on the 291
subject, make the man. Not among the Konde. 643
Chungu is a great chief, but his greatness does not 554
depend on what he wears, although there are occasions when he dresses more carefully than at other times. This almost naked man is regarded with a reverence greater than is granted to any but a very few Europeans, and out of all recognition greater than is felt for the native who swaggers about in boots and helmet and white man's clothes. The respect which is accorded to a European depends to-day (though it did not in the past) upon his personal character, his control of resources, the authority which has been bestowed upon him by others. But Chungu, with hundreds of other chiefs throughout Bantu Africa, has a respect which is gained in a totally different fashion. He is in close touch with unseen powers. His prayers have a compelling power, his benediction is priestly, his curse of fearful validity. He is a channel through which may come weal or woe upon the land; and hence his authority depends in no degree upon such an accident as dress.

By almost all who know them the Konde are re- 461
garded as lazy. And to the bustling, and perhaps

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

857 canoes of maize leaves are sent floating down stream, with shouting and racing competition between the 514 owners.

857 Girls help their mothers, and at a very early age look after their younger brothers or sisters. It is a common sight to see a small girl staggering along under weight of a fat baby brother strapped to her back.

855 In the hotter regions boys go naked till ten or twelve, wearing nothing but a piece of string on the ●291 waist and a charm on neck or wrist. Girls begin to wear bark-cloth waistbands at five or six, adding more as circumstances permit. Their clothing is provided by the father ; but boys, at whatever age they begin to wear any kind of garment, have to earn it for themselves, for it is not the business of their fathers to clothe them. They often, however, get a fowl or two, or even a goat or a sheep, from a grandparent, with the proceeds of which they buy a yard or two of cloth.

855 In the great majority of families there is a cruel difference in the treatment of boys and girls. The boys are uncared for, dirty, unoiled, not too well fed ; while the girls are kept clean and oiled, well fed, and as far as possible clothed at an early age. The reason is not far to seek. Girls are a source of wealth, and a dirty, ill-cared-for girl will command few head of cattle when the time comes to think of her marriage. Boys, on the other hand, have value only as representatives of the family when the father has passed to the spirit world, and that value is not dependent on external circumstances. A change is being effected,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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A Public Dance.

Usually dances take place at night, and many of them are morally evil, but daylight dancing is not uncommon, and is usually free from objectionable accompaniments. What is shown is a kind of solo dance, but commonly a circle is formed into which dancers advance, one or two at a time, to an accompaniment of drums, singing and hand clapping.

[facing p. 96]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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A BANANA-LEAF UMBRELLA.

In April there is an average rainfall of 36 inches. Children go to school, men and women go about their duties, protected—more or less—from the downpour, by a leaf taken from the nearest banana stem.

[facing p. 112]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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SIFTING.

A turning motion of the basket brings the chaff and dust to the top, and a skilful throw casts it out, leaving the flour, which is now ready for cooking.

GRINDING.

As evening approaches, the rasping sound of stone on stone with the grist between, may be heard all over the village, as the housewives begin to prepare the evening meal. The flour falls into the basket in front, and more grain is taken from the one at the side.

[facing p. 128]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

about these arts and crafts is their failure to develop at all. Hints and suggestions were there continually; yet nothing ever came of them. Iron was digged, smelted, and made into tools, yet no better tool for digging the ironstone itself was thought of than the hoe. Cloth was widely made on native looms before the advent of inferior trade goods, and needles, with eyes, for sewing mats; but the idea of sewn garments did not penetrate the native mind. Burned clay pipes were made to direct the wind from the skin bellows into the blacksmith's fire, but no one received from these pipes a hint of other possibilities. The idea of the wheel, with its boundless possibilities, did not suggest itself to the Konde mind, nor, so far as I know, to the Bantu mind anywhere, although hints of it were lying about, especially in the round tree trunks which were used as rollers when a canoe had to be dragged some distance from the forest to the water.

At every point the native mind seems to have been waiting for the stimulus which was to come with the white man, and which has led to an awakening, the full extent of which is not realized except by thoughtful persons. For already, after the comparatively brief tuitional period of fifty years, Central Africans are replacing Indians as Government clerks, as hospital assistants, as engineers on river steamers, as telegraphists; they do all kinds of printing and bookbinding, carpentry, and building; and they fill positions of trust which a generation ago no one thought they would ever be capable of filling. The Konde have not yet taken more than a small share in

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

287 sometimes long coats. They look well for a few weeks and then take on a dirty depressing appearance, and it is safe to say that with the reduction in price of Home goods bark-cloth will go out of favour.

281 [854] Leather work has not developed to any great extent. Women use undressed skins for carrying babies; and men, in remote districts, use them as aprons. In Poloto skins are sewn together to form garments, and in the Kinga Mountains the skins worn by the women are pleasingly decorated with shells, while the leg skins are skilfully cut into strips and used as ties, by which to bind the skin on the back. They are seldom worn in front, and the Kinga women go in furs as to their backs, while a small bunch of grass alone clothes the front. Shields, wide and narrow; blacksmith's bellows of undressed goat skin; tobacco and snuff pouches, waist belts, caps, sandals; and long strips of hide for binding purposes, such as the haft of a spear, are all or nearly all the uses that are made of leather, if indeed the term leather should be used at all, as most of the articles named are made from unprepared skins.

301 Beads are strung into pleasing patterns by using various colours, and are worn in strings or broad bands, on neck, forehead, arms, ankles, shoulders. [291] Children often go clad only in a tiny apron of beadwork, and girls in the Kinga Mountains wear similar aprons until marriage.

532 One European house in my neighbourhood is decorated with a frieze of crude representations of men on foot or on horseback, motor-cars, cycles, birds,

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

439 direct with the ivory traders or with the Kyíngu, for cloths or cattle or slaves. And groups of chiefdoms and fiefs co-operated in hoeing the *milasa*.

Nor did the ivory trade enter very deeply into the economic relations of the local rulers with their subjects. The common people usually dressed in [291] exiguous pieces of bark cloth or of a coarse cloth which they manufactured themselves from a kind of cotton; the scarce imported cloths, which came through Mbande, were normally used by chiefs and nobles only. They added to the prestige of the chiefs and nobles by linking them visibly with the opulence of Mbande, but did not much increase their own subjects' economic dependence on them. Though here again we must note the occasional exchanges of ivory and other wealth between [652] commoners and chiefs or nobles. The important economic links between local rulers and their subjects were determined, on the one hand, by the differential bride-price, by polygyny and by their power of requisitioning food, and, on the other hand, by their position as chief hosts to their people.

The ivory-trade, in fact, enabled Mbande to bind the local rulers to it in a kind of permanent hierarchical alliance, but neither the constitution of the local groups nor their autonomy in relation to one another was very much affected thereby.

5. *LEGAL ELEMENTS (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

We now come to a third element of the central power of Mbande, the traditional part which it played in the maintenance of law. We will take this topic in two parts: first, the ways in which Mbande maintained its own authority and that of its subordinates, and, second, the part played by Mbande and those lesser authorities in maintaining the common law of Ngonde.

(a). *CONSTITUTIONAL LAW: TREASON ETC.*

687 Treason against the Kyungu was summarily punished with little or no legal argument. The commonest form of treason seems to have been 567 too near an approach to one of his wives. We remember that his wives were very closely guarded from all men, for their adultery might magically bring sickness on him, and if he fell ill then the whole land was magically endangered. One side of the hill Mbande is precipitous, and over this cliff (*Ipongo*) all traitors were thrown, including such as had looked on his wives naked; while many members of the traitors' families were subsequently enslaved.

"If a man had looked on the wives of the Kyungu bathing, he himself would be killed by being thrown over the cliff and all his

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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THE KYUNGU, PETER

[opposite title page]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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5a. PRIESTS OF LUBAGA (KINGA)

[534]
[778]

5b. KINGA PRIESTS WITH HORN AND DRUM

[Facing p. 39]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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7. HEIR TO A CHIEFDOM
(*Mwaipula in 1936*)

[Facing p. 55]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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8. COMMUNION WITH THE SHADES

[Facing p. 70]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 782 Mwalukuta, the hereditary priest of Mbyanga, had been pressing the chiefs to sacrifice for some time. He had sent messengers in March, April, May, and again in July, saying: 'At Mbyanga things have gone back, it is bad, see hunger kills!' At last, in August, Mwaihojo agreed to provide a cow if Mwaitende of the junior line finally refused. Mwalukuta, the priest of the grove, ex-
[793] plained:

We went to Mwaitende (121, identified with his grandfather 61) and asked him to sacrifice. He said: 'No, I am not coming; do the work there at Mbyanga yourselves.' We said: 'Why do you refuse to come, to return a cow? Our grandfathers gave you a cow, why don't you return it? They gave you cows on the understanding that you would bring them back, one by one, and kill them in the sacred grove here. Why do you refuse to return them?' It has always been the custom for the junior brothers to find cows for sacrifice. Their seniors give them wealth and appoint them priests to bring cattle to the sacred grove.
[177] But in European times they refuse to come, each man kills at his own place. . . . I must go and tell Kasitile (86) and also Kifubuka, or rather his son—the father refuses to come he had a lawsuit with Kasitile. . . . Kifubuka used to kill the cow, then Kasitile said Makuli should kill the cow, but now Makuli has refused to come so I go to fetch Kifubuka [the younger]. Makuli was a chief who ate the meat. . . . Mwaitende (61) used to send the cow to him and Mwaluseke to bring to Mbyanga . . . as he now refuses to send the cow they say: 'What should we bring?' and have refused to come here.

[132] There had been another spell of cold weather and the tempera-ture on the night of 8th August was down to 59° F., but fine weather was visibly approaching from the Lake. On the 9th the ritual was to have been held, but not everyone had been formally summoned and it was put off to the 10th.

Only eight men came, Mwalukuta I, the priest of the grove,
[793] and his younger brother Mwalukuta II, two other priests (Nyama and Mwakasukula) and Mwakyonde (148), younger brother of Mwaihojo the chief who provided the cow, and three other young men of the chief's lineage. One of the young chiefs was
● [291] wearing a red cloth and was scolded by Mwakyonde for doing so: 'It's taboo in the sacred grove.' 'Why?' 'Because it's like a rainbow.'[1] And he took it off.

The mother of Nyama brought a bundle of saplings for building the hut for the shade, and Kisisile, the senior wife of Mwaihojo the

[1] The rainbow is a symbol of misfortune. cf. p. 60.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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10*a*. KASITILE THE PRIEST

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10*b*. DIVINATION WITH PORRIDGE

[Facing p. 118]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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12*b*. NYASURU, LEADER OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CHURCH

12*a*. NGEMELA, FOUNDER OF A SEPARATIST CHURCH

[opp. p. 166]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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13. MARIA, A CHRISTIAN ELDER

[opp. p. 167]

less uncultivated. These areas can easily be picked out today by the absence of village sites and banana groves. There was something of a rush to grab land in such areas and in the less densely populated parts of the chiefdoms. Today in my personal experience – for no general survey has been attempted – there remains little or no unused land within the paddy-growing region which can, by native techniques, be brought under the plough; and indeed men are attempting to grow paddy on unsuitably raised land where inundation is inadequate. Communal cattle pastures have shrunk as arable holdings extended until they remain only where cultivation is profitless.

The demand for land has far outrun the physical supply, and in 1955 it still seemed to be insatiable. The initial cycle was that a desire for more money to permit of a higher standard of living created a demand for more land on which to produce more cash crops; but the increased level of income then further stimulated money demands to raise standards higher again, thus bringing a renewed demand for land. The cycle has now been halted by the lack of further land to meet the people's needs, but the demand remains nevertheless and is indeed increased by rising costs of living.

This economic picture is, of course, oversimplified, but it may serve to illustrate the nature of forces at work in the situation. I would not wish to overemphasise the snowball effect, for the bulk of the population remains still largely content with only a little over earlier standards; but increasing numbers of men and their families are coming to seek something better. Bicycles have become something of a general necessity; a variety of good clothing and shoes is considered quite essential. Only a single decade before the Nyakyusa women still generally went about in the traditional nudity, whereas in 1955 they must have ranked among the very best-dressed African women in the Territory. European-type household goods, crockery and utensils are common. The demand for money, that is for a higher standard of living, has also been greatly stimulated by the experiences of the thousands of labour migrants returning from southern towns and mines, and by the cash and goods they bring back with them.[1]

It is not possible for me to attempt to suggest what a desirable acreage would be for a contemporary Nyakyusa, because money demands, crop yields and selling prices change and the desire for higher standards of living also alter as the potentialities of the new cash economy are increasingly understood. In 1954 the approximate average of Sh.200/- per paddy cultivator was earned from perhaps two or three acres of arable land, but an indeterminable amount of the crop was kept back for home food requirements. As will be shown later many men's paddy fields could have been little more than an acre, and many men, specifically young men, had no paddy land at all. Certainly there were few who held what they considered, at a reasonable estimate, to be sufficient land.

This universal cash crop agriculture and the continuing demand for higher standards of living, and therefore for higher money incomes, is the real cause of the new and rather sudden pressure of population on the land. Of course this economic process operates within a situation of relatively dense population and in a peasant community where land is almost the only form of capital and alternative enterprise is small. The gradual increase of population, although probably small, further aggravates the difficult situation.

Arable Holdings

It was not possible to obtain adequate, satisfactory data to allow the calculation of local population densities, and the detailed results of the 1948

1. In Gulliver, P. H.: 1957, an estimate of the cash incomes of Nyakyusa in 1954 is given at pp. 51-2. Data on the cash brought back by returning labour migrants are given at p. 35.

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

122 for research, I am very grateful for a grant from the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures[2] which enabled me to start my ethnographical field work among these people. I wish also to express my thanks to the Government of the Tanganyika Territory, the Provincial Commissioner of Mbeya, and the District Officer of Tukuyu for all the courtesy I received during my work.

114 1. My first step, after my arrival at Katumba near Masoko, was to
123 pay a visit to Mwamasika, the chief *(omalafyale)*[3] of the village and

[241 516 622]

The chief Wwamasika with his councillors.

of those adjacent. On the open place near his hut he welcomed me in company with his *amafumu*[4], the influential men of his villages. My attendant, the interpreter and I were asked to sit on chairs, while the *amafumu* sat down on mats or on large banana leaves on the ground; but the chief remained standing. I explained the aim of my visit, and that I would be very glad of his support. The chief promised it, and he kept his promise excellently. On other occasions the chief also sat
[431] on a chair. In the afternoon of the first day I sent to the chief some presents. The following he made a return in form of food. This exchange of gifts is named *ukubonola*, handing over the gift.

123 2. In a small village belonging to Mwamasika's chieftainship was the
757 residence of a medicine man, to whom I paid a visit as soon as I could. When I met him he was being consulted by a sick male person who had a stomach complaint *(agaju)*. After some negotiations he allowed me

[2] Cf. Africa. Vol. XI, p. 497.
[3] Cf. *Wilson*, Introduction, p. 283; Land Rights, p. 44.
[4] Cf. *Wilson*, Land Rights, p. 13. W. translates *ulifumu (olifumu)* by „great commoner", Introduction, p. 276, 282.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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The chief Wwamasika and his family after he had received from me my old "Klepper-Mantle" as a gift.

to enter his hut, where the patient was sitting on the ground with his back to the wall. To heal his patient of the pains, the doctor made some small incisions in his skin near the stomach by means of a triangular-shaped knife, and then he rubbed in the incisions a thick black juice taken from the horn of an antelope (the horn was called *kapembe*, pl. *ulupembe*). The juice was prepared from different roots and herbs as a medicine against stomach pains. In the horn were certain divisions for other medicines, and in each of these divisions was stuck a small (black) stick for removing the specific medicine from it. After this treatment the patient declared that he felt severe pains in the region of his stomach. I asked the doctor for some of his medicines, but he was unwilling to give me anything. Then I promised to bring him next day some European medicines hoping to get in exchange some of his medicaments. 123 757 [415 237]

The following morning I returned. On this occasion I did acquire some of his medicines in exchange for various European tablets, especially as he was most fascinated with the kaliumpermanganatum[1] of which I gave him a few crystals, explaining to him the use and the dose; when I dissolved some of the crystals before his eyes, it probably seemed to him to be a mystical process. Among the medicines I received then from him was a medicine for luck, called *kwarusako*. [777] Some of the inhabitants of the village, who had meantime appeared, were very unwilling for him to give me this medicine, and maintained that I would take with me all the luck of the village.

On this second visit to the medicine-man, there was again a patient present, and I wanted to take a photograph of the scene because it was 123 755

[1] [i.e., $KMnO_4$. – Analyst]

123 in the open air and not within the hut as on the previous day. But the
755 patient was unwilling to be photographed. He feared, he said, that by the photo I would take „his inner man together with the medicine just accepted" with me to Europe. I tried to calm him, showing him some pictures of my family, and I also let him look through the view-finder of my camera, so that at last he was satisfied. Then, after feeling more confident, he told me the cause of the pains which led him to come to the doctor. He thought he had been bewitched, as he had met a descendant of a man whom some long time ago had killed one of his own ancestors.

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The Medicine Man and one of his patients. The medicines are spread out on the mat.

756 Then the medicine man also explained to me how he had come to the position of a doctor. He did not inherit his position from his father, but he was instructed in medical practices by another doctor. The circumstances which had led him to this position were the following.

[837] Before his initiation to the medical practice he had entered into forbidden relations with the wife of another man. To protect himself
[789] from the magical revenge of the deceived husband and his kin he went to a medicine man to acquire antidotes against the expected bewitching. He had to pay two cows for this medicine, and as he had paid them, the medicine-man offered to initiate him into the secrets of the practice of a medicine-man. The character of the client, probably, had won his confidence, and indeed, the medicine-man whose guest I now was, made a profound impression on me.

754 He also described some forms of bewitching[5] for vengeance. For this purpose the avenger poisons a fowl in his own village uttering curses

[5] Cf. G. Wilson, Introduction, p. 277 (belief in witchcraft).

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

765 head of the line. She was also the first who crawled between the legs
48| of the others, facing the hut, and followed by the others. This ceremony has the same purpose as the preceding act.

[291]

Scene from the ubunyago-ceremony: The mourners returning from the grave to the house crawling through the legs of the others.

765 Then the hair of the mourners was shaved (*ukumwa inwili*, to shave
[302 the hair, profane and ritual) and, I was told that a bath would be
515] the last act ending mourning.

[291
516]

Scene from the ubunyago-ceremony: The shaving of the hair.

765 In the afternoon I sent the father of the dead child a cotton kerchief
123 as a gift, and when I met him later on, he told me I had participated
43| in the burial of his child by that gift, saying, "You have buried my child with me".

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 sister of the chief had also been brought back to the village of her
[164 brother. I was of the opinion that she was afflicted by a serious
484] tropical ulcer on the ankle of the left foot. The healing of these ulcers commonly takes a very long time, and as this woman had already much suffered, and as the medicine-men consulted seemed to be unable to restore her, she was brought to her brother's village, but there also she had not yet recovered. The chief had, therefore, resolved to ask the diviner, whose name was Mwaigwisya, for the real cause of her sickness.

After he and his *amafumu* had taken their seats on mats, the chief explained to the diviner the reason of his visit. The diviner then grasped a curved piece of wood about 20 cms. in length with his right hand, after he had spat upon his hands. Then he moved the wood round his head, and finally placed it with one of its ends on the even, cleansed ground before his mat, and waited for the questions of the chief. The single questions, as for instance: "Is the sickness caused by Kyara?", or "Is the sickness caused by this or that person?", etc., were put to the diviner by Lamek Mwainyekule, the son of a chief of another chieftainship[16], now belonging to the *amafumu* of Mwamasika, as he now stayed in his village. Mwainyekule seemed to be not only

[291
516]

The Séance with the diviner.

[776] the most intimate adviser of Mwamasika, but alltogether the most clever man I met among this people. After each of the questions addressed to him the diviner murmured the names of the chief's

[16] A village of this name is to be found on Dr. *Kieperts* map (of 1895), southern to the Kieyo.

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

881 I went to the place and got permission to enter the hut in which the first part of the ceremony took place. I found there the parents of the girl, the girl sitting enveloped in clothes in one corner of the hut, and some older females, one of whom was the acting *unnyago*. Some male guests were also present[20]. As the girl had had her first catamenia the present ceremony marked at the same time the end of her preparation for marriage.

[273 278] The *unnyago* prepared a beverage of beer in which a light-brown medical powder *(imbondanya)* was put. First the girl had to drink from it, then the parents followed. This beverage was believed to strengthen *(ubusisya)* the consumers. Then a spear was handed to the girl by her father, and the girl handed it in turn to some relatives of [582 583] the bridegroom waiting near the hut. These persons had to bring the spear to the girl's bridegroom as a sign that he could now marry the girl[21], but not before he had brought a bull to the girl's father. After [431] this the girl, now sitting in the middle of the hut, was given small gifts from the participants in the ceremony.

[291 342 516 868 415]

Practical instruction of premature girls in house-hold matters.

[302] Following this the whole body of the girl was anointed before the door of the hut. The *unnyago* began by anointing her legs; then the [278] girl herself continued it. The ointment was prepared from castor oil and a powder of red wood *(Kipimba*, found commonly in the environment of Lake Rukwa). At this moment a male participant in the cere- [606] mony chanced to, come out of the hut, and suddenly a young woman

[20] Cf. *Wilson*, Introduction, p. 258; The Study of African Society, p. 11 (The Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. 2, 1939).

[21] *ukwega*: to take (also as regards marrying); *ubwega*: nuptials.

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

881 and other duties applicable to a girl after marriage. The practical
867 instruction takes place in or before a special hut in the village under
868 the leadership of the *abanyago (avanyago)*. The girl is admonished by the *unnyago* to obey her parents without any delay, to perform the commands of her mother immediately, e. g. to clean the hut, and especially to show obedience when guests are present. Should the mother blame her daughter unjustly, she should not reply. (The girl had been blamed in the earlier discussion that she had not swept the hut when her mother required her to do it). Then her duties and
881 conduct towards her future husband were inculcated. As a wife she
867 must never accept anything from the hands of her husband without
543 kneeling and stretching out both hands, and turning away her face
562 with eyes cast down. Also as a wife she must not hold her head up

[142
[291]
534]

Some of the drummers.

when she is addressed by a man. As a wife she must be anxious to prepare her husband's meal always at the right time, that means, it has to be ready when her husband returns from the field. If she sees her husband coming from the field, then she has to go to meet him, and take his hatchet from him. Should her husband scold her, she is
[356] not to reply; but she may ask her neighbours for help. It is one of her duties to take care of the regular cleaning of the hut[23]. The ashes must always be removed by her from the fireplace. If there are only a few ashes on the fireplace she must remove them with her hands[24].

[364] [23] The place near the house where the sweepings are thrown down is called *urutagilio*.

[24] Cf. *Mackenzie*, p. 51, who refers to such moral instructions connected with puberty customs, probably at Karonga; cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 359 (Nygonde plain).

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

usa. It is true that one still meets blacksmiths on the outskirts of the villages or some distance away from them (as in the case of the Ndali tribe, western to the Nyakyusa area), but they no longer smelt the iron from ore mined by themselves as in former times. The smith of to-day remelt only scrap iron from disused motor-cars and other machines into tools, hatches, and spear-heads, unless, of course, the natives prefer to buy imported iron-ware. As with the Chaga, also the Nyakyusa smith can only be persuaded to submit to being photographed after long negotiation and a change into better clothes. The blacksmiths I met in the Bundali Mountains, however, made no objections whatever to being photographed at their work. Also women were allowed to attend. But one feature of the ancient Nyakyusa blacksmith's culture has been preserved till the present day: the lower part of the bellows through which the air blast is driven into the fire is still made of wood. This feature has been defined by H. Baumann as an element of the "ancient nigritic culture".

178 198 325 126 326 [184] 178 325

12. Dress. The cloths of the Nyakyusa have changed to a very considerable degree since the beginning of European influence. A comparison of the earliest pictures and descriptions of inhabitants at the northern end of Lake Nyasa with the dress of modern times brings out this point most forcibly. Originally the Nyakyusa went almost naked, adorned only with rings and belts, but nowadays all degrees of compromise with European fashions of dress are to be found, especially near the European settlements and Mission Stations. The most conservative element are, in this case, the women. It is still possible to-day to observe in each village the preparation of the long strips of bark *(elyabi*, pl. *amabi)* commonly worn by the women. The so-called *impandapanda* (Fotheringham: *mlambe)* tree furnishes the dress material. After the bark has been immersed in water, the bast is beaten with wooden instruments and then pulled off from the harder parts of the bark. These tools are like hammers; the flat end of such an implement is furrowed, sometimes with a disk made of horn, and as it produces patters on the bast it is called "*obosimbe*", that which produces patters. These long belts, almost reaching the ground, especially in front, are mostly ruby coloured, but the women sitting in front of their huts manufacture also other types with geometrical (triangular) patterns in yellow and brown forming only girdles *(umpango)*. In addition to this minimum requirement in the way of dress some women around the waist also wear copper belts *(manyeta)*, made of thin copper-wire, spiraly wound on a core of hairs from the tails of cows. These

291 177 287 291 [531] 291 301 [237]

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

291 301 belts are also worn by men, nowadays below the other clothing. More and more pieces of cotton with imprinted patterns have come into 291 vogue. They are worn around the lower part of the body or below the 177 shoulders or fastened about one of them, and are bought from Indian [139] shops. That this modern fashion, however, is something new in such places which are a little remoter from direct European influence was demonstrated to me when I came through a small village in the environment of Masoko. There by chance I met some young girls carrying a piece of cloth on the top of a long pole as if it were a banner. On enquiry I was told that this "banner" was nothing other than a [556 piece of cloth newly bought by a woman of that village and that it was 482] hoisted on a pole and carried in procession out of sheer joy that this woman had been able to buy it.

291 Menfolk throughout are fuller dressed, especially when they go dancing. The women, on the other hand, wear their ordinary dress also on such occasions. The dancing costume of the men — only the younger [242 men participate in dancing — consists of a sort of tight-jacket or 535] sweater and wide robes with coloured patterns. The hair is adorned [302 with feathers. At work the men mostly wear only loin cloths or shorts. 237] After work especially the older man wrap their bodies in blankets. It is very seldom nowadays to find even very old men still wearing the former national dress: a bundle of long grass in front and a smaller one behind tied to the waist by means of a string, as I found a man on a solitary spot near Rungwe Station. Little boys go altogether naked untill they are about three years of age. Little girls begin to wear a small *smabi* at an earlier age.

531 *13. Art.* One of the most interesting and striking features in the artistic endowment of the Nyakyusa are the decorations on the outer-walls of their huts. The latter are only painted, however, when the exterior of the framework of bamboo is mud covered, otherwise only the wooden doors (*ikifigo*, door) of the huts are painted. By no means every hut or house is painted, but only a limited number in each village, probably depending on the presence and industry of an artist as this art is as in other cases an individualistic one. One such artist was introduced to me in a village near Rutengasio. The ornaments consist in most cases of geometrical patterns in white and black, seldom in other colours, or they represent different sorts of animals, e. g. elephants, horses, cattle, snakes, etc. The richest designs I found in a long extended village on the right bank of the upper Kiwira. In an other case the names of the animals were written in Swahili below

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Food (other than meat) is provided on the day of the burial by the women of the home at which the burial takes place, on the succeeding day by visiting relatives, and on the third day by village neighbours. Women neighbours, like woman relatives, often bring gifts of bark-cloth belts (*amakiba*) with which to bind up the bellies of their bereaved friends, who are all atremble and full of fear, and so support them. These belts symbolize the sympathy of friends in the fearful grief of the mourners. 'If a woman wears many belts at a burial that means that she has many friends; her passionate grief is comforted by their friendship.'[1] And neighbours, like relatives and close friends from other chiefdoms, may bring cloths which are used to wrap the corpse and bind up the bellies of the chief mourners. But these gifts of food, firewood, belts, and cloth are the limit of a neighbour's obligations; very rarely does a neighbour bring a bull to kill for the funeral feast, whereas close kinsmen and affines are obliged to provide a bull or cow for this purpose if they have one. And neighbours take virtually no share in the elaborate ritual which follows for cleansing relatives from the contagion of death, driving the thought of the deceased out of their minds, and bringing back his spirit to bless the home. Their only part is to bring small gifts of millet from which to brew the beer drunk at the close of this ritual.

764 [431 292]

At an ordinary birth there is very little ceremony and the village as a group is not concerned, though close friends will help the mother during her confinement, fetching wood and water for her, and bringing occasional gifts of cooked food; but twin births are regarded as fearful and dangerous, and an elaborate ritual is performed to cleanse relatives from the contagion which, if left untreated, is believed to lead to serious swelling of the arms, legs, and stomachs, accompanied by diarrhoea. Relatives are treated with many medicines, while village neighbours are sprinkled with one only, but their cattle, especially the cattle herded with those of the man who has begotten twins, are thought to be in danger. At one twin ritual we watched there was some discussion whether all the cattle of the age-village should be treated, or only those of the herd-group to which the father of the twins belonged. Finally it was decided that on previous occasions all the cattle of the village had been treated, and a message was sent

[844] 621 845 783 [753]

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939), p. 12.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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XIII. DISPLAY—THE *UKUMQUA* DANCE AT A MARRIAGE FEAST
A woman in the foreground is wearing the traditional brass body-rings

[facing p. 130]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[3]
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XIV. A MEN'S *UKUMOGA* DANCE AT A FUNERAL

[facing p.131]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

dead man'. Sometimes, immediately after the burial, the chief mourners, both men and women, wail outside near the newly-filled grave. 764

Very many of the women relatives, a few of the men relatives, and some of the neighbours smear their heads and faces with mud or pot-black as a sign of grief (*kyo kesa*). Such an expression of grief is thought extravagant by the Christians who have themselves abandoned the custom. One Christian explained: 'The pagans smear themselves with mud because they tremble with fear at a death—but we do not tremble; the pagans are very sorrowful because they say: "Our friend has vanished from our eyes and we shall never meet him happily again."' 764 177

It is also the custom for the women relatives to bind one another's bellies with strips of bark-cloth, and for their woman friends to bind them also. These bark-cloth belts are called *amakiba* and symbolize the fearful grief and mutual sympathy of the mourners, and the sympathy of their friends. One women, who was taking two belts to tie up the bellies of two mourning friends whose husband had died, explained: 'I give them these to tie round their bellies because they are all a-tremble, they are full of fear.' And when she was asked why men did not thus support one another, she replied: 'They are not afraid like women, they do not tremble much.' But there is evidence that, before the coming of the Europeans, men also wore *amakiba* 'and even now if a chief dies his men often wear *amakiba* for one day'. The Christian women have kept the custom, but they emphasize more the aspect of sympathy and less that of fear. 'If a woman wears many belts at a burial that means she has many friends; her passionate grief is comforted by their friendship.' 292 764 [177] [572]

Sometimes on the first day, and usually on the last two or three days of a burial, there is dancing as well as wailing. Dancing begins late in the morning to the accompaniment of three or four drums, in the swept courtyard of the dead man's homestead; gradually it attracts more and more dancers, more and more of the attention of the onlookers, until the wailing is confined to the chief women mourners inside the hut, and the dance is the most conspicuous part of the proceedings. It is led by young men dressed in a special costume of ankle-bells and cloth skirts and, traditionally, bedaubed with red and white clay. All hold spears and leap wildly about, stamping down the soft earth of the grave as they dance. There is little common movement, each dances 535 764 [292] [302]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tradition of the leaping dance and show ourselves to the girls!" 764
And so it is with the women, some of the young women do not 535
come to mourn but to call the war-cry to the boys! Those who 832
come to mourn go into the hut and weep and weep. The young men say that they dance by reason of the women. The old men say that in the past it was different, it was war; the women ran behind the fighters watching the battle and calling the war-cry. And we all say that the present custom of dancing is the softer custom of a peaceful land.'

As the old significance of the dance to the majority of the participants was a lively salute to the dead man's fighting quality and a heightened sense of their own, so now it is his sexual quality which they honour and their own which they enjoy. 'Why', we asked a young man, 'do you dance nowadays at burials? There is little or no warfare and the dead man was never a fighter!' His answer came almost in the traditional form of words: 'We think that he too danced before the women, he was a brave dancer (*mogi*), and so we too dance (*ukukina*) at his death.'

'He too was a brave dancer (*mogi*).' The word *mogi* is from the 535
verb *ukumoga* which refers to the ordinary dances of sexual display 764
in contrast to the war-dance (*ukukina*). It is the war-dance which 721
is still normally danced at death. Not only, however, is its signi- 832
ficance being assimilated to that of the ordinary dances of recre- 177
ation, as this quotation clearly shows, but these other dances are now often performed at burials. Near Rungwe Mission the pagans dance the war-dance on the first day of a burial and sometimes on the second day as well, but always on the third day the dance is changed. The men abandon cloth skirts, spears, and ankle-bells [292]
and put on their best clothes, an ample white toga being particularly fashionable; the women adorn themselves with great care and some put roses in their hair. The dance is no longer a wild mêlée, but is slow and graceful; and its sexual significance is now apparent, not only in the faces of the dancers and the comments of the bystanders, but also in the forms of movement.

This custom is new. None of the chief mourners takes part in the 535
dance, though they watch it. In the war-dance, however, the chief 764
mourners among the men are expected to participate, and some 721
of them always do so. 'The (men) relatives dance if they have 177
strength, they weep first and then dance. For if they all sit still and no one of them dances we others say that they have not mourned him properly.' But they do not all dance. One old man whose

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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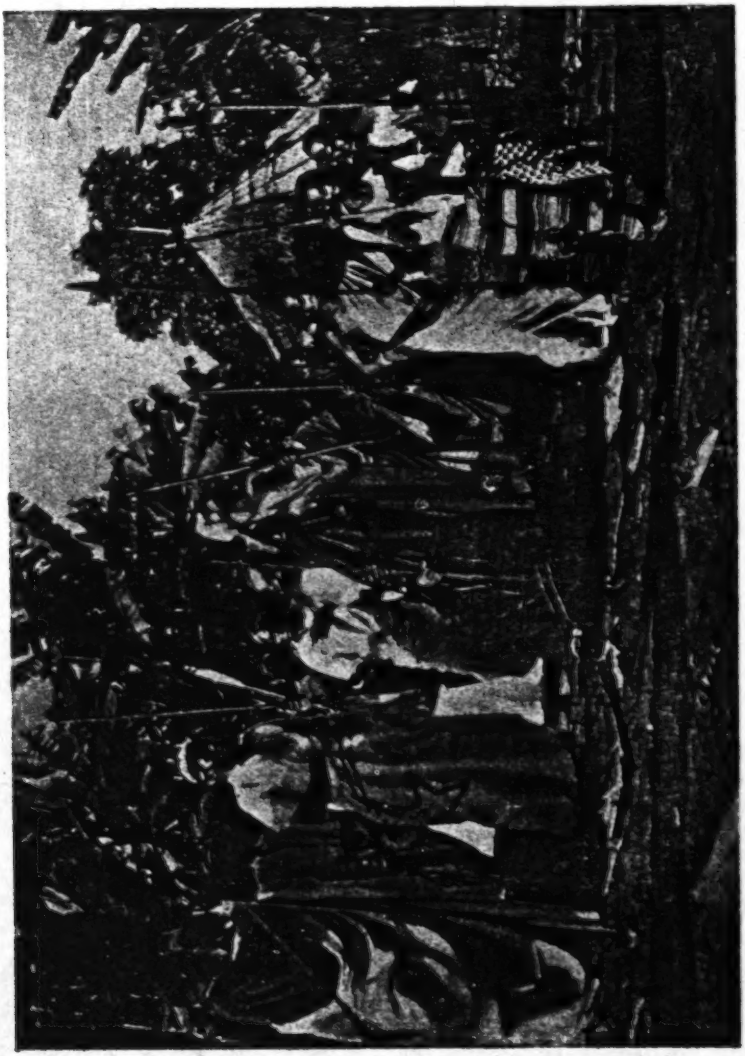

6. *The groomsmen dance the stamping dance*

[facing p. 101]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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A PROHIBITIONIST.

When food runs low, it is the duty of the chief to prevent undue consumption. The man in the picture has been sent out to prohibit the eating of bananas before a fixed date. He is wearing banana leaves and calabashes. Sometimes he carries a wooden rifle and a bandolier.

[FACING p. 272]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

trader brought in other seed. The trader himself planted a large plot and his success seems to have stimulated the Nyakyusa to follow suit. There was a slow but gradual development of planting and by 1932 it was estimated that some 500 tons of hand-hulled rice were sold. It had become clear that the alluvial flood plains around the northern tip of Lake Nyasa were ideally suited to paddy growing. Until 1942 the people continued to hand-hull their crop and sell the rice, but in that year they were persuaded to sell the paddy direct to a locally established mill. Following initial difficulties in milling, handling and marketing, the Government built a store capable of holding 14,000 bags and it also took over the whole of the marketing with a seconded District Officer in charge. In 1947 the cultivators formed their first co-operative society. This movement has been encouraged by Government and the local Co-operative Union now deals with storage and marketing with the guidance of a Government Co-operative Officer.

The figures of sales of rice and paddy are given in Table II.[1]

Paddy has become a well-established crop, not only as the single cash crop of the region, but also as a food crop second only (or even equal) to the traditionally staple banana. About four-fifths of all arable holdings are paddy fields – though parts of these are used for dry season crops of maize, beans, etc. Virtually every Nyakyusa land-holder now grows paddy, and the vast majority regard it as their main crop. Cultivation is mainly by ox-plough followed by broadcast sowing and hand-weeding. Government efforts to encourage nurseries and planting out in rows have so far been entirely unsuccessful. Yields and perhaps quality too are thought to be lower than need be; the chief factor in production seems to be the degree of natural flooding during the wet season.

TABLE II

SALES OF RICE AND PADDY, 1932-56*

		tons			tons
1932	..	500	1945	..	1,200
1933	..	600	1946	..	2,700
1934	..	600	1947	..	3,300
1935	..	600	1948	..	2,100
1936	..	700	1949	..	3,700
1938	..	700	1950	..	2,300
1939	..	1,200	1951	..	1,200
1940	..	1,500	1952	..	2,000
1941	..	1,600	1953	..	5,700
1942	..	2,200	1954	..	5,900
1943	..	2,800	1955	..	5,700
1944	..	2,900	1956	..	3,000

*1932-41—hand-hulled rice, estimates only.
1942-47—paddy, sold through Government agency.
1948-56—paddy, sold through cultivators' co-operatives.

The cultivation of paddy requires relatively large-sized holdings due to the nature of the crop and the local extensive method of agriculture – for example, to produce a given income requires a far larger area of paddy in the Lake Plains than of coffee in the Northern Highlands of Nyakyusa country. As paddy cultivation became established, men increased their arable holdings in order to earn their money incomes. Larger holdings, rather than improved agricultural techniques, have become directly connected with higher incomes, and so the demand for more land set in. Assisted by the now general use of ploughs, paddy growing increased rapidly wherever it was found ecologically possible – i.e., within the alluvial flood plains and the coterminous area of annual natural flooding. Before this new demand for land emerged there were, even in the most highly populated parts, extensive areas which were more or

1. Information has been supplied by the Co-operative Officer, Tukuyu.

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

535 [832] These dances seemed to be a representation of "sex appeal" or courting. Each new phase of the dance was introduced by the advancing of one or two young women fairly near to the side of the men, then each retreated followed by the whole lines of both the sexes. If the youngest girls present who stood mostly behind the "dancing" line (i. e. the group of the advancing women and older girls) were to come too near the proper dancing place, they were driven back. The older people and the *amafumu* were only spectators.

535 292 The women had no special dancing dress, but the men did. They now wore mostly a sort of tight jackets or sweaters and wide robes, coloured or with patterns.

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Synopsis

000 Verfasser legt seine Ermittlungen vor, die er während seines dreimonatigen Aufenthalts im Dorfe der Masoko (die zu den Nyakyusa gehören sammelte. Sie geben einen Einblick in die damals, 1939, überwiegend traditionsgebundene Lebensweise dieses Stammes, namentlich bezüglich der Medizinmänner und der Behandlung der Kranken. Um im Falle der Schwester des Häuptlings die Ursache der Erkrankung zu ermitteln, wurde ein Wahrsager gerufen, der bei einer Sitzung den Ehemann als Urheber feststellte. Zur Heilung wurden vom Häuptling Zeremonien am Grabe von dessen Vater angeordnet. Außerdem beschreibt Verfasser aus eigener Erfahrung die Trauerzeremonie nach dem Tode eines Kindes, die Initiation eines verlobten Mädchens u. a.

291 301 belts are also worn by men, nowadays below the other clothing. More and more pieces of cotton with imprinted patterns have come into 291 vogue. They are worn around the lower part of the body or below the 177 shoulders or fastened about one of them, and are bought from Indian [139] shops. That this modern fashion, however, is something new in such places which are a little remoter from direct European influence was demonstrated to me when I came through a small village in the environment of Masoko. There by chance I met some young girls carrying a piece of cloth on the top of a long pole as if it were a banner. On enquiry I was told that this "banner" was nothing other than a [556 piece of cloth newly bought by a woman of that village and that it was 482] hoisted on a pole and carried in procession out of sheer joy that this woman had been able to buy it.

291 Menfolk throughout are fuller dressed, especially when they go dancing. The women, on the other hand, wear their ordinary dress also on such occasions. The dancing costume of the men — only the younger [292 men participate in dancing — consists of a sort of tight-jacket or 535] sweater and wide robes with coloured patterns. The hair is adorned [302 with feathers. At work the men mostly wear only loin cloths or shorts. 237] After work especially the older man wrap their bodies in blankets. It is very seldom nowadays to find even very old men still wearing the former national dress: a bundle of long grass in front and a smaller one behind tied to the waist by means of a string, as I found a man on a solitary spot near Rungwe Station. Little boys go altogether naked untill they are about three years of age. Little girls begin to wear a small *amabi* at an earlier age.

531 *13. Art.* One of the most interesting and striking features in the artistic endowment of the Nyakyusa are the decorations on the outer-walls of their huts. The latter are only painted, however, when the exterior of the framework of bamboo is mud covered, otherwise only the wooden doors (*ikifigo*, door) of the huts are painted. By no means every hut or house is painted, but only a limited number in each village, probably depending on the presence and industry of an artist as this art is as in other cases an individualistic one. One such artist was introduced to me in a village near Rutenganio. The ornaments consist in most cases of geometrical patterns in white and black, seldom in other colours, or they represent different sorts of animals, e. g. elephants, horses, cattle, snakes, etc. The richest designs I found in a long extended village on the right bank of the upper Kiwira. In an other case the names of the animals were written in Swahili below

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 796 pumpkin leaves were ready to eat, an elaborate first-fruit ceremony was formerly carried out. The new season's food was offered first by the nobles of Ngonde in the grove of the previous Kyungu, the one who had last died.

[778] The great chiefs would do so next, each at his own sacred grove (the grave of his own predecessor in the title). And after them everyone, both chiefs and people, each at his father's grave. All offered first fruits to their own shades. And finally they would themselves eat, each with his chief wife. But they would not eat beforehand for fear of angering the shades.

643 796 [721] In time of tribal war also the Kyungu and nobles of Ngonde led the people in prayer. All chiefs and nobles were summoned from the plain and the great ones entered the Kyungu's house to receive their instructions:

[782] When he had finished speaking he would tell them to go and pray. So they would leave his house and gather all together, all the chiefs, and the other men, and pray. The premier noble of Ngonde would begin asking each of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn to bless them in the fight. And then the great chiefs would pray after him.

This organization of religious ritual in the Ngonde plain was both a factor of and itself determined by the general political structure. Many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions, but the reverse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular significance, [782] the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle were sent to Lubaga by the chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and health; but the 'clearing out of the ashes' was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruits ritual at all; while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

643 789 The majesty (*ubusiya*) of the Kyungu was cultivated in a variety of ways. He smeared himself with ointment made from lion fat, and his bed was built up with elephant tusks and lion pelts. He [352] was enthroned on the sacred iron stool called Kisumbi, he had a [293] spear, Kamisa, and Mulima, a porous piece of iron 'like a mouth organ' used to make rain, all handed down from the first Kyungu. [778] His zebra tails, set with medicines in horn handles, were waved in

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

in rulers and is thought to be transferred to them in the medicine brewed out of python blood. 643

It will be noticed that the central mystery of Lubaga and the sources of the most powerful medicine are the same, and the medicine is akin to witchcraft. The shades, medicines, and witchcraft are distinguished and are thought to operate independently, but they are all manifestations of a mystical power which is logically one, though none of our informants saw it as that. 778 789

We referred earlier to the function of the chiefs' medicines in giving courage in war and luck in raiding. Certain emblems of chieftainship are carried in war: a sacred spear, a bamboo trumpet (*ililonge*) or a great war-horn (*ingangabwite*), and several giraffe or zebra tails (*imiswigala*), and all of these have little horns filled with *inyifwila* attached to them. Of the trumpet it was said: 'You hear it and your heart swells and a great trembling comes over you and you fight.' 'The chiefs forbid them to be blown now because their blowing always brings war.' Each of the senior village headmen is given a tail at the 'coming out' and he went into battle with it bound on to his upper arm. A notable warrior was sometimes given one also. To lose a tail in battle was comparable to losing the regimental colours and there are epics of their loss and recovery. If the leader who carried it saw that he was surrounded he would try to pass it back, or he might hide it on the ground: [293] [721] [726]

> then that night they would go back to the spot and they would find it because it shone with a light and made a bubbling noise, *burukut, burukut, burukut*. . . . [774]
>
> In the old days the medicine [in the tails] was frequently renewed; for there was war, and it gave the headmen the power of dreaming of the course of war. . . . But now, since you have brought peace to the land, no one renews it, and it has gone rotten.

However, the tails in Mwaipopo's chiefdom *were* thus treated in December 1937, and we saw it done. The four tails, with six tiny medicine horns and a calabash of medicated ointment, were formally handed over to the care of Kalinga, Mwaipopo's (116) chief wife, having previously been in the care of his mother. Mwaipopo himself was there with two kinsmen and the three commoner priests Kissogota, Njobakosa, and Ngulyo, but not Kasitile (86) since he was 'father-in-law' to Kalinga and could not meet her, though he was informed of the ritual. Kalobo, the second senior wife, looked on. Kalinga poured out the ointment

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ages, they sometimes build in villages of different generations. 561
When it comes to the selection of village headmen, however, 643
care is taken to ensure that they are indeed sons of men who came 622
out with the previous chief, and a village like Katumba which comprised both younger brothers and sons of Mwankuga's generation breaks up, some members 'coming out' with Mwankuga's son, others acting as 'fathers'. Within a village all the members are equal subject to their headman, but a hierarchy of villages is clear.

The pre-eminence of the two senior village headmen of a chief 631
is marked. They alone make fire with him at the 'coming out'. 643
They alone are handed war tails with which to lead their men in [293]
battle. Each is responsible for one half of the country and a dispute [778]
not settled by the headman of the village of the defendant is reported to the senior headman in whose side of the country the village lies, and he brings it before the chief. Each senior headman has his own village, the two senior villages of the country, in which the royal ladies live; the senior wife married at the 'coming out' is established close to the senior village headman, the second wife close to the second senior headman. A chief may establish wives in a number of villages, and some at least of those he inherits from his father continue to live in his father's old homestead 'to sweep the graves', but his capitals (*ifitangalala*) are the two senior villages of the country in which his two senior wives and two senior village headmen live[1] and the names of the capitals are used not only for the senior villages but for the half sections of the generation they lead. The importance of the two senior headmen is apparent even when their generation has handed over political authority to their sons. At the sacrifices we have described Njobakosa and Ngulyo, heirs of the senior headmen of the chief Mwaijonga (82) officiated, and at the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) it was Mwambuputa and Kakuju his father's senior headmen who organized the ritual.

Each village established at a 'coming out' is a clearly defined 621
unit with its own land, and leader, and name, but villages are also 631
segments of larger units, the half-section of the chiefdom under a 561
senior headman, and the whole chiefdom under the leadership of

[1] Mwanyilu (177), though he had two senior headmen, established his two senior wives in *our* house, close to the house of Kilasile his most senior headman. This was explained as a temporary measure 'because they were young', but it is not the traditional pattern, and may be linked with the fact that the splitting of the country each generation is no longer accepted as the inevitable pattern.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngoode FN17
Nyakyusa

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12a. NGEMELA, FOUNDER OF A SEPARATIST CHURCH

12b. NYASUKU, LEADER OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CHURCH

[opp. p. 169]

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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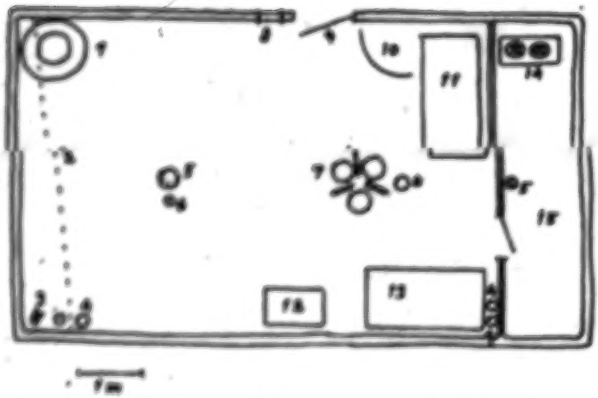
[352
353]



Idina's house. 1, basket; 2, clothes-line; 3, broom; 4, jars, in the back room on low shelf; 5, posts supporting roof; 6, small diameter bamboo poles, supports for the ceiling; 7, hearth with three round hearthstones; 8, shuttered opening through which the bolt may be reached; 9, door; 10, camera for food; 11, spare bed; 12, table; 13, Idina's bed; 14, shelf for jars; 15, store-room behind mud wall with door.

[361] man and his two wives. The houses were grouped round a common courtyard, the doors giving upon this space and not on the nearby village thoroughfare.

The three houses bore the names of Iselina's house, Idina's house, and Baba's house. The elder wife, Iselina, had several minor children, who slept either near
352 her own bed or in the living area. She owned furnishings as modern as a chair
177 and a cupboard with shelves, besides the usual objects in these houses, baskets, bamboo-mugs, hen's nest and roost, ladder and water jars. She also had an earthen-
[415 ware beer jar which, one day when I called on her, was standing on the fire,
273] nearly making the froth boil over. She was preparing beer for her husband's friends, who had just dropped in.

352 The new wife, Idina, had a store-room in her house, and there was also a
[353 large heap of cassava, meant for food. As often seen in these houses, she had also
262] a guest bed. She had a number of jars and baskets, but no hen's nest. Straight across the room she had suspended a line on which she put her clothes. Such an
[246] arrangement was often used, especially by the bachelors; they had a line for their shirts. Clothes-hangers were not in use. You just threw your clothes across the line. A wardrobe was never seen.

342 The interior of Baba's house presented a peculiar picture. It was divided into
352 three rooms, a living-area in the middle; at one side the bed-room, at the other a store-room. The bed-room had only one bed and a wooden chest. There was no hearth in the living-room—for the husband had his meals prepared by one of his wives. But there was a true accumulation of tables, chairs, suitcases, and a

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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VII. A LITTLE GIRL PLANTING SWEET POTATOES IN HER MOTHER'S FIELD

[facing p. 66]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngoade FN17
Nyakyusa

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IX. NDIMBOMI, A CHRISTIAN WOMAN, STOOPING TO GREET A MAN

[FACING P. 70]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

156 ments and fine clothes, or a splendid herd of cattle—all these are forms of *ukumoga*.

Traditionally Nyakyusa women wore only a bark-cloth belt 291 tied around the waist and drawn between the legs to fall in streamers in front (cf. Plate XIII), and the pagan women cling to 177 this dress, maintaining that it is only 'Swahili women with dirty diseases' who have to wear clothes to cover their sores, and if a pagan woman has a cloth she will probably wave it like a flag or hang it over one shoulder, when she dances. Except for the Christians, few Nyakyusa women regularly wear clothes. The Christians like a brightly coloured cloth tied under the armpits, and hanging to the knees (cf. Plate IX). Women make their own [287] bark-cloths with great care, and decorate them with geometrical patterns in red and black, the red dye being imported from the Livingstone mountains; they mix this same dye with a fatty [386] ointment made from the seeds of the *unyunguti* tree, and rub it all over themselves. The most prized ornament (worn by both [301] sexes) are body rings of coiled brass or copper wire (cf. Plate XIII). In the past men went naked except for these body rings[1] but, unlike the women, they have taken enthusiastically to clothes, and swagger around in brilliant loin-cloths or flowing white togas; or, if rather more sophisticated, in freshly pressed shorts and shirts, or lounge suits and topees.

535 The series of ceremonies at a girl's initiation and marriage, and 156 at a funeral, are regular occasions for dancing, and the birth and death rates are so high that these occur very frequently within a chiefdom of 3,000 men. Once in a generation the eagerly anticipated 'coming out' ceremony offers an even greater opportunity for display. Skill in dancing is admired and the young people are encouraged to practise. A bride's mother does a great deal of the heavy work for her daughter, saying '*amoge tan*', which means literally 'let her display herself first', and implies 'let her have a good time while she can'; and a father may use the same phrase of his son. Angombwike explained: "The old men used to take 156 great pride in their sons; often a man would say to his son: "Don't 593 you hoe for me, I'll do the hoeing myself, you go and swagger about." Sometimes a man would sell a cow and buy a huge-bladed spear and give it to his son. Then, if he heard that his son

[1] cf. Elton, op. cit., p. 322; H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, p. 18.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

XIII. DISPLAY—THE *UKUMOGA* DANCE AT A MARRIAGE FEAST
A woman in the foreground is wearing the traditional brass body-rings

[facing p. 130]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[3]
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XIV. A MEN'S *UKUMOGA* DANCE AT A FUNERAL

[facing p. 131]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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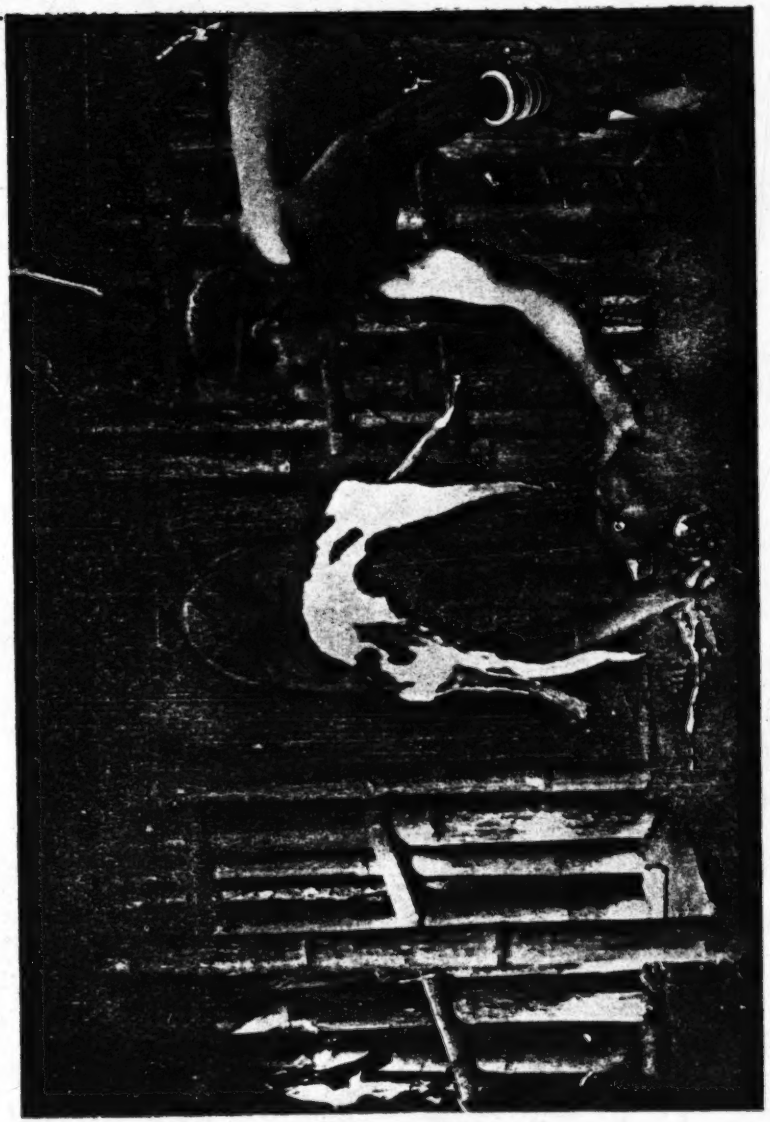

4. *The bride washes with* ikipiki *in the doorway of her mother's hut*

[Facing p. 85]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

them and polite greetings were exchanged. The bride herself 585
crouched down with her head covered with a cloth, but after the greetings were completed she sat up and chatted with them. Then one of the groom's 'village mothers', who was the officiant in the ritual, his sister, and two young women from his village, took the bride to the stream to wash. The officiant told the young women to carry her, which they did for a few yards, then they put her down. Her maids sang and she herself danced a few steps. Women came out of the houses as we passed, dancing and clapping. At the stream the bride took off her old bark-cloth and bathed with her maids. As she finished she stepped into a flat winnowing basket (*uluselo*) for a minute, then stepped out, and her husband's sister decked her with four brass body-rings (*vide* plate 7) and a [301] folded cloth (*umpepe*) hanging down from the rings behind like a tail. The bride shook the 'tail' and the others laughed and cried: '*Kipetule*[1] *tukunsepeka*[2] (It is turned over! We clothe her with the male genital covering!)' They walked back again laughing, and when they reached the first houses one of the party said: 'We should carry her now.' Another demurred: 'Let's go a little further, she's heavy.' Then a woman of the village came along and called: 'Carry her! Carry her!' They arrived at her mother's house singing: '*Nisya, Nisya, Nisya*! (Put me down!)' The groom's 'mothers', the bride herself, and her maids, all sang this. The rest of the groom's party joined in and they walked up and down the courtyard carrying her and singing '*Nisya, Nisya.*' The groom's own mother carried a winnowing basket on her head and the bride's 'mothers' rushed out and threw into it small bowlfuls of millet, maize, pumpkin-seeds and lentils.[3] This grain goes to the groom's 'mothers': 'The mother-in-law drinks beer made from the millet.' Then the bride was made to sit down in the doorway of her mother's hut; the officiant sat behind her, shaved a little of the sprouting hair from the front of her head, and smeared her head, arms, legs, and stomach with ointment and red powder supplied [302] by her own mother. Powdered medicine supplied by the groom's mother was added to the shaving water.

When her toilet was completed, the women called the men to come and give their gifts. The bride and her maids crouched down and the cloth removed from her buttocks was spread

[1] *Okopetula*: to turn over.
[2] *Okosepeka*: to clothe, from *ikisepe*: male genital covering.
[3] Beans, cowpeas and ground-nuts are also mentioned as being given at this time.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 the boys form a queue and bend forward, holding out their hands while she poured water over the hands of each of them. After washing, each took a mouthful of water and spat it out. They were warned not to spill it on their legs as they washed and spat. Some young men washed with the boys, and women watching shouted advice, but a number of the boys went off without taking a mouthful of water or without spitting. After the boys came the girls, and then the women and babies and some more small boys who had arrived late. We counted twenty-six boys and young men, twenty-six girls and babies, and twenty-four women washing.

Then came the splashing of legs. The doctor shredded a banana sucker to make a tail. All the company gathered round the boiling pot of medicine, and the doctor, dipping the tail into the pot, splashed the boiling liquid on to their legs. Children screamed; women hopped with the pain, but shouted to their children to come and be treated. Frightened small children were hauled back by men, women, and elder children—a full sister of the twins, about 9 years old, was dragged in yelling. Mothers were especially careful to see that their babies were splashed, and pulled up the cloths binding them to their backs, so that their legs might be exposed. Mwakobela and his brother came to be splashed but some of the young men hurried away immediately after washing, disregarding the women who shouted to them that it was taboo for them to leave before they had been splashed. The women took [183] the whole ritual much more seriously than the men, and they were very particular to see that their children were treated. One old woman who had helped a child to wash, holding its hands, came back again to wash herself. The doctor and other women shouted that she had already washed. She replied: 'Oh, I just helped the child. Have I really finished?' The mother and remaining twin did not stir from the hut—she looked dirty and dishevelled. The doctor was elegant; she wore five brass body-rings • [301] and her body was well oiled and rouged. She organized everyone with great confidence and was treated with respect, a mat being spread for her to sit upon (no other woman had a mat), and her assistant fetching and carrying everything she required.

845 431 Many of the women relatives had brought gifts of millet and after the treatment was over they tipped their small basketfuls into a big grain basket. Then they had a snack of roasted plantains (Mwakobela provided three stems) and went home.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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7. The officiant at a twin ritual anoints a child

[facing p. 164]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 PNI: Ngonde PNI:
Nyakyusa

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8. *Preparing the meat for the participants to match at a lavia ritual*

[facing p.165]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

[Frontispiece]

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AN ITINERANT ENTERTAINER.

He is dressed in skin and feather head-dress, armlets, skin kilt, and body stripe, the number of which latter indicates his social position. He carries, as professional properties, a spear, a skin pack, rattles, horns, bells, and a stringed musical instrument.

[Facing p. viii]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Man
of social position are known by the number of *manyria* 291
(body rings worn on the waist) which they wear: [301
one for a man or woman just "above the common"; 554]
six or seven for a man of high standing. A few women
have begun, to their own great discomfort, to wear
the immense coils of brass or iron on wrists or ankles
which are so popular among other tribes.

Clothes, says an acknowledged authority on the 291
subject, make the man. Not among the Konde. 643
Chungu is a great chief, but his greatness does not 554
depend on what he wears, although there are occa-
sions when he dresses more carefully than at other
times. This almost naked man is regarded with a
reverence greater than is granted to any but a very
few Europeans, and out of all recognition greater
than is felt for the native who swaggers about in
boots and helmet and white man's clothes. The
respect which is accorded to a European depends
to-day (though it did not in the past) upon his personal
character, his control of resources, the authority which
has been bestowed upon him by others. But Chungu,
with hundreds of other chiefs throughout Bantu
Africa, has a respect which is gained in a totally
different fashion. He is in close touch with unseen
powers. His prayers have a compelling power, his
benediction is priestly, his curse of fearful validity.
He is a channel through which may come weal or
woe upon the land; and hence his authority depends
in no degree upon such an accident as dress.

By almost all who know them the Konde are re- 461
garded as lazy. And to the bustling, and perhaps

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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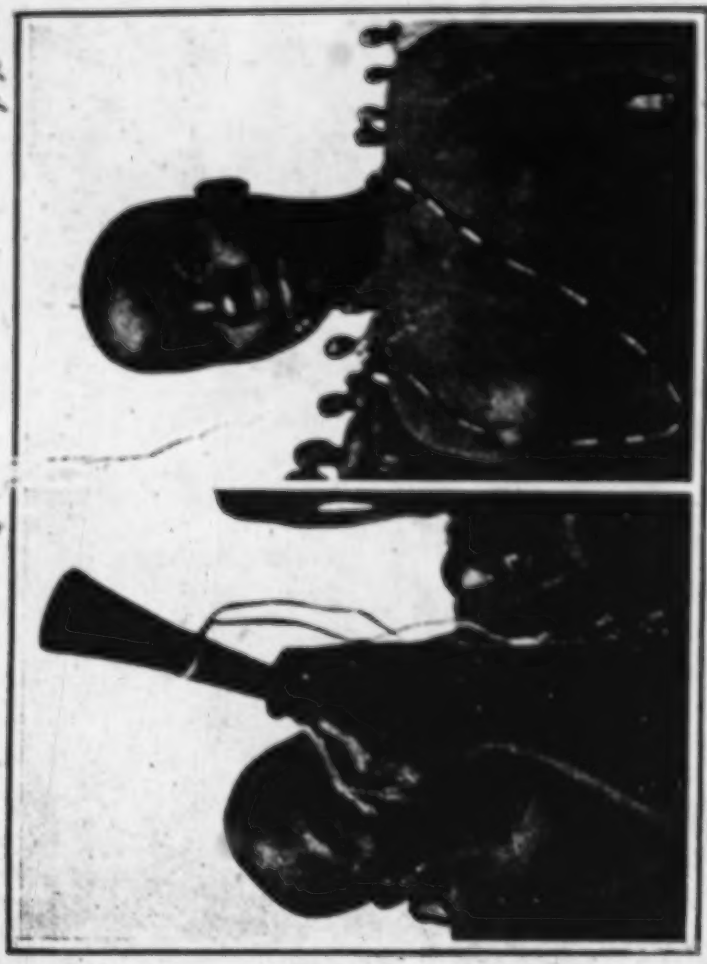

TOBACCO SMOKING.

Some may be only one pipe for a dozen smokers. Each taken one big puff, and slowly exhales after he has handed the pipe to his neighbour. Many grow their own tobacco, and often table it in the form of snuff.

A YOUNG WOMAN.

Young women are not always so simply dressed, many wear quantities of beads on their necks and arms, and some are weighted down on neck, arms and ankles with coils of copper wire. The class dresses head, however, is unknown to all girls who wish to be smart.

[Facing p. 64]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

empty?" Mwaikuyu said, "Why should we die? 326
I will call the people to worship."

The most important products of the smithy are 411
hoes and spears. Of the latter there are about a 412
dozen different kinds, for war, hunting, fishing; with broad or narrow blades; plain or with one, two, or three prongs; with long or short hafts. Axes are made for cutting down trees, digging out canoes, and all heavy work; some are slightly bent, and are used adze-wise; a small one, very sharp, is used for smoothing woodwork and finishing it off. There is also the *isenge*, a kind of cross between a hooked axe and a small scythe, used mostly for clearing bush land; and a long-bladed axe, carried by chiefs over the shoulder, and serving only as an ornament.

Knives are made of many patterns and sizes, with or without sheaths. A long spear-bladed knife is used for grass cutting, and a neat small strip of iron, sharpened at one end, not along the blade, is used as a razor. Arrows are not much used, as the Konde are not given to the use of the bow except for killing birds. Fish hooks were originally barbless, but some are now made on the European pattern. Needles are made for sewing mats; smaller ones for sewing breaks in calabashes, and others for sewing basket-work. Cow bells, tiny bells worn by little children [301] on the ankles, anklets, and bracelets for women, complete the list.

For lake-shore people, and those living near the 501
larger rivers, the most important wood-working art is canoe making, and the average Konde canoe is a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

notwithstanding the accident, accepted the inevitable, 505
and were ferried safely across.

For the rest, the variety of woodwork includes 322
carved walking-sticks, with straight, knobbed, or bent 352
handles; chairs, stools, pillows, musical instruments, and wooden platters. In the Bundali district remarkably good Rurkee chairs are made on the European pattern, with perfectly smoothed spars, and perfectly burned-out holes for fitting the parts together. The one in my possession might quite well have been made in a carpenter's shop, but the only tools used were an axe and a knife, and a piece of iron for boring the holes. Toothed hair ornaments and [321
small wooden dolls represent the finer work; and 524
bamboo cups are decorated with pleasing patterns in 415]
poker work.

More important than the woodwork is the ancient 323
craft of the potter. There is, of course, no potter's 415
wheel, everything, from the immense pots, three feet high, down to the smallest eating dish, being formed by hand, built up, as regards the larger ones, by successive layers of clay, and finally hardened, after drying in the sun, by being put on a fire, while another fire is kindled inside. There is a great variety of pots, both in shape and in size. The very large ones are used for storing grain or flour; and some Europeans employ them for storing water. A well-stocked house will have up to twenty pots, for water carrying, for cook- 323
ing porridge, fish, beans, flesh; and special ones are 415
kept for beer making and drinking. The best clay is 317
found at the north end of the lake, and from there

J: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

287 sometimes long coats. They look well for a few weeks and then take on a dirty depressing appearance, and it is safe to say that with the reduction in price of Home goods bark-cloth will go out of favour.

281 [254] Leather work has not developed to any great extent. Women use undressed skins for carrying babies; and men, in remote districts, use them as aprons. In Poloto skins are sewn together to form garments, and in the Kings Mountains the skins worn by the women are pleasingly decorated with shells, while the leg skins are skilfully cut into strips and used as ties, by which to bind the skin on the back. They are seldom worn in front, and the Kings women go in furs as to their backs, while a small bunch of grass alone clothes the front. Shields, wide and narrow; blacksmith's bellows of undressed goat skin; tobacco and snuff pouches, waist belts, caps, sandals; and long strips of hide for binding purposes, such as the haft of a spear, are all or nearly all the uses that are made of leather, if indeed the term leather should be used at all, as most of the articles named are made from unprepared skins.

• 301 Beads are strung into pleasing patterns by using various colours, and are worn in strings or broad bands, on neck, forehead, arms, ankles, shoulders. [291] Children often go clad only in a tiny apron of beadwork, and girls in the Kings Mountains wear similar aprons until marriage.

532 One European house in my neighbourhood is decorated with a frieze of crude representations of men on foot or on horseback, motor-cars, cycles, birds,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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THE KYUNGU, PETER

[opposite title page]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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13. MARIA, A CHRISTIAN ELDER

[opp. p. 167]

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

usa. It is true that one still meets blacksmiths on the outskirts of the villages or some distance away from them (as in the case of the Ndali tribe, western to the Nyakyusa area), but they no longer smelt the iron from ore mined by themselves as in former times. The smith of to-day remelt only scrap iron from disused motor-cars and other machines into tools, hatches, and spear-heads, unless, of course, the natives prefer to buy imported iron-ware. As with the Chaga, also the Nyakyusa smith can only be persuaded to submit to being photographed after long negotiation and a change into better clothes. The blacksmiths I met in the Bundali Mountains, however, made no objections whatever to being photographed at their work. Also women were allowed to attend. But one feature of the ancient Nyakyusa blacksmith's culture has been preserved till the present day: the lower part of the bellows through which the air blast is driven into the fire is still made of wood. This feature has been defined by H. Baumann as an element of the "ancient nigritic culture".

12. Dress. The cloths of the Nyakyusa have changed to a very considerable degree since the beginning of European influence. A comparison of the earliest pictures and descriptions of inhabitants at the northern end of Lake Nyasa with the dress of modern times brings out this point most forcibly. Originally the Nyakyusa went almost naked, adorned only with rings and belts, but nowadays all degrees of compromise with European fashions of dress are to be found, especially near the European settlements and Mission Stations. The most conservative element are, in this case, the women. It is still possible to-day to observe in each village the preparation of the long strips of bark *(elyabi*, pl. *amabi)* commonly worn by the women. The so-called *impandapanda* (Fotheringham: *mlambe)* tree furnishes the dress material. After the bark has been immersed in water, the bast is beaten with wooden instruments and then pulled off from the harder parts of the bark. These tools are like hammers; the flat end of such an implement is furrowed, sometimes with a disk made of horn, and as it produces patters on the bast it is called "obosimbe", that which produces patters. These long belts, almost reaching the ground, especially in front, are mostly ruby coloured, but the women sitting in front of their huts manufacture also other types with geometrical (triangular) patterns in yellow and brown forming only girdles *(umpango)*. In addition to this minimum requirement in the way of dress some women around the waist also wear copper belts *(manyeta)*, made of thin copper-wire, spiraly wound on a core of hairs from the tails of cows. These

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

291 301 belts are also worn by men, nowadays below the other clothing. More and more pieces of cotton with imprinted patterns have come into 291 vogue. They are worn around the lower part of the body or below the 177 shoulders or fastened about one of them, and are bought from Indian [439] shops. That this modern fashion, however, is something new in such places which are a little remoter from direct European influence was demonstrated to me when I came through a small village in the environment of Masoko. There by chance I met some young girls carrying a piece of cloth on the top of a long pole as if it were a banner. On enquiry I was told that this "banner" was nothing other than a [556 piece of cloth newly bought by a woman of that village and that it was 482] hoisted on a pole and carried in procession out of sheer joy that this woman had been able to buy it.

291 Menfolk throughout are fuller dressed, especially when they go dancing. The women, on the other hand, wear their ordinary dress also on such occasions. The dancing costume of the men — only the younger [292 men participate in dancing — consists of a sort of tight-jacket or 535] sweater and wide robes with coloured patterns. The hair is adorned [302 with feathers. At work the men mostly wear only loin cloths or shorts. 237] After work especially the older man wrap their bodies in blankets. It is very seldom nowadays to find even very old men still wearing the former national dress: a bundle of long grass in front and a smaller one behind tied to the waist by means of a string, as I found a man on a solitary spot near Rungwe Station. Little boys go altogether naked untill they are about three years of age. Little girls begin to wear a small *smabi* at an earlier age.

531 *13. Art.* One of the most interesting and striking features in the artistic endowment of the Nyakyusa are the decorations on the outer-walls of their huts. The latter are only painted, however, when the exterior of the framework of bamboo is mud covered, otherwise only the wooden doors (*ikifigo*, door) of the huts are painted. By no means every hut or house is painted, but only a limited number in each village, probably depending on the presence and industry of an artist as this art is as in other cases an individualistic one. One such artist was introduced to me in a village near Rutenganio. The ornaments consist in most cases of geometrical patterns in white and black, seldom in other colours, or they represent different sorts of animals, e. g. elephants, horses, cattle, snakes, etc. The richest designs I found in a long extended village on the right bank of the upper Kiwira. In an other case the names of the animals were written in Swahili below

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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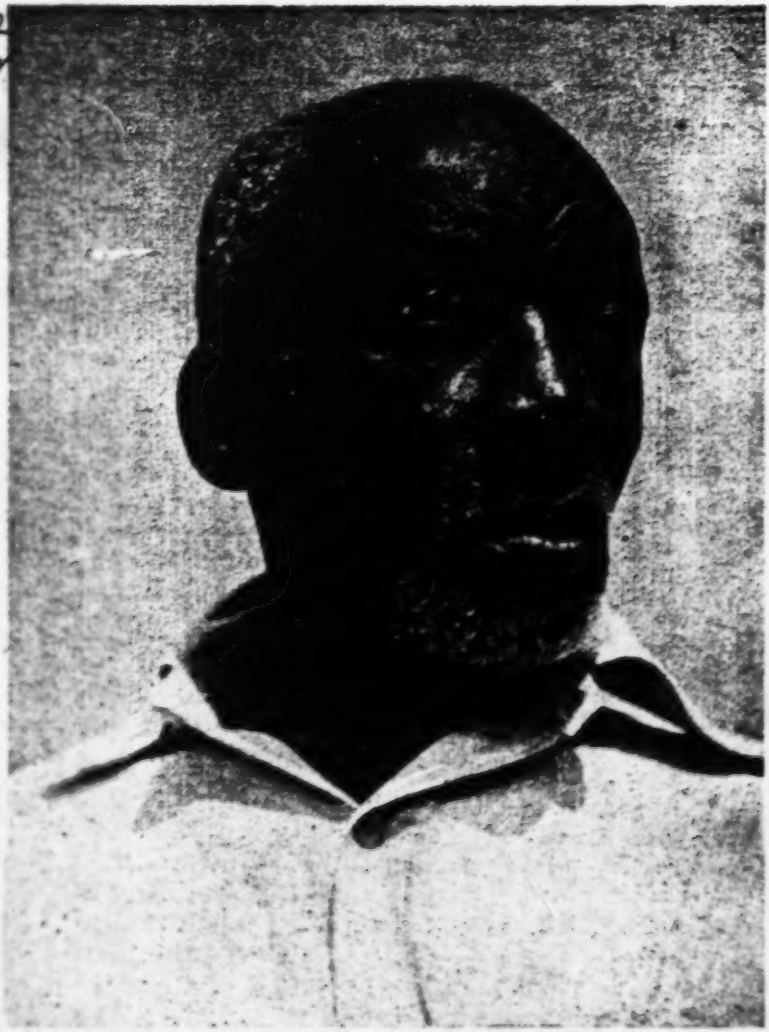

VI. FIBOMBE, A CHRISTIAN ELDER

[facing p. 51]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

dead man'. Sometimes, immediately after the burial, the chief mourners, both men and women, wail outside near the newly-filled grave. 764

Very many of the women relatives, a few of the men relatives, and some of the neighbours smear their heads and faces with mud or pot-black as a sign of grief (*kyo kesa*). Such an expression of grief is thought extravagant by the Christians who have themselves abandoned the custom. One Christian explained: 'The pagans smear themselves with mud because they tremble with fear at a death—but we do not tremble; the pagans are very sorrowful because they say: "Our friend has vanished from our eyes and we shall never meet him happily again."' 764 177

It is also the custom for the women relatives to bind one another's bellies with strips of bark-cloth, and for their woman friends to bind them also. These bark-cloth belts are called *amakiba* and symbolize the fearful grief and mutual sympathy of the mourners, and the sympathy of their friends. One women, who was taking two belts to tie up the bellies of two mourning friends whose husband had died, explained: 'I give them these to tie round their bellies because they are all a-tremble, they are full of fear.' And when she was asked why men did not thus support one another, she replied: 'They are not afraid like women, they do not tremble much.' But there is evidence that, before the coming of the Europeans, men also wore *amakiba* 'and even now if a chief dies his men often wear *amakiba* for one day'. The Christian women have kept the custom, but they emphasize more the aspect of sympathy and less that of fear. 'If a woman wears many belts at a burial that means she has many friends; her passionate grief is comforted by their friendship.' 292 764 [177] [572]

Sometimes on the first day, and usually on the last two or three days of a burial, there is dancing as well as wailing. Dancing begins late in the morning to the accompaniment of three or four drums, in the swept courtyard of the dead man's homestead; gradually it attracts more and more dancers, more and more of the attention of the onlookers, until the wailing is confined to the chief women mourners inside the hut, and the dance is the most conspicuous part of the proceedings. It is led by young men dressed in a special costume of ankle-bells and cloth skirts and, traditionally, bedaubed with red and white clay. All hold spears and leap wildly about, stamping down the soft earth of the grave as they dance. There is little common movement, each dances 535 764 [292] [302]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

but the salted is mixed in a ball with the millet porridge previously 765
prepared, and plastered against the wall of the hut and on the hearthstones, whence the participants must bite it off. They compete for it, jostling one another. Sometimes the officiant also puts some watery porridge in a leaf of the bark-cloth tree and squeezes it into a basket. Again the participants fight to take a little each.

Some of the millet paste, previously prepared, is smeared on the head of each participant in the form of a cross, drawn from the forehead and the nape of the neck to the crown, and from each ear to the crown. The officiant then shaves each of them, beginning with the lines along which she smeared them. As she does so she says: 'Alas, he (or she, if the deceased was a woman) stole. . . . They cut his head.'

If the family is wealthy at least one cow is killed by the heir—Kasitile insisted that a sacrifice is essential at the pumpkin-seed ritual—and the authority of the heir is acknowledged at the same time. Lubalelo, discussing the funeral of his kinsman Mwafyuma, remarked that, at the ritual of the pumpkin-seeds, when they had called together all the dead man's children, his son would kill cows. 'Then when he has killed the cows the children will be told "He is your father", and all of them will fall down before him clapping their hands to say: "Thanks be! Father has risen from the dead (*Ndaga! Ndaga! Asyukile tata*)."'

ii. '*Shaving the sprouting hair.*' The remaining millet brought by relatives and neighbours is usually put to soak immediately and, when it has sprouted, the wives of relatives and village neighbours are called to come and help grind it for beer. The women of the village bring firewood to boil water for the beer and, when the brewing is ripe, 'those whose wives came to grind' come to drink. The participants are given some of the beer mixed with *ikipiki* and a powdered medicine in a small calabash at the grave. Then the officiant smears their faces with soot and draws lines on the head of each with a piece of banana stalk dipped in the lees of the beer to which the *ikipiki* and powdered medicine have been added. Again the lines are drawn from forehead and nape of neck to the crown and from each ear to the crown. She shaves the sprouting [302] hair on the forehead and at the nape of the neck of each of them, and also makes some small cuts in these places and rubs in the lees of the beer. Or she may do this for the senior participant only, who then does it for his juniors. This is 'the shaving of the sprouting hair' (*ukutemela ilitemelo*) and implies the lifting of a ban. If the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

at the groom's home (*ukusukusula*). The party was given a hen when they arrived and a second the next morning. The groom and some of his friends spent the night with the bride and her friends. (He and she lie together on this occasion but do not yet have full intercourse.)[1] In the morning the mother-in-law shaved the bride's head, eyebrows, and eyelashes, leaving only a small tuft on the nape of her neck. Then she mixed water with powdered medicine and poured it for groom and bride to wash. The groom washed his hands and mouth only, the bride her hands and mouth and whole body. During her seclusion she might not use oil or the red powder favoured as a cosmetic by Nyakyusa women,[2] but after this third washing she was free to do so, and she oiled herself meticulously. Meantime the groom was shaved by one of his friends.

On the same day the bride returned to her father's homestead with her own party and seven 'mothers' of the groom who brought five stems of bananas, a pot of water, and a small bull for the ritual of 'clearing out the litter' (*ukusosya ulufumbo*). She herself was wearing the skin of a bull over her head—'she wears any skin she can get hold of'. One of the groom's party shaved off the last tuft of her hair and buried it carefully in the *ulufumbo*, the litter of banana leaves on which she had slept and sat during her seclusion. Had her own mother been present she would have shaved also and so should the brother, but he did not do so. The groom's mother and Kyobwe (representing the bride's mother) carried out the litter to the edge of the banana plantation surrounding the homestead. As they did so they whispered to each other. Kyobwe said the bride was a little liar. Her husband had offered her 1s. to take to her mothers and she had refused it saying: 'No, they swear at me and grudge me food.' 'She's your child,' said the mother-in-law. 'No,' said Kyobwe, 'she's another woman's child, she's a foolish child.' Every scrap of litter in the hut was carefully collected and a little of the soil below it scraped off and carried out with the leaves. All who had helped with the clearing washed their hands carefully.

Then the groom's mother made a basin of two banana leaves close to the pile of litter. Into it she poured the water her party had brought with them, and sprinkled in powdered medicine in

[1] One or two informants maintained that 'she must not refuse him now or he will refuse to wash with her, saying: "She is not my wife."' But others were insistent that according to strict custom only intercourse *inter crura* was allowed. Full intercourse at this time would make nonsense of the *ilibalaga* ritual which follows.

[2] Formerly also by men: cf. V. Giraud, *Les Lacs de l'Afrique Equatoriale* (1890), p. 176.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Sokya, Makgonde

them and polite greetings were exchanged. The bride herself 585
crouched down with her head covered with a cloth, but after the greetings were completed she sat up and chatted with them. Then one of the groom's 'village mothers', who was the officiant in the ritual, his sister, and two young women from his village, took the bride to the stream to wash. The officiant told the young women to carry her, which they did for a few yards, then they put her down. Her maids sang and she herself danced a few steps. Women came out of the houses as we passed, dancing and clapping. At the stream the bride took off her old bark-cloth and bathed with her maids. As she finished she stepped into a flat winnowing basket (*ulusele*) for a minute, then stepped out, and her husband's sister decked her with four brass body-rings (*side* plate 7) and a [301]
folded cloth (*umpepe*) hanging down from the rings behind like a tail. The bride shook the 'tail' and the others laughed and cried: '*Kipetule*[1] *tukunsepeka*[2] (It is turned over! We clothe her with the male genital covering!)' They walked back again laughing, and when they reached the first houses one of the party said: 'We should carry her now.' Another demurred: 'Let's go a little further, she's heavy.' Then a woman of the village came along and called: 'Carry her! Carry her!' They arrived at her mother's house singing: '*Niya, Niya, Niya*! (Put me down!)' The groom's 'mothers', the bride herself, and her maids, all sang this. The rest of the groom's party joined in and they walked up and down the courtyard carrying her and singing '*Niya, Niya*.' The groom's own mother carried a winnowing basket on her head and the bride's 'mothers' rushed out and threw into it small bowlfuls of millet, maize, pumpkin-seeds and lentils.[3] This grain goes to the groom's 'mothers': 'The mother-in-law drinks beer made from the millet.' Then the bride was made to sit down in the doorway of her mother's hut; the officiant sat behind her, shaved a little of the sprouting hair from the front of her head, and smeared her head, [302]
arms, legs, and stomach with ointment and red powder supplied by her own mother. Powdered medicine supplied by the groom's mother was added to the shaving water.

When her toilet was completed, the women called the men to come and give their gifts. The bride and her maids crouched down and the cloth removed from her buttocks was spread

[1] *Okupetule*: to turn over.
[2] *Okunsepeka*: to clothe, from *ikisepe*: male genital covering.
[3] Beans, cowpeas and ground-nuts are also mentioned as being given at this time.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

864 little older than herself, rather than at the formal admonition by
[302] her mothers, though a little is given then also.[1] She is especially warned to depilate herself regularly. 'If she is hairy her husband will complain to the mothers and they will beat her.' The maids listen to the instruction along with the bride, and since every girl keeps several of her immediate seniors company before she grows up herself, no young woman can be left in doubt as to her duties as a wife.

881 At the shaving of the sprouting hair the 'bull of puberty'
585 (*ingombele jabwangu*) should be killed if the bride is found, on examination by her mothers and those of the groom, to be a virgin, or if the husband has told the women that he himself has deflowered her. Mwasofu's complaint at the ceremony just described was that the groom's party had not brought the bull though his daughter was a virgin, and he insisted that the bride could not go to her husband until it had been provided.

At another puberty ritual which we attended, the bull was duly brought and, after examining the girl, the mothers announced her virginity with the cry of triumph (*akalulu*), and shouted: 'It is ours, it is ours.' They rushed through the courtyard dancing and applauding. Before the examination the bull had been tied up near the mothers, and immediately the joyful announcement was made it was killed. The meat of this bull is divided between the bride's mothers, her father's kinsmen with whom he exchanges cattle, and his immediate neighbours. The ritual portion, the *ijumaga*, cut from the top of the right foreleg, is taken by her father to his ritual grove of bananas and there he prays, saying: 'You, so-and-so (naming his father), since I have eaten the food of others (non-relatives) may she flourish at her husband's.' Another informant's version of the prayer was: 'I am eating the bull for my daughter, may she bear children!' A third said: 'Here is the meat! I have eaten the food of others, come out a little, may she bear a child at her husband's!'

If the bride is not a virgin the bull is not killed. It must be returned. Informants repeatedly implied, in talking of the ritual, that everyone knew beforehand whether the bride was virgin or not. 'If she is not a virgin we only do a little ritual, there is but one

[538] [1] Our informants maintained that clay images were not used as a medium of instruction, as among the Bemba, though Nyakyusa girls would stylised dolls out of clay almost identical with one shown for the Kid in F. Fülleborn, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, Band IX, *Atlas*, plate no. 98, 99, 97, 70.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

23 July 1935

iii. *The bringing out* (*ukuisya*)

Seventeen days after the induction the 'bringing out' took place.[1] The hut had been burnt last night and a new one built in a new place. Mwakobela was inside it and when we went to greet him he only put his head out, saying: 'I am not coming out.' The doctor had slept at the homestead and a small bull had been killed yesterday evening. Mwakobela had provided it because the sheep which Mwaiteteja (his brother) had got from the hills had died. Twenty-one men were present and there were two pots of beer, of which we were given one. Mwaisumo (our clerk) left (as we had told him to do if he wished) and the men remarked: 'He is baptized, he only looks on, it's taboo for him to participate, it's taboo for him to drink the ritual beer.' 845

The meat was being cooked by Mwakobela's wives and the doctor was preparing the medicine. There were two lots of medicine: a fine powder (*imbondaya*) made of *kabombelo* and *ikipiki*, and a rough sort (*uskata*) made of *kajinja*[2] and *skungusi*. The doctor explained: 'The powder is used for smearing on the forehead to enable people to meet the parents of the twins; it is not very important, it prevents the belly swelling. It is also drunk in beer at midday, for the same purpose, by the parents of the twins, and then by all their relatives. The second medicine is used for splashing on the legs with hot water; it prevents the legs from swelling. If anyone does not come to-day and his legs or belly swell, he will come to me, the doctor, and I will put hot medicines on his legs and give him powder to drink in beer. I will not smear his forehead then, no. . . . The non-relatives have their legs splashed but do not anoint their faces or drink the medicated beer.' Mwanyoso remarked: 'Our wives often do not come. Then we take home a little of the lees of the beer for them to drink.' Thirty-six people who had not washed at the induction washed now.

From the time we arrived at 7.30 a.m. the women were busy shaving each other and all the small girls except one. She was not shaved for she was in mourning—her mother had died recently. After shaving, the women and girls washed and anointed and rouged themselves. The mother of the twins (Masobesi) was in the new hut with her surviving twin and her husband. All were 845 302

[1] It was delayed three days to oblige us, as we had another engagement.

[2] *Kajinja* gives a yellow dye used traditionally to decorate bark-cloth, and nowadays also used as a relish like curry, 'but this is a new Swahili custom'.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 freshly shaved and anointed; the mother and child were also
302 rouged, and both husband and wife had on new cloths. The women explained: 'The filth is finished now', and, in answer to a question about why they shaved, they replied: 'We throw away the hair in the long grass because it is filthy.' The little girls picked up scraps of hair carefully and disposed of it in the long grass. Mwaiteteja (brother of Mwakobela) said of the shaving:

All the children, Mwakobela's and mine, boys and girls, and our wives, shave. I, Mwaiteteja, do not. Mwakobela shaved last night. At an ordinary birth only the mother shaves. Mwanyilu and other grandsons of Mwaipopo are 'just people' [i.e. not relatives for this purpose] and do not shave, but they are treated with the hot medicines.

MWANYOSO: The anointing is part of the ritual. The shaving and anointing are to show that the ritual is over. Since the birth of the twins neither the women nor the children have shaved or anointed themselves, nor we men either, but we don't anoint ourselves very much anyway. We shall all shave to-day or to-morrow, but I have shaved already because of the funeral ritual of Mwakinini which took place two days ago.

845 Husband and wife in the hut spoke in whispers, and not even the doctor entered: 'They fear the legs.'

The doctor ranged everyone in a rough circle and she and her assistant went round smearing the forehead of each with the powder mixed with ointment. The circle soon broke up and people came up to her of their own accord to be smeared. She just dabbed a line on the forehead of each.

Then the banana suckers were cut and frayed at the end. A regular circle was formed. Mwakobela rushed out of the hut (washed, shaved and wearing a new cloth), seized two of the suckers and dipped them in the hot medicine, and splashed it on to the circle. The people yelled and ran away, only to return. He splashed them thus two or three times and then returned to the hut. The doctor continued the splashing.

Then Mwanyoso went up to the hut with a pruning hook and cut it open, crying: 'War has come!' Mwakobela and his wife and the child rushed out 'in the direction of Mwaijonga's place' [Mwakobela's father's home], followed by the whole crowd shouting: 'We are pure (*Tali bele*).' They ran thirty or forty yards only
[77] and came back laughing and talking. Mwakobela said: 'In the old days I'd have taken a spear and shield and danced, alone!'

Two banana leaves were spread on the ground and the doctor

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Ndali

The officiant prepared some beer mixing it with powdered medicine, 764
and they came one by one to drink. The other officiant made as if to 184
shave them, taking a little hair from the forehead and the neck. When she had done this she put her hands between her legs. Thus the people of Selya perform the ritual. In another calabash they put the lees of the beer that had been drunk, with two pots of water. These lees are poured on to their heads and the water runs over their bodies. When the officiant has done this she puts her hands and the calabash between her legs. They look towards Sangu country. Then they shave their hair. When they have finished they throw away the cloths and bark-cloth which they wear when they wash. Then they anoint themselves with oil, and sleep with it on them, and wash in the morning. The people of Selya shave in the morning; at this time they do not really shave, they only cut the sprouting hair.

In the evening there is the ceremony of handing over the inheritance. The heir sits on a banana stump in the doorway and the chief wife hands him a billhook. Then they say: 'Care for these children whom your elder brother left as if you had begotten them yourself, do not be hard, be kindly as he was.'

And at night he will sleep with the widows. In the morning the chief wife goes to her father without washing off the filth and gives her fathers beer, then they greet one another. Ndingania also goes to his mother's people. They said one woman did not go because her fathers did not know the custom, they are Lugulu. There were only these two women, one grown up and one a girl, to be inherited.

Mwaijumba told me that for Kanyosa their affines will not cut the banana grove for they have no girl to give in her place. 'They will give us cattle, we divide (the marriage-cattle) with them.'

(8) *Ndali funeral rites* *Record of Mwaikambe*

When someone has died the Ndali mourn for five days, and the 764
sixth day they sweep and shave the hair. When they are shaving it they 302
take a pombord and put in it all the hair that is shaved off. When they 184
have finished they choose one senior woman, the chief wife, and they hand her this hair and they go to throw it away at the cross-roads. Giving the woman the hair means that the shade should be at his place and leave others. Shaving is to get rid of the shade which was on their bodies (*akamwe lo kamonye amyuka ajie kali nagwe na ndili*). And the people who held the corpse in their arms and dug the grave step over a trench of fire when they have come from the bathing. The doctor gives them medicines to bathe with. They say that if they do not step over fire it is as if they had the dead on their bodies (*kalinagwe numbili anyfwe*), and he will always come in dreams, so they drive him away.

When some considerable time has passed—a whole year—they do the 765
ifyengule. This word comes from straining beer. To strain the *ifyengule*

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 and sniffed at the grave. When this son-in-law arrived, the chief women mourners got up from under the tree and went with him into the hut to wail. They came out all wailing. The women under the tree were wailing all the time with a leader standing up in the middle. But the wailing was drowned by the drums of which there were three sets.

764 Three young men were got up with white clay spots and some had
535 bells on their ankles and loin-cloths. They held spears, and danced and
602 leaps wildly. 'What', I asked Kasitile, 'is the meaning of the white clay?'

KASITILE: It is war paint. During war we painted ourselves with white clay formerly. Then if I saw one with white clay I did not spear him. It was my comrade. But he whom I saw without it was an enemy and I speared him. It was the sign.

725 QUESTION: But did the other side not use it?

KASITILE: We took them by surprise.

Mwanyoso came to visit me in the evening.

764 QUESTION: And what steps are they taking about Katuya's death
789 from sorcery?

MWANYOSO: They sought the doctor, Mwangukombe, for the burial yesterday. He pounded a medicine and burnt it on the grave. Then they buried the dead man and danced on the grave. That means they destroyed the sorcery. The dead man should take it away with him.

QUESTION: And has the doctor given them medicines to drink?

MWANYOSO: He has not yet done so. They will fetch him again to cook the medicine at the home.

QUESTION: What about the payment?

759 MWANYOSO: For yesterday they did not pay anything, now, but when they have fetched him to their home, then they will pay some shillings. But if many people have died, then they fetch a famous doctor such as Mwakisonde. Then he comes with all the protective medicines (*amapingo*) and treats them. Then such a doctor gets a cow. The famous doctors in this country are Mwakisonde and Kapugumo and Mwakanyamale.

787 QUESTION: Will they consult an oracle?

MWANYOSO: Why should they consult an oracle? They know what it is. It is the sorcery of their brothers!

759 QUESTION: But it might be the sorcery of another. Some say of Mwailonjo (the chief).

MWANYOSO: They are liars. See, Katuya had just come from his brothers. He got the illness at their place. It is they. If it was from Mwailonjo and his people, they would have speared him by night. We would have found wounds and much blood, but we did not find them.

QUESTION: He came from his brothers?

MWANYOSO: Yes, there was a ritual because their father, Mwailonjo, had died. Their senior brother inherited and he also died. Katuya

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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276

TOBACCO SMOKERS.

There may be only one pipe for a dozen smokers. Each takes one long puff, and slowly exhales after he has handed the pipe to his neighbour. Many pipe-men tobacco, and often take it in the form of snuff.

A YOUNG WOMAN.

Young women are not always so simply dressed, many wear quantities of beads on their necks and arms, and some are weighted down by rods, rings and anklets made of copper wire. The clothes shown here, however, is unknown to all girls who wish to be smart.

[Facing p. 64]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Lepers are now buried like ordinary persons. But in the not very distant past, they were placed in a sitting position against a tree, and so left to be devoured. No one of those who carried the body looked behind, lest he also should be "caught" by the disease. 766

About a month after the funeral, the beer feast takes place. A small quantity is taken to the grave, and the dead man is addressed, and bidden again to go to his ancestors. "Take this beer as an offering to them. The ox that we have killed is also for them." The day is given up to eating and drinking, with intervals of wailing, the men in the open, the women in the house of the heir, or near relative of the dead man. 765

The ceremonies for women and children are similar to those described. A small chief, near Karonga, who was utterly neglectful of his mother during her life, impoverished himself in the splendour of her funeral. The grave was completely lined with expensive cloths, and the body was decked out as it never had been in life. The man's grief was genuine; or if it was not grief, it was fear of what the old lady, with her renewed powers, might do, if he did not attend to her now that she was dead. 764

When the mourning is over, all the friends of the dead man shave their heads. Omission of this ceremony involves the careless one in a quarrel with the departed. 765 302

Here and there throughout the country ancient customs survive which have been dropped by the majority of the people. In many places the entrance of the heir upon his new position is accompanied by 768

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3417 Ngonde F3417
Nyakyusa

757 clearly inclined to the shades as it had before the divination, but as
753 before the certain conviction was lacking.

Four days later (12/2/37) Kasitile went to Nesa in Kindi village to consult the oracle again 'for that of Nzuki went wrong'. He told us afterwards 'This oracle supported the finding of Ndembwe's. It said: [775] Your kinsman who is dead is angry; he says, "Why did you not [769] celebrate the ritual? I am tired of the hair (*Ngondo nagu iwuli*). And what did you offer your father after cutting that tree?"' Here yet another cause of Kasitile's illness is suggested—the neglect of the death ritual of a kinsman. The implication is that the chief mourners have [765] not yet performed the concluding rite of shaving which makes it ● [302] possible for the deceased to join his fathers. The hair which the mourners shave off is called 'the hair of the corpse'.

QUESTION: What are you going to do then?

KASITILE: I shall charge the young man, son of my dead kinsman, with [681] neglect, and tell him to celebrate the ritual that the shades which have [682] bound me may go out of my body.

QUESTION: And the bull?

KASITILE: If I can find one I shall kill it.

QUESTION: Who will be there?

[793] KASITILE: The priests will be there, Ngulyo, Kimagwa, Nzikakwa, Mwaikhata and Mwakanshule,[1] and also Mwaipopo (116) himself. Were I a commoner I should kill alone with my younger brothers, but since I am a public personage (*ndi ulukwelo*) the village headmen are there. (To Mwaikambo, the clerk.) It is good at your home in the hills; here things are bad.

QUESTION: But they also have shades?

[775] KASITILE: But they are not important. Look you, I just cut a tree and [778] they have seized me and dwell in my body. Are there sacred groves in the hills? Do men visit them? There in the hills rituals have died; the puberty ritual and the rituals of the groves are celebrated very little.

On 27th March Kasitile looked in to say that he was going to con-
787 sult a visiting Sangu doctor 'from very far off' about his cough, but
791 G.W. had better not come lest his presence spoil the divination.
753 Kasitile came again after the consultation, full of excitement. 'What a doctor! That is a doctor indeed! That is a diviner! He took an ear and divined with it; he took coppers which I brought and threw them in a little pot, together with the ear, and ash, and he said: "You also take ash and throw it in" and I did so. Then he looked into the little pot and said: "You built on the plain?" He knew this without being told! I said: "Yes".'

SOMO: There was a quarrel there.

[1] The last two are priests of Mbwanga (see p. 81) who did not in fact come. Mwaikambo, Kasitile's assistant, who did come is not mentioned.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

753 and achievement. An account of the treatment of a field for
579 protection against wild pig emphasizes this.

If people wish to protect a crop from wild pig they go to a doctor to
789 ask for medicine. When he gives it to them he tells them that there
241 must be no quarrelling in the home after they have barricaded the
(449) field. Four women go to the field with the husband of the one who cultivates it. They go after sunset. One woman is shaved; her head is a symbol of the garden devastated by pig. A second woman, who keeps
[307] her hair, ties a head-pad on her head and carries bananas with medicine. She enters the field and eats the bananas. The husband climbs a hill at a little distance, and two of the women go into the long grass close to the field. The bald pate twists a head-pad and the one with hair smears it with medicine and as they do so they look towards their
[531] husband and abuse him saying, 'You lay with your mother', and he swears at them saying, 'The leather aprons of your fathers' . . . and many other insults. Then the women walk round the edge of the field, sprinkling medicines, and they go out the way they came in. The circular pad is a symbol of the barricade placed round the field. When
[242] they return home they do not eat but go to sleep hungry (though the clever ones eat beforehand). If they quarrel, the pig finishes the food. It is as if quarrelling destroyed the fierceness, the power, of the protective medicine; you must put aside all quarrelling that the medicine may be powerful. If the pigs come it is as if there were a quarrel, as the woman and her husband quarrel in the field mimicking the pig. The husband on the hill is like the pig approaching the field, his wives in the long grass also represent pigs. . . . The husband and his wives quarrel only in the field. If, when the maize is ripe, the husband leaves one of his wives for any cause she does not go to pick the maize herself, a friend picks it for her. If she goes in her anger she finds the maize finished, nothing but earth is left.

787 Here the link between medicines and morality is made plain.
649 Quarrelling weakens medicines of all sorts and renders them ineffective. But a mimic quarrel between husband and wives in the fields renders the medicine effective. It represents the battle between the pig and the medicines. There is a suggestion elsewhere (pp. 69, 113) that pigs are *sent* by the shades when kinsmen
[778] or neighbours quarrel, but in the account just quoted it is implied that quarrelling in the home directly injures the medicine.

In themselves, many medicines are neutral. They may be
278 put to good or evil ends, but because they are mysterious and
754 powerful, they are feared, in the same sort of way as cosmic
787 energy is feared in contemporary society. Men use medicines themselves 'for purely peaceful purposes', but they are shocked at

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

765 head of the line. She was also the first who crawled between the legs
48 of the others, facing the hut, and followed by the others. This cere-
mony has the same purpose as the preceding act.

[291]

Scene from the ubunyago-ceremony: The mourners returning from the grave to the house crawling through the legs of the others.

765 Then the hair of the mourners was shaved (ukumoa nwili, to shave
[302 the hair, profane and ritual) and, I was told that a bath would be
55] the last act ending mourning.

[291
516]

Scene from the ubunyago-ceremony: The shaving of the hair.

765 In the afternoon I sent the father of the dead child a cotton kerchief
123 as a gift, and when I met him later on, he told me I had participated
43 in the burial of his child by that gift, saying, "You have buried my child with me".

13: Lehrmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[88] I went to the place and got permission to enter the hut in which the first part of the ceremony took place. I found there the parents of the girl, the girl sitting enveloped in clothes in one corner of the hut, and some older females, one of whom was the acting *wwapapo*. Some male guests were also present[20]. As the girl had had her first catamenia the present ceremony marked at the same time the end of her preparation for marriage.

[273 278] The *wwapapo* prepared a beverage of beer in which a light-brown medical powder *(mbondanga)* was put. First the girl had to drink from it, then the parents followed. This beverage was believed to strengthen *(wbusirga)* the consumers. Then a spear was handed to the girl by her father, and the girl handed it in turn to some relatives of the bridegroom waiting near the hut. These persons had to bring the [582 583] spear to the girl's bridegroom as a sign that he could now marry the girl[21], but not before he had brought a bull to the girl's father. After [431] this the girl, now sitting in the middle of the hut, was given small gifts from the participants in the ceremony.

[391 342 516 868 415]

Practical instruction of premature girls in house-hold matters.

[302] Following this the whole body of the girl was anointed before the door of the hut. The *wwapapo* began by anointing her legs; then the [278] girl herself continued it. The ointment was prepared from castor oil and a powder of red wood (*Kipimba*, found commonly in the environment of Lake Rukwa). At this moment a male participant in the cere- [606] mony chanced to come out of the hut, and suddenly a young woman

[20] Cf. Wilson, Introduction, p. 258; The Study of African Society, p. 11 (The Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. 2, 1938).

[21] *ukwenga*: to take (also as regards marrying); *ubwengio*: nuptials.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sitting there on the yard got up, as quickly as possible held her hands before her eyes and rushed off. This was because this man was her father-in-law. The strict social tabu in such circumstances is well known[10].

The next act consisted in shaving the girl's hair on her temples by the *wanpago*; the father was shaved by a younger brother of his in the same manner. (I cannot remember whether it was also the case with the mother of the girl.)

The old fashioned hut of the chief's wife.

Then the further ceremony took place again inside the hut. All the participants sat down on mats, and the *wanpago* accepted the complaints of the parents on the former conduct of their daughter. Sometimes the discussion between these parties, where the *wanpago* played the role of a mediator as is the case with the *wajobi* (or speaker) in the court, reached such a pitch of excitement that I thought a serious quarrel had broken out. The excitement was, perhaps, only of a ceremonial character; I was told, however, that in former times corporeal punishment has been inflicted, if, indeed, the girl had shown misconduct in the times before.

Next, the girl was instructed by the *wanpago* in her duties as a wife. These instructions were of a theoretical or moral nature concerning the correct conduct of the girl towards her parents also after the ceremony and towards her future husband. The practical part of the initiation instructions sometimes comes before this ceremony at the end of initiation. These practical instructions cover the preparing of food

[10] Cf. *Merensky*, p. 125; *Mackenzie*, p. 108 (at Karonga?). According to *Merensky* the daughter-in-law has to observe this tabu also towards the brethren of her father-in-law. All these persons are named *ukwenena*.

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

291 301 belts are also worn by men, nowadays below the other clothing. More and more pieces of cotton with imprinted patterns have come into 291 vogue. They are worn around the lower part of the body or below the 177 shoulders or fastened about one of them, and are bought from Indian [139] shops. That this modern fashion, however, is something new in such pieces which are a little remoter from direct European influence was demonstrated to me when I came through a small village in the environment of Masoko. There by chance I met some young girls carrying a piece of cloth on the top of a long pole as if it were a banner. On enquiry I was told that this "banner" was nothing other than a [556 piece of cloth newly bought by a woman of that village and that it was 482] hoisted on a pole and carried in procession out of sheer joy that this woman had been able to buy it.

291 Menfolk throughout are fuller dressed, especially when they go dancing. The women, on the other hand, wear their ordinary dress also on such occasions. The dancing costume of the men — only the younger [292 men participate in dancing — consists of a sort of tight-jacket or 535] sweater and wide robes with coloured patterns. The hair is adorned [302 with feathers. At work the men mostly wear only loin cloths or shorts. 237] After work especially the older man wrap their bodies in blankets. It is very seldom nowadays to find even very old men still wearing the "former national dress: a bundle of long grass in front and a smaller one behind tied to the waist by means of a string, as I found a man on a solitary spot near Rungwe Station. Little boys go altogether naked untill they are about three years of age. Little girls begin to wear a small *swabi* at an earlier age.

531 *13. Art.* One of the most interesting and striking features in the artistic endowment of the Nyakyusa are the decorations on the outer-walls of their huts. The latter are only painted, however, when the exterior of the framework of bamboo is mud covered, otherwise only the wooden doors (*ikifiga*, door) of the huts are painted. By no means every hut or house is painted, but only a limited number in each village, probably depending on the presence and industry of an artist as this art is as in other cases an individualistic one. One such artist was introduced to me in a village near Rutenganio. The ornaments consist in most cases of geometrical patterns in white and black, seldom in other colours, or they represent different sorts of animals, e. g. elephants, horses, cattle, snakes, etc. The richest designs I found in a long extended village on the right bank of the upper Kiwira. In an other case the names of the animals were written in Swahili below

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

inheriting their stepmothers. Where circumcision is practised a grown woman scorns sex relations with an uncircumcised boy, therefore uncircumcised youths are not potential lovers of their fathers' junior wives; but with the Nyakyusa there is no ceremony to mark the sexual maturity of a male, and adolescent youths are acceptable to young married women of their own age. And not only does the wide difference in the age of men and girls at first marriage allow of a high degree of polygyny, but the very early bethrothal of girls (over whom their future husbands have exclusive sexual rights except during the initiation ritual) means that there are very few girls available to the unmarried men. The institution of girls' huts (*isaka*) has disappeared among the Nyakyusa owing to the lack of nubile girls who are not already betrothed, and the period of seclusion at initiation (when betrothed girls are available to men other than their husbands) is short. The contrast with Nguni society, in which girls do not marry until sixteen to twenty-two, and have several years of great sex freedom before marriage[1] is marked. We suggest that it is because unmarried girls are so scarce and lusty bachelors so many, that the seduction of the wives of polygynists is frequent, and homosexual practices are general.[2] Nyakyusa insist that formerly seduction was rare,[3] and possibly the impulse towards it was indeed less strong when girls married rather later and *isaka* existed (*vide supra*, p. 87).

835 304 595 582 [838]

Lastly, the Nyakyusa permit the inheritance of a father's widows by his sons, a practice regarded as improper by certain other peoples (e.g. the Pondo[4]) who practise the levirate. A son is required to treat all his father's wives as 'mothers' while his father and father's full brothers are alive, and intercourse with a father's wife is treated as a heinous offence necessitating special purification; but after the death of the father and his full brothers these same women become wives of their former 'sons'—with the limitation that a man cannot inherit his own mother or her kins-

587 835

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 180-6; M. Kohler, *Marriage Customs in Southern Natal*, pp. 20-44; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 135-6.

[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, p. 408 (footnote), hints that similar practices exist among the Nyasaland Tonga and elsewhere *before* adolescence only. The Nyakyusa certainly continue after puberty.

[3] MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 63, states that the acknowledged child of an adulterous union was openly put to death. [848]

[4] Hunter, op. cit., p. 212.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

taking advantage of the credulity of the masses—can be entertained only by those who have acquired no insight into the native mind and its working. It is impossible to maintain that a system, as wide as a continent, and as persistent as the centuries, should be the outcome of an age-long conspiracy to cheat. The human mind does not work in that way. The system is involved in the world-view; it is woven into the mind-texture of the people, and the honesty of the "practitioners" is, in many cases, as indubitable as the faith of the people.

The prayer for rain, for instance, is offered with a simple sincerity, as honest as any petition ever offered in a Christian church. I am not asserting that the prayer brings the rain; nor yet that it does not. Nor do I suppose that the diviner is in touch with fact, when he uses what he considers to be means of getting into communication with the spirits. I am arguing only for the honesty, in a great majority of cases, of the men who do these things. They are men with a conviction.

The diviner usually hands on his knowledge and his office to one of his own family; but an outsider may learn his secrets by paying an ox or a cow. I am not aware that there is any serious attempt to guard the secrets of the profession, though the various drugs used are not made known except to those who are willing to pay the fee. The only form of initiation is the incising of medicines into the arms or wrists of the initiate, and this incision may be renewed should occasion require it.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ancestors and of Kyara[17]. At the same time he moved his curved wood to and fro on the ground and when he did so, it indicated a negative answer from the beings invoked. But when he was asked: "Is the guilt for the sickness to be found in the husband of the chief's sister?", he was unable to move his wood as before; he could only stamp it on the ground, and this meant an affirmative reaction of the invoked spirits. Now, therefore, the meeting had reached its aim. 787 [776]

I asked the diviner to tell me how he had acquired his faculty. He explained that (besides the necessary inner disposition) the payment of a fee for the medical preparation was necessary in order to become a diviner[18]. This outfit consisted in a special vaccination by a learned diviner. For this purpose the neophyte was incised by his master on different spots on the upper side of the knuckles, and in these small incisions was rubbed a medical powder. By these means the initiate may be inspired by the prophesying spirits. These influences are then felt by the diviner as a power which directs the movements of his hand in the manner described. 791 [304]

6. Near the hut of the chief's principal wife was a "sacred" banana plant, in the grove opposite to the chief's hut and in the grove with the grave of the chief's father already described. At particular times, when any need demands it, the chief offers a prayer in this place to his ancestors[19]. The sickness of his sister, for instance, was such an occasion for him to address the ancestors. I was invited by the chief to witness this act; but I raised objections, telling him that my presence might perhaps rather cause the anger than the help of his ancestors. In reality, I did not want the chief to stage a theatrical act on my behalf. But the chief rejected my excuses and explained that he would act in the same manner as if I were not present, because he had made up his mind to this prayer. The chief was assisted during this ceremony by Mwainyekule who presented to the chief a calebash of water as he arrived at the banana plant devoted to this purpose. The chief took some mouthfuls of the water and squirted it towards the banana plant. Then he recited the names of his ancestors and begged them to help his sister. 824 778 782 769 [23]

7. During one afternoon, I was told that a ceremony to end the initiation of a (betrothed) girl was going on in a family of the village. 881

[17] name of the supreme spiritual being.
[18] Cf. Mackenzie, p. 226.
[19] Mackenzie refers that such a place is named "ikiyinje", "the familiy place off prayer" (pp. 144, 197), but without indication of the locality, as Kyenga.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

131 twenty miles from Lake Nyasa (1,500 feet). A little compact country,
133 secluded until very recently from any effective external contacts, slightly over 1,000 square miles in extent.[1]

132 The soil, particularly that of the higher ground in the north of the
134 Nyakyusa country, is not in itself very rich, but, as between 100 and 130
[161] inches of rain usually fall each year, the district is one of the most fertile in the whole of Tanganyika; two crops a year are often grown on the same patch of ground, and the African population is over eighty to the square
[23] mile. There is no infected tsetse fly and cattle are the most prized possession of the Nyakyusa.

63 For historical reasons, which we will discuss in a later section, the Nyakyusa have never been united under any one paramount chief of their own, but live in a number (nearly 100 at the present day) of tiny but traditionally independent chiefdoms. For these chiefdoms the numerous streams which run down from the north into Lake Nyasa and the crests of the ridges of land between them, form natural boundaries.

133 The country, of course, is not all of equal economic value, parts of it
134 are stony and mountainous, other parts, and particularly the plain in the south, consist of deep and level soil; and the population is heavier on the plain than on the higher ground. Further, on the higher ground, there exist numerous old volcanic craters filled with rich moist soil and these, being more fertile than the surrounding land, are particularly valued by
[24] the Nyakyusa. Again, of the two chief economic crops of this district, one, coffee, can only be grown on the higher ground while the other, rice, can only be grown on or near the plain. And at every point their system of land tenure is partially determined by such physical factors as these.

3. *THE USES AND VALUE OF LAND*

• 31 The Nyakyusa use their land for building on, for agriculture, for pasture, for hunting and fishing; they collect firewood, reeds, thatching-grass, mushrooms and other wild vegetables there; they draw water from its streams and bathe daily in them; on their land they grow bamboos, bananas, *ndyangati* trees[2] and coffee; they keep bees; they dance, they fight, they walk and lie down upon it; their land is both the receptacle of refuse and the location of religious ritual, while their doctors continually wander over its surface in search of magical medicines.

Not all these uses of land give rise to laws, moral rules or conventions, but only those uses which tend to lead men into conflict with one another or into mutual embarrassment. The only reasons for the existence of

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[1] The whole of Rungwe District is 1,800 square miles, but this includes the hills of the Nkali and Lambya as well.

[2] I have not been able to discover the botanical name of this tree.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

rules of land tenure are firstly to prevent, as far as possible, such conflicts and embarrassments from arising, and secondly, to facilitate their resolution when aroused. If, then, there is no danger of conflict or embarrassment neither is there a need for any rule at all. A Nyakyusa doctor wandering in the uncultivated bush looking for medicines cannot harm any man's interest, cannot hurt any man's feelings, and he is therefore free to gather what and where he will. 311

In many of its uses, however, land is scarce and so leads men into competition for it. When, in any society, land, or some other material of action, is scarce, we say that it has economic value; and whenever anything has economic value then, of necessity, its use must always be effectively limited and defined by rules of law or of morality or by convention, for only by such limitations of human action can anarchy be kept at bay and ordered human society continue to exist.

The scarcity or economic value of land is, in most of the Nyakyusa chiefdoms, more a matter of quality than of mere quantity. In some few chiefdoms there is, however, already threatening an actual lack of arable land, and it is almost certain that there will in time be a general shortage. The natural increase of population is to some extent counterbalanced by ever-increasing emigration into neighbouring, less densely populated districts; but rapidly changing economic and technical conditions will of themselves, in all probability, bring about a shortage of land. Ploughs (over 100 of them) are already in use and are multiplying many times over the area which one man can cultivate, while the recent development of an external market for surplus food is stimulating many men to greater effort even with the hoe. An area amply sufficient, with primitive subsistence agriculture, for about 100,000 persons may well prove quite insufficient when ploughs are employed and when to the 100,000 mouths are added, through the medium of the market, many thousand more. Rungwe District is already one of the main sources not only of labour but also of food for the nearby Lupa gold fields, while its rapidly increasing crop of Native-grown coffee now finds its way to Europe. In 1936 produce to the value of some £24,000* was sold by this district to the outside world. 311 241 [67] [139]

At the moment, however, there is no general shortage of land. It is the best ground which is scarce, not land as such. The best building sites, the best plots of arable ground and the best pastures have economic value and their use is precisely defined and limited in the Nyakyusa system of land-tenure. 311

* Figure estimated for the whole district (Nkokyusa, Ndali and Lambya, about 150,000 persons in all) on the basis of information supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Office, Tukuyu.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

kind of grass grows there maize will do well, or maybe ground-nuts. Some grass-lands have very poor soil in which no crop at all will grow properly, the one we call *kyasi* for example, or again the one we call *amyapwi* ("the ant"); no one hoes these lands. Some gardens we hoe on the higher ground, others near the streams, either right in the mud by the water or else in ground that is merely moist. On the higher ground we hoe millet, peas, sweet-potatoes, cassava and some other crops; in the muddy places by the water we hoe yams, building huge ridges for them called *fibimbike*; and there too we sometimes put in (during the dry season) the shoots of sweet potatoes that we shall later plant elsewhere. If the soil is only a little muddy and is mixed with sand, then we plant maize there. The right soil for beans we call *kibumbe*—a red soil which is sometimes mixed with sand. Ground-nuts we either plant in the *kibumbe* (if it is the sandy kind) or else just in sand. Whenever a man is hoeing a field for millet or ground-nuts or sweet-potatoes, he can tell just from the soil whether his crop will do well or not."[9] 242

And so also the Nyakyusa well understand the different qualities of pasture. The cattle are herded by small boys but on most mornings one of the men also goes out with the herd to show the boys where to pasture it and what grass-land to avoid. 232

Into the value of arable land sentiment also enters and men like, *ceteris paribus*, to hoe their gardens where they themselves or their fathers and brothers have hoed before. So too the value of building plots is determined both by practical and emotional considerations: large and relatively level sites on which bananas grow well are preferred to narrow or steeply sloping ones or to sites where bananas do badly, but, on the other hand, of two equally convenient sites that with family associations is normally preferred. And in the case of building sites religious considerations may also enter. A friend of mine told me that, when his father died, he did not move but left his father's site vacant with the new grave upon it; a year or two later his millet crop unaccountably failed and the diviner told him that his father's spirit was angry that no one had "swept his grave," i.e. that the plot had been left vacant. My friend did not actually move, even then, for he preferred his own site; he compromised by the performance of a ritual sacrifice to his father's spirit. But in such cases a man will often move to his dead father's site for fear of further misfortunes. 311 ● 769 [777]

We have discussed briefly the purposes for which and the techniques by means of which the Nyakyusa use their land, and we have indicated a few of the main considerations which lead them to value some particular

[9] Text written for me by a literate Nyakyusa.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F2017 Ngonde F2017
Nyakyusa

partly to the closer spacing of children. Whereas four years between births was conventional formerly, two or less is now usual. One of the characteristics of the present population is a disproportion between the sexes, the females outnumbering the males by 100 to 87·9 even when due allowance has been made for men away at work.[1] This disproportion is characteristic also of African populations in the south[2] and it appears likely that it is due to a wide difference in the survival rate of men and women, but the vital statistics necessary to test this hypothesis are lacking.

The increase in population, and the demand for coffee gardens and rice fields by men who prefer to earn cash by agriculture rather than as migrant labourers, has led to a shortage of land, already acute in the fertile lake-shore plain, and imminent in the coffee-growing villages of the hills.[3] Much land that was previously pasture land has been taken into cultivation, and signs of overstocking are everywhere apparent. Hillsides that in 1938 were covered with grass, waist high, now have a thin stubble. To aggravate matters, the care of stock is less efficient than it used to be because it is left to very small boys, their seniors being occupied with school and hoeing. Often the cattle are both ill nourished and covered with ticks—something that was never seen when they were herded by adolescents and carefully hand-dressed. The villagers themselves are as much concerned as the agricultural officers over the shortage of pasture and the decrease in the milk supply, but they are not prepared to accept the remedies recommended: namely, reduction of stock and stall-feeding. The advice of Europeans on the growing of rice and coffee crops, which they introduced to the district, is acceptable, but the Nyakyusa argue

[1] The Census figures cannot be taken as exact, but they give some indication of the increase in population, and the disproportion between men and women. In 1931 the population of Rungwe District was given as 123,080. In 1948 it was 178,988. In 1931 the proportion of males to females (Kyela and Nyakyusa in Rungwe district) was 79·6 : 100 (Tanganyika Territory, *Census of the Native Population 1931*). In 1948 the figure for Tukuyu district as a whole was 80 : 100 (Tanganyika Territory, *East African Population Census, 1948*). Allowing for Kibo men away without wives (estimate for 1954 has to pass count), the proportion is 87·9 : 100 (cf. P. H. Gulliver, Report on the Migration of African Workers to the South from the Southern Highland Province, with special Reference to the Nyakyusa of Rungwe District, February 1955, p. 18). The discrepancy in the figures given for adults was 60 : 100 in 1948, but the ages of males and females classed as 'adult' are uncertain.

[2] D. H. Houghton and E. M. Walton, *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, Keiskammahoek Rural Survey, vol. 2, pp. 24-6, 31. The sex ratio for Keiskammahoek District is 75·6 males : 100 females.

[3] cf. P. H. Gulliver, *Nyakyusa Land and Population*, 1956.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

that they have always been cattle men and they need no instruction on cattle. The tension over stock limitation and soil conservation, so acute in many parts of Africa, is only just appearing in Rungwe district, but potentially it is serious.

Pressure on land, and the planting of a valuable long-term crop such as coffee, have undermined the traditional organization of age-villages. The old men are no longer prepared to move to make way for their sons and, without a new deal in land each generation, the territorial separation of the generations is blurred. Boys villages are no longer visible in the hills near Rungwe mission, partly because so many young men are away, either at school or in employment, but largely because most of the land is taken up with coffee gardens. Homesteads are being built farther apart as men lay out coffee round their houses, and sons often build on a corner of their father's estate instead of in a separate village. On the plain, also, the pressure of population blurs the boundaries between generations. Only in the least heavily populated middle belt are numerous boys' villages still clearly visible, and here too a 'coming out' has recently been celebrated, with some redistribution of land. The scarcest land, that in old volcanic craters, was always inherited, like cattle, not reallocated each generation, and almost all cultivated land is now treated in this way. In many chiefdoms, therefore, a young man looks to his father or senior brother for land, rather than to the village headman, and inheritance is supremely important. But the form of inheritance is changing: property now goes directly from father to son, not as formerly to each of a group of full brothers before reverting to the senior son of the eldest of them. The claims of more distant kinsmen on inherited stock are less than they used to be; such stock becomes the exclusive property of father and sons, rather than property in which members of a lineage of three or four generations have reciprocal rights. The main economic bond which held the lineage together, the exchange of cattle, is thus broken.

Formerly a marriage was a contract between lineages rather than between individuals. A girl was betrothed before puberty to a man of her father's choice and should he die she was still regarded as married to his heir. Should she die a sister replaced her. Ideally a marriage bond between lineages lasted for generations, each man who died being replaced by a brother or son, each woman by a sister or brother's daughter. The choice of a partner in marriage

[363] [428] [34] [511] [511] [434] [511] [176] [54] [511] [436] [511] [64]

[illegible] land in such areas and in the less densely populated parts of the chiefdoms. Today in my personal experience – for no general survey has been attempted – there remains little or no unused land within the paddy-growing regions which can, by native techniques, be brought under the plough; and indeed men are attempting to grow paddy on unsuitably raised land where insolation is inadequate. Communal cattle pastures have shrunk as arable holdings extended until they remain only where cultivation is problem.

The demand for land has far outrun the physical supply, and in 1955 it still seemed to be insatiable. The initial cycle was that a desire for more money to permit of a higher standard of living created a demand for more land on which to produce more cash crops; but the increased level of income then further stimulated money demands to raise standards higher again, thus bringing a renewed demand for land. The cycle has now been halted by the lack of further land to meet the people's needs, but the demand remains nevertheless and is indeed increased by rising costs of living.

This economic picture is, of course, oversimplified, but it may serve to illustrate the nature of forces at work in the situation. I would not wish to overemphasize the snowball effect, for the bulk of the population remains still largely content with only a little over earlier standards; but increasing numbers of men and their families are coming to seek something better. Bicycles have become something of a general necessity; a variety of good clothing and shoes is considered quite essential. Only a single decade before the Nyakyusa women still generally went about in the traditional nudity, whereas in 1955 they must have ranked among the very best-dressed African women in the Territory. European-type household goods, crockery and utensils are common. The demand for money, that is for a higher standard of living, has also been greatly stimulated by the experiences of the thousands of labour migrants returning from southern towns and mines, and by the cash and goods they bring back with them.[1]

It is not possible for me to attempt to suggest what a desirable average would be for a contemporary Nyakyusa, because money demands, crop yields and selling prices change and the desire for higher standards of living also alter as the potentialities of the new cash economy are increasingly understood. In 1954 the approximate average of £6.20d/- per paddy cultivator was earned from perhaps two or three acres of arable land, but an indeterminable amount of the crop was kept back for home food requirements. As will be shown later many men's paddy fields could have been little more than an acre, and many men, specifically young men, had no paddy land at all. Certainly there were few who held what they considered, at a reasonable minimum, to be sufficient land.

This universal cash crop agriculture and the continuing demand for higher standards of living, and therefore for higher money incomes, is the real cause of the new and rather sudden pressure of population on the land. Of course this economic process operates within a situation of relatively dense population and in a present community where land is almost the only form of capital and alternative enterprise is small. The gradual increase of population, although probably small, further aggravates the difficult situation.

Arable Holdings

It was not possible to obtain adequate, satisfactory data to allow the calculation of local population densities, and the detailed results of the 1948

[1] See Oulliver, E. G. 1957, an abstract of the cash income of Chisanga in 1954 is given on pp. [illegible]. Data on the cash brought back by returning labour migrants are given on p. [illegible].

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

Cassava have never been issued.[1] However in some sample villages I very roughly measured arable holdings, and my results provide new information even though they can be illustrative only of the modern situation.

In each of the eight villages chosen[2] the arable holdings of all the adult male members (whether at home or away at work at the time) of the whole village, or occasionally of a distinct section of it, were measured by the simple and rough method of pacing the borders of every separate plot and converting the resultant figures into yards and then to acreages. The actual pacing was done entirely by myself in order to try to maintain an even stride on all occasions, but in each village I was well supported by a team of four or five villagers, always including the headman and his assistants. The figures obtained relate only to arable holdings and bear no determinate relation either to crop yields or to non-arable land in the villages concerned. The results are summarized in Table III below.

TABLE III

ARABLE HOLDINGS IN EIGHT VILLAGES

Village and chiefdom	No. of land holders	Average holding in acres	No. of men holding more than:— 1 acre	10 acres	Average size of plots in acres
Kyesa					
Mwamasangula ..	19	1.2	11	1	1
Bole Mwakyusa ..	40	1.0	13	0	1.3
Mwenya Mwakibete	30	1.0	4	1	0.6
Lugombo Kawao ..	24	1.6	3	0	0.6
Mpungati					
Mwakipunda ..	45	1.0	1	0	0.3
Kasogi Kawao ..	40	1.3	1	0	0.4
Lusesa Mwakibete	12	1.3	0	0	0.4
Bwaka Mwasigwale	16	1.0	0	0	0.4
	272 men		32 men (8.5%)	2 men	

From this Table it can be seen that in the chiefdoms of Kawao and Mwakipunda, in the villages concerned, the average holding per man was about one and a half acres – and my impression was that in the southern parts of Lusesa's chiefdom and elsewhere immediately surrounding the lake shore similar conditions obtained. It may be noted too that in these cases there were large numbers of young men without holdings at all. On the other hand, in the selected villages in the chiefdoms of Mwamasangula and Mwakyusa, the average holdings were about twice as large – three acres; and fewer young men were landless. Note also the cases of the villages in the chiefdoms of Mwamipunda and Mwakibete in the more northerly parts of the Lake Plains, where the average holdings were one and 1.3 acres respectively, and where yet there was arable land unused and available. In these parts paddy cultivation is very limited because of the higher and hilly country, and the people remain little more than subsistence farmers – perhaps they may be taken as not unlike the traditional, pre-European subsistence cultivators.

Unfortunately I am unable to relate these figures of arable holdings to the total land available in each village, for this would have required survey work beyond my competence. Non-arable land is utilized for village sites with banana groves, roads and paths, pasturage, etc.; but the position is further complicated by varying amounts of unusable land in my sample villages. To give only two examples: within the boundaries of Mpungati village, Mwakipunda's chiefdom, there are many acres of land adjacent to the Mbaka river which today are unusable because of deep flooding from

1. Population figures of any kind are not available even for the separate chiefdoms, let alone for ecological zones.

2. Their approximate locations are indicated on the accompanying sketch-map.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

311 [133] the river in spate during the wet season, although here and there a few plots are cultivated on slightly raised ground. Similarly in Kapugi village, Korosi's chiefdom, some parts are heavily inundated by the Kiwira river. In both these cases flooding has made unusable ground which was cultivated and even built on a generation ago; the degree of annual flooding seems to be decreasing again now so that very slowly a certain amount of new land is becoming available. This cyclical change appears to be directly connected with the long-term rise and fall of the level of Lake Nyasa. On the other hand, in more fortunate villages such as Ikolo, Mwakyusa's chiefdoms, and Kapugi, Mwamasangula's chiefdom, there is rather more common pasturage remaining, and village sites, paths, etc., are noticeably less restricted.

The following arithmetical observations may be noted as permitting, perhaps, some guide to population densities in the Lake Plains:-

[161]

Persons per sq. mile	*Total acreage per family of five*	*Arable holding per family of five if proportion of total land under arable holdings is —*	
		one-third	*two-fifths*
300	10.7	3.6	4.3
400	8	2.7	3.2
500	6.4	2.1	2.6
600	5.3	1.8	2.1

(N.B. The statistically average family is composed of five people)

It has been suggested by the Agricultural Field Officer, Tukuyu, that for the whole of Rungwe District perhaps 30 per cent. of all land is under cultivation. He was not prepared to place any reliance on this figure, and certainly for the Lake Plains it must be higher.

To summarise my own tentative conclusions and in order to obtain some kind of picture of the current land situation, I suggest the following division into regions:-

311
134 A. The flood plains proper

161 1. **Very high-density region** – the arable land available under present conditions amounts to about 1½-2 acres per adult male and the local density of population is probably in the region of 500 persons per square mile: – in most of the chiefdoms of Mwasulama, Koroso and Lazarus, the south-eastern part of Mwakipesile's and the eastern part of Mwakyusa's chiefdoms.

2. **High-density region** – there is available about 3 acres of arable land per adult male and the local density of population is between 300 and 400 persons per square mile: – in the chiefdoms of Mwamasangula, Mwanyilu and Mwakilima, the southern part of Mwakilasa's, the centre of Mwakyusa's and much of Mwandemele's chiefdoms.

B. The remainder of the Lake Plains (Nitebela)

3. **Low-density region** – here there remains much vacant land (some usable, some scarcely usable) and population density is probably little over 100 persons per square mile, and even lower than that in the most northerly parts: – the northern, higher areas comprising the north of Mwakyusa's (Mwisula's) chiefdom, the remainder of Mwandemele's, the whole of Mwantipulo's, Mwakatundu's and Mwakipege's chiefdoms, together with the northern part of Mwakipesile's and of Mwakilasa's chiefdoms.

This summary description is, and can be, only very approximate, taking no account of the complexity of local variations to be seen on the ground. It is illustrated in the accompanying sketch-map.

It may be emphasised that in the two high-density regions practically all available land is in use. In the "high-density region" (No. 2 above) it may be possible to reduce slightly the non-productive areas taken up by village sites, but nowhere will this be easy or even desirable, and already most of the vacant spaces between houses are packed with banana groves, small

[141]
[145]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

plots of maize, squashes, tobacco, etc., and useful trees (bamboo, citrus-mango, kapok, sycomore and forewood). Artificial drainage would, of course, make more land available along the rivers, but this is in general beyond the abilities and resources of the Nyakyusa without considerable outside assistance.

Finally, in this matter it is to be remembered that in addition to a man's arable holding, each of his wives has a banana plot at her house from which she obtains her staple foodstuff. Such plots amount to perhaps about a tenth of an acre on the average. On the other hand, the Nyakyusa are no longer prepared to tolerate a predominantly banana diet. Rice has, in most areas of the Lake Plains, become almost as important as bananas.

Large-sized Holdings

Some blame for this novel shortage of land and the smallness of the average holding has often been laid upon that minority of Nyakyusa who have exceptionally large holdings, and also upon the immigrants from beyond the Lake Plains who have come to settle there during the past decade.

The occupiers of large-sized holdings are rather fewer than has sometimes been supposed. The notoriety of large land-owners, such as some of the modern chiefs with as much as 25-30 acres, has brought more attention to them than is really warranted. Most chiefs and village headmen have arable holdings of above average size, as a result of their privileged positions in the land allocation system and because of their prestige influence; but they remain a small minority and their number is bound to decrease in the future as inheritance causes sub-division of their holdings, for most of them have also more than the average number of wives and sons. In the two high-density regions it is clearly impossible for any man much to increase his present holding. As will be shown later (see page 24) the modern trend is not unnaturally towards a dangerous fragmentation of holdings.

The data obtained in this matter for my eight village samples are summarized in Table III, page 15. In those villages the two men out of 372 who held more than ten acres were a village headman and the father of a chief.[1] There were seven other headmen and one chief as well as some other locally influential men amongst the people covered by my surveys, but none of them held more than ten acres. There are, of course, some commoners amongst the large land-holders; many of them are close relatives of the chief or headman and have thus received preferential treatment. Some, however, are ordinary villagers who were perspicacious enough to see future trends and to obtain land in the early days before most men realized its new value and when vacant areas were still easily available. Such men are tending to become a new, wealthy class, but on the other hand they are particularly susceptible to the begging of kinsmen and friends who have insufficient land. If they are not to be regarded as unneighbourly or even anti-social (perhaps practising witchcraft) they are virtually compelled to be generous sometimes, both with their land and with their profits.

On the whole this minority of men excites little attention or jealousy among the Nyakyusa, who indeed take it for granted that their chiefs and headmen will have more land than ordinary villagers, as befits their status and prestige. If it be thought that by reducing somehow the size and number of these unusually large holdings then the land shortage might be partly relieved, it is a false hope. I scarcely think that the Nyakyusa would welcome any such attempt at interference by administrative action, but in any case it would only provide minor and temporary relief here and there and would not be worth the executive difficulties involved.

1. This second man should be a chief himself but he was dismissed by Government on his inauguration for misdeeds. He still holds much of the prestige and privilege of a chief for he was a very efficient assistant to purely local government officers.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)0958 F'017 Ngonde F'017
Nyakyusa

The Problem of Immigrant Land-holders

Undue importance has also been given to immigrants, but their numbers are relatively small and only significant locally. Since about 1940, or a little earlier, there has been an influx of Africans into the Lake Plains: – Nyakyusa from the Highlands (chiefly from the Central Region – Pokati), Ndali from the Ndali Highlands of Rungwe District and Kinga from the Njombe District to the east beyond the Livingstones; from northern Nyasaland have come Ndali, Lambia and Sukwa, and there are also small numbers of Bemba and others from Northern Rhodesia. They have been attracted in the modern era, when local movement is easier, by the possibility of obtaining land in the northern Lake Plains, where rainfall is so high and uncultivated bushland has been available.[1]

These immigrants have been and continue to be almost entirely restricted to the north in the "low-density region" (see map, facing page 17). This contained the outstandingly empty area of the country and still there remain vacant lands to be taken up. Such land is usually of relatively inferior quality, easily subject to erosion and loss of fertility on the slopes of the foothills and unsuitable for paddy cultivation except in small, isolated basins. The immigrants, that is, have settled in areas rejected by most Nyakyusa. There, locally, the newcomers outnumber the indigenous population. In the flood plains, the high-density regions, the proportions of foreigners cannot be more than one or two per cent. of the population, and in most villages there are none at all.

It is true that these newcomers do occupy land which might well be used to relieve the congestion nearer to the Lake; but in practice this would not be at all easy. To take a single example: the newly opened area in the north of the chiefdom of Mwakyusa between the Kiwira and Songwe rivers is being rapidly taken up by Ndali from the north-west, Nyasalanders and Nyakyusa from the Central Region (in that order of numerical importance). A few miles to the south, in the centre of the same chiefdom, the inhabitants of the Ibako area commonly refuse to move although they manifestly cannot meet their land needs within their present villages. They, and others like them, say with some truth that paddy cultivation is less easy and less profitable in these newer and higher areas, and that poor communications make the disposal of produce more difficult. They also say, but more often leave to inference, that they are unwilling to leave their traditional village areas and begin in new parts, even though the move required is only one of a few miles. They have not yet become sufficiently aware of the permanent gravity of modern land shortage to overcome their parochial inertia. By the time they do become aware of it the opportunity may well be lost, for immigrants continue to arrive in twos and threes, and the last vacant land may be taken. To date, however, some vacant lands remain, albeit of poor quality, into which the densely packed Nyakyusa could move, and the immigrants cannot be blamed, at least not yet, for preventing the expansion and resettlement of the local population.

At the moment the chiefs and headmen in these northerly areas are keen to obtain as many of these immigrants as possible in order to swell the number of their commoners, the size of their villages and thus, directly, their own prestige and importance. Newcomers have every opportunity to be allocated as much land as they wish, where they wish, and many are liberally assisted with food in the traditional way until they harvest their first crop. I heard no complaints from either the local Nyakyusa or the immigrants, and relations seemed to be good. Strangers must conform to Nyakyusa ways of life and to the authority of the headmen and chief, although

1. Immigrants from Nyasaland are said to have come following the introduction of new regulations there prohibiting the cultivation of newly acquired bush areas.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F367 Ngonde F367
Nyakyusa

In fact they usually settle on the common East African pattern of scattered homesteads, each in its arable area, and not in the tight Nyakyusa village pattern.

I think that the headmen and chiefs concerned would not welcome a concerted immigration, for it offers them a chance to emulate the economically produced prestige of their fellows in the flood plains, to whom at the moment they feel inferior. They would, of course, most probably prefer indigenous Nyakyusa, could the latter be persuaded to settle there. As it is, at least some of the Nyakyusa of these northerly villages are trying to move into the flood plains, where they can more easily cultivate paddy and where they can join in a more active and ebullient village life.

One type of foreigner to the Lake Plains is the rare (almost invariably a Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who has obtained land but does not settle on it nor in any village. He continues to live in his upland village and comes down to the plains only to cultivate and harvest his paddy field. This is entirely against Nyakyusa land law and custom and, in fact, such an absentee land-holder has often made a substantial monetary gift to the chief or headman for the promotion of this extra-legal privilege. These strangers are frequently among the more wealthy upland Nyakyusa, who can afford such payments or them, and often they are of chiefly rank themselves, perhaps having kinship ties with the local chief. There are probably no chiefdoms where such strangers have not obtained paddy fields, though naturally those which contained a good deal of vacant, usable paddy land at the beginning of the cash-cropping era have most.

This does arouse a certain amount of ill-feeling and opposition amongst local villagers who have insufficient land themselves, for they lose land and gain no numerical strength or profit of any kind. The illegal action of the local chief is also condemned, especially as the chiefs should not in any case assume allocatory powers. On the other hand it must be noted that the commoners philosophically accept the supposedly protected prerogatives of their chiefs under European rule and they expect the chiefs to take advantage of them. As with the case of the minority of large land-holders, the actual effect is not particularly great and reformation here would be a minor palliative. Nevertheless in this matter there is a definite and unpopular infringement of villagers' rights and of the local customary law.

One other group of strangers may be noted for the sake of completeness. That is the Kisi, who have for at least two generations been settling along the lake shore itself from Mazema in the east to the Songwe river (and beyond) in the north-west. They have come from the north-eastern shores of the lake and in the Nyakyusa area they are principally fishermen who do not, therefore, compete with the indigenous population economically. They cultivate only tiny plots of cassava and sometimes of finger millet, although a few of the younger generation are now trying to grow a little paddy also. The total number of Kisi involved cannot be more than a few hundred and they have probably not increased much over the past decades. They follow an almost separate existence from their Nyakyusa neighbours, not intermarrying, and following their own way of life.[1]

1. The main Kisi settlements in Rungwe District are in the Kyela area, on inshore peninsulas south of the Lake Plains, where they number about 1,200. Another 1,000 are scattered on smaller peninsulas and in the intervals between further south along Lake Nyasa. They are widely liked as fishers, and they exchange their wares for cereal foods with Nyakyusa other fishing.

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Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IV

THE RESULTS OF LAND SHORTAGE

●311 As indicated in the short outline of traditional land tenure in Chapter II, the system developed and worked adequately in the old situation (both before and after European conquest) when land was plentiful in relation to the people's demands. Any villager who wanted land had the right to be allocated fields; any established villager who wished to expand his cultivation could do so without difficulty. Movement between villages was easy, and especially after the establishment of European peace, for everywhere newcomers were welcomed to increase the strength and prestige of the village, and land was available for them. The young men in their age-villages were able to obtain sufficient arable land and they were able to establish their economic independence after marriage, if not earlier. Because land was plentiful there was little real concern for security of tenure and disputes over land were both uncommon and unimportant.

[24]

By 1955 the basic fact was that there was insufficient land to meet the people's requirements in the alluvial flood plains – as also in many Highland areas – and there remained little or no unused land which could be taken into cultivation.

Inheritance of Land

426 451 In these earlier and more spacious days, inheritance was chiefly significant in moveable property – cattle pre-eminently, and grain, money and other goods – and also in the matter of widows and the custody of children. The rules of inheritance were the same in principle for all this property. Inheritance was by groups of full-brothers rather than by individuals, and therefore when a man died, his sons, his widows and his wealth were taken by the eldest surviving full-brother; failing a full-brother, a half-brother would inherit (the eldest surviving at the time). Only when all the deceased's brothers were dead, or if they had moved away and severed practical relations, were the dead man's sons able to take up the property in their own right. Then each group of full-brothers tended to inherit as separate, corporate groups. Although the separation into "houses" was not as strong and notable as amongst some African peoples,[1] yet there was a fairly strong solidarity between full-brothers such that, for instance, their cattle were regarded as a distinct and separate herd, over which the senior brother had principal control and in which half-brothers had little direct rights.

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Originally land inheritance did not follow this scheme because it was an unimportant matter, for ideally a man obtained his building plot and arable land at the time of the formal establishment of his age-village, and he preferred if possible to continue to live amongst his coevals. Consequently, when a man died, his brothers and his sons and nephews normally had land of their own and did not wish for more elsewhere, especially as the deceased's land would probably be in another age-village. Out of respect for the dead man and his contemporaries, the chief heir often made a token residence at the deceased's homestead and then, after a brief period, would obtain the approval of the villagers to return to his own village and holding again – perhaps at the cost of some beer or a goat. Sometimes the heir or another member of the lineage might take the opportunity to leave his own village

[423]

1. See Wilson, M. 1936, pp. 1-18. Cf. also my The Family Herds, London, 1958, Chapters 3 and 4, for a description of a strongly patrilineal "herd" system.

423 428 [58] believed that parents and children should live apart.[1] In the same way, and for similar reasons, an elder brother tries to make provision for his junior when the latter marries if their father is already dead. The practice of the father is not a legally required one, although it is nowadays increasingly common and sons have begun to expect it: the practice of an elder brother is now legally required in the matter of land and probably always has been in the matter of cattle.

[241] The difficulties are obvious when a man dies and leaves several sons but only a small-sized holding. To date no clear ruling has emerged and unfortunately the African District Council did not deal specifically with such details when introducing the new law. How much land an eldest brother can reasonably retain for himself is perhaps not determinable in practice except in specific relation to the nature, locality and fertility of the holding in question, the plots already held by the man himself, the needs and number of the younger brothers and any holdings they may have, and the location of the villages in which they severally live. There is also plenty [579] of scope for disagreement between half-brothers over portions of the paternal holding which had been retained by the father himself for his own use; over portions allocated to a wife who has borne no sons or whose sons have died, and over permanent trees. The situation is still fluid and there has not yet been time enough for a common and generally acceptable solution to be established. Consequently each group of sons tries to solve its own particular problems in this matter as best it can, torn between old values and new attitudes and needs.

593 428 Relations between both full-brothers and half-brothers tend often to be severely tried at times of inheritance. It is not primarily, I think, a case of brothers' greed for valued land tending to overcome bonds of fraternity and co-operation; but it is rather that a father's arable holding is often not able to provide adequate amounts of arable land for each of his sons, and yet they find the very greatest difficulty in obtaining land elsewhere. Already the traditional kin-group comprising the sons and grandsons of a group of [182] full-brothers had begun to break down even before land shortage became serious. Now the group of full-brothers itself tends to be dispersed as men obtain land where they can and it is endangered by dissensions over land rights and land division. Increasingly, it seems, a Nyakyusa man is becoming detached from his brothers and he tends to establish an independent family unit comprising his immediate family alone – that is, himself with his wives and children. We cannot attribute the whole cause of this modern trend to land shortage and economic difficulties, of course, for involved also are new ideas of individualism and of personal effort and reward, and the decreasing need for the consistent support of brothers in social, economic and ritual activities.

578 423 428 Younger brothers may, and sometimes do in fact, agree that the paternal holding is already too small for further sub-division, or that the small parts which can be made available to them are scarcely worth having – especially if they live some distance away. On the other hand, the eldest brother may already have obtained a holding in his own village and is therefore willing to make only a small claim or none at all in the interests of his juniors, and he may then divide the inheritance amongst them alone. Usually, so acute is the dearth of land, the holding is divided between two [311] or more brothers. It is split into small plots so that each brother has a share of paddy, food-crop and banana land, and these are commonly a half acre or even less in size nowadays. As already mentioned, by a kind of modern [696] equity the local African courts generally favour the claims of the younger

1. See Wilson, M., 1951, p. 139 and passim. "The overt purpose (of age-villages) is the separation of sons and mothers, of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law." (Ibid p. 142).

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

brothers, and this is compelling the increasing and continued fragmentation of holdings at time of inheritance. Even so, if there are several brothers (i.e., sons of the deceased) the youngest among them may still be unable to obtain a plot, or at least not one of an economically viable size, and they are then compelled to try to gain admittance to some other village as newcomers, there to be allocated land.

The shortage of land is, therefore, not only making inheritance very considerably more important, but it is assisting in the establishment of new kinship attitudes and a redefining of fraternal relations. The position is most confused at the moment as the old system continues to exist alongside the new, sometimes more or less successfully, but often in intractable opposition. At the present time the observer can only mention general tendencies, for it is impossible as yet to foresee what the eventual result will be, and there are, in any case, many other factors involved besides those of the inheritance of scarce land.

In so far as we are primarily concerned with land problems in this essay, the basic factors are that land is newly scarce, that there is virtually no alternative activity in the country to the arable use of the land, and that therefore each son must try to obtain a share in the often inadequate holding of his father. I suggest that no form of inheritance can deal with such a situation satisfactorily – at least it is highly doubtful if any has yet emerged in an area of land shortage in Eastern Africa – and thus there are bound to be severe difficulties and a deterioration of inter-personal relations between near kinsmen who are most in competition. The new inheritance law of the Nyakyusa has narrowed the range of potential conflict from the patrilineal descendants of a grandfather to the sons of a single father; but if it has obviated possible hostility between the generations and between paternal cousins, it has also removed much of the common interest and mutual interdependence between them.

The Right to Land, and the Authority of the Village Headman

Although the traditional principle still exists that every villager has a right to arable land within the village boundaries, yet it is no longer possible to carry it out in practice. Every village headman, in my experience, attempts to ensure that each of his men has land, but he cannot always succeed, and most especially he cannot provide every one with as much land as he would like, because of sheer spatial limitation.

Nowhere any longer does the old principle now hold that an established villager may, without permission or notification, take vacant land into cultivation as part of his holding. When land becomes vacant it must now revert immediately to the village as a group, that is to the common pool from which the headman as village authority makes allocations. There are so many and such varied demands for land nowadays that no man acting on his own can presume to take up vacant land, and only the headman may decide allocation. No person can now obtain land, whether he be an established villager or not, unless he is allocated it by the headman – or, in the many large villages typical of the Lake Plains, by the headman's assistant, ugwakyimo, who is delegated authority in a section of the village.

Land becomes vacant when a man shifts to another village, when a man dies and leaves no active heir who desires to take up the deceased's holding, or (but seldom today) when a man gives up part of his holding due to his inability to use the whole of it. In all these cases the land is immediately re-allocated by the headman, probably not as a single unit any longer, as best he can among a crowd of land-hungry villagers – established men seeking extra land to meet the needs of growing families or for increasing cash-crop

630 311 423 production, young men seeking their own independent holding, and newcomers to the villages who seek to settle there.

The modern shortage of land has therefore considerably increased the authority and the activities of the village headman. Nowadays he is the prime mover in all changes in land-holding, other than by inheritance or temporary loans and gifts. In these latter, and particularly in inheritance, he has necessarily become an important interested party whose influence cannot be ignored, whose approval is desired and whose assistance is frequently sought both as arbiter and witness. Much more than before, and directly because of the scarcity and value of land today, he is the principal controller and allocator of land – though, of course, he remains subject to the state of public feeling and the opinions of his villagers. His position has been further strengthened by his status at the base of the administrative hierarchy in modern local government, whereby he is given executive responsibility for his village and its people. As always, disputes over land are taken before him in the first instance and here he acts not only as a judge but also as the expositor of village opinion and public knowledge. Such disputes are increasing in number, giving him more work and responsibility and also more opportunity for the expression of his status. Meanwhile his traditionally crucial ritual and magical (anti-witchcraft) powers continue, though now in somewhat attenuated form.

Fragmentation and Dispersion of Holdings

423 423 311 It has been shown how the inheritance of land, now of increasing importance, results normally in the splitting up of a man's holding.[1] Whether a young man obtains an inherited share of his father's land or he obtains an allocation in another village, its size is likely to be small – smaller than the holdings of his father's generation. Tiny, uneconomic plots are to be seen everywhere in the flood plains.

At the same time a man's holding is tending to comprise a scattered, heterogeneous collection of small plots, as he has obtained land when and where he could. An actual example will illustrate this: a young man had [341] about a tenth of an acre behind his house on which he was growing maize and beans; he had about a quarter of an acre which was his share of his deceased father's land, and another quarter of an acre which had been [343] allocated to him by the headman when a vacated holding was split up, and on both of these he cultivated paddy. This man had only small hope of obtaining more land, unless one of his brothers died without sons, for he had already been refused by the headman a share in a recently vacated holding on the grounds that, unlike many of his contemporaries, he already had at least some arable land.

Even amongst older men the holding of scattered plots is common. This is partly the result of the earlier expansion of cultivation when the formerly unused lands were put under paddy, and partly because older men too, lose no opportunity, in the face of scarcity, to take up any land they can. The Nyakyusa ideal is to have a single large holding, preferably stretching away behind the homestead – or alternatively two fields, one for paddy out in the open plains and one for food crops nearer home. This ideal becomes less and less practicable. There seems to be little or no need for this scatter of plots on account of soil and fertility differences, for these are generally few and unimportant within the area of a single village.

311 423 In my sample villages the average number of separate plots was about three per holding. There was a notable difference between villages in relation to the average size of villagers' holdings. Where land was more plentiful the

1. If there is only one son to inherit the holding, it is more likely that he will have to give way to the pressing demands of his father's brothers' sons if he is not to cut himself off from his lineage.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

number of separate plots per holding was less than where land was scarce; at the same time the average size of separate plots was smaller in those more land-hungry villages. The reader may refer to Table III (page 15) for some illustrative figures. Though differences are not yet very great, nevertheless there seems to be a fairly clear correlation between the average size of villagers' holdings on the one hand, and on the other the number and size of separate plots, and this is entirely borne out by my general information obtained in villages where actual measurements were not made. The inescapable conclusion must be that increasing scarcity of land in the Lake Plains leads to increasing fragmentation and dispersion of holdings; further, the present land situation and land tenure system can only lead to a continuation of this trend. 311 423

To emphasise the actual situation in 1955, let me reiterate the results of my own village surveys in the very high density region. In a village in Kaweme's chiefdom only a quarter of the younger men had paddy land of their own, holdings averaging about three-quarters of an acre; in a village in Mwakipesile's chiefdom, only 17 per cent. of the younger men had paddy land and holdings averaged about half an acre (cf. Table VII, page 37). These two examples are taken from the areas of most severe land shortage and are not therefore altogether typical of the whole Lake Plains. Nevertheless, I do not think that they are entirely atypical; more importantly, they indicate the present trend. Within another generation this fragmentation and scatter of holdings may well be the common feature everywhere in the flood plains unless the system of tenure and inheritance is modified. If the increase in population is quickened through improved medical facilities, better diet and housing, and improved conditions generally, then the position will become more acute. Such an increase is only to be expected. The Nyakyusa have decisively entered a money economy and they have learnt to seek higher standards of living. Only from their fields, by cash-cropping, can they expect to earn their livings and the demand for better living will not be curtailed – nor, of course, is it desirable that it should be. [433] [511]

There is another aspect of this whole matter which must be considered. It relates to the movement of individuals between villages. Such movement was, in earlier European days, a crucial factor in the age-village structure, for it was not only exceedingly frequent, but also it tended to undermine the idealised coeval basis of village life. Movement between villages is increasingly difficult now, for a newcomer naturally cannot easily obtain land, nor as much land as he would desire even at a moderate demand. Nevertheless, the reasons for movement persist, and they will do so whilst the fear of witchcraft remains and whilst illness and misfortune are attributable to the unfavourable aura of a place. There remains also the tradition of moving so that a man may escape from bad relations with kinsfolk or neighbours, or from the obloquy resulting from his own disapproved actions. Much social and psychological tension is being created now as a result of the new difficulty of movement, and so far the Nyakyusa have not evolved alternative methods. [166] [754] [753] [624] [152] [578]

On the other hand, so deeply engrained is the notion of the prestige and power which accrues to a village by virtue of the number of its inhabitants, that headmen and villagers alike remain most reluctant to refuse to accept newcomers, even when it inevitably means that the present inhabitants must meet a further decrease in the average amount of land available per family, for a newcomer must be allocated a holding if he is to remain. Consequently, if a holding is for any reason left vacant, a headman tends to refuse to re-allocate some or all of it amongst his villagers and thus to augment their holdings; but instead he keeps it in reserve pending the hoped-for arrival of another newcomer. Men desiring to leave their own village try to get [554] [609] [622]

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Nyakyusa

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[311] [312] [313] [314]

sons of such reserved land elsewhere. Such land is cultivated in the meantime on a kind of year-to-year lease by one or more of the villagers as allowed by the headman.

Even when no vacant plots exist a headman will still accept newcomers. If they are young men they must be prepared to go landless for the time being (i.e., to remain dependent on their father's fields elsewhere) until such time as land becomes vacant. If the newcomer is an older man, then the headman will try to persuade one or more of his villagers to give up portions of their holdings and he will often cede part of his own land. The newcomer is therefore often allocated small strips and plots here and there in the village arable area and he thereafter joins the land-hungry crowd seeking to expand their holdings. In one village in which I worked where land shortage was critical (Kapugi, Kyrowa's chiefdom), there was not a single patch of arable land unworked; yet here the headman had, with full village approval, accepted three newcomers during the first nine months of 1955. Two of them were young men, one unmarried, and they could not expect to obtain land for some time except for a small banana plot. The third newcomer was a middle-aged man from a village some 12 miles away in another chiefdom. The headman had given him a half-acre plot out of his own paddy field and was laboriously begging pieces of land here and there from his people in order to make up a new holding of perhaps an acre. The headman himself had only about three and a half acres of arable land; he had at least one adult son who had not yet acquired an arable plot and he had other sons and brothers' sons owning only small fields. Yet he favoured this stranger, this newcomer. He was quite firm in his resolution to accept other newcomers in the future and in this he believed that he was acting as a good headman should. As far as I could learn he was supported by his villagers.

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This is not, by any means, an isolated or even unusual phenomenon. It is, I feel, important to bear in mind this illustration of contemporary affairs. Firstly, because it shows another way in which holdings are fragmented and dispersed; and secondly, because it demonstrates how, so far, the Nyakyusa have refused to face the situation of land shortage, and how they continue to follow traditional practices and values associated with village prestige. These people complain of their inability to obtain sufficient arable land, but they are not yet prepared to make the mental and social adjustments which might at least partly relieve their new predicament. On the other hand, they themselves understand the need for movement and perhaps they are right in their implied insistence not to discard their cultural ideals. Their insistence on accepting newcomers and their willingness (however dimly perceived and expressed) to share their land with the landless are not discreditable attitudes, even if they are economically untenable.

Security of Tenure and Disputes over Land

As already noted, under traditional land tenure a Nyakyusa had good security in his holding so long as he continued to live in the same village. The only alteration of tenure occurred at the "coming-out" ceremony of a new chief when the older men would, if required, move aside in order to give their sons' generation the best land. This did not invariably happen in any case. Fundamentally, however, security of tenure is not a matter of great importance to a people who have plenty of land, and land which is more or less of the same quality. Indeed, convenience of location in respect of one's own homestead was almost the only value land had as such. Occasionally a more dominant chief might try to seize a commoner's field to allow of his own expanded cultivation; it was most unusual for him to succeed, and even if he did the dispossessed villager suffered little real deprivation, for he could easily obtain another field fairly near at hand.

[561] [641] [643]

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Nyakyusa

Security of tenure has continued into European times, and although perhaps weakened slightly in one way through the exaggerated powers which accrue to modern Government-supported chiefs, it has been strengthened by the modern peace and rule of law and the more efficient system of justice provided by the established local courts. According to G. Wilson (Wilson, G., 1938, p. 32) the increase in the movement of individuals between villages in earlier European times (i.e., up to about 1940-45) directly caused a lack of attachment to individual plots, and thus security of tenure was not considered particularly important. 311 423 [182] [160]

The new situation of land shortage does not affect the basic position, or rather, by producing a high scarcity value on land, it has brought about an intensification of individuals' rights over their holdings. No longer dare a chief or headman attempt to commit such illegal acts as the seizure of a villager's field, so long as that villager is not afraid to publicise the affair. A man is not, and cannot afford to be, prepared to lose his field, for he cannot replace it with any certainty, either in a convenient location or elsewhere. A headman may sometimes bring strong pressure to bear on some of the men of his village to try to persuade them to give up portions of their land to assist a newcomer or a landless neighbour, but a villager can and does refuse and there is no legal authority which can override him here. As the land shortage becomes more obvious and more acute so men become less willing to allow their holdings to be touched for any reason, by anyone. The re-allocation or a "coming-out" ceremony appears to have been dropped nowadays[1] and thus a man holds his land undisturbed until his death, when it passes by inheritance to his sons. There are cases now where grandsons of the original holder occupy land through undisturbed and undisputed inheritance. A man can, as he wishes, loan a kinsman or friend a plot in his holding, or he can make an outright gift. The principal restriction which remains is that a man must continue to live in the village in order to retain these rights; he must relinquish them if he permanently goes to live elsewhere. Nevertheless, the land of a well-established villager would be kept for him pending his hoped-for return, for if he has left in umbrage and fear because of suspected witchcraft, then he may be persuaded to come back after a time. The headman and his neighbours should in fact persist in their attempts to persuade him, even to the use of force, for this is not only a moral duty of age-mates and fellow-villagers but is also an effort to remove the implications of their alleged witchcraft and anti-social conduct. [622] [645] [626] [718] [928] [924] [754]

Once, therefore, a man obtains land he has absolute rights in it during his continued residence in the village. Especially today, older men seldom shift their homes and almost all land is now held on a tenure which will be passed on by inheritance. .

423

Boundary disputes are few. Usually, and increasingly, village boundaries are well known, and field boundaries invariably are. During my field measurements in the sample villages, I never met any difficulty with my local teams in quickly establishing the ownership and exact limits of any plot. Boundaries are usually marked by small ridges of accumulated debris or by narrow paths, and these form an intricate and irregular network throughout a village's arable area. They are so well known that there is very little scope for a greedy man to attempt to encroach on a neighbour's holding at hoeing time. If minor disagreements do arise at that season they can be immediately settled – by appeal to neighbours working nearby if necessary – and the headman or his assistant may well not be called in at all. [627]

1. This is the case in the Lake Plains. In some of the more conservative Highland chiefdoms where the cash economy is less advanced and land scarcity is not serious, there still appears to be some re-allocation in favour of the young man in the traditional way. In general, however, it is clear that the traditional age-village system of land allocation is obsolete; see pages 298.

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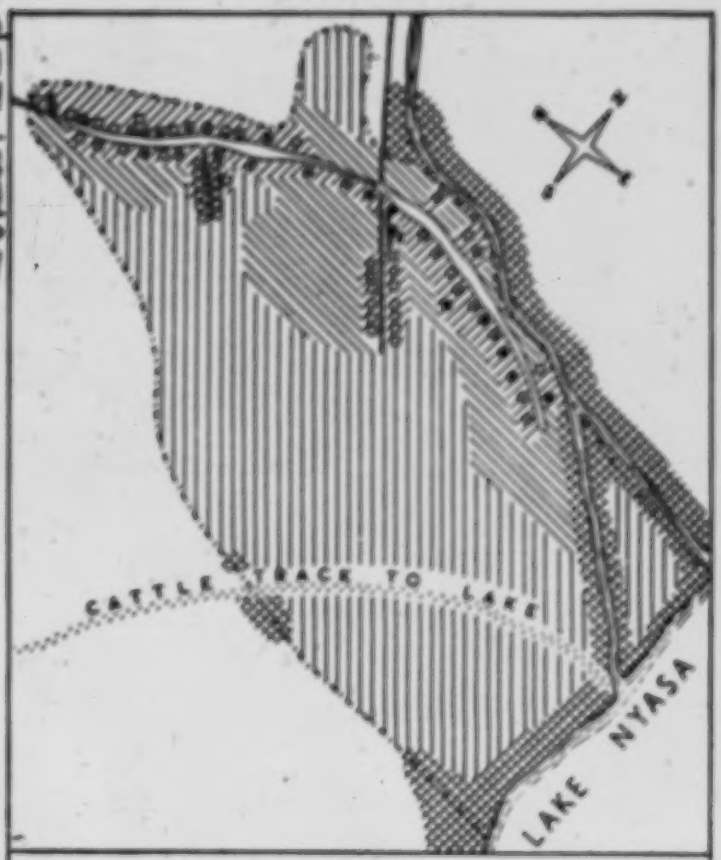

SKETCH PLAN OF KAPUGI VILLAGE,
KOROSO'S CHIEFDOM, 1955

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[Facing p. 29]

423 as determined by the village headman. But even building sites with the
178 essentially associated banana groves are becoming increasingly scarce and
[423] valuable, for no one desires to decrease the amount of arable by enlarging the
[36] built-up areas – rather the reverse. The number of young men's villages is
therefore diminishing and congestion of their huts is increasing to the stage
[54] very often where no more than a narrow passage if left between adjacent
houses. There comes to be a wider age range in the young men's hamlets
where, often, a large village provides only one for all its sons. Smaller villages
sometimes provide no accommodation at all for their sons, who are thus
compelled to seek membership of a neighbouring group. These hamlets
are mainly regarded nowadays as temporary residential areas for the young
men until such time as they move on to an existing holding – their father's or
some other. There is therefore no attempt to provide sufficient space for an
adequate banana grove with each young man's house, let alone a food-
crop plot behind it. The arable land beyond the compound huts already
belongs to inhabitants of the main village. When a young man is able to
leave and take up a holding, his vacated site (together, often, with the hut) is
taken over by a waiting youth who has probably been sharing with another
hitherto.

361 These young men's hamlets do not, any longer, eventually mature and
311 become villages in their own right with their own headman and arable lands.
Formerly, when this occurred, they would probably have taken over a good
178 deal of the lands of the old village, as the young men exercised the privileges
of their new maturity against their elders with the emergence of the new
chiefdom. New chiefdoms, and with them new villages, no longer emerge,
[698] and this is mainly because Government has prohibited the bifurcation of petty
chiefdoms on the death of the old chief, as it is considered inconsistent with the
development of stable, modern local government. Additionally, however,
the shortage of land can no longer allow of the traditional expanding politico-
territorial organisation. The elder men's villages are not now prepared to yield
ground to the young men, and the latter cannot expand elsewhere. Thus
political requirements and land restriction work together to make the old
system obsolete and to freeze the spatial distribution of villages as it existed
in early European times. As far as I could ascertain in the chiefdoms of the
Lake Plains, probably no new village had emerged in the past 20 or more
years, except for a few cases of large ones splitting into two for administrative
and social convenience. Many villages there date back to pre-European days
often now under the son, or even the grandson, of the original headman
(though this is not essential or invariable in any way).

561 The age-basis of the Nyakyusa village is thus disappearing; indeed, in
178 many villages it has already disappeared in everything but the young men's
428 hamlets. Where the process has gone least far, there is still apparent a rough
division of the single village into the old men's sector (men at least 50 years of
age, and many much older); the middle-aged men's sector (men between
about 30 and 50 years old, being the younger brothers or older sons of the
old men); and the young men's and youths' sector. On inheritance, sons tend
to shew a continued reluctance to move and live on their father's house-site
and to become immediate neighbours of older men; they avoid it if possible,
often allowing a middle-aged man to shift there instead. Nevertheless even
178 this sort of age-division is rapidly vanishing and in very many villages a
428 man's neighbour may be of any age.

We have seen that inheritance is now one of the chief methods of
[423] obtaining land. Under the new inheritance rules, this means that sons
follow their fathers and take up their fathers' arable holdings, building sites
and banana groves. Some young men inherit early, others inherit late; there is
no longer any notion or possibility of the younger generation entering into its

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Nyakyusa

land as time. Young men compete with one another, with their older brothers and with their fathers for allocations of land left vacant. We also saw, however, that often in the larger families not all the sons are able to get a share of the paternal holding, or at least not a share of practicable size. Thus younger sons are forced to resort to trying to obtain vacant land elsewhere – possibly within the same village, but as often as not outside. Finally, the young man on his new holding may find his neighbours to be of any age; certainly they will not have been members of his own original coeval hamlet.

The way for this changing concept of village life and the new sort of village was prepared in the years before land shortage became important. The changed political system has been briefly noted already, but no less important was the great increase in inter-village movement in earlier European days when peace and personal security had been established. During this period Wilson (1938, page 32) reckoned that perhaps 80 per cent. of Nyakyusa shifted at least once from the place where they first obtained fields. This estimate, whilst perhaps holding good for Highland Nyakyusa amongst whom Wilson mainly worked, was too high for the people of the Lake Plains, where about 40 per cent. is more correct according to my genealogical and village surveys. That is still a relatively high degree of mobility for a mainly subsistence, peasant society such as it was in those years. It is clear that the pseudo-fraternal bond of coevality could not persist as a main element of village life and consciousness, when in fact as many as half of the members of a village were not original coeval founders but had come in from elsewhere. Before the land shortage, movement did not entail the shifting of young men to other young men's villages, or of older men to other older men's villages. It was, at least eventually, promiscuous movement, ignoring age categories. The compulsions of land shortage seem, in retrospect, only to have followed existing lines of village development and to have begun the completion of the process.

In the Lake Plains, therefore, the village persists as a close, territorial, land-owning group and as a specific cluster of homesteads and huts, usually with a village street, the whole closely hemmed in by continuous banana groves. Beyond this lie the arable lands, usually food-crop fields nearby and paddy fields farther off. In jealously protecting what it already holds, the village has gained a new exclusiveness, for the security of the individual land-holder is maintained by the corporate ownership of the village and by excluding outsiders as far as possible. On the other hand, it is no longer an age-village either in fact or intention, and it cannot be, for age-villages were consistent only with an expanding territorial system and a subsistence economy.

This brief analysis of Nyakyusa village organisation in recent times applies only to the Lake Plains. In some parts of both the Central Region and the Northern Highlands the age-basis of Nyakyusa villages had most probably already been seriously weakened in pre-European times.[2] On the other hand, elsewhere, and particularly in the more conservative parts less affected by modern trends and the cash economy, the traditional age-village still exists in something like its old form.

Land shortage has appeared in the Highlands together with a developing cash economy, but the basis of agricultural and economic change lies mainly in coffee cultivation which, of course, requires relatively smaller fields than does paddy in the Lake Plains, but it needs more care and attention from the grower for moderate success. As far as I could see in the course of

1. Polygyny is still the norm amongst the older and many middle-aged men, and therefore a father often forces several sons to inherit.

2. According to elderly informants in Western Kyela, Mwakaleli and some central chiefdoms, and also the evidence of old village sites.

311 433 845 ay earlier labour migration enquiries in the Highlands, the village as a close residential unit is breaking up as the people are increasingly adopting the more common East African pattern of each family building its own homestead in its own land-holding. These northern Nyakyusa say that they must have their coffee plots next to their homesteads for the sake of continuous supervision, and that this is impossible (which is true enough) where men live close together in compact villages. Again, coffee plots, with their standing, permanent trees, have become a valuable item of inheritance; men lose no opportunity of taking them irrespective of the location of their customs or of the identity of their immediate neighbours. The values of land, cash-crops and material progress are placed much higher than the traditional values of customs; indeed, such traditional values are largely inconsistent with modern wants and aspirations.

561 561 198 Thus the Nyakyusa age-village has become almost obsolete and it would seem that it must inevitably vanish altogether even in the remaining conservative areas (e.g., in the east). Furthermore, its disappearance is leading to a distinct divergence between the Lake Plains Nyakyusa and those of the Highlands. How far this divergence will become permanent and basically significant cannot be foreseen as yet in this early stage. Clearly the compact village is best fitted to an arable economy of rice cultivation in the Lake Plains, and at least until there is further agricultural change it will persist as a most important social group.

Nevertheless, with its enhanced exclusiveness and relative social isolation and with reserved rivalry with its neighbours, the Lake Plains village is scarcely conducive to the encouragement of agricultural and economic development. Neither is it anything but harmful towards contemporary efforts in the politico-administrative sphere to reduce parochialism and to foster a sense of unity and co-operation beyond the village and the petty traditional chieftdoms. Whilst supervisory control of the land through the headman is in general excellent, reasonable and readily understandable to the people, yet the excess of restrictiveness, the competitive scrambling for vacated holdings and the jealous fears are surely more than merely unfortunate. There needs to be some modification to loosen the over-tight strings of village corporate ownership, to regularise the transfer of vacated holdings and to lessen the fears of village against village. These points are taken up again in Chapter V.

622 152 182

Cattle and Pastoral Requirements

311 233 Unfortunately, no great accuracy can be presumed for the Rungwe District cattle censuses, but the available figures are summarised in Table VI.

TABLE VI
NYAKYUSA CATTLE

	1955				1951	
	No. of cattle	*Acres per head*	*Cattle per person*	*Cattle per family of 5*	*No. of cattle*	*Acres per head*
Lake Plains	31,618	4.1	0.5	2.5	26,832	5.2
Central Region ..	19,380	7.1	0.4	2	19,180	7.3
N.E. Highlands ..	19,095	7.4	0.4	2	17,165	8.4
N.W. Highlands ..	22,974	8.0	0.4	2	16,855	10.9
Total:						
Nyakyusa.. ..	92,067	6.4	0.4	2	80,032	7.3

The indicated increase in the numbers of cattle may well be attributable only to improved census enumeration by the Veterinary Department.

Although 6.4 acres per head of cattle for all Nyakyusa country, and even 4.1 acres in the Lake Plains, might seem to be adequate in a country so

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Nyakyusa

well covered with vegetation and with an reliable and plentiful a rainfall, yet, of course, the actual pasturage available is very considerably less as so much of the land is taken for arable and building purposes. There is in practice a great acute shortage of grazing land everywhere, except in certain parts of the north-west Highlands (Ukukwe). This shortage is most critical during the wet season, for at other times of the year the herds are able to graze over the arable fields, where herbage grows exceptionally rapidly after harvest as a result of the high rainfall. 311 233 [132]

Traditionally, each village had a roughly demarcated area of common pasturage which was not, and could not be, used for arable purposes. With the increased demand for arable land, this commonage has almost everywhere in the Lake Plains been gradually whittled away for permanent arable holdings. Headmen who control these pastures, and many of their chiefs too, are much worried about this process, about the break with tradition and the modern pastoral difficulties, but arable needs are given priority over grazing and the practice continues. In the flood plains, the higher-density regions, common pasturage has by now almost disappeared altogether. The little which remains is largely unusable for cultivation, consisting of infertile or badly drained areas – often the sandy, coastal strips covered with dense thicket and tall sedges which provide very little useful grazing. During the dry seasons, after the paddy harvest, the situation is fair, but during the cultivation season pasturage is entirely inadequate, and in addition the cattle are compelled to live and graze in extremely arduous conditions of standing water, mud, mosquitoes and flies. They do not obtain enough food then and they lose condition badly. There are many deaths from exhaustion, near-starvation and disease, and this affects the immature stock particularly. Only by ceaseless tenacity on the part of both man and beast can the herds be retained at all. There is no tradition of cut-feeding and so far the Nyakyusa have refused to adopt this measure of alleviation. [522] [43]

Yet, as the Nyakyusa are quick to point out, each family has only a few cattle. Most families have a cow or two, and the average is only about two to three head per family – *cf.* Table VI, page 34. Owners of large herds are relatively few, and herds of more than ten cattle in a single family are very uncommon. Although the cattle population is too great for the pasture resources now available, yet the animals are fairly evenly and thinly distributed amongst the dense human population. Goats and sheep are few – about 600 altogether – in the Lake Plains and of no significance. It is important to note that here we do not have a situation of large herds which might be reduced by some form of culling.

Cattle are held in high esteem by all Nyakyusa as a source of valued milk for the daily diet, as the means to marriage (in bridewealth), as a store of capital, as a symbol of prestige and as an essential element in important ceremonial activity. This kind of value system needs no emphasis here as it is common to much of Eastern Africa, but it may be noted that one of the principle uses of the large sums of money saved from wages in mining employment (labour migration)[1] and from the profits of cash-cropping at home is in the purchase of cattle. It is thought that money is best invested, saved and used in that way, once immediate material needs have been met. [552] [454]

Even with the high proportion of deaths from disease and the appalling conditions of the wet season, there are indications that the numbers of cattle are not decreasing and there may well be local increases. Apart from natural increase, there is fairly heavy buying from the Ndali people to the north-west in Rungwe District, and also from farther afield in Northern Nyasaland, and in Nyamwanga and Fipa tribal areas (albeit illicitly). [439]

1. During the course of my earlier labour migration enquiries men would usually estimate their savings for me, when completing receipt questionnaires, by the number of cattle they could buy.

311 233 Whereas in the Highland and Central regions the large numbers of cattle – in relation, that is, to the available pasture resources – are causing over-grazing and soil erosion, particularly in the hilly areas so often nowadays relegated to pasturage, on the other hand in the flood plains there does not appear, at least to the layman, to have been any serious effects on the land. [324] The natural manuring of the paddy fields in the dry seasons is advantageous. In the Lake Plains it is the cattle rather than the land which suffer, but so far the Nyakyusa have done virtually nothing to meet the new conditions, other than to complain bitterly and fruitlessly.

The Young Men: Land Shortage and Labour Migration

433 The younger Nyakyusa men find increasing difficulty in obtaining arable land now that there are no longer vacant areas to be taken up, and the older men are no longer prepared to cede their land rights in favour of the younger generation, as they traditionally did. When occasional fields are left vacant, the young men must take their turn with their elders, who themselves are so chronically short of land – and the headmen community favour the older villagers with families as against the younger men. This means that in the high-density regions the majority of men under the age of about 30 years have little or no arable land, nor can they hope for it until the deaths of their fathers. In the congested village sites even their banana plots may be smaller than is desirable for the provision of the staple food.

[593] [176] The young man, then, is compelled to remain dependent on his father's and elder brother's holding; indeed, headmen often justify their refusals to allocate plots to young men on the express grounds that the latter must share their elders' fields. Thus the valued independence of the young Nyakyusa is severely restricted and it seems that tensions and difficulties are beginning to arise between fathers and sons, and between brothers, because of this. [578] Sons are blamed for not doing their fair share in the family cultivation; fathers are blamed for giving their sons inadequate shares in crops and crop incomes. It will be remembered that one of the fundamental principles underlying Nyakyusa society and its age-village organisation is the spatial segregation of parents and children (*cf.* page 22). Now they are inevitably being put into competition with one another over inadequate fields in a single holding.

[434] [593] The young men are severely restricted, if not altogether cut off, from the opportunity to cultivate paddy in their own fields and thus to earn their incomes at home, for paddy-growing is the only way of earning a living in the Lake Plains. Yet it is these younger men whose money demand is greatest; to buy clothing, bicycles and other store-goods, and to buy cattle for marriage payments. They are therefore strongly attracted by the ready opportunities for taking up wage-labour abroad, in the mines of the Rhodesias and South Africa where wages are high (see Gulliver, 1957).

With the best will in the world, when, as in the very high-density region, the average holding is little more than an acre and a half – when, that is, the older men themselves desire larger acreages for their own cultivation needs – it is not possible for a father to allow his son to take large shares in his fields. In some cases a father does give outright to his adult sons strips of his holding, but plots so provided are necessarily small. Quite as frequently a father does not consider it possible to break up his holding in his own lifetime, and sons are expected to assist in the common cultivation and to continue merely to be given a share in the family proceeds at harvest. It is not surprising, therefore, that very large numbers of young men from the Lake Plains migrate abroad to work. Only about one man in 20 has not been away at all before the age of about 25 years. Much higher proportions of men and larger numbers absolutely are temporarily absent from the Lake

[593] [167]

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Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Briefly to summarize the contemporary land situation: in the Lake Plains it may be said that in the main the traditional land tenure system and land law still continue as the basis of native land holding today. The essential feature in recent years has been the acute land shortage in relation to arable lands under the current system of agriculture. Village unity and village enclosures have been increased and so also has the authority of the village headman in his control and allocation of land rights. Security of tenure has been strengthened, if anything, and one of the most important methods of obtaining land is now by inheritance. The new law establishing inheritance from father to sons, while generally acceptable to the people, is producing a number of civil suits which form the greatest proportion of the more important land cases before the local courts.

The shortage of land is principally the result of increased demands for paddy (i.e. cash crop) cultivation, although the population appears to be increasing slowly. In the high density regions almost all men have considerably less land than they could cultivate, especially under the impetus of the co-plough, with the developing desires for money income. In the low density region of the low foothills there is still some vacant or partly utilized land, though of very inferior quality for paddy cultivation. The shortage hits the younger men severely, and many of them cannot obtain land at all until the death or senility of their fathers. Fragmentation and dispersion of holdings is rapidly becoming serious and without check.

The first question which arises is whether anything can be done to ease the pressure of population on the country by making more land available, or by making its distribution more equitable.

The thinly populated parts of the northern region of the Lake Plains offer a meagre solution only, for the country is raised above the level of the flood plains and is often broken and hilly. Fertility is low, erosion is a constant danger and the paddy yield (if obtainable at all) is poor. Nyakyusa from the densely populated areas to south and east are therefore most unwilling to move there. In any case the available land, which remains safely and economically open to cultivation, is filling up fairly quickly – mainly by immigration. Certainly I do not think that it can supply sufficient space to meet modern needs. There is, however, no reason why immigrants should make a difficult situation worse, and therefore it is suggested that further immigration from outside the Lake Plains should be carefully controlled if not altogether prevented. Indubitably outsiders (almost entirely Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who hold land without permanent residence should be prohibited and their holdings reallocated to local inhabitants.

As I have already indicated (page 17), I do not think that the problem of men who hold unusually large acreages is particularly serious. Such large holdings are relatively few and will be inevitably split up by inheritance on the deaths of the present occupiers.

In the flood plains proper there is, as far as I am aware, extremely little new land which could be brought under cultivation. Mechanical assistance in the clearance of dense reed thicket[1] and in drainage schemes would produce

1. These areas of thicket are heavily inundated in the wet season but, if cleared, could be used for a dry season crop.

311
423

some more land. How much could be made cultivable is beyond my appraisal, but it would be of valuable local assistance and ought not to be neglected. It does not, on the other hand, appear practicable to decrease further the amount of land used for building and village sites – the people themselves have already done this to some extent, and increased congestion in the villages would probably be undesirable on medical grounds.

There remain the local cases where part or all of a holding is not used (excluding genuine fallowing). An old man, or one who has for some reason lost the labour of his wives or sons, is sometimes unable to cultivate the whole of his fields. This is not common, or if it occurs the occupier is usually approached by his kinsmen, friends and neighbours for a loan or gift. Occasionally such land does remain relatively unutilised and the occupier refuses to release it even at the request of the headman. There is some feeling in the Lake Plains over this matter, and some men have suggested openly that such unused land should compulsorily revert to the village to be re-allocated by the headman.[1] Unless there is overwhelming demand for a new ruling here it would seem not to be a practicable policy and would only weaken security of land-holding and further increase the already over-exaggerated communal claim of the village. It would, of course, be difficult to assess when in fact a man had more land than he could or would cultivate, and it might easily lead to injustice if chiefs or headmen were given powers (however restricted) to interfere in a man's holding. Nevertheless headmen might be encouraged to keep a close watch on unused fields in their villages and to bring pressure to bear either to persuade the occupier to increase his efforts or to make temporary, witnessed loans to a neighbour.

In some cases land is left unused for a period whilst a man is away from home – usually while he is away at work. Where his absence is brief, little can or needs to be done, and already under Nyakyusa law the headman may authorise another villager to cultivate the fields on a year to year tenure: the absentee re-entering his holding on return. Occasionally, however, a young man may, for example, inherit land but then leave it for a number of years whilst he migrates to work in the mines. There is no adequate ruling as to the number of years' absence which should elapse before the absentee forfeits his land as an assumed permanent emigrant from the village. Headmen are reluctant to reallocate unused land for fear of the obvious legal and
[622] social difficulties should the absentee return, although some headmen are more hasty than others in this matter. Neighbours are often reluctant to borrow the land for fear of losing their opportunity of an outright allocation elsewhere in the village in the meantime. In some cases I saw fields which had lain unused for more than four years for these reasons. Like the unused portions of an old man's holding, these few cases arouse a good deal of land-hungry indignation, beyond their real importance in fact. Nevertheless some limit to the period of absence might well be introduced so that at least headmen know what their authority is in this matter, and so that men not prepared to work the land shall not be able to retain it indefinitely, It may be noted that the average length of absence of men in migratory labour is 18-24 months. A period of three years' continuous absence, at least without special cause, might perhaps be taken to indicate the automatic abdication of right of tenure.

If more land cannot be made available – or only relatively little – the obvious solution is a more intensive and profitable use of the existing resources. The Agricultural Department has long urged this policy and is
[648] attempting to put it into effect, pointing out the relatively inferior yields of paddy in the Lake Plains because of poor techniques and inefficient effort.

1. Significantly enough, one of the men to bring this suggestion to my notice was the Nyakyusa Senior Agricultural Instructor in the Lake Plains.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

This is not the province of the Sociologist, and all that can be said here is that it seems the most practical and valuable policy that could be adopted: it should be made the chief line of attack on contemporary problems. Unfortunately the Nyakyusa do not appreciate the value of this sort of solution – at least not yet – and therefore they are not inclined to learn and to increase their efforts and to change their practices in the fields. They have not yet rid themselves of the notion that increased production of crops and thus increased profits from agriculture are correlated only with increased holdings. In view of the critical land shortage a crucial change of attitude and understanding is required. The Nyakyusa must learn that increased production and higher profits can come from new and more efficient techniques – i.e. intensive cultivation. They must also learn what is so difficult for the African, that quality of production is no less important than quantity and that therefore cash incomes and standards of living can be raised by improving the standard of crops to be sold. Indeed, with a tendency for world agricultural prices to fall due to increasing supply, quality of produce is of the greatest importance. This is notably so in the case of rice. Tanganyika African rice is reckoned as of lower quality than that from South-east Asia, which therefore commands not only the better price but also the main share of the keenly competitive market. But it is a difficult idea for the Nyakyusa to grasp. It seems obvious to them, inheriting attitudes of a former subsistence age, that three poor cattle are better than two good ones – and in fact so they were in the hazardous time of their grandfathers. Cash crop production is based on the same premise, but it cannot hold in a modern cash economy and in dealings with world markets. 311 423 181

If, however, the present land shortage continues unchecked by the successful introduction of new attitudes, ideas and techniques there may well be serious social and political repercussions in the not too distant future. Current schemes of tribal development will surely be rendered futile if economic activity is restricted and if land discontent is allowed to become important.

A second agricultural policy, and one of which less is heard, would be to stop the present dangerous monoculture – the persistence with paddy alone – and to attempt on a large scale to introduce second and third cash crops, particularly such crops as require intensive cultivation on small acreages. This may be forced on the people in any case if the gloomy prognostications of world rice prices are borne out in the next few years. Such a development would allow of a more stable economy and a more balanced agriculture, in addition to assisting towards a reduction of land difficulties. Experiments on a small scale in robusta coffee, palm oil and other crops have already been started by the Agricultural Department but, at least from the layman's point of view, they need priority in finance, attention and effort as a main part of an agricultural programme for the Lake Plains. [648]

In the time available for my investigations it was not possible to enquire with sufficient care into the details and exact procedure of Nyakyusa land law (c.f. page 3) and therefore I am reluctant to suggest any drastic changes. The new inheritance law (page 21) is a step in the right direction and is clearly in keeping with modern trends, but it is suggested that its detailed operation on the ground and in the courts should be studied by the Native Authority and the Administration in order to attempt to define its meaning more clearly and to reduce the number of disputes. In order to check fragmentation before it has gone too far, it should be considered whether some minimum limit might not be imposed on the size of fields. Voluntary schemes for the consolidation of holdings, which have achieved some success elsewhere in Africa, might also be considered. These would be particularly valuable in the 311 423 [178] [128]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

311 423 flood plains paddy fields where the ox-plough is in general use today. The general advantages of consolidation require no exposition here.

In view of the domestic, economic and social importance of cattle to [233] the Nyakyusa and their potential value in a mixed intensive economy, and also in view of the fact that cattle are widely held in very small numbers by individual families, it is suggested that further and more urgent attempts be made to encourage stall-feeding, especially during the wet season. It is realised that past efforts in this matter have failed, and therefore a thorough-going scheme of propaganda and demonstration work is needed. Small fodder crops might be grown in the dry season and there is always plenty of banana fodder as makeweight.

The problem of the landless young men is likely to remain very difficult (see pages 36ff). It has to be remembered of course, that as they get older men do acquire land gradually. Nevertheless the proportion of landless, or [167] virtually landless, men is high and is apparently increasing. The large-scale, post-war labour migration to the Rhodesias and South Africa is undoubtedly one of the more important results of land shortage and economic difficulty, and it is a valuable safety valve. As I have written elsewhere: "The serious and increasing land shortage amongst the Nyakyusa raises real doubts if there is any policy at all which can keep the men at home when there is not enough land for them – for the sake of both economic and general social stability it might be preferable in the long run if the continued pressure on the land resources were released by a degree of permanent emigration."[1] Since writing that and during the course of my land investigations I have only become more convinced of its rightness. I would now go so far as to say that [464] Nyakyusa men should be encouraged to go abroad to work and even to become permanent wage-labourers in the industries and areas which demand labour and offer a higher standard of living. If the Nyakyusa are not to be seriously retarded in their home economic development, based as it must be on agriculture (i.e. on the land), the excess population must find an outlet elsewhere.

[621] The general tendency towards greatly increased exclusiveness in the Nyakyusa village, involving renewed emphasis on the principle of land-[597] holding only by residence and the forfeiture of a holding when changing residence, raises wider issues the future significance of which is not easily seen, especially by the Nyakyusa themselves. This narrow village parochialism does little to meet the increasingly difficult problem of land shortage, whilst the isolation it fosters is the antithesis of the wider outlook required by a developing society in a world money economy. I am fully aware of the strong native sentiment attached to the village and to village independence, but this was in fact diminishing in earlier European times before the new land scarcity set in (see pages 29-30). I do not think that this village system and the complex of attitudes and values it fosters is adequate to provide for the future – a future which the Nyakyusa do not yet clearly foresee. With some deference, therefore, I offer the following suggestion: a man who already has a holding should be able to retain it when he moves to live in another village. If his new home is too far away for the continued cultivation of all or part of the holding, or for any other valid reason, he should be able to sell or give it to anyone he wishes. Such gift or sale could be supervised by the headman of the village in which the holding lies. It might well, at first at any rate, be limited to a member of the same village, either an established villager or another man who is willing to come and live there. I think it important that disposal should be outright and not on leasehold terms, for the latter would most propably engender further complications and uncertainty of tenure, which must be avoided.

1. Gulliver, P. H.: *A Report on the Migration of African Workers to the South from the Southern Highlands Province, with special reference to the Nyakyusa of Rungwe District.* Provincial Administration, Tanganyika, 1955, page A.11.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

311
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Thus men wishing to move could seek to obtain, that is to buy, a holding from another man living in a village to which he is willing to move; a man leaving a village could either retain his holding in cultivation or obtain some compensation for the loss of his holding there. It is not likely that this would produce a rush of land sales, for only a relatively few men would wish to relinquish their holdings. It would, however, facilitate freer movement between villages. Secondly, it would assist younger men to obtain holdings when they have earned and saved money at work.[1] Thirdly, it would assist profit-making cultivators to enlarge their holdings. Fourthly, it would help to bring to the Nyakyusa a realisation of the implications of the new money economy which they have inevitably and irrevocably entered, and it would demonstrate the value of holdings in relation to other commodities and activities. This kind of system would allow the village to retain much of its valued unity and control whilst reducing its excessive and potentially harmful exclusiveness. Such disposals of land, especially if by money sale, could be performed before the headman and other reliable village witnesses and they could be registered formally at the local court. There would need also to be some ruling limiting the maximum size of holdings (to prevent excessive buying) and preventing alienation to Africans from outside the Lake Plains. In this matter the village headman would probably be the executive authority.

166

Although the suggestion could be introduced simply as a scheme enabling the buying and selling of land, I am here more concerned with the problem of freer movement and the limitation of the reversionary rights of the headman on behalf of the village, whilst retaining his useful controls. A more general recognition of the economic value of land would probably follow, and if it proved practicable and useful, an extended and refined scheme could be introduced later.

My suggestions are, then, as follows:—

1. (*a*) an immediate restriction of immigration into the Lake Plains from whatever origin, and the encouragement of the movement of people from the congested areas into the lightly populated areas, accompanied by local development programmes there;

(*b*) the consideration of the practicability of drainage and thicket clearance schemes in order to make more land available;

(*c*) the absolute abolition of land-holding by non-residents and the reallocation through the local headmen of land so held to local inhabitants;

(*d*) the sympathetic encouragement of village headmen to watch unused portions of villagers' holdings with a view to their voluntary and temporary reallocation to neighbours in need.

2. (*a*) a detailed enquiry into the operation and administration of the new inheritance law, with a view to improving its details;

(*b*) an enquiry into the possibility of imposing a minimum limit on the size of holdings and plots;

(*c*) the introduction of local, voluntary schemes for the consolidation of holdings.

3. Covering the whole field of Nyakyusa land problems must necessarily be a progressive agricultural programme aimed, firstly, at a more intensive and a more efficient use of the land by improved cultivation methods, and, secondly, the abolition of monoculture by the introduction of other cash crops. This is, of course, the policy of the Agricultural Department, but it needs more urgent application despite the obvious difficulties raised.

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Stall-feeding of cattle, especially in the wet season, would assist to improve the living conditions of the herds and to increase their domestic and economic value.

1. It would also provide an alternative cash investment to the present purchase of cattle.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

311
423

4. The safety valve of labour migration should not be closed and young Nyakyusa should be encouraged to go away to work whilst wages abroad are relatively high.

5. Finally, with a view to the future as well as the present, it is suggested that an individual's land-holding should be at his own disposal, and, if desired, by money sale. Purchasers should, at first anyway, be limited to members of the village where the holding lies or to men willing to settle there.

These recommendations are to be taken only as a suggested programme for administrative consideration. No attempt can be made here to lay down the details of future policy, for that is the function and responsibility of administrators and technical officers, African and European, and not of the Sociologist.

The Sociologist could, however, with profit participate in the discussions and work preparatory to the development of a satisfactory programme. It is essential that a complete programme be arranged and executed to tackle all or most of the problems concerning the land, economics and agriculture. Tinkering with different aspects here and there is likely to be unfruitful and is unlikely to command the propaganda and drive of a comprehensive scheme. Such a planned scheme should be able to catch the imagination and support of the people themselves, especially if they and their leaders can be brought to see the reasons for it and the value it may bring.

Bibliography

113

Throughout the essay the following works of reference are given in brief form only:—

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Wilson, M. (1951) – *Good Company: a Study of Nyakusa Age-villages*, International African Institute, London.

Gulliver, P. H. (1957) – "Nyakyusa Labour Migration," *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, No. XXI, pp. 32-63.

N.B. In Wilson, M. (1951) there is a full bibliography of works dealing with the Nyakyusa.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

fed by the owner in each case. When a headman's 241
garden is being done, beer is provided, and the chief 476
usually kills an ox when he has a party hoeing for him. The main crops are maize, cassava, millet, sweet potatoes, peas, beans, ground nuts, but many other food-stuffs are cultivated. Every village is hidden in groves of bananas, which need regular tending. Rice is grown for the market, and in the Kinga Mountains large quantities of wheat are cultivated. Every man owns his clump of bamboos ; many have a few kapok trees, some mangoes, one or two lemon trees ; and some European fruits are slowly spreading to native gardens. A few cultivate kitchen vegetables, but only for sale to the white man.

In a few places I have seen intelligently conceived 312
irrigation, but never on a large scale, each man attending to his own needs in the matter.

Growing crops must be protected from numerous 241
pests. Boys are stationed by day to drive off monkeys ; straying cattle eating the crops involve their owner in damages : elephants, no rare visitors in some districts, are driven off by drum and horn and wild shouting when they pay no attention to the small sticks which are placed in a corner of the garden to keep them away. Pigs are very fond of growing maize ; and where they are numerous, small huts, elevated on poles, are built in the gardens, and there the young men sleep and keep an open ear for the grunting which betrays the presence of the spoilers. Then one may hear the long shout of the watchers, who add to their shouting the rattling of dried gourds strung on cords

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

f. Housekeeping

356 Every married woman has her own hearth and granary, and
476 she works very largely alone when cooking and cleaning; but in
one essential activity women who are neighbours in a village
● 313 regularly co-operate, and that is in fetching firewood. We never
saw a woman going alone; usually there is a group of three or four
up to a dozen or more. Firewood must be fetched two or three
times a week, and the journey and the collection of the wood takes
from four to ten hours, depending upon the distance of the
village from a patch of forest or bush. Thus the women spend up
to thirty hours a week fetching wood, and it is with village neighbours that this time is spent, not with relatives from other villages. If a woman is ill her friends will help in bringing wood and cooked food for her. Some co-wives co-operate in this way, fetching wood together, and helping each other in sickness, but whether they do or not depends upon personal friendship. Often it is with an unrelated neighbour, rather than with a co-wife, that a woman works most closely. Only when co-wives are sisters, or aunt and niece, are they expected to work together regularly.

476 Village neighbours—women—also co-operate in the preparation of feasts, as we shall see in the following chapter.

g. Economic co-operation beyond the village

476 The economic relations of fellow villagers, and the changes
taking place in these relations, cannot be understood without
some reference to economic co-operation beyond the village
602 boundaries. As we have already indicated, co-operation with
relatives living in other villages is very important: cattle, the most
prized possession of the Nyakyusa, circulate within kinship
groups, between father and son, brother and brother, and
between affines, and these same relatives assist one another in
cultivation and building. But beyond the circle of kinsmen and
village-mates there was formerly little economic co-operation.
[438] Each village and kinship group was largely self-sufficient, buying
from outside little save iron spears and hoes, medicines, salt,
cosmetics, and brass or copper wire for ornament.

326 Smiths were essential to the Nyakyusa economy for they

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

262 The tender leaves of pumpkins and taro plants *(amasimbi,* leaves of taro), as well as of a number of other plants growing wild *(indeke)* are also used as vegetables. This food is called *iseke,* a word denoting all sorts of green vegetables.

In his treatise on "The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa" (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. 1; 1938, p. 43). G. Wilson points out that the fruit of the so — called *unsyunguti* — tree is "both [278] delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment *(inyemba)*", but he adds that he had been unable to find out the botanical name of this useful tree. Perhaps the following passage in the article of Dr. Kerr Cross ("Notes on the Country Lying between Lakes Nyasa and Tanganyika"; Proc. Roy. Geogr. Inst. N.S.Vol. XIII, 1891, p. 98) may be helpful in this connection: "There is a tree of the 314 sycamore family which grows extensively all over the north of the [262] lake called mwisyungute by the natives which might be developed. [386] It is a most picturesque tree which produces a food, an oil, and a dye. The oil or fat, when cool, is solid, even at a tolerably high temperature, and is like beeswax. It burns well as a night-light, and with wax might [388] be made into candles. In a rude way I have made candles of it. It might also make an excellent soap."

273 As an adjunct to these foods curdy milk *(ulukama ulukafu)* is very [272] much esteemed[2], to say nothing of the various types of beer, mostly prepared from millet for the men. Large fields of millet are, therefore, to be seen everywhere in the land of the Nyakyusa. On one occasion I attended a beer drink in the hut of a chief. The conduct of the natives present, the chief and his advisers *(amafumu),* was in every respect praise-worthy. Pleasant and interesting stories were narrated. Not [574] infrequently the invitation of a commoner who has had some differences with his chief or one of the *amafumu* to such a feast is regarded as a gesture of reconciliation.

243 As in the time of Sir H. H. Johnston so also to-day "all the oozy-meadows are planted with rice." A traveller coming from the hilly region to the north on nearing Lake Nyasa is struck by numerous large fields of rice in the plain at the northern end of the lake.

178 *11. Crafts.* Mackenzie (1925) is certainly justified in complains of the decay of the arts and crafts among the Nyakyusa. The Indian and European influence is to be seen everywhere in the deterioration and final dissolution of these branches of the ancient culture of the Nyaky-

[2] A. Wilson, Introduction, p. 256.

N 233 cattle in the district in the 1941 census was about 2.3 head per taxpayer or 55 head per N [184 square mile. Certain land is set aside each year for grazing, where stock is not able to 635] interfere with the produce plots. Compensation for trespass of cattle on cultivated land is only paid among people of the lake shore.

N 656 Parts of the land to the west of Tukuyu have been badly eroded by cultivation and 134 over-grazing, and it is only since 1935 that 185 anti-erosion rules have been made to check the tendency for bad cultivation. Since they 242 were brought in, however, the majority of the tribe have become very keen on seeing the effect that well-controlled cultivation has on crops. The following are the Native Authority Rules concerning anti-erosion:—

"Throughout the Rungwa District, all natives shall follow orders regarding cultivation designed to prevent soil erosion as demonstrated and enjoined by the Agricultural Officer.

(*a*) All ridges and terraces shall be contoured and not follow the slope of the hill.

(*b*) In the case of cultivation done on the flat and not on ridges or terraces, a large ridge and ditch shall be dug at the top of the plot to remain permanently and be repaired from N time to time."

439 The Wanyakyusa have never been dependant on outside sources for any of their food, N but in their own territory there is no iron for [135] making hoes nor clay for making earthenware pots. The former they were accustomed to get from Ukinga, on the eastern boundary of the district in the Livingstone mountains, and the pots were, and are still, made only by about 500 members of the Wakisi tribe living in a K village on the lake shore at the extreme south-439 western point of the district. The Wakisi are 101 really of Ukinga origin and inhabit the eastern, northern and western shores of Lake Nyasa. They grow no food except cassava, and that only recently, and apart from the one village that makes the pots, their only work is as paddlers of canoes and fishermen. Most of their fish and pots are exchanged for food.

N 443 Since the Tukuyu District is so thickly populated and the inhabitants concentrated, it has been found necessary to create produce markets at comparatively short distances. N Transport from these markets, during war-438 time, has become difficult. The natural outlet for Tukuyu native foodstuffs is the Lupa ●316 Goldfields, which lie about 100 miles to the

(*Received for publication*

438 north. Before the war, the goldfields gave work
316 to about 15,000 natives, chiefly Wanyakyusa,
[464] and most of the foodstuffs from this district went there. The goldfields are gradually closing due to difficulties in obtaining spares, and it has been necessary to look for outlets for Tukuyu produce elsewhere. Should the goldfields open again after the war, and large-scale mining start, there is a great future for produce grown in Tukuyu.

434 The main income of the tribe is derived from agricultural, military, mining and public works sources, and it is estimated that in 1941 the average annual income per man, woman and child was about Sh. 10 per year. It has risen considerably since, as over 4,000 men have joined the military and a large part of their salaries comes back to the district in the form of remittances. The agricultural source, from which a larger part of the tribal income
[464] accrues, is from sales of rice, maize and other foodstuffs. A fair number of Wanyakyusa also work on the tea plantations.

241 The picture sketched above will show that the district is inhabited by a tribe whose agriculture is of great interest, since the variety of crops, from wheat in the highlands to paddy and cotton on the lake shore, is perhaps unrivalled in so small an area elsewhere in
181 East Africa. It has not been possible to fill in the picture with details of the people's character, but it is worth mentioning that the Wanyakyusa are a people difficult to administer, argumentative, litigious, self-willed and at times inclined to truculence. Neverthe-
153 less their intelligence is such that they are willing to be persuaded, and, once convinced of the benefit of any change, adopt it with energy. This is instanced by the way they have in a few years accepted the principles of anti-erosion to such an extent that now there is perhaps 90 per cent control in the well-populated areas. It should, however, be stressed
134 that, though the soil is not being eroded to
241 any great extent, it is still being impoverished, since increased cultivation for the war effort has involved breaking a great deal of new land with a consequent lessening of fallow. Over-cropping in the hilly country is very great and, in order to prevent further emigration, it be-
[185] hoves the native planters to learn to put something back into the soil in the form of mulch or compost. If care is not taken, a comparatively prosperous country will one day become like so many parts of Africa, where a losing struggle is fought with Nature to obtain a sufficiency for the people's needs.

on 21st September, 1943)

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

753 681 believed to be a danger to his kin and descendants, but in a manner somewhat different from the one who has killed another. The sickness is thought to come from the ropes and is called *ingoje* after them.

Mwaikambo explained:

[783] If one member of a family commits suicide by hanging then his surviving relatives, if they do not drink a medicine, will die of the 'ropes', always. If a man hangs himself all his relatives fear; if a woman only her children.

Kasitile's wife, Kiluleli, had borne ten children, but all save one had died. He said:

It is because of the ropes of her father. They bound him at Tukuyu; he died in gaol; it is those ropes which are killing my children. I said to her father [i.e. the heir]: 'Let us go to divine,' but he has not yet agreed to do so.

The death of Mukwabila, a junior kinsman of the Chief Mwaipopo, whose funeral we attended, was attributed to the ropes used to tether cattle raided by his grandfather, Kasitile, himself a distant agnatic kinsman, explained this case also:

One of the fathers of Mukwabila was killed by the hill people. They seized him on the road. So in revenge Mwamusiku, the father of [317] Mukwabila, took twenty cows belonging to the hill people as they passed north, coming from the salt lick. This was long ago. Then Mukwabila's father omitted to kill a cow for those who had helped him to secure the cows. So they were angry and brought *ingoje*—the disease of ropes—upon him. After seizing the cattle he moved to Mwambebule's country in the hills and he was quite well, but then he came back to live here, first sending two cows to the Chief Mwaipopo, but killing none for the people, who were angry and said: 'Why does he not kill for us? What sort of chief is he?' He got weak and fell ill and died. They [763] did not perform an autopsy, saying it was forbidden to do it on a chief, and his son died also and was not examined, but now when the younger son died, Mwaipopo said: 'Let us examine him so that we may know.' And it is that old *ingoje*. . . .

The sickness of ropes (*ingoje*) is of three sorts coming from: (1) the suicide (by hanging) of a relative long ago; (2) the binding of a man by other people, as distinct from a man binding himself; and (3) the shocked astonishment of men and their breath. In dreams they put the [828] sickness of ropes into his stomach, they say: 'May the sickness of ropes come into his stomach.' The sickness of ropes lies in wait for an heir. A man dies and the sickness comes on his heir, others are all right; so it

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

535

317

A Professional Dancer.

Note the wristlets and anklets, which make a jingling noise as he leaps about. He is stripped to the waist. His audience is in front of him. He has thrown his cow-hide shield into the air and will catch it as it falls.

Salt Factory at Lake Rukwa.

Large quantities of salt are manufactured every year under Government supervision. The heavily impregnated water is evaporated, and the remaining deposit purified, and separated into grades, before being offered for sale.

[facing p. 307]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

notwithstanding the accident, accepted the inevitable, 505
and were ferried safely across.

For the rest, the variety of woodwork includes 322
carved walking-sticks, with straight, knobbed, or bent 352
handles; chairs, stools, pillows, musical instruments, and wooden platters. In the Bundali district remarkably good Rurkee chairs are made on the European pattern, with perfectly smoothed spars, and perfectly burned-out holes for fitting the parts together. The one in my possession might quite well have been made in a carpenter's shop, but the only tools used were an axe and a knife, and a piece of iron for boring the holes. Toothed hair ornaments and [301
small wooden dolls represent the finer work; and 524
bamboo cups are decorated with pleasing patterns in 415]
poker work.

More important than the woodwork is the ancient 323
craft of the potter. There is, of course, no potter's 415
wheel, everything, from the immense pots, three feet high, down to the smallest eating dish, being formed by hand, built up, as regards the larger ones, by successive layers of clay, and finally hardened, after drying in the sun, by being put on a fire, while another fire is kindled inside. There is a great variety of pots, both in shape and in size. The very large ones are used for storing grain or flour; and some Europeans employ them for storing water. A well-stocked house will have up to twenty pots, for water carrying, for cook- 323
ing porridge, fish, beans, flesh; and special ones are 415
kept for beer making and drinking. The best clay is 317
found at the north end of the lake, and from there

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

323 one will sometimes meet with long strings of men and
415 women, carrying ten to a dozen pots, hawking them
317 round the upland villages, or offering them for sale at the local market at Tukuyu. The pots made at
[531] Matema are smeared on the outside with a dull red ochre, and the more artistic potters work patterns in red, with thin lines around the protruding middle, and herring-bone or crossed patterns from thence to lip and base.

353 I once slept in a native house in which there was a double row of pots, one on top of the other, along two walls. I was told that they were there for ornamental purposes, " just as you white men have pictures on your walls."

285 Basket work is done everywhere, and a great variety
415 of baskets are made. Immense *ifituba*, for storing grain, up to four feet high, and perhaps ten feet in girth, are to be found in almost every family. Smaller baskets for carrying goods of all kinds; wide shallow baskets for sifting grain; others for serving food, and yet others for drinking beer. The latter are so closely woven that they will hold water, and are made from a fine grass, which is found only in certain regions. A new development of this industry is the making of articles to European, or native, order; hats, table mats, baskets with hinged lids and divisions inside, almost anything can be made if a specimen is given to the maker as a sample from which he may copy what is wanted. Basket work includes also the large and small fish traps in use at the lake or on the rivers.

286 Net making is naturally confined to the lake shore

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

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286 Net making is naturally confined to the lake shore

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Kyala has no living representative—in the myth he had no descendants—but only a priest. However, the priest is sometimes referred to as 'Kyala' as were the early missionaries who preached about Kyala.[1] The present priest (1936) is a young man who, by his own account, would be a Christian were it not for his public responsibility in providing food for the country. His grandfather, Mwakinyasa, was a Kisi who came as an immigrant doctor from Ikubajila in Kisi country to the south, and was the first of his family to hold office at PaliKyala. Before that the chiefs of the line of Mwampasa themselves celebrated the ritual. According to Mwampasa's descendant, the present chief Mwandula, 'We planted food and the crops failed, but when "the owner of food" (Mwakinyasa) came with many medicines it grew, there was much food in the homesteads, hence we said: "Kyala has indeed loved this man, let us give him the duty of sacrificing", so the chiefs gave him cattle of his own and said: "Let the ritual come out of our bodies and go to Mwakinyasa."' It was Mwakinyasa who (according to his grandson) introduced a variety of crops—beans, maize, cowpeas and groundnuts—to the people of Ikombe; before that they grew only bananas and *mapemba*,[2] so the myth of the hero who brought benefits is linked to the new line of priests. But there is no tradition that the priest of Mwampasa's line was once a 'divine king' like the Lwembe and the Kyungu.

Those who sacrifice at PaliKyala are the local chiefs (descendants of Mwampasa), the Kinga chiefs Mwakalukwa and Kyelela (to whom Mwampasa was related), and various chiefs of the Nyakyusa plain as far west as Mwandisi (107) near Mwaya. The Kinga priests bring bamboo beer, hoes, sheep, and occasionally goats or cattle; the local people offer white fowls, flour, cattle, and, traditionally, pots, which are produced in quantity near by, and which were being sold at the market at Ikombe when the Europeans first arrived in the country.[3] The Nyakyusa of the plain send black (or black and white) cattle and sheep. According to the Kinga priests they themselves offer black animals in Bu-Kinga when they want rain—black clouds—and white animals when they want sun and a clear sky. At Lubaga only dark animals are offered, but at PaliKyala white fowls and black, or white (or

[1] F. Fülleborn, *Das Deutsche Njassa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet*, p. 317.

[2] *Mapembe*—maize in Penja, but here it is contrasted with *ifilombe* (maize).

[3] Joseph Thomson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back* (1881), v. I, pp. 262-3. The missionary, Dr. A. Merensky, saw hatchets and choppers, as well as pots, on the floor of the cave. F. Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 black and white) animals are killed, with the same symbolism as
793 in BuKinga.[1] 'We kill a white sheep in the dry season that the
[789] sun may shine—if we killed a black sheep in summer the wet season would last all the year.'

The Kinga pray for fertility of the fields, that illness may pass, that they 'may sleep at home'; the local people[2] for fertility of the fields and that the pots they make (and on the sale of which they largely depend) may not crack in the firing. The more distant chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa plain sacrifice only in drought or plague—the last sacrifice remembered was during a plague of locusts about 1915, but the Kinga chief Kyelela sent a cow in PaliKyala in July 1937.

Like the grove of Lubaga, Kyala's cave is fearful. There is a
778 story of two men who took a length of creeper from near it to tie
688 up their canoe, and when they got home both went mad. Godfrey Wilson's guide, a young Christian, refused to enter the cave on the grounds that his pagan half-brother had once entered and taken away a potsherd and 'when he got home he went mad'.

[1] Merensky appears to have been misinformed on this point, *op. cit.*, pp. 321-2.

[177] [2] The potters are primarily Kisi, but neighbouring Nyakyusa have taken to this
[323] lucrative trade.

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

very substantial, the main meal being taken in the evening shortly before sunset.

8. Manufacture. The pot for cooking *(indeku)* is placed on three stones which form the hearth *(ikipembero,* hearth stones). The flat bowl made of clay used for the needs of the kitchen is called *ulwangabia* and a pig pot used for storing water *ingumbe.* The pots of clay are manufactured by Kissi women because in their land on the north-eastern shores of Lake Nyassa the best clay is found. In the eastern part of the Nyakyusa country adjacent to Kissi land the women visit the pottery markets of the Kissi, but to the remoter villages, e. g. around the Rungwe volcano the pottery is brought by Kissi men. In this case, owing to the great distance from the Kissi-Land the men carry the loads of eight to ten pots on their head between split poles of bamboo. The Kissi pots I saw in the Rungwe Station were ornamented in a rough way with red ochre and seemed only slightly baked. The hearth stones, however, are made by the Nyakyusa women themselves as I was able to observe near Rutenganio, where widows manufactured them for sale.

In many villages of the Nyakyusa I could watch basket-making. This I saw being done by men. In the chief's hut in Katumba I had the opportunity to admire a great number of very big baskets *(ifituba)* for storing grain, smeared with cow dung on the outside. The attractive closely wickered baskets, which are filled with *malesi* (millet) and then placed in water for a night in the process of beer-brewing were originally made by the Buanyi, but nowadays also the Nyakyusa are said to be skilled enough to weave them. I had no opportunity to observe it, but could acquire an excellent specimen of that wicker-work.

9. The Meal. At the beginning of each meal the hands are washed, including those of children. The men take their meal separately from the women. The wives only eat when their husbands have been satisfied. Boys under ten years eat with their mothers, but as soon as they begin to live in age-set villages, they eat together with their friends of their own age-set, as described in detail by Mr. G. Wilson in his "Introduction of Nyakyusa Society" (Bantu Studies X, p. 271). The head of the family likes to eat together with his friends.

Meat is eaten very seldom, but on special occasions such as marriages, death lamentations, christenings of Christianized natives, enormous quantities are devoured. *Inyama* (Swahili: *nyama)* is the Nyakyusa word for all sorts of meat, *ingombe* for that of cattle and *ingambaku* for that of oxen. Near Utengule I saw black pigs *(inguruwe,* pig)

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

about these arts and crafts is their failure to develop at all. Hints and suggestions were there continually; yet nothing ever came of them. Iron was digged, smelted, and made into tools, yet no better tool for digging the ironstone itself was thought of than the hoe. Cloth was widely made on native looms before the advent of inferior trade goods, and needles, with eyes, for sewing mats; but the idea of sewn garments did not penetrate the native mind. Burned clay pipes were made to direct the wind from the skin bellows into the blacksmith's fire, but no one received from these pipes a hint of other possibilities. The idea of the wheel, with its boundless possibilities, did not suggest itself to the Konde mind, nor, so far as I know, to the Bantu mind anywhere, although hints of it were lying about, especially in the round tree trunks which were used as rollers when a canoe had to be dragged some distance from the forest to the water.

At every point the native mind seems to have been waiting for the stimulus which was to come with the white man, and which has led to an awakening, the full extent of which is not realized except by thoughtful persons. For already, after the comparatively brief tuitional period of fifty years, Central Africans are replacing Indians as Government clerks, as hospital assistants, as engineers on river steamers, as telegraphists; they do all kinds of printing and bookbinding, carpentry, and building; and they fill positions of trust which a generation ago no one thought they would ever be capable of filling. The Konde have not yet taken more than a small share in

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

usa. It is true that one still meets blacksmiths on the outskirts of the villages or some distance away from them (as in the case of the Ndali tribe, western to the Nyakyusa area), but they no longer smelt the iron from ore mined by themselves as in former times. The smith of to-day remelt only scrap iron from disused motor-cars and other machines into tools, hatches, and spear-heads, unless, of course, the natives prefer to buy imported iron-ware. As with the Chaga, also the Nyakyusa smith can only be persuaded to submit to being photographed after long negotiation and a change into better clothes. The blacksmiths I met in the Bundali Mountains, however, made no objections whatever to being photographed at their work. Also women were allowed to attend. But one feature of the ancient Nyakyusa blacksmith's culture has been preserved till the present day: the lower part of the bellows through which the air blast is driven into the fire is still made of wood. This feature has been defined by H. Baumann as an element of the "ancient nigritic culture".

12. Dress. The cloths of the Nyakyusa have changed to a very considerable degree since the beginning of European influence. A comparison of the earliest pictures and descriptions of inhabitants at the northern end of Lake Nyasa with the dress of modern times brings out this point most forcibly. Originally the Nyakyusa went almost naked, adorned only with rings and belts, but nowadays all degrees of compromise with European fashions of dress are to be found, especially near the European settlements and Mission Stations. The most conservative element are, in this case, the women. It is still possible to-day to observe in each village the preparation of the long strips of bark *(elyabi*, pl. *amabi)* commonly worn by the women. The so-called *impandapanda* (Fotheringham: *mlambe)* tree furnishes the dress material. After the bark has been immersed in water, the bast is beaten with wooden instruments and then pulled off from the harder parts of the bark. These tools are like hammers; the flat end of such an implement is furrowed, sometimes with a disk made of horn, and as it produces patters on the bast it is called "*obosimbe*", that which produces patters. These long belts, almost reaching the ground, especially in front, are mostly ruby coloured, but the women sitting in front of their huts manufacture also other types with geometrical (triangular) patterns in yellow and brown forming only girdles *(umpango)*. In addition to this minimum requirement in the way of dress some women around the waist also wear copper belts *(manyeta)*, made of thin copper-wire, spiraly wound on a core of hairs from the tails of cows. These

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

planted at the break of the rains, and of the new crop, rice, is a seed-bed of ash prepared, and then it is grass and scrub which is burned; they do not fell or pollard trees to provide ash. For other crops there is no burning; the weeds are hoed in green instead; and, at a second hoeing before planting, the earth is piled into ridges or mounds to ensure drainage. Formerly, it is said, the chiefs insisted that the ridges on slopes should be made contour-wise, and recently this law has been revived. Elton, the first European to travel through the area, observed that there was 'terraced cultivation everywhere';[1] and the ridges do in fact look like terracing from a distance.

Hoeing is the work of men and boys; only quite recently have a few women, whose husbands are away in European employment, begun to hoe for themselves. And most men hoe for three or four hours a day during the greater part of the year, for crops are planted in succession. Neither old age nor high status excuses a man from this duty. Even the chief Mwaipopo, who was already grown up when the Europeans arrived in his country, hoed regularly in his fields during the years 1935–8. Iron hoes were made by Nyakyusa smiths from iron obtained from the Kinga,[2] but they were scarce, and some men had to use wooden hoes such as many of the women still have for weeding (*vide* Plate VII). The women are solely responsible for sowing, weeding, and reaping.

Cattle are fairly numerous:[3] few men over twenty-five nowadays own none, and many older men have four or five cows in their stalls. Long ago, we were told, cattle were scarcer, some men having to marry without them, but Cotterill (1876)[4] and Kerr-Cross (1890)[5] both said 'cattle abound' in Nyakyusa coun-

on 'Wanyakyusa Agriculture' (*The East African Agricultural Journal*, April 1944), states that 'though the soil is not being eroded to any great extent it is still being impoverished'.

[1] Elton, op. cit., pp. 326, 330.

[2] Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 272–3. Possibly iron was also obtained from the west. Kerr Cross (op. cit. p. 289) saw large foundries in Nyika country before 1890. cf. Elton, op. cit., p. 321 and map at the end.

[3] No census of the cattle in the district had been taken when we were among the Nyakyusa. D. H. Thwaites, op. cit., states that, 'The number of cattle in the district (Rungwe) in the 1941 census was about 2.3 head per taxpayer or 55 head per square mile'.

[4] H. B. Cotterill, 'On the Nyasa and a Journey from the North End to Zanzibar', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XXII (1878).

[5] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyassa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 119.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

f. Housekeeping

356 Every married woman has her own hearth and granary, and
476 she works very largely alone when cooking and cleaning; but in
313 one essential activity women who are neighbours in a village regularly co-operate, and that is in fetching firewood. We never saw a woman going alone; usually there is a group of three or four up to a dozen or more. Firewood must be fetched two or three times a week, and the journey and the collection of the wood takes from four to ten hours, depending upon the distance of the village from a patch of forest or bush. Thus the women spend up to thirty hours a week fetching wood, and it is with village neighbours that this time is spent, not with relatives from other villages. If a woman is ill her friends will help in bringing wood and cooked food for her. Some co-wives co-operate in this way, fetching wood together, and helping each other in sickness, but whether they do or not depends upon personal friendship. Often it is with an unrelated neighbour, rather than with a co-wife, that a woman works most closely. Only when co-wives are sisters, or aunt and niece, are they expected to work together regularly.

476 Village neighbours—women—also co-operate in the preparation of feasts, as we shall see in the following chapter.

g. Economic co-operation beyond the village

476 The economic relations of fellow villagers, and the changes
taking place in these relations, cannot be understood without
602 some reference to economic co-operation beyond the village boundaries. As we have already indicated, co-operation with relatives living in other villages is very important: cattle, the most prized possession of the Nyakyusa, circulate within kinship groups, between father and son, brother and brother, and between affines, and these same relatives assist one another in cultivation and building. But beyond the circle of kinsmen and village-mates there was formerly little economic co-operation.
[438] Each village and kinship group was largely self-sufficient, buying from outside little save iron spears and hoes, medicines, salt, cosmetics, and brass or copper wire for ornament.

● 326 Smiths were essential to the Nyakyusa economy for they

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

fashioned iron hoes for cultivation and spears for hunting and war; they also made the cow-bells with which rich men loved to decorate their cattle. Doctors were equally important, for the medicines supplied by them were believed to influence health, fertility, and success in every undertaking. Neither smiths nor doctors served only their own home villages—the number of smiths was much smaller than the number of villages—and doctors living at a distance were generally preferred to those living near by. The need for iron goods and for medicines therefore took men out of their own villages and made links with other villages, often in other chiefdoms. Some at least of the iron ore which the smiths smelted was obtained from the distant Kinga mountains outside the Nyakyusa area all together (*vide supra*, p. 7), and many medicines came from the Kinga or Sangu. *Umwafi* for the poison ordeal was bought from Ngonde. Three other commodities also came from far—these were salt, which Kinga bought from Bena country and sold to the Nyakyusa; a red root (*ikipimba*) used as a dye and cosmetic, bought by the Mahasi from the Sangu and sold to the Nyakyusa; and brass or copper wire for making body rings (*amanyeta*).[1] There was scarcely any cloth in the country when the Europeans first arrived.[2] Pots were sold throughout the Lake-shore plain by the Kisi—Thomson found the Kisi pot-market operating in 1879[3]—and in the hills by Penja specialists. The details of this trade will be discussed when we come to consider the wider relations of the Nyakyusa: here we are only concerned to show that though villagers were dependent on outsiders for a little iron and salt, together with some medicines and ornaments, the bulk of the trade remained very small—salt and iron were extremely scarce—and economic relations beyond the village and kinship group were tenuous.

[1] We do not know by what route the wire came in: it is possible that it was as scarce as cloth before the first contact with Europeans. Elton speaks of spear shafts 'beautifully inlaid with a delicate tracery of brass and copper wire' (op. cit., p. 323), but the first reference we have traced to *amanyeta* in Nyakyusa country is in D. Kerr-Cross 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 118, his observation having been made in 1893. At that time he says 'you could buy anything for brass wire'. c.f. Moir, op. cit., p. 89. Fotheringham (op. cit., p. 27) says that the brass wire used in Ngonde (before 1889) was imported from Britain.

[2] Elton, op. cit., pp. 316, 320, 322, 331; Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 268, 274.

[3] Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 263. The market was at Pupanganda, at the N.E. corner of the Lake, on the narrow strip of land between the escarpment of the Livingstones and the water.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ing audiences watch their friends in the detachment of the King's African Rifles at bayonet drill in Masoko.[1]

Display is felt to be particularly appropriate to young people, and bachelors were held to be the fiercest warriors, but neither dancing nor fighting was confined to young men. The chief Mwaipopo (Plate V) was famous as a skilful and ardent dancer when over seventy, and the leader in war was the senior headman of the country, who, if not already married when he took office, had to marry almost immediately, since his wife shared in the ritual of establishing his house. Furthermore the villages of married men of the ruling generation fought, as well as the villages of their bachelor brothers and sons.

That the Nyakyusa had some skill in warfare is certain, for they defeated and drove off Ngoni raiders and warriors of the Sangu chief Merere,[2] but they never developed a military kingdom like that of the Bemba to the west, or the Hehe to the east, nor did they raid at large like the Masai and Ngoni. Their geographical position sheltered them very considerably from outside attack, and discouraged raiding abroad. They confined themselves mostly to lifting the cattle of neighbouring chiefdoms.

Cattle, whether they be spoils of war or inherited wealth, are displayed. Not only does a long byre add to the dignity of a homestead, but, when there is some ceremony at the home of a rich man, he shows off his herd by driving it round and round the homestead. At other times his sons gallop it along the village street, the iron bells with which the animals are adorned ringing merrily. Nyakyusa smiths make cow-bells in sets,[3] to chime in harmony, and the aim of a rich man is to own a set of bells which ring a full chime, and a herd large enough to carry them. Nowadays those who own bicycles display them in the same sort of way, riding round and round the homestead at a ceremony, and ringing the bells madly.

Unlike the enjoyment of good company (*ukwangala*), display

[1] This detachment was not supposed to include Nyakyusa who were recruited for a detachment stationed outside the district, but in fact Nyakyusa got in by posing as men from Ngonde, Nyasaland.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 119–20; Lugard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 56, speaks of the Nyakyusa as 'brave in war'.

[3] We deposited a set in the Livingstone Memorial Museum, Livingstone, N. Rhodesia.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

nant woman there is a notion that they will *flee* from him, and therefore he will be hopelessly unsuccessful in hunting. Isaiah, who persisted in hunting while his wife was pregnant and rarely brought in anything, was the laughing-stock of his neighbours. Lyandileko, the woman doctor, explained: 'The animals flee because the man smells. He smells because his wife is pregnant.'

Procreation and smithing are also felt to be in opposition because they are felt to be alike. A pregnant woman usually avoids a forge altogether, lest she miscarry, and her husband, if he approaches one, remains silent until he has picked up a piece of charcoal, spat on it, and thrown it into the fire. If he neglects to do so, the iron does not coalesce. Kasitile explained the taboo very clearly:

> If a woman is pregnant she and her husband both fear to go near a forge lest either the iron or the foetus is spoiled. The foetus is spoiled only because medicines are used on the forge; that is to say, the medicine of the forge spoils the iron in the belly of a woman, and she has a miscarriage. But if there is no medicine then the iron is spoiled; it is difficult to work until the smith has sought a doctor to treat it with medicine; then the iron is all right again.

Kasitile speaks of 'the iron in the belly of the woman' and the details of this symbolism are instructive. Angombwike said:

> When a smith forges a spear he does not sleep with his wives[1] because, we say, when a woman conceives the fire blazes within her to forge a person, and the woman's fire and the smith's fire fight. When a smith comes with the fire of his smithy on his body and lies with a woman, the woman has a miscarriage.
>
> The iron of a woman is that within which receives the seed [i.e. the womb]. And we ordinary people who are not smiths, we fear the smith's fire. We do not fear to injure a woman, no, but we fear *ilipondelo*, the disease of the forge, in children. If a man sits talking with a smith at his forge and catches hold of the iron being forged there, if his wife at home bears a child, the child will cough: 'He, he.' It's like the cough of *ingotolo*, but we call it 'the forge'. Then people say: 'The forge! Indeed, you, the father, must have sat with a smith at the forge.' Then the father thinks, and he remembers, and takes the child to that smith with whom he sat, and the smith lets his bellows play on the child's body

[1] All informants were agreed that a forge is dangerous to a pregnant woman or her husband, but a smith consulted denied that he observed any sex taboos himself. 'The fire is mine.' 'But,' he said, 'if my wife is pregnant or has given birth to twins, when I go to someone else's forge I myself, with the wisdom of a smith, spit on a piece of charcoal and throw it in the fire.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

843 and that cures him. So, when a man comes to a smith's forge for the
326 first time, he always takes a piece of charcoal from the fire and spits on
772 it and throws it into the fire. This means: 'I have come to your forge, smith, may this fire not come on my body.'

And sometimes the smith's iron does not glow and sparkle well. Then he is angry, saying: 'Heavy ones are present. Some of you have pregnant wives, you are spoiling my fire.' We all pick up pieces of charcoal and spit on them and throw them into the fire again. Then the fire blazes up well and the iron glows and sparks.

Mwambuputa, the village headman, confirmed this:

When my wife is pregnant I fear the smithy. I spit on a piece of charcoal. Until she gives birth I fear, but when we just play together on the mat, and she has not yet conceived, I do not fear. . . . Only when it is seen that the 'iron' is there do I fear.

QUESTION: The iron?

MWAMBUPUTA: It's the blood of the man. The man is the smith. He forges iron there with the woman. The woman is the bellows. The smithing flourishes because of the sweat. Sometimes a woman conceives if I have lain with her two or three times—if Kyala gives us a child—but some delay, and I sleep with them a whole month.

QUESTION: The woman is a bellows?

[833] MWAMBUPUTA: Yes, because when she is having intercourse she gasps: 'He, he, he!'

QUESTION: And the man?

MWAMBUPUTA: Yes, but where do we find the fire? In the body of the woman! It's a great fire. Hence we say the bellows is the woman. It's smithing. Women are the anvil. Is there not fire in their bodies? Therefore I hammer there.

The primary taboo is on the pregnant woman approaching the smithy lest she injure it, but it is also thought that, like grain and cattle, it may be treated with strong medicines which will cause her to miscarry if she breaks the taboo. Hence the Nyakyusa dictum: 'She who has a miscarriage is she who is proud (*namatingo*).'

784 The conception that like things are antagonistic, and that the
772 sexual activities of different couples must not be mixed, is clearly shown in the taboos relating to fire and the calabash cup used for water. An elderly councillor of Ngonde, himself a Christian, explained it:

It is taboo for married people to blow up the fire in someone else's house, or to drink from the calabash cup; if they do they will bring a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

about these arts and crafts is their failure to develop 176
at all. Hints and suggestions were there continually;
yet nothing ever came of them. Iron was digged, 325]
smelted, and made into tools, yet no better tool for
digging the ironstone itself was thought of than the
hoe. Cloth was widely made on native looms before [286
the advent of inferior trade goods, and needles, with 291]
eyes, for sewing mats; but the idea of sewn garments
did not penetrate the native mind. Burned clay pipes [326]
were made to direct the wind from the skin bellows
into the blacksmith's fire, but no one received from
these pipes a hint of other possibilities. The idea of [401]
the wheel, with its boundless possibilities, did not
suggest itself to the Konde mind, nor, so far as I know,
to the Bantu mind anywhere, although hints of it
were lying about, especially in the round tree trunks
which were used as rollers when a canoe had to be
dragged some distance from the forest to the water.

At every point the native mind seems to have been 177
waiting for the stimulus which was to come with the
white man, and which has led to an awakening, the
full extent of which is not realized except by thought-
ful persons. For already, after the comparatively
brief tuitional period of fifty years, Central Africans
are replacing Indians as Government clerks, as hos-
pital assistants, as engineers on river steamers, as
telegraphists; they do all kinds of printing and
bookbinding, carpentry, and building; and they fill
positions of trust which a generation ago no one
thought they would ever be capable of filling. The
Konde have not yet taken more than a small share in

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

177 all this progress; but they have made a beginning, and they will go on.

326 522 Among the purely native arts that of the blacksmith is held in highest esteem; and the blacksmith himself is a man feared as well as honoured; and joked about as much as he is feared. I think if there were a local "Punch" here, jokes about the blacksmith would take the place of jokes about the plumber which in times past found so frequent favour with the editors of the actual "Punch." He steals both your time and your materials. He tells you that your hoe will be ready on a given day; you get your hoe days afterwards, and he has not used more than half the material you gave him; the rest will go to make another hoe, which he will sell, perhaps to yourself. "As great a thief as a blacksmith," "as big a liar as a blacksmith," are gross insults, not to the blacksmith, but to the man who is compared with him. "The blacksmith gets rich out of other men's property," is another saying indicating the morals of the great 326 artificer. Yet he is feared also, and such jokes are never made in his presence, for he is in touch with mysterious powers, and his ancestor blacksmiths have their own ways of conveying information to him. Quite recently a native friend of mine was talking to his chief, when a messenger came in hot haste to say that a hoe had broken in the blacksmith's hands. The blacksmith had gone at once to consult a diviner, and learned that the spirits were angry because no one was worshipping. "Go at once, therefore, and tell Mwaikuyu (the chief). Do you think heaven is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

empty?" Mwaikuyu said, "Why should we die? 326
I will call the people to worship."

The most important products of the smithy are 411
hoes and spears. Of the latter there are about a 412
dozen different kinds, for war, hunting, fishing; with broad or narrow blades; plain or with one, two, or three prongs; with long or short hafts. Axes are made for cutting down trees, digging out canoes, and all heavy work; some are slightly bent, and are used adze-wise; a small one, very sharp, is used for smoothing woodwork and finishing it off. There is also the *isengo*, a kind of cross between a hooked axe and a small scythe, used mostly for clearing bush land; and a long-bladed axe, carried by chiefs over the shoulder, and serving only as an ornament.

Knives are made of many patterns and sizes, with or without sheaths. A long spear-bladed knife is used for grass cutting, and a neat small strip of iron, sharpened at one end, not along the blade, is used as a razor. Arrows are not much used, as the Konde are not given to the use of the bow except for killing birds. Fish hooks were originally barbless, but some are now made on the European pattern. Needles are made for sewing mats; smaller ones for sewing breaks in calabashes, and others for sewing basket-work. Cow bells, tiny bells worn by little children [301]
on the ankles, anklets, and bracelets for women, complete the list.

For lake-shore people, and those living near the 501
larger rivers, the most important wood-working art is canoe making, and the average Konde canoe is a

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

231 according to the *Bell Report*. Cattle and hides are exported to Tanganyika.[1] The *Nyamwanga* herds were reduced, partly by Bemba raids, and partly by rinderpest.[2]

Domestic Architecture

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Specialization and Trade

●326 The Ngonde were accomplished iron-workers; iron was dug, smelted, and made into hoes and spears.[7] The Iwa were formerly noted as iron-workers. Both they and the Nyamwanga grow tobacco on a large scale.[8]

286 A rough kind of cloth was made on native looms. The Ngonde made hollowed
501 canoes, but were not good sailors. In fishing they used poison, hooks, nets, and traps.
226 Pottery and basket-making were carried on.[9]

[177] The Ngonde were the most civilized of this cluster of tribes, owing to their closer
439 contact with Arab and Swahili traders who used the lake as a waterway.[10] The Nyam-
643 wanga also had opportunities of contact with Arab and Swahili traders at the south end of Lake Tanganyika,[11] but information about the effect of this on their economic life is lacking. By comparison with the Ngonde the Nyakyusa were isolated from contact with the outside world,[12] and this is probably true of the other tribes of the group. Among the Ngonde, in spite of the political hierarchy and central religious authority of Kyungu, economic links between separate local groups were few. The ivory trade was a source of wealth for the Kyungu and for the nobles of Ngonde at Mbande, but its benefits had a strictly limited effect on the rest of the people. The economic links between the capital and the chiefdoms followed the lines of the political system. The income of Kyungu in slaves and cattle depended on the judicial process and on warfare. He had a semi-monopoly of the ivory of the country (the right tusk of every elephant killed was his). His expenditure consisted of entertainment for all important visitors to the capital, and gifts of cloths, obtained through the ivory trade, to nobles and chiefs. The first Kyungu gave head-cloths to the indigenous rulers, who, in accepting them, accepted his overlordship, and the practice was continued every time a new chief or territorial noble succeeded to office. The nobles of Ngonde got cloths every time the Arab traders came. Chiefs bringing food to Mbande, the capital, were

[1] *Bell Report*, pp. 100–3; Aplin, 1931.
[2] Kerr-Cross, 1894; Murray, 1932, pp. 210–11.
[3] Ibid., p. 64.
[4] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 146–8; Kerr-Cross, 1894, p. 189.
[5] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[6] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 44.
[7] Cozhead, 1914, p. 44.
[8] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[9] *Handbook of German East Africa*, p. 68.
[10] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[11] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 146, 149, 151–2.
[12] Ibid., 3, 1938, p. 15.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

inheritance ensure that a limited number of young men are absorbed into the senior generation and live with the older men, sharing their activities and from time to time holding office as headmen or priests of that generation, and the selection in each generation of young men who are *not* the sons of village headmen, or chiefs, or headmen of the past generation, ensures that commoners without office are constantly recruited to the hierarchy of rulers. In short, power is distributed.

(c) RITUAL AND SECULAR BONDS

As in so many societies, economic and ritual links extended, traditionally, further than political links.[1] Selya was dependent upon BuKinga for iron and the Kinga came to fruitful Selya to pray for fertility. The priests who came to pray brought the hoes. The many independent chiefdoms of Selya and the Mbaka valley acknowledged the spiritual overlordship of the Lwembe by sending sacrifices to him, and it was through the network of hereditary priests like Kasitile, Mwamakunda, Mwalukuta, and Nyama of Selya, and the Kinga priests Kikungubeja, Nsyanigwa, Kyamba Kitali, and Silobwike that wider bonds were maintained. Mwaipopo (116) when he was granted a Court which gave him the secular leadership of Selya, failed to make any acknowledgement of Lwembe's traditional power, and it was Kasitile who later urged him to do so. The western chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa still buy medicines and bark-cloth from the Ndali to the west, and have done so for many generations, but no common ritual links them as it does Selya and the plain with BuKinga. The trade was of lesser importance than that to the east, for it does not seem to have included iron, though the Nyiha who share a common culture with the Lambya, the western neighbours of the Nyakyusa, are known to have been skilled smiths.[2] With the Sangu to the

[1] cf. E. Colson, 'The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia' in *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa* (ed. Colson and Gluckman).

A comparison with the frontier in West and South Africa where economic and religious expansion compelled the establishment of Government is instructive. Cf. W. K. Hancock, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs*, vol. ii, part ii, pp. 162-8.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between the Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, vi (1890), p. 289. Elton's suggestion that some of the Nyakyusa iron came from the west is discounted by Cotterill. J. F. Elton, *The Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa* (1879), p. 371 and map, cf. J. Thompson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back*, vol. i, p. 272.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for an appropriate medicine, and his main function is organizing the observances. 791 793

(d) SYMBOLISM

In the field of medicine imagination runs riot, and associations are unpredictable. The ingredients of most medicines are professional secrets and unknown to the user who takes the concoction on trust from his doctor, and inquires no further. Therefore the study of medicine is not linked to the study of social relationships in the same manner as is the study of ritual, for the symbolism of medicines is individual and free, whereas the symbolism of ritual is common and obligatory. 278 789

Nevertheless, the imagination of doctors works within the general symbolic system, and such knowledge as we have indicates that many of the associations made are similar to those used in ritual. In medicine, as in the rituals of kinship, one type of banana stands for a male, another for a female, a banana sucker represents a kinsman, a sprouting shoot conception. Smithing and coition are felt to be alike, and the molten iron that trickles out of a forge is linked with menstrual blood. Hair stands for growth, and a bald pate a devastated field. A ring, or circumambulation, implies a protecting fence. Pythons, crocodiles, leopards, and lions stand for power and majesty, spears and thorns for attack; vomiting and emptiness for innocence, spitting for forgiveness. There is colour symbolism in medicines (though we know little of it save that the *ikipiki* which stands for the blood of the lineage is red, or reddish brown), and auditory symbolism, the rumble of thunder and the groaning of a bellows being identified. Men mime that which they wish to avoid, as well as that which they desire; like things are antagonistic as well as sympathetic. No doubt a laborious study of prescriptions would reveal further general principles of association, as well as the range of individual imagination, but such a task has yet to be undertaken. [831] [326] [825] [827] [822]

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

usa. It is true that one still meets blacksmiths on the outskirts of the villages or some distance away from them (as in the case of the Ndali tribe, western to the Nyakyusa area), but they no longer smelt the iron from ore mined by themselves as in former times. The smith of to-day remelt only scrap iron from disused motor-cars and other machines into tools, hatches, and spear-heads, unless, of course, the natives prefer to buy imported iron-ware. As with the Chaga, also the Nyakyusa smith can only be persuaded to submit to being photographed after long negotiation and a change into better clothes. The blacksmiths I met in the Bundali Mountains, however, made no objections whatever to being photographed at their work. Also women were allowed to attend. But one feature of the ancient Nyakyusa blacksmith's culture has been preserved till the present day: the lower part of the bellows through which the air blast is driven into the fire is still made of wood. This feature has been defined by H. Baumann as an element of the "ancient nigritic culture".

12. Dress. The cloths of the Nyakyusa have changed to a very considerable degree since the beginning of European influence. A comparison of the earliest pictures and descriptions of inhabitants at the northern end of Lake Nyasa with the dress of modern times brings out this point most forcibly. Originally the Nyakyusa went almost naked, adorned only with rings and belts, but nowadays all degrees of compromise with European fashions of dress are to be found, especially near the European settlements and Mission Stations. The most conservative element are, in this case, the women. It is still possible to-day to observe in each village the preparation of the long strips of bark *(elyabi*, pl. *amabi)* commonly worn by the women. The so-called *impandapanda* (Fotheringham: *mlambe)* tree furnishes the dress material. After the bark has been immersed in water, the bast is beaten with wooden instruments and then pulled off from the harder parts of the bark. These tools are like hammers; the flat end of such an implement is furrowed, sometimes with a disk made of horn, and as it produces patters on the bast it is called "*obosimbe*", that which produces patters. These long belts, almost reaching the ground, especially in front, are mostly ruby coloured, but the women sitting in front of their huts manufacture also other types with geometrical (triangular) patterns in yellow and brown forming only girdles *(umpango)*. In addition to this minimum requirement in the way of dress some women around the waist also wear copper belts *(manyeta)*, made of thin copper-wire, spiraly wound on a core of hairs from the tails of cows. These

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the figures. Also bicycles, aeroplanes, motor-cars and other striking 531
objects of the European civilization are to be found represented and [177]
concentric white circles adjacent to these drawings or paintings.

14. Houses. Sometimes the upper portion of the framework of the 342
rectangular houses is not fully plastered with mud leaving broad open areas or strips horizontally or slopingly to the base-line. This may have its origin in an artistic motive and at the same time be useful in ventilating the interior of the hut. The ancient custom of the Nyakyusa to fill out the spaces between the framework of the walls with flat, oval cakes or clods of clay, supported inside the house by a second framework of bamboo *(uvumango)*, has also a decorative effect.

The preparation of those oval sun-dried clay cakes is the work of the [339
women. L. Monteith Fotheringham described this in his "Adventures 462]
in Nyasaland" (London 1891, p. 22) with the following words: "The
women make the bricks in shape like large eggs by pressing the clay [113]
between their hands." The building of the framework of the hut and the thatching of the roof is the task of the men. Nyumba means "the house" in Kinyakyusa as wellas in Swahili; *isyenga* is the name for the old-fashioned hut of the Nyakyusa possessing a round baseline and a framework expanding upwards in diameter. The rectangular hut is called *ikibaga* and the smaller rectangular hut used as a store or a fowl pen, *akabaga*. It is interesting to note that there is no special word for roof in Kinyakyusa. This part of the hut or house is simply called "the above" *(iyuru)*. In contrast to this fact the different poles of the roof-structure are specially named according to their position parallel to or at right angels to the ridge of the rectangular houses. *Ukutalike* means to bind the different rafters of the roof together; *imbanda* is the name for the supporting poles of the roof, and *inyengo* for the poles of the framework of the walls.

15. Outfit. Inside the house we find besides the bedsteads *(ikitara,* 352
pl. *ifitara)* and the household utensils, the grinding-mill *(uruwara)*, [42]
consisting of an upper (smaller) and a lower (broader) stone. The flour
falls into a basket placed in front of the mill. Sometimes in a corner [231]
of the hut a nest *(ikitero)* for a sitting hen on top of a pole is to be
found. Outside the house is a place for the sweepings *(urutagililo)*. The 356
cleaning of the interior of the houses and also the repairing of the mud 462
plaster is the task of the women, but I saw men cleaning the space in front of the huts. At any case, it must be acknowledged that the cleanliness of a Nyakyusa village leaves little to be desired.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

b. Dignity

Though the Nyakyusa lay so much stress on geniality, and praise a man for being 'a good mixer', yet they greatly admire dignity (*ubusisya*). To be *nsisya* (dignified, impressive) is one of the attributes of chiefs and village headmen, sought, as we have seen, through medicines; but ordinary men may also aspire to it in their persons and homesteads. Indeed, *ubusisysa bwa nkaja*, the dignity of the homestead, is one of the legitimate channels of ambition to a Nyakyusa, and is something achieved largely through hard work.

Two styles of huts are traditional—one round, with the wall slanting outwards towards the top, and a conical roof; the other rectangular with perpendicular walls, a pitched roof, and curving gables (cf. Plates X and XI). For a homestead to be dignified the huts must be built of good bamboos, and the space between them packed with oval-shaped mud bricks, carefully worked in patterns. Special pains are taken with the ends of long huts (*ifibaga*) to get a good curve on the roof pole, and a pleasing design of bricks and criss-cross binding on the gable (cf. Plate XI). Inside, the walls are plastered smooth, and house-proud women mould a pattern in the mud with their fingers, which runs round the wall like a frieze. A long hut, showing that the owner has many cattle and young wives to house, adds dignity, but the homestead of a relatively poor man may be *nsisya* if the huts are well built, the open space between them weeded and swept, and the bananas pruned and heavy with fruit; while a shabby long hut and a dirty court are never dignified, no matter how rich the owner. The insistence on cleanliness both within the huts and in the court is very marked;[1] men themselves weed and sweep regularly around their homesteads, and their young sons must help them. The Nyakyusa jibe at their neighbours for being dirty in person, in cooking, and in their homesteads: indeed the dirty habits of the women is given as a main reason for not intermarrying with the Kinga or Poroto; and a Christian confided in

[1] Thomson, Kerr-Cross, and Lugard were all greatly impressed by Nyakyusa cleanliness; Thomson, op. cit., p. 271; Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), p. 283; Lugard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 131.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

us that it was a great effort to her to accept food from the Poroto when she went on preaching tours, because their huts and pots were so dirty.

Trees are felt to add to the dignity of a homestead as well as throwing a grateful shade; the beautiful *umwali* trees have long been valued for this purpose, and to-day exotics are much sought after. For example, the old chief Mwaipopo, noticing a fine cypress when he visited us at Isumba (a cottage that had once been a German mission hospital) inquired whether there were not some seedlings under the tree. He himself carefully dug up one and took it away to plant in his 'capital'. Some Nyakyusa even *steal* trees to adorn their homesteads. It is said that jacarandas planted out in an avenue at Tukuyu disappeared within a very short time.

The attributes of dignity in the homestead are changing perceptibly. Well-built huts in the old style, a long *ikibaga*, a well-swept court, fruitful bananas, and fine *umwali* trees are mentioned by the old men; but many of the younger ones prefer hip-roofed houses (a style introduced by Europeans and known, appropriately enough, as 'the partridge') with windows and door of European pattern, beds of flowers, roses, fine coffee and exotic trees. Yet they keep the court well swept; for lawns have not become fashionable.

A fine presence, a well-kept homestead rich in cattle and bananas and shaded with stately trees, are in themselves impressive, but the possessor of them only reaches his full dignity when he acts as host, and uses his fine food and fine home for lavish hospitality. Wealth and an impressive manner, without urbanity and hospitality, may well lead to accusations of witchcraft.

c. Display

Feasts provide opportunity for swaggering parades and dances in which the Nyakyusa delight to display themselves and their possessions; they are the great occasions for *ukumoga*, that is, display in approved forms. Dancing, exhibiting a beautiful body with only a narrow bark-cloth belt to hide it, showing off physical strength and the aggressiveness of a warrior, parading orna-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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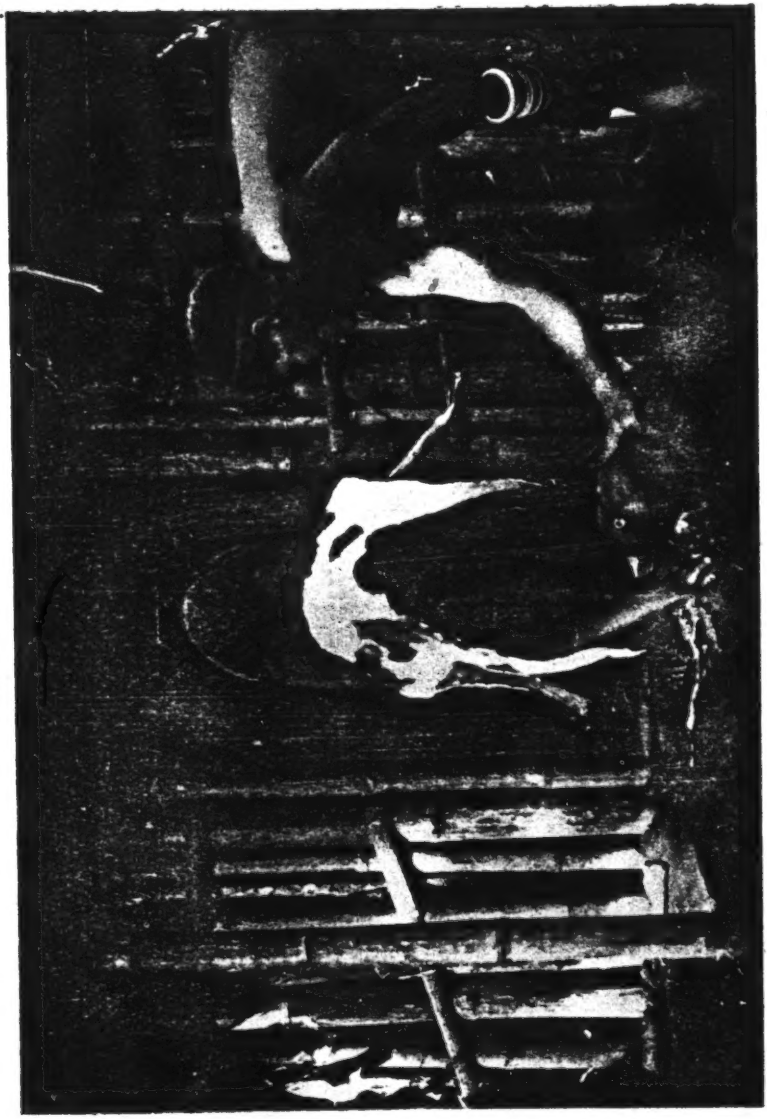

4. *The bride washes with* ikipiki *in the doorway of her mother's hut*

[facing p. 85]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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5. *Shaving the bride*

[Facing p 100]

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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[9] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 146, 149, 151–2.
[10] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 44.
[11] Ibid., 3, 1938, p. 15.
[12] Coxhead, 1914, p. 44.

I: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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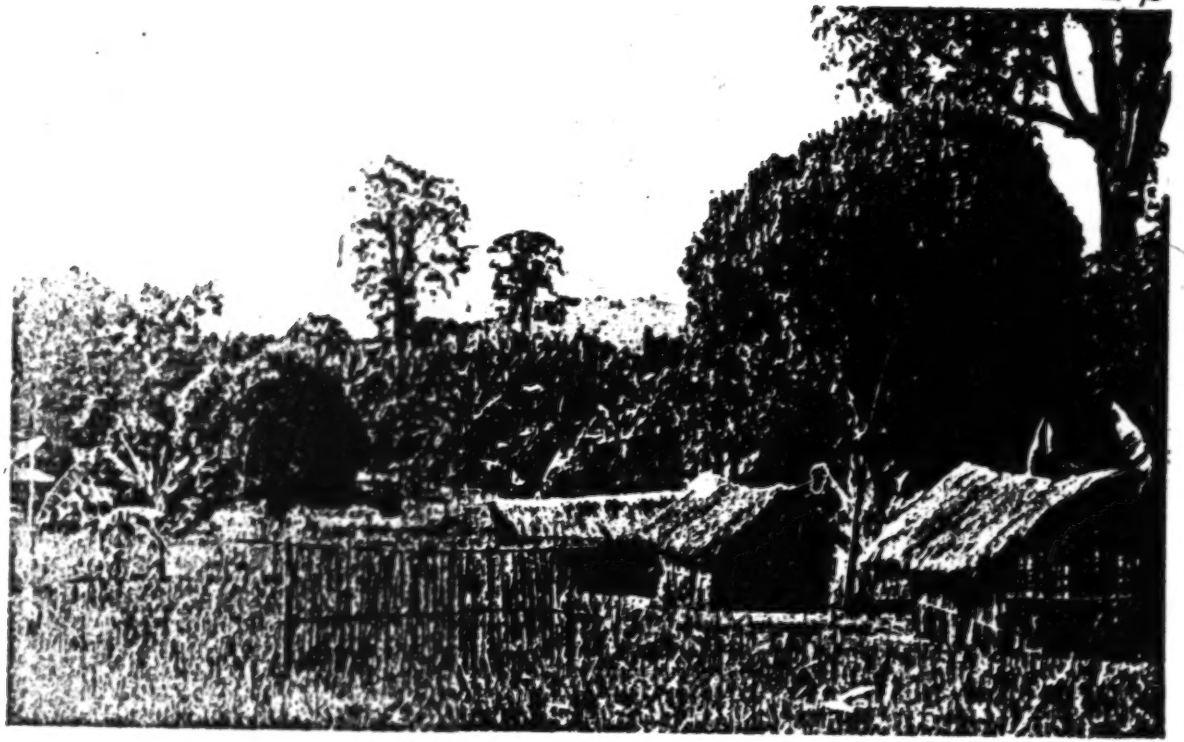

II. THE GENESIS OF A VILLAGE
Boys' huts built on the edge of their fathers' village

[FACING P. 19]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

591 Before the establishment of peace by European authority, how-
231 ever, cattle were commonly herded by young men, armed, and
857 only the calves were entrusted to boys, who herded them near the homesteads; therefore moving to a boys' village did not coincide with the change of occupation. Even to-day it is not uncommon for some boys who have reached puberty to be found herding cattle. One we knew herded his father's cattle although he had reached puberty, because he had no younger brothers old enough to take over, and there were only five or six boys in his herd-group altogether. There are also cases where special circumstances put the age of moving later. In one age-village the boys leave home a little later than usual because there are leopards about and it is dangerous for small boys to walk from the village of their fathers to that of the boys, after dark.

857 When a number of the sons of a village of married men have reached the right age, their fathers give them a piece of land to
342 one side of the parent village on which to build. There they build little huts of reeds for themselves, sufficiently well thatched to keep out the heavy rain, and there they sleep (*vide* Plate II). The building of the huts on this land begins in a playful manner, before the boys move. While they are still herding cows and sleeping at home they build miniature huts there in their spare time, but do not sleep in them. When they move they build slightly more substantial huts with better thatch. At the beginning, when a group of boys starts a new village, or when boys join one already formed, they do not all have huts for themselves: two or three friends share a hut. But later, as they grow older, each builds for himself.

857 Until he marries each boy hoes his father's fields in his father's village and eats food cooked by his own mother at his father's
264 house, but he sleeps with his friends. Thus between the time when he leaves home and his marriage each is a member of two
571 villages: economically he still belongs to that of his father; socially to that of his own contemporaries. Though bachelors eat at their parents' home, it is very rarely that they do not eat in the company of their own friends. A bachelor does not simply go home to eat by himself, but a group of bachelors, friends living in the same boys' village, go round together eating at the house of each one's mother in turn.

621 In an age-village of married men there are always several
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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

"Ha! what's this?" They were burned; so they said: "These are chiefs because they brought this fire." It is this they remember, even to-day. . . .' And another informant explained: 'The fire means (*kukuti*) that a new chief has come, he brings fire, we throw away the old fire in the house.'

Having lighted their fires the young men cut bamboos and build temporary shelters for themselves, making one or more huts according to their numbers. It is forbidden for them to sleep in old huts, nor may they build on the site on which they lived as boys. Usually their first huts are on what was formerly pasture land, and later their fathers move aside to make room for the new generation. On the new site the two senior headmen of the new chief, together with a doctor, plant with magical ritual two branches of a *ficus* (known in Nyakyusa as *iliyabe*)—a species which is important economically since the bark of saplings provides the traditional dress of Nyakyusa women. These trees, known as *ulupando* and *umpandapanda*, are planted where the future boundary will run between the two halves of the young chief's country, and the senior headman (who is leader of the senior half of the country) builds his house near where the *ulupando* has been planted. He and his colleague, together with the doctor, proceed, after planting the trees, to set up the hearth-stones of his hut. Again magic is performed. Nyakyusa informants were not agreed as to the symbolism of these trees, as they were about the symbolism of the new fire. The root *ukupanda* means to plant a crop, or to set up, or establish the hearth-stones of a house; it is used also for establishing, or treating, with medicines. Some informants interpreted the *ulupando* as the chief and *umpandapanda* as his wife, saying: 'We are planting the chief and his wife.' Others said that the two trees represented the two senior headmen of the country, another that they represented the chief's two senior wives. What is certain is that *ulupando* is regarded as more important than *umpandapanda* and that both are taboo. No one may cut the trees. If anyone breaks the taboo it is believed that lions and leopards (closely associated with chiefs) will roar at night, and treatment by a doctor will be necessary to still them. It is also widely believed that the strength of the chief is associated with the growth of the trees. 'If these trees go dry the reign will not be successful, the chief will be defeated in war. If they flourish and grow the reign will be successful, the chief is

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 a ruler.' It is relevant to add that cuttings of this tree strike easily
643 in the soil and climate of Nyakyusa country. When a chief dies
764 he is buried beside his trees, and gradually a thicket—a sacred
[764] grove—forms round them.

The young men spend much time feasting and dancing. Formerly not only did they raid cattle for food from neighbouring chiefdoms, but they also took cattle, milk, and bananas from their fathers' villages. And they still do the latter, for they say: 'We are now the owners of the country.' The milk and bananas are often sent by the old chief, but 'if the chief is stingy, they teach him a lesson by going and *taking* bananas, saying: "We are important people."' Great emphasis is laid on this right of the young men to take food: one group, the mates of the first heir of a senior chief, boasted to us: 'We came out with grandeur, we ate many men's cattle.'

342 After a month or two the members of each new village move
621 off to build on a site of their own, and the wives of those who are married join them. Wives do not come to the first temporary shelters. The senior of the new villages remains on the site of the temporary shelters where fire was made, the ritual trees planted, and the hearth-stones of the senior headman established with magic. Gradually each member builds himself a permanent hut.

621 The old men move aside to make room for their sons. If land
561 is short they may move on to the site on which a boys' village formerly was, or there may be other land available. Whatever the position, adequate land must be provided for the young men's villages. And, we were told, 'We old men are glad to move, we are glad our sons are so many and we leave the land to them.' Or again: 'The old men move because new fire has come; the young men have made themselves into new people, hence they cannot build on their old sites but on new ones. Perhaps the old men will succeed them, for they may build in the boys' village where their sons were, or if there is space they go elsewhere. But the old men rejoice greatly, for their sons have "come out".' Nevertheless there are sometimes disputes between villages of different generations regarding a particular site (*vide* Document, p. 188).

643 A few months after the 'coming out' each of the two young
562 chiefs marries two wives. A young chief may be married already;
585 but the two whom he now takes rank as his great wives (*abeke*

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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IV. A CHRISTIAN BOYS' VILLAGE BEING BUILT ROUND A SCHOOL
(the larger building in the centre of the picture)

[facing p. 35]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

it is implied that coffee planted in the chiefdoms will be inherited by a man's heirs. As a leading Christian woman put it: 'We like to build on this side of the river because the other is mission land, and if a man moves he loses the coffee and everything else he has planted there. . . . A man has children and he wishes his children to inherit what he has planted.' The number of coffee-trees each man may plant on mission land is also limited to 100, so that the development of large plantations, such as some astute Nyakyusa are undertaking, is impossible there.

b. *Building*

When a group of boys starts a new village two or three friends usually combine to erect a little hut and live in it together. As younger boys join the village the older ones instruct and help their juniors to build. Thus, although as they grow older each boy builds a hut for himself, the habit of co-operation with village-mates in construction is already established. Until they are married, boys do all the work on their huts for themselves, fetching their own reeds or bamboos for the frame, and cutting and carrying thatching grass. They usually leave their huts unmudded. Adult men, on the other hand, are helped by their wives and female relatives as well as by sons and sons-in-law, and one or two of their own village neighbours. Men fell the bamboos, construct the framework of the house, and thatch, while women cut and carry grass, carry bamboos, mould the mud bricks which are packed between the bamboo uprights, and plaster the hut inside. The wife for whom the hut is being built is responsible for the women's work, but she usually gets some help from her co-wives and women neighbours, as well as from her mother and sisters, and the mother and sisters of her husband. Sons and sons-in-law are expected to bring with them other young men, their village-mates. Co-operation is thus both with relatives and village neighbours—the neighbours of the couple building the hut, and of their sons and sons-in-law.

The huts of married men are built with immense care, for not only are substantial houses essential to comfort, and indeed a condition of survival, in this climate of torrential rains and cold winter mists, but the Nyakyusa take great pride in the appearance of their homesteads (*vide infra*, p. 77). The early European

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 travellers in the area all comment on the excellently built huts and the cleanness of the villages.[1] Lord Lugard calls their huts 'the neatest and the most wonderfully built of any I have seen in Africa, excepting only the houses of the king and chiefs in Uganda.'[2] This high standard of building necessitates hard work and co-operation between a number of men and women.

c. *Cultivation*

241 The primary unit in cultivation is the elementary family consisting of a man, his wife and unmarried children or, in the case of a polygynous family, of the house group of a wife and her children, together with her husband, part of whose time is spent in hoeing her fields.[3] There is also, however, some co-operation with other relatives, and with village neighbours.

241 476 Unmarried sons hoe with their fathers and very often they bring one or more village-mates to work with them, making return, in due course, by working with these friends for their respective fathers. The boys who come are fed after hoeing, and should be fed generously, by the woman in whose fields they have [584] worked. After his betrothal a young man comes in the same way with village-mates to hoe for his father-in-law, as well as continuing to hoe for his own father. Once his wife joins him they have their own fields, and the bulk of his time is spent in hoeing for her, but he still hoes one or two strips (*embaka*) for his own father and for his father-in-law. Such help is reciprocal, for his 'mothers' (i.e. his own mother and his father's other wives) and sisters, as well as the 'mothers' and sisters of his wife, will help his wife with her tasks of sowing, weeding, and reaping. From the point of view of village organization the essential fact is that young men working for fathers and fathers-in-law very frequently bring one or two village-mates with them. A typical hoeing group is made up of a man with his sons, and one or two village-mates of the sons.

Larger hoeing parties, to which not only youths, but also older men come, are fairly common, especially among the Kukwe.

[1] Elton, op. cit., p. 323; D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyasa' in *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 116–7.

[2] F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), Vol. I, p. 52.

[3] The respective rights of the husband and of each wife have been analysed by Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., pp. 16–29.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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X. 'THE DIGNITY OF THE HOMESTEAD' — OLD STYLE
Note the tree planted and carefully protected, in the courtyard

[facing p. 71]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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XI. A TRADITIONAL STYLE LONG HUT (IKIBAGA)

[FACING p. 78]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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XII. 'THE DIGNITY OF THE HOMESTEAD'—— NEW STYLE
Chief Porokoto's main house in Ilolo village

[facing p. 79]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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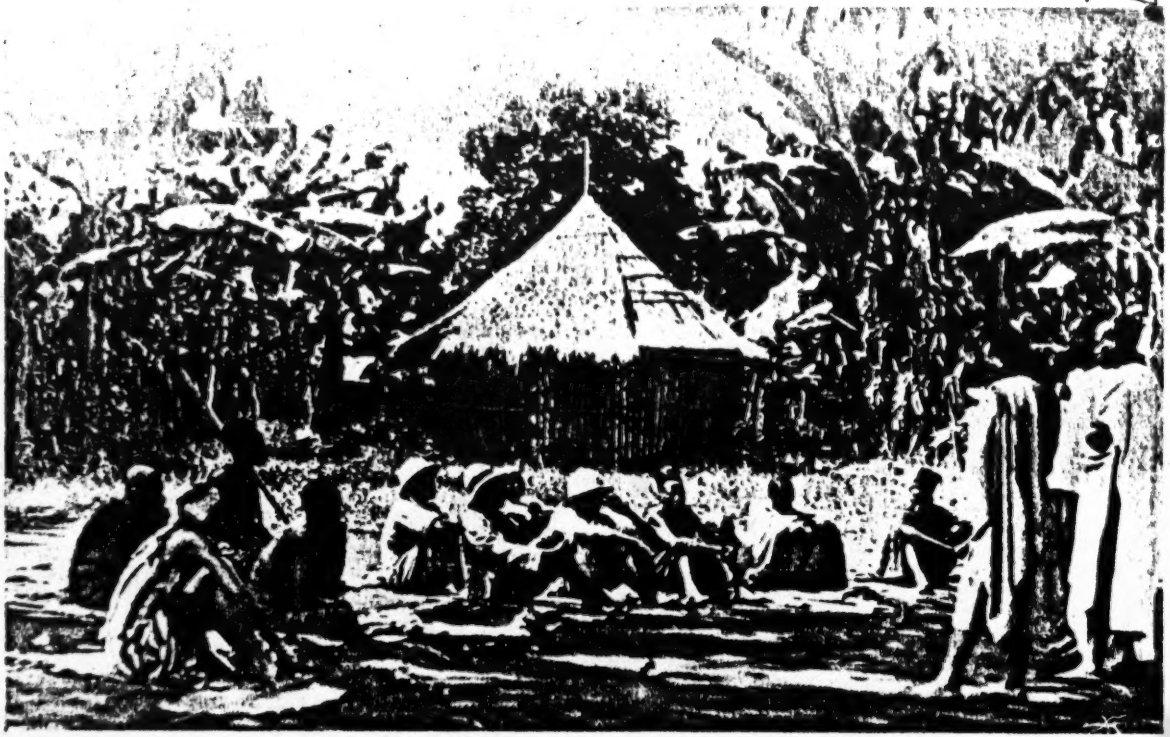

XV. SETTLEMENT OF A DISPUTE

The anthropologist (Godfrey Wilson) is sitting with the court. On his right is the chief Mwaihojo, on his left Kasitile the rain-maker. Behind him (in a topee) is Mwaisumo the clerk, and Mwakionde, famous as a doctor and maker of lions. In the background is a half-built hut

[Facing p. 146]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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1. *Sacrifice and drums round the open grave*

[facing p. 20]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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2. *Leaping on the newly filled grave*

[facing p. 21]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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6. The groomsmen dance the stamping dance

[facing p. 101]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 'To-day there is no ritual, we have come to express sympathy (*ukuti ndaga*).'[1]

845 The two grown sons of Mwakobela were building a little hut of
342 saplings and had finished the main structure, but had not yet thatched it. 'She will sleep there to-night. They will put leaves on top.' Kikuku brought a message from Mwaipopo, to whom they had previously sent to tell him of the twin birth: 'If the hut is not finished she may sleep in the house, I agree to that. But Mwakobela said:

845 No, the hut is finished, she can sleep there. [To me]: To-night she will just sleep there, then the doctor will come [it is Mwaipopo's business to find the doctor] and will induct her (*akammuingiya*), and then we shall lay the litter. The woman and her mother sleep there for a month with the twins—no others—the mother alone keeps her company (*ikampanja*); then the doctor will come again to bring her out (*akamsoya*). The ritual is in two parts, the induction and the bringing out.

They tie up the cord of the first twin to be born with a shred of plantain bark, and of the second with a shred of sweet banana bark, the plantain bark is a sign of seniority.

The woman may not cook while she is in the hut—it's taboo. But the other wives cook food for her and bring it to prevent her dying of hunger. Also her friends of the village will come with food and firewood to greet her. The pot in which food is cooked for the parents of twins must not be covered when it is on the fire, and if plantains are cooked only the middle bunches on the stem are used, not the ends; those at the ends are thrown away. When they are eating the wife may not begin until the husband has received his and put some in his mouth, then she too may eat.

845 It is wholly taboo for the mother of twins to call for anything she
784 wants. She knocks with a stick to summon the one who brings her food. . . . If her husband wants anything he calls to his wives, it is not taboo, but he does not shout loudly, he must be careful not to make too great a noise, for if he shouts his children's hearts are startled and, it is said, they will die.

Traditionally, when the mother had to leave the hut to relieve herself, she walked backwards and hid her face with a piece of mat, to prevent herself from looking at the front of anyone. She avoided cows at pasture, and if she caught sight of anyone in the distance she waved a hand to warn them to let her pass.

May 13

845 Mwaiswelo III (Mwakobela's brother) came to fetch us at ten-

[1] This phrase can imply either condolence or congratulation.

2: Wilson 5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

533 764 names of their father); Sananbi, Mwilwa, Maluhajegila (these are the praise-names of their mother). The next day they explained their song: 'It is to perform the ritual (*ukuyekala*). They call it *iyekala* (i.e. the ritual) and they say that if they don't perform it the child will be like an idiot, he will run about naked and mad.' In all the songs Sijele acted as leader and the principals as chorus.

Then, finally, a grain basket was brought and turned upside down. Sijele and the principals beat on it with a new rhythm, but still syncopated, singing: 'The two ways of the parent! The two ways of the parent!' And so it finished.

764 I was told that the next morning early the three principals would eat the beans which had now been cooked, but that they must stay for a night first in the hut.

Kalata commenting later said: 'We Kukwe circle and dance the stamping dance, but we beat neither the ground nor the basket. Beating the basket is a Sangu custom.' Kalata is a Kukwe but his mother was a Sangu.[1] 'We Kukwe sing farewell and "*Syeka, syeka*", and we dance round to the harp; but we don't sing "the two ways of the parent" at all!'

November 7

I arrived at 8 a.m. to find that the beans had been eaten. 'We came out in the morning cold very early, we washed our hands and ate the beans. Then Sijele, who had slept the night with us, swept out the rubbish (*imiade*) with the bunch of medicine twigs.' When I arrived Kalata was finishing the sweeping outside with an ordinary broom.

November 16 *Record of Mwaikambo*

764 342 They began by building a little hut on the pathway that goes through the bananas to the stream, near the house. The path went right through the hut, which was built only by the officiants, not by the others. After they had finished building they planted hearth-bricks inside and lit a fire; then, taking some dry oil-seeds and powdered medicine, they called out to summon those for whom the ritual was being performed. When they came into the hut the officiants gave powdered medicine and oil-seeds to the child who received them in both hands and poured them into a potsherd on the fire, saying as he did so: 'This is the death of my grandmother.' They gave them to the two young men likewise, who said: 'This is the death of my mother' (that is to say: 'This is the ritual of my mother'). And then the officiant took all the rest of the oil-seeds and put them in the potsherd to roast.

764 When the seeds were roasted the officiant ground them up and began to prepare ointment. Meanwhile the principals poured water into a

[1] Strictly the ritual should have been Kukwe since a wife follows the ritual of her husband.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

One by one the villagers emerge from the houses, and sit in the sun, greeting neighbours with a polite 572
"Have you slept well?" if there are any neighbours [576]
near. Then the husband milks the cattle, and the boys come to drive them out to the pasture, where they will remain until the early afternoon, when they are again milked.

Generally the cattle sleep in the same house as their 231
owners, tied up to stakes fixed deep in the floor; but 592
where there are grown-up sons not yet married, a separate house is built in which the parents sleep with the little ones, while the young men guard the cattle from raiding thieves.

The bed is frequently no more than a mat spread 573
on the mud floor, with a single blanket for covering, and no pillow, unless it is a piece of roughly trimmed wood. The more prosperous natives, earning good pay in the employment of Europeans, have well-made beds fully equipped, in many cases even with mosquito nets hung from the roof. The poorer consider that they have made a great step forward if they have been able to save up enough money to buy a single blanket, and not seldom even that belongs to the father, the mother and children having to be content with meagre coverings of calico or grass mats. But [354]
the house is warm, often too warm, for the fire is always burning, the door is closed, there are no windows, and there is no ventilation in the roof; and all the inmates sleep with their feet to the fire, which is in the middle of the floor.

Here and there one will come upon rows of tiny 342
houses, each built and occupied by two or three small 561

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

342 561 boys, who have grown too big to occupy any longer the single-roomed hut in which their parents dwell. They are slender erections of reed and grass, and look as if a strong wind might carry them away; but the children live a happy, and not always innocent, life in these huts until they are able to build bigger ones for themselves.

291 Dress is more conspicuous by its absence than by its presence. During the day the women wear little but a long strip of bark cloth hanging down almost to the ground before and behind. The children usually have nothing at all, unless they have the good fortune to get a strip of cloth from a grandparent. They go about quite naked for the first few years of life, and a mission school usually reveals rows of children who consist of long legs and arms and smiling faces, wholly unconscious of need if they have a tiny rag strung in front, often not more than a few square inches in size. But the men who are earning money may be well dressed. The richer wear trousers and jacket, a shirt, a collar and tie, boots, if they are able to afford them, and a helmet. Their wives and children wear long robes of highly coloured cloths, and are no doubt observed with envy by their less fortunate sister-women, with little but a piece of bark-cloth to hide their nakedness. The average man, however, goes to church or market with a single garment, unsewn, flung over his shoulders, and covering, more or less completely, his whole body; but he goes to work in a scanty waist cloth, which leaves him uncovered below the knees and above the waist. Men

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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A Konde Village, Lake Shore Type.

The circular houses are of reeds and grass, shaded by overhanging banana leaves, and usually surrounded by a fence of reed or matting. As cattle are being a very common crime, the cattle sleep in the houses with their owners.

[facing p. 32]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925-
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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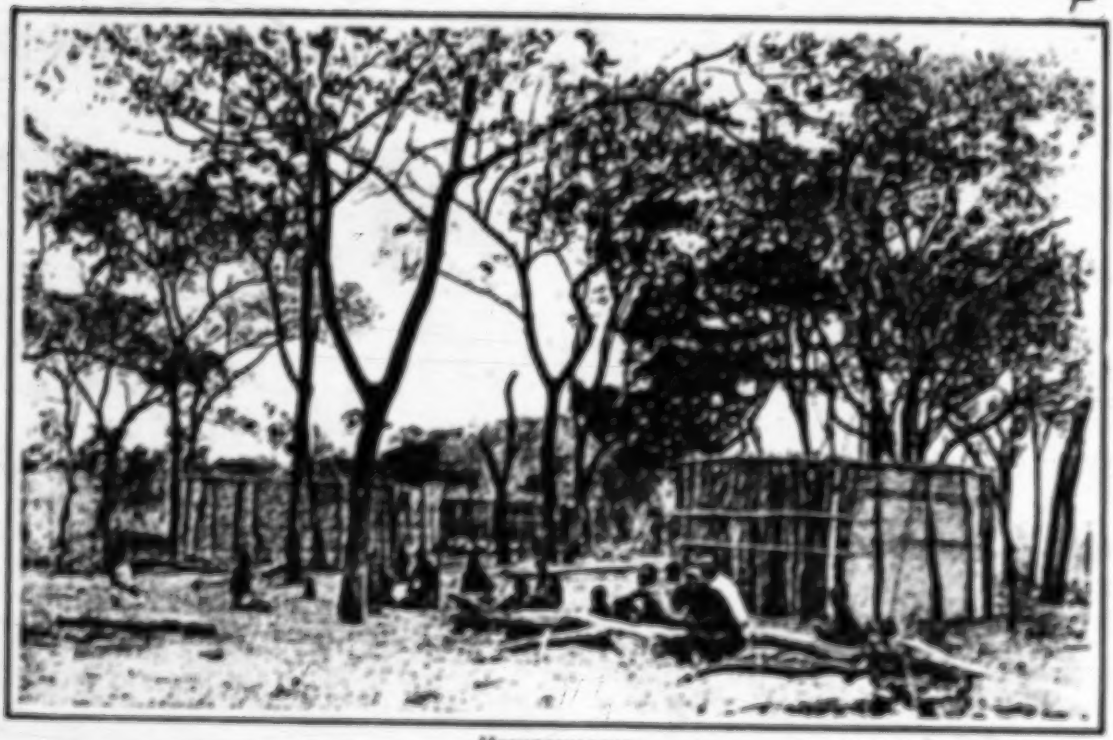

HOUSEBUILDING.

Among the Ngonde this is a leisurely process. Silas, one renowned hero-chief, takes six months to finish, and the workers go off for weeks to other duties. The men cut the trees and erect the walls, which the women plaster. The roofing grass is brought in by the women, but thatching is men's work.

[facing p. 152]

3:Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

animals, snakes, in astonishing variety, done in black or red on white ground by two native artists from Runjwe. Whether the ideas were supplied to them by the white man who owned the house, I cannot tell, but the execution is entirely native, and, although the total effect is weird rather than pleasing, it indicates possibilities which might be worth developing. 532

If housebuilding be included in arts and crafts, then the Konde people take a high place. There are at present some remarkably good houses at Karonga, of four, five, or six apartments, built on the European model, with properly made doors and windows; and there is, not far from Tukuyu, a house at present being built, with two storeys, T-shaped, the only materials used being the ordinary wood and clay. But the common Konde hut is a very high-class thing compared with the rude erections of tribes which have surpassed the Konde in other respects. Whether it be the older round type, or the newer square, there is a neatness and cleanliness in the Konde homestead that is sadly lacking in tribes that are wealthier, and more ambitious, but whose ambitons are only slowly reaching out towards improved dwellings. 342

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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A Konde Hut.

Leisurliness is the key note of Konde life, and there is always time to sit down for the welcome chat about cattle, crops, children, or the white man, whose strange ways are of unfailing interest.

Lion Hunting.

The presence of a lion in a district causes a great scare, and the chief may call up all able-bodied men, armed with spears, clubs and bows, to the hunt. The lion—or leopard—is sometimes seized alive and clubbed or speared to death. The presence of a white man with a rifle gives increased courage to the hunters.

[Facing p. 176]

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 others as well. Any boys' village is found to consist primarily of the
561 sons of the members of some older village who originally gave the land for its building, but as we shall see later sons of other villages live there too.

621 At the beginning, when a group of boys starts a new age-village, or
342 when boys join one already formed, they do not all have a hut to themselves, two or three friends share a hut. But later, as they grow older, each builds for himself. The younger ones build their huts of reeds, but the older ones try to get a few bamboos from their fathers or senior relatives and build more solid houses. Married men build entirely of bamboo, but often in a boys' village you will find a compromise between bamboo and reed, both being used in the same house; and the houses of bachelors, even though they be all of bamboo, are smaller than those of married men. The technique of good building is not very difficult, and the older boys instruct and help their juniors, as they join the village, to improve the skill playfully acquired as herd-boys so as to build more substantial huts.

245 The chief food of the Nyakyusa is the banana; men plant bananas
262 immediately round their huts, though their fields are mostly at a distance. And bachelors, while they continue to eat their main meals at their parents' village, plant bananas round their own huts as well. Bananas begin to bear very quickly, sometimes within a year of planting, and so, soon after the establishment of a boys' village, its members have bananas of their own, which they cook for themselves and eat with their friends at odd times during the day. But they have as yet no fields.

864 There is no formal initiation of boys at puberty; but, on the other
[881] hand, the custom of leaving home and joining a boys' village is directly
577 connected by the Nyakyusa with their ideas of decency in sexual life. They think it is perfectly all right to discuss sex openly among friends of about the same age but altogether wrong to discuss it either in the presence of, or with, their parents or those of their parents' generation. If a boy learns about love-making, in any way, from his parents the Nyakyusa think that he will not respect them properly and that he himself will be a fool. A boy must learn these things from his immediate seniors and friends. One man said to me: "If a boy after about ten years old stays at home to sleep, he is laughed at by his friends and his own parents send him away. They say: 'If he sleeps at home he will hear what his parents talk about at night, the night is always full of lewd talk; and he may even see them undressing. He will grow up a fool, with little wisdom.' You see at the boys' village" he went on to say, "the older

631 Age-villages combined to form a chiefdom under the hereditary chief,
628 *malafyale*, but active co-operation between villages thus associated was often slight; indeed in the larger chiefdoms there commonly existed intermittent animosity which might break out in raiding or even civil war. The integrity of these larger chiefdoms was weak – for example, when the
[721] Nyakyusa were attacked by Sangu and Ngoni war-parties, and later by the
[548] Germans, villages of the same chiefdom conspicuously failed to join in common defence. Similarly the land affairs of one village were no concern of any other, and each jealously guarded its own rights.

631 None of the chiefdoms was large; smallness of scale is typical of
162 Nyakyusa political organisation and social attitudes. In 1955 the smallest indigenous chiefdom contained only 36 men. In 1948 55,700 people were divided amongst about 18 indigenous chiefs, but undoubtedly had not the Colonial Government frozen the system there would have been rather more – at least five more. Today there are 12 recognised "administrative chiefs", amongst whom five have each less than 3,000 people under them, and the largest chiefdom contains fewer than 10,000 people – the average is just over 4,000 people.

631 Nevertheless the chiefdom, the collection of villages, was important,
361 because in the creation of the chiefdom villages were created, and in its development the villages developed, matured and died away. A village survived only so long as its members lived and by the nature of the age-organisation there was but little possibility of the recruitment of new members, for villagers' sons left to form their own new villages. Their sons eventually came to comprise the core of the new chiefdoms.

642 In connection with the constitution of a Nyakyusa village and with
643 land tenure, the significant feature of the chiefdom was its establishment, together with the induction of a new chief, at the great "coming-out"
[796] ceremony, *ubusoka*. In brief, each chief was succeeded by two of his sons – the
[898] eldest son of each of the senior houses of the chief, i.e., of his first two wives. At the "coming-out" ceremony, when the sons were still young men and their father was not a particularly old man, the old chiefdom was divided into two, each part coming under one of the new young chiefs. Before this critical occasion – at which much important ritual was performed – the younger men of the old chiefdom had already moved away from their fathers villages and had established their own incipient villages nearby, each one containing a group of coevals. A Nyakyusa boy from the age of about seven years could not continue to live with his father and mother, but, in company with his equals, built his own hut on a site adjacent to the main
621 village as indicated by the fathers' headman. Until the "coming-out" cere-
[342] mony these youths' villages came under the control of the old village headmen; but with the induction of the new chiefs they achieved independent status, each with its own headman appointed from among its members by the old headmen. Each new village was allocated a new building site and a new arable area, and quite commonly the old villages, the older men, moved away a little in order to give the younger men adequate access to the land,
631 for it was considered that the young men's needs for land were paramount.

After this wholesale reorganisation of the old chiefdom, when new
[178] villages were established and new boundaries demarcated,[1] the old chief
[622] himself, the old headmen and the older men (the "fathers") gradually retired from active public life. The old chief was supposed to commit suicide after a time (or was quietly killed off) in order to leave the field clear for his
643 sons; the old headmen became the religious and ritual leaders of the new
888 chiefdoms, with the flavour of elder statesmanship, and the old men's

1. "At the "coming-out" it is said that "everything is made new", boundaries are redrawn and the new chiefdoms and villages of the young men are consciously incorporated". Wilson, G., 1938, p. 31.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

land automatically reverted to the common pool. An established villager might decide to use part of it perhaps, but not before prudently gaining the approval of the headman, lest the migrant return later and accuse him of unlawful and unfriendly seizure. If the headman agreed, as he would after a time in most cases, the newly acquired plot became part of that villager's holding with as secure a title as the rest. Such vacated land could also be allocated by the headman to a newcomer or, before the sons' village was established, to the son of a villager.

If a man had more land than he could cultivate – because, for example, his sons had left him to cultivate in their own villages, or his wife had died – he was under no essential obligation to give up any part. The headman might, if the need arose, try to persuade him to release a portion in order to make it available to someone in need; but the land-holder could refuse and the headman had to accept his refusal. As a chief depended on the support of his headmen, so did a headman's position ultimately depend upon at least the passive support of his villagers, from whose ranks he was chosen.

At the next "coming-out" ceremony the men of a village of the old chiefdom might be required to move aside in order to allow the young men, their sons, to take up the better building sites and farming land. This they traditionally did voluntarily and they built new homesteads on one side and cleared new arable plots. Once re-established in this manner, these older men would not be disturbed again and they remained secure in their new holdings. How often in fact such a displacement took place I cannot say, but it certainly seems to have occurred sometimes, for one can still trace old village sites which appear to bear out the common Nyakyusa story.

In all this it must be remembered that the spirit of village unity and coevality was held in far higher esteem than land in such a fertile country where land was plentiful and subsistence farming required but small-sized holdings. Security of tenure and defined rights to particular plots are notions belonging to a different situation and age; when land begins to be scarce and to have an economic value, and when there is danger of men not being able to obtain as much as they need roughly where they need it.

Newcomers were invariably welcomed to a village: they were supplied with a house site and an arable holding and were assisted with food until the first harvest. They were an addition to the numerical size and physical strength of the village, and they increased a headman's prestige. Their rights were no less assured than those of founder-members of the village, although their social position was less secure, at least at first, for they had not shared in the history of the community and had not grown up with the ties of village association and comradeship amounting almost to kinship.

Traditional rights in trees may be mentioned briefly. Trees were inherited without difficulty along with the land on which they stood, and a brother or son would commonly inherit the deceased's valuable trees without bothering to take the arable land around. If a man left his village and thus forfeited his land there, the position was different. Banana trees went with the land and a new occupant simply took them over; bananas are of no great value as they grow so readily and ubiquitously. Bamboos are more valuable (being used extensively in house-building) and any left behind in this way could be claimed in the first instance not by the village but by the chief. If the chief wanted them they became his property, or he could grant them to any man he favoured. Usually a chief was content to leave them: then the local kinsmen of the departed man had first claim, and if they had no use for them, or if no kinsmen were resident in the village, they became village property to be allocated by the headman. *Usyunguti* trees[1] were regarded in

1. These are valued oil-bearing trees planted by the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains, the botanical name of which I do not know.

[P.236 A]

WANYAKYUSA AGRICULTURE

By D. H. Thwaites, Agricultural Assistant, Tanganyika Territory

131 The Wanyakyusa occupy the District of Rungwe in the Southern Highlands Province. The district lies between 9° and 9½° S. latitude
133 at the northern tip of Lake Nyasa. The altitude ranges from 1,500 feet to 9,500 feet. The
631 district is divided into twelve chiefdoms. The Administrative Headquarters are at Tukuyu, which was known before the British occupation as Neu Langenberg.

Inhabitants

101 The local people are not indigeneous to this area. They came, tradition has it, from
[173] Mahenge via Ukinga after many tribal fights. They are akin to the Wahenga in Nyasaland bordering on the Tanganyika boundary. It is
191 estimated that only 10 per cent of the Wanya-
161 kyusa speak Kiswahili. According to the 1935 census the total poulation was 153,204. The
162 total number of tax-payers in 1942 was 35,304, or 23.04 per cent of the total population.

181 The people themselves are extremely industrious and intelligent. As there are 90 people to the square mile, living conditions are
105 crowded and emigration is continually taking place. The people are partial to litigation over cattle and women. The number of cases heard annually in the Native Courts is about 6,000. There is no one historical and traditional head of the tribe. The twelve Chiefs are, in reality, hereditary Headmen who have been selected by Government to be Chiefs. They are in effect only *primi inter pares* in native eyes, the outlook of the people being unusually democratic for a native tribe.

105 The people live in houses made of wattle and daub or bamboo frame, with thatched
● 342 roof, and villages are sited mostly along ridges.
361 Rectangular houses are now built instead of the round huts of former days. They often stand in rows with a main street down the middle with bananas in the background. The more progressive natives build with sun-dried or burnt brick. Stock are stalled in the same house owing to the prevalence of thieving, but sleep in separate rooms.

Climate

132 The rainfall of the district varies in the different areas. In Tukuyu itself the annual average for 25 years (1918-1942) is 100.22 inches. On the Lake shore the average is probably higher, but no continuous statistics are available. The heaviest rainfall months are from December to May, but, in most years,

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Chagga FN4
Haya FN8

House-types of the Banyakyusa

By Agnete Bisgaard

During a stay in the Southern Highlands in Tanganyika in 1955, I was given the opportunity to inspect—and draw plans of—some of the houses belonging to the local Bantu tribe of the Nyakyusa. In literature they are known also under the name of Konde.

The district in which they live is fairly high above sea level and near the borders of Rhodesia and Nyasaland; the rainfall is fully adequate. Banana and coffee are doing well—the banana trees often forming groves in between which you catch a glimpse of the village houses.

The district invites comparison with other localities in Tanganyika where the country is high, and where precipitation is plentiful. Such localities would be the districts around Kilimanjaro and near Bukoba to the west of Lake Victoria. In the former live the Chagga tribe, in the latter the tribe of the Haya. Even here banana and coffee are plenty—and the I.Q. of both tribes is said to be high, as is the case of the Banyakyusa (plural of Nyakyusa).

Maybe you might therefore expect to find a corresponding standard of dwelling-houses, perhaps even the same type of hut. But in this matter you will be highly surprised; so great are the differences between the three areas. Apart from the original design of the house being round and the roof thatched, no similarity exists between the various houses or their interior lay-outs.

The round, thatched Chagga hut has its roof all way down to the ground. It is not very large and the interior lay-out is quite primitive. A cow or goat lives all its life indoors and is fed there. A short and uncomfortable bed is found near by. Down the centre of the floor is a stone-paved aisle. Everything looks quite simple—especially when you remember that in other aspects the Chagga are quite advanced in their use of modern facilities; for instance they use electricity for the grinding of their maize.

The Haya hut—the old, round type—is a really magnificent thing. I think its centre is seven or eight metres high. In front it has a kind of overhang, maybe you might call it a front room, where people will sit, and where guests will be received. If you are a wellcome guest, a straw mat will be rolled out to cover the grass flooring of the hut. The walls of the front room are solid plates made from a kind of reed. The hearth is placed near the centre of the inner room.

N 114 N [107] N 131 N 245 000 G N H 342 171 C 342 231 H 342 [574]

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Haya FN8

H 342 As indicated above, the floor is covered with grass. Various domestic utensils may be seen, stuck into thin screens of plant material.

H 342 178 But this old, beautiful type of hut is very much on the decline. It is costly to make and to keep in repair, and the thick straw roof is, admittedly, highly inflammable. A flying trip round Lake Victoria clearly shows how the straw roofs in the banana groves are being replaced by corrugated iron. This change may even have another reason, viz. the fact that fodder for cattle is in short supply and that the grass for roofs is hard to come by. No doubt, it is a question of time when the fine old Haya hut will have disappeared.

N 114 In the Southern Highlands, where I was given the opportunity to stay for three months at various Danish mission stations, I visited the village round the Rungwe mission, the neighbouring villages of Ilolo and Kikota, and some villages near the Rutenganio mission station. I made a trip to Lake Nyasa and another to the Poloto mountains. I must admit to a limited knowledge of drawing technique and of house construction, but I have measured a number of houses and sketched their plan and also the furnishings I found in them. The positioning of the various objects has been established.

N 361 d[342 356] The high standard of dwellings of the Banyakyusa is truly to be wondered at. The houses, clustered in villages, often along a winding street, lie intermingled with banana and coffee bushes. The houses are large and their interior is clean. Often two or three houses belong to one family, and, if so, will be grouped round a courtyard.

N 342 [824] Even if you could find houses built from sun-dried bricks and fired tiles, most were from bamboo with a grass roofing.

All houses stand on a clay base which, though not very high, no doubt means some protection against penetration of ground moisture during the heavy rains of April–June.

N [824] Besides bamboo, sometimes the bole of tree fern, *makete*, is used in outer walls. Such tree fern stems have not the carrying capacity of bamboo, but they are far more resistant to rot. Among the other common features of the existing types of houses, should be mentioned the mud clods, the size of rolls that from the inside are pressed between the vertical bamboo poles; also, the inner wall is rough-cast with a mixture of mud and cow manure; the floor is from tamped clay. In some places you find very fine floors in which a pattern has been rolled into the wet clay; to this end a short length of the stem of the banana cluster has been employed, viz. the length between the seats of the male and the female flowers. Also employed are another plant stem, or an empty corn cob.

N [237] [531]

N 354 595 In all houses where women live, there are one or more hearths. The presence of two hearths in one house usually means that the husband has two wives, each wife having her own hearth, either in the common house or in a house of her own.

N 347 The houses always have a kind of ceiling made from bamboo sticks and carried

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

by horizontal bamboo joists, at right angles to the principal beams of the ceiling. This ceiling never covers the entire room, but only the greater part, and always the part directly above the hearth. Up here firewood is placed to dry. A fine black basket is hung from the ceiling above the fire. Access to the loft is by means of a ladder. 342 [372]

When you read reports by the 'first' Europeans on these peoples and their houses, they always refer to a round house with reclining walls and a conical roof. Merensky (1894) mentions and illustrates such a house (pages 141 et seq.). Fülleborn (1906) mentions and illustrates several houses (Text Volume pages 376 et seq., and Atlas, plates 64–67). The inner surface of the walls of the house was decorated with patterns impressed into the mud layer which covers the bamboo poles. The three stones that form the hearth are shown, and also the bed behind a low permanent partition wall. These were exceptionally fine houses with beautiful, decorated and painted doors. The entrance had relief ornaments, often of coloured clay. Fülleborn notes that the mud houses are the dwellings of married people. [352]

There is no doubt that the round house is the original type of dwelling. In 1955, I saw no round houses like the ones described by the above scholars, but I know that formerly they were often seen, at least as late as 1932. Professor Monica Wilson of Cape Town has told me that she saw them everywhere in 1932, but that during a visit to the district in 1955 she found only one single house of this type, in the village of Masoko. 178 342

At the time of my visit, round houses could be seen, but not the type having walls inclining inwards near the ground, and they were not by far as imposing as the houses mentioned above; and there were not many of them. I had the opportunity to make drawings of three houses, all occupied by old people. 342

The round house is called an *isinga*. In one of these *isinga* there lived an old man whose wife, Malia, lived across the courtyard in a rectangular hut of the old Nyakyusa type (see infra). The husband's house was 6.5 metres across, and was divided in halves by a fence made from sticks. One half was where the man lived; it had one bed for him, and one for his grandchildren, who would come to visit him, now and then. Near the wall were two iron chests; also, a board had been hung at the wall as a roost for the chicken. A hen's nest, a small wicker basket, was placed about 3 ft. above the floor in the furcation of a four or five-pronged stick. These hen's nests are seen in all houses. The ceiling was supported by seven upright posts, seemingly placed entirely at random. The under side of the roof was strengthened by eight circular-running fascines of bamboo. In the centre, a heavy log (not bamboo) reached up to the pointed top of the roof. [592] [353] [352] [231]

The other half of the house was reserved for the cattle, three cows and two calves; there were five posts to which the cattle were tied at night. [231]

The house had an outer door at each end, but there was no passage from the man's half to that of the cattle.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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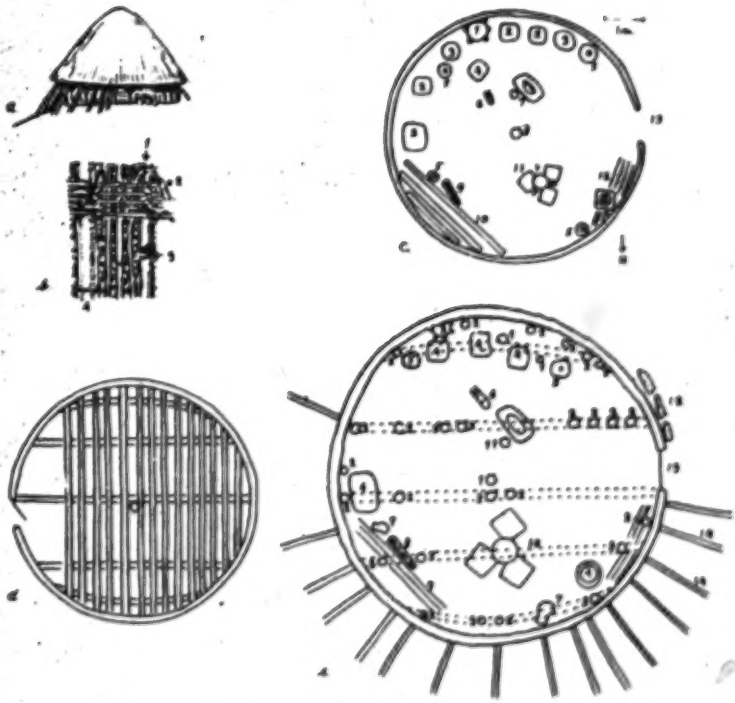

Isinga. Maloba's house at Ilolo near the Rungwe mission station.

a. Elevation showing buttressing posts; to the right of the door is material for thatching.—b. Detail of wall. 1, cow's horn; 2, bark fibre for winding round poles; 3, notch made in bamboo pole that was crooked; 4, bamboo.—c. Plan of house showing furnishings and utensils on the floor, but not the sticks that were lying everywhere (see plan e). 1, hen's nest; 2, basket; 3, jar; 4, newly made basket; 5, calabash; 6, broom; 7, mill-stone and grinder; 8, centre post (here were a couple of bananas for food); 9, sleeping mat; 10, small under-ceiling from sticks tied together, for small things; 11, hearth; 12, heap of *isiete*, a kind of grass which looks much like thin bamboo.—d. Cross-section at ceiling level showing centre post, beams, and joists on which the sticks are placed; the centre post reaches right up to the top of the roof.—e. Plan of house showing beams of the ceiling (dotted lines, cf. d). 1, centre post; 2, other beam-carrying posts; 3, hen's nest; 4, baskets; 5, calabash; 6, broom; 7, calabash; 8, sleeping mat; 9, small under-ceiling, repository for small things; 10, hearth from three stones; 11, mill-stone and small grinder; 12, thatching material; 13, door; 14, outside buttresses.

342 The round house was standing on somewhat higher ground than the surrounding bananas; half the house was buttressed by wooden posts, possibly because the ground was a bit lower there. The walls were from bamboo poles,

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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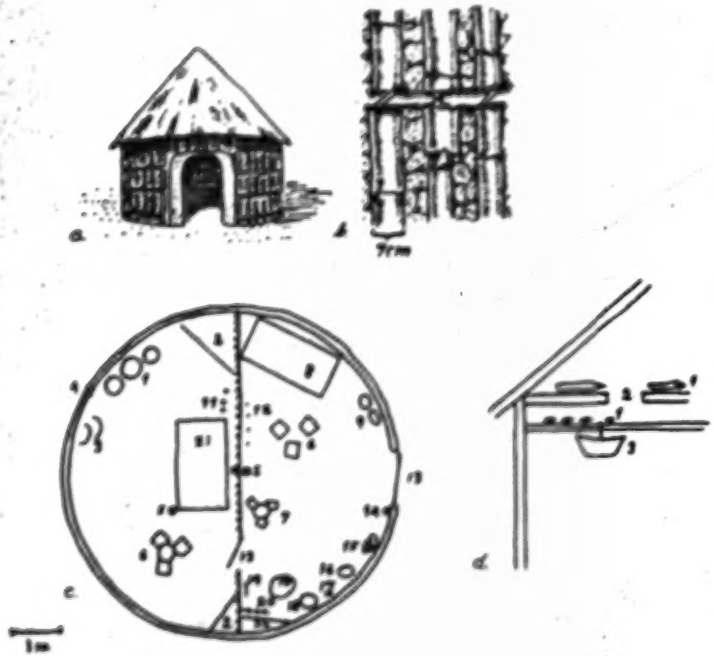

Isinga. Tufwene's house at Rungwe. Sept. 1955.

a. Elevation, showing doorway with walls drawn too thick; the door itself has been left out.—b. Outside detail of wall showing split cross-bamboo; red clay cubs between poles.—c. Plan. 1, jars; 2, shelves; 3, *ubusile* etc. (an *ubusile* is a flat basket used as a plate); 4, small window; 5, centre post; 6, hearth; 7, water jar; 8, spare bed; 9, banana fibres; 10, hen's nest; 11, sticks; 12, sticks for kitchen utensils; 13, door; 14, post for locking device; 15, *ususe* grinding trough; 16, basket with bananas; 17, pestle; 18, *ikisu*; 19, *ulusuya*, mat [illegible] flecting flour from grinding stone; 20, bamboo ladder; 21, bed of the woman; 22, roof [illegible] cross-section of bamboo ceiling, with firewood for drying, and a fine basket below.

connected near the ground with tree fern stems which easily fitted into the hollow of the bamboo. Between these tree fern stems, the liquid manure from the cow-house could escape—much to the benefit of the nearby bananas.

The other *isinga* belonged to the old widow, Tufwene. She lived alone in her house. The walls were bamboo, up to 7 cm in diameter. From the inside, the space between the poles had been filled with 3–5 cm large cubs of red clay. Round the outside were four horizontal bands of split bamboo.

This house, too, was 6.5 metres in diameter, and it was divided into two equal [353]

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 parts. The partition wall was bamboo and mud. A doorway gave on to the inner
353 part, where Tufwene had her bed.

354 There were two hearths, one in each room. The front one was not used. In the outer room was a bed for guests—a common feature of all houses. Tufwene was thought to be well off, and she had plenty of carrying rings, used by the
482 women when they carry loads, often very heavy, on their heads. The inner room was used for stores, including a number of earthen jars. She had three very fine,
352 low stools. I saw them outside in the sun, but their usual place was no doubt in the outer room, which had the character of a workroom. Here were the large
412 wooden mortar and its long pestle; also the grinding stone and in a corner the small mat, the *ulupanya*, which is used to take up the newly ground flour. There
417 was also the ladder, used for fetching down firewood from the loft; you could see
415 the hen's nest, and the large water jar with its pointed bottom placed on three stones.

415 The third *isinga* belonged to an eighty-year-old woman whose husband had
[769] died. She told me how every day she would fill a fine, decorated bamboo mug
[53] with milk for him! These mugs, seen in all the houses, mostly have geometrical

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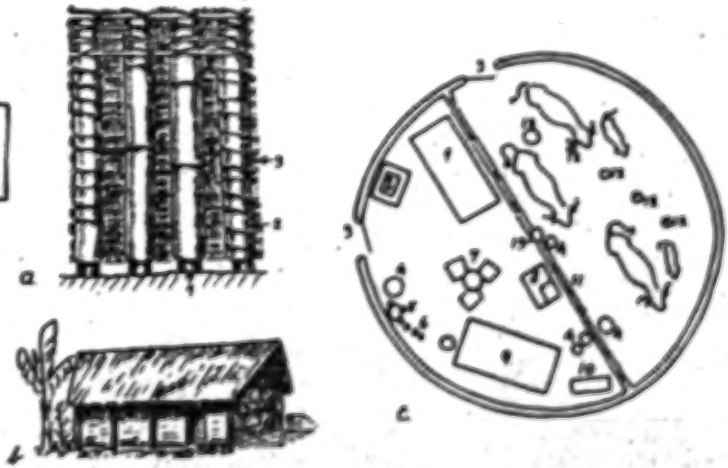


Houses belonging to Malia Ulinyekaya and her husband.

a. Detail of *isinga*, outer wall. 1, tree fork stem joined to bamboo pole—note aperture for liquid manure; 2, bamboo pole with plant fibre windings; 3, split bamboo.—b, Malia's *dikaga*. —c. Plan of *isinga*. 1, bed of the man; 2, iron chests for gardenets; 3, door; 4, posts supporting ceiling; 5, hen's nest; 6, hoes and pestle for the maize mortar; 7, hearth; 8, chests; 9, bed of the grandchildren; 10, roost from hollowed out trunk; 11, low partition; 12, posts for tying cattle; 13, crosse post to top of roof.

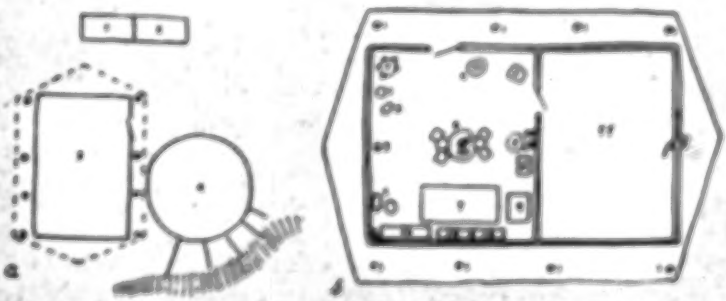
12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

patterns burned into the bamboo; they are hung upside down so the dust will not settle in them. The bottom is the natural partition of the bamboo cane.

The house was standing on high, slightly slanting ground, and like the first mentioned house it was buttressed by a great number of thick branches. Incidentally, it seemed to be very old and rickety. Inside, there were a great many posts supporting the horizontal bamboo ceiling and the stores of firewood. All posts were bifurcated and held the beams solidly in place. The diameter of the house was the usual 6.5 metres, but in this case there was no inner partition. As this woman was very poor, she had no bed, but slept on a mat on the floor. Only very rarely is there no bed in the houses; I remember having seen this only three times.

The hearth was the usual type: three decorated square stones, rising to a height of 30 cm above the floor, but being sunk 70 cm into the ground. Here they were positioned on one side, to ensure that the centre post would not catch fire, and to make for easy escape of the smoke through the doorway. None of the houses have other means of smoke outlet.

Alongside the wall were calabashes, jars, and baskets; material for the baskets; and a little away from the wall, the large mill-stone and its appurtenant smaller grinding stone. A hen's nest was not missing either. Along one side was fitted a small under-ceiling for the storage of small things. Two or three bananas, meant to be her next meal, were lying on the floor near one of the posts. From the left she reached down a cattkin in which she had been carrying her child. Its inside was of a reddish colour.



a. Site plan of Malia Ulinyehaya's houses. 1, hen-coop; 2, drying-racks for crops; 3, Malia's dikaga with roof supports along sides; 4, dikaga belonging to Malia's husband, with hearthstones at low ground.—b. Plan of Malia's dikaga (barred window in back room). 1, hen's nest; 2, dikaga (stool); 3, posts (those going up to ridge of roof are filled in); 4, large basket; 5, basket; 6, clay base round twin posts; 7, Malia's bed; 8, chest; 9, wooden chest; 10, table; 11, back room, having bamboo ceiling carried by bamboo cross beam (between posts marked 3); the room is used for storing clothes, etc.; 12, shelves.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 Another old woman lived in a neighbouring *ikinga* close by—if possible even more sparsely furnished than the last mentioned.

Common features of the round houses were: their size, the wooden centre-post, the ceiling covering the greater part of the room, the supporting posts for the beams that carry the bamboo joists and the ceiling proper; the building materials bamboo and mud; and the positioning of the hearth slightly off centre.

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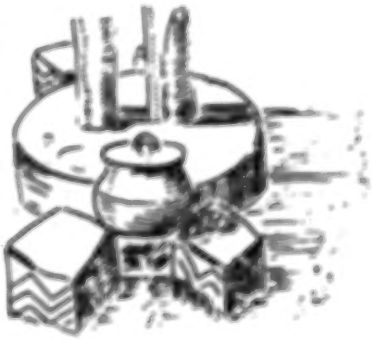

The two hearths of Malila's house. A clay base surrounds the main posts, then arrows to foreground them. Two hearthstones on either side form the hearths, the clay base acting as the third 'stone'.

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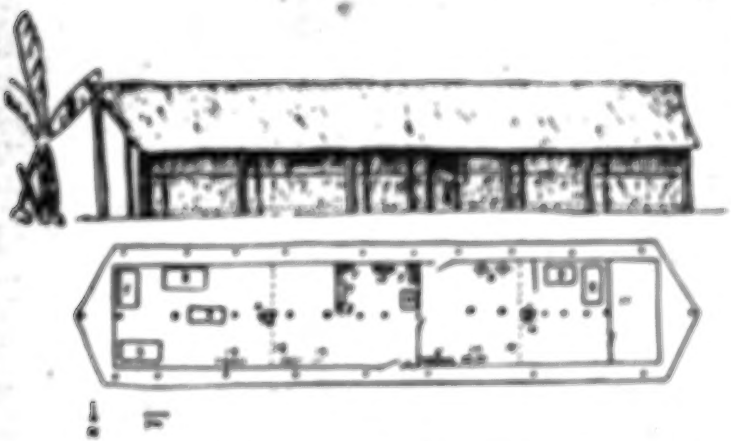
342 The differences between this *ikinga* and the original round-type house are: the angle of the wall, here vertical (as opposed to the inclination of the wall of the original house); the entrance (here without ornaments); the door itself also without ornaments; and further the fact that the clay cribs placed between the bamboo poles were here not the shape but only the size of cribs. The pictures presented by Fülleborn clearly show the carefully formed clay balls in the wall.

[531] As distinct from the old-type house, this new type of house has no decorations on the inside of the wall, but in some instances decorations are found on the floor.

342 Another type of house, again, was rectangular, often very long, with a ridge-beam roof. In most cases, these houses were buttressed along both sides, and were thus provided with what you might call two verandahs. Sometimes also the gables of the houses had buttresses. The roof projected over the gables, most near the ridge. The roof sagged in the middle, a fact that was already observed by the scholars mentioned. This may be because the ridge-beam is not dry but freshly cut, when it is mounted in its place. During the subsequent drying process under load it will then be brought to sag—as we know from other types of houses.

This house is called an *ikinga* and is known to be typical of the Banyakyusa since olden times. Literally, *ikinga* means stable or cowhouse, thus presumably indicating its original purpose. There is a full description of this house in Fülle-

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa



An dabaga in the village of Kiwanda, the district of Rungwe, belonging to a man with two wives. The rooms have bamboo ceilings from dotted lines to ridge pole. Posts reaching to ridge of roof are filled in. 1, husband's bed; 2, wife's bed; 3, child's bed; 4, hearth; 5, bread mats; 6, water jar; 7, mat; 8, ladder; 9, table; 10, stools; 11, store-room; 12, dotted lines show limitation of ceiling; 13, small objects; 14, working material; 15, sleeping mat.

leave. On page 355, he reports how the boys, when 7 or 10 years old, will leave their parents' house to live in long, rectangular cowhouse-like houses big or small, in a special youngsters' quarter at the far end of the village. On page 358 he writes: In many cases you do not know for certain whether you are dealing with a youngsters' house or a cowhouse—for the cattle may well be kept in these houses—or that herdsmen may sleep in the cowhouses. However, this usually holds true of the low-lying Kondo country, while on the other hand, in the high country, the cattle is usually kept in the dwelling houses. On pages 371 and 372, he relates how the cattle is tied up posts at night, and he shows a picture of a cowhouse.

He also refers (on page 378) to the use of the rectangular house for married men besides the boys. The difference is seen in the fact that these houses are not roughcast with mud, as this work is the province of women. Finally, he reports that, during the last few years of his stay in the Kondo country, he saw Kondo houses being built under increasing influence of the coastal culture, in imitation of the Swahili houses. They were roughcast with mud inside and out, and had a verandah supported by posts.

In 1955, many dabagas could be seen. Some were for the cattle, but most were dwelling houses for married people. (Boys aged 7-10 and upwards until the marriageable age lived in verandah-like boys' houses, the material of which was not bamboo, but a thinner grass, resembling bamboo very much. These houses stood

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 solitary or in a row some distance from the other houses of the village. They were never roughcast with mud).

Nearly all the *dikaga* had a post-supported verandah. I measured up and drew sketches of two houses of this type, one belonging to the above-mentioned woman called Malia, whose husband lived next door in an *isinga*. She was a Christian—actually a church-elder. On the outside of her bamboo-framed, mud-roughcast wall, she had drawn a church in yellow, red, and black colours, and below she had written the word *kanisa* (church). Apart from a house near Lake Nyasa, of which I took a photograph and which had very modernistic and drastic drawings on its outside wall (crocodiles, a man and his bicycle, a man with his firearm), it is the only instance in which I saw any kind of coloured decoration on a house. Besides impressed patterns in clay on hearth and floor, I saw no decorations on the inside or outside of houses, except fine patterns in the outside wickerwork of the wall.

342 532

342 In this house, approximately 8 metres long, there were two vertical supporting posts, reaching to the very ridge of the roof, where presumably they were joined to the ridge beam. However, the beam could not be seen.

354 The hearth was peculiar in that it consisted of two pairs of hearthstones near a clay base that surrounded a supporting post and a shorter post. Thus two hearths were available, at the same time serving as fire-proofing to the posts. Though Malia was a single woman, the house had two hearths. You might think that she had seen a stove and had found that two cooking places would be useful. I saw this arrangement in one more place, in the house of a widow, who—by the way—was also a Christian.

353 A space nearly half the size of the house was partitioned off, the half-wall having a doorway. This room was for storage only, clothes etc.; it had a barred window. Besides the hearths, the living-room had hen's nests, stools, baskets, Malia's bed (2 m by 1 m), table, wooden shelves, boxes, and a chest. These last-mentioned objects she had had no difficulty in obtaining from the neighbouring joiner's workshop belonging to the mission.

[352] [297]

342 The other *dikaga* is from quite a different district, that of Ruvenganin. It was a very long house, as often seen in this locality, 26 metres long. I was told that

The type of house called *dikaga*, or *isinga*.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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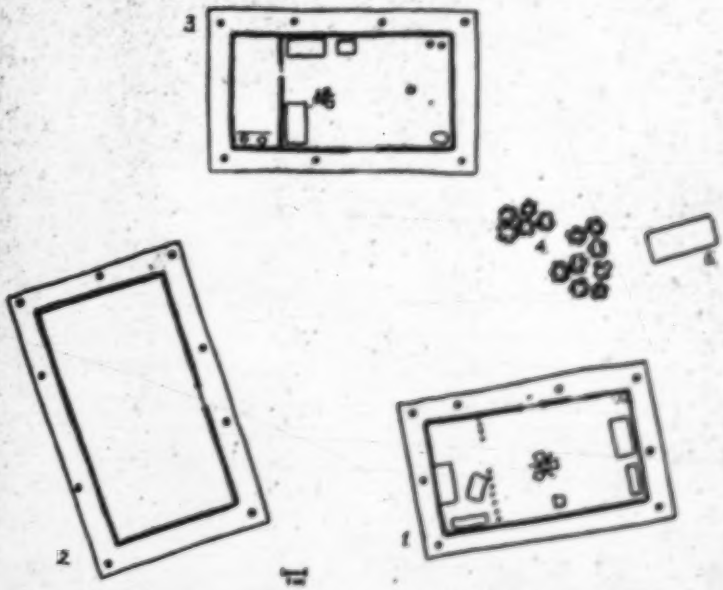

Three houses belonging to one family, situated round a common courtyard; the doors open on to the yard. The village street is along the back of the house at top. 1, Iselina's house; 2, Raba's house; 3, Idina's house; 4, banana plants; 5, hen-coop.

houses existed which were 60 metres in length. It had the same width as Malia's house, approximately 5 metres. The roof was supported by posts along the sides and at the gables.

Two women lived in this house, both married to the same man. Consequently, there were two hearths, the stones of which were cylindrical-conical, broadening slightly at the top. All were decorated. Each woman had her part of the house, both with an outer door, and further there was a door, slightly narrower, between the two parts, and a fourth door to a store-room. No less than twelve posts supported the roof, all reaching to the ridge. The two parts were a bit unequal in size; nearly half of each had the well-known loft for firewood, etc. One part contained beds for the woman and her husband (one bed had 100 straw mats). The children had two beds. The husband had still another house, a short distance away at the foot of a hill, they said. I did not see it. The other woman's room held her bed and a cot.

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The hearths of both rooms were placed in the centres, between two upright posts. Utensils and furnishings did not differ much from the usual: hen's nests,

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12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

352 two water jars, baskets, stools, a ladder leading to the loft, and a table. The rooms
415 were large and spacious, 5 m by 14 m, and in two places low partitions were
353 used to effect a sub-division of the rooms. One may well wonder at the great length of these houses, but probably it is quite true what is said, that, when—in 1897—the Germans took charge of the region and imposed a tax on houses, the
342 177 Nyakyusa men made their women move in under their own roofs—only at the same time extending the houses, using the technique they already knew from the cowhouses.

648 Fülleborn reports on this payment of taxes, and finds it reasonable enough,
178 because, he says, "it fosters in the people an understanding of work and discipline,"
342 and of the house tax he says, "it works to abolish polygamy, since every woman, following the traditions of her country, has her own house, for which her husband must pay the tax."

But the Banyakyusa seems to have adapted themselves to the new law and have moved their wives to the very long houses, thus escaping part of the taxes...

342 The third type of house was a rectangular house with a hipped roof. This type is called *ikema*, which means tent. It was also called *isiwa*, the meaning of which I have not been able to ascertain; maybe it means chicken-house, to which it bears much likeness.

This is the modern house-type to which Fülleborn may be referring when he talks about rectangular houses, "- - the very rare instances when a hipped roof is seen - -." (page 379).

342 According to statements made by people who have lived in the district for a
177 third of a century, this type of house is thought to have come from the south some 50 years ago. I have not visited the Ngonde who live farther south, but Sir Harry Johnston (1897) depicts a group of people called "Wankonde (North Nyasa)" in front of a house which looks very much like the modern *ikema* of the Banyakyusa. *It seems therefore reasonable to assume that the roof-construction design of the* Ngonde has now reached the district of the Banyakyusa. Johnston also informs us that the rectangular type is not actually the original type in East Africa, but that it was probably introduced by the Arabs.

342 This *ikema* or *isiwa* is shorter than the long *ikhaga*; seldom more than 11 metres in length. But its inprior design does not differ. For instance, this holds true of the placing of the hearth, of the equal distance between posts supporting the roof, of the bamboo ceiling covering about half the room, of half-partitions from bamboo and in some cases wood, of store-rooms in the far end of the house, accessible through an inner door.

[592] In an *ikema* I have never seen more than one hearth, which means that the house is inhabited by one woman. A house in the village of Kihoto presented an example of the peculiar tradition of the peoples of the Highlands, viz. the tying of the cattle to posts in the dwelling-houses. My drawings are all from the Highlands, where, in the *ikhaga*, as also noted by Fülleborn, the same tradition is

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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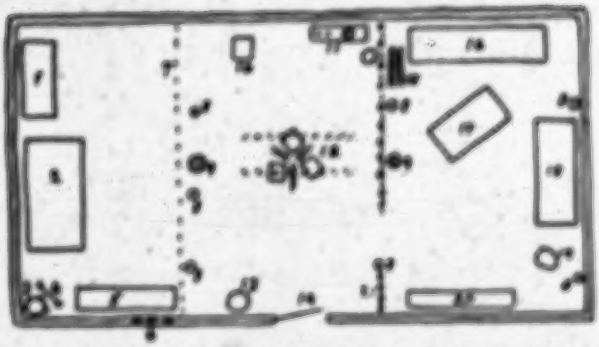

Inflow's house. 1, cupboard with shelves; 2, children's bed; 3, hen's nest; 4, ladder; 5, roof; 6, barred window; 7, from dotted line towards the right is the bamboo ceiling; 8, from here lower 3 horizontal bamboo sticks on which the bamboo ceiling is supported; 9, Posts supporting roof; 10, chair; 11, low shelf with two bamboo jars and a water jar; 12, hearth with three hearthstones and sticks under ceiling for carrying the fire basket, and corn-cobs hung up to dry, etc.; 13, beer jar; 14, door; 15, seats behind the low partition; 16, shelf for domestic utensils; 17, child's bed; 18, Inflow's bed; 19, bamboo; 20, domestic utensils; 21, low partition between rooms.

found. In the front part of the Kikoto house, serving as an entrance room, were four posts called *ikingi*, to which two cows were tied at night.

This part, which we may call the cowhouse, also housed hen's nests, the roof, [331]
and the mortar to be used for maize, etc.

The hearth, consisting of one square and two round hearthstones, was placed [354]
in the centre of the living-room part. Here were also water jars and the woman's bed. This means that even if this type of house had a roof of a different shape and was always provided with a verandah with posts supporting its roof, the interior was really designed on the same lines as the short *ikingi*, but it was [542]
meant to house only one woman, or one man, as we shall see below.

We may imagine that one of the reasons why the type of roof was changed, 342
was the weakness of the pointed roof of the ikingi. It could often be seen to have 176
a tendency to fall in, and had to be supported by a post. Even in Pilkhorn's illustrations, e.g. plate 64 c, a kind of reinforcement can be seen at the edge of the roof. No doubt the roof of the *ikiwa* does not suffer to the same extent from this flaw.

How houses were being built to this design, and I suppose that a little more 342
than half the number of the houses were of the *ikingi* type, and a little than half the *ikiwa*.

In the village of Ilala, I surveyed three houses belonging to one family, a [361]

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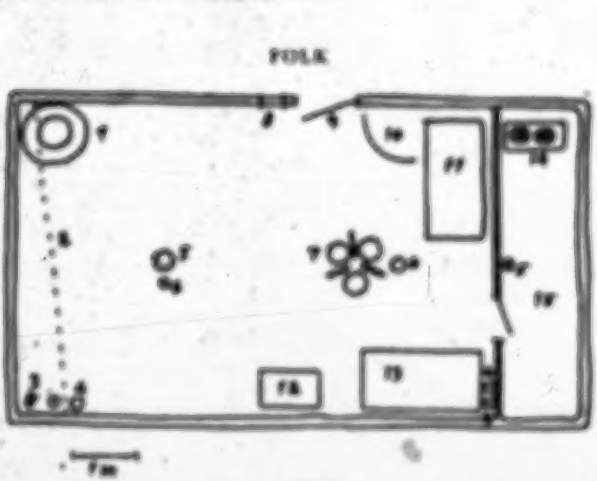


Idina's house. 1, basket; 2, clothes-line; 3, broom; 4, jars, in the back room on low shelf; 5, posts supporting roof; 6, small diameter bamboo poles, supports for the ceiling; 7, hearth with three round hearthstones; 8, shuttered opening through which the hen may be crawled; 9, door; 10, cassava for food; 11, spare bed; 12, table; 13, Idina's bed; 14, shelf for jars; 15, store-room behind mud wall with door.

[344] man and his two wives. The houses were grouped round a common courtyard, the doors giving upon this space and not on the nearby village thoroughfare.

The three houses here the names of Inelina's house, Idina's house, and Baba's house. The elder wife, Inelina, had several minor children, who slept either near

352 her own bed or in the living area. She owned furnishings as modern as a chair

177 and a cupboard with shelves, besides the usual objects in these houses, baskets, *bamboo swaps, Jere's near wood room, ladder and water jars. She also had an earthen-*

[415 ware beer jar which, one day when I called on her, was standing on the fire,

273] nearly making the froth boil over. She was preparing beer for her husband's friends, who had just dropped in.

352 The new wife, Idina, had a store-room in her house, and there was also a large heap of cassava, *mapa* for food. As often seen in these houses, she had also

[353 a guest bed. She had a number of jars and baskets, but no bed's nest. Straight

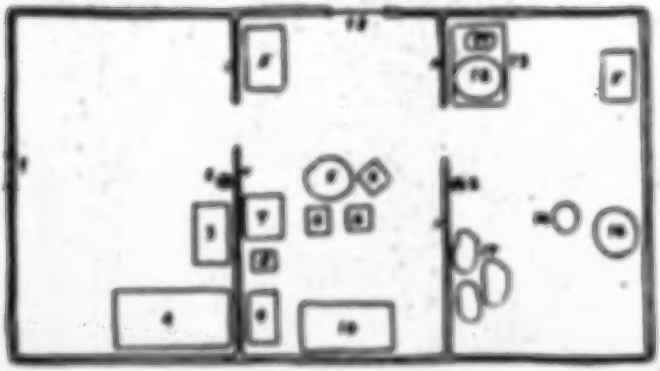
260 across the room she had suspended a line on which she put her clothes. Such an

[246] arrangement was often used, especially by the bachelors; they had a line for their dhoti. Clothes-hangers were not in use. You just throw your clothes across the line. A wardrobe was never seen.

342 The interior of Baba's house presented a peculiar picture. It was divided into

352 three rooms, a living-area in the middle; at one side the bed-room, at the other a store-room. The bed-room had only one bed and a wooden chest. There was no hearth in the living-room—for the husband had his meals prepared by one of his wives. But there was a true accumulation of tables, chairs, cabinets, and a

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa



Baba's house: 1, barred window; 2, posts supporting roof; 3, wooden river; 4, Baba's bed; 5, table; 6, chair; 7, cupboard; 8, chair with three suitcases; 9, suitcase; 10, table with bookshelf; 11, bags; 12, large baskets, drinks; 13, low stool for 11 and 12; 14, millet jars; 15, low partitions; 16, drinks in which the millet is soaked; 17, rice in bags.

cupboard. This seemed very strange and a bit disorderly. On a chair were three suitcases on top of each other.

It was interesting to see, in the store-room, the very crops that belong to the men, viz. rice and millet, the most valuable products. The rice was in bags, and it is quite probable that this man had bought it from the districts near Lake Nyasa, where it thrives well. On higher ground, rice cannot be cultivated.

The millet was contained in a basket, 1 m in height, 55 cm broad at the bottom, and narrower, 35 cm, at the top.

Further, there was a large, beautiful earthenware jar, which he had bought. This was intended for the millet. And there was also a cylindrical container for the washing of the millet when it was brought home from the field. This vessel was 55 cm in height and 85 cm across.

All these houses had a small window with bars or shutters.

The inside of the houses lay in semi-darkness, as the only light is admitted through the doorway, and in some cases through the diminutive barred window. Nevertheless, the houses give a nice impression, because of their tidiness, bright, nice, and clean-cut. And how cosy they are, when seen at night; the door is closed, you gather round the fire and delight in perfectly cooked rice, which is the favourite dish at this principal meal of the day.

Johnston says (1895, page 455) that the greater number of the houses are circular in their plan and very much like beehives in shape; their walls are wickerwork filled with mud cobs, and they have thatched roofs. He also reports

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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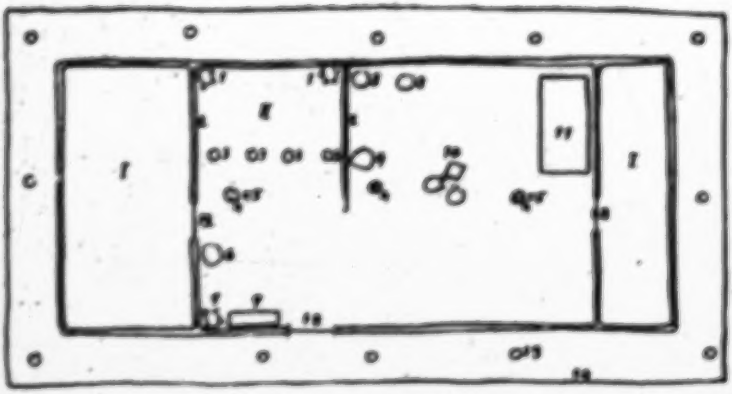

An *dwa* from the village of Kibwa. I, store-rooms at either end of the house; II, corner for cattle;—1, hen's nest; 2, low partitions from bamboo; 3, posts for tying two head of cattle; 4, Three posts supporting roof; 5, low bamboo cups, calabashes, etc. were hanging on the posts; 6, wooden mortar for maize; 7, roast from bamboo tied together; 8, water jar; 9, basket; 10, hearth consisting of two round and one square hearthstone; 11, bed of the woman; 12, door; 13, supports for the roof; 14, cows.—Outer doors from wooden boards; store-room doors from bamboo; bamboo ceiling covers area from half-way partition to the right of cow's corner on to store-room inner wall to the right.

[171] that such houses are found in Africa (a) south of the Zambezi, (b) in all of British Central Africa, (c) in all of East Africa including the Egyptian Sudan,—but not in localities where the Arab influence has introduced the oblong, rectangular building.

342 171 Now, if we look upon the eastern territories of Africa only—what great changes have taken place there since Johnston's day? The round house is being ousted under foreign influence—Arab as well as European.

If you ask a native of Africa, why he changes the plan of his house, his answer will be, that the rectangular house is easier to sub-divide and better in use—which is most probably true. When first the technique has been adopted, people in other parts of Africa will no doubt abandon the circular design and take up the rectangular.

171 342 But nevertheless, the variations in types of hut in Tanganyika are truly amazing: they range from e.g. the fine *dwa* of the Banyakyusa,—to the rectangular *dwala* with nearly flat, clay roof of the Vakimbu,—to the round bee-hives of the Batutsi, which may be built in no time on a frame-work of branches and covered with

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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gram. This last-mentioned type is used by the Batutsi of western Tanganyika as temporary shelter on their perennial wanderings.

Why, then, do not all tribes build to the same design? There are 120 different tribes in Tanganyika alone, and were you to put the question to a member of one of these tribes, he would simply say, "We follow our custom!"—and this is actually the answer. It takes time to be influenced; people will stick to their old customs,—a fact which, as seen from an ethnographical point of view, is really an advantage. Changes should not come too quickly.

At about the time when Johnston wrote the above lines, the history of Johannesburg as a town had just begun. Now, that city is all grey stone colossi and streets criss-crossing at right angles. Even if the gold was behind all that, you never know when a similar fate may befall some part of Tanganyika. What cannot be called forth by the diamonds to the south of Lake Victoria?

Were the African village to disappear entirely,—it would truly be missed. It is interesting to follow the development which is under way in Tanganyika, and which cannot be halted,—to see how it will influence the charming villages and their inhabitants.

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113

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13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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The chief Wwamasika and his family after he had received from me my old "Klepper-Mantle" as a gift.

to enter his hut, where the patient was sitting on the ground with his back to the wall. To heal his patient of the pains, the doctor made some small incisions in his skin near the stomach by means of a triangular-shaped knife, and then he rubbed in the incisions a thick black juice taken from the horn of an antelope (the horn was called *kapembe*, pl. *ulupembe*). The juice was prepared from different roots and herbs as a medicine against stomach pains. In the horn were certain divisions for other medicines, and in each of these divisions was stuck a small (black) stick for removing the specific medicine from it. After this treatment the patient declared that he felt severe pains in the region of his stomach. I asked the doctor for some of his medicines, but he was unwilling to give me anything. Then I promised to bring him next day some European medicines hoping to get in exchange some of his medicaments. 123 757 [415 237]

The following morning I returned. On this occasion I did acquire some of his medicines in exchange for various European tablets, especially as he was most fascinated with the kaliumpermanganatum, of which I gave him a few crystals, explaining to him the use and the dose; when I dissolved some of the crystals before his eyes, it probably seemed to him to be a mystical process. Among the medicines I received then from him was a medicine for luck, called *kwavasako*. Some of the inhabitants of the village, who had meantime appeared, were very unwilling for him to give me this medicine, and maintained that I would take with me all the luck of the village. [777]

On this second visit to the medicine-man, there was again a patient present, and I wanted to take a photograph of the scene because it was 123 755

[i.e., KMNO4. – Analyst]

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

881 I went to the place and got permission to enter the hut in which the first part of the ceremony took place. I found there the parents of the girl, the girl sitting enveloped in clothes in one corner of the hut, and some older females, one of whom was the acting *unnyago*. Some male guests were also present[20]. As the girl had had her first catamenia the present ceremony marked at the same time the end of her preparation for marriage.

[273 278] The *unnyago* prepared a beverage of beer in which a light-brown medical powder *(imbondanya)* was put. First the girl had to drink from it, then the parents followed. This beverage was believed to strengthen *(ubusisya)* the consumers. Then a spear was handed to the girl by her father, and the girl handed it in turn to some relatives of the bridegroom waiting near the hut. These persons had to bring the spear to the girl's bridegroom as a sign that he could now marry the girl[21], but not before he had brought a bull to the girl's father. After this the girl, now sitting in the middle of the hut, was given small gifts from the participants in the ceremony.

[582 583] [431]

[291 342 516 868 415]

Practical instruction of premature girls in house-hold matters.

[302] Following this the whole body of the girl was anointed before the door of the hut. The *unnyago* began by anointing her legs; then the girl herself continued it. The ointment was prepared from castor oil [278] and a powder of red wood *(Kipimba*, found commonly in the environment of Lake Rukwa). At this moment a male participant in the ceremony chanced to, come out of the hut, and suddenly a young woman [606]

[20] Cf. Wilson, Introduction, p. 258; The Study of African Society, p. 11 (The Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. 2, 1939).
[21] *ukwega*: to take (also as regards marrying); *ubwega*: nuptials.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sitting there on the yard got up, as quickly as possible held her hands before her eyes and rushed off. This was because this man was her father-in-law. The strict social tabu in such circumstances is well know[22]. 881 [606]

The next act consisted in shaving the girl's hair on her temples by the *unnyago;* the father was shaved by a younger brother of his in the same manner. (I cannot remember whether it was also the case with the mother of the girl.) [302]

[342 622]

The old fashioned hut of the chief's wife.

Then the further ceremony took place again inside the hut. All the participants sat down on mats, and the *unnyago* accepted the complaints of the parents on the former conduct of their daughter. Sometimes the discussion between these parties, where the *unnyago* played the role of a mediator as is the case with the *unjobi* (or speaker) in the court, reached such a pitch of excitement that I thought a serious quarrel had broken out. The excitement was, perhaps, only of a ceremonial character; I was told, however, that in former times corporeal punishment has been inflicted, if, indeed, the girl had shown misconduct in the times before. [152] [68]

Next, the girl was instructed by the *unnyago* in her duties as a wife. These instructions were of a theoretical or moral nature concerning the correct conduct of the girl towards her parents also after the ceremony and towards her future husband. The practical part of the initiation instructions sometimes comes before this ceremony at the end of initiation. These practical instructions cover the preparing of food 881 867 868

[22] Cf. *Merensky*, p. 128; *Mackenzie*, p. 108 (at Karonga?). According to *Merensky* the daughter-in-law has to observe this tabu also towards the brethren of her father-in-law. All these persons are named *ukamosea*.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

After these admonitions, the mats which the girl had manufactured were inspected. During this examination it was told her that a wife should be seen in the possession of as many beautiful mats as possible, made by her for herself and for her husband. Should the girl reveal such conduct as a wife, *ubusangalufu* (happiness) would be in her hut. 881 867 285

When the proper ceremony seemed to have come to an end, another discussion followed. The girl had told the *unnyago*, during the above mentioned admonition, that her parents also sometimes exchanged angry words. Therefore, a new discussion between the father and the mother arose, in which also the *unnyago* was the "speaker", but the other participants of the ceremony also shared in it, and the discussion too became at times heated. Still, after about 15 minutes, it suddenly came to an end, and the matter in dispute was declared settled. With this the whole ceremony ended. 881 578

8. One day I asked the chief for permission to visit his huts. He dwelt in a rectangular hut *(ikibaja)*. A very beautiful *ikitara* (bed) was in the main room, composed of many sleeping mats *(ubuleli*, pl. *imileli)* and of big round wooden blocks (sections of a tree-trunk), one at the head and a smaller one at the foot of the bed. Each of the four fine mats which lay uppermost had a special name. All the mats rested on sticks of reed laid across beams lying on smaller poles on the floor[25]. These mats were naturally of nearly the same height as the wooden block which formed the head part of the *ikitara*. In some other old-fashioned and better houses in Nyakyusa villages, similar beds were to be seen, but generally the bedsteads are much more simple. 622 352 [342]

One of the most important permissions granted me by the chief was to enter the "store room", connected with his main room by a door. The objects to be seen here were the same as those to be found in other huts or store-rooms, e. g. the big *ifitubu* (baskets) for storing grain, up to four feet high, smeared over with cow-dung and clay, and smaller baskets for different purposes. In one corner hung different kinds of dancing fans *(wukope*, sg.) made of hairs from the tails of bulls, with fine handles of horn. In the dark opposite corner of the same wall there seemed to hang a similar object, but it was wrapped in banana bast. This was the real sign of the chief's dignity, the symbol of his authority and power, named *ubusoigula*. A long discussion was needed to induce the chief to unveil it. Only by constantly consulting by glances the present *amafumu* the chief slowly unveiled it. He told us that 342 353 622 [251] [237] [778] [775]

[25] Cf. *Filishore*, p. 30.

[26] Boulenger I, 1

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 353 622 778 [775] he had received this object from his ancestors and it must always hang on this spot, as the ancestral spirits *(ubusyuka)*[26] themselves controlled its presence. It consisted of an *unswigara*, i. e. the tail of an ox, but the upper part of it was hollow. In this hollow part medicines *(ifingila)*[27] were kept. Yet another magical medicine, in the shape of a [824] piece of bark of the tree called *Erythrophleum Guineense*[28] was fastened at the upper end of this sign. When my European attendant immediately said to the chief: "And from this piece you make your *mwafi*"[29], the chief exclaimed in astonishment: *"Umne wana Kyara!"* (You are sons of Kyara! i. e. You Europeans know everything.)

After this there was no more delay in revealing to us some more features of this sign of dignity. According to the belief of his fathers this object possessed a special *amaka* (power)[30], e. g. to defeat enemies, if the chief were to hold it directly against them. Also if a thief were [789] to try to enter the room by force, by making a hole beneath the wall of this part of the hut, he would be stricken by power coming from the *ubusisya* and he would have the impression that eyes are directed against him, and so be driven away.

[595] After these interesting communications I went to visit the hut of one of his wives, which still revealed the *isyenga*, the old-fashioned round structure of bamboo poles diverging from their upper end and thatched with grass[31].

241 784 9. The frequent walks in company with the chief or some of his *amafumu* gave me several opportunities for enquiries. On one occasion,

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[26] Cf. Wilson, Burial, p. 9: *unsyuka* (Sing.); *Mackenzie*, p. 191: *basyuka* (Karonga).

[27] Cf. *Mackenzie*, p. 275: *ifingira* (Karonga).

[278] [28] The pharmacological substance of the bark (Cortex Erythroploei, „Sassa-bark") is the alcaloid Erythrophlein which produces the same typical effects on the heart as the Digitalis-group (cf. *C. G. Santesson:* Pfeilgiftstudien XII. Arkiv för Botanik 27 A, No. 4, Stockholm 1935, p. 6).

[29] Cf. Wilson, Land Rights, p. 32; *Merensky*, p. 134; *Fülleborn*, p. 309.

[30] *amaka* is not a specific expression for „magical" or (religious) „supernatural" power, although, from the European standpoint this meaning may be connected with the word in specific cases, but generally it means any striking expression or effect of a quality of a person or object, e. g. *upiki eki ngalimo amaka*, in this wood is power. This word is, therefore, a parallel to the Austronesian, especially Polynesian word *mana*, examined in my treatise „Mana. The term of that what is exceedingly striking". Staatliches Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde. I. Reihe. Ethnographie. Vol. 2. Leipzig. 1932. If the Nyakyusa wishes to say that a phenomenon is "supernatural", then he connects it with Kyara, or he names it directly "Kiara" (cf. *Merensky*, p. 118 [197, 218]).

[31] Cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 377, fig. 140: Schematical average of a round-hut (as also to be found with the Nyakyusa still today).

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the figures. Also bicycles, aeroplanes, motor-cars and other striking objects of the European civilization are to be found represented and concentric white circles adjacent to these drawings or paintings. 531 [177]

14. Houses. Sometimes the upper portion of the framework of the rectangular houses is not fully plastered with mud leaving broad open areas or strips horizontally or slopingly to the base-line. This may have its origin in an artistic motive and at the same time be useful in ventilating the interior of the hut. The ancient custom of the Nyakyusa to fill out the spaces between the framework of the walls with flat, oval cakes or clods of clay, supported inside the house by a second framework of bamboo *(uvumango)*, has also a decorative effect. 342 ●

The preparation of those oval sun-dried clay cakes is the work of the women. L. Monteith Fotheringham described this in his "Adventures in Nyasaland" (London 1891, p. 22) with the following words: "The women make the bricks in shape like large eggs by pressing the clay between their hands." The building of the framework of the hut and the thatching of the roof is the task of the men. Nyumba means "the house" in Kinyakyusa as wellas in Swahili; *isyenga* is the name for the old-fashioned hut of the Nyakyusa possessing a round baseline and a framework expanding upwards in diameter. The rectangular hut is called *ikibaga* and the smaller rectangular hut used as a store or a fowl pen, *akabaga*. It is interesting to note that there is no special word for roof in Kinyakyusa. This part of the hut or house is simply called "the above" *(iyuru)*. In contrast to this fact the different poles of the roof-structure are specially named according to their position parallel to or at right angels to the ridge of the rectangular houses. *Ukutalike* means to bind the different rafters of the roof together; *imbanda* is the name for the supporting poles of the roof, and *isyenga* for the poles of the framework of the walls. [334 462] [113]

15. Outfit. Inside the house we find besides the bedsteads *(ikitara*, pl. *(fitara)* and the household utensils, the grinding-mill *(urusuara)*, consisting of an upper (smaller) and a lower (broader) stone. The flour falls into a basket placed in front of the mill. Sometimes in a corner of the hut a nest *(ikitero)* for a sitting hen on top of a pole is to be found. Outside the house is a place for the sweepings *(urutagilio)*. The cleaning of the interior of the houses and also the repairing of the mud plaster is the task of the women, but I saw men cleaning the space in front of the huts. At any case, it must be acknowledged that the cleanliness of a Nyakyusa village leaves little to be desired. 352 [42] [231] 356 462

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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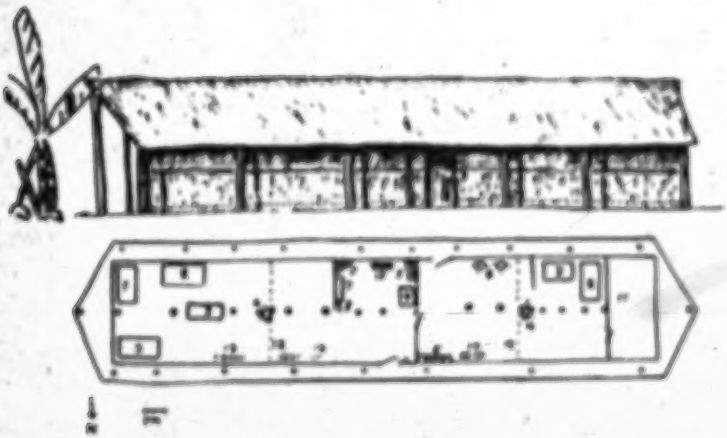

An *ikhaya* in the village of Kiwambela, the district of Rungwale, belonging to a man with two wives. The rooms have bamboo ceilings from dotted lines to either gable. Posts reaching to ridge of roof are filled in. 1, husband's bed; 2, wife's bed; 3, child's bed; 4, hearth; 5, beer room; 6, water jar; 7, roost; 8, ladder; 9, table; 10, stools; 11, store-room; 12, dotted lines show limitation of ceiling; 13, small objects; 14, working material; 15, sleeping mat.

born. On page 357, he reports how the boys, when 7 or 10 years old, will leave their parents' house to live in long, rectangular cowhouse-like houses big or small, in a special youngsters' quarter at the far end of the village. On page 358 he writes: In many cases you do not know for certain whether you are dealing with a youngsters' house or a cowhouse—for the cattle may well be kept in these houses—or the herdsmen may sleep in the cowhouses. However, this mostly holds true of the low-lying Konde country, while on the other hand, in the high country, the cattle is usually kept in the dwelling houses. On pages 371 and 372, he relates how the cattle is tied to posts at night, and he shows a picture of a cowhouse. [343] [34 201]

He also refers (on page 376) to the use of the rectangular house for married men besides the boys. The difference is seen in the fact that these houses are not roughcast with mud, as this work is the province of women. Finally, he reports that, during the last few years of his stay in the Konde country, he saw Konde houses being built under increasing influence of the coastal culture, in imitation of the Swahili houses. They were roughcast with mud inside and out, and had a verandah supported by posts. [462] [771]

In 1955, many *ikhaya* could be seen. Some were for the cattle, but most were dwelling houses for married people. (Boys aged 7–10 and upwards until the marriageable age lived in *ipumbakile* boys' houses, the material of which was not bamboo, but a thinner grass, resembling bamboo very much. These houses stood [824] [859]

14:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done." (G. Wilson, Introduction, p. 260). 241

The putting of maize-grains as seed into the earth is the women's work, the sowing of millet *(maleei)* of both sexes. If you ask the men after they had come home from their work: "*Mukumbide ifivanya fya nangi?*", "Whose fields did you hoe?", the answer often may be: "*Tukumbide ifivanya fya tata!*" We have hoed the fields of our father. [243 462]

In former times, the Nyakyusa had a lot of ceremonies relating to the beginning of the hoeing season and of the beginning of the harvest-work. They are, however, nowadays nearly extinguished under the influence of European culture. [177]

With respect to the beginning of the hoeing season, a very comprehensive ceremony had to be carried out by the chief in community whith the *wapanga* (medicine man) for providing the fields with extraordinary *(-siya)* power *(amaka)*: *amaka amasiya*, in this case: fertility. 241 622 [192]

When the crop was ripe, it was (at first) forbidden *(mwiko)* to take anything from the crop before the chief had given the permission. First the oldest male villagers informed the chief that it may be now the just time to give the crop free for the people, saying: "The people is hungry, we will now give them to eat!" Then the chief ordered that 6 or 8 (maize') corn-cobs were brought to him, and he sent these corn-cobs by a messenger to the (holy) offering-grove where they must be put down. After that has been correctly executed, he gave the permission for reaping the new crop. [182]

(NB. It was believed that those corn-cobs put into the offering-grove were eaten especially from the leopards. The powdered bones of the leopards were considered important ingredients of the consecration drink which the chief had to take at his initiation ceremonies and which should give him the strength *(amaka)* of a leopard, so that he also was called "the leopard" or "the leopard chief".) [237 825]

4. *Herding the Cattle and Cleansing the Stables.* The sociological importance of cattle among the Nyakyusa and the specific practice among them of herding the cattle by herdboys, that is also of highly sociological importance for the structure of the Nyakyusa society, is already described by G. Wilson (Introduction, p. 269 f). 233

The cleansing of the stables of which the Nyakyusa possess a great number of very well built ones, which have also sometimes a considerable length — apart from the cattle kraals —, is the task of 233 343 462

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

233 the women, but the men are responsible for keeping the floor of the
343 stable in good repair. For this purpose a specific tool is used, called
462 ukutoba indobelu. It is round on top, flattened on the lower side and
[413] provided with a handle.

224 5. *Hunting.* Sometimes the Nyakyusa go out to hunt, but nowadays hunting is much more restricted than in former times as described e. g by Mackenzie in his book: "The spirit-ridden Konde" (London 1925). This record, however, deals mostly with the Ngonde of the environment of Karonga whose interesting social history was unsurpassably revealed to us by Mr. Godfrey Wilson's treatise: "The Constitution of Ngonde" (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, Number Three. Livingstone, Northern Rhodesia 1939.) Hunting in the Nyakyusa country is now [656] curtailed by governmental regulations. Hunting *(ukufuema)*, therefore, does not supply an essential part of the food requirements of the [136] natives. The colobus apes on the slopes of the Rungwe volcano and the [656] Poroto Mountains are sometimes killed for their attractive black and white skins, but fortunately this is now forbidden by the government. Otherwise these apes would be exterminated in quite a short time, [439] since the skins of these apes are in great demand with some Europeans for rugs and covers. Naturally, the hunting of lions and especially of leopards, which even nowadays still cause great damage, is not restricted.

224 The hunting of game for food is often done with dogs *(imbwa)* which
231 have small bells *(ingesi)* on collars round their necks. Thereby the hunter *(umfuemi)* always knows the whereabouts of his dog. The chase is continued till the dog or dogs are exhausted. The object of the hunt *(umfuemu)* is generally a small type of antelope *(akanya)*, e. g. in the [656] environment of Mwakalele, as I was instructed. The usual time for hunting is the cooler season, but to-day a permit of the government is also required.

223 Catching birds by means of traps *(untegu, pl. imitegu)* is still common in the Nyakyusa area. I have also seen such traps constructed by means of the flicking-gallow's principle also in the vicinity of Utengule among the Safwa. The herd boys especially set traps to catch quails *(imbesi)* when the malesi (millet) harvest is over. Sometimes smaller birds are also coursed until they are exhausted and then slain. One day I found a stick vertically put on the soil and with a triangle made of smaller sticks at its top. The horizontal part of which was smeared with an adhesive substance. I was told that this was a trap for birds.

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

343 Also the stables I saw were very clean; their length is adjusted to the number of cattle which are sheltered therein. Sometimes a wooden hoop is to be found in such a stable, hanging down from the ceiling. [251] The inside of the hoop is filled with a wicker-work whose meshes are dense enough to hold fruits to be dried. If such a hoop is hanging in the stable being out of use, a bag made of leaves containing pumpkin seeds *(ikyugu)* for later planting may be fastened to it, and on the beams of 233 the framework of the walls you may find a plaited leather neckband *(ulukoba)* for cows destined to hold a cow's bell *(ibengala)*. The sound of the bells of the cattle gave already great delight to the first European visitors of Nyakyusa and Ngonde Land, as we can read with Fotheringham (p. 24): "It is a pretty sight to see the herd coming into villages in the evening, and pleasant to hear the tinkle of the bells which are suspended from their necks, recalling in homely quietude the peaceful scenes of the Swiss."

184 101 The daily life of the Nyakyusa differs more or less among the different ethnic groups which in former times had been independent units. Nowadays, however, all those groups who have similar speech and customs and share, therefore, a progressing common culture, only distinguished by minor local peculiarities, are called by the common name "Nyakyusa" (Cf. G. Wilson: An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society. Bantu Studies, Vol. X, 1936, p. 334 f).

Synopsis

030 Verfasser beschreibt in diesem zweiten Bericht die verschiedenen Arbeiten aus dem Alltagsleben der Nyakyusa. Die Betreuung der großen Rinderherden, einschließlich des Melkens, ist Männersache, die Frauen reinigen nur die Ställe. Die Männer hacken die Felder, die Frauen säen, reinigen, ernten und bereiten alle Nahrung zu. Diese Arbeitsteilung fand Verfasser bis noch unangetastet, dagegen waren die zahlreichen mit Saat und Ernte verbundenen Zeremonien durch den europäischen Einfluß fast verschwunden. Ebenso war der Verfall der traditionellen Künste und Handwerke weit fortgeschritten durch europäische Einwirkungen wie durch die überall verstreuten indischen Händler als Vermittler der europäischen Waren. Diese hatten auch die traditionelle Kleidung abgewandelt (als die Europäer kamen, gingen die Eingeborenen noch überwiegend nackt). Die alten geometrischen Muster, die äußere Hüttenwände und Türen schmückten, waren zum Teil mit Zeichnungen von Fahrrädern, Autos, Flugzeugen u.a. durchsetzt. Während früher auch das Alltagsleben der Nyakyusa in deren verschiedenen ähnlichen Gruppen deutliche Unterschiede aufwies, sind diese ehemals unabhängigen Einheiten unter den europäischen Einwirkungen mehr und mehr kulturell zusammengewachsen.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 (82) grove. According to custom, we should kill a bull here at the same
762 time as one is killed at Lubaga. A messenger from there finds us eating.
776 That was the custom when the chiefs were really chiefs. Now we neglect the rituals. Mwakinoya (111) cut a ripe banana stem for us, but now the bananas are rotting in the homesteads without ripening [owing to our failure to sacrifice]. If our fathers did not sleep they sacrificed cattle, but if we do not sleep we merely offer beer.

Then Kasitile recalled the quarrel between the men of Mwaipopo (116) and those of Lubaga.

Why did you insult Mwakinoya (111) saying 'What remains of your power?' When we built the Court House in Mwaipopo's country, (344) Mwakinoya's men came to help, and some advised that a beast should be sent to Lubaga to seek blessing on the Court, but others said: 'What use is Lubaga?' . . . Mwakinoya cut a banana stem for us and said 'Seek another cow oh thou Mwakagile' (59, i.e. identifying Kasitile with the grandfather of the chief Mwaipopo whom he represented).

This, however, was an invention of Kasitile's. He continued: 'I, Kasitile, have seen a sacrifice at the grove of Mwaijonga (82) twice, at that of Mwaipopo (115) once, and at that of Mwakalonle (117) once, but at Lubaga Kyala has received us frequently.' To which Mwambuputa replied: 'Yes, Kyala has helped us.'

Under pressure from Kasitile and the other priests of his chiefdom Mwaipopo did eventually provide a cow for sacrifice at the grove of his father Mwaijonga (82) but the description of that ritual is deferred to a later chapter.

771 A fundamental conception in Nyakyusa religion is that the proper working of the natural order depends upon harmony of the social order; on proper co-operation between the 'divine king' and his 'sons' the chiefs, between priests and chiefs, and between them and the whole community. If the Lwembe or a rain-
[734] maker is offended, that causes drought or flood in the area of his
[821] influence. When there is heavy rain in Selya it is said, 'There is anger at Lubaga' or 'There is anger at Lwembe's place'. Mwanjala II (78) talking of how angry he had been over an insult remarked, 'Had it been the wet season there would have been a torrent of rain.'

[578] And not only does quarrelling between chiefs and priests bring public misfortune; it reacts upon their own health. Now Kasitile
755 linked his ill-health with the quarrel between Mwakinoya (111)
771 of Lubaga and the men of Mwaipopo (116) over the Court, and Mwaipopo's failure to provide cattle for sacrifice has just been

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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IV. A CHRISTIAN BOYS' VILLAGE BEING BUILT ROUND A SCHOOL
(the larger building in the centre of the picture)

[facing p. 35]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

(*akasuya ulufumbe*). Rich people kill a cow 'to clear out the litter' 764
which, like those killed at the burial, is said to go with the deceased [856]
to the land of the shades.

Some time later (the date varies from one ritual to another) they 764
build a little hut at the intersection of two paths—cross-roads—or, 346
if there is no cross-roads near, on the path to the stream, and in this hut they make a hearth with fire-bricks (*amafiga*); a fire is lighted and each participant in turn puts oil-seeds from the *amyungwi* tree into a potsherd on the fire, saying as he does so: 'This is the death of my mother (etc.).' The seeds are mixed with 764
medicine and, when they are roasted, are ground for ointment. Then beans are put on with water in the same fashion, each participant pouring a little water and saying: 'This is the ritual of my mother (etc.).' Next, the participants are made to sit down on a bark-cloth. The officiant draws lines on the head of each with a bunch of *ikinjele* grass dipped in the lees of beer, and as she shaves him she mocks him saying: 'Poor fool, it found its mother was dead, went stealing, and they have speared it on the head.' Then the participants go to wash, each wearing two banana leaves round his loins and two round his neck. One of each pair is a plantain, and it is put on first, the other is a sweet banana and it comes on top. And each participant sticks a plantain into his (or her) waistband in front, and a sweet banana behind. When they [783]
come to the stream each participant sits down in it and the officiant puts pebbles between his fingers and toes, in the crooks of his elbows and knees, in his mouth and ears, and on his head. These, and the leaves and bananas he wore, are allowed to flow away in the water. They return to the temporary hut carrying flowers, *kalengelenge* and *kakonfu*, which they throw on to the roof, and the officiant pours water she has brought in a little calabash on to the thatch above the doorway, while each participant in turn runs through the drops, out at a back door, in again and out through the drops. As they come home millet is scattered on the ground before them, then they eat roasted bananas with lentils (and sometimes pumpkin-seeds) stuck in them as in the Selya ritual, boiled bananas and beans, a bean mash, and roasted chicken or, sometimes, meat. The bananas are from the plantain stem they stole and from a sweet banana stem provided by the family, and some of the food is salted, some unsalted. As they eat they look in the direction from which their lineage came, then the officiant anoints them with ointment (made from the oil-seeds

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

158 and fashions earth with his fingers, tying some up in leaves and rolling
828 some up between his palms, if he does things which they do in the ritual, then they perform the whole ritual. Saga, Jenale's grandmother, did these things, but then they began to perform the ritual and at once she recovered. She just talked to herself and went on moulding earth. She could not throw her clothes away for she was sick, her death was very near. As soon as they had done the ritual and she had recovered, she died. The reason they had not performed a complete ritual for her was because she had been away at the time it was performed. She had run off with a lover. It was the ritual of her mother which was not performed for her.

It is clear that, though informants were not agreed about the distinguishing features of the two types of madness, they were agreed about its general characteristics, and that one form was connected with neglect of rituals.

764 QUESTION: Why the little hut?
946 MWAMULENGA (an old chief): When performing the ritual they build a little hut in which to carry it out. This hut tells us of the man's behaviour when alive, he lived in a house. So that now he is dead we kill his home too, and that is why they destroy the hut at the end of the ritual. They perform the ritual in a house because he lived in a house.

764 QUESTION: Why the stealing of the stem of plantains?
MWAMULENGA: This tells us about driving the disease away, that the disease which killed him should leave our homestead. The stem of bananas is a symbol (*ikimwepile*) of the disease. We do not know where the disease came from. When we steal the bananas we think that the disease came from some other place and killed him, it has not always been in our house. That is why we go to another homestead to steal the stem of bananas. But when we are driven away with the bananas that is a symbol of driving the disease away again, we drive the disease away. Sometimes the householders come out and drive us away, sometimes they stay still, and we who have come with the thief drive him away. We arrange with the householder beforehand. The meaning is the same in either case.

QUESTION: Why the food?
MWAMULENGA: The salted and unsalted food, the mush, the beans and bananas which they take out separately, the chicken, the roast bananas, those in which they put lentils and pumpkin-seeds—all these they eat, for they are afraid that if they do not, but leave one of them out, then when they eat, in the ritual of other people, some of those they omitted, the ritual will infect them. So that is why they eat everything. If a man doesn't eat any chicken he will catch the disease afterwards from the very smell of a ritual chicken!

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XI

Arts & Crafts

• 346 177 AS I write there is a church being erected at Kyimbila to seat about seven hundred and fifty people. It has fifteen windows, each with three Gothic arches, and six doors each with its Gothic arch. This work was done, with only amateur supervision, by native workmen, of whom only one has had any kind of training, all the rest being young men, some of whom had never handled a trowel, and the best of them had not had more than a few months' now and again at similar work. A good deal of pulling down and rebuilding had to be done, but the building, as it stands, with its buttresses and arched doors and windows, has a dignified and satisfying appearance. The carpentry is being done with the assistance of a trained man from Nyasaland, all the other carpenters being men with a training, or lack of it, similar to that of the bricklayers. The church is cruciform in shape, and the placing of the crown couples, if that is correct designation, was a triumph of ingenuity and patience.

176 Now there is nothing in Konde arts and crafts to lead one to think all this a natural development of what they did before. For the remarkable thing

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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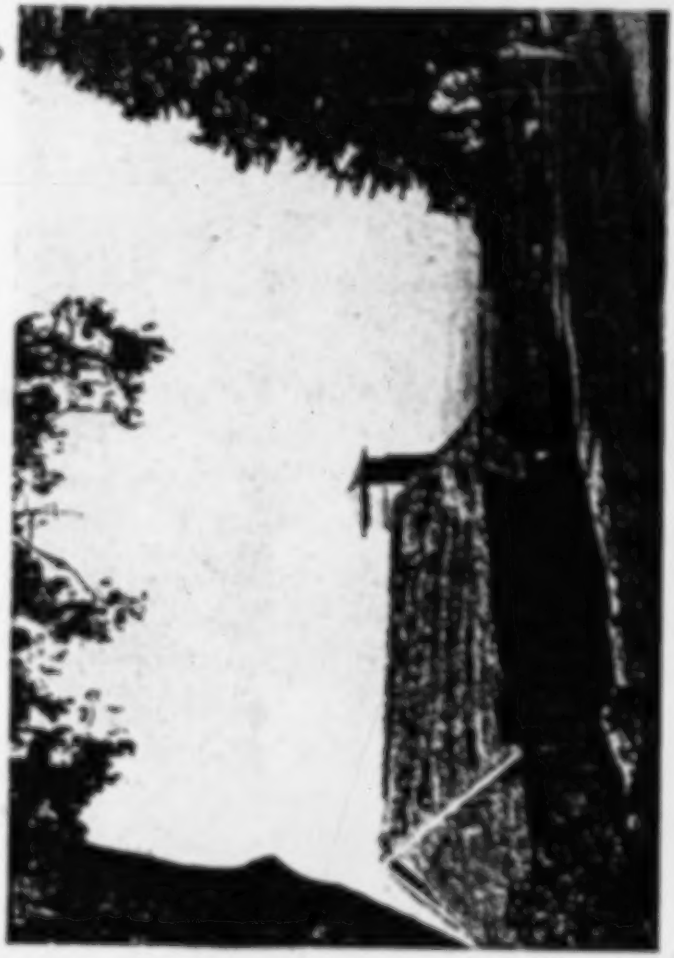

11. NGONDE CHURCH

[Facing p. 119]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

577 515 us that it was a great effort to her to accept food from the Poroto when she went on preaching tours, because their huts and pots were so dirty.

•351 577 Trees are felt to add to the dignity of a homestead as well as throwing a grateful shade; the beautiful *umuali* trees have long been valued for this purpose, and to-day exotics are much sought after. For example, the old chief Mwaipopo, noticing a fine cypress when he visited us at Isumba (a cottage that had once been a German mission hospital) inquired whether there were not some seedlings under the tree. He himself carefully dug up one and took it away to plant in his 'capital'. Some Nyakyusa even *steal* trees to adorn their homesteads. It is said that jacarandas planted out in an avenue at Tukuyu disappeared within a very short time.

341 577 177 The attributes of dignity in the homestead are changing perceptibly. Well-built huts in the old style, a long *ikibaga*, a well-swept court, fruitful bananas, and fine *umuali* trees are mentioned by the old men; but many of the younger ones prefer hip-roofed houses (a style introduced by Europeans and known, appropriately enough, as 'the partridge') with windows and door of European pattern, beds of flowers, roses, fine coffee and exotic trees. Yet they keep the court well swept; for lawns have not become fashionable.

577 A fine presence, a well-kept homestead rich in cattle and bananas and shaded with stately trees, are in themselves impressive, but the possessor of them only reaches his full dignity when he acts as host, and uses his fine food and fine home for lavish hospitality. Wealth and an impressive manner, without urbanity and hospitality, may well lead to accusations of witchcraft.

c. Display

156 Feasts provide opportunity for swaggering parades and dances in which the Nyakyusa delight to display themselves and their possessions; they are the great occasions for *ukumuya*, that is, display in approved forms. Dancing, exhibiting a beautiful body with only a narrow bark-cloth belt to hide it, showing off physical strength and the aggressiveness of a warrior, parading orna-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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a. Leaping on the newly filled grave

[facing p.21]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

maids and always carries a mat or cloth to screen her face from [58]
her father and his contemporaries, her father's full sisters, her older brothers,[1] and her 'mothers-in-law' (*abakamwana*).[2] These she must fear and respect (*akatile*) and so avoid. Her father-in-law and his brothers she avoids altogether from the time of her engagement, or at least after she has reached the age of 8 or 9. Her companions do not *akatile* with her, though those of them who are already betrothed will, of course, avoid their own fathers-in-law.

During the period of seclusion the girls have two specific tasks: to weave the fine mats used as beds, and to fetch firewood. Every [258]
bride should take to her husband's home at least one fine mat (*ulwyaza*) which she has made herself, as well as several coarse ones (*imisefe*),[3] and weaving a fine mat is a lengthy task, occupying a skilful woman a month. Each girl weaves for herself, but the firewood that each must fetch is stacked in the bride's mother's loft. The bride also occupies herself hammering out bark-cloth, [257]
pleating it for the strip worn between the legs, and decorating bark-cloth belts (*nide* plate 5), so that she may have the fresh ones required during the ritual, and a supply to take with her to her husband's; but this work is not emphasized as an obligation: rather it is a recreation. Women take great pride in the decora- [531]
tion of their belts—we watched several brides making them and handing them round for the admiration of their fellows. The maids may work in the fields if required to do so, but the bride herself does not, and 'she gets fat because she does not have much work to do'. The whole ritual normally lasts about three months, but if, for some reason such as a pressing need to go out to work, the husband is in a hurry for its completion, various acts may be telescoped. The time-table depends primarily on when the marriage-cattle and food for the various feasts are ready.

From the time of first menstruation until she does it ritually, a [88]
bride should neither wash nor oil herself. The prohibition is felt [515]
to be a very onerous one and some girls now break it, but women [177]
said 'in the old days we did not wash'. 'Girls nowadays are more cunning. We were afraid.'

[1] Some informants denied that she avoided father's sisters or brothers. Others insisted that she must avoid them because 'brothers are fathers, and father's full sisters are father'. [96]

[2] i.e. her husband's own mother and other women he calls mother. In this account the plural 'mothers' indicates own and classificatory mothers. [60]

[3] Nyakyusa beds are made of layers of mats laid on rollers between two logs at head and foot. One chief's bed we saw was made up of sixty-eight mats. [252]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

notwithstanding the accident, accepted the inevitable, 505
and were ferried safely across.

For the rest, the variety of woodwork includes 322
carved walking-sticks, with straight, knobbed, or bent 352
handles; chairs, stools, pillows, musical instruments, and wooden platters. In the Bundali district remarkably good Rurkee chairs are made on the European pattern, with perfectly smoothed spars, and perfectly burned-out holes for fitting the parts together. The one in my possession might quite well have been made in a carpenter's shop, but the only tools used were an axe and a knife, and a piece of iron for boring the holes. Toothed hair ornaments and [301
small wooden dolls represent the finer work; and 524
bamboo cups are decorated with pleasing patterns in 415]
poker work.

More important than the woodwork is the ancient 323
craft of the potter. There is, of course, no potter's 415
wheel, everything, from the immense pots, three feet high, down to the smallest eating dish, being formed by hand, built up, as regards the larger ones, by successive layers of clay, and finally hardened, after drying in the sun, by being put on a fire, while another fire is kindled inside. There is a great variety of pots, both in shape and in size. The very large ones are used for storing grain or flour; and some Europeans employ them for storing water. A well-stocked house will have up to twenty pots, for water carrying, for cook- 323
ing porridge, fish, beans, flesh; and special ones are 415
kept for beer making and drinking. The best clay is 317
found at the north end of the lake, and from there

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

769 796 pumpkin leaves were ready to eat, an elaborate first-fruit ceremony was formerly carried out. The new season's food was offered first by the nobles of Ngonde in the grove of the previous Kyungu, the one who had last died.

[778] The great chiefs would do so next, each at his own sacred grove (the grove of his own predecessor in the title). And after them everyone, both chiefs and people, each at his father's grove. All offered first fruits to their own shades. And finally they would themselves eat, each with his chief wife. But they would not eat beforehand for fear of angering the shades.

643 796 [721] In time of tribal war also the Kyungu and nobles of Ngonde led the people in prayer. All chiefs and nobles were summoned from the plain and the great ones entered the Kyungu's house to receive their instructions:

[722] When he had finished speaking he would tell them to go and pray. So they would leave his house and gather all together, all the chiefs, and the other men, and pray. The premier noble of Ngonde would begin asking each of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn to bless them in the fight. And then the great chiefs would pray after him.

This organization of religious ritual in the Ngonde plain was both a factor of and itself determined by the general political structure. Many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions, but the reverse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular significance, the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle [782] were sent to Lubaga by the chiefs to be sacrified for rain and health; but the 'clearing out of the ashes' was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruits ritual at all; while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

643 789 The majesty (*ubwinge*) of the Kyungu was cultivated in a variety of ways. He smeared himself with ointment made from lion fat, and his bed was built up with elephant tusks and lion pelts. He [352] was enthroned on the sacred iron stool called Kisumbi, he had a [293] spear, Kamisa, and Mulima, a porous piece of iron 'like a mouth organ' used to make rain, all handed down from the first Kyungu. [778] His zebra tails, set with medicines in horn handles, were waved in

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

by horizontal bamboo joists, at right angles to the principal beams of the ceiling. This ceiling never covers the entire room, but only the greater part, and always the part directly above the hearth. Up here firewood is placed to dry. A fine black basket is hung from the ceiling above the fire. Access to the loft is by means of a ladder. 342 [372]

Where you read reports by the 'first' Europeans on these peoples and their houses, they always refer to a round house with reclining walls and a conical roof. Moresby (1894) mentions and illustrates such a house (pages 141 et seq.). Fülleborn (1906) mentions and illustrates several houses (Text Volume pages 376 et seq., and Atlas, plates 64-67). The inner surface of the walls of the house was decorated with patterns impressed into the mud layer which covers the bamboo poles. The three stones that form the hearth are shown, and also the bed behind a low permanent partition wall. These were exceptionally fine houses with beautiful, decorated and painted doors. The entrance had relief ornaments, often of coloured clay. Fülleborn notes that the mud houses are the dwellings of married people. [352]

There is no doubt that that round house is the original type of dwelling. In 1955, I saw no round houses like the ones described by the above scholars, but I know that formerly they were often seen, at least as late as 1930. Professor Monica Wilson of Cape Town has told me that she saw them everywhere in 1932, but that during a visit to the district in 1955 she found only one single house of this type, in the village of Mundo. 178 342

At the time of my visit, round houses could be seen, but not the type having walls inclining towards near the ground, and they were not by far so imposing as the houses mentioned above; and there were not many of them. I had the opportunity to make drawings of three houses, all occupied by old people. 342

The round house is called an ilanga. In one of these ilanga there lived an old man whose wife, Malia, lived across the courtyard in a rectangular hut of the old Nyakyusa type (see infra). The husband's house was 6.5 metres wide, and was divided in halves by a fence made from sticks. One half was where the man lived; it had one bed for him, and one for his grandchildren, who would come to visit him, now and then. Near the wall were two iron chests; also, a board had been hung at the wall as a nest for the chickens. A hen's nest, a small wicker basket, was placed about 3 ft. above the floor in the fashion of a bar or five-pronged stick. These hen's nests are seen in all houses. The ceiling was supported by seven upright posts, seemingly placed entirely at random. The outer side of the roof was strengthened by eight circular-running fastens of bamboo. In the centre, a heavy log (not bamboo) reached up to the pointed top of the roof. [591] [353] [352] [231]

The other half of the house was reserved for the cattle, there one and two calves; there were five posts to which the cattle were tied at night. [231]

The house had an outer door at each end, but there was no passage from the man's half to that of the cattle.

12: Diagaard E-5 (1955) 1962 F917 Nconde F917
Nyakyusa

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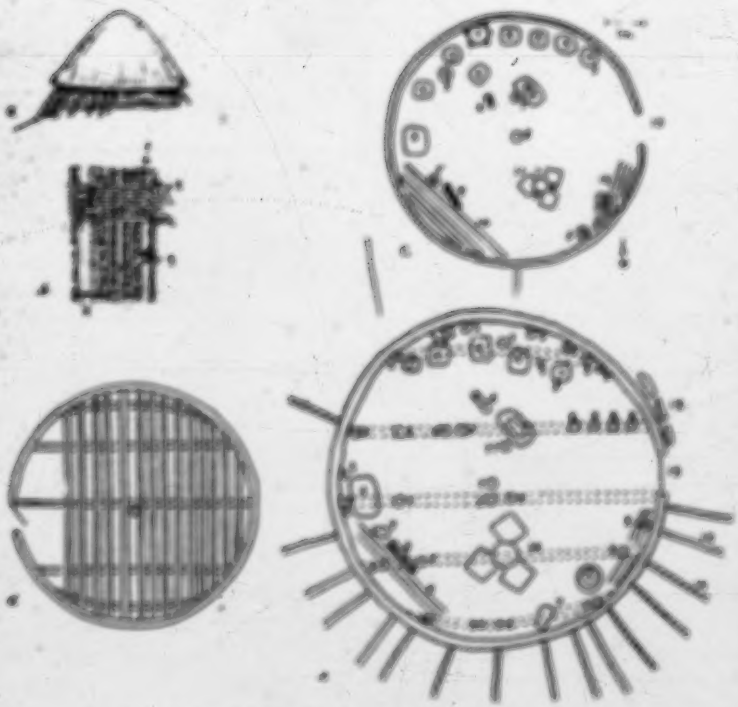

Ivanga. Mahiba's house at Ibale near the Rungwe mission station.

a. Elevation showing horizontal posts; to the right of the door is material for thatching.—b. Detail of wall. 1, cow's horn; 2, bark fibre for winding round poles; 3, notch made in bamboo pole that was crooked; 4, bamboo.—c. Plan of house showing furnishings and utensils on the floor, but not the sticks that were lying everywhere (see plan c). 1, bed's area; 2, basket; 3, jar; 4, newly made basket; 5, calabash; 6, broom; 7, roll-stone and grinder; 8, cooking pot (here were a couple of bananas for food); 9, sleeping mat; 10, small under-ceiling from sticks tied together, for small things; 11, hearth; 12, heap of ashes, a kind of grass which looks much like thin bamboo.—d. Cross-section at ceiling level showing cooking pot, beams, and joins on which the sticks are placed; the cooking pot reaches right up to the top of the roof.—e. Plan of house showing beams of the ceiling (dotted lines, cf. d). 1, cooking pot; 2, other beam-carrying posts; 3, bed's area; 4, basket; 5, calabash; 6, broom; 7, calabash; 8, sleeping mat; 9, small under-ceiling, repository for small things; 10, hearth from three stones; 11, roll-stone and small grinder; 12, thatching material; 13, door; 14, outside harmonn.

342. The round house was standing on somewhat higher ground than the surrounding harmonn; half the house was harmonn by wooden posts, possibly because the ground was a bit lower there. The walls were from bamboo poles,

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

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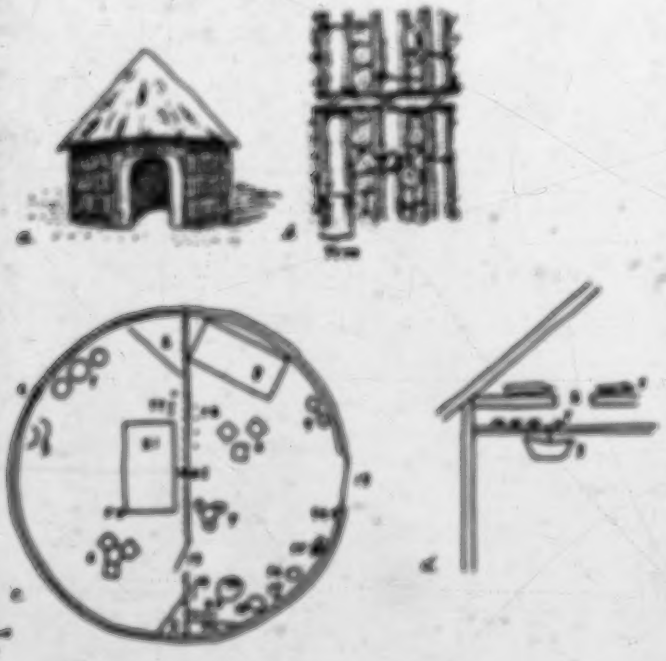

Image. Tuhoma's house at Rungwe, Sept. 1955.

a. Elevation, showing doorway with walls drawn too thick; the door itself has been left out.—b. Outside detail of wall showing split cross-bamboos; red clay cube between poles.—c. Plan: 1, jars; 2, shelves; 3, shards etc. (an shards is a flat basket used as a plate); 4, small window; 5, centre post; 6, hearth; 7, water jar; 8, square bed; 9, banana fibers; 10, bird's nest; 11, sticks; 12, sticks for bitches cassada; 13, door; 14, post for boiling device; 15, stone grinding trough; 16, basket with bananas; 17, pestle; 18, hoe; 19, shovel, used for collecting flour from grinding stone; 20, bamboo ladder; 21, bed of the women; 22, seat.—d. Cross-section of bamboo ceiling, with firewood for drying, and a fire basket below.

connected near the ground with two fore arms which easily fitted into the hollow of the bamboos. Between these two fore arms, the liquid manure from the cow-house could escape—much to the benefit of the nearby bananas.

The other things belonged to the old widow, Tuhoma. She lived alone in her house. The walls were bamboos, up to 7 cm in diameter. From the inside, the space between the poles had been filled with 3-5 cm large cube of red clay. Round the outside were four horizontal bands of split bamboos.

This house, too, was 6.5 metres in diameter, and it was divided into two equal [353]

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

392 353 parts. The partition wall was bamboo and mud. A doorway gave on to the inner part, where Tufwene had her bed.

394 There were two hearths, one in each room. The front one was not used. In the outer room was a bed for guests—a common feature of all houses. Tufwene was thought to be well off, and she had plenty of carrying slings, used by the 482 women when they carry loads, often very heavy, on their heads. The inner room was used for storm, including a number of earthen jars. She had three very fine, 352 hoe woods. I saw them outside in the sun, but their usual place was no doubt in the outer room, which had the character of a workroom. Here were the large 412 wooden mortar and its long pestle; also the grinding stone and in a corner the small mat, the ulumwa, which is used to take up the newly ground flour. There 417 was also the ladder, used for fetching down firewood from the loft; you could see 415 the hen's nest, and the large water jar with its painted bottom placed on three stones.

408 The third image belonged to an eighty-year-old woman whose husband had 769 died. She told me how every day she would fill a fine, decorated bamboo mug 651 with milk for him! These mugs, seen in all the houses, mostly have geometrical

395 231 352 353

Houses belonging to Mafia Ukiwalwa and her husband.

a. Detail of image, outer wall. 1, two fine stone joined to bamboo pole—note aperture for liquid measure; 2, bamboo pole with plant fibre windings; 3, split bamboo.—b, Mafia's dwelling.—c. Plan of image. 1, bed of the man; 2, iron chests for garments; 3, door; 4, posts supporting ceiling; 5, hen's nest; 6, farm and pestle for the maize mortar; 7, hearth; 8, chests; 9, bed of the grandchildren; 10, water from hollowed out trunk; 11, low partition; 12, posts for drying cards; 13, stones pots in top of roof.

12: Blagsard E-5 (1955) 1962 F917 Mgunde F917
Nyakyusa

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narrow tunnel into the bamboo; they are hung upside down so the dust will not settle in them. The bamboo is the natural partition of the bamboo cane.

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The house was standing on high, slightly sloping ground, and like the first mentioned house it was buttressed by a great number of thick branches. Incidentally, it seemed to be very old and rickety. Inside, there were a great many posts supporting the horizontal bamboo ceiling and the eaves of forecourt. All posts were bifurcated and held the beams solidly in place. The diameter of the house was the usual 4.5 metres, but in this case there was no inner partition. As this woman was very poor, she had no bed, but slept on a mat on the floor. Only very rarely is there no bed in the houses; I remember having seen this only three times.

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The hearth was the usual type: three decorated square stones, rising to a height of 30 cm above the floor, but being sunk 30 cm into the ground. Here they were positioned on one side, to ensure that the centre post would not catch fire, and to make for easy escape of the smoke through the doorway. None of the houses have other means of smoke outlet.

Alongside the wall were calabashes, jars, and baskets; essential for the baskets, and a little away from the wall, the large roll-stone and its appurtenant smaller grinding stone. A hen's nest was not missing either. Along one side was fixed a small under-ceiling for the storage of small things. Two or three hammocks, meant to be her own stand, were lying on the floor near one of the posts. From the left she reached down a rabbit in which she had been carrying her child. Its inside was of a reddish colour.

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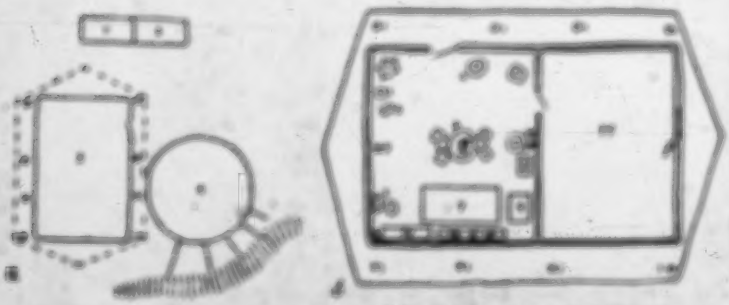
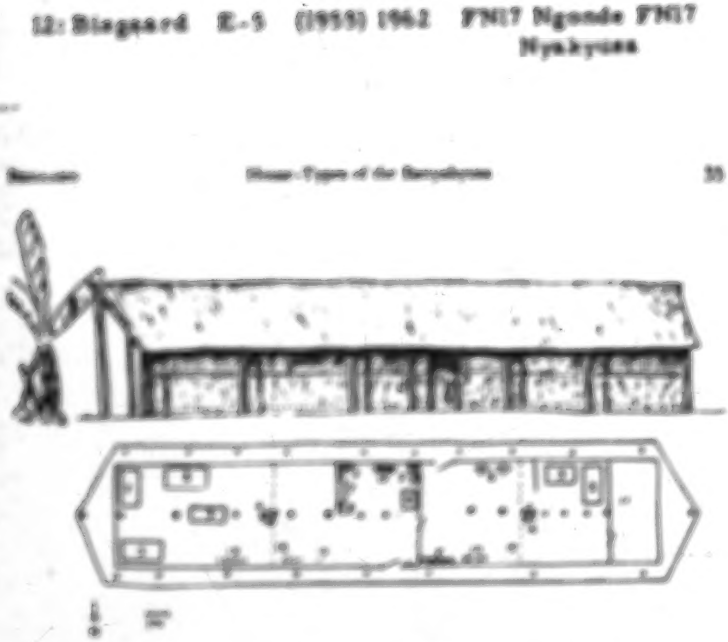


a. Site plan of Mabie Ulwyalwa's houses. r, forecourt; s, drying-racks for crops; g, Mabie's village with roof supports along sides; g, range belonging to Mabie's husband, with buttresses on low ground.—b. Plan of Mabie's village (faced window in back room). r, hen's nest; s, drying (small); g, posts (those going up to ridge of roof are filled in); g, large baskets; g, baskets; f, clay base round main posts; t, Mabie's bed; f, chair; g, wooden chest; m, table; m, back room, having bamboo ceiling carried by bamboo cross beam (between posts marked g); the room is used for storing clothes, etc.; m, shelves.

12: Blegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa



An dabaga in the village of Kiwanda, the district of Rungwe, belonging to a man with two wives. The rooms have bamboo ceilings from dotted lines to ridge-pole. Plan reaching to ridge of roof are filled in. 1, husband's bed; 2, wife's bed; 3, child's bed; 4, hearth; 5, bread oven; 6, water jar; 7, roof; 8, ladder; 9, table; 10, stools; 11, storerooms; 12, dotted lines show footholes of ceiling; 13, small objects; 14, working material; 15, sleeping mat.

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leave. On page 351, he reports how the boys, when 7 or 10 years old, will leave their parents' house to live in long, rectangular cowhouse-like houses big or small, in a special youngsters' quarter at the far end of the village. On page 358 he writes: In many cases you do not know for certain whether you are dealing with a youngsters' house or a cowhouse—for the cattle may well be kept in these houses—or the herdsmen may sleep in the cowhouse. However, this mostly holds true of the low-lying Konde country, while on the other hand, in the high country, the cattle is usually kept in the dwelling houses. On pages 371 and 372, he relates how the cattle is tied up goats at night, and he shows a picture of a cowhouse.

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He also refers (on page 376) to the use of the rectangular house for married men besides the boys. The difference is seen in the fact that these houses are not roughcast with mud, as this work is the province of women. Finally, he reports that, during the last few years of his stay in the Konde country, he saw Konde houses being built under increasing influence of the coastal culture, in imitation of the Swahili houses. They were roughcast with mud inside and out, and had a verandah supported by posts.

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In 1955, many dabagas could be seen. Some were for the cattle, but most were dwelling houses for married people. Boys aged 7-10 and upwards until the marriageable age lived in rectangular boys' houses, the material of which was not bamboo, but a thinner grass, resembling bamboo very much. These houses stood

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12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 solitary or in a row some distance from the other houses of the village. They were never roughcast with mud).

Nearly all the ilidaga had a post-supported verandah. I measured up and drew sketches of two houses of this type, one belonging to the above-mentioned woman called Malia, whose husband lived next door in an isinga. She was a Christian—actually a church-elder. On the outside of her bamboo-framed, mud-roughcast wall, she had drawn a church in yellow, red, and black colours, and below she had written the word *kanisa* (church). Apart from a house near Lake Nyasa, of which I took a photograph and which had very modernistic and drastic drawings on its outside wall (crocodiles, a man and his bicycle, a man with his firearm), it is the only instance in which I saw any kind of coloured decoration on a house. Besides impressed patterns in clay on hearth and floor, I saw no decorations on the inside or outside of houses, except fine patterns in the outside wickerwork of the wall.

342 532

342 In this house, approximately 8 metres long, there were two vertical supporting posts, reaching to the very ridge of the roof, where presumably they were joined to the ridge beam. However, the beam could not be seen.

354 The hearth was peculiar in that it consisted of two pairs of hearthstones near a clay base that surrounded a supporting post and a shorter post. Thus two hearths were available, at the same time serving as fire-proofing to the posts. Though Malia was a single woman, the house had two hearths. You might think that she had seen a stove and had found that two cooking places would be useful. I saw this arrangement in one more place, in the house of a widow, who—by the way—was also a Christian.

353 A space nearly half the size of the house was partitioned off, the half-wall having a doorway. This room was for stores only, clothes etc.; it had a barred window. Besides the hearths, the living-room had hen's nests, stools, baskets, Malia's bed (2 m by 1 m), table, wooden shelves, boxes, and a chest. These last-mentioned objects she had had no difficulty in obtaining from the neighbouring joiner's workshop belonging to the mission.

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342 The other ilidaga is from quite a different district, that of Rungwanda. It was a very long house, as often seen in this locality, 26 metres long. I was told that

The type of house called ikaza, or isinga.

12: Blegvaard E-5 (1955) 1962 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

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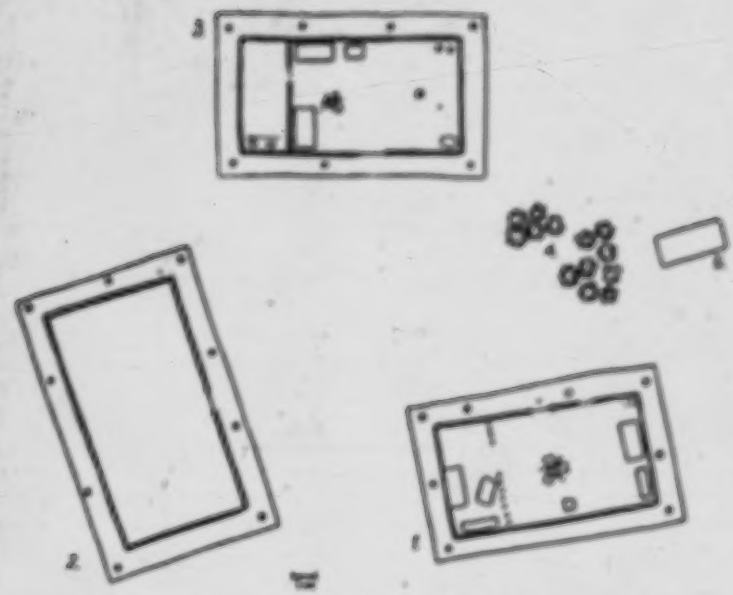

Three houses belonging to one family, situated round a common courtyard; the doors open on to the yard. The village street is along the back of the house at top. 1, Sarlina's house; 2, Baba's house; 3, Idina's house; 4, banana plants; 5, hen-coop.

houses existed which were 60 metres in length. It had the same width as Malia's house, approximately 5 metres. The roof was supported by posts along the sides and at the gables.

Two women lived in this house, both married to the same man. Consequently, there were two hearths, the stones of which were cylindrical-conical, broadening slightly at the top. All were decorated. Each woman had her part of the house, both with an outer door, and further there was a door, slightly narrower, between the two parts, and a fourth door to a store-room. No less than twelve posts supported the roof, all reaching to the ridge. The two parts were a bit unequal in size; nearly half of each had the well-known loft for firewood, etc. One part contained beds for the woman and her husband (one bed had 100 straw mats). The children had two beds. The husband had still another house, a short distance away at the foot of a hill, they said. I did not see it. The other woman's room held her bed and a cot.

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The hearths of both rooms were placed in the centres, between two upright posts. Utensils and furnishings did not differ much from the usual: hen's nests,

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12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

392 two water jars, baskets, stools, a ladder leading to the loft, and a table. The rooms
465 were large and spacious, 5 m by 14 m, and in two places low partitions were
353 used to effect a sub-division of the rooms. One may well wonder at the great length of these houses, but probably it is quite true what is said, that, when—in 1897—the Germans took charge of the region and imposed a tax on houses, the
392 Nyakyusa men made their women move in under their own roofs—only at the
177 same time extending the houses, using the technique they already knew from the cowhouses.

648 Fülleborn reports on this payment of taxes, and finds it reasonable enough,
178 because, he says, "it fosters in the people an understanding of work and discipline,"
342 and of the house tax he says, "it works to abolish polygamy, since every woman, following the traditions of her country, has her own house, for which her husband must pay the tax."

But the Banyakyusa seems to have adapted themselves to the new law and have moved their wives to the very long houses, thus escaping part of the taxes....

342 The third type of house was a rectangular house with a hipped roof. This type is called *ikoma*, which means tent. It was also called *isimo*, the meaning of which I have not been able to ascertain; maybe it means chicken-house, to which it bears much likeness.

This is the modern house-type to which Fülleborn may be referring when he talks about rectangular houses, "- - the very rare instances where a hipped roof is seen - -," (page 370).

342 According to statements made by people who have lived in the district for a
177 third of a century, this type of house is thought to have come from the south some 40 years ago. I have not visited the Ngonde who live farther south, but Sir Harry Johnston (1897) depicts a group of people called "Wankonde (North Nyasa)" in front of a house which looks very much like the modern *ikoma* of the Banyakyusa. It seems therefore reasonable to assume that the roof-construction design of the Ngonde has now reached the district of the Banyakyusa. Johnston also informs us that the rectangular type is not actually the original type in East Africa, but that it was probably introduced by the Arabs.

342 This *ikoma* or *isimo* is shorter than the long *ikhaga*; seldom more than 11 metres in length. But its interior design does not differ. For instance, this holds true of the placing of the hearth, of the equal distance between posts supporting the roof, of the bamboo ceiling covering about half the room, of half-partitions from bamboo and in some cases mud, of store-rooms in the far end of the house, accessible through an inner door.

[592] In an *ikoma* I have never seen more than one hearth, which means that the house is inhabited by one woman. A house in the village of Kikota presented an example of the peculiar tradition of the people of the Highlands, viz. the tying of the cattle to posts in the dwelling-house. My drawings are all from the Highlands, where, in the *ikhaga*, as also noted by Fülleborn, the same tradition is

12: Bingaard E-5 (1955) 1962 F9017 Ngonde F9017
Nyakyusa

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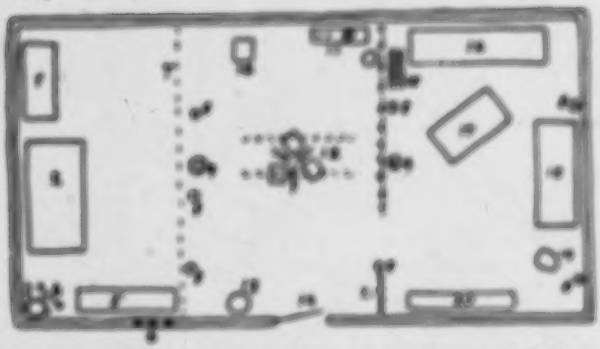

Isebwa's house: 1, cupboard with shelves; 2, children's bed; 3, bed's over; 4, ladder; 5, room; 6, barred window; 7, from dotted line towards the right is the bamboo ceiling; 8, from here four 3 horizontal bamboo sticks on which the bamboo ceiling is supported; 9, Posts supporting roof; 10, chair; 11, low shelf with two bamboo jars and a water jar; 12, hearth with three hearthstones and sticks under ceiling for carrying the fire basket, and corn-cobs hung up to dry, etc.; 13, beer jar; 14, door; 15, room behind the low partition; 16, shelf for domestic utensils; 17, child's bed; 18, Isebwa's bed; 19, baskets; 20, domestic utensils; 21, low partition between rooms.

found. In the front part of the Kilesia house, serving as an entrance room, were four posts called *ikingi*, to which two cows were tied at night.

This part, which we may call the cowhouse, also housed here's room, the cows, [23]
and the mortar to be used for maize, etc.

The hearth, consisting of one square and two round hearthstones, was placed [354]
in the centre of the living-room part. Here were also water jars and the woman's bed. This means that even if this type of house had a roof of a different shape and was always provided with a verandah with posts supporting its roof, the interior was really designed on the same lines as the short *ikingi*, but it was [542]
meant to house only one woman, or one man, as we shall see below.

We may imagine that one of the reasons why the type of roof was changed, was the weakness of the pointed roof of the *ikingi*. It could often be seen to have a tendency to fall in, and had to be supported by a post. Even in Fülleborn's Illustrations, e.g. plate 64 c, a kind of reinforcement can be seen at the edge of the roof. No doubt the roof of the *ikwa* does not suffer to the same extent from this flaw. 342 176

New houses were being built to this design, and I suppose that a little more than half the number of the houses were of the *ikingi* type, and a little than half the *ikwa*. 342

In the village of Ilolo, I surveyed three houses belonging to one family, a [361]

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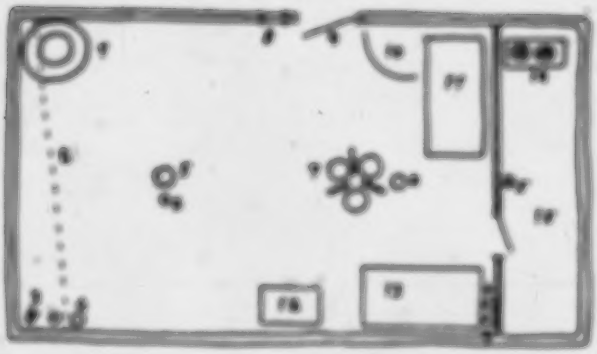

Mbisa's house: 1, basket; 2, clothes-line; 3, broom; 4, jar, in the back room on low shelf; 5, post supporting roof; 6, small decorative bamboo poles, supports for the ceiling; 7, hearth with three round hearthstones; 8, shuttered opening through which the bolt may be reached; 9, door; 10, remove for food; 11, spare bed; 12, table; 13, Mbisa's bed; 14, shelf for jars; 15, door-room behind mud wall with door.

[364] man and his two wives. The houses were grouped round a common courtyard, the doors giving upon this space and not on the nearby village thoroughfare.

The three houses have the names of Ineliba's house, Mbisa's house, and Baba's house. The elder wife, Ineliba, had several minor children, who slept either near her own bed or in the living area. She owned furnishings as modern as a chair and a cupboard with shelves, besides the usual objects in these houses, baskets, bamboo mats, hoe's nest and coat, ladder and water jars. She also had an earthenware beer jar which, one day when I called on her, was standing on the fire, nearly making the finds boil over. She was preparing beer for her husband's friends, who had just dropped in.

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The new wife, Mbisa, had a store-room in her house, and there was also a large heap of cassava, meant for food. As often seen in these houses, she had also a guest bed. She had a number of jars and baskets, but no hen's nest. Straight across the room she had suspended a line on which she put her clothes. Such an arrangement was often used, especially by the bachelors; they had a line for their skins. Clothes-hangers were not in use. You just threw your clothes across the line. A wardrobe was never seen.

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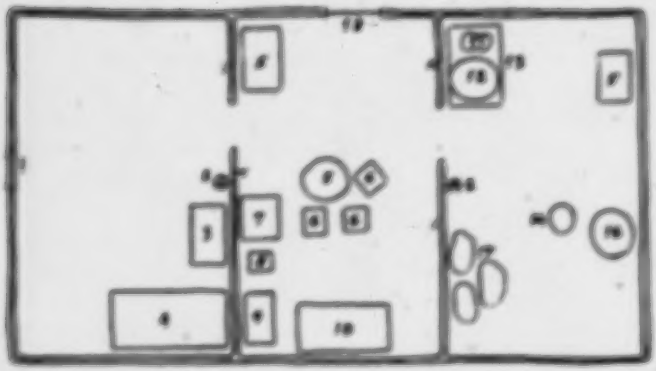
The interior of Baba's house presented a peculiar picture. It was divided into three rooms, a living-area in the middle; at one side the bed-room, at the other a store-room. The bed-room had only one bed and a wooden chest. There was no hearth in the living-room—for the husband had his meals prepared by one of his wives. But there was a true accumulation of tables, chairs, suitcases, and a

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa



Baba's house. 1, barred window; 2, posts supporting roof; 3, wooden chest; 4, Baba's bed; 5, table; 6, chair; 7, cupboard; 8, chair with three suitcases; 9, suitcase; 10, table with books; 11, bag; 12, large basket, *dishe*; 13, low stand for 11 and 12; 14, millet jars; 15, low partitions; 16, *dishe* in which the millet is washed; 17, *sieve* in bags.

cupboard. This seemed very strange and a bit disorderly. On a chair were three suitcases on top of each other.

It was interesting to see, in the store-room, the very crops that belong to the 251
man, viz. rice and millet, the most valuable produce. The rice was in bags, and [438
it is quite probable that this man had bought it from the districts near Lake 243]
Nyasa, where it thrives well. On higher ground, rice cannot be cultivated.

The millet was contained in a basket, 1 m in height, 55 cm broad at the [415]
bottom, and narrower, 35 cm, at the top.

Further, there was a large, beautiful earthenware jar, which he had bought. This was intended for the millet. And there was also a cylindrical container for the washing of the millet when it was brought home from the field. This vessel was 33 cm in height and 85 cm across.

All three houses had a small window with bars or shutters. 342

The inside of the houses lay in semi-darkness, as the only light is admitted [354]
through the doorway, and in some cases through the diminutive barred window. Nevertheless, the interiors give a nice impression, because of their tidiness, bright, size, and cleanness. And how cosy they are, when seen at night; the door is closed, [262]
you gather round the fire and delight in perfectly cooked rice, which is the favourite dish at this principal meal of the day.

Johnston says (1897, page 453) that the greater number of the houses are circular in their plan and very much like bee-hives in shape; their walls are [171]
wickerwork filled with mud cobs, and they have thatched roofs. He also reports

12: Blegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

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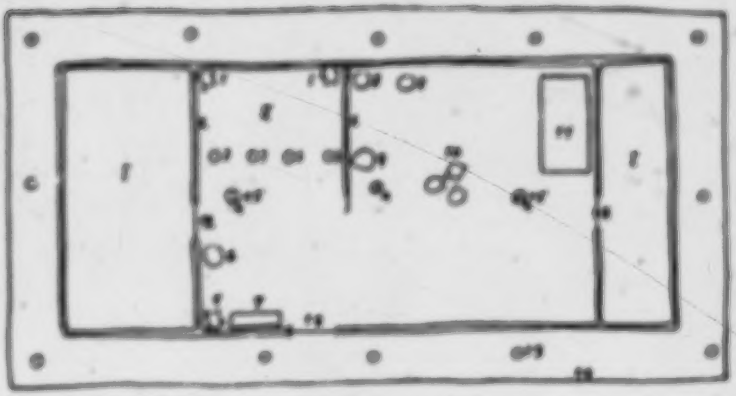

An ikaya from the village of Kikoto. I, *store-room at either end of the house;* II, *corner for cattle,*—1, *hen's nest;* 2, *low partitions from bamboo;* 3, *posts for tying two head of cattle;* 4, *Three posts supporting roof;* 5, *here bamboo cups, calabashes, etc. were hanging on the posts;* 6, *wooden mortar for maize;* 7, *roost from bamboo tied together;* 8, *water jar;* 9, *basket;* 10, *hearth consisting of two round and one square hearthstone;* 11, *bed of the woman;* 12, *door;* 13, *supports for the roof;* 14, *cows.*—*Outer doors from wooden boards; store-room doors from bamboo; bamboo ceiling covers area from half-way partition to the right of cow's corner on to store-room inner wall to the right.*

[171] that such houses are found in Africa (a) south of the Zambesi, (b) in all of British Central Africa, (c) in all of East Africa including the Egyptian Sudan,—but not in localities where the Arab influence has introduced the oblong, rectangular building.

342
177 Now, if we look upon the eastern territories of Africa only—what great changes have taken place there since Johnston's day? The round house is being ousted under foreign influence—Arab as well as European.

If you ask a native of Africa, why he changes the plan of his house, his answer will be, that the rectangular house is easier to sub-divide and better in use—which is most probably true. When first the technique has been adopted, people in other parts of Africa will no doubt abandon the circular design and take up the rectangular.

171
342 But nevertheless, the variations in types of hut in Tanganyika are truly amazing; they range from e.g. the fine *ikaya* of the Banyakyusa,—to the rectangular *itonde* with nearly flat, clay roof of the Vakimbu,—to the round bee-hives of the Batutsi, which may be built in no time on a frame-work of branches and covered with

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

After these admonitions, the mats which the girl had manufactured were inspected. During this examination it was told her that a wife should be seen in the possession of as many beautiful mats as possible, made by her for herself and for her husband. Should the girl reveal such conduct as a wife, ubuzengelufu (happiness) would be in her hut. 881 867 285

When the proper ceremony seemed to have come to an end, another discussion followed. The girl had told the umupapo, during the above mentioned admonition, that her parents also sometimes exchanged angry words. Therefore, a new discussion between the father and the mother arose, in which also the umupapo was the "speaker", but the other participants of the ceremony also shared in it, and the discussion too became at times heated. Still, after about 15 minutes, it suddenly came to an end, and the matter in dispute was declared settled. With this the whole ceremony ended. 881 578

8. One day I asked the chief for permission to visit his huts. He dwelt in a rectangular hut (ikibaga). A very beautiful ikitara (bed) was in the main room, composed of many sleeping mats (ubuleli, pl. imileli) and of big round wooden blocks (sections of a tree-trunk), one at the head and a smaller one at the foot of the bed. Each of the four fine mats which lay uppermost had a special name. All the mats rested on sticks of reed laid across beams lying on smaller poles on the floor[16]. These mats were naturally of nearly the same height as the wooden block which formed the head part of the ikitara. In some other old-fashioned and better houses in Nyakyusa villages, similar beds were to be seen, but generally the bedsteads are much more simple. 622 352 [342]

One of the most important permissions granted me by the chief was to enter the "store room", connected with his main room by a door. The objects to be seen here were the same as those to be found in other huts or store-rooms, e. g. the big ifitaba (baskets) for storing grain, up to four feet high, smeared over with cow-dung and clay, and smaller baskets for different purposes. In one corner hung different kinds of dancing fans (urukope, sg.) made of hairs from the tails of bulls, with fine handles of horn. In the dark opposite corner of the same wall there seemed to hang a similar object, but it was wrapped in banana bast. This was the real sign of the chief's dignity, the symbol of his authority and power, named ubusuipela. A long discussion was needed to induce the chief to unveil it. Only by constantly consulting by glances the present amafumu the chief slowly unveiled it. He told us that 342 353 622 [251] [237] [778] [775]

16. Cf. Filleborn, p. 281.

6 Soziologus I, 1

14:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the figures. Also bicycles, aeroplanes, motor-cars and other striking objects of the European civilisation are to be found represented and concentric white circles adjacent to these drawings or paintings.

14. Houses. Sometimes the upper portion of the framework of the rectangular houses is not fully plastered with mud leaving broad open areas or strips horizontally or slopingly to the base-line. This may have its origin in an artistic motive and at the same time be useful in ventilating the interior of the hut. The ancient custom of the Nyakyusa to fill out the spaces between the framework of the walls with flat, oval cakes or clods of clay, supported inside the house by a second framework of bamboo (*wumange*), has also a decorative effect.

The preparation of these oval sun-dried clay cakes is the work of the women. L. Monteith Fotheringham described this in his "Adventures in Nyasaland" (London 1891, p. 22) with the following words: "The women make the bricks in shape like large eggs by pressing the clay between their hands." The building of the framework of the hut and the thatching of the roof is the task of the men. Nyumba means "the house" in Kinyakyusa as well as in Swahili; *ngenge* is the name for the old-fashioned hut of the Nyakyusa possessing a round baseline and a framework expanding upwards in diameter. The rectangular hut is called *ikibage* and the smaller rectangular hut used as a store or a fowl pen, *akabage*. It is interesting to note that there is no special word for roof in Kinyakyusa. This part of the hut or house is simply called "the above" (*ipuru*). In contrast to this fact the different poles of the roof-structure are specially named according to their position parallel to or at right angels to the ridge of the rectangular houses. *Ukutelike* means to bind the different rafters of the roof together; *imbanda* is the name for the supporting poles of the roof, and *ingenge* for the poles of the framework of the walls.

15. Outfit. Inside the house we find besides the bedsteads (*ikitara*, pl. (*itara*) and the household utensils, the grinding-mill (*urwurara*), consisting of an upper (smaller) and a lower (broader) stone. The flour falls into a basket placed in front of the mill. Sometimes in a corner of the hut a nest (*ikitero*) for a sitting hen on top of a pole is to be found. Outside the house is a place for the sweepings (*urutapililo*). The cleaning of the interior of the houses and also the repairing of the mud plaster is the task of the women, but I saw men cleaning the space in front of the huts. At any case, it must be acknowledged that the cleanliness of a Nyakyusa village leaves little to be desired.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

323 one will sometimes meet with long strings of men and
415 women, carrying ten to a dozen pots, hawking them
317 round the upland villages, or offering them for sale
at the local market at Tukuyu. The pots made at
[531] Matema are smeared on the outside with a dull red
ochre, and the more artistic potters work patterns in
red, with thin lines around the protruding middle,
and herring-bone or crossed patterns from thence to
lip and base.

• 353 I once slept in a native house in which there was
a double row of pots, one on top of the other, along
two walls. I was told that they were there for orna-
mental purposes, "just as you white men have pictures
on your walls."

285 Basket work is done everywhere, and a great variety
415 of baskets are made. Immense *ifitubu*, for storing
grain, up to four feet high, and perhaps ten feet in
girth, are to be found in almost every family. Smaller
baskets for carrying goods of all kinds; wide shallow
baskets for sifting grain; others for serving food, and
yet others for drinking beer. The latter are so closely
woven that they will hold water, and are made from
a fine grass, which is found only in certain regions. A
new development of this industry is the making of
articles to European, or native, order; hats, table
mats, baskets with hinged lids and divisions inside,
almost anything can be made if a specimen is given
to the maker as a sample from which he may copy
what is wanted. Basket work includes also the large
and small fish traps in use at the lake or on the rivers.

286 Net making is naturally confined to the lake shore

12: Biagnard E-5 (1955) 1962 F317 Ngonde F317 Nyakyusa

by horizontal bamboo joists, at right angles to the principal beams of the ceiling. This ceiling never covers the entire room, but only the greater part, and always the part directly above the hearth. Up here firewood is placed to dry. A fine black basket is hung from the ceiling above the fire. Access to the loft is by means of a ladder. 342 [372]

When you read reports by the 'first' Europeans on these peoples and their houses, they always refer to a round house with ceiling walls and a conical roof. Merensky (1894) mentions and illustrates such a house (pages 141 et seq.). Fülleborn (1906) mentions and illustrates several houses (Text Volume pages 356 et seq., and Atlas, plates 64-67). The inner surface of the walls of the house was decorated with patterns impressed into the mud layer which covers the bamboo poles. The three stones that form the hearth are shown, and also the bed behind a low permanent partition wall. These were exceptionally fine houses with beautiful, decorated and painted doors. The entrance had relief ornaments, often of coloured clay. Fülleborn notes that the mud houses are the dwellings of married people. [352]

There is no doubt that the round house is the original type of dwelling. In 1955, I saw no round houses like the ones described by the above scholars, but I know that formerly they were often seen, at least as late as 1932. Professor Monica Wilson of Cape Town has told me that she saw them everywhere in 1932, but that during a visit to the district in 1955 she found only one single house of this type, in the village of Mwaka. 178 342

At the time of my visit, round houses could be seen, but not the type having walls inclining towards near the ground, and they were not by far as imposing as the houses mentioned above; and there were not many of them. I had the opportunity to make drawings of three houses, all occupied by old people. 342

The round house is called an *isinga*. In one of these *isinga* there lived an old man whose wife, Malia, lived across the courtyard in a rectangular hut of the old Nyakyusa type (see infra). The husband's house was 6.5 metres across, and was divided in halves by a fence made from sticks. One half was where the man lived; it had one bed for him, and one for his grandchildren, who would come to visit him, now and then. Near the wall were two iron chests; also, a board had been hung at the wall as a roost for the chicken. A hen's nest, a small wicker basket, was placed about 3 ft. above the floor in the furcation of a four or five-pronged stick. These hen's nests are seen in all houses. The ceiling was supported by seven upright posts, seemingly placed entirely at random. The under side of the roof was strengthened by eight circular-running fascines of bamboo. In the centre, a heavy log (not bamboo) reached up to the pointed top of the roof. [592] [353] [352] [231]

The other half of the house was reserved for the cattle, three cows and two calves; there were five posts to which the cattle were tied at night. [231]

The house had an outer door at each end, but there was no passage from the man's half to that of the cattle.

12: Bieguard E-5 (1955) 1962 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

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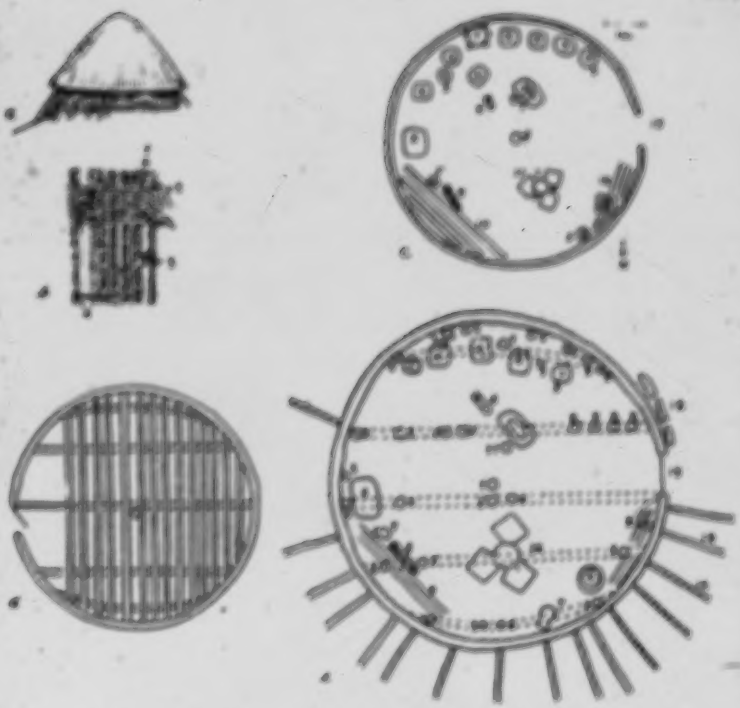

Isongo. Mahoba's house at Ibala near the Rungwe mission station.

a. Elevation showing buttressing posts; to the right of the door is material for thatching.—b. Detail of wall. 1, cow's horn; 2, bark fibre for winding round poles; 3, notch made in bamboo pole that was crooked; 4, bamboo.—c. Plan of house showing furnishings and utensils on the floor, but not the sticks that were lying everywhere (see plan e). 1, hen's nest; 2, basket; 3, jar; 4, nicely made basket; 5, calabash; 6, broom; 7, mill-stone and grinder; 8, centre post (here were a couple of bananas for food); 9, sleeping mat; 10, small under-ceiling from sticks tied together, for small things; 11, hearth; 12, heap of *mdete*, a kind of grass which looks much like thin bamboo.—d. Cross-section at ceiling level showing centre post, beams, and *jakes* on which the sticks are placed; the centre post reaches right up to the top of the roof.—e. Plan of house showing beams of the ceiling (dotted lines, cf. d). 1, centre post; 2, other beam-carrying posts; 3, hen's nest; 4, baskets; 5, calabash; 6, broom; 7, calabash; 8, sleeping mat; 9, small under-ceiling, repository for small things; 10, hearth from three stones; 11, mill-stone and small grinder; 12, thatching material; 13, door; 14, outside buttresses.

342 The round house was standing on somewhat higher ground than the surrounding bananas; half the house was buttressed by wooden posts, possibly because the ground was a bit lower there. The walls were from bamboo poles,

12: Blegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 F317 Ngonde F317
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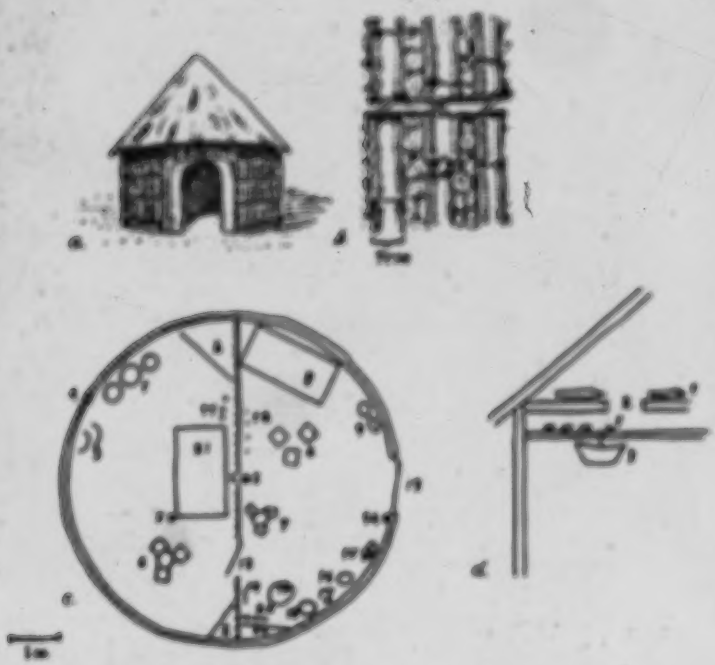

Isinga. Tufweme's house at Rungwe. Sept. 1955.

a. Elevation, showing doorway with walls drawn too thick; the door itself has been left out.—b. Outside detail of wall showing split cross-bamboo; red clay cobs between poles.—c. Plan. 1, jars; 2, shelves; 3, *ubusile* etc. (an *ubusile* is a flat basket used as a plate); 4, small window; 5, centre post; 6, hearth; 7, water jar; 8, spare bed; 9, banana fibres; 10, hen's nest; 11, sticks; 12, sticks for kitchen utensils; 13, door; 14, post for locking device; 15, stone grinding trough; 16, basket with bananas; 17, pestle; 18, *kiso*; 19, *ulowaya*, mat for collecting flour from grinding stone; 20, bamboo ladder; 21, bed of the woman; 22, coat.—d. Cross-section of bamboo ceiling, with firewood for drying, and a fine basket below.

connected near the ground with tree fern stems which easily fitted into the hollow of the bamboo. Between these tree fern stems, the liquid manure from the cow-house could escape—much to the benefit of the nearby bananas.

The other *isinga* belonged to the old widow, Tufweme. She lived alone in her house. The walls were bamboo, up to 7 cm in diameter. From the inside, the space between the poles had been filled with 3–5 cm large cobs of red clay. Round the outside were four horizontal bands of split bamboo.

This house, too, was 6.5 metres in diameter, and it was divided into two equal [353]

12: Blegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 F917 Ngombe F917
Nyakyusa

342 353 parts. The partition wall was bamboo and mud. A doorway gave on to the inner part, where Tulowne had her bed.

354 There were two hearths, one in each room. The front one was not used. In the outer room was a bed for guests—a common feature of all houses. Tulowne was thought to be well off, and she had plenty of carrying rings, used by the 482 women when they carry loads, often very heavy, on their heads. The inner room was used for stores, including a number of earthen jars. She had three very fine, 352 new stools. I saw them outside in the sun, but their usual place was no doubt in the outer room, which had the character of a workroom. Here were the large 412 wooden mortar and its long pestle; also the grinding stone and in a corner the small mat, the ulyanya, which is used to take up the newly ground flour. There 417 was also the ladder, used for fetching down firewood from the loft; you could see 415 the hen's nest, and the large water jar with its painted bottom placed on three stones.

415 The third ninga belonged to an eighty-year-old woman whose husband had 769 died. She told me how every day she would fill a fine, decorated bamboo mug 621 with milk for him! These mugs, seen in all the houses, mostly have geometrical

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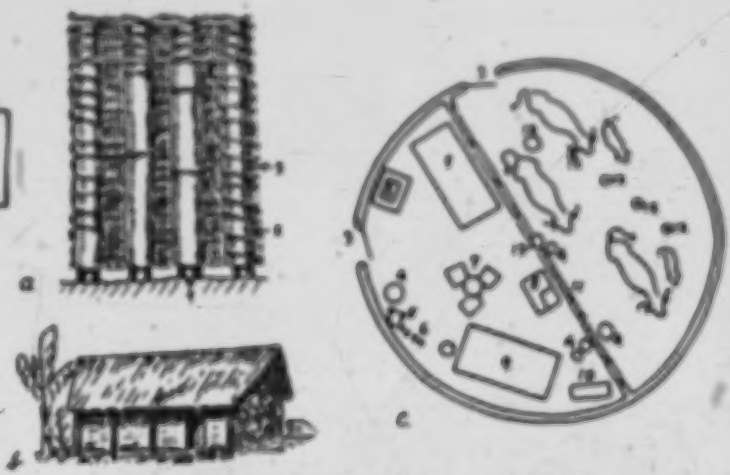

Houses belonging to Malia Ulinyanya and her husband.

a. Detail of ninga, outer wall. 1, tree fern stem joined to bamboo pole—note aperture for liquid manure; 2, bamboo pole with plant fibre windings; 3, split bamboo.—b, Malia's ninga.—c. Plan of ninga. 1, bed of the man; 2, iron chests for garments; 3, door; 4, posts supporting ceiling; 5, hen's nest; 6, hoes and pestle for the maize mortar; 7, hearth; 8, chests; 9, bed of the grandchildren; 10, water from hollowed out trunk; 11, low partition; 12, posts for tying cattle; 13, centre post to top of roof.

12: Biegaard E-9 (1955) 1962 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

415 531

gutterow burned into the bamboo; they are hung upside down so the dust will not settle in them. The bamboo is the natural partition of the bamboo room.

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The house was standing on high, slightly sloping ground, and like the first mentioned house it was buttressed by a great number of thick branches, fortunately, it seemed to be very old and rickety. Inside, there were a great many posts supporting the horizontal bamboo ceiling and the crown of forward. All posts were bifurcated and held the beams solidly in place. The diameter of the house was the usual 6.5 metres, but in this case there was no inner partition.* As this woman was very poor, she had no bed, but slept on a mat on the floor. Only very rarely is there no bed in the houses; I remember having seen this only three times.

[352 556]

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The hearth was the usual type: three decorated square stones, rising to a height of 30 cm above the floor, but being sunk 30 cm into the ground. Here they were positioned on one side, to ensure that the centre post would not catch fire, and to make for easy escape of the smoke through the doorway. None of the houses have other means of smoke outlet.

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Alongside the wall were calabashes, jars, and baskets; essential for the baskets; and a little away from the wall, the large roll-stone and its appurtenant smaller grinding stone. A hen's nest was not missing either. Along one side was fitted a small under-ceiling for the storage of small things. Two or three bananas, meant to be her own meal, were lying on the floor near one of the posts. From the left she crawled down a calibkin in which she had been carrying her child. Its inside was of a reddish colour.

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[482 237]

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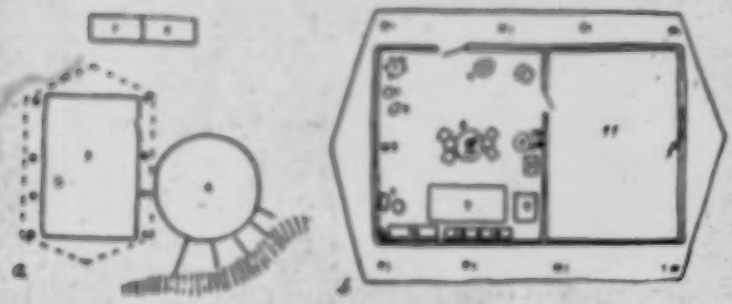
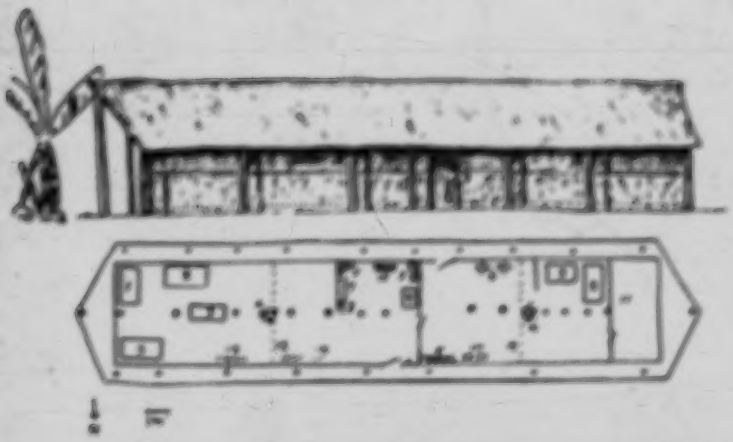


a. Site plan of Malia Ulinyehanya's houses. 1, hen-coop; 2, drying-racks for crops; 3, Malia's dilaga with roof supports along sides; 4, dilaga belonging to Malia's husband, with buttresses at low ground.—b. Plan of Malia's dilaga (barred window in back room). 1, hen's nest; 2, chinta (stool); 3, posts (those going up to ridge of roof are filled in); 4, large basket; 5, basket; 6, clay base round twin posts; 7, Malia's bed; 8, chest; 9, wooden chest; 10, table; 11, back room, having bamboo ceiling carried by bamboo cross beam (between posts marked 3); the room is used for storing clothes, etc.; 12, shelves.

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa



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An *ikhaya* in the village of Kiwanda, the district of Rungwe, belonging to a man with two wives. The rooms have bamboo ceilings from dressed lines to either gable. Poles reaching to ridge of roof are filled in. 1, husband's bed; 2, wife's bed; 3, child's bed; 4, hearth; 5, brew' ness; 6, water jar; 7, roost; 8, ladder; 9, table; 10, stools; 11, store-room; 12, dressed lines show limitation of ceiling; 13, small objects; 14, working material; 15, sleeping mat.

here. On page 337, he reports how the boys, when 7 or 10 years old, will leave their parents' house to live in long, rectangular cowhouse-like houses big or small, in a special youngsters' quarter at the far end of the village. On page 358 he writes: In many cases you do not know for certain whether you are dealing with a youngsters' house or a cowhouse—for the cattle may well be kept in these houses—or the herdsmen may sleep in the cowhouses. However, this mostly holds true of the low-lying Konde country, while on the other hand, in the high country, the cattle is usually kept in the dwelling houses. On pages 371 and 372, he relates how the cattle is tied to posts at night, and he shows a picture of a cowhouse. [343] [184 20]

He also refers (on page 376) to the use of the rectangular house for married men besides the boys. The difference is seen in the fact that these houses are not roughcast with mud, as this work is the province of women. Finally, he reports that, during the last few years of his stay in the Konde country, he saw Konde houses being built under increasing influence of the coastal culture, in imitation of the Swahili houses. They were roughcast with mud inside and out, and had a verandah supported by posts. [462] [177]

In 1955, many *ikhaya* could be seen. Some were for the cattle, but most were dwelling houses for married people. (Boys aged 7–10 and upwards until the marriageable age lived in ramshackle boys' houses, the material of which was not bamboo, but a thinner grass, resembling bamboo very much. These houses stood [824] [855]

12: Blegvaard E-5 (1955) 1962 F917 Mgonda F917
Nyakyusa

342 solitary or in a few some distance from the other houses of the village. They were never roughcast with mud).

Nearly all the dishoga had a post-supported verandah. I measured up and drew sketches of two houses of this type, one belonging to the above-mentioned woman called Malia, whose husband lived next door in an isinga. She was a Christian—actually a church-elder. On the outside of her bamboo-framed, mud-roughcast wall, she had drawn a church in yellow, red, and black colours, and below she had written the word Amisa (church). Apart from a house near Lake Nyasa, of which I took a photograph and which had very modernistic and drastic drawings on the outside wall (crocodiles, a man and his bicycle, a man with his firearm), it is the only instance in which I saw any kind of coloured decoration on a house. Besides impressed patterns in clay on hearth and floor, I saw no decorations on the inside or outside of houses, except fine patterns in the outside wickerwork of the wall.

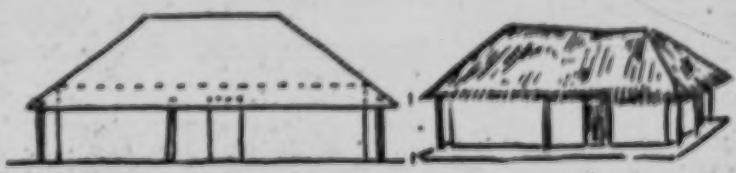
342 In this house, approximately 8 metres long, there were two vertical supporting posts, reaching to the very ridge of the roof, where presumably they were joined to the ridge beam. However, the beam could not be seen.

354 The hearth was peculiar in that it consisted of two pairs of hearthstones near a clay base that surrounded a supporting post and a shorter post. Thus two hearths were available, at the same time serving as fire-grounding to the posts. Though Malia was a single woman, the house had two hearths. You might think that she had seen a stove and had found that two cooking places would be useful. I saw this arrangement in one more place, in the house of a widow, who—by the way—was also a Christian.

● 353 A space nearly half the size of the house was partitioned off, the half-wall having a doorway. This room was for stores only, clothes etc.; it had a barred window. Besides the hearths, the living-room had hen's nests, stools, baskets, Malia's bed (2 m by 1 m), table, wooden shelves, boxes, and a chest. These last-mentioned objects she had had no difficulty in obtaining from the neighbouring joiner's workshop belonging to the mission.

[352] [097]

342 The other dishoga is from quite a different district, that of Ruteganio. It was a very long house, as often seen in this locality, 26 metres long. I was told that



The type of house called ikoma, or isiwa.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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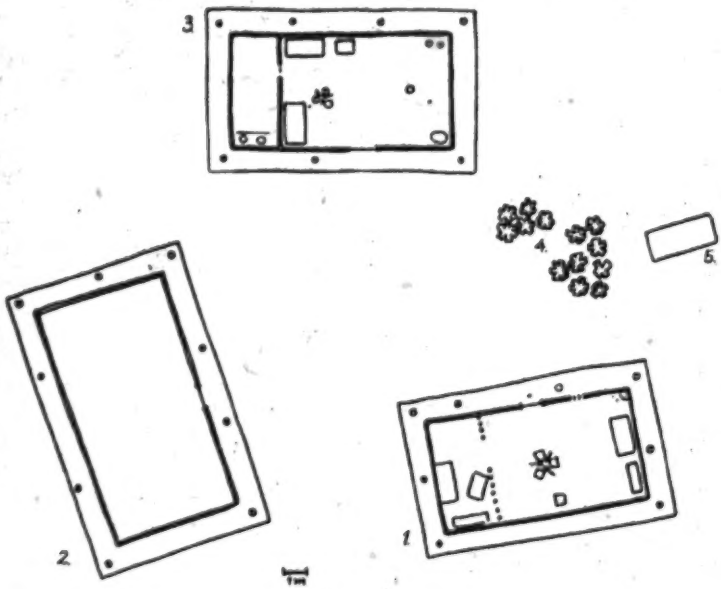

Three houses belonging to one family, situated round a common courtyard; the doors open on to the yard. The village street is along the back of the house at top. 1, Iselina's house; 2, Baba's house; 3, Idina's house; 4, banana plants; 5, hen-coop.

houses existed which were 60 metres in length. It had the same width as Malia's house, approximately 5 metres. The roof was supported by posts along the sides and at the gables.

Two women lived in this house, both married to the same man. Consequently, there were two hearths, the stones of which were cylindrical-conical, broadening slightly at the top. All were decorated. Each woman had her part of the house, both with an outer door, and further there was a door, slightly narrower, between the two parts, and a fourth door to a store-room. No less than twelve posts supported the roof, all reaching to the ridge. The two parts were a bit unequal in size; nearly half of each had the well-known loft for firewood, etc. One part contained beds for the woman and her husband (one bed had 100 straw mats). The children had two beds. The husband had still another house, a short distance away at the foot of a hill, they said. I did not see it. The other woman's room held her bed and a cot.

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The hearths of both rooms were placed in the centres, between two upright posts. Utensils and furnishings did not differ much from the usual: hen's nests,

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12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

352 415 two water jars, baskets, stools, a ladder leading to the loft, and a table. The rooms were large and spacious, 5 m by 14 m, and in two places low partitions were used to effect a sub-division of the rooms. One may well wonder at the great 353 length of these houses, but probably it is quite true what is said, that, when—in 342 177 1891—the Germans took charge of the region and imposed a tax on houses, the Nyakyusa men made their women move in under their own roofs—only at the same time extending the houses, using the technique they already knew from the cowhouses.

648 178 342 Fülleborn reports on this payment of taxes, and finds it reasonable enough, because, he says, "it fosters in the people an understanding of work and discipline," and of the house tax he says, "it works to abolish polygamy, since every woman, following the traditions of her country, has her own house, for which her husband must pay the tax."

But the Banyakyusa seems to have adapted themselves to the new law and have moved their wives to the very long houses, thus escaping part of the taxes...

342 The third type of house was a rectangular house with a hipped roof. This type is called *ihema*, which means tent. It was also called *istoro*, the meaning of which I have not been able to ascertain; maybe it means chicken-breast, to which it bears much likeness.

This is the modern house-type to which Fülleborn may be referring when he talks about rectangular houses, "... the very rare instances when a hipped roof is seen ..." (page 379).

342 177 According to statements made by people who have lived in the district for a third of a century, this type of house is thought to have come from the south some 20 years ago. I have not visited the Ngonde who live farther south, but Sir Harry Johnston (1897) depicts a group of people called "Wankonde (North Nyasa)" in front of a house which looks very much like the modern *ihema* of the Banyakyusa. It seems therefore reasonable to assume that the roof-construction design of the Ngonde has now reached the district of the Banyakyusa. Johnston also informs us that the rectangular type is not actually the original type in East Africa, but that it was probably introduced by the Arabs.

342 This *ihema* or *istoro* is shorter than the long *ikibaga;* seldom more than 11 metres in length. But its interior design does not differ. For instance, this holds true of the placing of the hearth, of the equal distance between posts supporting the roof, of the bamboo ceiling covering about half the room, of half-partitions from bamboo and in some cases mud, of store-rooms in the far end of the house, accessible through an inner door.

[592] In an *ihema* I have never seen more than one hearth, which means that the house is inhabited by one woman. A house in the village of Kikota presented an example of the peculiar tradition of the peoples of the Highlands, viz. the tying of the cattle to posts in the dwelling-houses. My drawings are all from the Highlands, where, in the *ikibagas*, as also noted by Fülleborn, the same tradition is

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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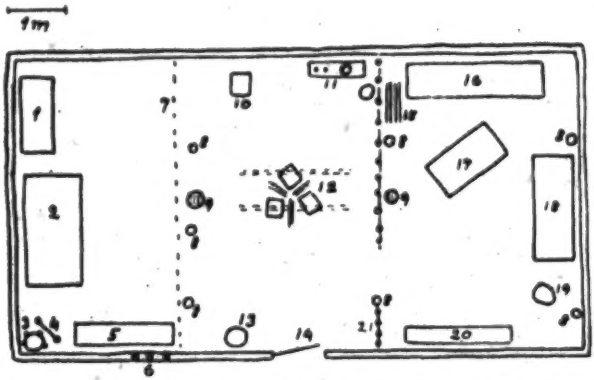

Iselina's house. 1, cupboard with shelves; 2, children's bed; 3, hen's nest; 4, ladder; 5, roost; 6, barred window; 7, from dotted line towards the right is the bamboo ceiling; 8, from here issue 5 horizontal bamboo sticks on which the bamboo ceiling is supported; 9, Posts supporting roof; 10, chair; 11, low shelf with two bamboo jars and a water jar; 12, hearth with three hearthstones and sticks under ceiling for carrying the fine basket, and corn-cobs hung up to dry, etc.; 13, beer jar; 14, door; 15, mats behind the low partition; 16, shelf for domestic utensils; 17, child's bed; 18, Iselina's bed; 19, baskets; 20, domestic utensils; 21, low partition between rooms.

found. In the front part of the Kikofa house, serving as an entrance room, were four posts called *fkingi*, to which two cows were tied at night.

This part, which we may call the cowhouse, also housed hen's nests, the roost, [231] and the mortar to be used for maize, etc.

The hearth, consisting of one square and two round hearthstones, was placed [354] in the centre of the living-room part. Here were also water jars and the woman's bed. This means that even if this type of house had a roof of a different shape and was always provided with a verandah with posts supporting its roof, the interior was really designed on the same lines as the short *ikibaga*, but it was [592] meant to house only one woman, or one man, as we shall see below.

We may imagine that one of the reasons why the type of roof was changed, 342 was the weakness of the pointed roof of the *ikibaga*. It could often be seen to have 178 a tendency to fall in, and had to be supported by a post. Even in Fülleborn's illustrations, e.g. plate 64 c, a kind of reinforcement can be seen at the edge of the roof. No doubt the roof of the *ihema* does not suffer to the same extent from this flaw.

New houses were being built to this design, and I suppose that a little more 342 than half the number of the houses were of the *ikibaga* type, and a little than half the *ihema*.

In the village of Ilolo, I surveyed three houses belonging to one family, a [36]

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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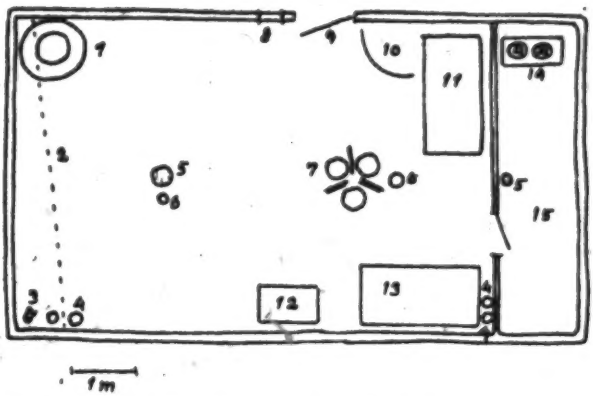

Idina's house. 1, basket; 2, clothes-line; 3, broom; 4, jars, in the back room on low shelf; 5, posts supporting roof; 6, small dimension bamboo poles, supports for the ceiling; 7, hearth with three round hearthstones; 8, shuttered opening through which the bolt may be reached; 9, door; 10, cassava for food; 11, spare bed; 12, table; 13, Idina's bed; 14, shelf for jars; 15, store-room behind mud wall with door.

[361] man and his two wives. The houses were grouped round a common courtyard, the doors giving upon this space and not on the nearby village thoroughfare.

The three houses bore the names of Iseliña's house, Idina's house, and Baba's house. The elder wife, Iselina, had several minor children, who slept either near
352 her own bed or in the living area. She owned furnishings as modern as a chair
177 and a cupboard with shelves, besides the usual objects in these houses, baskets, bamboo mugs, hen's nest and roost, ladder and water jars. She also had an earthen-
[415 ware beer jar which, one day when I called on her, was standing on the fire,
273] nearly making the froth boil over. She was preparing beer for her husband's friends, who had just dropped in.

352 The new wife, Idina, had a store-room in her house, and there was also a large heap of cassava, meant for food. As often seen in these houses, she had also
[353 a guest bed. She had a number of jars and baskets, but no hen's nest. Straight
262] across the room she had suspended a line on which she put her clothes. Such an
[296] arrangement was often used, especially by the bachelors; they had a line for their shirts. Clothes-hangers were not in use. You just threw your clothes across the line. A wardrobe was never seen.

342 The interior of Baba's house presented a peculiar picture. It was divided into three rooms, a living-area in the middle; at one side the bed-room, at the other
352 a store-room. The bed-room had only one bed and a wooden chest. There was no hearth in the living-room—for the husband had his meals prepared by one of his wives. But there was a true accumulation of tables, chairs, suitcases, and a

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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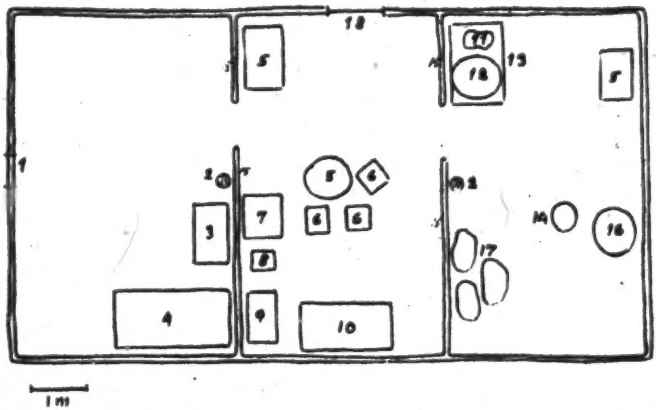

Baba's house. 1, barred window; 2, posts supporting roof; 3, wooden chest; 4, Baba's bed; 5, table; 6, chair; 7, cupboard; 8, chair with three suitcases; 9, suitcase; 10, table with bookshelf; 11, bag; 12, large basket, *ikiteba*; 13, low stand for 11 and 12; 14, millet jars; 15, low partitions; 16, *ikimbo* in which the millet is washed; 17, rice in bags.

cupboard. This seemed very strange and a bit disorderly. On a chair were three suitcases on top of each other.

It was interesting to see, in the store-room, the very crops that belong to the man, viz. rice and millet, the most valuable produce. The rice was in bags, and it is quite probable that this man had bought it from the districts near Lake Nyasa, where it thrives well. On higher ground, rice cannot be cultivated. 251 [438 243]

The millet was contained in a basket, 1 m in height, 55 cm broad at the bottom, and narrower, 35 cm, at the top. [415]

Further, there was a large, beautiful earthenware jar, which he had bought. This was intended for the millet. And there was also a cylindrical container for the washing of the millet when it was brought home from the field. This vessel was 55 cm in height and 85 cm across.

All three houses had a small window with bars or shutters. 342

The inside of the houses lay in semi-darkness, as the only light is admitted through the doorway, and in some cases through the diminutive barred window. Nevertheless, the interiors give a nice impression, because of their tidiness, height, size, and cleanness. And how cosy they are, when seen at night; the door is closed, you gather round the fire and delight in perfectly cooked rice, which is the favourite dish at this principal meal of the day. [354] [262]

Johnston says (1897, page 453) that the greater number of the houses are circular in their plan and very much like bee-hives in shape; their walls are wickerwork filled with mud cobs, and they have thatched roofs. He also reports [171]

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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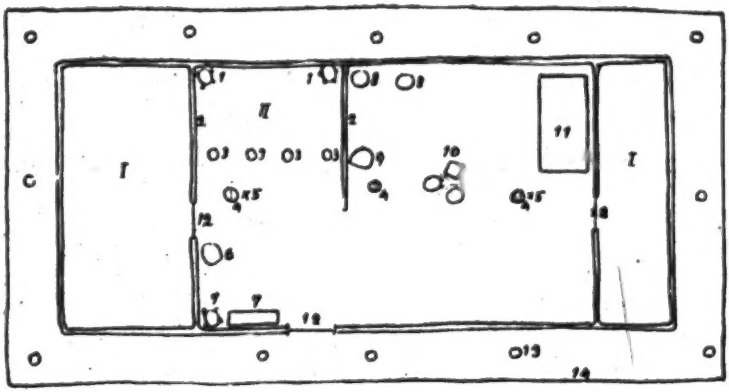

An *ihema* from the village of Kikota. I, store-rooms at either end of the house; II, corner for cattle.—1, hen's nest; 2, low partitions from bamboo; 3, posts for tying two head of cattle; 4, Three posts supporting roof; 5, here bamboo cups, calabashes, etc. were hanging on the posts; 6, wooden mortar for maize; 7, roost from bamboo tied together; 8, water jar; 9, basket; 10, hearth consisting of two round and one square hearthstone; 11, bed of the woman; 12, door; 13, supports for the roof; 14, eaves.—Outer doors from wooden boards; store-room doors from bamboo; bamboo ceiling covers area from half-way partition to the right of cow's corner on to store-room inner wall to the right.

[171] that such houses are found in Africa (a) south of the Zambezi, (b) in all of British Central Africa, (c) in all of East Africa including the Egyptian Sudan,—but not in localities where the Arab influence has introduced the oblong, rectangular building.

342 177 Now, if we look upon the eastern territories of Africa only—what great changes have taken place there since Johnston's day? The round house is being ousted under foreign influence—Arab as well as European.

If you ask a native of Africa, why he changes the plan of his house, his answer will be, that the rectangular house is easier to sub-divide and better in use—which is most probably true. When first the technique has been adopted, people in other parts of Africa will no doubt abandon the circular design and take up the rectangular.

171 342 But nevertheless, the variations in types of hut in Tanganyika are truly amazing; they range from e.g. the fine *ihema* of the Banyakyusa,—to the rectangular *itembe* with nearly flat, clay roof of the Vakimbu,—to the round bee-hives of the Batutsi, which may be built in no time on a frame-work of branches and covered with

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

After these admonitions, the mats which the girl had manufactured were inspected. During this examination it was told her that a wife should be seen in the possession of as many beautiful mats as possible, made by her for herself and for her husband. Should the girl reveal such conduct as a wife, *ubusangalufu* (happiness) would be in her hut. 881 867 285

When the proper ceremony seemed to have come to an end, another discussion followed. The girl had told the *unnyago*, during the above mentioned admonition, that her parents also sometimes exchanged angry words. Therefore, a new discussion between the father and the mother arose, in which also the *unnyago* was the "speaker", but the other participants of the ceremony also shared in it, and the discussion too became at times heated. Still, after about 15 minutes, it suddenly came to an end, and the matter in dispute was declared settled. With this the whole ceremony ended. 881 578

8. One day I asked the chief for permission to visit his huts. He dwelt in a rectangular hut *(ikibaga)*. A very beautiful *ikitara* (bed) was in the main room, composed of many sleeping mats *(ubuleli*, pl. *imileli)* and of big round wooden blocks (sections of a tree-trunk), one at the head and a smaller one at the foot of the bed. Each of the four fine mats which lay uppermost had a special name. All the mats rested on sticks of reed laid across beams lying on smaller poles on the floor[28]. These mats were naturally of nearly the same height as the wooden block which formed the head part of the *ikitara*. In some other old-fashioned and better houses in Nyakyusa villages, similar beds were to be seen, but generally the bedsteads are much more simple. 622 352 [342]

One of the most important permissions granted me by the chief was to enter the "store room", connected with his main room by a door. The objects to be seen here were the same as those to be found in other huts or store-rooms, e. g. the big *ifituba* (baskets) for storing grain, up to four feet high, smeared over with cow-dung and clay, and smaller baskets for different purposes. In one corner hung different kinds of dancing fans *(urukope*, sg.) made of hairs from the tails of bulls, with fine handles of horn. In the dark opposite corner of the same wall there seemed to hang a similar object, but it was wrapped in banana bast. This was the real sign of the chief's dignity, the symbol of his authority and power, named *ubuswigala*. A long discussion was needed to induce the chief to unveil it. Only by constantly consulting by glances the present *amafumu* the chief slowly unveiled it. He told us that 342 353 622 [251] [237] [778] [775]

[28] Cf. Fülleborn, p. 381.

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 353 622 778 [775] [824] he had received this object from his ancestors and it must always hang on this spot, as the ancestral spirits *(ubusyuka)*[26] themselves controlled its presence. It consisted of an *unswigara*, i. e. the tail of an ox, but the upper part of it was hollow. In this hollow part medicines *(ifingila)*[27] were kept. Yet another magical medicine, in the shape of a piece of bark of the tree called *Erythrophleum Guineense*[28] was fastened at the upper end of this sign. When my European attendant immediately said to the chief: "And from this piece you make your *mwafi*"[29], the chief exclaimed in astonishment: "*Umne wana Kyara!*" (You are sons of Kyara! i. e. You Europeans know everything.)

After this there was no more delay in revealing to us some more features of this sign of dignity. According to the belief of his fathers this object possessed a special *amaka* (power)[30], e. g. to defeat enemies, if the chief were to hold it directly against them. Also if a thief were [789] to try to enter the room by force, by making a hole beneath the wall of this part of the hut, he would be stricken by power coming from the *ubusisya* and he would have the impression that eyes are directed against him, and so be driven away.

[595] After these interesting communications I went to visit the hut of one of his wives, which still revealed the *isyenga*, the old-fashioned round structure of bamboo poles diverging from their upper end and thatched with grass[31].

241 784 9. The frequent walks in company with the chief or some of his *amafumu* gave me several opportunities for enquiries. On one occasion,

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[26] Cf. *Wilson*, Burial, p. 9: *unsyuka* (Sing.); *Mackenzie*, p. 191: *basyuka* (Karonga).

[27] Cf. *Mackenzie*, p. 275: *ifingira* (Karonga).

[278] [28] The pharmacological substance of the bark (Cortex Erythroploëi, „Sassa-bark") is the alcaloid Erythrophleïn which produces the same typical effects on the heart as the Digitalis-group (cf. *C. G. Santesson:* Pfeilgiftstudien XII. Arkiv för Botanik 27 A, No. 4, Stockholm 1935, p. 6).

[29] Cf. *Wilson*, Land Rights, p. 32; *Merensky*, p. 134; *Fülleborn*, p. 309.

[30] *amaka* is not a specific expression for „magical" or (religious) „supernatural" power, although, from the European standpoint this meaning may be connected with the word in specific cases, but generally it means any striking expression or effect of a quality of a person or object, e. g. *upiki eki ngalimo amaka*, in this wood is power. This word is, therefore, a parallel to the Austronesian, especially Polynesian word *mana*, examined in my treatise „Mana. The term of that what is exceedingly striking". Staatliches Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde. I. Reihe. Ethnographie. Vol. 2. Leipzig. 1922. If the Nyakyusa wishes to say that a phenomenon is "supernatural", then he connects it with Kyara, or he names it directly "Kiara" (cf. *Merensky*, p. 110 [197, 218]).

[31] Cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 377, fig. 140: Schematical average of a round-hut (as also to be found with the Nyakyusa still today).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

vessel of milk and two stems of bananas. We do not carry her in 881
triumph. The mothers-in-law do not bring the powdered medi- 585
cine.' One informant maintained that the bride was always examined before she washed with her husband (if she was a chief wife) and we once saw the bride examined at the *ukwingesia* ritual, but the examination before handing over the bull is the only one mentioned by most people. What is certain is that virginity must be publicly demonstrated in the ritual and that it is honoured.

After the shaving and instruction, the bride goes round her 585
father's village visiting the men who have not already given her a 431
gift. She is accompanied by the wife of the go-between who represented her father in the marriage negotiations. Each of her father's fellow villagers (as well as her elder brothers and her father's full sisters) should give her something—a bark-cloth, a chicken, a calabash, a spearhead, or some coins, as he greets her. These the bride divides between her maids, the officiant who treated her in the ritual, her husband, and herself; to the wife of the go-between is due one pot of the beer brewed for the shaving ritual, to take home to her husband.

If the agreed number of marriage-cattle have been handed over, [273]
the bride's father puts millet to soak for beer immediately after the
rite of instruction has been completed and the bull of puberty 585
eaten. When the brewing is ready the bride is formally taken to her husband's house (*ukumbeka*) by a 'mother' and one or two of her maids. Her own mother never goes—the woman of the party is usually a junior wife of the bride's father or the wife of the go-between. They take with them one or two pots of beer, a basketful of plantains to roast for her husband, two or three cooking pots, a log of firewood, a calabash of light ointment (*inyemba*), and a little pot of brown ointment (*imbale*) for anointing her husband and his friends in the village. 'What the wife brings when she comes for the first time is for all the men of the village to use to anoint themselves. They come every day to use it until it is finished.' These ointments are brought by every wife but they are especially important if the bride is her husband's first wife, and it is his bachelor neighbours who mostly use them. The bride also brings the fine 584
mat and several coarse ones which she has woven during her 354
seclusion, bark-cloths she has made for herself, and three hearth bricks (*amafiga*) carefully moulded for her by her mother out of clay and manure mixed with medicines. These are set up in her

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

585
354 new home, and her mother-in-law provides her with fire and a pot.

783 After the bride has had full intercourse with her husband she cannot return home, or see her own parents, until she has taken them the ritual *ilibalaga*. After sexual intercourse she wipes her husband's genitals with her hands, then wipes them on a fowl and some millet: these together form the *ilibalaga*. In the morning she goes off without washing—'with the filth of intercourse on her'—to her parents' house, taking the fowl and millet with her. The fowl is killed on a path and cooked with *ikipiki* medicine and, if the bride is the eldest daughter of one of the father's first two wives, her father and mother eat it together. Her mother eats alone if she is a younger daughter, or the mother is a junior wife. If the father is a chief the husband may kill a young bull and beef is sent in place of the hen.

834 After eating the *ilibalaga* her parents resume intercourse[1] which has been taboo from the time the girl first menstruated. If no hen is brought because the husband is poor, the parents still resume sexual intercourse, but the bride, when she visits her home, must not take water from her mother's pot. Someone else draws for her and she drinks it outside from a separate calabash. If she drinks [753] inside, or if her mother uses the calabash she has used, it is believed that her mother will get diarrhœa. She also avoids her father's bed and stool.

606 With the ritual of marriage must be included the negative ritual of avoidance between a woman and her husband's father and between those identified with him or her. The taboo applies from the time of betrothal or, if the girl has been betrothed as an infant, from well before she reaches puberty, and forbids father-in-law and daughter-in-law ever to look at one another or meet face to face on the pathway, or enter the same house, much less speak together. As we have seen, a similar taboo applies between the bride and her own father during her seclusion, but is relaxed when he [184] has given her a gift. Between a woman and her father-in-law, however, it is never relaxed, except among the more sophisticated
773 Christians. A myth of origin tells of a case of incest between father-
606 in-law and daughter-in-law which led to the establishment of the
811

[1] Kasitile maintained that if the mother has not reached the menopause the parents do not lie together until the daughter's pregnancy is apparent. 'For the mother to conceive before the daughter is forbidden, but old women are fruits sucked dry.' Mwakionde denied any danger in mother conceiving before daughter.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

One by one the villagers emerge from the houses, and sit in the sun, greeting neighbours with a polite 572
"Have you slept well?" if there are any neighbours [576]
near. Then the husband milks the cattle, and the boys come to drive them out to the pasture, where they will remain until the early afternoon, when they are again milked.

Generally the cattle sleep in the same house as their 231
owners, tied up to stakes fixed deep in the floor; but 592
where there are grown-up sons not yet married, a separate house is built in which the parents sleep with the little ones, while the young men guard the cattle from raiding thieves.

The bed is frequently no more than a mat spread 573
on the mud floor, with a single blanket for covering, and no pillow, unless it is a piece of roughly trimmed wood. The more prosperous natives, earning good pay in the employment of Europeans, have well-made beds fully equipped, in many cases even with mosquito nets hung from the roof. The poorer consider that they have made a great step forward if they have been able to save up enough money to buy a single blanket, and not seldom even that belongs to the father, the mother and children having to be content with meagre coverings of calico or grass mats. But [354]
the house is warm, often too warm, for the fire is always burning, the door is closed, there are no windows, and there is no ventilation in the roof; and all the inmates sleep with their feet to the fire, which is in the middle of the floor.

Here and there one will come upon rows of tiny 342
houses, each built and occupied by two or three small 561

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Haya FN8

H 342 As indicated above, the floor is covered with grass. Various domestic utensils may be seen, stuck into thin screens of plant material.

H 342 178 But this old, beautiful type of hut is very much on the decline. It is costly to make and to keep in repair, and the thick straw roof is, admittedly, highly inflammable. A flying trip round Lake Victoria clearly shows how the straw roofs in the banana groves are being replaced by corrugated iron. This change may even have another reason, viz. the fact that fodder for cattle is in short supply and that the grass for roofs is hard to come by. No doubt, it is a question of time when the fine old Haya hut will have disappeared.

N 114 In the Southern Highlands, where I was given the opportunity to stay for three months at various Danish mission stations, I visited the village round the Rungwe mission, the neighbouring villages of Ilolo and Kikota, and some villages near the Rutenganio mission station. I made a trip to Lake Nyasa and another to the Poloto mountains. I must admit to a limited knowledge of drawing technique and of house construction, but I have measured a number of houses and sketched their plan and also the furnishings I found in them. The positioning of the various objects has been established.

N 361 [342 356] The high standard of dwellings of the Banyakyusa is truly to be wondered at. The houses, clustered in villages, often along a winding street, lie intermingled with banana and coffee bushes. The houses are large and their interior is clean. Often two or three houses belong to one family, and, if so, will be grouped round a courtyard.

N 342 [824] Even if you could find houses built from sun-dried bricks and fired tiles, most were from bamboo with a grass roofing.

All houses stand on a clay base which, though not very high, no doubt means some protection against penetration of ground moisture during the heavy rains of April–June.

N [824] Besides bamboo, sometimes the bole of tree fern, *makeke*, is used in outer walls. Such tree fern stems have not the carrying capacity of bamboo, but they are far more resistant to rot. Among the other common features of the existing types of houses, should be mentioned the mud clods, the size of rolls that from the inside are pressed between the vertical bamboo poles; also, the inner wall is roughcast with a mixture of mud and cow manure; the floor is from tamped clay. In some places you find very fine floors in which a pattern has been rolled into the wet clay; to this end a short length of the stem of the banana cluster has been employed, viz. the length between the seats of the male and the female flowers. Also employed are another plant stem, or an empty corn cob.

N [237] [531]

N 354 595 In all houses where women live, there are one or more hearths. The presence of two hearths in one house usually means that the husband has two wives, each wife having her own hearth, either in the common house or in a house of her own.

N 342 The houses always have a kind of ceiling made from bamboo sticks and carried

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 parts. The partition wall was bamboo and mud. A doorway gave on to the inner
353 part, where Tufwene had her bed.

354 There were two hearths, one in each room. The front one was not used. In the outer room was a bed for guests—a common feature of all houses. Tufwene was thought to be well off, and she had plenty of carrying rings, used by the
482 women when they carry loads, often very heavy, on their heads. The inner room was used for stores, including a number of earthen jars. She had three very fine,
352 low stools. I saw them outside in the sun, but their usual place was no doubt in the outer room, which had the character of a workroom. Here were the large
412 wooden mortar and its long pestle; also the grinding stone and in a corner the small mat, the *uluyanya*, which is used to take up the newly ground flour. There
417 was also the ladder, used for fetching down firewood from the loft; you could see
415 the hen's nest, and the large water jar with its pointed bottom placed on three stones.

415 The third *isienga* belonged to an eighty-year-old woman whose husband had
[769] died. She told me how every day she would fill a fine, decorated bamboo mug
[531] with milk for him! These mugs, seen in all the houses, mostly have geometrical

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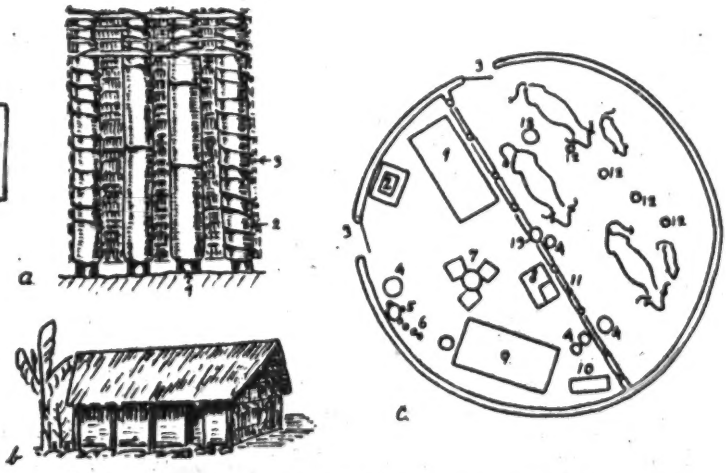

Houses belonging to Malia Ulinyelusya and her husband.

a. Detail of *isienga*, outer wall. 1, tree fern stem joined to bamboo pole—note aperture for liquid manure; 2, bamboo pole with plant fibre windings; 3, split bamboo.—b, Malia's *ikibaga*. —c. Plan of *isienga*. 1, bed of the man; 2, iron chests for garments; 3, door; 4, posts supporting ceiling; 5, hen's nest; 6, hoes and pestle for the maize mortar; 7, hearth; 8, chests; 9, bed of the grandchildren; 10, roost from hollowed out trunk; 11, low partition; 12, posts for tying cattle; 13, centre post to top of roof.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

patterns burned into the bamboo; they are hung upside down so the dust will not settle in them. The bottom is the natural partition of the bamboo cane. 415 531

The house was standing on high, slightly slanting ground, and like the first mentioned house it was buttressed by a great number of thick branches. Incidentally, it seemed to be very old and rickety. Inside, there were a great many posts supporting the horizontal bamboo ceiling and the stores of firewood. All posts were bifurcated and held the beams solidly in place. The diameter of the house was the usual 6.5 metres, but in this case there was no inner partition. As this woman was very poor, she had no bed, but slept on a mat on the floor. Only very rarely is there no bed in the houses; I remember having seen this only three times. 342 [352 556]

The hearth was the usual type: three decorated square stones, rising to a height of 30 cm above the floor, but being sunk 70 cm into the ground. Here they were positioned on one side, to ensure that the centre post would not catch fire, and to make for easy escape of the smoke through the doorway. None of the houses have other means of smoke outlet. 354

Alongside the wall were calabashes, jars, and baskets; material for the baskets; and a little away from the wall, the large mill-stone and its appurtenant smaller grinding stone. A hen's nest was not missing either. Along one side was fitted a small under-ceiling for the storage of small things. Two or three bananas, meant to be her next meal, were lying on the floor near one of the posts. From the loft she reached down a calfskin in which she had been carrying her child. Its inside was of a reddish colour. 352 [231] [482 237]

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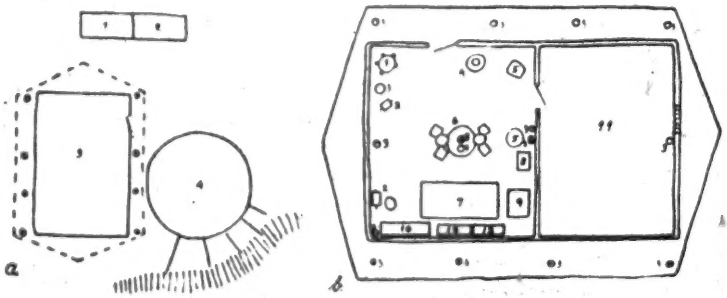

a. Site plan of Malia Ulinyelusya's houses. 1, hen-coop; 2, drying-racks for crops; 3, Malia's *ikibaga* with roof supports along sides; 4, *isiinga* belonging to Malia's husband, with buttresses at low ground.—b. Plan of Malia's *ikibaga* (barred window in back room). 1, hen's nest; 2, *ikitoto* (stool); 3, posts (those going up to ridge of roof are filled in); 4, large basket; 5, basket; 6, clay base round twin posts; 7, Malia's bed; 8, chest; 9, wooden chest; 10, table; 11, back room, having bamboo ceiling carried by bamboo cross beam (between posts marked 3); the room is used for storing clothes, etc.; 12, shelves.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17 Nyakyusa

342 Another old woman lived in a neighbouring *isienga* close by—if possible even more sparsely furnished than the last mentioned.

Common features of the round houses were: their size, the wooden centre-post, the ceiling covering the greater part of the room, the supporting posts for the beams that carry the bamboo joists and the ceiling proper; the building materials bamboo and mud; and the positioning of the hearth slightly off centre.

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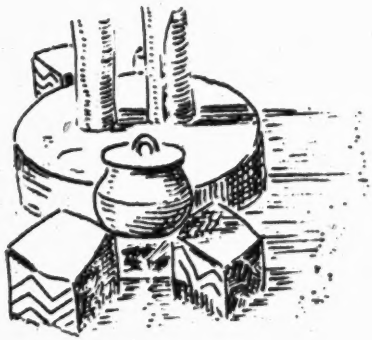

The two hearths of Malia's house. A clay base surrounds the twin posts, thus serves to fireproof them. Two hearthstones at either side form the hearths, the clay base acting as the third 'stones'.

178 The differences between this *isienga* and the original round-type house are: the angle of the wall, here vertical (as opposed to the inclination of the wall of 342 the original house); the entrance (here without ornaments); the door itself also without ornaments; and further the fact that the clay cobs placed between the bamboo poles were here not the shape but only the size of rolls. The pictures presented by Fülleborn clearly show the carefully formed clay balls in the wall.

[53] As distinct from the old-type house, this new type of house has no decorations on the inside of the wall, but in some instances decorations are found on the floor.

342 Another type of house, again, was rectangular, often very long, with a ridge-beam roof. In most cases, these houses were buttressed along both sides, and were thus provided with what you might call two verandahs. Sometimes also the gables of the houses had buttresses. The roof projected over the gables, most near the ridge. The roof sagged in the middle, a fact that was already observed by the scholars mentioned. This may be because the ridge-beam is not dry but freshly cut, when it is mounted in its place. During the subsequent drying process under load it will then be brought to sag—as we know from other types of houses.

This house is called an *ikibaga* and is known to be typical of the Banyakyusa since olden times. Literally, *ikibaga* means stable or cowhouse, thus presumably indicating its original purpose. There is a full description of this house in Fülle-

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 solitary or in a row some distance from the other houses of the village. They were never roughcast with mud).

Nearly all the *ikabaga* had a post-supported verandah. I measured up and drew sketches of two houses of this type, one belonging to the above-mentioned woman called Malia, whose husband lived next door in an *isienga*. She was a Christian—actually a church-elder. On the outside of her bamboo-framed, mud-
342 roughcast wall, she had drawn a church in yellow, red, and black colours, and
532 below she had written the word *kanisa* (church). Apart from a house near Lake Nyasa, of which I took a photograph and which had very modernistic and drastic drawings on its outside wall (crocodiles, a man and his bicycle, a man with his firearm), it is the only instance in which I saw any kind of coloured decoration on a house. Besides impressed patterns in clay on hearth and floor, I saw no decorations on the inside or outside of houses, except fine patterns in the outside wickerwork of the wall.

342 In this house, approximately 8 metres long, there were two vertical supporting posts, reaching to the very ridge of the roof, where presumably they were joined to the ridge beam. However, the beam could not be seen.

● 354 The hearth was peculiar in that it consisted of two pairs of hearthstones near a clay base that surrounded a supporting post and a shorter post. Thus two hearths were available, at the same time serving as fire-proofing to the posts. Though Malia was a single woman, the house had two hearths. You might think that she had seen a stove and had found that two cooking places would be useful. I saw this arrangement in one more place, in the house of a widow, who—by the way—was also a Christian.

353 A space nearly half the size of the house was partitioned off, the half-wall having a doorway. This room was for stores only, clothes etc.; it had a barred window. Besides the hearths, the living-room had hen's nests, stools, baskets,
[352] Malia's bed (2 m by 1 m), table, wooden shelves, boxes, and a chest. These last-
[097] mentioned objects she had had no difficulty in obtaining from the neighbouring joiner's workshop belonging to the mission.

342 The other *ikibaga* is from quite a different district, that of Rutenganio. It was a very long house, as often seen in this locality, 26 metres long. I was told that

The type of house called *ikema*, or *isiwe*.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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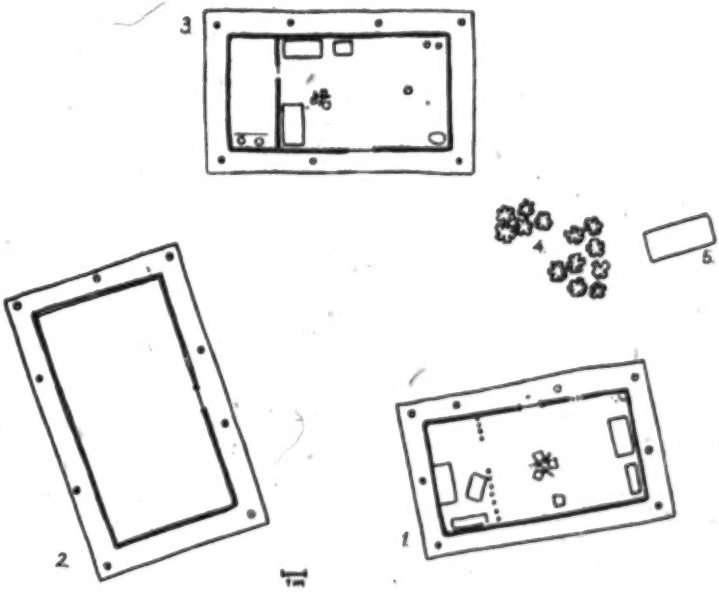

Three houses belonging to one family, situated round a common courtyard; the doors open on to the yard. The village street is along the back of the house at top. 1, Isefina's house; 2, Baba's house; 3, Idina's house; 4, banana plants; 5, hen-coop.

houses existed which were 60 metres in length. It had the same width as Malia's house, approximately 5 metres. The roof was supported by posts along the sides and at the gables.

Two women lived in this house, both married to the same man. Consequently, there were two hearths, the stones of which were cylindrical-conical, broadening slightly at the top. All were decorated. Each woman had her part of the house, both with an outer door, and further there was a door, slightly narrower, between the two parts, and a fourth door to a store-room. No less than twelve posts supported the roof, all reaching to the ridge. The two parts were a bit unequal in size; nearly half of each had the well-known loft for firewood, etc. One part contained beds for the woman and her husband (one bed had 100 straw mats). The children had two beds. The husband had still another house, a short distance away at the foot of a hill, they said. I did not see it. The other woman's room held her bed and a cot.

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The hearths of both rooms were placed in the centres, between two upright posts. Utensils and furnishings did not differ much from the usual: hen's nests,

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12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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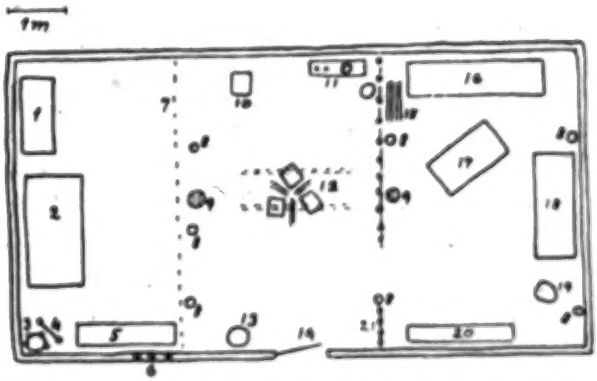


Isilina's house. 1, cupboard with shelves; 2, children's bed; 3, hen's nest; 4, ladder; 5, roost; 6, barred window; 7, from dotted line towards the right is the bamboo ceiling; 8, from here issue 5 horizontal bamboo sticks on which the bamboo ceiling is supported; 9, Posts supporting roof; 10, chair; 11, low shelf with two bamboo jars and a water jar; 12, hearth with three hearthstones and sticks under ceiling for carrying the fine basket, and corn-cobs hung up to dry, etc.; 13, beer jar; 14, door; 15, mats behind the low partition; 16, shelf for domestic utensils; 17, child's bed; 18, Isilina's bed; 19, baskets; 20, domestic utensils; 21, low partition between rooms.

found. In the front part of the Kikoła house, serving as an entrance room, were four posts called *ikingi*, to which two cows were tied at night.

This part, which we may call the cowhouse, also housed hen's nests, the roost, [231] and the mortar to be used for maize, etc.

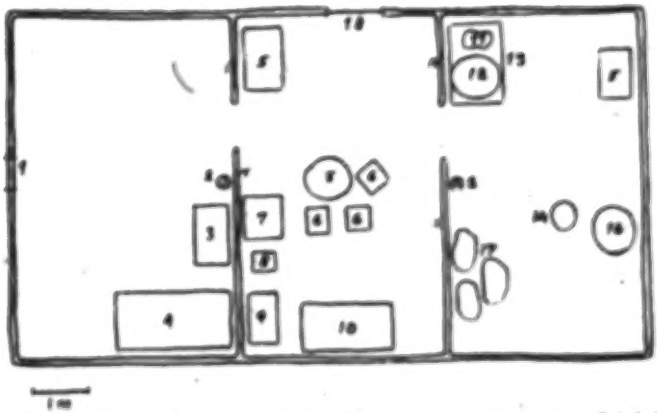
The hearth, consisting of one square and two round hearthstones, was placed [354] in the centre of the living-room part. Here were also water jars and the woman's bed. This means that even if this type of house had a roof of a different shape and was always provided with a verandah with posts supporting its roof, the interior was really designed on the same lines as the short *ikibaga*, but it was [542] meant to house only one woman, or one man, as we shall see below.

We may imagine that one of the reasons why the type of roof was changed, was the weakness of the pointed roof of the *ikibaga*. It could often be seen to have a tendency to fall in, and had to be supported by a post. Even in Fülleborn's illustrations, e.g. plate 64 c, a kind of reinforcement can be seen at the edge of the roof. No doubt the roof of the *ikema* does not suffer to the same extent from this flaw. 342 178

New houses were being built to this design, and I suppose that a little more than half the number of the houses were of the *ikibaga* type, and a little than half the *ikema*. 342

In the village of Ilolo, I surveyed three houses belonging to one family, a [361]

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa



Baba's house. 1, barred window; 2, posts supporting roof; 3, wooden chest; 4, Baba's bed; 5, table; 6, chair; 7, cupboard; 8, chair with three suitcases; 9, suitcase; 10, table with bookshelf; 11, bag; 12, large basket, *ilimbo*; 13, low stand for 11 and 12; 14, millet jars; 15, low partitions; 16, *ilimbo* in which the millet is washed; 17, rice in bags.

cupboard. This seemed very strange and a bit disorderly. On a chair were three suitcases on top of each other.

It was interesting to see, in the store-room, the very crops that belong to the man, viz. rice and millet, the most valuable produce. The rice was in bags, and it is quite probable that this man had bought it from the districts near Lake Nyasa, where it thrives well. On higher ground, rice cannot be cultivated.

The millet was contained in a basket, 1 m in height, 55 cm broad at the bottom, and narrower, 35 cm, at the top.

Further, there was a large, beautiful earthenware jar, which he had bought. This was intended for the millet. And there was also a cylindrical container for the washing of the millet when it was brought home from the field. This vessel was 55 cm in height and 85 cm across.

All three houses had a small window with bars or shutters.

The inside of the houses lay in semi-darkness, as the only light is admitted through the doorway, and in some cases through the diminutive barred window. Nevertheless, the interiors give a nice impression, because of their tidiness, height, size, and cleanness. And how cosy they are, when seen at night; the door is closed, you gather round the fire and delight in perfectly cooked rice, which is the favourite dish at this principal meal of the day.

Johnston says (1897, page 453) that the greater number of the houses are circular in their plan and very much like bee-hives in shape; their walls are wickerwork filled with mud cobs, and they have thatched roofs. He also reports

462 252 264 very substantial, the main meal being taken in the evening shortly before sunset.

415 [354] *8. Manufacture.* The pot for cooking *(indeku)* is placed on three stones which form the hearth *(ikipembero,* hearth stones). The flat bowl made of clay used for the needs of the kitchen is called *ulwangabia* and a pig pot used for storing water *ingumbe.* The pots of clay 415 439 are manufactured by Kissi women because in their land on the north-eastern shores of Lake Nyassa the best clay is found. In the eastern part of the Nyakyusa country adjacent to Kissi land the women visit the pottery markets of the Kissi, but to the remoter villages, e. g. around the Rungwe volcano the pottery is brought by Kissi men. In this case, owing to the great distance from the Kissi-Land the men carry the loads of eight to ten pots on their head between split poles of bamboo. The Kissi pots I saw in the Rungwe Station were ornamented in [462] a rough way with red ochre and seemed only slightly baked. The [324] hearth stones, however, are made by the Nyakyusa women themselves as I was able to observe near Rutenganio, where widows manufactured them for sale.

285 In many villages of the Nyakyusa I could watch basket-making. This [462] I saw being done by men. In the chief's hut in Katumba I had the opportunity to admire a great number of very big baskets *(ifituba)* for [237] storing grain, smeared with cow dung on the outside. The attractive closely wickered baskets, which are filled with *malesi* (millet) and then [273] placed in water for a night in the process of beer-brewing were originally made by the Buanyi, but nowadays also the Nyakyusa are said to be skilled enough to weave them. I had no opportunity to observe it, but could acquire an excellent specimen of that wicker-work.

264 [515] *9. The Meal.* At the beginning of each meal the hands are washed, including those of children. The men take their meal separately from the women. The wives only eat when their husbands have been satisfied. Boys under ten years eat with their mothers, but as soon as they begin to live in age-set villages, they eat together with their friends of their own age-set, as described in detail by Mr. G. Wilson in his "Introduction of Nyakyusa Society" (Bantu Studies X, p. 271). The head of the family likes to eat together with his friends.

262 Meat is eaten very seldom, but on special occasions such as marriages, death lamentations, christenings of Christianized natives, enormous [192] quantities are devoured. *Inyama* (Swahili: *nyama)* is the Nyakyusa word for all sorts of meat, *ingombe* for that of cattle and *ingambaku* for that of oxen. Near Utengule I saw black pigs *(inguruwe,* pig)

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

f. Housekeeping

356 Every married woman has her own hearth and granary, and
476 she works very largely alone when cooking and cleaning; but in
313 one essential activity women who are neighbours in a village regularly co-operate, and that is in fetching firewood. We never saw a woman going alone; usually there is a group of three or four up to a dozen or more. Firewood must be fetched two or three times a week, and the journey and the collection of the wood takes from four to ten hours, depending upon the distance of the village from a patch of forest or bush. Thus the women spend up to thirty hours a week fetching wood, and it is with village neighbours that this time is spent, not with relatives from other villages. If a woman is ill her friends will help in bringing wood and cooked food for her. Some co-wives co-operate in this way, fetching wood together, and helping each other in sickness, but whether they do or not depends upon personal friendship. Often it is with an unrelated neighbour, rather than with a co-wife, that a woman works most closely. Only when co-wives are sisters, or aunt and niece, are they expected to work together regularly.

476 Village neighbours—women—also co-operate in the preparation of feasts, as we shall see in the following chapter.

g. Economic co-operation beyond the village

476 The economic relations of fellow villagers, and the changes
taking place in these relations, cannot be understood without
602 some reference to economic co-operation beyond the village boundaries. As we have already indicated, co-operation with relatives living in other villages is very important: cattle, the most prized possession of the Nyakyusa, circulate within kinship groups, between father and son, brother and brother, and between affines, and these same relatives assist one another in cultivation and building. But beyond the circle of kinsmen and village-mates there was formerly little economic co-operation.
[438] Each village and kinship group was largely self-sufficient, buying from outside little save iron spears and hoes, medicines, salt, cosmetics, and brass or copper wire for ornament.

326 Smiths were essential to the Nyakyusa economy for they

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 symbol of potency,[1] and we suggest that this also is an element in
622 the ritual of the 'coming out', for the fertility of the chiefdom is
796 thought to be bound up with the virility of the chief.

[372] There are a number of stories about the way in which Mwakyusa (38) surpassed his brothers and one of them tells how each brother made fire and set alight the pasture land (for traditionally parts of the pasture land were fired each season to provide fresh grass for grazing in the early spring), and the fires started by the elder brothers soon died out, but that started by Mwakyusa 'burned for a whole month'. This is interpreted as an omen of his greatness as a chief: fire, potency, lordship are inextricably linked.

At the 'coming out' all things are made new. No matter how [561] crowded the country the young men must move to new sites and the shelters in which they live must be new, though, as will be [356] shown, they do not necessarily move to *unoccupied* country. On their new site the young men live as bachelors, milking their cows and cooking for themselves on their new fires the meat of the cattle they seize, the bananas and grain brought by their wives and mothers. Meat is abundant, for the young chief now rules and has the right to take what cattle he chooses, even from the villages of the old men in his country. 'It was as if there were war, [726] the young men seized cattle, food, and women', and though they did not fight their fathers directly, as the Meru did, they clearly asserted their power. And, as so common further south, the accession of a chief was the occasion for raiding the neighbours: [778] the young men, we were told, went forthwith to test the efficacy of the magic spears and the medicines with which their chief and headmen had been treated. Or the chiefs might lead a battue to clear the country of wild pig, as Mwakatumbula (Mwambete 162) did directly after his 'coming out'. Well fed and exuberant, the [574] young men dance and display their cattle, and entertain visitors lavishly, for every chief seeks to attract men to his country by his hospitality.

Then they set up the sign and memorial of the chieftainship: [824] they plant cuttings of two species[2] of *ficus*, *indola* which is much used as a shade tree, and *umpandapanda* from which bark-cloth is [423] made. Close to these the first house of the chief and that of his senior village headmen are built, and the trees also mark the

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 124, 143.

[2] When writing *Good Company* I mistakenly thought that two cuttings of the same species were planted. Cf. *Good Company*, p. 27.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Haya FN8

H 342 As indicated above, the floor is covered with grass. Various domestic utensils may be seen, stuck into thin screens of plant material.

H 342 178 But this old, beautiful type of hut is very much on the decline. It is costly to make and to keep in repair, and the thick straw roof is, admittedly, highly inflammable. A flying trip round Lake Victoria clearly shows how the straw roofs in the banana groves are being replaced by corrugated iron. This change may even have another reason, viz. the fact that fodder for cattle is in short supply and that the grass for roofs is hard to come by. No doubt, it is a question of time when the fine old Haya hut will have disappeared.

N 114 In the Southern Highlands, where I was given the opportunity to stay for three months at various Danish mission stations, I visited the village round the Rungwe mission, the neighbouring villages of Ilolo and Kikota, and some villages near the Rutenganio mission station. I made a trip to Lake Nyasa and another to the Poloto mountains. I must admit to a limited knowledge of drawing technique and of house construction, but I have measured a number of houses and sketched their plan and also the furnishings I found in them. The positioning of the various objects has been established.

N 361 [342 356] The high standard of dwellings of the Banyakyusa is truly to be wondered at. The houses, clustered in villages, often along a winding street, lie intermingled with banana and coffee bushes. The houses are large and their interior is clean. Often two or three houses belong to one family, and, if so, will be grouped round a courtyard.

N 342 [824] Even if you could find houses built from sun-dried bricks and fired tiles, most were from bamboo with a grass roofing.

All houses stand on a clay base which, though not very high, no doubt means some protection against penetration of ground moisture during the heavy rains of April–June.

N [824] Besides bamboo, sometimes the bole of tree fern, *makeke*, is used in outer walls. Such tree fern stems have not the carrying capacity of bamboo, but they are far more resistant to rot. Among the other common features of the existing types of houses, should be mentioned the mud clods, the size of rolls that from the inside are pressed between the vertical bamboo poles; also, the inner wall is rough-cast with a mixture of mud and cow-manure; the floor is from tamped clay. In some places you find very fine floors in which a pattern has been rolled into the wet clay; to this end a short length of the stem of the banana cluster has been employed, viz. the length between the seats of the male and the female flowers. Also employed are another plant stem, or an empty corn cob.

N [237] [531]

N 354 515 In all houses where women live, there are one or more hearths. The presence of two hearths in one house usually means that the husband has two wives, each wife having her own hearth, either in the common house or in a house of her own.

N 342 The houses always have a kind of ceiling made from bamboo sticks and carried

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

881 and other duties applicable to a girl after marriage. The practical
867 instruction takes place in or before a special hut in the village under
868 the leadership of the *abanyago (avanyago)*. The girl is admonished by the *unnyago* to obey her parents without any delay, to perform the commands of her mother immediately, e. g. to clean the hut, and especially to show obedience when guests are present. Should the mother blame her daughter unjustly, she should not reply. (The girl had been blamed in the earlier discussion that she had not swept the hut when her mother required her to do it). Then her duties and
881 conduct towards her future husband were inculcated. As a wife she
867 must never accept anything from the hands of her husband without
543 kneeling and stretching out both hands, and turning away her face
562 with eyes cast down. Also as a wife she must not hold her head up

[142 291 534]

Some of the drummers.

when she is addressed by a man. As a wife she must be anxious to prepare her husband's meal always at the right time, that means, it has to be ready when her husband returns from the field. If she sees her husband coming from the field, then she has to go to meet him, and take his hatchet from him. Should her husband scold her, she is
[356] not to reply; but she may ask her neighbours for help. It is one of her duties to take care of the regular cleaning of the hut[23]. The ashes must always be removed by her from the fireplace. If there are only a few ashes on the fireplace she must remove them with her hands[24].

[364]

[23] The place near the house where the sweepings are thrown down is called *urutagililo*.

[24] Cf. *Mackenzie*, p. 51, who refers to such moral instructions connected with puberty customs, probably at Karonga; cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 359 (Nygonde plain).

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the figures. Also bicycles, aeroplanes, motor-cars and other striking objects of the European civilization are to be found represented and concentric white circles adjacent to these drawings or paintings.

14. Houses. Sometimes the upper portion of the framework of the rectangular houses is not fully plastered with mud leaving broad open areas or strips horizontally or slopingly to the base-line. This may have its origin in an artistic motive and at the same time be useful in ventilating the interior of the hut. The ancient custom of the Nyakyusa to fill out the spaces between the framework of the walls with flat, oval cakes or clods of clay, supported inside the house by a second framework of bamboo *(uvumango)*, has also a decorative effect.

The preparation of those oval sun-dried clay cakes is the work of the women. L. Monteith Fotheringham described this in his "Adventures in Nyasaland" (London 1891, p. 22) with the following words: "The women make the bricks in shape like large eggs by pressing the clay between their hands." The building of the framework of the hut and the thatching of the roof is the task of the men. Nyumba means "the house" in Kinyakyusa as wellas in Swahili; *isyenga* is the name for the old-fashioned hut of the Nyakyusa possessing a round baseline and a framework expanding upwards in diameter. The rectangular hut is called *ikibaga* and the smaller rectangular hut used as a store or a fowl pen, *akabaga*. It is interesting to note that there is no special word for roof in Kinyakyusa. This part of the hut or house is simply called "the above" *(iyuru)*. In contrast to this fact the different poles of the roof-structure are specially named according to their position parallel to or at right angels to the ridge of the rectangular houses. *Ukutalike* means to bind the different rafters of the roof together; *imbanda* is the name for the supporting poles of the roof, and *inyengo* for the poles of the framework of the walls.

15. Outfit. Inside the house we find besides the bedsteads *(ikitara,* pl. *ifitara)* and the household utensils, the grinding-mill *(uruwara)*, consisting of an upper (smaller) and a lower (broader) stone. The flour falls into a basket placed in front of the mill. Sometimes in a corner of the hut a nest *(ikitero)* for a sitting hen on top of a pole is to be found. Outside the house is a place for the sweepings *(urutagililo)*. The cleaning of the interior of the houses and also the repairing of the mud plaster is the task of the women, but I saw men cleaning the space in front of the huts. At any case, it must be acknowledged that the cleanliness of a Nyakyusa village leaves little to be desired.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

£25,500 was earned by Nyakyusa migrant labourers and those employed in the district.[1] Earnings from employment are thus probably about equal to the total earnings from the sale of produce. 465

Within the district Nyakyusa men are employed in Government service as clerks, hospital orderlies, agricultural inspectors, and as labourers on roads and buildings. They are employed also as house servants by Europeans, as labourers on the twelve European-owned estates in the district, and as shop assistants and servants by Indian traders. There is also a little employment of Nyakyusa by Nyakyusa in agricultural work. Traditionally chiefs, being responsible for hoeing the fields of many wives, sometimes employed poor men to hoe for them, rewarding them after two hoeing seasons with a heifer or bull, but the extent of such employment was, in the old days, small and confined to the chiefs. Nowadays it has been considerably extended, rich men employing others to hoe or, less commonly, to plough for them, and paying them in stock or cash. A few monogamists also employ young boys to assist their wives in fetching wood and water. 464 357

Most Nyakyusa men now take paid employment at one time or another. Of a small sample of seventy-nine men, seventy-six (94 per cent) had been in paid employment. There was, however, a marked difference between the work histories of young and old, and between pagan and Christian. Of the pagan men over middle age, the majority of those who worked had not done so willingly, but had been conscripted as carriers, and the total periods for which they had worked were short, averaging under six months per man. On the other hand, all the Christian men over middle age had worked willingly, and the total period for which each had worked averaged over twelve years. Of the young men, all who had worked had done so willingly, but as with the older men, there was a marked difference between the length of time pagans and Christians spent in employment. The profession of Christianity is, amongst the Nyakyusa, correlated with education, and Christian young men, more especially the sons of Christians, tend to secure the skilled or semi-skilled jobs. Those who have skilled work tend to stay longer in a job and return home less frequently because they fear lest they may not find an equally good job again, and because they have often travelled far to find skilled 464 466 464 795

[1] Based on the estimated number of men in employment, and an analysis of wage rates within and outside the district.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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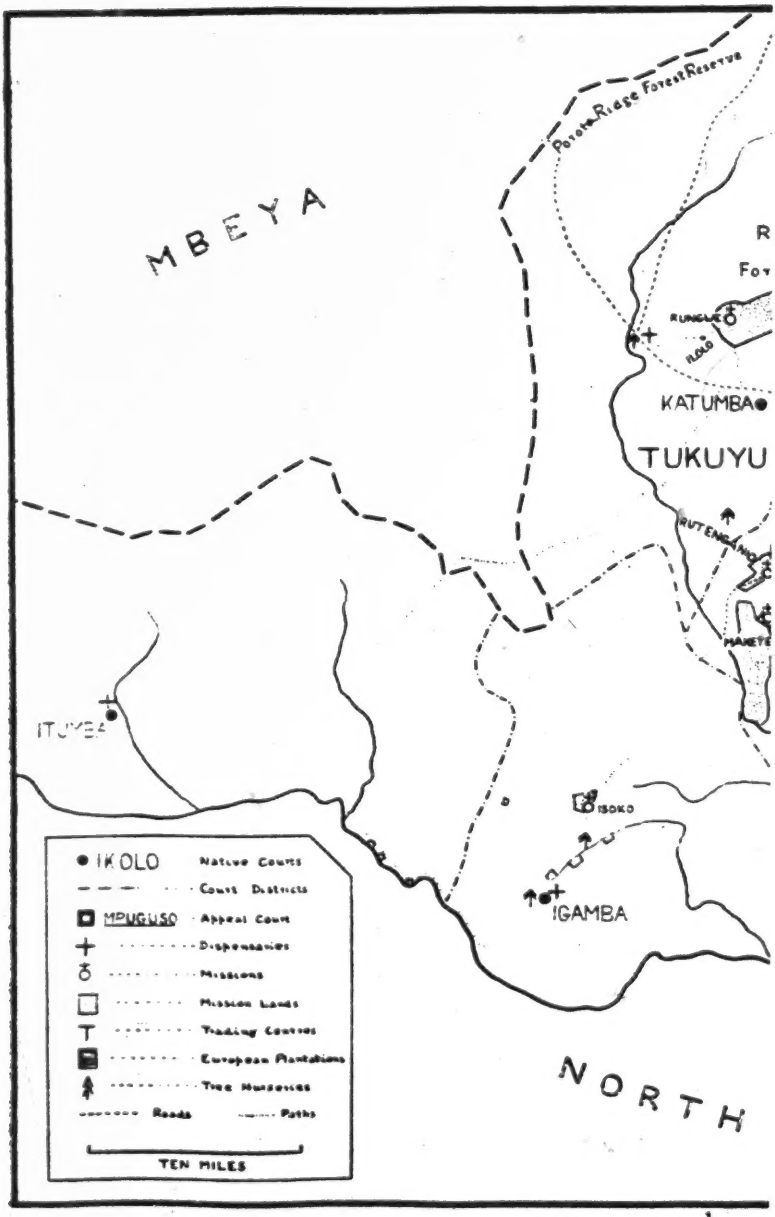

MAP III. RUNGWE

[Facing p. 16(a)]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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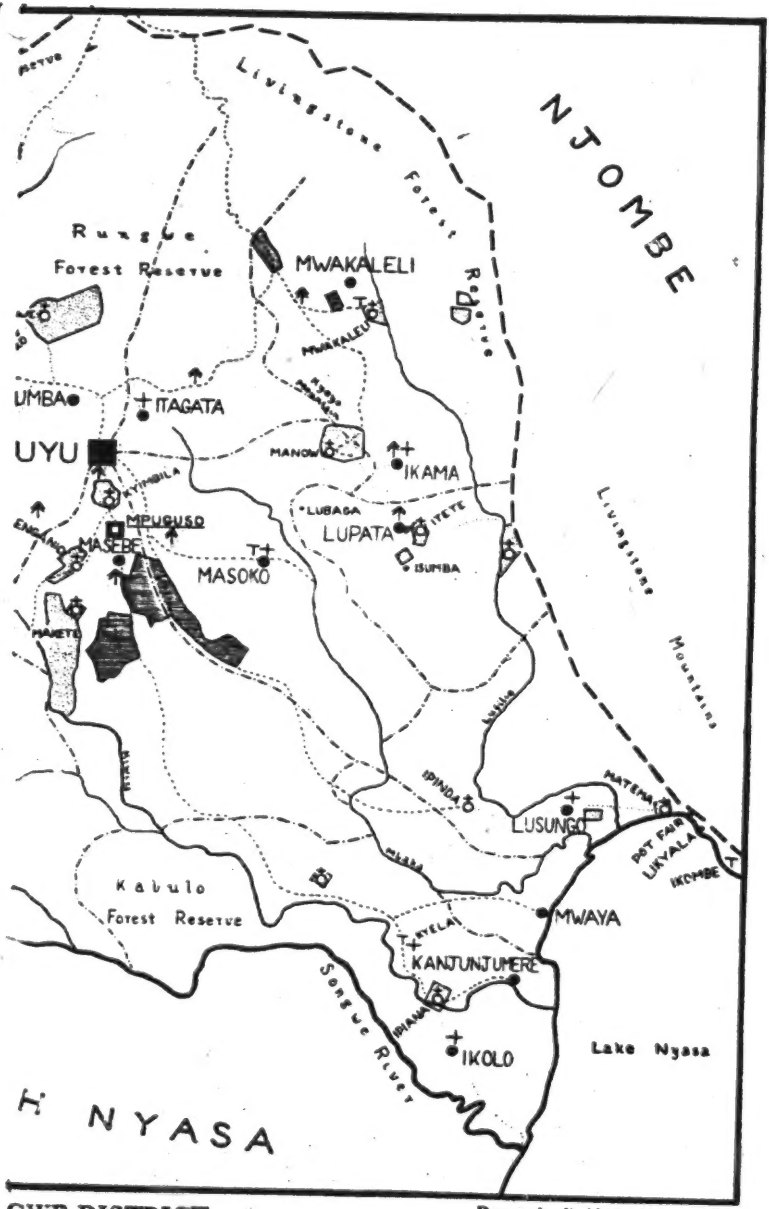

GWE DISTRICT

Drawn by J. V. L. Rennie after R. de Z. Hall and G. D. Archer

[facing p. 16 (b)]

I:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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II. THE GENESIS OF A VILLAGE
Boys' huts built on the edge of their fathers' village

[facing p. 19]

I:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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III. MEN'S VILLAGES HIDDEN IN BANANA GROVES AND FRINGED BY CULTIVATED LAND

A long hut is visible in the centre of the picture to the right, and an *umwali* tree on the left. In the cultivated land are oil-bearing *unsyunguti* trees

[facing p. 34]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 mony, and are clearly distinguished from those who do. Indeed
624 they may be appointed at a considerably later date. The qualities looked for in them, however, are similar to those looked for in the village headmen, namely, wisdom in dealing with men, generosity, wealth, and the respect of their neighbours. They are expected to settle disputes, to pass on the orders of their chief or village headman to the men under them, to entertain their neighbours, and 'to watch over the country by day and by night'. On the hot Lake-shore plain, where the cattle are brought in before noon to stand in the shade of the bananas and are protected from insects by the smoke of a fire specially kindled for the purpose, an assistant headman is called 'he of the heap of hot ashes' (*ugwakyemo*), implying that he is the leader of the group whose cattle are herded together. 'He of the heap of hot ashes' is responsible both for the cows and for their masters. 'If the cows give no milk he will call the ten friends and warn them that if there is a witch among them he will be driven away.' Again, the extent of an assistant headman's influence depends very largely on his personal popularity. 'The village headman chooses a man of wisdom and says: "Build here with your friends": he is there first, and, if he is charitable (*mololo*), more people will come.' Generally speaking the assistants are more important in the large villages of the plains than in the smaller villages of the hills.

621 The distinction between the sub-divisions of a village and two separate villages is theoretically quite clear for the villages of men, since each independent village has been formally established at a 'coming out' ceremony. But in practice the distinction is somewhat blurred; for large villages often split *after* the 'coming out' ceremony into sections which operate very much as independent villages. This became apparent when we analysed in detail the villages of Mwaipopo's chiefdom (*vide* Document pp. 181-5) and found, besides the nineteen established villages, five village-sections which were treated in many respects as independent villages. Boys' villages remain somewhat fluid until the 'coming out'; but those offshoots of a parent village which have been closed to younger brothers may be regarded as separate villages.

361 Boys build their huts close together and plant bananas round them (*vide* Plate II). Then, as they grow older and marry, they build larger huts and space them further apart; but the homestead

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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IV. A CHRISTIAN BOYS' VILLAGE BEING BUILT ROUND A SCHOOL
(the larger building in the centre of the picture)

[facing p. 35]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

of a married man is close to those of his neighbours, his banana grove probably adjoining theirs, while the main garden-lands of the whole group are all together at a distance (*vide* Plate III). Boundaries between age-villages are thus not always apparent to a stranger. A solid hundred acres or so of houses and bananas may turn out to consist of two or three villages, each with its own organization, and each having a block of garden-lands separate from the others.

If any question arises about the village a man belongs to, the points discussed are: where he has built and where he cultivates —i.e. to what village the land he uses belongs; with whom he herds his cows; and which village headman he goes to in case of a dispute. Membership of a village is therefore defined primarily in terms of economic co-operation and political allegiance.

d. Moving

The age-system is somewhat modified by men moving from one village to another. When a man dies his heir frequently comes and lives where the dead man was living, so becoming a member of his age-village. A man's heir is his full brother next to him in age, and only when all the full brothers of a family have died does the property pass to the eldest son of the eldest brother. The difference in the ages of a man and his heir is often, therefore, only a few years; but even if the difference be great, and the heir many years younger than his new neighbours, he is now treated as their contemporary. He sits with them at ceremonies and he shares their rights at any division of meat.

Were all heirs to remove to the homesteads of those who had died, the villages of old men would, of course, continue to exist indefinitely. In Mwaipopo's chiefdom there remained only one small village of old men, the grandfathers of the generation which had last 'come out'. Other villages of this grandfathers' generation were remembered by name; the heirs of former members sometimes used the old name; but they did not live together as a group; they were members of other villages of their own generation. Even the heir of the headman of each old village, who acted as a priest, lived in some other village. It was said that these grandfathers' villages would disappear even in name when Mwaipopo, the father of the young chief died. No

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

131 Bukukwe, culminating, so far as the peopled regions
133 are concerned, in Tukuyu, five thousand feet above sea-level, the residence of the Administrative Officer and his staff, with Post and Telegraph Offices, and a large Government Hospital. Here also are many small trading stores, conducted by Indians and Somali; and a little to the south is the Kyimbila
[797] Station of the Scottish Churches Mission, carrying on the work of the exiled German missionaries. Still further to the south, and less elevated, is the British military post of Masoko.

The population of these fertile and healthy high-
• 361 lands is dense. From Tukuyu or Kyimbila, looking
101 south and west, numerous villages, each hidden in its banana grove, fill the view westwards to the Bundali Hills, where the Kibira River is marked out by a morning mist, and southwards towards the lake, thirty miles distant. In this region the people call themselves Nyakyusa, with a number of local names indicating no difference of origin or language. The
241 soil is so fertile, and the rain usually so abundant, that in many places two crops are taken annually of some foodstuffs, while of the others the single crop is so great that scarcity, no uncommon occurrence in some parts of Central Africa, is rarely experienced.

133 The Bundali Hills close in this happy valley (for in
101 spite of its elevation the country has the appearance of a valley) on the west; and beyond them, after a most exhausting march, over lofty summits, through deep ravines threaded by bridgeless rivers, one comes to the home of the Bandali, a race of hardy

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER II

Village Life

•361 THE typical Konde village has very little in common with a European one. Here and there one will come on villages neatly laid out in streets or rows, usually with the ends, rather than the sides, facing the road; frequently with a clump of bananas separating one house from another. But much more common is the village in which each house is hidden in its own banana grove; or where at one point one may find three or four huts grouped together, at another perhaps a solitary hut, yonder, again, two or three are near each other; but everywhere surrounded by bananas growing close up to the houses. Or, in a few places, the tall maize conceals the houses from view in the growing season, leaving them exposed, after the harvest, to the eye of all passers-by.

512 From a distance nothing is seen but the wide spreading barana leaves. In the early morning from hundreds of huts smoke rises into the still air, as the sleepers rouse themselves and lay fresh wood on the fire which has been smouldering all night, unless some one has wakened and stirred the dying embers. One by one the villagers emerge from the houses, and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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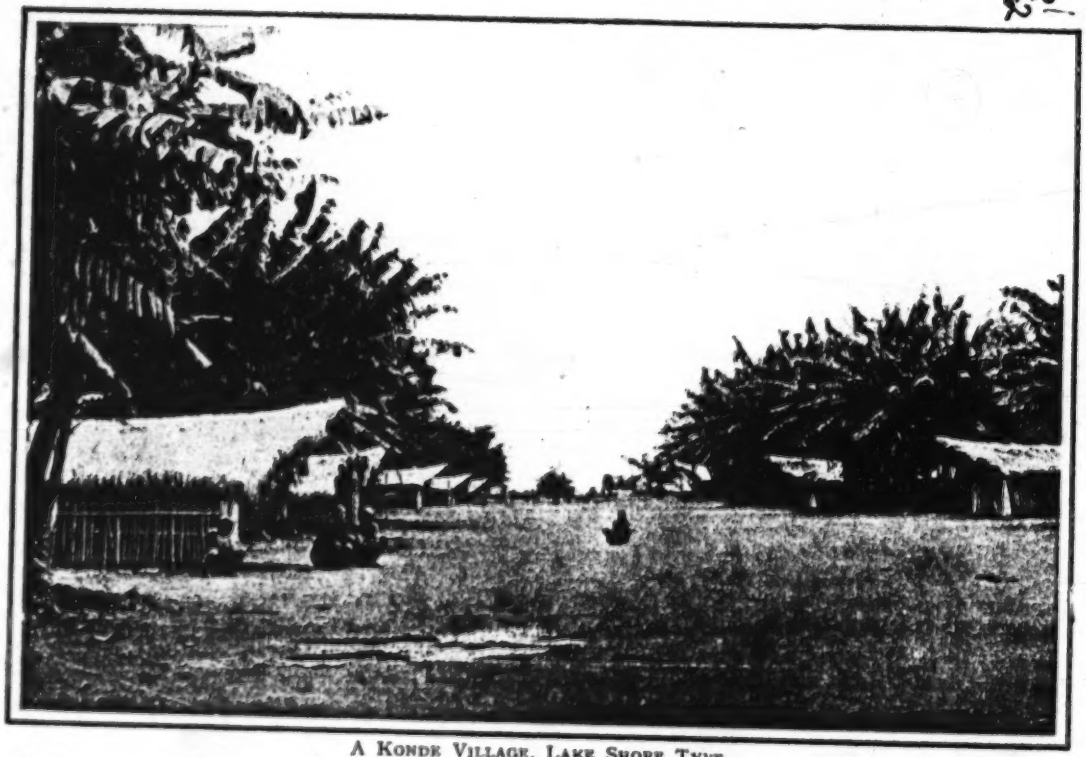


A KONDE VILLAGE, LAKE SHORE TYPE.

The slender houses are of reeds and grass, shaded by overhanging banana leaves, and usually unplastered to admit every straying breeze. As cattle stealing s a very common crime, the cattle sleep in the houses with their owners.

[facing p. 32]

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

231 according to the *Bell Report*. Cattle and hides are exported to Tanganyika.[1] The *Nyamwanga* herds were reduced, partly by Bemba raids, and partly by rinderpest.[2]

Domestic Architecture

341 *Ngonde* homesteads are famous in Nyasaland for their peculiar style and neatness of execution. They are made of bamboos, specially grown for the purpose. They are ●361 oblong, with the ends slightly tapering upwards so that they present a ship-like appearance. The huts are erected in two lines facing each other, at a distance of about 30 yards. This centre street is kept scrupulously clean.[3] The *Nyakusa* live in round or long huts of bamboo or grass.[4] *Kinga* homesteads are scattered; they live in round huts of bamboo and straw.[5] The *Iwa* formerly lived in large stockaded villages, but these are now broken up.[6]

Specialization and Trade

326 The Ngonde were accomplished iron-workers; iron was dug, smelted, and made into hoes and spears.[7] The Iwa were formerly noted as iron-workers. Both they and the Nyamwanga grow tobacco on a large scale.[8]

286 A rough kind of cloth was made on native looms. The Ngonde made hollowed 501 canoes, but were not good sailors. In fishing they used poison, hooks, nets, and traps. 226 Pottery and basket-making were carried on.[9]

[17] The Ngonde were the most civilized of this cluster of tribes, owing to their closer contact with Arab and Swahili traders who used the lake as a waterway.[10] The Nyam- 439 wanga also had opportunities of contact with Arab and Swahili traders at the south 643 end of Lake Tanganyika,[11] but information about the effect of this on their economic life is lacking. By comparison with the Ngonde the Nyakyusa were isolated from contact with the outside world,[12] and this is probably true of the other tribes of the group. Among the Ngonde, in spite of the political hierarchy and central religious authority of Kyungu, economic links between separate local groups were few. The ivory trade was a source of wealth for the Kyungu and for the nobles of Ngonde at Mbande, but its benefits had a strictly limited effect on the rest of the people. The economic links between the capital and the chiefdoms followed the lines of the political system The income of Kyungu in slaves and cattle depended on the judicial process and on warfare. He had a semi-monopoly of the ivory of the country (the right tusk of every elephant killed was his). His expenditure consisted of entertainment for all important visitors to the capital, and gifts of cloths, obtained through the ivory trade, to nobles and chiefs. The first Kyungu gave head-cloths to the indigenous rulers, who, in accepting them, accepted his overlordship, and the practice was continued every time a new chief or territorial noble succeeded to office. The nobles of Ngonde got cloths every time the Arab traders came. Chiefs bringing food to Mbande, the capital, were

[1] *Bell Report*, pp. 100–3; Aplin, 1931.
[2] Kerr-Cross, 1894; Murray, 1932, pp. 210–11.
[3] Ibid., p. 64.
[4] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[5] *Handbook of German East Africa*, p. 68.
[6] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[7] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 146–8; Kerr-Cross, 1894, p. 189.
[8] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[9] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 146, 149, 151–2.
[10] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 44.
[11] Ibid., 3, 1938, p. 15.
[12] Cozhead, 1914, p. 44.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN

622 and the great commoners of the most senior villages. The constitution of a chiefdom
624 was that of a limited monarchy, for the chief was dependent on his great commoners
631 for his authority. All the way up the scale, with the exception of the Kyungu himself, each chief had his own great commoners and people directly subordinate to him. The organization of families and villages within the chiefdoms was the same as that of the Nyakyusa, but the organization of a territory ruled by a noble differed in that although there were always at least two age-villages, there were no great commoners.[1]

361 Villages vary in size, and average from forty to fifty households. In the first instance a boys' village is built on ground allotted to them by the village of their fathers, but a
621 new allotment is made ceremoniously at the 'coming out', *ubusoka*, ceremony of the young chiefs, when the old chief and his great commoners formally allot a tract of land to each village of young men, and redraw the boundaries.

621 In every generation each chiefdom was divided into two (they were originally immigrant groups expanding their territory, and incorporating previous inhabitants).
622 The chief at his accession, or 'coming out', married two 'great wives', whose eldest
631 sons would each be one of his two heirs, and divide his chiefdom. The number of villages which 'came out' with each young chief varied between four and eight. If he was later reduced to a minor position he might be left with only one village of adult men, and one of their sons, as people tended to move away from minor chiefdoms. This was the system which obtained among the Nyakyusa and also among the Ngonde.[2] A summary of the 'coming out' ritual is given here, instead of in the section on ritual, as it indicates some of the features of the political organization.

621 Usually eight age-villages 'came out' at the same time, four under each of the young chiefs. At this occasion, some thirty years after the old chief's accession, eight new
622 great commoners were chosen. The two young chiefs were secluded for a few hours
624 in the hut of the old chief's first wife, and received magical treatment. Then they
583 'came out'. The boundaries of the age-villages were freshly drawn. After the 'coming out', each young chief, whether he was already married or not, married his two great wives, whose first sons would be his heirs. Girls who had not yet reached puberty were carried off from other chiefdoms with a show of force by the chief's men, who later sent cows of their own to regularize the position. The girls stayed at the home of one of the old chief's men until their first menstruation. They were initiated together, not at the house of their fathers, but in the country of their husbands; the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the retiring chief) played the part usually played by the girl's parents and neighbours; the chief and his young men playing the usual part of the husband and his friends. After the ceremonies the girls were given as wives to the young chiefs, and separate huts were built for them in the two senior age-villages of the chiefdom. Wives married subsequently were attached in order of seniority to one or other of the two 'sides' of the chiefdom. Thus the four age-villages normally attached to a young chief were, from the first days of his official marriage, divided into two. If one of the two great wives bore no sons, the succession for that side of the chiefdom would pass to the son of the next senior wife of that side.

Between the 'coming out' of two young chiefs and the death of their own father, a
622 delicate balance of prestige and power was maintained, secular power over their own age-villages passing to each young chief, while the old chief retained control over the

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 22–4.

[2] Ibid., 3, 1938, pp. 12–15.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

595 and children a man has to assist him the more wealth he can produce. The man and his unmarried sons hoe, his wives and young daughters plant, weed and harvest, fetch water, cut firewood and cook the food ; and in other practical activities there is equally fruitful co-operation within the household group.

591 621 882 When a man marries he takes his wife from her father's village to his own where he lives with a group of contemporaries. Each village is in origin an age-group, formed by the sons of some village of adult men who leave home one by one as they reach the age of ten to twelve years and build together on ground set aside for them by their fathers. It is not decent, the Nyakyusa maintain, for a boy to sleep at home after any vigorous interest in sexual activity has awakened in him ; and so, for the fifteen years or more between leaving home and marriage, he sleeps with bachelor friends in a boys' village. He and a group of friends go round in turn to the houses of their respective parents for meals, and each hoes his own parents' fields, but all return to the boys' village at night.

621 882 361 As the members of the boys' village grow older, younger boys just leaving home begin to be refused admittance to it and so either start a fresh village of their own nearby or else join a village of their own contemporaries which has already been started. Boys' villages are thus forever hiving off from the villages of men. At first a boys' village covers but little ground for, as its members are unmarried, the houses are small and close together and there are no garden lands attached to it. But as the young men marry one by one the village expands, houses are built bigger and further apart and some adjacent ground is brought under cultivation, until at last it assumes the normal aspect of a village of adult men.

621 A village thus consists of a male age-group with wives and children attached. Wives may be of any age and there is no such formal age grouping among them as among the men. And, as time goes on, some men too may enter the village who are not exact contemporaries of its other members. When a man dies his heir, either a younger brother or a son, often comes to live in his village ; nor are strangers who apply for land in a village ever, I think, refused on the ground of unsuitable age. Villages vary considerably in size but average forty to fifty households.

At first a village of boys, as we have said, is built on ground allotted to it by the village of their fathers ; but a new allotment is made ceremonially at the " coming out " (*ubusoka*) of the young chiefs.

631 622 Every generation each chiefdom of the Nyakyusa is divided into two halves, a fact which is hard to understand until it is realized that the Nyakyusa consist of a number of immigrant groups which have, until very recently, been expanding their territory within the district and

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

471 for labour and food. There are also a few small plantations owned by Europeans inside the district which fulfil a similar function. 26,000 acres only of land have been alienated in Rungwe District by the two Governments which have in turn controlled it; and it is the declared intention of the present Government to alienate no more. Of the alienated land only 2,200 acres is at the moment in use.

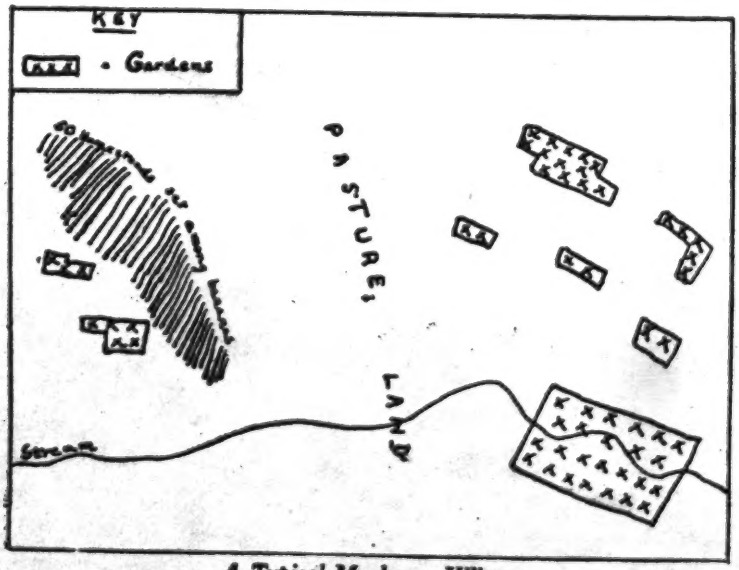
797 Missionaries of the Berlin Lutheran and the Moravian missions have been in the district since 1891, and a substantial proportion, about 16%, of the population now professes Christianity. The Christians live, some in separate Christian villages, some scattered about among their pagan neighbours. In the Christian villages the traditional age grouping usually prevails, with elders and deacons taking the place of great-commoners.

000 Such in outline is the form of society within which individual Nyakyusa hold property in land.

5. *INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD*

●361 A village, as we have seen, usually consists of a group of houses built fairly close together with one or more blocks of garden land at some distance from them, while the village cattle graze the adjoining grass lands in various different herds.

Plan A



A Typical Myakyusa Village

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

far as as men compete for land that rules of tenure are developed among them. And where competition is weakest there the rules are least strict.

In Nyakyusa society every married man holds land of his own for building and agriculture, for there is still enough for all, and pastures his cattle on the grasslands of some village group. His land rights, in which, as we have seen, his wives and children participate, are conditioned at every point by his membership of a particular village, his allegiance to a particular chief and by the particular cultural idiom of his tribal group.

Before the " coming out " a boy's village, as we have seen, is built on land assigned for the purpose by the parent village. A block of land for building is set aside by the great-commoner in consultation with the other men as their sons begin to reach the age of leaving home, and there the boys are often joined later by contemporaries, sons of other villages of men. At first building sites alone are needed, but later, as the boys grow up and get married, they need gardens too and bring the adjacent ground under cultivation. In doing so they are careful not to infringe upon their fathers' land rights, they either hoe land which was previously unowned[1] or else that which has been specifically granted to them by the parent village. Into the nature of such grants of garden land before the " coming out "—whether they are block grants by the parent village as a whole to the boys' village as a whole, or separate grants by individuals to individuals—I omitted to enquire.

At the " coming out " a whole tract of land is formally allotted to each village of young men by the old chief and his great-commoners and within this tract individuals take up garden land by hoeing it. At the " coming out " it is said that " everything is made new," boundaries are redrawn and the new chiefdoms and villages of the young men are ceremonially incorporated.

The situation in which individual land rights in relation to the village group and the chief are clearest to an observer is that of the taking up of land after a move, for it is in this situation that disputes are most frequent.

Mainly owing to their religious beliefs movement from one place to another is constant among the pagan Nyakyusa. If a man or his wife or child falls sick and does not respond quickly to medical treatment the witchcraft of neighbours is at once suspected as a possible cause ; there are always other possible causes too so diviners are consulted in order to decide between them ; but if the suspicion of neighbourly witchcraft is confirmed then the cure for the sickness is held to lie in moving. In every village " some people " are vaguely believed to have the power of

[1] Vide infra. pp.41-2.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VI

LAND AND POWER

643 561 423 THE crux of the chiefs' 'coming out' was a redistribution of power and of land, and we must pause in our description of the ritual cycle to discuss the relation between chiefdoms and villages and the land, and to consider more closely the balance of power between successive generations.

(a) THE TERRITORIAL ALIGNMENT OF CHIEFDOMS AND VILLAGES

173 361 Tradition makes it clear that the heroes came to a sparsely occupied country and that their descendants gradually spread out as their numbers increased. The settlers chose to live on hillocks overlooking the surrounding country. Lubaga and [103] Mbande, the seats of the two 'divine kings' are commanding sites. [778] The grove of Kabale, where the ancestors of the Kukwe chiefs first established themselves, is on an eminence rising from the plateau, and Kambasekela (near the Mbaka bridge) on which the early chiefs Mwaipaja (21) and Mwaipopo (26) were buried is a hill very like Mbande, overlooking the plain.

361 Unlike most of their neighbours the Nyakyusa show a preference for cleared and cultivated land, planted with bamboos and the [824] oil-bearing *unsyunguti* trees (*Trichillia supp.*)[1] as well as the great *umwali* (*Chorophora excelsa*) which, in their view, adds dignity to the homestead.[2] A study of the trees planted at the 'coming out' and the sacred groves in Mwaipopo's chiefdom (C 24)[3] shows that for four generations the ruling chiefs (descendants of Mwaijonga 82) have established their principal villages within a quarter of a mile of one another, and for seven generations the descendants of Mwakisambwe (30) have lived within two or three miles of one another (*vide* plan, p. 101), though there were acres of fertile land

[1] I am indebted to Mr. P. B. Nightingale, Forestry Officer, Tukuyu, for giving me the botanical names of these and other trees.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 77-8.

[3] C followed by a number is the reference number of a chiefdom as listed in the genealogies of chiefs.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

available which are only now being settled. Colonies are established, but usually by junior sons, the seniors remaining near where their fathers built; e.g. the descendants of Mwakasangule (22) remained near Lubaga, but Mwakisambwe (30) the junior heir moved to Mbyanga about 1750 and his senior great-great-great-grandson Mwaihojo (147) lives close to Mbyanga still, while Mwaijonga (82) the junior heir settled two or three miles away. Mwakyusa (38), a junior son not strictly an heir at all, but personally very popular, was defeated by his elder brothers and driven from the hills to the plain, where his descendants now live. It is not an invariable rule that the junior should move away—for example Mwambete (162) of the junior line lives close to Kambasekela where his ancestor Mwaipaja (21) is buried, and not Mwakibwele (182) of the senior line—but most often it is the junior who moves. The tradition is that the junior heir of a chief leads off his men as colonists at his 'coming out', and this may indeed have happened in the past, but the area of colonization in Mwaipopo's country (which we have observed over twenty years) was first opened by private individuals moving into unoccupied savannah forest land in search of virgin soil for cultivation, and lush grazing. The chief Mwaipopo asserted his claim to the area first by establishing a household there with some of his junior wives, and then by sending the son of a subordinate house (who could have no claim to inheritance of the chieftainship) to live there. Nsusa, the second village headman of Mwaipopo's heir Mwankuga (150), also settled in the forest and acted as headman of the men there, but whether his move was primarily to lay claim to the land or because he had quarrelled with his chief, Mwankuga, and the other village headmen, was never very clear.[1] Then in 1953, at the coming out of Mwankuga's heirs, the junior Mwabungulu (178) was established in the colony, and is regarded by the people as 'chief' of that area, though he is not recognized as a chief by the Administration.

When a colony is established several miles are left uncultivated between it and the parent chiefdom. Mwabungulu lives five or six miles from his senior brother Mwanyilu (177) and there is an area without homesteads between them. It seems that, traditionally, each chiefdom was surrounded by a belt of uncultivated land used as pasturage, and very often at the 'coming out' both brothers merely extended their villages on to the adjoining pasture land

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 268-9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

361 leaving a strip of pasture between them, but when the area became
561 crowded the junior heir would establish a colony at some distance.
631 With the increasing density of population, and of the acreage cultivated by each family, the buffer strips between chiefdoms are disappearing.

The more closely related chiefs are the nearer their chiefdoms are likely to be, as will be apparent if the map on p. 87 is compared with the genealogies I and II, but the pattern of splitting and expansion was continually modified by conquest and absorption. For example, the descendants of Mwaipasi (81) of the junior line have no chiefdom, and the descendants of Mwamwifu (84) were defeated and absorbed by Mwaipopo II (116), and the junior house of Mwakisambwe (30) appears never to have established itself. His second son named in the genealogy, Mwamukinga II (44), was a full brother of the senior heir Mwamukinga I (43), not the heir of the second house. And of the descendants of Mwankyuse (33) only one heir appears to have established himself in each generation.

Although a chiefdom was surrounded by pasture land with unoccupied savannah forest beyond it, when the heirs 'came out' their fathers moved. The old men gave the senior heir a site in the centre of the country, not exactly where his father had lived but somewhere near the senior village of the past generation, and the old men moved aside to make room for the new village. The old men's villages diminished in size for many members had died and not all the heirs had come to live where their fathers had lived, and the homesteads were built on the periphery of the young men's villages. Traditionally most of the cultivated land was reallocated at the 'coming out' also, but that no longer happens. Nowadays, even where the 'coming out' is celebrated, the old men continue to cultivate until their death most of the fields they cultivated before the 'coming out', vacating only their homestead sites and adjoining gardens. The dominance of the younger generation is reflected in their compact villages, forming wide straight avenues, in central positions in the country, while the villages of older men are often split, and their homesteads scattered without order. The avenues are felt to contribute to the dignity of the ruling generation and the older men are content to withdraw that their sons may 'display themselves' (*ukumoga*).

[602] Age, territorial, and kinship grouping interlock in a complex

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

fashion. Each village is occupied by an age-set and men are emphatic that age and friendship, not kinship, are the basis of a village, but the villages of fathers, sons, and grandsons commonly, though not invariably, adjoin one another, as Bujege, Igembe, and Lupando, or Lupondo, Njisi, and Iringa in Mwaipopo's chiefdom (*vide* plan, p. 101). Each section of a chiefdom comprises half the ruling generation, and interspersed with their villages are those of their fathers and sons. Men are identified by the name of their village, section, and chief; the village name defines their age-set, the name of section and chief their generation. The section name is always that of the senior village which leads it. Generation succeeds generation in office when their heirs 'come out', but the relative position of villages (age-sets) within a generation remains constant. Since chiefdoms traditionally split each generation at the 'coming out' the men of the retired generation who remained belonged to one section only; those of the other section of their generation were members of another chiefdom. The territorial arrangements reflected in the plan of Mwaipopo's chiefdom on p. 101 are modified by the fact that the chiefdom has not split for four generations. In generation I Kibonde was the portion of the junior heir, Mwafungo (83), but he died young and his land and widow were inherited by the senior brother, Mwaijonga (82). The son of this leviratical union, Mwakipesile (118), went through the 'coming out' in generation II along with Mwaijonga's heirs, Ijonga (114, representing her full brother 115), and Mwakabule (117). Mwakipesile inherited Kibonde and Mwakabule inherited Kituli, but both were later defeated in war by Mwaipopo II and their land incorporated in his chiefdom. Mwakipesile's heir, Likosyela, and Mwakabule remained as subordinate chiefs. Though the girl Ijonga celebrated the 'coming out' in place of her unborn brother she could not rule, and Mwaiteteja, son of Mwaijonga II (younger full brother of 82) acted for her. He was finally defeated by Mwaipopo II and fled to the periphery of the country. Kabula was his village, and he was subordinate to Mwaipopo, not independent.

In generation III the chiefdom did not split because by that time the British administration was in control, and the territorial division remained much the same, Igembe and Njisi becoming the senior villages in place of Bujege and Lupondo, with Mwankuga (150) and Mwaseba (152) as the young chiefs. Kibonde,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 Kituli, and Kabula still remained somewhat detached. In generation IV the second heir, Mwabungulu (178), has moved out to the
631 forest and the area occupied and ruled by Mwaijonga and Mwai-
561 popo is still one, with a division between Lupando and Iringa. Kibonde is fully absorbed into Lupando, and Kituli and Kabula into Iringa—no descendants of Mwakipesile of Kibonde and Mwakabule of Kituli went through the 'coming out' with Mwanyilu as chiefs. Kibonde, Kituli, and Kabula are subdivided into age-villages of three generations, but these are not shown on the plan. They are spoken of by outsiders by the inclusive names.

To a European the most surprising fact about the age-organiza-
561 tion is that a young man of the ruling generation may still choose
428 to move into the homestead of his deceased father or elder brother. We knew one young man, who had been spoken of as a possible village headman at the coming out of Mwanyilu, but shortly before the 'coming out' he chose to move into the homestead of his deceased father in Lupondo village (where his father in turn had inherited) even though he might have inherited his father's wealth in wives and stock and returned to his own village of Masoko, after completing the ritual of death and inheritance. Our informants insisted that, though the young men might rule, the older generation were the more honoured, and in inheriting from his father this man was classified as a member of his father's generation. Nevertheless many young men do *not* choose to move into the village of the father or elder brother from whom they inherit, and the villages of old men decrease in size and finally disappear altogether.

The relation between kinship and territorial grouping cannot
602 easily be indicated by plans and genealogies for though in theory
361 each village consists of 'sons' of a village of the previous
166 generation (as shown in the table facing p. 91) there is con-
561 siderable movement from one village to another, and the members of any adult village usually prove to have come from a number of
631 different villages, though a boy's village consists of sons of adjoining villages. The table of members of three of the villages of Mwaipopo's chiefdom illustrates this (*vide* pp. 224-6). An analysis of genealogies showing where different members live gives much the same picture. Though the shortage of land in the coffee-growing chiefdoms of the hills and the rice-growing chiefdoms of the plain is tending to obliterate the age-village organization, the old

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

system is still the accepted form in Mwaipopo's chiefdom; the advantages of separating kinsmen in different villages are explicitly stated, and the contrast between the Nyakyusa and their neighbours in this respect emphasized. 'Certainly we do not live with kinsmen here but the Kinga do.' 'It is not good for a son to live close to his father, they will quarrel.' 'When we move to another village we consider friendship not kinship in selecting it.'

(b) THE BALANCE BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND SECTIONS

The ritual cycle of the 'coming out' and the sacrifices in the groves helped to maintain a balance of power between generations, as well as between chiefs and commoners. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) in 1953 it was Mwabuputa, the senior village headman of his father, who took the leading part. He was described as 'the greatest man in the country' who 'brings out the chief' and his manner indicated that he was well aware of his power. During the reign of Mwaipopo (116) the power of his father's village headmen, Njobakosa and Ngulyo, was apparent at every ritual. Spiritual power was shared between chiefs and commoners, but exercised ideally by a virile chief of the ruling generation and the experienced headmen of the retired generation.

Those chosen as senior village headmen at the 'coming out' are commonly older than the young chief, but village headmen are thought of as surviving their chief—it is they who were responsible for smothering him, and performing the sacrifices in his grove. The headmanship is an *office* and so long as the office is necessary an incumbent is found for it, in the person of the heir of the original holder who is so closely identified with the deceased that most precise inquiry is often necessary to establish whether a given individual is the original holder, the succeeding heir, or a later heir, successor to the successor. The Ngulyo who officiated at the rituals in 1935 was the heir of the original Ngulyo (some said the *grandson*, not the son) and he was criticized by Kasitile as being 'a young man who knew nothing'. The principle, so familiar in Central Africa, of a perpetual office[1] emerges, among the

[1] I. Cunnison, *Kinship and Local Organization on the Luapula*, Communications of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute No. 5 (1950), pp. 14-15; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), p. 122; A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, O.U.P. (1939), p. 24; 'Some Types of Family Structure among the Central Bantu, in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, p. 224; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, London (1911), p. 3.

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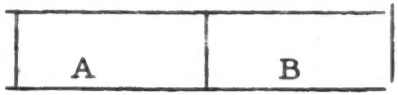
FN17 Ngonde
Nyakyusa

Chart showing position of sections of plan of Mwaipopo's Chiefdom. (Facing p. 100)



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FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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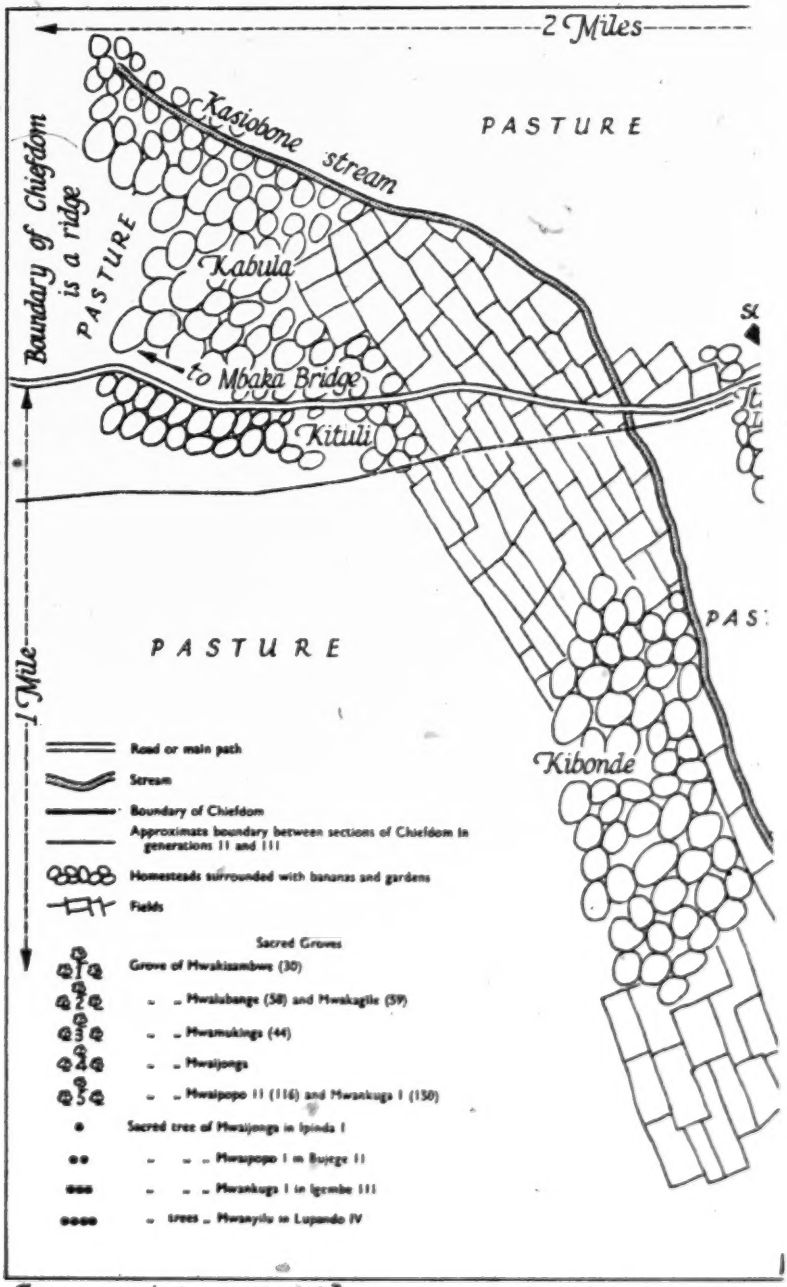

[facing p. 100; section A]

PLAN OF MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM

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Nyakyusa

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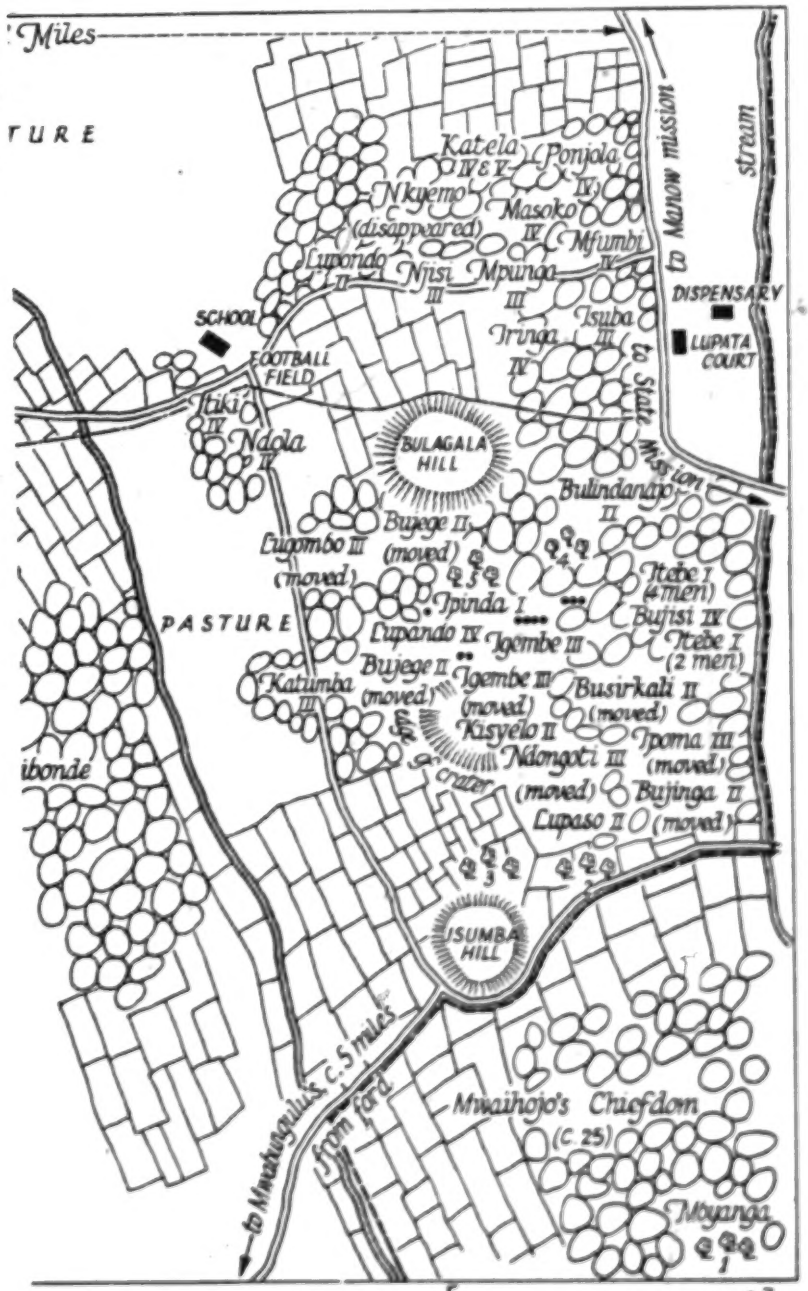

POPO'S CHIEFDOM (C 24) IN 1955 [facing p. 100; section B]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XII

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

(a) THE GROWTH OF A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

×797 ×795 WITH the arrival of European missionaries at the end of the nineteenth century[1] a new set of religious ideas was introduced and a new form of social grouping established. The early missionaries settled on land which they bought from various chiefs and gathered round them workers and refugees—the survivors of slave-raids in neighbouring areas—many of whom gradually became converts. In BuNyakyusa a new type of village, a Christian village, was established on mission land and the converts who occupied it were largely withdrawn from the authority of the chief, looking instead to the missionary as their leader. In Ngonde the development was rather different. The converts were not gathered on mission land but stayed in their own villages, where they were expected to spread the gospel among their neighbours. The difference was partly due to a difference in policy between the Scottish mission operating[2] in Ngonde, and the Moravian and Lutheran[3] missions operating in BuNyakyusa, but it was emphasized by differences in the history of the two areas. In Ngonde the missionaries became the allies of the Ngonde against the Arab slavers, whereas in BuNyakyusa there was no such alliance. The Scottish mission deliberately sought to convert and train the traditional leaders, and so gain the whole community, whereas the Moravians and Lutherans preferred to withdraw their converts from the surrounding pagan community.[4]

[567] [648]

The number of converts increased much more rapidly in Ngonde than in BuNyakyusa, but after forty years of missionary activity the structural pattern was growing similar. More and more

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[1] For an account of the first contacts of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde with Europeans, and bibliography on it, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 81-1, 273-6.

[2] The Livingstonia Mission of the Free Church of Scotland which later united with the Church of Scotland. It is still referred to in Ngonde as 'Free Church'.

[3] The Berlin Society (Berlin I).

[4] For an admirable account of the development of mission policy in East Africa, see Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (1952). Dr. Oliver describes the withdrawal of converts on to mission stations as typical of the *first* phase of mission activity and this is true for the Moravian and Lutheran missions, but Christians in Ngonde were never so withdrawn.

[p. 166]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

of the Nyakyusa converts chose to live, not in Christian villages on mission land, but in Christian sections of pagan villages—often grouped round a school—and after the establishment of Indirect Rule in 1926 the independence of Nyakyusa living on mission land from the authority of chiefs was no longer recognized officially, though in practice they were not regarded as chiefs' men in quite the same way as other people when it came to calling up conscripts for labour service. One of the signs of the difference between pagan and Christian in relation to the chief is that Christians are not punctilious about sending to the chiefs the customary cut (the breast) of every animal killed, as are pagans, and even the most conservative do not fear the 'breath' of their neighbours if they neglect the tribute.

After the war of 1914-18 three new missions were established in the Nyakyusa valley: the White Fathers, the Benedictines, and the Pentecostal Holiness Association. Two churches of purely African origin emerged: the Last Church of God and His Christ, commonly called the BaNgemela after its leader, and the African National Church led by Paddy Nyasuru, which flourished in Ngonde and had a few members across the Songwe in Bu-Nyakyusa. And there was a small group of Watch Tower[1] with Nyakyusa leaders, but acknowledging a vague affiliation with a Watch Tower mission in Northern Rhodesia, and corresponding with the Watch Tower offices in Cape Town, from which they obtained literature. As the publications sent were in English or Nyanja, neither of which the local Watch Tower members could read,[2] and the correspondence was also in English, the link was a tenuous one, but Rutherford's apocalyptic pamphlets, prophesying a speedy judgement on 'the goat class', were carried about reverently.

Therefore, by 1935 there were a number of different religious associations, more or less closely connected. The Moravians, Lutherans, and Church of Scotland worked in different areas and co-operated closely; but between them and the Roman Catholics and Pentecostal and the purely African or 'independent' Churches there was little co-operation and sometimes tension. The great bulk of the Christians (74 per cent) belong to the three long-established missions—Moravian, Lutheran, and Church of

[1] Jehovah's Witnesses. For an account of the tenets and international organization of this denomination, see Horton Davies, *Christian Deviations*, O.U.P. (1954), pp. 63 ff.

[2] We ourselves were called upon as scribes and translators.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Scotland—and it is with their organization that we are primarily concerned.

Each denomination is divided into congregations, local groups living in villages surrounding a central Church which usually has its own pastor or minister—European or African—in charge, though the shortage of men and funds after 1914 meant that one minister was sometimes in charge of two congregations. For the fifteen congregations of the three Churches mentioned there were eleven ministers in 1937, three of them Africans, and the congregations varied in size from just over 600 to 3,000 members. They included communicant members—that is, adults who had been baptized, and the children of Christians who, after having been baptized in infancy, were confirmed during adolescence—children of Christians who had been baptized but not yet confirmed; 'hearers' and catechumens who were undergoing a two or three years' period of instruction before baptism, and members under discipline who, because of some serious breach of Church law were not, for the time being, admitted to communion. Women members outnumbered the men by more than three to one in the congregations in Ngonde (where many men were away as labour migrants) and by three to two in the Moravian congregations in BuNyakyusa.

The functions of the congregation are worship, evangelization, religious instruction, and sometimes, general education and welfare. Each congregation chooses elders from among its members and they, together with the minister, form the 'Session' or Church Court which deals with matters of discipline and administration within its area, as well as discussing matters of Church policy which may later be brought up before a higher court or council.

Both men and women are eligible for office as elders, but their duties are somewhat different. Each male elder is in charge of the Christians in a given area, usually those living in one age-village. He organizes services in the village, often taking them himself, and choosing suitable people from among the residents to help him. He instructs candidates for baptism, holding the weekly classes for 'hearers' and catechumens; he visits the sick; above all he must try and compose quarrels among his people. It is customary among pagans for a husband and wife who quarrel to take their dispute to a senior kinsman or to a neighbour; among Christians such disputes are usually taken to the elder, since the Church is immediately concerned in maintaining the marriage bond. The

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Christians. A revealing phrase was used of Ngemela by one of his followers: 'He is our European.' 797x 795x

Two sets of rituals are celebrated in BuNyakyusa, but there are not two communities. Nearly all the Christians have pagan kinsfolk with whom they co-operate in practical affairs, many of the Christians live in pagan villages, though usually in separate sections of them. In the early years of the missions there was clearly some friction—there were accusations of witchcraft against those who learnt to read and write for if they were not witches how could they have learnt? And there was talk of people 'hiding their witchcraft in Christianity'. Pagans averred that in the land of the shades Christians ate frogs—a symbol of difference and dislike oddly familiar to Englishmen. But by 1935 it had become almost conventional for a boy who went to school to become Christian, and if later he became betrothed to a pagan girl, she was expected to join a catechumen's class and be baptized also. The opposition from pagan kinsfolk was small except in the case of an heir to wealth or office. Then there was bitter objection. For if a young man became Christian he could neither inherit his father's wives nor increase the influence of the lineage in the approved fashion by marrying several wives himself, and much of the family wealth would pass to a junior line. If a convert were heir to a chiefdom, or likely to succeed his father as village headman, it was felt that he would not be able to maintain his position with only one wife, and succession to a pagan priesthood was totally impossible. [754]

The Christians, for their part, press their pagan relatives to join them in the Church, and a considerable proportion of conversions occur in this way. It is common for a mother to join her son, or a younger brother his elder brother of the same house. For a father, to whom baptism would mean sending away all his wives save one, the step is a much more difficult one and indeed not pressed by some missionaries, who are aware of the difficulties of elderly women so divorced. But whether kinsfolk worship together or not, there can still be amity and friendship.

Thus, in addition to the traditional system of chiefdoms and villages with groups of chiefs co-operating to perform sacrifices to common ancestors and certain more distant heroes, there are Christian Churches whose members are organized in local congregations, and presbytery or diocese. The traditional religion expresses the unity of lineages and chiefdoms: the new religion [364]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

expresses the unity of groups of believers who associate in Churches. But the two systems are not wholly exclusive: the Christian still belongs to a lineage and a chiefdom, though he does not worship as a member of either, and thereby impairs their solidarity.

(b) THE CHRISTIAN WITHDRAWAL

What is the attitude of Christian converts to the rituals performed by their pagan kinsmen and neighbours and what replaces the traditional pagan rituals in the Christian community? These questions have already been touched upon in the accounts of pagan rituals, but we must now consider them more fully.

Christians withdraw very largely from the pagan rituals of kinship which, as was shown in a previous book, are directed to the shades. They attend the funerals of pagan kinsmen to weep and comfort the mourners, and they often undertake the work of grave-digging so fearful to pagans, but they take no part in the 'farewell to the dead' nor do the stricter among them eat of the funeral meat, since the cattle killed are an offering to the shades. Christians do not participate in the twin ritual which brings together such a large number of pagan kinsmen, nor do they share in the puberty ritual, and they forbid their daughters to keep a pagan bride company during her seclusion. For the most part their withdrawal is accepted tolerantly by their pagan kin who carry on without them, a pagan father even performing the 'farewell to the dead' for a Christian son who has died, lest his lineage shades be angered by the omission, but occasionally the non-participation of Christians leads to strained relations, as when pagans refuse to visit or eat with a bride or a remarried widow who has not celebrated with them after her union with her husband, and sometimes a Church member, under pressure from pagan relatives or driven by his own fears, celebrates the ritual for a pagan father. The dropping of the elaborate twin ritual creates surprisingly little difficulty considering how much the pagans fear sickness from twins. Their birth is interpreted by Christians as a special blessing —a bounteous increase—rather than 'an illness' as the pagans call it. A Christian woman, asked if a mother of twins was not fearful when the ritual was omitted, gave a classic reply: 'What she thinks in her heart I can't see; what I think in my heart you can't see; but we *do* see that no one avoids her when they meet her face to face.'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 that they have always been cattle men and they need no instruction on cattle. The tension over stock limitation and soil conservation, so acute in many parts of Africa, is only just appearing in Rungwe district, but potentially it is serious.

Pressure on land, and the planting of a valuable long-term crop such as coffee, have undermined the traditional organization of age-villages. The old men are no longer prepared to move to make way for their sons and, without a new deal in land each generation, the territorial separation of the generations is blurred. Boys villages are no longer visible in the hills near Rungwe mission, partly because so many young men are away, either at school or in employment, but largely because most of the land is taken up with coffee gardens. Homesteads are being built farther apart as men lay out coffee round their houses, and sons often build on a corner of their father's estate instead of in a separate village. On the plain, also, the pressure of population blurs the boundaries between generations. Only in the least heavily populated middle belt are numerous boys' villages still clearly visible, and here too a 'coming out' has recently been celebrated, with some redistribution of land. The scarcest land, that in old volcanic craters, was always inherited, like cattle, not reallocated each generation, and almost all cultivated land is now treated in this way. In many chiefdoms, therefore, a young man looks to his father or senior brother for land, rather than to the village headman, and inheritance is supremely important. But the form of inheritance is changing: property now goes directly from father to son, not as formerly to each of a group of full brothers before reverting to the senior son of the eldest of them. The claims of more distant kinsmen on inherited stock are less than they used to be; such stock becomes the exclusive property of father and sons, rather than property in which members of a lineage of three or four generations have reciprocal rights. The main economic bond which held the lineage together, the exchange of cattle, is thus broken.

Formerly a marriage was a contract between lineages rather than between individuals. A girl was betrothed before puberty to a man of her father's choice and should he die she was still regarded as married to his heir. Should she die a sister replaced her. Ideally a marriage bond between lineages lasted for generations, each man who died being replaced by a brother or son, each woman by a sister or brother's daughter. The choice of a partner in marriage

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER II

THE TRADITIONAL SYSTEM

Although this essay is to be primarily concerned with the modern and changing land and population situation among the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains, it is quite essential first to have an understanding of the traditional system of political and territorial organisation and of land tenure. This is not mere historicism, for despite changes the traditional system remains as the basis of contemporary land-holding and land law. Whilst actual conditions on the ground change, the Nyakyusa appreciation of those changes and their attitudes to land lag significantly behind. In brief, the traditional system was geared to a situation where there was plenty of land. Today the people find real difficulty in adjusting themselves to a high density of population and an acute shortage of land, with the result that this new situation is aggravated by outmoded practices, attitudes and cultural values.

The ancestors of the present group of peoples now known collectively as the Nyakyusa, moved into the Rungwe region from the Ukinga Highlands to the east beyond the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains. According to legend, which is probably substantially true, these newcomers found a sparsely populated country which they easily occupied. Later, following internecine strife, one group under a man called Mwakyusa left the Masoko area in the centre of present-day Rungwe District and moved down into the Lake Plains. There, probably less than 150 years ago, they drove out the Ngonde people and settled. The sons of Mwakyusa took their shares of the country and people and established their independent chiefdoms. The chiefs in 1956 are the lineal descendants, mainly in the fifth generation, of Mwakyusa, and have a well-known genealogy. The only exception to this occurs amongst the group of tiny chiefdoms in the extreme east under the Livingstones, which now form a single administrative chiefdom under Mwakilasa and number some 400 men. They trace descent from pre-Nyakyusa settlers known as the Saku.

Traditionally, as today, the village was the basic unit both in social life generally and in land-holding in particular. The Nyakyusa village was possibly unique in Africa. It was comprised of men of roughly the same age, together with their wives and young children, and it excluded their fathers and sons and also, very often, their elder and younger brothers. Each village consisted of a close group of houses (often centred on a broad "village street"), with arable and pastoral land around it. Each village had fairly well-defined boundaries with its neighbours. The village was represented as a group and acted corporately through its headman, *lifumu*, who was the guardian of villagers' land rights, the arbiter in land problems and disputes, and the controller of unused land. He was also the political and ritual leader of the village, but nevertheless he was a commoner chosen from amongst the villagers themselves, and was not a member of a chiefly lineage.

Land was owned by the village as a group. Every man resident in the village had a clear right to a site for his house and banana plot and to arable land within the village boundaries; he also had a right to graze his cattle in its communal pastures. Residence gave these rights and members of other villages were excluded. A man who left the village automatically gave up these rights, though if he returned he was able to take up his former holding or its equivalent.

631 Age-villages combined to form a chiefdom under the hereditary chief,
628 *amalafyale*, but active co-operation between villages thus associated was often slight; indeed in the larger chiefdoms there commonly existed intermittent animosity which might break out in raiding or even civil war. The
[721] integrity of these larger chiefdoms was weak – for example, when the Nyakyusa were attacked by Sangu and Ngoni war-parties, and later by the
[648] Germans, villages of the same chiefdom conspicuously failed to join in common defence. Similarly the land affairs of one village were no concern of any other, and each jealously guarded its own rights.

631 None of the chiefdoms was large; smallness of scale is typical of
162 Nyakyusa political organisation and social attitudes. In 1955 the smallest indigenous chiefdom contained only 36 men. In 1948 55,700 people were divided amongst about 18 indigenous chiefs, but undoubtedly had not the Colonial Government frozen the system there would have been rather more – at least five more. Today there are 12 recognised "administrative chiefs", amongst whom five have each less than 3,000 people under them, and the largest chiefdom contains fewer than 10,000 people – the average is just over 4,000 people.

631 Nevertheless the chiefdom, the collection of villages, was important,
361 because in the creation of the chiefdom villages were created, and in its development the villages developed, matured and died away. A village survived only so long as its members lived and by the nature of the age-organisation there was but little possibility of the recruitment of new members, for villagers' sons left to form their own new villages. Their sons eventually came to comprise the core of the new chiefdoms.

642 In connection with the constitution of a Nyakyusa village and with
643 land tenure, the significant feature of the chiefdom was its establishment,
[796] together with the induction of a new chief, at the great "coming-out"
[898] ceremony, *ubusoka*. In brief, each chief was succeeded by two of his sons – the eldest son of each of the senior houses of the chief, i.e., of his first two wives. At the "coming-out" ceremony, when the sons were still young men and their father was not a particularly old man, the old chiefdom was divided into two, each part coming under one of the new young chiefs. Before this critical occasion – at which much important ritual was performed – the younger men of the old chiefdom had already moved away from their fathers villages and had established their own incipient villages nearby, each one containing a group of coevals. A Nyakyusa boy from the age of about seven years could not continue to live with his father and mother, but, in company with his equals, built his own hut on a site adjacent to the main village as indicated by the fathers' headman. Until the "coming-out" cere-
631 mony these youths' villages came under the control of the old village head-
[342] men; but with the induction of the new chiefs they achieved independent status, each with its own headman appointed from among its members by the old headmen. Each new village was allocated a new building site and a new arable area, and quite commonly the old villages, the older men, moved away a little in order to give the younger men adequate access to the land, for it was considered that the young men's needs for land were paramount.

631 After this wholesale reorganisation of the old chiefdom, when new
[178] villages were established and new boundaries demarcated,[1] the old chief
[622] himself, the old headmen and the older men (the "fathers") gradually retired from active public life. The old chief was supposed to commit suicide
643 after a time (or was quietly killed off) in order to leave the field clear for his sons; the old headmen became the religious and ritual leaders of the new
[888] chiefdoms, with the flavour of elder statesmanship, and the old men's

1. "At the "coming-out" it is said that "everything is upside down", boundaries are unknown and the new chiefdoms and villages of the young men are [illegible]". Wilson, G., 1938, p. 32.

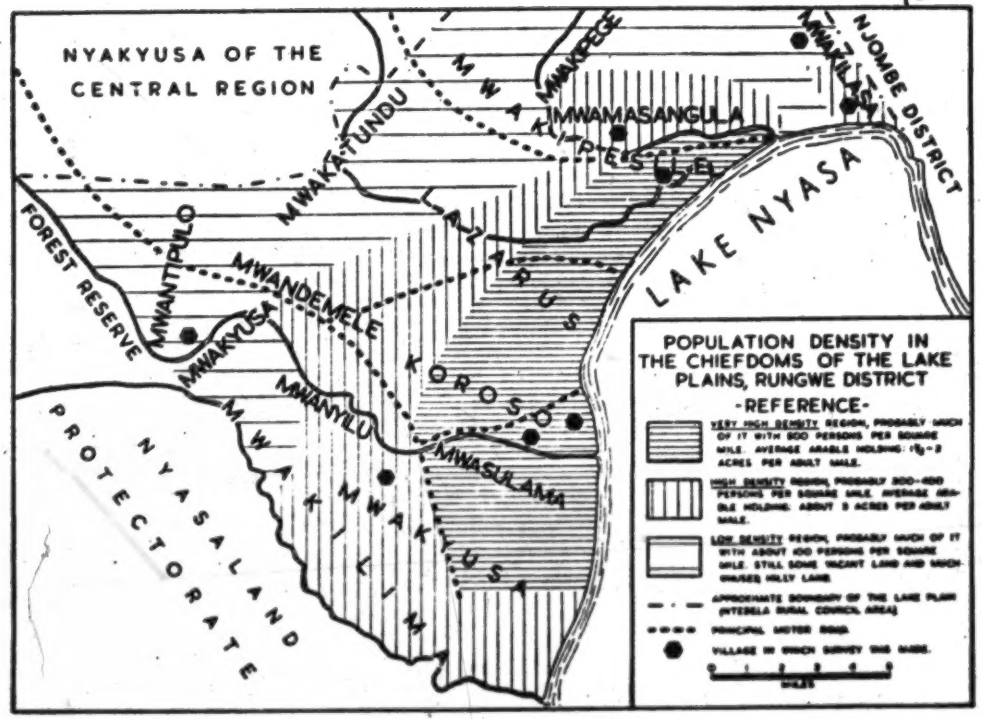
Sometimes a chief who was a powerful personality rode roughshod over his headmen and achieved a measure of autocracy; but most headmen would not allow this and in their opposition they had the full support of their villagers, as well as the moral backing of public opinion. There are remembered cases in pre-European days when a chief was deposed or reduced to a non-entity by his headmen acting together in the face of what they considered to be encroachments on the inviolability of village unity and independence. In any case, however, even the strongest chiefs were little disposed to interfere in the land matters of their villages; few wished to be bothered with the details of land rights. A chief could legitimately complain if he were not kept informed by his headmen, but his approval of their actions – and most especially in land matters – was very largely a formality.

Traditional Land Tenure

As already briefly described, a village comes into formal existence at the time of the formation of a new chiefdom. At that time its building site and arable and pastoral areas were roughly demarcated by the retiring headmen of the old chiefdom. Within the village, members were allocated their house plots and each man tended to take the strip of land stretching behind his plot and make his field there. The land was shared out on a friendly, co-operative basis; the new headman smoothed out any difficulties and settled any disputes. Thus was the pattern of land-holding established. Apart from the relative value of a plot proximate to a man's house, there was little or no cause for dispute as land needs were small and the supply plentiful. An established villager could, without notification or special permission, extend his cultivation to any land which lay vacant – i.e., which was not in use or under fallow by a fellow-villager. There was therefore no need for a man to try at first to grab more land than he immediately required, nor did he need to be jealous of his neighbours' claims.

A villager's rights to the use of his land were quite secure and he had no fear of eviction or of the seizure of part of his holding. It is said that very occasionally a chief might take a man's holding but I think, at least in the Lake Plains, that this must have been most unusual. In fact, of course, so long as a man was allowed to reap his crop there was little value attached to the plot as such when nearly similar ground stood unused. Men sought security not on their plots of land, but in their membership of the village community, which assured them of their continuing rights to adequate opportunity for cultivation over the years. However, virtually every man had an excellent security of tenure on his holding during the mature life of his age-village (i.e. until at least the next "coming-out" ceremony), and if he died his heir, should he wish, could come and live in his house and cultivate his fields without hindrance. The way in which he cultivated, though of course strongly conditioned by custom and convention, was his own affair, and he sub-divided his holding amongst his own family as he thought fit. He could not, however, allocate any of his land to a man living in another village, nor could he permit it to be cultivated by such a stranger.

Through fear of witchcraft, because of persistent illness, misfortune or unfriendliness, in order to live near a relative or friend, or to inherit elsewhere, a man might leave his village and his age-mates. Then he had to give up his land-holding. When a man moved because of witchcraft or illness (much the same thing and a chief cause of movement) his land was normally left idle pending his hoped-for return, and his former neighbours would do all they could to induce him to return to his old home and fields – even to the use of force (see Wilson, G. 1938, pp. 32-3). His departure was an accusation against them, and a disturbance of co-operative unity. If the man consistently refused to return, or if it was known that he had definitely left for good, his


NYAKYUSA OF THE CENTRAL REGION
MWAKA-TUNDU
MWAKIPESULA
MWAKIECE
IMWAMASANGULA
MWAKILISI
NJOMBE DISTRICT
LAKE NYASA
MWANTIPULO
FOREST RESERVE
MWAKYUSA
MWANDEMELE
KOROSO
MWANYILU
MWASULAMA
MWAKYUSA
NYASALAND PROTECTORATE
POPULATION DENSITY IN THE CHIEFDOMS OF THE LAKE PLAINS, RUNGWE DISTRICT
-REFERENCE-
VERY HIGH DENSITY REGION, PROBABLY MUCH OF IT WITH 500 PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE. AVERAGE ARABLE HOLDING: 1½-2 ACRES PER ADULT MALE.
HIGH DENSITY REGION, PROBABLY 300-400 PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE. AVERAGE ARABLE HOLDING: ABOUT 3 ACRES PER ADULT MALE.
LOW DENSITY REGION, PROBABLY MUCH OF IT WITH ABOUT 100 PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE. STILL SOME VACANT LAND AND MUCH UNUSED HILLY LAND.
APPROXIMATE BOUNDARY OF THE LAKE PLAIN (NTEBELA RURAL COUNCIL AREA)
PRINCIPAL MOTOR ROAD
VILLAGE IN WHICH SURVEY WAS MADE.
0 1 2 3 4 5
MILES

[Facing p. 15]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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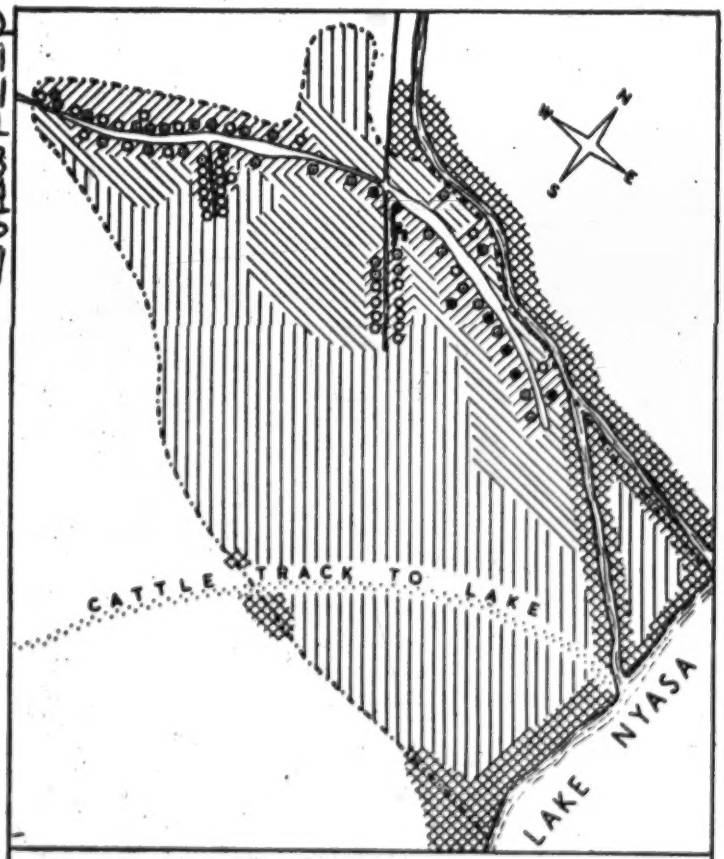

SKETCH PLAN OF KAPUGI VILLAGE, KOROSO'S CHIEFDOM, 1955

-REFERENCE-

HUT OR HOMESTEAD OF:
MAN OVER 50 YEARS
MAN ABOUT 30-50 YEARS
MAN ABOUT 17-30 YEARS
YOUTH OR GIRL
VILLAGE BOUNDARY
BANANAS AND OTHER TREES (CITRUS, MANGO, FIREWOOD, ETC)
MAIZE AND BEANS
PADDY (THE PARTS NEARER THE HOMESTEADS ARE USED IN THE DRY SEASON FOR BEANS, MAIZE)
SEDGE AND REED THICKET

[Facing p. 29]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

there remained scattered pieces here and there which could be taken up, and some existing holdings in the area are too large for the agricultural capabilities of their occupiers. The temporary safety valve was shut off. The local headman had become seriously worried over the large-scale alienation of his land resources without any equivalent increase in the number of his villagers, and he also wished to conserve the remaining land against the now better understood needs of his own people. 423 78

The principle of no land without residence also means that a villager who wishes to move must automatically forfeit his land-holding in the village. A little earlier he would most probably have been able to retain at least his fields beyond the immediate vicinity of the houses – in so far as his new residence was not too far away to allow continued cultivation. This has been especially important for younger men who, wishing to take up a vacant holding elsewhere, also desire to retain their share of the paternal holding obtained by inheritance. Conversely, they are now unable to move on to their father's holding and yet retain their fields in their own village. Such men must now make a permanent decision between the utility of, perhaps, two inadequate holdings which, *however, combined together might be of* satisfactory size.

As a consequence of this, inter-village opposition is probably greater than it has ever been in European times, and no less strong perhaps than it was in the old days. Men feel that the security of their holdings, the future of their sons, and the possibility of increasing their arable cultivation lies wholly within the security and stability of their own village. They tend to see other villages and other villagers as a potential threat to their own land requirements; they often suspect the worst of neighbouring villages who, they think, will, given the chance, seize some of their land. Headmen and villagers would refuse to cross the boundary into another village when they accompanied me during my investigations, lest they be accused of contemplating appropriation of the land there. Such aliens who still retained land in a village were regarded with some animosity. Nyakyusa would not look beyond their own village boundaries in an attempt to make an appreciation of the modern overall land situation. They wished only tenaciously to cling to what they already had and to guard it jealously; they were only too inclined to believe that other villages nearby were better off and to use them as scapegoats for their own difficulties and shortage. It must be said that this renewed insistence on village exclusiveness and the inviolability of village boundaries has in fact tended to make for a certain inequality of land-holding according to the perceptiveness and celerity with which headmen claimed authority over formerly vacant lands. This condition is, however, overexaggerated in men's claims today, and in any case it is tending to disappear under the pressure of inter-village movement. [628]

The Nyakyusa village in the Lake Plains, with its intensified independence and aggressive exclusiveness, and jealous of its believed permanent boundaries, has not at the same time been able to retain its traditional coeval basis. Whereas formerly the youths of a village moved to one side, there to build their own hamlet and eventually to acquire their own fields in association with its establishment as a full village in its own right, now this is no longer feasible or even possible, for the land is not available for this sort of expansion. The young men are driven back on a dependence on the fields already held by their fathers in the old village. They gradually move into their fathers' places and take over the paternal holdings; or, as we have seen, they seek where they may to obtain new allocations in any other village where they can gain admittance. The coeval basis of village living is lost. [181]

The boys and youths still leave their fathers' houses and build their first, small huts together on a site somewhere adjacent to the main village site, [882] [361] [561]

423 as determined by the village headman. But even building sites with the
178 essentially associated banana groves are becoming increasingly scarce and
[882] valuable, for no one desires to decrease the amount of arable by enlarging the
[361] built-up areas – rather the reverse. The number of young men's villages is
[56] therefore diminishing and congestion of their huts is increasing to the stage very often where no more than a narrow passage if left between adjacent houses. There comes to be a wider age range in the young men's hamlets where, often, a large village provides only one for all its sons. Smaller villages sometimes provide no accommodation at all for their sons, who are thus compelled to seek membership of a neighbouring group. These hamlets are mainly regarded nowadays as temporary residential areas for the young men until such time as they move on to an existing holding – their father's or some other. There is therefore no attempt to provide sufficient space for an adequate banana grove with each young man's house, let alone a food-crop plot behind it. The arable land beyond the congested huts already belongs to inhabitants of the main village. When a young man is able to leave and take up a holding, his vacated site (together, often, with the hut) is taken over by a waiting youth who has probably been sharing with another hitherto.

361 These young men's hamlets do not, any longer, eventually mature and
311 become villages in their own right with their own headman and arable lands. Formerly, when this occurred, they would probably have taken over a good deal of the lands of the old village, as the young men exercised the privileges
178 of their new maturity against their elders with the emergence of the new chiefdom. New chiefdoms, and with them new villages, no longer emerge,
[648] and this is mainly because Government has prohibited the bifurcation of petty chiefdoms on the death of the old chief, as it is considered inconsistent with the development of stable, modern local government. Additionally, however, the shortage of land can no longer allow of the traditional expanding politico-territorial organisation. The elder men's villages are not now prepared to yield ground to the young men, and the latter cannot expand elsewhere. Thus political requirements and land restriction work together to make the old system obsolete and to freeze the spatial distribution of villages as it existed in early European times. As far as I could ascertain in the chiefdoms of the Lake Plains, probably no new village had emerged in the past 20 or more years, except for a few cases of large ones splitting into two for administrative and social convenience. Many villages there date back to pre-European days often now under the son, or even the grandson, of the original headman (though this is not essential or invariable in any way).

561 The age-basis of the Nyakyusa village is thus disappearing; indeed, in
178 many villages it has already disappeared in everything but the young men's hamlets. Where the process has gone least far, there is still apparent a rough
428 division of the single village into the old men's sector (men at least 50 years of age, and many much older); the middle-aged men's sector (men between about 30 and 50 years old, being the younger brothers or elder sons of the old men); and the young men's and youths' sector. On inheritance, sons tend to show a continued reluctance to move and live on their father's house-site and to become immediate neighbours of older men; they avoid it if possible, often allowing a middle-aged man to shift there instead. Nevertheless even
178 this sort of age-division is rapidly vanishing and in very many villages a
428 man's neighbour may be of any age.

We have seen that inheritance is now one of the chief methods of
[423] obtaining land. Under the new inheritance rules, this means that sons follow their fathers and take up their fathers' arable holdings, building sites and banana groves. Some young men inherit early, others inherit late; there is no longer any notion or possibility of the younger generation entering into its

land en bloc. Young men compete with one another, with their elder brothers and with their fathers for allocations of land left vacant. We also saw, however, that often in the larger families[1] not all the sons are able to get a share of the paternal holding, or at least not a share of practicable size. Thus younger sons are forced to resort to trying to obtain vacant land elsewhere – possibly within the same village, but as often as not outside. Finally, the young man on his new holding may find his neighbours to be of any age; certainly they will not have been members of his own original coeval hamlet.

The way for this changing concept of village life and the new sort of village was prepared in the years before land shortage became important. The changed political system has been briefly noted already, but no less important was the great increase in inter-village movement in earlier European days when peace and personal security had been established. During this period Wilson (1938, page 32) reckoned that perhaps 80 per cent. of Nyakyusa shifted at least once from the place where they first obtained fields. This estimate, whilst perhaps holding good for Highland Nyakyusa amongst whom Wilson mainly worked, was too high for the people of the Lake Plains, where about 40 per cent. is more correct according to my genealogical and village surveys. That is still a relatively high degree of mobility for a mainly subsistence, peasant society such as it was in those years. It is clear that the pseudo-fraternal bond of coevality could not persist as a main element of village life and consciousness, when in fact as many as half of the members of a village were not original coeval founders but had come in from elsewhere. Before the land shortage, movement did not entail the shifting of young men to other young men's villages, or of older men to other older men's villages. It was, at least eventually, promiscuous movement, ignoring age categories. The compulsions of land shortage seem, in retrospect, only to have followed existing lines of village development and to have begun the completion of the process.

In the Lake Plains, therefore, the village persists as a close, territorial, land-owning group and as a specific cluster of homesteads and huts, usually with a village street, the whole closely hemmed in by continuous banana groves. Beyond this lie the arable lands, usually food-crop fields nearby and paddy fields farther off. In jealously protecting what it already holds, the village has gained a new exclusiveness, for the security of the individual land-holder is maintained by the corporate ownership of the village and by excluding outsiders as far as possible. On the other hand, it is no longer an age-village either in fact or intention, and it cannot be, for age-villages were consistent only with an expanding territorial system and a subsistence economy.

This brief analysis of Nyakyusa village organisation in recent times applies only to the Lake Plains. In some parts of both the Central Region and the Northern Highlands the age-basis of Nyakyusa villages had most probably already been seriously weakened in pre-European times.[2] On the other hand, elsewhere, and particularly in the more conservative parts less affected by modern trends and the cash economy, the traditional age-village still exists in something like its old form.

Land shortage has appeared in the Highlands together with a developing cash economy, but the basis of agricultural and economic change lies mainly in coffee cultivation which, of course, requires relatively smaller fields than does paddy in the Lake Plains, but it needs more care and attention from the grower for moderate success. As far as I could see in the course of

1. Polygny is still the norm amongst the older and many middle-aged men, and therefore a father often leaves several sons to inherit.

2. According to elderly informants in Western Kukwe, Mwakaleli and some central chiefdoms, and also the evidence of old village sites.

311 my earlier labour migration enquiries in the Highlands, the village as a close residential unit is breaking up as the people are increasingly adopting the
433 more common East African pattern of each family building its own home-
245 stead in its own land-holding. These northern Nyakyusa say that they must have their coffee plots next to their homesteads for the sake of continuous supervision, and that this is impossible (which is true enough) where men live close together in compact villages. Again, coffee plots, with their standing, permanent trees, have become a valuable item of inheritance; sons lose no opportunity of taking them irrespective of the locations of their coevals or of the identity of their immediate neighbours. The values of land, cash-crops and material progress are placed much higher than the traditional values of coevality; indeed, such traditional values are largely inconsistent with modern wants and aspirations.

561 Thus the Nyakyusa age-village has become almost obsolete and it would seem that it must inevitably vanish altogether even in the remaining
361 conservative areas (e.g., in the east). Furthermore, its disappearance is leading to a distinct divergence between the Lake Plains Nyakyusa and those
178 of the Highlands. How far this divergence will become permanent and basically significant cannot be foreseen as yet in this early stage. Clearly the compact village is best fitted to an arable economy of rice cultivation in the Lake Plains, and at least until there is further agricultural change it will persist as a most important social group.

Nevertheless, with its enhanced exclusiveness and relative social isolation and with renewed rivalry with its neighbours, the Lake Plains village is scarcely conducive to the encouragement of agricultural and economic development. Neither is it anything but harmful towards contemporary efforts in the politico-administrative sphere to reduce parochialism and to foster a sense of unity and co-operation beyond the village and the petty
622 traditional chiefdoms. Whilst supervisory control of the land through the headman is in general excellent, reasonable and readily understandable
152 to the people, yet the excess of restrictiveness, the competitive scrambling for vacated holdings and the jealous fears are surely more than merely
182 unfortunate. There needs to be some modification to loosen the over-tight strings of village corporate ownership, to regularise the transfer of vacated holdings and to lessen the fears of village against village. These points are taken up again in Chapter V.

Cattle and Pastoral Requirements

311 Unfortunately, no great accuracy can be presumed for the Rungwe
233 District cattle censuses, but the available figures are summarised in Table VI.

TABLE VI
NYAKYUSA CATTLE

	1955				1951	
	No. of cattle	*Acres per beast*	*Cattle per person*	*Cattle per family of 5*	*No. of cattle*	*Acres per beast*
Lake Plains	31,418	4.1	0.5	2.5	26,822	5.2
Central Region ..	19,380	7.1	0.4	2	19,160	7.2
N.E. Highlands ..	19,095	7.4	0.4	2	17,165	8.4
N.W. Highlands ..	22,974	8.0	0.4	2	16,855	10.9
Total: Nyakyusa.. ..	92,867	6.4	0.4	2	80,002	7.2

The indicated increase in the numbers of cattle may well be attributable only to improved census enumeration by the Veterinary Department.

Although 6.4 acres per head of cattle for all Nyakyusa country, and even 4.1 acres in the Lake Plains, might seem to be adequate in a country so

11:Thwaites C-5 (ca. 1942) 1944
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P. 236 A]

WANYAKYUSA AGRICULTURE

By D. H. Thwaites, Agricultural Assistant, Tanganyika Territory

131 The Wanyakyusa occupy the District of Rungwe in the Southern Highlands Province. The district lies between 9° and 9½° S. latitude
133 at the northern tip of Lake Nyasa. The altitude ranges from 1,500 feet to 9,500 feet. The
631 district is divided into twelve chiefdoms. The Administrative Headquarters are at Tukuyu, which was known before the British occupation as Neu Langenberg.

Inhabitants

101 The local people are not indigeneous to this area. They came, tradition has it, from
[173] Mahenge via Ukinga after many tribal fights. They are akin to the Wahenga in Nyasaland bordering on the Tanganyika boundary. It is
191 estimated that only 10 per cent of the Wanya-
161 kyusa speak Kiswahili. According to the 1935 census the total poulation was 153,204. The
162 total number of tax-payers in 1942 was 35,304, or 23.04 per cent of the total population.

181 The people themselves are extremely industrious and intelligent. As there are 90 people to the square mile, living conditions are
105 crowded and emigration is continually taking place. The people are partial to litigation over cattle and women. The number of cases heard annually in the Native Courts is about 6,000. There is no one historical and traditional head of the tribe. The twelve Chiefs are, in reality, hereditary Headmen who have been selected by Government to be Chiefs. They are in effect only *primi inter pares* in native eyes, the outlook of the people being unusually democratic for a native tribe.

105 The people live in houses made of wattle and daub or bamboo frame, with thatched
342 roof, and villages are sited mostly along ridges.
● 361 Rectangular houses are now built instead of the round huts of former days. They often stand in rows with a main street down the middle with bananas in the background. The more progressive natives build with sun-dried or burnt brick. Stock are stalled in the same house owing to the prevalence of thieving, but sleep in separate rooms.

Climate

132 The rainfall of the district varies in the different areas. In Tukuyu itself the annual average for 25 years (1918-1942) is 100.22 inches. On the Lake shore the average is probably higher, but no continuous statistics are available. The heaviest rainfall months are from December to May, but, in most years,

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Haya FN8

H 342 As indicated above, the floor is covered with grass. Various domestic utensils may be seen, stuck into thin screens of plant material.

H 342 178 But this old, beautiful type of hut is very much on the decline. It is costly to make and to keep in repair, and the thick straw roof is, admittedly, highly inflammable. A flying trip round Lake Victoria clearly shows how the straw roofs in the banana groves are being replaced by corrugated iron. This change may even have another reason, viz. the fact that fodder for cattle is in short supply and that the grass for roofs is hard to come by. No doubt, it is a question of time when the fine old Haya hut will have disappeared.

N 114 In the Southern Highlands, where I was given the opportunity to stay for three months at various Danish mission stations, I visited the village round the Rungwe mission, the neighbouring villages of Ilolo and Kikota, and some villages near the Rutenganio mission station. I made a trip to Lake Nyasa and another to the Poloto mountains. I must admit to a limited knowledge of drawing technique and of house construction, but I have measured a number of houses and sketched their plan and also the furnishings I found in them. The positioning of the various objects has been established.

N 361 [342 356] The high standard of dwellings of the Banyakyusa is truly to be wondered at. The houses, clustered in villages, often along a winding street, lie intermingled with banana and coffee bushes. The houses are large and their interior is clean. Often two or three houses belong to one family, and, if so, will be grouped round a courtyard.

N 342 [824] Even if you could find houses built from sun-dried bricks and fired tiles, most were from bamboo with a grass roofing.

All houses stand on a clay base which, though not very high, no doubt means some protection against penetration of ground moisture during the heavy rains of April–June.

N [824] Besides bamboo, sometimes the bole of tree fern, *makeke*, is used in outer walls. Such tree fern stems have not the carrying capacity of bamboo, but they are far more resistant to rot. Among the other common features of the existing types of houses, should be mentioned the mud clods, the size of rolls that from the inside are pressed between the vertical bamboo poles; also, the inner wall is rough-cast with a mixture of mud and cow manure; the floor is from tamped clay. In some places you find very fine floors in which a pattern has been rolled into the wet clay; to this end a short length of the stem of the banana cluster has been employed, viz. the length between the seats of the male and the female flowers. Also employed are another plant stem, or an empty corn cob.

N [237] [531]

N 354 585 In all houses where women live, there are one or more hearths. The presence of two hearths in one house usually means that the husband has two wives, each wife having her own hearth, either in the common house or in a house of her own.

N 342 The houses always have a kind of ceiling made from bamboo sticks and carried

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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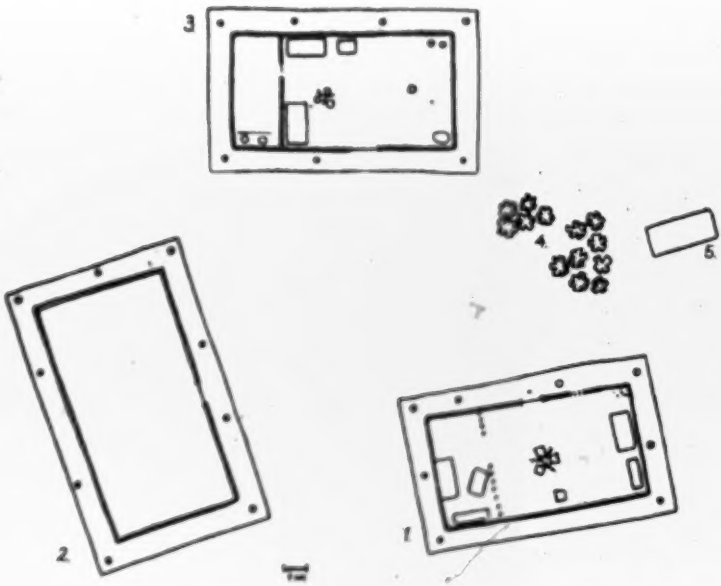

Three houses belonging to one family, situated round a common courtyard; the doors open on to the yard. The village street is along the back of the house at top. 1, Iselina's house; 2, Baba's house; 3, Idina's house; 4, banana plants; 5, hen-coop.

houses existed which were 60 metres in length. It had the same width as Malia's house, approximately 3 metres. The roof was supported by posts along the sides and at the gables.

Two women lived in this house, both married to the same man. Consequently, there were two hearths, the stones of which were cylindrical-conical, broadening slightly at the top. All were decorated. Each woman had her part of the house, both with an outer door, and further there was a door, slightly narrower, between the two parts, and a fourth door to a store-room. No less than twelve posts supported the roof, all reaching to the ridge. The two parts were a bit unequal in size; nearly half of each had the well-known loft for firewood, etc. One part contained beds for the woman and her husband (one bed had 100 straw mats). The children had two beds. The husband had still another house, a short distance away at the foot of a hill, they said. I did not see it. The other woman's room held her bed and a cot.

[595
[354]
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The hearths of both rooms were placed in the centres, between two upright posts. Utensils and furnishings did not differ much from the usual: hen's nests,

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12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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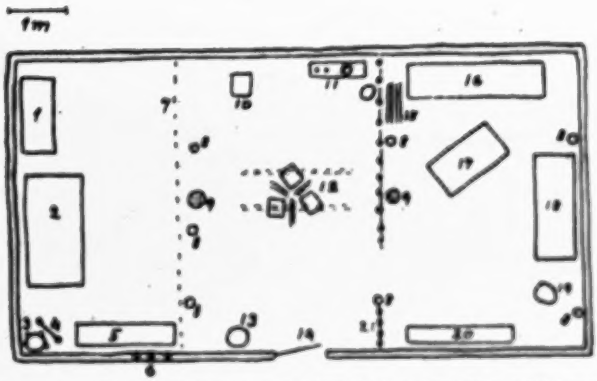

Isolina's house. 1, cupboard with shelves; 2, children's bed; 3, hen's nest; 4, ladder; 5, roost; 6, barred window; 7, from dotted line towards the right is the bamboo ceiling; 8, from here issue 5 horizontal bamboo sticks on which the bamboo ceiling is supported; 9, Posts supporting roof; 10, chair; 11, low shelf with two bamboo jars and a water jar; 12, hearth with three hearthstones and sticks under ceiling for carrying the fine basket, and corn-cobs hung up to dry, etc.; 13, beer jar; 14, door; 15, mats behind the low partition; 16, shelf for domestic utensils; 17, child's bed; 18, Isolina's bed; 19, baskets; 20, domestic utensils; 21, low partition between rooms.

found. In the front part of the Kikoła house, serving as an entrance room, were four posts called *ikingi*, to which two cows were tied at night.

This part, which we may call the cowhouse, also housed hen's nests, the roost, [231]
and the mortar to be used for maize, etc.

The hearth, consisting of one square and two round hearthstones, was placed [354]
in the centre of the living-room part. Here were also water jars and the woman's bed. This means that even if this type of house had a roof of a different shape and was always provided with a verandah with posts supporting its roof, the interior was really designed on the same lines as the short *ikibaga*, but it was [542]
meant to house only one woman, or one man, as we shall see below.

We may imagine that one of the reasons why the type of roof was changed, 342
was the weakness of the pointed roof of the *ikibaga*. It could often be seen to have 178
a tendency to fall in, and had to be supported by a post. Even in Fülleborn's illustrations, e.g. plate 64 c, a kind of reinforcement can be seen at the edge of the roof. No doubt the roof of the *ikema* does not suffer to the same extent from this flaw.

New houses were being built to this design, and I suppose that a little more 342
than half the number of the houses were of the *ikibaga* type, and a little than half the *ikema*.

In the village of Ilolo, I surveyed three houses belonging to one family, a [361]

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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[352
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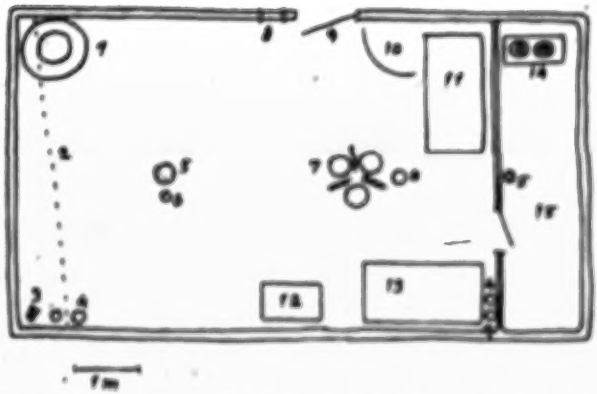

Idina's house. 1, basket; 2, clothes-line; 3, broom; 4, jars, in the back room on low shelf; 5, posts supporting roof; 6, small diagonalon bamboo poles, supports for the ceiling; 7, hearth with three round hearthstones; 8, shuttered opening through which the bolt may be reached; 9, door; 10, camava for food; 11, spare bed; 12, table; 13, Idina's bed; 14, shelf for jars; 15, store-room behind mud wall with door.

[364] man and his two wives. The houses were grouped round a common courtyard, the doors giving upon this space and not on the nearby village thoroughfare.

The three houses bore the names of Iselina's house, Idina's house, and Baba's house. The elder wife, Iselina, had several minor children, who slept either near
352 her own bed or in the living area. She owned furnishings as modern as a chair
177 and a cupboard with shelves, besides the usual objects in these houses, baskets, bamboo mugs, hen's nest and roost, ladder and water jars. She also had an earthen-
[415 ware beer jar which, one day when I called on her, was standing on the fire,
273] nearly making the froth boil over. She was preparing beer for her husband's friends, who had just dropped in.

352 The new wife, Idina, had a store-room in her house, and there was also a
[353 large heap of camava, meant for food. As often seen in these houses, she had also
262] a guest bed. She had a number of jars and baskets, but no hen's nest. Straight across the room she had suspended a line on which she put her clothes. Such an
[246] arrangement was often used, especially by the bachelors; they had a line for their shirts. Clothes-hangers were not in use. You just threw your clothes across the line. A wardrobe was never seen.

342 The interior of Baba's house presented a peculiar picture. It was divided into
352 three rooms, a living-area in the middle; at one side the bed-room, at the other a store-room. The bed-room had only one bed and a wooden chest. There was no hearth in the living-room—for the husband had his meals prepared by one of his wives. But there was a true accumulation of tables, chairs, sideboards, and a

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and other duties applicable to a girl after marriage. The practical instruction takes place in or before a special hut in the village under the leadership of the abanyago (sweepage). The girl is admonished by the wanyago to obey her parents without any delay, to perform the commands of her mother immediately, e. g. to clean the hut, and especially to show obedience when guests are present. Should the mother blame her daughter unjustly, she should not reply. (The girl had been blamed in the earlier discussion that she had not swept the hut when her mother required her to do it). Then her duties and conduct towards her future husband were inculcated. As a wife she must never accept anything from the hands of her husband without kneeling and stretching out both hands, and turning away her face with eyes cast down. Also as a wife she must not hold her head up

Some of the drummers.

when she is addressed by a man. As a wife she must be anxious to prepare her husband's meal always at the right time, that means, it has to be ready when her husband returns from the field. If she sees her husband coming from the field, then she has to go to meet him, and take his hatchet from him. Should her husband scold her, she is not to reply; but she may ask her neighbours for help. It is one of her duties to take care of the regular cleaning of the hut[29]. The ashes must always be removed by her from the fireplace. If there are only a few ashes on the fireplace she must remove them with her hands[30].

[29] The place near the house where the sweepings are thrown down is called urutaplilo.

[30] Cf. Mackenzie, p. 51, who refers to such moral instructions connected with puberty customs, probably at Karonga; cf. Fülleborn, p. 300 (Nyganda plain).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

spear, and magic horn. In this way the new chiefs are shown to their people.

Chiefs who are to be independent now separate, each moving off with his men to the place where the senior age-village of that chiefdom will eventually be built. All fire in the country is extinguished, even the fires in the homesteads of the old men, and in each of the new independent chiefdoms new fire is made, ceremonially, by the senior headman of the chiefdom and his fellow next in rank. One holds a lion-bone while the other twirls a medicated stick in a groove in the bone. The senior headman and his second each gives fire to the village headman immediately junior to him, and then the latter in turn to his immediate junior, until each of the headmen has fire. At this point the future division of each new chiefdom is foreshadowed, for the second senior headman in each new chiefdom is recognized as the leader of one side of the country. As each village headman lights his fire he calls: 'Come men of such and such a village to me!' and they take fire from him.

Since we are not primarily concerned with symbolism in this book we shall not enter at length into the interpretation of these events.[1] It must suffice to remind our readers of the Nyakyusa myth that their chiefs came down from the Livingstone mountains ten generations ago bringing fire with them, and that they found the previous inhabitants of the valley, who became their subjects, without fire, and eating their food raw. The extinguishing of the old fires and lighting of new is interpreted by the Nyakyusa as a symbol of the new chieftainship. A chief with whom we were well acquainted explained it thus: 'The fire is the fire of lordship (*umoto botwa*). The old chieftainship is coming to an end, the new has come. They extinguish the fires in all the homes, those of the young men and those of the old men, then they make new fire which is taken to every home. For formerly Mwangamilo [the old chief] would have had little power [after the 'coming out'], Mwakyusa and Reubeni [his sons] would have ruled.' But why fire? we asked. 'Because of old,' they relate, we chiefs came with fire, the commoners had not yet got it, they ate raw food only. When we came we slept in men's houses and we made fire and cooked food. Men were astonished, and said:

[1] A full analysis of the symbolism of one ritual necessitates a comparison of all the rituals of the society, which will be made in another book.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

"Ha! what's this?" They were burned; so they said: "These are chiefs because they brought this fire." It is this they remember, even to-day. . . .' And another informant explained: 'The fire means (*kukuti*) that a new chief has come, he brings fire, we throw away the old fire in the house.'

Having lighted their fires the young men cut bamboos and build temporary shelters for themselves, making one or more huts according to their numbers. It is forbidden for them to sleep in old huts, nor may they build on the site on which they lived as boys. Usually their first huts are on what was formerly pasture land, and later their fathers move aside to make room for the new generation. On the new site the two senior headmen of the new chief, together with a doctor, plant with magical ritual two branches of a *ficus* (known in Nyakyusa as *ilyabe*)—a species which is important economically since the bark of saplings provides the traditional dress of Nyakyusa women. These trees, known as *ulupando* and *umpandapanda*, are planted where the future boundary will run between the two halves of the young chief's country, and the senior headman (who is leader of the senior half of the country) builds his house near where the *ulupando* has been planted. He and his colleague, together with the doctor, proceed, after planting the trees, to set up the hearth-stones of his hut. Again magic is performed. Nyakyusa informants were not agreed as to the symbolism of these trees, as they were about the symbolism of the new fire. The root *ulupanda* means to plant a crop, or to set up, or establish the hearth-stones of a house; it is used also for establishing, or treating, with medicines. Some informants interpreted the *ulupando* as the chief and *umpandapanda* as his wife, saying: 'We are planting the chief and his wife.' Others said that the two trees represented the two senior headmen of the country, another that they represented the chief's two senior wives. What is certain is that *ulupando* is regarded as more important than *umpandapanda* and that both are taboo. No one may cut the trees. If anyone breaks the taboo it is believed that lions and leopards (closely associated with chiefs) will roar at night, and treatment by a doctor will be necessary to still them. It is also widely believed that the strength of the chief is associated with the growth of the trees. 'If these trees go dry the reign will not be successful, the chief will be defeated in war. If they flourish and grow the reign will be successful, the chief is

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241 an immediately adjoining village, until his chief had begun.
476 Members of other villages do not regard the chief, but wait only
622 for their village headman to begin. Within the family, junior wives must follow senior wives, but there is no precedence between brothers. If two should live in the same village it does not matter which begins sowing first, provided both follow the leader, nor need a junior age-village wait on a senior one to begin. Not only must the headman of the village begin the clearing, but each process in cultivation must be initiated by him or his senior wife; thus clearing, raking, burning, planting, and reaping, are ceremonially begun, and the wife of the headman should be the first to wash her millet, and he the first to eat of the new crop. Further, once a process is initiated, the villagers should press on with their tasks so that all may finish about the same time.

241 Now the cultivation of millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins[1] is
622 peculiar in that the weeds and grass are not turned in for green manure, as they are for all other crops (except rice), but are collected in heaps and burnt, just before the rains break at the end of the dry season. And the fire for this must be lighted
• [312] ritually by the headman of the village. Using fire-sticks and 'medicine of plenty' (*unkota gwa ifugo*[2]) bought by the Kukwe from the Sangu people, he ignites a special fire in his own field and then, if a great wife of the chief lives in the village, he lights the heaps in her field. All the members of the village take fire from him, or from the field of the chief's wife. To take fire from a house is forbidden, because the owner of the house from which it is taken may be a witch, who will rot the heaps so that the millet does not grow, or will not ripen. Roasting food on a burning heap, or taking a brand to light tobacco is likewise forbidden, lest the person who does so has medicine which will rot the millet.

241 It is thought that if one breaks the rule, beginning a process before the headman, the fields of all the other villagers will suffer. 'If men hoe higgledy piggledy the food in their gardens does not grow, and if they reap higgledy piggledy the yield from all the

[1] Some Kukwe held that these rules about cultivation applied also to maize and to an old root crop, *undogo*, but the most reliable informants were agreed that the rule was only strictly enforced with regard to the three crops planted 'at the break of the rains, in the new year'.

[2] 'A village headman, *ugwe ifugo*, is one who drives off witches and protects the food.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

a. THE 'COMING OUT' (*UBUSOKA*)

Mwaikambo (clerk and son of a chief).[1]

621 'The village headmen begin to talk among themselves, saying: "Our
622 sons have grown up, should we not establish them?" So they go to tell
643 the chief, saying: "Our sons have grown up, let us show them to the country." Two chiefs always "come out". We call them the senior and the junior. It is an old custom which is still followed that two chiefs should "come out".

[789] 'So the village headmen seek a doctor to make them a medicine horn and treat the tails of chieftainship with medicine. The village headmen take council together and choose two senior headmen to "come out" with the chiefs. These senior headmen drink medicine (*ewbomdanya*) with the chiefs.

'When many people, together with the two young chiefs, have come together the doctor gives powdered medicine (*ewbomdanya*) to the chiefs and the senior headman chosen for each chief. They give a spear of chieftainship, and a horn, and tail to each of the men chosen as senior headmen—one for each chief. Each senior headman then binds the horn to the blade of the spear, and standing with his own chief and many men and women, raises the spear to the sky. The women trill and each party goes to its place of "coming out" on the pasturage. [535] Each chief, with his followers, goes to his own place. The men dance; sometimes they have drums, sometimes not.

• [373] 'Then when each party has reached it own place they make fire with fire sticks. The chief just simulates the action of fire-making then his senior headman takes the sticks and makes fire by friction. When they have built the shelters for sleeping in they warm themselves at the fire they have made; they do not take fire from the houses of men. If there are many of them then there will be three or four shelters, if few, then only one shelter. The men and their chief who has "come out" sleep in these shelters and enjoy themselves together (*nakwangala*). The first day they kill two head of cattle. Also they plant "the tree of coming out" (*ewpili gwa basoka*) which is called *ubgwonde*. They plant it with a man who has come out previously, a man of their fathers' generation, he begins to plant, then he explains to them what to do, saying "plant", then the new senior headman plants it.

'While they sleep in these shelters with their cattle, they eat food which they take from their fathers, bananas, and milk, and other food.

[1] For a note on conspicuous informants see p. vi.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

From time to time their father, the chief, gives them a bull to kill. During the "coming out" food is very plentiful. If people pass on the road they honour them and give them food, and make love to them that they may build there. They remain in their shelters, they do not go about much. If the chief is stingy they teach him a lesson by taking bananas; they say: "Know that we are important people, we are those who have 'come out' and we are your parents." Later on they play drums—I think only in recent years. And the village headmen seize a woman, the daughter of a commoner, as a wife for the chief.

"The horn is the luck of the chiefs, that many people may come to build. Binding the horn to the blade of the spear is to show that the chief is one who has "come out" (*swaka*); it is as if he were carried aloft (*i.e.* "chaired")[1]. We show his greatness ("seniority") to people, then we trill.

"The fire made with fire sticks is to symbolize the new chieftainship. We do not take the old fire of the old men.

"The medicine is to make the chief heavy (*nsito*), that it may be apparent that he is a chief.

"The *ukpando* tree is a memorial of the "coming out", that men may come and say: "So and so planted this tree when he came out." Some say it is to show the power (*swaka*) of the chief, because if it does not grow it is said that his chieftainship will perhaps not flourish; then they will say: "Let us move and plant elsewhere." It is said that the spear of chieftainship is to fight battles; it is strength, manhood; it is treated with medicines.

"The tails are those with which battles are fought. When men go to war the senior headman grasps the tail. If the tail does not lead them well they return from the fight. It, also, they treat with medicines.'

[1] A bride at a puberty-marriage ritual is carried about shoulder high.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

coughing disease to the owners of the house. . . . Pagans used to fear to let 784
those who are sleeping together touch the hearth-bricks or blow up the 772
fire in their house for, if they do so, then the owners of the house, both man and woman, fall sick coughing. They say it is the disease of fires (*nyoto*). . . . But when a woman has borne a child and is suckling it, and her husband is not with her, then it is not taboo.

Making fire by friction and, in more general terms, fire, are 831
symbols of sexual intercourse, and 'the fire of the body and the 772
fire of the house fight'. Drinking from a calabash cup is perhaps [372]
also a symbol of intercourse—the shape of the cup suggests it—but there is no direct evidence of such an association.

The taboo on mixing the sex activities of different couples is 834
pushed to the point that women avoid for a day the milk of a cow 772
that has been with the bull. 'They say: "We will harm the cow. It will abort." They compare it with themselves as women.'

Two last pregnancy taboos may be noted which turn, not on 843
the feeling that like things are antagonistic, but that like produces 772
like. Things felt to be alike are treated as causally related. We quote Mwambuputa, the village headman:

> Women fear to stand in a doorway when they are pregnant. They say: 'How should the child stand in the doorway? It will refuse to come out.' Because if birth is delayed, it is as if the child refused to come out of the house. That is the symbol. And I, the husband, feared also [to stand in a doorway]. Now we men do not fear; it is finished; but women still fear.
>
> And another thing, when a woman was pregnant we feared to sit close together, I, the husband, and my child. It was taboo. And for my wife and another woman to sit close together was taboo. It was said that she would bear twins, because we had sat together. Now we men do not fear, but women still do.

(*b*) *The confinement*

A first confinement, like first menstruation, is the occasion for 844
elaborate ritual, and though at later confinements (as at later menstrual periods) certain taboos must be observed, they are less numerous and less strictly enforced than those connected with the birth of the first child, *umuwa gwa bwangu*.

A first child should be born at the husband's mother's house, 'and if the first child is a girl they will tell her to come again for the second, saying: "Come that we may treat our husband [i.e. grandson]."' The woman lies, during labour, on a heap of leaves

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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seedling in each, *indola* in one, and *imbandapanda* in the other. Pits to receive the pots were digged by the doctor, and held in position by the two most important of the subordinate chiefs, who, with closed eyes, filled in the soil all around. The two *imbigita* become later the two lions of the young chief. Every chief has these mysterious lions, which are quite harmless except to evil-doers; if any common person creates or controls a lion, it is the duty of these two to slay it. No one may eat food at harvest time until a portion has been set aside for these lions. The two trees in time provide the shade under which the chief's court will sit, and as long as they stand his residence must not be removed from their neighbourhood.

The doctor now took a broom, and swept the dust into the faces of Reuben and his subordinates, praying that the men under them would be in number as the dust of the earth. All the old fires were extinguished, [372] and new fire was made by the young chief and his fellows; at present from two pieces of wood rubbed together, but in the past, the lower was the bone of a leopard or lion specially dried for the purpose. In the old warlike days this fire kindled the courage of the chiefs, but with the peace that has been brought in by the white men such courage is not called for. From the fire thus made, brands were given out to all householders in the district, and no ashes from old fires were allowed to remain in any house.

Next came the great medicine drinking, which was to give authority to the new chiefs. It is indeed a

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

539 Mwakaleli and came here and died. The Kinga went to BuSangu to buy food, for there was great hunger after Mbasi and Kyala were driven out, and wandering home they came here and met Mbasi. He said, 'Go home, there will be plenty of food, but I want my things.' He had left them at his father's place when he fled with his sister Kyungu. He asked for his leopard and otterskins, his drums, his bows for shooting birds,[1] his harp, mats, a stool, bamboo beer, and twenty hoes. . . . Then the Kinga went back and found their country full of food; and they brought all his things to Mbasi and even things like salt that he had not asked for. . . . This is how the ritual began. . . . Mbasi ruled because he had helped them in their hunger.

173 773 Kasitile (86), the rain-maker, speaking of the same incident, stressed only the hoes. Lwembe 'came to Lubaga and found a good place to settle, then he sent out messengers to Mwemusi (the Kinga chief) and said: "I want my hoes, especially my great, eyed hoe" (*ilikumbulu ilya maso*).' (The old ritual hoes had per- [778] forations—'eyes'—on the blades comparable to the perforations on other rain-making instruments.) Still today Kinga priests [782] come to Lubaga to sacrifice to Lwembe (3), and they bring with them hoes.[2]

The hero of Ngonde, the Kyungu (16), was also associated with [643] iron implements which he had brought with him—a spear, staff, stool, and a sieve used for making rain, which were royal insignia, and razors, spears, and knives of an unusual pattern, which long remained in the groves of the hero and his successors.

In the commonly-told Nyakyusa myth it was Lwembe who [372] introduced fire to BuNyakyusa—'he found the original occupants eating their food raw'—and the fact that he conferred so great a benefit is the charter for the position of the chiefs, celebrated at every 'coming out'. The Kinga priests push the spread of fire back a little further.

539 Of old in this country [BuKinga] there was no fire, men ate food un- 372 cooked; there were very few men in the country, most of it was forest. This was after Mwemusi came to Kinga country. Then one man, a hunter, went into the forest to hunt buck and otter, and he had dogs. And in the forest he made fire with a drill and cooked his food; and gave his friends cooked food to eat, and they were astonished.

[1] The bow and arrow are not now used among the Nyakyusa, but men in their thirties had used them when boys, for shooting birds.

[2] cf. Ludwig Weichert, *Mythen i Afrika! Kiten under Afrika* (Berlin, 1927), p. 129, for a photograph of one.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Then the chiefs took it from him and spread it through the Kinga country . . . and to the Mahasi, the Ndali, the Nyakyusa. . . . It was taken to BuNyakyusa before Lwembe went, when he was a child, before the killing of Nkekete and Kyala. 539 372

In the version told by Mwandisi (107), the old blind chief of MuNgonde, the various events of the cycle are rather differently combined; there were three brothers in BuKinga, Lyambilo (12) or Ngutike, Kyala, and Mbasi, and a sister, Kyumba. Lyambilo discovered how to make fire with a fire drill. Kyala was clever at making food—maize and millet—and Mbasi was clever at making animals—cattle, lions, elephants. 173 773

Then Lyambilo, the eldest, was angry that his younger brothers should be so clever; he was jealous. First he made war on Kyala, he wounded him once, but he did not die; then he wounded him again, but still he didn't die; then the third time Lyambilo put a stone in the fire and made it hot and threw it at Kyala, and he died, and was thrown into the Lake. But as soon as he died there was a great famine, no rain fell and no food grew. So they had to pray to Kyala to give them rain, and they killed a cow to sacrifice to Kyala. And as soon as they had done this much food grew. 539

Still Lyambilo was jealous of Mbasi because he could make animals. But when he went to kill him he found so many animals with him, roaring lions, and elephants, that he was afraid and he ran away. And he brought some hoes to Mbasi to say he was sorry for having tried to kill him. Then Mbasi moved from BuKinga to the Nyakyusa hills (Mwamba). . . . Lyambilo stayed in BuKinga. . . . Mbasi came down to the plain on a visit and went back to the hills, but his sister Kyumba stayed down here and married a man and bore a son. Before she came there was no fire here, she brought fire, and so they called her son Kyungu in honour of his mother because she brought fire.

When Mbasi was at Masukulu (in the hills) he made one cow, but it soon died; then he moved to Mbambo and made another cow and this soon died; then he went to Lubaga (which is still called Mbasi) and there he made one cow again which bore many many calves, and he divided his cattle among his sons. . . . Mbasi was Lwembe.

In Ngonde tradition the first Kyungu (16) was a man, descendant of Ngulube the Kinga chief, and he travelled with three brothers and a sister westwards, passing south of Rungwe volcano, where he and his immediate successor were buried, one of them on Kieyo mountain. Their descendants went on to the 'country of the Bisa', then returned eastward to Mbande, the sacred hill which the Kyungu took from a Fipa hunter, Simbobwe. Like Lwembe, 173 773

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173 The balance between chiefs and commoners is explicit. So
773 also is their dependence on *both* cultivation and herding, and it
[643] should be noted that, though the Nyakyusa speak of themselves
as stock men, they are not pastoralists to the same extent as
[733] the Masai or the Nuer. The number of cattle in Rungwe District
today is less than half the human population, and men tradition-
ally have done the heaviest share of cultivation.

773 In every version of the myth the tension between father and
593 son, or older and younger brother, is stressed. In Nyakyusa
561 society the father (or his eldest son who replaces him) controls
173 the family property and exacts obedience from his juniors who
[769] continue to show their respect after his death by sacrifices. The
tale of Kyala and Lwembe celebrates the triumph of the junior.
Thus, at the heart of the very ritual which sanctifies seniority
there is the assertion of the victory of the son and younger brother.
The myth expresses the aspirations of subordinates—of com-
moners and junior kinsmen—as well as the power of chiefs and
seniors.

173 As we have already noted, the heroic cycle makes no reference
773 to the peculiar Nyakyusa institution of age-villages. Their charter
561 is a quite separate myth[1] which tells of a chief who looked on his
621 daughter-in-law and loved her and took her, and this so shocked
606 men that in future fathers and sons built separately, so that a
father-in-law should never see his daughter-in-law.

There are other hints of the eternal theme. Besides the saga of
173 Lwembe there is another quite different tale of the origin of fire,
773 which is less often related. In it a girl who had angered her father
● 372 by breaking his drinking calabash fled from BuKinga to the
Nyakyusa valley, where she found people who ate their food raw.
She made fire and cooked for them and 'all women came to
her to learn to cook'. The long-necked calabash, used as a drinking
[415] vessel and in prayer to the shades, is a man's most personal
[768] possession destroyed at his death, and it stands for a husband,
while cooking is a symbol of the sexual activity of women, so the
myth is perhaps a drama of incest, but we have no direct evidence
of this.

173 This last is the only tale in which a woman appears as a
773 benefactor. In general, the mythology is that of a strongly
562 patrilineal society in which men are dominant. The wives of
Lwembe who walked behind their lord, shepherded by a lion,

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 85.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

hood.' Some say that it is not the chief himself who grasps the spear but his senior village headman who pauses in the doorway calling the war cry and rejoicing. However that may be, the spear represents the authority of a ruling chief. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) and his junior brother Mwabungulu (178), both were secluded and rushed out of the hut, but for Mwabungulu there was no spear since the chiefdom of their father was not divided into independent units.

The heirs separate, each going to where his village is to stand, whether it be pasture land or the site of a former village. The young men build temporary shelters for themselves and proceed to the most important rite of all, the making of fire by friction, using a lion bone as the trough of the drill and a reed as the shaft. Each of the two young chiefs starts the process, then his senior village headmen take over, one twirling the shaft and the other holding the trough. It is difficult to make fire with the bone and reed and great importance is attached to success; the senior headman may even be replaced if he fails, for it is taken as a sign that his headmanship will be a failure. If he succeeds, he is known in future as *ulifumu gwa lupegeso*—the headman of the fire-making. All the old fires throughout the chiefdom are put out and each appointed headman, in order of precedence, takes fire from his immediate senior and calls to his men: 'You of such and such a village come to me' and gives fire to them. The men, though crowded together in one or two shelters, split into small groups, each with its own fire, to cook. This is interpreted as a symbol of the ending of the old chieftainship and the establishment of the new. 'That fire means a new chief has come, he brings new fire, we throw away the old fire in the houses. . . .' 'The old chieftainship is coming to an end, the new has come. The fires are put out in all the homesteads, those of the young men and those of the old men, they make new fire which is taken to every home. . . .' 'But why fire?' we asked. 'Because of old . . . we chiefs came with fire, the commoners had not yet got it, they ate raw food only. When we came we slept in men's houses and we lighted fires and cooked food. Men were astonished and said: "Ha! What's this?" They were burned so they said: "These are chiefs because they brought this fire." It is this they remember still.' 'Fire *is* lordship (*ubutwa*)', therefore a junior chief who goes through the ritual with his brothers does not make fire with his headmen; only those who are to rule do so. In other contexts the lighting of fire by friction is a

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 symbol of potency,[1] and we suggest that this also is an element in
622 the ritual of the 'coming out', for the fertility of the chiefdom is
796 thought to be bound up with the virility of the chief.

[372] There are a number of stories about the way in which Mwakyusa (38) surpassed his brothers and one of them tells how each brother made fire and set alight the pasture land (for traditionally parts of the pasture land were fired each season to provide fresh grass for grazing in the early spring), and the fires started by the elder brothers soon died out, but that started by Mwakyusa 'burned for a whole month'. This is interpreted as an omen of his greatness as a chief: fire, potency, lordship are inextricably linked.

At the 'coming out' all things are made new. No matter how [561] crowded the country the young men must move to new sites and the shelters in which they live must be new, though, as will be [356] shown, they do not necessarily move to *unoccupied* country. On their new site the young men live as bachelors, milking their cows and cooking for themselves on their new fires the meat of the cattle they seize, the bananas and grain brought by their wives and mothers. Meat is abundant, for the young chief now rules and has the right to take what cattle he chooses, even from the villages of the old men in his country. 'It was as if there were war, [726] the young men seized cattle, food, and women', and though they did not fight their fathers directly, as the Meru did, they clearly asserted their power. And, as so common further south, the accession of a chief was the occasion for raiding the neighbours: [778] the young men, we were told, went forthwith to test the efficacy of the magic spears and the medicines with which their chief and headmen had been treated. Or the chiefs might lead a battue to clear the country of wild pig, as Mwakatumbula (Mwambete 162) did directly after his 'coming out'. Well fed and exuberant, the [574] young men dance and display their cattle, and entertain visitors lavishly, for every chief seeks to attract men to his country by his hospitality.

Then they set up the sign and memorial of the chieftainship: [824] they plant cuttings of two species[2] of *ficus*, *indola* which is much used as a shade tree, and *umpandapanda* from which bark-cloth is [423] made. Close to these the first house of the chief and that of his senior village headmen are built, and the trees also mark the

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 124, 143.

[2] When writing *Good Company* I mistakenly thought that two cuttings of the same species were planted. Cf. *Good Company*, p. 27.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 the order to clear out the ashes; messages were sent to the great
796 chiefs and the senior territorial nobles of the plain, and they told
[643] their juniors. A sacrifice was made in one of the sacred groves of the Kyungus and all fires in the whole Ngonde plain were put out. And then

> all the chiefs from every country near Mbande and the nobles and all the village headmen and all the ordinary men and women, too, went to Kyimbwe where we threw away the sickness of all the country.

At Kyimbwe, which is the crossroads in the bush, they threw away the ashes of their old fires, and some of the pots and baskets in which food is served; while those few people who could not get to Kyimbwe threw them away from their own houses on the same day as the others. At Kyimbwe new fire was made with a
[372] fire-drill by the nobles of Ngonde who

> ran with it without looking back and the people danced alongside them and speared one another! . . . They said, 'Let us dance, let us fight that the homesteads may be peaceful'. . . . 'Let us throw out the ashes that death may leave the homesteads and they be at peace.' It is to bring out war from within (*ukusosya*).

The symbolism is the same as in the rituals of kinship when kinsmen gather to admit their quarrels and press one another to speak out, so that they may cleanse themselves of anger.

The new fire was distributed to the whole plain in order. Great chiefs and senior nobles took it first and passed it to their juniors, chiefs passed to village headmen, and in each group the common people got it from their own ruling noble or their own village headman.

In July 1937, while we were visiting Ngonde, there was a
[731] plague of rats[1] which threatened the food supply, and Bungulu,
[136] the wife of a chief and well known as a prophetess, went into a
[791] trance and revealed that the rats were caused by the anger of the
[787] previous Kyungu and could be got rid of only by a ritual 'throwing out the rubbish' and sacrifice. Her husband reported the matter to Mulwa, the premier noble of Ngonde, to whom the present Kyungu, Peter—at one time a Church member—had long since handed over all responsibility for communal rituals. Mulwa called four of the leading chiefs who were pagan and a number of

[1] Nothing new in Ngonde. Lord (then Captain) Lugard suffered from them in 1888: F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), vol. i, p. 127. In 1937 the country swarmed with rats: in our own camp we killed 70 to 100 each night.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

833 and women, it is procreative power, fertility. That power is
783 constantly expelled from the belly but returns again and by that
755 expulsion and return men live.

There was a great deal of criticism from the conservatives
177 because no sacrifice had been made.

787 MWAMUNDA: Now people are talking much saying, 'We have abandoned that which they did formerly, we are doing something else.' People have many dreams (gesture head on hand as if heavy with anxiety), many say: 'I have dreamed of the dead, they told me to sacrifice a cow, to pray, we did not pray properly, that is useless, it will not effect anything.' So we have told the chief saying: 'Let us kill a cow at the grave of Mwakan'ata,' he has agreed, but the cow has not yet
783 come.

Formerly, on the night following the day of the prayer we should
796 have eaten the sacrificial cow, the chief would have killed two cows and the headmen from different villages would have come and eaten by night, and drunk beer provided by the chief, in the house of the senior wife of the chief. . . . They ate a little meat, raw, the rest they roasted. Then in the morning, when they had eaten and were satisfied, they would go to clear out the house, to throw out the ashes, and to
[372] pray, as we prayed now, and to make new fire by friction in the pasture land. The village headman made fire with medicine which the chief gave him, the name of the medicine is Mbamba, it's a tree. To throw out the ashes means to clear out all the filth, the filth which the
[754] witches and the shades have brought to us—the filth that is sickness. . . .
[775] Do not the witches eat meat at the fire? Human flesh? Some roast at your fires your bodies which they have seized, some go home with the human flesh to their own fires, hence comes the filth of the ashes. The village headmen eat the sacrificial meat at night with the shades, they celebrate for them with the blood which goes beneath. . . .

If the chief has done something wrong, then those above [i.e. the village headmen] pray to those beneath saying, 'Let us help one another to punish him who has strayed, but we do not wish that he
[754] should die, let him be ill; perhaps then he will seek something to nourish us.' Again the night before the throwing out of the ashes they confess their anger and say: 'You beneath, this our child (the chief) has remembered us, there is no accusation against him now, may sickness go away from the country, and children sleep, let us all sleep and the cows calve. We greet those beneath.' In my childhood I was repeatedly surprised at night when my father came in, he had a little parcel of meat. 'Where have you been?' I asked. 'We have been praying.' But since I grew up and became a village headman, and was recorded as such [by the administration] we have never seen sacrificial meat.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

796 Penja chief, Mwalukasa. He called all his people because he heard that
783 smallpox was coming and said: 'Let us pray.' And he called his fellow
753 chiefs, those of the same lineage, and said: 'Let this illness not come, may it go to other chiefs. . . . Listen! I am the chief! We have heard that smallpox is approaching, who is here who rejoices at his approach? Who is here who wishes that it should kill us?'

THE CHIEFS: We, we do not rejoice that it is coming, we reject it, chief Mwalukasa, may it pass by this homestead.

THE COMMONERS: And we also reject it, may it pass by our homesteads.

MWALUKASA: And I, I reject it, may smallpox not come into our country. If there be one who has relatives in a chiefdom where there is smallpox and they come to call him to a funeral let them stay at a distance, and not sleep here, let him not go near until the illness has passed by, at the end of the year. If you witches go to fetch it, you will kill your
[754] fellows with whom you are chatting now. You will not enjoy my company or build with me, the chief, if you go and bring in smallpox and kill your fellows. We pray that it may pass. [For it is believed in this country that the witches go to bring in illness, or wild animals, from a distance.]

THE COMMONERS: Yes, indeed, may it pass by.

MWALUKASA: If you go to bury a brother in a country in which there is smallpox stand afar off, tie the cow you bring to a tree and call to them: 'Here is my cow for killing, come and take it.' Take your cow, but do not go into the homestead.

And the people did as he said. Then he told them to get ready for the ritual. He took his calabash cup and three other chiefs with
[769] calabash cups followed him. They blew water and prayed to Kyala and the shades. Then the people were gathered together; and the chiefs, led by Mwalukasa, ran round facing each group in turn and blowing out water towards them; the men held their shields in front of them and when the chiefs blew they shook their shields violently, as if fighting.

When all was finished then Mwalukasa said: 'When you go home,
[372] throw out the ashes and the fires; all make new fire with drills.' And they all did this.

Finally he had bamboos planted with medicine on the main roads between BuPenja and BuKukwe and BuPenja and BuNyiha. No one
[755] ill with smallpox, or who had lived in contact with smallpox, was allowed to pass, unless he had been ill and recovered. I saw the one bamboo clump on the boundary of Nyiha and Penja country. No one passed it, it was very fearsome (*lusiya fijo*).

As in cultivation there was a combination of ritual and science.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

by horizontal bamboo joists, at right angles to the principal beams of the ceiling. This ceiling never covers the entire room, but only the greater part, and always the part directly above the hearth. Up here firewood is placed to dry. A fine black basket is hung from the ceiling above the fire. Access to the loft is by means of a ladder. 342 [372]

When you read reports by the 'first' Europeans on these peoples and their houses, they always refer to a round house with reclining walls and a conical roof. Merensky (1894) mentions and illustrates such a house (pages 141 et seq.). Fülleborn (1906) mentions and illustrates several houses (Text Volume pages 376 et seq., and Atlas, plates 64-67). The inner surface of the walls of the house was decorated with patterns impressed into the mud layer which covers the bamboo poles. The three stones that form the hearth are shown, and also the bed behind a low permanent partition wall. These were exceptionally fine houses with beautiful, decorated and painted doors. The entrance had relief ornaments, often of coloured clay. Fülleborn notes that the mud houses are the dwellings of married people. [352]

There is no doubt that the round house is the original type of dwelling. In 1955, I saw no round houses like the ones described by the above scholars, but I know that formerly they were often seen, at least as late as 1932. Professor Monica Wilson of Cape Town has told me that she saw them everywhere in 1932, but that during a visit to the district in 1955 she found only one single house of this type, in the village of Masoko. 178 342

At the time of my visit, round houses could be seen, but not the type having walls inclining inwards near the ground, and they were not by far as imposing as the houses mentioned above; and there were not many of them. I had the opportunity to make drawings of three houses, all occupied by old people. 342

The round house is called an *isinga*. In one of these *isinga* there lived an old man whose wife, Malia, lived across the courtyard in a rectangular hut of the old Nyakyusa type (see infra). The husband's house was 6.5 metres across, and was divided in halves by a fence made from sticks. One half was where the man lived; it had one bed for him, and one for his grandchildren, who would come to visit him, now and then. Near the wall were [illegible] iron chests; also, a board had been hung at the wall as a roost for the chickens. A hen's nest, a small wicker basket, was placed about 3 ft. above the floor in the fork of a four or five-pronged stick. These hen's nests are seen in all houses. The ceiling was supported by seven upright posts, seemingly placed entirely at random. The under side of the roof was strengthened by eight circular-running fascines of bamboo. In the centre, a heavy log (not bamboo) reached up to the pointed top of the roof. [592] [353] [352] [231]

The other half of the house was reserved for the cattle, three cows and two calves; there were five posts to which the cattle were tied at night. [231]

The house had an outer door at each end, but there was no passage from the man's half to that of the cattle.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

4. A visit to the chief's father's grave was paid in company with the chief and some of his *amafumu*. It was situated in a banana grove *(ilisyeto*[11]*)* not very remote from the chief's hut. The grave of the present chief's father was on the ground-floor, about one hundred paces from its edge and was characterised by a small sixedged basalt block about half a metre in height[12] and about forty centimetres in breadth. An *indolo*-plant was also standing on the grave about one metre from the basalt block. 765 [764]

On this occasion the chief also told me of the special cases for which sacrifices are offered in this grove. These are performed only in cases of very serious accidents, sickness or famine which may overcome the chieftainship. In such cases a black cow is slaughtered after sunset at the edge of the grove. In the presence of the chief some pieces of meat of the slaughtered beast, together with some bananas, are laid down at the grave. The chief adds a prayer to his ancestors at some distance from the grave, referring to the evil by which the chieftainship or some special village of it has been afflicted. He enumerates all the names of his ancestors and asks them for their help. 769 782

The remaining pieces of the meat and other bananas are left in the grove during the night. When the next day dawns, the *amafumu* return and some *abanyago* divide the meat and eat it together. On this occasion the chief orders the removal of all remains of ashes from the huts. The ashes are thrown down in such unclean places as where leprous persons had been buried. After this has been done, the chief in conjunction with an *unnyago*[13] produces a new fire for the huts by twirling, and all other fires of the village, or villages, must be kindled anew from this "need-fire". [766] [372]

5. The reason for visiting an *undagusi* (diviner)[14] who dwelled in Ibungu an older age-set village[15] which seemed to the visitor to be a more ancient part of Katumba, was caused by the sickness of the chief's sister. In accordance with the custom of the Nyakyusa in bringing women back to their father's village if they are very sick, the 787 [164 484]

[11] Cf. *Johnston*, *ilisieta*, pl. *amasieta*, p. 450; *Mackenzie*, *ilisyeto*, burial place, p. 209; *masyeto*, graves of the dead chiefs, p. 121; *Wilson*, Introduction, p. 287, *ilisyeto*, sacred grove; *Merensky*, p. 115.

[12] Cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 327.

[13] Cf. n. 5, p. 3.

[14] Cf. *Johnston*, p. 451.

[15] I proposed to call the special form of villages found within the Nyakyusa society, which are erected on the age-set principle, „age-set villages" (African Studies, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 15—16 June 1943), a terminology that does not alter *G. Wilsons* statements on the "Age Villages" (Introduction, p. 269 ff). [56 621]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

156 ments, and fine clothes, or a splendid herd of cattle—all these are forms of *ubumwage*.

Traditionally Nyakyusa women wore only a bark-cloth belt 291 tied around the waist and drawn between the legs to fall in streamers in front (cf. Plate XIII), and the pagan women cling to 177 this dress, maintaining that it is only 'Swahili women with dirty diseases' who have to wear clothes to cover their sores, and if a pagan woman has a cloth she will probably wave it like a flag or hang it over one shoulder, when she dances. Except for the Christians, few Nyakyusa women regularly wear clothes. The Christians like a brightly coloured cloth tied under the armpits, and hanging to the knees (cf. Plate IX). Women make their own [287] bark-cloths with great care, and decorate them with geometrical patterns in red and black, the red dye being imported from the Livingstone mountains; they mix this same dye with a fatty [349] ointment made from the seeds of the *uwyungwati* tree, and rub it all over themselves. The most prized ornament (worn by both [341] sexes) are body rings of coiled brass or copper wire (cf. Plate XIII). In the past men went naked except for these body rings[1] but, unlike the women, they have taken enthusiastically to clothes, and swagger around in brilliant loin-cloths or flowing white togas; or, if rather more sophisticated, in freshly pressed shorts and shirts, or lounge suits and topees.

535 The series of ceremonies at a girl's initiation and marriage, and 156 at a funeral, are regular occasions for dancing, and the birth and death rates are so high that these occur very frequently within a chiefdom of 3,000 men. Once in a generation the eagerly anticipated 'coming out' ceremony offers an even greater opportunity for display. Skill in dancing is admired and the young people are encouraged to practise. A bride's mother does a great deal of the heavy work for her daughter, saying '*ewage tani*', which means literally 'let her display herself first', and implies 'let her have a good time while she can'; and a father may use the same phrase of his son. Angombwike explained: "The old men used to take 156 great pride in their sons; often a man would say to his son: "Don't 593 you hoe for me, I'll do the hoeing myself, you go and swagger about." Sometimes a man would sell a cow and buy a huge-bladed spear and give it to his son. Then, if he heard that his son

[1] cf. Elmo, op. cit., p. 320; H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, p. 18.

14:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

262 The tender leaves of pumpkins and taro plants (*amasimbi*, leaves of taro), as well as of a number of other plants growing wild (*indeke*) are also used as vegetables. This food is called *iseke*, a word denoting all sorts of green vegetables.

In his treatise on "The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa" (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. 1; 1938, p. 43). G. Wilson points out that the fruit of the so — called *uwepungati* — tree is "both [278] delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment (*ingemba*)", but he adds that he had been unable to find out the botanical name of this useful tree. Perhaps the following passage in the article of Dr. Kerr Cross ("Notes on the Country Lying between Lakes Nyasa and Tanganyika"; Proc. Roy. Geogr. Inst. N.S.Vol. XIII, 1891, p. 98) may be helpful in this connection: "There is a tree of the 314 sycamore family which grows extensively all over the north of the [362] lake called *mwiyungute* by the natives which might be developed. [380] It is a most picturesque tree which produces a food, an oil, and a dye. The oil or fat, when cool, is solid, even at a tolerably high temperature, and is like beeswax. It burns well as a night-light, and with wax might [381] be made into candles. In a rude way I have made candles of it. It might also make an excellent soap."

273 As an adjunct to these foods curdy milk (*ulukwa ulukafu*) is very [272] much esteemed[1], to say nothing of the various types of beer, mostly prepared from millet for the men. Large fields of millet are, therefore, to be seen everywhere in the land of the Nyakyusa. On one occasion I attended a beer drink in the hut of a chief. The conduct of the natives present, the chief and his advisers (*amafumu*), was in every respect praise-worthy. Pleasant and interesting stories were narrated. Not [579] infrequently the invitation of a commoner who has had some differences with his chief or one of the *amafumu* to such a feast is regarded as a gesture of reconciliation.

243 As in the time of Sir H. H. Johnston so also to-day "all the swamp-meadows are planted with rice." A traveller coming from the hilly region to the north on nearing Lake Nyasa is struck by numerous large fields of rice in the plain at the northern end of the lake.

178 *11. Crafts.* Mackenzie (1925) is certainly justified in complains of the decay of the arts and crafts among the Nyakyusa. The Indian and European influence is to be seen everywhere in the deterioration and final dissolution of those branches of the ancient culture of the Nyaky-

[1] A. Wilson, Introduction, p. 108.

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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[1] A. Wilson, Introduction, p. 288.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

about these arts and crafts is their failure to develop at all. Hints and suggestions were there continually; yet nothing ever came of them. Iron was digged, smelted, and made into tools, yet no better tool for digging the ironstone itself was thought of than the hoe. Cloth was widely made on native looms before the advent of inferior trade goods, and needles, with eyes, for sewing mats; but the idea of sewn garments did not penetrate the native mind. Burned clay pipes were made to direct the wind from the skin bellows into the blacksmith's fire, but no one received from these pipes a hint of other possibilities. The idea of the wheel, with its boundless possibilities, did not suggest itself to the Konde mind, nor, so far as I know, to the Bantu mind anywhere, although hints of it were lying about, especially in the round tree trunks which were used as rollers when a canoe had to be dragged some distance from the forest to the water.

At every point the native mind seems to have been waiting for the stimulus which was to come with the white man, and which has led to an awakening, the full extent of which is not realized except by thoughtful persons. For already, after the comparatively brief tuitional period of fifty years, Central Africans are replacing Indians as Government clerks, as hospital assistants, as engineers on river steamers, as telegraphists; they do all kinds of printing and bookbinding, carpentry, and building; and they fill positions of trust which a generation ago no one thought they would ever be capable of filling. The Konde have not yet taken more than a small share in

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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411

[facing p. 67]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

585
535
292
342
411

6. The processors dance the stamping dance

[facing p. 101]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

[frontispiece]

291
301
411
534

AN ITINERANT ENTERTAINER.

He is dressed in skin and feather head dress, armlets, skin kilt, and leafy wraps, the wearers of which better indicate his social position. He carries, as professional properties, a spear, a skin pack, rattles, beads, bells, and a cowgall musical instrument.

[facing p. 117]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

empty?" Mwaikuyu said, "Why should we die? 326
I will call the people to worship."

The most important products of the smithy are 411 ●
hoes and spears. Of the latter there are about a 412
dozen different kinds, for war, hunting, fishing; with broad or narrow blades; plain or with one, two, or three prongs; with long or short hafts. Axes are made for cutting down trees, digging out canoes, and all heavy work; some are slightly bent, and are used adze-wise; a small one, very sharp, is used for smoothing woodwork and finishing it off. There is also the *isungo*, a kind of cross between a hooked axe and a small scythe, used mostly for clearing bush land; and a long-bladed axe, carried by chiefs over the shoulder, and serving only as an ornament.

Knives are made of many patterns and sizes, with or without sheaths. A long spear-bladed knife is used for grass cutting, and a neat small strip of iron, sharpened at one end, not along the blade, is used as a razor. Arrows are not much used, as the Konde are not given to the use of the bow except for killing birds. Fish hooks were originally barbless, but some are now made on the European pattern. Needles are made for sewing mats; smaller ones for sewing breaks in calabashes, and others for sewing basket-work. Cow bells, tiny bells worn by little children [301]
on the ankles, anklets, and bracelets for women, complete the list.

For lake-shore people, and those living near the 501
larger rivers, the most important wood-working art is canoe making, and the average Konde canoe is a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

231
342
516

224
411

A Konde Hut.

Lowerthorne is the very core of Konde life, and there is always time to sit down for the welcome—that silent castle, crops, children, or the white man, whose strange ways are of unfailing interest.

Lion Hunting.

The presence of a lion in a district causes a great scare, and the chief may call up all able-bodied men, armed with spears, bows and bows, to the hunt. The lion—or leopard—is sometimes cornered alive and clubbed or spared to death. The presence of a white man with a rifle gives increased courage to the hunters.

[Facing p. 176]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

empty?" Mwaikuyu said, "Why should we die? 326
I will call the people to worship."

The most important products of the smithy are 411
hoes and spears. Of the latter there are about a 412
dozen different kinds, for war, hunting, fishing; with broad or narrow blades; plain or with one, two, or three prongs; with long or short hafts. Axes are made for cutting down trees, digging out canoes, and all heavy work; some are slightly bent, and are used adze-wise; a small one, very sharp, is used for smoothing woodwork and finishing it off. There is also the *isengo*, a kind of cross between a hooked axe and a small scythe, used mostly for clearing bush land; and a long-bladed axe, carried by chiefs over the shoulder, and serving only as an ornament.

Knives are made of many patterns and sizes, with or without sheaths. A long spear-bladed knife is used for grass cutting, and a neat small strip of iron, sharpened at one end, not along the blade, is used as a razor. Arrows are not much used, as the Konde are not given to the use of the bow except for killing birds. Fish hooks were originally barbless, but some are now made on the European pattern. Needles are made for sewing mats; smaller ones for sewing breaks in calabashes, and others for sewing basketwork. Cow bells, tiny bells worn by little children [301]
on the ankles, anklets, and bracelets for women, complete the list.

For lake-shore people, and those living near the 501
larger rivers, the most important wood-working art is canoe making, and the average Konde canoe is a

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 parts. The partition wall was bamboo and mud. A doorway gave on to the inner
353 part, where Tufwene had her bed.

394 There were two hearths, one in each room. The front one was not used. In the outer room was a bed for guests—a common feature of all houses. Tufwene was thought to be well off, and she had plenty of carrying rings, used by the
482 women when they carry loads, often very heavy, on their heads. The inner room was used for stores, including a number of earthen jars. She had three very fine,
352 low stools. I saw them outside in the sun, but their usual place was no doubt in the outer room, which had the character of a workroom. Here were the large
● 412 wooden mortar and its long pestle; also the grinding stone and in a corner the small mat, the *ulyanya*, which is used to take up the newly ground flour. There
417 was also the ladder, used for fetching down firewood from the loft; you could see
415 the hen's nest, and the large water jar with its pointed bottom placed on three stones.

415 The third *isinga* belonged to an eighty-year-old woman whose husband had
[769] died. She told me how every day she would fill a fine, decorated bamboo mug
[531] with milk for him! These mugs, seen in all the houses, mostly have geometrical

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Houses belonging to Mafia Ulwyakaya and her husband.

a. Detail of *isinga*, outer wall. 1, cow dung cross joined to bamboo pole—note aperture for liquid measure; 2, bamboo pole with plaited fibre windings; 3, split bamboo.—b, Mafia's *ichinga*.—c, Plan of *isinga*. 1, bed of the man; 2, iron chairs for guests; 3, door; 4, posts supporting ceiling; 5, hen's nest; 6, hoes and pestle for the maize mortar; 7, hearth; 8, chairs; 9, bed of the grandchildren; 10, cross from hollowed out trunk; 11, low partition; 12, posts for tying cattle; 13, cross post to top of roof.

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

grubbing for food outside the stable. Old people also eat the meat of apes *(salila, ape)* and of jakal *(ingebe)*. The Nyakyusa men are generally very fond of eating fowl, indeed: "*Wakugana inyama sya inguku*", they are fond of the flesh of fowl. 262 [192]

Bones are usually given to the children for gnawing. Eight to ten boys may be seen sitting in a circle and alternately gnaw on the same bone, often drinking a little milk *(ulukama)* the while.

During a boating on Lake Nyasa I saw the well-known columnar clouds formed by the so-called Kungu-flies in the distance above the surface of the water. These flies are also eaten by the peoples on the shore of the Lake. When these insects come shore-wards they are caught, roasted at home and then eaten. But I was told that sometimes they are also caught and eaten out on the Lake, being squeezed into lumps between the hands. [136] [252]

The Nyakyusa eat with the right hand, but when the meal consists of such food as boiled maize and beans *(ingate)* they also use spoons *(slutiko)* made of folded strips of banana leaves. Nowadays, however, tin spoons and tin plates have come into wide use. The ancient eating-mats *(akatefu*, diminutive of *urutefu)* are also being more and more displaced. 264 [112] [178 285]

When the meal is over, the vessels and plates are cleaned with the fingers, bent inward, and then licked off. The mouth is rinsed out with water.

10. Diet. The vegetable diet is roughly the following. The light meal in the morning consists mostly of boiled maize-cobs *(ingate)*, sweet potatoes *(imbatata)*, bananas *(ilitoki*, pl. *amatoki)*, roasted bananas; or, *amawtfu*, sweet bananas. The main meal in the evening, shortly before sunset, usually consists of flour porridge *(ikigindi)*, beans *(indima)*, both often boiled together with maize, peas *(efinyanga)* very often in the form of porridge, maize-corns *(ikirombe)* and groundnuts *(inyabala*, pl. *amanyabala)*. These groundnuts are dried in the sun on mats. Bananas, if dried in the same manner, are usually halved lengthwise and spread out sometimes on banana leaves. I have seen this done in the village of Katumba. Granary stores are very often, e. g. near Utengule (on the border of Nyakyusa and Safwa culture), erected on platforms supported by poles. The container is a big quadrangular basket, roughly three by three meters in length and 1 m in height. The roof has the shape of a large Chinese hat and can be taken off from the lower part of the granary. 262 264 [251] [285 415]

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the figures. Also bicycles, aeroplanes, motor-cars and other striking 531
objects of the European civilisation are to be found represented and [177]
concentric white circles adjacent to these drawings or paintings.

14. Houses. Sometimes the upper portion of the framework of the 342
rectangular houses is not fully plastered with mud leaving broad open areas or stripe horizontally or slopingly to the base-line. This may have its origin in an artistic motive and at the same time be useful in ventilating the interior of the hut. The ancient custom of the Nyakyusa to fill out the spaces between the framework of the walls with flat, oval cakes or clods of clay, supported inside the house by a second framework of bamboo (*uwumango*), has also a decorative effect.

The preparation of those oval sun-dried clay cakes is the work of the [339
women. L. Monteith Fotheringham described this in his "Adventures 462]
in Nyasaland" (London 1891, p. 22) with the following words: "The [113]
women make the bricks in shape like large eggs by pressing the clay between their hands." The building of the framework of the hut and the thatching of the roof is the task of the men. Nyumba means "the house" in Kinyakyusa as wellas in Swahili; *isyenga* is the name for the old-fashioned hut of the Nyakyusa possessing a round baseline and a framework expanding upwards in diameter. The rectangular hut is called *ikibaga* and the smaller rectangular hut used as a store or a fowl pen, *akabaga*. It is interesting to note that there is no special word for roof in Kinyakyusa. This part of the hut or house is simply called "the above" (*iyuru*). In contrast to this fact the different poles of the roof-structure are specially named according to their position parallel to or at right angels to the ridge of the rectangular houses. *Ukutalika* means to bind the different rafters of the roof together; *imbanda* is the name for the supporting poles of the roof, and *isyengo* for the poles of the framework of the walls.

15. Outfit. Inside the house we find besides the bedsteads (*ikitera*, 352
pl. *ifitera*) and the household utensils, the grinding-mill (*wuwera*), [112]
consisting of an upper (smaller) and a lower (broader) stone. The flour falls into a basket placed in front of the mill. Sometimes in a corner [231]
of the hut a nest (*ikitera*) for a sitting hen on top of a pole is to be found. Outside the house is a place for the sweepings (*wutagilile*). The 356
cleaning of the interior of the houses and also the repairing of the mud 462
plaster is the task of the women, but I saw men cleaning the space in front of the huts. At any case, it must be acknowledged that the cleanliness of a Nyakyusa village leaves little to be desired.

14:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

233 343 462 [415] the women, but the men are responsible for keeping the floor of the stable in good repair. For this purpose a specific tool is used, called ukutoba indobela. It is round on top, flattened on the lower side and provided with a handle.

224 5. *Hunting.* Sometimes the Nyakyusa go out to hunt, but nowadays hunting is much more restricted than in former times as described e. g by Mackenzie in his book: "The spirit-ridden Konde" (London 1925). This record, however, deals mostly with the Ngonde of the environment of Karonga whose interesting social history was unsurpassably revealed to us by Mr. Godfrey Wilson's treatise: "The Constitution of Ngonde" (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, Number Three. Livingstone, Northern Rhodesia 1939.) Hunting in the Nyakyusa country is now [656] curtailed by governmental regulations. Hunting (ukufuma), therefore, does not supply an essential part of the food requirements of the [136] [656] natives. The colobus apes on the slopes of the Rungwe volcano and the Poroto Mountains are sometimes killed for their attractive black and white skins, but fortunately this is now forbidden by the government. [439] Otherwise these apes would be exterminated in quite a short time, since the skins of these apes are in great demand with some Europeans for rugs and covers. Naturally, the hunting of lions and especially of leopards, which even nowadays still cause great damage, is not restricted.

224 231 The hunting of game for food is often done with dogs (imbwa) which have small bells (ingeni) on collars round their necks. Thereby the hunter (umfuemi) always knows the whereabouts of his dog. The chase is continued till the dog or dogs are exhausted. The object of the hunt (umfuema) is generally a small type of antelope (ikanga), e. g. in the [656] environment of Mwakalele, as I was instructed. The usual time for hunting is the cooler season, but to-day a permit of the government is also required.

223 Catching birds by means of traps (uwaga, pl. iwaga) is still common in the Nyakyusa area. I have also seen such traps constructed by means of the flicking-gallow's principle also in the vicinity of Utengule among the Safwa. The herd boys especially set traps to catch quails (imbesi) when the malesi (millet) harvest is over. Sometimes smaller birds are also coursed until they are exhausted and then slain. One day I found a stick vertically put on the soil and with a triangle made of smaller sticks at its top. The horizontal part of which was smeared with an adhesive substance. I was told that this was a trap for birds.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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3. The hut of the 'gaping cough.' Mosquitoes on the left

[Facing p. 84]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

content with maize roasted on a piece of tin, or a few potatoes roasted in the fire. I have known them, too, going perforce for a long time and quite uncomplainingly, without salt, or any kind of relish for their food. For all these drawbacks are fully compensated for when the white man kills game; then they gorge; then the astonishing capacity of the native to take in food is seen at its best, or worst. A friend of mine once, far up in the mountains, killed an eland, and, leaving his men to deal with the carcase, went to his camp. His men kindled a fire at the ndkill, a sat down to feast; when they returned to camp in the early hours of the morning, one man was missing, and his dead body was found where he fell, killed by his own immense greed, aided by a heavy rain which set in during the night.

But while feeding arrangements "on safari" are primitive in the extreme, the ordinary household arrangements are by no means so. The housewife operates with a great variety of pots, baskets, calabashes, and some women are celebrated cooks. A possibly mythical story of olden times tells how two chiefs went to war for the possession of a great woman, who was the wife of one of them, and was widely distinguished for wisdom and sagacity, and for her unusual culinary skill. She was secured by the attacking chief, and lived with him quite happily as his chief wife; an unusual honour, for it is a rule that captured wives never attain to that distinction.

The Konde, like most Bantu peoples, are noisy

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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Sorting.

A turning up of the basket brings the chaff and dust to the top, and a skilful throw casts it out, leaving the flour, which is now ready for cooking.

Grinding.

In spinning operations, the creaking sound of stone on stone with the grain between, may be heard all over the village, as the housewives begin to prepare the evening meal. The flour falls into the basket in front, and more grain is taken from the sac at the side.

[Facing p. 128]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

notwithstanding the accident, accepted the inevitable, 505
and were ferried safely across.

For the rest, the variety of woodwork includes 322
carved walking-sticks, with straight, knobbed, or bent 352
handles; chairs, stools, pillows, musical instruments, and wooden platters. In the Bundali district remarkably good Rurkee chairs are made on the European pattern, with perfectly smoothed spars, and perfectly burned-out holes for fitting the parts together. The one in my possession might quite well have been made in a carpenter's shop, but the only tools used were an axe and a knife, and a piece of iron for boring the holes. Toothed hair ornaments and [321
small wooden dolls represent the finer work; and 524
bamboo cups are decorated with pleasing patterns in 415]
poker work.

More important than the woodwork is the ancient 323
craft of the potter. There is, of course, no potter's 415
wheel, everything, from the immense pots, three feet high, down to the smallest eating dish, being formed by hand, built up, as regards the larger ones, by successive layers of clay, and finally hardened, after drying in the sun, by being put on a fire, while another fire is kindled inside. There is a great variety of pots, both in shape and in size. The very large ones are used for storing grain or flour; and some Europeans employ them for storing water. A well-stocked house will have up to twenty pots, for water carrying, for cook- 323
ing porridge, fish, beans, flesh; and special ones are 415
kept for beer making and drinking. The best clay is 317
found at the north end of the lake, and from there

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F7617 Ngonde F7617

323 one will sometimes meet with long strings of men and
•48 women, carrying ten to a dozen pots, hawking them
317 round the upland villages, or offering them for sale
at the local market at Tukuyu. The pots made at
[531] Matema are smeared on the outside with a dull red
ochre, and the more artistic potters work patterns in
red, with thin lines around the protruding middle,
and herring-bone or crossed patterns from thence to
lip and base.

353 I once slept in a native house in which there was
a double row of pots, one on top of the other, along
two walls. I was told that they were there for orna-
mental purposes, "just as you white men have pictures
on your walls."

285 Basket work is done everywhere, and a great variety
48 of baskets are made. Immense *findo*, for storing
grain, up to four feet high, and perhaps ten feet in
girth, are to be found in almost every family. Smaller
baskets for carrying goods of all kinds; wide shallow
baskets for sifting grain; others for serving food, and
yet others for drinking beer. The latter are so closely
woven that they will hold water, and are made from
a fine grass, which is found only in certain regions. A
new development of this industry is the making of
articles to European, or native, order; hats, table
mats, baskets with hinged lids and divisions inside,
almost anything can be made if a specimen is given
to the maker as a sample from which he may copy
what is wanted. Basket work includes also the large
and small fish traps in use at the lake or on the rivers.

286 Net making is naturally confined to the lake shore

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F917 Ngonde F917

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A Pneumonitis.

[illegible] is the date of the chart to generate [illegible] consumption. The man in the [illegible] has been seen to predict the coming of [illegible] before a fixed date. He is [illegible] brown and [illegible]. Frog [illegible] a [illegible] rifle and a [illegible].

[Facing p. 272]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

173 The balance between chiefs and commoners is explicit. So
773 also is their dependence on *ash* cultivation and herding, and it
[643] should be noted that, though the Nyakyusa speak of themselves
as stock men, they are not pastoralists to the same extent as
[773] the Masai or the Nuer. The number of cattle in Rungwe District
today is less than half the human population, and men traditionally have done the heaviest share of cultivation.

773 In every version of the myth the tension between father and
573 son, or older and younger brother, is stressed. In Nyakyusa
56 society the father (or his eldest son who replaces him) controls
173 the family property and exacts obedience from his juniors who
[769] continue to show their respect after his death by sacrifices. The tale of Kyala and Lwembe celebrates the triumph of the junior. Thus, at the heart of the very ritual which sanctifies seniority there is the assertion of the victory of the son and younger brother. The myth expresses the aspirations of subordinates—of commoners and junior kinsmen—as well as the power of chiefs and seniors.

173 As we have already noted, the heroic cycle makes no reference
773 to the peculiar Nyakyusa institution of age-villages. Their charter
56 is a quite separate myth[1] which tells of a chief who looked on his
62 daughter-in-law and loved her and took her, and this so shocked
604 men that in future fathers and sons built separately, so that a father-in-law should never see his daughter-in-law.

There are other hints of the eternal theme. Besides the saga of
173 Lwembe there is another quite different tale of the origin of fire,
773 which is less often related. In it a girl who had angered her father
372 by breaking his drinking calabash fled from BuKinga to the Nyakyusa valley, where she found people who ate their food raw. She made fire and cooked for them and 'all women came to her to learn to cook'. The long-necked calabash, used as a drinking
[915] vessel and in prayer to the shades, is a man's most personal
[768] possession destroyed at his death, and it stands for a husband, while cooking is a symbol of the sexual activity of women, so the myth is perhaps a drama of incest, but we have no direct evidence of this.

173 This last is the only tale in which a woman appears as a
773 benefactor. In general, the mythology is that of a strongly
562 patrilineal society in which men are dominant. The wives of Lwembe who walked behind their lord, shepherded by a lion,

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 8.

9: Wilson E.-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ogonde F3017
Nyakyusa

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[415]

[facing p. 22]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

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[415]

38. PRIESTS OF LUBANGA (SONGA)

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38. SONGA PRIESTS WITH SHRINE AND DRUM

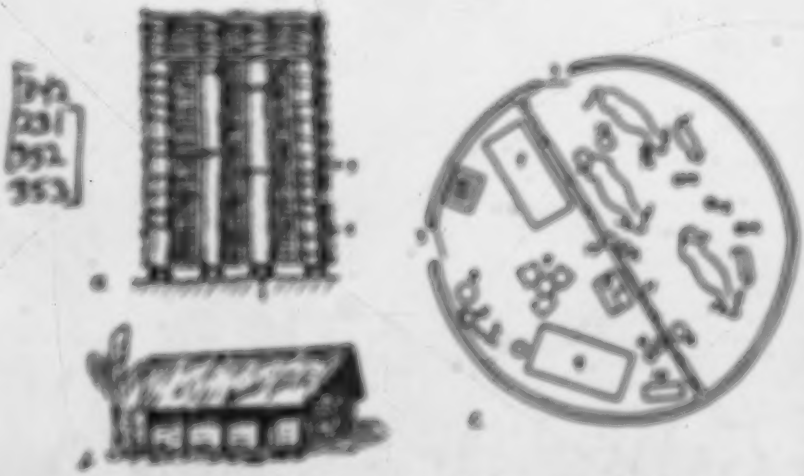
[Facing p. 39]

12: Diagnard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

gate. The partition wall was bamboo and mud. A doorway gave on to the inner part, where Tafuwa had her bed.

There were two hearths, one in each room. The front one was not used. In the outer room was a bed for guests—a common feature of all houses. Tafuwa was thought to be well off, and she had plenty of carrying slings, used by the women when they carry loads, often very heavy, on their heads. The inner room was used for ovens, including a number of earthen jars. She had three very fine, dove woods. I saw them outside in the sun, but their usual place was no doubt in the outer room, which had the character of a workroom. Here were the large wooden mortar and its long pestle; also the grinding stone and in a corner the small mat, the ulumyo, which is used to take up the newly ground flour. There was also the ladder, used for fetching down foreword from the loft; you could see the fowl's roo, and the large water jar with its pointed bottom placed on three stones.

The third image belonged to an eighty-year-old woman whose husband had died. She told me how every day she would fill a fine, decorated bamboo mug with milk for him! These mugs, seen in all the houses, mostly have geometrical



Houses belonging to Walle Ulwanhasa and her husband.

a. Detail of image, outer wall. 1, two low ones joined to bamboo pole—note aperture for liquid measure; 2, bamboo pole with plant fibre attachings; 3, split bamboo—4, Walle's design—5, Plan of image. 1, bed of the main; 2, iron chairs for gentlemen; 3, door; 4, posts supporting ceiling; 5, fowl's roo; 6, bow and gourds for the water ovenes; 7, hearth; 8, chairs; 9, bed of the grandchildren; 10, roof from hollowed out trunk; 11, low partition; 12, posts for wing roofs; 13, ovens gate to top of wall.

12: Bingaard E-5 (955) 1962 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

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gutters burned into the bamboo; they are hung upside down so the dust will not settle in them. The bottom is the natural partition of the bamboo cane.

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The house was standing on high, slightly sloping ground, and like the few mentioned houses it was buttressed by a great number of thick branches. Incidentally, it seemed to be very old and rickety. Inside, there were a great many posts supporting the horizontal bamboo ceiling and the stores of firewood. All posts were bifurcated and held the house solidly in place. The diameter of the house was the usual 6.5 metres, but in this case there was no inner partition. In this instance was very poor, she had no bed, but slept on a mat on the floor. Only very rarely is there no bed in Ukinaman; I remember having seen this only three times.

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The hearth was the usual type three decorated square stones, rising to a height of 30 cm above the floor, but being sunk 30 cm into the ground. Here they were positioned on one side, to ensure that the center post would not catch fire, and to make for easy escape of the smoke through the doorway. None of the houses have other means of smoke outlet.

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Alongside the wall were calabashes, jars, and baskets, essential for the baskets, and a little away from the wall, be large mill-stone and be appurtenant smaller grinding stone. A bed's rest was no missing either. Along one side was fixed a small under-ceiling for the storage of small things. Two or three basketses, meant to be for seed meal, were lying in the floor near one of the posts. From the left the marked down a calibiti in which she had been carrying her child. In inside was of a reddish colour.

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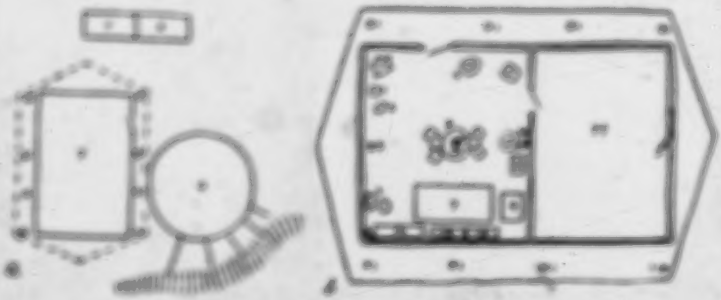

a. Site plan of Mulle Ulimyelimwe's house. 1, bee-scaps; 2, drying-racks for crops; 3, Mulle's village with roof supports along sides; 4 scaps for laughing to Mulle's husband, with buttresses at low ground.—b. Plan of Mulle's village (layered window in back room). 1, bed's rest; 2, dishes (small); 3, posts (from going up a ridge of roof are filled in); 4, large baskets; 5, baskets; 6, clay bees-wood with posts; 7, Mulle bed; 8, chair; 9, wooden chair; 10, table; 11, back room, having bamboo ceiling carried by bamboo cross beam (between posts marked 3); the room is used for drying clothes, etc.; 12, shelves.

12: Blegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

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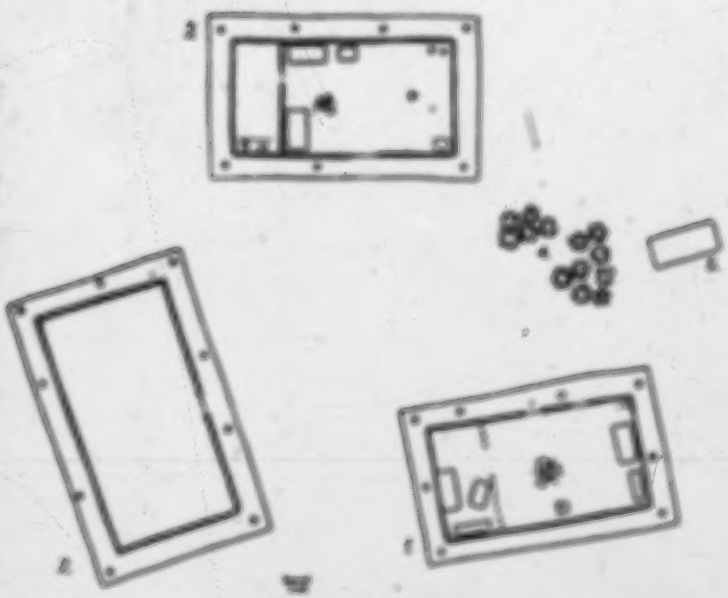

Three houses belonging to one family, situated round a common courtyard, the doors open on to the yard. The village seen in along the back of the house on top. 1, father's house; 2, Baba's house; 3, Mama's house; 4, banana plants; 5, hen-coop.

houses existed which were six metres in length. It had the same width as Mulla's house, approximately 3 metres. The roof was supported by posts along the sides and at the gables.

Two women lived in this house, both married to the same man. Consequently, there were two hearths, the stones of which were cylindrical-conical, broadening slightly at the top. All were decorated. Each woman had her part of the house, both with an outer door, and further there was a door, slightly narrower, between the two parts, and a fourth door to a store-room. Six low thatch rather posts supported the roof, all reaching to the ridge. The two parts were a bit unequal in size; nearly half of each had the well-known bed for firewood, etc. One part contained beds for the woman and her husband (one bed had two straw mats). The children had two beds. The husband had still another house, a short distance away at the foot of a hill, they said. I did not see it. The other woman's room held her bed and a cot.

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The hearths of both rooms were placed in the centres, between two upright posts. Utensils and furnishings did not differ much from the usual: bed's mats,

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12: Diegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

352 two water jars, baskets, stools, a ladder leading to the loft, and a table. The rooms
415 were large and spacious, 5 m by 14 m, and in two places low partitions were
353 used to effect a sub-division of the rooms. One may well wonder at the great length of these houses, but probably it is quite true what is said, that, where—in
342 fact—the Germans took charge of the region and imposed a tax on houses, the
177 Nyakyusa men made their women move in under their own roofs—only at the same time extending the houses, using the techniques they already knew from the cowhouses.

648 Fülleborn reports on this payment of taxes, and finds it reasonable enough,
178 because, he says, "it favors in the people an understanding of work and discipline," and of the house tax he says, "it works to abolish polygamy, since every woman,
342 following the traditions of her country, has her own house, for which her husband must pay the tax."

But the Banyakyusa seems to have adapted themselves to the new law and have moved their wives to the very long houses, thus escaping part of the taxes....

342 The third type of house was a rectangular house with a hipped roof. This type is called *dama*, which means tent. It was also called *ntaba*, the meaning of which I have not been able to ascertain; maybe it means chicken-house, to which it bears much likeness.

This is the modern house-type to which Fülleborn may be referring when he talks about rectangular houses, "... the very rare instances where a hipped roof is seen ..." (page 370).

342 According to statements made by people who have lived in the district for a third of a century, this type of house is thought to have come from the south some
177 40 years ago. I have not visited the Ngonde who live further south, but Sir Harry Johnston (1897) depicts a group of people called "Wankonde (North Nyasa)" in front of a house which looks very much like the modern *dama* of the Banyakyusa. It seems therefore reasonable to assume that the roof-construction design of the Ngonde has now reached the district of the Banyakyusa. Johnston also informs us that the rectangular type is not actually the original type in East Africa, but that it was probably introduced by the Arabs.

342 This *dama* or *ntaba* is shorter than the long *ikhaya*, seldom more than 11 metres in length. But its interior design does not differ. For instance, the bottle
[342] type of the placing of the hearth, of the equal distance between posts supporting the roof, of the bamboo ceiling covering about half the room, of half-partitions from bamboos and in some cases mud, of store-rooms in the far end of the house, accessible through an inner door.

[342] On no *dama* I have never seen more than one hearth, which means that the house is inhabited by one woman. A house in the village of Kikwa presented an example of the peculiar tradition of the peoples of the Highlands, viz. the tying of the cattle to posts in the dwelling-houses. My drawings are all from the Highlands, where, in the *ikhaya*, as also noted by Fülleborn, the same tradition is

12: Diagaard E-5 (1955) 1962 F917 Ngonda F917
Nyakyusa

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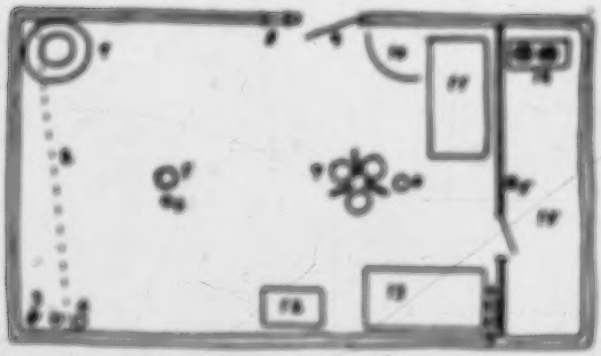

Ndosi's house: 1, basket; 2, clothes-line; 3, broom; 4, jar, in the back room on low shelf; 5, post supporting roof; 6, small decorative bamboo poles, supports for the ceiling; 7, hearth with three round boulders; 8, shuttered opening through which the hen may be watched; 9, door; 10, camera for food; 11, spare bed; 12, table; 13, Ndosi's bed; 14, shelf for jars; 15, door-room behind mud wall with door.

[344] room and his cot where. The houses were grouped round a common courtyard, the doors giving upon this space and not on the nearby village thoroughfare.

The three houses have the names of Isidiko's house, Ndosi's house, and Baba's house. The elder wife, Isidiko, had several minor children, who slept either near her own bed or in the living area. She owned furnishings as modern as a chair and a cupboard with shelves, besides the usual objects in these houses, baskets, bamboo stools, hen's nest and roost, ladder and water jars. She also had an earthenware beer jar which, one day when I called on her, was standing on the fire, nearly making the froth boil over. She was preparing beer for her husband's friends, who had just dropped in.

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The new wife, Ndosi, had a store-room in her house, and there was also a large heap of cassava, manioc for food. As often were in these houses, she had also a spare bed. She had a number of jars and baskets, but no hen's nest. Straight across the room she had suspended a line on which she put her clothes. Such an arrangement was often used, especially by the bachelors; they had a line for their skins. Clothes-hangers were not in use. You just threw your clothes across the line. A wardrobe was never seen.

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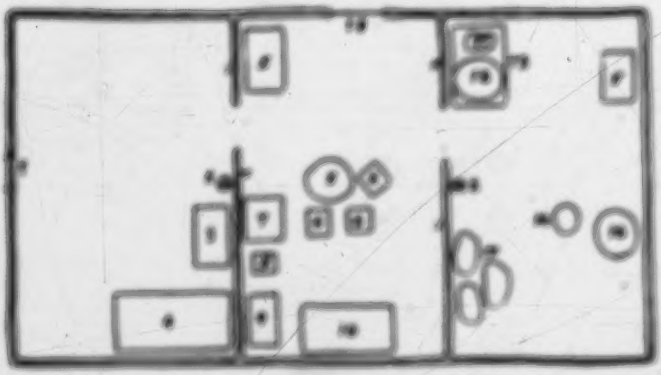
The interior of Baba's house presented a peculiar picture. It was divided into three rooms, a living-area in the middle; at one side the bed-room, at the other a store-room. The bed-room had only one bed and a wooden chest. There was no hearth in the living-room—for the husband had his meals prepared by one of his wives. But there was a true accumulation of tables, chairs, cabinets, and a

12: Diagaard E-5 (1955) 1962 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa



Sakaji's house. 1, barred window; 2, posts supporting roof; 3, wooden door; 4, Sakaji's bed; 5, table; 6, chair; 7, cupboard; 8, chair with three entrances; 9, entrance; 10, table with bookshelf; 11, bag; 12, large basket, divider; 13, low stool for 11 and 12; 14, millet jars; 15, two partitions; 16, divider in which the millet is sundried; 17, rice in bags.

cupboard. This seemed very strange and a bit disorderly. On a chair were three entrances on top of each other.

It was interesting to see, in the store-room, the very crops that belong to the [25]
man, viz. rice and millet, the most valuable products. The rice was in bags, and [p. 34, 342]
it is quite probable that this man had bought it from the dealers near Lake Nyasa, where it thrives well. On higher ground, rice cannot be cultivated.

The millet was contained in a basket, 1 m in height, 55 cm broad at the [41]
bottom, and narrower, 35 cm, at the top.

Further, there was a large, beautiful earthenware jar, which he had bought. This was intended for the millet, but there was also a cylindrical container for the washing of the millet when it was brought home from the field. This vessel was 55 cm in height and 65 cm across.

All these houses had a small window with bars or shutters. 342

The inside of the houses lay in semi-darkness, as the only light is admitted [39]
through the doorway, and in some cases through the distinctive barred window. Nevertheless, the interiors give a nice impression, because of their cleanness, brights, size, and cleanness. And here very they are, where were at night; the door is closed, [36-5]
you gather round the fire and delight in perfectly cooked rice, which is the favourite dish at this principal meal of the day.

Johnston says (1897, page 422) that the general number of the houses are circular in their plan and very much like beehives in shape; their walls are [71]
sticks-work filled with coral rubble, and they have thatched roofs. He also reports

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

The chief Wwanaiika and his family after he had received from me my old "Klopper-Mantle" as a gift.

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to enter his hut, where the patient was sitting on the ground with his back to the wall. To heal his patient of the pains, the doctor made some small incisions in his skin near the stomach by means of a triangular-shaped knife, and then he rubbed in the incisions a thick black juice taken from the horn of an antelope (the horn was called kayembe, pl. ulupembe). The juice was prepared from different roots and herbs as a medicine against stomach pains. In the horn were certain divisions for other medicines, and in each of these divisions was stuck a small (black) stick for removing the specific medicine from it. After this treatment the patient declared that he felt severe pains in the region of his stomach. I asked the doctor for some of his medicines, but he was unwilling to give me anything. Then I promised to bring him next day some European medicines hoping to get in exchange some of his medicaments.

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The following morning I returned. On this occasion I did acquire some of his medicines in exchange for various European tablets, especially as he was most fascinated with the kaliumpermanganatum, of which I gave him a few crystals, explaining to him the use and the dose, when I dissolved some of the crystals before his eyes. It probably seemed to him to be a mystical process. Among the medicines I received then from him was a medicine for luck, called kwewaako. Some of the inhabitants of the village, who had meanwhile appeared, were very unwilling for him to give me this medicine, and maintained that I would take with me all the luck of the village.

[777]

On this second visit to the medicine-man, there was again a patient present, and I wanted to take a photograph of the scene because it was

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[illegible]

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[88] I went to the place and got permission to enter the hut in which the first part of the ceremony took place. I found there the parents of the girl, the girl sitting enveloped in clothes in one corner of the hut, and some older females, one of whom was the acting uwapapo. Some male guests were also present[28]. As the girl had had her first catamenia the present ceremony marked at the same time the end of her preparation for marriage.

[207 278] The uwapapo prepared a beverage of beer in which a light-brown medical powder (*imbondanga*) was put. First the girl had to drink from it, then the parents followed. This beverage was believed to strengthen (*ukusinga*) the consumers. Then a spear was handed to the girl by her father, and the girl handed it in turn to some relatives of [582 583] the bridegroom waiting near the hut. These persons had to bring the spear to the girl's bridegroom as a sign that he could now marry the girl[29], but not before he had brought a bull to the girl's father. After [434] this the girl, now sitting in the middle of the hut, was given small gifts from the participants in the ceremony.

[391 392 516 968 415]

Practical instruction of premature girls in house-hold matters.

[302] Following this the whole body of the girl was anointed before the door of the hut. The uwapapo began by anointing her legs, then the [278] girl herself continued it. The ointment was prepared from castor oil and a powder of red wood (*Kipemba*, found commonly in the environment of Lake Rukwa). At this moment a male participant in the cere- [606] mony chanced to come out of the hut, and suddenly a young woman

[28] Cf. Wilson, Introduction, p. 256. The Study of African Society, p. 11 (The Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. 5, 1938).

[29] ukwenga: to take (also as regards marrying); ukwenga: nuptials.

14:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

very substantial, the main meal being taken in the evening shortly before sunset.

8. *Manufacture.* The pot for cooking (*ndeka*) is placed on three stones which form the hearth (*ikipembero*, hearth stones). The flat bowl made of clay used for the needs of the kitchen is called *ulwengeko* and a pig pot used for storing water *ingumba*. The pots of clay are manufactured by Kisi women because in their land on the north-eastern shores of Lake Nyasa the best clay is found. In the eastern part of the Nyakyusa country adjacent to Kisi land the women visit the pottery markets of the Kisi, but to the remoter villages, e.g. around the Rungwe volcano the pottery is brought by Kisi men. In this case, owing to the great distance from the Kisi-Land the men carry the loads of eight to ten pots on their head between split poles of bamboo. The Kisi pots I saw in the Rungwe Station were ornamented in a rough way with red ochre and seemed only slightly baked. The hearth stones, however, are made by the Nyakyusa women themselves as I was able to observe near Kolongaziu, where widows manufactured them for sale.

In many villages of the Nyakyusa I could watch basket-making. This I saw being done by men. In the chief's hut in Katumba I had the opportunity to admire a great number of very big baskets (*ifisuba*) for storing grain, smeared with cow dung on the outside. The attractive closely wickered baskets, which are filled with *malesi* (millet) and then placed in water for a night in the process of beer-brewing were originally made by the Dumyi, but nowadays also the Nyakyusa are said to be skilled enough to weave them. I had no opportunity to observe it, but could acquire an excellent specimen of that wicker-work.

9. *The Meal.* At the beginning of each meal the hands are washed, including those of children. The men take their meal separately from the women. The wives only eat when their husbands have been satisfied. Boys under ten years eat with their mothers, but as soon as they begin to live in age-set villages, they eat together with their friends of their own age-set, as described in detail by Mr. G. Wilson in his "Introduction of Nyakyusa Society" (Bantu Studies X, p. 171). The head of the family likes to eat together with his friends.

Meat is eaten very seldom, but on special occasions such as marriages, death lamentations, christenings of Christianized natives, successes in war or sacrifices are devoured. *Inyama* (Swahili: *nyama*) is the Nyakyusa word for all sorts of meat, *ingombe* for that of cattle and *ingombuka* for that of cows. Near Utengule I saw black pigs (*ingwanwa*, pig)

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

grubbing for food outside the stable. Old people also eat the meat of 262
apes (mlilo, ape) and of jakal (ingelu). The Nyakyusa men are generally [142]
very fond of eating fowl, indeed: "Wakwapena ingoma ego inyuka", they are fond of the flesh of fowl.

Bones are usually given to the children for gnawing. Eight to ten boys may be seen sitting in a circle and alternately gnaw on the same bone, often drinking a little milk (ulukamu) the while.

During a boating on Lake Nyasa I saw the well-known coloured [136]
cloude formed by the so-called Kungu-flies in the distance above the surface of the water. These flies are also eaten by the peoples on the shore of the Lake. When these insects come shore-wards they are [152]
caught, roasted at home and then eaten. But I was told that sometimes they are also caught and eaten out on the Lake, being squeezed into lumps between the hands.

The Nyakyusa eat with the right hand, but when the meal consists 264
of such food as boiled maize and beans (ingwiri) they also use spoons [172]
(ulwiko) made of folded strips of banana leaves. Nowadays, however, tin spoons and tin plates have come into wide use. The ancient eating- [178
sticks (ukwefu, diminutive of uwefu) are also being more and more 288]
displaced.

When the meal is over, the vessels and plates are cleaned with the fingers, bent inward, and then licked off. The mouth is rinsed out with water.

II. Diet. The vegetable diet is roughly the following. The light meal 262
in the morning consists mostly of boiled maize-cobs (ingwiri), sweet 264
potatoes (ivibatata), bananas (ilitoki, pl. amatoki), roasted bananas, or, amarafu, sweet bananas. The main meal in the evening, shortly before sunset, usually consists of flour porridge (ikigwali), beans (indimwe), both often boiled together with maize, peas (ufwagaga) very often in the form of porridge, maize-corns (ikiwenke) and groundnuts (ingwele, pl. amangwele). These groundnuts are dried in the sun on mats. Bananas, if dried in the same manner, are usually halved lengthwise and spread out sometimes on banana leaves. I have seen this done in [251]
the village of Katumbe. Granary stores are very often, e. g. near Utengule (on the border of Nyakyusa and Safwa culture), erected on platforms supported by poles. The container is a big quadrangular basket, [285
roughly three by three meters in length and 1 m in height. The roof 415]
has the shape of a large Chinese hat and can be taken off from the lower part of the granary.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

house. Then she goes in and steals a piece of firewood from the 768
hill* and runs off with it, laughing. The officiant pursues her and 587
makes her drop it and gives her medicine, while the company cry:
'A thief, a thief!' She takes the firewood back to her husband's
home. 'It is a sign that she has entered her father's house, just as
the spear is a sign that she has entered the house of another hus-
band.' In rich families the new husband sends a bull which is [556]
killed and eaten at the ritual.

Our informants were agreed that 'there is no fear of the gaping
cough if a woman runs away from her husband and goes to a
lover', and in practice no ritual is performed when she visits her
father after divorce and re-marriage, but it is perhaps significant
that such a situation could scarcely have arisen in the past, since [564
divorce by agreement rarely, if ever, occurred. An adulterer fled, 177]
if he could, with his lover to another chiefdom, breaking off all [595]
relations with her kin.

(3) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

Now we turn to the Kukwe interpretation of events. Our two 115
principal informants here were Mwaalemba, an elderly pagan
man, brother to the chief Porukoro, whose wife, Syungu, acted as
officiant at rituals in the chief's family, and Kakune, a young
doctor who had learnt the medicines from his mother. Mwaa-
lemba was much more coherent than Syungu herself, and his
interpretation was confirmed by Kakune and numerous other
informants. Again I give the interpretation of the two principal
informants without any editing other than placing consecutively
statements made on different occasions.

i. *Mwaalemba's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. and translated 158
by him soon afterwards.)

MWAALEMBA: Perhaps a youth, perhaps a girl, runs mad; he runs
about naked so that we say: 'He's mad, why doesn't he cover himself?'
He goes to the place of defaecation and takes filth and eats it: he goes
into people's houses and takes things, he might even take some things
from you, from a European, without fear; he knows not what he does.
Sometimes, after a visit to a doctor, he recovers altogether and never
has the fit again—that is the lesser kind of madness. But sometimes he 158
recovers and then the fit takes him again later—that is the more serious 757

* The hill (*ngulu*) consists of horizontal beams running at well level across a portion [522
of the hut. Here every married woman keeps a supply of dry firewood. It is her private 917]
store-place which may not be touched without her permission.

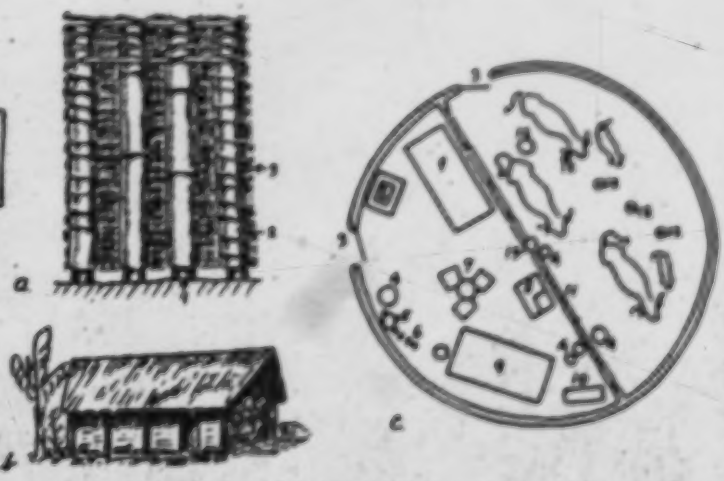
12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

342 353 parts. The partition wall was bamboo and mud. A doorway gave on to the inner part, where Tufwene had her bed.

354 There were two hearths, one in each room. The front one was not used. In the outer room was a bed for guests—a common feature of all houses. Tufwene was thought to be well off, and she had plenty of carrying rings, used by the 482 women when they carry loads, often very heavy, on their heads. The inner room was used for stores, including a number of earthen jars. She had these very few, 352 low stools. I saw them outside in the sun, but their usual place was no doubt in the outer room, which had the character of a workroom. Here were the large 412 wooden mortar and its long pestle; also the grinding stone and in a corner the small mat, the *ulyanya*, which is used to take up the newly ground flour. There 417 was also the ladder, used for fetching down firewood from the loft; you could see 415 the hen's nest, and the large water jar with its pointed bottom placed on three stones.

415 The third *isinga* belonged to an eighty-year-old woman whose husband had [769] died. She told me how every day she would fill a fine, decorated bamboo mug [53] with milk for him! These mugs, seen in all the houses, mostly have geometrical

[342 231 352 353]

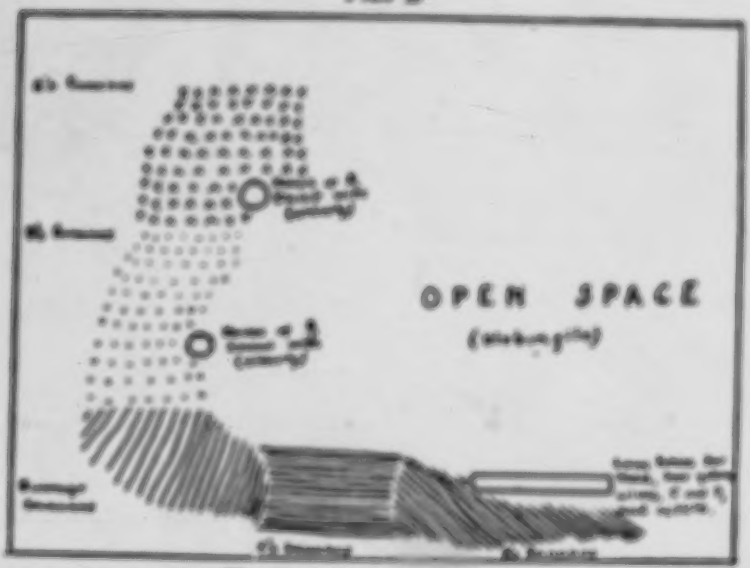


Houses belonging to Malia Ulwyehanya and her husband.

a. Detail of *isinga*, outer wall. 1, tree fern stem joined to bamboo pole—note aperture for liquid manure; 2, bamboo pole with plant fibre windings; 3, split bamboo.—b, Malia's *isinga*.—c. Plan of *isinga*. 1, bed of the man; 2, iron chests for gardenia; 3, door; 4, posts supporting ceiling; 5, hen's nest; 6, hoes and pestle for the maize mortar; 7, hearth; 8, chests; 9, bed of the grandchildren; 10, resat from hollowed out trunk; 11, low partition; 12, posts for tying cattle; 13, coarse post in top of roof.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Nguoda FN17
Nyakyusa

Plan B



592

The Homestead of a Rich Man

Each married man has at least one house and, if he is a polygynist, he often has several; young wives may sometimes share a house, older wives normally have one apiece. The land immediately surrounding a man's houses belongs to him and his wives and will be referred to in this paper as their "building site" or "homestead" (*ahaje*). Each homestead is sufficient in size to hold not only the houses of one man but also his bananas and, maybe, a few small plots of beans, ground-nuts or some other crop as well; and it is there, under the bananas, that coffee trees are planted. But there is no room on it for the main gardens of the household. In the centre of every homestead is an open space (*ahabingile*) carefully weeded and swept by the owner and his wives, who usually take great pride in thus keeping it clean. 592 423

At some distance from the homestead—a distance varying from a few yards to two miles or more—lie the main gardens (*imigunda*) of the household, near those of other people. Each year different types of gardens are hoed together by groups of villagers; millet in one place, potatoes in another, maize and beans in another; so that the gardens of one particular household are scattered in different spots. 241

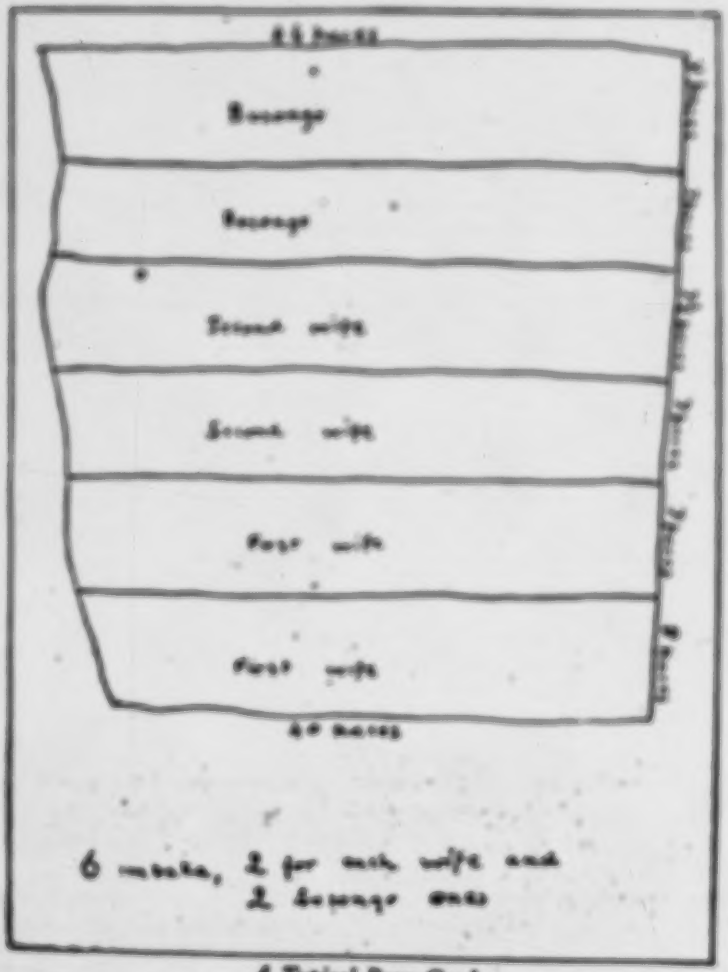
After the man and his sons have hoed the gardens, clearing the ground first if necessary, his wives are each given portions of their own to plant, weed and reap. In hoeing for any particular crop the land is 241 592 421

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

divided up into separate plots (indaka) all roughly of the same size, and one or two of these plots are assigned to each wife. There is no standard size for a plot (ulupaka), the only important thing being that there should be equality between the several wives of one man in the area allotted to them.

The rights of a woman to dispose of the crops of her own garden (ingonde), that is of the plots (indaka) allotted to her by her husband,

Plan C



A Typical Bean Garden

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

vary in different circumstances. Millet and rice, the two most valuable crops, belong to the man and are owned by him; so that the division of a millet or rice garden into plots and their assignment to different wives is rather a division of labour than of property. But of all other crops the woman on whose plots they have grown is an effective owner. She stores them herself in her own house and no other wife of her husband can touch them; it is only with him that her rights are in any way shared. 291 592 934

The main use of the crops which the Nyakyusa grow is to provide food for each separate household group. Next in importance is the provision of food and beer for hospitality, and for the making of gifts both in everyday life and on special ceremonial occasions. And, finally, there is the barter or sale of surplus crops to obtain salt, pots, clothes, cattle and to pay tax. Each married woman, therefore, first uses her own crops to feed her husband, her own children and herself. If she is the only wife then she cooks for her husband every day, but, even if she is one of many, she is yet careful to cook for him frequently, in order to keep his affection and the various advantages which go with it. 592 593 279 [937]

When cooking for her husband she must, when necessary, prepare sufficient for guests, for a man very often has friends and neighbours eating with him; and if he wishes to make a gift of cooked food, she cooks it for him from her own store. To provide meals for him and his guests and cooked food for gifts is an obligation which she normally fulfils quite willingly, as we have hinted above; she may be fond of him; it is in any case to her interest to play her part in the co-operative relationship which binds them together and from which both alike benefit. He hoes for her and builds her house, he gives her a share of the household milk, which he himself controls, he sleeps with and is gentle to her; he has, without the aid of any legal, moral or conventional sanctions, a great hold over her, as she, on her side, has over him. But, if either fails to play their part in willing co-operation, then there are, for both alike, these other sanctions to fall back upon. A quarrel develops between them and leads to violence, perhaps he strikes her, perhaps she viciously repels him, one night, from her bed; and then the immediately injured party appeals to the neighbours for support. They discuss the matter, censure one or the other, and try to make it up between them; if they fail to do so the case may go to Court and one will then have to pay compensation to the other. Or it may happen, without any violent quarrel, without any formal appeal to the neighbours, that one of them becomes aware that his conduct is provoking their mockery and criticism; and then in shame he mends his ways. Or, finally, one of them may fall sick and suspect that wrong-doing on his part has been followed by spiritual retribution in the form of witchcraft. 543 [579] [627] [626] [794]

A woman, then, uses her stores of food to seek not only for herself

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

A woman, then, owns her share of food produced and stored by herself

421 and her children but also for her husband, and his guests and for gifts; she has, however, every right both to entertain her own women friends to meals and to make gifts of food to her relatives, and she does so when she chooses without consulting her husband. Co-wives entertain one another if they are on friendly terms and even sometimes make a habit of taking their meals together; but this is entirely a matter of personal inclination, it is in no way necessarily inherent in their relationship; there is no community of property between them.

421 This sharp division of property between fellow wives is well exemplified in the following story from a Kukwe family. I was discussing with a young man what happened if, in a polygynous household, the crops of one wife were a failure. He assured me that no action could possibly be taken to compel the others to give her a share of their crops, either for food or for seed; if they did give her a share it was kindness and good-will alone that would prompt their doing so: "I saw it happen once," he continued, "in my own father's house. He had three wives and had hoed maize plots for them and divided them up, and each had planted her own maize. But, when it began to grow, that on one wife's plot was very poor while that on the others' plots was abundant, and at the harvest the one wife reaped very little maize indeed. So when the harvest was all gathered my father asked the other two whether, as they had plenty of maize, they would not give some of it to their fellow. At first they refused emphatically to give her any, saying that it had just happened so, they had reaped plenty and she had reaped little or none, but it was not their custom to divide up their crops and she, if she had reaped plenty and they had reaped little or none, would certainly not have given any of her crop to them. And they asked whether she was his favourite that he made such a suggestion. Let him, they said, spend a shilling or two on buying food for her himself. My father entreated them but still they refused.

"But day after day for a long time he went on entreating and persuading them, pointing out that she had children to feed and asking if they wished her to die of hunger; he, he said, was not in any way compelling them to hand over their food, it was entirely for them to decide whether they would not each give her a little; if they disliked doing so, well there was no more to be said. And at last they began to be persuaded, they discussed it all, the two of them together, and the fact that she had children to feed, and each gave her a portion of her own crop. And later, when this maize had all been consumed, they gave her seed also for the next year's planting."

I then asked if the one whose crop had failed was, in fact, his father's favourite wife or not. "No, she was not, one of the other two was his

S:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

favourite. What they said about her being, perhaps, his favourite was just their way of putting it." 421 515

Before passing to the discussion of the disposal of surplus crops we must dwell a little on the importance of a fair division of land between the several wives of a polygynist. Not only garden plots but also the bananas growing on the homestead are divided between them. Each wife is allotted a number of banana stems and is responsible for keeping their roots clear of weeds and she is also expected to weed and sweep the adjacent portion of the open space (*ubuhingile*). In the sweeping her husband will often assist her, her fellow wife will not. The bunches which grow on her own banana stems are her property and not even her husband will cut them without consulting her, save in exceptional circumstances. In every polygynous household, then, a division of garden plots and bananas is made between the wives, and, as it is made by the husband, it is a most important element of their relationships with one another.

For every man with more than one wife has a favourite, and, if he allows his affection for her to express itself in an inequitable division of land, then there is trouble in store: "Each wife is the owner of a plot (*ubupaka*) and each harvests and weeds it and keeps the food separately. The wives help each other if friendly but each wife must have her own plot—a maize plot, a bean plot, a cassava plot, a plot of sweet-potatoes, and so on. The bananas also are divided between the wives.

"A polygynist when he hoes his gardens is always afraid to give to any one wife a bigger plot than to another. For it is thought that the wife who gets the smaller plot will whisper complaints of her husband among the people; and whispering complaints of a man brings witches to kill him. It is feared that in such a case, either the husband or else the favoured wife will be killed (by witchcraft). In consequence a man is always exceedingly careful, in dividing his garden into plots, to treat his wives fairly. But even so he will perhaps give to the wife whom he loves the plot with the best soil! And it happens sometimes that a polygynist's wife, when given a smaller plot than her co-wives, will sulk and refuse to plant: 'Why,' she asks, 'do you give me such a small garden plot? Did I not cook for you while you were hoeing?' And, if her husband then loses his temper and strikes her, she will make a case before the neighbours. And they will say to him: 'Friend, you should make a just division, you will only set your wives against one another by not doing so and make them kill one another.' By this they mean that if one wife is angered she will bring the witches to kill her fellow wives! [754] [827]

"And if a woman is restless with her husband and is herself considering leaving him then she will be forever going and complaining to her 586

5:Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1938 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

586 mothers[2] to assure that she is in trouble and that her husband has no regard for her, that he grudges her garden plots and gives her only small ones. Then maybe her mothers will take the initiative in suggesting that she should leave this man who is no husband and who loves her not. And they will tell their husband, her father, that his child is in trouble and—only think of it!—has scarcely a ridge[3] to call her own. So that if the girl does then find life with her husband intolerable and leaves him, her father will not be too hard on his daughter, he will not compel her to go back to him; for he knows that she was in trouble."

921 626 759] This statement, written by an educated Nyakyusa, brings out very clearly both the fact that men do at times divide their land unfairly and the nature of some of the sanctions which operate against such injustice. The faith in wisharah provides a moral sanction of which, if the man is fool enough to disregard it, he is very likely explicitly reminded in the course of the subsequent legal proceedings; the injured wife has an immediate hold over him in virtue of the relationship of practical co-operation and emotional intimacy in which they stand to each other, a hold which, if he attempts to break it by recourse to violence, is strengthened and given a legal form by the support of their neighbours. The support of her kin is an alternative legal force[4] which an injured wife

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[2] i.e. her father's wives.

[3] For many crops the ground is hoed into ridges.

[4] Some readers may be puzzled by and somewhat critical of the meaning with which the concepts of law is employed in this paper. This is not the place to meet their criticisms, but, in order to avoid misunderstanding, it is necessary to define that meaning precisely. Law, then, is here distinguished alike from morality with its religious sanctions, from convention with its controlling sense of shame and from the reciprocity dictated by self-interest—with all of which it is in fact inextricably interwoven. Law is here taken to be that normal or customary form of action in society which is kept in being by the inherent necessity of systematic cooperation among its members. The particular form of law varies in different areas of society in accordance with the particular conditions of each area; but some normal form of action there must be everywhere if social life is to continue; anarchy is, in the strictest sense of the word, impracticable. A breach of law is a course of action, on the part of some individual or minority group, which is inconsistent with the normal and accepted form of cooperative action, and which would therefore, if unchecked, make continued relationship between the lawbreaker and the other members of their society wholly impossible; it threatens to disorder society into anarchy. But breaches of law are always in fact checked, as they must be, by the actions of those with whom the lawbreaker are in practice related; and it is those actions which are the sanctions of law.

If law is to be preserved it is necessary that the actions which sanction it should have an irresistible force, the lawbreaker must normally be helpless before them; and they are only thus irresistible if the great majority of those people with whom the lawbreaker is effectively related do in fact either participate in or at least approve of them. Now in civilized areas of society, in which vast numbers of people are related, legal sanctions must be applied by a central authority if they are to be effective, for only such a central

S:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

may call in against her husband, if she desires divorce. And, it is hinted, this particular force may sometimes be successfully invoked by a plausible woman even without good cause. 421 626

In disposing of the surplus of their crops and bananas the respective rights of a married woman and her husband vary in detail, though little in substance, according as he has or has not made a formal division between them. It is not infrequent for a man to reserve for his own use one or two plots and some banana stems, which are then called *kwango* plots or bananas (*imbuka* or *ifiyoje fya kwango*). In the planting, weeding and reaping of the *kwango* plots all the man's wives co-operate if he has several, but the final product is absolutely his own, it is stored by him and they have no part in it. Conversely, however, the rights of each woman to dispose of the surplus crop of the plots allotted to her are thereby greatly increased, for her husband cannot then touch it at all. 421 593

In any case, whether or not *kwango* plots and bananas have been set aside, a woman's obligations to provide food for her husband's con-

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authority can possibly either act over the whole area or command general approval and support for its actions.

But in primitive society it is otherwise. In a small and isolated group largely composed of personal acquaintances it is difficult to escape from one's friends; while the facts of every dispute, of every breach of law, are soon widely known; and in consequence, it is there perfectly possible at times for legal sanctions to be effective without the intervention of any central authority at all. The neighbours, or the kinsmen, or the affines of a lawbreaker are in themselves a large and important section of his society, and he can only with difficulty escape their authority; he can not lose himself in a great city as can his civilized counterpart. And so the typical method of legal procedure in a primitive society is for action to be taken against a lawbreaker by those more nearly concerned, supported by general public approval. And it frequently happens that the only effective action is taken straightforwardly by the injured party; nevertheless if that action is supported and strengthened by any generally expressed approval we can not deny that it possesses a legal force.

In a primitive group any request which an individual may make to his kinsmen or neighbours for practical assistance against a lawbreaker, any appeal to their opinion in a dispute is a legal procedure, for it is an appeal to authority. It is they upon whom he is in practice most dependent. Nor is it only in "private life" that he depends upon them, for, owing to the smallness of the group, the distinction between "public" and "private life" hardly exists. In many situations they hold in their hands the whole force of his society; their actions and opinions are checked or supported by the informal but nevertheless effective jury of widespread public discussion; and if they are against him he has nowhere else to turn.

Now Nyakyusa society to-day is no longer isolated and primitive, neither has it yet fully taken its place in the social system of the world; it is in process of transition. Legal procedure is, quite inevitably, becoming everyday more and more an affair of the central territorial authorities, of the Governor in Council and the High Court of Tanganyika and of their appointed deputies; the local Magistrates, the District Officers and the Native Courts. But the process is not complete. In many situations of social life the new impersonal relationships with the great world are still, for the moment, more or less irrelevant and in them the old primitive sanctions retain their power. [178 692]

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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sumption, for hospitality and for gifts are very much the same; but there, if he has *bwanga* plots and bananas of his own, her obligations cease. Bananas demanded by the chief, money for tax and for his own clothes he provides for himself by making use of his *bwanga* crops, and he may even keep some of them as a security against possible failures; and so he leaves her free to dispose of her own surplus as she pleases. If, however, he has reserved no plots for himself then the surplus of each wife's plot is jointly owned by her and her husband. Neither can rightly dispose of it, in any large quantity, without consulting the other; neither can be denied the right to dispose of it, after consultation with the other, for any urgent need.

Sometimes however a division is made by the husband between himself and his wife not of land but of crops; after the harvest he takes a portion of the crop of her plots for his own use, leaving the bulk of it to her for cooking and for her own needs. In that case, once the division is made, their respective rights are just the same as if the portion kept for himself had been grown on a *bwanga* plot.

The following words of a young Kukwe man make these points clear. I had asked him about the respective rights of husband and wife to dispose of maize and beans for cash: "Normally," he replied, "if the man has not kept any *bwanga* plot separate and the crop is in consequence their common property, he will speak to his wife and ask her to take some of the beans and sell them and buy him a cloth with the proceeds. But an inconsiderate husband may just take them without consultation. So with the woman, if she wants a cloth she tells her husband and suggests taking some beans and selling them in order to buy one; and her husband agrees that she should, because there has been no division made, the crop is their common property. And if the man is in trouble for tax money he consults his wife about selling some maize or beans and she agrees, for otherwise he would be arrested. If, however, the man has kept a *bwanga* plot separate then he takes and sells his own food and his wife hers, without consulting one another; because a division has been made."

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"And supposing," I asked, "that a man has three wives, whom does he consult about selling food, if there is no *bwanga* plot?" "In that case," he replied, "if, maybe, he wants to procure tax money and has no *bwanga* plot, then he speaks to his chief wife and tells her that they must assist him or he will be arrested and she suggests that they all consult together. So he calls his wives to him and they agree to give each so much from her store of food; maybe he shows them a basket for each to fill once; and then he puts it all together and sells it and pays his tax."

"This custom of keeping a *bwanga* plot," he volunteered," is only rarely followed nowadays in Bukukwe in the case of maize and beans, but it is quite common with cassava and with bananas."

S:Wilson E-5 [1934-1938]1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

"Why with cassava?" I asked. "Because the husband thinks of cassava as a security against famine; if a famine comes he takes his *bwanga* cassava and gives some to each of his wives."

"And why with bananas?" "Because if he has bananas of his own then when the chief sends the great-commoner round to collect bananas for guests, or to send to the hospital in Tukuyu, the man cuts one of his bananas. He realizes that, as he has two wives, if he takes a banana branch from one of them she will be angry and wonder why he cut her branch and not that of her fellow wife."

"So it is only polygynists who keep separate *bwanga* bananas?" "Certainly, no monogamist would ever do so."

"A man named Mwaisaka," he told me later, "once disputed with his wife over the selling of maize. They had just begun harvesting the crop when the woman told her husband that she intended to take some of the maize to the shop and sell it and buy some cloths; for her child was naked and she had neither cloth nor skin to carry him in on her back, she had to hold him in her arms. Mwaisaka, however, told her to wait a little until all the maize was harvested, when he would divide it up. His wife thereupon protested that the crop was their joint property and that he himself could take some for sale whenever he wished, so why not she also; and she pointed out that many other people had already begun to sell their maize and buy cloths. So they quarrelled and Mwaisaka struck his wife, who then ran complaining to the great-commoner. The great-commoner heard the case and judged that Mwaisaka was in the wrong because his wife had no skin for carrying her baby and was in trouble therefore. If, he said, she had not been in such trouble over carrying the child they would have given their opinion against her for refusing to agree with her husband's proposal to wait and finish harvesting first, but as it was they thought that Mwaisaka was in the wrong; no division of plots or crop had been made and the food was their common property. And Mwaisaka admitted that he was wrong." "Did he pay his wife any compensation for the blow?" I asked. "No, they reconciled them to one another."

"And if a man," I enquired further, "takes some of the food which belongs to himself and his wife jointly and sells it without telling her, will she make a case against him?" "She may, but if she is a gentle wife she argues it out alone with her husband; she asks him why he did not consult her, for there is now but little left and she wonders what they will eat. And her husband, if he is a sensible man, agrees with her and admits that he was in fault. But if, instead, the man makes out that he had every right to take it, for the food is as much his as hers, and if he is indignant at her protest then that attitude will bring a quarrel between them."

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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The most important reason which traditionally impelled men to reserve *bwanga* plots and bananas was, as the old men told me, the frequent lack of affection and generosity in women towards their married step-children. If one of his wives had died or left him, then a man might find that his children by her, when they came to visit him, received but scanty entertainment from his other wives and went away home empty-handed. So to obviate this state of affairs he would set aside *bwanga* plots and bananas, and take food and gifts for these motherless children thence. In the old days married children nearly always lived within a mile or two of their father's home and visits were frequent. Nowadays this reason, which still continues to operate, tends to be overshadowed by the desire on the man's part to have a definite portion of the crop marked out for sale to the Indian traders. Nevertheless many men prefer community of property to an anti-harvest contract with their wives and so do not keep any *bwanga* plots at all.

"What," I asked an elderly man in Selya, "is a *bwanga* plot?" "The word *bwanga*, used either of bananas or of garden plots, means that they belong only to me, not to my wives; so that when my daughter comes I cut for her a banana bunch of my own and give her my own food. Not all men keep *bwanga* plots; some like the customs but others do not. I myself have only one wife and no *bwanga* plots, all my bananas are here and all my gardens too."

And another elderly man, also of Selya, said to me one day: "Some men like to have *bwanga* plots, others do not. Nowadays these plots are used to grow crops for sale, but in the old days they were for feeding a man's children. I myself divide up all my gardens amongst my wives (he has three living with him at present). Even though three of my wives have died and one has left me, even so I do not keep a *bwanga* plot; when my children come to visit me they are given food by Jane (his chief wife, who is also his favourite). At first I divided up the children (i.e. the grown-up children whose mothers had either died or left him, and who in consequence had no special claim on any one of his present wives) assigning some to one, some to another of my wives, but the others grudged them food so now they all come to Jane." He here suggests that the meanness of two of his wives and the existence of many motherless children gave him good reason to reserve *bwanga* plots and bananas, but he did not do so, he preferred to rely on the generosity of his favourite wife.

And besides providing entertainment for adult but motherless children, besides providing a definite portion of the crop for the husband to sell, *bwanga* plots and bananas are also useful, as we have seen, to meet the demands of the chief and to secure the household against a shortage of food.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

all except his own mother, whom he either builds for or a little distance and looks after, or else gives to a half-brother.[1] Inherited wives have the same land rights as others, and a mother for whom a son builds and hoes is treated by him, in the matter of land, just like a wife.

And a married man often supports an old woman[1]—a mother, mother-in-law or elder sister—whose husband, though still alive, is incapable of hoeing and who has no unmarried sons. He may either hoe for her on her own husband's land or else assign to her a plot or two of his own.

The gardens of a household are not only worked by its members, other people assist them from time to time. Each married man usually invites a group of his village neighbours to help him with a day's hoeing two or three times a year, entertaining them to food and beer after the work is over. A married woman likewise is often assisted by women friends from neighbouring households in the planting, weeding or reaping of her crops and them she rewards simply with a luxurious meal in the evening, without any beer. Again, as we have seen, a married woman sometimes engages a young man to hoe for her regularly, for a month or more at a time, and pays him by feeding him well for that period.

But although this last custom is still common it is beginning to decline; fewer men each year are willing to work for any length of time except for money, and already in some of the more prosperous households young men are found to be employed in hoeing at the rate of 2/- a month in addition to their food. The young men who thus accept employment in hoeing are always the poor ones, those for whom (whether because their fathers are poor in cattle or because they have many elder brothers before them) the prospect of getting married is too distant to stimulate them to any great diligence at home. In the plain of Mungonde, however, where ploughs are extensively used, the owners of ploughs make a considerable profit by hiring themselves out with their ploughs at 2/- a plot (*ubupako*).

Kinsmen and affines also often assist in a household's hoeing. When a man inherits his dead father's wealth then he assumes the position of father towards his own younger brothers and is responsible for the marriages of any who are bachelors; they then hoe for him and are fed by his wives just as unmarried sons do. Sons-in-law, again, are expected to bring their friends now and then to help their father-in-law in hoeing and they often do so, more particularly if they are behindhand with the marriage-cattle. After the day's work is over, however, they are entertained just as sumptuously as an ordinary work-party of neighbours.

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[1] And any kinswomen of his mother (sister or niece) whom his father has married is treated likewise.

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Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IV

THE RESULTS OF LAND SHORTAGE

311 As indicated in the short outline of traditional land tenure in Chapter II, the system developed and worked adequately in the old situation (both before and after European contact) when land was plentiful in relation to the people's demands. Any villager who wanted land had the right to be allocated little; any established villager who wished to expand his cultivation could do so without difficulty. Movement between villages was easy, and

[64] especially after the establishment of European peace, for everywhere newcomers were welcomed to increase the strength and prestige of the village, and land was available for them. The young men in their age-villages were able to obtain sufficient arable land and they were able to establish their economic independence after marriage, if not earlier. Because land was plentiful there was little real concern for security of tenure and disputes over land were both uncommon and unimportant.

By 1955 the basic fact was that there was insufficient land to meet the people's requirements in the alluvial flood plains – as also in many Highland areas – and there remained little or no unused land which could be taken into cultivation.

Inheritance of Land

421 In these earlier and more spacious days, inheritance was chiefly significant in moveable property – cattle pre-eminently, and goats, money and

[421] other goods – and also in the matter of widows and the custody of children. The rules of inheritance were the same in principle for all this property. Inheritance was by groups of full-brothers rather than by individuals, and therefore when a man died, his sons, his widows and his wealth were taken by the eldest surviving full-brother, failing a full-brother, a half-brother would inherit (the eldest surviving at the time). Only when all the deceased's brothers were dead, or if they had moved away and severed practical relations, were the dead man's sons able to take up the property in their own right. Thus each group of full-brothers tended to inherit as separate, corporate groups. Although the separation into "houses" was not as strong and

[418] notable as amongst some African peoples,[1] yet there was a fairly strong solidarity between full-brothers such that, for instance, their cattle were regarded as a distinct and separate herd, over which the senior brother had principal control and in which half-brothers had little direct rights.

Originally land inheritance did not follow this scheme because it was an unimportant matter, for ideally a man obtained his building plot and

[423] arable land at the time of the formal establishment of his age-village, and he preferred if possible to continue to live amongst his cattle. Consequently, when a man died, his brothers and his sons and nephews normally had land of their own and did not wish for more elsewhere, especially as the deceased's land would probably be in another age-village. Out of respect for the dead man and his contemporaries, the chief heir often made a token residence at the deceased's homestead and then, after a brief period, would obtain the approval of the villagers to return to his own village and building again – perhaps at the cost of some beer or a goat. Sometimes the heir or another member of the lineage might take the opportunity to leave his own village

1. See Wilson, op. cit., pp. 118-21, also my The Family Herds, London, 1955, Chapters 3 and 4, for a description of a strongly conjugal "house" (yaka).

(e.g. for fear of witchcraft) and take up the vacant holding. Nevertheless in general the holding was allowed to lapse and it could be re-allocated by the village headman if need arose; or the elderly widows might be allowed to continue to reside and cultivate as long as they wished.

Once land began to become scarce and valuable this loose system could no longer continue. Junior brothers and half-brothers were no longer content to permit the chief heir to take the whole of the deceased's holding to do with it as he wished, and a conventional division had to be adopted. As land, naturally enough, land was gradually brought under the same system which controlled the inheritance of other property, but this proved inadequate - inadequate not only to hold in check, perhaps, too complicated and exhaustive a disagreement and quarrelling as so far as land is concerned, but also because this system itself was already beginning to break down under the impact of individualism.

It was felt that brothers who assist their father in his homestead and fields and in their turn rely on him for a share in the cash-and-kind profits of peasant farming, therefore they should have priority in the inheritance of their father's property. Their father's brothers, it was said, would in any case already have their own holdings in which likewise their sons have prior interest. Conversely, older Nyakyusa men began to be reluctant to take a brother's land (and other property too) on his death, for fear that, in their turn, control of their own land would descend at their death to their brothers' sons rather than to their own sons.

As a result of these attitudes a strong desire arose to modify the customary laws in this matter, and the Rungwe African District Council, with the approval of the Government, has by formal resolution established a new law under which sons may inherit direct from their own fathers.

This law is not universally accepted by the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plain and men still will sometimes waive their novel rights in favour of the traditional claims of their fathers' brothers. They say that they do not desire to see the break up of the wider lineage which, in effect, this new law encourages; they are also afraid of the anger and jealousy, and thus of the witchcraft, of their uncles. It appears however that the change is accepted by the large majority of the people, for it follows the trend of modern values and kinship sentiments.

The principal heir is now the eldest son, but is general he has little direct control over the property and land of his half-brothers unless they are still young, in which case he has a moral duty to act as guardian and caretaker. Sons inherit the part of the paternal holding which had been allocated to their mother by their father in his lifetime, plus any other parcels he might have given to any of them direct as individuals. Each group of full-brothers determines the way in which it divides up its own inheritance. The eldest brother of such a house has a definite obligation to see that his patrons always shares of the land is so far as its excess and their number will allow. On the whole it is expected by Nyakyusa that the eldest brother will secure the farm holding for himself, as farm his new status, but he cannot deny his younger brothers' claims. Disputes in this matter are not uncommon and the local courts have already shown their determination to support the claims of younger brothers.

Very commonly - though it has not yet crystallised as compulsory social behaviour - a father will grant a portion of his holding to his son on the latter's marriage, or as soon after as the son decides to give up labour migration and settle down. It is thought that a married man should be independent economically and that he should be able to maintain his own household; it is realised that there is most likely to be friction in the relations between father and son, especially in this society where it is traditionally

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F?617 ?Igonde F?617
Nyakyusa
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house. Then she goes in and steals a piece of firewood from the 763
loft[1] and runs off with it, laughing. The officiant pursues her and 817
makes her drop it and gives her medicine, while the company cry: 'A thief, a thief!' She takes the firewood back to her husband's house. 'It is a sign that she has entered her father's house, just as the spear is a sign that she has entered the house of another husband.' In rich families the new husband sends a bull which is [154]
killed and eaten at the ritual.

Our informants were agreed that 'there is no fear of the gaping cough if a woman runs away from her husband and goes to a lover', and in practice no ritual is performed when she visits her father after divorce and re-marriage, but it is perhaps significant that such a situation could scarcely have arisen in the past, since [184
divorce by agreement rarely, if ever, occurred. An adulterer fled, 177]
if he could, with his lover to another chiefdom, breaking off all [187]
relations with her kin.

(3) The overt purpose and symbolism

Now we turn to the Kukwe interpretation of events. Our two 115
principal informants here were Mwaalemba, an elderly pagan man, brother to the chief Pavokoto, whose wife, Syungu, acted as officiant at rituals in the chief's family, and Kakuse, a young doctor who had learnt the medicines from his mother. Mwaalemba was much more coherent than Syungu herself, and his interpretation was confirmed by Kakuse and numerous other informants. Again I give the interpretation of the two principal informants without any editing other than placing consecutively statements made on different occasions.

(*i. Mwaalemba's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. and translated 158
by him soon afterwards.)

MWAALEMBA: Perhaps a youth, perhaps a girl, runs mad; he runs about naked so that we say: 'He's mad, why doesn't he cover himself?' He goes to the place of defaecation and takes filth and eats it: he goes into people's houses and takes things, he might even take some things from you, from a European, without fear; he knows not what he does. Sometimes, after a visit to a doctor, he recovers altogether and never has the fit again—that is the lesser kind of madness. But sometimes he 158
recovers and then the fit takes him again later—that is the more serious 757

[1] The loft (*ngindo*) consists of horizontal beams running at wall level across a portion of the hut. Here every married woman keeps a supply of dry firewood. It is her private store-place which may not be touched without her permission. [422 417]

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F7617 Ngonde F7617

585 There are a few heathen women who do not wish their husbands to take other wives, but many who urge them to do so. Another wife is like a servant in the house, and the position of the principal wife (who is not necessarily the first) is improved when her husband adds to the number of her more or less obedient juniors. Formally they are her sisters; in reality they are her servants, and must always answer her demands with the polite response "ee." The husband also gains in importance as he acquires one wife after another. When the children are grown up, they are dispersed to various villages, and the father is always "feared" in such places, because he has sons or daughters who will see to it that he is properly honoured when he pays them a visit.

553 585 Husband and wife take new names at marriage; but they are for private use only, the old names being used by their friends. The new names, which are given in the presence of witnesses, indicate that the old life is past, and that new duties and privileges now bind the couple to each other.

543 The position of the wife is guarded in many ways. 422 Her father and brothers are always ready to take up her quarrel, even to the extent of fighting her husband [586] if need be. She owns property, but she retains it only so long as she is a wife: divorce separates her from husband and children, and also from all the household goods of which she is otherwise mistress. The husband hoes the garden, but the produce belongs to the wife; he may not take anything without her consent, even to feed his friends. If one wife

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

593 refuses point blank to feed his visitors, he appeals to
•422 another; but it will be obvious that continued churlishness on the part of a wife would lead to trouble. Bananas, rice, and malesi belong to the husband; bananas, because he alone attends to them; rice, because it came from the Europeans; and malesi, because from this cereal beer is made, and the husband is lord of the beer pot once the beer is brewed. Fowls belong to the wife, but though the profits of sale are hers, she usually lays them out in small household necessities, such as salt. She often gets a cow from her father, and her husband may make her a similar gift; and he must not use the milk without her consent, though if it is sold, the money is laid by to pay the tax. All household utensils are hers, except the small dish from which her husband eats; but she leaves everything behind should she be divorced, except the cow she received from her father.

587 If a wife dies while still capable of child-bearing,
765 her father must give another daughter to the widower; or, if he has none, a cow, dressed with flowers, is sent with an apology, and a promise that as soon as possible the dowry cattle will be returned. If the father hopes that another daughter may yet be born to him, an arrangement may be come to by which she will go to the widower. Widows become the "family" of the heir. They wear anklets of cow-skin, and let their hair grow, mixing it with clay. These signs of mourning they wear for about a year. Girls wear similar tokens of mourning if either parent is dead, but not boys.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

231 and will follow the caller wherever he goes. They come to be milked morning and evening, and no cow moves until her name is called. The greatest insult that can be offered to a man is to sprinkle milk on the road behind him as he passes, suggesting, "You are too incompetent to provide yourself and your family with milk to drink; I can spare some to mock you with." And each man is jealous of the quality of his herd. A year or two ago, a wedding party went to [579] pay over a cow to the bride's father. It was not a high-class animal: a bystander threw a taunt, and in the fight which followed, two men were killed, and a number wounded.

•422 The man is the owner of the cattle as a rule. It is rare for the wife to own any; but sometimes a father will make his daughter a present of a cow, which becomes hers absolutely, to pass, with its increase, to her son at her death or his marriage. The husband also may set a cow apart for his wife, but it returns to him in case of divorce.

231 857 During the day the cattle are herded by the village boys, each family sending one or two in turn to the work. They have a thoroughly good time, though for the smaller boys it is rather a testing time of moral and muscle, for they have a severe apprentice-234 ship to serve. Cows are milked by the owner usually twice a day. No one ever salutes a man while so engaged; if the milk stops, he will be accused of witchcraft. A visitor arriving at milking time will sit down and wait, neither he nor his host taking any notice of each other until the cow that is being milked

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

killed by rinderpest should not be eaten, but the injunction was disregarded, with fatal results, and again the fatalistic attitude in the presence of the all-powerful white man revealed itself: "If we die, that is the white man's affair. They wish to kill us." It is useless to point to the recent increase of cattle in the district. The reply always is that the deterioration in quality, which began with the coming of the white man, and has continued ever since, more than balances the increase in numbers.

In comparison with cattle, other animals are of small importance. Sheep and goats are reared in small numbers, and belong to the man, very much as cattle do. Fowls belong to any member of the family, and each owns what he sells them for. There are many breeds of dogs, formerly used for hunting, but now mostly as watchdogs, in view of the prevalence of thieving. Dogs are as a rule treated with neglect, and pick up a living as best they can from the garbage around the doors. With a few exceptions they are cowardly brutes, possibly a natural result of their vile treatment. Occasionally one will come upon a man who has well-fed, well-cared-for dogs, and is very proud of their intelligence and courage, either in keeping off thieves or in tending cattle. The story of the two dogs which were shown the limits within which their master's cattle might feed, and kept them strictly within bounds, is not, perhaps, without parallel in other lands.

There is a very remarkable tradition that in the old days of war, and especially during the Angoni raids,

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER III

ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

602 THE primary economic units in Nyakyusa society are the kinship groups—the elementary family, the cattle-owing lineage, and the 476 group of cognates who co-operate in production and exchange many gifts, and among whom cattle circulate.[1] However, fellow villagers also work together, exchange food, and have a common interest in certain property.

a. Land

423 The village is the land-holding group. As we have seen, land is allocated to a boys' village, at its commencement, by the parent 245 village, that is the village to which the fathers of most of the boys belong. Little boys' huts are usually to be seen going up on a strip of pasture-land, adjoining the block of banana groves which shroud their fathers' houses. The boys' land is primarily a building site, but very soon after moving into their huts they turn over the ground and plant banana suckers (*vide* Plate II). Bananas begin to bear very quickly, and so in a little more than a year after the establishment of a boys' village, its members have bananas of their own, which they cook for themselves and eat with their 241 friends at odd times during the day. But they have, as yet, no 423 fields, for the cultivation of fields requires the co-operation of a wife. Bachelors continue to eat their main meals at their parents' village. As the boys grow up and marry they begin to cultivate garden-land adjacent to their village. Some of these gardens are acquired by individuals from their own fathers and fathers-in-law, but whether there may also be a block grant of garden-land by the parent village as a whole to the boys' village as a whole we 423 are not certain. In any case the land of boys' villages is limited, and at the 'coming out' the old men move aside and the young men enter their inheritance. The allotment to each village is

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe Brown and Daryll Forde.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

decided by the old village headmen and chief in consultation, at the commencement of the 'coming out' ceremony. This moving aside of the old men is an essential part of the ceremony and occurs even when there is unoccupied land available. For example, at the 'coming out' of Mwankuga, Mwaipopo's heir, the old men moved aside to make room for their sons, although there is a large area of unoccupied land in the chiefdom, which is slowly being colonized by Mwaipopo's men. 423

Although the main redistribution is at the 'coming out', later readjustments are common enough. If a particular men's village attracts many members, and these members become wealthy in wives and children, then it may be necessary for the old men to move aside a second time, to make yet more room for their sons. The senior headman of the side of the chiefdom concerned, in consultation with the chief and other village headmen, has the power to make equitable adjustments in the land holdings of the villages of his side. We watched one village, whose numbers had diminished, being moved to make more room for a junior one which had flourished. But so long as its members remain together, a village retains its name and identity, though its site may be moved more than once. 'A village', the Nyakyusa say, 'consists in men, not in land.' 621 423 [622]

Boundary disputes between villages of a chiefdom are not unusual. In the old days these often led to war. Nowadays they are taken before the Court, whence there is an appeal to the federal court, the District Officer, the Provincial Commissioner and thence to the High Court (cf. p. 137). One such case, which we observed, had dragged on for years because the chief concerned, who happened to be president of the Court, feared to give judgment lest he be bewitched by the village which lost the case (cf. Document p. 191). 691

The division of the land allotted to each village lies with the members of that village, under the leadership of their own headman. The village headman himself, and other prominent individuals in the group, get first choice of sites: a son does not have a prescriptive right to the building site and gardens of his father when the old men move aside for their sons. 'If you are prominent, and you like your father's old site, that's all right, the others agree; but if you are unimportant ("light"), no; one of the important men takes it; *you* have no power.' Certain building and garden 425 554

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

425 554 sites are preferred to others, but the division of them at the 'coming out' does not appear to create much friction.

When the old men move they still maintain rights over what 423 may be regarded as the major 'improvement' made on their old sites, that is, trees which they or others have planted. There are two species which were traditionally and still are of great value to the Nyakyusa, the bamboo and the *unsyunguti*. Bamboos are used for house-building, while the *unsyunguti* produces a fruit which is both delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment. As has been shown in a previous essay[1] rights over these trees are maintained when individuals move from one village to another. Similarly, when a whole village moves, rights over bamboos are maintained, the former owner returning to cut them himself if he chooses. But the less valuable *unsyunguti* crop is left to the occupier. As one old man put it: 'We don't send our wives back to harvest the *imisyunguti* trees lest the young men make love to them there.' Bamboos are felled by men. Further complications are now potentially created by the planting of coffee-trees, but we know of no case in which a 'coming out' has yet taken place in a chiefdom in which coffee has been extensively planted—the first coffee-planters were those living on mission land which is unaffected by the 'coming out' ceremony. Now that coffee planting is becoming general, however, the difficulties of moving whole villages will be much greater.

The only land which was traditionally excluded from the 'new deal' in each generation is the very scarce and valuable ground in the bottom of old volcanic craters. This land is owned by families, and is always claimed by a kinsman when the occupier dies or moves to another chiefdom. It may be that long ago the land in each particular crater was owned solely by members of some particular village, but now it is held by old families scattered all over the chiefdom in which it lies. Thus ordinary [428] land, of which in the old days there was ample, was re-allotted in each generation, but the most valuable ground was passed down from father to son. We shall return to this point again in our last chapter.

425 As we have seen, movement of individuals from one village to another is very frequent. Normally land for building and gardens

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa*, pp. 43–5; Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 1, 1938.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

425 and need not be recapitulated. The essential fact here is that the village is the group which allocates land to a new-comer, and which maintains the rights of individuals who have moved and who wish to return.

425 Once established in a village, a man can hoe any ground which has not yet been cultivated, and thereby make it his own.[1] No 423 reference need be made to the headman and other villagers, provided that he does not encroach on land formerly cultivated by others, or on the main pasture land. There is no limit to the acreage he may use. Pasture-land is jointly owned by the whole village group and no individual has exclusive rights to any portion of it. Every member of a village has the right to graze his cattle on the village pastures, and this right may also be granted to an outsider by the village headman in consultation with his neighbours. But no one has the right to cut trees near the village (unless they are ones he has planted or inherited) without the permission of his fellow villagers. The death of one man we knew, the younger brother of a chief, was attributed to the fact that he had cut a branch from a self-sown tree growing in the arable land of a village in which he was a new-comer, without asking permission of his fellow villagers. It was said that 'the owners' of the village were angry and killed him because he had not asked their leave before lopping the tree. He had wanted the branch to make an axe-handle.

423 The land rights of Christians living in the chiefdoms are identical with those of their pagan fellows; but those who live on 797 mission land are in a different position. They are tenants of the mission, paying an annual rent of 1s., and liable to be evicted by the missionary in charge if they leave the Church. A man so driven out loses the coffee-trees he has planted. One Christian informant remarked: 'We do not think it good to plant coffee on mission land because very often a man is turned out of the Church.' And at Rungwe mission even those moving voluntarily lose the coffee they have planted. Now all trees introduced by Europeans have been declared by the Federation of Chiefs to be the property of the planter, even though he has moved to a different chiefdom, and Christians feel that they have greater security of ownership in coffee planted in the chiefdoms than in that on mission land. The difficulties likely to arise at a 'coming out' are ignored, and

[1] Ibid., pp. 41-2.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

it is implied that coffee planted in the chiefdoms will be inherited by a man's heirs. As a leading Christian woman put it: 'We like to build on this side of the river because the other is mission land, and if a man moves he loses the coffee and everything else he has planted there. . . . A man has children and he wishes his children to inherit what he has planted.' The number of coffee-trees each man may plant on mission land is also limited to 100, so that the development of large plantations, such as some astute Nyakyusa are undertaking, is impossible there.

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b. Building

When a group of boys starts a new village two or three friends usually combine to erect a little hut and live in it together. As younger boys join the village the older ones instruct and help their juniors to build. Thus, although as they grow older each boy builds a hut for himself, the habit of co-operation with village-mates in construction is already established. Until they are married, boys do all the work on their huts for themselves, fetching their own reeds or bamboos for the frame, and cutting and carrying thatching grass. They usually leave their huts unmudded. Adult men, on the other hand, are helped by their wives and female relatives as well as by sons and sons-in-law, and one or two of their own village neighbours. Men fell the bamboos, construct the framework of the house, and thatch, while women cut and carry grass, carry bamboos, mould the mud bricks which are packed between the bamboo uprights, and plaster the hut inside. The wife for whom the hut is being built is responsible for the women's work, but she usually gets some help from her co-wives and women neighbours, as well as from her mother and sisters, and the mother and sisters of her husband. Sons and sons-in-law are expected to bring with them other young men, their village-mates. Co-operation is thus both with relatives and village neighbours—the neighbours of the couple building the hut, and of their sons and sons-in-law.

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The huts of married men are built with immense care, for not only are substantial houses essential to comfort, and indeed a condition of survival, in this climate of torrential rains and cold winter mists, but the Nyakyusa take great pride in the appearance of their homesteads (*vide infra*, p. 77). The early European

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1:WilsonE-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 land in each generation. The territorial segregation of fathers and
561 sons is directly dependent upon the shifting of the old men after
178 the 'coming out' ceremony, without which the young men would not have sufficient land to establish themselves as a compact group on land adequate to support their growing families. Where no redistribution of land takes place, as on mission land and in the chiefdoms where the 'coming out' ceremony has been dropped, the territorial division between age groups becomes blurred within a generation.

621 Redistribution of land in each generation depends upon two
425 further conditions: the existence of ample land to support the population, and relatively little development of land. As soon as
423 land becomes scarce those in possession of it are reluctant to agree
178 to redistribution. It is significant that the most valuable land of all in Nyakyusa country—that in old craters—is *not* redistributed at a 'coming out' ceremony, but is retained by an individual until his death, and then inherited by kinsmen. And as soon as improvements are made in the form of planting long-term crops, or building durable and expensive houses, the difficulties of redistribution are increased. Nyakyusa land-law recognized the right of an elder who had moved, or of his son, to the bamboos and *imisyunguti* trees he had planted (*vide supra*, p. 46). But such rights become much more complicated when it is not only an odd clump of bamboos or two or three trees which are at stake, but a large patch of coffee; or when, in place of the old-fashioned long hut (*ikibaga*) built with the co-operation of kinsmen and neighbours, there is a more substantial house with expensive doors and windows made by an expert carpenter. It has been shown that where individual rights over trees or other long-term crops are recognized, and such crops are planted on a large scale, individual tenure of land, as opposed to a temporary right of usufruct, tends to develop.[1]

621 Secondly, the solidarity of the Nyakyusa age-village, as of
476 kinship villages in other African societies, is a function of a small-scale society. Fellow villagers have been hitherto, and are still in
178 a large measure, dependent upon one another for land, for aid in economic undertakings, for sympathy and good fellowship, and for protection 'by night and by day'. But such mutual dependence is visibly decreasing. In the economic field co-opera-

[1] C. K. Meek, *Land Law and Custom in the Colonies*, p. 28.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

4. A BOUNDARY DISPUTE

Heard by the Lupata Court (president, Mwaipopo), 18/3/35.

Man A brought case against man B for assault.

Plaintiff and defendant gave their accounts, and also Mwangomo, chief of the country concerned. 423

A and B had quarrelled over the boundary of their adjoining homesteads, which are in different villages of the same chiefdom. There was an old quarrel about the boundary of the village. Mwangomo stated: 'The week before this quarrel I went with my brothers and the young village headmen (leaving behind the old village headmen because I thought they would quarrel) to settle the dispute. We walked over the boundary and said to the people concerned: "It is here." 695 683

'A and his two friends (not in court) were not satisfied with my demarcation and grumbled openly saying: "Who is Mwangomo to take from us the place where our fathers lived, and from which they ate the bananas, and give it to our neighbours? We will take it and not care for Mwangomo" . . . or again: "We do not believe that Mwangomo really decided like this, we shall act as if the line was as before." So when I heard that they were talking like this I asked all the people to watch for any man who might do anything against the decision, and I told one man in particular to watch.'

A and B gave evidence, telling much the same story.

A went to cut the banana leaves (i.e prune) on the old boundary, with a bill-hook (*isenge*), and B came and told him to stop. They quarrelled, each claiming that the land had been his father's, and that his father had eaten the bananas off it. Then B caught hold of the bill-hook, and in the struggle A was cut. A now brings a case for assault against B.

Mwangomo: 'B is in the right, and what makes it worse is that since his father died A has never been in the country. He has lived in MuNgonde (the Lake-shore plain); he has only been back a few days in my country and he brings war into it and spoils it.' Mwangomo spoke angrily, and asked that A should be imprisoned.

The Court: 'We follow what you, the chief, say; if people resist you and speak against you it is very bad, but we disagree about imprisoning him, he has only just returned to the country and it is not a good custom to imprison a man who has only just come to a country. Bring his two friends who have lived long in your country.' 695 683

[p. 191]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

explanation among the heathen is that it was the work of an ex-Christian who had died the previous day, and took the earliest opportunity, in his new state, of being revenged on those who had expelled him from the Church. In any case the act cost the Christian community at Karonga a large sum of money. Burning a house is a method frequently resorted to of "getting one's own back" from one's enemy, and detection is extremely difficult. 685

The Land Laws.—All the land belongs to the chief, who divides it among his various headmen, and they in turn give it out to their immediate followers. Newcomers are admitted and given lands by the headmen, but the grant must be confirmed by the chief, without whose consent no arrangement is final. This ownership by the chief is not mere theory, but, on the other hand, the individual has practically permanent rights in his property. He cannot be turned out at the mere caprice of anyone, and he hands on his lands to his heirs. Absence, even for many years, does not affect ownership, provided that wife or friends cultivate the land in the meantime. 423

The law of trespass was very severe in the past, and would remain so if the natives had their way. Trespass, however, does not mean merely walking over another man's ground; in that sense there is no trespass. It means annexation with the hoe; and if, in the fight which followed discovery, the trespasser was killed, a charge of murder did not lie against the owner; but if the owner was killed, the trespasser was indicted for murder. If the case was remitted to the 685 682

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

428 was set aside in succession, his right to inherit the property and widows was none the less undisputed.[1]

SLAVERY (AMONG THE NGONDE)

567 Slaves were obtained by the Kyungu and chiefs in warfare and as fines for offences. The Kyungu gave women slaves to his important chiefs, thus strengthening the kinship bonds between them and himself, for the recipient would regard the Kyungu as his father-in-law if he took the woman to wife, and her children would be counted as grandchildren of the Kyungu. The owner of a slave was obliged to find a spouse for him or her, and a male slave could rise to positions of importance.[2]

LAND TENURE

423 No individual can own land unless he himself either works it or is a full member of the local community. Rights to land are only rigorously defined in cases of scarce and
425 valuable land. Owing to witchcraft beliefs, movement from one place to another is constant. In taking up new land after a move, a stranger is granted land by the villagers acting through their great commoners, the chief being merely informed. Both chiefs and villagers welcome new-comers. If a man returns after absence to his own village he has a claim to enter into possession of his old building site and gardens. The claim varies in strength according to his relations with the villagers and the chief. If a man goes to a neighbouring village within a chiefdom, he can go on hoeing his old gardens, ownership depending on effective use.

Land suitable for bean and maize plots is the most valuable, as it is hoed continuously for years. Land for other crops is plentiful, so that if a man leaves a garden fallow for only two years anyone may cultivate it. The most scarce and valuable land is in the bottom of old volcanic craters, and in these cases rights are insisted upon, so that if a man moves to a new chiefdom, his next of kin claims his crater land. In other cases, when a man moves from a chiefdom, his old gardens revert to the joint ownership of villagers and chief. When a man dies his heir takes his wives, cattle, and movable property, but not his land, unless he comes to live in the village.

Rights in trees differ according to the types of trees and according to local custom. In some cases rights in trees are lost when a man moves away, in others the rights to valuable trees are claimed by the nearest kinsman in the neighbourhood. Now that chiefdoms are no longer in a state of potential war with each other, the group within which property is held is wider. Coffee-trees have been declared by the Federation of Chiefs to be the property of the original planter, even though he may have moved to another chiefdom. The Agricultural Officer takes over abandoned coffee-trees to tend them for pest control.

423 Pasture is jointly owned by the whole village group, no individual having exclusive rights in it.

No direct charge is made for the right to build or cultivate. Certain obligations are owed to a chief in view of his over-lordship, e.g. providing cooked food for ceremonies of the chief's own immediate family, but this obligation is reciprocal, the chief being expected in return to kill beasts to feed the people.[3]

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 52–4.
[2] Ibid., p. 46; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 38–40.
[3] Wilson, 3, 1938, pp. 30–48; Mackenzie, 1925, p. 93.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

pieces of ground above others. We must now pass to the third great determinant of the system of Nyakyusa land-tenure—the form of their society.

4. *THE FORM OF NYAKYUSA SOCIETY*

178 When we speak of " Nyakyusa society " to-day we refer to one small area within a world society, to a group of men distinguished from the rest of the world by the possession of a unique cultural idiom of their own but none the less bound to it by the strongest ties. Two generations ago Nyakyusa society was, unknown to our grandfathers, almost a world in itself, a world moreover which was split up into a number of tiny units in the shape of independent chiefdoms whose relationships with one another were of the loosest kind. The sons of men for whom society (that is effective relationship) was normally confined to two or three thousand families, all or nearly all consisting of personal acquaintances, now find their own destinies inextricably entangled with those of 1,600,000,000 people. To the Nyakyusa of to-day fluctuations in the world price of gold and coffee, the policies and incomes of the missionary Churches of Europe, the political relationships between Great Britain, her Dominions, the League of Nations and Germany are matters of some importance.

Nyakyusa society at the present moment thus includes a number of complicated relationships between the Nyakyusa group and the outside world which, in the recent past, had no existence at all. And the presence of these new relationships has profoundly modified the social forms which traditionally obtained within the group itself. And as, with the spread of Christianity, Islam and cilivised education, with the increase of skill and wealth and with the taking of new responsibilities, the Nyakyusa participate ever more and more fully in the life of the world society, so will their relationships with one another continue to change in form. For they still have upon them a primitive stamp, they still to some extent proceed from assumptions of isolation.

182 423 The relationships of Nyakyusa society to-day fall into four main categories. There are, firstly, relationships of blood, marriage and affinity, secondly there are the various bonds of village life, thirdly there are those which subsist between members of the same chiefdom and, finally, there are those which bind the Nyakyusa to still wider groups, to the tribal group, the Territory, the World. And these relationships, as they are limited and defined, amongst other things, by rules of land-tenure, so also are they among the sources of these rules. Land is held in society and the form of society largely determines the manner of its holding.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 fought each other and one was sometimes reduced to a subordinate
622 position by the other. Such subordinate or minor chiefs did not always lose all power, some men often continued to live with them, but not many, for they were poor and could not afford the feasts that prosperous and powerful chiefs gave to their warriors. Nowadays the junior of the two young chiefs, in the majority of cases, becomes subordinate to his brother immediately, for the Administration normally recognizes the senior of the two only, and a salary is paid to him alone on the old chief's death.

The number of villages which "come out" with each young chief usually varies between four and eight. But if a chief is subsequently reduced to a minor position he will often end his life with one village only
[624] of adult men and one village of their sons. For people move from minor chiefdoms and the depleted villages that are left gradually coalesce under the leadership of one of the great-commoners. The son of a minor chief may succeed to his father's position, but only one son will do so; a minor chiefdom is too small to be divided and has no formal "coming out" of its own; its young men attend the "coming out" of the superior chiefdom.

621 So much in outline for the political constitution of the separate
● 423 Nyakyusa chiefdoms. Some account of it was a necessary preface to the discussion of individual land rights, since it is within this political structure that they have validity. If, for example, the boundaries of a village are changed at the "coming out"—and they very frequently are—then no individual rights to village land can be maintained outside the new boundaries.

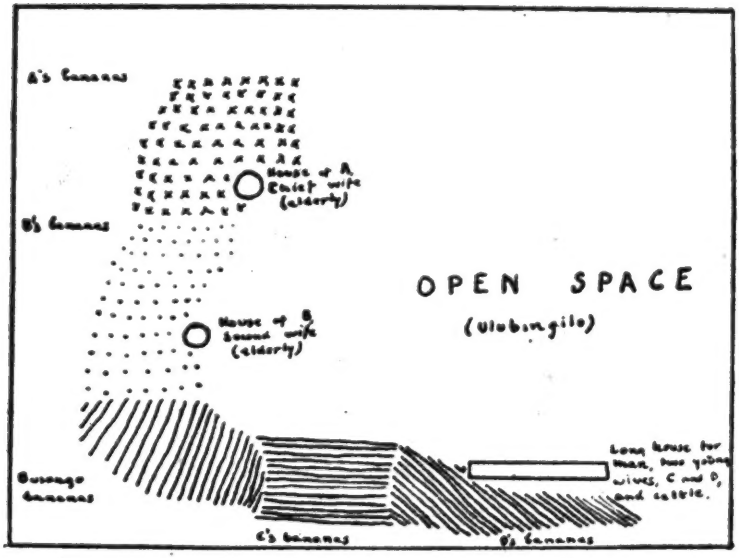
631 Prior to the arrival of the Europeans there was no paramount political authority among the Nyakyusa, but a number of tiny independent chiefdoms side by side, with minor chiefdoms in some cases attached to them. Of these traditionally independent chiefdoms there is none, I think, which to-day exceeds 3,000 adult male members, and most of them are far smaller than that. This smallness of scale, which is difficult at first for a European to grasp, is the fundamental characteristic of primitive society, in the organization of which personal relationships are predominant, wherein social relationships, that is, mainly subsist between personal acquaintances. In the old Nyakyusa polity impersonal relationships, effective social bonds linking together men who were personally unknown to one another, though they existed had relatively little importance.

648 Just south of the Nyakyusa, in what is now North Nyasaland, live
184 the Ngonde[1] people, whose language and culture was and is very similar to that of the Nyakyusa. They were, however, slightly more civilized in that they were in closer contact with Arab and Swahili ivory traders; and

[1] Better known to Europeans as *Konde*.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Plan B



The Homestead of a Rich Man

Each married man has at least one house and, if he is a polygynist, he often has several; young wives may sometimes share a house, older wives normally have one apiece. The land immediately surrounding a man's houses belongs to him and his wives and will be referred to in this paper as their " building site " or " homestead " (*akaja*). Each homestead is sufficient in size to hold not only the houses of one man but also his bananas and, maybe, a few small plots of beans, ground-nuts or some other crop as well; and it is there, under the bananas, that coffee trees are planted. But there is no room on it for the main gardens of the household. In the centre of every homestead is an open space (*ulubingilo*) carefully weeded and swept by the owner and his wives, who usually take great pride in thus keeping it clean.

At some distance from the homestead—a distance varying from a few yards to two miles or more—lie the main gardens (*imigunda*) of the household, near those of other people. Each year different types of gardens are hoed together by groups of villagers; millet in one place, potatoes in another, maize and beans in another; so that the gardens of one particular household are scattered in different spots.

After the man and his sons have hoed the gardens, clearing the ground first if necessary, his wives are each given portions of their own to plant, weed and reap. In hoeing for any particular crop the land is

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Further, if a young man's own father is poor in cattle, he will often attach himself to the household of a rich kinsman, a brother of his father or of his mother, and hoe regularly for him. This is far more paying than hiring himself out to a mere neighbour, for he thereby places his rich kinsman *in loco parentis* and eventually gets from him a substantial proportion of his marriage cattle. 464 602

6. *INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS IN RELATION TO VILLAGE GROUP AND CHIEF*

Land is not owned in any absolute sense either by the man and his household who live on and cultivate it, or by the village group, or by the chief, but by all of them together. Land tenure among the Nyakyusa is a coherent system of rights in which the chief as overlord, the age-village under the leadership of its great-commoner, the individual male holder, his wives and children all participate. In this the Nyakyusa are in no way peculiar, for " absolute ownership " of land is a fiction nowhere realized ; even in Western Europe the use of land is hedged by state and municipal regulations while the security of every owner's tenure is dependent upon political conditions which are not necessarily permanent. Everywhere, whether in civilized or in primitive society, the holding of land is " communal " in the sense that the individual's rights are dependent upon his social relationships, upon his membership of some group with a definite cultural idiom and social organization of its own ; everywhere the holding of land is " individual " in the sense that particular people have, at any one moment, definite rights to participate in the use and to share the produce of particular pieces of ground. 423

There is however at the present time a difference of type between the land-tenure systems of Western Europe and those of the Central African tribes. Rapidly though these latter groups are being integrated with the world-wide organization of modern civilization, the process is not yet complete ; and these systems of land-tenure still have some characteristics of the old primitive state wherein small and isolated groups were worlds unto themselves. For in some respects they are still isolated. The Nyakyusa, for example, are 400 miles from the nearest railway and, with the exception of a few small missions and plantations, they remain in occupation of all that traditional tribal land. Now in small and isolated social groups personal relationships necessarily dominate the holding of land for there are few or no impersonal relationships within their society at all. In the land-tenure systems of the vast social organizations of civilized society, on the other hand, impersonal relationship necessarily play an important part, though the precise legal emphasis which is laid 000

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

far as as men compete for land that rules of tenure are developed among them. And where competition is weakest there the rules are least strict.

In Nyakyusa society every married man holds land of his own for building and agriculture, for there is still enough for all, and pastures his cattle on the grasslands of some village group. His land rights, in which, as we have seen, his wives and children participate, are conditioned at every point by his membership of a particular village, his allegiance to a particular chief and by the particular cultural idiom of his tribal group.

Before the " coming out " a boy's village, as we have seen, is built on land assigned for the purpose by the parent village. A block of land for building is set aside by the great-commoner in consultation with the other men as their sons begin to reach the age of leaving home, and there the boys are often joined later by contemporaries, sons of other villages of men. At first building sites alone are needed, but later, as the boys grow up and get married, they need gardens too and bring the adjacent ground under cultivation. In doing so they are careful not to infringe upon their fathers' land rights, they either hoe land which was previously unowned[1] or else that which has been specifically granted to them by the parent village. Into the nature of such grants of garden land before the " coming out "—whether they are block grants by the parent village as a whole to the boys' village as a whole, or separate grants by individuals to individuals—I omitted to enquire.

At the " coming out " a whole tract of land is formally allotted to each village of young men by the old chief and his great-commoners and within this tract individuals take up garden land by hoeing it. At the " coming out " it is said that " everything is made new," boundaries are redrawn and the new chiefdoms and villages of the young men are ceremonially incorporated.

The situation in which individual land rights in relation to the village group and the chief are clearest to an observer is that of the taking up of land after a move, for it is in this situation that disputes are most frequent.

Mainly owing to their religious beliefs movement from one place to another is constant among the pagan Nyakyusa. If a man or his wife or child falls sick and does not respond quickly to medical treatment the witchcraft of neighbours is at once suspected as a possible cause ; there are always other possible causes too so diviners are consulted in order to decide between them ; but if the suspicion of neighbourly witchcraft is confirmed then the cure for the sickness is held to lie in moving. In every village " some people " are vaguely believed to have the power of

[1] Vide infra. pp.41-2.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 425 621 624

as Mwasumbi had, because there were some other maize-gardens adjoining it. The other land he asked for was not near anyone else's gardens, so he was told that he could hoe just where he liked."

Such is the custom of giving land to a newcomer, whether he comes from a different chiefdom altogether or from another village of the same chiefdom. He has no claim to any particular land but the villagers welcome him gladly and give some to him. If, however, a man returns after a period of absence to his home village then he has a claim, varying in strength in different circumstances, to enter again into possession of his old building site and gardens. But his claim is never an absolute one, it depends upon his relationship to the villagers and to the chief; they it is who decide it.

166 423 621

Let us first consider building sites. If a man moves from his home village leaving his house standing there and another is given the site, and if he returns before the house has fallen into disrepair, before it has had to be rebuilt, then the occupier will be evicted in his favour, the villagers will always admit his claim to that site. But only, of course, if they are in general prepared to have him back in the village; if he has been expelled for witchcraft or some other serious crime he has no possible claim at all.

When men move and leave their houses behind it usually but not always implies an intention to return in a few months. If they move because of sickness and the suspicion of witchcraft men are often invited back, as we have seen, and sometimes they accept the first invitation; and then, if they and their families remain healthy, all is well. If a more protracted absence is intended from the first then the normal custom is to pull down the house and to carry the bamboos with one.

A young Kukwe great-commoner gave me from his own experience an example of the eviction of a man in occupation of another's house: "While my father was alive I fell sick and moved to Mwankenja's country leaving my house behind without taking it down. And I returned quite soon again, I was not a year away. But meanwhile, when I first moved, a stranger came and was put into my house, he was not told that I might be returning; so he went into my house—but as he was a bachelor the house was too big[1] for him. Afterwards my friends remembered me and went to bring me back, and I came with them; and I said that as another man had been put into my house and as I was myself an owner of the soil (i.e. he was the son of an old family and so had the right to choose any unoccupied plot for himself anywhere he pleased) I would build elsewhere. But they would not hear of it and said that I must go back to my own house. So they informed the newcomer that the owner had returned and gave him another place."

[1] This is a boast, irrelevant to the main argument.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Again if the villagers expect a man to return and if they themselves wish him to do so, then his homestead is normally kept for him. If he refuses their first formal invitation to return they may give his homestead to a newcomer meanwhile, but only provisionally ; and if he does return later, whether by another formal invitation or on his own initiative, then the newcomer is moved elsewhere. 166 423 621

The difficulty arises when a man comes back unexpectedly to find that a newcomer has been given his site unconditionally. Perhaps the villagers are indifferent to his return and so have omitted to keep his site for him ; but far more frequently it is that he has been many years away and has refused several invitations to return, and so has led the villagers to think that he is never going to come back at all. But, whatever the reason, if his site has been given unconditionally to a newcomer, who has then built his own house upon it, the villagers cannot possibly evict the newcomer in his favour ; his only chance of getting the old site back lies in an indirect and tactful approach to the chief. The chief, as overlord, has the power to evict the newcomer if he chooses, but he may not choose to do so. And, if he does not, then the man will have to build elsewhere. 166 423 425 621 [622]

I was discussing these points with one of our servants whose father had recently moved from Bulindanajo, his home village in Mwaipopo's chiefdom in Selya, to a village in the adjoining chiefdom. I asked him to explain to me his father's potential rights, if he were to return later to his home village, to enter again into possession of his old homestead.

" If a man, like my father for instance, has moved and his friends wish him to return they go to fetch him back, but if he then at first refuses to return they may put in a stranger on his homestead. But in doing so they inform the stranger that the owner of the homestead is away in such a country, that he, the stranger, is just eating the bananas meanwhile (i.e. is only in temporary possession) and that, when the owner returns, he will have to leave this place and build on another site which they will then give him for his own. In that case when my father returns, if he wishes for his old site, his friends will move the newcomer away, because they have told him beforehand, and my father will have his own old site.

" As it happens, however, when my father did actually move recently they did not put any newcomer on to his site, but Mwakyoma . . . . one of his neighbours chose to build there himself. And him they do not inform of my father's rights, for he is already aware of them. If my father returns later his friends will turn Mwakyoma out telling him to go back to his own old site. For it always happens with a good homestead on which bananas do well that people covet it, and when the owner moves,

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[1] This is a boast, irrelevant to the main argument.

[This footnote refers to p. 36. – Analyst]

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 423 425 621

someone, coveting the vacant place, goes and builds there. But if it is a neighbour he knows that it is not his own and when the owner returns he relinquishes it and goes back to where he was before.

"It may happen, however, that the owner of a homestead moves and lives many years away; his friends go to fetch him but he continually refuses to return, until they begin to think that he has moved finally and forever. And, in that case, they may, perhaps, put a man in there without informing him of the existence of any other owner. The newcomer builds a house and thrives. And if the previous owner then after all comes back they do not evict the newcomer; shame prevents them, for they never told him of any such possibility. Then the old owner, as it were my father for example, seeing that another is in occupation of his site goes to a different village in the same chiefdom and asks for a site. But the great-commoner to whom he goes asks him why he is approaching him—'It is true,' my father then answers, 'that I have a place in Bulindanajo and the graves of my family and my trees are there, but another man has built upon it.' Then the great-commoner gives him a site, but he also goes to tell the chief what has happened. Then the chief, Mwaipopo, summons the men of Bulindanajo and asks them why they have driven my father away, on his return to the country, from the site that was always his. The villagers admit their mistake but explain to the chief that, as they thought my father was never going to return at all, they put in another man. So they discuss the matter; and the chief, if he so wishes, may summon the present occupier and tell him that his friends deceived him by omitting to inform him of the probable return of the owner of that site and that now, as the owner has returned, they will have to move him and give him another site; and thus the chief evicts the present holder. But such an action must come from the chief, his neighbours cannot evict the occupier, for they gave him no initial warning. So then my father would return to his own old site. But maybe in such a case my father would himself prefer to build elsewhere, he would say to his friends that, as another had built on his site, he would be content to watch over his family graves from afar and to build in a different place."

[622]

As for his old garden-land, to that too a man has a title on returning to his home village, but it is only scarce and valuable ground that he will ever trouble to claim if others are in possession. At first, when he moves from the village, his fellows, if they intend to invite him back, keep his gardens for him just as they keep his house site; but if he refuses to return at first then maybe the ground is given to others. But he can always recover it later when he does return. It is easier to get old gardens back than it is to get a house site, for no great hardship is involved for an

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

evicted man. And it is even possible sometimes to make good a claim to the old gardens of one's father, even although one has never hoed them at all oneself; this is more difficult however, the claim may be refused or alternatively a compromise may be effected by dividing the land in question between the claimant and the present possessors. 166 423 425 621

As an example of the keeping of gardens vacant for a man who is expected to return we may cite the story of Nyambo, a Kukwe, as it was told to me by a young man who lived near him. This case is of particular interest as it brings out two points to which we have not yet referred; firstly that the chief himself sometimes takes the initiative in inviting a man back, and that his doing so widens the invitation to include all the villages of the chiefdom, not only the man's old home village; and secondly that it possible to build in one village of a chiefdom and own gardens in another. This second point will be discussed again later. 166 423 621 622

" A man named Nyambo moved because eight of his cows all died in quick succession and he thought that his neighbours, maybe, had bewitched them; but he moved without telling people of this reason. After he had spent eight months away, however, the chief sent his great-commoner to enquire of him why he had moved and left his chief wondering, and Nyambo replied that he had moved because of the death of eight of his cows all within a few days of one another, a fact which had led him to suspect that his neighbours hated him; and he would never, he told the great-commoner to inform the chief, be persuaded to return. So the great-commoner reported all this to the chief. Whereupon the chief suggested that it would be a good thing to go and fetch Nyambo back forcibly. And he, the chief, went in person with a crowd of men from Nyambo's old village and they just seized upon his furniture and drove off his cows and took them all home. But even so Nyambo refused to return and spent another two days where he was. Then they sent again to urge him to come back and at last he agreed because the chief himself had begged him to do so; he said, however, that he would prefer not to build in his old place, because his cows had died there, but rather across the river in the village of a different great-commoner. And so he did. None the less he continued to hoe his old gardens, and he still does so. They had left his gardens vacant because they had always meant to fetch him back. Now that he has returned and gone to live in another village they have given his old building site to a newcomer from Masoko, but his gardens are still his own."

The story of Kalonga, another Kukwe, exemplifies a man's right to reclaim his own old gardens. It will be noticed that the ground which he reclaimed was of particular value. 166 423 425

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 "Kalonga had moved from the country of Kissokola to Masoko and
●423 other people had taken his ground and hoed it. It is the kind of ground
425 which we call *umfweje*, rich soil near water. Kalonga had moved because of illness, several of his children had fallen sick and more than one had died. After he moved his neighbours never went to invite him back.

166 "Now Kalonga himself did not come back to live, but he brought
423 back his mother. She had gone with him, but then she began to complain
425 that he had taken her to an unpleasant country and she would prefer to go
622 home; so he came back just to build a house for her. He did not build for her in his old village but asked another great-commoner (of the same chiefdom) for a site; he did however go to the chief to reclaim his old garden (the *umfweje* to which we have already referred). Now four men had divided the ground between them; they had approached the great-commoner and asked for it and he had referred them to the chief, fearing that he might be blamed for giving the ground away if Kalonga should return subsequently. And the chief agreed that they should take it, so as not to let it lie idle.

"So when Kalonga came and reclaimed it the chief pointed out that he had moved and left the country (and so had no claim to the land). But no, Kalonga replied, he had not moved, for see he had brought back his mother and built a house for her, which was exactly equivalent to living in the chiefdom himself. And the chief admitted his argument and agreed that, so soon as the present holders had reaped their standing crops, he should re-enter into possession of his own ground. So now Kalonga comes regularly with his younger brothers and they hoe the land quickly (being many) for their mother and go home again. Kalonga is of an old family and his father is buried in that chiefdom."

166 And finally the story of Enoch the son of Mwakajileke, another
423 Kukwe, well illustrates the more limited rights of a son to claim his father's old gardens which he himself has never hoed.

425 "Mwakajileke built in the village of Ibungila, and he died there in
622 1925. He had three sons, all of whom moved after his death; one of
624 these sons, whose name was Enoch, went and built at Kyimbila; and meanwhile the chief gave the garden-land of Mwakajileke to other people. Part of this land was cultivated by a commoner named Gwaselya but he too, later on, moved into another chiefdom and the land was left unused. Then Enoch returned to the country to find that no one was now hoeing the ground which his father had used to hoe, so he approached Mwangokile, the great-commer, and asked for it: 'As no one is hoeing your father's land,' Mwangokile replied, 'you may go and hoe it yourself, but there are some other men who want it and they have already asked me for it, so I must divide it between you.' So he went with them and marked

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 out boundaries, drawing lines on the ground; he divided the land into
423 three portions, one for each. The others were strangers to the chiefdom
425 but had taken a fancy to that piece of land."

622 The sentence in this story "The chief gave the garden land of
624 Mwakajileke to other people" deserves remark for it in no way implies any other custom than the one we have previously described. And it illustrates the dangers of relying too much on verbal statements of custom. When a stranger is given land by a great-commoner after reference to the chief he is commonly said to have been given it by the chief. The chief, from one point of view, is the overlord and the great-commoner acts for him. But, and this is an essential qualification, the great-commoner nearly always so acts for the chief and, save exceptionally, it is wholly incorrect for the chief to grant land directly. The great-commoner acts not only for the chief but also as the representative and leader of the villagers; and in relation to them the chief cannot exercise his rights of overlordship save occasionally and in particular circumstances.

166 The old Kukwe great-commoner whom we have already quoted
423 explained this to me very clearly: "Occasionally one of his own men will
425 ask a chief to give him ground to hoe in another village, 'If indeed you
621 say that the land is yours!' (challenging the chief to assert his right of
622 overlordship). Then the chief agrees that all the land is most certainly his; but still, if it is possible, he tells the man to go to the commoners of that village and ask them for land. If the chief does not do this (but makes a direct grant of land) we blame him for not being a true chief: 'Who is it,' we ask him, 'that has built up this country? Did you do it all by yourself? It is we the commoners who have built it up! And how is it, then, that you give this man land without consulting us?'" [754
Nor is the censure of his people mere idle talk for a Nyakyusa chief, he
626] fears that they may bewitch him, that the witches among them, led by the great-commoners of the several villages, may come in dreams at night and cause him to sicken or to die.

166 So much for the initial grants of land to newcomers and the rights of
423 men returning to their home chiefdoms. If a man goes back, after moving, to a chiefdom which is in no sense his home, where, that is to say, he is not a member of an old family but in which he has himself spent some years, he is treated as a newcomer. He is welcomed but he has no rights to the ground, whether building-site or gardens, which he previously occupied.

423 Once established in a village, however, any man can hoe any unowned
425 ground within its borders and thereby make it his own. A newcomer for

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the first few years, until he has become familiar with the details of the rights of the other villagers, will normally ask for more land as he requires it, in order to avoid unwitting trespass ; but an old member asks nobody. If, however, it is desired to hoe land to which some other villager has a prior claim then his permission, as the owner, must first be asked. Any previously unowned land that an ordinary commoner once hoes is his property, all informants agree, so long as he remains a full member of the village. Within the village there is thus a theory of continuing ownership but, as we have seen in discussing the reclaiming of land after a move, it is only to the more valuable ground that it is strictly applied. A valuable garden may be left fallow for years but, so long as the owner is a member of the village, no one can take it without asking his permission ; nor is he under any kind of obligation to give it away when asked. "If a stranger comes," a great-commoner told me, "and we commoners of the village want to give him some old gardens of one of our number we ask the owner to give the ground to the stranger ; but if he refuses we cannot insist."

Many gardens, however, are not in fact continuously owned ; men not infrequently hoe less valuable ground that has been left two or three years fallow without asking the permission of the previous holders, as they should strictly do. So long as the ground is relatively plentiful no objection is usually raised, but it always may be ; and the increasing scarcity of land under modern conditions is already prompting some men to a new insistence upon their rights.

"In our country," a young Kukwe told me, "it is the maize and bean plots which are the most valuable, because we hoe them continuously, year after year. . . . Land for other crops is plentiful, so much so that if a man leaves one of these gardens fallow only for two years then anyone else who wishes can come and hoe it. Nowadays, however, the custom is changing a little and some men like to keep the same gardens continuously for all their hoeing."

In the case of the most scarce and valuable ground of all, that in the bottom of old volcanic craters, the principle of continuous ownership is carried furthest. Rights in it have always been insisted upon and whenever a holder of such land moves from the chiefdom then the nearest kinsman of his who lives there steps in and claims it. And here the village group ceases to be of any importance. It may be that long ago the land in each particular crater was owned solely by the members of some particular village but now it is held by old families scattered all over the chiefdom in which it lies. Apart from the craters, however, all arable land can be truly said to belong to some village or other.

It is, none the less, quite possible to hold garden-land in a village without being a member of it, but only if the land is kept in effective use.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

We have already seen in two examples that a man, when returning to the chiefdom from which he has moved, may recover his old gardens even though he builds in a different village. And it frequently happens also that a man comes to a village and asks for garden-land only, continuing to live in another village, or even in another chiefdom. Such requests the villagers always, so far as I know, grant willingly, for once a man has taken up land in a new village there is every prospect that he will one day move altogether and build there. In case of sickness he is more likely to move to the group where he is already half-established and sure of a warm welcome than anywhere else. 423 425

When a man moves he has the right to reap the crops standing in his old gardens so soon as they ripen, but after that the ground, save in the case of craters, reverts to the joint ownership of villagers and chief. And his building plot and bananas revert to them immediately. The next-door neighbours on either side keep the bananas clean and eat the fruit themselves until the plot and the bananas are given by the villagers, with the chief's approval, to another man. If the previous holder has moved to a place without bananas and not very far away he may, in the first year, send to his late neighbours and ask to be allowed to cut and carry away some of the banana fruit " for my bananas in my new plot have not yet grown." But his request is of grace and not of right, it may be refused. If the villagers like and respect him and hope to persuade him to return later it will always be granted, but if they dislike him and are glad to be rid of him then it will not. If the plot is a separate one without immediate neighbours then no one keeps the bananas clean and, unless someone else is given the plot soon, they get choked with weeds and die.

When a man dies the heir takes his wives, his cattle and his moveable property, and, if he comes to live in the dead man's village, his land also. But if the heir remains in his own old village[1] he has no rights over the dead man's land. The situation is then exactly comparable to that which obtains when a man moves from one village to another, his land rights in the old village lapse. 423 428

Rights in trees differ in some respects from rights in land and they differ also for different kinds of trees ; and here, as an added complication, we are also faced with a difference of local custom. 423

Prior to the introduction of new trees by Europeans the only ones of any great value to the Nyakyusa were the bamboo (*ililasi*) and the *unsyunguti* tree, whose botanical name I have been unable to find out. Bamboos 423 824

[1] Owing to the age grouping among villagers and the long period which traditionally separated one pregnancy from another in a woman's life it is unusual to find full-brothers in the same village.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 824 are used for house building, while the *syunguti* produces a fruit (*indilolo*) which is both delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment (*inyemba*). Of the two trees the bamboo is the more valuable.

423 425 621 Now among the Kukwe and Selya groups rights in these trees are somewhat similar to rights in the valuable crater plots. When a man moves, his bamboos and *syunguti* trees, unlike his bananas, do not revert to the villagers ; normally they continue to belong to his nearest kinsman in that chiefdom, who cuts and uses the bamboos and picks the fruits of the *syunguti* trees. If the villagers give the site to another man then the newcomer has no rights over these trees unless the kinsman himself gives them to him. But it sometimes happens that, where only *syunguti* trees and not bamboos are involved, the kinsfolk do not bother to exercise their rights ; then the trees are treated like bananas, picked by the neighbours until a newcomer is given that plot, and then by him.

423 425 622 If however, among the Selya and Kukwe groups, a man moves leaving no kinsfolk near at hand, then the chief (*umalafyale*) as the supreme overlord has a right to his trees, and if they are near the chief's own place this right is exercised ; he cuts and uses the bamboos and his wives pick the *syunguti* trees. If another man is given the land by the villagers to build on then he goes and asks the chief to allow him some of the *syunguti* trees, and his request is usually granted, the chief gives him two or three of the trees, keeping two or three for himself. But the bamboos, being more valuable, are usually kept altogether by the chief. If, however, the ownerless trees are at a distance from the chief's place then he normally does not trouble to claim the *syunguti* trees but only the bamboos. The former are at first picked by the neighbours and later given by the villagers to a newcomer together with the site. And, even with the bamboos, if they are a long way from the chief's place a " good chief," they say, will allow the newcomer to cut some of them without payment ; but it is wholly within the chief's power to keep them all for himself if he wishes, and " bad chiefs " do so. Furthermore a chief does occasionally also exercise his right to claim an ownerless *syunguti* tree at a distance. If one of his wives comes and complains to him that she has no *syunguti* tree of her own, then he takes her to a site from which someone has recently moved leaving ownerless trees behind and there he gives her one of the trees ; the rest he leaves as usual to the villagers and so to the newcomer.

423 621 Bamboos are men's property and only a man can claim them but *syunguti* trees can be claimed by a kinswoman, a sister or a daughter, of the old owner if none of his near kinsmen have troubled to do so.

423 178 We must here take note of a most significant modern development. In the old days rights in trees could only be exercised by members of the

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

same chiefdom in which the trees were growing ; for between chiefdoms an actual or potential state of war always existed, and a man coming from a hostile group to claim property would have been driven away violently. But to-day under European rule it is now customary for a man to cut his own bamboos, if he is living in a neighbouring chiefdom, instead of leaving them to his resident kinsfolk. The group within which property can be held is gradually widening. 423 178

Such is the custom among the Kukwe and Selya groups ; their rights in bamboos and *syunguti* trees are not normally lost when a man moves provided there are kinsfolk left nearby to exercise them. The one exception to this rule is in the case of expulsion for witchcraft or other serious crime. Then even if the man expelled has left kinsfolk behind him, still the chief takes his trees. 423 681

Among the Nyakyusa proper, on the other hand, the *syunguti* trees are treated like bananas. When a man moves he loses all rights in them and, unless the chief steps in to take them, as he always may, they are granted by the great-commoner, together with the soil, to the newcomer who is put on that site. Bamboos, as in Selya and Kukwe country, continue to belong to the kinsman of the man who has moved.[1] 423 425 621

Trees introduced by the Europeans, of which coffee trees are the most valuable, have been declared by the Federation of Chiefs to be the property of the planter, even although he has moved to a different chiefdom. This law was made after much anxious discussion between the chiefs, the Administration and the Agricultural Department and is, of course, subject to revision if it is found after trial to be impracticable. In the case of coffee it has inevitably been modified in practice since coffee must be tended continuously if it is to remain free from pests and to bear fruit, and any man who actually looks after coffee trees has a generally admitted claim to the crop unless he is paid by the planter for his labour. The planter, however, in surrendering the trees to him may compel him to pay something for their initial value. 423 177 245

Further, as the Agricultural Officer has the right to uproot any untended coffee trees and must exercise it if pests are to be kept under control, the practice has grown up of his taking over any large number of abandoned trees and keeping them clean with labour paid by the Native Treasury ; the trees are subsequently sold to some other man and the proceeds paid into the Native Treasury again. If, however, a planter of coffee trees makes arrangements, when he moves, for the cleaning of his coffee then the trees remain his own.

[1] Some informants deny this and insist that they always pass to the chief. I was not myself long in Mungonde among the Nyakyusa proper and I lack conclusive evidence on the point.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 The legal practice in this matter is still in process of formation and I quote the most recent account of it which I have in my notes without claiming that it is either complete or wholly accurate.

" If a coffee-planter who has moved," I was told, " either keeps the coffee trees clean himself or sends people to do so, then the trees are his ; if, however, he does not keep them clean and another man builds on that site and looks after them then they belong to the latter, for he it is who keeps them clean. But if both men concerned (both the planter who has moved and the newcomer on that site) want to have the trees then they belong to the planter, and no one can take them from him.

423 425 " Or, alternatively, if there are a great many coffee trees and their owner has moved (without making arrangements for cleaning) then the Government takes them and looks after them and sells them subsequently to some other man who can afford to buy. And if, maybe, a newcomer on that site has been keeping some of the trees clean, but not all, then the Government leaves some to him and takes the rest.

" And if a planter who has moved wishes later to come back to his old site then great pressure is put upon him to make a payment to the man who has kept the trees clean meanwhile.

" Aswile, for example, had planted coffee in his home in Kissokola's country but then he moved away and went to work (for Europeans) ; and when he returned from work he built at Kyimbila Mission. Meanwhile Mwankungili had succeeded to his site in Kissokola's country and had been looking after the coffee trees ; but no sooner did he begin to pick the coffee than Aswile came and wanted to know who was daring to pick his coffee. Mwankungili explained that he was doing so because he had spent a great deal of time and energy in keeping the trees clean ; and the two men disputed each other's claims. So Aswile took the case to Mwangoka's court, and it appeared that there were seventy-five trees in bearing with other younger ones as well, and that Mwankungili had looked after the trees, hoeing round them, for nine months. The court enquired of Aswile whether he had not moved ; but he denied having done so and maintained that his absence was only temporary, that he had every intention of returning soon. Mwankungili then pointed out that he had built a house at Kyimbila and actually planted some more coffee there ! And that was a proof that he had really moved. So the court sent a messenger to Kyimbila to see, and his report confirmed what Mwankungili had said. The court then asked Aswile whether he had given instructions to any relative to look after his coffee trees ; but no, he had not. So he was then told that he must pay Mwankungili for his labour ; but this he refused to do. The final judgment was that he must either pay Mwankungili for his labour or else leave the coffee trees to him.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

"Aswile thereupon appealed to Mpuguso (the appeal court of the Federation of chiefs); he absolutely refused to pay Mwankungili any money at all, but finally he agreed to give him some of the coffee trees. So he went with Mwankungili and a court messenger—and a crowd of people went with them to see this new custom—and divided up the trees, keeping the bulk for himself but giving some to Mwankungili in repayment for his hoeing. And Mwankungili accepted the division. Now Aswile's younger brother, who lives nearby, is looking after Aswile's trees and Mwankungili is looking after his own." 423 425

The same informant also told me of another case: "A man who had lived in Kissokola's country moved to Mbalisi (in Mbeya District) and died there later. Now while living in Kissokola's country he had planted forty-five coffee trees; all of which were now (at the time of the case which is being related) very large; and there were also some smaller trees as well. So then his heir, a brother, came back to the country to find that another man had built on that site meanwhile. But when he raised the question of the coffee, the occupier answered him amicably and said that he would buy it; and he paid 35/50c. for the trees. And then the heir took up land elsewhere in the same chiefdom. He had not wanted to claim the old site, only the coffee trees."

But still there remain difficulties of practice of which the fundamental one is that of owning *and tending* trees on another man's ground. *Syunguti* trees can be owned on another's homestead without difficulty for they require no attention, but it is hard to draw the line between the ordinary weeding and sweeping of the open space (*ulubingilo*) and bananas and the weeding of coffee trees that grow there. "Am I not to be allowed to sweep under my own bananas?" one man said indignantly when he returned to an old site of his to find coffee growing upon it. Where the coffee trees are still young the difficulty is sometimes got over—to the great displeasure of the Agricultural Officer—by transplanting them. But with older trees this is impossible.

Pasture, unlike garden land, is jointly owned by the whole village group and no individual has any exclusive rights to any portion of it. The detailed discussion of grazing-rights thus falls outside the scope of this paper, but two points must be noted here. In the first place every member of a village has the right to graze his cattle on the village pastures and this right may also be granted to an outsider by the great-commoner in consultation with his neighbours. And, in the second place, when any member of a village takes up new garden land by hoeing it he must not, in so doing, encroach unduly on the village pastures. 423

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 622 In his tenure of land every Nyakyusa man is related to some chief who is his overlord. But their relationship is not confined to the single element of land-tenure, it is just as many-sided and complex as is any other human relationship ; and even as we abstract from it the particular set of facts that immediately concerns us here we must at once refer them again to it if they are to be intelligible.

166 423 622 When a newcomer is received into a village and given land the chief, as we have seen, is normally a party to the villagers' action, and in most cases he himself ceremonially welcomes the newcomer if he comes from outside the chiefdom by sending to him a present of cooked food. He has gained a new subject and his power and prestige are thereby increased. [427] As men are quite free to move from one tiny chiefdom to another and as land is still relatively plentiful the phenomenon of rent does not exist among the pagan Nyakyusa, there is no direct charge ever specifically made in return for the right to build and cultivate. Nevertheless a chief is a chief and his subjects' land is his as well as theirs and they are under certain obligations to him.

622 554 [585] Among these obligations that of providing cooked food for the ceremonies of the chief's own immediate family is probably the most important. When a chief's daughter, for example, is getting married women from all over the chiefdom bring food to entertain the bridegroom and his friends on the day that they bring the bulk of the cattle. The obligation to bring food, though not a legal one, is both reciprocal and conventional. The chief is expected to kill one or two of the beasts to feed his people and if he is mean about this, killing one where he should have killed two, then on the next occasion his people are more reluctant [626] to bring food. But there is also the sense of shame constraining individuals. If the majority of households in a village provide food for a chief on such an occasion, and the majority I think nearly always do so, then the shameful meanness and unconventionality of defaulters is the subject of adverse comment among them.

A chief also has the traditional right, still widely admitted to-day, to send and take food, especially milk and bananas, from his subjects if he has need of it. And we have seen already that men with more than one wife are prompted to retain *busongo* bananas for themselves in order to meet his demands without upsetting the peace of their households. This [177] traditional right however is known not to be admitted by the European Administration, on the grounds that a salary has taken its place, and is therefore beginning to fall into disuse. Chiefs, I was told, often fear to exercise it lest some man refuse obedience and take a complaint to the *Boma*, nor are they willing to confine their demands to those men of whose compliance they are certain. As the salary of an ordinary chief,

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

425 him if it was his idea that the village should die out and leave him, the
622 great-commoner, without men ? As he had moved, the great-commoner
624 would have continued, the place was presumably distasteful to him and it had now been allotted to another man. The claim would certainly have been disallowed ! "

425 The examples in this paper have been taken almost entirely from
797 pagan families. For Christians the situation is very much the same
427 except where they live actually on mission land, there they are tenants of the Mission concerned and pay rent to it. And Christians, wherever they live, tend to be more stable in their occupation of land, since they are not forever moving in fear of witchcraft.

7. *CONCLUSION*

178 I have striven in this paper to make the individual land-rights
● 423 possessed by Nyakyusa to-day intelligible to the European reader and to demonstrate to him their determining factors. Of these factors the following are the most important. The Nyakyusa were until recently an isolated and primitive people and so bring with them into the modern world a legal tradition based upon small social groups. This tradition is being inevitably modified both in theory and practice under modern conditions, but not out of all recognition ; for they are still a relatively isolated people and the system of indirect rule secures them, in general, against arbitrary legal changes. Within their legal system individuals have, as in any system they must have, certain precisely defined and enforceable rights—among them rights in land.

Many kinds of land, however, are plentiful, though less so than of old owing to the growth of population, the opening of new markets for food and the recent introduction of ploughs. And this cheapness of land is reflected at times in a lack of rigour in the enforcement of rights in it which is unfamiliar to the European observer. Sufficient land for all is a fundamental condition of Nyakyusa society in its present form, which has no place for a landless man.

[166 And, finally, the habitual movement of men with their families from one village to another to escape the witchcraft of their neighbours leads to
691] a constant transfer of homesteads and gardens and is the main cause of difficulty in the administration of their laws of property in land and trees. This difficulty is greatest in the case of the newly introduced coffee trees which need continuous tending.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done.

In a polygynous family each wife has her own fields (*embaka*), hoed by her husband and her own sons, which she plants, weeds and reaps with the help of her own daughters, and the produce of which she uses to cook for her husband, her own children and herself. The relative rights of husband and wife to dispose of produce vary with different crops, but no co-wife has any rights over a woman's food. She may, and often does, ask her co-wives to help in her fields and sends them presents of cooked food from her own fire, she may help them and receive presents in return; but they have no rights over her fields or her food, only her husband and herself. And the fields which are hoed by a bachelor son belong to his own mother, who in her turn cooks food for him to eat.

Each wife has either a hut to herself, or else a separate alcove in a large hut, and there she has her fire for cooking. She fetches her own firewood and water or sends an unmarried daughter for them.

At meals the ages and the sexes eat separately; in some polygynous families each wife sends a dish to the husband, in others the wives take it in turns to cook for him. The husband eats alone or with neighbours of his own age[7] to share his dish, the older boys and their friends[7] eat separately from the younger children, and each mother again usually eats with her own daughters, apart.

In the relationship of husband and wife the chief elements are sexual intercourse, co-operation in work, the procreation of children and factors of personal inclination, character and temperament. By men women are praised for sexual skill, cleanliness and beauty, for good cooking and hard work, for their fecundity, and for gentleness of speech and behaviour, and those with opposite qualities are criticized. Among women men are praised for sexual skill and attentiveness, for vigour in hoeing and skill in house-building, and for kindness; while sexual neglect, laziness, impotence and cruelty are disliked and may cause a woman to leave her husband for another man.

The birth of children is a most important factor in the marriage relationship, for children are greatly desired both by men and women. They are desired for themselves and also because they bring their parents wealth and prestige; a boy will one day work in the fields of his father and mother, a girl will bring in cattle from her marriage. And the possession of children brings compliments and respect both to man and woman.

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[7] Vide infra "*The Age-Village.*"

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

561 The age system of the Nyakyusa has been described in detail in
621 *Good Company*,[1] but, since it forms the basis of their social structure, a brief explanation must here be given for the benefit of readers unacquainted with that earlier volume. Within each chiefdom there are a number of villages composed not of kinsmen but of age-mates. Villages begin when small boys of eight or ten years
857 build together at a little distance from their fathers. They are joined by younger brothers, as these reach the age when boys stop sleeping at home, until the eldest are in their middle teens, when
[883] the youngsters will be told to begin another village. The boys of a village have their own leader, a 'natural' leader, not specifically appointed, but they are subject to the headman of their fathers' village, and formerly fought as a group under his direction. But
[622] at the 'coming out' a headman for each village is selected from among its members by the fathers: if he dies, his heir—a younger brother or son—inherits his position, so that sometimes a young man becomes headman of an old men's village, taking the name and social position of his father. Only commoners are eligible as headmen: we knew one candidate who was rejected because his great-grandfather was a chief.

Two villages in each chiefdom are senior to the others and their
[634] headmen are responsible each for half of the country. During the 'coming out' ritual the chief marries two wives, 'mothers of the country', and one is established in each senior village or capital (*ikitangalala*). The eldest sons of these two wives are the heirs, and later divide the old chief's country between them. Most of the chief's junior wives are divided between the capitals but some may be settled in a colonizing village in unoccupied country. All the chief's sons build with commoners in villages appropriate to their age, and all save the two heirs are subject to the commoner headmen of their villages. They are entitled to some respect as 'sons of the chief', and those of strong personality gain a following and settle disputes between their fellows (as may any commoner), but only the two senior sons can claim political authority.

561 Before the 'coming out' the villages of young men and their
621 fathers adjoin, for the boys have built on their fathers' land, on the fringes of their fathers' villages. But at the 'coming out' there
884 is a new deal in land. The young men are established in the centre
423 of the country and their fathers move to the periphery; it is not merely that fathers and sons exchange land, but all the boundaries

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, 1952.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

are redrawn and only the fields in old craters (the most prized and fertile of all) are not re-allotted. Thus the villages of kinsmen of two generations adjoin, and often those of three generations. 561 621 884

On the old chief's death his village headmen become priests of the grove in which he is buried, and, in co-operation with his sons, the new chiefs, sacrifice there on behalf of the two countries into which his old chiefdom is divided. There is a nice balance of power between chief and village headmen in life, and when he dies his two heirs and the headmen (or their heirs) continue to share power, the power which belief in his spiritual force and their ability to guide it gives them. The success or failure of rituals is held largely to depend upon the personal relationships of the leading participants, chiefs and commoner priests. 423 634 793 622

Besides the ordinary commoner priests (the village headmen of a past generation or their heirs) there are priests of the chiefs' lineage, usually belonging to a junior line to which specific ritual functions, such as rain-making, have been entrusted, and whose office is hereditary in the same way as that of a chief. Kasitile (86),[1] the rain-maker, is such a priest: his grandfather was the brother of a ruling chief (43) and had been appointed as rain-maker (*umpelafula*) and priest (*unyago*), the two functions being separate but overlapping. As rain-maker Kasitile tended the rain stones, as priest he initiated the rituals in certain of the sacred groves, though he did not actually officiate himself. Kasitile was a key informant on ritual and a chapter is devoted to his history, since it epitomizes the relationships between chiefs and commoners. 793

As we have shown, most of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde chiefs claim some sort of kinship with one another. Those who are nearly related pray together at the groves of their common ancestors, and those more distantly connected join in sacrifice to their founding fathers, but in the communal rituals kinship is neither the dominant theme nor the exclusive principle of association, as it is in the rituals celebrated by private persons. In the communal rituals most of the priests are commoners unrelated to the dead who are honoured, and the sacrifices are held to benefit not only the descendants of the dead, but all those who live in the countries they once ruled. Nevertheless, the symbolism of the communal rituals constantly recalls that of the rituals of kinship; themes which pervade the death ritual recur again in the rituals of 'coming out' and 'cleansing the country'. This background is 634 796 769

[1] Numerals after a name refer to the genealogy of Nyakyusa chiefs facing p. 3.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

symbol of potency,[1] and we suggest that this also is an element in the ritual of the 'coming out', for the fertility of the chiefdom is thought to be bound up with the virility of the chief.

There are a number of stories about the way in which Mwakyusa (38) surpassed his brothers and one of them tells how each brother made fire and set alight the pasture land (for traditionally parts of the pasture land were fired each season to provide fresh grass for grazing in the early spring), and the fires started by the elder brothers soon died out, but that started by Mwakyusa 'burned for a whole month'. This is interpreted as an omen of his greatness as a chief: fire, potency, lordship are inextricably linked.

At the 'coming out' all things are made new. No matter how crowded the country the young men must move to new sites and the shelters in which they live must be new, though, as will be shown, they do not necessarily move to *unoccupied* country. On their new site the young men live as bachelors, milking their cows and cooking for themselves on their new fires the meat of the cattle they seize, the bananas and grain brought by their wives and mothers. Meat is abundant, for the young chief now rules and has the right to take what cattle he chooses, even from the villages of the old men in his country. 'It was as if there were war, the young men seized cattle, food, and women', and though they did not fight their fathers directly, as the Meru did, they clearly asserted their power. And, as so common further south, the accession of a chief was the occasion for raiding the neighbours: the young men, we were told, went forthwith to test the efficacy of the magic spears and the medicines with which their chief and headmen had been treated. Or the chiefs might lead a battue to clear the country of wild pig, as Mwakatumbula (Mwambete 162) did directly after his 'coming out'. Well fed and exuberant, the young men dance and display their cattle, and entertain visitors lavishly, for every chief seeks to attract men to his country by his hospitality.

Then they set up the sign and memorial of the chieftainship: they plant cuttings of two species[2] of *ficus*, *indola* which is much used as a shade tree, and *umpandapanda* from which bark-cloth is made. Close to these the first house of the chief and that of his senior village headmen are built, and the trees also mark the

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 124, 143.

[2] When writing *Good Company* I mistakenly thought that two cuttings of the same species were planted. Cf. *Good Company*, p. 27.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

future boundary between the two halves of the chiefdom, where it will split the next generation. They serve as beacons[1] and are cited as evidence both of the 'coming out' and of the division of land in any later dispute. At the same time the trees are symbols of chieftainship and with their growth the success of the reign is mystically linked. According to one account, 'four headmen fetch the cuttings and the young chief stands between them (*vide plate* 6) and tells the trees to grow well, and the others say: "We are planting you likewise, we are at the ritual of establishing a new chieftainship, you are a symbol for our chief, spread branches that our young headmen and other people may rest in your shade."' A doctor assists at the planting, burying at the roots a live white sheep and medicines, which, it is said, later turn into the lions or leopards which protect the trees from the impious (*vide infra*, p. 58); and he sweeps beneath the trees, a symbol of what the senior headman must do in future, for it is his duty to 'watch over the trees'. In Nyakyusa thought, village headmen are an integral part of chieftainship—it cannot exist without them—and the trees symbolize *both* the chief and his lady and the two senior headmen. The same informant (well known as a doctor for the 'coming out') told us: 'It means we are planting the chief and his lady; *umpandapanda* is the herd to herd *indola*, which is the more important. *Umpandapanda* is the woman, it may dry up, but *ulupando* (*indola*) never does; it is the chief, it is familiars (*ulupege*). but *umpandapanda* is not', and a moment or two later, 'the *ulupando* is the senior village headman, *umpandapanda* is the junior headman'. The strength of the chief is associated with the growth of the trees. If these trees go dry the reign will not be successful, the chief will be defeated in war. If they flourish and grow the reign will be successful, the chief is a ruler. The *indola* planted for Mwaijonga (82) is shown proudly by his great-grandson, and Mwambete (162) who had a long reign and an enormous family boasted of the size of his *umpandapanda*—'a great spreading tree'. Ideally the young chief should, in due course, sit in the shade of his *indola* with his headmen, to settle disputes.

After the trees are planted the young men build their senior headman's house and the doctor sets up his hearth bricks, burying medicine beneath them also. The marriage of the chief follows.[2]

[1] cf. D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-Lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, v, IV (1895), p. 117.

[2] According to most accounts, but *vide infra*, p. 56.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VI

LAND AND POWER

643 561 423 THE crux of the chiefs' 'coming out' was a redistribution of power and of land, and we must pause in our description of the ritual cycle to discuss the relation between chiefdoms and villages and the land, and to consider more closely the balance of power between successive generations.

(a) THE TERRITORIAL ALIGNMENT OF CHIEFDOMS AND VILLAGES

173 361 Tradition makes it clear that the heroes came to a sparsely occupied country and that their descendants gradually spread out as their numbers increased. The settlers chose to live on hillocks overlooking the surrounding country. Lubaga and [103] Mbande, the seats of the two 'divine kings' are commanding sites. [778] The grove of Kabale, where the ancestors of the Kukwe chiefs first established themselves, is on an eminence rising from the plateau, and Kambasekela (near the Mbaka bridge) on which the early chiefs Mwaipaja (21) and Mwaipopo (26) were buried is a hill very like Mbande, overlooking the plain.

361 Unlike most of their neighbours the Nyakyusa show a preference for cleared and cultivated land, planted with bamboos and the [824] oil-bearing *unsyunguti* trees (*Trichillia supp.*)[1] as well as the great *umwali* (*Chorophora excelsa*) which, in their view, adds dignity to the homestead.[2] A study of the trees planted at the 'coming out' and the sacred groves in Mwaipopo's chiefdom (C 24)[3] shows that for four generations the ruling chiefs (descendants of Mwaijonga 82) have established their principal villages within a quarter of a mile of one another, and for seven generations the descendants of Mwakisambwe (30) have lived within two or three miles of one another (*vide* plan, p. 101), though there were acres of fertile land

[1] I am indebted to Mr. P. B. Nightingale, Forestry Officer, Tukuyu, for giving me the botanical names of these and other trees.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 77-8.

[3] C followed by a number is the reference number of a chiefdom as listed in the genealogies of chiefs.

[p. 88]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

available which are only now being settled. Colonies are established, but usually by junior sons, the seniors remaining near where their fathers built; e.g. the descendants of Mwakasangule (22) remained near Lubaga, but Mwakisambwe (30) the junior heir moved to Mbyanga about 1750 and his senior great-great-great-grandson Mwaihojo (147) lives close to Mbyanga still, while Mwaijonga (82) the junior heir settled two or three miles away. Mwakyusa (38), a junior son not strictly an heir at all, but personally very popular, was defeated by his elder brothers and driven from the hills to the plain, where his descendants now live. It is not an invariable rule that the junior should move away—for example Mwambete (162) of the junior line lives close to Kambasekela where his ancestor Mwaipaja (21) is buried, and not Mwakibwele (182) of the senior line—but most often it is the junior who moves. The tradition is that the junior heir of a chief leads off his men as colonists at his 'coming out', and this may indeed have happened in the past, but the area of colonization in Mwaipopo's country (which we have observed over twenty years) was first opened by private individuals moving into unoccupied savannah forest land in search of virgin soil for cultivation, and lush grazing. The chief Mwaipopo asserted his claim to the area first by establishing a household there with some of his junior wives, and then by sending the son of a subordinate house (who could have no claim to inheritance of the chieftainship) to live there. Nsusa, the second village headman of Mwaipopo's heir Mwankuga (150), also settled in the forest and acted as headman of the men there, but whether his move was primarily to lay claim to the land or because he had quarrelled with his chief, Mwankuga, and the other village headmen, was never very clear.[1] Then in 1953, at the coming out of Mwankuga's heirs, the junior Mwabungulu (178) was established in the colony, and is regarded by the people as 'chief' of that area, though he is not recognized as a chief by the Administration.

When a colony is established several miles are left uncultivated between it and the parent chiefdom. Mwabungulu lives five or six miles from his senior brother Mwanyilu (177) and there is an area without homesteads between them. It seems that, traditionally, each chiefdom was surrounded by a belt of uncultivated land used as pasturage, and very often at the 'coming out' both brothers merely extended their villages on to the adjoining pasture land

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 268-9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 The office of chieftainship still carries high prestige and the District Council has actually resolved to select a paramount chief. [643] Competition for this position is fierce and it remains to be seen [648] whether the Council will ever agree on a nomination. The persistent suggestion that the Administration should undertake the invidious task and select a paramount is scarcely likely to be acted upon, since the Administration sees no necessity for establishing such an office.

Chiefs, assisted by their village headmen, are the executive officers of the Rural Councils, but they have lost their judicial functions. There are twenty-four recognized courts with a bench [692] of 'courtholders' appointed annually by the Rural Councils, and [648] one superior court, but the annual appointment ceased in 1956 and more permanent appointments were made. The aim is to develop a specialized judiciary independent of the executive. There is also a very important class of full-time civil servants, secretaries of the District and Rural Councils, and clerks of the courts.

The position of village headman is in a fluid state. Where the [622] 'coming out' ritual has been dropped, the traditional occasion for the formal appointment of village headmen no longer arises, and old men continue in office much longer than before. When a headman dies his heir sometimes takes his position or, if neither the heir nor a junior son will accept it, some other man is appointed by the chief. There is evidence that in many chiefdoms men are reluctant to undertake the position, which carries no salary but involves a considerable amount of work and makes it difficult or impossible for a man to engage in paid employment either within or outside the District. As one woman put it, 'Money has killed the office of village headman' (*Indalama sigogile ubufumu*). There is some evidence from the lake-shore plain, however, of men competing for the office, and indeed of a son claiming in the courts the headmanship his father held. Possibly the competition for land on the plain, and the fact that the allocation of land lies with the village headman, account for this. When all the arable land is taken up, it is probable that acquisition will be [622] through inheritance or sale only, and the present headman's [423] power to allocate land is likely to vanish; but one of the most important assets of a village is its pasture-land, and in controlling and developing this the headman may well play a decisive part in the future. Since village headmen are essential executive officers in local administration, and are integrated into the new system of

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Councils, the importance of establishing machinery for their appointment in chiefdoms where the 'coming out' is no longer held is obvious. 177 [622] [423]

The traditional communal rituals have not been dropped altogether, but their celebration is sporadic and not everyone supports them. Careful enquiries suggest that in less than half of the chiefdoms has the 'coming out' been celebrated when it was due. In the most conservative portion of the district, Selya, there were celebrations in 1952 and 1954, but even in that area a number of the ruling chiefs have never 'come out'. The omission is due partly to the desire of the old men to retain office, partly to the increase in population and the planting of coffee which makes any new deal in land unacceptable, and partly to the feeling of many that the old ritual is an anachronism, if not directly incompatible with their new faith in Christianity. Some chiefs who have not 'come out' would welcome a celebration; one such told us that 'if the "coming out" died chieftainship would die'; but a young chief's personal wishes are not decisive in this matter. Sacrifices at the groves of chiefs and heroes are not as frequent as before, but they still occur at some groves in time of drought or other emergency. The Kinga came to Lubaga in 1954, and they were expected to come and instal Kasitile's heir in 1955. In 1954 also there were sacrifices to Mwaijonga (82) and Mwakisambwe (30) for it was a season of scarcity. Rituals for cleansing the country and sprinkling the homesteads occur sporadically 'when occasion demands', but not annually in any chiefdom and never in some. And when celebrations do occur they do not unite the people of a chiefdom as they used to do. Christians oppose them and many non-Christians are also sceptical. [561] [796] [643] [782] [769] [771]

In 1935 the traditional rituals celebrated by lineages and chiefdoms formed a coherent system. They were directed towards the shades and the heroes, as was manifest in the sacrifices and in the dramas of death and rebirth when those secluded 'dwelt with the shades' or were 'caught hold of' by Kyala.[1] The older participants were then conscious, in greater or lesser degree, of the symbolism implicit in the actions they performed. By 1955 the ritual cycle was nowhere celebrated in full: what remained were 'bits and pieces' of ritual, none of them fully intelligible without reference to the complete cycle. The link between the rites and the shades and the heroes was less clear, and the symbolism less [769] [796]

[1] *Vide supra*, pp. 27-48, 70-85; *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 51, 98, 101, 111-13, 205.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

182 and is therefore to be interpreted as 'confession of anger', rather
783 than as 'rebellion'.

796 Sometimes there is an expression of *opposite* tendencies, both
631 implicitly approved. The sacrifices to the heroes and at the
182 groves of the chiefs emphasize seniority and precedence, and
769 express the dependence of junior on senior kinsmen, but the
783 myth, recalled in every celebration, tells of the surpassing power
561 of the son or younger brother in the beginning of time, and the junior brother of a chief often holds office as a priest. Then there is the drama of driving away the shade and bringing him back transformed, which is so characteristic of the rituals of kinship and appears again at the cleansing of the country. Such contradictions are doubtless expressions of ambivalent attitudes among the participants themselves, and of the attempt in ritual to reconcile conflicting social principles—in these instances authority with the rights and duties of juniors, and change with continuity.

182 In a society without written records legal certainty depends
643 very largely on publicity. This is apparent in the law relating to
561 marriage contracts and family inheritance,[1] and still more so in the law of the chiefdom. The ritual of 'coming out' celebrates radical changes in social status, and the public recognition of the leaders, members, and territorial boundaries of villages, as well as of the heirs to chieftainship. Thus certainty in these matters is assured. There is no positive value of the co-regency of father and son (as in ancient Egypt),[2] but the installation of the young chiefs before the death of their father serves to mitigate conflicts over the succession. Confusion over village boundaries and village
[423] leadership often appears when the ritual has not been celebrated, for there is no public definition to refer to.

How close is the link between religious belief and practice and
182 social structure? There is no doubt that the sacrifices to the dead
769 chiefs and heroes and the traditional rituals of kinship supported
797 the former political and kinship structure of the Nyakyusa. Their performance compelled co-operation between kinsmen,[3] between neighbouring chiefs, and between chiefs and people. How far then does the change in religion, begun when the first Christian convert professed his new faith, compel a change in the social

[1] Godfrey Wilson, 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Law', *Africa*, vol. ix, 1937, p. 29.
[2] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, pp. 101-2.
[3] cf. *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 190-200, 227.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and try to understand the nature and reasons for change. Here, then, is a good opportunity for the study of social change – not only in land tenure as such, but also in village and family organisation, political authority and economic life.

II

The Nyakyusa are a Bantu people inhabiting the main part of the Rungwe District in southern Tanganyika, immediately to the north of Lake Nyasa. In 1948 they numbered about 199,000 in that District, but about 10,000 men were probably at the time temporarily absent from their homes and in employment in the mines and towns of the Rhodesias and South Africa (see Gulliver, 1957), whilst about 20,000 had migrated to live in the adjacent Mbeya District to the north.

The tribal area comprises a confined geographical basin surrounding the northern end of Lake Nyasa. It extends only about 40 miles from the tip of the lake at 1,550 feet above sea level to the Poroto Mountains in the north at 8,000 feet; and from east to west is only about 30 miles, from the almost sheer walls of the Livingstone Mountains (with peaks up to 10,000 feet) to the Ndali Highlands (rising to about 7,000 feet). There are therefore unusually large ecological differences within so small an area. Three major regions are to be distinguished: the "Northern Highlands" over about 4,500 feet, the low-lying "Lake Plains" in the south, and the "Central Region" in between. Everywhere rainfall is reliable and high, averaging at least 100 inches annually[1], and this amply compensates for a certain poverty and misuse of the soil, although (and particularly in the Central Region) it brings dangers of soil erosion. Except in the highest parts the banana is the staple food, supported by maize, beans, finger millet and groundnuts. In the Northern Highlands coffee has become well established as the principal cash crop: in the Lake Plains paddy rice cultivation provides both a food and a cash crop: in the Central Region the country is too low generally for coffee and too high and dry for rice; consequently cash-cropping is considerably inferior and the people's standard of living is rather poorer.

The Nyakyusa and their country tended for a long time to be relatively isolated from the outside world by high mountain walls and rain-soaked roads. In addition, or because of it perhaps, they developed an almost unique culture which was supported by considerable conservatism and high insularity. They still continue to regard their African neighbours beyond the mountains as their social and cultural inferiors. The turmoil of the slave-trade in Central Africa passed them by; in modern times they have not enthusiastically accepted Christianity and they have refused to take up the use of Swahili, the Territorial *lingua franca*. In recent years, and most especially since the end of World War II, they have, however, accepted and pushed forward with vigour a rapid and extensive economic development, involving particularly the production of coffee and paddy as cash crops, and large-scale labour migration to the south in the high-wage mining industries. The multiplicity of petty, often tiny, independent chiefdoms has been reorganised to provide four local government areas, each under a Rural Council, in which the old chiefdoms have become something like parishes[2]. Although much of the old conservatism and narrow parochialism persists, yet there is now an atmosphere of accepted change, of a keen desire for economic development, and a general acceptance of a cash economy.

Probably the most significant feature of modern life in the Nyakyusa country is the increasing scarcity of land for agriculture in relation to the

1. At Tukuyu, in the Northern Highlands, annual rainfall averaged 99.28 inches between 1919 and 1952; at Kyela, in the Lake Plains, the average between 1940 and 1951 was 106.21 inches.
2. See Kingdon, Z.E.: The initiation of a system of local government by African rural councils in the Rungwe District, Tanganyika; *The Journal of African Administration*, iii, 4, October, 1951.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

people's needs. The importance of this can scarcely be overemphasised for a peasant people who are adopting a cash economy and are socially and emotionally deeply attached to their land – their single, continuous source of capital and their tribal heritage. Apart from the possibilities of labour migration which, so far at any rate, are taken up only temporarily and by the younger men, there are no economic opportunities and no capital to compete with the land. In non-economic life the land remains supreme as the persisting basis of society.

As late as 1940 the District Commissioner, Rungwe, was able to write that there was most generally sufficient land for the people's needs in all parts of the country, and the only competition was perhaps in respect of the very best and most fertile tracts, as had always been the case. G. Wilson recorded similar remarks in the late nineteen-thirties. That these observations were correct cannot be doubted. It is known, for instance, that until the post-war years in the Lake Plains – where now land shortage is most acute – there was a broad belt of mainly unoccupied, uncultivated bushland, infested with game, extending from the Livingstone Mountains in the east to the Nyasaland border in the south-west. There were extensive, more or less empty areas in almost every chiefdom. The people were subsistence farmers only, and also banana eaters, and in this well-watered country their agricultural requirements were adequately met on very modest holdings, from most of which two harvests a year could be gathered.

In the brief period of little more than ten years the situation has altered radically to the point of a general shortage of land (except for some parts in the north-west), and especially in the Lake Plains the available land is quite insufficient to meet the demands of the inhabitants. This critical change is the result partly of an increasing population, augmented by some immigration from other tribal areas; but more especially it is the result of the demands for larger arable holdings to meet cash crop aspirations – i.e., money earning. Although both coffee and paddy rice cultivation had begun before 1939, and both were encouraged and developed during the War years, it was not until after 1945 that both of these cash crops became well and generally established and the demand for money incomes became universal.

III

It was in order to investigate this new situation, which was beginning to become serious and to cause concern to Government, that I made a sociological survey in 1955. I had already spent some months in the country in 1954 investigating labour migration in order to provide Government with information and to make recommendations to deal with the problems arising. The second period of work occupied about five months. During both enquiries I was extremely fortunate in having the use of the excellent monographs of G. and M. Wilson who had carried out a conventional anthropological study of the Nyakyusa between 1934 and 1938. Without their basic work behind me, neither of my two studies would have been possible in so brief a time, and I must gratefully acknowledge the real value of their writings.

The intention had been that a complete enquiry should be made into Nyakyusa land conditions in all parts of the country, and that it should culminate in a full recording of tribal land law and custom with a view to its possible reform. In the event only the initial enquiry in the field in the Lake Plains was completed and the results of that alone are described in this essay. Whereas in former days there were probably few distinctive differences between the various parts of the country, in modern times with the introduction of different cash crops, with differential population growths and varying demands on the land, important divergences seem to be arising. For example,

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER II

THE TRADITIONAL SYSTEM

Although this essay is to be primarily concerned with the modern and changing land and population situation among the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains, it is quite essential first to have an understanding of the traditional system of political and territorial organisation and of land tenure. This is not mere historicism, for despite changes the traditional system remains as the basis of contemporary land-holding and land law. Whilst actual conditions on the ground change, the Nyakyusa appreciation of those changes and their attitudes to land lag significantly behind. In brief, the traditional system was geared to a situation where there was plenty of land. Today the people find real difficulty in adjusting themselves to a high density of population and an acute shortage of land, with the result that this new situation is aggravated by outmoded practices, attitudes and cultural values.

The ancestors of the present group of peoples now known collectively as the Nyakyusa, moved into the Rungwe region from the Ukinga Highlands to the east beyond the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains. According to legend, which is probably substantially true, these newcomers found a sparsely populated country which they easily occupied. Later, following internecine strife, one group under a man called Mwakyusa left the Masoko area in the centre of present-day Rungwe District and moved down into the Lake Plains. There, probably less than 150 years ago, they drove out the Ngonde people and settled. The sons of Mwakyusa took their shares of the country and people and established their independent chiefdoms. The chiefs in 1956 are the lineal descendants, mainly in the fifth generation, of Mwakyusa, and have a well-known genealogy. The only exception to this occurs amongst the group of tiny chiefdoms in the extreme east under the Livingstones, which now form a single administrative chiefdom under Mwakilasa and number some 400 men. They trace descent from pre-Nyakyusa settlers known as the Saku.

Traditionally, as today, the village was the basic unit both in social life generally and in land-holding in particular. The Nyakyusa village was possibly unique in Africa. It was comprised of men of roughly the same age, together with their wives and young children, and it excluded their fathers and sons and also, very often, their elder and younger brothers. Each village consisted of a close group of houses (often centred on a broad "village street"), with arable and pastoral land around it. Each village had fairly well-defined boundaries with its neighbours. The village was represented as a group and acted corporately through its headman, *lifumu*, who was the guardian of villagers' land rights, the arbiter in land problems and disputes, and the controller of unused land. He was also the political and ritual leader of the village, but nevertheless he was a commoner chosen from amongst the villagers themselves, and was not a member of a chiefly lineage.

Land was owned by the village as a group. Every man resident in the village had a clear right to a site for his house and banana plot and to arable land within the village boundaries; he also had a right to graze his cattle in its communal pastures. Residence gave these rights and members of other villages were excluded. A man who left the village automatically gave up these rights, though if he returned he was able to take up his former holding or its equivalent.

villages grew ever smaller and became extinct as their members gradually died off in old age.

A Nyakyusa village, then, owed its being to this most significant political, social and religious event. Each village had its area approximately demarcated, and each headman was ritually and magically strengthened in order to lead and protect his men and their families.

This particular system operated satisfactorily in the demographic and land-using conditions of the old days. By the process of bifurcation, briefly described above, new chiefdoms and new villages were formed for each generation. Although the population appears to have been increasing rapidly there was always sufficient land to create two chiefdoms where one had existed before, and to create new villages and more villages than had existed before in the old chiefdom. The two new chiefs were able easily to move apart and find sufficient and more than sufficient land for their needs.

The system of bifurcation, the ideal of the Nyakyusa, did not always work out so neatly in practice – at any rate it often did not in the Lake Plains. Sometimes it did work; for example, the present chiefdoms of Lazarus and Koroso are the two parts of their grandfather's single chiefdom, which split up under their respective fathers. Similarly, the present Mwakipesile and Mwamasangula chiefdoms stemmed from a single unit, whilst the Mwakipesile chiefdom itself today is really two indigenous chiefdoms, but the Government would recognise only the senior brother's claim to chiefship and allowed him authority over the whole. Even where a single new chiefdom succeeded the old (frequently as the result of civil war in which one brother subjugated the other) the essential dichotomous arrangement persisted so that the resultant single unit had two distinct halves, each with its own head with his villages and headmen. In any case, whether traditional bifurcation occurred or not, and right down to modern times, new villages have been established at the time of the "coming-out" of the new chief. The basic village system showed greater persistence and remained truer to type than did the chiefdom and the wider political system.

The real authority of a Nyakyusa chief was not in general very great, although individuals here and there achieved personal importance. A chief was accorded a great deal of prestige and honour, and by tribute and gifts he frequently became pre-eminently wealthy. He was supposed to be kept informed by his headmen of all important village affairs and to approve all matters concerning the land; but the village headman was in fact the real land authority, who attended to the details of land allocation and land use within his village. A chief could not do this, and in fact only in so far as he had the support and loyalty of his headmen had he any authority at all. "A chief is a chief because he has headmen," one informant put it to me – he was a prominent chief himself. A villager said: "A chief does not own the chiefdom, or the land. We, the people together, own it." A chief could, without notice or advice, take any unoccupied land for the use of himself or of his kinsmen, but he could not allocate it to others; both headman and villagers would have indignantly and successfully protested had he tried, as some occasionally did. Land disputes, an uncommon feature in a country where land was plentiful, were settled by the headman of the village in question; they were the private affairs of the village and the chief had no right of interference. Inter-village disputes first came before a meeting of the headmen concerned, with perhaps the assistance of the senior headman of the chiefdom. Only if a dispute could not be settled and if it seemed likely to threaten general peace within the chiefdom would the disputants go before the chief himself, who even so relied and had to rely heavily on his headmen to secure a settlement. So delicate was his position that he might be unable to resolve inter-village disputes for fear of witchcraft reprisals against him by the unsuccessful party.

Sometimes a chief who was a powerful personality rode roughshod over his headmen and achieved a measure of autocracy; but most headmen would not allow this and in their opposition they had the full support of their villagers, as well as the moral backing of public opinion. There are remembered cases in pre-European days when a chief was deposed or reduced to a non-entity by his headmen acting together in the face of what they considered to be encroachments on the inviolability of village unity and independence. In any case, however, even the strongest chiefs were little disposed to interfere in the land matters of their villages; few wished to be bothered with the details of land rights. A chief could legitimately complain if he were not kept informed by his headmen, but his approval of their actions – and most especially in land matters – was very largely a formality.

Traditional Land Tenure

As already briefly described, a village comes into formal existence at the time of the formation of a new chiefdom. At that time its building site and arable and pastoral areas were roughly demarcated by the retiring headmen of the old chiefdom. Within the village, members were allocated their house plots and each man tended to take the strip of land stretching behind his plot and make his field there. The land was shared out on a friendly, co-operative basis; the new headman smoothed out any difficulties and settled any disputes. Thus was the pattern of land-holding established. Apart from the relative value of a plot proximate to a man's house, there was little or no cause for dispute as land needs were small and the supply plentiful. An established villager could, without notification or special permission, extend his cultivation to any land which lay vacant – i.e., which was not in use or under fallow by a fellow-villager. There was therefore no need for a man to try at first to grab more land than he immediately required, nor did he need to be jealous of his neighbours' claims.

A villager's rights to the use of his land were quite secure and he had no fear of eviction or of the seizure of part of his holding. It is said that very occasionally a chief might take a man's holding but I think, at least in the Lake Plains, that this must have been most unusual. In fact, of course, so long as a man was allowed to reap his crop there was little value attached to the plot as such when nearly similar ground stood unused. Men sought security not on their plots of land, but in their membership of the village community, which assured them of their continuing rights to adequate opportunity for cultivation over the years. However, virtually every man had an excellent security of tenure on his holding during the mature life of his age-village (i.e. until at least the next "coming-out" ceremony), and if he died his heir, should he wish, could come and live in his house and cultivate his fields without hindrance. The way in which he cultivated, though of course strongly conditioned by custom and convention, was his own affair, and he sub-divided his holding amongst his own family as he thought fit. He could not, however, allocate any of his land to a man living in another village, nor could he permit it to be cultivated by such a stranger.

Through fear of witchcraft, because of persistent illness, misfortune or unfriendliness, in order to live near a relative or friend, or to inherit elsewhere, a man might leave his village and his age-mates. Then he had to give up his land-holding. When a man moved because of witchcraft or illness (much the same thing and a chief cause of movement) his land was normally left idle pending his hoped-for return, and his former neighbours would do all they could to induce him to return to his old home and fields – even to the use of force (see Wilson, G. 1938, pp. 32-3). His departure was an accusation against them, and a disturbance of co-operative unity. If the man consistently refused to return, or if it was known that he had definitely left for good, his

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

land automatically reverted to the common pool. An established villager might decide to use part of it perhaps, but not before prudently gaining the approval of the headman, lest the migrant return later and accuse him of unlawful and unfriendly seizure. If the headman agreed, as he would after a time in most cases, the newly acquired plot became part of that villager's holding with as secure a title as the rest. Such vacated land could also be allocated by the headman to a newcomer or, before the sons' village was established, to the son of a villager.

If a man had more land than he could cultivate – because, for example, his sons had left him to cultivate in their own villages, or his wife had died – he was under no essential obligation to give up any part. The headman might, if the need arose, try to persuade him to release a portion in order to make it available to someone in need; but the land-holder could refuse and the headman had to accept his refusal. As a chief depended on the support of his headmen, so did a headman's position ultimately depend upon at least the passive support of his villagers, from whose ranks he was chosen.

At the next "coming-out" ceremony the men of a village of the old chiefdom might be required to move aside in order to allow the young men, their sons, to take up the better building sites and farming land. This they traditionally did voluntarily and they built new homesteads on one side and cleared new arable plots. Once re-established in this manner, these older men would not be disturbed again and they remained secure in their new holdings. How often in fact such a displacement took place I cannot say, but it certainly seems to have occurred sometimes, for one can still trace old village sites which appear to bear out the common Nyakyusa story.

In all this it must be remembered that the spirit of village unity and coevality was held in far higher esteem than land in such a fertile country where land was plentiful and subsistence farming required but small-sized holdings. Security of tenure and defined rights to particular plots are notions belonging to a different situation and age; when land begins to be scarce and to have an economic value, and when there is danger of men not being able to obtain as much as they need roughly where they need it.

Newcomers were invariably welcomed to a village: they were supplied with a house site and an arable holding and were assisted with food until the first harvest. They were an addition to the numerical size and physical strength of the village, and they increased a headman's prestige. Their rights were no less assured than those of founder-members of the village, although their social position was less secure, at least at first, for they had not shared in the history of the community and had not grown up with the ties of village association and comradeship amounting almost to kinship.

Traditional rights in trees may be mentioned briefly. Trees were inherited without difficulty along with the land on which they stood, and a brother or son would commonly inherit the deceased's valuable trees without bothering to take the arable land around. If a man left his village and thus forfeited his land there, the position was different. Banana trees went with the land and a new occupant simply took them over; bananas are of no great value as they grow so readily and ubiquitously. Bamboos are more valuable (being used extensively in house-building) and any left behind in this way could be claimed in the first instance not by the village but by the chief. If the chief wanted them they became his property, or he could grant them to any man he favoured. Usually a chief was content to leave them: then the local kinsmen of the departed man had first claim, and if they had no use for them, or if no kinsmen were resident in the village, they became village property to be allocated by the headman. *Usyunguti* trees[1] were regarded in

1. These are valued oil-bearing trees planted by the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains, the botanical name of which I do not know.

423 the same way as bananas, to be allocated along with the vacant surrounding land, although sometimes it seems that a chief might successfully lay claim to them. Trees supplying firewood were generally plentiful in the surrounding bushland. A man would not cut wood on another's holding, and standing trees merely went with the land if it was taken up by anyone else, in the same way as useful stands of thatching grass did.

In conclusion of this summary account the following points may be reiterated as important to the understanding of the traditional system:—

(i) Land was plentiful in relation to the people's needs and extensive areas were left untouched.

(ii) Land was owned by the village as a group, acting under its own headman, who was the arbiter and the allocator of fields.

[621] (iii) Land was held in usufructory right only by a resident member of the village, and every resident had the right to a house and banana-grove site, to sufficient arable land and to the use of communal pastures and woodland.

(iv) The individual's security of tenure was good, in so far as this was thought at all important.

[643] (v) The power of the chief was slight in land matters; he had no authority to allocate land.

(vi) Other villages, whether of the same chiefdom or not, had no claim in, or authority over, a village's land and land affairs.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

trader brought in other seed. The trader himself planted a large plot and his success seems to have stimulated the Nyakyusa to follow suit. There was a slow but gradual development of planting and by 1932 it was estimated that some 500 tons of hand-hulled rice were sold. It had become clear that the alluvial flood plains around the northern tip of Lake Nyasa were ideally suited to paddy growing. Until 1942 the people continued to hand-hull their crop and sell the rice, but in that year they were persuaded to sell the paddy direct to a locally established mill. Following initial difficulties in milling, handling and marketing, the Government built a store capable of holding 14,000 bags and it also took over the whole of the marketing with a seconded District Officer in charge. In 1947 the cultivators formed their first co-operative society. This movement has been encouraged by Government and the local Co-operative Union now deals with storage and marketing with the guidance of a Government Co-operative Officer.

The figures of sales of rice and paddy are given in Table II.[1]

Paddy has become a well-established crop, not only as the single cash crop of the region, but also as a food crop second only (or even equal) to the traditionally staple banana. About four-fifths of all arable holdings are paddy fields – though parts of these are used for dry season crops of maize, beans, etc. Virtually every Nyakyusa land-holder now grows paddy, and the vast majority regard it as their main crop. Cultivation is mainly by ox-plough followed by broadcast sowing and hand-weeding. Government efforts to encourage nurseries and planting out in rows have so far been entirely unsuccessful. Yields and perhaps quality too are thought to be lower than need be; the chief factor in production seems to be the degree of natural flooding during the wet season.

TABLE II

SALES OF RICE AND PADDY, 1932-56*

	tons		tons
1932 ..	500	1945 ..	1,200
1933 ..	600	1946 ..	2,700
1934 ..	600	1947 ..	3,300
1935 ..	600	1948 ..	2,100
1936 ..	700	1949 ..	3,700
1938 ..	700	1950 ..	2,300
1939 ..	1,200	1951 ..	1,200
1940 ..	1,500	1952 ..	2,000
1941 ..	1,600	1953 ..	5,700
1942 ..	2,200	1954 ..	5,900
1943 ..	2,800	1955 ..	5,700
1944 ..	2,900	1956 ..	3,000

*1932-41—hand-hulled rice, estimates only.
1942-47—paddy, sold through Government agency.
1948-56—paddy, sold through cultivators' co-operatives.

The cultivation of paddy requires relatively large-sized holdings due to the nature of the crop and the local extensive method of agriculture – for example, to produce a given income requires a far larger area of paddy in the Lake Plains than of coffee in the Northern Highlands of Nyakyusa country. As paddy cultivation became established, men increased their arable holdings in order to earn their money incomes. Larger holdings, rather than improved agricultural techniques, have become directly connected with higher incomes, and so the demand for more land set in. Assisted by the now general use of ploughs, paddy growing increased rapidly wherever it was found ecologically possible – i.e., within the alluvial flood plains and the coterminous area of annual natural flooding. Before this new demand for land emerged there were, even in the most highly populated parts, extensive areas which were more or

1. Information has been supplied by the Co-operative Officer, Tukuyu.

less uncultivated. These areas can easily be picked out today by the absence of village sites and banana groves. There was something of a rush to grab land in such areas and in the less densely populated parts of the chiefdoms. Today in my personal experience – for no general survey has been attempted – there remains little or no unused land within the paddy-growing region which can, by native techniques, be brought under the plough; and indeed men are attempting to grow paddy on unsuitably raised land where inundation is inadequate. Communal cattle pastures have shrunk as arable holdings extended until they remain only where cultivation is profitless.

The demand for land has far outrun the physical supply, and in 1955 it still seemed to be insatiable. The initial cycle was that a desire for more money to permit of a higher standard of living created a demand for more land on which to produce more cash crops; but the increased level of income then further stimulated money demands to raise standards higher again, thus bringing a renewed demand for land. The cycle has now been halted by the lack of further land to meet the people's needs, but the demand remains nevertheless and is indeed increased by rising costs of living.

This economic picture is, of course, oversimplified, but it may serve to illustrate the nature of forces at work in the situation. I would not wish to overemphasise the snowball effect, for the bulk of the population remains still largely content with only a little over earlier standards; but increasing numbers of men and their families are coming to seek something better. Bicycles have become something of a general necessity; a variety of good clothing and shoes is considered quite essential. Only a single decade before the Nyakyusa women still generally went about in the traditional nudity, whereas in 1955 they must have ranked among the very best-dressed African women in the Territory. European-type household goods, crockery and utensils are common. The demand for money, that is for a higher standard of living, has also been greatly stimulated by the experiences of the thousands of labour migrants returning from southern towns and mines, and by the cash and goods they bring back with them.[1]

It is not possible for me to attempt to suggest what a desirable acreage would be for a contemporary Nyakyusa, because money demands, crop yields and selling prices change and the desire for higher standards of living also alter as the potentialities of the new cash economy are increasingly understood. In 1954 the approximate average of Sh.200/- per paddy cultivator was earned from perhaps two or three acres of arable land, but an indeterminable amount of the crop was kept back for home food requirements. As will be shown later many men's paddy fields could have been little more than an acre, and many men, specifically young men, had no paddy land at all. Certainly there were few who held what they considered, at a reasonable estimate, to be sufficient land.

This universal cash crop agriculture and the continuing demand for higher standards of living, and therefore for higher money incomes, is the real cause of the new and rather sudden pressure of population on the land. Of course this economic process operates within a situation of relatively dense population and in a peasant community where land is almost the only form of capital and alternative enterprise is small. The gradual increase of population, although probably small, further aggravates the difficult situation.

Arable Holdings

It was not possible to obtain adequate, satisfactory data to allow the calculation of local population densities, and the detailed results of the 1948

1. In Gulliver, P. H.: 1957, an estimate of the cash incomes of Nyakyusa in 1954 is given at pp. 51-2. Data on the cash brought back by returning labour migrants are given at p. 55.

0:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Census have never been issued.[1] However in some sample villages I very roughly measured arable holdings, and my results provide new information even though they can be illustrative only of the modern situation.

In each of the eight villages chosen[2] the arable holdings of *all* the adult male members (whether at home or away at work at the time) of the whole village, or occasionally of a distinct section of it, were measured by the simple and rough method of pacing the borders of every separate plot and converting the resultant figures into yards and thus to acreages. The actual pacing was done entirely by myself in order to try to maintain an even stride on all occasions, but in each village I was well supported by a team of four or five villagers, always including the headman and his assistants. The figures obtained relate only to arable holdings and bear no determinate relation either to crop yields or to non-arable land in the villages concerned. The results are summarised in Table III below.

TABLE III

ARABLE HOLDINGS IN EIGHT VILLAGES

Village and chiefdom	*No. of land-holders*	*Average holding in acres*	*No. of men holding more than:—* 5 *acres*	10 *acres*	*Average size of plots in acres*
Kapugi Mwamasangula ..	59	3.2	11	1	1
Ikolo Mwakyusa ..	68	3.0	13	0	1.2
Matema Mwakilasa	50	1.9	4	1	0.6
Lugombo Koroso ..	24	1.6	2	0	0.6
Mpunguti Mwakipesile ..	63	1.5	1	0	0.5
Kapugi Koroso ..	60	1.3	1	0	0.4
Lusonjo Mwakilasa	12	1.3	0	0	0.6
Busoka Mwantipulo	36	1.0	0	0	0.4
	372 men		32 men (8.6%)	2 men	

From this Table it can be seen that in the chiefdoms of Koroso and Mwakipesile, *in the villages concerned*, the average holding per man was about one and a half acres – and my impression was that in the southern parts of Lazarus's chiefdom and elsewhere immediately surrounding the lake shore similar conditions existed. It may be noted too that in these cases there were large numbers of young men without holdings at all. On the other hand, in the selected villages in the chiefdoms of Mwamasangula and Mwakyusa, the average holdings were about twice as large – three acres; and fewer young men were landless. Note also the cases of the villages in the chiefdoms of Mwantipulo and Mwakilasa in the more northerly parts of the Lake Plains, where the average holdings were one and 1.3 acres respectively, and where yet there was arable land unused and available. In those parts paddy cultivation is very limited because of the higher and hilly country, and the people remain little more than subsistence farmers – perhaps they may be taken as not unlike the traditional, pre-European subsistence cultivators.

Unfortunately I am unable to relate these figues of arable holdings to the total land available in each village, for this would have required survey work beyond my competence. Non-arable land is utilised for village sites with banana groves, roads and paths, pasturage, etc.; but the position is further complicated by varying amounts of unusable land in my sample villages. To give only two examples: within the boundaries of Mpunguti village, Mwakipesile's chiefdom, there are many acres of land adjacent to the Mbaka river which today are unusable because of deep flooding from

1. Population figures of any kind are not available even for the separate chiefdoms, let alone for ecological areas.

2. Their approximate locations are indicated on the accompanying sketch-map.

plots of maize, squashes, tobacco, etc., and useful trees (bamboo, citrus, mango, kapok, *usyunguti* and firewood). Artificial drainage would, of course, make more land available along the rivers, but this is in general beyond the abilities and resources of the Nyakyusa without considerable outside assistance.

Finally, in this matter it is to be remembered that in addition to a man's arable holding, each of his wives has a banana plot at her house from which she obtains her staple foodstuff. Such plots amount to perhaps about a tenth of an acre on the average. On the other hand, the Nyakyusa are no longer prepared to tolerate a predominantly banana diet. Rice has, in most areas of the Lake Plains, become almost as important as bananas.

Large-sized Holdings

Some blame for this novel shortage of land and the smallness of the average holding has often been laid upon that minority of Nyakyusa who have exceptionally large holdings, and also upon the immigrants from beyond the Lake Plains who have come to settle there during the past decade.

The occupiers of large-sized holdings are rather fewer than has sometimes been supposed. The notoriety of large land-owners, such as some of the modern chiefs with as much as 25-30 acres, has brought more attention to them than is really warranted. Most chiefs and village headmen have arable holdings of above average size, as a result of their privileged positions in the land allocation system and because of their prestige influence; but they remain a small minority and their number is bound to decrease in the future as inheritance causes sub-division of their holdings, for most of them have also more than the average number of wives and sons. In the two high-density regions it is clearly impossible for any man much to increase his present holding. As will be shown later (see page 24) the modern trend is not unnaturally towards a dangerous fragmentation of holdings.

The data obtained in this matter for my eight village samples are summarised in Table III, page 15. In those villages the two men out of 372 who held more than ten acres were a village headman and the father of a chief.[1] There were seven other headmen and one chief as well as some other locally influential men amongst the people covered by my surveys, but none of them held more than ten acres. There are, of course, some commoners amongst the large land-holders; many of them are close relatives of the chief or headman and have thus received preferential treatment. Some, however, are ordinary villagers who were perspicacious enough to see future trends and to obtain land in the early days before most men realised its new value and when vacant areas were still easily available. Such men are tending to become a new, wealthy class, but on the other hand they are particularly susceptible to the begging of kinsmen and friends who have insufficient land. If they are not to be regarded as unneighbourly or even anti-social (perhaps practising witchcraft) they are virtually compelled to be generous sometimes, both with their land and with their profits.

On the whole this minority of men excites little attention or jealousy among the Nyakyusa, who indeed take it for granted that their chiefs and headmen will have more land than ordinary villagers, as befits their status and prestige. If it be thought that by reducing somehow the size and number of these unusually large holdings then the land shortage might be partly relieved, it is a false hope. I scarcely think that the Nyakyusa would welcome any such attempt at interference by administrative action, but in any case it would only provide minor and temporary relief here and there and would not be worth the executive difficulties involved.

1. This second man should be a chief himself but he was dismissed by Government on his imprisonment for peculation. He still holds much of the prestige and privilege of a chief for his son is only allowed authority in purely local government affairs.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Problem of Immigrant Land-holders

Undue importance has also been given to immigrants, but their numbers are relatively small and only significant locally. Since about 1948, or a little earlier, there has been an influx of Africans into the Lake Plains: – Nyakyusa from the Highlands (chiefly from the Central Region – Pakati), Ndali from the Ndali Highlands of Rungwe District and Kinga from the Njombe District to the east beyond the Livingstones; from northern Nyasaland have come Ndali, Lambia and Sukwa, and there are also small numbers of Bemba and others from Northern Rhodesia. They have been attracted in the modern era, when local movement is easier, by the possibility of obtaining land in the northern Lake Plains, where rainfall is so high and untouched bushland has been available.[1]

These immigrants have been and continue to be almost entirely restricted to the north in the "low-density region" (see map, facing page 15). This contained the outstandingly empty area of the country and still there remain vacant lands to be taken up. Such land is usually of relatively inferior quality, easily subject to erosion and loss of fertility on the slopes of the foothills and unsuitable for paddy cultivation except in small, isolated basins. The immigrants, that is, have settled in areas rejected by most Nyakyusa. There, locally, the newcomers outnumber the indigenous population. In the flood plains, the high-density regions, the proportions of foreigners cannot be more than one or two per cent. of the population, and in most villages there are none at all.

It is true that these newcomers do occupy land which might well be used to relieve the congestion nearer to the Lake; but in practice this would not be at all easy. To take a single example: the newly opened area in the north of the chiefdom of Mwakyusa between the Kiwira and Songwe rivers is being rapidly taken up by Ndali from the north-west, Nyasalanders and Nyakyusa from the Central Region (in that order of numerical importance). A few miles to the south, in the centre of the same chiefdom, the inhabitants of the Ikolo area consistently refuse to move although they manifestly cannot meet their land needs within their present villages. They, and others like them, say with some truth that paddy cultivation is less easy and less profitable in these newer and higher areas, and that poor communications make the disposal of produce more difficult. They also say, but more often leave to inference, that they are unwilling to leave their traditional village areas and begin in new parts, even though the move required is only one of a few miles. They have not yet become sufficiently aware of the permanent gravity of modern land shortage to overcome their parochial inertia. By the time they do become aware of it the opportunity may well be lost, for immigrants continue to arrive in twos and threes, and the last vacant land may be taken. To date, however, some vacant lands remain, albeit of poor quality, into which the densely packed Nyakyusa could move, and the immigrants cannot be blamed, at least not yet, for preventing the expansion and resettlement of the local population.

At the moment the chiefs and headmen in these northerly areas are keen to obtain as many of these immigrants as possible in order to swell the number of their commoners, the size of their villages and thus, directly, their own prestige and importance. Newcomers have every opportunity to be allocated as much land as they wish, where they wish, and many are liberally assisted with food in the traditional way until they harvest their first crop. I heard no complaints from either the local Nyakyusa or the immigrants, and relations seemed to be good. Strangers must conform to Nyakyusa ways of life and to the authority of the headman and chief, although

1. Immigrants from Nyasaland are said to have come following the introduction of new regulations there prohibiting the cultivation of easily eroded hill areas.

in fact they usually settle on the common East African pattern of scattered homesteads, each in its arable area, and not in the tight Nyakyusa village pattern.

I think that the headmen and chiefs concerned would not welcome a restraint on immigration, for it offers them a chance to emulate the numerically produced prestige of their fellows in the flood plains, to whom at the moment they feel inferior. They would, of course, most probably prefer indigenous Nyakyusa, could the latter be persuaded to settle there. As it is, at least some of the Nyakyusa of these northerly villages are trying to move into the flood plains, where they can more easily cultivate paddy and where they can join in a more active and ebullient village life.

One type of foreigner to the Lake Plains is the man (almost invariably a Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who has obtained land but does not settle on it nor in any village. He continues to live in his upland village and comes down to the plains only to cultivate and harvest his paddy field. This is strictly against Nyakyusa land law and custom and, in fact, such an absentee land-holder has often made a substantial monetary gift to the chief or headman for the protection of this extra-legal privilege. These strangers are frequently among the more wealthy upland Nyakyusa, who can afford such payments as these, and often they are of chiefly rank themselves, perhaps having kinship ties with the local chief. There are probably no chiefdoms where such strangers have not obtained paddy fields, though naturally those which contained a good deal of vacant, usable paddy land at the beginning of the cash-cropping era have most.

This does arouse a certain amount of ill-feeling and opposition amongst local villagers who have insufficient land themselves, for they lose land and gain no numerical strength or profit of any kind. The illegal action of the local chief is also condemned, especially as the chiefs should not in any case assume allocatory powers. On the other hand it must be noted that the commoners philosophically accept the supposedly protected prerogatives of their chiefs under European rule and they expect the chiefs to take advantage of them. As with the case of the minority of large land-holders, the actual effect is not particularly great and reformation here would be a minor palliative. Nevertheless in this matter there is a definite and unpopular infringement of villagers' rights and of the local customary law.

One other group of strangers may be noted for the sake of completeness. That is the Kisi, who have for at least two generations been settling along the lake shore itself from Matema in the east to the Songwe river (and beyond) in the south-west. They have come from the north-eastern shores of the lake and in the Nyakyusa area they are principally fishermen who do not, therefore, compete with the indigenous population economically. They cultivate only tiny plots of casava and sometimes of finger millet, although a few of the younger generation are now trying to grow a little paddy also. The total number of Kisi involved cannot be more than a few hundred and they have probably not increased much over the past decades. They follow an almost separate existence from their Nyakyusa neighbours, not intermarrying, and following their own way of life.[1]

1. The main Kisi settlements in Rungwe District are in the Ikombe area, an isolated peninsular south of the Lake Plains, where they number about 1,200. Another 3,000 are scattered on smaller peninsulars and in tiny lakeside basins further south along the Lake shore. They are widely famed as potters, and they exchange their wares for cereal foods to augment their fishing.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IV

THE RESULTS OF LAND SHORTAGE

311 As indicated in the short outline of traditional land tenure in Chapter II, the system developed and worked adequately in the old situation (both before and after European conquest) when land was plentiful in relation to the people's demands. Any villager who wanted land had the right to be allocated fields: any established villager who wished to expand his cultivation could do so without difficulty. Movement between villages was easy, and especially after the establishment of European peace, for everywhere new-[166] comers were welcomed to increase the strength and prestige of the village, and land was available for them. The young men in their age-villages were able to obtain sufficient arable land and they were able to establish their economic independence after marriage, if not earlier. Because land was plentiful there was little real concern for security of tenure and disputes over land were both uncommon and unimportant.

By 1955 the basic fact was that there was insufficient land to meet the people's requirements in the alluvial flood plains – as also in many Highland areas – and there remained little or no unused land which could be taken into cultivation.

Inheritance of Land

428 In those earlier and more spacious days, inheritance was chiefly significant in moveable property – cattle pre-eminently, and goats, money and 421 other goods – and also in the matter of widows and the custody of children. The rules of inheritance were the same in principle for all this property. Inheritance was by groups of full-brothers rather than by individuals, and therefore when a man died, his sons, his widows and his wealth were taken by the eldest surviving full-brother; failing a full-brother, a half-brother would inherit (the eldest surviving at the time). Only when all the deceased's brothers were dead, or if they had moved away and severed practical relations, were the dead man's sons able to take up the property in their own right. Then each group of full-brothers tended to inherit as separate, corporate groups. Although the separation into "houses" was not as strong and [593] notable as amongst some African peoples,[1] yet there was a fairly strong solidarity between full-brothers such that, for instance, their cattle were regarded as a distinct and separate herd, over which the senior brother had principal control and in which half-brothers had little direct rights.

Originally land inheritance did not follow this scheme because it was an unimportant matter, for ideally a man obtained his building plot and [423] arable land at the time of the formal establishment of his age-village, and he preferred if possible to continue to live amongst his coevals. Consequently, when a man died, his brothers and his sons and nephews normally had land of their own and did not wish for more elsewhere, especially as the deceased's land would probably be in another age-village. Out of respect for the dead man and his contemporaries, the chief heir often made a token residence at the deceased's homestead and then, after a brief period, would obtain the approval of the villagers to return to his own village and holding again – perhaps at the cost of some beer or a goat. Sometimes the heir or another member of the lineage might take the opportunity to leave his own village

1. See Wilson, M. 1950, pp. 117ff. Cf. also my *The Family Herds*, London, 1955, Chapters 3 and 4, for a description of a strong, corporate 'house' system.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(e.g. for fear of witchcraft) and take up the vacant holding. Nevertheless in general the holding was allowed to lapse and it could be re-allocated by the village headman if need arose; or the elderly widows might be allowed to continue to reside and cultivate as long as they wished.

Once land began to become scarce and valuable this loose system could no longer continue. Junior brothers and half-brothers were no longer content to permit the chief heir to take the whole of the deceased's holding to do with it as he wished, and a systematised division had to be adopted. At first, naturally enough, land was gradually brought under the same system which controlled the inheritance of other property, but this proved inadequate – inadequate not only in itself as being, perhaps, too complicated and conducive of disagreement and quarrelling in so far as land is concerned, but also because that system itself was already beginning to break down under the impact of individualism.

It was felt that because sons assist their father in his homestead and fields and in their turn rely on him for a share in the cash-and-kind profits of peasant farming, therefore they should have priority in the inheritance of their father's property. Their father's brothers, it was said, would in any case already have their own holdings in which likewise their sons have prime interest. Conversely, older Nyakyusa men began to be reluctant to take a brother's land (and other property too) on his death, for fear that, in their turn, control of their own land would descend at their deaths to their brothers' sons rather than to their own sons.

As a result of these attitudes a strong desire arose to modify the customary laws in this matter, and the Rungwe African District Council, with the approval of the Government, has by formal resolution established a new law under which sons may inherit direct from their own fathers.

This law is not universally accepted by the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains and sons still will sometimes waive their novel rights in favour of the traditional claims of their fathers' brothers. They say that they do not desire to see the break up of the wider lineage which, in effect, this new law encourages; they are also afraid of the anger and jealousy, and thus of the witchcraft, of their uncles. It appears however that the change is accepted by the large majority of the people, for it follows the trend of modern values and kinship sentiments.

The principal heir is now the eldest son, but in general he has little direct control over the property and land of his half-brothers unless they are still young, in which case he has a moral duty to act as guardian and custodian. Sons inherit that part of the paternal holding which had been allocated to their mother by their father in his lifetime, plus any other pieces he might have given to any of them direct as individuals. Each group of full-brothers determines the way in which it divides up its own inheritance. The eldest brother of such a house has a definite obligation to see that his juniors obtain shares of the land in so far as its extent and their number will allow. On the whole it is expected by Nyakyusa that the eldest brother will secure the best holding for himself, as befits his new status, but he cannot deny his younger brothers' claims. Disputes in this matter are not uncommon and the local courts have already shown their determination to support the claims of younger brothers.

Very commonly – though it has not yet crystallised as compulsory social behaviour – a father will grant a portion of his holding to his son on the latter's marriage, or as soon after as the son decides to give up labour migration and settle down. It is thought that a married man should be independent economically and that he should be able to maintain his own household; it is realised that there is most likely to be friction in the relations between father and son, especially in this society where it is traditionally

423 428 [593] believed that parents and children should live apart.[1] In the same way, and for similar reasons, an elder brother tries to make provision for his junior when the latter marries if their father is already dead. The practice of the father is not a legally required one, although it is nowadays increasingly common and sons have begun to expect it: the practice of an elder brother is now legally required in the matter of land and probably always has been in the matter of cattle.

The difficulties are obvious when a man dies and leaves several sons [646] but only a small-sized holding. To date no clear ruling has emerged and unfortunately the African District Council did not deal specifically with such details when introducing the new law. How much land an eldest brother can reasonably retain for himself is perhaps not determinable in practice except in specific relation to the nature, locality and fertility of the holding in question, the plots already held by the man himself, the needs and number of the younger brothers and any holdings they may have, and the location of the villages in which they severally live. There is also plenty [578] of scope for disagreement between half-brothers over portions of the paternal holding which had been retained by the father himself for his own use; over portions allocated to a wife who has borne no sons or whose sons have died, and over permanent trees. The situation is still fluid and there has not yet been time enough for a common and generally acceptable solution to be established. Consequently each group of sons tries to solve its own particular problems in this matter as best it can, torn between old values and new attitudes and needs.

593 428 Relations between both full-brothers and half-brothers tend often to be severely tried at times of inheritance. It is not primarily, I think, a case of brothers' greed for valued land tending to overcome bonds of fraternity and co-operation; but it is rather that a father's arable holding is often not able to provide adequate amounts of arable land for each of his sons, and yet they find the very greatest difficulty in obtaining land elsewhere. Already the traditional kin-group comprising the sons and grandsons of a group of [182] full-brothers had begun to break down even before land shortage became serious. Now the group of full-brothers itself tends to be dispersed as men obtain land where they can and it is endangered by dissensions over land rights and land division. Increasingly, it seems, a Nyakyusa man is becoming detached from his brothers and he tends to establish an independent family unit comprising his immediate family alone – that is, himself with his wives and children. We cannot attribute the whole cause of this modern trend to land shortage and economic difficulties, of course, for involved also are new ideas of individualism and of personal effort and reward, and the decreasing need for the consistent support of brothers in social, economic and ritual activities.

578 423 428 Younger brothers may, and sometimes do in fact, agree that the paternal holding is already too small for further sub-division, or that the small parts which can be made available to them are scarcely worth having – especially if they live some distance away. On the other hand, the eldest brother may already have obtained a holding in his own village and is therefore willing to make only a small claim or none at all in the interests of his juniors, and he may then divide the inheritance amongst them alone. Usually, so acute is the dearth of land, the holding is divided between two [311] or more brothers. It is split into small plots so that each brother has a share of paddy, food-crop and banana land, and these are commonly a half acre or even less in size nowadays. As already mentioned, by a kind of modern [696] equity the local African courts generally favour the claims of the younger

1. See Wilson, M., 1951, p. 159 and passim. "The overt purpose (of age-villages) is the separation of sons and mothers, of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law." (*Ibid* p. 162).

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

brothers, and this is compelling the increasing and continued fragmentation of holdings at time of inheritance. Even so, if there are several brothers (i.e., sons of the deceased) the youngest among them may still be unable to obtain a plot, or at least not one of an economically viable size, and they are then compelled to try to gain admittance to some other village as newcomers, there to be allocated land.

The shortage of land is, therefore, not only making inheritance very considerably more important, but it is assisting in the establishment of new kinship attitudes and a redefining of fraternal relations. The position is most confused at the moment as the old system continues to exist alongside the new, sometimes more or less successfully, but often in intractable opposition. At the present time the observer can only mention general tendencies, for it is impossible as yet to foresee what the eventual result will be, and there are, in any case, many other factors involved besides those of the inheritance of scarce land.

In so far as we are primarily concerned with land problems in this essay, the basic factors are that land is newly scarce, that there is virtually no alternative activity in the country to the arable use of the land, and that therefore each son must try to obtain a share in the often inadequate holding of his father. I suggest that no form of inheritance can deal with such a situation satisfactorily – at least it is highly doubtful if any has yet emerged in an area of land shortage in Eastern Africa – and thus there are bound to be severe difficulties and a deterioration of inter-personal relations between near kinsmen who are most in competition. The new inheritance law of the Nyakyusa has narrowed the range of potential conflict from the patrilineal descendants of a grandfather to the sons of a single father; but if it has obviated possible hostility between the generations and between paternal cousins, it has also removed much of the common interest and mutual interdependence between them.

The Right to Land, and the Authority of the Village Headman

Although the traditional principle still exists that every villager has a right to arable land within the village boundaries, yet it is no longer possible to carry it out in practice. Every village headman, in my experience, attempts to ensure that each of his men has land, but he cannot always succeed, and most especially he cannot provide every one with as much land as he would like, because of sheer spatial limitation.

Nowhere any longer does the old principle now hold that an established villager may, without permission or notification, take vacant land into cultivation as part of his holding. When land becomes vacant it must now revert immediately to the village as a group, that is to the common pool from which the headman as village authority makes allocations. There are so many and such varied demands for land nowadays that no man acting on his own can presume to take up vacant land, and only the headman may decide allocation. No person can now obtain land, whether he be an established villager or not, unless he is allocated it by the headman – or, in the many large villages typical of the Lake Plains, by the headman's assistant, *ugwakyimo*, who is delegated authority in a section of the village.

Land becomes vacant when a man shifts to another village, when a man dies and leaves no active heir who desires to take up the deceased's holding, or (but seldom today) when a man gives up part of his holding due to his inability to use the whole of it. In all these cases the land is immediately re-allocated by the headman, probably not as a single unit any longer, as best he can among a crowd of land-hungry villagers – established men seeking extra land to meet the needs of growing families or for increasing cash-crop

622 production, young men seeking their own independent holding, and new-
311 comers to the villages who seek to settle there.
423 The modern shortage of land has therefore considerably increased the authority and the activities of the village headman. Nowadays he is the prime mover in all changes in land-holding, other than by inheritance or temporary loans and gifts. In these latter, and particularly in inheritance, he has necessarily become an important interested party whose influence cannot be ignored, whose approval is desired and whose assistance is frequently sought both as arbiter and witness. Much more than before, and directly because of the scarcity and value of land today, he is the principal controller and allocator of land – though, of course, he remains subject to the state of public feeling and the opinions of his villagers. His position has been further strengthened by his status at the base of the administrative hierarchy in modern local government, whereby he is given executive responsibility for his village and its people. As always, disputes over land are taken before him in the first instance and here he acts not only as a judge but also as the expositor of village opinion and public knowledge. Such disputes are increasing in number, giving him more work and responsibility and also more opportunity for the expression of his status. Meanwhile his traditionally crucial ritual and magical (anti-witchcraft) powers continue, though now in somewhat attentuated form.

Fragmentation and Dispersion of Holdings

423 It has been shown how the inheritance of land, now of increasing
428 importance, results normally in the splitting up of a man's holding.[1] Whether
311 a young man obtains an inherited share of his father's land or he obtains an allocation in another village, its size is likely to be small – smaller than the holdings of his father's generation. Tiny, uneconomic plots are to be seen everywhere in the flood plains.

At the same time a man's holding is tending to comprise a scattered, heterogeneous collection of small plots, as he has obtained land when and where he could. An actual example will illustrate this: a young man had
[341] about a tenth of an acre behind his house on which he was growing maize and beans; he had about a quarter of an acre which was his share of his deceased father's land, and another quarter of an acre which had been
[343] allocated to him by the headman when a vacated holding was split up, and on both of these he cultivated paddy. This man had only small hope of obtaining more land, unless one of his brothers died without sons, for he had already been refused by the headman a share in a recently vacated holding on the grounds that, unlike many of his contemporaries, he already had at least some arable land.

Even amongst older men the holding of scattered plots is common. This is partly the result of the earlier expansion of cultivation when the formerly unused lands were put under paddy, and partly because older men too, lose no opportunity, in the face of scarcity, to take up any land they can. The Nyakyusa ideal is to have a single large holding, preferably stretching away behind the homestead – or alternatively two fields, one for paddy out in the open plains and one for food crops nearer home. This ideal becomes less and less practicable. There seems to be little or no need for this scatter of plots on account of soil and fertility differences, for these are generally few and unimportant within the area of a single village.

311 In my sample villages the average number of separate plots was about
423 three per holding. There was a notable difference between villages in relation to the average size of villagers' holdings. Where land was more plentiful the

1. If there is only one son to inherit the holding, it is most likely that he will have to give way to the pressing demands of his father's brothers' sons if he is not to cut himself off from his lineage.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

number of separate plots per holding was less than where land was scarcer; at the same time the average size of separate plots was smaller in those more land-hungry villages. The reader may refer to Table III (page 15) for some illustrative figures. Though differences are not yet very great, nevertheless there seems to be a fairly clear correlation between the average size of villagers' holdings on the one hand, and on the other the number and size of separate plots, and this is entirely borne out by my general information obtained in villages where actual measurements were not made. The inescapable conclusion must be that increasing scarcity of land in the Lake Plains leads to increasing fragmentation and dispersion of holdings; further, the present land situation and land tenure system can only lead to a continuation of this trend.

To emphasise the actual situation in 1955, let me reiterate the results of my own village surveys in the very high density region. In a village in Koroso's chiefdom only a quarter of the younger men had paddy land of their own, holdings averaging about three-quarters of an acre; in a village in Mwakipesile's chiefdom, only 17 per cent. of the younger men had paddy land and holdings averaged about half an acre (cf. Table VII, page 37). These two examples are taken from the areas of most severe land shortage and are not therefore altogether typical of the whole Lake Plains. Nevertheless, I do not think that they are entirely atypical; more importantly, they indicate the present trend. Within another generation this fragmentation and scatter of holdings may well be the common feature everywhere in the flood plains unless the system of tenure and inheritance is modified. If the increase in population is quickened through improved medical facilities, better diet and housing, and improved conditions generally, then the position will become more acute. Such an increase is only to be expected. The Nyakyusa have decisively entered a money economy and they have learnt to seek higher standards of living. Only from their fields, by cash-cropping, can they expect to earn their livings and the demand for better living will not be curtailed – nor, of course, is it desirable that it should be.

There is another aspect of this whole matter which must be considered. It relates to the movement of individuals between villages. Such movement was, in earlier European days, a crucial factor in the age-village structure, for it was not only exceedingly frequent, but also it tended to undermine the idealised coeval basis of village life. Movement between villages is increasingly difficult now, for a newcomer naturally cannot easily obtain land, nor as much land as he would desire even at a moderate demand. Nevertheless, the reasons for movement persist, and they will do so whilst the fear of witchcraft remains and whilst illness and misfortune are attributable to the unfavourable aura of a place. There remains also the tradition of moving so that a man may escape from bad relations with kinsfolk or neighbours, or from the obloquy resulting from his own disapproved actions. Much social and psychological tension is being created now as a result of the new difficulty of movement, and so far the Nyakyusa have not evolved alternative methods.

On the other hand, so deeply engrained is the notion of the prestige and power which accrues to a village by virtue of the number of its inhabitants, that headmen and villagers alike remain most reluctant to refuse to accept newcomers, even when it inevitably means that the present inhabitants must meet a further decrease in the average amount of land available per family, for a newcomer must be allocated a holding if he is to remain. Consequently, if a holding is for any reason left vacant, a headman tends to refuse to re-allocate some or all of it amongst his villagers and thus to augment their holdings; but instead he keeps it in reserve pending the hoped-for arrival of another newcomer. Men desiring to leave their own village try to get

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news of such reserved land elsewhere. Such land is cultivated in the meantime on a kind of year-to-year lease by one or more of the villagers as allowed by the headman.

Even when no vacant plots exist a headman will still accept newcomers. If they are young men they must be prepared to go landless for the time being (i.e., to remain dependent on their father's fields elsewhere) until such time as land becomes vacant. If the newcomer is an older man, then the headman will try to persuade one or more of his villagers to give up portions of their holdings and he will often cede part of his own land. The newcomer is therefore often allocated small strips and plots here and there in the village arable area and he thereafter joins the land-hungry crowd seeking to expand their holdings. In one village in which I worked where land shortage was critical (Kapugi, Korose's chiefdom), there was not a single patch of usable land unworked; yet here the headman had, with full village approval, accepted three newcomers during the first nine months of 1955. Two of them were young men, one unmarried, and they could not expect to obtain land for some time except for a small banana plot. The third newcomer was a middle-aged man from a village some 12 miles away in another chiefdom. The headman had given him a half-acre plot out of his own paddy field and was laboriously begging pieces of land here and there from his people in order to make up a new holding of perhaps an acre. The headman himself had only about three and a half acres of arable land; he had at least one adult son who had not yet acquired an arable plot and he had other sons and brothers' sons owning only small fields. Yet he favoured this stranger, this newcomer. He was quite firm in his resolution to accept other newcomers in the future and in this he believed that he was acting as a good headman should. As far as I could learn he was supported by his villagers. [971]

This is not, by any means, an isolated or even unusual phenomenon. It is, I feel, important to bear in mind this illustration of contemporary affairs. Firstly, because it shows another way in which holdings are fragmented and dispersed; and secondly, because it demonstrates how, so far, the Nyakyusa have refused to face the situation of land shortage, and how they continue to follow traditional practices and values associated with village prestige. These people complain of their inability to obtain sufficient arable land, but they are not yet prepared to make the mental and social adjustments which might at least partly relieve their new predicament. On the other hand, they themselves understand the need for movement and perhaps they are right in their implied insistence not to discard their cultural ideals. Their insistence on accepting newcomers and their willingness (however dimly perceived and expressed) to share their land with the landless are not discreditable attitudes, even if they are economically untenable.

Security of Tenure and Disputes over Land

As already noted, under traditional land tenure a Nyakyusa had good security in his holding so long as he continued to live in the same village. [561] The only alteration of tenure occurred at the "coming-out" ceremony of a new chief when the older men would, if required, move aside in order to give their sons' generation the best land. This did not invariably happen in any case. Fundamentally, however, security of tenure is not a matter of great importance to a people who have plenty of land, and land which is more or less of the same quality. Indeed, convenience of location in respect of one's own homestead was almost the only value land had as such. Occasionally a more dominant chief might try to seize a commoner's field to allow of his own expanded cultivation; it was most unusual for him to succeed, and even if he did the dispossessed villager suffered little real deprivation, for he could easily obtain another field fairly near at hand. [661] [693]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Security of tenure has continued into European times, and although perhaps weakened slightly in one way through the exaggerated powers which accrue to modern Government-supported chiefs, it has been strengthened by the modern peace and rule of law and the more efficient system of justice provided by the established local courts. According to G. Wilson (Wilson, G., 1938, p. 32) the increase in the movement of individuals between villages in earlier European times (i.e., up to about 1940-45) directly caused a lack of attachment to individual plots, and thus security of tenure was not considered particularly important.

The new situation of land shortage does not affect the basic position, or rather, by producing a high scarcity value on land, it has brought about an intensification of individuals' rights over their holdings. No longer dare a chief or headman attempt to commit such illegal acts as the seizure of a villager's field, so long as that villager is not afraid to publicise the affair. A man is not, and cannot afford to be, prepared to lose his field, for he cannot replace it with any certainty, either in a convenient location or elsewhere. A headman may sometimes bring strong pressure to bear on some of the men of his village to try to persuade them to give up portions of their land to assist a newcomer or a landless neighbour, but a villager can and does refuse and there is no legal authority which can override him here. As the land shortage becomes more obvious and more acute so men become less willing to allow their holdings to be touched for any reason, by anyone. The re-allocation at a "coming-out" ceremony appears to have been dropped nowadays[1] and thus a man holds his land undisturbed until his death, when it passes by inheritance to his sons. There are cases now where grandsons of the original holder occupy land through undisturbed and undisputed inheritance. A man can, as he wishes, loan a kinsman or friend a plot in his holding, or he can make an outright gift. The principal restriction which remains is that a man must continue to live in the village in order to retain these rights; he must relinquish them if he permanently goes to live elsewhere. Nevertheless, the land of a well-established villager would be kept for him pending his hoped-for return, for if he has left in umbrage and fear because of suspected witchcraft, then he may be persuaded to come back after a time. The headman and his neighbours should in fact persist in their attempts to persuade him, even to the use of force, for this is not only a moral duty of age-mates and fellow-villagers but is also an effort to remove the implications of their alleged witchcraft and anti-social conduct.

Once, therefore, a man obtains land he has absolute rights in it during his continued residence in the village. Especially today, older men seldom shift their homes and almost all land is now held on a tenure which will be passed on by inheritance.

Boundary disputes are few. Usually, and increasingly, village boundaries are well known, and field boundaries invariably are. During my field measurements in the sample villages, I never met any difficulty with my local teams in quickly establishing the ownership and exact limits of any plot. Boundaries are usually marked by small ridges of accumulated debris or by narrow paths, and these form an intricate and irregular network throughout a village's arable area. They are so well known that there is very little scope for a greedy man to attempt to encroach on a neighbour's holding at hoeing time. If minor disagreements do arise at that season they can be immediately settled – by appeal to neighbours working nearby if necessary – and the headman or his assistant may well not be called in at all.

1. This is the case in the Lake Plains. In some of the more conservative Highland chiefdoms where the cash economy is less advanced and land scarcity is not serious, there still appears to be some re-allocation in favour of the young men in the traditional way. In general, however, it is clear that the traditional age-village system of land allocation is obsolete; see pages 298.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 all. Field boundaries have lost their earlier fluidity, when a plenty of land did not call for precise demarcation, and the only important changes now result from the land being left vacant or by the internal division of established holdings by inheritance or anticipatory inheritance.

In brief, then, the high premium given to land because of its modern scarcity value, and the enhanced authority of the headman in land affairs act together to preserve the individual's rights. The residual rights of the village, as group-owner of all land within the village boundary, do not affect the land-holder during his continued residence there.

[428] [598] The commonest type of dispute in land matters arises in inheritance, where a younger brother sues his senior in order to obtain or increase his share of the paternal holding (see page 21). That is to say, in general only where established holdings are being broken up does dispute arise and then, of course, only between the sons of the dead man. Disputes between neighbours in a village seldom are grave enough to be brought to court or even before the headman.

[593] There are also many petty, semi-domestic cases which faithfully reflect the frequently poor relations between Nyakyusa husbands and wives in modern times.[1]

TABLE IV

NYAKYUSA LAND DISPUTES: CIVIL CASES, 1954

691 423 [161]

	No. of civil cases	Land cases No.	Land cases %	Population per land case	Density of population
Lake Plains	1,977	104	5	567	285
N.E. Highlands	965	24	2.5	1,842	199
Central Region	901	13	1.5	4,092	245
N.W. Highlands	1,280	8	0.6	7,300	201

Based on returns of civil cases in local courts of first instance ('B' Courts) for 1954. In 1955 the percentages were almost exactly the same as in 1954.

Several interesting points are suggested by these figures. Firstly, there is the larger proportion of land cases and the much smaller population per case in the Lake Plains, where land shortage is worst in relation to local demand, not only because of the higher density of population as such, but also because of the relatively larger acreages required for paddy cultivation. Secondly, in the Central Region of Nyakyusa country there is also a high density of population, but nevertheless only a few land cases; this may be attributed to the absence of cash-cropping and the absence, therefore, of a keen demand for land. On the other hand, the relatively numerous cases, or small population per case, in the north-eastern Highlands seem to result directly from a particularly densely populated area (Mwakaleli) where coffee cultivation is long established and the demand for land is exceptionally keen. In other words, as far as the figures for 1954 and 1955 show, there is a direct connection between land scarcity and the incidence of land disputes before the local courts (i.e. the more intractable disputes which go beyond the village headmen). General observation supports this conclusion. It may be expected in the future, therefore, that such cases will increase unless administrative action is taken to rationalise the inheritance laws with a view to minimising the area of potential disagreement amongst the sons of a deceased man.

691 423 171 For comparative interest, in so far as they offer some indication, I append here data on other Districts in the Territory where land disputes are common.

1. In 1954, 68 per cent. of all civil cases in the lower courts were marital disputes, including divorce suits, and there was one divorce case for every 34 adult males living in the country in that year.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

TABLE V

DISTRICTS IN TANGANYIKA WHERE LAND DISPUTES ARE COMMON

1953	No. of land cases	% of total civil cases	Estimated population density	Population per land case
Bukoba District	1,189	23	69	223
Lushoto Division	149	12	188	742
Moshi District	347	25	277	746
Ngara District..	81	29	125	1,393

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The Changing Village

The possibly unique age-village of the Nyakyusa is now undergoing considerable and fairly rapid change in response to the new conditions of land shortage. There is, firstly, an increasing sense of village exclusiveness and, secondly, there has been a breakdown in the essential age-basis of its organisation. That is to say, that whilst the corporate unity of the village as an independent group has been strengthened, yet the social foundation of the village has simultaneously been changed and a different sort of village is emerging. It would take us far beyond the scope of this present essay if a full analysis of the changing village were to be made, nevertheless in so far as these changes are more or less directly the consequences of modern land shortage, land tenure and economic conditions some account is essential. Since the age-village was fundamental in the life and social organisation of these people, the new emerging village is of crucial importance.

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Land shortage has definitely exaggerated the unity and exclusiveness of the village in the Lake Plains at a time when, for other reasons, it was beginning to become a more open group. There was always, as we have seen, insistence on the principle that only a member of the village could hold and use village land; but village boundaries were often poorly marked and it was difficult to determine which headman, if any, had genuine jurisdiction over land relatively distant from the established village sites. Nor was it particularly important to be able to do so whilst land was plentiful. As paddy cultivation spread, men began seeking extra fields farther and farther away from home as land nearby was all taken up; and so long as they did not attempt to take land in the immediate vicinity of another village site there was seldom much difficulty in this. The attitudes born of a sufficiency of land persisted and headmen were not disposed to protest against outsiders who sought fields near the limits of their vaguely defined areas. Internecine warfare and raiding had, of course, been abolished as an expression of and a weapon in inter-village rivalries and animosities. With the establishment of general peace and security, and with increasing movement about the country between villages and chiefdoms, such rivalries and animosities began to die away. Many men came to live in the villages which they themselves had not helped to found; their coevals from their fathers' villages lived elsewhere, many of them widely scattered, and it was not possible to maintain a high degree of village patriotism, and, people began to feel, it was not especially necessary or important any longer.

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It began to be possible for a man to hold some of his arable land within the area of another village, so long as members of the second village were not deprived of the opportunity of their own agricultural expansion should they desire it. This was especially the case when a large area of hitherto vacant (i.e. bush) but now valuable paddy land was contained within the approximate boundaries of a village. Outsiders were allowed to acquire fields on the strength of kinship with the headman or with one of the established villagers, or even by giving some small present to the headman (e.g. a little beer or some meat, etc.). Land was still plentiful then, or so it seemed to the Nyakyusa, and future shortages and difficulties were not perceived.

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● 423 Thus beyond the established fields in the vicinity of the village itself, the pattern of land holding tended to become confused. The majority of land-holders were still members of the village who were expanding their cultivation outwards, but there was a considerable number of men from neighbouring villages, and even from farther afield where opportunities were more restricted. Some men even began to have a second house, inhabi-
[591] tated by a junior wife, in another village from which to continue the more easily the cultivation of new holdings.

This sort of development was in the event only a short-term process and, had pressure of population on the land not become so critical, it is not possible to say what would have been the final result upon Nyakyusa social and village organisation. It is, nevertheless, important to note that in the beginnings of the extension of arable holdings, cash-crop cultivation operated in a system in which village exclusiveness was breaking down, when residence was no longer an essential prerequisite of land-holding, and when men were neighbours in the fields as farmers without being coevals of a single village.

Once the Nyakyusa, and particularly the more perceptive headmen, began to realise that land was becoming less plentiful, indeed that it was beginning to be scarce in relation to new demands, this novel tendency was stopped fairly quickly and the old traditional principle of land-holding only by residence was reasserted. In the most recent years this has been strongly insisted on. Headmen and their villagers saw that in order to safeguard their
[622] own rights they must prevent scarce, valuable land being held and used by
[186] outsiders. This reaction appears to have been universal and automatic among the Nyakyusa. There was now insufficient land for everyone's demands and each village therefore looked after what it considered to be its own interests. Outsiders who already held fields could not be deprived of them, but they were not allowed to extend their holdings and every opportunity was, and still is, taken to regain control of their fields for allocation to villagers proper. Inheritance was often disallowed unless the heir agreed to come and live permanently in the village; gifts or loans to outsiders (kin or friends) were no longer permitted and most headmen seized the opportunity to re-allocate to their own villagers any alien-held plots which were not consistently maintained in cultivation.

In response to the new situation, almost everywhere village boundaries were clearly demarcated – not without a certain amount of dispute and a new recognition of inter-village opposition. Nowhere now is it possible for a man to take up land over which there is no firmly established village ownership. The significant principle has now emerged that not only does a village, as a corporate and distinct group, own its own land and is represented in this by its headman; but all land is now owned by some village. Further, at least in the high-density regions, there is no longer any vacant land to be taken up
[622] and any land temporarily falling vacant comes immediately under the allocating authority of the headman.

This process, the application of this principle, is not yet quite universal
423 in the Lake Plains, and it is sometimes still possible to see it coming into
178 operation. Still in the northerly parts of the Lake Plains – the low-density region – one may see fields occupied by a variety of outsiders, for there the realisation of the significance of land shortage has been slowest to come. For example, in Mwakipesile's chiefdom in the late 1940s and early 1950s it was the practice of men from the congested villages nearer the Lake to obtain valuable, virgin paddy land in the newly opened areas in the north (near Ipinda) without residential qualifications. Many men reserved their original holdings in their own villages for food crops and had their main paddy fields in this distant area. By 1955, however, it had become virtually impossible for a non-resident to obtain extra land in this way, although still

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

there remained scattered pieces here and there which could be taken up, and some existing holdings in the area are too large for the agricultural capabilities of their occupiers. The temporary safety valve was shut off. The local headman had become seriously worried over the large-scale alienation of his land resources without any equivalent increase in the number of his villagers, and he also wished to conserve the remaining land against the now better understood needs of his own people. 423/78

The principle of no land without residence also means that a villager who wishes to move must automatically forfeit his land-holding in the village. A little earlier he would most probably have been able to retain at least his fields beyond the immediate vicinity of the houses – in so far as his new residence was not too far away to allow continued cultivation. This has been especially important for younger men who, wishing to take up a vacant holding elsewhere, also desire to retain their share of the paternal holding obtained by inheritance. Conversely, they are now unable to move on to their father's holding and yet retain their fields in their own village. Such men must now make a permanent decision between the utility of, perhaps, two inadequate holdings which, however, combined together might be of satisfactory size.

As a consequence of this, inter-village opposition is probably greater than it has ever been in European times, and no less strong perhaps than it was in the old days. Men feel that the security of their holdings, the future of their sons, and the possibility of increasing their arable cultivation lies wholly within the security and stability of their own village. They tend to see other villages and other villagers as a potential threat to their own land requirements; they often suspect the worst of neighbouring villages who, they think, will, given the chance, seize some of their land. Headmen and villagers would refuse to cross the boundary into another village when they accompanied me during my investigations, lest they be accused of contemplating appropriation of the land there. Such aliens who still retained land in a village were regarded with some animosity. Nyakyusa would not look beyond their own village boundaries in an attempt to make an appreciation of the modern overall land situation. They wished only tenaciously to cling to what they already had and to guard it jealously; they were only too inclined to believe that other villages nearby were better off and to use them as scapegoats for their own difficulties and shortage. It must be said that this renewed insistence on village exclusiveness and the inviolability of village boundaries has in fact tended to make for a certain inequality of land-holding according to the perceptiveness and celerity with which headmen claimed authority over formerly vacant lands. This condition is, however, overexaggerated in men's claims today, and in any case it is tending to disappear under the pressure of inter-village movement. [628]

The Nyakyusa village in the Lake Plains, with its intensified independence and aggressive exclusiveness, and jealous of its believed permanent boundaries, has not at the same time been able to retain its traditional coeval basis. Whereas formerly the youths of a village moved to one side, there to build their own hamlet and eventually to acquire their own fields in association with its establishment as a full village in its own right, now this is no longer feasible or even possible, for the land is not available for this sort of expansion. The young men are driven back on a dependence on the fields already held by their fathers in the old village. They gradually move into their fathers' places and take over the paternal holdings; or, as we have seen, they seek where they may to obtain new allocations in any other village where they can gain admittance. The coeval basis of village living is lost. [181]

The boys and youths still leave their fathers' houses and build their first, small huts together on a site somewhere adjacent to the main village site, [882] [361] [561]

423 178 [882] [361] [56] as determined by the village headman. But even building sites with the essentially associated banana groves are becoming increasingly scarce and valuable, for no one desires to decrease the amount of arable by enlarging the built-up areas – rather the reverse. The number of young men's villages is therefore diminishing and congestion of their huts is increasing to the stage very often where no more than a narrow passage if left between adjacent houses. There comes to be a wider age range in the young men's hamlets where, often, a large village provides only one for all its sons. Smaller villages sometimes provide no accommodation at all for their sons, who are thus compelled to seek membership of a neighbouring group. These hamlets are mainly regarded nowadays as temporary residential areas for the young men until such time as they move on to an existing holding – their father's or some other. There is therefore no attempt to provide sufficient space for an adequate banana grove with each young man's house, let alone a food-crop plot behind it. The arable land beyond the congested huts already belongs to inhabitants of the main village. When a young man is able to leave and take up a holding, his vacated site (together, often, with the hut) is taken over by a waiting youth who has probably been sharing with another hitherto.

361 311 178 These young men's hamlets do not, any longer, eventually mature and become villages in their own right with their own headman and arable lands. Formerly, when this occurred, they would probably have taken over a good deal of the lands of the old village, as the young men exercised the privileges of their new maturity against their elders with the emergence of the new chiefdom. New chiefdoms, and with them new villages, no longer emerge, [648] and this is mainly because Government has prohibited the bifurcation of petty chiefdoms on the death of the old chief, as it is considered inconsistent with the development of stable, modern local government. Additionally, however, the shortage of land can no longer allow of the traditional expanding politico-territorial organisation. The elder men's villages are not now prepared to yield ground to the young men, and the latter cannot expand elsewhere. Thus political requirements and land restriction work together to make the old system obsolete and to freeze the spatial distribution of villages as it existed in early European times. As far as I could ascertain in the chiefdoms of the Lake Plains, probably no new village had emerged in the past 20 or more years, except for a few cases of large ones splitting into two for administrative and social convenience. Many villages there date back to pre-European days often now under the son, or even the grandson, of the original headman (though this is not essential or invariable in any way).

561 178 428 The age-basis of the Nyakyusa village is thus disappearing; indeed, in many villages it has already disappeared in everything but the young men's hamlets. Where the process has gone least far, there is still apparent a rough division of the single village into the old men's sector (men at least 50 years of age, and many much older); the middle-aged men's sector (men between about 30 and 50 years old, being the younger brothers or elder sons of the old men); and the young men's and youths' sector. On inheritance, sons tend to show a continued reluctance to move and live on their father's house-site and to become immediate neighbours of older men; they avoid it if possible, often allowing a middle-aged man to shift there instead. Nevertheless even 178 this sort of age-division is rapidly vanishing and in very many villages a 428 man's neighbour may be of any age.

We have seen that inheritance is now one of the chief methods of [802] obtaining land. Under the new inheritance rules, this means that sons follow their fathers and take up their fathers' arable holdings, building sites and banana groves. Some young men inherit early, others inherit late; there is no longer any notion or possibility of the younger generation entering into its

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

land en bloc. Young men compete with one another, with their elder brothers and with their fathers for allocations of land left vacant. We also saw, however, that often in the larger families[1] not all the sons are able to get a share of the paternal holding, or at least not a share of practicable size. Thus younger sons are forced to resort to trying to obtain vacant land elsewhere – possibly within the same village, but as often as not outside. Finally, the young man on his new holding may find his neighbours to be of any age; certainly they will not have been members of his own original coeval hamlet.

The way for this changing concept of village life and the new sort of village was prepared in the years before land shortage became important. The changed political system has been briefly noted already, but no less important was the great increase in inter-village movement in earlier European days when peace and personal security had been established. During this period Wilson (1938, page 32) reckoned that perhaps 80 per cent. of Nyakyusa shifted at least once from the place where they first obtained fields. This estimate, whilst perhaps holding good for Highland Nyakyusa amongst whom Wilson mainly worked, was too high for the people of the Lake Plains, where about 40 per cent. is more correct according to my genealogical and village surveys. That is still a relatively high degree of mobility for a mainly subsistence, peasant society such as it was in those years. It is clear that the pseudo-fraternal bond of coevality could not persist as a main element of village life and consciousness, when in fact as many as half of the members of a village were not original coeval founders but had come in from elsewhere. Before the land shortage, movement did not entail the shifting of young men to other young men's villages, or of older men to other older men's villages. It was, at least eventually, promiscuous movement, ignoring age categories. The compulsions of land shortage seem, in retrospect, only to have followed existing lines of village development and to have begun the completion of the process.

In the Lake Plains, therefore, the village persists as a close, territorial, land-owning group and as a specific cluster of homesteads and huts, usually with a village street, the whole closely hemmed in by continuous banana groves. Beyond this lie the arable lands, usually food-crop fields nearby and paddy fields farther off. In jealously protecting what it already holds, the village has gained a new exclusiveness, for the security of the individual land-holder is maintained by the corporate ownership of the village and by excluding outsiders as far as possible. On the other hand, it is no longer an age-village either in fact or intention, and it cannot be, for age-villages were consistent only with an expanding territorial system and a subsistence economy.

This brief analysis of Nyakyusa village organisation in recent times applies only to the Lake Plains. In some parts of both the Central Region and the Northern Highlands the age-basis of Nyakyusa villages had most probably already been seriously weakened in pre-European times.[2] On the other hand, elsewhere, and particularly in the more conservative parts less affected by modern trends and the cash economy, the traditional age-village still exists in something like its old form.

Land shortage has appeared in the Highlands together with a developing cash economy, but the basis of agricultural and economic change lies mainly in coffee cultivation which, of course, requires relatively smaller fields than does paddy in the Lake Plains, but it needs more care and attention from the grower for moderate success. As far as I could see in the course of

1. Polygny is still the norm amongst the older and many middle-aged men, and therefore a father often leaves several sons to inherit.

2. According to elderly informants in Western Kukwe, Mwakaleli and some central chiefdoms, and also the evidence of old village sites.

311 233 Whereas in the Highland and Central regions the large numbers of cattle – in relation, that is, to the available pasture resources – are causing over-grazing and soil erosion, particularly in the hilly areas so often nowadays relegated to pasturage, on the other hand in the flood plains there does not appear, at least to the layman, to have been any serious effects on the land. [241] The natural manuring of the paddy fields in the dry season is advantageous. In the Lake Plains it is the cattle rather than the land which suffer, but so far the Nyakyusa have done virtually nothing to meet the new conditions, other than to complain bitterly and fruitlessly.

The Young Men: Land Shortage and Labour Migration

● 423 The younger Nyakyusa men find increasing difficulty in obtaining arable land now that there are no longer vacant areas to be taken up, and the older men are no longer prepared to cede their land rights in favour of the younger generation, as they traditionally did. When occasional fields are left vacant, the young men must take their turn with their elders, who themselves are so chronically short of land – and the headmen commonly favour the older villagers with families as against the younger men. This means that in the high-density regions the majority of men under the age of about 30 years have little or no arable land, nor can they hope for it until the deaths of their fathers. In the congested village sites even their banana plots may be smaller than is desirable for the provision of the staple food.

[593] The young man, then, is compelled to remain dependent on his father's and elder brother's holding; indeed, headmen often justify their refusals to [178] allocate plots to young men on the express grounds that the latter must share their elders' fields. Thus the valued independence of the young Nyakyusa is severely restricted and it seems that tensions and difficulties are beginning [578] to arise between fathers and sons, and between brothers, because of this. Sons are blamed for not doing their fair share in the family cultivation; fathers are blamed for giving their sons inadequate shares in crops and crop incomes. It will be remembered that one of the fundamental principles underlying Nyakyusa society and its age-village organisation is the spatial segregation of parents and children (*cf.* page 22). Now they are inevitably being put into competition with one another over inadequate fields in a single holding.

The young men are severely restricted, if not altogether cut off, from the [434] opportunity to cultivate paddy in their own fields and thus to earn their incomes at home, for paddy-growing is the only way of earning a living in the [343] Lake Plains. Yet it is these younger men whose money demand is greatest; to buy clothing, bicycles and other store-goods, and to buy cattle for marriage payments. They are therefore strongly attracted by the ready opportunities for taking up wage-labour abroad, in the mines of the Rhodesias and South Africa where wages are high (see Gulliver, 1957).

With the best will in the world, when, as in the very high-density region, the average holding is little more than an acre and a half – when, that is, the older men themselves desire larger acreages for their own cultivation needs – it is not possible for a father to allow his son to take large shares in his fields. In some cases a father does give outright to his adult sons strips of his holding, but plots so provided are necessarily small. Quite as frequently a father does not consider it possible to break up his holding in his own lifetime, and sons are expected to assist in the common cultivation and to con- [543] tinue merely to be given a share in the family proceeds at harvest. It is not surprising, therefore, that very large numbers of young men from the Lake [167] Plains migrate abroad to work. Only about one man in 20 has not been away at all before the age of about 25 years. Much higher proportions of men and larger numbers absolutely are temporarily absent from the Lake

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Plains than from any other Nyakyusa area. In the high-density regions, the proportion of young men away at any one time is about 50 per cent. on the average and the proportion has risen concomitantly with the increasing scarcity of land.

It is not, of course, suggested that land shortage is the only factor responsible for contemporary labour migration amongst the Nyakyusa. Elsewhere (*loc. cit.*) I have drawn attention to the very high wages, the increased opportunity to obtain outside employment, the development of transport services and the intensification of recruiting, together with the general desire of the people to gain a higher standard of living as they more thoroughly embrace the new money economy. In fact, wage-labour in the mines is more profitable than growing paddy at home under current agricultural practice, even were land more easily available. Nevertheless, more young men do leave their homes in the Lake Plains than elsewhere in the country, and there is a rough correlation between land availability and the degree of labour migration, which seems to indicate that where men can obtain more land they tend to seek their money incomes at home. The Nyakyusa themselves, with an intensity of tribal patriotism, say that they much prefer to remain at home if they can earn their money there, even if they earn rather less than they might obtain abroad; but, say the young men, it is impossible to earn anything like sufficient when the fields are unobtainable in which to cultivate the cash-crop.

The data which I have been able to collect are summarised in Table VII. Young men are defined here as those under about 30 years old.

TABLE VII

YOUNG MEN: LAND HOLDING AND LABOUR MIGRATION

Village and chiefdom	*Young men having own paddy field*	*Young men away at work*	*Average holding of: Young men who own land*	*Older men in same village*
1. Very high density region				
Mpunguti Mwakipesile ..	17%	53%	0.5 acres	1.9 acres
Kapugi Koroso	25%	54%	0.75 acres	1.5 acres
Ndobo Mwakyusa ..	28%	51%	—	—
2. High density region				
Ikolo Mwakyusa ..	37%	47%	1.6 acres	3.7 acres
Kapugi Mwamasangula	52%	39%	1.25 acres	4.5 acres

There are some young men who have small food-crop plots but no paddy field, but I have chosen to correlate labour migration with paddy cultivation because these are almost the only alternative ways of earning money today, and the people themselves recognise the fact. The number of samples is too small, but the general inference seems to be quite clear nonetheless. My own conclusions in this matter were, however, arrived at independently of these figures, which were only obtained for corroboration. The evidence of the people themselves and their obvious difficulties of earning money at home were overwhelming.

If anything is required to underline the current land shortage and to illustrate the small size of the average holding, it surely lies in the existence of villages in which only about one quarter of the young men have their own paddy fields, and in which the average holding of this minority amounts to less than an acre.

Only in the low-density region can the young men obtain the fields they require. There, as they did traditionally, the young adult sons continue to assist their fathers in the heavier labour in the fields, but gradually before marriage they accumulate and extend their own holdings and so achieve economic independence. Elsewhere in the Lake Plains this process is taking much longer and indeed it now very frequently awaits inheritance at the death

of the father. The old principle that every man had the right to arable land applied no less strongly to the young men, married or bachelors. Today most headmen will refuse to entertain the applications of young bachelors for land, and in this they merely represent general public opinion. But many young husbands likewise cannot obtain land, or only an insufficient amount.

Consequently, the following case-history, which I recorded for one young man, is not unusual. In 1955 he lived in the Mlangali young-men's hamlet, attached to Mpunguti village in Mwakipesile's chiefdom, where his father lives. He was about 27 years old and had a wife and one child. Twice he had been to work in the mines and from the profits of this employment he had completed his bridewealth payment and had bought, in addition, three cattle, a bicycle and some good clothing. He thought he would probably go away again. Behind his house his wife had about 300 square yards of bananas and there was a tiny patch of cassava. This man had no other land, but he assisted in the heavy labour on his father's holding (about 1.7 acres in all) and by family convention he normally took for his own use the paddy crop of a small strip there; he insisted, however, that he had not been given this strip outright and that it remained at his father's pleasure. He had an unmarried half-brother about 22 years old who had not obtained even that concession at the time. Their father was about 55 years old and had two other sons who were still boys. The young man himself had been refused an allocation of land by the headman on the grounds that (as the headman well knew) he had the use of this strip of his father's land, and also because, as the eldest son, he would be the principal heir on his father's death. He was clearly worried about his future, for he did not wish to go abroad again and leave his wife and child; but he did not see how he could stay at home without seriously lowering his standard of living to little above subsistence level.

I quote this brief case-history not necessarily as typical – though I think it probably is – but as an actual illustration of the present state of affairs as they affect an individual.

The Modern "Chief" and the Land

Most of the traditional chiefs, *abanyafyale*, have been recognised and salaried under the Native Authority, and they are officially referred to today as *abatwa* (s. *ntwa*). Some of the smallest chiefdoms have been absorbed administratively by their larger neighbours, and, although they are still recognised by the people, their *abanyafyale* have lost very much of their earlier prestige and authority. In the Lake Plains the modern chiefdoms are often rather larger than is usual amongst the Nyakyusa,[1] but they are, of course, small in comparison with the size of most African chiefdoms in Tanganyika.

The slightness of the traditional authority of the chief in land matters has already been noted (pages 7-8) and in general this still holds. In European times, however, the recognised chiefs have been given an increased authority and prestige as local intermediaries between Government and people, and until recent years they were almost the only local instruments of the Government amongst the Nyakyusa. They have been backed by the all-powerful European, who preferred to deal with single, recognised individuals thought to have prime authority in a locality, and the European officer has been encouraged in this notion by an over-enthusiastic policy of indirect rule. Such chiefs were able to assume a degree of power well beyond the traditional limits, and to aggrandize themselves thereby. The ordinary commoner was never quite sure how far his chief was individually claiming more than he

1. On the numerical size of chiefdoms see supra, page 6.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

had authority to claim, or how far the Central Government was permitting or even compelling him to use new powers. Part of this novel power has, not unnaturally, been used to take over land-control responsibilities to which the chief has no traditional tribal right, and it has led to the claims, sometimes heard in the Courts and upheld in the District Commissioner's Appeal Court, that chiefs are the sole, traditional and rightful land authorities. It has led to chiefs assuming, or trying to assume, land allocation and supervisory powers which hitherto were the close right only of the village headmen.

Thus some chiefs have declared that they alone, or at least primarily, have allocatory powers over formerly uncultivated tracts which are relatively distant from the villages and which have now become valuable as paddy fields. Others have come to claim rights of interference in village land affairs, even within the long-established village areas. By the undefined threat of their alleged Government support, by taking advantage of new conditions, they have not infrequently "got away with it". They have insisted that their own nominees be allocated vacant holdings; they have gone over the heads of village headmen and made public their opinion as to who, amongst numbers of aspirants, should receive land in villages; they have insisted that headmen should consult them on the details of allocation. The desire for power and further prestige is one impulse behind this development. Sometimes the chiefs, better educated than many of their headmen, are able to understand the modern land situation better and are impatient of their headmen's conservatism and procrastination. Another factor is the potential profit which may accrue as land becomes scarce and thus a valuable commodity, and this became particularly important when the rush developed to take up the formerly vacant lands for paddy cultivation. Gifts in money and kind became common in return for preferential treatment for the donors. These lands are now all allocated and held by someone, but the chiefs have been reluctant to relinquish their new-found authority.

These remarks do not apply to all the chiefs: some have been notably content to use their influence through the traditional system by judicious co-operation with their headmen. Some, too, have been too imperceptive to bother to take action at all. Again, some have been forestalled by strong village headmen who would not allow any diminution of their own status and rights. In some of the fomerly vacant lands where no headman could reasonably claim traditional jurisdiction, the operations of the chiefs have probably been beneficial in reducing chaotic land-grabbing and jealous rivalry; once, however, these lands are brought under cultivation there seems to be a good case for their inclusion within the normal Nyakyusa land-control system. The continued existence of a supra-headman authority does not necessarily lead to stability or improved control. Certainly it is not in keeping with the people's values and institutions.

For these changes Government must clearly bear some responsibility and often also the blame for indirectly causing alterations in native land law and custom by some administrative attitude or ruling in a related sphere. There has been a good deal of well-intentioned insistence on determining and strengthening the "Land Authority" in tribal areas in the interests of stability and efficiency. In Rungwe District the facile claims of Nyakyusa chiefs have been only too readily accepted without question. In fact the traditional *umalafyale*, chief, only represented his chiefdom as a unit, and his lack of real power corresponded to the lack of cohesion within the chiefdom. The notion of a supreme "Land Authority" is largely incorrect for the Nyakyusa. In a theoretical sense we may perhaps say that the total land of a chiefdom was and is owned by all of the people in that chiefdom – chief, headmen and villagers; and therefore we may perhaps categorise the chief, the single individual representing the group as a whole, as the "land-owner." To

do this is however, seriously to strain the facts and values beyond what the average Nyakusa would understand or allow. The chief does not, as we have seen, allocate land either to villages as individual units or to the villagers separately; new, traditional villages obtained their land by allocation from the old headmen, and individual villagers were and are allocated their holdings by their own headman. The chief can act as arbitrator between villagers and villages, but his decisions have been notoriously difficult to enforce. Undoubtedly commoners resent the attempts by their chief to interfere in their own village affairs.

Now it may, of course, be desirable to widen and thus facilitate the scope of land authority, allocatory responsibility and equitable supervision, especially in the interests of a developing cash economy in a situation of a critical shortage of land. But if this significant change in native land law is to be introduced, it should surely be as a result of a proper appreciation of the facts and the existing law, and it must be in conformity with the interests and desires of the people themselves. It ought not to be a gradual sliding into a new situation as a result of other factors – as a by-product of local government development, for example, or as a matter of administrative convenience unsupported by real understanding. To make the chiefs the executive agents of the local government system does not necessarily mean – or it should not – that they should be passively allowed to usurp the land allocation powers of their headmen. Further, in view of modern Territorial policy aimed at bringing the people and their village leaders into the local government system, it seems perhaps unwise that at the same time chiefs should be allowed to assert non-traditional, autocratic land powers which are resented by villagers and headmen, and which may do little to improve the already difficult situation. When the additional powers of the chiefs are used at least partly, if not mainly, for self-aggrandizement or for personal profit, then it is a trend which needs to be strictly curtailed and controlled.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Briefly to summarise the contemporary land situation: in the Lake Plains it may be said that in the main the traditional land tenure system and land law still continue as the basis of native land holding today. The essential feature in recent years has been the acute land shortage in relation to arable needs under the current system of agriculture. Village unity and village exclusiveness have been increased and so also has the authority of the village headman in his control and allocation of land rights. Security of tenure has been strengthened, if anything, and one of the most important methods of obtaining land is now by inheritance. The new law establishing inheritance from father to sons, whilst generally acceptable to the people, is producing a number of civil suits which form the greatest proportion of the more important land cases before the local courts.

The shortage of land is principally the result of increased demands for paddy (i.e. cash crop) cultivation, although the population appears to be increasing slowly. In the high density regions almost all men have considerably less land than they could cultivate, especially under the impetus of the ox-plough, with the developing desires for money income. In the low density region of the low foothills there is still some vacant or partly utilised land, though of very inferior quality for paddy cultivation. The shortage hits the younger men severely, and many of them cannot obtain land at all until the death or senility of their fathers. Fragmentation and dispersion of holdings is rapidly becoming serious and without check.

The first question which arises is whether anything can be done to ease the pressure of population on the country by making more land available, or by making its distribution more equitable.

The thinly populated parts of the northern region of the Lake Plains offer a meagre solution only, for the country is raised above the level of the flood plains and is often broken and hilly. Fertility is low, erosion is a constant danger and the paddy yield (if obtainable at all) is poor. Nyakyusa from the densely populated areas to south and east are therefore most unwilling to move there. In any case the available land, which remains safely and economically open to cultivation, is filling up fairly quickly – mainly by immigration. Certainly I do not think that it can supply sufficient space to meet modern needs. There is, however, no reason why immigrants should make a difficult situation worse, and therefore it is suggested that further immigration from outside the Lake Plains should be carefully controlled if not altogether prevented. Indubitably outsiders (almost entirely Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who hold land without permanent residence should be prohibited and their holdings reallocated to local inhabitants.

As I have already indicated (page 17), I do not think that the problem of men who hold unusually large acreages is particularly serious. Such large holdings are relatively few and will be inevitably split up by inheritance on the deaths of the present occupiers.

In the flood plains proper there is, as far as I am aware, extremely little new land which could be brought under cultivation. Mechanical assistance in the clearance of dense reed thicket[1] and in drainage schemes would produce

1. These areas of thicket are heavily inundated in the wet season but, if cleared, could be used for a dry season crop.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

311 some more land. How much could be made cultivable is beyond my appraisal, but it would be of valuable local assistance and ought not to be neglected. 423 It does not, on the other hand, appear practicable to decrease further the amount of land used for building and village sites – the people themselves have already done this to some extent, and increased congestion in the villages would probably be undesirable on medical grounds.

There remain the local cases where part or all of a holding is not used (excluding genuine fallowing). An old man, or one who has for some reason lost the labour of his wives or sons, is sometimes unable to cultivate the whole of his fields. This is not common, or if it occurs the occupier is usually approached by his kinsmen, friends and neighbours for a loan or gift. Occasionally such land does remain relatively unutilised and the occupier refuses to release it even at the request of the headman. There is some feeling in the Lake Plains over this matter, and some men have suggested openly that such unused land should compulsorily revert to the village to be re-allocated by the headman.[1] Unless there is overwhelming demand for a new ruling here it would seem not to be a practicable policy and would only weaken security of land-holding and further increase the already over-exaggerated communal claim of the village. It would, of course, be difficult to assess when in fact a man had more land than he could or would cultivate, and it might easily lead to injustice if chiefs or headmen were given powers (however restricted) to interfere in a man's holding. Nevertheless headmen might be encouraged to keep a close watch on unused fields in their villages and to bring pressure to bear either to persuade the occupier to increase his efforts or to make temporary, witnessed loans to a neighbour.

In some cases land is left unused for a period whilst a man is away from home – usually while he is away at work. Where his absence is brief, little can or needs to be done, and already under Nyakyusa law the headman may authorise another villager to cultivate the fields on a year to year tenure: the absentee re-entering his holding on return. Occasionally, however, a young man may, for example, inherit land but then leave it for a number of years whilst he migrates to work in the mines. There is no adequate ruling as to the number of years' absence which should elapse before the absentee forfeits his land as an assumed permanent emigrant from the village. Headmen are reluctant to reallocate unused land for fear of the obvious legal and [622] social difficulties should the absentee return, although some headmen are more hasty than others in this matter. Neighbours are often reluctant to borrow the land for fear of losing their opportunity of an outright allocation elsewhere in the village in the meantime. In some cases I saw fields which had lain unused for more than four years for these reasons. Like the unused portions of an old man's holding, these few cases arouse a good deal of land-hungry indignation, beyond their real importance in fact. Nevertheless some limit to the period of absence might well be introduced so that at least headmen know what their authority is in this matter, and so that men not prepared to work the land shall not be able to retain it indefinitely. It may be noted that the average length of absence of men in migratory labour is 18-24 months. A period of three years' continuous absence, at least without special cause, might perhaps be taken to indicate the automatic abdication of right of tenure.

If more land cannot be made available – or only relatively little – the obvious solution is a more intensive and profitable use of the existing resources. The Agricultural Department has long urged this policy and is [648] attempting to put it into effect, pointing out the relatively inferior yields of paddy in the Lake Plains because of poor techniques and inefficient effort.

1. Significantly enough, one of the men to bring this suggestion to my notice was the Nyakyusa Senior Agricultural Instructor in the Lake Plains.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

This is not the province of the Sociologist, and all that can be said here is that it seems the most practical and valuable policy that could be adopted: it should be made the chief line of attack on contemporary problems. Unfortunately the Nyakyusa do not appreciate the value of this sort of solution – at least not yet – and therefore they are not inclined to learn and to increase their efforts and to change their practices in the fields. They have not yet rid themselves of the notion that increased production of crops and thus increased profits from agriculture are correlated only with increased holdings. In view of the critical land shortage a crucial change of attitude and understanding is required. The Nyakyusa must learn that increased production and higher profits can come from new and more efficient techniques – i.e. intensive cultivation. They must also learn what is so difficult for the African, that quality of production is no less important than quantity and that therefore cash incomes and standards of living can be raised by improving the standard of crops to be sold. Indeed, with a tendency for world agricultural prices to fall due to increasing supply, quality of produce is of the greatest importance. This is notably so in the case of rice. Tanganyika African rice is reckoned as of lower quality than that from South-east Asia, which therefore commands not only the better price but also the main share of the keenly competitive market. But it is a difficult idea for the Nyakyusa to grasp. It seems obvious to them, inheriting attitudes of a former subsistence age, that three poor cattle are better than two good ones – and in fact so they were in the hazardous time of their grandfathers. Cash crop production is based on the same premise, but it cannot hold in a modern cash economy and in dealings with world markets. 311 423 81

If, however, the present land shortage continues unchecked by the successful introduction of new attitudes, ideas and techniques there may well be serious social and political repercussions in the not too distant future. Current schemes of tribal development will surely be rendered futile if economic activity is restricted and if land discontent is allowed to become important.

A second agricultural policy, and one of which less is heard, would be to stop the present dangerous monoculture – the persistence with paddy alone – and to attempt on a large scale to introduce second and third cash crops, particularly such crops as require intensive cultivation on small acreages. This may be forced on the people in any case if the gloomy prognostications of world rice prices are borne out in the next few years. Such a development would allow of a more stable economy and a more balanced agriculture, in addition to assisting towards a reduction of land difficulties. Experiments on a small scale in robusta coffee, palm oil and other crops have already been started by the Agricultural Department but, at least from the layman's point of view, they need priority in finance, attention and effort as a main part of an agricultural programme for the Lake Plains. [648]

In the time available for my investigations it was not possible to enquire with sufficient care into the details and exact procedure of Nyakyusa land law (c.f. page 3) and therefore I am reluctant to suggest any drastic changes. The new inheritance law (page 21) is a step in the right direction and is clearly in keeping with modern trends, but it is suggested that its detailed operation on the ground and in the courts should be studied by the Native Authority and the Administration in order to attempt to define its meaning more clearly and to reduce the number of disputes. In order to check fragmentation before it has gone too far, it should be considered whether some minimum limit might not be imposed on the size of fields. Voluntary schemes for the consolidation of holdings, which have achieved some success elsewhere in Africa, might also be considered. These would be particularly valuable in the 311 423 [118] [328]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

311 flood plains paddy fields where the ox-plough is in general use today. The
423 general advantages of consolidation require no exposition here.

In view of the domestic, economic and social importance of cattle to
[233] the Nyakyusa and their potential value in a mixed intensive economy, and also in view of the fact that cattle are widely held in very small numbers by individual families, it is suggested that further and more urgent attempts be made to encourage stall-feeding, especially during the wet season. It is realised that past efforts in this matter have failed, and therefore a thorough-going scheme of propaganda and demonstration work is needed. Small fodder crops might be grown in the dry season and there is always plenty of banana fodder as makeweight.

The problem of the landless young men is likely to remain very difficult (see pages 36ff). It has to be remembered of course, that as they get older men do acquire land gradually. Nevertheless the proportion of landless, or
[167] virtually landless, men is high and is apparently increasing. The large-scale, post-war labour migration to the Rhodesias and South Africa is undoubtedly one of the more important results of land shortage and economic difficulty, and it is a valuable safety valve. As I have written elsewhere: "The serious and increasing land shortage amongst the Nyakyusa raises real doubts if there is any policy at all which can keep the men at home when there is not enough land for them – for the sake of both economic and general social stability it might be preferable in the long run if the continued pressure on the land resources were released by a degree of permanent emigration."[1] Since writing that and during the course of my land investigations I have only become more convinced of its rightness. I would now go so far as to say that
[464] Nyakyusa men should be encouraged to go abroad to work and even to become permanent wage-labourers in the industries and areas which demand labour and offer a higher standard of living. If the Nyakyusa are not to be seriously retarded in their home economic development, based as it must be on agriculture (i.e. on the land), the excess population must find an outlet elsewhere.

The general tendency towards greatly increased exclusiveness in the
[62] Nyakyusa village, involving renewed emphasis on the principle of land-
[597] holding only by residence and the forfeiture of a holding when changing residence, raises wider issues the future significance of which is not easily seen, especially by the Nyakyusa themselves. This narrow village parochialism does little to meet the increasingly difficult problem of land shortage, whilst the isolation it fosters is the antithesis of the wider outlook required by a developing society in a world money economy. I am fully aware of the strong native sentiment attached to the village and to village independence, but this was in fact diminishing in earlier European times before the new land scarcity set in (see pages 29-30). I do not think that this village system and the complex of attitudes and values it fosters is adequate to provide for the future – a future which the Nyakyusa do not yet clearly foresee. With some deference, therefore, I offer the following suggestion: a man who already has a holding should be able to retain it when he moves to live in another village. If his new home is too far away for the continued cultivation of all or part of the holding, or for any other valid reason, he should be able to sell or give it to anyone he wishes. Such gift or sale could be supervised by the headman of the village in which the holding lies. It might well, at first at any rate, be limited to a member of the same village, either an established villager or another man who is willing to come and live there. I think it important that disposal should be outright and not on leasehold terms, for the latter would most propably engender further complications and uncertainty of tenure, which must be avoided.

1. Gulliver, P. H.: *A Report on the Migration of African Workers to the South from the Southern Highlands Province, with special reference to the Nyakyusa of Rungwe District.* Provincial Administration, Tanganyika, 1955, page A21.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Thus men wishing to move could seek to obtain, that is to buy, a holding from another man living in a village to which he is willing to move; a man leaving a village could either retain his holding in cultivation or obtain some compensation for the loss of his holding there. It is not likely that this would produce a rush of land sales, for only a relatively few men would wish to relinquish their holdings. It would, however, facilitate freer movement between villages. Secondly, it would assist younger men to obtain holdings when they have earned and saved money at work.[1] Thirdly, it would assist profit-making cultivators to enlarge their holdings. Fourthly, it would help to bring to the Nyakyusa a realisation of the implications of the new money economy which they have inevitably and irrevocably entered, and it would demonstrate the value of holdings in relation to other commodities and activities. This kind of system would allow the village to retain much of its valued unity and control whilst reducing its excessive and potentially harmful exclusiveness. Such disposals of land, especially if by money sale, could be performed before the headman and other reliable village witnesses and they could be registered formally at the local court. There would need also to be some ruling limiting the maximum size of holdings (to prevent excessive buying) and preventing alienation to Africans from outside the Lake Plains. In this matter the village headman would probably be the executive authority.

Although the suggestion could be introduced simply as a scheme enabling the buying and selling of land, I am here more concerned with the problem of freer movement and the limitation of the reversionary rights of the headman on behalf of the village, whilst retaining his useful controls. A more general recognition of the economic value of land would probably follow, and if it proved practicable and useful, an extended and refined scheme could be introduced later.

My suggestions are, then, as follows:—

1. (*a*) an immediate restriction of immigration into the Lake Plains from whatever origin, and the encouragement of the movement of people from the congested areas into the lightly populated areas, accompanied by local development programmes there;

(*b*) the consideration of the practicability of drainage and thicket clearance schemes in order to make more land available;

(*c*) the absolute abolition of land-holding by non-residents and the reallocation through the local headmen of land so held to local inhabitants;

(*d*) the sympathetic encouragement of village headmen to watch unused portions of villagers' holdings with a view to their voluntary and temporary reallocation to neighbours in need.

2. (*a*) a detailed enquiry into the operation and administration of the new inheritance law, with a view to improving its details;

(*b*) an enquiry into the possibility of imposing a minimum limit on the size of holdings and plots;

(*c*) the introduction of local, voluntary schemes for the consolidation of holdings.

3. Covering the whole field of Nyakyusa land problems must necessarily be a progressive agricultural programme aimed, firstly, at a more intensive and a more efficient use of the land by improved cultivation methods, and, secondly, the abolition of monoculture by the introduction of other cash crops. This is, of course, the policy of the Agricultural Department, but it needs more urgent application despite the obvious difficulties raised.

Stall-feeding of cattle, especially in the wet season, would assist to improve the living conditions of the herds and to increase their domestic and economic value.

1. It would also provide an alternative cash investment to the present purchase of cattle.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

311
423

4. The safety valve of labour migration should not be closed and young Nyakyusa should be encouraged to go away to work whilst wages abroad are relatively high.

5. Finally, with a view to the future as well as the present, it is suggested that an individual's land-holding should be at his own disposal, and, if desired, by money sale. Purchasers should, at first anyway, be limited to members of the village where the holding lies or to men willing to settle there.

These recommendations are to be taken only as a suggested programme for administrative consideration. No attempt can be made here to lay down the details of future policy, for that is the function and responsibility of administrators and technical officers, African and European, and not of the Sociologist.

The Sociologist could, however, with profit participate in the discussions and work preparatory to the development of a satisfactory programme. It is essential that a complete programme be arranged and executed to tackle all or most of the problems concerning the land, economics and agriculture. Tinkering with different aspects here and there is likely to be unfruitful and is unlikely to command the propaganda and drive of a comprehensive scheme. Such a planned scheme should be able to catch the imagination and support of the people themselves, especially if they and their leaders can be brought to see the reasons for it and the value it may bring.

113

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243 and Mapiko, although very little of these is sold. Ploughs have been introduced into the area as it is flat and the total number in use in 1942 is about 400. The first ploughing is carried out in June or July when the ground is still wet, and the second ploughing in October to February. Planting, which is all broadcast, is carried out in November to the middle of March and the harvesting is done in May to September.

256 A first mill was erected at Ipyana on the lake shore in 1942 with a capacity of 9 tons of rice in 15 hours. Another is now on its way from India with a capacity of 14 tons of rice in 15 hours and should be erected some time in 1944.

248 A small acreage of cotton is also sown along the Songwe River boundary, which borders on Nyasaland, with seed obtained from that Colony. Conditions, however, are not suitable on the remainder of the lake shore and expansion is not encouraged.

241 439 A list of exports from the district with approximate weights for 1942 is appended:—

Article	Weight in tons
	Tons
Mixed beans	880
Coffee	50
Groundnuts	50
Maize..	1,000
Onions	50
European potatoes	200
Rice	1,000
Vegetables	60
Fruit	100
Banana flour	300
Cassava flour	50
Finger millet	150
Tea (European produce)	318
Total ..	4,758

Land Tenure and Economics of the People

423 In theory all land belongs to the chiefs or sub-chiefs, but in practice once a man has cultivated a plot, that plot belongs to him until he leaves the area in which he lives. If he leaves, the land reverts to the chief or sub-chief and may be given by him through his headman or elder to anyone in his area who is short of land or to a newcomer who wants a plot. Should a man go away and return after a long period and ask for a plot, he is bound to be given one but not necessarily the plot he had before he left. Newcomers are welcomed and are given land, as the amount of tax collected in an area is an indication of the importance of a chief.

554 609 651

233 Stock grazing is a problem which is coming more and more to the fore. The number of

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

decided by the old village headmen and chief in consultation, at the commencement of the 'coming out' ceremony. This moving aside of the old men is an essential part of the ceremony and occurs even when there is unoccupied land available. For example, at the 'coming out' of Mwankuga, Mwaipopo's heir, the old men moved aside to make room for their sons, although there is a large area of unoccupied land in the chiefdom, which is slowly being colonized by Mwaipopo's men.

Although the main redistribution is at the 'coming out', later readjustments are common enough. If a particular men's village attracts many members, and these members become wealthy in wives and children, then it may be necessary for the old men to move aside a second time, to make yet more room for their sons. The senior headman of the side of the chiefdom concerned, in consultation with the chief and other village headmen, has the power to make equitable adjustments in the land holdings of the villages of his side. We watched one village, whose numbers had diminished, being moved to make more room for a junior one which had flourished. But so long as its members remain together, a village retains its name and identity, though its site may be moved more than once. 'A village', the Nyakyusa say, 'consists in men, not in land.'

Boundary disputes between villages of a chiefdom are not unusual. In the old days these often led to war. Nowadays they are taken before the Court, whence there is an appeal to the federal court, the District Officer, the Provincial Commissioner and thence to the High Court (cf. p. 137). One such case, which we observed, had dragged on for years because the chief concerned, who happened to be president of the Court, feared to give judgment lest he be bewitched by the village which lost the case (cf. Document p. 191).

The division of the land allotted to each village lies with the members of that village, under the leadership of their own headman. The village headman himself, and other prominent individuals in the group, get first choice of sites: a son does not have a prescriptive right to the building site and gardens of his father when the old men move aside for their sons. 'If you are prominent, and you like your father's old site, that's all right, the others agree; but if you are unimportant ("light"), no; one of the important men takes it; you have no power.' Certain building and garden

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

425 554 sites are preferred to others, but the division of them at the 'coming out' does not appear to create much friction.

423 When the old men move they still maintain rights over what may be regarded as the major 'improvement' made on their old sites, that is, trees which they or others have planted. There are two species which were traditionally and still are of great value to the Nyakyusa, the bamboo and the *unsyunguti*. Bamboos are used for house-building, while the *unsyunguti* produces a fruit which is both delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment. As has been shown in a previous essay[1] rights over these trees are maintained when individuals move from one village to another. Similarly, when a whole village moves, rights over bamboos are maintained, the former owner returning to cut them himself if he chooses. But the less valuable *unsyunguti* crop is left to the occupier. As one old man put it: 'We don't send our wives back to harvest the *imisyunguti* trees lest the young men make love to them there.' Bamboos are felled by men. Further complications are now potentially created by the planting of coffee-trees, but we know of no case in which a 'coming out' has yet taken place in a chiefdom in which coffee has been extensively planted—the first coffee-planters were those living on mission land which is unaffected by the 'coming out' ceremony. Now that coffee planting is becoming general, however, the difficulties of moving whole villages will be much greater.

The only land which was traditionally excluded from the 'new deal' in each generation is the very scarce and valuable ground in the bottom of old volcanic craters. This land is owned by families, and is always claimed by a kinsman when the occupier dies or moves to another chiefdom. It may be that long ago the land in each particular crater was owned solely by members of some particular village, but now it is held by old families scattered all over the chiefdom in which it lies. Thus ordinary [428] land, of which in the old days there was ample, was re-allotted in each generation, but the most valuable ground was passed down from father to son. We shall return to this point again in our last chapter.

425 As we have seen, movement of individuals from one village to another is very frequent. Normally land for building and gardens

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa*, pp. 43–5, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 1, 1938.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

is granted to a stranger by the villagers concerned, acting through their headman, not by the chief, who is usually informed, but seldom interferes. Only if a member of the chief's own family is moving within the chiefdom from one village to another, or if a very important stranger comes from outside, he may go to the chief and ask for a building plot, and the chief may then exercise his right of overlordship and grant the request. But this is a special and unusual case. It is villagers who grant land to an ordinary new-comer[1] and thereby accept him as one of themselves. His own wishes are taken into account whenever possible; if he sees a piece of ground which attracts him, and no one else has a claim to it, then it will be his. 425

We must emphasize the willingness with which strangers are received both by the villagers and the chief. Men are still scarcer than land in most places and the prestige and prosperity of villages and chiefdoms are increased by each addition to their membership. As we have said, part of the magical treatment at the 'coming out' is directly designed to attract followers to chiefs and village headmen. Strangers to a village are always given a house to sleep in while they are building their own and are usually given food as well, both formally by the chiefs and village headman and informally by the neighbours. This formal giving of food has lapsed in Porokoto's chiefdom, which adjoins Rungwe mission, and to which very considerable immigration has taken place in the last forty years; there the relative scarcity of land is reflected in a decline of hospitality to new-comers, though none have yet been refused land. But the usual custom still is to receive them generously. 689 425

The granting of land to a new-comer is subject to the rights of a villager who has moved but may return. As we have seen, moves from one village to another are frequent, and unless a man has been expelled for witchcraft or some other serious crime his building site and gardens are kept for him, at least for a time. Anyone who occupies them does so on the understanding that he must vacate them should the former owner, or his heir, return. Further, a man who moves retains certain rights over bamboos, *imiyunguti* and coffee-trees. The precise conditions under which individuals who have moved may reclaim their land have been discussed in *The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa*.[2] 425

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 42. [2] pp. 36–42.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

425 and need not be recapitulated. The essential fact here is that the village is the group which allocates land to a new-comer, and which maintains the rights of individuals who have moved and who wish to return.

425 Once established in a village, a man can hoe any ground which has not yet been cultivated, and thereby make it his own.[1] No 423 reference need be made to the headman and other villagers, provided that he does not encroach on land formerly cultivated by others, or on the main pasture land. There is no limit to the acreage he may use. Pasture-land is jointly owned by the whole village group and no individual has exclusive rights to any portion of it. Every member of a village has the right to graze his cattle on the village pastures, and this right may also be granted to an outsider by the village headman in consultation with his neighbours. But no one has the right to cut trees near the village (unless they are ones he has planted or inherited) without the permission of his fellow villagers. The death of one man we knew, the younger brother of a chief, was attributed to the fact that he had cut a branch from a self-sown tree growing in the arable land of a village in which he was a new-comer, without asking permission of his fellow villagers. It was said that 'the owners' of the village were angry and killed him because he had not asked their leave before lopping the tree. He had wanted the branch to make an axe-handle.

423 The land rights of Christians living in the chiefdoms are identical with those of their pagan fellows; but those who live on 797 mission land are in a different position. They are tenants of the mission, paying an annual rent of 1s., and liable to be evicted by the missionary in charge if they leave the Church. A man so driven out loses the coffee-trees he has planted. One Christian informant remarked: 'We do not think it good to plant coffee on mission land because very often a man is turned out of the Church.' And at Rungwe mission even those moving voluntarily lose the coffee they have planted. Now all trees introduced by Europeans have been declared by the Federation of Chiefs to be the property of the planter, even though he has moved to a different chiefdom, and Christians feel that they have greater security of ownership in coffee planted in the chiefdoms than in that on mission land. The difficulties likely to arise at a 'coming out' are ignored, and

[1] Ibid., pp. 42-2.

I:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 land in each generation. The territorial segregation of fathers and
561 sons is directly dependent upon the shifting of the old men after
178 the 'coming out' ceremony, without which the young men would not have sufficient land to establish themselves as a compact group on land adequate to support their growing families. Where no redistribution of land takes place, as on mission land and in the chiefdoms where the 'coming out' ceremony has been dropped, the territorial division between age groups becomes blurred within a generation.

621 Redistribution of land in each generation depends upon two
425 further conditions: the existence of ample land to support the population, and relatively little development of land. As soon as
423 land becomes scarce those in possession of it are reluctant to agree
178 to redistribution. It is significant that the most valuable land of all in Nyakyusa country—that in old craters—is *not* redistributed at a 'coming out' ceremony, but is retained by an individual until his death, and then inherited by kinsmen. And as soon as improvements are made in the form of planting long-term crops, or building durable and expensive houses, the difficulties of redistribution are increased. Nyakyusa land-law recognized the right of an elder who had moved, or of his son, to the bamboos and *ismiywaguti* trees he had planted (*vide supra*, p. 46). But such rights become much more complicated when it is not only an odd clump of bamboos or two or three trees which are at stake, but a large patch of coffee; or when, in place of the old-fashioned long hut (*ikibaga*) built with the co-operation of kinsmen and neighbours, there is a more substantial house with expensive doors and windows made by an expert carpenter. It has been shown that where individual rights over trees or other long-term crops are recognized, and such crops are planted on a large scale, individual tenure of land, as opposed to a temporary right of usufruct, tends to develop.[1]

621 Secondly, the solidarity of the Nyakyusa age-village, as of
476 kinship villages in other African societies, is a function of a small-scale society. Fellow villagers have been hitherto, and are still in
178 a large measure, dependent upon one another for land, for aid in economic undertakings, for sympathy and good fellowship, and for protection 'by night and by day'. But such mutual dependence is visibly decreasing. In the economic field co-opera-

[1] C. K. Meek, *Land Law and Custom in the Colonies*, p. 18.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

3. A LAND DISPUTE BETWEEN VILLAGES OF THE SAME CHIEFDOM

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This case was discussed with a great number of informants. We first quote the account written by Mwaisumo (our clerk) which sums up the earlier discussions. 'Mwanaambe and Mwakalembo are quarrelling over the land of Ipoma. Both are village headmen of the older generation of Mwaipopo (the chief). Mwanaambe is the senior, Mwakalembo the junior. Mwanaambe is senior village headman of Mwaipopo. Mwakalembo is the next on his side (see table, pp. 181–2).

'At the "coming out" of Mwaipopo the old men gave Mwanaambe the land of Bujege, and said that his junior Mwakalembo should build on the land of Bunikali. He (Mwakalembo) built with Mwakwese, the man of Seba.

'When the "coming out" of Mwankuga, Mwaipopo's son, was held, Mwanaambe sent to his junior Mwakalembo, saying: "At your place here we are going to build the house of our wife Kalinga, that is to say we are going to plant the *ulupande* tree of our child Mwankuga here." Mwakalembo agreed, but in secret he thought to himself: "My senior wants to seize my village! See he is building the great house at my place, and I am a junior!" So they brought out Mwankuga with Mwafungo as his senior headman, and Mwaseba Kabolile as a junior, and they planted the *ulupande* tree. Mwafungo built with his people and Mwaseba Kabolile with his. Later on Mwanaambe arranged for his "sons", *i.e.* Mwafungo and his fellows, to go to his side, and Mwakalembo thought that his land was saved. He had thought that his senior was taking his country, but lo, the latter had moved!

'At that time Mwafungo went to enter into an inheritance[1] in MuNgonde (*i.e.* on the Lake-shore plain). On his return he went to the side from which he had come. He sought a bull with which to say: "Fathers, I have arrived." Mwanaambe called his junior Mwakalembo saying: "Our son has arrived, they are eating the meat there without our having discussed together where we should kill, or where we should eat the meat." (*cf.* pp. 171–4.)

'So now Mwanaambe wants to give his child Mwafungo a homestead site in which to build, he wishes to give him one at the *ulupande* tree where he first established him, and he has told his junior Mwakalembo so. Mwakalembo objected, saying: "How can you give him my homestead? Where shall I go?"

[1] Another reason for the departure of Mwafungo (Mwankuga) is given on p. 230.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

691
425

'Mwansambe said they could both build there together.

'Mwakalembo said "No."

'Mwansambe said: "How can you refuse? The site is mine, and I m your senior. Do you not see the *ulupando* tree which I planted for y child Mwafungo?"

'Mwakalembo replied: "Yes, I see it, but you went away and left , you and your children. I gave thanks thinking my land had escaped apture."

'Mwansambe said: "And the *ulupando* tree, do you tell us that it as seized also?"

'Mwakalembo replied: "No, I don't deny the *ulupando* tree, but hen you pray you pray in your homestead, in the house of your wife. f you wish you can plant again at your place."

'Mwansambe said: "Why do you quarrel with me, Mwakalembo, , your father, your senior, I who gave you land on which I said your ollow, Mwafungo should also build, since you are both my children?"

'Mwakalembo replied: "The land about which we are quarrelling mine, it is the place of my blood. I spilt blood, I seized it from Mwaipaja when I fought with him."

(For originally this land about which they are quarrelling was Mwakwese's, it was where Seba's house was built. Then that Mwaipaja of whom they speak was the assistant village headman—a senior man. The followers of Mwakalembo made love to the wives, they approached them when they (the women) went to draw water. Mwaipaja was angry and called out his men to fight with the followers of Mwakalembo. Mwaipaja was defeated, and fled. The followers of Mwakalembo took his homestead. Mwaipaja was driven out: he built at Lupata where Kalunda and his men are now.)

'It is here that Mwansambe planted the *ulupando* tree. It is this land that Mwakalembo means when he says that his land escaped seizure by his senior when he went away again with his followers! Mwansambe says: "See, it is mine also, my father moved Mwaipaja aside, that my junior should build here."

'Mwakalembo says: "I got it by conquest, I spilt my blood."

'People commenting on the case in private say that Mwansambe is wrong, the country is really Mwakalembo's. Many say that although the case is put off it is not finished, Mwansambe will be overcome, and so Mwaipopo himself thinks.

'Mwasoba Kabolile and Mwafungo Mwambuputa are those who hold the country now, they are the children of Mwansambe and Mwakalembo. Mwenenganga, who began speaking (at the trial in court), is the junior ('brother') of Mwansambe but he holds all the seniority of Mwansambe because Mwansambe himself is not in the

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

691
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country, he has moved. The Mwakalembo who is standing there is not Mwakalembo himself, but his son. And the Mweneganga Mwakoloma who is speaking is a junior, but he speaks because he knows how to speak—he has a "good tongue" (i.e. is an orator). And Ngulyo also is a junior—he is speaking because he knows how to speak. All of these are village headmen, senior men, fathers of Mwafungo and Mwaseba Kabolile.'

The case was twice discussed at greath length in Lupata Court but no judgement was given. Some maintained that were a judgement given war would result, because the losers would attack. Mwaipopo himself, as president of the court, was said to be afraid to give judgement lest he suffer from 'the breath' or witchcraft of the offended parties. He refused to hear the case a third time and, as Kasitile pointed out, sixteen months after the second hearing Mwaipopo was sleeping in the village of Bujenga (Mwakalembo's village), and it was Mwakalembo and his men who were in possession of the disputed land. Mwaipopo feared the witchcraft (or 'breath') of Mwansambe and his men.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

428 was set aside in succession, his right to inherit the property and widows was none the less undisputed.[1]

SLAVERY (AMONG THE NGONDE)

567 Slaves were obtained by the Kyungu and chiefs in warfare and as fines for offences. The Kyungu gave women slaves to his important chiefs, thus strengthening the kinship bonds between them and himself, for the recipient would regard the Kyungu as his father-in-law if he took the woman to wife, and her children would be counted as grandchildren of the Kyungu. The owner of a slave was obliged to find a spouse for him or her, and a male slave could rise to positions of importance.[2]

LAND TENURE

423 No individual can own land unless he himself either works it or is a full member of the local community. Rights to land are only rigorously defined in cases of scarce and
425 valuable land. Owing to witchcraft beliefs, movement from one place to another is constant. In taking up new land after a move, a stranger is granted land by the villagers acting through their great commoners, the chief being merely informed. Both chiefs and villagers welcome new-comers. If a man returns after absence to his own village he has a claim to enter into possession of his old building site and gardens. The claim varies in strength according to his relations with the villagers and the chief. If a man goes to a neighbouring village within a chiefdom, he can go on hoeing his old gardens, ownership depending on effective use.

Land suitable for bean and maize plots is the most valuable, as it is hoed continuously for years. Land for other crops is plentiful, so that if a man leaves a garden fallow for only two years anyone may cultivate it. The most scarce and valuable land is in the bottom of old volcanic craters, and in these cases rights are insisted upon, so that if a man moves to a new chiefdom, his next of kin claims his crater land. In other cases, when a man moves from a chiefdom, his old gardens revert to the joint ownership of villagers and chief. When a man dies his heir takes his wives, cattle, and movable property, but not his land, unless he comes to live in the village.

Rights in trees differ according to the types of trees and according to local custom. In some cases rights in trees are lost when a man moves away, in others the rights to valuable trees are claimed by the nearest kinsman in the neighbourhood. Now that chiefdoms are no longer in a state of potential war with each other, the group within which property is held is wider. Coffee-trees have been declared by the Federation of Chiefs to be the property of the original planter, even though he may have moved to another chiefdom. The Agricultural Officer takes over abandoned coffee-trees to tend them for pest control.

423 Pasture is jointly owned by the whole village group, no individual having exclusive rights in it.

No direct charge is made for the right to build or cultivate. Certain obligations are owed to a chief in view of his over-lordship, e.g. providing cooked food for ceremonies of the chief's own immediate family, but this obligation is reciprocal, the chief being expected in return to kill beasts to feed the people.[3]

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 52-4.
[2] Wilson, 3, 1938, pp. 30-48; Mackenzie, 1925, p. 93.
[3] Ibid., p. 46; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 38-40.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

far as as men compete for land that rules of tenure are developed among them. And where competition is weakest there the rules are least strict.

In Nyakyusa society every married man holds land of his own for building and agriculture, for there is still enough for all, and pastures his cattle on the grasslands of some village group. His land rights, in which, as we have seen, his wives and children participate, are conditioned at every point by his membership of a particular village, his allegiance to a particular chief and by the particular cultural idiom of his tribal group.

Before the " coming out " a boy's village, as we have seen, is built on land assigned for the purpose by the parent village. A block of land for building is set aside by the great-commoner in consultation with the other men as their sons begin to reach the age of leaving home, and there the boys are often joined later by contemporaries, sons of other villages of men. At first building sites alone are needed, but later, as the boys grow up and get married, they need gardens too and bring the adjacent ground under cultivation. In doing so they are careful not to infringe upon their fathers' land rights, they either hoe land which was previously unowned[1] or else that which has been specifically granted to them by the parent village. Into the nature of such grants of garden land before the " coming out "—whether they are block grants by the parent village as a whole to the boys' village as a whole, or separate grants by individuals to individuals—I omitted to enquire.

At the " coming out " a whole tract of land is formally allotted to each village of young men by the old chief and his great-commoners and within this tract individuals take up garden land by hoeing it. At the " coming out " it is said that " everything is made new," boundaries are redrawn and the new chiefdoms and villages of the young men are ceremonially incorporated.

The situation in which individual land rights in relation to the village group and the chief are clearest to an observer is that of the taking up of land after a move, for it is in this situation that disputes are most frequent.

Mainly owing to their religious beliefs movement from one place to another is constant among the pagan Nyakyusa. If a man or his wife or child falls sick and does not respond quickly to medical treatment the witchcraft of neighbours is at once suspected as a possible cause ; there are always other possible causes too so diviners are consulted in order to decide between them ; but if the suspicion of neighbourly witchcraft is confirmed then the cure for the sickness is held to lie in moving. In every village " some people " are vaguely believed to have the power of

[1] Vide infra, pp.41-2.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 In discussing the taking up of land after a move it is therefore
●425 necessary to distinguish clearly between men who move to villages in which they are newcomers and those who return, after a period of absence, to their home villages.

166 Normally land for building and gardens is granted to a stranger by the villagers concerned acting through their great-commoner, not by the
425 chief, who is usually informed but seldom interferes. Only if a member
622 of the chief's own family is moving within the chiefdom from one village to another or if a very important stranger comes from outside, he may go
624 to the chief and ask for a building plot, and the chief may then exercise his
621 right of overlordship and grant the request. But this is a special and unusual case. Village land is primarily governed by village relationships. It is villagers who grant land to an ordinary newcomer and thereby accept him as one of themselves. His own wishes are taken into account whenever possible ; if he sees a piece of ground which attracts him and no one else has a claim to it then it will be his.

An old Kukwe great-commoner thus explained the granting of land to a stranger : " First the stranger from another country comes to a friend in this village and says that he wishes to build here, then the friend brings him to me, the great-commoner,—or he may come directly to me in the first place ; and I go and tell the chief. Then the chief, according
[431] to the old custom, would say ' Good ! Go and cut a banana bunch for him,' and I would cut a banana bunch from my own homestead, not from anyone else's, and the chief would send one of his wives to me with cooked food for our guest the stranger. This custom is now no longer followed in our country but in the more remote chiefdoms they still cut bananas and cook food in such cases ; here the stranger now just comes and is not given anything. And again when he wishes to begin building we go and tell the chief, who tells us to give him a plot to build on, and then my friends and I choose a place for him." " Does not the chief have a say in choosing the plot ? " I enquired. " No, not the chief ; does he know the details of our land-rights ? He does not. It is we who choose the place for the newcomer. But if he does not like the plot we give him and has himself seen a place which he prefers he will ask us for it and maybe we will give it him." " Do not people sometimes go directly to the chief to ask for land ? " " No, they always come first to us, the commoners, not to the chief ; how should a man presume to approach the chief by himself ? No, a newcomer always approaches us, and it is we who inform the chief. I, the great-commoner, may go alone to tell the chief or I may take the stranger with me, as I please." And a young Kukwe chief confirmed this, with perhaps a shade more emphasis on the part played by the chief : " The stranger goes first to the great-commoner

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and makes his request for land, then the great-commoner goes to the chief and informs him that so and so has come with a request for land, and he asks his opinion as to which piece to give the stranger. Then the chief suggests that perhaps the great-commoner knows of a suitable plot. So the chief and the great-commoner discuss it together and decide. Then the great-commoner shows the plot to the stranger." 166 425 621 622 624

It is quite clear in my evidence that, though the normal custom is to consult the chief when a newcomer is given land, yet the newcomer's title is in no way invalidated if the great-commoner omits to do so at the time and simply tells the chief later after the grant has been made.

So much for the initial reception of a stranger and the grant of a building plot, the next step is the grant of garden land. But before discussing this we must emphasize the willingness with which strangers are received both by the villagers and the chief. Men are still scarcer than land in most places and the prestige and prosperity of villages and chiefdoms is increased by each addition to their membership. Strangers are always given a house to sleep in while building their own and are usually given food as well, both formally by the chief and great-commoner and informally by the neighbours. The great-commoner who told me that the formal custom of giving food had lapsed in his country belongs to the chiefdom which adjoins Rungwe mission, a small chiefdom to which very considerable immigration has taken place in the last forty years; there the relative scarcity of land is reflected in a decline of hospitality to newcomers, though none have yet been refused land. But the usual custom still is to receive them generously. "It is an ancient custom amongst us to welcome strangers, so that the chiefdom may increase and flourish." [431]

In giving garden-land to a newcomer the procedure differs slightly according to the value of the land in question. The great-commoner takes him out and shows him, if the land is scarce and valuable, an exactly demarcated piece, if it is cheap and plentiful, a vaguely defined area within which he can hoe where he likes. In the upland chiefdoms, for example, the best maize and bean plots are scarce; men hoe the same ground year in year out, planting maize and beans alternately in it or, sometimes, maize only with an interval of a few months fallow each year; and in this case the boundaries of each man's ground are precisely marked. But for the growing of sweet-potatoes and millet there is plenty of good land available and men hoe more or less where they please. "A stranger named Tusekelege," I was told, "came to the village of Ibungila (in Kukwe country). Amongst other things he asked for a maize-garden, so they gave him the ground of a man Mwasumbi who had moved to Masoko. They told Tusekelege that he could hoe only the same extent of ground 166 425 621 624

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 as Mwasumbi had, because there were some other maize-gardens adjoin-
●425 ing it. The other land he asked for was not near anyone else's gardens,
621 so he was told that he could hoe just where he liked."
624

Such is the custom of giving land to a newcomer, whether he comes from a different chiefdom altogether or from another village of the same chiefdom. He has no claim to any particular land but the villagers welcome him gladly and give some to him. If, however, a man returns after a period of absence to his home village then he has a claim, varying in strength in different circumstances, to enter again into possession of his old building site and gardens. But his claim is never an absolute one, it depends upon his relationship to the villagers and to the chief; they it is who decide it.

166 Let us first consider building sites. If a man moves from his home
423 village leaving his house standing there and another is given the site, and
621 if he returns before the house has fallen into disrepair, before it has had to be rebuilt, then the occupier will be evicted in his favour, the villagers will always admit his claim to that site. But only, of course, if they are in general prepared to have him back in the village; if he has been expelled for witchcraft or some other serious crime he has no possible claim at all.

When men move and leave their houses behind it usually but not always implies an intention to return in a few months. If they move because of sickness and the suspicion of witchcraft men are often invited back, as we have seen, and sometimes they accept the first invitation; and then, if they and their families remain healthy, all is well. If a more protracted absence is intended from the first then the normal custom is to pull down the house and to carry the bamboos with one.

A young Kukwe great-commoner gave me from his own experience an example of the eviction of a man in occupation of another's house: "While my father was alive I fell sick and moved to Mwankenja's country leaving my house behind without taking it down. And I returned quite soon again, I was not a year away. But meanwhile, when I first moved, a stranger came and was put into my house, he was not told that I might be returning; so he went into my house—but as he was a bachelor the house was too big[1] for him. Afterwards my friends remembered me and went to bring me back, and I came with them; and I said that as another man had been put into my house and as I was myself an owner of the soil (i.e. he was the son of an old family and so had the right to choose any unoccupied plot for himself anywhere he pleased) I would build elsewhere. But they would not hear of it and said that I must go back to my own house. So they informed the newcomer that the owner had returned and gave him another place."

[1] This is a boast, irrelevant to the main argument.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Again if the villagers expect a man to return and if they themselves wish him to do so, then his homestead is normally kept for him. If he refuses their first formal invitation to return they may give his homestead to a newcomer meanwhile, but only provisionally ; and if he does return later, whether by another formal invitation or on his own initiative, then the newcomer is moved elsewhere. 166 423 621

The difficulty arises when a man comes back unexpectedly to find that a newcomer has been given his site unconditionally. Perhaps the villagers are indifferent to his return and so have omitted to keep his site for him ; but far more frequently it is that he has been many years away and has refused several invitations to return, and so has led the villagers to think that he is never going to come back at all. But, whatever the reason, if his site has been given unconditionally to a newcomer, who has then built his own house upon it, the villagers cannot possibly evict the newcomer in his favour ; his only chance of getting the old site back lies in an indirect and tactful approach to the chief. The chief, as overlord, has the power to evict the newcomer if he chooses, but he may not choose to do so. And, if he does not, then the man will have to build elsewhere. 166 423 425 621 [622]

I was discussing these points with one of our servants whose father had recently moved from Bulindanajo, his home village in Mwaipopo's chiefdom in Selya, to a village in the adjoining chiefdom. I asked him to explain to me his father's potential rights, if he were to return later to his home village, to enter again into possession of his old homestead.

" If a man, like my father for instance, has moved and his friends wish him to return they go to fetch him back, but if he then at first refuses to return they may put in a stranger on his homestead. But in doing so they inform the stranger that the owner of the homestead is away in such a country, that he, the stranger, is just eating the bananas meanwhile (i.e. is only in temporary possession) and that, when the owner returns, he will have to leave this place and build on another site which they will then give him for his own. In that case when my father returns, if he wishes for his old site, his friends will move the newcomer away, because they have told him beforehand, and my father will have his own old site.

" As it happens, however, when my father did actually move recently they did not put any newcomer on to his site, but Mwakyoma . . . . one of his neighbours chose to build there himself. And him they do not inform of my father's rights, for he is already aware of them. If my father returns later his friends will turn Mwakyoma out telling him to go back to his own old site. For it always happens with a good homestead on which bananas do well that people covet it, and when the owner moves,

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[1] This is a boast, irrelevant to the main argument.

[This footnote refers to p. 36. – Analyst]

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 423 425 621

someone, coveting the vacant place, goes and builds there. But if it is a neighbour he knows that it is not his own and when the owner returns he relinquishes it and goes back to where he was before.

"It may happen, however, that the owner of a homestead moves and lives many years away; his friends go to fetch him but he continually refuses to return, until they begin to think that he has moved finally and forever. And, in that case, they may, perhaps, put a man in there without informing him of the existence of any other owner. The newcomer builds a house and thrives. And if the previous owner then after all comes back they do not evict the newcomer; shame prevents them, for they never told him of any such possibility. Then the old owner, as it were my father for example, seeing that another is in occupation of his site goes to a different village in the same chiefdom and asks for a site. But the great-commoner to whom he goes asks him why he is approaching him—'It is true,' my father then answers, 'that I have a place in Bulindanajo and the graves of my family and my trees are there, but another man has built upon it.' Then the great-commoner gives him a site, but he also goes to tell the chief what has happened. Then the chief, Mwaipopo, summons the men of Bulindanajo and asks them why they have driven my father away, on his return to the country, from the site that was always his. The villagers admit their mistake but explain to the chief that, as they thought my father was never going to return at all, they put in another man. So they discuss the matter; and the chief, if he so wishes, may summon the present occupier and tell him that his friends deceived him by omitting to inform him of the probable return of the owner of that site and that now, as the owner has returned, they will have to move him and give him another site; and thus the chief evicts the present holder. But such an action must come from the chief, his neighbours cannot evict the occupier, for they gave him no initial warning. So then my father would return to his own old site. But maybe in such a case my father would himself prefer to build elsewhere, he would say to his friends that, as another had built on his site, he would be content to watch over his family graves from afar and to build in a different place."

[622]

As for his old garden-land, to that too a man has a title on returning to his home village, but it is only scarce and valuable ground that he will ever trouble to claim if others are in possession. At first, when he moves from the village, his fellows, if they intend to invite him back, keep his gardens for him just as they keep his house site; but if he refuses to return at first then maybe the ground is given to others. But he can always recover it later when he does return. It is easier to get old gardens back than it is to get a house site, for no great hardship is involved for an

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

evicted man. And it is even possible sometimes to make good a claim to the old gardens of one's father, even although one has never hoed them at all oneself; this is more difficult however, the claim may be refused or alternatively a compromise may be effected by dividing the land in question between the claimant and the present possessors. 166 423 425 621

As an example of the keeping of gardens vacant for a man who is expected to return we may cite the story of Nyambo, a Kukwe, as it was told to me by a young man who lived near him. This case is of particular interest as it brings out two points to which we have not yet referred; firstly that the chief himself sometimes takes the initiative in inviting a man back, and that his doing so widens the invitation to include all the villages of the chiefdom, not only the man's old home village; and secondly that it possible to build in one village of a chiefdom and own gardens in another. This second point will be discussed again later. 166 423 621 622

" A man named Nyambo moved because eight of his cows all died in quick succession and he thought that his neighbours, maybe, had bewitched them; but he moved without telling people of this reason. After he had spent eight months away, however, the chief sent his great-commoner to enquire of him why he had moved and left his chief wondering, and Nyambo replied that he had moved because of the death of eight of his cows all within a few days of one another, a fact which had led him to suspect that his neighbours hated him; and he would never, he told the great-commoner to inform the chief, be persuaded to return. So the great-commoner reported all this to the chief. Whereupon the chief suggested that it would be a good thing to go and fetch Nyambo back forcibly. And he, the chief, went in person with a crowd of men from Nyambo's old village and they just seized upon his furniture and drove off his cows and took them all home. But even so Nyambo refused to return and spent another two days where he was. Then they sent again to urge him to come back and at last he agreed because the chief himself had begged him to do so; he said, however, that he would prefer not to build in his old place, because his cows had died there, but rather across the river in the village of a different great-commoner. And so he did. None the less he continued to hoe his old gardens, and he still does so. They had left his gardens vacant because they had always meant to fetch him back. Now that he has returned and gone to live in another village they have given his old building site to a newcomer from Masoko, but his gardens are still his own."

The story of Kalonga, another Kukwe, exemplifies a man's right to reclaim his own old gardens. It will be noticed that the ground which he reclaimed was of particular value. 166 423 425

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 423 425 "Kalonga had moved from the country of Kissokola to Masoko and other people had taken his ground and hoed it. It is the kind of ground which we call *umfweje*, rich soil near water. Kalonga had moved because of illness, several of his children had fallen sick and more than one had died. After he moved his neighbours never went to invite him back.

166 423 425 622 "Now Kalonga himself did not come back to live, but he brought back his mother. She had gone with him, but then she began to complain that he had taken her to an unpleasant country and she would prefer to go home; so he came back just to build a house for her. He did not build for her in his old village but asked another great-commoner (of the same chiefdom) for a site; he did however go to the chief to reclaim his old garden (the *umfweje* to which we have already referred). Now four men had divided the ground between them; they had approached the great-commoner and asked for it and he had referred them to the chief, fearing that he might be blamed for giving the ground away if Kalonga should return subsequently. And the chief agreed that they should take it, so as not to let it lie idle.

"So when Kalonga came and reclaimed it the chief pointed out that he had moved and left the country (and so had no claim to the land). But no, Kalonga replied, he had not moved, for see he had brought back his mother and built a house for her, which was exactly equivalent to living in the chiefdom himself. And the chief admitted his argument and agreed that, so soon as the present holders had reaped their standing crops, he should re-enter into possession of his own ground. So now Kalonga comes regularly with his younger brothers and they hoe the land quickly (being many) for their mother and go home again. Kalonga is of an old family and his father is buried in that chiefdom."

166 423 425 622 624 And finally the story of Enoch the son of Mwakajileke, another Kukwe, well illustrates the more limited rights of a son to claim his father's old gardens which he himself has never hoed.

"Mwakajileke built in the village of Ibungila, and he died there in 1925. He had three sons, all of who[illegible] moved after his death; one of these sons, whose name was Enoch, w[illegible] and built at Kyimbila; and meanwhile the chief gave the garden-land of Mwakajileke to other people. Part of this land was cultivated by a commoner named Gwaselya but he too, later on, moved into another chiefdom and the land was left unused. Then Enoch returned to the country to find that no one was now hoeing the ground which his father had used to hoe, so he approached Mwangokile, the great-commer, and asked for it: 'As no one is hoeing your father's land,' Mwangokile replied, 'you may go and hoe it yourself, but there are some other men who want it and they have already asked me for it, so I must divide it between you.' So he went with them and marked

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 out boundaries, drawing lines on the ground; he divided the land into
423 three portions, one for each. The others were strangers to the chiefdom
425 but had taken a fancy to that piece of land."

622 The sentence in this story "The chief gave the garden land of
624 Mwakajileke to other people" deserves remark for it in no way implies any other custom than the one we have previously described. And it illustrates the dangers of relying too much on verbal statements of custom. When a stranger is given land by a great-commoner after reference to the chief he is commonly said to have been given it by the chief. The chief, from one point of view, is the overlord and the great-commoner acts for him. But, and this is an essential qualification, the great-commoner nearly always so acts for the chief and, save exceptionally, it is wholly incorrect for the chief to grant land directly. The great-commoner acts not only for the chief but also as the representative and leader of the villagers; and in relation to them the chief cannot exercise his rights of overlordship save occasionally and in particular circumstances.

166 The old Kukwe great-commoner whom we have already quoted
423 explained this to me very clearly: "Occasionally one of his own men will
425 ask a chief to give him ground to hoe in another village, 'If indeed you
621 say that the land is yours!' (challenging the chief to assert his right of
622 overlordship). Then the chief agrees that all the land is most certainly his; but still, if it is possible, he tells the man to go to the commoners of that village and ask them for land. If the chief does not do this (but makes a direct grant of land) we blame him for not being a true chief: 'Who is it,' we ask him, 'that has built up this country? Did you do it all by yourself? It is we the commoners who have built it up! And how is it, then, that you give this man land without consulting us?'"
[754 Nor is the censure of his people mere idle talk for a Nyakyusa chief, he
626] fears that they may bewitch him, that the witches among them, led by the great-commoners of the several villages, may come in dreams at night and cause him to sicken or to die.

166 So much for the initial grants of land to newcomers and the rights of
423 men returning to their home chiefdoms. If a man goes back, after moving, to a chiefdom which is in no sense his home, where, that is to say, he is not a member of an old family but in which he has himself spent some years, he is treated as a newcomer. He is welcomed but he has no rights to the ground, whether building-site or gardens, which he previously occupied.

423 Once established in a village, however, any man can hoe any unowned
425 ground within its borders and thereby make it his own. A newcomer for

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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the first few years, until he has become familiar with the details of the rights of the other villagers, will normally ask for more land as he requires it, in order to avoid unwitting trespass; but an old member asks nobody. If, however, it is desired to hoe land to which some other villager has a prior claim then his permission, as the owner, must first be asked. Any previously unowned land that an ordinary commoner once hoes is his property, all informants agree, so long as he remains a full member of the village. Within the village there is thus a theory of continuing ownership but, as we have seen in discussing the reclaiming of land after a move, it is only to the more valuable ground that it is strictly applied. A valuable garden may be left fallow for years but, so long as the owner is a member of the village, no one can take it without asking his permission; nor is he under any kind of obligation to give it away when asked. "If a stranger comes," a great-commoner told me, "and we commoners of the village want to give him some old gardens of one of our number we ask the owner to give the ground to the stranger; but if he refuses we cannot insist."

Many gardens, however, are not in fact continuously owned; men not infrequently hoe less valuable ground that has been left two or three years fallow without asking the permission of the previous holders, as they should strictly do. So long as the ground is relatively plentiful no objection is usually raised, but it always may be; and the increasing scarcity of land under modern conditions is already prompting some men to a new insistence upon their rights.

"In our country," a young Kukwe told me, "it is the maize and bean plots which are the most valuable, because we hoe them continuously, year after year. . . . Land for other crops is plentiful, so much so that if a man leaves one of these gardens fallow only for two years then anyone else who wishes can come and hoe it. Nowadays, however, the custom is changing a little and some men like to keep the same gardens continuously for all their hoeing."

In the case of the most scarce and valuable ground of all, that in the bottom of old volcanic craters, the principle of continuous ownership is carried furthest. Rights in it have always been insisted upon and whenever a holder of such land moves from the chiefdom then the nearest kinsman of his who lives there steps in and claims it. And here the village group ceases to be of any importance. It may be that long ago the land in each particular crater was owned solely by the members of some particular village but now it is held by old families scattered all over the chiefdom in which it lies. Apart from the craters, however, all arable land can be truly said to belong to some village or other.

It is, none the less, quite possible to hold garden-land in a village without being a member of it, but only if the land is kept in effective use.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

We have already seen in two examples that a man, when returning to the chiefdom from which he has moved, may recover his old gardens even though he builds in a different village. And it frequently happens also that a man comes to a village and asks for garden-land only, continuing to live in another village, or even in another chiefdom. Such requests the villagers always, so far as I know, grant willingly, for once a man has taken up land in a new village there is every prospect that he will one day move altogether and build there. In case of sickness he is more likely to move to the group where he is already half-established and sure of a warm welcome than anywhere else. 423 425

When a man moves he has the right to reap the crops standing in his old gardens so soon as they ripen, but after that the ground, save in the case of craters, reverts to the joint ownership of villagers and chief. And his building plot and bananas revert to them immediately. The next-door neighbours on either side keep the bananas clean and eat the fruit themselves until the plot and the bananas are given by the villagers, with the chief's approval, to another man. If the previous holder has moved to a place without bananas and not very far away he may, in the first year, send to his late neighbours and ask to be allowed to cut and carry away some of the banana fruit "for my bananas in my new plot have not yet grown." But his request is of grace and not of right, it may be refused. If the villagers like and respect him and hope to persuade him to return later it will always be granted, but if they dislike him and are glad to be rid of him then it will not. If the plot is a separate one without immediate neighbours then no one keeps the bananas clean and, unless someone else is given the plot soon, they get choked with weeds and die.

When a man dies the heir takes his wives, his cattle and his moveable property, and, if he comes to live in the dead man's village, his land also. But if the heir remains in his own old village[1] he has no rights over the dead man's land. The situation is then exactly comparable to that which obtains when a man moves from one village to another, his land rights in the old village lapse. 423 428

Rights in trees differ in some respects from rights in land and they differ also for different kinds of trees; and here, as an added complication, we are also faced with a difference of local custom. 423

Prior to the introduction of new trees by Europeans the only ones of any great value to the Nyakyusa were the bamboo (*ikilasi*) and the *unyungwi* tree, whose botanical name I have been unable to find out. Bamboos 423 824

[1] Owing to the age grouping among villagers and the long period which traditionally separated one pregnancy from another in a woman's life it is unusual to find full-brothers in the same village.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 824 are used for house building, while the *ryungwati* produces a fruit (*indilolo*) which is both delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment (*inyemba*). Of the two trees the bamboo is the more valuable.

423 425 621 Now among the Kukwe and Selya groups rights in these trees are somewhat similar to rights in the valuable crater plots. When a man moves, his bamboos and *ryungwati* trees, unlike his bananas, do not revert to the villagers; normally they continue to belong to his nearest kinsman in that chiefdom, who cuts and uses the bamboos and picks the fruits of the *ryungwati* trees. If the villagers give the site to another man then the newcomer has no rights over these trees unless the kinsman himself gives them to him. But it sometimes happens that, where only *ryungwati* trees and not bamboos are involved, the kinsfolk do not bother to exercise their rights; then the trees are treated like bananas, picked by the neighbours until a newcomer is given that plot, and then by him.

423 425 628 If however, among the Selya and Kukwe groups, a man moves leaving no kinsfolk near at hand, then the chief (*umalefyale*) as the supreme overlord has a right to his trees, and if they are near the chief's own place this right is exercised; he cuts and uses the bamboos and his wives pick the *ryungwati* trees. If another man is given the land by the villagers to build on then he goes and asks the chief to allow him some of the *ryungwati* trees, and his request is usually granted, the chief gives him two or three of the trees, keeping two or three for himself. But the bamboos, being more valuable, are usually kept altogether by the chief. If, however, the ownerless trees are at a distance from the chief's place then he normally does not trouble to claim the *ryungwati* trees but only the bamboos. The former are at first picked by the neighbours and later given by the villagers to a newcomer together with the site. And, even with the bamboos, if they are a long way from the chief's place a "good chief," they say, will allow the newcomer to cut some of them without payment; but it is wholly within the chief's power to keep them all for himself if he wishes, and "bad chiefs" do so. Furthermore a chief does occasionally also exercise his right to claim an ownerless *ryungwati* tree at a distance. If one of his wives comes and complains to him that she has no *ryungwati* tree of her own, then he takes her to a site from which someone has recently moved leaving ownerless trees behind and there he gives her one of the trees; the rest he leaves as usual to the villagers and so to the newcomer.

423 621 Bamboos are men's property and only a man can claim them but *ryungwati* trees can be claimed by a kinswoman, a sister or a daughter, of the old owner if none of his near kinsmen have troubled to do so.

423 178 We must here take note of a most significant modern development. In the old days rights in trees could only be exercised by members of the

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

same chiefdom in which the trees were growing; for between chiefdoms an actual or potential state of war always existed, and a man coming from a hostile group to claim property would have been driven away violently. But to-day under European rule it is now customary for a man to cut his own bamboos, if he is living in a neighbouring chiefdom, instead of leaving them to his resident kinsfolk. The group within which property can be held is gradually widening. 423 178

Such is the custom among the Kukwe and Selya groups; their rights in bamboos and *ryanguti* trees are not normally lost when a man moves provided there are kinsfolk left nearby to exercise them. The one exception to this rule is in the case of expulsion for witchcraft or other serious crime. Then even if the man expelled has left kinsfolk behind him, still the chief takes his trees. 423 681

Among the Nyakyusa proper, on the other hand, the *ryanguti* trees are treated like bananas. When a man moves he loses all rights in them and, unless the chief steps in to take them, as he always may, they are granted by the great-commoner, together with the soil, to the newcomer who is put on that site. Bamboos, as in Selya and Kukwe country, continue to belong to the kinsman of the man who has moved.[1] 423 425 621

Trees introduced by the Europeans, of which coffee trees are the most valuable, have been declared by the Federation of Chiefs to be the property of the planter, even although he has moved to a different chiefdom. This law was made after much anxious discussion between the chiefs, the Administration and the Agricultural Department and is, of course, subject to revision if it is found after trial to be impracticable. In the case of coffee it has inevitably been modified in practice since coffee must be tended continuously if it is to remain free from pests and to bear fruit, and any man who actually looks after coffee trees has a generally admitted claim to the crop unless he is paid by the planter for his labour. The planter, however, in surrendering the trees to him may compel him to pay something for their initial value. 423 177 245

Further, as the Agricultural Officer has the right to uproot any untended coffee trees and must exercise it if pests are to be kept under control, the practice has grown up of his taking over any large number of abandoned trees and keeping them clean with labour paid by the Native Treasury; the trees are subsequently sold to some other man and the proceeds paid into the Native Treasury again. If, however, a planter of coffee trees makes arrangements, when he moves, for the cleaning of his coffee then the trees remain his own.

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[1] Some informants deny this and insist that they always pass to the chief. I was not myself long in Mungonde among the Nyakyusa proper and I lack conclusive evidence on the point.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 The legal practice in this matter is still in process of formation and I quote the most recent account of it which I have in my notes without claiming that it is either complete or wholly accurate.

" If a coffee-planter who has moved," I was told, " either keeps the coffee trees clean himself or sends people to do so, then the trees are his; if, however, he does not keep them clean and another man builds on that site and looks after them then they belong to the latter, for he it is who keeps them clean. But if both men concerned (both the planter who has moved and the newcomer on that site) want to have the trees then they belong to the planter, and no one can take them from him.

423 425 " Or, alternatively, if there are a great many coffee trees and their owner has moved (without making arrangements for cleaning) then the Government takes them and looks after them and sells them subsequently to some other man who can afford to buy. And if, maybe, a newcomer on that site has been keeping some of the trees clean, but not all, then the Government leaves some to him and takes the rest.

" And if a planter who has moved wishes later to come back to his old site then great pressure is put upon him to make a payment to the man who has kept the trees clean meanwhile.

" Aswile, for example, had planted coffee in his home in Kisekola's country but then he moved away and went to work (for Europeans); and when he returned from work he built at Kyimbila Mission. Meanwhile Mwankungili had succeeded to his site in Kisekola's country and had been looking after the coffee trees; but no sooner did he begin to pick the coffee than Aswile came and wanted to know who was daring to pick his coffee. Mwankungili explained that he was doing so because he had spent a great deal of time and energy in keeping the trees clean; and the two men disputed each other's claims. So Aswile took the case to Mwangoka's court, and it appeared that there were seventy-five trees in bearing with other younger ones as well, and that Mwankungili had looked after the trees, hoeing round them, for nine months. The court enquired of Aswile whether he had not moved; but he denied having done so and maintained that his absence was only temporary, that he had every intention of returning soon. Mwankungili then pointed out that he had built a house at Kyimbila and actually planted some more coffee there! And that was a proof that he had really moved. So the court sent a messenger to Kyimbila to see, and his report confirmed what Mwankungili had said. The court then asked Aswile whether he had given instructions to any relative to look after his coffee trees; but no, he had not. So he was then told that he must pay Mwankungili for his labour; but this he refused to do. The final judgment was that he must either pay Mwankungili for his labour or else leave the coffee trees to him.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

"Aswile thereupon appealed to Mpuguso (the appeal court of the Federation of chiefs); he absolutely refused to pay Mwankungili any money at all, but finally he agreed to give him some of the coffee trees. So he went with Mwankungili and a court messenger—and a crowd of people went with them to see this new custom—and divided up the trees, keeping the bulk for himself but giving some to Mwankungili in repayment for his hoeing. And Mwankungili accepted the division. Now Aswile's younger brother, who lives nearby, is looking after Aswile's trees and Mwankungili is looking after his own." 423 425

The same informant also told me of another case: "A man who had lived in Kisenkole's country moved to Mbalisi (in Mbeya District) and died there later. Now while living in Kisenkole's country he had planted forty-five coffee trees; all of which were now (at the time of the case which is being related) very large; and there were also some smaller trees as well. So then his heir, a brother, came back to the country to find that another man had built on that site meanwhile. But when he raised the question of the coffee, the occupier answered him amicably and said that he would buy it; and he paid 35/50c. for the trees. And then the heir took up land elsewhere in the same chiefdom. He had not wanted to claim the old site, only the coffee trees."

But still there remain difficulties of practice of which the fundamental one is that of owning *and tending* trees on another man's ground. *Syungwi* trees can be owned on another's homestead without difficulty for they require no attention, but it is hard to draw the line between the ordinary weeding and sweeping of the open space (*ululengilo*) and bananas and the weeding of coffee trees that grow there. "Am I not to be allowed to *sweep under* my own bananas?" one man said indignantly when he returned to an old site of his to find coffee growing upon it. Where the coffee trees are still young the difficulty is sometimes got over—to the great displeasure of the Agricultural Officer—by transplanting them. But with older trees this is impossible.

Pasture, unlike garden land, is jointly owned by the whole village group and no individual has any exclusive rights to any portion of it. The detailed discussion of grazing-rights thus falls outside the scope of this paper, but two points must be noted here. In the first place every member of a village has the right to graze his cattle on the village pastures and this right may also be granted to an outsider by the great-commoner in consultation with his neighbours. And, in the second place, when any member of a village takes up new garden land by hoeing it he must not, in so doing, encroach unduly on the village pastures. 423

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

paid out of the Native Treasury from the taxes, rarely exceeds 10/- a month it may be doubted whether modern conditions are not in this, as in other respects, impoverishing the Nyakyusa chiefs. 622 554

A chief had the right traditionally to evict any man he pleased if he desired his site for his own personal use, giving him another in exchange. But this right is no longer effective: "It is now at an end," as a chief's kinsman told me, "for the man evicted will go to Tukuyu (the administrative capital of the district) and complain that his chief is turning him out of his home without good cause." It is however still perfectly possible for a chief to take any *unoccupied* site he pleases without reference to the local villagers. He may take it for himself or he may give it to a kinsman, and no objection to such an action on his part is ever raised. It is only if he gives it to an ordinary commoner that his people will criticise him. 622 425 178

Land once held by the kinsman of a chief at the latter's gift is more secure to him than any land can be which is granted in the ordinary way by a great-commoner; for no one but the chief himself can ever finally take it from him. If he moves and the villagers wish to give the site to a newcomer then they must either send a message after him and ask his permission to do so or else get explicit permission from the chief, if the newcomer's title is to be in any way secure. 622 425

A case within my own knowledge well illustrates these points: Mwakobela, half-brother of chief Mwaipopo, had been given land in the village of Ipoma by Mwaipopo himself. Subsequently he had moved to Kibonde, a minor chiefdom under the jurisdiction of Mwaipopo, and had spent many years there; and when I first met him he was living there still. But then he fell sick and, suspecting witchcraft, decided to return to Ipoma, only to find his old building-site occupied. For the great-commoner of Ipoma, thinking he had moved for good, had given it to a newcomer. 622 425 624

This grant of land to the newcomer had been irregular in more ways than one: firstly Mwakobela's permission had not been asked, secondly no reference at all had apparently been made to Mwaipopo, who subsequently denied any part in the grant and, thirdly, the great-commoner had not even consulted his fellow villagers; if he had done so they would, as one of them told me in discussing the case, have reminded him of the necessity of first asking Mwakobela's permission. The newcomer however had been given the site unconditionally and when Mwakobela reclaimed it he refused to move; but the rights of Mwakobela were unquestionable and he had no difficulty at all in getting him evicted.

I went to visit Mwakobela a few weeks after he had taken possession of the site and he told me about the eviction: "I approached the great-commoner and asked him who had given Mwangonje (the newcomer)

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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permission to build on my plot, perhaps, I suggested, it was Mwaipopo (the chief). But no, he told me, it was not Mwaipopo but he himself who had given the permission, and he said, further, that Mwangeniye would have to move, as I wished to come back, and that he would give him another site. But Mwangeniye refused to move and said that the place was his. So the next thing was that, at a funeral . . . . . I asked Mwaipopo who it was that had given my plot to this Mwangeniye who now claimed it as his own and made as if I had never built there, perhaps Mwaipopo himself had given it to him. And all that Mwaipopo replied was no, he had not done so.

"Then I simply brought my sons with bamboos and told them to begin building. Off goes Mwangeniye to Mwaipopo! 'Mwakobela,' he complains, 'is driving me away from my home!' 'Who gave you the plot?' asks Mwaipopo. 'The great-commoner gave it me.' 'And what does he say now?' 'He says I must move.' 'Well then you had better move!'

"And then, next morning, Mwangeniye came to me and said 'My friend I was wrong, the place was always yours, I will move; but the hanging bananas and the coffee trees I shall take with me.' 'Why certainly,' I replied, 'you may cut the banana bunches and transplant your coffee trees, I shall not object.' Thereupon the great-commoner offered him another site with bananas already growing on it, but he refused and said that he intended to return to live in the chiefdom from which he originally came.—And now his sons have carried away his house and there is only left that one hut over there (pointing) which they will take away shortly, and then later they will transplant his coffee trees also."

It was made abundantly clear to me that the important point was the fact that Mwakobela had originally been given the land directly by Mwaipopo, the chief; had he been given it in the ordinary way by the great-commoner with Mwaipopo's concurrence he would have had no claim on it at all. A member of the village of Ipoma explained this to me very lucidly: "If, in the first instance, Mwaipopo had not made the grant, if Mwakobela had approached the great-commoner and said that, as the plot was vacant, he would like to build there and if the great-commoner had agreed to this, then had Mwakobela later moved (as he did) to Kibondo and spent many years there and had the plot meanwhile been given by the great-commoner to Mwangeniye—Mwaipopo all the time being in no way involved—then, if Mwakobela had returned and claimed the plot, the great-commoner would not have admitted his claim. If, in that case, Mwakobela had come to Mwangeniye and tried to evict him Mwangeniye would have complained to the great-commoner, who would then have addressed Mwakobela in some such terms as these:

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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'You, sir, are a chief' (Mwakobela is one of the ruling chiefs' kinsmen, all of whom are entitled 'chiefs,') how then is it that you wish to drive men away? (For chiefs always desire to attract men to them!) Do you wish the two of us, you and I, to live together alone without any men? In the first instance you simply came to me and said that you wished to build here and I agreed that you should; but then you moved and I saw myself that you had built a new house and planted bananas trees in another village and I supposed you had moved for good. Nor did you ever tell me that you might be coming back nor ask me to keep your site for you, you only told me that you were moving. So I cannot, as great-commoner, agree to evict Mwangoiye, I will find another site for you...'

"But as it was," my informant continued," the site had been granted by Mwaipopo himself. Mwaipopo had simply informed the great-commoner that he had given Mwakobela a certain vacant plot in his village. And then the great-commoner was at fault in that he gave the place to Mwangoiye without consulting his neighbours;[1] had he consulted us about it, and had he sent a message to Mwakobela to ask his permission to give the vacant site to another man, and had Mwakobela given the permission (he could hardly have refused it unless he were himself intending to return shortly), then again Mwakobela would have had no power at all to evict Mwangoiye. The great-commoner would have disallowed his claim, pointing out that he had been informed at the time and had agreed to Mwangoiye's building there. It was owing to the failure to inform Mwakobela at the time that he now has power to evict Mwangoiye."

"And supposing," I enquired," that Mwakobela had not been the younger brother of Mwaipopo, the ruling chief, but just a commoner, a stranger from another chiefdom, and supposing that some the less he had approached Mwaipopo in the first instance and asked for land, instead of going to the great-commoner, how would that have affected this case?" —" Well, in the first place, Mwaipopo would have brought the stranger to the great-commoner and the two of them, the chief and the great-commoner would have discussed together where to give him land and decide to give him a certain vacant plot." "And then," I asked," if the stranger had moved to Kibondo and the great-commoner had given the plot to Mwangoiye, without informing him, could he then have returned later and evicted Mwangoiye, or not?" "No, he could not do so; had he attempted it the great-commoner would have disallowed the claim, asking

[1] It is, of course, never correct for a great-commoner to grant land without consulting his fellow-villagers, but the point here is that, had he consulted them, they would have reminded him of the necessity of consulting Mwakobela before making this particular grant.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

him if it was his idea that the village should die out and leave him, the great-commoner, without men? As he had moved, the great-commoner would have continued, the place was presumably distasteful to him and it had now been allotted to another man. The claim would certainly have been disallowed!"

The examples in this paper have been taken almost entirely from pagan families. For Christians the situation is very much the same except where they live actually on mission land, there they are tenants of the Mission concerned and pay rent to it. And Christians, wherever they live, tend to be more stable in their occupation of land, since they are not forever moving in fear of witchcraft.

7. *CONCLUSION*

I have striven in this paper to make the individual land-rights possessed by Nyakyusa to-day intelligible to the European reader and to demonstrate to him their determining factors. Of these factors the following are the most important. The Nyakyusa were until recently an isolated and primitive people and so bring with them into the modern world a legal tradition based upon small social groups. This tradition is being inevitably modified both in theory and practice under modern conditions, but not out of all recognition; for they are still a relatively isolated people and the system of indirect rule secures them, in general, against arbitrary legal changes. Within their legal system individuals have, as in any system they must have, certain precisely defined and enforceable rights—among them rights in land.

Many kinds of land, however, are plentiful, though less so than of old owing to the growth of population, the opening of new markets for food and the recent introduction of ploughs. And this cheapness of land is reflected at times in a lack of rigour in the enforcement of rights in it which is unfamiliar to the European observer. Sufficient land for all is a fundamental condition of Nyakyusa society in its present form, which has no place for a landless man.

And, finally, the habitual movement of men with their families from one village to another to escape the witchcraft of their neighbours leads to a constant transfer of homesteads and gardens and is the main cause of difficulty in the administration of their laws of property in land and trees. This difficulty is greatest in the case of the newly introduced coffee trees which need continuous tending.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 the favour of the white man for any reason, can be supplied with a charm which will secure the end he has in view. For a few moments after the interview begins, he chews at the charm, then removes it from his mouth, trusting for the rest to what has been incised in his forehead. A favourable result may be confidently expected.

789 Thieving charms are also in use, and men who operate under such protection are called *balebi*. A 674 drug unknown to me is tied up in a leaf, and thrown on to the roof of the house to be robbed, and also at the door, to make the inmates sleep. The thieves enter, either by opening the now facile door, or by digging; and immediately place another drug under the heads of the sleeping owners of the house. "May they sleep heavily; may they dream dreams," is their incantation. Another medicine is worn on the wrists. So bold are the robbers thus protected that, when they have removed everything they wish, they awaken the sleepers, and demand food (which is given to them), without fear of being recognized; but it is not perhaps surprising, considering the fear in which these criminals are held, that the victims never admit that they recognize the thieves.

The house, however, may be protected. Powdered root of *ikisebe* is spread all over the house, and any thief who enters will have sores breaking out on his lips, a thing which happens only to thieves who have ignored this charm.

789 Kondeland should be a paradise for debtors, for the •426 man who knows the ropes can arrange to put off pay-

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 426 ment so often that finally it is either not paid at all, or paid when it is quite convenient for the debtor to do so. To secure this desirable result the debtor, when he learns that his creditor is coming to demand payment, slips out into the bush, where he gets the roots of a plant called *butisi*, which he chews as the creditor approaches. A most amiable conversation ensues, at the end of which the creditor begs his friend on no account to disturb himself about the small matter that lies between them: any other time will do just as well, and he will be delighted to call again in a couple of months or so. The same end is attained by incising a powder into the forehead between the eyes.

789 224 763 Hunting medicines have already been referred to. One is incised along the bone from the thumb to the elbow; another is taken internally, but this latter is dangerous, because it leads to a lingering death. When death draws on, instead of dying as common men do, the whole body of the hunter who drinks this medicine becomes helpless; the heart keeps going, the lips move and talk; death does not come. Then his friends come and sing to him: "*Ndembo syaya mmiyombo*," the elephants are among the trees. The sick man, puffing out his cheeks, emits breath with a whirring sound, which is supposed to resemble a sound made by elephants, and presently he breathes his last.

755 But there are few ills, imaginary or otherwise, for which there are no cures, imaginary or otherwise: and the cautious hunter, finding old age creeping on him, and his hunting days becoming a thing of

Security of tenure has continued into European times, and although perhaps weakened slightly in one way through the exaggerated powers which accrue to modern Government-supported chiefs, it has been strengthened by the modern peace and rule of law and the more efficient system of justice provided by the established local courts. According to G. Wilson (Wilson, G., 1938, p. 32) the increase in the movement of individuals between villages in earlier European times (i.e., up to about 1940-45) directly caused a lack of attachment to individual plots, and thus security of tenure was not considered particularly important.

The new situation of land shortage does not affect the basic position, or rather, by producing a high scarcity value on land, it has brought about an intensification of individuals' rights over their holdings. No longer dare a chief or headman attempt to commit such illegal acts as the seizure of a villager's field, so long as that villager is not afraid to publicise the affair. A man is not, and cannot afford to be, prepared to lose his field, for he cannot replace it with any certainty, either in a convenient location or elsewhere. A headman may sometimes bring strong pressure to bear on some of the men of his village to try to persuade them to give up portions of their land to assist a newcomer or a landless neighbour, but a villager can and does refuse and there is no legal authority which can override him here. As the land shortage becomes more obvious and more acute so men become less willing to allow their holdings to be touched for any reason, by anyone. The re-allocation at a "coming-out" ceremony appears to have been dropped nowadays[1] and thus a man holds his land undisturbed until his death, when it passes by inheritance to his sons. There are cases now where grandsons of the original holder occupy land through undisturbed and undisputed inheritance. A man can, as he wishes, loan a kinsman or friend a plot in his holding, or he can make an outright gift. The principal restriction which remains is that a man must continue to live in the village in order to retain these rights; he must relinquish them if he permanently goes to live elsewhere. Nevertheless, the land of a well-established villager would be kept for him pending his hoped-for return, for if he has left in umbrage and fear because of suspected witchcraft, then he may be persuaded to come back after a time. The headman and his neighbours should in fact persist in their attempts to persuade him, even to the use of force, for this is not only a moral duty of age-mates and fellow-villagers but is also an effort to remove the implications of their alleged witchcraft and anti-social conduct.

Once, therefore, a man obtains land he has absolute rights in it during his continued residence in the village. Especially today, older men seldom shift their homes and almost all land is now held on a tenure which will be passed on by inheritance.

Boundary disputes are few. Usually, and increasingly, village boundaries are well known, and field boundaries invariably are. During my field measurements in the sample villages, I never met any difficulty with my local teams in quickly establishing the ownership and exact limits of any plot. Boundaries are usually marked by small ridges of accumulated debris or by narrow paths, and these form an intricate and irregular network throughout a village's arable area. They are so well known that there is very little scope for a greedy man to attempt to encroach on a neighbour's holding at hoeing time. If minor disagreements do arise at that season they can be immediately settled – by appeal to neighbours working nearby if necessary – and the headman or his assistant may well not be called in at all.

1. This is the case in the Lake Plain. In some of the no-to-conservative highland chiefdoms where the cult economy is less advanced and land scarcity is not serious, there still appears to be some re-allocation in favour of the young men in the traditional way. In general, however, it is clear that the traditional age-village system of land allocation is obsolete, see pages 244.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 In his tenure of land every Nyakyusa man is related to some chief
622 who is his overlord. But their relationship is not confined to the single element of land-tenure, it is just as many-sided and complex as is any other human relationship ; and even as we abstract from it the particular set of facts that immediately concerns us here we must at once refer them again to it if they are to be intelligible.

166 When a newcomer is received into a village and given land the chief, as we have seen, is normally a party to the villagers' action, and in most
423 cases he himself ceremonially welcomes the newcomer if he comes from
622 outside the chiefdom by sending to him a present of cooked food. He has gained a new subject and his power and prestige are thereby increased.
[427] As men are quite free to move from one tiny chiefdom to another and as land is still relatively plentiful the phenomenon of rent does not exist among the pagan Nyakyusa, there is no direct charge ever specifically made in return for the right to build and cultivate. Nevertheless a chief is a chief and his subjects' land is his as well as theirs and they are under certain obligations to him.

622 Among these obligations that of providing cooked food for the
554 ceremonies of the chief's own immediate family is probably the most
[585] important. When a chief's daughter, for example, is getting married women from all over the chiefdom bring food to entertain the bridegroom and his friends on the day that they bring the bulk of the cattle. The obligation to bring food, though not a legal one, is both reciprocal and conventional. The chief is expected to kill one or two of the beasts to feed his people and if he is mean about this, killing one where he should have killed two, then on the next occasion his people are more reluctant
[626] to bring food. But there is also the sense of shame constraining individuals. If the majority of households in a village provide food for a chief on such an occasion, and the majority I think nearly always do so, then the shameful meanness and unconventionality of defaulters is the subject of adverse comment among them.

A chief also has the traditional right, still widely admitted to-day, to send and take food, especially milk and bananas, from his subjects if he has need of it. And we have seen already that men with more than one wife are prompted to retain *busongo* bananas for themselves in order to meet his demands without upsetting the peace of their households. This
[177] traditional right however is known not to be admitted by the European Administration, on the grounds that a salary has taken its place, and is therefore beginning to fall into disuse. Chiefs, I was told, often fear to exercise it lest some man refuse obedience and take a complaint to the *Boma*, nor are they willing to confine their demands to those men of whose compliance they are certain. As the salary of an ordinary chief,

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

425 him if it was his idea that the village should die out and leave him, the
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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

563 constitution (about which they asked many questions) was a
622 democratic one; for, they said, the Administration always supported the chiefs against the commoners.

621 The villages to which commoner leaders are appointed differ from all other Bantu villages of which we have knowledge in that they consist of groups of age-mates, not groups of kinsmen; boys build with contemporaries and remain with them through life; girls join the villages of their husbands at marriage; therefore relatives, other than husband and wife and young children, do
602 not live together. Nevertheless kinship ties are important, for property circulates within the kinship group rather than within the village, and kinsmen are believed to be mystically interdependent, in a way in which fellow villagers are not. The most prized
[556] possession of the Nyakyusa are cattle, for cattle enable a man to marry, to live in comfort, to gain prestige by feasting his friends; and cattle pass along the roads of kinship. They pass between brothers, and half-brothers, and the sons of brothers; between fathers and sons; and between affines. Kinsmen also participate in common rituals, praying to common ancestors, and seeking protection from mystical dangers which are thought to travel, like
[578] cattle, along the roads of kinship. Ever fearful lest a quarrel among them should bring misfortune on all, they strive to live in harmony.

The range of kinship recognized varies somewhat with the *status of the family concerned and the proximity and personalities* of its members, but, generally speaking, economic and religious co-operation link the descendants of a common grandfather, and marriage between the descendants of a common great-grand-
[581] father is excluded. A legal marriage is effected by the passage of cattle from the groom's group to the bride's, and it is this passage which is said to create kinship (*ubukamu*), with the consequent mystical interdependence, between a man and his wife, and between the one partner in a marriage and the close kinsmen of
595 the other. Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan, and it is made possible by the ten years' difference in the average marriage age
●428 of men and women. Girls are betrothed very young and finally join their husbands at puberty, while few pagan men marry under twenty-five. Inherited cattle are controlled by the older generation and polygyny is the prerogative of age. For property passes not directly from father to son, but from brother to brother,

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

through each group of full brothers, until, when the last full brother is dead, and the son of the eldest is an adult, the family stock comes to him. Thus few men under forty (other than chiefs) have more than one wife. Of 3,000 tax-payers (presumed to be 18 years and over) in Selya, 34 per cent were bachelors, 37 per cent monogamists, and 29 per cent polygynists. Plural marriages breed wealth, for the polygynist is likely to command the labour of many sons as well as several wives, and in due course he expects to receive the marriage cattle of many daughters.

Social status turns primarily on age, sex, and the control and distribution of wealth. As we have seen, the position of a chief is hereditary, but kinship with a chief does not carry office, nor are the kinsmen of chiefs conspicuously wealthy. Every man in turn hopes to control the property attaching to the house into which he was born, and all who live long enough do so. But there is a delayed right of primogeniture, for the senior son of a senior son inherits the bulk of the family stock when it passes to his generation, and the eldest of each group of full brothers has a special claim to the cattle coming in from the marriages of his sisters.

Seniority, whether within the context of the lineage, or of the hierarchy of age-villages, is something respected in itself, but wealth carries authority and prestige only in so far as it is used generously, in hospitality: one man is great and distinguished *(naiya) because he feeds people, another of little account* because he is poor or mean.

Women occupy a position very subordinate to men in Nyakyusa society. They play no part in public life, except in so far as the two great wives of a chief, and the first wife of a village headman co-operate with their husbands in rituals; and in the relationship of husband and wife, as well as in that of father and daughter, a woman is expected to show obedience and respect. Her deference is expressed conventionally in her crouching to greet men (*vide* Plate IX), and in her use of the submissive *toa* ("Yes, my lord") when addressed by them. Having no great chiefs and little regard for rank, Nyakyusa men show no trace of subservience in their manner to each other, but they expect a meek compliance from all women. The only relationships with a male in which a woman may in some measure assert herself are those which she has with a brother, and with a brother's sons. Leader-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

abakulumba) and their eldest sons are his two heirs in the chieftainship. Young girls, daughters of neighbouring chiefs, are carried off with a show of force from their fathers' homes, by the young chief's men, who themselves later contribute to the herd of cows sent to regularize the position. The two great wives are thus married not solely with the cows of their husband, but also with those of the men whose sons their sons will one day rule. The duty of arranging the match lies with the village headmen of the old chief, and it is said that they are often guided in their choice by dreams. 643 582 595 [622]

The girls who are carried off are just about to reach puberty, and they stay at the house of one of the men of the old chief until their periods begin. When both have reached puberty they are initiated, not at their fathers' houses, as are ordinary girls, but in the country of their husband, and both together. At their initiation the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the old retiring chief) play the part normally played by a girl's parents and their neighbours, while the young chief and his men take the usual part of a husband and his friends. And then, after the ceremonies are over, the two girls are given to the young chief as his wives. Houses are built for them separately, *i.e.* in the senior age-village of the new chiefdom for the first wife, in the next senior village for the second wife; and in this separation of dwelling place is already apparent the future division of the chiefdom between their sons. 643 583 595 881

Within the chiefdom, and among the wives and children of the chief two 'sides' (*imibafu*) are recognized. Usually, in each country there are, at its beginning, at least two age-villages and half the wives of the chief on either side. This distinction of two sides is important in succession, a son from each side eventually inheriting half the country. 428 616

From the time of the 'coming out' of the two young chiefs till the day of their own father's death there exists between him and them a delicate balance of prestige and power. Each of the three, traditionally, has judicial authority in his own age-villages, but appeals in difficult cases may be taken from either of the young chiefs and their village headmen to the old chief and his village headmen, while the religious duties of chieftainship are exercised entirely by the old chief. But in the old days it was the young chief who fought and fed men. 'Young chiefs used to lead their 643 642

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

of a married man is close to those of his neighbours, his banana grove probably adjoining theirs, while the main garden-lands of the whole group are all together at a distance (*vide* Plate III). Boundaries between age-villages are thus not always apparent to a stranger. A solid hundred acres or so of houses and bananas may turn out to consist of two or three villages, each with its own organization, and each having a block of garden-lands separate from the others.

If any question arises about the village a man belongs to, the points discussed are: where he has built and where he cultivates —*i.e.* to what village the land he uses belongs; with whom he herds his cows; and which village headman he goes to in case of a dispute. Membership of a village is therefore defined primarily in terms of economic co-operation and political allegiance.

d. Moving

The age-system is somewhat modified by men moving from one village to another. When a man dies his heir frequently comes and lives where the dead man was living, so becoming a member of his age-village. A man's heir is his full brother next to him in age, and only when all the full brothers of a family have died does the property pass to the eldest son of the eldest brother. The difference in the ages of a man and his heir is often, therefore, only a few years; but even if the difference be great, and the heir many years younger than his new neighbours, he is now treated as their contemporary. He sits with them at ceremonies and he shares their rights at any division of meat.

Were all heirs to remove to the homesteads of those who had died, the villages of old men would, of course, continue to exist indefinitely. In fact they do not. In Mwaipopo's chiefdom there remained only one small village of old men, the grandfathers of the generation which had last 'come out'. Other villages of this grandfathers' generation were remembered by name; the heirs of former members sometimes used the old name; but they did not live together as a group; they were members of other villages of their own generation. Even the heir of the headman of each old village, who acted as a priest, lived in some other village. It was said that these grandfathers' villages would disappear even in name when Mwaipopo, the father of the young chief died. No

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

425 554 sites are preferred to others, but the division of them at the 'coming out' does not appear to create much friction.

When the old men move they still maintain rights over what 423 may be regarded as the major 'improvement' made on their old sites, that is, trees which they or others have planted. There are two species which were traditionally and still are of great value to the Nyakyusa, the bamboo and the *uuryuuguti*. Bamboos are used for house-building, while the *uuryuuguti* produces a fruit which is both delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment. As has been shown in a previous essay[1] rights over these trees are maintained when individuals move from one village to another. Similarly, when a whole village moves, rights over bamboos are maintained, the former owner returning to cut them himself if he chooses. But the less valuable *uuryuuguti* crop is left to the occupier. As one old man put it: 'We don't send our wives back to harvest the *imiryuuguti* trees lest the young men make love to them there.' Bamboos are felled by men. Further complications are now potentially created by the planting of coffee-trees, but we know of no case in which a 'coming out' has yet taken place in a chiefdom in which coffee has been extensively planted—the first coffee-planters were those living on mission land which is unaffected by the 'coming out' ceremony. Now that coffee planting is becoming general, however, the difficulties of moving whole villages will be much greater.

The only land which was traditionally excluded from the 'new deal' in each generation is the very scarce and valuable ground in the bottom of old volcanic craters. This land is owned by families, and is always claimed by a kinsman when the occupier dies or moves to another chiefdom. It may be that long ago the land in each particular crater was owned solely by members of some particular village, but now it is held by old families scattered all over the chiefdom in which it lies. Thus ordinary land, of which in the old days there was ample, was re-allotted in each generation, but the most valuable ground was passed down from father to son. We shall return to this point again in our last chapter.

425 As we have seen, movement of individuals from one village to another is very frequent. Normally land for building and gardens

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa*, pp. 41-2. Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 1, 1938.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

22. 'THE BREATH OF MEN'

Mwaiwumo (ilwa).

'"The breath of men" is a very serious illness; if a person is ill from "the breath of men" he is in great trouble. Such a person never recovers until they pray (*lukwikemanya*). This illness comes especially when a man enters into his inheritance but does not perform the ritual, perhaps to bury him from whom he inherited—his father, or elder brother, or perhaps his mother's brother. As in the case of the estate of our mother's brother, Mwakaliku. When Mwambilike (informant's elder brother) inherited the woman Kyando, he did not perform the ritual for her. The woman was constantly ailing, but no one knew that she was suffering from this illness until they went to divine and found that she was ill from "the breath" because no ritual had been performed for her from the time she was inherited until now. So Mwambilike found a cow and called together all his dependants and his fellows in the village, and he killed the cow and told everyone about this illness. Then people "complained" (*abwijaje*), and said: "Indeed, may this illness finish." (It was neighbours who complained, not relatives.) From that time the woman concerned has never been ill again. So everyone says: "In truth, 'the breath of men' is very great." 753 626 428

'This illness is very serious, but it never kills people, though they are ill for a long time. If it is not discovered that this is the cause, the patient will be ill for a very long time, perhaps for two or three years. Yes, sometimes it kills when it has spread in the homestead, but people very rarely die from this illness. 753 626

'It is often seen in connection with inheritance. Another case occurred in my country. A certain man built with us who was of a chief's lineage. He inherited from a relative but he did not kill a cow at the death ritual. The wife he inherited was constantly ill until they went to divine and found that it was "the breath of men" (which was making her ill) because he had not performed a ritual since he entered into his inheritance. So he also found a cow and called people (non-relatives) and all his descendants, and killed the cow, and his fellow villagers "complained" (*abwijaje*). But I do not know whether the illness finished or not. What I do know is that he found a cow—I saw it myself when it was lying there dead and people gathered, relatives, descendants, and neighbours. 753 626 428

'*Ingwite* is a disease of children. It comes from the insults used by the mother of the child. It is commonly said that when a married 753 626

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

765 deceased was a man and wealthy, the heir kills a bull or cow for a feast.

765 184 According to one account, 'the heir kills a cow saying: "This is your cow, Father." Then he takes the praying calabash and fills it with beer and goes to the banana grove. The others sit in the courtyard watching from afar. He blows beer and then pours out a little, several times, mentioning the dead man's name and those of three or four prominent dead relatives, and prays for children, health, and food. He takes his own senior son (or the son of his dead brother) with him to see what he does, for he (the son) will do it after his death. Then they come back and the meat is eaten and beer drunk.' But we never saw this happen nor was the prayer in the banana grove mentioned by other informants.

782 765 If the millet put to soak fails to sprout, however, there must be prayer. It is thought that there has been disagreement among the mourners and the shades are angry and have spoilt the millet. The kinsmen gather to confess their quarrels and pray before preparing another batch.

765 At the shaving of the sprouting hair (or some other time during the death ritual) the sisters of the dead man formally admonish his widows on their behaviour as wives. One admonition recorded lasted two hours, and the main theme was the stinginess of the widows in entertaining their sisters-in-law when the latter had come to visit.

765 768 581 On the morning after 'the shaving of the sprouting hair' the participants shave their whole heads and are anointed with ointment by the officiant. In the evening comes the formal handing over of the inheritance, if the deceased was a married man. The heir sits in the doorway of the mourning hut and the senior wife of the deceased hands him a bill-hook, such as is used for pruning bananas. He is adjured by his relatives, his village headman, and his neighbours to care for the children of the deceased as if they were his own, and the widows are told: 'This is your husband who will hoe for you always.' If there is any division of property it is formally made on this occasion, the dead man's sisters and the village headman being primarily responsible for a just allocation. And though, traditionally, women were given no choice about inheritance, this was in fact the occasion on which their protests and preferences were expressed. Then the heir is thrown into the hut with the women he has inherited 'on to the ashes' (*umfuwandele*), and must have intercourse with all of them that night. One of

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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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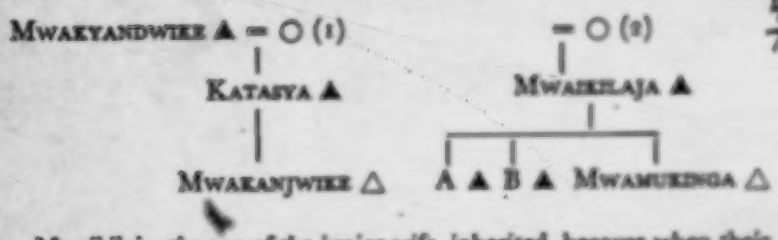


Mwaikilaja, the son of the junior wife, inherited, because when their father, Mwakyandwike, died, Katasya, the son of the senior wife, was a child. Mwamukinga is accused of killing Katasya by sorcery.

Mwakwelebeja came in to take me to the funeral of Katasya. 'It is 764
not the day of burial to-day, but the day of war. On the day of burial they weep very much and it does not go well (*ikasage*) but to-day it will be well performed.' He was eager and excited at the prospect of good dancing. 'The chief Mwabuga from Masoko, his son-in-law, is coming. He is coming with his drums. The people of Masoko dance well.' At first I refused to go, but he would take no refusal. 'You must come,' he insisted, so finally I went.

On the way we discussed the cause of death. Some say the witches 761
have eaten him. They say that Mwainyopolela is angry on account of the meat. Some say it is the sorcery of Mwaihojo (the chief) because Katasya (a man of Chief Mwaipopo) hoed a big area in the disputed ground. He built a temporary hut and lived there. But we say no. If they had roused up a war between the witches, would they not have gone to Mwakagile (Chief Mwaipopo) and his fellows? But we have not done that. We argue and say: 'Why are you taking our country?' but we are only fighting with words.

QUESTION: The war of the witches?

MWAKWELEBEJA: Yes, the war when they call the witches of a chief- 754
dom by night to fight against those of another chiefdom. But Katasya 721
was indeed wrong to stint his neighbours in Busikali of meat. If he had 689
been wise he would have given them a leg. Mwainyopolela is very generous. Always when he kills a beast he shares the meat with his fellows.

We arrived at the funeral. The women were packed together under a 764
tree to the left, where they had sat with the corpse yesterday. The girls and young women stood watching the dance and occasionally strolling rhythmically out into the midst of it. The errant son was with the other men to-day. The son-in-law from Masoko came with all his cattle (seven cows, one bull and five calves) of which one will be killed and the others returned. The bull was unusually large with an enormous hump and it caused comment. It was well known. They told each other how, when his father, Mwakabulwa, died, this bull was quiescent. It did not move about at all, and it was a very small calf. It was quiescent

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

went to catch the junior brother who was there, but from that time he has been ill. 754

QUESTION: Did Mwamukinga (the sorcerer) come to the funeral and did they give him meat? 754 764

MWANYONO: Yes, he came.

QUESTION: Is he not ashamed? Do people agree that they have worked sorcery against someone?

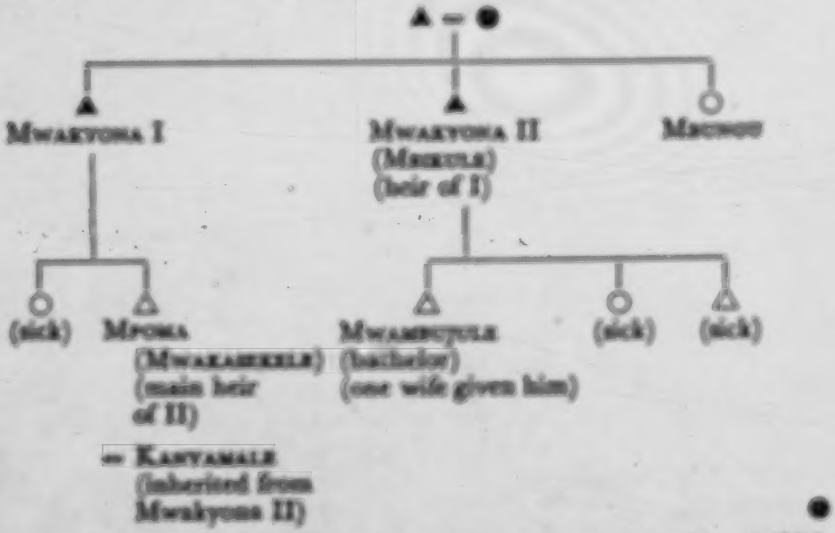
MWANYONO: They deny it.

QUESTION: Did they give him meat?

MWANYONO: Yes, they gave it to him.

(*b*) *Sickness in the lineage of Mwakyusa*

The following case also illustrates how several possible causes of misfortune were considered—sorcery between kinsmen who were quarrelling over inheritance, the anger of the shades, and the jealousy of neighbours were mentioned. It shows, further, how expression of goodwill by those thought to be injuring a man is necessary for his recovery. The doctor treating the patient made the kinsmen confess their anger and gave them a medicine guaranteed to kill anyone working sorcery. 753



MWAKAMBO: When Mwakyusa died, his younger brother, Mwakyusa the younger, whom they call Msikule, inherited. But Msikule also died, so they sought Mwakisunde (the doctor and brother of the chief) and they asked him: 'To whom shall we give the inheritance?' The village elders, their fathers—those of the house—and their father's sisters, were those who saw to the matter of the inheritance. Then 423

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

● 426 Mwakionde let Mpoma (Mwakasekele) take the inheritance because he is the eldest. Mwakionde said: 'Let him be their father.' But when they gave the inheritance to Mpoma, they talked to one another and said that Mwambujule should take one wife because he did not have any wife. He was a bachelor. So they gave him one wife, but four wives of the father were inherited by Mpoma. After a little time Mwambujule said: 'My fellow has made a mistake with the property and he has
428 not given me anything.' So he strove to attract the mothers. He said:
576 'Come to me and let me inherit you myself.' The mothers agreed, they ran away and came to his place. Mpoma was angry and went to Mwakionde to tell him that Mwambujule had attracted the mothers and taken them to his house. Mwakionde said: 'Do not make a case.' The village headman went to Mwambujule to admonish him together with the mothers. Then he returned them to Mpoma.

754 Later on, illness appeared. The sister of Mpoma fell ill. They gave
757 her medicines to drink and she recovered. Then the brother of Mwambujule fell ill and the doctors said it was sorcery (*ubwogi*), that is, Mwakionde thinks it is sorcery. This is also a common rumour. But, as will be seen later, the diviners, when appealed to, said: '*Mizimu*,' that is, the shades.

755 When Mwakionde saw the sick man, he called together all of them
754 that they might grumble (*kijanuw*) and drive away the illness, because it is said that when people pray (*ukuipute*) the sickness from sorcery gets less. It is said if one has worked sorcery against his fellow he always hides himself, he does not appear at his friend's home, because, if he appears, if he comes and says: 'I am sorry for the illness (*ndaga ulubaw*),' even without praying at all, the illness disappears. Also, if a sick man has died, he does not go or he will die soon. It is said that the dead rise. Yes, it is the same in the case of witchcraft. Then also they say that if someone has 'eaten' his fellow he does not go to him, he hides himself at his own home, and if his fellow has died he does not go or he will die very quickly. The dead rise. In the prayer they especially drive away the shades, because it is said that sickness from the shades comes from us living. If, for example, I have done something bad to my fellow, and the shades are angry, but if he forgives me, they also forgive. He must express forgiveness openly in words of prayer (*omuyu yanw ga ukuipute*). If he forgives me only in his heart, the shades do not forgive. This prayer that we heard during the day had power both against sorcery and against the shades, they spoke of both. In the evening it was completed.

754 Mwakionde called them all together and said: 'Friends, I am astonished that the illness has come again.' The people: 'Ho; this illness puzzles us very much.'

MWAKIONDE: 'For what reason does this man fall ill in the summer, and that man fall ill in the summer, and the other fall ill?'

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Ngokwesa

600 important relationships of kinship and affinity. Marriage cattle are not kept by the bride's father, but are distributed by him among her brothers for their marriages, and among his own brothers and half-brothers, who in turn give him cattle when their own daughters marry.

598 Half-brothers do not generally exchange cattle, but unless they do so there are no strong bonds of kinship between them. A polygynist usually creates the relationship of 'milking each other's cows', between his senior son and the eldest of each group of full-brothers by his other wives. He gives some of the marriage cows received for a daughter to one of her half-brothers, the latter being placed under an obligation to return the cows to the girl's eldest full brother some day from the marriage cattle of a sister or daughter of his own. The exchange cows begun usually continues as sisters and daughters marry, and only lapses in the third generation, unless the principals quarrel and take legal action for 'separation'. Then a balance is drawn up of the cows exchanged from the beginning of the relationship, and the kinship is broken. The two thus 'separated' have no mutual obligations and do not attend each other's funerals.

602 Half-brothers may be linked by blood if their mothers are close kin; they may also be linked by cattle exchanges. The laws of inheritance make the full brothers of a man his first heirs, then his half-brothers linked by blood, then those linked by cattle have precedence over other half-brothers.[1]

604 The bond between a man and his mother's brother is expressed in terms of the passage of cattle. As the mother's brother married with the mother's cattle, her eldest son has the right to make free with his property in his lifetime, the right to receive one cow to set up a herd of his own, and a reversionary right of inheritance; if the mother's brother dies without heir, her son can claim the particular wife obtained with and the particular property of the cattle given for his own mother.

606 There is a strict custom of father and daughter-in-law avoidance. A woman may never speak to, approach, or look at her husband's father, on pain of death through the witchcraft of indignant neighbours. The prohibition is extended from her own father-in-law to all his classificatory brothers, and is the basis of the age-village system.[2] A man must also avoid his mother-in-law, but this prohibition is relaxed after the birth of a child.[3] The affinal relationship is also expressed by the obligation of a man to bring a cow to the funeral of his wife's father or brother, and to give one at the death of his own son-in-law. The former may count as part of his marriage payments in case of a claim for refund.[4]

601 The main kinship terms are as follows:

Ndama — brother-in-law or sister-in-law; used by a man for all husbands of his 'sisters', all 'brothers' of his wives, and for the son of his wife's brother, since he has a right to marry that man's sister; by a woman for all wives of her 'brothers' and all 'sisters' of her husband.

Ntaghe — parent-in-law or child-in-law; used for the husband of a daughter, or for the parent of a wife or husband (a daughter-in-law is called by the special name of *Nkamwanu*). The wife of the wife's brother is called *Ntaghe*, as she is the mother of a potential wife, and of a brother-in-law.

[1] Wilson, n. [illegible], p. [illegible]; n. [illegible], p. [illegible].
[2] Hunt, n. [illegible], pp. [illegible]; Mackenzie, [illegible], pp. [illegible] and [illegible].
[3] Mackenzie, [illegible], p. [illegible].
[4] Wilson, n. [illegible].

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

534 live with her husband until at least three cows have been given. One of the bulls is only given if the girl is virgin at her initiation rite, and this bull is given to her mother. The laws of inheritance and the system of marriage by cattle payments ensures that cattle will be in the hands of the older men. In general polygynists are men over forty-five.[1]

585 The first wife married is the chief wife, and is entitled to respect and obedience from her co-wives. Her first son is her husband's ultimate heir. A man cannot lightly divorce his first wife during the lifetime of his own father who provided the cattle
586 with which she was married. Divorce is effected by the return of the marriage cattle. Usually the woman has a lover who will pay cows to redeem her; if she refuses to go back to her husband there is no means of compelling her to do so, though in pre-European times her father and the chief might send her back. In such a case the husband would be entitled to his original payments plus their increase.[2] Men do not demand divorce for adultery unless it is persistent.[3] Divorce is often sought for very trivial reasons.[4] If the paternal uncles have helped the groom to collect his marriage cattle, the beasts are redistributed to their original donors after they have been returned to the husband.[5]

587 A man whose wife dies can claim a substitute or the refund of his cattle. When a
768 man dies his widows pass to his heir who takes them all as wives, if he is a brother of the dead man; if the heir is a son he takes all except his own mother and the wives who are her close kin. Inherited wives have the same land rights as others.[6]

Inheritance

428 Brothers inherit before sons, their half-brothers (indeed half-brothers before other half-brothers). When all the brothers are dead the property and wives of each pass to each man's eldest son.[7] This rule also applies to the Nyamwanga and Iwa.[8] The heir assumes the full obligations of father to his younger brothers and is responsible for their marriages; they hoe for him and are fed by his wives as are commoner sons.[9] The sister's son only inherits if all near patrilineal kinsmen are dead or are infants.[10]

The above applies to commoners' inheritance only. For chiefs, succession and inheritance may follow different principles. For instance, in succession to local chieftaincies, two or more sons would divide the chieftdom. Among the Ngonde the Kyungu and the great chiefs were not chosen according to strict genealogical right, but were selected from the appropriate families according to their wealth, generosity, and courage. In the succession to the great chieftdoms, there was formerly a difference of procedure in the two royal lines: that of Ngolenge, where the nobles of Ngonde were sent by the Kyungu to help to select the successor; that of Ngum, the line of the female side, where the nobles of Ngonde merely announced the great commoners to discuss with them who was to succeed. Nowadays the difference between the two lines has disappeared, and the Ngolenge custom is followed for both. If the genealogical heir

[1] Wilson, o, op. cit. p.
[2] Wilson, o, op. cit. p. 184.
[3] Ibid., p. 84.
[4] Ibid., o, op. cit. p. 184; Sanderson, o, op. cit. p.
[5] Wilson, o, op. cit. p. 11 and 18; Johnston, Ibid, p. 411.
[6] Sanderson, op. cit. p.
[7] Sanderson, op. cit. p.
[8] Wilson, o, op. cit. p. 41.
[9] Cardwell, op. cit. p.
[10] Wilson, o, op. cit. p. 41.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

was set aside in succession, his right to inherit the property and widows was none the less undisputed.[1]

SLAVERY (AMONG THE NGONDE)

967 Slaves were obtained by the Kyungu and chiefs in warfare and as fines for offences. The Kyungu gave women slaves to his important chiefs, thus strengthening the kinship bonds between them and himself, for the recipient would regard the Kyungu as his father-in-law if he took the woman to wife, and her children would be counted as grandchildren of the Kyungu. The owner of a slave was obliged to find a spouse for him or her, and a male slave could rise to positions of importance.[2]

LAND TENURE

923 No individual can own land unless he himself either works it or is a full member of the local community. Rights to land are only rigorously defined in cases of scarce and
925 valuable land. Owing to witchcraft beliefs, movement from one place to another is constant. In taking up new land after a move, a stranger is granted land by the villagers acting through their great commoners, the chief being merely informed. Both chiefs and villagers welcome new-comers. If a man returns after absence to his own village he has a claim to enter into possession of his old building site and gardens. The claim varies in strength according to his relations with the villagers and the chief. If a man goes to a neighbouring village within a chiefdom, he can go on hoeing his old gardens, ownership depending on effective use.

Land suitable for beans and maize plots is the most valuable, as it is hoed continuously for years. Land for other crops is plentiful, so that if a man leaves a garden fallow for only two years anyone may cultivate it. The most scarce and valuable land is in the bottom of old volcanic craters, and in these cases rights are insisted upon, so that if a man moves to a new chiefdom, his next of kin claims his crater land. In other cases, when a man moves from a chiefdom, his old gardens revert to the joint ownership of villagers and chief. When a man dies his heir takes his wives, cattle, and movable property, but not his land, unless he comes to live in the village.

Rights in trees differ according to the types of trees and according to local customs. In some cases rights in trees are lost when a man moves away, in others the rights to valuable trees are claimed by the nearest kinsman in the neighbourhood. Now that chiefdoms are no longer in a state of potential war with each other, the group within which property is held is wider. Coffee-trees have been declared by the Federation of Chiefs to be the property of the original planter, even though he may have moved to another chiefdom. The Agricultural Officer takes over abandoned coffee-trees to tend them for pest control.

923 Pasture is jointly owned by the whole village group, no individual having exclusive rights in it.

No direct charge is made for the right to build or cultivate. Certain obligations are owed to a chief in view of his over-lordship, e.g. providing cooked food for ceremonies of the chief's own immediate family, but this obligation is reciprocal, the chief being expected in return to kill beasts to feed the people.[3]

[1] Wilson, J. 1939, pp. 50-1.
[2] Wilson, J. 1938, pp. 50-58; Mackenzie, 1925, p. 62.
[3] Ibid., p. 48; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 58-60.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Nyakyusa are, predominantly, a patrilineal people, for inheritance normally follows the male line. They differ, however, from the patrilineal peoples of Europe in that brothers inherit before sons. Inherited wealth is thus mainly kept in the hands of the older men, though they are under certain obligations towards their "sons" (whether own or classificatory) in their use of it. Marriage involves a transfer of anything from four to thirty head of cattle from the bridegroom to his father-in-law, and consequently the chief obligation which an older man has, both to his own sons and to the sons of any kinsman from whom he has inherited, is to provide them, in due time, with cattle for marriage. But this obligation is not an absolute one, it depends, in part, upon the due fulfilment by each "son" of his filial duties, which are, firstly, to hoe his father's fields diligently and, secondly, to maintain a respectful bearing towards him. Unmarried men have no gardens of their own, they work their fathers' land and eat the produce of it which their mothers cook. 611 425 583 593

Under modern conditions money for tax and clothes is necessary both to father and son, and very many young men visit the nearby Lupa gold fields regularly, for periods of a few months at a time, to earn it. A youth who always brings back to his parents after each spell of absence tax money and some presents is held to have done all his duty and he will be given marriage cattle just as soon and as readily as if he had spent all his time hoeing at home. And if he earns more, sufficient to purchase some of his marriage cattle for himself, still his father benefits, for the old man has then to spend fewer beasts from his own stock. But the Lupa needs food as well as labour and some unmarried men stay continuously at home and engage in the production of crops; after the family needs have been met the surplus is sold and from the proceeds the father pays his own tax and his sons' and buys clothes for them as well. 167 593

Hoeing, which is the hardest part of Nyakyusa cultivation, is normally done by men, planting; weeding, reaping and cooking by women. But some women nowadays do some hoeing too—if their husbands are away at work or if for any other reason they find it difficult to get enough ground prepared for them. Traditionally, I was told, women never used a hoe at all. 241 462

Polygyny is the rule rather than the exception among middle-aged men, and in a polygynous household, as we shall see, each wife has her own garden plots. The institution of polygyny has many other elements besides the economic, but the economic is not the least important of them: the taking of additional wives is the best capital investment which is open to an ordinary, uneducated, Nyakyusa peasant. A Nyakyusa wife is not her husband's property, she is his wife; but as family relationships are, among the Nyakyusa, the basis of economic activity, so the more wives 595

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

We have already seen in two examples that a man, when returning to the chiefdom from which he has moved, may recover his old gardens even though he builds in a different village. And it frequently happens also that a man comes to a village and asks for garden-land only, continuing to live in another village, or even in another chiefdom. Such requests the villagers always, so far as I know, grant willingly, for once a man has taken up land in a new village there is every prospect that he will one day move altogether and build there. In case of sickness he is more likely to move to the group where he is already half-established and sure of a warm welcome than anywhere else. 423 425

When a man moves he has the right to reap the crops standing in his old gardens as soon as they ripen, but after that the ground, save in the case of craters, reverts to the joint ownership of villagers and chief. And his building plot and bananas revert to them immediately. The next-door neighbours on either side keep the bananas clean and eat the fruit themselves until the plot and the bananas are given by the villagers, with the chief's approval, to another man. If the previous holder has moved to a place without bananas and not very far away he may, in the first year, send to his late neighbours and ask to be allowed to cut and carry away some of the banana fruit "for my bananas in my new plot have not yet grown." But his request is of grace and not of right, it may be refused. If the villagers like and respect him and hope to persuade him to return later it will always be granted, but if they dislike him and are glad to be rid of him then it will not. If the plot is a separate one without immediate neighbours then no one keeps the bananas clean and, unless someone else is given the plot soon, they get choked with weeds and die.

When a man dies the heir takes his wives, his cattle and his moveable property, and, if he comes to live in the dead man's village, his land also. But if the heir remains in his own old village[1] he has no rights over the dead man's land. The situation is then exactly comparable to that which obtains when a man moves from one village to another, his land rights in the old village lapse. 423 428

Rights in trees differ in some respects from rights in land and they differ also for different kinds of trees; and here, as an added complication, we are also faced with a difference of local custom. 423

Prior to the introduction of new trees by Europeans the only ones of any great value to the Nyakyusa were the bamboo (ilikai) and the ensyegati tree, whose botanical name I have been unable to find out. Bamboos 423 424

[1] Owing to the age grouping among villagers and the long period which traditionally separated one pregnancy from another in a woman's life it is unusual to find full-brothers in the same village.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

that to the independent chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa, tied up with the custom of the "coming out" (*ewanoka*). In both areas the two senior sons of the two great wives of each ruling chief were publicly "brought out" about a generation after the "coming out" of their father; and from that time forwards the old chief went into semi-retirement while they divided his country between them. If it was a big country both of them would very likely be prosperous rulers; if it was not then one of them—the most generous rather than the senior—would probably in time attract the bulk of the people to him, leaving his half-brother little but the name of a chief. 622

Now both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa there was a certain tendency for other sons of an old chief, besides the two senior who were formally "brought out," to collect a few men round them and set up chiefdoms of their own. But it was in Ngonde that this tendency was most marked. And so today the chiefdoms of Ngonde are smaller than those of the Nyakyusa, for they have been for more split up. The reason for this difference appears to have lain in the very great prestige of Mbande, and so of all kinsmen of the Kyungu. There is a saying current in Ngonde: "Every son of the Kyungu is a chief." But no such saying is current among the Nyakyusa. And thus it has happened that often in Ngonde the men of an old chief have been divided up among four or five sons, not among two only; and the most successful of these four or five has not always been one of the two senior. If a junior son was a more generous leader of men than his seniors he would die a greater chief than they, for many of their followers would leave them and join him. So we see that the formal passing over of a mean or poverty-stricken chief in favour of a richer or more generous junior, in the selection of the great chiefs, was but an extension of a principle which already worked less formally among the little local chiefs themselves. 622 559

And, further, it must be emphasized that the principles of succession to high office in Ngonde and the principles by which property is inherited there were, and still are, wholly distinct. When the immediate heir of a Kyungu or a great chief is passed over in the succession he does not thereby lose his inheritance. The wives and property of the dead man are indisputably his. Full-brothers are the first heirs and after them either sons or half-brothers, in accordance with different circumstances, while a sister's son can only inherit if all near patrilineal kinsmen are either still in their infancy or already dead. 423

The traditional laws of succession to the Kyungship, the great chiefdoms and the fiefs of Ngonde thus present the student with a most interesting balance between different principles: heredity was modified 643 622 559

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

maternal uncle about, and she calls him *ukome*. As a sister's son comes very low down in the table of succession, this cannot be due to their prospective relationship should the maternal uncle die, and it may be that the relationship of husband's sister's son is (or was) regarded as analogous to that of wife's brother's daughter. On the other hand, if the father of X exercises his right to marry his wife's brother's daughter, this girl, from being the "sister" of X, becomes his "mother," and her mother (the wife of X's maternal uncle) becomes his "grandmother" and therefore his *ukome*. 601 604

(7) Cross-cousins are classed as "brothers" and "sisters," and all first cousins are, therefore, unmarriageable. 606 607

(8) It is of interest to note that a kind of marriage by capture is still in vogue among the Wangonde. It may be performed either with or without the consent of the woman, but, except in the case of a woman to whom the man has a right by relationship, her father's sanction is necessary, and at least part of the dowry must be paid beforehand: usually, the woman is aware that the marriage has been proposed. 513

The bridegroom, assisted by some friends, either lies in wait for the woman, on the way to the water-supply for instance, or decoys her out of the village by means of a spurious message, and carries her off to his home. Her relatives would be bound in honour to rescue her if the bridegroom were so unskilful as to make it impossible for them to affect ignorance of the abduction. It is said that the marriage is sometimes consummated by force with the assistance of the companions of the bridegroom: in any case, a small present to the girl personally is necessary before consummation.

4. *Succession.*—The order of succession is liable to modification if the legal heir is considered unsuitable for any reason. The relationships are put in the following order of precedence:— 623

(1) Younger brother by same father and mother.
(2) Younger brother by same father and different mother.
(3) Any younger "brother."

Note.—It would be considered *infra dig.* for an elder "brother" to take the name of his junior, so that, although he has a prior right to the property, he would appoint a younger "brother" to the name. In such a case he may choose which of the "wives" of the deceased he likes, in addition to the uncle.

(4) Eldest surviving son (very begetting).
(5) Eldest son of elder brother (by the same father).
(6) Eldest son of younger brother (by the same father)

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

(7) Eldest *wenjwa*, *i.e.*, eldest son of eldest sister. 1-28

(8) Eldest son of a younger sister.

(9) Eldest grandson of the father's elder brother.

(10) Eldest grandson of the father's younger brother.

(11) Eldest grandson of the father's sister.

(12) Eldest grandson of the mother's sister.

(13) Eldest grandson of the mother's brother.

(14) Eldest grandson of the eldest brother by the same mother (not father).

(15) Eldest son of own son or daughter.

(16) Eldest grandson of a younger brother.

(17) Eldest grandson of a sister.

3. All single must be "feared," *i.e.*, avoided on all occasions; a woman must never her head if unavoidably in their presence. These rules do not differ greatly from those found in other parts of the world, except that a man's "fear" of his wife's mother is greatly lessened after the birth of a child to the couple. They have to be much more strictly observed by a woman than by a man. 606

II.—THE WAHENGA.

1. The term Wahenga is somewhat loosely applied to a group of Bantu people living to the north of the Wanyende, and is often used as synonymous with WaTumbuka, Wakamanga, and Wa'nka. It is adopted here for convenience, though properly only applicable to those living in the valley of the S. Rukuru River, often called the Henga Valley; the word *henga* means "chief" in some Bantu languages, but the valley is said to have been named after a chief who settled in it. 607

The information detailed here as to relationships has been derived from natives whose birthplace is the Nkhamanga plains to the north of the S. Rukuru River and west of the "Henga Valley," but so far as has been ascertained it applies equally to the rest of the group. These people prefer to be called Wakamanga, and they have a tradition that their forefathers came from the East across the Lake (Nyasa); they are now, however, so mixed by inter-marriage with the other small groups mentioned above that the practice of including them all under the term Wahenga has been followed here.

2. *Definitions.*—MUKAMU = "brother" to "sister," or "sister" to "brother." An elder "brother" is MKULU, a younger one MFUNU'UNA, of a man: the same terms are used by a woman of her "sisters." The children of the father's elder brother are called WAKULU irrespective of age, as also those of the mother's elder sister.

MWANAWEWA ("my fellow-child," other forms MWANAWEWU, MWANAWEWA, etc., "your" "his fellow-child"). This term is often used as equivalent to "brother" or "sister" by either a man or a woman.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

her and then returns to her first husband the cows he had given for her with two in addition as adultery fine. But this return is usually made only after the first husband has brought a lawsuit against him.

Adultery is extremely common now-a-days; when a man runs off with, or is discovered seducing, a married woman and has not enough cows to marry her, he is legally compelled to pay two cows for the adultery to her husband. In pre-European days an adulterer, if caught, was usually punished by the husband and his neighbours with death or extreme torture, and the old men tell me that adultery was then a rarer event.

The extent to which a girl is usually allowed to choose whom she will marry is difficult to guage, and varies in different circumstances. Opportunities of meeting and flirting with young men at dances and ceremonies are frequent; and the older men say that, owing to the abolition by the Europeans of the old severe punishments for adultery, girls are freer now than they used to be, for their lovers no longer fear to run off with them if they are married or bespoken (which is in Nyakyusa law very much the same thing). The custom of betrothing infant girls is, they declare, less common than it used to be; they are now more chary of pledging their daughters "for when they grow up they just run off with someone else." A girl's choice is, however, limited by the necessity of finding a lover who has cows, and few young men have enough to secure her if she is already married, though they may have enough to pay an adultery fine.

Owing, in part, to the laws of inheritance, by which a commoner's* full-brother inherits before his son, it is the older men who control the cattle. Every bachelor is largely or wholly dependent on his own father (or his dead father's heir) for the cows for his first marriage, and he must hoe his father's fields for many years before he is given enough to secure a wife and to set up a family of his own. Economic reciprocity is an element in most human relationships, and it enters into the Nyakyusa relationship of father and son. It is well understood, in this society, that after a certain length of time spent hoeing his father's fields a young man is entitled to some cows, if his father has any; and if his father delays too long the young man either stops hoeing for his father or else he takes legal action and enforces his claim. Between father and son such law cases are rare, but they are frequent between a young man and the brother of his father who has inherited his father's wives, property, and position in the family.

* The laws of inheritance for a chief are, in certain respects, different; vide infra, "The Chiefdom."

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

586 her own father and the chief. A man has the right to divorce his wife, that is to send her away and demand back his cows, if she is dirty or lazy in housework or if she commits adultery, but men do not often demand a divorce for adultery unless it is persistent. If a man sends his wife away for some such reason she returns to her father and he, if he has cows available, sends back to her husband his marriage-cattle, if he has not got the cows the husband must wait until the girl is remarried.

593 857 Into the relationship of mother and daughter economic co-operation and reciprocity enter. The care of young children is largely in the hands of their elder sisters, and the girls also help their own mothers in field-work and in fetching and carrying. In return their mothers cook for them, teach them how to cook themselves and how to make mats.

586 593 Each mother is responsible also for her own daughter's virginity. One of the bulls which a young man brings during the initiation of his betrothed wife is only given if the girl is found on examination to be still virgin, or if he has deflowered her himself. If it is given this bull belongs to the girl's mother to eat with her own friends. But, in spite of her [569] mother's responsibility for her, a girl learns nothing positive from her mother about sex, but from her own slightly older friends; with them she discusses the technique of love-making in detail, but never with her mother.

593 The relationships of siblings are, in general, closer than those of half-siblings, and the eldest son in each individual family is privileged above his brothers. A boy's claim for cattle is, as we have seen, partly based on the time and energy he has put into hoeing his parents' fields; but it also depends, in part, on having full-sisters of his own. When a girl marries the cows come to her father, but her own full-brothers expect to receive these cows, in time, for their own marriages, in the order of their age. Though the father controls the cattle the brothers speak of them as "our cows" and they have an ultimate legal claim to them, which only gross laziness or insult to their father can altogether vitiate. The eldest of a group of full-brothers is the first to draw on these cows and to marry, his juniors wait longer. Full-brothers are bound together in many ways; the eldest, who is privileged, is bound to help his juniors in any way he can, and they in turn respect him and in time give to him some cows from the marriages of their own daughters; 593 and each makes the others' quarrels his own. What chiefly unites them 448 in the law of inheritance, for though the eldest has first right to the cattle from their sisters' marriages, and though the younger ones, later in life, give cattle from their daughters' marriages to him, yet they are his heirs, and all his privileges in time pass to them. When the eldest dies his next

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

full-brother steps into his place, takes his wives, huts, land and cows and looks after his children; after him the next full-brother inherits and so on, until, when all are dead, the property and wives of each pass to each one's senior son.[9] 593 428

The heir has exactly the same obligations to his predecessor's children that the dead man had himself while alive, but frequently he has less will to perform them; and his conformity is often only assured by the pressure of legal and religious sanctions.

This rule of inheritance is part of a more general fact, which is that, in Nyakyusa society, death does not break a family and its relationships, but simply alters the particular people between whom these relationships obtain. Only rarely does death leave a man or woman widowed, or a child orphaned; nearly always some one is at once substituted in place of the one who has died. When a woman dies young her parents are bound either to give another daughter to her husband or else to return the marriage-cattle to him so that he can obtain another wife; when a man dies his wives and children are not left alone but taken by his heir. If the heir is a brother he takes all the women as his wives, if a son he builds a separate hut for his own mother and takes the others. And the heir is now "the father" of the dead man's children. Even when a man and all his full-brothers are dead the families of each are still united for some purposes under the leadership of each one's senior son (eldest son of chief wife). The senior son is now called "father" by his siblings and half-siblings, he is religiously responsible for them all (*vide infra*), he normally exchanges cows with the eldest brother in each individual family (*vide infra*.), he is entitled to their respect and obedience. 768

Half-brothers may, or may not, be linked especially closely together. They may, as we have seen, be linked by blood when their two mothers are either sisters or close kinswomen, they may also be linked by an exchange of cattle, by "milking each other's cows" (*ukukamanda*). Each group of full brothers regards the cows that come in from the marriages of their sisters as their own cattle, but the father disposes of these cattle as he wishes. If he gives some of their cows to a half-brother, he thereby creates between the eldest of the group and this man the special relationship of "milking each other's cows;" and it is expected that the cows given will in time be returned by this half-brother from the marriage-cattle either of a full sister or of a daughter of his own. And the exchange once begun goes on; as their sisters and daughters marry 593

[9] This refers to commoner's inheritance only.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

593 they continually give each other cows; between their respective sons also the exchange usually continues, but between their grandsons it lapses.
593 686 Reciprocity is expected and can be legally enforced, but it is not insisted upon so long as the two men concerned are friends, and its legal enforcement at once breaks the relationship. If two such half-brothers (or their sons) quarrel, one may take legal action for "separation" (*ukulekana*) against the other. The cows that have been handed over by both sides since the beginning of the relationship (perhaps twenty or thirty years before) are counted up, and one or the other is ordered to pay over the balance to make the numbers equal. After this the two are "no longer kinsmen," they have no mutual obligations and do not attend each other's funerals.

593 428 It is usual for a father to create this relationship between his senior son and the eldest of each group of full-brothers, so that by this exchange of cows the family is held together. The linkage of half-brothers, whether by blood or by "milking each others cows," is important in inheritance. If a man with no full-brother dies and leaves no sons, or sons too young to inherit, then the inheritance passes to a linked half-brother; to a half-brother linked by blood if there is one, if there is not then to one linked by exchange of cows.

771 Religion enters continually into family life and helps to maintain wider kinship bonds also. The Nyakyusa religion falls, broadly, into three parts: The Ancestor cult, Witchcraft and Magic. Taken as a whole their religion, as they believe, secures for them many of the most important values of life, health, good crops and success in various enterprises; it provides an intelligible explanation of death and misfortune by tracing them to the ill-will either of the ancestral spirits or of living men acting through witchcraft or magic; in its rituals it resolves fear and replaces it by hope and confidence; while the believed destructive action of the ancestors and of men is generally, though not entirely, linked with morality.[29] The commonest explanation of misfortune is that some wrong done by the victim, or by his close kinsman, has provoked the spirits or his fellow men to anger.

769 753 As long as a man has alive a father, a father's full-brother, or a senior brother or half-brother[30] of his own, this senior kinsman deals with the ancestral spirits, not only on his behalf, but also on behalf of his wives and children; and health is the chief value which his prayers are believed to secure for them. In the absence of sickness or misfortune no appeal is

[29] cf. Godfrey Wilson. "An African Morality." *Africa*. Jan. 1938.
[30] Provided the relationship between them has not been legally broken (vide supra).

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tion reveals the presence of some sons of other men's villages as well. Brothers, half-brothers and other relatives are sometimes members of the same village, but more often not; and if they do belong to the same village that is because they are near each other in age, and were born in the same village, not because they are kinsmen. 421 564

The members of the boys' village, which is now closed and no longer increases in numbers, continue to grow older, and after a time they begin to get married. Getting married, as we have seen, is often a gradual process; but it is not until he has his wife permanently with him that a young man can have fields of his own and eat their produce at his own place. The cultivation of land requires the co-operation of man and woman, cooking on any elaborate scale is a woman's business. [47]

As the members of a boys' village marry the village does not move but it expands. The houses are built ever bigger and further apart and the adjacent land is brought under cultivation. The boys' village with which I am best acquainted is in this transitional stage; it has fifty-three members altogether, the majority of whom are single, but some few are married, cultivate their own fields with their wives and eat food cooked by their wives in their own houses. Of those who are single some again are betrothed to girls who visit them from time to time, but each still cultivates his father's fields, and eats at his father's home.

(c) *The Men's Village*

It is now necessary to understand the system of men's villages and the general political organization in which the boys' villages finally take their place.

The number of age-villages in one chiefdom, all the members of which are married, varies with different circumstances, but the most usual number is from six to twelve. The age system is only broken by moving or by death; when a man dies his heir usually comes and lives where the dead man was living in his age-village. There he inherits the wives, the huts, the cows and the land of his predecessor, he inherits the dead man's position in the village and often takes his personal name as well. The heir may be many years younger than his new neighbours but he is now treated as their contemporary, he sits with them at ceremonies, he shares their rights at any division of meat. The age system in the villages is also broken by moving, for a stranger may come and be granted land in a village even though he is considerably older or younger than the bulk of its members. But otherwise members of a village are roughly contemporaries. 631 428 561

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 Kituli, and Kabula still remained somewhat detached. In genera-
631 tion IV the second heir, Mwabungulu (178), has moved out to the
561 forest and the area occupied and ruled by Mwaijonga and Mwai-
popo is still one, with a division between Lupando and Iringa.
Kibonde is fully absorbed into Lupando, and Kituli and Kabula
into Iringa—no descendants of Mwakipesile of Kibonde and
Mwakabule of Kituli went through the 'coming out' with Mwan-
yilu as chief. Kibonde, Kituli, and Kabula are subdivided
into age-villages of three generations, but these are not shown
on the plan. They are spoken of by outsiders by the inclusive
names.

To a European the most surprising fact about the age-organiza-
561 tion is that a young man of the ruling generation may still choose
428 to move into the homestead of his deceased father or elder brother.
We knew one young man, who had been spoken of as a possible
village headman at the coming out of Mwanyilu, but shortly
before the 'coming out' he chose to move into the homestead of his
deceased father in Lupendo village (where his father in turn had
inherited) even though he might have inherited his father's
wealth in wives and stock and returned to his own village of
Mnaka, after completing the ritual of death and inheritance. Our
informants insisted that, though the young men might rule, the
older generation were the more honoured, and in inheriting from
his father this man was classified as a member of his father's
generation. Nevertheless many young men do *not* choose to move
into the village of the father or elder brother from whom they
inherit, and the villages of old men decrease in size and finally
disappear altogether.

The relation between kinship and territorial grouping cannot
602 easily be indicated by plans and genealogies for though in theory
361 each village consists of 'sons' of a village of the previous
166 generation (as shown in the table facing p. 91) there is con-
561 siderable movement from one village to another, and the members
631 of any adult village usually prove to have come from a number of
different villages, though a boy's village consists of sons of adjoin-
ing villages. The table of members of three of the villages of
Mwaipopo's chiefdom illustrates this (*vide* pp. 224-6). An analysis
of genealogies showing where different members live gives much the
same picture. Though the shortage of land in the coffee-growing
chiefdoms of the hills and the rice-growing chiefdoms of the plain
is tending to obliterate the age-village organization, the old

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

[177] that they have always been cattle men and they need no instruction on cattle. The tension over stock limitation and soil conservation, so acute in many parts of Africa, is only just appearing in Rungwe district, but potentially it is serious.
[232] [242]

Pressure on land, and the planting of a valuable long-term crop such as coffee, have undermined the traditional organization of age-villages. The old men are no longer prepared to move to make way for their sons and, without a new deal in land each generation, the territorial separation of the generations is blurred. Boys villages are no longer visible in the hills near Rungwe mission, partly because so many young men are away, either at school or in employment, but largely because most of the land is taken up with coffee gardens. Homesteads are being built further apart as men lay out coffee round their houses, and sons often build on a corner of their father's estate instead of in a separate village. On the plain, also, the pressure of population blurs the boundaries between generations. Only in the least heavily populated middle belt are numerous boys' villages still clearly visible, and here too a 'coming out' has recently been celebrated, with some redistribution of land. The scarcest land, that in old volcanic craters, was always inherited, like cattle, not reallocated each generation, and almost all cultivated land is now treated in this way. In many chiefdoms, therefore, a young man looks to his father or senior brother for land, rather than to the village headman, and inheritance is supremely important. But the form of inheritance is changing: property now goes directly from father to son, not as formerly to each of a group of full brothers before reverting to the senior son of the eldest of them. The claims of more distant kinsmen on inherited stock are less than they used to be; such stock becomes the exclusive property of father and sons, rather than property in which members of a lineage of three or four generations have reciprocal rights. The main economic bond which held the lineage together, the exchange of cattle, is thus broken.
[311] [361] [361] [428] [613]

Formerly a marriage was a contract between lineages rather than between individuals. A girl was betrothed before puberty to a man of her father's choice and should he die she was still regarded as married to his heir. Should she die a sister replaced her. Ideally a marriage bond between lineages lasted for generations, each man who died being replaced by a brother or son, each woman by a sister or brother's daughter. The choice of a partner in marriage
[583] [581]

631 Age-villages combined to form a chiefdom under the hereditary chief, *mukyala*, but active co-operation between villages thus constituted was often slight; indeed in the larger chiefdoms there commonly existed considerable animosity which might break out in raiding or even civil war. The integrity of these larger chiefdoms was weak – for example, when the 632 Hyokyusa were attacked by Ilangu and Ngoni war-parties, and later by the 641 Germans, villages of the same chiefdom consistently failed to join in common defence. Similarly the land affairs of one village were no concern of any other, and each jealously guarded its own rights.

631 None of the chiefdoms was large; smallness of scale is typical of 662 Hyokyusa political organisation and social attitudes. In 1931 the smallest indigenous chiefdom contained only 36 men. In 1948 11,700 people were divided amongst about 11 indigenous chiefs, but undoubtedly had not the Colonial Government frozen the system there would have been rather more – at least five more. Today there are 12 recognized "administrative chiefs", amongst whom five have each less than 1,000 people under them, and the largest chiefdom contains fewer than 10,000 people – the average is just over 4,000 people.

631 Nevertheless the chiefdom, the collection of villages, was important, 321 because in the creation of the chiefdom villages were created, and in its development the villages developed, matured and died away. A village survived only as long as its members lived and by the nature of the age-organisation there was but little possibility of the recruitment of new members, for villagers' sons left to form their own new villages. Thus were eventually come to comprise the core of the new chiefdom.

662 In connection with the constitution of a Hyokyusa village and with 663 land tenure, the significant feature of the chiefdom was its establishment, 664 together with the induction of a new chief, at the great "running-out" 665 ceremony, *ubwaka*. In brief, each chief was succeeded by two of his sons – the 666 elder son of each of the senior houses of the chief, i.e., of his first two wives. At the "running-out" ceremony, when the sons were still young men and their father was not a particularly old man, the old chiefdom was divided into two, each part coming under one of the new young chiefs. Before the critical occasion – at which much important ritual was performed – the younger sons of the old chiefdom had already moved away from their fathers' villages and had established their own incipient villages nearby, each one consisting a group of *ensala*. A Hyokyusa boy from the age of about seven years could not continue to live with his father and mother, but, in company with his mates, built his own hut on a site adjacent to the main village as indicated by the fathers' headmen. Until the "running-out" cere- 631 mony these youthful villages came under the control of the old village head- 342 men; but with the induction of the new chiefs they achieved independent status, each with its own headman appointed from among its members by the old headmen. Each new village was allocated a new building site and a new arable area, and quite commonly the old villagers, the older men, moved away a little in order to give the younger men adequate scope in the land, for it was considered that the young men's needs for land were paramount.

631 After this wholesale reorganisation of the old chiefdom, when new 178 villages were established and new boundaries demarcated,[1] the old chief 632 himself, the old headmen and the older sons (the "fathers") gradually 643 retired from active public life. The old chief was supposed to commit suicide 698 after a time (or was quietly killed off) in order to leave the field clear for his sons; the old headmen became the religious and ritual leaders of the new chiefdoms, with the favour of older statesmanship, and the old men's

1. "In the 'running-out' of a [illegible] chief, headmen may [illegible] and the new chiefs [illegible] of the young men are [illegible] accomplished." Wilson, G., 1939, p. 31.

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Nyakyusa

land automatically reverted to the common pool. An established villager might decide to use part of it perhaps, but not before prudently gaining the approval of the headman, lest the migrant return later and accuse him of unlawful and unfriendly seizure. If the headman agreed, as he would after a time in most cases, the newly acquired plot became part of that villager's holding with an secure a title as the rest. Such vacated land could also be allocated by the headman to a newcomer or, before the core village was established, to the son of a villager.

If a man had more land than he could cultivate – because, for example, his sons had left him to cultivate in their own villages, or his wife had died – he was under no essential obligation to give up any part. The headman might, if the need arose, try to persuade him to release a portion in order to make it available to someone in need; but the land-holder could refuse and the headman had to accept his refusal. As a chief depended on the support of his headmen, so did a headman's position ultimately depend upon at least the passive support of his villagers, from whose ranks he was chosen.

At the next "coming-out" ceremony the men of a village of the old checkboxes might be required to move aside in order to allow the young men, their sons, to take up the better building sites and farming land. This they traditionally did voluntarily and they built new homesteads on one side and cleared new arable plots. Once re-established in this manner, these older men would not be disturbed again and they remained secure in their new buildings. How often in fact such a displacement took place I cannot say, but it certainly seems to have occurred sometimes, for one can still trace old village sites which appear to bear out the common Nyakyusa story.

In all this it must be remembered that the spirit of village unity and amicability was held in far higher esteem than land in such a fertile country where land was plentiful and subsistence farming required but small-sized holdings. Security of tenure and defined rights to particular plots are notions belonging to a different situation and age, when land began to be scarce and to have an economic value, and when there is danger of men not being able to obtain as much as they need roughly where they need it.

Newcomers were invariably welcomed to a village: they were supplied with a house site and an arable holding and were assisted with food until the first harvest. They were an addition to the numerical size and physical strength of the village, and they increased a headman's prestige. These rights were no less secured that those of founder-members of the village, although their social position was less secure, at least at first, for they had not shared in the history of the community and had not grown up with the ties of village association and comradeship amounting almost to kinship.

Traditional rights in trees may be mentioned briefly. Trees were inherited without difficulty along with the land on which they stood, and a brother or son would commonly inherit the deceased's valuable trees without bothering to take the arable land around. If a man left his village and thus forfeited his land there, the position was different. Banana trees went with the land and a new occupant simply took them over; bananas are of so great value as they grow so readily and abundantly. Bamboos are more valuable (being used extensively in house-building) and any left behind in this way could be claimed in the first instance not by the village but by the chief. If the chief wanted them they became his property, or he could grant them to any man he favoured. Usually a chief was content to leave them: then the local kinsmen of the departed man had first claim, and if they had no use for them, or if no kinsmen were resident in the village, they became village property to be allocated by the headman. Ownerless trees were regarded as

1. These pits, round alignments were placed by the Department of the Lake Malawi, the Southern name of Mount Fort Hill.

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Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IV

THE RESULTS OF LAND SHORTAGE

311 As indicated in the short outline of traditional land tenure in Chapter II, the system developed and worked adequately in the old situation (both before and after European conquest) when land was plentiful in relation to the people's demands. Any villager who wanted land had the right to be allocated fields; any established villager who wished to expand his cultivation could do so without difficulty. Movement between villages was easy, and especially after the establishment of European peace, for everywhere newcomers were welcomed to increase the strength and prestige of the village, and land was available for them. The young men in their age-villages were able to obtain sufficient arable land and they were able to establish their economic independence after marriage, if not earlier. Because land was plentiful there was little real concern for security of tenure and disputes over land were both uncommon and unimportant.

By 1955 the basic fact was that there was insufficient land to meet the people's requirements in the alluvial flood plains – as also in many Highland areas – and there remained little or no unused land which could be taken into cultivation.

Inheritance of Land

In those earlier and more spacious days, inheritance was chiefly significant in moveable property – cattle pre-eminently, and goats, money and other goods – and also in the matter of widows and the custody of children. The rules of inheritance were the same in principle for all this property. Inheritance was by groups of full-brothers rather than by individuals, and therefore when a man died, his sons, his widows and his wealth were taken by the oldest surviving full-brother; failing a full-brother, a half-brother would inherit (the oldest surviving at the time). Only when all the deceased's brothers were dead, or if they had moved away and severed practical relations, were the dead man's sons able to take up the property in their own right. Thus each group of full-brothers tended to inherit as separate, corporate groups. Although the separation into "houses" was not as strong and notable as amongst some African peoples,[1] yet there was a fairly strong solidarity between full-brothers such that, for instance, their cattle were regarded as a distinct and separate herd, over which the senior brother had principal control and in which half-brothers had little direct rights.

Originally land inheritance did not follow this scheme because it was an unimportant matter, for ideally a man obtained his building plot and arable land at the time of the formal establishment of his age-village, and he preferred if possible to continue to live amongst his cowals. Consequently, when a man died, his brothers and his sons and nephews normally had land of their own and did not wish for more elsewhere, especially as the deceased's land would probably be in another age-village. Out of respect for the dead man and his contemporaries, the chief heir often made a token residence at the deceased's homestead and then, after a brief period, would obtain the approval of the villagers to return to his own village and building again – perhaps at the cost of some beer or a goat. Sometimes the heir or another member of the lineage might take the opportunity to leave his own village

1. See Wilson, M. 1936, pp. 1-18, 23; also see The Family Group, London, 1951, Chapters 3 and 4, for a description of a strongly corporate "house" system.

(e.g. for fear of witchcraft) and take up the vacant holding. Nevertheless in general the holding was allowed to lapse and it could be re-allocated by the village headman if need arose; or the elderly widows might be allowed to continue to reside and cultivate as long as they wished. [428] [42]

Once land began to become scarce and valuable this loose system could no longer continue. Junior brothers and half-brothers were no longer content to permit the chief heir to take the whole of the deceased's holding to do with it as he wished, and a systematised division had to be adopted. At first, naturally enough, land was gradually brought under the same system which controlled the inheritance of other property, but this proved inadequate – inadequate not only in itself as being, perhaps, too complicated and conducive of disagreement and quarrelling in so far as land is concerned, but also because that system itself was already beginning to break down under the impact of individualism. [423] [78] [428]

It was felt that because sons assist their father in his homestead and fields and in their turn rely on him for a share in the cash-and-kind profits of peasant farming, therefore they should have priority in the inheritance of their father's property. Their father's brothers, it was said, would in any case already have their own holdings in which likewise their sons have prime interest. Conversely, older Nyakyusa men began to be reluctant to take a brother's land (and other property too) on his death, for fear that, in their turn, control of their own land would descend at their deaths to their brothers' sons rather than to their own sons.

As a result of these attitudes a strong desire arose to modify the customary laws in this matter, and the Rungwe African District Council, with the approval of the Government, has by formal resolution established a new law under which sons may inherit direct from their own fathers. [646]

This law is not universally accepted by the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains and sons still will sometimes waive their novel rights in favour of the traditional claims of their fathers' brothers. They say that they do not desire to see the break up of the wider lineage which, in effect, this new law encourages; they are also afraid of the anger and jealousy, and thus of the witchcraft, of their uncles. It appears however that the change is accepted by the large majority of the people, for it follows the trend of modern values and kinship sentiments. [754] [578]

The principal heir is now the eldest son, but in general he has little direct control over the property and land of his half-brothers unless they are still young, in which case he has a moral duty to act as guardian and custodian. Sons inherit that part of the paternal holding which had been allocated to their mother by their father in his lifetime, plus any other pieces he might have given to any of them direct as individuals. Each group of full-brothers determines the way in which it divides up its own inheritance. The eldest brother of such a house has a definite obligation to see that his juniors obtain shares of the land in so far as its extent and their number will allow. On the whole it is expected by Nyakyusa that the eldest brother will secure the best holding for himself, as befits his new status, but he cannot deny his younger brothers' claims. Disputes in this matter are not uncommon and the local courts have already shown their determination to support the claims of younger brothers. [423] [428] [593]

Very commonly – though it has not yet crystallised as compulsory social behaviour – a father will grant a portion of his holding to his son on the latter's marriage, or as soon after as the son decides to give up labour migration and settle down. It is thought that a married man should be independent economically and that he should be able to maintain his own household; it is realised that there is most likely to be friction in the relations between father and son, especially in this society where it is traditionally [183] [198] [593]

423 believed that parents and children should live apart.[1] In the same way, and
428 for similar reasons, an elder brother tries to make provision for his junior
[583] where the latter marries if their father is already dead. The practice of the father is not a legally required one, although it is nowadays increasingly common and sons have begun to expect it: the practice of an elder brother is now legally required in the matter of land and probably always has been in the matter of cattle.

The difficulties are obvious when a man dies and leaves several sons
[640] but only a small-sized holding. To date no clear ruling has emerged and unfortunately the African District Council did not deal specifically with such details when introducing the new law. How much land an eldest brother can reasonably retain for himself is perhaps not determinable in practice except in specific relation to the nature, locality and fertility of the holding in question, the plots already held by the man himself, the needs and number of the younger brothers and any holdings they may have, and
[574] the location of the villages in which they severally live. There is also plenty of scope for disagreement between half-brothers over portions of the paternal holding which had been retained by the father himself for his own use; over portions allocated to a wife who has borne no sons or whose sons have died, and over permanent trees. The situation is still fluid and there has not yet been time enough for a common and generally acceptable solution to be established. Consequently each group of sons tries to solve its own particular problems in this matter as best it can, torn between old values and new attitudes and needs.

593 Relations between both full-brothers and half-brothers tend often to
428 be severely tried at times of inheritance. It is not primarily, I think, a case of brothers' greed for valued land tending to overcome bonds of fraternity and co-operation; but it is rather that a father's arable holding is often not able to provide adequate amounts of arable land for each of his sons, and yet they find the very greatest difficulty in obtaining land elsewhere. Already
[182] the traditional kin-group comprising the sons and grandsons of a group of full-brothers had begun to break down even before land shortage became serious. Now the group of full-brothers itself tends to be dispersed as men obtain land where they can and it is endangered by dissensions over land rights and land division. Increasingly, it seems, a Nyakyusa man is becoming detached from his brothers and he tends to establish an independent family unit comprising his immediate family alone – that is, himself with his wives and children. We cannot attribute the whole cause of this modern trend to land shortage and economic difficulties, of course, for involved also are new ideas of individualism and of personal effort and reward, and the decreasing need for the consistent support of brothers in social, economic and ritual activities.

578 Younger brothers may, and sometimes do in fact, agree that the
423 paternal holding is already too small for further sub-division, or that the small parts which can be made available to them are scarcely worth having –
428 especially if they live some distance away. On the other hand, the eldest brother may already have obtained a holding in his own village and is therefore willing to make only a small claim or none at all in the interests of his juniors, and he may then divide the inheritance amongst them alone. Usually, so acute is the dearth of land, the holding is divided between two
[311] or more brothers. It is split into small plots so that each brother has a share of paddy, food-crop and banana land, and these are commonly a half acre or even less in size nowadays. As already mentioned, by a kind of modern
[696] equity the local African courts generally favour the claims of the younger

1. See Wilson, op. cit., 1951, p. 139 and passim. "The overt purpose (of age-villages) is the separation of sons and mothers, of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law." (Ibid. p. 140).

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Hyakyusa

brothers, and this is compelling the increasing and continued fragmentation of holdings at time of inheritance. Even so, if there are several brothers (i.e., sons of the deceased) the youngest among them may still be unable to obtain a plot, or at least not one of an economically viable size, and they are then compelled to try to gain admittance to some other village as newcomers, there to be allocated land.

The shortage of land is, therefore, not only making inheritance very considerably more important, but it is assisting in the establishment of new kinship attitudes and a redefining of fraternal relations. The position is most confused at the moment as the old system continues to exist alongside the new, sometimes more or less successfully, but often in intractable opposition. At the present time the observer can only mention general tendencies, for it is impossible as yet to foresee what the eventual result will be, and there are, in any case, many other factors involved besides those of the inheritance of scarce land.

In so far as we are primarily concerned with land problems in this essay, the basic factors are that land is newly scarce, that there is virtually no alternative activity in the country to the arable use of the land, and that therefore each son must try to obtain a share in the often inadequate holding of his father. I suggest that no form of inheritance can deal with such a situation satisfactorily – at least it is highly doubtful if any has yet emerged in an area of land shortage in Eastern Africa – and that there are bound to be severe difficulties and a deterioration of inter-personal relations between near kinsmen who are most in competition. The new inheritance law of the Nyakyusa has narrowed the range of potential conflict from the patrilineal descendants of a grandfather to the sons of a single father; but if it has obviated possible hostility between the generations and between paternal cousins, it has also removed much of the common interest and mutual interdependence between them.

The Right to Land, and the Authority of the Village Headman

Although the traditional principle still exists that every villager has a right to arable land within the village boundaries, yet it is no longer possible to carry it out in practice. Every village headman, in my experience, attempts to ensure that each of his men has land, but he cannot always succeed, and most especially he cannot provide every one with as much land as he would like, because of sheer spatial limitation.

Nowhere any longer does the old principle now hold that an established villager may, without permission or notification, take vacant land into cultivation as part of his holding. When land becomes vacant it must now revert immediately to the village as a group, that is to the common pool from which the headman as village authority makes allocations. There are so many and such varied demands for land nowadays that no man acting on his own can presume to take up vacant land, and only the headman may decide allocations. No person can now obtain land, whether he be an established villager or not, unless he is allocated it by the headman – or, in the many large villages typical of the Lake Plains, by the headman's assistant, ugwakyisa, who is delegated authority in a section of the village.

Land becomes vacant when a man shifts to another village, when a man dies and leaves no active heir who desires to take up the deceased's holding, or (but seldom today) when a man gives up part of his holding due to his inability to use the whole of it. In all these cases the land is immediately re-allocated by the headman, probably not as a single unit any longer, as best he can among a crowd of land-hungry villagers – established men seeking extra land to meet the needs of growing families or for increasing cash-crop

630 311 423 production, young men seeking their own independent holding, and newcomers to the villages who seek to settle there.

The modern shortage of land has therefore considerably increased the authority and the activities of the village headmen. Nowadays he is the prime mover in all changes in land-holding, either then by inheritance or temporary loans and gifts. In these latter, and particularly in inheritance, he has necessarily become an important concerned party whose influence cannot be ignored, whose approval is desired and whose assistance is frequently sought both as arbiter and witness. Much more than before, and directly because of the scarcity and value of land today, he is the principal controller and allocator of land – though, of course, he remains subject to the mere of public feeling and the opinions of his villagers. His position has been further strengthened by his status as the base of the administrative hierarchy in modern local government, whereby he is given executive responsibility for his village and its people. As always, disputes over land are taken before him in the first instance and here he acts not only as a judge but also as the expositor of village opinion and public knowledge. Such disputes are increasing in number, giving him more work and responsibility and also more opportunity for the expression of his status. Meanwhile his traditionally crucial ritual and magical (anti-witchcraft) powers continue, though now in somewhat attenuated form.

Fragmentation and Dispersion of Holdings

423 423 311 It has been shown how the inheritance of land, now of increasing importance, results normally in the splitting up of a man's holding.[1] Whether a young man obtains an inherited share of his father's land or he obtains an allocation in another village, its size is likely to be small – smaller than the holdings of his father's generation. Tiny, uneconomic plots are to be seen everywhere in the flood plains.

At the same time a man's holding is tending to comprise a scattered, heterogeneous collection of small plots, as he has obtained land when and where he could. An actual example will illustrate this: a young man had (341) about a rood of an acre behind his house on which he was growing maize and beans; he had about a quarter of an acre which was his share of his deceased father's land, and another quarter of an acre which had been (343) allocated to him by the headman when a vacated holding was split up, and on both of these he cultivated paddy. This man had only small hope of obtaining more land, unless one of his brothers died without sons, for he had already been refused by the headman a share in a recently vacated holding on the grounds that, unlike many of his contemporaries, he already had at least some arable land.

Even amongst older men the holding of scattered plots is common. This is partly the result of the earlier expansion of cultivation when the formerly unused lands were put under paddy, and partly because older men too, lose no opportunity, in the face of scarcity, to take up any land they can. The Nyakyusa ideal is to have a single large holding, preferably stretching away behind the homestead – or alternatively two fields, one for paddy and in the open plains and one for food crops nearer home. This ideal becomes less and less practicable. There seems to be little or no need for this scatter of plots on account of soil and fertility differences, for these are generally few and unimportant within the area of a single village.

311 423 In my sample villages the average number of separate plots was about three per holding. There was a notable difference between villages in relation to the average size of villagers' holdings. Where land was more plentiful the

1. If there is only one son to inherit the holding, it is most likely that he will have to give way to the pressing demands of his father's brothers' sons if he is not to be labelled all from his lineage.

Security of tenure has continued into European times, and although perhaps weakened slightly in one way through the suggested powers which accrue to modern Government-supported chiefs, it has been strengthened by the modern peace and rule of law and the more efficient system of justice provided by the established local courts. According to C. Wilson (Wilson, G., 1938, p. 32) the increase in the movement of individuals between villages in earlier European times (i.e., up to about 1940-45) directly caused a lack of attachment to individual plots, and thus security of tenure was not considered particularly important.

The new situation of land shortage does not affect the basic position, or rather, by producing a high scarcity value on land, it has brought about an intensification of individuals' rights over their holdings. No longer does a chief or headman attempt to commit such illegal acts as the seizure of a villager's field, as long as that villager is not afraid to publicize the affair. A man is not, and cannot afford to be, prepared to lose his field, for he cannot replace it with any certainty, either in a convenient location or elsewhere. A headman may sometimes bring strong pressure to bear on some of the men of his village to try to persuade them to give up portions of their land to assist a newcomer or a landless neighbour, but a villager can and does refuse and there is no legal authority which can override him here. As the land shortage becomes more obvious and more acute so men become less willing to allow their holdings to be touched for any reason, by anyone. The re-allocation or a "running-out" ceremony appears to have been dropped nowadays[1] and thus a man holds his land undisturbed until his death, when it passes by inheritance to his sons. There are cases now where grandsons of the original holder occupy land through undisturbed and undisputed inheritance. A man can, as he wishes, lent a kinsman or friend a plot in his holding, or he can make an outright gift. The principal restriction which remains is that a man must continue to live in the village in order to retain these rights; he must relinquish them if he permanently goes to live elsewhere. Nevertheless, the land of a well-established villager would be kept for him pending his hoped-for return, for if he has left in outrage and fear because of suspected witchcraft, then he may be persuaded to come back after a time. The headman and his neighbours should in fact persist in their attempts to persuade him, even to the use of force, for this is not only a moral duty of age-mates and fellow-villagers but is also an effort to remove the implications of their alleged witchcraft and anti-social conduct.

Once, therefore, a man obtains land he has absolute rights in it during his continued residence in the village. Especially today, older men seldom shift their homes and almost all land is now held on a tenure which will be passed on by inheritance.

Boundary disputes are few. Usually, and increasingly, village boundaries are well known, and field boundaries invariably are. During my field measurements in the sample villages, I never met any difficulty with my local teams in quickly establishing the ownership and exact limits of any plot. Boundaries are usually marked by small ridges of accumulated debris or by narrow paths, and these form an intricate and irregular network throughout a village's arable area. They are so well known that there is very little scope for a greedy man to attempt to encroach on a neighbour's holding at hoeing time. If minor disagreements do arise at that season they can be immediately settled – by appeal to neighbours working nearby if necessary – and the headman or his assistant may well not be called in at all.

1. This is the case in the Lake Plain. In some of the more conservative Highland chiefdoms where the old economy is less advanced and land scarcity is not serious, there still appears to be some re-allocation in favour of the young men in the traditional way. In general, however, it is clear that the traditional age-village system of land allocation is obsolete, see pages 246.

10:Culliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

all. Field boundaries have lost their earlier fluidity, when a plenty of land did not call for precise demarcation, and the only important changes now result from the land being left vacant or by the internal division of established holdings by inheritance or anticipatory inheritance.

In brief, then, the high premium given to land because of its modern scarcity value, and the enhanced authority of the headman in land affairs act together to preserve the individual's rights. The residual rights of the village, as group-owner of all land within the village boundary, do not affect the land-holder during his continued residence there.

The commonest type of dispute in land matters arises in inheritance, where a younger brother sues his senior in order to obtain or increase his share of the paternal holding (see page 21). That is to say, in general only where established holdings are being broken up does dispute arise and then, of course, only between the sons of the dead man. Disputes between neighbours in a village seldom are grave enough to be brought to court or even before the headman.

There are also many petty, semi-domestic cases which faithfully reflect the frequently poor relations between Nyakyusa husbands and wives in modern times.[1]

TABLE IV

NYAKYUSA LAND DISPUTES: CIVIL CASES, 1954

			No. of civil cases	Land cases No.	Land cases %	Population per land case	Density of population
Lake Plains	..	..	1,077	104	9	367	285
N.E. Highlands	..	..	965	34	3.5	1,042	199
Central Region	..	..	981	15	1.5	4,082	243
N.W. Highlands	..	..	1,380	8	0.6	7,300	301

Based on returns of civil cases in local courts of first instance (B' Courts) for 1954. In 1955 the percentages were almost exactly the same as in 1954.

Several interesting points are suggested by these figures. Firstly, there is the larger proportion of land cases and the much smaller population per case in the Lake Plains, where land shortage is worst in relation to local demand, not only because of the higher density of population as such, but also because of the relatively larger acreages required for peddy cultivation. Secondly, in the Central Region of Nyakyusa country there is also a high density of population, but nevertheless only a few land cases; this may be attributed to the absence of cash-cropping and the absence, therefore, of a keen demand for land. On the other hand, the relatively numerous cases, or small population per case, in the north-eastern Highlands seem to result directly from a particularly densely populated area (Mwakaleli) where coffee cultivation is long established and the demand for land is exceptionally keen. In other words, as far as the figures for 1954 and 1955 show, there is a direct connection between land scarcity and the incidence of land disputes before the local courts (i.e. the more intractable disputes which go beyond the village headmen). General observation supports this conclusion. It may be expected in the future, therefore, that such cases will increase unless administrative action is taken to rationalise the inheritance laws with a view to minimising the area of potential disagreement amongst the sons of a deceased man.

For comparative interest, in so far as they offer some indication, I append here data on other Districts in the Territory where land disputes are common.

1. In 1954, 68 per cent. of all civil cases in the lower courts were marital disputes, including divorce suits, and there was one divorce case for every 34 adult males living in the country in that year.

423 as determined by the village headman. But even building sites with the
178 essentially associated banana groves are becoming increasingly scarce and
[illegible] valuable, for no one desires to decrease the amount of arable by enlarging the
[illegible] built-up areas - rather the reverse. The number of young men's villages is
[illegible] therefore diminishing and congestion of their huts is increasing to the stage
[illegible] very often where no more than a narrow passage of left between adjacent
[illegible] houses. There seems to be a wider age range in the young men's hamlets
where, often, a large village provides only one for all its sons. Smaller villages
sometimes provide no accommodation at all for their sons, who are thus
compelled to seek membership of a neighbouring group. These hamlets
are mainly regarded nowadays as temporary residential areas for the young
men until such time as they move on to an existing holding - their father's or
some other. There is therefore no attempt to provide sufficient space for an
adequate banana grove with each young man's house, let alone a food-
crop plot behind it. The arable land beyond the compound hut is already
belongs to inhabitants of the main village. When a young man is able to
leave and take up a holding, his vacated site (together, often, with the hut) is
taken over by a waiting youth who has probably been sharing with another
hitherto.

361 These young men's hamlets do not, any longer, eventually mature and
311 become villages in their own right with their own headman and arable lands.
178 Formerly, when this occurred, they would probably have taken over a good
deal of the lands of the old village, as the young men exercised the privileges
of their new maturity against their elders with the emergence of the new
chieftdom. New chieftdoms, and with them new villages, no longer emerge,
[698] and this is mainly because Government has prohibited the bifurcation of petty
chieftdoms on the death of the old chief, as it is considered inconsistent with the
development of stable, modern local government. Additionally, however,
the shortage of land can no longer allow of the traditional expanding politico-
territorial organisation. The elder men's villages are not now prepared to yield
ground to the young men, and the latter cannot expand elsewhere. Thus
political requirements and land restriction work together to make the old
system obsolete and to freeze the spatial distribution of villages as it existed
in early European times. As far as I could ascertain in the chieftdoms of the
Lake Plains, probably no new village had emerged in the past 20 or more
years, except for a few cases of large ones splitting into two for administrative
and social convenience. Many villages there date back to pre-European days
often now under the son, or even the grandson, of the original headman
(though this is not essential or invariable in any way).

561 The age-basis of the Nyakyusa village is thus disappearing; indeed, in
178 many villages it has already disappeared in everything but the young men's
428 hamlets. Where the process has gone least far, there is still apparent a rough
division of the single village into the old men's sector (men at least 50 years of
age, and many much older); the middle-aged men's sector (men between
about 30 and 50 years old, being the younger brothers or older sons of the
old men); and the young men's and youths' sector. On inheritance, sons tend
to show a continued reluctance to move and live on their father's house-site
and to become immediate neighbours of older men; they avoid it if possible,
often allowing a middle-aged man to shift there instead. Nevertheless even
178 this sort of age-division is rapidly vanishing and in very many villages a
428 man's neighbour may be of any age.

We have seen that inheritance is now one of the chief methods of
[422] obtaining land. Under the new inheritance rules, this means that sons
follow their fathers and take up their fathers' arable holdings, building sites
and banana groves. Some young men inherit early, others inherit late; there is
no longer any notion or possibility of the younger generation entering into its

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

land on lease. Young men compete with one another, with their older brothers and with their fathers for allocations of land left vacant. We also saw, however, that often in the larger families not all the sons are able to get a share of the paternal holding, or at least not a share of practicable size. Thus younger sons are forced to resort to trying to obtain vacant land elsewhere – possibly within the same village, but as often as not outside. Finally, the young man on his new holding may find his neighbours to be of any age; certainly they will not have been members of his own original coeval hamlet.

The way for this changing concept of village life and the new sort of village was prepared in the years before land shortage became important. The changed political system has been briefly noted already, but no less important was the great increase in inter-village movement in earlier European days when peace and personal security had been established. During this period Wilson (1936, page 32) reckoned that perhaps 80 per cent. of Nyakyusa shifted at least once from the place where they first obtained fields. This estimate, whilst perhaps holding good for Highland Nyakyusa amongst whom Wilson mainly worked, was too high for the people of the Lake Plains, where about 40 per cent. is more correct according to my genealogical and village surveys. That is still a relatively high degree of mobility for a mainly subsistence, peasant society such as it was in those years. It is clear that the pseudo-fraternal bond of coevality could not persist as a main element of village life and consciousness, when in fact as many as half of the members of a village were not original coeval founders but had come in from elsewhere. Before the land shortage, movement did not entail the shifting of young men to other young men's villages, or of older men to other older men's villages. It was, at least eventually, promiscuous movement, ignoring age categories. The compulsions of land shortage seem, in retrospect, only to have followed existing lines of village development and to have begun the completion of the process.

In the Lake Plains, therefore, the village persists as a close, territorial, land-owning group and as a specific cluster of homesteads and huts, usually with a village street, the whole closely hemmed in by continuous banana groves. Beyond this lie the arable lands, usually food-crop fields nearby and paddy fields farther off. In jealously protecting what is already holds, the village has gained a new exclusiveness, for the security of the individual land-holder is maintained by the corporate ownership of the village and by excluding outsiders as far as possible. On the other hand, it is no longer an age-village either in fact or intention, and it cannot be, for age-villages were consistent only with an expanding territorial system and a subsistence economy.

This brief analysis of Nyakyusa village organisation in recent times applies only to the Lake Plains. In some parts of both the Central Region and the Northern Highlands the age-basis of Nyakyusa villages had most probably already been seriously weakened in pre-European times.[2] On the other hand, elsewhere, and particularly in the more conservative parts less affected by modern trends and the cash economy, the traditional age-village still exists in something like its old form.

Land shortage has appeared in the Highlands together with a developing cash economy, but the basis of agricultural and economic change lies mainly in coffee cultivation which, of course, requires relatively smaller fields than does paddy in the Lake Plains, but it needs more care and attention from the grower for moderate success. As far as I could see in the course of

1. Polygyny is still the norm amongst the older and many middle-aged men, and therefore a father often [illegible] several sons to inherit.
2. According to elderly informants in Western Kyela, Mwakaleli and some central chieftaincies, and also the evidence of old village sites.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F3U7 Hgonde F3U7
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Briefly to summarise the contemporary land situation: in the Lake Plains it may be said that in the main the traditional land tenure system and land law still continue as the basis of native land holding today. The essential feature in recent years has been the acute land shortage in relation to arable needs under the current system of agriculture. Village unity and village exclusiveness have been increased and so also has the authority of the village headman in his control and allocation of land rights. Security of tenure has been strengthened, if anything, and one of the most important methods of obtaining land is now by inheritance. The new law establishing inheritance from father to son, while generally acceptable to the people, is producing a number of civil suits which form the greatest proportion of the more important land cases before the local courts.

The shortage of land is principally the result of increased demands for paddy (i.e. cash crop) cultivation, although the population appears to be increasing slowly. In the high density regions almost all men have considerably less land than they could cultivate, especially under the impetus of the co-operatives, with the developing desires for money income. In the low density region of the low foothills there is still some vacant or partly utilised land, though of very inferior quality for paddy cultivation. The shortage hits the younger men severely, and many of them cannot obtain land at all until the death or senility of their fathers. Fragmentation and dispersion of holdings is rapidly becoming serious and without check.

The first question which arises is whether anything can be done to ease the pressure of population on the country by making more land available, or by making its distribution more equitable.

The thinly populated parts of the northern region of the Lake Plains offer a meagre solution only, for the country is raised above the level of the flood plains and is often broken and hilly. Fertility is low, erosion is a constant danger and the paddy yield (if obtainable at all) is poor. Nyakyusa from the densely populated areas to south and east are therefore most unwilling to move there. In any case the available land, which remains safely and economically open to cultivation, is filling up fairly quickly – mainly by immigration. Certainly I do not think that it can supply sufficient space to meet modern needs. There is, however, no reason why immigrants should make a difficult situation worse, and therefore it is suggested that further immigration from outside the Lake Plains should be carefully controlled if not altogether prevented. Indubitably outsiders (almost entirely Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who hold land without permanent residence should be prohibited and their holdings reallocated to local inhabitants.

As I have already indicated (page 17), I do not think that the problem of men who hold unusually large acreages is particularly serious. Such large holdings are relatively few and will be inevitably split up by inheritance on the deaths of the present occupiers.

In the flood plains proper there is, as far as I am aware, extremely little new land which could be brought under cultivation. Mechanical assistance in the clearance of dense reed thicket[1] and in drainage schemes would produce

1. These areas of thicket are heavily inundated in the wet season but, if cleared, could be used for a dry season crop.

Mc:Oxfilver E-5 (1954-1955) 1954 F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

This is not the province of the Sociologist, and all that can be said here is that it seems the most practical and valuable policy that could be adopted; it should be made the chief line of attack on contemporary problems. Unfortunately the Nyakyusa do not appreciate the value of this sort of solution – at least not yet – and therefore they are not inclined to learn and to increase their efforts and to change their practices in the fields. They have not yet cut themselves of the notion that increased production of crops and thus increased profits from agriculture are correlated only with increased holdings. In view of the critical land shortage a crucial change of attitude and understanding is required. The Nyakyusa must learn that increased production and higher profits can come from new and more efficient techniques – i.e. intensive cultivation. They must also learn what is so difficult for the African, that quality of production is no less important than quantity and that therefore cash incomes and standards of living can be raised by improving the standard of crops to be sold. Indeed, with a tendency for world agricultural prices to fall due to increasing supply, quality of produce is of the greatest importance. This is notably so in the case of rice. Tanganyika African rice is reckoned as of lower quality than that from South-east Asia, which therefore commands not only the better price but also the main share of the keenly competitive market. But it is a difficult idea for the Nyakyusa to grasp. It seems obvious to them, inheriting attitudes of a former subsistence age, that three poor cattle are better than two good ones – and in fact so they were in the hazardous time of their grandfathers. Cash crop production is based on the same premise, but it cannot hold in a modern cash economy and in dealings with world markets.

If, however, the present land shortage continues unchecked by the successful introduction of new attitudes, ideas and techniques there may well be serious social and political repercussions in the not too distant future. Current schemes of tribal development will surely be rendered futile if economic activity is removed and if land discontent is allowed to become important.

A second agricultural policy, and one of which less is heard, would be to stop the present dangerous monoculture – the preoccupation with paddy alone – and to attempt on a large scale to introduce second and third cash crops, particularly cash crops as require intensive cultivation on small acreages. This may be forced on the people in any case if the gloomy prognostications of world rice prices are borne out in the next few years. Such a development would allow of a more stable economy and a more balanced agriculture, in addition to assisting towards a reduction of land difficulties. Experiments on a small scale in robusta coffee, palm oil and other crops have already been started by the Agricultural Department but, at least from the layman's point of view, they need priority in finance, attention and effort as a main part of an agricultural programme for the Lake Plains.

In the time available for my investigations it was not possible to enquire with sufficient care into the details and exact procedure of Nyakyusa land law (*v.f.* page 3) and therefore I am reluctant to suggest any drastic changes. The new inheritance law (page 21) is a step in the right direction and is clearly in keeping with modern trends, but it is suggested that its detailed operation on the ground and in the courts should be studied by the Native Authority and the Administration in order to attempt to define its meaning more clearly and to reduce the number of disputes. In order to check fragmentation before it has gone too far, it should be considered whether some minimum limit might not be imposed on the size of fields. Voluntary schemes for the consolidation of holdings, which have achieved some success elsewhere in Africa, might also be considered. These would be particularly valuable in the

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Food (other than meat) is provided on the day of the burial by the women of the home at which the burial takes place, on the succeeding day by visiting relatives, and on the third day by village neighbours. Women neighbours, like woman relatives, often bring gifts of bark-cloth belts (*amakilo*) with which to bind up the bellies of their bereaved friends, who are all atremble and full of fear, and so support them. These belts symbolize the sympathy of friends in the fearful grief of the mourners. 'If a woman wears many belts at a burial that means that she has many friends; her passionate grief is comforted by their friendship.'[1] And neighbours, like relatives and close friends from other chiefdoms, may bring cloths which are used to wrap the corpse and bind up the bellies of the chief mourners. But these gifts of food, firewood, belts, and cloth are the limit of a neighbour's obligations; very rarely does a neighbour bring a bull to kill for the funeral feast, whereas close kinsmen and affines are obliged to provide a bull or cow for this purpose if they have one. And neighbours take virtually no share in the elaborate ritual which follows for cleansing relatives from the contagion of death, driving the thought of the deceased out of their minds, and bringing back his spirit to bless the home. Their only part is to bring small gifts of millet from which to brew the beer drunk at the close of this ritual.

764 [931] 292]

At an ordinary birth there is very little ceremony and the village as a group is not concerned, though close friends will help the mother during her confinement, fetching wood and water for her, and bringing occasional gifts of cooked food; but twin births are regarded as fearful and dangerous, and an elaborate ritual is performed to cleanse relatives from the contagion which, if left untreated, is believed to lead to serious swelling of the arms, legs, and stomachs, accompanied by diarrhoea. Relatives are treated with many medicines, while village neighbours are sprinkled with one only, but their cattle, especially the cattle herded with those of the man who has begotten twins, are thought to be in danger. At one twin ritual we watched there was some discussion whether all the cattle of the age-village should be treated, or only those of the herd-group to which the father of the twins belonged. Finally it was decided that on previous occasions all the cattle of the village had been treated, and a message was sent

[944] 621 845 783 [753]

[1] *cf.* Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939), p. 12.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mahigonde

mourners sat) is sprinkled with powdered medicine and carried 765
out by the officiant and burnt, or thrown away under the bananas. If the deceased has been buried elsewhere still a bunch of banana leaves representing the *ulufumbe* is taken out. 'Until then the rubbish (*imisala*) is kept in the house and not swept out because they are grieving—a person cannot be clean, it would seem as if he did not grieve.'

Next the officiant takes an old pot and, holding it, circles round the hearth while her assistant drops pumpkin-seeds, beans, lentils and cowpeas into it and the participants sing: 'The croaking bird, the croaking bird (*ilewanwo*).' The food is transferred to another pot and put on the fire and the officiant touches the hearth with different parts of her body (or makes gestures as if to do so), she and the participants saying as she does so: 'The knee is also put on (the fire), the heel is also put on, the backs of the knees are also put on, the loins are also put on, the belly is also put on, the back of the head is also put on.' Then she stamps noisily on the hearth, and the participants sing: 'It startles him. . . .'

Relatives and village neighbours are expected to bring small [63]
gifts of millet at this ritual and these are formally received by the officiant, who sits outside the mourning hut with two large baskets beside her and acknowledges each gift as it is brought and emptied into one or other of them. The one is for the millet of kinsmen, the other for that of neighbours. She addresses each giver in terms of his or her relationship to the deceased, announcing: 'Your grandchild has brought a measure, your daughter has brought a measure, your fellow (i.e. neighbour) has brought a measure, etc. . . .' This is spoken of as 'measuring the measures' (*ukupela imipela*); it is 'to greet the shade', and if millet is not available at the time the ritual is performed it is done symbolically.

A fresh piece of bark is stripped from the species of *ficus* used for making bark-cloth, hammered a little and placed on a fresh banana leaf and sprinkled with powdered medicine. A grindstone is lifted on to it and the officiant grinds some of the millet just presented and allows it to fall on the bark. During the grinding the officiant says: 'The knee is also ground, the heels are also ground,' and so on, mentioning the belly and loins. From the time of the death until this ritual, hammering of bark-cloth in the home [76]
of the deceased is taboo (*musiko*), for hammering bark-cloth is a [784
symbol of sexual intercourse and 'the hammer belonged to him 83]
who died'. The first millet ground is made into a paste and later

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selga, Ms Ngonde

763 881 If a bride is her husband's first or second wife[1] (but not if she is a junior wife) she washes with him ritually at his homestead. The officiant (*ntyage*), who may be her husband's own mother or some other mature woman chosen by her, pours out medicated water, and groom and bride wash together, his hands being above and hers below. This usually takes place about a month after her seclusion, but neither it nor the following events are timed to coincide with periods.

881 In one ritual we watched, that of the daughter of Chief Mwaihojo, the go-between in the marriage and the brother of the groom 58+ came to fetch the bride for the ritual washing (*ukuchunula*), [49] bringing her a small gift of 10 cents, four weeks after her first menstruation. She washed in medicated water with her husband at his house and returned to her father's the same night (May 19). Next day, about 3 p.m., the groom's 'mothers' (*abakamwana*), twelve of them, and one girl, arrived carrying six stems of bananas and four enormous pots of curds for the ritual of *ukuingesia*, 'putting her in'. They approached, singing two of the ritual songs:

Litukule, litukule,
Tukule mumilagule.
Let us go, let us go,
Let us go for ever and never return.

and

Akayungati kambagile
Palili po pakuko kwanga.
The *yungati* tree suited me,
The place is like that of my own in-laws.

The bride was carried first by one and then by another of her 'mothers' (*abamwa*)[2] while a compact group of mothers and maids, with the bride raised high in their midst, danced to and fro. And all the time she held a mat to shield her head and face. After five minutes or so the dancing stopped and the 'mother-in-law' sat down in the shade, as Kyobwe (a senior wife of Mwaihojo who acted in place of the bride's own mother who was divorced) came to greet them formally and receive their gifts of food. Meanwhile the bride herself knelt on the ground beside Kyobwe's hut, her head covered with a mat, and surrounded by her maids. Presently

[1] Informants differed on this point. Some maintained that chief alone washed with two wives, commoners with one only. Others insisted that commoners also washed with two.

[2] i.e. her father's wives, and wives of his brothers and neighbours.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa
Safya, Ma Ngonde

881 One of the women of the groom's party then fetched two banana
534 leaves, one of sweet banana and one of plantain, and put them down in Kyobwe's hut. Meantime the mother of the groom changed the bride's belt and the bark-cloth worn between the legs, dressing her in new ones, and burying the old cloth, soiled by first menstruation, in a bundle of dry banana leaves. These she placed on top of the fresh leaves already mentioned, covered the pile with a small rough mat, and sprinkled it with powdered medicine. The bride knelt on the mat and, with head bent, ate roast bananas also sprinkled with the powdered medicine, which her mother-in-law handed to her. Her young brother who had washed with her also shared the bananas. After this the bride is free to wash, but not yet to oil herself.

The groom's mothers were feasted on meat and bananas—two large and two small basketfuls—and returned home. The atmosphere all through the ritual was one of rejoicing, and it was markedly a women's affair. The chief and several other men were present but, apart from his scolding of the women for not bringing a bull, the chief played no part at all.

[531] According to strict custom the groom's mothers should have come a second time with gifts of food (*ukwandulula*)[1] to cement the friendship, but since the groom was in a hurry to get to work on the Lupa gold-fields this act was omitted. 'They brought the two lots of food together,' we were told, 'some of the milk and bananas were for the *ukwingenia* and some for the *ukwandulula*.'

§13 Three weeks later (June 14) the groom, with his go-between and
535 other friends, brought the main body of marriage-cattle (*ukulima*), and they danced the stamping dance (*ukulanya ngwenje*) in the bride's father's courtyard and on the litter of the seclusion hut, brandishing their spears as they stamped to the war rhythm. The bride's companions and mothers danced in a separate group, one mother carrying the bride on her shoulders. A lavish feast of cooked food was set before the groom and his friends, and they in their turn scattered pieces of meat and cents which the bride's [537] maids and 'mothers' scrambled for. Meantime a quarrel broke out between the bride's father and her brothers over the distribution of the marriage-cattle.

881 Six weeks after the *ukwingenia* (July 29) the bride, accompanied
537 by two of her father's wives, two of her maids, and a third girl invited because she was a good singer, went to wash ritually again

[1] *Ukwandulula*: to give a present for the first time to a new friend.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Salp, Mulungonde

at the groom's home (*ubwabwale*). The party was given a hen when they arrived and a second the next morning. The groom and some of his friends spent the night with the bride and her friends. (He and she lie together on this occasion but do not yet have full intercourse.)[1] In the morning the mother-in-law shaved the bride's head, eyebrows, and eyelashes, leaving only a small tuft on the nape of her neck. Then she mixed water with powdered medicine and poured it for groom and bride to wash. The groom washed his hands and mouth only, the bride her hands and mouth and whole body. During her seclusion she might not use oil or the red powder favoured as a cosmetic by Nyakyusa women,[2] but after this third washing she was free to do so, and she oiled herself meticulously. Meanwhile the groom was shaved by one of his friends.

On the same day the bride returned to her father's homestead with her own party and seven 'mothers' of the groom who brought five stems of bananas, a pot of water, and a small bull for the ritual of 'clearing out the litter' (*ukumoya ulufunde*). She herself was wearing the skin of a bull over her head—'she wears any skin she can get hold of'. One of the groom's party shaved off the last tuft of her hair and buried it carefully in the *ulufunde*, the litter of banana leaves on which she had slept and sat during her seclusion. Had her own mother been present she would have shaved also and so should the brother, but he did not do so. The groom's mother and Kyobwe (representing the bride's mother) carried out the litter to the edge of the banana plantation surrounding the homestead. As they did so they whispered to each other. Kyobwe said the bride was a little liar. Her husband had offered her 1s. to take to her mothers and she had refused it saying: 'No, they swear at me and grudge me food.' 'She's your child,' said the mother-in-law. 'No,' said Kyobwe, 'she's another woman's child, she's a foolish child.' Every scrap of litter in the hut was carefully collected and a little of the soil below it scraped off and carried out with the leaves. All who had helped with the clearing washed their hands carefully.

Then the groom's mother made a basin of two banana leaves close to the pile of litter. Into it she poured the water her party had brought with them, and sprinkled in powdered medicine in

[1] One or two informants maintained that 'she must not refuse him now or he will refuse to wash with her, saying: "She is not my wife."' But others were insistent that according to strict custom only intercourse *inter crures* was allowed. Full intercourse at this time would make nonsense of the *ubulogo* ritual which follows.

[2] Formerly also by men: cf. V. Giraud, *Les Lacs de l'Afrique Equatoriale* (1890), p. 176.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Salza, Mahyoede

vessel of milk and two stems of bananas. We do not carry her in 581
triumph. The mothers-in-law do not bring the powdered medi- 585
cine.' One informant maintained that the bride was always examined before she washed with her husband (if she was a chief wife) and we once saw the bride examined at the *ukwinyola* ritual, but the examination before handing over the bull is the only one mentioned by most people. What is certain is that virginity must be publicly demonstrated in the ritual and that it is honoured.

After the shaving and instruction, the bride goes round her 585
father's village visiting the men who have not already given her a 451
gift. She is accompanied by the wife of the go-between who represented her father in the marriage negotiations. Each of her father's fellow villagers (as well as her elder brothers and her father's full sisters) should give her something—a bark-cloth, a chicken, a calabash, a spearhead, or some coins, as he greets her. These the bride divides between her maids, the officiant who treated her in the ritual, her husband, and herself; to the wife of the go-between is due one pot of the beer brewed for the shaving ritual, to take home to her husband.

If the agreed number of marriage-cattle have been handed over, [271]
the bride's father puts millet to soak for beer immediately after the 585
rite of instruction has been completed and the bull of puberty eaten. When the brewing is ready the bride is formally taken to her husband's house (*ukwinkola*) by a 'mother' and one or two of her maids. Her own mother never goes—the woman of the party is usually a junior wife of the bride's father or the wife of the go-between. They take with them one or two pots of beer, a basketful of plantains to roast for her husband, two or three cooking pots, a log of firewood, a calabash of light ointment (*isyombe*), and a little pot of brown ointment (*imbale*) for anointing her husband and his friends in the village. 'What the wife brings when she comes for the first time is for all the men of the village to use to anoint themselves. They come every day to use it until it is finished.' These ointments are brought by every wife but they are especially important if the bride is her husband's first wife, and it is his bachelor neighbours who mostly use them. The bride also brings the fine 584
mat and several coarse ones which she has woven during her 354
seclusion, bark-cloths she has made for herself, and three hearth bricks (*amafiga*) carefully moulded for her by her mother out of clay and manure mixed with medicines. These are set up in her

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F?417 Ngonde F?417
Nyakyusa
Selps, Ha Ngonde

881 her mother-in-law covers her head with a red cloth 'for display'.
585 'We are rejoicing because our child has grown up,' and the two takes her on her shoulders and dances with her. When the 'husbands' come to dance the stamping dance: 'It too is a rejoicing. It shows I have married a wife now.' All through there is rejoicing over the fine food, and the celebration and feasting is primarily among the women. The culmination comes when the girl is publicly shown to be a virgin and the mothers can claim the bull crying in exultation: 'It's ours, it's ours.'

881 An interesting sidelight on the attitude of girls towards the ritual
585 came from a young man, a Christian, who was betrothed to a
697 pagan girl and had forbidden her to go through the ritual. He
745 said:

> Once my wife, when she had reached puberty, asked me why I objected to her undergoing the puberty ritual. I said it was forbidden for us Christians to participate in it, and I asked her if she wished to do so. She said 'Yes', and I asked why. She said: 'When the ritual is performed for us we are famed. People tell each other that so-and-so's daughter has grown up and people from far away come to sing songs, so we become very well known. See, now I have grown up, but no one sees that I have done so. Only you know.' Then I said: 'We Christians also have the custom of celebrating growing up at the handing over of marriage-cattle to the father (*ukukwa*). We do not hand over cattle when girls are still small, so everyone sees that a girl has grown up when we do so.' She agreed and said: 'I, also, have seen a little of the handing over of cattle among Christians.'

In fact, the *ukukwa* is the occasion for a great feast among Christians to which many young men and girls come to sing and dance.

881 The giving of presents to the bride by her father and his con-
585 temporaries is interpreted as part of the rejoicing.

●431 To give presents (*ukukwala*) is to rejoice. It's an occasion for display and rejoicing, because the girl has grown up. The father gives her a present because he rejoices that she has grown up. He says to her: 'Congratulations, you have grown up, you are going away to your husband, you are going away to gain a child!'

881 During the period of seclusion the girl's father is spoken of as
585 her father-in-law (*ukukwanwa*). She must *ukutila* (respect and
602 avoid) him:

> Because he is her father who begot her. She thinks: 'I must respect

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

585 ried to the stream, runs in and out under the dripping water, is
881 anointed with red ointment, shares the mash of beans and bananas, and drinks medicated beer with her from the same calabash. In
[77] the old days it was taboo for either bride or groom to set foot to the ground on their way to the stream.

For a senior wife, the mother-in-law moulds hearth-bricks with powdered medicine, and sets them up in the groom's hut. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest daughter if the daughter is her first-born, or with her senior daughter-in-law if her eldest child is a boy. 'If they do not do this they go mad.'

As in Selya, an admonition of the bride by her 'mothers', in the presence of her in-laws, concludes the full 'bringing out' ritual. We never heard it in Kukwe country, but the points mentioned by informants were similar to those emphasized in Selya. Kajinga, Porokoto's second wife, summed up the teaching thus:

> Obey your husband when he calls you. Fetch water and wood. Don't say: 'First let me fetch firewood' if your husband wants you to do something else. Do what your husband says first, then to-morrow go for wood. It is forbidden to refuse when your husband wants to sleep with you. In the morning get up and wash. Wash first, then light the fire and give your husband food. Don't say: 'There isn't any food.'

585 Next day, on her return home, the bride is given presents by the
881 people of her home village (*ukugwa*), her father making the first
431 gift. The groom brings the bull of puberty on which all the 'mothers' feast, but the meat from the top of the right foreleg (*ijamapa*) is reserved for the bride's own parents who sing as they eat it:

Kyatile, Kyatile, Kyatipwe

Some days later a party of 'mothers' takes her formally to her husband's house (*ukumbeka*) with gifts of beer and food and firewood, and are feasted by the groom's people and given chickens and shillings.

585 When she is finally living with her husband, before she can visit
881 or greet her parents, the bride must put milk and a fowl (some use
783 a live fowl, others a cooked one) under her bed at night. After having had intercourse with her husband 'she takes the fowl and milk and gives them to her parents with the filth of intercourse still on her. This is called the *ilibuko*. If she does not do this her mother will fall ill and have diarrhœa.' 'When they take the food

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 the boys form a queue and bend forward, holding out their hands while she poured water over the hands of each of them. After washing, each took a mouthful of water and spat it out. They were warned not to spill it on their legs as they washed and spat. Some young men washed with the boys, and women watching shouted advice, but a number of the boys went off without taking a mouthful of water or without spitting. After the boys came the girls, and then the women and babies and some more small boys who had arrived late. We counted twenty-six boys and young men, twenty-six girls and babies, and twenty-four women washing.

Then came the splashing of legs. The doctor shredded a banana sucker to make a tail. All the company gathered round the boiling pot of medicine, and the doctor, dipping the tail into the pot, splashed the boiling liquid on to their legs. Children screamed; women hopped with the pain, but shouted to their children to come and be treated. Frightened small children were hauled back by men, women, and elder children—a full sister of the twins, about 9 years old, was dragged in yelling. Mothers were especially careful to see that their babies were splashed, and pulled up the cloths binding them to their backs, so that their legs might be exposed. Mwakobela and his brother came to be splashed but some of the young men hurried away immediately after washing, disregarding the women who shouted to them that it was taboo for them to leave before they had been splashed. The women took [183] the whole ritual much more seriously than the men, and they were very particular to see that their children were treated. One old woman who had helped a child to wash, holding its hands, came back again to wash herself. The doctor and other women shouted that she had already washed. She replied: 'Oh, I just helped the child. Have I really finished?' The mother and remaining twin did not stir from the hut—she looked dirty and dishevelled. The doctor was elegant; she wore five brass body-rings [301] and her body was well oiled and rouged. She organized everyone with great confidence and was treated with respect, a mat being spread for her to sit upon (no other woman had a mat), and her assistant fetching and carrying everything she required.

845 431 Many of the women relatives had brought gifts of millet and after the treatment was over they tipped their small basketfuls into a big grain basket. Then they had a snack of roasted plantains (Mwakobela provided three stems) and went home.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

on their return home, but the general effect of modern conditions is that the solidarity of the kinship group expressed in gatherings at rituals is weakened. These changes will be discussed at length in the volume on the communal rituals after the differences between the pagan and Christian conceptions of God have been analysed.

(*c*) *The exchange of gifts*

All the family rituals are occasions for the exchange of gifts which pass primarily between lineages linked by marriage. The exchanges at different rituals are connected, and acceptance of a gift at a marriage may necessitate a return gift at a funeral. Thus the groom gives cattle for his bride at the marriage and at a funeral sons-in-law and fathers-in-law must bring cattle to kill so that they may accompany the deceased, and these are counted among the marriage-cattle given or returned. They may be kept and not killed if there are sufficient cattle to kill otherwise, but they must be offered. The obligation of affines to 'bury one another' by providing cattle for each other's funerals is even mentioned in the marriage negotiations. If a bride is not sent to replace a dead woman, marriage-cattle must be returned by her father, or at least one beast representing 'a mother to draw water for you'. So strong is the feeling that acceptance of a gift implies the obligation to make a return, that cattle offered for a marriage or funeral feast may be refused, on the ground that the family concerned do not wish to commit themselves to returning them. Angombwike described how he sweated and could eat little of a very lavish marriage feast, at which he acted as the groom's 'go-between', for he was wondering how he could make adequate return (cf. p. 253).

The greatest gifts are cattle; but fowls, cloth, beer, curds, bananas, pots, mats, firewood, ointment, cooked food and, nowadays, cash play a subsidiary part. At a funeral affines of the dead man who have no cattle, affines of the 'owner of the funeral', and close friends bring cloths. After the consummation of a marriage, or the inheritance of a widow, the new husband must give his wife a fowl, or meat, or cash representing a fowl, to take to her parents, and when she bears a child he sends another fowl. The wife's people, for their part, bring beer, ointment, firewood, mats, pots, and bananas when they take a bride or young mother back to her husband. There are also three or four exchanges of feasts

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

431 between the groom's lineage and that of the bride during the puberty–marriage ritual.

431 613 Within a lineage, also, there is some circulation of property. A young man is provided with marriage-cattle by his father, or father's heir; a father kills a cow at his son's funeral, a son does likewise for his father; and if a son offends his father he begs pardon with a gift. A daughter is given a gift by her father at the close of the puberty ritual, and he or his heir kills a cow at her funeral.

431 621 Village neighbours are closely identified with the father, and feast on the bull of puberty and the offering provided by an erring son, and give gifts to a daughter when she reaches maturity.

431 Kinsmen and neighbours are expected to help provide food, and firewood on which to cook it, for the guests at a funeral or marriage or at a twin-birth ritual. On the first day of a funeral guests are fed on food provided by the bereaved household, on the following day on that provided by their kinsmen, and on the third day on that provided by the village neighbours. Before the marriage-cattle are brought for his daughter, a man asks his kinsmen and immediate neighbours to help him cook for 'the husbands'—not to ask for such help is unfriendly. Kinsmen and neighbours also bring gifts of millet at a funeral and after an abnormal birth, which is used for brewing the ritual beer.

(d) The symbolism of participation and exchange

431 602 What is implied by undergoing a ritual or offering gifts? Participation in a ritual implies close kinship. We see, in the rituals performed after death, or spearing, or binding with ropes, the unity of the group composed of parents, children, grandparents, and siblings; the acknowledgement of a closer link between some siblings than between others; a recognition that wives are of 'one blood' with their husbands; and a separation between kinsmen and affines who are of another blood. In the twin ritual the limits of recognized kinship are expressed by participation and in the death ritual they are expressed by attendance. Observance of the taboo of avoidance, like attendance at rituals, is taken as evidence of kinship.

554 602 The difference in the status of senior and junior wives, and of eldest and junior daughters and sons, also appears in the rituals at puberty and marriage and at death. The unity between living and dead agnatic kin and, in a lesser degree, mother's kin, is ex-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

pressed again and again in the pagan rituals. The Christian withdrawal from them implies a partial break with the closed circle of kin, a movement from the nexus of kinship to that of association, from the kinship group to the congregation of believers. 554 602

The passage of cattle at marriage implies first the establishment of a bond of kinship with the wife for whom they are given. 'Kinship is cattle' (*ubukamu syo ngombe*) and a woman for whom cattle have not been given is never kin (*unkamu*) to her husband. 431 602

The passage of marriage-cattle determines the legal position of the children borne by the woman for whom they have been given. Whoever has given the cattle controls the children; and, if no cattle have passed, the girl's father (or brother) can claim them. If the woman for whom cattle have been given leaves the lineage which gave them, the cattle (traditionally all of them, together with their progeny) must then be returned, even though her original husband is dead; and when she dies she should be replaced. Kinship between lineages once linked by marriage should ideally be permanent, and the link is reasserted in the ritual in which, when a woman dies, her brother goes to cut down the bananas at her husband's homestead and to seize her children, and has to be persuaded with a gift to desist. The identification made between women and cattle exchanged is suggested in the phrase conventionally used when no girl is available to take the place of a dead wife and a cow is offered in her place 'for drawing water with'.

The killing of cattle at a funeral, and the burial of cloths and other goods, is an expression of the idea that the dead take wealth with them. When a man requires cattle to pay compensation for some wrong committed and has not sufficient stock to do so, he turns for help to his affines, his sons-in-law and fathers-in-law, and so, when he dies, and is in need of cattle, it is felt appropriate that they should help him. 775 764 431

But the gifts offered at rituals have many other implications. Men take cattle and cloths to a funeral '*ukuti ndaga*'—to express sympathy—and gifts are given to a bride also '*ukuti ndaga*', which then implies congratulation rather than condolence. And gifts are used when begging pardon—a son who has sinned against his father first sends a hen and later offers a bull; and a daughter-in-law who has looked at her father-in-law or sworn at her mother-in-law must offer beer or a bull. Lastly, they are used in lifting a ban, putting an end to an avoidance. When a girl's father and his 431

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

431 neighbours give her gifts after her initiation it is that she may 'cease to avoid them', and a woman may give a small gift to her husband's father's sister, and thereafter look at her. Nowadays, a [606] father-in-law, in exceptional cases, kills a bull for his daughter-in-law so that she may look at him.[1]

556 Great prestige attaches to generosity, particularly generosity 577 with food. A chief or village headman is one who *feeds* people, and generosity is displayed both in informal feasts for neighbours and on the formal occasions of ritual. A father who is generous in the feasts provided for his daughter at her initiation and marriage gains prestige; if he is stingy his affines and his neighbours comment on it; he both loses their respect and fears lest he may even fall ill from 'the breath of men'. If the groom's family fail to provide sufficient, the bride's father does not hesitate to scold them for it, and they reply with humility which may be so exaggerated as to verge on boasting. It is conventional for the groom to plead poverty but at the same time he and his kin compete with the bride's family in preparing quantities of fine food. The pride and excitement over feasts is clearly brought out in the comments on funerals, the remarks of a mother on the return of her daughter to her husband after the birth of the first child, and Angombwike's account of marriage negotiations and gifts (pp. 31–4, 148, 253–5). The principals in any ritual are the centre of attention and may gain prestige from its performance, as a bride does, but what concerns the Nyakyusa much more is the reputation of the family serving the feast. Here the emphasis is very different from what it [171] is in the Pondo ritual for the initiation of diviners, or the Lunda rituals of misfortune.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 85.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

find it. There are many cases like that. My friends in the age-village will go to a diviner who will declare that the shades are angry because I do not care for my father.' If a daughter makes a runaway marriage her father is angry and it is believed that either she may not conceive or her baby may be ailing until the marriage-cattle and bull of puberty have been given by her husband and accepted by her father.

The respect and obedience due to a father is due to his heir, and in certain circumstances to his sister also; while on his part the heir has the same obligations to his juniors as the deceased had. Fibombe cited the example, already quoted, of a man quarrelling with his dead father's sister over the distribution of the marriage-cattle for his own sister, and the girl failing to conceive because of the anger of her father's sister. If a son, whose parents are dead, neglects to provide his sister with the customary gifts of food when she returns to her husband after a visit to her 'father', he may become impotent: 'Those below are angry and when he has begotten twins he will have trouble at the ritual.' Or the girl may fall ill. 'She thinks: "Who is my father? This is my father, but he does not care for me." ' The mystical power of a senior relative is linked directly with his obligation to give gifts:

> My father's elder half-brother has power over me only if he has given marriage-cattle for my father or nurtured him. If he has given him cattle to marry a wife then he has power over him. . . . My superior (*mbala gwangu*) is he who gives me everything.

Favouritism in a polygynous family, shown in the unfair division of milk or meat or fish by the husband between his wives, is thought to anger the shades, which cause his cows to bleed from the udder when milked, or prevent fish entering his traps, and so do the bad temper and insulting language of a quarrelsome wife. Mwakwelebeja explained that:

> If a woman is bad-tempered when she is making beer the beer goes sour. If my wife and I quarrel my shades are angry and the beer is spoiled. I say to my wife: 'You have spoiled the beer because you do not listen to what I say.'

Neglect of his wards by the heir is a wrong-doing frequently mentioned.

> It is said that if I neglect my brother's children he and my father will be very angry, they will not come to meet me when I die, as the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

577 There is much more talk among the Nyakyusa of misfortune
777 from the shades or the anger of neighbours, than of blessing, but
556 there is an idea, somewhat vague but real, that generosity and kindliness will bring blessing (*ulusajo*). Ambilikile, a Christian teacher who had grown up in a pagan home, said:

> My mother tells me that my father was in the habit of feeding people, those who were not his relatives. People went to a distance and brought medicines for fertility and gave them to him, hence they said: 'He is very kind; food never grows short at his home.' She also told me that my father died very old. He did not die of disease, but of old age, no breath being left in him. This was because men were always saying: 'May they stand by him, may they bless him (*bammwemelege, bansajege*),' not to his face but to others. They said that he lived long because of the blessing of men. Yes, they say that the food of a kindly man never gets finished, that of a stingy man finishes; he himself suffers hunger.

763 Mwaisumo described a father on his death-bed blessing a favourite son, allocating cattle to him, and telling him:

> Care for the children I have left, keep on good terms with them, then you will be rich in everything like your father. I cared for my children, I was not harsh (*nkali*), so complain to me of anything that troubles you. If you are like this the property in your home will be plentiful, people will be astonished and say: 'He is like his father.'

●431 Of a man given a cow by the chief, it was sometimes said: 'The
775 shades have blessed him; he has a righteous (*ngolofu*) shade.'

Although our Nyakyusa informants talked a great deal about
754 the danger of neglecting rituals and angering senior relatives,
673 living and dead, the number of cases of misfortune attributed to
621 their anger is small in comparison with the number attributed to witchcraft or 'the breath of men'. (Ten as compared with sixty-three.) There is no reason to suppose that one type of case was concealed when the others were reported to us, and it is clear that the Nyakyusa prefer to make neighbours in the age-village, rather than kinsmen, the scapegoat for their misfortunes. Even when the wrong done is against a kinsman it is often the neighbours, rather than the shades, who are said to have brought punishment on the wrong-doer.

777 At the same time, we were assured by one informant after an-
621 other that people blame the shades or Kyala for misfortune when it is really the neighbours who are responsible! Angombwike argued that men fear to accuse the neighbours, who are slow to

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

512 low, again rising to a perfect fury of rapid sounds,
535 not without a certain rhythm, but with rasping effect upon the nerves of Europeans tossing sleeplessly in the warm humid air.

[221] After harvest comes the house-building; and when
484 that is finished the men are free to go out to seek
464 work. They usually set out in companies, for the Konde dislikes being alone on a journey. Like all
[609] home-loving people, they are suspicious of strangers, and if they have to pass through another tribe, they take great care to guard their small possessions; seldom more than they are wearing, and a spear or a club to guard them from the more obvious dangers of the way. There will be a few youths going out for the first time, with a wild flutter at the heart, of fear and expectancy. Fear, for they have heard strange tales of the white men and their ways; expectancy, because of the wonderful things they will see: the great houses, steamers, trains, motors; and what must seem countless white men to those who have been accustomed only to the missionary, the magistrate, and the storekeeper, and even these perhaps some days' journey from home. And who knows but he will come back with money in his pocket, wearing gorgeous raiment, a helmet perhaps, and, above all other things to be desired, a pair of boots! Those who stay long
• [431] come back with the spoils of civilisation; highly coloured cloths, cheap clocks, melodeons, mouth-organs, worthless pocket-knives, which they deal out to admiring friends and acquaintances.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

845 783 and the statement cannot be altogether devoid of truth. The influence of the mind upon the body is universally admitted: may it not be that the consciousness of guilt has the effect of contracting the muscles, and the relaxation which follows confession renders birth less painful? And may it not be that even a false confession, wrung from a despairing sufferer, brings a momentary relief sufficient to bring the child to the birth? One is glad to add, however, that many women have the courage to refuse altogether to submit to this shameful ordeal, insisting that their trouble is due, not to the wrath of the spirits, but to other causes, and that they will die rather than confess what is not true.

844 846 When birth has taken place, the cord is cut with a bamboo knife, and the placenta buried in the family place of prayer, a small part protruding to leave a connection which insures further children. All this time no one in the house may swallow saliva. The father calls out to know the sex of the child, but he must not yet enter (for the party have entered the house as soon as possible after the birth). After a few days the mother is anointed with oil and shaved, along with her child, and powdered with medicine. Meantime intimation has been sent to the grandparents; a cock if a boy, a hen if a girl, telling them all that they wish to know. The mother may now resume her household duties.

851 603 431 But in about a week she goes to show the child to her own parents, and at the end of her visit, which lasts some weeks, great preparations are made by both

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

sets of grandparents. The mother sets out from her father's house with a train of friends carrying food, and a very special friend who carries the baby. Arrived at the paternal grandfather's, the food is laid down, and the child is taken by the grandfather, who presents a hoe to the maternal grandmother; and then, with the child in his arms, goes to the *ikiyinja* (the family place of prayer). He spits into the palm of his hand, and, laying it in blessing upon the child's head, he prays:

> "May it be well with you, my child. Ye spirits, be not surprised at this child of yours whom I present to you. I am old: let him take my place. Care for him in this world of sickness. I was alone, and ye have multiplied me and made me a company. Be not angry, but bless the child; and in the sight of God let him be acceptable."

The mother sits with head covered, for she must not be seen by her father-in-law. The parties now exchange gifts of food, and eat separately, after which the grandfather gives the child a gift, usually now a small coin, over which the little hand is closed. Next, the grandmother takes the infant and hands it to its mother, who, with a pot of beer on her head, goes off with her husband to their home. Arrived there, but not till then, the father takes the child in his arms, and thanks it for the gift it has brought, a foretoken of more yet to be earned.

Lingering here and there in certain families are strange customs, probably belated survivals from

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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The most important reason which traditionally impelled men to reserve *busongo* plots and bananas was, so the old men told me, the frequent lack of affection and generosity in women towards their married step-children. If one of his wives had died or left him, then a man might find that his children by her, when they came to visit him, received but scanty entertainment from his other wives and went away home empty-handed. So to obviate this state of affairs he would set aside *busongo* plots and bananas, and take food and gifts for these motherless children thence. In the old days married children nearly always lived within a mile or two of their father's house and visits were frequent. Nowadays this reason, which still continues to operate, tends to be overshadowed by the desire on the man's part to have a definite portion of the crop marked out for sale to the Indian traders. Nevertheless many men prefer community of property to an anti-harvest contract with their wives and so do not keep any *busongo* plots at all.

"What," I asked an elderly man in Selya, "is a *busongo* plot?" "The word *busongo*, used either of bananas or of garden plots, means that they belong only to me, not to my wives; so that when my daughter comes I cut for her a banana bunch of my own and give her my own food. Not all men keep *busongo* plots; some like the customs but others do not. I myself have only one wife and no *busongo* plots, all my bananas are hers and all my gardens too."

And another elderly man, also of Selya, said to me one day: "Some men like to have *busongo* plots, others do not. Nowadays these plots are used to grow crops for sale, but in the old days they were for feeding a man's children. I myself divide up all my gardens amongst my wives (he has three living with him at present). Even though three of my wives have died and one has left me, even so I do not keep a *busongo* plot; when my children come to visit me they are given food by Jane (his chief wife, who is also his favourite). At first I divided up the children (i.e. the grown-up children whose mothers had either died or left him, and who in consequence had no special claim on any one of his present wives) assigning some to one, some to another of my wives, but the others grudged them food so now they all come to Jane." He here suggests that the meanness of two of his wives and the existence of many motherless children gave him good reason to reserve *busongo* plots and bananas, but he did not do so, he preferred to rely on the generosity of his favourite wife.

And besides providing entertainment for adult but motherless children, besides providing a definite portion of the crop for the husband to sell, *busongo* plots and bananas are also useful, as we have seen, to meet the demands of the chief and to secure the household against a shortage of food.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 425 In discussing the taking up of land after a move it is therefore necessary to distinguish clearly between men who move to villages in which they are newcomers and those who return, after a period of absence, to their home villages.

166 425 622 624 621 Normally land for building and gardens is granted to a stranger by the villagers concerned acting through their great-commoner, not by the chief, who is usually informed but seldom interferes. Only if a member of the chief's own family is moving within the chiefdom from one village to another or if a very important stranger comes from outside, he may go to the chief and ask for a building plot, and the chief may then exercise his right of overlordship and grant the request. But this is a special and unusual case. Village land is primarily governed by village relationships. It is villagers who grant land to an ordinary newcomer and thereby accept him as one of themselves. His own wishes are taken into account whenever possible ; if he sees a piece of ground which attracts him and no one else has a claim to it then it will be his.

An old Kukwe great-commoner thus explained the granting of land to a stranger : " First the stranger from another country comes to a friend in this village and says that he wishes to build here, then the friend brings him to me, the great-commoner,—or he may come directly to me in the first place ; and I go and tell the chief. Then the chief, according [431] to the old custom, would say ' Good ! Go and cut a banana bunch for him,' and I would cut a banana bunch from my own homestead, not from anyone else's, and the chief would send one of his wives to me with cooked food for our guest the stranger. This custom is now no longer followed in our country but in the more remote chiefdoms they still cut bananas and cook food in such cases ; here the stranger now just comes and is not given anything. And again when he wishes to begin building we go and tell the chief, who tells us to give him a plot to build on, and then my friends and I choose a place for him." " Does not the chief have a say in choosing the plot ? " I enquired. " No, not the chief ; does he know the details of our land-rights ? He does not. It is we who choose the place for the newcomer. But if he does not like the plot we give him and has himself seen a place which he prefers he will ask us for it and maybe we will give it him." " Do not people sometimes go directly to the chief to ask for land ? " " No, they always come first to us, the commoners, not to the chief ; how should a man presume to approach the chief by himself ? No, a newcomer always approaches us, and it is we who inform the chief. I, the great-commoner, may go alone to tell the chief or I may take the stranger with me, as I please." And a young Kukwe chief confirmed this, with perhaps a shade more emphasis on the part played by the chief : " The stranger goes first to the great-commoner

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and makes his request for land, then the great-commoner goes to the chief and informs him that so and so has come with a request for land, and he asks his opinion as to which piece to give the stranger. Then the chief suggests that perhaps the great-commoner knows of a suitable plot. So the chief and the great-commoner discuss it together and decide. Then the great-commoner shows the plot to the stranger." 166 425 621 622 624

It is quite clear in my evidence that, though the normal custom is to consult the chief when a newcomer is given land, yet the newcomer's title is in no way invalidated if the great-commoner omits to do so at the time and simply tells the chief later after the grant has been made.

So much for the initial reception of a stranger and the grant of a building plot, the next step is the grant of garden land. But before discussing this we must emphasize the willingness with which strangers are received both by the villagers and the chief. Men are still scarcer than land in most places and the prestige and prosperity of villages and chiefdoms is increased by each addition to their membership. Strangers are always given a house to sleep in while building their own and are usually given food as well, both formally by the chief and great-commoner and informally by the neighbours. The great-commoner who told me that the formal custom of giving food had lapsed in his country belongs to the chiefdom which adjoins Rungwe mission, a small chiefdom to which very considerable immigration has taken place in the last forty years; there the relative scarcity of land is reflected in a decline of hospitality to newcomers, though none have yet been refused land. But the usual custom still is to receive them generously. "It is an ancient custom amongst us to welcome strangers, so that the chiefdom may increase and flourish." [431]

In giving garden-land to a newcomer the procedure differs slightly according to the value of the land in question. The great-commoner takes him out and shows him, if the land is scarce and valuable, an exactly demarcated piece, if it is cheap and plentiful, a vaguely defined area within which he can hoe where he likes. In the upland chiefdoms, for example, the best maize and bean plots are scarce; men hoe the same ground year in year out, planting maize and beans alternately in it or, sometimes, maize only with an interval of a few months fallow each year; and in this case the boundaries of each man's ground are precisely marked. But for the growing of sweet-potatoes and millet there is plenty of good land available and men hoe more or less where they please. "A stranger named Tusekelege," I was told, "came to the village of Ibungila (in Kukwe country). Amongst other things he asked for a maize-garden, so they gave him the ground of a man Mwasumbi who had moved to Masoko. They told Tusekelege that he could hoe only the same extent of ground 166 425 621 624

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

so the increment that accrued to them was also greater than usual. And thus they normally had more cattle than ordinary men. 556 583

Some of these extra cattle they expended in marrying more wives of their own, who bore them more children. The girl children later brought in more marriage-cattle, and meanwhile the wives and unmarried children worked in the fields and so enabled the rulers to entertain more often and more lavishly than their less married subjects. And it was by lavish entertainment above all that the prestige of a ruler was maintained.

(b) *THE EXPENDITURE OF MBANDE AND OTHER AUTHORITIES.*

All important guests at Mbande, whether traders or subordinates, were, as we have seen, entertained at the Kyungu's expense. Now the entertainment of guests and subordinates is a quite indispensable function of every primitive political authority; power and prestige cannot possibly be maintained without it. Its importance in primitive constitutions has recently been pointed out by Richards in a paper[1] on the constitution of the Bemba tribe in Northern Rhodesia; and the facts of Ngonde tradition bear out her conclusions. Chiefs and nobles were given food and beer when they visited Mbande and the position of Mbande could not otherwise have been maintained. And the Kyungu, like the Citimukulu of the Bemba, also gave to his subordinates gifts of more permanent value. 652

Cloths were given both to chiefs and nobles. We remember that the very first Kyungu at Mbande is said to "have given headcloths to the indigenous rulers" who, in accepting them, accepted also his overlordship; and from that time onwards the practice continued. Whenever a territorial noble died the nobles of Ngonde came from the Kyungu and formally presented his successor with a dark headcloth, which he then wore turban-fashion as a symbol of his status. And other gifts of cloths were made to them also, from time to time. The nobles of Ngonde likewise were formally presented with dark headcloths on succession and, as we have seen, got gifts of cloth each time the traders came. 652 431

And the custom grew up in the middle period of giving cloths to the chiefs also, the sons of the Kyungu. When the chiefs heard that the Kyungu had been buying cloths they used to come, each alone with one man, and be given some. Our evidence does not make clear whether

[1] Audrey Richards "Tribal Government in Transition." Supplement to *J.R.A.S.* Oct. 1935.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

652 431 this was done by all chiefs or only by the great chiefs; but it is certain that the great chiefs possessed more of these cloths than their juniors.

652 431 764 But perhaps the most important traditional use of cloth by the Kyungus was for funeral gifts.[1] The social significance of funeral ceremonial in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa is hard to exaggerate;[2] for both the economic and the emotional aspects not only of kinship but also of village and political relationships are given formal expression most frequently at funerals. And a gift at a funeral carries greater weight than one on any other occasion.

652 431 567 583 Then, again, chiefs and nobles who brought food to Mbande were often given either a beast or a woman slave in return. "When one of the chiefs had caught a great many fish . . . . . he would gather his men and go to Mbande . . . . . Then the Kyungu would tell one of the nobles of Ngonde to go and fetch a beast or, if no beast were available—and cattle were scarce in the old days—he would give him a woman. And if the chief liked her he would take her in marriage and she would become his lady,[3] but if he did not, then he would take her to his own country and sell her there for a cow." (We expressed some surprise at the rate of exchange.) "Yes, truly, for one cow only, cows were very scarce in those days." And sometimes, in order to make sure he would like her, the visiting chief would be allowed to choose his own girl. "When one of his sons came to visit him the Kyungu would sometimes give orders that he should be shown all the (slave) girls and choose the one he liked best; and so the chief would choose a local girl[4] and marry her. And he could never then sell her, once he had chosen her in love."

Now the gift of a woman slave had many social implications. If she was taken to wife the recipient regarded the Kyungu thereafter as his father-in-law, as well as his "father." She herself became free and her children spoke of the Kyungu as their grandfather. And these gifts did more than any others to strengthen the bonds of kinship between the Kyungu and his subordinate chiefs.

652 431 To his common subjects also, if they had deserved well of him, the Kyungu would occasionally give either cloths or a woman or a cow; and the great chiefs of Ngonde likewise and even ordinary chiefs and nobles did the same. And these subordinate authorities, as we have seen, also used to entertain their own subjects generously with food

[1] *Vide infra* section 7.
[2] Cf. Wilson "Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial." *Bantu Studies*, March 1939.
[3] I use "lady" here to translate "*mwehe*" which is the title of honour used for a chief's wife; the implication is that she then ceased to be a slave.
[4] Slaves were of two kinds, the relatives of criminals and war captives (*vide infra* sections 5 and 6). It was apparently customary to choose one of the first kind on such occasions.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FNi7

and beer; their position depended upon doing so. Up and down the hierarchy the stream of wealth travelled and this stream, in its ebb and flow, was the lifeblood of the old constitution. 652 431

(c) *THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE IVORY TRADE.*

Now it was the scarce and valuable cloths derived from the ivory trade which enabled Mbande to bind the subordinate chiefs and nobles to it in secular matters. Lubaga, lacking this wealth, had no such secular power. But it is very easy to exaggerate the secular power which Mbande had. Personal loyalty to the Kyungu and the great chiefs was enforced throughout Ngonde,[1] the nobles of Ngonde participated in the selection of territorial nobles and great chiefs,[2] tribal war was organized from Mbande,[3] but that was all. In everyday life the sovereignty of the local rulers was scarcely limited. Civil war was endemic in Ngonde,[4] and secular justice had no central organization[5]. 643 439

The central power of Mbande rested on the combination of divine kingship with wealth derived from the ivory-trade. But both in religious and economic matters there was a very high degree of local autonomy. We have already discussed the local autonomy in religion[6] and must now discuss it in the economic sphere.

The economic relations of men in the middle period of Ngonde's history were largely confined to the little local groups of chiefdom and fief. Subsistence agriculture was practised by each family, with the assistance of village neighbours and of a few friends and relatives who normally lived in the same chiefdom or fief. Marriage, with all the exchanges of cattle and food which marriage involved, was usually a local matter also; men only occasionally went beyond the chiefdom or the fief for their wives; while of the few specialised craftmen, such as smiths, a representative was usually to be found in each such local group. Economic links between the local groups existed: men moved from one chiefdom or fief to another leaving relatives behind, some marriages took place across the local boundaries, famous craftmen or doctors attracted clients from far afield. But these links were far fewer in number than those which obtained between the members of each separate local group. 433

And the ivory trade added little to the economic links between the local groups. It involved no tribal organization of elephant hunts, or anything of the kind; it touched the common people only slightly. Commoners and chiefs however did occasionally exchange tusks either 439

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[1] *Vide infra* 5 (a)
[2] *Vide infra* 5 (b)
[3] *Vide infra* 6 (b)
[4] *Vide infra* 6 (a)
[5] *Vide infra* 5 (c)
[6] *Vide supra* 3

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Burier of men!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Mpeta![1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kiposa[1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kyabala![1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Striker and Stabber! —Great Father! Great Father!—O Mwenende![2]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Mpolombasambo![2]—Great Father! Great Father! —Dweller in the hot sun!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Fish-eater! O Banana-eater!—Great Father! Great Father!'" The general form of this praise-song was identical with that of the prayers in the sacred groves and so it is literally true to say that the nobles of Ngonde worshipped the living Kyungus. 643 644

But the majority of their subjects only worshipped from afar in fear and trembling. At Mbande no ordinary commoner was ever conducted into the sacred enclosure but only the territorial nobles and the elder chiefs, and they only occasionally; while when the Kyungu travelled through his country all men save the very oldest fled from his approach: "In former times we commoners never looked on the face of the Kyungu, we feared him far too much. When he journeyed through Ngonde we all used to flee from him, men, women and children; only the very oldest stayed to watch him as he came; and they would fall down and clap their hands in grateful worship."

Even in speech fearful circumlocutions were used to refer to his journeying—"The country is on the move"—"The great hill is moving"—"The mystery is coming." While it was taboo both for the old men who then stayed to see him and for those who entered the sacred enclosure, ever to greet him in the usual way. Falling down and clapping the hands was the only greeting for the Kyungu, never the ordinary "how-do-you-do?" From the nobles and great chiefs men did not flee; but the great chiefs, at least, were greeted by falling down and handclapping, not in the ordinary way. [195] [576]

From the wives of the Kyungu also men fled in terror, fearing lest they be compromised and thrown over the cliff, and this both added to the atmosphere of terror which surrounded him and was an expression of it.

On the other hand the various gifts of the Kyungu to his subjects were, in their ceremonial aspect, an expression of personal relationship to them, of paternal interest in them; and so also the tribute which they brought to him was, in its ceremonial aspect, an expression of filial respect. As in all primitive groups personal rather than impersonal relationships were dominant in the old Ngonde. The Kyungu was 643 602 [43]

[1] Names of early Kyungus.
[2] Archic words which I do not understand.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 "the father of all." All the chiefs were his kinsmen, many of the nobles
602 were related to him by marriage, most of them were personally acquainted with him; and these facts were fundamental in the old constitution of Ngonde.

602 And so also the great chiefs and their subordinates, and the local
764 rulers and their subjects were united by personal bonds which were given frequent ceremonial expression. At every funeral,[1] in particular, whether
431 of chief, noble or commoner, ceremonial gifts of meat, beer, ordinary food, and other gifts also were made along the lines of the political hierarchy.

764 On the death of a chief, a noble or any commoner who had, during his life, had many personal dealings with Mbande, a hen was sent to the
431 Kyungu to announce the death, and the Kyungu then returned one of
[763] the imported cloths. When other prominent commoners or great-commoners died a hen was sent to the great chief of the area, who also returned an imported cloth. The deaths of ordinary commoners and less prominent great-commoners were announced only to the local ruler (chief or noble) without the gift of a hen, and no cloth was returned.

Similarly when cattle were killed at the funeral of any great-commoner or commoner a special portion of the meat of one beast (the breast and ribs) was always given to the local ruler.[2] In the case of a prominent commoner or great-commoner, however, a similar portion might be given to the great-chief as well. "Such an action was taken on the initiative of the family concerned, the great-chief never claimed it as of right." But if he himself came to the funeral it was normally done. The local rulers themselves, with their wives, attended the funerals of their subjects, and their wives brought food with them, to assist the family in its entertainment of the neighbours. And, finally, at the death of a local ruler or of one of his family, his subjects attended the funeral, bringing gifts of food.[3]

8. *THE CHRONICLE OF NGONDE COMPLETED* (1875-1937)

000 We have now finished our systematic analysis of the constitution of Ngonde as it was before the coming of the Europeans. We have had to rely largely on oral tradition and that by itself is always in some degree suspect. Nevertheless the richness and coherence of what is remembered to-day, together with the observable continuity of modern institutions

[1] This account excludes the funeral of the Kyungu, which was secretly carried out by the nobles of Ngonde.
[2] This was certainly so in the chiefdoms, evidence for the fiefs is here lacking.
[3] *Vide* Wilson "Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial."

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 431 643 The present Kyungu maintains his position by a continual distribution of material gifts, as the Kyungus did in the past, but many of the details of this distribution are now altered. Besides the cattle which he now gives the great chiefs he also gives away far more funeral gifts than his predecessors. But on the other hand, the traditional distribution of cloth and ivory, after a visit from the ivory traders, and of slaves and cattle to those who brought tribute in food has now ceased. The traditional procedure of giving a newly elected noble a cloth still continues.

178 431 643 764 Previous Kyungus only sent cloths to the funerals of the most important of their subjects—chiefs, nobles, great-commoners and a few others. But Peter sends a cloth to nearly every funeral in his own half of the Ngonde plain ; though in Kilupula's half and in the hills he only sends cloths to the funerals of chiefs and nobles.

Nearly every family in his own half of the plain now sends a hen (worth 3d.) to Peter to announce a death and he returns a cloth (worth 2s, 3s. or 4s.) as a funeral gift. More important families (chiefs or rich great-commoners) from all over Ngonde send a bull-calf (worth maybe 7s. or 8s.) and to them he returns a cloth or blanket worth anything from 8s. to 12s. In 1934, a year with many deaths, he spent £57 on such funeral gifts and he can hardly have received more than a tenth of that value in hens and calves.

It is this custom above all which gives Peter the status of a paramount chief (as opposed to a subordinate official of the British Administration) in the Ngonde of to-day. And it is only his private fortune which makes it possible. The profits of the *milasa* never reach any such proportions, while, if he spent his official salary on funeral gifts, he would be quite unable to clothe himself, his wives and children.

Now the extension by Peter of the custom of sending cloths to funerals is significant both in relation to the new legal situation and to the present poverty of the other rulers of Ngonde. In his own portion of the plain Peter is the only Native judicial authority who can execute judgments, he is also the only Native ruler who can afford to keep up, on any large scale, the bountiful activities traditionally associated with chieftainship. And he has thus largely replaced the local rulers and the great chiefs, in relation to the common people, both as judge and as plutocrat.

Though we made no intensive study of the areas of the "Sub-chiefs," it is clear that they are not in a position to give any valuable gifts to their people, and that their prestige is in consequence far lower in their own areas than is the Kyungu's in his ; they are but subordinate magistrates with traditional affiliations. Moreover the Kyungu, both through his appeal court and through the sending of funeral gifts to chiefs and nobles is still able to maintain his paramount position in their areas.

in fact they usually settle on the common East African pattern of scattered homesteads, each in its arable area, and not in the tight Nyakyusa village pattern.

I think that the headmen and chiefs concerned would not welcome a restraint on immigration, for it offers them a chance to emulate the numerically produced prestige of their fellows in the flood plains, to whom at the moment they feel inferior. They would, of course, most probably prefer indigenous Nyakyusa, could the latter be persuaded to settle there. As it is, at least some of the Nyakyusa of these northerly villages are trying to move into the flood plains, where they can more easily cultivate paddy and where they can join in a more active and ebullient village life.

One type of foreigner to the Lake Plains is the man (almost invariably a Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who has obtained land but does not settle on it nor in any village. He continues to live in his upland village and comes down to the plains only to cultivate and harvest his paddy field. This is strictly against Nyakyusa land law and custom and, in fact, such an absentee land-holder has often made a substantial monetary gift to the chief or headman for the protection of this extra-legal privilege. These strangers are frequently among the more wealthy upland Nyakyusa, who can afford such payments as these, and often they are of chiefly rank themselves, perhaps having kinship ties with the local chief. There are probably no chiefdoms where such strangers have not obtained paddy fields, though naturally those which contained a good deal of vacant, usable paddy land at the beginning of the cash-cropping era have most.

This does arouse a certain amount of ill-feeling and opposition amongst local villagers who have insufficient land themselves, for they lose land and gain no numerical strength or profit of any kind. The illegal action of the local chief is also condemned, especially as the chiefs should not in any case assume allocatory powers. On the other hand it must be noted that the commoners philosophically accept the supposedly protected prerogatives of their chiefs under European rule and they expect the chiefs to take advantage of them. As with the case of the minority of large land-holders, the actual effect is not particularly great and reformation here would be a minor palliative. Nevertheless in this matter there is a definite and unpopular infringement of villagers' rights and of the local customary law.

One other group of strangers may be noted for the sake of completeness. That is the Kisi, who have for at least two generations been settling along the lake shore itself from Matema in the east to the Songwe river (and beyond) in the south-west. They have come from the north-eastern shores of the lake and in the Nyakyusa area they are principally fishermen who do not, therefore, compete with the indigenous population economically. They cultivate only tiny plots of casava and sometimes of finger millet, although a few of the younger generation are now trying to grow a little paddy also. The total number of Kisi involved cannot be more than a few hundred and they have probably not increased much over the past decades. They follow an almost separate existence from their Nyakyusa neighbours, not intermarrying, and following their own way of life.[1]

1. The main Kisi settlements in Rungwe District are in the Ikombe area, an isolated peninsular south of the Lake Plains, where they number about 1,200. Another 3,000 are scattered on smaller peninsulars and in tiny lakeside basins further south along the Lake shore. They are widely famed as potters, and they exchange their wares for cereal foods to augment their fishing.

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

122 for research, I am very grateful for a grant from the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures[2] which enabled me to start my ethnographical field work among these people. I wish also to express my thanks to the Government of the Tanganyika Territory, the Provincial Commissioner of Mbeya, and the District Officer of Tukuyu for all the courtesy I received during my work.

114 1. My first step, after my arrival at Katumba near Masoko, was to
123 pay a visit to Mwamasika, the chief *(omalafyale)*[3] of the village and

[291
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622]

The chief Wwamasika with his councillors.

of those adjacent. On the open place near his hut he welcomed me in company with his *amafumu*[4], the influential men of his villages. My attendant, the interpreter and I were asked to sit on chairs, while the *amafumu* sat down on mats or on large banana leaves on the ground; but the chief remained standing. I explained the aim of my visit, and that I would be very glad of his support. The chief promised it, and he kept his promise excellently. On other occasions the chief also sat
●[431] on a chair. In the afternoon of the first day I sent to the chief some presents. The following he made a return in form of food. This exchange of gifts is named *ukubonola*, handing over the gift.

123 2. In a small village belonging to Mwamasika's chieftainship was the
757 residence of a medicine man, to whom I paid a visit as soon as I could. When I met him he was being consulted by a sick male person who had a stomach complaint *(agaju)*. After some negotiations he allowed me

[2] Cf. Africa. Vol. XI, p. 497.
[3] Cf. *Wilson*, Introduction, p. 283; Land Rights, p. 44.
[4] Cf. *Wilson*, Land Rights, p. 13. W. translates *ulifumu (olifumu)* by „great commoner", Introduction, p. 276, 282.

765 head of the line. She was also the first who crawled between the legs
48| of the others, facing the hut, and followed by the others. This ceremony has the same purpose as the preceding act.

[291]

Scene from the ubunyago-ceremony: The mourners returning from the grave to the house crawling through the legs of the others.

765 Then the hair of the mourners was shaved (*ukumwa inwili*, to shave
[302 the hair, profane and ritual) and, I was told that a bath would be
515] the last act ending mourning.

[291
516]

Scene from the ubunyago-ceremony: The shaving of the hair.

765 In the afternoon I sent the father of the dead child a cotton kerchief
123 as a gift, and when I met him later on, he told me I had participated
43| in the burial of his child by that gift, saying, "You have buried my child with me".

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

881 I went to the place and got permission to enter the hut in which the first part of the ceremony took place. I found there the parents of the girl, the girl sitting enveloped in clothes in one corner of the hut, and some older females, one of whom was the acting *unnyago*. Some male guests were also present[20]. As the girl had had her first catamenia the present ceremony marked at the same time the end of her preparation for marriage.

[273 278] The *unnyago* prepared a beverage of beer in which a light-brown medical powder *(imbondanya)* was put. First the girl had to drink from it, then the parents followed. This beverage was believed to strengthen *(ubusisya)* the consumers. Then a spear was handed to the girl by her father, and the girl handed it in turn to some relatives of the bridegroom waiting near the hut. These persons had to bring the [582 583] spear to the girl's bridegroom as a sign that he could now marry the girl[21], but not before he had brought a bull to the girl's father. After this the girl, now sitting in the middle of the hut, was given small gifts [431] from the participants in the ceremony.

[291 342 516 868 415]

Practical instruction of premature girls in house-hold matters.

[302] Following this the whole body of the girl was anointed before the door of the hut. The *unnyago* began by anointing her legs; then the [278] girl herself continued it. The ointment was prepared from castor oil and a powder of red wood *(Kipimba*, found commonly in the environment of Lake Rukwa). At this moment a male participant in the cere- [606] mony chanced to, come out of the hut, and suddenly a young woman

[20] Cf. *Wilson*, Introduction, p. 258; The Study of African Society, p. 11 (The Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. 2, 1939).

[21] *ukwega:* to take (also as regards marrying); *ubwegia:* nuptials.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I

In many areas of Eastern Africa the pressure of peasant populations on their tribal lands is a critical feature of the contemporary scene, and this is most especially so in the more fertile parts where the African has accepted the new cash economy and is beginning to appreciate the potentialities of the modern world. The situation has been highlighted recently in the public mind by the publication of the Report of the East African Royal Commission[1] which examined the economic conditions of our time and made general recommendations.

In Tanganyika the overall density of population is low (22 persons per square mile) and the general scale of economic activity still remains little above subsistence level over vast areas of Territory. There are, however, islands of extremely dense populations scattered through the country, often associated with the mountain areas, where soil is fertile, rainfall is reliable and adequate and the cultivation of crops for sale in world markets has gone ahead fairly easily. These populations still comprise peasant farming communities with little capital and their "natural" impulse is to expand their extensive agricultural system rather than to intensify their cultivation on existing holdings. Serious overcrowding soon results for the favourable areas are limited and surrounded by drier bushlands. African attitudes and legal customs concerning their land do not change quickly and they lag behind new conditions of physical limitation and economic development. Whilst the recommendations of the Royal Commission may be valuable in the establishment of general policy, it is obvious that detailed application through time demands a fairly exact knowledge and understanding of particular local conditions if it is to be reasonably successful. This is particularly the case in so large a country as Tanganyika, with its multiplicity of environments and tribal systems of law, land tenure and agriculture, and the social attitudes which encompass them.

The present essay is an attempt, sponsored by Government, to describe and analyse the land and population conditions in one small area of the Territory where a cash economy is emerging and where the pressure of a peasant population on its land resources has become acute. It is hoped that some of this account may be applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to other similar areas both in Tanganyika and elsewhere, and that the conclusions reached may be helpful in dealing with the problems there; but primarily this is a study of one particular part of the country in order to provide the information upon which detailed policy may be founded.

The Nyakyusa are not entirely typical of many of the Bantu people of East Africa for they have a most distinctive social organisation, peculiar to themselves, based on age-villages and petty, independent chiefdoms. Also, they inhabit a country whose annual rainfall is unusually high, averaging about 100 inches. On the other hand, these people are one of the very few in Tanganyika for whom we have an excellent account of both their pre-European and early European systems of land tenure. Based on this information, obtained *before* modern changes began, we can perceive, analyse

1. *East African Royal Commission* 1953-5, *Report:* H.M.S.O. 1955. Cmd. 9475.

161 If therefore, pending the next Census to be made in 1957, we assume these rates of increase, then by 1955 it may be estimated that the Nyakyusa numbered about 217,000 at an average density of 233 persons per square mile, allowing 13.7 acres of land per family of five. For the Lake Plains alone, the population in 1955 would have been nearly 60,000 at an average density of 287 persons per square mile, with 11.2 acres per family. If we also include the estimated number of absentee migrant labourers in the base year of 1948, then there were in 1955 perhaps 63,000 people dependent on the land resources of the Lake Plains at an average density of 303 per square mile, though in fact some 6,000 men were temporarily absent from home in that year.

The figures and estimates are given in Table I. These averages do, of course, hide some considerable and significant local variations which are further described at pages 14 ff. below.

TABLE I
NYAKYUSA POPULATION

162

	1948 *Census*			1955 *Estimates*		
	a	*b*	*c*	*a*	*b*	*c*
Lake Plains at increase of 1% p.a.	55,700	268	11.9	59,700	287	11.2
Central Region at increase of 1½% p.a.	48,500	224	14.2	53,800	248	12.9
N.E. Highlands at increase of 1½% p.a.	40,300	183	17.4	44,700	203	15.8
N.W. Highlands at increase of 1½% p.a.	53,200	185	17.3	59,000	205	15.6
NYAKYUSA in tribal area	197,700	212	15.2	217,200	233	13.7

a = population
b = persons per square mile on land available for African use.
c = average acreage available per family of 5 persons.

Assuming that there were in 1948 about 3,000 men temporarily absent from their homes in the Lake Plains but who remained dependent on the land resources of that region, then the following estimate may be made:–

Lake Plains – persons resident at home and temporarily abroad:–

a	*b*	*c*	*a*	*b*	*c*
58,700	282	11.3	62,935	303	10.6

The approximate areas available for African use in the tribal lands (excluding alienated land, forest reserves and main roads) are:–

Lake Plains – 208 sq. miles N.E. Highlands – 220 sq. miles
Central Region – 217 sq. miles N.W. Highlands – 288 sq. miles
BuNyakyusa – 933 sq. miles

In these calculations no account is taken of unusable land such as swamps, steep slopes, thicket, etc.

Cash Cropping: Paddy Cultivation

433 432 This condition of a high density of population exists in a modern economy in which cash-cropping is universally accepted and desired. Under the former subsistence agriculture, because of heavy rainfall and natural annual flooding, quite small-sized holdings were adequate to satisfy a family's food requirements. Two harvests a year are easily obtained in some 241 combination of maize, beans, groundnuts and finger millet, with a few small "luxury" crops; and the banana groves yield continuously. The Nyakyusa were and are extremely fortunate in their food supply, and seldom experience shortages such as occasionally or even commonly afflict many peoples of East Africa.

243 [141] Rice was first introduced in 1896 by two chiefs who obtained the seed from Nyasaland Arabs; and in 1898 the Moravian Mission and a Swahili

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

trader brought in other seed. The trader himself planted a large plot and his success seems to have stimulated the Nyakyusa to follow suit. There was a slow but gradual development of planting and by 1932 it was estimated that some 500 tons of hand-hulled rice were sold. It had become clear that the alluvial flood plains around the northern tip of Lake Nyasa were ideally suited to paddy growing. Until 1942 the people continued to hand-hull their crop and sell the rice, but in that year they were persuaded to sell the paddy direct to a locally established mill. Following initial difficulties in milling, handling and marketing, the Government built a store capable of holding 14,000 bags and it also took over the whole of the marketing with a seconded District Officer in charge. In 1947 the cultivators formed their first co-operative society. This movement has been encouraged by Government and the local Co-operative Union now deals with storage and marketing with the guidance of a Government Co-operative Officer.

The figures of sales of rice and paddy are given in Table II.[1]

Paddy has become a well-established crop, not only as the single cash crop of the region, but also as a food crop second only (or even equal) to the traditionally staple banana. About four-fifths of all arable holdings are paddy fields – though parts of these are used for dry season crops of maize, beans, etc. Virtually every Nyakyusa land-holder now grows paddy, and the vast majority regard it as their main crop. Cultivation is mainly by ox-plough followed by broadcast sowing and hand-weeding. Government efforts to encourage nurseries and planting out in rows have so far been entirely unsuccessful. Yields and perhaps quality too are thought to be lower than need be; the chief factor in production seems to be the degree of natural flooding during the wet season.

TABLE II

SALES OF RICE AND PADDY, 1932-56*

		tons			tons
1932	..	500	1945	..	1,200
1933	..	600	1946	..	2,700
1934	..	600	1947	..	3,300
1935	..	600	1948	..	2,100
1936	..	700	1949	..	3,700
1938	..	700	1950	..	2,300
1939	..	1,200	1951	..	1,200
1940	..	1,500	1952	..	2,000
1941	..	1,600	1953	..	5,700
1942	..	2,200	1954	..	5,900
1943	..	2,800	1955	..	5,700
1944	..	2,900	1956	..	3,000

*1932-41—hand-hulled rice, estimates only.
1942-47—paddy, sold through Government agency.
1948-56—paddy, sold through cultivators' co-operatives.

The cultivation of paddy requires relatively large-sized holdings due to the nature of the crop and the local extensive method of agriculture – for example, to produce a given income requires a far larger area of paddy in the Lake Plains than of coffee in the Northern Highlands of Nyakyusa country. As paddy cultivation became established, men increased their arable holdings in order to earn their money incomes. Larger holdings, rather than improved agricultural techniques, have become directly connected with higher incomes, and so the demand for more land set in. Assisted by the now general use of ploughs, paddy growing increased rapidly wherever it was found ecologically possible – i.e., within the alluvial flood plains and the coterminous area of annual natural flooding. Before this new demand for land emerged there were, even in the most highly populated parts, extensive areas which were more or

1. Information has been supplied by the Co-operative Officer, Tukuyu.

241 Other foodstuffs grown are coca-yams, cow peas, pigeon peas, Bambarra groundnuts, ginger, cardamon, groundnuts, wheat, pumpkins, peppers, citrus, sugar cane and European vegetables, including a quantity of European potatoes. [177]

Economic Crops

245 177 One of the main cash crops is coffee, which was introduced about 1900 by the Berlin Lutheran Mission, but it was not grown by natives until 1930 when an attempt was made to organize an industry. It had already been tried from 1924 onwards by Europeans but had gradually died out, giving place to tea.

245 Native coffee has not been truly successful and many reasons are suspected for this. In effect, the coffee suffers from many pests and diseases and yields are so low as to be almost uneconomical even to a tribe of very low individual annual income. It has become obvious that coffee can only be grown by natives if shaded by bananas and mulched heavily with banana trash. Multiple-stem pruning is gaining favour.

Seedlings are planted out in December and the first crop is obtained four years after. The area planted rose in 1939 to 5,864 acres and the number of native planters to 7,966. Yields, however, are low, varying from 131.4 kg. to 20.4 kg. parchment to the acre. Hemeleia leaf disease and yellow and white borer are prevalent all over the coffee-growing area. Over the period since 1932 the price paid to natives has averaged 44 cents a kg. for parchment. [136]

[438] All coffee is collected and sold by Native Authority after rough grading and, in order to encourage better preparation, much lower payments are made for the inferior grades. A native staff is employed to visit coffee plots and to give instructions, and it is noticeable that the quality of preparation varies with the price. [432]

175 243 The cultivation of rice on the lake shore was started by Chief Koroso in 1896 with seed obtained from Arab traders in Nyasaland and the Moravian Mission issued further seed in 1898. Being an innovation, rice was not popular and little was grown except for small local sales. In 1917 the Government issued seed and tax was paid in rice instead of money. Interest was hereby aroused and the cultivation of rice was started. In 1932 several other kinds of seed were issued and now sixteen varieties are found. "Faya", which was issued in 1929, gives the best yields and is the variety chiefly grown, other varieties being Bungala, Marula [651] 243

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

439 given a slave or cow in return. Those who performed hoeing service, *milasa*, were
643 entertained with food and beer.

The ivory trade, although it bound the local rulers to the capital, involved no tribal
622 organization of elephant hunts, and scarcely touched the common people, who never
437 obtained the imported cloths exchanged for ivory, but continued to dress in bark-cloth or in their coarse home-woven cloth. Between each chief and his people economic links were determined on the one hand by his power of requisitioning food, and his greater wealth derived from the higher bride-price given for his daughters, and on the other by his people's expectation of entertainment from him in return for their food. Economic links between local chiefdoms were tenuous. Subsistence agriculture was practised by each family with the help of village neighbours and a few friends and kin; marriage with its economic exchanges was usually within the chiefdom. Of the few specialized craftsmen, representatives of each were usually found in each local group.[1]

439 Under modern economic conditions, Ngonde country is the only part of north
433 Nyasaland which cannot be called the 'Dead North', and does not suffer from excessive migration. The soil is fertile and at present there is no land shortage, though there is likelihood of one developing in the near future. Food is cultivated for export to the Lupa goldfields in Tanganyika, which is the natural market for Ngonde produce. Rice, cattle, and hides are also exported there. Parts of the lake littoral are suitable for cotton cultivation, which was revived in 1934. Ninety tons were sold in 1936. Out of the total effective male population of 12,000, 3,000 grow 'economic crops', and 7,000 grow cash crops only.[2] There are two European coffee estates in the Misuku hills, but they are handicapped by the long dry season.[3] Money is also derived from the fishing industry. An attempt to develop a ghee industry from native butter for sale to Indians in Nyasaland collapsed owing to the apathy of the Ngonde, their neglect of quality, and their insistence on too high a price for their inferior product. The main cash income of the district is derived from emigration to the Lupa goldfields, so that 90 per cent. of the money in circulation in the district is East African currency, which is accepted by the Nyasaland local government, surplus balances being remitted to the District Officer at Tukuyu, Tanganyika.[4]

Periodic Migrations

167 Long-distance labour migration is not a serious problem among the Ngonde, as they are able to earn their main cash income by working in the nearby Lupa goldfields, or by supplying that market with agricultural produce. In north Nyasa district (Ngonde), of 12,052 adult males fit to work for wages, only 11·6 per cent. are labour emigrants, and of these in 1937 only 100 were counted as 'lost ones' (i.e. not heard of since 1930).[5] In Abercorn and Kasama districts, Northern Rhodesia, where the Nyamwanga and Iwa live, 50 per cent. of the able-bodied male adult population is absent.[6]

A local migration of Nyakyusa does constitute a problem for the Tanganyika administration. Up to 1935 some 2,000 families had migrated from Rungwe district to tribal lands in the neighbouring chiefdoms of Mbeya district. By 1941 the figure had increased to 3,000. The immigrants now total 17 per cent. of the whole population

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 39–50.
[2] Murray, 1932, p. 206.
[3] *Bell Report*, 1938, Appendix A.
[4] *Bell Report*, 1938, pp. 100–3.
[5] Smith, 1937, p. 21.
[6] Orde Browne, 1, 1938, maps.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

and beer; their position depended upon doing so. Up and down the hierarchy the stream of wealth travelled and this stream, in its ebb and flow, was the lifeblood of the old constitution. 652 431

(c) *THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE IVORY TRADE.*

Now it was the scarce and valuable cloths derived from the ivory trade which enabled Mbande to bind the subordinate chiefs and nobles to it in secular matters. Lubaga, lacking this wealth, had no such secular power. But it is very easy to exaggerate the secular power which Mbande had. Personal loyalty to the Kyungu and the great chiefs was enforced throughout Ngonde,[1] the nobles of Ngonde participated in the selection of territorial nobles and great chiefs,[2] tribal war was organized from Mbande,[3] but that was all. In everyday life the sovereignty of the local rulers was scarcely limited. Civil war was endemic in Ngonde,[4] and secular justice had no central organization[5]. 643 439

The central power of Mbande rested on the combination of divine kingship with wealth derived from the ivory-trade. But both in religious and economic matters there was a very high degree of local autonomy. We have already discussed the local autonomy in religion[6] and must now discuss it in the economic sphere.

The economic relations of men in the middle period of Ngonde's history were largely confined to the little local groups of chiefdom and fief. Subsistence agriculture was practised by each family, with the assistance of village neighbours and of a few friends and relatives who normally lived in the same chiefdom or fief. Marriage, with all the exchanges of cattle and food which marriage involved, was usually a local matter also; men only occasionally went beyond the chiefdom or the fief for their wives; while of the few specialised craftmen, such as smiths, a representative was usually to be found in each such local group. Economic links between the local groups existed: men moved from one chiefdom or fief to another leaving relatives behind, some marriages took place across the local boundaries, famous craftmen or doctors attracted clients from far afield. But these links were far fewer in number than those which obtained between the members of each separate local group. 433

And the ivory trade added little to the economic links between the local groups. It involved no tribal organization of elephant hunts, or anything of the kind; it touched the common people only slightly. Commoners and chiefs however did occasionally exchange tusks either 439

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[1] *Vide infra* 5 (a)
[2] *Vide infra* 5 (b)
[3] *Vide infra* 6 (b)
[4] *Vide infra* 6 (a)
[5] *Vide infra* 5 (c)
[6] *Vide supra* 3

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I

In many areas of Eastern Africa the pressure of peasant populations on their tribal lands is a critical feature of the contemporary scene, and this is most especially so in the more fertile parts where the African has accepted the new cash economy and is beginning to appreciate the potentialities of the modern world. The situation has been highlighted recently in the public mind by the publication of the Report of the East African Royal Commission[1] which examined the economic conditions of our time and made general recommendations.

In Tanganyika the overall density of population is low (22 persons per square mile) and the general scale of economic activity still remains little above subsistence level over vast areas of Territory. There are, however, islands of extremely dense populations scattered through the country, often associated with the mountain areas, where soil is fertile, rainfall is reliable and adequate and the cultivation of crops for sale in world markets has gone ahead fairly easily. These populations still comprise peasant farming communities with little capital and their "natural" impulse is to expand their extensive agricultural system rather than to intensify their cultivation on existing holdings. Serious overcrowding soon results for the favourable areas are limited and surrounded by drier bushlands. African attitudes and legal customs concerning their land do not change quickly and they lag behind new conditions of physical limitation and economic development. Whilst the recommendations of the Royal Commission may be valuable in the establishment of general policy, it is obvious that detailed application through time demands a fairly exact knowledge and understanding of particular local conditions if it is to be reasonably successful. This is particularly the case in so large a country as Tanganyika, with its multiplicity of environments and tribal systems of law, land tenure and agriculture, and the social attitudes which encompass them.

The present essay is an attempt, sponsored by Government, to describe and analyse the land and population conditions in one small area of the Territory where a cash economy is emerging and where the pressure of a peasant population on its land resources has become acute. It is hoped that some of this account may be applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to other similar areas both in Tanganyika and elsewhere, and that the conclusions reached may be helpful in dealing with the problems there; but primarily this is a study of one particular part of the country in order to provide the information upon which detailed policy may be founded.

The Nyakyusa are not entirely typical of many of the Bantu people of East Africa for they have a most distinctive social organisation, peculiar to themselves, based on age-villages and petty, independent chiefdoms. Also, they inhabit a country whose annual rainfall is unusually high, averaging about 100 inches. On the other hand, these people are one of the very few in Tanganyika for whom we have an excellent account of both their pre-European and early European systems of land tenure. Based on this information, obtained *before* modern changes began, we can perceive, analyse

1. *East African Royal Commission* 1953-5, *Report*: H.M.S.O. 1955. Cmd. 9475.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

people's needs. The importance of this can scarcely be overemphasised for a peasant people who are adopting a cash economy and are socially and emotionally deeply attached to their land – their single, continuous source of capital and their tribal heritage. Apart from the possibilities of labour migration which, so far at any rate, are taken up only temporarily and by the younger men, there are no economic opportunities and no capital to compete with the land. In non-economic life the land remains supreme as the persisting basis of society.

As late as 1940 the District Commissioner, Rungwe, was able to write that there was most generally sufficient land for the people's needs in all parts of the country, and the only competition was perhaps in respect of the very best and most fertile tracts, as had always been the case. G. Wilson recorded similar remarks in the late nineteen-thirties. That these observations were correct cannot be doubted. It is known, for instance, that until the post-war years in the Lake Plains – where now land shortage is most acute – there was a broad belt of mainly unoccupied, uncultivated bushland, infested with game, extending from the Livingstone Mountains in the east to the Nyasaland border in the south-west. There were extensive, more or less empty areas in almost every chiefdom. The people were subsistence farmers only, and also banana eaters, and in this well-watered country their agricultural requirements were adequately met on very modest holdings, from most of which two harvests a year could be gathered.

In the brief period of little more than ten years the situation has altered radically to the point of a general shortage of land (except for some parts in the north-west), and especially in the Lake Plains the available land is quite insufficient to meet the demands of the inhabitants. This critical change is the result partly of an increasing population, augmented by some immigration from other tribal areas; but more especially it is the result of the demands for larger arable holdings to meet cash crop aspirations – i.e., money earning. Although both coffee and paddy rice cultivation had begun before 1939, and both were encouraged and developed during the War years, it was not until after 1945 that both of these cash crops became well and generally established and the demand for money incomes became universal.

III

It was in order to investigate this new situation, which was beginning to become serious and to cause concern to Government, that I made a sociological survey in 1955. I had already spent some months in the country in 1954 investigating labour migration in order to provide Government with information and to make recommendations to deal with the problems arising. The second period of work occupied about five months. During both enquiries I was extremely fortunate in having the use of the excellent monographs of G. and M. Wilson who had carried out a conventional anthropological study of the Nyakyusa between 1934 and 1938. Without their basic work behind me, neither of my two studies would have been possible in so brief a time, and I must gratefully acknowledge the real value of their writings.

The intention had been that a complete enquiry should be made into Nyakyusa land conditions in all parts of the country, and that it should culminate in a full recording of tribal land law and custom with a view to its possible reform. In the event only the initial enquiry in the field in the Lake Plains was completed and the results of that alone are described in this essay. Whereas in former days there were probably few distinctive differences between the various parts of the country, in modern times with the introduction of different cash crops, with differential population growths and varying demands on the land, important divergences seem to be arising. For example,

161 If therefore, pending the next Census to be made in 1957, we assume these rates of increase, then by 1955 it may be estimated that the Nyakyusa numbered about 217,000 at an average density of 233 persons per square mile, allowing 13.7 acres of land per family of five. For the Lake Plains alone, the population in 1955 would have been nearly 60,000 at an average density of 287 persons per square mile, with 11.2 acres per family. If we also include the estimated number of absentee migrant labourers in the base year of 1948, then there were in 1955 perhaps 63,000 people dependent on the land resources of the Lake Plains at an average density of 303 per square mile, though in fact some 6,000 men were temporarily absent from home in that year.

The figures and estimates are given in Table I. These averages do, of course, hide some considerable and significant local variations which are further described at pages 14 ff. below.

162 TABLE I
NYAKYUSA POPULATION

	1948 *Census*			1955 *Estimates*		
	a	*b*	*c*	*a*	*b*	*c*
Lake Plains at increase of 1% p.a.	55,700	268	11.9	59,700	287	11.2
Central Region at increase of 1½% p.a.	48,500	224	14.2	53,800	248	12.9
N.E. Highlands at increase of 1½% p.a.	40,300	183	17.4	44,700	203	15.8
N.W. Highlands at increase of 1½% p.a.	53,200	185	17.3	59,000	205	15.6
NYAKYUSA in tribal area	197,700	212	15.2	217,200	233	13.7

a = population
b = persons per square mile on land available for African use.
c = average acreage available per family of 5 persons.

Assuming that there were in 1948 about 3,000 men temporarily absent from their homes in the Lake Plains but who remained dependent on the land resources of that region, then the following estimate may be made:–

Lake Plains – persons resident at home and temporarily abroad:–

a	*b*	*c*	*a*	*b*	*c*
58,700	282	11.3	62,935	303	10.6

The approximate areas available for African use in the tribal lands (excluding alienated land, forest reserves and main roads) are:–

Lake Plains – 208 sq. miles N.E. Highlands – 220 sq. miles
Central Region – 217 sq. miles N.W. Highlands – 288 sq. miles
BuNyakyusa – 933 sq. miles

In these calculations no account is taken of unusable land such as swamps, steep slopes, thicket, etc.

Cash Cropping: Paddy Cultivation

433 432 This condition of a high density of population exists in a modern economy in which cash-cropping is universally accepted and desired. Under the former subsistence agriculture, because of heavy rainfall and natural annual flooding, quite small-sized holdings were adequate to satisfy a family's food requirements. Two harvests a year are easily obtained in some 241 combination of maize, beans, groundnuts and finger millet, with a few small "luxury" crops; and the banana groves yield continuously. The Nyakyusa were and are extremely fortunate in their food supply, and seldom experience shortages such as occasionally or even commonly afflict many peoples of East Africa.

243 [144] Rice was first introduced in 1896 by two chiefs who obtained the seed from Nyasaland Arabs; and in 1898 the Moravian Mission and a Swahili

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

trader brought in other seed. The trader himself planted a large plot and his success seems to have stimulated the Nyakyusa to follow suit. There was a slow but gradual development of planting and by 1932 it was estimated that some 500 tons of hand-hulled rice were sold. It had become clear that the alluvial flood plains around the northern tip of Lake Nyasa were ideally suited to paddy growing. Until 1942 the people continued to hand-hull their crop and sell the rice, but in that year they were persuaded to sell the paddy direct to a locally established mill. Following initial difficulties in milling, handling and marketing, the Government built a store capable of holding 14,000 bags and it also took over the whole of the marketing with a seconded District Officer in charge. In 1947 the cultivators formed their first co-operative society. This movement has been encouraged by Government and the local Co-operative Union now deals with storage and marketing with the guidance of a Government Co-operative Officer.

The figures of sales of rice and paddy are given in Table II.[1]

Paddy has become a well-established crop, not only as the single cash crop of the region, but also as a food crop second only (or even equal) to the traditionally staple banana. About four-fifths of all arable holdings are paddy fields – though parts of these are used for dry season crops of maize, beans, etc. Virtually every Nyakyusa land-holder now grows paddy, and the vast majority regard it as their main crop. Cultivation is mainly by ox-plough followed by broadcast sowing and hand-weeding. Government efforts to encourage nurseries and planting out in rows have so far been entirely unsuccessful. Yields and perhaps quality too are thought to be lower than need be; the chief factor in production seems to be the degree of natural flooding during the wet season.

TABLE II

SALES OF RICE AND PADDY, 1932-56*

		tons			tons
1932	..	500	1945	..	1,200
1933	..	600	1946	..	2,700
1934	..	600	1947	..	3,300
1935	..	600	1948	..	2,100
1936	..	700	1949	..	3,700
1938	..	700	1950	..	2,300
1939	..	1,200	1951	..	1,200
1940	..	1,500	1952	..	2,000
1941	..	1,600	1953	..	5,700
1942	..	2,200	1954	..	5,900
1943	..	2,800	1955	..	5,700
1944	..	2,900	1956	..	3,000

*1932-41—hand-hulled rice, estimates only.
1942-47—paddy, sold through Government agency.
1948-56—paddy, sold through cultivators' co-operatives.

The cultivation of paddy requires relatively large-sized holdings due to the nature of the crop and the local extensive method of agriculture – for example, to produce a given income requires a far larger area of paddy in the Lake Plains than of coffee in the Northern Highlands of Nyakyusa country. As paddy cultivation became established, men increased their arable holdings in order to earn their money incomes. Larger holdings, rather than improved agricultural techniques, have become directly connected with higher incomes, and so the demand for more land set in. Assisted by the now general use of ploughs, paddy growing increased rapidly wherever it was found ecologically possible – i.e., within the alluvial flood plains and the coterminous area of annual natural flooding. Before this new demand for land emerged there were, even in the most highly populated parts, extensive areas which were more or

1. Information has been supplied by the Co-operative Officer, Tukuyu.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

number of separate plots per holding was less than where land was scarcer; at the same time the average size of separate plots was smaller in those more land-hungry villages. The reader may refer to Table III (page 15) for some illustrative figures. Though differences are not yet very great, nevertheless there seems to be a fairly clear correlation between the average size of villagers' holdings on the one hand, and on the other the number and size of separate plots, and this is entirely borne out by my general information obtained in villages where actual measurements were not made. The inescapable conclusion must be that increasing scarcity of land in the Lake Plains leads to increasing fragmentation and dispersion of holdings; further, the present land situation and land tenure system can only lead to a continuation of this trend.

To emphasise the actual situation in 1955, let me reiterate the results of my own village surveys in the very high density region. In a village in Koroso's chiefdom only a quarter of the younger men had paddy land of their own, holdings averaging about three-quarters of an acre; in a village in Mwakipesile's chiefdom, only 17 per cent. of the younger men had paddy land and holdings averaged about half an acre (cf. Table VII, page 37). These two examples are taken from the areas of most severe land shortage and are not therefore altogether typical of the whole Lake Plains. Nevertheless, I do not think that they are entirely atypical; more importantly, they indicate the present trend. Within another generation this fragmentation and scatter of holdings may well be the common feature everywhere in the flood plains unless the system of tenure and inheritance is modified. If the increase in population is quickened through improved medical facilities, better diet and housing, and improved conditions generally, then the position will become more acute. Such an increase is only to be expected. The Nyakyusa have decisively entered a money economy and they have learnt to seek higher standards of living. Only from their fields, by cash-cropping, can they expect to earn their livings and the demand for better living will not be curtailed – nor, of course, is it desirable that it should be.

There is another aspect of this whole matter which must be considered. It relates to the movement of individuals between villages. Such movement was, in earlier European days, a crucial factor in the age-village structure, for it was not only exceedingly frequent, but also it tended to undermine the idealised coeval basis of village life. Movement between villages is increasingly difficult now, for a newcomer naturally cannot easily obtain land, nor as much land as he would desire even at a moderate demand. Nevertheless, the reasons for movement persist, and they will do so whilst the fear of witchcraft remains and whilst illness and misfortune are attributable to the unfavourable aura of a place. There remains also the tradition of moving so that a man may escape from bad relations with kinsfolk or neighbours, or from the obloquy resulting from his own disapproved actions. Much social and psychological tension is being created now as a result of the new difficulty of movement, and so far the Nyakyusa have not evolved alternative methods.

On the other hand, so deeply engrained is the notion of the prestige and power which accrues to a village by virtue of the number of its inhabitants, that headmen and villagers alike remain most reluctant to refuse to accept newcomers, even when it inevitably means that the present inhabitants must meet a further decrease in the average amount of land available per family, for a newcomer must be allocated a holding if he is to remain. Consequently, if a holding is for any reason left vacant, a headman tends to refuse to re-allocate some or all of it amongst his villagers and thus to augment their holdings; but instead he keeps it in reserve pending the hoped-for arrival of another newcomer. Men desiring to leave their own village try to get

land en bloc. Young men compete with one another, with their elder brothers and with their fathers for allocations of land left vacant. We also saw, however, that often in the larger families[1] not all the sons are able to get a share of the paternal holding, or at least not a share of practicable size. Thus younger sons are forced to resort to trying to obtain vacant land elsewhere – possibly within the same village, but as often as not outside. Finally, the young man on his new holding may find his neighbours to be of any age; certainly they will not have been members of his own original coeval hamlet.

The way for this changing concept of village life and the new sort of village was prepared in the years before land shortage became important. The changed political system has been briefly noted already, but no less important was the great increase in inter-village movement in earlier European days when peace and personal security had been established. During this period Wilson (1938, page 32) reckoned that perhaps 80 per cent. of Nyakyusa shifted at least once from the place where they first obtained fields. This estimate, whilst perhaps holding good for Highland Nyakyusa amongst whom Wilson mainly worked, was too high for the people of the Lake Plains, where about 40 per cent. is more correct according to my genealogical and village surveys. That is still a relatively high degree of mobility for a mainly subsistence, peasant society such as it was in those years. It is clear that the pseudo-fraternal bond of coevality could not persist as a main element of village life and consciousness, when in fact as many as half of the members of a village were not original coeval founders but had come in from elsewhere. Before the land shortage, movement did not entail the shifting of young men to other young men's villages, or of older men to other older men's villages. It was, at least eventually, promiscuous movement, ignoring age categories. The compulsions of land shortage seem, in retrospect, only to have followed existing lines of village development and to have begun the completion of the process.

In the Lake Plains, therefore, the village persists as a close, territorial, land-owning group and as a specific cluster of homesteads and huts, usually with a village street, the whole closely hemmed in by continuous banana groves. Beyond this lie the arable lands, usually food-crop fields nearby and paddy fields farther off. In jealously protecting what it already holds, the village has gained a new exclusiveness, for the security of the individual land-holder is maintained by the corporate ownership of the village and by excluding outsiders as far as possible. On the other hand, it is no longer an age-village either in fact or intention, and it cannot be, for age-villages were consistent only with an expanding territorial system and a subsistence economy.

This brief analysis of Nyakyusa village organisation in recent times applies only to the Lake Plains. In some parts of both the Central Region and the Northern Highlands the age-basis of Nyakyusa villages had most probably already been seriously weakened in pre-European times.[2] On the other hand, elsewhere, and particularly in the more conservative parts less affected by modern trends and the cash economy, the traditional age-village still exists in something like its old form.

Land shortage has appeared in the Highlands together with a developing cash economy, but the basis of agricultural and economic change lies mainly in coffee cultivation which, of course, requires relatively smaller fields than does paddy in the Lake Plains, but it needs more care and attention from the grower for moderate success. As far as I could see in the course of

1. Polygny is still the norm amongst the older and many middle-aged men, and therefore a father often leaves several sons to inherit.

2. According to elderly informants in Western Kukwa, Mwakaleli and some central chiefdoms, and also the evidence of old village sites.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

my earlier labour migration enquiries in the Highlands, the village as a close residential unit is breaking up as the people are increasingly adopting the more common East African pattern of each family building its own homestead in its own land-holding. These northern Nyakyusa say that they must have their coffee plots next to their homesteads for the sake of continuous supervision, and that this is impossible (which is true enough) where men live close together in compact villages. Again, coffee plots, with their standing, permanent trees, have become a valuable item of inheritance; sons lose no opportunity of taking them irrespective of the locations of their coevals or of the identity of their immediate neighbours. The values of land, cash-crops and material progress are placed much higher than the traditional values of coevality; indeed, such traditional values are largely inconsistent with modern wants and aspirations.

Thus the Nyakyusa age-village has become almost obsolete and it would seem that it must inevitably vanish altogether even in the remaining conservative areas (e.g., in the east). Furthermore, its disappearance is leading to a distinct divergence between the Lake Plains Nyakyusa and those of the Highlands. How far this divergence will become permanent and basically significant cannot be foreseen as yet in this early stage. Clearly the compact village is best fitted to an arable economy of rice cultivation in the Lake Plains, and at least until there is further agricultural change it will persist as a most important social group.

Nevertheless, with its enhanced exclusiveness and relative social isolation and with renewed rivalry with its neighbours, the Lake Plains village is scarcely conducive to the encouragement of agricultural and economic development. Neither is it anything but harmful towards contemporary efforts in the politico-administrative sphere to reduce parochialism and to foster a sense of unity and co-operation beyond the village and the petty traditional chiefdoms. Whilst supervisory control of the land through the headman is in general excellent, reasonable and readily understandable to the people, yet the excess of restrictiveness, the competitive scrambling for vacated holdings and the jealous fears are surely more than merely unfortunate. There needs to be some modification to loosen the over-tight strings of village corporate ownership, to regularise the transfer of vacated holdings and to lessen the fears of village against village. These points are taken up again in Chapter V.

Cattle and Pastoral Requirements

Unfortunately, no great accuracy can be presumed for the Rungwe District cattle censuses, but the available figures are summarised in Table VI.

TABLE VI
NYAKYUSA CATTLE

	1955				1951	
	No. of cattle	*Acres per beast*	*Cattle per person*	*Cattle per family of 5*	*No. of cattle*	*Acres per beast*
Lake Plains	31,418	4.1	0.5	2.5	26,822	5.2
Central Region ..	19,380	7.1	0.4	2	19,160	7.2
N.E. Highlands ..	19,095	7.4	0.4	2	17,165	8.4
N.W. Highlands ..	22,974	8.0	0.4	2	16,855	10.9
Total: Nyakyusa.. ..	92,867	6.4	0.4	2	80,002	7.2

The indicated increase in the numbers of cattle may well be attributable only to improved census enumeration by the Veterinary Department.

Although 6.4 acres per head of cattle for all Nyakyusa country, and even 4.1 acres in the Lake Plains, might seem to be adequate in a country so

[498 423 [643] do this is however, seriously to strain the facts and values beyond what the average Nyakusa would understand or allow. The chief does not, as we have seen, allocate land either to villages as individual units or to the villagers separately; new, traditional villages obtained their land by allocation from the old headmen, and individual villagers were and are allocated their holdings by their own headman. The chief can act as arbitrator between villagers and villages, but his decisions have been notoriously difficult to enforce. Undoubtedly commoners resent the attempts by their chief to interfere in their own village affairs.

Now it may, of course, be desirable to widen and thus facilitate the [433] scope of land authority, allocatory responsibility and equitable supervision, especially in the interests of a developing cash economy in a situation of a critical shortage of land. But if this significant change in native land law is to be introduced, it should surely be as a result of a proper appreciation of the facts and the existing law, and it must be in conformity with the interests and desires of the people themselves. It ought not to be a gradual sliding into a new situation as a result of other factors – as a by-product of local government development, for example, or as a matter of administrative convenience unsupported by real understanding. To make the chiefs the executive agents of the local government system does not necessarily mean – or it should not – that they should be passively allowed to usurp the land allocation powers of their headmen. Further, in view of modern Territorial policy aimed at bringing the people and their village leaders into the local government system, it seems perhaps unwise that at the same time chiefs should be allowed to assert non-traditional, autocratic land powers which are resented by villagers and headmen, and which may do little to improve the already difficult situation. When the additional powers of the chiefs are used at least partly, if not mainly, for self-aggrandizement or for personal profit, then it is a trend which needs to be strictly curtailed and controlled.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Briefly to summarise the contemporary land situation: in the Lake Plains it may be said that in the main the traditional land tenure system and land law still continue as the basis of native land holding today. The essential feature in recent years has been the acute land shortage in relation to arable needs under the current system of agriculture. Village unity and village exclusiveness have been increased and so also has the authority of the village headman in his control and allocation of land rights. Security of tenure has been strengthened, if anything, and one of the most important methods of obtaining land is now by inheritance. The new law establishing inheritance from father to sons, whilst generally acceptable to the people, is producing a number of civil suits which form the greatest proportion of the more important land cases before the local courts.

The shortage of land is principally the result of increased demands for paddy (i.e. cash crop) cultivation, although the population appears to be increasing slowly. In the high density regions almost all men have considerably less land than they could cultivate, especially under the impetus of the ox-plough, with the developing desires for money income. In the low density region of the low foothills there is still some vacant or partly utilised land, though of very inferior quality for paddy cultivation. The shortage hits the younger men severely, and many of them cannot obtain land at all until the death or senility of their fathers. Fragmentation and dispersion of holdings is rapidly becoming serious and without check.

The first question which arises is whether anything can be done to ease the pressure of population on the country by making more land available, or by making its distribution more equitable.

The thinly populated parts of the northern region of the Lake Plains offer a meagre solution only, for the country is raised above the level of the flood plains and is often broken and hilly. Fertility is low, erosion is a constant danger and the paddy yield (if obtainable at all) is poor. Nyakyusa from the densely populated areas to south and east are therefore most unwilling to move there. In any case the available land, which remains safely and economically open to cultivation, is filling up fairly quickly – mainly by immigration. Certainly I do not think that it can supply sufficient space to meet modern needs. There is, however, no reason why immigrants should make a difficult situation worse, and therefore it is suggested that further immigration from outside the Lake Plains should be carefully controlled if not altogether prevented. Indubitably outsiders (almost entirely Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who hold land without permanent residence should be prohibited and their holdings reallocated to local inhabitants.

As I have already indicated (page 17), I do not think that the problem of men who hold unusually large acreages is particularly serious. Such large holdings are relatively few and will be inevitably split up by inheritance on the deaths of the present occupiers.

In the flood plains proper there is, as far as I am aware, extremely little new land which could be brought under cultivation. Mechanical assistance in the clearance of dense reed thicket[1] and in drainage schemes would produce

1. These areas of thicket are heavily inundated in the wet season but, if cleared, could be used for a dry season crop.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 in similar schools in 1938. Less than 40 per cent of the children
[872] between eight and eleven years old[1] are as yet in school in Rungwe District and the demand for places is enormous. Among the most insistent are girls wanting education. During the
[871] 1930's the Education Department was trying, with little success, to coax girls to stay in school long enough to learn to read and write, but today nearly a third of the primary school pupils are girls. A handful of boys and girls go out of the district to attend
[874] middle or secondary schools, and a few candidates for training as teachers and district nurses come in. Thus an educated person, or one who goes out to work, mixes with people whose backgrounds and languages are quite different from his own.

[511] Then people are richer than they used to be, partly because of
[465] the wages earned abroad, and partly because of the coffee and rice grown and exported. There is also some employment within the district on tea estates (especially important to women and girls), and coal and vermiculite mines. The value of peasant crops
[434] exported has risen from about £24,000 in 1936[2] to nearly £578,000 from coffee and rice alone in 1955,[3] and some men have made as much as £150 from their coffee in a year. A coffee cheque of £30 to £60 is common. In addition to the peasant crops there is tea from estates—well over a million pounds of made tea in 1955 as well as a quantity of seed. This increase in wealth has involved a change in the division of labour. Because men are not at home to clear and hoe, their wives, perforce, must clear fields and hoe for themselves, assisted by their young sons, boys who twenty years ago would not yet have stopped herding.

[161] There has been a rapid increase in population, more especially in the hills, due partly to the development of health services and

[1] Number of children in Mission and Native Authority schools in Rungwe District, 1955:

Boys	Girls	Total	No. of children 8-11 years of age (estimated at 10% of total population)
6,592	2,054	8,646	23,639
Middle Schools			
718	73	791	(This total does not include those who are in middle schools *outside* the District, nor does it include those following a professional course *in* the District)

(Figures provided by the courtesy of the Provincial Education Officer, Mbeya.)
Change in Ngonde is not discussed for it was not possible to visit that area in 1955.

[2] *Good Company*, p. 16.

[3] Calculated from figures kindly supplied by the District Commissioner, Mr. Peter Johnston.

less uncultivated. These areas can easily be picked out today by the absence of village sites and banana groves. There was something of a rush to grab land in such areas and in the less densely populated parts of the chiefdoms. Today in my personal experience – for no general survey has been attempted – there remains little or no unused land within the paddy-growing region which can, by native techniques, be brought under the plough; and indeed men are attempting to grow paddy on unsuitably raised land where inundation is inadequate. Communal cattle pastures have shrunk as arable holdings extended until they remain only where cultivation is profitless.

The demand for land has far outrun the physical supply, and in 1955 it still seemed to be insatiable. The initial cycle was that a desire for more money to permit of a higher standard of living created a demand for more land on which to produce more cash crops; but the increased level of income then further stimulated money demands to raise standards higher again, thus bringing a renewed demand for land. The cycle has now been halted by the lack of further land to meet the people's needs, but the demand remains nevertheless and is indeed increased by rising costs of living.

This economic picture is, of course, oversimplified, but it may serve to illustrate the nature of forces at work in the situation. I would not wish to overemphasise the snowball effect, for the bulk of the population remains still largely content with only a little over earlier standards; but increasing numbers of men and their families are coming to seek something better. Bicycles have become something of a general necessity; a variety of good clothing and shoes is considered quite essential. Only a single decade before the Nyakyusa women still generally went about in the traditional nudity, whereas in 1955 they must have ranked among the very best-dressed African women in the Territory. European-type household goods, crockery and utensils are common. The demand for money, that is for a higher standard of living, has also been greatly stimulated by the experiences of the thousands of labour migrants returning from southern towns and mines, and by the cash and goods they bring back with them.[1]

It is not possible for me to attempt to suggest what a desirable acreage would be for a contemporary Nyakyusa, because money demands, crop yields and selling prices change and the desire for higher standards of living also alter as the potentialities of the new cash economy are increasingly understood. In 1954 the approximate average of Sh.200/- per paddy cultivator was earned from perhaps two or three acres of arable land, but an indeterminable amount of the crop was kept back for home food requirements. As will be shown later many men's paddy fields could have been little more than an acre, and many men, specifically young men, had no paddy land at all. Certainly there were few who held what they considered, at a reasonable estimate, to be sufficient land.

This universal cash crop agriculture and the continuing demand for higher standards of living, and therefore for higher money incomes, is the real cause of the new and rather sudden pressure of population on the land. Of course this economic process operates within a situation of relatively dense population and in a peasant community where land is almost the only form of capital and alternative enterprise is small. The gradual increase of population, although probably small, further aggravates the difficult situation.

Arable Holdings

It was not possible to obtain adequate, satisfactory data to allow the calculation of local population densities, and the detailed results of the 1948

1. In Gulliver, P. H.: 1957, an estimate of the cash incomes of Nyakyusa in 1954 is given at pp. 51-2. Data on the cash brought back by returning labour migrants are given at p. 53.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Census have never been issued.[1] However in some sample villages I very roughly measured arable holdings, and my results provide new information even though they can be illustrative only of the modern situation.

In each of the eight villages chosen[2] the arable holdings of *all* the adult male members (whether at home or away at work at the time) of the whole village, or occasionally of a distinct section of it, were measured by the simple and rough method of pacing the borders of every separate plot and converting the resultant figures into yards and thus to acreages. The actual pacing was done entirely by myself in order to try to maintain an even stride on all occasions, but in each village I was well supported by a team of four or five villagers, always including the headman and his assistants. The figures obtained relate only to arable holdings and bear no determinate relation either to crop yields or to non-arable land in the villages concerned. The results are summarised in Table III below.

TABLE III

ARABLE HOLDINGS IN EIGHT VILLAGES

Village and chiefdom	*No. of land-holders*	*Average holding in acres*	*No. of men holding more than:—* 5 *acres*	10 *acres*	*Average size of plots in acres*
Kapugi Mwamasangula ..	59	3.2	11	1	1
Ikolo Mwakyusa ..	68	3.0	13	0	1.2
Matema Mwakilasa	50	1.9	4	1	0.6
Lugombo Koroso ..	24	1.6	2	0	0.6
Mpunguti Mwakipesile ..	63	1.5	1	0	0.5
Kapugi Koroso ..	60	1.3	1	0	0.4
Lusonjo Mwakilasa	12	1.3	0	0	0.6
Busoka Mwantipulo	36	1.0	0	0	0.4
	372 men		32 men (8.6%)	2 men	

From this Table it can be seen that in the chiefdoms of Koroso and Mwakipesile, *in the villages concerned*, the average holding per man was about one and a half acres – and my impression was that in the southern parts of Lazarus's chiefdom and elsewhere immediately surrounding the lake shore similar conditions existed. It may be noted too that in these cases there were large numbers of young men without holdings at all. On the other hand, in the selected villages in the chiefdoms of Mwamasangula and Mwakyusa, the average holdings were about twice as large – three acres; and fewer young men were landless. Note also the cases of the villages in the chiefdoms of Mwantipulo and Mwakilasa in the more northerly parts of the Lake Plains, where the average holdings were one and 1.3 acres respectively, and where yet there was arable land unused and available. In those parts paddy cultivation is very limited because of the higher and hilly country, and the people remain little more than subsistence farmers – perhaps they may be taken as not unlike the traditional, pre-European subsistence cultivators.

Unfortunately I am unable to relate these figues of arable holdings to the total land available in each village, for this would have required survey work beyond my competence. Non-arable land is utilised for village sites with banana groves, roads and paths, pasturage, etc.; but the position is further complicated by varying amounts of unusable land in my sample villages. To give only two examples: within the boundaries of Mpunguti village, Mwakipesile's chiefdom, there are many acres of land adjacent to the Mbaka river which today are unusable because of deep flooding from

1. Population figures of any kind are not available even for the separate chiefdoms, let alone for ecological areas.

2. Their approximate locations are indicated on the accompanying sketch-map.

311 Whereas in the Highland and Central regions the large numbers of
233 cattle – in relation, that is, to the available pasture resources – are causing over-grazing and soil erosion, particularly in the hilly areas so often nowadays relegated to pasturage, on the other hand in the flood plains there does not appear, at least to the layman, to have been any serious effects on the land.
[241] The natural manuring of the paddy fields in the dry season is advantageous. In the Lake Plains it is the cattle rather than the land which suffer, but so far the Nyakyusa have done virtually nothing to meet the new conditions, other than to complain bitterly and fruitlessly.

The Young Men: Land Shortage and Labour Migration

423 The younger Nyakyusa men find increasing difficulty in obtaining arable land now that there are no longer vacant areas to be taken up, and the older men are no longer prepared to cede their land rights in favour of the younger generation, as they traditionally did. When occasional fields are left vacant, the young men must take their turn with their elders, who themselves are so chronically short of land – and the headmen commonly favour the older villagers with families as against the younger men. This means that in the high-density regions the majority of men under the age of about 30 years have little or no arable land, nor can they hope for it until the deaths of their fathers. In the congested village sites even their banana plots may be smaller than is desirable for the provision of the staple food.

[593] The young man, then, is compelled to remain dependent on his father's
[178] and elder brother's holding; indeed, headmen often justify their refusals to allocate plots to young men on the express grounds that the latter must share their elders' fields. Thus the valued independence of the young Nyakyusa is severely restricted and it seems that tensions and difficulties are beginning
[578] to arise between fathers and sons, and between brothers, because of this. Sons are blamed for not doing their fair share in the family cultivation; fathers are blamed for giving their sons inadequate shares in crops and crop incomes. It will be remembered that one of the fundamental principles underlying Nyakyusa society and its age-village organisation is the spatial segregation of parents and children (*cf.* page 22). Now they are inevitably being put into competition with one another over inadequate fields in a single holding.

The young men are severely restricted, if not altogether cut off, from the
[434] opportunity to cultivate paddy in their own fields and thus to earn their incomes at home, for paddy-growing is the only way of earning a living in the
[343] Lake Plains. Yet it is these younger men whose money demand is greatest; to buy clothing, bicycles and other store-goods, and to buy cattle for marriage payments. They are therefore strongly attracted by the ready opportunities for taking up wage-labour abroad, in the mines of the Rhodesias and South Africa where wages are high (see Gulliver, 1957).

With the best will in the world, when, as in the very high-density region, the average holding is little more than an acre and a half – when, that is, the older men themselves desire larger acreages for their own cultivation needs – it is not possible for a father to allow his son to take large shares in his fields. In some cases a father does give outright to his adult sons strips of his holding, but plots so provided are necessarily small. Quite as frequently a father does not consider it possible to break up his holding in his own life-
[593] time, and sons are expected to assist in the common cultivation and to continue merely to be given a share in the family proceeds at harvest. It is not surprising, therefore, that very large numbers of young men from the Lake
[167] Plains migrate abroad to work. Only about one man in 20 has not been away at all before the age of about 25 years. Much higher proportions of men and larger numbers absolutely are temporarily absent from the Lake

438 north. Before the war, the goldfields gave work
316 to about 15,000 natives, chiefly Wanyakyusa,
[464] and most of the foodstuffs from this district
went there. The goldfields are gradually closing due to difficulties in obtaining spares, and it has been necessary to look for outlets for Tukuyu produce elsewhere. Should the goldfields open again after the war, and large-scale mining start, there is a great future for produce grown in Tukuyu.

434 The main income of the tribe is derived from agricultural, military, mining and public works sources, and it is estimated that in 1941 the average annual income per man, woman and child was about Sh. 10 per year. It has risen considerably since, as over 4,000 men have joined the military and a large part of their salaries comes back to the district in the form of remittances. The agricultural source, from which a larger part of the tribal income
[464] accrues, is from sales of rice, maize and other foodstuffs. A fair number of Wanyakyusa also work on the tea plantations.

241 The picture sketched above will show that the district is inhabited by a tribe whose agriculture is of great interest, since the variety of crops, from wheat in the highlands to paddy and cotton on the lake shore, is perhaps unrivalled in so small an area elsewhere in
181 East Africa. It has not been possible to fill in the picture with details of the people's character, but it is worth mentioning that the Wanyakyusa are a people difficult to administer, argumentative, litigious, self-willed and at times inclined to truculence. Neverthe-
153 less their intelligence is such that they are willing to be persuaded, and, once convinced of the benefit of any change, adopt it with energy. This is instanced by the way they have in a few years accepted the principles of anti-erosion to such an extent that now there is perhaps 90 per cent control in the well-popu-
134 lated areas. It should, however, be stressed that, though the soil is not being eroded to
241 any great extent, it is still being impoverished, since increased cultivation for the war effort has involved breaking a great deal of new land with a consequent lessening of fallow. Over-cropping in the hilly country is very great and, in order to prevent further emigration, it be-
[185] hoves the native planters to learn to put something back into the soil in the form of mulch or compost. If care is not taken, a comparatively prosperous country will one day become like so many parts of Africa, where a losing struggle is fought with Nature to obtain a sufficiency for the people's needs.

on 21st September, 1943)

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

younger half-brother, Mwaisalwa. The dead woman is a wife of Mwalemba (Kanjesi) another half-brother. Kanjesi was an old inhabitant of this village but he moved to Masebe. His wife was on a visit to her 'fathers' at Mwakalobo's place in the hills. She went to a funeral there and fell sick and died there yesterday. The corpse was brought here this morning. It is now 10 a.m. and the grave is half-dug. The owner of the homestead, Mwampiki II (Mwaisalwa), is not here, he is sick at Masoko where he had gone for a case. The husband is not yet here either; they have sent for him to Masebe. The dead woman's elder sister and co-wife is here, and their mother. 764 184

They went to fetch a doctor to perform an autopsy, offering him 20 cents, but came back without him. 'He refused,' they said. 'Well then,' said Kakuju, 'take him a cloth, doctors do not agree to come for just a little.' So they took him a cloth. [763 435]

Kakuju told the women to come out of the house as it was too small to hold them all. The corpse was carried out into the shade of an *unsyunguti* tree. All the women gathered round wailing, about seventy of them, and about twenty men.

No cows have been killed yet as neither the husband nor Mwampiki II are here. No drums are here yet either. The grave was finished about 11 a.m. I asked Kakuju about dancing at death. He agreed that in the old days they had only danced the war-dance. 'That was our old custom. Formerly we fought and killed people—the men of Mwangomo (another chief) who came to the funeral!' Mwambuga (the husband of the dead woman's husband's sister), who had been quite cheerful heretofore, suddenly began weeping and crying. He walked over to the women and joined in the wailing. Some small and naked children started climbing joyfully on the piled-up earth from the grave. [177]

Now it is noon and there are thirty-five to forty men present and ninety to one hundred women. A doctor has agreed to come (to perform the autopsy) but has not yet arrived. Although the corpse was outside male mourners went into the house on their arrival to weep. An older woman got up and led a dirge. I heard her say a number of names, among which 'Mwampiki' was distinguishable. Clapping followed her words. Often she just called the war-cry (*akalulu*). The others wailed and joined in the war-cry. She accompanied her wailing with rhythmic movements of the body and arms. After a time she sat down but continued to lead the wailing.

Mwakalabela (Mbalakatela) arrived with a cow. His daughter is married to young Mwaijumba, the son of Mwampiki. The autopsy followed (for description see *Good Company*, pp. 247–9).

17/3/37

Angombwike told me at breakfast that now Mwampiki himself was dead. He died yesterday at Masoko and was carried here last night.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

593 holding of land and the economics of life in general, the rules and procedure of law, the emotional forms of ceremony, the dogma, rite, morality and symbol of religion, the forms of knowledge and opinion—all are interpenetrated by these relationships.

593 The word *family* is used in this paper to mean the organized group
595 of a man, his wife or wives, and their children of any age, but not to include any other relatives. A Nyakyusa family, as we shall see, does not become extinct when the father dies; his younger full-brother or his senior son steps into his place and the group continues very much as before. In this society families are sometimes monogamous, sometimes polygynous; and, in consequence, two more relationships with which we are not familiar in our own culture are included in the Nyakyusa family; one is the relationship of co-wives and the other is that of half-siblings. Within a ploygynous family the different wives and their respective children form groups to some extent distinct from one another; and the term *individual family* is here used to denote the group of a man, one wife and their children, whether that group is part of a polygynous family or forms a complete monagamous family by itself.

593 The Nyakyusa themselves have no separate word for either of these
595 small groups; the word *ekekɔlɔ* is sometimes used in the restricted
601 sense to which we have here confined the word "family," but more usually means the whole of any single person's recognized blood kindred, living or dead, both in the male and female lines; and it is translated in this paper as *kindred*, *kinsfolk*, or *kinsmen*. They also have a word *ovokamu* which includes the whole of any one person's *ekekɔlɔ* together with all his recognized affines, and this is here translated *relatives*. The term *affines* is used to translate the Nyakyusa word *avakɔ*, which is identical in meaning with it.

[585] Marriage is legally effected by the handing over of four to thirty
[435] cows, together with one or two bulls, by the groom to his wife's father. And this transfer of cattle is the key to the whole Nyakyusa system of
436 blood and affinal relationship. Cattle have a very high value because of their production of milk and meat, which are the most highly prized foods, and because of their scarcity; they are in constant circulation, and by their movement from one man to another they forever create and maintain the bonds of kinship and affinity. Cattle circulate rapidly; few except chiefs have more than six cows in their herds at any one time, more often each man has only two or three, while some have no cows at all; and yet every mature man has paid out, for his own and his sons' marriages, five, ten or twenty times the number of cattle that he at

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

marriages of his kinswomen. When his father dies his father's wives 622
and cows pass to his father's full-brother, but they come to him and his 595
brother eventually when this man dies. While, if the young chiefs have "come out" it is common for their father's brother to hand over some, or even the bulk of the cattle, to them before his own death. And in his own half of the family, among his siblings and half-siblings on that side, a chief has far greater rights both of inheritance and of receiving marriage-cattle, than those possessed by the senior son of a commoner. So much is clear from my evidence, but it is not yet sufficiently detailed for an exact statement of rules.

Before 1893 fighting between chiefdoms was common and, except 631
between brother chiefs, the usual aim of fighting was, not conquest, but 721
cows; wars were generally just cattle raids. And a substantial proportion of the cows captured in a successful raid went to increase the herds of the chief. This lost source of income is now supplied by Government [435
salaries, which vary from 5/- to £15 a month.[19] The price of a cow is £2; 465]
but many shillings are spent on clothes, bicycles and beer, as well as on cows.

A chief, like any other rich man, maintains his prestige by hospitality, 622
he constantly entertains his more notable subjects with beer, at the 527
ceremonies of his family all his people gather in their age-villages and he kills cattle for them to eat. Chiefs seldom nowadays kill cattle except on ceremonial occasions, but in the old days of warfare they used also, I am told, to entertain their subjects with meat from time to time, in order to keep up their spirits for fighting. History is full of stories of Nyakyusa chiefs who attracted many men to their countries, and so gained great military strength, by the generosity and abundance of their feasts.

Every time a man or woman dies, a message must be sent to the 622
chief, and at the burial he is given the whole breast and ribs (*akakwa*) of 764
one of the cows which are killed by the family of the dead person at that time. He has the right to take food or milk from any of his subjects if he has need of it; but he cannot take any man's beast without later returning another to him.

Apart from the now abandoned pursuit of cattle raiding the only 631
profitable enterprizes in which the members of a whole chiefdom jointly 476
participate are those of hunting and fishing; in some chiefdoms, but not

[19] Salaries above £1 a month are only paid to senior chiefs. No minor chief gets a Government salary, nor do great-commoners. The local value of money is shown (a) by the tax (8/- p.a.), (b) by the wages of unskilled labour (6/- to 8/- p.m.)

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

present possesses. A young man is given cows by his father and sends them to his father-in-law; his father's income in cattle is derived partly from the increase of his own stock, but chiefly from the marriages of his own and his brothers' sisters and daughters, for it is the custom for full-brothers and half-brothers to give one another cows as their daughters and sisters get married; the young man's father-in-law gives the cows which he receives some to his brothers, some to his sons, and some he keeps himself. And thus, continually, the cattle are driven down the paths of human relationship. 436

The passage of cattle makes the children of a marriage legitimate and members of their father's family; the sons can inherit from their father, and the daughters, when they marry in their turn, bring cattle to him. But if a woman bears a child to a man who has given no cows for her, the child is illegitimate, has no right of inheritance anywhere, and belongs either to her husband or father, not to its own biological sire. 585 848

Getting married is not a single event; the marriage-cattle are seldom handed over all at once, but in ones, twos, or threes over a period of years; and a girl very commonly goes to visit and sleep with her betrothed husband, from time to time, for several years before she finally sets up house with him and begins to bear his children. There are three ways of getting married: (1) by negotiation with the girl's father (2) by running off with an unmarried girl (3) by running off with a married woman. The first is the ideal, socially approved, method and is not uncommonly followed. The negotiations often begin while the girl is still an infant, sometimes even before she is born; the man sends one or two cows to her father to bespeak her (*okosingela*). These cows are counted as part of the marriage-cattle (*ezygwela*) and the girl is henceforth called his "wife," but she lives at home with her parents. Sometimes a boy is betrothed by his father while he himself is still young, but always, I think, to a girl several years his junior. Such betrothals are determined by the friendship of the two families. A girl who is bespoken in infancy does not, ideally, go to live altogether with her husband till after she has reached puberty and passed through the elaborate initiation which then takes place. But there is an intermediate period when, from the age of ten or earlier, she is allowed to visit and sleep with her husband from time to time. The man sends a bull or a hen to her father to ask for his wife (*okosombolela*), and the old man agrees to let her go on occasional visits. But she is seldom allowed to go until at least three cows, in all, have been received for her. She is not supposed to be deflowered before puberty and she and her husband always, at first, practise limited intercourse without penetration. Not infrequently, however, full intercourse 583 584 836

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

that he has killed, they are astonished and say: 'He should have called us. Does he perform ritual alone?' 761 578

QUESTION: But why were those beneath angry in the first place? They are not angry without cause.

LUKUSYILA: Indeed, they are never angry without cause. There is always some wrong. But we do not know what it is in this case. If you do not kill cattle for your father's burial they are always angry. But we do not know what wrong Katasya committed to make them angry.

Later Mwanifu came in. He told me that Katasya is still alive, but perhaps he will die this evening. We do not speak with him. He is just breathing. We only ask his wives: 'Does he sleep?' The case is thus: the millet failed in his field and he said: 'I shall pray to my shades and it will grow again.' Then he went to a certain man to get his big bull and gave him a cow in calf, saying: 'Take this and give me your bull,' and later they will give him a little calf worth 30s. The bull was very big. He killed it. Before he did so he was already slightly ill, but when he had killed it the illness became very much worse. We say they have bewitched him because he stinted his fellows in the village. But they themselves deny it, saying: 'But we always kill and eat ourselves alone. I, Mwainyopolela, killed my animal and ate it alone. Have I died therefore? According to the custom, if I have killed my beast as a sacrifice (*jakwiputela*) then I give my fellows one leg.' 754 782 [437] 782

QUESTION: Did Katasya not do so?

MWANIFU: No, Katasya did not give them any. He ate alone. Some wise men give the chief the breast because the chief is the owner of the country. Katasya did not give him that. Yes, if someone dies then the chief is usually given the breast. But when a beast is killed for sacrifice, no one having died, then many eat by themselves. The mourner gives to the chief.

QUESTION: Did he inquire of a diviner or not?

MWANIFU: We do not know. Some inquire of a diviner. Some think for themselves that the fathers are shaking them. Concerning his death, we are only speculating, saying: 'Perhaps they have bewitched him. They were angry on account of the meat.' But perhaps it is sorcery. See, he was sweating very much on his face. Let him die. We will look in his belly. Perhaps he has been speared. They have bewitched him. Perhaps it is sorcery. We only speculate. 787 754 761

In the morning Mwaipopo (the chief) was very, very angry. He said: 'Why have you gathered together, you people? Go off home. Do you want to finish off a dying man? It is taboo to gather together. First let a man die, then come to lament the death.' 763

QUESTION: Is it a Nyakyusa custom to be angry if people gather together at a sick man's house? Is it as if they bewitch him?

MWANIFU: Yes.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

given a slave or cow in return. Those who performed hoeing service, *milasa*, were entertained with food and beer.

The ivory trade, although it bound the local rulers to the capital, involved no tribal organization of elephant hunts, and scarcely touched the common people, who never obtained the imported cloths exchanged for ivory, but continued to dress in bark-cloth or in their coarse home-woven cloth. Between each chief and his people economic links were determined on the one hand by his power of requisitioning food, and his greater wealth derived from the higher bride-price given for his daughters, and on the other by his people's expectation of entertainment from him in return for their food. Economic links between local chiefdoms were tenuous. Subsistence agriculture was practised by each family with the help of village neighbours and a few friends and kin; marriage with its economic exchanges was usually within the chiefdom. Of the few specialized craftsmen, representatives of each were usually found in each local group.[1]

Under modern economic conditions, Ngonde country is the only part of north Nyasaland which cannot be called the 'Dead North', and does not suffer from excessive migration. The soil is fertile and at present there is no land shortage, though there is likelihood of one developing in the near future. Food is cultivated for export to the Lupa goldfields in Tanganyika, which is the natural market for Ngonde produce. Rice, cattle, and hides are also exported there. Parts of the lake littoral are suitable for cotton cultivation, which was revived in 1934. Ninety tons were sold in 1936. Out of the total effective male population of 12,000, 3,000 grow 'economic crops', and 7,000 grow cash crops only.[2] There are two European coffee estates in the Misuku hills, but they are handicapped by the long dry season.[3] Money is also derived from the fishing industry. An attempt to develop a ghee industry from native butter for sale to Indians in Nyasaland collapsed owing to the apathy of the Ngonde, their neglect of quality, and their insistence on too high a price for their inferior product. The main cash income of the district is derived from emigration to the Lupa goldfields, so that 90 per cent. of the money in circulation in the district is East African currency, which is accepted by the Nyasaland local government, surplus balances being remitted to the District Officer at Tukuyu, Tanganyika.[4]

Periodic Migrations

Long-distance labour migration is not a serious problem among the Ngonde, as they are able to earn their main cash income by working in the nearby Lupa goldfields, or by supplying that market with agricultural produce. In north Nyasa district (Ngonde), of 12,052 adult males fit to work for wages, only 11·6 per cent. are labour emigrants, and of these in 1937 only 100 were counted as 'lost ones' (i.e. not heard of since 1930).[5] In Abercorn and Kasama districts, Northern Rhodesia, where the Nyamwanga and Iwa live, 50 per cent. of the able-bodied male adult population is absent.[6]

A local migration of Nyakyusa does constitute a problem for the Tanganyika administration. Up to 1935 some 2,000 families had migrated from Rungwe district to tribal lands in the neighbouring chiefdoms of Mbeya district. By 1941 the figure had increased to 3,000. The immigrants now total 17 per cent. of the whole population

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 39–50.
[2] Murray, 1932, p. 206.
[3] *Bell Report*, 1938, Appendix A.
[4] *Bell Report*, 1938, pp. 100–3.
[5] Smith, 1937, p. 21.
[6] Orde Browne, 1, 1938, maps.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

vary in different circumstances. Millet and rice, the two most valuable crops, belong to the man and are stored by him ; so that the division of a millet or rice garden into plots and their assignment to different wives is rather a division of labour than of property. But of all other crops the woman on whose plots they have grown is an effective owner. She stores them herself in her own house and no other wife of her husband can touch them ; it is only with him that her rights are in any way shared. 241 592 421

The main use of the crops which the Nyakyusa grow is to provide food for each separate household group. Next in importance is the provision of food and beer for hospitality, and for the making of gifts both in everyday life and on special ceremonial occasions. And, finally, there is the barter or sale of surplus crops to obtain salt, pots, clothes, cattle and to pay tax. Each married woman, therefore, first uses her own crops to feed her husband, her own children and herself. If she is the only wife then she cooks for her husband every day, but, even if she is one of many, she is yet careful to cook for him frequently, in order to keep his affection and the various advantages which go with it. 592 593 574 [437]

When cooking for her husband she must, when necessary, prepare sufficient for guests, for a man very often has friends and neighbours eating with him ; and if he wishes to make a gift of cooked food, she cooks it for him from her own store. To provide meals for him and his guests and cooked food for gifts is an obligation which she normally fulfils quite willingly, as we have hinted above ; she may be fond of him ; it is in any case to her interest to play her part in the co-operative relationship which binds them together and from which both alike benefit. He hoes for her and builds her house, he gives her a share of the household milk, which he himself controls, he sleeps with and is gentle to her ; he has, without the aid of any legal, moral or conventional sanctions, a great hold over her, as she, on her side, has over him. But, if either fails to play their part in willing co-operation, then there are, for both alike, these other sanctions to fall back upon. A quarrel develops between them and leads to violence, perhaps he strikes her, perhaps she viciously repels him, one night, from her bed ; and then the immediately injured party appeals to the neighbours for support. They discuss the matter, censure one or the other, and try to make it up between them ; if they fail to do so the case may go to Court and one will then have to pay compensation to the other. Or it may happen, without any violent quarrel, without any formal appeal to the neighbours, that one of them becomes aware that his conduct is provoking their mockery and criticism ; and then in shame he mends his ways. Or, finally, one of them may fall sick and suspect that wrong-doing on his part has been followed by spiritual retribution in the form of witchcraft. 593 [574] [627] [626] [754]

A woman, then, uses her stores of food to cook not only for herself

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

f. Housekeeping

356 Every married woman has her own hearth and granary, and
476 she works very largely alone when cooking and cleaning; but in
313 one essential activity women who are neighbours in a village regularly co-operate, and that is in fetching firewood. We never saw a woman going alone; usually there is a group of three or four up to a dozen or more. Firewood must be fetched two or three times a week, and the journey and the collection of the wood takes from four to ten hours, depending upon the distance of the village from a patch of forest or bush. Thus the women spend up to thirty hours a week fetching wood, and it is with village neighbours that this time is spent, not with relatives from other villages. If a woman is ill her friends will help in bringing wood and cooked food for her. Some co-wives co-operate in this way, fetching wood together, and helping each other in sickness, but whether they do or not depends upon personal friendship. Often it is with an unrelated neighbour, rather than with a co-wife, that a woman works most closely. Only when co-wives are sisters, or aunt and niece, are they expected to work together regularly.

476 Village neighbours—women—also co-operate in the preparation of feasts, as we shall see in the following chapter.

g. Economic co-operation beyond the village

476 The economic relations of fellow villagers, and the changes taking place in these relations, cannot be understood without
602 some reference to economic co-operation beyond the village boundaries. As we have already indicated, co-operation with relatives living in other villages is very important: cattle, the most prized possession of the Nyakyusa, circulate within kinship groups, between father and son, brother and brother, and between affines, and these same relatives assist one another in cultivation and building. But beyond the circle of kinsmen and village-mates there was formerly little economic co-operation.
•[438] Each village and kinship group was largely self-sufficient, buying from outside little save iron spears and hoes, medicines, salt, cosmetics, and brass or copper wire for ornament.

326 Smiths were essential to the Nyakyusa economy for they

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

286 and the river banks. Large nets, with wide or fine mesh, are made with floats and sinkers attached, pulled at both ends by means of ropes. *Ilitimbilo* is [226] a net used only at night, when the water is beaten with flat sticks to drive the fish into it. There are also small hand nets, and special nets made for catching special kinds of fish.

Weaving is a very ancient craft, and may have begun with the weaving of mats, which are at present made from banana fibre, grass, reeds, palm leaf, and the tough outer skin of palms. These mats are used for sleeping on, laying out grain to dry in the sun, straining pounded maize, and a dozen other uses. Long grass or palm leaf mats are used by Europeans [438] as carpets; and there is a good trade in palm leaf bags for carrying rice, and great mats for packing cotton for the European market.

Very good cloth is still woven in the Igale district by the Safwa. The art was formerly universal among the Konde, but has now died out before inferior trade goods. At Igale the cloth is either plain white, or mixed black and white, though dyes for other colours are known. These cloths make excellent bath towels, and a trade could be developed if encouragement were given. Bark-cloth is very extensively made, 287 and there has been a recent revival of this industry consequent on the exorbitant price of European goods since the war. Women wear the long *ilyabi* or loin cloth of bark, and nothing else; but, especially in the Igale district, complete suits are now made for men, wonderfully cut and sewn shorts and jackets, and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

inheritance ensure that a limited number of young men are absorbed into the senior generation and live with the older men, sharing their activities and from time to time holding office as headmen or priests of that generation, and the selection in each generation of young men who are *not* the sons of village headmen, or chiefs, or headmen of the past generation, ensures that commoners without office are constantly recruited to the hierarchy of rulers. In short, power is distributed.

(*e*) RITUAL AND SECULAR BONDS

As in so many societies, economic and ritual links extended, traditionally, further than political links.[1] Selya was dependent upon BuKinga for iron and the Kinga came to fruitful Selya to pray for fertility. The priests who came to pray brought the hoes. The many independent chiefdoms of Selya and the Mbaka valley acknowledged the spiritual overlordship of the Lwembe by sending sacrifices to him, and it was through the network of hereditary priests like Kasitile, Mwamakunda, Mwalukuta, and Nyama of Selya, and the Kinga priests Kikungubeja, Nsyanigwa, Kyamba Kitali, and Silobwike that wider bonds were maintained. Mwaipopo (116) when he was granted a Court which gave him the secular leadership of Selya, failed to make any acknowledgement of Lwembe's traditional power, and it was Kasitile who later urged him to do so. The western chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa still buy medicines and bark-cloth from the Ndali to the west, and have done so for many generations, but no common ritual links them as it does Selya and the plain with BuKinga. The trade was of lesser importance than that to the east, for it does not seem to have included iron, though the Nyiha who share a common culture with the Lambya, the western neighbours of the Nyakyusa, are known to have been skilled smiths.[2] With the Sangu to the

[1] cf. E. Colson, 'The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia' in *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa* (ed. Colson and Gluckman).

A comparison with the frontier in West and South Africa where economic and religious expansion compelled the establishment of Government is instructive. Cf. W. K. Hancock, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs*, vol. ii, part ii, pp. 162-8.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between the Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, vi (1890), p. 289. Elton's suggestion that some of the Nyakyusa iron came from the west is discounted by Cotterill. J. F. Elton, *The Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa* (1879), p. 371 and map, cf. J. Thompson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back*, vol. i, p. 272.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

a missionary, was warned by her servants before Godfrey Wilson's 789
arrival in her neighbourhood 'not to go out at night as there were 751
abanyambuta about, sent by the Government to kill people and take 754
their blood', and women going for firewood made a long detour 186
to avoid his camp. One was overheard asking when she caught sight of him: 'Is that the man who kills people?' Angombwike explained that, since all really strong Nyakyusa medicines contained human blood, it was argued that European medicines, which were so powerful, must contain it also. 'They follow their own customs.'

It seems obvious to the Nyakyusa that Europeans must have strong medicines because their confidence and success are so great. Moreover, it is held (in theory) that they are immune to attacks from witchcraft. X, who had been a clerk and lost his *job, and was bitter, expanded on this:*

People say that Europeans have *inyifwila* (*vide* p. 38), see they are brave, they do not fear, if someone seizes a spear they do not fear, they just come to him, they are very brave. And also the witches say that they are unable to choke Europeans. When we hear people boasting of their mystical power (*amanga*) we always say to them: 'But if that is so, go and choke a European, show us!' Then they always say, 'Oh no, we can't do that, when we go to a European house at night we find it all lighted up and flaming, we can't get near them.' I think [778] this is the power of the Holy Spirit which you Europeans have.

He came of a well-known family of doctors and perhaps spoke from first-hand knowledge. He just laughed at the suggestion that the light might come from lamps. But the fact that Europeans were held to be immune did not prevent our servants and friends [753] attributing our recurring attacks of malaria to witchcraft.

(c) DOCTORS

Among the Nyakyusa, as perhaps in every society, the doctors 791
with the greatest reputation are those at a distance, and a high proportion of the practitioners in the country are of foreign lineages, their fathers, or grandfathers, or great-grandfathers having come in, bringing medicines with them, and begun to practice. In fact, we were assured that there were *no* Nyakyusa doctors who were famous, they were all Sangu, or Kinga, or Kisi, [439] or from Ngonde or Misuku in Nyasaland, but detailed investigation proved this to be false. The trade in medicines from a dist- [278] ance is a very old one and continues today. As we have seen, [438]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

791 *inyifwila* comes from west of Ngonde, or east of the Kinga; *mwafi* [439] came from 'Nyasaland'; medicine for fertility of the fields from [278] Misuku which is rich in food; war medicine from the Sangu and Kinga. Whether neighbouring people get medicines from Bu- [438] Nyakyusa we do not know—no one ever suggested it, but it is likely that they do.

Since foreign doctors and medicines have the highest reputation [177] new treatments are welcomed. This is where the practice of medicines differs radically from the rituals directed to the shades in which the charter is tradition, and any deviation must be justified. But the willingness to accept something new did not lead to any systematic experiment, or any regard for experiment as such.

791 Anyone who chooses, and can pay the fees, can become a 278 doctor by apprenticing himself to a practitioner of repute, but it is very noticeable that the majority of well-known doctors come from families of doctors, the medicines being passed down from one generation to the next and sometimes taught to wives as well. Lyandileko, who has often been quoted, was taught certain medicines by her husband, and had a large practice. The diviners we knew were all men, but many women know a number of medicines. Once in practice, a doctor may add to his knowledge by buying a medicine from a fellow practitioner or exchanging medicines with him. One doctor we knew had paid two bulls for the secret of his protective medicine (*umkota gwa ipingo*). The teaching includes what plants or other ingredients to collect and how to 'cook' them, i.e. what to mix together and what quantities to use. As elsewhere in Africa, it is the material substance, usually vegetable, which is held to be important in any treatment. The spell—the words addressed to the medicine—is of little significance except that when vengeance magic is prepared the man on whose behalf it is done may say the name of his enemy (if he knows his identity) and state his own innocence in a phrase like the following: 'Return this medicine, thou Kyala, I have done no wrong whatsoever to cause me to be killed; if he says he will kill me let him die.'

The doctor (*isanga*) who 'knows medicines' is distinguished 791 from the priest or officiant (*usyago*) who knows how to conduct a 793 ritual directed to the shades or heroes. The *usyago* uses medicines in celebrating rituals, and he or she may be able to collect and prepare plants himself, but he sometimes has to apply to a doctor

245 Bananas and plantains are grown all over the district except in the highlands to the north and west. Numerous local varieties abound, with a red plantain and the *Sukari* variety of [262 banana as recent introductions, and are used 273] exclusively for food, no beer being made. They are mostly dried and pounded with pestle and [251] mortar to be used as flour, although they are also eaten whole after roasting.

244 Sweet potatoes are extensively grown. They are planted on contoured ridges from 3-4 feet high. Planting distances vary from 6 inches to 1 foot in either direction. They are planted in March to May and north of Tukuyu take eight months to mature, but south of that place four [252] months is sufficient. Sweet potatoes are eaten boiled or roasted.

243 Finger millet is used more for beer-making than for food. It is always sown broadcast in [262 November to January and harvested in March 273] to May. The land is first hand-hoed and all grass put into heaps and burnt when dry. In the highlands to the west the trees are lopped and branches piled in heaps to be burnt. Contoured ridges are put in at intervals depending on the slope of the land. The harvesting is carried out just before the grain is ripe by cutting off the heads and stacking in the field while ripening proceeds. The heads are then collected into large baskets and steeped in water for a day, after which they are taken out and rubbed with the hands to separate the [251] grain from the chaff. The millet is then dried and stored in earthenware pots or mud-covered baskets until required. It is reported that it can be stored for five or six years by this method, but I have not verified this personally.

244 Beans are nearly always interplanted with 262 maize or sown in banana plantations and the local seed is of mixed varieties. They are 262 eaten boiled as a relish with other food such as maize. The leaves are also eaten dried or fresh.

245 Groundnuts are grown in the medium and 251 lower altitudes. Planted in November to February and harvested in April to July, they are dried in the shell and eaten raw.

243 Rice is grown on the lake shore and also in the neighbouring foothills. It is sown broadcast in November to February and harvested in May to August. Yields are not high in the foothills, being about 6-7 bags of paddy to the acre. Many local varieties are grown, such [252 as Musafiri, Mwangulu, and Marula. The hill 432] rice is eaten boiled, but most is sold hand-hulled in the markets for purely local consumption.

241 Other foodstuffs grown are coca-yams, cow peas, pigeon peas, Bambarra groundnuts, ginger, cardamon, groundnuts, wheat, pumpkins, peppers, citrus, sugar cane and European vegetables, including a quantity of European potatoes. [177]

Economic Crops

245 One of the main cash crops is coffee, which was introduced about 1900 by the Berlin Lutheran Mission, but it was not grown by natives until 1930 when an attempt was made to organize an industry. It had already been tried from 1924 onwards by Europeans but had gradually died out, giving place to tea. 177

245 Native coffee has not been truly successful and many reasons are suspected for this. In effect, the coffee suffers from many pests and diseases and yields are so low as to be almost uneconomical even to a tribe of very low individual annual income. It has become obvious that coffee can only be grown by natives if shaded by bananas and mulched heavily with banana trash. Multiple-stem pruning is gaining favour.

Seedlings are planted out in December and the first crop is obtained four years after. The area planted rose in 1939 to 5,864 acres and the number of native planters to 7,966. Yields, however, are low, varying from 131.4 kg. to 20.4 kg. parchment to the acre. Hemeleia leaf disease and yellow and white borer are prevalent all over the coffee-growing area. Over the period since 1932 the price paid to natives has averaged 44 cents a kg. for parchment. [136]

[438] All coffee is collected and sold by Native Authority after rough grading and, in order to encourage better preparation, much lower payments are made for the inferior grades. A native staff is employed to visit coffee plots and to give instructions, and it is noticeable that the quality of preparation varies with the price. [432]

175 The cultivation of rice on the lake shore was started by Chief Koroso in 1896 with seed obtained from Arab traders in Nyasaland and the Moravian Mission issued further seed in 1898. Being an innovation, rice was not popular and little was grown except for small local sales. In 1917 the Government issued seed and tax was paid in rice instead of money. Interest was hereby aroused and the cultivation of rice was started. In 1932 several other kinds of seed were issued and now sixteen varieties are found. "Faya", which was issued in 1929, gives the best yields and is the variety chiefly grown, other varieties being Bungala, Marula 243 243 [65]

N 233 cattle in the district in the 1941 census was about 2.3 head per taxpayer or 55 head per square mile. Certain land is set aside each N [184 year for grazing, where stock is not able to 635] interfere with the produce plots. Compensation for trespass of cattle on cultivated land is only paid among people of the lake shore.

N 656 Parts of the land to the west of Tukuyu have been badly eroded by cultivation and 134 over-grazing, and it is only since 1935 that 185 anti-erosion rules have been made to check the tendency for bad cultivation. Since they 242 were brought in, however, the majority of the tribe have become very keen on seeing the effect that well-controlled cultivation has on crops. The following are the Native Authority Rules concerning anti-erosion:—

"Throughout the Rungwa District, all natives shall follow orders regarding cultivation designed to prevent soil erosion as demonstrated and enjoined by the Agricultural Officer.

(*a*) All ridges and terraces shall be contoured and not follow the slope of the hill.

(*b*) In the case of cultivation done on the flat and not on ridges or terraces, a large ridge and ditch shall be dug at the top of the plot to remain permanently and be repaired from time to time."

N 439 The Wanyakyusa have never been dependant on outside sources for any of their food. N [135] but in their own territory there is no iron for making hoes nor clay for making earthenware pots. The former they were accustomed to get from Ukinga, on the eastern boundary of the district in the Livingstone mountains, and the pots were, and are still, made only by about 500 members of the Wakisi tribe living in a K village on the lake shore at the extreme south-439 western point of the district. The Wakisi are 101 really of Ukinga origin and inhabit the eastern, northern and western shores of Lake Nyasa. They grow no food except cassava, and that only recently, and apart from the one village that makes the pots, their only work is as paddlers of canoes and fishermen. Most of their fish and pots are exchanged for food.

N 443 Since the Tukuyu District is so thickly populated and the inhabitants concentrated, it has been found necessary to create produce markets at comparatively short distances. Transport from these markets, during war-N time, has become difficult. The natural outlet ●438 for Tukuyu native foodstuffs is the Lupa 316 Goldfields, which lie about 100 miles to the

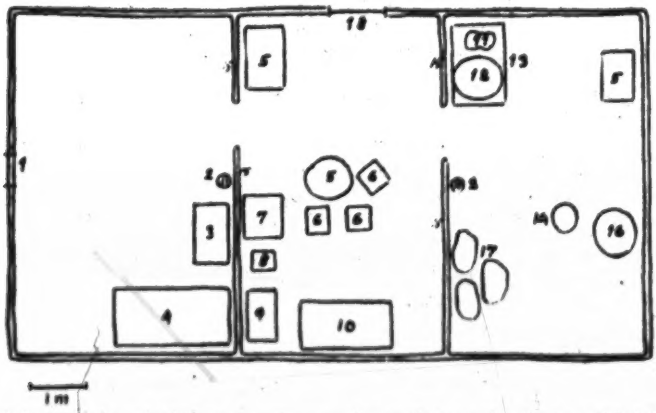
438 north. Before the war, the goldfields gave work
316 to about 15,000 natives, chiefly Wanyakyusa,
[464] and most of the foodstuffs from this district went there. The goldfields are gradually closing due to difficulties in obtaining spares, and it has been necessary to look for outlets for Tukuyu produce elsewhere. Should the goldfields open again after the war, and large-scale mining start, there is a great future for produce grown in Tukuyu.

434 The main income of the tribe is derived from agricultural, military, mining and public works sources, and it is estimated that in 1941 the average annual income per man, woman and child was about Sh. 10 per year. It has risen considerably since, as over 4,000 men have joined the military and a large part of their salaries comes back to the district in the form of remittances. The agricultural source, from which a larger part of the tribal income
[464] accrues, is from sales of rice, maize and other foodstuffs. A fair number of Wanyakyusa also work on the tea plantations.

241 The picture sketched above will show that the district is inhabited by a tribe whose agriculture is of great interest, since the variety of crops, from wheat in the highlands to paddy and cotton on the lake shore, is perhaps unrivalled in so small an area elsewhere in
181 East Africa. It has not been possible to fill in the picture with details of the people's character, but it is worth mentioning that the Wanyakyusa are a people difficult to administer, argumentative, litigious, self-willed
153 and at times inclined to truculence. Nevertheless their intelligence is such that they are willing to be persuaded, and, once convinced of the benefit of any change, adopt it with energy. This is instanced by the way they have in a few years accepted the principles of anti-erosion to such an extent that now there is perhaps 90 per cent control in the well-populated areas. It should, however, be stressed
134 that, though the soil is not being eroded to
241 any great extent, it is still being impoverished, since increased cultivation for the war effort has involved breaking a great deal of new land with a consequent lessening of fallow. Overcropping in the hilly country is very great and, in order to prevent further emigration, it be-
[185] hoves the native planters to learn to put something back into the soil in the form of mulch or compost. If care is not taken, a comparatively prosperous country will one day become like so many parts of Africa, where a losing struggle is fought with Nature to obtain a sufficiency for the people's needs.

on 21st September, 1943)

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa



Baba's house. 1, barred window; 2, posts supporting roof; 3, wooden chest; 4, Baba's bed; 5, table; 6, chair; 7, cupboard; 8, chair with three suitcases; 9, suitcase; 10, table with bookshelf; 11, bag; 12, large basket, *ikitoba*; 13, low stand for 11 and 12; 14, millet jars; 15, low partitions; 16, *ikimbo* in which the millet is washed; 17, rice in bags.

cupboard. This seemed very strange and a bit disorderly. On a chair were three suitcases on top of each other.

It was interesting to see, in the store-room, the very crops that belong to the man, viz. rice and millet, the most valuable produce. The rice was in bags, and it is quite probable that this man had bought it from the districts near Lake Nyasa, where it thrives well. On higher ground, rice cannot be cultivated.

The millet was contained in a basket, 1 m in height, 55 cm broad at the bottom, and narrower, 35 cm, at the top.

Further, there was a large, beautiful earthenware jar, which he had bought. This was intended for the millet. And there was also a cylindrical container for the washing of the millet when it was brought home from the field. This vessel was 55 cm in height and 85 cm across.

All three houses had a small window with bars or shutters.

The inside of the houses lay in semi-darkness, as the only light is admitted through the doorway, and in some cases through the diminutive barred window. Nevertheless, the interiors give a nice impression, because of their tidiness, height, size, and cleanness. And how cosy they are, when seen at night; the door is closed, you gather round the fire and delight in perfectly cooked rice, which is the favourite dish at this principal meal of the day.

Johnston says (1897, page 453) that the greater number of the houses are circular in their plan and very much like bee-hives in shape; their walls are wickerwork filled with mud cobs, and they have thatched roofs. He also reports

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

by the Arabs and Bemba, built their huts within a stockade.[1] 131
According to Thomson, the Nyakyusa were unaware even of the 171
existence of Lake Tanganyika in 1879 and their more distant eastern neighbours, the Pangwa, Bena, and Hehe had no communication with them.[2]

Unlike the Nyakyusa, the people of Ngonde were trading with 439
the coast long before the arrival of the Europeans, a fact which 177
had a profound effect on their political institutions;[3] but even they did not suffer from the attacks of slavers until *after* Euro- 721
peans were established in Karonga.

From the point of view of the Nyakyusa-Ngonde people the 721
Europeans came just in time. It was the establishment of British control in Nyasaland which prevented the complete destruction of the people of Ngonde by the slavers, and it is likely that the Nyakyusa also were saved by European intervention, for the raids of Arab slavers and their Sangu allies were becoming serious in Kukwe country in 1889[4] before the German annexation.

The first Europeans known to have sighted Nyakyusa country 177
were a party from the Livingstonia mission (then established at the south of Lake Nyasa) who circumnavigated the Lake in the mission steamer, the *Ilala*, in 1875. They anchored off the north shore but did not land.[5] Two years later, the same steamer sailed by two famous missionaries, Dr. Stewart (of Lovedale) and Dr. Laws (of Livingstonia), landed Frederick Elton, H.B.M. Consul at Mozambique, and a party near the Mbaka mouth.[6] Elton and his party travelled through Selya and Kukwe country to the fort of the Sangu chief, Merere, and thence started for the coast. Elton died on the road, but some of the others got through.[7] In 1879 Joseph Thomson (aged 20), alone with his carriers, travelled through Hehe and Bena country, crossed the Livingstone moun-

[1] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), pp. 286–7; Fotheringham, op. cit., pp. 13–5; 269.

[2] Thomson, op. cit., pp. 248, 276.

[3] Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., *passim*.

[4] Fotheringham, op. cit., pp. 238–41, 288. The Sangu had previously been occupied in a prolonged war with the Hehe. cf. Elton, op. cit., p. 374; Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 229–34.

[5] E. D. Young, 'On a recent Sojourn at Lake Nyassa', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XXI (1877), pp. 230–1.

[6] J. Stewart, 'The Second Circumnavigation of Lake Nyassa', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, 1879, pp. 289–304.

[7] Elton, op. cit., pp. 318–44; Cotterill, op. cit.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631 recognized over 100 chiefdoms, mustering anything from 100 to 3,000 adult men apiece.

Although no centralized political authority existed before the 769 German occupation, certain groups of chiefdoms joined in com-
631 mon rituals directed to common ancestors. We traced four such centres of worship among the Nyakyusa; the most important being Lubaga, in the middle of the valley, where Kinga priests (from the top of the Livingstone mountains) join with many Nyakyusa chiefdoms in sacrifice to Lwembe, who is claimed as the ancestor both of the chiefs of the Nyakyusa proper, and of the Kinga. At LiKyala, on the Lake-shore plain, Kinga also join in sacrifice with the surrounding Nyakyusa chiefdoms. In Ngonde the chief connected with a similar centre of worship, Mbande, developed far-reaching secular as well as religious powers; and by the time the Europeans arrived he was established as a paramount chief with the title of the Kyungu. This development was [439] directly connected with the fact that Ngonde traded with the outside world, and that their Kyungu, through his control of ivory, was able also to control the guns and cloth which came into the country:[1] the Nyakyusa, remaining isolated, remained politically disunited.

Besides sacrificing to a distant ancestor in company with the representatives of a large group of chiefdoms, two or more chiefs who are neighbours participate in a sacrifice at the grove in which their common father, or grandfather, is buried. Thus common worship links both large groups of chiefdoms, whose chiefs are more or less distantly related, and small groups of contiguous chiefdoms whose chiefs are close kinsmen. The sacrifices made are to the chiefs of immediately preceding generations, and to certain great heroes of the distant past, such as Lwembe and Kyala.

All these sacrifices are believed to bring rain and fertility, for 769 the well-being of each chiefdom is thought to be bound up with 789 the health of the chief and the goodwill of his ancestors.

The Nyakyusa are all agreed that their chiefs, *abanyafyale*, are 173 'strangers' who came down from the Livingstone mountains 622 eight or ten generations ago, and found the valley already occu-
563 pied by people who had no knowledge of fire, but ate their food raw. The chiefs brought fire with them—some say, cattle also;

[1] Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., pp. 9, 39–48.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

562 ship among the women themselves is, moreover, less developed than in many other African societies.

178 The isolation and self-sufficiency of the Nyakyusa are diminishing rapidly, for considerable economic and political develop-
439 ment followed the 1914–18 war. Coffee (first introduced by the German missionaries) has been developed as a native crop for
444 export, and the cultivation of rice (which had been fostered by the British to provide food for their troops) has expanded. Gold-digging began some fifty miles beyond the borders of the Nyakyusa country, on the Lupa river, and there Nyakyusa men have found both employment as labourers and a ready market for much of their produce, so that by 1936 Rungwe district was exporting goods worth £24,000 annually.[1] In addition to this peasant production there are a small number of European estates
[167] producing coffee and tea for export.[2] We estimate the number of Nyakyusa working outside the district as migrant labourers at about 8,000 or 25 per cent of the able-bodied men. There were about 7,000 Nyakyusa men on the Lupa gold-fields in 1937,[3] and a small number on the coffee plantations of Mbozi. These are all within a hundred miles of home; and the Lupa labourers return usually after two or three months' work. A considerable number of Nyakyusa are also at work on the sisal plantations of the coast, and employed as domestic servants or in other semi-skilled jobs through Tanganyika, who remain away for periods up to two or three years. Nyakyusa labourers are regarded by European employers as intelligent and capable of heavy work, but lacking in all the subservient virtues.

642 The system of Indirect Rule was established in 1926, and a consistent attempt has been made to develop a centralized Native
177 Authority for the Rungwe district. The traditionally sovereign chiefs of the Nyakyusa have been grouped in eleven court districts with one chief as president of the Native Court in each (see Map III); these eleven chiefs, together with the two presidents of the Ndali and Lambya courts, belong to a single federation, with an appeal court and joint Native treasury of its own. In the eleven Native Courts (which are courts of record) most of the

[1] Figure estimated on the basis of information supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu.

[2] In 1938 the total area alienated was 26,0[illegible] ac.; only 2,200 ac. of this was being worked.

[3] Estimate of the Labour Officer on the Lupa, 4 June 1937.

[Missing on the original – Analyst]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

fashioned iron hoes for cultivation and spears for hunting and war; they also made the cow-bells with which rich men loved to decorate their cattle. Doctors were equally important, for the medicines supplied by them were believed to influence health, fertility, and success in every undertaking. Neither smiths nor doctors served only their own home villages—the number of smiths was much smaller than the number of villages—and doctors living at a distance were generally preferred to those living near by. The need for iron goods and for medicines therefore took men out of their own villages and made links with other villages, often in other chiefdoms. Some at least of the iron ore which the smiths smelted was obtained from the distant Kinga mountains outside the Nyakyusa area all together (*vide supra*, p. 7), and many medicines came from the Kinga or Sangu. *Umwafi* for the poison ordeal was bought from Ngonde. Three other commodities also came from far—these were salt, which Kinga bought from Bena country and sold to the Nyakyusa; a red root (*ikipimba*) used as a dye and cosmetic, bought by the Mahasi from the Sangu and sold to the Nyakyusa; and brass or copper wire for making body rings (*amanyeta*).[1] There was scarcely any cloth in the country when the Europeans first arrived.[2] Pots were sold throughout the Lake-shore plain by the Kisi—Thomson found the Kisi pot-market operating in 1879[3]—and in the hills by Penja specialists. The details of this trade will be discussed when we come to consider the wider relations of the Nyakyusa: here we are only concerned to show that though villagers were dependent on outsiders for a little iron and salt, together with some medicines and ornaments, the bulk of the trade remained very small—salt and iron were extremely scarce—and economic relations beyond the village and kinship group were tenuous.

[1] We do not know by what route the wire came in: it is possible that it was as scarce as cloth before the first contact with Europeans. Elton speaks of spear shafts 'beautifully inlaid with a delicate tracery of brass and copper wire' (op. cit., p. 323), but the first reference we have traced to *amanyeta* in Nyakyusa country is in D. Kerr-Cross 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 118, his observation having been made in 1893. At that time he says 'you could buy anything for brass wire'. c.f. Moir, op. cit., p. 89. Fotheringham (op. cit., p. 27) says that the brass wire used in Ngonde (before 1889) was imported from Britain.

[2] Elton, op. cit., pp. 316, 320, 322, 331; Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 268, 274.

[3] Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 263. The market was at Pupanganda, at the N.E. corner of the Lake, on the narrow strip of land between the escarpment of the Livingstones and the water.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

439 The modern position is quite different. Each village still produces almost all its own food, but very considerable quantities of clothing, metal utensils, and tools are imported, in addition to salt, medicines, and ornaments. All the men and some of the women wear cloth. Every man possesses at least one loin-cloth, [651] a hoe, and an axe, and he must pay an annual tax of 12s. with an additional 2s. for every wife after the first. These essential expenses are met by the sale of produce and labour. Rungwe district is one of the main sources of food for the nearby Lupa gold-fields, while its native-grown coffee is sold on the London market. In 1936 produce to the value of some £24,000[1] was sold from Rungwe district to the outside world, and considerable quantities of produce were also sold within the district to Government officials, missionaries, traders, and their servants. At the same time an exchange of different types of produce, particularly of rice from the plains for ground-nuts from the hills, is developing, and markets flourish at several centres.

441 Trade is in the hands of Indians and Swahili settled in the Government station, Tukuyu, the military station, Masoko, and 443 the Lake-shore port, Mwaya. These traders employ Nyakyusa agents on a commission basis, to sell their goods and bring in produce; and there are many small shops scattered through the district, where commercially-minded Nyakyusa sell cloth, salt, paraffin, matches, hoes, knives, tin dishes, padlocks, soap, and cigarettes; and buy produce. But the shop is not a village centre. In the first place, one shop usually serves several villages; in the second, dependence on trade-goods is not yet so great that shopping close at hand is a necessary convenience, and when a purchase is to be made the buyer often prefers to go to one of the three main trading centres where his choice is greater. There was no sign of a Nyakyusa shop serving as a meeting-place for a village or a group of villages, as does the trading store of the Transkei.[2] Tukuyu market is indeed a social centre but it attracts custom from all over Rungwe district, not merely from one village or group of villages. Trading thus draws men outside their village; it does not nourish relationships within the village.

445 Employment for wages is the second means of meeting essential expenses, and we estimated that in 1936 approximately

[1] *Vide supra*, p. 16.
[2] Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 356.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

231 according to the *Bell Report*. Cattle and hides are exported to Tanganyika.[1] The *Nyamwanga* herds were reduced, partly by Bemba raids, and partly by rinderpest.[2]

Domestic Architecture

341 *Ngonde* homesteads are famous in Nyasaland for their peculiar style and neatness
361 of execution. They are made of bamboos, specially grown for the purpose. They are oblong, with the ends slightly tapering upwards so that they present a ship-like appearance. The huts are erected in two lines facing each other, at a distance of about 30 yards. This centre street is kept scrupulously clean.[3] The *Nyakusa* live in round or long huts of bamboo or grass.[4] *Kinga* homesteads are scattered; they live in round huts of bamboo and straw.[5] The *Iwa* formerly lived in large stockaded villages, but these are now broken up.[6]

Specialization and Trade

326 The Ngonde were accomplished iron-workers; iron was dug, smelted, and made into hoes and spears.[7] The Iwa were formerly noted as iron-workers. Both they and the Nyamwanga grow tobacco on a large scale.[8]

286 A rough kind of cloth was made on native looms. The Ngonde made hollowed
601 canoes, but were not good sailors. In fishing they used poison, hooks, nets, and traps.
226 Pottery and basket-making were carried on.[9]

[177] The Ngonde were the most civilized of this cluster of tribes, owing to their closer
● 439 contact with Arab and Swahili traders who used the lake as a waterway.[10] The Nyam-
643 wanga also had opportunities of contact with Arab and Swahili traders at the south end of Lake Tanganyika,[11] but information about the effect of this on their economic life is lacking. By comparison with the Ngonde the Nyakyusa were isolated from contact with the outside world,[12] and this is probably true of the other tribes of the group. Among the Ngonde, in spite of the political hierarchy and central religious authority of Kyungu, economic links between separate local groups were few. The ivory trade was a source of wealth for the Kyungu and for the nobles of Ngonde at Mbande, but its benefits had a strictly limited effect on the rest of the people. The economic links between the capital and the chiefdoms followed the lines of the political system. The income of Kyungu in slaves and cattle depended on the judicial process and on warfare. He had a semi-monopoly of the ivory of the country (the right tusk of every elephant killed was his). His expenditure consisted of entertainment for all important visitors to the capital, and gifts of cloths, obtained through the ivory trade, to nobles and chiefs. The first Kyungu gave head-cloths to the indigenous rulers, who, in accepting them, accepted his overlordship, and the practice was continued every time a new chief or territorial noble succeeded to office. The nobles of Ngonde got cloths every time the Arab traders came. Chiefs bringing food to Mbande, the capital, were

[1] *Bell Report*, pp. 100–3; Aplin, 1931.
[2] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[3] Kerr-Cross, 1894; Murray, 1932, pp. 210–11.
[4] *Handbook of German East Africa*, p. 68.
[5] Ibid., p. 64.
[6] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[7] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 146–8; Kerr-Cross, 1894, p. 189.
[8] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[9] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 146, 149, 151–2.
[10] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 44.
[11] Ibid., 3, 1938, p. 15.
[12] Cozhead, 1914, p. 44.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

439 643 given a slave or cow in return. Those who performed hoeing service, *milasa*, were entertained with food and beer.

622 437 The ivory trade, although it bound the local rulers to the capital, involved no tribal organization of elephant hunts, and scarcely touched the common people, who never obtained the imported cloths exchanged for ivory, but continued to dress in bark-cloth or in their coarse home-woven cloth. Between each chief and his people economic links were determined on the one hand by his power of requisitioning food, and his greater wealth derived from the higher bride-price given for his daughters, and on the other by his people's expectation of entertainment from nim in return for their food. Economic links between local chiefdoms were tenuous. Subsistence agriculture was practised by each family with the help of village neighbours and a few friends and kin; marriage with its economic exchanges was usually within the chiefdom. Of the few specialized craftsmen, representatives of each were usually found in each local group.[1]

439 438 Under modern economic conditions, Ngonde country is the only part of north Nyasaland which cannot be called the 'Dead North', and does not suffer from excessive migration. The soil is fertile and at present there is no land shortage, though there is likelihood of one developing in the near future. Food is cultivated for export to the Lupa goldfields in Tanganyika, which is the natural market for Ngonde produce. Rice, cattle, and hides are also exported there. Parts of the lake littoral are suitable for cotton cultivation, which was revived in 1934. Ninety tons were sold in 1936. Out of the total effective male population of 12,000, 3,000 grow 'economic crops', and 7,000 grow cash crops only.[2] There are two European coffee estates in the Misuku hills, but they are handicapped by the long dry season.[3] Money is also derived from the fishing industry. An attempt to develop a ghee industry from native butter for sale to Indians in Nyasaland collapsed owing to the apathy of the Ngonde, their neglect of quality, and their insistence on too high a price for their inferior product. The main cash income of the district is derived from emigration to the Lupa goldfields, so that 90 per cent. of the money in circulation in the district is East African currency, which is accepted by the Nyasaland local government, surplus balances being remitted to the District Officer at Tukuyu, Tanganyika.[4]

Periodic Migrations

167 Long-distance labour migration is not a serious problem among the Ngonde, as they are able to earn their main cash income by working in the nearby Lupa goldfields, or by supplying that market with agricultural produce. In north Nyasa district (Ngonde), of 12,052 adult males fit to work for wages, only 11·6 per cent. are labour emigrants, and of these in 1937 only 100 were counted as 'lost ones' (i.e. not heard of since 1930).[5] In Abercorn and Kasama districts, Northern Rhodesia, where the Nyamwanga and Iwa live, 50 per cent. of the able-bodied male adult population is absent.[6]

A local migration of Nyakyusa does constitute a problem for the Tanganyika administration. Up to 1935 some 2,000 families had migrated from Rungwe district to tribal lands in the neighbouring chiefdoms of Mbeya district. By 1941 the figure had increased to 3,000. The immigrants now total 17 per cent. of the whole population

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 39–50.
[2] Murray, 1932, p. 206.
[3] *Bell Report*, 1938, Appendix A.
[4] *Bell Report*, 1938, pp. 100–3.
[5] Smith, 1937, p. 21.
[6] Orde Browne, 1, 1938, maps.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

rules of land tenure are firstly to prevent, as far as possible, such conflicts and embarrassments from arising, and secondly, to facilitate their resolution when aroused. If, then, there is no danger of conflict or embarrassment neither is there a need for any rule at all. A Nyakyusa doctor wandering in the uncultivated bush looking for medicines cannot harm any man's interest, cannot hurt any man's feelings, and he is therefore free to gather what and where he will. 311

In many of its uses, however, land is scarce and so leads men into competition for it. When, in any society, land, or some other material of action, is scarce, we say that it has economic value; and whenever anything has economic value then, of necessity, its use *must* always be effectively limited and defined by rules of law or of morality or by convention, for only by such limitations of human action can anarchy be kept at bay and ordered human society continue to exist.

The scarcity or economic value of land is, in most of the Nyakyusa chiefdoms, more a matter of quality than of mere quantity. In some few chiefdoms there is, however, already threatening an actual lack of arable land, and it is almost certain that there will in time be a general shortage. The natural increase of population is to some extent counterbalanced by ever-increasing emigration into neighbouring, less densely populated districts; but rapidly changing economic and technical conditions will of themselves, in all probability, bring about a shortage of land. Ploughs (over 100 of them) are already in use and are multiplying many times over the area which one man can cultivate, while the recent development of an external market for surplus food is stimulating many men to greater effort even with the hoe. An area amply sufficient, with primitive subsistence agriculture, for about 100,000 persons may well prove quite insufficient when ploughs are employed and when to the 100,000 mouths are added, through the medium of the market, many thousand more. Rungwe District is already one of the main sources not only of labour but also of food for the nearby Lupa gold fields, while its rapidly increasing crop of Native-grown coffee now finds its way to Europe. In 1936 produce to the value of some £24,000[1] was sold by this district to the outside world. 311 241 [167] [439]

At the moment, however, there is no general shortage of land. It is the *best* ground which is scarce, not land as such. The best building sites, the best plots of arable ground and the best pastures have economic value and their use is precisely defined and limited in the Nyakyusa system of land-tenure. 311

[1] Figure estimated for the whole district (Nyakyusa, Ndali and Lambya, about 150,000 persons in all) on the basis of information supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Office, Tukuyu.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa chiefs afterwards conquered, but which is still known as "Mu-Ngonde") was certainly included in it. And the men of Ngonde also claim that Musomba of the Ndali hills, and Mujombe and others in the present Northern Rhodesia were nobles of the Kyungu and sent him tribute. 173 565 643

How much secular power the Kyungus and nobles of Ngonde then had we cannot know; but, as in the later period it can be proved to have been more effective in the plain near Mbande than in the hills, it is not unreasonable to suppose that so it was in the early period also.

Trade with the outer world there was, so legend says, from the first, and this trade went north. The present Kyungu told us: "The Kyungus used to send ivory to the coast, they sent men over the hills of the Ndali; the ivory that they took from Simbobwe went that way. And the men used to come back with cloths and iron goods and white crockery. This I heard from Mwakalengula who died as a very, very old man in the year 1900 or perhaps it was 1901." 173 439

In later times the central power of the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde can be proved to have rested on the twin bases of religious faith and the control of great wealth; as these two conditions seem both to have been present in the early period we can assert with some confidence that then also they were the real bases of the central power. 173 565 643

(b) *A TURNING POINT.*

"Kyungu Magemo had a sister who was married to Katenga, one of the nobles of Ngonde. And one day when the other nobles of Ngonde went to Ngana (a district of Ngonde) to fish—for fish were plentiful in Ngana—this woman followed them, and there she married Mwakasekele a man of Ngana. So the nobles returned and told Magemo that his sister had been taken to wife in Ngana, and all he said was, 'very well.' Later she bore a son to Mwakasekele and Kyungu Magemo named him Kasyombe." 173 643

Now Magemo himself when he died left only one son, Mwangonde, and he had only survived by an accident. Mwangonde's mother came from Butambo (in the present Northern Rhodesia) and was a distant relative of Mulwa, another noble of Ngonde. Her delivery was unexpected and took place in the house of one of Mulwa's near kinsmen So Mulwa hid her and the child, and then sent her away to Butambo. The other nobles of Ngonde accused him of having done so and were angry, for they wished to kill the child if it were a boy. Mulwa denied his action, but afterwards they heard that the child was a boy and alive. Now but for Mulwa the direct line of the Kyungus would have died out,

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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(c) *THE MIDDLE KYUNGUS: CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE.*

When Kasyombe died Mwenengubwe succeeded, for Mwangonde, though now grown up, was still living in Butambo. Mwenengubwe was the eldest of those sons whom Kasyombe had begotten on the wives of Magemo, and he began that process of gradual emergence from religious seclusion which the present Kyungu has completed. The early Kyungus had all lived on the top of Mbande, cut off from the outside world not only by their enclosure but also by the steep sides of the hill; Mwenengubwe and his successors lived in the plain at its foot, by the Lukulu River. This change appears to have been connected with the unsuccessful effort of the chiefs of Ngana to control the killing of the Kyungus. Three of the present nobles of Ngonde took me up Mbande and explained on the way: "At first all the Kyungus were installed on the summit of the hill, but Mwenengubwe came down to the valley; Kasyombe was the last to live on the summit. The Kyungus came down to the valley because they were afraid to live on the hill, they thought that no Kyungu ever lived long on Mbande, always they died quite soon. And so, after Mwenengubwe had come down from the hill, they installed his successors in the valley, in the house of the Kyungu." But still they lived at Mbande in the midst of the nobles of Ngonde, and still their houses were surrounded with an enclosure that only the nobles of Ngonde might freely enter.

On the death of Mwenengubwe, Mwangonde succeeded.[1] From now onwards the traditions of Ngonde are full of warfare, civil and tribal; but more important than the wars themselves are the accompanying constitutional and commercial changes of which we get occasional glimpses.

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About this time the direction of the trade in ivory changed. The present Kyungu told us: "Later, after the first Kyungus, Mwangonde and his successors used to exchange the ivory with Marabi who came from across the lake; the men of Mwela rowed them across. These traders brought cloths, red and white and dark cloths. But when the first Kyungu arrived in Ngonde there was no trade-route across the lake at all." And one of the Kyungus about this time is said to have "struck the lake and walked over to Mwela to marry a woman, Mapunda." And the present Kyungu told us that, "besides the trade with these Marabi, there had also been trade with the men of Mwela

[1] "When Kasyombe died Mwenengubwe inherited the position of Kyungu. Mwangonde refused it and continued living with his mother's family in Butambo. But the nobles discussed together and decided it was not fitting that Mwangonde should live in another country and they went to invite him back. He agreed to come; at first he only paid a short visit to Ngonde and went back again, but the second time he came and stayed. So when Mwenengubwe died they set Mwangonde on Mbande."

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

themselves, and with the Kisi. With the people of Mwela they exchanged canoes for hoes. And from the Kisi also they got hoes, which the Kisi in their turn had got in exchange from the Kinga. 173 643 439

Then, during the reigns of Mwangonde and his successors "the sons of the Kyungu" began more and more to displace the territorial nobles as rulers of the various districts of the Ngonde plain. They became hereditary chiefs (*awanyafyale*), each of whom was succeeded by two or more sons, who divided his country and tried to extend it. And thus the number of ruling chiefs now began to increase at a great rate. Each of the territorial nobles, on the other hand, was only succeeded by a single heir. Houses of chiefs were set up and a new hierarchy appeared, for the senior chief in each house ranked as the "father" of his juniors. The name of the founder of each house was preserved as a hereditary title borne by each head of that house in turn. Thus to-day we find in the Ngonde plain the house of the Katambas, (or Mwenitetes),[1] the house of the Kalongas, the house of the Mwakasungulas and so on, and, among the chiefs of Ngana, the house of the Mwafongos, the house of the Mwenengubwes, the house of the Kalombos, the house of the Kilupulas and so on. The heads of these houses were the great chiefs of Ngonde, subordinate to the Kyungu and each with a number of junior chiefs traditionally subordinate to him. Most of these great titles can be traced back to some important son either of Mwangonde or of Kasyombe; but in some cases junior branches also have acquired sufficient importance to be distinguished by hereditary titles which are borne by their heads[2]. Whenever the bearer of one of these great titles became the Kyungu, his old title was at once taken by a successor in his house. 173 643 565 622

The chiefs supplanted the territorial nobles and took their subjects for their own in this way: "A great many territorial nobles have lost their power, for the Kyungus were in the habit of sending their sons to build with them in their countries. A Kyungu would send one of his sons (i.e. a chief) to a certain noble saying 'I send this your son to build with you, his father'—for the nobles were called 'father' by the sons of the Kyungu—, so the noble would welcome him. But in after years the people would give their affection to the son of the Kyungu and the noble would lose his power. And yet, even so, in the old days the two of them, chief and noble, would remain on friendly terms." . . . . "Some of the nobles lost their power through the cunning of the chiefs. For example the noble Mwenifumbo used to have a country of his own,

[1] This house, as we have seen, dates from the early period.
[2] The first Malema, for instance, was a son of Mwakasungula, the first Kajuni of Mwenengubwe.

[text continues on p. 21]

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

ordinary custom of hoeing parties which is still followed by every chief and commoner in this whole area. Every man, two or three times a year, invites his neighbours to hoe for him and rewards them with a beer-drink in the evening. Where the hoeing of the Kyungu's public gardens differed from this custom was in the religious sanction behind it and in its political organization. 651 241 476 273

After the local chiefs had finished the *mulasa* for the Kyungu they would next return and hoe a small garden for their great chief who had led them to Mbande. But in this the territorial nobles took no part. Such gardens were not called *milasa* and there was no distinction made between them and the great chief's private ones. For this custom also there was a moral sanction; for the great chiefs, we remember, also participated in divinity. "If his people forgot to hoe for Mwakasungula then perhaps a little local epidemic of some kind would break out and the diviners, when questioned, would attribute it to their forgetfulness. Or perhaps a prophetic fit would fall on some one and he would tell them to go and hoe (or they would rue it!)" 651 585

And, still lower in the hierarchy, among a group of chiefs who were half-brothers, the senior chief used sometimes to summon his juniors to bring their men and hoe; but "their acquiescence depended on their friendship for him"; it seems to have had no effective moral sanction.

The private gardens of the Kyungu were traditionally very small indeed, for the constant income of food from the plain made them all but unnecessary. Such as they were, they were worked by the people of Mbande, i.e. the nobles of Ngonde and their followers. The wives of the Kyungu lived like ladies and had all the normal work of a woman, including weeding, done for them. 643 651

The income of the Kyungu in slaves and cattle cannot be understood save in the context of judicial procedure and warfare with which we have not yet dealt[1]. 643 652

The income of Mbande reached others besides the Kyungu and his wives. We have already seen how the nobles of Ngonde took their share of the food which was brought in; and some of it they gave to their messengers, the *nalukata*. Neither the nobles of Ngonde nor the messengers, according to the present Kyungu, used to have any large gardens of their own; they also were maintained at the public expense. And the nobles of Ngonde shared also in the proceeds of the ivory.

With the exception of a pile of tusks upon which the Kyungu slept, most of the ivory which reached Mbande, from the time of Mwangonde 439

[1] *Vide infra* sections 5 and 6.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

439 until the settlement of the Arabs and Europeans in Ngonde, was exchanged "for cloths and rings" with the *Lungwani* (i.e. Arab or half-caste) traders, who regularly crossed the lake from Mwela.

Now the Kyungu of Mbande when compared with their divine-cousins the Lwembes of Lubaga, were fortunate in their geographical position. The conditions which kept them in contact with a market in the early period are beyond our knowledge, we only know the bare fact. But with the opening of the trade route from the east the greater accessibility of Mbande is at once obvious. Mbande is only eight miles from the shores of the lake, Lubaga is forty. Moreover the plain between Lubaga and the lake was occupied in this middle period by Nyakyusa chiefs only distantly related to the Lwembe. Our evidence suggests that, in any case, the traders from Mwela did not reach the north end of the lake in their travels till some time after reaching Ngonde. And it is undoubted that when they did so they traded with the chiefs on the shore one by one and never journeyed inland to Lubaga. To Lubaga the lake shore chiefs sent cows to beg for rain and health, but they sent no ivory; from Lubaga they believed they received their rain and health; but it was from the traders direct that they got the coveted cloth. Ivory was but dry bones without a market, so that the Lwembes had no inducement to claim it.

In Ngonde the Lungwani traders bought relatively little ivory from others save the Kyungu; he alone held large stocks and to him they came first. They gave him red, white and dark cloths and rings also in exchange for the tusks, eating and drinking at his expense during their stay.

Some of the cloths and rings were at once given by him to the nobles of Ngonde, on each occasion that the traders came; others were used as clothes by himself and his household; others were stored for future gifts; while still others he exchanged, either for hoes with the men of Mwela and the Kisi, or with his own people for ivory or slaves.

556 583 Polygyny and a differential bride-price were important sources of wealth for all the rulers of Ngonde. The numbers of cattle given to great-commoners, nobles or chiefs at the marriages of their daughters were greater than the numbers given to ordinary men. This was a matter of prestige. Moreover girls married younger than boys, so that all fathers usually had an interval between receiving cattle at the marriages of their daughters and giving them away again at the marriages of their sons; during this interval the cattle increased and the increment accrued to them. Now chiefs, nobles and great-commoners usually gave away more cattle at the marriages of their sons than did ordinary men; this again was a matter of prestige. But it did not alter the fact that greater numbers of cattle than usual passed though their hands; and

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

and beer; their position depended upon doing so. Up and down the hierarchy the stream of wealth travelled and this stream, in its ebb and flow, was the lifeblood of the old constitution. 652 431

(c) *THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE IVORY TRADE.*

Now it was the scarce and valuable cloths derived from the ivory trade which enabled Mbande to bind the subordinate chiefs and nobles to it in secular matters. Lubaga, lacking this wealth, had no such secular power. But it is very easy to exaggerate the secular power which Mbande had. Personal loyalty to the Kyungu and the great chiefs was enforced throughout Ngonde,[1] the nobles of Ngonde participated in the selection of territorial nobles and great chiefs,[2] tribal war was organized from Mbande,[3] but that was all. In everyday life the sovereignty of the local rulers was scarcely limited. Civil war was endemic in Ngonde,[4] and secular justice had no central organization[5]. 643 439

The central power of Mbande rested on the combination of divine kingship with wealth derived from the ivory-trade. But both in religious and economic matters there was a very high degree of local autonomy. We have already discussed the local autonomy in religion[6] and must now discuss it in the economic sphere.

The economic relations of men in the middle period of Ngonde's history were largely confined to the little local groups of chiefdom and fief. Subsistence agriculture was practised by each family, with the assistance of village neighbours and of a few friends and relatives who normally lived in the same chiefdom or fief. Marriage, with all the exchanges of cattle and food which marriage involved, was usually a local matter also; men only occasionally went beyond the chiefdom or the fief for their wives; while of the few specialised craftmen, such as smiths, a representative was usually to be found in each such local group. Economic links between the local groups existed: men moved from one chiefdom or fief to another leaving relatives behind, some marriages took place across the local boundaries, famous craftmen or doctors attracted clients from far afield. But these links were far fewer in number than those which obtained between the members of each separate local group. 433

And the ivory trade added little to the economic links between the local groups. It involved no tribal organization of elephant hunts, or anything of the kind; it touched the common people only slightly. Commoners and chiefs however did occasionally exchange tusks either 439

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[1] *Vide infra* 5 (a)
[2] *Vide infra* 5 (b)
[3] *Vide infra* 6 (b)
[4] *Vide infra* 6 (a)
[5] *Vide infra* 5 (c)
[6] *Vide supra* 3

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

●439 direct with the ivory traders or with the Kyungu, for cloths or cattle or slaves. And groups of chiefdoms and fiefs co-operated in hoeing the *milasa*.

Nor did the ivory trade enter very deeply into the economic relations of [291] the local rulers with their subjects. The common people usually dressed in exiguous pieces of bark cloth or of a coarse cloth which they manufactured themselves from a kind of cotton; the scarce imported cloths, which came through Mbande, were normally used by chiefs and nobles only. They added to the prestige of the chiefs and nobles by linking them visibly with the opulence of Mbande, but did not much increase their own subjects' economic dependence on them. Though here again we must note the occasional exchanges of ivory and other wealth between [652] commoners and chiefs or nobles. The important economic links between local rulers and their subjects were determined, on the one hand, by the differential bride-price, by polygyny and by their power of requisitioning food, and, on the other hand, by their position as chief hosts to their people.

The ivory-trade, in fact, enabled Mbande to bind the local rulers to it in a kind of permanent hierarchical alliance, but neither the constitution of the local groups nor their autonomy in relation to one another was very much affected thereby.

5. *LEGAL ELEMENTS (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

000 We now come to a third element of the central power of Mbande, the traditional part which it played in the maintenance of law. We will take this topic in two parts: first, the ways in which Mbande maintained its own authority and that of its subordinates, and, second, the part played by Mbande and those lesser authorities in maintaining the common law of Ngonde.

(a). *CONSTITUTIONAL LAW: TREASON ETC.*

687 Treason against the Kyungu was summarily punished with little or no legal argument. The commonest form of treason seems to have been 567 too near an approach to one of his wives. We remember that his wives were very closely guarded from all men, for their adultery might magically bring sickness on him, and if he fell ill then the whole land was magically endangered. One side of the hill Mbande is precipitous, and over this cliff (*Ipunga*) all traitors were thrown, including such as had looked on his wives naked; while many members of the traitors' families were subsequently enslaved.

"If a man had looked on the wives of the Kyungu bathing, he himself would be killed by being thrown over the cliff and all his

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173 643 rulers were not of the royal blood but 'nobles' (*amakembera*), descendants of the five leading men who had arrived with the Kyungu, of those he found already occupying the country, and of those who arrived after him. Later the slaughter of the Kyungu's [634] sons ceased, and as they grew up they were established as subordinate chiefs through his territories, gradually taking over power from the commoners who had previously ruled, by a process familiar in other parts of Africa.[1] But the 'nobles' retained considerable power. At Lubaga the descendants of the two men who had arrived with the first Lwembe, and of some of those who were there before him, became priests, and priests only; in Ngonde those of similar origin developed secular, as well as ritual, functions.

The reasons why the office of Kyungu developed into a paramount chieftainship, and that of the Lwembe did not, have been examined in a previous publication,[2] and may therefore be dealt with very briefly here. The most important factor was that [439] the Kyungu exported ivory and amassed wealth which was used [556] to bind territorial rulers to him, while the Lwembe remained cut off from the outside world and did not trade at all. The geographical situation largely accounts for this. The ivory of Ngonde first went north, and later south-east, across the Lake, and Mbande was well situated for both routes. It lies eight miles from the Lake and close to a defile which leads from the lakeshore plain to an open table-land stretching north to Lake Tanganyika, the very route which engineers later selected for the Stevenson road. Lubaga, on the other hand, is forty miles from the Lake and the only routes northward lay over broken country and passes 8,000 feet high. Giraud remarks in his journal that the Nyakyusa were the only people he had come across among whom the chiefs did not claim at least one tusk of every elephant killed;[3] they did not claim it, for they had no use for the ivory; but the Kyungu's right to a tusk from every elephant killed was enforced.

The growth of a paramount chieftainship in Ngonde was slow. The early Kyungus lived within an enclosure on Mbande to which only their personal servants and the nobles of Ngonde had

[1] cf. M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 380; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 13-14; I. Schapera, in *African Political Systems* (edited Fortes and Evans-Pritchard), pp. 60-1.

[113] [2] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3 (1939).

[3] V. Giraud, *Les Lacs d'Afrique Equatoriale* (1890), p. 186.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

a missionary, was warned by her servants before Godfrey Wilson's arrival in her neighbourhood 'not to go out at night as there were *abazyambuta* about, sent by the Government to kill people and take their blood', and women going for firewood made a long detour to avoid his camp. One was overheard asking when she caught sight of him: 'Is that the man who kills people?' Angombwike explained that, since all really strong Nyakyusa medicines contained human blood, it was argued that European medicines, which were so powerful, must contain it also. 'They follow their own customs.' 789 751 754 186

It seems obvious to the Nyakyusa that Europeans must have strong medicines because their confidence and success are so great. Moreover, it is held (in theory) that they are immune to attacks from witchcraft. X, who had been a clerk and lost his job, and was bitter, expanded on this:

> People say that Europeans have *isyifutile* (*vide* p. 58), see they are brave, they do not fear, if someone seizes a spear they do not fear, they just come to him, they are very brave. And also the witches say that they are unable to choke Europeans. When we hear people boasting of their mystical power (*amasyo*) we always say to them: 'But if that is so, go and choke a European, show us!' Then they always say, 'Oh no, we can't do that, when we go to a European house at night we find it all lighted up and flaming, we can't get near them.' I think this is the power of the Holy Spirit which you Europeans have. [778]

He came of a well-known family of doctors and perhaps spoke from first-hand knowledge. He just laughed at the suggestion that the light might come from lamps. But the fact that Europeans were held to be immune did not prevent our servants and friends attributing our recurring attacks of malaria to witchcraft. [753]

(*c*) DOCTORS

Among the Nyakyusa, as perhaps in every society, the doctors with the greatest reputation are those at a distance, and a high proportion of the practitioners in the country are of foreign lineages, their fathers, or grandfathers, or great-grandfathers having come in, bringing medicines with them, and begun to practice. In fact, we were assured that there were *so* Nyakyusa doctors who were famous, they were all Sangu, or Kinga, or Kisi, or from Ngonde or Misuku in Nyasaland, but detailed investigation proved this to be false. The trade in medicines from a distance is a very old one and continues today. As we have seen, 791 [439] [278] [438]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

791 *ispifwila* comes from west of Ngonde, or east of the Kinga; *mwafi* [479] came from 'Nyasaland'; medicine for fertility of the fields from [278] Misuku which is rich in food; war medicine from the Sangu and [438] Kinga. Whether neighbouring people get medicines from Bu-Nyakyusa we do not know—no one ever suggested it, but it is likely that they do.

Since foreign doctors and medicines have the highest reputation [177] new treatments are welcomed. This is where the practice of medicines differs radically from the rituals directed to the shades in which the charter is tradition, and any deviation must be justified. But the willingness to accept something new did not lead to any systematic experiment, or any regard for experiment as such.

791 Anyone who chooses, and can pay the fees, can become a 278 doctor by apprenticing himself to a practitioner of repute, but it is very noticeable that the majority of well-known doctors come from families of doctors, the medicines being passed down from one generation to the next and sometimes taught to wives as well. Lyandileko, who has often been quoted, was taught certain medicines by her husband, and had a large practice. The diviners we knew were all men, but many women know a number of medicines. Once in practice, a doctor may add to his knowledge by buying a medicine from a fellow practitioner or exchanging medicines with him. One doctor we knew had paid two bulls for the secret of his protective medicine (*amlete gwa ipiage*). The teaching includes what plants or other ingredients to collect and how to 'cook' them, i.e. what to mix together and what quantities to use. As elsewhere in Africa, it is the material substance, usually vegetable, which is held to be important in any treatment. The spell—the words addressed to the medicine—is of little significance except that when vengeance magic is prepared the man on whose behalf it is done may say the name of his enemy (if he knows his identity) and state his own innocence in a phrase like the following: 'Return this medicine, thou Kyala, I have done no wrong whatsoever to cause me to be killed; if he says he will kill me let him die.'

The doctor (*isyanga*) who 'knows medicines' is distinguished 791 from the priest or officiant (*usyage*) who knows how to conduct a 793 ritual directed to the shades or heroes. The *usyage* uses medicines in celebrating rituals, and he or she may be able to collect and prepare plants himself, but he sometimes has to apply to a doctor

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

well covered with vegetation and with so reliable and plentiful a rainfall, yet, of course, the actual pasturage available is very considerably less as so much of the land is taken for arable and building purposes. There is in practice a most acute shortage of grazing land everywhere, except in certain parts of the north-west Highlands (Ukukwe). This shortage is most critical during the wet season, for at other times of the year the herds are able to graze over the arable fields, where herbage grows exceptionally rapidly after harvest as a result of the high rainfall.

Traditionally, each village had a roughly demarcated area of common pasturage which was not, and could not be, used for arable purposes. With the increased demand for arable land, this commonage has almost everywhere in the Lake Plains been gradually whittled away for permanent arable holdings. Headmen who control these pastures, and many of their chiefs too, are much worried about this process, about the break with tradition and the modern pastoral difficulties; but arable needs are given priority over grazing and the practice continues. In the flood plains, the higher-density regions, common pasturage has by now almost disappeared altogether. The little which remains is largely unusable for cultivation, consisting of infertile or badly drained areas – often the sandy, coastal strips covered with dense thicket and tall sedges which provide very little useful grazing. During the dry season, after the paddy harvest, the situation is fair, but during the cultivation season pasturage is entirely inadequate, and in addition the cattle are compelled to live and graze in extremely arduous conditions of standing water, mud, mosquitoes and flies. They do not obtain enough food then and they lose condition badly. There are many deaths from exhaustion, near-starvation and disease, and this affects the immature stock particularly. Only by obstinate tenacity on the part of both man and beast can the herds be retained at all. There is no tradition of stall-feeding and so far the Nyakyusa have refused to adopt this measure of alleviation.

Yet, as the Nyakyusa are quick to point out, each family has only a few cattle. Most families have a cow or two, and the average is only about two to three head per family – *cf.* Table VI, page 34. Owners of large herds are relatively few, and herds of more than ten cattle in a single family are very uncommon. Although the cattle population is too great for the pasture resources now available, yet the animals are fairly evenly and thinly distributed amongst the dense human population. Goats and sheep are few – about 600 altogether – in the Lake Plains and of no significance. It is important to note that here we do not have a situation of large herds which might be reduced by some form of culling.

Cattle are held in high esteem by all Nyakyusa as a source of valued milk for the daily diet, as the means to marriage (in bridewealth), as a store of capital, as a symbol of prestige and as an essential element in important ceremonial activity. This kind of value system needs no emphasis here as it is common to much of Eastern Africa, but it may be noted that one of the principle uses of the large sums of money saved from wages in mining employment (labour migration)[1] and from the profits of cash-cropping at home is in the purchase of cattle. It is thought that money is best invested, saved and used in that way, once immediate material needs have been met.

Even with the high proportion of deaths from disease and the appalling conditions of the wet season, there are indications that the numbers of cattle are not decreasing and there may well be local increases. Apart from natural increase, there is fairly heavy buying from the Ndali people to the north-west in Rungwe District, and also from farther afield in Northern Nyasaland, and in Nyamwanga and Fipa tribal areas (albeit illicitly).

1. During the course of my earlier labour migration enquiries men would usually estimate their savings for me, when completing routine questionnaires, by the number of cattle they could buy.

243 and Mapiko, although very little of these is sold. Ploughs have been introduced into the area as it is flat and the total number in use in 1942 is about 400. The first ploughing is carried out in June or July when the ground is still wet, and the second ploughing in October to February. Planting, which is all broadcast, is carried out in November to the middle of March and the harvesting is done in May to September.

256 A first mill was erected at Ipyana on the lake shore in 1942 with a capacity of 9 tons of rice in 15 hours. Another is now on its way from India with a capacity of 14 tons of rice in 15 hours and should be erected some time in 1944.

248 A small acreage of cotton is also sown along the Songwe River boundary, which borders on Nyasaland, with seed obtained from that Colony. Conditions, however, are not suitable on the remainder of the lake shore and expansion is not encouraged.

241 A list of exports from the district with approximate weights for 1942 is appended:—
#139

Article	Weight in tons
	Tons
Mixed beans	550
Coffee	50
Groundnuts	50
Maize	1,500
Onions	20
European potatoes	200
Rice	1,500
Vegetables	40
Fruit	100
Banana flour	300
Cassava flour	50
Finger millet	150
Tea (European produce)	218
Total ..	4,723

Land Tenure and Economics of the People

423 In theory all land belongs to the chiefs or sub-chiefs, but in practice once a man has cultivated a plot, that plot belongs to him until he leaves the area in which he lives. If he leaves, the land reverts to the chief or sub-chief and may be given by him through his headman or elder to anyone in his area who is short of land or to a newcomer who wants a plot. Should a man go away and return after a long period and ask for a plot, he is bound to be given one but not necessarily the plot he had before he left. Newcomers are welcomed and are given land, as the amount of tax collected in an area is an indication of the importance of a chief.

[554 609 651]

233 Stock grazing is a problem which is coming more and more to the fore. The number of

N 233 cattle in the district in the 1941 census was about 2.3 head per taxpayer or 55 head per square mile. Certain land is set aside each N [184 year for grazing, where stock is not able to 615] interfere with the produce plots. Compensation for trespass of cattle on cultivated land is only paid among people of the lake shore.

N 656 Parts of the land to the west of Tukuyu have been badly eroded by cultivation and 134 over-grazing, and it is only since 1935 that 185 anti-erosion rules have been made to check the tendency for bad cultivation. Since they 242 were brought in, however, the majority of the tribe have become very keen on seeing the effect that well-controlled cultivation has on crops. The following are the Native Authority Rules concerning anti-erosion:—

"Throughout the Rungwa District all natives shall follow orders regarding cultivation designed to prevent soil erosion as demonstrated and enjoined by the Agricultural Officer.

(*a*) All ridges and terraces shall be contoured and not follow the slope of the hill.

(*b*) In the case of cultivation done on the flat and not on ridges or terraces, a large ridge and ditch shall be dug at the top of the plot to remain permanently and be repaired from time to time."

N 439 The Wanyakyusa have never been dependant on outside sources for any of their food, N [135 but in their own territory there is no iron for making hoes nor clay for making earthenware pots. The former they were accustomed to get from Ukinga, on the eastern boundary of the district in the Livingstone mountains, and the pots were, and are still, made only by about 500 members of the Wakisi tribe living in a K village on the lake shore at the extreme south-439 western point of the district. The Wakisi are 101 really of Ukinga origin and inhabit the eastern, northern and western shores of Lake Nyasa. They grow no food except cassava, and that only recently, and apart from the one village that makes the pots, their only work is as paddlers of canoes and fishermen. Most of their fish and pots are exchanged for food.

N 443 Since the Tukuyu District is so thickly populated and the inhabitants concentrated, it has been found necessary to create produce markets at comparatively short distances. N Transport from these markets, during war-438 time, has become difficult. The natural outlet 316 for Tukuyu native foodstuffs is the Lupa Goldfields, which lie about 100 miles to the

(*Received for publication*

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

233 343 462 [413] the women, but the men are responsible for keeping the floor of the stable in good repair. For this purpose a specific tool is used, called *ukutoba indobelu*. It is round on top, flattened on the lower side and provided with a handle.

224 5. *Hunting.* Sometimes the Nyakyusa go out to hunt, but nowadays hunting is much more restricted than in former times as described e. g by Mackenzie in his book: "The spirit-ridden Konde" (London 1925). This record, however, deals mostly with the Ngonde of the environment of Karonga whose interesting social history was unsurpassably revealed to us by Mr. Godfrey Wilson's treatise: "The Constitution of Ngonde" (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, Number Three. Livingstone, Northern Rhodesia 1939.) Hunting in the Nyakyusa country is now [656] curtailed by governmental regulations. Hunting *(ukufuema)*, therefore, does not supply an essential part of the food requirements of the [136] [656] natives. The colobus apes on the slopes of the Rungwe volcano and the Poroto Mountains are sometimes killed for their attractive black and white skins, but fortunately this is now forbidden by the government. Otherwise these apes would be exterminated in quite a short time, ● [439] since the skins of these apes are in great demand with some Europeans for rugs and covers. Naturally, the hunting of lions and especially of leopards, which even nowadays still cause great damage, is not restricted.

224 231 The hunting of game for food is often done with dogs *(imbwa)* which have small bells *(inyesi)* on collars round their necks. Thereby the hunter *(umfuemi)* always knows the whereabouts of his dog. The chase is continued till the dog or dogs are exhausted. The object of the hunt *(umfuemu)* is generally a small type of antelope *(akasya)*, e. g. in the [656] environment of Mwakalele, as I was instructed. The usual time for hunting is the cooler season, but to-day a permit of the government is also required.

223 Catching birds by means of traps *(untegu*, pl. *imitegu)* is still common in the Nyakyusa area. I have also seen such traps constructed by means of the flicking-gallow's principle also in the vicinity of Utengule among the Safwa. The herd boys especially set traps to catch quails *(imbesi)* when the *malesi* (millet) harvest is over. Sometimes smaller birds are also coursed until they are exhausted and then slain. One day I found a stick vertically put on the soil and with a triangle made of smaller sticks at its top. The horizontal part of which was smeared with an adhesive substance. I was told that this was a trap for birds,

252
264 very substantial, the main meal being taken in the evening shortly before sunset.

415 *8. Manufacture.* The pot for cooking *(indeku)* is placed on three
[354] stones which form the hearth *(ikipembero,* hearth stones). The flat bowl made of clay used for the needs of the kitchen is called *ulwangabia* and a pig pot used for storing water *ingumbe.* The pots of clay
415 are manufactured by Kissi women because in their land on the north-
●439 eastern shores of Lake Nyassa the best clay is found. In the eastern part of the Nyakyusa country adjacent to Kissi land the women visit the pottery markets of the Kissi, but to the remoter villages, e. g. around the Rungwe volcano the pottery is brought by Kissi men. In this case, owing to the great distance from the Kissi-Land the men carry the loads of eight to ten pots on their head between split poles of bamboo. The Kissi pots I saw in the Rungwe Station were ornamented in
[462] a rough way with red ochre and seemed only slightly baked. The
[324] hearth stones, however, are made by the Nyakyusa women themselves as I was able to observe near Rutenganio, where widows manufactured them for sale.

285 In many villages of the Nyakyusa I could watch basket-making. This
[462] I saw being done by men. In the chief's hut in Katumba I had the opportunity to admire a great number of very big baskets *(ifitubo)* for
[237] storing grain, smeared with cow dung on the outside. The attractive closely wickered baskets, which are filled with *malesi* (millet) and then
[273] placed in water for a night in the process of beer-brewing were originally made by the Buanyi, but nowadays also the Nyakyusa are said to be skilled enough to weave them. I had no opportunity to observe it, but could acquire an excellent specimen of that wicker-work.

264 *9. The Meal.* At the beginning of each meal the hands are washed,
[515] including those of children. The men take their meal separately from the women. The wives only eat when their husbands have been satisfied. Boys under ten years eat with their mothers, but as soon as they begin to live in age-set villages, they eat together with their friends of their own age-set, as described in detail by Mr. G. Wilson in his "Introduction of Nyakyusa Society" (Bantu Studies X, p. 271). The head of the family likes to eat together with his friends.

262 Meat is eaten very seldom, but on special occasions such as marriages, death lamentations, christenings of Christianized natives, enormous
[192] quantities are devoured. *Inyama* (Swahili: *nyama)* is the Nyakyusa word for all sorts of meat, *ingombe* for that of cattle and *ingombaku* for that of oxen. Near Utengule I saw black pigs *(ingurusue,* pig)

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

291 301 belts are also worn by men, nowadays below the other clothing. More and more pieces of cotton with imprinted patterns have come into 291 vogue. They are worn around the lower part of the body or below the 177 shoulders or fastened about one of them, and are bought from Indian shops. That this modern fashion, however, is something new in such [439] places which are a little remoter from direct European influence was demonstrated to me when I came through a small village in the environment of Masoko. There by chance I met some young girls carrying a piece of cloth on the top of a long pole as if it were a banner. On enquiry I was told that this "banner" was nothing other than a [556 piece of cloth newly bought by a woman of that village and that it was 482] hoisted on a pole and carried in procession out of sheer joy that this woman had been able to buy it.

291 Menfolk throughout are fuller dressed, especially when they go dancing. The women, on the other hand, wear their ordinary dress also on such occasions. The dancing costume of the men — only the younger [292 men participate in dancing — consists of a sort of tight-jacket or 535] sweater and wide robes with coloured patterns. The hair is adorned [302 with feathers. At work the men mostly wear only loin cloths or shorts. 237] After work especially the older man wrap their bodies in blankets. It is very seldom nowadays to find even very old men still wearing the former national dress: a bundle of long grass in front and a smaller one behind tied to the waist by means of a string, as I found a man on a solitary spot near Rungwe Station. Little boys go altogether naked untill they are about three years of age. Little girls begin to wear a small *amabi* at an earlier age.

531 *13. Art.* One of the most interesting and striking features in the artistic endowment of the Nyakyusa are the decorations on the outer-walls of their huts. The latter are only painted, however, when the exterior of the framework of bamboo is mud covered, otherwise only the wooden doors *(ikifigo,* door) of the huts are painted. By no means every hut or house is painted, but only a limited number in each village, probably depending on the presence and industry of an artist as this art is as in other cases an individualistic one. One such artist was introduced to me in a village near Rutenganio. The ornaments consist in most cases of geometrical patterns in white and black, seldom in other colours, or they represent different sorts of animals, e. g. elephants, horses, cattle, snakes, etc. The richest designs I found in a long extended village on the right bank of the upper Kiwira. In an other case the names of the animals were written in Swahili below

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

439 The modern position is quite different. Each village still produces almost all its own food, but very considerable quantities of clothing, metal utensils, and tools are imported, in addition to salt. medicines, and ornaments. All the men and some of the women wear cloth. Every man possesses at least one loin-cloth, [651] a hoe, and an axe, and he must pay an annual tax of 12s. with an additional 2s. for every wife after the first. These essential expenses are met by the sale of produce and labour. Rungwe district is one of the main sources of food for the nearby Lupa gold-fields, while its native-grown coffee is sold on the London market. In 1936 produce to the value of some £24,000[1] was sold from Rungwe district to the outside world, and considerable quantities of produce were also sold within the district to Government officials, missionaries, traders, and their servants. At the same time an exchange of different types of produce, particularly of rice from the plains for ground-nuts from the hills, is developing, and markets flourish at several centres.

441 Trade is in the hands of Indians and Swahili settled in the Government station, Tukuyu, the military station, Masoko, and 443 the Lake-shore port, Mwaya. These traders employ Nyakyusa agents on a commission basis, to sell their goods and bring in produce; and there are many small shops scattered through the district, where commercially-minded Nyakyusa sell cloth, salt, paraffin, matches, hoes, knives, tin dishes, padlocks, soap, and cigarettes; and buy produce. But the shop is not a village centre. In the first place, one shop usually serves several villages; in the second, dependence on trade-goods is not yet so great that shopping close at hand is a necessary convenience, and when a purchase is to be made the buyer often prefers to go to one of the three main trading centres where his choice is greater. There was no sign of a Nyakyusa shop serving as a meeting-place for a village or a group of villages, as does the trading store of the Transkei.[2] Tukuyu market is indeed a social centre but it attracts custom from all over Rungwe district, not merely from one village or group of villages. Trading thus draws men outside their village; it does not nourish relationships within the village.

465 Employment for wages is the second means of meeting essential expenses, and we estimated that in 1936 approximately

[1] *Vide supra*, p. 16.
[2] Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 356.

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N 233 cattle in the district in the 1941 census was about 2.3 head per taxpayer or 55 head per square mile. Certain land is set aside each N [184 year for grazing, where stock is not able to 635] interfere with the produce plots. Compensation for trespass of cattle on cultivated land is only paid among people of the lake shore.

N 656 Parts of the land to the west of Tukuyu have been badly eroded by cultivation and 134 over-grazing, and it is only since 1935 that 185 anti-erosion rules have been made to check the tendency for bad cultivation. Since they 242 were brought in, however, the majority of the tribe have become very keen on seeing the effect that well-controlled cultivation has on crops. The following are the Native Authority Rules concerning anti-erosion:—

"Throughout the Rungwa District, all natives shall follow orders regarding cultivation designed to prevent soil erosion as demonstrated and enjoined by the Agricultural Officer.

(*a*) All ridges and terraces shall be contoured and not follow the slope of the hill.

(*b*) In the case of cultivation done on the flat and not on ridges or terraces, a large ridge and ditch shall be dug at the top of the plot to remain permanently and be repaired from time to time."

N 439 The Wanyakyusa have never been dependant on outside sources for any of their food. N [135 but in their own territory there is no iron for making hoes nor clay for making earthenware pots. The former they were accustomed to get from Ukinga, on the eastern boundary of the district in the Livingstone mountains, and the pots were, and are still, made only by about 500 members of the Wakisi tribe living in a K village on the lake shore at the extreme south-439 western point of the district. The Wakisi are really of Ukinga origin and inhabit the eastern, 101 northern and western shores of Lake Nyasa. They grow no food except cassava, and that only recently, and apart from the one village that makes the pots, their only work is as paddlers of canoes and fishermen. Most of their fish and pots are exchanged for food.

N ● 443 Since the Tukuyu District is so thickly populated and the inhabitants concentrated, it has been found necessary to create produce markets at comparatively short distances. N Transport from these markets, during war-438 time, has become difficult. The natural outlet for Tukuyu native foodstuffs is the Lupa 316 Goldfields, which lie about 100 miles to the

(*Received for publication*

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the war and the form of its activities has not altered appreciably. Three other missions based elsewhere now have small congregations in the District and a Lutheran pastor under discipline broke away and formed his own 'independent' Church, which differs from the other 'independent' Churches in that the rule of monogamy is enforced.

The total number of converts has increased very considerably, much more than keeping pace with the increase in population; taking the three main missions together, their converts form over 14 per cent of the total population.[1] Figures for the five mission Churches with small congregations in the District—Pentecostal Holiness, Assemblies of God, Seventh Day Adventists, Anglican, and Watch Tower—are not available. Nor do we know the membership of one of the 'independent' African Churches, but supposing the membership of the missions with small congregations in the District to be 2,000 (a conservative estimate) the percentage claiming to be Christian is 24 per cent as against 16 per cent in 1938. Dissimilarities in the response to Christian teaching in different areas are very marked. Around Rungwe, the main Moravian mission-station, the bulk of the population is Christian, and the whole atmosphere is that of a Christian community, whereas in Selya, where mission work began in 1891 as it did in Rungwe, Christians still form a small minority in dominantly pagan chiefdoms. The reasons for this difference are complex. One factor is that Selya is geographically isolated whereas Rungwe is near a main road and within easy reach of the Government and trading centre Tukuyu; but much more important have been differences in mission policy regarding education, and differences in the personalities of missionaries, chiefs, and early converts.

The change from a society based on kinship to one based on voluntary association is apparent in the economic field as well as in the religious. Co-operative societies formed by producers of coffee and rice, which collect and market the crops, and give opportunity

[1] Figures supplied by the courtesy of the missionaries directing each mission and the leaders of two 'independent' Churches were as follows for 1954:

Moravians		23,350
Lutherans		10,000 (approximately)
Roman Catholic		4,700
Last Church (Ngemela) (Also called 'Native Mission')	('independent')	10,701
'African Lutheran Church'	('independent')	800

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 for the local investment of savings are the most important
[474] economic undertaking in the District. The seven coffee co-
[954] operatives handled a crop of 950 tons in 1955, worth about £427,500, and are organized so efficiently as to be able to return over 90 per cent of the price of the coffee on Moshi market to the producer, after the heavy transport costs (14 per cent) have been paid. One Government-paid officer assists these societies.

In the educational and recreational field also, associations are
526 emerging: football clubs; companies of Scouts and Guides;
575 'Welfare Centres' with classes in reading for adult illiterates,
177 indoor games, and Saturday-night dances; Women's Clubs for handwork and recreation; and in Tukuyu itself an inter-racial club with its own premises, whose members meet to play games, and get to know one another and discuss common problems. These associations make a visible mark on the face of the country in the shape of new brick Churches, co-operative stores, football fields, and, more rarely, a village club-house.

177 The change from a subsistence to a money economy, and from a system of government through chiefs and village headmen who
651 were dependent primarily on inherited wealth, which secured to them the labour of many able-bodied wives and sons, to a system of government through European officials, chiefs, and clerks paid out of taxes, and assisted by unpaid village headmen, implies the collection and administration of taxes. The District Council has
177 the responsibility for the budgeting and expenditure of over £60,000 per annum. The greater part of it is spent on the salaries
652 of chiefs, secretaries, and clerks engaged in administration, on courts, on schools, dispensaries, and roads. The development of associations with paid officers also implies the collection of dues and budgeting. As in so many countries the difficulty of building
177 up a tradition of honesty in administration is great. Tax clerks,
685 court clerks, council secretaries, and co-operative society secretaries, and even church elders handle sums of money relatively large in proportion to their earnings and one of the tasks of European officials and missionaries is to secure a sound system of accounting and check corruption. In the traditional society stock theft was a capital offence, but money has not the sanctity of cattle, and often the clerk who has appropriated public funds is treated by others as 'unfortunate' rather than immoral. At the same time villagers show great anxiety lest a man entrusted with some common fund should spend it for himself. The risk of theft

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

well covered with vegetation and with so reliable and plentiful a rainfall, yet, of course, the actual pasturage available is very considerably less as so much of the land is taken for arable and building purposes. There is in practice a most acute shortage of grazing land everywhere, except in certain parts of the north-west Highlands (Ukukwe). This shortage is most critical during the wet season, for at other times of the year the herds are able to graze over the arable fields, where herbage grows exceptionally rapidly after harvest as a result of the high rainfall. 311 233 [132]

Traditionally, each village had a roughly demarcated area of common pasturage which was not, and could not be, used for arable purposes. With the increased demand for arable land, this commonage has almost everywhere in the Lake Plains been gradually whittled away for permanent arable holdings. Headmen who control these pastures, and many of their chiefs too, are much worried about this process, about the break with tradition and the modern pastoral difficulties; but arable needs are given priority over grazing and the practice continues. In the flood plains, the higher-density regions, common pasturage has by now almost disappeared altogether. The little which remains is largely unusable for cultivation, consisting of infertile or badly drained areas – often the sandy, coastal strips covered with dense thicket and tall sedges which provide very little useful grazing. During the dry season, after the paddy harvest, the situation is fair, but during the cultivation season pasturage is entirely inadequate, and in addition the cattle are compelled to live and graze in extremely arduous conditions of standing water, mud, mosquitoes and flies. They do not obtain enough food then and they lose condition badly. There are many deaths from exhaustion, near-starvation and disease, and this affects the immature stock particularly. Only by obstinate tenacity on the part of both man and beast can the herds be retained at all. There is no tradition of stall-feeding and so far the Nyakyusa have refused to adopt this measure of alleviation. [20] [43]

Yet, as the Nyakyusa are quick to point out, each family has only a few cattle. Most families have a cow or two, and the average is only about two to three head per family – *cf.* Table VI, page 34. Owners of large herds are relatively few, and herds of more than ten cattle in a single family are very uncommon. Although the cattle population is too great for the pasture resources now available, yet the animals are fairly evenly and thinly distributed amongst the dense human population. Goats and sheep are few – about 600 altogether – in the Lake Plains and of no significance. It is important to note that here we do not have a situation of large herds which might be reduced by some form of culling.

Cattle are held in high esteem by all Nyakyusa as a source of valued milk for the daily diet, as the means to marriage (in bridewealth), as a store of capital, as a symbol of prestige and as an essential element in important ceremonial activity. This kind of value system needs no emphasis here as it is common to much of Eastern Africa, but it may be noted that one of the principle uses of the large sums of money saved from wages in mining employment (labour migration)[1] and from the profits of cash-cropping at home is in the purchase of cattle. It is thought that money is best invested, saved and used in that way, once immediate material needs have been met. [55] [459]

Even with the high proportion of deaths from disease and the appalling conditions of the wet season, there are indications that the numbers of cattle are not decreasing and there may well be local increases. Apart from natural increase, there is fairly heavy buying from the Ndali people to the north-west in Rungwe District, and also from farther afield in Northern Nyasaland, and in Nyamwenge and Fipa tribal areas (albeit illicitly). [439]

1. During the course of my earlier labour migration enquiries men would usually estimate their savings for me, when completing detailed questionnaires, by the number of cattle they could buy.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Men
of social position are known by the number of *manyeta* 291
(body rings worn on the waist) which they wear: [301
one for a man or woman just "above the common"; 554]
six or seven for a man of high standing. A few women have begun, to their own great discomfort, to wear the immense coils of brass or iron on wrists or ankles which are so popular among other tribes.

Clothes, says an acknowledged authority on the 291
subject, make the man. Not among the Konde. 643
Chunga is a great chief, but his greatness does not 554
depend on what he wears, although there are occasions when he dresses more carefully than at other times. This almost naked man is regarded with a reverence greater than is granted to any but a very few Europeans, and out of all recognition greater than is felt for the native who swaggers about in boots and helmet and white man's clothes. The respect which is accorded to a European depends to-day (though it did not in the past) upon his personal character, his control of resources, the authority which has been bestowed upon him by others. But Chungu, with hundreds of other chiefs throughout Bantu Africa, has a respect which is gained in a totally different fashion. He is in close touch with unseen powers. His prayers have a compelling power, his benediction is priestly, his curse of fearful validity. He is a channel through which may come weal or woe upon the land; and hence his authority depends in no degree upon such an accident as dress.

By almost all who know them the Konde are re- 461
garded as lazy. And to the bustling, and perhaps

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

461 unobservant European, village life affords abundant justification for the charge; while even the most observant and sympathetic must admit that they are, to put it mildly, a people with a large amount of unimproved leisure on their hands. There is, in truth, a good deal of idle lounging in the sun, and it is thoroughly enjoyed; and so long as it remains unproved that the restless energy of the white man has succeeded in securing the best possible conditions for the great masses of his race, just so long will some white men, and a vast majority of black, decline to admit that the African is altogether on the wrong path, and the European altogether on the right.

If the year has been a good one, the father has very little care upon his shoulders: his barns are well filled, and hunger is not likely to trouble him and his family; his children are healthy, and perhaps doing well at the little mission school; he has paid his tax, and the precious certificate, signed by the magistrate, is carefully laid away in some place of safety; his house is re-thatched, and will keep out the rain; his cattle and sheep and goats are away with the village herd, and looked after as part of the village property. If he wants a little money for immediate use, he can go to the nearest white man with a sheep or a goat for sale, or perhaps his wife will go with fowls or eggs, or a bunch of bananas. Finally, if he is religiously inclined, whether he is a Christian or not, he has probably been to church on Sunday, a fact which adds to his sense of personal well-being during the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

week. He has, then, no reason for doing any more work. Work has yielded him all that he requires, and he may lie in the sun and chat lazily, or move about strumming his *pango* (stringed instrument) with that supreme unconsciousness of being an idler, which is to some so irritating, to others so charming, a characteristic of the African. 46/

All this, however, is ideal, and seldom corresponds to the actual fact. The year may have been a bad one; ill-health may have overtaken himself or his family; his cattle may be dying; or he may have failed to find employment after long trekking in search of it, and consequently his tax is unpaid and trouble is hanging over him. But a normal year, neither unusually prosperous nor unusually disastrous, will reveal how the Konde fill in their time. Let it be understood that they see nothing but folly in working for what they do not want. Working for what other people want is a high form of altruism to which only a small number of Konde have risen. That work increases the wealth of the country is a doctrine of high economics which they do not understand: wealth is increased by good harvests and by increase of live-stock.

The whole life of the community centres round the hoeing season. During the great heat which usually precedes the rains, the people move languidly about, incapable of anything like exertion. The men gather in groups and lie idly in the shade, talking languidly, droningly; an illness or a death; a 461 521 522

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

461 marriage settlement; the wealth some one has
521 brought from the South; or perhaps they exchange
522 impressions of Europeans they have worked for—a subject into which a great deal of humour can be packed; for it must not be imagined that the white man is taken too seriously. His little foibles, his often none too good temper, his haste to get a job done, and above all his cool assumption of unquestioned superiority, supply endless fun to the village joker. "Bantu as she is spoke" by some Europeans gladdens the weary hours for many a humorously inclined native.

241 Should the rains be late, the situation may be
512 serious, for not only does the heat continue, but the harvest will be correspondingly late, and there is dark fear lest the supplies in the barns, intended to last until March, should have to do until April is well on. [783] Public prayer is offered, led by the chief. The preliminary ceremonies have been attended to, and as soon as the first rains fall all sally out with the first streak of dawn to begin the year's work. From a score of small crofts one may hear the long happy shout of the men, and the shrill call of the women, as they toil in the early morning; but as the day advances and the heat increases, the shouting dies away, and every one puts the last ounce of energy into the task in hand. Henceforward, for about three months, the native gives all his attention to his crops; for as the season advances, and the grain begins to grow, the weeds come up also in wild profusion, and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Life is never dull for the African. There are marriages and funerals here as elsewhere; the former always a joyous occasion, the latter not always or necessarily the reverse. A walk through a populous village will bring one upon net making, pot making, basket or cloth weaving, and one may hear the sharp tap-tap of the bark cloth worker, or, in an iron-working district, the clang of the blacksmith's stone hammer, beating out hoes or spears upon a rough stone anvil. And many drive dullness away with beer. Sometimes it is a small party. A few friends gather in a house, and sit around a pot or two of beer provided by the wife of the host. They drink to the strumming of a *pango* or the beating of a small drum, for they like to have music at their feasts, even when only a few are gathered. But if it is a village feast, given by the chief, it may go on all night with terrific noise, shouting, singing, and drumming; and not always does the feast end without fighting.

Sometimes the villagers receive visitors. The native evangelist on his rounds is always hospitably welcomed. The tax collector is not exactly welcomed—who ever welcomes a tax collector!—but he is received well enough, for his coming has at least this advantage, that those who are ready to pay the sum demanded will not have to go later and pay at the *boma* (magistrate's office), which may be a long distance away. Sometimes a native trader comes along, his packs carried by attendants, for he never carries them himself, even when beginning on a small scale. Visitors

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

planted at the break of the rains, and of the new crop, rice, is a seed-bed of ash prepared, and then it is grass and scrub which is burned; they do not fell or pollard trees to provide ash. For other crops there is no burning; the weeds are hoed in green instead; and, at a second hoeing before planting, the earth is piled into ridges or mounds to ensure drainage. Formerly, it is said, the chiefs insisted that the ridges on slopes should be made contour-wise, and recently this law has been revived. Elton, the first European to travel through the area, observed that there was 'terraced cultivation everywhere';[1] and the ridges do in fact look like terracing from a distance.

Hoeing is the work of men and boys; only quite recently have a few women, whose husbands are away in European employment, begun to hoe for themselves. And most men hoe for three or four hours a day during the greater part of the year, for crops are planted in succession. Neither old age nor high status excuses a man from this duty. Even the chief Mwaipopo, who was already grown up when the Europeans arrived in his country, hoed regularly in his fields during the years 1935–8. Iron hoes were made by Nyakyusa smiths from iron obtained from the Kinga,[2] but they were scarce, and some men had to use wooden hoes such as many of the women still have for weeding (*vide* Plate VII). The women are solely responsible for sowing, weeding, and reaping.

Cattle are fairly numerous:[3] few men over twenty-five nowadays own none, and many older men have four or five cows in their stalls. Long ago, we were told, cattle were scarcer, some men having to marry without them, but Cotterill (1876)[4] and Kerr-Cross (1890)[5] both said 'cattle abound' in Nyakyusa coun-

on 'Wanyakyusa Agriculture' (*The East African Agricultural Journal*, April 1944), states that 'though the soil is not being eroded to any great extent it is still being impoverished'.

[1] Elton, op. cit., pp. 326, 330.

[2] Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 272–3. Possibly iron was also obtained from the west. Kerr Cross (op. cit. p. 289) saw large foundries in Nyika country before 1890. cf. Elton, op. cit., p. 321 and map at the end.

[3] No census of the cattle in the district had been taken when we were among the Nyakyusa. D. H. Thwaites, op. cit., states that, 'The number of cattle in the district (Rungwe) in the 1941 census was about 2.3 head per taxpayer or 55 head per square mile'.

[4] H. B. Cotterill, 'On the Nyasa and a Journey from the North End to Zanzibar', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XXII (1878).

[5] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyassa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 109.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

it is implied that coffee planted in the chiefdoms will be inherited by a man's heirs. As a leading Christian woman put it: 'We like to build on this side of the river because the other is mission land, and if a man moves he loses the coffee and everything else he has planted there. . . . A man has children and he wishes his children to inherit what he has planted.' The number of coffee-trees each man may plant on mission land is also limited to 100, so that the development of large plantations, such as some astute Nyakyusa are undertaking, is impossible there.

b. Building

When a group of boys starts a new village two or three friends usually combine to erect a little hut and live in it together. As younger boys join the village the older ones instruct and help their juniors to build. Thus, although as they grow older each boy builds a hut for himself, the habit of co-operation with village-mates in construction is already established. Until they are married, boys do all the work on their huts for themselves, fetching their own reeds or bamboos for the frame, and cutting and carrying thatching grass. They usually leave their huts unmudded. Adult men, on the other hand, are helped by their wives and female relatives as well as by sons and sons-in-law, and one or two of their own village neighbours. Men fell the bamboos, construct the framework of the house, and thatch, while women cut and carry grass, carry bamboos, mould the mud bricks which are packed between the bamboo uprights, and plaster the hut inside. The wife for whom the hut is being built is responsible for the women's work, but she usually gets some help from her co-wives and women neighbours, as well as from her mother and sisters, and the mother and sisters of her husband. Sons and sons-in-law are expected to bring with them other young men, their village-mates. Co-operation is thus both with relatives and village neighbours—the neighbours of the couple building the hut, and of their sons and sons-in-law.

The huts of married men are built with immense care, for not only are substantial houses essential to comfort, and indeed a condition of survival, in this climate of torrential rains and cold winter mists, but the Nyakyusa take great pride in the appearance of their homesteads (*vide infra*, p. 77). The early European

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

time, and providing meat feasts at funerals and at the initiation and marriage of daughters. 264 574

As it is proper for men to eat with their equals it is improper for them to eat with their juniors, or with women. In the past fathers and sons never ate or drank together. Nowadays they sometimes do so, even though conservative pagans, especially if the fathers and sons have been working together. Three reasons are adduced for the change: first, the example of Europeans and Swahili; secondly, the fact that the country is at peace and it is safe for all the men to drink together, whereas formerly, when there was constant danger of attack, the young men were forbidden to drink at all; and thirdly the fact that young men earn money and buy beer for themselves which they may invite a 'father' to share (*vide* Document p. 194). When the Nyakyusa drink beer they replenish the pot repeatedly with boiling water, and men expect to have the water boiled for them by a woman. As Mwambuputa explained, 'Sometimes my son brings his pot (of beer) to my place and calls his friends saying: "We will take the pot to mother's house and she will pour in water for us." Then they come to my place, and they invite me to drink, and I accept, and we drink together. How can I grudge my son beer when I have some? Did he and his friends not entertain me?' The change turns on the fact that a young man can earn money and buy beer for himself while yet unmarried. Formerly no unmarried man commanded millet for brewing. Now, when he is drinking in his father's homestead he cannot but invite his father to join him. 264 593 178

Women commonly eat alone with their young children and unmarried daughters. Sometimes co-wives who are good friends eat together, but they have no obligation to do so, and in a big homestead perhaps only two wives will eat together and each of the others eat alone. More usually a woman sends a dish of food to each co-wife to eat in her own hut. For a woman to eat food with a man is considered quite impossible. In those families in which men no longer ate with neighbours one or two ate with their young sons, but we heard of none who ate with their wives. The example of Europeans did not influence them to this extent. 264 595

It is admitted that women also enjoy company and profit from it, and it is considered good that they should get on with their fellows, but there is no suggestion that it is a woman's duty to 264 462 574

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

cultivate her mind by conversation, or to eat regularly in company. In more formal hospitality there is the same difference; a woman never invites her friends to drink beer with her, or to a 'dinner party', as her husband must do if he is to have prestige with his neighbours. Women only share the ritual feasts at initiation and marriage, and at death.

There are local variations in Nyakyusa rituals, notably between the Kukwe and Nyakyusa proper. But everywhere there is an obligation to provide feasts at the funerals and marriages of dependants. When his wife or unmarried child dies, a man must kill cattle for his relatives and neighbours to feast at the burial,[1] while an heir provides a feast for his relatives, and the neighbours of the 'father' from whom he has inherited. At these feasts equal portions of meat are allotted to relatives and neighbours—or were so allotted until the rights of neighbours to meat at funerals were formally limited (*vide infra*, p. 93). An heir must also brew beer, or kill a bull, to feast the deceased's neighbours when he begins to cohabit with his widow, or moves the property from his village. At the initiation and marriage of a girl there is a series of feasts (five in Selya), the food for which is provided partly by the groom's family and partly by the bride's; and if, as is usual, the bride is still a virgin or has been deflowered by the groom himself, he must provide a bull in thanks for her virginity (*engambako jabusungu*), which is killed to feast the neighbours and relatives of her parents. The carcass is divided into three portions, one for the immediate neighbours of her father (men), one for 'those relatives with whom the father is on good terms and exchanges cattle', and one for the 'mothers' of the bride. Women as well as men eat meat and other fine food at all the marriage and funeral feasts.

The third occasion on which a feast for the village neighbours is thought to be essential is when a man or woman has offended his (or her) neighbours, or the neighbours of a 'father'. Thus a woman who has shirked her duty of advising on the division of her brother's inheritance, and is disapproved of by her neighbours on this account, begs pardon of them over a brewing of beer (*vide infra*, pp. 107, 236); a son, having insulted his father's neighbours

[1] For the circumstances under which other relatives must provide cattle for funeral feasts see Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939), p. 18.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

241 sheer hard work makes men and women look thin and
512 haggard. Work stops about noon; the women go home to attend to the food, the men to see to the cattle which the smaller boys have been looking after
231 during the day. The milking is always done by the
512 men; it is not women's work as with us. If there are
[462] flies about, and there usually are, the cows need no invitation to thrust their heads into the column of acrid smoke that arises from a dung fire, kindled for the purpose. The rest of the afternoon is filled either with small duties, basket mending, net work, some slight repairs to a canoe, rope making, house repairing; or it may be there is a lawsuit to be settled, and every idler will make a point of being present.

512 By the time food is over, night has closed in. If the night is dark, one after another slips away with a
[576] friendly "May you sleep well," and silence reigns until morning. Unless it is suddenly broken by the roar of a lion or the growl of a leopard; and then the young men, who sleep with the cattle, rush out with spears and clubs and wild shouting to drive off the intruder, while the others raise a weird cry within the houses. Should the lion take refuge in a thicket and refuse to be driven off, a small party may slip round to the nearest white man, if he is not too far away, to beg him either to lend them a rifle, or to
512 come himself to their aid. In the warm moonlight
535 nights, however, other noises fill the ear. The young people gather for a dance, and the drum fills the night air with its interminable tum tum tum, now soft and

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Nyakyusa are, predominantly, a patrilineal people, for inheritance normally follows the male line. They differ, however, from the patrilineal peoples of Europe in that brothers inherit before sons. Inherited wealth is thus mainly kept in the hands of the older men, though they are under certain obligations towards their " sons " (whether own or classificatory) in their use of it. Marriage involves a transfer of anything from four to thirty head of cattle from the bridegroom to his father-in-law, and consequently the chief obligation which an older man has, both to his own sons and to the sons of any kinsman from whom he has inherited, is to provide them, in due time, with cattle for marriage. But this obligation is not an absolute one, it depends, in part, upon the due fulfilment by each " son " of his filial duties, which are, firstly, to hoe his father's fields diligently and, secondly, to maintain a respectful bearing towards him. Unmarried men have no gardens of their own, they work their fathers' land and eat the produce of it which their mothers cook. 611 428 583 593

Under modern conditions money for tax and clothes is necessary both to father and son, and very many young men visit the nearby Lupa gold fields regularly, for periods of a few months at a time, to earn it. A youth who always brings back to his parents after each spell of absence tax money and some presents is held to have done all his duty and he will be given marriage cattle just as soon and as readily as if he had spent all his time hoeing at home. And if he earns more, sufficient to purchase some of his marriage cattle for himself, still his father benefits, for the old man has then to spend fewer beasts from his own stock. But the Lupa needs food as well as labour and some unmarried men stay continuously at home and engage in the production of crops ; after the family needs have been met the surplus is sold and from the proceeds the father pays his own tax and his sons' and buys clothes for them as well. 167 593

Hoeing, which is the hardest part of Nyakyusa cultivation, is normally done by men, planting ; weeding, reaping and cooking by women. But some women nowadays do some hoeing too—if their husbands are away at work or if for any other reason they find it difficult to get enough ground prepared for them. Traditionally, I was told, women never used a hoe at all. 241 462

Polygyny is the rule rather than the exception among middle-aged men, and in a polygynous household, as we shall see, each wife has her own garden plots. The institution of polygyny has many other elements besides the economic, but the economic is not the least important of them: the taking of additional wives is the best capital investment which is open to an ordinary, uneducated, Nyakyusa peasant. A Nyakyusa wife is not her husband's property, she is his wife ; but as family relationships are, among the Nyakyusa, the basis of economic activity, so the more wives 595

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

their wives took to wearing cloth they should earn it for themselves by growing and selling millet and brewing beer, and many women do the clearing and hoeing in their fields, work that used to fall to men; but it is difficult for a chief to refuse to provide a man to hoe the ridges in his wife's field, or to refuse an elderly woman a cloth or some salt, and young heirs grumble much about their encumbrances.

In the political field there has been a sustained attempt to make local government more democratic and to include in it the educated men. Between 1891, when the German Government first assumed control of the area, and 1938, the tendency was for the power of the chiefs to be increased at the expense of that of the commoners. This was admitted by the chiefs themselves, as we have seen. In 1949 there was established a system of Rural Councils, on which chiefs, village headmen (*amafumu*), and ordinary commoners are represented. Four[1] of each category are chosen as representatives on the Council in their area by an electoral college itself elected by all taxpayers. Rungwe District is divided into five areas. The policy of treating some chiefs as senior to others has been abandoned and each of the seventy-eight recognized rulers (*abatwa*) is eligible for election as a chief's representative on his local Rural Council. Village headmen (two from each chiefdom) and the ordinary commoners are similarly chosen. The five Rural Councils in turn elect one man of each sort to the District Council.[2] The system allows for, and seems to have achieved, a combination of men with traditionally high status and those who are conspicuous by reason of their education or success as coffee or rice farmers. The old feeling that education was not necessary to a chief's son, though it might be useful to a poor man, has vanished, and a considerable number of the educated leaders of the district are sons or grandsons of chiefs. The elected president of the District Council, Mr. Gordon Mwansasu (186) is of the Nyakyusa chiefs' lineage, though not of the most senior line. In the Rural Councils the presidents elected have all, with one exception, been ruling chiefs, but it is not necessarily the genealogically senior who is chosen. There is scope for selection on the grounds of character and ability.

[1] Five in the populous plain, Ntebela (MuNgonde).

[2] cf. Z. E. Kingdon, 'The Initiation of a System of Local Government by African Rural Councils in Rungwe District of Tanganyika', *Journal of African Administration*, vol. iii, 4 (1951).

137 in thickness. This part is devoid of timber except along some river banks—*Albizzia* and *Acacia* spp.—and fuel has to be carried some distance. The dominant herbs are *Crotalaria striata* and *Hyparrhenia* sp., with *Phragmites* and *Pennisetum purpureum* along the rivers.

Methods of Cultivation

241 The work of cultivation is equally divided between the sexes. After the plots have been
462 cleared and hand-hoed by the men, it is women's work to plant, clear, harvest, winnow and sell at the market. Men's work consists of clearing, hoeing and looking after the cattle.

242 Rotation of crops is practised, as it must be in an area where all land is far from pro-
241 ductive. In the highlands, 9,500 feet to 5,000 feet, the rotation in valleys is sweet potatoes, finger millet, groundnuts, finger millet, groundnuts, finger millet and rest for five years, or sweet potatoes, maize for five years and rest for five years. On the hillsides, finger millet and pigeon pea or finger millet alone are sown every fourth year.

In the medium altitudes, between 5,000 feet and 2-3,000 feet, the rotation is finger millet, maize and yams, beans, rested and grazed. Continual planting of rice cannot take place as fertility is so quickly impaired.

In the lower altitudes, below 2,000 feet, rice is planted continuously for some 15 years and the land is then rested and grazed for about 8 years.

Diet and Food Crops

262 No one food is the staple throughout the district, but plantains, maize and sweet potatoes for the higher altitudes and rice on the lake shore are generally eaten, with additions that vary from area to area.

243 Maize is planted both on contoured ridges and on flat land. Holes are drilled generally 3 feet apart and each hole has 3 seeds planted
[241] in it. Maize is usually interplanted with beans or Bambarra groundnuts, groundnuts, cowpeas or pigeon peas. Planting takes place in the highlands in July to September and harvesting in February to April. In the medium altitudes, two crops are planted annually, in November to February and again in May to June. In the lower altitudes, however, little maize is grown
[251] and this is sown in November to December and harvested in March and April. Maize is stored in mud-covered basket granaries or is
[262] sold as soon as it is dried. It is eaten roasted or boiled with beans. The varieties of maize grown vary but they are mostly of the hard flint type.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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[353]
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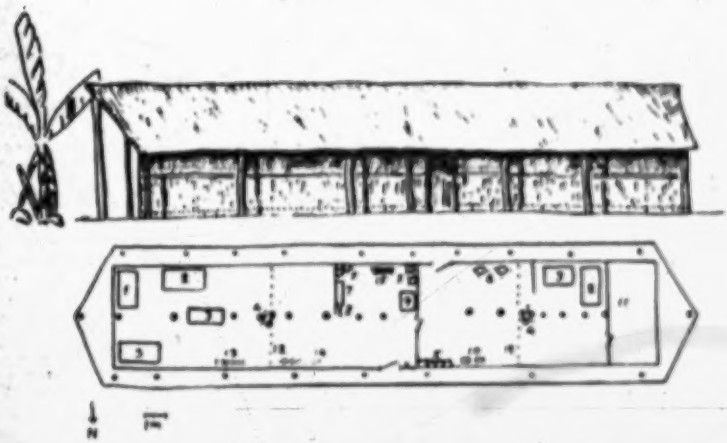

An ikhaga in the village of Kisondela, the district of Rutengalo, belonging to a man with two wives. The rooms have bamboo ceilings from dotted lines to either gable. Posts reaching to ridge of roof are filled in. 1, husband's bed; 2, wife's bed; 3, child's bed; 4, hearth; 5, hens' nests; 6, water jar; 7, roost; 8, ladder; 9, table; 10, stools; 11, store-room; 12, dotted lines show limitation of ceiling; 13, small objects; 14, working material; 15, sleeping mat.

born. On page 357, he reports how the boys, when 7 or 10 years old, will leave their parents' house to live in long, rectangular cowhouse-like houses big or small, in a special youngsters' quarter at the far end of the village. On page 358 he writes: In many cases you do not know for certain whether you are dealing with [343] a youngsters' house or a cowhouse—for the cattle may well be kept in these [184 houses—or the herdsmen may sleep in the cowhouses. However, this mostly holds true of the low-lying Konde country, while on the other hand, in the high country, 291] the cattle is usually kept in the dwelling houses. On pages 371 and 372, he relates how the cattle is tied to posts at night, and he shows a picture of a cowhouse.

He also refers (on page 376) to the use of the rectangular house for married men besides the boys. The difference is seen in the fact that these houses are not [462] roughcast with mud, as this work is the province of women. Finally, he reports that, during the last few years of his stay in the Konde country, he saw Konde [177] houses being built under increasing influence of the coastal culture, in imitation of the Swahili houses. They were roughcast with mud inside and out, and had a verandah supported by posts.

In 1955, many ikhagas could be seen. Some were for the cattle, but most were dwelling houses for married people. (Boys aged 7–10 and upwards until the [824] marriageable age lived in ramshackle boys' houses, the material of which was not [855] bamboo, but a thinner grass, resembling bamboo very much. These houses stood

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P. 138]

Notes on the daily life of the Nyakyusa (Tanganyika Territory)

Cf. Sociologus 1951, I, 1 S. 53 ff.

By F. Rudolf Lehmann

192 576 *1. Greetings.* The first thing to strike a visitor to the Nyakyusa country north of Lake Nyasa on passing through one of the numerous picturesque villages surrounded by banana groves is the way of greeting customary among these people. *"Ukuponya"* is the Nyakyusa word for "to greet". In the morning you are greeted with the exclamation: *"uponile* (pl. *muponile)"*, which literally means: "Did you sleep well?" And you may answer in the same way, or, in fuller form as you can hear it from the mouth of the natives: *"ase ndaga, uponile"*, or *"uponile yoyoque"*. *"ase ndaga"* may be used with all answers, meaning: thanks! At noon or in the afternoon you will hear: *"uvombide"*, you have worked, or, have you worked? Then, according to the case, you may answer: *"muvombide ananda"*, you, men, have worked, or, generally: *"muangare"*, which is equivalent to the Swahili: *"habari gani?"*. If you greet a person in the evening with the words: *"uponage"*, may you sleep well, the person thus addressed will answer: *"kagone!"*.

234 [312] *2. Milking.* The first task in the daily life of the Nyakyusa people is for the men to milk the cows. This is done in the morning before the cattle are driven out to graze and again in the evening when they return. But the cattle are also driven back to the village at noon when [237 232] they are usually fumigated standing in the smoke of a fire for which cow dung and banana leaves are used, a process designed to remove vermin from the skin of the cattle. The animals seem to be very fond of this procedure. They stand quietly in the smoke gazing at the passers-by.

241 [462] *3. Hoeing.* "Hoeing is the work of men, planting weeding, reaping is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about four hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a. m., on the upland plateau they

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done." (G. Wilson, Introduction, p. 260). 241

The putting of maize-grains as seed into the earth is the women's work, the sowing of millet *(malesi)* of both sexes. If you ask the men after they had come home from their work: "*Mukumbide ifivanya fya nongi?*", "Whose fields did you hoe?", the answer often may be: "*Tukumbide ifivanya fya tata!*" We have hoed the fields of our father. [243 462]

In former times, the Nyakyusa had a lot of ceremonies relating to the beginning of the hoeing season and of the beginning of the harvest-work. They are, however, nowadays nearly extinguished under the influence of European culture. [177]

With respect to the beginning of the hoeing season, a very comprehensive ceremony had to be carried out by the chief in community whith the *ungunga* (medicine man) for providing the fields with extraordinary *(-sisya)* power *(amaka)*: *amaka amasisya*, in this case: fertility. 241 622 [192]

When the crop was ripe, it was (at first) forbidden *(mwiko)* to take anything from the crop before the chief had given the permission. First the oldest male villagers informed the chief that it may be now the just time to give the crop free for the people, saying: "The people is hungry, we will now give them to eat!" Then the chief ordered that 6 or 8 (maize') corn-cobs were brought to him, and he sent these corn-cobs by a messenger to the (holy) offering-grove where they must be put down. After that has been correctly executed, he gave the permission for reaping the new crop. [182]

(NB. It was believed that those corn-cobs put into the offering-grove were eaten especially from the leopards. The powderes bones of the leopards were considered important ingredients of the consecration drink which the chief had to take at his initiation ceremonies and which should give him the strength *(amaka)* of a leopard, so that he also was called "the leopard" or "the leopard chief".) [237 825]

4. *Herding the Cattle and Cleansing the Stable.* The sociological importance of cattle among the Nyakyusa and the specific practice among them of herding the cattle by herdboys, that is also of highly sociological importance for the structure of the Nyakyusa society, is already described by G. Wilson (Introduction, p. 269 f). 233

The cleansing of the stables of which the Nyakyusa possess a great number of very well built ones, which have also sometimes a considerable length — apart from the cattle kraals —, is the task of 233 343 462

14:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

233 343 462 [413] the women, but the men are responsible for keeping the floor of the stable in good repair. For this purpose a specific tool is used, called ulutobe indobelu. It is round on top, flattened on the lower side and provided with a handle.

224 5. *Hunting.* Sometimes the Nyakyusa go out to hunt, but nowadays hunting is much more restricted than in former times as described e. g by Mackenzie in his book: "The spirit-ridden Konde" (London 1925). This record, however, deals mostly with the Ngonde of the environment of Karonga whose interesting social history was unsurpassably revealed to us by Mr. Godfrey Wilson's treatise: "The Constitution of Ngonde" (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, Number Three. Livingstone, [656] Northern Rhodesia 1939.) Hunting in the Nyakyusa country is now curtailed by governmental regulations. Hunting *(ukufuema)*, therefore, does not supply an essential part of the food requirements of the [136] [654] natives. The colobus apes on the slopes of the Rungwe volcano and the Poroto Mountains are sometimes killed for their attractive black and white skins, but fortunately this is now forbidden by the government. [439] Otherwise these apes would be exterminated in quite a short time, since the skins of these apes are in great demand with some Europeans for rugs and covers. Naturally, the hunting of lions and especially of leopards, which even nowadays still cause great damage, is not restricted.

224 231 The hunting of game for food is often done with dogs *(imbwa)* which have small bells *(ingesi)* on collars round their necks. Thereby the hunter *(umfuemi)* always knows the whereabouts of his dog. The chase is continued till the dog or dogs are exhausted. The object of the hunt *(umfuema)* is generally a small type of antelope *(ikaeya)*, e. g. in the [656] environment of Mwakalele, as I was instructed. The usual time for hunting is the cooler season, but to-day a permit of the government is also required.

223 Catching birds by means of traps *(untepu, pl. imitepu)* is still common in the Nyakyusa area. I have also seen such traps constructed by means of the flicking-gallow's principle also in the vicinity of Utengule among the Safwa. The herd boys especially set traps to catch quails *(imbesi)* when the malesi (millet) harvest is over. Sometimes smaller birds are also coursed until they are exhausted and then slain. One day I found a stick vertically put on the soil and with a triangle made of smaller sticks at its top. The horizontal part of which was smeared with an adhesive substance. I was told that this was a trap for birds.

14:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

but I was astonished that this trap was erected relatively near to my 223
tent on the border of the village of Katumba.

6. *Fishing.* Fishing is a much more common practice with the 226
Nyakyusa than hunting. The old-established custom of poisoning fish
in their smaller rivers is still widely used. The poison is derived from [324]
the *unkeredu* shrub. Its branches and leaves are broken off, reduced
to small pieces between stones and then packed in a covering of grass
to resemble a long cigar about 1 meter in length and 25 cm in width.
The bundles prepared in such a manner are fixed between two rows
of stones placed across the river for this purpose. The poison gradually
diffuses into the water, which takes on a green colour. The fish are
soon affected by the poison and rise to the surface with gaping mouths.
They are then easily caught with a scoop made from bamboo. The open
end of a piece of bamboo is split into several sections and the splinters
are bent apart and tied together with raffia to form a sort of funnel[1].
The fish are strung through their gills on small pliable sticks and [252]
roasted at home over a fire. All people are allowed to join in this
fishing which to them is always a festive occasion in the cooler season.

Fishing in broader and deeper rivers, such as the lower Kiwira, is
done by means of large fish-traps. They are made and repaired by men
on the banks of the river. The traps are attached to poles rammed into
the bed and almost invariably boats trying to reach the Lake Nyasa
get struck on submerged poles. These large fish-traps strung across the
river form quite an impressive sight. Looking up-stream, they look
like the bows of little ships standing in a row.

7. *Preparing food.* With the Nyakusa the preparation of food is so 252
exclusively the task of the women, that R. Thurnwald is quite correct 462
when says (Black and White in East Africa, London 1935, p. 157):
"Mendolk starve if there are no women to prepare their meals". There
is thus a very strong division of labour between the sexes, also noti- [482]
cable in the carrying of loads. For a young man to carry the load of an
old woman or his sweetheart, whom perchance he might meet on the
road, would be a grave violation of a rigid custom.

As the preparation of the food is the women's duty, also the grinding
(*akutika*) of the corn in a mortar (*ikitali*) with a pestle (*ikitwo*) which
is the exclusive task of the female sex. The wife is always the first to [264]
rise in the morning to prepare breakfast. Usually, however, this is not

[1] NB. They are of the same kind as those of the Hottentots along the [171]
Great Fish River in South West Africa.

14:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

very substantial, the main meal being taken in the evening shortly before sunset.

8. Manufacture. The pot for cooking (*indeku*) is placed on three stones which form the hearth (*ikipembero*, hearth stones). The flat bowl made of clay used for the needs of the kitchen is called *ulwengabia* and a pig pot used for storing water (*ngumbe*. The pots of clay are manufactured by Kisi women because in their land on the north-eastern shores of Lake Nyassa the best clay is found. In the eastern part of the Nyakyusa country adjacent to Kisi land the women visit the pottery markets of the Kisi, but to the remoter villages, e. g. around the Rungwe volcano the pottery is brought by Kisi men. In this case, owing to the great distance from the Kisi-Land the men carry the loads of eight to ten pots on their head between split poles of bamboo. The Kisi pots I saw in the Rungwe Station were ornamented in a rough way with red ochre and seemed only slightly baked. The hearth stones, however, are made by the Nyakyusa women themselves as I was able to observe near Rutenganio, where widows manufactured them for sale.

In many villages of the Nyakyusa I could watch basket-making. This I saw being done by men. In the chief's hut in Katumba I had the opportunity to admire a great number of very big baskets (*ifruba*) for storing grain, smeared with cow dung on the outside. The attractive closely wickered baskets, which are filled with *maiei* (millet) and then placed in water for a night in the process of beer-brewing were originally made by the Bunyi, but nowadays also the Nyakyusa are said to be skilled enough to weave them. I had no opportunity to observe it, but could acquire an excellent specimen of that wicker-work.

9. The Meal. At the beginning of each meal the hands are washed, including those of children. The men take their meal separately from the women. The wives only eat when their husbands have been satisfied. Boys under ten years eat with their mothers, but as soon as they begin to live in age-set villages, they eat together with their friends of their own age-set, as described in detail by Mr. G. Wilson in his "Introduction of Nyakyusa Society" (Bantu Studies X, p. 311). The head of the family likes to eat together with his friends.

Meat is eaten very seldom, but on special occasions such as marriages, death lamentations, christenings of Christianized natives, enormous quantities are devoured. *Inyama* (Swahili: *nyama*) is the Nyakyusa word for all sorts of meat, *ingumbe* for that of cattle and *ingombeko* for that of sheep. Near Uyangale I saw black pigs (*ingurwe*, pig)

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the figures. Also bicycles, aeroplanes, motor-cars and other striking objects of the European civilization are to be found represented and concentric white circles adjacent to these drawings or paintings. 531 [177]

14. *Houses.* Sometimes the upper portion of the framework of the rectangular houses is not fully plastered with mud leaving broad open areas or strips horizontally or slopingly to the base-line. This may have its origin in an artistic motive and at the same time be useful in ventilating the interior of the hut. The ancient custom of the Nyakyusa to fill out the spaces between the framework of the walls with flat, oval cakes or clods of clay, supported inside the house by a second framework of bamboo (*uwumango*), has also a decorative effect. 342

The preparation of these oval sun-dried clay cakes is the work of the women. L. Monteith Fotheringham described this in his "Adventures in Nyasaland" (London 1891, p. 22) with the following words: "The women make the bricks in shape like large eggs by pressing the clay between their hands." The building of the framework of the hut and the thatching of the roof is the task of the men. Nyumba means "the house" in Kinyakyusa as wellas in Swahili; *isyenga* is the name for the old-fashioned hut of the Nyakyusa possessing a round baseline and a framework expanding upwards in diameter. The rectangular hut is called *ikibaga* and the smaller rectangular hut used as a store or a fowl pen, *akabaga*. It is interesting to note that there is no special word for roof in Kinyakyusa. This part of the hut or house is simply called "the above" (*iyuru*). In contrast to this fact the different poles of the roof-structure are specially named according to their position parallel to or at right angels to the ridge of the rectangular houses. *Ukutalike* means to bind the different rafters of the roof together; *imbanda* is the name for the supporting poles of the roof, and *isyenga* for the poles of the framework of the walls. [334 462] [113]

15. *Outfit.* Inside the house we find besides the bedsteads (*ikitara*, pl. (*tiara*) and the household utensils, the grinding-mill (*urusaara*), consisting of an upper (smaller) and a lower (broader) stone. The flour falls into a basket placed in front of the mill. Sometimes in a corner of the hut a nest (*ikitera*) for a sitting hen on top of a pole is to be found. Outside the house is a place for the sweepings (*urutagililo*). The cleaning of the interior of the houses and also the repairing of the mud plaster is the task of the women, but I saw men cleaning the space in front of the huts. At any case, it must be acknowledged that the cleanliness of a Nyakyusa village leaves little to be desired. 352 [42] [231] 356 462

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

562 ship among the women themselves is, moreover, less developed than in many other African societies.

178 The isolation and self-sufficiency of the Nyakyusa are diminishing rapidly, for considerable economic and political develop-
439 ment followed the 1914–18 war. Coffee (first introduced by the German missionaries) has been developed as a native crop for
444 export, and the cultivation of rice (which had been fostered by the British to provide food for their troops) has expanded. Gold-digging began some fifty miles beyond the borders of the Nyakyusa country, on the Lupa river, and there Nyakyusa men have found both employment as labourers and a ready market for much of their produce, so that by 1936 Rungwe district was exporting goods worth £24,000 annually.[1] In addition to this peasant production there are a small number of European estates
[167] producing coffee and tea for export.[2] We estimate the number of Nyakyusa working outside the district as migrant labourers at about 8,000 or 25 per cent of the able-bodied men. There were about 7,000 Nyakyusa men on the Lupa gold-fields in 1937,[3] and a small number on the coffee plantations of Moshi. These are all within a hundred miles of home; and the Lupa labourers return usually after two or three months' work. A considerable number of Nyakyusa are also at work on the sisal plantations of the coast, and employed as domestic servants or in other semi-skilled jobs through Tanganyika, who remain away for periods up to two or three years. Nyakyusa labourers are regarded by European employers as intelligent and capable of heavy work, but lacking in all the subservient virtues.

642 The system of Indirect Rule was established in 1926, and a consistent attempt has been made to develop a centralized Native
177 Authority for the Rungwe district. The traditionally sovereign chiefs of the Nyakyusa have been grouped in eleven court districts with one chief as president of the Native Court in each (see Map III); these eleven chiefs, together with the two presidents of the Ndali and Lambya courts, belong to a single federation, with an appeal court and joint Native treasury of its own. In the eleven Native Courts (which are courts of record) most of the

[1] Figures estimated on the basis of information supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu.

[2] In 1938 the total area alienated was 26,[illegible] ac.; only 2,500 ac. of this was being worked.

[3] Estimate of the Labour Officer on the [illegible] cpm, 4 June 1937.

[Missing in the Original – Analysis]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

£25,500 was earned by Nyakyusa migrant labourers and those employed in the district.[1] Earnings from employment are thus probably about equal to the total earnings from the sale of produce. 465

Within the district Nyakyusa men are employed in Government service as clerks, hospital orderlies, agricultural inspectors, and as labourers on roads and buildings. They are employed also as house servants by Europeans, as labourers on the twelve European-owned estates in the district, and as shop assistants and servants by Indian traders. There is also a little employment of Nyakyusa by Nyakyusa in agricultural work. Traditionally chiefs, being responsible for hoeing the fields of many wives, sometimes employed poor men to hoe for them, rewarding them after two hoeing seasons with a heifer or bull, but the extent of such employment was, in the old days, small and confined to the chiefs. Nowadays it has been considerably extended, rich men employing others to hoe or, less commonly, to plough for them, and paying them in stock or cash. A few monogamists also employ young boys to assist their wives in fetching wood and water. 464 357

Most Nyakyusa men now take paid employment at one time or another. Of a small sample of seventy-nine men, seventy-six (94 per cent) had been in paid employment. There was, however, a marked difference between the work histories of young and old, and between pagan and Christian. Of the pagan men over middle age, the majority of those who worked had not done so willingly, but had been conscripted as carriers, and the total periods for which they had worked were short, averaging under six months per man. On the other hand, all the Christian men over middle age had worked willingly, and the total period for which each had worked averaged over twelve years. Of the young men, all who had worked had done so willingly, but as with the older men, there was a marked difference between the length of time pagans and Christians spent in employment. The profession of Christianity is, amongst the Nyakyusa, correlated with education, and Christian young men, more especially the sons of Christians, tend to secure the skilled or semi-skilled jobs. Those who have skilled work tend to stay longer in a job and return home less frequently because they fear lest they may not find an equally good job again, and because they have often travelled far to find skilled 464 466 464 465

[1] Based on the estimated number of men in employment, and an analysis of wage rates within and outside the district.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

work. The unskilled can always get a job, and frequent moves make little difference to their pay. In the sample taken 81 per cent of the Christian sons of Christians, 40 per cent of the Christian sons of pagans, and 5 per cent of the pagan sons of pagans had had skilled or semi-skilled jobs. These cases are set out in a table on p. 193. Of twenty-eight individuals who remained over a year at a stretch in employment, twenty were in skilled or semi-skilled jobs, and eighteen had had some schooling.

It was very difficult to get adequate information on the proportion of time that young men spent away, for though the periods they spent at work might be accurately remembered, the periods at home were not easily recorded. Ten young Christians (other than those cited in the sample above), whose work histories were carefully investigated, had spent, on the average, eighteen and a half months, out of the twenty-five months preceding their return home, in employment outside Rungwe district. That is, they had spent less than a quarter of their time at home. They are certainly not typical of the whole district, but they are probably not unrepresentative of the young Christians.

Certain points emerge from this study. Firstly, the time spent away from their homes at work by middle-aged and elderly pagans is negligible. Secondly, the middle-aged Christians have all worked for long periods, but during most of that time they have lived with their families in Christian villages attached to missions in the district; they are not migrants in the sense that their sons are, though they move from one mission village to another following employment. Thirdly, the great bulk of the young men work outside the district at some time, and those in skilled jobs (mostly Christians) tend to stay away for much longer periods than the unskilled. The effects of this are noticed by Nyakyusa themselves, who remarked of Kabembe Christian village that: 'There were few nice houses, for so many of the young men are away at work.' Nevertheless, even in Christian villages, the effects of men's absence is much less marked than it is in Ngonde, where the percentage of absentees is estimated at over half the able-bodied men.[1]

[1] It was estimated in 1934 that the total male labour force of the district was approximately 12,000 and that, of these, 300 men were in Southern Rhodesia and the Union, and 5,000 on the Lupa goldfields. (Figures supplied by courtesy of the District Commissioner, Rungwe, from District records.)

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Economic co-operation beyond the village has therefore increased enormously, and this is correlated with a decrease in economic co-operation within the village. The change is most obvious in the case of migrant labourers who, while remaining members of their villages (for they are domiciled there) cease, during the period they are at labour centres, to co-operate with their village neighbours in building, herding, hoeing and hunting; and those of their wives who accompany them are also withdrawn from village activities. 476

Of the men in paid employment within the district, some, such as house servants, police, hospital orderlies, and clerks attached to the Government station, are very largely withdrawn from economic co-operation in their villages; and even labourers employed on European estates, who still cultivate for themselves, and those who meet essential expenses by growing cash crops on their own account, co-operate less with their village neighbours than was customary in the old days. 476 444

As we have seen there is no village co-operation in the production of the main cash crops—rice and coffee—such as there was in the cultivation of three of the main food crops; therefore those who grow cash crops spend a smaller proportion of their time working with their neighbours than their fathers did. Moreover, the cultivation of cash crops encourages the development of hired labour at the expense of work parties attended by neighbours. In effect, the cultivation of cash crops involves less village co-operation than did the traditional cultivation of food crops, and in so far as men's energies are directed into producing cash crops, village co-operation becomes relatively less important. 241 476

We argue that while traditionally there was considerable co-operation in production between fellow villagers, that co-operation is diminishing, and its diminution is correlated with employment for wages and the production of crops for sale. The more educated the individual the more time he is likely to spend working outside his village, and the less he co-operates in economic activities with his fellow villagers. 476 178

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

464
169
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571

5. SUMMARY OF LABOUR HISTORIES

Information from men concerned

Category	No. of Men	Worked	Average Total Period (Men who worked)	Working Out Time and Time at a Month	Schooling		Skilled and Semi-skilled (of those working)	Place of Work		
					Illiterate	Normal Village School		In Tanganyika only	Large Gold Mine	Out of Territory
Pagans: Middle-aged and over	10	90%	8 months	90%	100%	90	10%	10%	–	0%
Christians: Middle-aged and over	10	100%	10 years, 6 months	80%	80%	80	80%	80%	–	80%
Pagans: Young	10	90%	[illegible]	77%	60%	0%	0%	10%	50%	80%
Christians: Sons of pagans, young	11	91%	–	80%	0%	90%	40%	30%	70%	30
Christians: Sons of Christians, young	10	100%	–	90%	0%	10%	80%	0%	80%	80%
Total	70	94%	–	80%	60%	19%	40%	30%	60%	77%

[1] Four worked on other relative stations of the Province.

[2] As many of the men are quite young, a record of the total period worked is insignificant. We lack material here on the proportion of time spent at work.

[3] This is not a true random sample for informants were selected deliberately. Therefore, the percentages have no exact significance, but a correlation between Christianity, literacy, skilled work, and long-term employment is suggested.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

795 the case of a Christian who had stayed away from a ritual in his
184 family and 'as soon as he met his relatives he fell sick and coughed
788 like an animal. So they got some of the lees of the beer and gave it to him and he recovered.' A number of Christian kinsmen, leaders in the Church, did not come to the gasping-cough ritual which we attended, but others did come and sipped the beer, or had the lees sent to them at their homes. In the ritual for protection against sorcery which we watched a Christian brother and his wife took part.

And some Christians, though they deny the necessity of many of the pagan rituals for themselves as Christians, still believe them to be necessary to their pagan kinsmen. Hence the anomalous (and to the missionaries the highly unorthodox) position of a woman professing Christianity and acting as officiant in a pagan ritual, as did N. in the death ritual for Kalata's mother (p. 239). N., it will be remembered, came by night. The officiant who performed the ritual for Mwakobela's twins was under instruction as a Christian and was proposing to hand on her medicines to her daughter, a pagan, when she herself was received into the Church. She explained this when Mwakobela (her patient) asked her: 'And what shall we do for twin medicine when you become a Christian?' And we had little doubt that she believed in the efficacy of her medicine for pagans.

Though Christians cannot go through pagan rituals as principals they do not withdraw altogether: they often help their pagan neighbours as grave-diggers at a funeral and in the provision of food for guests at funerals and marriages; and the young men and girls may dance as a separate group, singing their own
[578] songs or hymns and ignoring the drums. Sometimes acute rivalry between the two groups of dancers is apparent.

771 The effect of Christian teaching on pagan ritual is not limited
177 to the partial withdrawal of professing Christians. In those villages most influenced by missions, such as Ilolo, near Rungwe, there is considerable scepticism among pagans, and many of them curtail the rituals in their families, or do not attend them. The Christian view is that 'the pagans see that the Christians disregard the rituals and nothing happens to them, so they begin to ignore them too'. 'Pagans fear much less than they used to do.'

177 Men who are in European employment either inside or outside
● 464 the district cannot attend all the rituals. Their case is partially met by keeping the lees of the ritual beer with which to treat them

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

on their return home, but the general effect of modern conditions is that the solidarity of the kinship group expressed in gatherings at rituals is weakened. These changes will be discussed at length in the volume on the communal rituals after the differences between the pagan and Christian conceptions of God have been analysed.

(*c*) *The exchange of gifts*

All the family rituals are occasions for the exchange of gifts which pass primarily between lineages linked by marriage. The exchanges at different rituals are connected, and acceptance of a gift at a marriage may necessitate a return gift at a funeral. Thus the groom gives cattle for his bride at the marriage and at a funeral sons-in-law and fathers-in-law must bring cattle to kill so that they may accompany the deceased, and these are counted among the marriage-cattle given or returned. They may be kept and not killed if there are sufficient cattle to kill otherwise, but they must be offered. The obligation of affines to 'bury one another' by providing cattle for each other's funerals is even mentioned in the marriage negotiations. If a bride is not sent to replace a dead woman, marriage-cattle must be returned by her father, or at least one beast representing 'a mother to draw water for you'. So strong is the feeling that acceptance of a gift implies the obligation to make a return, that cattle offered for a marriage or funeral feast may be refused, on the ground that the family concerned do not wish to commit themselves to returning them. Angombwike described how he sweated and could eat little of a very lavish marriage feast, at which he acted as the groom's 'go-between', for he was wondering how he could make adequate return (cf. p. 253).

The greatest gifts are cattle; but fowls, cloth, beer, curds, bananas, pots, mats, firewood, ointment, cooked food and, nowadays, cash play a subsidiary part. At a funeral affines of the dead man who have no cattle, affines of the 'owner of the funeral', and close friends bring cloths. After the consummation of a marriage, or the inheritance of a widow, the new husband must give his wife a fowl, or meat, or cash representing a fowl, to take to her parents, and when she bears a child he sends another fowl. The wife's people, for their part, bring beer, ointment, firewood, mats, pots, and bananas when they take a bride or young mother back to her husband. There are also three or four exchanges of feasts

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

512 low, again rising to a perfect fury of rapid sounds,
535 not without a certain rhythm, but with rasping effect upon the nerves of Europeans tossing sleeplessly in the warm humid air.

[221] After harvest comes the house-building; and when
487 that is finished the men are free to go out to seek
•464 work. They usually set out in companies, for the Konde dislikes being alone on a journey. Like all
[609] home-loving people, they are suspicious of strangers, and if they have to pass through another tribe, they take great care to guard their small possessions; seldom more than they are wearing, and a spear or a club to guard them from the more obvious dangers of the way. There will be a few youths going out for the first time, with a wild flutter at the heart, of fear and expectancy. Fear, for they have heard strange tales of the white men and their ways; expectancy, because of the wonderful things they will see: the great houses, steamers, trains, motors; and what must seem countless white men to those who have been accustomed only to the missionary, the magistrate, and the storekeeper, and even these perhaps some days' journey from home. And who knows but he will come back with money in his pocket, wearing gorgeous raiment, a helmet perhaps, and, above all other things to be desired, a pair of boots! Those who stay long
[431] come back with the spoils of civilisation; highly coloured cloths, cheap clocks, melodeons, mouth-organs, worthless pocket-knives, which they deal out to admiring friends and acquaintances.

S:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

all except his own mother, whom he either builds for at a little distance and looks after, or else gives to a half-brother.[1] Inherited wives have the same land rights as others, and a mother for whom a son builds and hoes is trusted by him, in the matter of land, just like a wife.

And a married man often supports an old woman[1]—a mother, mother-in-law or elder sister—whose husband, though still alive, is incapable of hoeing and who has no unmarried sons. He may either hoe for her on her own husband's land or else assign to her a plot or two of his own.

The gardens of a household are not only worked by its members, other people assist them from time to time. Each married man usually invites a group of his village neighbours to help him with a day's hoeing two or three times a year, entertaining them to food and beer after the work is over. A married woman likewise is often assisted by women friends from neighbouring households in the planting, weeding or reaping of her crops and them she rewards simply with a luxurious meal in the evening, without any beer. Again, as we have seen, a married woman sometimes engages a young man to hoe for her regularly, for a month or more at a time, and pays him by feeding him well for that period.

But although this last custom is still common it is beginning to decline; fewer men each year are willing to work for any length of time except for money, and already in some of the more prosperous households young men are found to be employed in hoeing at the rate of 2/- a month in addition to their food. The young men who thus accept employment in hoeing are always the poor ones, those for whom (whether because their fathers are poor in cattle or because they have many elder brothers before them) the prospect of getting married is too distant to stimulate them to any great diligence at home. In the plain of Mungonde, however, where ploughs are extensively used, the owners of ploughs make a considerable profit by hiring themselves out with their ploughs at 2/- a plot (*ulupaka*).

Kinsmen and affines also often assist in a household's hoeing. When a man inherits his dead father's wealth then he assumes the position of father towards his own younger brothers and is responsible for the marriages of any who are bachelors; they then hoe for him and are fed by his wives just as unmarried sons do. Sons-in-law, again, are expected to bring their friends now and then to help their father-in-law in hoeing and they often do so, more particularly if they are behindhand with the marriage-cattle. After the day's work is over, however, they are entertained just as sumptuously as an ordinary work-party of neighbours.

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[1] And any kinswoman of his mother (sister or niece) whom his father has married is treated likewise.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Further, if a young man's own father is poor in cattle, he will often attach himself to the household of a rich kinsman, a brother of his father or of his mother, and hoe regularly for him. This is far more paying than hiring himself out to a mere neighbour, for he thereby places his rich kinsman *in loco parentis* and eventually gets from him a substantial proportion of his marriage cattle. 464 602

6. *INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS IN RELATION TO VILLAGE GROUP AND CHIEF*

Land is not owned in any absolute sense either by the man and his household who live on and cultivate it, or by the village group, or by the chief, but by all of them together. Land tenure among the Nyakyusa is a coherent system of rights in which the chief as overlord, the age-village under the leadership of its great-commoner, the individual male holder, his wives and children all participate. In this the Nyakyusa are in no way peculiar, for "absolute ownership" of land is a fiction nowhere realized; even in Western Europe the use of land is hedged by state and municipal regulations while the security of every owner's tenure is dependent upon political conditions which are not necessarily permanent. Everywhere, whether in civilized or in primitive society, the holding of land is "communal" in the sense that the individual's rights are dependent upon his social relationships, upon his membership of some group with a definite cultural idiom and social organization of its own; everywhere the holding of land is "individual" in the sense that particular people have, at any one moment, definite rights to participate in the use and to share the produce of particular pieces of ground. 423

There is however at the present time a difference of type between the land-tenure systems of Western Europe and those of the Central African tribes. Rapidly though these latter groups are being integrated with the world-wide organization of modern civilization, the process is not yet complete; and these systems of land-tenure still have some characteristics of the old primitive state wherein small and isolated groups were worlds unto themselves. For in some respects they are still isolated. The Nyakyusa, for example, are 400 miles from the nearest railway and, with the exception of a few small missions and plantations, they remain in occupation of all that traditional tribal land. Now in small and isolated social groups personal relationships necessarily dominate the holding of land for there are few or no impersonal relationships within their society at all. In the land-tenure systems of the vast social organizations of civilized society, on the other hand, impersonal relationship necessarily play an important part, though the precise legal emphasis which is laid

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tive capital, Tukuyu, and it is still thus used to distinguish this group 101
from others. This group will here be referred to as "*Nyakyusa proper*." Those in the North of the district to the West and East of Mount Rungwe call themselves *Kukwe* and *Mwamba* respectively, and there is a group of chiefdoms to the East, under the Livingstone Mountains, called *Selya*. All these four groups share a common culture, distinguished by minor [184]
local peculiarities of dialect and custom. Immediately bordering the Nyakyusa to the South West are the *Ngonde* (Europeanized as "*Konde*") in Northern Nyasaland; they belong to the same cultural group but are distinguished by greater differences of custom and speech than the others. I have not yet visited them.

In the hills to the West of the Rift live the *Ndali*, who are included in this administrative district; and on the plateau under these hills, to the West of the Kukwe, live the *Penja*. Both these small groups have old languages of their own which, though related to that of the Nyakyusa are [197]
more or less unintelligible to them; and they have equally distinct cultures. But they are now rapidly being assimilated to the Nyakyusa both in [177]
speech and in law.

I use the name Nyakyusa, in accordance with modern usage, to include the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, Mwamba, and Selya groups, but to exclude the Ndali, the Penja, and the Konde. The Nyakyusa together with the Ndali and Penja number 150,000; the Konde of Nyasa- [161]
land 30,000.[1]

Members of the Berlin and Moravian Missions were the first Euro- 747
peans to settle in the district, where they have lived now for forty-five 177
years and have made numerous converts. The German Administrators followed them closely, and later came a few planters. But pronounced economic change is a matter of the past five to ten years during which time the Lupa Gold Fields of South Tanganyika have been opened up and have employed increasing numbers of Africans on the diggings. During the past few years the young men of the Nyakyusa have developed [166
the habit of going for a few months, now and again, to the Gold Fields to 469]
earn money for tax and clothes. They seldom stay more than six months at a time, often only one or two; so that their absence does not cause the same difficulties in their own community that are found in other areas where the men spend longer periods away from home.

The Family, together with a sketch of wider Kinship Groupings

The relationships of husband and wife, parent and child, sibling and 593
sibling are continually visible in the culture of the Nyakyusa. The

[1] Government Census figures.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

842 Impotence and barrenness are well known facts, and magic is much used
595 to cure them; but apart from their operation it is believed that each
581 conception directly depends upon the frequency with which a man visits his wife. And thus the bearing of children is, for a woman, a demonstration of her husband's great affection for her. People adduce the number of children that a woman has borne to prove, in conversation, that she is her husband's favourite.

595 Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan Nyakyusa; a plurality of wives is necessary, in this society, for full sexual satisfaction, wives bring a man wealth, prestige and authority, the more wives he has the more children, he thinks, will be born to him.

853 It is believed that any contact with the sexual fluids is dangerous to a
831 young child's health, and so, after a woman has borne a child, her husband is supposed wholly to refrain from intercourse with her for about a year, until the child is old enough to play by itself and allow its mother time to wash in the mornings before touching it. Then he may begin to visit her again, but still she must not become pregnant until the child is weaned. "If she does her breasts become rotten" and the first child is harmed.
[833 As children are not weaned for two or three years, this rule involves the
842] couple in yet another year or more either of *coitus interruptus* or of infrequent intercourse (which also is believed to avoid conception).
[845] These taboos on intercourse after a child's birth are to some extent observed in practice, and are one of the reasons for polygyny among the Nyakyusa.

● 1464 Another reason is the absence of hired labour. With a few minor
595 exceptions the only way a man can increase the supply of labour at his disposal is by marrying more wives. Polygyny is the mark of a wealthy man, conditioned by his control of cattle, conditioning his supply of food. And the cattle spent in marriage come back again with interest as the polygynist's daughters begin to be betrothed and married.

595 It is extremely common for a man to take as his second or third wife the sister, half-sister, or brother's daughter of his first or second wife. By doing so a man pays a great compliment to the wife whose sister, or niece, he takes and to her family; his action implies complete satisfaction with her and friendship with her family. He sends his wife home "to fetch out (her kinswoman) into the open" (*ukusokola*); but she will not agree to do so unless she approves of him as a husband, and so, if she does agree, her action likewise compliments him. I know of one case in which a man wished to take his second wife's younger sister in this way.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 them first, then his grandfather, and father. Others told us that
778 rain stones always came from Kisi country, a very wet strip of land on the north-east shore of the Lake where the clouds always seem to gather when one looks south from the Nyakyusa valley and plain, and a piece of perforated wood used in Ngonde for making rain came from the hills of Mmaku, also a very wet country. Kasitile's stones were of two types, but no direct association of male and female was made. However, the Kukwe spoke of a 'mother' stone having young. 'The rain-maker puts back the stone in the potsherd without water (after rain has come) and going later he finds that it has got young, perhaps seven, with the mother there are eight.'

The rain-makers are subject to certain taboos: during the dry
791 season they may not wash lest they drive away the rain nor do they
[784] shave for 'they compare hair and clouds saying, "Let it be black", they compare a bald pate with sunshine.' And the rain-maker
[262] may not eat roasted maize 'for as the maize crackles in the potsherd when it is roasted, so the thunder will crackle in the sky'. He may not eat green maize (which is reaped during the rains) until the dry weather begins 'because he creates rain, which means he creates all the food which grows with the rain'. If he begins eating too soon he may stop the growth. And when the rain-maker is manipulating his instruments a sex taboo is observed.
[834] 'When I am making rain,' said Kasitile, 'I do not sleep with my wives for two days, it's taboo. How would Kyala help us if I did?'

In theory the rain-maker always works under the direction of
[643] the political authority—the Kyungu or a chief—but he is also thought to wreak vengeance on those who anger him. Kasitile was critical of his colleague in the hills above Isumba: 'He never makes a nice gentle rain, it always destroys food. . . . He is always demanding things from men, and, if they refuse, he brings his rain to destroy things. . . . There is a very strong wind and heavy rain which takes roofs off houses.' But when Kasitile himself was
[464] angry, because his son was taken as a tax defaulter to work on the
[687] roads, the weather grew bad.

789 People say I am angry, that this rain is because they came and beat me because of tax. This time the tax collectors came to my place and beat me and when I thought, 'It is not the custom with our forefathers for the tax collectors to come at all to men like me', I grew angry and prayed. . . . When I was in Mu'Ngonde the country suffered from hunger, all their children were in trouble. . . . Then I came up, and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XIII

TWENTY YEARS' CHANGE

How does Christianity interact with other revolutionary forces in the community? It has been possible to observe the changes that have taken place among the Nyakyusa after a lapse of twenty years, and a summary of them is necessary before we proceed to a discussion of the links between religious and secular change. 177

The first thing that strikes a visitor returning to Nyakyusa country after many years, is that the isolation, which was so typical of the valley, has greatly diminished. Buses, filled with Nyakyusa passengers, cross twice daily the high pass that leads out of the valley, and where once travellers died of exposure and starvation there is a hard road fringed with homesteads and fields. The belt of unoccupied country that even twenty years ago separated the Nyakyusa from their neighbours has disappeared, for they themselves have spilled out of the valley to the north and west, and their Kinga neighbours have come down the Livingstone escarpment to the east and cultivate the mountain slopes, for 'they no longer fear that people (i.e. the Nyakyusa) will seize their property'. Men travel abroad to find work and they go much farther and stay away longer than before. In the remotest village there is some man who has visited Burma or Malaya as a soldier, and a dozen lads who will argue the relative merits of the Orange Free State gold mines and the Copper-belt as centres of employment. Many women now accompany their husbands to Rhodesia, or other parts of Tanganyika, and some travel to visit daughters or sisters. The older women enlarge on their journeys and joke about how fearful they used to be. [494] [491] [166] [167] [164]

Travel implies learning another language, most often Swahili, but also Bemba and English and the pidgin of the gold and copper mines called Fanakalo. Thus intellectual isolation is disappearing along with the physical isolation. The numerous 'bush schools' which existed in the Nyakyusa valley in 1938, and at which many of those who attended never even learnt to read and write, have been largely replaced by mission primary schools, state-aided and imported, and in these and the Native Authority primary and middle schools there are now 2,417 pupils, as against about 500 [191] [198] 177 872

[p. 203]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Plains than from any other Nyakyusa area. In the high-density regions, the proportion of young men away at any one time is about 50 per cent. on the average and the proportion has risen concomitantly with the increasing scarcity of land.

It is not, of course, suggested that land shortage is the only factor responsible for contemporary labour migration amongst the Nyakyusa. Elsewhere (*loc. cit.*) I have drawn attention to the very high wages, the increased opportunity to obtain outside employment, the development of transport services and the immediacies of recruiting, together with the general desire of the people to gain a higher standard of living as they more thoroughly embrace the new money economy. In fact, wage-labour is the means is more profitable than growing paddy at home under current agricultural practice, even were land more easily available. Nevertheless, more young men do leave their homes in the Lake Plains than elsewhere in the country, and there is a rough correlation between land availability and the degree of labour migration, which seems to indicate that where men can obtain more land they tend to seek their money incomes at home. The Nyakyusa themselves, with an intensity of tribal patriotism, say that they much prefer to remain at home if they can earn their money there, even if they earn rather less than they might obtain abroad; but, say the young men, it is impossible to earn anything like sufficient when the fields are unobtainable in which to cultivate the cash-crop.

The data which I have been able to collect are summarised in Table VII. Young men are defined here as those under about 30 years old.

TABLE VII

YOUNG MEN: LAND HOLDING AND LABOUR MIGRATION

Village and chieftaincy	Young men having own paddy field	Young men away at work	Average holding of: Young men who own land	Older men in same village
1. Very high density region				
Mpangani Mwakipesile ..	17%	55%	0.1 acres	1.9 acres
Kapyaji Kyesso	21%	56%	0.75 acres	1.3 acres
Nkulele Mwakyusa ..	28%	51%	—	—
2. High density region				
Ibula Mwakyusa ..	27%	47%	1.6 acres	3.7 acres
Kapyaji Mwamunangale	31%	39%	1.20 acres	4.3 acres

There are some young men who have small food-crop plots but no paddy field, but I have chosen to correlate labour migration with paddy cultivation because these are almost the only alternative ways of earning money today, and the people themselves recognize the fact. The number of samples is too small, but the general inference seems to be quite clear nonetheless. My own conclusions in this matter were, however, arrived at independently of these figures, which were only obtained for corroboration. The evidence of the people themselves and their obvious difficulties of earning money at home were overwhelming.

If anything is required to underline the current land shortage and to illustrate the small size of the average holding, it surely lies in the existence of villages in which only about one quarter of the young men have their own paddy fields, and in which the average holding of this minority amounts to less than an acre.

Only in the low-density region can the young men obtain the fields they require. There, as they did traditionally, the young adult sons continue to assist their fathers in the heavier labour in the fields, but gradually before marriage they accumulate and extend their own holdings and so achieve economic independence. Elsewhere in the Lake Plains this process is taking much longer and indeed it now very frequently awaits inheritance at the death

10;Culliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

311
493

flood plains paddy fields where the ox-plough is in general use today. The general advantages of consolidation require no exposition here.

In view of the domestic, economic and social importance of cattle to the Nyakyusa and their potential value in a mixed intensive economy, and also in view of the fact that cattle are widely held in very small numbers by individual families, it is suggested that further and more urgent attempts be made to encourage stall-feeding, especially during the wet season. It is realised that past efforts in this matter have failed, and therefore a thoroughgoing scheme of propaganda and demonstration work is needed. Small fodder crops might be grown in the dry season and there is always plenty of banana fodder as makeweight.

[p33]

The problem of the landless young men is likely to remain very difficult (see pages 36ff). It has to be remembered of course, that as they get older men do acquire land gradually. Nevertheless the proportion of landless, or virtually landless, men is high and is apparently increasing. The large-scale, post-war labour migration to the Rhodesias and South Africa is undoubtedly one of the more important results of land shortage and economic difficulty, and it is a valuable safety valve. As I have written elsewhere: "The serious and increasing land shortage amongst the Nyakyusa raises real doubts if there is any policy at all which can keep the men at home when there is not enough land for them – for the sake of both economic and general social stability it might be preferable in the long run if the continued pressure on the land resources were released by a degree of permanent emigration."[1] Since writing that and during the course of my land investigations I have only become more convinced of its rightness. I would now go so far as to say that Nyakyusa men should be encouraged to go abroad to work and even to become permanent wage-labourers in the industries and areas which demand labour and offer a higher standard of living. If the Nyakyusa are not to be seriously retarded in their home economic development, based as it must be on agriculture (i.e. on the land), the excess population must find an outlet elsewhere.

[167]

[p44]

The general tendency towards greatly increased exclusiveness in the Nyakyusa village, involving renewed emphasis on the principle of land-holding only by residence and the forfeiture of a holding when changing residence, raises wider issues the future significance of which is not easily seen, especially by the Nyakyusa themselves. This narrow village parochialism does little to meet the increasingly difficult problem of land shortage, whilst the tendency it fosters is the antithesis of the wider outlook required by a developing society in a world money economy. I am fully aware of the strong native sentiment attached to the village and to village independence, but this was in fact diminishing in earlier European times before the new land scarcity set in (see pages 29-30). I do not think that this village system and the complex of attitudes and values it fosters is adequate to provide for the future – a future which the Nyakyusa do not yet clearly foresee. With some deference, therefore, I offer the following suggestion: a man who already has a holding should be able to retain it when he moves to live in another village. If his new home is too far away for the continued cultivation of all or part of the holding, or for any other valid reason, he should be able to sell or give it to anyone he wishes. Such gift or sale could be supervised by the headman of the village in which the holding lies. It might well, at first at any rate, be limited to a member of the same village, either an established villager or another man who is willing to come and live there. I think it important that disposal should be outright and not on leasehold terms, for the latter would most probably engender further complications and uncertainty of tenure, which must be avoided.

[2]
[p1]

1. Culliver, P. G.: A Report on the Migration of African Workers to the South from the Southern Highlands Province, with special reference to the Problems of Rungwe District. Provincial administration, Tanganyika, 1954, page 63.

[P.039B]

438 north. Before the war, the goldfields gave work
316 to about 15,000 natives, chiefly Wanyakyusa,
and most of the foodstuffs from this district
[466] went there. The goldfields are gradually closing
due to difficulties in obtaining opens, and it
has been necessary to look for outlets for
Tukuyu produce elsewhere. Should the gold-
fields open again after the war, and large-
scale mining start, there is a great future for
produce grown in Tukuyu.

434 The main income of the tribe is derived
from agricultural, military, mining and public
works sources, and it is estimated that in 1941
the average annual income per man, woman
and child was about Sh. 10 per year. It has
risen considerably since, as over 4,000 men
have joined the military and a large part of
their salaries comes back to the district in the
form of remittances. The agricultural source,
[464] from which a larger part of the tribal income
accrues, is from sales of rice, maize and other
foodstuffs. A few number of Wanyakyusa also
work on the tea plantations.

241 The picture sketched above will show that
the district is inhabited by a tribe whose agri-
culture is of great interest, since the variety
of crops, from wheat in the highlands to
paddy and cotton on the lake shore, is perhaps
unrivalled in so small an area elsewhere in
191 East Africa. It has not been possible to fill in
the picture with details of the people's
character, but it is worth mentioning that the
Wanyakyusa are a people difficult to ad-
minister, argumentative, litigious, self-willed
153 and at times inclined to truculence. Nevertha-
less their intelligence is such that they are
willing to be persuaded, and, once convinced
of the benefit of any change, adopt it with
energy. This is instanced by the way they have
in a few years accepted the principles of soil-
erosion to such an extent that now there is
perhaps 90 per cent control in the well-popu-
lated areas. It should, however, be stressed
139 that, though the soil is not being eroded to
241 any great extent, it is still being impoverished,
since increased cultivation for the war effort
has involved breaking a great deal of new land
with a consequent lessening of fallow. Over-
cropping in the hilly country is very great and,
in order to prevent further emigration, it be-
[195] hoves the native planters to learn to put some-
thing back into the soil in the form of mulch
or compost. If care is not taken, a comparat-
ively prosperous country will one day become
like so many parts of Africa, where a losing
struggle is fought with Nature to obtain a
sufficiency for the people's needs.

(as 21st September, 1962)

I: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

439 The modern position is quite different. Each village still produces almost all its own food, but very considerable quantities of clothing, metal utensils, and tools are imported, in addition to salt, medicines, and ornaments. All the men and some of the women wear cloth. Every man possesses at least one loin-cloth, [651] a hoe, and an axe, and he must pay an annual tax of 12s. with an additional 2s. for every wife after the first. These essential expenses are met by the sale of produce and labour. Rungwe district is one of the main sources of food for the nearby Lupa gold-fields, while its native-grown coffee is sold on the London market. In 1936 produce to the value of some £24,000[1] was sold from Rungwe district to the outside world, and considerable quantities of produce were also sold within the district to Government officials, missionaries, traders, and their servants. At the same time an exchange of different types of produce, particularly of rice from the plains for ground-nuts from the hills, is developing, and markets flourish at several centres.

441 Trade is in the hands of Indians and Swahili settled in the Government station, Tukuyu, the military station, Masoko, and 443 the Lake-shore port, Mwaya. These traders employ Nyakyusa agents on a commission basis, to sell their goods and bring in produce; and there are many small shops scattered through the district, where commercially-minded Nyakyusa sell cloth, salt, paraffin, matches, hoes, knives, tin dishes, padlocks, soap, and cigarettes; and buy produce. But the shop is not a village centre. In the first place, one shop usually serves several villages; in the second, dependence on trade-goods is not yet so great that shopping close at hand is a necessary convenience, and when a purchase is to be made the buyer often prefers to go to one of the three main trading centres where his choice is greater. There was no sign of a Nyakyusa shop serving as a meeting-place for a village or a group of villages, as does the trading store of the Transkei.[2] Tukuyu market is indeed a social centre but it attracts custom from all over Rungwe district, not merely from one village or group of villages. Trading thus draws men outside their village; it does not nourish relationships within the village.

•445 Employment for wages is the second means of meeting essential expenses, and we estimated that in 1936 approximately

[1] *Vide supra*, p. 18.
[2] Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 256.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

£25,500 was earned by Nyakyusa migrant labourers and those employed in the district.[1] Earnings from employment are thus probably about equal to the total earnings from the sale of produce. 465

Within the district Nyakyusa men are employed in Government service as clerks, hospital orderlies, agricultural inspectors, and as labourers on roads and buildings. They are employed also as house servants by Europeans, as labourers on the twelve European-owned estates in the district, and as shop assistants and servants by Indian traders. There is also a little employment of Nyakyusa by Nyakyusa in agricultural work. Traditionally chiefs, being responsible for hoeing the fields of many wives, sometimes employed poor men to hoe for them, rewarding them after two hoeing seasons with a heifer or bull, but the extent of such employment was, in the old days, small and confined to the chiefs. Nowadays it has been considerably extended, rich men employing others to hoe or, less commonly, to plough for them, and paying them in stock or cash. A few monogamists also employ young boys to assist their wives in fetching wood and water. 464 357

Most Nyakyusa men now take paid employment at one time or another. Of a small sample of seventy-nine men, seventy-six (94 per cent) had been in paid employment. There was, however, a marked difference between the work histories of young and old, and between pagan and Christian. Of the pagan men over middle age, the majority of those who worked had not done so willingly, but had been conscripted as carriers, and the total periods for which they had worked were short, averaging under six months per man. On the other hand, all the Christian men over middle age had worked willingly, and the total period for which each had worked averaged over twelve years. Of the young men, all who had worked had done so willingly, but as with the older men, there was a marked difference between the length of time pagans and Christians spent in employment. The profession of Christianity is, amongst the Nyakyusa, correlated with education, and Christian young men, more especially the sons of Christians, tend to secure the skilled or semi-skilled jobs. Those who have skilled work tend to stay longer in a job and return home less frequently because they fear lest they may not find an equally good job again, and because they have often travelled far to find skilled 464 466 464-795

[1] Based on the estimated number of men in employment, and an analysis of wage rates within and outside the district.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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[465]

cillor said: 'Give the girl a betrothal gift.' The groom gave her 3s., and I gave the councillor 1s. Then the councillor told the chief, saying: 'The girl has agreed.' 'Thank you, tell them that they must bring four cows.'

Then they called us to eat. They put us in a house which they had prepared with many fine mats, and we sat down. They gave us four calabashes of curds, and a wooden spoon, and we were four. Then we trembled and sweat came on our bodies, especially I, because I knew that they would come to me, the go-between, and I thought 'cleverness is bad!' [i.e. his ready tongue had put him in the most prominent position]. I trembled, thinking: 'When they come to my place what shall I give them?' But the others ate joyfully. I only ate a little and with fear. Then we saw much food. Indeed, very much. What should we do? We called our wife [*sic*] and gave her one big calabash. Then we gathered together and looked at the food. What should we do? Then we called the councillor with whom we had spoken and said: 'Help us, we are defeated.'

'No. The chief will be angry, saying: "Why are you depriving them of their food?"'

Then I went to the chief and said: 'We beg people to help us, the food is so much we are overcome.' He laughed, all of them laughed. 'Are you overcome, Mwaisyelage?'

'Yes.'

Then he gave us four of his people, and they entered the house, and we gave them the curds and went off quickly because we feared lest they compel us to eat more and we should be ill. I put 50 cents in the basket which the chief's wives had brought us with calabashes. It was my 50 cents because the groom had finished what he had; he had only brought 4s. But it was not really mine, it belonged to my mother who had given it to me to buy groundnuts but I asked all of them, saying: 'Friends, who has fifty cents?' None of them had it, so I thought: 'How about this? Will my mother beat me? Is she not my mother? According to custom I will give it.' And the chief's wives accompanied us on the road and praised us, saying we were men of wisdom, because we had put 50 cents in their basket.

So on Thursday we went with four very good cows, some of them in milk. Because it is the work of the go-between to give the owner of the woman wise advice, saying: 'Choose good cattle to begin with, the weaker ones will follow.' And I told them: 'Let us be many friends; the first time he defeated us with his food; let us be many.' So ten of us went, and when they arrived they gave us six calabashes of curds with the whey drained off. They praised us because the cows were very good, but I told them: 'There is another which is sick at home, it will come when you have called your people to hoe, you will kill it to rejoice them.' All laughed and said: 'Let him bring it, it is Linolemu

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

is generally admitted that all chiefs are less affected by this fear than they used to be. The secularization of the constitution tends, in this connection, to make it more autocratic. 178 692 771

On the economic side it is difficult to exaggerate the change in the relative wealth of rulers and people. The change is temporarily obscured by the historical accident of the present Kyungu's personal fortune, but this, when he dies, will go to this own heir, not to his successor in the Kyungship. The Kyungu's total official salary in 1937 was £72 a year and those of the "Sub-chiefs" varied from about £4 10s. to £12 a year. The nobles of Ngonde all received either 10s. or 15s. a year, with the exception of Mulwa who received 30s. These salaries, which are paid out of the Native Treasurery, are the modern substitute for the profits of the ivory-trade, which the Kyungu shared with his subordinates, together with the regular tribute of food and the proceeds of tribal warfare and of punitive expeditions, all of which sources of income have now dried up. And these salaries do not make possible the giving of any valuable gifts to subordinates and subjects. The local rulers also receive slight financial subsidies from the Native Treasury. Each "Village Headman" is allowed to retain 3d. from the tax of every adult male subject of his own and the "Important Headmen" (great chiefs) receive in addition subsidies ranging from 5s. to 40s. a year. This custom has replaced that of the requisitioning of food; but, owing to the smallness of all the present chieftdoms and fiefs of the plain, few "Village Headmen" receive more than £1 a year from this source.[1] 178 565 652 465

It is open to commoners, on the other hand, to become as rich or richer than most of their rulers. The head clerk in the Boma in 1937 received £52 a year, and there were fifty-three other Government employees who all received £12 or over; Native Christian Ministers and Evangelists all received many times the salary of Mulwa while young men often returned from the Lupa gold-fields with savings of several pounds.

The decline of polygyny in Ngonde again reduces the relative wealth of the subordinate chiefs and nobles in comparison with their people. Women are increasingly reluctant, for various reasons, to be married by polygynists, and the old style of entertainment is changing. Few chiefs and nobles, save the present Kyungu himself, now have sufficient wives and unmarried children to be able to entertain on a large scale. In the case of ordinary chiefs and territorial nobles (the "Village Headmen" of to-day) this poverty is not in itself very significant, for with the dwindling 178 565 595 178 565

[1] The average receipts of the one hundred and twenty-four "Village Headmen" in the Ngonde plain were almost exactly 10/- per annum in 1936. They had, that is, an average of forty tax-payers each.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

kinsman. Though some of the reasons for his subordination are to be found in modern conditions, it is clear that many of the factors have always operated. 422

Wars did not only occur between brothers; but when one chief defeated another who was more distantly related to him, he did not, apparently ever, reduce him to a minor position: He either took his cows and then left him alone, or killed him and set up a brother of his own as an independent though allied chief, or else, more rarely, killed him, took over the country and directly incorporated it in his own. So that, apart from the subordination of a defeated brother and his heirs, political authority always stopped at the boundaries of each separate chiefdom.[10] 422 727

The traditionally independent chiefdoms to-day vary in numbers from 100 to about 3,000 adult men. 681 161

The coming of the German Administration in 1893 introduced a paramount political authority, for the first time, in the persons of European officials; while in 1926, a generation later, the British Administration created new Native Authorities under the District Officer and superior to the chiefs. The traditionally independent chiefs were grouped together in eleven court districts, in each district a "Native Court" was set up, consisting of the various chiefs and their great commoners, under the hereditary presidency of one of the chiefs, who thereby became senior to all the others in that court district. Salaries for chiefs have been introduced, and the senior chiefs receive far higher salaries than the others; while the meetings of each Court are always held in the territory of the senior chief (*omulafyale ogholomba*); and to it has now been transferred a great deal of the legal business which, before 1926, was transacted by each chief sitting with his own great commoners in his own chiefdom. The chiefs themselves were consulted in the selection of the Court Presidents, and those chosen were normally the chiefs with the greatest number of men in each particular court district. 636 177 [465]

In this account the term *senior chief* (*omulafyale ogholomba*) denotes the President of a Native Court, *chief* (*omulafyale*) means one of the traditionally independent chiefs, while *minor chief* (*omulafyale omusuk*) means one of the subordinate chiefs, often with only 40-60 men under him.

The introduction of Courts and salaries has brought an entirely new element into the relationship between old and young chiefs (*vide* 636 177 578

[10] Among the Konde of Nyasaland, I am told, there was a paramount chief Kyungu, with a far-reaching political authority; but there was no such chief among the Nyakyusa.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

marriages of his kinsmen. When his father dies his father's wives 622
and cows pass to his father's full-brother, but they come to him and his 519
brother eventually when this man dies. While, if the young chiefs have "come out" it is common for their father's brother to hand over some, or even the bulk of the cattle, to them before his own death. And in his own half of the family, among his siblings and half-siblings on that side, a chief has far greater rights both of inheritance and of receiving marriage-cattle, than those possessed by the senior son of a commoner. So much is clear from my evidence, but it is not yet sufficiently detailed for an exact statement of rules.

Before 1893 fighting between chiefdoms was common and, except 631
between brother chiefs, the usual aim of fighting was, not conquest, but 721
cows; wars were generally just cattle raids. And a substantial proportion of the cows captured in a successful raid went to increase the herds of the chief. This last source of income is now supplied by Government 635
salaries, which vary from 5/- to £15 a month.[10] The price of a cow is £2; 96
but many shillings are spent on clothes, bicycles and beer, as well as on cows.

A chief, like any other rich man, maintains his prestige by hospitality. 622
He constantly entertains his more notable subjects with beer, at the 527
ceremonies of his family all his people gather in their age-villages and he kills cattle for them to eat. Chiefs seldom nowadays kill cattle except on ceremonial occasions, but in the old days of warfare they used also, I am told, to entertain their subjects with meat from time to time, in order to keep up their spirits for fighting. History is full of stories of Nyakyusa chiefs who attracted many men to their countries, and so gained great military strength, by the generosity and abundance of their feasts.

Every time a man or woman dies, a message must be sent to the 622
chief, and at the burial he is given the whole breast and ribs (*akabwa*) of 647
one of the cows which are killed by the family of the dead person at that time. He has the right to take food or milk from any of his subjects if he has need of it; but he cannot take any man's beast without later returning another to him.

Apart from the now abandoned pursuit of cattle raiding the only 631
profitable enterprises in which the members of a whole chiefdom jointly 476
participate are those of hunting and fishing; in some chiefdoms, but not

[10] Salaries above £1 a month are only paid to senior chiefs. No minor chief gets a Government salary, nor do great-commoners. The local value of money is shown (a) by the tax (8/- p.a.), (b) by the wages of unskilled labour (6/- to 8/- p.m.)

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

[177] in similar schools in 1958. Less than 40 per cent of the children
[872] between eight and eleven years old[1] are as yet in school in Rungwe District and the demand for places is enormous. Among the most insistent are girls wanting education. During the
[871] 1950's the Education Department was trying, with little success, to coax girls to stay in school long enough to learn to read and write, but today nearly a third of the primary school pupils are girls. A handful of boys and girls go out of the district to attend
[874] middle or secondary schools, and a few candidates for training as teachers and district nurses come in. Thus an educated person, or one who goes out to work, mixes with people whose backgrounds and languages are quite different from his own.

[511] Then people are richer than they used to be, partly because of
[465] the wages earned abroad, and partly because of the coffee and rice grown and exported. There is also some employment within the district on tea estates (especially important to women and girls), and coal and vermiculite mines. The value of peasant crops
[434] exported has risen from about £24,000 in 1936[2] to nearly £378,000 from coffee and rice alone in 1955,[3] and some men have made as much as £150 from their coffee in a year. A coffee cheque of £30 to £60 is common. In addition to the peasant crops there is tea from estates—well over a million pounds of made tea in 1955 as well as a quantity of seed. This increase in wealth has involved a change in the division of labour. Because men are not at home to clear and hoe, their wives, perforce, must clear fields and hoe for themselves, assisted by their young sons, boys who twenty years ago would not yet have stopped herding.

[161] There has been a rapid increase in population, more especially in the hills, due partly to the development of health services and

[1] Number of children in Mission and Native Authority schools in Rungwe District, 1955:

Boys	Girls	Total	No. of children 8-11 years of age (estimated as 10% of total population)
6,590	2,054	8,648	15,839
Middle Schools			
718	73	791	(This total does not include those who are in middle schools outside the District, nor does it include those following a professional course in the District)

(Figures provided by the courtesy of the Provincial Education Officer, Mbeya.)
Change in Ngonde is not discussed for it was not possible to visit that area in 1955.

[2] *Good Company*, p. 16.

[3] Calculated from figures kindly supplied by the District Commissioner, Mr. Peter Johnston.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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Within the district Nyakyusa men are employed in Government service as clerks, hospital orderlies, agricultural inspectors, and as labourers on roads and buildings. They are employed also as house servants by Europeans, as labourers on the twelve European-owned estates in the district, and as shop assistants and servants by Indian traders. There is also a little employment of Nyakyusa by Nyakyusa in agricultural work. Traditionally *chiefs*, being responsible for hoeing the fields of many wives, sometimes employed poor men to hoe for them, rewarding them after two hoeing seasons with a heifer or bull, but the extent of such employment was, in the old days, small and confined to the chiefs. Nowadays it has been considerably extended, rich men employing others to hoe or, less commonly, to plough for them, and paying them in stock or cash. A few monogamists also employ young boys to assist their wives in fetching wood and water. 464 357

Most Nyakyusa men now take paid employment at one time or another. Of a small sample of seventy-nine men, seventy-six (94 per cent) had been in paid employment. There was, however, a marked difference between the work histories of young and old, and between pagan and Christian. Of the pagan men over middle age, the majority of those who worked had not done so willingly, but had been conscripted as carriers, and the total periods for which they had worked were short, averaging under six months per man. On the other hand, all the Christian men over middle age had worked willingly, and the total period for which each had worked averaged over twelve years. Of the young men, all who had worked had done so willingly, but as with the older men, there was a marked difference between the length of time pagans and Christians spent in employment. The profession of Christianity is, amongst the Nyakyusa, correlated with education, and Christian young men, more especially the sons of Christians, tend to secure the skilled or semi-skilled jobs. Those who have skilled work tend to stay longer in a job and return home less frequently because they fear lest they may not find an equally good job again, and because they have often travelled far to find skilled 464 466 464 465

[1] Based on the estimated number of men in employment, and on analysis of wage rates within and outside the district.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

one of the early missionaries the sons of leading men had been sent to Kondowe to be educated and their influence had been important in gaining the support of the Kyungu and chiefs for the mission. 797* 795*

In the second generation of Christians not nearly all those baptised in infancy come to be confirmed or 'blessed'—an elder in Ngonde put it at about half. There is, therefore, a large group of people who have been Church members and have been struck off the Church register because they have married a second wife or committed adultery or become drunkards, and show no sign of repentance, and of those who have grown up as Christians, but have not maintained any connexion with a Church in later life. [688]

So far we have talked of Christian rituals and dogma in terms of the three mission Churches whose converts form the great bulk of Christians: differences between them are negligible. The doctrinal differences between Protestant and Roman Catholic do not bulk large to the Nyakyusa, and since the Roman Catholic Church had not been operating for any long period among them and had a membership of under 1,000, many of whom were Ngoni from Songea or Kisi, who had settled in Tukuyu district, it was not possible to make any adequate comparison of the differences between Protestant and Catholic groups.

Two small Churches, the Pentecostal Holiness and the Watch Tower, had certain peculiarities. The Pentecostal Holiness Church holds highly emotional services at which members are expected to 'speak with tongues'; during prayers the whole congregation begins to jabber, each man usually being unintelligible to his neighbour, though words of other languages can be distinguished. Our informants maintained that the attraction of the Church was that its members seemed to 'have more of the Holy Ghost', as demonstrated by the 'speaking with tongues', though the more cynical of outsiders mentioned also 'the loaves and fishes'—cheaper Bibles, and the fact that the European leader was the largest employer of labour in the district and those who belonged to his Church got on best with him. Many of the members had formerly been Moravians. Its rules were strict: members were not permitted to smoke or drink, or use any Nyakyusa medicines. [781] [778] [466] [785]

The Watch Tower members emphasized that their Church, through its leader, Judge Rutherford, interpreted prophecy in a way in which no other Church could do. They practised baptism [852]

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the wealth derived from this trade enabled one of their chiefs, Kyungu, to maintain himself as paramount over all Ngonde. Among his people impersonal relationships thus had a greater importance. And it was, I believe, the historical isolation of the Nyakyusa from any considerable commercial contact with the outside world which prevented the rise among them of a paramount chief. 648 484

To-day the Nyakyusa are in process of integration with the civilized society of the world and the independence of their minute chiefdoms has inevitably passed away. The traditionally sovereign chiefs have been grouped in seven court districts with one chief as President of the Native Court in each; and these seven chiefs together with the two Presidents of the Nidali and Lambya Courts are federated, with an Appeal Court and joint Native Treasury of their own. In the seven Native Courts most of the traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their great-commoners, and assist the President and his great-commoners in the hearing of cases. The bulk of the legal business previously transacted by each chief in his own country is now taken to Court, but the power of great-commoners to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages is still the basis of the legal system. 178 622 692

A poll tax, now (1938) fixed at 9/- per annum for adult males with no additional tax for plural wives, has been introduced and chiefs are paid small salaries ranging from 5/-, 10/- or 20/- a month for ordinary chiefs to 80/- or 100/- a month for the Court Presidents. 651 622

The Nyakyusa, as we have previously mentioned, consist of a number of immigrant groups who have spread among and incorporated an indigenous population. The main immigrant groups were three in number and are distinguished to-day by the names of "Nyakyusa," "Kukwe" and "Selya." As all these three groups together (including those who are now incorporated in them) call themselves "Nyakyusa" to the outside world, I distinguish the one group to which the name more particularly belongs as the "Nyakyusa proper." The Nyakyusa proper live in the plain of Mungonde and up on the higher ground as far north as Tukuyu, the Kukwe live north of them around the base of Rungwe Mountain while the Selya live in the east of the district, between the Nyakyusa proper and the Kukwe, right under the wall of the Livingstone Mountains. Between the three groups there are minor differences of dialect and custom. 563

The extent to which the indigenous groups retain any separate identity varies in accordance with the number of the immigrants and the date at which they reached them, but over a large part of the district fusion has been complete.

We have already discussed the economic relations between the Nyakyusa and the Lupa gold fields which provides them with a market 471

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

471 for labour and food. There are also a few small plantations owned by Europeans inside the district which fulfil a similar function. 26,000 acres only of land have been alienated in Rungwe District by the two Governments which have in turn controlled it; and it is the declared intention of the present Government to alienate no more. Of the alienated land only 2,200 acres is at the moment in use.

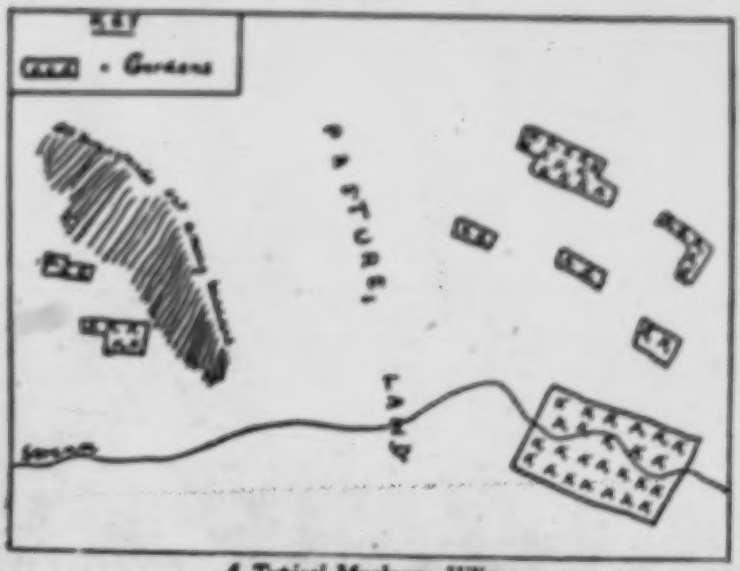
787 Missionaries of the Berlin Lutherans and the Moravian missions have been in the district since 1891, and a substantial proportion, about 16%, of the population now professes Christianity. The Christians live, some in separate Christian villages, some scattered about among their pagan neighbours. In the Christian villages the traditional age grouping usually prevails, with elders and deacons taking the place of great-commoners.

Such is outline is the form of society within which individual Nyakyusa hold property in land.

5. *INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD*

361 A village, as we have seen, usually consists of a group of houses built fairly close together with one or more blocks of garden land at some distance from them, while the village cattle graze the adjoining grass lands in various different herds.

Plan A



A Typical Nyakyusa Village

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tion reveals the presence of some sons of other men's villages as well. 621
Brothers, half-brothers and other relatives are sometimes members of the 54
same village, but more often not; and if they do belong to the same village that is because they are near each other in age, and were born in the same village, not because they are kinsmen.

The members of the boys' village, which is now closed and no longer increases in numbers, continue to grow older, and after a time they begin to get married. Getting married, as we have seen, is often a gradual process; but it is not until he has his wife permanently with him that a young man can have fields of his own and eat their produce at his own place. The cultivation of land requires the co-operation of man and woman, cooking on any elaborate scale is a woman's business. [97]

As the members of a boys' village marry the village does not move but it expands. The houses are built ever bigger and further apart and the adjacent land is brought under cultivation. The boys' village with which I am best acquainted is in this transitional stage; it has fifty-three members altogether, the majority of whom are single, but some few are married, cultivate their own fields with their wives and eat food cooked by their wives in their own houses. Of those who are single some again are betrothed to girls who visit them from time to time, but each still cultivates his father's fields, and eats at his father's home.

(c) *The Men's Village*

It is now necessary to understand the system of men's villages and the general political organization in which the boys' villages finally take their place.

The number of age-villages in one chiefdom, all the members of 631
which are married, varies with different circumstances, but the most 428
usual number is from six to twelve. The age system is only broken by 561
moving or by death; when a man dies his heir usually comes and lives where the dead man was living in his age-village. There he inherits the wives, the huts, the cows and the land of his predecessor, he inherits the dead man's position in the village and often takes his personal name as well. The heir may be many years younger than his new neighbours but he is now treated as their contemporary, he sits with them at ceremonies, he shares their rights at any division of meat. The age system in the villages is also broken by moving, for a stranger may come and be granted land in a village even though he is considerably older or younger than the bulk of its members. But otherwise members of a village are roughly contemporaries.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 F?17 Ngonde F?17
Nyakyusa

631
976 all, hunting is organized like warfare and fishing is a joint endeavour, both ordered by the chief.

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622 Every chief has a title of ownership (*ubwene nshyi*) to the land of his chiefdom and can evict any man he pleases, (giving him another plot), if he wishes to build there himself; but his people also have titles of ownership to it, both collectively, under the leadership of the great commoners, and individually, each man to his own ground. It is the great commoners who, in consultation with their neighbours, give to the sons of each village land on which to build; it is they who, together, finally fix the boundaries of the young men's villages at their "Coming Out;" it is they who, again in consultation with their neighbours, grant land to strangers who ask for it, though they must notify the chief and get his approval before doing so.

627
692 As the single great commoners settle disputes within their own villages so the chief and great commoners together hear and decide cases within the chiefdom. Many of these legal actions are now settled in the Courts, but not all of them; and, even when cases are going to Court, preliminary hearings commonly take place before the chief, first. Cases are conducted and witnesses interrogated by chief and great commoners together, and the decision which the chief pronounces is an expression of their general opinion.

554
627 Among the great commoners there is an order of seniority. The leaders of the two senior age-villages of the chief's own men play a prominent part at his "Coming Out," they each have a pre-eminent authority in one side of his chiefdom, and the other great commoners rank as their juniors, some on one side, some on the other. In the old days the two senior great commoners each led a whole side of the chiefdom in war.

622
754 The two most effective checks on the power of a chief are migration and witchcraft. Military strength used to depend upon the number of a chief's adherents, to-day the scale of his salary is similarly dependent; men are quite free to move, and there is a constant flow of adherents from unpopular to popular chiefs. But unpopularity is most feared in its spiritual form of witchcraft. We have seen already that an adverse current of opinion is believed to act invisibly, as the "breath of men," against an unpopular member of a village and to make him sick. So also the adverse opinion of a single village or of a whole chiefdom is believed to have power against a chief, to bring sickness or even death upon him. As in the single village, so in the whole chiefdom the great commoners are the prime sources of this spiritual power; they are believed severally to protect the members of their own villages and jointly to protect their

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

to these crops, production of which is now expanding—beans, groundnuts, coffee and rice—even though the latter is planted like millet in a seed-bed of ash. The cultivation of rice is on a commercial basis. A small number of men own ploughs which they hire out for preparing rice-fields, and the weeding and reaping is also often done by hired labour. For the hulling, grading, and marketing of coffee the Agricultural Department has established a coffee co-operative, to which all native-grown coffee is sold, but in this organization villages as such play no part.

d. Herding

In each village there are, as we have seen, several herd-groups, five to ten neighbours herding their cattle together. This association is voluntary, but it is usual for members of adjoining homesteads to co-operate—special friends in a village tend to build together—and the group is more or less stable. All the boys of appropriate age (six to eleven) go to herd, even though there is one son of their father already in the group, and when a man has cattle, but no sons of an age to herd, he may leave his cattle to be looked after by the sons of neighbours. As one old man put it: 'My cows are herded by other men's sons, but I give them neither milk nor payment, it is not done in this country. When I beget a son he will herd too.' There is thus considerable give-and-take between fellow members of the group. Among Christians, and those pagans who wish their sons to go to school, the herds take shifts, half attending the morning session of school, and half the afternoon session. Formerly, young men armed with spears herded the cattle for fear of raids, while boys herded the calves which grazed near the villages. The same young men used to herd and hoe, taking it in turn, or hoeing in the late afternoon when the cattle grazed near the villages and could be herded by the youngsters. The cattle were trained to follow the call of a herdsman and in case of danger were quickly led away and hidden.[1]

In the large villages of the plain an assistant headman, one of whose functions is the care of cattle, is connected with each herd-group. In his homestead, under the bananas, a smoky fire is kept going during the heat of the day, and there the cattle of the group

[1] D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., p. 121; F. L. M. Moir, op. cit., p. 93.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the war and the form of its activities has not altered appreciably. Three other missions based elsewhere now have small congregations in the District and a Lutheran pastor under discipline broke away and formed his own 'independent' Church, which differs from the other 'independent' Churches in that the rule of monogamy is enforced.

The total number of converts has increased very considerably, much more than keeping pace with the increase in population; taking the three main missions together, their converts form over 14 per cent of the total population.[1] Figures for the five mission Churches with small congregations in the District—Pentecostal Holiness, Assemblies of God, Seventh Day Adventists, Anglican, and Watch Tower—are not available. Nor do we know the membership of one of the 'independent' African Churches, but supposing the membership of the missions with small congregations in the District to be 2,000 (a conservative estimate) the percentage claiming to be Christian is 24 per cent as against 16 per cent in 1938. Dissimilarities in the response to Christian teaching in different areas are very marked. Around Rungwe, the main Moravian mission-station, the bulk of the population is Christian, and the whole atmosphere is that of a Christian community, whereas in Selya, where mission work began in 1891 as it did in Rungwe, Christians still form a small minority in dominantly pagan chiefdoms. The reasons for this difference are complex. One factor is that Selya is geographically isolated whereas Rungwe is near a main road and within easy reach of the Government and trading centre Tukuyu; but much more important have been differences in mission policy regarding education, and differences in the personalities of missionaries, chiefs, and early converts.

The change from a society based on kinship to one based on voluntary association is apparent in the economic field as well as in the religious. Co-operative societies formed by producers of coffee and rice, which collect and market the crops, and give opportunity

[1] Figures supplied by the courtesy of the missionaries directing each mission and the leaders of two 'independent' Churches were as follows for 1954:

Moravians		23,350
Lutheran		10,000 (approximately)
Roman Catholic		4,700
Last Church (Ngonde) (Also called 'Native Mission')	('independent')	10,721
'African Lutheran Church'	('independent')	200

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 for the local investment of savings are the most important
[474] economic undertaking in the District. The seven coffee co-
[454] operatives handled a crop of 950 tons in 1955, worth about £407,500, and are organized so efficiently as to be able to return over 90 per cent of the price of the coffee on Moshi market to the producer, after the heavy transport costs (14 per cent) have been paid. One Government-paid officer assists these societies.

In the educational and recreational field also, associations are
526 emerging: football clubs; companies of Scouts and Guides;
575 'Welfare Centres' with classes in reading for adult illiterates,
177 indoor games, and Saturday-night dances; Women's Clubs for handwork and recreation; and in Tukuyu itself an inter-racial club with its own premises, whose members meet to play games, and get to know one another and discuss common problems. These associations make a visible mark on the face of the country in the shape of new brick Churches, co-operative stores, football fields, and, more rarely, a village club-house.

177 The change from a subsistence to a money economy, and from a
651 system of government through chiefs and village headmen who were dependent primarily on inherited wealth, which secured to them the labour of many able-bodied wives and sons, to a system of government through European officials, chiefs, and clerks paid out of taxes, and assisted by unpaid village headmen, implies the collection and administration of taxes. The District Council has
177 the responsibility for the budgeting and expenditure of over
652 £60,000 per annum. The greater part of it is spent on the salaries of chiefs, secretaries, and clerks engaged in administration, on courts, on schools, dispensaries, and roads. The development of associations with paid officers also implies the collection of dues and budgeting. As in so many countries the difficulty of building
177 up a tradition of honesty in administration is great. Tax clerks,
685 court clerks, council secretaries, and co-operative society secretaries, and even church elders handle sums of money relatively large in proportion to their earnings and one of the tasks of European officials and missionaries is to secure a sound system of accounting and check corruption. In the traditional society stock theft was a capital offence, but money has not the sanctity of cattle, and often the clerk who has appropriated public funds is treated by others as 'unfortunate' rather than immoral. At the same time villagers show great anxiety lest a man entrusted with some common fund should spend it for himself. The risk of theft

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER III

ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

602 THE primary economic units in Nyakyusa society are the kinship groups—the elementary family, the cattle-owing lineage, and the 476 group of cognates who co-operate in production and exchange many gifts, and among whom cattle circulate.[1] However, fellow villagers also work together, exchange food, and have a common interest in certain property.

a. Land

423 The village is the land-holding group. As we have seen, land 245 is allocated to a boys' village, at its commencement, by the parent village, that is the village to which the fathers of most of the boys belong. Little boys' huts are usually to be seen going up on a strip of pasture-land, adjoining the block of banana groves which shroud their fathers' houses. The boys' land is primarily a building site, but very soon after moving into their huts they turn over the ground and plant banana suckers (*vide* Plate II). Bananas begin to bear very quickly, and so in a little more than a year after the establishment of a boys' village, its members have bananas of their own, which they cook for themselves and eat with their 241 friends at odd times during the day. But they have, as yet, no 423 fields, for the cultivation of fields requires the co-operation of a wife. Bachelors continue to eat their main meals at their parents' village. As the boys grow up and marry they begin to cultivate garden-land adjacent to their village. Some of these gardens are acquired by individuals from their own fathers and fathers-in-law, but whether there may also be a block grant of garden-land by the parent village as a whole to the boys' village as a whole we 423 are not certain. In any case the land of boys' villages is limited, and at the 'coming out' the old men move aside and the young men enter their inheritance. The allotment to each village is

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe Brown and Daryll Forde.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

it is implied that coffee planted in the chiefdoms will be inherited by a man's heirs. As a leading Christian woman put it: 'We like to build on this side of the river because the other is mission land, and if a man moves he loses the coffee and everything else he has planted there. . . . A man has children and he wishes his children to inherit what he has planted.' The number of coffee-trees each man may plant on mission land is also limited to 100, so that the development of large plantations, such as some astute Nyakyusa are undertaking, is impossible there.

b. *Building*

When a group of boys starts a new village two or three friends usually combine to erect a little hut and live in it together. As younger boys join the village the older ones instruct and help their juniors to build. Thus, although as they grow older each boy builds a hut for himself, the habit of co-operation with village-mates in construction is already established. Until they are married, boys do all the work on their huts for themselves, fetching their own reeds or bamboos for the frame, and cutting and carrying thatching grass. They usually leave their huts unmudded. Adult men, on the other hand, are helped by their wives and female relatives as well as by sons and sons-in-law, and one or two of their own village neighbours. Men fell the bamboos, construct the framework of the house, and thatch, while women cut and carry grass, carry bamboos, mould the mud bricks which are packed between the bamboo uprights, and plaster the hut inside. The wife for whom the hut is being built is responsible for the women's work, but she usually gets some help from her co-wives and women neighbours, as well as from her mother and sisters, and the mother and sisters of her husband. Sons and sons-in-law are expected to bring with them other young men, their village-mates. Co-operation is thus both with relatives and village neighbours—the neighbours of the couple building the hut, and of their sons and sons-in-law.

The huts of married men are built with immense care, for not only are substantial houses essential to comfort, and indeed a condition of survival, in this climate of torrential rains and cold winter mists, but the Nyakyusa take great pride in the appearance of their homesteads (*vide infra*, p. 77). The early European

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 travellers in the area all comment on the excellently built huts and the cleanness of the villages.[1] Lord Lugard calls their huts 'the neatest and the most wonderfully built of any I have seen in Africa, excepting only the houses of the king and chiefs in Uganda.'[2] This high standard of building necessitates hard work and co-operation between a number of men and women.

c. *Cultivation*

241 The primary unit in cultivation is the elementary family consisting of a man, his wife and unmarried children or, in the case of a polygynous family, of the house group of a wife and her children, together with her husband, part of whose time is spent in hoeing her fields.[3] There is also, however, some co-operation with other relatives, and with village neighbours.

241 Unmarried sons hoe with their fathers and very often they bring one or more village-mates to work with them, making •476 return, in due course, by working with these friends for their respective fathers. The boys who come are fed after hoeing, and should be fed generously, by the woman in whose fields they have [584] worked. After his betrothal a young man comes in the same way with village-mates to hoe for his father-in-law, as well as continuing to hoe for his own father. Once his wife joins him they have their own fields, and the bulk of his time is spent in hoeing for her, but he still hoes one or two strips (*embaka*) for his own father and for his father-in-law. Such help is reciprocal, for his 'mothers' (i.e. his own mother and his father's other wives) and sisters, as well as the 'mothers' and sisters of his wife, will help his wife with her tasks of sowing, weeding, and reaping. From the point of view of village organization the essential fact is that young men working for fathers and fathers-in-law very frequently bring one or two village-mates with them. A typical hoeing group is made up of a man with his sons, and one or two village-mates of the sons.

Larger hoeing parties, to which not only youths, but also older men come, are fairly common, especially among the Kukwe.

[1] Elton, op. cit., p. 323; D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyasa' in *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 116–7.

[2] F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), Vol. I, p. 52.

[3] The respective rights of the husband and of each wife have been analysed by Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., pp. 16–29.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

To these come some of a man's village-mates and male relatives or special friends from other villages, as well as his sons and sons-in-law with their village-mates. At one such party we noted in the morning eight helpers, of which six were men, two being classificatory brothers of the owner and four of them friends. There were also two young sons of the owner working. In the afternoon a son-in-law came with a party of his village-mates. Such hoeing parties are not the concern of the whole village. Only those who have been specially invited, or very close friends of the owner of the field, come (the number usually ranging between ten and twenty), and some of those invited may be from other villages. It is difficult for one to whom an invitation has been sent to refuse. After work the guests are feasted. Traditionally they were given milk with bananas or beans (a prized food), but nowadays beer is expected. For the party noted above two pots of beer were provided, one being given to the older men and the other to the son-in-law with his friends. Christians, many of whom are forbidden to brew beer, provide meat, rice, or milk —all much prized foods. Possibly the proportion of men attending this type of work party has diminished as opportunity for paid employment has increased—we have no certain evidence.

Mutual assistance in cultivation turns on kinship and personal friendship: all the members of a village or a village-section are not obliged to work with a neighbour. But it is insisted that neighbours should keep in step with one another in cultivation. It will be remembered that their garden-lands are together, and each year different types of garden are hoed by groups of villagers—millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins in one place, potatoes in another, maize and beans in another, so that while the gardens of one particular household are scattered, each crop is in one or two blocks. Neighbours cultivating the same crop in adjoining fields should, according to Nyakyusa ideas, begin each process in cultivation together, and the whole village should keep in step. As one informant put it, 'in hoeing and planting one must be neither ahead of nor behind one's neighbours'.

The idea reaches its furthest development among the Kukwe in regard to three crops planted with the first rains, namely, finger millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins. Traditionally, no Kukwe man might begin to clear ground for these crops until his village headman had begun, or, if he lived in the village of a chief or in

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241 an immediately adjoining village, until his chief had begun. Members of other villages do not regard the chief, but wait only
● 476 for their village headman to begin. Within the family, junior
622 wives must follow senior wives, but there is no precedence between brothers. If two should live in the same village it does not matter which begins sowing first, provided both follow the leader, nor need a junior age-village wait on a senior one to begin. Not only must the headman of the village begin the clearing, but each process in cultivation must be initiated by him or his senior wife; thus clearing, raking, burning, planting, and reaping, are ceremonially begun, and the wife of the headman should be the first to wash her millet, and he the first to eat of the new crop. Further, once a process is initiated, the villagers should press on with their tasks so that all may finish about the same time.

241 Now the cultivation of millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins[1] is
622 peculiar in that the weeds and grass are not turned in for green manure, as they are for all other crops (except rice), but are collected in heaps and burnt, just before the rains break at the end of the dry season. And the fire for this must be lighted
[372] ritually by the headman of the village. Using fire-sticks and 'medicine of plenty' (*unkota gwa ifugo*[2]) bought by the Kukwe from the Sangu people, he ignites a special fire in his own field and then, if a great wife of the chief lives in the village, he lights the heaps in her field. All the members of the village take fire from him, or from the field of the chief's wife. To take fire from a house is forbidden, because the owner of the house from which it is taken may be a witch, who will rot the heaps so that the millet does not grow, or will not ripen. Roasting food on a burning heap, or taking a brand to light tobacco is likewise forbidden, lest the person who does so has medicine which will rot the millet.

241 It is thought that if one breaks the rule, beginning a process before the headman, the fields of all the other villagers will suffer. 'If men hoe higgledy piggledy the food in their gardens does not grow, and if they reap higgledy piggledy the yield from all the

[1] Some Kukwe held that these rules about cultivation applied also to maize and to an old root crop, *umbogo*, but the most reliable informants were agreed that the rule was only strictly enforced with regard to the three crops planted 'at the break of the rains, in the new year'.

[2] 'A village headman, *ugwa ifugo*, is one who drives off witches and protects the food.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Nyakyusa generally it is kinship groups, not villages, which eat protective medicines with certain first-fruits. 754

Unlike many other cattle-keeping Bantu the Nyakyusa take great pride in cultivation, men boasting about their strength in hoeing, and praising those who are diligent. Significantly, the vocabulary relating to bananas matches in richness that relating to cattle: we recorded a dozen terms—and there were said to be many more—for varieties of bananas and plantains, which are distinguished by the form and flavour of the fruit, and thirteen terms for types of cattle, distinguished by colour and markings. 241 192

Not only does success in cultivation carry prestige in itself, but it provides the wherewithal for hospitality, on which status in a Nyakyusa community turns. To be respected a man must entertain his neighbours with food and millet-beer. Control of grain and vegetables to do this depends upon his own effort in hoeing, as well as upon having wives and sons to work with him. We have seen how the laggard among the Kukwe believes that the fertility of his gardens will be sapped by his neighbours being ahead. There is thus considerable social pressure compelling both men and women to cultivate diligently. At the same time, however, no individual should be too conspicuous. Each must keep in step in cultivation with his neighbours; and though his fields may be a little larger than the average, they must not be a great deal larger. The area cultivated (visible crops and stubble) by seven compound families on the Lake-shore plain in 1935 averaged 6·13 acres per family; which, divided by the number of members in each family, gave rather over half an acre per head (men, women, and children) or 1·3 acres per adult. The acreage ranged from 1·99 to 0·61 per adult.[1] 574 241 [626]

Cultivation thus involves co-operation primarily within elementary and compound families, but it also involves village co-operation, in that neighbours hold land together, help one another in some measure, and try to carry out each process simultaneously. 476 241

The pressure of neighbours still helps to keep laggards up to the mark, and also to keep the most energetic from getting far ahead. But the village control over cultivation is diminishing for, as we have seen, the custom of keeping in step is no longer strictly insisted upon even among the Kukwe, nor does it apply 241

[1] Monthly report of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu District, July 1933. Figures supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu, 1935.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241 to those crops, production of which is now expanding—beans, groundnuts, coffee and rice—even though the latter is planted like millet in a seed-bed of ash. The cultivation of rice is on a commercial basis. A small number of men own ploughs which they hire out for preparing rice-fields, and the weeding and reaping is also often done by hired labour. For the hulling, grading, [474] and marketing of coffee the Agricultural Department has established a coffee co-operative, to which all native-grown coffee is sold, but in this organization villages as such play no part.

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231 In the large villages of the plain an assistant headman, one of 476 whose functions is the care of cattle, is connected with each herd-group. In his homestead, under the bananas, a smoky fire is kept going during the heat of the day, and there the cattle of the group

[1] D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., p. 121; F. L. M. Moir, op. cit., p. 93.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

stand protected from insects: hence his title 'he of the heap of hot ashes' (*ugwakyemo*, *vide supra*, p. 34). The protection of their cattle from raiders by day, and witches by night, was one of the main co-operative activities of the village, and each herd-group within the village was particularly concerned with the protection of its own cattle. For the boys of one herd-group the association is very close since they are together on the pasturage for the greater part of the day. Friendships then formed sometimes last a lifetime.

A few rich men choose to herd their cattle separately from those of their neighbours. 'They are the men who have many cattle! They want to show off their herd, so that men may say: "That's the herd of so and so." ' Sometimes their sons, against orders, foregather with other herd-boys on the pasturage, but they are careful to bring home the herds separately. We knew three men near Rungwe who were spoken of as herding their cattle separately, though in fact their sons often joined friends in the pasturage. To herd alone is regarded as somewhat ostentatious,[1] and only a few individuals do it.

Many rich men do not even keep all their cattle at their homesteads for fear of the jealous witchcraft of their neighbours. Instead, they disperse their herds among friends in other villages (of their own or neighbouring chiefdoms) believing that the cattle may in that way escape danger. Porokoto explained: 'We place cattle with friends (*ukufufya*) on account of sickness and death. Supposing I have three or four cows, and they all calf, but the calves die, then I place the cows with friends. People say: "The cows will escape in another village or chiefdom." If, when cattle die and are cut up, wounds are found in their stomachs,[2] then the owner places the others with friends.' Not all of them are sent to the same place.

The fear of witchcraft was traditionally, and is still, the main reason for placing out cattle, but nowadays they are sent away for other reasons also: Nyakyusa living around Rungwe often send cattle to friends on the other side of the mountains in Mbeya district, where grazing is particularly good, and wealthy Christians place out cattle because their wives, working single-handed,

[1] A beast which gores others may be herded apart without any imputation of pride to the owner.

[2] Taken as evidence that they have been killed by witchcraft, *vide infra*, p. 116.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

find the cleaning of byres in which many cattle are stalled, very arduous. A pagan who has many cattle always has more than one wife.

Thus, herding together was traditionally, and still is, one of the main common activities of neighbours in a village; most cattle are herded with those of neighbours, but there is a measure of co-operation with relatives and personal friends of other villages. It is likely that the practice of placing cattle with friends of other villages is becoming more common.

e. Hunting and fishing

From the point of view of village co-operation, hunting and fishing are relatively unimportant, for, in the first place, game and fish provide the Nyakyusa with prized foods to eat as relish with the staple bananas, roots, and cereals, rather than with main items of diet; and secondly, hunting and fishing are not primarily village enterprises.

Most fishing is done by men, individually, each keeping his own catch; but groups of herd-boys or young men sometimes co-operate to divert a branch of a stream temporarily, so that they may tickle the fish stranded in the shallow pools. They choose a place where a stream divides naturally, and block one channel with stones; but such enterprises are on a small scale. Periodically however, when fish were plentiful, communal fishing was organized during the dry season. The seeds of a certain legume, grown for the purpose, were thrown into the river to stupefy the fish. Men, women, and children waited some way down the stream with hand-nets, and when, an hour or two after the poison had been put in, the fish began to float down stupefied, they were easily netted. The poisoning was organized by the chief and village headmen and all the villages of the chiefdom participated, as well as those from neighbouring chiefdoms, when their chiefs were on good terms. Friends naturally went together, but the various villages did not act as separate units as they do in a communal hunt. Communal fishing never occurred regularly, for if fish were scarce the chief might forbid it for a number of years, and it is now rare, since poisoning the rivers has been forbidden by the Administration. We heard of only one such fishing during our stay in Nyakyusa country.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

f. Housekeeping

356 Every married woman has her own hearth and granary, and
she works very largely alone when cooking and cleaning; but in
476 one essential activity women who are neighbours in a village
313 regularly co-operate, and that is in fetching firewood. We never saw a woman going alone; usually there is a group of three or four up to a dozen or more. Firewood must be fetched two or three times a week, and the journey and the collection of the wood takes from four to ten hours, depending upon the distance of the village from a patch of forest or bush. Thus the women spend up to thirty hours a week fetching wood, and it is with village neighbours that this time is spent, not with relatives from other villages. If a woman is ill her friends will help in bringing wood and cooked food for her. Some co-wives co-operate in this way, fetching wood together, and helping each other in sickness, but whether they do or not depends upon personal friendship. Often it is with an unrelated neighbour, rather than with a co-wife, that a woman works most closely. Only when co-wives are sisters, or aunt and niece, are they expected to work together regularly.

476 Village neighbours—women—also co-operate in the preparation of feasts, as we shall see in the following chapter.

g. Economic co-operation beyond the village

476 The economic relations of fellow villagers, and the changes
taking place in these relations, cannot be understood without
602 some reference to economic co-operation beyond the village boundaries. As we have already indicated, co-operation with relatives living in other villages is very important: cattle, the most prized possession of the Nyakyusa, circulate within kinship groups, between father and son, brother and brother, and between affines, and these same relatives assist one another in cultivation and building. But beyond the circle of kinsmen and village-mates there was formerly little economic co-operation.
[438] Each village and kinship group was largely self-sufficient, buying from outside little save iron spears and hoes, medicines, salt, cosmetics, and brass or copper wire for ornament.

326 Smiths were essential to the Nyakyusa economy for they

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Economic co-operation beyond the village has therefore increased enormously, and this is correlated with a decrease in economic co-operation within the village. The change is most obvious in the case of migrant labourers who, while remaining members of their villages (for they are domiciled there) cease, during the period they are at labour centres, to co-operate with their village neighbours in building, herding, hoeing and hunting; and those of their wives who accompany them are also withdrawn from village activities. 476

Of the men in paid employment within the district, some, such as house servants, police, hospital orderlies, and clerks attached to the Government station, are very largely withdrawn from economic co-operation in their villages; and even labourers employed on European estates, who still cultivate for themselves, and those who meet essential expenses by growing cash crops on their own account, co-operate less with their village neighbours than was customary in the old days. 476 464

As we have seen there is no village co-operation in the production of the main cash crops—rice and coffee—such as there was in the cultivation of three of the main food crops; therefore those who grow cash crops spend a smaller proportion of their time working with their neighbours than their fathers did. Moreover, the cultivation of cash crops encourages the development of hired labour at the expense of work parties attended by neighbours. In effect, the cultivation of cash crops involves less village co-operation than did the traditional cultivation of food crops, and in so far as men's energies are directed into producing cash crops, village co-operation becomes relatively less important. 241 476

We argue that while traditionally there was considerable co-operation in production between fellow villagers, that co-operation is diminishing, and its diminution is correlated with employment for wages and the production of crops for sale. The more educated the individual the more time he is likely to spend working outside his village, and the less he co-operates in economic activities with his fellow villagers. 476 178

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 land in each generation. The territorial segregation of fathers and
561 sons is directly dependent upon the shifting of the old men after
178 the 'coming out' ceremony, without which the young men would not have sufficient land to establish themselves as a compact group on land adequate to support their growing families. Where no redistribution of land takes place, as on mission land and in the chiefdoms where the 'coming out' ceremony has been dropped, the territorial division between age groups becomes blurred within a generation.

621 Redistribution of land in each generation depends upon two
425 further conditions: the existence of ample land to support the population, and relatively little development of land. As soon as
423 land becomes scarce those in possession of it are reluctant to agree
178 to redistribution. It is significant that the most valuable land of all in Nyakyusa country—that in old craters—is *not* redistributed at a 'coming out' ceremony, but is retained by an individual until his death, and then inherited by kinsmen. And as soon as improvements are made in the form of planting long-term crops, or building durable and expensive houses, the difficulties of redistribution are increased. Nyakyusa land-law recognized the right of an elder who had moved, or of his son, to the bamboos and *imisyunguti* trees he had planted (*vide supra*, p. 46). But such rights become much more complicated when it is not only an odd clump of bamboos or two or three trees which are at stake, but a large patch of coffee; or when, in place of the old-fashioned long hut (*ikibaga*) built with the co-operation of kinsmen and neighbours, there is a more substantial house with expensive doors and windows made by an expert carpenter. It has been shown that where individual rights over trees or other long-term crops are recognized, and such crops are planted on a large scale, individual tenure of land, as opposed to a temporary right of usufruct, tends to develop.[1]

621 Secondly, the solidarity of the Nyakyusa age-village, as of kinship villages in other African societies, is a function of a small-
● 476 scale society. Fellow villagers have been hitherto, and are still in
178 a large measure, dependent upon one another for land, for aid in economic undertakings, for sympathy and good fellowship, and for protection 'by night and by day'. But such mutual dependence is visibly decreasing. In the economic field co-opera-

[1] C. K. Meek, *Land Law and Custom in the Colonies*, p. 28.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tion is already as important beyond as within the village, and village control over the main cash crops has not been established, as it was over certain food crops. With increasing centralization the village headman, embodiment of the solidarity and relative autonomy of each village, is losing power to the chiefs and courts, on the one hand, and to the specialist agriculturalists, school teachers, elders, and ministers of religion on the other.

Friendships beyond the age-village are fostered by common experiences at a boarding school or a labour centre, and by common interests as members of a church or a coffee co-operative which does not necessarily include fellow villagers. And most important of all, fellow villagers are not bound to one another in resistance to external dangers as they were formerly. Lion, leopard, and buffalo still exist in the district, but we heard of no recent case of a village combining for defence against dangerous (as distinct from destructive) game: if action were necessary a European sportsman was usually glad of the chance of a bag. With the cessation of cattle-raiding and inter-village warfare, the curtailment of the right of self-help, and the development of courts with power to enforce judgement in cases involving members of different chiefdoms, dependence on fellow villagers for protection from material dangers and the responsibility of a village for the actions of its members, virtually cease. A sense of dependence upon neighbours for mystical protection lingers, but as elementary education, belief in Christian dogma, and the solidarity of Christian congregations increase, this supposed dependence upon the *amanga* or mystical power of neighbours also lessens. Many men who fear sorcery (including poisoning) do not fear witchcraft, and it is only against witches that neighbours are believed to protect one. Thus change in the form of beliefs is correlated with the development of more intense relationships beyond the village.

An age-village organization is probably dependent upon isolation in another fashion also: by their own account the Nyakyusa feeling that close association between successive generations is improper has been blunted by the example of Europeans and Swahili who do not share this feeling (*vide supra*, p. 69). The missionaries teach that avoidance between father- and daughter-in-law is unnecessary, if not in itself sinful, and the implication is that only 'superstition' maintains the taboo (*vide*

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

241 other women take fire from the lighted heap, and
789 kindle their own, first setting the torch to the large heap which contains the medicine, the virtue of which is carried to all the other heaps as they are set alight one by one.

There is a custom, now passing away, but still followed by a few, of throwing medicine into the ground as one hoes. Many use manure for fertilisation, but the medicines I am speaking of have no manure qualities. They are *unkota*, something possessing mysterious powers, the virtues of which are known by experience, but are not open to rational explanation. One of the best-known medicines of this kind is elephant manure, dried and set on fire, and the smoke allowed to spread over the garden. Where this is used it insures a bumper crop.

Not even yet, however, is all ready, for the seed must be doctored before being sown. A medium-sized basket is taken, and plastered on the inside with the drug, which, of course, has been obtained from the local doctor, who at this season does a roaring trade. Into the basket the seed is put, mixed with more medicine, and then sown. The object in this case is not, however, to secure a good crop, but to prevent the yield being interfered with. If even a sorcerer steals from that garden, he will sicken, and probably die; or a disease will eat up his lips, and he will stand revealed to all men for what he is, a garden thief, and, it may be, a sorcerer as well.

241 Working parties are often formed for the hoeing,
476 the group spending one day in each garden, and being

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

fed by the owner in each case. When a headman's 241
garden is being done, beer is provided, and the chief 476
usually kills an ox when he has a party hoeing for him. The main crops are maize, cassava, millet, sweet potatoes, peas, beans, ground nuts, but many other food-stuffs are cultivated. Every village is hidden in groves of bananas, which need regular tending. Rice is grown for the market, and in the Kinga Mountains large quantities of wheat are cultivated. Every man owns his clump of bamboos ; many have a few kapok trees, some mangoes, one or two lemon trees ; and some European fruits are slowly spreading to native gardens. A few cultivate kitchen vegetables, but only for sale to the white man.

In a few places I have seen intelligently conceived 312
irrigation, but never on a large scale, each man attending to his own needs in the matter.

Growing crops must be protected from numerous 241
pests. Boys are stationed by day to drive off monkeys ; straying cattle eating the crops involve their owner in damages : elephants, no rare visitors in some districts, are driven off by drum and horn and wild shouting when they pay no attention to the small sticks which are placed in a corner of the garden to keep them away. Pigs are very fond of growing maize ; and where they are numerous, small huts, elevated on poles, are built in the gardens, and there the young men sleep and keep an open ear for the grunting which betrays the presence of the spoilers. Then one may hear the long shout of the watchers, who add to their shouting the rattling of dried gourds strung on cords

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

768 all except his own mother, whom he either builds for at a little distance
587 and looks after, or else gives to a half-brother.[1] Inherited wives have the
[42] same land rights as others, and a mother for whom a son builds and hoes is treated by him, in the matter of land, just like a wife.

737 And a married man often supports an old woman—a mother, mother-in-law or elder sister—whose husband, though still alive, is incapable of hoeing and who has no unmarried sons. He may either hoe for her on her own husband's land or else assign to her a plot or two of his own.

241 The gardens of a household are not only worked by its members, other people assist them from time to time. Each married man usually
476 invites a group of his village neighbours to help him with a day's hoeing two or three times a year, entertaining them to food and beer after the work is over. A married woman likewise is often assisted by women friends from neighbouring households in the planting, weeding or reaping of her crops and them she rewards simply with a luxurious meal in the evening, without any beer. Again, as we have seen, a married woman sometimes engages a young man to hoe for her regularly, for a month or more at a time, and pays him by feeding him well for that period.

241 But although this last custom is still common it is beginning to
464 decline ; fewer men each year are willing to work for any length of time except for money, and already in some of the more prosperous households young men are found to be employed in hoeing at the rate of 2/- a month in addition to their food. The young men who thus accept employment in hoeing are always the poor ones, those for whom (whether because their fathers are poor in cattle or because they have many elder brothers before them) the prospect of getting married is too distant to stimulate them to any great diligence at home. In the plain of Mungonde, however, where ploughs are extensively used, the owners of ploughs make a considerable profit by hiring themselves out with their ploughs at 2/- a plot (*ulupaka*).

241 Kinsmen and affines also often assist in a household's hoeing. When
592 a man inherits his dead father's wealth then he assumes the position of
602 father towards his own younger brothers and is responsible for the
606 marriages of any who are bachelors ; they then hoe for him and are fed by his wives just as unmarried sons do. Sons-in-law, again, are expected to bring their friends now and then to help their father-in-law in hoeing and they often do so, more particularly if they are behindhand with the marriage-cattle. After the day's work is over, however, they are entertained just as sumptuously as an ordinary work-party of neighbours.

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[1] And any kinswoman of his mother (sister or niece) whom his father has married is treated likewise.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 The gardens of the Kyungu were divided traditionally into public
652 (*imilasa*) and private ones (*imigunda gya masano*). The produce of the first was mainly devoted to the entertainment of important guests—chiefs, territorial nobles and the ivory traders from over the lake. That of the second to the personal needs of the Kyungu and his household.
643 The public gardens were hoed and weeded by the great chiefs and the
651 nobles of the Ngonde plain with their subordinates and followers, the private ones by the nobles of Ngonde with theirs.

The hoeing of his public gardens by the chiefs and nobles of the plain was as intimately connected with the religious status of the Kyungu as was the bringing of royal tusks to him, for the belief in his rain-making powers provided a moral sanction for it. Drought and disease, as we have seen, were often attributed to the displeasure of the living Kyungu; and the failure of some ruler to bring his people to work the public gardens was, so we were told, the most usual way of displeasing him. The wealth and the divinity of the Kyungu were inextricably linked. Nor without these public gardens could the lucrative ivory trade have been maintained. In the primitive world of Ngonde there were no "purely business relations;" tributaries and buyers alike had to be royally feasted.

643 In the hoeing of the public gardens the political hierarchy of
651 Ngonde was made evident, for each great chief came separately to hoe, accompanied both by the local chiefs of his own house and by those
565 territorial nobles who lived near him. At an appropriate time either
622 the great chief or one of his noble neighbours would suggest going to Mbande to hoe, and the former would then summon all his local chiefs. But he could not summon the nobles; with them it was a polite arrangement between equals. "When they went to hoe for the Kyungu it might be a neighbouring noble and not the great chief at all who made the first suggestion; and then the two of them would go together with their followers. For the nobles are not subjects of the great chiefs but only of the Kyungu."

651 The main crop grown in the public gardens was millet (*amalesi*) for
241 beer. And at some time during the year all the chiefs and nobles[1] who
476 had brought men to hoe[2] them were summoned to taste "the beer of the *mulasa*." So we see that, in one aspect, the hoeing of the public
273 gardens of the Kyungu was but an extension on a large scale of the

[1] It is clear from our notes that each chief and noble brought to this beer-drink some of his people; but it is not clear whether he brought all those who had worked or only the more important among them.

[2] I speak of "hoeing" and "men." It is fairly certain that the women also came to weed afterwards and that they participated in the beer. We omitted, however, to find this out.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

ordinary custom of hoeing parties which is still followed by every chief and commoner in this whole area. Every man, two or three times a year, invites his neighbours to hoe for him and rewards them with a beer-drink in the evening. Where the hoeing of the Kyungu's public gardens differed from this custom was in the religious sanction behind it and in its political organization.

After the local chiefs had finished the *mulasa* for the Kyungu they would next return and hoe a small garden for their great chief who had led them to Mbande. But in this the territorial nobles took no part. Such gardens were not called *milasa* and there was no distinction made between them and the great chief's private ones. For this custom also there was a moral sanction; for the great chiefs, we remember, also participated in divinity. "If his people forgot to hoe for Mwakasungula then perhaps a little local epidemic of some kind would break out and the diviners, when questioned, would attribute it to their forgetfulness. Or perhaps a prophetic fit would fall on some-one and he would tell them to go and hoe (or they would rue it!)"

And, still lower in the hierarchy, among a group of chiefs who were half-brothers, the senior chief used sometimes to summon his juniors to bring their men and hoe; but "their acquiescence depended on their friendship for him"; it seems to have had no effective moral sanction.

The private gardens of the Kyungu were traditionally very small indeed, for the constant income of food from the plain made them all but unnecessary. Such as they were, they were worked by the people of Mbande, i.e. the nobles of Ngonde and their followers. The wives of the Kyungu lived like ladies and had all the normal work of a woman, including weeding, done for them.

The income of the Kyungu in slaves and cattle cannot be understood save in the context of judicial procedure and warfare with which we have not yet dealt[1].

The income of Mbande reached others besides the Kyungu and his wives. We have already seen how the nobles of Ngonde took their share of the food which was brought in; and some of it they gave to their messengers, the *valukuta*. Neither the nobles of Ngonde nor the messengers, according to the present Kyungu, used to have any large gardens of their own; they also were maintained at the public expense. And the nobles of Ngonde shared also in the proceeds of the ivory.

With the exception of a pile of tusks upon which the Kyungu slept, most of the ivory which reached Mbande, from the time of Mwangonde

[1] *Vide infra* sections 5 and 6.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

marriages of his kinswomen. When his father dies his father's wives 622
and cows pass to his father's full-brother, but they come to him and his 595
brother eventually when this man dies. While, if the young chiefs have "come out" it is common for their father's brother to hand over some, or even the bulk of the cattle, to them before his own death. And in his own half of the family, among his siblings and half-siblings on that side, a chief has far greater rights both of inheritance and of receiving marriage-cattle, than those possessed by the senior son of a commoner. So much is clear from my evidence, but it is not yet sufficiently detailed for an exact statement of rules.

Before 1893 fighting between chiefdoms was common and, except 631
between brother chiefs, the usual aim of fighting was, not conquest, but 721
cows; wars were generally just cattle raids. And a substantial proportion of the cows captured in a successful raid went to increase the herds of the chief. This lost source of income is now supplied by Government [435
salaries, which vary from 5/- to £15 a month.[19] The price of a cow is £2; 465]
but many shillings are spent on clothes, bicycles and beer, as well as on cows.

A chief, like any other rich man, maintains his prestige by hospitality, 622
he constantly entertains his more notable subjects with beer, at the 527
ceremonies of his family all his people gather in their age-villages and he kills cattle for them to eat. Chiefs seldom nowadays kill cattle except on ceremonial occasions, but in the old days of warfare they used also, I am told, to entertain their subjects with meat from time to time, in order to keep up their spirits for fighting. History is full of stories of Nyakyusa chiefs who attracted many men to their countries, and so gained great military strength, by the generosity and abundance of their feasts.

Every time a man or woman dies, a message must be sent to the 622
chief, and at the burial he is given the whole breast and ribs (*akakua*) of 764
one of the cows which are killed by the family of the dead person at that time. He has the right to take food or milk from any of his subjects if he has need of it; but he cannot take any man's beast without later returning another to him.

Apart from the now abandoned pursuit of cattle raiding the only 631
profitable enterprizes in which the members of a whole chiefdom jointly 476
participate are those of hunting and fishing; in some chiefdoms, but not

[19] Salaries above £1 a month are only paid to senior chiefs. No minor chief gets a Government salary, nor do great-commoners. The local value of money is shown (a) by the tax (8/- p.a.), (b) by the wages of unskilled labour (6/- to 8/- p.m.)

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631
476 all, hunting is organized like warfare and fishing is a joint endeavour, both ordered by the chief.

471 Every chief has a title of ownership (*obwene nakyo*) to the land of his
622 chiefdom and can evict any man he pleases, (giving him another plot), if he wishes to build there himself; but his people also have titles of ownership to it, both collectively, under the leadership of the great commoners, and individually, each man to his own ground. It is the great commoners who, in consultation with their neighbours, give to the sons of each village land on which to build; it is they who, together, finally fix the boundaries of the young men's villages at their "Coming Out;" it is they who, again in consultation with their neighbours, grant land to strangers who ask for it, though they must notify the chief and get his approval before doing so.

627 As the single great commoners settle disputes within their own
692 villages so the chief and great commoners together hear and decide cases within the chiefdom. Many of these legal actions are now settled in the Courts, but not all of them; and, even when cases are going to Court, preliminary hearings commonly take place before the chief, first. Cases are conducted and witnesses interrogated by chief and great commoners together, and the decision which the chief pronounces is an expression of their general opinion.

554 Among the great commoners there is an order of seniority. The
624 leaders of the two senior age-villages of the chief's own men play a prominent part at his "Coming Out," they each have a pre-eminent authority in one side of his chiefdom, and the other great commoners rank as their juniors, some on one side, some on the other. In the old days the two senior great commoners each led a whole side of the chiefdom in war.

622 The two most effective checks on the power of a chief are migration
754 and witchcraft. Military strength used to depend upon the number of a chief's adherents, to-day the scale of his salary is similarly dependent; men are quite free to move, and there is a constant flow of adherents from unpopular to popular chiefs. But unpopularity is most feared in its spiritual form of witchcraft. We have seen already that an adverse current of opinion is believed to act invisibly, as the "breath of men," against an unpopular member of a village and to make him sick. So also the adverse opinion of a single village or of a whole chiefdom is believed to have power against a chief, to bring sickness or even death upon him. As in the single village, so in the whole chiefdom the great commoners are the prime sources of this spiritual power; they are believed severally to protect the members of their own villages and jointly to protect their

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

against the wrong-doer. It is supposed that after this procedure sickness or even death may come to that person. Another method consists of laying a bewitched object on the path usually used by the offender; with the same result. Such bewitching is practised, for instance, when a quarrel has broken out between relatives. With the Nyakyusa any quarrelling with kinsmen is considered a very serious crime, as such a conduct is apt, in their estimation, to destroy the highly-valued family harmony.

3. Another day a ceremony *(ubunyago)*[6] to end mourning was held at Katumba. Some time before an older child had died, and now they were gathered to take leave of the dead[7].

At some distance from the hut, on the open space before it, a square represented the grave, in which the blossom of a banana[8] was interred, representing the dead. The mourners knelt at this grave and touched it with their elbows, knees and foreheads[9]. Each of the chief mourners had to do this, according to the belief of the Natives, lest he should fall into madness.

The next act was performed by the *unnyago*[10], the leading person of the ceremony, one in full knowledge of the rites. Immediately before the door of the hut of the mourning parents, the *unnyago* threw the collections of corn, brought by the participants in small baskets in honour of the dead, together into a big basket, and uttered the names of the contributors addressing the dead. The other participants repeated these names.

Then the mourners went into the hut; but, after some moments, they reappeared one by one and each one, as he left the door in a crouching position, was softly struck on his neck by the *unnyago* with a piece of the trunk of a banana plant. It was explained to me that this ceremony would induce new strength to the mourners, who were weakened by the death of their relative.

The portion of the ceremony which followed, consisted in the forming of a line by the mourners between the hut and the grave. The persons now stood straddle-legged on leaves of banana, the *unnyago* at the

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[6] Cf. *Wilson*, Conventions of Burial, p. 9, n. 4: nounyago.

[7] *Wilson* has described burials (*ifwa*, sg.) of adult persons; nevertheless, I think, my description will be of some value.

[8] Cf. my Chaga Notes, Bantu Studies, XV, p. 392.

[9] Cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 328.

[10] Cf. *Mackenzie*, p. 296; pl. *banyago*, p. 51; *Wilson*, Introduction, p. 287, *abanyago* (hereditary priests).

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

765 head of the line. She was also the first who crawled between the legs
●48| of the others, facing the hut, and followed by the others. This ceremony has the same purpose as the preceding act.

[291]

Scene from the ubunyago-ceremony: The mourners returning from the grave to the house crawling through the legs of the others.

765 Then the hair of the mourners was shaved (*ukumwa inwili*, to shave
[302 the hair, profane and ritual) and, I was told that a bath would be
515] the last act ending mourning.

[291
516]

Scene from the ubunyago-ceremony: The shaving of the hair.

765 In the afternoon I sent the father of the dead child a cotton kerchief
123 as a gift, and when I met him later on, he told me I had participated
43| in the burial of his child by that gift, saying, "You have buried my child with me".

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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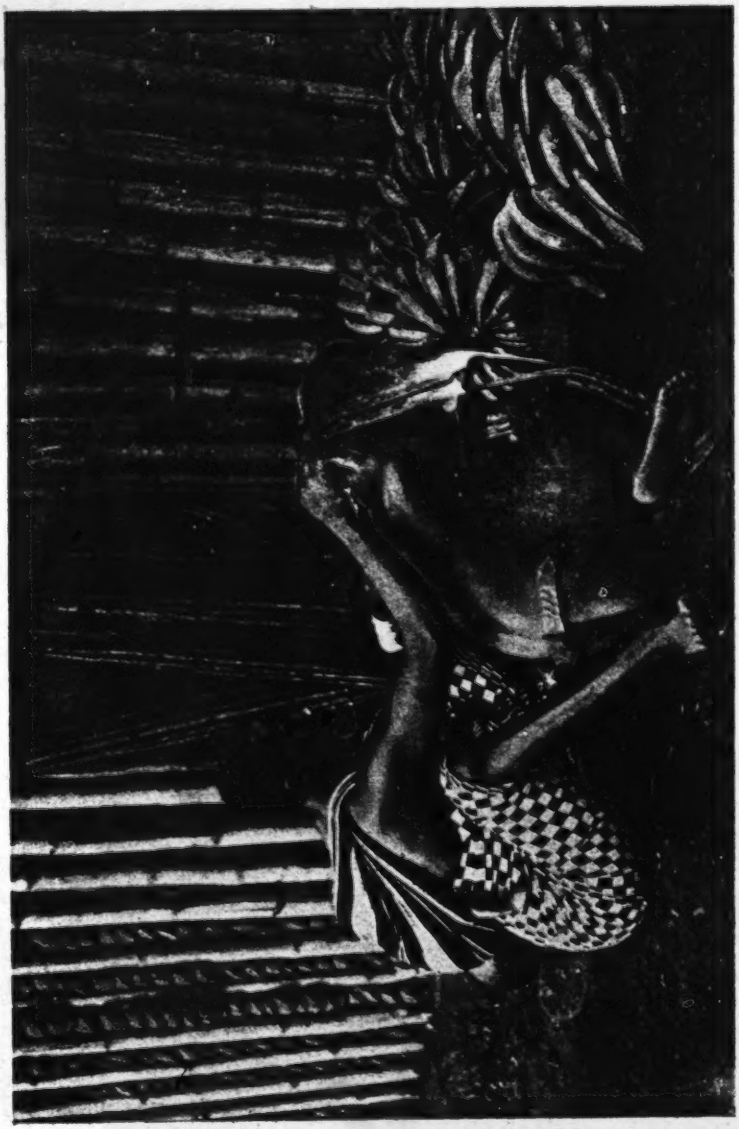

5. *Shaving the bride*

[facing p. 100]

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 parts. The partition wall was bamboo and mud. A doorway gave on to the inner
353 part, where Tufwene had her bed.

354 There were two hearths, one in each room. The front one was not used. In the outer room was a bed for guests—a common feature of all houses. Tufwene was thought to be well off, and she had plenty of carrying rings, used by the
482 women when they carry loads, often very heavy, on their heads. The inner room was used for stores, including a number of earthen jars. She had three very fine,
352 low stools. I saw them outside in the sun, but their usual place was no doubt in the outer room, which had the character of a workroom. Here were the large
412 wooden mortar and its long pestle; also the grinding stone and in a corner the small mat, the *ulupanya*, which is used to take up the newly ground flour. There
417 was also the ladder, used for fetching down firewood from the loft; you could see
415 the hen's nest, and the large water jar with its pointed bottom placed on three stones.

415 The third *isienga* belonged to an eighty-year-old woman whose husband had
[769] died. She told me how every day she would fill a fine, decorated bamboo mug
[531] with milk for him! These mugs, seen in all the houses, mostly have geometrical

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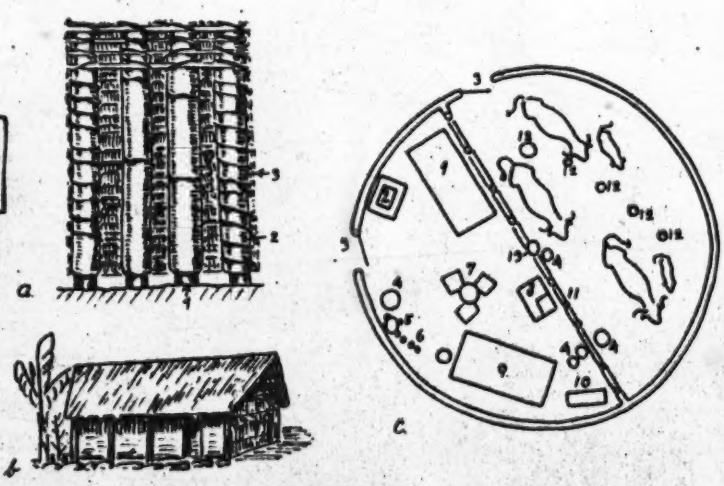


Houses belonging to Malia Ulinyelusya and her husband.

a. Detail of *isienga*, outer wall. 1, tree fern stem joined to bamboo pole—note aperture for liquid manure; 2, bamboo pole with plant fibre windings; 3, split bamboo.—b, Malia's *ifibaga*. —c. Plan of *isienga*. 1, bed of the man; 2, iron chests for garments; 3, door; 4, posts supporting ceiling; 5, hen's nest; 6, hoes and pestle for the maize mortar; 7, hearth; 8, chests; 9, bed of the grandchildren; 10, roost from hollowed out trunk; 11, low partition; 12, posts for tying cattle; 13, centre post to top of roof.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

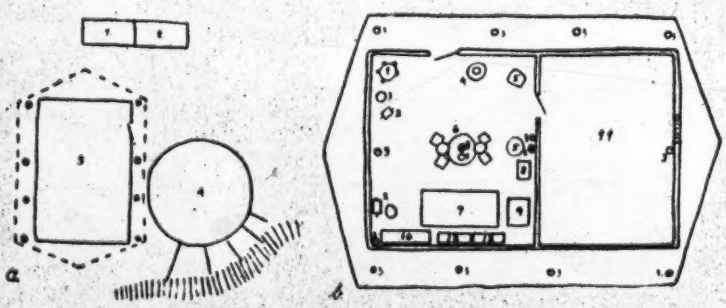
patterns burned into the bamboo; they are hung upside down so the dust will not settle in them. The bottom is the natural partition of the bamboo cane. 415 531

The house was standing on high, slightly slanting ground, and like the first mentioned house it was buttressed by a great number of thick branches. Incidentally, it seemed to be very old and rickety. Inside, there were a great many posts supporting the horizontal bamboo ceiling and the stores of firewood. All posts were bifurcated and held the beams solidly in place. The diameter of the house was the usual 6.5 metres, but in this case there was no inner partition. As this woman was very poor, she had no bed, but slept on a mat on the floor. Only very rarely is there no bed in the houses; I remember having seen this only three times. 342 [352 556]

The hearth was the usual type: three decorated square stones, rising to a height of 30 cm above the floor, but being sunk 70 cm into the ground. Here they were positioned on one side, to ensure that the centre post would not catch fire, and to make for easy escape of the smoke through the doorway. None of the houses have other means of smoke outlet. 354

Alongside the wall were calabashes, jars, and baskets; material for the baskets; and a little away from the wall, the large mill-stone and its appurtenant smaller grinding stone. A hen's nest was not missing either. Along one side was fitted a small under-ceiling for the storage of small things. Two or three bananas, meant to be her next meal, were lying on the floor near one of the posts. From the loft she reached down a calfskin in which she had been carrying her child. Its inside was of a reddish colour. 352 [231] [482 237]

342 231 352 353



a. Site plan of Malia Ulinyelusya's houses. 1, hen-coop; 2, drying-racks for crops; 3, Malia's *ikibaga* with roof supports along sides; 4, *isiinga* belonging to Malia's husband, with buttresses at low ground.—b. Plan of Malia's *ikibaga* (barred window in back room). 1, hen's nest; 2, *ikitete* (stool); 3, posts (those going up to ridge of roof are filled in); 4, large basket; 5, basket; 6, clay base round twin posts; 7, Malia's bed; 8, chest; 9, wooden chest; 10, table; 11, back room, having bamboo ceiling carried by bamboo cross beam (between posts marked 3); the room is used for storing clothes, etc.; 12, shelves.

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

but I was astonished that this trap was erected relatively near to my tent on the border of the village of Katumba. 223

6. *Fishing.* Fishing is a much more common practice with the Nyakyusa than hunting. The old-established custom of poisoning fish in their smaller rivers is still widely used. The poison is derived from the *unkeredu* shrup. Its branches and leaves are broken off, reduced to small pieces between stones and then packed in a covering of grass to resemble a long cigar about 1 meter in length and 25 cm in width. The bundles prepared in such a manner are fixed between two rowes of stones placed across the river for this purpose. The poison gradually diffuses into the water, which takes on a green colour. The fish are soon affected by the poison and rise to the surface with gaping mouths. They are then easily caught with a scoop made from bamboo. The open end of a piece of bamboo is split into several sections and the splinters are bent apart and tied together with raffia to form a sort of funnel[1]. The fish are strung through their gills on small pliable sticks and roasted at home over a fire. All people are allowed to join in this fishing which to them is always a festive occasion in the cooler season. 226 [824] [252]

Fishing in broader and deeper rivers, such as the lower Kiwira, is done by means of large fish-traps. They are made and repaired by men on the banks of the river. The traps are attached to poles rammed into the bed and almost invariably boats trying to reach the Lake Nyassa get struck on submerged poles. These large fish-traps strung across the river form quite an impressive sight. Looking up-stream, they look like the bows of little ships standing in a row.

7. *Preparing food.* With the Nyakusa the preparation of food is so exclusively the task of the women, that R. Thurnwald ist quite correct when says (Black and White in East Africa, London 1935, p. 157): "Menfolk starve if there are no women to prepare their meals". There is thus a very strong division of labour between the sexes, also noticable in the carrying of loads. For a young man to carry the load of an old woman or his sweetheart, whom perchance he might meet on the road, would be a grave violation of a rigid custom. 252 462 [482]

As the preparation of the food is the women's duty, also the grinding *(ukutika)* of the corn in a mortar *(ikituli)* with a pestle *(ikitiro)* which is the exclusive task of the female sex. The wife is always the first to rise in the morning to prepare breakfast. Usually, however, this is not [264]

[1] NB. They are of the same kind as those of the Hottentots along the Great Fish River in South West Africa. [171]

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

291 301 belts are also worn by men, nowadays below the other clothing. More and more pieces of cotton with imprinted patterns have come into 291 vogue. They are worn around the lower part of the body or below the 177 shoulders or fastened about one of them, and are bought from Indian [439] shops. That this modern fashion, however, is something new in such places which are a little remoter from direct European influence was demonstrated to me when I came through a small village in the environment of Masoko. There by chance I met some young girls carrying a piece of cloth on the top of a long pole as if it were a banner. On enquiry I was told that this "banner" was nothing other than a [556 piece of cloth newly bought by a woman of that village and that it was 482] hoisted on a pole and carried in procession out of sheer joy that this woman had been able to buy it.

291 Menfolk throughout are fuller dressed, especially when they go dancing. The women, on the other hand, wear their ordinary dress also on such occasions. The dancing costume of the men — only the younger [292 men participate in dancing — consists of a sort of tight-jacket or 535] sweater and wide robes with coloured patterns. The hair is adorned [302 with feathers. At work the men mostly wear only loin cloths or shorts. 237] After work especially the older man wrap their bodies in blankets. It is very seldom nowadays to find even very old men still wearing the former national dress: a bundle of long grass in front and a smaller one behind tied to the waist by means of a string, as I found a man on a solitary spot near Rungwe Station. Little boys go altogether naked untill they are about three years of age. Little girls begin to wear a small *amabi* at an earlier age.

531 *13. Art.* One of the most interesting and striking features in the artistic endowment of the Nyakyusa are the decorations on the outer-walls of their huts. The latter are only painted, however, when the exterior of the framework of bamboo is mud covered, otherwise only the wooden doors *(ikifigo,* door) of the huts are painted. By no means every hut or house is painted, but only a limited number in each village, probably depending on the presence and industry of an artist as this art is as in other cases an individualistic one. One such artist was introduced to me in a village near Rutenganio. The ornaments consist in most cases of geometrical patterns in white and black, seldom in other colours, or they represent different sorts of animals, e. g. elephants, horses, cattle, snakes, etc. The richest designs I found in a long extended village on the right bank of the upper Kiwira. In an other case the names of the animals were written in Swahili below

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

501 fearsome thing. It is sometimes hollowed out, by burning and hewing, miles from the shore, even up in the hills, and has to be dragged down by long-stretching teams, who will be entertained to a beer feast when the canoe is launched. The tree selected is not necessarily a straight one. A bend does not seem to matter, and some amazing things are afloat on the lake, and in regular use. But the Konde are not sailors, and compared, for example, with the Atonga, half-way down the lake, the number of canoes is very small indeed. The Konde catch their 226 fish by setting lines of traps across the rivers; only a few bolder spirits venture out on the lake with nets.

[483]

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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

512 low, again rising to a perfect fury of rapid sounds,
535 not without a certain rhythm, but with rasping effect upon the nerves of Europeans tossing sleeplessly in the warm humid air.

[221] After harvest comes the house-building; and when
484 that is finished the men are free to go out to seek
464 work. They usually set out in companies, for the Konde dislikes being alone on a journey. Like all
[609] home-loving people, they are suspicious of strangers, and if they have to pass through another tribe, they take great care to guard their small possessions; seldom more than they are wearing, and a spear or a club to guard them from the more obvious dangers of the way. There will be a few youths going out for the first time, with a wild flutter at the heart, of fear and expectancy. Fear, for they have heard strange tales of the white men and their ways; expectancy, because of the wonderful things they will see: the great houses, steamers, trains, motors; and what must seem countless white men to those who have been accustomed only to the missionary, the magistrate, and the storekeeper, and even these perhaps some days' journey from home. And who knows but he will come back with money in his pocket, wearing gorgeous raiment, a helmet perhaps, and, above all other things to be desired, a pair of boots! Those who stay long
[431] come back with the spoils of civilisation; highly coloured cloths, cheap clocks, melodeons, mouth-organs, worthless pocket-knives, which they deal out to admiring friends and acquaintances.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

4. A visit to the chief's father's grave was paid in company with the chief and some of his *amafumu*. It was situated in a banana grove *(ilisyeto*[11]*)* not very remote from the chief's hut. The grave of the present chief's father was on the ground-floor, about one hundred paces from its edge and was characterised by a small sixedged basalt block about half a metre in height[12] and about forty centimetres in breadth. An *indola*-plant was also standing on the grave about one metre from the basalt block. 765 [764]

On this occasion the chief also told me of the special cases for which sacrifices are offered in this grove. These are performed only in cases of very serious accidents, sickness or famine which may overcome the chieftainship. In such cases a black cow is slaughtered after sunset at the edge of the grove. In the presence of the chief some pieces of meat of the slaughtered beast, together with some bananas, are laid down at the grave. The chief adds a prayer to his ancestors at some distance from the grave, referring to the evil by which the chieftainship or some special village of it has been afflicted. He enumerates all the names of his ancestors and asks them for their help. 769 782

The remaining pieces of the meat and other bananas are left in the grove during the night. When the next day dawns, the *amafumu* return and some *abanyago* divide the meat and eat it together. On this occasion the chief orders the removal of all remains of ashes from the huts. The ashes are thrown down in such unclean places as where leprous persons had been buried. After this has been done, the chief in conjunction with an *unnyago*[13] produces a new fire for the huts by twirling, and all other fires of the village, or villages, must be kindled anew from this "need-fire". [766] [372]

5. The reason for visiting an *undagusi* (diviner)[14] who dwelled in Ibungu an older age-set village[15] which seemed to the visitor to be a more ancient part of Katumba, was caused by the sickness of the chief's sister. In accordance with the custom of the Nyakyusa in bringing women back to their father's village if they are very sick, the 787 [164 484]

[11] Cf. *Johnston*, *ilisieta*, pl. *amasieta*, p. 450; *Mackenzie*, ilisyeto, burial place, p. 209; *masyeto*, graves of the dead chiefs, p. 121; *Wilson*, Introduction, p. 287, *elisyeto*, sacred grove; *Merensky*, p. 115.

[12] Cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 327.

[13] Cf. n. 5, p. 3.

[14] Cf. *Johnston*, p. 451.

[15] I proposed to call the special form of villages found within the Nyakyusa society, which are erected on the age-set principle, „age-set villages" (African Studies, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 15—16 June 1943), a terminology that does not alter G. Wilsons statements on the "Age Villages" (Introduction, p. 269 ff). [56 621]

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 sister of the chief had also been brought back to the village of her brother. I was of the opinion that she was afflicted by a serious [164 tropical ulcer on the ankle of the left foot. The healing of these ulcers 484] commonly takes a very long time, and as this woman had already much suffered, and as the medicine-men consulted seemed to be unable to restore her, she was brought to her brother's village, but there also she had not yet recovered. The chief had, therefore, resolved to ask the diviner, whose name was Mwaigwisya, for the real cause of her sickness.

After he and his *amafumu* had taken their seats on mats, the chief explained to the diviner the reason of his visit. The diviner then grasped a curved piece of wood about 20 cms. in length with his right hand, after he had spat upon his hands. Then he moved the wood round his head, and finally placed it with one of its ends on the even, cleansed ground before his mat, and waited for the questions of the chief. The single questions, as for instance: "Is the sickness caused by Kyara?", or "Is the sickness caused by this or that person?", etc., were put to the diviner by Lamek Mwainyekule, the son of a chief of another chieftainship[16], now belonging to the *amafumu* of Mwamasika, as he now stayed in his village. Mwainyekule seemed to be not only

[291 516]

The Séance with the diviner.

[776] the most intimate adviser of Mwamasika, but alltogether the most clever man I met among this people. After each of the questions addressed to him the diviner murmured the names of the chief's

[16] A village of this name is to be found on Dr. *Kieperts* map (of 1895), southern to the Kieyo.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

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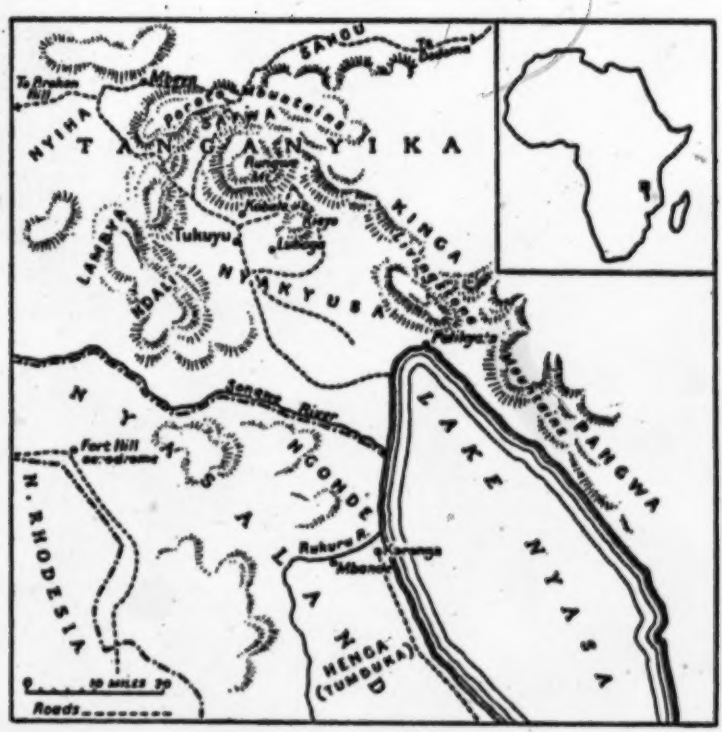

Map I. Country north of Lake Nyasa

[p. viii]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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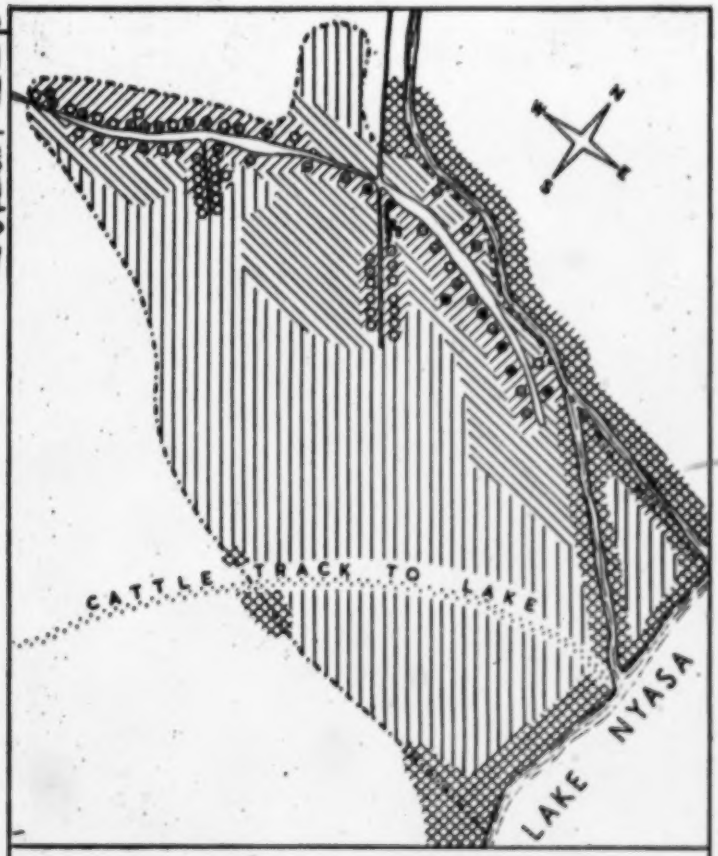

SKETCH PLAN OF KAPUGI VILLAGE, KOROSO'S CHIEFDOM, 1955

-REFERENCE-

[Facing p. 29]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

131
491

MAP II. NGONDE AND ?

[facing p. 2(a)]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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491

D NYAKYUSA COUNTRY

Drawn by J. V. L. Rennie

[facing p. 2(b)]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

797
743
692
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MAP III. RUNGWE

[Facing p. 16(a)]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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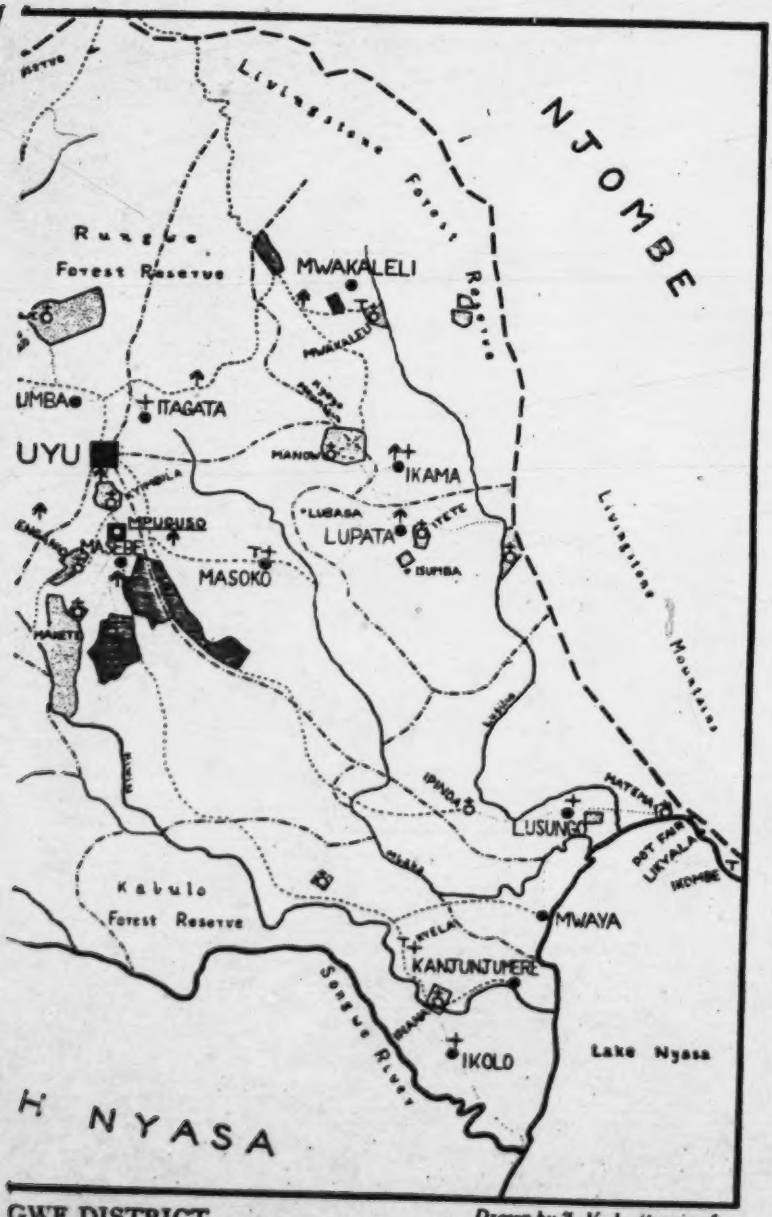

GWE DISTRICT

Drawn by J. V. L. Hennie after R. de Z. Hall and G. D. Archer

[facing p. 16 (b)]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XIII

TWENTY YEARS' CHANGE

How does Christianity interact with other revolutionary forces in the community? It has been possible to observe the changes that have taken place among the Nyakyusa after a lapse of twenty years, and a summary of them is necessary before we proceed to a discussion of the links between religious and secular change. 177

The first thing that strikes a visitor returning to Nyakyusa country after many years, is that the isolation, which was so typical of the valley, has greatly diminished. Buses, filled with Nyakyusa passengers, cross twice daily the high pass that leads out of the valley, and where once travellers died of exposure and starvation there is a hard road fringed with homesteads and fields. The belt of unoccupied country that even twenty years ago separated the Nyakyusa from their neighbours has disappeared, for they themselves have spilled out of the valley to the north and west, and their Kinga neighbours have come down the Livingstone escarpment to the east and cultivate the mountain slopes, for 'they no longer fear that people (i.e. the Nyakyusa) will seize their property'. Men travel abroad to find work and they go much farther and stay away longer than before. In the remotest village there is some man who has visited Burma or Malaya as a soldier, and a dozen lads who will argue the relative merits of the Orange Free State gold mines and the Copper-belt as centres of employment. Many women now accompany their husbands to Rhodesia, or other parts of Tanganyika, and some travel to visit daughters or sisters. The older women enlarge on their journeys and joke about how fearful they used to be. [494] [491] [166] [167] [464]

Travel implies learning another language, most often Swahili, but also Bemba and English and the pidgin of the gold and copper mines called Fanakalo. Thus intellectual isolation is disappearing along with the physical isolation. The numerous 'bush schools' which existed in the Nyakyusa valley in 1938, and at which many of those who attended never even learnt to read and write, have been largely replaced by mission primary schools, state-aided and inspected, and in these and the Native Authority primary and middle schools there are now 9,437 pupils, as against about 500 [191] [198] 177 872

[p. 203]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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[p. 203]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

empty?" Mwaikuyu said, "Why should we die? 326
I will call the people to worship."

The most important products of the smithy are 411
hoes and spears. Of the latter there are about a 412
dozen different kinds, for war, hunting, fishing; with broad or narrow blades; plain or with one, two, or three prongs; with long or short hafts. Axes are made for cutting down trees, digging out canoes, and all heavy work; some are slightly bent, and are used adze-wise; a small one, very sharp, is used for smoothing woodwork and finishing it off. There is also the *isengo*, a kind of cross between a hooked axe and a small scythe, used mostly for clearing bush land; and a long-bladed axe, carried by chiefs over the shoulder, and serving only as an ornament.

Knives are made of many patterns and sizes, with or without sheaths. A long spear-bladed knife is used for grass cutting, and a neat small strip of iron, sharpened at one end, not along the blade, is used as a razor. Arrows are not much used, as the Konde are not given to the use of the bow except for killing birds. Fish hooks were originally barbless, but some are now made on the European pattern. Needles are made for sewing mats; smaller ones for sewing breaks in calabashes, and others for sewing basketwork. Cow bells, tiny bells worn by little children [301]
on the ankles, anklets, and bracelets for women, complete the list.

For lake-shore people, and those living near the 501
larger rivers, the most important wood-working art is canoe making, and the average Konde canoe is a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

501 fearsome thing. It is sometimes hollowed out, by burning and hewing, miles from the shore, even up [483] in the hills, and has to be dragged down by long-stretching teams, who will be entertained to a beer feast when the canoe is launched. The tree selected is not necessarily a straight one. A bend does not seem to matter, and some amazing things are afloat on the lake, and in regular use. But the Konde are not sailors, and compared, for example, with the Atonga, half-way down the lake, the number of canoes is very small indeed. The Konde catch their 226 fish by setting lines of traps across the rivers; only a few bolder spirits venture out on the lake with nets.

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4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

231 according to the *Bell Report*. Cattle and hides are exported to Tanganyika.[1] The *Nyamwanga* herds were reduced, partly by Bemba raids, and partly by rinderpest.[2]

Domestic Architecture

341 *Ngonde* homesteads are famous in Nyasaland for their peculiar style and neatness
361 of execution. They are made of bamboos, specially grown for the purpose. They are oblong, with the ends slightly tapering upwards so that they present a ship-like appearance. The huts are erected in two lines facing each other, at a distance of about 30 yards. This centre street is kept scrupulously clean.[3] The *Nyakusa* live in round or long huts of bamboo or grass.[4] *Kinga* homesteads are scattered; they live in round huts of bamboo and straw.[5] The *Iwa* formerly lived in large stockaded villages, but these are now broken up.[6]

Specialization and Trade

326 The Ngonde were accomplished iron-workers; iron was dug, smelted, and made into hoes and spears.[7] The Iwa were formerly noted as iron-workers. Both they and the Nyamwanga grow tobacco on a large scale.[8]

286 A rough kind of cloth was made on native looms. The Ngonde made hollowed
●501 canoes, but were not good sailors. In fishing they used poison, hooks, nets, and traps.
226 Pottery and basket-making were carried on.[9]

[177] The Ngonde were the most civilized of this cluster of tribes, owing to their closer
439 contact with Arab and Swahili traders who used the lake as a waterway.[10] The Nyam-
643 wanga also had opportunities of contact with Arab and Swahili traders at the south end of Lake Tanganyika,[11] but information about the effect of this on their economic life is lacking. By comparison with the Ngonde the Nyakyusa were isolated from contact with the outside world,[12] and this is probably true of the other tribes of the group. Among the Ngonde, in spite of the political hierarchy and central religious authority of Kyungu, economic links between separate local groups were few. The ivory trade was a source of wealth for the Kyungu and for the nobles of Ngonde at Mbande, but its benefits had a strictly limited effect on the rest of the people. The economic links between the capital and the chiefdoms followed the lines of the political system The income of Kyungu in slaves and cattle depended on the judicial process and or warfare. He had a semi-monopoly of the ivory of the country (the right tusk of every elephant killed was his). His expenditure consisted of entertainment for all important visitors to the capital, and gifts of cloths, obtained through the ivory trade, to nobles and chiefs. The first Kyungu gave head-cloths to the indigenous rulers, who, in accepting them, accepted his overlordship, and the practice was continued every time a new chief or territorial noble succeeded to office. The nobles of Ngonde got cloths every time the Arab traders came. Chiefs bringing food to Mbande, the capital, were

[1] *Bell Report*, pp. 100–3; Aplin, 1931.
[2] Kerr-Cross, 1894; Murray, 1932, pp. 210–11.
[3] Ibid., p. 64.
[4] *Handbook of German East Africa*, p. 68.
[5] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[6] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[7] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 146–8; Kerr-Cross, 1894, p. 189.
[8] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 12.
[9] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 146, 149, 151–2.
[10] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 44.
[11] Ibid., 3, 1938, p. 15.
[12] Coxhead, 1914, p. 44.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

501 fearsome thing. It is sometimes hollowed out, by burning and hewing, miles from the shore, even up
[483] in the hills, and has to be dragged down by long-stretching teams, who will be entertained to a beer feast when the canoe is launched. The tree selected is not necessarily a straight one. A bend does not seem to matter, and some amazing things are afloat on the lake, and in regular use. But the Konde are not sailors, and compared, for example, with the Atonga, half-way down the lake, the number of canoes is very small indeed. The Konde catch their
226 fish by setting lines of traps across the rivers; only a few bolder spirits venture out on the lake with nets.

• 505 Many years ago I was travelling with a team of hill-men, and not knowing the men I had to deal with, I crossed a deep river, swarming with crocodiles, by the first canoe that offered, leaving the men to follow, as I had no doubt they would readily do. But I had miscalculated. Not a man would enter the canoe, nor had the jeers of the villagers any effect whatever upon them. Finally I called for the canoe to ferry me back, with the intention of driving my reluctant highlanders, willy nilly, into it; but the threat was sufficient, and four or five ventured, planting their feet in the bottom, and stooping down to hold on to the sides with their hands. Half-way over, the canoe capsized, the men struggled, blowing and shouting, to my side of the river, and one or two villagers plunged in to retrieve my bed which was floating gracefully down the stream. The rest of my carriers,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

notwithstanding the accident, accepted the inevitable, 505 ●
and were ferried safely across.

For the rest, the variety of woodwork includes 322
carved walking-sticks, with straight, knobbed, or bent 352
handles; chairs, stools, pillows, musical instruments, and wooden platters. In the Bundali district remarkably good Rurkee chairs are made on the European pattern, with perfectly smoothed spars, and perfectly burned-out holes for fitting the parts together. The one in my possession might quite well have been made in a carpenter's shop, but the only tools used were an axe and a knife, and a piece of iron for boring the holes. Toothed hair ornaments and [301
small wooden dolls represent the finer work; and 524
bamboo cups are decorated with pleasing patterns in 415]
poker work.

More important than the woodwork is the ancient 323
craft of the potter. There is, of course, no potter's 415
wheel, everything, from the immense pots, three feet high, down to the smallest eating dish, being formed by hand, built up, as regards the larger ones, by successive layers of clay, and finally hardened, after drying in the sun, by being put on a fire, while another fire is kindled inside. There is a great variety of pots, both in shape and in size. The very large ones are used for storing grain or flour; and some Europeans employ them for storing water. A well-stocked house will have up to twenty pots, for water carrying, for cook- 323
ing porridge, fish, beans, flesh; and special ones are 415
kept for beer making and drinking. The best clay is 317
found at the north end of the lake, and from there

583 Normally a bachelor is given cows one by one, over a period of years, and, as we have seen, he sends them, as he receives them, to the father of the girl he wants to marry. One cow is sufficient for betrothal, but not until he has given three can he begin openly to sleep with her. And he cannot usually set up his own economy until he has given at least three cows and she has reached puberty and been initiated. He may of course bespeak an already grown girl, but if he engages himself to a young one he is expected to bring two or more bulls as well, during the course of her initiation.

684 If he chooses to spend his cows in adultery fines, he may, but he will then have to wait longer to get married.

582 561 Thus the system of marriage by a transfer of cattle is, in this society, directly linked with a late marriage age for young men and with a privileged position for older men. When a boy gets cattle he at once gives them to an older man in order to secure his daughter as a wife; the labour of every bachelor helps to increase his father's wealth in food; it is in general the older men alone who can afford more than one wife. And there is an average difference of ten years or more in the initial marriage age of men and girls. The tax registers show in part of the district, among 3,000 adult* men, 34% bachelors, 37% monogamists, and 29% polygynists; and investigation proves that, generally speaking, it is the young men who are bachelors, the men over forty-five who are polygynists. [162]

•511 574 Though cattle are their most valued form of wealth, it is on agriculture that the economy of the Nyakyusa is primarily based. Meat and milk are luxuries, and daily bread comes from the fields. Hard work in a fertile country provides food for each family, and the millet beer which is the ordinary material of hospitality. Hospitality brings a man prestige and authority among his fellows; on the possession of sufficient food largely depends the contentment of his wives. And in the production, preparation and eating of food the relationships of the family and of the individual family within it, are clearly visible.

241 512 Hoeing is the work of men, planting, weeding, reaping and cooking is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about four hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a.m., on the upland plateau they begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different

*Presumed to be 18 years or over.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 in similar schools in 1938. Less than 40 per cent of the children
[872] between eight and eleven years old[1] are as yet in school in Rungwe District and the demand for places is enormous. Among the most insistent are girls wanting education. During the 1930's the Education Department was trying, with little success,
[871] to coax girls to stay in school long enough to learn to read and write, but today nearly a third of the primary school pupils are girls. A handful of boys and girls go out of the district to attend
[874] middle or secondary schools, and a few candidates for training as teachers and district nurses come in. Thus an educated person, or one who goes out to work, mixes with people whose backgrounds and languages are quite different from his own.

[511] Then people are richer than they used to be, partly because of the wages earned abroad, and partly because of the coffee and
[465] rice grown and exported. There is also some employment within the district on tea estates (especially important to women and girls), and coal and vermiculite mines. The value of peasant crops exported has risen from about £24,000 in 1936[2] to nearly £578,000
[434] from coffee and rice alone in 1955,[3] and some men have made as much as £150 from their coffee in a year. A coffee cheque of £30 to £60 is common. In addition to the peasant crops there is tea from estates—well over a million pounds of made tea in 1955 as well as a quantity of seed. This increase in wealth has involved a change in the division of labour. Because men are not at home to clear and hoe, their wives, perforce, must clear fields and hoe for themselves, assisted by their young sons, boys who twenty years ago would not yet have stopped herding.

[161] There has been a rapid increase in population, more especially in the hills, due partly to the development of health services and

[1] Number of children in Mission and Native Authority schools in Rungwe District, 1955:

Boys	Girls	Total	No. of children 8-11 years of age (estimated at 10% of total population)
6,592	2,054	8,646	23,639
Middle Schools			
718	73	791	(This total does not include those who are in middle schools *outside* the District, nor does it include those following a professional course in the District)

(Figures provided by the courtesy of the Provincial Education Officer, Mbeya.)
Change in Ngonde is not discussed for it was not possible to visit that area in 1955.

[2] *Good Company*, p. 16.

[3] Calculated from figures kindly supplied by the District Commissioner, Mr. Peter Johnston.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and try to understand the nature and reasons for change. Here, then, is a good opportunity for the study of social change – not only in land tenure as such, but also in village and family organisation, political authority and economic life.

II

The Nyakyusa are a Bantu people inhabiting the main part of the Rungwe District in southern Tanganyika, immediately to the north of Lake Nyasa. In 1948 they numbered about 199,000 in that District, but about 10,000 men were probably at the time temporarily absent from their homes and in employment in the mines and towns of the Rhodesias and South Africa (see Gulliver, 1957), whilst about 20,000 had migrated to live in the adjacent Mbeya District to the north.

The tribal area comprises a confined geographical basin surrounding the northern end of Lake Nyasa. It extends only about 40 miles from the tip of the lake at 1,550 feet above sea level to the Poroto Mountains in the north at 8,000 feet; and from east to west is only about 30 miles, from the almost sheer walls of the Livingstone Mountains (with peaks up to 10,000 feet) to the Ndali Highlands (rising to about 7,000 feet). There are therefore unusually large ecological differences within so small an area. Three major regions are to be distinguished: the "Northern Highlands" over about 4,500 feet, the low-lying "Lake Plains" in the south, and the "Central Region" in between. Everywhere rainfall is reliable and high, averaging at least 100 inches annually[1], and this amply compensates for a certain poverty and misuse of the soil, although (and particularly in the Central Region) it brings dangers of soil erosion. Except in the highest parts the banana is the staple food, supported by maize, beans, finger millet and groundnuts. In the Northern Highlands coffee has become well established as the principal cash crop: in the Lake Plains paddy rice cultivation provides both a food and a cash crop: in the Central Region the country is too low generally for coffee and too high and dry for rice; consequently cash-cropping is considerably inferior and the people's standard of living is rather poorer.

The Nyakyusa and their country tended for a long time to be relatively isolated from the outside world by high mountain walls and rain-soaked roads. In addition, or because of it perhaps, they developed an almost unique culture which was supported by considerable conservatism and high insularity. They still continue to regard their African neighbours beyond the mountains as their social and cultural inferiors. The turmoil of the slave-trade in Central Africa passed them by; in modern times they have not enthusiastically accepted Christianity and they have refused to take up the use of Swahili, the Territorial *lingua franca*. In recent years, and most especially since the end of World War II, they have, however, accepted and pushed forward with vigour a rapid and extensive economic development, involving particularly the production of coffee and paddy as cash crops, and large-scale labour migration to the south in the high-wage mining industries. The multiplicity of petty, often tiny, independent chiefdoms has been reorganised to provide four local government areas, each under a Rural Council, in which the old chiefdoms have become something like parishes[2]. Although much of the old conservatism and narrow parochialism persists, yet there is now an atmosphere of accepted change, of a keen desire for economic development, and a general acceptance of a cash economy.

Probably the most significant feature of modern life in the Nyakyusa country is the increasing scarcity of land for agriculture in relation to the

1. At Tukuyu, in the Northern Highlands, annual rainfall averaged 99.32 inches between 1919 and 1952; at Kyela, in the Lake Plains, the average between 1940 and 1951 was 106.31 inches.
2. Kyi Kingdom, E.R.: The extension of a system of local governments by African rural councils in the Rungwe District, Tanganyika; *The Journal of African Administration*, III, 4, October, 1951.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

less uncultivated. These areas can easily be picked out today by the absence of village sites and banana groves. There was something of a rush to grab land in such areas and in the less densely populated parts of the chiefdoms. Today in my personal experience – for no general survey has been attempted – there remains little or no unused land within the paddy-growing region which can, by native techniques, be brought under the plough; and indeed men are attempting to grow peddy on unsuitably raised land where inundation is inadequate. Communal cattle pastures have shrunk as arable holdings extended until they remain only where cultivation is profitless.

The demand for land has far outrun the physical supply, and in 1955 it still seemed to be insatiable. The initial cycle was that a desire for more money to permit of a higher standard of living created a demand for more land on which to produce more cash crops; but the increased level of income then further stimulated money demands to raise standards higher again, thus bringing a renewed demand for land. The cycle has now been halted by the lack of further land to meet the people's needs, but the demand remains nevertheless and is indeed increased by rising costs of living.

This economic picture is, of course, oversimplified, but it may serve to illustrate the nature of forces at work in the situation. I would not wish to overemphasise the snowball effect, for the bulk of the population remains still largely content with only a little over earlier standards; but increasing numbers of men and their families are coming to seek something better. Bicycles have become something of a general necessity; a variety of good clothing and shoes is considered quite essential. Only a single decade before the Nyakyusa women still generally went about in the traditional nudity, whereas in 1955 they must have ranked among the very best-dressed African women in the Territory. European-type household goods, crockery and utensils are common. The demand for money, that is for a higher standard of living, has also been greatly stimulated by the experiences of the thousands of labour migrants returning from southern towns and mines, and by the cash and goods they bring back with them.[1]

It is not possible for me to attempt to suggest what a desirable acreage would be for a contemporary Nyakyusa, because money demands, crop yields and selling prices change and the desire for higher standards of living also alter as the potentialities of the new cash economy are increasingly understood. In 1954 the approximate average of Sh.200/- per paddy cultivator was earned from perhaps two or three acres of arable land, but an indeterminable amount of the crop was kept back for home food requirements. As will be shown later many men's paddy fields could have been little more than an acre, and many men, specifically young men, had no paddy land at all. Certainly there were few who held what they considered, at a reasonable estimate, to be sufficient land.

This universal cash crop agriculture and the continuing demand for higher standards of living, and therefore for higher money incomes, is the real cause of the new and rather sudden pressure of population on the land. Of course this economic process operates within a situation of relatively dense population and in a present community where land is almost the only form of capital and alternative enterprise is small. The gradual increase of population, although probably small, further aggravates the difficult situation.

Arable Holdings

It was not possible to obtain adequate, satisfactory data to allow the calculation of local population densities, and the detailed results of the 1948

1. In Gulliver, P. H. (1957), an estimate of the cash income of Nyakyusa in 1954 is given at pp. 51-2. Data on the cash brought back by returning labour migrants are given at p. 58.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Census have never been issued.[1] However in some sample villages I very roughly measured arable holdings, and my results provide new information even though they can be illustrative only of the modern situation.

In each of the eight villages chosen[2] the arable holdings of *all* the adult male members (whether at home or away at work at the time) of the whole village, or occasionally of a distinct section of it, were measured by the simple and rough method of pacing the borders of every separate plot and converting the resultant figures into yards and thus to acreages. The actual pacing was done entirely by myself in order to try to maintain an even stride on all occasions, but in each village I was well supported by a team of four or five villagers, always including the headman and his assistants. The figures obtained relate only to arable holdings and bear no determinate relation either to crop yields or to non-arable land in the villages concerned. The results are summarised in Table III below.

TABLE III
ARABLE HOLDINGS IN EIGHT VILLAGES

Villages and chieftdoms	*No. of land-holders*	*Average holding in acres*	*No. of men holding more than:—* 5 *acres*	10 *acres*	*Average size of plots in acres*
Kapugi					
Mwamasangula ..	39	3.2	11	1	1
Ikolo Mwakyusa ..	48	3.0	13	0	1.2
Matema Mwakilasa	30	1.9	4	1	0.6
Lugombo Koroso ..	24	1.6	2	0	0.6
Mpungati					
Mwakipesile ..	43	1.5	1	0	0.5
Kapugi Koroso ..	40	1.3	1	0	0.4
Lusungo Mwakilasa	12	1.3	0	0	0.6
Bunka Mwantipulo	36	1.0	0	0	0.4
	372 men		32 men (8.6%)	2 men	

From this Table it can be seen that in the chieftdoms of Koroso and Mwakipesile, *in the villages concerned*, the average holding per man was about one and a half acres – and my impression was that in the southern parts of Lazarus's chieftdom and elsewhere immediately surrounding the lake shore similar conditions existed. It may be noted too that in these cases there were large numbers of young men without holdings at all. On the other hand, in the selected villages in the chieftdoms of Mwamasangula and Mwakyusa, the average holdings were about twice as large – three acres; and fewer young men were landless. Note also the cases of the villages in the chieftdoms of Mwantipulo and Mwakilasa in the more northerly parts of the Lake Plains, where the average holdings were one and 1.3 acres respectively, and where yet there was arable land unused and available. In those parts paddy cultivation is very limited because of the higher and hilly country, and the people remain little more than subsistence farmers – perhaps they may be taken as not unlike the traditional, pre-European subsistence cultivators.

Unfortunately I am unable to relate these figures of arable holdings to the total land available in each village, for this would have required survey work beyond my competence. Non-arable land is utilised for village sites with banana groves, roads and paths, pasturage, etc.; but the position is further complicated by varying amounts of unusable land in my sample villages. To give only two examples: within the boundaries of Mpungati village, Mwakipesile's chieftdom, there are many acres of land adjacent to the Mbaka river which today are unusable because of deep flooding from

1. Population figures of any kind are not available even for the separate chieftdoms, let alone for ecological units.

2. Their approximate locations are indicated on the accompanying sketch-map.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

number of separate plots per holding was less than where land was scarcer; at the same time the average size of separate plots was smaller in those more land-hungry villages. The reader may refer to Table III (page 15) for some illustrative figures. Though differences are not yet very great, nevertheless there seems to be a fairly clear correlation between the average size of villagers' holdings on the one hand, and on the other the number and size of separate plots, and this is entirely borne out by my general information obtained in villages where actual measurements were not made. The inescapable conclusion must be that increasing scarcity of land in the Lake Plains leads to increasing fragmentation and dispersion of holdings; further, the present land situation and land tenure system can only lead to a continuation of this trend.

To emphasise the actual situation in 1955, let me reiterate the results of my own village surveys in the very high density region. In a village in Koroso's chiefdom only a quarter of the younger men had paddy land of their own, holdings averaging about three-quarters of an acre; in a village in Mwakipesile's chiefdom, only 17 per cent. of the younger men had paddy land and holdings averaged about half an acre (cf. Table VII, page 37). These two examples are taken from the areas of most severe land shortage and are not therefore altogether typical of the whole Lake Plains. Nevertheless, I do not think that they are entirely atypical; more importantly, they indicate the present trend. Within another generation this fragmentation and scatter of holdings may well be the common feature everywhere in the flood plains unless the system of tenure and inheritance is modified. If the increase in population is quickened through improved medical facilities, better diet and housing, and improved conditions generally, then the position will become more acute. Such an increase is only to be expected. The Nyakyusa have decisively entered a money economy and they have learnt to seek higher standards of living. Only from their fields, by cash-cropping, can they expect to earn their livings and the demand for better living will not be curtailed – nor, of course, is it desirable that it should be.

There is another aspect of this whole matter which must be considered. It relates to the movement of individuals between villages. Such movement was, in earlier European days, a crucial factor in the age-village structure, for it was not only exceedingly frequent, but also it tended to undermine the idealised coeval basis of village life. Movement between villages is increasingly difficult now, for a newcomer naturally cannot easily obtain land, nor as much land as he would desire even at a moderate demand. Nevertheless, the reasons for movement persist, and they will do so whilst the fear of witchcraft remains and whilst illness and misfortune are attributable to the unfavourable aura of a place. There remains also the tradition of moving so that a man may escape from bad relations with kinsfolk or neighbours, or from the obloquy resulting from his own disapproved actions. Much social and psychological tension is being created now as a result of the new difficulty of movement, and so far the Nyakyusa have not evolved alternative methods.

On the other hand, so deeply engrained is the notion of the prestige and power which accrues to a village by virtue of the number of its inhabitants, that headmen and villagers alike remain most reluctant to refuse to accept newcomers, even when it inevitably means that the present inhabitants must meet a further decrease in the average amount of land available per family, for a newcomer must be allocated a holding if he is to remain. Consequently, if a holding is for any reason left vacant, a headman tends to refuse to re-allocate some or all of it amongst his villagers and thus to augment their holdings; but instead he keeps it in reserve pending the hoped-for arrival of another newcomer. Men desiring to leave their own village try to get

10:Culliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Plains than from any other Nyakyusa area. In the high-density regions, the proportion of young men away at any one time is about 50 per cent. on the average and the proportion has risen concomitantly with the increasing scarcity of land. 423 [167]

It is not, of course, suggested that land shortage is the only factor responsible for contemporary labour migration amongst the Nyakyusa. Elsewhere (*loc. cit.*) I have drawn attention to the very high wages, the increased opportunity to obtain outside employment, the development of transport services and the intensification of recruiting, together with the general desire of the people to gain a higher standard of living as they more thoroughly embrace the new money economy. In fact, wage-labour in the mines is more profitable than growing paddy at home under current agricultural practice, even were land more easily available. Nevertheless, more young men do leave their homes in the Lake Plains than elsewhere in the country, and there is a rough correlation between land availability and the degree of labour migration, which seems to indicate that where men can obtain more land they tend to seek their money incomes at home. The Nyakyusa themselves, with an intensity of tribal patriotism, say that they much prefer to remain at home if they can earn their money there, even if they earn rather less than they might obtain abroad; but, say the young men, it is impossible to earn anything like sufficient when the fields are unobtainable in which to cultivate the cash-crop. 464 167 423 [511]

The data which I have been able to collect are summarised in Table VII. Young men are defined here as those under about 30 years old.

TABLE VII

YOUNG MEN: LAND HOLDING AND LABOUR MIGRATION

Villages and chiefdom	*Young men having own paddy field*	*Young men away at work*	*Average holding of:* *Young men who own land*	*Older men in same villages*
1. Very high density region				
Mpungati Mwakipesile ..	17%	53%	0.5 acres	1.9 acres
Kapugi Korusso	23%	54%	0.75 acres	1.5 acres
Ndobo Mwakyusa ..	28%	51%	—	—
2. High density region				
Ikuio Mwakyusa ..	37%	47%	1.6 acres	3.7 acres
Kapugi Mwamasangale	33%	39%	1.25 acres	4.5 acres

423 167 [464]

There are some young men who have small food-crop plots but no paddy field, but I have chosen to correlate labour migration with paddy cultivation because these are almost the only alternative ways of earning money today, and the people themselves recognise the fact. The number of samples is too small, but the general inference seems to be quite clear nonetheless. My own conclusions in this matter were, however, arrived at independently of these figures, which were only obtained for corroboration. The evidence of the people themselves and their obvious difficulties of earning money at home were overwhelming.

If anything is required to underline the current land shortage and to illustrate the small size of the average holding, it surely lies in the existence of villages in which only about one quarter of the young men have their own paddy fields, and in which the average holding of this minority amounts to less than an acre.

Only in the low-density region can the young men obtain the fields they require. There, as they did traditionally, the young adult sons continue to assist their fathers in the heavier labour in the fields, but gradually before marriage they accumulate and extend their own holdings and so achieve economic independence. Elsewhere in the Lake Plains this process is taking much longer and indeed it now very frequently awaits inheritance at the death [178]

of the father. The old principle that every man had the right to arable land applied no less strongly to the young men, married or bachelors. Today most headmen will refuse to entertain the applications of young bachelors for land, and in this they merely represent general public opinion. But many young husbands likewise cannot obtain land, or only an insufficient amount.

Consequently, the following case-history, which I recorded for one young man, is not unusual. In 1955 he lived in the Mlangali young-men's hamlet, attached to Mpunguti village in Mwakipesile's chiefdom, where his father lives. He was about 27 years old and had a wife and one child. Twice he had been to work in the mines and from the profits of this employment he had completed his bridewealth payment and had bought, in addition, three cattle, a bicycle and some good clothing. He thought he would probably go away again. Behind his house his wife had about 300 square yards of bananas and there was a tiny patch of cassava. This man had no other land, but he assisted in the heavy labour on his father's holding (about 1.7 acres in all) and by family convention he normally took for his own use the paddy crop of a small strip there; he insisted, however, that he had not been given *this strip outright* and that it remained at his father's pleasure. He had an unmarried half-brother about 22 years old who had not obtained even that concession at the time. Their father was about 55 years old and had two other sons who were still boys. The young man himself had been refused an allocation of land by the headman on the grounds that (as the headman well knew) he had the use of this strip of his father's land, and also because, as the eldest son, he would be the principal heir on his father's death. He was clearly worried about his future, for he did not wish to go abroad again and leave his wife and child; but he did not see how he could stay at home without seriously lowering his standard of living to little above subsistence level.

I quote this brief case-history not necessarily as typical – though I think it probably is – but as an actual illustration of the present state of affairs as they affect an individual.

The Modern "Chief" and the Land

Most of the traditional chiefs, *abanyafyale*, have been recognised and salaried under the Native Authority, and they are officially referred to today as *abatwa* (s. *ntwa*). Some of the smallest chiefdoms have been absorbed administratively by their larger neighbours, and, although they are still recognised by the people, their *abanyafyale* have lost very much of their earlier prestige and authority. In the Lake Plains the modern chiefdoms are often rather larger than is usual amongst the Nyakyusa,[1] but they are, of course, small in comparison with the size of most African chiefdoms in Tanganyika.

The slightness of the traditional authority of the chief in land matters has already been noted (pages 7-8) and in general this still holds. In European times, however, the recognised chiefs have been given an increased authority and prestige as the local intermediaries between Government and people, and until recent years they were almost the only local instruments of the Government amongst the Nyakyusa. They have been backed by the all-powerful European, who preferred to deal with single, recognised individuals thought to have prime authority in a locality, and the European officer has been encouraged in this notion by an over-enthusiastic policy of indirect rule. Such chiefs were able to assume a degree of power well beyond the traditional limits, and to aggrandize themselves thereby. The ordinary commoner was never quite sure how far his chief was individually claiming more than he

1. On the numerical size of chiefdoms see supra, page 6.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the women has constantly to handle it and if, just after intercourse, she has to do this without time to wash first, then the child, we think, will get diarrhœa or grow thin. Women[1] always wash very carefully in the mornings after intercourse, both for the sake of the children and the husband. If the woman touches food unwashed after intercourse we think it will make her husband sick, and he will get unhealthily fat. If a child is old enough to play by itself . . . so that the wife can wash properly before attending to it, then it is all right for the couple to have intercourse, but not for the woman to become pregnant again yet. She should not do that until the child is weaned![2] 846 [512] [753]

Contact with menstrual blood or a menstruating woman is held to be dangerous to a man, more particularly to a warrior, hence there is an absolute taboo on intercourse during menstruation (for five to eight days) and restrictions on cooking for a man. A menstruating woman does not blow up the fire on which her husband's food is cooking, or squeeze the food to test whether it is ready, or scrape ash off bananas or sweet potatoes she has roasted, or serve food, for 'her breath comes from her belly and it is dirty; her belly is dirty on account of the menstrual blood. All her body is dirty. She does not wash. When she washes, you, the husband, think that the flow has dried up and catch hold of her!' So a woman who is menstruating fans the fire instead of blowing it, and calls a co-wife or a child to serve the food she has cooked. She does not even crouch over the fire to warm herself, lest she contaminate it; and she neither uses the common calabash cup for drinking nor scoops water from the household water jar with her hand, but fashions a cup for herself from a leaf, or has her own little water-pot. She avoids passing behind or shaking hands with a man; she avoids a new-born infant; she keeps well away from cattle, neither passing behind them when they are in the homestead nor clearing out dung from the byre; she avoids touching medicines or entering the house of a doctor; and she avoids eating pumpkin or pumpkin leaves, or picking them. These taboos are enforced lest she injure men or infants or cattle or medicines, for 'she is dirty' and her 'dirt' is thought to cause purging and to rot medicines, and she, 841

[1] The 'filth' is on the wife because she cleanses her husband with her hands.

[2] *Coitus interruptus* is practised until the mother is ready to conceive again. 'Formerly it was taboo to make a woman pregnant before her previous child was four or five years old. Her husband's sisters made a great case about it. The child must know how to run before a younger brother was born. We said: "How can a woman carry two children?" Now she becomes pregnant again when the elder is two. Of those who bear again before that it is said: "They kill the elder child." ' (Statement of Nsajigwa, an elderly man.) [833]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER II

Village Life

361 THE typical Konde village has very little in common with a European one. Here and there one will come on villages neatly laid out in streets or rows, usually with the ends, rather than the sides, facing the road; frequently with a clump of bananas separating one house from another. But much more common is the village in which each house is hidden in its own banana grove; or where at one point one may find three or four huts grouped together, at another perhaps a solitary hut, yonder, again, two or three are near each other; but everywhere surrounded by bananas growing close up to the houses. Or, in a few places, the tall maize conceals the houses from view in the growing season, leaving them exposed, after the harvest, to the eye of all passers-by.

•512 From a distance nothing is seen but the wide spreading banana leaves. In the early morning from hundreds of huts smoke rises into the still air, as the sleepers rouse themselves and lay fresh wood on the fire which has been smouldering all night, unless some one has wakened and stirred the dying embers. One by one the villagers emerge from the houses, and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

One by one the villagers emerge from the houses, and sit in the sun, greeting neighbours with a polite 572 ● "Have you slept well?" if there are any neighbours [576] near. Then the husband milks the cattle, and the boys come to drive them out to the pasture, where they will remain until the early afternoon, when they are again milked.

Generally the cattle sleep in the same house as their 231 owners, tied up to stakes fixed deep in the floor; but 592 where there are grown-up sons not yet married, a separate house is built in which the parents sleep with the little ones, while the young men guard the cattle from raiding thieves.

The bed is frequently no more than a mat spread 573 on the mud floor, with a single blanket for covering, and no pillow, unless it is a piece of roughly trimmed wood. The more prosperous natives, earning good pay in the employment of Europeans, have well-made beds fully equipped, in many cases even with mosquito nets hung from the roof. The poorer consider that they have made a great step forward if they have been able to save up enough money to buy a single blanket, and not seldom even that belongs to the father, the mother and children having to be content with meagre coverings of calico or grass mats. But [354] the house is warm, often too warm, for the fire is always burning, the door is closed, there are no windows, and there is no ventilation in the roof; and all the inmates sleep with their feet to the fire, which is in the middle of the floor.

Here and there one will come upon rows of tiny 342 houses, each built and occupied by two or three small 561

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

461 marriage settlement; the wealth some one has
521 brought from the South; or perhaps they exchange
522 impressions of Europeans they have worked for—a subject into which a great deal of humour can be packed; for it must not be imagined that the white man is taken too seriously. His little foibles, his often none too good temper, his haste to get a job done, and above all his cool assumption of unquestioned superiority, supply endless fun to the village joker. "Bantu as she is spoke" by some Europeans gladdens the weary hours for many a humorously inclined native.

241 Should the rains be late, the situation may be
512 serious, for not only does the heat continue, but the harvest will be correspondingly late, and there is dark fear lest the supplies in the barns, intended to last until March, should have to do until April is well on. [785] Public prayer is offered, led by the chief. The preliminary ceremonies have been attended to, and as soon as the first rains fall all sally out with the first streak of dawn to begin the year's work. From a score of small crofts one may hear the long happy shout of the men, and the shrill call of the women, as they toil in the early morning; but as the day advances and the heat increases, the shouting dies away, and every one puts the last ounce of energy into the task in hand. Henceforward, for about three months, the native gives all his attention to his crops; for as the season advances, and the grain begins to grow, the weeds come up also in wild profusion, and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

241 sheer hard work makes men and women look thin and
512 haggard. Work stops about noon; the women go home to attend to the food, the men to see to the cattle which the smaller boys have been looking after
231 during the day. The milking is always done by the
512 [462] men; it is not women's work as with us. If there are flies about, and there usually are, the cows need no invitation to thrust their heads into the column of acrid smoke that arises from a dung fire, kindled for the purpose. The rest of the afternoon is filled either with small duties, basket mending, net work, some slight repairs to a canoe, rope making, house repairing; or it may be there is a lawsuit to be settled, and every idler will make a point of being present.

512 By the time food is over, night has closed in. If
[576] the night is dark, one after another slips away with a friendly "May you sleep well," and silence reigns until morning. Unless it is suddenly broken by the roar of a lion or the growl of a leopard; and then the young men, who sleep with the cattle, rush out with spears and clubs and wild shouting to drive off the intruder, while the others raise a weird cry within the houses. Should the lion take refuge in a thicket and refuse to be driven off, a small party may slip round to the nearest white man, if he is not too far away, to beg him either to lend them a rifle, or to
512 come himself to their aid. In the warm moonlight
535 nights, however, other noises fill the ear. The young people gather for a dance, and the drum fills the night air with its interminable tum tum tum, now soft and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

512 low, again rising to a perfect fury of rapid sounds,
535 not without a certain rhythm, but with rasping effect upon the nerves of Europeans tossing sleeplessly in the warm humid air.

[221] After harvest comes the house-building; and when
484 that is finished the men are free to go out to seek
464 work. They usually set out in companies, for the Konde dislikes being alone on a journey. Like all
[609] home-loving people, they are suspicious of strangers, and if they have to pass through another tribe, they take great care to guard their small possessions; seldom more than they are wearing, and a spear or a club to guard them from the more obvious dangers of the way. There will be a few youths going out for the first time, with a wild flutter at the heart, of fear and expectancy. Fear, for they have heard strange tales of the white men and their ways; expectancy, because of the wonderful things they will see: the great houses, steamers, trains, motors; and what must seem countless white men to those who have been accustomed only to the missionary, the magistrate, and the storekeeper, and even these perhaps some days' journey from home. And who knows but he will come back with money in his pocket, wearing gorgeous raiment, a helmet perhaps, and, above all other things to be desired, a pair of boots! Those who stay long
[431] come back with the spoils of civilisation; highly coloured cloths, cheap clocks, melodeons, mouth-organs, worthless pocket-knives, which they deal out to admiring friends and acquaintances.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

583 Normally a bachelor is given cows one by one, over a period of years, and, as we have seen, he sends them, as he receives them, to the father of the girl he wants to marry. One cow is sufficient for betrothal, but not until he has given three can he begin openly to sleep with her. And he cannot usually set up his own economy until he has given at least three cows and she has reached puberty and been initiated. He may of course bespeak an already grown girl, but if he engages himself to a young one he is expected to bring two or more bulls as well, during the course of her initiation.

684 If he chooses to spend his cows in adultery fines, he may, but he will then have to wait longer to get married.

582 561 Thus the system of marriage by a transfer of cattle is, in this society, directly linked with a late marriage age for young men and with a privileged position for older men. When a boy gets cattle he at once gives them to an older man in order to secure his daughter as a wife; the labour of every bachelor helps to increase his father's wealth in food; it is in general the older men alone who can afford more than one wife. And there is an average difference of ten years or more in the initial marriage age of men and girls. The tax registers show in part of the district, among 3,000 [162] adult* men, 34% bachelors, 37% monogamists, and 29% polygynists; and investigation proves that, generally speaking, it is the young men who are bachelors, the men over forty-five who are polygynists.

511 574 Though cattle are their most valued form of wealth, it is on agriculture that the economy of the Nyakyusa is primarily based. Meat and milk are luxuries, and daily bread comes from the fields. Hard work in a fertile country provides food for each family, and the millet beer which is the ordinary material of hospitality. Hospitality brings a man prestige and authority among his fellows; on the possession of sufficient food largely depends the contentment of his wives. And in the production, preparation and eating of food the relationships of the family and of the individual family within it, are clearly visible.

241 512 Hoeing is the work of men, planting, weeding, reaping and cooking is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about four hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a.m., on the upland plateau they begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different

*Presumed to be 18 years or over.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done.

In a polygynous family each wife has her own fields (*embaka*), hoed by her husband and her own sons, which she plants, weeds and reaps with the help of her own daughters, and the produce of which she uses to cook for her husband, her own children and herself. The relative rights of husband and wife to dispose of produce vary with different crops, but no co-wife has any rights over a woman's food. She may, and often does, ask her co-wives to help in her fields and sends them presents of cooked food from her own fire, she may help them and receive presents in return; but they have no rights over her fields or her food, only her husband and herself. And the fields which are hoed by a bachelor son belong to his own mother, who in her turn cooks food for him to eat.

Each wife has either a hut to herself, or else a separate alcove in a large hut, and there she has her fire for cooking. She fetches her own firewood and water or sends an unmarried daughter for them.

At meals the ages and the sexes eat separately; in some polygynous families each wife sends a dish to the husband, in others the wives take it in turns to cook for him. The husband eats alone or with neighbours of his own age[7] to share his dish, the older boys and their friends[7] eat separately from the younger children, and each mother again usually eats with her own daughters, apart.

In the relationship of husband and wife the chief elements are sexual intercourse, co-operation in work, the procreation of children and factors of personal inclination, character and temperament. By men women are praised for sexual skill, cleanliness and beauty, for good cooking and hard work, for their fecundity, and for gentleness of speech and behaviour, and those with opposite qualities are criticized. Among women men are praised for sexual skill and attentiveness, for vigour in hoeing and skill in house-building, and for kindness; while sexual neglect, laziness, impotence and cruelty are disliked and may cause a woman to leave her husband for another man.

The birth of children is a most important factor in the marriage relationship, for children are greatly desired both by men and women. They are desired for themselves and also because they bring their parents wealth and prestige; a boy will one day work in the fields of his father and mother, a girl will bring in cattle from her marriage. And the possession of children brings compliments and respect both to man and woman.

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[7] Vide infra "*The Age-Village.*"

[Cat. 116, pp. 269 ff. --Analyst]

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P. 138]

Notes on the daily life of the Nyakyusa (Tanganyika Territory)

Cf. Sociologus 1951, I, 1 S. 53 ff.

By F. Rudolf Lehmann

192 576 *1. Greetings.* The first thing to strike a visitor to the Nyakyusa country north of Lake Nyasa on passing through one of the numerous picturesque villages surrounded by banana groves is the way of greeting customary among these people. *"Ukuponya"* is the Nyakyusa word for "to greet". In the morning you are greeted with the exclamation: *"ugonile* (pl. *mugonile)"*, which literally means: "Did you sleep well?" And you may answer in the same way, or, in fuller form as you can hear it from the mouth of the natives: *"ae'e ndaga, ugonile"*, or *"ugonile yoyoque"*. *"ae'e ndaga"* may be used with all answers, meaning: thanks! At noon or in the afternoon you will hear: *"uvombide"*, you have worked, or, have you worked? Then, according to the case, you may answer: *"muvombide avanda"*, you, men, have worked, or, generally: *"mwangere"*, which is equivalent to the Swahili: *"habari gani?"*. If you greet a person in the evening with the words: *"ugonege"*, may you sleep well, the person thus addressed will answer: *"kagone!"*.

234 [312] *2. Milking.* The first task in the daily life of the Nyakyusa people is for the men to milk the cows. This is done in the morning before the cattle are driven out to graze and again in the evening when they return. But the cattle are also driven back to the village at noon when they are usually fumigated standing in the smoke of a fire for which cow dung and banana leaves are used, a process designed to remove vermin from the skin of the cattle. The animals seem to be very fond of this procedure. They stand quietly in the smoke gazing at the passers-by.

[237 232] 241 [462] *3. Hoeing.* "Hoeing is the work of men, planting weeding, reaping is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about four hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a. m., on the upland plateau they

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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Generally the cattle sleep in the same house as their 231 owners, tied up to stakes fixed deep in the floor; but 592 where there are grown-up sons not yet married, a separate house is built in which the parents sleep with the little ones, while the young men guard the cattle from raiding thieves.

The bed is frequently no more than a mat spread 573 on the mud floor, with a single blanket for covering, and no pillow, unless it is a piece of roughly trimmed wood. The more prosperous natives, earning good pay in the employment of Europeans, have well-made beds fully equipped, in many cases even with mosquito nets hung from the roof. The poorer consider that they have made a great step forward if they have been able to save up enough money to buy a single blanket, and not seldom even that belongs to the father, the mother and children having to be content with meagre coverings of calico or grass mats. But [354] the house is warm, often too warm, for the fire is always burning, the door is closed, there are no windows, and there is no ventilation in the roof; and all the inmates sleep with their feet to the fire, which is in the middle of the floor.

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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

rouse him, it does not wish to come out. And although the faeces are firm they are the corpse. Because we bury a corpse underground, and faeces also go underground to the shades. They disappear by night, that is the shade. If someone excretes faeces and finds it in the grass we say: 'The shade has caught hold of him.'

QUESTION: Are faeces associated with sexual intercourse?

MWASALEMBA: Yes, the shade does both things, he causes diarrhœa and sexual intercourse. If you defaecate firm stools that is not the shade, that is the food we eat, but watery diarrhœa which troubles you repeatedly at night—that is the shade. If you have diarrhœa for three days people say: 'The shades have hammered you' or 'The shade has caught hold of you.'

QUESTION: Madness?

MWASALEMBA: That is the shade because it says: 'Since you have me in your belly, and they have not treated you, I cause this—these faeces are the corpse. A madman defaecates and catches hold of his faeces, perhaps he eats them, perhaps he binds it up in the grass and catches hold of it. It is the corpse.'

Kakune, the doctor, also interpreted the puberty ritual as being, in one aspect, the transference of a girl from her father's group to her husband's and, like Kasitile and Mwasalemba, he identified sexual desire and potency with the shades. He said:

At puberty a girl has left her father's and has gone to others; if she dies he to whom she has gone buries her.

QUESTION: Where does the blood of a woman come from?

KAKUNE: If the girl is unmarried, from her shades; they create her blood, but in the ritual we treat her so that she moves to my place, she comes to my shades; the blood of a married woman is created by my shades and hers together. And the 'blood' of a man [i.e. semen] also comes from the shades.

QUESTION: Do the shades reveal themselves at birth?

KAKUNE: Yes, because if I am angry or my father is angry I do not beget a child, but when he has prayed I do so. If I am angry with the woman and she has caught hold of me and injured me, then we do not have a child. The ordeal (ꞷꞷꞷꞷ) convicts the woman. She goes to her father who prays. Then we have a child.

QUESTION: Where does the power to bear and beget children come from?

KAKUNE: From the shades, you have the shades in your belly. If they are not there you are all like women in the house, you cannot have an erection, but when the shades work, you have an erection.

QUESTION: Whose shades are present at intercourse?

KAKUNE: Mine, the man's and the woman's, we both have them,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Lugulu

851 brothers he will call if they are near) and they come with a bull. They arrive at nightfall.

The girl's parents meanwhile have called all their relatives (but it does not matter if some relatives do not come; it brings them no trouble) and friends of the age-village, and the boys come too. And they shut the door fast and start drinking the beer. 'They have come, they have come, let us close the door', they say. Then the go-between outside calls to us: 'We have come,' but we are silent. We answer never a word. At last we answer and ask: 'What have you brought?' And he answers: 'A bull.'

'What-sized bull?' 'A little bull.' 'He! What do you mean by bringing a little bull only?' 'Well, it's a nice big bull!'

851 578 Then they come and bang on the door and we hold it shut and they bang, and bang, and then we begin insulting one another. We accuse them of filthiness, saying: 'They defaecate, they urinate!' And of incest, saying: 'You have intercourse with your mother'; and of foolishness, [514] and they accuse us likewise. At last they burst in and the insults continue inside. They actually defaecate in the house.[1]

851 But soon we call out: 'They have entered, let us make peace, friends,' and we all sit down. Then I (the father of the girl) call on the go-between, and he sits down opposite us. I and my wife, the girl's mother, sit by the fire. Then I ask him: 'What have you brought?' 'I have brought a bull!' 'Oh! Eh!' 'I am hungry, give me some food.'

Then we discuss this for a time and agree, and we give them the food to eat and some beer. They eat, the young men snatching food over there, and our young men here, and we, the elders, eating sedately at the back.

851 578 Then, when they have eaten, we begin to insult one another again over the cattle that have been paid, the laziness and slovenliness of the bride, the dirty cooking of her mother. They scold us and we scold them. Then after a time, with insults flying, and the young men stamping and stamping, we call out: 'Silence, silence,' and the noise subsides.

851 Then our son-in-law comes to the fire at the summons of the go-between, who says: 'Praise your father,' and he says: 'You of so-and-so, son of so-and-so (he mentions all my names), our true father.' Then the go-between says: 'Praise your mother!' and he praises her: 'You, so-and-so, daughter of so-and-so, our true mother!' and he goes back and sits down. Then the bride is called by the go-between and she is made to praise first her father and then her mother. And if there is any man who eloped with the bride from her husband's, but she later returned to her husband, the lover comes too. He fears to go blind

[1] Angwabwike confirmed this asking, when the rite was mentioned, whether we had been told these details.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IV

VALUES

a. *Good company*

829 One of the values most constantly stressed by the Nyakyusa is
876 that of *ukwangala* which, in its primary sense, means 'the enjoy-
521 ment of good company' and, by extension, the mutual aid and
515 sympathy which spring from personal friendship. It implies ur-
banc manners and a friendliness which expresses itself in eating and drinking together; not only merry conversation, but also discussion between equals, which the Nyakyusa regard as the principal form of education. 'It is by conversing with our friends', said one of our witnesses, 'that we gain wisdom (*amakala*); it is bad to sit quite still in men's company. A man who does this is a fool; he learns no wisdom, he has only his own thoughts. Moreover, a man who does not spend time with other people is always dirty, he does not compare himself with any friends. For we learn cleanliness of body in company, those who are dirty learning from their more cleanly friends. Again, if a man is accused of some crime and brought before the chief and is unable to defend himself easily and with eloquence we mock at him and say: "What is the matter with you? Do you live all by yourself? How is it that you are so foolish?" Wisdom and cleanliness are the two great things to be learnt in company. It is bad to live alone far from other people, such a man learns nothing: he never learns to express himself well, to converse wittily with friends, or to argue a case with eloquence. It is better to live with other people.'

829 'To live with other people', says our informant, but he implies
876 'to live with contemporaries'. For *ukwangala*, in the sense of discussion and easy give-and-take, can never occur between men and women, and is made difficult between men of different generations by the respect required of sons for their fathers. Since men are held to acquire manners, eloquence, and wisdom only in company it is necessary, the Nyakyusa argue, that they should build in villages, rather than in scattered homesteads, and since

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

b. Dignity

Though the Nyakyusa lay so much stress on geniality, and praise a man for being 'a good mixer', yet they greatly admire dignity (*ubuniya*). To be *niya* (dignified, impressive) is one of the attributes of chiefs and village headmen, sought, as we have seen, through medicines; but ordinary men may also aspire to it in their persons and homesteads. Indeed, *ubuniya bwa nkaja*, the dignity of the homestead, is one of the legitimate channels of ambition to a Nyakyusa, and is something achieved largely through hard work.

Two styles of huts are traditional—one round, with the wall slanting outwards towards the top, and a conical roof; the other rectangular with perpendicular walls, a pitched roof, and curving gables (cf. Plates X and XI). For a homestead to be dignified the huts must be built of good bamboos, and the space between them packed with oval-shaped mud bricks, carefully worked in patterns. Special pains are taken with the ends of long huts (*ifkaga*) to get a good curve on the roof pole, and a pleasing design of bricks and criss-cross binding on the gable (cf. Plate XI). Inside, the walls are plastered smooth, and house-proud women mould a pattern in the mud with their fingers, which runs round the wall like a frieze. A long hut, showing that the owner has many cattle and young wives to house, adds dignity, but the homestead of a relatively poor man may be *niya* if the huts are well built, the open space between them weeded and swept, and the bananas pruned and heavy with fruit; while a shabby long hut and a dirty court are never dignified, no matter how rich the owner. The insistence on cleanliness both within the huts and in the court is very marked;[1] men themselves weed and sweep regularly around their homesteads, and their young sons must help them. The Nyakyusa jibe at their neighbours for being dirty in person, in cooking, and in their homesteads: indeed the dirty habits of the women is given as a main reason for not intermarrying with the Kings or Porote; and a Christian confided in

[1] Thomson, Kerr-Cross, and Leggard were all greatly impressed by Nyakyusa cleanliness; Thomson, op. cit., p. 271; Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lake Nyasa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), p. 283; Leggard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 131.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

us that it was a great effort to her to accept food from the Poroto when she went on preaching tours, because their huts and pots were so dirty.

Trees are felt to add to the dignity of a homestead as well as throwing a grateful shade; the beautiful *umwali* trees have long been valued for this purpose, and to-day exotics are much sought after. For example, the old chief Mwaipopo, noticing a fine cypress when he visited us at Isumba (a cottage that had once been a German mission hospital) inquired whether there were not some seedlings under the tree. He himself carefully dug up one and took it away to plant in his 'capital'. Some Nyakyusa even *steal* trees to adorn their homesteads. It is said that jacarandas planted out in an avenue at Tukuyu disappeared within a very short time.

The attributes of dignity in the homestead are changing perceptibly. Well-built huts in the old style, a long *ikibaga*, a well-swept court, fruitful bananas, and fine *umwali* trees are mentioned by the old men; but many of the younger ones prefer hip-roofed houses (a style introduced by Europeans and known, appropriately enough, as 'the partridge') with windows and door of European pattern, beds of flowers, roses, fine coffee and exotic trees. Yet they keep the court well swept; for lawns have not become fashionable.

A fine presence, a well-kept homestead rich in cattle and bananas and shaded with stately trees, are in themselves impressive, but the possessor of them only reaches his full dignity when he acts as host, and uses his fine food and fine home for lavish hospitality. Wealth and an impressive manner, without urbanity and hospitality, may well lead to accusations of witchcraft.

c. Display

Feasts provide opportunity for swaggering parades and dances in which the Nyakyusa delight to display themselves and their possessions; they are the great occasions for *ukumoga*, that is, display in approved forms. Dancing, exhibiting a beautiful body with only a narrow bark-cloth belt to hide it, showing off physical strength and the aggressiveness of a warrior, parading orna-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

maids and always carries a mat or cloth to screen her face from her father and his contemporaries, her father's full sisters, her older brothers,[1] and her 'mothers-in-law' (*abakamwana*).[2] These she must fear and respect (*ukutila*) and so avoid. Her father-in-law and his brothers she avoids altogether from the time of her engagement, or at least after she has reached the age of 8 or 9. Her companions do not *ukutila* with her, though those of them who are already betrothed will, of course, avoid their own fathers-in-law. [881]

During the period of seclusion the girls have two specific tasks: to weave the fine mats used as beds, and to fetch firewood. Every bride should take to her husband's home at least one fine mat (*ubuyasa*) which she has made herself, as well as several coarse ones (*imitefu*),[3] and weaving a fine mat is a lengthy task, occupying a skilful woman a month. Each girl weaves for herself, but the firewood that each must fetch is stacked in the bride's mother's loft. The bride also occupies herself hammering out bark-cloth, pleating it for the strip worn between the legs, and decorating bark-cloth belts (*side* plate 5), so that she may have the fresh ones required during the ritual, and a supply to take with her to her husband's; but this work is not emphasized as an obligation: rather it is a recreation. Women take great pride in the decoration of their belts—we watched several brides making them and handing them round for the admiration of their fellows. The maids may work in the fields if required to do so, but the bride herself does not, and 'she gets fat because she does not have much work to do'. The whole ritual normally lasts about three months, but if, for some reason such as a pressing need to go out to work, the husband is in a hurry for its completion, various acts may be telescoped. The time-table depends primarily on when the marriage-cattle and food for the various feasts are ready. [285] [237] [531]

From the time of first menstruation until she does it ritually, a bride should neither wash nor oil herself. The prohibition is felt to be a very onerous one and some girls now break it, but women said 'in the old days we did not wash'. 'Girls nowadays are more cunning. We were afraid.' [881] [515] [177]

[1] Some informants denied that she avoided father's sisters or brothers. Others insisted that she must avoid them because 'brothers are fathers, and father's full sisters are father'. [184]

[2] i.e. her husband's own mother and other women he calls mother. In this account the plural 'mothers' indicates own and classificatory mothers. [601]

[3] Nyakyusa beds are made of layers of mats laid on rollers between two logs at head and foot. One chief's bed we noted was made up of sixty-eight mats. [352]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya

SELECT RECORDS

I. REPORTS OF PARTICULAR FUNERALS

(a) *Farewell to Mwamulenga III,*[1] *son of Mwegama (Selya)*

Record of G. W. 10/3/37

764 Mwamulenga III hanged himself seventeen days ago, after the [762] death of one of his wives and his only child. This ritual was held at his own house in Katumba but he was buried at the place where his father, Mwegama, had lived, and the mourning was carried out in the hills by Mwakapesa, the head of the family, who has moved there. The litter was at Mwakapesa's and was taken out about a week ago.

Mwalkambo and I arrived about 10 a.m. with Sikatula (wife of Gwamungonde), who is a cross-cousin (*ustawi*) of the family. The women were gathered inside the house wailing dirges—words were clearly audible but not, to me, distinguishable: one woman was the leader. There was more wailing than singing. The dirge was punctuated by slow handclaps. Mpogo, the eldest full brother of the dead man, and the heir, told me: 'It is the custom to wail just before the ritual, like this.'

764 Food was brought out about 11 a.m. The women had come close to ●515 talk to me; when food came out the men told them to go away. I asked why. 'We wash constantly, but women only wash a little, also they look after children and their bark-cloth belts are dirty. When they cook they wash, but for eating they wash little.'

764 I asked who would perform the ritual.

Mpogo: 'Kalukwa (the widow) will perform the ritual, also each of his brothers and half-brothers will select one or two children to do it too. The rest of our children just look on, for we ourselves are not yet dead.'

Kana Ntambe: 'It is our custom to leave some people over, not to perform it on all.'

Later I asked why Bapala (Kana Lwesi) did the ritual and not Kana Ipalu whose relationship to the dead man was exactly the same. 'We leave some out, they will do it at some other later death.' Actually thirteen people performed it. 'Mwamaloba (son of Mwegama II) will not do the ritual when he returns—it does not matter; but if he'd been a son of the dead man then he would do so. The wives of the dead man's brothers never do the ritual. The ritual for Lukosa (dead wife of

[1] cf. Genealogy on p. 273.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

chief, brought a bundle of firewood. Mwalukuta I was not 749
expected to enter the grove and he went off soon. His brother and 752
Nyama took a little basket of maize and millet. The chiefs stayed on the edge of the grove and the three commoners entered alone. Mwalukuta II and Nyama built a little hut five feet from the 'grave' with the saplings brought by Nyama's mother. 'We put firewood and food and a little calabash which we have prepared in it, it's for the shades.' The calabash contained millet, maize, pumpkin seeds, ground nuts, and cow peas; and a stem of bananas was put beside it. Mwalukuta swept the 'grave' which was marked by a few small trees, and Mwakasukula killed the cow, which must lie facing east to BuKinga. Mwalukuta spoke the invocation: 'Thou Mwakisambwe (30) . . . Mwakihaba (45) has gone back, but Mwamukinga (44) is here still. . . . Mwakihaba says, "I am no longer a relative, I have gone out."' Then they took the sacred meat from the forelegs of the cow: that from the right leg was buried near the 'grave', that from the left by an *ulaju* tree (a species of *ficus*) forty paces away. The priests ate some roasted meat and intestines with bananas, and the rest of the meat was divided between them and the chiefs. The head went to Nyama's house and was kept for three nights. The priests explained that they are forbidden to bathe for three days or lie with their wives, but on the fourth day they eat the head and after that they bathe and resume married life. [515] [834]

Eighteen days after the sacrifice Mwalukuta went to look and found the stem of bananas which had been left in the little hut had ripened, and the earth on the grave had been disturbed. This was a good omen. But later his legs began to trouble him—he could scarcely walk—and it was said that certain priests who should have been called to the ritual had not been summoned and were angry and had cursed him. He fled to a distance and sought a bull to kill for his fellows. [717] [783]

(*d*) SACRIFICE AT KABALE

The form of sacrifice among the Kukwe is very similar. We never saw a sacrifice at Kabale—our friends assured us that they had been dropped before 1935—but a description by two of the leading priests of the grove of Kabale demonstrates the similarity between the rituals there and in Selya. The only points of difference were that the Kukwe sacrificed fowls as well as cattle, and granddaughters shared the sacred food with grandsons.

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 Another old woman lived in a neighbouring *ninga* close by—if possible even more sparely furnished than the last mentioned.

Common features of the round houses were: their size, the wooden centre-post, the ceiling covering the greater part of the room, the supporting posts for the beams that carry the bamboo joists and the ceiling proper; the building materials bamboo and mud; and the positioning of the hearth slightly off centre.

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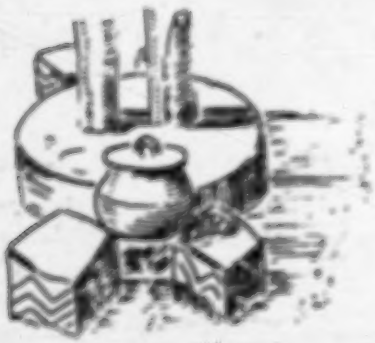

The two hearths of Malia's house. A clay base surrounds the main posts, thus serves as fireproof dams. Two hearthstones at either side form the hearths, the clay base acting as the third 'stone'.

178
342 The differences between this *ninga* and the original round-type house are: the angle of the wall, here vertical (as opposed to the inclination of the wall of the original house); the entrance (here without ornaments); the door itself also without ornaments; and further the fact that the clay cube placed between the bamboo poles were here not the shape but only the size of cells. The pictures presented by Fülleborn clearly show the carefully formed clay balls in the wall.

[531] As distinct from the old-type house, this new type of house has no decorations on the inside of the wall, but in some instances decorations are found on the floor.

342 Another type of house, again, was rectangular, often very long, with a ridge-beam roof. In most cases, these houses were lengthened along both sides, and were thus provided with what you might call two verandahs. Sometimes also the gables of the houses had hatchways. The roof projected over the gables, most over the ridge. The roof sagged in the middle, a fact that was already observed by the scholars mentioned. This may be because the ridge-beam is not dry but freshly cut, when it is mounted in its place. During the subsequent drying process under load it will then be brought to sag—as we know from other types of houses.

This house is called an *ikhaga* and is known to be typical of the Banyakyusa since olden times. Literally, *ikhaga* means stable or cowhouse, thus presumably indicating its original purpose. There is a full description of this house in Fülle-

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

765 head of the line. She was also the first who crawled between the legs
48| of the others, facing the hut, and followed by the others. This cere-
mony has the same purpose as the preceding act.

[291]

Scene from the ubunyago-ceremony: The mourners returning from the grave to the house crawling through the legs of the others.

765 Then the hair of the mourners was shaved (ukumwa inwili, to shave
[302 the hair, profane and ritual) and, I was told that a bath would be
● 55] the last act ending mourning.

[291
516]

Scene from the ubunyago-ceremony: The shaving of the hair.

765 In the afternoon I sent the father of the dead child a cotton kerchief
123 as a gift, and when I met him later on, he told me I had participated
43| in the burial of his child by that gift, saying, "You have buried my
child with me".

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

very substantial, the main meal being taken in the evening shortly before sunset.

8. Manufacture. The pot for cooking *(indeku)* is placed on three stones which form the hearth *(ikipembero,* hearth stones). The flat bowl made of clay used for the needs of the kitchen is called *ulucungubia* and a pig pot used for storing water *ingumbe.* The pots of clay are manufactured by Kissi women because in their land on the north-eastern shores of Lake Nyassa the best clay is found. In the eastern part of the Nyakyusa country adjacent to Kissi land the women visit the pottery markets of the Kissi, but to the remoter villages, e. g. around the Rungwe volcano the pottery is brought by Kissi men. In this case, owing to the great distance from the Kissi-Land the men carry the loads of eight to ten pots on their head between split poles of bamboo. The Kissi pots I saw in the Rungwe Station were ornamented in a rough way with red ochre and seemed only slightly baked. The hearth stones, however, are made by the Nyakyusa women themselves as I was able to observe near Rutenganio, where widows manufactured them for sale.

In many villages of the Nyakyusa I could watch basket-making. This I saw being done by men. In the chief's hut in Katumba I had the opportunity to admire a great number of very big baskets *(ifitubu)* for storing grain, smeared with cow dung on the outside. The attractive closely wickered baskets, which are filled with *malesi* (millet) and then placed in water for a night in the process of beer-brewing were originally made by the Buanyi, but nowadays also the Nyakyusa are said to be skilled enough to weave them. I had no opportunity to observe it, but could acquire an excellent specimen of that wicker-work.

9. The Meal. At the beginning of each meal the hands are washed, including those of children. The men take their meal separately from the women. The wives only eat when their husbands have been satisfied. Boys under ten years eat with their mothers, but as soon as they begin to live in age-set villages, they eat together with their friends of their own age-set, as described in detail by Mr. G. Wilson in his "Introduction of Nyakyusa Society" (Bantu Studies X, p. 271). The head of the family likes to eat together with his friends.

Meat is eaten very seldom, but on special occasions such as marriages, death lamentations, christenings of Christianized natives, enormous quantities are devoured. *Inyama* (Swahili: *nyama)* is the Nyakyusa word for all sorts of meat, *ingombe* for that of cattle and *ingumbaku* for that of oxen. Near Utengule I saw black pigs *(ingurwe,* pig)

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

her husband may give her *ikipiki* to rub on her hands and on a stick with which she touches each of the cattle. She gives them *ikipiki* that they may not be "empty". Then she can clean out the byre at any time.' 842 789

A third idea that recurs, again and again, is that of *ukukilanya*, overstepping, which is used in both a literal and a metaphorical sense. It is taboo for a woman to step over her husband in any way, hence there are explicit rules (taught during initiation) on posture in intercourse. It she should step over him it is said that 'his legs will swell' and he has grounds for divorcing her. It is taboo for an adult to step over a child and for a woman who is having intercourse to step over one who is not, though a child may step over an adult and a virgin or youth who is not having intercourse may step over a married person of the same sex who is not. In a society in which everyone sits on the ground, often with legs outstretched, observance of the taboo necessitates care. 842 784 [516]

In its metaphorical sense *ukukilyana* is used for a 'heavy' person coming into close contact with an 'empty' one, as, for example, a woman who is sleeping with her husband entering the hut of a woman with a new-born child, or the mother of a bride resuming intercourse before her daughter has had intercourse, or a bride who has not yet brought the *ilibalaga*, the symbol of her union with her husband, to her parents, drinking from her mother's calabash, or entering the inner part of her hut; or a wife who has committed adultery cooking for her husband. It is used, too, of a woman who continues to bear children after the marriage of her son for, it is said, if she does so the son's wife will never conceive at all, or will be long in conceiving, or her child will not walk, on account of a curse. 195

MWAIKAMBO: It is not customary for mother and son both to have infants. Women mostly begin to stop intercourse when their sons marry. They say it is not good that both mother and son should have small children, because the mother of the young man now thinks of helping her daughter-in-law in nourishing her children. If mother and son both have babies, people are much astonished and say it is not a good custom; they create a curse (*ikigune*) and the fertility of the son and his wife rots. 842 834 [789]

Mwaihojo's wife put it this way:

I leave off having children when my son is married for I should receive my grandchild in my arms, and care for my grandchildren, and be with them in the house.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Ndali

765 they seek two or three officiants, and they build a temporary hut behind the living huts where they strain three pots of beer, which they call 'the beer of the shades'. These officiants do not bathe their bodies because they say: 'Let us be with the shade when we make the beer (*tujege nagwe umyuka bo tukubomba ubwalwa*).' The rest of the beer is strained in the house.

When they have brewed it they take one potful from the temporary hut and pour the contents on top of the grave; then they dig a hole on the grave and place in it a little pot of beer. What is left in these two pots they drink, together with the rest of the beer, and there is much drumming.

766 After a long time has passed, perhaps two years, if there has been sickness in the home, they think that the deceased is making them giddy, is causing them to be ill. So they dig up the corpse and take all the bones and finger and toe nails. If one is left the sickness is not cured. When Mulape, the grandchild of Mwakafunga, was ill they dug up the corpse and the illness ceased very quickly. They pile up the bones which have been dug up.

III. MARRIAGE NEGOTIATIONS AND GIFTS

584 ANGOMBWIKE: One of our comrades in Kabembe heard that there was an unmarried girl at the Chief Mwasumbwe's, so one Monday he said to three of us: 'Don't go away, friends, we are going to woo the chief's daughter at Mwasumbwe's.' So we put on our best clothes, those we wear to church, and we went to the home of the father of the girl. He was the younger brother of the Chief Mwasumbwe by the same mother, and he told us: 'I am not the father (*uguise*). She is my own child, but the father is the chief. Go to him' [i.e. authority over his daughter rested with his elder brother]. The girl had reached puberty. Someone else had married her, but her father had received only one cow, so the elder brother, the chief, was angry and took away the girl from her husband. My friend had never met her, never. He had just heard that there was an unmarried girl at that place, because the custom of making love to girls in the long grass is not a traditional one: a girl used to stay at her father's house. A young man went to the father before he spoke with the girl; he never spoke to her in secret. Then the father would send the girl to speak with the young man. She came and sat down and the young man looked at her closely and his friends who
[177 accompanied him helped him. Formerly a young man did not wear
291] many clothes, he only wore one cloth in front, and a brass body-ring,
so that his whole belly might be seen, and she might look closely. Also
[516] he sits high on a stool, while his fellows sit on the ground, that he may be seen by the girl.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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A KONDE HUT.

Leisureliness is the key note of Konde life, and there is always time to sit down for the welcome chat about cattle, crops, children, or the white man, whose strange ways are of unfailing interest.

LION HUNTING.

The presence of a lion in a district causes a great scare, and the chief may call up all able-bodied men, armed with spears, clubs and bows, to the hunt. The lion—or leopard—is sometimes seized alive and clubbed or speared to death. The presence of a white man with a rifle gives increased courage to the hunters.

[Facing p. 176]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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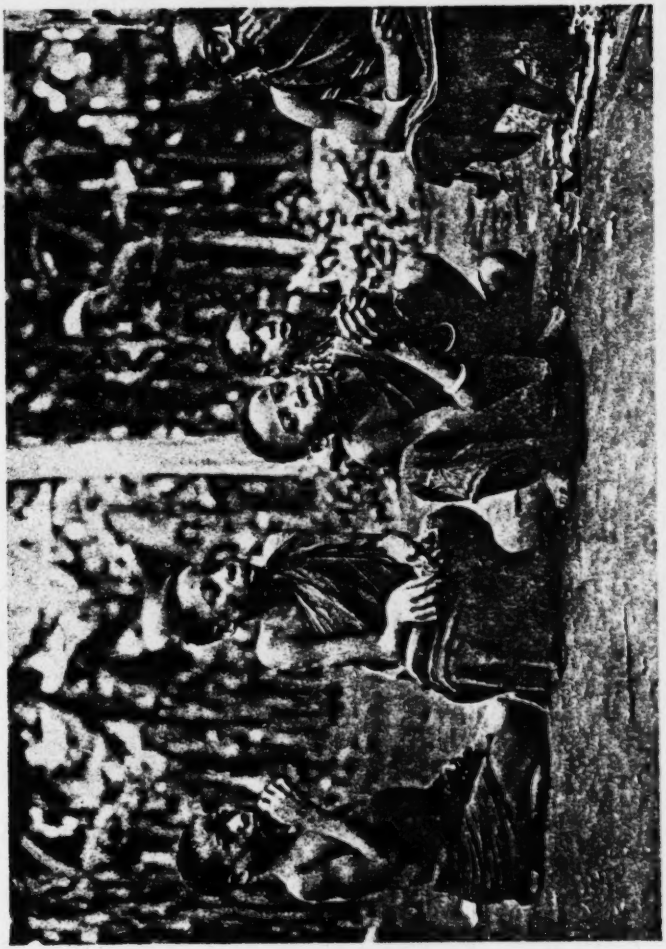

8. COMMUNION WITH THE SHADES

[Facing p. 70]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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10*a*. KASITILE THE PRIEST

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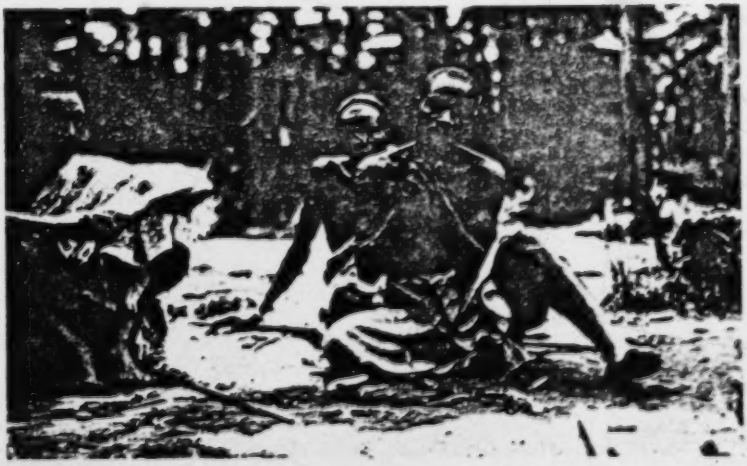

10*b*. DIVINATION WITH PORRIDGE

[Facing p. 118]

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

122 for research, I am very grateful for a grant from the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures[2] which enabled me to start my ethnographical field work among these people. I wish also to express my thanks to the Government of the Tanganyika Territory, the Provincial Commissioner of Mbeya, and the District Officer of Tukuyu for all the courtesy I received during my work.

114 123 1. My first step, after my arrival at Katumba near Masoko, was to pay a visit to Mwamasika, the chief *(omalafyale)*[3] of the village and

[291 516 622]

The chief Wwamasika with his councillors.

of those adjacent. On the open place near his hut he welcomed me in company with his *amafumu*[4], the influential men of his villages. My attendant, the interpreter and I were asked to sit on chairs, while the *amafumu* sat down on mats or on large banana leaves on the ground; but the chief remained standing. I explained the aim of my visit, and that I would be very glad of his support. The chief promised it, and he kept his promise excellently. On other occasions the chief also sat [431] on a chair. In the afternoon of the first day I sent to the chief some presents. The following he made a return in form of food. This exchange of gifts is named *ukubonola*, handing over the gift.

123 757 2. In a small village belonging to Mwamasika's chieftainship was the residence of a medicine man, to whom I paid a visit as soon as I could. When I met him he was being consulted by a sick male person who had a stomach complaint *(agaju)*. After some negotiations he allowed me

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[2] Cf. Africa. Vol. XI, p. 497.
[3] Cf. Wilson, Introduction, p. 283; Land Rights, p. 44.
[4] Cf. Wilson, Land Rights, p. 13. W. translates *alifuma (olifuma)* by „great commoner", Introduction, p. 276, 282.

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

123 755 in the open air and not within the hut as on the previous day. But the patient was unwilling to be photographed. He feared, he said, that by the photo I would take „his inner man together with the medicine just accepted" with me to Europe. I tried to calm him, showing him some pictures of my family, and I also let him look through the view-finder of my camera, so that at last he was satisfied. Then, after feeling more confident, he told me the cause of the pains which led him to come to the doctor. He thought he had been bewitched, as he had met a descendant of a man whom some long time ago had killed one of his own ancestors.

[142 291 516 756]

The Medicine Man and one of his patients. The medicines are spread out on the mat.

756 Then the medicine man also explained to me how he had come to the position of a doctor. He did not inherit his position from his father, but he was instructed in medical practices by another doctor. The circumstances which had led him to this position were the following.

[837] Before his initiation to the medical practice he had entered into forbidden relations with the wife of another man. To protect himself [789] from the magical revenge [illegible] deceived husband and his kin he went to a medicine man to acquire antidotes against the expected bewitching. He had to pay two cows for this medicine, and as he had paid them, the medicine-man offered to initiate him into the secrets of the practice of a medicine-man. The character of the client, probably, had won his confidence, and indeed, the medicine-man whose guest I now was, made a profound impression on me.

754 He also described some forms of bewitching[4] for vengeance. For this purpose the avenger poisons a fowl in his own village uttering curses

[4] Cf. G. Wilson, Introduction, p. 177 (belief in witchcraft).

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

765 head of the line. She was also the first who crawled between the legs
48| of the others, facing the hut, and followed by the others. This cere-
mony has the same purpose as the preceding act.

[291]

Scene from the ubunyago-ceremony: The mourners returning from the grave to the house crawling through the legs of the others.

765 Then the hair of the mourners was shaved (ukamera (ucili), to shave
[302 the hair, profane and ritual) and, I was told that a bath would be
55] the last act ending mourning.

[291
516]

Scene from the ubunyago-ceremony: The shaving of the hair.

765 In the afternoon I sent the father of the dead child a cotton kerchief
123 as a gift, and when I met him later on, he told me I had participated
43| in the burial of his child by that gift, saying, "You have buried my
child with me".

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 [164 484] sister of the chief had also been brought back to the village of her brother. I was of the opinion that she was afflicted by a serious tropical ulcer on the ankle of the left foot. The healing of these ulcers commonly takes a very long time, and as this woman had already much suffered, and as the medicine-men consulted seemed to be unable to restore her, she was brought to her brother's village, but there also she had not yet recovered. The chief had, therefore, resolved to ask the diviner, whose name was Mwaigwiya, for the real cause of her sickness.

After he and his *amafumu* had taken their seats on mats, the chief explained to the diviner the reason of his visit. The diviner then grasped a curved piece of wood about 20 cms. in length with his right hand, after he had spat upon his hands. Then he moved the wood round his head, and finally placed it with one of its ends on the even, cleaned ground before his mat, and waited for the questions of the chief. The single questions, as for instance: "Is the sickness caused by Kyara?", or "Is the sickness caused by this or that person?", etc., were put to the diviner by Lamak Mwainyekule, the son of a chief of another chieftainship[14], now belonging to the *amafumu* of Mwamasika, as he now stayed in his village. Mwainyekule seemed to be not only

[291 516]

The fetisco with the diviner.

[776] the most intimate adviser of Mwamasika, but altogether the most clever man I met among this people. After each of the questions addressed to him the diviner murmured the names of the chief's

[14] A village of this name is to be found on Dr. *Kieyers* map of 1898, southern to the Kieyo.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

88| I went to the place and got permission to enter the hut in which the first part of the ceremony took place. I found there the parents of the girl, the girl sitting enveloped in clothes in one corner of the hut, and some older females, one of whom was the acting *wanyage*. Some male guests were also present[18]. As the girl had had her first catamenia the present ceremony marked at the same time the end of her preparation for marriage.

[273 278] The *wanyage* prepared a beverage of beer in which a light-brown medical powder *(mbowdanya)* was put. First the girl had to drink from it, then the parents followed. This beverage was believed to strengthen *(ubusirya)* the consumers. Then a spear was handed to the girl by her father, and the girl handed it in turn to some relatives of [582 583] the bridegroom waiting near the hut. These persons had to bring the spear to the girl's bridegroom as a sign that he could now marry the girl[19], but not before he had brought a bull to the girl's father. After [431] this the girl, now sitting in the middle of the hut, was given small gifts from the participants in the ceremony.

[391 342 516 868 415]

Practical instruction of premature girls in house-hold matters.

[302] Following this the whole body of the girl was anointed before the door of the hut. The *wanyage* began by anointing her legs; then the [279] girl herself continued it. The ointment was prepared from castor oil and a powder of red wood *(Kipimbe,* found commonly in the environ- [606] ment of Lake Rukwa). At this moment a male participant in the ceremony chanced to come out of the hut, and suddenly a young woman

[18] Cf. Wilson, Introduction, p. 256; The Study of African Society, p. 11 (The Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. 2, 1939).

[19] *ukwaga*: to take (also as regards marrying); *ubwagia*: nuptials.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Life is never dull for the African. There are marriages and funerals here as elsewhere; the former always a joyous occasion, the latter not always or necessarily the reverse. A walk through a populous village will bring one upon net making, pot making, basket or cloth weaving, and one may hear the sharp tap-tap of the bark cloth worker, or, in an iron-working district, the clang of the blacksmith's stone hammer, beating out hoes or spears upon a rough stone anvil. And many drive dullness away with beer. Sometimes it is a small party. A few friends gather in a house, and sit around a pot or two of beer provided by the wife of the host. They drink to the strumming of a *pango* or the beating of a small drum, for they like to have music at their feasts, even when only a few are gathered. But if it is a village feast, given by the chief, it may go on all night with terrific noise, shouting, singing, and drumming; and not always does the feast end without fighting.

Sometimes the villagers receive visitors. The native evangelist on his rounds is always hospitably welcomed. The tax collector is not exactly welcomed—who ever welcomes a tax collector?—but he is received well enough, for his coming has at least this advantage, that those who are ready to pay the sum demanded will not have to go later and pay at the *boma* (magistrate's office), which may be a long distance away. Sometimes a native trader comes along, his packs carried by attendants, for he never carries them himself, even when beginning on a small scale. Visitors

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XII

Amusements & Relaxations

•517 I HAVE already said that the average African is a man with an abundance of spare time on his hands, and the situation suits him exactly. But even with him it may pall, and something more than mere lying in the sun must be found to fill the idle hours. A full account of the numerous games and amusements would fill a small volume, and a few examples must suffice.

526 Association football is now very popular in many parts of Africa, and Konde youths take up the game with zest; but it can be enjoyed only at Mission schools, or at Government stations, or wherever there is a white man sufficiently interested to provide a ball, and to give some instruction in the game. They kick from the ball of the great toe, as direct kicking with bare feet is impossible. To score a goal is "to give the egg" to the losers, a phrase taken from one of their own games, where a rubber ball is knocked about with sticks by two sides, to attain a given objective, when the losing side is said to get "the egg."

545 I was once present at a school concert to which audience and performers gathered from many different villages. The programme, when presented to me by

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IV

VALUES

a. *Good company*

One of the values most constantly stressed by the Nyakyusa is that of *ukwangala* which, in its primary sense, means 'the enjoyment of good company' and, by extension, the mutual aid and sympathy which spring from personal friendship. It implies urbane manners and a friendliness which expresses itself in eating and drinking together; not only merry conversation, but also discussion between equals, which the Nyakyusa regard as the principal form of education. 'It is by conversing with our friends', said one of our witnesses, 'that we gain wisdom (*amakala*); it is bad to sit quite still in men's company. A man who does this is a fool; he learns no wisdom, he has only his own thoughts. Moreover, a man who does not spend time with other people is always dirty, he does not compare himself with any friends. For we learn cleanliness of body in company, those who are dirty learning from their more cleanly friends. Again, if a man is accused of some crime and brought before the chief and is unable to defend himself easily and with eloquence we mock at him and say: "What is the matter with you? Do you live all by yourself? How is it that you are so foolish?" Wisdom and cleanliness are the two great things to be learnt in company. It is bad to live alone far from other people, such a man learns nothing: he never learns to express himself well, to converse wittily with friends, or to argue a case with eloquence. It is better to live with other people.'

'To live with other people', says our informant, but he implies 'to live with contemporaries'. For *ukwangala*, in the sense of discussion and easy give-and-take, can never occur between men and women, and is made difficult between men of different generations by the respect required of sons for their fathers. Since men are held to acquire manners, eloquence, and wisdom only in company it is necessary, the Nyakyusa argue, that they should build in villages, rather than in scattered homesteads, and since

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week. He has, then, no reason for doing any more work. Work has yielded him all that he requires, and he may lie in the sun and chat lazily, or move about strumming his *pango* (stringed instrument) with that supreme unconsciousness of being an idler, which is to some so irritating, to others so charming, a characteristic of the African.

All this, however, is ideal, and seldom corresponds to the actual fact. The year may have been a bad one; ill-health may have overtaken himself or his family; his cattle may be dying; or he may have failed to find employment after long trekking in search of it, and consequently his tax is unpaid and trouble is hanging over him. But a normal year, neither unusually prosperous nor unusually disastrous, will reveal how the Konde fill in their time. Let it be understood that they see nothing but folly in working for what they do not want. Working for what other people want is a high form of altruism to which only a small number of Konde have risen. That work increases the wealth of the country is a doctrine of high economics which they do not understand; wealth is increased by good harvests and by increase of live-stock.

The whole life of the community centres round the hoeing season. During the great heat which usually precedes the rains, the people move languidly about, incapable of anything like exertion. The men gather in groups and lie idly in the shade, talking languidly, drowsingly; an illness or a death; a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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marriage settlement; the wealth some one has brought from the South; or perhaps they exchange impressions of Europeans they have worked for—a subject into which a great deal of humour can be packed; for it must not be imagined that the white man is taken too seriously. His little foibles, his often none too good temper, his haste to get a job done, and above all his cool assumption of unquestioned superiority, supply endless fun to the village joker. "Bantu as she is spoke" by some Europeans gladdens the weary hours for many a humorously inclined native.

Should the rains be late, the situation may be serious, for not only does the heat continue, but the harvest will be correspondingly late, and there is dark fear lest the supplies in the barns, intended to last until March, should have to do until April is well on. Public prayer is offered, led by the chief. The preliminary ceremonies have been attended to, and as soon as the first rains fall all sally out with the first streak of dawn to begin the year's work. From a score of small crofts one may hear the long happy shout of the men, and the shrill call of the women, as they toil in the early morning; but as the day advances and the heat increases, the shouting dies away, and every one puts the last ounce of energy into the task in hand. Henceforward, for about three months, the native gives all his attention to his crops; for as the season advances, and the grain begins to grow, the weeds come up also in wild profusion, and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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264 eaters. The loud smacking of many pairs of lips round the camp fire makes a quite surprising noise; [521] to which is added, especially if there is *nyama* (flesh), a sustained conversation carried on in a loud voice, making a din which is only ended by an angry shout from the European, who has himself long ago finished his repast, and cannot sleep in the uproar of the feast.

If their table manners in this respect leave much to be desired, in others they are beyond reproach. They carefully wash their hands before, and their mouths after eating. For the hand, the right hand, which is the "eating" hand, is almost their only implement; but I have often watched my carriers make spoons of folded leaves, with which they neatly scooped up the cooked maize, or whatever else they were eating; and I have myself frequently drunk water scooped from a passing stream with a similarly folded leaf.

The one great meal a day is a mighty feast, and one's girth is considerably increased when it is over. Little children literally protrude in front, and their entire nakedness makes the protrusion very obvious. But while the Konde look forward to the evening meal as the event of the day, the practice of eating twice, or even thrice, is growing; and I have never known anyone being averse from eating, and that heartily, at any hour of the twenty-four. Eating by families is unknown, would indeed be bad manners, for the men eat first, and the women only after their lords are satisfied. A few Christian families are beginning to

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J. Mackenzie M-J (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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They play at "grown-ups," having their own chiefs and headmen; build houses, pay taxes, learn various useful and many injurious things. Their "chiefs" demand taxes, and there is no pretence about it. A boy must steal, even if it be from his own parents, whatever his chief wants, and pay it to him as tax. More serious thieving is often attempted, and the chief, who is usually the biggest bully of the crowd, will bring to trial and punishment the very boys whom he sent out to steal. Mimic battles are fought in good temper, but they sometimes end in serious injury to some of the warriors. The great achievement which [526]
all boys burn to excel in is the high leap, and a thrashing may be the portion of the unlucky one who is weakest. Tricks of many kinds are indulged in, one [522]
of the favourites being to send a mere child off on some errand, and on his return direct him to sit in a place where a fire has been kindled, and the ashes removed in his absence; or he is ordered to sit where thorns have been placed for him. No boy dares to disobey such orders.

Mimicry is a favourite amusement. I have seen 857
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671 law-breaking, and the balance was restored when the law was vindicated. The idea that stable equilibrium means stagnation is alien to the Konde mind. To disturb the balance in order to advance to new conditions is a European, not a Bantu idea, and wherever the European stimulus has been removed, the wheels of custom drag heavily again.

692 695 A native court is not, to a white man, an imposing spectacle; though no doubt it is fearsome enough to some trembling rascal, who has little reason to hope that his misdeeds will escape their due reward. The court meets under the village tree, or, if the weather is bad, on the verandah of the chief or judge. There the chief sits with his headmen if the case is an important one, and there are usually a few old men present also, in whose memories are stored up records of previous cases which may have some bearing on the one in hand. The persons concerned are among the audience, which sits facing the court; and when called upon, they rise in turn, and conduct the case from where they stand. The native is a keen disputer. I have known a clever man fight his case with amazing skill and perseverance; even after it was clear that the evidence against him was complete, he would go on adducing fact after fact with a dialectical skill that would not disgrace a European lawyer at cross-examination. If the judge is a man with a [32] sense of humour, he often announces his decision by relating some well-known story, the point of which is taken by all, as, with expressions of approval or otherwise, they rise and go. Execution of sentence

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

177 all this progress; but they have made a beginning, and they will go on.

326 Among the purely native arts that of the black-
● 522 smith is held in highest esteem; and the blacksmith himself is a man feared as well as honoured; and joked about as much as he is feared. I think if there were a local "Punch" here, jokes about the blacksmith would take the place of jokes about the plumber which in times past found so frequent favour with the editors of the actual "Punch." He steals both your time and your materials. He tells you that your hoe will be ready on a given day; you get your hoe days afterwards, and he has not used more than half the material you gave him; the rest will go to make another hoe, which he will sell, perhaps to yourself. "As great a thief as a blacksmith," "as big a liar as a blacksmith," are gross insults, not to the blacksmith, but to the man who is compared with him. "The blacksmith gets rich out of other men's property," is another saying indicating the morals of the great
326 artificer. Yet he is feared also, and such jokes are never made in his presence, for he is in touch with mysterious powers, and his ancestor blacksmiths have their own ways of conveying information to him. Quite recently a native friend of mine was talking to his chief, when a messenger came in hot haste to say that a hoe had broken in the blacksmith's hands. The blacksmith had gone at once to consult a diviner, and learned that the spirits were angry because no one was worshipping. "Go at once, therefore, and tell Mwaikuyu (the chief). Do you think heaven is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

the committee, contained no less than eighty-one 545
items. I asked the committee to reduce it by at least a half, but after earnest wrestling with the problem, they returned and said that I must do the reduction myself. By the simple method of drawing my pencil through every second item, I reduced the programme to forty-one, but I did it to the mournful head-shakings of the committee. The performance was a mixture of native songs, games, dances, and Christian hymns, and dragged its weary length far into the afternoon. But there was compensation. Eight or ten boys of [522]
about ten years old came on to the platform, and gave a "show" of a European doctor examining people for signs of sleeping sickness, regarding which there was a great scare at the time. The little fellow who acted the doctor was nothing less than an imitative genius, the kick with which he finally dismissed the examinees being done "to the life," and it never failed to raise uproarious laughter in the great audience.

Of purely native games and amusements the number 524
is legion.

Ingongwe is the large purple lump at the end of a growing bunch of bananas. It is rolled on the ground and pursued by yelling boys, armed with pointed sticks, each jabbing at it as it rolls, until one lifts it triumphantly on his stick.

Ikimbenengwa. Two pounding sticks are laid parallel to each other. One boy holds a third across, lifting and lowering it rhythmically, while another tries to hold it down by putting his foot on it. If he

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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Then the line advances and passes under the arch singing. The last to pass through is usually held, but sometimes escapes. 524

Of such games there is almost no end, and new ones are continually being invented, many of them imitative of something introduced by the white man, European peculiarities being specially liable to this hilarious form of flattery. I have seen boys imitate the peculiar walk of Europeans, to the intense joy of the onlookers. For, let it be repeated, to the younger generation the white man is no longer a little tin god, or any other kind of god. He is fully respected for all that the native considers worthy of respect (and their ideas do not always harmonize with ours), but if he is laughable for any reason, he need not doubt that he is laughed at. 524 177 522

Dancing is the principal relaxation of the Konde, if the violent exercise which it sometimes involves may be called relaxation. It is indulged in with great zest, and, as the night advances, with complete abandon, moral and physical. There is not much that can be called religious dancing: a children's rain dance, a pestilence dance, and the wild leaping and shouting, with horn and drum, which young and old engage in at times of eclipse or earthquake. But anything may be made the occasion of an impromptu dance: the arrival of a European, especially if he is popular; the killing of lion or leopard; the killing of much game by a European; the return of friends from a journey; or a score of other reasons, some of them trivial, such as the laying down of a load which 535

164. Amusements & Relaxations

538 A hired man eats his own share and that of others. (Be self-reliant.)

The right hand does not cut off the left. (Be consistent.)

There is no blessing in hurry. (Think before you leap.)

If you would get something from under the bed, you must kneel down. (Honour to whom honour is due.)

If you would get honey, you must use fire. (Take the bull by the horns.)

538 Tales told to the children, and to adults, are as numerous as proverbs and riddles, or even more so.
• 522 Many of them have come down the generations, but others are of quite recent origin; those which contain references to Europeans being necessarily late compositions, though in a few cases they may be old stories revised to suit modern conditions. At the concert referred to at the beginning of this chapter, one of the items was a hugely comic account of a native's adventures among Europeans, which quite convulsed the audience, though the white man was not always represented as getting the worst of the situation. The reciter, however, modestly disclaimed authorship, and assured me that he had received it from others. In any case the ability to tell a vivid story, and to show the humorous side of life, was quite striking.

538 These stories cover every aspect of life, and each one has a moral, not always obvious to the European listener, but apparently quite clear to the people

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

881 On moonlight nights the girls
524 play special games in the courtyard, such as 'Knock, knock, little man'; they put bits of banana leaves in the forks of the fingers and toes and sing: 'Knock, knock, little man; knock, knock, little woman!' Then they spread wide their arms and legs and fingers and toes and knock them together. The leaves that fall out when they do so are collected and hidden some distance away. Then they all separate and hunt for them, singing:

> 'We look for our fellow the barren one.
> I don't know where she is, the barren one.'

When they find the leaves they pile them up and then each snatches one, singing:

> 'Here she is, here she is!'

Then the game ends.

Another traditional song goes:

'Little mouth, little mouth, She-who-makes-her-friends-quarrel.'

But many of the songs the maids sing with the young men are just current popular songs.

881 'The maids are friends for the bride to amuse herself with. They
883 amuse themselves with young men, singing, and if some other bride is secluded at the same time, they go and compete against her and her maids in singing.' At the seclusion of Mwaihojo's daughter described below, a dozen girls, all a little younger than herself, kept her company. Five were her own half-sisters, one was a wife of her father who had not yet reached puberty, one a daughter of her father's sister, and four were daughters of her father's neighbours.

864 Although a bride's hut is the centre for sex play, women who are
881 sleeping with their husbands and are therefore 'heavy' (nzito) with semen, do not enter it and may not cook for her, for any contact with them is felt to be dangerous to her. Her own mother refrains from intercourse until her daughter has gone to her husband.

881 The bride is not confined to the hut (as among many other African peoples) but is free to move about the immediate neighbourhood. Her movements are, however, limited by the taboo on crossing a stream, the need to avoid sexually active women, and the avoidance of her father and other men of his village, as well as her in-laws. When she leaves her hut she is accompanied by her

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857 canoes of maize leaves are sent floating down stream,
524 with shouting and racing competition between the owners.

857 Girls help their mothers, and at a very early age look after their younger brothers or sisters. It is a common sight to see a small girl staggering along under weight of a fat baby brother strapped to her back.

855 In the hotter regions boys go naked till ten or
291 twelve, wearing nothing but a piece of string on the waist and a charm on neck or wrist. Girls begin to wear bark-cloth waistbands at five or six, adding more as circumstances permit. Their clothing is provided by the father; but boys, at whatever age they begin to wear any kind of garment, have to earn it for themselves, for it is not the business of their fathers to clothe them. They often, however, get a fowl or two, or even a goat or a sheep, from a grandparent, with the proceeds of which they buy a yard or two of cloth.

855 In the great majority of families there is a cruel difference in the treatment of boys and girls. The boys are uncared for, dirty, unoiled, not too well fed; while the girls are kept clean and oiled, well fed, and as far as possible clothed at an early age. The reason is not far to seek. Girls are a source of wealth, and a dirty, ill-cared-for girl will command few head of cattle when the time comes to think of her marriage. Boys, on the other hand, have value only as representatives of the family when the father has passed to the spirit world, and that value is not dependent on external circumstances. A change is being effected,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

ceremonies begin; indeed, the one passes into the other. Girls are sometimes betrothed before birth, but this is usually done only when a wife has died, and the father, being obliged to supply another, offers the widower the next child to be born if it is a girl. He sends a boy to the man as a guarantee of good faith, but the boy remains only a week or so, and then returns to his home.

It may be accepted as certain that no boy comes through the dangers of adolescence unharmed. Fathers are said to warn their growing sons about these dangers, and sometimes they threaten to refuse to find wives for them if the warning goes unheeded; but nothing more is done, and the threat is never carried out.

Children's games are much too numerous for anything but a mere reference. For quiet moments, puzzles; or guessing what is in the hand of another; or what object, out of sight, is being touched. A favourite river- or lake-side sport is diving and staying under water while some one counts. Walking on the hands or on stilts is very popular.

Vangilo is a ball game, with sides, the ball being thrown from one to another on the same side, while the other side endeavours to get and keep it a given number of throws, without letting it fall to the ground or into the hands of the opponents. *Ingoba* is a game not unlike our hockey, a ball being struck about, and kept as far as possible within one's own side. *Ngalya* is played with sides sitting at a distance from a small object set up in the middle, while any round thing is thrown at it from side to side, the winning side

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

being the one that hits the object a given number of 526
times in succession.

Ingarama, the lion, is a piece of banana cord at- 524
tached to a string and whirled round the head, when it makes a noise remotely resembling the growling of a lion. *Ifula*, rain, is our bull-roarer; old people still believe that it stops the rain; but even they admit that no well-disposed spirit takes any notice of child's play. *Bandu* is a kind of top, spun by twirling it between the palms and letting it go. Whip-tops are [177]
in use, but are of European origin. A kind of mimic ammunition is supplied by the seeds of the *unyunguti* tree, which are thrown at the enemy, and all who are hit are "killed," and carried off the field.

Konde children are perfectly happy. Those who 857
go to school hail the dismissal hour with the same shouts of joy as little people at home. The boys will climb a tree perhaps, with the more glee if the teacher's prohibition has added a whiff of danger to the exploit. Or they will chase an unfortunate goat around; though the goat, having been handled from earliest childhood very much as we handle pet dogs, probably enjoys the sport as much as the boys do. A couple of boys may get astride a young bullock, and go careering along the road; or more likely the whole troop will make a rush for the nearest water in river or lake, and with terrific noise splash about in joyous excitement. No doubt those who are utterly unclad look with envy on the scraps of clothing worn by their more fortunate fellows, but that does not silence the shout of glee which fills the air as boys and girls are let loose

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

notwithstanding the accident, accepted the inevitable, 505
and were ferried safely across.

For the rest, the variety of woodwork includes 322
carved walking-sticks, with straight, knobbed, or bent 352
handles; chairs, stools, pillows, musical instruments, and wooden platters. In the Bundali district remarkably good Rurkee chairs are made on the European pattern, with perfectly smoothed spars, and perfectly burned-out holes for fitting the parts together. The one in my possession might quite well have been made in a carpenter's shop, but the only tools used were an axe and a knife, and a piece of iron for boring the holes. Toothed hair ornaments and [301
small wooden dolls represent the finer work; and 524
bamboo cups are decorated with pleasing patterns in 415]
poker work.

More important than the woodwork is the ancient 323
craft of the potter. There is, of course, no potter's 415
wheel, everything, from the immense pots, three feet high, down to the smallest eating dish, being formed by hand, built up, as regards the larger ones, by successive layers of clay, and finally hardened, after drying in the sun, by being put on a fire, while another fire is kindled inside. There is a great variety of pots, both in shape and in size. The very large ones are used for storing grain or flour; and some Europeans employ them for storing water. A well-stocked house will have up to twenty pots, for water carrying, for cook- 323
ing porridge, fish, beans, flesh; and special ones are 415
kept for beer making and drinking. The best clay is 317
found at the north end of the lake, and from there

FN17 Ngonde FN17

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Himlewengua. Two pounding sticks are laid parallel to each other. One boy holds a third across, lifting and lowering it rhythmically, while another tries to hold it down by putting his foot on it. If he

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
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534 fails, the moving pounding stick comes down upon his foot, which is held between the two parallel ones.

Ikyula, the frog. Two sides at a small distance from each advance to meet, hopping like frogs, and, circling round each other, return to their places. Any who fail through exhaustion are the captives of the other side, and the game goes on until one side is captured, or all are tired out.

Eya kalenda. Children form a ring, with one in the middle. All bend forward, hands on knees, and move round in a shuffling manner in a circle. The one in the middle acts as leader; if he turns to the right the others do the same; if to the left they follow suit. The leader sings "*eya kalenda*," and the others respond with "*nyama ne*." After a little the leader claps hands over his head, the others following and singing the while.

"*Tenne na Balemba*": let us fight the Abemba. Two rows of boys kneel facing each other, hands on ground, heads down; all sing "*Tenne na Balemba*" twice, beating the ground with their hands. At the second singing one side advances on hands and knees, growling, to drive back the enemy; then the other side advances to fight the first, and so on.

Pamba nilili is not unlike "See the robbers passing by" or "Oranges and Lemons." Two of the tallest children stand facing each other, hands raised and meeting to form an arch, a gentle clapping being kept up all the time. The others form in line according to height, and sing "*E! yuba nilili*"; the two forming the arch respond with "*Pamba nilili*."

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Then the line advances and passes under the arch singing. The last to pass through is usually held, but sometimes escapes. 524

Of such games there is almost no end, and new ones are continually being invented, many of them imitative of something introduced by the white man. European peculiarities being specially liable to this hilarious form of flattery. I have seen boys imitate the peculiar walk of Europeans, to the intense joy of the onlookers. For, let it be repeated, to the younger generation the white man is no longer a little tin god, or any other kind of god. He is fully respected for all that the native considers worthy of respect (and their ideas do not always harmonize with ours), but if he is laughable for any reason, he need not doubt that he is laughed at. 524 177 522

Dancing is the principal relaxation of the Konde, if the violent exercise which it sometimes involves may be called relaxation. It is indulged in with great zest, and, as the night advances, with complete abandon, moral and physical. There is not much that can be called religious dancing: a children's rain dance, a pestilence dance, and the wild leaping and shouting, with horn and drum, which young and old engage in at times of eclipse or earthquake. But anything may be made the occasion of an impromptu dance: the arrival of a European, especially if he is popular; the killing of lion or leopard; the killing of much game by a European; the return of friends from a journey; or a score of other reasons, some of them trivial, such as the laying down of a load which 535

3 Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

535 *Ibikwa.* This is highly objectionable dance, better not too minutely described. There are four drums and uproarious singing and shouting. The dance is of recent introduction among the Konde, and is held late at night. The chiefs try to put it down, but without much success; and there are other very evil dances, which no decent people will have anything to do with. Such dances usually come like an epidemic, spread rapidly over a whole district, and lead to great moral injury, until they are put down by vigorous chiefs, or die out of themselves, until the epidemic comes round again. Very frequently these evil performances go on the whole night, with terrific noise, and so determined are the dancers, that respectable people are afraid to interfere, lest an unmerciful handling should send them back to their homes bruised and bleeding. But the approach of a white man sends the dancers rushing off to hide in the bush, as I have often found at all hours of the night.

529 Of games of skill the most important is a kind of draughts game, an Arab introduction. Thirty-six holes are made in the ground; the players, two or four in number, have small stones which they move from hole to hole, until one side is declared winner. I do not understand the game, and shall not attempt to describe it; but a very complete description is given in "The Ila-speaking Peoples," by Smith and Dale.

538 A favourite intellectual exercise is the propounding of riddles, of which there is a large stock, and new

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Weller, senior, and turn their children out into the 857
bush to learn whatever the companions they find there have to teach them.

They play at "grown-ups," having their own chiefs and headmen; build houses, pay taxes, learn various useful and many injurious things. Their "chiefs" demand taxes, and there is no pretence about it. A boy must steal, even if it be from his own parents, whatever his chief wants, and pay it to him as tax. More serious thieving is often attempted, and the chief, who is usually the biggest bully of the crowd, will bring to trial and punishment the very boys whom he sent out to steal. Mimic battles are fought in good temper, but they sometimes end in serious injury to some of the warriors. The great achievement which all boys burn to excel in is the high leap, and a thrashing may be the portion of the unlucky one who is weakest. Tricks of many kinds are indulged in, one of the favourites being to send a mere child off on some errand, and on his return direct him to sit in a place where a fire has been kindled, and the ashes removed in his absence; or he is ordered to sit where thorns have been placed for him. No boy dares to disobey such orders. [536] [522]

Mimicry is a favourite amusement. I have seen 857
remarkably good imitations of motor-bicycles made by 524
quite small boys, even the "phut-phut" being reproduced by another boy running along with a bent reed touching the ground. Lanterns are made out of pumpkins, as boys at home make turnip lanterns. Hats and shoes are fashioned out of leaves, and tiny

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

584 ceremonies begin; indeed, the one passes into the other. Girls are sometimes betrothed before birth, but this is usually done only when a wife has died, and the father, being obliged to supply another, offers the widower the next child to be born if it is a girl. He sends a boy to the man as a guarantee of good faith, but the boy remains only a week or so, and then returns to his home.

583 It may be accepted as certain that no boy comes through the dangers of adolescence unharmed. Fathers are said to warn their growing sons about these dangers, and sometimes they threaten to refuse to find wives for them if the warning goes unheeded; but nothing more is done, and the threat is never carried out.

524 Children's games are much too numerous for anything but a mere reference. For quiet moments, puzzles; or guessing what is in the hand of another; or what object, out of sight, is being touched. A favourite river- or lake-side sport is diving and staying under water while some one counts. Walking on the hands or on stilts is very popular.

526 *Vangile* is a ball game, with sides, the ball being thrown from one to another on the same side, while the other side endeavours to get and keep it a given number of throws, without letting it fall to the ground or into the hands of the opponents. *Ingube* is a game not unlike our hockey, a ball being struck about, and kept as far as possible within one's own side. *Ngalya* is played with sides sitting at a distance from a small object set up in the middle, while any round thing is thrown at it from side to side, the winning side

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

being the one that hits the object a given number of 526
times in succession.

Ingarama, the lion, is a piece of banana cord at- 524
tached to a string and whirled round the head, when it makes a noise remotely resembling the growling of a lion. *Ifula*, rain, is our bull-roarer; old people still believe that it stops the rain; but even they admit that no well-disposed spirit takes any notice of child's play. *Bando* is a kind of top, spun by twirling it between the palms and letting it go. Whip-tops are [77]
in use, but are of European origin. A kind of mimic ammunition is supplied by the seeds of the *ntyungati* tree, which are thrown at the enemy, and all who are hit are "killed," and carried off the field.

Konde children are perfectly happy. Those who 157
go to school hail the dismissal hour with the same shouts of joy as little people at home. The boys will climb a tree perhaps, with the more glee if the teacher's prohibition has added a whiff of danger to the exploit. Or they will chase an unfortunate goat around; though the goat, having been handled from earliest kidhood very much as we handle pet dogs, probably enjoys the sport as much as the boys do. A couple of boys may get astride a young bullock, and go careering along the road; or more likely the whole troop will make a rush for the nearest water in river or lake, and with terrific noise splash about in joyous excitement. No doubt those who are utterly unclad look with envy on the scraps of clothing worn by their more fortunate fellows, but that does not silence the shout of glee which fills the air as boys and girls are let loose

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XII

Amusements & Relaxations

517 I HAVE already said that the average African is a man with an abundance of spare time on his hands, and the situation suits him exactly. But even with him it may pall, and something more than mere lying in the sun must be found to fill the idle hours. A full account of the numerous games and amusements would fill a small volume, and a few examples must suffice.

•526 Association football is now very popular in many parts of Africa, and Konde youths take up the game with zest; but it can be enjoyed only at Mission schools, or at Government stations, or wherever there is a white man sufficiently interested to provide a ball, and to give some instruction in the game. They kick from the ball of the great toe, as direct kicking with bare feet is impossible. To score a goal is "to give the egg" to the losers, a phrase taken from one of their own games, where a rubber ball is knocked about with sticks by two sides, to attain a given objective, when the losing side is said to get "the egg."

595 I was once present at a school concert to which audience and performers gathered from many different villages. The programme, when presented to me by

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for the local investment of savings are the most important economic undertaking in the District. The seven coffee co-operatives handled a crop of 930 tons in 1955, worth about £407,500, and are organized so efficiently as to be able to return over 90 per cent of the price of the coffee on Moshi market to the producer, after the heavy transport costs (14 per cent) have been paid. One Government-paid officer assists these societies.

In the educational and recreational field also, associations are emerging: football clubs; companies of Scouts and Guides; 'Welfare Centres' with classes in reading for adult illiterates, indoor games, and Saturday-night dances; Women's Clubs for handwork and recreation; and in Tukuyu itself an inter-racial club with its own premises, whose members meet to play games, and get to know one another and discuss common problems. These associations make a visible mark on the face of the country in the shape of new brick Churches, co-operative stores, football fields, and, more rarely, a village club-house.

The change from a subsistence to a money economy, and from a system of government through chiefs and village headmen who were dependent primarily on inherited wealth, which secured to them the labour of many able-bodied wives and sons, to a system of government through European officials, chiefs, and clerks paid out of taxes, and assisted by unpaid village headmen, implies the collection and administration of taxes. The District Council has the responsibility for the budgeting and expenditure of over £60,000 per annum. The greater part of it is spent on the salaries of chiefs, secretaries, and clerks engaged in administration, on courts, on schools, dispensaries, and roads. The development of associations with paid officers also implies the collection of dues and budgeting. As in so many countries the difficulty of building up a tradition of honesty in administration is great. Tax clerks, court clerks, council secretaries, and co-operative society secretaries, and even church elders handle sums of money relatively large in proportion to their earnings and one of the tasks of European officials and missionaries is to secure a sound system of accounting and check corruption. In the traditional society stock theft was a capital offence, but money has not the sanctity of cattle, and often the clerk who has appropriated public funds is treated by others as 'unfortunate' rather than immoral. At the same time villagers show great anxiety lest a man entrusted with some common fund should spend it for himself. The risk of theft

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

marriages of his kinswomen. When his father dies his father's wives 622
and cows pass to his father's full-brother, but they come to him and his 595
brother eventually when this man dies. While, if the young chiefs have "come out" it is common for their father's brother to hand over some, or even the bulk of the cattle, to them before his own death. And in his own half of the family, among his siblings and half-siblings on that side, a chief has far greater rights both of inheritance and of receiving marriage-cattle, than those possessed by the senior son of a commoner. So much is clear from any evidence, but it is not yet sufficiently detailed for an exact statement of rules.

Before 1893 fighting between chiefdoms was common and, except 631
between brother chiefs, the usual aim of fighting was, not conquest, but 721
cows; wars were generally just cattle raids. And a substantial proportion of the cows captured in a successful raid went to increase the herds of the chief. This last source of income is now supplied by Government 635
salaries, which vary from 5/- to £15 a month.[19] The price of a cow is £2; 636
but many shillings are spent on clothes, bicycles and beer, as well as on cows.

A chief, like any other rich man, maintains his prestige by hospitality, 622
he constantly entertains his more notable subjects with beer, at the 527
ceremonies of his family all his people gather in their age-villages and he kills cattle for them to eat. Chiefs seldom nowadays kill cattle except on ceremonial occasions, but in the old days of warfare they used also, I am told, to entertain their subjects with meat from time to time, in order to keep up their spirits for fighting. History is full of stories of Nyakyusa chiefs who attracted many men to their countries, and so gained great military strength, by the generosity and abundance of their feasts.

Every time a man or woman dies, a message must be sent to the 622
chief, and at the burial he is given the whole breast and ribs (*akabwa*) of 664
one of the cows which are killed by the family of the dead person at that time. He has the right to take food or milk from any of his subjects if he has need of it; but he cannot take any man's beast without later returning another to him.

Apart from the now abandoned pursuit of cattle raiding the only 631
profitable enterprises in which the members of a whole chiefdom jointly 676
participate are those of hunting and fishing; in some chiefdoms, but not

[19] Salaries shown £5 a month are only paid to senior chiefs. No minor chief gets a Government salary, nor do great-commoners. The local value of money is shown (a) by the tax (8/- p.a.), (b) by the wages of unskilled labour (8/- to 8/- p.m.)

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Seiya, Ma Ngonde

maids and always carries a mat or cloth to screen her face from her father and his contemporaries, her father's full sisters, her older brothers,[1] and her 'mothers-in-law' (*abakamwana*).[2] These she must fear and respect (*akatile*) and so avoid. Her father-in-law and his brothers she avoids altogether from the time of her engagement, or at least after she has reached the age of 8 or 9. Her companions do not *akatile* with her, though those of them who are already betrothed will, of course, avoid their own fathers-in-law.

During the period of seclusion the girls have two specific tasks: to weave the fine mats used as beds, and to fetch firewood. Every bride should take to her husband's home at least one fine mat (*abapuse*) which she has made herself, as well as several coarse ones (*imingfo*),[3] and weaving a fine mat is a lengthy task, occupying a skilful woman a month. Each girl weaves for herself, but the firewood that each must fetch is stacked in the bride's mother's loft. The bride also occupies herself hammering out bark-cloth, pleating it for the strip worn between the legs, and decorating bark-cloth belts (*ndo* plate 5), so that she may have the fresh ones required during the ritual, and a supply to take with her to her husband's; but this work is not emphasized as an obligation: rather it is a recreation. Women take great pride in the decoration of their belts—we watched several brides making them and handing them round for the admiration of their fellows. The maids may work in the fields if required to do so, but the bride herself does not, and 'she gets fat because she does not have much work to do'. The whole ritual normally lasts about three months, but if, for some reason such as a pressing need to go out to work, the husband is in a hurry for its completion, various acts may be telescoped. The time-table depends primarily on when the marriage-cattle and food for the various feasts are ready.

From the time of first menstruation until she does it ritually, a bride should neither wash nor oil herself. The prohibition is felt to be a very onerous one and some girls now break it, but women said 'in the old days we did not wash'. 'Girls nowadays are more cunning. We were afraid.'

[1] Some informants denied that she avoided father's sisters or brothers. Others insisted that she must avoid them because 'brothers are fathers, and father's full sisters are father'.

[2] i.e. her husband's own mother and other women he calls mother. In this account the plural 'mothers' indicates own and classificatory mothers.

[3] Hardwood beds are made of layers of mats laid on rollers between two logs or bound and lies. One chief's bed on record was made up of sixty-eight mats.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

323 one will sometimes meet with long strings of men and
48 women, carrying ten to a dozen pots, hawking them
317 round the upland villages, or offering them for sale
at the local market at Tukuyu. The pots made at
[531] Matema are smeared on the outside with a dull red
ochre, and the more artistic potters work patterns in
red, with thin lines around the protruding middle,
and herring-bone or crossed patterns from thence to
lip and base.

353 I once slept in a native house in which there was
a double row of pots, one on top of the other, along
two walls. I was told that they were there for orna-
mental purposes, "just as you white men have pictures
on your walls."

285 Basket work is done everywhere, and a great variety
48 of baskets are made. Immense *ifuba*, for storing
grain, up to four feet high, and perhaps ten feet in
girth, are to be found in almost every family. Smaller
baskets for carrying goods of all kinds; wide shallow
baskets for sifting grain; others for serving food, and
yet others for drinking beer. The latter are so closely
woven that they will hold water, and are made from
a fine grass, which is found only in certain regions. A
new development of this industry is the making of
articles to European, or native, order; hats, table
mats, baskets with hinged lids and divisions inside,
almost anything can be made if a specimen is given
to the maker as a sample from which he may copy
what is wanted. Basket work includes also the large
and small fish traps in use at the lake or on the rivers.

286 Net making is naturally confined to the lake shore

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Haya FN8

H 342

As indicated above, the floor is covered with grass. Various domestic utensils may be seen, stuck into this wreath of plant material.

H 342 178

But this old, beautiful type of hut is very much on the decline. It is costly to make and to keep in repair, and the thick straw roof is, admittedly, highly inflammable. A flying trip round Lake Victoria clearly shows how the straw roofs in the banana groves are being replaced by corrugated iron. This change may even have another reason, viz. the fact that fodder for cattle is in short supply and that the grass for roofs is hard to come by. No doubt, it is a question of time when the fine old Haya hut will have disappeared.

N 114

In the Southern Highlands, where I was given the opportunity to stay for three months at various Danish mission stations, I visited the village round the Rungwe mission, the neighbouring villages of Ilolo and Kikota, and some villages near the Ruanagwio mission station. I made a trip to Lake Nyasa and another to the Poroto mountains. I must admit to a limited knowledge of drawing techniques and of house construction, but I have surveyed a number of houses and sketched their plan and also the furnishings I found in them. The positioning of the various objects has been established.

N 361 [342] 352

The high standard of dwellings of the Nyakyusa is truly to be wondered at. The houses, clustered in villages, often along a winding street, lie interwoven with banana and coffee bushes. The houses are large and their interior is clean. Often two or three houses belong to one family, and, if so, will be grouped round a courtyard.

N 342 [324]

Even if you could find houses built from sun-dried bricks and fired tiles, most were from bamboo with a grass roofing.

All houses stand on a clay base which, though not very high, no doubt secures some protection against penetration of ground moisture during the heavy rains of April-June.

N [324]

Besides bamboo, sometimes the bark of tree ferns, mabale, is used in outer walls. Such tree ferns seem have not the carrying capacity of bamboo, but they are far more resistant to rot. Among the other common features of the existing types of houses, should be mentioned the wood chips, the size of rolls that from the inside are pressed between the vertical bamboo poles; also, the inner wall is roughcast with a mixture of mud and cow manure; the floor is from tamped clay. In some places you find very fine floors in which a pattern has been rolled into the wet clay; to this end a short length of the stem of the banana cluster has been employed, viz. the length between the seats of the male and the female flowers. Also employed are smaller plant stems, or an empty store roll.

N [287] [291]

In all houses where women live, there are one or more hearths. The presence of two hearths in one house usually means that the husband has two wives, each with having her own hearth, either in the common house or in a house of her own.

N 359 515

The houses always have a kind of ceiling made from bamboo rods and carried

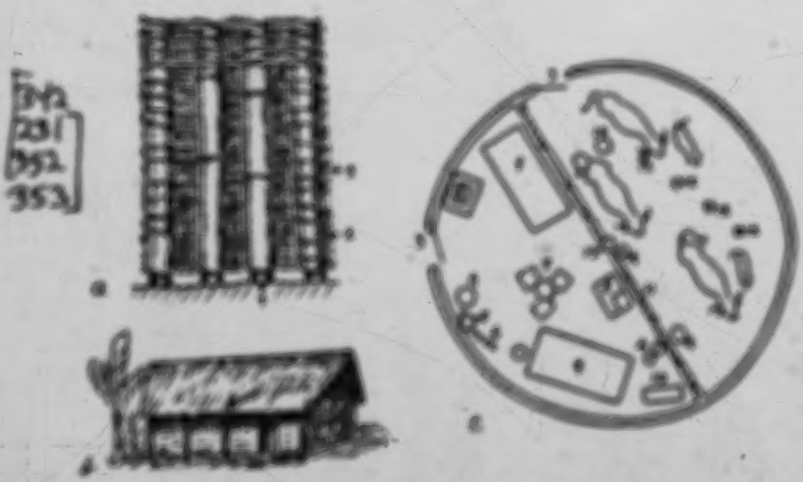
N 342

12: Blegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

392 353 parts. The partition wall was bamboo and mud. A doorway gave on to the inner part, where Tulwene had her bed.

394 There were two hearths, one in each room. The front one was not used. In the outer room was a bed for guests—a common feature of all houses. Tulwene was thought to be well off, and she had plenty of carrying slings, used by the 482 women when they carry loads, often very heavy, on their heads. The inner room was used for storage, including a number of earthen jars. She had there very few, 352 but good, utensils. I saw them outside in the sun, but their usual place was no doubt in the outer room, which had the character of a workroom. Here were the large 402 wooden mortar and its long pestle; also the grinding stone and in a corner the small mat, the *ulupanya*, which is used to take up the newly ground flour. There 417 was also the ladder, used for fetching down foreswad from the loft; you could see 415 the hen's nest, and the large water jar with its painted bottom placed on three stones.

415 The third image belonged to an eighty-year-old woman whose husband had 704 died. She told me how every day she would fill a fine, decorated bamboo mug 624 with milk for him! These mugs, seen in all the houses, mostly have geometrical



Houses belonging to Mulo Ulwyatheya and her husband.

a. Detail of image, outer wall. 1, row from stone joined to bamboo pole—note apertures for liquid measure; 2, bamboo pole with plaited thin strellings; 3, split bamboo—b, Mulo's dwelling—c. Plan of image. 1, bed of the man; 2, iron chairs for guests; 3, door; 4, posts supporting ceiling; 5, hen's nest; 6, horn and pestle for the maize mortar; 7, hearth; 8, chairs; 9, bed of the grandchildren; 10, meat from hollowed out trunk; 11, low partition; 12, posts for tying cattle; 13, remove goat to top of mud.

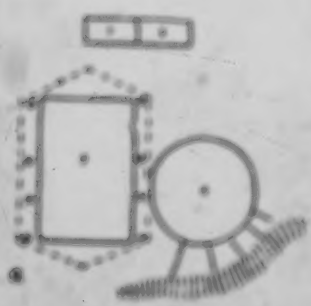
12: Diagnard E-5 (1955) 1962 F907 Ngonde F907
Nyakyusa

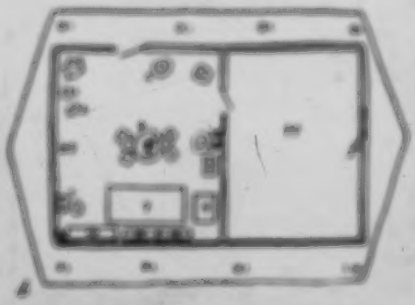
gateway hewed into the bamboo; they are hung upside down so the dust will not settle in them. The bamboo is the natural partition of the bamboo cane.

The house was standing on high, slightly slanting ground, and like the two mentioned houses it was buttressed by a great number of thick bamboo. Incidentally, it seemed to be very old and rickety. Inside, there were a great many posts supporting the horizontal bamboo ceiling and the stores of firewood. All posts were bifurcated and held the beams solidly in place. The diameter of the house was the usual 6.5 metres, but in this case there was no inner partition. As this woman was very poor, she had no bed, but slept on a mat on the floor. Only very rarely is there no bed in the houses; I remember having seen this only three times.

The hearth was the usual type: three decorated square stones, rising to a height of 30 cm above the floor, but being sunk 30 cm into the ground. Here they were positioned on one side, to ensure that the center post would not catch fire, and to make for easy escape of the smoke through the doorway. None of the houses have other means of smoke outlet.

Alongside the wall were calabashes, jars, and baskets, essential for the housewife; and a little away from the wall, the large millstone and its appurtenant smaller grinding stone. A hen's nest was not missing either. Along one side was fixed a small under-ceiling for the storage of small things. Two or three bananas, meant to be for sale small, were lying on the floor near one of the posts. From the left the reached down a rabbit to which she had been carrying her child. On inside was of a reddish colour.





a. The plan of Mafia Ulimwengwa's houses. 1, hearthstones; 2, drying racks for crops; 3, Mafia's dilaga with roof supports along sides; 4, large belonging to Mafia's husband, with bottom on the ground.—b. Plan of Mafia's dilaga (hatched window in back room). 1, hen's nest; 2, dishes (small); 3, posts (those going up to ridge of roof are filled in); 4, large baskets; 5, baskets; 6, clay base round corn posts; 7, Mafia's bed; 8, chest; 9, wooden chest; 10, rabbit; 11, back room, having bamboo ceiling carried by bamboo cross beam (between posts marked 3); the room is used for storing clothes, etc.; 12, dishes.

342 Another old woman lived in a neighbouring village close by—if possible even more sparsely furnished than the last mentioned.

Common features of the round houses were: their size, the wooden centre-post, the ceiling covering the greater part of the room, the supporting posts for the beams that carry the bamboo poles and the ceiling proper; the building materials bamboo and reed; and the positioning of the hearth slightly off centre.

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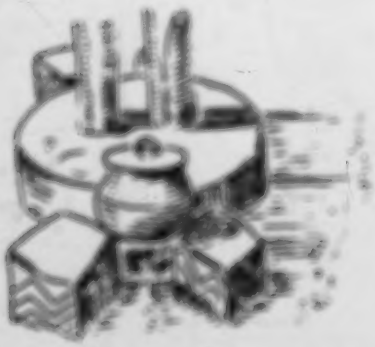

The two hearths of Vidal's hut: in this hut surrounds the cells posts, thus serves as fireproof floor. Two hearthstones at either side form the hearths, for they have acting as the stool tenant.

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The differences between this village and the original round-type house are: the angle of the wall, here vertical (as opposed to the inclination of the wall of the original house); the entrance (here without ornaments); the door itself also without ornaments; and further the fact that the clay cells placed between the bamboo poles were here not the shape but only the size of cells. The pictures presented by Fildebaro clearly show the carefully formed clay balls in the wall.

[34] As distinct from the old-type house, this new type of house has no decorations on the inside of the wall, but in some instances decorations are found on the floor.

342 Another type of house, again, was rectangular, often very long, with a ridge-beam roof. In most cases, these houses were buttressed along both sides, and were thus provided with what you might call two verandahs. Sometimes also the gables of the houses had buttresses. The roof projected over the gables, most over the ridge. The roof sagged in the middle, a fact that was already observed by the scholars mentioned. This may be because the ridge-beam is not dry but freshly cut, when it is mounted in its place. During the subsequent drying process sudden load is will then be brought to sag—as we know from other types of houses.

This house is called an ibdugo and is known to be typical of the Banyakyuen since olden times. Literally, ibdugo means stable or confinem, thus presumably indicating its original purpose. There is a full description of this house in Fildebaro

12: Diagnosed E-9 (1955) 1962 P317 Ngonde P317
Nyakyusa

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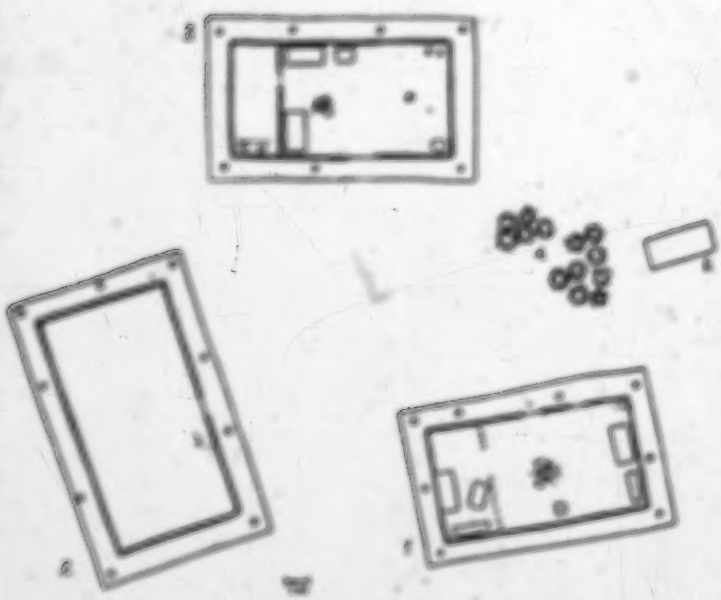

Three houses belonging to one family, situated round a common courtyard, the doors open on to the yard. The village street is along the back of the house at top. 1, Sefina's house; 2, Rafa's house; 3, Silwa's house; 4, banana plants; 5, fowl-coop.

houses evident which were six metres in length. It had the same width as Malia's house, approximately 3 metres. The roof was supported by posts along the sides and at the gables.

Two women lived in this house, both married to the same man. Consequently, [595
there were two hearths, the stones of which were cylindrical-conical, broadening [354]
slightly at the top. All were decorated. Each woman had her part of the house, 531]
both with an outer door, and further there was a door, slightly narrower, between the two parts, and a fourth door to a store-room. No less than twelve posts supported the roof, all reaching to the ridge. The two parts were a bit unequal in [353]
size; nearly half of each had the well-known bili for firewood, etc. One part contained beds for the woman and her husband (one bed had two straw mats). [352]
The children had two beds. The husband had still another house, a short distance away at the foot of a hill, they said. I did not see it. The other woman's room held her bed and a cot.

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The hearths of both rooms were placed in the centre, between two upright posts. Utensils and furnishings did not differ much from the usual: here's one, 352
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14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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[237]

usa. It is true that one still meets blacksmiths on the outskirts of the villages or some distance away from them (as in the case of the Ndali tribe, western to the Nyakyusa area), but they no longer smelt the iron from ore mined by themselves as in former times. The smith of to-day remelt only scrap iron from disused motor-cars and other machines into tools, hatches, and spear-heads, unless, of course, the natives prefer to buy imported iron-ware. As with the Chaga, also the Nyakyusa smith can only be persuaded to submit to being photographed after long negotiation and a change into better clothes. The blacksmiths I met in the Bundali Mountains, however, made no objections whatever to being photographed at their work. Also women were allowed to attend. But one feature of the ancient Nyakyusa blacksmith's culture has been preserved till the present day: the lower part of the bellows through which the air blast is driven into the fire is still made of wood. This feature has been defined by H. Baumann as an element of the "ancient nigritic culture".

12. Dress. The cloths of the Nyakyusa have changed to a very considerable degree since the beginning of European influence. A comparison of the earliest pictures and descriptions of inhabitants at the northern end of Lake Nyasa with the dress of modern times brings out this point most forcibly. Originally the Nyakyusa went almost naked, adorned only with rings and belts, but nowadays all degrees of compromise with European fashions of dress are to be found, especially near the European settlements and Mission Stations. The most conservative element are, in this case, the women. It is still possible to-day to observe in each village the preparation of the long strips of bark *(elyabi*, pl. *amabi)* commonly worn by the women. The so-called *impandapanda* (Fotheringham: *mlambe)* tree furnishes the dress material. After the bark has been immersed in water, the bast is beaten with wooden instruments and then pulled off from the harder parts of the bark. These tools are like hammers; the flat end of such an implement is furrowed, sometimes with a disk made of horn, and as it produces patters on the bast it is called "obosimbe", that which produces patters. These long belts, almost reaching the ground, especially in front, are mostly ruby coloured, but the women sitting in front of their huts manufacture also other types with geometrical (triangular) patterns in yellow and brown forming only girdles *(umpango)*. In addition to this minimum requirement in the way of dress some women around the waist also wear copper belts *(manyeta)*, made of thin copper-wire, spiraly wound on a core of hairs from the tails of cows. These

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN? Ngonde FN?
Nyakyusa

291 301 belts are also worn by men, nowadays below the other clothing. More and more pieces of cotton with imprinted patterns have come into 291 vogue. They are worn around the lower part of the body or below the 177 shoulders or fastened about one of them, and are bought from Indian [139] shops. That this modern fashion, however, is something new in such places which are a little remoter from direct European influence was demonstrated to me when I came through a small village in the environment of Masoko. There by chance I met some young girls carrying a piece of cloth on the top of a long pole as if it were a banner. On enquiry I was told that this "banner" was nothing other than a [556 piece of cloth newly bought by a woman of that village and that it was 482] hoisted on a pole and carried in procession out of sheer joy that this woman had been able to buy it.

291 Mendolk throughout are fuller dressed, especially when they go dancing. The women, on the other hand, wear their ordinary dress also on such occasions. The dancing costume of the men — only the younger [292 men participate in dancing — consists of a sort of tight-jacket or 535] sweater and wide robes with coloured patterns. The hair is adorned [302 with feathers. At work the men mostly wear only loin cloths or shorts. 237] After work especially the older man wrap their bodies in blankets. It is very seldom nowadays to find even very old men still wearing the former national dress: a bundle of long grass in front and a smaller one behind tied to the waist by means of a string, as I found a man on a solitary spot near Rungwe Station. Little boys go altogether naked untill they are about three years of age. Little girls begin to wear a small *ensabi* at an earlier age.

●531 *13. Art.* One of the most interesting and striking features in the artistic endowment of the Nyakyusa are the decorations on the outer-walls of their huts. The latter are only painted, however, when the exterior of the framework of bamboo is mud covered, otherwise only the wooden doors (*ikifigo*, door) of the huts are painted. By no means every hut or house is painted, but only a limited number in each village, probably depending on the presence and industry of an artist as this art is as in other cases an individualistic one. One such artist was introduced to me in a village near Rutenganio. The ornaments consist in most cases of geometrical patterns in white and black, seldom in other colours, or they represent different sorts of animals, e. g. elephants, horses, cattle, snakes, etc. The richest designs I found in a long extended village on the right bank of the upper Kiwira. In an other case the names of the animals were written in Swahili below

14:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 F907 Ngonde F907
Nyakyusa

the figures. Also bicycles, aeroplanes, motor-cars and other striking objects of the European civilization are to be found represented and concentric white circles adjacent to these drawings or paintings.

14. Houses. Sometimes the upper portion of the framework of the rectangular houses is not fully plastered with mud leaving broad open areas or stripe horizontally or obliquely to the base-line. This may have its origin in an artistic motive and at the same time be useful in ventilating the interior of the hut. The ancient custom of the Nyakyusa to fill out the spaces between the framework of the walls with flat, oval cakes or clods of clay, supported inside the house by a round framework of bamboo (*ncumengeni*), has also a decorative effect.

The preparation of these oval sun-dried clay cakes is the work of the women. L. Monteith Fotheringham described this in his "Adventures in Nyasaland" (London 1891, p. 22) with the following words: "The women make the bricks in shape like large eggs by pressing the clay between their hands." The building of the framework of the hut and the thatching of the roof is the task of the men. Nyumba means "the house" in Kinyakyusa as well as in Swahili; *ugenga* is the name for the old-fashioned hut of the Nyakyusa possessing a round bamboo and a framework expanding upwards in diameter. The rectangular hut is called *ikibaga* and the smaller rectangular hut used as a store or a fowl pen, *akabaga*. It is interesting to note that there is no special word for roof in Kinyakyusa. This part of the hut or house is simply called "the above" (*igulu*). In contrast to this fact the different poles of the roof-structure are specially named according to their position parallel to or at right angle to the ridge of the rectangular houses. *Ukutalika* means to bind the different rafters of the roof together; *imbanda* is the name for the supporting poles of the roof, and *ingenga* for the poles of the framework of the walls.

15. Outfit. Inside the house we find besides the bedsteads (*ikitanda*, pl. (*ifitanda*) and the household utensils, the grinding-mill (*urwanga*), consisting of an upper (smaller) and a lower (broader) stone. The flour falls into a basket placed in front of the mill. Sometimes in a corner of the hut a nest (*ikitanda*) for a sitting hen on top of a pole is to be found. Outside the house is a place for the sweepings (*urutagilila*). The cleaning of the interior of the houses and also the repairing of the mud plaster is the task of the women, but I saw men cleaning the space in front of the huts. At any case, it must be acknowledged that the cleanliness of a Nyakyusa village leaves little to be desired.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3117 Ngonde F3117
Nyakyusa
Selya, Ma Ngonde

little older than herself, rather than at the formal admonition by her mothers, though a little is given then also.[1] She is especially warned to depilate herself regularly. 'If she is hairy her husband will complain to the mothers and they will beat her.' The maids listen to the instruction along with the bride, and since every girl keeps several of her immediate seniors company before she grows up herself, no young woman can be left in doubt as to her duties as a wife.

At the shaving of the sprouting hair the 'bull of puberty' (*ngombele jobusungu*) should be killed if the bride is found, on examination by her mothers and those of the groom, to be a virgin, or if the husband has told the women that he himself has deflowered her. Mwandi's complaint at the ceremony just described was that the groom's party had not brought the bull though his daughter was a virgin, and he insisted that the bride could not go to her husband until it had been provided.

At another puberty ritual which we attended, the bull was duly brought and, after examining the girl, the mothers announced her virginity with the cry of triumph (*ababale*), and shouted: 'It is ours, it is ours.' They rushed through the courtyard dancing and applauding. Before the examination the bull had been tied up near the mothers, and immediately the joyful announcement was made it was killed. The meat of this bull is divided between the bride's mothers, her father's kinsmen with whom he exchanges cattle, and his immediate neighbours. The ritual portion, the *ijumaga*, cut from the top of the right foreleg, is taken by her father to his ritual grove of bananas and there he prays, saying: 'You, so-and-so (naming his father), since I have eaten the food of others (non-relatives) may she flourish at her husband's.' Another informant's version of the prayer was: 'I am eating the bull for my daughter, may she bear children!' A third said: 'Here is the meat! I have eaten the food of others, come out a little, may she bear a child at her husband's!'

If the bride is not a virgin the bull is not killed. It must be returned. Informants repeatedly implied, in talking of the ritual, that everyone knew beforehand whether the bride was virgin or not. 'If she is not a virgin we only do a little ritual, there is but one

[1] Our informants maintained that clay images were not used as a medium of instruction, as among the Bemba, though Nyakyusa girls would stylized dolls out of clay almost identical with one shown for the Kisi in F. Fuhlhorn, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, Band IX, Atlas, plate no. 28, 30, 31, 32.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

287 sometimes long coats. They look well for a few weeks and then take on a dirty depressing appearance, and it is safe to say that with the reduction in price of Home goods bark-cloth will go out of favour.

281 [254] Leather work has not developed to any great extent. Women use undressed skins for carrying babies; and men, in remote districts, use them as aprons. In Poloto skins are sewn together to form garments, and in the Kings Mountains the skins worn by the women are pleasingly decorated with shells, while the leg skins are skilfully cut into strips and used as ties, by which to bind the skin on the back. They are seldom worn in front, and the Kings women go in furs as to their backs, while a small bunch of grass alone clothes the front. Shields, wide and narrow; blacksmith's bellows of undressed goat skin; tobacco and snuff pouches, waist belts, caps, sandals; and long strips of hide for binding purposes, such as the haft of a spear, are all or nearly all the uses that are made of leather, if indeed the term leather should be used at all, as most of the articles named are made from unprepared skins.

301 Beads are strung into pleasing patterns by using various colours, and are worn in strings or broad bands, on neck, forehead, arms, ankles, shoulders. [291] Children often go clad only in a tiny apron of beadwork, and girls in the Kinga Mountains wear similar aprons until marriage.

532 One European house in my neighbourhood is decorated with a frieze of crude representations of men on foot or on horseback, motor-cars, cycles, birds,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

animals, snakes, in astonishing variety, done in black or red on white ground by two native artists from Rungwe. Whether the ideas were supplied to them by the white man who owned the house, I cannot tell, but the execution is entirely native, and, although the total effect is weird rather than pleasing, it indicates possibilities which might be worth developing.

If housebuilding be included in arts and crafts, then the Konde people take a high place. There are at present some remarkably good houses at Karongs, of four, five, or six apartments, built on the European model, with properly made doors and windows; and there is, not far from Tukuyu, a house at present being built, with two storeys, T-shaped, the only materials used being the ordinary wood and clay. But the common Konde hut is a very high-class thing compared with the rude erections of tribes which have surpassed the Konde in other respects. Whether it be the older round type, or the newer square, there is a neatness and cleanliness in the Konde homestead that is sadly lacking in tribes that are wealthier, and more ambitious, but whose ambitions are only slowly reaching out towards improved dwellings.

9:Wilson E-S (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

and Tuvi who established conquest states to the north-west.[1] 773

Whatever the origin and adventures of the heroes they were important in Nyakyusa and Ngonde history because their graves became centres of religious ritual which linked together groups that were otherwise largely independent. The myths about them are the charter for chieftainship. They are depicted as benefactors who brought to uncivilized men not only the institution of chieftainship itself, but fire, cattle, iron, seed, and a creative power resident in their own bodies and those of their associated heirs. But the myths also justify the power of commoners who first occupied the country and who have witchcraft in their bellies:

773 [774] [778] [754]

The commoners whom Lwembe found here were extraordinary. They were cultivators, but they had not yet got fire, they ate their food raw. It was we chiefs, it was Lwembe, who brought fire and cattle—he came and found the original occupants without cattle; hence the commoners say, 'We are the earth'. Commoners are different from us physically, they are black; they are awe-inspiring, they are witches. Before you Europeans came the chiefs like Mwaipopo (116) were not awe-inspiring, they feared the commoners very much; the commoners hammered the chief with their fists—yes, by daylight. And if the chief cut a man's banana that man took the chief's. If the commoners were angry with Mwaipopo they fetched Mwangomo (104 whose chiefdom adjoins Mwaipopo's) at night by their witchcraft; he came in the night with his people and seized the cattle, both those of the chief, Mwaipopo, and those of the commoners. The next day the commoners said: 'It is we, we are angry. Why do you not look after us? Why do you not kill cattle for us?' Then Mwaipopo would kill two head of cattle and all the men in the country ate. . . . Mwaipopo and his equals were not awe-inspiring long ago, it is you Europeans who have created chieftainship and awe.

537 [777] [754] [643]

[1] cf. H. H. Curson and R. W. Thomson, 'A Contribution to the Study of African Native Cattle', *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Science and Animal Industry*, vol. 9 October 1936 (Government Printer, Pretoria). An analysis of the distribution and migration of breeds in Africa. [113]

H. B. Thompson and R. Scott, *Uganda* (1935), pp. 135 ff.

Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 68 / 69.

M. Merker, *Die Masai*, pp. 137 ff., 1904, Berlin.

H. H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, 1904, pp. 86, 103 (early photographs of Nyoro cattle).

The short-horn type predominates among the Nyakyusa, but some animals suggest an intermixture with Sanga cattle. The hump is regarded as a great delicacy and is exaggerated in the clay cattle which boys model. Cf. Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 72. The similarity between the ritual and symbolism of the Nyakyusa and those of the Ganda as described by Roscoe is marked. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, 1911. [231] [825] [532]

12: Stagnard E-5 (1955) 1962 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

342 ordinary or to a few some distance from the other houses of the village. They were never roughcast with mud).

Nearly all the dokoga had a gun-supported verandah. I measured up and drew sketches of two houses of this type, one belonging to the above-mentioned woman called Malia, whose husband lived near door to an iseng. She was a Christian—actually a church-elder. On the outside of her bamboo-framed, mud-roughcast wall, she had drawn a church in yellow, red, and black colours, and below she had written the word Isaiso (church). Apart from a house near Lake Nyasa, of which I took a photograph and which had very modernistic and drastic drawings on its outside wall (crocodiles, a man and his bicycle, a man with his firearm), it is the only instance in which I saw any kind of coloured decoration on a house. Besides impressed patterns in clay on hearth and floor, I saw no decorations on the inside or outside of houses, except fine patterns in the outside wickerwork of the wall.

342 In this house, approximately 8 metres long, there were two vertical supporting posts, reaching to the very ridge of the roof, where presumably they were joined to the ridge beam. However, the beam could not be seen.

354 The hearth was peculiar in that it consisted of two pairs of hearthstones near a clay base that surrounded a supporting post and a shorter post. Thus two hearths were available, at the same time serving as fire-proofing to the posts. Though Malia was a single woman, the house had two hearths. You might think that she had seen a stove and had found that two cooking places would be useful. I saw this arrangement in one more place, in the house of a widow, who—by the way—was also a Christian.

353 A space nearly half the size of the house was partitioned off, the half-wall having a doorway. This room was for storm only, clothes etc.; it had a barred window. Besides the hearths, the living-room had her's own, stools, baskets, [352] Malia's bed (2 m by 1 m), table, wooden shelves, boxes, and a chest. These last-mentioned objects she had had no difficulty in obtaining from the neighbouring [297] joiner's workshop belonging to the mission.

342 The other dokoga is from quite a different district, that of Rungwesa. It was a very long house, as often seen in this locality, 26 metres long. I was told that

The type of house called dokoga, or isiseng.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KaKwe

confusion and beans into his two hands and K. helped him to throw them into the pot. As he did so K. and N. both said for him: 'This is the ritual of my grandmother.' Then Sijele gave him the water calabash and K. helped him to pour, while the same words were said for him again. Sijele did the same for K. and his brother in turn. She began each time by putting powder and beans and pouring water into the pot, and then K. followed suit, and his brother after him. For K. she said: 'This is the ritual of my mother,' and he repeated: 'This is the ritual of my mother, Sanduni'; for the brother she said: 'This is the death of my mother,' and he repeated the same words. 764

The ritual was interrupted once or twice by discussion. The child's hands got burnt in throwing the beans into the pot and there was a pause for comment and comfort. When Sijele said for the child: 'This is the ritual of my wife,' N. said: 'Let him say "of my grandmother".' Neither of the young men was very serious, and each laughed as he finished his words.

We went quietly (by pre-arrangement) to a neighbour's homestead, stumbling in the darkness, and cut a stem of banana. We made a noise doing so but the householder stayed quiet. K's younger brother picked up the stem from the ground and ran off home with it, while the rest of us set up a hue and cry, following him at a run and calling: 'Thief, thief, he's stolen a banana stem!' Still the householder stayed quiet. This is the custom, the owners say nothing, it is the party of the 'thief' that pursue him. This stem, they told me, would be kept and used later.

So we entered the house again. Kalata had previously borrowed a [534] harp (*ilipango*) of four strings and asked a neighbour to come and play 764 it. The three principals, Sijele, and the player, stood up and began to 535 circle round the fire slowly, stepping rhythmically and saying: 'Good-bye, go to father! Good-bye, go to mother!' Sijele and N. had previously told them the words and the tune. The fire burned up brightly and flickered on the circling figures, the leader crouching to his harp, while the beans steamed in the pot. Sijele held a winnowing basket full of dry pods of oil-seeds (*isyembe*) in her hands. The three principals reached into the basket as they circled and crushed them in their fingers till the seeds fell out. Then N. called out: 'Now then, stamp the stamping dance (*ukukanya ingenye*)!' The harp-player stopped playing while the three principals stamped and stamped near the fire calling the war-cry as they did so. No words were spoken.

Two leaves were then placed on the ground, one sweet banana, one 764 plantain, on top of each other. Sijele and the three principals knelt 533 round them, and N. told them the words and the tune. Then these four beat the leaves as if they were hand drums, singing: 'The ritual of my father (*pala, pala*), the ritual of my mother: the ritual of Mwaijagila, Mwalibuti, Malambaiaga, Kisinile, Lambwe (these are the praise-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

533 764 names of their father); Sanambi, Mwilwa, Malubajegila (these are the praise-names of their mother). The next day they explained their song: 'It is to perform the ritual (*ukayulule*). They call it *ipulule* (i.e. the ritual) and they say that if they don't perform it the child will be like an idiot, he will run about naked and mad.' In all the songs Sijele acted as leader and the principals as chorus.

Then, finally, a grain basket was brought and turned upside down. Sijele and the principals beat on it with a new rhythm, but still syncopated, singing: 'The two ways of the parent! The two ways of the parent!' And so it finished.

764 I was told that the next morning early the three principals would eat the beans which had now been cooked, but that they must stay for a night first in the hut.

Kalata commenting later said: 'We Kukwe circle and dance the stamping dance, but we beat neither the ground nor the basket. Beating the basket is a Sangu custom.' Kalata is a Kukwe but his mother was a Sangu.[1] 'We Kukwe sing farewell and "*Ipula, ipula*", and we dance round to the harp; but we don't sing "the two ways of the parent" at all.'

November 7

I arrived at 8 a.m. to find that the beans had been eaten. 'We came out in the morning cold very early, we washed our hands and ate the beans. Then Sijele, who had slept the night with us, swept out the rubbish (*isinde*) with the bunch of medicine twigs.' When I arrived Kalata was finishing the sweeping outside with an ordinary broom.

November 16 *Record of Mwailombe*

764 342 They began by building a little hut on the pathway that goes through the bananas to the stream, near the house. The path went right through the hut, which was built only by the officiants, not by the others. After they had finished building they planted hearth-bricks inside and lit a fire; then, taking some dry oil-seeds and powdered medicine, they called out to summon those for whom the ritual was being performed. When they came into the hut the officiants gave powdered medicine and oil-seeds to the child who received them in both hands and poured them into a potsherd on the fire, saying as he did so: 'This is the death of my grandmother.' They gave them to the two young men likewise, who said: 'This is the death of my mother' (that is to say: 'This is the ritual of my mother'). And then the officiant took all the rest of the oil-seeds and put them in the potsherd to roast.

764 When the seeds were roasted the officiant ground them up and began to prepare ointment. Meanwhile the principals poured water into a

[1] Strictly the ritual should have been Kukwe since a wife follows the ritual of her husband.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

The festivities and display are most often linked, not to the Church ritual, but to the handing over of marriage cattle. Since the feasts of the puberty ritual are not celebrated, the Christians concentrate their energies on the ukukwa, when quantities of food are provided by the bride's family, and a crowd gathers to sing and dance. Then, some time after the cattle have been handed over, the bride is taken to her husband by a party of 'mothers' and friends, and a feast is provided by the groom. The pattern is very similar to that of the pagan handing over of marriage cattle (ukukwa) and bringing home the bride (ukukala), but new songs and dances replace the somewhat bawdy pagan ones, and the Christian youths, unlike the pagans, dance without spears. Often at a Christian wedding pagans also attend, and there are rival groups of dancers, pagans, and Christians, between whom quarrels readily flare up. And when the new songs and dances of the Christians are copied by the pagans, as they sometimes are, then the Christians drop them, for they wish to be different.

The traditional examination of the bride by the 'mothers' and the giving of a bull if she goes to her husband a virgin, are maintained in the Christian community. The bull is usually killed as a feast for the mothers 'to say thank you for nourishing her', but there is, of course, no offering of the sacred meat to the ancestors, and sometimes the bull is not killed at all, or the groom brings shillings instead. As so often happens, a former ritual survives as ceremonial, an observance felt to be specially appropriate to the occasion, but no longer regarded as a condition of health or salvation.

When she is taken to her husband the bride is exhorted by her 'mothers' on her duties as a married woman. The traditional emphasis on separation from her mother is still there: 'You have left your mother, your husband is your mother, we have separated. . . .' And she is exhorted to be chaste, to obey her husband and answer him submissively, to be clean and diligent in her work, to be hospitable, and above all, as a Christian, to feed 'those from a distance'. Here the contrast between pagan and Christian ethics is emphasized: a pagan wife is only obliged to cook for kinsmen and neighbours, not strangers, but for a Christian to let a stranger starve is spoken of as a mortal sin.

The annual festivals of the Church are not so closely parallel to pagan communal rituals, for they were developed in a northern and temperate climate with a rhythm very different from the

W Wilson E-3 (1924-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

Christians in Ngonde (e.g. *amajumaapi*) have been banned by the Kirk Sessions. The European-style dances, such as are sometimes organized by the educated men in centres like Karonga or Tukuyu, are not attended by these men's wives: respectable women avoid them. While we lived near Rungwe mission there was much discussion among the villagers over what recreations were permissible, and hot arguments between those who wished to permit beer drinking and dancing to Christians and those who wished to ban both. It is the Nyakyusa elders who are most puritan in their views—much more so than many of the missionaries who are very conscious of the need for recreation; indeed, the Livingstonia Presbytery once instructed all its Sessions to look into the matter. The chief outlet for young Christians is in ballads. A good singer is much admired and the composer may even sell his songs, with words and music written out. One of the former missionaries is honoured as the man who first taught the Nyakyusa to read music as well as to sing by ear.

In pagan thought moral obligations are limited to kinsmen and neighbours: they do not extend beyond the chiefdom except to those relatives who may live beyond its bounds. As we have shown, the common moral sanctions are the anger of senior relatives, and 'the breath of men', and these operate only within the lineage and age-village. But Christians have read the parable of the Good Samaritan and taken it to heart. Sermons stress this: 'If a Kinga comes and asks for a place to sleep the night and you refuse you are among the goats.' 'If a traveller from the coast asks for a place to sleep and you refuse, do you show love?' 'We tell a bride she should be hospitable to her neighbours if she can, but she must cook for those from a distance.' It is one of the points on which the Christians are most conscious of a difference between themselves and the pagans. And the exclusiveness of Europeans is one of the reasons why they are distinguished from Christians in the song on the title page of *Rituals of Kinship*. 'If all Europeans made friends with us (*akwangale*) like X and Y', we were told, 'the whole country would have been Christian long ago.'

Linked with the concern for strangers is the obligation to preach the Gospel to others—something constantly stressed in sermons, and finding expression both in preaching in the surrounding villages and in tours of more remote areas, often areas of another language. Such tours implied hardship in travelling and a

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F7417 Ngonde F7417
Nyakyusa

1. Sacrifice and dance round the epa pole

764
534
342
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[facing p. 20]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 Besides fighting, the dancers indulge in an orgy of destruction,
535 slashing at the bananas and *four* saplings (which surround the
721 swept courtyard) with their spears.

764 The dance was thus, traditionally, a common form for the ex-
535 pression by the dancers of a considerable range of emotions, vary-
152 ing from an intolerable burden of grief and fear to a recognition of and salute to the warlike quality of the dead men and a vivid consciousness of their own. And this last feeling passed easily into actual fighting.

764 To-day it is not so much into the excitements of warfare that
534 the feelings turn, but rather into those of love. Burial dances are
832 the occasions of much sexual display, of the beginning of some love affairs and the consummation of others, and this is nothing new. 'At a death people did not want war (though it came sometimes), they wanted love-making: they displayed the pride of their strength!' 'We speared one another . . . our wives called the war-cry when they saw the strength of their husbands.'

777 Dances of sexual display, on occasions other than burials, are
535 traditional among the Nyakyusa; but all our informants are
837 unanimous in declaring that both these other dances and the dances of burial are far more frequently followed by lovers' meetings than they used to be. For the enforcement of peace among the Nyakyusa has been accompanied by the prohibition of violence of any kind; and this has freed sexual passion from its rigid traditional bonds. Girls are married young and engaged younger; and
[611] while formerly any man who seduced or even flirted with another man's betrothed or wife was speared or tortured by the husband and his friends if they caught him, such punishments are now illegal and the present fine of cattle is a far less effective deterrent. 'In the old days love-making only went on in secret; if a man stood and talked to a woman he expected to be speared. But now the Europeans have introduced the custom of making love openly!' (i.e. by forbidding the previous penalties.)

764 For all the younger men and women, save the chief mourners
535 and close friends, the quality of the burial dance is now pre-
832 dominantly and openly sexual. But the older people are, on the one hand, more conscious of its warlike associations and, on the other hand, inclined to regard the whole occasion more soberly than their juniors. 'There are two reasons for coming to a burial: the old men come to mourn their friend, they say: "Let us go and mourn him"; but the young men say: "Let us follow the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

medicine and beans into his two hands and K. helped him to throw 764
them into the pot. As he did so K. and N. both said for him: 'This is the ritual of my grandmother.' Then Sijele gave him the water calabash and K. helped him to pour, while the same words were said for him again. Sijele did the same for K. and his brother in turn. She began each time by putting powder and beans and pouring water into the pot, and then K. followed suit, and his brother after him. For K. she said: 'This is the ritual of my mother,' and he repeated: 'This is the ritual of my mother, Sandumi'; for the brother she said: 'This is the death of my mother,' and he repeated the same words.

The ritual was interrupted once or twice by discussion. The child's hands got burnt in throwing the beans into the pot and there was a pause for comment and comfort. When Sijele said for the child: 'This is the ritual of my wife,' N. said: 'Let him say "of my grandmother".' Neither of the young men was very serious, and each laughed as he finished his words.

We went quietly (by pre-arrangement) to a neighbour's homestead, stumbling in the darkness, and cut a stem of banana. We made a noise doing so but the householder stayed quiet. K's younger brother picked up the stem from the ground and ran off home with it, while the rest of us set up a hue and cry, following him at a run and calling: 'Thief, thief, he's stolen a banana stem!' Still the householder stayed quiet. This is the custom, the owners say nothing, it is the party of the 'thief' that pursue him. This stem, they told me, would be kept and used later.

So we entered the house again. Kalata had previously borrowed a [534] harp (*ilipango*) of four strings and asked a neighbour to come and play 764
it. The three principals, Sijele, and the player, stood up and began to 535
circle round the fire slowly, stepping rhythmically and saying: 'Good-bye, go to father! Good-bye, go to mother!' Sijele and N. had previously told them the words and the tune. The fire burned up brightly and flickered on the circling figures, the leader crouching to his harp, while the beans steamed in the pot. Sijele held a winnowing basket full of dry pods of oil-seeds (*inyemba*) in her hands. The three principals reached into the basket as they circled and crushed them in their fingers till the seeds fell out. Then N. called out: 'Now then, stamp the stamping dance (*ukukanya inganya*)!' The harp-player stopped playing while the three principals stamped and stamped near the fire calling the war-cry as they did so. No words were spoken.

Two leaves were then placed on the ground, one sweet banana, one 764
plantain, on top of each other. Sijele and the three principals knelt 533
round them, and N. told them the words and the tune. Then these four beat the leaves as if they were hand drums, singing: 'The ritual of my father (*syeku, syeku*), the ritual of my mother: the ritual of Mwaijagila, Mwalibuti, Malambaiaga, Kisinile, Lambwe (these are the praise-

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

[frontispiece]

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AN ITINERANT ENTERTAINER.

He is dressed in skin and feather head-dress, armlets, skin kilt, and body rings, the number of which latter indicates his social position. He carries, as professional properties, a spear, a skin pack, rattles, horns, bells, and a stringed musical instrument.

[facing p. vii]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 dare not greet their children on their return without the safeguard
789 of protective medicines. At a celebration the Kinga priests took
751 medicines, 'powdered medicine which comes from Mwemusi and Mwakalukwa [the Kinga chiefs]', and smeared it on Lwembe's forehead and shoulders 'because the grove is great. If you entered it without this medicine you died'; they gave the Lwembe the medicine 'so that Kyala (*vide* pp. 17-18) might not kill him, that he might show respect and escape'.

783 Another medicine, *imbinga*, which is red in colour, was brought
789 from BuKinga to smear on the foreheads of the children of the Lwembe and Kissoule, the priest, when these two returned home after celebrating in the grove. Their senior wives 'would smear the *imbinga* on the children's foreheads, when they would turn round calling: "You hit us", and Mwakisiya (56) (the Lwembe) and Kissoule (the priest) would both reply: "No, I am innocent (*mwelu*)." The medicine was smeared on the children because Mwakisisya and his fellow thought: "How can we meet them, how can they look on our bodies, since we are taboo from the ritual." Yes, the words are the same as in the twin ritual, but the medicine is different.' During one of the rituals we attended, Mwakilima (111) begged the Kinga priests to bring him some of this medicine for the protection of his children.

778 The numinous quality of everything connected with Lubaga
789 can hardly be exaggerated; the Nyakyusa believe that it overcomes even curious Europeans. The most sacred and terrible object of all was the drum which was polished with blood, the blood of children, who, in Nyakyusa thought, had died for the people, that the country might live and be fertile. 'Formerly,
[782] when the Kinga came with a drum, they said: "Catch the child of a commoner, fat and strong, hide him in the drum." In the old days when the Kinga came beating their drum, ping . . . ping . . . [single strokes with long intervals] we of the country used to run away and women would hide their children for fear lest they be snatched up and put in the drum.'[1] The child was strangled

[534] [1] These statements were made by three different groups of informants independently. All had special knowledge of these matters. The *ilikole*, the sacred drum of the Kinga, differs in shape from the Nyakyusa *indingala*. It is made of *nkuju* wood and ox-hide and is beaten when a ritual is celebrated and to summon men to war. The Kinga do not dance to drums and the Nyakyusa did not do so formerly either, but after the Europeans arrived Nyakyusa chiefs began to buy *indingala* from outside BuNyakyusa, paying a bull for a set—'a mother drum and her children'. Only quite recently have Nyakyusa craftsmen learnt from a Henga immigrant to make *indingala*.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and its body taken to Lubaga and added to the 'medicine for fertility' (*unkata gwa ifuge*) which was sprinkled throughout the country, starting at Lubaga, proceeding to the other sacred groves, and then to the ordinary homesteads. Thus the terror of the grove had objective roots in the fact of human sacrifice, but it is rather a fear of the unknown and miraculous than of death itself; a fight involving casualties was not terrible in the same way as the grove and the throb of the sacred drum. 778 789 [782]

The Kinga priests travelled 'the road of Lwembe', down the escarpment of the Livingstone mountains from Mwakalukwa's country and across Selya, beating their drum. They stopped to sleep at the home of Kasitile the priest, and poured a libation of beer at 'the places where Lwembe had rested': Isumba, a hill overlooking Kasitile's homestead, Kituli in Mwaipopo's country, and near the homestead of the priest Munyoso.[1] 'He [Lwembe] used to shout on Isumba, the little hill here, then no one would cut the trees on the hill,' said Kasitile. 'It was one of his resting places; he used to come here to tell my grandfather to go and get a cow for Lubaga, and later to tell my father to do so. . . .' The beer is poured at the base of an *nkuju* tree (a variety of *ficus*) at Isumba, in the long grass in Kituli, and at the base of an *nkuju* near Munyoso's homestead. 'They pour [it] out here by the *nkuju*, they beat the drum to say: "We have come", then the people of Munyoso hide their children—that's of old.' Besides the drum the Kinga travelled with a kudu horn[2] (blown in battle in BuKinga) and a sacred drum and horn were lodged in the hut of the Lwembe's chief wife. Before they start the Kinga priests make an offering of millet flour and beer in one of their own groves,[3] and leave there overnight the beer and salt and hoes which they will take to the Lwembe, 'that the aba-Ngulube (9) may see them before they go to Lwembe'. 789 793 782 [778 534]

At Lubaga there were several places of prayer and offering: the trees planted at the installation of the last living Lwembe (*vide infra* pp. 54-5), the trees planted at the installation of a previous 778 782

[1] Probably grandson of 84 and representative of a junior lineage to which priestly functions had been delegated.

[2] *Ulutilimo* in Kinga, *ingenge bwite* in Nyakyusa. cf. plate 5*b*.

[3] Nyandala, a Kinga chief, and two priests took Godfrey Wilson to a sacrifice in one of their groves. The form of sacrifice is very similar to that among the Nyakyusa save that the meat-offering is placed in the fork of a tree. The priests had gone very early in the morning 'to tell Bululile (the dead chief) "Do not be angry, a European comes to greet you".'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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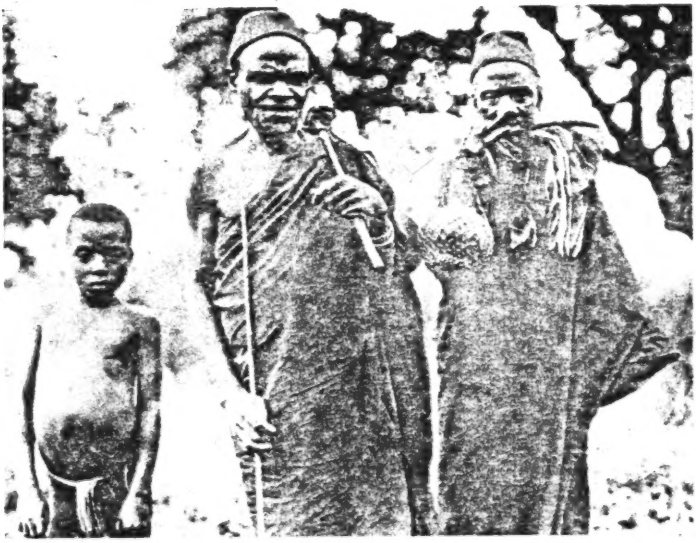

5*a*. PRIESTS OF LUBAGA (KINGA)

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5*b*. KINGA PRIESTS WITH HORN AND DRUM

[Facing p. 39]

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

881 and other duties applicable to a girl after marriage. The practical
867 instruction takes place in or before a special hut in the village under
868 the leadership of the *abanyago (avanyago)*. The girl is admonished by the *unnyago* to obey her parents without any delay, to perform the commands of her mother immediately, e. g. to clean the hut, and especially to show obedience when guests are present. Should the mother blame her daughter unjustly, she should not reply. (The girl had been blamed in the earlier discussion that she had not swept the hut when her mother required her to do it). Then her duties and
881 conduct towards her future husband were inculcated. As a wife she
867 must never accept anything from the hands of her husband without
543 kneeling and stretching out both hands, and turning away her face
562 with eyes cast down. Also as a wife she must not hold her head up

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Some of the drummers.

when she is addressed by a man. As a wife she must be anxious to prepare her husband's meal always at the right time, that means, it has to be ready when her husband returns from the field. If she sees her husband coming from the field, then she has to go to meet him, and take his hatchet from him. Should her husband scold her, she is
[356] not to reply; but she may ask her neighbours for help. It is one of her duties to take care of the regular cleaning of the hut[23]. The ashes must always be removed by her from the fireplace. If there are only a few ashes on the fireplace she must remove them with her hands[24].

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[23] The place near the house where the sweepings are thrown down is called *urutagililo*.

[24] Cf. *Mackenzie*, p. 51, who refers to such moral instructions connected with puberty customs, probably at Karonga; cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 359 (Nygonde plain).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

poraries, the men of the village. They are forbidden to enter her hut, and if she catches sight of one outside she turns away from him and shields her face with a mat. And at the end of the seclusion each 'village father', as well as her own father, must make her a small gift, before she will greet him. The co-wives and some of the village neighbours of the bride's mother form the group of 'mothers' who treat and instruct the bride, help to provide food for the feasts, and finally take her to her husband. Not all the village neighbours are expected to cook for the marriage feasts of a commoner's daughter, only immediate neighbours and special friends (together with relatives) who have been asked to do so; but if an immediate neighbour is not invited to help he will feel affronted. Twijulege explained that 'If the owner of the homestead overlooks someone who has built close to him, and does not say to him, "They are coming to bring the marriage-cattle for *your* child, please help us to cook", then that friend will be angry, and will think to himself, "Perhaps we are not on good terms (*tutikwangala kanunu*) though I had always thought we were", and he will say to the father of the bride: "Why did you not tell me that they were coming to bring the marriage-cattle for your child that I might help you with the food? I was startled by the rejoicing." ' An old man who had only called one friend, besides relatives and the 'best man', to help cook at the marriage of his daughter, was stigmatized as 'a surly fellow who does not care about being on good terms with people'.

The groom, on his part, is supported by his village-mates, who come in a crowd driving the marriage-cattle, and dancing the stamping marriage dance (*ukukanya nganya*). His mother, who has a share in the ritual and brings gifts of food, follows him, accompanied by some of her co-wives and village neighbours.

Village solidarity is thus exhibited at ceremonies, not only in the allocation of food, but by the manner in which village contemporaries of the same sex rally to each other's help, dance together and, if need be, fight together.

Besides offering sympathy and help when their fellow is in need, it is the duty of neighbours to give him advice, and persuade him to act wisely. If, for example, a man has delayed very long in providing marriage-cattle for his son, his neighbours take the son's part, and try to persuade him to give the cattle. 'Perhaps', said one informant, 'the son may elope with a girl, and

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

156 ments and fine clothes, or a splendid herd of cattle—all these are forms of *ukumoga*.

Traditionally Nyakyusa women wore only a bark-cloth belt 291 tied around the waist and drawn between the legs to fall in streamers in front (cf. Plate XIII), and the pagan women cling to 177 this dress, maintaining that it is only 'Swahili women with dirty diseases' who have to wear clothes to cover their sores, and if a pagan woman has a cloth she will probably wave it like a flag or hang it over one shoulder, when she dances. Except for the Christians, few Nyakyusa women regularly wear clothes. The Christians like a brightly coloured cloth tied under the armpits, and hanging to the knees (cf. Plate IX). Women make their own [287] bark-cloths with great care, and decorate them with geometrical patterns in red and black, the red dye being imported from the Livingstone mountains; they mix this same dye with a fatty [386] ointment made from the seeds of the *unsyunguti* tree, and rub it all over themselves. The most prized ornament (worn by both [301] sexes) are body rings of coiled brass or copper wire (cf. Plate XIII). In the past men went naked except for these body rings[1] but, unlike the women, they have taken enthusiastically to clothes, and swagger around in brilliant loin-cloths or flowing white togas; or, if rather more sophisticated, in freshly pressed shorts and shirts, or lounge suits and topees.

535 The series of ceremonies at a girl's initiation and marriage, and 156 at a funeral, are regular occasions for dancing, and the birth and death rates are so high that these occur very frequently within a chiefdom of 3,000 men. Once in a generation the eagerly anticipated 'coming out' ceremony offers an even greater opportunity for display. Skill in dancing is admired and the young people are encouraged to practise. A bride's mother does a great deal of the heavy work for her daughter, saying '*amoge tasi*', which means literally 'let her display herself first', and implies 'let her have a good time while she can'; and a father may use the same phrase of his son. Angombwike explained: 'The old men used to take 156 great pride in their sons; often a man would say to his son: "Don't 593 you hoe for me, I'll do the hoeing myself, you go and swagger about." Sometimes a man would sell a cow and buy a huge-bladed spear and give it to his son. Then, if he heard that his son

[1] cf. Elton, op. cit., p. 322; H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, p. 18.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

156 (*ukumoga*) is not confined to the company of contemporaries of the same sex. Indeed the liveliest dancing is before members of [535 584] the opposite sex, and is often the preliminary to love-making; but full opportunity for display is thought to depend upon living in a village, rather than in scattered homesteads. Some Nyakyusa are 166 colonists, cultivating and building out in unoccupied bush country five or six miles from a settled area; but living out in the bush 156 is disliked by most people and is done, we were told, only for gain. Cattle are said to increase very much more quickly out in bush, where grazing is plentiful, than they do on the village pastures, and the yield of virgin fields made in the bush is high. Hence the Nyakyusa dictum: 'People live in the villages for display, in the bush for gain.' And individuals commonly display themselves as members of a group—a group of contemporaries of the same sex, that is, of village-mates.

d. Decency

834 The basis of Nyakyusa sexual morality is the separation of the sexual activities of successive generations, more particularly the separation of the sexual activities of mothers and sons, and the complete segregation of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

Nyakyusa informants hold that boys are sent out of their parents' 834 village to build apart so that their parents may have privacy. 864 Mwaisumo explained: 'If a boy over ten years old stays at home to sleep, he is laughed at by his friends, and his own parents send him away. They say, "If he sleeps at home he will hear what his parents talk about at night"; the night is always full of lewd talk; and he may even see them undressing. He will grow up a fool, with little wisdom! You see at the boys' village', he went on to say, 'the older boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love-making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger ones listen to these things and that's all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn, but we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night; and that is very bad, that is foolishness. But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to listen, that is how children grow up.'

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1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

XIII. DISPLAY—THE *UKUMOGA* DANCE AT A MARRIAGE FEAST
A woman in the foreground is wearing the traditional brass body-rings

[Facing p. 130]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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XIV. A MEN'S *UKUMOGA* DANCE AT A FUNERAL

[facing p.131]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

2. THE 'COMING OUT' (*UBUSOKA*)

Mwaikambo (*clerk and son of a chief*).[1]

621 'The village headmen begin to talk among themselves, saying: "Our
622 sons have grown up, should we not establish them?" So they go to tell
643 the chief, saying: "Our sons have grown up, let us show them to the country." Two chiefs always "come out". We call them the senior and the junior. It is an old custom which is still followed that two chiefs should "come out".

[789] 'So the village headmen seek a doctor to make them a medicine horn and treat the tails of chieftainship with medicine. The village headmen take council together and choose two senior headmen to "come out" with the chiefs. These senior headmen drink medicine (*embondanya*) with the chiefs.

'When many people, together with the two young chiefs, have come together the doctor gives powdered medicine (*embondanya*) to the chiefs and the senior headman chosen for each chief. They give a spear of chieftainship, and a horn, and tail to each of the men chosen as senior headmen—one for each chief. Each senior headman then binds the horn to the blade of the spear, and standing with his own chief and many men and women, raises the spear to the sky. The women trill
[535] and each party goes to its place of "coming out" on the pasturage. Each chief, with his followers, goes to his own place. The men dance; sometimes they have drums, sometimes not.

[372] 'Then when each party has reached it own place they make fire with fire sticks. The chief just simulates the action of fire-making then his senior headman takes the sticks and makes fire by friction. When they have built the shelters for sleeping in they warm themselves at the fire they have made; they do not take fire from the houses of men. If there are many of them then there will be three or four shelters, if few, then only one shelter. The men and their chief who has "come out" sleep in these shelters and enjoy themselves together (*nukwangala*). The first day they kill two head of cattle. Also they plant "the tree of coming out" (*umpiki gwa busoka*) which is called *ulupando*. They plant it with a man who has come out previously, a man of their fathers' generation, he begins to plant, then he explains to them what to do, saying "plant", then the new senior headman plants it.

'While they sleep in these shelters with their cattle, they eat food which they take from their fathers, bananas, and milk, and other food.

[1] For a note on conspicuous informants see p. vi.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 the killing has a legal implication, for the death of a man involves
768 the transfer of his wives and property to another. If the inheritance is quite clear and disputes are unlikely, then a 'father' of the dead man tells the heir to kill the burial cattle. All the people present see him do this and know that he is the heir. And if the inheritance is, after all, denied him later, then the fact that he killed the cattle at his brother's (or father's) funeral gives him a strong *prima facie* claim to its recovery in the courts. If the inheritance is doubtful then a 'father' of the dead man kills the cattle. It is known that he himself cannot inherit and his killing of the cattle is an assertion of his authority to decide who shall do so.

643 When a man of the chief's lineage dies, a live cow is buried with
764 him and the more general custom of taking a cow or bull to look into the grave is interpreted as being 'like burying the cow'. The cattle used in this way must be of the lineage stock and are reserved for sacrifice.

764 All the cattle killed are thought to go with the shade to the land
775 of the dead (*abuke nasyo kubusyuka*) and it is believed that if he goes without any cattle he may be rejected by his kinsmen there. Tales are told of meeting dead men in the bush with their cattle which were killed for them. A cloth is a substitute for a cow and cloths which are buried likewise go with the dead. 'We will meet in the land of the shades and he will be wearing these cloths.' At one burial we saw, the dead man had left no cows of his own but his brothers killed two cows for him, three beasts were brought by affines, and sixteen cloths were brought by kinsmen, affines, and friends. 'Why', we asked, 'do you spend so much wealth at death?' 'Because, we say, as the owner has died let him take his wealth with him to the place of the shades. If he dies in lonely poverty he goes with nothing.' At another burial two beasts were brought by kinsmen, six by affines and one by a friend. There were thirty-two cloths, fifteen brought by kinsmen, twelve by affines, and five by friends. 'The bringing of cloths is to express sympathy (*kukuti ndaga*); we bury many of them with the corpse, and some we leave over, which we bind on as mourning belts (*amakiba*). Of old, people brought the cloth the Safwa weave, and brass body-rings. It means: "May our fellow go with them; may he swagger with them—with the cloth and body-rings (*ko kuti umwinetu abukege nafyo, a mogege nafyo*)." And we pour out food that he may take it with him.'

764 During the course of the war-dance (described below) the young

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

men cut down some of the bananas which surround the huts and the open place in front of them. 'The owner has died, it is a sign to men that someone has died there.' 'We do it so that it should not seem as if he was still alive; if the bananas were not cut but all stood they would cause us to remember that he was recently alive.' 'We wish the dead man to take them with him to the land of the shades.' And for exactly the same reasons some of the calabashes and pots of a dead woman are broken at her burial, and saplings of the *ficus* used for making bark-cloth are cut down. We have seen older men get up and check the dancers from destroying too many bananas. They told us that 'in the old days we used to cut down all the bananas of a dead man and any crops that were growing near the house also; but now we think that if we destroy all the food his children will die of hunger! So we just cut down a few bananas.' This destruction of food is connected with the belief that a man, when he dies, takes the fertility of the land with him, and this loss of fertility can only be avoided by the proper performance of the funeral ritual. The present moderation of the ritual destruction of food is, we think, an index of the decline of the power of the old belief; for the fear of future hunger, which now restrains them, used to encourage them to a greater sacrifice.

764 [535] [177]

(*d*) *The wailing and dancing*

From the time of the death until the end of the three or four days of the burial rites, wailing continues intermittently. 'We weep because we grieve and tremble with fear.' The old women are the most persistent, next come the men and boys. 'The women weep all the time; even at night they only sleep a little, weeping and sleeping and then weeping again! But we men weep just once, when we first arrive, we do not go on and on.' The chief mourners (*abenemfwa*: lit. owners of the death) among the women, that is the mother, stepmothers, wives, sisters, daughters, and brothers' wives, spend most of the time inside one of the huts, which is the centre of the wailing. The other women spend some time inside the hut, wailing with the chief mourners, but then they move to make way for others and sit just outside. On the plain and in Selya they sit packed close together and sway rhythmically as they wail in chorus, following a leader who stands in their midst. Tears roll down her face as she chants short phrases ending in the high-pitched wail: 'Alas father! Alas! Aaaaaaaaaaa! Farewell! Go So-and-so, farewell . . . we long for you, Father, farewell!' In the

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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

dead man'. Sometimes, immediately after the burial, the chief mourners, both men and women, wail outside near the newly-filled grave. 764

Very many of the women relatives, a few of the men relatives, and some of the neighbours smear their heads and faces with mud or pot-black as a sign of grief (*kyo kesa*). Such an expression of grief is thought extravagant by the Christians who have themselves abandoned the custom. One Christian explained: 'The pagans smear themselves with mud because they tremble with fear at a death—but we do not tremble; the pagans are very sorrowful because they say: "Our friend has vanished from our eyes and we shall never meet him happily again."' 764 177

It is also the custom for the women relatives to bind one another's bellies with strips of bark-cloth, and for their woman friends to bind them also. These bark-cloth belts are called *amakiba* and symbolize the fearful grief and mutual sympathy of the mourners, and the sympathy of their friends. One women, who was taking two belts to tie up the bellies of two mourning friends whose husband had died, explained: 'I give them these to tie round their bellies because they are all a-tremble, they are full of fear.' And when she was asked why men did not thus support one another, she replied: 'They are not afraid like women, they do not tremble much.' But there is evidence that, before the coming of the Europeans, men also wore *amakiba* 'and even now if a chief dies his men often wear *amakiba* for one day'. The Christian women have kept the custom, but they emphasize more the aspect of sympathy and less that of fear. 'If a woman wears many belts at a burial that means she has many friends; her passionate grief is comforted by their friendship.' 292 764 [177] [572]

Sometimes on the first day, and usually on the last two or three days of a burial, there is dancing as well as wailing. Dancing begins late in the morning to the accompaniment of three or four drums, in the swept courtyard of the dead man's homestead; gradually it attracts more and more dancers, more and more of the attention of the onlookers, until the wailing is confined to the chief women mourners inside the hut, and the dance is the most conspicuous part of the proceedings. It is led by young men dressed in a special costume of ankle-bells and cloth skirts and, traditionally, bedaubed with red and white clay. All hold spears and leap wildly about, stamping down the soft earth of the grave as they dance. There is little common movement, each dances 535 764 [292] [302]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 alone as if fighting a single combat. Among the men some of the
535 women move about, singly or in twos and threes, calling the war-cry and swinging their hips in a kind of rhythmical walk. Under a tropical sun in a damp heat, with the thermometer often over 90° F. in the shade, they dance for hours. In the dust and noise and excitement there are no very apparent signs of grief; and yet if you ask the onlookers what it is all about they reply: 'They are mourning the dead.'

764 This burial dance is traditionally a dance of war; now, as also
535 in former times, it provides those men who are most affected by
721 grief and fear with a violent and passionate means of expres-
177 sion, in which their feelings are assuaged by the touch of life; for the others it was, in the old days, an assertion of their own and their dead neighbour's warlike quality, and this significance is still vividly present to their minds; but, after a generation and more of peace, its content is changing and the sexual element, always present in it, is rapidly dominating the old memories.

764 'This war-dance (*ukukina*)', said an old man, 'is mourning, we
535 are mourning the dead man. We dance because there is war in
721 our hearts. A passion of grief and fear exasperates us (*ilyojo likutusila*).' Since this statement is the clue to both the present and the traditional meaning of the war-dance for the chief mourners, we must examine the language carefully. *Ilyojo* means a passion of grief, anger or fear; *ukusila* means to annoy or exasperate beyond endurance. In explaining *ukusila* one man put it like this: 'If a man continually insults me then he exasperates me (*ikusila*) so that I want to fight him.' Death is a fearful and grievous event that exasperates those men nearly concerned and makes them want to fight. The chief mourners and personal friends among the women assuage their feelings in the wailing, among the men in the war-dance. 'A kinsman, when he dances, assuages his passionate grief (*ilyojo*); he goes into the house to weep and then he comes out and dances the war-dance; his passionate grief is made tolerable in the dance (lit. he is able to endure it there, in the dance), it bound his heart and the dance assuages it.'

This exasperated and fearful grief was linked in traditional expression with a general salute to the warlike quality of man. Those of old said: 'The dead man was a lively dancer in battle, and now he is dead we dance for him, he too was a fighting dancer!' 'He was a warrior (lit. a man of the spear), we dance now, as he danced himself, the dance of war.' And this salute at the same time gave

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

to the dancers a heightened sense of their own warlike quality: 764
'We used not actually to fight at burials so much as to dance and 535
become conscious of our strength for future wars against other 721
chiefdoms, when, on another day, we would go to raid their cows.'

But although an actual fight was not a necessary part of the 578
funeral it very frequently occurred; and burials are still one of 764
the most usual occasions of spearing. 'In the old days, before the 721
country was at peace, we men often fought at burials; we ran in 535
front spearing one another, while our wives ran behind calling the
war-cry and watching the prowess of their husbands.' So far from
rituals having the sole function of promoting social integration, as [182]
some would have us believe, the burial rites of the Nyakyusa were
occasions on which existing antipathies continually found overt
expression in fighting and new antipathies arose; but the quarrels
were not within the mourning lineage.

The fights normally followed the lines of division between chiefdom and chiefdom, village and village. Kinship and affinity have always for some men extended beyond the single chiefdom; and to the burials of these people, if they are in any way eminent, the young men of other chiefdoms often come to dance. And while today, with a well-established tradition of peace, there are fewer smouldering enmities between chiefdoms, forty or fifty years ago it was scarcely possible for the young men of two chiefs to meet peaceably; cattle-raids, abductions of women, defeats and victories in battle were too hot in the memory. Sometimes an accidental jostling, sometimes a deliberate insult was the occasion for a running fight.

At burials there was often war. If the men of two chiefdoms were there together at a burial they would quarrel and fight. Sometimes the fight began when one hurled his spear into the ground and then pulled it up so as to pitch earth on to another man. Perhaps there would be only a few men dancing at first and many sitting down; but when a neighbouring chief was heard coming with his men, and the sound of the trumpet and flute[1] came to us, then we said: 'If we sit still they will say there were no men but only women at that burial, let us dance too!' So we would get up and dance, and then if the others did anything there would be war.

And fights sometimes occurred between two villages of the same chief.

[1] The trumpet of horn and the bamboo flute which used to accompany the war-dance. They are now seldom heard; drums have superseded them.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 Besides fighting, the dancers indulge in an orgy of destruction,
535 slashing at the bananas and *ficus* saplings (which surround the
721 swept courtyard) with their spears.

764 The dance was thus, traditionally, a common form for the ex-
535 pression by the dancers of a considerable range of emotions, vary-
152 ing from an intolerable burden of grief and fear to a recognition of and salute to the warlike quality of the dead man and a vivid consciousness of their own. And this last feeling passed easily into actual fighting.

764 To-day it is not so much into the excitements of warfare that
534 the feelings turn, but rather into those of love. Burial dances are
832 the occasions of much sexual display, of the beginning of some love affairs and the consummation of others, and this is nothing new. 'At a death people did not want war (though it came sometimes), they wanted love-making: they displayed the pride of their strength!' 'We speared one another . . . our wives called the war-cry when they saw the strength of their husbands.'

177 Dances of sexual display, on occasions other than burials, are
535 traditional among the Nyakyusa; but all our informants are
837 unanimous in declaring that both these other dances and the dances of burial are far more frequently followed by lovers' meetings than they used to be. For the enforcement of peace among the Nyakyusa has been accompanied by the prohibition of violence of any kind; and this has freed sexual passion from its rigid tradi-
[684] tional bonds. Girls are married young and engaged younger; and while formerly any man who seduced or even flirted with another man's betrothed or wife was speared or tortured by the husband and his friends if they caught him, such punishments are now illegal and the present fine of cattle is a far less effective deterrent. 'In the old days love-making only went on in secret; if a man stood and talked to a woman he expected to be speared. But now the Europeans have introduced the custom of making love openly!' (i.e. by forbidding the previous penalties.)

764 For all the younger men and women, save the chief mourners
535 and close friends, the quality of the burial dance is now pre-
832 dominantly and openly sexual. But the older people are, on the one hand, more conscious of its warlike associations and, on the other hand, inclined to regard the whole occasion more soberly than their juniors. 'There are two reasons for coming to a burial: the old men come to mourn their friend, they say: "Let us go and mourn him"; but the young men say: "Let us follow the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tradition of the leaping dance and show ourselves to the girls!" 764
And so it is with the women, some of the young women do not 535
come to mourn but to call the war-cry to the boys! Those who 832
come to mourn go into the hut and weep and weep. The young men say that they dance by reason of the women. The old men say that in the past it was different, it was war; the women ran behind the fighters watching the battle and calling the war-cry. And we all say that the present custom of dancing is the softer custom of a peaceful land.'

As the old significance of the dance to the majority of the participants was a lively salute to the dead man's fighting quality and a heightened sense of their own, so now it is his sexual quality which they honour and their own which they enjoy. 'Why', we asked a young man, 'do you dance nowadays at burials? There is little or no warfare and the dead man was never a fighter!' His answer came almost in the traditional form of words: 'We think that he too danced before the women, he was a brave dancer (*mogi*), and so we too dance (*ukukina*) at his death.'

'He too was a brave dancer (*mogi*).' The word *mogi* is from the 535
verb *ukumoga* which refers to the ordinary dances of sexual display 764
in contrast to the war-dance (*ukukina*). It is the war-dance which 721
is still normally danced at death. Not only, however, is its signi- 832
ficance being assimilated to that of the ordinary dances of recre- 177
ation, as this quotation clearly shows, but these other dances are now often performed at burials. Near Rungwe Mission the pagans dance the war-dance on the first day of a burial and sometimes on the second day as well, but always on the third day the dance is changed. The men abandon cloth skirts, spears, and ankle-bells [292]
and put on their best clothes, an ample white toga being particularly fashionable; the women adorn themselves with great care and some put roses in their hair. The dance is no longer a wild mêlée, but is slow and graceful; and its sexual significance is now apparent, not only in the faces of the dancers and the comments of the bystanders, but also in the forms of movement.

This custom is new. None of the chief mourners takes part in the 535
dance, though they watch it. In the war-dance, however, the chief 764
mourners among the men are expected to participate, and some 721
of them always do so. 'The (men) relatives dance if they have 177
strength, they weep first and then dance. For if they all sit still and no one of them dances we others say that they have not mourned him properly.' But they do not all dance. One old man whose

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

535 764 721 177 brother had just been buried said: 'Those who are really sad sit quite still and silent.' But he was an old man with little strength for dancing; on the first day of his brother's burial he sat still, but on the second day he danced a little.

As for the women who participate in the war-dance, running about among the men and calling the war-cry, their behaviour is clearly distinguished in accordance with their relationship to the dead man. 'The distant (women) relatives dance in their dirt, they cannot adorn themselves much, but non-relatives adorn themselves. The wives and sisters of a dead man and the nearer women relatives are the chief mourners and they cannot dance at the burial. They are truly grieved. If a wife danced we'd say she did not love her husband—well, perhaps she might wander round distraught to the sound of the drums, but with grief on her face and without looking at the young men! If she looked at the young men we'd say she did not love her husband. If a brother's wife danced we should laugh at her and say she was no kinswoman of the dead man! But for a man it is different, he dances with his grief to enable his heart to bear it. In the old days, if there was a fight, the chief women mourners did not follow and call the war-cry, but the others; all the men went to fight but not all the women to watch.'

535 764 177 832 727 Our observation shows that there is just as much dancing at the burials of women as at those of men. Here too the dance, as now performed, combines the two functions: assuaging the fearful grief of some people and providing a sexual display in honour of the dead: 'We dance at her burial, for she too was a brave dancer (*mogi*).' But in the old days also there was dancing at women's burials: 'For a woman', one old man explained, 'bears us men, so that she too is a warrior.' 'In the past,' said another old man, 'we did dance at women's burials, only a little, not so much as at men's; we said that she was only a woman, but that none the less she also was concerned in war.'

The change in the quality of the burial dance is one of emphasis only; in the past also the sexual element was present: 'We danced so that the women should see our strength'—but it was not dominant. And the warlike quality which was then dominant has by no means disappeared; we heard of many spear-fights at burial dances. At one of them the chief, in order to prevent its continuance, made the dancers abandon the war-dance and finish the funeral with the ordinary dances of sexual display.

781 764 The emotional quality of mourning (*ukulila*) is different in

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

781 man; but all kinsmen and affines fear contagion, and the family
764 fear spiritual afflictions as well.

[811] These fears are dealt with in two ways: fear is an immediate state of feeling which the Nyakyusa, on this occasion, express and make tolerable in the wailing, the dancing, and so on; but their terror is also rationalized[1] as a fear of certain specific events proceeding from religious causes, and thus is pacified by various ritual actions which are believed effectively to prevent those happenings. The killing of cows, the washing with magical plants, the subsequent ritual of protection—all these are designed to check the occurrence of fearful events.

781 But still the fear, as an actual state of feeling at the time of a
764 death, has to be expressed in some tolerable form. Its expression
721 in the wailing associated with grief is already clear; and it is also
● 535 proved that the war-dance is, for the men most affected, both an expression and an alleviation of their terrified grief: 'There is war in our hearts—a passion of fear and grief exasperates us—it is made tolerable in the dance.'

781 It is the attitude of the chief mourners that is the clue to the
764 whole ritual; and the contrast between terrified wailing and lively dancing, which seems very strange at first to a European observer, is explained by it. The fear and sorrow of death are only emotionally tolerable if their expression is followed by, or combined with, an assertion of life. This is certainly true of the Nyakyusa, and possibly it is universally true. Having no confident expectation of happiness in a future life, these pagan Africans turn at burial to a realization of present life in its most intense quality, to the war-dance, to sexual display, to lively talk, and to the eating of great quantities of meat.

And to this emotional reaction of the chief mourners the sympathetic vivacity of other people is essential. The Nyakyusa were astonished to hear of the sobriety of an English funeral: 'We talk and dance to comfort the relatives. If we others sat sad and glum, then the grief of the relatives would far exceed ours. If we just sorrowed what depths of grief would they not reach? And so we sit and talk and laugh and dance until the relatives laugh too.' And they were even more surprised at the suggestion that anyone might wish for privacy. 'We are quite different: we keep people company, when a relative has died, to cheer them. I am com-

[1] The word 'rationalize' properly implies neither truth nor falsehood of thought, but simply the fact of its existence.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

One of the half-sisters, meanwhile, rolls over and over in the fresh earth 764
of the grave in passionate contortions, with the tears running down her 781
cheeks. Gradually a group of women relatives collects on the grave, eight or nine of them; they sit huddled up together with their arms on one another's shoulders wailing. One woman, before she sits down, makes a series of trembling gestures towards the grave, crying out 'Avaunt!' in fearful grief.

Then, at last, the drums begin in earnest and the young men start to 764
dance. The insistent vital rhythm of the drums contrasts sharply with 535
the grief and despair of the wailing. The situation begins to change. Still in the house the wailing is loud and continuous, but the women on the grave give place to the dancers and return to the house, while the group of women outside gradually ceases wailing and turns all its attention to the dance. The conversation among the men changes also, none are silent now and the talk is more eager than before. Soon the dancers begin to cut the bananas; one stem falls full on a young man's head, causing loud laughter among the onlookers. But at first the dance, though always lively, is by no means wholly gay. The male kinsmen dance with grief in their looks, calling out 'Alas!' as each shakes his spear.

No women are yet dancing at all; two or three kinswomen wander about distraught, and one of the half-sisters in particular seems quite blind to the dancers, who have to get out of her way. The situation is, however, a lively one, and it becomes livelier still as the young men from another village come to join in, bringing three more drums with them. Six drums are now being beaten and about thirty young men are dancing. Two hours have passed since I first arrived.

At 4.30 p.m. I am back again to find the scene changed once more. There is no sound of wailing, not even inside the house. About a hundred men are either dancing or standing round looking on, with a number of girls walking rhythmically about among the dancers. These girls are non-relatives and adorned with great finish.

The young men leap and dance, some with more agility than others; 764
they stamp, roll on the ground, leap in the air, turn somersaults, hurl 535
their spears into the earth and fight invisible enemies. All the spectators, 781
save the chief women mourners and one or two of the men, seem lively and excited. I see the young wife of the dead man looking tired and sad, and she and the other women chief mourners spend most of the time in the house; but one of the half-brothers, on the other hand, who appeared to be so greatly affected seven or eight hours before, is laughing gaily as he dances.

Two cows have been killed and are now being cut up. As the sun 764
sinks and the dancers go away home, taking their meat with them, the relatives and near neighbours gather round fires and begin to roast and eat the meat. Some is given separately to the groups of friends from

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

881 584 One of the women of the groom's party then fetched two banana leaves, one of sweet banana and one of plantain, and put them down in Kyobwe's hut. Meantime the mother of the groom changed the bride's belt and the bark-cloth worn between the legs, dressing her in new ones, and burying the old cloth, soiled by first menstruation, in a bundle of dry banana leaves. These she placed on top of the fresh leaves already mentioned, covered the pile with a small rough mat, and sprinkled it with powdered medicine. The bride knelt on the mat and, with head bent, ate roast bananas also sprinkled with the powdered medicine, which her mother-in-law handed to her. Her young brother who had washed with her also shared the bananas. After this the bride is free to wash, but not yet to oil herself.

The groom's mothers were feasted on meat and bananas—two large and two small basketfuls—and returned home. The atmosphere all through the ritual was one of rejoicing, and it was markedly a women's affair. The chief and several other men were present but, apart from his scolding of the women for not bringing a bull, the chief played no part at all.

[431] According to strict custom the groom's mothers should have come a second time with gifts of food (*ukusumbulela*)[1] to cement the friendship, but since the groom was in a hurry to get to work on the Lupa gold-fields this act was omitted. 'They brought the two lots of food together,' we were told, 'some of the milk and bananas were for the *ukwingesia* and some for the *ukusumbulela*.'

583 ●535 Three weeks later (June 14) the groom, with his go-between and other friends, brought the main body of marriage-cattle (*ukukwa*), and they danced the stamping dance (*ukukanya nganya*) in the bride's father's courtyard and on the litter of the seclusion hut, brandishing their spears as they stamped to the war rhythm. The bride's companions and mothers danced in a separate group, one mother carrying the bride on her shoulders. A lavish feast of cooked food was set before the groom and his friends, and they in their turn scattered pieces of meat and cents which the bride's [578] maids and 'mothers' scrambled for. Meantime a quarrel broke out between the bride's father and her brothers over the distribution of the marriage-cattle.

881 584 Six weeks after the *ukwingesia* (July 29) the bride, accompanied by two of her father's wives, two of her maids, and a third girl invited because she was a good singer, went to wash ritually again

[1] *Ukusumbulela*: to give a present for the first time to a new friend.

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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

6. *The groomsmen dance the stamping dance*

[facing p. 101]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

medicine and beans into his two hands and K. helped him to throw 764
them into the pot. As he did so K. and N. both said for him: 'This is the ritual of my grandmother.' Then Sijele gave him the water calabash and K. helped him to pour, while the same words were said for him again. Sijele did the same for K. and his brother in turn. She began each time by putting powder and beans and pouring water into the pot, and then K. followed suit, and his brother after him. For K. she said: 'This is the ritual of my mother,' and he repeated: 'This is the ritual of my mother, Sandumi'; for the brother she said: 'This is the death of my mother,' and he repeated the same words.

The ritual was interrupted once or twice by discussion. The child's hands got burnt in throwing the beans into the pot and there was a pause for comment and comfort. When Sijele said for the child: 'This is the ritual of my wife,' N. said: 'Let him say "of my grandmother".' Neither of the young men was very serious, and each laughed as he finished his words.

We went quietly (by pre-arrangement) to a neighbour's homestead, stumbling in the darkness, and cut a stem of banana. We made a noise doing so but the householder stayed quiet. K's younger brother picked up the stem from the ground and ran off home with it, while the rest of us set up a hue and cry, following him at a run and calling: 'Thief, thief, he's stolen a banana stem!' Still the householder stayed quiet. This is the custom, the owners say nothing, it is the party of the 'thief' that pursue him. This stem, they told me, would be kept and used later.

So we entered the house again. Kalata had previously borrowed a [534]
harp (*ilipango*) of four strings and asked a neighbour to come and play 764
it. The three principals, Sijele, and the player, stood up and began to 535
circle round the fire slowly, stepping rhythmically and saying: 'Good-bye, go to father! Good-bye, go to mother!' Sijele and N. had previously told them the words and the tune. The fire burned up brightly and flickered on the circling figures, the leader crouching to his harp, while the beans steamed in the pot. Sijele held a winnowing basket full of dry pods of oil-seeds (*inyemba*) in her hands. The three principals reached into the basket as they circled and crushed them in their fingers till the seeds fell out. Then N. called out: 'Now then, stamp the stamping dance (*ukukanya inganya*)!' The harp-player stopped playing while the three principals stamped and stamped near the fire calling the war-cry as they did so. No words were spoken.

Two leaves were then placed on the ground, one sweet banana, one 764
plantain, on top of each other. Sijele and the three principals knelt 533
round them, and N. told them the words and the tune. Then these four beat the leaves as if they were hand drums, singing: 'The ritual of my father (*syeku, syeku*), the ritual of my mother: the ritual of Mwaijagila, Mwalibuti, Malambaiaga, Kisinile, Lambwe (these are the praise-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

though there are no cattle they carry him thus.' The corpse was then 764
taken to be washed. 'We do not examine him; yesterday's corpse we 184
did indeed examine but not this one. He was a senior, a chief,' said his
son, and Kakuju confirmed it. 'We do not examine him. We refuse
because he was a senior person.' More cattle appeared—'those of his [643]
son at Masoko'. 'It is the custom,' I was told. 'All the cattle come to
mourn. These are the cattle of Mwansasu, the first lot were Mbembela's own. Most (or all of them) were kept by Mwaipungu, the eldest son.'

The drums began again and dancing recommenced. The drums had
been warmed up by a fire. About 200 women and 100 men were [535]
present.

Mbasuke, father-in-law of Mwansasu, brought a heifer calf. Three cows were killed, two after the burial, all belonging to Mbembela and his sons. The heads of the cows killed point towards Sangu country. There was a dispute about one of these cows. They had killed one already which had come for the marriage of a daughter of the family, and they had taken another from the same son-in-law. There was objection, some saying: 'No, we should take one which came from another son-in-law.' All the cattle of Mwansasu and of the deceased were driven through the homestead together, a herd of twenty or so. Then they were gathered at the side, facing the grave. The corpse was carried out to the side of the grave. The chief mourners stood holding the corpse and all the men and women stood up to watch. The noise of wailing was terrific. A son seemed entirely to have lost control. 'Alas Father! Alas Father!' he cried, his body trembling and sweating, the tears running down his face, his hand pointing, shaking, towards the corpse and the grave. A friend was wailing, holding his head with his hands: 'My friend, my friend!' The corpse was laid down by the women and wrapped in more cloths. This took about half an hour. Still we stood and watched while the women began to sit down. Two men (Mwaisalwa III and a half-brother) and one woman (his widow) got into the grave—a tight fit. The corpse was buried with a new pot (a small one, used for serving food), several calabashes including a calabash cup, and a calabash of beer. Some of the beer was taken out just beforehand and left above ground. 'That means he should not go with all our fertility.' A huge calabash had been smashed before this by a son, in an ecstasy of grief. Now another was brought but it was decided not to bury it.

Kititu explained about the beer: 'Always, when a person has drunk beer during his illness before his death, the remains are buried with him. If he has not drunk beer during his illness none is sought.'

No door was available so a cloth was fixed across the opening of the cave. The women got out of the grave while the men remained in to stamp down the earth. Many people threw handfuls of earth.

764 and sniffed at the grave. When this son-in-law arrived, the chief women mourners got up from under the tree and went with him into the hut to wail. They came out all wailing. The women under the tree were wailing all the time with a leader standing up in the middle. But the wailing was drowned by the drums of which there were three sets.

764 Three young men were got up with white clay spots and some had
●535 bells on their ankles and loin-cloths. They held spears, and danced and
302 leapt wildly. 'What', I asked Kasitile, 'is the meaning of the white clay?'

KASITILE: It is war paint. During war we painted ourselves with white clay formerly. Then if I saw one with white clay I did not spear him. It was my comrade. But he whom I saw without it was an enemy and I speared him. It was the sign.

725 QUESTION: But did the other side not use it?

KASITILE: We took them by surprise.

Mwanyoso came to visit me in the evening.

764 QUESTION: And what steps are they taking about Katsaya's death
789 from sorcery?

MWANYOSO: They sought the doctor, Mwangolombe, for the burial yesterday. He pounded a medicine and burnt it on the grave. Then they buried the dead man and danced on the grave. That means they destroyed the sorcery. The dead man should take it away with him.

QUESTION: And has the doctor given them medicines to drink?

MWANYOSO: He has not yet done so. They will fetch him again to cook the medicine at the home.

QUESTION: What about the payment?

759 MWANYOSO: For yesterday they did not pay anything, now, but when they have fetched him to their home, then they will pay some shillings. But if many people have died, then they fetch a famous doctor such as Mwakionde. Then he comes with all the protective medicines (*amapingo*) and treats them. Then such a doctor gets a cow. The famous doctors in this country are Mwakionde and Kapuguso and Mwakanyamale.

787 QUESTION: Will they consult an oracle?

MWANYOSO: Why should they consult an oracle? They know what it is. It is the sorcery of their brothers!

754 QUESTION: But it might be the sorcery of another. Some say of Mwaihojo (the chief).

MWANYOSO: They are liars. See, Katasya had just come from his brothers. He got the illness at their place. It is they. If it was from Mwaihojo and his people, they would have speared him by night. We would have found wounds and much blood, but we did not find them.

QUESTION: He came from his brothers?

MWANYOSO: Yes, there was a ritual because their father, Mwaikilaja, had died. Their senior brother inherited and he also died. Katasya

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

241 sheer hard work makes men and women look thin and
512 haggard. Work stops about noon; the women go home to attend to the food, the men to see to the cattle which the smaller boys have been looking after
231 during the day. The milking is always done by the
512 men; it is not women's work as with us. If there are
[462] flies about, and there usually are, the cows need no invitation to thrust their heads into the column of acrid smoke that arises from a dung fire, kindled for the purpose. The rest of the afternoon is filled either with small duties, basket mending, net work, some slight repairs to a canoe, rope making, house repairing; or it may be there is a lawsuit to be settled, and every idler will make a point of being present.

512 By the time food is over, night has closed in. If
[576] the night is dark, one after another slips away with a friendly "May you sleep well," and silence reigns until morning. Unless it is suddenly broken by the roar of a lion or the growl of a leopard; and then the young men, who sleep with the cattle, rush out with spears and clubs and wild shouting to drive off the intruder, while the others raise a weird cry within the houses. Should the lion take refuge in a thicket and refuse to be driven off, a small party may slip round to the nearest white man, if he is not too far away, to beg him either to lend them a rifle, or to
512 come himself to their aid. In the warm moonlight
535 nights, however, other noises fill the ear. The young people gather for a dance, and the drum fills the night air with its interminable tum tum tum, now soft and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

512 low, again rising to a perfect fury of rapid sounds,
535 not without a certain rhythm, but with rasping effect upon the nerves of Europeans tossing sleeplessly in the warm humid air.

[221] After harvest comes the house-building; and when
484 that is finished the men are free to go out to seek
464 work. They usually set out in companies, for the Konde dislikes being alone on a journey. Like all
[609] home-loving people, they are suspicious of strangers, and if they have to pass through another tribe, they take great care to guard their small possessions; seldom more than they are wearing, and a spear or a club to guard them from the more obvious dangers of the way. There will be a few youths going out for the first time, with a wild flutter at the heart, of fear and expectancy. Fear, for they have heard strange tales of the white men and their ways; expectancy, because of the wonderful things they will see: the great houses, steamers, trains, motors; and what must seem countless white men to those who have been accustomed only to the missionary, the magistrate, and the storekeeper, and even these perhaps some days' journey from home. And who knows but he will come back with money in his pocket, wearing gorgeous raiment, a helmet perhaps, and, above all other things to be desired, a pair of boots! Those who stay long
[431] come back with the spoils of civilisation; highly coloured cloths, cheap clocks, melodeons, mouth-organs, worthless pocket-knives, which they deal out to admiring friends and acquaintances.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

535

317

A Professional Dancer.

Note the wristlets and anklets, which make a jingling noise as he leaps about. He is stripped to the waist. His audience is in front of him. He has thrown his cow-hide shield into the air and will catch it as it falls.

Salt Factory at Lake Rukwa.

Large quantities of salt are manufactured every year under Government supervision. The heavily impregnated water is evaporated, and the remaining deposit purified, and separated into grades, before being offered for sale. [facing pg. 80]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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A Public Dance.

Usually dances take place at night, and many of them are morally evil, but daylight dancing is not uncommon, and is usually free from objectionable accompaniments. What is shown is a kind of solo dance, but commonly a circle is formed into which dancers advance, one or two at a time, to an accompaniment of drums, singing and hand clapping.

[facing p. 96]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Then the line advances and passes under the arch singing. The last to pass through is usually held, but sometimes escapes. 524

Of such games there is almost no end, and new ones are continually being invented, many of them imitative of something introduced by the white man, European peculiarities being specially liable to this hilarious form of flattery. I have seen boys imitate the peculiar walk of Europeans, to the intense joy of the onlookers. For, let it be repeated, to the younger generation the white man is no longer a little tin god, or any other kind of god. He is fully respected for all that the native considers worthy of respect (and their ideas do not always harmonize with ours), but if he is laughable for any reason, he need not doubt that he is laughed at. 524 177 522

Dancing is the principal relaxation of the Konde, if the violent exercise which it sometimes involves may be called relaxation. It is indulged in with great zest, and, as the night advances, with complete abandon, moral and physical. There is not much that can be called religious dancing: a children's rain dance, a pestilence dance, and the wild leaping and shouting, with horn and drum, which young and old engage in at times of eclipse or earthquake. But anything may be made the occasion of an impromptu dance: the arrival of a European, especially if he is popular; the killing of lion or leopard; the killing of much game by a European; the return of friends from a journey; or a score of other reasons, some of them trivial, such as the laying down of a load which 535

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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Photo by] [*Major J. S. Wells.*

MEN'S DANCE.

The men's dance is often a procession with horns and drums, and waving buffalo tails, moving slowly in a circle. An individual will stand out and indulge in a wild *pas seul*, while the others move round.

[facing p. 160]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

a man has been carrying until he is almost exhausted ; but he has always enough strength in hand to enable him to give a few leaps of joy when he is at last set free from its weight.

The ordinary dance usually takes place at night. The dancers are summoned by the sound of the drum, which is an invitation to all who care to join. The general characteristics of all dances are movements and posturings of the body, usually two or more dancers, sometimes only one, advancing to the centre, making a few posturings or leaps, and retiring to give place to others, while the drums sound continuously, and the shouts of the dancers increase in vigour as the movement reaches its climax, until the noise becomes terrific and indescribable. And yet the older people, long past the dancing age, sleep soundly through the din ; though occasionally an angry man will get up and drive away a few boys and girls who have got up an impromptu dance after their elders are in bed.

Ikimbimbi dance. Men and women stand in opposing lines, the men carrying spears, the women rods. Two or three drums are beating, and at a signal all break out into a song, while simultaneously the lines advance to meet each other, and then fall back. Two men and two women dance into the centre, retire, and give place to others, until all have danced. The dancing is a mere shuffling of the feet with posturings, but the men and women do not touch each other. The singing is a recitative, with shouts intervening, and the drums beat softly or furiously in harmony with the singing.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
.FN17 Ngonde FN17

535 *Ingwata.* Two lines as before, men and women advancing and retiring, while all the others keep up a continuous tramping more or less in time with the drums.

Amasere. Each dancer has half a dozen reeds filled at the top with sand, which they beat on the ground, while the lines advance and retire, and a man and a woman approach the centre, dance round each other, and give place to the next couple, singing and shouting as before.

Ikindundulu. In this dance there are no drums, but the opposing lines keep up a continuous shouting or singing; two men advance to the women's line, one of whom comes out to meet them, selects the more handsome, and retires with him to her own line, which dances round him, laughing the while at the other, and later dancing round him with mocking songs. Two more men face the ordeal, until all have been through it.

Ikinanda. No drums, but each dancer has tiny calabashes, filled with sand, on the ankles, and two streamers of bark rope flowing out behind. The line advance and retire, giving place to couples who dance in the centre, while the others shout and clap hands.

Ikisepe. Each dancer has pieces of cloth or bark rope, one before, the other behind, and a reed in the hand; the dance consists of heaves of the body which cause the streamers to be thrown out before and behind, while the drums beat and the song goes on, as each couple fills the centre for a moment.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•535 *Ikikweta.* This a highly objectionable dance, better not too minutely described. There are four drums and uproarious singing and shouting. The dance is of recent introduction among the Konde, and is held late at night. The chiefs try to put it down, but without much success; and there are other very evil dances, which no decent people will have anything to do with. Such dances usually come like an epidemic, spread rapidly over a whole district, and lead to great moral injury, until they are put down by vigorous chiefs, or die out of themselves, until the epidemic comes round again. Very frequently these evil performances go on the whole night, with terrific noise, and so determined are the dancers, that respectable people are afraid to interfere, lest an unmerciful handling should send them back to their homes bruised and bleeding. But the approach of a white man sends the dancers rushing off to hide in the bush, as I have often found at all hours of the night.

524 Of games of skill the most important is a kind of draughts game, an Arab introduction. Thirty-six holes are made in the ground; the players, two or four in number, have small stones which they move from hole to hole, until one side is declared winner. I do not understand the game, and shall not attempt to describe it; but a very complete description is given in "The Ila-speaking Peoples," by Smith and Dale.

538 A favourite intellectual exercise is the propounding of riddles, of which there is a large stock, and new

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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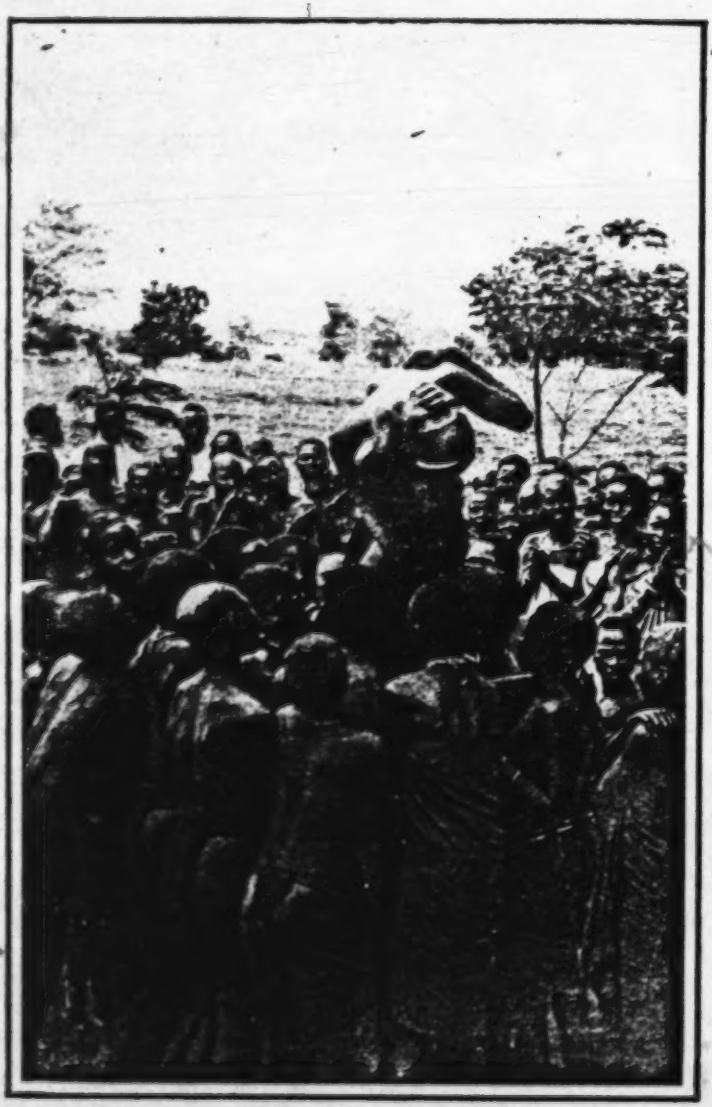

DANCING AT A FEAST.

The dance includes striking contortions, supported in the air, as this woman is. Boys standing on the ground will bend backward until their heads come near their thighs. Walking on the hands, throwing a somersault, doing a catherine wheel are all in the native mind dancing, and may be indulged in at any moment, as it occurs to the dancer.

[facing p. 240]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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A DEATH DANCE.

The dance is in honour of the dead person, and is not seldom an unrestrained orgy of emotion let loose. If spear and shield are carried, fighting may take place, ending in wounds and death, especially at the burial of a chief, who should not go to his ancestors unattended.

[facing p. 288]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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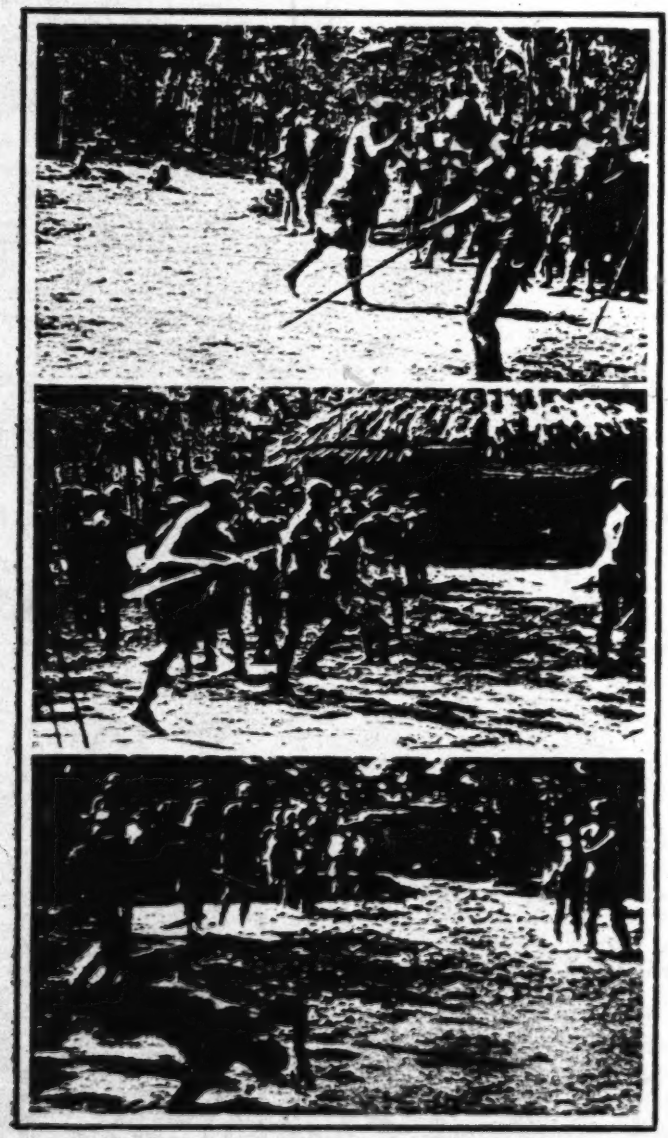

VARIOUS MOVEMENTS IN THE DEATH DANCE.

The performers advance at a run to a fixed line, then retire, waving spears, or clubs, shouting and singing, while the drums beat out their persistent tum tum. Individuals rush about alone, brandishing weapons, and other mourners are keening the death song in or near the house of the deceased.

[FACING p. 296]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

766 medicine placed in the empty grave, which attracts the lizard into which the soul of the dead man has entered. It is thus caught and burned in the grave. The parents or near relatives drink medicine, and the body is carried off by the doctor to be burned in the bush. Among the Bandali, all bodies are dug up after the flesh has rotted away, and the bones are taken into the forest, where they are placed in a sitting position against a tree and left there. A much more gruesome custom, which prevails among the Bandali, is that of keeping the bones on the verandah of the heir's house, done up in banana leaves, which are renewed as required, the bones being occasionally anointed with oil. Here and there throughout Konde-land are places called *Itago*, so named from the verb *kutaga*, to cast away. In the long past, when a man was dying, and all hope of recovery had been abandoned, he was carried to the *Itago*, placed in a sitting position, and left to die. After death the flesh was devoured by birds or beasts. Nowhere, so far as I have discovered, is this repulsive practice now followed.

765 The death dance begins as soon as the first wailing is over, and continues as long as people continue
●535 coming in to mourn. The men carry spears or sticks, if the dead man was of any importance; the women have leaves or tails. When the dance has fully developed, the men form one line, and the women another, facing them. The two lines approach each other, the men raising their spears and shields, the women waving the leaves or tails; at about a yard apart they retire again, shouting or singing as the drum

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

765 beats out its monotonous noise. In the meantime
•535 there may be uncontrolled persons running about, leaping, waving spears, not seldom casting a taunt, which is quickly taken up, and spears are thrown, and wounds, and even death, may be the result.

765 Sometimes the wailing takes place in the house, or in the open, just outside. It is interesting to watch
152 men and women approach the place of mourning: they come with all appearance of *sang-froid*, but suddenly emotion grips them, and they take up the wail with streaming tears. It does not occur to anyone that he should restrain himself; it was not for that that he came. Yet the recovery from this high-pitched emotion is just as rapid. There is a sudden hush, some one addresses to the widow the old, world-old, world-wide comfort, that all must die; and, amazing to relate, this is often received with laughter, not mocking laughter, but laughter intended to relieve the strain which all are feeling. Sometimes too, jesting, and even obscene language, are indulged in, with the same end in view. And as emotion rises
765 again, and this especially among the dancers, free rein
837 is given to looseness of language and gesture, and more definite evil follows in the darkness.

It is affirmed that all this looseness has arisen since the coming of the white man; but statements of the harm done by the latter are so common among the Konde and other tribes, that one may well be sceptical. The explanation given is that European government will not permit the old death penalty for adultery, and therefore it has become more common; or that

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

x797 x795 585 The festivities and display are most often linked, not to the Church ritual, but to the handing over of marriage cattle. Since the feasts of the puberty ritual are not celebrated, the Christians concentrate their energies on the *ukukwa*, when quantities of food are provided by the bride's family, and a crowd gathers to sing and dance. Then, some time after the cattle have been handed over, the bride is taken to her husband by a party of 'mothers' and friends, and a feast is provided by the groom. The pattern is very similar to that of the pagan handing over of marriage cattle (*ukukwa*) and bringing home the bride (*ukubeka*), but new songs [533] and dances replace the somewhat bawdy pagan ones, and the [535] Christian youths, unlike the pagans, dance without spears. Often at a Christian wedding pagans also attend, and there are rival groups of dancers, pagans, and Christians, between whom quarrels readily flare up. And when the new songs and dances of the Christians are copied by the pagans, as they sometimes are, then the Christians drop them, for they wish to be different.

The traditional examination of the bride by the 'mothers' and the giving of a bull if she goes to her husband a virgin, are maintained in the Christian community. The bull is usually killed as a feast for the mothers 'to say thank you for nourishing her', but there is, of course, no offering of the sacred meat to the ancestors, and sometimes the bull is not killed at all, or the groom brings shillings instead. As so often happens, a former ritual survives as ceremonial, an observance felt to be specially appropriate to the occasion, but no longer regarded as a condition of health or salvation.

When she is taken to her husband the bride is exhorted by her 'mothers' on her duties as a married woman. The traditional [183] emphasis on separation from her mother is still there: 'You have left your mother, your husband is your mother, we have separated. . . .' And she is exhorted to be chaste, to obey her husband and answer him submissively, to be clean and diligent in her work, to be hospitable, and above all, as a Christian, to feed 'those from a distance'. Here the contrast between pagan and Christian ethics is emphasized: a pagan wife is only obliged to cook for kinsmen and neighbours, not strangers, but for a Christian to let a stranger starve is spoken of as a mortal sin.

x x797 795 796 The annual festivals of the Church are not so closely parallel to pagan communal rituals, for they were developed in a northern and temperate climate with a rhythm very different from the

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

x 797 x 795 583 584 went away to work again and in time I earned four cows which I hid with friends far from home. My father knew nothing about them. Then I wrote to my father from Mwasebe [about twenty miles from where his father lived] where I was working, saying that I had found a girl there, the daughter of a Christian, and please could I have the cows with which to marry her? My father said: "No, she lives too far away." ' Then later he found a Christian girl of whom his father approved and a satisfactory marriage was arranged.

A common topic of discussion among Christian women was whether parents should choose mates for their children, or leave them free to choose for themselves, for though traditionally a girl had to signify her consent to marriage, she was betrothed very young and her freedom of choice was small. The growing insistence on personal freedom in marriage is symptomatic of a radical change in the attitude towards persons.

x 797 x 795 [764] [585] [782] The pagan rituals were the main occasions of recreation. It has been shown, in *Rituals of Kinship*, how pagan funerals and marriages are the occasion for feasting and dancing and display, and how the seclusion hut of a nubile girl is the gathering place for the young men and girls of the neighbourhood. Even a twin ritual is a festival with beer for the older men and some meat for everyone. The sacrifices at the groves were feasts for the leading men of the country, and the 'coming out' was the occasion of the greatest feast of the generation, and dances were practised for months ahead. [796] [688] Partly because of a change in sex morality, and partly because the meat and beer at pagan feasts are offered to the shades, Christians are largely excluded from these festivals. They may not participate in pagan dances, or join in the lewd songs, or attend the initiation hut of a girl, and they are partly debarred from the feasts of the pagans: certain of the Churches (notably the Church [273] of Scotland and, for a time, the Moravians) forbid Christians to drink beer at all.

[796] And the Christian rituals, though some of them are 'festivals of the Church', are scarcely celebrated as such. There has been a separation between ritual and recreation which has left a gap in the Christian community. It is true that the Christian young men [535] [684] and girls sing and dance at funerals and marriages, but the elders, for the most part, look on with dubious eyes, saying that dancing leads to adultery, and several of the dances introduced by

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Christians in Ngonde (e.g. *amapenenga*) have been banned by the Kirk Sessions. The European-style dances, such as are sometimes organized by the educated men in centres like Karonga or Tukuyu, are not attended by these men's wives: respectable women avoid them. While we lived near Rungwe mission there was much discussion among the villagers over what recreations were permissible, and hot arguments between those who wished to permit beer drinking and dancing to Christians and those who wished to ban both. It is the Nyakyusa elders who are most puritan in their views—much more so than many of the missionaries who are very conscious of the need for recreation; indeed, the Livingstonia Presbytery once instructed all its Sessions to look into the matter. The chief outlet for young Christians is in ballads. A good singer is much admired and the composer may even sell his songs, with words and music written out. One of the former missionaries is honoured as the man who first taught the Nyakyusa to read music as well as to sing by ear.

In pagan thought moral obligations are limited to kinsmen and neighbours: they do not extend beyond the chiefdom except to those relatives who may live beyond its bounds. As we have shown, the common moral sanctions are the anger of senior relatives, and 'the breath of men', and these operate only within the lineage and age-village. But Christians have read the parable of the Good Samaritan and taken it to heart. Sermons stress this: 'If a Kinga comes and asks for a place to sleep the night and you refuse you are among the goats.' 'If a traveller from the coast asks for a place to sleep and you refuse, do you show love?' 'We tell a bride she should be hospitable to her neighbours if she can, but she *must* cook for those from a distance.' It is one of the points on which the Christians are most conscious of a difference between themselves and the pagans. And the exclusiveness of Europeans is one of the reasons why they are distinguished from Christians in the song on the title page of *Rituals of Kinship*. 'If all Europeans made friends with us (*ukwangala*) like X and Y', we were told, 'the whole country would have been Christian long ago.'

Linked with the concern for strangers is the obligation to preach the Gospel to others—something constantly stressed in sermons, and finding expression both in preaching in the surrounding villages and in tours of more remote areas, often areas of another language. Such tours implied hardship in travelling and a

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

when we went to a field I saw a stick of a special type upright in the soil. It was made of a reed split at the top, with a small bundle of leaves squeezed in the split. A piece of bark stood out from this bundle. I asked the chief for the significance of this and he explained that it was an *ulusingo*, i. e. a tabu sign to prevent anyone from stepping on the field which was an *imasibi* (yam-field). This sign was believed to possess "magical power", to strike an invader with illness. Each owner of a field has the right to protect his field in such a manner, and a chief especially has the right to command tabus regarding plants which are staple food for the whole chieftainship, as, for instance, maize that is not allowed to be reaped before the chief has given his permission. All such tabus are also named *mwiko*[32]. During the time of such a general tabu, visitors, who by chance come through a village under tabu, are not allowed to greet the inhabitants of the village or to speak to them. 241 784 [574]

The chief added that special watchmen are installed during these periods; these men are dressed in a terrifying manner, and have the right to arrest any person transgressing the tabu. The chief may punish the offenders immediately, imposing on them, for instance, a cow as a fine. This was also the case with an ordinary theft in a field, but nowadays such affairs are regulated by the law of the Mandated Government. After the repeal of such a general tabu by the chief, beer will be drunk (e. g. *ubwalwa bwa kutagila bwa kutondelo*, the beer that is poured out at the harvest), and the usual eating community of men will be re-established, for Nyakyusa men like to eat together as comrades, not in families. 241 688 784 [178] [264]

10. When I was in Katumba, dances were held on several days from the afternoon till midnight, very similar in form to that which Mackenzie describes (p. 160) by the name *Ikimbimbi*. 535

The men stood on one side of the open place in several lines, with sticks in their hands; on the opposite side were the women and girls. Between them, more in the background, were the drummers, at the beginning of the dance; then they moved round the place. The principal drummer was a man of great excitability. He performed most extravagant movements with his body and his drumstick, making somersaults, jumping over the drum, treating it as a "living being", running to it and turning just in front of it.

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[32] This word *mwiko* (forbidden) has the same wide (profane and ritual) meanings as *tapu* or *tabu* in the Polynesian Languages (cf. *Rud. Lehmann:* Die polynesischen Tabu-Sitten. Staatl. Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde I, 10; Leipzig 1930).

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

535 [832] These dances seemed to be a representation of "sex appeal" or courting. Each new phase of the dance was introduced by the advancing of one or two young women fairly near to the side of the men, then each retreated followed by the whole lines of both the sexes. If the youngest girls present who stood mostly behind the "dancing" line (i. e. the group of the advancing women and older girls) were to come too near the proper dancing place, they were driven back. The older people and the *amafumu* were only spectators.

535 292 The women had no special dancing dress, but the men did. They now wore mostly a sort of tight jackets or sweaters and wide robes, coloured or with patterns.

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Synopsis

000 Verfasser legt seine Ermittlungen vor, die er während seines dreimonatigen Aufenthalts im Dorfe der Masoko (die zu den Nyakyusa gehören sammelte. Sie geben einen Einblick in die damals, 1939, überwiegend traditionsgebundene Lebensweise dieses Stammes, namentlich bezüglich der Medizinmänner und der Behandlung der Kranken. Um im Falle der Schwester des Häuptlings die Ursache der Erkrankung zu ermitteln, wurde ein Wahrsager gerufen, der bei einer Sitzung den Ehemann als Urheber feststellte. Zur Heilung wurden vom Häuptling Zeremonien am Grabe von dessen Vater angeordnet. Außerdem beschreibt Verfasser aus eigener Erfahrung die Trauerzeremonie nach dem Tode eines Kindes, die Initiation eines verlobten Mädchens u. a.

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

291 301 belts are also worn by men, nowadays below the other clothing. More and more pieces of cotton with imprinted patterns have come into 291 vogue. They are worn around the lower part of the body or below the 177 shoulders or fastened about one of them, and are bought from Indian [139] shops. That this modern fashion, however, is something new in such places which are a little remoter from direct European influence was demonstrated to me when I came through a small village in the environment of Masoko. There by chance I met some young girls carrying a piece of cloth on the top of a long pole as if it were a banner. On enquiry I was told that this "banner" was nothing other than a [556 piece of cloth newly bought by a woman of that village and that it was 482] hoisted on a pole and carried in procession out of sheer joy that this woman had been able to buy it.

291 Menfolk throughout are fuller dressed, especially when they go dancing. The women, on the other hand, wear their ordinary dress also on such occasions. The dancing costume of the men — only the younger [292 men participate in dancing — consists of a sort of tight-jacket or 535] sweater and wide robes with coloured patterns. The hair is adorned [302 with feathers. At work the men mostly wear only loin cloths or shorts. 237] After work especially the older man wrap their bodies in blankets. It is very seldom nowadays to find even very old men still wearing the former national dress: a bundle of long grass in front and a smaller one behind tied to the waist by means of a string, as I found a man on a solitary spot near Rungwe Station. Little boys go altogether naked untill they are about three years of age. Little girls begin to wear a small *amabi* at an earlier age.

531 *13. Art.* One of the most interesting and striking features in the artistic endowment of the Nyakyusa are the decorations on the outer-walls of their huts. The latter are only painted, however, when the exterior of the framework of bamboo is mud covered, otherwise only the wooden doors (*ikifigo*, door) of the huts are painted. By no means every hut or house is painted, but only a limited number in each village, probably depending on the presence and industry of an artist as this art is as in other cases an individualistic one. One such artist was introduced to me in a village near Rutenganio. The ornaments consist in most cases of geometrical patterns in white and black, seldom in other colours, or they represent different sorts of animals, e. g. elephants, horses, cattle, snakes, etc. The richest designs I found in a long extended village on the right bank of the upper Kiwira. In an other case the names of the animals were written in Swahili below

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

ones are always being added. The following are a few examples: 538

My house has no doors? An egg.

My hen lays her eggs among thorns? A pineapple.

When I returned from my walk, I took the cow by the tail? A long-handled drinking calabash.

By day or by night, by hill or by plain, it is hard work? Walking on slippery ground.

I hoed a large garden, but when I gathered the crop it did not fill my hand? Haircutting.

All my children have red hats? The finger-nails.

It has neither feet to walk with, nor hands to seize with, yet it devours everything? Fire.

The chief's cup is empty? In comparison with the lake, which is always full.

Feet which have no toe-nails? The feet of a table.

The "wisdom of the fathers" is expressed in short pithy parables, of which the following are a few examples:

A familiar road needs no sign-posts.

If one fish (in a basket) rots, they all rot. (Beware of evil company.)

The tongue has no bones. (Beware of talkative people.)

The liar has only a short way to go. (Your sin will find you out.)

Righteousness injures no one.

Little by little, and the cup is filled. (Much dropping wears away stones.)

164 Amusements & Relaxations

538 A hired man eats his own share and that of others. (Be self-reliant.)

The right hand does not cut off the left. (Be consistent.)

There is no blessing in hurry. (Think before you leap.)

If you would get something from under the bed, you must kneel down. (Honour to whom honour is due.)

If you would get honey, you must use fire. (Take the bull by the horns.)

538 522 Tales told to the children, and to adults, are as numerous as proverbs and riddles, or even more so. Many of them have come down the generations, but others are of quite recent origin; those which contain references to Europeans being necessarily late compositions, though in a few cases they may be old stories revised to suit modern conditions. At the concert referred to at the beginning of this chapter, one of the items was a hugely comic account of a native's adventures among Europeans, which quite convulsed the audience, though the white man was not always represented as getting the worst of the situation. The reciter, however, modestly disclaimed authorship, and assured me that he had received it from others. In any case the ability to tell a vivid story, and to show the humorous side of life, was quite striking.

538 These stories cover every aspect of life, and each one has a moral, not always obvious to the European listener, but apparently quite clear to the people

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

themselves. They form part of the education of 538 every child, and of the admonitory stock-in-trade of all parents of growing boys and girls. A judge will use one to give point to his decision; a man pleading his case at the native court will illustrate his plea with an apt story. There are men and women whose large stock of tales, and skill in relating them, make them welcome in every gathering; but anyone, on occasion, will tell one.

The Tortoise and the Hedgehog

Once upon a time, when there was a famine, the 539 Tortoise went to a far country to buy food. He found it in abundance, and made up a load; but on his way home he came upon a tree which had fallen across the path. So he laid down his load on the path, and followed the tree to see how big it was. When he was satisfied, he returned to pick up his load, but found that the Hedgehog had carried it off. Then the Tortoise said, "My friend Hedgehog, why have you taken off my load?" "Your load!" said the Hedgehog. "Why did you leave your load on the path? No, I have beaten you." The Tortoise went at once to the judge, who summoned the Hedgehog; and when he heard the facts he gave judgment for the latter. The judge said to the Tortoise, "You have lost the case. Why did you leave your load on the path? You are a fool." So the Tortoise went home, and the Hedgehog went off with the load of food.

After a long time hunters went out to hunt the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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CHAPTER XIV

The Supreme Being

776 OF the Supreme Being there is little that can be said with certainty beyond that He was believed in prior to the coming of the white man and the teachings of Christianity. The existence of this belief cannot be doubted. Indications of it are found everywhere in the native mind inextricably intertwined with life and thought and language, with prayer and sacrifice, with birth and death, with famine and pestilence and sword. For the rest, there is much confusion. That a developed [779] theology does not exist, hardly needs to be said. What one informant will give as common belief, another will say he never heard of; it belongs, he will tell you, to another district, but it was not the belief of his fathers.

776 Many parables and proverbs, of the pre-European origin of which there can be no doubt, give evidence 538 of the belief in a Supreme Being. "Who mocks at orphans," says an old proverb, "let him beware: God is watching him." "God will judge between us and the white man," a common saying at funerals, is necessarily of recent origin; but there are scores of other sayings which are certainly ancient. Many

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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of these are expressed in archaic language, which is not in use at all to-day, except in these and similar sayings. Thus we have, "*Chikulu ku nsi*," the Great One is everywhere; "*Gwende muneno*," go where you will (you will hear of God). "*Imbwa yikurwa pa lwigi*," literally means, the dog is fighting at the door, but the actual meaning is, God is within you. Expressions like these are very numerous, and, even in their archaic form, are in common use every day. 776 538

The names in use for the Deity give some indication of how He is regarded. The name most commonly used in Konde is *Kyala*, but although it is now almost exclusively used in public worship, in the translation of the Scriptures, and in hymns, it is, perhaps, the weakest of all the Divine names. For it may be applied to persons in whom the Deity dwells, or to men who, though they lived on earth, were yet *Kyala*. The name is sometimes applied to white men, who are dangerous because they are believed to have closer relations with the source of all power than common men have. Other names are *Tenende*, the Owner of all things; *Nkurumuke*, the Undying One; *Chata*, the Originator; *Kyaubiri*, the Unseen; *Kalesi*, He who is everywhere present. The name *Ndorombwike* is the one used on solemn occasions, and comes from the verb *kuteromboka*, to create in a sense in which God only can. *Mperi*, again, is the Maker, applied to God only, though the verb from which it is derived may be applied to men also. 776

Prayer is addressed directly to the ancestral spirits, who in many cases are conceived as having power of 782

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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TO WHOM DO THEY PRAY?

Abanyafyale, abanyafyale bikwiputa kugu?
Abanyafyale, abanyafyale bikwiputa kugu?
Kubasyuka! Kubasyuka!

Chorus: Alikumwanya! Alikumwanya!

Abasungu, abasungu bikwiputa kugu?
Abasungu, abasungu bikwiputa kugu?
Kundalama! Kundalama!

Chorus: Alikumwanya! Alikumwanya!

Abisilamu, abisilamu, bikwiputa kugu?
Abisilamu, abisilamu, bikwiputa kugu?
Kwa Mohamedi! Kwa Mohamedi!

Chorus: Alikumwanya! Alikumwanya!

Abosigwa, abosigwa, bikwiputa kugu?
Abosigwa, abosigwa, bikwiputa kugu?
Kwa Jesu! Kwa Jesu!

Chorus: Alikumwanya! Alikumwanya!

Translation

The chiefs, the chiefs to whom do they pray?
The chiefs, the chiefs to whom do they pray?
To the shades! To the shades!

Chorus: He is above! He is above!

The Europeans, the Europeans to whom do they pray?
The Europeans, the Europeans to whom do they pray?
To money! To money!

Chorus: He is above! He is above!

The Mohammedans, the Mohammedans to whom do they pray?
The Mohammedans, the Mohammedans to whom to they pray?
To Mohammed! To Mohammed!

Chorus: He is above! He is above!

The baptised, the baptised to whom do they pray?
The baptised, the baptised to whom do they pray?
To Jesus! To Jesus!

Chorus: He is above! He is above!

(Song of Nyakyusa Christians)

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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

themselves. They form part of the education of every child, and of the admonitory stock-in-trade of all parents of growing boys and girls. A judge will use one to give point to his decision; a man pleading his case at the native court will illustrate his plea with an apt story. There are men and women whose large stock of tales, and skill in relating them, make them welcome in every gathering; but anyone, on occasion, will tell one. 538

The Tortoise and the Hedgehog

Once upon a time, when there was a famine, the Tortoise went to a far country to buy food. He found it in abundance, and made up a load; but on his way home he came upon a tree which had fallen across the path. So he laid down his load on the path, and followed the tree to see how big it was. When he was satisfied, he returned to pick up his load, but found that the Hedgehog had carried it off. Then the Tortoise said, "My friend Hedgehog, why have you taken off my load?" "Your load!" said the Hedgehog. "Why did you leave your load on the path? No, I have beaten you." The Tortoise went at once to the judge, who summoned the Hedgehog; and when he heard the facts he gave judgment for the latter. The judge said to the Tortoise, "You have lost the case. Why did you leave your load on the path? You are a fool." So the Tortoise went home, and the Hedgehog went off with the load of food. 539

After a long time hunters went out to hunt the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

539 Hedgehog, who, to escape from them, backed into a hole in the ground. And in that hole who was there but the Tortoise, who when he saw the tail of the Hedgehog coming in, promptly bit it off close to the bone, and said, "Now I've got you!" The Hedgehog was terribly angry, and went off to the judge. The judge summoned the Tortoise, who said, "Why did he separate himself from his tail in that way? The rest of us are all of a piece." And the judge said, "You are a fool, Hedgehog. Why don't you go like other people? You have lost the case."

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER II

THE MYTHOLOGICAL CHARTER

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In Nyakyusa mythology the heroes were creators of crops and animals and were driven out from BuKinga by a jealous father (or elder brother) who sought to kill them; but he found, when they had gone, that they had taken the fertility of the country with them, so he sent offerings after them, and still such offerings are brought to their graves in sacrifice. One of the heroes, Kyala (2), created crops alone, and of him it is said that each time his father or elder brother tried to kill him he rose again; another, Lwembe or Mbasi (3 or 15?), created both crops and animals, brought cattle, fire, and iron to the Nyakyusa valley, and left many descendants who spread over the valley as chiefs, ruling a people who had not known chiefs.

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The names and events mentioned vary somewhat from one area to another; in some versions there were three brothers, though the eldest, Nkekete (1), being buried in Kisi country, does not concern the Nyakyusa; in another version the brothers had a sister who was the mother of Kyungu (16), the hero of Ngonde; but the general pattern of heroic ancestors who were creators and discoverers, and who brought to the old inhabitants of the valley such good gifts as crops and stock, fire and iron, and the institution of chieftainship, remains the same. They all had miraculous power and are vaguely connected with volcanic disturbance, such as continued in the area until recent times (*vide infra*, p. 16).

Here is an account by Kikungubeja, one of the priests of BuKinga, whence the heroes came:

Nkekete (1) and Kyala (2) were brothers, Mwemusi [the first Kinga chief] killed them. Mwemusi's men tried first to kill them by cutting their throats, then by throwing them into a little lake, then by heating a great stone and throwing it on top of them. Each time Nkekete and his younger brother Kyala rose again. Then they left the country, the two of them, and the earth rumbled as they walked. Nkekete (1) went to Mbela to build; Kyala (2), the younger, to PaliKyala. Then the men of Mwemusi followed Nkekete with a cow to entreat him because he had taken all the food with him. Mwemusi was angry with him and his younger brother Kyala, because they made food and they were

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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

539 fierce warriors. They were first driven out, then later Lwembe (3) was driven out too. When Lwembe was a child, herding cattle with his fellows, he moulded cattle of clay and they became alive; so with lions and leopards, too; he also took up a handful of earth and it became beans or millet. His fellows told Mwemusi of this and he was astonished. Then Mwemusi sent men to watch; they went early in the morning and hid themselves and watched; they watched him making all these things. Then they wanted to kill him, but the forefather of Mwakalukwa [another Kinga chief] gave him two cows; he was a friend and said: 'Leave the country, they want to kill you, take these cows and eat them on the road.' Lwembe went away with Kissoule and Mwamaloba (Mwamalunguka) and two wives and all his animals.

These three, Nkekete (1), Kyala (2), and Lwembe (3), were driven out by Mwemusi, but Lwembe's younger brothers, the BaMwalukissa (4), were left. When Lwembe went away, Mwemusi's men followed him, wishing to kill him, but they feared his animals, and did not try.

Nkekete (1) set out to the Lake [Nyasa] and went into a stream; he is in the water now, in a stream with pools near the Lake, in Kisi country. Kyala (2) went and built among stones in a cave. When the [177] Europeans came they took rifles and shot at Kyala in the place where he had built, so he moved to a different place. Of old he was in a cave washed by the waters of the Lake, but after the Europeans came he moved to his present cave at the boundary between Kisselelo's and Kisi country. Kyala had fowls there; some saw them in the old days [782] and some did not. Nkekete is in a stream with pools in it; there (at Lumbila in Kisi country) men sacrifice a cow. Kyala's sheep are killed near his cave.

Neither Nkekete nor Kyala had any children, but Lwembe (3), who went off alive, begot many children. We speak with them. Nkekete and Kyala were killed, Lwembe was not. . . . All the Kinga chiefs when praying in the sacred groves say the names of their fathers [782] who have died, and also the names of Nkekete, Kyala, and Lwembe, [769] in that order . . . Lwembe was the youngest of the three brothers . . . Nkekete and Kyala only made crops—millet and beans. We ask for fertility of the soil (*imboto*), and sunshine, and rain from them, but not animals. From Lwembe we ask for milk, and fertility of men and cattle, and snakes, and goats, and sheep, and all crops. Lwembe has everything. We ask for sunshine and rain from Lwembe as well.

When Lwembe went down into Selya he found the hill people (*BaMusumba*) and the people of the plain (Mwakyembe's men)[1] already there. They feared him because he had all things, and they still fear him. He was greater than Nkekete. They cut Nkekete's throat, but they couldn't kill Lwembe. He made the small lakes—all of them. He

[1] In other versions Mwakyembe is a descendant of Lwembe.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

went from Mwemusi's country down the path by Mwakalukwa's to Mwakaleli. He lived a year at Lumbila and found it too cold, and thence he went to Masoko, and thence to Lubaga. All men feared him and his animals. 599

In another version Lwembe's survival is linked with the possession of *ifingila*, the medicine on which still, today, the authority of chiefs is thought largely to depend. [773] [173]

Nkekete had much food and Mwemusi killed him because he had no *ifingila*. He killed him and he rose again. 'Why don't you die?' Mwemusi asked. Nkekete replied: 'I don't know, I have nothing, I am quite alone, I have no *ifingila*.' Mwemusi killed him again and he rose, many times. Then at last Nkekete said, 'I am tired.' And he showed Mwemusi and his men a razor (*ulwembe*) and said 'Kill me by cutting my throat with this', and they did and he stayed dead.

Mwemusi feared to kill Lwembe because he was very 'heavy'. He had *ifingila*, and when they tried to kill him they found his house full of animals, lions and others. . . . Once he turned himself into a stone when they tried to capture him. So Mwemusi told him to go far off, and he went with his two wives and two men, Kissoule and Kimonile. He went off riding on a lion like a donkey, with a lion behind his wives, and men were astonished when they saw him.

It is perhaps significant that Lwembe who survived is 'The Razor', by which Nkekete was killed, and the python from which *ifingila* medicine is made must be killed with razors and in no other way (*vide infra*, p. 60). [789] [825] [278]

It is Lwembe's capacity to make things live and grow which is always emphasized: [773]

Lwembe and another were given millet in their hands; Lwembe's sprouted, but not that of his fellow. He was told, 'You plant here and the other there.' The next day Lwembe's had sprouted, but not that of the other. He and his friend went to a hill in dry weather and wanted water. He just struck the earth and water came out. . . . He created leopards and kept them, and he moulded cattle of clay, he moulded them and they became cows, and his friends did the same and they remained clay.

When the heroes were driven out there was a fearful famine in BuKinga, for they had taken the fertility of the country with them, which is why, the priests say, sacrifices to them were begun by the Kinga. The priests of Lubaga were explicit on the point: [773] [173]

Mbasi (Lwembe 15?) came from BuKinga, he took the road to

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

539 Mwakaleli and came here and died. The Kinga went to BuSangu to buy food, for there was great hunger after Mbasi and Kyala were driven out, and wandering home they came here and met Mbasi. He said, 'Go home, there will be plenty of food, but I want my things.' He had left them at his father's place when he fled with his sister Kyungu. He asked for his leopard and otterskins, his drums, his bows for shooting birds,[1] his harp, mats, a stool, bamboo beer, and twenty hoes. . . . Then the Kinga went back and found their country full of food; and they brought all his things to Mbasi and even things like salt that he had not asked for. . . . This is how the ritual began. . . . Mbasi ruled because he had helped them in their hunger.

173 773 Kasitile (86), the rain-maker, speaking of the same incident, stressed only the hoes. Lwembe 'came to Lubaga and found a good place to settle, then he sent out messengers to Mwemusi (the Kinga chief) and said: "I want my hoes, especially my great, eyed hoe" (*ilikumbulu ilya maso*).' (The old ritual hoes had per- [778] forations—'eyes'—on the blades comparable to the perforations on other rain-making instruments.) Still today Kinga priests [782] come to Lubaga to sacrifice to Lwembe (3), and they bring with them hoes.[2]

The hero of Ngonde, the Kyungu (16), was also associated with [643] iron implements which he had brought with him—a spear, staff, stool, and a sieve used for making rain, which were royal insignia, and razors, spears, and knives of an unusual pattern, which long remained in the groves of the hero and his successors.

In the commonly-told Nyakyusa myth it was Lwembe who [372] introduced fire to BuNyakyusa—'he found the original occupants eating their food raw'—and the fact that he conferred so great a benefit is the charter for the position of the chiefs, celebrated at every 'coming out'. The Kinga priests push the spread of fire back a little further.

539 372 Of old in this country [BuKinga] there was no fire, men ate food uncooked; there were very few men in the country, most of it was forest. This was after Mwemusi came to Kinga country. Then one man, a hunter, went into the forest to hunt buck and otter, and he had dogs. And in the forest he made fire with a drill and cooked his food; and gave his friends cooked food to eat, and they were astonished.

[1] The bow and arrow are not now used among the Nyakyusa, but men in their thirties had used them when boys, for shooting birds.

[2] cf. Ludwig Weichert, *Mayikuyi i Africa! Kehre wieder Afrika* (Berlin, 1927), p. 129, for a photograph of one.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Then the chiefs took it from him and spread it through the Kinga country . . . and to the Mahasi, the Ndali, the Nyakyusa. . . . It was taken to BuNyakyusa before Lwembe went, when he was a child, before the killing of Nkekete and Kyala. 539 372

In the version told by Mwandisi (107), the old blind chief of MuNgonde, the various events of the cycle are rather differently combined; there were three brothers in BuKinga, Lyambilo (12) or Ngutike, Kyala, and Mbasi, and a sister, Kyumba. Lyambilo discovered how to make fire with a fire drill. Kyala was clever at making food—maize and millet—and Mbasi was clever at making animals—cattle, lions, elephants. 173 773

Then Lyambilo, the eldest, was angry that his younger brothers should be so clever; he was jealous. First he made war on Kyala, he wounded him once, but he did not die; then he wounded him again, but still he didn't die; then the third time Lyambilo put a stone in the fire and made it hot and threw it at Kyala, and he died, and was thrown into the Lake. But as soon as he died there was a great famine, no rain fell and no food grew. So they had to pray to Kyala to give them rain, and they killed a cow to sacrifice to Kyala. And as soon as they had done this much food grew. 539

Still Lyambilo was jealous of Mbasi because he could make animals. But when he went to kill him he found so many animals with him, roaring lions, and elephants, that he was afraid and he ran away. And he brought some hoes to Mbasi to say he was sorry for having tried to kill him. Then Mbasi moved from BuKinga to the Nyakyusa hills (Mwamba). . . . Lyambilo stayed in BuKinga. . . . Mbasi came down to the plain on a visit and went back to the hills, but his sister Kyumba stayed down here and married a man and bore a son. Before she came there was no fire here, she brought fire, and so they called her son Kyungu in honour of his mother because she brought fire.

When Mbasi was at Masukulu (in the hills) he made one cow, but it soon died; then he moved to Mbambo and made another cow and this soon died; then he went to Lubaga (which is still called Mbasi) and there he made one cow again which bore many many calves, and he divided his cattle among his sons. . . . Mbasi was Lwembe.

In Ngonde tradition the first Kyungu (16) was a man, descendant of Ngulube the Kinga chief, and he travelled with three brothers and a sister westwards, passing south of Rungwe volcano, where he and his immediate successor were buried, one of them on Kieyo mountain. Their descendants went on to the 'country of the Bisa', then returned eastward to Mbande, the sacred hill which the Kyungu took from a Fipa hunter, Simbobwe. Like Lwembe, 173 773

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and Tutsi who established conquest states to the north-west.[1] 173

Whatever the origin and adventures of the heroes they were 773 important in Nyakyusa and Ngonde history because their [174] graves became centres of religious ritual which linked together groups that were otherwise largely independent. The myths about them are the charter for chieftainship. They are depicted as benefactors who brought to uncivilized men not only the institution of chieftainship itself, but fire, cattle, iron, seed, and a creative power resident in their own bodies and those of their anointed heirs. But the myths also justify the power of commoners [778] who first occupied the country and *who have witchcraft in their* [754] bellies:

The commoners whom Lwembe found here were extraordinary. They 539 were cultivators, but they had not yet got fire, they ate their food raw. It was we chiefs, it was Lwembe, who brought fire and cattle—he came and found the original occupants without cattle; hence the commoners say, 'We are the earth'. Commoners are different from us physically, they are black; they are awe-inspiring, they are witches. Before you Europeans came the chiefs like Mwaipopo (116) were not [177] awe-inspiring, they feared the commoners very much; the commoners hammered the chief with their fists—yes, by daylight. And if the chief [754] cut a man's bananas that man took the chief's. If the commoners were [643] angry with Mwaipopo they fetched Mwangomo (124 whose chiefdom adjoins Mwaipopo's) at night by their witchcraft; he came in the night with his people and seized the cattle, both those of the chief, Mwaipopo, and those of the commoners. The next day the commoners said: 'It is we, we are angry. Why do you not look after us? Why do you not kill cattle for us?' Then Mwaipopo would kill two head of cattle and all the men in the country ate. . . . Mwaipopo and his equals were not awe-inspiring long ago, it is you Europeans who have created chieftainship and awe.

[1] cf. H. H. Curson and R. W. Thornton, 'A Contribution to the Study of African Native Cattle', *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Science and Animal Industry*, vii, 2 [113] October 1936 (Government Printer, Pretoria). An analysis of the distribution and migration of breeds in Africa.

H. B. Thompson and R. Scott, *Uganda* (1935), pp. 195 ff.

Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 68: 69.

M. Merker, *Die Masai*, pp. 157 ff., 1904, Berlin.

H. H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, 1904, pp. 86, 105 (early photographs of Nyoro cattle).

The short-horn type predominates among the Nyakyusa, but some animals suggest an intermixture with Sanga cattle. The hump is regarded as a great delicacy and is [231] exaggerated in the clay cattle which boys model. Cf. Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 72. The [825] similarity between the ritual and symbolism of the Nyakyusa and those of the Ganda [532] as described by Roscoe is marked. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, 1911.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

looking for me", and so if there was much heat he would send rain.' But this no longer happens. 177 788

At the same time both pagans and Christians tell a myth of how a European missionary, Rev. — Jauer (Mwaisumo), who visited the grove of Lubaga intending to remove the hoes in the grove to demonstrate the falsehood of the ritual, was confounded by a miracle (*ifika*). [773] [789]

Once the missionary Mwaisumo wished to go and see the grove of Lubaga. He was warned that if he entered he would flee because there were many marvels there, and the rain would catch him. He said: 'Oh, I shall go, nothing will happen.' So he went and entered the grove, and he found many hoes, some standing up, some lying down, and some of them had 'eyes'. He seized one to take it away, then there was a crash of thunder, and he was afraid and fled. When he ran out of the grove the rain fell in torrents. It is said that he was so frightened he left his jacket behind. From that time people said that indeed there are miracles at Lubaga. 539

'European times' is given as the reason for sacrifices being less frequent and regular than formerly. The occasions were, and still are: any period of hunger or scarcity, such as the Kinga regularly experience during the dry season, and the Nyakyusa also complain of at that time; any irregular misfortune such as a failure of the rains, a plague of locusts or an epidemic; and any prediction of hunger or disease by a prophet (*unsololi* or *unkunguluka*). But the chiefs are said to be more reluctant to provide the cattle for sacrifice than formerly, and less quickly influenced by the actual occurrence of hunger or by prophecy that famine is imminent. Nevertheless they still 'treat the earth' (*ukutendekesya umfu*) by sending a black cow to Lubaga when hunger presses. 782 [177]

According to Kasitile (86) and Mwamakunda (his fellow priest) no ritual could be performed in the grove of the first Lwembe when he had no living representative. Formerly, the Kissoule in office and another priest penetrated alone, and there bound a live sheep and left it to bleat until a python took it. 'It is Kyala, he turns himself into a python' (*Jo kyala: ipela sota*). Here Kasitile used *kyala* in the sense of 'the lord' and he was referring to Lwembe. According to another informant, when the heir to any priesthood connected with Lubaga is installed he should sleep in the grove enclosed in a stout wicker hut, and remain there until the python of the grove comes and *licks* him. The case was cited of a priest who had lain captive for two weeks 643 793 782

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

war and during prayer to the shades, and he also had the famous drum on which the blood of a child was poured: 643 789 [778]

The Kyungu had a drum, called Mwenekelwa, which sometimes refused to sound when struck, then they asked: 'What does it wish, friends?' and they killed a sheep and poured the blood over Mwenekelwa; if it refused to sound when they struck it again, they killed a cow and poured the blood over it and if it still refused to sound when they struck it again, they said: 'What does it want now? It wants a man.' And they took the child of a commoner and cut his throat and poured the blood over the drum and struck it and it sounded loudly. *If* the drum did not sound when struck it was as if it had boomed an order; its silence was like a prayer. The drum was to show the majesty (*ubusisya*) of the Kyungu, that all the little chiefs at a distance might say: 'Something is happening, let us hear what it is.' Then they all gathered and were told to bring ivory. . . . They needed the blood of a man because their Lord (*Kyala gwabo*, i.e. the Kyungu) had fastened up the drum saying 'I myself am war, there is no other war' . . . [782]

The corpses of those sacrificed to the drum, like those condemned to death, were thrown over the scarp edge of Mbande, to be sucked into the marsh beneath.

Towards the early Kyungus their subjects expressed the feelings of worship and terror appropriate to an irascible divinity. 643 782

At Mbande the nobles of Ngonde would sit round praising the Kyungu —the drums went *kinde! kinde!* And they would praise him in antiphony: 'Oh, Kyungu! . . . Great Father! Great Father!—burier of men!—Great Father! Great Father!—Great Father!—O Mpeta![1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kiposa[1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kyabala![1]—Great Father! Great Father! O Striker and Stabber! Great Father! Great Father! O Mwenende! Great Father! Great Father! O Mpolombasambo! Great Father! Great Father! Dweller in the hot sun!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Fish-eater! O Banana-eater!—Great Father! Great Father!' [539]

The general form of this praise-song was identical with that of the prayers in the sacred groves and so it is literally true to say that the nobles of Ngonde worshipped the living Kyungus.

But the majority of their subjects only worshipped from afar in fear and trembling. At Mbande no ordinary commoner was ever conducted into the sacred enclosure, but only the territorial nobles and the elder chiefs, and they only occasionally; while when the Kyungu travelled through his country all men save the 643

[1] These names are obscure.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

indeed from the whispering of men and the shades here, but people speak openly, saying: 'Why does he not celebrate the ritual?' The witches do not come into it. 754 775

QUESTION: Well, when the witches do throttle someone, do they always call shades, or not? 753

KASITILE: No, sometimes they throttle a man alone, and the shades are not there.

QUESTION: But your sickness?

KASITILE: Now the priests in their witchcraft gathered with the shades. [793] The day after we had celebrated Njobakosa came to my place and said: 'We have finished then!' I replied: 'Yes, my body is better now, but the cough is separate, it is from Kyala.' And did you not hear what Mwaipopo asked in his cups—'How did the doctor (the Sangu) know that you are a priest? And that you had done wrong? Indeed they (Kissogota and his fellows) had told him!'

QUESTION: What did he mean by that?

KASITILE: That they had gone to the doctor in dreams to tell him. [787]

Asked about Kissogota's words: 'You are impressive, we are cannibals, we are', Kasitile explained: 'It means, "You chiefs kill cattle for us, you are impressive, that is your impressiveness. Do we kill cattle? No! We eat men, we are witches." Because when we have killed cattle they receive blood, their witchcraft goes away, it stays in its house.'

QUESTION: And your reply, 'You are impressive, you are'?

KASITILE: I replied: 'You are impressive, you are, you are witches, if I were alone what would I do? It is you who brought the chilling breath on me and said I had done wrong. Even though I have not done wrong, you wish to eat meat. If I walk about among you, my body shrinks, it fears.'

Mwaipopo (the chief 116) had also prayed with water the night [782] before the sacrifice, he helps me in prayer and if he prays at his house, I help him. We pray with water to bring out everything; if I do not [776] pray with water then something is left within. I summon all the gods, [775] all the fathers, and all the shades. (*Apa tukwiputa namesi ko kusyosya ilisyu loysa, lenga ndikwiputa namesi po lisyele limo nkati. Nikumpala kyala* [539] *gwesa, tata gwesa, abasyuka bosa.*)

QUESTION:

KASITILE: Yes, when Kissogota and his fellows came in their witchcraft to call my shades to their aid, I saw them in dreams, I saw them! And [787] if they correct Mwaipopo like this in witchcraft, together with the shades, he sees them; he complies immediately, he seeks a cow. And if they just come to throttle me I see them. It is the village headmen of the country who come to throttle me, the shades are not there, no, only Kissogota and his fellows, they stand with the shades, not the others they come and suck my blood and they go away again. I do not speak,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XII

Amusements & Relaxations

517 I HAVE already said that the average African is a man with an abundance of spare time on his hands, and the situation suits him exactly. But even with him it may pall, and something more than mere lying in the sun must be found to fill the idle hours. A full account of the numerous games and amusements would fill a small volume, and a few examples must suffice.

526 Association football is now very popular in many parts of Africa, and Konde youths take up the game with zest; but it can be enjoyed only at Mission schools, or at Government stations, or wherever there is a white man sufficiently interested to provide a ball, and to give some instruction in the game. They kick from the ball of the great toe, as direct kicking with bare feet is impossible. To score a goal is "to give the egg" to the losers, a phrase taken from one of their own games, where a rubber ball is knocked about with sticks by two sides, to attain a given objective, when the losing side is said to get "the egg."

•545 I was once present at a school concert to which audience and performers gathered from many different villages. The programme, when presented to me by

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

the committee, contained no less than eighty-one 545
items. I asked the committee to reduce it by at least a half, but after earnest wrestling with the problem, they returned and said that I must do the reduction myself. By the simple method of drawing my pencil through every second item, I reduced the programme to forty-one, but I did it to the mournful head-shakings of the committee. The performance was a mixture of native songs, games, dances, and Christian hymns, and dragged its weary length far into the afternoon. But there was compensation. Eight or ten boys of [522]
about ten years old came on to the platform, and gave a "show" of a European doctor examining people for signs of sleeping sickness, regarding which there was a great scare at the time. The little fellow who acted the doctor was nothing less than an imitative genius, the kick with which he finally dismissed the examinees being done "to the life," and it never failed to raise uproarious laughter in the great audience.

Of purely native games and amusements the number 524
is legion.

Ingongwe is the large purple lump at the end of a growing bunch of bananas. It is rolled on the ground and pursued by yelling boys, armed with pointed sticks, each jabbing at it as it rolls, until one lifts it triumphantly on his stick.

Ikimbenengwa. Two pounding sticks are laid parallel to each other. One boy holds a third across, lifting and lowering it rhythmically, while another tries to hold it down by putting his foot on it. If he

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

birth but they commonly say: 'This illness has come from Kyala, in the 845
ritual we drive away Kyala (*tukunkaga Kyala*).'

MWANDISI (asked about the meaning of the phrase 'War has come' in relation to twin birth): It means the war of Kyala, of the twins, the illness. We bring out Kyala. Let him get out of the body, Kyala has caught hold of him, has brooded over him, has given him twins. 'Go out therefore! (*Soka panja lelo*).' At first he was taboo. Kyala was in the house; he could not come out. So then we bring him out, saying: 'We have fought the war there, he has come out.'

NJOBAKOSA (another elderly man—also said that the ritual was to to 'drive off Kyala'): He [the father of twins] comes out, he takes a spear and shield and runs, and we run. One snatches up a shield, and another, and another. Then we give each other beer to drink, and food, and meat, snatching it from one another; we drive off Kyala. When the father of twins comes out of the hut we say: 'You hit us!' He replies: 'I am innocent (*muelu*, lit. white) because he has been black (*ntitu*) on account of having twins.'

MWANDISI: If the ritual is not completed [i.e. if copulation does not take place], then they go to divine. It is said: 'The shades are angry.' Are the shades not with Kyala?

ANGOMBWIKE: I remember when I was a child, when I had one younger brother who was just beginning to walk, my father had twins. I remember the people sitting round the beer praying that his first ritual copulation should be successful. They began with Mbasi. 'You, Mbasi,[1] support us! (*Gwe Mbasi utwemele*). You, Kyala, support us!' Then they came to the shades. And I have heard that they always said both Mbasi and Kyala but began with Mbasi.

The parents of twins have been singled out by Kyala or Mbasi and therefore remain somewhat fearful all their lives. Angombwike said:

The parent of twins (*umuviparya*) seems like a great person (*alete mundu fijo*), he is not like us, his relatives. See, he has gained two people, he is the child of Mbasi, he is with Kyala, he has seen Kyala. You know that [262]
pagans do not eat twin bananas, they fear, saying: 'These are twins (*mapasa*).' They give them to small children. (What I speak of is Nyakyusa custom, not the custom of the baptized.) And the parents of twins (*abiparya*) do not eat the bananas on the sides of the bunch, only those in the middle. When a girl has brought a bunch of bananas to them in the temporary hut . . . they say to her: 'Take away those at the sides,' and she takes away here one, and there one.

[1] There were hints of some special connection between the hero Mbasi and twins (*amapasa*), the elder of whom is *Mbasa*. The younger twin is *Mwindeka*, the following [551] ●
child is *Syula*, the next *Kwaba*, and the next *Kwabelila*.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

salutations with his hand upon his mouth. Beer mixed 845
with medicine is handed to him, and, all the others 783
drinking one by one from a calabash, he takes a little into his mouth and squirts it upon each as he or she drinks. The final stage comes about a month later, when, in the presence of the doctor, without whom nothing can be done, all the grandparents and both parents drink beer amid a circle of shouting villagers, and then, laying hold of the calabash, break it in pieces. After one more sprinkling of all, the doctor departs, taking with him a cow as fee for his many exertions. But until another child is born, the parents must eat alone, or with other parents of twins; and the mother may not pass behind anyone without warning them and receiving their consent, signified by clapping the hands.

The naming of the child. The Konde child possesses a varied selection of names. When he is grown he will offer a European employer one or another, sometimes in perfect honesty, sometimes with intent to hide the fact that under a previously given name he had a bad character. But the names are all genuine. Descent is through the father, and the new-born child [611] takes the personal name of its paternal grandfather, let us say Ambangire. But his mother must never refer to her father-in-law by name, nor may she use the name in referring to any other person who bears it; her son therefore takes her own name; if she is called Kalukwa, he will be named Mwakalukwa; next he takes the family name of his father, say Mwakasungula.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•551 He is now Ambangire Mwakalukwa Mwakasungula; but his mother usually has a pet name for him, which no one else uses; and, finally, at marriage he takes yet another name, used only by his wife. But only one name is used at a time. When the personal name, Ambangire, is used, he is among familiar friends; when he is called Mwakalukwa he is being referred to as his mother's son; and when it is desired to honour or humour him he is given his title of Mwakasungula.

Girls take the personal name of the paternal grandmother, but are sometimes referred to by their father's family name.

857 For boys, the work of life begins at about five. It is a greatly longed-for promotion, for at that age many of them go out with the bigger boys to herd the village cattle. One may see almost anywhere a couple of infants, with long sticks, looking after herds of fifteen to twenty head of cattle, and having a thoroughly good time of it. In the low-lying plains they do not begin till they are eight, for there the grass is longer, and the ever-present dangers of the bush are more difficult to guard against. The boys, big and little, get together in groups, and there is no kind of evil that growing boys can learn that they do not learn during that period; but they learn also much that is good, and useful in after life. About eight to ten [872] thousand children of all ages attend the Mission schools, but with many attendance is spasmodic, and the great school of life is the bush. The majority of parents follow the educational principles of Mr. Samuel

9: Wilson
643
622
103
631
551

FN17 Ngonde
Nyakyusa

Chart showing position of sections of chart on "Villages of Mwaipopo' Chiefdom." (Facing page 91)

A	B
C	D

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Gen.	Chief	Village	Headman	Structural Position	Land
643 I	*Mwaijonga* (8a)	IPINDA	*NJOBAKOSA*	Senior village of Mwaijonga	
622		Ichi	*Kongolo*		
103		ITEBE	*NJULYO*	Second senior village of Mwaijonga	Moved for Ip
631		Bukeba			
551		Itumba			
II	*Mwaipopo I* (115)	BUJEGE	MWANSAMBE (Mwegama)	Sons of Ipinda and Ichi	Moved for Lu
	Mwaipopo II (116)				
		Bujonga	Katolile		Moved for Ip
		Lupaso		Older section of Bujonga	Moved at same Mwasinga II
		Kleyela			
		Bunkali		Contemporaries of Mwaipopo II	
		Bulindanajo	Mwaoota	Much younger men than those of Bujonga	
		Kibonde	Mwakika'o		
		LUPONDO	*MWAIKOFU*	Sons of Bukeba	
		Kyomo	*Kayeko*		
		Kitule	Mwangoba		
		Kabula	*Mwakitwanga*		
III	*Mwasinga I* (156)	IGEMBE	MWAMBUPUTA (Mwafungo) b. c. 1880 active in 1955	Sons of Bujonga	
	Mwasinga II (151) active 1955				
		Katumba		Younger brothers and a few sons of Igembe	
		Lugombo	Nsoma (active 1955)		Moved for I members gon
		Ipoma	Kabolile	Sons of Bujonga and Bunkali. Younger men than in Igembe	Got land from
		Ndongwi		Younger brothers of Ipoma	Moved south
		Kibonde (junior section)	*Mwakiduka*	Sons of Kibonde	
		NJESI	KAKUJU (old & fragile 1955)	Sons of Lupondo	
		Mpunga	Mwahaika	Younger sons of Lupondo	
		Isuba	Mwakabumbe	Youngest sons of Lupondo	
		Lukwego	Lyambelo	Sons of Kitule	
		Ndobo	Nyambage	Sons of Kabula	
		Kilosi	Kamtule	New village	Colony in for
		Kiloba	Nsoma (of Lugombo)	New village	Colony in for

[facing p. 91; section A]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

613
622
103
631
551

OF MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM[1]

	Land	Numbers (Men or boys) 1955	Comments
			Widows of Mwaipopo live here
			Not surviving
[illegible]ungu	Moved for Ipuma	6	
			Not surviving
			Not surviving
	Moved for Lupando	8 (31 wives)	
	Moved for Ipuma		
	Moved at running out of Mwasinga II, but not again		
[illegible] II		7 (22 wives)	
[illegible]ne of			First built where Ishi is now. Driven out by Bujuge
			Chiefdom of Mwakipesile
		9	
			Disappeared by 1955
			Chiefdom of Mwakabule
		8 (30 wives)	Mwambogwa now senior point of country. 'Brought out' Mwasyelo.
[illegible]n of		10	Junior members including Kilwale moved to Lupando. 57 members in 1956.
	Moved for Lupando. Many members gone to farms.		Nzuza now headman of Kilolo, new village in farms.
	Got land from Bujuge		Akiwa, one of Mwaipopo II, a former member, moved to farms.
	Moved southward		
			Sub-chief Likuyulo
		10 (26 wives)	
		8	
			Mwakilwadi sub-chief
	Colony in farms	48	Akiwa, a junior son of Mwaipopo II, was sent to watch over this colony. In 1955 Mwakangale was established as sub-chief of the area.
	Colony in farms	158	Freshly subdivided

[facing p. 91; section B]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643
622
103
631
551

		Kilonde (under section)	Mwakilale	Sons of Kilonde	
		NJEBI	KAKUJU (old & fragile 1955)	Sons of Lupumbe	
		Mpunga	Mwakaiha	Younger sons of Lupumbe	
		Isoba	Mwakabumbe	Youngest sons of Lupumbe.	
		Lukwego	Lyambelo	Sons of Kitule	
		Nikobo	Nyambage	Sons of Kabwila	
		Kibwi	Kambale	New village	Colony in fore
		Kiloba	Nsoan (of Lupumbe)	New village	Colony in fore
IV	Mwanyika (1?)	Lupumbe	KILASILE MWANBASU	Sons of Igumbe Married	Occupies area by parts of I and Lupumbe out of Mwany some members and some cent make room for members of Ig the headman and Lupumbe
		Nsungu	KILASILE MWANBASU	Sections of Lupumbe. Younger sons of Igumbe and Lupumbe. Married.	
		Iduki	KILASILE MWANBASU	Sons of Igumbe and Lupumbe some married, some c. 14	
		Nikoba	KILASILE MWANBASU	Sons of Igumbe and Lupumbe. Some married. 12 boys.	
		Bujini	Pasilili Mwambepo	Sons of Ipumu. Mostly married.	Occupies the Isoba of gro spin and lan to the north then by Ipu moved some c at 'running on Bunkbeds II . have also mov
		Pungulu	Bulyumu Mwakamwikula	Sons of Kilonde III	
		IRINGA	SIKAMBOMBO KIGULEWE	Sons of Njisi. Some married.	Occupies lan pied by Njisi
		Mundu	SIKAMBOMBO KIGULEWE	Sons of Mpunga and Njisi	
		Kanda	SIKAMBOMBO KIGULEWE	Sons of Mundu and Mpunga. Younger brothers of Iringa. Ages 15-20 years.	
		Mlumbi	Bayangulu Mwamunalu	Sons of Isoba	
		Pungulu	Bayangulu Mwamunalu	Sons of Isoba. Younger brothers of Mlumbi. Ages c. 10-15 yrs.	
		Kimili		Sons of Lukwego	
		Kabwila		Sons of Nikoba	
		Nkuju	Mwanjetile	New village	Colony in fore

[1] A more elaborate version of this table appeared in *Good Company*. Certain minor village and errors Capitals—senior village of senior headman of chiefdom.
Italics—dead.
Total No. of taxpayers (including migrant labourers) 1955: 833.

[Taking p. 91; Section C]

643
622
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631
551

		Sub-chief Lihanyula
	19 (26 wives)	
	8	
		Mwakihwili sub-chief
Colony in forest	98	Ahlaso, a junior son of Mwalipapa II, was sent to watch over this colony. In 1933 Mwakisungula was established as sub-chief of the area.
Colony in forest	198	Possibly subdivided
Occupies site previously held by parts of Bajuga, Igwanda, and Lugwanda. At 'coming out' of Mwanyika Bajuga split, some moved coming north, and some south, some west, to make room for Lugwanda. Some members of Igwanda, including the headman, moved south, and Lugwanda moved west.	20 (including Nsungu)	Kilanila first built in Kwimba. Father was in Igwanda. Born c. 1910. Made for at Mwanyika's 'coming out'. This village has a new name. It was originally called Mpugwa.
some chief.		Three Mwanyika's names. He first built here.
some	11	Christian village near school. Mwakisungula (198) first built here but moved to forest. Mwakisungula (198) had occupied this site, then Mwanjunga built. Title I am in.
	23	2 sons of Bajuga who had to move to make room for Lugwanda have built at one end of Nikula but this is irregular.
4. Occupies the site first held by Isoka of generation I which split and has two tiny sections to the north and south, and then by Ipuma III which moved some distance to south at 'coming out' of Mwanyika, Pendeki II and Bajuga II have also moved southward.		9. of Pendeki in Bwichali. Bajuga also called Ipuma. New name has recently been established.
		No son of Lihanyula 'came out' with Mwanyika.
Occupies land formerly occupied by Nijai	23 (24 wives)	12 men stayed at south, 11 remained. Mkwalumba made flee at Mwanyika's 'coming out'. His father was in Nijai.
	19	
	23	
		Also called Isoka
son of		
		Names of villages of generation IV not ascertained.
		Names of villages of generation IV not ascertained.
Colony in forest	198	New village established for second heir Mwakisungula who is a sub-chief. Possibly subdivided.

Amplifiage and errors have been corrected and the village established in generation IV added.

[facing p. 91; section D]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IX

KASITILE THE PRIEST

We turn now from the description of rituals to a personal document, an account of the illness of Kasitile (86), the leading priest of Selya, the causes suggested for it, and the rituals performed. His case shows: (i) the power of village headmen over chiefs in general, more particularly the power of the commoner priests (village headmen of the previous generation) over hereditary priests of the chief's lineage; (ii) the persistent linking of misfortune with sin in both public and private life; (iii) the function of divination in selecting between possible causes of disease; (iv) the influences of Christian and Muslim teaching and Western medical science on a conservative who goes so far as to invite a Muslim to cut the throat of the sacrificial animal and speaks of turning Christian in his old age; and (v) the very great importance attached to 'speaking out' (*ukumpe*) and not leaving anger to smoulder unconfessed. Beer is necessary for such a ritual 'speaking out' and the participants are pressed to drink deep, for *in vino veritas*.

The *dramatis personae* are:

KASITILE (86) of the chief's lineage, priest of Selya
JANE his senior and favourite wife
JANE'S YOUNGER SISTER and co-wife
KILULELE a third wife suspected of bewitching Kasitile
MWAIPOPO (116) the chief and senior kinsman of Kasitile
MWAKYOMBE (148) the doctor who was treating Kasitile
KIMDA *priests* (i.e. Kikungubeja Nsyanigwa, Kyambo Kitali, *vide* pp. 24-34)
NGULUVO, NJOMOKOMA, KIMOGOTA — Village headmen of Mwaijonga (82) and priests of his grove, *vide* pp. 74-7, 84-5
MWAMAKUMBA THE ELDER a hereditary priest, assistant to Kasitile
MWAMAKUMBA THE YOUNGER (Mwambagoje) son of the elder who often acted in his place

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

793 NDEMBWE
755 NSOKI
[551] NSESA } Diviners consulted by Kasitile
[791] A SANGU
NDISA a kinsman of Kasitile

It will be remembered that, in accordance with the custom of 793 delegating ritual functions to a junior line, Kasitile's grand- 755 father (44) had been appointed rain-maker and priest responsible for receiving the Kinga when they came to sacrifice at Lubaga. Kasitile thus held an important public office. He was living on the plain (where he had inherited the estate of his father's younger brother) where his own elder brother (85) died and he came up into Selya to bury him and succeed to his position. But he failed to notify the Kinga priests of his brother's death and they were [787] very angry, and told him he would die if he stayed in the homestead, so he fled back to the plain. There he fell ill, and he was carried back to Selya to be treated by the visiting Kinga priests, who told him he was sick 'because he went to the plain in a hurry and they had not given him medicine'. The idea here is that the heir to a chief or priest must cultivate the power that was in his [778] father's body by drinking medicines: Kasitile was 'losing the *ifingila* of his father by not drinking medicines'. Now *ifingila* implies *both* the medicines of chieftainship and the power which they create in the body of a man.

So Kasitile was treated and we quote his own account of what happened:

> The Kinga came to cook medicine by the tree where I pray—it is where the cattle byre of my elder brother was. They put some medicine for Jane [his senior wife] and me in beer . . . and we drank together . . . [783] and they boiled medicines in a pot and told us both to wash with the infusion every day for two months. I found a goat and called the priests Ngulyo, Njobakosa, and Kissogota and . . . they and the Kinga priests ate the meat together, and they told me to stay for two months and return to the plain again, and so I did. Then the Kinga sent for me to come back and I've come up to live. I found a cow, and called the priests and killed it at the sacred grove, Kinyangwa, and all the people ate the meat. Then the Kinga told me to move to my father's old homestead, and I did so this very year.

Before we arrived, therefore, Kasitile had been in conflict with [753] his fellow priests, and he had been very ill, and attributed his

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

We remarked to a Christian friend, a deacon, that the rains were late. He replied: 'Well, it is not so very unusual. Sometimes rains begin in one part of the country and not in another. Sometimes we do not get heavy rain down here until the end of January.' In short, the more educated Christians are beginning to think in more general terms: they do not as yet define probabilities statistically in terms of rainfall averages, but they are tending in that direction.

And what of the positive content of Christianity? The supreme attraction, mentioned again and again as the reason for conversion, is: 'There is life' (*ubumi bulipo*), and it is life in a world to come rather than 'more abundant life' here and now that is spoken of. The contrast is between heaven above and the shadowy world 'beneath' of pagan thought, or a fearful fiery hell in which most Christians believe and to which, some think, all pagans are condemned. Constantly in sermons by Nyakyusa preachers there was stress on life, resurrection, and on the rewards and punishments of the future life, and this theme recurs again and again in the dreams of Christians.

There is a gulf also between the pagan conception of 'driving off' the shades and the heroes lest by 'brooding over' a man they bring madness and death, and the Christian ideal of union with God. Sermons stress the goodness and love of God, characteristics quite foreign to the traditional picture of Kyala.

Something of the quality of Christian thought and feeling may be grasped by an examination of the names taken at baptism—the convert from paganism always chooses a new name for himself and the meaning is more immediately obvious to everyone than it is with modern English Christian names derived, as they mostly are, from languages no longer familiar. Many of the Nyakyusa names express a very direct personal relationship with God, the Redeemer: 'He has looked upon me', 'He has roused me', 'He has waited hoping for me', 'He has died for me', 'He gives me courage', 'He has changed me', 'He has chosen me out', 'He has comforted me', and a score more of the same type. Some refer to the Gospels: 'Word of Truth', 'The Word has taken hold of me'. A few speak of purification: 'Make me white', 'He has washed me'. Some express that union with God which the pagans so greatly fear: 'We are with him', 'He has come near', 'He has brooded over me', 'Let us approach', and some thanksgiving: 'Let us sing to Him', 'We praise Him', 'We have rejoiced', and some life: 'He is risen',

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'I have entered into life'; a few express the Christian virtues: 'Love', 'Joy', 'Peace', 'Hope'.

These, then, are the things that the ordinary Nyakyusa emphasize. As will have been obvious to the reader, we are not concerned to outline the orthodox teaching of the mission Churches: that can be readily found in creeds and catechisms; but it is not so easy to discover how these are interpreted by converts just emerging from a pagan society. Our Nyakyusa friends are unanimous in asserting that dogma is never a hindrance to conversion: the only dogmatic conflict that arises is over the Christian denial of traditional pagan belief in the power of the shades and witches. What hinders people from joining the Church is the difficulty of keeping the rules of life, such as monogamy and chastity. This, we were assured, is the reason why there are more women Church members than men, though most conversions come through the schools and more boys go to school than girls. Many men leave the Church because they marry or inherit a second wife and few middle-aged or elderly men come to be baptized because most of them are polygynists, but the first wife of a polygynist (and in the Moravian and Lutheran congregations all the wives) may be Church members and many women are baptized during middle life and old age.

Most of the early converts in BuNyakyusa were already living and working at the mission stations before their baptism. They came either from groups of refugees from slaving caravans who were rescued by the German Administration and settled at the newly founded mission stations, or from the poorer Nyakyusa who found at the mission an opportunity to earn cloth and cattle which presented itself nowhere else. Again and again we were told by elderly converts: 'We came to work at the mission and we listened to the preaching and then the word of God took hold of our hearts.' In the early days those who worked at the mission stations and received some instruction there were the only men in the district with any knowledge of western techniques and manner of life. Later, most of the converts came through the schools, and Christianity, education, and the expectation of skilled employment have gone together. There was a strong feeling among Christians in the 1930's that they could expect something better than work as unskilled labourers. In Ngonde the first Christians were not refugees, but there was the same alliance between Christianity and education. At the request of

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

MEMBERSHIP OF VILLAGES

621
613
162
551

(e) *Lupondo* (Senior village of Generation IV)

Members	*Village of father*	*Villages of fathers-in-law*	*Kinsmen in village*
1. Mwanyilu (177)	Igembe	Bujege Itebe Iringa Igembe	Half-brother Half-sister married to headman Father's half-brother
2. Kilasile (headman)	Kituli Father's heir in Kibonde	Igembe Heir in forest village	Married half-sister of chief
3. Ndungundeli Mwaipopo	Igembe	Mwangomo's (C 28) chiefdom	Half-brother of chief
4. Mwasikambo	Bujege. Moved to Kibonde	Another chiefdom	None traced
5. Mwambambale	Bujege	Bujege Moved to Ndola	Married daughter of chief's father's half-brother
6. Mwakalinga	Igembe	Igembe	None traced
7. Mwampora	Kisyero	Igembe	None traced
8. Musika	Ipoma	Ipoma	None traced
9. Mwakipesile	Ipoma	Igembe	None traced
10. Mwakilasa	Kisyero	Igembe	None traced
11. Mwakipokera	Another chiefdom	Mwandosya's chiefdom (C 27)	None traced
12. Mwakipesile	Another chiefdom	Ipoma	None traced
13. Mwakalebela	Mwangomo's chiefdom (C 28)	Mwangomo's chiefdom (C 28) Kabula	None traced
14. Mwambipile	Igembe	Lupondo	None traced
15. Mwakinyolobe	Ipoma	Mwaihojo's chiefdom (C 25)	None traced
16. Mwakasio	Kibonde	Lupondo	None traced
17. Mwajojele	Another chiefdom	Another chiefdom	None traced
18. Mwanaale	Itiki	Igembe Kisyero	None traced
19. Kigasya Mwaipopo	Bujege	bachelor	Half-brother of chief's father
20. Mwampise	Kisyero	Igembe	None traced

i.e. out of twenty members, three are close kinsmen, and two are married to kinswomen of these three. The remaining fifteen members are not connected by kinship ties.

[p. 224]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(b) *Katumba* (Generation III)

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162
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Members	*Village of father*	*Villages of fathers-in-law*	*Kinsmen in village*	*Kinsmen elsewhere*
1. Gwemelose	Kisyero		Elder brother of 2	Son in Ndola. Elder brother in another chiefdom (C 27)
2. Anganile	Kisyero	Not married	Younger brother of 1	
3. Syapabwingi	Kisyero	Lugombo Kasambala's chiefdom (C 2)		Brother in forest village. Brother in chiefdom (C 2). Brother in plain. (All at first built in Katumba).
4. Kileke	Bujege	(a) Bujinga (b) Kisyero	Half-brother of 5	Elder brother Igembe, moved to C 28. Brother in Christian village Kabembe (at first built in Katumba). Brother in Mbeya at work. Brother in Itiki (but away at work).
5. Nkokwa	Bujege		Half-brother of 4	
6. Mwalumu	Bujege	(a) Kisyero (b) Mwangomo's country (C 28) (c) Kibonde	Half-brother of 7	No full brothers. 2 half-brothers moved to other chiefdoms, another to Zanzibar. Daughter married Kibonde, another married Ndola.
7. Nsana	Bujege	not married	Half-brother of 6	
8. Nathan	Bujege	Kibonde moved to Igembe		He only son of mother, 2 half-brothers in Ndola.
9. Pabulosi	Another chiefdom (C 23)	Ndupaso		Father's younger brother's son headman of Iringa.
10. Mwalibaki				

In out of ten members, there are one pair of brothers and two pairs of half-brothers, but all have close kinsmen (brothers, half-brothers, or father's brother's sons) in other villages or chiefdoms. Katumba has diminished from fifty-three members in 1998 to ten in 1955. Many members have died and many have moved, some to the forest colony, some to the plain to plant rice, four to Lupando.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621
613
162
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(c) *Katala* (Generation IV and V)

Boys (none married)		*Father*	*Father's village*
Andulu	full brothers	Mwaseba (152)	Mpunga
Alijesi			
Jestina			
Mololo	half-brothers	Mwaseba (152)	Mpunga
Freda			
Tukafika			
Laseki			
Kimamba			
Abandubandu		Bampolile	Masoko
Andambile		Peteli	Masoko
Lalogwa		Mbukanya	Masoko
Bandadanwile		Imilano	Masoko
Anigwile		Mungile	Masoko
Kofia		Gusike	Masoko
Kaswelile		Mwaiposi	Masoko
Akipwele		Mwankuni	Masoko
Bajeko		Mwangosi	Masoko
Adumile		Gwilliam	Masoko (Inherited in Lupondo)
Kajobene		Mwalusamba	Masoko
Fryin		Anitike	Masoko
Mwitingi		Simeon	Masoko
Ndalwisye		Mwangoje	Masoko
Osijah		Mwaipaja	Mfumbi

i.e. out of twenty-three members, two are full brothers and six others are half-brothers. No other kinship connections were traced.

COMMONER PRIESTS MENTIONED

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Kikungubeja, Kyamba Kitali, Nsyanigwa, Silobwike	Hereditary Kinga priests who come to Lubaga and visit Kasitile on the way
Kissoule, Mwamalunguka, Mwambipili	Hereditary priests of Lubaga
Mwamakunda	Kasitile's assistant priest
Mwalukuta, Nyama	Hereditary priests of Mbyanga, the grove of Mwaklsambwe (30)
Kissogota, Ngulyo, Njobakosa	Village headmen of Mwaijonga (82) and priests of his grove
Mwambuputa, Kakuju	Village headmen of Mwankuga (150) and priests responsible for 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177)

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Husband & Wife

595 There are a few heathen women who do not wish their husbands to take other wives, but many who urge them to do so. Another wife is like a servant in the house, and the position of the principal wife (who is not necessarily the first) is improved when her husband adds to the number of her more or less obedient juniors. Formally they are her sisters; in reality they are her servants, and must always answer her demands with the polite response "*ta*." The husband also gains in importance as he acquires one wife after another. When the children are grown up, they are dispersed to various villages, and the father is always "feared" in such places, because he has sons or daughters who will see to it that he is properly honoured when he pays them a visit.

•553 585 Husband and wife take new names at marriage; but they are for private use only, the old names being used by their friends. The new names, which are given in the presence of witnesses, indicate that the old life is past, and that new duties and privileges now bind the couple to each other.

593 422 The position of the wife is guarded in many ways. Her father and brothers are always ready to take up her quarrel, even to the extent of fighting her husband if need be. [586] She owns property, but she retains it only so long as she is a wife: divorce separates her from husband and children, and also from all the household goods of which she is otherwise mistress. The husband hoes the garden, but the produce belongs to the wife; he may not take anything without her consent, even to feed his friends. If one wife

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

We remarked to a Christian friend, a deacon, that the rains were late. He replied: 'Well, it is not so very unusual. Sometimes rains begin in one part of the country and not in another. Sometimes we do not get heavy rain down here until the end of January.' In short, the more educated Christians are beginning to think in more general terms: they do not as yet define probabilities statistically in terms of rainfall averages, but they are tending in that direction.

And what of the positive content of Christianity? The supreme attraction, mentioned again and again as the reason for conversion, is: 'There is life' (*ubumi bulipo*), and it is life in a world to come rather than 'more abundant life' here and now that is spoken of. The contrast is between heaven above and the shadowy world 'beneath' of pagan thought, or a fearful fiery hell in which most Christians believe and to which, some think, all pagans are condemned. Constantly in sermons by Nyakyusa preachers there was stress on life, resurrection, and on the rewards and punishments of the future life, and this theme recurs again and again in the dreams of Christians.

There is a gulf also between the pagan conception of 'driving off' the shades and the heroes lest by 'brooding over' a man they bring madness and death, and the Christian ideal of union with God. Sermons stress the goodness and love of God, characteristics quite foreign to the traditional picture of Kyala.

Something of the quality of Christian thought and feeling may be grasped by an examination of the names taken at baptism—the convert from paganism always chooses a new name for himself and the meaning is more immediately obvious to everyone than it is with modern English Christian names derived, as they mostly are, from languages no longer familiar. Many of the Nyakyusa names express a very direct personal relationship with God, the Redeemer: 'He has looked upon me', 'He has roused me', 'He has waited hoping for me', 'He has died for me', 'He gives me courage', 'He has changed me', 'He has chosen me out', 'He has comforted me', and a score more of the same type. Some refer to the Gospels: 'Word of Truth', 'The Word has taken hold of me'. A few speak of purification: 'Make me white', 'He has washed me'. Some express that union with God which the pagans so greatly fear: 'We are with him', 'He has come near', 'He has brooded over me', 'Let us approach', and some thanksgiving: 'Let us sing to Him', 'We praise Him', 'We have rejoiced', and some life: 'He is risen',

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

through each group of full brothers, until, when the last full brother is dead, and the son of the eldest is an adult, the family stock comes to him. Thus few men under forty (other than chiefs) have more than one wife. Of 3,000 tax-payers (presumed to be 18 years and over) in Selya, 34 per cent were bachelors, 37 per cent monogamists, and 29 per cent polygynists. Plural marriages breed wealth, for the polygynist is likely to command the labour of many sons as well as several wives, and in due course he expects to receive the marriage cattle of many daughters.

Social status turns primarily on age, sex, and the control and distribution of wealth. As we have seen, the position of a chief is hereditary, but kinship with a chief does not carry office, nor are the kinsmen of chiefs conspicuously wealthy. Every man in turn hopes to control the property attaching to the house into which he was born, and all who live long enough do so. But there is a delayed right of primogeniture, for the senior son of a senior son inherits the bulk of the family stock when it passes to his generation, and the eldest of each group of full brothers has a special claim to the cattle coming in from the marriages of his sisters.

Seniority, whether within the context of the lineage, or of the hierarchy of age-villages, is something respected in itself, but wealth carries authority and prestige only in so far as it is used generously, in hospitality: one man is great and distinguished (*sinya*) because he feeds people, another of little account because he is poor or mean.

Women occupy a position very subordinate to men in Nyakyusa society. They play no part in public life, except in so far as the two great wives of a chief and the first wife of a village headman co-operate with their husbands in rituals; and in the relationship of husband and wife, as well as in that of father and daughter, a woman is expected to show obedience and respect. Her deference is expressed conventionally in her crouching to greet men (*vide* Plate IX), and in her use of the submissive *taa* ('Yes, my lord') when addressed by them. Having no great chiefs and little regard for rank, Nyakyusa men show no trace of subservience in their manner to each other, but they expect a meek compliance from all women. The only relationships with a male in which a woman may in some measure assert herself are those which she has with a brother, and with a brother's sons. Leader-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

decided by the old village headmen and chief in consultation, at the commencement of the 'coming out' ceremony. This moving aside of the old men is an essential part of the ceremony and occurs even when there is unoccupied land available. For example, at the 'coming out' of Mwanikuga, Mwaipopo's heir, the old men moved aside to make room for their sons, although there is a large area of unoccupied land in the chiefdom, which is slowly being colonized by Mwaipopo's men.

Although the main redistribution is at the 'coming out', later readjustments are common enough. If a particular men's village attracts many members, and these members become wealthy in wives and children, then it may be necessary for the old men to move aside a second time, to make yet more room for their sons. The senior headman of the side of the chiefdom concerned, in consultation with the chief and other village headmen, has the power to make equitable adjustments in the land holdings of the villages of his side. We watched one village, whose numbers had diminished, being moved to make more room for a junior one which had flourished. But so long as its members remain together, a village retains its name and identity, though its site may be moved more than once. 'A village', the Nyakyusa say, 'consists in men, not in land.'

Boundary disputes between villages of a chiefdom are not unusual. In the old days these often led to war. Nowadays they are taken before the Court, whence there is an appeal to the federal court, the District Officer, the Provincial Commissioner and thence to the High Court (cf. p. 137). One such case, which we observed, had dragged on for years because the chief concerned, who happened to be president of the Court, feared to give judgment lest he be bewitched by the village which lost the case (cf. Document p. 191).

The division of the land allotted to each village lies with the members of that village, under the leadership of their own headman. The village headman himself, and other prominent individuals in the group, get first choice of sites: a son does not have a prescriptive right to the building site and gardens of his father when the old men move aside for their sons. 'If you are prominent, and you like your father's old site, that's all right, the others agree; but if you are unimportant ("light"), no; one of the important men takes it; you have no power.' Certain building and garden

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

425 554 sites are preferred to others, but the division of them at the 'coming out' does not appear to create much friction.

423 When the old men move they still maintain rights over what may be regarded as the major 'improvement' made on their old sites, that is, trees which they or others have planted. There are two species which were traditionally and still are of great value to the Nyakyusa, the bamboo and the *unyungwti*. Bamboos are used for house-building, while the *unyungwti* produces a fruit which is both delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment. As has been shown in a previous essay[1] rights over these trees are maintained when individuals move from one village to another. Similarly, when a whole village moves, rights over bamboos are maintained, the former owner returning to cut them himself if he chooses. But the less valuable *unyungwti* crop is left to the occupier. As one old man put it: 'We don't send our wives back to harvest the *imiyungwti* trees lest the young men make love to them there.' Bamboos are felled by men. Further complications are now potentially created by the planting of coffee-trees, but we know of no case in which a 'coming out' has yet taken place in a chiefdom in which coffee has been extensively planted—the first coffee-planters were those living on mission land which is unaffected by the 'coming out' ceremony. Now that coffee planting is becoming general, however, the difficulties of moving whole villages will be much greater.

The only land which was traditionally excluded from the 'new deal' in each generation is the very scarce and valuable ground in the bottom of old volcanic craters. This land is owned by families, and is always claimed by a kinsman when the occupier dies or moves to another chiefdom. It may be that long ago the land in each particular crater was owned solely by members of some particular village, but now it is held by old families scattered all over the chiefdom in which it lies. Thus ordinary [428] land, of which in the old days there was ample, was re-allotted in each generation, but the most valuable ground was passed down from father to son. We shall return to this point again in our last chapter.

425 As we have seen, movement of individuals from one village to another is very frequent. Normally land for building and gardens

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa*, pp. 43–5; Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 1, 1938.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

shown by the way in which one fearing witchcraft, or accused of practising it, moves to another village. Sometimes he goes to another chiefdom, but often he only moves to another village in the same chiefdom—the chief himself may feel safe in one village of his country and not in another (*vide* Document, p. 190). It is on his fellow villagers that the good man depends for protection, and it is they whom the evil-doer fears. 754

Accusations within the lineage are rare. At first we were told that they did not occur at all; later a number of elderly informants agreed that this was not true—'the young men have misled you', they said; but careful inquiry only elicited three concrete cases[1] of witchcraft within the lineage (cf. table, p. 204). As we have seen, fellow members of a lineage normally live in different villages, and just how the idea of attacks by kinsmen is reconciled with the theory of village defence is not clear. Possibly it is argued that the witch attacks while visiting his kinsman, for it is in terms of visiting that the effect of 'the breath of men' on erring sons or younger brothers is explained. Where 'the breath of men' is thought to have affected someone of another village, it is argued that he or she came frequently to visit in the village of the attackers (cf. Document, p. 237), and the heir who neglects his elder brother's or father's funeral rites, and who is thought to suffer from 'the breath' of the deceased's justly indignant neighbours, is supposed to fall ill when he comes to their village to enter into his inheritance, or to make arrangements for the disposal of his property. 754 613

Even within the village it is the immediate neighbours that are primarily concerned in a case of suspected witchcraft. In the large villages of the plains the leader of a section, 'he of the heap of hot ashes', has the specific duty of protecting the herd which stands in the smoke of his fire against witches; and in smaller villages, also, a witchcraft case commonly begins with murmuring among a few next-door neighbours. Suspicion of witchcraft falls first on a member of the same village-section, then on a fellow villager; only rarely, and in peculiar circumstances, does it fall on a member of another village, and never on someone outside the chiefdom. 754 621

Differences of rank are relatively slight in Nyakyusa society 754 554

[1] A possible fourth is quoted on p. 246, but the exact relationship of the accused to the victim was not known to our informant.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and scarcely affect accusations of practising witchcraft, save that the chief himself is never accused, though he is often thought to suffer from the witchcraft, or 'the breath', of his men. The commoners, 'the black people' (*abatitu*), are said to be the real witches, but a study of cases shows that junior brothers and sons of the chiefs are, in fact, sometimes accused. Village headmen may be accused just like the humblest of their followers, and men are accused at least as often as women (cf. table p. 198). Thus though witchcraft is held to be hereditary, and is particularly associated with menstrual blood, it is individual behaviour, not birth, or sex, that determines accusations.

What sort of behaviour, then, leads to accusations of witchcraft, and what sort of behaviour is thought to provoke attack by a witch, or bring upon one the chilling breath of men? We found that some quite specific teaching was given to Nyakyusa children on this point.

The type most usually described as a witch is the person whose character makes him (or her) to some extent isolated and unpopular—a proud man who treats his neighbours with disdain; a retiring man who always keeps silent in public; a gloomy wife, or one who fails to greet the other women she meets and to inquire after their children. Such people are treated by their neighbours with less courtesy and hospitality than the traditional ideals of good manners demand. 'Perhaps we do not summon him to drink beer, or to eat with us: and then when our cows fail to give milk we think, "doubtless it is he who is throttling them".'

One who fails to show sympathy with a neighbour in bereavement, neglecting to attend a funeral in the village, or one who does not try to persuade a neighbour to remain, when that neighbour is preparing to move for fear of witchcraft, is immediately suspect. The chief characteristic of witches is always said to be pride (*amatiga*), which includes a cold aloofness, as well as boastfulness and irascibility.

And what sort of people are thought to be attacked by witches? Informants agree that, though they act without public support, witches seldom act without provocation. It is argued on the one hand that they act from greed, and on the other that suppressed hatred drives them to attack (*vide supra*, pp. 92–4 and table, pp. 198–205). The Nyakyusa see no contradiction in this, for they

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

431 between the groom's lineage and that of the bride during the puberty-marriage ritual.

431 613 Within a lineage, also, there is some circulation of property. A young man is provided with marriage-cattle by his father, or father's heir; a father kills a cow at his son's funeral, a son does likewise for his father; and if a son offends his father he begs pardon with a gift. A daughter is given a gift by her father at the close of the puberty ritual, and he or his heir kills a cow at her funeral.

431 621 Village neighbours are closely identified with the father, and feast on the bull of puberty and the offering provided by an erring son, and give gifts to a daughter when she reaches maturity.

431 Kinsmen and neighbours are expected to help provide food, and firewood on which to cook it, for the guests at a funeral or marriage or at a twin-birth ritual. On the first day of a funeral guests are fed on food provided by the bereaved household, on the following day on that provided by their kinsmen, and on the third day on that provided by the village neighbours. Before the marriage-cattle are brought for his daughter, a man asks his kinsmen and immediate neighbours to help him cook for 'the husbands'—not to ask for such help is unfriendly. Kinsmen and neighbours also bring gifts of millet at a funeral and after an abnormal birth, which is used for brewing the ritual beer.

(d) The symbolism of participation and exchange

431 602 What is implied by undergoing a ritual or offering gifts? Participation in a ritual implies close kinship. We see, in the rituals performed after death, or spearing, or binding with ropes, the unity of the group composed of parents, children, grandparents, and siblings; the acknowledgement of a closer link between some siblings than between others; a recognition that wives are of 'one blood' with their husbands; and a separation between kinsmen and affines who are of another blood. In the twin ritual the limits of recognized kinship are expressed by participation and in the death ritual they are expressed by attendance. Observance of the taboo of avoidance, like attendance at rituals, is taken as evidence of kinship.

554 602 The difference in the status of senior and junior wives, and of eldest and junior daughters and sons, also appears in the rituals at puberty and marriage and at death. The unity between living and dead agnatic kin and, in a lesser degree, mother's kin, is ex-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

pressed again and again in the pagan rituals. The Christian withdrawal from them implies a partial break with the closed circle of kin, a movement from the nexus of kinship to that of association, from the kinship group to the congregation of believers. 554 602

The passage of cattle at marriage implies first the establishment of a bond of kinship with the wife for whom they are given. 'Kinship is cattle' (*ubukamu syo ngombe*) and a woman for whom cattle have not been given is never kin (*unkamu*) to her husband. 431 602

The passage of marriage-cattle determines the legal position of the children borne by the woman for whom they have been given. Whoever has given the cattle controls the children; and, if no cattle have passed, the girl's father (or brother) can claim them. If the woman for whom cattle have been given leaves the lineage which gave them, the cattle (traditionally all of them, together with their progeny) must then be returned, even though her original husband is dead; and when she dies she should be replaced. Kinship between lineages once linked by marriage should ideally be permanent, and the link is reasserted in the ritual in which, when a woman dies, her brother goes to cut down the bananas at her husband's homestead and to seize her children, and has to be persuaded with a gift to desist. The identification made between women and cattle exchanged is suggested in the phrase conventionally used when no girl is available to take the place of a dead wife and a cow is offered in her place 'for drawing water with'.

The killing of cattle at a funeral, and the burial of cloths and other goods, is an expression of the idea that the dead take wealth with them. When a man requires cattle to pay compensation for some wrong committed and has not sufficient stock to do so, he turns for help to his affines, his sons-in-law and fathers-in-law, and so, when he dies, and is in need of cattle, it is felt appropriate that they should help him. 775 764 431

But the gifts offered at rituals have many other implications. Men take cattle and cloths to a funeral '*ulati ndage*'—to express sympathy—and gifts are given to a bride also '*ulati ndage*', which then implies congratulation rather than condolence. And gifts are used when begging pardon—a son who has sinned against his father first sends a hen and later offers a bull; and a daughter-in-law who has looked at her father-in-law or sworn at her mother-in-law must offer beer or a bull. Lastly, they are used in lifting a ban, putting an end to an avoidance. When a girl's father and his 431

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

613 referred to is not necessarily an ancestor of those who speak of him. In the rituals the participants look towards the direction from which their ancestors came, and the details vary both with the cultural area and with the particular lineage, but similarity in ritual observance is no ground for claiming kinship. The one recognized bond is common participation—attending one another's funerals and observing the rules of avoidance.

The segmentation of lineages is by houses. Ties between full siblings are closer than those between half-siblings and this is immediately apparent in the attendance at, and participation in rituals, as the genealogy of Mwakobela (Table (a)) shows. Full siblings, particularly successive and linked siblings, are closely identified. The most important link between men or women is inheritance. The heir takes the name and social position of the deceased, succeeding to his or her rights and obligations, and observing the same avoidances. 'A shade is resurrected in the body of his child.' The heir is a junior[1] man or woman of the lineage, preferably a full brother or sister, but possibly a half-brother or sister, or parallel cousin, or a son, or brother's son, or brother's daughter.

613 When the heir is a son, or brother's son or daughter, the separa-
601 tion so strictly maintained between generations is bridged for that individual only; he or she changes generation and a man is treated by his former comrades as a 'father' and referred to by his wives as 'father-in-law', even though they are still his wives and live with him.

The identification of alternate generations is expressed in calling grandchildren ('the comrades of the shades') to eat the sacrificial meat or fish, or take the first sip of beer, as well as in the absence of taboos between affines of such alternate generations. A woman does *not* avoid her husband's grandfather. Thus, though the lineage is treated in some respects as a unit, one man (or woman) of it being able to replace another and override the distinction between successive generations, the unity is not pushed as far as among
[71] many other peoples, such as the Pondo, where the form of behaviour appropriate to a father-in-law applies to *all* senior members of his lineage irrespective of generation.

613 Differences in status within the lineage are clearly shown in the
● 554 rituals. In their observance seniors precede juniors, men precede

[1] If there is no junior full brother, a senior full brother may inherit provided that he has not previously inherited from his father and so become 'father'.

[Category IIb, facing p. 270. – Analysis]

women, daughters of the lineage precede wives. Seniority, of course, does not depend solely on age, and we once saw a little boy precede his father in the performance of a ritual for his grandmother, with whose generation he was identified. The relative status of husband and wife is expressed in the taboo on a woman 'overstepping' her husband physically or metaphorically, and 'overstepping' is symbolized (oddly to a Christian) by the sign of a cross. The precedence of the chief wife is very marked. In commoner families she alone washes with her husband using the *ikipiki* medicine, and he performs the death ritual for her only. A chief may do this for two wives. In Selya a father washes in the puberty ritual with his senior daughter, and among the Kukwe a woman washes with her daughter or eldest son's first wife. 'To wash is to admit that I have lived, and borne a child, and grown up.'

All the rituals celebrate a change in status, and danger lies in not recognizing or admitting the change, in clinging to the past. This is most obvious in the death ritual, which is directed to the separation of the living and the dead. The mourners have the corpse 'on their bodies', they may not separate themselves from him by washing till the appropriate moment, and they share their food and *ikipiki* medicine with the shade, thereby recognizing him as a kinsman; but in due course they drive him off: 'You were our kinsman before but now it is finished, you are a stranger.' 'You are no relative of ours.' 'We are not corpses.' And at the same time they bring him back transformed, as a beneficent spirit in the home. The pattern is a common one in Bantu Africa: the Nyakyusa peculiarity is (1) the speed with which the transformation is achieved (commonly the 'bringing back' of the spirit is delayed a year, whereas the Nyakyusa may delay only a month); and (2) the close correspondence between the change in status of the dead and the change in status of the older generation, who 'move aside' at the 'coming out'. Each generation has its day and must give place to the next.

All through the rituals the dominance of the agnatic lineage is evident, but it does not exclude the recognition of kinship in the female line. Daughters' children must perform the ritual at death, twin birth, spearing, and binding with ropes, for their grandparents, while some sisters' children, and father's sisters' sons, may do so also. What is clear from the genealogies is that kinship links in the female line are not traced as far as in the male line and,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sons, between whom economic and religious bonds were strong, [21] might be liable to isolate themselves, but could not do so when [182] each brother and son lived in a different village. As among the northern Nguni and Tswana, who were organized in age regiments,[1] the principle of generation balanced the lineage principle, each holding the other in check.

Every society values co-operation: 'mutual aid' of one sort or another is a condition of social survival. The Nyakyusa rituals of kinship constantly reaffirm the mutual dependence of members of a lineage. They are 'members of one another' by virtue of their common blood, and what injures one may injure all. This is very clearly expressed in the rituals of death, twin birth, spearing, rotting the ropes, and protection against sorcery. The desire for health and plenty is the lever used to compel co-operation.

The elementary family of parents and children exists in every [21] society of which we have evidence and may be taken as an institu- [399] tion necessary to survival, biological and social, though its form varies. In the death, and puberty, and birth rituals the close character of the bonds between parents and children, between siblings, and between spouses, is expressed; and the polygynous form of the Nyakyusa family, the closer bonds between a man and his first wife and those of the same 'house', and the identification of alternate generations, are also manifested. Thus the importance of the primary ties of parents and children, and of the 'house' within the polygynous family, is enhanced.

Differences in status exist in every society and must do so since [21] leadership is necessary. Individuals move from one position to [384] another during the course of their lives, and all societies celebrate such changes, thereby compelling public acceptance of them, and impressing on the individuals concerned their new duties and responsibilities. These are expressed very pointedly in the Nyakyusa admonition to a bride, or widow, or the mother of twins; in the greeting accorded to the heir to the father of a family; and in the oration to the shade. The rituals are a symbolic weaning from childhood, from the bride's father's lineage, from a former marriage, or from deceased parents, and compel acceptance of a new position; clinging to the old spells madness and death. The conception of being 'born again' and making a new start, is directly

[1] Among the Pedi it was taboo for full brothers to be initiated into the same regiment. G. M. Pitje, 'Traditional systems of male education among the Pedi', *African Studies*, 9 (1950), p. 109.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

121 linked to the physiological cycle of individuals and their close kin,
● 534 and cannot be detached from it as in Christianity.

121 Law is a condition of social survival; no society can exist with-
626 out it; and in so far as religion helps to maintain law and order it fulfils a necessary social function. Among the Nyakyusa (and perhaps in all societies) order is maintained partly by fear of supernatural sanctions. The rituals we have described both enhance fear and relieve it. They harness fear to social ends.

121 The preceding chapters are full of the pagan fear of death,
771 menstruation, childbirth, and shedding blood. The rituals express the fear and teach men what they must do to be saved. They teach them to co-operate with their kinsmen and to follow traditional custom, for in that alone does salvation lie. The fear of madness or sterility compels each generation to follow traditional custom as ordained for them by the heroes: thus is the dependence of man upon his society instilled. The death ritual illustrates this most dramatically. In every society men must overcome death emotionally, they must turn to life. In the death ritual the mourners are distraught, terrified; they express their grief and put it behind them; their relatives and neighbours gather round them, share their sorrow, and help them to overcome it. The dead is replaced. Death is associated with fecundity and so made tolerable. It is no accident that the Nyakyusa interpret all the rituals, and especially the death ritual, as a protection against going mad, against the disintegration of the personality. And safety is assured to the living by following minutely the traditions of their lineage.

[99] That the nature of men's fears is culturally determined is clear from the Nyakyusa evidence, for Christians and pagans alike are agreed that 'the Christians fear much less' than do pagans, and the Christians do in fact ignore taboos which the pagans feel to be binding. But the rituals do not create fear out of nothing. All the situations in which they are performed—birth and death, marriage, and misfortune—are situations of emotional tension in all societies. The rituals heighten the emotions and canalize them. They both teach men to feel, and teach them what it is proper to feel.

771 Many writers have shown us that the conception of sacred in-
783 cludes both the idea of holiness and of pollution;[1] that the awful, the fearful, may be conceived both as pure and as filthy. In

[1] See particularly W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (1889), pp. 152, 446–94 (1894 ed.); R. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (1923).

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Men
of social position are known by the number of *manyeta* 291
(body rings worn on the waist) which they wear: [301
one for a man or woman just "above the common"; 554]
six or seven for a man of high standing. A few women have begun, to their own great discomfort, to wear the immense coils of brass or iron on wrists or ankles which are so popular among other tribes.

Clothes, says an acknowledged authority on the 291
subject, make the man. Not among the Konde. 643
Chungu is a great chief, but his greatness does not 554
depend on what he wears, although there are occasions when he dresses more carefully than at other times. This almost naked man is regarded with a reverence greater than is granted to any but a very few Europeans, and out of all recognition greater than is felt for the native who swaggers about in boots and helmet and white man's clothes. The respect which is accorded to a European depends to-day (though it did not in the past) upon his personal character, his control of resources, the authority which has been bestowed upon him by others. But Chungu, with hundreds of other chiefs throughout Bantu Africa, has a respect which is gained in a totally different fashion. He is in close touch with unseen powers. His prayers have a compelling power, his benediction is priestly, his curse of fearful validity. He is a channel through which may come weal or woe upon the land; and hence his authority depends in no degree upon such an accident as dress.

By almost all who know them the Konde are re- 461
garded as lazy. And to the bustling, and perhaps

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 622 In his tenure of land every Nyakyusa man is related to some chief who is his overlord. But their relationship is not confined to the single element of land-tenure, it is just as many-sided and complex as is any other human relationship; and even as we abstract from it the particular set of facts that immediately concerns us here we must at once refer them again to it if they are to be intelligible.

166 423 622 When a newcomer is received into a village and given land the chief, as we have seen, is normally a party to the villagers' action, and in most cases he himself ceremonially welcomes the newcomer if he comes from outside the chiefdom by sending to him a present of cooked food. He has gained a new subject and his power and prestige are thereby increased. [427] As men are quite free to move from one tiny chiefdom to another and as land is still relatively plentiful the phenomenon of rent does not exist among the pagan Nyakyusa, there is no direct charge ever specifically made in return for the right to build and cultivate. Nevertheless a chief is a chief and his subjects' land is his as well as theirs and they are under certain obligations to him.

622 ● 551 [585] Among these obligations that of providing cooked food for the ceremonies of the chief's own immediate family is probably the most important. When a chief's daughter, for example, is getting married women from all over the chiefdom bring food to entertain the bridegroom and his friends on the day that they bring the bulk of the cattle. The obligation to bring food, though not a legal one, is both reciprocal and conventional. The chief is expected to kill one or two of the beasts to feed his people and if he is mean about this, killing one where he should have killed two, then on the next occasion his people are more reluctant [626] to bring food. But there is also the sense of shame constraining individuals. If the majority of households in a village provide food for a chief on such an occasion, and the majority I think nearly always do so, then the shameful meanness and unconventionality of defaulters is the subject of adverse comment among them.

A chief also has the traditional right, still widely admitted to-day, to send and take food, especially milk and bananas, from his subjects if he has need of it. And we have seen already that men with more than one wife are prompted to retain *banongo* bananas for themselves in order to meet his demands without upsetting the peace of their households. This [177] traditional right however is known not to be admitted by the European Administration, on the grounds that a salary has taken its place, and is therefore beginning to fall into disuse. Chiefs, I was told, often fear to exercise it lest some man refuse obedience and take a complaint to the *Boma*, nor are they willing to confine their demands to those men of whose compliance they are certain. As the salary of an ordinary chief,

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

paid out of the Native Treasury from the taxes, rarely exceeds 10/- a month it may be doubted whether modern conditions are not in this, as in other respects, impoverishing the Nyakyusa chiefs. 622 554

A chief had the right traditionally to evict any man he pleased if he desired his site for his own personal use, giving him another in exchange. But this right is no longer effective: "It is now at an end," as a chief's kinsman told me, "for the man evicted will go to Tukuyu (the administrative capital of the district) and complain that his chief is turning him out of his home without good cause." It is however still perfectly possible for a chief to take any *unoccupied* site he pleases without reference to the local villagers. He may take it for himself or he may give it to a kinsman, and no objection to such an action on his part is ever raised. It is only if he gives it to an ordinary commoner that his people will criticize him. 622 425 178

Land once held by the kinsman of a chief at the latter's gift is more secure to him than any land can be which is granted in the ordinary way by a great-commoner; for no one but the chief himself can ever finally take it from him. If he moves and the villagers wish to give the site to a newcomer then they must either send a message after him and ask his permission to do so or else get explicit permission from the chief, if the newcomer's title is to be in any way secure. 622 425

A case within my own knowledge well illustrates these points: Mwakobela, half-brother of chief Mwaipopo, had been given land in the village of Ipoma by Mwaipopo himself. Subsequently he had moved to Kibonde, a minor chiefdom under the jurisdiction of Mwaipopo, and had spent many years there; and when I first met him he was living there still. But then he fell sick and, suspecting witchcraft, decided to return to Ipoma, only to find his old building-site occupied. For the great-commoner of Ipoma, thinking he had moved for good, had given it to a newcomer. 622 425 624

This grant of land to the newcomer had been irregular in more ways than one: firstly Mwakobela's permission had not been asked, secondly no reference at all had apparently been made to Mwaipopo, who subsequently denied any part in the grant and, thirdly, the great-commoner had not even consulted his fellow villagers; if he had done so they would, so one of them told me in discussing the case, have reminded him of the necessity of first asking Mwakobela's permission. The newcomer however had been given the site unconditionally and when Mwakobela reclaimed it he refused to move; but the rights of Mwakobela were unquestionable and he had no difficulty at all in getting him evicted.

I went to visit Mwakobela a few weeks after he had taken possession of the site and he told me about the eviction: "I approached the great-commoner and asked him who had given Mwangesiye (the newcomer)

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

sheep over it; if it still refused they would kill a cow; and if it still refused then they would kill a human being, the child of a commoner. 789 782

Then there was *Malima*, a porous piece of iron "like a mouth organ," which the Kyungu used to make rain. If he held it up out of doors with its holes clear, so that he could see right through them, then it would be fine, but if he stopped up the holes and then held it up out of doors the sky would at once become overcast and rain would fall. And there were his zebra tails set in horn handles, with medicine in the handles, which his people carried to war to give them victory; and his spear *Kawisa*, and so on. 789

There is no sharp distinction in the pagan religion of Ngonde and the Nyakyusa between its magical and its theistic elements. Sometimes the magical, sometimes the theistic predominates, but often they are inextricably mixed. In the prayers and sacrifices to the ancestors magic enters at every turn: particular people, a particular place, particular materials and gestures, particular words are held to be essential to their success. Nor are the more permanent and obvious magical objects always free from divine associations. When we asked, for example, why the drum *Muenekelue* had needed occasional human sacrifices to make it work properly we got this answer: "It was because their god[1] had given this drum to the Kyungu saying: 'I alone am war, there is none other war save me.' It (the human sacrifice) was like a prayer. The refusal of *Muenekelue* to sound was like the prophetic fit that falls on people (from the spirits) commanding sacrifice (in the groves)." Or, again, it is clear from our evidence that the living Kyungu's power of causing a drought was believed to arise both from his relationship to the spirits and from his possession and use of *Malima* together. His magical body and possessions, being inherited from his predecessors, were part of his relationship to them. 789 771

Now one of the material facts which had magical significance in Ngonde was that of general social status. The magical powers of the Kyungu not only contributed to the general political authority of Mbande but were, in part, magically derived from it. Only the greatest in the land could possess the greatest magic without endangering his life. There were, for example, a number of chiefs' medicines (*ifingile*), and if a chief used a medicine which was above his status then it was believed that, on meeting the Kyungu or some great chief, to whose 789 554 543

[1] The phrase "their god" (*Kyala yaabe*) is normally used by pagans nowadays to mean the ancestral spirits, or some one among them. The term *Kyala*, which originally referred only to one of the most influential Nyakyusa spirits, has now been identified either with the Christian God or with divinity in general throughout all this area.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 status it rightly belonged, he would at once fall down dead. And many
554 stories are still told of such happenings in the past.

And besides this there was the fact that the Kyungu, being the
643 richest man in Ngonde and in the most intimate contact with the ivory traders, could secure medicines from a distance, which had a greater reputation than local ones.

But, as in the theistic aspect of the religion of Ngonde there was
789 considerable local and family autonomy, so also was there in the magical
771 aspect; and here there was individual autonomy also. Lesser rulers had
554 lesser magic than Mbande, but still it was magic. Ordinary chiefs, for instance, had magically filled zebra tails which gave their people military success. And every individual could go to a doctor and exchange a little of his surplus food for magic. Success in love and hunting, in warfare and legal disputes, good crops and good health—all alike, it was believed, magic could give.

(c). *THE ELEMENT OF WITCHCRAFT.*

754 Both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa it was believed that cer-
622 tain commoners had snakes in their stomachs which gave them the power
624 of witchcraft (*uwalosi* or *uwangu*[1]) and among those who had this power were the great-commoners of every chiefdom. Normally a ruling chief was spiritually protected by his great-commoners from the malicious attacks of other witches, but, if he did wrong, then the great-commoners, so it was held, would cease to protect him and join in the attack.

Now in many circumstances the great-commoners' power of witchcraft and the power of the chief's dead predecessors were believed to act together. The anger of witches and that of the ancestors were sharply *distinguished in theory, but in practice they often coincided.* The great-commoners, for example, not only had the power of bewitching their chief but also of appealing to his predecessors to punish him for wrong-doing; and on particular occasions they were often believed to do both at once.[2] And the nobles of Ngonde had similar powers in relation to the Kyungu.[3]

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[1] *Uwalosi* is normally used when the act of witchcraft is disapproved of and *uwangu* when it is approved of by the speaker.

[2] A point of considerable theoretical interest is raised by the repeated statements of our best informant on these matters that it was because they were witches that the great-commoners had this power of influencing the chief's ancestors, that they went to the chief's ancestors in their capacity of witches and, in the manner of witchcraft (i.e. by means of the snakes in their stomachs). But our evidence on this point is not yet conclusive.

[3] So we were told when we put the question; but it was never volunteered. It was the hold which the nobles of Ngonde had over the Kyungu in consequence of his magical fools which was the more emphasized.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

and say 'This is the new Kyungu.' And when they make obeisance to Kyungu all the rest, both the chiefs and nobles, fall to the ground, but Kalonga alone remains seated, for he is the senior of the whole line." 643

In the succession to the great chiefdoms there was formerly a difference of procedure in the two royal lines, that of Ngelenge and that of Ngana. When a great chief of Ngelenge died, the nobles of Ngonde were sent by the Kyungu, both to the funeral and, later, to assist in the selection of a successor. "With the great chiefs of Ngelenge it is we, the nobles of Ngonde, who have always caught their successors. We catch Kalonga, Mwakasungula Mwambelo, Katamba (or Mwenitete) and Mvambungu.[1] But we have never gone to catch the successors of the lesser chiefs, nor used we to catch the chiefs of Ngana either, for they are of the female line.... When a great chief (of Ngelenge) has died we go and consult secretly with the great-commoners and then, if one of the dead man's immediate heirs is suitable we catch him, but if not we may pass them over and take someone else who is, it maybe, quite junior in that house but who entertains his people generously. Him we hit with a dry stick saying, we have you, you are M—(title of the great chief) now! .... The chosen man we set upon a stool; his is the ancient custom. We always (used to) select mature men for these positions, not just youths[2]." 622 565

"The great titles among the Ngana chiefs" we were told "are five: Mwengubwe, Mwafongo, Kalambo, Kilupula and Mwabulambo. In the old days the nobles of Ngonde did not go to catch them, because they were only the female line; they would summon their great-commoners to Mbande and enquire who was to succeed and, when they had discussed it with them, tell them to go and catch the selected man to be the new chief. Then the great-commoners would return and discuss it with the other four great chiefs of Ngana, after which they would catch the chosen man." [554]

The qualities looked for both in a Kyungu and a great chief were the same, with one exception: he had to be "a ruling chief.... elderly man....one who was respectful in his manner to the leading commoners.....a wise chief who knew how to feed his people." The emphasis on generosity in entertainment is most striking, every informant stresses it above all other qualities. Generosity and the possesion of abundance of food were the supreme traditional marks of a chief both in Ngonde, among the Nyakusa and in many other parts of Africa as 643 622 554

[1] The house of Mwambungu was originally a junior branch of that of Katamba.
[2] Mwamudeka and Kyalinga. Other informants make it clear that not only the nobles of Ngonde but the territorial nobles of the plain also participate in the selection of these great chiefs.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 well. The one additional qualification of a great chief was bravery in
622 war; the Kyungus never fought and so in their case bravery was less
554 important.

565 The succession of the nobles of Ngonde, of the territorial nobles of the plain and of the territorial nobles of the hills was similar to that of the great chiefs: the nobles of Ngonde themselves went and discussed with the leading men of the dead noble which member of his family to appoint in his place; and the immediate heirs were passed over if unsuitable.[1] But in the case of the territorial nobles the successor of the original noble sponsor or protégé of that family also took part in the discussions. It will be remembered that there was an, at least ceremonial, hierarchy among the territorial nobles, depending upon the priority of their arrival in Ngonde and the fact that a later arrival was always introduced at Mbande by some established noble and given land near him. And the relationship then established between the fiefs continued to manifest itself at every subsequent succession.

"Mwenelupembe was a Nyika but then he came here to Ngonde and the Kyungu gave him land by the lake. Then later Mwalugali came from Mwela, and Mwenelupembe told the Kyungu that he nad come; whereupon the Kyungu sent the nobles of Ngonde with Mwenelupembe to give him land. And still, when a Mwalugali dies it is Mwenelupembe and the nobles of Ngonde who discuss with his men the choice of a successor. Then, still later, Kasembe came to Mwalugali who told Mwenelupembe, who told the Kyungu. Kasembe came without men; he came from Mwela like Mwalugali but was not a kinsman of his. So the Kyungu said that Kasembe should build with Mwalugali. Then last of all came Songwe with some of his relatives, to Mwalugali. Now Songwe was a kinsman of Kasembe's. Mwalugali told Mwenelupembe who, in his turn, told the Kyungu.——And the Kyungu decided that as Songwe and Kasembe were kinsmen they should be given land together, but a little apart from Mwalugali. And still they are associated, all four, and when one of them dies the other three come to the funeral and together send the message to the Kyungu. And the three of them consult with the nobles of Ngonde about the choice of a successor; they, the nobles of Ngonde and the relatives of the dead noble consult together,

622 The succession to the ordinary local chiefdoms of Ngonde was, like

[1] Later in their conversation it was made clear, however, that, in the case of the more distant territorial nobles, both in the plain to the north and in the hills to the west, it was only to the successors of the most important ones that the nobles of Ngonde went in person. When a lesser noble died then the Kyungu would send to the great chief who was nearest (to Kihupula in the west and to Kalambo in the north), asking him to send men of his own to "catch" the successor.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

that to the independent chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa, tied up with the 622
custom of the "coming out" (*wusoka*). In both areas the two senior sons of the two great wives of each ruling chief were publicly "brought out" about a generation after the "coming out" of their father; and from that time forwards the old chief went into semi-retirement while they divided his country between them. If it was a big country both of them would very likely be prosperous rulers; if it was not then one of them—the most generous rather than the senior—would probably in time attract the bulk of the people to him, leaving his half-brother little but the name of a chief.

Now both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa there was a certain 622
tendency for other sons of an old chief, besides the two senior who were 554
formally "brought out," to collect a few men round them and set up chiefdoms of their own. But it was in Ngonde that this tendency was most marked. And so today the chiefdoms of Ngonde are smaller than those of the Nyakyusa, for they have been far more split up. The reason for this difference appears to have lain in the very great prestige of Mbande, and so of all kinsmen of the Kyungu. There is a saying current in Ngonde: "Every son of the Kyungu is a chief." But no such saying is current among the Nyakyusa. And thus it has happened that often in Ngonde the men of an old chief have been divided up among four or five sons, not among two only; and the most successful of these four or five has not always been one of the two senior. If a junior son was a more generous feaster of men than his seniors he would die a greater chief than they, for many of their followers would leave them and join him. So we see that the formal passing over of a mean or poverty-stricken chief in favour of a richer or more generous junior, in the selection of the great chiefs, was but an extension of a principle which already worked less formally among the little local chiefs themselves.

And, further, it must be emphasized that the principles of succession 428
to high office in Ngonde and the principles by which property is inherited there were, and still are, wholly distinct. When the immediate heir of a Kyungu or a great chief is passed over in the succession he does not thereby lose his inheritance. The wives and property of the dead man are indisputably his. Full-brothers are the first heirs and after them either sons or half-brothers, in accordance with different circumstances; while a sister's son can only inherit if all near patrilineal kinsmen are either still in their infancy or already dead.

The traditional laws of succession to the Kyungship, the great 643
chiefdoms and the fiefs of Ngonde thus present the student with a most 622
interesting balance between different principles: heredity was modified 554

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 622 554 by election; the election was made by the central power and the leaders of the local populations in agreement; mature wisdom, courtesy and generosity in the use of wealth were all essential qualifications for office. In arranging the succession to the local chiefdoms, on the other hand, the central power of Mbande took no active part. All these chiefs were related to the Kyungu, who was informed of every "coming out" as a matter of form, but that was all. In the case of these local chiefs the hereditary principles were modified only by popular choice, acting gradually over a number of years.

(c) *COMMON LAW.*

692 We must beware of letting our civilized preconceptions blind us to the fact that, though some common law must be maintained in every society, it is not always necessary for it to be maintained by a central political authority. In the primitive world of Ngonde Mbande played little or no direct part in the maintenance of common law; the great chiefs, the local chiefs, the territorial nobles, the great-commoners of the villages played a larger part; but even they usually left whole areas of law untouched to be enforced by the common people among themselves. The laws of marriage for example, seem to have been normally enforced by the two families of each married couple concerned, with the advice and assistance of their neighbours.

In a primitive society a man is far more helplessly dependent upon his relatives, friends and neighbours than he is in our own. He cannot normally escape them, for his world is so small. And this fact enables them often to constrain him effectively without calling in the aid of any constituted political authority whatever. Moreover even when it is necessary to call in the aid of political authorities it is often sufficient to call in those that have a local jurisdiction only. Centralized judicial institutions, covering wide areas, are rare in primitive conditions, because widely extensive social relations are rare also. The modern insistence upon the judicial functions of paramount chiefs in Africa is necessitated by the magnitude and complexity of the modern civilised world, in which law can only be maintained by central authorities; but, in many areas at least, this insistence is something new. That many African paramount chiefs had some judicial functions in former times is, of course, a fact, but those functions were often less extensive than they are to-day.

In Ngonde, however, there was traditionally no central court at all in which ordinary men could either bring cases direct or appeal from the decisions of their local authorities. At Mbande only cases of treason and insubordination against the Kyungu or the great chiefs were dealt

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 643 Magemo to Mwakabanga no Kyungu has ever been succeeded by his own immediate heir; the choice of Peter as successor to Mwangalaba was unique, for he was his full brother and the heir to his property, but then Peter's ability and personal wealth were unique also. And in the case of the great chiefs and the nobles also the principle of election is still followed.

178 554 643 The grounds of election have slightly altered. Generosity and wealth are still important, but "wisdom in European ways" is now more looked for than maturity, and shortly before our visit a fairly young man was chosen as Mwakasungula. Bravery in war, of course, no longer matters.

178 565 622 The Administration have so far made little use of any great chiefs except the three who are now "Sub-chiefs;" but the others (the "Important Headmen") could be made into effective local rulers, if their salaries were raised. The ordinary chiefs and nobles (the "Village Headmen") are too numerous and have too few subjects to be very effective links in the chain of modern authority. But many of the great chiefs command the respect of considerable numbers. Moreover the fact that they are already being elected for their "wisdom in European ways" suggests that they will prove competent to deal with modern problems.

The traditional secular procedure of election is still followed, with some exceptions: the nobles of Ngonde are now sent by the Kyungu to participate in the "catching" of the great chiefs of Ngana[1] on the spot; the District Commissioner is informed of the result of every election; while the Kyungu himself, no longer secluded, takes a bigger share in making the choices than his predecessors very well could. And many of the religious elements of the traditional procedure, such as the setting of a new Kyungu on the iron stool *Kiwumbi*, have fallen out of use.

The sending by Peter of the nobles of Ngonde to catch the chiefs of Ngana is a sign of the present centralization of power in his hands under Government. When we asked why the old custom had been changed we were told that it was "because now everything is under the control of Government and comes to the Kyungu."

The gradual ousting by chiefs of the few ruling territorial nobles who still remain in the plain has continued in modern times, but the novel conditions have complicated the process and seem to be checking it. A recent quarrel between Kajuni and Mwenelupembe illustrates this. The head of the house of Kajuni, which is a junior branch of the [570]

[1] I think this is also true of the less important territorial nobles of the hills, but we did not know.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

583 takes place on some occasion and her parents usually find out when it
584 does. In some families the girl's mother examines her after each visit to
836 her husband to see if the hymen is intact, sometimes the girl tells her mother herself. When her father hears about it his action is determined partly by his feelings towards his son-in-law, partly by his need for cattle. Sometimes he does nothing at all; occasionally he sends back the cows he has received for his daughter and breaks off the marriage, and this is particularly likely to happen if the girl has been forced against her will or generally ill-treated. More usually, however, he sends his daughter to live with her husband saying: "You have made her a woman yourself, you must pay the rest of the marriage-cattle quickly."

836 We have no evidence to suggest that the girls in any general way dislike sleeping with their husbands before puberty, rather the reverse; and the men say: "It is good, it accustoms a girl to her husband." But some girls dislike the particular men to whom they are betrothed.

881 The initiation of a girl at puberty lasts for some months and includes several exchanges of food between her family and that of her husband, and a number of ceremonies in which both her girl friends of the same village[4] and her husband's friends from his village[4] participate. If a girl
[587] is not bespoken before puberty the initiation is still carried out in a modified form, but its full significance is lost.

585 Soon after her initiation a girl, if she has been bespoken, goes to live altogether with her husband, to play her part in his economy and to bear him children. If only a few cows have been received for her, her father insists on one or two more being handed over before she is allowed to go. At some time, perhaps during the girl's initiation, perhaps years later, the final marriage ceremony (ukwa) takes place. The balance of the marriage-cattle are brought to her father by the husband and his village neighbours,[4] her "mothers" prepare a great deal of food for the guests to eat, there is dancing, feasting and great excitement.

554 The number of cows handed over varies with the wealth and social
583 status of the two families concerned. Six to ten cows is the most usual number, but sometimes as few as four or as many as thirty change hands.

583 The second method of marriage is adopted when a man falls in love with a grown girl, who is not bespoken, and cannot find the cows to satisfy her father at once; he runs off with her and regularizes the position
583 later by sending cattle. The third method is adopted when a man falls
837 in love with a married woman and has cows available; he runs off with

[4] Vide index "The Age Village"
[p. 269, col. 86 — Analysis]

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

636 177 578 *supra*). Only one of them can receive the salary and they commonly dispute about it. Quarrels are particularly frequent over the position of senior chief, for the presidency of a Court carries with it a relatively large salary. Old senior chiefs cling to the position long after their sons have "come out" and when they die their full-brothers still dispute the position with the sons because of the salary involved. Such a situation could not have arisen before 1926, for then there was no comparable issue between them.

636 622 177 And the introduction of salaries has also had a most profound effect upon the relative status of the two young chiefs who "come out" together. When an ordinary chief, with a small salary, dies the Government recognizes the first son alone as chief and pays the whole salary to him. This reduces the second son to the position of a minor chief as effectively as a defeat in war might have done in the old days. But, while the action of warfare only occasionally led to the subordination of one of the brothers, this action of the Government does so invariably, and always subordinates the younger brother. When a senior chief dies, on the other hand, the salary is usually divided: the bulk of it goes to the first son, together with the position of senior chief, while to the second son is given the salary of an ordinary chief.

554 622 As the prestige and authority of a father in his family, or of a man among his neighbours, is closely connected with his wealth on the one hand, and with his believed religious powers on the other, so also the status of a chief among his people. He has more cows, more wives, more food than other men; he is spiritually responsible for the fertility of the land, the women and the cattle of his chiefdom. But he is no autocrat, and all his public functions require for their exercise the co-operation of his great commoners.

622 595 Polygyny is, above all, the mark of a chief. Few commoners have more than five or six wives, but a chief frequently marries fifteen, thirty, fifty or even more; his wives weed and plant the fields which their unmarried sons hoe, and there is plenty of food for guests. Chiefs themselves hoe when they have time, and often they employ a poor man to hoe for them as well, rewarding him after a year or two with a cow. It is not [537] possible for one man to satisfy so many women sexually, and it is generally said that every chief's wife, save the five or six who are his favourites, has a lover. But intrigues must be carried on with care, for their discovery means a great public scandal.

The extent of a chief's polygyny is conditioned by his control of cattle, and his income in cattle is derived mainly from inheritance and the

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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476 all, hunting is organised like warfare and fishing is a joint endeavour, both ordered by the chief.

471 Every chief has a title of ownership (*ubwene nakya*) to the land of his
622 chiefdom and can evict any man he pleases, (giving him another plot), if he wishes to build there himself; but his people also have titles of ownership to it, both collectively, under the leadership of the great commoners, and individually, each man to his own ground. It is the great commoners who, in consultation with their neighbours, give to the sons of each village land on which to build; it is they who, together, finally fix the boundaries of the young men's villages at their "Coming Out;" it is they who, again in consultation with their neighbours, grant land to strangers who ask for it, though they must notify the chief and get his approval before doing so.

627 As the single great commoners settle disputes within their own
692 villages so the chief and great commoners together hear and decide cases within the chiefdom. Many of these legal actions are now settled in the Courts, but not all of them; and, even when cases are going to Court, preliminary hearings commonly take place before the chief, first. Cases are conducted and witnesses interrogated by chief and great commoners together, and the decision which the chief pronounces is an expression of their general opinion.

● 554 Among the great commoners there is an order of seniority. The
629 leaders of the two senior age-villages of the chief's own men play a prominent part at his "Coming Out," they each have a pre-eminent authority in one side of his chiefdom, and the other great commoners rank as their juniors, some on one side, some on the other. In the old days the two senior great commoners each led a whole side of the chiefdom in war.

622 The two most effective checks on the power of a chief are migration
754 and witchcraft. Military strength used to depend upon the number of a chief's adherents, to-day the scale of his salary is similarly dependent; men are quite free to move, and there is a constant flow of adherents from unpopular to popular chiefs. But unpopularity is most feared in its spiritual form of witchcraft. We have seen already that an adverse current of opinion is believed to act invisibly, as the "breath of men," against an unpopular member of a village and to make him sick. So also the adverse opinion of a single village or of a whole chiefdom is believed to have power against a chief, to bring sickness or even death upon him. As in the single village, so in the whole chiefdom the great commoners are the prime sources of this spiritual power; they are believed severally to protect the members of their own villages and jointly to protect their

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 784 round him and sit at home in the middle in the sun. . . . All the old chiefs inspired fear (*bupale*). It used to be taboo to walk near the house of a chief and approach him unless taken by a village headman . . . nowadays men walk about and enter his home and [177] even steal his food.'[1] The power came partly from his position as the living Lwembe, and partly from the medicines with which he was treated, especially the terrible *ifugila*.

643 [554] The 'divine king' who came as a conqueror bringing iron is also associated with victory in battle. Still today a brave fighter is saluted as 'Lwembe', and an iron spear is one of the emblems of chieftainship.

643 793 782 The Lwembe was himself a priest—he is often referred to as *sepage*—but he was assisted by commoners. There is a hereditary keeper of the grove of Lubaga named Kimoule who is the descendant of that Kimoule the commoner who fled from BuKinga with Lwembe. It is he who conducts the sacrifices, who daubs the participants with medicines before they enter, and who protects the groves. 'If by mistake the grove was a little burnt then the people here paid a beast to Kimoule, it was his to eat as he liked.' Others of the priests say that Lwembe found their ancestors at Lubaga; they are 'owners of the soil' there, and one of them, Mwaseni, could give us the names of six generations of ancestors who had been priests of Lubaga before him. But the bulk of the commoner priests are not hereditary at all, they are surviving village headmen (or their heirs) of the most recently dead Lwembe.

The success of the sacrifices at Lubaga was held to depend upon the proper co-operation of chiefs and priests: first, on the Lwembe himself (the coverage of food among the Kinga, and of milk among the Nyakyusa, while we were there, was attributed by Kaitila to the fact that there was no living Lwembe); secondly on the commoner priests of Lubaga; thirdly on the commoner Kinga priests; fourthly on Kaitila (86) and certain other priests of Selya; and fifthly on the chiefs of the Nyakyusa and the Kinga who provided the offerings. 'Can a priest celebrate alone?' said Kaitila. 'No, the ritual depends on the chiefs.' The celebrations thus linked together chiefs and people, as well as Kinga and Nyakyusa, and numerous different Nyakyusa chiefdoms. The hereditary Kinga priests live in the country of the Kinga chief Mwakalukwa and

[1] This is inconsistent with Kaitila's statements quoted above. The general opinion was that chiefs were more powerful than formerly, but the living Lwembe lost so.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

system is still the accepted form in Mwaipopo's chiefdom; the advantages of separating kinsmen in different villages are explicitly stated, and the contrast between the Nyakyusa and their neighbours in this respect emphasized. 'Certainly we do not live with kinsmen here but the Kinga do.' 'It is not good for a son to live close to his father, they will quarrel.' 'When we move to another village we consider friendship not kinship in selecting it.'

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(3) THE BALANCE BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND SECTIONS

The ritual cycle of the 'coming out' and the sacrifices in the groves helped to maintain a balance of power between generations, as well as between chiefs and commoners. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) in 1953 it was Mwabuputa, the senior village headman of his father, who took the leading part. He was described as 'the greatest man in the country' who 'brings out the chief' and his manner indicated that he was well aware of his power. During the reign of Mwaipopo (116) the power of his father's village headmen, Njobokosa and Ngulyo, was apparent at every ritual. Spiritual power was shared between chiefs and commoners, but exercised ideally by a virile chief of the ruling generation and the experienced headmen of the retired generation.

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[554]

Those chosen as senior village headmen at the 'coming out' are commonly older than the young chief, but village headmen are thought of as surviving their chief—it is they who were responsible for smoothering him, and performing the sacrifices in his grove. The headmanship is an office and so long as the office is necessary an incumbent is found for it, in the person of the heir of the original holder who is so closely identified with the deceased that most precise inquiry is often necessary to establish whether a given individual is the original holder, the succeeding heir, or a later heir, successor to the successor. The Ngulyo who officiated at the rituals in 1953 was the heir of the original Ngulyo (some said the grandson, not the son) and he was criticized by Kasitile as being 'a young man who knew nothing'. The principle, so familiar in Central Africa, of a perpetual office[1] emerges, among the

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[1] J. Gluckman, *Kinship and Local Organization on the Lungwala*, Communications of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute No. 5 (1950), pp. 14–15; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), p. 100; A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, O.U.P. (1939), p. 62; 'Some Types of Family Structure among the Central Bantu', in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, p. 204; J. Roscoe, *The Bagesu*, London (1924), p. 9.

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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IX

KASITILE THE PRIEST

WE turn now from the description of rituals to a personal document, an account of the illness of Kasitile (86), the leading priest of Selya, the causes suggested for it, and the rituals performed. His case shows: (i) the power of village headmen over chiefs in general, more particularly the power of the commoner priests (village headmen of the previous generation) over hereditary priests of the chief's lineage; (ii) the persistent linking of misfortune with sin in both public and private life; (iii) the function of divination in selecting between possible causes of disease; (iv) the influences of Christian and Muslim teaching and Western medical science on a conservative who goes so far as to invite a Muslim to cut the throat of the sacrificial animal and speaks of turning Christian in his old age; and (v) the very great importance attached to 'speaking out' (*ulumpa*) and not leaving anger to smoulder unconfessed. Beer is necessary for such a ritual 'speaking out' and the participants are pressed to drink deep, for *in vino veritas*.

The *dramatis personae* are:

KASITILE (86) of the chief's lineage, priest of Selya
JANE his senior and favourite wife
JANE'S YOUNGER SISTER and co-wife
KHULELE a third wife suspected of bewitching Kasitile
MWAIPOPO (116) the chief and senior kinsman of Kasitile
MWAKYONDE (148) the doctor who was treating Kasitile
KINGA *priests* (i.e. Kikungubeja Nryanigwa, Kyamba Kitali, *vide* pp. 24-34)
NGULUVO, NJOBOKONA, KIMOGOTA — Village headmen of Mwaijonga (82) and priests of his grove, *vide* pp. 74-7, 84-5
MWAMAKUNDA THE ELDER a hereditary priest, assistant to Kasitile
MWAMAKUNDA THE YOUNGER (Mwamlangoje) son of the elder who often acted in his place

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 but I see them. It's taboo to speak. They must seek blood and they go
775 off; we fear them!

Question: Why do you chiefs never speak out if you are throttled?

753 Kaitile: If I speak how many would there be to name? Very many!

[689] For us it's taboo to accuse a man of witchcraft, but the commoners
[554] accuse one another. Look you, do few people keep you company?

Many!

Like us chiefs, everyone comes. It's taboo for us to speak out, we fear. Look you, when Mwambene (Mwaipopo 116) and I were alone we feared to throw out the beer, we said: 'If we throw it out will they leave?' But when Kisagota came, he said: 'All right, I will throw it
[152] out myself.' We fear the fierce great priests, the terrible witches, they are angry.[1] We shrink when they appear.

[622] The village headmen of the country call on the priests for help against us, they whisper by the fire, the priests come in their witchcraft, they call on my shades saying, 'Let us punish him', also they eat,
[793] together with the shades. Our shades never initiate anything, never; they look to the priests. But with a commoner the shade may initiate matters himself. Yes, people whisper indeed, but is that witchcraft? No! They whisper openly and ask, 'Why did you not perform the ritual?' But even although people are silent, still the shade comes
[688] saying, 'Why did you not perform the ritual? I am on the road.' He initiates the thing himself.

Question: But don't people eat meat at the ritual of a commoner?

Kaitile: Yes, and if he does not celebrate it they accuse him, but they accuse him openly.

Question: If the heir buries him with a few cattle?

688 Kaitile: If a rich commoner dies and the heir buries him with only
775 one cow, the shades are angry and the people also; their chilling
774 breath comes on his body, perhaps he falls ill himself, perhaps his child falls ill, but the people and witches do not meet together, people are angry here, and the shades there; all of them and the shades too, because he has celebrated with one cow only. People are angry because
[787] they wish to eat the meat. But the oracle says, 'The shades are angry.' It does not speak of people, it knows that people also are angry, but it speaks of the shades. And at the celebration he prays in the evening, the next day he calls people and kills a cow, and throws the sacred
[783] meat in the banana grove, saying, 'Here is your meat, father.' People say, 'Indeed he did wrong, his father was angry', but they do not confess saying, 'It was we', no, they say 'the shades' . . .

[826] We chiefs have bodies which are different, the commoners arrived
[554] first in the country, they ate raw food, we fear them saying, 'They eat raw food.' It is we who followed and brought fire. To us they confess

[1] *Amipepo imbori milikulu.* The noun class implies size, fierceness, and dislike.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(their witchcraft); to each other they say: 'It is your father.' Because if they confess to a fellow commoner saying, 'It is we', he says, 'You are "eating" me, drink the ordeal'. The witch is driven out. But to us they admit saying, 'It was we who were angry.' They do not fear us. Commoners are the seniors in the country; they arrived first. 689 775 774 826 559

It will be remembered that the commoners are spoken of as 'black people' (abatite) and that the first chiefs were 'pale' (mwele) but these words also have moral implications. 'It is said that a person "has a black heart" or "has black blood", or "is black in his face towards us" when he is thought to be a witch, eating his fellows, or when he is a thief, or a liar, or an adulterer, or dirty. Even though his body is light coloured (mwele) the word "black" (atite) is used of him metaphorically.' And mwele implies innocent, pure, as well as light in colour. The comparable symbolism of 'nigger' and 'white man' is all too familiar in Johannesburg or Charleston.

That Kasitile himself was much afraid of the commoner chiefs and was relieved by the 'speaking out' was clear, and the people of the country as a whole were glad that the ritual had been celebrated, for they expected an increase in fertility. Some days later Mwakyonde (148), came in and said, laughing, but half serious: 'Congratulations, Mwaipaja (G.W.). You have celebrated the ritual, we rejoice greatly, you give us fertility of the soil, you are a great priest.' [152] [578] 793 778 183

In some moods Kasitile was inclined to become a Christian, but he felt an obligation to the country as priest, and believed too strongly in the efficacy of the traditional rituals to abandon them. He said to G.W. one day, over a pot of beer: 'If it were not for the ritual I would get you to speak to the Europeans of the mission, and I would go with my wife Jane, and be baptized. If my son was old enough and had agreed to carry on the ritual I would do it; perhaps I will when I am old. . . . It is good to have one's heart washed clean, we are dirty inside. The Christians say to us: "You with your four wives each, you are all dirty, you love one and squabble with the rest." Well, it is so with me, I love Jane only; I would like to go and be baptized with her. But I fear for the ritual, I fear hunger, the hunger of the people. For I am the food of the country, I am the maker of food.' [177] [787]

We left Selya shortly after this and were not able to observe the effect of the ritual on political relationships in Selya. Kasitile lived another seventeen years, duly performing his functions, and in 1954 he was succeeded by his brother's son, James.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

their wives took to wearing cloth they should earn it for themselves by growing and selling millet and brewing beer, and many women do the clearing and hoeing in their fields, work that used to fall to men; but it is difficult for a chief to refuse to provide a man to hoe the ridges in his wife's field, or to refuse an elderly woman a cloth or some salt, and young heirs grumble much about their encumbrances.

In the political field there has been a sustained attempt to make local government more democratic and to include in it the educated men. Between 1891, when the German Government first assumed control of the area, and 1938, the tendency was for the power of the chiefs to be increased at the expense of that of the commoners. This was admitted by the chiefs themselves, as we have seen. In 1949 there was established a system of Rural Councils, on which chiefs, village headmen (*ambafwa*), and ordinary commoners are represented. Four[1] of each category are chosen as representatives on the Council in their area by an electoral college itself elected by all taxpayers. Rungwe District is divided into five areas. The policy of treating some chiefs as senior to others has been abandoned and each of the seventy-eight recognized rulers (*abatwe*) is eligible for election as a chief's representative on his local Rural Council. Village headmen (two from each chiefdom) and the ordinary commoners are similarly chosen. The five Rural Councils in turn elect one man of each sort to the District Council.[2] The system allows for, and seems to have achieved, a combination of men with traditionally high status and those who are conspicuous by reason of their education or success as coffee or rice farmers. The old feeling that education was not necessary to a chief's son, though it might be useful to a poor man, has vanished, and a considerable number of the educated leaders of the district are sons or grandsons of chiefs. The elected president of the District Council, Mr. Gordon Mwanasaso (186) is of the Nyakyusa chiefs' lineage, though not of the most senior line. In the Rural Councils the presidents elected have all, with one exception, been ruling chiefs, but it is not necessarily the genealogically senior who is chosen. There is scope for selection on the grounds of character and ability.

[1] Five in the populous plain, Nsalala (Mu'Ngonde).

[2] *cf.* E. E. Kingdon, 'The Initiation of a System of Local Government by African Rural Councils in Rungwe District of Tanganyika', *Journal of African Administration*, vol. iii, 4 (1951).

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

villages grew ever smaller and became extinct as their members gradually died off in old age.

A Nyakyusa village, then, owed its being to the most significant political, social and religious event. Each village had its area approximately demarcated, and each headman was ritually and magically strengthened in order to lead and protect his men and their families.

This particular system operated satisfactorily in the demographic and land-using conditions of the old days. By the process of bifurcation, briefly described above, new chiefdoms and new villages were formed for each generation. Although the population appears to have been increasing rapidly there was always sufficient land to create two chiefdoms where one had existed before, and to create new villages and more villages than had existed before in the old chiefdom. The two new chiefs were able easily to move apart and find sufficient and more than sufficient land for their needs.

The system of bifurcation, the ideal of the Nyakyusa, did not always work out so neatly in practice – at any rate it often did not in the Lake Plains. Sometimes it did work; for example, the present chiefdoms of Lazarus and Kyesa are the two parts of their grandfather's single chiefdom, which split up under their respective fathers. Similarly, the present Mwakipesile and Mwamanenguba chiefdoms stemmed from a single unit, while the Mwakipesile chiefdom itself today is really two indigenous chiefdoms, but the Government would recognise only the senior brother's claim to chieftaincy and allowed him authority over the whole. Even where a single new chiefdom succeeded the old (frequently as the result of civil war in which one brother subjugated the other) the essential dichotomous arrangement persisted so that the resultant single unit had two distinct halves, each with its own head with his villages and headmen. In any case, whether traditional bifurcation occurred or not, and right down to modern times, new villages have been established at the time of the "coming-out" of the new chief. The basic village system showed greater persistence and remained truer to type than did the chiefdom and the wider political system.

The real authority of a Nyakyusa chief was not in general very great, although individuals here and there achieved personal importance. A chief was accorded a great deal of prestige and honour, and by tribute and gifts he frequently became pre-eminently wealthy. He was supposed to be kept informed by his headmen of all important village affairs and to approve all matters concerning the land, but the village headman was in fact the real land authority, who attended to the details of land allocation and land use within his village. A chief could not do this, and in fact only in so far as he had the support and loyalty of his headmen had he any authority at all. "A chief is a chief because he has headmen," one informant put it to me – he was a prominent chief himself. A village said: "A chief does not own the chiefdom, or the land. We, the people together, own it." A chief could, without notice or advice, take any unoccupied land for the use of himself or of his kinsmen, but he could not allocate it to others; both headmen and villagers would have indignantly and successfully protested had he tried, as some considerably did. Land disputes, an uncommon feature in a country where land was plentiful, were settled by the headmen of the village in question; they were the private affairs of the village and the chief had no right of interference. Inter-village disputes first came before a meeting of the headmen concerned, with perhaps the assistance of the senior headman of the chiefdom. Only if a dispute could not be settled and if it seemed likely to threaten general peace within the chiefdom would the disputants go before the chief himself, who even so relied and had to rely heavily on his headmen to secure a settlement. So delicate was his position that he might be unable to resolve inter-village disputes for fear of witchcraft reprisals against him by the unsuccessful party.

10:Gulliver R-5 (1954-1955) 1956 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

plots of maize, squashes, tobacco, etc., and useful trees (bamboo, citrus, mango, kapok, mpangati and Eucalyptus). Artificial drainage would, of course, make more land available along the rivers, but this is in general beyond the abilities and resources of the Nyakyusa without considerable outside assistance.

Finally, in this matter it is to be remembered that in addition to a man's arable holding, each of his wives has a banana plot at her house from which she obtains her staple foodstuff. Such plots amount to perhaps about a rood of an acre on the average. On the other hand, the Nyakyusa are no longer prepared to tolerate a predominantly banana diet. Rice has, in most areas of the Lake Plains, become almost as important as banana.

Large-sized Holdings

Some blame for this novel shortage of land and the smallness of the average holding has often been laid upon that minority of Nyakyusa who have exceptionally large holdings, and also upon the immigrants from beyond the Lake Plains who have come to settle there during the past decade.

The occupiers of large-sized holdings are rather fewer than has sometimes been supposed. The minority of large land-owners, such as some of the modern chiefs with as much as 25-30 acres, has brought more attention to them than is really warranted. Most chiefs and village headmen have arable holdings of above average size, as a result of their privileged positions in the land allocation system and because of their prestige influence; but they remain a small minority and their number is bound to decrease in the future as inheritance causes sub-division of their holdings, for most of them have also more than the average number of wives and sons. In the two high-density regions it is clearly impossible for any man much to increase his present holding. As will be shown later (see page 24) the modern trend is not necessarily towards a dangerous fragmentation of holdings.

The data obtained on this matter for my eight village samples are summarised in Table III, page 15. In these villages the two men out of 272 who held more than ten acres were a village headman and the father of a chief.[1] There were seven other headmen and one chief as well as some other locally influential men amongst the people covered by my surveys, but none of them held more than ten acres. There are, of course, some commoners amongst the large land-holders; many of them are close relatives of the chief or headman and have thus received preferential treatment. Some, however, are ordinary villagers who were perspicacious enough to see future trends and to obtain land in the early days before most men realised its new value and when vacant areas were still easily available. Such men are tending to become a new, wealthy class, but on the other hand they are particularly susceptible to the begging of kinsmen and friends who have insufficient land. If they are not to be regarded as unneighbourly or even anti-social (perhaps practising witchcraft) they are virtually compelled to be generous sometimes, both with their land and with their profits.

On the whole this minority of men evoke little envy or jealousy among the Nyakyusa, who indeed take it for granted that their chiefs and headmen will have more land than ordinary villagers, as befits their status and prestige. If it be thought that by reducing somehow the size and number of these unusually large holdings then the land shortage might be partly relieved, it is a false hope. I warmly think that the Nyakyusa would welcome any such attempt at interference by administrative action, but in any case it would only provide minor and temporary relief here and there and would not be worth the executive difficulties involved.

1. The second man should be a chief himself but he was dismissed by Government on the representations of his predecessor, the past holder of the prestige and privilege of a chief (in the sense in which chieftainship is purely local government office).

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Problem of Immigrant Land-holders

Undue importance has also been given to immigrants, but their numbers are relatively small and only significant locally. Since about 1948, or a little earlier, there has been an influx of Africans into the Lake Plains: – Nyakyusa from the Highlands (chiefly from the Central Region – Pekati), Ndali from the Ndali Highlands of Rungwe District and Kinga from the Njombe District to the east beyond the Livingstones; from northern Nyasaland have come Ndali, Lambin and Sukwa, and there are also small numbers of Bemba and others from Northern Rhodesia. They have been attracted in the modern era, when local movement is easier, by the possibility of obtaining land in the northern Lake Plains, where rainfall is so high and untouched bushland has been available.[1]

These immigrants have been and continue to be almost entirely restricted to the north in the "low-density region" (see map, facing page 15). This contained the outstandingly empty area of the country and still there remain vacant lands to be taken up. Such land is usually of relatively inferior quality, easily subject to erosion and loss of fertility on the slopes of the foothills and unsuitable for paddy cultivation except in small, isolated basins. The immigrants, that is, have settled in areas rejected by most Nyakyusa. There, locally, the newcomers outnumber the indigenous population. In the flood plains, the high-density regions, the proportions of foreigners cannot be more than one or two per cent. of the population, and in most villages there are none at all.

It is true that these newcomers do occupy land which might well be used to relieve the congestion nearer to the Lake; but in practice this would not be at all easy. To take a single example: the newly opened area in the north of the chiefdom of Mwakyusa between the Kiwira and Songwe rivers is being rapidly taken up by Ndali from the north-west, Nyasalanders and Nyakyusa from the Central Region (in that order of numerical importance). A few miles to the south, in the centre of the same chiefdom, the inhabitants of the Ikolo area consistently refuse to move although they manifestly cannot meet their land needs within their present villages. They, and others like them, say with some truth that paddy cultivation is less easy and less profitable in these newer and higher areas, and that poor communications make the disposal of produce more difficult. They also say, but more often leave to inference, that they are unwilling to leave their traditional village areas and begin in new parts, even though the move required is only one of a few miles. They have not yet become sufficiently aware of the permanent gravity of modern land shortage to overcome their parochial inertia. By the time they do become aware of it the opportunity may well be lost, for immigrants continue to arrive in twos and threes, and the last vacant land may be taken. To date, however, some vacant lands remain, albeit of poor quality, into which the densely packed Nyakyusa could move, and the immigrants cannot be blamed, at least not yet, for preventing the expansion and resettlement of the local population.

At the moment the chiefs and headmen in these northerly areas are keen to obtain as many of these immigrants as possible in order to swell the number of their commoners, the size of their villages and thus, directly, their own prestige and importance. Newcomers have every opportunity to be allocated as much land as they wish, where they wish, and many are liberally assisted with food in the traditional way until they harvest their first crop. I heard no complaints from either the local Nyakyusa or the immigrants, and relations seemed to be good. Strangers must conform to Nyakyusa ways of life and to the authority of the headman and chief, although

1. Immigrants from Nyasaland are said to have come following the introduction of new regulations there prohibiting the cultivation of newly acquired bush areas.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

in fact they usually settle on the common East African pattern of scattered homesteads, each in its arable area, and not in the tight Nyakyusa village pattern.

I think that the headmen and chiefs concerned would not welcome a restraint on immigration, for it offers them a chance to emulate the numerically produced prestige of their fellows in the flood plains, to whom at the moment they feel inferior. They would, of course, most probably prefer indigenous Nyakyusa, could the latter be persuaded to settle there. As it is, at least some of the Nyakyusa of these northerly villages are trying to move into the flood plains, where they can more easily cultivate paddy and where they can join in a more active and obedient village life.

One type of foreigner to the Lake Plains is the man (almost invariably a Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who has obtained land but does not settle on it nor in any village. He continues to live in his upland village and comes down to the plains only to cultivate and harvest his paddy field. This is strictly against Nyakyusa land law and custom and, in fact, such an absentee land-holder has often made a substantial monetary gift to the chief or headman for the protection of this extra-legal privilege. These strangers are frequently among the more wealthy upland Nyakyusa, who can afford such payments as these, and often they are of chiefly rank themselves, perhaps having kinship ties with the local chief. There are probably no chiefdoms where such strangers have not obtained paddy fields, though naturally those which contained a good deal of vacant, usable paddy land at the beginning of the cash-cropping era have most.

This does arouse a certain amount of ill-feeling and opposition amongst local villagers who have insufficient land themselves, for they lose land and gain no numerical strength or profit of any kind. The illegal action of the local chief is also condemned, especially as the chiefs should not in any case assume allocatory powers. On the other hand it must be noted that the commoners philosophically accept the supposedly protected prerogatives of their chiefs under European rule and they expect the chiefs to take advantage of them. As with the case of the minority of large land-holders, the actual effect is not particularly great and reformation here would be a minor palliative. Nevertheless in this manner there is a definite and unpopular infringement of villagers' rights and of the local customary law.

One other group of strangers may be noted for the sake of completeness. That is the Kisi, who have for at least two generations been settling along the lake shore itself from Matema in the east to the Songwe river (and beyond) in the north-west. They have come from the north-eastern shores of the lake and in the Nyakyusa area they are principally fishermen who do not, therefore, compete with the indigenous population economically. They cultivate only tiny plots of cassava and sometimes of finger millet, although a few of the younger generation are now trying to grow a little paddy also. The total number of Kisi involved cannot be more than a few hundred and they have probably not increased much over the past decades. They follow an almost separate existence from their Nyakyusa neighbours, not intermarrying, and following their own way of life.[1]

1. The many Kisi settlements in Rungwe District are in the Ngambo area, on lowland peninsulas south of the Lake Plains, which this number where [illegible] are occupied by quasi-permanent and to [illegible] further south along the shoreline. They are widely dispersed in pockets, and they do change their name for varied local religious reasons.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

number of separate plots per holding was less than where land was scarce; at the same time the average size of separate plots was smaller in those more land-hungry villages. The reader may refer to Table III (page 15) for some illustrative figures. Though differences are not yet very great, nevertheless there seems to be a fairly clear correlation between the average size of villagers' holdings on the one hand, and on the other the number and size of separate plots, and this is entirely borne out by my general information obtained in villages where actual measurements were not made. The inescapable conclusion must be that increasing scarcity of land in the Lake Plains leads to increasing fragmentation and dispersion of holdings; further, the present land situation and land tenure system can only lead to a continuation of this trend.

To emphasize the actual situation in 1955, let me reiterate the results of my own village surveys in the very high density region. In a village in Karonei's chiefdom only a quarter of the younger men had paddy land of their own, holdings averaging about three-quarters of an acre; in a village in Mwakipesile's chiefdom, only 17 per cent. of the younger men had paddy land and holdings averaged about half an acre (cf. Table VII, page 37). These two examples are taken from the areas of most severe land shortage and are not therefore altogether typical of the whole Lake Plains. Nevertheless, I do not think that they are entirely atypical; more importantly, they indicate the present trend. Within another generation this fragmentation and scatter of holdings may well be the common feature everywhere in the flood plains unless the system of tenure and inheritance is modified. If the increase in population is quickened through improved medical facilities, better diet and housing, and improved conditions generally, then the position will become more acute. Such an increase is only to be expected. The Nyakyusa have definitely entered a money economy and they have learnt to want higher standards of living. Only from their fields, by cash-cropping, can they expect to earn their livings and the demand for better living will not be curtailed – nor, of course, is it desirable that it should be.

There is another aspect of this whole matter which must be considered. It relates to the movement of individuals between villages. Such movement was, in earlier European days, a crucial factor in the age-village structure, for it was not only exceedingly frequent, but also it tended to undermine the idealized coeval basis of village life. Movement between villages is increasingly difficult now, for a newcomer naturally cannot easily obtain land, nor as much land as he would desire even at a moderate demand. Nevertheless, the reasons for movement persist, and they will do so whilst the fear of witchcraft remains and whilst illness and misfortune are attributable to the unfavourable aura of a place. There remains also the tradition of moving so that a man may escape from bad relations with kinsfolk or neighbours, or from the obloquy resulting from his own disapproved actions. Much social and psychological tension is being created now as a result of the new difficulty of movement, and so far the Nyakyusa have not evolved alternative methods.

On the other hand, so deeply engrained is the notion of the prestige and power which accrues to a village by virtue of the number of its inhabitants, that headmen and villagers alike remain most reluctant to refuse to accept newcomers, even when it inevitably means that the present inhabitants must meet a further decrease in the average amount of land available per family, for a newcomer must be allocated a holding if he is to remain. Consequently, if a holding is for any reason left vacant, a headman tends to refuse to re-allocate some or all of it amongst his villagers and thus to augment their holdings; but instead he keeps it in reserve pending the hoped-for arrival of another newcomer. Men desiring to leave their own village try to get

10;Culliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 F'HI7 Ngonde F'HI7
Nyakyusa

news of such reserved land elsewhere. Such land is cultivated in the meantime on a kind of year-to-year lease by one or more of the villagers as allowed by the headman.

Even when no vacant plots exist a headman will still accept newcomers. If they are young men they must be prepared to go landless for the time being (i.e., to remain dependent on their father's fields elsewhere) until such time as land becomes vacant. If the newcomer is an older man, then the headman will try to persuade one or more of his villagers to give up portions of their holdings and he will often cede part of his own land. The newcomer is therefore often allocated small strips and plots here and there in the village arable area and he thereafter joins the land-hungry crowd seeking to expand their holdings. In one village in which I worked where land shortage was critical (Kapugi, Korosi's chiefdom), there was not a single patch of usable land unworked; yet here the headman had, with full village approval, accepted three newcomers during the first nine months of 1955. Two of them were young men, one unmarried, and they could not expect to obtain land for some time except for a small banana plot. The third newcomer was a middle-aged man from a village some 12 miles away in another chiefdom. The headman had given him a half-acre plot out of his own paddy field and was laboriously begging pieces of land here and there from his people in order to make up a new holding of perhaps an acre. The headman himself had only about three and a half acres of arable land; he had at least one adult son who had not yet acquired an arable plot and he had other sons and brothers' sons owning only small fields. Yet he favoured this stranger, this newcomer. He was quite firm in his resolution to accept other
[571] newcomers in the future and in this he believed that he was acting as a good headman should. As far as I could learn he was supported by his villagers.

This is not, by any means, an isolated or even unusual phenomenon. It is, I feel, important to bear in mind this dimension of contemporary affairs. Firstly, because it shows another way in which holdings are fragmented and dispersed; and secondly, because it demonstrates how, so far, the Nyakyusa have refused to face the situation of land shortage, and how they continue to follow traditional practices and values concerned with village prestige. These people complain of their inability to obtain sufficient arable land, but they are not yet prepared to make the mental and social adjustments which might at least partly relieve their new predicament. On the other hand, they themselves understand the need for movement and perhaps they are right in their implied insistence not to discard their cultural ideals. Their insistence on accepting newcomers and their willingness (however dimly perceived and expressed) to share their land with the landless are not discreditable attitudes, even if they are economically untenable.

Security of Tenure and Disputes over Land

As already noted, under traditional land tenure a Nyakyusa had good
[561] security in his holding so long as he continued to live in the same village. The only alteration of tenure occurred at the "coming-out" ceremony of a new chief when the older men would, if required, move aside in order to give their sons' generation the best land. This did not invariably happen in any case. Fundamentally, however, security of tenure is not a matter of great importance to a people who have plenty of land, and land which is more or less of the same quality. Indeed, convenience of location in respect of one's own homestead was almost the only value land had as such. Occasionally a more dominant chief might try to seize a commoner's field
[561] to allow of his own expanded cultivation; it was most unusual for him to succeed, and even if he did the dispossessed villager suffered little real
[545] deprivation, for he could easily obtain another field fairly near at hand.

of the father. The old principle that every man had the right to arable land applied no less strongly to the young men, married or bachelors. Today chief headmen will refuse to entertain the applications of young bachelors for land, and in this they merely represent general public opinion. But many young bachelors likewise cannot obtain land, or only an insufficient amount.

Consequently, the following case-history, which I recorded for one young man, is not unusual. In 1949 he lived in the Mbangali young-men's hamlet, attached to Myungwi village in Mwakipesile's chieftdom, where his father lives. He was about 27 years old and had a wife and one child. Twice he had been to work in the mines and from the profits of this employment he had completed his bridewealth payment and had bought, in addition, three cattle, a bicycle and some good clothing. He thought he would probably go away again. Behind his house his wife had about 300 square yards of bananas and there was a tiny patch of cassava. This man had no other land, but he assisted in the heavy labour on his father's holding (about 1.7 acres in all) and by family convention he normally took for his own use the paddy strip of a small strip there; he insisted, however, that he had not been given this strip outright and that it remained at his father's pleasure. He had an unmarried half-brother about 22 years old who had not obtained even that concession at the time. Their father was about 55 years old and had two other sons who were still boys. The young man himself had been refused an allocation of land by the headman on the grounds that (as the headman well knew) he had the use of this strip of his father's land, and also because, as the eldest son, he would be the principal heir on his father's death. He was clearly worried about his future, for he did not wish to go abroad again and leave his wife and child; but he did not see how he could stay at home without seriously lowering his standard of living to little above subsistence level.

I quote this brief case-history not necessarily as typical – though I think it probably is – but as an actual illustration of the present state of affairs as they affect an individual.

The Modern "Chief" and the Land

Most of the traditional chiefs, *abanyafuki*, have been recognized and selected under the Native Authority, and they are officially referred to today as *abaweni* (s. *mwen*). Some of the smaller chieftdoms have been absorbed administratively by their larger neighbours, and, although they are still recognized by the people, their *abanyafuki* have lost very much of their earlier prestige and authority. In the Lake Plains the modern chieftdoms are often rather larger than is usual amongst the Nyakyusa,[1] but they are, of course, small in comparison with the size of most African chieftdoms in Tanganyika.

The slightness of the traditional authority of the chief in land matters has already been noted (pages 7-8) and in general this still holds. In European times, however, the recognized chiefs have been given an increased authority and prestige as the local intermediaries between Government and people, and until recent years they were almost the only local instruments of the Government amongst the Nyakyusa. They have been backed by the all-powerful European, who preferred to deal with single, recognized individuals thought to have prime authority in a locality, and the European officer has been encouraged in this notion by an over-enthusiastic policy of indirect rule. Such chiefs were able to assume a degree of power well beyond the traditional limits, and to aggrandize themselves thereby. The ordinary commoner was never quite sure how far his chief was individually claiming more than he

1. See the numerical size of chieftdoms on page 6.

243 and Mapiko, although very little of these is sold. Ploughs have been introduced into the area as it is flat and the total number in use in 1942 is about 400. The first ploughing is carried out in June or July when the ground is still wet, and the second ploughing in October to February. Planting, which is all broadcast, is carried out in November to the middle of March and the harvesting is done in May to September.

256 A first mill was erected at Ipyana on the lake shore in 1942 with a capacity of 9 tons of rice in 15 hours. Another is now on its way from India with a capacity of 14 tons of rice in 15 hours and should be erected some time in 1944.

248 A small acreage of cotton is also sown along the Songwe River boundary, which borders on Nyasaland, with seed obtained from that Colony. Conditions, however, are not suitable on the remainder of the lake shore and expansion is not encouraged.

291 939 A list of exports from the district with approximate weights for 1942 is appended:—

Article	Weight in tons
	Tons
Wood boxes	[illegible]
Coffee	[illegible]
Groundnuts	[illegible]
Rice	1,[illegible]
Onions	[illegible]
Sisal	[illegible]
Sisal	1,[illegible]
Vegetables	[illegible]
Fish	[illegible]
Banana fibre	[illegible]
Cassava flour	[illegible]
Finger millet	[illegible]
Tea (European produce)	[illegible]
Total ..	4,[illegible]

Land Tenure and Economics of the People

423 In theory all land belongs to the chiefs or sub-chiefs, but in practice once a man has cultivated a plot, that plot belongs to him until he leaves the area in which he lives. If he leaves, the land reverts to the chief or sub-chief and may be given by him through his headman or elder to anyone in his area who is short of land or to a newcomer who wants a plot. Should a man go away and return after a long period and ask for a plot, he is bound to be given one but not necessarily the plot he had before he left. Newcomers are welcomed and are given land, as the amount of tax collected in an area is an indication of the importance of a chief.

[559 609 651]

283 Stock grazing is a problem which is coming more and more to the fore. The number of

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

forted, I think people follow the custom, many have come to see me.'

There is no criticism of men or women who come to a burial to dance rather than to weep: 'They are not relatives—it is our custom of mourning.' They are saluting the dead and 'seeing him on his way', they are helping 'to comfort the relatives'. The presence of non-relatives at a burial is variously determined by feelings of affection and grief, of respect and sympathy for the family, by a sense of shame, by fear of being accused of witchcraft, and finally by the attraction of the crowds, the lively conversation, the dancing, and the meat.

At the burial of a Nyakyusa Christian there is little unrestrained wailing and no dancing; instead the young men of the congregation gather round the grieving relatives and sing cheerful hymns, full of the certainty of Heaven, 'to accompany him on his way to God' and 'to comfort the mourners'.

(e) Prestige at funerals

As has already been indicated, the length of the mourning depends upon the status of the deceased. It is short for a child—there is no sacrifice and no crowd; for a rich man it is longer than for a poor man; for the kinsman of a chief longer than for a commoner. Mwaikambo explained:

> Many conceal their position (*abafumako*), it only appears at death. People may never know that a man is rich—only those who build close to him will know—but when he dies many know; many people come to the funeral. For a commoner, an ordinary person, the drums usually play a lament for two days only, sometimes for three, but for a village headman they play the lament for four days, or perhaps a week, and also for a man who has married a chief's daughter it continues for four days or a week. Then people ask why the drums are playing for so long and the reply comes: 'He married into the chief's family. The chief honours him in kinship.' Drums follow the importance of a man.
>
> Those who stay longest at a funeral are kinsmen. If a man has many kinsmen then the funeral will last long because his kinsmen do not return home quickly. A chief has many kinsmen, more than anyone else, because the people of his chiefdom are all like kinsmen. With a village headman also the people who build with him are somewhat like kinsmen, and his funeral lasts a long time.

The size of the crowd at a funeral depends very largely upon the amount of meat provided, and this in turn depends upon the

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

their wives took to wearing cloth they should earn it for themselves by growing and selling millet and brewing beer, and many women do the clearing and hoeing in their fields, work that used to fall to men; but it is difficult for a chief to refuse to provide a man to hoe the ridges in his wife's field, or to refuse an elderly woman a cloth or some salt, and young heirs grumble much about their encumbrances.

In the political field there has been a sustained attempt to make local government more democratic and to include in it the educated men. Between 1891, when the German Government first assumed control of the area, and 1958, the tendency was for the power of the chiefs to be increased at the expense of that of the commoners. This was admitted by the chiefs themselves, as we have seen. In 1949 there was established a system of Rural Councils, on which chiefs, village headmen (*wafuma*), and ordinary commoners are represented. Four[1] of each category are chosen as representatives on the Council in their area by an electoral college itself elected by all taxpayers. Rungwe District is divided into five areas. The policy of treating some chiefs as senior to others has been abandoned and each of the seventy-eight recognized rulers (*abatwe*) is eligible for election as a chief's representative on his local Rural Council. Village headmen (two from each chiefdom) and the ordinary commoners are similarly chosen. The five Rural Councils in turn elect one man of each sort to the District Council.[2] The system allows for, and seems to have achieved, a combination of men with traditionally high status and those who are conspicuous by reason of their education or success as coffee or rice farmers. The old feeling that education was not necessary to a chief's son, though it might be useful to a poor man, has vanished, and a considerable number of the educated leaders of the district are sons or grandsons of chiefs. The elected president of the District Council, Mr. Gordon Mwasanao (186) is of the Nyakyusa chiefs' lineage, though not of the most senior line. In the Rural Councils the presidents elected have all, with one exception, been ruling chiefs, but it is not necessarily the genealogically senior who is chosen. There is scope for selection on the grounds of character and ability.

[1] Five in the populous plain, Ntokela (Mbeligwale).

[2] *cf.* J. E. Kingdon, 'The Initiation of a System of Local Government by African Rural Councils in Rungwe District of Tanganyika', *Journal of African Administration*, vol. iii, 4 (1951).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

constitution (about which they asked many questions) was a democratic one; for, they said, the Administration always supported the chiefs against the commoners.

The villages to which commoner leaders are appointed differ from all other Bantu villages of which we have knowledge in that they consist of groups of age-mates, not groups of kinsmen; boys build with contemporaries and remain with them through life; girls join the villages of their husbands at marriage; therefore relatives, other than husband and wife and young children, do not live together. Nevertheless kinship ties are important, for property circulates within the kinship group rather than within the village, and kinsmen are believed to be mystically interdependent, in a way in which fellow villagers are not. The most prized possession of the Nyakyusa are cattle, for cattle enable a man to marry, to live in comfort, to gain prestige by feasting his friends; and cattle pass along the roads of kinship. They pass between brothers, and half-brothers, and the sons of brothers; between fathers and sons; and between affines. Kinsmen also participate in common rituals, praying to common ancestors, and seeking protection from mystical dangers which are thought to travel, like cattle, along the roads of kinship. Ever fearful lest a quarrel among them should bring misfortune on all, they strive to live in harmony.

The range of kinship recognized varies somewhat with the status of the family concerned and the proximity and personalities of its members, but, generally speaking, economic and religious co-operation link the descendants of a common grandfather, and marriage between the descendants of a common great-grandfather is excluded. A legal marriage is effected by the passage of cattle from the groom's group to the bride's, and it is this passage which is said to create kinship (*ubuhamu*), with the consequent mystical interdependence, between a man and his wife, and between the one partner in a marriage and the close kinsmen of the other. Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan, and it is made possible by the ten years' difference in the average marriage age of men and women. Girls are betrothed very young and finally join their husbands at puberty, while few pagan men marry under twenty-five. Inherited cattle are controlled by the older generation and polygyny is the prerogative of age. For property passes not directly from father to son, but from brother to brother,

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

through each group of full brothers, until, when the last full brother is dead, and the son of the eldest is an adult, the family stock comes to him. Thus few men under forty (other than chiefs) have more than one wife. Of 3,000 tax-payers (presumed to be 18 years and over) in Selya, 34 per cent were bachelors, 37 per cent monogamists, and 29 per cent polygynists. Plural marriages breed wealth, for the polygynist is likely to command the labour of many sons as well as several wives, and in due course he expects to receive the marriage cattle of many daughters.

Social status turns primarily on age, sex, and the control and distribution of wealth. As we have seen, the position of a chief is hereditary, but kinship with a chief does not carry office, nor are the kinsmen of chiefs conspicuously wealthy. Every man in turn hopes to control the property attaching to the house into which he was born, and all who live long enough do so. But there is a delayed right of primogeniture, for the senior son of a senior son inherits the bulk of the family stock when it passes to his generation, and the eldest of each group of full brothers has a special claim to the cattle coming in from the marriages of his sisters.

Seniority, whether within the context of the lineage, or of the hierarchy of age-villages, is something respected in itself, but wealth carries authority and prestige only in so far as it is used generously, in hospitality: one man is great and distinguished (*mnyu*) because he feeds people, another of little account because he is poor or mean.

Women occupy a position very subordinate to men in Nyakyusa society. They play no part in public life, except in so far as the two great wives of a chief, and the first wife of a village headman co-operate with their husbands in rituals; and in the relationship of husband and wife, as well as in that of father and daughter, a woman is expected to show obedience and respect. Her deference is expressed conventionally in her crouching to great men (*vide* Plate IX), and in her use of the submissive *ton* ('Yes, my lord') when addressed by them. Having no great chiefs and little regard for rank, Nyakyusa men show no trace of subservience in their manner to each other, but they expect a meek compliance from all women. The only relationships with a male in which a woman may in some measure assert herself are those which she has with a brother, and with a brother's sons. Leader-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

stand protected from insects: hence his title 'he of the heap of hot ashes' (*ngwakyeme*, *vide supra*, p. 34). The protection of their cattle from raiders by day, and witches by night, was one of the main co-operative activities of the village, and each herd-group within the village was particularly concerned with the protection of its own cattle. For the boys of one herd-group the association is very close since they are together on the pasturage for the greater part of the day. Friendships then formed sometimes last a lifetime.

A few rich men choose to herd their cattle separately from those of their neighbours. 'They are the men who have many cattle! They want to show off their herd, so that men may say: "That's the herd of so and so."' Sometimes their sons, against orders, foregather with other herd-boys on the pasturage, but they are careful to bring home the herds separately. We knew three men near Rungwe who were spoken of as herding their cattle separately, though in fact their sons often joined friends in the pasturage. To herd alone is regarded as somewhat ostentatious,[1] and only a few individuals do it.

Many rich men do not even keep all their cattle at their homesteads for fear of the jealous witchcraft of their neighbours. Instead, they disperse their herds among friends in other villages (of their own or neighbouring chiefdoms) believing that the cattle may in that way escape danger. Porukoto explained: 'We place cattle with friends (*ukufefye*) on account of sickness and death. Supposing I have three or four cows, and they all calf, but the calves die, then I place the cows with friends. People say: "The cows will escape in another village or chiefdom." If, when cattle die and are cut up, wounds are found in their stomachs,[2] then the owner places the others with friends.' Not all of them are sent to the same place.

The fear of witchcraft was traditionally, and is still, the main reason for placing out cattle, but nowadays they are sent away for other reasons also: Nyakyusa living around Rungwe often send cattle to friends on the other side of the mountains in Mbeya district, where grazing is particularly good, and wealthy Christians place out cattle because their wives, working single-handed,

[1] A beast which grows others may be herded apart without any imputation of pride to the owner.

[2] Taken as evidence that they have been killed by witchcraft, *vide infra*, p. 116.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ing audiences watch their friends in the detachment of the King's African Rifles at bayonet drill in Masoko.[1]

Display is felt to be particularly appropriate to young people, and bachelors were held to be the fiercest warriors, but neither dancing nor fighting was confined to young men. The chief Mwaipopo (Plate V) was famous as a skilful and ardent dancer when over seventy, and the leader in war was the senior headman of the country, who, if not already married when he took office, had to marry almost immediately, since his wife shared in the ritual of establishing his house. Furthermore the villages of married men of the ruling generation fought, as well as the villages of their bachelor brothers and sons.

That the Nyakyusa had some skill in warfare is certain, for they defeated and drove off Ngoni raiders and warriors of the Sangu chief Merere,[2] but they never developed a military kingdom like that of the Bemba to the west, or the Hehe to the east, nor did they raid at large like the Masai and Ngoni. Their geographical position sheltered them very considerably from outside attack, and discouraged raiding abroad. They confined themselves mostly to lifting the cattle of neighbouring chiefdoms.

Cattle, whether they be spoils of war or inherited wealth, are displayed. Not only does a long byre add to the dignity of a homestead, but, when there is some ceremony at the home of a rich man, he shows off his herd by driving it round and round the homestead. At other times his sons gallop it along the village street, the iron bells with which the animals are adorned ringing merrily. Nyakyusa smiths make cow-bells in sets,[3] to chime in harmony, and the aim of a rich man is to own a set of bells which ring a full chime, and a herd large enough to carry them. Nowadays those who own bicycles display them in the same sort of way, riding round and round the homestead at a ceremony, and ringing the bells madly.

Unlike the enjoyment of good company (*ukwangala*), display

[1] This detachment was not supposed to include Nyakyusa who were recruited for a detachment stationed outside the district, but in fact Nyakyusa got in by posing as men from Ngonde, Nyasaland.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Center-lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 119-29; Leonard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 38, speaks of the Nyakyusa as 'brave in war'.

[3] We deposited a set in the Livingstone Memorial Museum, Livingstone, N. Rhodesia.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F?617 Ngonde F?617
Nyakyusa

fared, I think people follow the custom, many have come to see me.' 781 764

There is no criticism of men or women who come to a burial to dance rather than to weep: 'They are not relatives—it is our custom of mourning.' They are saluting the dead and 'seeing him on his way', they are helping 'to comfort the relatives'. The presence of non-relatives at a burial is variously determined by feelings of affection and grief, of respect and sympathy for the family, by a sense of shame, by fear of being accused of witchcraft, and finally by the attraction of the crowds, the lively conversation, the dancing, and the meat. [E]

At the burial of a Nyakyusa Christian there is little unrestrained wailing and no dancing; instead the young men of the congregation gather round the grieving relatives and sing cheerful hymns, full of the certainty of Heaven, 'to accompany him on his way to God' and 'to comfort the mourners'. 781 764 715 189

(v) Prestige at funerals

As has already been indicated, the length of the mourning depends upon the status of the deceased. It is short for a child—there is no sacrifice and no crowd; for a rich man it is longer than for a poor man; for the kinsman of a chief longer than for a commoner. Mwaikambo explained: 764 555 556

> Many conceal their position (*abaghanda*), it only appears at death. People may never know that a man is rich—only those who build close to him will know—but when he dies many know; many people come to the funeral. For a commoner, an ordinary person, the drums usually play a lament for two days only, sometimes for three, but for a village headman they play the lament for four days, or perhaps a week, and also for a man who has married a chief's daughter it continues for four days or a week. Then people ask why the drums are playing for so long and the reply comes: 'He married into the chief's family. The chief honours him in kinship.' Drums follow the importance of a man.
>
> Those who stay longest at a funeral are kinsmen. If a man has many kinsmen then the funeral will last long because his kinsmen do not return home quickly. A chief has many kinsmen, more than anyone else, because the people of his chiefdom are all like kinsmen. With a village headman also the people who build with him are somewhat like kinsmen, and his funeral lasts a long time.

The size of the crowd at a funeral depends very largely upon the amount of meat provided, and this in turn depends upon the 764 556

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 556 wealth of the family in cattle and the number of its affines. There is a direct relationship between the number of cattle killed and the number of people who come to a burial. On one occasion we were told: 'There are not many people here because there is little meat; they only killed one bull!' And this connection can be observed at any burial; hundreds of people come to mourn the rich, only a few to mourn the poor. And if no meat is killed there is usually no dancing at all. But once a crowd has gathered it is in itself an inducement to others to come. When men were dancing the funeral dance in the rain a neighbour commented: 'They will say there is no rain for many women are present.' We have seen a crowd of 2,000 or more at a funeral, with 100 men dancing at once.

The meat is divided among the chief, the relatives, the neighbours, and the non-relatives from a distance. To the chief of the country is given the breast and ribs of one beast: 'This is to honour him.' To each affine who brings a beast a whole leg is returned to be eaten. To the various groups of non-relatives from other chiefdoms is given sometimes a side, sometimes a leg, and the rest of the meat is divided between the relatives and neighbours who have come from the same or adjoining villages. At large funerals, where many cows are killed and where people gather from all the villages of the chiefdom, a portion of the meat is presented to each of the various village headmen to eat with his men; at smaller funerals the division is made less formally.

'A man's very own cow, that of his lineage, is eaten by the people of the country, not the relatives, because the people [non-relatives] always looked at it thinking: "It's ours."' A picture of ghoulish expectation? That indeed is an element of Nyakyusa thought. While we were in the country a number of chiefs forbade the [75] offering of funeral meat to non-relatives, for, it was believed, gluttonous neighbours sometimes killed a man by witchcraft[1] in order to feast at his funeral.

The kinsmen of the dead man gain prestige from a lavish funeral. They are compelled to sacrifice by fear lest the anger of the shades, or the 'breath' of their neighbours, should bring misfortune upon them, and they are rewarded by the admiration of men when they do so.

764 626 Social pressure is not always exerted upon the members of the dead man's family to provide cattle themselves. If he left sufficient cattle to sustain the family dignity they only kill from his own

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 55.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

herd. But if he has not left sufficient, then they are ashamed not to 764
make good the deficiency. 'If no cows are killed at a burial we 626
others [non-relatives] say that it was a mean burial, that the dead man was a pauper without kin, for if he had had kinsmen they would have killed cows for him. So then the relatives grieve their poor griefs alone, we others don't go to that burial.' To a poor burial the members of the same village do in fact come, as they are obliged to do; but few other people come, and there is seldom any dancing.

There is one other situation in which a member of the family is 764
under obligation to kill. If the dead man is buried by his 'father' at his 'father's' place, then one of his 'father's' cows must be killed. But if his 'father' does not choose to exercise his privilege of carrying the body to his place for burial (and he need not do so unless he wishes), then there is no such obligation.

Upon affines, however, the obligation is absolute, unless they actually have not got a cow or bull available. 'If a father-in-law brings no beast to his son-in-law's burial, then his daughter is estranged from him, she asks angrily why he does not bring one, seeing that her husband has died.' 'If a son-in-law does not bring a cow to his father-in-law's burial, though he has one that he might have brought, he is ashamed before men. They say to him: "Your wife's father has died, why did you not bring a cow? Perhaps you think you have a father-in-law still alive (i.e. the dead man's heir, to whom all previous obligations are due, and with whom the relationship of affinity continues very much as before), but he himself, your own father-in-law, has died."' And thus, if insufficient cows are killed to maintain the family dignity, both the family and the affines are made to feel ashamed.

Occasionally a friend of the dead man, who is no relative, brings a bull to kill, as a sign of friendship and affection, but he [672]
has no obligation to do so.

Social position, both in its practical aspect of authority and in 764
its emotion aspect of prestige, depends primarily, among the 556
Nyakyusa, on the generous use of wealth, or, to put it more simply, on feeding people. The Nyakyusa insisted on this again and again in explaining the relative status of different people: one man is great and distinguished (*sisiya*) because he feeds people, another who feeds people less is less distinguished. At a lavish funeral, where many people gather and eat meat, they go home in

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 the evening saying with admiration that it was a most impressive
556 (aigwe) burial; months or years afterwards it is still remembered and described with pride by the family, with admiration by the neighbours. What is chiefly remembered is the number of cattle killed and the number of people present; sometimes the vigour of the women's wailing and of the men's dancing is also described.

(f) *A particular burial* (recorded by G. W.)

764 It is the second day; the man, who was quite young, died yesterday afternoon and was buried early this morning. I arrive at 7.30 a.m. to find that the wailing is the dominant activity. The dead man's house is full of weeping men and women, shedding tears and wailing in the conventional high-pitched voice. His sister, his young wife, a stepmother, a classificatory brother and two half-brothers, with many other women, are inside the house. The noise is considerable. The rest of the women, fifty or more, are seated just outside, in and around an unfinished bamboo house which he died leaving half-built; they too are weeping and wailing. A few men are seated in a group on the opposite side of the swept place facing the women; they are either silent or talking soberly.

764 The emotional pitch is very high. The classificatory brother leaves
781 the house and walks about round the new grave with his hands to his head, shedding tears and calling: 'Alas! Alas! What kin are left? Alas! What kin are left?' He is a mature man about forty years old. Then he takes by the hand a half-sister of the dead man, a woman of thirty or more, smothered in mud and pot-black, her belly supported by many bark-cloths, and with a baby on her back; together they walk over the grave weeping and wailing, addressing each other in words that I fail to distinguish, and stumbling about as though blind with grief. The baby sleeps quietly all the time. Then comes an old woman, stepmother of the dead man, leading a daughter in each hand (his half-sisters), all wailing, shedding tears and calling out indistinguishable words. They sit down on the newly-filled grave with their arms on one another's shoulders rocking to and fro and weeping. More people keep arriving and in the background now is the insistent wailing of seventy or a hundred women in and outside the house.

For the first hour after my arrival the drums are only occasionally beaten, and a few young men rush across the grave brandishing spears, but only spasmodically.

The two half-brothers, after wailing in the house, come outside and walk up and down together still weeping. Then they each take a spear and run back and forth several times wailing the dead man's name.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

ukuunya ulufumbo). Rich people kill a cow 'to clear out the litter' 764
which, like those killed at the burial, is said to go with the deceased [756]
to the land of the shades.

Some time later (the date varies from one ritual to another) they 764
build a little hut at the intersection of two paths—cross-roads—or, 766
if there is no cross-roads near, on the path to the stream, and in this hut they make a hearth with fire-bricks (*amafigo*); a fire is lighted and each participant in turn puts oil-seeds from the *mwangati* tree into a potsherd on the fire, saying as he does so: 'This is the death of my mother (etc.).' The seeds are mixed with 764
medicine and, when they are roasted, are ground for ointment. Then beans are put on with water in the same fashion, each participant pouring a little water and saying: 'This is the ritual of my mother (etc.).' Next, the participants are made to sit down on a bark-cloth. The officiant draws lines on the head of each with a bunch of *ilinjala* grass dipped in the lees of beer, and as she shaves him she mocks him saying: 'Poor fool, it found its mother was dead, went stealing, and they have speared it on the head.' Then the participants go to wash, each wearing two banana leaves round his loins and two round his neck. One of each pair is a plantain, and it is put on first, the other is a sweet banana and it comes on top. And each participant sticks a plantain into his (or her) waistband in front, and a sweet banana behind. When they [715]
come to the stream each participant sits down in it and the officiant puts pebbles between his fingers and toes, in the crooks of his elbows and knees, in his mouth and ears, and on his head. These, and the leaves and bananas he wore, are allowed to flow away in the water. They return to the temporary hut carrying flowers, *kalengalenge* and *kalenyfu*, which they throw on to the roof, and the officiant pours water she has brought in a little calebash on to the thatch above the doorway, while each participant in turn runs through the drops, out at a back door, in again and out through the drops. As they come home millet is scattered on the ground before them, then they eat roasted bananas with lentils (and sometimes pumpkin-seeds) stuck in them as in the Seiya ritual, boiled bananas and beans, a bean mash, and roasted chicken or, sometimes, meat. The bananas are from the plantain stem they stole and from a sweet banana stem provided by the family, and some of the food is salted, some unsalted. As they eat they look in the direction from which their lineage came, then the officiant anoints them with ointment (made from the oil-seeds

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

house. Then she goes in and steals a piece of firewood from the [743
left[1] and runs off with it, laughing. The officiant pursues her and [587
makes her drop it and gives her medicine, while the company cry:
'A thief, a thief!' She takes the firewood back to her husband's
home. 'It is a sign that she has entered her father's house, just as
the spear is a sign that she has entered the house of another hus-
band.' In rich families the new husband sends a bull which is [354]
killed and eaten at the ritual.

Our informants were agreed that 'there is no fear of the gaping
cough if a woman runs away from her husband and goes to a
lover', and in practice no ritual is performed when she visits her
father after divorce and re-marriage, but it is perhaps significant
that such a situation could scarcely have arisen in the past, since [184
divorce by agreement rarely, if ever, occurred. An adulterer fled, [177]
if he could, with his lover to another chiefdom, breaking off all [289]
relations with her kin.

(3) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

Now we turn to the Kukwe interpretation of events. Our two [115
principal informants here were Mwanalemba, an elderly pagan
man, brother to the chief Porokoto, whose wife, Syungu, acted as
officiant at rituals in the chief's family, and Kakuse, a young
doctor who had learnt the medicines from his mother. Mwana-
lemba was much more coherent than Syungu herself, and his
interpretation was confirmed by Kakuse and numerous other
informants. Again I give the interpretation of the two principal
informants without any editing other than placing consecutively
statements made on different occasions.

i. *Mwanalemba's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. and translated [158
by him soon afterwards.)

Mwanalemba: Perhaps a youth, perhaps a girl, runs mad; he runs
about naked so that we say: 'He's mad, why doesn't he cover himself?'
He goes to the place of defaecation and takes filth and eats it: he goes
into people's houses and takes things, he might even take some things
from you, from a European, without fear; he knows not what he does.
Sometimes, after a visit to a doctor, he recovers altogether and never
has the fit again—that is the lesser kind of madness. But sometimes he [158
recovers and then the fit takes him again later—that is the more serious [787

[1] The left (ipide) consists of horizontal beams running at wall level across a portion [622
of the hut. Here every married woman keeps a supply of dry firewood. It is her private [417]
store-place which may not be touched without her permission.

2: Wilson K-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

[783] [783] [783] [

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

431 neighbours give her gifts after her initiation it is that she may 'cease to avoid them', and a woman may give a small gift to her husband's father's sister, and thereafter look at her. Nowadays, a [206] father-in-law, in exceptional cases, kills a bull for his daughter-in-law so that she may look at him.[1]

•556 577 Great prestige attaches to generosity, particularly generosity with food. A chief or village headman is one who *feeds* people, and generosity is displayed both in informal feasts for neighbours and on the formal occasions of ritual. A father who is generous in the feasts provided for his daughter at her initiation and marriage gains prestige; if he is stingy his affines and his neighbours comment on it; he both loses their respect and fears lest he may even fall ill from 'the breath of men'. If the groom's family fail to provide sufficient, the bride's father does not hesitate to scold them for it, and they reply with humility which may be so exaggerated as to verge on boasting. It is conventional for the groom to plead poverty but at the same time he and his kin compete with the bride's family in preparing quantities of fine food. The pride and excitement over feasts is clearly brought out in the comments on funerals, the remarks of a mother on the return of her daughter to her husband after the birth of the first child, and Angombwike's account of marriage negotiations and gifts (pp. 31–4, 148, 253–5). The principals in any ritual are the centre of attention and may gain prestige from its performance, as a bride does, but what concerns the Nyakyusa much more is the reputation of the family serving the feast. Here the emphasis is very different from what it [171] is in the Pondo ritual for the initiation of diviners, or the Lunda rituals of misfortune.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 85.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

577 There is much more talk among the Nyakyusa of misfortune
777 from the shades or the anger of neighbours, than of blessing, but
●556 there is an idea, somewhat vague but real, that generosity and kindliness will bring blessing (*ulungile*). Ambilikile, a Christian teacher who had grown up in a pagan home, said:

> My mother tells me that my father was in the habit of feeding people, those who were not his relatives. People went to a distance and brought medicines for fertility and gave them to him, hence they said: 'He is very kind; food never grows short at his home.' She also told me that my father died very old. He did not die of disease, but of old age, no breath being left in him. This was because men were always saying: 'May they stand by him, may they bless him (*bamusumbilage, bamupepe*),' not to his face but to others. They said that he lived long because of the blessing of men. Yes, they say that the food of a kindly man never gets finished, that of a stingy man finishes; he himself suffers hunger.

763 Mwaisumo described a father on his death-bed blessing a favourite son, allocating cattle to him, and telling him:

> Care for the children I have left, keep on good terms with them, then you will be rich in everything like your father. I cared for my children, I was not harsh (*okali*), so complain to me of anything that troubles you. If you are like this the property in your home will be plentiful, people will be astonished and say: 'He is like his father.'

431 Of a man given a cow by the chief, it was sometimes said: 'The
775 shades have blessed him; he has a righteous (*ugulefe*) shade.'

Although our Nyakyusa informants talked a great deal about
754 the danger of neglecting rituals and angering senior relatives,
673 living and dead, the number of cases of misfortune attributed to
621 their anger is small in comparison with the number attributed to witchcraft or 'the breath of men'. (Ten as compared with sixty-three.) There is no reason to suppose that one type of case was concealed when the others were reported to us, and it is clear that the Nyakyusa prefer to make neighbours in the age-village, rather than kinsmen, the scapegoat for their misfortunes. Even when the wrong done is against a kinsman it is often the neighbours, rather than the shades, who are said to have brought punishment on the wrong-doer.

777 At the same time, we were assured by one informant after an-
621 other that people blame the shades or Kyala for misfortune when it is really the neighbours who are responsible! Angombwike argued that men fear to accuse the neighbours, who are slow to

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

763 QUESTION: Why the gathering?

MWAMFU: We were startled to hear that he had died. They raised the lament of death in the morning and his cattle went home when Kasitile and I were on the pasture land. We were startled to see Katarya's cattle going home and said: 'He has died.' But his relatives saw that he had not died. They said it is taboo to lament when someone is still alive.

QUESTION: Why do cows come home when a man dies?

MWAMFU: It is a form of mourning. They should also weep and say farewell. He had property. For if I, Mwanifu, die, though I do not have cattle myself, yet because I am the son of Mwaipopo cattle are
764 killed at the funeral. It is impressive. But if I were a commoner and
●536 had no cattle, then the funeral would be a flop. There would be no meat and people would say: 'He has not yet died, he has left one head.' They count the cattle to kill. If an important commoner dies, one who has cattle, then his funeral is impressive. People dance at his homestead and say: 'Our fellow, who has died, was a strong man who danced the war-dance in the homesteads.' And if he was tough in disputes, if he always got the better of them and no one ever got his cow, then they say: 'A tough fellow has died. May he leave a son as tough as himself. He died with his toughness.' They praise him.

782 QUESTION: Tell me about the killing of Katarya's bull.

MWAMFU: He killed the bull without telling his neighbours, but when he poured out the beer he called Mwainyopoleta and Kapuguso and two others. There were four. He had built in Bunkali village in which there are ten homesteads, but, customarily, we do not call all the neighbours, only those who are nearest. Only if I have killed a full-grown beast do I call them all and give them a leg. Yes, it was a big bull and perhaps it is on account of that that they are angry. When they came they were startled, saying: 'They are drinking beer! And there is meat lying outside!' They entered and drank a little. Then Katarya divided the meat for his relatives and took his own. He gave to Mwainyopoleta and his fellows three ribs. Then M. said to his three fellows: 'Let us go home. I will not take this little piece of meat.' So they all went away. The other three ate the meat, only M. did not.

QUESTION: So they were angry?

754 MWAMFU: Perhaps! We say sometimes: 'They were angry and ate
757 him.' But perhaps it was sorcery, because just now three snakes entered the house of his chief wife—the *isolei* snakes. One entered and they killed it. Another entered and they killed it. Then they caught the third to take to a doctor, the son of Mwakanyamale. The doctor said: 'This snake is sorcery,' and he will find a medicine to give them to drink that the illness may be slight. But he has not yet done so.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

until the settlement of the Arabs and Europeans in Ngonde, was exchanged "for cloths and rings" with the *Longwani* (*i.e.* Arab or half-caste) traders, who regularly crossed the lake from Mwela.

Now the Kyungu of Mbande when compared with their divine-cousins the Lwembes of Lubaga, were fortunate in their geographical position. The conditions which kept them in contact with a market in the early period are beyond our knowledge, we only know the bare fact. But with the opening of the trade route from the east the greater accessibility of Mbande is at once obvious. Mbande is only eight miles from the shores of the lake, Lubaga is forty. Moreover the plain between Lubaga and the lake was occupied in this middle period by Nyakyusa chiefs only distantly related to the Lwembe. Our evidence suggests that, in any case, the traders from Mwela did not reach the north end of the lake in their travels till some time after reaching Ngonde. And it is undoubted that when they did so they traded with the chiefs on the shore one by one and never journeyed inland to Lubaga. To Lubaga the lake shore chiefs sent cows to beg for rain and health, but they sent no ivory; from Lubaga they believed they received their rain and health; but it was from the traders direct that they got the coveted cloth. Ivory was but dry bones without a market, so that the Lwembes had no inducement to claim it.

In Ngonde the Longwani traders bought relatively little ivory from others save the Kyungu; he alone held large stocks and to him they came first. They gave him red, white and dark cloths and rings also in exchange for the tusks, eating and drinking at his expense during their stay.

Some of the cloths and rings were at once given by him to the nobles of Ngonde, on each occasion that the traders came; others were used as clothes by himself and his household; others were stored for future gifts; while still others he exchanged, either for hoes with the men of Mwela and the Kisi, or with his own people for ivory or slaves.

Polygyny and a differential bride-price were important sources of wealth for all the rulers of Ngonde. The numbers of cattle given to great-commoners, nobles or chiefs at the marriages of their daughters were greater than the numbers given to ordinary men. This was a matter of prestige. Moreover girls married younger than boys, so that all fathers usually had an interval between receiving cattle at the marriages of their daughters and giving them away again at the marriages of their sons; during this interval the cattle increased and the increment accrued to them. Now chiefs, nobles and great-commoners usually gave away more cattle at the marriages of their sons than did ordinary men; this again was a matter of prestige. But it did not alter the fact that greater numbers of cattle than usual passed through their hands; and

6:Wilson E-6 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

or the interest that accrued to them was also greater than usual. And thus they normally had more cattle than ordinary men. 956 583

Some of these extra cattle they expended in marrying more wives of their own, who bore them more children. The girl children later brought in more marriage-cattle, and meanwhile the wives and unmarried children worked in the fields and so enabled the rulers to entertain more often and more lavishly than their less married subjects. And it was by lavish entertainment above all that the prestige of a ruler was maintained.

(b) *THE EXPENDITURE OF MBANDE AND OTHER AUTHORITIES.*

All important guests at Mbande, whether traders or subordinates, were, as we have seen, entertained at the Kyungu's expense. Now the entertainment of guests and subordinates is a quite indispensable function of every primitive political authority; power and prestige cannot possibly be maintained without it. Its importance in primitive constitutions has recently been pointed out by Richards in a paper[1] on the constitution of the Bemba tribe in Northern Rhodesia; and the facts of Ngonde tradition bear out her conclusions. Chiefs and nobles were given food and beer when they visited Mbande and the position of Mbande could not otherwise have been maintained. And the Kyungu, like the Citimukulu of the Bemba, also gave to his subordinates gifts of more permanent value. 652

Cloths were given both to chiefs and nobles. We remember that the very first Kyungu at Mbande is said to "have given headcloths to the indigenous rulers" who, in accepting them, accepted also his overlordship; and from that time onwards the practice continued. Whenever a territorial noble died the nobles of Ngonde came from the Kyungu and formally presented his successor with a dark headcloth, which he then wore turban-fashion as a symbol of his status. And other gifts of cloths were made to them also, from time to time. The nobles of Ngonde likewise were formally presented with dark headcloths on succession and, as we have seen, got gifts of cloth each time the traders came. 652 931

And the custom grew up in the middle period of giving cloths to the chiefs also, the sons of the Kyungu. When the chiefs heard that the Kyungu had been buying cloths they used to come, each alone with one man, and be given some. Our evidence does not make clear whether

[1] Audrey Richards "Tribal Government in Transition." Supplement to *J.R.A.S.* Oct. 1935.

6 Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

brother of the reigning Kyungu, and this fact was half his opportunity. It was a tradition in Ngonde that Mbonde was a centre of trade as well as of government, and so when Peter went into trade he had a great advantage over all his rivals. He tells with great gusto the story of how, in 1911 when the price of cotton[1] was high, two firms competed for the crop of the Ngonde plain—and the firm which employed him to buy it secured it all. For as soon as the people heard that the Kyungu's brother was buying cotton they all came to him to sell. And throughout his business career the same factor has operated. 643

From 1899 to 1912 Peter was a employee of European trading firms, from 1913 to 1918 he worked in partnership with them and from 1919 onwards he worked on his own. Now from 1914 to 1923 trade boomed and this fact was the other half of his opportunity. In 1913 his own capital was about £50, in 1923 it was well over £1,000, and he had four shops of his own.

After the war he employed men to hoe cotton for him also; and here he was greatly assisted by shrewd advice from European friends who watched the market. In 1920 the price of cotton suddenly dropped and he gained nothing, but he was advised to persevere and did so; and in the next two years he made a profit of £120. But in 1923 when the price of cotton dropped again he advisedly planted none.[2]

Now from 1923 onwards the pressure of his administrative duties began to drive him out of business and from 1924 he kept one shop only open. His savings he turned either into cattle or into burnt-brick houses for his wives and so passed safely through the world-wide slump. In 1937 he still had a herd of cattle worth about £400 and six brick houses, whose total cost was £155, together with a small stock of cloth in his one remaining shop. Figures have a purely relative significance, and these figures in Ngonde represent great wealth.[3]

The effect of this private fortune on the present constitution of Ngonde is very great indeed, for it enables the Kyungu to maintain a state comparable to that of his predecessors. Had he only his official salary to rely upon he could not do this and his authority and prestige in Ngonde would be less than they are. His successor and his heir will not be the same man; and it follows inescapably that, if the present rate of salary remains substantially unchanged and if other factors remain equal too, then his successor's authority and prestige will be less than his. [556]

[1] Native cotton planting was early encouraged in Ngonde.
[2] Soon afterwards a boll-weevil scare caused cotton-planting to be suspended in Ngonde for many years.
[3] Very few chiefs or commoners in Ngonde have more than £20 worth of stock in their herds. There are c. 30,000 cattle in Ngonde, which gives an average of c. 3 head per adult male, and 3 head are worth about £4.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

173 rulers were not of the royal blood but 'nobles' (*amakombwe*),
693 descendants of the five leading men who had arrived with the Kyungu, of those he found already occupying the country, and of those who arrived after him. Later the slaughter of the Kyungu's
[694] sons ceased, and as they grew up they were established as subordinate chiefs through his territories, gradually taking over power from the commoners who had previously ruled, by a process familiar in other parts of Africa.[1] But the 'nobles' retained considerable power. At Lubaga the descendants of the two men who had arrived with the first Lwembe, and of some of those who were there before him, became priests, and priests only; in Ngonde those of similar origin developed secular, as well as ritual, functions.

The reasons why the office of Kyungu developed into a paramount chieftainship, and that of the Lwembe did not, have been examined in a previous publication,[2] and may therefore be dealt with very briefly here. The most important factor was that
[499] the Kyungu exported ivory and amassed wealth which was used
[556] to bind territorial rulers to him, while the Lwembe remained cut off from the outside world and did not trade at all. The geographical situation largely accounts for this. The ivory of Ngonde first went north, and later south-east, across the Lake, and Mbande was well situated for both routes. It lies eight miles from the Lake and close to a defile which leads from the lakeshore plain to an open table-land stretching north to Lake Tanganyika, the very route which engineers later selected for the Stevenson road. Lubaga, on the other hand, is forty miles from the Lake and the only routes northward lay over broken country and passes 8,000 feet high. Giraud remarks in his journal that the Nyakyusa were the only people he had come across among whom the chiefs did not claim at least one tusk of every elephant killed;[3] they did not claim it, for they had no use for the ivory; but the Kyungu's right to a tusk from every elephant killed was enforced.

The growth of a paramount chieftainship in Ngonde was slow. The early Kyungus lived within an enclosure on Mbande to which only their personal servants and the nobles of Ngonde had

[1] *cf.* M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 380; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*,
[113] pp. 13-14; I. Schapera, in *African Political Systems* (edited Fortes and Evans-Pritchard), pp. 60-1.

[2] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3 (1939).

[3] V. Giraud, *Les Lacs l'Afrique Equatoriale* (1890), p. 186.

10:Cullivar E-5 (1954-1955) 1954 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

well covered with vegetation and with an reliable and plentiful a rainfall, yet, of course, the actual pasturage available is very considerably less as so much of the land is taken for arable and building purposes. There is in practice a most acute shortage of grazing land everywhere, except in certain parts of the north-west Highlands (Ukukwe). This shortage is most critical during the wet season, for at other times of the year the herds are able to graze over the arable fields, where herbage grows exceptionally rapidly after harvest as a result of the high rainfall. 31/ 233 [132]

Traditionally, each village had a roughly demarcated area of common pasturage which was not, and could not be, used for arable purposes. With the increased demand for arable land, this commonage has almost everywhere in the Lake Plains been gradually whittled away for permanent arable holdings. Headmen who control these pastures, and many of their chiefs too, are much worried about this process, about the break with tradition and the modern pastoral difficulties, but arable needs are given priority over grazing and the practice continues. In the flood plains, the higher-density regions, common pasturage has by now almost disappeared altogether. The little which remains is largely unusable for cultivation, consisting of infertile or badly drained areas – often the sandy, coastal strips covered with dense thicket and tall sedges which provide very little useful grazing. During the dry season, after the paddy harvest, the situation is fair, but during the cultivation season pasturage is entirely inadequate, and in addition the cattle are compelled to live and graze in extremely arduous conditions of standing water, mud, mosquitoes and flies. They do not obtain enough food there and they lose condition badly. There are many deaths from exhaustion, near-starvation and disease, and this affects the immature stock particularly. Only by obstinate tenacity on the part of both man and beast can the herds be retained at all. There is no tradition of stall-feeding and so far the Nyakyusa have refused to adopt this measure of alleviation. [320] [43]

Yet, as the Nyakyusa are quick to point out, each family has only a few cattle. Most families have a cow or two, and the average is only about two to three head per family – *cf.* Table VI, page 34. Owners of large herds are relatively few, and herds of more than ten cattle in a single family are very uncommon. Although the cattle population is too great for the pasture resources now available, yet the animals are fairly evenly and thinly distributed amongst the dense human population. Goats and sheep are few – about 600 altogether – in the Lake Plains and of no significance. It is important to note that here we do not have a situation of large herds which might be reduced by some form of culling.

Cattle are held in high esteem by all Nyakyusa as a source of valued milk for the daily diet, as the means to marriage (in bridewealth), as a store of capital, as a symbol of prestige and as an essential element in important ceremonial activity. This kind of value system needs no emphasis here as it is common to much of Eastern Africa, but it may be noted that one of the principle uses of the large sums of money saved from wages in mining employment (labour migration)[1] and from the profits of cash-cropping at home is in the purchase of cattle. It is thought that money is best invested, saved and used in that way, once immediate material needs have been met. [556] [454]

Even with the high proportion of deaths from disease and the appalling conditions of the wet season, there are indications that the numbers of cattle are not decreasing and there may well be local increases. Apart from natural increase, there is fairly heavy buying from the Ndali people to the north-west in Rungwe District, and also from farther afield in Northern Nyasaland, and in Nyamwanga and Fipa tribal areas (albeit illicitly). [439]

1. During the course of my earlier labour migration enquiries men would usually estimate their savings for me, when completing receipt questionnaires, by the number of cattle they could buy.

12: Bingaard E-5 (1955) 1962 F907 Ngonde F907
Nyakyusa

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partitions burned into the bamboos; they are hung upside down so the dust will not settle in them. The bottom is the natural partition of the bamboo cane.

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The house was standing on high, slightly sloping ground, and like the two previous houses it was buttressed by a great number of thick branches. Incidentally, it seemed to be very old and rickety. Inside, there were a great many posts supporting the horizontal bamboo ceiling and the eaves of thatchwood. All posts were bifurcated and held the beams solidly in place. The diameter of the house was the usual 6.5 metres, but in this case there was no inner partition. As this woman was very poor, she had no bed, but slept on a mat on the floor. Only very rarely is there no bed in the houses. I remember having seen this only three times.

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The hearth was the usual type: three decorated square stones, rising to a height of 30 cm above the floor, but being sunk 30 cm into the ground. Here they were positioned on one side, to ensure that the center post would not catch fire, and to make for easy escape of the smoke through the doorway. None of the houses have other means of smoke outlet.

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Alongside the wall were calabashes, jars, and baskets; material for the baskets; and a little away from the wall, the large roll-stone and its apparitenant smaller grinding stone. A hen's nest was not missing either. Along one side was fixed a small under-ceiling for the storage of small things. Two or three hammocks, meant to be her nest, were lying on the floor near one of the posts. From the left the cracked down a calibkin in which she had been carrying her child. Its inside was of a reddish colour.

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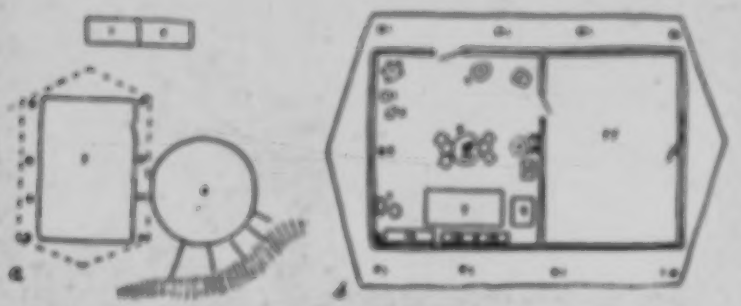

a. Site plan of Malia Ulloyelaya's houses. 1, hen-coop; 2, drying-racks for crops; 3, Malia's dikaga with roof supports along sides; 4, dikaga belonging to Malia's husband, with buttresses at low ground.—b. Plan of Malia's dikaga (barred window in back room). 1, hen's nest; 2, dikaga (door); 3, posts (those going up to ridge of roof are filled in); 4, large basket; 5, basket; 6, clay base round twin posts; 7, Malia's bed; 8, chest; 9, wooden chest; 10, table; 11, back room, having bamboo ceiling carried by bamboo cross beam (between posts marked 3); the room is used for storing clothes, etc.; 12, shelves.

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)[951 F307 Ngonde F307 Nyakyusa

291 301 291 [111] [111] belts are also worn by men, nowadays below the other clothing. More and more pieces of cotton with imprinted patterns have come into vogue. They are worn around the lower part of the body or below the shoulders or fastened about one of them, and are bought from Indian shops. That this modern fashion, however, is something new in such places which are a little remoter from direct European influence was demonstrated to me when I came through a small village in the environment of Mambo. There by chance I met some young girls carrying a piece of cloth on the top of a long pole as if it were a banner. On enquiry I was told that this "banner" was nothing other than a piece of cloth newly bought by a woman of that village and that it was hoisted on a pole and carried in procession out of sheer joy that this woman had been able to buy it.

[554 1482] 291 Mondolik throughout are fuller dressed, especially when they go dancing. The women, on the other hand, wear their ordinary dress also on such occasions. The dancing costume of the men — only the younger men participate in dancing — consists of a sort of tight-jacket or sweater and wide robes with coloured patterns. The hair is adorned with feathers. At work the men rarely wear only loin cloths or shorts. After work especially the older men wrap their bodies in blankets. It is very seldom nowadays to find even very old men still wearing the former national dress: a bundle of long grass in front and a smaller one behind tied to the waist by means of a string, as I found a man on a military spot near Rungwe Station. Little boys go altogether naked untill they are about three years of age. Little girls begin to wear a small swabi at an earlier age.

[2142 595] [302 237] 531 *13. Art.* One of the most interesting and striking features in the artistic endowment of the Nyakyusa are the decorations on the outer-walls of their huts. The latter are only painted, however, when the exterior of the framework of bamboo is mud covered, otherwise only the wooden doors (*ikifiga*, door) of the huts are painted. By no means every hut or house is painted, but only a limited number in each village, probably depending on the presence and industry of an artist as this art is as in other cases an individualistic one. One such artist was introduced to me in a village near Rutenganio. The ornaments consist in most cases of geometrical patterns in white and black, seldom in other colours, or they represent different sorts of animals, e. g. elephants, horses, cattle, snakes, etc. The richest designs I found in a long extended village on the right bank of the upper Kiwira. In an other case the names of the animals were written in Swahili below

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER II

VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

NYAKYUSA villages (*ifyanga*)[1] are formed by groups of boys or men, all roughly of the same age, together with the wives and young children of those who are married. Women belong to the villages of their husbands, young children to those of their fathers. Girls live at home until they are betrothed, after which they visit their future husbands periodically, and soon after puberty each joins her husband in his village. Boys, who marry later in life, leave home at about the age of ten or eleven and set up villages of their own.

a. *The genesis of the village*

Between the ages of about six and eleven boys sleep at their fathers' houses and herd their fathers' cattle. This is a full-time, if not a very arduous, occupation. The cattle are driven out about an hour or two after sunrise and return to be milked about 1 p.m.; after an hour they are again driven out and do not come back until sunset. The cattle of a group of neighbours, usually five to ten,[2] are herded together by their young sons; and so these boys spend all day together for several years of their lives. This group of boys is the germ of the future age-village; it is a community with a common activity in the herding of the cattle, with a leader and laws and customs of its own.[3]

When the boys reach the age of ten or eleven, two important changes usually take place in their lives. Firstly, they leave the herding of cows to their younger brothers, and themselves begin the business of hoeing the fields which will occupy them until they die; secondly, they no longer sleep in the houses of their fathers but join an age-village of boys. Nowadays the two changes usually, but not always, take place at the same time, and well before puberty.

[1] cf. Xhosa *intanga*, 'a company of persons or animals of equal age'.

[2] The herd group is smaller in young men's villages where few are cattle-owners, and a very rich man occasionally herds his cattle alone.

[3] G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 51–3.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

different herds of cattle; and it is not only those from the same group of herd-boys that set up a new village together, but all the sons of the age-village. Thus when a boy leaves the herd group he joins a larger community, including the friends of his own age who have herded cows with him, and many others as well. Every boys' village consists primarily of the sons of the member of an older village who originally gave the land for its building, but sons of other villages live there too.

The village begins with perhaps a dozen boys, and their younger brothers join them, one by one; but after some years, when the senior members of the boys' village are between sixteen and eighteen years old, the younger ones begin to be refused admittance to the village: 'they are children.' The young ones then either begin a new age-village of their own, or else join a village which has already been started by the sons of a nearby men's village a little junior to that of their own fathers. If you inquire who are the members of such and such a boys' village you are always told that they are the sons of a particular village of men, but detailed investigation reveals the presence of some sons of other men's villages as well. Brothers, half-brothers and other relatives are sometimes members of the same village, but more often not; and if they do belong to the same village that is because they are near each other in age, and were born in the same village, not because they are kinsmen.

The members of the older boys' village, which is now closed and no longer increases in numbers, begin to marry as they reach the age of about twenty-five. Getting married is often a gradual process; but it is not until he has his wife permanently with him that a young man can have fields of his own and eat the produce at his own place. The cultivation of land requires the co-operation of a man and woman, and cooking on any elaborate scale is a woman's business. As the young men marry their village expands. The site is not changed but the houses are built ever bigger and farther apart, and adjacent land is brought under cultivation. The boys' village with which we are best acquainted is in this transitional stage. It has fifty-three members altogether, the majority of whom are single; but some few are married, cultivate their own fields with their wives and eat food cooked by their wives in their own houses. Of those who are single some again are betrothed to girls who visit them from time to time, but each

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

582 241 621 still cultivates his father's fields and eats at his father's home. In former days, we were told, the marriage age of men was even later than it is at present (*vide infra*, p. 80). 'Perhaps after twenty a boy would be betrothed, but to a young girl, and he would wait eight years before she grew up.'

857 From the time boys begin to herd they recognize one of their number as a leader. 'When we herd cows as boys', a friend told us, 'there is always one who is obeyed by his fellows whatever he says. No one chooses him, he gains his leadership and his prestige by bodily strength. For always, when we are boys together among the cows, we vie with one another and dispute about going to turn back straying cattle, or about fetching fire to cook the food we have brought with us. And so we start fighting, and we go on fighting until one of us beats all his fellows completely and so becomes the leader. And then it is he who sends others to turn back straying cattle, to fetch fire and to collect firewood. And he is greatly respected. He settles quarrels too. What we quarrel about most as boys is a particular insult: one says to another: "You are only a child, you are, I am your senior." This is always happening and then it is the part of the one who is leader to set those two on to fight. We all stand round and watch and the one who first cries is proved the child.'

622 Later, when the boys have built apart from their fathers, one of their number is often appointed by the headman of their fathers' village to settle disputes between them. Some boys' villages have no such appointed leader, but many of them do. Such appointments are, however, temporary. It is only when political authority is transferred to their generation that the young men's permanent leaders are chosen.

b. The 'coming out' ceremony

561 622 621 643 Eight or ten years after the young men of the senior boys' village of the chiefdom have begun to marry, their fathers hand over the government of the country to them. This transfer of authority is effected in an elaborate ceremony called the 'coming out' (*ubusoka*).

The 'coming out' is a series of legal acts by which the country of an old chief and his village headman (*amafumu*) is, with certain reservations, handed over into the possession and control of his

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

two senior sons and their respective village headmen. These legal acts are accompanied by much pomp and ceremony. It is at once the initiation of all the youth of the chiefdom into public life, the constitution of two new political units and the proclamation of two new chiefs. It consists not only of a series of legal acts but of religious ritual as well, action being taken to increase the personal qualities appropriate in a chief and his village headmen by treatment with medicines.

The 'coming out' comprises six main events: firstly, the public recognition of a number of age-villages of young men, and the selection of headmen to lead them; secondly, the magical treatment of young chiefs and headmen to make them dignified and powerful; thirdly, the public recognition of the two young chiefs; fourthly, a cattle raid; fifthly, the establishment of the young age-villages on adequate land; and sixthly, the marriage of the young chiefs.

When the eldest sons of his contemporaries reach the age of about thirty-three to thirty-five years the old chief is approached by his village headmen who say: 'The sons have grown up, let us make the "coming out" for them.' After a period of delay, for he is unwilling to relinquish his own honour and power, the old chief agrees, and the 'coming out' takes place. He fears lest he may fall ill from 'the breath of men' should he delay too long (*vide infra*, p. 134). His two heirs, together with all the boys and young men, whether married or single, who are sons of the old chief's contemporaries, are summoned to attend, according to their age-villages, at the old chief's principal house. When they arrive they wait there for several days, while the old village headmen discuss with their chief where to give the young men land, and whom they will select as headmen of the young villages. In many of the young village groups there are already leaders previously appointed by the village headmen of their fathers. If they have proved satisfactory their appointments are confirmed by the old village headmen; if not new ones are selected.

In selecting leaders of the young men's villages the old headmen look for men who are wealthy, who come from respected families, who have ability in judging cases, and are popular with their fellows; in the old days they looked also for courage and the ability to lead men in war. These qualities correspond to the village headman's functions. He should be hospitable to his

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 643 784 [764] a ruler.' It is relevant to add that cuttings of this tree strike easily in the soil and climate of Nyakyusa country. When a chief dies he is buried beside his trees, and gradually a thicket—a sacred grove—forms round them.

The young men spend much time feasting and dancing. Formerly not only did they raid cattle for food from neighbouring chiefdoms, but they also took cattle, milk, and bananas from their fathers' villages. And they still do the latter, for they say: 'We are now the owners of the country.' The milk and bananas are often sent by the old chief, but 'if the chief is stingy, they teach him a lesson by going and *taking* bananas, saying: "We are important people."' Great emphasis is laid on this right of the young men to take food: one group, the mates of the first heir of a senior chief, boasted to us: 'We came out with grandeur, we ate many men's cattle.'

342 621 After a month or two the members of each new village move off to build on a site of their own, and the wives of those who are married join them. Wives do not come to the first temporary shelters. The senior of the new villages remains on the site of the temporary shelters where fire was made, the ritual trees planted, and the hearth-stones of the senior headman established with magic. Gradually each member builds himself a permanent hut.

621 ●561 The old men move aside to make room for their sons. If land is short they may move on to the site on which a boys' village formerly was, or there may be other land available. Whatever the position, adequate land must be provided for the young men's villages. And, we were told, 'We old men are glad to move, we are glad our sons are so many and we leave the land to them.' Or again: 'The old men move because new fire has come; the young men have made themselves into new people, hence they cannot build on their old sites but on new ones. Perhaps the old men will succeed them, for they may build in the boys' village where their sons were, or if there is space they go elsewhere. But the old men rejoice greatly, for their sons have "come out".' Nevertheless there are sometimes disputes between villages of different generations regarding a particular site (*vide* Document, p. 188).

643 582 595 A few months after the 'coming out' each of the two young chiefs marries two wives. A young chief may be married already; but the two whom he now takes rank as his great wives (*abehe*

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the establishment of the mother of an heir in each, the future division of the country is foreshadowed. Finally, it is the occasion on which power is formally handed over to the younger generation, and the success of the new headmen as war leaders is put to the test.

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c. Relations between villages within one chiefdom

Within each chiefdom, then, there are two sides, each under a senior headman. On each side are two or more age-villages of contemporaries of the chief—men of the ruling generation. Attached to these villages are boys' villages made up of the younger brothers and sons of contemporaries of the chief. They live separately from their fathers and may have their own village leaders, but legally each boys' village is subject to the authority of the headman of its parent village. On each side there are also two or more villages of old men, contemporaries of the chief's father, whose headmen have ritual functions. Each village established at a 'coming out' ceremony has considerable autonomy under its own headman, but it is subject to the senior headman of the side it belongs to in two ways: cases not settled by a village headman go to the senior headman of the side, and a senior headman leads the villages of his side in war and communal hunts. Even villages of old men are subject to the authority of the senior headman of the ruling generation on the side of the country where they live. Boys and young men of the generation which had not yet 'come out' used to fight and hunt as village groups under the leadership of the senior headman (of their fathers' generation) on the side of the country to which they belonged. Whether or not each boys' village was also subject in war and chase, as in legal disputes, to the authority of the headman of its parent village is not clear. Certainly each boys' village formed a defined segment within any larger group.

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To recapitulate, there are always villages of three generations in existence—those of contemporaries of the late chief, the headmen of which have ritual functions; those of mature men, contemporaries of the ruling chief, whose headmen have administrative and military functions; and those of boys and young men, contemporaries of the heir, who have not yet 'come out', and who fight under the leadership of their fathers' senior headman.

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[631] Sometimes, as we shall see presently, villages of a fourth generation exist also.

561 621 Each age-grade, or generation, covers a span of 30 to 35 years, and each village comprises an age-set with a span of 5 to 8 years, though this is longer in sub-chiefdoms (*vide infra*, p. 37). The average age of members in each grade varies with the date of the last 'coming out' ceremony. Just before the ceremony the elders with ritual functions are those over 65 or 70; the mature men of the ruling generation those between 35 and 65; and the 'boys' who have not yet come out, those between 10 and 35. Just after the ceremony the ruling generation consists of those between about 10 and 35, anyone over 35 being an elder. Those just too young to participate in one 'coming out' may be just too old to participate in the next. The village of Katumba in Mwaipopo's country was in this position: it had been created after the 'coming out' of the young chief Mwankuga, but informants were uncertain whether or not it would be established as a separate village at the 'coming out' of his heir Mwanyilu (*vide* Document, p. 183).

622 643 561 621 The two senior headmen of a new chiefdom are chosen from the two senior villages established at a 'coming out' ceremony, so that a commoner's chance of holding high office is greatest when he is just a little older than a chief's heirs. The senior village of one generation begets the senior villages of the next (*vide* Document, pp. 181-5). Thus, though the son of a village headman in one generation cannot become a village headman in the succeeding generation, there is a tendency for leadership within the chiefdom to pass from one *group* of men to their sons. Those who participate in a 'coming out' while very young tend to have least authority in the country, and are superseded when still under forty by the generation of their sons. The immediate contemporaries of a chief, i.e. those with whom he lives during boyhood, have a special bond with him all through life; and it may sometimes happen that when a chief dies young and is replaced by a brother (his own son being too young to inherit) a junior village comes into prominence because its members have been 'the companions' of the new chief. Bulindanajo in Mwaipopo's country was a village of this kind: Mwaipopo I had died young, and was succeeded by his brother Mwaipopo II ('Mwambene') who had 'come out' as a youth in Bulindanajo; and his immediate contemporaries from that village maintained a special bond with him.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VII

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN AGE-VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

a. The peculiarity of Nyakyusa villages

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VILLAGES in which contemporaries live together permanently have not been reported among any people in Africa other than the Nyakyusa; such villages are not found among their neighbours, and diligent inquiry from Africans of many tribes has not revealed them elsewhere; it is possible that the Nyakyusa system is unique, but we still know too little of Africa to be sure. A similar system might well exist elsewhere without having been noted by Europeans. The fact that Nyakyusa villages were organized on an age basis was not recorded either by the missionaries[1] or the Administration, though the system of Indirect Rule had been in operation for eight years before we began work in the district.

What is common in Africa is for groups of male contemporaries —age-sets—to live together in temporary villages or club houses before marriage. The warrior-villages of the Masai,[2] the regimental barracks of Zulu[3] and Swazi,[4] the cattle posts of Tswana[5] and Pedi,[6] are all occupied by groups of contemporaries; while among the Kikuyu[7] and the Kipisigis[8] local detachments of age-

[1] D. R. MacKenzie, *The Spirit-Ridden Konde*, speaks of 'small boys' living in 'tiny houses' of their own (pp. 27–8); J. T. Hamilton, *Twenty Years of Pioneer Missions in Nyasaland*, says: 'The elder boys live together in long oblong houses at the end of the village. When one of them marries he builds a house near the boys' quarter, and in this manner the village extends in this direction.' (p. 40.) He does not suggest any further separation of the generations.

[2] L. S. B. Leakey, 'Some Notes on the Masai of Kenya Colony', *J.R.A.I.*, LX (1930), pp. 185–209; D. Storrs Fox, 'Further Notes on the Masai of Kenya Colony', *J.R.A.I.*, LX (1930), pp. 447–65.

[3] E. J. Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus*, pp. 261–7.

[4] H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 117–37.

[5] I. Schapera, *Native Land Tenure in the Bechuanaland Protectorate*, pp. 25, 220–9.

[6] G. M. Pitje, *Some Aspects of Male Education among the Pedi and Cognate Tribes*. (Thesis accepted for the M.A. degree in the University of South Africa. Unpublished.)

[7] W. S. and K. Routledge, *With a Prehistoric People*, p. 118.

[8] J. G. Peristiany, *The Social Institutions of the Kipsigis*, pp. 49–51.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sets have club houses in which young men sleep. Among the Cewa, though boys do not move out of the parent village, they have a special hut in which they sleep together from the age of five or six.[1] But among all these people the age-set scatters at marriage, each young man building his permanent home, to which he brings his wife, alongside his kinsmen or, in the case of the Cewa, alongside his wife's kin.

The peculiarity of the Nyakyusa then consists in the fact that contemporaries live together permanently through life, not merely as bachelors: age-villages appear in an isolated area surrounded (so far as we know) by people with no similar institution.

We cannot hope to explain how, or when, age-villages developed among the Nyakyusa: there is no reference to them in such documents as exist, and we could trace no oral tradition regarding their origin. Even the historian Mwandesi (cf. p. vi) had no idea whether age-villages were introduced by the incoming Nyakyusa chiefs, or were found by them among the previous inhabitants of the valley, or were invented after the conquest. We can, however, inquire into the social characteristics associated with age-villages. *What are the peculiarities of Nyakyusa society not found in societies with kinship villages?* In this chapter we attempt to answer that question.

b. Age-villages and incest

The Nyakyusa themselves associate living in age-villages with decency in sex life—the separation of the sex activities of successive generations, and the avoidance of incest. When asked why small boys build apart from their parents they refer to the danger of a growing boy overhearing lewd talk between his parents, or seeing them unclothed (*vide supra*, p. 82); and they enlarge on the difficulties of father- and daughter-in-law avoidance were father and son to live in the same village—an avoidance which is consciously related to the fear of incest between father- and daughter-in-law (*vide supra*, p. 85). We may add also the fear of young men seducing their fathers' junior wives, who are often girls of their own age. Nyakyusa informants did not mention this last point as a reason for living in age-villages, but it is significant

[1] A. G. O. Hodgson, 'Notes on the Achewa and Angoni of the Dowa District of Nyasaland Protectorate', *J.R.A.I.*, LXIII (1933), p. 129.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

g. Kith and kin

602 621 The tendency to identify neighbours and kinsmen—kith and kin—appears not only in religious belief, the two groups being credited with somewhat similar mystical power; but also in verbal usage—'fathers of the village', 'mothers of the village', 'sisters of the village', etc.; in the obligation to respect a father's fellows, to run errands for them and obey their orders; in the belief that a father's neighbours are insulted by an insult to the father, and must be pacified as well as the real father; and in the responsibility of villagers for certain torts of a fellow. The distinction between neighbours and kinsmen is, however, clear-cut in marriage, in rituals, and in the control of cattle. Fellow villagers marry each other's daughters; they neither perform the elaborate ritual at death or twin birth believed to be necessary for the safety of relatives, nor are they required to help each other with cattle for marriages, funeral rites, and fines, as are kinsmen.[1]

Kinsmen are bound together by their common interest in the inherited stock of the lineage and in the cattle coming in for its daughters; by co-operation in cultivation and building; and by the belief that they are mystically interdependent—the contagion of defilement and of certain diseases caused by sorcery travelling along the roads of kinship. Village neighbours are bound together by occupation and ownership of common land; by co-operation in herding and cultivation; and by common defence against enemies 'by day and by night'. In both groups discipline is thought to be maintained by mystical as well as material sanctions, the anger of neighbours bringing ill-health like the anger of senior relatives; and both groups have certain responsibilities for their members in relations with other like groups.

h. Relative social status

621 561 The Nyakyusa material suggests certain further connections between the age-village organization and other aspects of the social structure which comparative study shows to be false. For example, it might be argued for the Nyakyusa (as it has been for

[1] Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the Kikuyu)[1] that the equalitarian emphasis is related to the emphasis on age-organization. As we have seen, hereditary office exists among the Nyakyusa but the power of chief and hereditary priest is limited at every point by the power of the leaders of age-sets who are chosen each generation from among commoners. That democratic (i.e. non-hereditary) leadership is not a necessary concomitant of a developed age-organization is, however, proved by the fact that among the Zulu, Swazi, Pedi, and Tswana, whose military organization was based on age-regiments, rank is stressed, and the leaders of age-sets are always sons or kinsmen of the chief.

It is possible, however, that the low status of Nyakyusa women relative to men is partly dependent on the age-village organization. It is most obviously related to the high degree of polygyny, and the fact that the position of the various wives is not clearly determined by date of marriage, birth, or allocation of property. For a commoner the first wife betrothed is his great wife, who takes precedence in ritual, but there is no ranking of houses and allocation of the bulk of property to different houses as among the Nguni, nor the same strong pressure on a husband to visit each wife in rotation. Instead there is acute competition between a man's various wives for the position of favourite, with a disportionate share of milk and meat and of her husband's attention. We do not suggest that there is no competition among the wives of a Pondo or Zulu polygynist, but we argue that competitive tendencies have freer play among the Nyakyusa,[2] and that this competition depresses the status of women in relation to men.

Like the kinship organization, the age-village organization favours men. As we have seen, a main end of age-villages, in the Nyakyusa view, is to allow men the enjoyment of congenial company, that is the company of friends and equals. A village consists of a group of male contemporaries and their dependants; ideally, the men live together all their lives and form a close-knit group of equals, between whom mutual loyalty, hospitality, and affability is fostered from childhood. Those who move tend to go to villages in which they already have close friends. The women,

[1] J. Kenyatta, op. cit., pp. 186–9.

[2] Unfair division of milk between wives is said by some Nyakyusa to anger the ancestors who cause the cows to give blood in place of milk; nevertheless unequal allocation of milk is a much commoner cause of complaint than it is among the Pondo.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 on the other hand, come from many villages, and they move from village to village more than men, because most women are in-
● 561 herited at least once in their lives. Nor do the women form an
562 age-set, for men inherit wives as old, or older than themselves, and they continue to marry young brides until they themselves are elderly. A village thus contains women of all ages, the older ones often being quite late-comers to it. There is neither the unity of a kinship group, with leadership of mother or grandmother, as among a matrilineal people like the Bemba, nor the leadership of the mother-in-law as among the patrilineal Nguni and Sotho peoples. It is true that among the latter peoples the leadership of women devolves on a man's senior wife when his mother is dead, but the pattern has developed in a society in which daughters-in-law usually live for a long time in the same homestead as their mother-in-law, whereas among the pagan Nyakyusa a woman rarely joins her own son until she is decrepit, long after his marriage. When the Nguni or Sotho chief wife is obeyed by her co-wives it is as the successor of her mother-in-law; indeed on the latter's death she is often referred to by junior wives as 'mother'. Where women have authority in a patrilineal society it is usually as mother, or grandmother, or father's sister. But there are none with such positions in the context of the age-village; the office of headman is not hereditary so there is no mother of the heir, and the headman's own mother and sisters normally live elsewhere.

Such solidarity and leadership as exist among women in pagan
562 Nyakyusa society are within the group of women of the same
613 lineage who live together. Great emphasis is laid on the propriety
595 of a wife bringing a younger sister, or brother's daughter, as a junior wife for her husband (*ukusakula*): this is felt to be a compliment to the husband and a comfort to the wife, proof that the marriage has been a success. Co-wives who are of the same lineage are very closely identified, their children being treated almost as full siblings, and they themselves co-operating in everything.

One of the marked changes in contemporary Nyakyusa society
562 is the development of leadership among women in the Christian
795 congregations.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

i. Constitutional form

Two other negative points are worth noting. First, the Nyakyusa fought among themselves and honoured a brave warrior, but they never developed a military kingdom, nor did they regard battle as the chief end of man. Emphasis on the value of war is not, then, a necessary concomitant of a developed age-organization, as a study of the Masai, Zulu, Swazi, and Pedi material might suggest. Secondly, the constitutional division of a chiefdom once every generation is not dependent upon the age-village organization, for such a division was common enough among the southern Nguni whose age-organizations were of relatively small importance. Among the Pondo and Xhosa the 'great son' and the 'right-hand son' of a chief very often both became independent; the main condition of their separation and independence being that there should be ample land in which they might live, each with his own followers.[1] Nyakyusa chiefdoms could divide in each generation because the Nyakyusa were an expanding population in relatively empty country. 642

j. Necessary conditions of age-villages

The limitations of the connections we have attempted to show must be realized. None of the characteristics cited are *correlates* of age-villages, for in each case either the age-villages could exist without them, or they could exist without age-villages: e.g. fathers- and daughters-in-law could not avoid one another completely if they lived in the same village, but the separate villages in which they live need not necessarily be age-villages; age-villages might be established though father- and daughter-in-law did not avoid one another; and so on. We claim only that these characteristics of Nyakyusa society which have been cited *partly* determine, and are themselves partly determined by, the age-village organization. 621 561

There are, however, certain other characteristics of Nyakyusa society without which age-villages such as we have described could not exist at all. The first of these is the redistribution of 621 561 178

[1] J. H. Soga, *Ama-Xosa Life and Customs*, pp. 25-49; M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, pp. 379-80.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 land in each generation. The territorial segregation of fathers and
• 561 sons is directly dependent upon the shifting of the old men after
178 the 'coming out' ceremony, without which the young men would not have sufficient land to establish themselves as a compact group on land adequate to support their growing families. Where no redistribution of land takes place, as on mission land and in the chiefdoms where the 'coming out' ceremony has been dropped, the territorial division between age groups becomes blurred within a generation.

621 Redistribution of land in each generation depends upon two
425 further conditions: the existence of ample land to support the
423 population, and relatively little development of land. As soon as
178 land becomes scarce those in possession of it are reluctant to agree to redistribution. It is significant that the most valuable land of all in Nyakyusa country—that in old craters—is *not* redistributed at a 'coming out' ceremony, but is retained by an individual until his death, and then inherited by kinsmen. And as soon as improvements are made in the form of planting long-term crops, or building durable and expensive houses, the difficulties of redistribution are increased. Nyakyusa land-law recognized the right of an elder who had moved, or of his son, to the bamboos and *imisyunguti* trees he had planted (*vide supra*, p. 46). But such rights become much more complicated when it is not only an odd clump of bamboos or two or three trees which are at stake, but a large patch of coffee; or when, in place of the old-fashioned long hut (*ikibaga*) built with the co-operation of kinsmen and neighbours, there is a more substantial house with expensive doors and windows made by an expert carpenter. It has been shown that where individual rights over trees or other long-term crops are recognized, and such crops are planted on a large scale, individual tenure of land, as opposed to a temporary right of usufruct, tends to develop.[1]

621 Secondly, the solidarity of the Nyakyusa age-village, as of
476 kinship villages in other African societies, is a function of a small-
178 scale society. Fellow villagers have been hitherto, and are still in a large measure, dependent upon one another for land, for aid in economic undertakings, for sympathy and good fellowship, and for protection 'by night and by day'. But such mutual dependence is visibly decreasing. In the economic field co-opera-

[1] C. K. Meek, *Land Law and Custom in the Colonies*, p. 28.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 *supra*, p. 84). The Nyakyusa pattern of avoidance has un-
177 doubtedly influenced that of the small groups absorbed by them,
but they in turn have been influenced by these groups, and by the
784 example of Christians of neighbouring tribes. In Ilolo avoidance
178 between father- and daughter-in-law is much less strict than in
Selya. This was attributed partly to the influence of neighbouring
small groups of Nyika and Penja, who had not the same tradition
of strict avoidance as the Nyakyusa, and partly to the influence
of the Christians, whose number was proportionately greater in
Ilolo than in Selya. As Nyakyusa informants argued: the pagans
see Christian women disregard avoidance taboos, and they see
that nothing dreadful happens to them (as the result of their
neglect), so the pagans, too, begin to think that avoidance is of
no importance.

621 The relationship between the generations is also modified
among the Nyakyusa, as among other African people, by the
561 power of young men to earn money and so command wealth. As
178 we have seen, sons are in a position to *invite* their fathers to drink
beer in the father's own homestead. Once fathers and sons have
begun to *ukwangala*, drinking beer together, and once the horror
of a woman seeing her father-in-law has diminished, then there
is much less insistence on the need to buttress separation of the
generations by territorial segregation. When convenient, fathers
and sons will continue to live apart, but if a building site and
arable land near his age-mates is lacking a son may suggest that
avoidance does not really matter after all, and his father (if a
Christian or a sceptic) may agree to the son building near him.

621 Nyakyusa age-villages still flourish, but they are hardly likely
561 to survive many decades with increasing pressure on land, the
planting of coffee and other long-term crops, the development of
178 trade and migration, and a diminishing isolation from the ideas
and values of the outside world. Age is no longer the sole basis
for village grouping in Rungwe district—common belief and
common occupation now provide other grounds for building
together. There are Christian villages, an administrative station,
a military station, and trading centres such as Mwaya, the Lake
port. Tukuyu (the administrative centre) has its police lines,
quarters for hospital attendants, traders' quarters, and so on,
COO while Masoko has soldiers' and traders' quarters. This account
of age-villages may therefore have some significance as a docu-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

6. CHANGE IN THE RELATION OF FATHERS AND SONS

Record of G. W.

561 Mwambuputa, the headman, was building himself a new house with the help of six other men. He invited us to wait and join in the
177 beer and bananas, which were about to be served.

264 A boy came to call two of the builders to enjoy the company (and food?) of some other friends. They went off. It turned out that these two were from the boys' village, Katumba, one being a 'son' of Mwambuputa, and the other a friend of this 'son'. They had been eating and drinking with the rest of us.

Q.: 'In the old days, would these two have eaten and drunk with you—boys with men? Would you have called them to help you build?'

'No, formerly that was not the custom. Though we should have called them to help us build, they would not have drunk beer, and they would have eaten their calabash of milk separately, over there (pointing to a corner of the hut), while we men were here with our food and beer.'

Q. 'How is it then that the customs have changed, that now you eat, and even drink, with them?'

'You brought it yourselves, you Europeans. You sit down with your children at table and eat together, and the Swahili do the same. So we say: "He! Formerly we hated our children!" We said: "Eat over there." Let us eat with them!'

Q.: 'No, that does not convince us at all. The Europeans are strangers. How many of you have been into a European's house and seen them eating? Only the house-boys!'

Mwambuputa: 'All right, ask the others!'

Mwalubunju: 'Let me speak! In the old days, because there was war, we objected very much to the young men drinking beer with us. If we all drank together and the war cry was raised we should all be defeated. And men did not begin drinking in the morning, never! They began in the late afternoon when the cows came home . . . and in the evening each went home to his own house . . . but now, since the country is at peace, the young men also drink beer.'

Q.: 'Yes, but still I don't see why you drink *with* them. Why not give them a separate pot? And you eat with them, too.'

Mwambuputa: 'Because, as Mwalubunju has said, the country has fallen to you. It is at peace and there is no war, so the young men buy

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

their own beer.[1] Sometimes my son brings his pot to my place and calls his friends, saying: "We will take the pot to mother's house. She will pour in water for us." Then they come to my place and they invite me to drink and I accept and we drink together. How then can I grudge my son beer when I have some? Did he and his friends not entertain me'?

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[1] This, of course, is not so much a result of peace as of new opportunities of gaining wealth on the Lupa gold-fields and elsewhere, but to the Nyakyusa the two things go together as 'European times' (*ikisungu*).

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

One by one the villagers emerge from the houses, and sit in the sun, greeting neighbours with a polite 572 "Have you slept well?" if there are any neighbours [576] near. Then the husband milks the cattle, and the boys come to drive them out to the pasture, where they will remain until the early afternoon, when they are again milked.

Generally the cattle sleep in the same house as their 231 owners, tied up to stakes fixed deep in the floor; but 592 where there are grown-up sons not yet married, a separate house is built in which the parents sleep with the little ones, while the young men guard the cattle from raiding thieves.

The bed is frequently no more than a mat spread 513 on the mud floor, with a single blanket for covering, and no pillow, unless it is a piece of roughly trimmed wood. The more prosperous natives, earning good pay in the employment of Europeans, have well-made beds fully equipped, in many cases even with mosquito nets hung from the roof. The poorer consider that they have made a great step forward if they have been able to save up enough money to buy a single blanket, and not seldom even that belongs to the father, the mother and children having to be content with meagre coverings of calico or grass mats. But [354] the house is warm, often too warm, for the fire is always burning, the door is closed, there are no windows, and there is no ventilation in the roof; and all the inmates sleep with their feet to the fire, which is in the middle of the floor.

Here and there one will come upon rows of tiny 342 houses, each built and occupied by two or three small 561

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

342 boys, who have grown too big to occupy any longer
561 the single-roomed hut in which their parents dwell. They are slender erections of reed and grass, and look as if a strong wind might carry them away; but the children live a happy, and not always innocent, life in these huts until they are able to build bigger ones for themselves.

291 Dress is more conspicuous by its absence than by its presence. During the day the women wear little but a long strip of bark cloth hanging down almost to the ground before and behind. The children usually have nothing at all, unless they have the good fortune to get a strip of cloth from a grandparent. They go about quite naked for the first few years of life, and a mission school usually reveals rows of children who consist of long legs and arms and smiling faces, wholly unconscious of need if they have a tiny rag strung in front, often not more than a few square inches in size. But the men who are earning money may be well dressed. The richer wear trousers and jacket, a shirt, a collar and tie, boots, if they are able to afford them, and a helmet. Their wives and children wear long robes of highly coloured cloths, and are no doubt observed with envy by their less fortunate sister-women, with little but a piece of bark-cloth to hide their nakedness. The average man, however, goes to church or market with a single garment, unsewn, flung over his shoulders, and covering, more or less completely, his whole body; but he goes to work in a scanty waist cloth, which leaves him uncovered below the knees and above the waist. Men

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

574 of more importance are the magistrate and the missionary, whose coming is usually heralded afar, by the report that he is already in the district, and is now perhaps only a day's journey off, slowly making his way from village to village, and dealing with whatever matters require his attention as magistrate or missionary. His coming is a matter of importance, for he will have a number of men with him who will need food, by the sale of which the villagers hope to make a few honest pence; though abundance of food is often given freely as a token of welcome. As the great man approaches the village, all the younger people come out to meet him with shouts of welcome, and if he is travelling in a *machilla*, the men will take the pole from the bearers, and with tremendous noise enter the village and deposit him at the school or the chief's house.

182 And the sadder side? Sickness, epidemics, the perpetual fear of witchcraft and of evil dreams fore-
●561 shadowing ill, theft with its ever-present possibility
578 of accompanying murder, quarrels that will not heal, forced marriages, and all the hidden cruelty that so rarely comes to the surface. Most pathetic of all, perhaps, the feud between old and young; the young all for to-day and to-morrow, for the new ideas, the hope of progress; the old for yesterday with its stability and ordered life; the young going in crowds to church, the old going secretly, and no doubt sadly, to worship at the ancient shrines, guarding the approaches lest the levity of youth should desecrate the place of terror, and evil come upon all the land; the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

young gathering around the white man, and lending themselves to his purposes, the old even to-day approaching him with reluctance, if at all, for to them he still retains much of the awe and hidden power with which he was credited in the earlier days.

The individual Konde is not so popular with white men as are members of other tribes; indeed there are employers who will not knowingly give work to a Konde at all. As workmen, it must be acknowledged that they are both less active and less reliable than surrounding tribes; they are neither so intelligent nor so loyal to contract. The Konde soon wearies of effort, and longs to get back to the lowing of his cattle and his pretty little hut in its banana grove. He loves his children, and the hope of being able to clothe them if he works well, does not compensate him for prolonged absence. Loyalty, as the Henga, Angoni, and Yao are loyal, does not distinguish the Konde, who show loyalty rather to chief and to tribal custom, than to the white man with his problematical benefits. They have never attached themselves to the European, as many of the surrounding tribes have done; for the Konde are less convinced than others that the one hope of Africa is the European and his influence; less convinced, be it added, that Africa stands so desperately in need of saving. That may be due to their unawakened condition—and, again, it may not. Educationally, too, they are less advanced than other tribes. Only a few of them are to be found in Government offices, or doing the skilled work which commands such good pay from Europeans; nor have they supplied,

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

167 of the new area. Their culture differs from that of the indigenous tribes, so that they remain largely unassimilated. The cause of the exodus is partly shortage of land;[1] the Nyakyusa are skilled cultivators; the active soil-conservation campaign promoted by the Agricultural Department in Rungwe district involved farmers in additional effort, so that land in Mbeya was attractive in so far as the soil conservation scheme only started there two years later. The main motive, however, was to shorten the transport haul between the farmer and the market at Lupa. The demand for supplies of beans and grain from Rungwe district was decreasing even before the 1939 war, partly because production on the goldfields was declining, and partly because the produce of Mbeya district was increasing (largely through the work of the immigrant Nyakyusa farmers). The main problems for the administration arising from the Nyakyusa immigration into Mbeya district is the lack of control by the Native Authorities and congestion in the river valleys. The Safwa, who vacated the valleys of the Nsofwe and Mbalizi rivers after their wars with the Sangu, retreated into the hills before the flood of Nyakyusa immigrants, who now populate the valleys almost exclusively with their own compact endogamous groups.[2]

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Kinship and Local Grouping

621 (The following section is compiled from information applying equally to Nyakyusa
●561 and Ngonde.)

The distinctive feature of the social organization is the system of age-villages. An age-village consists of a male age-group with wives of any age and children. When a man dies his heir may come to live in his village, and strangers applying for land are never refused on grounds of age, but the original constitution of the village is based on the principle of identity of age. Up to the age of ten years the small boys herd cattle in groups. Then they start to hoe for their fathers, and leave their fathers' houses to go to sleep with friends. After two or three years they build for themselves in an age-village of young men. They continue to hoe the fields and eat the food of their mothers until marriage, after which they hoe mainly for themselves, on land adjacent to their own huts.[3]

602 If a young man, instead of hoeing, goes out to work, he is expected to bring back tax-money for his father. By his service he earns the right to be given cattle for marriage. A young man whose father is poor in cattle will often attach himself to the household of a rich kinsman, brother of his father or mother, and hoe regularly for him, eventually receiving from him a large portion of his marriage cattle.[4] Sons-in-law are expected to bring their friends now and again to hoe for their father-in-law, who will afterwards entertain the workers.[5]

[611] Descent and inheritance are patrilineal, but there are no clans, and no descent group with a common name and definite membership.[6] The sons of a group of effective kinsmen are not all themselves effective kinsmen, and in the third generation the bonds of kinship may often have been forgotten. Cattle exchanges signalize the most

[1] Wilson, 3, 1938, p. 7.
[2] Wilson, 1, 1936, p. 78.
[3] Ibid., p. 28.
[4] Hall, 1945.
[5] Ibid., p. 29.
[6] Ibid., 2, 1936, p. 267; 4, 1939, p. 2.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

583 Normally a bachelor is given cows one by one, over a period of years, and, as we have seen, he sends them, as he receives them, to the father of the girl he wants to marry. One cow is sufficient for betrothal, but not until he has given three can he begin openly to sleep with her. And he cannot usually set up his own economy until he has given at least three cows and she has reached puberty and been initiated. He may of course bespeak an already grown girl, but if he engages himself to a young one he is expected to bring two or more bulls as well, during the course of her initiation.

684 If he chooses to spend his cows in adultery fines, he may, but he will then have to wait longer to get married.

582 Thus the system of marriage by a transfer of cattle is, in this society,
●561 directly linked with a late marriage age for young men and with a privileged position for older men. When a boy gets cattle he at once gives them to an older man in order to secure his daughter as a wife; the labour of every bachelor helps to increase his father's wealth in food; it is in general the older men alone who can afford more than one wife. And there is an average difference of ten years or more in the initial marriage age of men
[162] and girls. The tax registers show in part of the district, among 3,000 adult* men, 34% bachelors, 37% monogamists, and 29% polygynists; and investigation proves that, generally speaking, it is the young men who are bachelors, the men over forty-five who are polygynists.

511 Though cattle are their most valued form of wealth, it is on agricul-
574 ture that the economy of the Nyakyusa is primarily based. Meat and milk are luxuries, and daily bread comes from the fields. Hard work in a fertile country provides food for each family, and the millet beer which is the ordinary material of hospitality. Hospitality brings a man prestige and authority among his fellows; on the possession of sufficient food largely depends the contentment of his wives. And in the production, preparation and eating of food the relationships of the family and of the individual family within it, are clearly visible.

241 Hoeing is the work of men, planting, weeding, reaping and cooking
512 is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about four hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a.m., on the upland plateau they begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different

*Presumed to be 18 years or over.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

law to all his classificatory brothers. The normal routine of life is 606
constantly interrupted by women's avoidance of these men, they crouch and hide and make wide detours to avoid them, a man comes into a room and a woman runs out hastily, a father cannot enter his son's house while his son's wives are cooking there, ceremonies are duplicated to avoid bringing them in contact. Few people seem to realize the meaning of 606
this taboo, but occasionally a man is found who tells a story which makes 773
its function abundantly clear. It is said that an old chief, long ago before the taboo was instituted, fell in love with his son's wife and took her, and such was the horror of everyone at what he had done that this taboo was instituted. This story expresses the necessity, in a society where the old men are accustomed to take the young women as wives, of guarding in some way against the possibility of a father desiring his own son's wife for himself; more particularly perhaps because the cows for her marriage have come from him.

This taboo, separating father and daughter-in-law is one of the 606
reasons for the age-village system which we must next discuss. For in 621
Nyakyusa society father and son live in different villages.

Age-Villages

The most characteristic relationships of the Nyakyusa people are 621
those which centre in the age-village. Villages and age-groups are 561
common enough in other societies, and are familiar to all of us, but it is rare to find them combined; it is very uncommon to find, as we do among the Nyakyusa, that local groups of contemporaries live together for most or all of their lives.

Age-villages are formed by groups of men, all roughly of the same age, their wives and young children. Women belong to the villages of their husbands, young children to those of their fathers. The number of households in an age-village varies, but thirty is probably a fair average. Girls, as we have seen, live at home until they marry, which they normally do soon after pubery, and then each goes to the house and joins the village of her husband. But boys, who marry later in life, leave home at about the age of ten or eleven and set up villages of their own.

(*a*) *Herd-Boys*

Between the ages of about six and eleven the boys sleep at their 857
fathers' houses and herd their fathers' cattle. This is a full-time if not a very arduous occupation; the cattle are driven out about an hour after sunrise and return to be milked about 1 p.m.; after an hour they are again driven out and do not come back until nearly sunset. The cattle of eight

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

As the boys one by one reach the age of ten or eleven, two important 857
changes usually take place in their lives. Firstly they leave the herding 621
of cows to their younger brothers, and themselves begin the business of hoeing the fields which will occupy them until they die; and secondly they no longer sleep in the houses of their fathers but join an age-village of boys. These two changes usually, but not always, take place at the same time and normally at about the age of ten or eleven years, well before puberty. But there are cases where special circumstances put the [184]
age of one or both of these changes later; I know one boy who herds his father's cattle although he has reached puberty, because he has no younger brother old enough to take over, and there are only five or six boys in his herd-group altogether. And in general I am told it is not uncommon for some boys who have reached puberty to be found still herding cattle. Again in one age-village the boys leave home a little later than usual because there are leopards about and it is dangerous for small boys to walk from the village of their fathers to that of the boys after dark.

(b) *The Boys' Village*

When a fair number of the sons of a village of married men have 621
reached the right age, their fathers give them a piece of land to one side of 561
the parent village on which to build. There they build little huts of reeds for themselves, sufficiently well-thatched to keep out the heavy rain, and there they sleep. The building of the huts on this land begins, in a playful manner, before the boys move. While they are still herding the cows and sleeping at home they build minature huts there in their spare time, but do not sleep in them. When they move they build slightly more substantial huts with a better thatch. Until he marries each boy hoes his father's fields in his father's village and eats food cooked by his own mother at his father's house. But he sleeps with his friends. Thus between the time when he leaves home and his marriage each is a member of two villages, economically he still belongs to that of his father, socially to that of his own contemporaries. Though bachelors eat at their parents' homes, it is very rarely that they do not eat in the company [264]
of their own friends. A bachelor does not simply go home to eat but a group of bachelors, friends of the same boys'-village, go round together eating at the house of each one's mother in turn.

In an age-village of married men there are always several different herds of cattle; and it is not only those from the same group of herd-boys that set up a new village together, but all the sons of the age-village. When a boy leaves the herd-group he joins a larger community, including the friends of his own age who have herded cows with him, but many

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 others as well. Any boys' village is found to consist primarily of the
561 sons of the members of some older village who originally gave the land for its building, but as we shall see later sons of other villages live there too.

621 At the beginning, when a group of boys starts a new age-village, or
342 when boys join one already formed, they do not all have a hut to themselves, two or three friends share a hut. But later, as they grow older, each builds for himself. The younger ones build their huts of reeds, but the older ones try to get a few bamboos from their fathers or senior relatives and build more solid houses. Married men build entirely of bamboo, but often in a boys' village you will find a compromise between bamboo and reed, both being used in the same house; and the houses of bachelors, even though they be all of bamboo, are smaller than those of married men. The technique of good building is not very difficult, and the older boys instruct and help their juniors, as they join the village, to improve the skill playfully acquired as herd-boys so as to build more substantial huts.

245 The chief food of the Nyakyusa is the banana; men plant bananas
262 immediately round their huts, though their fields are mostly at a distance. And bachelors, while they continue to eat their main meals at their parents' village, plant bananas round their own huts as well. Bananas begin to bear very quickly, sometimes within a year of planting, and so, soon after the establishment of a boys' village, its members have bananas of their own, which they cook for themselves and eat with their friends at odd times during the day. But they have as yet no fields.

864 There is no formal initiation of boys at puberty; but, on the other
[881] hand, the custom of leaving home and joining a boys' village is directly
577 connected by the Nyakyusa with their ideas of decency in sexual life. They think it is perfectly all right to discuss sex openly among friends of about the same age but altogether wrong to discuss it either in the presence of, or with, their parents or those of their parents' generation. If a boy learns about love-making, in any way, from his parents the Nyakyusa think that he will not respect them properly and that he himself will be a fool. A boy must learn these things from his immediate seniors and friends. One man said to me: "If a boy after about ten years old stays at home to sleep, he is laughed at by his friends and his own parents send him away. They say: 'If he sleeps at home he will hear what his parents talk about at night, the night is always full of lewd talk; and he may even see them undressing. He will grow up a fool, with little wisdom.' You see at the boys' village" he went on to say, "the older

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 system that small cases between neighbours are always first discussed and
868 often finally settled in the presence of some friend or friends who act as
867 arbitrators, without recourse to the constituted political authorities. Small disputes about petty theft, the possession of a cloth or some coppers, the ownership of a banana stem and so on, are as frequent in the boys' village as elsewhere, and as elsewhere the people concerned often argue it out to a finish before some friend or neighbour. And by listening to such disputes, or participating in them either as judge or principal, the boys acquire rhetorical skill and some knowledge of law. In some boys' villages there is a recognized leader appointed by the political authorities of the chiefdom to settle graver disputes, in others there is not. The position of such a leader, where there is one, will be discussed later.

577 Above all the boys' village gives to its members the conversation and
621 company of more of their own contemporaries than did the group of herd boys, and company the Nyakyusa hold to be the greatest of educators. In the most explicit discourse I heard on the value of company my informant explained that cleanliness, together with rhetorical and conversational skill, were all learned in company. These are his exact words: "We say that it is by conversing with our friends that we gain wisdom; it is bad to sit quite silent always in men's company. A man who does this seems to us a fool, he learns no wisdom, he has only his own thoughts. And a man who does not spend time with other people is always dirty, he does not compare himself with any friend. We say that we learn cleanliness of body in company, the dirty ones learn from their more cleanly friends. Again if a man is accused to the chief and is unable to defend himself easily and with eloquence we mock at him and say: 'What is the matter with you? Do you live all by yourself? How is it that you are so foolish?' We think that wisdom and cleanliness are the two great things learnt in company. We think it is bad to live alone far from other people, such a man learns nothing; he never learns to express himself well, to converse pleasantly with friends or to argue a case with eloquence. It is better to live with other people."

621 At first the sons of the parent village continue to join the boys'
561 village as they grow up; but after some years, when the senior members of the boys' village are about seventeen or eighteen years old, the younger ones begin to be refused admittance to the village; "they are children." The young ones then either begin a new age-village of their own, or else join a village which has already been started by the sons of a nearby men's village a little junior to that of their own fathers. If you enquire who are the members of such and such a boys' village you are always told that they are the sons of a particular village of men, but detailed investiga-

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tion reveals the presence of some sons of other men's villages as well. 621
Brothers, half-brothers and other relatives are sometimes members of the 561
same village, but more often not; and if they do belong to the same village that is because they are near each other in age, and were born in the same village, not because they are kinsmen.

The members of the boys' village, which is now closed and no longer increases in numbers, continue to grow older, and after a time they begin to get married. Getting married, as we have seen, is often a gradual process; but it is not until he has his wife permanently with him [471] that a young man can have fields of his own and eat their produce at his own place. The cultivation of land requires the co-operation of man and woman, cooking on any elaborate scale is a woman's business.

As the members of a boys' village marry the village does not move but it expands. The houses are built ever bigger and further apart and the adjacent land is brought under cultivation. The boys' village with which I am best acquainted is in this transitional stage; it has fifty-three members altogether, the majority of whom are single, but some few are married, cultivate their own fields with their wives and eat food cooked by their wives in their own houses. Of those who are single some again are betrothed to girls who visit them from time to time, but each still cultivates his father's fields, and eats at his father's home.

(c) *The Men's Village*

It is now necessary to understand the system of men's villages and the general political organization in which the boys' villages finally take their place.

The number of age-villages in one chiefdom, all the members of 631
which are married, varies with different circumstances, but the most 428
usual number is from six to twelve. The age system is only broken by 561
moving or by death; when a man dies his heir usually comes and lives where the dead man was living in his age-village. There he inherits the wives, the huts, the cows and the land of his predecessor, he inherits the dead man's position in the village and often takes his personal name as well. The heir may be many years younger than his new neighbours but he is now treated as their contemporary, he sits with them at ceremonies, he shares their rights at any division of meat. The age system in the villages is also broken by moving, for a stranger may come and be granted land in a village even though he is consideraly older or younger than the bulk of its members. But otherwise members of a village are roughly contemporaries.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

living representatives, to take their name, and to sacrifice at their groves, it was commoner priests who chose them and, as will be seen, put them to death when it was expedient for the good of the people. It is clear, too, from what source the commoners drew their power. The invaders were supposed to have brought into the country fire, cattle, crops, and iron; they were creators, the guarantors and preservers of fertility; and it was to foster and increase fertility that men worshipped and sacrificed at the groves of the mythical heroes. The aborigines, on the other hand, without fire, without iron, and feeding on raw meat as the myth depicts them, possessed one weapon of terrible potency, witchcraft, which no chief, not even a priest of the chief's lineage, could withstand or would dare to challenge. To the Nyakyusa the essential nature of the universe, established in history and in the institutions of their society, was reciprocity, a balance between chiefs and commoners, between cattle-owners and cultivators, between the creative power of the heroes and the black anger of the witches. The idea of a chief who was a dictator was as foreign as the idea of a single omnipotent creator. Moreover, there was a multiplicity of chiefs, no single central authority.

The heroic tradition, then, accounts for the differences between the chiefs and commoners and for the remarkable equilibrium that obtains between them. It accounts also, as we shall find, for the 'coming out' ritual, at least in part. It is strangely silent, however, about the origin of what is perhaps the most striking feature of Nyakyusa social life, the system of age-villages. The absence of any link between the myths of the heroes and the founding of age-villages is the more surprising in that the pattern of age-organization almost certainly came into the valley from the north-east. Only in East Africa was government based on age groups and the handing over of power from one generation to the next celebrated by whole communities. If the system of age-villages came in with the eastern invaders why is this contribution to civilized living (for the Nyakyusa regard village life as the essence of civilization) never mentioned? The only explanation we can offer is that the age structure is not necessarily linked with chieftainship, whereas the control of cattle and iron was the basis of power, and making fire was a symbol, not only of a new chieftainship, but of the vital creative force in the body of the chief. The heroic cycle justifies the relations between chiefs and commoners, but is not concerned with other institutions of the society.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

561 621 The age system of the Nyakyusa has been described in detail in *Good Company*,[1] but, since it forms the basis of their social structure, a brief explanation must here be given for the benefit of readers unacquainted with that earlier volume. Within each chiefdom there are a number of villages composed not of kinsmen but of age-mates. Villages begin when small boys of eight or ten years 857 build together at a little distance from their fathers. They are joined by younger brothers, as these reach the age when boys stop sleeping at home, until the eldest are in their middle teens, when [883] the youngsters will be told to begin another village. The boys of a village have their own leader, a 'natural' leader, not specifically appointed, but they are subject to the headman of their fathers' village, and formerly fought as a group under his direction. But [622] at the 'coming out' a headman for each village is selected from among its members by the fathers: if he dies, his heir—a younger brother or son—inherits his position, so that sometimes a young man becomes headman of an old men's village, taking the name and social position of his father. Only commoners are eligible as headmen: we knew one candidate who was rejected because his great-grandfather was a chief.

Two villages in each chiefdom are senior to the others and their [634] headmen are responsible each for half of the country. During the 'coming out' ritual the chief marries two wives, 'mothers of the country', and one is established in each senior village or capital (*ikitangalala*). The eldest sons of these two wives are the heirs, and later divide the old chief's country between them. Most of the chief's junior wives are divided between the capitals but some may be settled in a colonizing village in unoccupied country. All the chief's sons build with commoners in villages appropriate to their age, and all save the two heirs are subject to the commoner headmen of their villages. They are entitled to some respect as 'sons of the chief', and those of strong personality gain a following and settle disputes between their fellows (as may any commoner), but only the two senior sons can claim political authority.

561 621 884 423 Before the 'coming out' the villages of young men and their fathers adjoin, for the boys have built on their fathers' land, on the fringes of their fathers' villages. But at the 'coming out' there is a new deal in land. The young men are established in the centre of the country and their fathers move to the periphery; it is not merely that fathers and sons exchange land, but all the boundaries

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, 1952.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

are redrawn and only the fields in old craters (the most prized and fertile of all) are not re-allotted. Thus the villages of kinsmen of two generations adjoin, and often those of three generations. 561 621 884

On the old chief's death his village headmen become priests of the grove in which he is buried, and, in co-operation with his sons, the new chiefs, sacrifice there on behalf of the two countries into which his old chiefdom is divided. There is a nice balance of power between chief and village headmen in life, and when he dies his two heirs and the headmen (or their heirs) continue to share power, the power which belief in his spiritual force and their ability to guide it gives them. The success or failure of rituals is held largely to depend upon the personal relationships of the leading participants, chiefs and commoner priests. 423 634 793 622

Besides the ordinary commoner priests (the village headmen of a past generation or their heirs) there are priests of the chiefs' lineage, usually belonging to a junior line to which specific ritual functions, such as rain-making, have been entrusted, and whose office is hereditary in the same way as that of a chief. Kasitile (86)[1] the rain-maker, is such a priest: his grandfather was the brother of a ruling chief (43) and had been appointed as rain-maker (*umpelafula*) and priest (*unyago*), the two functions being separate but overlapping. As rain-maker Kasitile tended the rain stones, as priest he initiated the rituals in certain of the sacred groves, though he did not actually officiate himself. Kasitile was a key informant on ritual and a chapter is devoted to his history, since it epitomizes the relationships between chiefs and commoners. 793

As we have shown, most of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde chiefs claim some sort of kinship with one another. Those who are nearly related pray together at the groves of their common ancestors, and those more distantly connected join in sacrifice to their founding fathers, but in the communal rituals kinship is neither the dominant theme nor the exclusive principle of association, as it is in the rituals celebrated by private persons. In the communal rituals most of the priests are commoners unrelated to the dead who are honoured, and the sacrifices are held to benefit not only the descendants of the dead, but all those who live in the countries they once ruled. Nevertheless, the symbolism of the communal rituals constantly recalls that of the rituals of kinship; themes which pervade the death ritual recur again in the rituals of 'coming out' and 'cleansing the country'. This background is 634 796 769

[1] Numerals after a name refer to the genealogy of Nyakyusa chiefs facing p. 3.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173 The balance between chiefs and commoners is explicit. So
773 also is their dependence on *both* cultivation and herding, and it
[643] should be noted that, though the Nyakyusa speak of themselves
as stock men, they are not pastoralists to the same extent as
[233] the Masai or the Nuer. The number of cattle in Rungwe District
today is less than half the human population, and men tradition-
ally have done the heaviest share of cultivation.

773 In every version of the myth the tension between father and
593 son, or older and younger brother, is stressed. In Nyakyusa
561 society the father (or his eldest son who replaces him) controls
173 the family property and exacts obedience from his juniors who
[769] continue to show their respect after his death by sacrifices. The
tale of Kyala and Lwembe celebrates the triumph of the junior.
Thus, at the heart of the very ritual which sanctifies seniority
there is the assertion of the victory of the son and younger brother.
The myth expresses the aspirations of subordinates—of com-
moners and junior kinsmen—as well as the power of chiefs and
seniors.

173 As we have already noted, the heroic cycle makes no reference
773 to the peculiar Nyakyusa institution of age-villages. Their charter
561 is a quite separate myth[1] which tells of a chief who looked on his
621 daughter-in-law and loved her and took her, and this so shocked
606 men that in future fathers and sons built separately, so that a
father-in-law should never see his daughter-in-law.

There are other hints of the eternal theme. Besides the saga of
173 Lwembe there is another quite different tale of the origin of fire,
773 which is less often related. In it a girl who had angered her father
372 by breaking his drinking calabash fled from BuKinga to the
Nyakyusa valley, where she found people who ate their food raw.
She made fire and cooked for them and 'all women came to
her to learn to cook'. The long-necked calabash, used as a drinking
[415] vessel and in prayer to the shades, is a man's most personal
[768] possession destroyed at his death, and it stands for a husband,
while cooking is a symbol of the sexual activity of women, so the
myth is perhaps a drama of incest, but we have no direct evidence
of this.

173 This last is the only tale in which a woman appears as a
773 benefactor. In general, the mythology is that of a strongly
562 patrilineal society in which men are dominant. The wives of
Lwembe who walked behind their lord, shepherded by a lion,

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 85.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IV

THE RITUAL OF CHIEFTAINSHIP

(a) THE 'COMING OUT'

THE ritual which arouses the greatest excitement in BuNyakyusa and in which every man, woman, and child participates, is the 'coming out' when the two heirs of a chief are acknowledged as rulers, and the government of the country is handed over to them and their village headmen.[1] This ritual occurs but once in a generation, when the chief's senior sons are between thirty and thirty-five years old; they, and their slightly older contemporaries and juniors 'come out' together. Should one, or even both heirs of a chief die after their 'coming out' and before their sons are grown up, the ritual is not celebrated again—it cannot be, for it concerns not individuals but a generation. Instead the young chiefs are replaced by their younger 'brothers', full or classificatory. And should a village headman die he also is replaced by his heir; the office does not lapse. Therefore there are two types of change in status: the great communal ritual when the old men retire and their sons take office, and the family ritual when a dead man is succeeded by his younger brother or his son. An *individual* may inherit from his father, succeeding to his office and moving into his homestead at any time, and when he has done so he is treated formally as a member of his father's generation; but the celebration throughout the chiefdom of sons succeeding fathers only takes place thrice in a century. Each chiefdom celebrates separately. There is no attempt to synchronize with neighbours.

It was usual, traditionally, for two sons to succeed their father, and divide his country between them. The division was foreshadowed at the father's 'coming out' when he married two senior wives and settled them in different sections of his country; but it sometimes happened that a chief had a favourite for whom he built separately, and whose son went through the 'coming out' with his brothers and became independent, unless he was defeated in war and subjugated. Even a son who had no expectation of a

[1] Neither of us saw a 'coming out' in full. Godfrey Wilson saw the conclusion of the coming out of the heirs of Mwangoka (24) in November 1935 and in April 1955 I was able to observe the territorial changes brought about by Mwanyilu's (117) 'coming out' in December 1953.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 symbol of potency,[1] and we suggest that this also is an element in
622 the ritual of the 'coming out', for the fertility of the chiefdom is
796 thought to be bound up with the virility of the chief.

[372] There are a number of stories about the way in which Mwakyusa (38) surpassed his brothers and one of them tells how each brother made fire and set alight the pasture land (for traditionally parts of the pasture land were fired each season to provide fresh grass for grazing in the early spring), and the fires started by the elder brothers soon died out, but that started by Mwakyusa 'burned for a whole month'. This is interpreted as an omen of his greatness as a chief: fire, potency, lordship are inextricably linked.

At the 'coming out' all things are made new. No matter how
[561] crowded the country the young men must move to new sites and
the shelters in which they live must be new, though, as will be
[356] shown, they do not necessarily move to *unoccupied* country. On
their new site the young men live as bachelors, milking their
cows and cooking for themselves on their new fires the meat of the
cattle they seize, the bananas and grain brought by their wives
and mothers. Meat is abundant, for the young chief now rules
and has the right to take what cattle he chooses, even from the
villages of the old men in his country. 'It was as if there were war,
[726] the young men seized cattle, food, and women', and though they
did not fight their fathers directly, as the Meru did, they clearly
asserted their power. And, as so common further south, the
accession of a chief was the occasion for raiding the neighbours;
[778] the young men, we were told, went forthwith to test the efficacy of
the magic spears and the medicines with which their chief and
headmen had been treated. Or the chiefs might lead a battue to
clear the country of wild pig, as Mwakatumbula (Mwambete 162
did directly after his 'coming out'. Well fed and exuberant, the
[574] young men dance and display their cattle, and entertain visitors
lavishly, for every chief seeks to attract men to his country by
his hospitality.

Then they set up the sign and memorial of the chieftainship;
[824] they plant cuttings of two species[2] of *ficus*, *indola* which is much
used as a shade tree, and *umpandapanda* from which bark-cloth is
[423] made. Close to these the first house of the chief and that of his
senior village headmen are built, and the trees also mark the

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 124, 143.

[2] When writing *Good Company* I mistakenly thought that two cuttings of the same species were planted. Cf. *Good Company*, p. 27.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

married. Thus, yet another bond is forged between chief and headman, for he who provides marriage cattle is 'father' to him who marries, and the chief's wives acknowledge this by avoiding the village headmen of the senior generation as they do their father-in-law. Once the chief's ritual marriage is complete the sex taboo is lifted and such of his men as are already married are joined by their wives. In theory, though not nowadays in practice, the taboo is observed until the marriage of the chief.

All through the ritual of the 'coming out' the idea of a new beginning is expressed—a new site for the villages, new houses, new fire, new power for the young men. The events of this ritual, the seclusion, the lying on a litter, the prohibition on washing, washing with medicines in the doorway of the hut, the admonition, are directly parallel to the events of the rituals of death and puberty which, we have argued in a previous book,[1] are dramatizations of death and rebirth. There seems little doubt that the 'coming out' is yet another celebration of this theme. The young men enter an enclosed house—that of the senior's mother—and 'come out' (*ukusoka*) renewed as a child 'comes out' (*ukusoka*) of the mother's womb. No Nyakyusa informant volunteered such an interpretation, but, when it was suggested, it was eagerly accepted as expressing the real meaning of 'coming out'.

(*b*) THE CHIEF'S MEDICINES

Reference has already been made to medicines used by chiefs and by village headmen at the 'coming out' and we must now examine them more closely. The great medicines of chieftainship are *ifingila* and their function is to create *amanga*, i.e. spiritual power, and *ubusisya*, i.e. dignity, majesty, in order to make the chief fearful 'so that men obey him'. The medicines are comparable to robes of office for they are designed to give their user assurance and fill the commonality with awe. The Nyakyusa also think that chiefs and headmen should be 'heavy' with 'pythons in their bellies' which give them the power to see and fight witches. Without such a 'python' a chief or village headman cannot fulfil his duty of 'watching over the country by day and by night' and if a man is not born with one he may develop it through the proper use of medicines. This notion has been examined elsewhere.[2] The *ifingila* medicines are also thought to give courage and ferocity (*ubugasi*) in war, with luck in seizing enemy

[1] *op. cit.*, p. 205. [2] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 97-102.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VI

LAND AND POWER

643 THE crux of the chiefs' 'coming out' was a redistribution of power
561 and of land, and we must pause in our description of the ritual
423 cycle to discuss the relation between chiefdoms and villages and the land, and to consider more closely the balance of power between successive generations.

(a) THE TERRITORIAL ALIGNMENT OF CHIEFDOMS AND VILLAGES

173 Tradition makes it clear that the heroes came to a sparsely
361 occupied country and that their descendants gradually spread out as their numbers increased. The settlers chose to live on hillocks overlooking the surrounding country. Lubaga and
[103] Mbande, the seats of the two 'divine kings' are commanding sites.
[778] The grove of Kabale, where the ancestors of the Kukwe chiefs first established themselves, is on an eminence rising from the plateau, and Kambasekela (near the Mbaka bridge) on which the early chiefs Mwaipaja (21) and Mwaipopo (26) were buried is a hill very like Mbande, overlooking the plain.

361 Unlike most of their neighbours the Nyakyusa show a preference for cleared and cultivated land, planted with bamboos and the
[824] oil-bearing *unsyunguti* trees (*Trichillia supp.*)[1] as well as the great *umwali* (*Chorophora excelsa*) which, in their view, adds dignity to the homestead.[2] A study of the trees planted at the 'coming out' and the sacred groves in Mwaipopo's chiefdom (C 24)[3] shows that for four generations the ruling chiefs (descendants of Mwaijonga 82) have established their principal villages within a quarter of a mile of one another, and for seven generations the descendants of Mwakisambwe (30) have lived within two or three miles of one another (*vide* plan, p. 101), though there were acres of fertile land

[1] I am indebted to Mr. P. B. Nightingale, Forestry Officer, Tukuyu, for giving me the botanical names of these and other trees.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 77-8.

[3] C followed by a number is the reference number of a chiefdom as listed in the genealogies of chiefs.

[p. 88]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

available which are only now being settled. Colonies are established, but usually by junior sons, the seniors remaining near where their fathers built; e.g. the descendants of Mwakasangule (22) remained near Lubaga, but Mwakisambwe (30) the junior heir moved to Mbyanga about 1750 and his senior great-great-great-grandson Mwaihojo (147) lives close to Mbyanga still, while Mwaijonga (82) the junior heir settled two or three miles away. Mwakyusa (38), a junior son not strictly an heir at all, but personally very popular, was defeated by his elder brothers and driven from the hills to the plain, where his descendants now live. It is not an invariable rule that the junior should move away—for example Mwambete (162) of the junior line lives close to Kambasekela where his ancestor Mwaipaja (21) is buried, and not Mwakibwele (182) of the senior line—but most often it is the junior who moves. The tradition is that the junior heir of a chief leads off his men as colonists at his 'coming out', and this may indeed have happened in the past, but the area of colonization in Mwaipopo's country (which we have observed over twenty years) was first opened by private individuals moving into unoccupied savannah forest land in search of virgin soil for cultivation, and lush grazing. The chief Mwaipopo asserted his claim to the area first by establishing a household there with some of his junior wives, and then by sending the son of a subordinate house (who could have no claim to inheritance of the chieftainship) to live there. Nsusa, the second village headman of Mwaipopo's heir Mwankuga (150), also settled in the forest and acted as headman of the men there, but whether his move was primarily to lay claim to the land or because he had quarrelled with his chief, Mwankuga, and the other village headmen, was never very clear.[1] Then in 1953, at the coming out of Mwankuga's heirs, the junior Mwabungulu (178) was established in the colony, and is regarded by the people as 'chief' of that area, though he is not recognized as a chief by the Administration.

When a colony is established several miles are left uncultivated between it and the parent chiefdom. Mwabungulu lives five or six miles from his senior brother Mwanyilu (177) and there is an area without homesteads between them. It seems that, traditionally, each chiefdom was surrounded by a belt of uncultivated land used as pasturage, and very often at the 'coming out' both brothers merely extended their villages on to the adjoining pasture land

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 268-9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

leaving a strip of pasture between them, but when the area became crowded the junior heir would establish a colony at some distance. With the increasing density of population, and of the acreage cultivated by each family, the buffer strips between chiefdoms are disappearing.

The more closely related chiefs are the nearer their chiefdoms are likely to be, as will be apparent if the map on p. 87 is compared with the genealogies I and II, but the pattern of splitting and expansion was continually modified by conquest and absorption. For example, the descendants of Mwaipasi (81) of the junior line have no chiefdom, and the descendants of Mwamwifu (84) were defeated and absorbed by Mwaipopo II (116), and the junior house of Mwakisambwe (30) appears never to have established itself. His second son named in the genealogy, Mwamukinga II (44), was a full brother of the senior heir Mwamukinga I (43), not the heir of the second house. And of the descendants of Mwankyuse (33) only one heir appears to have established himself in each generation.

Although a chiefdom was surrounded by pasture land with unoccupied savannah forest beyond it, when the heirs 'came out' their fathers moved. The old men gave the senior heir a site in the centre of the country, not exactly where his father had lived, but somewhere near the senior village of the past generation, and the old men moved aside to make room for the new village. The old men's villages diminished in size for many members had died and not all the heirs had come to live where their fathers had lived, and the homesteads were built on the periphery of the young men's villages. Traditionally most of the cultivated land was reallocated at the 'coming out' also, but that no longer happens. Nowadays, even where the 'coming out' is celebrated, the old men continue to cultivate until their death most of the fields they cultivated before the 'coming out', vacating only their homestead sites and adjoining gardens. The dominance of the younger generation is reflected in their compact villages, forming wide, straight avenues, in central positions in the country, while the villages of older men are often split, and their homesteads scattered without order. The avenues are felt to contribute to the dignity of the ruling generation and the older men are content to withdraw that their sons may 'display themselves' (*ukumoga*).

[602] Age, territorial, and kinship grouping interlock in a complex

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

fashion. Each village is occupied by an age-set and men are emphatic that age and friendship, not kinship, are the basis of a village, but the villages of fathers, sons, and grandsons commonly, though not invariably, adjoin one another, as Bujege, Igembe, and Lupando, or Lupondo, Njisi, and Iringa in Mwaipopo's chiefdom (*vide* plan, p. 101). Each section of a chiefdom comprises half the ruling generation, and interspersed with their villages are those of their fathers and sons. Men are identified by the name of their village, section, and chief; the village name defines their age-set, the name of section and chief their generation. The section name is always that of the senior village which leads it. Generation succeeds generation in office when their heirs 'come out', but the relative position of villages (age-sets) within a generation remains constant. Since chiefdoms traditionally split each generation at the 'coming out' the men of the retired generation who remained belonged to one section only; those of the other section of their generation were members of another chiefdom. The territorial arrangements reflected in the plan of Mwaipopo's chiefdom on p. 101 are modified by the fact that the chiefdom has not split for four generations. In generation I Kibonde was the portion of the junior heir, Mwafungo (83), but he died young and his land and widow were inherited by the senior brother, Mwaijonga (82). The son of this leviratical union, Mwakipesile (118), went through the 'coming out' in generation II along with Mwaijonga's heirs, Ijonga (114, representing her full brother 115), and Mwakabule (117). Mwakipesile inherited Kibonde and Mwakabule inherited Kituli, but both were later defeated in war by Mwaipopo II and their land incorporated in his chiefdom. Mwakipesile's heir, Likosyela, and Mwakabule remained as subordinate chiefs. Though the girl Ijonga celebrated the 'coming out' in place of her unborn brother she could not rule, and Mwaiteteja, son of Mwaijonga II (younger full brother of 82) acted for her. He was finally defeated by Mwaipopo II and fled to the periphery of the country. Kabula was his village, and he was subordinate to Mwaipopo, not independent.

In generation III the chiefdom did not split because by that time the British administration was in control, and the territorial division remained much the same, Igembe and Njisi becoming the senior villages in place of Bujege and Lupondo, with Mwankuga (150) and Mwaseba (152) as the young chiefs. Kibonde,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 Kituli, and Kabula still remained somewhat detached. In generation IV the second heir, Mwabungulu (178), has moved out to the
631 forest and the area occupied and ruled by Mwaijonga and Mwai-
561 popo is still one, with a division between Lupando and Iringa. Kibonde is fully absorbed into Lupando, and Kituli and Kabula into Iringa—no descendants of Mwakipesile of Kibonde and Mwakabule of Kituli went through the 'coming out' with Mwanyilu as chiefs. Kibonde, Kituli, and Kabula are subdivided into age-villages of three generations, but these are not shown on the plan. They are spoken of by outsiders by the inclusive names.

To a European the most surprising fact about the age-organiza-
561 tion is that a young man of the ruling generation may still choose
428 to move into the homestead of his deceased father or elder brother. We knew one young man, who had been spoken of as a possible village headman at the coming out of Mwanyilu, but shortly before the 'coming out' he chose to move into the homestead of his deceased father in Lupondo village (where his father in turn had inherited) even though he might have inherited his father's wealth in wives and stock and returned to his own village of Masoko, after completing the ritual of death and inheritance. Our informants insisted that, though the young men might rule, the older generation were the more honoured, and in inheriting from his father this man was classified as a member of his father's generation. Nevertheless many young men do *not* choose to move into the village of the father or elder brother from whom they inherit, and the villages of old men decrease in size and finally disappear altogether.

The relation between kinship and territorial grouping cannot
602 easily be indicated by plans and genealogies for though in theory
361 each village consists of 'sons' of a village of the previous
166 generation (as shown in the table facing p. 91) there is con-
561 siderable movement from one village to another, and the members of any adult village usually prove to have come from a number of
631 different villages, though a boy's village consists of sons of adjoining villages. The table of members of three of the villages of Mwaipopo's chiefdom illustrates this (*vide* pp. 224-6). An analysis of genealogies showing where different members live gives much the same picture. Though the shortage of land in the coffee-growing chiefdoms of the hills and the rice-growing chiefdoms of the plain is tending to obliterate the age-village organization, the old

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

system is still the accepted form in Mwaipopo's chiefdom; the advantages of separating kinsmen in different villages are explicitly stated, and the contrast between the Nyakyusa and their neighbours in this respect emphasized. 'Certainly we do not live with kinsmen here but the Kinga do.' 'It is not good for a son to live close to his father, they will quarrel.' 'When we move to another village we consider friendship not kinship in selecting it.'

631 166 561 361 [183] [602]

(b) THE BALANCE BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND SECTIONS

The ritual cycle of the 'coming out' and the sacrifices in the groves helped to maintain a balance of power between generations, as well as between chiefs and commoners. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) in 1953 it was Mwabuputa, the senior village headman of his father, who took the leading part. He was described as 'the greatest man in the country' who 'brings out the chief' and his manner indicated that he was well aware of his power. During the reign of Mwaipopo (116) the power of his father's village headmen, Njobakosa and Ngulyo, was apparent at every ritual. Spiritual power was shared between chiefs and commoners, but exercised ideally by a virile chief of the ruling generation and the experienced headmen of the retired generation.

643 561 796 [554]

Those chosen as senior village headmen at the 'coming out' are commonly older than the young chief, but village headmen are thought of as surviving their chief—it is they who were responsible for smothering him, and performing the sacrifices in his grove. The headmanship is an *office* and so long as the office is necessary an incumbent is found for it, in the person of the heir of the original holder who is so closely identified with the deceased that most precise inquiry is often necessary to establish whether a given individual is the original holder, the succeeding heir, or a later heir, successor to the successor. The Ngulyo who officiated at the rituals in 1935 was the heir of the original Ngulyo (some said the *grandson*, not the son) and he was criticized by Kasitile as being 'a young man who knew nothing'. The principle, so familiar in Central Africa, of a perpetual office[1] emerges, among the

[622] [782] [554] [769]

[1] I. Cunnison, *Kinship and Local Organization on the Luapula*, Communications of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute No. 5 (1950), pp. 14-15; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), p. 122; A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, O.U.P. (1939), p. 24; 'Some Types of Family Structure among the Central Bantu, in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, p. 224; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, London (1911), p. 3. [113]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 Nyakyusa, when sacrifices are continued in the grove of a dead chief
561 such as Mwakisambwe (30), for an indefinite number of generations, and the heirs of his senior village headmen serve as his
796 [769] priests, taking the name of the first holder of the office. Most of the
[793] priests of Lubaga held perpetual titles of this sort. The conception of the *corporation sole* is familiar enough in the western tradition, but European observers in Africa are sometimes confused by the use of a personal name and the almost complete identification of each holder with his predecessors, as well as by the practice of treating certain kinship relationships as if they were offices.

Generation was determined among the Nyakyusa by association
561 with a chief. There was no name for those who 'came out'
796 together other than that of their chief, who was the focus of the ritual. On the other hand, however, a 'coming out' concerned a
173 whole generation, and it could not be held out of season. If the
634 heir died he was replaced by a brother, as were Mwaipopo I
[611] (115) and Mwankuga I (150). If a chief had no male heir of the right age in his senior house his daughter might represent an heir. For example, at the coming out of the sons of Mwaijonga, it was a *girl* Ijonga (114) who performed the leading part in the ritual which fell due before the birth of Mwaipopo I (115). When Mwaipopo I was born and grew up he assumed office, but he died young and was replaced by his younger brother without a further celebration. Because the 'coming out' was thus linked to the maturity of a whole generation we have felt some confidence in assigning approximate dates to the arrival of the heroes. The period between each 'coming out' we estimate at thirty to thirty-five years, though the higher figure is probably more nearly correct. There must in fact have been some flexibility in the timing of the 'coming out' to account for the differences in the number of generations of ruling chiefs in different segments of the lineage. Some of the differences may be due to errors (e.g. it is possible that 70 is an elder brother not the father of 98, and that a generation has been omitted between Mwakapeje (54) and Mwakage (75), but even where there is little possibility of error the number of generations does not always tally.

643 In theory a man always belongs to the generation succeeding
561 that of his father, irrespective of his age, provided he has not inherited from a man of the previous generation and taken his
622 status, but in practice, since men often have sons of very different

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ages, they sometimes build in villages of different generations. 561
When it comes to the selection of village headmen, however, 643
care is taken to ensure that they are indeed sons of men who came 622
out with the previous chief, and a village like Katumba which comprised both younger brothers and sons of Mwankuga's generation breaks up, some members 'coming out' with Mwankuga's son, others acting as 'fathers'. Within a village all the members are equal subject to their headman, but a hierarchy of villages is clear.

The pre-eminence of the two senior village headmen of a chief 631
is marked. They alone make fire with him at the 'coming out'. 643
They alone are handed war tails with which to lead their men in [293]
battle. Each is responsible for one half of the country and a dispute [778]
not settled by the headman of the village of the defendant is reported to the senior headman in whose side of the country the village lies, and he brings it before the chief. Each senior headman has his own village, the two senior villages of the country, in which the royal ladies live; the senior wife married at the 'coming out' is established close to the senior village headman, the second wife close to the second senior headman. A chief may establish wives in a number of villages, and some at least of those he inherits from his father continue to live in his father's old homestead 'to sweep the graves', but his capitals (*ifitangalala*) are the two senior villages of the country in which his two senior wives and two senior village headmen live[1] and the names of the capitals are used not only for the senior villages but for the half sections of the generation they lead. The importance of the two senior headmen is apparent even when their generation has handed over political authority to their sons. At the sacrifices we have described Njobakosa and Ngulyo, heirs of the senior headmen of the chief Mwaijonga (82) officiated, and at the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) it was Mwambuputa and Kakuju his father's senior headmen who organized the ritual.

Each village established at a 'coming out' is a clearly defined 621
unit with its own land, and leader, and name, but villages are also 631
segments of larger units, the half-section of the chiefdom under a 561
senior headman, and the whole chiefdom under the leadership of

[1] Mwanyilu (177), though he had two senior headmen, established his two senior wives in *one* house, close to the house of Kilasile his most senior headman. This was explained as a temporary measure 'because they were young', but it is not the traditional pattern, and may be linked with the fact that the splitting of the country each generation is no longer accepted as the inevitable pattern.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 the chief himself. The members of each village co-operate in some
561 measure in cultivation and herding and they form a defensive
631 group against attack 'by day and by night'—i.e. against armed raiders and witches.[1] But there is no great elaboration of ritual for single villages. Such village rituals as occur are connected with
[788] defence against witchcraft and involve driving out a supposed
[754] witch, or receiving back a member who has fled from fear of witchcraft, or protecting the village fields against witches.[2] Most communal rituals are organized on the basis of the chiefdom or group of chiefdoms, and villages or sections participate as segments of the chiefdom.

The principle of generation and that of section hold one another in check. All those who have 'come out' together have a strong sense of unity as opposed to the generations of their fathers and sons, but every generation is split into two sections each led by an heir of the chief, and these sections have a certain territorial solidarity. It is common in Africa for organized age-groups to cut across kinship and territorial groups. The Nyakyusa peculiarity lies in the territorial unity of age-sets which occupy villages, and the manner in which the fissiparous tendencies within a chiefdom have a constitutional outlet in the rivalry between the sections of a ruling generation which become independent at the 'coming out' of the next generation.

The combination of the hereditary and selective principles of leadership among the Nyakyusa is also somewhat different from that among their neighbours. With many Central African people the heir to the holder of the office of village headman or chief is *selected*, and the most capable member of a given lineage or lineage
[643] segment appointed.[3] Among the Nyakyusa succession is precisely
[622] defined and there is no selection of a suitable heir except to the supreme and greatly feared office of 'divine king', but the selective principle is given full scope in the 'catching' of leaders for the young men's villages at every 'coming out'. It is this combination of the hereditary and selective principles which binds together chiefs and commoners and successive generations. The rules of

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 44-66, 91-127.

[2] *op. cit.*, pp. 52-4, 109 ff., 154-6, 270-4.

[3] I. Cunnison, 'Headmanship and Ritual of Luapula Villages', *Africa*, xxvi (1956), p. 11; M. G. Marwick, 'The Social Context of Cewa Witch Belief', *Africa*, xxii (1952), pp. 219-22; V. Turner, 'Ndembu Village Structure', *Africa*, xxv (1955), pp. 123-4; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), pp. 157-63.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

inheritance ensure that a limited number of young men are absorbed into the senior generation and live with the older men, sharing their activities and from time to time holding office as headmen or priests of that generation, and the selection in each generation of young men who are *not* the sons of village headmen, or chiefs, or headmen of the past generation, ensures that commoners without office are constantly recruited to the hierarchy of rulers. In short, power is distributed.

(c) RITUAL AND SECULAR BONDS

As in so many societies, economic and ritual links extended, traditionally, further than political links.[1] Selya was dependent upon BuKinga for iron and the Kinga came to fruitful Selya to pray for fertility. The priests who came to pray brought the hoes. The many independent chiefdoms of Selya and the Mbaka valley acknowledged the spiritual overlordship of the Lwembe by sending sacrifices to him, and it was through the network of hereditary priests like Kasitile, Mwamakunda, Mwalukuta, and Nyama of Selya, and the Kinga priests Kikungubeja, Nsyanigwa, Kyamba Kitali, and Silobwike that wider bonds were maintained. Mwaipopo (116) when he was granted a Court which gave him the secular leadership of Selya, failed to make any acknowledgement of Lwembe's traditional power, and it was Kasitile who later urged him to do so. The western chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa still buy medicines and bark-cloth from the Ndali to the west, and have done so for many generations, but no common ritual links them as it does Selya and the plain with BuKinga. The trade was of lesser importance than that to the east, for it does not seem to have included iron, though the Nyiha who share a common culture with the Lambya, the western neighbours of the Nyakyusa, are known to have been skilled smiths.[2] With the Sangu to the

[1] cf. E. Colson, 'The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia' in *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa* (ed. Colson and Gluckman).

A comparison with the frontier in West and South Africa where economic and religious expansion compelled the establishment of Government is instructive. Cf. W. K. Hancock, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs*, vol. ii, part ii, pp. 162-8.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between the Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, vi (1890), p. 289. Elton's suggestion that some of the Nyakyusa iron came from the west is discounted by Cotterill. J. F. Elton, *The Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa* (1879), p. 371 and map, cf. J. Thompson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back*, vol. i, p. 272.

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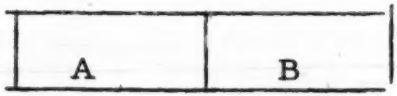
FN17 Ngonde
Nyakyusa

Chart showing position of sections of plan of Mwaipopo's Chiefdom. (Facing p. 100)



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FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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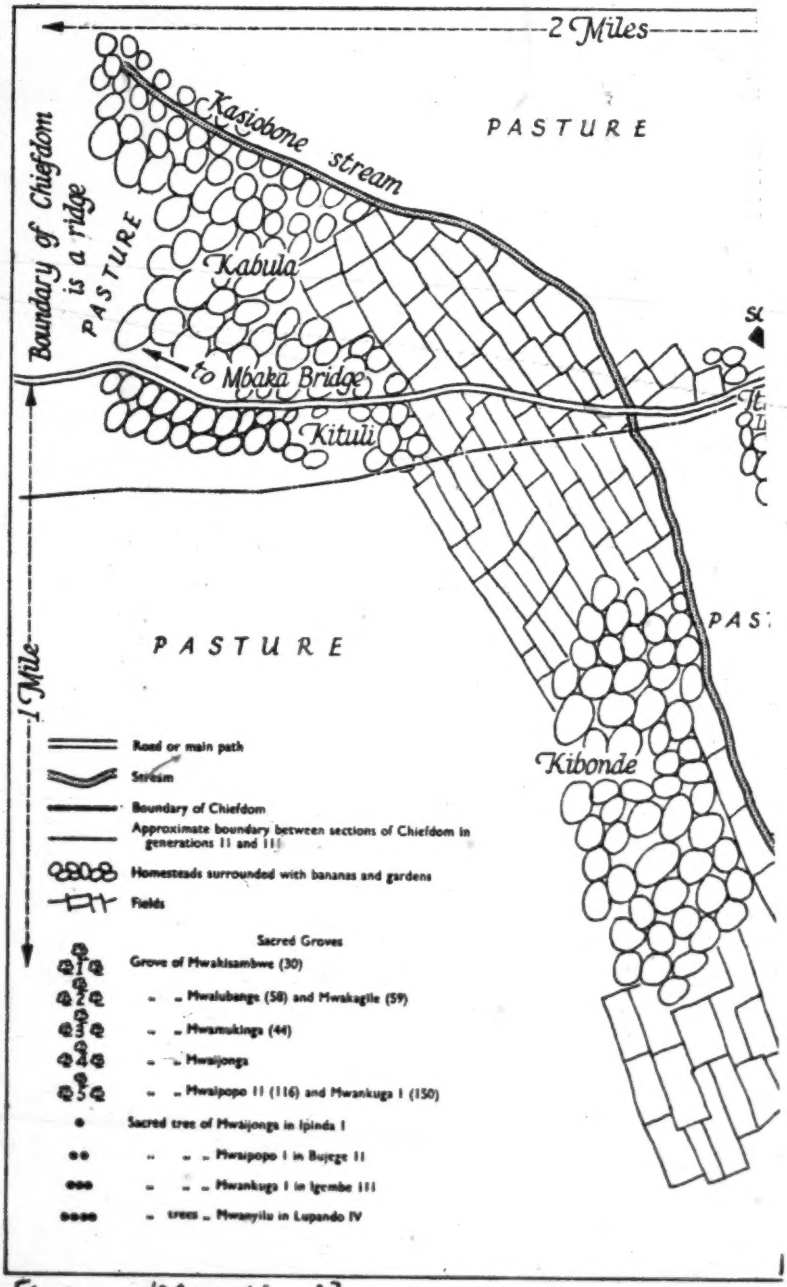

[facing p. 100; section A]

PLAN OF MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM

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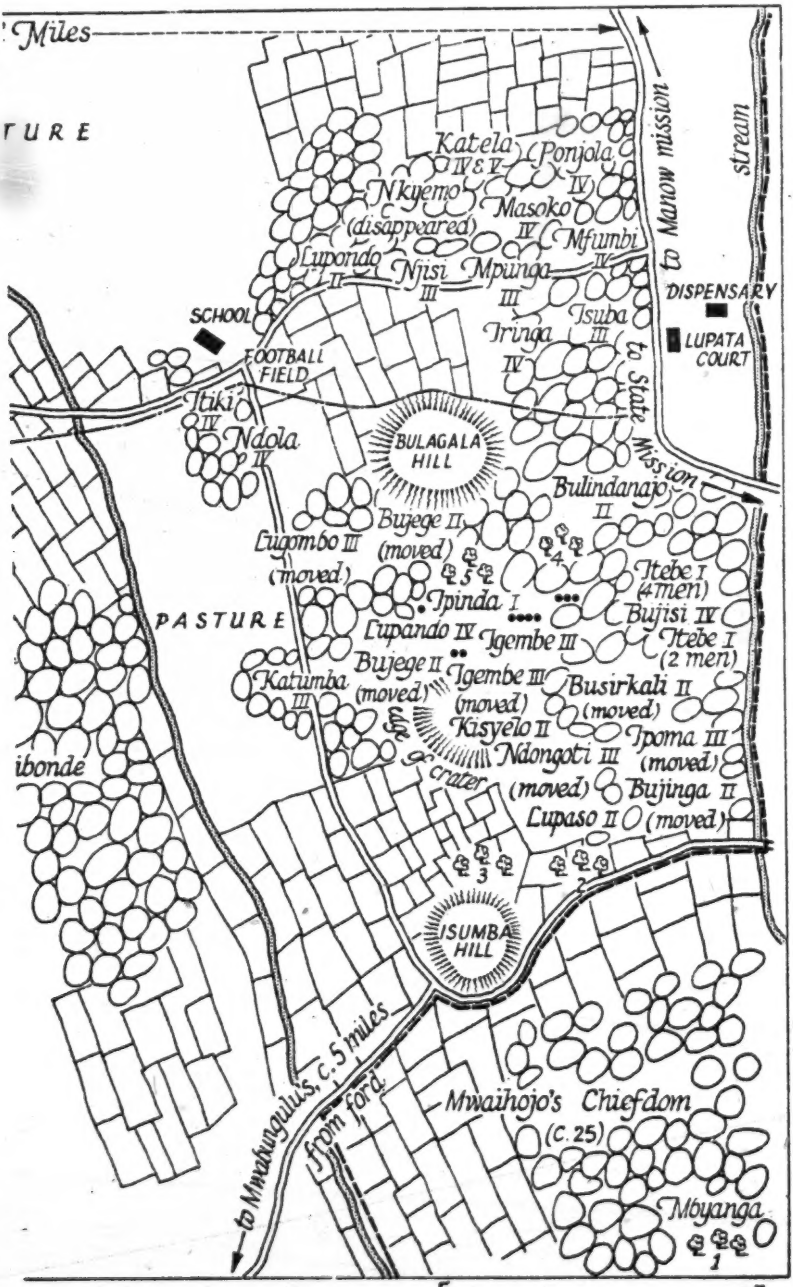

POPO'S CHIEFDOM (C 24) IN 1955 [facing p. 100; section B]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

NOTE

621 It should be realized that (i) the names of the two senior villages of a
631 generation are well known and clear cut, but those of subordinate
561 villages are more fluid. Furthermore a village often has subdivisions,
[103] distinguished by its members by name, but known to outsiders only by
[796] the general village name. (ii) A village may acquire a new name at the 'coming out'; the senior village of Mwanyilu's generation used to be called 'Mpuguso' but 'came out' as 'Lupando'. (iii) Some villages die out altogether, e.g. Kyemo II. (iv) Some villages straddle generations. Katela in 1955 is in the same sort of position as Katumba in 1935. It includes eight sons of Mpunga who belong to generation III, but also fourteen sons of men of Masoko who 'came out' with Mwanyilu. In the case of Katumba the members who were sons of men of generation III moved to younger villages and 'came out' with Mwanyilu, among them being his senior headman Kilasile, a man of over forty. But Kilasile's contemporaries who were sons of men of generation II could not 'come out' with Mwanyilu, at least not as a group—and the members of Katumba attended the 'coming out' as 'fathers'. Boys join a village of contemporaries but may move later to a village of younger men who are of their own structural generation.

At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu and Mwabungulu five village headmen were 'caught' and secluded with their chiefs. They represented five clear-cut villages. Kilasile and Sikambombo, Mwanyilu's two senior headmen who made fire are leaders of Lupando and Iringa respectively; Pauliki and Batungulu their juniors are leaders of
[622] Bujisi (or Ipoma) and Mfumbi (or Isuba), and Mwanjotile the single headman of the junior heir, Mwabungulu, has his own village of Nkuyu established on newly settled land in the forest. The young men of Kibonde were included under Kilasile's authority, and those of Kituli and Kabula under Sikambombo's. The names Lupando and Iringa are well known as those of sections of Mwanyilu's chiefdom, but the names Bujisi and Mfumbi are not: the young men of these villages still use the names of their fathers' villages, Ipoma and Isuba, though there is a clear territorial separation between fathers and sons. Taxes
[651] are collected under the names of Igembe, Ipoma, Kibonde, Njisi, Isuba, Kituli, and the three forest villages, Kilosi, Kiloba, and Nkuyu.

[p. 101 is blank]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

like most of the leaders of Zionist Churches in the south.[1] 797x

It is noticeable that the two 'independent' Churches have a more elaborate form of service than the Church from which their leaders have sprung, and Ngemela habitually wears conspicuous vestments. There is, of course, great variation between different denominations in the emphasis placed on ritual, some Protestants abjuring it and turning their very insistence on starkness and simplicity into a ritual in itself—a taboo. There seems to be a clear tendency in Southern Africa for 'independent' Churches to express themselves more and more in ritual and less in dogma. In this way they reduce the gap between themselves and the pagans, for the pagan religion is expressed almostly exclusively in ritual, whereas Christianity is expressed in creeds and confessions as well as in the rituals of the Church. 795x 779 [796]

(e) THE CONTRAST BETWEEN PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

There are certain common elements in the rituals celebrated by pagans and Christians: some of the occasions are the same, and in the conceptions of sacrifice, of death and rebirth, of confession and cleansing, there are similarities; but there are also profound differences. The conception of life, immortality, replaces the preoccupation with fertility, for though most Nyakyusa Christians, like the pagans, regard celibacy as evidence of physical abnormality, and the conventional desire of a woman is to have six children—a quiverful in Nyakyusa eyes—yet fertility is no longer the end of all being, sought in every ritual. There are profound differences, too, in the values expressed in the rituals regarding sex relations, the range of moral obligations, and social change. In pagan thought polygyny is good—a man should have many children. Child marriage is defended on the ground that a girl 'gets accustomed to her husband' if she goes to him early, and homosexual relations between youths and young men are tolerated since they have no wives and *cannot* marry if the older men are polygynists. What is upheld is the chastity of women, and a total separation of the sex activities of members of successive generations, expressed in the taboos limiting familiarity between mother and son, father and nubile daughter, father-in-law and daughter-law. In Christian thought it is the 'pure in heart' who 'see God' and this is interpreted by the mission Churches to imply monogamy. Only in the 'independent' African Churches is it asserted

797x 795x [842] [589] [595] [584] [838] [836] [561] [183] [595]

[1] The emphasis on healing, so common in the south, is absent.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Councils, the importance of establishing machinery for their appointment in chiefdoms where the 'coming out' is no longer held is obvious. 177 [622] [423]

The traditional communal rituals have not been dropped altogether, but their celebration is sporadic and not everyone supports them. Careful enquiries suggest that in less than half of the chiefdoms has the 'coming out' been celebrated when it was due. In the most conservative portion of the district, Selya, there were celebrations in 1952 and 1954, but even in that area a number of the ruling chiefs have never 'come out'. The omission is due partly to the desire of the old men to retain office, partly to the increase in population and the planting of coffee which makes any new deal in land unacceptable, and partly to the feeling of many that the old ritual is an anachronism, if not directly incompatible with their new faith in Christianity. Some chiefs who have not 'come out' would welcome a celebration; one such told us that 'if the "coming out" died chieftainship would die'; but a young chief's personal wishes are not decisive in this matter. Sacrifices at the groves of chiefs and heroes are not as frequent as before, but they still occur at some groves in time of drought or other emergency. The Kinga came to Lubaga in 1954, and they were expected to come and instal Kasitile's heir in 1955. In 1954 also there were sacrifices to Mwaijonga (82) and Mwakisambwe (30) for it was a season of scarcity. Rituals for cleansing the country and sprinkling the homesteads occur sporadically 'when occasion demands', but not annually in any chiefdom and never in some. And when celebrations do occur they do not unite the people of a chiefdom as they used to do. Christians oppose them and many non-Christians are also sceptical. [561] [796] [643] [782] [769] [771]

In 1935 the traditional rituals celebrated by lineages and chiefdoms formed a coherent system. They were directed towards the shades and the heroes, as was manifest in the sacrifices and in the dramas of death and rebirth when those secluded 'dwelt with the shades' or were 'caught hold of' by Kyala.[1] The older participants were then conscious, in greater or lesser degree, of the symbolism implicit in the actions they performed. By 1955 the ritual cycle was nowhere celebrated in full: what remained were 'bits and pieces' of ritual, none of them fully intelligible without reference to the complete cycle. The link between the rites and the shades and the heroes was less clear, and the symbolism less [769] [796]

[1] *Vide supra*, pp. 27-48, 70-85; *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 51, 98, 101, 111-13, 205.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

182 and is therefore to be interpreted as 'confession of anger', rather
783 than as 'rebellion'.

776 Sometimes there is an expression of *opposite* tendencies, both
631 implicitly approved. The sacrifices to the heroes and at the groves of the chiefs emphasize seniority and precedence, and
182 express the dependence of junior on senior kinsmen, but the
769 myth, recalled in every celebration, tells of the surpassing power
783 of the son or younger brother in the beginning of time, and the
561 junior brother of a chief often holds office as a priest. Then there is the drama of driving away the shade and bringing him back transformed, which is so characteristic of the rituals of kinship and appears again at the cleansing of the country. Such contradictions are doubtless expressions of ambivalent attitudes among the participants themselves, and of the attempt in ritual to reconcile conflicting social principles—in these instances authority with the rights and duties of juniors, and change with continuity.

In a society without written records legal certainty depends
182 very largely on publicity. This is apparent in the law relating to
643 marriage contracts and family inheritance,[1] and still more so in
561 the law of the chiefdom. The ritual of 'coming out' celebrates radical changes in social status, and the public recognition of the leaders, members, and territorial boundaries of villages, as well as of the heirs to chieftainship. Thus certainty in these matters is assured. There is no positive value of the co-regency of father and son (as in ancient Egypt),[2] but the installation of the young chiefs before the death of their father serves to mitigate conflicts over the succession. Confusion over village boundaries and village
[423] leadership often appears when the ritual has not been celebrated, for there is no public definition to refer to.

How close is the link between religious belief and practice and
182 social structure? There is no doubt that the sacrifices to the dead
769 chiefs and heroes and the traditional rituals of kinship supported the former political and kinship structure of the Nyakyusa. Their
797 performance compelled co-operation between kinsmen,[3] between neighbouring chiefs, and between chiefs and people. How far then does the change in religion, begun when the first Christian convert professed his new faith, compel a change in the social

[1] Godfrey Wilson, 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Law', *Africa*, vol. ix, 1937, p. 29.
[2] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, pp. 101-2.
[3] cf. *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 190-200, 227.

For example,

In the Northern Highlands there is now a strong tendency for the tight village system to disintegrate as men seek to site their houses, each in his own coffee plot. In the Lake Plains also the structure of the age-village is changing – there the villages persist as such but they come to be inhabited by men of any age and new villages do not emerge with a new chief. No attempt is made here, however, to analyse these variations for they are only now beginning and no satisfactory, detailed information is available for the post-war cash economy of the highland areas.

The Government of Tanganyika has permitted the publication of this essay, and I wish to express my gratitude for its support. The essay is a modified version of my original Report which was presented to Government in January, 1956. The views expressed in it are my own and not those of Government. As usual in my work as Government Sociologist, I have received much valuable assistance, advice and information from officers stationed in the area. The Nyakyusa themselves, as during my first enquiry, were usually cooperative, and at least some of them welcomed my work as a contribution to the easement of their novel difficulties. It would not have been surprising had they remained obdurate and antagonistic towards my enquiries about their land, for like many modern Africans they have a sense of insecurity which is not susceptible to reason. In fact I was able without much difficulty to make any enquiry I wished, to measure sample areas and to discuss the situation in all its aspects. Perhaps it is that an African people welcome a sympathetic enquirer and in their problems genuinely want assistance. The task of a sociologist is of course in some ways rather easier than that of an administrator or technical officer who has to persuade the people actually to accept and practice new ways and to abandon old ways. It is hoped that this essay may be of assistance both to these officers and to the people whom they are attempting to assist and teach.

Finally, I must thank the East African Institute of Social Research which has accepted this essay for publication, and especially Dr. L. A. Fallers who kindly read and criticised the original draft and who drew the two sketch maps.

Note: The term, the "Lake Plains", as used in this essay is to be understood to cover the major part of the modern local government area under the Ntebela Rural Council. Omitted are the small groups of Kisi (Ikombe) and Ndali (Ngana) peoples to the extreme east and west respectively. This area contains the alluvial flood plains surrounding the northern tip of Lake Nyasa, and the lowest foothills to the north where the country begins its steep incline towards the Poroto Mountains. To the south lies the lake and to the south-west, beyond the meandering Songwe river, lie the bushlands of the northern part of the Nyasaland Protectorate. To the east are the towering Livingstone Mountains and to the north live the other Nyakyusa groups in the highlands.

The area comprises a fairly compact social and economic region with a common historical tradition. Several of the indigenous chiefdoms stretch across the intermediate boundary between flood plains and foothills. With but one exception the present chiefs are lineal descendants, in their various houses, of the original Mwakyusa who led the people into this lowland area five generations ago. The modern inhabitants are pre-eminently the Nyakyusa-proper.

10;Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER II

THE TRADITIONAL SYSTEM

Although this essay is to be primarily concerned with the modern and changing land and population situation among the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains, it is quite essential first to have an understanding of the traditional system of political and territorial organisation and of land tenure. This is not mere historicism, for despite changes the traditional system remains as the basis of contemporary land-holding and land law. Whilst actual conditions on the ground change, the Nyakyusa appreciation of those changes and their attitudes to land lag significantly behind. In brief, the traditional system was geared to a situation where there was plenty of land. Today the people find real difficulty in adjusting themselves to a high density of population and an acute shortage of land, with the result that this new situation is aggravated by outmoded practices, attitudes and cultural values.

The ancestors of the present group of peoples now known collectively as the Nyakyusa, moved into the Rungwe region from the Ukinga Highlands to the east beyond the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains. According to legend, which is probably substantially true, these newcomers found a sparsely populated country which they easily occupied. Later, following internecine strife, one group under a man called Mwakyusa left the Masoko area in the centre of present-day Rungwe District and moved down into the Lake Plains. There, probably less than 150 years ago, they drove out the Ngonde people and settled. The sons of Mwakyusa took their shares of the country and people and established their independent chiefdoms. The chiefs in 1956 are the lineal descendants, mainly in the fifth generation, of Mwakyusa, and have a well-known genealogy. The only exception to this occurs amongst the group of tiny chiefdoms in the extreme east under the Livingstones, which now form a single administrative chiefdom under Mwakilasa and number some 400 men. They trace descent from pre-Nyakyusa settlers known as the Saku.

Traditionally, as today, the village was the basic unit both in social life generally and in land-holding in particular. The Nyakyusa village was possibly unique in Africa. It was comprised of men of roughly the same age, together with their wives and young children, and it excluded their fathers and sons and also, very often, their elder and younger brothers. Each village consisted of a close group of houses (often centred on a broad "village street"), with arable and pastoral land around it. Each village had fairly well-defined boundaries with its neighbours. The village was represented as a group and acted corporately through its headman, *lifumu*, who was the guardian of villagers' land rights, the arbiter in land problems and disputes, and the controller of unused land. He was also the political and ritual leader of the village, but nevertheless he was a commoner chosen from amongst the villagers themselves, and was not a member of a chiefly lineage.

Land was owned by the village as a group. Every man resident in the village had a clear right to a site for his house and banana plot and to arable land within the village boundaries; he also had a right to graze his cattle in its communal pastures. Residence gave these rights and members of other villages were excluded. A man who left the village automatically gave up these rights, though if he returned he was able to take up his former holding or its equivalent.

villages grew ever smaller and became extinct as their members gradually died off in old age.

A Nyakyusa village, then, owed its being to this most significant political, social and religious event. Each village had its area approximately demarcated, and each headman was ritually and magically strengthened in order to lead and protect his men and their families.

This particular system operated satisfactorily in the demographic and land-using conditions of the old days. By the process of bifurcation, briefly described above, new chiefdoms and new villages were formed for each generation. Although the population appears to have been increasing rapidly there was always sufficient land to create two chiefdoms where one had existed before, and to create new villages and more villages than had existed before in the old chiefdom. The two new chiefs were able easily to move apart and find sufficient and more than sufficient land for their needs.

The system of bifurcation, the ideal of the Nyakyusa, did not always work out so neatly in practice – at any rate it often did not in the Lake Plains. Sometimes it did work; for example, the present chiefdoms of Lazarus and Koroso are the two parts of their grandfather's single chiefdom, which split up under their respective fathers. Similarly, the present Mwakipesile and Mwamasangula chiefdoms stemmed from a single unit, whilst the Mwakipesile chiefdom itself today is really two indigenous chiefdoms, but the Government would recognise only the senior brother's claim to chiefship and allowed him authority over the whole. Even where a single new chiefdom succeeded the old (frequently as the result of civil war in which one brother subjugated the other) the essential dichotomous arrangement persisted so that the resultant single unit had two distinct halves, each with its own head with his villages and headmen. In any case, whether traditional bifurcation occurred or not, and right down to modern times, new villages have been established at the time of the "coming-out" of the new chief. The basic village system showed greater persistence and remained truer to type than did the chiefdom and the wider political system.

The real authority of a Nyakyusa chief was not in general very great, although individuals here and there achieved personal importance. A chief was accorded a great deal of prestige and honour, and by tribute and gifts he frequently became pre-eminently wealthy. He was supposed to be kept informed by his headmen of all important village affairs and to approve all matters concerning the land; but the village headman was in fact the real land authority, who attended to the details of land allocation and land use within his village. A chief could not do this, and in fact only in so far as he had the support and loyalty of his headmen had he any authority at all. "A chief is a chief because he has headmen," one informant put it to me – he was a prominent chief himself. A villager said: "A chief does not own the chiefdom, or the land. We, the people together, own it." A chief could, without notice or advice, take any unoccupied land for the use of himself or of his kinsmen, but he could not allocate it to others; both headman and villagers would have indignantly and successfully protested had he tried, as some occasionally did. Land disputes, an uncommon feature in a country where land was plentiful, were settled by the headman of the village in question; they were the private affairs of the village and the chief had no right of interference. Inter-village disputes first came before a meeting of the headmen concerned, with perhaps the assistance of the senior headman of the chiefdom. Only if a dispute could not be settled and if it seemed likely to threaten general peace within the chiefdom would the disputants go before the chief himself, who even so relied and had to rely heavily on his headmen to secure a settlement. So delicate was his position that he might be unable to resolve inter-village disputes for fear of witchcraft reprisals against him by the unsuccessful party.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

land automatically reverted to the common pool. An established villager might decide to use part of it perhaps, but not before prudently gaining the approval of the headman, lest the migrant return later and accuse him of unlawful and unfriendly seizure. If the headman agreed, as he would after a time in most cases, the newly acquired plot became part of that villager's holding with as secure a title as the rest. Such vacated land could also be allocated by the headman to a newcomer or, before the sons' village was established, to the son of a villager.

If a man had more land than he could cultivate – because, for example, his sons had left him to cultivate in their own villages, or his wife had died – he was under no essential obligation to give up any part. The headman might, if the need arose, try to persuade him to release a portion in order to make it available to someone in need; but the land-holder could refuse and the headman had to accept his refusal. As a chief depended on the support of his headmen, so did a headman's position ultimately depend upon at least the passive support of his villagers, from whose ranks he was chosen.

At the next "coming-out" ceremony the men of a village of the old chiefdom might be required to move aside in order to allow the young men, their sons, to take up the better building sites and farming land. This they traditionally did voluntarily and they built new homesteads on one side and cleared new arable plots. Once re-established in this manner, these older men would not be disturbed again and they remained secure in their new holdings. How often in fact such a displacement took place I cannot say, but it certainly seems to have occurred sometimes, for one can still trace old village sites which appear to bear out the common Nyakyusa story.

In all this it must be remembered that the spirit of village unity and coevality was held in far higher esteem than land in such a fertile country where land was plentiful and subsistence farming required but small-sized holdings. Security of tenure and defined rights to particular plots are notions belonging to a different situation and age; when land begins to be scarce and to have an economic value, and when there is danger of men not being able to obtain as much as they need roughly where they need it.

Newcomers were invariably welcomed to a village: they were supplied with a house site and an arable holding and were assisted with food until the first harvest. They were an addition to the numerical size and physical strength of the village, and they increased a headman's prestige. Their rights were no less assured than those of founder-members of the village, although their social position was less secure, at least at first, for they had not shared in the history of the community and had not grown up with the ties of village association and comradeship amounting almost to kinship.

Traditional rights in trees may be mentioned briefly. Trees were inherited without difficulty along with the land on which they stood, and a brother or son would commonly inherit the deceased's valuable trees without bothering to take the arable land around. If a man left his village and thus forfeited his land there, the position was different. Banana trees went with the land and a new occupant simply took them over; bananas are of no great value as they grow so readily and ubiquitously. Bamboos are more valuable (being used extensively in house-building) and any left behind in this way could be claimed in the first instance not by the village but by the chief. If the chief wanted them they became his property, or he could grant them to any man he favoured. Usually a chief was content to leave them: then the local kinsmen of the departed man had first claim, and if they had no use for them, or if no kinsmen were resident in the village, they became village property to be allocated by the headman. *Usyunguti* trees[1] were regarded in

1. These are valued oil-bearing trees planted by the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains, the botanical name of which I do not know.

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news of such reserved land elsewhere. Such land is cultivated in the meantime on a kind of year-to-year lease by one or more of the villagers as allowed by the headman.

Even when no vacant plots exist a headman will still accept newcomers. If they are young men they must be prepared to go landless for the time being (i.e., to remain dependent on their father's fields elsewhere) until such time as land becomes vacant. If the newcomer is an older man, then the headman will try to persuade one or more of his villagers to give up portions of their holdings and he will often cede part of his own land. The newcomer is therefore often allocated small strips and plots here and there in the village arable area and he thereafter joins the land-hungry crowd seeking to expand their holdings. In one village in which I worked where land shortage was critical (Kapugi, Koroso's chiefdom), there was not a single patch of usable land unworked; yet here the headman had, with full village approval, accepted three newcomers during the first nine months of 1955. Two of them were young men, one unmarried, and they could not expect to obtain land for some time except for a small banana plot. The third newcomer was a middle-aged man from a village some 12 miles away in another chiefdom. The headman had given him a half-acre plot out of his own paddy field and was laboriously begging pieces of land here and there from his people in order to make up a new holding of perhaps an acre. The headman himself had only about three and a half acres of arable land; he had at least one adult son who had not yet acquired an arable plot and he had other sons and brothers' sons owning only small fields. Yet he favoured this stranger, this newcomer. He was quite firm in his resolution to accept other newcomers in the future and in this he believed that he was acting as a good headman should. As far as I could learn he was supported by his villagers.

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This is not, by any means, an isolated or even unusual phenomenon. It is, I feel, important to bear in mind this illustration of contemporary affairs. Firstly, because it shows another way in which holdings are fragmented and dispersed; and secondly, because it demonstrates how, so far, the Nyakyusa have refused to face the situation of land shortage, and how they continue to follow traditional practices and values associated with village prestige. These people complain of their inability to obtain sufficient arable land, but they are not yet prepared to make the mental and social adjustments which might at least partly relieve their new predicament. On the other hand, they themselves understand the need for movement and perhaps they are right in their implied insistence not to discard their cultural ideals. Their insistence on accepting newcomers and their willingness (however dimly perceived and expressed) to share their land with the landless are not discreditable attitudes, even if they are economically untenable.

Security of Tenure and Disputes over Land

As already noted, under traditional land tenure a Nyakyusa had good security in his holding so long as he continued to live in the same village. The only alteration of tenure occurred at the "coming-out" ceremony of a new chief when the older men would, if required, move aside in order to give their sons' generation the best land. This did not invariably happen in any case. Fundamentally, however, security of tenure is not a matter of great importance to a people who have plenty of land, and land which is more or less of the same quality. Indeed, convenience of location in respect of one's own homestead was almost the only value land had as such. Occasionally a more dominant chief might try to seize a commoner's field to allow of his own expanded cultivation; it was most unusual for him to succeed, and even if he did the dispossessed villager suffered little real deprivation, for he could easily obtain another field fairly near at hand.

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10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

TABLE V

DISTRICTS IN TANGANYIKA WHERE LAND DISPUTES ARE COMMON

1953			No. of land cases	% of total civil cases	Estimated population density	Population per land case
Bukoba District	..	..	1,189	23	69	223
Lushoto Division	..	..	149	12	188	742
Moshi District	..	..	347	25	277	746
Ngara District..	..	..	81	29	125	1,393

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The Changing Village

The possibly unique age-village of the Nyakyusa is now undergoing considerable and fairly rapid change in response to the new conditions of land shortage. There is, firstly, an increasing sense of village exclusiveness and, secondly, there has been a breakdown in the essential age-basis of its organisation. That is to say, that whilst the corporate unity of the village as an independent group has been strengthened, yet the social foundation of the village has simultaneously been changed and a different sort of village is emerging. It would take us far beyond the scope of this present essay if a full analysis of the changing village were to be made, nevertheless in so far as these changes are more or less directly the consequences of modern land shortage, land tenure and economic conditions some account is essential. Since the age-village was fundamental in the life and social organisation of these people, the new emerging village is of crucial importance.

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Land shortage has definitely exaggerated the unity and exclusiveness of the village in the Lake Plains at a time when, for other reasons, it was beginning to become a more open group. There was always, as we have seen, insistence on the principle that only a member of the village could hold and use village land; but village boundaries were often poorly marked and it was difficult to determine which headman, if any, had genuine jurisdiction over land relatively distant from the established village sites. Nor was it particularly important to be able to do so whilst land was plentiful. As paddy cultivation spread, men began seeking extra fields farther and farther away from home as land nearby was all taken up; and so long as they did not attempt to take land in the immediate vicinity of another village site there was seldom much difficulty in this. The attitudes born of a sufficiency of land persisted and headmen were not disposed to protest against outsiders who sought fields near the limits of their vaguely defined areas. Internecine warfare and raiding had, of course, been abolished as an expression of and a weapon in inter-village rivalries and animosities. With the establishment of general peace and security, and with increasing movement about the country between villages and chiefdoms, such rivalries and animosities began to die away. Many men came to live in the villages which they themselves had not helped to found; their coevals from their fathers' villages lived elsewhere, many of them widely scattered, and it was not possible to maintain a high degree of village patriotism, and, people began to feel, it was not especially necessary or important any longer.

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It began to be possible for a man to hold some of his arable land within the area of another village, so long as members of the second village were not deprived of the opportunity of their own agricultural expansion should they desire it. This was especially the case when a large area of hitherto vacant (i.e. bush) but now valuable paddy land was contained within the approximate boundaries of a village. Outsiders were allowed to acquire fields on the strength of kinship with the headman or with one of the established villagers, or even by giving some small present to the headman (e.g. a little beer or some meat, etc.). Land was still plentiful then, or so it seemed to the Nyakyusa, and future shortages and difficulties were not perceived.

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there remained scattered pieces here and there which could be taken up, and some existing holdings in the area are too large for the agricultural capabilities of their occupiers. The temporary safety valve was shut off. The local headman had become seriously worried over the large-scale alienation of his land resources without any equivalent increase in the number of his villagers, and he also wished to conserve the remaining land against the now better understood needs of his own people. 423/78

The principle of no land without residence also means that a villager who wishes to move must automatically forfeit his land-holding in the village. A little earlier he would most probably have been able to retain at least his fields beyond the immediate vicinity of the houses – in so far as his new residence was not too far away to allow continued cultivation. This has been especially important for younger men who, wishing to take up a vacant holding elsewhere, also desire to retain their share of the paternal holding obtained by inheritance. Conversely, they are now unable to move on to their father's holding and yet retain their fields in their own village. Such men must now make a permanent decision between the utility of, perhaps, two inadequate holdings which, however, combined together might be of satisfactory size.

As a consequence of this, inter-village opposition is probably greater than it has ever been in European times, and no less strong perhaps than it was in the old days. Men feel that the security of their holdings, the future of their sons, and the possibility of increasing their arable cultivation lies wholly within the security and stability of their own village. They tend to see other villages and other villagers as a potential threat to their own land requirements; they often suspect the worst of neighbouring villages who, they think, will, given the chance, seize some of their land. Headmen and villagers would refuse to cross the boundary into another village when they accompanied me during my investigations, lest they be accused of contemplating appropriation of the land there. Such aliens who still retained land in a village were regarded with some animosity. Nyakyusa would not look beyond their own village boundaries in an attempt to make an appreciation of the modern overall land situation. They wished only tenaciously to cling to what they already had and to guard it jealously; they were only too inclined to believe that other villages nearby were better off and to use them as scapegoats for their own difficulties and shortage. It must be said that this renewed insistence on village exclusiveness and the inviolability of village boundaries has in fact tended to make for a certain inequality of land-holding according to the perceptiveness and celerity with which headmen claimed authority over formerly vacant lands. This condition is, however, overexaggerated in men's claims today, and in any case it is tending to disappear under the pressure of inter-village movement. [628]

The Nyakyusa village in the Lake Plains, with its intensified independence and aggressive exclusiveness, and jealous of its believed permanent boundaries, has not at the same time been able to retain its traditional coeval basis. Whereas formerly the youths of a village moved to one side, there to build their own hamlet and eventually to acquire their own fields in association with its establishment as a full village in its own right, now this is no longer feasible or even possible, for the land is not available for this sort of expansion. The young men are driven back on a dependence on the fields already held by their fathers in the old village. They gradually move into their fathers' places and take over the paternal holdings; or, as we have seen, they seek where they may to obtain new allocations in any other village where they can gain admittance. The coeval basis of village living is lost. [181] [882]

The boys and youths still leave their fathers' houses and build their first, small huts together on a site somewhere adjacent to the main village site, [361] [561]

423 178 [882] [361] [56] as determined by the village headman. But even building sites with the essentially associated banana groves are becoming increasingly scarce and valuable, for no one desires to decrease the amount of arable by enlarging the built-up areas – rather the reverse. The number of young men's villages is therefore diminishing and congestion of their huts is increasing to the stage very often where no more than a narrow passage if left between adjacent houses. There comes to be a wider age range in the young men's hamlets where, often, a large village provides only one for all its sons. Smaller villages sometimes provide no accommodation at all for their sons, who are thus compelled to seek membership of a neighbouring group. These hamlets are mainly regarded nowadays as temporary residential areas for the young men until such time as they move on to an existing holding – their father's or some other. There is therefore no attempt to provide sufficient space for an adequate banana grove with each young man's house, let alone a food-crop plot behind it. The arable land beyond the congested huts already belongs to inhabitants of the main village. When a young man is able to leave and take up a holding, his vacated site (together, often, with the hut) is taken over by a waiting youth who has probably been sharing with another hitherto.

361 311 178 [648] These young men's hamlets do not, any longer, eventually mature and become villages in their own right with their own headman and arable lands. Formerly, when this occurred, they would probably have taken over a good deal of the lands of the old village, as the young men exercised the privileges of their new maturity against their elders with the emergence of the new chiefdom. New chiefdoms, and with them new villages, no longer emerge, and this is mainly because Government has prohibited the bifurcation of petty chiefdoms on the death of the old chief, as it is considered inconsistent with the development of stable, modern local government. Additionally, however, the shortage of land can no longer allow of the traditional expanding politico-territorial organisation. The elder men's villages are not now prepared to yield ground to the young men, and the latter cannot expand elsewhere. Thus political requirements and land restriction work together to make the old system obsolete and to freeze the spatial distribution of villages as it existed in early European times. As far as I could ascertain in the chiefdoms of the Lake Plains, probably no new village had emerged in the past 20 or more years, except for a few cases of large ones splitting into two for administrative and social convenience. Many villages there date back to pre-European days often now under the son, or even the grandson, of the original headman (though this is not essential or invariable in any way).

561 178 428 The age-basis of the Nyakyusa village is thus disappearing; indeed, in many villages it has already disappeared in everything but the young men's hamlets. Where the process has gone least far, there is still apparent a rough division of the single village into the old men's sector (men at least 50 years of age, and many much older); the middle-aged men's sector (men between about 30 and 50 years old, being the younger brothers or elder sons of the old men); and the young men's and youths' sector. On inheritance, sons tend to show a continued reluctance to move and live on their father's house-site and to become immediate neighbours of older men; they avoid it if possible, often allowing a middle-aged man to shift there instead. Nevertheless even this sort of age-division is rapidly vanishing and in very many villages a man's neighbour may be of any age.

178 428 [423] We have seen that inheritance is now one of the chief methods of obtaining land. Under the new inheritance rules, this means that sons follow their fathers and take up their fathers' arable holdings, building sites and banana groves. Some young men inherit early, others inherit late; there is no longer any notion or possibility of the younger generation entering into its

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

land en bloc. Young men compete with one another, with their elder brothers and with their fathers for allocations of land left vacant. We also saw, however, that often in the larger families[1] not all the sons are able to get a share of the paternal holding, or at least not a share of practicable size. Thus younger sons are forced to resort to trying to obtain vacant land elsewhere – possibly within the same village, but as often as not outside. Finally, the young man on his new holding may find his neighbours to be of any age; certainly they will not have been members of his own original coeval hamlet.

The way for this changing concept of village life and the new sort of village was prepared in the years before land shortage became important. The changed political system has been briefly noted already, but no less important was the great increase in inter-village movement in earlier European days when peace and personal security had been established. During this period Wilson (1938, page 32) reckoned that perhaps 80 per cent. of Nyakyusa shifted at least once from the place where they first obtained fields. This estimate, whilst perhaps holding good for Highland Nyakyusa amongst whom Wilson mainly worked, was too high for the people of the Lake Plains, where about 40 per cent. is more correct according to my genealogical and village surveys. That is still a relatively high degree of mobility for a mainly subsistence, peasant society such as it was in those years. It is clear that the pseudo-fraternal bond of coevality could not persist as a main element of village life and consciousness, when in fact as many as half of the members of a village were not original coeval founders but had come in from elsewhere. Before the land shortage, movement did not entail the shifting of young men to other young men's villages, or of older men to other older men's villages. It was, at least eventually, promiscuous movement, ignoring age categories. The compulsions of land shortage seem, in retrospect, only to have followed existing lines of village development and to have begun the completion of the process.

In the Lake Plains, therefore, the village persists as a close, territorial, land-owning group and as a specific cluster of homesteads and huts, usually with a village street, the whole closely hemmed in by continuous banana groves. Beyond this lie the arable lands, usually food-crop fields nearby and paddy fields farther off. In jealously protecting what it already holds, the village has gained a new exclusiveness, for the security of the individual land-holder is maintained by the corporate ownership of the village and by excluding outsiders as far as possible. On the other hand, it is no longer an age-village either in fact or intention, and it cannot be, for age-villages were consistent only with an expanding territorial system and a subsistence economy.

This brief analysis of Nyakyusa village organisation in recent times applies only to the Lake Plains. In some parts of both the Central Region and the Northern Highlands the age-basis of Nyakyusa villages had most probably already been seriously weakened in pre-European times.[2] On the other hand, elsewhere, and particularly in the more conservative parts less affected by modern trends and the cash economy, the traditional age-village still exists in something like its old form.

Land shortage has appeared in the Highlands together with a developing cash economy, but the basis of agricultural and economic change lies mainly in coffee cultivation which, of course, requires relatively smaller fields than does paddy in the Lake Plains, but it needs more care and attention from the grower for moderate success. As far as I could see in the course of

1. Polygyny is still the norm amongst the older and many middle-aged men, and therefore a father often knows several ways to inherit.
2. According to elderly informants in Western Kukwe, Mwakisili and some central chiefdoms, and also the evidence of old village sites.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

311 my earlier labour migration enquiries in the Highlands, the village as a close residential unit is breaking up as the people are increasingly adopting the
433 more common East African pattern of each family building its own home-
245 stead in its own land-holding. These northern Nyakyusa say that they must have their coffee plots next to their homesteads for the sake of continuous supervision, and that this is impossible (which is true enough) where men live close together in compact villages. Again, coffee plots, with their standing, permanent trees, have become a valuable item of inheritance; sons lose no opportunity of taking them irrespective of the locations of their coevals or of the identity of their immediate neighbours. The values of land, cash-crops and material progress are placed much higher than the traditional values of coevality; indeed, such traditional values are largely inconsistent with modern wants and aspirations.

561 Thus the Nyakyusa age-village has become almost obsolete and it
361 would seem that it must inevitably vanish altogether even in the remaining conservative areas (e.g., in the east). Furthermore, its disappearance is
178 leading to a distinct divergence between the Lake Plains Nyakyusa and those of the Highlands. How far this divergence will become permanent and basically significant cannot be foreseen as yet in this early stage. Clearly the compact village is best fitted to an arable economy of rice cultivation in the Lake Plains, and at least until there is further agricultural change it will persist as a most important social group.

Nevertheless, with its enhanced exclusiveness and relative social isolation and with renewed rivalry with its neighbours, the Lake Plains village is scarcely conducive to the encouragement of agricultural and economic development. Neither is it anything but harmful towards contemporary efforts in the politico-administrative sphere to reduce parochialism and to foster a sense of unity and co-operation beyond the village and the petty traditional chiefdoms. Whilst supervisory control of the land through the
682 headman is in general excellent, reasonable and readily understandable
152 to the people, yet the excess of restrictiveness, the competitive scrambling for vacated holdings and the jealous fears are surely more than merely
182 unfortunate. There needs to be some modification to loosen the over-tight strings of village corporate ownership, to regularise the transfer of vacated holdings and to lessen the fears of village against village. These points are taken up again in Chapter V.

Cattle and Pastoral Requirements

311 Unfortunately, no great accuracy can be presumed for the Rungwe
233 District cattle censuses, but the available figures are summarised in Table VI.

TABLE VI
NYAKYUSA CATTLE

	1955				1951	
	No. of cattle	*Acres per beast*	*Cattle per person*	*Cattle per family of 5*	*No. of cattle*	*Acres per beast*
Lake Plains	31,418	4.1	0.5	2.5	26,822	5.2
Central Region ..	19,380	7.1	0.4	2	19,180	7.2
N.E. Highlands ..	19,095	7.4	0.4	2	17,165	8.4
N.W. Highlands ..	22,974	8.0	0.4	2	16,835	10.9
Total: Nyakyusa.. ..	92,867	6.4	0.4	2	80,002	7.2

The indicated increase in the numbers of cattle may well be attributable only to improved census enumeration by the Veterinary Department.

Although 6.4 acres per head of cattle for all Nyakyusa country, and even 4.1 acres in the Lake Plains, might seem to be adequate in a country so

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

4. A visit to the chief's father's grave was paid in company with the chief and some of his *amafumu*. It was situated in a banana grove *(ilisyeto*[11]*)* not very remote from the chief's hut. The grave of the present chief's father was on the ground-floor, about one hundred paces from its edge and was characterised by a small sixedged basalt block about half a metre in height[12] and about forty centimetres in breadth. An indola-plant was also standing on the grave about one metre from the basalt block. 765 [764]

On this occasion the chief also told me of the special cases for which sacrifices are offered in this grove. These are performed only in cases of very serious accidents, sickness or famine which may overcome the chieftainship. In such cases a black cow is slaughtered after sunset at the edge of the grove. In the presence of the chief some pieces of meat of the slaughtered beast, together with some bananas, are laid down at the grave. The chief adds a prayer to his ancestors at some distance from the grave, referring to the evil by which the chieftainship or some special village of it has been afflicted. He enumerates all the names of his ancestors and asks them for their help. 769 782

The remaining pieces of the meat and other bananas are left in the grove during the night. When the next day dawns, the *amafumu* return and some *abanyago* divide the meat and eat it together. On this occasion the chief orders the removal of all remains of ashes from the huts. The ashes are thrown down in such unclean places as where leprous persons had been buried. After this has been done, the chief in conjunction with an *wanyago*[13] produces a new fire for the huts by twirling, and all other fires of the village, or villages, must be kindled anew from this "need-fire". [766] [372]

5. The reason for visiting an *undagusi* (diviner)[14] who dwelled in Ibungu an older age-set village[15] which seemed to the visitor to be a more ancient part of Katumba, was caused by the sickness of the chief's sister. In accordance with the custom of the Nyakyusa in bringing women back to their father's village if they are very sick, the 787 [164 484]

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[11] Cf. Johnston, *ilisieta*, pl. *amasieta*, p. 450; *Mackenzie*, *ilisyeto*, burial place, p. 300; *masyeto*, graves of the dead chiefs, p. 121; Wilson, Introduction, p. 387, *ilisyeto*, sacred grove; *Merensky*, p. 115.

[12] Cf. *Fillebore*, p. 327.

[13] Cf. n. 8, p. 8.

[14] Cf. Johnston, p. 431.

[15] I proposed to call the special form of villages found within the Nyakyusa society, which are erected on the age-set principle, „age-set villages" (African Studies, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 15—16 June 1943), a terminology that does not alter G. Wilsons statements on the "Age Villages" (Introduction, p. 389 ff). [56 621]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ough each group of full brothers, until, when the last full 595
ther is dead, and the son of the eldest is an adult, the family 428
ck comes to him. Thus few men under forty (other than chiefs)
e more than one wife. Of 3,000 tax-payers (presumed to be
years and over) in Selya, 34 per cent were bachelors, 37 per
t monogamists, and 29 per cent polygynists. Plural marriages 595
ed wealth, for the polygynist is likely to command the labour 556
many sons as well as several wives, and in due course he ex-
cts to receive the marriage cattle of many daughters.

Social status turns primarily on age, sex, and the control and 554
tribution of wealth. As we have seen, the position of a chief is 428
editary, but kinship with a chief does not carry office, nor are
kinsmen of chiefs conspicuously wealthy. Every man in turn
es to control the property attaching to the house into which
was born, and all who live long enough do so. But there is a
ayed right of primogeniture, for the senior son of a senior
inherits the bulk of the family stock when it passes to his
eration, and the eldest of each group of full brothers has a
cial claim to the cattle coming in from the marriages of his
ers.

Seniority, whether within the context of the lineage, or of the 554
rarchy of age-villages, is something respected in itself, but 556
lth carries authority and prestige only in so far as it is used
erously, in hospitality: one man is great and distinguished
ya) because he feeds people, another of little account because
is poor or mean.

Women occupy a position very subordinate to men in Nyak- 562
a society. They play no part in public life, except in so far as [593]
two great wives of a chief, and the first wife of a village head-
n co-operate with their husbands in rituals; and in the rela-
nship of husband and wife, as well as in that of father and
ghter, a woman is expected to show obedience and respect.
r deference is expressed conventionally in her crouching to [576]
et men (*vide* Plate IX), and in her use of the submissive *taa*
es, my lord') when addressed by them. Having no great chiefs
l little regard for rank, Nyakyusa men show no trace of sub-
vience in their manner to each other, but they expect a meek
npliance from all women. The only relationships with a male in
ich a woman may in some measure assert herself are those
ich she has with a brother, and with a brother's sons. Leader-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ship among the women themselves is, moreover, less developed than in many other African societies.

The isolation and self-sufficiency of the Nyakyusa are diminishing rapidly, for considerable economic and political development followed the 1914–18 war. Coffee (first introduced by the German missionaries) has been developed as a native crop for export, and the cultivation of rice (which had been fostered by the British to provide food for their troops) has expanded. Gold-digging began some fifty miles beyond the borders of the Nyakyusa country, on the Lupa river, and there Nyakyusa men have found both employment as labourers and a ready market for much of their produce, so that by 1936 Rungwe district was exporting goods worth £24,000 annually.[1] In addition to this peasant production there are a small number of European estates producing coffee and tea for export.[2] We estimate the number of Nyakyusa working outside the district as migrant labourers at about 8,000 or 25 per cent of the able-bodied men. There were about 7,000 Nyakyusa men on the Lupa gold-fields in 1937,[3] and a small number on the coffee plantations of Mbozi. These are all within a hundred miles of home; and the Lupa labourers return usually after two or three months' work. A considerable number of Nyakyusa are also at work on the sisal plantations of the coast, and employed as domestic servants or in other semi-skilled jobs through Tanganyika, who remain away for periods up to two or three years. Nyakyusa labourers are regarded by European employers as intelligent and capable of heavy work, but lacking in all the subservient virtues.

The system of Indirect Rule was established in 1926, and a consistent attempt has been made to develop a centralized Native Authority for the Rungwe district. The traditionally sovereign chiefs of the Nyakyusa have been grouped in eleven court districts with one chief as president of the Native Court in each (see Map III); these eleven chiefs, together with the two presidents of the Ndali and Lambya courts, belong to a single federation, with an appeal court and joint Native treasury of its own. In the eleven Native Courts (which are courts of record) most of the

[1] Figure estimated on the basis of information supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu.

[2] In 1938 the total area alienated was 26,[illegible] ac.; only 2,200 ac. of this was being worked.

[3] Estimate of the Labour Officer on the [illegible] ups, 4 June 1937.

[Missing in the original – Analyst]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Theoretically the territorial arrangement is one in which the villages of the ruling generation lie at the centre of the country, each surrounded by satellite villages of their sons, while smaller villages of old men lie on the boundaries. In practice—at least nowadays—the pattern is more complex, with old men's villages squeezed in between those of the ruling generation. From the time of its establishment as a separate chiefdom at the 'coming out', the future division of the country is adumbrated: there is a senior headman in each half of the country with villages subordinate to him, and the mother of an heir in each half. On the boundary between the halves stand the ritual trees, landmarks for all to see. 631 621

Age and locality coincide, while kinship cuts across local grouping, fathers and sons, and very often brothers, being in different villages. But kinsmen tend to be established in the same side of a country, and so to remain within one chiefdom. Kinship terms are extended in some measure to the villages of the chiefdom, which are classified as those of 'our fathers', 'our elder brothers', 'our young brothers', and 'our sons'. Women have no direct share in the age-organization: their membership of a village turns on their relationship to some man—father, husband, husband's heir—and the age-range of women within one village is very wide. 621 602 [562]

Villages vary considerably in size. Boys' villages, as we have seen, begin with a dozen members or less, and the villages of old men are often very small also; we knew one with only 10 households, another with 11. The villages of young and middle-aged men commonly vary between 20 and 50 households, with 30 as a fair average in the hills. In Mwaipopo's country there were 540 taxpayers on the roll and we recorded 19 established villages and 5 boys' villages.[1] Some members of the boys' villages, and some elderly men, were not on the tax-roll, so that the average was over 20 boys or men in each village. Villages in the plain are somewhat larger, averaging around 40 households. 621

Men's villages are usually subdivided into sections under the leadership of assistant headmen, appointed by the headman of the village. These assistants do not share in the 'coming out' cere- 621 624

[1] *Vide infra*, pp. 181 ff. The tax registers are no guide to the number of villages since in them several villages are commonly lumped together as one under a senior village headman.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

829 876 *ukwangala* is only possible between contemporaries[1] they must build with contemporaries. The value set on *ukwangala* is thus related to the age-village; male contemporaries build together, and the company of, and good fellowship with, his age-mates is what creates a man of wisdom and character. Such is the Nyakyusa view of society.

576 264 572 For conversation to flow merrily and discussion to be profound there must be *ifyakwangalela*—'the wherewithal for good fellowship', that is, food and drink—and very great stress is laid on sharing these. Men and boys are expected to eat regularly with age-mates. Traditionally, fathers and sons never ate or drank together—to do so was held to be incompatible with the respect due from son to father—and men sought the company of equals at meals. From the time a small boy begins to herd he is encouraged to bring home two or three friends to eat with him, and in turn he visits each of them. Since boys have no fields of their own until they marry, but co-operate in cultivation with their parents, it is to their own mothers they go for food, and parents are proud of a son bringing many friends. 'Perhaps', said Angombwike, 'a son will come with his friends and cut a huge bunch of bananas, and take thick milk and eat with them. When the father comes back his wives will tell him: "Your son has eaten all the thick milk and cut a banana bunch!" Then he will ask: "How many men were with my son?" "Six!" "Ah, he's a chief!" the old man [861] will say, smiling proudly.' 'And formerly if a young man came home often alone to eat, his father would beat him, or even take a spear and wound him, and when people asked why he would say: "This great fool comes *alone* to my place, again and again." It is good to eat with friends, for boys to go round in groups of four or five.'

264 562 574 After marriage each man is cooked for by his own wife, but he continues to eat with his friends, bringing them to his home or going to their's .The first wife to come to a young men's village is said to have a hard life. 'She has to draw water and cook for all the young men of the village—they come to drink, and to wash, and they beat her with a stick if she refuses them. No, the

[1] *Ukwangala* is sometimes used with reference to relatives as well as to village-mates, as in the phrase '*atikwangala hamwe nabakowe baba*', meaning 'he is not on good terms with his relatives'; but in its fullest sense it can only be used with reference to contemporaries.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

264 husband will not be angry; if he were, he would be mocked at:
562 "Did not your father provide marriage-cattle for this woman for you that she might be the wife (*unkasi*) of us all?" Sometimes, when
574 the woman is cooking, her husband's friends come and take food out of the pot before she has finished cooking. When she protests, saying it is not yet cooked, the men say: "It is your work to cook, ours to eat." Then when her husband comes she tells him that so and so, and so and so, have eaten the food and there is only water left in the pot. . . . But when her husband's friends begin to get married they say to their wives: "That woman is really our wife! Listen to her!" And she has honour among the other women, and when they go to fetch firewood she walks with nothing, another carries her axe and head-pad.' This account cannot be taken literally—the first wife in the village does not provide *all* the food for her husband's friends, who still eat at their mothers' homes, nor do they have any sexual rights over her though they call her 'wife', but she must serve them as far as she can.

571 Sometimes, we were told, men's eating groups last a lifetime,
264 but often friends quarrel or move, and the group breaks up. 'Per-
578 haps one eats at midday and does not summon his friend, but only calls him to the evening meal, then the other, who always calls his friend to the midday meal also, is angry, saying: "He grudges me food", and they separate. They just stop calling each other to eat. Or sometimes one tries to seduce his friend's wife, and on that account they separate.'

264 Eating with contemporaries is still considered right and proper
178 by Nyakyusa men, and it is generally practised by pagans, but the old men say that youths are less ready to share food than formerly. 'This custom of eating together is dying.' Certainly in Christian villages the practice has declined markedly. Many unmarried Christians eat with their friends, but the majority of the married men eat at home alone. Out of eight married men living in Rungwe, for example, only two ate together regularly, and the most educated group, the clerks, are notorious in the district for their eating habits. 'People are much shocked at the clerks for eating food alone. They say they are proud.'

264 Apart from eating regularly with certain close friends, well-to-
574 do pagan men are expected to entertain generously, inviting fellow villagers to drink beer, or to a 'dinner party'—an ample meal with delicious dishes, very carefully served—from time to

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the Kikuyu)[1] that the equalitarian emphasis is related to the emphasis on age-organization. As we have seen, hereditary office exists among the Nyakyusa but the power of chief and hereditary priest is limited at every point by the power of the leaders of age-sets who are chosen each generation from among commoners. That democratic (i.e. non-hereditary) leadership is not a necessary concomitant of a developed age-organization is, however, proved by the fact that among the Zulu, Swazi, Pedi, and Tswana, whose military organization was based on age-regiments, rank is stressed, and the leaders of age-sets are always sons or kinsmen of the chief. 621 561

It is possible, however, that the low status of Nyakyusa women relative to men is partly dependent on the age-village organization. It is most obviously related to the high degree of polygyny, and the fact that the position of the various wives is not clearly determined by date of marriage, birth, or allocation of property. For a commoner the first wife betrothed is his great wife, who takes precedence in ritual, but there is no ranking of houses and allocation of the bulk of property to different houses as among the Nguni, nor the same strong pressure on a husband to visit each wife in rotation. Instead there is acute competition between a man's various wives for the position of favourite, with a disportionate share of milk and meat and of her husband's attention. We do not suggest that there is no competition among the wives of a Pondo or Zulu polygynist, but we argue that competitive tendencies have freer play among the Nyakyusa,[2] and that this competition depresses the status of women in relation to men. 562 595

Like the kinship organization, the age-village organization favours men. As we have seen, a main end of age-villages, in the Nyakyusa view, is to allow men the enjoyment of congenial company, that is the company of friends and equals. A village consists of a group of male contemporaries and their dependants; ideally, the men live together all their lives and form a close-knit group of equals, between whom mutual loyalty, hospitality, and affability is fostered from childhood. Those who move tend to go to villages in which they already have close friends. The women, 621 561 562

[1] J. Kenyatta, op. cit., pp. 186–9.

[2] Unfair division of milk between wives is said by some Nyakyusa to anger the ancestors who cause the cows to give blood in place of milk; nevertheless unequal allocation of milk is a much commoner cause of complaint than it is among the Pondo.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 561 562 on the other hand, come from many villages, and they move from village to village more than men, because most women are inherited at least once in their lives. Nor do the women form an age-set, for men inherit wives as old, or older than themselves, and they continue to marry young brides until they themselves are elderly. A village thus contains women of all ages, the older ones often being quite late-comers to it. There is neither the unity of a kinship group, with leadership of mother or grandmother, as among a matrilineal people like the Bemba, nor the leadership of the mother-in-law as among the patrilineal Nguni and Sotho peoples. It is true that among the latter peoples the leadership of women devolves on a man's senior wife when his mother is dead, but the pattern has developed in a society in which daughters-in-law usually live for a long time in the same homestead as their mother-in-law, whereas among the pagan Nyakyusa a woman rarely joins her own son until she is decrepit, long after his marriage. When the Nguni or Sotho chief wife is obeyed by her co-wives it is as the successor of her mother-in-law; indeed on the latter's death she is often referred to by junior wives as 'mother'. Where women have authority in a patrilineal society it is usually as mother, or grandmother, or father's sister. But there are none with such positions in the context of the age-village; the office of headman is not hereditary so there is no mother of the heir, and the headman's own mother and sisters normally live elsewhere.

562 613 595 Such solidarity and leadership as exist among women in pagan Nyakyusa society are within the group of women of the same lineage who live together. Great emphasis is laid on the propriety of a wife bringing a younger sister, or brother's daughter, as a junior wife for her husband (*ukusakula*): this is felt to be a compliment to the husband and a comfort to the wife, proof that the marriage has been a success. Co-wives who are of the same lineage are very closely identified, their children being treated almost as full siblings, and they themselves co-operating in everything.

562 795 One of the marked changes in contemporary Nyakyusa society is the development of leadership among women in the Christian congregations.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

women, daughters of the lineage precede wives. Seniority, of course, does not depend solely on age, and we once saw a little boy precede his father in the performance of a ritual for his grandmother, with whose generation he was identified. The relative status of husband and wife is expressed in the taboo on a woman 'overstepping' her husband physically or metaphorically, and 'overstepping' is symbolized (oddly to a Christian) by the sign of a cross. The precedence of the chief wife is very marked. In commoner families she alone washes with her husband using the *ikipiki* medicine, and he performs the death ritual for her only. A chief may do this for two wives. In Selya a father washes in the puberty ritual with his senior daughter, and among the Kukwe a woman washes with her daughter or eldest son's first wife. 'To wash is to admit that I have lived, and borne a child, and grown up.'

All the rituals celebrate a change in status, and danger lies in not recognizing or admitting the change, in clinging to the past. This is most obvious in the death ritual, which is directed to the separation of the living and the dead. The mourners have the corpse 'on their bodies', they may not separate themselves from him by washing till the appropriate moment, and they share their food and *ikipiki* medicine with the shade, thereby recognizing him as a kinsman; but in due course they drive him off: 'You were our kinsman before but now it is finished, you are a stranger.' 'You are no relative of ours.' 'We are not corpses.' And at the same time they bring him back transformed, as a beneficent spirit in the home. The pattern is a common one in Bantu Africa: the Nyakyusa peculiarity is (1) the speed with which the transformation is achieved (commonly the 'bringing back' of the spirit is delayed a year, whereas the Nyakyusa may delay only a month); and (2) the close correspondence between the change in status of the dead and the change in status of the older generation, who 'move aside' at the 'coming out'. Each generation has its day and must give place to the next.

All through the rituals the dominance of the agnatic lineage is evident, but it does not exclude the recognition of kinship in the female line. Daughters' children *must* perform the ritual at death, twin birth, spearing, and binding with ropes, for their grandparents, while some sisters' children, and father's sisters' sons, may do so also. What is clear from the genealogies is that kinship links in the female line are not traced as far as in the male line and,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

583 The dowry cattle are usually found by the father of the bridegroom; if he does not own them himself, the boy's uncles come to his aid; and in the event of divorce, they are re-distributed, with the increase, in the proportion in which each contributed. The father of the bride, who receives the cattle, as a rule divides them among his relatives, one going, in the case of the first daughter to be married, to the village headman.

593 It is usual to commiserate the sad lot of the African wife. I am not sure that much commiseration is 562 called for. If the husband converts his duties of natural guardian into those of oppressor, he will answer to her father and brothers. As I have indicated, she owns property in a small measure; she is mistress in her own house; even her husband seldom interferes with her decisions, and no one else ever does. She has to work hard, it is true, working up till old age at tasks that would quickly kill a European woman. But she is not unhappy; indeed one sees more happy faces among them than unhappy; and she is blessed beyond imagination in comparison with the horrible conditions in which some women in our own country lived during the earlier part of the Industrial Revolution; and large numbers of them are happy in their husbands and children. Although many girls are married before they know what is happening to them, and many are unhappily yoked, as revealed by the great numbers who run away later with young men of their own age; yet there are countless happy families, where deep affection binds

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

husband and wife by strong ties; and where a possibility of parting faces them, as in the case of men wishing to join the Christian Church, and so having to put away all wives except the first, it brings with it in very many cases a pain, keen and poignant, such as one might imagine would be felt by Europeans in similar circumstances. I know not a few cases where a young husband and wife began their married life by serious quarrelling; but after a while not only became reconciled, but discovered that something had happened to them not unlike falling in love with each other. And, while there are too many instances of the opposite, it is further true that at least in the presence of strangers, husband and wife treat each other with a mutual courtesy and dignity, which would form no inappropriate model for peoples of higher development.

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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173 The balance between chiefs and commoners is explicit. So
773 also is their dependence on *both* cultivation and herding, and it
[643] should be noted that, though the Nyakyusa speak of themselves
as stock men, they are not pastoralists to the same extent as
[233] the Masai or the Nuer. The number of cattle in Rungwe District
today is less than half the human population, and men traditionally have done the heaviest share of cultivation.

773 In every version of the myth the tension between father and
593 son, or older and younger brother, is stressed. In Nyakyusa
561 society the father (or his eldest son who replaces him) controls
173 the family property and exacts obedience from his juniors who
[769] continue to show their respect after his death by sacrifices. The tale of Kyala and Lwembe celebrates the triumph of the junior. Thus, at the heart of the very ritual which sanctifies seniority there is the assertion of the victory of the son and younger brother. The myth expresses the aspirations of subordinates—of commoners and junior kinsmen—as well as the power of chiefs and seniors.

173 As we have already noted, the heroic cycle makes no reference
773 to the peculiar Nyakyusa institution of age-villages. Their charter
561 is a quite separate myth[1] which tells of a chief who looked on his
621 daughter-in-law and loved her and took her, and this so shocked
606 men that in future fathers and sons built separately, so that a father-in-law should never see his daughter-in-law.

There are other hints of the eternal theme. Besides the saga of
173 Lwembe there is another quite different tale of the origin of fire,
773 which is less often related. In it a girl who had angered her father
372 by breaking his drinking calabash fled from BuKinga to the Nyakyusa valley, where she found people who ate their food raw. She made fire and cooked for them and 'all women came to her to learn to cook'. The long-necked calabash, used as a drinking
[415] vessel and in prayer to the shades, is a man's most personal
[768] possession destroyed at his death, and it stands for a husband, while cooking is a symbol of the sexual activity of women, so the myth is perhaps a drama of incest, but we have no direct evidence of this.

173 This last is the only tale in which a woman appears as a
773 benefactor. In general, the mythology is that of a strongly
562 patrilineal society in which men are dominant. The wives of Lwembe who walked behind their lord, shepherded by a lion,

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 85.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

are remembered, and the names of the two senior wives of a chief are often recited in genealogies because the heirs take their names from their mothers, but she-who-taught-cooking is the only heroine in her own right.

It is worth noting also that the rituals of kinship are linked neither with the heroic tradition nor with primeval incest. We could trace no myths regarding their beginning, save that concerning the origin of avoidance between father and daughter-in-law. The myth of the origin of death is a variation on the theme, so familiar in Bantu-speaking Africa, of the two messengers (a sheep and a dog in this version) sent to men by 'Kyala', one promising life, the other death. It provides no charter for the ritual.

And what of the relation between myth and history? The conquest of cultivators by cattle-keepers is the common theme of traditions in the lacustrine area, and it is quite possible that small groups of invaders, who brought with them iron tools and weapons and cattle, established themselves as chiefs over small unorganized groups of hunters and cultivators in an isolated valley three or four centuries ago.[1] The Nyakyusa valley and the plain of Ngonde have no iron ore, and the inhabitants were dependent, until the coming of the Europeans, on iron (*ikyela*) smelted in the hills to the east for weapons and tools.[2] The original inhabitants are said to have used wooden hoes exclusively—such hoes were still in common use in 1938[3]—so the myth of a Lwembe sending to BuKinga for iron hoes has a firm foundation in historical fact. But that the original inhabitants of the valley did not know the use of fire 300 or 400 years ago (when Lwembe arrived) is incredible. Here the record of one of the greatest events in history is fitted into the shallow time-scale of an isolated people. To them it is not *when* fire arrived that is really important, but *who* brought it; chiefs are chiefs to the Nyakyusa (as to other peoples in Africa) by virtue of this great benefit they brought to men.

[1] Namwanga tradition (recorded in the Mbeya District Book) tells of the introduction of iron fifteen generations ago. The Sangu tradition says that a tall, pale man from 'Somaliland' first brought iron spear-heads to BuSangu and his son established a hegemony by virtue of his superior weapons.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 7. The iron deposits on the Livingstone mountains have recently been investigated by the Colonial Development Corporation. A 'titaniferous iron mountain' in the south of Njombe District was found to be 'smeltable'. *Tanganyika: Annual Reports of the Provincial Commissioners*, 1951, p. 51.

[3] Wilson, *op. cit.*, plate VII.

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

881 and other duties applicable to a girl after marriage. The practical
867 instruction takes place in or before a special hut in the village under
868 the leadership of the *abanyago (avanyago)*. The girl is admonished by the *unnyago* to obey her parents without any delay, to perform the commands of her mother immediately, e. g. to clean the hut, and especially to show obedience when guests are present. Should the mother blame her daughter unjustly, she should not reply. (The girl had been blamed in the earlier discussion that she had not swept the hut when her mother required her to do it). Then her duties and
881 conduct towards her future husband were inculcated. As a wife she
867 must never accept anything from the hands of her husband without
543 kneeling and stretching out both hands, and turning away her face
562 with eyes cast down. Also as a wife she must not hold her head up

[142
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534]

Some of the drummers.

when she is addressed by a man. As a wife she must be anxious to prepare her husband's meal always at the right time, that means, it has to be ready when her husband returns from the field. If she sees her husband coming from the field, then she has to go to meet him, and take his hatchet from him. Should her husband scold her, she is
[356] not to reply; but she may ask her neighbours for help. It is one of her duties to take care of the regular cleaning of the hut[23]. The ashes must always be removed by her from the fireplace. If there are only a few ashes on the fireplace she must remove them with her hands[24].

[364]

[23] The place near the house where the sweepings are thrown down is called *urutagililo*.

[24] Cf. *Mackenzie*, p. 51, who refers to such moral instructions connected with puberty customs, probably at Karonga; cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 359 (Nygonde plain).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631 recognized over 100 chiefdoms, mustering anything from 100 to 3,000 adult men apiece.

Although no centralized political authority existed before the 769 German occupation, certain groups of chiefdoms joined in common rituals directed to common ancestors. We traced four such 631 centres of worship among the Nyakyusa; the most important being Lubaga, in the middle of the valley, where Kinga priests (from the top of the Livingstone mountains) join with many Nyakyusa chiefdoms in sacrifice to Lwembe, who is claimed as the ancestor both of the chiefs of the Nyakyusa proper, and of the Kinga. At LiKyala, on the Lake-shore plain, Kinga also join in sacrifice with the surrounding Nyakyusa chiefdoms. In Ngonde the chief connected with a similar centre of worship, Mbande, developed far-reaching secular as well as religious powers; and by the time the Europeans arrived he was established as a paramount chief with the title of the Kyungu. This development was [439] directly connected with the fact that Ngonde traded with the outside world, and that their Kyungu, through his control of ivory, was able also to control the guns and cloth which came into the country:[1] the Nyakyusa, remaining isolated, remained politically disunited.

Besides sacrificing to a distant ancestor in company with the representatives of a large group of chiefdoms, two or more chiefs who are neighbours participate in a sacrifice at the grove in which their common father, or grandfather, is buried. Thus common worship links both large groups of chiefdoms, whose chiefs are more or less distantly related, and small groups of contiguous chiefdoms whose chiefs are close kinsmen. The sacrifices made are to the chiefs of immediately preceding generations, and to certain great heroes of the distant past, such as Lwembe and Kyala.

All these sacrifices are believed to bring rain and fertility, for 769 the well-being of each chiefdom is thought to be bound up with 789 the health of the chief and the goodwill of his ancestors.

The Nyakyusa are all agreed that their chiefs, *abanyafyale*, are 173 'strangers' who came down from the Livingstone mountains 622 eight or ten generations ago, and found the valley already occu- 563 pied by people who had no knowledge of fire, but ate their food raw. The chiefs brought fire with them—some say, cattle also;

[1] Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., pp. 9, 39–48.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and by virtue of this great benefit were accepted as chiefs. Such is the myth (*vide infra*, p. 26). It is remembered that the chiefs of different groups such as the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, the Lugulu, and the Saku arrived at different times, but of the proportion of the immigrants to the former occupants, and of the proportion of men to women in the invading groups, we learnt nothing. Some suggest that the chiefs were lighter in colour than the previous inhabitants of the valley,[1] and the term *abatitu*, 'black people', is used for commoners as contrasted with chiefs. But chiefs intermarry freely with commoners and there is no observable difference in physical type between them and their people to-day. The Nyakyusa are without a clan system, and though kinship with a chief may be remembered for three (or perhaps even four) generations, the body of 'kinsmen of the chief' is not defined as it is in tribes which have a 'royal clan' like the Bemba or Pondo. Moreover, among the Nyakyusa the chief's advisers are never his kinsmen, but commoners. Sons or grandsons of a chief are ineligible as village headmen, who are the counsellors of the chief, and who had in the past very great control over him. The contrast is made between chiefs, *abanyafyale*, on the one hand, and commoners, *amafumu*, on the other, and the leaders of villages, chosen each generation by their predecessors (*vide infra*, p. 23), are the *amafumu par excellence*.[2] Words from this *-fumu* root mean 'chief' in various central Bantu languages (Bemba, Tumbuka, Nyanja); and it is tempting to suppose that the *amafumu* were the old chiefs conquered by the invading *abanyafyale*, but that is only a supposition. The important point for the contemporary social structure is that the village leaders are *commoners*; that their position is not hereditary, since they are selected afresh each generation; and that formerly they had very great power over the chief. This power has diminished considerably with the development of European administration. The Nyakyusa, indeed, were astounded to be told that the British

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 10 (footnote).

[2] For this reason *ulifumu* was translated by Godfrey Wilson as 'great commoner', in 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. X (1936), and other papers, but this translation has considerable difficulties, and I have preferred to translate *ulifumu* as 'village headman' in the contexts in which it means the leader of the village, and 'commoner' or 'villager' in other contexts. It must be clearly understood that 'village headman' as used in this book means something quite different from 'headman' as used by the Administration (*vide infra*, p. 258).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

563 constitution (about which they asked many questions) was a
622 democratic one; for, they said, the Administration always supported the chiefs against the commoners.

621 The villages to which commoner leaders are appointed differ from all other Bantu villages of which we have knowledge in that they consist of groups of age-mates, not groups of kinsmen; boys build with contemporaries and remain with them through life; girls join the villages of their husbands at marriage; therefore relatives, other than husband and wife and young children, do
602 not live together. Nevertheless kinship ties are important, for property circulates within the kinship group rather than within the village, and kinsmen are believed to be mystically interdependent, in a way in which fellow villagers are not. The most prized
[556] possession of the Nyakyusa are cattle, for cattle enable a man to marry, to live in comfort, to gain prestige by feasting his friends; and cattle pass along the roads of kinship. They pass between brothers, and half-brothers, and the sons of brothers; between fathers and sons; and between affines. Kinsmen also participate in common rituals, praying to common ancestors, and seeking protection from mystical dangers which are thought to travel, like
[578] cattle, along the roads of kinship. Ever fearful lest a quarrel among them should bring misfortune on all, they strive to live in harmony.

The range of kinship recognized varies somewhat with the status of the family concerned and the proximity and personalities of its members, but, generally speaking, economic and religious co-operation link the descendants of a common grandfather, and marriage between the descendants of a common great-grand-
[581] father is excluded. A legal marriage is effected by the passage of cattle from the groom's group to the bride's, and it is this passage which is said to create kinship (*ubukamu*), with the consequent mystical interdependence, between a man and his wife, and between the one partner in a marriage and the close kinsmen of
595 the other. Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan, and it is made
428 possible by the ten years' difference in the average marriage age of men and women. Girls are betrothed very young and finally join their husbands at puberty, while few pagan men marry under twenty-five. Inherited cattle are controlled by the older generation and polygyny is the prerogative of age. For property passes not directly from father to son, but from brother to brother,

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the wealth derived from this trade enabled one of their chiefs, Kyungu, to maintain himself as paramount over all Ngonde. Among his people impersonal relationships thus had a greater importance. And it was, I believe, the historical isolation of the Nyakyusa from any considerable commercial contact with the outside world which prevented the rise among them of a paramount chief. 648 184

To-day the Nyakyusa are in process of integration with the civilized society of the world and the independence of their minute chiefdoms has inevitably passed away. The traditionally sovereign chiefs have been grouped in seven court districts with one chief as President of the Native Court in each; and these seven chiefs together with the two Presidents of the Ndali and Lambya Courts are federated, with an Appeal Court and joint Native Treasury of their own. In the seven Native Courts most of the traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their great-commoners, and assist the President and his great-commoners in the hearing of cases. The bulk of the legal business previously transacted by each chief in his own country is now taken to Court, but the power of great-commoners to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages is still the basis of the legal system. 622 692

A poll tax, now (1938) fixed at 9/- per annum for adult males with no additional tax for plural wives, has been introduced and chiefs are paid small salaries ranging from 5/-, 10/- or 20/- a month for ordinary chiefs to 80/- or 100/- a month for the Court Presidents. 651 622

The Nyakyusa, as we have previously mentioned, consist of a number of immigrant groups who have spread among and incorporated an indigenous population. The main immigrant groups were three in number and are distinguished to-day by the names of "Nyakyusa," "Kukwe" and "Selya." As all these three groups together (including those who are now incorporated in them) call themselves "Nyakyusa" to the outside world, I distinguish the one group to which the name more particularly belongs as the "Nyakyusa proper." The Nyakyusa proper live in the plain of Mungonde and up on the higher ground as far north as Tukuyu, the Kukwe live north of them around the base of Rungwe Mountain while the Selya live in the east of the district, between the Nyakyusa proper and the Kukwe, right under the wall of the Livingstone Mountains. Between the three groups there are minor differences of dialect and custom. 563

The extent to which the indigenous groups retain any separate identity varies in accordance with the number of the immigrants and the date at which they reached them, but over a large part of the district fusion has been complete.

We have already discussed the economic relations between the Nyakyusa and the Lupa gold fields which provides them with a market 471

7: Sanderson-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

THE RELATIONSHIP SYSTEMS OF THE WANGONDE AND WAHENGA TRIBES, NYASALAND.

By Meredith Sanderson, M.R.C.S., F.R.G.S.

I.—The Wangonde.

1. The Wangonde are a Bantu tribe inhabiting that part of Central Africa adjacent to the north-west shores of Lake Nyasa. They are a somewhat primitive people, as yet little contaminated by European civilisation; they are intensely conservative and their customs differ from those of neighbouring tribes. As a result of this conservatism their system of relationship still bears, in its nomenclature, evidence of its evolution from exogamy in its most primitive form, and of all Nyasaland tribes the Wangonde have probably been least influenced by contact with others. In recent history they were victimised from time to time both by Arab slavers and by the Angoni, but neither appear to have left any trace of their domination. It should be mentioned, however, that the chieftainship was usurped some 10 (?) generations ago by an adventurer who, according to tradition, came from the north-west (towards Tanganyika) and whose descendants still form the ruling caste. It may be that some new customs were introduced at this time, though this is denied by the descendants of the old nobility, who still retain a large share of influence in tribal council.

2. *Definitions.*—Ilumbu = "brother"[1] to "sister," or "sister" to "brother." A man calls his elder "brother" *mkulowanga*; a younger one *wang'ono*: the same terms are used by a woman for her "sisters." All children of uncles and aunts are regarded as "brothers" and "sisters," including those of maternal uncle and of paternal aunt; those of father's elder "brother," of mother's elder "sister," and of mother's "brother," are called *wakulu*, irrespective of age.

The term *wangulu* is often used, irrespective of sex, as alternative for "brother" or "sister"; its real meaning is rather "kinsman," and it may also be used for any relative or connection except the age-classes immediately above or below that of the speaker (*e.g.*, father or son), as it implies a degree of intimacy not permitted with those degrees. *Wangulu* means "my" (lit. "our") "kinsman"; the second and third persons are *wangulo* and *wangulo* respectively: there is no singular form.

[1] The use of inverted commas with English terms of relationship indicates that they are used in the full classificatory sense.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE peoples with whom this book is concerned, the Nyakyusa and the Ngonde, occupy an area shut in by mountains at the northern end of Lake Nyasa, and enjoy a culture which, though varying locally, clearly springs from a common basis and is traditionally attributed to similar origins. The most conspicuous features of their political organization are (i) the balance of power between chiefs and commoners; (ii) the 'coming out' ritual in which a generation of men which has governed for approximately thirty years retires and hands over the administration to its sons, retaining only ritual functions; and (iii) the system of age-villages.

N 101 13 [184] N 642

All are agreed that chiefs and commoners belong to different stocks; the commoners being descended from the original occupants of the country while the chiefs trace their descent to a line of invaders who came down from the Livingstone mountains eight generations ago. According to the myth, they brought with them fire, and cattle, and iron tools, and they found a people who ate their food raw in a land 'without trees'.[1] Commoners are *abatita*, black people, while Ngulube, an early ancestor of the chiefs, was 'pale'[2] and chiefs (*abaspa/pale*) generally are said to have been lighter in colour and 'different in their bodies'. After generations of intermarriage between chiefs and commoners there is no consistent difference in physical type between them, but the range of physical type among the Nyakyusa as a whole is wide.[3]

N 173 [167] N [569] N 144

Nyakyusa and Ngonde historians say that their chiefs are related to those of the Kinga, who live high above the Nyakyusa valley to the east in the Livingstone mountains, whence the chiefs came. The Kinga acknowledge the connexion and join with the Nyakyusa in sacrifice to their common heroes, but culturally the

N 173 N K 171 [648]

[1] Possibly the lake-shore plain. The hills until cultivated are covered with either savannah or rain forest.

[2] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3, p. 10 (1939). According to the Ngonde version Ngulube was the *first* ancestor.

[3] cf. F. Fülleborn, *Beiträge zur physischen Anthropologie der Nord-Nyassaländer* (1906). *Das Deutsche Nyassa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet Afrikas* (1906).

[113]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

two peoples are distinct. Their languages are not mutually intelligible and the Nyakyusa despise the Kinga as dirty in habit and obsequious in manner. There were two main invasions from BuKinga: (i) that of the 'sons of Lwembe' who settled south and east of Tukuyu, and (ii) that of the 'sons of Ngomale' (or Kukwe), who settled first at Kina below the northern crater of Rungwe volcano, and then at Kabale in the foothills to the south-east. Most of the present chiefs of the Nyakyusa belong to one or other of these two lineages, and the chiefs of Ngonde are claimed by both. The arrival of the chiefs of Lwembe's line may be fixed between 1560 and 1650, i.e. before the settlement at the Cape, but after the death of the first Christian martyr in what is now Rhodesia[1] and the 'sons of Ngomale' followed them some generations later (*vide infra*, genealogies pp. 3, 27; p. 94). Two of the invading heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, became 'divine kings' whose successors claimed spiritual authority over wide areas, and the heirs of Kyungu gradually acquired temporal power also.

About the first inhabitants of the Nyakyusa valley, the *abilema*, tradition is vague; however, it is clear that they were not one people, but consisted of small, scattered, independent groups, disparate in origin. Some were very early invaders from BuKinga, others came from near Lake Rukwa and were kin to the Bungu of the Rukwa plain. They occupied an almost empty country (as their name indicates) but they found pygmy hunters[2] in the Rungwe forests. The invaders themselves were primarily hunters and honey-gatherers, though some, at least, of them began to cultivate millet, beans, and pumpkins. One group of early inhabitants, the Penja, which was pushed into the north-west corner of the valley, has remained relatively discrete, though for the most part they have fused with the conquerors.

It is clear that nowhere were the invaders allowed to establish themselves as tyrants since, though their descendants rule over the various chiefdoms, their authority is strictly limited by the headmen of the villages who are invariably of commoner stock. Moreover, while the most sacred persons in the country are, or before the coming of the Europeans were, 'divine kings', descendants of the original heroes, chosen by each generation to become their

[1] In 1561, cf. G. M. Theal, *Records of South-East Africa*, vol. ii, p. 126.

[2] The quality of relations with the Pygmies is summed up in the ironical name for them 'Where did you see me?' (*Ubwenebage?*) The tale is that they were very sensitive about their size and the first question on meeting a Nyakyusa was always: 'Where did you see me?' The only safe reply was: 'Far, far away!'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

living representatives, to take their name, and to sacrifice at their groves, it was commoner priests who chose them and, as will be seen, put them to death when it was expedient for the good of the people. It is clear, too, from what source the commoners drew their power. The invaders were supposed to have brought into the country fire, cattle, crops, and iron; they were creators, the guarantors and preservers of fertility; and it was to foster and increase fertility that men worshipped and sacrificed at the groves of the mythical heroes. The aborigines, on the other hand, without fire, without iron, and feeding on raw meat as the myth depicts them, possessed one weapon of terrible potency, witchcraft, which no chief, not even a priest of the chief's lineage, could withstand or would dare to challenge. To the Nyakyusa the essential nature of the universe, established in history and in the institutions of their society, was reciprocity, a balance between chiefs and commoners, between cattle-owners and cultivators, between the creative power of the heroes and the black anger of the witches. The idea of a chief who was a dictator was as foreign as the idea of a single omnipotent creator. Moreover, there was a multiplicity of chiefs, no single central authority.

The heroic tradition, then, accounts for the differences between the chiefs and commoners and for the remarkable equilibrium that obtains between them. It accounts also, as we shall find, for the 'coming out' ritual, at least in part. It is strangely silent, however, about the origin of what is perhaps the most striking feature of Nyakyusa social life, the system of age-villages. The absence of any link between the myths of the heroes and the founding of age-villages is the more surprising in that the pattern of age-organization almost certainly came into the valley from the north-east. Only in East Africa was government based on age groups and the handing over of power from one generation to the next celebrated by whole communities. If the system of age-villages came in with the eastern invaders why is this contribution to civilized living (for the Nyakyusa regard village life as the essence of civilization) never mentioned? The only explanation we can offer is that the age structure is not necessarily linked with chieftainship, whereas the control of cattle and iron was the basis of power, and making fire was a symbol, not only of a new chieftainship, but of the vital creative force in the body of the chief. The heroic cycle justifies the relations between chiefs and commoners, but is not concerned with other institutions of the society.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

000 Only the *Ngonde*, the *Nyamwanga*, and the *Iwa* seem to have had any paramount authority. Of these, only that of the Ngonde has been described in detail. The Nyamwanga had a paramount chief, the Mukoma, living over the border in Tanganyika. Under him the Northern Rhodesian Nyamwanga were always ruled by his sister, the Waituika; directly under her were the headmen of villages. The Mukoma used to appoint his own sons or selected friends to be headmen of the larger villages. A nominal tribute, mainly fish, was sent by the Waituika to the Mukoma, and the latter could also command annual labour in his gardens. The Iwa also had a paramount chief, Kafwimbi, who recognized common ancestry with the Mukoma but paid him no tribute. His country was divided into two sections, under two sub-chiefs, Mpanga and Terefya. The succession to the chieftaincy is normally the same as commoner succession, i.e. brothers, then sons of the deceased, but the order need not be rigidly adhered to.[1]

Ngonde Traditional System

643 The section on history briefly indicated the position of the Kyungu. He was wealthy,
565 owing to the ivory trade, and used his wealth to maintain political links with the chiefs
622 and nobles of the country. At the same time he was kept in strict religious seclusion,
631 and the real government of the country was in the hands of the nobles of Ngonde, a group of hereditary nobles, descendants of the original companions of the first Kyungu. The relations of the great chiefs (descendants of sons of Kyungu) and the territorial nobles to the capital allowed of considerable local autonomy, the Kyungu's prestige being mainly religious. Each territorial noble was succeeded by one son; each chief was succeeded by two or more sons, so that the chiefdoms tended to supplant the territorial nobles in importance and number, and the junior branches of the house of any one great chief formed a hierarchy based on descent. The great chiefs, at their accession, were recognized by the Kyungu with gifts of cloth, and they brought the junior chiefs of their house to perform hoeing service, *milasa*, for the Kyungu. Afterwards the junior chiefs performed *milasa* for their great chief, and were similarly rewarded with entertainment. The great chief might invite the territorial nobles in his neighbourhood to accompany him in performing *milasa*, but he could not command them as he could his junior chiefs. Apart from recognizing a certain authority of superior chiefs in judicial matters, and the right of the latter to command them to hoe, or in war, the junior chiefs had almost complete autonomy in their chiefdoms.[2]

622 Each chief had a traditional right to demand from his own subjects milk and bananas if he needed them, and to evict any man he pleased if he desired the site for his personal use or to give to a *bimman* (not to a commoner), offering the evicted tenant another site.[3]

622 The chiefdom[4] consisted of a number of age-villages, older and younger men living
631 apart with their own contemporaries. At the head of each age-village was a headman
624 (called 'great commoner' by Wilson) chosen from among the villagers by the chief

[1] Cadenat, 1914, pp. 22-3.
[2] Ibid., 3, 1938, pp. 48-9.
[3] Wilson, 3, 1939, p. 24.
[4] In the absence of information I do not know whether the following description of Ngonde and Nyakyusa chiefdoms and age-villages is capable of a wider application.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

already in the earliest legends are reflected the twin sources of the Kyungus' supremacy, for, as we shall see, they combined divine kingship with wholesale ivory trading. 173 643

The Kyungu who took Mbande was not alone, he brought with him into Ngonde five leading men whose names are still borne by their descendants: Katenga, Mulwa, Kyumba, Mboma and Ngusi. Nor did he find the country empty; besides Simbobwe, who was himself a recent immigrant, there were Musyani, Mwenendeka, Mwenekaluma, Mwenekisindile, Mwenifumbo and others; they all had men of their own, and, with the exception of Simbobwe who fled, they all accepted the Kyungu as their overlord. To this day some of their names also survive in Ngonde. The Kyungu, according to the late Mwenifumbo,[1] brought cloth with him and used it to consolidate his position: "Then the Kyungu gave headcloths to us nobles, to Mwenekaluma, Mwenifumbo and the others; and he said to us: 'You are the priests, you the indigenous owners of the land, do you pray for me that I, the chief, may sleep in peace.'"

I make no attempt here to date the arrival of the Kyungu in Ngonde, for to do so would require a careful collation of this tradition with those of neighbouring tribes. The present Kyungu is said to be about the eighteenth of that title in Ngonde, but, as the reigns of many Kyungus were very short and as some early names have probably been forgotten, this fact alone tells us little.

For the period from the coming of the first Kyungu to the birth of Mwangonde (who was about the tenth Kyungu in Ngonde) the legends are scanty and vague; but the following facts are generally attested by them. The leading men among the Kyungu's followers, together with the rulers of the indigenous population, came to form a class of hereditary nobles (*amakombola*), within which, as we shall see, two groups were distinguished, those who lived near Kyungu at Mbande and those who did not. Important immigrants with followers of their own continued to enter Ngonde after the coming of the Kyungu and they also became hereditary nobles, either in the one group or in the other. The Kyungus, though credited with divine powers and enriched by the ivory trade, had but limited powers of secular action; they lived a life of religious seclusion, while the nobles ruled the country. Most of the male children of the Kyungu were killed at birth, and they themselves were killed when they fell sick, lest their sickness should spread magically among their people. 173 643 565

These early Kyungus lived with their wives on the top of the hill Mbande, inside a great enclosure. Near them, some on Mbande, some not, lived a group of nobles. This group, which is specifically referred

[1] Reuben Mwenifumbo. He has died since we left Ngonde.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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to as "the nobles of Ngonde" (*Avangonde*) included, firstly, the successors of those five leading men whom the first Kyungu brought with him[1], secondly the successors of two of the indigenous rulers whom the Kyungu had found in the country and who happened to live near Mbande[2] and, thirdly, seven others who joined the group later.[3] These fourteen nobles lived at Mbande, each with a group of followers and exercised the central power at the Kyungu's command, or at least in his name. The names of all fourteen are still borne as hereditary titles by their successors in Ngonde to-day and, with two exceptions,[4] all their successors still rank as nobles of Ngonde.

Besides the nobles of Ngonde near Mbande there were the other nobles "who lived at a distance," some in the plain, some in the hills. In the language of Ngonde they are simply referred to by the general term "nobles" (*amakambala*) but, in order to distinguish them from the nobles of Ngonde, I shall here call them "territorial nobles."

They consisted, firstly, of those indigenous rulers whom the first Kyungu found in Ngonde but who did not happen to live near Mbande, and, secondly, of important immigrants who constantly arrived in Ngonde with followers of their own and were given land. Some of these immigrants came from the east across the lake, others from the west, from what is now Northern Rhodesia. The present Kyungu gave us a list of thirty-seven families of territorial nobles, of whom only five or six were found in Ngonde by the first Kyungu, the remainder having entered afterwards. How many of these thirty odd immigrants came during the period of the early Kyungus and how many later we do not know.

In the middle period of Ngonde's history, as we shall see, two tendencies are manifest: the Kyungus begin to emerge from their religious seclusion and slightly to increase their secular power at the expense of the nobles of Ngonde, while the "sons of the Kyungu" increase in numbers, set up hereditary chiefdoms under him and gradually oust the territorial nobles from the Ngonde plain. But in this early period the nobles were the only effective rulers. At Mbande the nobles of Ngonde

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[1] Katenga, Mulwa, Kyumba, Mbomu and Ngosi.

[2] Muzyani and Mwenendeka.

[3] Mwenibila and Kyabinga were both of the same line as Muzyani but attained prominence later as heads of junior branches of it and both became nobles of Ngonde. And two others from the line of Mwenendeka—Kyiju and Mwenekinembe—did the same. Besides these, three of the later immigrants became nobles of Ngonde. There was Mwenenitumbe who, says legend, "was a good drum player and so was sent for by the Kyungu to come and live at Mbande;" there was Mwenenikibombwe, who came from Mbala (Abercorn), and there was Kipaka, whose histories we do not know.

[4] The two exceptions are Kyumba and Kipaka. Once one of the Kyumbas seduced a wife of the Kyungu and had to flee for his life across the Songwe; while Kipaka's descendants have become just ordinary commoners for some reason unknown to us.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

mediated between the divine Kyungus and the outer world, while both in the hills and in the plain the territorial nobles governed each his own people without royal rivals—for most of the sons of the Kyungus were killed at birth. 173 643 565

The exact conditions which led to this state of affairs are beyond our knowledge; there is no detailed evidence to explain just how the descendants of a wandering adventurer who succeeded to the camp and the ivory of "a great elephant hunter" should have become divine kings jealously controlled by their subordinates. All we can do is to set down in all its vagueness and uncertainty, such information as the tradition offers us.

The three crucial facts were, firstly the wealth of the Kyungus, which gave the other rulers a secular interest in them, secondly the constant immigration of important men, which kept up the numbers of these other rulers, and, thirdly, the killing of most of the sons of the Kyungus at birth; a custom whereby the territorial nobles were rid of possible rivals and the nobles of Ngonde were rid of possible supporters of the Kyungus against themselves. Reuben Mwenifumbo told us: "They feared that, if the Kyungu had many sons, they might seduce his wives and so bring sickness on him himself and on the country.[1] And they also feared that, if many of the Kyungu's sons grew up, they might destroy the nobles, they might ask, when the Kyungu died, how it was that he had died so suddenly!—I refer to his being killed when he fell sick or cut himself.—If there were only a few sons they could not protest (being only few), but if there had been many then all the nobles might have had their throats cut. So they kept two sons only alive. This was told me by the old Mulwa,[2] the father of the present Mulwa. He knew a great deal about the things of old. I asked him one day why the sons of Kyungu had been killed and he answered what I have just told you." Two reasons are given here, first the magical danger to the Kyungu (and through him to his people) of infidelity on the part of his wives, for his sons would naturally have more access to the sacred enclosure than other men; and second the danger that his sons might prevent his being killed when sick. The danger that they would supplant the territorial nobles is not mentioned, but it is hard to believe that the nobles were not conscious of it.

The nobles, both territorial and of Ngonde, still speak of themselves to-day as a single group with common interests opposed, to some extent, to those of the Kyungu and the chiefs; and, when we compare Ngonde with the Nyakyusa, it seems probable that there was some causal connection between the wealth of the Kyungus and the constant increase 643 565

[1] *Vide infra* Section 3 (b).
[2] Mulwa is the premier noble of Ngonde.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 565 in the nobles' numbers by immigration, on the one hand, and the close hold maintained by the nobles of Ngonde over the family life of the early Kyungus, on the other. The Lwembe of Lubaga was, like the Kyungu an immigrant into his district and he also had a group of hereditary priests living with him who, both in their origins and their religious functions exactly corresponded to the nobles of Ngonde; and they used to kill the Lwembe when he fell sick. But they neither developed many secular functions themselves nor ever prevented the royal family of the Lwembe from increasing. The sons of the Lwembe founded hereditary chiefdoms from the first. There had been indigenous rulers among the Nyakyusa prior to the coming of the Lwembe, but they were soon displaced by his sons and did not maintain themselves within the constitution. But then the Lwembe was poor, and among the Nyakyusa there was not the constant immigration of important men unrelated to the Lwembe[1] as there was into Ngonde of important men unrelated to the Kyungu. The comparison thus suggests very strongly a causal connection between these facts; but the exact mechanism of the causation is obscure.

173 643 565 The reasons for the killing of the Kyungu himself will be fully discussed in section three. But it must be mentioned here that the history of Ngonde is full of refusals on the part of prospective heirs to accept the position of Kyungu, and that one of the reasons for refusal was the short life that a Kyungu so often had. In order to refuse it was usually necessary to flee, for an heir once forcibly seized by the nobles of Ngonde and set on the stool of the Kyungus could not abdicate; if he did it was believed he would die. And thus was founded the house of Katamba (or Mwenitete) in the plain north of Songwe River. One of the early Kyungus died and "two of his sons, Katamba and a younger brother, fled across the Songwe to Itete, to their grandfather; for the name Mwenitete is in origin a noble not a royal name, the Kyungu had married the daughter of the noble Mwenitete. They fled because they feared to die on Mbande!"

In Itete the house of Katamba became hereditary chiefs and began to spread their power through all the surrounding plain. But later the Nyakyusa came down from the hills and drove them back across Songwe. The boundaries of Ngonde[2] in this early period, were thus wider than they are to-day. The plain north of the Songwe (which the

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[1] There was another immigration into the district of the Nyakyusa, but it was led, so says tradition, by a close kinsman of the Lwembe, whose sons, like the Lwembe's own, became hereditary chiefs. (The Kukwe are ignored in this footnote.)

[2] Using "Ngonde" always in the sense of the area of the Kyungu's supremacy.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa chiefs afterwards conquered, but which is still known as "Mu-Ngonde") was certainly included in it. And the men of Ngonde also claim that Musomba of the Ndali hills, and Mujombe and others in the present Northern Rhodesia were nobles of the Kyungu and sent him tribute. 173 565 643

How much secular power the Kyungus and nobles of Ngonde then had we cannot know; but, as in the later period it can be proved to have been more effective in the plain near Mbande than in the hills, it is not unreasonable to suppose that so it was in the early period also.

Trade with the outer world there was, so legend says, from the first, and this trade went north. The present Kyungu told us: "The Kyungus used to send ivory to the coast, they sent men over the hills of the Ndali; the ivory that they took from Simbobwe went that way. And the men used to come back with cloths and iron goods and white crockery. This I heard from Mwakalengula who died as a very, very old man in the year 1900 or perhaps it was 1901." 173 439

In later times the central power of the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde can be proved to have rested on the twin bases of religious faith and the control of great wealth; as these two conditions seem both to have been present in the early period we can assert with some confidence that then also they were the real bases of the central power. 173 565 643

(b) *A TURNING POINT.*

"Kyungu Magemo had a sister who was married to Katenga, one of the nobles of Ngonde. And one day when the other nobles of Ngonde went to Ngana (a district of Ngonde) to fish—for fish were plentiful in Ngana—this woman followed them, and there she married Mwakasekele a man of Ngana. So the nobles returned and told Magemo that his sister had been taken to wife in Ngana, and all he said was, 'very well.' Later she bore a son to Mwakasekele and Kyungu Magemo named him Kasyombe." 173 643

Now Magemo himself when he died left only one son, Mwangonde, and he had only survived by an accident. Mwangonde's mother came from Butambo (in the present Northern Rhodesia) and was a distant relative of Mulwa, another noble of Ngonde. Her delivery was unexpected and took place in the house of one of Mulwa's near kinsmen So Mulwa hid her and the child, and then sent her away to Butambo. The other nobles of Ngonde accused him of having done so and were angry, for they wished to kill the child if it were a boy. Mulwa denied his action, but afterwards they heard that the child was a boy and alive. Now but for Mulwa the direct line of the Kyungus would have died out,

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

themselves,. and with the Kisi. With the people of Mwela they exchanged canoes for hoes. And from the Kisi also they got hoes, which the Kisi in their turn had got in exchange from the Kinga. 173 643 439

Then, during the reigns of Mwangonde and his successors "the sons of the Kyungu" began more and more to displace the territorial nobles as rulers of the various districts of the Ngonde plain. They became hereditary chiefs (*avanyafyale*), each of whom was succeeded by two or more sons, who divided his country and tried to extend it. And thus the number of ruling chiefs now began to increase at a great rate. Each of the territorial nobles, on the other hand, was only succeeded by a single heir. Houses of chiefs were set up and a new hierarchy appeared, for the senior chief in each house ranked as the "father" of his juniors. The name of the founder of each house was preserved as a hereditary title borne by each head of that house in turn. Thus to-day we find in the Ngonde plain the house of the Katambas, (or Mwenitetes),[1] the house of the Kalongas, the house of the Mwakasungulas and so on, and, among the chiefs of Ngana, the house of the Mwafongos, the house of the Mwenengubwes, the house of the Kalombos, the house of the Kilupulas and so on. The heads of these houses were the great chiefs of Ngonde, subordinate to the Kyungu and each with a number of junior chiefs traditionally subordinate to him. Most of these great titles can be traced back to some important son either of Mwangonde or of Kasyombe; but in some cases junior branches also have acquired sufficient importance to be distinguished by hereditary titles which are borne by their heads[2]. Whenever the bearer of one of these great titles became the Kyungu, his old title was at once taken by a successor in his house. 173 643 565 622

The chiefs supplanted the territorial nobles and took their subjects for their own in this way: "A great many territorial nobles have lost their power, for the Kyungus were in the habit of sending their sons to build with them in their countries. A Kyungu would send one of his sons (i.e. a chief) to a certain noble saying 'I send this your son to build with you, his father'—for the nobles were called 'father' by the sons of the Kyungu—, so the noble would welcome him. But in after years the people would give their affection to the son of the Kyungu and the noble would lose his power. And yet, even so, in the old days the two of them, chief and noble, would remain on friendly terms." .... "Some of the nobles lost their power through the cunning of the chiefs. For example the noble Mwenifumbo used to have a country of his own,

[1] This house, as we have seen, dates from the early period.
[2] The first Malema, for instance, was a son of Mwakasungula, the first Kajuni of Mwenengubwes.

[text continues on p. 21]

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

but then he was given a young chief, Mwakijule, to look after as a child. The father of Mwakijule (who was not the Kyungu) asked Mwenifumbo to bring him up; but then when he grew up he became the ruler of the country!" And others lost their power to young chiefs who had married their daughters and then come to live near them. 173 643 565 622

Now all informants agree on three points: Firstly that it was the prestige of the royal blood which was responsible for this loss of power, secondly that the process was a gradual one and thirdly that the chiefs and the dispossessed nobles generally continued to live together on amicable terms. "The people gave their affection to the son of the Kyungu," but not all at once; some men at first would continue to regard themselves as the noble's men while others looked more to the chief. The noble acquiesced in this process and became in the end but the most important and respected commoner of the new chiefdom. For the chiefs apparently always treated such nobles with the greatest consideration, continued to call them "father" and to defer to their advice. The nobles retained all their religious functions and their right to participate in the selection of Kyungus and great chiefs, while their own titles continued to be handed on with due ceremony to their successors. All that they lost was leadership in war, the power of requisitioning food, together with the main responsibility for feasting the common people, and the formal position of chief justice. But in actual fact a noble's opinion on a law case was probably seldom disputed by the chief who had asked for it.

We have already suggested that during this middle period the balance of secular power between the nobles of Ngonde and the divine Kyungu himself began to change, and we have noted his descent from Mbande and the stopping of the killing of his sons as undoubted examples of this. But the nobles of Ngonde still had the real power at Mbande: "they alone conversed with the Kyungu; no one else saw him except when they went in to make obeisance. All orders came from them. Even with the *masuso*, the wives of the Kyungu, it was the nobles of Ngonde who put each one into the house of the Kyungu for a week at a time and then took her out and put in another. No one else built their houses near the Kyungu except these nobles (and their own immediate followers.)" 173 643 565

Such incidents as the going to war of Kyungu Mwakasungula, and the abandonment of the custom of building an enclosure (*ulupaso*) in the reign of Mwambelo[1] seem significant in the light of modern developments; but we cannot be sure that any very radical constitutional change would

[1] Vide infra pp. 28-9.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173 643 565 necessarily have followed from them, had modern conditions been different. The evidence is inconclusive.

565 642 622 Now not all territorial nobles in the Ngonde plain have been supplanted by "the sons of the Kyungus" even to-day; while in the hills inland they have mostly retained their power. And so in discussing the political system of Ngonde under the middle Kyungus, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between four different kinds of political unit: (1) the chiefdoms in the plain, each ruled by a hereditary chief related to the Kyungu; (2) the fiefs (if I may adapt this word from a feudal to a primitive context) in the plain, ruled by hereditary nobles unrelated to the Kyungu; (3) the fiefs in the hills inland, also ruled by hereditary nobles, but differing in many ways from the fiefs in the plain, and (4) the chiefdoms of the houses of Nyondo and Kameme in the hills.

642 622 This paper is mainly concerned with chiefdoms and fiefs of the plain. There each of the chiefdoms consisted, as among the Nyakyusa, of a group of age-villages, older and younger men living apart with their own contemporaries. At the head of each village was a headman, or great-commoner (*ulifumu*) chosen for life from among the villagers by the chief and the great-commoners (*amafumu*) of the senior villages of the chiefdom. Except in the case of very small chiefdoms each chief was succeeded by two or more sons who divided the villages among them. The transference of power from the old chief to his sons normally began in his lifetime at the "coming out" (*wusoka*) when they were formally shown to the country as chiefs and magically treated. The constitution of every chiefdom was that of limited monarchy, for the chief was dependent upon his great-commoners, who advised and, in many ways, controlled him. In the status of chief and great-commoners religious elements played an important part.

642 622 643 565 But, whereas among the Nyakyusa each chiefdom, save the very small ones, was, in secular matters, quite independent of its neighbours and each chief was a sovereign, in Ngonde, on the other hand, the wealth of the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde made them the apex of a political hierarchy. And thus, while among the Nyakyusa the senior of two brother chiefs could only command his junior in religious matters, when they sacrificed to their common father's spirit, in Ngonde he could occasionally command him in other ways also, he could, for example, summon him to war or to hoe,[1] and he had a certain slight judicial authority.[2] Of two brother chiefs the junior was subordinate to the senior; in each of the great houses all other chiefs were subordinate to the head of the house, the great chief with a hereditary title;

[1] Vide infra sections 4 and 6.
[2] Vide infra section 5.

[text continues on p. 24]

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

642 the great chiefs themselves were subordinate to Kyungu. But every
622 ruling chief right up the scale, except the Kyungu himself, had also his
643 own great-commoners and people directly subordinate to him. More-
565 over the subordination of some chiefs to others and of all to Mbande was a very different thing from the subordination of authorities in a civilized state. It was still above all a religious and ceremonial subordination, but in matters of secular justice and administration there was a very large measure of local autonomy.

Within the chiefdom the organization of families and villages was more or less[1] the same as that described in the first paper of this series, and need not be further described here.

642 Among the fiefs of the plain there was another hierarchy, depend-
643 ing not upon seniority of birth but upon priority of arrival in Ngonde.
565 For each important immigrant who entered the country with followers of his own went first to an already established territorial noble, not straight to Mbande; and it was the already established noble, who then acted as his sponsor, took him to Mbande and told the nobles of Ngonde and the Kyungu of his request for land. The normal procedure then was for the nobles of Ngonde to be sent by the Kyungu to arrange with his sponsor where to settle him. And thereafter he ranked, at least for ceremonial purposes, as his sponsor's junior. Thus the territorial noble Kasyombe was junior to his sponsor Mwenekibuta, and so on. But no ruling noble was subordinate to any chief save the Kyungu. The nobles, both territorial and of Ngonde, describe themselves as "the great-commoners (*amafumu*) of the Kyungu," likening the relationship of the fiefs and the Kyungu to that of the villages of a single chiefdom and their chief.

642 The organization of each single fief seems to have resembled in
565 many ways that of a small chiefdom, each was divided into at least two age-villages, so that old men and their sons should live separately; for it was taboo in all the Ngonde plain, as among the Nyakyusa, for father and daughter-in-law ever to meet. Kinship, however, was more emphasized as a reason for living together than in the chiefdoms, and we are told that the inhabitants of the fiefs were usually related, either as kinsmen or affines, to the territorial noble concerned; while the age-villages of a fief had no great-commoners at their head. Otherwise the customs which obtained in the plain, both in the fiefs and the chiefdoms, were, on the whole, homogeneous.

Each of the nobles of Ngonde had a few subject commoners of his own living at Mbande with him, divided up into two age-villages; so

[1] The climatic difference determines certain differences in the system of land-tenure of Ngonde and of the Nyakyusa, but of these we have made no study.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

that the organization of Mbande may be described either as a group of small fiefs clustered together or as the capital chiefdom of the Kyungu, in which the nobles of Ngonde acted as the great commoners, each in two small age-villages. 642 565

Besides the nobles of Ngonde and their own followers there lived at Mbande men called *valukuta*, who acted as the personal messengers and police of the Kyungu. They were not hereditary officials but chosen for their speed by the nobles of Ngonde, who also gave them their orders. Anyone might become a messenger, the son of a chief, or of a commoner, or even a slave. 624 202

Of the customs of the hill fiefs and of the chiefdom, of the houses of Nyondo and Kameme we know very little; but it is certain that in many of them different dialects were spoken from that of the plain and that their inhabitants called themselves (as they still do to-day) Sukwa, Wenya, Lambya, and so on, rather than "men of Ngonde." And these upland groups were much more loosely attached[1] to the central power at Mbande than were the people of the plain. 642 565

There is some evidence to show that, even in the early period, the the nobles of Ngonde did not always take the most immediate heir of a dead Kyungu to succeed him; during the middle period it is certain that they did not. The Kyungu had to be taken from the royal family but, within limits, the most suitable man might be chosen. And with the increase in the numbers of the chiefs the area of selection grew constantly wider. The constitutional metheds of selection will be discussed in section five.

(d) *THE MIDDLE KYUNGUS: CIVIL WARS.*

We must now turn to the rivalry between the chiefs of Ngelenge and Ngana. "Mwangonde begot Kalonga, Mpeta,[2] and Mwansele. And they, when they grew up, quarrelled with the sons of Kasyombe: 'Let them move further off, they are only commoners, we object to their proximity!' So they made war on them and drove them fleeing out of Ngana with only a few men. Before this war began their father Mwangonde had forbidden them to fight and commanded them to be friends." We notice here a point, which will be discussed later in section five, that the Kyungus, though not themselves involved in the civil wars, yet had little or no power to keep the peace. 173

"Then the sons of Kasyombe went to the Ndali to make allies of them and they returned together and fought the sons of Mwangonde

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[1] cf. Section 3.
[2] Mpeta (*vide infra*) later took the name of Mwakasungula.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

the senior territorial nobles of the plain, and they told their juniors. A sacrifice was made in one of the sacred groves of the Kyungus and all fires in the whole Ngonde plain were put out. And then "all the chiefs from every country near Mbande and the nobles and all the great-commoners and all the ordinary men and the women too went to Kyimbwe." At Kyimbwe, which is a cross-roads in the bush, they threw away the ashes of their old fires; while those few people who could not get to Kyimbwe threw them away near their own houses on the same day as the others. At Kyimbwe new fire was made with fire-sticks by the nobles of Ngonde and distributed to the whole plain in order. Great chiefs and senior nobles took it first and passed it to their juniors, chiefs passed to great-commoners, and in each group the common people got it from their own ruling noble or their own great-commoner. 769 796

And then, later in the year when the first maize and the first pumpkin leaves were ready to eat, an elaborate first-fruit ceremony was carried out. The first-fruits were offered by the nobles of Ngonde in the grove of the previous Kyungu, the one who had last died. "Then the great chiefs would do so next—Kalonga, Mwakasungula, Mwembelo, Katamba and the chiefs of Ngana also, each in his own sacred grove (i.e. at the grave of his own predecessor in the title). . . . . And then after them everyone, both chiefs and people, each at his father's grave. All offered first-fruits to their own spirits. And finally they would eat themselves, each with his chief wife. But beforehand they would not eat for fear of angering the spirits."

These two rituals concerned the plain alone; the nobles and chiefs of the hills are said to have had similar rituals of their own but they were not synchronized with or dependent upon those of the plain.

In time of tribal war also the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde led the people in prayer. All chiefs and nobles were summoned from the plain and the great ones entered the Kyungu's house to receive their instructions: "When he had finished speaking he would tell them to go to pray. So they would leave his house and gather all together, all chiefs and men, and pray. The premier noble of Ngonde would begin, asking each of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn to bless them in the fight. And then the great chiefs would pray after them" (each addressing his own predecessors in his title). The territorial nobles did not pray, for it was the royal family alone whose spirits were then addressed. Here again it was the plain alone that was concerned. 643 565 732 726

Now this organization of religious ritual in the Ngonde plain was both a factor of and itself determined by the general political

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17
NyaKyusa

structure. We shall see in later sections how many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions. But the reverse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular content at all, the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle were sent to Lubaga by the other chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and health; but the "clearing out of the ashes" was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruit ritual at all;[1] while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

Besides the Kyungus the great chiefs of Ngonde also were believed to be able to avert local droughts and misfortunes in their districts by offerings to their own immediate ancestors; and the lesser chiefs likewise and the territorial nobles—each in his own little area. While among the territorial nobles, the original owners of the land had wider powers. It will be remembered that to them the first Kyungu is said to have given head-cloths and asked for their prayers. Sometimes people would prophesy future misfortune "at Kisindile", or "at Kaluma" or "at Ifumbo," or would prophesy of present misfortunes that such was their source. Then the territorial noble concerned[2] would be formally visited by the nobles of Ngonde, and he and they together would offer sacrifice to his ancestors on behalf of all Ngonde.

And then also there were sacred lagoons near the lake—Nthola, Kambwe, Kibondo, Mulale and Katindi. They were associated not with ancestral spirits at all but with a vaguely defined supreme deity named Mbamba. And beside them also prayers and sacrifices were made from time to time by the nobles of Ngonde.

Over these other spiritual powers we need not linger, save to notice one most significant fact. The participation by the Kyungu in the divinity of his ancestors was no isolated phenomenon in Ngonde. The head of every family in the country, whether of chiefs or commoners, was similarly placed; in his own family and, in the case of a chief or noble, in his own area too, he was both a priest and a demi-god; he dealt with the spirits and by virtue of his relation to them shared their powers; his anger could curse. The Kyungus were but the greatest of many divinities. And thus there was in theistic ritual a high degree of local and family autonomy; local or family misfortunes

[1] Particular people among the Nyakyusa carried it out: reigning chiefs, senior great-commoners, prophets, and any person whose birth was held to be due to magical treatment of a previously barren woman. But only they.

[2] Mwene-kisindile, Mwene-kaluma, Mwene-ifumbo etc.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

were dealt with by the local rulers or by the family-heads, not by the central authorities. It was only occasionally that general fears or misfortunes turned all men's thoughts together to Mbande. 771 643

Now the great-commoners of every chief were believed to have independent access to his ancestral spirits and this gave them a spiritual hold over him. If they compared him too unfavourably with his predecessors then, it was believed, those predecessors might hear and afflict him in various ways. And so it was also with the nobles of Ngonde and the reigning Kyungu. But as this belief was intimately linked with the belief in witchcraft it will be more conveniently analysed in that context.[1] 565 622

(b) *THE MAGICAL ELEMENT.*

Magic (the belief that certain particular objects, events, words or actions, involving particular people in particular situations, possessed in themselves an extraordinary power) was an essential ingredient of the old pagan religion of Ngonde. While the greatest magical object in the country was, traditionally, the body of the Kyungu. And the fact that the central political authority of Ngonde was so largely vested in the nobles of Ngonde was due above all to their responsibility for controlling this magical object in the public interest. 789 643

If the Kyungu cut himself, and more particularly if his blood fell to the ground, then it was the duty of the nobles of Ngonde to kill him, lest the whole land be afflicted with disease; and if he was ill likewise. "They considered that if his blood fell to the ground that was his life falling. And they likened him to a god, considering it taboo for a god to be wounded; they thought that if his blood fell to the ground it would turn into a sickness and all the people would die. And so, when the Kyungu was wounded, they thought it best to put him out of the way and start afresh with a new one. They thought it taboo for him to have even the tiniest wound on his body. And it was equally taboo for him to fall ill; everyone else, it was believed, would fall ill too; it was better to put him out of the way so that the people should keep well." 789 643 784 753

In consequence of this belief elaborate precautions were taken to maintain the Kyungu's health. Sexual impurity was believed to be magically dangerous to health in many ways and so the Kyungu, above all men, must be guarded from it. It was not considered safe even for his own wives to cook his food, lest one of them touch it during a menstrual period, and so young boys who had not yet reached puberty 789 643 834

[1] *Vide infra* section 3 (c).

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 652 The gardens of the Kyungu were divided traditionally into public (*imilasa*) and private ones (*imigunda gya masono*). The produce of the first was mainly devoted to the entertainment of important guests—chiefs, territorial nobles and the ivory traders from over the lake. That of the second to the personal needs of the Kyungu and his household. 643 651 The public gardens were hoed and weeded by the great chiefs and the nobles of the Ngonde plain with their subordinates and followers, the private ones by the nobles of Ngonde with theirs.

The hoeing of his public gardens by the chiefs and nobles of the plain was as intimately connected with the religious status of the Kyungu as was the bringing of royal tusks to him, for the belief in his rain-making powers provided a moral sanction for it. Drought and disease, as we have seen, were often attributed to the displeasure of the living Kyungu; and the failure of some ruler to bring his people to work the public gardens was, so we were told, the most usual way of displeasing him. The wealth and the divinity of the Kyungu were inextricably linked. Nor without these public gardens could the lucrative ivory trade have been maintained. In the primitive world of Ngonde there were no "purely business relations;" tributaries and buyers alike had to be royally feasted.

643 651 565 622 In the hoeing of the public gardens the political hierarchy of Ngonde was made evident, for each great chief came separately to hoe, accompanied both by the local chiefs of his own house and by those territorial nobles who lived near him. At an appropriate time either the great chief or one of his noble neighbours would suggest going to Mbande to hoe, and the former would then summon all his local chiefs. But he could not summon the nobles; with them it was a polite arrangement between equals. "When they went to hoe for the Kyungu it might be a neighbouring noble and not the great chief at all who made the first suggestion; and then the two of them would go together with their followers. For the nobles are not subjects of the great chiefs but only of the Kyungu."

651 241 476 273 The main crop grown in the public gardens was millet (*amalen*) for beer. And at some time during the year all the chiefs and nobles[1] who had brought men to hoe[2] them were summoned to taste "the beer of the *malasa*." So we see that, in one aspect, the hoeing of the public gardens of the Kyungu was but an extension on a large scale of the

[1] It is clear from our notes that each chief and noble brought to this beer-drink some of his people; but it is not clear whether he brought all those who had worked or only the more important among them.

[2] I speak of "hoeing" and "men." It is fairly certain that the women also came to weed afterwards and that they participated in the beer. We omitted, however, to find this out.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

ordinary custom of hoeing parties which is still followed by every chief and commoner in this whole area. Every man, two or three times a year, invites his neighbours to hoe for him and rewards them with a beer-drink in the evening. Where the hoeing of the Kyungu's public gardens differed from this custom was in the religious sanction behind it and in its political organization. 651 241 476 273

After the local chiefs had finished the *mulasa* for the Kyungu they would next return and hoe a small garden for their great chief who had led them to Mbande. But in this the territorial nobles took no part. Such gardens were not called *milasa* and there was no distinction made between them and the great chief's private ones. For this custom also there was a moral sanction; for the great chiefs, we remember, also participated in divinity. "If his people forgot to hoe for Mwakasungula then perhaps a little local epidemic of some kind would break out and the diviners, when questioned, would attribute it to their forgetfulness. Or perhaps a prophetic fit would fall on some one and he would tell them to go and hoe (or they would rue it!)" 651 565

And, still lower in the hierarchy, among a group of chiefs who were half-brothers, the senior chief used sometimes to summon his juniors to bring their men and hoe; but "their acquiescence depended on their friendship for him"; it seems to have had no effective moral sanction.

The private gardens of the Kyungu were traditionally very small indeed, for the constant income of food from the plain made them all but unnecessary. Such as they were, they were worked by the people of Mbande, i.e. the nobles of Ngonde and their followers. The wives of the Kyungu lived like ladies and had all the normal work of a woman, including weeding, done for them. 643 651

The income of the Kyungu in slaves and cattle cannot be understood save in the context of judicial procedure and warfare with which we have not yet dealt[1]. 643 652

The income of Mbande reached others besides the Kyungu and his wives. We have already seen how the nobles of Ngonde took their share of the food which was brought in; and some of it they gave to their messengers, the *nakakata*. Neither the nobles of Ngonde nor the messengers, according to the present Kyungu, used to have any large gardens of their own; they also were maintained at the public expense. And the nobles of Ngonde shared also in the proceeds of the ivory.

With the exception of a pile of tusks upon which the Kyungu slept, most of the ivory which reached Mbande, from the time of Mwangonde 439

[1] *Vide infra* sections 5 and 6.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

and say 'This is the new Kyungu.' And when they make obeisance to Kyungu all the rest, both the chiefs and nobles, fall to the ground, but Kalonga alone remains seated, for he is the senior of the whole line." 643

In the succession to the great chiefdoms there was formerly a difference of procedure in the two royal lines, that of Ngelenge and that of Ngana. When a great chief of Ngelenge died, the nobles of Ngonde were sent by the Kyungu, both to the funeral and, later, to assist in the selection of a successor. "With the great chiefs of Ngelenge it is we, the nobles of Ngonde, who have always caught their successors. We catch Kalonga, Mwakasungula Mwambelo, Katumba (or Mwunitete) and Mwambungu.[1] But we have never gone to catch the successors of the lesser chiefs, nor used we to catch the chiefs of Ngana either, for they are of the female line.... When a great chief (of Ngelenge) has died we go and consult secretly with the great-commoners and then, if one of the dead man's immediate heirs is suitable we catch him, but if not we may pass them over and take someone else who is, it maybe, quite junior in that house but who entertains his people generously. Him we hit with a dry stick saying, we have you, you are M—(title of the great chief) now! .... The chosen man we set upon a stool; this is the ancient custom. We always (used to) select mature men for these positions, not just youths[2]." 622 565

"The great titles among the Ngana chiefs" we were told "are five: Mwenengubwe, Mwafongo, Kalambo, Kilupula and Mwabulambo. In the old days the nobles of Ngonde did not go to catch them, because they were only the female line; they would summon their great-commoners to Mbande and enquire who was to succeed and, when they had discussed it with them, tell them to go and catch the selected man to be the new chief. Then the great-commoners would return and discuss it with the other four great chiefs of Ngana, after which they would catch the chosen man." 554

The qualities looked for both in a Kyungu and a great chief were the same, with one exception: he had to be "a ruling chief.... elderly man....one who was respectful in his manner to the leading commoners.....a wise chief who knew how to feed his people." The emphasis on generosity in entertainment is most striking, every informant stresses it above all other qualities. Generosity and the possession of abundance of food were the supreme traditional marks of a chief both in Ngonde, among the Nyakusa and in many other parts of Africa as 643 622 554

[1] The house of Mwambungu was originally a junior branch of that of Katumba.
[2] Mwaambuka and Kyabinga. Other informants make it clear that not only the nobles of Ngonde but the territorial nobles of the plain also participate in the selection of these great chiefs.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

693 well. The one additional qualification of a great chief was bravery in
622 war; the Kyungus never fought and so in their case bravery was less
659 important.

565 The succession of the nobles of Ngonde, of the territorial nobles of the plain and of the territorial nobles of the hills was similar to that of the great chiefs: the nobles of Ngonde themselves went and discussed with the leading men of the dead noble which member of his family to appoint in his place; and the immediate heirs were passed over if unsuitable.[1] But in the case of the territorial nobles the successor of the original noble sponsor or protégé of that family also took part in the discussions. It will be remembered that there was an, at least ceremonial, hierarchy among the territorial nobles, depending upon the priority of their arrival in Ngonde and the fact that a later arrival was always introduced at Mbande by some established noble and given land near him. And the relationship then established between the fiefs continued to manifest itself at every subsequent succession.

"Mwenelupembe was a Nyika but then he came here to Ngonde and the Kyungu gave him land by the lake. Then later Mwalugali came from Mwela, and Mwenelupembe told the Kyungu that he had come; whereupon the Kyungu sent the nobles of Ngonde with Mwenelupembe to give him land. And still, when a Mwalugali dies it is Mwenelupembe and the nobles of Ngonde who discuss with his men the choice of a successor. Then, still later, Kasembe came to Mwalugali who told Mwenelupembe, who told the Kyungu. Kasembe came without men; he came from Mwela like Mwalugali but was not a kinsman of his. So the Kyungu said that Kasembe should build with Mwalugali. Then last of all came Songwe with some of his relatives, to Mwalugali. Now Songwe was a kinsman of Kasembe's. Mwalugali told Mwenelupembe who, in his turn, told the Kyungu.——And the Kyungu decided that as Songwe and Kasembe were kinsmen they should be given land together, but a little apart from Mwalugali. And still they are associated, all four, and when one of them dies the other three come to the funeral and together send the message to the Kyungu. And the three of them consult with the nobles of Ngonde about the choice of a successor; they, the nobles of Ngonde and the relatives of the dead noble consult together,

622 The succession to the ordinary local chiefdoms of Ngonde was, like

[1] Later in their conversation it was made clear, however, that, in the case of the more distant territorial nobles, both in the plain to the north and in the hills to the west, it was only to the successors of the most important ones that the nobles of Ngonde went in person. When a lesser noble died then the Kyungu would send to the great chief who was nearest (to Kilupula in the west and to Kalembo in the north), asking him to send men of his own to "catch" the successor.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

is generally admitted that all chiefs are less affected by this fear than they used to be. The secularization of the constitution tends, in this connection, to make it more autocratic. 178 692 771

On the economic side it is difficult to exaggerate the change in the relative wealth of rulers and people. The change is temporarily obscured by the historical accident of the present Kyungu's personal fortune, but this, when he dies, will go to this own heir, not to his successor in the Kyunguship. The Kyungu's total official salary in 1937 was £72 a year and those of the "Sub-chiefs" varied from about £4 10s. to £12 a year. The nobles of Ngonde all received either 10s. or 15s. a year, with the exception of Mulwa who received 30s. These salaries, which are paid out of the Native Treasurery, are the modern substitute for the profits of the ivory-trade, which the Kyungu shared with his subordinates, together with the regular tribute of food and the proceeds of tribal warfare and of punitive expeditions, all of which sources of income have now dried up. And these salaries do not make possible the giving of any valuable gifts to subordinates and subjects. The local rulers also receive slight financial subsidies from the Native Treasury. Each "Village Headman" is allowed to retain 3d. from the tax of every adult male subject of his own and the "Important Headmen" (great chiefs) receive in addition subsidies ranging from 5s. to 40s. a year. This custom has replaced that of the requisitioning of food; but, owing to the smallness of all the present chiefdoms and fiefs of the plain, few "Village Headmen" receive more than £1 a year from this source.[1] 178 565 652 465

It is open to commoners, on the other hand, to become as rich or richer than most of their rulers. The head clerk in the Boma in 1937 received £52 a year, and there were fifty-three other Government employees who all received £12 or over; Native Christian Ministers and Evangelists all received many times the salary of Mulwa while young men often returned from the Lupa gold-fields with savings of several pounds.

The decline of polygyny in Ngonde again reduces the relative wealth of the subordinate chiefs and nobles in comparison with their people. Women are increasingly reluctant, for various reasons, to be married by polygynists, and the old style of entertainment is changing. Few chiefs and nobles, save the present Kyungu himself, now have sufficient wives and unmarried children to be able to entertain on a large scale. In the case of ordinary chiefs and territorial nobles (the "Village Headmen" of to-day) this poverty is not in itself very significant, for with the dwindling 178 565 595 178 565

[1] The average receipts of the one hundred and twenty-four "Village Headmen" in the Ngonde plain were almost exactly 10/- per annum in 1936. They had, that is, an average of forty tax-payers each.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 565 in size of the groups they rule, they have fewer subjects to entertain. But the "Sub-chiefs" and the "Important Headmen" cannot cease to entertain largely without losing much of their pre-eminent status.

178 692 The outlawing by Government of civil and tribal war, combined with the new economic and religious conditions, has enormously extended the normal range of social relationships among the people of Ngonde; and a centralised judicial system has necessarily been developed to deal with the new situation. The old forms of local autonomy have ceased.

178 642 The continuity which is observable between the present constitution of Ngonde and that of the middle period is mainly determined by three factors. In the first place the Government of the Protectorate deliberately supports in positions of high authority the legitimate successors of some of the old rulers. In the second place the judicial functions of those successors, which have been greatly extended, have replaced, to some extent, the old religious and military functions. And, in the third place, the present Kyungu is, as it happens, a rich man. A decentralised mercantile divinity has been transformed into a centralised Native Authority with some continuity of personnel, with the substitution of new functions for old and with the assistance of a private fortune.

(b) *FROM GOD TO MAGISTRATE.*

178 692 The first two of these factors of continuity—Government support and the increase of judicial functions—must be discussed together, for it is mainly because of their utility as subordinate magistrates that the Government supports the Native rulers of Ngonde.

Modern conditions, in the sphere of law, bring about two great changes. Firstly the integration of the one-time primitive society of Ngonde with the civilised world greatly increases the range of social relationships among its people, and so renders ineffective much of the traditional legal machinery. And, secondly, the introduction of Christianity, of political control by the British and of European economic enterprise inevitably changes the content of the law. Granted the general conditions of contact between Africans and Europeans in Central Africa a transformation of all its traditional legal systems is seen to be an inescapable necessity.

Common law must now be maintained by a hierarchy of legal authorities reaching far beyond the boundaries of Ngonde, if it is to be maintained among its people at all. As I write these words in Livingstone, a thousand miles by road from Mbande, there is a man of Ngonde working in a shop within a hundred yards of my office. While in Ngonde itself it is no longer true that a man's friends and neighbours, or even his immediate rulers, can ever be sure of constraining him effectively if he

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 643 692 tional rivals of those of Ngelenge; most of the traditional reasons which led them to accept the supremacy of a Kyungu of the house of Ngelenge, whenever one was elected, have now ceased to influence them; while they themselves, as we shall see in a moment, are now barred from the succession. Moreover the Kyungu's supremacy is now mainly operative in the unaccustomed sphere of law. And so a new reason for admitting that supremacy has had to be more forcibly presented to them than to the other rulers of Ngonde.

Once forcibly presented, however, the new reason seems to have been admitted in place of the old ones without much difficulty. For in 1936, the next year, Kilupula spontaneously led his people to the Kyungu and formally handed over a cow to him, thereby re-establishing friendship and mutual respect between the two of them. The dispute has ended in a manifest harmony.[1]

It is relevant to mention here that in the first five months of 1937 only one case was taken on appeal from the Kyungu's court to that of the District Commissioner.

178 565 622 629 692 The general status both of the great chiefs and of the local chiefs and nobles (the "Important" and "Village Headmen,") as also of the great-commoners, has been radically altered by the new legal conditions. Formerly these authorities were the mainstay of a primitive justice, but to-day they could not possibly enforce any legal decisions without the backing of the central Government. And this backing they do not have. Their sphere of influence is so small[2] that it has not been thought worth while to give them any formal judicial authority; they are now mere arbitrators and all important cases go to court.

178 692 The modern constitution of Ngonde is thus more centralized than the old. The support of the Government is given to, and effective *judicial power is concentrated in the hands of half a dozen men, with their* own advisers. The new judicial functions of the Kyungu and the selected "Sub-chiefs" have, in fact, been transferred to them from the local rulers. Some such centralization was inevitable under modern conditions but the details are dependent upon the decisions of the Government.

(c) *PETER THE FORTUNATE.*

643 The wealth of the present Kyungu is not only due to his great personal abilities. For twenty years before his appointment as Regent (when he himself became the Kyungu in all but name) he was the full-

[1] This phrase begs no questions about private feelings, upon which we have no evidence.

[2] This is less true of the great chiefs (the "Important Headmen") than of the rest; and possibly an understanding of their status will alter the attitude of the Administration to them.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 643 Magemo to Mwakabanga no Kyungu has ever been succeeded by his own immediate heir; the choice of Peter as successor to Mwangaloba was unique, for he was his full brother and the heir to his property, but then Peter's ability and personal wealth were unique also. And in the case of the great chiefs and the nobles also the principle of election is still followed.

178 554 683 The grounds of election have slightly altered. Generosity and wealth are still important, but "wisdom in European ways" is now more looked for than maturity, and shortly before our visit a fairly young man was chosen as Mwakasungula. Bravery in war, of course, no longer matters.

178 565 622 The Administration have so far made little use of any great chiefs except the three who are now "Sub-chiefs;" but the others (the "Important Headmen") could be made into effective local rulers, if their salaries were raised. The ordinary chiefs and nobles (the "Village Headmen") are too numerous and have too few subjects to be very effective links in the chain of modern authority. But many of the great chiefs command the respect of considerable numbers. Moreover the fact that they are already being elected for their "wisdom in European ways" suggests that they will prove competent to deal with modern problems.

The traditional secular procedure of election is still followed, with some exceptions: the nobles of Ngonde are now sent by the Kyungu to participate in the "catching" of the great chiefs of Ngana[1] on the spot; the District Commissioner is informed of the result of every election; while the Kyungu himself, no longer secluded, takes a bigger share in making the choices than his predecessors very well could. And many of the religious elements of the traditional procedure, such as the setting of a new Kyungu on the iron stool *Kipundi*, have fallen out of use.

The sending by Peter of the nobles of Ngonde to catch the chiefs of Ngana is a sign of the present centralization of power in his hands under Government. When we asked why the old custom had been changed we were told that it was "because now everything is under the control of Government and comes to the Kyungu."

The gradual ousting by chiefs of the few ruling territorial nobles who still remain in the plain has continued in modern times, but the novel conditions have complicated the process and seem to be checking it. A recent quarrel between Kajuni and Mwanalupembe illustrates this. The head of the house of Kajuni, which is a junior branch of the [579]

[1] I think this is also true of the less important territorial nobles of the hills, but am not sure.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Mwenengubwe, has attained more or less the status of a great chief; but his country originally belonged to the noble Mwenelupembe. One of the Kajunis married a daughter of Mwenelupembe and, in the usual way, became the effective ruler of most of the country. But the position was not formally clarified, Kajuni and Mwenelupembe are said to have lived on the best of terms, "and there was no boundary between them." After the arrival of the Europeans Kajuni was recorded in the Government list as the "Headman," for taxation purposes, with the consent of Mwenelupembe. And this meant that Mwenelupembe received no share of the tax money. But then, recently, Kajuni sold some of their land to a European for a tobacco shamba without consulting Mwenelupembe, who was furious, and demanded his own tax register and to have a boundary formally marked out between them. And this has now been done. The present cash value of the status of a ruler has altered the economics of the situation, the decline of the religious status of Mbande lessens the comparative importance of the royal blood, while new occasions of dispute between the rulers are now present.

178 569 622 578

The "coming out" (*ewunka*) has ceased in Ngonde owing to the smallness of all the present chiefdoms, both in area and numbers, and the impossibility of finding sufficient land and followers for two successors to any local chief.[1] There has been no "coming out" since 1913. Each local chief is now succeeded by one younger full-brother (or one son) alone. But still among these "Village Headmen" popular favour determines their position. If his subjects do not like a "Headman" they move away to his neighbours, and every emigration reduces his salary by 3d. a year.

178 622

(c) *CONCLUSION.*

Now the more autocratic form and the greater centralisation of the modern constitution of Ngonde is very largely the product of inevitable social forces. Granted the general conditions of contact between Africans and Europeans in Central Africa, a decline of the religion of Ngonde, with the consequential change in the relations of chiefs with their leading commoners, could not possibly be avoided. Nor could the old local autonomy possibly be fitted in unchanged to any modern administrative system. And Ngonde is not unique in this, similar changes, equally inevitable, can be seen in most areas of Central Africa.

178 642

Nor is the relative poverty of the majority of the Native rulers of Ngonde today a unique phenomenon either. Richards[2] has shown the

[1] Owing to the climatic difference land is scarcer in Ngonde than among the Nyakyusa; but the implications of this fact we did not specially study.
[2] op. cit.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

thought to be embedded in the visibly growing parts of the body of a chief, and the horrifying practice of plucking out the hair and nails of a dying man is an assertion of the value of vitality, energy, force of personality in a leader. 773 [778]

The separate origin of chiefs and people, and the reciprocity between them, are constantly emphasized. Among many primitive peoples a myth of common origin is the charter for unity, and foreign lineages are linked by some fiction to the dominant line; but among the Nyakyusa it is the *reciprocity* between cultivators and cattle-owners, between 'owners of the soil' who ate their food raw and immigrants who brought with them cattle and fire, which is the basis of unity. The chiefs (like the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers or the Voortrekkers) speak of themselves as having brought civilization to a savage land, but they acknowledge the contribution of the previous 'owners of the soil' in a way in which the white Americans and South Africans do not. Characteristically, the dichotomy of chiefs and commoners is couched in terms of descent, but in fact this is a fiction, for the younger sons of chiefs join the ranks of the commoners, and the mother of a chief is often of commoner origin. [182]

The complementary character of the economies of chiefs and commoners is matched, in belief, by a balance in mystical power. The divine kings have an innate creative power while the commoners have pythons in their bellies with which to destroy their enemies. It sounds like a myth of good and evil put about by the chiefs, but we never heard it expressed in that way even by Kasitile, who so feared and hated the commoner priests. The destructive power of the commoners can be used morally, to maintain the established order, as well as irresponsibly by witches. The constitution was a balance between chiefs and commoners, not a dictatorship. Chiefs maintain their position by feasting their men on beef, and this, the Nyakyusa think, prevents the witches from attacking; sated with meat their pythons 'lie quiet'. 778 865

Ultimate power is symbolized by the python, for though the chiefs—like English kings—are commonly associated with lions and leopards, the terror of the grove of Lubaga, and the source of the *ifugila* medicine upon which the potency of divine kings and chiefs depends is a python, like that which lies in the belly of a witch. The most fearful thing of the tropical forest (and the forests on the Livingstone escarpment and Rungwe mountain are but the remains of much greater ones) is a natural symbol for power. [825]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

872 in any numbers, the trained assistants in Mission work
797 who form one of the principal successes of Missions among other tribes.

157 But this does not imply that the Konde are without virtues. They are very shy, and respectful to authority, the latter a characteristic that atones for many defects in the minds of those who consider subserviency the primary virtue in a native of Africa. Their conservative nature prevents them being too free with strangers, and they will not greet a passing European, either until he takes the initiative, or until long friendship has convinced them that it will not be regarded as an undue liberty. Once their confidence has been gained, they are found to be merry, laughing, and bright. The friendliness of children is an attractive feature of the tribe. And the adults are most willing to be friendly also, provided the first advances are made by the European. When one begins to know them intimately, it becomes obvious that their backwardness is not due to lack of capacity, but to an unyielding conservatism, which leads them to think long—and some have been thinking for a generation—before committing themselves to anything new. "We will think about it" is a common response to invitations to take their place alongside the more progressive tribes. Yet with it all they are a lovable people, responsive to friendliness, deeply attached to each other, and to all who rightly claim the name of friend.

• 567 Slavery is, formally at least, a thing of the past. It is asserted by natives that some men and women are still in slavery, but while that is not impossible, no one

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

has ever been able, or willing, to give me the name of 567
either slave or owner in a single case. Yet such is the terrifying influence which some natives exert over others, that it is not difficult to believe that here and there throughout the country there may be individuals to whom continued slavery is a smaller evil than the wrath of an exposed owner, and therefore the fact of their bondage is not reported to the authorities.

Many circumstances might combine to make the 567
freeman a slave, and the slave a freeman. A man who 681
led astray the wife of a chief, if discovered, paid a son or daughter to the husband. So also, one found stealing from a garden was similarly penalised. Mocking at a lame man was a crime which could only be atoned for by the same kind of payment; and a man who could not pay just debts might himself be taken by the creditor. Prisoners of war, it need hardly be 567
added, were slaves. On the other hand, the owner might find himself obliged by circumstances to restore children so obtained; if not, he was obliged to find wives or husbands for them. A slave might be a member of the council, and there are cases where slaves acquitted themselves so well in battle that they were granted their freedom. So long as it remained purely domestic, it was not an altogether intolerable condition. There was an ex-slave living at Karonga not long ago, who supported as long as she lived the old woman who was once his owner, and that, as he assured me, from genuine affection. On the other hand, a man, not yet beyond the prime of life, was present when a slave was buried alive along with the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•567 body of his late owner. And another knew of a slave, bound and weighted with stones, thrown into the lake to feed the crocodiles. Such things may with reason be assumed to be impossible to-day, whether it be true or not that slavery still exists.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 chief. For Chungu must not die a natural death;
645 the land would be turned into water should such a
771 calamity be allowed to happen. Having decided that the illness is really grave, the councillors, one by one, give their voice in the formula, "*Siku na mwaka*," literally, day and year; but actually meaning, "Does God die?" In solemn procession these terrible persons enter the house, and, having turned out the chief's wives, lay him down on the floor. Two keep him in that posture, while a third stops his breath by holding his mouth and nostrils, a fourth meanwhile gently slapping him all over the body until the life has gone out of him.

643 No announcement of the death was made. One of
645 the councillors lived in the royal dwelling, so that if
766 any came to consult Chungu a response might be given, and as he was rarely seen by common men, it was easy to keep up the deception. The councillors with their own hands digged the grave, and on their shoulders, at midnight, carried the body, anointed with lion fat, and enswathed in cloth, to the place of
• [567] burial. Six or eight slaves, who did not return, went
[782] with them. Four went down into the grave to receive the body of their dead master, two at the head and two at the feet, and, in sitting position, held him in their arms. The remaining slaves being placed on the top, the soil was filled in on living and dead.

After the lapse of about a month, a big iron drum, now lost, was beaten, and it conveyed only one message to the people. "*Kutebite ku Mphande*," Mphande (the royal residence) has done its work;

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

726 protection by the medicine man; and the armed
789 warriors, standing in rows or circles, were sprinkled with medicine from a huge pot, rendering them and their weapons irresistible. In the rising of 1906 in the Songea area, it is said that the fighting men were so confident of the power of the drugs that they rushed up to the mouths of the German guns, only to perish there by the bullets which they believed would be turned into water.

Besides the publicly administered medicine, a more powerful drug was to be had for a fee; and the chief himself was armed and protected at all points in this way. One medicine ensured that his spear would find the heart of an enemy; another that the enemy's spear would fall short; a third he chewed as the fight went on; and a few very great chiefs possess a medicine which enables them to remove a fatal wound to a non-fatal spot. Those who could obtain it attached another medicine to the spear handle, and some carried a charm on their shields.

Fighting men carried spears numbering from six
726 up to twenty; and the greater the number the
714 bolder the hero, for a large number of spears indicated a determination not to run until every weapon available had been thrown at the enemy, or otherwise
• [567] disposed of. Great heroes were followed by slaves who carried additional supplies of weapons. Some had wide shields of ox-hide, and others had narrow strips strengthened by slim bamboos. On their heads they wore the *ikipubili*, a plume of red and black feathers, the capture of which from an enemy was

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

428 was set aside in succession, his right to inherit the property and widows was none the less undisputed.[1]

SLAVERY (AMONG THE NGONDE)

●567 Slaves were obtained by the Kyungu and chiefs in warfare and as fines for offences. The Kyungu gave women slaves to his important chiefs, thus strengthening the kinship bonds between them and himself, for the recipient would regard the Kyungu as his father-in-law if he took the woman to wife, and her children would be counted as grandchildren of the Kyungu. The owner of a slave was obliged to find a spouse for him or her, and a male slave could rise to positions of importance.[2]

LAND TENURE

423 No individual can own land unless he himself either works it or is a full member of the local community. Rights to land are only rigorously defined in cases of scarce and
425 valuable land. Owing to witchcraft beliefs, movement from one place to another is constant. In taking up new land after a move, a stranger is granted land by the villagers acting through their great commoners, the chief being merely informed. Both chiefs and villagers welcome new-comers. If a man returns after absence to his own village he has a claim to enter into possession of his old building site and gardens. The claim varies in strength according to his relations with the villagers and the chief. If a man goes to a neighbouring village within a chiefdom, he can go on hoeing his old gardens, ownership depending on effective use.

Land suitable for beans and maize plots is the most valuable, as it is hoed continuously for years. Land for other crops is plentiful, so that if a man leaves a garden fallow for only two years anyone may cultivate it. The most scarce and valuable land is in the bottom of old volcanic craters, and in these cases rights are insisted upon, so that if a man moves to a new chiefdom, his next of kin claims his crater land. In other cases, when a man moves from a chiefdom, his old gardens revert to the joint ownership of villagers and chief. When a man dies his heir takes his wives, cattle, and moveable property, but not his land, unless he comes to live in the village.

Rights in trees differ according to the types of trees and according to local custom. In some cases rights in trees are lost when a man moves away, in others the rights to valuable trees are claimed by the nearest kinsman in the neighbourhood. Now that chiefdoms are no longer in a state of potential war with each other, the group within which property is held is wider. Coffee-trees have been declared by the Federation of Chiefs to be the property of the original planter, even though he may have moved to another chiefdom. The Agricultural Officer takes over abandoned coffee-trees to tend them for pest control.

423 Pasture is jointly owned by the whole village group, no individual having exclusive rights in it.

No direct charge is made for the right to build or cultivate. Certain obligations are owed to a chief in view of his over-lordship, e.g. providing cooked food for ceremonies of the chief's own immediate family, but this obligation is reciprocal, the chief being expected in return to kill beasts to feed the people.[3]

[1] Wilson, J. 1939, pp. 32-6.
[2] Wilson, J. 1938, pp. 30-38; Mackenzie, 1925, p. 93.
[3] Ibid., p. 48; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 38-40.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

652 431 this was done by all chiefs or only by the great chiefs; but it is certain that the great chiefs possessed more of these cloths than their juniors.

652 431 764 But perhaps the most important traditional use of cloth by the Kyungus was for funeral gifts.[1] The social significance of funeral ceremonial in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa is hard to exaggerate;[2] for both the economic and the emotional aspects not only of kinship but also of village and political relationships are given formal expression most frequently at funerals. And a gift at a funeral carries greater weight than one on any other occasion.

652 431 567 583 Then, again, chiefs and nobles who brought food to Mbande were often given either a beast or a woman slave in return. "When one of the chiefs had caught a great many fish . . . . . he would gather his men and go to Mbande . . . . . Then the Kyungu would tell one of the nobles of Ngonde to go and fetch a beast or, if no beast were available—and cattle were scarce in the old days—he would give him a woman. And if the chief liked her he would take her in marriage and she would become his lady,[3] but if he did not, then he would take her to his own country and sell her there for a cow." (We expressed some surprise at the rate of exchange.) "Yes, truly, for one cow only, cows were very scarce in those days." And sometimes, in order to make sure he would like her, the visiting chief would be allowed to choose his own girl. "When one of his sons came to visit him the Kyungu would sometimes give orders that he should be shown all the (slave) girls and choose the one he liked best; and so the chief would choose a local girl[4] and marry her. And he could never then sell her, once he had chosen her in love."

Now the gift of a woman slave had many social implications. If she was taken to wife the recipient regarded the Kyungu thereafter as his father-in-law, as well as his "father." She herself became free and her children spoke of the Kyungu as their grandfather. And these gifts did more than any others to strengthen the bonds of kinship between the Kyungu and his subordinate chiefs.

652 431 To his common subjects also, if they had deserved well of him, the Kyungu would occasionally give either cloths or a woman or a cow; and the great chiefs of Ngonde likewise and even ordinary chiefs and nobles did the same. And these subordinate authorities, as we have seen, also used to entertain their own subjects generously with food

[1] *Vide infra* section 7.

[2] Cf. Wilson, "Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial," *Bantu Studies*, March 1939.

[3] I use "lady" here to translate "*nsadar*" which is the title of honour used for a chief's wife; the implication is that she then ceased to be a slave.

[4] Slaves were of two kinds, the relatives of criminals and war captives (*vide infra* sections 5 and 6). It was apparently customary to choose one of the first kind on such occasions.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

439 direct with the ivory traders or with the Kyungu, for cloths or cattle or slaves. And groups of chiefdoms and fiefs co-operated in hoeing the milasa.

Nor did the ivory trade enter very deeply into the economic relations of [291] the local rulers with their subjects. The common people usually dressed in exiguous pieces of bark cloth or of a coarse cloth which they manufactured themselves from a kind of cotton; the scarce imported cloths, which came through Mbande, were normally used by chiefs and nobles only. They added to the prestige of the chiefs and nobles by linking them visibly with the opulence of Mbande, but did not much increase their own subjects' economic dependence on them. Though here again we must note the occasional exchanges of ivory and other wealth between [652] commoners and chiefs or nobles. The important economic links between local rulers and their subjects were determined, on the one hand, by the differential bride-price, by polygyny and by their power of requisitioning food, and, on the other hand, by their position as chief hosts to their people.

The ivory-trade, in fact, enabled Mbande to bind the local rulers to it in a kind of permanent hierarchical alliance, but neither the constitution of the local groups nor their autonomy in relation to one another was very much affected thereby.

5. *LEGAL ELEMENTS (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

We now come to a third element of the central power of Mbande, the traditional part which it played in the maintenance of law. We will take this topic in two parts: first, the ways in which Mbande maintained its own authority and that of its subordinates, and, second, the part played by Mbande and those lesser authorities in maintaining the common law of Ngonde.

(a). *CONSTITUTIONAL LAW: TREASON ETC.*

687 Treason against the Kyungu was summarily punished with little or no legal argument. The commonest form of treason seems to have been 567 too near an approach to one of his wives. We remember that his wives were very closely guarded from all men, for their adultery might magically bring sickness on him, and if he fell ill then the whole land was magically endangered. One side of the hill Mbande is precipitous, and over this cliff (*Ipunga*) all traitors were thrown, including such as had looked on his wives naked; while many members of the traitors' families were subsequently enslaved.

"If a man had looked on the wives of the Kyungu bathing, he himself would be killed by being thrown over the cliff and all his

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

children and relatives would be apprehended and brought to the Kyungu by the messengers. The Kyungu, or rather the nobles of Ngonde, would select the best-looking girls and let the others go. And then it was all over, any kinsfolk who had fled could return in safety to their homes. For in the old days when a man did wrong there was no legal argument and no trial. All his kinsfolk were terrified and the men fled, but the women, not having the strength to flee far, would be apprehended. The messengers would apprehend not only his full siblings and their children but his half siblings and their children too." Not only girls but boys also were sometimes kept as slaves. One of our informants made it clear, however, that it was always possible for a rich family to redeem them later, both boys and girls, by giving one or two beasts in exchange for each. 687 567

Our enquiries about the statement that "in the old days there was no legal argument and no trial" brought a clear distinction between ordinary cases and cases of treason either against the Kyungu or against the great chiefs: "In cases between two ordinary men, whether commoners or junior chiefs, there was indeed real legal procedure: a chief would take the case, one would pay damages to the other and smooth relationships would be re-established between them. But what we meant was that when a man wronged the Kyungu or one of the great chiefs then there was no sort of legal argument at all!" 687 695

It is not relevant here to enter into any full account of the institution of slavery in Ngonde; but it must be pointed out that it was a very different thing from that introduced by the Arabs in the late 19th century. Few of these early slaves appear to have been sold outside Ngonde, and the Longwani traders carried away white ivory alone. Nor was there any impassable barrier between slave and free. All our informants maintain that slaves were treated rather as younger sons and daughters than as chattels, with the one exception that they could be sold to another man. A woman slave married by a free man herself at once became free, and the children of two married slaves were free also. 567

Another form of treason against the Kyungu, we were told, was to insult him by whispered criticism. The present Kyungu said that in the old days a Kyungu used occasionally to be insulted by one of his sons, the chiefs, and that then, "if the Kyungu was a fierce man," he would send the other chiefs against him and have all his cows and wealth taken and his houses burnt. The way in which the Kyungu might be insulted was this: after the election of a new Kyungu perhaps one of the other chiefs would begin to ask secretly why on earth they had chosen such an unsuitable man for the position, and suggest that he had none of the qualities of a chief; then if the Kyungu heard of 687

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

726 manner to his own predecessors in his title. The territorial nobles, however, did not then pray to theirs, although they went to fight; tribal war was carried on under royal auspices alone. The Kyungu himself remained behind in his house praying for their success. Some of the nobles of Ngonde went with the expedition, carrying the magic war-tails of the Kyungu, his spear *Kamisa* and a magic horn.

The territorial nobles of the hills, we were told, were not summoned 721 to take part in tribal wars or punitive expeditions. And this fact is perhaps the clearest evidence of the relatively slight hold which Mbande had upon them. Nor, even in the plain, were the Kyungu's orders invariably obeyed without question. It is said that when Mujombe appealed for help against the Bemba chief Kyepele (=Cepela) Kyungu Mwangonde at first ordered the chiefs of Ngana to go alone to the war, without Mwakasungula. For Mwakasungula was his only surviving adult son and he feared to lose him. But the chiefs of Ngana refused to start without Mwakasungula, who in the end went with them.

The same warning that preceded a civil war was given by the men 726 of Ngonde in tribal warfare also. "When the Kyungu sent his people against strangers he always forbade any surprise attacks, let there be parley first and explanation; let them point out that they had no wish for war, that it was the others who had forced war on them by wantonly killing one of their men (or whatever the reason was). We never fought like the Ngoni, always we explained our case first, asking why, if the other side had any just cause for their actions, they had not refrained and come and talked it all over with us. And so it was in the war against Kyepele, we explained our case."

727 We have seen already that the booty of punitive expeditions was divided among the chiefs and nobles who had fought and the Kyungu, 567 and so it was in tribal warfare also. War was an important source of revenue for Mbande, bringing in both cattle and slaves. The war against the Bemba Kyepele (=Cepela) is particularly remembered for the number of slaves which Mwakasungula and the other chiefs brought back from it. While discussing slavery with some men of Ngonde one of us remarked that there had been little or no slavery among the Nyakyusa. "Yes, indeed, that is so: there was a lot of slavery here in Ngonde and very little among the Nyakyusa, because here people were captured in war. From Kyepele, for instance, a great host of slaves was captured and every chief at that time had Bemba slaves.

"And it was the custom for every chief to take a certain proportion of the slaves he had captured and hand them over to the Kyungu." (Why?) "Because they thought that it was his prayers for success that had enabled them to fight so well, to rout the enemy and to capture slaves

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

and wealth." Once again we see how closely connected were the religious powers of the Kyungu with his wealth.

And the military authority of Mbande, like that of the lesser rulers, was correlated both as cause and as effect with the other factors of its general political status. The central power rested in part on its military functions: it was a tribal rallying point for defence against alien attacks, together with the hierarchy which depended upon it, it provided the necessary large-scale organization for military success, its religious powers were never more valued than in wartime, while victory brought wealth and prestige both to the Kyungu and his subordinates. But, as comparison with the Nyakyusa shows,[1] it was only the flow of wealth up and down the hierarchy, in combination with the religious functions of Mbande, that made this large-scale military organization possible.

(c) *WARFARE AND AUTONOMY.*

Now warfare is, at one and the same time, an example of order and of disorder in human society. By social order I mean the systematic overcoming of lesser autonomies within existing wider groups: the overcoming of *individual* autonomy within the family and the local community, the overcoming of family, local and other autonomies within the tribe or state, the overcoming of tribal and state autonomies within still wider groups. By social disorder I mean the temporary overcoming by a lesser autonomy of the forces of some existing wider group. Legal procedure is one of most obvious examples of order, crime is one of the most obvious examples of disorder.

But warfare falls between these two extremes. Seldom are lesser autonomies so completely overcome as they are within a group at war, never is the autonomy of that group more clearly dominant over the forces making for a wider order. And it is of fundamental importance for the understanding of any social field to see which groups within it have both sufficient unity and sufficient autonomy to engage in recurrent warfare with one another. The size of the groups which go to war is one of the marks by which we distinguish primitive from civilized societies —the smaller the warring groups the more primitive the society.

Now the recurrent civil wars of Ngonde in the middle period of its history show us that, beneath its hierarchical facade, it was a society of the same kind as that of the Nyakyusa across the Songwe; the centralized political organization was too weak permanently to overcome the local autonomies of village, fief and chiefdom. It is true that the mercantile divinity of Mbande gave sufficient unity to Ngonde to enable it to fight as

[1] Vide infra p. 64.

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FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XII

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

(a) THE GROWTH OF A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

With the arrival of European missionaries at the end of the nineteenth century[1] a new set of religious ideas was introduced and a new form of social grouping established. The early missionaries settled on land which they bought from various chiefs and gathered round them workers and refugees—the survivors of slave-raids in neighbouring areas—many of whom gradually became converts. In BuNyakyusa a new type of village, a Christian village, was established on mission land and the converts who occupied it were largely withdrawn from the authority of the chief, looking instead to the missionary as their leader. In Ngonde the development was rather different. The converts were not gathered on mission land but stayed in their own villages, where they were expected to spread the gospel among their neighbours. The difference was partly due to a difference in policy between the Scottish mission operating[2] in Ngonde, and the Moravian and Lutheran[3] missions operating in BuNyakyusa, but it was emphasized by differences in the history of the two areas. In Ngonde the missionaries became the allies of the Ngonde against the Arab slavers, whereas in BuNyakyusa there was no such alliance. The Scottish mission deliberately sought to convert and train the traditional leaders, and so gain the whole community, whereas the Moravians and Lutherans preferred to withdraw their converts from the surrounding pagan community.[4]

The number of converts increased much more rapidly in Ngonde than in BuNyakyusa, but after forty years of missionary activity the structural pattern was growing similar. More and more

[1] For an account of the first contacts of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde with Europeans, and bibliography on it, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 80-1, 275-6.

[2] The Livingstonia Mission of the Free Church of Scotland which later united with the Church of Scotland. It is still referred to in Ngonde as 'Free Church'.

[3] The Berlin Society (Berlin I).

[4] For an admirable account of the development of mission policy in East Africa, see Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (1952). Dr. Oliver describes the withdrawal of converts on to mission stations as typical of the first phase of mission activity and this is true for the Moravian and Lutheran missions, but Christians in Ngonde were never so withdrawn.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

591 Before the establishment of peace by European authority, how-
231 ever, cattle were commonly herded by young men, armed, and
only the calves were entrusted to boys, who herded them near
857 the homesteads; therefore moving to a boys' village did not coin-
cide with the change of occupation. Even to-day it is not un-
common for some boys who have reached puberty to be found
herding cattle. One we knew herded his father's cattle although
he had reached puberty, because he had no younger brothers old
enough to take over, and there were only five or six boys in his
herd-group altogether. There are also cases where special circum-
stances put the age of moving later. In one age-village the boys
leave home a little later than usual because there are leopards
about and it is dangerous for small boys to walk from the village
of their fathers to that of the boys, after dark.

857 When a number of the sons of a village of married men have
reached the right age, their fathers give them a piece of land to
342 one side of the parent village on which to build. There they build
little huts of reeds for themselves, sufficiently well thatched to
keep out the heavy rain, and there they sleep (*vide* Plate II). The
building of the huts on this land begins in a playful manner,
before the boys move. While they are still herding cows and
sleeping at home they build miniature huts there in their spare
time, but do not sleep in them. When they move they build
slightly more substantial huts with better thatch. At the begin-
ning, when a group of boys starts a new village, or when boys join
one already formed, they do not all have huts for themselves:
two or three friends share a hut. But later, as they grow older,
each builds for himself.

857 Until he marries each boy hoes his father's fields in his father's
village and eats food cooked by his own mother at his father's
264 house, but he sleeps with his friends. Thus between the time
● 591 when he leaves home and his marriage each is a member of two
villages: economically he still belongs to that of his father;
socially to that of his own contemporaries. Though bachelors eat
at their parents' home, it is very rarely that they do not eat in the
company of their own friends. A bachelor does not simply go
home to eat by himself, but a group of bachelors, friends living
in the same boys' village, go round together eating at the house
of each one's mother in turn.

621 In an age-village of married men there are always several
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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

different herds of cattle; and it is not only those from the same group of herd-boys that set up a new village together, but all the sons of the age-village. Thus when a boy leaves the herd group he joins a larger community, including the friends of his own age who have herded cows with him, and many others as well. Every boys' village consists primarily of the sons of the member of an older village who originally gave the land for its building, but sons of other villages live there too.

The village begins with perhaps a dozen boys, and their younger brothers join them, one by one; but after some years, when the senior members of the boys' village are between sixteen and eighteen years old, the younger ones begin to be refused admittance to the village: 'they are children.' The young ones then either begin a new age-village of their own, or else join a village which has already been started by the sons of a nearby men's village a little junior to that of their own fathers. If you inquire who are the members of such and such a boys' village you are always told that they are the sons of a particular village of men, but detailed investigation reveals the presence of some sons of other men's villages as well. Brothers, half-brothers and other relatives are sometimes members of the same village, but more often not; and if they do belong to the same village that is because they are near each other in age, and were born in the same village, not because they are kinsmen.

The members of the older boys' village, which is now closed and no longer increases in numbers, begin to marry as they reach the age of about twenty-five. Getting married is often a gradual process; but it is not until he has his wife permanently with him that a young man can have fields of his own and eat the produce at his own place. The cultivation of land requires the co-operation of a man and woman, and cooking on any elaborate scale is a woman's business. As the young men marry their village expands. The site is not changed but the houses are built ever bigger and farther apart, and adjacent land is brought under cultivation. The boys' village with which we are best acquainted is in this transitional stage. It has fifty-three members altogether, the majority of whom are single; but some few are married, cultivate their own fields with their wives and eat food cooked by their wives in their own houses. Of those who are single some again are betrothed to girls who visit them from time to time, but each

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

264 husband will not be angry; if he were, he would be mocked at:
562 "Did not your father provide marriage-cattle for this woman for you that she might be the wife (*ukwe*) of us all?" Sometimes, when
574 the woman is cooking, her husband's friends come and take food out of the pot before she has finished cooking. When she protests, saying it is not yet cooked, the men say: "It is your work to cook, ours to eat." Then when her husband comes she tells him that so and so, and so and so, have eaten the food and there is only water left in the pot. . . . But when her husband's friends begin to get married they say to their wives; "That woman is really our wife! Listen to her!" And she has honour among the other women, and when they go to fetch firewood she walks with nothing, another carries her axe and head-pad.' This account cannot be taken literally—the first wife in the village does not provide *all* the food for her husband's friends, who still eat at their mothers' homes, nor do they have any sexual rights over her though they call her 'wife', but she must serve them as far as she can.

571 Sometimes, we were told, men's eating groups last a lifetime,
264 but often friends quarrel or move, and the group breaks up. 'Per-
578 haps one eats at midday and does not summon his friend, but only calls him to the evening meal, then the other, who always calls his friend to the midday meal also, is angry, saying: "He grudges me food", and they separate. They just stop calling each other to eat. Or sometimes one tries to seduce his friend's wife, and on that account they separate.'

264 Eating with contemporaries is still considered right and proper
178 by Nyakyusa men, and it is generally practised by pagans, but the old men say that youths are less ready to share food than formerly. 'This custom of eating together is dying.' Certainly in Christian villages the practice has declined markedly. Many unmarried Christians eat with their friends, but the majority of the married men eat at home alone. Out of eight married men living in Rungwe, for example, only two ate together regularly, and the most educated group, the clerks, are notorious in the district for their eating habits. 'People are much shocked at the clerks for eating food alone. They say they are proud.'

264 Apart from eating regularly with certain close friends, well-to-
574 do pagan men are expected to entertain generously, inviting fellow villagers to drink beer, or to a 'dinner party'—an ample meal with delicious dishes, very carefully served—from time to

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 cows. No, they did not take his food and mats, was he not a village headman? He moved; but, after one year only, they went to fetch him back.'

Here, in the accusation against a village headman, who, by virtue of his office has the power of defence and of bringing 'the breath' on wrong-doers, we come to the root of the ambivalence towards those accused of witchcraft. Witches are dangerous, but the very power which makes them dangerous also makes them valuable as 'defenders', for no distinction between the power of attack and defence is consistently maintained. The essential difference lies in the use of the power. Hence, Mwaisumo declared, people actually like it when a man who has admitted witchcraft builds among them. 'They say he has the power of defence, and they think that a man who has once admitted witchcraft will not throttle them.' A parallel attitude towards homicides and cattle-thieves existed in the traditional culture, when chiefs were sometimes urged to rescue a homicide from the vengeance of a dead man's kin, or a cattle-thief from enraged victims, on the grounds that one who had proved himself such a fierce warrior (by killing another) or so skilful in lifting cattle, was too useful in war to be lost to the chiefdom.

754 Nevertheless, if a person who has once been accused of witch-
683 craft makes himself (or herself) unpopular again, the old case is raked up against him or her, and there are men who have been driven from one chiefdom to another, each time accused by their neighbours, and wives who have been divorced for witchcraft by one husband after another. This is the terrible fate held up before 'proud' children.

754 And what of the slur on the family when a member is con-
571 victed of witchcraft? We have seen that witchcraft is considered
582 hereditary in all but a few exceptional cases, and the stock reaction to an accusation is: 'We are astounded! No one in *our* family has ever been convicted of witchcraft!' In practice, parents are loath to allow a son or daughter to marry into a family in which either parent has a reputation of witchcraft; two or three cases were cited in which parents had opposed a marriage for this reason (*vide* Document, p. 251). But such arguments are private within the family, and the family feared by one group of neighbours need not be considered dangerous by people from another village. Since practically every adult marries at least once, the

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

objection to marrying the child of one who has been convicted is clearly not pushed to its logical conclusion. No slur is cast on any one lineage when an individual is convicted of witchcraft, for he may have inherited it from either parent, or even got it from a friend; conversely no lineage is cleared by an autopsy, for not all the children of a witch are necessarily witches. Thus a man may have a father or brother or son who is 'pure', yet be a witch himself. As we have seen, even persons belonging to the same lineage may occasionally accuse each other. Nevertheless, when an individual who is reputed to be a witch dies, the close relatives do sometimes insist on an autopsy, in order to clear the deceased of suspicion, and possibly themselves also (*vide supra*, p. 117). In one case we recorded it was a daughter who insisted on the autopsy being performed on her mother, a reputed witch. No witchcraft was found.

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So far we have dealt with cases of misfortune befalling an individual, followed by action against a fellow villager who is suspected of being responsible. This type of case is far the commonest within the field of witchcraft. When a general misfortune, such as a plague or epidemic, threatens, the chiefdom acts as a whole, not the villages separately, and the ritual is directed primarily to securing the blessing of the shades. There is some suggestion of ridding the chiefdom of witchcraft at the same time, but the emphasis is on appeasing the ancestors. The traditional new year cleansing (*ukutag' ishiwaga*), now rarely performed, was also the concern of chiefdoms not separate villages, and it involved prayer to the ancestors.

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5. *The age-village and the ancestors*

We have dwelt at length on witchcraft and 'the breath of men', for, in Nyakyusa belief, the defence of the village against witches and the punishment of wrong-doers by 'the breath' of their fellows is the main corporate activity of the village in the religious sphere. There are no village rituals directed to the ancestors comparable to those performed on behalf of lineages and chiefdoms. Indeed, belief in the power of shades operates only in situations where social position is determined by descent, as it is in lineages and in the succession to chieftainship. The office of village headman is not hereditary. The son of a village headman

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tion is already as important beyond as within the village, and village control over the main cash crops has not been established, as it was over certain food crops. With increasing centralization the village headman, embodiment of the solidarity and relative autonomy of each village, is losing power to the chiefs and courts, on the one hand, and to the specialist agriculturalists, school teachers, elders, and ministers of religion on the other.

Friendships beyond the age-village are fostered by common experiences at a boarding school or a labour centre, and by common interests as members of a church or a coffee co-operative which does not necessarily include fellow villagers. And most important of all, fellow villagers are not bound to one another in resistance to external dangers as they were formerly. Lion, leopard, and buffalo still exist in the district, but we heard of no recent case of a village combining for defence against dangerous (as distinct from destructive) game: if action were necessary a European sportsman was usually glad of the chance of a bag. With the cessation of cattle-raiding and inter-village warfare, the curtailment of the right of self-help, and the development of courts with power to enforce judgement in cases involving members of different chiefdoms, dependence on fellow villagers for protection from material dangers and the responsibility of a village for the actions of its members, virtually cease. A sense of dependence upon neighbours for mystical protection lingers, but as elementary education, belief in Christian dogma, and the solidarity of Christian congregations increase, this supposed dependence upon the *amanga* or mystical power of neighbours also lessens. Many men who fear sorcery (including poisoning) do not fear witchcraft, and it is only against witches that neighbours are believed to protect one. Thus change in the form of beliefs is correlated with the development of more intense relationships beyond the village.

An age-village organization is probably dependent upon isolation in another fashion also: by their own account the Nyakyusa feeling that close association between successive generations is improper has been blunted by the example of Europeans and Swahili who do not share this feeling (*vide supra*, p. 69). The missionaries teach that avoidance between father- and daughter-in-law is unnecessary, if not in itself sinful, and the implication is that only 'superstition' maintains the taboo (*vide*

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Nyakyusa

105 is the marriage of two sisters, or of a woman and her brother's daughter, to the same man; such 'sisters' are closely identified and their children are treated almost as full siblings.

Besides being bound together by a common interest in property —the cattle of the lineage—kinsmen join in the celebration of rituals to their common ancestors; for the very fact of their kinship is held to make them mystically dependent upon one another, and more particularly on the prayers of the most senior among them. At a funeral kinsmen will gather from many of the villages of the chiefdom, and some from other chiefdoms also. The range of kinship recognized varies somewhat with status, but the effective lineage group is normally of a span of three or four generations only, including descendants of a common grandfather or great-grandfather.

105 Traditionally villages were grouped in a number of small in-
571 dependent chiefdoms led by hereditary chiefs. Each chiefdom contained many kinsmen, but there was no fiction of common descent of all the men of a chiefdom, or of chiefs and people. There were thus three types of social group: villages occupied by age-mates, who shared common land rights, and herded and fought together; lineages bound by common interest in inherited cattle and common rituals; and chiefdoms in which the bond was occupation of a common territory and allegiance to a common chief.

105 Relations between the three groups are epitomized in the traditional law relating to theft, adultery, murder, and witchcraft.[1] A man was a member both of a village and of a lineage and both groups were responsible for his behaviour. An adulterer or cattle-thief was speared by the injured party and his kinsmen, if they could catch him. If they could not, they might attack any member of his age-village. This commonly led to war between the villages, but short of this, the kinsmen of the dead man claimed compensation from the thief or adulterer and his kin, not from the avengers. Both lineage and age-village were therefore corporate groups, the members of which were mutually responsible for each other, and it is significant that *both* senior kinsman and village headman of the defendant were required to accompany him when the case came to court. Murder was treated as a private delict, the kinsmen of the dead attacking or claiming compensation from the murderer and his kin, but witchcraft was treated as an offence against the

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company* (1951), p. 150.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

those of very young children. 'He goes because it is his subject who has died: he is like the senior kinsman of the whole country, he rules all.' 'If a chief omits to go to a burial people say nothing, they know that he is always going to burials and they think that perhaps he has some urgent business. But if he constantly misses burials then people say that he has no affection for his people, that he does not come to bury them as is fit; and if a chief hears them saying this then he is ashamed.' Sometimes a chief who is busy will send a son to represent him. And he sends the drums to beat the lament. 'The drum *is* the chief . . . they cannot beat the drum before the chief has spoken.' 643 764

Besides the chief, the villagers, the relatives, and the drummers, there come also personal friends of the dead man from other villages and chiefdoms. And beyond all these there often come others who are attracted not so much by grief and sympathy, nor even by the obligation to express these feelings, but rather by the dancing, the crowds and the possibility of getting some meat to eat. Not all those who come stay the whole three or four days, while the relatives who live at a distance often do not arrive until the second or third day. 764 572 571

The Nyakyusa believe that in order to protect the living and avenge the dead it is most important to discover the cause of death. To do this they summon a doctor to perform an autopsy,[1] an operation fearful and repugnant, but felt to be necessary. The symptoms are interpreted in terms of witchcraft or sorcery, or other supposed causes of disease. 763

On the first, or early on the second, day after death, the burial takes place. The grave is dug in the swept and beaten earth that immediately surrounds the huts. The first spit of earth is always turned by the eldest son of the one who has died. At one burial we saw the young eldest son of a dead man being helped to do this. He was too small to manage a hoe by himself so he caught the handle near the blade while an older relative held it behind to steady it for him. The digging after the first spit is done by a skilled grave-digger, who may be a kinsman or not, with the help of others. The grave is ten or more feet deep with a cave at the bottom to one side. Some graves are oblong, some round or oval, 764

[1] This is certainly traditional, cf. D. Kerr-Cross, 'Greater Lake North of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, V (1895), p. 119. The custom is also reported for the Nyamwanga. For a description of the autopsy, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 247-50. [17]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VIII

THE PARTICIPANTS

788
571
602

(a) *Categories of participants*

THE people who take part in rituals have been referred to repeatedly and now it is possible to define who they are. They fall into four categories: the principals, the minor actors, the congregation, and the officiants or priests. The principals are those who undergo the full ritual lest they go mad; they are always close kin, but what category of kin depends on the type of ritual and the status of the person for whom it is performed. After a death, those who *must* perform the ritual to drive away the shade are the children and grandchildren of the deceased—all of them, the widows and the heir, if a man has died, or, if it is a woman and a senior wife, the widower and her related co-wife if she has one.[1] A man does not perform the ritual for a junior wife or one he has inherited. Children of a related co-wife are treated, for the purposes of ritual, as her own children, and all must undergo the ritual, but only some of the children of other co-wives are selected to perform it. When a man dies the children of the heir perform it, but only some of the children of his other brothers and half-brothers. 'We choose some and leave the others until their own father dies.' The genealogy given on p. 273 to show who performed the ritual on a particular occasion illustrates this. A mother (unless she has been divorced) performs the ritual for all her own children, and the children of a sister who is a co-wife. A divorced woman may come to mourn her dead child at her former husband's homestead but she takes no part in the ritual. 'I, the husband, perform the ritual alone; the woman comes to weep and returns to her new husband. I, the husband, say: "The blood is mine; that bag was bought (*ajukigwe*) with cattle; she was divorced and bought with cattle again."' A man performs the ritual for a son and daughter of each wife, and grandparents perform it for some, but not all, grandchildren.

[1] Probably also the younger sister or brother's daughter who replaces her as a wife, but we have no conclusive evidence on this point.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ritual they distinguish *abakaw* (kinsmen) from *abanda itale* (non-relatives) or *abapakipanga* (villagers), and *abakikale* (those of the lineage of a dead man) from *abake* (affines) and mother's relatives (*abijwa*). These categories have different functions.

(*b*) *Christians*

The performance of family rituals is complicated by the fact that 16 per cent of the Nyakyusa are professing Christians, and in almost every lineage there are individuals who withdraw from the full performance of traditional rituals at death, puberty, and marriage, birth, and misfortune. In most cases such a withdrawal is treated tolerantly by the pagan kinsmen: the Christian kinsmen come to mourn, to congratulate the bride, to express sympathy with the parents of twins; and their non-participation in the washing and shaving and avoidance of ritual meat and beer is accepted. At the funeral of Mwamulenga his preceding full brother, who should have been a principal in the death ritual, was a Christian, and he took no part, though his children went through it. At the funeral of Mwampiki (p. 248) one boy was left untreated on the ground that he was a Christian and a Christian 'should not have two gods'. At the puberty ritual of Mwaihojo's daughter (p. 91) the brother called to wash with her was influenced by Christians and was reluctant to take part, though he finally did so.

Only when a son who is heir to family wealth, or to the office of chieftainship or priesthood refuses the inheritance of widows (as a Christian must do) is there very strong pressure on him to conform to traditional custom: the union of the heir with the widows is held essential to their health. Sometimes also there is acute conflict between different members of the family over the performance of an autopsy, the pagans pressing for it and the Christians opposing it. This we saw in the death of E. when her pagan senior brother wished to examine her, and her Christian junior brother opposed him vehemently.

That Christians cannot take part in certain of the rituals[1] and do not suffer if they omit them is generally accepted. The farewell to the dead at the homestead of the deceased, and the treatment of kinsmen of twins, fall into this category. About certain other rituals, such as the ritual of the gasping cough and the protection against sorcery, opinions are divided. Some of our Christian friends insisted that 'the gasping cough is a real illness' and cited

[1] There are minor differences in the rules of the different ministers.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

stand protected from insects: hence his title 'he of the heap of hot ashes' (*ngwakyemu*, *vide supra*, p. 34). The protection of their cattle from raiders by day, and witches by night, was one of the main co-operative activities of the village, and each herd-group within the village was particularly concerned with the protection of its own cattle. For the boys of one herd-group the association is very close since they are together on the pasturage for the greater part of the day. Friendships then formed sometimes last a lifetime. 231 476 [72]

A few rich men choose to herd their cattle separately from those of their neighbours. 'They are the men who have many cattle! They want to show off their herd, so that men may say: "That's the herd of so and so."' Sometimes their sons, against orders, foregather with other herd-boys on the pasturage, but they are careful to bring home the herds separately. We knew three men near Rungwe who were spoken of as herding their cattle separately, though in fact their sons often joined friends in the pasturage. To herd alone is regarded as somewhat ostentatious,[1] and only a few individuals do it. 231 476 556

Many rich men do not even keep all their cattle at their homesteads for fear of the jealous witchcraft of their neighbours. Instead, they disperse their herds among friends in other villages (of their own or neighbouring chiefdoms) believing that the cattle may in that way escape danger. Porokoto explained: 'We place cattle with friends (*ubufafye*) on account of sickness and death. Supposing I have three or four cows, and they all calf, but the calves die, then I place the cows with friends. People say: "The cows will escape in another village or chiefdom." If, when cattle die and are cut up, wounds are found in their stomachs,[2] then the owner places the others with friends.' Not all of them are sent to the same place. 231 476 556 754

The fear of witchcraft was traditionally, and is still, the main reason for placing out cattle, but nowadays they are sent away for other reasons also: Nyakyusa living around Rungwe often send cattle to friends on the other side of the mountains in Mbeya district, where grazing is particularly good, and wealthy Christians place out cattle because their wives, working single-handed, 231 476

[1] A beast which grows others may be herded apart without any imputation of pride to the owner.

[2] Taken as evidence that they have been killed by witchcraft, *vide infra*, p. 116.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

829 *ukwangala* is only possible between contemporaries[1] they must
876 build with contemporaries. The value set on *ukwangala* is thus related to the age-village; male contemporaries build together, and the company of, and good fellowship with, his age-mates is what creates a man of wisdom and character. Such is the Nyakyusa view of society.

576 For conversation to flow merrily and discussion to be profound
264 there must be *ifyakwangalala*—'the wherewithal for good fellowship', that is, food and drink—and very great stress is laid on
572 sharing these. Men and boys are expected to eat regularly with age-mates. Traditionally, fathers and sons never ate or drank together—to do so was held to be incompatible with the respect due from son to father—and men sought the company of equals at meals. From the time a small boy begins to herd he is encouraged to bring home two or three friends to eat with him, and in turn he visits each of them. Since boys have no fields of their own until they marry, but co-operate in cultivation with their parents, it is to their own mothers they go for food, and parents are proud of a son bringing many friends. 'Perhaps', said Angombwike, 'a son will come with his friends and cut a huge bunch of bananas, and take thick milk and eat with them. When the father comes back his wives will tell him: "Your son has eaten all the thick milk and cut a banana bunch!" Then he will ask: "How many men were with my son?" "Six!" "Ah, he's a chief!" the old man
[261] will say, smiling proudly.' 'And formerly if a young man came home often alone to eat, his father would beat him, or even take a spear and wound him, and when people asked why he would say: "This great fool comes *alone* to my place, again and again." It is good to eat with friends, for boys to go round in groups of four or five.'

264 After marriage each man is cooked for by his own wife, but he
562 continues to eat with his friends, bringing them to his home or going to their's. The first wife to come to a young men's village
574 is said to have a hard life. 'She has to draw water and cook for all the young men of the village—they come to drink, and to wash, and they beat her with a stick if she refuses them. No, the

[1] *Ubwangala* is sometimes used with reference to relatives as well as to village-mates, as in the phrase '*ntibwangala kwanu nakukwanu kuko*', meaning 'he is not on good terms with his relatives'; but in its fullest sense it can only be used with reference to contemporaries.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

poraries, the men of the village. They are forbidden to enter her hut, and if she catches sight of one outside she turns away from him and shields her face with a mat. And at the end of the seclusion each 'village father', as well as her own father, must make her a small gift, before she will greet him. The co-wives and some of the village neighbours of the bride's mother form the group of 'mothers' who treat and instruct the bride, help to provide food for the feasts, and finally take her to her husband. Not all the village neighbours are expected to cook for the marriage feasts of a commoner's daughter, only immediate neighbours and special friends (together with relatives) who have been asked to do so; but if an immediate neighbour is not invited to help he will feel affronted. Twijulege explained that 'If the owner of the homestead overlooks someone who has built close to him, and does not say to him, "They are coming to bring the marriage-cattle for *your* child, please help us to cook", then that friend will be angry, and will think to himself, "Perhaps we are not on good terms (*tatikwangala kawaw*) though I had always thought we were", and he will say to the father of the bride: "Why did you not tell me that they were coming to bring the marriage-cattle for your child that I might help you with the food? I was startled by the rejoicing." ' An old man who had only called one friend, besides relatives and the 'best man', to help cook at the marriage of his daughter, was stigmatized as 'a surly fellow who does not care about being on good terms with people'.

The groom, on his part, is supported by his village-mates, who come in a crowd driving the marriage-cattle, and dancing the stamping marriage dance (*ukukanya ngunya*). His mother, who has a share in the ritual and brings gifts of food, follows him, accompanied by some of her co-wives and village neighbours.

Village solidarity is thus exhibited at ceremonies, not only in the allocation of food, but by the manner in which village contemporaries of the same sex rally to each other's help, dance together and, if need be, fight together.

Besides offering sympathy and help when their fellow is in need, it is the duty of neighbours to give him advice, and persuade him to act wisely. If, for example, a man has delayed very long in providing marriage-cattle for his son, his neighbours take the son's part, and try to persuade him to give the cattle. 'Perhaps', said one informant, 'the son may elope with a girl, and

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 then if the father says his son has done wrong his neighbours
reply: "You have caused him to do wrong yourself. Did you
•572 suppose him to be a boy that you did not provide marriage-cattle
for him?" Then the father becomes more ready to pay damages
for his son.' And again, 'If a young man finds that his father
objects to his marrying the girl he loves, he complains to his
father's neighbours (*pamafumu abapalamani ba gwize*). Then they
discuss the matter and say to the father: "Do you want him to
teach you a lesson by taking a chief's wife or daughter, for whom
many cattle must be given?" So the father agrees.'

768 Neighbours are concerned, too, to see a fair distribution of a
deceased fellow's estate, and the fulfilment of the heir's obliga-
621 tions to his wards. 'It is not the relatives, but "the fathers of the
village" who watch over a young boy's interests when his father
is dead' (*vide infra*, p. 106). We listened to one discussion of a
[584] quarrel over inheritance which was believed to have led to kins-
men working sorcery against each other. At this discussion four
village neighbours of the sick man (thought to be suffering from
the sorcery of his father's brother's son), as well as ten relatives,
attended.

684 The father's neighbours are also asked to mediate when a son
has wronged his father and seeks forgiveness. For example,
593 Mwangobola's son had committed adultery with his father's
621 wife. He paid six head of cattle and then went off to the coast,
783 where he remained a long time. When he returned he brought
two cows and approached his father's neighbours, asking them
to take the cows to his father. When they took the cows his father
said: 'He must find a bull as well, and brew beer, because he is
my eldest son.' So he got a bull and brewed beer, and the father
also brewed. 'Then', said the old man who reported the case,
'the fathers of the village came together and the bull was killed
and they ate the meat and drank the beer. . . . Thus the son made
friends with his father.'

621 Here we have the ritual of reconciliation between relatives in
which neighbours of the senior must participate, for their anger
783 is held to be as dangerous to the junior as that of his senior rela-
tive. Informal giving of advice merges into the practice of arbitra-
tion, and of murmuring against a wrong-doer, and thus, it is
thought, causing him misfortune. These latter practices are dis-
cussed in ensuing chapters.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tion is already as important beyond as within the village, and village control over the main cash crops has not been established, as it was over certain food crops. With increasing centralization the village headman, embodiment of the solidarity and relative autonomy of each village, is losing power to the chiefs and courts, on the one hand, and to the specialist agriculturalists, school teachers, elders, and ministers of religion on the other.

Friendships beyond the age-village are fostered by common experiences at a boarding school or a labour centre, and by common interests as members of a church or a coffee co-operative which does not necessarily include fellow villagers. And most important of all, fellow villagers are not bound to one another in resistance to external dangers as they were formerly. Lion, leopard, and buffalo still exist in the district, but we heard of no recent case of a village combining for defence against dangerous (as distinct from destructive) game: if action were necessary a European sportsman was usually glad of the chance of a bag. With the cessation of cattle-raiding and inter-village warfare, the curtailment of the right of self-help, and the development of courts with power to enforce judgment in cases involving members of different chiefdoms, dependence on fellow villagers for protection from material dangers and the responsibility of a village for the actions of its members, virtually cease. A sense of dependence upon neighbours for mystical protection lingers, but as elementary education, belief in Christian dogma, and the solidarity of Christian congregations increase, this supposed dependence upon the *amaoga* or mystical power of neighbours also lessens. Many men who fear sorcery (including poisoning) do not fear witchcraft, and it is only against witches that neighbours are believed to protect one. Thus change in the form of beliefs is correlated with the development of more intense relationships beyond the village.

An age-village organization is probably dependent upon isolation in another fashion also: by their own account the Nyakyusa feeling that close association between successive generations is improper has been blunted by the example of Europeans and Swahili who do not share this feeling (*vide supra*, p. 69). The missionaries teach that avoidance between father- and daughter-in-law is unnecessary, if not in itself sinful, and the implication is that only 'superstition' maintains the taboo (*vide*

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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who has died: he is like the senior kinsman of the whole country, 764
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Besides the chief, the villagers, the relatives, and the drummers, 764
there come also personal friends of the dead man from other vil- 572
lages and chiefdoms. And beyond all these there often come others 571
who are attracted not so much by grief and sympathy, nor even by the obligation to express those feelings, but rather by the dancing, the crowds and the possibility of getting some meat to eat. Not all those who come stay the whole three or four days, while the relatives who live at a distance often do not arrive until the second or third day.

The Nyakyusa believe that in order to protect the living and 763
avenge the dead it is most important to discover the cause of death. To do this they summon a doctor to perform an autopsy,[1] an operation fearful and repugnant, but felt to be necessary. The symptoms are interpreted in terms of witchcraft or sorcery, or other supposed causes of disease.

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takes place. The grave is dug in the swept and beaten earth that immediately surrounds the hut. The first spit of earth is always turned by the eldest son of the one who has died. At one burial we saw the young eldest son of a dead man being helped to do this. He was too small to manage a hoe by himself so he caught the handle near the blade while an older relative held it behind to steady it for him. The digging after the first spit is done by a skilled grave-digger, who may be a kinsman or not, with the help of others. The grave is ten or more feet deep with a cave at the bottom to one side. Some graves are oblong, some round or oval,

[1] This is certainly traditional, cf. D. Kerr-Cross, 'Greater Lake North of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, V (1895), p. 119. The custom is also reported for the Ngonde. For a description of the autopsy, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 247-50. [171]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

dead man'. Sometimes, immediately after the burial, the chief 764
mourners, both men and women, wail outside near the newly-filled grave.

Very many of the women relatives, a few of the men relatives, 764
and some of the neighbours smear their heads and faces with mud
or pot-black as a sign of grief (*kwe kusa*). Such an expression of 177
grief is thought extravagant by the Christians who have themselves abandoned the custom. One Christian explained: 'The pagans smear themselves with mud because they tremble with fear at a death—but we do not tremble; the pagans are very sorrowful because they say: "Our friend has vanished from our eyes and we shall never meet him happily again."'

It is also the custom for the women relatives to bind one 292
another's bellies with strips of bark-cloth, and for their woman 764
friends to bind them also. These bark-cloth belts are called *amakibe* and symbolize the fearful grief and mutual sympathy of the mourners, and the sympathy of their friends. One women, who was taking two belts to tie up the bellies of two mourning friends whose husband had died, explained: 'I give them these to tie round their bellies because they are all a-tremble, they are full of fear.' And when she was asked why men did not thus support one another, she replied: 'They are not afraid like women, they do not tremble much.' But there is evidence that, before the coming of the Europeans, men also wore *amakibe* 'and even now if a chief [177] dies his men often wear *amakibe* for one day'. The Christian women have kept the custom, but they emphasize more the aspect of sympathy and less that of fear. 'If a woman wears many belts at a burial that means she has many friends; her passionate grief is [572] comforted by their friendship.'

Sometimes on the first day, and usually on the last two or three 535
days of a burial, there is dancing as well as wailing. Dancing 764
begins late in the morning to the accompaniment of three or four drums, in the swept courtyard of the dead man's homestead; gradually it attracts more and more dancers, more and more of the attention of the onlookers, until the wailing is confined to the chief women mourners inside the hut, and the dance is the most conspicuous part of the proceedings. It is led by young men [542] dressed in a special costume of ankle-bells and cloth skirts and [302] traditionally, bedaubed with red and white clay. All hold spears and leap wildly about, stamping down the soft earth of the grave as they dance. There is little common movement, each dances

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

herd. But if he has not left sufficient, then they are ashamed not to 764
make good the deficiency. 'If no cows are killed at a burial we 626
others [non-relatives] say that it was a mean burial, that the dead man was a pauper without kin, for if he had had kinsmen they would have killed cows for him. So then the relatives grieve their poor grief alone, we others don't go to that burial.' To a poor burial the members of the same village do in fact come, as they are obliged to do; but few other people come, and there is seldom any dancing.

There is one other situation in which a member of the family is 764
under obligation to kill. If the dead man is buried by his 'father' at his 'father's' place, then one of his 'father's' cows must be killed. But if his 'father' does not choose to exercise his privilege of carrying the body to his place for burial (and he need not do so unless he wishes), then there is no such obligation.

Upon affines, however, the obligation is absolute, unless they actually have not got a cow or bull available. 'If a father-in-law brings no beast to his son-in-law's burial, then his daughter is estranged from him, she asks angrily why he does not bring one, seeing that her husband has died.' 'If a son-in-law does not bring a cow to his father-in-law's burial, though he has one that he might have brought, he is ashamed before men. They say to him: "Your wife's father has died, why did you not bring a cow? Perhaps you think you have a father-in-law still alive (i.e. the dead man's heir, to whom all previous obligations are due, and with whom the relationship of affinity continues very much as before), but he himself, your own father-in-law, has died."' And thus, if insufficient cows are killed to maintain the family dignity, both the family and the affines are made to feel ashamed.

Occasionally a friend of the dead man, who is no relative, brings a bull to kill, as a sign of friendship and affection, but he [572] ●
has no obligation to do so.

Social position, both in its practical aspect of authority and in 764
its emotion aspect of prestige, depends primarily, among the 556
Nyakyusa, on the generous use of wealth, or, to put it more simply, on feeding people. The Nyakyusa insisted on this again and again in explaining the relative status of different people: one man is great and distinguished (*ninje*) because he feeds people, another who feeds people less is less distinguished. At a lavish funeral, where many people gather and eat meat, they go home in

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

582 they sometimes do so before the relationship is discovered, and then simply drink a protective medicine but do not break the marriage. The old men speak of a now abandoned custom of preferential cross-cousin marriage.

604 The bond between a man and his mother's brother (omujowe) is mainly constituted by the passage of cattle. "My real mother's brother," they say "is the one who took the bulk of the marriage-cattle which my father gave for my mother", and it is between this particular brother and a woman's eldest son that the bond is strongest. Because this brother of his mother has taken "our cattle" and married with them the young man has a certain right of making free with his property during his life, the right to receive from him one cow to set up a herd of his own with, and a residuary right of inheritance if this uncle dies childless and leaves no brothers. If his mother's brother does die without other heirs, it is only the particular wife obtained with and the particular property of his father's marriage-cattle that the young man can claim.

602 Ceremonies, and particularly funerals, are the occasions on which
764 the effective relatives of any one family meet all together, both kinsmen and affines. I have even heard kinship defined by attendance at funerals: One man argued that he was not related to another because, though they were admittedly genealogically related they did not attend the funerals in each other's families and were not therefore really kinsmen at all.

602 Known blood-kinship is a common occasion of friendship, but it
●572 does not necessarily produce it, while the absence of friendship can render many of the normal kinship bonds quite inoperative. We have seen already that quarrels may destroy the relationship between half-brothers and lead to a judicial separation. On the other hand, I have observed two men meet for the first time, discover a common great-grandfather and at once become friends. A few months later the sister of one of them died and the other went to the funeral and behaved there like a close kinsman.

Proximity is another factor of great importance in the relations of kinship, for while nearness of dwelling does not always make for friendship, yet a considerable distance tends to lessen it and to make attendance at funerals impossible.

606 One of the most stringent taboos in Nyakyusa life is that which separates father and daughter-in-law. A woman may never speak to, approach, or look at her husband's father. If she does it is believed that she will die, through the witchcraft of indignant neighbours, a painful and lingering death. And the taboo is extended from her own father-in-

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

857 to twelve neighbours are usually herded together by their young sons; and so these boys spend all the day together for several years of their lives. This group of boys is the germ of the future age-village; it is a community with a common activity in the herding of the cattle, with a leader and with laws and customs of its own.

"When we herd cows as boys" a friend of mine told me "there is always one who is obeyed by his fellows whatever he says. No one chooses him, he gains his leadership and his prestige by bodily strength. For always, when we are all boys together among the cows, we vie with one another and dispute about going to turn back straying cattle or about fetching fire to cook the food we have brought with us. And so we start fighting, and we go on fighting until one of us beats all his fellows completely and so becomes the leader. And then it is he who sends the others to turn back straying cattle, to fetch fire and to collect firewood. And he is greatly respected. He settles quarrels too. What we quarrel about most as boys is a particular insult; one says to another: 'You are only a child, you are, I am your senior.' This is always happening and then it is the part of the one who is leader to set those two on to fight. We all stand round and watch and the one who first cries is proved the child."

The herd-boys of my own acquaintance, a group of eleven daughter, told me that besides insulting one another like this, boys often cause trouble in their little community by stealing cow-bells from one another' cattle and hiding them away for future use. And one day, when I visited the local herd, the leader of the herd-boys told me they had caught two boys drowning a sheep that morning so as to be able to pretend it had drowned itself by accident, and then they would have had some of the meat to eat. "We beat them very much," he told me, and he called one [141] of the culprits to come and exhibit his wounds. The leader further explained to me that such cases would not ever be reported at home, unless the culprits themselves complained to their parents that they had been unjustly beaten, "then," he said, "I should explain what they had done, and they would get beaten again!"

The time that is not spent in herding cows, in arranging and watching duels and in punishing wrongdoers, is spent in playing various games, occasionally in football battles with neighbouring herd-boys, and in cooking and eating small amounts of food brought from home.

857 572 Friendships formed between members of this group sometimes last a lifetime. An old man once said to me of a friend of his who had died: "We herded cows together when we were boys."

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Nyakyusa generally it is kinship groups, not villages, which eat protective medicines with certain first-fruits. 754

Unlike many other cattle-keeping Bantu the Nyakyusa take great pride in cultivation, men boasting about their strength in hoeing, and praising those who are diligent. Significantly, the vocabulary relating to bananas matches in richness that relating to cattle: we recorded a dozen terms—and there were said to be many more—for varieties of bananas and plantains, which are distinguished by the form and flavour of the fruit, and thirteen terms for types of cattle, distinguished by colour and markings. 241 192

Not only does success in cultivation carry prestige in itself, but it provides the wherewithal for hospitality, on which status in a Nyakyusa community turns. To be respected a man must entertain his neighbours with food and millet-beer. Control of grain and vegetables to do this depends upon his own effort in hoeing, as well as upon having wives and sons to work with him. We have seen how the laggard among the Kukwe believes that the fertility of his gardens will be sapped by his neighbours being ahead. There is thus considerable social pressure compelling both men and women to cultivate diligently. At the same time, however, no individual should be too conspicuous. Each must keep in step in cultivation with his neighbours; and though his fields may be a little larger than the average, they must not be a great deal larger. The area cultivated (visible crops and stubble) by seven compound families on the Lake-shore plain in 1935 averaged 6·13 acres per family; which, divided by the number of members in each family, gave rather over half an acre per head (men, women, and children) or 1·3 acres per adult. The acreage ranged from 1·99 to 0·61 per adult.[1] 574 241 [626]

Cultivation thus involves co-operation primarily within elementary and compound families, but it also involves village co-operation, in that neighbours hold land together, help one another in some measure, and try to carry out each process simultaneously. 471 241

The pressure of neighbours still helps to keep laggards up to the mark, and also to keep the most energetic from getting far ahead. But the village control over cultivation is diminishing for, as we have seen, the custom of keeping in step is no longer strictly insisted upon even among the Kukwe, nor does it apply 241

[1] Monthly report of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu District, July 1933. Figures supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu, 1935.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

809 *ukwungala* is only possible between contemporaries[1] they must
876 build with contemporaries. The value set on *ukwungala* is thus related to the age-village; male contemporaries build together, and the company of, and good fellowship with, his age-mates is what creates a man of wisdom and character. Such is the Nyakyusa view of society.

576 For conversation to flow merrily and discussion to be profound
264 there must be *ifyakwungalela*—'the wherewithal for good fellowship', that is, food and drink—and very great stress is laid on
572 sharing these. Men and boys are expected to eat regularly with age-mates. Traditionally, fathers and sons never ate or drank together—to do so was held to be incompatible with the respect due from son to father—and men sought the company of equals at meals. From the time a small boy begins to herd he is encouraged to bring home two or three friends to eat with him, and in turn he visits each of them. Since boys have no fields of their own until they marry, but co-operate in cultivation with their parents, it is to their own mothers they go for food, and parents are proud of a son bringing many friends. 'Perhaps', said Angombwike, 'a son will come with his friends and cut a huge bunch of bananas, and take thick milk and eat with them. When the father comes back his wives will tell him: "Your son has eaten all the thick milk and cut a banana bunch!" Then he will ask: "How many men were with my son?" "Six!" "Ah, he's a chief!" the old man
[861] will say, smiling proudly.' 'And formerly if a young man came home often alone to eat, his father would beat him, or even take a spear and wound him, and when people asked why he would say: "This great fool comes *alone* to my place, again and again." It is good to eat with friends, for boys to go round in groups of four or five.'

264 After marriage each man is cooked for by his own wife, but he continues to eat with his friends, bringing them to his home or
562 going to their's .The first wife to come to a young men's village
●574 is said to have a hard life. 'She has to draw water and cook for all the young men of the village—they come to drink, and to wash, and they beat her with a stick if she refuses them. No, the

[1] *Ukwungala* is sometimes used with reference to relatives as well as to village-mates, as in the phrase '*atikwungala kamwu nabakamu baba*', meaning 'he is not on good terms with his relatives'; but in its fullest sense it can only be used with reference to contemporaries.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

264 husband will not be angry; if he were, he would be mocked at:
562 "Did not your father provide marriage-cattle for this woman for you that she might be the wife (*ankaw*) of us all?" Sometimes, when
574 the woman is cooking, her husband's friends come and take food out of the pot before she has finished cooking. When she protests, saying it is not yet cooked, the men say: "It is your work to cook, ours to eat." Then when her husband comes she tells him that so and so, and so and so, have eaten the food and there is only water left in the pot. . . . But when her husband's friends begin to get married they say to their wives: "That woman is really our wife! Listen to her!" And she has honour among the other women, and when they go to fetch firewood she walks with nothing, another carries her axe and head-pad.' This account cannot be taken literally—the first wife in the village does not provide *all* the food for her husband's friends, who still eat at their mothers' homes, nor do they have any sexual rights over her though they call her 'wife', but she must serve them as far as she can.

571 Sometimes, we were told, men's eating groups last a lifetime,
264 but often friends quarrel or move, and the group breaks up. 'Per-
578 haps one eats at midday and does not summon his friend, but only calls him to the evening meal, then the other, who always calls his friend to the midday meal also, is angry, saying: "He grudges me food", and they separate. They just stop calling each other to eat. Or sometimes one tries to seduce his friend's wife, and on that account they separate.'

264 Eating with contemporaries is still considered right and proper
178 by Nyakyusa men, and it is generally practised by pagans, but the old men say that youths are less ready to share food than formerly. 'This custom of eating together is dying.' Certainly in Christian villages the practice has declined markedly. Many unmarried Christians eat with their friends, but the majority of the married men eat at home alone. Out of eight married men living in Rungwe, for example, only two ate together regularly, and the most educated group, the clerks, are notorious in the district for their eating habits. 'People are much shocked at the clerks for eating food alone. They say they are proud.'

264 Apart from eating regularly with certain close friends, well-to-
574 do pagan men are expected to entertain generously, inviting fellow villagers to drink beer, or to a 'dinner party'—an ample meal with delicious dishes, very carefully served—from time to

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

time, and providing meat feasts at funerals and at the initiation and marriage of daughters. 264 574

As it is proper for men to eat with their equals it is improper for them to eat with their juniors, or with women. In the past fathers and sons never ate or drank together. Nowadays they sometimes do so, even though conservative pagans, especially if the fathers and sons have been working together. Three reasons are adduced for the change: first, the example of Europeans and Swahili; secondly, the fact that the country is at peace and it is safe for all the men to drink together, whereas formerly, when there was constant danger of attack, the young men were forbidden to drink at all; and thirdly the fact that young men earn money and buy beer for themselves which they may invite a 'father' to share (*vide* Document p. 194). When the Nyakyusa drink beer they replenish the pot repeatedly with boiling water, and men expect to have the water boiled for them by a woman. As Mwamboputa explained, 'Sometimes my son brings his pot (of beer) to my place and calls his friends saying: "We will take the pot to mother's house and she will pour in water for us." Then they come to my place, and they invite me to drink, and I accept, and we drink together. How can I grudge my son beer when I have some? Did he and his friends not entertain me?' The change turns on the fact that a young man can earn money and buy beer for himself while yet unmarried. Formerly no unmarried man commanded millet for brewing. Now, when he is drinking in his father's homestead he cannot but invite his father to join him. 264 593 178

Women commonly eat alone with their young children and unmarried daughters. Sometimes co-wives who are good friends eat together, but they have no obligation to do so, and in a big homestead perhaps only two wives will eat together and each of the others eat alone. More usually a woman sends a dish of food to each co-wife to eat in her own hut. For a woman to eat food with a man is considered quite impossible. In those families in which men no longer ate with neighbours one or two ate with their young sons, but we heard of none who ate with their wives. The example of Europeans did not influence them to this extent. 264 595

It is admitted that women also enjoy company and profit from it, and it is considered good that they should get on with their fellows, but there is no suggestion that it is a woman's duty to 264 462 574

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

cultivate her mind by conversation, or to eat regularly in company. In more formal hospitality there is the same difference; a woman never invites her friends to drink beer with her, or to a 'dinner party', as her husband must do if he is to have prestige with his neighbours. Women only share the ritual feasts at initiation and marriage, and at death.

There are local variations in Nyakyusa rituals, notably between the Kukwe and Nyakyusa proper. But everywhere there is an obligation to provide feasts at the funerals and marriages of dependants. When his wife or unmarried child dies, a man must kill cattle for his relatives and neighbours to feast at the burial,[1] while an heir provides a feast for his relatives, and the neighbours of the 'father' from whom he has inherited. At these feasts equal portions of meat are allotted to relatives and neighbours—or were so allotted until the rights of neighbours to meat at funerals were formally limited (*vide infra*, p. 93). An heir must also brew beer, or kill a bull, to feast the deceased's neighbours when he begins to cohabit with his widow, or moves the property from his village. At the initiation and marriage of a girl there is a series of feasts (five in Selya), the food for which is provided partly by the groom's family and partly by the bride's; and if, as is usual, the bride is still a virgin or has been deflowered by the groom himself, he must provide a bull in thanks for her virginity (*ingombe ilako jabwanga*), which is killed to feast the neighbours and relatives of her parents. The carcass is divided into three portions, one for the immediate neighbours of her father (men), one for 'those relatives with whom the father is on good terms and exchanges cattle', and one for the 'mothers' of the bride. Women as well as men eat meat and other fine food at all the marriage and funeral feasts.

The third occasion on which a feast for the village neighbours is thought to be essential is when a man or woman has offended his (or her) neighbours, or the neighbours of a 'father'. Thus a woman who has shirked her duty of advising on the division of her brother's inheritance, and is disapproved of by her neighbours on this account, begs pardon of them over a brewing of beer (*vide infra*, pp. 107, 236); a son, having insulted his father's neighbours

[1] For the circumstances under which other relatives must provide cattle for funeral feasts see Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939), p. 18.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

by insulting his father, begs pardon of them by bringing a bull which his father may eat with them; or a daughter-in-law, having inadvertently caught sight of her father-in-law, brings beer for him to drink with his neighbours.

At all feasts food is allotted in terms of kinship and village affiliation, and this tends to enhance the solidarity of kin groups and villages. For example, funeral meat is first divided between relatives and non-relatives, and that allocated to non-relatives is subdivided by villages, each village headman present being given a share to divide between his people, men and women. When a relative of the chief has died, and the whole country has come to mourn, the chief allots a cow to each of his senior headmen, who then divide the carcasses between the villages in their respective halves of the chiefdom. The meat at a 'coming out' ceremony, and at the great feasts which were held after battle, was divided in the same way, and we saw a division of this kind when a senior headman who had been in exile was welcomed home (cf. pp. 273–4). Thus the right to share in a feast depends either on kinship with the provider, or on membership of a village.

The Christians' code of hospitality differs somewhat from that of the pagans: the latter stress feeding *neighbours*, whether it be in the daily eating together, or at informal beer and dinner parties, or at ceremonies, while the Christians stress feeding strangers, quoting the text 'I was a stranger and ye took me in'[1] and the parable of the Good Samaritan.[2] The pagans jibe at the Christians for being inhospitable because (as the Christians themselves admit) they entertain their neighbours less than pagans do; the Christians point to their wider obligations, and the fact that they do feed and house visitors from a distance, especially fellow Christians gathering for Church festivals. The Christians are very conscious also of the difficulties of hospitality in a monogamous household, for a wife must not only do all the cooking for visitors (and many Nyakyusa dishes require considerable labour to prepare), but she must also help to grow the food. The pagan who can afford to entertain much has several wives who share the work between them, whereas a Christian, no matter how rich, cannot have more than one wife and remain a member of his Church—unless it be one of the two small independent

[1] Matthew xxv. 35.
[2] Luke x. 29.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

● 574 African churches which countenance polygyny. The difficulty is
184 partially overcome in some well-to-do Christian families by hiring labour to work in their fields and to fetch water and wood, and by offering visitors coffee or tea, which are easily prepared, in place of home-brewed beer; nevertheless the conflict between
[182] the value of hospitality (to which pagan and Christian alike subscribe, though they define it rather differently) and the value of monogamy, is often acute.

621 The mutual obligations of neighbours are not confined to feeding one another, for neighbours share with relatives the obligation of giving sympathy and assistance at the various crises in Nyakyusa life; the concept of *ukwangala* includes keeping on good terms with people by being sympathetic and obliging.

764 All the members of a village (except young children) are
621 obliged to attend every burial of an adolescent or adult in that village; they go to mourn the death of a neighbour or condole with one who is burying a 'son', for if a man dies while his father (or father's full brother, or his own senior brother) is yet alive, he is often buried in his 'father's' homestead.[1] Where a youth or man is buried by his 'father', his fellow villagers must attend the funeral also, but boys and young men need not go to a funeral in their fathers' village unless it is a village-mate of their own who is being buried.

[759] Funerals are occasions for feasting and dancing, so the obligation 'to mourn one another' (*ukulelawila*) does not press hardly, and the Nyakyusa feeling is that no one would fail to come unless he were a witch, and fearful lest his victim rise from the grave and denounce him. 'If a man does not go to his neighbour's burial then at once people say: "It was you who bewitched him. Why else do you not come to bury him?"' Failure to come is certain evidence that the truant is 'a harsh man who does not keep on good terms with people (*ukali, atikwangala kawaa nabanda*)'.

764 One neighbour, 'he who went about most with the dead man', is appointed by the headman of the village to help the relatives dig the grave, and village neighbours must also bring small gifts of food and firewood for the entertainment of the many guests.

[1] A married man whose 'fathers' are dead, or do not choose to exercise their right to bury him, is buried at his own home, and a woman who has borne a child is buried at her husband's house.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Christians are only affected by the shocked astonishment of fellow Christians, not by the disapproval of pagans, and the unit within which 'the curse' is commonly spoken of as operating is the congregation. In two of the cases we recorded (*vide* Document, p. 209) it was suggested that illness was due to the anger of neighbours, fellow Christians, over stinginess and greed, but in the other cases it was not village neighbours who were primarily concerned, but the Christian congregation, a group embracing members from many villages.

The type of behaviour believed to be punishable by 'the curse' of fellow Christians also differs somewhat from that thought to be punished by 'the breath of men'. The virtue Christians emphasize most is chastity, and 'the curse' is often said to be a punishment for fornication or adultery. The other sin commonly spoken of as bringing down a curse is disobedience, or disrespectful behaviour to the minister (or priest) or elder of the congregation. Among pagans 'the breath of men' serves also to sanction sexual morals and to sustain respect for those in authority, but their sex code is different. It is incest, or familiarity between father- and daughter-in-law, which they regard as really evil, not sex relations outside marriage. And they emphasize respect to senior relatives and fathers' neighbours rather than to the leaders of any wider group.

Christians lay much less stress on hospitality to neighbours than pagans, and it is generally agreed that they eat alone more than pagans would dare to do. As one Christian put it, a pagan would *always* call his neighbours to share meat or beer when he had it, but a Christian might eat a sheep, or a goat, or even a calf, alone with his family. It is good, the Christians say, to call friends to share a feast, but not an inescapable obligation. Nor do Christians regularly send the saddle and ribs of any animal they kill to the chief, as pagans do; 'for', they say, 'we do not fear "the breath of men".' But hospitality towards strangers is felt to be a condition of salvation. One informant explained that 'If a man is stingy towards his neighbours it does not matter; but if he is stingy towards a stranger from a distance, he might die from lack of food; and that would be the fault of the stingy one. Such a fault would prevent him from entering Heaven.' This statement points to the most striking difference between Christian and pagan morality—the range of moral obligations. A pagan's duties

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

are primarily to his kinsmen and fellow villagers, and secondarily to fellow members of his chiefdom; beyond the chiefdom and circle of kinsmen he had, traditionally, no obligations. The Christian definition of 'neighbour' is a much wider one. It is emphasized by the missionaries that the Christian Church is universal, and Nyakyusa Christians themselves are conscious of their unity with, and obligations to, members of other chiefdoms, other cultural groups, and other races. The new sanctions for behaviour operating within the Christian group—the emphasis on Christian duty; the hope of that 'peace which passeth all understanding' and of eternal life; and the fear of suspension or expulsion from the communion of the faithful, and of hell-fire[1]—all these apply to relations beyond, as well as within, the village, the chiefdom, and the circle of kin.

Two other points were mentioned by Christian informants when discussing the differences between pagan and Christian morality: they said that Christian children growing up were liable to be 'proud' (*nawatiapo*) in their bearing and manner of greeting, because they do not fear 'the breath of men'; and also that Christian men were not afraid to ask many cattle for their daughters at marriage, again because they do not fear their neighbours' disapproval in the way pagans fear it. The implication is that there is less insistence upon conformity to a given code among Christians than among pagans; a greater tolerance of diversity of behaviour.

These differences between pagan and Christian dogma are matched by differences between their ritual. There are no Christian rituals in which the village as a group, distinct from other groups, is concerned. The congregation—the group worshipping in one church—is drawn from many villages, and though devout Christians living in the same neighbourhood often gather for morning and evening prayer, such rituals never include a whole village. Even in a Christian village on mission land only a small proportion of the villagers attend daily prayer regularly. As we have seen, the members of a pagan village meet from time to time to warn off witches, or to bless a repentant wrong-doer (*vide supra*, pp. 101, 109 ff.), but since belief in witchcraft or in 'the curse' is not orthodox among Christians, there is no ritual con-

[1] cf. Monica Hunter, 'An African Christian Morality', *Africa*, Vol. X (1937), p. 283-91.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Scipt, Ngonde

them knocks on the wall when he has succeeded, and the officiant 765
raises the *ululu*, the trill of applause and triumph[1] which is also 763
the war-cry, and shakes a basket of seeds by the door shouting: 587
'Ours, ours, we marvel at the thing!' Until this ritual connection the heir and the widows remain continent, and great importance is attached to the success of the heir in having intercourse with all the widows. Should a widow refuse the heir after touching the ash it is said that she will either die herself or cause any man she lies with to die of 'the ash'; but if she escapes before being smeared with ash then she is safe. The heir is also in danger if a widow should refuse him after he has touched the ash.

The morning after the ritual union the heir is formally summoned out of the hut by a man knocking on the door and crying: 'Come out, war has come (*Soka' ulwite kwinile*),' i.e. sexual intercourse has begun. He sits on a stool in the doorway of the hut and is greeted by the children of the deceased: 'Good morning, Father.'

iii. '*The gaping cough.*' Each of the inherited women goes off to 783
her own father's homestead with the filth (*indefo*) of intercourse 763
on her. She does not even wash her hands, and she takes with her 587
cooked bananas which she has smeared with her husband's semen and her own emission. This she buries in the banana grove in her father's homestead in which he prays to his ancestors. She takes meat to her father if an animal has been killed at the 'shaving of the sprouting hair'. The heir similarly goes to his father's homestead (or that of his father's heir) with cooked bananas to be buried in his father's sacred grove. Each wife drinks beer mixed with medicine with her father and other close relatives. From the time when the heir sleeps with the widows until this ritual is performed, they cannot visit their parents nor can their children do so (though usually children come and go freely in the home of their mother's people) and, more particularly, a widow must not drink from her mother's cup, or eat with her, or sit over her fire, or touch her hand. It is believed that, if the ritual is neglected, those for whom it should have been performed will be seized with a racking cough (*ingotele*) and diarrhoea. Even Christians, who eschew the other parts of the death ritual, often participate in the *ingotele*. [874]

When a woman has died she should be replaced by a sister or 587
brother's daughter, just as the dead man is by a brother or son. 834

[1] The closest equivalent in our society is cheering, but the *ululu* is raised by women.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

All the women present, and Mwaipopo himself, had shaved 845
to-day.

We stayed forty minutes there and some of the food was eaten on the spot. The rest of the food, the pot of beer, and the ointment and rouge, we carried back with us to Mwakobela's. The beer was given to Mwakobela who drank it with eleven other men, his kinsmen and neighbours. The food and ointment and rouge went to the women.

26 July 1935

The women had intended to go and visit the maternal relatives 845
(*abipuo*) of the mother of twins yesterday, but her 'father' (Mwai- 574
popo) had sent a message to say: 'Do not come yet, they are all away, some in Mwandonia's country, others planting potatoes.' Mwakobela, asked about his own mother's relatives, replied: 'My own *abipuo* have all died, and even if they had not, it would be too far to go, for they lived in Kukwe country. I did not throw medicine into the grass for them, no, we never do.

'The doctor is coming soon to sprinkle the cattle, all our herd 845
here, my cattle and my neighbours', with medicine.' There are 783
two herd groups in the village.

28 July 1935 (Sunday)

v. *Treating the cattle*

We were called to Mwakobela's place. He told us:

The doctor brought medicine last night, just before dark, and she said to me: 'Sprinkle the cattle yourself.' 'Perhaps it is taboo for me to do so?' I replied: 'No, not at all, you sprinkle them; I am going off to church to-morrow, to the catechumen's class.' Her elder sister is baptized already and she herself intends to be baptized. So I asked her: 'To whom shall we go for medicine then?' She replied: 'I am giving the medicine to my daughter, the wife of Mwakisisile, the son of Mwaihojo.'

When we arrived at about 1.15 p.m. Mwakobela's cattle and some others were standing round a smoky fire, as usual, during the midday hours.[1] The pot of medicine was steaming on another fire at a little distance. 'How do the cattle fall sick, if you do not treat them?' we asked. 'They purge continually. . . .'

Mwakobela's wife said: 'We should send to Mwampona and let his cattle be treated too.' Mwakobela (to us): 'Mwampona herds his cattle with Mwakikato, in a separate herd from ours;[2] she says they should come too; certainly when Mwampona had twins our

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 34. [2] op. cit., p. 56.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Life is never dull for the African. There are marriages and funerals here as elsewhere; the former always a joyous occasion, the latter not always or necessarily the reverse. A walk through a populous village will bring one upon net making, pot making, basket or cloth weaving, and one may hear the sharp tap-tap of the bark cloth worker, or, in an iron-working district, the clang of the blacksmith's stone hammer, beating out hoes or spears upon a rough stone anvil. And many drive dullness away with beer. Sometimes it is a small party. A few friends gather in a house, and sit around a pot or two of beer provided by the wife of the host. They drink to the strumming of a *pango* or the beating of a small drum, for they like to have music at their feasts, even when only a few are gathered. But if it is a village feast, given by the chief, it may go on all night with terrific noise, shouting, singing, and drumming; and not always does the feast end without fighting.

Sometimes the villagers receive visitors. The native evangelist on his rounds is always hospitably welcomed. The tax collector is not exactly welcomed—who ever welcomes a tax collector?—but he is received well enough, for his coming has at least this advantage, that those who are ready to pay the sum demanded will not have to go later and pay at the *boma* (magistrate's office), which may be a long distance away. Sometimes a native trader comes along, his packs carried by attendants, for he never carries them himself, even when beginning on a small scale. Visitors

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•574 of more importance are the magistrate and the missionary, whose coming is usually heralded afar, by the report that he is already in the district, and is now perhaps only a day's journey off, slowly making his way from village to village, and dealing with whatever matters require his attention as magistrate or missionary. His coming is a matter of importance, for he will have a number of men with him who will need food, by the sale of which the villagers hope to make a few honest pence; though abundance of food is often given freely as a token of welcome. As the great man approaches the village, all the younger people come out to meet him with shouts of welcome, and if he is travelling in a *machilla*, the men will take the pole from the bearers, and with tremendous noise enter the village and deposit him at the school or the chief's house.

182 And the sadder side? Sickness, epidemics, the per-
561 petual fear of witchcraft and of evil dreams fore-
578 shadowing ill, theft with its ever-present possibility of accompanying murder, quarrels that will not heal, forced marriages, and all the hidden cruelty that so rarely comes to the surface. Most pathetic of all, perhaps, the feud between old and young; the young all for to-day and to-morrow, for the new ideas, the hope of progress; the old for yesterday with its stability and ordered life; the young going in crowds to church, the old going secretly, and no doubt sadly, to worship at the ancient shrines, guarding the approaches lest the levity of youth should desecrate the place of terror, and evil come upon all the land; the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 breasts, sit on a tree near the house; if *mwanjala*,
[825] little black and white birds of another species, hop
about twittering; the approach of strangers is fore-
told. Hospitality to strangers is a primary virtue
[574] among the Konde, and food is prepared at once; but
it is not cooked until they actually arrive. To offer
[576] them food already cooked, is to offer a cold welcome,
and possibly to do an injury; for cold food must not
be eaten by chiefs, nor by hunters, nor by doctors, for
in all these cases the effect would be to destroy the
power of the medicines by virtue of which they are
assured of success in their various callings.

787 5. Omens having reference to food are numerous,
and a few examples must suffice. If a fly goes into
262 one's mouth, it is a sure sign that the person will
soon be eating flesh, a rare treat for the Konde, who
seldom eat flesh, unless there is an occasion for it: a
birth, a marriage, or a death. But the fly indicates
none of these; the flesh hinted at is a pure gift with
no kind of condition attached. The same good
fortune is suggested if a child eats cinders from the
fire-place. A leopard crying all night in the neigh-
bourhood is giving information that some one has
broken a food prohibition. New season's food has
been eaten before the chief has laid an offering of the
first-fruits of that particular food-stuff at the grave
of his ancestors, and the dwellers in the underworld
are angry at the insult offered them. The chief is
informed of the crying of the leopard, and the
diviner is called in to find the culprit.

787 There is a common grass called *ditika*, which in

S:Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

vary in different circumstances. Millet and rice, the two most valuable crops, belong to the man and are stored by him; so that the division of a millet or rice garden into plots and their assignment to different wives is rather a division of labour than of property. But of all other crops the woman on whose plots they have grown is an effective owner. She stores them herself in her own house and no other side of her husband can touch them; it is only with him that her rights are in any way shared. 291 592 921

The main use of the crops which the Nyakyusa grow is to provide food for each separate household group. Next in importance is the provision of food and beer for hospitality, and for the making of gifts both in everyday life and on special ceremonial occasions. And, finally, there is the barter or sale of surplus crops to obtain salt, pots, clothes, cattle and to pay tax. Each married woman, therefore, first uses her own crops to feed her husband, her own children and herself. If she is the only wife then she cooks for her husband every day, but, even if she is one of many, she is yet careful to cook for him frequently, in order to keep his affection and the various advantages which go with it. 592 593 594 [433]

When cooking for her husband she must, when necessary, prepare sufficient for guests, for a man very often has friends and neighbours eating with him; and if he wishes to make a gift of cooked food, she cooks it for him from her own store. To provide meals for him and his guests and cooked food for gifts is an obligation which she normally fulfils quite willingly, as we have hinted above; she may be fond of him; it is in any case to her interest to play her part in the co-operative relationship which binds them together and from which both alike benefit. He hoes for her and builds her house, he gives her a share of the household milk, which he himself controls, he sleeps with and is gentle to her; he has, without the aid of any legal, moral or conventional sanctions, a great hold over her, as she, on her side, has over him. But, if either fails to play their part in willing co-operation, then there are, for both alike, these other sanctions to fall back upon. A quarrel develops between them and leads to violence, perhaps he strikes her, perhaps she viciously repels him, one night, from her bed; and then the immediately injured party appeals to the neighbours for support. They discuss the matter, censure one or the other, and try to make it up between them; if they fail to do so the case may go to Court and one will then have to pay compensation to the other. Or it may happen, without any violent quarrel, without any formal appeal to the neighbours, that one of them becomes aware that his conduct is provoking their mockery and criticism; and then in shame he mends his ways. Or, finally, one of them may fall sick and suspect that wrong-doing on his part has been followed by spiritual retribution in the form of witchcraft. 543 [579] [627] [626] [754]

A woman, then, uses her stores of food to cook not only for herself

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

583 Normally a bachelor is given cows one by one, over a period of years, and, as we have seen, he sends them, as he receives them, to the father of the girl he wants to marry. One cow is sufficient for betrothal, but not until he has given three can he begin openly to sleep with her. And he cannot usually set up his own economy until he has given at least three cows and she has reached puberty and been initiated. He may of course bespeak an already grown girl, but if he engages himself to a young one he is expected to bring two or more bulls as well, during the course of her initiation.

684 If he chooses to spend his cows in adultery fines, he may, but he will then have to wait longer to get married.

582 561 Thus the system of marriage by a transfer of cattle is, in this society, directly linked with a late marriage age for young men and with a privileged position for older men. When a lucky gets cattle he at once gives them to an older man in order to receive his daughter as a wife; the labour of every bachelor helps to increase his father's wealth in food; it is in general the older men alone who can afford more than one wife. And there is an average difference of ten years or more in the initial marriage age of men and girls. The tax registers show in part of the district, among 3,000 adult* men, 34% bachelors, 37% monogamists, and 29% polygynists; and investigation proves that, generally speaking, it is the young men who are bachelors, the men over forty-five who are polygynists.

[162]

511 ● 579 Though cattle are their most valued form of wealth, it is on agriculture that the economy of the Nyakyusa is primarily based. Meat and milk are luxuries, and daily bread comes from the fields. Hard work in a fertile country provides food for each family, and the millet beer which is the ordinary material of hospitality. Hospitality brings a man prestige and authority among his fellows; on the possession of sufficient food largely depends the contentment of his wives. And in the production, preparation and eating of food the relationships of the family and of the individual family within it, are clearly visible.

241 512 Hoeing is the work of men, planting, weeding, reaping and cooking is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about four hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a.m., on the upland plateau they begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different

*Presumed to be 18 years or over.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Ara. every year two hereditary Kings priests come a three days journey from their own country to participate in the sacrifice of a black cow to the spirits of Lwembe and his descendants.

Down by Lake Nyasa, in the extreme South East of the Nyakyusa district, there is another equally sacred spot where sacrifices were, and believe still are[21] made to Kyala, a younger brother of Lwembe.

The Christians and the Moslems form other religious groups which transcend the boundaries of a single chiefdom, but an examination of the Nyakyusa Christian and Moslem communities is beyond the scope of this paper.

The political group which is constituted by a Court district, though only ten years old, is of great importance in Nyakyusa society; but here again the detailed examination of its organization and the relationships of its members is beyond the scope of this paper.

Conclusion: Culture and Society

The aim of sociology is to describe single forms of society fully and, in comparison with one another, to explain them completely, in so far as reasons can be found within this particular scientific field. Neither full description nor complete explanation of Nyakyusa society has here been attempted: many important facts have been omitted from the account, irregularities of detail have been slurred over, the connections of fact have been only occasionally and sketchily established, and no systematic comparison of this unit with others has been made at all.

But the method of this paper has involved an analysis, summary and general though it has been, of the nature of some of the many institutions in which the Nyakyusa meet, of some of the actual elements in their relationships with one another. It is in their dealings with the earth and their cattle, with the spirits and with men who break the law, in their discussions and arguments, their ceremonial feasts, their giving and receiving, in their loves and hates and in their admiration and mockery of one another that they forever make and remake their own human relationships.

Culture is the matter of which society is the form; inseparable in fact they are only intelligible together. No two men can be related unless they both do something and unless their activities are somehow connected. Nor can either escape relationship with his fellow if what

[21] I have not yet been there to investigate.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

[413] symbol of potency,[1] and we suggest that this also is an element
[622] the ritual of the 'coming out', for the fertility of the chieftain
[772] thought to be bound up with the virility of the chief.

[372] There are a number of stories about the way in which Mw
kyusa (98) surpassed his brothers and one of them tells how
brother made fire and set alight the pasture land (for traditiona
parts of the pasture land were fired each season to provide fr
grass for grazing in the early spring), and the fires started by
elder brothers soon died out, but that started by Mwakyu
'burned for a whole month'. This is interpreted as an omen of
greatness as a chief: fire, potency, lordship are inextricably link

At the 'coming out' all things are made new. No matter h
[561] crowded the country the young men must move to new sites a
the shelters in which they live must be new, though, as will
[954] shown, they do not necessarily move to *unoccupied* country.
their new site the young men live as bachelors, milking th
cows and cooking for themselves on their new fires the meat of
cattle they seize, the bananas and grain brought by their wi
and mothers. Meat is abundant, for the young chief now r
and has the right to take what cattle he chooses, even from
villages of the old men in his country. 'It was as if there were w
[726] the young men seized cattle, food, and women', and though th
did not fight their fathers directly, as the Merwe did, they clea
asserted their power. And, as so common further south,
accession of a chief was the occasion for raiding the neighbou
[778] the young men, we were told, went forthwith to test the efficacy
the magic spears and the medicines with which their chief a
headmen had been treated. Or the chiefs might lead a battue
clear the country of wild pig, as Mwakatumbula (Mwambete 1
did directly after his 'coming out'. Well fed and exuberant,
[574] young men dance and display their cattle, and entertain visit
lavishly, for every chief seeks to attract men to his country
his hospitality.

Then they set up the sign and memorial of the chieftainsh
[829] they plant cuttings of two species[2] of *ficus*, *indele* which is sm
used as a shade tree, and *umpandapanda* from which bark-cloth
[423] made. Close to these the first house of the chief and that of
senior village headmen are built, and the trees also mark

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 104, 143.

[2] When writing *Good Company* I mistakenly thought that two cuttings of the s
species were planted. Cf. *Good Company*, p. 27.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

773 among some other peoples with a corresponding ritual), but the young men seize cattle belonging to the older generation, thus asserting their authority. The opposition of generations is taken for granted and given expression in constitutional form: the ritual is a celebration not of 'rebellion' but of growth. For all their reluctance to hand over power the fathers 'rejoice and are glad because their sons have grown up'. Change in the structure of society after the revolution of the heroic age, is not celebrated, and is scarcely admitted, but the process of growth, of death and procreation, is expressed in every ritual. Indeed, the ritual cycle is like a fugue with the theme of death and rebirth constantly recurring.

771 The pagan universe is just and orderly. There is a nemesis
772 attached to spilling blood or binding a man with ropes. The anger of men,[1] or of the shades who are roused by men, is what brings
812 most misfortune, and often, the Nyakyusa think, such anger is justified. Even medicines may be selective, injuring only the guilty. The good man who celebrates the proper rituals, fulfils his kinship obligations, and keeps on good terms with his neighbours, is protected, while the evil-doer falls ill. But some evil men, witches and sorcerers, attack the innocent out of jealousy and spite. Evil to the Nyakyusa, lies primarily within men: it is 'anger in the heart' which materializes as pythons that throttle others.
[578] Because they are aware of angry impulses in themselves the Nyakyusa find it difficult to believe that any society without witchcraft can exist; to say that there is no *ubulosi* is like suggesting that there is no ill will or anger in a community. And since anger brings misfortune there is an obligation on those whose anger might have caused sickness or ill luck to express goodwill by spitting or blowing out water, and saying, 'May the patient recover' or 'I am without anger'. Among commoners the man required to show goodwill is usually a senior relative, rather than a suspected witch (as among the Azande). But a neighbour or
[574] friend who might be a witch or sorcerer should also express goodwill when he visits the sick, and fellow hunters who have ill luck may stop to declare their goodwill to one another, as we have seen. If a chief or priest-chief is sick the village headmen and priests must wish him well and confess any anger they have felt towards
[783] him. The blowing out of water is a symbol of confession, 'bringing

[1] For a full account of the belief in witchcraft and the 'breath of men', cf. Monica Wilson, *Gurd Company*, pp. 91-121, 198-261.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

her by his anger, others that the husband was to blame for rejecting medical treatment earlier on. The girl herself was reported to have said to her mother-in-law, when she was lying ill at the doctor's house: 'Are you angry with me and has your anger caused the trouble? Perhaps I did not help you in collecting firewood?' But her mother-in-law replied: 'No, I am not angry with you at all.' And the girl continued: 'I know that my father is angry. Someone might go and ask him to pray for me.' There was also tension with the husband's pagan father who had protested that his son was praying for the death of his own children when he prayed with his Pentecostal friends that God's will be done. 'The Pentecostal people say: "I like to die. I don't take any medicine . . . if someone dies or not it is all the same thing."'

Nevertheless, it is true to say that the field in which natural causation is accepted is much wider among Christians than among pagans. It expands very slowly, but the change is evident. Even two cases of 'madness' (*ukubopa ikigili*), invariably the symptom of the wrath of the gods in pagan thought, were interpreted to us by a Christian teacher in terms of grief and shock. The first was of a young man whose wife and grandmother (who lived with him) both died very suddenly, and whose only cow was taken by other relatives and killed for the funeral feast. The loss of the cow following the loss of his wife and grandmother was held to have shattered him finally—'the lineage was finished'. The other case was of a mother, devoted to her daughter, who was distraught when the daughter went off to a distance, accompanying her husband to his place of work. For a daughter to marry beyond easy visiting distance was traditionally inconceivable.

The vagaries of the weather, attributed by the pagans to the neglect of sacrifices or quarrels between chiefs and priests, are explained in scientific terms by some Christians. Heavy rain fell around Rungwe in October 1937 and prevented people burning their rubbish heaps to fertilize their millet gardens. The pagans insisted that such early rain was unheard of and kept asking each other what could have caused it. A Christian elder assured us that the early rain was *not* very unusual in the hill country; he had seen other seasons like it. And in January of the same year the people of Mwaipopo's country were 'astonished' because no heavy rain had fallen and young maize and millet were shrivelling in the ground. They said: 'It has rained all round' and 'it seems as if we had offended Kyala'. Kasitile went to divine (*vide supra*, p. 119).

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

when we went to a field I saw a stick of a special type upright in the soil. It was made of a reed split at the top, with a small bundle of leaves squeezed in the split. A piece of bark stood out from this bundle. I asked the chief for the significance of this and he explained that it was an *ulusingo*, i. e. a tabu sign to prevent anyone from stepping on the field which was an *imasibi* (yam-field). This sign was believed to possess "magical power", to strike an invader with illness. Each owner of a field has the right to protect his field in such a manner, and a chief especially has the right to command tabus regarding plants which are staple food for the whole chieftainship, as, for instance, maize that is not allowed to be reaped before the chief has given his permission. All such tabus are also named *mwiko*[32]. During the time of such a general tabu, visitors, who by chance come through a village under tabu, are not allowed to greet the inhabitants of the village or to speak to them. 241 784 [574]

The chief added that special watchmen are installed during these periods; these men are dressed in a terrifying manner, and have the right to arrest any person transgressing the tabu. The chief may punish the offenders immediately, imposing on them, for instance, a cow as a fine. This was also the case with an ordinary theft in a field, but nowadays such affairs are regulated by the law of the Mandated Government. After the repeal of such a general tabu by the chief, beer will be drunk (e. g. *ubwalwa bwa kutagila bwa kutondelo*, the beer that is poured out at the harvest), and the usual eating community of men will be re-established, for Nyakyusa men like to eat together as comrades, not in families. 241 688 784 [178] [264]

10. When I was in Katumba, dances were held on several days from the afternoon till midnight, very similar in form to that which Mackenzie describes (p. 160) by the name *Ikimbimbi*. 535

The men stood on one side of the open place in several lines, with sticks in their hands; on the opposite side were the women and girls. Between them, more in the background, were the drummers, at the beginning of the dance; then they moved round the place. The principal drummer was a man of great excitability. He performed most extravagant movements with his body and his drumstick, making somersaults, jumping over the drum, treating it as a "living being", running to it and turning just in front of it.

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[32] This word *mwiko* (forbidden) has the same wide (profane and ritual) meanings as *tapu* or *tabu* in the Polynesian Languages (cf. *Rud. Lehmann:* Die polynesischen Tabu-Sitten. Staatl. Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde I, 16; Leipzig 1930).

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

262 The tender leaves of pumpkins and taro plants *(amasimbi,* leaves of taro), as well as of a number of other plants growing wild *(indeke)* are also used as vegetables. This food is called *iseke,* a word denoting all sorts of green vegetables.

In his treatise on "The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa" (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. 1; 1938, p. 43). G. Wilson points out that the fruit of the so — called *unsyunguti* — tree is "both [278] delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment *(inyemba)*", but he adds that he had been unable to find out the botanical name of this useful tree. Perhaps the following passage in the article of Dr. Kerr Cross ("Notes on the Country Lying between Lakes Nyasa and Tanganyika"; Proc. Roy. Geogr. Inst. N.S.Vol. XIII, 1891, p. 98) may be helpful in this connection: "There is a tree of the 314 sycamore family which grows extensively all over the north of the [262] lake called mwisyungute by the natives which might be developed. [386] It is a most picturesque tree which produces a food, an oil, and a dye. The oil or fat, when cool, is solid, even at a tolerably high temperature, and is like beeswax. It burns well as a night-light, and with wax might [388] be made into candles. In a rude way I have made candles of it. It might also make an excellent soap."

273 As an adjunct to these foods curdy milk *(ulukama ulukafu)* is very [272] much esteemed[2], to say nothing of the various types of beer, mostly prepared from millet for the men. Large fields of millet are, therefore, to be seen everywhere in the land of the Nyakyusa. On one occasion I attended a beer drink in the hut of a chief. The conduct of the natives present, the chief and his advisers *(amafumu),* was in every respect praise-worthy. Pleasant and interesting stories were narrated. Not [574] infrequently the invitation of a commoner who has had some differences with his chief or one of the *amafumu* to such a feast is regarded as a gesture of reconciliation.

243 As in the time of Sir H. H. Johnston so also to-day "all the oozy-meadows are planted with rice." A traveller coming from the hilly region to the north on nearing Lake Nyasa is struck by numerous large fields of rice in the plain at the northern end of the lake.

178 *11. Crafts.* Mackenzie (1925) is certainly justified in complains of the decay of the arts and crafts among the Nyakyusa. The Indian and European influence is to be seen everywhere in the deterioration and final dissolution of these branches of the ancient culture of the Nyaky-

[2] A. Wilson, Introduction, p. 256.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 for the local investment of savings are the most important
[474] economic undertaking in the District. The seven coffee co-
[454] operatives handled a crop of 950 tons in 1955, worth about £427,500, and are organized so efficiently as to be able to return over 90 per cent of the price of the coffee on Moshi market to the producer, after the heavy transport costs (14 per cent) have been paid. One Government-paid officer assists these societies.

In the educational and recreational field also, associations are
526 emerging: football clubs; companies of Scouts and Guides;
575 'Welfare Centres' with classes in reading for adult illiterates,
177 indoor games, and Saturday-night dances; Women's Clubs for handwork and recreation; and in Tukuyu itself an inter-racial club with its own premises, whose members meet to play games, and get to know one another and discuss common problems. These associations make a visible mark on the face of the country in the shape of new brick Churches, co-operative stores, football fields, and, more rarely, a village club-house.

177 The change from a subsistence to a money economy, and from a system of government through chiefs and village headmen who
651 were dependent primarily on inherited wealth, which secured to them the labour of many able-bodied wives and sons, to a system of government through European officials, chiefs, and clerks paid out of taxes, and assisted by unpaid village headmen, implies the collection and administration of taxes. The District Council has
177 the responsibility for the budgeting and expenditure of over £60,000 per annum. The greater part of it is spent on the salaries
652 of chiefs, secretaries, and clerks engaged in administration, on courts, on schools, dispensaries, and roads. The development of associations with paid officers also implies the collection of dues and budgeting. As in so many countries the difficulty of building
177 up a tradition of honesty in administration is great. Tax clerks,
685 court clerks, council secretaries, and co-operative society secretaries, and even church elders handle sums of money relatively large in proportion to their earnings and one of the tasks of European officials and missionaries is to secure a sound system of accounting and check corruption. In the traditional society stock theft was a capital offence, but money has not the sanctity of cattle, and often the clerk who has appropriated public funds is treated by others as 'unfortunate' rather than immoral. At the same time villagers show great anxiety lest a man entrusted with some common fund should spend it for himself. The risk of theft

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

through each group of full brothers, until, when the last full brother is dead, and the son of the eldest is an adult, the family stock comes to him. Thus few men under forty (other than chiefs) have more than one wife. Of 3,000 tax-payers (presumed to be 18 years and over) in Selya, 34 per cent were bachelors, 37 per cent monogamists, and 29 per cent polygynists. Plural marriages breed wealth, for the polygynist is likely to command the labour of many sons as well as several wives, and in due course he expects to receive the marriage cattle of many daughters.

Social status turns primarily on age, sex, and the control and distribution of wealth. As we have seen, the position of a chief is hereditary, but kinship with a chief does not carry office, nor are the kinsmen of chiefs conspicuously wealthy. Every man in turn hopes to control the property attaching to the house into which he was born, and all who live long enough do so. But there is a delayed right of primogeniture, for the senior son of a senior son inherits the bulk of the family stock when it passes to his generation, and the eldest of each group of full brothers has a special claim to the cattle coming in from the marriages of his sisters.

Seniority, whether within the context of the lineage, or of the hierarchy of age-villages, is something respected in itself, but wealth carries authority and prestige only in so far as it is used generously, in hospitality: one man is great and distinguished (*nsisya*) because he feeds people, another of little account because he is poor or mean.

Women occupy a position very subordinate to men in Nyakyusa society. They play no part in public life, except in so far as the two great wives of a chief, and the first wife of a village headman co-operate with their husbands in rituals; and in the relationship of husband and wife, as well as in that of father and daughter, a woman is expected to show obedience and respect. Her deference is expressed conventionally in her crouching to greet men (*vide* Plate IX), and in her use of the submissive *taa* ('Yes, my lord') when addressed by them. Having no great chiefs and little regard for rank, Nyakyusa men show no trace of subservience in their manner to each other, but they expect a meek compliance from all women. The only relationships with a male in which a woman may in some measure assert herself are those which she has with a brother, and with a brother's sons. Leader-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

medicines of power for the first time, and these are thought to create or develop in them *amanga*, that is, the power of seeing and fighting witches (*vide infra*, pp. 96-102). To the senior headman of each young chief is handed a magic horn to attract people to the country. 'The horn is the luck of the chief that many people may come to build.' To each is given also a magic tail, which, it is believed, will enable him to dream of wars that are approaching and which, together with a magic spear, he carries into battle. 'The spear of the chieftainship is to fight battles with, it is manhood, strength.' The horn, the tail, and the spear are emblems of office handed on by the senior village headman of the old chief to the senior headmen of the young chiefs. They were treated periodically by a special doctor and a set was provided for each independent chiefdom at the coming out. The treatment of these emblems is now rarely undertaken—we were fortunate to see it once. The Nyakyusa say that since the country has been pacified, it has become unnecessary; its purpose was to secure success in war.

The next stage in the action is the one from which the whole institution takes its name: 'the coming out' (*ubusoka*). The two young chiefs are secluded for a few hours in the hut of the old chief's first wife, where they receive various forms of magical treatment, and when this is finished someone outside knocks at the door and cries 'Come out!' Then, to quote the words of a village headman who told us about his own 'coming out', 'The director of ceremonies said: "Get up!" The chiefs got up and came out (*basokile*)[1] of the house to us, and we, the crowd of young men, cried "Come on!" and welcomed them. Then we all ran shouting and calling the war cry towards the next chiefdom. In the old days we should have invaded that country to take cattle and to bring them back and eat them at the new huts which we build next. But that is finished now.' The senior headmen of the new chiefdom lead the charge, each grasping his war tail, his

[1] cf. the traditional Nyakyusa greeting (now archaic) '*Sokile!*' literally meaning 'You have come out (of the house)' i.e. 'Good morning!' This greeting was not confined to those who had been through the *ubusoka* ceremony.

A comparison of the meaning of the root in other Bantu languages is again suggestive. In Xhosa *ukusoka* means 'to install circumcised lads into manhood by giving them presents when they come out from their seclusion and are publicly acknowledged as men by the assembly of men' (Kropf, *A Kaffir English Dictionary*); *ubusoka* means bachelorhood, celibacy (of a circumcised man, not a boy).

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

gardens will be small.' And the crops of one who lags behind, 241
when his fellows have planted together, are also said to suffer. For this reason, if one woman is delayed and unable to work along with them, her friends will plant a corner of her field when they plant their own, so that the fertility of her fields may not be lost.

An educated informant explained that 'those who have learnt agriculture may think that late planting is unsuccessful because it is not the right season—the weather is wrong—but others think the failure is due to not planting at the same time as their neighbours.' Christians living on mission land, with their gardens in a block by themselves, do not trouble about planting simultaneously, but many of those living in mixed villages with fields adjoining the fields of pagans conform 'because if they do not plant with them they do not have pleasant social relations'. In some chiefdoms, however, the custom is dying even among pagans. In Porokoto's country we were told: 'The custom is now dead, men just burn higgledy piggledy. A fire blazes up somewhere. We ask, "Whose is it?" "So and so's" comes the reply. "Oh! All right!" The custom has died because the Christians are many and the chiefs have turned to the Christians; their hearts are with the Christians even though they themselves are not baptized, and about this burning of the rubbish heaps for millet they say: "What is it for? Does it avail anything?" '

Among the people of Selya the rule was traditionally less 241
elaborate than among the Kukwe. It is polite and customary for 576
those whose fields adjoin to call one another so that they may begin each process together. 'We speak to each other saying: "Friends, let us hoe a millet field over there, all of us, hunger comes on us." ' And if a son hoes a field next to his father's his 'mothers' call their daughter-in-law to plant with them, since their fields adjoin. But the only sanctions for keeping in step in hoeing and planting are conventional; there is no suggestion that the laggard's crops will fail. If, however, a man *burns* his millet field before his neighbours have heaped their weeds, they have ground for complaint. They say: 'Why have you harmed our crops?'

Underlying the emphasis on neighbours cultivating simul- 241
taneously is the idea that the fertility of fields and crops in ear 754
can be stolen by witchcraft and sorcery, and that if one man's

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

829 876 *ukwangala* is only possible between contemporaries[1] they must build with contemporaries. The value set on *ukwangala* is thus related to the age-village; male contemporaries build together, and the company of, and good fellowship with, his age-mates is what creates a man of wisdom and character. Such is the Nyakyusa view of society.

576 264 572 For conversation to flow merrily and discussion to be profound there must be *ifyakwangalela*—'the wherewithal for good fellowship', that is, food and drink—and very great stress is laid on sharing these. Men and boys are expected to eat regularly with age-mates. Traditionally, fathers and sons never ate or drank together—to do so was held to be incompatible with the respect due from son to father—and men sought the company of equals at meals. From the time a small boy begins to herd he is encouraged to bring home two or three friends to eat with him, and in turn he visits each of them. Since boys have no fields of their own until they marry, but co-operate in cultivation with their parents, it is to their own mothers they go for food, and parents are proud of a son bringing many friends. 'Perhaps', said Angombwike, 'a son will come with his friends and cut a huge bunch of bananas, and take thick milk and eat with them. When the father comes back his wives will tell him: "Your son has eaten all the thick milk and cut a banana bunch!" Then he will ask: "How many men were with my son?" "Six!" "Ah, he's a chief!" the old man will say, smiling proudly.' [861] 'And formerly if a young man came home often alone to eat, his father would beat him, or even take a spear and wound him, and when people asked why he would say: "This great fool comes *alone* to my place, again and again." It is good to eat with friends, for boys to go round in groups of four or five.'

264 562 574 After marriage each man is cooked for by his own wife, but he continues to eat with his friends, bringing them to his home or going to their's .The first wife to come to a young men's village is said to have a hard life. 'She has to draw water and cook for all the young men of the village—they come to drink, and to wash, and they beat her with a stick if she refuses them. No, the

[1] *Ukwangala* is sometimes used with reference to relatives as well as to village-mates, as in the phrase '*atikwangala kanunu nabakamu bake*', meaning 'he is not on good terms with his relatives'; but in its fullest sense it can only be used with reference to contemporaries.

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1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

IX. NDIMBOMI, A CHRISTIAN WOMAN, STOOPING TO GREET A MAN

[Facing p. 70]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

264 cultivate her mind by conversation, or to eat regularly in com-
462 pany. In more formal hospitality there is the same difference; a
574 woman never invites her friends to drink beer with her, or to a 'dinner party', as her husband must do if he is to have prestige with his neighbours. Women only share the ritual feasts at initiation and marriage, and at death.

585 There are local variations in Nyakyusa rituals, notably between the Kukwe and Nyakyusa proper. But everywhere there is an
764 obligation to provide feasts at the funerals and marriages of de-
574 pendants. When his wife or unmarried child dies, a man must kill cattle for his relatives and neighbours to feast at the burial,[1] while an heir provides a feast for his relatives, and the neighbours of the 'father' from whom he has inherited. At these feasts equal portions of meat are allotted to relatives and neighbours—or were so allotted until the rights of neighbours to meat at funerals were formally limited (*vide infra*, p. 93). An heir must also brew beer, or kill a bull, to feast the deceased's neighbours when he begins to cohabit with his widow, or moves the property from his village. At the initiation and marriage of a girl there is a series of feasts (five in Selya), the food for which is provided partly by the groom's family and partly by the bride's; and if, as is usual, the bride is still a virgin or has been deflowered by the groom himself, he must provide a bull in thanks for her virginity (*engambako jabusungu*), which is killed to feast the neighbours and relatives of her parents. The carcass is divided into three portions, one for the immediate neighbours of her father (men), one for 'those relatives with whom the father is on good terms and exchanges cattle', and one for the 'mothers' of the bride. Women as well as men eat meat and other fine food at all the marriage and funeral feasts.

574 The third occasion on which a feast for the village neighbours is thought to be essential is when a man or woman has offended
● 576 his (or her) neighbours, or the neighbours of a 'father'. Thus a woman who has shirked her duty of advising on the division of her brother's inheritance, and is disapproved of by her neighbours on this account, begs pardon of them over a brewing of beer (*vide infra*, pp. 107, 236); a son, having insulted his father's neighbours

[1] For the circumstances under which other relatives must provide cattle for funeral feasts see Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939), p. 18.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

574 by insulting his father, begs pardon of them by bringing a bull which his father may eat with them; or a daughter-in-law, having
576 inadvertently caught sight of her father-in-law, brings beer for him to drink with his neighbours.

574 At all feasts food is allotted in terms of kinship and village affiliation, and this tends to enhance the solidarity of kin groups
264 and villages. For example, funeral meat is first divided between
764 relatives and non-relatives, and that allocated to non-relatives is subdivided by villages, each village headman present being given a share to divide between his people, men and women. When a relative of the chief has died, and the whole country has come to mourn, the chief allots a cow to each of his senior headmen, who then divide the carcasses between the villages in their respective halves of the chiefdom. The meat at a 'coming out' ceremony, and at the great feasts which were held after battle, was divided in the same way, and we saw a division of this kind when a senior headman who had been in exile was welcomed home (cf. pp. 273–4). Thus the right to share in a feast depends either on kinship with the provider, or on membership of a village.

574 The Christians' code of hospitality differs somewhat from that of the pagans: the latter stress feeding *neighbours*, whether it be in
184 the daily eating together, or at informal beer and dinner parties, or at ceremonies, while the Christians stress feeding strangers, quoting the text 'I was a stranger and ye took me in'[1] and the parable of the Good Samaritan.[2] The pagans jibe at the Christians for being inhospitable because (as the Christians themselves admit) they entertain their neighbours less than pagans do; the Christians point to their wider obligations, and the fact that they do feed and house visitors from a distance, especially fellow Christians gathering for Church festivals. The Christians are very conscious also of the difficulties of hospitality in a monogamous household, for a wife must not only do all the cooking for visitors (and many Nyakyusa dishes require considerable labour to prepare), but she must also help to grow the food. The pagan who can afford to entertain much has several wives who share the work between them, whereas a Christian, no matter how rich, cannot have more than one wife and remain a member of his Church—unless it be one of the two small independent

[1] Matthew xxv. 35.
[2] Luke x. 29.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

poraries, the men of the village. They are forbidden to enter her hut, and if she catches sight of one outside she turns away from him and shields her face with a mat. And at the end of the seclusion each 'village father', as well as her own father, must make her a small gift, before she will greet him. The co-wives and some of the village neighbours of the bride's mother form the group of 'mothers' who treat and instruct the bride, help to provide food for the feasts, and finally take her to her husband. Not all the village neighbours are expected to cook for the marriage feasts of a commoner's daughter, only immediate neighbours and special friends (together with relatives) who have been asked to do so; but if an immediate neighbour is not invited to help he will feel affronted. Twijulege explained that 'If the owner of the homestead overlooks someone who has built close to him, and does not say to him, "They are coming to bring the marriage-cattle for *your* child, please help us to cook", then that friend will be angry, and will think to himself, "Perhaps we are not on good terms (*tutikwangala kanunu*) though I had always thought we were", and he will say to the father of the bride: "Why did you not tell me that they were coming to bring the marriage-cattle for your child that I might help you with the food? I was startled by the rejoicing." ' An old man who had only called one friend, besides relatives and the 'best man', to help cook at the marriage of his daughter, was stigmatized as 'a surly fellow who does not care about being on good terms with people'.

The groom, on his part, is supported by his village-mates, who come in a crowd driving the marriage-cattle, and dancing the stamping marriage dance (*ukukanya nganya*). His mother, who has a share in the ritual and brings gifts of food, follows him, accompanied by some of her co-wives and village neighbours.

Village solidarity is thus exhibited at ceremonies, not only in the allocation of food, but by the manner in which village contemporaries of the same sex rally to each other's help, dance together and, if need be, fight together.

Besides offering sympathy and help when their fellow is in need, it is the duty of neighbours to give him advice, and persuade him to act wisely. If, for example, a man has delayed very long in providing marriage-cattle for his son, his neighbours take the son's part, and try to persuade him to give the cattle. 'Perhaps', said one informant, 'the son may elope with a girl, and

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

576 754 In Nyakyusa society it is senior relatives who formally blow out water to express their good will, not suspected witches, as among the Azande. But the admission of anger by the supposed witch or justly shocked neighbours, and their wishes for the patient's good health, are anxiously sought (*vide infra*, p. 101), for such good wishes are thought to lead directly to his recovery.

754 The reverse of this emphasis on the value of confessing anger is the belief that the man who nurses a grudge in secret without ever admitting it is the most dangerous enemy, whether he be a senior relative muttering to the shades, or a neighbour using witchcraft, or a rival who has turned to sorcery. Mwambuputa, a conservative village headman without any school education, was very explicit on the point: 'The root of witchcraft is this—when two people have a quarrel in their hearts and do not let it out. Maybe I have a neighbour who hates me, but he never lets it out, he says nothing and we seem to be on friendly terms—these are the quarrels that are pregnant with witchcraft. But if he lets it out and tells me that I have wronged him in some way then the quarrel has no menace in it. It is when he lets nothing out and stays silent, though angry in his heart, that he comes in dreams to throttle me. That is the root of witchcraft.' Hence the insistence on one accused of witchcraft admitting guilt (*vide* infra, p. 112).

754 'The defenders' are powerful, but it is believed that witches are occasionally able in dreams to get past them, and throttle 791 men against whom they have a grudge, or their cows. ' "The defenders" do not go out in dreams to fight the aggressors every night. A witch wanting to throttle a man comes night after night.' 'Nowadays it is much worse than it used to be, since the Europeans prevent us reporting them, and getting them stopped; "the defenders" work hard, but some nights they sleep without dreaming and the witches get past.'

754 Although the primary function of 'the defenders' is to see and drive off witches, nevertheless they are also thought to use their 791 power to punish a wrong-doer. In doing so they are assisted by the witches, but, the Nyakyusa argue, the village headman who 626 leads this night attack in dreams is no more breaking the law than he is when he fines a thief in court. In both cases he is exerting power to maintain the law. The Nyakyusa have a lively fear of shocking their neighbours, for it is held that the shocked astonish-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 626 between the legal and illegal use of power derived from pythons. 'The breath of men' is the general public opinion of a whole group—of an age-village or chiefdom—acting through the 'python power' of those of its members who happen to be possessed of it, led by one or more village headmen and directed against a single person. On the other hand, individuals proved to be witches are those believed to have acted by themselves, either against the public opinion of their age-village or chiefdom, or at any rate without securing its support. No pagan Nyakyusa doubts that witchcraft is bad, or that 'the breath of men' is used to bring legitimate punishment on evil-doers, but the classification of particular cases varies somewhat with the point of view of the individual. The victim of 'the breath of men' may speak indignantly about the attacks of 'the witches'.[1]

791 576 'The defenders' are regarded as pillars of society, and their exercise of python power as right and proper, yet no one readily admits to the possession of such power; it is a proud and boastful thing to do, and not good manners. Informants, when discussing it, rarely spoke as if they had direct knowledge of the power, usually prefacing their remarks with: 'It is said that', or 'I hear that'. This was true even of village headmen who are all believed to have the power. One such man, to whom a direct question was put, replied: 'I would not go so far as to boast of it myself, but other people in my village have it.' In villages of mature and old men, others besides the headmen are often known by name as having it; and besides this there is the general belief that in each such age-village 'some people', not specified, have it as well.

iv. Witchcraft, 'the breath of men' and morality

754 [626] Now the power of witchcraft and 'the breath of men' is held to operate primarily within one age-village, and it is denied that it can ever extend beyond the chiefdom. 'How could the people of another chiefdom "eat" a man?' said the village headman, Mwafula, 'It is those *here*'. The typical accusations are against neighbours and wives or co-wives and, nowadays, against fellow workers living in the same camp (cf. table, p. 198). The fact that it is within the village that witchcraft is thought to operate is

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'An African Morality' in *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936), pp. 87–8, for such a case.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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Nyakyusa pagan society from its quality in England. The word *ukulila* in other contexts means to cry, weep, or complain aloud; at burial it is used to refer specifically to the wailing, and by extension to the whole of the ritual. The quality of Nyakyusa mourning is both more openly terrified and grief-stricken and also more lively than in England. And these two qualities of fearful grief and vivacity are very closely connected.

That some at least of those who attend a Nyakyusa burial are moved by grief it is easy to establish. We have heard people talking regretfully in ordinary conversation of a man's death; we have seen a man whose sister had just died walk over alone towards her grave and weep quietly by himself without any parade of grief; and we have heard of a man killing himself because of his grief for a dead son. But, even among the chief mourners, they are not all grieved: 'There are some men', said an old woman, 'who have no sorrow when their wives die. J., when his wife died, was quite unmoved; and some women are not much upset when they lose their husbands. L. was not when her husband died; perhaps she was thinking of marrying again, for she was quite young. But old women are always grieved for they cannot marry again.'

Whatever their private feelings may be, however, the chief mourners and other relatives are obliged for very shame to show [576] signs of grief. The chief women mourners, as we have seen, may not dance; the more distant women relatives may not adorn themselves; and all the chief mourners, both men and women, are expected to weep and shed tears. We have seen an old man weeping at his half-brother's burial, although the two had, notoriously, been on very bad terms and had hardly spoken to each other for years. And all relatives, however distant, who come to a burial are expected to greet the chief mourners sympathetically. Very many non-relatives do so too, but they may omit the greeting without offence, if there is a great crowd present.

We have plenty of evidence that the grief at death is largely mixed with fear. It is, indeed, probable that the fear of death (fear of their own future death, fear of the shades, fear of the contagion of the corpse) touches some people at a burial more deeply than grief. Be this as it may, it is clear that the mourning is, for some, an expression of real fears. And it is the relatives, above all, who are afraid. Neither contagious diseases nor subsequent affliction by the shades, nor the vague contagion of the corpse concern any non-relatives, except those who dig the grave and bury the dead

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

One by one the villagers emerge from the houses, and sit in the sun, greeting neighbours with a polite 572 "Have you slept well?" if there are any neighbours [576] near. Then the husband milks the cattle, and the boys come to drive them out to the pasture, where they will remain until the early afternoon, when they are again milked.

Generally the cattle sleep in the same house as their 231 owners, tied up to stakes fixed deep in the floor; but 592 where there are grown-up sons not yet married, a separate house is built in which the parents sleep with the little ones, while the young men guard the cattle from raiding thieves.

The bed is frequently no more than a mat spread 573 on the mud floor, with a single blanket for covering, and no pillow, unless it is a piece of roughly trimmed wood. The more prosperous natives, earning good pay in the employment of Europeans, have well-made beds fully equipped, in many cases even with mosquito nets hung from the roof. The poorer consider that they have made a great step forward if they have been able to save up enough money to buy a single blanket, and not seldom even that belongs to the father, the mother and children having to be content with meagre coverings of calico or grass mats. But [354] the house is warm, often too warm, for the fire is always burning, the door is closed, there are no windows, and there is no ventilation in the roof; and all the inmates sleep with their feet to the fire, which is in the middle of the floor.

Here and there one will come upon rows of tiny 342 houses, each built and occupied by two or three small 561

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

241 sheer hard work makes men and women look thin and
512 haggard. Work stops about noon; the women go home to attend to the food, the men to see to the cattle which the smaller boys have been looking after
231 during the day. The milking is always done by the
512 men; it is not women's work as with us. If there are
[462] flies about, and there usually are, the cows need no invitation to thrust their heads into the column of acrid smoke that arises from a dung fire, kindled for the purpose. The rest of the afternoon is filled either with small duties, basket mending, net work, some slight repairs to a canoe, rope making, house repairing; or it may be there is a lawsuit to be settled, and every idler will make a point of being present.

512 By the time food is over, night has closed in. If
[576] the night is dark, one after another slips away with a friendly "May you sleep well," and silence reigns until morning. Unless it is suddenly broken by the roar of a lion or the growl of a leopard; and then the young men, who sleep with the cattle, rush out with spears and clubs and wild shouting to drive off the intruder, while the others raise a weird cry within the houses. Should the lion take refuge in a thicket and refuse to be driven off, a small party may slip round to the nearest white man, if he is not too far away, to beg him either to lend them a rifle, or to
512 come himself to their aid. In the warm moonlight
535 nights, however, other noises fill the ear. The young people gather for a dance, and the drum fills the night air with its interminable tum tum tum, now soft and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

allowed to escape; it has *ifingira*, the most powerful 784
of all drugs, and is divided between the chief and the great doctors, who alone may cut up a lion's carcase. Another very powerful drug is *ilibobwe*, which, if cast into a doctor's house, destroys the virtue of all his medicines; and if carried through a garden will wither up all crops; it is therefore *mwiko* to possess it unless one is a doctor.

The code of manners includes prohibitions against 576
speaking with the mouth full in the presence of elders; the elders will curse the offender with dire results; against spitting, for sorcerers only are great enough to dare, and one may be accused of sorcery. If a great man is passing, one must sit right down on the ground to salute him; to sit on a chair or any kind of seat is grossly bad manners, and is *mwiko;* it is followed by the unspoken but unfailing curse. Nakedness, even among the unclothed Konde, is a serious offence; at the least a small apron of leaves must be worn, for sorcerers go naked at night, and a charge may lie against anyone found unclad. If a stranger, notwithstanding the prohibition against it, asks for food, it must not be refused: how do you know that he is not a friend of Kabeta, who will send lions to punish you for churlishness! A woman must [264]
not eat while the males of her family are eating; if she does, her husband will talk to her presently. When on a journey, the young men must go first to face the dangers of the road; it is *mwiko* for the elders or chiefs to be in front. If two companies meet, they must not mix; each keeps its own side of

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

576 the road, and all spears must be lowered from the "ready" position, as must axes or other weapons. It is *mwiko* to attend to one's personal comfort in a public place.

843 784 The prohibitions connected with women are very numerous, and only a selection is given. A pregnant woman may not go near food in any condition, growing, being threshed, or being cooked; nor may she go near beer that is being prepared. If she goes out of the house, she must not turn back in the doorway; the ancestors are there; she must go right out, and if she needs to go in again, she must do it from a pace or so from the door. The penalty is the death of the child she is carrying. An interesting prohibition is that against going behind anyone, and it applies specially though not exclusively to women. The incised medicine of the person behind whom she passes loses its virtue; but the evil may be averted by the person turning round to face her. A woman must not sweep rubbish out of the house; she must lift it out; to sweep it out is to scatter her husband's wealth.

595 The younger wife must not begin sowing or planting until the elder has begun; she must not sleep at night nearer the fire than the elder; she must carry loads for the elder wife, and be generally in a subordinate position. There is no reluctance on the part of the first wife to see her husband taking others; the more he has the greater is her position. A singular prohibition is that which forbids a man to take his widowed mother home to care for her; he must care

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

606 how unwittingly, is one of the gravest of misfortunes. "He will never die," say some; but this apparently startling fate means no more than he will fall into one sickness after another, and finally will die in a weak and undesirable old age. Others believe in a different kind of ill-luck. The man will be accursed, and will be unable to stand upright, but will be obliged to crawl on his buttocks all his life, scourged by an evil spirit which dwells in him. If the daughter-in-law [576] sees her husband's father, she has merely committed a breach of good manners, and suffers no evil in consequence.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

were killed by a tree, who were killed in war, by lightning, by lion or leopard, I call you all to come; and whosoever has been forgotten, let him come. I pray to you all, let my dog be well, let him lie down in peace. He is the saliva of God. O God, be merciful, and turn back the disease." 782

The beer that he brought and laid on the ground before him, is now poured into the palms of little children, who drink it in that way. If a flesh offering is also made, it is laid down in small pieces, and each ancestor is named as his portion is laid down. When ants come out to feast on it, it is known that the spirits have accepted the offering, and all present run away lest the spirits should work evil upon them.

Little children are affectionately referred to as dogs, especially when they commit a fault, which the father apologizes for. "How can you be angry with the little one? He has no more sense of what is fitting than a dog." But to call a person a dog in any other connection is a great insult, and must be atoned for. Spitting on a person is another insult, but when done ceremonially, it is believed to have great virtue, and is no doubt connected with the idea of the "Spittle of God" referred to above. 576

If the sick person does not recover, the fault is not in the system. Some mistake has been made, the diviner is unskilful, his wife is "unclean," or some other cause prevents the expected result from following; for, when the proper ceremonies have been performed, the patient recovers. But a final cause of failure is always kept in hand; it is the will of God 761

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 breasts, sit on a tree near the house; if *mwanjala*,
[825] little black and white birds of another species, hop about twittering; the approach of strangers is fore-
[574] told. Hospitality to strangers is a primary virtue among the Konde, and food is prepared at once; but it is not cooked until they actually arrive. To offer
[576] them food already cooked, is to offer a cold welcome, and possibly to do an injury; for cold food must not be eaten by chiefs, nor by hunters, nor by doctors, for in all these cases the effect would be to destroy the power of the medicines by virtue of which they are assured of success in their various callings.

787 5. Omens having reference to food are numerous, and a few examples must suffice. If a fly goes into
262 one's mouth, it is a sure sign that the person will soon be eating flesh, a rare treat for the Konde, who seldom eat flesh, unless there is an occasion for it: a birth, a marriage, or a death. But the fly indicates none of these; the flesh hinted at is a pure gift with no kind of condition attached. The same good fortune is suggested if a child eats cinders from the fire-place. A leopard crying all night in the neighbourhood is giving information that some one has broken a food prohibition. New season's food has been eaten before the chief has laid an offering of the first-fruits of that particular food-stuff at the grave of his ancestors, and the dwellers in the underworld are angry at the insult offered them. The chief is informed of the crying of the leopard, and the diviner is called in to find the culprit.

787 There is a common grass called *ditika*, which in

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Burier of men!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Mpeta![1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kiposa[1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kyabala![1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Striker and Stabber! —Great Father! Great Father!—O Mwenende![2]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Mpolombasambo![2]—Great Father! Great Father! —Dweller in the hot sun!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Fish-eater! O Banana-eater!—Great Father! Great Father!'" The general form of this praise-song was identical with that of the prayers in the sacred groves and so it is literally true to say that the nobles of Ngonde worshipped the living Kyungus. 643 644

But the majority of their subjects only worshipped from afar in fear and trembling. At Mbande no ordinary commoner was ever conducted into the sacred enclosure but only the territorial nobles and the elder chiefs, and they only occasionally; while when the Kyungu travelled through his country all men save the very oldest fled from his approach: "In former times we commoners never looked on the face of the Kyungu, we feared him far too much. When he journeyed through Ngonde we all used to flee from him, men, women and children; only the very oldest stayed to watch him as he came; and they would fall down and clap their hands in grateful worship."

Even in speech fearful circumlocutions were used to refer to his journeying—"The country is on the move"—"The great hill is moving"—"The mystery is coming." While it was taboo both for the old men who then stayed to see him and for those who entered the sacred enclosure, ever to greet him in the usual way. Falling down and clapping the hands was the only greeting for the Kyungu, never the ordinary "how-do-you-do?" From the nobles and great chiefs men did not flee; but the great chiefs, at least, were greeted by falling down and handclapping, not in the ordinary way. [195] [576]

From the wives of the Kyungu also men fled in terror, fearing lest they be compromised and thrown over the cliff, and this both added to the atmosphere of terror which surrounded him and was an expression of it.

On the other hand the various gifts of the Kyungu to his subjects were, in their ceremonial aspect, an expression of personal relationship to them, of paternal interest in them; and so also the tribute which they brought to him was, in its ceremonial aspect, an expression of filial respect. As in all primitive groups personal rather than impersonal relationships were dominant in the old Ngonde. The Kyungu was 643 602 [431]

[1] Names of early Kyungus.
[2] Archic words which I do not understand.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

to which all had led up.) Then Mwaipopo (116) spoke: 'We have taken home Mwakanjoki (60), we have taken home Mwakisambwe (30).' And the others agreed: 'We have taken him, we have taken him.' Mwaipopo went on to speak of the tree cutting: 'It was always a swept place, Mwakanjoki (60) built there, let it be a swept place again, let it be clear, let our prayers go beneath to enter the house here [i.e. no matter that the trees have been pruned], prayers go beneath in the swept place. See, we buried our father Mwaijonga (82) in the swept place, was it heavy? [i.e. a sacred grove] No, a tree grew later. So if I like I cut that it may be clear again.' To which Kasitile replied: 'Thank you, Mwakagile' (116, identified with his grandfather 59). Mwaipopo continued: 'Let no one whisper. Who whispered? Where do we all look? Here! It is our earth, here, it is our tree, here, it is our fertility of the soil (*mboto*), here. No one stirred up Mwakisambwe (30); he stirred up himself.'

783 782 [688] [778]

So they prepared to go, saying, 'It's getting dark, it's getting dark.' But Kasitile stopped them. 'Wait, there is one thing left, tell Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 59) that he should seek a cow, let us finish.' They took this up: 'Yes, since we have taken your grandfather to his home, let us go to your father, Mwaijonga (82), and to Mwakabule (117), let us finish them.'

Mwaipopo ignored this. 'It's getting dark, let us go.' And Kasitile softened it by addressing Njobakosa and his fellows: 'But Njobakosa have you cattle?' 'Yes!'

'And has Kissogota got some?'

'Yes.'

'Well, then, is it you who will seek this cow?'

'No!'

'Indeed, it hurts Mwakagile' (116, identified with his grandfather 59) [i.e. it hurts him to have to spend his cows].

'Do not "cut leaves at home" [i.e. summon a crowd and discuss the matter publicly], he will be startled, he will swear at us, speak with him privately.'

[576]

So they went off. Jane (wife of Kasitile, 86) took the breast of beef to Mwaipopo's (116) place. One leg went to the priests, Njobakosa, Ngulyo, and Kissogota, one to Mwamakunda and Ndisu (Kasitile's kinsman), and another kinsman who was not present, the hump and neck were sent to me; and two legs and the chine were kept for Kasitile himself and his female relatives.

A couple of weeks later, when Kasitile came to visit, he explained one or two points in the ritual. Asked about Mwamakunda's forceful words 'Why do you shut up words in the heart?' and the reply of Kissogota and Njobakosa, he said: 'That is very important. Mwamakunda is my man, he stands by me, he eats meat with me, he compelled

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P.138]

Notes on the daily life of the Nyakyusa (Tanganyika Territory)

Cf. Sociologus 1951, I, 1 S. 53 ff.

By F. Rudolf Lehmann

192 576 *1. Greetings.* The first thing to strike a visitor to the Nyakyusa country north of Lake Nyasa on passing through one of the numerous picturesque villages surrounded by banana groves is the way of greeting customary among these people. *"Ukuponya"* is the Nyakyusa word for "to greet". In the morning you are greeted with the exclamation: *"ugonile* (pl. *mugonile)"*, which literally means: "Did you sleep well?" And you may answer in the same way, or, in fuller form as you can hear it from the mouth of the natives: *"ae'e ndaga, ugonile"*, or *"ugonile yoyoque"*. *"ae'e ndaga"* may be used with all answers, meaning: thanks! At noon or in the afternoon you will hear: *"uvombide"*, you have worked, or, have you worked? Then, according to the case, you may answer: *"muvombide avanda"*, you, men, have worked, or, generally: *"mwangere"*, which is equivalent to the Swahili: *"habari gani?"*. If you greet a person in the evening with the words: *"ugonege"*, may you sleep well, the person thus addressed will answer: *"kagone!"*.

234 [312] *2. Milking.* The first task in the daily life of the Nyakyusa people is for the men to milk the cows. This is done in the morning before the cattle are driven out to graze and again in the evening when they return. But the cattle are also driven back to the village at noon when [237 they are usually fumigated standing in the smoke of a fire for which 232] cow dung and banana leaves are used, a process designed to remove vermin from the skin of the cattle. The animals seem to be very fond of this procedure. They stand quietly in the smoke gazing at the passers-by.

241 [462] *3. Hoeing.* "Hoeing is the work of men, planting weeding, reaping is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about four hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a. m., on the upland plateau they

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

b. Dignity

Though the Nyakyusa lay so much stress on geniality, and praise a man for being 'a good mixer', yet they greatly admire dignity (*ubusisya*). To be *nsisya* (dignified, impressive) is one of the attributes of chiefs and village headmen, sought, as we have seen, through medicines; but ordinary men may also aspire to it in their persons and homesteads. Indeed, *ubusisysa bwa nkaja*, the dignity of the homestead, is one of the legitimate channels of ambition to a Nyakyusa, and is something achieved largely through hard work.

Two styles of huts are traditional—one round, with the wall slanting outwards towards the top, and a conical roof; the other rectangular with perpendicular walls, a pitched roof, and curving gables (cf. Plates X and XI). For a homestead to be dignified the huts must be built of good bamboos, and the space between them packed with oval-shaped mud bricks, carefully worked in patterns. Special pains are taken with the ends of long huts (*ifibaga*) to get a good curve on the roof pole, and a pleasing design of bricks and criss-cross binding on the gable (cf. Plate XI). Inside, the walls are plastered smooth, and house-proud women mould a pattern in the mud with their fingers, which runs round the wall like a frieze. A long hut, showing that the owner has many cattle and young wives to house, adds dignity, but the homestead of a relatively poor man may be *nsisya* if the huts are well built, the open space between them weeded and swept, and the bananas pruned and heavy with fruit; while a shabby long hut and a dirty court are never dignified, no matter how rich the owner. The insistence on cleanliness both within the huts and in the court is very marked;[1] men themselves weed and sweep regularly around their homesteads, and their young sons must help them. The Nyakyusa jibe at their neighbours for being dirty in person, in cooking, and in their homesteads: indeed the dirty habits of the women is given as a main reason for not intermarrying with the Kinga or Poroto; and a Christian confided in

[1] Thomson, Kerr-Cross, and Lugard were all greatly impressed by Nyakyusa cleanliness; Thomson, op. cit., p. 271; Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), p. 283; Lugard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 131.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

us that it was a great effort to her to accept food from the Poroto when she went on preaching tours, because their huts and pots were so dirty.

Trees are felt to add to the dignity of a homestead as well as throwing a grateful shade; the beautiful *umwali* trees have long been valued for this purpose, and to-day exotics are much sought after. For example, the old chief Mwaipopo, noticing a fine cypress when he visited us at Isumba (a cottage that had once been a German mission hospital) inquired whether there were not some seedlings under the tree. He himself carefully dug up one and took it away to plant in his 'capital'. Some Nyakyusa even *steal* trees to adorn their homesteads. It is said that jacarandas planted out in an avenue at Tukuyu disappeared within a very short time.

The attributes of dignity in the homestead are changing perceptibly. Well-built huts in the old style, a long *ikibaga*, a well-swept court, fruitful bananas, and fine *umwali* trees are mentioned by the old men; but many of the younger ones prefer hip-roofed houses (a style introduced by Europeans and known, appropriately enough, as 'the partridge') with windows and door of European pattern, beds of flowers, roses, fine coffee and exotic trees. Yet they keep the court well swept; for lawns have not become fashionable.

A fine presence, a well-kept homestead rich in cattle and bananas and shaded with stately trees, are in themselves impressive, but the possessor of them only reaches his full dignity when he acts as host, and uses his fine food and fine home for lavish hospitality. Wealth and an impressive manner, without urbanity and hospitality, may well lead to accusations of witchcraft.

c. Display

Feasts provide opportunity for swaggering parades and dances in which the Nyakyusa delight to display themselves and their possessions; they are the great occasions for *ukumoga*, that is, display in approved forms. Dancing, exhibiting a beautiful body with only a narrow bark-cloth belt to hide it, showing off physical strength and the aggressiveness of a warrior, parading orna-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

was a fierce man in war, and always quarrelling with and spearing his fellows, he would say with pride: "He is my son!" And if he heard people saying: "The son of so and so is a fierce man", he would rejoice. And if the son wished to marry young his father would refuse him cows, saying: "Swagger first."' That truculence (*ubukali*) is a form of swaggering for men, is still evident in the funeral dance, when men charge up and down with spears, displaying their strength, and take umbrage at the slightest thing (*vide infra*, p. 151). And marriage was deliberately delayed partly because a bachelor was thought to be a fiercer warrior than a married man.

This admiration of truculence, as shown in the funeral dance, reveals a contradiction in Nyakyusa values. On the one hand urbanity and good temper are praised—they are intrinsic to *ukwangala*—on the other truculence. Is the opposition one between old and new values, or is the contradiction itself traditional? It is obvious that a readiness to fight was a quality valuable to the village in the days of inter-village warfare, and the Nyakyusa tell of murderers and even thieves being reprieved just because they were so useful in war. 'We did not drive away violent men (*abagasi*) in the old days; we said: "They will fight along with us in the future"'; whereas since the pacification of the country, quarrelsome men have become nothing but a liability, likely to get their fellows and their chief into trouble with the Administration. The Christian emphasis, also, is all on the virtue of peaceableness. There has probably been some change in values with the disappearance of war from the villages, but we think that a certain contradiction always existed: swaggering young men were admired, and children were warned not to be quarrelsome (*nkali*) towards their fellows, lest they be accused of practising witchcraft, or rouse the anger of a witch. The contradiction is not, of course, peculiar to Nyakyusa society, and it may be resolved by defining the groups within which fighting is excluded, and those in which it is approved. Most Nyakyusa would hold that in the old days quarrelsomeness within the village was bad, that towards members of another village of the same chiefdom it was allowable, and towards members of another chiefdom it was good. In the wider society of to-day the same distinctions are apparent: the war dance at funerals is limited lest it lead to fighting between villages (*vide infra*, p. 151) but admir-

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ing audiences watch their friends in the detachment of the King's African Rifles at bayonet drill in Masoko.[1]

Display is felt to be particularly appropriate to young people, and bachelors were held to be the fiercest warriors, but neither dancing nor fighting was confined to young men. The chief Mwaipopo (Plate V) was famous as a skilful and ardent dancer when over seventy, and the leader in war was the senior headman of the country, who, if not already married when he took office, had to marry almost immediately, since his wife shared in the ritual of establishing his house. Furthermore the villages of married men of the ruling generation fought, as well as the villages of their bachelor brothers and sons.

That the Nyakyusa had some skill in warfare is certain, for they defeated and drove off Ngoni raiders and warriors of the Sangu chief Merere,[2] but they never developed a military kingdom like that of the Bemba to the west, or the Hehe to the east, nor did they raid at large like the Masai and Ngoni. Their geographical position sheltered them very considerably from outside attack, and discouraged raiding abroad. They confined themselves mostly to lifting the cattle of neighbouring chiefdoms.

Cattle, whether they be spoils of war or inherited wealth, are displayed. Not only does a long byre add to the dignity of a homestead, but, when there is some ceremony at the home of a rich man, he shows off his herd by driving it round and round the homestead. At other times his sons gallop it along the village street, the iron bells with which the animals are adorned ringing merrily. Nyakyusa smiths make cow-bells in sets,[3] to chime in harmony, and the aim of a rich man is to own a set of bells which ring a full chime, and a herd large enough to carry them. Nowadays those who own bicycles display them in the same sort of way, riding round and round the homestead at a ceremony, and ringing the bells madly.

Unlike the enjoyment of good company (*ukwangala*), display

[1] This detachment was not supposed to include Nyakyusa who were recruited for a detachment stationed outside the district, but in fact Nyakyusa got in by posing as men from Ngonde, Nyasaland.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 119–20; Lugard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 56, speaks of the Nyakyusa as 'brave in war'.

[3] We deposited a set in the Livingstone Memorial Museum, Livingstone, N. Rhodesia.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ance among Nyakyusa Christians, and the tendency for fathers and sons to build fairly close to one another.

The forms of display approved among Christians are also changing with the change in the sex code. The nakedness of the Nyakyusa shocked the missionaries, and it is insisted that Christian women, as well as men, should wear at least one cloth; also many of the traditional dances and songs are felt by the Nyakyusa converts themselves to be incompatible with the profession of Christianity, consequently at funerals and weddings there is often a group of Christians dancing quite separately from pagans, and singing their own song, which, more often than not, is a hymn. A wedding dance to a hymn does not appear incongruous to Nyakyusa, as it does to European observers.

e. Wisdom

There is a very close connection between the values we have cited, and all save one are coherent with one another. The enjoyment of good company implies observance of the rules of decency; *ukwangala* is between equals, not between parents and children; it merges into neighbourliness, for one who does not help, or seek help from, a neighbour is unfriendly (*atikwangala kanunu*); and it is dependent upon that generous hospitality which is one of the manifestations of dignity (*ubusisya*).

The one value which is not wholly coherent with the others is the value of display (*ukumoga*). Certain forms of display are compatible with urbanity and friendliness between neighbours, but the swaggering truculence of the warrior is not—it is liable to breed quarrels between fellow villagers, as well as with outsiders; and display also ceases to be compatible with other values when it involves adultery. The friends of a woman who has eloped with a lover may greet her with the phrase: '*Ndaga, umogile*!' which literally translated means 'Thank you, you have displayed yourself', and implies, 'Congratulations! Had a good time?' But no Nyakyusa would maintain that to commit adultery was, in general, good.

The all-embracing virtue to the Nyakyusa is wisdom (*amahala*). It includes the enjoyment of company and the practice of hospitality, for no man is wise who is surly, or aloof, or stingy; it includes neighbourly behaviour, dignity, and respect for law and

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

convention, but it does not include display. The wise may dance, but they do not need to dance in order to be wise, and those who commit adultery, or are boastful, or quarrelsome show foolishness (*ubukonyofu*) and sinful pride (*amatingo*), the opposite of wisdom. Wisdom is expressed in all relationships, not only in village relationships, but it is *learned* in the village; pagan Nyakyusa insist that 'it is by conversing with our friends that we gain wisdom'.

The Christian view is somewhat different. Urbanity, neighbourliness, hospitality, and dignity are components of wisdom for a Christian also, but he would add something further—'the knowledge of God'—and such knowledge is sought not in village relationships only. It is sought also in schools, in the religious teaching of the missionaries, in the scriptures, in worship, and in prayer.

Having considered some of the values[1] realized in age-villages, we now turn to the sanctions maintaining them.

[1] It may be asked why we have omitted fertility in our discussion of values realized in village relationships, when fertility in men, cattle, and fields is one of the ultimate values of Nyakyusa society. The reason is that fertility is realized in the relationships of kinship and of the chiefdom, rather than in village relationships. The village rituals in the fields, which we have described, are primarily defensive—to protect the crops against the attacks of witches and sorcerers—and the fertility of the soil is held to depend mainly on the chief, and the rituals he performs on behalf of his country.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Christians are only affected by the shocked astonishment of fellow Christians, not by the disapproval of pagans, and the unit within which 'the curse' is commonly spoken of as operating is the congregation. In two of the cases we recorded (*vide* Document, p. 209) it was suggested that illness was due to the anger of neighbours, fellow Christians, over stinginess and greed, but in the other cases it was not village neighbours who were primarily concerned, but the Christian congregation, a group embracing members from many villages.

The type of behaviour believed to be punishable by 'the curse' of fellow Christians also differs somewhat from that thought to be punished by 'the breath of men'. The virtue Christians emphasize most is chastity, and 'the curse' is often said to be a punishment for fornication or adultery. The other sin commonly spoken of as bringing down a curse is disobedience, or disrespectful behaviour to the minister (or priest) or elder of the congregation. Among pagans 'the breath of men' serves also to sanction sexual morals and to sustain respect for those in authority, but their sex code is different. It is incest, or familiarity between father- and daughter-in-law, which they regard as really evil, not sex relations outside marriage. And they emphasize respect to senior relatives and fathers' neighbours rather than to the leaders of any wider group.

Christians lay much less stress on hospitality to neighbours than pagans, and it is generally agreed that they eat alone more than pagans would dare to do. As one Christian put it, a pagan would *always* call his neighbours to share meat or beer when he had it, but a Christian might eat a sheep, or a goat, or even a calf, alone with his family. It is good, the Christians say, to call friends to share a feast, but not an inescapable obligation. Nor do Christians regularly send the saddle and ribs of any animal they kill to the chief, as pagans do; 'for', they say, 'we do not fear "the breath of men".' But hospitality towards strangers is felt to be a condition of salvation. One informant explained that 'If a man is stingy towards his neighbours it does not matter; but if he is stingy towards a stranger from a distance, he might die from lack of food; and that would be the fault of the stingy one. Such a fault would prevent him from entering Heaven.' This statement points to the most striking difference between Christian and pagan morality—the range of moral obligations. A pagan's duties

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

795 are primarily to his kinsmen and fellow villagers, and secondarily
574 to fellow members of his chiefdom; beyond the chiefdom and
184 circle of kinsmen he had, traditionally, no obligations. The
577 Christian definition of 'neighbour' is a much wider one. It is emphasized by the missionaries that the Christian Church is universal, and Nyakyusa Christians themselves are conscious of their unity with, and obligations to, members of other chiefdoms, other cultural groups, and other races. The new sanctions for behaviour operating within the Christian group—the emphasis on Christian duty; the hope of that 'peace which passeth all understanding' and of eternal life; and the fear of suspension or expulsion from the communion of the faithful, and of hell-fire[1]—all these apply to relations beyond, as well as within, the village, the chiefdom, and the circle of kin.

795 Two other points were mentioned by Christian informants
184 when discussing the differences between pagan and Christian
577 morality: they said that Christian children growing up were liable to be 'proud' (*namatingo*) in their bearing and manner of greeting, because they do not fear 'the breath of men'; and also that Christian men were not afraid to ask many cattle for their daughters at marriage, again because they do not fear their neighbours' disapproval in the way pagans fear it. The implication is that there is less insistence upon conformity to a given code among Christians than among pagans; a greater tolerance of diversity of behaviour.

795 These differences between pagan and Christian dogma are
788 matched by differences between their ritual. There are no
184 Christian rituals in which the village as a group, distinct from other groups, is concerned. The congregation—the group worshipping in one church—is drawn from many villages, and though devout Christians living in the same neighbourhood often gather for morning and evening prayer, such rituals never include a whole village. Even in a Christian village on mission land only a small proportion of the villagers attend daily prayer regularly. As we have seen, the members of a pagan village meet from time to time to warn off witches, or to bless a repentant wrong-doer (*vide supra*, pp. 101, 109 ff.), but since belief in witchcraft or in 'the curse' is not orthodox among Christians, there is no ritual con-

[1] cf. Monica Hunter, 'An African Christian Morality', *Africa*, Vol. X (1937), p. 265–91.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

587 woman. It is scarcely surprising that the seduction of the young
835 wives of an ageing father is a common theme for scandal. We do not suggest that the Oedipus complex involving own mother and son never occurs among the Nyakyusa; what we are concerned to show is that the relationship between a man and his stepmothers is particularly likely to be ambivalent.

583 It may be asked why there is so much emphasis on the segregation of sons from their parents, and not of daughters. The answer
584 again lies in the sex difference in the marriage age. Betrothed girls pay long visits to their husbands even before puberty, and directly after the initiation which follows first menstruation they leave their fathers' home to join their husbands. During her initiation a girl carefully avoids her father and his contemporaries in the village, and after marriage, when she returns home to visit, she must observe certain restrictions not applicable to an unmarried girl: notably she must not approach her parents' bed, and informants interpret the taboo as being due to the danger of mixing the sex activities of mother and daughter.

In short, we argue that there is a connection between the exis-
621 tence of age-villages and the fear of incest between father-in-law
835 and daughter-in-law on the one hand, and between stepson and stepmother on the other, and we suggest that certain features of the Nyakyusa social system facilitate incest of the second type. The incest theme elaborated in one fashion among people organized in clans and practising clan exogamy, and in another among people practising brother—sister avoidance, finds yet a different expression in age-villages, of which the overt purpose is the separation of sons and mothers, of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

c. *Good company*

The emphasis on the separation of parents and children is
577 matched by the value laid on good fellowship (*ukwangala*)
621 between contemporaries. A main end of age-villages, in the Nyakyusa view, is to allow men the enjoyment of congenial company, that is the company of friends and equals. The value of *ukwangala* is, indeed, directly linked with the age-village organization: to attain it men must build not only in villages, rather than in scattered homesteads, but also with contemporaries rather than with kin, since there can be no free and easy inter-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

course and sharing of food and beer between fathers and sons. 577
Ukwangala implies eating and drinking together frequently, and 621
cannot be fully enjoyed by people who do not live close to one another.

The value of good fellowship with equals is constantly talked 577
about by the Nyakyusa, and it is dinned into boys from child- 869
hood that enjoyment and morality alike consist in eating and drinking, in talking and learning, in the company of contemporaries. The solitary and aloof, those who enjoy the company of women (as opposed to direct sexual satisfaction) and those who seek intimacy with members of another generation, are derided.

Now this very emphasis on the value of good fellowship with 577
equals is doubtless a reflection of the difficulty of achieving it. 578
The frequent accusations of witchcraft and movement from one village to another are evidence of friction between fellow villagers. Does the friction turn on the age-village organization?

d. The incidence of accusations of witchcraft

As we have seen, witchcraft is believed to operate primarily 578
within the village, and the typical accusation is against a neigh- 754
bour.[1] But in other societies also witchcraft accusations are most commonly made against those with whom one is living, and in close daily contact: in Pondoland it is members of the same homestead or of neighbouring homesteads who suspect one another of witchcraft; among Xhosa-speaking people in towns it is fellow employees, or fellow schoolmates; among the Azande it is members of the same small neighbourhood. Therefore it is not only the Nyakyusa who accuse village neighbours of witchcraft.

Of the *frequency* of accusation in different societies we can 754
make no comparison, for statistics on witchcraft are extremely difficult to collect. Few field-workers could be certain that they were cognizant of *every* accusation of witchcraft within a given

[1] Over a third of the accusations of witchcraft recorded were against neighbours, as distinct from spouses or co-wives or kinsmen and, if one excludes the modern type of accusation against fellow workers in the same camp, the proportion of accusations against neighbours is almost one half. The thirty-eight witchcraft accusations cannot, of course, be taken as a random sample in the technical sense; we recorded every case that came to our ears, but cannot be certain that inquiries brought to light every accusation in the villages investigated. Nevertheless the preponderance of accusations against neighbours is significant (*vide* Document, pp. 198 ff.).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

121 sarily implied all through, but since the argument can only be un-
128 folded step by step (for no one ritual can be fully analysed until all are described) a discussion of it is reserved to the concluding chapters. In interpreting the symbolism, cross reference between the different rituals of the cycles would be too frequent to give in the text. Readers wishing to follow up references to the symbolism of bananas, for example, or *ikipiki* medicine, should use the index.

771 The link between religious beliefs and morality (in the sense of
577 right behaviour) is very clear among the Nyakyusa. Many misfortunes are attributed to sin, that is, wrong-doings (*inongwa*) thought to be supernaturally punished. Indeed, to the Nyakyusa the idea of the wicked man 'spreading himself like a green bay tree'[1] is inconceivable, and the disciples' question: 'Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'[2] cold common sense. Here we are concerned with the form of morality[3] sanctioned by Nyakyusa religion, with the conception of good and evil, and with
[128] the relation between belief and behaviour.[4] A table of private misfortunes attributed to the anger of senior relatives is included in this volume; public misfortunes will be discussed in the succeeding one; and a table of misfortunes attributed to witchcraft, sorcery, and the legitimate anger of neighbours ('the breath of men') has been given in the study of Nyakyusa age-villages already published.[5] While the Nyakyusa lay great emphasis on the correct performance, in every detail, of certain rituals, their very performance implies co-operation between kinsmen, and not only co-operation but amity. For 'anger in the heart', if unconfessed, may bring misfortune. Thus though the outward form is stressed, the inward and spiritual is not totally ignored.

121 We proceed on the assumption that men express in ritual what moves them most; that the form of expression is conventional and obligatory, and that therefore in ritual the values of a group (as opposed to those of individuals) are revealed.

[1] Psalm xxxvii: 35. [2] John ix, 2.

[3] I cannot accept Professor Radcliffe-Brown's definition of morality as the control of conduct by 'public opinion and conscience' as opposed to control by religion. Nor do I accept Professor Macbeath's argument that primitive man has an idea of good quite apart from religion. A. E. Taylor's view of morality comes much closer to the facts as shown in Nyakyusa society.

cf. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*, p. 172; A. Macbeath, *Experiments in Living*, Gifford Lectures 1948–9; A. E. Taylor, *The Faith of a Moralist*, Gifford Lectures 1926–8.

[4] The germ of the book is Godfrey Wilson's 'An African morality', *Africa*, 1936.

[5] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 198–213.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

602 763 is forgotten he will be angry: 'It happens sometimes that a kinsman comes in later, after the man is buried, and is very angry because no message was sent to him; he comes in a passion, and perhaps he beats his brother [the one who should have sent him a message]. Then the others catch hold of him and say: "Why do you not come soberly and greet us decently with the appropriate words? Come now, why?" And if he does not stop they beat him.'

602 764 These kinsmen and affines, with their wives and children, are under obligation to come to the burial, unless they are sick. Young children under the age of 10 or 11 are not obliged to come, though they often do, but older children must do so. One reason for the continuance of the burial ceremonies for three or four days is that this gives time for relatives from a distance to receive the messages and come. Deliberately to refuse to send a message or, on the [578] other side, to refuse to come to a burial for no good reason, is a symbolic breaking of the bond of kinship and no one ever does either, unless there is a serious quarrel and all economic and social relations are being broken off between the two families concerned.

621 764 577 The village neighbours also are obliged to come to every burial in the village. They normally wish to do so, but, even if they do not, they still come for shame or for fear of being accused of witchcraft if they stay away. Where there is friendship the neighbours come in grief and sympathy and quarrels are softened by the fact of death, but, if the memory of enmity still persists, then the last sanctions are shame and fear: 'Some people mourn more than others.' 'The men who knew him say: "Let us go and mourn him."' 'Those who did not know him intimately mourn because each thinks: "He has died, my neighbour, and so will it be with me one day."' 'If I have quarrelled with my neighbour and he dies, I go to his burial for I say to myself: "It is true that while he lived we quarrelled, but now he is dead and we shall never meet again. I too will go to his burial and mourn him."' 'If a village neighbour does not come to a burial we say he is unkindly and unsociable.' 'And if a man does not go to his neighbour's burial then at once people say: "It was you who bewitched him. Why else do you not come to bury him?"' Several of the accusations of witchcraft recorded had been occasioned by a man's absence from a village neighbour's funeral. For it is believed that witches are chary of going to the burials of their victims lest the dead should rise and denounce them.

643 764 A chief normally goes to all burials in his own country, except

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

789 would never dry up.' Kasitile said: 'The work of the *undumila* and
841 *ikipiki* are the same, they are together. The heavy ones will overstep the girl, they are going to injure her so that she is barren, constantly menstruating, with painful periods.' Lyandileko, a woman doctor, and exceptionally intelligent, said: 'The bride
[753] uses the *ikipiki* medicine because she is empty (*bwasi*). So she washes and eats bananas with *ikipiki*. If she does not wash with it she will have diarrhœa.'

789 The *ikipiki* is also said to make a bride 'patient and polite'. 'If
● 577 the girl did not wash with the powdered medicine (*ikipiki*) she might be rude and proud when she went to her husband's home and insult men there.' This was the statement of Mwakwelebeja, an old commoner particularly well versed in matters of ritual, and it was separately confirmed both by his wife and by Lyandileko, the woman doctor, but not everyone knew the connection. Mwaihojo, the chief, who was present when Mwakwelebeja gave his explanation, said: 'Really! I never knew that!' and his wives, when applied to, said: 'We don't know. The mothers have died' (this though some of them were past middle age).

613 Angombwike identified the *ikipiki* medicine with the blood of a
789 lineage and a bride's treatment with it with the union in marriage.
581 He said:

> As soon as a girl grows up people begin to think about her bearing children. They say: 'The molten iron is discharged, the blood for bearing children has come.' When they grind and brew beer in her honour, they do it in honour of her 'iron' [i.e. menstrual blood]. They give her medicines for disciplining her in the lineage of her husband. When the mothers hear they cry: 'Ours, ours, it has fruited! (*Ifyeto, ifyeto, fipele*).' The girl is given a bundle of the medicine, powdered, and is made to wear a belt of bark-cloth with the powder in it; the medicine is brought from the husband's home by his mothers. The husband, as it were, says: 'That is my blood [or semen] which I have sent to her.' The little bundle is the symbol (*ikimanyilo*) of the child she will bear, the belt with medicine on it means that the molten 'iron' belongs to the blood of that husband. The powdered medicine is brought by the husband's mother. A man's chief wife always has a bamboo flask or a pot full of medicine of their lineage (*ja kikololo kyabo*), powdered ready for use. If she dies it goes to the second wife, if the husband dies to the first wife of the eldest son, and by her it is distributed at need. The powdered medicine is the blood (*imbondanya*[1] *lyo ilopa*).

[1] i.e. the powder made from the *ikipiki*.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

431 neighbours give her gifts after her initiation it is that she may 'cease to avoid them', and a woman may give a small gift to her husband's father's sister, and thereafter look at her. Nowadays, a [606] father-in-law, in exceptional cases, kills a bull for his daughter-in-law so that she may look at him.[1]

556 Great prestige attaches to generosity, particularly generosity •577 with food. A chief or village headman is one who *feeds* people, and generosity is displayed both in informal feasts for neighbours and on the formal occasions of ritual. A father who is generous in the feasts provided for his daughter at her initiation and marriage gains prestige; if he is stingy his affines and his neighbours comment on it; he both loses their respect and fears lest he may even fall ill from 'the breath of men'. If the groom's family fail to provide sufficient, the bride's father does not hesitate to scold them for it, and they reply with humility which may be so exaggerated as to verge on boasting. It is conventional for the groom to plead poverty but at the same time he and his kin compete with the bride's family in preparing quantities of fine food. The pride and excitement over feasts is clearly brought out in the comments on funerals, the remarks of a mother on the return of her daughter to her husband after the birth of the first child, and Angombwike's account of marriage negotiations and gifts (pp. 31–4, 148, 253–5). The principals in any ritual are the centre of attention and may gain prestige from its performance, as a bride does, but what concerns the Nyakyusa much more is the reputation of the family serving the feast. Here the emphasis is very different from what it [171] is in the Pondo ritual for the initiation of diviners, or the Lunda rituals of misfortune.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 85.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

577 There is much more talk among the Nyakyusa of misfortune
777 from the shades or the anger of neighbours, than of blessing, but
556 there is an idea, somewhat vague but real, that generosity and kindliness will bring blessing (*ulusajo*). Ambilikile, a Christian teacher who had grown up in a pagan home, said:

> My mother tells me that my father was in the habit of feeding people, those who were not his relatives. People went to a distance and brought medicines for fertility and gave them to him, hence they said: 'He is very kind; food never grows short at his home.' She also told me that my father died very old. He did not die of disease, but of old age, no breath being left in him. This was because men were always saying: 'May they stand by him, may they bless him (*bammwemelege, bansajege*),' not to his face but to others. They said that he lived long because of the blessing of men. Yes, they say that the food of a kindly man never gets finished, that of a stingy man finishes; he himself suffers hunger.

763 Mwaisumo described a father on his death-bed blessing a favourite son, allocating cattle to him, and telling him:

> Care for the children I have left, keep on good terms with them, then you will be rich in everything like your father. I cared for my children, I was not harsh (*nkali*), so complain to me of anything that troubles you. If you are like this the property in your home will be plentiful, people will be astonished and say: 'He is like his father.'

431 Of a man given a cow by the chief, it was sometimes said: 'The
775 shades have blessed him; he has a righteous (*ngolofu*) shade.'

Although our Nyakyusa informants talked a great deal about
754 the danger of neglecting rituals and angering senior relatives,
673 living and dead, the number of cases of misfortune attributed to
621 their anger is small in comparison with the number attributed to witchcraft or 'the breath of men'. (Ten as compared with sixty-three.) There is no reason to suppose that one type of case was concealed when the others were reported to us, and it is clear that the Nyakyusa prefer to make neighbours in the age-village, rather than kinsmen, the scapegoat for their misfortunes. Even when the wrong done is against a kinsman it is often the neighbours, rather than the shades, who are said to have brought punishment on the wrong-doer.

777 At the same time, we were assured by one informant after an-
621 other that people blame the shades or Kyala for misfortune when it is really the neighbours who are responsible! Angombwike argued that men fear to accuse the neighbours, who are slow to

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

613 602 though wives are assimilated to their husbands' lineages for ritual purposes, men play no part in the rituals of their wives' lineages.

613 The second fundamental principle expressed in the rituals of ●577 kinship is that a moral law holds within the lineage. Senior kinsmen, living and dead, have a mystical power over their juniors, but their anger is dangerous only if it is just. They cannot mutter irresponsibly. Kinsmen are 'members of one another' in the sense that the life and death of one affect the others. The sins of a father are visited on his children, his juniors in the lineage (though a woman's sins affect only her own husband and children), and the very fact of kinship makes a mystical bond between agnatic kin, descendants of a common great-grandfather, and a man and his daughters or sister's children. The moral law is thought to operate also within the age-village, where the just are protected and the evil punished by 'the breath of men'; but within both lineage and village irresponsible and malicious injury by witches or sorcerers is possible.

777 When misfortune occurs the sufferer, and his kinsmen and 787 neighbours, seek an explanation in conflicts and ritual omissions, and interpret the misfortune in terms of these, putting the possible alternatives before the oracle. Thus the danger of conflict with kinsmen and neighbours, and of neglect of ritual, is constantly before men's minds. In practice, there is a strong tendency to push the blame for misfortune outside the lineage of living and dead on to the neighbours.

000 (*b*) *The celebration of rituals and maintenance of the structure*

In any society the practical, intellectual, and emotional aspects are mutually dependent; the practical organization is dependent upon, and at the same time supports, an intellectual system—certain cosmological ideas—and attitudes. It has been argued very cogently that these ideas and attitudes are maintained by their expression in myth and rite[1] but little evidence for this has been published. Can objective evidence be collected? The anthropologist cannot look into men's minds; he is not concerned with personal religion—with the varieties of religious experience. Can he observe any effect of participation in ritual upon the behaviour of groups and categories of people? It must be admitted that our evidence here is thin.

[1] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Andaman Islanders* (1922), pp. 236 ff.; *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (1952), pp. 157 ff.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER VI

Law & Crime

•577 771 671

LAW, morals, and religion are inseparably bound up together. The old idea, still hard to kill, that in the native mind morals and religion have no connection with each other, is the reverse of the truth; but African ideas of morality do not always coincide with European, and to this disparity may be traced the belief that there is no morality in African religion. The sinless man is the man who has broken no law. He is said to be *mweru*, without offence. Now as law and custom are one, and as the spirits are jealous for the retention of all customs that were in force while they were on earth, the man who is assured of a good reception in the underworld is he who has either broken no law of custom, or, having broken the law, has made the required atonement to the injured person.

671 Everything was settled in the long distant past by the fathers, and all one has to do is to conform. For the long domination of ancient custom in law, morals, and religion, meant that life had attained to a condition of stable equilibrium, before the coming of the white man set all in confusion again for many of the people. The ancient equilibrium was disturbed by

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

protective powers of the drug are securely transferred to his own stock. 251

A man who does not hoe is held in supreme contempt, but he does not starve. His neighbours give him food, seizing the opportunity to add much sound advice. But lazy men are held in suspicion, for it is highly probable that they will become garden thieves. 577

When there is reason to anticipate a general scarcity of food, the spirits are invited to confirm or dissipate fears. The chief orders a collection of *malesi* (millet) to be made, each village headman bringing the contribution of his people in a small basket. One headman is selected whose wife makes the beer, the behaviour of which indicates the spirit's answer to the question put. The beer is poured into a large calabash, and thence into two cups, which are placed at the *masyeto* (graves of the dead chiefs). There they are left for the night, and if in the morning the beer is found to have risen in the cups, filling them to the top, the harvest will be good; otherwise it will be bad. If the signs are good, all care is cast away, beer is made in great quantities, and drinking and feasting take the place of the previous anxiety. But when the spirits foretell a bad harvest the utmost economy is practised, and the chief is bound to see that no one makes prodigal use of his resources. 261 787

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done.

In a polygynous family each wife has her own fields (*embaka*), hoed by her husband and her own sons, which she plants, weeds and reaps with the help of her own daughters, and the produce of which she uses to cook for her husband, her own children and herself. The relative rights of husband and wife to dispose of produce vary with different crops, but no co-wife has any rights over a woman's food. She may, and often does, ask her co-wives to help in her fields and sends them presents of cooked food from her own fire, she may help them and receive presents in return; but they have no rights over her fields or her food, only her husband and herself. And the fields which are hoed by a bachelor son belong to his own mother, who in her turn cooks food for him to eat.

Each wife has either a hut to herself, or else a separate alcove in a large hut, and there she has her fire for cooking. She fetches her own firewood and water or sends an unmarried daughter for them.

At meals the ages and the sexes eat separately; in some polygynous families each wife sends a dish to the husband, in others the wives take it in turns to cook for him. The husband eats alone or with neighbours of his own age[7] to share his dish, the older boys and their friends[7] eat separately from the younger children, and each mother again usually eats with her own daughters, apart.

In the relationship of husband and wife the chief elements are sexual intercourse, co-operation in work, the procreation of children and factors of personal inclination, character and temperament. By men women are praised for sexual skill, cleanliness and beauty, for good cooking and hard work, for their fecundity, and for gentleness of speech and behaviour, and those with opposite qualities are criticized. Among women men are praised for sexual skill and attentiveness, for vigour in hoeing and skill in house-building, and for kindness; while sexual neglect, laziness, impotence and cruelty are disliked and may cause a woman to leave her husband for another man.

The birth of children is a most important factor in the marriage relationship, for children are greatly desired both by men and women. They are desired for themselves and also because they bring their parents wealth and prestige; a boy will one day work in the fields of his father and mother, a girl will bring in cattle from her marriage. And the possession of children brings compliments and respect both to man and woman.

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[7] Vide infra "*The Age-Village.*"

[Cat. 116, pp. 269 ff. --Analyst]

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 others as well. Any boys' village is found to consist primarily of the
561 sons of the members of some older village who originally gave the land for its building, but as we shall see later sons of other villages live there too.

621 At the beginning, when a group of boys starts a new age-village, or
342 when boys join one already formed, they do not all have a hut to themselves, two or three friends share a hut. But later, as they grow older, each builds for himself. The younger ones build their huts of reeds, but the older ones try to get a few bamboos from their fathers or senior relatives and build more solid houses. Married men build entirely of bamboo, but often in a boys' village you will find a compromise between bamboo and reed, both being used in the same house; and the houses of bachelors, even though they be all of bamboo, are smaller than those of married men. The technique of good building is not very difficult, and the older boys instruct and help their juniors, as they join the village, to improve the skill playfully acquired as herd-boys so as to build more substantial huts.

245 The chief food of the Nyakyusa is the banana; men plant bananas
262 immediately round their huts, though their fields are mostly at a distance. And bachelors, while they continue to eat their main meals at their parents' village, plant bananas round their own huts as well. Bananas begin to bear very quickly, sometimes within a year of planting, and so, soon after the establishment of a boys' village, its members have bananas of their own, which they cook for themselves and eat with their friends at odd times during the day. But they have as yet no fields.

864 There is no formal initiation of boys at puberty; but, on the other
[881] hand, the custom of leaving home and joining a boys' village is directly
577 connected by the Nyakyusa with their ideas of decency in sexual life. They think it is perfectly all right to discuss sex openly among friends of about the same age but altogether wrong to discuss it either in the presence of, or with, their parents or those of their parents' generation. If a boy learns about love-making, in any way, from his parents the Nyakyusa think that he will not respect them properly and that he himself will be a fool. A boy must learn these things from his immediate seniors and friends. One man said to me: "If a boy after about ten years old stays at home to sleep, he is laughed at by his friends and his own parents send him away. They say: 'If he sleeps at home he will hear what his parents talk about at night, the night is always full of lewd talk; and he may even see them undressing. He will grow up a fool, with little wisdom.' You see at the boys' village" he went on to say, "the older

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love-making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger ones listen to these things and that is all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn. But we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night ; and that is very bad, that is foolishness.—But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to listen, that is how children grow up." 864 577

On another occasion when I told this same man that in Europe many people thought it a good thing for boys to get sexual instruction from their parents and teachers he was shocked : " But I think it is impossible " he protested " for parents to go into detail with their children ; there is too much shame on both sides. And if they did, it would damage the children's respect for them."

There is thus a correlation in this society between the age-village system at its genesis and the belief that a boy's dawning interest in sex must be informed, not by his parents, but by friends only a little older than himself.

Few men marry before twenty-five years of age, but affairs with girls begin before puberty. All affairs are related in detail to friends in the age-village, and the younger ones learn by listening ; and they also learn when the older boys send them as messengers to the girls of their fancy. 582 836 [202]

Besides the more serious love affairs which are carried on in secret, groups of boys from the same age-village commonly flirt with any girls they meet on the way, and it is then that the incest taboos are learnt. If one of the boys is known to be related to one of the girls, either through a common grandfather or great-grandfather, his companions send him away : " Don't you see your sister is here ? You cannot come ! " 835 867

Contrary to a general belief about " primitive " societies, homosexual intercourse is common in the boys' villages, between close friends, but there is no real perversion ; homosexuality is said to be always *faute de mieux*. The older men in discussion dismiss it with the tolerant word " adolescence," it is never continued after marriage, and all except the feeble-minded get married sooner or later. 838

But life in a boys' village also gives its members much information and wisdom unconnected with sex. There, as we have seen, boys perfect their skill in building, and there also they learn to argue and express themselves with adult fluency. It is characteristic of the Nyakyusa legal 621 868 867

621 system that small cases between neighbours are always first discussed and
868 often finally settled in the presence of some friend or friends who act as
867 arbitrators, without recourse to the constituted political authorities. Small disputes about petty theft, the possession of a cloth or some coppers, the ownership of a banana stem and so on, are as frequent in the boys' village as elsewhere, and as elsewhere the people concerned often argue it out to a finish before some friend or neighbour. And by listening to such disputes, or participating in them either as judge or principal, the boys acquire rhetorical skill and some knowledge of law. In some boys' villages there is a recognized leader appointed by the political authorities of the chiefdom to settle graver disputes, in others there is not. The position of such a leader, where there is one, will be discussed later.

577 Above all the boys' village gives to its members the conversation and
621 company of more of their own contemporaries than did the group of herd boys, and company the Nyakyusa hold to be the greatest of educators. In the most explicit discourse I heard on the value of company my informant explained that cleanliness, together with rhetorical and conversational skill, were all learned in company. These are his exact words: "We say that it is by conversing with our friends that we gain wisdom; it is bad to sit quite silent always in men's company. A man who does this seems to us a fool, he learns no wisdom, he has only his own thoughts. And a man who does not spend time with other people is always dirty, he does not compare himself with any friend. We say that we learn cleanliness of body in company, the dirty ones learn from their more cleanly friends. Again if a man is accused to the chief and is unable to defend himself easily and with eloquence we mock at him and say: 'What is the matter with you? Do you live all by yourself? How is it that you are so foolish?' We think that wisdom and cleanliness are the two great things learnt in company. We think it is bad to live alone far from other people, such a man learns nothing; he never learns to express himself well, to converse pleasantly with friends or to argue a case with eloquence. It is better to live with other people."

621 At first the sons of the parent village continue to join the boys'
561 village as they grow up; but after some years, when the senior members of the boys' village are about seventeen or eighteen years old, the younger ones begin to be refused admittance to the village: "they are children." The young ones then either begin a new age-village of their own, or else join a village which has already been started by the sons of a nearby men's village a little junior to that of their own fathers. If you enquire who are the members of such and such a boys' village you are always told that they are the sons of a particular village of men, but detailed investiga-

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Since the 'coming out' of his sons spelt not only retirement, but a speedy death to a chief, he was not unnaturally reluctant to hasten it and, we were told, chiefs would try to defer it, but were pressed by their village headmen to celebrate, and had eventually to accept their advice. Indeed we heard of one chief whose illness was attributed to the 'breath' of his men, angry because he refused to hold the 'coming out' which was due. 643 [753]

Nowadays the situation is radically altered by the fact that chiefs continue to live long after the 'coming out' of their sons, and the administration treats the old chief as the sole authority, or the old men find good reasons for not holding the celebration at all.

Before the ritual there is much speculation and excitement throughout the chiefdom, and private discussions between the old chief and his village headmen about suitable candidates for office. They look for men of wisdom (*amahala*),[1] skilled in settling disputes, modest (for boastfulness is judged intolerable in a Nyakyusa age-village as it is in an English public school), and given to hospitality. A leader must feed his men and to do so he requires to be relatively wealthy, therefore the poor have little chance of office. [183] [577]

When the old men are agreed among themselves they summon all the young men to the capital. They come dancing and swaggering with all their cattle, and there the old headmen seize, one by one, those they have chosen as village headmen for the next generation, beginning with the senior headman for each heir, then the second senior for each, and so on. Usually eight are chosen, four for each young chief. We get a glimpse of what it means to one individual in the following statement by the second headman of the chief, Koroso (173): 643 622 796

I made fire at the 1910 'coming out'. I can't tell much because we who were caught were in fear and trembling. I knew beforehand, because my brother was told to come from Ipyana [mission], but he was a Christian and the missionaries refused to allow him to become a village headman—they feared the medicines. He ran away and came here—he wanted to be a headman and the old men wanted him, but then he changed his mind and went off to be a soldier, and so they took me. [177]

Probably word of who have been chosen as village headmen

[1] For a discussion of the content of *amahala*, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 89-90.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

assuaged and men should be *mwelu*, pure, innocent, without anger in their hearts. But, as has been shown, this quality of purity is the very *opposite* of spiritual power (*amanga* or *ubusisya*). It is attributed neither to Kyala and the other heroes nor to the priests; according to Kasitile (p. 138) a pure person cannot be a commoner priest and the chiefs themselves, though *mwelu*—pale—by comparison with the black commoners who are witches, are also 'heavy' (*nsito*) with the medicines they have drunk. Men become *mwelu* by confession; 'speaking out' is a condition of efficacy in sacrifice and the officiant blows out water as a symbol of bringing up all the anger that was in his heart. The parents of twins and the priests of Lubaga, having celebrated their awful rituals emerge, crying, '*Tuli belu*'—we are pure. The very quality which rituals produce in men is the *opposite* of that which characterizes their heroes, their priests, and their rulers. Galahad whose 'strength was as the strength of ten because his heart was pure' is wholly foreign to Nyakyusa thought. 769 783

Truthfulness was never mentioned as a characteristic of the righteous or the pure, nor is it a quality of the heroes or priests. Men censure one another for *ubutungulu* which is commonly translated as 'lying', but means rather 'speaking indiscreetly'. In one Nyakyusa text the child who is told certain ritual secrets by his father and reveals them when he should not is *ntungulu*, and this is an accepted use of the word. No burning concern with truth or falsehood is apparent in the Nyakyusa tradition though they are passionately interested in what they conceive to be right and wrong. [577]

The conception of witchcraft and sorcery implies a freedom, a choice of good or evil, for the individual. Much is determined. In Nyakyusa thought, the sins of the fathers are visited on the children, and a child may fall ill because his great-grandfather shed blood or was bound with ropes, and was not adequately cleansed, or because his father has neglected a ward; moreover, kinsmen are 'members one of another', and a ritual neglected by one may bring suffering to others; but there is *also* the notion of individual responsibility. A witch or sorcerer acts consciously and voluntarily—our informants scouted the idea of a witch being unaware of his actions—and he may repent and desist. There are now, periodically in Africa, 'revivalist' movements in which a pagan doctor or diviner urges men to throw away their evil medicines and repent from their witchcraft. One such movement [754] [688] [177]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Christians in Ngonde (e.g. *amapenenga*) have been banned by the Kirk Sessions. The European-style dances, such as are sometimes organized by the educated men in centres like Karonga or Tukuyu, are not attended by these men's wives: respectable women avoid them. While we lived near Rungwe mission there was much discussion among the villagers over what recreations were permissible, and hot arguments between those who wished to permit beer drinking and dancing to Christians and those who wished to ban both. It is the Nyakyusa elders who are most puritan in their views—much more so than many of the missionaries who are very conscious of the need for recreation; indeed, the Livingstonia Presbytery once instructed all its Sessions to look into the matter. The chief outlet for young Christians is in ballads. A good singer is much admired and the composer may even sell his songs, with words and music written out. One of the former missionaries is honoured as the man who first taught the Nyakyusa to read music as well as to sing by ear.

In pagan thought moral obligations are limited to kinsmen and neighbours: they do not extend beyond the chiefdom except to those relatives who may live beyond its bounds. As we have shown, the common moral sanctions are the anger of senior relatives, and 'the breath of men', and these operate only within the lineage and age-village. But Christians have read the parable of the Good Samaritan and taken it to heart. Sermons stress this: 'If a Kinga comes and asks for a place to sleep the night and you refuse you are among the goats.' 'If a traveller from the coast asks for a place to sleep and you refuse, do you show love?' 'We tell a bride she should be hospitable to her neighbours if she can, but she *must* cook for those from a distance.' It is one of the points on which the Christians are most conscious of a difference between themselves and the pagans. And the exclusiveness of Europeans is one of the reasons why they are distinguished from Christians in the song on the title page of *Rituals of Kinship*. 'If all Europeans made friends with us (*ukwangala*) like X and Y', we were told, 'the whole country would have been Christian long ago.'

Linked with the concern for strangers is the obligation to preach the Gospel to others—something constantly stressed in sermons, and finding expression both in preaching in the surrounding villages and in tours of more remote areas, often areas of another language. Such tours implied hardship in travelling and a

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

leap in sympathy; as one of our friends explained, she found it hard to accept food from the neighbouring Safwa who were 'so dirty in their cooking'.

Both pagans and Christians pin their faith to resurrection, but the interpretations differ radically. To the pagan the shade is resurrected 'in the body of his child', it scarcely has any separate existence. To Christians the personality, the individual soul, is something indestructible and continuing. This theological difference is but one facet of a deep cleavage between the pagan view of a man and his relations with his group, and the Christian view.

Because the traditional religion is a cult of the shades, piety consists in doing just as father did. It is neglect of traditional rituals, departure from traditional ways, that is held to bring madness, sterility, or death. But Christianity is revolutionary; it is the yeast working in society to transform it. That is often forgotten in communities with a Christian tradition, but where the Gospel has been preached only for a generation and confessing Christians are but one in six, it is in men's minds all the time. The Nyakyusa could not be unaware that the Gospel implied changing their society.

In the pagan tradition the meticulous performance of the rituals is stressed: the right medicines; the right persons; the right order of events are all important. The attitude of mind of the participants matters also—if they are on bad terms the ritual will be ineffective —but goodwill and forgiveness alone are useless without the performance of the proper ritual. In the Christian tradition, as interpreted to us by Nyakyusa converts, it is the inward and spiritual attitude of the participants that is stressed.

Finally, all the pagan rituals are directed to driving off the shades or the heroes, whereas the Christian rituals are the 'means of grace', of coming near to God. Christians pray that the Holy Spirit should take up his abode within them; they seek to emulate the saints who 'walked with God'. Our Christian friends were quite clear about the contrast here between the pagan and Christian tradition: it is crystallized in the attitude to dreams: if a pagan dreams of converse (*ukwangala*) with shades, he fears death; 'if a Christian dreams of converse with God he rejoices greatly because it means he is gaining strength in Christianity.'

311 413 [554] [609] [621] news of such reserved land elsewhere. Such land is cultivated in the meantime on a kind of year-to-year lease by one or more of the villagers as allowed by the headman.

Even when no vacant plots exist a headman will still accept newcomers. If they are young men they must be prepared to go landless for the time being (i.e., to remain dependent on their father's fields elsewhere) until such time as land becomes vacant. If the newcomer is an older man, then the headman will try to persuade one or more of his villagers to give up portions of their holdings and he will often cede part of his own land. The newcomer is therefore often allocated small strips and plots here and there in the village arable area and he thereafter joins the land-hungry crowd seeking to expand their holdings. In one village in which I worked where land shortage was critical (Kapugi, Koroso's chiefdom), there was not a single patch of usable land unworked; yet here the headman had, with full village approval, accepted three newcomers during the first nine months of 1955. Two of them were young men, one unmarried, and they could not expect to obtain land for some time except for a small banana plot. The third newcomer was a middle-aged man from a village some 12 miles away in another chiefdom. The headman had given him a half-acre plot out of his own paddy field and was laboriously begging pieces of land here and there from his people in order to make up a new holding of perhaps an acre. The headman himself had only about three and a half acres of arable land; he had at least one adult son who had not yet acquired an arable plot and he had other sons and brothers' sons owning only small fields. Yet he favoured this stranger, this newcomer. He was quite firm in his resolution to accept other newcomers in the future and in this he believed that he was acting as a [591] good headman should. As far as I could learn he was supported by his villagers.

This is not, by any means, an isolated or even unusual phenomenon. It is, I feel, important to bear in mind this illustration of contemporary affairs. Firstly, because it shows another way in which holdings are fragmented and dispersed; and secondly, because it demonstrates how, so far, the Nyakyusa have refused to face the situation of land shortage, and how they continue to follow traditional practices and values associated with village prestige. These people complain of their inability to obtain sufficient arable land, but they are not yet prepared to make the mental and social adjustments which might at least partly relieve their new predicament. On the other hand, they themselves understand the need for movement and perhaps they are right in their implied insistence not to discard their cultural ideals. Their insistence on accepting newcomers and their willingness (however dimly perceived and expressed) to share their land with the landless are not discreditable attitudes, even if they are economically untenable.

Security of Tenure and Disputes over Land

As already noted, under traditional land tenure a Nyakyusa had good [561] security in his holding so long as he continued to live in the same village. The only alteration of tenure occurred at the "coming-out" ceremony of a new chief when the older men would, if required, move aside in order to give their sons' generation the best land. This did not invariably happen in any case. Fundamentally, however, security of tenure is not a matter of great importance to a people who have plenty of land, and land which is more or less of the same quality. Indeed, convenience of location in respect of one's own homestead was almost the only value land had as such. Occasionally a more dominant chief might try to seize a commoner's field [661] to allow of his own expanded cultivation; it was most unusual for him to [643] succeed, and even if he did the dispossessed villager suffered little real deprivation, for he could easily obtain another field fairly near at hand.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

311 flood plains paddy fields where the ox-plough is in general use today. The
423 general advantages of consolidation require no exposition here.

In view of the domestic, economic and social importance of cattle to
[233] the Nyakyusa and their potential value in a mixed intensive economy, and also in view of the fact that cattle are widely held in very small numbers by individual families, it is suggested that further and more urgent attempts be made to encourage stall-feeding, especially during the wet season. It is realised that past efforts in this matter have failed, and therefore a thorough-going scheme of propaganda and demonstration work is needed. Small fodder crops might be grown in the dry season and there is always plenty of banana fodder as makeweight.

The problem of the landless young men is likely to remain very difficult (see pages 36ff). It has to be remembered of course, that as they get older men do acquire land gradually. Nevertheless the proportion of landless, or
[167] virtually landless, men is high and is apparently increasing. The large-scale, post-war labour migration to the Rhodesias and South Africa is undoubtedly one of the more important results of land shortage and economic difficulty, and it is a valuable safety valve. As I have written elsewhere: "The serious and increasing land shortage amongst the Nyakyusa raises real doubts if there is any policy at all which can keep the men at home when there is not enough land for them – for the sake of both economic and general social stability it might be preferable in the long run if the continued pressure on the land resources were released by a degree of permanent emigration."[1] Since writing that and during the course of my land investigations I have only
[464] become more convinced of its rightness. I would now go so far as to say that Nyakyusa men should be encouraged to go abroad to work and even to become permanent wage-labourers in the industries and areas which demand labour and offer a higher standard of living. If the Nyakyusa are not to be seriously retarded in their home economic development, based as it must be on agriculture (i.e. on the land), the excess population must find an outlet elsewhere.

[621] The general tendency towards greatly increased exclusiveness in the
[597] Nyakyusa village, involving renewed emphasis on the principle of land-holding only by residence and the forfeiture of a holding when changing residence, raises wider issues the future significance of which is not easily seen, especially by the Nyakyusa themselves. This narrow village parochialism does little to meet the increasingly difficult problem of land shortage, whilst the isolation it fosters is the antithesis of the wider outlook required by a developing society in a world money economy. I am fully aware of the strong native sentiment attached to the village and to village independence, but this was in fact diminishing in earlier European times before the new land scarcity set in (see pages 29-30). I do not think that this village system and the complex of attitudes and values it fosters is adequate to provide for the future – a future which the Nyakyusa do not yet clearly foresee. With some deference, therefore, I offer the following suggestion: a man who already has a holding should be able to retain it when he moves to live in another village. If his new home is too far away for the continued cultivation of all or part of the holding, or for any other valid reason, he should be able to sell or give it to anyone he wishes. Such gift or sale could be supervised by the headman of the village in which the holding lies. It might well, at first at any rate, be limited to a member of the same village, either an established villager or another man who is willing to come and live there. I think it important that disposal should be outright and not on leasehold terms, for the latter would most propably engender further complications and uncertainty of tenure, which must be avoided.

1. Gulliver, P. H.: *A Report on the Migration of African Workers to the South from the Southern Highlands Province, with special reference to the Nyakyusa of Rungwe District.* Provincial Administration, Tanganyika, 1955, page A21.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

563 constitution (about which they asked many questions) was a
622 democratic one; for, they said, the Administration always supported the chiefs against the commoners.

621 The villages to which commoner leaders are appointed differ from all other Bantu villages of which we have knowledge in that they consist of groups of age-mates, not groups of kinsmen; boys build with contemporaries and remain with them through life; girls join the villages of their husbands at marriage; therefore relatives, other than husband and wife and young children, do
602 not live together. Nevertheless kinship ties are important, for property circulates within the kinship group rather than within the village, and kinsmen are believed to be mystically interdependent, in a way in which fellow villagers are not. The most prized
[556] possession of the Nyakyusa are cattle, for cattle enable a man to marry, to live in comfort, to gain prestige by feasting his friends; and cattle pass along the roads of kinship. They pass between brothers, and half-brothers, and the sons of brothers; between fathers and sons; and between affines. Kinsmen also participate in common rituals, praying to common ancestors, and seeking protection from mystical dangers which are thought to travel, like
[578] cattle, along the roads of kinship. Ever fearful lest a quarrel among them should bring misfortune on all, they strive to live in harmony.

The range of kinship recognized varies somewhat with the status of the family concerned and the proximity and personalities of its members, but, generally speaking, economic and religious co-operation link the descendants of a common grandfather, and marriage between the descendants of a common great-grand-
[581] father is excluded. A legal marriage is effected by the passage of cattle from the groom's group to the bride's, and it is this passage which is said to create kinship (*ubukamu*), with the consequent mystical interdependence, between a man and his wife, and between the one partner in a marriage and the close kinsmen of
595 the other. Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan, and it is made
428 possible by the ten years' difference in the average marriage age of men and women. Girls are betrothed very young and finally join their husbands at puberty, while few pagan men marry under twenty-five. Inherited cattle are controlled by the older generation and polygyny is the prerogative of age. For property passes not directly from father to son, but from brother to brother,

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

salary to him. This reduces the second son to the position of a minor chief as effectively as a defeat in war might have done in the old days. But, while the action of warfare only occasionally led to the subordination of one of the brothers, this action of the Government does so invariably, and always subordinates the younger brother. When a senior chief dies, on the other hand, the salary is usually divided; the bulk of it goes to the first son, together with the position of senior chief, while the second son is given the salary of an ordinary chief. 643 171

Nevertheless, whether the junior brother is to become a chief in receipt of a salary or not, he still goes through the 'coming out' ceremony with his brother, and is apportioned villages and headmen. Even in a country in which there are several minor chiefs there still is the division into two, some being regarded as subordinate to the senior heir, and the others to the junior. Division of a chiefdom into two at the 'coming out' is the basic form which is maintained, at least ceremonially, despite all modifications.

The introduction of Courts and salaries has brought a new element into the relationship between the old chief and his heirs. Only one of them can receive the salary and they commonly dispute about it. Quarrels are particularly frequent over the position of senior chief, for the presidency of a Court carries with it a relatively large salary. Old senior chiefs cling to the position long after their sons have 'come out'. There is no compulsory superannuation of chiefs, and the traditional mechanism for getting rid of an old chief when his sons were ready to take over—strangulation by his councillors—no longer operates. The old headmen remain in power along with the old chief. Thus one effect of British Administration in Nyakyusa country has been to maintain the older generation in power much longer than was traditionally usual, and to delay the assumption of full responsibility for government by the younger generation. 643 177 578

Another modern change which has far-reaching effects is the omission in some chiefdoms of the 'coming out' ceremony. When there is no 'coming out' the old men do not move aside to make room for their sons, and consequently the territorial demarcation between villages of old and young becomes blurred. Among the neighbouring people of Ngonde the 'coming out' ceremony has been dropped. There boys still build apart from their fathers, and the villages of young and old are more or 643 177 621

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

264 husband will not be angry; if he were, he would be mocked at:
562 "Did not your father provide marriage-cattle for this woman for you that she might be the wife (*unkani*) of us all?" Sometimes, when
574 the woman is cooking, her husband's friends come and take food out of the pot before she has finished cooking. When she protests, saying it is not yet cooked, the men say: "It is your work to cook, ours to eat." Then when her husband comes she tells him that so and so, and so and so, have eaten the food and there is only water left in the pot. . . . But when her husband's friends begin to get married they say to their wives: "That woman is really our wife! Listen to her!" And she has honour among the other women, and when they go to fetch firewood she walks with nothing, another carries her axe and head-pad.' This account cannot be taken literally—the first wife in the village does not provide *all* the food for her husband's friends, who still eat at their mothers' homes, nor do they have any sexual rights over her though they call her 'wife', but she must serve them as far as she can.

571 Sometimes, we were told, men's eating groups last a lifetime,
264 but often friends quarrel or move, and the group breaks up. 'Per-
578 haps one eats at midday and does not summon his friend, but only calls him to the evening meal, then the other, who always calls his friend to the midday meal also, is angry, saying: "He grudges me food", and they separate. They just stop calling each other to eat. Or sometimes one tries to seduce his friend's wife, and on that account they separate.'

264 Eating with contemporaries is still considered right and proper
178 by Nyakyusa men, and it is generally practised by pagans, but the old men say that youths are less ready to share food than formerly. 'This custom of eating together is dying.' Certainly in Christian villages the practice has declined markedly. Many unmarried Christians eat with their friends, but the majority of the married men eat at home alone. Out of eight married men living in Rungwe, for example, only two ate together regularly, and the most educated group, the clerks, are notorious in the district for their eating habits. 'People are much shocked at the clerks for eating food alone. They say they are proud.'

264 Apart from eating regularly with certain close friends, well-to-
574 do pagan men are expected to entertain generously, inviting fellow villagers to drink beer, or to a 'dinner party'—an ample meal with delicious dishes, very carefully served—from time to

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 to bring all the herds of the village for treatment. The father of
783 these twins explained that neighbours would suffer less than
621 relatives, if left untreated, but 'their legs would ache a little
because we eat with them'. And here we come to an idea which
[264] appears in many situations in Nyakyusa life, the idea that contagion is spread through eating together. Relatives of parents of twins are not thought to be in danger until they eat or drink with one of the parents: the ritual is performed so that they may eat together safely. Similarly a murderer and his relatives are thought to be in magical danger from the relatives of the murdered man only if they should eat or drink with them. So too, the bond between neighbours which puts them in danger from the impurity of one of them is the sharing of food.

881 At the initiation and marriage of a girl, neighbours again assist
621 and identify themselves with the principals. When she reaches puberty a girl is secluded, and her companions in the village—the girls who are her immediate juniors, for the older ones will have joined their husbands—keep her company. Some are her own younger sisters and half-sisters, others are not related at all. Should one girl of the village not join them she is not accused of witchcraft, but it is unusual for one to stay away; to do so would show 'pride' (*amatingo*). These companions (*abapanji*) sleep and eat with the 'bride' (*unsungu*)[1] and share her tasks and lessons, fetching firewood, making mats, learning songs, and listening to the instruction of 'the mothers'. They and the 'bride' go about together as a group and, accompanied by one or two 'mothers', may visit a 'bride' and her maids in another village, the two
• [571] groups competing in dancing and singing. So keen is the rivalry that formerly, we were told, the visits sometimes led to fighting between the maids and 'mothers' of each 'bride', particularly when the competing groups came from different chiefdoms. At the end of the ritual two of the maids accompany the bride to her
[864] husband's house, and spend a few days with her there, sharing the attentions of her husband at night (*vide infra*, p. 87).

During her seclusion the bride avoids her father, whom she refers to as 'father-in-law', and she avoids also all his contem-

[1] *Unsungu* means a girl who has reached puberty but has not yet borne a child. She is usually, though not invariably, betrothed, and her 'husband' has a part in the puberty ritual. There is no exact English translation, and we think that 'bride' is the least misleading in this context.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

posed action of witches, exercised the right of expelling members thought to be dangerous to it. Nowadays, since a village is no longer held responsible for the torts of its members, men are not often banished for theft or adultery, but supposed witches and sorcerers are still frequently compelled to move. 681

There is also a great deal of voluntary movement to escape friction in the village. This is commonly expressed in terms of witchcraft—a family moves to avoid the witchcraft of its neighbours; but neighbours are not feared unless there has been a quarrel. It is when the parties to some dispute have *not* been reconciled that fear of witchcraft germinates, and illness precipitates a move. 166 578

Among ordinary commoners only their immediate neighbours are believed to be dangerous and such men therefore sometimes move only from one village to another of the same chiefdom; but very many move right outside to another chiefdom altogether, preferring to make assurance doubly sure and to put a long distance between themselves and their spiritual persecutors. And in the case of certain men of high social status, such as senior village headmen who are the advisers of the chief, and priests, for whom a wider circle is dangerous, it is held to be essential to leave the chiefdom.

We have argued (*vide supra*, p. 36) that movement from village to village has always occurred among the Nyakyusa but that it is increasing. The change is almost certainly a symptom of increasing friction within the village. One traditional mechanism of settling disputes—the ordeal—has lapsed, while fear of one's neighbours' witchcraft continues. It is possible also that the incidence of disease, and hence of suspected witchcraft and sorcery, has increased among the Nyakyusa—tuberculosis and venereal diseases are said to have spread greatly since 1914[1] and, in the opinion of the German missionaries, malaria is much more prevalent at the higher altitudes than it was before 1914; but there 166 578 164

[1] The incidence of tuberculosis in Rungwe district is now thought to be about sixteen per thousand (C. Wilcocks, *Tuberculosis in Tanganyika Territory*, Government Printer, Dar-es-salaam, 1938). Dr. D. Kerr-Cross, in a list of diseases encountered during ten years' practice in north Nyasaland before 1897 reports that he only saw one case of 'pulmonary tubercular phthisis', but syphilis (which the natives called 'the disease of the Arabs'), was very prevalent. Dr. Kerr-Cross was a missionary doctor who travelled extensively in Nyakyusa country. (See his articles already cited and H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, pp. 473-7.)

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 is another reason also for increasing movement. Formerly, to move to a strange chiefdom was hazardous—a refugee might be •578 killed, or his wife or cattle seized by the chief; nowadays it is safe. 164 Even to-day a man's status is lower in the village in which he is a stranger than in his home village. The old families of a village, 'the owners of the soil' (*abilema*), are spoken of as *amafumu*, which, in its restricted sense, means village headmen who have 'come out' with the chief, but which is also used more widely for commoners of importance. And in the past, we were told, an individual's security of life and property depended upon the support of his neighbours, the *amafumu*, and a stranger was much less likely to receive this than an 'owner of the soil'. If a chief seized a stranger's wife no one would protest, but if he dared to touch the wife of an 'owner of the soil' the village would rise as one man. Hence the incentive to overcome friction by submission, rather than by moving, was stronger in the old society than it is to-day.[1] It may well become stronger again soon. The present circulation from village to village is possible because men are still scarcer than land in Nyakyusa country, but as the population increases, and the production of crops for sale expands, it is probable that strangers will be less welcome and movement more difficult.

166 To lose a member who has not been expelled is a slur on a village, for the implication is that the man who has moved has 624 suffered from the witchcraft of his neighbours. A good neighbour should persuade a fellow contemplating a voluntary move to stay (*vide infra*, p. 243), and when someone has moved of his own accord (and sometimes even when he has been expelled) his fellows go, after the lapse of a little time, to fetch him back.

'When a man moves from his home chiefdom, his village neighbours there, in the majority of cases, follow him within two months and ceremonially invite him back with a show of force by seizing his belongings and carrying them off home to his old village. They may really like and respect him and if, as is usually the case, he has moved because of sickness, they are most anxious to prove to him that his tacit suspicions are unfounded, they wish to rid themselves of the slur of witchcraft. To invite him back is to express affection for him and so to demonstrate that he could

[1] cf. the modern tendency for Pondo homesteads to break up. Hunter, op. cit., pp. 15, 39.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 A man who has been driven out and then fetched back pro-
783 vides a feast for his friends on his return. This feast is essentially the same as the 'ritual of reconciliation' that takes place when a wrong-doer begs pardon of his own village or that of his father (*vide supra*, p. 101). For a private individual only his own village is concerned, but if the exile happens to be a senior headman then all the villages of the chiefdom participate. A detailed account of such a feast, which we attended, is given on pp. 271–4.

166 In a civilized society social separation overcomes friction in
795 two ways: first, it separates individuals who are personally in-
578 compatible, and secondly, it provides the individual who is a misfit in one group with a choice of groups whose values may be more compatible with his own than those of the group from which he came.[1] In Nyakyusa society villages were formerly all of the same type, with virtually identical group values, therefore the individual only escaped from personal incompatibilities by moving. In the modern society, however, there is a variation of type as between pagan and Christian villages and, among the Christians, as between the several denominations. The convert in a pagan village often moves to a Christian village finding that more compatible, and the son of a Christian, having abandoned Christianity and perhaps married several wives, leaves the Christian village in which he grew up and joins a pagan one with whose members he has more in common.

578 The Nyakyusa, in their rationalizations about witchcraft,
166 recognize the fact that friction is often personal and may be over-
754 come by moving. Constantly villages receive individuals who have been driven out of some other village for practising witchcraft, and when we inquired whether a man who had once been accused was not feared as a neighbour, the reply was always in the same tenor as that of Mwamunda: 'Perhaps he has bewitched his fellows there, we do not know, but he has not bewitched us.' There is also the implication that quarrels may be forgotten after a temporary separation, since those who have moved because they feared witchcraft, and even some who have been accused of practising witchcraft, are welcomed back.

578 When our informants discussed moving and returning to the
166 home village they always emphasized friction with one's fellows (*abasise*) as providing the chief impetus to move, and the desire

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, op. cit., pp. 60–1.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

to rejoin the group in which he is 'known', in which he has 578 ●
'friends with whom he herded cattle as a boy', as that which 166
provides the chief impetus to return. Never once did an informant suggest friction with the village headman as the reason for moving[1] or loyalty to a former headman as the reason for returning. The Nyakyusa village is in no way the personal following of a headman, as the villages of some other central African peoples (such as the Bemba,[2] Yao, and Ngoni[3]) appear to be. It is essentially a group of equals, established before adolescence, whose stability and continuity turn on friendship and co-operation between its members. It is already a corporate group, with very close bonds forged through years between its members, before the permanent leader is chosen, and it continues as a group though its leader dies or moves.

We do not deny that the personality of the village headman— 622
particularly his generosity and his skill in settling disputes 621
between his men—affects the stability and growth of the village; 166
some villages increase noticeably in size after the 'coming out', while others shrink, and headmen (like chiefs) use medicines to attract men to them; but the Nyakyusa themselves imply that it is the character of the villagers rather than the character of the headman which determines movement to and from the village.

The headman, like any private individual in the village, must 622
remain on good terms with the other members lest *he* be driven 626
out. A number of cases were cited in which headmen had moved because they had become unpopular with their men and feared their 'breath' or witchcraft (*vide* pp. 204–8; 268–70) but most of them had returned after the lapse of a little time.

What private individuals and headmen alike fear is not a quarrel with one individual, but the disapproval of the village or village-section as a whole; for 'the breath of men' is but the crystallization of adverse public opinion. The man who has the support of his fellows in a dispute with one neighbour is shielded in 'the war by night'.

[1] Personal friction with a chief occurs (*vide* pp. 191–2).
[2] A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, pp. 110 ff.
[3] M. Gluckman, J. C. Mitchell, and J. A. Barnes, 'The Village Headman in British Central Africa', *Africa*, Vol. XIX (1949), pp. 91, 98, 100.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

course and sharing of food and beer between fathers and sons. *Ukwangala* implies eating and drinking together frequently, and cannot be fully enjoyed by people who do not live close to one another.

The value of good fellowship with equals is constantly talked about by the Nyakyusa, and it is dinned into boys from childhood that enjoyment and morality alike consist in eating and drinking, in talking and learning, in the company of contemporaries. The solitary and aloof, those who enjoy the company of women (as opposed to direct sexual satisfaction) and those who seek intimacy with members of another generation, are derided.

Now this very emphasis on the value of good fellowship with equals is doubtless a reflection of the difficulty of achieving it. The frequent accusations of witchcraft and movement from one village to another are evidence of friction between fellow villagers. Does the friction turn on the age-village organization?

d. The incidence of accusations of witchcraft

As we have seen, witchcraft is believed to operate primarily within the village, and the typical accusation is against a neighbour.[1] But in other societies also witchcraft accusations are most commonly made against those with whom one is living, and in close daily contact: in Pondoland it is members of the same homestead or of neighbouring homesteads who suspect one another of witchcraft; among Xhosa-speaking people in towns it is fellow employees, or fellow schoolmates; among the Azande it is members of the same small neighbourhood. Therefore it is not only the Nyakyusa who accuse village neighbours of witchcraft.

Of the *frequency* of accusation in different societies we can make no comparison, for statistics on witchcraft are extremely difficult to collect. Few field-workers could be certain that they were cognizant of *every* accusation of witchcraft within a given

[1] Over a third of the accusations of witchcraft recorded were against neighbours, as distinct from spouses or co-wives or kinsmen and, if one excludes the modern type of accusation against fellow workers in the same camp, the proportion of accusations against neighbours is almost one half. The thirty-eight witchcraft accusations cannot, of course, be taken as a random sample in the technical sense; we recorded every case that came to our ears, but cannot be certain that inquiries brought to light every accusation in the villages investigated. Nevertheless the preponderance of accusations against neighbours is significant (*vide* Document, pp. 198 ff.).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 area, during a given period, so we cannot either assert or deny that accusations of witchcraft are more frequent in age-villages than in kinship villages.

578 There are two sets of loyalties in Nyakyusa society: those to a kinship group and those to an age-village. Does conflict arise 621 from a clash between them? We have no evidence that it does. It is true that kin may support a sick relative against his age-602 group, referring to his illness as due to witchcraft, whereas neighbours will attribute it to his own sin and their legitimate anger; but very often the ancestors and the 'defenders' are believed to work together to punish wrong-doers—those who break avoidance and incest taboos, those who insult seniors, those who neglect traditional rituals (*vide supra*, p. 122). Amity between relatives is sanctioned by neighbours as well as by senior kinsmen, and the importance of enjoying the company of village mates is constantly stressed by relatives. Where a village does appear to support a member against his kin, it is usually on the side of the ancestors and 'justice', in terms of the Nyakyusa code, as when neighbours share a father's anger at the insolence of his son, or after his death protect his son against unjust treatment by the heir. The values of village solidarity and of kinship solidarity are thus coherent.

e. The form of witch beliefs

621 There is, however, a connection between the age-village 754 organization and the *form* of witch beliefs. As we have seen, great emphasis is laid on feasting neighbours, and it is believed that 626 the impulse to witchcraft comes from the lust for milk and meat. The Nyakyusa argue thus: witchcraft comes from neighbours, and neighbours must be fed or they get angry; feeding a witch on milk or beef pacifies him (*vide supra*, p. 92). An explicit connection is made between neglecting to provide feasts on the proper occasions and suffering from 'the breath' of justly angry neighbours whose blighting power springs from the same root as witchcraft. The contrast with the witch beliefs of the Pondo is marked: among them it is held that the drive to witchcraft is sex lust, and all witches have familiars with whom they have sex relations.[1]

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 275–88.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Nyakyusa emphasis upon lust for food as the incentive to crime is not due to starvation, for they are among the best-fed people in Africa, with a much greater variety and quantity of food at their disposal than the Pondo. Why, then, this emphasis in their witch beliefs? We suggest that it is directly connected with living with non-relatives who have no share in one's inheritance. The most prized possession of the Nyakyusa is cattle, and cattle are controlled by lineages. Neighbours who are not kinsmen, and who cannot hope to benefit by inheritance or through assistance with marriage and funeral cattle from a fellow's herd, are more likely to be jealous of his wealth in cattle than are his brothers and sons who directly share in it through inheritance, and the gift of cattle at marriage and death. The only profit which neighbours derive from the herd of a rich fellow is the milk and meat on which he feasts them. Jealousy of another's wealth is a common enough cause for supposed witchcraft, but the affront of inequality is greater when it is constantly before one's eyes. Nyakyusa live close-packed in villages and can hardly be unaware of what next-door neighbours eat. The statement that the pythons of witches are roused by the *smell* of meat cooking and the *smell* of milk (*vide supra*, p. 92) suggests the envy of a poor neighbour when he smells the roast beef and curds next door. Where the local group consists of a lineage (as among the Pondo) people are not necessarily aware of what non-relatives eat. Among the Pondo the pressure to kill cattle for meat comes from within the lineage, and is associated not with the witches but with the ancestors. Sickness is commonly attributed to the *hunger* of the ancestors (*balambile*), who 'want to eat by means of him' who is ill (*bafuna ukudla ngaye*),[1] a notion quite strange to the Nyakyusa.

In short, we argue that it is because people who do not benefit from each other's herds by inheritance and the provision of marriage and funeral cattle, live close to one another, that so much emphasis is laid on the lust for milk and meat as the drive to witchcraft among the Nyakyusa.

And why the Pondo emphasis on sex? Are they more inhibited than the Nyakyusa? At first sight the Pondon sex code seems a freer one than that of the Nyakyusa. The marriage age of men is no later than among the Nyakyusa, while the marriage age of girls is considerably higher, and unmarried men are free to

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 332, 345.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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(a) *Witchcraft—contd.*

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accuser and accused
6	Young men	Village neighbour, Kagenya's son	Victims	Same village	Prevented road on which they were working being completed quickly			Accused driven out	Village neighbours
7	Village cows	Man of the village	Village neighbours (public accusation made)	Same village	Bewitched cows	Decline in milk supply	*Mwafi* ordeal. Accused did not vomit	Accused driven out	Village neighbours
8	Child	Man, neighbour of victim's father	Father of deceased	Same village	Killed child by witchcraft	Death of child. Accused did not attempt to persuade father of victim to remain, when he was packing to go after victim's death.	Autopsy on victim. *Mwafi* ordeal. Accused did not vomit	Accused driven out Chief seized his cattle	Village neighbours
9	Child of visitor	Host	Village neighbours	Same homestead	Made child ill	Child very ill with ear-ache. Host angry because visitor feasted neighbours. Child worse after such a feast. Host did not express good wishes for recovery (cf. p. 110 ff).	Discussion before assistant headman and village headman	Accused driven out of village	Village neighbours
10	Child	Man, neighbours of victim's father	Victim's father	Same village	Killed child by witchcraft	Father of victim wanted an unreasonable amount of land. Given one field when he joined the village. Wanted another which was refused him by the villagers	None known		Village neighbours

[p. 199]

I: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754
627
578

(a) *Witchcraft—contd.*

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accuser and accused
11	Man	3 neighbours (men)	Victim (before his death)	Same village	Speared victim internally (by witchcraft)	Illness and death of victim. He dreamed before his death that 3 neighbours (whom he recognized) had speared him	Autopsy. Internal 'wounds' found	No case made. Agreed by village that 'friends' he saw were responsible, but their names were not made public	Village neighbours
12	(a) Cows (b) Child	Neighbour of child's father	Victim's father	Same village	Bewitched cows killed child	Death of child. Accused boasted of his witchcraft	?	Accused driven out	Village neighbours
13	Two men	Neighbour (a man, Kimbila)	Victims	Same village	'He had destroyed their potency' by witchcraft	?	?	?	Village neighbours
14	?	Christian elder	Pagan fellow villagers	Same village	?	'Proud'. 'Does not look at people when he greets them.' Built a very big house in a pagan village	?	?	Village neighbours
15	X Labourer on the Lupa gold-fields	Fellow labourer (a Christian) William	Victim	Same camp	Had injured X's eyes by witchcraft	X had eye trouble. William was seen in a dream by a third labourer. William had recently found gold	Meeting of all the workers	William driven away from the camp	Fellow employees

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P. 201]

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

(a) *Witchcraft—contd.*

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accuser and accused
16	Young man, labourer in Lupa gold-fields	Fellow labourers		Same camp	'They stamped on his belly' (a kind of witchcraft)	Alleged that he ate their rations by means of witchcraft. Illness while at work and finally death after returning home	Divination (twice)		Fellow employees
17	Clerk A	Fellows in work camp, especially fellow clerk B	His friends	Same camp	A made ill by *malila* (a form of witchcraft)	A had replaced B as interpreter and B was jealous. A was greedy when eating with his fellows. Illness began when he choked over a piece of food. He was eating with his fellows	None		Fellow employees
18	Labourer on Lupa gold-fields	Fellow labourers	European employer (sic)	Same camp	Fellow workers had 'eaten' him	Sudden death of labourer. He was lucky in finding gold and his employer's favourite	None	Fellows agreed that one of them had 'eaten' the victim but culprit not found	Fellow employees
19	Labourer on Lupa gold-fields	Fellow labourers	?	Same camp	Fellow workers bewitched him	Died morning after he had received 100s. in prize-money from his employer (cf. pp. 229–30).	?	?	Fellow employees

754
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754
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787
578

I: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(a) *Witchcraft—contd.*

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—*contd.*

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accuser and accused
20	Headboy of European employer on Lupa gold-fields	Fellow employees. Individual not named but cook hinted at	Victim	Same camp	'People' had bewitched him	Acute illness of victim after sleeping with concubine of his European employer. This woman was given in charge of the cook when the European visited other Europeans, but she and the headboy were lovers. Victim and cook hated one another on account of this woman. Victim hated by his fellow employees because he was headboy and looked after everything during his employer's absence	A doctor gave victim medicine which would enable him to see the witches in dreams. He saw two men who hated him, and employer's concubine carrying a knife	Slow recovery of victim. He told the dream to his lover	Fellow employees
21	Nyakyusa employer of 31 men on Lupa gold-fields	Employees	Victim	Same camp	Employees had 'spoiled him' (with witchcraft)	Acute stomach pain. Weakness. 'He had been angry with his men.'	Divination	Victim recovered	Employer/employee
22	Village headman working as a labourer on Lupa gold-fields	Fellow labourers	?	Same camp	Fellow labourers killed him by witchcraft because he darkened their eyes so that they should not find gold. He himself was a witch.	Sudden death of headman a week after he began work. Gold was scarce and he alone had found some, earning 10s. prize money	?		Fellow employees

[p. 202]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(a) *Witchcraft—contd.*

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accuser and accused
23	Husband	2 wives (not favourites)	Victim	Same homestead	Wives summoned the witches to 'eat' him. Opened the door for them. One herself was a witch	Illness of husband. Wives jealous of chief wife who was the favourite	Divination	Treatment with medicine. Divorce impossible because one suspect a sister of the favourite wife	Spouses
24	Husband	Wife	'	Same homestead	Caused illness in husband	'He hated her and he fell ill.'	Divination		Spouses
25	Husband	Wife	'	Same homestead	'Eaten' husband	Death of husband	'		Spouses
26	Co-wives	Wife (Kajonga)	Husband (first)	Same homestead	'Bewitched loins of co-wives'	Husband did not sleep well with other wives	'	Divorced for witchcraft	Spouses
27	'	Wife (Kajonga)	Husband (second)	Same homestead	'	'	'	Divorced for witchcraft	Spouses
28	Husband's cows	Wife	Husband	Same homestead	Bewitched husband's cows	Cows gave little milk when wife at home, much when wife away	*Mwafi* ordeal. Wife vomited	Husband paid a cow and a bull to his in-laws	Spouses
29	Adulterer	Husband of woman seduced				Adulterer began to squint after he had run off with the woman			Husband/wife's lover

754
627
787
578

[P. 203]

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754
627
787
578

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—*contd.*

(*a*) *Witchcraft—contd.*

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Special relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accuser and accused
30	Adultress	Husband of woman adulteresses (no. 29)				Adultress was very ill with a poisoned hand. Husband of his lover had been previously accused	Divination		Husband/wife's lover
31	Senior half-brother (different mother)	Junior half-brother	Victim	?			*Mwafi* ordeal. Junior brother vomited	Junior brother judged innocent	Half-brothers
32	Father (sister and gentler)	Middle son (Mwalyale)	Brothers (half?)	?	Killed father	Death of father	*Mwafi* ordeal	Accused driven out of chiefdom. His brothers left and brothers later made friends with him. They said 'Mwafi had been mistaken'	Brothers (half?)
33	Child	Father of child an unknown headman	Village headman	Same homestead	Made child ill	Child ill. Father did not report illness to village headman	?	Accused driven out of village	Village headman/junior headman
34	Chief's child	Village headman (Mwambi)	People of the chiefdom	Same chiefdom	Caused child to have sore eyes	Mwambi had gone to the chief elsewhere and said 'witches are eating the child'. He would have gone with other village headmen, had he been summoned	*Mwafi* ordeal	Child took Mwambi's a cow. He was driven out for ages year	People of chiefdom and village headmen

[p. 204]

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—*contd.*

(*a*) *Witchcraft—contd.*

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accuser	Category of accused	Spatial relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accuser and accused
25	Chief	'People of the north'	?	Same chiefdom		Chief sick	?	Said that chief and his fellows fought and defeated the attackers in dreams	Chief/ People
26	Chief;	Rich man owning 30 head of cattle (Mwakusu)	Chief	Same chiefdom		Chief 'did not sleep'	*Mzeeji* ordered. Mwakusu did not vomit	Chief seized all Mwakusu's cattle. Neighbours seized his crops. He moved with his wives to another country	Chief/rich commoner
27	Anthropologist	A man who had been refused 1s. when he asked for it as a present	Servants and friends of victim. (Nyakyusa)	Same neighbourhood	Caused attack of malaria (by witchcraft)	Attack of malaria day following refusal of present. Accused did not come to inquire for victim as others did.	None	None	European/ African
28	Anthropologist	'The witches' individual not specified	Servants and friends of victim. (Nyakyusa)	Same village	Prevented normal recovery from malaria	Prolonged attacks of malaria, not cured by ordinary treatment. 'It was not just malaria—we you drank much medicine for malaria, but still did not recover.'	None	Formal welcome by wife of chief who lived in village on anthropologist's return, and apology for the illness	European/ African

[P. 205]

754
637
578

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngoende FN17
Nyakyusa

754
769
578
763

(d) Sorcery (Ulwitagi)

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accuser	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case
1	Chief	'People'	Chief and one of his village headmen	Other chiefdoms	Made chief ill	Envy of chief having a court. Illness of chief.		
2	Compound chief	Conquering chief (pre-European)		Different villages but same country (after the conquest)	Conquered had killed conqueror by sorcery	Nkwamkola had taken Mwamba's country. Death of conqueror		
3	Christian who became very popular by healing sick. People said he wouldn't 'eat' the position of the spiritual because of his popularity	Senior village headman X		Same village	X sought medicine to work sorcery against the Christian	X envied popularity of new-comer. He was overheard by neighbours saying he would work sorcery. Serious illness of Christian followed		
4	Child of P.	Classificatory brother of P.	P., father of victim	Different chiefdoms		Quarrel over inheritance of cattle. P's brother claimed cows from him. Case went to court of defendant's chief. Decided in his favour		
5	Man (Mwanyiko) and his wife	Not specified	Son of deceased (Mwanyiko)			Death of Mwanyiko and his wife	Autopsy on Mwanyiko. Found a powder, thought to be strange medicine, in his stomach. No autopsy on wife but 'knew that she died from the same disease'	Family drank pots before cremation
6	2 wives of X. Sister of X. 1 married daughter and another child. Husband of married daughter					All died within a short time of one another. Sorcery spread through autopsies	Autopsies	Family drank medicine provided by a doctor and the illness ceased

[p. 210]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754
784
578
763

No.	Category of victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Special relationship of victim and accuser	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case
7	Daughter of A. Son and daughter of A's full brother B	A accused X, his parallel cousin (child of A's father's brother). X accused A	A, father and brother of victims		Use of sorcery against one another	Junior brother's son wanted inheritance divided. Elder brother's son (A) did not. This was followed by illness of victims	Suggested by doctor that trouble due to sorcery or to anger of ancestors over family quarrel	Open discussion of quarrel (*ukwiputa*). Drank medicine against sorcery. Also prayer to ancestors
8	Child of neighbour B	Man X	Neighbour B.	Same village	Sent his leopard to kill the child	Child killed by leopard on day after X had quarrelled with accuser B, saying B's cattle were eating his crops	X asked for ordeal. This refused	X driven out of country by chief. Later returned
9	Foreman and clerk A, very lucky in striking gold and favourite of his employer	Fellow clerk B.		Same camp	B accused of killing A by sorcery	A died suddenly at his house. B was very jealous of A's wealth, and had spoken in secret of his desire to kill A by sorcery, saying 'they' be die at his house'		
10	Wife of village headman					Death	Autopsy. Symptoms of sorcery found	
11	Man who had run off with another's wife	Injured husband	Victim	Victim on Lupa. Injured husband in Iringa (300 miles distant)	Husband blowing medicines at the adulterer of his wife (i.e. working sorcery—*ulwaga*). The husband's friends might have found this as vengeance might	Continued illness of victim	Divination by a doctor	Victim treated with medicines. Moved to another house. He finally recovered, but he best fell ill

[P. 211]

I: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754
784
627
578

(e) *Vengeance Magic* (Ulupembe—*the Horn*) MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of Victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accuser	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case
1	2 brothers M1 and M2	A doctor (Makikuje)			Accused used the horn. Did not tell M1 that he was doing so	Accused said M1 had stolen his millet. M1 and M2 both died	Autopsy revealed death due to 'the horn'	Chief drove accused out of country for not bringing case to court but revenging himself. The doctor had used the horn in his own case
2	1. Seducer of woman 2. Child of seducer's elder brother	Husband of woman seduced (Mwakikuhu)	Relatives of deceased seducer		Accused used the horn. Relatives of victims spoke of deaths as due to sorcery (*Ubulogo*)	Victim 1 had eloped with accused's wife. Accused boasted that he had revenged himself. Both victims 1 and 2 died suddenly		Woman returned to husband lest others of the family should die
3	Child of A and children of other wives of A's husband	Co-wife B.	A, mother of victim	Same homestead	B used the horn	A had stolen B's bananas and not admitted it when case was taken first to husband and then to chief. B was dissatisfied. The death of child A and children of other wives followed		A paid B for theft. A and other wives went to horn-doctor and drank medicine. They recovered
4	Man C, and woman X with whom he had eloped	Man A who inherited the woman X	Man B, brother of deceased C	Different chiefdoms	A used the horn	C ran off with X, widow of A's elder brother whom A had inherited. C and X both died. A boasted: 'I killed them with the horn'		B spoured A and fled to a distant chiefdom (before European came)

[p. 212]

(e) (*Vengeance Magic* (Ulupembe—*the Horn*)—*contd.*

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—*contd.*

No.	Category of victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accuser	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case
5	9 of A's children	B, son-in-law of A	A, father of victims		B used the horn	A's daughter left B. A returned only 2 head of cattle to B. Owed him 10 to 13 cattle. Told him to collect balance from his daughter's second husband. B summoned A to come before horn doctor. A refused. Told B to sue in court. Within 3 years children of A died		A speared B. He was convicted in District Officer's court of manslaughter
6	Gwatabile, his wife, and his full sister's husband	Man (Itupa)	Family of deceased debtor, Gwatabile		Itupa kindled the horn	Gwatabile had a cow belonging to Itupa. The relationship not known. The three victims died		Family paid a cow to Itupa
7	C	Doctor	C			A ran off with B's wife. B followed her and found her in C's house. B claimed damages from A, but A objected saying: 'No, she was found with C'. The court gave judgement against A, and he paid damages to B, then subsequently the court gave judgement for A in his case against C, ordering him to return to A the cows A had paid to B. C delayed, so A went to a doctor and got him to make medicine against C. C handed over the cows to A immediately and paid doctor fee, to counteract his medicine.	Case brought before D.O.	Doctor discharged. Doubt whether or not doctor should be expelled from the chiefdom in which he lived. Opinion of the Nyakyusa divided on this point

[P. 213]

754
789
627
578

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

19. THINGS WHICH ARE SAID TO ANGER THE WITCHES AND MAKE THEM THROTTLE US

Mwaisumo (clerk):

'Carrying very heavy loads, frequently. They (the witches) wonder (*ukukiba*) at a person and he (or she) falls ill.' 754

'Hoeing a very large field, surpassing others.' 626

'Being more wealthy, as by earning money on the Lupa, like Bingibamo and Kiputa.' 578

'Boasting at work, saying: "I am the senior" like Ramsay and Isiah at Tukuyu.'

'Eating fine food alone. This may be meat, when you have killed a bull or cow, or beer or gifts of food from in-laws, or any other fine food. Mwambuputa was accused of doing this.'

'People are always afraid to carry very heavy things because they think that others will be angry and wonder at it (*ukukiba*). Their astonishment causes illness. Women especially speak of this a great deal when they are fetching firewood. If they carry a very big load others express wonder saying: "It is God who has given you strength surpassing us all." This astonishment brings on serious illness. People fall ill and some even die. Formerly people feared very much to speak to someone who carried a heavy load, saying: "You carry a very heavy load"; they were likely to be fined if they did, because the person to whom they said it would complain, saying: "He wondered at me. He brings down illness on me; he brings the witches by saying I am a strong fellow."

'It is like this also in hoeing; if a man has hoed much he fears lest they (the witches) will kill him; if people say: "He has surpassed us in strength" and are angry, that is what happens—the man falls ill and may die.

'Surpassing others in possessions is said also to anger other people, witches, who kill their fellow because they think that he has a medicine (*unkota*) which enables him to surpass them in wealth. The medicine for surpassing others is the medicine of good fortune (*unkota gwa lusako*). There was a case like this among the Nyangomo—the case of a young man who died quite recently. His name was Bingibamo, the son of Kiputa. This young man was in employment on the Lupa gold-fields . . . and he sent back money to his father to buy cattle. When he had been working for a certain European for a short time

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754
626
578

only he surpassed the other workers as they searched for gold, and found a very big nugget. He saw it first and picked it up immediately. All the others wished to share it; they all went together to their European (employer) to say that their fellow did not find this nugget alone, but that they had all got it. The employer said: "Yes, of course I shall pay you all for sifting, but he found it. He picked it up. I shall give him something separately." So he gave Bingibamo 100s. and to each of the others he gave 6s. The next morning Bingibamo was ill; the following day he died and they buried him. It is said that his fellows "ate" him, they were angry about the nugget he had got. And those who work there (on the Lupa) regularly say that no one who gets a nugget ever escapes; those who get money always die.

'It is said that one who boasts at work saying that he has surpassed his fellows in wisdom and seniority dies like Ramsay, who was a clerk at Tukuyu, and Isiah Mwagomba. They died. Some say privately that the sin (*inongwa*) which killed them was boasting—they boasted very much to their fellows. Some say that there is one man among them (the clerks at Tukuyu) who always kills his fellows if they seem likely to surpass him in seniority (i.e. importance). A boastful man (*gwalwitufyo*) is always proud (*gwamatingo*), and as for enjoying the company of his fellows he does not keep on good terms with them at all (*atikwangala nabo kanunu*).

'Eating fine food alone is said to kill a man. If you have killed a bull to eat you must give your fellows some, because if you grudge them they will summon the witches to "eat" you. That is to say the people who saw you will tell of it and at night "the defenders" will be angry and summon the witches to "eat" you. Or when your in-laws bring something when they visit you, and you do not call your fellows, but grudge them a share they will "eat" you, as happened in the case of Mwambuputa. It is said that Mwambuputa grudged his fellows certain food, so they were very angry and two of his children died at home. When he found that sickness was spreading at his homestead he fled to the Lake-shore plain (MuNgonde), but there also he found that death pursued him and he returned home again. It is said that sickness pursued him to the plain because he went off without performing the death ritual for the children who died. So when he returned he found two bulls and killed them, saying: "Friends, I have come. I did wrong because I did not perform the ritual for your children with you."'

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

753 woman has been angry with her husband, and perhaps quarrelled with him, and has sworn at her husband by "the things" (i.e. the sex organs) 626 of his mother, or perhaps his father, the child she bears will fall sick with *ingoto*. It becomes very thin and does not grow. The disease is recognized when a child is very ill from infancy, and it is very thin but does not die. Then they say it is *ingoto*. Sometimes they inquire of [787] a diviner and the diviner reveals that it is ill of *ingoto*.

'I remember a certain woman who was married to a man, Akayamba. This man had married two wives, and she of whom I speak was the third. This woman was very proud (*namatingo fijo*) and was con- [578] stantly quarrelling with her husband and her co-wives. When she quarrelled with her husband he got angry and beat her. Then she swore at him horribly, about "the things" of his mother or father. She said: "You! So and so of your father! So and so of your mother!" Then this woman bore a girl child and when it had grown a little it became very ill. It was very ill for a whole year. When it began to recover she quarrelled again with her husband and swore at him insultingly, and the child got ill again. So her husband (the father of [787] the child) and she went to inquire of a diviner. The divination revealed *ingoto*. It said: "Your wife has sworn at you about the things of your mother when you were quarrelling." When they got home the husband drove his wife away, saying: "Go to your father!" When she got home the woman told her father everything and he took millet and gave it to her to make beer with which to pay. So she brewed beer and brought it to her husband, saying: "I did wrong, my husband." Her husband called his fellows and they all drank the beer and expressed their anger (*ukwijaja*) and said: "May the child recover and grow well!"

'This happened when I was 13 or 14 years old. The girl (who was ill) is still alive; her body shows signs of not having grown properly.

'The disease comes from "the breath of men" because these insults were made publicly and others heard them. I do not think anything would happen if the insults were private, I am not sure.'

A curse of neighbours for neglect of rituals.
Angombwike (young Christian man).

789 'If I do not do the (death) ritual properly for my father the death of my children is due to the case against me, the dispute with relatives 626 and the curse of people—non-relatives (*nongwa mbukamu, ikigune* 842 *mbandu*).

'Sometimes the villagers (*amafumu*) bind a man's loins so that he cannot beget children with his wife. They are both sterile. Mwakaná-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

recurring in a cycle of rituals is likely to have the same significance in each, holds good for the Nyakyusa: certain symbols of shaving, washing, eating, spreading banana leaves, scattering grain, and so forth were similarly interpreted by our informants in the different rituals of the cycle, and their full significance is only apparent when a comparison of their various uses is made. In this book, therefore, attention is focused on the ritual cycle. A comparison of numerous rites reveals a *symbolic pattern*, the counterpart, in the emotional aspect, of kinship organization in the practical aspect; and the comments of the more self-conscious Nyakyusa on the rites indicate the *intellectual system* linked with this pattern.

As already mentioned, the religious conceptions of the Nyakyusa include the belief in medicines, in 'the breath of men', and in witchcraft, as well as in the power of senior relatives. The importance of medicines in the rituals directed to the shades will be evident in every chapter of this book. References to witchcraft and the 'breath of men' are not so frequent, since these form what is on the whole a separate system of beliefs, and refer to a different set of relationships. The ancestor cult is concerned *solely* with the relationships of kinsmen, and of the chiefs and their peoples; witchcraft and 'the breath of men' *mainly* with the relationships of fellow villagers—i.e. age mates and their wives—though it also impinges on kinship and political relationships. Only in the relationship of spouses, and that between chief and village headmen, do the two sets of beliefs constantly overlap. An account of the Nyakyusa conception of witchcraft and 'the breath of men' has already been published, and it has been shown that accusations of witchcraft occur most frequently between fellow villagers and, nowadays, between fellow employees, that is, between non-relatives; they are also fairly frequently directed against wives and co-wives; but accusations of witchcraft against kinsmen of the same lineage are very rare.[1] Antagonism between kinsmen occurs and is expressed in accusations of practising sorcery, as well as in fear of the power of senior relatives, but most misfortunes are attributed to the lust and envy of neighbours or wives rather than to the malice of kinsmen. Evil is conceived of as having a personal cause, but as originating generally outside the circle of kin. The mystical power of senior relatives (living and dead) can never be used irresponsibly—it cannot operate unless the cause is just—and therefore misfortune emanating from the shades is always a just

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 102–4; 198–205.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

602 763 is forgotten he will be angry: 'It happens sometimes that a kinsman comes in later, after the man is buried, and is very angry because no message was sent to him; he comes in a passion, and perhaps he beats his brother [the one who should have sent him a message]. Then the others catch hold of him and say: "Why do you not come soberly and greet us decently with the appropriate words? Come now, why?" And if he does not stop they beat him.'

602 764 These kinsmen and affines, with their wives and children, are under obligation to come to the burial, unless they are sick. Young children under the age of 10 or 11 are not obliged to come, though they often do, but older children must do so. One reason for the continuance of the burial ceremonies for three or four days is that this gives time for relatives from a distance to receive the messages and come. Deliberately to refuse to send a message or, on the [578] other side, to refuse to come to a burial for no good reason, is a symbolic breaking of the bond of kinship and no one ever does either, unless there is a serious quarrel and all economic and social relations are being broken off between the two families concerned.

621 764 577 The village neighbours also are obliged to come to every burial in the village. They normally wish to do so, but, even if they do not, they still come for shame or for fear of being accused of witchcraft if they stay away. Where there is friendship the neighbours come in grief and sympathy and quarrels are softened by the fact of death, but, if the memory of enmity still persists, then the last sanctions are shame and fear: 'Some people mourn more than others.' 'The men who knew him say: "Let us go and mourn him."' 'Those who did not know him intimately mourn because each thinks: "He has died, my neighbour, and so will it be with me one day."' 'If I have quarrelled with my neighbour and he dies, I go to his burial for I say to myself: "It is true that while he lived we quarrelled, but now he is dead and we shall never meet again. I too will go to his burial and mourn him."' 'If a village neighbour does not come to a burial we say he is unkindly and unsociable.' 'And if a man does not go to his neighbour's burial then at once people say: "It was you who bewitched him. Why else do you not come to bury him?"' Several of the accusations of witchcraft recorded had been occasioned by a man's absence from a village neighbour's funeral. For it is believed that witches are chary of going to the burials of their victims lest the dead should rise and denounce them.

643 764 A chief normally goes to all burials in his own country, except

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

to the dancers a heightened sense of their own warlike quality: 764
'We used not actually to fight at burials so much as to dance and 535
become conscious of our strength for future wars against other 721
chiefdoms, when, on another day, we would go to raid their cows.'

But although an actual fight was not a necessary part of the 578
funeral it very frequently occurred; and burials are still one of 764
the most usual occasions of spearing. 'In the old days, before the 721
country was at peace, we men often fought at burials; we ran in 535
front spearing one another, while our wives ran behind calling the war-cry and watching the prowess of their husbands.' So far from rituals having the sole function of promoting social integration, as [182] some would have us believe, the burial rites of the Nyakyusa were occasions on which existing antipathies continually found overt expression in fighting and new antipathies arose; but the quarrels were not within the mourning lineage.

The fights normally followed the lines of division between chiefdom and chiefdom, village and village. Kinship and affinity have always for some men extended beyond the single chiefdom; and to the burials of these people, if they are in any way eminent, the young men of other chiefdoms often come to dance. And while today, with a well-established tradition of peace, there are fewer smouldering enmities between chiefdoms, forty or fifty years ago it was scarcely possible for the young men of two chiefs to meet peaceably; cattle-raids, abductions of women, defeats and victories in battle were too hot in the memory. Sometimes an accidental jostling, sometimes a deliberate insult was the occasion for a running fight.

At burials there was often war. If the men of two chiefdoms were there together at a burial they would quarrel and fight. Sometimes the fight began when one hurled his spear into the ground and then pulled it up so as to pitch earth on to another man. Perhaps there would be only a few men dancing at first and many sitting down; but when a neighbouring chief was heard coming with his men, and the sound of the trumpet and flute[1] came to us, then we said: 'If we sit still they will say there were no men but only women at that burial, let us dance too!' So we would get up and dance, and then if the others did anything there would be war.

And fights sometimes occurred between two villages of the same chief.

[1] The trumpet of horn and the bamboo flute which used to accompany the war-dance. They are now seldom heard; drums have superseded them.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Ma Ngonde

881 584 One of the women of the groom's party then fetched two banana leaves, one of sweet banana and one of plantain, and put them down in Kyobwe's hut. Meantime the mother of the groom changed the bride's belt and the bark-cloth worn between the legs, dressing her in new ones, and burying the old cloth, soiled by first menstruation, in a bundle of dry banana leaves. These she placed on top of the fresh leaves already mentioned, covered the pile with a small rough mat, and sprinkled it with powdered medicine. The bride knelt on the mat and, with head bent, ate roast bananas also sprinkled with the powdered medicine, which her mother-in-law handed to her. Her young brother who had washed with her also shared the bananas. After this the bride is free to wash, but not yet to oil herself.

The groom's mothers were feasted on meat and bananas—two large and two small basketfuls—and returned home. The atmosphere all through the ritual was one of rejoicing, and it was markedly a women's affair. The chief and several other men were present but, apart from his scolding of the women for not bringing a bull, the chief played no part at all.

[43] According to strict custom the groom's mothers should have come a second time with gifts of food (*ukunambulela*)[1] to cement the friendship, but since the groom was in a hurry to get to work on the Lupa gold-fields this act was omitted. 'They brought the two lots of food together,' we were told, 'some of the milk and bananas were for the *ukwingenia* and some for the *ukunambulela*.'

583 535 Three weeks later (June 14) the groom, with his go-between and other friends, brought the main body of marriage-cattle (*ukukwe*), and they danced the stamping dance (*ukukanya nganya*) in the bride's father's courtyard and on the litter of the seclusion hut, brandishing their spears as they stamped to the war rhythm. The bride's companions and mothers danced in a separate group, one mother carrying the bride on her shoulders. A lavish feast of cooked food was set before the groom and his friends, and they in their turn scattered pieces of meat and cents which the bride's • [578] maids and 'mothers' scrambled for. Meantime a quarrel broke out between the bride's father and her brothers over the distribution of the marriage-cattle.

881 584 Six weeks after the *ukwingenia* (July 29) the bride, accompanied by two of her father's wives, two of her maids, and a third girl invited because she was a good singer, went to wash ritually again

[1] *Ukunambulela*: to give a present for the first time to a new friend.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Lugulu

851 brothers he will call if they are near) and they come with a bull. They arrive at nightfall.

The girl's parents meanwhile have called all their relatives (but it does not matter if some relatives do not come; it brings them no trouble) and friends of the age-village, and the boys come too. And they shut the door fast and start drinking the beer. 'They have come, they have come, let us close the door', they say. Then the go-between outside calls to us: 'We have come,' but we are silent. We answer never a word. At last we answer and ask: 'What have you brought?' And he answers: 'A bull.'

'What-sized bull?' 'A little bull.' 'He! What do you mean by bringing a little bull only?' 'Well, it's a nice big bull!'

851 Then they come and bang on the door and we hold it shut and they
●578 bang, and bang, and then we begin insulting one another. We accuse them of filthiness, saying: 'They defaecate, they urinate!' And of incest, saying: 'You have intercourse with your mother'; and of foolishness,
[514] and they accuse us likewise. At last they burst in and the insults continue inside. They actually defaecate in the house.[1]

851 But soon we call out: 'They have entered, let us make peace, friends,' and we all sit down. Then I (the father of the girl) call on the go-between, and he sits down opposite us. I and my wife, the girl's mother, sit by the fire. Then I ask him: 'What have you brought?' 'I have brought a bull!' 'Oh! Eh!' 'I am hungry, give me some food.'

Then we discuss this for a time and agree, and we give them the food to eat and some beer. They eat, the young men snatching food over there, and our young men here, and we, the elders, eating sedately at the back.

851 Then, when they have eaten, we begin to insult one another again
578 over the cattle that have been paid, the laziness and slovenliness of the bride, the dirty cooking of her mother. They scold us and we scold them. Then after a time, with insults flying, and the young men stamping and stamping, we call out: 'Silence, silence,' and the noise subsides.

851 Then our son-in-law comes to the fire at the summons of the go-between, who says: 'Praise your father,' and he says: 'You of so-and-so, son of so-and-so (he mentions all my names), our true father.' Then the go-between says: 'Praise your mother!' and he praises her: 'You, so-and-so, daughter of so-and-so, our true mother!' and he goes back and sits down. Then the bride is called by the go-between and she is made to praise first her father and then her mother. And if there is any man who eloped with the bride from her husband's, but she later returned to her husband, the lover comes too. He fears to go blind

[1] Angambwike confirmed this saying, when the rite was mentioned, whether we had been told these details.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ritual, though not openly admitted. The younger brother protested at the inclusion of the cactus stems and it is likely that they were an ingredient intended to injure the sender of sorcery. 783 784

(*d*) *Prayer to the shades*

Misfortune is also believed to come from the anger of senior relatives, living and dead. If a junior has angered his senior kinsman the senior is said to 'mutter over the fire'. 'He is so angry that he cannot speak intelligible words, he murmurs and mumbles to himself. . . .' 'I crouch over the fire in the evening and mutter to myself in a low voice: "I am astonished and hurt at my son. Did I not provide marriage-cattle for him? And he does this to me!" ' Then the shades hear him and the wrong-doer falls ill, or is sterile, or his crops or fishing fail. 'No man has the power of making the shades hear like this save Father (*tata*)—he mutters alone and the shades hear him—all of us, pagans and Christians alike, believe in the power of Father to mutter, because whenever a man wrongs his father something always happens to him—he finds blessing nowhere.' The 'father' is a man's own father who begot him, or his heir, or, in a lesser degree, his father's elder full brother, or any kinsman who has given marriage-cattle on his behalf. 'If a man has given me cattle for marriage then he has authority over me (*je mpala gwangu*)[1] for cattle are important (*imbala*).' 578 775 754

If a senior is at fault (for example, an heir who neglects his wards) the shades may, in theory, punish him also, but more often any misfortune that befalls him is attributed to the just wrath of his neighbours who watch over the interests of the dead man's children. The idea that misfortunes spring from the anger of the living is strong; indeed, one of our best informants, Angombwike, maintained that 'the shades never act alone', and Mwakwelebeja, an old man, said: 'It is really we who get angry, but the shades help a little because they are always with us; we always dream of them.'

The shades are 'the fathers' (*batata*), and prayers are addressed primarily to the men of the lineage, but a father's sister is also claimed as a 'father'. Some informants denied that a mother could bring sickness on her children: 775 782

Women never murmur against their children, only the father, the 754 775

[1] Literally, 'he is my great one'.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 775 man. Women murmur but it only makes them sick themselves [laughter]. But my father's sister (*umasange*) can murmur, she is a man like my father. . . . If my mother is old and I do not care for her she will murmur and fall sick herself, she will never make me sick. My mother is no relative in my homestead, she is no relative to the shades.

However, Mwakwelebeja (a very old and conservative man) held that 'People sometimes say: "My mother beneath is angry" though it's not common', and Kasitile was quite positive that a mother was also a shade with power to inflict misfortune, as the following conversation shows:

QUESTION: What shades influence a man or woman?

KASITILE AND HIS YOUNGEST WIFE: *Isinde* of father is there, and *isinde* of mother. Yes, indeed, *isinde* of mother exists. Once I had not put beer in the house and I fell ill. The divination said: 'It is *isinde* of your mother. She is angry not to find anything in your house.' Because we chiefs always put beer in a little calabash in the house, it stays there always.

QUESTION: When it goes bad?

KASITILE: We put some more. There is a little millet flour there now. Sometimes we put flour, sometimes beer. And when I come to die they bury beer with me. . . . Once the offering was not there, and my mother who was dead came to look and did not find anything. Then she went to father, who was dead, and said: 'I went to our child. His house was without anything.' Then father said: 'Let us go and look!' The[illegible] did not find anything, then they shook me up. Then the oracle said: 'It is the *isinde* of your mother.'

QUESTION: And a wife?

KASITILE: Both her father and her mother punish [lit. hit] her at their place, even though she is with me, also they punish her.

QUESTION: But your shades?

KASITILE: How can they punish in-laws? They do not punish her, but the child whom she has borne, their grandchild, him they punish.

[593] Though Kasitile and others denied that the husband's shades could punish a wife, nevertheless she suffers from their anger through the child, through a difficult labour, or through the beer she brews going bad.

578 775 PYAGILAMO: It is said that when a woman who has quarrelled with her husband is brewing beer and it goes bad, that means the shades are angry. The shades of the husband have made the beer go bad. The husband has murmured and the shades have heard. When a wife is [848] pregnant it is taboo for her to quarrel with her husband; she will have a difficult labour. The husband murmurs and the shades hear. The

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

difficult labour is from this, not from adultery. And in a case of difficult labour her husband does pray to his shades.

All were agreed that a woman is in the power of the shades of her father's lineage and if her father is angry with her, or with his son-in-law her husband, his shades afflict her, causing her to be barren or to have miscarriages, or ailing children. Hence a woman who is barren or ill, or whose children are sickly, often returns to her father's homestead so that he may pray for her, and she sleeps there on the night of the ritual, for the shades come by night. More rarely, if she has quarrelled with her father, she goes outside her husband's homestead and, facing towards her father's home, she prays herself on the pathway. But in all the cases we traced in which a woman's ancestors were believed to have made her, or her child, ill, there was a dispute between her father (or his heir) and her husband over marriage-cattle or the bull of puberty; and we were told that her father's shades 'are angry only if marriage-cattle have not been paid, and for no other reason', thus it seems that the control of her father's shades over a married woman is in fact somewhat limited.

The characteristic illness sent by the shades is sores round the mouth, and fever—an illness which is not acute and clears up quickly. These symptoms are immediately interpreted as *imiadu*, affliction from the shades. Beer going sour before it is mature is also *imiadu*, usually thought to be caused by quarrels between husband and wife. But almost any misfortune, mild or serious, is interpreted as *imiadu* if members of the lineage are conscious of quarrels between themselves, or with their spouses or fathers-in-law.

The ritual consists in the reconciliation of the living in the presence of the dead and, if the misfortune is serious, a sacrifice of flesh, fish, or fowl. The junior begs pardon of his senior who acknowledges his anger and expresses forgiveness by taking a mouthful of water from his calabash cup (*ulupindi*) and blowing it out (*ukuiputa*) in his sacred banana grove. For the patient to recover, or the blight on crops or fish-traps to be removed, *the senior kinsman must confess his anger*, and spitting, or blowing out water, is a symbol of confession and forgiveness. Mwaisumo was explicit on the matter: 'If a father is angry with his son or daughter he may say, some day: "I forgive you now" and spit on the ground: all the anger that is in him comes out like spit.' *Ukuiputa* means both 'to

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

in the banana grove. No one eats any. Then in the morning the children 783
go there and eat. Are they not the comrades of the shades? But for us grown people it is taboo. We eat later on. That is the old custom. And formerly no one dried the fish which first entered the trap. They cooked and ate them in the house with the children. . . . If they put them to dry in the sun the shades were angry, saying: 'Where are the fish we gave you? We do not see them in the house.'

KASITILE: Sometimes it is her father's anger which prevents a girl 842
from becoming pregnant. Perhaps she runs off with men repeatedly, 578
then her father is angry with her. He says: 'She is squandering my cattle.' He complains (*ikuibuneya*) with his wives at the hearth and calls to mind his fathers, the shades. Then the girl does not conceive.

If later on the father forgives her, he sends a messenger to her hus- 783
band, saying: 'Send me your wife, let her come and we will pray.' 842
Then, after calling his fellows and killing a bull, he takes meat from the top of the foreleg (*mmapa*) and cuts it into pieces and puts a piece into the mouth of the girl, and she eats. They say that it is to drive the shades from the body of the girl, the shades who have caught hold of her fecundity. Some of the meat from the *mmapa* is thrown down, and the children pick it up and eat it. It is taboo for others to take and eat it.

FIBOMBE (a Christian elder): Perhaps your father has died and people 842
have come to marry your sister; and perhaps the sister of your father 578
(*anyokaanga*) claims one cow, saying: 'I am your father, give me one.' 783
If you grudge it, then there is much murmuring which is heard by the shades, by your brother and your father who died. And so if your sister does not conceive people say: 'They grudged the father's sister, the shades are angry.' Then you seek a fowl and beer, and send them to your father's sister, and she puts the fowl under her bed that the shades may know it. She speaks, saying: 'Indeed I was angry.' The shades hear. That fowl opens the door; she knows that the cow is near, it is coming. She confesses everything (*ikuseya syese*) on receiving the fowl; this she speaks in her house. You go later with the cow to bring your sister to your father's sister. Then if the girl bears at her husband's everyone says: 'Indeed it was so.'

And if your sister has run off with a man and you are angry, the shades hear. You say: 'I do not know if she will conceive there.' Then she does not bear and people say: 'Let her take her husband to her brother.' If the husband is rich perhaps he seeks two cows and a bull calf, but the cows for bringing back are not sent first, a hen is sent first with a message, saying: 'I come on such and such a day.' The hen is put under the bed. The shades know about it. I, the brother, who was angry, pray, and she bears a child. But this does not happen among Christians; there is nothing of it.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 578 783 One minor quarrel occurred at a funeral we attended. Kasitile was given only a little meat and he complained, saying: 'Why do you give me a leg, I the owner of the funeral?' He took umbrage and left the funeral with his wives. Then they went to his home to say: 'We are in the wrong, we made a mistake in dividing.' Then Kasitile was satisfied and prayed over a medicine (*ulota*) which they cooked to eat. If he did not pray the medicine would go bad and would not cook. He said in his prayer: 'I have no case against them, let the medicine cook, the young men just played with the meat, it is not a serious case, may the medicine cook at once.'

(*e*) *Reconciliation*

828 783 A distinction is made by the Nyakyusa between misfortune due to the anger of senior relatives and that due to the anger of neighbours,[1] and the rituals performed are theoretically distinct, though in practice they merge into one another.

578 783 A man fears the anger of his fellow villagers who murmur against him when he has offended them, and whose cold breath is believed to fall upon him and chill him with fever or cause a paralysis. Mature men or women fear only the anger of their own neighbours, but a young man and his wife also fear their parents' neighbours. The ritual performed to lift the curse of neighbours consists in acknowledging guilt and making an offering of beer or meat for them to feast upon; then, while they eat or drink, they *admit their anger* and express goodwill.

The doctor comes beforehand and gives the sick man medicine to drink. A cow is killed. People are there and say: 'May this medicine help our child.' To drink without people there is like continuing the quarrel. People are there and they speak (*ukusijeje*), saying: 'Someone was angry, but no one is angry now. May this medicine help you.' They drink beer and eat meat saying: 'We are not angry now.' Those who were angry are present and they are satisfied. *Ukusijeje* is to speak many things, and it is like praying (*ukusiputa*) but without actually taking water and spitting.

578 775 783 Sometimes responsibility is fixed squarely on *either* shades *or* neighbours, but since neighbours are said to 'help a father to murmur' against an erring son, and since they may share in beef or beer offered to the shades, the rituals merge into one another, and some offerings seem to be intended to pacify *both* the shades and the neighbours, though in Nyakyusa theory the sources of

[1] Discussed in relation to the age-village in *Good Company*, pp. 98–108.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

misfortune and the rituals are distinct. In theory, when the shades are angry the essential offering is that made in the sacred banana grove or on the hearth; it is eaten by the grandsons of the most recently dead, and whether neighbours partake or not depends upon the generosity of the officiant; whereas when neighbours are angry there is no offering in the grove or at the hearth, the neighbours are feasted, admit anger and express forgiveness.

However, neighbours are slow to admit responsibility (for to curse someone comes close to witchcraft) and in some cases there is both a formal feast for the neighbours and a prayer to the shades, and it is left uncertain where final responsibility rests. The following texts illustrate this:

MWAIKAMBO: It is the custom among us Nyakyusa to marry many wives, mature ones and young ones, so if a man has sons at his home it sometimes happens that one of them makes love to one of his father's wives. Perhaps they commit adultery in secret, perhaps he runs off with her to a distant chiefdom. Then the father breaks off relations with him.

The son, wherever he is, learns that he has been cursed by his father and his body becomes like goose flesh. If the son is wise he gathers his property and returns to his father. He takes a friend with him and goes into the house of one of his father's neighbours. His friend and his father's neighbour speak together. 'I have come to return unto my father because I have done wrong.' He tells the neighbour what they have brought to offer the father—usually a cow and a bull. Then that neighbour seeks three comrades or perhaps four or five, and they go to pacify their irate fellow, saying: 'Our child has returned. He knows that he has done wrong towards you, but we have received him because he has confessed humbly and begged forgiveness.' His father refuses furiously and almost spears himself in his passion. His fellows pacify him for the whole day, or perhaps two or three days, then at last he agrees. Then the young man and his fellows bring the cow and the bull. The father also calls together many of his fellows and he seeks beer and cooks food. They gather together at the father's homestead and the father says: 'My son has come and admitted that he has done wrong, asking that I forgive him and saying: 'I did not know what I was doing, these are the cattle which I have brought', and the others agree. Then they kill the bull. They roast some meat. The father catches one side of it, the son the other and the village headman cuts it in the middle, and the father and son each eat their piece. This is the blessing (*ukuje*), meaning that there is kinship between them now. They eat together. Then all the people eat. Also with the beer it is like this. The village headman picks a straw and puts it in the beer, hands it to the father who drinks, and then to the son. Then other people drink, and they

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ritual they distinguish *abakamu* (kinsmen) from *abanda itale* (non-relatives) or *abapakipanga* (villagers), and *abakikale* (those of the lineage of a dead man) from *abaka* (affines) and mother's relatives (*abijwa*). These categories have different functions.

(*b*) *Christians*

The performance of family rituals is complicated by the fact that 16 per cent of the Nyakyusa are professing Christians, and in almost every lineage there are individuals who withdraw from the full performance of traditional rituals at death, puberty, and marriage, birth, and misfortune. In most cases such a withdrawal is treated tolerantly by the pagan kinsmen: the Christian kinsmen come to mourn, to congratulate the bride, to express sympathy with the parents of twins; and their non-participation in the washing and shaving and avoidance of ritual meat and beer is accepted. At the funeral of Mwamulenga his preceding full brother, who should have been a principal in the death ritual, was a Christian, and he took no part, though his children went through it. At the funeral of Mwampiki (p. 248) one boy was left untreated on the ground that he was a Christian and a Christian 'should not have two gods'. At the puberty ritual of Mwaihojo's daughter (p. 91) the brother called to wash with her was influenced by Christians and was reluctant to take part, though he finally did so.

Only when a son who is heir to family wealth, or to the office of chieftainship or priesthood refuses the inheritance of widows (as a Christian must do) is there very strong pressure on him to conform to traditional custom: the union of the heir with the widows is held essential to their health. Sometimes also there is acute conflict between different members of the family over the performance of an autopsy, the pagans pressing for it and the Christians opposing it. This we saw in the death of E. when her pagan senior brother wished to examine her, and her Christian junior brother opposed him vehemently.

That Christians cannot take part in certain of the rituals[1] and do not suffer if they omit them is generally accepted. The farewell to the dead at the homestead of the deceased, and the treatment of kinsmen of twins, fall into this category. About certain other rituals, such as the ritual of the gasping cough and the protection against sorcery, opinions are divided. Some of our Christian friends insisted that 'the gasping cough is a real illness' and cited

[1] There are minor differences in the rules of the different missions.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

795 the case of a Christian who had stayed away from a ritual in his
184 family and 'as soon as he met his relatives he fell sick and coughed
789 like an animal. So they got some of the lees of the beer and gave it to him and he recovered.' A number of Christian kinsmen, leaders in the Church, did not come to the gasping-cough ritual which we attended, but others did come and sipped the beer, or had the lees sent to them at their homes. In the ritual for protection against sorcery which we watched a Christian brother and his wife took part.

And some Christians, though they deny the necessity of many of the pagan rituals for themselves as Christians, still believe them to be necessary to their pagan kinsmen. Hence the anomalous (and to the missionaries the highly unorthodox) position of a woman professing Christianity and acting as officiant in a pagan ritual, as did N. in the death ritual for Kalata's mother (p. 239). N., it will be remembered, came by night. The officiant who performed the ritual for Mwakobela's twins was under instruction as a Christian and was proposing to hand on her medicines to her daughter, a pagan, when she herself was received into the Church. She explained this when Mwakobela (her patient) asked her: 'And what shall we do for twin medicine when you become a Christian?' And we had little doubt that she believed in the efficacy of her medicine for pagans.

Though Christians cannot go through pagan rituals as principals they do not withdraw altogether: they often help their pagan neighbours as grave-diggers at a funeral and in the provision of food for guests at funerals and marriages; and the young men and girls may dance as a separate group, singing their own
•[576] songs or hymns and ignoring the drums. Sometimes acute rivalry between the two groups of dancers is apparent.

771 The effect of Christian teaching on pagan ritual is not limited
177 to the partial withdrawal of professing Christians. In those villages most influenced by missions, such as Ilolo, near Rungwe, there is considerable scepticism among pagans, and many of them curtail the rituals in their families, or do not attend them. The Christian view is that 'the pagans see that the Christians disregard the rituals and nothing happens to them, so they begin to ignore them too'. 'Pagans fear much less than they used to do.'

177 Men who are in European employment either inside or outside
464 the district cannot attend all the rituals. Their case is partially met by keeping the lees of the ritual beer with which to treat them

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[585] of which the basic rule is the separation of the reproductive
834 activities of successive generations.

If my wife goes to the inner part of my mother's house, it is a wrong. Perhaps she will bear a thin and sickly child. She has gone to the inner part of her in-law's house and my mother is angry with her for going where my father goes. Perhaps, when she is first pregnant, my wife goes to the back of her own mother's house. That is a wrong, too. Perhaps she will have a difficult labour. The trouble in both cases comes from the anger of the elders, my mother's in the first case, her mother's in the second. It is said that if my wives have seen my father by inheritance, then, when I die, the fathers who are dead will not receive me because I have injured ('kept back') their younger brother. I think, for my part, that the pagans honour this custom [of avoidance] very much because they say that the shades will be angry if it is neglected.

775 Apart from the neglect of rituals, the types of behaviour com-
673 monly believed to be directly punished by the shades are (1) quar-
578 rels between father and son or between brothers, turning on the
681 seduction of a senior's wife by his junior, on the sharing of marriage-cattle or, nowadays, on the sharing of the earnings of a young man working for wages, or on his seduction of women which necessitates the payment of fines by his father; (2) quarrels between father and daughter or father-in-law and son-in-law turning on the handing over of marriage-cattle by the son-in-law and the provision of gifts for his daughter by the father; (3) quarrels between husband and wife; (4) quarrels between relatives of all sorts over failure to attend, or to invite to, rituals; and (5) the neglect of his wards by the heir.

578 Cases of family quarrels over seduction leading to misfortune
775 have already been quoted (pp. 134–5; 187–8). One concerning cattle and earnings was cited by Mwakwelebeja. A young man, X., went out to work and left the cattle he earned with his elder full brother. When he married he took all these cattle and gave them to his father-in-law. His elder brother was very angry. X. said: 'I take all the cattle for you have never given me any of yours.' His brother replied: 'How could I give you cows? I have no children.' Then all the cattle X. had given to his father-in-law died and had to be replaced. 'The shades were angry because when the younger brother took the cows his elder brother complained very much.' And if a young man goes out to work and gives his father no share of his earnings the shades are angry: 'Perhaps I will fall ill; perhaps when I look for work I shall not

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngohde FN17
Nyakyusa

find it. There are many cases like that. My friends in the age-village will go to a diviner who will declare that the shades are angry because I do not care for my father.' If a daughter makes a runaway marriage her father is angry and it is believed that either she may not conceive or her baby may be ailing until the marriage-cattle and bull of puberty have been given by her husband and accepted by her father.

The respect and obedience due to a father is due to his heir, and in certain circumstances to his sister also; while on his part the heir has the same obligations to his juniors as the deceased had. Fibombe cited the example, already quoted, of a man quarrelling with his dead father's sister over the distribution of the marriage-cattle for his own sister, and the girl failing to conceive because of the anger of her father's sister. If a son, whose parents are dead, neglects to provide his sister with the customary gifts of food when she returns to her husband after a visit to her 'father', he may become impotent: 'Those below are angry and when he has begotten twins he will have trouble at the ritual.' Or the girl may fall ill. 'She thinks: "Who is my father? This is my father, but he does not care for me." ' The mystical power of a senior relative is linked directly with his obligation to give gifts:

> My father's elder half-brother has power over me only if he has given marriage-cattle for my father or nurtured him. If he has given him cattle to marry a wife then he has power over him. . . . My superior (*mbala gwanga*) is he who gives me everything.

Favouritism in a polygynous family, shown in the unfair division of milk or meat or fish by the husband between his wives, is thought to anger the shades, which cause his cows to bleed from the udder when milked, or prevent fish entering his traps, and so do the bad temper and insulting language of a quarrelsome wife. Mwakwelebeja explained that:

> If a woman is bad-tempered when she is making beer the beer goes sour. If my wife and I quarrel my shades are angry and the beer is spoiled. I say to my wife: 'You have spoiled the beer because you do not listen to what I say.'

Neglect of his wards by the heir is a wrong-doing frequently mentioned.

> It is said that if I neglect my brother's children he and my father will be very angry, they will not come to meet me when I die, as the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Yet still she remains a daughter of her father's lineage and shares in its rituals as well as in those of her husband's. 613

Lineages are linked by marriage and kinship between them is established by the passage of cattle. The son-in-law becomes 'one blood' with his parents-in-law when they drink the beer brewed or eat the chicken killed at the consummation of the marriage; some of his semen is buried in his father-in-law's grove, and his spear is placed in his father-in-law's hut. The significance of the link is magnified by the thicket of taboos which surrounds 'mixing bloods'; and once forged the link should be, and commonly is, retained long after the deaths of the individuals by whom it was created, for each is replaced, the husband by a brother or son, the wife by a sister or brother's daughter. For each heir the ritual of 'mixing bloods' is performed afresh reminding them of their separation and union. 613 581

Cattle are closely identified with men and therefore with lineages. The shades watch over them. Like men, they are in danger from women who are ritually impure; at the death of their owner they, too, mourn; and kinship relationships are established and expressed by their transfer from one lineage to another. 'Kinship is cattle.' 613

The distinction and opposition of lineages is apparent in the ritual of puberty and marriage which expresses both hostility and conciliation. The two lineages dance in rivalry, haggle over cattle, and exchange feasts. Among the Nyakyusa, the opposition is not between men and women, as suggested by some recent writers on rituals elsewhere,[1] but between lineages; though the men and the women, both of the groom's party and the bride's, act separately. The hostility and conciliation reach their culmination in the ritual of vituperation among the Lugulu, when groom's group and bride's insult each other by word and in action and then, at the instance of the master of ceremonies, praise each other and feast together. 613 585 881 578

Among the Nyakyusa there is no clan organization and no common name for a lineage of many generations like the Pondo *isidula*, which identifies agnatic kinship within a large group. A common name is used by members of a lineage of three or four generations at the most, and among commoners there is no invocation of a distant ancestor as among the Pondo. The hero [614 171] 613

[1] E. Fortune, *The Forgotten Language*; M. Gluckman, 'The Role of the Sexes in Wiko Circumcision Ceremonies', in *Social Structure*, edited by M. Fortes (1949).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

V. CAUSES OF MISFORTUNE

761 (*a*) *The death of Katasya*

The following account of the death of Katasya is quoted in full [128] because it illustrates how several possible causes of misfortune were considered. Possible causes mentioned were:

(a) The anger of his junior kinsmen
(b) The witchcraft of his wives
(c) The anger of his shades
(d) The anger of his neighbours because he had given them too small a cut of a bull killed as a sacrifice to his shades
(e) The adultery of his son with three of his wives
(f) The sorcery of his half-brother's son, Mwamukinga, with whom there was a long-standing quarrel over inheritance and whom he had accused of killing his (Mwamukinga's) full brother
(g) The sorcery of the Chief Mwaihojo, for Katasya, a man of the neighbouring Chief Mwaipopo, had built and cultivated on land claimed by both Mwaihojo and Mwaipopo

Record of G. W., 4/1/38

761 Angombwike told me at midday that Katasya had died. He was a village headman of Mwaipopo, the fellow of Mwainyopolela. His case (*isugua*) was thus:

The millet did not grow in his field, so he called all his children to 782 his homestead and killed a big bull for them, saying: 'Perhaps my children are angry at home. Perhaps my wives have worked witchcraft.' But to the neighbours he gave one leg and the children at home ate the rest. He did not, however, live long. He died immediately. It is said that the meat is still there. They have not eaten it. Such is the case of his death.

Kasitile, when I called on him yesterday, was out and his wife said he had gone to see Katasya who was ill.

Later in the day—4.1.38. Likunyila came in and I asked about Katasya's death.

But he has not died, he is still just alive. We heard that the millet [787] failed in his field and the maize and beans in all his gardens. They all failed. One of his wives went into a trance repeatedly. She said: 'Those beneath are angry. Seek a bull and kill it.' Then he sought one, but 761 now they have killed him. Perhaps he stinted his fellows in the village 578 of meat, because if a man kills his animal alone and his fellows hear

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

that he has killed, they are astonished and say: 'He should have called us. Does he perform ritual alone?' 761 578

QUESTION: But why were those beneath angry in the first place? They are not angry without cause.

LUKUNYILA: Indeed, they are never angry without cause. There is always some wrong. But we do not know what it is in this case. If you do not kill cattle for your father's burial they are always angry. But we do not know what wrong Katasya committed to make them angry.

Later Mwanifu came in. He told me that Katasya is still alive, but perhaps he will die this evening. We do not speak with him. He is just breathing. We only ask his wives: 'Does he sleep?' The case is thus: the millet failed in his field and he said: 'I shall pray to my shades and it will grow again.' Then he went to a certain man to get his big bull and gave him a cow in calf, saying: 'Take this and give me your bull,' and later they will give him a little calf worth 30s. The bull was very big. He killed it. Before he did so he was already slightly ill, but when he had killed it the illness became very much worse. We say they have bewitched him because he stinted his fellows in the village. But they themselves deny it, saying: 'But we always kill and eat ourselves alone. I, Mwainyopolela, killed my animal and ate it alone. Have I died therefore? According to the custom, if I have killed my beast as a sacrifice (*jakuipatela*) then I give my fellows one leg.' 754 782 [437] 782

QUESTION: Did Katasya not do so?

MWANIFU: No, Katasya did not give them any. He ate alone. Some wise men give the chief the breast because the chief is the owner of the country. Katasya did not give him that. Yes, if someone dies then the chief is usually given the breast. But when a beast is killed for sacrifice, no one having died, then many eat by themselves. The mourner gives to the chief.

QUESTION: Did he inquire of a diviner or not?

MWANIFU: We do not know. Some inquire of a diviner. Some think for themselves that the fathers are shaking them. Concerning his death, we are only speculating, saying: 'Perhaps they have bewitched him. They were angry on account of the meat.' But perhaps it is sorcery. See, he was sweating very much on his face. Let him die. We will look in his belly. Perhaps he has been speared. They have bewitched him. Perhaps it is sorcery. We only speculate. 787 754 761

In the morning Mwalipopo (the chief) was very, very angry. He said: 'Why have you gathered together, you people? Go off home. Do you want to finish off a dying man? It is taboo to gather together. First let a man die, then come to lament the death.' 763

QUESTION: Is it a Nyakyusa custom to be angry if people gather together at a sick man's house? Is it as if they bewitch him?

MWANIFU: Yes.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

763 As we came away various people stopped us and asked: 'Have you examined him?' 'Yes, it is sorcery.' Great interest was shown by all in the cause of death.

764 When we first arrived, we found the son a little distance from the funeral and he did not, so far as I know, come near at all. He did not go near the grave when the corpse was buried. I asked Kasitile about bathing at the waterfall. 'They will wash him to-night. Katasya died in the afternoon. At night the son and three women fled. They will wash them at night.'

6/1/38

Kasitle came in to see us at breakfast time. I asked why the son of Katasya had not come near the burial though they had bathed him at the waterfall.

KASITLE: It is forbidden, but they have made a mistake. They have washed him irregularly. According to custom they should first have buried the dead, then, on the evening after the burial, they take them to the waterfall to wash them. When they come from washing, then the son takes a torch of burning grass, he throws it down on the grave, and jumps over the grave. Then they say: 'Let him strike the cattle.' He kills one of his own because he does not eat of those which they have killed previously. This is what they did yesterday afternoon, so it is finished now.

QUESTION: What does it symbolize?

KASITLE: It means it is I who overstepped you.

QUESTION: And when he steps over the grave and the fire?

KASITLE: It is the fire which the women kindled for him who has died.

QUESTION: Do they know who worked sorcery against him?

578 754 KASITLE: Yes, it is the son of Mwaikilaja whose name is Mwamukinga, because when their father, Mwakyandwike, died, the elder brother, Katasya, was a child, and the son of the second wife, Mwaikilaja, inherited. But when Katasya grew up they refused to be on good terms with him and quarrelled with him. But they never worked sorcery against each other. So then when Mwaikilaja died, his sons inherited. Katasya lost the inheritance because they said: 'You are not on good terms with your kinsmen. Let the sons inherit.' So he said: 'I, Katasya, agree.' But later on he was on good terms with those sons of his brother. There were three of them. But the eldest and the youngest quarrelled. The youngest, Mwamukinga, worked sorcery against the eldest, so Katasya told them: 'Do not be friendly with Mwamukinga who is working sorcery against you. Let him be at a distance.' Then Mwamukinga was angry and said: 'Is that wretched elder (*ilulu ali*) never going to die?' and he worked sorcery against him. This is the case.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

428 Mwakionde let Mpoma (Mwakasekele) take the inheritance because he is the eldest. Mwakionde said: 'Let him be their father.' But when they gave the inheritance to Mpoma, they talked to one another and said that Mwambujule should take one wife because he did not have any wife. He was a bachelor. So they gave him one wife, but four wives of the father were inherited by Mpoma. After a little time Mwambujule said: 'My fellow has made a mistake with the property and he has
428 not given me anything.' So he strove to attract the mothers. He said:
576 'Come to me and let me inherit you myself.' The mothers agreed, they ran away and came to his place. Mpoma was angry and went to Mwakionde to tell him that Mwambujule had attracted the mothers and taken them to his house. Mwakionde said: 'Do not make a case.' The village headman went to Mwambujule to admonish him together with the mothers. Then he returned them to Mpoma.

754 Later on, illness appeared. The sister of Mpoma fell ill. They gave
787 her medicines to drink and she recovered. Then the brother of Mwambujule fell ill and the doctors said it was sorcery (*ubutege*), that is, Mwakionde thinks it is sorcery. This is also a common rumour. But, as will be seen later, the diviners, when appealed to, said: '*Mindu*,' that is, the shades.

755 When Mwakionde saw the sick man, he called together all of them
754 that they might grumble (*bijumane*) and drive away the illness, because it is said that when people pray (*ukwiputa*) the sickness from sorcery gets less. It is said if one has worked sorcery against his fellow he always hides himself, he does not appear at his friend's home, because, if he appears, if he comes and says: 'I am sorry for the illness (*ndaga ububine*),' even without praying at all, the illness disappears. Also, if a sick man has died, he does not go or he will die soon. It is said that the dead rise. Yes, it is the same in the case of witchcraft. Then also they say that if someone has 'eaten' his fellow he does not go to him, he hides himself at his own home, and if his fellow has died he does not go or he will die very quickly. The dead rise. In the prayer they especially drive away the shades, because it is said that sickness from the shades comes from us living. If, for example, I have done something bad to my fellow, and the shades are angry, but if he forgives me, they also forgive. He must express forgiveness openly in words of prayer (*amatyu gamo ga lusiputo*). If he forgives me only in his heart, the shades do not forgive. This prayer that we heard during the day had power both against sorcery and against the shades, they spoke of both. In the evening it was completed.

754 Mwakionde called them all together and said: 'Friends, I am astonished that the illness has come again.' The people: 'Hu; this illness puzzles us very much.'

MWAKIONDE: 'For what reason does this man fall ill in the summer, and that man fall ill in the summer, and the other fall ill?'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

MPOMA: 'I am ashamed, and also I am very angry, because people 754
say it is I who am working sorcery against them, although when they 578
were ill I carried them to my house.'[1]

Mpoma turned back on the road when they sent medicine for the sick man (i.e. he did not go to the sick man).

A WOMAN: 'Why do they work sorcery against one another when they are both left?'

ANOTHER WOMAN: 'The wives of Mbikule say Mpoma says: "Let me be alone, let me kill all of them and get everything for myself by cunning."'

MWAMBUJULE: 'Since I carried him to my place I said the illness would not be serious. He also sent a message to *your* place, Mpoma, saying that he was ill, and asking for some milk, but you did not send any.'

MPOMA: 'No one told me.'

THE WOMAN: 'The widows fight with Mpoma. They say: "You have eaten a medicine to work sorcery against your fellows."'

KANYAMALE: 'Also they speak of his wrongdoing, in not approaching the sick man.'

ANOTHER WOMAN: 'Yes, and also you are angry.'

MPOMA: 'See, when they said the present patient was still ill, I prayed, I said aloud: "What am I doing? Get away, what am I doing?" and I sent a medicine and he recovered.'

A WOMAN: 'We consulted an oracle, it said: "It is Mwakyona who 787
is angry," but I said: "What is he angry about?" The oracle said: "He is angry on account of cattle." He says: "Why does he fear me when he has taken cattle?" So we said: "Mwakyona is angry because he has taken cattle."'

THE MBUNGUS (Mwakyona's sisters): 'We like him (the shade), let 753
him come.'

WOMAN: 'They are jealous of the sick man [i.e. a third cause suggested. The unreasonable jealousy of his neighbours]. He dies like his father. People say: "He eats meat in our houses, he borrows our cloths," and he dies of their unreasonable jealousy (*akabini*)!'

The women and the men said: 'Thank you, Mwakionde, because you have made us think of these things [he had taken the initiative in prayer]. You make us make friends, and make us love one another, and bless one another.'

Mwakionde spoke, saying: 'There are many, many roads on which people travel and there is one road through which illness enters.' They 782
say that if many people are with a sick man then the illness spreads.

They also prayed, confessing their anger in the case of Kanyamale, [783]

[1] 'It is the custom to carry people to the "father", the head of the family, when very sick. This is not supposed to cure them, but it is customary (*lolesho*). That is where we all are ill, at their father's place.'

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

574 of more importance are the magistrate and the missionary, whose coming is usually heralded afar, by the report that he is already in the district, and is now perhaps only a day's journey off, slowly making his way from village to village, and dealing with whatever matters require his attention as magistrate or missionary. His coming is a matter of importance, for he will have a number of men with him who will need food, by the sale of which the villagers hope to make a few honest pence; though abundance of food is often given freely as a token of welcome. As the great man approaches the village, all the younger people come out to meet him with shouts of welcome, and if he is travelling in a *machilla*, the men will take the pole from the bearers, and with tremendous noise enter the village and deposit him at the school or the chief's house.

182 And the sadder side? Sickness, epidemics, the per-
561 petual fear of witchcraft and of evil dreams fore-
•578 shadowing ill, theft with its ever-present possibility of accompanying murder, quarrels that will not heal, forced marriages, and all the hidden cruelty that so rarely comes to the surface. Most pathetic of all, perhaps, the feud between old and young; the young all for to-day and to-morrow, for the new ideas, the hope of progress; the old for yesterday with its stability and ordered life; the young going in crowds to church, the old going secretly, and no doubt sadly, to worship at the ancient shrines, guarding the approaches lest the levity of youth should desecrate the place of terror, and evil come upon all the land; the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

young gathering around the white man, and lending 182
themselves to his purposes, the old even to-day ap- 561
proaching him with reluctance, if at all, for to them 578
he still retains much of the awe and hidden power
with which he was credited in the earlier days.

The individual Konde is not so popular with white 157
men as are members of other tribes; indeed there are
employers who will not knowingly give work to a
Konde at all. As workmen, it must be acknowledged
that they are both less active and less reliable than
surrounding tribes; they are neither so intelligent nor
so loyal to contract. The Konde soon wearies of
effort, and longs to get back to the lowing of his cattle
and his pretty little hut in its banana grove. He loves
his children, and the hope of being able to clothe
them if he works well, does not compensate him for
prolonged absence. Loyalty, as the Henga, Angoni, [177]
and Yao are loyal, does not distinguish the Konde,
who show loyalty rather to chief and to tribal custom,
than to the white man with his problematical benefits.
They have never attached themselves to the European,
as many of the surrounding tribes have done; for the
Konde are less convinced than others that the one hope
of Africa is the European and his influence; less con-
vinced, be it added, that Africa stands so desperately
in need of saving. That may be due to their un-
awakened condition—and, again, it may not. Edu- 972
cationally, too, they are less advanced than other tribes. 977
Only a few of them are to be found in Government
offices, or doing the skilled work which commands such
good pay from Europeans; nor have they supplied,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

has a disease, from which he does not himself suffer, 787
but which passes over to the person who arouses the wrath.

At Karonga, if two old men fight with their fists, 787
and tear each other's garments, they have forecasted 579
death for each other. The death of a friend of one or the other will shortly take place. Among the Banyakyusa to the north, the fight of any two, young or old, with fists only, is a portent of the same significance. Such anger blazes up suddenly, and the two men fly at each other in blind fury, unable to restrain themselves sufficiently to go and fetch the weapons with which reasonable men fight. The fist as a weapon of war is not highly regarded by Africans generally, however dear it may be to others.

2. Unnatural actions. To invite an old man to 787
climb a tree may seem to us more laughable than 578
deadly; but to the Konde it is a dreadful combination of insult and forecast; it is a forecast, because such a thing is an insult so great as to be in itself a portent. The number of things that come under this head is legion; but generally, to ask an old person to do what is unnatural for an old person to do, is *kanikwa*. Little girls quite innocently removing their scanty covering in the presence of an old man, have unwittingly warned him that his days are near an end. Perhaps under the same category we may include an invitation given by a child to an old man to come and eat; to us it could not come in a more charming way; but the old Konde would turn his back indignantly on the ill-bred brat who

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

781 so insulted him. This does not apply to an invitation
578 to drink beer, but no one can explain why there is a difference.

3. Accusations against a man of good character come under the same heading. Some evil has been done, and the wrong-doer has not been discovered. Then, perhaps in joke, or it may be out of personal dislike, some one says that so and so did it. The person referred to knows that his days will not be long in the land. "Did I ever do a thing like that?" he asks indignantly. "Why, then, am I accused?" It can only be *kusikura*, and he expects to die, at the best, within a year or two.

781 4. If the spirits, in dreams, offer food, it must not
828 be accepted, even in the dream: to accept it means death.

Connected with the foregoing, but having a
781 different name among the Konde, are insults or
578 injuries to parents. A man who fights with his father,
593 and throws him down, has achieved the final wickedness. Whether the old man was right or wrong in the matter in dispute is of no consequence; the whole community expresses its abhorrence of the deed. "Has this man reached even to God?" that is to say, does he consider himself the equal of God, that he does such things? Word is sent to the chief, and the whole district is informed of the evil thing that has been done. There is no formal denunciation, no spoken curse; but the *ikugwa*, the curse of all fathers, and of all ancestors, is upon the son. He becomes lame; then unable to stand upright; finally he

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

 781 578 593

crawls about on his buttocks, a helpless object. The curse has taken effect.

After a time good-natured people try to bring father and son together again. The son is persuaded to make his father an offering of an ox or a cow in token of repentance. If the father agrees, a day is fixed, and the whole community, including the little children, assembles at the house of the injured father. Beer is prepared, the ox is killed, the son publicly expresses his repentance, and the father his acceptance thereof. Then the people, having heard all the details of the crime,* express their feelings in a prolonged groan. A dose of medicine is now given to the son, a stick is put into his hands, and he is bidden to rise and walk, which he does in the presence of all! A similar curse falls upon the man who does evil with one of his father's wives; and there are a very few other crimes which automatically bring on the same punishment. 578 593 783

It is not difficult, from the point of view of modern mental science, to explain the facts. The disability is due to the conviction in the mind of the younger man, strengthened by a similar conviction in the mind of the whole community, that such results always follow deeds like his. Similar phenomena are by no means unknown among Europeans, where the response to each other of mind and body is not so immediate as it is among the more unsophisticated Konde. The man bearing his sin is mentally, perhaps, rather than physically, unable to stand upright; and the conviction having been removed from his mind, 000

* [Fighting and throwing down one's father — Analyst]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

of witchcraft is made. The people are assembled by order of the chief, and the woman walks slowly round the circle, gazing into the eyes of each person, and eliminating the innocent one by one, using no other test than the look in the individual's eyes. Those who remain are guilty. 754 695

Prosperity in another arouses all the evil passions of witches and wizards. But prosperity in itself was, until lately, evidence that the prosperous person was himself a wizard. There is a woman living not far from me who was accused before the British magistrate of pretending to exercise witchcraft, and to obtain cattle and other goods by threatening violence. She was dismissed on technical grounds, but ordered not to return to her own district. In conversation with her after the trial she told me that it was only the presence of the white man that saved her from being burned alive as a witch; the evidence against her being the rapid increase of her live stock. But the increase, she assured me, was "the gift of God." 754 578

Death by burning was the ancient penalty when that was inflicted publicly; but when the witches or wizards themselves undertook to kill a fellow-sorcerer in jealousy, they did it in another way. Leaving their bodies behind them, they go to the house of the victim, enter by the roof, disturbing nothing; and finally enter the stomach of the sleeping person. Thence they wander about to lungs, heart, or liver, and wound him with their "secret spears." Next day the man is ill, and the day following he dies. If the *post mortem* reveals ulcers on heart, lungs, or liver, [683] 754

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

421 593 [261]

"Why with cassava?" I asked. "Because the husband thinks of cassava as a security against famine; if a famine comes he takes his *bwanga* cassava and gives some to each of his wives."

"And why with bananas?" "Because if he has bananas of his own, then when the chief sends the great-commoner round to collect bananas for guests, or to send to the hospital in Tukuyu, the man cuts one of his bananas. He realizes that, as he has two wives, if he takes a banana bunch from one of them she will be angry and wonder why he cut her bunch and not that of her fellow wife."

"So it is only polygynists who keep separate *bwanga* bananas?" "Certainly, no monogamist would ever do so."

421 578 593 627

"A man named Mwainaka," he told me later, "once disputed with his wife over the selling of maize. They had just begun harvesting the crop when the woman told her husband that she intended to take some of the maize to the shops and sell it and buy some clothes; for her child was naked and she had neither cloth nor skin to carry him in on her back, she had to hold him in her arms. Mwainaka, however, told her to wait a little until all the maize was harvested, when he would divide it up. His wife thereupon protested that the crop was their joint property and that he himself could take some for sale whenever he wished, so why not she also; and she pointed out that many other people had already begun to sell their maize and buy cloths. So they quarrelled and Mwainaka struck his wife, who then ran complaining to the great-commoner. The great-commoner heard the case and judged that Mwainaka was in the wrong because his wife had no skin for carrying her baby and was in trouble therefore. If, he said, she had not been in such trouble over carrying the child they would have given their opinion against her for refusing to agree with her husband's proposal to wait and finish harvesting first, but as it was they thought that Mwainaka was in the wrong; no division of plots or crop had been made and the food was their common property. And Mwainaka admitted that he was wrong." "Did he pay his wife any compensation for the blow?" I asked. "No, they reconciled them to one another."

421 578 593

"And if a man," I enquired further, "takes some of the food which belongs to himself and his wife jointly and sells it without telling her, will she make a case against him?" "She may, but if she is a gentle wife she argues it out alone with her husband; she asks him why he did not consult her, for there is now but little left and she wonders what they will eat. And her husband, if he is a sensible man, agrees with her and admits that he was in fault. But if, instead, the man makes out that he had every right to take it, for the food is as much his as hers, and if he is indignant at her protest then that attitude will bring a quarrel between them."

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 643 Mageme to Mwakabanga no Kyungu has ever been succeeded by his own immediate heir; the choice of Peter as successor to Mwangalaba was unique, for he was his full brother and the heir to his property, but then Peter's ability and personal wealth were unique also. And in the case of the great chiefs and the nobles also the principle of election is still followed.

178 559 653 The grounds of election have slightly altered. Generosity and wealth are still important, but "wisdom in European ways" is now more looked for than maturity, and shortly before our visit a fairly young man was chosen as Mwakasungula. Bravery in war, of course, no longer matters.

178 565 622 The Administration have so far made little use of any great chiefs except the three who are now "Sub-chiefs;" but the others (the "Important Headmen") could be made into effective local rulers, if their salaries were raised. The ordinary chiefs and nobles (the "Village Headmen") are too numerous and have too few subjects to be very effective links in the chain of modern authority. But many of the great chiefs command the respect of considerable numbers. Moreover the fact that they are already being elected for their "wisdom in European ways" suggests that they will prove competent to deal with modern problems.

The traditional secular procedure of election is still followed, with some exceptions: the nobles of Ngonde are now sent by the Kyungu to participate in the "catching" of the great chiefs of Ngana[1] on the spot; the District Commissioner is informed of the result of every election; while the Kyungu himself, no longer secluded, takes a bigger share in making the choices than his predecessors very well could. And many of the religious elements of the traditional procedure, such as the setting of a new Kyungu on the iron stool *Kiumbi*, have fallen out of use.

The sending by Peter of the nobles of Ngonde to catch the chiefs of Ngana is a sign of the present centralization of power in his hands under Government. When we asked why the old custom had been changed we were told that it was "because now everything is under the control of Government and comes to the Kyungu."

The gradual ousting by chiefs of the few ruling territorial nobles who still remain in the plain has continued in modern times, but the novel conditions have complicated the process and seem to be checking it. A recent quarrel between Kajuni and Mwenelupembe illustrates this. The head of the house of Kajuni, which is a *junior* branch of the

[1] I think this is also true of the less important territorial nobles of the hills, but we have not seen.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Mwenengubwe, has attained more or less the status of a great chief; but his country originally belonged to the noble Mwenelupembe. One of the Kajunis married a daughter of Mwenelupembe and, in the usual way, became the effective ruler of most of the country. But the position was not formally clarified, Kajuni and Mwenelupembe are said to have lived on the best of terms, "and there was no boundary between them." After the arrival of the Europeans Kajuni was recorded in the Government list as the "Headman," for taxation purposes, with the consent of Mwenelupembe. And this meant that Mwenelupembe received no share of the tax money. But then, recently, Kajuni sold some of their land to a European for a tobacco shamba without consulting Mwenelupembe, who was furious, and demanded his own tax register and to have a boundary formally marked out between them. And this has now been done. The present cash value of the status of a ruler has altered the economics of the situation, the decline of the religious status of Mbande lessens the comparative importance of the royal blood, while new occasions of dispute between the rulers are now present.

The "coming out" (*wazoka*) has ceased in Ngonde owing to the smallness of all the present chiefdoms, both in area and numbers, and the impossibility of finding sufficient land and followers for two successors to any local chief.[1] There has been no "coming out" since 1913. Each local chief is now succeeded by one younger full-brother (or one son) alone. But still among these "Village Headmen" popular favour determines their position. If his subjects do not like a "Headman" they move away to his neighbours, and every emigration reduces his salary by 3d. a year.

(e) *CONCLUSION.*

Now the more autocratic form and the greater centralization of the modern constitution of Ngonde is very largely the product of inevitable social forces. Granted the general conditions of contact between Africans and Europeans in Central Africa, a decline of the religion of Ngonde, with the consequential change in the relations of chiefs with their leading commoners, could not possibly be avoided. Nor could the old local autonomy possibly be fitted in unchanged to any modern administrative system. And Ngonde is not unique in this, similar changes, equally inevitable, can be seen in most areas of Central Africa.

Nor is the relative poverty of the majority of the Native rulers of Ngonde today a unique phenomenon either. Richards[2] has shown the

[1] Owing to the climatic difference land is scarcer in Ngonde than among the Nyakyusa; but the implications of this fact we did not specially study.
[2] *op. cit.*

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631 sons. To the dead chief's full-brother go his wives and cattle, so that property and power are usually inherited separately; in all the cases which I have investigated however, this brother has himself given some of the cows to the young chiefs, but the reasons for his action are still obscure to me. In so far as the dead chief's brother is still the religious head of both chiefdoms the functions of chieftainship may be said still to be divided; but all the secular functions are now normally exercised by the young chiefs. And the religious functions also fall to them when all their father's full-brothers are dead.

Political authority is the general authority of one or more persons within a community, whether local or nomadic, which goes beyond the bounds of a single family; a leadership confined to no one type of behaviour, but ordering a variety of social activities. Such an authority is wielded by a Nyakyusa chief, together with his great commoners, in his own chiefdom. There a number of legal, economic, religious[20] and ceremonial activities are controlled by them; and there, before the coming of the Europeans, they had military leadership also. But before that event no man had any wide political authority beyond the single chiefdom. The chiefs of Lubaga[21] had a far-reaching religious pre-eminence, but no general or political influence at all beyond their own country.

622 The only extensions of political power beyond a single chiefdom
578 before European times, as far as I know, arose from the rivalry of brother chiefs. The division of an old chief's country into two was not always accepted by the young men concerned; quarrels and fighting between them were common, and the position established at the "Coming Out" was sometimes modified by war. If one of the two decisively defeated the other, he took all his brother's cows and reduced him to a subordinate position. The land of the Nyakyusa is full of such minor chiefdoms; by the clerks who collect tax they are described as "villages," but they are
622 radically different from villages in their constitution. For, while they often consist only of a few score families, they are themselves articulated into age-villages and have at their head, not an elected great commoner (*ulijamo*) but a hereditary chief (*umulafyule*). A minor chief marries in the ordinary way, like a commoner, and only one of his sons inherits his chieftainship; while his chiefdom, owing to its small size, is often simply divided into two villages, one for the old, one for the young men. To-day his position carries with it neither wealth nor power; he has some authority over his own people, but less than the great commoners of his powerful

[20] I am now speaking of the position of a chief after his father and all his father's full-brothers are dead, and before his own sons have "come out."
[21] Vide infra. sec: 641

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

kinsmen. Though some of the reasons for his subordination are to be found in modern conditions, it is clear that many of the factors have always operated. 622

Wars did not only occur between brothers; but when one chief defeated another who was more distantly related to him, he did not, apparently ever, reduce him to a minor position: He either took his cows and then left him alone, or killed him and set up a brother of his own as an independent though allied chief, or else, more rarely, killed him, took over the country and directly incorporated it in his own. So that, apart from the subordination of a defeated brother and his heirs, political authority always stopped at the boundaries of each separate chiefdom.[14] 623 727

The traditionally independent chiefdoms to-day vary in numbers from 100 to about 3,000 adult men. 631 161

The coming of the German Administration in 1893 introduced a paramount political authority, for the first time, in the persons of European officials; while in 1926, a generation later, the British Administration created new Native Authorities under the District Officer and superior to the chiefs. The traditionally independent chiefs were grouped together in eleven court districts, in each district a "Native Court" was set up, consisting of the various chiefs and their great commoners, under the hereditary presidency of one of the chiefs, who thereby became senior to all the others in that court district. Salaries for chiefs have been introduced, and the senior chiefs receive far higher salaries than the others; while the meetings of each Court are always held in the territory of the senior chief (*omulefyale ephalombe*); and to it has now been transferred a great deal of the legal business which, before 1926, was transacted by each chief sitting with his own great commoners in his own chiefdom. The chiefs themselves were consulted in the selection of the Court Presidents, and those chosen were normally the chiefs with the greatest number of men in each particular court district. 634 177 [145]

In this account the term *senior chief* (*omulefyale ephalombe*) denotes the President of a Native Court, *chief* (*omulefyale*) means one of the traditionally independent chiefs, while *minor chief* (*omulefyale omwandi*) means one of the subordinate chiefs, often with only 40-60 men under him.

The introduction of Courts and salaries has brought an entirely new element into the relationship between old and young chiefs (vide 634 177 578

[14] Among the Kondo of Nyasaland, I am told, there was a paramount chief Kyungu, with a far-reaching political authority; but there was no such chief among the Nyakyusa.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

636 177 578 *supra*). Only one of them can receive the salary and they commonly dispute about it. Quarrels are particularly frequent over the position of *senior chief*, for the presidency of a Court carries with it a relatively large salary. Old *senior chiefs* cling to the position long after their sons have "come out" and when they die their full-brothers will dispute the position with the sons because of the salary involved. Such a situation could not have arisen before 1926, for then there was no comparable issue between them.

636 622 177 And the introduction of salaries has also had a most profound effect upon the relative status of the two young chiefs who "come out" together. When an ordinary chief, with a small salary, dies the Government recognises the first son alone as chief and pays the whole salary to him. This reduces the second son to the position of a minor chief as effectively as a defeat in war might have done in the old days. But, while the action of warfare only occasionally led to the subordination of one of the brothers, this action of the Government does so invariably, and always subordinates the younger brother. When a *senior chief* dies, on the other hand, the salary is usually divided: the bulk of it goes to the first son, together with the position of *senior chief*, while to the second son is given the salary of an *ordinary chief*.

554 622 As the prestige and authority of a father in his family, or of a man among his neighbours, is closely connected with his wealth on the one hand, and with his believed religious powers on the other, so also the status of a chief among his people. He has more cows, more wives, more food than other men; he is spiritually responsible for the fertility of the land, the women and the cattle of his chiefdom. But he is no sorcerer, and all his public functions require for their exercise the co-operation of his great commoners.

622 595 Polygyny is, above all, the mark of a chief. Few commoners have more than five or six wives, but a chief frequently marries fifteen, thirty, fifty or even more; his wives weed and plant the fields which their unmarried sons hoe, and there is plenty of food for guests. Chiefs themselves hoe when they have time, and often they employ a poor man to hoe for them as well, rewarding him after a year or two with a cow. It is not 637 possible for one man to satisfy so many women sexually, and it is generally said that every chief's wife, save the five or six who are his favourites, has a lover. But intrigues must be carried on with care, for their discovery means a great public scandal.

The extent of a chief's polygyny is conditioned by his control of cattle, and his income in cattle is derived mainly from inheritance and the

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

instructed us, you have taught us the customs, we did not know them, we thought that when the food came that was all.' 782 796

Kaniile said: 'Yes, I do it as our fathers did it.' Then they discussed the dispute between Mwakiniya and Kaniile and agreed that Kaniile had got the better of Mwakiniya with the reference to his own reluctance to provide cattle for sacrifice.

Kaniile was determined to extract a cow for sacrifice from the chief Mwaipopo (116) also, and presently he said:

Friends; listen, let us report at home that we used hard words, we insulted Mwakiniya, we said there is nothing left to eat though we are not really starving. What has come over me? Why am I ill? Let Mwaipopo pay a cow.

The following day Mwamalongoka, one of the priests of Lubaga, explained what was meant by the complaint of insults from Selya:

The people of Mwaipopo (116) do really insult us, and since the Europeans have given them a Court they have begun to say that Mwakiniya (111) is a priest, not a chief, but just an old priest (*ipapi*), and we his men are all angry to hear this because Mwakiniya was always the senior. And they do not send us cattle to sacrifice, they say: 'It's European times now, all that is finished.' [177] [578]

But of Kaniile's retort that Mwakiniya himself did not listen to his priests at home, Mwamalongoka said: 'Indeed it is so, that was an excellent reply.'

The party going up to Lubaga and back travelled dry, but on the return journey Kaniile noticed that the road was wet and he remarked, 'The rain follows us again', and it was true, clouds were gathering quickly. An hour and a half after they got home heavy rain began and continued for three or four hours. During the preceding weeks there had been many heavy showers and bright spells, unnoticed and of no particular significance, but the downpour on the day of the sacrifice was immediately connected with it.

Three weeks later the rain had almost stopped and people were talking of drought. Kaniile was quick to link this with the failure to follow up the offering at Lubaga with sacrifices in the graves of the chiefs. On the sixth of April he spoke his mind to Mwambeputa, the senior village headman of Mwaipopo, when both were visiting us. 769 782 796

Where is the rain? [said Kaniile] I am at fault, and my child Mwaipopo (116) also. He ought to provide a cow to kill at Mwaipopo's

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 (82) grove. According to custom, we should kill a bull here at the same
782 time as one is killed at Lubaga. A messenger from there finds us eating.
776 That was the custom when the chiefs were really chiefs. Now we neglect the rituals. Mwakisiya (111) cut a ripe banana stem for us, but now the bananas are rotting in the homesteads without ripening [owing to our failure to sacrifice]. If our fathers did not sleep they sacrificed cattle, but if we do not sleep we merely offer beer.

Then Kasitile recalled the quarrel between the men of Mwaipopo (116) and those of Lubaga.

Why did you insult Mwakisiya (111) saying 'What remains of your power?' When we built the Court House in Mwaipopo's country,
[394] Mwakisiya's men came to help, and some advised that a beast should be sent to Lubaga to seek blessing on the Court, but others said: 'What use is Lubaga?' . . . Mwakisiya cut a banana stem for us and said 'Seek another cow oh thou Mwakagile' (59, *i.e.* identifying Kasitile with the grandfather of the chief Mwaipopo whom he represented).

This, however, was an invention of Kasitile's. He continued: 'I, Kasitile, have seen a sacrifice at the grove of Mwaijonga (82) twice, at that of Mwaipopo (115) once, and at that of Mwakalsule (117) once, but at Lubaga Kyala has received us frequently.' To which Mwambuputa replied: 'Yes, Kyala has helped us.'

Under pressure from Kasitile and the other priests of his chiefdom Mwaipopo did eventually provide a cow for sacrifice at the grove of his father Mwaijonga (82) but the description of that ritual is deferred to a later chapter.

771 A fundamental conception in Nyakyusa religion is that the proper working of the natural order depends upon harmony of the social order; on proper co-operation between the 'divine king' and his 'sons' the chiefs, between priests and chiefs, and between them and the whole community. If the Lwembe or a rain-
[731] maker is offended, that causes drought or flood in the area of his
[821] influence. When there is heavy rain in Selya it is said, 'There is anger at Lubaga' or 'There is anger at Lwembe's place'. Mwanjala II (78) talking of how angry he had been over an insult remarked, 'Had it been the wet season there would have been a torrent of rain.'

● [578] And not only does quarrelling between chiefs and priests bring public misfortune; it reacts upon their own health. How Kasitile
758 linked his ill-health with the quarrel between Mwakisiya (111)
771 of Lubaga and the men of Mwaipopo (116) over the Court, and Mwaipopo's failure to provide cattle for sacrifice has just been

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

indicated (*vide supra*, p. 35). And, as we shall see later, he also [771]
suspected that his quarrels with the Kinga priests and with the [753]
commoner priests of Mwaipopo's chiefdom made him ill. [578]

Chiefs, and even the 'divine king' himself, lived in fear of the
legitimate anger of their people, more particularly of their village 649
headmen and priests, believing that such anger would bring them 753
sickness, and this belief gave headmen and priests a very strong [622]
hold over their lord. How it worked was illustrated by an incident
at Lubaga.

Mwanjala II (78) remarked to Mwakilima (111): 'I sent to summon [786]
Mwaneni (a commoner priest) for the ritual tomorrow but he refused
saying: "I shall not come." He is angry because he was not called to
the ritual at your home, nor was he told formally when the Kinga
came, or when Mwaipopo [G.W.] came.' Mwakilima (111) asked:
'Will you pay him?' [i.e. admit your mistake and offer him com-
pensation]. Mwanjala replied that he would, and Mwakilima ex-
pressed disgust. One of the Kinga priests who was listening broke
into the conversation: 'Ignore him if he refuses to come. If it were us
we should leave him and celebrate without him, but you Nyakyusa [794]
are all witches, and you fear to ignore a man who refuses to come to a
ritual saying that he will bewitch you. You are cowards, you are!'

At this Godfrey Wilson asked if there were no witchcraft in BuKinga.
The Kinga priest replied: 'There is some, but if the chief gives orders to
celebrate a ritual and someone refuses to come we ignore him, and
celebrate without him. You Nyakyusa *pay* a man for doing wrong. A
man refuses to come when he should and then you *pay* him! If you are
afraid of witchcraft why not finish the ritual and send his portion of
meat to him afterwards?'

Another priest objected: 'Then he would say it was too small a
piece.'

The commoner priests then could control even the Lwembe (for
Mwanjala II acted in the place of the Lwembe though he was
not installed), but at the same time the mystical power of the
Lwembe was feared both by ordinary chiefs and commoners.
Mwaijonga (82), who ruled before the European occupation,
insulted and fought Mwakisiya the Lwembe (56), and killed
some of his men, because 'Lwembe had spoiled the year', but
he sent back the cattle that were seized.

In the old days it did not matter killing the Lwembe's men (in war), but [727]
no one dared to take his cattle, they feared lest he would spoil the year
and send too much rain, and a plague of ulcers, and cause the cattle to [789]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 As we have seen, the chief's fearsome medicine *isyifuele* is
779 thought to be very dangerous, and too much in the tails may cause
622 them 'to fly about throttling men and cattle', but a chief is never
[754] accused of working witchcraft; it is inconceivable to the Nyakyusa that he could be. If the tails have got out of hand they are treated
[789] by a doctor 'to close them up'; no one suggests that the chief should get rid of them. It is commoners, 'black people', who are witches —cannibals, the eaters of raw flesh—as opposed to chiefs who, since the dawn of history, have killed cattle for meat and cooked their food like civilized men. But the distinction does not extend very far; junior kinsmen of the chief are 'commoners' and may well be accused of practising witchcraft.

There was a delicate balance of power in the Nyakyusa constitution between hereditary chief and commoner headmen and
[182] the belief in the power of medicines and of witchcraft was an integral part of it. The chief provided fruitfulness by the power of his own body and his medicines; all men depended upon him for their well-being—food, cattle, children, success in war; but he in his turn depended upon the goodwill of his men led by their village headmen; without it he shivered and fell ill, only to be buried by them 'with the breath still in his body' lest the power of growth disappear with his breathless corpse.

Something of the quality of this mutual dependence and fear is conveyed in Kasitile's account of his own illness quoted in Chapter VIII.

(e) THE NECESSITY FOR HARMONY

182 The welfare of the chiefdom is thought to depend upon
643 harmony between the chief and his village headmen and priests,
622 and also between the chief and his kinsmen. Any friction between
793 them may result in public misfortune as well as sickness to the individual at fault. The quarrel of Kasitile, the priest, first with
[753] the Kinga priests, and then with the commoner priests of Mwai-
[821] pepo's chiefdom was believed to affect the crops and the weather, as well as Kasitile's own health (*vide infra*, pp. 124-41), and Mwaipopo's failure to tell Kasitile formally of the death of their
[688] kinsman led to rain which spoiled the funeral dance. A quarrel between the lineages of two chiefs which should have sacrificed together was said to have been followed by a very poor millet
643 crop (*vide infra*, pp. 79-80, 118, 136).
602
578 How the personal relationship of a chief with his kinsmen is

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

thought to affect the whole country was illustrated in Mwaihojo's chiefdom where the people were plagued by wild pig destroying their gardens. Mwaihojo (147) had a longstanding quarrel with his half-brother, Mwakyonde (148), whose country he had seized after their 'coming out'. Mwakyonde became famous as a doctor, and he was a great raconteur and beer-drinker, a regular Silenus, the boon companion of many influential men, whereas his brother was cold and irascible; so although he had lost his chieftaincy, Mwakyonde had considerable power. In February 1937, four lions were seen in the adjoining chiefdom of Mwaipopo (116), and we heard pig squealing as it was killed. Angombwike (whose father lived near Mwakyonde in Mwaihojo's country) explained to us: 'People say that these are Mwakyonde's lions. . . . Lion-makers have bundles of twigs which they put into the long grass, and which turn into lions. Long ago Mwakyonde made lions and they came and killed all the pigs, and the country (Mwaihojo's) was at peace, but he quarrelled with Mwaihojo and put his bundles of twigs into his box and locked it up. Then the country was filled with pig, and buck, and elephant, and all the crops were spoiled, and so it is still. Now Mwakyonde has begun to be friendly with Mwaipopo (116); they enjoy each other's company and drink beer together, and so he is making lions again in Kipungu, the land where Mwaipopo is hoeing, to kill the pig for Mwaipopo. They say Mwaipopo has given him a country in secret.' Now Mwaihojo claimed as his the forest country, which Mwaipopo's men had begun to colonize, therefore to aid Mwaipopo there was an effective slap at Mwaihojo. The lions came into Mwaihojo's country—we heard them repeatedly close to our camp—but they did not clear the pig.

There, in March, Mwakyonde was supposed to be using a new medicine he had obtained to scare off pig from the fields. We asked him about it. 'Oh, it has failed. The pigs are still there eating. I've done everything I should but without effect. I think that the pigs are possessed by the shades (*ali sinindo ingulube*).' 'Why?' we asked. 'Because my elder brother (Mwaihojo) and I are not on good terms (*tatikwengale kwema*) the shades are angry.'

So the destruction of men's gardens was traced to the quarrel between the chief and his brother.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

SACRIFICES AT THE GROVES OF CHIEF

(a) THE PLACE, OCCASION, AND FORM OF SACRIFICE

778. 769 [137] A CHIEF is buried near the trees planted at his 'coming out' a
around the grave a thicket grows up. It is taboo for men to c
saplings or brushwood there and since trees grow very fast in t
climate and soil of the Nyakyusa valley, the thicket soon becom
a grove, and there sacrifices to the dead chief are made. T
priests look for the stone planted at his marriage, and place t
offering beside it. How long a chief is so honoured depends on h
conspicuous he was as a ruler or warrior, and perhaps also o
[762] whether the sacrifices are judged to be efficient in producing ra
and health or not. Mbyanga and Kabale, two groves which a
particularly honoured, were the shrines of founders of expandi
lineages. At Mbyanga was planted a cutting of a tree whi
sprouted from the grave of Mwakisumbwe (91) who had fi
occupied the country in which Mbyanga is situated. He is oft
spoken of as having been 'buried' at Mbyanga, in fact he w
carried back ten miles to Lubaga, whence he had come, for burie
But he is worshipped at Mbyanga and we attended a sacrifi
there for which his great-great-great-grandson, Mwaihoje (14
the chief, provided a cow, and Mwaihoje's grandsons ate the be
food. In contrast to this, the grave of Mwaipopo's (116) young
brother, who had once ruled a country but was defeated in w
and whose sons had died, was completely neglected; no o
sacrificed there. We knew more than a dozen chiefs' graves
which sacrifices were made, and there must have been a gre
many more in different parts of BuNyakyusa.

643 769 Since every ruling chief normally had two heirs, sacrifi
involved co-operation between independent chiefdoms—t
chiefs at the grave of their father, four at that of their grandfathe
and so on. But if there is friction between the chiefs, some branch
of the lineage cease to participate, saying that the connexion
'too distant', and celebrate at the graves of their nearer ancest
only. This happened at the sacrifice of Mbyanga which
[578] [698] attended (*vide infra*, pp. 79-81). The mention for co-operation
the belief that quarrelling between kinsmen annoys the shades o

[p. 70]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

may nullify any ritual, but often it is not strong enough to overcome the fissiparous tendencies of the lineage. In theory a celebration at the grove of a senior should precede that at the grove of a junior and sacrifices at Lubaga would be followed by sacrifices at the groves of the 'sons of Lwembe' in order of seniority, but this does not happen in practice nowadays and we doubt whether it ever did, since a hierarchy was not organized and maintained by a central authority as in Ngonde. In 1935 a celebration at the grove of Mwaijonga (80) preceded one at the grove of his great-grandfather Mwakisambwe (90) by a month, as we shall see. 643 769 [578] [688]

Sacrifices are made when a drought or flood occurs, or a plague of locusts, or an epidemic among men or cattle; when fishing is poor in the chiefdoms of the plain, or war is imminent. They occur most often during the 'winter' in the hills, when a malaria-sodden people feel the chill of damp mists and cool south winds, and in October, just before the break of the rains, when the country is parched; but they are not confined to these periods. In theory the village headmen and the priests who 'watch over the country' foresee *coming* misfortune in dreams, and avert it by making the appropriate sacrifices. And they are helped by ordinary people who see dreaming repeatedly or falling into a trance or fit, and prophesying evil and jabbering of 'a black cow, a black cow' or some other appurtenance of sacrifice. But in practice the prophecies generally occur when there is hunger or plague in the land, or an omen (such as a python or a ground hornbill behaving oddly) has been seen. [731] [782] [787]

The dreamers are *ukusololi* or *ukulungulula*, and, as these names indicate, they are believed to have descended into the land of the shades. *Ukusoloka*[8] means to go down into something, like the roots of a tree into the earth, and *ukulungula ingungula* means to pluck a banana flower which (as was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*) is a symbol for a corpse and is buried; so the *ukulungulula* are those who have been buried in the earth. '*Ukulungulula* go to the land of the shades and return. . . . An *ukulungulula* plucks up the "blessed grass" (*ilinjala*) in his swept courtyard and goes beneath and sees.[9] . . . He goes down into the earth beneath and takes the chief to the land of the shades when he dies, and he also sees the witches. . . .' More rarely, the *ukusololi* or *ukulungulula* is 791 787

[8] *Ukusoloka*—a Lusoga pronunciation, the implication being that the initiate's head is in Busoga, but children born in this way are not necessarily prophets. [845]

[9] cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 73, 212.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngomde FN17
Nyakyusa

weather, and the ritual. 'We prayed yesterday at Ipinda, Mwaipopo and all of us, we prayed and prayed. Did you feel the cold as much as usual last night? Did you hear the banana leaves rustle as usual?' 'No.' 'Well, Kyala has heard our prayer.'

At 7.45 a.m. they moved into the grove. A black cow had already been killed. 'We killed it at cock-crow, while it was still dark, we were all there. Mwambene (the chief Mwaipopo 116) handed the axe to Mwanyoso (his junior kinsman *vide* p. 84) who killed the cow.' Bananas were brought and all roasted them and ate, waiting for the other priests, Njobakosa and Kisogota. After a discussion about certain persons who had not come because the last time they got no meat, one of them said: 'Don't talk of what is forbidden in the sacred grove, don't let's make a noise; no, we pray to Mwakagile (59). . . . If we quarrel and make a noise the shades will not hear our prayer.' James (119), Kasitile's heir, was there but not Kasitile (86) himself. Someone asked whether Tandale ought to be summoned. But one said: 'We have never asked this Tandale to come here; we used to ask his father.'[1] . . . Tandale lives in the boys' village. He has not the position of Ngulyo and Kisogota.'

Mwaipopo: 'Why do you argue about this today and not before?'

After an hour's delay Njobakosa arrived, and shortly after him Kisogota, who apologized, saying: 'I am late because my child has just died.'

Kisogota and Ngulyo flayed the cow, letting the blood pour out on to the ground. There was some discussion over the division of the meat, and they cut out the chine, saying: 'We send it with the tail to Kasitilo—if we sever the tail we have spoiled it.'

Ngulyo took the sacred meat (*ifyamasaga*) from both forelegs, and with Kisogota's help he chopped off twenty-three small pieces. The rest of this meat was left for the children. At 10.10 all gathered to go to the grave. A sacred stone (*ulufge*)[2] was found under a tree. Mwaitetja (Mwaipopo's junior kinsman) cleared the undergrowth with his bill-hook and dug a hole close to the stone, then he threw the meat which Kisogota was holding on two leaves, placed the leaves on top and filled in the earth. Five or six men spoke:

[1] Tandale the senior had buried the previous chief, Mwaipopo I (105).

[2] It was not clear whether this was the one planted at Mwajonga's running out or not, since his fields were some hundreds of yards away.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

t was stolen by Ngoni raiders. When the brewing was ripe, the 769
hief sought a calabash of curds and Kalinga cut a stem of 782
ananas, and the priests ate and drank in her hut, together with
unior kinsmen of the chief's family, but not the chief himself. As
hey drank they prayed:

Oh thou Mwakagile (59) give us millet, may it be plentiful, and may
he milk be plentiful and may the bananas grow.

One pot of beer was due to Kasitile, the priest, and he would leave
t overnight in his house.

The shades come and drink a lot, only a little beer is left in the morn- [775]
ng. . . . then the bananas flourish and there is much fertility in the [778]
omesteads. . . . The sacred pot gives fertility of the soil to the whole
ountry.

A very bitter quarrel flared up while we were in Selya because [578]
Kasitile came upon Ngulyo and his colleagues drinking the sacred
eer without their having sent him his pot, or even notifying him
f the brewing. The repercussions of this are discussed in chapter
IX.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the shades and the hearths which was stressed; in Poenkoto's country people talked mostly of the witches; but it seemed clear that both conceptions were present when men murmured: 'The hearth bricks are bad' (*amafge mabiki*) and they sought to cleanse them by clearing out the old fire and lighting new. 'To clear out the ashes means they take away all that dirt, the dirt which the witches have brought and the shades; it is the cause of illness.' When witches are thought to be active there is also a public complaint, and a public warning is given 'to whom it may concern' to desist.[1] This occurred in the ritual after the ground hornbill had eaten the chicken. Above all, men must admit their anger to one another: 'they fight that the homesteads may be peaceful'. The theme so familiar in Nyakyusa rituals—that quarrels must be confessed if they are to be composed—recurs yet again. Though we distinguish the rituals for 'cleansing the country' from sacrifices, on the ground that the whole community participates in the 'cleansing' while the sacrifice is esoteric, the two are closely linked, and a sacrifice commonly precedes or follows the cleansing. We turn now to the detailed accounts of celebrations for 'cleansing' in Ngonde and among the Kukwe.

(*a*) THE RATS

In Ngonde they used to clear out the ashes at the new year, at the first hoeing (in December) after 'the break of the rains'. They feared that death and disease would spread through the land if they continued living with the old fires, that the shades in the earth, both the shades of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry. Let them drive the shades away and hoe in peace. They always remembered to do so each new year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually, they never forgot. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to clear out the ashes; and then they would hoe in peace. And at other times, too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the ashes again. 'It is to drive away the shade with the sickness that he brings. We throw out the ashes and firebrands because he has come to warm himself over the fire in our houses, we throw out the pots and winnowing baskets because he has come to see us eating; let him go there (to the grove) and eat what he asked for—we say the shades ask for food—let him eat here, perhaps a sheep. We say the shades bring sickness to the fire, hence we throw out the ashes and make new fire with a drill.'

The nobles of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 109-13.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(d) THE WILD PIG

Another sort of cleansing, unorganized, but concerning groups of neighbours, not kinsmen, is the 'blowing one another' (*ukuufuna*) which takes place if a pig-hunt fails and quarrelling between the hunters is suspected to be the cause. It was described by a Christian, who had called his pagan neighbours to help him in tracking down a pig, which he had wounded during the previous night in his maize garden. It eluded them, hour after hour, though they were close upon it.

The neighbours began to think that the pig was sent by the shades (*abi amizimu*)—they meant themselves. So they stopped hunting and gathered together to express their anger, and they said: 'Our fathers built together and drank beer together, why should this pig trouble us so? We don't suspect our friend who is a Christian for he has shown that he has no quarrel with us. Had he been angry he would not have called us to hunt with him. But if one of the rest of us has a quarrel with his fellow let him speak out, that we may all be free of anger (*tuje bele*) and seize the pig, for if we think hard thoughts about one another we shall not have strength to take the pig.' All said that they were in friendship with their fellows, so first one and then another took his spear and . . . laid it on the ground and said: 'I am without anger (*Une ndimwele ilele*).' All of them did this. One spoke to his fellow and said: 'Perhaps you are angry over that quarrel we had over beer?' But he replied, 'No.' Then the first man took up his spear from the ground and said, 'Father help us to catch this pig, if there was a quarrel, forgive, do not think of that with which I counted you to be angry. We bless one another, we are without anger.' Then all the others did the same, and they set off again to hunt.

This account, and the commentary of Mwaikambo on it, made it plain that the true translation of *bele* in such a context is 'without anger'. The communal rituals in which a whole chiefdom, or a group of neighbours, participate all have this one end, the cleansing of the group of quarrels by their open expression and explicit rejection.

789 drought, as in illness, a number of possible causes are discussed,
[775] and if one possible cause is dealt with and yet the drought persists,
[77] another will be put forward. A shrewd priest or doctor can turn
this to account and find many reasons for the failure of his ritual,
as the following case shows.

789 In the wet Nyakyusa valley rain-makers are not concerned
only with drought, but also with flood, and, in the years 1935-8,
791 with the rise in the level of the Lake which inundated many
gardens.[1] On the Nyakyusa plain the rise was attributed to the
[821] action of a Kisi doctor, Mwatabi, who had first boasted that he
could bring up the Lake and then been commissioned by the
chief, Mwakalukwa (141), to do so, 'because there was much grass
by the Lake and many mosquitoes, and it was dirty there'. He
was told to 'take the Lake up a bit, but not too far' and given a
sheep. Then, the following season, in April (a month of torrential
rain), Mwakalukwa's son Mwakisisile (170, for Mwakalukwa
himself had died) gave him a little bull saying,

• [576] Send the Lake back, it has come too far. Then the doctor went home
thinking to himself, 'Why does he give me such a little bull?' and he
met a headman of the neighbouring chief, Mwakabulafu (138), and
said, 'Why should I send the Lake back, Mwakisisile has given me a
bull only; had he given me a cow, I'd have done so, but now I am
angry.' Then Mwakabulafu heard and sent a message to say he would
provide a cow, since Mwakalukwa was dead. But the doctor refused:
'No, Mwakalukwa (the son, 170) is still alive, he must give it.' The
following September, before the usual end of the dry season, there was
rain on the plain. It is the Kisi's rain. Mwakisisile (170) refused to give
him anything, he said he was a liar, but the commoners collected 30s.
and a goat, and the Kisi performed a ritual just recently, and said:
'The Lake will go back, but my strength will bring the rain; it will
rain during the dry season this month.' We laughed very much in
Tukuyu to hear such a prophecy, but it is raining!

The following year—after the Lake had risen again—another
reason was given. It was said that a rain-maker at Bojo in Kisi
country had died, and just before he died he had thrown a rain
stone into the Lake.

(8) MAGIC OF FERTILITY

789 We did not learn very much about 'sprinkling the homesteads';

[1] There is a periodic rise and fall in the level of the Lake. In 1937 the Lake measure was surfacing in what had been the road-way of the District Commissioner's house at Kyela.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

illness to neglect of his duty to the Kings. All the time we were in BuNyakyusa he was ailing—possibly he suffered from tuber- 793 755
culosis—and one wrongdoing after another was suggested as the [753]
cause of his illness.

His case is intelligible only in terms of the conception of 'the breath of men', that is, a power akin to witchcraft thought to be [754]
legitimately exercised by village headmen and others to punish wrongdoers, but which is referred to by the victims as 'witchcraft'. This has been discussed at length elsewhere.[1]

On 2nd July 1955, Kasitile had left his own house and was 793
living with a friend in a neighbouring village. His doctor, Mwa- 754
kyonde, said that he was being 'throttled by the witches' and had invited him to come and recollect himself (*ukwipelelaya*) in the tranquillity of a village of another chiefdom in which there were many people with spiritual power (*ukumanga*) so that 'the witches' could not get at him. This is a common precaution in case of illness, for witches are thought not to have power ordinarily outside their own village and never beyond the chiefdom.[2]

The cause of the illness was explained as follows: Kasitile had [578]
quarrelled with Kisengota, the commoner priest, and others of the [753]
principal men of the country, because he had found them drinking the sacred beer (*ukwilema*), brewed after the millet harvest (*vide supra*, pp. 84-5) without telling him, or sending him the pot which was his due. They invited him to drink, but he refused and they each sent him 1*s.* to beg pardon. Kasitile bought beer with one of the shillings and called the senior commoner priest, Ngulyo, and his fellows to drink saying, 'I was angry, friends, you "overstepped" me' (i.e. they had ignored his rights). He himself [689]
should have brewed when he confirmed his anger, and slaughtered a calf or prepared food for them as well, but he had bought only one shilling's worth of beer and provided nothing himself. Then, when they had drunk, Kasitile fell ill. Hence it was said that the commoner priests were angry and 'ate' (i.e. bewitched) him. Kasitile's own comment was: 'The fault lies with the young priests (Ngulyo, a young man, had inherited his father's position), they are useless as priests . . . I was not told of that ritual beer, yet the medicine comes from me, from this home where I keep it. They should have come to me to get it and put it with the millet [731]
in the holy pot. They drank the beer without medicine. It is they [789]
who have brought cold and hunger on the country. I think the

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 91-111, 1951. [2] *op. cit.*, pp. 100-3.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F2617 Ngonde F2617
Nyakyusa

KASITILE: Yes indeed.
SAMOU: Now your body is sick, you are coughing. 787
KASITILE: Yes indeed, I am ill, and I am coughing a great deal. 791
SAMOU: Yes, it is that quarrel down there. You came with the cough from the plain. 753
KASITILE: Yes, I came with it.
SAMOU: You are a priest, you are a senior priest. (He knew this himself!)
KASITILE: Yes indeed.
SAMOU: But the cough comes from the quarrel in the plain. If you were not a priest you would have died.
KASITILE: Indeed, we quarrelled over land, over the boundaries, on the plain. I hoed someone else's land—the land of a commoner there. [578]
SAMOU: They placed something to injure you.

Kasitile paused in his narrative and we asked how the 'something' operated.

KASITILE: In dreams, by means of their witchcraft. [754]

The Sangu told me: 'It is this which causes you to cough continually, but there is something else also, you did not move to the plain from here without trouble.'

KASITILE: No, I moved with an accusation against me. [775]
SAMOU: Yes indeed, you did wrong and now your fathers are very angry. [776]
KASITILE: Yes, I cut a tree.
SAMOU: Mother! You cut a tree? The fathers and Kyala are brooding over you, Kyala is angry and broods over you. Pray, pray very much. It is you who are throwing the cattle of the country.

We expressed surprise and Kasitile continued: 'Yes, indeed. The Sangu said: "It is your wrongdoing (in cutting the tree) which is causing the cows to abort. I will clear out the thing which came with you from the plain. Bring us, tomorrow." He's a great doctor, Mwaipaja.' [688]

The astonishing thing was that Kasitile, a man of considerable intelligence and inclined to query the truth of the revelations of some oracles, was so much impressed by the fact that the foreign doctor (staying in the country) knew that he was a priest and had sojourned in the plain, though to anyone knowing KiNyakyusa well his connexion with the plain was apparent in his speech, and his bearing indicated him as a personage.

Talking of the divination three days later, Kasitile told us the Sangu doctor had said: 'You have done wrong at home. This Kyala (pointing to the little pot into which he was looking) knows that Lwembe and the Kings and your father are angry, your father is very important, he works with Kyala, he is with him.' 755

As a treatment for the cough the doctor put various ingredients with 791

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

(their witchcraft); to each other they say: 'It is your father.' Because if they confess to a fellow commoner saying, 'It is we', he says, 'You are "eating" me, drink the ordeal'. The witch is driven out. But to us they admit saying, 'It was we who were angry.' They do not fear us. Commoners are the seniors in the country; they arrived first.

It will be remembered that the commoners are spoken of as 'black people' (abatite) and that the first chiefs were 'pale' (mwele) but these words also have moral implications. 'It is said that a person "has a black heart" or "has black blood", or "is black in his face towards us" when he is thought to be a witch, eating his fellows, or when he is a thief, or a liar, or an adulterer, or dirty. Even though his body is light coloured (mwele) the word "black" (atite) is used of him metaphorically.' And mwele implies innocent, pure, as well as light in colour. The comparable symbolism of 'nigger' and 'white man' is all too familiar in Johannesburg or Charleston.

That Kasitile himself was much afraid of the commoner chiefs and was relieved by the 'speaking out' was clear, and the people of the country as a whole were glad that the ritual had been celebrated, for they expected an increase in fertility. Some days later Mwakyonde (148), came in and said, laughing, but half serious: 'Congratulations, Mwaipaja (G.W.). You have celebrated the ritual, we rejoice greatly, you give us fertility of the soil, you are a great priest.'

In some moods Kasitile was inclined to become a Christian, but he felt an obligation to the country as priest, and believed too strongly in the efficacy of the traditional rituals to abandon them. He said to G.W. one day, over a pot of beer: 'If it were not for the ritual I would get you to speak to the Europeans of the mission, and I would go with my wife Jane, and be baptized. If my son was old enough and had agreed to carry on the ritual I would do it; perhaps I will when I am old. . . . It is good to have one's heart washed clean, we are dirty inside. The Christians say to us: "You with your four wives each, you are all dirty, you love one and squabble with the rest." Well, it is so with me, I love Jane only; I would like to go and be baptized with her. But I fear for the ritual, I fear hunger, the hunger of the people. For I am the food of the country, I am the maker of food.'

We left Selya shortly after this and were not able to observe the effect of the ritual on political relationships in Selya. Kasitile lived another seventeen years, duly performing his functions, and in 1954 he was succeeded by his brother's son, James.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

(b) MEDICINES AND MORALITY

Doctors classify most of their medicines in terms of the supposed mystical causes of disease, and the determining factor in diagnosis is what quarrels have occurred in the patient's circle of kinsmen and friends, or what wrongdoing he has on his conscience. The medicines mentioned to us by various doctors were for treatment of sickness caused by 'the breath of men', by sorcery, by vengeance magic, by the protective medicine put on wives, by the anger of the shades or living senior relatives, by incest, by spearing or binding with ropes,[1] or abnormal birth. Only a few of the medicines listed were for the treatment of observable symptoms such as fever, too frequent periods, or swelling after snake-bite, rather than the supposed mystical cause. 278 753

The emphasis on discovering the mystical cause and counteracting it was shown very clearly when Godfrey Wilson accompanied Mwakyunde, the doctor, to the home of a patient, a young man so weak that he could not lift a limb. Mwakyunde spent two minutes examining him, and provided leaves with which he was poulticed, and a medicine which was rubbed into cuts made all over his body, but the greater part of the day was devoted to discussing the quarrel between kinsmen, from which his illness was thought to have arisen, to persuading the kinsmen to 'speak out', and to preparing and administering a medicine which would cause the death of any one of them who was working sorcery against another. 753 578 [757]

Medicine for the treatment of a disease is held to be ineffective—at the best a temporary palliative—unless the underlying cause is discovered and dealt with. For example, doctors spoke of poisoning a medicine against dysps, the disease caused by a kinsman to whom a debt in cattle is due, but it is not effective alone. 'The wrongdoer drinks medicine and pays his kinsman. He must pay, for though the medicine may cure him temporarily the disease will come again if he does not pay his debt.'

The ultimate cause of disease is believed to be friction in social relationships—a breach in moral law—and so the study of medicines takes us directly to problems of morality. There is a deep-rooted conviction that medicines will not be effective if there is quarrelling in the family which uses them. This applies not only to medicines used in sickness, but also to those for protection [402]

[1] op. cit., pp. 179-9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and achievement. An account of the treatment of a field for protection against wild pig emphasizes this.

If people wish to protect a crop from wild pig they go to a doctor to ask for medicine. When he gives it to them he tells them that there must be no quarrelling in the home after they have barricaded the field. Four women go to the field with the husband of the one who cultivates it. They go after sunset. One women is shaved; her head is a symbol of the garden devastated by pig. A second woman, who keeps her hair, has a head-pad on her head and carries bananas with medicine. She enters the field and eats the bananas. The husband climbs a hill at a little distance, and two of the women go into the long grass close to the field. The bald pate twists a head-pad and the one with hair smears it with medicine and as they do so they look towards their husband and abuse him saying, 'You lay with your mother', and he swears at them saying, 'The leather aprons of your fathers' . . . and many other insults. Then the women walk round the edge of the field, sprinkling medicines, and they go out the way they came in. The circular pad is a symbol of the barricade placed round the field. When they return home they do not eat but go to sleep hungry (though the clever ones eat beforehand). If they quarrel, the pig finishes the food. It is as if quarrelling destroyed the ferocious, the power, of the protective medicine; you must put aside all quarrelling that the medicine may be powerful. If the pigs come it is as if there were a quarrel, so the woman and her husband quarrel in the field mimicking the pig. The husband on the hill is like the pig approaching the field, his wives in the long grass also represent pigs. . . . The husband and his wives quarrel only in the field. If, when the maize is ripe, the husband beats one of his wives for any cause she does not go to pick the maize herself, a friend picks it for her. If she goes in her anger she finds the maize finished, nothing but earth is left.

Here the link between medicines and morality is made plain. Quarrelling weakens medicines of all sorts and renders them ineffective. But a mimic quarrel between husband and wives in the fields renders the medicine effective. It represents the battle between the pig and the medicines. There is a suggestion elsewhere (pp. 69, 113) that pigs are *sent* by the shades when kinsmen or neighbours quarrel, but in the account just quoted it is implied that quarrelling in the home directly injures the medicine.

In themselves, many medicines are neutral. They may be put to good or evil ends, but because they are mysterious and powerful, they are feared, in the same sort of way as atomic energy is feared in contemporary society. Men use medicines themselves 'for purely peaceful purposes', but they are shocked at

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the prospect of their enemies using them. The notion that medicines are a weapon which may be used rightly or wrongly is very clearly brought out in the attitude towards 'making' animals. If a private individual 'makes' lion, or leopard, or crocodile which kill men that is sorcery—there is no question about it—and we heard of at least one man who had been driven from his home because he was reputed to have made leopards which killed children and cattle,[1] but when Mwakyonde 'made' lions which drove off pig and did not attack men, that was a public service (*vide* p. 69). And when one chief uses lions in his conflict with another the action is felt to be comparable with war, rather than murder. In February 1937, four lions were hunting in a piece of bush country near the salt lick, which two chiefs claimed. Mwansumbwe, a chief from the hills, had sent some of his men to clear fields in the bush, but Mwakagile (50, or his heir), the neighbouring chief, objected saying, 'This is my land.' There was a long case and finally the District Officer gave judgement in favour of Mwakagile and refused Mwansumbwe any compensation for his work in clearing the bush. 'You got a crop for your labour,' he said. Mwansumbwe was incensed by the judgement and grew even more angry when his men elected to remain on the land they had cleared and became men of Mwakagile. So, everyone said, Mwansumbwe had sought medicines and created these lions. They killed seven cattle in a few days, attacking even by daylight. 'Yes,' we were told, 'there are always lion in the bush, but they do not ordinarily kill cattle as they have done now.'

Another chief who tried the same sort of thing was not so successful. 'Some time ago the chief Mwakila made elephants, he turned his wives into elephants and they ate the bananas of Malapula, but Malapula said, "Let's try", and he created much rain which poured down on to the elephants and those wives died. Then Mwakila was defeated. How about you Europeans? Have you this custom? Do you turn a wife into an animal?'

'No!'

'We have it, if I choose I give my wife *isigila* and she becomes a lion which roars, it roars and eats people.'[2]

[1] *cf.* Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 124.

[2] This, and the tale of a young man fleeing from justice who obtained a medicine to turn himself into a lion, were the only accounts of lycanthropy we heard—usually the medicines themselves (such as those of a chief) turn into animals, or the young of ordinary lion, leopard, or crocodile 'smell the medicines' and become attached to the 'owner' who feeds and commands them.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

If a man has quarrelled with a kinsman, or is conscious of having bitter enemies, or hears that someone with whom he has had a dispute has 'gone to the doctors', he is likely to go to a horn doctor for protective medicine, even though he is perfectly well. 751 [578]

'The horn' is believed to discover and punish the guilty whether they are known to the injured or not, but if someone uses it without just cause the medicine will recoil on himself. The seven cases of using the horn reported to us[1] were all used in revenge: two for theft, two for seduction, and three for withholding cattle due. And it is revenge that was emphasized in one account of the treatment: 749 751 754

If someone has stolen my cow I go to a doctor and pay him a bull. Then he prepares the medicine (the horn) and stands facing it, with a spear over his shoulder, pointing towards it, and he speaks aloud saying: 'So-and-so, if you have not taken the cow you will recover, if you have eaten it you will die.' Then the breath (*ondepe*) goes to the man named and if he has really stolen the cow he dies. . . . [685]

But another informant, listing the contents of a 'horn', stressed the protective element. It contains 'the bile of a crocodile, the skin of a python, and *isyifuile* medicine (*side* p. 58) which has been used to kill men' . . . [278]

If a witch comes to throttle and kill you then the bile of the crocodile throttles and strikes him [the witch], and the *isyifuile* does the same, it is to kill the witches, it spears those who come to throttle you. The skin of the python means that if people come to throttle you they find you have changed yourself into a python.

Another type of vengeance magic, *ilyepe*, is thought to work only between blood relatives.

If your father-in-law is angry it is your children he kills, not yourself. If the diviner says the disease comes from the woman's side of the family the protective medicine is given only to her, not to the man; if from his side only he is protected, not the wife. The relative who is angry drinks a medicine; he puts a barbed spear into the fire and when it is red hot he slashes a banana sucker with it and speaks the name, then the kinsman who is mentioned dies. [578]

A third type is that used to secure property (*akasinga*) and snare thieves or adulterers; for the exclusive rights of a husband over his wife are treated as property rights. Often a medicated stick is placed in a field to ward off thieves, and some husbands [685] [684]

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 212-56.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

among some other peoples with a corresponding ritual), but the young men seize cattle belonging to the older generation, thus asserting their authority. The opposition of generations is taken for granted and given expression in constitutional form: the ritual is a celebration not of 'rebellion' but of growth. For all their reluctance to hand over power the fathers 'rejoice and are glad because their sons have grown up'. Change in the structure of society after the revolution of the heroic age, is not celebrated, and is scarcely admitted, but the process of growth, of death and procreation, is expressed in every ritual. Indeed, the ritual cycle is like a fugue with the theme of death and rebirth constantly recurring.

The pagan universe is just and orderly. There is a nemesis attached to spilling blood or binding a man with ropes. The anger of men,[1] or of the shades who are roused by men, is what brings most misfortune, and often, the Nyakyusa think, such anger is justified. Even medicines may be selective, injuring only the guilty. The good man who celebrates the proper rituals, fulfils his kinship obligations, and keeps on good terms with his neighbours, is protected, while the evil-doer falls ill. But some evil men, witches and sorcerers, attack the innocent out of jealousy and spite. Evil to the Nyakyusa, lies primarily within men: it is 'anger in the heart' which materializes as pythons that throttle others. Because they are aware of angry impulses in themselves the Nyakyusa find it difficult to believe that any society without witchcraft can exist; to say that there is no *ubulosi* is like suggesting that there is no ill will or anger in a community. And since anger brings misfortune there is an obligation on those whose anger might have caused sickness or ill luck to express goodwill by spitting or blowing out water, and saying, 'May the patient recover' or 'I am without anger'. Among commoners the man required to show goodwill is usually a senior relative, rather than a suspected witch (as among the Azande). But a neighbour or friend who might be a witch or sorcerer should also express goodwill when he visits the sick, and fellow hunters who have ill luck may stop to declare their goodwill to one another, as we have seen. If a chief or priest-chief is sick the village headmen and priests must wish him well and confess any anger they have felt towards him. The blowing out of water is a symbol of confusion, 'bringing

[1] For a full account of the belief in witchcraft and the 'breath of men', cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 91-121, 138-162.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

out all the anger that is within', 'admitting that I have done wrong', begging pardon (*ulupalupa*) and *also a symbol of confession* and so of driving off the shades (*vide supra*, pp. 104, 108-110; 135). Good health depends upon good social relationships, and of one who is ailing it is commonly said: 'It seems as if they (unspecified) had hated her.' Further, the proper working of the natural order is held to depend upon the proper working of the social order. Drought, or 'cold', or pestilence falls on a chiefdom if there is quarrelling between chief and priests, and the anger of the Lwembe with his 'sons' will shrivel the crops of Selya. The heroes, the shades, many of the men of power (*abamanga*), and many medicines help to maintain an orderly universe; only the witches and sorcerers work against it. In short, order and right living are an integral part of Nyakyusa religion as they are of Christianity.

The ultimate good is the power of fertility, of generation, which lies in the heroes and shades; the punishment for evil-doing is ill-health of body or mind and sterility. And towards the heroes and shades, who are both life-givers and avengers, the attitude of men is clearly ambivalent: the shades are driven away—'let them warm themselves over there in the long grass', men say when they throw out the ashes (*vide supra*, pp. 109-11) but they bring them home again to 'warm themselves by the hearth'.

In analysing the rituals of the Nyakyusa, I have been driven to the conclusion that they are, in fact, dogged by a sense of guilt,[1] for this is the only hypothesis on which the linking of misfortune and sin, the preoccupation with 'filth', and the recurring acts of purification can be explained. One of the sources of this sense of guilt is, I suggest, awareness of anger within, for it is believed that such anger injures others. An act of confession is essential to many rituals, and what must be confessed are anger, hard thoughts, ill will against others. The anger is acknowledged to come primarily from men—it is the angry parent who rouses the shades to action by muttering over the fire—but the guilt, the filth, is projected on to the shade or the hero. It is when they 'brood on' men that men are contaminated. A shade or a man that is *ngwiyo*—good, righteous—is one without a grudge, without anger against anyone, free of witchcraft, and free of sex transgression—'there is no accusation against him'.

[1] I developed this section, cf. 'Nyakyusa Ritual and Symbolism', *American Anthropologist*, v. 56 (1954), pp. 253-8.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

swept through BaNyakyusa in the early 1930's; perhaps other similar movements preceded it—we do not know. What is clear is that traditionally there was continuous public pressure to overcome hatred within the village and the kinship group; to rid oneself of it by confession and an expression of goodwill. In pagan thought Utopia is a society without witches or sorcerers and, though it was never achieved, everyone is convinced that formerly these evil-doers were fewer than now, because they were restrained by law, whereas 'witches' now go scot-free.

The interests of the Nyakyusa are personal and practical. Health, fertility, and amity between kinsmen and neighbours are what they seek. It is with rain and drought, with the rise of the Lake or the striking of lightning which destroys property, with stock, crops, and the wild animals which prey upon them that the myths are concerned. We could trace no tales of the sun, moon, and stars, and no rituals are directed to them. Reference is made to volcanic disturbance in the myths of the heroes—'the ground rumbled' when Nkekete and Kyala walked, and there are stories of small lakes disappearing and reappearing elsewhere—but the concern shown is surprisingly little if an eruption indeed destroyed villages last century as Mr. Harkin's single informant suggests (*vide supra*, p. 18).

Reality is thought to be revealed to men in dreams, by prophets who 'go down thinking like the roots of a tree' to the world of the shades, and by oracles. What men seek to know are the causes of misfortune—public and private—and the identity of witches. Occasionally, it is said, a prophet has looked into the future and foretold drought, or flood, or the coming of Europeans—'white things on the Lake'—against whom it would be foolish to fight, but for the most part they are concerned with the misfortunes that exist, and urging men to pray in the groves. The contemplative is not honoured in Nyakyusa tradition; the man of spiritual power is a detective—a discoverer of evil-doers—or an administrator whose awfulness adds to his authority.

Men are preoccupied with their relationships to other living men—their kinsmen, neighbours, and fellow office-holders—and with their dead fathers. They are not concerned with their relationship to Kyala. The rituals celebrated by kinsmen are directed to the shades not to any supreme God, and it is quarrelling between kinsmen that angers the shades and makes the celebration of certain rituals necessary. The communal rituals are

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

A 797 Government service for a number of years. Most of the members
A 795 of the Church, and all the office-bearers, were Henga, some of them living, like Nyasuru himself, in the Kyungu's country, but there were also a few Ngonde and Nyakyusa.

Silwani Ngemela, the leader of 'The Last Church of God and His Christ', was also an ex-teacher and elder of the Church of Scotland Mission. He was of Ngonde lineage, the son of a minor chief, and had been a member of the Watch Tower, but had broken away from it and formed his own Church in 1925—retaining the practice of baptism by immersion 'in Jordan' which he had learnt from the Watch Tower. He, too, had been closely connected with a man, Jordan Msumba, who had worked in South Africa; indeed some said that Msumba, who had been for many years in Cape Town, was the real founder of the Church. Most of Ngemela's members were Nyakyusa or Ngonde.

Nyasuru and Ngemela each emphasized the independence of his Church from any other and each was somewhat jealous of his position as a leader. As Ngemela put it, 'The Governor corresponds with me alone'. In his Church all monies go direct to him, and
[578] there had already been a quarrel with one 'pastor' who had split off because he said that the Church funds should be lodged in the Boma and used to build a school. The BaNgemela had no schools and none of their pastors was paid. Nyasuru made a point of the fact that his deacons collected the Church funds and banked them in the name of the Church, and the African National Church did in fact run several schools (one of them within the Ngonde area) and pay the teachers.

Though the membership of the 'independent' African Churches was not very large (in the Nyakyusa-Ngonde area a total membership of 8,577 was claimed in 1938, but some of these probably lived outside this area), yet these Churches are symptomatic of a movement that has been important elsewhere. Nearly a fifth of the Africans who are professing Christians in the Union of South Africa belong to 'independent' Churches,[1] and a substantial number in Kenya. These Churches are a structural expression of the conflict between European and African, and of the desire of Africans to be independent leaders, but yet recognized as

[1] *Official Year Book of the Union of South Africa, 1952-3*, pp. 251, 457. But the proportion had declined from 16·5 per cent to 9·6 per cent of the total Bantu population between 1911 and 1946. *Official Summary of the Report of the Commission for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bantu Areas within the Union of South Africa* (U.G. 61/1955), p. 21.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

Yes, indeed, they boast, they say threateningly (she put her arms akimbo, and imitated a menacing voice) 'Don't speak to me like that!' 797 x 795 x

All through this discussion Y was excited and spoke with vehemence. Next day she came in looking worried and said: 754

About that choking of which I was telling you, what do *you* think it is when you wake up with pains like that? I'll tell you how it was. I went to see my sister, and found her very ill. She had had a miscarriage and her in-laws had not looked after her properly; they had not sent her to hospital, and when she was lying ill her mother-in-law even refused to come and cook for her. And so I was very, very angry with them. And that night I woke up feeling as if someone were stamping on my head, and I heard the knocking on the door and the footsteps I told you about. What do you make of such things when you dream someone strikes you or is throttling you?

The conception that misfortune is the result of sin, which dominates pagan thought, is reinterpreted in terms of the changing conception of God and the changing social structure. We found that many Christians believed that misfortune had been brought on certain wrong-doers by the 'curse' (*ikigaw*) of a priest or elder, or the anger of their Christian neighbours. A missionary or elder rebuking a man was repeatedly thought to have 'cursed' him,[1] so that he lost his job, or fell ill, or was eaten by a crocodile, and in one case a young couple who had not had a child were said to have been cursed by their Christian neighbours because the young man had provided no feast at his wedding. The Christians who believe in such a 'curse' explain that the power comes from God who 'hears people who murmur'—a direct parallel to the pagan belief in the power of senior relatives and neighbours to bring misfortune on wrong-doers—and it is the *words uttered*—the rebuke of one in authority or the murmuring of neighbours—which are held to be dangerous. [688] [578]

How the reproving words of a missionary may be interpreted as a curse is shown in the following case.

The wife of Z was a thief. She stole things from the loft of her mother-in-law's hut. She herself began to say: 'I am tired of my husband', and she began making love to other men. When her husband asked her to do anything she refused. She complained to neighbours, saying: 'My husband is a hard man. He watches me when I am preparing food to

[1] Thirteen cases of this type are recorded in *Good Company*, p. 109. cf. Monica Hunter, 'An African Christian Morality', *Africa*, x (1937), pp. 265-9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

[77] conscious. This disintegration of a former coherence, and a
[769] decreasing awareness of the meaning of symbols used, are perhaps
[796] characteristic of changing societies in Africa.

Despite the growth of the Christian Church, the great demand for schools, and the dropping of the old rituals directed to family [759] shades and the heroes, belief in the power of medicines flourishes. [778] Probably most deaths and misfortunes are still attributed to an enemy using either witchcraft or sorcery. The traditional belief in witchcraft is rejected by educated people, but belief in the power of medicines is general. Autopsies still take place and occasionally the poison ordeal is administered in secrecy; one case was mentioned which occurred in 1942. As we have seen, medicines have always been regarded as a potential instrument of individual competition. They are used in the rituals of kinship to ensure health, fertility, and good manners and morals; in the ritual of chieftainship to buttress authority, and in 'sprinkling the homesteads' to fertilize the fields; but also by individuals to steal the fertility of their neighbours' fields and to grow rich at the expense of their neighbours, and it is their use as an instrument of individual aggrandisement that is most talked of today. There were many reports of their use by rivals to office as chiefs, and the floods of 1955, which washed away the Mbaka bridge and caused a serious landslide on that river, were interpreted as incidents in a [578] prolonged fight between chiefs who were rivals for the position of paramount. The deaths of the heir of one of them in 1953, and of the other chief himself in 1956, were also attributed to their duel with medicines.

Along with the political changes there has been a development [791] of the Churches, more particularly of the Moravian Church, [795] which is now largely self-supporting, with growing congregations [177] served by African ministers.[1] Until 1938 the two main Protestant missions in Nyakyusa valley, the Moravian and Lutheran, were staffed by Germans and their funds came mainly from Germany. The war meant the withdrawal of the missionaries and the cutting off of funds. After a lapse of three years one Moravian missionary, and later one Lutheran, came to take charge of the missions and they were reinforced by other missionaries after the end of the war, but the whole policy in both missions is to build up self-supporting churches staffed by African pastors.

The work of the White Fathers mission was not interrupted by

[1] Change in Ngonde is not discussed.

(e.g. for fear of witchcraft) and take up the vacant holding. Nevertheless in general the holding was allowed to lapse and it could be re-allocated by the village headman if need arose; or the elderly widows might be allowed to continue to reside and cultivate as long as they wished.

Once land began to become scarce and valuable this loose system could no longer continue. Junior brothers and half-brothers were no longer content to permit the chief heir to take the whole of the deceased's holding to do with it as he wished, and a systematized division had to be adopted. At first, naturally enough, land was gradually brought under the same system which controlled the inheritance of other property, but this proved inadequate – inadequate not only in itself as being, perhaps, too complicated and conducive of disagreement and quarrelling in so far as land is concerned, but also because that system itself was already beginning to break down under the impact of individualism.

It was felt that because sons assist their father in his homestead and fields and in their turn rely on him for a share in the cash-and-kind profits of peasant farming, therefore they should have priority in the inheritance of their father's property. Their father's brothers, it was said, would in any case already have their own holdings in which likewise their sons have prime interest. Conversely, older Nyakyusa men began to be reluctant to take a brother's land (and other property too) on his death, for fear that, in their turn, control of their own land would descend at their death to their brothers' sons rather than to their own sons.

As a result of these attitudes a strong desire arose to modify the customary laws in this matter, and the Rungwe African District Council, with the approval of the Government, has by formal resolution established a new law under which sons may inherit direct from their own fathers.

This law is not universally accepted by the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains and sons still will sometimes waive their novel rights in favour of the traditional claims of their fathers' brothers. They say that they do not desire to see the break up of the wider lineage which, in effect, this new law encourages; they are also afraid of the anger and jealousy, and then of the witchcraft, of their uncles. It appears however that the change is accepted by the large majority of the people, for it follows the trend of modern values and kinship sentiments.

The principal heir is now the eldest son, but in general he has little direct control over the property and land of his half-brothers unless they are still young, in which case he has a moral duty to act as guardian and custodian. Sons inherit that part of the paternal holding which had been allocated to their mother by their father in his lifetime, plus any other pieces he might have given to any of them direct as individuals. Each group of full-brothers determines the way in which it divides up its own inheritance. The eldest brother of such a house has a definite obligation to see that his juniors obtain shares of the land in so far as its extent and their number will allow. On the whole it is expected by Nyakyusa that the eldest brother will secure the best holding for himself, as befits his new status, but he cannot deny his younger brothers' claims. Disputes in this matter are not uncommon and the local courts have already shown their determination to support the claims of younger brothers.

Very commonly – though it has not yet crystallized as compulsory social behaviour – a father will grant a portion of his holding to his son on the latter's marriage, or as soon after as the son decides to give up labour migration and settle down. It is thought that a married man should be independent economically and that he should be able to maintain his own household; it is realised that there is most likely to be friction in the relations between father and son, especially in this society where it is traditionally

423 believed that parents and children should live apart.[1] In the same way, and
28 for similar reasons, an elder brother tries to make provision for his junior
when the latter marries if their father is already dead. The practice of the
[518] father is not a legally required one, although it is nowadays increasingly
common and some have begun to expect it; the practice of an elder brother
is now legally required in the matter of land and probably always has been
in the matter of cattle.

The difficulties are obvious when a man dies and leaves several sons
[241] but only a small-sized holding. To date no clear ruling has emerged and
unfortunately the African District Council did not deal specifically with
such details when introducing the new law. How much land an eldest
brother can reasonably retain for himself is perhaps not determinable in
practice except in specific relation to the nature, locality and fertility of the
holding in question, the plots already held by the man himself, the needs
and number of the younger brothers and any holdings they may have, and
[509] the location of the villages in which they severally live. There is also plenty
of scope for disagreement between half-brothers over portions of the paternal
holding which had been retained by the father himself for his own use; over
portions allocated to a wife who has borne no sons or whose sons have died,
and over permanent loans. The situation is still fluid and there has not yet
been time enough for a common and generally acceptable solution to be
established. Consequently each group of sons tries to solve its own particular
problems in this matter as best it can, torn between old values and new
attitudes and needs.

593 Relations between both full-brothers and half-brothers tend often to
458 be severely tried at times of inheritance. It is not primarily, I think, a case of
brothers' greed for valued land tending to overcome bonds of fraternity
and co-operation; but it is rather that a father's arable holding is often not
able to provide adequate amounts of arable land for each of his sons, and
yet they find the very greatest difficulty in obtaining land elsewhere. Already
the traditional kin-group comprising the sons and grandsons of a group of
[182] full-brothers had begun to break down even before land shortage became
serious. Now the group of full-brothers itself tends to be dispersed as men
obtain land where they can and it is endangered by disunions over land
rights and land divisions. Increasingly, it seems, a Nyakyusa man is becoming
detached from his brothers and he tends to establish an independent family
unit comprising his immediate family alone – that is, himself with his wives
and children. We cannot attribute the whole cause of this modern trend to
land shortage and economic difficulties, of course, for involved also are
new ideas of individualism and of personal effort and reward, and the
decreasing need for the consistent support of brothers in social, economic
and ritual activities.

578 Younger brothers may, and sometimes do in fact, agree that the
443 paternal holding is already too small for further sub-divisions, or that the
small parts which can be made available to them are scarcely worth having –
428 especially if they live some distance away. On the other hand, the eldest
brother may already have obtained a holding in his own village and is
therefore willing to make only a small claim or none at all in the interests
of his juniors, and he may then divide the inheritance amongst them alone.
Usually, so acute is the dearth of land, the holding is divided between two
[311] or more brothers. It is split into small plots so that each brother has a share
of paddy, food-crop and banana land, and there are commonly a half acre
[696] or even less in size nowadays. As already mentioned, by a kind of modern
equity the local African courts generally favour the claims of the younger

1. See Wilson, M., 1951, p. 139 and passim. "The great purpose of age-villages is the separation of sons and mothers, of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law." Ibid p. 140.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F'N17 Ngoude F'N17
Nyakyusa

brothers, and this is compelling the increasing and continued fragmentation of holdings at time of inheritance. Even so, if there are several brothers (i.e., sons of the deceased) the youngest among them may still be unable to obtain a plot, or at least not one of an economically viable size, and they are then compelled to try to gain admittance to some other village as newcomers, there to be allocated land.

The shortage of land is, therefore, not only making inheritance very considerably more important, but it is assisting in the establishment of new kinship attitudes and a redefining of fraternal relations. The position is most confused at the moment as the old system continues to exist alongside the new, sometimes more or less successfully, but often in intractable opposition. At the present time the observer can only mention general tendencies, for it is impossible as yet to foresee what the eventual result will be, and there are, in any case, many other factors involved besides those of the inheritance of scarce land.

In so far as we are primarily concerned with land problems in this essay, the basic factors are that land is newly scarce, that there is virtually no alternative activity in the country to the arable use of the land, and that therefore each son must try to obtain a share in the often inadequate holding of his father. I suggest that no form of inheritance can deal with such a situation satisfactorily – at least it is highly doubtful if any has yet emerged in an area of land shortage in Eastern Africa – and thus there are bound to be severe difficulties and a deterioration of inter-personal relations between near kinsmen who are most in competition. The new inheritance law of the Nyakyusa has narrowed the range of potential conflict from the patrilineal descendants of a grandfather to the sons of a single father; but if it has obviated possible hostility between the generations and between paternal cousins, it has also removed much of the common interest and mutual interdependence between them.

The Right to Land, and the Authority of the Village Headman

Although the traditional principle still exists that every villager has a right to arable land within the village boundaries, yet it is no longer possible to carry it out in practice. Every village headman, in my experience, attempts to ensure that each of his men has land, but he cannot always succeed, and most especially he cannot provide every one with as much land as he would like, because of sheer spatial limitation.

Nowhere any longer does the old principle now hold that an established villager may, without permission or notification, take vacant land into cultivation as part of his holding. When land becomes vacant it must now revert immediately to the village as a group, that is to the common pool from which the headman as village authority makes allocations. There are so many and such varied demands for land nowadays that no man acting on his own can presume to take up vacant land, and only the headman may decide allocations. No person can now obtain land, whether he be an established villager or not, unless he is allocated it by the headman – or, in the many large villages typical of the Lake Plains, by the headman's assistant, ngwakyusa, who is delegated authority in a section of the village.

Land becomes vacant when a man shifts to another village, when a man dies and leaves no active heir who desires to take up the deceased's holding, or (but seldom today) when a man gives up part of his holding due to his inability to use the whole of it. In all these cases the land is immediately re-allocated by the headman, probably not as a single unit any longer, as best he can among a crowd of land-hungry villagers – established men seeking extra land to meet the needs of growing families or for increasing cash-crop

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

number of separate plots per holding was less than where land was scarcer; at the same time the average size of separate plots was smaller in these more land-hungry villages. The reader may refer to Table III (page 15) for some illustrative figures. Though differences are not yet very great, nevertheless there seems to be a fairly clear correlation between the average size of villagers' holdings on the one hand, and on the other the number and size of separate plots, and this is entirely borne out by my general information obtained in villages where actual measurements were not made. The inescapable conclusion must be that increasing scarcity of land in the Lake Plains leads to increasing fragmentation and dispersion of holdings; further, the present land situation and land tenure system can only lead to a continuation of this trend. 311 423

To emphasise the actual situation in 1955, let me reiterate the results of my own village surveys in the very high density region. In a village in Kaswa's chieftdom only a quarter of the younger men had paddy land of their own, holdings averaging about three-quarters of an acre; in a village in Mwakipesile's chieftdom, only 17 per cent. of the younger men had paddy land and holdings averaged about half an acre (cf. Table VII, page 37). These two examples are taken from the areas of most severe land shortage and are not therefore altogether typical of the whole Lake Plains. Nevertheless, I do not think that they are entirely atypical; more importantly, they indicate the present trend. Within another generation this fragmentation and scatter of holdings may well be the common feature everywhere in the flood plains unless the system of tenure and inheritance is modified. If the increase in population is quickened through improved medical facilities, better diet and housing, and improved conditions generally, then the position will become more acute. Such an increase is only to be expected. The Nyakyusa have decisively entered a money economy and they have learnt to seek higher standards of living. Only from their fields, by cash-cropping, can they expect to earn their livings and the demand for better living will not be curtailed – nor, of course, is it desirable that it should be. [433] [511]

There is another aspect of this whole matter which must be considered. It relates to the movement of individuals between villages. Such movement was, in earlier European days, a crucial factor in the age-village structure, for it was not only exceedingly frequent, but also it tended to undermine the idealised coeval basis of village life. Movement between villages is increasingly difficult now, for a newcomer naturally cannot easily obtain land, nor as much land as he would desire even at a moderate demand. Nevertheless, the reasons for movement persist, and they will do so whilst the fear of witchcraft remains and whilst illness and misfortune are attributable to the unfavourable aura of a place. There remains also the tradition of moving so that a man may escape from bad relations with kinsfolk or neighbours, or from the obloquy resulting from his own disapproved actions. Much social and psychological tension is being created now as a result of the new difficulty of movement, and so far the Nyakyusa have not evolved alternative methods. [166] [754] [753] [626] [152] [578]

On the other hand, so deeply engrained is the notion of the prestige and power which accrues to a village by virtue of the number of its inhabitants, that headmen and villagers alike remain most reluctant to refuse to accept newcomers, even when it inevitably means that the present inhabitants must meet a further decrease in the average amount of land available per family, for a newcomer must be allocated a holding if he is to remain. Consequently, if a holding is for any reason left vacant, a headman tends to refuse to re-allocate some or all of it amongst his villagers and thus to augment their holdings; but instead he keeps it in reserve pending the hoped-for arrival of another newcomer. Men desiring to leave their own village try to get [554] [609] [622]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

423 all. Field boundaries have lost their earlier fluidity, when a plenty of land did not call for precise demarcation, and the only important changes now result from the land being left vacant or by the internal division of established holdings by inheritance or anticipatory inheritance.

In brief, then, the high premium given to land because of its modern scarcity value, and the enhanced authority of the headman in land affairs act together to preserve the individual's rights. The residual rights of the village, as group-owner of all land within the village boundary, do not affect the land-holder during his continued residence there.

[428] [598] The commonest type of dispute in land matters arises in inheritance, where a younger brother sues his senior in order to obtain or increase his share of the paternal holding (see page 21). That is to say, in general only where established holdings are being broken up does dispute arise and then, of course, only between the sons of the dead man. Disputes between neighbours in a village seldom are grave enough to be brought to court or even before the headman.

[593] There are also many petty, semi-domestic cases which faithfully reflect the frequently poor relations between Nyakyusa husbands and wives in modern times.[1]

TABLE IV

NYAKYUSA LAND DISPUTES: CIVIL CASES, 1954

691 423 [161]

	No. of civil cases	Land cases No.	Land cases %	Population per land case	Density of population
Lake Plains	1,077	106	9	567	385
N.E. Highlands	965	24	2.5	1,842	199
Central Region	901	13	1.5	4,092	245
N.W. Highlands	1,380	8	0.6	7,300	201

Based on returns of civil cases in local courts of first instance ('B' Courts) for 1954. In 1955 the percentages were almost exactly the same as in 1954.

Several interesting points are suggested by these figures. Firstly, there is the larger proportion of land cases and the much smaller population per case in the Lake Plains, where land shortage is worst in relation to local demand, not only because of the higher density of population as such, but also because of the relatively larger acreages required for paddy cultivation. Secondly, in the Central Region of Nyakyusa country there is also a high density of population, but nevertheless only a few land cases; this may be attributed to the absence of cash-cropping and the absence, therefore, of a keen demand for land. On the other hand, the relatively numerous cases, or small population per case, in the north-eastern Highlands seem to result directly from a particularly densely populated area (Mwakaleli) where coffee cultivation is long established and the demand for land is exceptionally keen. In other words, as far as the figures for 1954 and 1955 show, there is a direct connection between land scarcity and the incidence of land disputes before the local courts (i.e. the more intractable disputes which go beyond the village headmen). General observation supports this conclusion. It may be expected in the future, therefore, that such cases will increase unless administrative action is taken to rationalise the inheritance laws with a view to minimising the area of potential disagreement amongst the sons of a deceased man.

691 423 171 For comparative interest, in so far as they offer some indication, I append here data on other Districts in the Territory where land disputes are common.

1. In 1954, 60 per cent. of all civil cases in the lowest courts were marital disputes, including divorce suits, and there was one divorce case for every 34 adult males living in the country in that year.

311
233 Whereas in the Highland and Central regions the large numbers of cattle – in relation, that is, to the available pasture resources – are causing over-grazing and soil erosion, particularly in the hilly areas so often nowadays relegated to pasturage, on the other hand in the flood plains there does not appear, at least to the layman, to have been any serious effects on the land. [24] The natural manuring of the paddy fields in the dry season is advantageous. In the Lake Plains it is the cattle rather than the land which suffer, but so far the Nyakyusa have done virtually nothing to meet the new conditions, other than to complain bitterly and fruitlessly.

The Young Men: Land Shortage and Labour Migration

423 The younger Nyakyusa men find increasing difficulty in obtaining arable land now that there are no longer vacant areas to be taken up, and the older men are no longer prepared to cede their land rights in favour of the younger generation, as they traditionally did. When occasional fields are left vacant, the young men must take their turn with their elders, who themselves are so chronically short of land – and the headmen commonly favour the older villagers with families as against the younger men. This means that in the high-density regions the majority of men under the age of about 30 years have little or no arable land, nor can they hope for it until the deaths of their fathers. In the congested village units even their banana plots may be smaller than is desirable for the provision of the staple food.

[593] The young man, then, is compelled to remain dependent on his father's [178] and elder brother's holding; indeed, headmen often justify their refusals to allocate plots to young men on the express grounds that the latter must share their elders' fields. Thus the valued independence of the young Nyakyusa is severely restricted and it seems that tensions and difficulties are beginning [578] to arise between fathers and sons, and between brothers, because of this. Sons are blamed for not doing their fair share in the family cultivation; fathers are blamed for giving their sons inadequate shares in crops and crop incomes. It will be remembered that one of the fundamental principles underlying Nyakyusa society and its age-village organisation is the spatial segregation of parents and children (*cf.* page 22). Now they are inevitably being put into competition with one another over inadequate fields in a single holding.

The young men are severely restricted, if not altogether cut off, from the [934] opportunity to cultivate paddy in their own fields and thus to earn their incomes at home, for paddy-growing is the only way of earning a living in the [343] Lake Plains. Yet it is these younger men whose money demand is greatest; to buy clothing, bicycles and other store-goods, and to buy cattle for marriage payments. They are therefore strongly attracted by the ready opportunities for taking up wage-labour abroad, in the mines of the Rhodesias and South Africa where wages are high (see Gulliver, 1957).

With the best will in the world, when, as in the very high-density region, the average holding is little more than an acre and a half – when, that is, the older men themselves desire larger acreages for their own cultivation needs – it is not possible for a father to allow his son to take large shares in his fields. In some cases a father does give outright to his adult sons strips of his holding, but plots so provided are necessarily small. Quite as frequently a father does not consider it possible to break up his holding in his own lifetime, and sons are expected to assist in the common cultivation and to con- [593] tinue merely to be given a share in the family proceeds at harvest. It is not surprising, therefore, that very large numbers of young men from the Lake [167] Plains migrate abroad to work. Only about one man in 20 has not been away at all before the age of about 25 years. Much higher proportions of men and larger numbers absolutely are temporarily absent from the Lake

against the wrong-doer. It is supposed that after this procedure sickness or even death may come to that person. Another method consists of laying a bewitched object on the path usually used by the offender; with the same result. Such bewitching is practised, for instance, when a quarrel has broken out between relatives. With the Nyakyusa any quarrelling with kinsmen is considered a very serious crime, as such a conduct is apt, in their estimation, to destroy the highly-valued family harmony.

3. Another day a ceremony (*ulwengepi*)[7] to end mourning was held at Katumba. Some time before an older child had died, and now they were gathered to take leave of the dead[8].

At some distance from the hut, on the open space before it, a square represented the grave, in which the blossom of a banana[9] was interred, representing the dead. The mourners knelt at this grave and touched it with their elbows, knees and foreheads[10]. Each of the chief mourners had to do this, according to the belief of the Natives, lest he should fall into madness.

The next act was performed by the *uwengepi*[10], the leading person of the ceremony, one in full knowledge of the rites. Immediately before the door of the hut of the mourning parents, the *uwengepi* threw the collections of corn, brought by the participants in small baskets in honour of the dead, together into a big basket, and uttered the names of the contributors addressing the dead. The other participants repeated these names.

Then the mourners went into the hut; but, after some moments, they reappeared one by one and each one, as he left the door in a crouching position, was softly struck on his neck by the *uwengepi* with a piece of the trunk of a banana plant. It was explained to me that this ceremony would induce new strength to the mourners, who were weakened by the death of their relative.

The portion of the ceremony which followed, consisted in the forming of a line by the mourners between the hut and the grave. The persons now stood straddle-legged on leaves of banana, the *uwengepi* at the

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[7] Cf. Wilson, Conventions of Burial, p. 8, n. 4: *uwengepi*.
[8] Wilson has described burials (*lifwa*, sg.) of adult persons; nevertheless, I think, my description will be of some value.
[9] Cf. my Chaga Notes, Bantu Studies, XV, p. 381.
[9] Cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 338.
[10] Cf. *Mackenzie*, p. 206; pl. *bengepo*, p. 51; Wilson, Introduction, p. 387, *uwengepo* (hereditary priests).

13:Lehmann E-5 (939) 1951 FNI7 Ngonde FNI7
Nyakyusa

After these admonitions, the mats which the girl had manufactured were inspected. During this examination it was told her that a wife should be seen in the possession of as many beautiful mats as possible, made by her for herself and for her husband. Should the girl reveal such conduct as a wife, ubumenpelele (happiness) would be in her hut. 881 867 285

When the proper ceremony seemed to have come to an end, another discussion followed. The girl had told the uwapapo, during the above mentioned admonition, that her parents also sometimes exchanged angry words. Therefore, a new discussion between the father and the mother arose, in which also the uwapapo was the "speaker", but the other participants of the ceremony also shared in it, and the discussion too became at times heated. Still, after about 15 minutes, it suddenly came to an end, and the matter in dispute was declared settled. With this the whole ceremony ended. 881 578

8. One day I asked the chief for permission to visit his huts. He dwelt in a rectangular hut (ikilaupa). A very beautiful ikitara (bed) was in the main room, composed of many sleeping mats (ubulelé, pl. imifelé) and of big round wooden blocks (sections of a tree-trunk), one at the head and a smaller one at the foot of the bed. Each of the four fine mats which lay uppermost had a special name. All the mats rested on sticks of reed laid across beams lying on smaller poles on the floor[11]. These mats were naturally of nearly the same height as the wooden block which formed the head part of the ikitara. In some other old-fashioned and better houses in Nyakyusa villages, similar beds were to be seen, but generally the bedsteads are much more simple. 622 352 [342]

One of the most important permissions granted me by the chief was to enter the "store room", connected with his main room by a door. The objects to be seen here were the same as those to be found in other huts or store-rooms, e. g. the big ifitubo (baskets) for storing grain, up to four feet high, smeared over with cow-dung and clay, and smaller baskets for different purposes. In one corner hung different kinds of dancing fans (urukupa, sg.) made of hairs from the tails of bulls, with fine handles of horn. In the dark opposite corner of the same wall there seemed to hang a similar object, but it was wrapped in banana fast. This was the real sign of the chief's dignity, the symbol of his authority and power, named ubwenigula. A long discussion was needed to induce the chief to unveil it. Only by constantly consulting by glances the present emafumu the chief slowly unveiled it. He told us that 342 353 622 [251] [237] [778] [715]

[11] Cf. Fülleborn, p. 301.

[1] Genesis I, 1

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

692 in the religious seclusion of the Kyungu. No Kyungu ever sat in public to judge his people until Mwakabenga, who reigned from 1894 to 1904. And if the nobles of Ngonde, who acted for the Kyungu in most mundane matters, only exercised judicial authority in matters immediately affecting his personal position, that was, I believe, because nothing more would have been tolerated by the chiefs. I cannot prove this point, for it only occurred to us after leaving Ngonde, but it seems probable that only under the presidency of the Kyungu himself could a central court have maintained itself; for the nobles of Ngonde were not of royal blood. Comparative evidence supports this hypothesis, and the ease with which the present Kyungu maintains his central appeal court to-day makes it still more probable.

6. *WARFARE. (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

(a) *CIVIL WAR.*

• 579 The endemic civil war of Ngonde appears rather to have resembled a series of rugby football matches without referees than the scientific mass-killing of modern Europe. "In the old days we used frequently to engage in little local fights. But always, when some occasion for war arose we used to send a message beforehand to tell the other side that we meant to fight them the next day at a certain time. And perhaps, if we had mentioned the morning, they would refuse and say they preferred the afternoon, and we would agree." (Was this always done?) "Yes, always; for if ever any group attacked suddenly and unexpectedly then everyone used to mock them for their cowardice and compare them with the Ngoni——for it was by unexpected night attacks that the Ngoni overcame us."

"And how did war start?" we asked. "Maybe a couple of boys would begin fighting, just with their fists, and as they fought another would come and join in to help his friend, then another on the other side, ——until at last yet another would join in with a spear and wound someone. Then the wounded man would be taken home bleeding, and the next day there would be war!" (And what was the point of fighting such a war?) "So that the others should be underneath and we on top. We used to fight from infancy onwards; we began as children by using mushrooms, then we took to reeds and finally, as we grew up, to sharpened stakes and spears." Such warfare seldom or never lasted for more than a single day. Cattle might be captured and houses burnt, but there was no acquisition of territory.

669 It was the territorial aim of the wars between the chiefs of Ngelange and of Ngana which distinguished them from other civil wars; though

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

231 and will follow the caller wherever he goes. They come to be milked morning and evening, and no cow moves until her name is called. The greatest insult that can be offered to a man is to sprinkle milk on the road behind him as he passes, suggesting, "You are too incompetent to provide yourself and your family with milk to drink; I can spare some to mock you with." And each man is jealous of the quality of his herd. A year or two ago, a wedding party went to [579] pay over a cow to the bride's father. It was not a high-class animal: a bystander threw a taunt, and in the fight which followed, two men were killed, and a number wounded.

422 The man is the owner of the cattle as a rule. It is rare for the wife to own any; but sometimes a father will make his daughter a present of a cow, which becomes hers absolutely, to pass, with its increase, to her son at her death or his marriage. The husband also may set a cow apart for his wife, but it returns to him in case of divorce.

231 857 During the day the cattle are herded by the village boys, each family sending one or two in turn to the work. They have a thoroughly good time, though for the smaller boys it is rather a testing time of moral and muscle, for they have a severe apprentice-
234 ship to serve. Cows are milked by the owner usually twice a day. No one ever salutes a man while so engaged; if the milk stops, he will be accused of witchcraft. A visitor arriving at milking time will sit down and wait, neither he nor his host taking any notice of each other until the cow that is being milked

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

273 bed at midnight to break up drunken revels, and drive to bed men who, though sternly refused permission to finish the beer, vowed themselves, in drunken sentimentality, my eternal friends. But not always do beer feasts end so happily. As in other lands, some men become jocular in drink, others quarrelsome, and •[579] many a Konde beer feast has ended in a spear fight. Beer is an accompaniment of feasts given at births, marriages, and deaths; but occasion of that sort need not be waited for. The chief may give a feast at any time; or a man who has been long away from home celebrates his return; or the hoeing season provides an excuse; but with or without occasion, an immense amount of beer is drunk every year.

Light beer is made in many ways. A favourite is 272 made from sweet potatoes laid out to dry, pounded into flour, and mixed with flour of maize, cassava, or other material, cooked, and drunk when cool. Groundnuts shelled and ground, put into small baskets with water, and allowed to drip dry, then mixed with *malesi* flour, and cooked, is a common drink; as is also a light drink made from the juice of sugar-cane similarly mixed and cooked. All these are non-intoxicating, and are taken along with food, or at any other time as a refreshing drink.

733 Many of the more progressive chiefs are alive to the injury done by heavy drinking, and do all in their power to stop it; and native Christians who take any part in a beer feast are excluded from the sacraments. By the action of the Government in exercising control over beer, of some of the better chiefs, and of the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

has a disease, from which he does not himself suffer, 787
but which passes over to the person who arouses the wrath.

At Karonga, if two old men fight with their fists, 787
and tear each other's garments, they have forecasted 579
death for each other. The death of a friend of one or the other will shortly take place. Among the Banyakyusa to the north, the fight of any two, young or old, with fists only, is a portent of the same significance. Such anger blazes up suddenly, and the two men fly at each other in blind fury, unable to restrain themselves sufficiently to go and fetch the weapons with which reasonable men fight. The fist as a weapon of war is not highly regarded by Africans generally, however dear it may be to others.

2. Unnatural actions. To invite an old man to 787
climb a tree may seem to us more laughable than 578
deadly; but to the Konde it is a dreadful combination of insult and forecast; it is a forecast, because such a thing is an insult so great as to be in itself a portent. The number of things that come under this head is legion; but generally, to ask an old person to do what is unnatural for an old person to do, is *kunikura*. Little girls quite innocently removing their scanty covering in the presence of an old man, have unwittingly warned him that his days are near an end. Perhaps under the same category we may include an invitation given by a child to an old man to come and eat; to us it could not come in a more charming way; but the old Konde would turn his back indignantly on the ill-bred brat who

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

563 constitution (about which they asked many questions) was a
622 democratic one; for, they said, the Administration always supported the chiefs against the commoners.

621 The villages to which commoner leaders are appointed differ from all other Bantu villages of which we have knowledge in that they consist of groups of age-mates, not groups of kinsmen; boys build with contemporaries and remain with them through life; girls join the villages of their husbands at marriage; therefore relatives, other than husband and wife and young children, do
602 not live together. Nevertheless kinship ties are important, for property circulates within the kinship group rather than within the village, and kinsmen are believed to be mystically interdependent, in a way in which fellow villagers are not. The most prized
[556] possession of the Nyakyusa are cattle, for cattle enable a man to marry, to live in comfort, to gain prestige by feasting his friends; and cattle pass along the roads of kinship. They pass between brothers, and half-brothers, and the sons of brothers; between fathers and sons; and between affines. Kinsmen also participate in common rituals, praying to common ancestors, and seeking protection from mystical dangers which are thought to travel, like
[578] cattle, along the roads of kinship. Ever fearful lest a quarrel among them should bring misfortune on all, they strive to live in harmony.

The range of kinship recognized varies somewhat with the status of the family concerned and the proximity and personalities of its members, but, generally speaking, economic and religious co-operation link the descendants of a common grandfather, and marriage between the descendants of a common great-grand-
[581] father is excluded. A legal marriage is effected by the passage of cattle from the groom's group to the bride's, and it is this passage which is said to create kinship (*ubukamu*), with the consequent mystical interdependence, between a man and his wife, and between the one partner in a marriage and the close kinsmen of
595 the other. Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan, and it is made
428 possible by the ten years' difference in the average marriage age of men and women. Girls are betrothed very young and finally join their husbands at puberty, while few pagan men marry under twenty-five. Inherited cattle are controlled by the older generation and polygyny is the prerogative of age. For property passes not directly from father to son, but from brother to brother,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

789 would never dry up.' Kasitile said: 'The work of the *undumila* and
841 *ikipiki* are the same, they are together. The heavy ones will overstep the girl, they are going to injure her so that she is barren, constantly menstruating, with painful periods.' Lyandileko, a woman doctor, and exceptionally intelligent, said: 'The bride
[753] uses the *ikipiki* medicine because she is empty (*bwasi*). So she washes and eats bananas with *ikipiki*. If she does not wash with it she will have diarrhœa.'

789 The *ikipiki* is also said to make a bride 'patient and polite'. 'If
577 the girl did not wash with the powdered medicine (*ikipiki*) she might be rude and proud when she went to her husband's home and insult men there.' This was the statement of Mwakwelebeja, an old commoner particularly well versed in matters of ritual, and it was separately confirmed both by his wife and by Lyandileko, the woman doctor, but not everyone knew the connection. Mwaihojo, the chief, who was present when Mwakwelebeja gave his explanation, said: 'Really! I never knew that!' and his wives, when applied to, said: 'We don't know. The mothers have died' (this though some of them were past middle age).

613 Angombwike identified the *ikipiki* medicine with the blood of a
789 lineage and a bride's treatment with it with the union in marriage.
●581 He said:

> As soon as a girl grows up people begin to think about her bearing children. They say: 'The molten iron is discharged, the blood for bearing children has come.' When they grind and brew beer in her honour, they do it in honour of her 'iron' [i.e. menstrual blood]. They give her medicines for disciplining her in the lineage of her husband. When the mothers hear they cry: 'Ours, ours, it has fruited! (*Ifyeto, ifyeto, fipele*).' The girl is given a bundle of the medicine, powdered, and is made to wear a belt of bark-cloth with the powder in it; the medicine is brought from the husband's home by his mothers. The husband, as it were, says: 'That is my blood [or semen] which I have sent to her.' The little bundle is the symbol (*ikimanyilo*) of the child she will bear, the belt with medicine on it means that the molten 'iron' belongs to the blood of that husband. The powdered medicine is brought by the husband's mother. A man's chief wife always has a bamboo flask or a pot full of medicine of their lineage (*ja kikololo kyabo*), powdered ready for use. If she dies it goes to the second wife, if the husband dies to the first wife of the eldest son, and by her it is distributed at need. The powdered medicine is the blood (*imbondanya*[1] *lyo ilopa*).

[1] i.e. the powder made from the *ikipiki*.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

The bundle of medicine and the belt are burnt with the litter at the coming out. And whenever a child is born, every time, not only at the birth of the first or second, it is washed by the husband's mother with this same powdered medicine from the store in her pot. If this is not done they fear that perhaps the child will go mad or something dreadful will happen. They say of the powdered medicine: 'It is our kinship, it is our blood (*Bo bukamu bwetu, lyo ilopa lyetu*).' And if a girl runs off with a lover in the veld they mock her and say: 'Who has given you powdered medicine? You are no relative.' They say: 'She is not our relative, she has not got our blood. . . .' The medicine is to create relationship (*ubukamu*). Using it means that the bride is now of my lineage (*ikikolo*). You know that burial customs differ. When they have used the medicine they will bury my wives as they bury me, either sitting up or lying down, as the case may be. We Christians do not do this because we have another way. We take hands before the priest and say: 'This is my relative (*unkamu gwangu*).'

Another informant (a pagan), questioned separately, gave a similar interpretation. He said: 'Washing with the medicine means, "my wife has come. She is now my relative (*nkamu gwangu*)." '

As already indicated, the act of washing with her husband proclaims the seniority of a wife. Washing with her own mother and her father or young brother, is to proclaim kinship. 'The girl washes with a brother to show that she has brothers and sisters. If she does not do so it shows that she is a poor person without relatives.' 'She has washed at her husband's place, then she comes home and her father honours her by looking for a boy, not an old one but a young one, to wash with her. Then the girl thinks: "I have fathers, I am no bastard." But if she washed alone she would think: "Perhaps I am not their child, perhaps I have no relatives." ' Kasitile said: 'If she washes with me, her father, it means: "She is my child, I begot her myself, she is my first-born." ' Mwakionde, after discussing the circumstances under which a father washes, said: 'To wash is to admit that I have lived and borne a child and grown up.' 'And if a brother does it?' we asked. 'It means: "You young man, you are her father." If they ever quarrel the brother says: "Why do you not respect me, your father? We washed together in water." ' A young brother is chosen 'because the grown-up boys are going about. They want one who has not made love to girls.'

Standing in the doorway of her mother's hut (or of the woman acting in place of her mother if the latter is dead or divorced) is

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

danger of incest. They account for the rule by a myth which tells 881
how a certain chief looked on his son's wife and saw that she 585
was beautiful and took her, and men were shocked, and forbade a 606
father-in-law and daughter-in-law ever to see one another again. And this taboo, they say, is the reason why fathers and sons must live in separate villages. To avoid (*ukutila*) is 'to fear, to show respect'. Avoidance occurs between women in a limited degree—a girl shows respect to her father's sister, a daughter-in-law to her mother-in-law and her husband's father's sister by not looking at them directly or touching their backs; but these women are in some measure identified with father and father-in-law, and the taboos are most stringent regarding things or actions which are associated with sexual activity. The behaviour of Nyakyusa women suggests very strongly that the fundamental idea in *ukutila* is avoidance of incest.[1] Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is the primary rule of good manners and morals in domestic relations, and is constantly expressed in everyday activities.

Besides being a celebration of the change from childhood to 581
womanhood, and of movement from the lineage of her father to 585
that of her husband, the puberty—marriage ritual includes a legal 584
contract. Either at the betrothal, or when the bulk of the marriage-cattle are handed over, the groom's go-between thrusts a spear into the earth of the swept courtyard and there, publicly, before her kinsfolk and neighbours, the bride must pluck it out and hand it to her father, in token of her consent to the marriage. 'It means: "With this spear you may slay me if I run away from my husband." And her father keeps the spear and may kill her if she does—some fathers did so in the old days.'

After taking the spear the father plucks a banana leaf and hands his daughter the mid-rib with which she strikes one of the cows brought by her husband, and all the women of the homestead acclaim her. Thus her acceptance of the marriage is demonstrated. And each time an instalment of the marriage-cattle is handed over, the go-between of her father and the go-between of the husband must both be present as witnesses; and they notify their sons of the contracts they have so witnessed so that the sons may give evidence after the death of their fathers if necessary.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 83–6, 106, 123, 160–2; 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde, p. 127–8.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Yet still she remains a daughter of her father's lineage and shares in its rituals as well as in those of her husband's.

Lineages are linked by marriage and kinship between them is established by the passage of cattle. The son-in-law becomes 'one blood' with his parents-in-law when they drink the beer brewed or eat the chicken killed at the consummation of the marriage; some of his semen is buried in his father-in-law's grove, and his spear is placed in his father-in-law's hut. The significance of the link is magnified by the thicket of taboos which surrounds 'mixing bloods', and once forged the link should be, and commonly is, retained long after the deaths of the individuals by whom it was created, for each is replaced, the husband by a brother or son, the wife by a sister or brother's daughter. For each heir the ritual of 'mixing bloods' is performed afresh reminding them of their separation and union.

Cattle are closely identified with men and therefore with lineages. The shades watch over them. Like men, they are in danger from women who are ritually impure; at the death of their owner they, too, mourn; and kinship relationships are established and expressed by their transfer from one lineage to another. 'Kinship is cattle.'

The distinction and opposition of lineages is apparent in the ritual of puberty and marriage which expresses both hostility and conciliation. The two lineages dance in rivalry, haggle over cattle, and exchange feasts. Among the Nyakyusa, the opposition is not between men and women, as suggested by some recent writers on rituals elsewhere,[1] but between lineages; though the men and the women, both of the groom's party and the bride's, act separately. The hostility and conciliation reach their culmination in the ritual of vituperation among the Lugulu, when groom's group and bride's insult each other by word and in action and then, at the instance of the master of ceremonies, praise each other and feast together.

Among the Nyakyusa there is no clan organization and no common name for a lineage of many generations like the Pondo *isiduko*, which identifies agnatic kinship within a large group. A common name is used by members of a lineage of three or four generations at the most, and among commoners there is no invocation of a distant ancestor as among the Pondo. The hero

[1] E. Fromm, *The Forgotten Language*; M. Gluckman, 'The Role of the Sexes in Wiko Circumcision Ceremonies', in *Social Structure*, edited by M. Fortes (1949).

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done.

In a polygynous family each wife has her own fields (*embaka*), hoed by her husband and her own sons, which she plants, weeds and reaps with the help of her own daughters, and the produce of which she uses to cook for her husband, her own children and herself. The relative rights of husband and wife to dispose of produce vary with different crops, but no co-wife has any rights over a woman's food. She may, and often does, ask her co-wives to help in her fields and sends them presents of cooked food from her own fire, she may help them and receive presents in return; but they have no rights over her fields or her food, only her husband and herself. And the fields which are hoed by a bachelor son belong to his own mother, who in her turn cooks food for him to eat.

Each wife has either a hut to herself, or else a separate alcove in a large hut, and there she has her fire for cooking. She fetches her own firewood and water or sends an unmarried daughter for them.

At meals the ages and the sexes eat separately; in some polygynous families each wife sends a dish to the husband, in others the wives take it in turns to cook for him. The husband eats alone or with neighbours of his own age[7] to share his dish, the older boys and their friends[7] eat separately from the younger children, and each mother again usually eats with her own daughters, apart.

In the relationship of husband and wife the chief elements are sexual intercourse, co-operation in work, the procreation of children and factors of personal inclination, character and temperament. By men women are praised for sexual skill, cleanliness and beauty, for good cooking and hard work, for their fecundity, and for gentleness of speech and behaviour, and those with opposite qualities are criticized. Among women men are praised for sexual skill and attentiveness, for vigour in hoeing and skill in house-building, and for kindness; while sexual neglect, laziness, impotence and cruelty are disliked and may cause a woman to leave her husband for another man.

The birth of children is a most important factor in the marriage relationship, for children are greatly desired both by men and women. They are desired for themselves and also because they bring their parents wealth and prestige; a boy will one day work in the fields of his father and mother, a girl will bring in cattle from her marriage. And the possession of children brings compliments and respect both to man and woman.

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[7] Vide infra "*The Age-Village.*"

[Cat. 116, pp. 269 ff. --Analyst]

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

842 Impotence and barrenness are well known facts, and magic is much used
595 to cure them; but apart from their operation it is believed that each
●581 conception directly depends upon the frequency with which a man visits his wife. And thus the bearing of children is, for a woman, a demonstration of her husband's great affection for her. People adduce the number of children that a woman has borne to prove, in conversation, that she is her husband's favourite.

595 Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan Nyakyusa; a plurality of wives is necessary, in this society, for full sexual satisfaction, wives bring a man wealth, prestige and authority, the more wives he has the more children, he thinks, will be born to him.

853 It is believed that any contact with the sexual fluids is dangerous to a
831 young child's health, and so, after a woman has borne a child, her husband is supposed wholly to refrain from intercourse with her for about a year, until the child is old enough to play by itself and allow its mother time to wash in the mornings before touching it. Then he may begin to visit her again, but still she must not become pregnant until the child is weaned, "If she does her breasts become rotten" and the first child is harmed.
[833 As children are not weaned for two or three years, this rule involves the
862] couple in yet another year or more either of *coitus interruptus* or of infrequent intercourse (which also is believed to avoid conception). These taboos on intercourse after a child's birth are to some extent
[595] observed in practice, and are one of the reasons for polygyny among the Nyakyusa.

464 Another reason is the absence of hired labour. With a few minor
595 exceptions the only way a man can increase the supply of labour at his disposal is by marrying more wives. Polygyny is the mark of a wealthy man, conditioned by his control of cattle, conditioning his supply of food. And the cattle spent in marriage come back again with interest as the polygynist's daughters begin to be betrothed and married.

595 It is extremely common for a man to take as his second or third wife the sister, half-sister, or brother's daughter of his first or second wife. By doing so a man pays a great compliment to the wife whose sister, or niece, he takes and to her family; his action implies complete satisfaction with her and friendship with her family. He sends his wife home "to fetch out (her kinswoman) into the open" (*okosakola*); but she will not agree to do so unless she approves of him as a husband, and so, if she does agree, her action likewise compliments him. I know of one case in which a man wished to take his second wife's younger sister in this way,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 that they have always been cattle men and they need no instruction on cattle. The tension over stock limitation and soil conservation, so acute in many parts of Africa, is only just appearing in Rungwe district, but potentially it is serious.

Pressure on land, and the planting of a valuable long-term crop such as coffee, have undermined the traditional organization of age-villages. The old men are no longer prepared to move to make way for their sons and, without a new deal in land each generation, the territorial separation of the generations is blurred. Boys villages are no longer visible in the hills near Rungwe mission, partly because so many young men are away, either at school or in employment, but largely because most of the land is taken up with coffee gardens. Homesteads are being built farther apart as men lay out coffee round their houses, and sons often build on a corner of their father's estate instead of in a separate village. On the plain, also, the pressure of population blurs the boundaries between generations. Only in the least heavily populated middle belt are numerous boys' villages still clearly visible, and here too a 'coming out' has recently been celebrated, with some redistribution of land. The scarcest land, that in old volcanic craters, was always inherited, like cattle, not reallocated each generation, and almost all cultivated land is now treated in this way. In many chiefdoms, therefore, a young man looks to his father or senior brother for land, rather than to the village headman, and inheritance is supremely important. But the form of inheritance is changing: property now goes directly from father to son, not as formerly to each of a group of full brothers before reverting to the senior son of the eldest of them. The claims of more distant kinsmen on inherited stock are less than they used to be; such stock becomes the exclusive property of father and sons, rather than property in which members of a lineage of three or four generations have reciprocal rights. The main economic bond which held the lineage together, the exchange of cattle, is thus broken.

Formerly a marriage was a contract between lineages rather than between individuals. A girl was betrothed before puberty to a man of her father's choice and should he die she was still regarded as married to his heir. Should she die a sister replaced her. Ideally a marriage bond between lineages lasted for generations, each man who died being replaced by a brother or son, each woman by a sister or brother's daughter. The choice of a partner in marriage

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

was not an individual one. True, a girl gave her formal consent in the marriage ritual, but the pressure on her to accept the husband selected for her by her kinsmen was almost irresistible. In the thirties Christian women who refused their husband's heir and lived alone, or married an unrelated man of their choice, were regarded by their pagan sisters as very daring, and little girls in pagan families took it as a matter of course that they should replace their dead sisters; today the right of a widow to choose whom she will marry is generally accepted, and the custom of replacing a dead woman by her sister has lapsed. 'Every girl wants her own husband nowadays', the old women say. Thus lineage obligations give way to individual freedom of choice in marriage. At the same time the rituals which emphasized the lineage are dropped or modified. The fearful fecundity of a double birth no longer appals men and the twin ritual which used to bring together all the living members of a lineage of three generations is not celebrated at all. At a puberty ritual a pagan girl may be given the *ikipiki* medicine, the symbol of 'the blood of the lineage' by her mother, but there is no seclusion and elaborate feasting, no sacrifice of the bull of puberty that her father's shades may 'move aside a little' to make way for the shades of her husband's lineage. Only at a funeral do kinsmen still gather and celebrate, for many still fear the shades, and at a funeral the heir is installed and the importance of property and the inheritance of it has not diminished one whit. As we have seen, the traditional religion was formulated in terms of kinship; the gods were senior kinsmen; but today God, *Kyala*, is no ancestor; to pagans as well as to Christians he is separate and supreme. Men are still classified by their lineages, and one of the topics of village questions is how Prince Charles can be heir to the British throne when his father is not of the house of Windsor; but already in the economic field, and increasingly in the religious, it is the family of parents and children which is now dominant, not the lineage.

Divorce is far more frequent than formerly, partly because women claim a greater freedom of behaviour than before, as well as the right of choosing their own husbands, and are supported by the courts. As one village headman put it, 'Formerly a father beat his daughter with a stick if she ran home and sent her back to her husband who also beat her.' The women reject the old pattern of subservience which was expressed in crouching to greet a man, and addressing him in a very deferential fashion; the men observe, and

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

different herds of cattle; and it is not only those from the same group of herd-boys that set up a new village together, but all the sons of the age-village. Thus when a boy leaves the herd group he joins a larger community, including the friends of his own age who have herded cows with him, and many others as well. Every boys' village consists primarily of the sons of the member of an older village who originally gave the land for its building, but sons of other villages live there too.

The village begins with perhaps a dozen boys, and their younger brothers join them, one by one; but after some years, when the senior members of the boys' village are between sixteen and eighteen years old, the younger ones begin to be refused admittance to the village: 'they are children.' The young ones then either begin a new age-village of their own, or else join a village which has already been started by the sons of a nearby men's village a little junior to that of their own fathers. If you inquire who are the members of such and such a boys' village you are always told that they are the sons of a particular village of men, but detailed investigation reveals the presence of some sons of other men's villages as well. Brothers, half-brothers and other relatives are sometimes members of the same village, but more often not; and if they do belong to the same village that is because they are near each other in age, and were born in the same village, not because they are kinsmen.

The members of the older boys' village, which is now closed and no longer increases in numbers, begin to marry as they reach the age of about twenty-five. Getting married is often a gradual process; but it is not until he has his wife permanently with him that a young man can have fields of his own and eat the produce at his own place. The cultivation of land requires the co-operation of a man and woman, and cooking on any elaborate scale is a woman's business. As the young men marry their village expands. The site is not changed but the houses are built ever bigger and farther apart, and adjacent land is brought under cultivation. The boys' village with which we are best acquainted is in this transitional stage. It has fifty-three members altogether, the majority of whom are single; but some few are married, cultivate their own fields with their wives and eat food cooked by their wives in their own houses. Of those who are single some again are betrothed to girls who visit them from time to time, but each

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

582 241 621 still cultivates his father's fields and eats at his father's home. In former days, we were told, the marriage age of men was even later than it is at present (*vide infra*, p. 80). 'Perhaps after twenty a boy would be betrothed, but to a young girl, and he would wait eight years before she grew up.'

857 From the time boys begin to herd they recognize one of their number as a leader. 'When we herd cows as boys', a friend told us, 'there is always one who is obeyed by his fellows whatever he says. No one chooses him, he gains his leadership and his prestige by bodily strength. For always, when we are boys together among the cows, we vie with one another and dispute about going to turn back straying cattle, or about fetching fire to cook the food we have brought with us. And so we start fighting, and we go on fighting until one of us beats all his fellows completely and so becomes the leader. And then it is he who sends others to turn back straying cattle, to fetch fire and to collect firewood. And he is greatly respected. He settles quarrels too. What we quarrel about most as boys is a particular insult: one says to another: "You are only a child, you are, I am your senior." This is always happening and then it is the part of the one who is leader to set those two on to fight. We all stand round and watch and the one who first cries is proved the child.'

622 Later, when the boys have built apart from their fathers, one of their number is often appointed by the headman of their fathers' village to settle disputes between them. Some boys' villages have no such appointed leader, but many of them do. Such appointments are, however, temporary. It is only when political authority is transferred to their generation that the young men's permanent leaders are chosen.

b. The 'coming out' ceremony

561 622 621 643 Eight or ten years after the young men of the senior boys' village of the chiefdom have begun to marry, their fathers hand over the government of the country to them. This transfer of authority is effected in an elaborate ceremony called the 'coming out' (*ubusoka*).

The 'coming out' is a series of legal acts by which the country of an old chief and his village headman (*amafumu*) is, with certain reservations, handed over into the possession and control of his

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 a ruler.' It is relevant to add that cuttings of this tree strike easily
643 in the soil and climate of Nyakyusa country. When a chief dies
184 he is buried beside his trees, and gradually a thicket—a sacred
[764] grove—forms round them.

The young men spend much time feasting and dancing. Formerly not only did they raid cattle for food from neighbouring chiefdoms, but they also took cattle, milk, and bananas from their fathers' villages. And they still do the latter, for they say: 'We are now the owners of the country.' The milk and bananas are often sent by the old chief, but 'if the chief is stingy, they teach him a lesson by going and *taking* bananas, saying: "We are important people."' Great emphasis is laid on this right of the young men to take food: one group, the mates of the first heir of a senior chief, boasted to us: 'We came out with grandeur, we ate many men's cattle.'

342 After a month or two the members of each new village move
621 off to build on a site of their own, and the wives of those who are married join them. Wives do not come to the first temporary shelters. The senior of the new villages remains on the site of the temporary shelters where fire was made, the ritual trees planted, and the hearth-stones of the senior headman established with magic. Gradually each member builds himself a permanent hut.

621 The old men move aside to make room for their sons. If land
561 is short they may move on to the site on which a boys' village formerly was, or there may be other land available. Whatever the position, adequate land must be provided for the young men's villages. And, we were told, 'We old men are glad to move, we are glad our sons are so many and we leave the land to them.' Or again: 'The old men move because new fire has come; the young men have made themselves into new people, hence they cannot build on their old sites but on new ones. Perhaps the old men will succeed them, for they may build in the boys' village where their sons were, or if there is space they go elsewhere. But the old men rejoice greatly, for their sons have "come out".' Nevertheless there are sometimes disputes between villages of different generations regarding a particular site (*vide* Document, p. 188).

643 A few months after the 'coming out' each of the two young
582 chiefs marries two wives. A young chief may be married already;
595 but the two whom he now takes rank as his great wives (*abehe*

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

abakulumba) and their eldest sons are his two heirs in the chieftainship. Young girls, daughters of neighbouring chiefs, are carried off with a show of force from their fathers' homes, by the young chief's men, who themselves later contribute to the herd of cows sent to regularize the position. The two great wives are thus married not solely with the cows of their husband, but also with those of the men whose sons their sons will one day rule. The duty of arranging the match lies with the village headmen of the old chief, and it is said that they are often guided in their choice by dreams.

The girls who are carried off are just about to reach puberty, and they stay at the house of one of the men of the old chief until their periods begin. When both have reached puberty they are initiated, not at their fathers' houses, as are ordinary girls, but in the country of their husband, and both together. At their initiation the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the old retiring chief) play the part normally played by a girl's parents and their neighbours, while the young chief and his men take the usual part of a husband and his friends. And then, after the ceremonies are over, the two girls are given to the young chief as his wives. Houses are built for them separately, i.e. in the senior age-village of the new chiefdom for the first wife, in the next senior village for the second wife; and in this separation of dwelling place is already apparent the future division of the chiefdom between their sons.

Within the chiefdom, and among the wives and children of the chief two 'sides' (*imibafu*) are recognized. Usually, in each country there are, at its beginning, at least two age-villages and half the wives of the chief on either side. This distinction of two sides is important in succession, a son from each side eventually inheriting half the country.

From the time of the 'coming out' of the two young chiefs till the day of their own father's death there exists between him and them a delicate balance of prestige and power. Each of the three, traditionally, has judicial authority in his own age-villages, but appeals in difficult cases may be taken from either of the young chiefs and their village headmen to the old chief and his village headmen, while the religious duties of chieftainship are exercised entirely by the old chief. But in the old days it was the young chief who fought and fed men. 'Young chiefs used to lead their

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

was a fierce man in war, and always quarrelling with and spearing his fellows, he would say with pride: "He is my son!" And if he heard people saying: "The son of so and so is a fierce man", he would rejoice. And if the son wished to marry young his father would refuse him cows, saying: "Swagger first." ' That truculence (*ubukali*) is a form of swaggering for men, is still evident in the funeral dance, when men charge up and down with spears, displaying their strength, and take umbrage at the slightest thing (*vide infra*, p. 151). And marriage was deliberately delayed partly because a bachelor was thought to be a fiercer warrior than a married man.

This admiration of truculence, as shown in the funeral dance, reveals a contradiction in Nyakyusa values. On the one hand urbanity and good temper are praised—they are intrinsic to *ukwangala*—on the other truculence. Is the opposition one between old and new values, or is the contradiction itself traditional? It is obvious that a readiness to fight was a quality valuable to the village in the days of inter-village warfare, and the Nyakyusa tell of murderers and even thieves being reprieved just because they were so useful in war. 'We did not drive away violent men (*abagasi*) in the old days; we said: "They will fight along with us in the future" '; whereas since the pacification of the country, quarrelsome men have become nothing but a liability, likely to get their fellows and their chief into trouble with the Administration. The Christian emphasis, also, is all on the virtue of peaceableness. There has probably been some change in values with the disappearance of war from the villages, but we think that a certain contradiction always existed: swaggering young men were admired, and children were warned not to be quarrelsome (*nkali*) towards their fellows, lest they be accused of practising witchcraft, or rouse the anger of a witch. The contradiction is not, of course, peculiar to Nyakyusa society, and it may be resolved by defining the groups within which fighting is excluded, and those in which it is approved. Most Nyakyusa would hold that in the old days quarrelsomeness within the village was bad, that towards members of another village of the same chiefdom it was allowable, and towards members of another chiefdom it was good. In the wider society of to-day the same distinctions are apparent: the war dance at funerals is limited lest it lead to fighting between villages (*vide infra*, p. 151) but admir-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

her chair and sat on the floor. We said to Mwaipopo as he entered: 'There is a daughter-in-law here.' He said: 'That's all right, she is enjoying the company of Kagile (M.W.)', but he was obviously restive, and went outside as soon as food appeared. He said to G.W.: 'That's quite all right, let them go on enjoying each other's company. She (i.e. S—) does not avoid me because M— (a local missionary) brought her to me one day and I killed a bull for them, but let us stay outside now, for they would be ashamed to eat.' The women protested very much saying *they* would go out, but the chief would not agree. As soon as they had drunk their tea they hurried off, and crouching down with their backs towards the men they answered their farewell greetings.

In reply to queries as to why they insist that father-in-law and daughter-in-law avoid one another, the Nyakyusa relate a myth of incest between them: 'Long ago a chief's son married a very beautiful wife. The boy's father saw the girl and after one look desired her, for she was very beautiful, and he said: "She is fit to be a chief's wife (*umwehe*)." Men said this was a very bad thing and agreed that in future they would not look at their daughters-in-law. That is how avoidance began. It was for fear of fathers making love to their sons' wives.' This myth is related with some diffidence, and not everyone knows it, but it was told us, or referred to, repeatedly, and may be taken as current in the society. One informant, a very intelligent woman doctor, also associated seeing a father-in-law with seeing his sexual activities. 'We think that to see your husband's father is very rude, because it is as if you saw him sleeping with your husband's mother. You compare, you see, your husband's body and you see your husband's father's body. It is very bad.'

Age-villages are then associated with the feeling that fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law must be kept completely separate lest they should commit incest, and that adolescent youths should not have any glimpse of the sexual activities of their parents; but the separation of the generations is not complete, for marriage with the daughter of a village neighbour is approved, provided he is not an *immediate* neighbour. Mwakionde explained that in the old days people disliked marriage with the daughter of a next-door neighbour because she was 'like a daughter'—'the fathers ate *embalaga* (a dish made with bananas) together'—but marriage with the daughters of other village-mates was always approved.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

582 Marriage with the daughter of a father's age-mate is also favoured, though she is called 'a village-sister' (*ulilumbu pa kipanga*), and such a marriage means that a girl has to avoid a father-in-law in her own father's village.

837 835 Adultery with the wife of a village neighbour is regarded as a heinous offence, much worse than ordinary adultery, and so also is the seduction of the wife of one's father, or of one of his village neighbours, even though a father's wives are eventually inherited by his son. 'It is bad,' Mwaisumo said, 'because they are friends of one's own mother.' That is to say, there is a direct extension of the incest taboo so long as the father is alive. A son who has com- [764] mitted adultery with his own father's wives is afraid to attend his father's funeral lest he fall dead.[1]

584 Since marriage between 'brothers and sisters of the village' is approved, courtship goes on between the youths of a boys' village and the girls of their fathers' village, with this limitation, that brothers and sisters, or cousins—the descendants of a common grandfather or great-grandfather—must not be present at a flirtation. Boys from the same age-village go about together, and they commonly flirt with any group of girls they meet, whether from their fathers' village or not. It is then that the incest taboos are learnt. If one of the boys is known to be related to one of the girls his companions send him away saying: 'Don't you see your sister is here? You cannot come.'

Formerly, we were told, girls of the same village lived together (until they were married) in a girls' house (*isaka*), where they were visited secretly by lovers, who had external relations with them. Such girls' houses no longer exist among the Nyakyusa, each daughter living in her father's homestead until she is married, and sleeping with her own mother, or with a step-mother when her father visits her mother, or with the other children in a separate division of the long house, if her mother is the only wife. Only when she is keeping an older companion company at the initiation ritual does she sleep with the other girls of the village in a hut provided by the 'bride's' father.[2] But permanent girls' houses still exist in Ngonde. There each family

[1] Occasionally an elderly man gives his son leave to sleep with his wives in secret, while he (the father) is still alive; then an elaborate ritual is performed on the father's death.

[2] This hut is referred to as *isaka* also, but only during the initiation; it is to be distinguished from a hut regularly reserved for girls.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

usually has a separate hut for its girls, to which, we were told, 584
their lovers come secretly by night.

Nyakyusa informants connected the existence of girls' houses 582
with the marriage age. In Ngonde the marriage age of girls is
much higher than it is among the Nyakyusa, partly because there [795]
are many more Christians (45 per cent as against 16 per cent)
who do not allow polygyny, partly because even the girls from
pagan families in Ngonde dislike marrying a polygynist, and
partly because a much higher percentage of young men are away at
work, than from Nyakyusa country. Formerly, they said, the marri-
age age was higher among the Nyakyusa also, and then the Nyak-
yusa had *isaka*. It is certain that among the Nyakyusa betrothal [881]
of a girl has long taken place before puberty, for the husband
plays an essential part in the puberty ritual, and there were always
some girls who were betrothed when quite tiny; but the evidence
is fairly clear that the average age of betrothal among the pagans
has been going down. The Nyakyusa view is that no man in his
senses, who is able to marry, will engage a little girl of eight if he
can find one approaching puberty; and it is the scarcity of wives
that makes men 'marry' little girls. It is also clear that the number [231]
of cattle in the country, and their rate of circulation, has increased
during the last two decades, so there are 'too many cattle chasing
too few brides' with the result that the marriage age of girls
has fallen, and the number of cattle given at marriage has
increased.

Once she is betrothed, a girl's 'husband' has exclusive sexual 584
rights over her, and she cannot entertain lovers in the *isaka*. The 836
only two occasions on which she may flirt and have external 881
relations with a man other than her husband, are during an initia-
tion ceremony, when the girls of the village who have not yet
reached puberty sleep with their fellow who is being initiated,
and there entertain young men, and when she accompanies a
bride to her husband's house. A bridegroom is expected to have
external relations with his wife's two friends, as well as with his
wife, on the night they bring her to his house. Love-making at the
initiation-marriage ritual is held to be 'part of the ritual' and a
means of sex education, and a husband can make no complaint
about his 'wife' receiving lovers then, provided that penetration
does not take place.

Homosexual practices are said to be very common in the boys' 838

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 cows. No, they did not take his food and mats, was he not a village headman? He moved; but, after one year only, they went to fetch him back.'

Here, in the accusation against a village headman, who, by virtue of his office has the power of defence and of bringing 'the breath' on wrong-doers, we come to the root of the ambivalence towards those accused of witchcraft. Witches are dangerous, but the very power which makes them dangerous also makes them valuable as 'defenders', for no distinction between the power of attack and defence is consistently maintained. The essential difference lies in the use of the power. Hence, Mwaisumo declared, people actually like it when a man who has admitted witchcraft builds among them. 'They say he has the power of defence, and they think that a man who has once admitted witchcraft will not throttle them.' A parallel attitude towards homicides and cattle-thieves existed in the traditional culture, when chiefs were sometimes urged to rescue a homicide from the vengeance of a dead man's kin, or a cattle-thief from enraged victims, on the grounds that one who had proved himself such a fierce warrior (by killing another) or so skilful in lifting cattle, was too useful in war to be lost to the chiefdom.

754 683 Nevertheless, if a person who has once been accused of witchcraft makes himself (or herself) unpopular again, the old case is raked up against him or her; and there are men who have been driven from one chiefdom to another, each time accused by their neighbours, and wives who have been divorced for witchcraft by one husband after another. This is the terrible fate held up before 'proud' children.

754 571 582 And what of the slur on the family when a member is convicted of witchcraft? We have seen that witchcraft is considered hereditary in all but a few exceptional cases, and the stock reaction to an accusation is: 'We are astounded! No one in *our* family has ever been convicted of witchcraft!' In practice, parents are loath to allow a son or daughter to marry into a family in which either parent has a reputation of witchcraft; two or three cases were cited in which parents had opposed a marriage for this reason (*vide* Document, p. 252). But such arguments are private within the family, and the family feared by one group of neighbours need not be considered dangerous by people from another village. Since practically every adult marries at least once, the

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

objection to marrying the child of one who has been convicted is clearly not pushed to its logical conclusion. No slur is cast on any one lineage when an individual is convicted of witchcraft, for he may have inherited it from either parent, or even got it from a friend; conversely no lineage is cleared by an autopsy, for not all the children of a witch are necessarily witches. Thus a man may have a father or brother or son who is 'pure', yet be a witch himself. As we have seen, even persons belonging to the same lineage may occasionally accuse each other. Nevertheless, when an individual who is reputed to be a witch dies, the close relatives do sometimes insist on an autopsy, in order to clear the deceased of suspicion, and possibly themselves also (*vide supra*, p. 117). In one case we recorded it was a daughter who insisted on the autopsy being performed on her mother, a reputed witch. No witchcraft was found.

So far we have dealt with cases of misfortune befalling an individual, followed by action against a fellow villager who is suspected of being responsible. This type of case is far the commonest within the field of witchcraft. When a general misfortune, such as a plague or epidemic, threatens, the chiefdom acts as a whole, not the villages separately, and the ritual is directed primarily to securing the blessing of the shades. There is some suggestion of ridding the chiefdom of witchcraft at the same time, but the emphasis is on appeasing the ancestors. The traditional new year cleansing (*ukutag' ikikungu*), now rarely performed, was also the concern of chiefdoms not separate villages, and it involved prayer to the ancestors.

b. The age-village and the ancestors

We have dwelt at length on witchcraft and 'the breath of men', for, in Nyakyusa belief, the defence of the village against witches and the punishment of wrong-doers by 'the breath' of their fellows is the main corporate activity of the village in the religious sphere. There are no village rituals directed to the ancestors comparable to those performed on behalf of lineages and chiefdoms. Indeed, belief in the power of shades operates only in situations where social position is determined by descent, as it is in lineages and in the succession to chieftainship. The office of village headman is not hereditary. The son of a village headman

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 that adolescent sons are not permitted to visit their homes after
834 dark, and when they come by day for their meals they are
often required to eat in the open court-yard and not 'hide in
606 the bananas or huts' lest they make love to their fathers' wives.
They do not sit about in the men's village. Thus, although the villages of fathers and sons adjoin until the sons 'come out', the young men are physically separated from their young 'mothers'.

The feeling that sons should not be cognizant of the sex activities of parents, and that father-in-law and daughter-in-law should avoid one another is not, of course, peculiar to the Nyakyusa; all we seek to show is that the extreme elaboration of these avoidances among the Nyakyusa is dependent upon the existence of age-villages. Whereas a Pondo daughter-in-law must never
[171] walk across the courtyard of the kinship village in which she lives, or approach the cattle byre or the men's side of her mother-in-law's hut, lest she come too near her father-in-law, yet, living in the same village, she necessarily sees him daily; the Nyakyusa daughter-in-law, living in a separate village, need not (and should not) set eyes on her father-in-law after her marriage. Where the territorial segregation of fathers and sons is blurred (as at Rungwe) there father- daughter-in-law avoidance is less strictly observed. The Nyakyusa regard this extreme form of avoidance as a peculiarity of their culture which has been imparted by them to the small groups (such as Ndali, Penja, and Nyika) whom they are assimilating.

Father- and daughter-in-law incest is clearly a potential danger in a society in which cattle are controlled by middle-aged and elderly men, who frequently have to choose between taking another wife themselves and giving cattle for a son's marriage, and who are accustomed to marrying young girls of an age suitable to be wives to their sons. But we cannot show that the danger is *greater* among the Nyakyusa than it is among other patrilineal cattle people such as the Pondo, Zulu, or Swazi, who do not find it necessary to segregate fathers- and daughters-in-law in different villages.

On the other hand the danger (common to all polygynous societies) of sons seducing their fathers' wives is exaggerated among the Nyakyusa by the absence of circumcision, the late
545 marriage age of men, the very early betrothal and marriage of
582 girls, the high degree of polygyny, and the practice of sons

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

inheriting their stepmothers. Where circumcision is practised a grown woman scorns sex relations with an uncircumcised boy, therefore uncircumcised youths are not potential lovers of their fathers' junior wives; but with the Nyakyusa there is no ceremony to mark the sexual maturity of a male, and adolescent youths are acceptable to young married women of their own age. And not only does the wide difference in the age of men and girls at first marriage allow of a high degree of polygyny, but the very early bethrothal of girls (over whom their future husbands have exclusive sexual rights except during the initiation ritual) means that there are very few girls available to the unmarried men. The institution of girls' huts (*isaka*) has disappeared among the Nyakyusa owing to the lack of nubile girls who are not already betrothed, and the period of seclusion at initiation (when betrothed girls are available to men other than their husbands) is short. The contrast with Nguni society, in which girls do not marry until sixteen to twenty-two, and have several years of great sex freedom before marriage[1] is marked. We suggest that it is because unmarried girls are so scarce and lusty bachelors so many, that the seduction of the wives of polygynists is frequent, and homosexual practices are general.[2] Nyakyusa insist that formerly seduction was rare,[3] and possibly the impulse towards it was indeed less strong when girls married rather later and *isaka* existed (*vide supra*, p. 87).

Lastly, the Nyakyusa permit the inheritance of a father's widows by his sons, a practice regarded as improper by certain other peoples (e.g. the Pondo[4]) who practise the levirate. A son is required to treat all his father's wives as 'mothers' while his father and father's full brothers are alive, and intercourse with a father's wife is treated as a heinous offence necessitating special purification; but after the death of the father and his full brothers these same women become wives of their former 'sons'—with the limitation that a man cannot inherit his own mother or her kins-

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 180–6; M. Kohler, *Marriage Customs in Southern Natal*, pp. 20–44; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 135–6.

[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, p. 408 (footnote), hints that similar practices exist among the Nyasaland Tonga and elsewhere *before* adolescence only. The Nyakyusa certainly continue after puberty.

[3] MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 63, states that the acknowledged child of an adulterous union was openly put to death.

[4] Hunter, op. cit., p. 211.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

28. FEAR OF HEREDITARY WITCHCRAFT

Mwaisumo (*clerk*).

754 582 'There are some people who, though they wish to marry a certain woman, fear to do so because the mother or father of the girl is a witch. They are afraid to marry because she is the child of a witch. And sometimes a girl loves a particular young man very much, but if his father is repeatedly accused of witchcraft her parents refuse to allow the marriage, because the young man's father is a witch. Such was the case of a certain young man, in the country of Mwaijande, who loved a particular girl very much. Her father was said to be a witch (*undosi*) a maker of wild animals;[1] he was said especially to make leopards. The parents of the young man objected very much to his marrying this girl whose father was a witch, the mother of the young man objected even more than her husband, saying: "No! She is a witch; witches always go in the lineage (*ikikolo*), and she will also be a witch when she grows up and comes to the house" (i.e. her husband's house). The father of the young man and the father of the girl were next-door neighbours, their homesteads adjoined. The matter was only spoken of in whispers, but I heard about it because the brother-in-law of the young man (the husband of his full sister) was my friend, and he told me about it.

'And again, a certain man who was always said to be a witch made love to a woman who was a widow, the husband who had married her having died. They agreed together that they should marry. When the parents of the woman heard they objected very much, saying: "That man is a witch." The women was not yet old—she was quite young. Her husband had died but there was no one to inherit her. So then she refused the man (who had made love to her) saying: "I do not love you." Her parents argued against the marriage, saying: "We do not like it" and they persuaded her to leave the man, saying: "You know yourself that when he beats you you will think, 'I am married to a witch'." For she was grown up and her parents could not compel her if she loved him, though if she had been a child they would have been able to object and compel her to do what they wished. But she (though she was grown up) followed the advice of her parents and left him and refused to marry him.

[1] There was some doubt whether this man should be classed as a witch or a sorcerer. In this text Mwaisumo refers to him as *undosi*, but elsewhere he was spoken of as a sorcerer (*vide supra*, pp. 124, 252).

[p. 252]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'And again, a long time ago, my brother Mwamoto went to betroth a girl at the place of that man who was a witch. Mwanama objected very much to his younger brother's action, saying: "You should not marry at that man's place, everyone says he is a witch." But Mwamoto paid no attention to any of them—others also tried to persuade him not to marry the child of a witch. He married her and she is with him now, as his wife. 754 582

'People fear witchcraft in a husband or wife lest he or she bring witchcraft into the house, and they have children who become witches when they grow up. As I explained witchcraft runs in a lineage (*ikikolo*). It is especially women who object to their children marrying or being married by a witch, it is they (the women) who forbid the children, and their husbands also object. I remember once that a certain man came to make love to my sister. The mother of this man was spoken of as a witch, and my mother objected very much, saying: "Do not desire this young man's cattle, I do not like him even though you do. His mother's witchcraft is much spoken about." He had come to betroth the girl when she was still very young. The others agreed to what my mother said and refused the young man, saying: "We have not got a child yet (ready for marriage), she of whom you speak must first grow up."'

In reply to questions Mwaisumo explained that people fear to marry witches lest their children be witches and be driven from country to country. 'We say it is bad to be driven out. A man is never driven out because of the witchcraft of his wife—he used to divorce her if it were proved—but a girl's parents will refuse to give their daughter in marriage to a young man from a family of witches because if he is convicted of witchcraft she will be driven out with him.' [586]

We were also told of a young Christian who had been refused by a number of women. It was whispered that this was because his father was a sorcerer. Later on, however, he married and the talk died down.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

third to cook food, and a final gift is required to make 584
her lie down on the mat along with her girl friend, 585
who stays with her for a few days. This ceremony of the gifts is never omitted in heathen marriages, and each successively binds the girl to her husband.

If the bride is a twin, the doctor must be present, to 789
sprinkle medicines over house and bedding, and to give the couple a decoction supposed to prevent the occurrence of twins in the new family.

Except the daughters of Christian parents, all 582
Konde girls are married before they arrive at puberty, 177
and what has been described above applies to child wives, who stay with their husbands for about a month, and then go home.

The child wife having grown to womanhood, how- 583
ever, further ceremonies have to be observed. The husband arrives at her father's house with an ox for the feast, and a mock struggle for possession of the bride takes place. The women of her family barricade themselves in the house, which is attacked by the women of the other family. Payment of a shilling opens the door, and the further struggle which takes place in the house is brought to an end by the formal presentation of the ox. The husband and his friends enter, and engage in a weird dance, a mere tramping of the floor in unison, with shouting and waving of spears, no doubt a survival of what was once marriage by capture.

The washing and shaving of the bride follows, and 585
her bark-cloth is burned, and a new one given her, and then comes the feast of beef and beer, the materials

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

585 for the latter having been previously collected from house to house, with a snatch of song at each door. After the feast the bride goes in procession to her husband's house, accompanied by a number of girl friends. The happy couple are chased along the road, beaten with sticks as they go, and advised to treat each other as becomes husband and wife. At the door of her future home a final ceremony has to be performed: the wife of the go-between pours water over the husband's hands, and the bride, kneeling at his feet, receives the water as it falls, and washes her own hands therewith.

582 There are strict rules regarding selection. A man may not take a wife from the family either of his father or of his mother, using the word "family" in the native sense, implying the whole circle of relatives from which each originally came. But there are countless bye-laws. A man has two wives from different families; the son of one wife may take a wife from the family of the other, the two families not being related; but a man may not marry the daughter of his paternal uncle, for the latter is his "father," and the girl is his "sister." The daughter of his maternal uncle, again, is his cousin, and he may not marry her, though there is nothing to hinder his father marrying her. The chief Koloso married his father's sister, to the great scandal of his people, although the "father" was really a very distant relative, according to European ideas.

684 The marriage tie is sacred and binding; how binding on the wife may be judged from the laying up of

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

fearsome mixture: ground flesh of *inyifwira* (the flying serpent); heart and nose of hyena, which enables one to see danger ahead; heart of hawk, giving power to see danger from behind; and heart of the fish-eagle, which swoops down upon its prey. Thus furnished the young rulers can foresee the future, deal with the present, and be a terror to all evil-doers. This powerful medicine is drunk by all chiefs at their installation, and spread under the beds to make them see in dreams what is coming in the future. But never may the chief eat food that is not freshly cooked, for that would take away all virtue even from these potent drugs.

From that time until the 19th November, the young men led a happy, care-free life. Their food was daily provided; cattle were set apart for them; they did not shave all that time, and no girls were allowed to go near them. On the closing day of the ceremonial, the fathers of all the young rulers came and stood at a distance, and the younger brother of Reuben was given a spear with which he knocked on the closed door of the hut in which Reuben and his companions were waiting, and called out, "There is war outside; come out." Immediately all rushed to where the elders were standing, and after greetings, the company formed itself into a boundary commission, to fix the limits of Reuben's authority. Finally, the same day, the new chief was married to the two girls whose offspring will be his successors. They must be daughters of men of note, not cowards in battle, of no reproach in the tribe; and the girls

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 themselves must be free from any kind of blemish. They drink a medicine weaker than that taken by
•582 their husband, but sufficiently potent to make them respected by all the other women of the district.

The death of a chief, like that of Chungu, is a
622 great event. An immense crowd of men and women
766 gather on these occasions. At the death of Mwafongo, near Karonga, in 1913, fifty head of cattle were killed for the feast. Of these perhaps thirty were the property of the dead chief; the rest were brought by the mourners as a token of respect for the dead man; but for each animal so killed, an equivalent, an ox for an ox, a cow for a cow, was given to the donor from the dead man's herd, so that the herd left by Mwafongo was reduced by fifty at his death. Intense emotion is generated at these gatherings, frequently leading to death. And in the past it was the rule that a chief should not go to his fathers alone. If therefore fighting broke out, and men were killed, it was only right and fitting that this should be so. In 1897 there was a small rising against the Germans, in which the chief Mwakalinga and many of his people were killed. The chief having been killed, it was not surprising that there should be a heavy death-roll among his men. The death of Mwasulama in 1918 was followed, quite naturally, by the influenza which carried off so many of his people.

622 About a month after the death of the chief, the feasting is resumed, this time with immense quantities of beer which has been prepared in the interval. The new chief is now anointed with oil, and the

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

601 *Mwisukulu* = grandparent or grandchild; but a man addresses his male grandparents as *Mwinangu* (my compeer) and his female grandparents as *Nkasi* (wife). A woman addresses her male grandparents as *Ndume* (husband) and her female grandparents as *Mwinangu* (my compeer).

Ndume = husband, extended for a woman to include the husbands of 'sisters', male grandparents, male grandchildren, husbands of female grandparents or grandchildren; all 'brothers' of a husband, husband of a father's sister, and grandfathers of a husband, and finally, the husband's sister's son.

Nkasi = wife; for a man it includes the wives of 'brothers', female grandparents and grandchildren, or wives of male ones; all sisters of wife, daughters of wife's brothers, wives of grandsons by marriage, the 'grandmothers' of a wife, and the wife of a maternal uncle.[1]

605 The Ngonde do not seem to distinguish cross-cousins from ortho-cousins as clearly as do the Maravi, or the Yao, Makua, and Makonde peoples.

MARRIAGE

582 There are no exogamous clans, but the descendants of a common grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are forbidden to marry.[2] The descendants of a common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry, but sometimes they do so before the relationship is discovered; they then simply drink a special medicine, but do not break the marriage. The old men speak of a now abandoned custom of preferential cross-cousin marriage.[3] The husband of the eldest girl of a family has the prior right to marry her full sisters, and such marriages are very common. A man also has the right to marry the daughter of his wife's brother, therefore the wife of the wife's brother is classed as a parent-in-law in kinship terminology.[4]

583 The passage of cattle makes children of a marriage legitimate. A child of a man who has given no cattle belongs either to the mother's husband or to her father. Cattle are in rapid circulation. Few men possess more than six cows at any time, yet marriage payments range from four to thirty cows (formerly only one or two were given). Marriage involves considerable expenditure and months of preliminary economic activity.[5] The cattle are seldom handed over all at once, but in ones or twos over a period of years. Full brothers have a claim to the cattle of their sister's marriage, and at the marriage of his eldest daughter the father hands one of the cows to the village headman.[6]

584 A girl commonly goes to visit and sleep with her betrothed husband for several years before she finally sets up house for him. The ideal procedure is by negotiation with the girl's father, but a man without cows may run off with a girl and satisfy her father with cows later on, or a man with cattle may seduce a married woman and pay her husband the adultery fine of two cows, plus the cows originally given for her marriage. A girl may be betrothed before puberty, and may visit her husband, but she is supposed to be virgin at her initiation ceremony, and is generally not allowed to

[1] Sanderson, 3, 1923.
[2] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 55.
[3] See Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 267; but according to Sanderson, 3, 1923, p. 453, cross-cousins are classed as sisters, and all first cousins are unmarriageable; according to Johnston, 1897, p. 415, and to Mackenzie 1925, p. 55, cousin marriage was not allowed.
[4] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 262; Sanderson, op. cit., p. 451.
[5] Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 11.
[6] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 65.

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

MWIKO is very nearly a translation of the word *tabu*, and may be used either 601
of things or of forbidden degrees of relationship.

3. The following points are noteworthy :—

(1) The wife of a "brother," whether older or younger, uterine or not, is called 601
by the same term (*nkasi*) as a wife. I am informed that sexual intercourse, 602
though not countenanced, is not uncommon, and such cases are apt to 837
be treated leniently should they come to (native) court. This might be regarded as evidence of former "group marriages," but it should be noted that a man's first heir is his brother, who succeeds to the wives in common with the rest of the "property."

The same term (*ndume*) is used by a woman for the "brothers" 601
of her husband as for the husband himself, and their wives are *wakasi-winake* (= "her fellow-wives").

(2) The "sisters" of a wife are also called *nkasi*. The husband of the eldest 601
of a family has a prior right to marry her uterine sisters, and a semi- 595
right to her other "sisters"; such marriages are very common. Any man who marries a woman to whom another has a prior right becomes *mweghanisi* (or *kitwasi*) to the ousted one. (See Definitions.) Reciprocally a woman calls her "sister's" husband *ndume*, even after her marriage to another.

(3) A man has the right to marry the daughter of his wife's "brother" as 582
among the Thonga,[1] and the wife of the wife's "brother" is called 601
nkogho (see Definitions); the son of the wife's "brother" is often called *ndamu* instead of *mwana*. There is a special term for a father's sister, which is reciprocally used by a woman for her "brother's" daughter; the term *nkasi-mwinangu* (= "my fellow-wife") does not appear to be used by her unless and until her husband actually marries the girl. This special term is *nasenge*, and it can hardly be mere coincidence that it so closely resembles the Nandi term *senget* for father's sister[2] (*na-* being a common Bantu prefix, usually honorific, and, on the other hand, the terminal *-t* merely formative).

A woman calls the son of her husband's "sister" *ndume*. (See para. (6) below.)

(4) All "grand-daughters," except those by marriage, are called *nkasi*, but marriage has never been allowed within living memory; the husband of these "grand-daughters" are called *mweghanisi* (*kitwasi*). A "grandson" is not called *ndamu* but (*mwisukulu*) *mwinangu* (= "my compeer");

[1] B. Z. Seligman, "The relationship systems of the Nandi, Masai and Thonga, *Man*, April, 1917, 46 (quoting Junod).

[2] Seligman, *loc. cit.*, quoting Hollis, "The Nandi."

7: Sanderson 4-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

582 601 his wife is called *nkasi*, like the wife of a "brother," not *nkogho*. This appears to be the result of the law that a man may have to marry his "grandmothers." (See para. 5.)

601 Similarly a woman calls her "grandson" *ndume*, and his wife *nkasi-mwinangu*.

No distinction is made between the offspring of a "son" and that of a "daughter," either by a man or a woman.

"Grand-daughters" by marriage are not called *nkasi* by a man, nor are "grandsons" by marriage called *ndume* by a woman: the term *mwisukulu-mwinangu* is used in either case. It is of interest to note, however, that the wives and husbands of these relations are called *nkasi* [616] and *ndume* respectively, which is evidently a relic of the period when the whole tribe was divided into two classes, marriageable and unmarriageable: since a "grandchild" by marriage belonged to the latter class, his or her spouse must be included in the former.

(5) All "grandmothers" are termed *nkasi*, except perhaps the sisters of the paternal grandfather; some say that these should be classed as "sister," as the sister of one's *mwinangu* (grandfather), because *nkasi* would not be polite to the *nasenge* of one's father. Others deny this and include all grandmothers as *nkasi*, and it is doubtful whether the objection is not modern. The same applies to the "grandmothers" of a wife.

587 A man often has to marry his "grandmothers" on the death of his "grandfather," though if the latter were a chief or a rich man the heir would probably marry them as part of the property. The rule appears to be that it is the duty of any man to marry his "grandmothers" if they are destitute.

[582] 601 A woman calls all her "grandfathers" *ndume*, though actual marriage is not permitted. It is difficult to say whether this is due to analogy with the relationship of a man to his "grandmother," or is the corollary of that to his "grand-daughter." Since marriage with a "grand-daughter" is not uncommon in other tribes, it may be that it was originally the reason for a woman calling her grandfather *ndume* among the Wangonde, but that the persistence of the terminology after such a marriage came to be regarded as incestuous is partly due to analogy.

As a result of the similarity of relationship between grandparents and grandchildren the same term *mwisukulu* is used for both. There was formerly a special term for grandparents (*mbuya*), but it is now obsolete.

601 604 (6) The relationship between mother's "brother" and "sister's" son is peculiar, in that the term is used reciprocally (*mwipwa*). A man calls the wife of his

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

583
837 her and then returns to her first husband the cows he had given for her with two in addition as adultery fine. But this return is usually made only after the first husband has brought a lawsuit against him.

837 Adultery is extremely common now-a-days; when a man runs off
684 with, or is discovered seducing, a married woman and has not enough
177 cows to marry her, he is legally compelled to pay two cows for the adultery to her husband. In pre-European days an adulterer, if caught, was usually punished by the husband and his neighbours with death or extreme torture, and the old men tell me that adultery was then a rarer event.

584 The extent to which a girl is usually allowed to choose whom she
177 will marry is difficult to guage, and varies in different circumstances. Opportunities of meeting and flirting with young men at dances and ceremonies are frequent; and the older men say that, owing to the abolition by the Europeans of the old severe punishments for adultery, girls
[582] are freer now than they used to be, for their lovers no longer fear to run off with them if they are married or bespoken (which is in Nyakyusa law very much the same thing). The custom of betrothing infant girls is, they declare, less common than it used to be; they are now more chary of pledging their daughters "for when they grow up they just run off with someone else." A girl's choice is, however, limited by the necessity of finding a lover who has cows, and few young men have enough to secure her if she is already married, though they may have enough to pay an adultery fine.

[428] Owing, in part, to the laws of inheritance, by which a commoner's[5]
593 full-brother inherits before his son, it is the older men who control the cattle. Every bachelor is largely or wholly dependent on his own father (or his dead father's heir) for the cows for his first marriage, and he must hoe his father's fields for many years before he is given enough to secure a wife and to set up a family of his own. Economic reciprocity is an element in most human relationships, and it enters into the Nyakyusa relationship of father and son. It is well understood, in this society, that
593 after a certain length of time spent hoeing his father's fields a young man
685 is entitled to some cows, if his father has any; and if his father delays too long the young man either stops hoeing for his father or else he takes legal action and enforces his claim. Between father and son such law cases are rare, but they are frequent between a young man and the brother of his father who has inherited his father's wives, property, and position in the family.

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[5] The laws of inheritance for a chief are, in certain respects, different; vide infra, "The Chiefdom."
[Cat. 116, pp. 278ff. --Analyst]

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

583 Normally a bachelor is given cows one by one, over a period of years, and, as we have seen, he sends them, as he receives them, to the father of the girl he wants to marry. One cow is sufficient for betrothal, but not until he has given three can he begin openly to sleep with her. And he cannot usually set up his own economy until he has given at least three cows and she has reached puberty and been initiated. He may of course bespeak an already grown girl, but if he engages himself to a young one he is expected to bring two or more bulls as well, during the course of her initiation.

684 If he chooses to spend his cows in adultery fines, he may, but he will then have to wait longer to get married.

●582 561 Thus the system of marriage by a transfer of cattle is, in this society, directly linked with a late marriage age for young men and with a privileged position for older men. When a boy gets cattle he at once gives them to an older man in order to secure his daughter as a wife; the labour of every bachelor helps to increase his father's wealth in food; it is in general the older men alone who can afford more than one wife. And there is an average difference of ten years or more in the initial marriage age of men and girls. [162] The tax registers show in part of the district, among 3,000 adult* men, 34% bachelors, 37% monogamists, and 29% polygynists; and investigation proves that, generally speaking, it is the young men who are bachelors, the men over forty-five who are polygynists.

511 574 Though cattle are their most valued form of wealth, it is on agriculture that the economy of the Nyakyusa is primarily based. Meat and milk are luxuries, and daily bread comes from the fields. Hard work in a fertile country provides food for each family, and the millet beer which is the ordinary material of hospitality. Hospitality brings a man prestige and authority among his fellows; on the possession of sufficient food largely depends the contentment of his wives. And in the production, preparation and eating of food the relationships of the family and of the individual family within it, are clearly visible.

241 512 Hoeing is the work of men, planting, weeding, reaping and coo[illegible] is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about [illegible] hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a.m., on the upland plateau they begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different

*Presumed to be 18 years or over.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ever made to the spirits, but when some member of a family or his wife or 769
child falls sick the anger of the spirits is often suspected as a possible 753
cause. There are usually other reasons suspected as well, and so the [787]
sickness is taken to a diviner for diagnosis. Various causes are suggested to the diviner and he selects one among them. If the anger of the spirits is selected then this senior kinsman must pray for the one who is sick, if he is to recover. When half-brothers live at a distance from one another, after their father and his brothers have died, then each may pray to the spirits to cure a little sickness in his own family but if the sickness persists then a message must be sent to the senior kinsman. And, as the anger of the spirits is due to wrong doing, the sinner must reform his ways as well.

The wrongs which rouse the spirits to anger are usually breaches of 673
family morality. If a son does not respect his father or insults him, if an heir neglects to feed and provide for the dead man's children, then when sickness falls on him or his own children it will probably be traced to the anger of the spirits at his behaviour.

Space does not allow any full analysis of religion in family life and in 754
the relationships of kinsmen and affines. Not only the ancestor cult but 771
witchcraft and magic are factors in them. A man's neglect of a wife or his cruelty to her may, it is believed, lead to his falling sick through her witchcraft and that of sympathetic neighbours; his relations with his father-in-law are affected by the fear that if he offends him, his father-in-law may, by magical means, kill his children, and so on.

Wider kinship groupings than the family gather at ceremonies and 614
are recognized in the rules against incest. But there are no clans; there is no descent group continuous down the generations with a common name and definite membership. Each individual family has its own penumbra of kinsfolk, the effective kindred of a man and his son, or of two half-brothers are not all the same, while each single person is especially related by respect, affection and mutual obligations to particular kinsmen beyond his own family. Descent, as we have seen, is patrilineal 611
except in the case of illigitimate children. A man asked for his *ekekolo* 614
always recites first the names of his paternal forbears as far as he can [848]
remember. But if he is related through mother or grandmother to a chief he usually volunteers this fact as part of his *ekekolo*; and questions always elicit some knowledge of his mother's paternal kinsfolk and a statement that "they are my *ekekolo* too." Descendants of a common grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are to-day forbidden to marry, 582●
and no case of infringment has come to my notice; descendants of a common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry but, I am told,

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

582 they sometimes do so before the relationship is discovered, and then simply drink a protective medicine but do not break the marriage. The old men speak of a now abandoned custom of preferential cross-cousin marriage.

604 The bond between a man and his mother's brother (*omwipwa*) is mainly constituted by the passage of cattle. "My real mother's brother," they say "is the one who took the bulk of the marriage-cattle which my father gave for my mother", and it is between this particular brother and a woman's eldest son that the bond is strongest. Because this brother of his mother has taken "our cattle" and married with them the young man has a certain right of making free with his property during his life, the right to receive from him one cow to set up a herd of his own with, and a residuary right of inheritance if this uncle dies childless and leaves no brothers. If his mother's brother does die without other heirs, it is only the particular wife obtained with and the particular progeny of his father's marriage-cattle that the young man can claim.

602 764 Ceremonies, and particularly funerals, are the occasions on which the effective relatives of any one family meet all together, both kinsmen and affines. I have even heard kinship defined by attendance at funerals: One man argued that he was not related to another because, though they were admittedly genealogically related they did not attend the funerals in each other's families and were not therefore really kinsmen at all.

602 572 Known blood-kinship is a common occasion of friendship, but it does not necessarily produce it, while the absence of friendship can render many of the normal kinship bonds quite inoperative. We have seen already that quarrels may destroy the relationship between half-brothers and lead to a judicial separation. On the other hand, I have observed two men meet for the first time, discover a common great-grandfather and at once become friends. A few months later the sister of one of them died and the other went to the funeral and behaved there like a close kinsman.

Proximity is another factor of great importance in the relations of kinsfolk, for while nearness of dwelling does not always make for friendship, yet a considerable distance tends to lessen it and to make attendance at funerals impossible.

606 One of the most stringent taboos in Nyakyusa life is that which separates father and daughter-in-law. A woman may never speak to, approach, or look at her husband's father. If she does it is believed that she will die, through the witchcraft of indignant neighbours, a painful and lingering death. And the taboo is extended from her own father-in-

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love-making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger ones listen to these things and that is all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn. But we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night ; and that is very bad, that is foolishness.—But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to listen, that is how children grow up." 864 577

On another occasion when I told this same man that in Europe many people thought it a good thing for boys to get sexual instruction from their parents and teachers he was shocked : " But I think it is impossible " he protested " for parents to go into detail with their children ; there is too much shame on both sides. And if they did, it would damage the children's respect for them."

There is thus a correlation in this society between the age-village system at its genesis and the belief that a boy's dawning interest in sex must be informed, not by his parents, but by friends only a little older than himself.

Few men marry before twenty-five years of age, but affairs with girls begin before puberty. All affairs are related in detail to friends in the age-village, and the younger ones learn by listening ; and they also learn when the older boys send them as messengers to the girls of their fancy. 582 836 [202]

Besides the more serious love affairs which are carried on in secret, groups of boys from the same age-village commonly flirt with any girls they meet on the way, and it is then that the incest taboos are learnt. If one of the boys is known to be related to one of the girls, either through a common grandfather or great-grandfather, his companions send him away : " Don't you see your sister is here ? You cannot come ! " 835 867

Contrary to a general belief about " primitive " societies, homosexual intercourse is common in the boys' villages, between close friends, but there is no real perversion ; homosexuality is said to be always *faute de mieux*. The older men in discussion dismiss it with the tolerant word " adolescence," it is never continued after marriage, and all except the feeble-minded get married sooner or later. 838

But life in a boys' village also gives its members much information and wisdom unconnected with sex. There, as we have seen, boys perfect their skill in building, and there also they learn to argue and express themselves with adult fluency. It is characteristic of the Nyakyusa legal 621 868 867

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 some copy, the manners of Europeans towards their wives, but neither husband nor wife is quite sure what the change in manners [586] implies, and both are often inconsistent in their behaviour. As an educated Nyakyusa put it: 'They do not know what to expect from each other.'

[585] Marriage relationships are complicated by the disproportion [162] in the numbers of men and women; a disproportion which continues while the rule of monogamy is preached and accepted [582] by many. The first effect of the increase in wealth in Rungwe district was for the marriage age of women to go down; in Mr. Punch's phrase 'too many cattle were chasing too few wives'; but the combined pressure of missions and Administration, and some acquaintance with the customs of the outside world, has reversed that tendency, and the marriage of girls below puberty, which was general among pagans in 1938, now appears to be exceptional. Many girls are still betrothed before puberty, but [584] they do not go to their husbands until after that time, and to be still single at puberty with no betrothed to play his part in the ritual is no longer embarrassing to a girl, for the puberty ritual is not celebrated in full. The ruling of the District Council that a man may not recover more than *one* cow given for a girl who has not reached puberty, if the marriage is dissolved, discourages men from giving cattle for girls who have not grown up. At the [582] same time the marriage age of men is going down. Marriage in the early twenties or even the late teens is common now, for young men who have been to work on the mines can buy marriage cattle for themselves, and Christians who are well-to-do provide for the marriages of young sons instead of taking additional wives. Therefore the gap in the marriage age of men and women is very considerably diminished, but it still exists, and combined with the disproportion in the total number of males and females it means that a considerable proportion of the women (perhaps 30 per cent)[1] must become the junior wives of polygynists or remain unmarried altogether, or live alone as widows.

595 Among pagans polygyny is approved, but young men are irked by their responsibility for elderly widows, a responsibility that was formerly accepted as a matter of course. Able-bodied wives are still economically an asset even now that trade goods are in general use. For Nyakyusa men—pagans—have insisted that as

[1] The masculinity rate is calculated at 87·9 : 100 (*vide supra*) and the *average* difference in the marriage age may well be six years.

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

881 I went to the place and got permission to enter the hut in which the first part of the ceremony took place. I found there the parents of the girl, the girl sitting enveloped in clothes in one corner of the hut, and some older females, one of whom was the acting *unnyago*. Some male guests were also present[20]. As the girl had had her first catamenia the present ceremony marked at the same time the end of her preparation for marriage.

[273 278] The *unnyago* prepared a beverage of beer in which a light-brown medical powder *(imbondanya)* was put. First the girl had to drink from it, then the parents followed. This beverage was believed to strengthen *(ubusisya)* the consumers. Then a spear was handed to the girl by her father, and the girl handed it in turn to some relatives of the bridegroom waiting near the hut. These persons had to bring the [582 583] spear to the girl's bridegroom as a sign that he could now marry the girl[21], but not before he had brought a bull to the girl's father. After [431] this the girl, now sitting in the middle of the hut, was given small gifts from the participants in the ceremony.

[291 342 516 868 415]

Practical instruction of premature girls in house-hold matters.

[302] Following this the whole body of the girl was anointed before the door of the hut. The *unnyago* began by anointing her legs; then the [278] girl herself continued it. The ointment was prepared from castor oil and a powder of red wood *(Kipimba*, found commonly in the environment of Lake Rukwa). At this moment a male participant in the cere- [606] mony chanced to, come out of the hut, and suddenly a young woman

[20] Cf. *Wilson*, Introduction, p. 258; The Study of African Society, p. 11 (The Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. 2, 1939).

[21] *ukwega:* to take (also as regards marrying); *ubwegia:* nuptials.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

abakulumba) and their eldest sons are his two heirs in the chieftainship. Young girls, daughters of neighbouring chiefs, are carried off with a show of force from their fathers' homes, by the young chief's men, who themselves later contribute to the herd of cows sent to regularize the position. The two great wives are thus married not solely with the cows of their husband, but also with those of the men whose sons their sons will one day rule. The duty of arranging the match lies with the village headmen of the old chief, and it is said that they are often guided in their choice by dreams.

The girls who are carried off are just about to reach puberty, and they stay at the house of one of the men of the old chief until their periods begin. When both have reached puberty they are initiated, not at their fathers' houses, as are ordinary girls, but in the country of their husband, and both together. At their initiation the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the old retiring chief) play the part normally played by a girl's parents and their neighbours, while the young chief and his men take the usual part of a husband and his friends. And then, after the ceremonies are over, the two girls are given to the young chief as his wives. Houses are built for them separately, i.e. in the senior age-village of the new chiefdom for the first wife, in the next senior village for the second wife; and in this separation of dwelling place is already apparent the future division of the chiefdom between their sons.

Within the chiefdom, and among the wives and children of the chief two 'sides' (*imibafu*) are recognized. Usually, in each country there are, at its beginning, at least two age-villages and half the wives of the chief on either side. This distinction of two sides is important in succession, a son from each side eventually inheriting half the country.

From the time of the 'coming out' of the two young chiefs till the day of their own father's death there exists between him and them a delicate balance of prestige and power. Each of the three, traditionally, has judicial authority in his own age-villages, but appeals in difficult cases may be taken from either of the young chiefs and their village headmen to the old chief and his village headmen, while the religious duties of chieftainship are exercised entirely by the old chief. But in the old days it was the young chief who fought and fed men. 'Young chiefs used to lead their

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

881 584 One of the women of the groom's party then fetched two banana leaves, one of sweet banana and one of plantain, and put them down in Kyobwe's hut. Meantime the mother of the groom changed the bride's belt and the bark-cloth worn between the legs, dressing her in new ones, and burying the old cloth, soiled by first menstruation, in a bundle of dry banana leaves. These she placed on top of the fresh leaves already mentioned, covered the pile with a small rough mat, and sprinkled it with powdered medicine. The bride knelt on the mat and, with head bent, ate roast bananas also sprinkled with the powdered medicine, which her mother-in-law handed to her. Her young brother who had washed with her also shared the bananas. After this the bride is free to wash, but not yet to oil herself.

The groom's mothers were feasted on meat and bananas—two large and two small basketfuls—and returned home. The atmosphere all through the ritual was one of rejoicing, and it was markedly a women's affair. The chief and several other men were present but, apart from his scolding of the women for not bringing a bull, the chief played no part at all.

[431] According to strict custom the groom's mothers should have come a second time with gifts of food (*ukusumbulela*)[1] to cement the friendship, but since the groom was in a hurry to get to work on the Lupa gold-fields this act was omitted. 'They brought the two lots of food together,' we were told, 'some of the milk and bananas were for the *ukwingesia* and some for the *ukusumbulela*.'

●583 535 Three weeks later (June 14) the groom, with his go-between and other friends, brought the main body of marriage-cattle (*ukukwa*), and they danced the stamping dance (*ukukanya nganya*) in the bride's father's courtyard and on the litter of the seclusion hut, brandishing their spears as they stamped to the war rhythm. The bride's companions and mothers danced in a separate group, one mother carrying the bride on her shoulders. A lavish feast of cooked food was set before the groom and his friends, and they in their turn scattered pieces of meat and cents which the bride's [E78] maids and 'mothers' scrambled for. Meantime a quarrel broke out between the bride's father and her brothers over the distribution of the marriage-cattle.

881 584 Six weeks after the *ukwingesia* (July 29) the bride, accompanied by two of her father's wives, two of her maids, and a third girl invited because she was a good singer, went to wash ritually again

[1] *Ukusumbulela*: to give a present for the first time to a new friend.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

585 over her and the maids closest to her. Her father, Mwasofu, and four or five other men, his village mates, came to give her gifts to break the taboo (*ukubonola*). Her father came first and asked: 'Which is she?' She was pointed out to him and he gave her 10 cents, greeted her with the words 'Good morning, my child', and shook hands. At the same time he admonished her saying: 'If you ever go away from your husband who has married you, then you have a case against you, you have a great case against you.'

The other men followed: 'Good morning, good morning, you have recovered.' They gave some cents and shook hands and repeated her father's warning. One, having no cents, brought a spearhead which he said he would redeem later for 50 cents.

585 Then over the girl's head the father spoke to the officiant:
583 'Where are the bull and the other cow?'

Officiant: 'I am poor. Thank you for giving us your daughter, thank you.'

Father: 'Pay a bull. See, my child has stayed at home a long time. It is seven months since she grew up and it is not right that she should stay here always. Bring the bull!'

Officiant: 'Yes, we all regret that, but I am very poor.'

A mother: 'You know very well that our child is pure [i.e. a virgin].'

Father: 'See, she is the eldest daughter, and there is someone here with a case against him. My brother has expectations from her, he is claiming cattle. If her husband comes to carry her off we will beat him, we will beat him, we will take cattle.'

585 Then the men went away and the women, 'mothers' and 'mothers-in-law', together began to admonish (*ukufunda*) her. 'Yesterday evening she was a child, now she has grown up, she is a woman, let us tell her about womanhood.' Her father's second wife, and an elderly woman of her father's village, talked most, but advice was shouted at her by several women at once and it was impossible to take it down verbatim. The following points were mentioned: She must cook for her children. (This was repeated with emphasis.) She must cook for her husband; she must be gentle (*mololo*) to her children; she must welcome and cook for her mothers when they come to see her.

One mother said: 'If your husband has built in a boys' village and his fellows come wanting water to drink don't say: "There is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER IV

Husband & Wife

DOES the African buy his wife? The answer must be ambiguous, because the situation is so. I put the question to two highly educated natives, and both, independently, gave an immediate and emphatic "Yes." I put it to some elderly men of no education at all in our sense of the term, and they indignantly answered "No." There are, too, educated Africans, of many tribes, who resent as an outrage the suggestion of purchase. And wives, whatever the implication may be, take pride in the number of cattle paid for them, much as a girl at home might regard with satisfaction the amount of dowry she brought to the common purse. Some years ago a bride went to her husband, with the full consent of her father, no cattle, or any other goods, having been given for her, but the experiment was disastrous. The other married women regarded her with contempt, as a person of no consideration. A most unhappy life followed, and in a very short time the home was broken up. Such an attitude, however, is obviously not permanent. The Christians of the Tonga tribe gave up, some time ago, the whole custom, with, I understand, no evil results.

No Konde youth can get a wife if he, or his family

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

583 on his behalf, cannot find the requisite number of cattle to hand over to the relatives of the bride; but the idea of purchase is not present to the minds of any of the numerous relatives on both sides who take part in the discussion; and in point of fact nothing corresponding to our idea of purchase takes place. The wife is in no sense a slave. She belongs to her husband only in the sense in which the wife of a white man belongs to him. The cattle are, indeed, a *quid pro quo*, for the man who has got a wife has got a good thing, and it is, say the Konde, right that the parents, who had all the trouble of bringing his wife up for him, should get some return for their toil. The father, in receiving the cattle, guarantees the conduct of his daughter in all that is expected of a wife, but in nothing that is expected of a slave. She is not a chattel, as our own laws once declared a wife to be. If she goes astray, the cattle, with the increase, are returned to the husband. On the other hand, if the husband is divorced, he will not get back all the cattle when his wife leaves him. The father and brothers retain always the rights of guardianship, and may remove the wife if they think it necessary to do so, the number of cattle, if any, to be returned being decided in open discussion. But if the marriage takes place, as it often does, before the whole of the goods have been handed over, the first daughter goes to the maternal grandfather or his heirs, and if she reaches marriageable age before the full amount has been paid, the cattle for her marriage belong, not to her father, but to her maternal grandfather.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

third to cook food, and a final gift is required to make her lie down on the mat along with her girl friend, who stays with her for a few days. This ceremony of the gifts is never omitted in heathen marriages, and each successively binds the girl to her husband. 584 585

If the bride is a twin, the doctor must be present, to sprinkle medicines over house and bedding, and to give the couple a decoction supposed to prevent the occurrence of twins in the new family. 789

Except the daughters of Christian parents, all Konde girls are married before they arrive at puberty, and what has been described above applies to child wives, who stay with their husbands for about a month, and then go home. 582 177

The child wife having grown to womanhood, however, further ceremonies have to be observed. The husband arrives at her father's house with an ox for the feast, and a mock struggle for possession of the bride takes place. The women of her family barricade themselves in the house, which is attacked by the women of the other family. Payment of a shilling opens the door, and the further struggle which takes place in the house is brought to an end by the formal presentation of the ox. The husband and his friends enter, and engage in a weird dance, a mere tramping of the floor in unison, with shouting and waving of spears, no doubt a survival of what was once marriage by capture. 583 ●

The washing and shaving of the bride follows, and her bark-cloth is burned, and a new one given her, and then comes the feast of beef and beer, the materials 585

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

583 The dowry cattle are usually found by the father of the bridegroom; if he does not own them himself, the boy's uncles come to his aid; and in the event of divorce, they are re-distributed, with the increase, in the proportion in which each contributed. The father of the bride, who receives the cattle, as a rule divides them among his relatives, one going, in the case of the first daughter to be married, to the village headman.

593 562 It is usual to commiserate the sad lot of the African wife. I am not sure that much commiseration is called for. If the husband converts his duties of natural guardian into those of oppressor, he will answer to her father and brothers. As I have indicated, she owns property in a small measure; she is mistress in her own house; even her husband seldom interferes with her decisions, and no one else ever does. She has to work hard, it is true, working up till old age at tasks that would quickly kill a European woman. But she is not unhappy; indeed one sees more happy faces among them than unhappy; and she is blessed beyond imagination in comparison with the horrible conditions in which some women in our own country lived during the earlier part of the Industrial Revolution; and large numbers of them are happy in their husbands and children. Although many girls are married before they know what is happening to them, and many are unhappily yoked, as revealed by the great numbers who run away later with young men of their own age; yet there are countless happy families, where deep affection binds

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

601 *Mwisukulu* = grandparent or grandchild; but a man addresses his male grandparents as *Mwinangu* (my compeer) and his female grandparents as *Nkasi* (wife). A woman addresses her male grandparents as *Ndume* (husband) and her female grandparents as *Mwinangu* (my compeer).

Ndume = husband, extended for a woman to include the husbands of 'sisters', male grandparents, male grandchildren, husbands of female grandparents or grandchildren; all 'brothers' of a husband, husband of a father's sister, and grandfathers of a husband, and finally, the husband's sister's son.

Nkasi = wife; for a man it includes the wives of 'brothers', female grandparents and grandchildren, or wives of male ones; all sisters of wife, daughters of wife's brothers, wives of grandsons by marriage, the 'grandmothers' of a wife, and the wife of a maternal uncle.[1]

605 The Ngonde do not seem to distinguish cross-cousins from ortho-cousins as clearly as do the Maravi, or the Yao, Makua, and Makonde peoples.

MARRIAGE

582 There are no exogamous clans, but the descendants of a common grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are forbidden to marry.[2] The descendants of a common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry, but sometimes they do so before the relationship is discovered; they then simply drink a special medicine, but do not break the marriage. The old men speak of a now abandoned custom of preferential cross-cousin marriage.[3] The husband of the eldest girl of a family has the prior right to marry her full sisters, and such marriages are very common. A man also has the right to marry the daughter of his wife's brother, therefore the wife of the wife's brother is classed as a parent-in-law in kinship terminology.[4]

● 583 The passage of cattle makes children of a marriage legitimate. A child of a man who has given no cattle belongs either to the mother's husband or to her father. Cattle are in rapid circulation. Few men possess more than six cows at any time, yet marriage payments range from four to thirty cows (formerly only one or two were given). Marriage involves considerable expenditure and months of preliminary economic activity.[5] The cattle are seldom handed over all at once, but in ones or twos over a period of years. Full brothers have a claim to the cattle of their sister's marriage, and at the marriage of his eldest daughter the father hands one of the cows to the village headman.[6]

584 A girl commonly goes to visit and sleep with her betrothed husband for several years before she finally sets up house for him. The ideal procedure is by negotiation with the girl's father, but a man without cows may run off with a girl and satisfy her father with cows later on, or a man with cattle may seduce a married woman and pay her husband the adultery fine of two cows, plus the cows originally given for her marriage. A girl may be betrothed before puberty, and may visit her husband, but she is supposed to be virgin at her initiation ceremony, and is generally not allowed to

[1] Sanderson, 3, 1923.
[2] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 55.
[3] See Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 267; but according to Sanderson, 3, 1923, p. 453, cross-cousins are classed as sisters, and all first cousins are unmarriageable; according to Johnston, 1897, p. 415, and to Mackenzie 1925, p. 53, cousin marriage was not allowed.
[4] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 262; Sanderson, op. cit., p. 451.
[5] Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 11.
[6] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 65.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN

622 and the great commoners of the most senior villages. The constitution of a chiefdom
624 was that of a limited monarchy, for the chief was dependent on his great commoners
631 for his authority. All the way up the scale, with the exception of the Kyungu himself, each chief had his own great commoners and people directly subordinate to him. The organization of families and villages within the chiefdoms was the same as that of the Nyakyusa, but the organization of a territory ruled by a noble differed in that although there were always at least two age-villages, there were no great commoners.[1]

361 Villages vary in size, and average from forty to fifty households. In the first instance
621 a boys' village is built on ground allotted to them by the village of their fathers, but a new allotment is made ceremoniously at the 'coming out', *ubusoka*, ceremony of the young chiefs, when the old chief and his great commoners formally allot a tract of land to each village of young men, and redraw the boundaries.

621 In every generation each chiefdom was divided into two (they were originally
622 immigrant groups expanding their territory, and incorporating previous inhabitants).
631 The chief at his accession, or 'coming out', married two 'great wives', whose eldest sons would each be one of his two heirs, and divide his chiefdom. The number of villages which 'came out' with each young chief varied between four and eight. If he was later reduced to a minor position he might be left with only one village of adult men, and one of their sons, as people tended to move away from minor chiefdoms. This was the system which obtained among the Nyakyusa and also among the Ngonde.[2] A summary of the 'coming out' ritual is given here, instead of in the section on ritual, as it indicates some of the features of the political organization.

621 Usually eight age-villages 'came out' at the same time, four under each of the young
622 chiefs. At this occasion, some thirty years after the old chief's accession, eight new
624 great commoners were chosen. The two young chiefs were secluded for a few hours in the hut of the old chief's first wife, and received magical treatment. Then they
●583 'came out'. The boundaries of the age-villages were freshly drawn. After the 'coming out', each young chief, whether he was already married or not, married his two great wives, whose first sons would be his heirs. Girls who had not yet reached puberty were carried off from other chiefdoms with a show of force by the chief's men, who later sent cows of their own to regularize the position. The girls stayed at the home of one of the old chief's men until their first menstruation. They were initiated together, not at the house of their fathers, but in the country of their husbands; the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the retiring chief) played the part usually played by the girl's parents and neighbours; the chief and his young men playing the usual part of the husband and his friends. After the ceremonies the girls were given as wives to the young chiefs, and separate huts were built for them in the two senior age-villages of the chiefdom. Wives married subsequently were attached in order of seniority to one or other of the two 'sides' of the chiefdom. Thus the four age-villages normally attached to a young chief were, from the first days of his official marriage, divided into two. If one of the two great wives bore no sons, the succession for that side of the chiefdom would pass to the son of the next senior wife of that side.

622 Between the 'coming out' of two young chiefs and the death of their own father, a delicate balance of prestige and power was maintained, secular power over their own age-villages passing to each young chief, while the old chief retained control over the

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 22–4.

[2] Ibid., 3, 1938, pp. 12–15.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Nyakyusa are, predominantly, a patrilineal people, for inheritance normally follows the male line. They differ, however, from the patrilineal peoples of Europe in that brothers inherit before sons. Inherited wealth is thus mainly kept in the hands of the older men, though they are under certain obligations towards their " sons " (whether own or classificatory) in their use of it. Marriage involves a transfer of anything from four to thirty head of cattle from the bridegroom to his father-in-law, and consequently the chief obligation which an older man has, both to his own sons and to the sons of any kinsman from whom he has inherited, is to provide them, in due time, with cattle for marriage. But this obligation is not an absolute one, it depends, in part, upon the due fulfilment by each " son " of his filial duties, which are, firstly, to hoe his father's fields diligently and, secondly, to maintain a respectful bearing towards him. Unmarried men have no gardens of their own, they work their fathers' land and eat the produce of it which their mothers cook. 611 428 583 593

Under modern conditions money for tax and clothes is necessary both to father and son, and very many young men visit the nearby Lupa gold fields regularly, for periods of a few months at a time, to earn it. A youth who always brings back to his parents after each spell of absence tax money and some presents is held to have done all his duty and he will be given marriage cattle just as soon and as readily as if he had spent all his time hoeing at home. And if he earns more, sufficient to purchase some of his marriage cattle for himself, still his father benefits, for the old man has then to spend fewer beasts from his own stock. But the Lupa needs food as well as labour and some unmarried men stay continuously at home and engage in the production of crops; after the family needs have been met the surplus is sold and from the proceeds the father pays his own tax and his sons' and buys clothes for them as well. 167 593

Hoeing, which is the hardest part of Nyakyusa cultivation, is normally done by men, planting; weeding, reaping and cooking by women. But some women nowadays do some hoeing too—if their husbands are away at work or if for any other reason they find it difficult to get enough ground prepared for them. Traditionally, I was told, women never used a hoe at all. 241 462

Polygyny is the rule rather than the exception among middle-aged men, and in a polygynous household, as we shall see, each wife has her own garden plots. The institution of polygyny has many other elements besides the economic, but the economic is not the least important of them: the taking of additional wives is the best capital investment which is open to an ordinary, uneducated, Nyakyusa peasant. A Nyakyusa wife is not her husband's property, she is his wife; but as family relationships are, among the Nyakyusa, the basis of economic activity, so the more wives 595

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

439 until the settlement of the Arabs and Europeans in Ngonde, was exchanged " for cloths and rings" with the *Lungwani* (i.e. Arab or half-caste) traders, who regularly crossed the lake from Mwela.

Now the Kyungus of Mbande when compared with their divine cousins the Lwembes of Lubaga, were fortunate in their geographical position. The conditions which kept them in contact with a market in the early period are beyond our knowledge, we only know the bare fact. But with the opening of the trade route from the east the greater accessibility of Mbande is at once obvious. Mbande is only eight miles from the shores of the lake, Lubaga is forty. Moreover the plain between Lubaga and the lake was occupied in this middle period by Nyakyusa chiefs only distantly related to the Lwembe. Our evidence suggests that, in any case, the traders from Mwela did not reach the north end of the lake in their travels till some time after reaching Ngonde. And it is undoubted that when they did so they traded with the chiefs on the shore one by one and never journeyed inland to Lubaga. To Lubaga the lake shore chiefs sent cows to beg for rain and health, but they sent no ivory; from Lubaga they believed they received their rain and health; but it was from the traders direct that they got the coveted cloth. Ivory was but dry bones without a market, so that the Lwembes had no inducement to claim it.

In Ngonde the Lungwani traders bought relatively little ivory from others save the Kyungu; he alone held large stocks and to him they came first. They gave him red, white and dark cloths and rings also in exchange for the tusks, eating and drinking at his expense during their stay.

Some of the cloths and rings were at once given by him to the nobles of Ngonde, on each occasion that the traders came; others were used as clothes by himself and his household; others were stored for future gifts; while still others he exchanged, either for hoes with the men of Mwela and the Kisi, or with his own people for ivory or slaves.

556 Polygyny and a differential bride-price were important sources of wealth for all the rulers of Ngonde. The numbers of cattle given to
583 great-commoners, nobles or chiefs at the marriages of their daughters were greater than the numbers given to ordinary men. This was a matter of prestige. Moreover girls married younger than boys, so that all fathers usually had an interval between receiving cattle at the marriages of their daughters and giving them away again at the marriages of their sons; during this interval the cattle increased and the increment accrued to them. Now chiefs, nobles and great-commoners usually gave away more cattle at the marriages of their sons than did ordinary men; this again was a matter of prestige. But it did not alter the fact that greater numbers of cattle than usual passed though their hands; and

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

so the increment that accrued to them was also greater than usual. And thus they normally had more cattle than ordinary men. 556 583

Some of these extra cattle they expended in marrying more wives of their own, who bore them more children. The girl children later brought in more marriage-cattle, and meanwhile the wives and unmarried children worked in the fields and so enabled the rulers to entertain more often and more lavishly than their less married subjects. And it was by lavish entertainment above all that the prestige of a ruler was maintained.

(b) *THE EXPENDITURE OF MBANDE AND OTHER AUTHORITIES.*

All important guests at Mbande, whether traders or subordinates, were, as we have seen, entertained at the Kyungu's expense. Now the entertainment of guests and subordinates is a quite indispensable function of every primitive political authority; power and prestige cannot possibly be maintained without it. Its importance in primitive constitutions has recently been pointed out by Richards in a paper[1] on the constitution of the Bemba tribe in Northern Rhodesia; and the facts of Ngonde tradition bear out her conclusions. Chiefs and nobles were given food and beer when they visited Mbande and the position of Mbande could not otherwise have been maintained. And the Kyungu, like the Citimukulu of the Bemba, also gave to his subordinates gifts of more permanent value. 652

Cloths were given both to chiefs and nobles. We remember that the very first Kyungu at Mbande is said to "have given headcloths to the indigenous rulers" who, in accepting them, accepted also his overlordship; and from that time onwards the practice continued. Whenever a territorial noble died the nobles of Ngonde came from the Kyungu and formally presented his successor with a dark headcloth, which he then wore turban-fashion as a symbol of his status. And other gifts of cloths were made to them also, from time to time. The nobles of Ngonde likewise were formally presented with dark headcloths on succession and, as we have seen, got gifts of cloth each time the traders came. 652 431

And the custom grew up in the middle period of giving cloths to the chiefs also, the sons of the Kyungu. When the chiefs heard that the Kyungu had been buying cloths they used to come, each alone with one man, and be given some. Our evidence does not make clear whether

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[1] Audrey Richards "Tribal Government in Transition." Supplement to *J.R.A.S.* Oct. 1935.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

652 431 this was done by all chiefs or only by the great chiefs; but it is certain that the great chiefs possessed more of these cloths than their juniors.

652 431 764 But perhaps the most important traditional use of cloth by the Kyungus was for funeral gifts.[1] The social significance of funeral ceremonial in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa is hard to exaggerate;[2] for both the economic and the emotional aspects not only of kinship but also of village and political relationships are given formal expression most frequently at funerals. And a gift at a funeral carries greater weight than one on any other occasion.

652 431 567 583 Then, again, chiefs and nobles who brought food to Mbande were often given either a beast or a woman slave in return. "When one of the chiefs had caught a great many fish . . . . . he would gather his men and go to Mbande . . . . . Then the Kyungu would tell one of the nobles of Ngonde to go and fetch a beast or, if no beast were available—and cattle were scarce in the old days—he would give him a woman. And if the chief liked her he would take her in marriage and she would become his lady,[3] but if he did not, then he would take her to his own country and sell her there for a cow." (We expressed some surprise at the rate of exchange.) "Yes, truly, for one cow only, cows were very scarce in those days." And sometimes, in order to make sure he would like her, the visiting chief would be allowed to choose his own girl. "When one of his sons came to visit him the Kyungu would sometimes give orders that he should be shown all the (slave) girls and choose the one he liked best; and so the chief would choose a local girl[4] and marry her. And he could never then sell her, once he had chosen her in love."

Now the gift of a woman slave had many social implications. If she was taken to wife the recipient regarded the Kyungu thereafter as his father-in-law, as well as his "father." She herself became free and her children spoke of the Kyungu as their grandfather. And these gifts did more than any others to strengthen the bonds of kinship between the Kyungu and his subordinate chiefs.

652 431 To his common subjects also, if they had deserved well of him, the Kyungu would occasionally give either cloths or a woman or a cow; and the great chiefs of Ngonde likewise and even ordinary chiefs and nobles did the same. And these subordinate authorities, as we have seen, also used to entertain their own subjects generously with food

[1] *Vide infra* section 7.
[2] Cf. Wilson "Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial." *Bantu Studies*, March 1939.
[3] I use "lady" here to translate "*mwehe*" which is the title of honour used for a chief's wife; the implication is that she then ceased to be a slave.
[4] Slaves were of two kinds, the relatives of criminals and war captives (*vide infra* sections 5 and 6). It was apparently customary to choose one of the first kind on such occasions.

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

maternal uncle *nkasi*, and she calls him *ndume*. As a sister's son comes very 601
low down in the table of succession, this cannot be due to their prospective 604
relationship should the maternal uncle die, and it may be that the relationship of husband's sister's son is (or was) regarded as analogous to that of wife's brother's daughter. On the other hand, if the father of X exercises his right to marry his wife's brother's daughter, this girl, from being the "sister" of X, becomes his "mother," and her mother (the wife of X's maternal uncle) becomes his "grandmother" and therefore his *nkasi*.

(7) Cross-cousins are classed as "brothers" and "sisters," and all first cousins 605 601
are, therefore, unmarriageable.

(8) It is of interest to note that a kind of marriage by capture is still in vogue 583
among the Wangonde. It may be performed either with or without the consent of the woman, but, except in the case of a woman to whom the man has a right by relationship, her father's sanction is necessary, and at least part of the dowry must be paid beforehand: usually, the woman is aware that the marriage has been proposed.

The bridegroom, assisted by some friends, either lies in wait for the woman, on the way to the water-supply for instance, or decoys her out of the village by means of a spurious message, and carries her off to his home. Her relatives would be bound in honour to rescue her if the bridegroom were so maladroit as to make it impossible for them to affect ignorance of the abduction. It is said that the marriage is sometimes consummated by force with the assistance of the companions of the bridegroom: in any case, a small present to the girl personally is necessary before consummation.

4. *Succession.*—The order of succession is liable to modification if the legal 428
heir is considered unsuitable for any reason. The relationships are put in the following order of precedence:—

(1) Younger brother by same father and mother.

(2) Younger brother by same father and different mother.

(3) Any younger "brother."

Note.—It would be considered *infra dig.* for an elder "brother" to take the name of his junior, so that, although he has a prior right to the property, he would appoint a younger "brother" to the name. In such a case he may choose which of the "wives" of the deceased he likes, in addition to the cattle.

(4) Eldest surviving son (own begetting).

(5) Eldest son of elder brother (by the same father).

(6) Eldest son of younger brother (by the same father).

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

present possesses. A young man is given cows by his father and sends 436
them to his father-in-law; his father's income in cattle is derived partly from the increase of his own stock, but chiefly from the marriages of his own and his brothers' sisters and daughters, for it is the custom for full-brothers and half-brothers to given one another cows as their daughters and sisters get married; the young man's father-in-law gives the cows which he receives some to his brothers, some to his sons, and some he keeps himself. And thus, continually, the cattle are driven down the paths of human relationship.

The passage of cattle makes the children of a marriage legitimate 585
and members of their father's family; the sons can inherit from their 848
father, and the daughters, when they marry in their turn, bring cattle to him. But if a woman bears a child to a man who has given no cows for her, the child is illegitimate, has no right of inheritance anywhere, and belongs either to her husband or father, not to its own biological sire.

Getting married is not a single event; the marriage-cattle are seldom 583
handed over all at once, but in ones, twos, or threes over a period of 584
years; and a girl very commonly goes to visit and sleep with her betrothed 836
husband, from time to time, for several years before she finally sets up house with him and begins to bear his children. There are three ways of getting married: (1) by negotiation with the girl's father (2) by running off with an unmarried girl (3) by running off with a married woman. The first is the ideal, socially approved, method and is not uncommonly followed. The negotiations often begin while the girl is still an infant, sometimes even before she is born; the man sends one or two cows to her father to bespeak her (*okosingela*). These cows are counted as part of the marriage-cattle (*ebygwela*) and the girl is henceforth called his "wife," but she lives at home with her parents. Sometimes a boy is betrothed by his father while he himself is still young, but always, I think, to a girl several years his junior. Such betrothals are determined by the friendship of the two families. A girl who is bespoken in infancy does not, ideally, go to live altogether with her husband till after she has reached puberty and passed through the elaborate initiation which then takes place. But there is an intermediate period when, from the age of ten or earlier, she is allowed to visit and sleep with her husband from time to time. The man sends a bull or a hen to her father to ask for his wife (*okosombolela*), and the old man agrees to let her go on occasional visits. But she is seldom allowed to go until at least three cows, in all, have been received for her. She is not supposed to be deflowered before puberty and she and her husband always, at first, practise limited intercourse without penetration. Not infrequently, however, full intercourse

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

583 takes place on some occasion and her parents usually find out when it
584 does. In some families the girl's mother examines her after each visit to
836 her husband to see if the hymen is intact, sometimes the girl tells her mother herself. When her father hears about it his action is determined partly by his feelings towards his son-in-law, partly by his need for cattle. Sometimes he does nothing at all; occasionally he sends back the cows he has received for his daughter and breaks off the marriage, and this is particularly likely to happen if the girl has been forced against her will or generally ill-treated. More usually, however, he sends his daughter to live with her husband saying: "You have made her a woman yourself, you must pay the rest of the marriage-cattle quickly."

836 We have no evidence to suggest that the girls in any general way dislike sleeping with their husbands before puberty, rather the reverse; and the men say: "It is good, it accustoms a girl to her husband." But some girls dislike the particular men to whom they are betrothed.

881 The initiation of a girl at puberty lasts for some months and includes several exchanges of food between her family and that of her husband, and a number of ceremonies in which both her girl friends of the same village[4] and her husband's friends from his village[4] participate. If a girl
[584] is not bespoken before puberty the initiation is still carried out in a modified form, but its full significance is lost.

585 Soon after her initiation a girl, if she has been bespoken, goes to live altogether with her husband, to play her part in his economy and to bear him children. If only a few cows have been received for her, her father insists on one or two more being handed over before she is allowed to go. At some time, perhaps during the girl's initiation, perhaps years later, the final marriage ceremony (*okokwa*) takes place. The balance of the marriage-cattle are brought to her father by the husband and his village neighbours,[4] her "mothers" prepare a great deal of food for the guests to eat, there is dancing, feasting and great excitement.

554 The number of cows handed over varies with the wealth and social
583 status of the two families concerned. Six to ten cows is the most usual number, but sometimes as few as four or as many as thirty change hands.

583 The second method of marriage is adopted when a man falls in love with a grown girl, who is not bespoken, and cannot find the cows to satisfy her father at once; he runs off with her and regularizes the position
583 later by sending cattle. The third method is adopted when a man falls
837 in love with a married woman and has cows available; he runs off with

[4] Vide infra "*The Age Village*" ∧
∧ [p. 269, cat. 116 -- Analyst]

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

583 837 her and then returns to her first husband the cows he had given for her with two in addition as adultery fine. But this return is usually made only after the first husband has brought a lawsuit against him.

837 Adultery is extremely common now-a-days; when a man runs off 684 with, or is discovered seducing, a married woman and has not enough 177 cows to marry her, he is legally compelled to pay two cows for the adultery to her husband. In pre-European days an adulterer, if caught, was usually punished by the husband and his neighbours with death or extreme torture, and the old men tell me that adultery was then a rarer event.

584 The extent to which a girl is usually allowed to choose whom she 177 will marry is difficult to guage, and varies in different circumstances. Opportunities of meeting and flirting with young men at dances and ceremonies are frequent; and the older men say that, owing to the abolition by the Europeans of the old severe punishments for adultery, girls [582] are freer now than they used to be, for their lovers no longer fear to run off with them if they are married or bespoken (which is in Nyakyusa law very much the same thing). The custom of betrothing infant girls is, they declare, less common than it used to be; they are now more chary of pledging their daughters "for when they grow up they just run off with someone else." A girl's choice is, however, limited by the necessity of finding a lover who has cows, and few young men have enough to secure her if she is already married, though they may have enough to pay an adultery fine.

[428] Owing, in part, to the laws of inheritance, by which a commoner's[5] 593 full-brother inherits before his son, it is the older men who control the cattle. Every bachelor is largely or wholly dependent on his own father (or his dead father's heir) for the cows for his first marriage, and he must hoe his father's fields for many years before he is given enough to secure a wife and to set up a family of his own. Economic reciprocity is an element in most human relationships, and it enters into the Nyakyusa relationship of father and son. It is well understood, in this society, that 593 after a certain length of time spent hoeing his father's fields a young man 685 is entitled to some cows, if his father has any; and if his father delays too long the young man either stops hoeing for his father or else he takes legal action and enforces his claim. Between father and son such law cases are rare, but they are frequent between a young man and the brother of his father who has inherited his father's wives, property, and position in the family.

[5] The laws of inheritance for a chief are, in certain respects, different; vide infra, "The Chiefdom." [Cat. 116 pp. 278ff. --Analyst]

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

●583 Normally a bachelor is given cows one by one, over a period of years, and, as we have seen, he sends them, as he receives them, to the father of the girl he wants to marry. One cow is sufficient for betrothal, but not until he has given three can he begin openly to sleep with her. And he cannot usually set up his own economy until he has given at least three cows and she has reached puberty and been initiated. He may of course bespeak an already grown girl, but if he engages himself to a young one he is expected to bring two or more bulls as well, during the course of her initiation.

684 If he chooses to spend his cows in adultery fines, he may, but he will then have to wait longer to get married.

582 Thus the system of marriage by a transfer of cattle is, in this society,
561 directly linked with a late marriage age for young men and with a privileged position for older men. When a boy gets cattle he at once gives them to an older man in order to secure his daughter as a wife; the labour of every bachelor helps to increase his father's wealth in food; it is in general the older men alone who can afford more than one wife. And there is an average difference of ten years or more in the initial marriage age of men
[162] and girls. The tax registers show in part of the district, among 3,000 adult* men, 34% bachelors, 37% monogamists, and 29% polygynists; and investigation proves that, generally speaking, it is the young men who are bachelors, the men over forty-five who are polygynists.

511 Though cattle are their most valued form of wealth, it is on agricul-
574 ture that the economy of the Nyakyusa is primarily based. Meat and milk are luxuries, and daily bread comes from the fields. Hard work in a fertile country provides food for each family, and the millet beer which is the ordinary material of hospitality. Hospitality brings a man prestige and authority among his fellows; on the possession of sufficient food largely depends the contentment of his wives. And in the production, preparation and eating of food the relationships of the family and of the individual family within it, are clearly visible.

241 Hoeing is the work of men, planting, weeding, reaping and cooking
512 is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about four hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a.m., on the upland plateau they begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different

*Presumed to be 18 years or over.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

622 have invaded that country for cows and brought them back and eaten them at the new huts which we built next. But that is finished now." In this way the new chiefs are shown to their people.

631 Finally the young men are told exactly where to go and build, and the boundaries between the new chiefdoms and the villages of each are fixed; the old boys' villages are abandoned and the houses gradually pulled down and put up in their new places. At first the men of the four age-villages of each young chief just put up rough shelters to sleep in, all together on the place where the senior age-village of each new chiefdom will later be built, but after a month or two they separate, each village to its own place, and there they build their houses.

The land is now their own, they are no longer members of boys' villages, living on land given them at the side of the parent villages by their fathers, they are owners of the soil, full citizens, with chief and great commoners to rule them.

(b) *Organization and Life of a Single Chiefdom*

622 583 A few months after the "Coming Out" each of the two young chiefs marries two wives. He may be married already, but the two whom he now takes rank as his great wives (*avahe avakolombu*) and their sons are his two heirs in the chieftainship. Young girls, daughters of neighbouring chiefs, are carried off with a show of force from their fathers' homes by the young chief's men, who, themselves, later send cows to regularize the position. The two great wives are thus married, not with the cows of their husband, but with those of the men whose sons their sons will one day rule.

622 585 881 Girls are carried off who are just about to reach puberty, and they stay at the house of one of the men of the old chief until their periods begin. When both have reached puberty they are initiated, not at their fathers' houses, but in the country of their husband, both together. At their initiation, the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the old, retiring, chief) play the part normally played by a girl's parents and their neighbours, while the young chief and his men take the usual part of a husband and his friends. And then, after the ceremonies are over, the two girls are given to the young chief as his wives. Houses are built for them separately: in the senior age-village of the new chiefdom for the first wife, in the next senior village for the second wife; and in this separation of dwelling place is already apparent the future division of the chiefdom between their sons.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IV

THE RITUAL OF CHIEFTAINSHIP

(a) THE 'COMING OUT'

THE ritual which arouses the greatest excitement in BuNyakyusa and in which every man, woman, and child participates, is the 'coming out' when the two heirs of a chief are acknowledged as rulers, and the government of the country is handed over to them and their village headmen.[1] This ritual occurs but once in a generation, when the chief's senior sons are between thirty and thirty-five years old; they, and their slightly older contemporaries and juniors 'come out' together. Should one, or even both heirs of a chief die after their 'coming out' and before their sons are grown up, the ritual is not celebrated again—it cannot be, for it concerns not individuals but a generation. Instead the young chiefs are replaced by their younger 'brothers', full or classificatory. And should a village headman die he also is replaced by his heir; the office does not lapse. Therefore there are two types of change in status: the great communal ritual when the old men retire and their sons take office, and the family ritual when a dead man is succeeded by his younger brother or his son. An individual may inherit from his father, succeeding to his office and moving into his homestead at any time, and when he has done so he is treated formally as a member of his father's generation; but the celebration throughout the chiefdom of sons succeeding fathers only takes place thrice in a century. Each chiefdom celebrates separately. There is no attempt to synchronize with neighbours.

It was usual, traditionally, for two sons to succeed their father, and divide his country between them. The division was foreshadowed at the father's 'coming out' when he married two senior wives and settled them in different sections of his country; but it sometimes happened that a chief had a favourite for whom he built separately, and whose son went through the 'coming out' with his brothers and became independent, unless he was defeated in war and subjugated. Even a son who had no expectation of a

[1] Neither of us saw a 'coming out' in full. Godfrey Wilson saw the conclusion of the coming out of the heirs of Mwangoka (24) in November 1935 and in April 1955 I was able to observe the territorial changes brought about by Mwanyilu's (117) 'coming out' in December 1953.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

622 He, like many of his men, may have been married long before the
643 'coming out', but his ritual wedding to the mothers of his heirs
796 follows it, and from the time of his seclusion, until his marriage,
585 he, and all his men, should live as bachelors. The brides are chosen by his village headmen and in theory they are carried off by force, whether betrothed or not, but nowadays, since the [177] Administration discountenances forced marriages, the headmen arrange matters with the girls' families beforehand, very privately, but still they come with a show of force to carry off the brides. Girls are chosen who are approaching puberty and they are taken to the house of a commoner contemporary of their future husband. There they live until both have grown up and the puberty ritual can be celebrated. It follows the usual course except that the [584] neighbours of the man in whose house the brides are secluded play the part of the girls' families, cooking for the groom's party at the prescribed feasts. The chief washes with both girls, thereby acknowledging them as his senior wives; the marriage bed is prepared with medicines and there is great rejoicing. The following morning someone knocks at the door of the nuptial chamber crying: 'War has come', and the chief and his brides rush out to the pasture land, just as the parents of twins do at the end of their ritual.[1] Then[2] a long narrow stone (*ulufiga*) is set with medicines [789] in the earth, beside the chief's trees as a symbol of his marriage (*ikimanyilo kya bwegi*) to the mothers of his heirs. 'The stone *is* the chief' (*ilifiga ili jo malafyale*). Hearth-bricks (*amafiga*) are then set up for each bride with medicines buried beneath them, and they are given fire from that ritually kindled by their husband and his headman. Finally they are given medicines to drink in order to develop in them 'the dignity of chief's wives' (*ubusiya bwa bwehe*).

643 No marriage is complete, in Nyakyusa eyes, until cattle have been handed over, and though the chief's brides have been carried
583 off by force, cattle—more than double the normal number—are given to their fathers. The village headmen of the retiring generation should provide these cattle and they or their heirs are recompensed when the eldest daughters born of the two wives are

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 158, 169.

[2] Mwanyilu's marriage apparently preceded the planting of his trees and the phallic stone was erected at the same time as the trees were planted, but the marriages of the sons of Mwangoka *followed* the planting of their trees. The order of events seems to vary, and differences are explained as due to the order of the doctor in charge of the ritual. 'Different doctors have different customs.'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

married. Thus, yet another bond is forged between chief and headman, for he who provides marriage cattle is 'father' to him who marries, and the chief's wives acknowledge this by avoiding the village headmen of the senior generation as they do their father-in-law. Once the chief's ritual marriage is complete the sex taboo is lifted and such of his men as are already married are joined by their wives. In theory, though not nowadays in practice, the taboo is observed until the marriage of the chief.

All through the ritual of the 'coming out' the idea of a new beginning is expressed—a new site for the villages, new houses, new fire, new power for the young men. The events of this ritual, the seclusion, the lying on a litter, the prohibition on washing, washing with medicines in the doorway of the hut, the admonition, are directly parallel to the events of the rituals of death and puberty which, we have argued in a previous book,[1] are dramatizations of death and rebirth. There seems little doubt that the 'coming out' is yet another celebration of this theme. The young men enter an enclosed house—that of the senior's mother—and 'come out' (*ulusuka*) renewed as a child 'comes out' (*ulusuka*) of the mother's womb. No Nyakyusa informant volunteered such an interpretation, but, when it was suggested, it was eagerly accepted as expressing the real meaning of 'coming out'.

(*b*) THE CHIEF'S MEDICINES

Reference has already been made to medicines used by chiefs and by village headmen at the 'coming out' and we must now examine them more closely. The great medicines of chieftainship are *ifingila* and their function is to create *amaga*, i.e. spiritual power, and *ubunipa*, i.e. dignity, majesty, in order to make the chief fearful 'so that men obey him'. The medicines are comparable to robes of office for they are designed to give their user assurance and fill the commonality with awe. The Nyakyusa also think that chiefs and headmen should be 'heavy' with 'pythons in their bellies' which give them the power to see and fight witches. Without such a 'python' a chief or village headman cannot fulfil his duty of 'watching over the country by day and by night' and if a man is not born with one he may develop it through the proper use of medicines. This notion has been examined elsewhere.[2] The *ifingila* medicines are also thought to give courage and ferocity (*ubugani*) in war, with luck in seizing enemy

[1] op. cit., p. 205. [2] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 97-100.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

that polygyny is compatible with Christianity, and indeed sanctioned by the example of many of the heroes of the Old Testament. It is here that the cleavage between pagan and Christian ways of life is felt to be greatest: the desire to marry or inherit a second wife is the main reason for many men leaving the mission Churches. The traditional way for the well-to-do man to expend his capital and maintain his position was to marry again and the wealth of the lineage was concentrated in the senior line through the rule of inheritance of widows.

Again and again in sermons Nyakyusa preachers came back to the problem of polygyny. 'Let not those who know not the law deceive you saying, "You, Christian, what is one poor little wife? (*ikikituk kimo kyene*) See, do not your children also die (like those of pagans) and constantly fall ill? Take a second wife." Perhaps the BaNgemela tell you that God also favours that. If you agree you are uprooted. What, after all, is a second wife? In Jesus there is life.' (2 Peter iii. 17.)

Young men are also caught in a contradiction of values when their fathers have betrothed them while still quite young.

It is very difficult for a man to refuse a girl whom his father has engaged for him. To a pagan man it does not matter very much because, provided he has cattle, he can always marry a girl of his own choice as well, but a Christian cannot. Such was the case of a friend of ours, A, a Christian teacher. When he was a child, before he was baptized, his father, a senior village headman and a powerful and wealthy man, engaged for him B, a little girl who could barely walk. A got on well at school and when he was growing up the missionary said to him: 'When you marry choose a girl of some education, because it is good for an educated man to marry an educated girl.' A fell in love with C, a Christian, who had learnt to read and write, and sew and launder, and who consequently was one of the best-educated girls in the district. They came to an understanding together, our informant being the 'go-between'. A went to the elders of the congregation and told them he wished to marry C. They replied: 'We, on our part agree; go and ask your father.' Then A's father said: 'Well, no, B is your wife (though she was still a child and the marriage had not been consummated), but you are my eldest son, I have many cattle, I agree to arrange marriages with them both for you at once.' So A thought and thought and went back to the elders and told them saying: 'My father refuses, he won't hear of it unless I marry

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

them both, but I don't want to leave the Church.' Then the elders supported his father saying, 'We don't like sons to be disobedient and the girl will make a good wife for you.' 'But,' argued A, 'my wife is a child and C is grown up.' The missionary supported him saying: 'We are going to send him to a distance (to train as a teacher), it is better that he go married.' But the elders supported his father, following the Nyakyusa custom. Then a message came to A saying that B had 'grown-up'. He said to us, his friends: 'What can I say now? I can no longer argue that my wife is a child.' And to the missionaries and elders he said: 'Send me away for my training. I must think, I am not at peace.'

797x 795x 583 584

While A was still away D (who was a close friend of A's) came back from school, and he too fell in love with C. But before he spoke to her he wrote to A asking him: 'Have you broken with her, or are you still agreed to marry? Can I make love to her or not?' Then A wrote back: 'Yes, I have broken with her, it is true that I love her, but I cannot square marrying her with Christianity. Go ahead.' So then D came to our informant to ask him to be the go-between again, and to take him to the girl. So they went and showed her A's letter, and asked her if she could love D. Then she was very sorrowful and would give no answer until she had written to A herself. 'Is it true that you have left me?' And A replied: 'Indeed, my dear, I have left you. I love you truly, but what can we do? Perhaps the powers do not wish that we should marry. My father refuses. He says he will arrange a marriage with you, for me, as my second wife, but what of our Christianity? Are we both to leave the Church?' So then she agreed to marry D.

All this time the elders had supported A's father in his refusal saying: 'B also is a proper woman. We are surprised at the young man.' And A's father said to him: 'I betrothed this girl for you when she was quite tiny. *Kyala* has already given you this woman.' But the marriage of A and B proved a failure—they were constantly quarrelling—and later they were divorced.

The 'go-between' of this story was more fortunate in his own marriage. Like A he was the son of a wealthy pagan and two wives had been betrothed for him before he became a Christian. When he decided to be baptized he flatly refused to marry either of them. His father was very angry. 'For a time he treated me as if I were not his son, saying: "Since you refuse these girls I will not give you any cows to marry at all." So I said: "All right," and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

797 went away to work again and in time I earned four cows which I
795 hid with friends far from home. My father knew nothing about
583 them. Then I wrote to my father from Mwasebe [about twenty
584 miles from where his father lived] where I was working, saying that I had found a girl there, the daughter of a Christian, and please could I have the cows with which to marry her? My father said: "No, she lives too far away." ' Then later he found a Christian girl of whom his father approved and a satisfactory marriage was arranged.

A common topic of discussion among Christian women was whether parents should choose mates for their children, or leave them free to choose for themselves, for though traditionally a girl had to signify her consent to marriage, she was betrothed very young and her freedom of choice was small. The growing insistence on personal freedom in marriage is symptomatic of a radical change in the attitude towards persons.

797 The pagan rituals were the main occasions of recreation. It has
795 been shown, in *Rituals of Kinship*, how pagan funerals and marriages are the occasion for feasting and dancing and display, and how the [764] seclusion hut of a nubile girl is the gathering place for the young [585] men and girls of the neighbourhood. Even a twin ritual is a festival [782] with beer for the older men and some meat for everyone. The sacrifices at the groves were feasts for the leading men of the country, and the 'coming out' was the occasion of the greatest feast of the generation, and dances were practised for months [796] ahead. Partly because of a change in sex morality, and partly [688] because the meat and beer at pagan feasts are offered to the shades, Christians are largely excluded from these festivals. They may not participate in pagan dances, or join in the lewd songs, or attend the initiation hut of a girl, and they are partly debarred from the feasts of the pagans: certain of the Churches (notably the Church [273] of Scotland and, for a time, the Moravians) forbid Christians to drink beer at all.

And the Christian rituals, though some of them are 'festivals [796] of the Church', are scarcely celebrated as such. There has been a separation between ritual and recreation which has left a gap in the Christian community. It is true that the Christian young men [535] and girls sing and dance at funerals and marriages, but the elders, [684] for the most part, look on with dubious eyes, saying that dancing leads to adultery, and several of the dances introduced by

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 that they have always been cattle men and they need no instruc-
[232] tion on cattle. The tension over stock limitation and soil con-
[242] servation, so acute in many parts of Africa, is only just appearing in Rungwe district, but potentially it is serious.

Pressure on land, and the planting of a valuable long-term crop
[311] such as coffee, have undermined the traditional organization of
[361] age-villages. The old men are no longer prepared to move to make way for their sons and, without a new deal in land each
[161] generation, the territorial separation of the generations is blurred. Boys villages are no longer visible in the hills near Rungwe mission, partly because so many young men are away, either at school or in employment, but largely because most of the land is taken up with coffee gardens. Homesteads are being built farther apart as men lay out coffee round their houses, and sons often build on a corner of their father's estate instead of in a separate village. On the plain, also, the pressure of population blurs the boundaries between generations. Only in the least heavily populated middle belt are numerous boys' villages still clearly visible, and here too a 'coming out' has recently been celebrated, with some redistribution of land. The scarcest land, that in old volcanic craters, was always inherited, like cattle, not reallocated each generation, and almost all cultivated land is now treated in this way. In many chiefdoms, therefore, a young man looks to his father or senior brother for land, rather than to the village head-
[428] man, and inheritance is supremely important. But the form of inheritance is changing: property now goes directly from father to son, not as formerly to each of a group of full brothers before reverting to the senior son of the eldest of them. The claims of more distant kinsmen on inherited stock are less than they used to be; such stock becomes the exclusive property of father and sons, rather than property in which members of a lineage of three or
[613] four generations have reciprocal rights. The main economic bond which held the lineage together, the exchange of cattle, is thus broken.

Formerly a marriage was a contract between lineages rather
[583] than between individuals. A girl was betrothed before puberty to a
[581] man of her father's choice and should he die she was still regarded as married to his heir. Should she die a sister replaced her. Ideally a marriage bond between lineages lasted for generations, each man who died being replaced by a brother or son, each woman by a sister or brother's daughter. The choice of a partner in marriage

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

was not an individual one. True, a girl gave her formal consent in the marriage ritual, but the pressure on her to accept the husband selected for her by her kinsmen was almost irresistible. In the thirties Christian women who refused their husband's heir and lived alone, or married an unrelated man of their choice, were regarded by their pagan sisters as very daring, and little girls in pagan families took it as a matter of course that they should replace their dead sisters; today the right of a widow to choose whom she will marry is generally accepted, and the custom of replacing a dead woman by her sister has lapsed. 'Every girl wants her own husband nowadays', the old women say. Thus lineage obligations give way to individual freedom of choice in marriage. At the same time the rituals which emphasized the lineage are dropped or modified. The fearful fecundity of a double birth no longer appals men and the twin ritual which used to bring together all the living members of a lineage of three generations is not celebrated at all. At a puberty ritual a pagan girl may be given the *ikipiki* medicine, the symbol of 'the blood of the lineage' by her mother, but there is no seclusion and elaborate feasting, no sacrifice of the bull of puberty that her father's shades may 'move aside a little' to make way for the shades of her husband's lineage. Only at a funeral do kinsmen still gather and celebrate, for many still fear the shades, and at a funeral the heir is installed and the importance of property and the inheritance of it has not diminished one whit. As we have seen, the traditional religion was formulated in terms of kinship; the gods were senior kinsmen; but today God, *Kyala*, is no ancestor; to pagans as well as to Christians he is separate and supreme. Men are still classified by their lineages, and one of the topics of village questions is how Prince Charles can be heir to the British throne when his father is not of the house of Windsor; but already in the economic field, and increasingly in the religious, it is the family of parents and children which is now dominant, not the lineage.

Divorce is far more frequent than formerly, partly because women claim a greater freedom of behaviour than before, as well as the right of choosing their own husbands, and are supported by the courts. As one village headman put it, 'Formerly a father beat his daughter with a stick if she ran home and sent her back to her husband who also beat her.' The women reject the old pattern of subservience which was expressed in crouching to greet a man, and addressing him in a very deferential fashion; the men observe, and

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

881 I went to the place and got permission to enter the hut in which the first part of the ceremony took place. I found there the parents of the girl, the girl sitting enveloped in clothes in one corner of the hut, and some older females, one of whom was the acting *unnyago*. Some male guests were also present[29]. As the girl had had her first catamenia the present ceremony marked at the same time the end of her preparation for marriage.

[273 278] The *unnyago* prepared a beverage of beer in which a light-brown medical powder *(imbondanya)* was put. First the girl had to drink from it, then the parents followed. This beverage was believed to strengthen *(ubusisya)* the consumers. Then a spear was handed to the girl by her father, and the girl handed it in turn to some relatives of the bridegroom waiting near the hut. These persons had to bring the [582 583] spear to the girl's bridegroom as a sign that he could now marry the girl[31], but not before he had brought a bull to the girl's father. After [431] this the girl, now sitting in the middle of the hut, was given small gifts from the participants in the ceremony.

[291 342 516 868 415]

Practical instruction of premature girls in house-hold matters.

[302] Following this the whole body of the girl was anointed before the door of the hut. The *unnyago* began by anointing her legs; then the [278] girl herself continued it. The ointment was prepared from castor oil and a powder of red wood *(Kipimba*, found commonly in the environment of Lake Rukwa). At this moment a male participant in the cere- [606] mony chanced to, come out of the hut, and suddenly a young woman

[29] Cf. Wilson, Introduction, p. 258; The Study of African Society, p. 11 (The Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. 2, 1938).

[31] *ukwega*: to take (also as regards marrying); *ubwegia*: nuptials.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 travellers in the area all comment on the excellently built huts and the cleanness of the villages.[1] Lord Lugard calls their huts 'the neatest and the most wonderfully built of any I have seen in Africa, excepting only the houses of the king and chiefs in Uganda.'[2] This high standard of building necessitates hard work and co-operation between a number of men and women.

c. *Cultivation*

241 The primary unit in cultivation is the elementary family consisting of a man, his wife and unmarried children or, in the case of a polygynous family, of the house group of a wife and her children, together with her husband, part of whose time is spent in hoeing her fields.[3] There is also, however, some co-operation with other relatives, and with village neighbours.

241 476 Unmarried sons hoe with their fathers and very often they bring one or more village-mates to work with them, making return, in due course, by working with these friends for their respective fathers. The boys who come are fed after hoeing, and should be fed generously, by the woman in whose fields they have worked. After his betrothal a young man comes in the same way [584] with village-mates to hoe for his father-in-law, as well as continuing to hoe for his own father. Once his wife joins him they have their own fields, and the bulk of his time is spent in hoeing for her, but he still hoes one or two strips (*embaka*) for his own father and for his father-in-law. Such help is reciprocal, for his 'mothers' (i.e. his own mother and his father's other wives) and sisters, as well as the 'mothers' and sisters of his wife, will help his wife with her tasks of sowing, weeding, and reaping. From the point of view of village organization the essential fact is that young men working for fathers and fathers-in-law very frequently bring one or two village-mates with them. A typical hoeing group is made up of a man with his sons, and one or two village-mates of the sons.

Larger hoeing parties, to which not only youths, but also older men come, are fairly common, especially among the Kukwe.

[1] Elton, op. cit., p. 323; D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyasa' in *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 116–7.

[2] F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), Vol. I, p. 52.

[3] The respective rights of the husband and of each wife have been analysed by Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., pp. 16–29.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

156 (*ukumoga*) is not confined to the company of contemporaries of the same sex. Indeed the liveliest dancing is before members of [535 the opposite sex, and is often the preliminary to love-making; but 584] full opportunity for display is thought to depend upon living in a village, rather than in scattered homesteads. Some Nyakyusa are 166 colonists, cultivating and building out in unoccupied bush country five or six miles from a settled area; but living out in the bush 156 is disliked by most people and is done, we were told, only for gain. Cattle are said to increase very much more quickly out in bush, where grazing is plentiful, than they do on the village pastures, and the yield of virgin fields made in the bush is high. Hence the Nyakyusa dictum: 'People live in the villages for display, in the bush for gain.' And individuals commonly display themselves as members of a group—a group of contemporaries of the same sex, that is, of village-mates.

d. Decency

834 The basis of Nyakyusa sexual morality is the separation of the sexual activities of successive generations, more particularly the separation of the sexual activities of mothers and sons, and the complete segregation of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

Nyakyusa informants hold that boys are sent out of their parents' 834 village to build apart so that their parents may have privacy. Mwaisumo explained: 'If a boy over ten years old stays at home 864 to sleep, he is laughed at by his friends, and his own parents send him away. They say, "If he sleeps at home he will hear what his parents talk about at night"; the night is always full of lewd talk; and he may even see them undressing. He will grow up a fool, with little wisdom! You see at the boys' village', he went on to say, 'the older boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love-making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger ones listen to these things and that's all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn, but we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night; and that is very bad, that is foolishness. But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to listen, that is how children grow up.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

582 Marriage with the daughter of a father's age-mate is also favoured, though she is called 'a village-sister' (*ulilumbu pa kipanga*), and such a marriage means that a girl has to avoid a father-in-law in her own father's village.

837 835 Adultery with the wife of a village neighbour is regarded as a heinous offence, much worse than ordinary adultery, and so also is the seduction of the wife of one's father, or of one of his village neighbours, even though a father's wives are eventually inherited by his son. 'It is bad,' Mwaisumo said, 'because they are friends of one's own mother.' That is to say, there is a direct extension of the incest taboo so long as the father is alive. A son who has committed adultery with his own father's wives is afraid to attend his father's funeral lest he fall dead.[1] [764]

584 Since marriage between 'brothers and sisters of the village' is approved, courtship goes on between the youths of a boys' village and the girls of their fathers' village, with this limitation, that brothers and sisters, or cousins—the descendants of a common grandfather or great-grandfather—must not be present at a flirtation. Boys from the same age-village go about together, and they commonly flirt with any group of girls they meet, whether from their fathers' village or not. It is then that the incest taboos are learnt. If one of the boys is known to be related to one of the girls his companions send him away saying: 'Don't you see your sister is here? You cannot come.'

Formerly, we were told, girls of the same village lived together (until they were married) in a girls' house (*isaka*), where they were visited secretly by lovers, who had external relations with them. Such girls' houses no longer exist among the Nyakyusa, each daughter living in her father's homestead until she is married, and sleeping with her own mother, or with a stepmother when her father visits her mother, or with the other children in a separate division of the long house, if her mother is the only wife. Only when she is keeping an older companion company at the initiation ritual does she sleep with the other girls of the village in a hut provided by the 'bride's' father.[2] But permanent girls' houses still exist in Ngonde. There each family

[1] Occasionally an elderly man gives his son leave to sleep with his wives in secret, while he (the father) is still alive; then an elaborate ritual is performed on the father's death.

[2] This hut is referred to as *isaka* also, but only during the initiation; it is to be distinguished from a hut regularly reserved for girls.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

usually has a separate hut for its girls, to which, we were told, 584
their lovers come secretly by night.

Nyakyusa informants connected the existence of girls' houses 582
with the marriage age. In Ngonde the marriage age of girls is
much higher than it is among the Nyakyusa, partly because there [795]
are many more Christians (45 per cent as against 16 per cent)
who do not allow polygyny, partly because even the girls from
pagan families in Ngonde dislike marrying a polygynist, and
partly because a much higher percentage of young men are away at
work, than from Nyakyusa country. Formerly, they said, the marri-
age age was higher among the Nyakyusa also, and then the Nyak-
yusa had *isaka*. It is certain that among the Nyakyusa betrothal [881]
of a girl has long taken place before puberty, for the husband
plays an essential part in the puberty ritual, and there were always
some girls who were betrothed when quite tiny; but the evidence
is fairly clear that the average age of betrothal among the pagans
has been going down. The Nyakyusa view is that no man in his
senses, who is able to marry, will engage a little girl of eight if he
can find one approaching puberty; and it is the scarcity of wives
that makes men 'marry' little girls. It is also clear that the number [231]
of cattle in the country, and their rate of circulation, has increased
during the last two decades, so there are 'too many cattle chasing
too few brides' with the result that the marriage age of girls
has fallen, and the number of cattle given at marriage has
increased.

Once she is betrothed, a girl's 'husband' has exclusive sexual 584
rights over her, and she cannot entertain lovers in the *isaka*. The 836
only two occasions on which she may flirt and have external 881
relations with a man other than her husband, are during an initia-
tion ceremony, when the girls of the village who have not yet
reached puberty sleep with their fellow who is being initiated,
and there entertain young men, and when she accompanies a
bride to her husband's house. A bridegroom is expected to have
external relations with his wife's two friends, as well as with his
wife, on the night they bring her to his house. Love-making at the
initiation-marriage ritual is held to be 'part of the ritual' and a
means of sex education, and a husband can make no complaint
about his 'wife' receiving lovers then, provided that penetration
does not take place.

Homosexual practices are said to be very common in the boys' 838

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

587 woman. It is scarcely surprising that the seduction of the young
835 wives of an ageing father is a common theme for scandal. We do not suggest that the Oedipus complex involving own mother and son never occurs among the Nyakyusa; what we are concerned to show is that the relationship between a man and his stepmothers is particularly likely to be ambivalent.

593 It may be asked why there is so much emphasis on the segregation of sons from their parents, and not of daughters. The answer
584 again lies in the sex difference in the marriage age. Betrothed girls pay long visits to their husbands even before puberty, and directly after the initiation which follows first menstruation they leave their fathers' home to join their husbands. During her initiation a girl carefully avoids her father and his contemporaries in the village, and after marriage, when she returns home to visit, she must observe certain restrictions not applicable to an unmarried girl: notably she must not approach her parents' bed, and informants interpret the taboo as being due to the danger of mixing the sex activities of mother and daughter.

621 In short, we argue that there is a connection between the existence of age-villages and the fear of incest between father-in-law
835 and daughter-in-law on the one hand, and between stepson and stepmother on the other, and we suggest that certain features of the Nyakyusa social system facilitate incest of the second type. The incest theme elaborated in one fashion among people organized in clans and practising clan exogamy, and in another among people practising brother—sister avoidance, finds yet a different expression in age-villages, of which the overt purpose is the separation of ons and mothers, of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

c. Good company

577 The emphasis on the separation of parents and children is matched by the value laid on good fellowship (*ukwangala*)
621 between contemporaries. A main end of age-villages, in the Nyakyusa view, is to allow men the enjoyment of congenial company, that is the company of friends and equals. The value of *ukwangala* is, indeed, directly linked with the age-village organization: to attain it men must build not only in villages, rather than in scattered homesteads, but also with contemporaries rather than with kin, since there can be no free and easy inter-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

CHAPTER IV

THE RITUAL OF PUBERTY AND MARRIAGE

I. IN SELYA AND MUNGONDE

(a) *The events*

881 585 584 836 THE puberty ritual for girls among the Nyakyusa is fused with the marriage ritual. Girls are usually betrothed well before puberty and they may live with their 'husbands' for some time before they grow up, for the view of most Nyakyusa is that a girl should become accustomed to her husband gradually and that it is good for her to visit him from time to time, sweeping his house, cleaning the byre, drawing water and cooking for him, and learning the art of love-making with him and no one else. While she is still very immature it is insisted that he should only have intercourse with her *inter crura*, but when she is approaching puberty he often has full intercourse with her. No legal case can be brought against him in court if he does so, provided that he has not forced or frightened her, but his friends may tell him he is foolish, and is 'teaching his wife adultery', since now he can have no proof, in the physical examination at puberty, that she has not slept with other men. No stigma attaches to the girl; if it is her husband who has deflowered her she is acclaimed in the ritual as a virgin. In some pagan families, however, notably those of chiefs, girls are not allowed to visit their husbands before puberty. The girl's father has the right to [171] refuse it, for before the ritual a wife is only 'borrowed'. Unlike the neighbouring Bemba, the Nyakyusa are not anxious lest the girl should conceive before her first menstruation—if she should do so the ritual is performed in the ordinary way—but many fathers dislike letting their daughters go before the main bulk of the marriage cattle have been handed over. Opposition on the part of the missions and the Administration to early marriage also influences the more sophisticated. The period of betrothal is long, for pagan [145] girls are commonly engaged from about 8 years old onwards, and the average age of puberty appears to be between 15 and 16.[1]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

783 If a bride is her husband's first or second wife[1] (but not if she is
881 a junior wife) she washes with him ritually at his homestead. The officiant (*unyago*), who may be her husband's own mother or some other mature woman chosen by her, pours out medicated water, and groom and bride wash together, his hands being above and hers below. This usually takes place about a month after her seclusion, but neither it nor the following events are timed to coincide with periods.

881 In one ritual we watched, that of the daughter of Chief Mwai-
584 hojo, the go-between in the marriage and the brother of the groom
[43] came to fetch the bride for the ritual washing (*ukusukusula*), bringing her a small gift of 10 cents, four weeks after her first menstruation. She washed in medicated water with her husband at his house and returned to her father's the same night (May 19). Next day, about 3 p.m., the groom's 'mothers' (*abakamwana*), twelve of them, and one girl, arrived carrying six stems of bananas and four enormous pots of curds for the ritual of *ukwingesia*, 'putting her in'. They approached, singing two of the ritual songs:

Litubuke, litubuke,
Tubuke mwailugula.
Let us go, let us go,
Let us go for ever and never return.

and

Akasyunguti kambagila
Paliti po pabuko bwangu.
The *syunguti* tree suited me,
The place is like that of my own in-laws.

The bride was carried first by one and then by another of her 'mothers' (*abanna*)[2] while a compact group of mothers and maids, with the bride raised high in their midst, danced to and fro. And all the time she held a mat to shield her head and face. After five minutes or so the dancing stopped and the 'mother-in-law' sat down in the shade, as Kyobwe (a senior wife of Mwaihojo who acted in place of the bride's own mother who was divorced) came to greet them formally and receive their gifts of food. Meanwhile the bride herself knelt on the ground beside Kyobwe's hut, her head covered with a mat, and surrounded by her maids. Presently

[1] Informants differed on this point. Some maintained that chiefs alone washed with two wives, commoners with one only. Others insisted that commoners also washed with two.

[2] i.e. her father's wives, and wives of his brothers and neighbours.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selym, Mu Ngonde

the groom's mothers began to dance again. They approached the group of girls and the groom's own mother took the mat off the kneeling bride and spread a large scarlet cloth over her. Then she lifted her on to her shoulders and danced with her. The two parties coalesced and danced together, singing the ritual song *Tukulelela akela* (We sing a dirge). Everyone was smiling and joyful despite the song. By 3.40 the dancing was over and a large mat was spread for the 'mothers-in-law' to sit down in the shade. The bride knelt again with bent head covered by her mat and surrounded by her maids. 881 584

At this point Mwaihojo, her father, began scolding angrily because the groom's party had not brought a bull. 'Always when people come to marry my daughters they bring a bull, always. It looks as if the girl had been to visit her husband and you had found fault with her and did not like her.' The groom's mothers replied: 'We are poor.'

Mwaihojo: 'How can you say you are poor? You can find the marriage-cattle, you say. Why didn't you bring some of them? Then I would have killed one to eat now. See, I have killed a bull already. If I had known that you were not going to bring one I'd have killed another.'

The groom's mothers sat with downcast heads. For a commoner's daughter bananas and milk are adequate for the *ukwingesia* feast, but a chief has the right to expect a bull. 881 584 643

Presently the groom's own mother and one of her companions entered Kyobwe's hut to roast bananas and grind some of the bark of a tree they had brought for medicine. The powder was put into a small calabash with water. The bride knelt in the doorway of Kyobwe's hut and, as her mother-in-law poured out the medicated water, she washed her hands and wrists and mouth in it. The bride's half-brother, a lad of 15 or 16 years, was washed also, standing by the doorway of Kyobwe's hut, though he was most reluctant to co-operate. He kept looking towards his elder brother Lazarus, a Christian, and did not submit until Lazarus said: 'All right, go ahead!' Kyobwe, seeing his reluctance, said: 'You need not wash if you don't wish to, it doesn't matter. Perhaps we'll leave it out as it's European times now.' Then finally she said: 'Well, just hold out one hand,' and she washed it. Had the bride been the eldest daughter of either of her father's two senior wives he would have washed in place of her brother, and had her own mother not been divorced she would have washed also. 881 584 [177]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

881 ●584 One of the women of the groom's party then fetched two banana leaves, one of sweet banana and one of plantain, and put them down in Kyobwe's hut. Meantime the mother of the groom changed the bride's belt and the bark-cloth worn between the legs, dressing her in new ones, and burying the old cloth, soiled by first menstruation, in a bundle of dry banana leaves. These she placed on top of the fresh leaves already mentioned, covered the pile with a small rough mat, and sprinkled it with powdered medicine. The bride knelt on the mat and, with head bent, ate roast bananas also sprinkled with the powdered medicine, which her mother-in-law handed to her. Her young brother who had washed with her also shared the bananas. After this the bride is free to wash, but not yet to oil herself.

The groom's mothers were feasted on meat and bananas—two large and two small basketfuls—and returned home. The atmosphere all through the ritual was one of rejoicing, and it was markedly a women's affair. The chief and several other men were present but, apart from his scolding of the women for not bringing a bull, the chief played no part at all.

[431] According to strict custom the groom's mothers should have come a second time with gifts of food (*ukusumbulela*)[1] to cement the friendship, but since the groom was in a hurry to get to work on the Lupa gold-fields this act was omitted. 'They brought the two lots of food together,' we were told, 'some of the milk and bananas were for the *ukwingesia* and some for the *ukusumbulela*.'

583 535 Three weeks later (June 14) the groom, with his go-between and other friends, brought the main body of marriage-cattle (*ukukwa*), and they danced the stamping dance (*ukukanya nganya*) in the bride's father's courtyard and on the litter of the seclusion hut, brandishing their spears as they stamped to the war rhythm. The bride's companions and mothers danced in a separate group, one mother carrying the bride on her shoulders. A lavish feast of cooked food was set before the groom and his friends, and they in their turn scattered pieces of meat and cents which the bride's [578] maids and 'mothers' scrambled for. Meantime a quarrel broke out between the bride's father and her brothers over the distribution of the marriage-cattle.

881 584 Six weeks after the *ukwingesia* (July 29) the bride, accompanied by two of her father's wives, two of her maids, and a third girl invited because she was a good singer, went to wash ritually again

[1] *Ukusumbulela*: to give a present for the first time to a new friend.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

at the groom's home (*ukusukusula*). The party was given a hen 881
when they arrived and a second the next morning. The groom and 584
some of his friends spent the night with the bride and her friends. [431]
(He and she lie together on this occasion but do not yet have full
intercourse.)[1] In the morning the mother-in-law shaved the [836]
bride's head, eyebrows, and eyelashes, leaving only a small tuft on the nape of her neck. Then she mixed water with powdered medicine and poured it for groom and bride to wash. The groom washed his hands and mouth only, the bride her hands and mouth and whole body. During her seclusion she might not use oil or the red powder favoured as a cosmetic by Nyakyusa women,[2] but after this third washing she was free to do so, and she oiled herself meticulously. Meantime the groom was shaved by one of his [302]
friends.

On the same day the bride returned to her father's homestead with her own party and seven 'mothers' of the groom who brought five stems of bananas, a pot of water, and a small bull for the ritual of 'clearing out the litter' (*ukusosya ulufumbo*). She herself was wearing the skin of a bull over her head—'she wears any skin she can get hold of'. One of the groom's party shaved off the last tuft of [302]
her hair and buried it carefully in the *ulufumbo*, the litter of banana leaves on which she had slept and sat during her seclusion. Had her own mother been present she would have shaved also and so [183]
should the brother, but he did not do so. The groom's mother and Kyobwe (representing the bride's mother) carried out the litter to the edge of the banana plantation surrounding the homestead. As they did so they whispered to each other. Kyobwe said the bride was a little liar. Her husband had offered her 1s. to take to her mothers and she had refused it saying: 'No, they swear at me and grudge me food.' 'She's your child,' said the mother-in-law. 'No,' said Kyobwe, 'she's another woman's child, she's a foolish child.' Every scrap of litter in the hut was carefully collected and a little of the soil below it scraped off and carried out with the leaves. All who had helped with the clearing washed their hands carefully.

Then the groom's mother made a basin of two banana leaves close to the pile of litter. Into it she poured the water her party had brought with them, and sprinkled in powdered medicine in

[1] One or two informants maintained that 'she must not refuse him now or he will refuse to wash with her, saying: "She is not my wife."' But others were insistent that according to strict custom only intercourse *inter crura* was allowed. Full intercourse at this time would make nonsense of the *ilibelage* ritual which follows. [833]

[2] Formerly also by men: cf. V. Giraud, *Les Lacs de l'Afrique Equatoriale* (1890), p. 176.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

881 the form of a cross. The bride knelt down and carefully washed
584 her whole body. When she had done so the groom's mother told one of her party to light the pile of litter. As it blazed up, the bride leapt across it. Three of her maids and a married half-sister had plucked banana suckers, of the sort used for propagating bananas, and they struck her with them as she leapt back and forth over the fire. She was nervous, though the jump was easy, and her maids jeered at her. Then she returned to Kyobwe's hut and dried herself in the sun. Now that the litter was burnt she had come out of her seclusion and was free to sleep on ordinary mats; from the entering of seclusion to the coming out, she could only sleep on the litter, except for the night preceding the burning which she spent with her husband.

584 The mothers of the groom were feasted on sweet potatoes and
585 curds provided by the bride's family, and there was a discussion as to whether the bull the groom's party had brought was 'milk to eat with the bananas' for the bride's family, or 'the bull of virginity'. The bride's father insisted that it was only a relish for the feast and he did not prepare the beer for the final act of the ritual. Two weeks later the bride eloped with her husband because he had not got another bull to bring her father, and the final rites were never performed for her.

584 On the night before the ritual of 'clearing the litter' the bride's father should put millet to soak for beer, and when it is ready the groom's mothers come for the *ilitemelo* and *ulufundo*, that is, to 'shave the sprouting hair' and instruct the bride; but for the daughter of Mwasofu, for whom we watched it performed, it was long delayed. She had reached puberty seven months previously and before that had lived for three months with the man who had first betrothed her, but he had been unable to find sufficient cattle for the marriage, and the ritual was completed with another man.

585 The groom's 'mothers' arrived about one-thirty, by which time everyone was getting impatient. The men had nearly finished their beer and grumbled that the groom's party was late, and the bride herself was begging her mother to be allowed to go and bathe. Her mother replied emphatically: 'No, no, how can you go? The mothers-in-law will wash you and dress you in brass body-rings. That's the ritual.' Six women came in the groom's party—his own mother, his sister, two 'village mothers', and two young married women of the groom's village. A large mat was spread for

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

vessel of milk and two stems of bananas. We do not carry her in triumph. The mothers-in-law do not bring the powdered medicine.' One informant maintained that the bride was always examined before she washed with her husband (if she was a chief wife) and we once saw the bride examined at the *ukwingesia* ritual, but the examination before handing over the bull is the only one mentioned by most people. What is certain is that virginity must be publicly demonstrated in the ritual and that it is honoured.

After the shaving and instruction, the bride goes round her father's village visiting the men who have not already given her a gift. She is accompanied by the wife of the go-between who represented her father in the marriage negotiations. Each of her father's fellow villagers (as well as her elder brothers and her father's full sisters) should give her something—a bark-cloth, a chicken, a calabash, a spearhead, or some coins, as he greets her. These the bride divides between her maids, the officiant who treated her in the ritual, her husband, and herself; to the wife of the go-between is due one pot of the beer brewed for the shaving ritual, to take home to her husband.

If the agreed number of marriage-cattle have been handed over, the bride's father puts millet to soak for beer immediately after the rite of instruction has been completed and the bull of puberty eaten. When the brewing is ready the bride is formally taken to her husband's house (*ukumbeka*) by a 'mother' and one or two of her maids. Her own mother never goes—the woman of the party is usually a junior wife of the bride's father or the wife of the go-between. They take with them one or two pots of beer, a basketful of plantains to roast for her husband, two or three cooking pots, a log of firewood, a calabash of light ointment (*isyemba*), and a little pot of brown ointment (*imbale*) for anointing her husband and his friends in the village. 'What the wife brings when she comes for the first time is for all the men of the village to use to anoint themselves. They come every day to use it until it is finished.' These ointments are brought by every wife but they are especially important if the bride is her husband's first wife, and it is his bachelor neighbours who mostly use them. The bride also brings the fine mat and several coarse ones which she has woven during her seclusion, bark-cloths she has made for herself, and three hearth bricks (*amafigo*) carefully moulded for her by her mother out of clay and manure mixed with medicines. These are set up in her

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selm, Mu Ngonde

danger of incest. They account for the rule by a myth which tells how a certain chief looked on his son's wife and saw that she was beautiful and took her, and men were shocked, and forbade a father-in-law and daughter-in-law ever to see one another again. And this taboo, they say, is the reason why fathers and sons must live in separate villages. To avoid (*ukutila*) is 'to fear, to show respect'. Avoidance occurs between women in a limited degree—a girl shows respect to her father's sister, a daughter-in-law to her mother-in-law and her husband's father's sister by not looking at them directly or touching their backs; but these women are in some measure identified with father and father-in-law, and the taboos are most stringent regarding things or actions which are associated with sexual activity. The behaviour of Nyakyusa women suggests very strongly that the fundamental idea in *ukutila* is avoidance of incest.[1] Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is the primary rule of good manners and morals in domestic relations, and is constantly expressed in everyday activities.

Besides being a celebration of the change from childhood to womanhood, and of movement from the lineage of her father to that of her husband, the puberty—marriage ritual includes a legal contract. Either at the betrothal, or when the bulk of the marriage-cattle are handed over, the groom's go-between thrusts a spear into the earth of the swept courtyard and there, publicly, before her kinsfolk and neighbours, the bride must pluck it out and hand it to her father, in token of her consent to the marriage. 'It means: "With this spear you may slay me if I run away from my husband." And her father keeps the spear and may kill her if she does—some fathers did so in the old days.'

After taking the spear the father plucks a banana leaf and hands his daughter the mid-rib with which she strikes one of the cows brought by her husband, and all the women of the homestead acclaim her. Thus her acceptance of the marriage is demonstrated. And each time an instalment of the marriage-cattle is handed over, the go-between of her father and the go-between of the husband must both be present as witnesses; and they notify their sons of the contracts they have so witnessed so that the sons may give evidence after the death of their fathers if necessary.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 85-6, 106, 123, 160-2; 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde, p. 127-8.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

byre or strike a beast with a stick 'until the twins had grown up' 845
(an elastic phrase), 'but if he has no sons to milk a doctor comes and gives him a medicine to drink in the house, then he can milk the cows outside. To enter the byre is altogether taboo.' He and his attendant during his seclusion drink the milk of one cow only, which has been specially treated. All his wives avoid milk until the end of the ritual and the mother of twins herself 'can only begin to clean the byre after she has borne at least one other child'—some say two or three other children. If a cow is given her for milk (after the end of the ritual) it is taboo for others to share that milk. If these taboos are broken it is said that the cattle will purge and die, or their legs will swell.

It is also taboo for a parent of twins to pass behind people—he (or she) must always pass in front. 'They fear that if he passes behind, he (the parent) will always have twins.'

Twins, and their parents who have been through the full ritual, are thereafter immune from the danger of twin birth and may even go in to greet a mother of twins—Mwakobela's sister, who herself had borne twins, entered his wife's seclusion hut. There are, however, two or three taboos which apply to twins in later life. It is taboo for one of a pair of twin girls to get married without the 584 ●
other. Angombwike explained:

If a man comes wooing the first he must do it secretly, and when he speaks to her father he must do it secretly, he may bring cows but no [761]
one knows about it; if it becomes known they say the younger might curse herself (*ukuibusa*) and die. Then when another has come wooing the other, secretly, the father tells them both to come wooing openly *on the same day*. They come with cows. Then the father summons all his children, and the twin girls, and tells them: 'These men have come to marry you, do you like them?' And he asks the elder (*mkase*): 'Which do you like?' She chooses. Even if she chooses the man who came for her sister he must accept, and if he tries to protest people will hush him up at once, for it is the custom for the elder to get married first. Then the younger (*mwindeke*) says she likes the other one and their father takes the cattle. If either one is wooed secretly before the other she must stay quietly at home till a wooer comes for her sister. If she did not (whichever way it happened) the other might die. It is common knowledge in the boys' village here that of X's twin daughters a lover has only come for the younger, none for the elder. And so both are still unmarried.

Twins and their parents, the fearful ones (*abipaya*), and other 264
people who have been treated with medicines, eat first-fruits of 789

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngónde FN17
Nyakyusa
Ndali

765 they seek two or three officiants, and they build a temporary hut behind the living huts where they strain three pots of beer, which they call 'the beer of the shades'. These officiants do not bathe their bodies because they say: 'Let us be with the shade when we make the beer (*tujeje nagwe wacyala ku ndolombe abosinse*).' The rest of the beer is strained in the house.

When they have brewed it they take one potful from the temporary hut and pour the contents on top of the grave; then they dig a hole on the grave and place in it a little pot of beer. What is left in these two pots they drink, together with the rest of the beer, and there is much drumming.

766 After a long time has passed, perhaps two years, if there has been sickness in the home, they think that the deceased is making them giddy, is causing them to be ill. So they dig up the corpse and take all the bones and finger and toe nails. If one is left the sickness is not cured. When Mulape, the grandchild of Mwakafunga, was ill they dug up the corpse and the illness ceased very quickly. They pile up the bones which have been dug up.

III. MARRIAGE NEGOTIATIONS AND GIFTS

584 ANGOMBWEKE: One of our comrades in Kabembe heard that there was an unmarried girl at the Chief Mwasumbwe's, so one Monday he said to three of us: 'Don't go away, friends, we are going to woo the chief's daughter at Mwasumbwe's.' So we put on our best clothes, those we wear to church, and we went to the home of the father of the girl. He was the younger brother of the Chief Mwasumbwe by the same mother, and he told us: 'I am not the father (*ugwise*). She is my own child, but the father is the chief. Go to him' [i.e. authority over his daughter rested with his elder brother]. The girl had reached puberty. Someone else had married her, but her father had received only one cow, so the elder brother, the chief, was angry and took away the girl from her husband. My friend had never met her, never. He had just heard that there was an unmarried girl at that place, because the custom of making love to girls in the long grass is not a traditional one: a girl used to stay at her father's house. A young man went to the father before he spoke with the girl; he never spoke to her in secret. Then the father would send the girl to speak with the young man. She came and sat down and the young man looked at her closely and his friends who accompanied him helped him. Formerly a young man did not wear many clothes, he only wore one cloth in front, and a brass body-ring, so that his whole belly might be seen, and she might look closely. Also he sits high on a stool, while his fellows sit on the ground, that he may be seen by the girl.

[177 291] [584]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

be seen by the girl. Then the girl asks his fellows: 'What is he like, 584
friends?' And they reply: 'He's a real man.' Then she agrees to the 'go-between', saying: 'Indeed, I love them [*sic*].' But if she does not like them she refuses, and the young men go away. Yes, indeed, the girl always had power to refuse; no one ever compelled her to agree, even though the man had many cattle. The fathers always agreed for their part, saying: 'My daughter is good, she refuses at my house, and tells me (i.e. she does not accept and then run away, which is bad).' And if the girl has refused the young men go away, but others laugh and jeer at them, saying: 'So-and-so's daughter refused.'

'Oh?'

'Yes. Indeed, they are horrible young men, their bodies are very ugly.'

And the young men also look closely at the girl, they look very closely, and if they see that her breasts are thin, and her face is ugly, then they go and tell her father's friend, saying: 'We are leaving her, tell her father that we will not marry his daughter. Then he tells her father, who just says: 'All right, let them leave her.' But the custom of wooing in secret first, before a man has been to the father, began among Christians. The Christians say: 'It is good to woo in secret [77] first,' but pagan fathers still object, saying: 'We will not eat the cattle properly.'

So when the father of the girl had told us thus, we went to the chief's place, and sat down under a tree. The chief's wives sat down at a distance. Then we trembled and sweat came on our bodies. I said to my fellows: 'Do we just sit? Let us ask.' And I got up and asked the chief's wives: 'Is the chief at home?'

'Oh! Do you wish the chief?'

'Yes, we wish to see him.'

'But he is at another's wife's place. Shall we call him?'

'Please.'

'Where have you come from?'

'We come from Kabembe.'

Then I returned to my friends and the chief's wives called him, saying: 'Four young men from Kabembe have come and want to see you about something.'

Then the chief came with three of his men, and they greeted us. . . . Then the chief called to his wives: 'Bring some food for them to eat,' and he got up himself to cut a stem of bananas.

Then I said to my fellows: 'Friends, do we just chat to the chief without asking him? One should get up and tell the councillor that we had come to ask for a girl.'

Then they all said: 'You are brave, Angombwike, you get up.' 'No, I am ashamed to get up twice, let So-and-so get up.' He got up and told one of the chief's men: 'We have something to discuss; we

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

584 have heard that there is a girl who is unmarried here, it is about this we wished to see the chief, there is nothing else. But we are poor, we know that we have not got cattle.'

'Oh! But here there is no girl. There is a nubile girl at the home of the younger brother of the chief, across the stream.'

'It is she we want, indeed.'

Then they told the chief this, and he came and sat among his men, and I went with my fellow who had told the councillor, and we sat down with them.

Then the chief said: 'You have come to seek a girl?'

We: 'Yes, indeed, Chief, it is for this that we wished to see you. There is not anything else. But we beg you, we know that we are very poor. We have not got cattle. That we know. But we will make ourselves your servants, and hoe for you.'

Then he said: 'Who are you?'

'Do you ask our names before we have agreed? I am a son of Syelage.'

'That Mwaisyelage who has built in Bulindanajo in the country of Mwaipopo?'

'Yes.'

'Indeed, you are like your father, and Linolemu[1] himself, you are like him, we were friends, they were always clever fellows. But who wants the girl?'

He asked all our names, then I pointed out the suitor and told him his name.

Then he said to his councillor: 'Tell them that M. (his younger brother) has many funerals in his family, his children die frequently. Perhaps it will create quarrels later on if the girl dies. We have lazy people in our lineage.' So he told us. Then I replied and said: 'We are all like that. . . . We have come to create kinship, we want funerals, to bury one another. If one has died, let his fellow come to mourn at his place.'

'Yes, but some of us exceed in dying.'

'That is what we want, funerals, and burying one another.'

'All right, I agree.' (To the councillor): 'Call the girl and let them speak with her.'

And he went to call her.

Then we put our fellow, the suitor, on a stool, and I and my friend and the councillor, the go-between of the father, went closer to the girl than the others to hear what she said. Then I spoke to the girl, saying: 'We sought you, we want something else of you, we love you. It is L. M. there who wishes to marry.' . . . We spoke with her. . . . Then she agreed and said: 'Indeed, I love them, he is my husband, I love him. I am startled looking at him, I am startled indeed.' Then the coun-

[1] Angumbwike's grandfather who was dead.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

584 ●
[465]

cillor said: 'Give the girl a betrothal gift.' The groom gave her 3s., and I gave the councillor 1s. Then the councillor told the chief, saying: 'The girl has agreed.' 'Thank you, tell them that they must bring four cows.'

Then they called us to eat. They put us in a house which they had prepared with many fine mats, and we sat down. They gave us four calabashes of curds, and a wooden spoon, and we were four. Then we trembled and sweat came on our bodies, especially I, because I knew that they would come to me, the go-between, and I thought 'cleverness is bad!' [i.e. his ready tongue had put him in the most prominent position]. I trembled, thinking: 'When they come to my place what shall I give them?' But the others ate joyfully. I only ate a little and with fear. Then we saw much food. Indeed, very much. What should we do? We called our wife [*sic*] and gave her one big calabash. Then we gathered together and looked at the food. What should we do? Then we called the councillor with whom we had spoken and said: 'Help us, we are defeated.'

'No. The chief will be angry, saying: "Why are you depriving them of their food?"'

Then I went to the chief and said: 'We beg people to help us, the food is so much we are overcome.' He laughed, all of them laughed. 'Are you overcome, Mwaisyelage?'

'Yes.'

Then he gave us four of his people, and they entered the house, and we gave them the curds and went off quickly because we feared lest they compel us to eat more and we should be ill. I put 50 cents in the basket which the chief's wives had brought us with calabashes. It was my 50 cents because the groom had finished what he had; he had only brought 4s. But it was not really mine, it belonged to my mother who had given it to me to buy groundnuts but I asked all of them, saying: 'Friends, who has fifty cents?' None of them had it, so I thought: 'How about this? Will my mother beat me? Is she not my mother? According to custom I will give it.' And the chief's wives accompanied us on the road and praised us, saying we were men of wisdom, because we had put 50 cents in their basket.

So on Thursday we went with four very good cows, some of them in milk. Because it is the work of the go-between to give the owner of the woman wise advice, saying: 'Choose good cattle to begin with, the weaker ones will follow.' And I told them: 'Let us be many friends; the first time he defeated us with his food; let us be many.' So ten of us went, and when they arrived they gave us six calabashes of curds with the whey drained off. They praised us because the cows were very good, but I told them: 'There is another which is sick at home, it will come when you have called your people to hoe, you will kill it to rejoice them.' All laughed and said: 'Let him bring it, it is Lindemma

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

584 indeed, as Linolemu always was with his cunning. And they are alike in their shortness.' [Angombwike was short of stature.]

Then they told us: 'Bring five marriage-cattle (*akakwe*), then we shall agree to hand over the girl. We will send a messenger to call you.' And we went off.

Then the husband sought four cows, because we always took less than they asked, even though there was another available, we did not take it because they would say: 'They are rich, they boast of their property,' and ask for further cattle, more than they would otherwise have done.

One day we were surprised by a messenger, saying: 'Come tomorrow for the *akakwe*.' Many of us went, people from Mwangomo's country and from Mwaipopo's, many Christians and many pagans. The pagans danced and the Christians sang songs. The groom had relatives in both countries. Before his conversion he had lived in Mwaipopo's country, but after it he moved to Kabembe, to Mwangomo's country, so he brought his fellows, the sons of Mwaipopo, and those of Mwangomo. And I, the go-between, brought my fellows from Mwaipopo's country, for it is always customary for the go-between to have a following.

When we arrived the older ones among us told me, saying: 'Cut the banana grove!' I said: 'How can I cut the banana grove?' 'Cut.' Then I cut. That is to show 'We have come, we sons-in-law of the chief (*balenge*), we marry the daughter of a chief (*undenge*).' Then my fellows said: 'We will marry another, we will come to marry a sister, a daughter of the chief again.' And I cut another.[1] Then the chief's wives sang: 'Is there only one? Is there only one?' (meaning: 'Have we borne only once? Are there not other little daughters?'). For our part, the pagans danced and danced the war-dance, and thrust their spears in the ground, and sang: 'We shall marry her little sister, she has a little sister.'

And the Christians sang hymns.

Then the go-between of the chief called me, and I went to the chief. There they told me: 'See, we are shouting you have brought few cattle, bring what we mentioned.' And the chief's wives also sang: 'We are shouting, Mwambandele, we are shouting!'

Then I crouched down and said: 'Indeed, I told you, I am a poor man; indeed, you did mention the number of cattle, and I have not brought them, and about those which I brought at first I do not boast at all, they were as good as none.'

'But you know that I have many sons who are crying out, who wish to marry wives.'

'Indeed, but I told you that we are poor, if one cries out I will hoe

[1] In other ceremony cutting bananas is a symbol of death. It is possible that here the symbol is of a girl dying to her father's lineage, at marriage, but this is only a guess.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for him, let him cut a garden and call me to hoe, I will come, I will make myself his servant.' 584

'But to hoe for a man and to bring him cattle are different things; you hoe for a man when he has married a wife. Who hoes for a bachelor?'

All the time the young men who came with us danced and sang: 'We have brought many cattle, all together they are eight, we have given marriage-cattle indeed.' . . . That is Nyakyusa custom.

And I replied: 'Yes, indeed, I am a child. You correct my childishness. I have no wisdom at all, you told me to bring cattle and I did not bring them. Also my comrade, the bridegroom, you correct his youth, I am like a fly which is killed by your milk, it dies because of it!'

Then he was satisfied and gave us a spear. We grasped the spear and danced with it: 'We are sons-in-law of the chief, we have married the daughter of a chief.' And we brought us. to beg for the girl (*ukwaisisa*) but they refused, saying: 'We chiefs eat a bull.'

Then they brought us food: great quantities of food; and we were many. No one counted us. They brought twelve grain baskets of meat and bananas, sixteen calabashes of milk, and eight grain baskets or basins of banana and chicken, and much food which I have not mentioned; I have only told of the fine food. There was porridge and relish and milk, much of it. And I, the go-between, was like a chief, I divided it to my fellows, all was brought to me and I told my fellow Enoch (he who went with me to speak to the girl when we wooed her), saying: 'Take this to the So-and-so's and the So-and-so's.' Because it is not proper that I should carry the food, but another. We called our wife [*sic*] to receive the choicest food, which she ate with her sisters-in-law—the sisters of the groom had also come with us. And I chose the choicest food for the groom too. We three who had gone with him the first time to woo the girl ate with him, and we each called a friend to join us.

During the feast they showed us a cow, saying: 'Eat it.' But we refused, saying: 'We are poor men.' Then they showed us a bull which we also refused: 'We are poor men, we have plenty with what you have cooked.' Because we feared that if we ate it they would ask for another cow later on. Then we left, but there followed us fifteen grain baskets of food which they had not brought out at first.

On a later day I went with one friend, just the two of us (the groom did not come) to give fa. to take (*ukwaisisa*) the girl. They received it. There was much food, but we ate only a little because we were only two. Before they came to bring the girl to her husband I began working for you, so I told my friend Enoch to see to everything, and I told them to go to his house.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

however, by the fact that, in the neighbourhood of 855
Europeans, boys can earn money, and so help the family exchequer.

Puberty is reached at about fifteen, and boys pass 881
that stage without ceremony. Girls are segregated, usually in groups. They lie on leaves spread on the floor, and must not be seen by boys, unless they are the daughters of chiefs, who are permitted to see boys at night. The initiate receives instruction, usually from her mother, though there are plenty of willing advisers besides, in household matters. When this is over, the wife of the *mfusya* (the man who was go-between at her parents' marriage) comes, with others, to inquire about the girl's character, to which a favourable answer is given by the mother: she cooks for strangers, has never known a man, and is of good temper. Then she is examined, and if she is found to be impure (as she is; there is practically no exception), she is put up into the rafters, where she is half-choked in the fumes of a smoky fire specially kindled. Here she remains until permitted to come down, a severe beating following upon any attempt to escape. (The cleansing power of smoke is to be noted also in connection with twins.) The children of Christian parents are examined in the same way. Happily the situation is improving, though very slowly. After being thoroughly smoked, the girl is washed and oiled, and the *bamyage* (older women) come to instruct her in all her duties to husband and children when she has them.

Immediately after the initiation rites the betrothal 584

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•584 ceremonies begin; indeed, the one passes into the other. Girls are sometimes betrothed before birth, but this is usually done only when a wife has died, and the father, being obliged to supply another, offers the widower the next child to be born if it is a girl. He sends a boy to the man as a guarantee of good faith, but the boy remains only a week or so, and then returns to his home.

883 It may be accepted as certain that no boy comes through the dangers of adolescence unharmed. Fathers are said to warn their growing sons about these dangers, and sometimes they threaten to refuse to find wives for them if the warning goes unheeded; but nothing more is done, and the threat is never carried out.

524 526 Children's games are much too numerous for anything but a mere reference. For quiet moments, puzzles; or guessing what is in the hand of another; or what object, out of sight, is being touched. A favourite river- or lake-side sport is diving and staying under water while some one counts. Walking on the hands or on stilts is very popular.

526 *T'angilo* is a ball game, with sides, the ball being thrown from one to another on the same side, while the other side endeavours to get and keep it a given number of throws, without letting it fall to the ground or into the hands of the opponents. *Inguba* is a game not unlike our hockey, a ball being struck about, and kept as far as possible within one's own side. *Ngulya* is played with sides sitting at a distance from a small object set up in the middle, while any round thing is thrown at it from side to side, the winning side

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Even apart from the question of payment, a native marriage is a complicated business, involving prolonged negotiations; inquiries into the character and health of the parties, the prospects of the young man, the proposed place of residence, the quality of the gardens, and many other considerations, which are seriously gone into. 584

The first formal approach to the girl is made by a friend of the boy; but as this is bad form, it is afterwards denied. Next, a neighbour of the girl's father is visited.

"My friend here," says the *mfasya* (go-between), "needs some one to carry water for him."

"There is no one here to carry water for him," says the neighbour.

"O yes, there is," comes the reply; "the daughter of so-and-so would do very well."

The father of the girl is now visited by the whole party, and gives a non-committal consent, receiving a hoe as a token that negotiations have begun. Next day a council of the whole family discusses the proposal, and decides the number of cattle to be paid if everything else is satisfactory, with the pleasant prospect of a feast in the evening. The bridegroom and his friends then bring the first of the cattle, usually only one at this stage. The young men are oiled, painted, or adorned with leaves and flowers, and approach the bride's home at a run, leaping and shouting, and waving spears or clubs. The go-between lays on the ground a spear and a hoe, and invites the girl to come and take them. If she does so she signifies her

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•584 consent to the marriage, but it should be noted that she has the right of refusal, though it is seldom exercised. Two brides recently refused in church (they were both Christians) to marry the men who stood beside them; and a young girl a few months ago was with difficulty rescued from a hateful marriage, and is now pluckily living her own life, rather than submit to the unsavoury fate which her guardians had ordained for her. In case of refusal, however, the father may wash his hands of the whole matter, and decline to take any steps to find another husband for his disobedient daughter.

To return, the girl takes the hoe, and with the haft smites the cow which is standing there, in token that she accepts the obligations which the payment of the cattle involves. Then she lifts the spear, and hands it to her father, saying, "Slay me with this spear if I am unfaithful to my husband"; and the father, with a grim assurance that he will not fail, lays up the spear in the house, where it will be seen by the ancestral spirits.

584 About a week after the feast which follows, the bride, with one girl friend, and a "mother," but not
585 the mother who bore her, goes to the house of the go-between, who gives the mother a fowl, and the bride a piece of bark-cloth, and leads them to the husband's house. With a gift from the husband, the mother now retires, and a succession of small gifts induces the bride to take up her duties: a fowl persuades her to enter the house; some other gift, probably a few cents, induces her to kindle a fire, a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

third to cook food, and a final gift is required to make her lie down on the mat along with her girl friend, who stays with her for a few days. This ceremony of the gifts is never omitted in heathen marriages, and each successively binds the girl to her husband. 584 585

If the bride is a twin, the doctor must be present, to sprinkle medicines over house and bedding, and to give the couple a decoction supposed to prevent the occurrence of twins in the new family. 789

Except the daughters of Christian parents, all Konde girls are married before they arrive at puberty, and what has been described above applies to child wives, who stay with their husbands for about a month, and then go home. 582 177

The child wife having grown to womanhood, however, further ceremonies have to be observed. The husband arrives at her father's house with an ox for the feast, and a mock struggle for possession of the bride takes place. The women of her family barricade themselves in the house, which is attacked by the women of the other family. Payment of a shilling opens the door, and the further struggle which takes place in the house is brought to an end by the formal presentation of the ox. The husband and his friends enter, and engage in a weird dance, a mere tramping of the floor in unison, with shouting and waving of spears, no doubt a survival of what was once marriage by capture. 583

The washing and shaving of the bride follows, and her bark-cloth is burned, and a new one given her, and then comes the feast of beef and beer, the materials 585

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

601 *Mwinukulu* = grandparent or grandchild; but a man addresses his male grandparents as *Mwinangu* (my compeer) and his female grandparents as *Nkasi* (wife). A woman addresses her male grandparents as *Ndume* (husband) and her female grandparents as *Mwinangu* (my compeer).

Ndume = husband, extended for a woman to include the husbands of 'sisters', male grandparents, male grandchildren, husbands of female grandparents or grandchildren; all 'brothers' of a husband, husband of a father's sister, and grandfathers of a husband, and finally, the husband's sister's son.

Nkasi = wife; for a man it includes the wives of 'brothers', female grandparents and grandchildren, or wives of male ones; all sisters of wife, daughters of wife's brothers, wives of grandsons by marriage, the 'grandmothers' of a wife, and the wife of a maternal uncle.[1]

606 The Ngonde do not seem to distinguish cross-cousins from ortho-cousins as clearly as do the Maravi, or the Yao, Makua, and Makonde peoples.

MARRIAGE

582 There are no exogamous clans, but the descendants of a common grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are forbidden to marry.[2] The descendants of a common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry, but sometimes they do so before the relationship is discovered; they then simply drink a special medicine, but do not break the marriage. The old men speak of a now abandoned custom of preferential cross-cousin marriage.[3] The husband of the eldest girl of a family has the prior right to marry her full sisters, and such marriages are very common. A man also has the right to marry the daughter of his wife's brother, therefore the wife of the wife's brother is classed as a parent-in-law in kinship terminology.[4]

583 The passage of cattle makes children of a marriage legitimate. A child of a man who has given no cattle belongs either to the mother's husband or to her father. Cattle are in rapid circulation. Few men possess more than six cows at any time, yet marriage payments range from four to thirty cows (formerly only one or two were given). Marriage involves considerable expenditure and months of preliminary economic activity.[5] The cattle are seldom handed over all at once, but in ones or twos over a period of years. Full brothers have a claim to the cattle of their sister's marriage, and at the marriage of his eldest daughter the father hands one of the cows to the village headman.[6]

584 A girl commonly goes to visit and sleep with her betrothed husband for several years before she finally sets up house for him. The ideal procedure is by negotiation with the girl's father, but a man without cows may run off with a girl and satisfy her father with cows later on, or a man with cattle may seduce a married woman and pay her husband the adultery fine of two cows, plus the cows originally given for her marriage. A girl may be betrothed before puberty, and may visit her husband, but she is supposed to be virgin at her initiation ceremony, and is generally not allowed to

[1] Sanderson, 3, 1923.
[2] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 55.
[3] See Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 267; but according to Sanderson, 3, 1923, p. 453, cross-cousins are classed as sisters, and all first cousins are unmarriageable; according to Johnston, 1897, p. 415, and to Mackenzie 1925, p. 55, cousin marriage was not allowed.
[4] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 262; Sanderson, op. cit., p. 451.
[5] Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 11.
[6] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 65.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

584 live with her husband until at least three cows have been given. One of the bulls is only given if the girl is virgin at her initiation rite, and this bull is given to her mother. The laws of inheritance and the system of marriage by cattle payments ensures that cattle will be in the hands of the older men. In general polygynists are men over forty-five.[1]

595 The first wife married is the chief wife, and is entitled to respect and obedience from her co-wives. Her first son is her husband's ultimate heir. A man cannot lightly divorce his first wife during the lifetime of his own father who provided the cattle 586 with which she was married. Divorce is effected by the return of the marriage cattle. Usually the woman has a lover who will pay cows to redeem her; if she refuses to go back to her husband there is no means of compelling her to do so, though in pre-European times her father and the chief might send her back. In such a case the husband would be entitled to his original payments plus their increase.[2] Men do not demand divorce for adultery unless it is persistent.[3] Divorce is often sought for very trivial reasons.[4] If the paternal uncles have helped the groom to collect his marriage cattle, the beasts are redistributed to their original donors after they have been returned to the husband.[5]

587 A man whose wife dies can claim a substitute or the refund of his cattle. When a man dies his widows pass to his heir who takes them all as wives, if he is a brother of 768 the dead man; if the heir is a son he takes all except his own mother and the wives who are her close kin. Inherited wives have the same land rights as others.[6]

INHERITANCE

428 Brothers inherit before sons, then half-brothers (linked half-brothers before other half-brothers). When all the brothers are dead the property and wives of each pass to each one's eldest son.[7] This rule also applies to the Nyamwanga and Iwa.[8] The heir assumes the full obligations of father to his younger brothers and is responsible for their marriages; they hoe for him and are fed by his wives as are unmarried sons.[9] The sister's son only inherits if all near patrilineal kinsmen are dead or are infants.[10]

The above applies to commoners' inheritance only. For chiefs, succession and inheritance may follow different principles. For instance, in succession to local chiefdoms, two or more sons would divide the chiefdom. Among the Ngonde the Kyungu and the great chiefs were not chosen according to strict genealogical right, but were selected from the appropriate families according to their wealth, generosity, and courage. In the succession to the great chiefdoms, there was formerly a difference of procedure in the two royal lines: that of Ngelenge, where the nobles of Ngonde were sent by the Kyungu to help to select the successor; that of Ngana, the line of the female side, where the nobles of Ngonde merely summoned the great commoners to discuss with them who was to succeed. Nowadays the difference between the two lines has disappeared, and the Ngelenge custom is followed for both. If the genealogical heir

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, pp. 257–9.
[2] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 55.
[3] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 263.
[4] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 92.
[5] Ibid., p. 65.
[6] Wilson, 3, 1938, p. 27.
[7] Ibid., 2, 1936, pp. 264–6; Sanderson, 3, 1923, p. 453.
[8] Coxhead, 1914, p. 45.
[9] Wilson, 3, 1938, pp. 11 and 28; Johnston, 1897, p. 471.
[10] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 55.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

present possesses. A young man is given cows by his father and sends 436
them to his father-in-law ; his father's income in cattle is derived partly from the increase of his own stock, but chiefly from the marriages of his own and his brothers' sisters and daughters, for it is the custom for full-brothers and half-brothers to given one another cows as their daughters and sisters get married ; the young man's father-in-law gives the cows which he receives some to his brothers, some to his sons, and some he keeps himself. And thus, continually, the cattle are driven down the paths of human relationship.

The passage of cattle makes the children of a marriage legitimate 585
and members of their father's family; the sons can inherit from their 848
father, and the daughters, when they marry in their turn, bring cattle to him. But if a woman bears a child to a man who has given no cows for her, the child is illegitimate, has no right of inheritance anywhere, and belongs either to her husband or father, not to its own biological sire.

Getting married is not a single event ; the marriage-cattle are seldom 583
handed over all at once, but in ones, twos, or threes over a period of 584
years ; and a girl very commonly goes to visit and sleep with her betrothed 836
husband, from time to time, for several years before she finally sets up house with him and begins to bear his children. There are three ways of getting married : (1) by negotiation with the girl's father (2) by running off with an unmarried girl (3) by running off with a married woman. The first is the ideal, socially approved, method and is not uncommonly followed. The negotiations often begin while the girl is still an infant, sometimes even before she is born ; the man sends one or two cows to her father to bespeak her (*okosingela*). These cows are counted as part of the marriage-cattle (*ingwela*) and the girl is henceforth called his "wife," but she lives at home with her parents. Sometimes a boy is betrothed by his father while he himself is still young, but always, I think, to a girl several years his junior. Such betrothals are determined by the friendship of the two families. A girl who is bespoken in infancy does not, ideally, go to live altogether with her husband till after she has reached puberty and passed through the elaborate initiation which then takes place. But there is an intermediate period when, from the age of ten or earlier, she is allowed to visit and sleep with her husband from time to time. The man sends a bull or a hen to her father to ask for his wife (*okosombolela*), and the old man agrees to let her go on occasional visits. But she is seldom allowed to go until at least three cows, in all, have been received for her. She is not supposed to be deflowered before puberty and she and her husband always, at first, practise limited intercourse without penetration. Not infrequently, however, full intercourse

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

583 takes place on some occasion and her parents usually find out when it
584 does. In some families the girl's mother examines her after each visit to
836 her husband to see if the hymen is intact, sometimes the girl tells her mother herself. When her father hears about it his action is determined partly by his feelings towards his son-in-law, partly by his need for cattle. Sometimes he does nothing at all; occasionally he sends back the cows he has received for his daughter and breaks off the marriage, and this is particularly likely to happen if the girl has been forced against her will or generally ill-treated. More usually, however, he sends his daughter to live with her husband saying: "You have made her a woman yourself, you must pay the rest of the marriage-cattle quickly."

836 We have no evidence to suggest that the girls in any general way dislike sleeping with their husbands before puberty, rather the reverse; and the men say: "It is good, it accustoms a girl to her husband." But some girls dislike the particular men to whom they are betrothed.

881 The initiation of a girl at puberty lasts for some months and includes several exchanges of food between her family and that of her husband, and a number of ceremonies in which both her girl friends of the same village[4] and her husband's friends from his village[4] participate. If a girl
[584] is not bespoken before puberty the initiation is still carried out in a modified form, but its full significance is lost.

585 Soon after her initiation a girl, if she has been bespoken, goes to live altogether with her husband, to play her part in his economy and to bear him children. If only a few cows have been received for her, her father insists on one or two more being handed over before she is allowed to go. At some time, perhaps during the girl's initiation, perhaps years later, the final marriage ceremony (*okokwa*) takes place. The balance of the marriage-cattle are brought to her father by the husband and his village neighbours,[4] her "mothers" prepare a great deal of food for the guests to eat, there is dancing, feasting and great excitement.

554 The number of cows handed over varies with the wealth and social
583 status of the two families concerned. Six to ten cows is the most usual number, but sometimes as few as four or as many as thirty change hands.

583 The second method of marriage is adopted when a man falls in love with a grown girl, who is not bespoken, and cannot find the cows to satisfy her father at once; he runs off with her and regularizes the position
583 later by sending cattle. The third method is adopted when a man falls
837 in love with a married woman and has cows available; he runs off with

[4] Vide infra "The Age Village" A
A [p. 269, cat. 116 — Analyst]

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

583
837 her and then returns to her first husband the cows he had given for her with two in addition as adultery fine. But this return is usually made only after the first husband has brought a lawsuit against him.

837 Adultery is extremely common now-a-days; when a man runs off
684 with, or is discovered seducing, a married woman and has not enough
177 cows to marry her, he is legally compelled to pay two cows for the adultery to her husband. In pre-European days an adulterer, if caught, was usually punished by the husband and his neighbours with death or extreme torture, and the old men tell me that adultery was then a rarer event.

584 The extent to which a girl is usually allowed to choose whom she
177 will marry is difficult to guage, and varies in different circumstances. Opportunities of meeting and flirting with young men at dances and ceremonies are frequent; and the older men say that, owing to the abolition by the Europeans of the old severe punishments for adultery, girls
[582] are freer now than they used to be, for their lovers no longer fear to run off with them if they are married or bespoken (which is in Nyakyusa law very much the same thing). The custom of betrothing infant girls is, they declare, less common than it used to be; they are now more chary of pledging their daughters "for when they grow up they just run off with someone else." A girl's choice is, however, limited by the necessity of finding a lover who has cows, and few young men have enough to secure her if she is already married, though they may have enough to pay an adultery fine.

[428] Owing, in part, to the laws of inheritance, by which a commoner's[5]
593 full-brother inherits before his son, it is the older men who control the cattle. Every bachelor is largely or wholly dependent on his own father (or his dead father's heir) for the cows for his first marriage, and he must hoe his father's fields for many years before he is given enough to secure a wife and to set up a family of his own. Economic reciprocity is an element in most human relationships, and it enters into the Nyakyusa relationship of father and son. It is well understood, in this society, that
593 after a certain length of time spent hoeing his father's fields a young man
685 is entitled to some cows, if his father has any; and if his father delays too long the young man either stops hoeing for his father or else he takes legal action and enforces his claim. Between father and son such law cases are rare, but they are frequent between a young man and the brother of his father who has inherited his father's wives, property, and position in the family.

[5] The laws of inheritance for a chief are, in certain respects, different; vide infra, "The Chiefdom."
7/8 [Cat. 116, pp. 278ff. -- Analyst]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

622 He, like many of his men, may have been married long before the
643 'coming out', but his ritual wedding to the mothers of his heirs
796 follows it, and from the time of his seclusion, until his marriage,
585 he, and all his men, should live as bachelors. The brides are chosen by his village headmen and in theory they are carried off by force, whether betrothed or not, but nowadays, since the [177] Administration discountenances forced marriages, the headmen arrange matters with the girls' families beforehand, very privately, but still they come with a show of force to carry off the brides. Girls are chosen who are approaching puberty and they are taken to the house of a commoner contemporary of their future husband. There they live until both have grown up and the puberty ritual can be celebrated. It follows the usual course except that the [584] neighbours of the man in whose house the brides are secluded play the part of the girls' families, cooking for the groom's party at the prescribed feasts. The chief washes with both girls, thereby acknowledging them as his senior wives; the marriage bed is prepared with medicines and there is great rejoicing. The following morning someone knocks at the door of the nuptial chamber crying: 'War has come', and the chief and his brides rush out to the pasture land, just as the parents of twins do at the end of their ritual.[1] Then[2] a long narrow stone (*ulufiga*) is set with medicines [759] in the earth, beside the chief's trees as a symbol of his marriage (*ikimanyilo kya bwegi*) to the mothers of his heirs. 'The stone *is* the chief' (*ilifiga ili je malafyale*). Hearth-bricks (*amafiga*) are then set up for each bride with medicines buried beneath them, and they are given fire from that ritually kindled by their husband and his headman. Finally they are given medicines to drink in order to develop in them 'the dignity of chief's wives' (*ubusiya bwe fuebe*).

No marriage is complete, in Nyakyusa eyes, until cattle have
643 been handed over, and though the chief's brides have been carried
583 off by force, cattle—more than double the normal number—are given to their fathers. The village headmen of the retiring generation should provide these cattle and they or their heirs are recompensed when the eldest daughters born of the two wives are

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 158, 169.

[2] Mwanyilu's marriage apparently preceded the planting of his trees and the phallic stone was erected at the same time as the trees were planted, but the marriages of the sons of Mwangoka *followed* the planting of their trees. The order of events seems to vary, and differences are explained as due to the order of the doctor in charge of the ritual. 'Different doctors have different customs.'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

like most of the leaders of Zionist Churches in the south.[1] 797x

It is noticeable that the two 'independent' Churches have a more elaborate form of service than the Church from which their leaders have sprung, and Ngemela habitually wears conspicuous vestments. There is, of course, great variation between different denominations in the emphasis placed on ritual, some Protestants abjuring it and turning their very insistence on starkness and simplicity into a ritual in itself—a taboo. There seems to be a clear tendency in Southern Africa for 'independent' Churches to express themselves more and more in ritual and less in dogma. In this way they reduce the gap between themselves and the pagans, for the pagan religion is expressed almostly exclusively in ritual, whereas Christianity is expressed in creeds and confessions as well as in the rituals of the Church. 795x 779 [796]

(e) THE CONTRAST BETWEEN PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

There are certain common elements in the rituals celebrated by pagans and Christians: some of the occasions are the same, and in the conceptions of sacrifice, of death and rebirth, of confession and cleansing, there are similarities; but there are also profound differences. The conception of life, immortality, replaces the preoccupation with fertility, for though most Nyakyusa Christians, like the pagans, regard celibacy as evidence of physical abnormality, and the conventional desire of a woman is to have six children—a quiverful in Nyakyusa eyes—yet fertility is no longer the end of all being, sought in every ritual. There are profound differences, too, in the values expressed in the rituals regarding sex relations, the range of moral obligations, and social change. In pagan thought polygyny is good—a man should have many children. Child marriage is defended on the ground that a girl 'gets accustomed to her husband' if she goes to him early, and homosexual relations between youths and young men are tolerated since they have no wives and *cannot* marry if the older men are polygynists. What is upheld is the chastity of women, and a total separation of the sex activities of members of successive generations, expressed in the taboos limiting familiarity between mother and son, father and nubile daughter, father-in-law and daughter-law. In Christian thought it is the 'pure in heart' who 'see God' and this is interpreted by the mission Churches to imply monogamy. Only in the 'independent' African Churches is it asserted 797x 795x [842] [589] [595] [584] [838] [836] [561] [183] [595]

[1] The emphasis on healing, so common in the south, is absent.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

that polygyny is compatible with Christianity, and indeed sanctioned by the example of many of the heroes of the Old Testament. It is here that the cleavage between pagan and Christian ways of life is felt to be greatest: the desire to marry or inherit a second wife is the main reason for many men leaving the mission Churches. The traditional way for the well-to-do man to expend his capital and maintain his position was to marry again and the wealth of the lineage was concentrated in the senior line through the rule of inheritance of widows.

Again and again in sermons Nyakyusa preachers came back to the problem of polygyny. 'Let not those who know not the law deceive you saying, "You, Christian, what is one poor little wife? (*ikikiuk: kimo kyene*) See, do not your children also die (like those of pagans) and constantly fall ill? Take a second wife." Perhaps the BaNgemela tell you that God also favours that. If you agree you are uprooted. What, after all, is a second wife? In Jesus there is life.' (2 Peter iii. 17.)

Young men are also caught in a contradiction of values when their fathers have betrothed them while still quite young.

It is very difficult for a man to refuse a girl whom his father has engaged for him. To a pagan man it does not matter very much because, provided he has cattle, he can always marry a girl of his own choice as well, but a Christian cannot. Such was the case of a friend of ours, A, a Christian teacher. When he was a child, before he was baptized, his father, a senior village headman and a powerful and wealthy man, engaged for him B, a little girl who could barely walk. A got on well at school and when he was growing up the missionary said to him: 'When you marry choose a girl of some education, because it is good for an educated man to marry an educated girl.' A fell in love with C, a Christian, who had learnt to read and write, and sew and launder, and who consequently was one of the best-educated girls in the district. They came to an understanding together, our informant being the 'go-between'. A went to the elders of the congregation and told them he wished to marry C. They replied: 'We, on our part agree; go and ask your father.' Then A's father said: 'Well, no, B is your wife (though she was still a child and the marriage had not been consummated), but you are my eldest son, I have many cattle, I agree to arrange marriages with them both for you at once.' So A thought and thought and went back to the elders and told them saying: 'My father refuses, he won't hear of it unless I marry

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

them both, but I don't want to leave the Church.' Then the elders supported his father saying, 'We don't like sons to be disobedient and the girl will make a good wife for you.' 'But,' argued A, 'my wife is a child and C is grown up.' The missionary supported him saying: 'We are going to send him to a distance (to train as a teacher), it is better that he go married.' But the elders supported his father, following the Nyakyusa custom. Then a message came to A saying that B had 'grown-up'. He said to us, his friends: 'What can I say now? I can no longer argue that my wife is a child.' And to the missionaries and elders he said: 'Send me away for my training. I must think, I am not at peace.'

While A was still away D (who was a close friend of A's) came back from school, and he too fell in love with C. But before he spoke to her he wrote to A asking him: 'Have you broken with her, or are you still agreed to marry? Can I make love to her or not?' Then A wrote back: 'Yes, I have broken with her, it is true that I love her, but I cannot square marrying her with Christianity. Go ahead.' So then D came to our informant to ask him to be the go-between again, and to take him to the girl. So they went and showed her A's letter, and asked her if she could love D. Then she was very sorrowful and would give no answer until she had written to A herself. 'Is it true that you have left me?' And A replied: 'Indeed, my dear, I have left you. I love you truly, but what can we do? Perhaps the powers do not wish that we should marry. My father refuses. He says he will arrange a marriage with you, for me, as my second wife, but what of our Christianity? Are we both to leave the Church?' So then she agreed to marry D.

All this time the elders had supported A's father in his refusal saying: 'B also is a proper woman. We are surprised at the young man.' And A's father said to him: 'I betrothed this girl for you when she was quite tiny. *Kyala* has already given you this woman.' But the marriage of A and B proved a failure—they were constantly quarrelling—and later they were divorced.

The 'go-between' of this story was more fortunate in his own marriage. Like A he was the son of a wealthy pagan and two wives had been betrothed for him before he became a Christian. When he decided to be baptised he flatly refused to marry either of them. His father was very angry. 'For a time he treated me as if I were not his son, saying: "Since you refuse these girls I will not give you any cows to marry at all." So I said: "All right," and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

A 797 A 795 583 584 went away to work again and in time I earned four cows which I hid with friends far from home. My father knew nothing about them. Then I wrote to my father from Mwaseba [about twenty miles from where his father lived] where I was working, saying that I had found a girl there, the daughter of a Christian, and please could I have the cows with which to marry her? My father said: "No, she lives too far away." ' Then later he found a Christian girl of whom his father approved and a satisfactory marriage was arranged.

A common topic of discussion among Christian women was whether parents should choose mates for their children, or leave them free to choose for themselves, for though traditionally a girl had to signify her consent to marriage, she was betrothed very young and her freedom of choice was small. The growing insistence on personal freedom in marriage is symptomatic of a radical change in the attitude towards persons.

A 797 A 795 The pagan rituals were the main occasions of recreation. It has been shown, in *Rituals of Kinship*, how pagan funerals and marriages are the occasion for feasting and dancing and display, and how the [761] [585] seclusion hut of a nubile girl is the gathering place for the young men and girls of the neighbourhood. Even a twin ritual is a festival [762] with beer for the older men and some meat for everyone. The sacrifices at the groves were feasts for the leading men of the country, and the 'coming out' was the occasion of the greatest feast of the generation, and dances were practised for months [796] [688] ahead. Partly because of a change in sex morality, and partly because the meat and beer at pagan feasts are offered to the shades, Christians are largely excluded from these festivals. They may not participate in pagan dances, or join in the lewd songs, or attend the initiation hut of a girl, and they are partly debarred from the feasts of the pagans: certain of the Churches (notably the Church [273] of Scotland and, for a time, the Moravians) forbid Christians to drink beer at all.

And the Christian rituals, though some of them are 'festivals [796] of the Church', are scarcely celebrated as such. There has been a separation between ritual and recreation which has left a gap in the Christian community. It is true that the Christian young men [535] [684] and girls sing and dance at funerals and marriages, but the elders, for the most part, look on with dubious eyes, saying that dancing leads to adultery, and several of the dances introduced by

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[577] some copy, the manners of Europeans towards their wives, but
[584] neither husband nor wife is quite sure what the change in manners implies, and both are often inconsistent in their behaviour. As an educated Nyakyusa put it: 'They do not know what to expect from each other.'

[585] Marriage relationships are complicated by the disproportion
[142] in the numbers of men and women; a disproportion which continues while the rule of monogamy is preached and accepted
[582] by many. The first effect of the increase in wealth in Rungwe district was for the marriage age of women to go down; in Mr. Punch's phrase 'too many cattle were chasing too few wives'; but the combined pressure of missions and Administration, and some acquaintance with the customs of the outside world, has reversed that tendency, and the marriage of girls below puberty, which was general among pagans in 1938, now appears to be exceptional. Many girls are still betrothed before puberty, but
[589] they do not go to their husbands until after that time, and to be still single at puberty with no betrothed to play his part in the ritual is no longer embarrassing to a girl, for the puberty ritual is not celebrated in full. The ruling of the District Council that a man may not recover more than *one* cow given for a girl who has not reached puberty, if the marriage is dissolved, discourages men from giving cattle for girls who have not grown up. At the same time the marriage age of men is going down. Marriage in the
[582] early twenties or even the late teens is common now, for young men who have been to work on the mines can buy marriage cattle for themselves, and Christians who are well-to-do provide for the marriages of young sons instead of taking additional wives. Therefore the gap in the marriage age of men and women is very considerably diminished, but it still exists, and combined with the disproportion in the total number of males and females it means that a considerable proportion of the women (perhaps 30 per cent)[1] must become the junior wives of polygynists or remain unmarried altogether, or live alone as widows.

595 Among pagans polygyny is approved, but young men are irked by their responsibility for elderly widows, a responsibility that was formerly accepted as a matter of course. Able-bodied wives are still economically an asset even now that trade goods are in general use. For Nyakyusa men—pagans—have insisted that as

[1] The [illegible] rate is calculated at 87·9 : 100 (*table supra*) and the average difference in the marriage age may well be six years.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

182 595 797 Churches in the area. Nevertheless the bulk of professing Christians are monogamists, though it is still customary and, in Rungwe District, economically profitable, for a rich man who is not a Christian to have more than one wife. The difficulties of establishing monogamy are accentuated by the great disproportion in the numbers of men and women. If the figures available are accurate, a general acceptance of monogamy would mean that only about 70 per cent of the women could be married; therefore the Church is necessarily concerned in seeking an adjustment in the disproportion of the population—in keeping the men alive if our assumption that the shortage of men is due to a heavy male death rate is true.

182 797 584 The yeast of the gospel permeates still further. It is taken to imply the freedom of an individual to accept or reject a partner in marriage. This has been maintained from the first in the Nyakyusa Church, and is enforced by the courts, which apply a conception of personal rights springing from the Christian tradition.

182 586 797 Most Nyakyusa men attribute the rapid rise in the divorce rate to this new 'freedom' of women. Christian teaching stresses the family and the sanctity of marriage, but it ignores the lineage. In the traditional rituals of kinship the lineage is represented again and again, while in Christian ritual it is the elementary family and the Church that are pictured. The preoccupation with fertility and the reproductive cycle was linked with the glorification of the lineage itself, and it disappears when the lineage ceases to be the basis of social grouping.

182 181 178 How closely linked are symbols to other aspects of a society? Our hypothesis is that they are relatively free, but it can be shown that many of the symbols used in the traditional rituals of the Nyakyusa reflect the economy, and vary somewhat from one area to another, with the staple crops. The development of trade or of new crops is a prerequisite for using the symbols of bread and wine traditional in the Christian rituals, and even the 'independent' African Churches use new foods, not the beer and bananas of the country; thus change in material symbols and change in economy may be directly connected. The imagery changes also with the changing social structure; Kyala ceases to be pictured as a senior kinsman, when the lineage organization begins to weaken; he is God the father of a family rather than an early member of the royal lineage. But there is no evidence that

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

cultivate her mind by conversation, or to eat regularly in company. In more formal hospitality there is the same difference; a woman never invites her friends to drink beer with her, or to a 'dinner party', as her husband must do if he is to have prestige with his neighbours. Women only share the ritual feasts at initiation and marriage, and at death.

There are local variations in Nyakyusa rituals, notably between the Kukwe and Nyakyusa proper. But everywhere there is an obligation to provide feasts at the funerals and marriages of dependants. When his wife or unmarried child dies, a man must kill cattle for his relatives and neighbours to feast at the burial,[1] while an heir provides a feast for his relatives, and the neighbours of the 'father' from whom he has inherited. At these feasts equal portions of meat are allotted to relatives and neighbours—or were so allotted until the rights of neighbours to meat at funerals were formally limited (*vide infra*, p. 93). An heir must also brew beer, or kill a bull, to feast the deceased's neighbours when he begins to cohabit with his widow, or moves the property from his village. At the initiation and marriage of a girl there is a series of feasts (five in Selya), the food for which is provided partly by the groom's family and partly by the bride's; and if, as is usual, the bride is still a virgin or has been deflowered by the groom himself, he must provide a bull in thanks for her virginity (*ingambako jabusungu*), which is killed to feast the neighbours and relatives of her parents. The carcass is divided into three portions, one for the immediate neighbours of her father (men), one for 'those relatives with whom the father is on good terms and exchanges cattle', and one for the 'mothers' of the bride. Women as well as men eat meat and other fine food at all the marriage and funeral feasts.

The third occasion on which a feast for the village neighbours is thought to be essential is when a man or woman has offended his (or her) neighbours, or the neighbours of a 'father'. Thus a woman who has shirked her duty of advising on the division of her brother's inheritance, and is disapproved of by her neighbours on this account, begs pardon of them over a brewing of beer (*vide infra*, pp. 107, 236); a son, having insulted his father's neighbours

[1] For the circumstances under which other relatives must provide cattle for funeral feasts see Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939), p. 18.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

poraries, the men of the village. They are forbidden to enter her hut, and if she catches sight of one outside she turns away from him and shields her face with a mat. And at the end of the seclusion each 'village father', as well as her own father, must make her a small gift, before she will greet him. The co-wives and some of the village neighbours of the bride's mother form the group of 'mothers' who treat and instruct the bride, help to provide food for the feasts, and finally take her to her husband. Not all the village neighbours are expected to cook for the marriage feasts of a commoner's daughter, only immediate neighbours and special friends (together with relatives) who have been asked to do so; but if an immediate neighbour is not invited to help he will feel affronted. Twijulege explained that 'If the owner of the homestead overlooks someone who has built close to him, and does not say to him, "They are coming to bring the marriage-cattle for *your* child, please help us to cook", then that friend will be angry, and will think to himself, "Perhaps we are not on good terms (*tutikwongula Aawanu*) though I had always thought we were", and he will say to the father of the bride: "Why did you not tell me that they were coming to bring the marriage-cattle for your child that I might help you with the food? I was startled by the rejoicing." ' An old man who had only called one friend, besides relatives and the 'best man', to help cook at the marriage of his daughter, was stigmatized as 'a surly fellow who does not care about being on good terms with people'.

The groom, on his part, is supported by his village-mates, who come in a crowd driving the marriage-cattle, and dancing the stamping marriage dance (*ukukanya ngonya*). His mother, who has a share in the ritual and brings gifts of food, follows him, accompanied by some of her co-wives and village neighbours.

Village solidarity is thus exhibited at ceremonies, not only in the allocation of food, but by the manner in which village contemporaries of the same sex rally to each other's help, dance together and, if need be, fight together.

Besides offering sympathy and help when their fellow is in need, it is the duty of neighbours to give him advice, and persuade him to act wisely. If, for example, a man has delayed very long in providing marriage-cattle for his son, his neighbours take the son's part, and try to persuade him to give the cattle. 'Perhaps', said one informant, 'the son may elope with a girl, and

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mungonde

CHAPTER IV

THE RITUAL OF PUBERTY AND MARRIAGE

1. IN SELYA AND MUNGONDE

(a) *The events*

581 The puberty ritual for girls among the Nyakyusa is fused with the
585 marriage ritual. Girls are usually betrothed well before puberty
587 and they may live with their 'husbands' for some time before they
586 grow up, for the view of most Nyakyusa is that a girl should become accustomed to her husband gradually and that it is good for her to visit him from time to time, sweeping his house, cleaning the byre, drawing water and cooking for him, and learning the art of love-making with him and no one else. While she is still very immature it is insisted that he should only have intercourse with her *inter crura*, but when she is approaching puberty he often has full intercourse with her. No legal case can be brought against him in court if he does so, provided that he has not forced or frightened her, but his friends may tell him he is foolish, and in 'teaching his wife adultery', since now he can have no proof, in the physical examination at puberty, that she has not slept with other men. No stigma attaches to the girl; if it is her husband who has deflowered her she is acclaimed in the ritual as a virgin. In some pagan families, however, notably those of chiefs, girls are not allowed to visit their husbands before puberty. The girl's father has the right to
[70] refuse it, for before the ritual a wife is only 'borrowed'. Unlike the neighbouring Bemba, the Nyakyusa are not anxious lest the girl should conceive before her first menstruation—if she should do so the ritual is performed in the ordinary way—but many fathers dislike letting their daughters go before the main bulk of the marriage cattle have been handed over. Opposition on the part of the missions and the Administration to early marriage also influences the more sophisticated. The period of betrothal is long, for pagan girls are commonly engaged from about 8 years old onwards,
[45] and the average age of puberty appears to be between 15 and 16.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Ma Ngonde

581 the form of a cross. The bride knelt down and carefully washed
584 her whole body. When she had done so the groom's mother told one of her party to light the pile of litter. As it blazed up, the bride leapt across it. Three of her maids and a married half-sister had plucked banana suckers, of the sort used for propagating bananas, and they struck her with them as she leapt back and forth over the fire. She was nervous, though the jump was easy, and her maids jeered at her. Then she returned to Kyobwe's hut and dried herself in the sun. Now that the litter was burnt she had come out of her seclusion and was free to sleep on ordinary mats; from the entering of seclusion to the coming out, she could only sleep on the litter, except for the night preceding the burning which she spent with her husband.

584 The mothers of the groom were feasted on sweet potatoes and
585 curds provided by the bride's family, and there was a discussion as to whether the bull the groom's party had brought was 'milk to eat with the bananas' for the bride's family, or 'the bull of virginity'. The bride's father insisted that it was only a relish for the feast and he did not prepare the beer for the final act of the ritual. Two weeks later the bride eloped with her husband because he had not got another bull to bring her father, and the final rites were never performed for her.

584 On the night before the ritual of 'clearing the litter' the bride's father should put millet to soak for beer, and when it is ready the groom's mothers come for the *ilitemele* and *ulufunde*, that is, to 'shave the sprouting hair' and instruct the bride; but for the daughter of Mwandu, for whom we watched it performed, it was long delayed. She had reached puberty seven months previously and before that had lived for three months with the man who had first betrothed her, but he had been unable to find sufficient cattle for the marriage, and the ritual was completed with another man.

585 The groom's 'mothers' arrived about one-thirty, by which time everyone was getting impatient. The men had nearly finished their beer and grumbled that the groom's party was late, and the bride herself was begging her mother to be allowed to go and bathe. Her mother replied emphatically: 'No, no, how can you go? The mothers-in-law will wash you and dress you in brass bodyrings. That's the ritual.' Six women came in the groom's party—his own mother, his sister, two 'village mothers', and two young married women of the groom's village. A large mat was spread for

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Makgende

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them and polite greetings were exchanged. The bride herself crouched down with her head covered with a cloth, but after the greetings were completed she sat up and chatted with them. Then one of the groom's 'village mothers', who was the officiant in the ritual, his sister, and two young women from his village, took the bride to the stream to wash. The officiant told the young women to carry her, which they did for a few yards, then they put her down. Her maids sang and she herself danced a few steps. Women came out of the houses as we passed, dancing and clapping. At the stream the bride took off her old bark-cloth and bathed with her maids. As she finished she stepped into a flat winnowing basket (*ulusele*) for a minute, then stepped out, and her husband's sister decked her with four brass body-rings (*nide* plate 7) and a folded cloth (*umpepe*) hanging down from the rings behind like a tail. The bride shook the 'tail' and the others laughed and cried: '*Kipetule*[1] *tukumepeka*[2] (It is turned over! We clothe her with the male genital covering!)' They walked back again laughing, and when they reached the first houses one of the party said: 'We should carry her now.' Another demurred: 'Let's go a little further, she's heavy.' Then a woman of the village came along and called: 'Carry her! Carry her!' They arrived at her mother's house singing: '*Niya, Niya, Niya*! (Put me down!)' The groom's 'mothers', the bride herself, and her maids, all sang this. The rest of the groom's party joined in and they walked up and down the courtyard carrying her and singing '*Niya, Niya*.' The groom's own mother carried a winnowing basket on her head and the bride's 'mothers' rushed out and threw into it small bowlfuls of millet, maize, pumpkin-seeds and lentils.[3] This grain goes to the groom's 'mothers': 'The mother-in-law drinks beer made from the millet.' Then the bride was made to sit down in the doorway of her mother's hut; the officiant sat behind her, shaved a little of the sprouting hair from the front of her head, and smeared her head, arms, legs, and stomach with ointment and red powder supplied by her own mother. Powdered medicine supplied by the groom's mother was added to the shaving water.

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When her toilet was completed, the women called the men to come and give their gifts. The bride and her maids crouched down and the cloth removed from her buttocks was spread

[1] Okupetule: to turn over.
[2] Okumpeka: to clothe, from ilimpe: male genital covering.
[3] Beans, cowpeas and ground-nuts are also mentioned as being given at this time.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mulungwide

●585 over her and the maids closest to her. Her father, Mwasofu, and four or five other men, his village mates, came to give her gifts to break the taboo (*ukudonola*). Her father came first and asked: 'Which is she?' She was pointed out to him and he gave her 10 cents, greeted her with the words 'Good morning, my child', and shook hands. At the same time he admonished her saying: 'If you ever go away from your husband who has married you, then you have a case against you, you have a great case against you.'

The other men followed: 'Good morning, good morning, you have recovered.' They gave some cents and shook hands and repeated her father's warning. One, having no cents, brought a spearhead which he said he would redeem later for 50 cents.

585 Then over the girl's head the father spoke to the officiant:
583 'Where are the bull and the other cow?'

Officiant: 'I am poor. Thank you for giving us your daughter, thank you.'

Father: 'Pay a bull. See, my child has stayed at home a long time. It is seven months since she grew up and it is not right that she should stay here always. Bring the bull!'

Officiant: 'Yes, we all regret that, but I am very poor.'

A mother: 'You know very well that our child is pure [i.e. a virgin].'

Father: 'See, she is the eldest daughter, and there is someone here with a case against him. My brother has expectations from her, he is claiming cattle. If her husband comes to carry her off we will beat him, we will beat him, we will take cattle.'

585 Then the men went away and the women, 'mothers' and 'mothers-in-law', together began to admonish (*ukufunda*) her. 'Yesterday evening she was a child, now she has grown up, she is a woman, let us tell her about womanhood.' Her father's second wife, and an elderly woman of her father's village, talked most, but advice was shouted at her by several women at once and it was impossible to take it down verbatim. The following points were mentioned: She must cook for her children. (This was repeated with emphasis.) She must cook for her husband; she must be gentle (*usolo*) to her children; she must welcome and cook for her mothers when they come to see her.

One mother said: 'If your husband has built in a boys' village and his fellows come wanting water to drink don't say: "There is

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selyn, Ma Ngonde

no water." Don't let your in-laws say to us: "You did not bring her up properly, she behaves proudly." '

Another whispered: 'When your husband comes to lie with you do not fight him, but accept him. If you avoid him you have a case against you,' and she laughed as she said it.

There was also whispered advice about menstruation: 'You wait three or four days. . . . When a child appears look after yourself.' During the instruction the bride sat with her maids crouching round her, their heads covered by cloths, all giggling a little. None of the mothers made any attempt to hit the bride, though in discussing the ritual a number of informants insisted that 'the mothers do not teach her by word of mouth only, they also beat her' and 'they scold her for all the things which she has hitherto done wrong at her husband's house'. Old Kasitile explained that: 'If the girl is a good wife, then the husband tells the mothers, saying: "You must not swear at my wife, she always listens to me." Then no one beats her. . . . But if she is proud at her husband's then they beat her.' 'The mother who bore her husband says: "She has been proud towards me, she's a harsh (*ukali*) girl," and they hit her with their fists.'

The teaching as described by a number of women may be summed up thus: the bride is told to fetch relish from the fields, draw water, sweep the house, tend the fire, fetch firewood ('if you do not draw water or fetch firewood you are a fool') and prepare food for her husband when he comes in from hoeing at midday and again in the evening; she must never be proud (*numuingo*) when her husband calls for water or anything else, but always answer with the submissive *naa* and not just say *ee*; she must be hospitable to her husband's friends and her own mothers when they come to visit; she must cook for children and be gentle to them. She must look towards her mother-in-law now—her own mothers are 'just people'. 'We have sent you to your husband's house and if we hear of quarrels there you are no child of ours.' She is told to wipe her husband after intercourse, to wash her own body often and to be careful to attend to herself properly when she is menstruating and to wash her hands frequently and not allow her husband to approach her then. She is told not to reject her husband at other times ('if you refuse him he will demand his cattle back'), and she is warned not to flirt with other men. Most instruction in the art of love-making (including demonstration of the correct body movements) comes informally from girl friends a

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Ma Ngonde

864 little older than herself, rather than at the formal admonition by
her mothers, though a little is given then also.[1] She is especially
[302] warned to depilate herself regularly. 'If she is hairy her husband
will complain to the mothers and they will beat her.' The maids
listen to the instruction along with the bride, and since every girl
keeps several of her immediate seniors company before she grows
up herself, no young woman can be left in doubt as to her duties
as a wife.

881 At the shaving of the sprouting hair the 'bull of puberty'
● 585 (*ingambala jakwaga*) should be killed if the bride is found, on
examination by her mothers and those of the groom, to be a
virgin, or if the husband has told the women that he himself has
deflowered her. Mwasofu's complaint at the ceremony just
described was that the groom's party had not brought the bull
though his daughter was a virgin, and he insisted that the bride
could not go to her husband until it had been provided.

At another puberty ritual which we attended, the bull was duly
brought and, after examining the girl, the mothers announced her
virginity with the cry of triumph (*ukulula*), and shouted: 'It is
ours, it is ours.' They rushed through the courtyard dancing and
applauding. Before the examination the bull had been tied up
near the mothers, and immediately the joyful announcement was
made it was killed. The meat of this bull is divided between the
bride's mothers, her father's kinsmen with whom he exchanges
cattle, and his immediate neighbours. The ritual portion, the
ijumaga, cut from the top of the right foreleg, is taken by her
father to his ritual grove of bananas and there he prays, saying:
'You, so-and-so (naming his father), since I have eaten the food of
others (non-relatives) may she flourish at her husband's.' Another
informant's version of the prayer was: 'I am eating the bull for my
daughter, may she bear children!' A third said: 'Here is the meat!
I have eaten the food of others, come out a little, may she bear a
child at her husband's!'

If the bride is not a virgin the bull is not killed. It must be
returned. Informants repeatedly implied, in talking of the ritual,
that everyone knew beforehand whether the bride was virgin or
not. 'If she is not a virgin we only do a little ritual, there is but one

[1] Our informants maintained that clay images were not used as a medium of instruction, as among the Bemba, though Nyakyusa girls would stylised dolls out of clay almost identical with one shown for the Kui in F. Fuhlmann, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, Band IX, Atlas, plate no. 28, 30, 31, 32.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

vessel of milk and two stems of bananas. We do not carry her in triumph. The mothers-in-law do not bring the powdered medicine.' One informant maintained that the bride was always examined before she washed with her husband (if she was a chief wife) and we once saw the bride examined at the *ukwingesia* ritual, but the examination before handing over the bull is the only one mentioned by most people. What is certain is that virginity must be publicly demonstrated in the ritual and that it is honoured. 881 585

After the shaving and instruction, the bride goes round her father's village visiting the men who have not already given her a gift. She is accompanied by the wife of the go-between who represented her father in the marriage negotiations. Each of her father's fellow villagers (as well as her elder brothers and her father's full sisters) should give her something—a bark-cloth, a chicken, a calabash, a spearhead, or some coins, as he greets her. These the bride divides between her maids, the officiant who treated her in the ritual, her husband, and herself; to the wife of the go-between is due one pot of the beer brewed for the shaving ritual, to take home to her husband. 585 431

If the agreed number of marriage-cattle have been handed over, the bride's father puts millet to soak for beer immediately after the rite of instruction has been completed and the bull of puberty eaten. When the brewing is ready the bride is formally taken to her husband's house (*ukumbeka*) by a 'mother' and one or two of her maids. Her own mother never goes—the woman of the party is usually a junior wife of the bride's father or the wife of the go-between. They take with them one or two pots of beer, a basketful of plantains to roast for her husband, two or three cooking pots, a log of firewood, a calabash of light ointment (*inyemba*), and a little pot of brown ointment (*imbale*) for anointing her husband and his friends in the village. 'What the wife brings when she comes for the first time is for all the men of the village to use to anoint themselves. They come every day to use it until it is finished.' These ointments are brought by every wife but they are especially important if the bride is her husband's first wife, and it is his bachelor neighbours who mostly use them. The bride also brings the fine mat and several coarse ones which she has woven during her seclusion, bark-cloths she has made for herself, and three hearth bricks (*amafigo*) carefully moulded for her by her mother out of clay and manure mixed with medicines. These are set up in her [273] 585 584 354

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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5. *Shaving the bride*

[facing p 100]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

585 354 new home, and her mother-in-law provides her with fire and a pot.

783 After the bride has had full intercourse with her husband she cannot return home, or see her own parents, until she has taken them the ritual *ilibalaga*. After sexual intercourse she wipes her husband's genitals with her hands, then wipes them on a fowl and some millet: these together form the *ilibalaga*. In the morning she goes off without washing—'with the filth of intercourse on her'—to her parents' house, taking the fowl and millet with her. The fowl is killed on a path and cooked with *ikipiki* medicine and, if the bride is the eldest daughter of one of the father's first two wives, her father and mother eat it together. Her mother eats alone if she is a younger daughter, or the mother is a junior wife. If the father is a chief the husband may kill a young bull and beef is sent in place of the hen.

834 After eating the *ilibalaga* her parents resume intercourse[1] which has been taboo from the time the girl first menstruated. If no hen is brought because the husband is poor, the parents still resume sexual intercourse, but the bride, when she visits her home, must not take water from her mother's pot. Someone else draws for her and she drinks it outside from a separate calabash. If she drinks [753] inside, or if her mother uses the calabash she has used, it is believed that her mother will get diarrhœa. She also avoids her father's bed and stool.

606 With the ritual of marriage must be included the negative ritual of avoidance between a woman and her husband's father and between those identified with him or her. The taboo applies from the time of betrothal or, if the girl has been betrothed as an infant, from well before she reaches puberty, and forbids father-in-law and daughter-in-law ever to look at one another or meet face to face on the pathway, or enter the same house, much less speak together. As we have seen, a similar taboo applies between the bride and her own father during her seclusion, but is relaxed when he [184] has given her a gift. Between a woman and her father-in-law, however, it is never relaxed, except among the more sophisticated 773 Christians. A myth of origin tells of a case of incest between father-606 in-law and daughter-in-law which led to the establishment of the 811

[1] Kasitile maintained that if the mother has not reached the menopause the parents do not lie together until the daughter's pregnancy is apparent. 'For the mother to conceive before the daughter is forbidden, but old women are fruits sucked dry.' Mwakionde denied any danger in mother conceiving before daughter.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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6. The groomsmen dance the stamping dance

[facing p. 101]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selga, Mulungonde

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taboo, and the practical difficulties of observing the taboo if fathers 773
and sons live in the same village is cited as a reason for the age- 811
village organization.[1]

The marriage ritual may be said to finish with the eating of the 585
ilibalaga, but avoidance of father-in-law and daughter-in-law con- 606
tinues until death and no clear line can be drawn between the marriage ritual proper and the rituals of pregnancy and birth which follow.

It is plain from the events described that the *ubusungu bwa-* 881
bansungu is a marriage as well as a puberty ritual and that the hus- 516
band and his family play an essential part in it, but if a girl is not betrothed before puberty a curtailed ritual is still performed for her when she grows up. She drinks the *undumila* medicine, she washes with a brother, and her mothers put her formally into the hut of seclusion. They cook for the various feasts, and they tell her brothers to call their friends to help dance the stamping dance. The litter is cleared by her mothers in due course, and she is shaved and instructed. When she is eventually married, only the rites of slaughtering the bull of virginity, taking her to her husband, and returning with the *ilibalaga* are performed. She does not wash with him ritually.

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

The avowed purpose of the *ubusungu* ritual is to protect the 782
physical and mental health of the girl and to ensure her fertility. 755
'If the ritual is not performed the girl will fall ill, go mad, or not 881
bear children.' Numerous informants were agreed on this point. Angombwike expanded it, saying: 'It is said that if they do not perform the ritual of *ubusungu* the bride will go mad. When she is sick of the madness they perform the ritual. If the doctor says: "Those below are angry," then the father of the girl takes water and prays in the banana grove saying: "My father and my grandfather, let the child recover from her sickness." Sometimes the doctor says: "The so-and-so's (naming a village) have cursed her"; then the father seeks a bull and they eat it. It is the curse which comes from the mouths of people when many whisper saying: "Why have they not performed the ritual? Why have they not performed it?" It comes from their evil breath.' Neglect of the puberty ritual is therefore thought both to anger the shades and to shock the neighbours, who expect to feast on this occasion.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 80-6.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Malingonde

The bundle of medicine and the belt are burnt with the litter at the 789
coming out. And whenever a child is born, every time, not only at the [346]
birth of the first or second, it is washed by the husband's mother with 581
this same powdered medicine from the store in her pot. If this is not done they fear that perhaps the child will go mad or something dreadful will happen. They say of the powdered medicine: 'It is our kinship, it is our blood (*Ba bakamu bawa, ya ilipa yeta*).' And if a girl runs off with a lover in the veld they mock her and say: 'Who has given you powdered medicine? You are no relative.' They say: 'She is not our relative, she has not got our blood. . . .' The medicine is to create relationship (*ukakamu*). Using it means that the bride is now of my lineage (*ukilolo*). [602]
You know that burial customs differ. When they have used the medicine they will bury my wives as they bury me, either sitting up or lying down, as the case may be. We Christians do not do this because we have [775]
another way. We take hands before the priest and say: 'This is my relative (*ukakamu gwange*).'

Another informant (a pagan), questioned separately, gave a similar interpretation. He said: 'Washing with the medicine means, "my wife has come. She is now my relative (*ukamu gwange*)."'

As already indicated, the act of washing with her husband pro- 798
claims the seniority of a wife. Washing with her own mother and 602
her father or young brother, is to proclaim kinship. 'The girl washes with a brother to show that she has brothers and sisters. If she does not do so it shows that she is a poor person without relatives.' 'She has washed at her husband's place, then she comes home and her father honours her by looking for a boy, not an old one but a young one, to wash with her. Then the girl thinks: "I have fathers, I am no bastard." But if she washed alone she would think: "Perhaps I am not their child, perhaps I have no relatives."' Kasitile said: 'If she washes with me, her father, it means: "She is my child, I begot her myself, she is my first-born."' Mwakisonde, after discussing the circumstances under which a father washes, said: 'To wash is to admit that I have lived and borne a child and grown up.' 'And if a brother does it?' we asked. 'It means: "You young man, you are her father." If they ever quarrel the brother says: "Why do you not respect me, your father? We washed together in water."' A young brother is chosen 'because the grown-up boys are going about. They want one who has not made love to girls.'

Standing in the doorway of her mother's hut (or of the woman 602
acting in place of her mother if the latter is dead or divorced) is 335●

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

602 585 again an acknowledgment of kinship. 'If she washed outside it would mean that she was not the daughter of her father.'

585 The two fresh leaves of plantain and sweet banana on which the 839 officiant places her soiled bark-cloth, and on top of which she kneels to eat bananas are, as already stated, symbols of male and female. Everyone understood this. Fewer people were aware of the symbolism of eating the banana, but Kasitile and one or two others were fully conscious of it and forthright in discussion. He said:

> At the 'putting her in' (*ukwingwile*) the mothers-in-law bring a new bark-cloth and dress her in it; the old one is thrown away on the litter. They mix together bananas and *ikipiki* medicine which she receives. Don't you understand? They treat her. The plantain is the symbol of the man, of his penis, we are treating her, may she 'cook well' for her husband [i.e. be proficient in intercourse], may she bear children. She eats on that bark-cloth which means may the blood go to make children, this is your husband. Eating is a symbol (*ikimanyilo*) of sexual intercourse. She eats the plantain, meaning she has intercourse with her husband.

He connected this with the admonition at the end of the ritual. When she eats the banana nothing is said, it is only implied, but [847] at the drinking of beer they teach her, saying: "Look after your husband well; if you are sweeping the house and he catches hold of you don't be startled, accept him, and catch hold of him also. . . . Men when they do this beget children."'

783 The second washing at the groom's, which is performed for 881 every wife and not only for a senior one, is interpreted as a clean- 585 sing ritual. In the morning the officiant calls the husband and wife and says: 'Come and wash now and clean off the filth.'

Shaving is both a purification and a sign of the completion of the ritual. 'The hair of a girl who has reached puberty is the filthiness of puberty, of the menstrual blood which she produces then. She throws it away.' Mwakwelebeja and his wife said: 'The shaving is to show that she has awakened to puberty (*alombwile ulwanga*). During the ritual she did not shave. We perform the rite of shaving that she may begin to shave again, and to let her smear herself with brown ointment. It is like a burial. If a man's close relative [745] dies he does not shave or wash.' Mwalibeje said: 'The shaving is to show that the *ulwanga* ritual is finished.'

Clearing the litter which is 'filthy', contaminated with the menstrual blood of the girl, is also a symbol of purification. The washing in a leaf basin into which *ikipiki* medicine had been

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

sprinkled in the form of a cross was interpreted by Lyandileko (the 783
woman doctor already quoted) as the means by which the taboo 881
on a bride crossing a stream was removed. 'We give her *ikipiki* to 515
wash with that she may not fear streams. It is taboo to cross water while she is in the puberty ritual. Here I give her the *ikipiki* so that she may cross. If she crosses before she has been treated she grows thin. She will be like a stream [i.e. her periods will be very heavy].' Another informant remarked that if a bride crossed water before she was treated, the flow of menstrual blood would be excessive. Kaitile interpreted this rite rather differently. He said: 'It is to 881
tell her not to break the commandment with the man. . . . "Do 535
not break the commandment, do not step over him. When you lie 533
down, let the man get up first." It is taboo (*mwiko*) for the woman to get up first and step over (*akakilepa*) me, the man. My legs would swell up immediately. Sprinkling medicine thus [in a vertical line] is the man. He must get up first. Sprinkling thus [in a horizontal line] is the woman. She must follow.' Probably there is a double symbolism, as in several other rites. Both Lyandileko and Kaitile were experts on ritual and open in conversation with us.

Lyandileko explained the jumping over fire in a whisper: 'It 881
means, Kagile (M. W.), that she will never begin again. She is 535
going to do this at her husband's.' Angumbwike said:

> It is to give the girl fire, to say: 'Do not burn there at your husband's.' It means: 'Now you have grown up, you are a woman. I have made fire for you (*ngapele amate*).' For when a girl has run off as a child and been deflowered, then her mothers say: 'When shall we make fire for you? We cannot give it to you properly.' And at cooking she burns her hands, perhaps the water for the porridge spills over her hands and burns them. We hear that formerly they gave her fire, a torch of burning grass, to take to her husband's and kindle fire there, but they have left that. She jumps over fire, that is to give it to her.

The rite was also interpreted as a test of virginity. 'If a bride clears the fire she is virgin, if she falls in she has been foolish with men.'

The symbolism here is doubtless complex, but of the various informants Lyandileko, by reason of her status and personality, carries most weight, and I think it is probably correct to regard the jumping over fire both as a *rite de passage* and as a symbol of intercourse.

The cloth put on the bride like a tail after she has washed

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

§31 at the stream comes from the girl's father.[1] He spits on it and
535 gives it to her mothers to dress her in at the stream.' (Kasitile.) Angombwike explained further:

> Dressing her in it means her father has made her grow up. It means: 'Now she is a woman let her act like a woman.' They symbolise the genitals (*ikiupe*) of the man, because among us, according to Nyakyusa custom, in front is a woman and behind a man. They tell her, saying: 'You have grown up, you have work [i.e. intercourse] with a man.'
>
> QUERY: *Kipetule?*
>
> ANSWER: *Kipetule* is very old. It's to bless her and say: 'You have grown up. When you go to your husband it will not be painful. Have intercourse.' If the woman is no longer a virgin they do not speak of it. They say she knows already, she has learnt on the veld.

§39 *Kipetule*, like *usakemile*, is a word not used in mixed company. Once Kasitile whispered, when inquiry had been made, unwittingly, before other people: 'No, Mwaipaja (G. W.), there are children present, and my senior, that is bad. But when there are only cross-cousins (*katoto*), then . . .' So the conversation changed.

§31 The washing at the stream is a final purification. Lyandileko
535 said:
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> We give the bride brass body-rings because she was not wearing good things (*mono*), she was filthy during the puberty ritual. We wash her and put on body-rings and a cloth, and she stands in the winnowing basket, because now she must not step on dirt (*ububili*).

§31 The earth, it will be remembered, is associated with faeces,
535 corpses, and the shades. Then comes the triumphal return to her father's house, the girl carried high, and the women dancing. 'Crying "*Niyse*" and carrying the girl, on return from bathing, is for display.' Lyandileko, asked the reason for throwing millet in the winnowing basket, replied:

> It's to say it [the food, i.e. the meat of the bull of puberty] is ours. We examine the girl at the river. If she is rubbish (*longa linde*) we do not rejoice. The mothers of the girl give gifts (*akakemile*). It's a rejoicing because it's ours, it's ours, the girl is virgin.

Niyse, the word the women repeat as they carry and dance with the bride on the return from the stream, was interpreted by Angombwike as meaning: 'Put me down.'[2] 'It is traditional and

[1] Mwakikonde denied this, see infra, p. 109.
[2] *Ukwiyse*: to put down behind (as opposed to in front).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mukgonde

means: Since you have carried me, put me down, mother, I am a woman,' i.e. this is the symbolic ending of childhood.

Mwakwelebeja's wife interpreted stepping into the winnowing basket as being 'in order that she may cook well for her husband and serve his food nicely'. Kasitile, when asked about it, replied:

> They honour the fearful ones (*abipaya*) themselves, saying: 'This is your child, she is Kyala, we are performing the ritual for her.' If they honour an *amaripaya* on the ground Kyala is startled, the child runs mad, she is ill. . . . In these customs we come together to teach the child. Kyala said: 'Shake the winnowing basket for a daughter and say: "We have sent you to your husband; if we hear of cases at your husband's you are no child of ours."' The mothers of the village instruct the girl. She ought to look towards her mothers-in-law (as they do so) and, if she does not, they beat her again, saying: 'Those are your mothers there, we are not relatives, look to them over there.'

Mwakionde, a doctor, interpreted most of the events in the same way. Asked about the cloth hung over the bride's buttocks, he replied:

> It is because during the puberty ritual she does not wear iron [i.e. metal] or a good bark-cloth. . . . Then the cloth comes from the husband [*sic.*] with the three body-rings. It is a way of saying: 'She's my wife.' They carry her and say: *Niya*.
>
> QUESTION: Why?
>
> MWAKIONDE: Because she has grown up. Until now she was a child. A while ago we bore and begot her, now she has grown up herself and is honoured, she herself begins to bear a child. It is to finish and say: 'Go to your husband and bear your own children.' Her mothers and the women of her father's village throw millet and maize and pumpkin-seeds. It is a rejoicing. Our child has flourished, she has grown up. They give the seed to her mother-in-law, the mother of the groom, and she takes it away.
>
> QUESTION: Is it not a ritual?
>
> MWAKIONDE: No, it is only a rejoicing.

Mwaihojo's daughter, asked why millet was thrown into the basket, replied simply: 'It is shaken, we are rejoicing greatly,' and indeed the basket is shaken in time to the dance, almost like a tambourine.

The theme of rejoicing recurs again and again in the course of the ritual. At the 'putting her in' her mothers dance with her on their shoulders 'to honour her because my child has grown up';

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Ma Ngonde

881 her mother-in-law covers her head with a red cloth 'for display'.
585 'We are rejoicing because our child has grown up,' and she too takes her on her shoulders and dances with her. When the 'husbands' come to dance the stamping dance: 'It too is a rejoicing. It shows I have married a wife now.' All through there is rejoicing over the fine food, and the celebration and feasting is primarily among the women. The culmination comes when the girl is publicly shown to be a virgin and the mothers can claim the bull crying in exultation: 'It's ours, it's ours.'

881 An interesting sidelight on the attitude of girls towards the ritual
885 came from a young man, a Christian, who was betrothed to a
187 pagan girl and had forbidden her to go through the ritual. He
765 said:

> Once my wife, when she had reached puberty, asked me why I objected to her undergoing the puberty ritual. I said it was forbidden for us Christians to participate in it, and I asked her if she wished to do so. She said 'Yes', and I asked why. She said: 'When the ritual is performed for us we are famed. People tell each other that so-and-so's daughter has grown up and people from far away come to sing songs, so we become very well known. See, now I have grown up, but no one sees that I have done so. Only you know.' Then I said: 'We Christians also have the custom of celebrating growing up at the handing over of marriage-cattle to the father (*ukukwa*). We do not hand over cattle when girls are still small, so everyone sees that a girl has grown up when we do so.' She agreed and said: 'I, also, have seen a little of the handing over of cattle among Christians.'

In fact, the *ukukwa* is the occasion for a great feast among Christians to which many young men and girls come to sing and dance.

881 The giving of presents to the bride by her father and his con-
585 temporaries is interpreted as part of the rejoicing.

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> To give presents (*ukukwala*) is to rejoice. It's an occasion for display and rejoicing, because the girl has grown up. The father gives her a present because he rejoices that she has grown up. He says to her: 'Congratulations, you have grown up, you are going away to your husband, you are going away to gain a child!'

881 During the period of seclusion the girl's father is spoken of as
585 her father-in-law (*ukwamwana*). She must *ukutila* (respect and
602 avoid) him:

> Because he is her father who begot her. She thinks: 'I must respect

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mwakyonde

my father-in-law, father.'[1] She says: 'I have grown up finally, I am a woman.' 'As I have grown up, I am a daughter-in-law (*ukwamwene*).' 'If a girl looks at her father (during the ritual) she is proud (*umuntinga*).' 'She used to be beaten if she looked at her father's friends. She is proud if she does. Her mothers will beat her.' She also fears ridicule—'We *ukutila* because we laugh at one another'—and mystical sanctions. 'If she does not *ukutila* (her father) she gets thin and brown. Since she has grown up she must avoid people.' 'She would become light in colour if she did not *ukutila* during the ritual.' 'She will grow thin and her body will be brown instead of black. We think that ugly.'

Mwandini (the old blind chief), asked why a bride should *ukutila* her father, replied:

She avoids him and he gives her a gift to break the taboo. During puberty it is taboo. Kyala has created us so. Because if her father looks at her she grows thin, those below [i.e. the shades] are angry.

QUESTION: And those above?

MWANDINI: Yes! Do they not injure them? Do they not give those who throw out the litter a bull that they may eat?

Mwakionde (the doctor), asked the same question, replied:

It is because of the in-law relationship (*ukwamwene*). If I, the father, look at her she will grow thin and waste away, but at the beer we give her gifts of bark-cloth to break the taboo and say: 'You have come out (*ukutila*). You have come out, my child. I am sorry about the fire, I am sorry.' Then she looks at us. She avoids me, the father, and my younger brothers and my fellows in the age-village who are all, according to our custom, her fathers.

Ukutila of her mother-in-law (shielding her face with a mat or skin) was interpreted by Mwakionde in this way:

It is on account of the dignity of her mother-in-law who says: 'She is my child, see, she respects and avoids me, saying: "She bore my husband." I am her superior. She acknowledges my dignity. She is wise, she respects me, her mother.'

Everyone was agreed that 'the bull of puberty' (*ingombele jubo-nenge*) is both a sacrifice to the shades, who are asked to bless the girl and make her fertile, and a feast for the mothers and that, strictly, it is only brought if the girl is virgin. 'We throw the *ijie nenge* meat in the banana grove and put a stone on top of it so that those below may eat, and we pray that the girl may bear a

[1] Some aspects of father-in-law and daughter-in-law avoidance are discussed in *Good Company*, pp. 84-6.

2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selga, Mwakonde

585 881 child at her husband's.' Neglect to kill the bull may result in sterility. Mwaseba, a middle-aged man, said:

If the officiants, the mothers of the girl, have not eaten, and the father also, the girl will not bear a child, these people are angry and the shades are angry, they (the shades) help them (the living). And if you do not perform the other customs of the litter the shades are angry, the fathers and the mothers. They say: 'What! Have you not treated the child?'

Mwakionde, the doctor, explained:

[583] When a woman conceives and has a miscarriage, it is *minde*, the shades are angry. Perhaps if we have not killed the bull of puberty we buy one. The shades are angry, saying: 'Why have we not received a libation of blood poured on the ground for our grandchild? They have done wrong towards us, we who created them.' The girl does not bear a child because pouring out the blood of a beast (bull or cow) is to pray (*ukwa ililipa ipo wende lo lusipate*).

Mwakobela, our neighbour, said:

If we have not eaten the bull of puberty, they bewitch us (*bilundaga*), the child does not bear a child. Our fellows in the lineage bewitch us, they say: 'We have not eaten the puberty meat.' Then, later on, the husband brings the bull and we eat, and the *ijo nenaga* meat we throw in the banana grove, and we pray and pray and the girl conceives.

882 775 The fertility of the girl is believed to depend upon driving away the shade of her father's lineage from her body. We have already quoted (p. 98) the prayer: 'Here is the meat! I have eaten the food of others, *ewe nai a lilale*, may she bear a child at her husband's.' Mwasilage explained this conception:

Those of old said: 'We drive away Kyala and the shades, may she bear at her husband's.' She moves to others, to a different lineage. May that lineage rise up from the dead (*bisyalage ibilele bilo*). If we do not treat the girl she will not bear a child at her husband's.

To understand this it is necessary to understand the Nyakyusa theory of conception. It is held that sexual desire in both men and women comes from Kyala and the shades, and without their support a man is impotent, a woman barren. Kasitile was quite explicit on the matter:

Kyala is in the belly. He causes the blood of a woman which forms a child to flow and the blood of the man also. We say that Kyala is in the belly; he watches over us at the conception of a child. But our fathers,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Ma Ngonde

have thought of it now, this is the cow.' Then, in the evening, the mother's brother blows out water in the banana grove and prays much to the fathers. And when he has prayed he says: 'Send the girl to a doctor to drink medicine.' Then the girl bears a child. The pagans say of us Christians when we have children without performing the ritual: 'You have a medicine, you are baptized with a medicine.'

Mwakitela confirmed that the mother's brother, like the father, may prevent a girl bearing a child.

Yes, it is so, if I do not give marriage-cattle for my wife our child will not bear. We go to divine and the oracle catches hold of my wife saying that the fathers are angry. We ask what they are angry about, and the answer is 'cattle'. Then I, the father of the girl, go with a cow and leave it and return. My wife and daughter remain there. They pray and pray and the girl conceives.

It is clear, therefore, that the shades are present in intercourse and control conception. At marriage the shade of her father must 'move aside a little' so that the bride may conceive, and she herself becomes dangerous to her mother (and in a lesser degree to her father) because she has mingled her blood with that of another lineage. Mingling the blood of different lineages is dangerous and a bride can safely meet her mother only after performing a ritual in which her parents, as well as herself, become 'one flesh' with her husband. 'When a bride brings a hen and millet to her mother it is to say: "Mother, I have wiped my husband's genitals, I have grown up."' All our informants were agreed that this *ilibalage* or *ilibale* (both words are used) is to safeguard the mother's health, particularly to prevent her suffering from diarrhoea. Mwandini's statement was clear:

In the puberty ritual, when a bride has come from her husband, having lain with him, she catches hold of a little millet and a fowl without washing herself and carries them to her mother. The mother eats it with the fowl that her belly may be firm. If the daughter does not bring these things, then, when she drinks from the same calabash as her mother, she overstaps her mother, who has diarrhoea. Yes, the illness comes from the shades because she has come her from the bed. . . . This diarrhoea comes from the belly when those below are angry and those above also. They say: 'The mother has overstepped the child' or 'The child has overstepped the mother'. If a girl has reached puberty we, the parents, do not come together until she has gone to her husband and lain with him. If we have intercourse we

2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mulungonde

§81 overstep our child, she will be barren and not bear children, but when
585 she has lain with her husband then we two lie together again.
783

783 Kasitile identified the hen with the body of the girl, the millet
834 with the seed of her husband, and a daughter going to the back of her mother's hut (*kasyfu*), or drinking out of the common calabash, as meeting with her mother.

If she does this before she has brought a fowl she soils her mother. Her mother develops diarrhoea. That is getting rid of the dirt (*kukwepa ubupuli*). . . . The mother's diarrhoea is like that from adultery. If my wife lies with a man in the bush, and I lie with her also, she soils the food which I eat with her, it is dirty, and I have diarrhoea, it is to get rid of the filth. . . . Yes, even though we do not lie together, I get a little diarrhoea, the filth of my wife.

QUESTION: Is the *ilikalaga* to drive away the shade again?

KASITILE: No, it is something else. It is to save the mother that she may not have diarrhoea and may not become weak.

§81 The explanation given of the Kukwe *ilikalaga* rite makes clear
585 that it is a symbolic mingling of 'the blood' of son-in-law and mother-in-law, which makes contact between them (through the bride) safe.

§81 Failure to bring the *ilikalaga* is thought sometimes to result
585 in very serious illness. One of the wives of our neighbour,
783 Mwakobela, was delirious. We asked what the cause was. He replied:

Her daughter reached puberty and went to her husband, but refused to drink with her mother. She just came and took water in the calabash cup, she brought nothing from her husband. . . . If the husband is poor a girl brings a fowl for drinking with her mother. . . . The divination said: 'It's the girl.'

QUESTION: Why did she not bring a hen from her husband?

MWAKOBELA: He is not a man of wisdom, he's very harsh, and a fool.

§81 After the *ilikalaga* has been eaten by her parents a bride is no
585 longer dangerous to them, and she, fortified by the various treat-
600 ments with *undumila* and *ikipiki* medicines, no longer fears the 'heavy ones'. The critical periods of first menstruation and first intercourse are past. But the rule of avoidance between her and her father-in-law (and those identified with him) continues through life and is directly associated by the Nyakyusa with the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selm, Mr Ngonde

danger of incest. They account for the rule by a myth which tells 581
how a certain chief looked on his son's wife and saw that she 585
was beautiful and took her, and men were shocked, and forbade a 606
father-in-law and daughter-in-law ever to see one another again. And this taboo, they say, is the reason why fathers and sons must live in separate villages. To avoid (*ukutila*) is 'to fear, to show respect'. Avoidance occurs between women in a limited degree—a girl shows respect to her father's sister, a daughter-in-law to her mother-in-law and her husband's father's sister by not looking at them directly or touching their backs; but these women are in some measure identified with father and father-in-law, and the taboos are most stringent regarding things or actions which are associated with sexual activity. The behaviour of Nyakyusa women suggests very strongly that the fundamental idea in *ukutila* is avoidance of incest.[1] Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is the primary rule of good manners and morals in domestic relations, and is constantly expressed in everyday activities.

Besides being a celebration of the change from childhood to 581
womanhood, and of movement from the lineage of her father to 585
that of her husband, the puberty—marriage ritual includes a legal 584
contract. Either at the betrothal, or when the bulk of the marriage-cattle are handed over, the groom's go-between thrusts a spear into the earth of the swept courtyard and there, publicly, before her kinsfolk and neighbours, the bride must pluck it out and hand it to her father, in token of her consent to the marriage. 'It means: "With this spear you may slay me if I run away from my husband." And her father keeps the spear and may kill her if she does—some fathers did so in the old days.'

After taking the spear the father plucks a banana leaf and hands his daughter the mid-rib with which she strikes one of the cows brought by her husband, and all the women of the homestead acclaim her. Thus her acceptance of the marriage is demonstrated. And each time an instalment of the marriage-cattle is handed over, the go-between of her father and the go-between of the husband must both be present as witnesses; and they notify their sons of the contracts they have so witnessed so that the sons may give evidence after the death of their fathers if necessary.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 89-8, 108, 113, 180-2; 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde, p. 107-8.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

2. IN KUKWE COUNTRY

(a) *The events*

585 581 184 The puberty and marriage ritual performed by the Kukwe differs in detail from that performed by the Nyakyusa proper, but the main elements—the seclusion of the bride and avoidance of her fathers and brothers, the laying of a ritual litter, the meeting of maids and young men on the litter, the avoidance of water, the treatment with *ikipili* medicine, shaving and ceremonial purification, the instruction, the celebration of maturity and virginity by the exchange of feasts between the bride's parents and those of the groom, the slaughter of the bull of virginity provided by her husband, and the taking of a fowl to her mother after first intercourse—all these recur. And the overt purpose of the ritual is again that the girl may be fertile, and healthy in mind and body. The main differences are in the symbols used for intercourse and purification, and in the location of the rites. Among the Nyakyusa proper most of the ritual is performed at the bride's home, whereas among the Kukwe most of it is performed at the groom's home.

585 581 When a Kukwe girl first menstruates her father sends his go-between in the marriage (*ungkaye*) to inform her husband that she has grown up. If she has been visiting her husband, and is at his house when the first period begins, she runs home to her father's, and the formal message is despatched to her husband. He sends back a hen with the message: 'Thank you, you have nourished my wife,' and some time later sends a second hen by his go-between summoning her to come and wash. A party of two or three 'mothers' (her own mother does not go) and ten or a dozen maids takes her to her husband's, and there (if she is a senior wife) she washes with him in water mixed with powdered *ikipili* medicine. The officiant pours the water which the husband catches in his hands, and the wife holds her hands below his. Then they kindle fire together by friction (*ukupepa ukupenda*), husband and wife both twirling the stick (his hands are again above here) and the officiant holding the horizontal trough. On the fire they have kindled porridge is cooked, which they eat together. A junior wife washes and kindles fire and eats porridge, not with her husband, but with his younger brother.

After the ritual meal 'mothers-in-law' cut banana leaves and spread the litter for the bride at their homestead, not at her father's. The officiant sprinkles powdered medicine over the floor on one side of the hut and makes two girls lie down with the bride

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

between them. These two remain with the bride all through the period of seclusion, never leaving her, but the other maids may come and go if called away to perform other duties.

From the onset of menstruation until the ritual washing a girl may neither cross a stream nor wash; after it she crosses streams and washes her hands and feet, but does not yet bathe her whole body. She sleeps on the litter with her companions for about a month and 'by day and by night the young men sing songs with the girls. . . . The play in the puberty hut resembles adultery—we call it love-making (*ukugesiya*).' 'The groom visits his bride on the litter.' 'Gifts of beer and firewood are brought by the bride's mothers (*ukuwubulula*) and, after her second period has passed, the rite of *ukusiya* (bringing out) is performed.'

The litter is swept out and burnt. Bride and groom are shaved and go separately to bathe. 'The women carry the girl and the man's fellows carry him.' The girl is examined to prove her virginity and the women return with her rejoicing, and make her and her husband run in and out of the doorway of a hut over which they pour water. Then follows the admonition.

At the *ukusiya* (bringing out) rite the officiants drink a special brewing of beer made in the following fashion: the chief officiant puts a little millet, mixed with powdered medicine, into a flat winnowing basket, makes the bride stand in it and lowering her bark-cloth soiled by first menstruation, lets it fall into the millet.[1] Then she shrends and burns it, lest an enemy, wishing to prevent the bride conceiving, should get hold of it. The bride's fresh bark-cloth is sprinkled with medicines to make her 'heavy', the ashes of the old one are treated with medicines to ensure her fertility, and the millet is put to soak and brewed into beer in the hut in which she lies secluded on the litter.

We saw the Kukwe *ukusiya* rite performed only once. The girl, a daughter of a chief, was not yet married or betrothed, so there was no groom to play his part, and the whole ritual was carried out in her father's homestead, her own mother going through it with her. She herself appeared most reluctant, and there were various modifications due to the pressure of new ideas. We quote the account to show the manner of washing, and of entering and leaving the hut—rites which were described in detail by a number of informants, and which are characteristic of the Kukwe ritual cycle.

[1] It was not made clear by Kukwe informants exactly where this happened.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F:N17 Ngonde F:N17
Nyakyusa
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The words 'refer to the cries of the mother in labour'—'they symbolize the adolescence of the bride and the toil of the mother in labour.'

They went together to the stream, the girl's mother walking after they were past the homestead. The girl and her mother sat down on the bed of the stream, facing down-stream. The other women made them hold out their hands, and between each finger and toe, and behind each ear, they placed a small pebble. Flowers and grass, twisted together, were placed on their heads, with stones on top. Then both were made to lie down in the water. The girl was pushed down and dipped gently. She protested a little and was told: 'You are proud.' The women and girls on the bank laughed. She was told to take off her clothes and wash herself and, looking rather embarrassed, she went a little way up-stream into the shelter of some bushes. The women said said she was shy of me. Her mother took off her cloth and washed it, and all the chief's wives present, a younger sister of the *ssungu*, and another little girl did so also. The *ssungu* slipped on a fresh dry cloth, her mother a fresh bark-cloth, and each was given a little bunch of ferns and flowers to carry. One woman filled a small calebash with water and the party returned to the mother's house. Mother and daughter were told by the officiant to throw their flowers on to the roof of the hut just above the doorway; she herself poured some of the water brought from the stream on to the thatch and made the girl enter the doorway as the water dripped down. Again she poured water and made the girl come out. The rite was repeated for the mother. Then the officiant took the red ointment she had prepared with medicine, and touched herself with it on the left toe, the left knee, the navel, the left temple, and left elbow. She touched the girl with it in the same places, smeared it on her legs, arms, shoulders, and head, and did the same for the mother, and for the small sister who had washed.

Next she cleared away the banana skins and bean-shells left by the women who had cooked earlier and, along with this refuse, she burnt a bark-cloth strap taken off the girl when she washed. There was no fetter (*ulyilende*), though the women said it was usual for there to be one. Then the girl ate some of the cooked bananas, beans, and mush of beans and bananas prepared, and drank some of the medicated beer with her mother, and the curtailed rite was at an end.

Usually, we were told, the mothers sing: 'Put me down, Mother, put me down,' as they carry the bride back from the stream after examining her, and throw gifts of grain into a winnowing basket, as they do in Selya, but there was no such rejoicing for this girl. It seemed likely, from the events omitted, that she was known not to be a virgin, but we had no proof of this. When the *ssungu* is betrothed, her husband also shaves and washes, in cer-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

ried to the stream, runs in and out under the dripping water, is anointed with red ointment, shares the mash of beans and bananas, and drinks medicated beer with her from the same calabash. In the old days it was taboo for either bride or groom to set foot to the ground on their way to the stream.

For a senior wife, the mother-in-law moulds hearth-bricks with powdered medicine, and sets them up in the groom's hut. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest daughter if the daughter is her first-born, or with her senior daughter-in-law if her eldest child is a boy. 'If they do not do this they go mad.'

As in Selya, an admonition of the bride by her 'mothers', in the presence of her in-laws, concludes the full 'bringing out' ritual. We never heard it in Kukwe country, but the points mentioned by informants were similar to those emphasized in Selya. Kajinga, Porokoto's second wife, summed up the teaching thus:

> Obey your husband when he calls you. Fetch water and wood. Don't say: 'First let me fetch firewood' if your husband wants you to do something else. Do what your husband says first, then to-morrow go for wood. It is forbidden to refuse when your husband wants to sleep with you. In the morning get up and wash. Wash first, then light the fire and give your husband food. Don't say: 'There isn't any food.'

Next day, on her return home, the bride is given presents by the people of her home village (*ukugwa*), her father making the first gift. The groom brings the bull of puberty on which all the '—there' feast, but the meat from the top of the right foreleg (*ijemaga*) is reserved for the bride's own parents who sing as they eat it:

Kyatile, Kyatile, Kyatipaw

Some days later a party of 'mothers' takes her formally to her husband's house (*ulumiaka*) with gifts of beer and food and firewood, and are feasted by the groom's people and given chickens and shillings.

When she is finally living with her husband, before she can visit or greet her parents, the bride must put milk and a fowl (some use a live fowl, others a cooked one) under her bed at night. After having had intercourse with her husband 'she takes the fowl and milk and gives them to her parents with the filth of intercourse still on her. This is called the *ilibuka*. If she does not do this her mother will fall ill and have diarrhoea.' 'When they take the food

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

(from under the bed) in the morning it has the filth of intercourse 585 ●
on it, then the father and mother should eat it. If this is not done 881
they will fall ill with diarrhœa. If the hen is taken alive some eat 783
it and others do not.'

After discussing this rite Mwasalemba went on:

You know, also, that when a girl has gone through the puberty 784
ritual at her husband's she must not take firewood from her mother's 842
rafters (*kwijula*) until she is obviously pregnant. Before then, while she is lying with her husband, she must not. We say: 'How can you take your mother's firewood when you are sleeping with your husband?' It is just the same whether the mother is old or young. If the bride goes through the ritual without sleeping with her husband that is all right; it is when she begins to sleep with him that she begins to avoid her mother's loft. At that time I, the father, may meet her mother and sleep with her, but with *coitus interruptus*. I must not make her pregnant. [834] The daughter must begin. As soon as she is pregnant then we parents can begin to conceive a child again. If we do so before our daughter, then she will never bear a child at all, and others will say: 'How could you overstep your daughter?'

Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is ob- 606
served as in Selya, but is slightly less strict. 184

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

As has already been indicated, the symbolism of the Kukwe 585
ritual of puberty is similar to that of Selya. The same actions are 881
interpreted in exactly the same way and, where actions differ 184
somewhat, they are still interpreted as expressing the same general conceptions. For example, the Kukwe bride and groom make fire together by friction and eat porridge cooked on it, whereas a bride in Selya eats bananas with powdered medicine, but both actions are symbols of sexual intercourse. Both in Selya and in Kukwe country the bride is purified and, as part of the process of purification, the shade of her father's lineage is driven from her body; but only among the Kukwe is this symbolized by sitting in a running stream and allowing the water to wash away pebbles from between her fingers and toes.

That there may be no doubt about the interpretation of the 585
Kukwe ritual we again quote a number of statements by Nyakyusa 881
informants. These refer specifically to the Kukwe form of the puberty ritual.

Chief Porokoto's wives, discussing the ritual together, were em-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

585 881 phatic that 'if the bride does not wash with powdered medicine she will go mad and she will bury children'.

Syungu, the officiant for all the rituals in Porokoto's lineage, said:

[158] If a girl goes mad, we say, if we have not treated her: 'We neglected the ritual, let us treat her.' She runs about aimlessly and makes bundles of filth. But if we have treated her we say: 'Perhaps Kyala has gone away from me. See! Nothing has been omitted, we have treated her.' And if she does not bear a child at her husband's her in-laws say to her: 'Did your father and mother not treat you?'

[753] MUNGASALWA (a middle-aged pagan): It is said that if she eats food with her fellows who sleep with their husbands they will harm (overstep) her, and she has diarrhœa. When she has been given powdered medicine, then she eats with them. . . . To lie on powdered medicine which has been sprinkled on the ground is to give the bride weight (*ubunite*), because if it is not done those who are with their husbands will overstep her and she will have diarrhœa.

[177] POROKOTO'S WIVES: In the old days we put medicine in her porridge so that she would not run away from her husband . . . not now. It's European times now.

[882] QUESTION: In Selya it is said that if she is not given powdered medicine she will be proud.

WIVES: Yes, here too. And if the girl is proud we beat her.

MUNGASALWA: Washing and catching in her hands the water that falls from her husband's hands has two meanings. In some families the husband and wife wash separately, in others they wash together. In either case the first meaning is present, in the second both meanings.

[753] It is said that when someone has not washed in the puberty ritual his or her children will die, for that water (with which he neglected to wash) will enter the child's stomach and kill it. The water is in the child's stomach but its symptoms are those of diarrhœa. The nubile girl catching water in her hands teaches us that the woman will receive

[833] everything. The man is like the upper grindstone, the woman like the nether grindstone (we speak of intercourse), which means that the women receives the semen which comes from the man.

Making fire by friction is a symbol of procreation.[1] If the fire does not kindle we say the couple are sterile. Two fire-sticks are used, one is the man the other the woman, and the fire is the child. The sawdust made by the rubbing is the semen.

KAJIWOA: If the fire does not come the man is sterile and the girl will quarrel with her husband and perhaps run away. It does not mean she will be barren with other men.

[1] *Ulupepwe*: to make fire by friction; *ukupipwe*: to masturbate.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

MUNGASALWA: The bride does not cross water for it is said that the blood which began to flow when she reached puberty will not dry on her body if she does. 585 881

To sleep on the litter and to refuse to sleep on sleeping-mats is a sign of childhood (for during childhood girls do not think much about cleanliness, but are dirty); it means that they leave behind them [literally 'come out from'] childish things. The litter is burnt because if it has not been burnt the children take bits of it to make a fire and cook food, then, when they have eaten that food, their bodies are sick. We say the body becomes unhealthily fat (*ukujegejala*). Food is collected for a bride because if, later, a woman, who has not had food collected for her, eats food collected for another bride going through the puberty ritual, she will fall sick and her body will grow unhealthily fat. Bringing food for the *ukuwubulila* and giving gifts at the *ukugwa* are to congratulate the bride because she has grown up, she is now an adult. [863]

X: The wearing of banana leaves [at the bringing out] is a sign of fertility. The ritual is finished, the girl is someone's wife now. . . . The plantain represents the penis, the sweet banana the clitoris. [831]

Sitting in a stream and letting water carry away pebbles placed between fingers and toes is a symbol of purification and separation from the shade. The first element—purification—was mentioned by most informants: 'The rite means that the dirt is finished,' said Porokoto's wife; but the more self-conscious identified 'dirt' with the shade. Mwasalemba made the matter quite clear. When asked why pebbles were placed in the clefts of fingers and toes, he replied: 'Kyala, when he created men, said: "At death throw it away, it is the shade, it is the body." ' 783 775

QUESTION: In the puberty ritual? 881

MWASALEMBA: It is to say that the shade has brooded over the child, since he created blood we throw him away. May the shade go with these stones, then may she bear children; if he does not go, if you do not treat the girl, then Kyala broods over her and she does not bear children. 775

QUESTION: Why does she avoid her father at this time? 881

MWASALEMBA: Because I, the father, and her mother, perform the ritual for our child. Our shade has entered into her, has brooded over her, therefore we do not come together on the mat until we have finished treating our child; when we have finished, and have treated her, then we do what we will on the mat. If I want to lie with my wife [during the ritual] she refuses, saying: 'Our child has not yet finished, she is still undergoing the puberty ritual.' But if she agrees and we lie together, then our child will never bear. When we have finished the 834

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

853 775 they both work in us, they are not only in one partner. They work in the woman and in the man, they work in both of us.

885 Mwangwanda, an elderly pagan, explained the symbolism of the new hearth-brick at some length:

> We take a new hearth-brick and plant it by the hearth in the bride's house. It means: 'You have grown up, you are a woman, you must always cook a pot,' and she cooks on that hearth-brick. . . . It means: 'You have grown up, the food that your mother sent will come no more, you must cook for your husband yourself.' It is planted for the senior wife only, not for others. If I find that my first wife is not a virgin we do not plant a brick for her—she has lain with another. But if she has a younger sister and she brings her as a junior wife and she is a virgin and I deflower her myself, then the first sister is still the senior wife and we plant a brick for her and her child will inherit as the senior son, for another shut up her womb [i.e. made her virgin again]. If she has no younger sister I may marry her, but she will not be my chief wife. The next one I marry will be my senior wife and for her the brick will be planted and her son will inherit.

881 ●585 There is also an association, not made explicit by our informants, between a log of firewood and a marriageable woman. One of the tasks of the bride and her maids is to fetch heavy logs of firewood which are stored in her mother's loft. At least one log goes with her when she is taken by her 'mothers' to her husband, and this she keeps all her life, taking it with her if she moves. From it the shades are said to chip splinters when they wish to warm themselves at the dying fire at night. After she has gone to her husband and before she conceives, a bride is forbidden to touch the firewood in her mother's loft, and in the funeral ritual, when a widow returns home for the *isgutule* she steals a log of firewood from her mother's loft and takes it to her husband's. Into the cracks of this log the officiants press seeds. It seems probable that the reddish log represents a woman in her reproductive capacity, which is formally transferred to her husband and segregated from the reproductive activities of her mother. This, we repeat, is our own interpretation, not formulated by any Nyakyusa.

783 784 The taboo on a bride who has slept with her husband approaching her mother until she has brought the ritual *ilibako* is associated with the danger of mixing the bloods of different lineages.

> A bride avoids dipping water out of a pot and drinking from a calabash belonging to her relatives for the following reasons: A girl is of one blood (*ililupe*) with her mother, and when she goes to her husband, the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 has been a quarrel in the family, those members of the lineage
602 who have been at variance must attend and share the meat or beer, and bless one another. Grandchildren, 'comrades of the shades', must eat the offering left overnight in the banana grove.

593 If a son has quarrelled with his father and comes to beg pardon
621 the father calls his *neighbours* who must be present and partake of a
783 feast and bless the young men. 'If father and son just agree with one another and people do not eat anything, then the son will not be settled in well.'

585 At a puberty-marriage ritual the principals are the nubile girl
881 and her father or brother, her husband, and sometimes her mother
602 or mother-in-law. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest son's wife, or with her eldest daughter, if she is initiated at home. At an ordinary birth the principal are the mother and infant.

764 Besides these principals who undergo the full ritual there are
602 many minor actors. At a funeral there are the grave-diggers who,
621 traditionally among the Nyakyusa, were mature men, relatives or village neighbours.[1] They wash after the burial and are rewarded with a special leg of the funeral beef. As we have seen, the affines (*abale*), that is the fathers-in-law and sons-in-law of the deceased or of 'the owner of the funeral', come with cattle to kill or cloth. When a woman dies, her husband and her father, or her brother, kill cattle, and their affines bring cloths or, occasionally, cattle. Kinsmen—members of the lineage and their wives—and neighbours bring gifts of food to cook for the crowd of mourners, and small gifts of millet which are presented to the *abale* and used for making the ritual beer. After an abnormal birth, village neigh-
895 bours have their legs splashed with scalding medicine but do not
621 drink medicines or shave. The cattle of the village are also splashed. At the puberty ritual the bride's maids keep her com-
881 pany during her seclusion. The co-wives and neighbours of her
621 mother and mother-in-law assist in instructing her, and the neigh-
602 bours of her father join with him first in avoiding her and then in giving her gifts. Her father-in-law is identified with his brothers and his father's brothers' sons, whom she avoids, as well as his sisters, and her mother-in-law's brothers, and sisters' husbands. They, in turn, avoid her sisters, as well as herself.

621 By the 'congregation' we mean those who attend rituals to ex-
783 press sympathy, and whose presence is felt to be necessary to the

[1] In Ngonde they are *abalosi*, *ababumbe*.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

success of the ritual, but who do not play any specially defined 621
part. As we have seen, all who are reckoned kinsmen and all fellow 788
villagers must attend a funeral, and a large crowd enhances the status of the kinsmen of the deceased. At a puberty and marriage ritual the 'congregation' is much smaller but is nevertheless important, as is shown by the complaint of the girl marrying a Christian that if she were not initiated she would not be famed. At other rituals all who attend are actors.

The officiants (*abasyage*) for death, puberty and marriage, and 791
birth rituals are almost always elderly women who, by their own choice, have learnt the medicines and observances from some older *asyage* by acting as her assistant. We came across only one man who acted as *asyage* in death and puberty rituals, though at the rituals of spearing, binding with ropes, and protection against sorcery men are more common than women. Often all the elderly women are referred to as '*abasyage*' for 'they help the *asyage*', but the one who has been called upon to provide the medicines and organise the proceedings, and who is paid for her trouble, is clearly recognized. Sometimes she is a kinswoman of the 'owner' of the ritual—if a member of the lineage knows the medicines she will carry out the rituals for all her kin, as did Syungu, wife of Chief Porokoso's half-brother—but she is not necessarily a relative. It is knowledge, not kinship connections, that qualify her. She is the final arbitrator on procedure, and is insistent on exact observance of the details. Because knowledge of medicines is so important Nyakyusa often refer to the officiant at a ritual as *asyage*, a doctor, but *asyage* is the more precise word since *asyage* has other applications.

On the occasion of prayer in sickness, and in the ritual of recon- 791
ciliation, no specialist *asyage* is necessary. The senior kinsman of a 792
lineage pays to his shades direct, and a father and his neighbours 793
receive and bless an erring son without the mediation of any priest; but the doctor called in to treat a sick man may press the kinsmen to condone their anger and bless one another (as Mwakisonde did in the case quoted) and come very close to organising a ritual of reconciliation.

At a marriage ritual there is a 'go-between' (*asyage*) representing the bride's father and one representing the groom, and, besides 585 ●
their legal function as witnesses to the passage of cattle, they help [675]
the officiant to organize the ritual, and are specifically responsible for conveying invitations to the feasts. The wife of the groom's 'go-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

●585 between' accompanies 'the mothers-in-law' when they go to induct or instruct the bride, and the wife of her father's 'go-between' is one of the group of mothers which takes the bride to her husband. The duties of a 'go-between' do not end at marriage: the
[351] groom's 'go-between' is responsible for taking to the bride's people the hen to announce the birth of the first child, and, among the Lugulu, the 'go-between' of the father is master of ceremonies at the ritual of vituperation.

789 602 The ideas that emerge from this analysis are, that in the *protective* rituals—after death, twin birth, spearing, binding with ropes, and death from sorcery—the parents, children, grandchildren, and some siblings, and siblings' children of the person primarily affected undergo the ritual. Links through females as well as males are recognized—daughters' children as well as sons' children attend—but they are not traced so far, and a brother's or half-brother's children attend far more often than a sister's children. Moreover, children of an unrelated co-wife perform the death ritual for a woman rather than her sister's children.

593 Wives always attend rituals in which their husbands are concerned—indeed, they often come with their children when their husbands stay away—but when the wife is concerned as a sister or daughter, her husband never accompanies her.

593 602 The closest relatives, such as own children, children of the heir or of a related co-wife, and proximate full siblings, must *all* participate, but the more distant relatives select representatives.

602 The range of relations concerned varies with the particular ritual—it is widest in the twin ritual and narrowest for an ordinary birth—and is also modified by proximity, for relatives who live near come when those in the same category living twenty miles away do not.

Affines (*abala*) never perform a ritual together even when they are next-door neighbours and close friends, but *abala* in one generation are *abipaw* (mother's kin) in the next, and a man and his *abipaw* can participate together, as in the protection against sorcery described. More often, however, the members of each lineage act separately.

602 621 615 Our Nyakyusa informants distinguished the officiants—*abayaya*—from those undergoing a ritual but they did not make distinctions of the sort attempted here between principals and kin who do not undergo the ritual. The distinctions they drew were between kinsmen and neighbours and between lineages. At a death

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F2617 Ngonde F2617
Nyakyusa

or his crops fail, or his cattle die, he reflects on any quarrels he may have had with kinsmen or affines or neighbours, and on any rituals he should have performed and has omitted wholly or in part. He may be quite clear in his own mind that the misfortune is due to some particular wrong-doing (*mwapwa*)—perhaps a quarrel with a brother, or neglect to kill for his new neighbours on his inheritance from his father—and proceed directly to patch up the quarrel and perform the neglected ritual. More often he thinks of several possible causes and lays them before the oracle, relying upon it to select between them. How several possible causes of misfortune occurred to the chief sufferers, their kinsmen and neighbours, is shown in the cases of Ennei, Katanya, Mwamboputa and Mpoma quoted at the end of the book (pp. 258 ff.). 673 753 777

No linguistic distinction is made between an offence punished by the courts and one thought to be punished by the shades; both are wrong-doings (*mwapwa*), and there is no sharp distinction between an offence against a living kinsman and an offence against a dead one. In short, there is no clear conception of 'sin' as opposed to 'tort' or 'crime'. 673 [92]

There are two themes constantly recurring in Nyakyusa theology: firstly, men must observe the traditional rituals (both positive and negative) or they will go mad; and secondly, the anger of senior relatives and neighbours will injure unless it is confessed and goodwill expressed. 777 771

The first conception is a magical one:[1] what is required is the performance or avoidance of particular acts in a particular form on particular occasions; the second is sacramental, it is 'anger in the heart' that is dangerous, and no ritual is held to be efficacious without a change of heart.

Often the two conceptions are not consciously related to one another: again and again one is told: 'The rituals must be performed or men will go mad,' and there is no reference to the state of mind of the performers; but on certain occasions they overlap explicitly, as when Kasitile adjured his kinsmen to confess all while they were performing the ritual to 'untie ropes'; and always there is a symbolic connection, for the rituals themselves express the value of amity between kinsmen, of respect for seniors and obligation towards juniors.

The neglect of the marriage ritual is itself an expression of disrespect for parents or parents-in-law, and a breach of the sex code, [335] 139

[1] In the sense defined by G. B. M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 89-90.

[535] of which the basic rule is the separation of the reproductive
539 activities of successive generations.

If my wife goes to the inner part of my mother's house, it is a wrong. Perhaps she will bear a thin and sickly child. She has gone to the inner part of her in-law's house and my mother is angry with her for going where my father goes. Perhaps, when she is first pregnant, my wife goes to the back of her own mother's house. That is a wrong, too. Perhaps she will have a difficult labour. The trouble in both cases comes from the anger of the elders, my mother's in the first case, her mother's in the second. It is said that if my wives have seen my father by inheritance, then, when I die, the fathers who are dead will not receive me because I have injured ('kept back') their younger brother. I think, for my part, that the pagans honour this custom [of avoidance] very much because they say that the shades will be angry if it is neglected.

778 673 578 681 Apart from the neglect of rituals, the types of behaviour commonly believed to be directly punished by the shades are (1) quarrels between father and son or between brothers, turning on the seduction of a senior's wife by his junior, on the sharing of marriage-cattle or, nowadays, on the sharing of the earnings of a young man working for wages, or on his seduction of women which necessitates the payment of fines by his father; (2) quarrels between father and daughter or father-in-law and son-in-law turning on the handing over of marriage-cattle by the son-in-law and the provision of gifts for his daughter by the father; (3) quarrels between husband and wife; (4) quarrels between relatives of all sorts over failure to attend, or to invite to, rituals; and (5) the neglect of his wards by the heir.

578 775 Cases of family quarrels over seduction leading to misfortune have already been quoted (pp. 154-5; 187-8). One concerning cattle and earnings was cited by Mwakwelebeja. A young man, X., went out to work and left the cattle he earned with his elder full brother. When he married he took all those cattle and gave them to his father-in-law. His elder brother was very angry. X. said: 'I take all the cattle for you have never given me any of yours.' His brother replied: 'How could I give you cows? I have no children.' Then all the cattle X. had given to his father-in-law died and had to be replaced. 'The shades were angry because when the younger brother took the cows his elder brother complained very much.' And if a young man goes out to work and gives his father no share of his earnings the shades are angry: 'Perhaps I will fall ill; perhaps when I look for work I shall not

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Yet still she remains a daughter of her father's lineage and shares 613
in its rituals as well as in those of her husband's.

Lineages are linked by marriage and kinship between them is 613
established by the passage of cattle. The son-in-law becomes 'one 581
blood' with his parents-in-law when they drink the beer brewed or eat the chicken killed at the consummation of the marriage; some of his semen is buried in his father-in-law's grove, and his spear is placed in his father-in-law's hut. The significance of the link is magnified by the thicket of taboos which surrounds 'mixing bloods', and once forged the link should be, and commonly is, retained long after the deaths of the individuals by whom it was created, for each is replaced, the husband by a brother or son, the wife by a sister or brother's daughter. For each heir the ritual of 'mixing bloods' is performed afresh reminding them of their separation and union.

Cattle are closely identified with men and therefore with line- 613
ages. The shades watch over them. Like men, they are in danger from women who are ritually impure; at the death of their owner they, too, mourn; and kinship relationships are established and expressed by their transfer from one lineage to another. 'Kinship is cattle.'

The distinction and opposition of lineages is apparent in the 613
ritual of puberty and marriage which expresses both hostility and 585
conciliation. The two lineages dance in rivalry, haggle over cattle, 881
and exchange feasts. Among the Nyakyusa, the opposition is not 578
between men and women, as suggested by some recent writers on rituals elsewhere,[1] but between lineages; though the men and the women, both of the groom's party and the bride's, act separately. The hostility and conciliation reach their culmination in the ritual of vituperation among the Lungulu, when groom's group and bride's insult each other by word and in action and then, at the instance of the master of ceremonies, praise each other and feast together.

Among the Nyakyusa there is no clan organization and no 614
common name for a lineage of many generations like the Pondo 171
ciddolo, which identifies agnatic kinship within a large group. A 613
common name is used by members of a lineage of three or four generations at the most, and among commoners there is no invocation of a distant ancestor as among the Pondo. The hero

[1] E. Fortune, *The Forgotten Language*; M. Gluckman, 'The Role of the Sexes in Wiko Circumcision Ceremonies', in *Social Structure*, edited by M. Fortes (1949).

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

584 consent to the marriage, but it should be noted that she has the right of refusal, though it is seldom exercised. Two brides recently refused in church (they were both Christians) to marry the men who stood beside them; and a young girl a few months ago was with difficulty rescued from a hateful marriage, and is now pluckily living her own life, rather than submit to the unsavoury fate which her guardians had ordained for her. In case of refusal, however, the father may wash his hands of the whole matter, and decline to take any steps to find another husband for his disobedient daughter.

To return, the girl takes the hoe, and with the haft smites the cow which is standing there, in token that she accepts the obligations which the payment of the cattle involves. Then she lifts the spear, and hands it to her father, saying, "Slay me with this spear if I am unfaithful to my husband"; and the father, with a grim assurance that he will not fail, lays up the spear in the house, where it will be seen by the ancestral spirits.

584 About a week after the feast which follows, the bride, with one girl friend, and a "mother," but not
• 585 the mother who bore her, goes to the house of the go-between, who gives the mother a fowl, and the bride a piece of bark-cloth, and leads them to the husband's house. With a gift from the husband, the mother now retires, and a succession of small gifts induces the bride to take up her duties: a fowl persuades her to enter the house; some other gift, probably a few cents, induces her to kindle a fire, a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

third to cook food, and a final gift is required to make her lie down on the mat along with her girl friend, who stays with her for a few days. This ceremony of the gifts is never omitted in heathen marriages, and each successively binds the girl to her husband. 584 585

If the bride is a twin, the doctor must be present, to sprinkle medicines over house and bedding, and to give the couple a decoction supposed to prevent the occurrence of twins in the new family. 789

Except the daughters of Christian parents, all Konde girls are married before they arrive at puberty, and what has been described above applies to child wives, who stay with their husbands for about a month, and then go home. 582 177

The child wife having grown to womanhood, however, further ceremonies have to be observed. The husband arrives at her father's house with an ox for the feast, and a mock struggle for possession of the bride takes place. The women of her family barricade themselves in the house, which is attacked by the women of the other family. Payment of a shilling opens the door, and the further struggle which takes place in the house is brought to an end by the formal presentation of the ox. The husband and his friends enter, and engage in a weird dance, a mere tramping of the floor in unison, with shouting and waving of spears, no doubt a survival of what was once marriage by capture. 583

The washing and shaving of the bride follows, and her bark-cloth is burned, and a new one given her, and then comes the feast of beef and beer, the materials 585

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

585 for the latter having been previously collected from house to house, with a snatch of song at each door. After the feast the bride goes in procession to her husband's house, accompanied by a number of girl friends. The happy couple are chased along the road, beaten with sticks as they go, and advised to treat each other as becomes husband and wife. At the door of her future home a final ceremony has to be performed: the wife of the go-between pours water over the husband's hands, and the bride, kneeling at his feet, receives the water as it falls, and washes her own hands therewith.

582 There are strict rules regarding selection. A man may not take a wife from the family either of his father or of his mother, using the word "family" in the native sense, implying the whole circle of relatives from which each originally came. But there are countless bye-laws. A man has two wives from different families; the son of one wife may take a wife from the family of the other, the two families not being related; but a man may not marry the daughter of his paternal uncle, for the latter is his "father," and the girl is his "sister." The daughter of his maternal uncle, again, is his cousin, and he may not marry her, though there is nothing to hinder his father marrying her. The chief Koloso married his father's sister, to the great scandal of his people, although the "father" was really a very distant relative, according to European ideas.

684 The marriage tie is sacred and binding; how binding on the wife may be judged from the laying up of

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

585 There are a few heathen women who do not wish their husbands to take other wives, but many who urge them to do so. Another wife is like a servant in the house, and the position of the principal wife (who is not necessarily the first) is improved when her husband adds to the number of her more or less obedient juniors. Formally they are her sisters; in reality they are her servants, and must always answer her demands with the polite response "ia." The husband also gains in importance as he acquires one wife after another. When the children are grown up, they are dispersed to various villages, and the father is always "feared" in such places, because he has sons or daughters who will see to it that he is properly honoured when he pays them a visit.

583 585 Husband and wife take new names at marriage; but they are for private use only, the old names being used by their friends. The new names, which are given in the presence of witnesses, indicate that the old life is past, and that new duties and privileges now bind the couple to each other.

593 422 The position of the wife is guarded in many ways. Her father and brothers are always ready to take up her quarrel, even to the extent of fighting her husband if need be. She owns property, but she retains it [586] only so long as she is a wife: divorce separates her from husband and children, and also from all the household goods of which she is otherwise mistress. The husband hoes the garden, but the produce belongs to the wife; he may not take anything without her consent, even to feed his friends. If one wife

5:Wilson Z-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

In his tenure of land every Nyakyusa man is related to some chief who is his overlord. But their relationship is not confined to the single element of land-tenure, it is just as many-sided and complex as is any other human relationship; and even as we abstract from it the particular set of facts that immediately concerns us here we must at once refer them again to it if they are to be intelligible.

When a newcomer is received into a village and given land the chief, as we have seen, is normally a party to the villagers' action, and in most cases he himself ceremonially welcomes the newcomer if he comes from outside the chiefdom by sending to him a present of cooked food. He has gained a new subject and his power and prestige are thereby increased. As men are quite free to move from one tiny chiefdom to another and as land is still relatively plentiful the phenomenon of rent does not exist among the pagan Nyakyusa, there is no direct charge ever specifically made in return for the right to build and cultivate. Nevertheless a chief is a chief and his subjects' land is his as well as theirs and they are under certain obligations to him.

Among these obligations that of providing cooked food for the ceremonies of the chief's own immediate family is probably the most important. When a chief's daughter, for example, is getting married women from all over the chiefdom bring food to entertain the bridegroom and his friends on the day that they bring the bulk of the cattle. The obligation to bring food, though not a legal one, is both reciprocal and conventional. The chief is expected to kill one or two of the beasts to feed his people and if he is mean about this, killing one where he should have killed two, then on the next occasion his people are more reluctant to bring food. But there is also the sense of shame constraining individuals. If the majority of households in a village provide food for a chief on such an occasion, and the majority I think nearly always do so, then the shameful meanness and unconventionality of defaulters is the subject of adverse comment among them.

A chief also has the traditional right, still widely admitted to-day, to send and take food, especially milk and bananas, from his subjects if he has need of it. And we have seen already that men with more than one wife are prompted to retain *kasungo* bananas for themselves in order to meet his demands without upsetting the peace of their households. This traditional right however is known not to be admitted by the European Administration, on the grounds that a salary has taken its place, and is therefore beginning to fall into disuse. Chiefs, I was told, often fear to exercise it lest some man refuse obedience and take a complaint to the *Boma*, nor are they willing to confine their demands to those men of whose compliance they are certain. As the salary of an ordinary chief,

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

593 holding of land and the economics of life in general, the rules and procedure of law, the emotional forms of ceremony, the dogma, rite, morality and symbol of religion, the forms of knowledge and opinion—all are interpenetrated by these relationships.

593 The word *family* is used in this paper to mean the organized group
595 of a man, his wife or wives, and their children of any age, but not to include any other relatives. A Nyakyusa family, as we shall see, does not become extinct when the father dies; his younger full-brother or his senior son steps into his place and the group continues very much as before. In this society families are sometimes monogamous, sometimes polygynous; and, in consequence, two more relationships with which we are not familiar in our own culture are included in the Nyakyusa family; one is the relationship of co-wives and the other is that of half-siblings. Within a ploygynous family the different wives and their respective children form groups to some extent distinct from one another; and the term *individual family* is here used to denote the group of a man, one wife and their children, whether that group is part of a polygynous family or forms a complete monogamous family by itself.

593 The Nyakyusa themselves have no separate word for either of these
595 small groups; the word *ekekulu* is sometimes used in the restricted
601 sense to which we have here confined the word "family," but more usually means the whole of any single person's recognized blood kindred, living or dead, both in the male and female lines; and it is translated in this paper as *kindred*, *kinsfolk*, or *kinsmen*. They also have a word *ezukanu* which includes the whole of any one person's *ekekulu* together with all his recognized affines, and this is here translated *relatives*. The term *affines* is used to translate the Nyakyusa word *ezuko*, which is identical in meaning with it.

[585] Marriage is legally effected by the handing over of four to thirty
[595] cows, together with one or two bulls, by the groom to his wife's father.
And this transfer of cattle is the key to the whole Nyakyusa system of
436 blood and affinal relationship. Cattle have a very high value because of their production of milk and meat, which are the most highly prized foods, and because of their scarcity; they are in constant circulation, and by their movement from one man to another they forever create and maintain the bonds of kinship and affinity. Cattle circulate rapidly; few except chiefs have more than six cows in their herds at any one time, more often each man has only two or three, while some have no cows at all; and yet every mature man has paid out, for his own and his sons' marriages, five, ten or twenty times the number of cattle that he at

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

present possessions. A young man is given cows by his father and sends 436
them to his father-in-law; his father's income in cattle is derived partly from the increase of his own stock, but chiefly from the marriages of his own and his brothers' sisters and daughters, for it is the custom for full-brothers and half-brothers to given one another cows as their daughters and sisters get married; the young man's father-in-law gives the cows which he receives some to his brothers, some to his sons, and some he keeps himself. And thus, commonly, the cattle are driven down the paths of human relationship.

The passage of cattle makes the children of a marriage legitimate 585
and members of their father's family; the sons can inherit from their 848
father, and the daughters, when they marry in their turn, bring cattle to him. But if a woman bears a child to a man who has given no cows for her, the child is illegitimate, has no right of inheritance anywhere, and belongs either to her husband or father, not to its own biological sire.

Getting married is not a single event; the marriage-cattle are seldom 583
handed over all at once, but in one, two, or three over a period of 584
years; and a girl very commonly goes to visit and sleep with her betrothed 836
husband, from time to time, for several years before she finally sets up house with him and begins to bear his children. There are three ways of getting married: (1) by negotiation with the girl's father (2) by running off with an unmarried girl (3) by running off with a married woman. The first is the ideal, socially approved, method and is not uncommonly followed. The negotiations often begin while the girl is still an infant, sometimes even before she is born: the man sends one or two cows to her father to bespeak her (*ubwinzyela*). These cows are counted as part of the marriage-cattle (*ingwele*) and the girl is henceforth called his "wife," but she lives at home with her parents. Sometimes a boy is betrothed by his father while he himself is still young, but always, I think, to a girl several years his junior. Such betrothals are determined by the friendship of the two families. A girl who is bespoken in infancy does not, ideally, go to live altogether with her husband till after she has reached puberty and passed through the elaborate initiation which then takes place. But there is an intermediate period when, from the age of ten or earlier, she is allowed to visit and sleep with her husband from time to time. The man sends a bull or a hen to her father to ask for his wife (*okwombolela*), and the old man agrees to let her go on occasional visits. But she is seldom allowed to go until at least three cows, in all, have been received for her. She is not supposed to be deflowered before puberty and she and her husband always, at first, practise limited intercourse without penetration. Not infrequently, however, full intercourse

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 F317 Ngonde F317 Nyakyusa

583 take place on some occasion and her parents usually find out when it
584 does. In some families the girl's mother examines her after each visit to
836 her husband to see if the hymen is intact, sometimes the girl tells her mother herself. When her father hears about it his action is determined partly by his feelings towards his son-in-law, partly by his need for cattle. Sometimes he does nothing at all; occasionally he sends back the cows he has received for his daughter and breaks off the marriage, and this is particularly likely to happen if the girl has been forced against her will or generally ill-treated. More usually, however, he sends his daughter to live with her husband saying: "You have made her a woman yourself, you must pay the rest of the marriage-cattle quickly."

836 We have no evidence to suggest that the girls in any general way dislike sleeping with their husbands before puberty, rather the reverse; and the men say: "It is good, it accustoms a girl to her husband." But some girls dislike the particular men to whom they are betrothed.

881 The initiation of a girl at puberty lasts for some months and includes several exchanges of food between her family and that of her husband, and a number of ceremonies in which both her girl friends of the same village[6] and her husband's friends from his village[6] participate. If a girl
[584] is not bespoken before puberty the initiation is still carried out in a modified form, but its full significance is lost.

585 Soon after her initiation a girl, if she has been bespoken, goes to live altogether with her husband, to play her part in his economy and to bear him children. If only a few cows have been received for her, her father insists on one or two more being handed over before she is allowed to go. At some time, perhaps during the girl's initiation, perhaps years later, the final marriage ceremony (*okukwa*) takes place. The balance of the marriage-cattle are brought to her father by the husband and his village neighbours,[6] her "mothers" prepare a great deal of food for the guests to eat, there is dancing, feasting and great excitement.

554 The number of cows handed over varies with the wealth and social
583 status of the two families concerned. Six to ten cows is the most usual number, but sometimes as few as four or as many as thirty change hands.

583 The second method of marriage is adopted when a man falls in love with a grown girl, who is not bespoken, and cannot find the cows to satisfy her father at once; he runs off with her and regularizes the position
583 later by sending cattle. The third method is adopted when a man falls
837 in love with a married woman and has cows available; he runs off with

[6] *Vide infra* "The Age Village"
[p. 269, cat. 116 — Analyst]

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 F?417 Ngonde F?417
Nyakyusa

586 her own father and the chief. A man has the right to divorce his wife, that is to send her away and demand back his cows, if she is dirty or lazy in housework or if she commits adultery, but men do not often demand a divorce for adultery unless it is persistent. If a man sends his wife away for some such reason she returns to her father and he, if he has cows available, sends back to her husband his marriage-cattle, if he has not got the cows the husband must wait until the girl is remarried.

593 857 Into the relationship of mother and daughter economic co-operation and reciprocity enter. The care of young children is largely in the hands of their older sisters, and the girls also help their own mothers in field-work and in fetching and carrying. In return their mothers cook for them, teach them how to cook themselves and how to make mats.

● 588 593 Each mother is responsible also for her own daughter's virginity. One of the bulls which a young man brings during the initiation of his betrothed wife is only given if the girl is found on examination to be still virgin, or if he has deflowered her himself. If it is given this bull belongs to the girl's mother to eat with her own friends. But, in spite of her [449] mother's responsibility for her, a girl learns nothing positive from her mother about sex, but from her own slightly older friends; with them she discusses the technique of love-making in detail, but never with her mother.

593 The relationships of siblings are, in general, closer than those of half-siblings, and the eldest son in each individual family is privileged above his brothers. A boy's claim for cattle is, as we have seen, partly based on the time and energy he has put into hoeing his parents' fields; but it also depends, in part, on having full-sisters of his own. When a girl marries the cows come to her father, but her own full-brothers expect to receive these cows, in time, for their own marriages, in the order of their age. Though the father controls the cattle the brothers speak of them as "our cows" and they have an ultimate legal claim to them, which only gross laziness or insult to their father can altogether vitiate. The eldest of a group of full-brothers is the first to draw on these cows and to marry, his juniors wait longer. Full-brothers are bound together in many ways; the eldest, who is privileged, is bound to help his juniors in any way he can, and they in turn respect him and in time give to him some cows from the marriages of their own daughters; 593 and each makes the others' quarrels his own. What chiefly unites them 428 is the law of inheritance, for though the eldest has first right to the cattle from their sisters' marriages, and though the younger ones, later in life, give cattle from their daughters' marriages to him, yet they are his heirs, and all his privileges in time pass to them. When the eldest dies his next

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

622 have invaded that country for cows and brought them back and eaten them at the new huts which we built next. But that is finished now." In this way the new chiefs are shown to their people.

631 Finally the young men are told exactly where to go and build, and the boundaries between the new chiefdoms and the villages of each are fixed; the old boys' villages are abandoned and the houses gradually pulled down and put up in their new places. At first the men of the four age-villages of each young chief just put up rough shelters to sleep in, all together on the place where the senior age-village of each new chiefdom will later be built, but after a month or two they separate, each village to its own place, and there they build their houses.

The land is now their own, they are no longer members of boys' villages, living on land given them at the side of the parent villages by their fathers, they are owners of the soil, full citizens, with chief and great commoners to rule them.

(b) *Organization and Life of a Single Chiefdom*

632 583 A few months after the "Coming Out" each of the two young chiefs marries two wives. He may be married already, but the two whom he now takes rank as his great wives (*anabe anakulondwa*) and their sons are his two heirs in the chieftainship. Young girls, daughters of neighbouring chiefs, are carried off with a show of force from their fathers' homes by the young chief's men, who, themselves, later send cows to regularize the position. The two great wives are thus married, not with the cows of their husband, but with those of the men whose sons their sons will one day rule.

622 585 681 Girls are carried off who are just about to reach puberty, and they stay at the house of one of the men of the old chief until their periods begin. When both have reached puberty they are initiated, not at their fathers' houses, but in the country of their husband, both together. At their initiation, the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the old, retiring, chief) play the part normally played by a girl's parents and their neighbours, while the young chief and his men take the usual part of a husband and his friends. And then, after the ceremonies are over, the two girls are given to the young chief as his wives. Houses are built for them separately: in the senior age-village of the new chiefdom for the first wife, in the next senior village for the second wife; and in this separation of dwelling place is already apparent the future division of the chiefdom between their sons.

Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

future boundary between the two halves of the chiefdom, where it will split the next generation. They serve as beacons[1] and are cited as evidence both of the 'coming out' and of the division of land in any later dispute. At the same time the trees are symbols of chieftainship and with their growth the success of the reign is mystically linked. According to one account, 'four headmen fetch the cuttings and the young chief stands between them (*side plate* 6) and tells the trees to grow well, and the others say: "We are planting you likewise, we are at the ritual of establishing a new chieftainship, you are a symbol for our chief, spread branches that our young headmen and other people may rest in your shade."'[2] A doctor assists at the planting, burying at the roots a live white sheep and medicines, which, it is said, later turn into the lions or leopards which protect the trees from the impious (*side infra*, p. 58); and he sweeps beneath the trees, a symbol of what the senior headman must do in future, for it is his duty to 'watch over the trees'. In Nyakyusa thought, village headmen are an integral part of chieftainship—it cannot exist without them—and the trees symbolize *both* the chief and his lady and the two senior headmen. The same informant (well known as a doctor for the 'coming out') told us: 'It means we are planting the chief and his lady; *umpandapanda* is the herd to herd *indola*, which is the more important. *Umpandapanda* is the woman, it may dry up, but *ulupanda* (*indola*) never does; it is the chief, it is familiars (*ulupepi*). but *umpandapanda* is not', and a moment or two later, 'the *ulupanda* is the senior village headman, *umpandapanda* is the junior headman'. The strength of the chief is associated with the growth of the trees. If these trees go dry the reign will not be successful, the chief will be defeated in war. If they flourish. and grow the reign will be successful, the chief is a ruler. The *indola* planted for Mwaijonga (80) is shown proudly by his great-grandson, and Mwambete (162) who had a long reign and an enormous family boasted of the size of his *umpandapanda*—'a great spreading tree'. Ideally the young chief should, in due course, sit in the shade of his *indola* with his headmen, to settle disputes.

After the trees are planted the young men build their senior headman's house and the doctor sets up his hearth bricks, burying medicine beneath them also. The marriage of the chief follows.[3]

[1] cf. D. Kerr-Cross, 'Center-Lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, v, IV (1895), p. 113.

[2] According to most accounts, but *side infra*, p. 56.

[3]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

622 He, like many of his men, may have been married long before the
643 'coming out', but his ritual wedding to the mothers of his heirs
796 follows it, and from the time of his seclusion, until his marriage,
585 he, and all his men, should live as bachelors. The brides are chosen by his village headmen and in theory they are carried off by force, whether betrothed or not, but nowadays, since the [177] Administration discountenances forced marriages, the headmen arrange matters with the girls' families beforehand, very privately, but still they come with a show of force to carry off the brides. Girls are chosen who are approaching puberty and they are taken to the house of a commoner contemporary of their future husband. There they live until both have grown up and the puberty ritual can be celebrated. It follows the usual course except that the [584] neighbours of the man in whose house the brides are secluded play the part of the girls' families, cooking for the groom's party at the prescribed feasts. The chief washes with both girls, thereby acknowledging them as his senior wives; the marriage bed is prepared with medicines and there is great rejoicing. The following morning someone knocks at the door of the nuptial chamber crying: 'War has come', and the chief and his brides rush out to the pasture land, just as the parents of twins do at the end of their ritual.[1] Then[2] a long narrow stone (*ulufige*) is set with medicines [789] in the earth, beside the chief's trees as a symbol of his marriage (*ikimanyilo kya bwegi*) to the mothers of his heirs. 'The stone *is* the chief' (*ilifige ili je malafyale*). Hearth-bricks (*amafige*) are then set up for each bride with medicines buried beneath them, and they are given fire from that ritually kindled by their husband and his headman. Finally they are given medicines to drink in order to develop in them 'the dignity of chief's wives' (*ubuniya bwa bwebe*).

643 No marriage is complete, in Nyakyusa eyes, until cattle have
583 been handed over, and though the chief's brides have been carried off by force, cattle—more than double the normal number—are given to their fathers. The village headmen of the retiring generation should provide these cattle and they or their heirs are recompensed when the eldest daughters born of the two wives are

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 158, 169.

[2] Mwanyilu's marriage apparently preceded the planting of his trees and the phallic stone was erected at the same time as the trees were planted, but the marriages of the sons of Mwangoka *followed* the planting of their trees. The order of events seems to vary, and differences are explained as due to the order of the doctor in charge of the ritual. 'Different doctors have different customs.'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

expresses the unity of groups of believers who associate in Churches. But the two systems are not wholly exclusive: the Christian still belongs to a lineage and a chiefdom, though he does not worship as a member of either, and thereby impairs their solidarity.

(b) THE CHRISTIAN WITHDRAWAL

What is the attitude of Christian converts to the rituals performed by their pagan kinsmen and neighbours and what replaces the traditional pagan rituals in the Christian community? These questions have already been touched upon in the accounts of pagan rituals, but we must now consider them more fully.

Christians withdraw very largely from the pagan rituals of kinship which, as was shown in a previous book, are directed to the shades. They attend the funerals of pagan kinsmen to weep and comfort the mourners, and they often undertake the work of grave-digging so fearful to pagans, but they take no part in the 'farewell to the dead' nor do the stricter among them eat of the funeral meat, since the cattle killed are an offering to the shades. Christians do not participate in the twin ritual which brings together such a large number of pagan kinsmen, nor do they share in the puberty ritual, and they forbid their daughters to keep a pagan bride company during her seclusion. For the most part their withdrawal is accepted tolerantly by their pagan kin who carry on without them, a pagan father even performing the 'farewell to the dead' for a Christian son who has died, lest his lineage shades be angered by the omission, but occasionally the non-participation of Christians leads to strained relations, as when pagans refuse to visit or eat with a bride or a remarried widow who has not celebrated with them after her union with her husband, and sometimes a Church member, under pressure from pagan relatives or driven by his own fears, celebrates the ritual for a pagan father. The dropping of the elaborate twin ritual creates surprisingly little difficulty considering how much the pagans fear sickness from twins. Their birth is interpreted by Christians as a special blessing —a bounteous increase—rather than 'an illness' as the pagans call it. A Christian woman, asked if a mother of twins was not fearful when the ritual was omitted, gave a classic reply: 'What she thinks in her heart I can't see; what I think in my heart you can't see; but we *do* see that no one avoids her when they meet her face to face.'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The corpse is buried in a coffin, if the kinsmen can afford one, but it is still placed in a niche dug in the wall of the grave, which is usually in the homestead, for though cemeteries have been marked out in the Christian villages most families prefer to bury their dead at home. The Lutherans kill cattle, some distance from the grave, to feed the mourners but the Moravians and Presbyterians do not, on the grounds that the pagans believe that funeral cattle go with the dead and if Christians kill they seem to support the belief. Relatives, especially sons-in-law, are expected to bring white cloths in place of cattle to show their sympathy and these are used as a shroud, or to bind the chief mourners' bellies, to support them. And the family provide as much fine food—rice, chicken, groundnuts—as they can, for the mourners. But the crowd is smaller than at a pagan funeral for a man of equal standing, because the pagans crowd to funerals to enjoy the feasting and dancing. The Christians sing, and their hymns change from mournful to cheerful ones after the burial, and on the second or third day the young people may dance a little, but without the wild exuberance that succeeds the pagan passion of grief. Often, however, the funeral is a mixed one. Most Christians have pagan relatives and family obligations are not obliterated by differences in faith. So we sometimes heard drumming alternating with Christian hymns, or saw a war dance succeed the burial service, or a pagan woman honouring her Christian sister by dancing with her grain basket, and providing for her future comfort by burying her cooking-pot and cosmetics in the grave. All this the Christian elders present take with tolerance: 'It makes no difference if they choose to do it.'

797 x
795 x
764

The wedding celebrations of Nyakyusa Christians are in two parts: there is the solemnization of the marriage in Church and registration by a priest or minister who is a marriage officer, or the blessing of the union by an elder of the Church; and there is the handing over of the marriage cattle accompanied by feasting and dancing and certain other elements of the traditional ritual. The Moravian missionaries are reluctant to celebrate a marriage unless they are very certain of the characters of the bride and bridegroom because of the difficulties and expense of securing a legal divorce if the wife is later deserted by her husband. They prefer that a customary marriage should be blessed by an elder who is not a marriage officer, then, if one partner deserts, a legal divorce is easy.

797 x
795 x
585

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The festivities and display are most often linked, not to the Church ritual, but to the handing over of marriage cattle. Since the feasts of the puberty ritual are not celebrated, the Christians concentrate their energies on the ukulwa, when quantities of food are provided by the bride's family, and a crowd gathers to sing and dance. Then, some time after the cattle have been handed over, the bride is taken to her husband by a party of 'mothers' and friends, and a feast is provided by the groom. The pattern is very similar to that of the pagan handing over of marriage cattle (ukulwa) and bringing home the bride (ukuleta), but new songs and dancers replace the somewhat bawdy pagan ones, and the Christian youths, unlike the pagans, dance without spears. Often at a Christian wedding pagans also attend, and there are rival groups of dancers, pagans, and Christians, between whom quarrels readily flare up. And when the new songs and dances of the Christians are copied by the pagans, as they sometimes are, then the Christians drop them, for they wish to be different.

The traditional examination of the bride by the 'mothers' and the giving of a bull if she goes to her husband a virgin, are maintained in the Christian community. The bull is usually killed as a feast for the mothers 'to say thank you for nourishing her', but there is, of course, no offering of the sacred meat to the ancestors, and sometimes the bull is not killed at all, or the groom brings shillings instead. As so often happens, a former ritual survives as ceremonial, an observance felt to be specially appropriate to the occasion, but no longer regarded as a condition of health or salvation.

When she is taken to her husband the bride is exhorted by her 'mothers' on her duties as a married woman. The traditional emphasis on separation from her mother is still there: 'You have left your mother, your husband is your mother, we have separated. . . .' And she is exhorted to be chaste, to obey her husband and answer him submissively, to be clean and diligent in her work, to be hospitable, and above all, as a Christian, to feed 'those from a distance'. Here the contrast between pagan and Christian ethics is emphasized: a pagan wife is only obliged to cook for kinsmen and neighbours, not strangers, but for a Christian to let a stranger starve is spoken of as a mortal sin.

The annual festivals of the Church are not so closely parallel to pagan communal rituals, for they were developed in a northern and temperate climate with a rhythm very different from the

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Igonde F317
Nyakyusa

went away to work again and in time I owned four cows which I hid with friends far from home. My father knew nothing about them. Then I wrote to my father from Mwaebe [about twenty miles from where his father lived] where I was working, saying that I had found a girl there, the daughter of a Christian, and please could I have the cows with which to marry her? My father said: "No, she lives too far away." Then later he found a Christian girl of whom his father approved and a satisfactory marriage was arranged.

A common topic of discussion among Christian women was whether parents should choose mates for their children, or leave them free to choose for themselves, for though traditionally a girl had to signify her consent to marriage, she was betrothed very young and her freedom of choice was small. The growing insistence on personal freedom in marriage is symptomatic of a radical change in the attitude towards persons.

The pagan rituals were the main occasions of recreation. It has been shown, in *Rituals of Kinship*, how pagan funerals and marriages are the occasion for feasting and dancing and display, and how the seclusion hut of a nubile girl is the gathering place for the young men and girls of the neighbourhood. Even a twin ritual is a festival with beer for the older men and some meat for everyone. The sacrifices at the groves were feasts for the leading men of the country, and the 'coming out' was the occasion of the greatest feast of the generation, and dances were practised for months ahead. Partly because of a change in sex morality, and partly because the meat and beer at pagan feasts are offered to the shades, Christians are largely excluded from these festivals. They may not participate in pagan dances, or join in the lewd songs, or attend the initiation hut of a girl, and they are partly debarred from the feasts of the pagans: certain of the Churches (notably the Church of Scotland and, for a time, the Moravians) forbid Christians to drink beer at all.

And the Christian rituals, though some of them are 'festivals of the Church', are scarcely celebrated as such. There has been a separation between ritual and recreation which has left a gap in the Christian community. It is true that the Christian young men and girls sing and dance at funerals and marriages, but the elders, for the most part, look on with dubious eyes, saying that dancing leads to adultery, and several of the dances introduced by

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F7017 Ngonde F7017
Nyakyusa

[577] some copy, the manners of Europeans towards their wives, but
[584] neither husband nor wife is quite sure what the change in manners implies, and both are often inconsistent in their behaviour. As an educated Nyakyusa put it: 'They do not know what to expect from each other.'

[585] Marriage relationships are complicated by the disproportion
[162] in the numbers of men and women; a disproportion which continues while the rule of monogamy is preached and accepted
[582] by many. The first effect of the increase in wealth in Rungwe district was for the marriage age of women to go down; in Mr. Punch's phrase 'too many cattle were chasing too few wives'; but the combined pressure of missions and Administration, and some acquaintance with the customs of the outside world, has reversed that tendency, and the marriage of girls below puberty, which was general among pagans in 1938, now appears to be exceptional. Many girls are still betrothed before puberty, but
[584] they do not go to their husbands until after that time, and to be still single at puberty with no betrothed to play his part in the ritual is no longer embarrassing to a girl, for the puberty ritual is not celebrated in full. The ruling of the District Council that a man may not recover more than *one* cow given for a girl who has not reached puberty, if the marriage is dissolved, discourages men from giving cattle for girls who have not grown up. At the
[582] same time the marriage age of men is going down. Marriage in the early twenties or even the late teens is common now, for young men who have been to work on the mines can buy marriage cattle for themselves, and Christians who are well-to-do provide for the marriages of young sons instead of taking additional wives. Therefore the gap in the marriage age of men and women is very considerably diminished, but it still exists, and combined with the disproportion in the total number of males and females it means that a considerable proportion of the women (perhaps 30 per cent)[1] must become the junior wives of polygynists or remain unmarried altogether, or live alone as widows.

595 Among pagans polygyny is approved, but young men are irked by their responsibility for elderly widows, a responsibility that was formerly accepted as a matter of course. Able-bodied wives are still economically an asset even now that trade goods are in general use. For Nyakyusa men—pagans—have insisted that as

[1] The masculinity rate is calculated at 87·9 : 100 (*vide supra*) and the *average* difference in the marriage age may well be six years.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 villages of the great-grandfathers' generation survived, even ritually (*vide* Document, pp. 881–5).[1]

166 Men also move from one village to another and they do not always join a village of their exact contemporaries. A stranger may come and be granted land in a village even though he is considerably older or younger than the bulk of its members. Such movement from one village to another is now very considerable: we estimated that at least 80 per cent of the married men have at some time or other moved from the chiefdom in which they first cultivated gardens of their own. There is also movement from village to village within a chiefdom.

[681] Everyone agreed that moving is not something new. In the past a convicted witch was expelled from his village, and sometimes from the chiefdom; thieves and adulterers were also expelled or fled to take refuge with another chief (*vide infra*, pp. 118–9). But it is probable that movement between villages has increased greatly since the imposition of European control. The main [754] reason for moving nowadays is, as we have said, the fear of witchcraft. Subsidiary reasons are the desire to get suitable land for cultivating cash crops, the desire to be near some centre of employment (such as Tukuyu or Rungwe), and the desire to live with others of like mind, as fellow Christians or fellow pagans, fellow Moravians or fellow adherents of the 'Watch Tower' (*vide infra*, pp. 40–3).

166 Women move from one village to another even more often than men, for, not only do wives move with their husbands, but 591 a girl commonly marries a man of a village other than that in 587 which she grew up, and is later inherited by a kinsman of her dead husband who lives in yet another village. Since first wives are usually ten years younger than their husbands, and junior wives may be forty or fifty years younger, most women are inherited at least once during their lives, and some are inherited several times. The modern high divorce rate accelerates this long- [586] established circulation of women from village to village.

[1] It is possible that the existence of villages of four generations was due to the fact that Mwaipopo continued to live long after the 'coming out' of his heir Mwankuga—a survival not usual in traditional practice (*vide supra*, p. 30).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

homicide. 'Was he speared by *day*?' say the Nyakyusa. On the other hand, if relatives themselves brought the accusation, the chief could not take the accused's property. Since kinsmen them-themselves were driving the man out, whose property should the chief take? Everything went to the kinsmen, save one cow, which they gave the man they were driving out, that he might start a herd in his new home. A wife convicted of witchcraft was commonly divorced, being sent back to her father, who had then to return the marriage-cattle given for her. Rarely was a supposed witch killed.

As we have seen, supposed witches are still often banished if men, or divorced if women, but property is no longer seized, the practice having been effectively stopped by the British Administration. There is considerable variation in the actual treatment of supposed witches at the present time. Some husbands do not divorce their wives when they are convicted of witchcraft, others do so immediately; some chiefs drive supposed witches out of their country, and others allow them to settle in another village of the chiefdom. We have no evidence that those who are supposed to have killed others by witchcraft are usually treated more severely than those whose crime is causing sickness or a decrease in the milk supply. The punishment seems to vary, and to have varied formerly, rather with the status and personal popularity of the accused in his village, or with the affection a man has for his wife, than with the nature of the crime.

Those who have been convicted of witchcraft are not ostracized. A wife divorced on account of her witchcraft commonly remarries soon after; a man driven out for witchcraft is admitted to another village. The attitude is: 'Perhaps he bewitched his fellows there, we do not know, but he has not bewitched us.' Often a man who has been driven away by neighbours is fetched back again, a year or more later. Such was the case with the village headman Mwamila, who went to his chief and said: 'People are eating your child'—one of the chief's children had a disease of the eyes which blinded him. 'The chief ordered his people (i.e. their representatives) to take the ordeal. Then all were angry at Mwamila for going to the chief, because he went alone to whisper about them. Had he gone with others they would have been satisfied, but to go alone was not right. The ordeal indicated Mwamila himself, and the chief took all his four

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'And again, a long time ago, my brother Mwamoto went to betroth a girl at the place of that man who was a witch. Mwanama objected very much to his younger brother's action, saying: "You should not marry at that man's place, everyone says he is a witch." But Mwamoto paid no attention to any of them—others also tried to persuade him not to marry the child of a witch. He married her and she is with him now, as his wife.

'People fear witchcraft in a husband or wife lest he or she bring witchcraft into the house, and they have children who become witches when they grow up. As I explained witchcraft runs in a lineage (*ikikolo*). It is especially women who object to their children marrying or being married by a witch, it is they (the women) who forbid the children, and their husbands also object. I remember once that a certain man came to make love to my sister. The mother of this man was spoken of as a witch, and my mother objected very much, saying: "Do not desire this young man's cattle, I do not like him even though you do. His mother's witchcraft is much spoken about." He had come to betroth the girl when she was still very young. The others agreed to what my mother said and refused the young man, saying: "We have not got a child yet (ready for marriage), she of whom you speak must first grow up."'

In reply to questions Mwaisumo explained that people fear to marry witches lest their children be witches and be driven from country to country. 'We say it is bad to be driven out. A man is never driven out because of the witchcraft of his wife—he used to divorce her if it were proved—but a girl's parents will refuse to give their daughter in marriage to a young man from a family of witches because if he is convicted of witchcraft she will be driven out with him.'

We were also told of a young Christian who had been refused by a number of women. It was whispered that this was because his father was a sorcerer. Later on, however, he married and the talk died down.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

house. Then she goes in and steals a piece of firewood from the 768
loft[1] and runs off with it, laughing. The officiant pursues her and 587
makes her drop it and gives her medicine, while the company cry: 'A thief, a thief!' She takes the firewood back to her husband's home. 'It is a sign that she has entered her father's house, just as the spear is a sign that she has entered the house of another husband.' In rich families the new husband sends a bull which is [556]
killed and eaten at the ritual.

Our informants were agreed that 'there is no fear of the gasping cough if a woman runs away from her husband and goes to a lover', and in practice no ritual is performed when she visits her father after divorce and re-marriage, but it is perhaps significant [586
that such a situation could scarcely have arisen in the past, since 177]
divorce by agreement rarely, if ever, occurred. An adulterer fled, [684]
if he could, with his lover to another chiefdom, breaking off all relations with her kin.

(b) The overt purpose and symbolism

Now we turn to the Kukwe interpretation of events. Our two 115
principal informants here were Mwasalemba, an elderly pagan man, brother to the chief Porokoto, whose wife, Syungu, acted as officiant at rituals in the chief's family, and Kakune, a young doctor who had learnt the medicines from his mother. Mwasalemba was much more coherent than Syungu herself, and his interpretation was confirmed by Kakune and numerous other informants. Again I give the interpretation of the two principal informants without any editing other than placing consecutively statements made on different occasions.

i. *Mwasalemba's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. and translated 158
by him soon afterwards.)

MWASALEMBA: Perhaps a youth, perhaps a girl, runs mad; he runs about naked so that we say: 'He's mad, why doesn't he cover himself?' He goes to the place of defaecation and takes filth and eats it: he goes into people's houses and takes things, he might even take some things from you, from a European, without fear; he knows not what he does. Sometimes, after a visit to a doctor, he recovers altogether and never has the fit again—that is the lesser kind of madness. But sometimes he 158
recovers and then the fit takes him again later—that is the more serious 757

[1] The loft (*pijulu*) consists of horizontal beams running at wall level across a portion [422
of the hut. Here every married woman keeps a supply of dry firewood. It is her private 417]
store-place which may not be touched without her permission.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

841 for her part, fears lest the medicines with which men protect themselves and their cattle may injure her, causing her menstrual flow to 'last a whole month'. She avoids pumpkins lest she suffer from a small growth in the vagina called a 'pumpkin' and bear sickly children. 'It is said that this disease is due to women picking or eating pumpkins when they are menstruating . . . the menstrual blood resembles the pumpkin and they fight together.'

841 If a wife fails to warn her husband that she is menstruating and
●586 permits him to have intercourse with her, he will be furiously angry and may even divorce her saying: 'You are soiling me, get out!'

841 Any contact with a menstruating woman is believed to cause
753 him suffering. 'His legs become swollen and painful and he is very tired.' 'Strength leaves the man.' 'He sits back weakly; he has no speed in running.' Kasitile explained:

> The danger of menstrual blood is that it is filthy; it is an illness. Formerly, if a foolhardy man took his wife when she was menstruating, when he went to war, he fell. We others said: 'Why were you vanquished? Did you enter when your wife was unwell? Do you not know that it is a very serious illness?'

Angombwike added:

> Formerly, the fear was greater than it is to-day. If a man made love to a menstruating woman they said he would fall ill of *imbela*, an illness for which there was no remedy. His belly ached and his body grew red; he just lay down. His face swelled and his legs ached. Now pagans are not so much afraid of menstruation; they have listened to the Christians.

Asked why sleeping with a menstruating woman should make a man weary, informants linked the danger from menstrual blood with the danger that besets a husband when his wife commits adultery, and the 'blood' of two men mixes in the woman's womb. Menstrual blood is not so dangerous to a husband as the 'blood' of another man, but yet it is 'filthy'. One of Mwakionde's wives said:

> My husband gets tired if he sleeps with me when I am menstruating because he has given us our menstrual blood; it is that which has entered into me; there are two bloods, his and mine.

Mwambuputa, a village headman, elaborated further:

[837] If my wife has committed adultery and cooks my food or draws water for me, then my legs are weary and I also have diarrhœa. If she

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

the spear which is to slay her if she disregards it. The injured husband, too, has the right to inflict death upon the paramour. This is no mere tale of the past, but a grim fact of to-day. Just a very short time ago, two of my workmen asked a day's leave of absence to go and bury a relative who had suffered the extreme penalty at the hands of an outraged husband. Cases of this nature are very numerous, and are necessarily treated by British law as murder; but native law still looks upon them as a just reprisal by the husband.

Divorce is granted only for approved reasons. The husband, when he believes he has ground for divorce, requests his go-between to take up the case; but the latter will do so only if he is satisfied that the evidence is sufficient to secure a verdict in his client's favour. The woman's father fixes a day for the public hearing of the case, himself as judge, for there is an appeal to the chief only if either party is dissatisfied with the decision arrived at. The finding of the court is in all cases reported to the chief.

The commonest cause is unfaithfulness of the wife, which being proved or admitted, there is no further discussion, although the trouble is sometimes patched up by the gift of a cow to the husband. If a wife has conceived, and does not tell her husband, it is a very grave matter indeed, for she is assumed to be trying to hide from him what is not his, and an action for divorce may follow. Barrenness, if known to be of the wife, is a cause of divorce; but not seldom the wife retorts the charge upon her husband, and cases are not unknown where, by mutual agreement, both

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•586 parties brought the dispute to the test of intercourse with others. Again, if daughters die one after another, their death is assumed to be due to the [753] disease called *kitasya* in the mother, and she is divorced. A wife who goes out in the morning while her husband is still abed, is doing a very foolish thing, for there is at least the possibility that she is providing ground for divorce. General laziness and uselessness, inability or refusal to carry out the ordinary household duties, if persisted in, lead to divorce.

On the other hand, while ordinary unfaithfulness in the husband gives the wife no ground for an appeal for divorce, no woman will tolerate incest by her husband, but will demand instant release. Beating a wife and starving her will bring down father or brothers in wrath to demand the release of their ward; but beating alone only if merciless and persistent. The right of a husband to beat his wife within reason is not questioned. There are other grounds on which the wife may claim divorce, and also the husband, but in both cases they are such as cannot appear in print.

When a husband's demand for divorce has been granted, all the cattle given to the woman's father are returned, along with the increase which has taken place. British justice, with more fairness, deducts one-fifth or one-quarter of the number of cattle (plus increase) for each child born, the remainder going back to the husband. The children belong to the father, to whom belong also children unborn or too young to leave the mother. When the time comes,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

he takes such children away, leaving a cow as payment 586
to his late wife for bringing them up. The frantic appeals of the mother, when her child is being taken away from her, make a most distressing scene. I have been implored by mothers, kneeling at my feet, or rolling on the ground in agony, to intercede for them; but native and British law here coincide, and, apart from an appeal to the husband to forego his rights, nothing can be done. And any interference is inadvisable for the child's own sake, for there is reason to suspect that fathers deprived of what they consider their rights, take measures quietly to put the children to death. In the past the acknowledged [848]
child of adultery was openly put to death; to-day the husband may claim it if it is a girl, for a girl is "cattle"; but a boy he, in most cases, entirely ignores.

There is formally no limit to the number of wives 595
a man may have, except the limit of his ability to part with cattle. But while polygamy was always lawful, it was not always expedient: warriors were often monogamous in practice until they reached an age when but little fighting was likely to be expected of them. And there were always men who never had more than one wife, two being a very common number for others. While there is a sentiment among some women in favour of monogamy, it is a very slow growth. There are women who will not marry Christians, because the wife of a Christian, being alone, has to do all the work, whereas in the other case, many wives make light work for each.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Husband & Wife

595 There are a few heathen women who do not wish their husbands to take other wives, but many who urge them to do so. Another wife is like a servant in the house, and the position of the principal wife (who is not necessarily the first) is improved when her husband adds to the number of her more or less obedient juniors. Formally they are her sisters; in reality they are her servants, and must always answer her demands with the polite response "*ta*." The husband also gains in importance as he acquires one wife after another. When the children are grown up, they are dispersed to various villages, and the father is always "feared" in such places, because he has sons or daughters who will see to it that he is properly honoured when he pays them a visit.

553 585 Husband and wife take new names at marriage; but they are for private use only, the old names being used by their friends. The new names, which are given in the presence of witnesses, indicate that the old life is past, and that new duties and privileges now bind the couple to each other.

593 422 The position of the wife is guarded in many ways. Her father and brothers are always ready to take up her quarrel, even to the extent of fighting her husband if need be. [586] She owns property, but she retains it only so long as she is a wife: divorce separates her from husband and children, and also from all the household goods of which she is otherwise mistress. The husband hoes the garden, but the produce belongs to the wife; he may not take anything without her consent, even to feed his friends. If one wife

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

684 greeting and passed on, without constraint of any kind. It turned out that the man was only slightly wounded; but most husbands in such circumstances "mak' siccar."

684 If the guilty paramour escapes, he goes to another chief, who receives and protects him, unless his co-
622 sinner is the wife of a chief, in which case the man is sent back to meet whatever punishment awaits him. The woman, as I have already said, is liable to the extreme penalty also, but I know of no case in which it has been inflicted, and I think it is of very rare occurrence. An alternative punishment was to have her ears cut off. There is a woman living in the neighbourhood who, along with her paramour, suffered this penalty lately, but the chief by whose orders it was done was heavily fined by the administrative officer. Other punishments are still in use, which will not bear
[586] the light of print. A wife found guilty is divorced without further question, and the cattle returned to the husband. Divorce is often sought for very trivial reasons, but native courts will not seriously consider ill-supported claims.

685 *Arson.*—There is a general rule that accidental burning of another man's goods must be compensated for, by replacing all that is lost, whether that be a mere shilling's worth, or a house and all its contents. Arson proper, however, is a much more serious crime, and in the past involved the enslavement of the criminal and all his family. Not a few cases of arson are among the crimes that are common to-day. The church at Karonga was burned down in 1921, probably as an act of revenge against a Christian; but a common

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

584 live with her husband until at least three cows have been given. One of the bulls is only given if the girl is virgin at her initiation rite, and this bull is given to her mother. The laws of inheritance and the system of marriage by cattle payments ensures that cattle will be in the hands of the older men. In general polygynists are men over forty-five.[1]

595 The first wife married is the chief wife, and is entitled to respect and obedience from her co-wives. Her first son is her husband's ultimate heir. A man cannot lightly divorce his first wife during the lifetime of his own father who provided the cattle ●586 with which she was married. Divorce is effected by the return of the marriage cattle. Usually the woman has a lover who will pay cows to redeem her; if she refuses to go back to her husband there is no means of compelling her to do so, though in pre-European times her father and the chief might send her back. In such a case the husband would be entitled to his original payments plus their increase.[2] Men do not demand divorce for adultery unless it is persistent.[3] Divorce is often sought for very trivial reasons.[4] If the paternal uncles have helped the groom to collect his marriage cattle, the beasts are redistributed to their original donors after they have been returned to the husband.[5]

587 A man whose wife dies can claim a substitute or the refund of his cattle. When a man dies his widows pass to his heir who takes them all as wives, if he is a brother of 768 the dead man; if the heir is a son he takes all except his own mother and the wives who are her close kin. Inherited wives have the same land rights as others.[6]

Inheritance

428 Brothers inherit before sons, then half-brothers (linked half-brothers before other half-brothers). When all the brothers are dead the property and wives of each pass to each one's eldest son.[7] This rule also applies to the Nyamwanga and Iwa.[8] The heir assumes the full obligations of father to his younger brothers and is responsible for their marriages; they hoe for him and are fed by his wives as are unmarried sons.[9] The sister's son only inherits if all near patrilineal kinsmen are dead or are infants.[10]

The above applies to commoners' inheritance only. For chiefs, succession and inheritance may follow different principles. For instance, in succession to local chiefdoms, two or more sons would divide the chiefdom. Among the Ngonde the Kyungu and the great chiefs were not chosen according to strict genealogical right, but were selected from the appropriate families according to their wealth, generosity, and courage. In the succession to the great chiefdoms, there was formerly a difference of procedure in the two royal lines: that of Ngelenge, where the nobles of Ngonde were sent by the Kyungu to help to select the successor; that of Ngana, the line of the female side, where the nobles of Ngonde merely summoned the great commoners to discuss with them who was to succeed. Nowadays the difference between the two lines has disappeared, and the Ngelenge custom is followed for both. If the genealogical heir

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, pp. 257–9.
[2] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 55.
[3] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 263.
[4] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 92.
[5] Ibid., p. 65.
[6] Wilson, 3, 1938, p. 27.
[7] Ibid., 2, 1936, pp. 264–6; Sanderson, 3, 1923, p. 453.
[8] Coxhead, 1914, p. 45.
[9] Wilson, 3, 1938, pp. 11 and 28; Johnston, 1897, p. 471.
[10] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 55.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

favourite. What they said about her being, perhaps, his favourite was just their way of putting it." 421 595

Before passing to the discussion of the disposal of surplus crops we must dwell a little on the importance of a fair division of land between the several wives of a polygynist. Not only garden plots but also the bananas growing on the homestead are divided between them. Each wife is allotted a number of banana stems and is responsible for keeping their roots clear of weeds and she is also expected to weed and sweep the adjacent portion of the open space (*ulubingilo*). In the sweeping her husband will often assist her, her fellow wife will not. The bunches which grow on her own banana stems are her property and not even her husband will cut them without consulting her, save in exceptional circumstances. In every polygynous household, then, a division of garden plots and bananas is made between the wives, and, as it is made by the husband, it is a most important element of their relationships with one another.

For every man with more than one wife has a favourite, and, if he allows his affection for her to express itself in an inequitable division of land, then there is trouble in store: "Each wife is the owner of a plot (*ulupaka*) and each harvests and weeds it and keeps the food separately. The wives help each other if friendly but each wife must have her own plot—a maize plot, a bean plot, a cassava plot, a plot of sweet-potatoes, and so on. The bananas also are divided between the wives.

"A polygynist when he hoes his gardens is always afraid to give to any one wife a bigger plot than to another. For it is thought that the wife who gets the smaller plot will whisper complaints of her husband among the people; and whispering complaints of a man brings witches to kill him. It is feared that in such a case, either the husband or else the favoured wife will be killed (by witchcraft). In consequence a man is always exceedingly careful, in dividing his garden into plots, to treat his wives fairly. But even so he will perhaps give to the wife whom he loves the plot with the best soil! And it happens sometimes that a polygynist's wife, when given a smaller plot than her co-wives, will sulk and refuse to plant: 'Why,' she asks, 'do you give me such a small garden plot? Did I not cook for you while you were hoeing?' And, if her husband then loses his temper and strikes her, she will make a case before the neighbours. And they will say to him: 'Friend, you should make a just division, you will only set your wives against one another by not doing so and make them kill one another.' By this they mean that if one wife is angered she will bring the witches to kill her fellow wives! [754] [627]

"And if a woman is restless with her husband and is herself considering leaving him then she will be forever going and complaining to her 586

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

586 mothers[1] in secret that she is in trouble and that her husband has no regard for her, that he grudges her garden plots and gives her only small ones. Then maybe her mothers will take the initiative in suggesting that she should leave this man who is no husband and who loves her not. And they will tell their husband, her father, that his child is in trouble and—only think of it !—has scarcely a ridge[2] to call her own. So that if the girl does then find life with her husband intolerable and leaves him, her father will not be too hard on his daughter, he will not compel her to go back to him ; for he knows that she was in trouble."

421 626 754] This statement, written by an educated Nyakyusa, brings out very clearly both the fact that men do at times divide their land unfairly and the nature of some of the sanctions which operate against such injustice. The faith in witchcraft provides a moral sanction of which, if the man is fool enough to disregard it, he is very likely explicitly reminded in the course of the subsequent legal proceedings ; the injured wife has an immediate hold over him in virtue of the relationship of practical co-operation and emotional intimacy in which they stand to each other, a hold which, if he attempts to break it by recourse to violence, is strengthened and given a legal form by the support of their neighbours. The support of her kin is an alternative legal force[3] which an injured wife

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[1] i.e. her father's wives.

[241] [2] For many crops the ground is hoed into ridges.

[3] Some readers may be puzzled by and somewhat critical of the meaning with which the concept of law is employed in this paper. This is not the place to meet their criticisms, but, in order to avoid misunderstanding, it is necessary to define that meaning precisely. Law, then, is here distinguished alike from morality with its religious sanctions, from convention with its constraining sense of shame and from the reciprocity dictated by self-interest —with all of which it is in fact inextricably intertwined. Law is here taken to be that normal or customary form of action in society which is kept in being by the inherent necessities of systematic cooperation among its members. The particular form of law varies in different areas of society in accordance with the particular conditions of each area ; but some normal form of action there must be everywhere if social life is to continue ; anarchy is, in the strictest sense of the word, impracticable. A breach of law is a course of action, on the part of some individual or minority group, which is inconsistent with the normal and accepted form of cooperative action, and which would therefore, if unchecked, make continued relationship between the lawbreakers and the other members of their society wholly impossible ; it threatens to dissolve society into anarchy. But breaches of law are always in fact checked, as they must be, by the actions of those with whom the lawbreakers are in practice related ; and it is these actions which are the sanctions of law.

If law is to be preserved it is necessary that the actions which sanction it should have an irresistible force, the lawbreaker must normally be helpless before them ; and they are only thus irresistible if the great majority of those people with whom the lawbreaker is effectively related do in fact either participate in or at least approve of them. Now in civilized areas of society, in which vast numbers of people are related, legal sanctions must be applied by a central authority if they are to be effective, for only such a central

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

but his wife refused to go and fetch her on the ground that he was a bad 595
husband.

The children of one man and two close kinswomen have almost the 593
relationship of full-siblings, but not quite, and I propose to call their relationship that of *linked half-siblings* (*vide infra*).

In a polygynous family the first wife married, the chief wife (*oŋkasi-* 595
kolo), is in a privileged position; she is entitled to the respect and 586
obedience of her co-wives and her eldest son is her husband's ultimate heir. A man cannot lightly divorce his first wife during his own father's lifetime, for while the other wives he obtains by his own efforts, with his own cattle, she is married with cattle given him by his father, who must be consulted before she is divorced and who is offended if she is sent away without good cause.

Besides the chief wife there is, in most polygynous households a 595
favourite wife (*oŋkondwe*), who in fact has greater privileges. Ideally a man is supposed to be fair to all his wives and to distribute milk, land and sexual attentions equally between them, with perhaps a slight bias in favour of his chief wife. But usually one wife is her husband's favourite and is given by him an undue share of the household's milk supply, and sometimes he hoes more land for her than for the others, as well.

Divorce is legally effected by the return of the marriage-cattle. No 586
pagan woman in this society ever desires to live single, and so when a wife leaves her husband it is always with the intention of marrying some other man. Usually she has a particular man in mind who has been making love to her and who has cows enough to redeem her, but not always. A woman may, as we have described already, run off with a lover and then, as soon as he has returned the marriage-cattle and the adultery fine to her former husband, she becomes his legal wife, and her children by him are legitimate: If she has no lover to run off with, or if her lover wishes to avoid the adultery fine, the woman goes to Court[a] (before 1926 she went to her own chief) and publicly refuses to live with her husband. She may or may not give a reason for leaving him, but if she persistently refuses to go back to him there is now no way of compelling her to do so. The judges say to her: "Well you must find the cattle," and so she stays, either with her father or in the charge of a court official, until some man comes to marry her. Then the cows are returned to her first husband and the divorce is effected. In pre-European times, I am told, such a woman was frequently compelled to return to her husband by

[a] Vide infra. *The Chiefdom.* * [cat. 116, pp. 278ff. — Analyst]

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

586 her own father and the chief. A man has the right to divorce his wife, that is to send her away and demand back his cows, if she is dirty or lazy in housework or if she commits adultery, but men do not often demand a divorce for adultery unless it is persistent. If a man sends his wife away for some such reason she returns to her father and he, if he has cows available, sends back to her husband his marriage-cattle, if he has not got the cows the husband must wait until the girl is remarried.

593 857 Into the relationship of mother and daughter economic co-operation and reciprocity enter. The care of young children is largely in the hands of their elder sisters, and the girls also help their own mothers in field-work and in fetching and carrying. In return their mothers cook for them, teach them how to cook themselves and how to make mats.

585 593 Each mother is responsible also for her own daughter's virginity. One of the bulls which a young man brings during the initiation of his betrothed wife is only given if the girl is found on examination to be still virgin, or if he has deflowered her himself. If it is given this bull belongs to the girl's mother to eat with her own friends. But, in spite of her [864] mother's responsibility for her, a girl learns nothing positive from her mother about sex, but from her own slightly older friends; with them she discusses the tecnique of love-making in detail, but never with her mother.

593 The relationships of siblings are, in general, closer than those of half-siblings, and the eldest son in each individual family is privileged above his brothers. A boy's claim for cattle is, as we have seen, partly based on the time and energy he has put into hoeing his parents' fields; but it also depends, in part, on having full-sisters of his own. When a girl marries the cows come to her father, but her own full-brothers expect to receive these cows, in time, for their own marriages, in the order of their age. Though the father controls the cattle the brothers speak of them as "our cows" and they have an ultimate legal claim to them, which only gross laziness or insult to their father can altogether vitiate. The eldest of a group of full-brothers is the first to draw on these cows and to marry, his juniors wait longer. Full-brothers are bound together in many ways; the eldest, who is privileged, is bound to help his juniors in any way he can, and they in turn respect him and in time give to him some cows from the marriages of their own daughters; 593 and each makes the others' quarrels his own. What chiefly unites them 428 is the law of inheritance, for though the eldest has first right to the cattle from their sisters' marriages, and though the younger ones, later in life, give cattle from their daughters' marriages to him, yet they are his heirs, and all his privileges in time pass to them. When the eldest dies his next

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

was not an individual one. True, a girl gave her formal consent in the marriage ritual, but the pressure on her to accept the husband selected for her by her kinsmen was almost irresistible. In the thirties Christian women who refused their husband's heir and lived alone, or married an unrelated man of their choice, were regarded by their pagan sisters as very daring, and little girls in pagan families took it as a matter of course that they should replace their dead sisters; today the right of a widow to choose whom she will marry is generally accepted, and the custom of replacing a dead woman by her sister has lapsed. 'Every girl wants her own husband nowadays', the old women say. Thus lineage obligations give way to individual freedom of choice in marriage. At the same time the rituals which emphasized the lineage are dropped or modified. The fearful fecundity of a double birth no longer appals men and the twin ritual which used to bring together all the living members of a lineage of three generations is not celebrated at all. At a puberty ritual a pagan girl may be given the *ikipiki* medicine, the symbol of 'the blood of the lineage' by her mother, but there is no seclusion and elaborate feasting, no sacrifice of the bull of puberty that her father's shades may 'move aside a little' to make way for the shades of her husband's lineage. Only at a funeral do kinsmen still gather and celebrate, for many still fear the shades, and at a funeral the heir is installed and the importance of property and the inheritance of it has not diminished one whit. As we have seen, the traditional religion was formulated in terms of kinship; the gods were senior kinsmen; but today God, *Kyala*, is no ancestor; to pagans as well as to Christians he is separate and supreme. Men are still classified by their lineages, and one of the topics of village questions is how Prince Charles can be heir to the British throne when his father is not of the house of Windsor; but already in the economic field, and increasingly in the religious, it is the family of parents and children which is now dominant, not the lineage.

Divorce is far more frequent than formerly, partly because women claim a greater freedom of behaviour than before, as well as the right of choosing their own husbands, and are supported by the courts. As one village headman put it, 'Formerly a father beat his daughter with a stick if she ran home and sent her back to her husband who also beat her.' The women reject the old pattern of subservience which was expressed in crouching to greet a man, and addressing him in a very deferential fashion; the men observe, and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 some copy, the manners of Europeans towards their wives, but neither husband nor wife is quite sure what the change in manners [586] implies, and both are often inconsistent in their behaviour. As an educated Nyakyusa put it: 'They do not know what to expect from each other.'

[585] [162] Marriage relationships are complicated by the disproportion in the numbers of men and women; a disproportion which continues while the rule of monogamy is preached and accepted [582] by many. The first effect of the increase in wealth in Rungwe district was for the marriage age of women to go down; in Mr. Punch's phrase 'too many cattle were chasing too few wives'; but the combined pressure of missions and Administration, and some acquaintance with the customs of the outside world, has reversed that tendency, and the marriage of girls below puberty, which was general among pagans in 1938, now appears to be exceptional. Many girls are still betrothed before puberty, but [584] they do not go to their husbands until after that time, and to be still single at puberty with no betrothed to play his part in the ritual is no longer embarrassing to a girl, for the puberty ritual is not celebrated in full. The ruling of the District Council that a man may not recover more than *one* cow given for a girl who has not reached puberty, if the marriage is dissolved, discourages men from giving cattle for girls who have not grown up. At the same time the marriage age of men is going down. Marriage in the [582] early twenties or even the late teens is common now, for young men who have been to work on the mines can buy marriage cattle for themselves, and Christians who are well-to-do provide for the marriages of young sons instead of taking additional wives. Therefore the gap in the marriage age of men and women is very considerably diminished, but it still exists, and combined with the disproportion in the total number of males and females it means that a considerable proportion of the women (perhaps 30 per cent)[1] must become the junior wives of polygynists or remain unmarried altogether, or live alone as widows.

595 Among pagans polygyny is approved, but young men are irked by their responsibility for elderly widows, a responsibility that was formerly accepted as a matter of course. Able-bodied wives are still economically an asset even now that trade goods are in general use. For Nyakyusa men—pagans—have insisted that as

[1] The masculinity rate is calculated at 87·9 : 100 (*vide supra*) and the *average* difference in the marriage age may well be six years.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

182 Churches in the area. Nevertheless the bulk of professing Christians
595 are monogamists, though it is still customary and, in Rungwe
797 District, economically profitable, for a rich man who is not a Christian to have more than one wife. The difficulties of establishing monogamy are accentuated by the great disproportion in the numbers of men and women. If the figures available are accurate, a general acceptance of monogamy would mean that only about 70 per cent of the women could be married; therefore the Church is necessarily concerned in seeking an adjustment in the disproportion of the population—in keeping the men alive if our assumption that the shortage of men is due to a heavy male death rate is true.

182 The yeast of the gospel permeates still further. It is taken to
797 imply the freedom of an individual to accept or reject a partner in
584 marriage. This has been maintained from the first in the Nyakyusa Church, and is enforced by the courts, which apply a conception of personal rights springing from the Christian tradition.

182 Most Nyakyusa men attribute the rapid rise in the divorce rate
586 to this new 'freedom' of women. Christian teaching stresses the
797 family and the sanctity of marriage, but it ignores the lineage. In the traditional rituals of kinship the lineage is represented again and again, while in Christian ritual it is the elementary family and the Church that are pictured. The preoccupation with fertility and the reproductive cycle was linked with the glorification of the lineage itself, and it disappears when the lineage ceases to be the basis of social grouping.

How closely linked are symbols to other aspects of a society?
182 Our hypothesis is that they are relatively free, but it can be shown
181 that many of the symbols used in the traditional rituals of the
178 Nyakyusa reflect the economy, and vary somewhat from one area to another, with the staple crops. The development of trade or of new crops is a prerequisite for using the symbols of bread and wine traditional in the Christian rituals, and even the 'independent' African Churches use new foods, not the beer and bananas of the country; thus change in material symbols and change in economy may be directly connected. The imagery changes also with the changing social structure; Kyala ceases to be pictured as a senior kinsman, when the lineage organization begins to weaken; he is God the father of a family rather than an early member of the royal lineage. But there is no evidence that

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 villages of the great-grandfathers' generation survived, even ritually (*vide* Document, pp. 881–5).[1]

166 Men also move from one village to another and they do not always join a village of their exact contemporaries. A stranger may come and be granted land in a village even though he is considerably older or younger than the bulk of its members. Such movement from one village to another is now very considerable: we estimated that at least 80 per cent of the married men have at some time or other moved from the chiefdom in which they first cultivated gardens of their own. There is also movement from village to village within a chiefdom.

[681] Everyone agreed that moving is not something new. In the past a convicted witch was expelled from his village, and sometimes from the chiefdom; thieves and adulterers were also expelled or fled to take refuge with another chief (*vide infra*, pp. 118–9). But it is probable that movement between villages has increased greatly since the imposition of European control. The main [759] reason for moving nowadays is, as we have said, the fear of witchcraft. Subsidiary reasons are the desire to get suitable land for cultivating cash crops, the desire to be near some centre of employment (such as Tukuyu or Rungwe), and the desire to live with others of like mind, as fellow Christians or fellow pagans, fellow Moravians or fellow adherents of the 'Watch Tower' (*vide infra*, pp. 40–3).

166 Women move from one village to another even more often than men, for, not only do wives move with their husbands, but 591 a girl commonly marries a man of a village other than that in ●587 which she grew up, and is later inherited by a kinsman of her dead husband who lives in yet another village. Since first wives are usually ten years younger than their husbands, and junior wives may be forty or fifty years younger, most women are inherited at least once during their lives, and some are inherited several times. The modern high divorce rate accelerates this long- [581] established circulation of women from village to village.

[1] It is possible that the existence of villages of four generations was due to the fact that Mwaipopo continued to live long after the 'coming out' of his heir Mwaukuge—a survival not usual in traditional practice (*vide supra*, p. 30).

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

inheriting their stepmothers. Where circumcision is practised a grown woman scorns sex relations with an uncircumcised boy, therefore uncircumcised youths are not potential lovers of their fathers' junior wives; but with the Nyakyusa there is no ceremony to mark the sexual maturity of a male, and adolescent youths are acceptable to young married women of their own age. And not only does the wide difference in the age of men and girls at first marriage allow of a high degree of polygyny, but the very early bethrothal of girls (over whom their future husbands have exclusive sexual rights except during the initiation ritual) means that there are very few girls available to the unmarried men. The institution of girls' huts (*isaka*) has disappeared among the Nyakyusa owing to the lack of nubile girls who are not already betrothed, and the period of seclusion at initiation (when betrothed girls are available to men other than their husbands) is short. The contrast with Nguni society, in which girls do not marry until sixteen to twenty-two, and have several years of great sex freedom before marriage[1] is marked. We suggest that it is because unmarried girls are so scarce and lusty bachelors so many, that the seduction of the wives of polygynists is frequent, and homosexual practices are general.[2] Nyakyusa insist that formerly seduction was rare,[3] and possibly the impulse towards it was indeed less strong when girls married rather later and *isaka* existed (*vide supra*, p. 87).

Lastly, the Nyakyusa permit the inheritance of a father's widows by his sons, a practice regarded as improper by certain other peoples (e.g. the Pondo[4]) who practise the levirate. A son is required to treat all his father's wives as 'mothers' while his father and father's full brothers are alive, and intercourse with a father's wife is treated as a heinous offence necessitating special purification; but after the death of the father and his full brothers these same women become wives of their former 'sons'—with the limitation that a man cannot inherit his own mother or her kins-

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 180–6; M. Kohler, *Marriage Customs in Southern Natal*, pp. 20–44; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 135–6.

[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, p. 408 (footnote), hints that similar practices exist among the Nyasaland Tonga and elsewhere *before* adolescence only. The Nyakyusa certainly continue after puberty.

[3] MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 63, states that the acknowledged child of an adulterous union was openly put to death.

[4] Hunter, op. cit., p. 211.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

587 835 woman. It is scarcely surprising that the seduction of the young wives of an ageing father is a common theme for scandal. We do not suggest that the Oedipus complex involving own mother and son never occurs among the Nyakyusa; what we are concerned to show is that the relationship between a man and his stepmothers is particularly likely to be ambivalent.

593 584 It may be asked why there is so much emphasis on the segregation of sons from their parents, and not of daughters. The answer again lies in the sex difference in the marriage age. Betrothed girls pay long visits to their husbands even before puberty, and directly after the initiation which follows first menstruation they leave their fathers' home to join their husbands. During her initiation a girl carefully avoids her father and his contemporaries in the village, and after marriage, when she returns home to visit, she must observe certain restrictions not applicable to an unmarried girl: notably she must not approach her parents' bed, and informants interpret the taboo as being due to the danger of mixing the sex activities of mother and daughter.

621 835 In short, we argue that there is a connection between the existence of age-villages and the fear of incest between father-in-law and daughter-in-law on the one hand, and between stepson and stepmother on the other, and we suggest that certain features of the Nyakyusa social system facilitate incest of the second type. The incest theme elaborated in one fashion among people organized in clans and practising clan exogamy, and in another among people practising brother—sister avoidance, finds yet a different expression in age-villages, of which the overt purpose is the separation of sons and mothers, of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

c. *Good company*

577 621 The emphasis on the separation of parents and children is matched by the value laid on good fellowship (*ukwangala*) between contemporaries. A main end of age-villages, in the Nyakyusa view, is to allow men the enjoyment of congenial company, that is the company of friends and equals. The value of *ukwangala* is, indeed, directly linked with the age-village organization: to attain it men must build not only in villages, rather than in scattered homesteads, but also with contemporaries rather than with kin, since there can be no free and easy inter-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

27. WIVES DRIVEN AWAY FOR WITCHCRAFT

Makwelebeja (elderly commoner).

'Many wives are driven away for witchcraft. They are driven away by their husbands. If a man has several wives one may be bad and throttle her husband's cattle, or throttle her husband himself. Then the man goes and complains (*ukwijaja*), saying: "They have destroyed my cattle", or perhaps, "My neighbours have 'eaten' me", whichever it is. When his fellows hear his complaints they say: "Do not accuse outsiders. See! It's your wife." Some women are bad and the husband does not sleep when he is with his other wives; only when he is with her (the witch) does he have a good sleep. She spoils the fertility of her co-wives. Or sometimes all the wives are friendly and agree to spoil the cattle of their husband. 754 627

'There is a woman named Kajonga whose husband drove her away for witchcraft because she bewitched the fertility of her co-wives. A long time after her divorce she was married to another man, Mwitoba by name. From that man also she was driven away for witchcraft, but what wrong she had done was not much known. Some time later she died. 754 627 587

'Women who are driven away for witchcraft always remarry; they do not run off with men.'

Njobakosa.

'When a wife was accused she drank *umwafi*. If she was "caught" by the ordeal sometimes her husband drove her away, sometimes he did not. Usually he did not.'

Nsusa.

'Formerly wives were frequently driven away for witchcraft. Such a wife remarried quickly.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

765 deceased was a man and wealthy, the heir kills a bull or cow for a feast.

765 According to one account, 'the heir kills a cow saying: "This is
184 your cow, Father." Then he takes the praying calabash and fills it with beer and goes to the banana grove. The others sit in the courtyard watching from afar. He blows beer and then pours out a little, several times, mentioning the dead man's name and those of three or four prominent dead relatives, and prays for children, health, and food. He takes his own senior son (or the son of his dead brother) with him to see what he does, for he (the son) will do it after his death. Then they come back and the meat is eaten and beer drunk.' But we never saw this happen nor was the prayer in the banana grove mentioned by other informants.

782 If the millet put to soak fails to sprout, however, there must be
765 prayer. It is thought that there has been disagreement among the mourners and the shades are angry and have spoilt the millet. The kinsmen gather to confess their quarrels and pray before preparing another batch.

765 At the shaving of the sprouting hair (or some other time during the death ritual) the sisters of the dead man formally admonish his widows on their behaviour as wives. One admonition recorded lasted two hours, and the main theme was the stinginess of the widows in entertaining their sisters-in-law when the latter had come to visit.

765 On the morning after 'the shaving of the sprouting hair' the par-
768 ticipants shave their whole heads and are anointed with ointment by
587 the officiant. In the evening comes the formal handing over of the inheritance, if the deceased was a married man. The heir sits in the doorway of the mourning hut and the senior wife of the deceased hands him a bill-hook, such as is used for pruning bananas. He is adjured by his relatives, his village headman, and his neighbours to care for the children of the deceased as if they were his own, and the widows are told: 'This is your husband who
[428] will hoe for you always.' If there is any division of property it is formally made on this occasion, the dead man's sisters and the village headman being primarily responsible for a just allocation. And though, traditionally, women were given no choice about inheritance, this was in fact the occasion on which their protests and preferences were expressed. Then the heir is thrown into the hut with the women he has inherited 'on to the ashes' (*umfwandelo*), and must have intercourse with all of them that night. One of

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

them knocks on the wall when he has succeeded, and the officiant 765
raises the *akalulu*, the trill of applause and triumph[1] which is also 768
the war-cry, and shakes a basket of seeds by the door shouting:
'Ours, ours, we marvel at the thing!' Until this ritual connection 587
the heir and the widows remain continent, and great importance is attached to the success of the heir in having intercourse with all the widows. Should a widow refuse the heir after touching the ash it is said that she will either die herself or cause any man she lies with to die of 'the ash'; but if she escapes before being smeared with ash then she is safe. The heir is also in danger if a widow should refuse him after he has touched the ash.

The morning after the ritual union the heir is formally summoned out of the hut by a man knocking on the door and crying: 'Come out, war has come (*Soka! ubwite bwisile*),' i.e. sexual intercourse has begun. He sits on a stool in the doorway of the hut and is greeted by the children of the deceased: 'Good morning, Father.'

iii. '*The gasping cough.*' Each of the inherited women goes off to 783
her own father's homestead with the filth (*indafu*) of intercourse 768
on her. She does not even wash her hands, and she takes with her 587
cooked bananas which she has smeared with her husband's semen and her own emission. This she buries in the banana grove in her father's homestead in which he prays to his ancestors. She takes meat to her father if an animal has been killed at the 'shaving of the sprouting hair'. The heir similarly goes to his father's homestead (or that of his father's heir) with cooked bananas to be buried in his father's sacred grove. Each wife drinks beer mixed with medicine with her father and other close relatives. From the time when the heir sleeps with the widows until this ritual is per- [574]
formed, they cannot visit their parents nor can their children do so (though usually children come and go freely in the home of their mother's people) and, more particularly, a widow must not drink from her mother's cup, or eat with her, or sit over her fire, or touch her hand. It is believed that, if the ritual is neglected, those for whom it should have been performed will be seized with a racking cough (*ingotolo*) and diarrhœa. Even Christians, who eschew the other parts of the death ritual, often participate in the *ingotolo*.

When a woman has died she should be replaced by a sister or 587
brother's daughter, just as the dead man is by a brother or son. 834

[1] The closest equivalent in our society is cheering, but the *akalulu* is raised by women.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

587 and the widower should refrain from sexual intercourse with his
834 other wives until the ritual union with the 'wife who replaces the dead' (*unsasi*) at the 'shaving of the sprouting hair'. Nowadays, however, widowers do not keep this taboo strictly, and many lie with their other wives after the 'picking up of pumpkin-seeds'.

765 Before the 'shaving of the sprouting hair' for a dead woman her brother (or, if he is dead, his heir) goes to cut down the bananas at her former husband's home, as a sign that kinship between them is at an end, but he is persuaded to desist. Mwakwelebeja, an elderly man who had just performed it after the death of his sister Seba, the wife of the chief Mwaipopo, in company with his neighbour Mwaiselage and his wives, thus described the ritual:

> We arrived and our wives and the wives of Mwaipopo went into the house to wail, and we men went in too and cried: 'Alas father! Alas father!' Then we seized my *umwipwa*, the girl Ijonga, the daughter of Seba, and went off with her. The women, the chief's wives, fought with us and cried: 'Bring a cloth, bring a cloth!' They gave us a cloth and we left the girl. Then I seized a bill-hook and began to cut down the banana grove. I cut indeed! They cried: 'Not the banana grove!' and gave me another cloth.
>
> QUESTION: What does this mean?
>
> MWAKWELEBEJA: When we seize the girl it is as if we said: 'My child has died, the kinship is finished, it is finished here, I'll be off with my sister's children (*abipwa*), they are *my* children.' And when they give me a cloth they pay saying: 'Father, we pray you, don't! There is still kinship, Father, you are not a stranger! Do not terminate the kinship, it is still there.' And when I cut the banana grove it means the same; it means my child has died here, it is finished here, the kinship has ended. And when they give me a cloth, they beseech me saying: 'Not the banana grove, Father, the kinship is not yet finished, it still exists!' Formerly, if they were rich they gave a bull. . . . We were unfortunate, Mwaipopo paid us nothing.
>
> After I had cut the grove I gave bananas and meat (from a cow I had brought to kill) to all my sisters' children, on the roadway (outside the homestead). I stood with my back to them and handed the bananas and meat over my shoulder. They came up behind me one by one, and took the food in their mouths. [This was demonstrated, dramatically.] Yes, it is a ritual. If we do not give them bananas and meat, their legs swell up, they fall ill and become mad.

765 Some of our informants maintained that this ritual of cutting
184 the bananas was performed only when the deceased's family had no girl to send in her place. Mwakwelebeja and Mwaiselage, how-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

ever, insisted that it was performed whether there was a girl to 765
send or not, but if several sisters were married to the same man it 184
was carried out only for the eldest of them.

We do this whether we are substituting another woman or not, but we do it only for the senior sister. There were three Sebas married to Mwaipopo, and when the two junior ones died we did not go to cut the bananas, but now the senior Seba has died, we do cut the bananas.

Mwaiselage explained that his brother-in-law would come to 765
cut bananas when his senior wife, Lyandileko, died, whether she died before or after her junior sister who is her co-wife, but the brother would not cut bananas at the death of the junior sister.

MWAKWELEBEJA: We cut the banana grove again when all the children of those women, the kinswomen married to one man, are dead. That is, their mother's brother's son (*untani*) does it, for their mother's brother will be dead by then. It means the same thing: 'The kinship is finished.' They pay to say: 'No, Father, it still continues.'

A woman to replace the dead is asked for even though her 587
husband has predeceased her. X, describing the ritual added: 765

And when my mother dies (if my father has died first) still her relatives, my *abipwa*, come to cut the banana grove. I throw them a cloth crying: 'Not the bananas.' Also they bring me another woman. If they do not, I go to them and say: 'Give me another mother to look after me.' They give me a girl whom I give to a half-brother (as his wife). If there is no girl they give me a cow, saying: 'That's your mother.'

Ibaso and Mwaijamba explained:

If, when a woman has died, her people are poor, having no child to replace her, they say: 'We are sorry, but there is nothing at all here, this cow is for drawing water with.' And formerly they returned all the cattle later on; but now, since we have stopped claiming calves, we divide the cows. . . . But when there is a daughter and they give her to me, the husband, we give marriage cattle again. Kinship does not [602]
come to an end.

To recapitulate, the main events of the ritual of death are the 765
formal recognition of the heir (if the deceased was a married man); 768
the burial of a flowering head of bananas and the rubbing in earth from the grave; washing; a ritual eating of bananas with certain seeds; sweeping out the mourning hut; circling the hearth and putting an old pot on the fire with various foods; the presentation of millet by relatives and friends, and a ritual grinding; a second

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

764 prepared earlier) and ties a strip of medicated banana bark round the neck of each, and with these necklaces on they must sleep. In one lineage they take little horns and blow into them and walk round calling out: 'We are driving you away, you are a stranger to us, do not come in dreams repeatedly.'

Next morning sausages of millet porridge mixed with medicine are half-buried in the earth at the cross-roads—or somewhere on the pathway—and each participant in turn bends down and bites off a piece, leaving some in the ground. They take off their bark necklaces and throw them into the little hut, which is then destroyed. After they have bathed again the officiant strokes each one on the forehead with a razor.

768 When a married man has died the heir is formally recognized,
587 and the widows are asked whether they accept him as their husband, at some point during the ritual; when Mwaikambo's father died the recognition of the heir preceded the whole ritual; more often it follows it and there is a formal drinking of 'the beer of inheritance'. In any case the first intercourse between the heir and the widows is always delayed for some months and, until it has taken place, the widows may meet their relatives; after it each widow returns to the homestead of her father (or his heir) for the 'ritual of the gasping cough' (*ingotolo*). Old Fibombe, a Christian elder, described it vividly:

768 The parents of the girl brew beer and call her to the beer of *ingotolo*.
177 They also call their relatives. She brings a hoe or a goat (or now a cloth
587 or 1s.). First of all she lifts up the pot of beer into which an officiant has put powdered medicine (*imbondanya*) and takes a mouthful, stirring the rest, then she hands it to another participant and when he has taken a mouthful she spits out, then she stirs and hands it on, and when the next has taken a mouthful she spits, and so it continues until all present have done this. Nowadays people do not take the beer in their mouths, they simply stir and pass it on. Pride prevents them. They say people will laugh at them if they do the things of old. Time is passing and things are like *Mambo Leo* [the Swahili newspaper] now. All
[184] pagans, however, still do this ritual in a modified form, only the Christians leave it undone.

768 This informant omitted two significant points in the ritual
587 which we saw for ourselves: the widow brings a spear belonging to her new husband and thrusts it into the earth outside her father's house. It stands beside the vessel of beer while her kinsmen drink until her brother plucks it out and takes it into the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

house. Then she goes in and steals a piece of firewood from the loft[1] and runs off with it, laughing. The officiant pursues her and makes her drop it and gives her medicine, while the company cry: 'A thief, a thief!' She takes the firewood back to her husband's home. 'It is a sign that she has entered her father's house, just as the spear is a sign that she has entered the house of another husband.' In rich families the new husband sends a bull which is killed and eaten at the ritual.

Our informants were agreed that 'there is no fear of the gasping cough if a woman runs away from her husband and goes to a lover', and in practice no ritual is performed when she visits her father after divorce and re-marriage, but it is perhaps significant that such a situation could scarcely have arisen in the past, since divorce by agreement rarely, if ever, occurred. An adulterer fled, if he could, with his lover to another chiefdom, breaking off all relations with her kin.

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

Now we turn to the Kukwe interpretation of events. Our two principal informants here were Mwasalemba, an elderly pagan man, brother to the chief Porokoto, whose wife, Syungu, acted as officiant at rituals in the chief's family, and Kakune, a young doctor who had learnt the medicines from his mother. Mwasalemba was much more coherent than Syungu herself, and his interpretation was confirmed by Kakune and numerous other informants. Again I give the interpretation of the two principal informants without any editing other than placing consecutively statements made on different occasions.

i. *Mwasalemba's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. and translated by him soon afterwards.)

MWASALEMBA: Perhaps a youth, perhaps a girl, runs mad; he runs about naked so that we say: 'He's mad, why doesn't he cover himself?' He goes to the place of defaecation and takes filth and eats it: he goes into people's houses and takes things, he might even take some things from you, from a European, without fear; he knows not what he does. Sometimes, after a visit to a doctor, he recovers altogether and never has the fit again—that is the lesser kind of madness. But sometimes he recovers and then the fit takes him again later—that is the more serious

[1] The loft (*pijulu*) consists of horizontal beams running at wall level across a portion of the hut. Here every married woman keeps a supply of dry firewood. It is her private store-place which may not be touched without her permission.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

764 QUESTION: What are the stones in the clefts of hands and toes?
773 MWASALEMBA: Kyala when he created men said: 'At the death ritual do this, it is the shade, it is the body.'

775 Mwasalemba went on to discuss the puberty ritual and attributed sexual desire and diarrhœa to the shades. He explained that faeces (which are buried) 'go below to the land of the shades' (*vide* p. 127; 210 ff.).

764 SYUNGU: If we leave out something a child runs off to Mwibonde
[158] [wild pasture-land] and catches hold of that which is bad and pants with madness (*ikigili*). Some go to Mwibonde and gather faggots and put them on their heads then throw them away again.

QUESTION: How is it that people ever omit a ritual?

SYUNGU: Some omit some of it. They make mistakes out of ignorance.

QUESTION: But do any omit it altogether?

[184] SYUNGU: No, only the Christians. No pagan neglects it altogether.

QUESTION: But those who have run away and are not there (e.g. women who have eloped with lovers)?

SYUNGU: Yes, indeed, it is they who neglect it, but those who are at home perform the ritual.

QUESTION: How about stealing the banana bunch?

SYUNGU: Yes, we steal it, but we tell the owner beforehand, and when we eat the mash we mix the stolen with the home-grown, that which is stolen is always a plantain and that from home is a sweet banana. The plantain is the man's and the sweet banana the woman's. And when we bathe we wear a plantain leaf, which has been stolen, in front, and a sweet banana leaf, which comes from home, behind.

MWASALEMBA:[1] The girl brought the spear of her husband and stuck it in the ground. At the end Losi (my eldest son and her full brother) pulled it up and it will always be on my wall. The spear is an essential part of the ritual; without it the ritual would go wrong. If she came with no spear we should send her back again to fetch one.

764 We drink the medicine because, when our son-in-law has died and
● 587 our daughter lies with another who has not been our son-in-law before, if she comes and gives us food with the filth (*indafu*) on her then we gasp and cough with *ingotolo*. It is quite different if she runs away from her husband when he is alive. Then we drink no medicine. Yes, then she comes, with *indafu* on her, and gives us food and nothing happens.
[828] I don't know why. Kyala made us black people like this. It is when her husband dies that we drink. We drink as soon as she lies with her new husband, not after she becomes pregnant. If we see that she is pregnant before she comes we are angry. She should come first to the ritual and then conceive. She does not wait until her periods stop before coming

[1] Referring to the *ingotolo* ritual for his daughter described on p. 66.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

for the ritual. We think that when she has slept with her new husband she is full (*nsito*) and if she gives us food it will make us ill. 764 587

MWANGWANDA: The new husband gives us relatives a disease by impregnating the girl, he who is no relative of ours, the new husband. [753] *Ingotolo* is an illness.

ii. *Kakune's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W.)

KAKUNE: Yes, if we do not perform the ritual the children run mad. 764 They speak foolishly and deliriously, they run about wildly wearing leaves, they eat filth. [158] But they do not fight with their fellows—that is what those do who have the madness of Kyala. It is these of whom we say: 'Perhaps Kyala loved them.'

QUESTION: Why the first washing?

KAKUNE: That is to get rid of the disease, the filth, for they held the corpse in their hands. They do not eat the ritual food until they have washed.

QUESTION: Why the eating of porridge?

KAKUNE: Because of the tears we have wept. We have mourned him; now let us eat and strengthen our bodies again.

QUESTION: Why are beans thrown into the pot in the evening?

KAKUNE: These beans, which we throw into the pot, saying: 'This is my father's death', are an ending of the ritual. They remain all night in the house after they have been cooked, and the shades come and eat. In the morning the doctor [*unganga*, i.e. the officiant] washes us again with powdered medicine and we eat the beans and finish them. We use beans in the ritual for that is the food which our father hoed. We think: 'Our father has died, he will never hoe for us again', and so we say: 'This is the death of my father.' So then the shade of our father comes at night and tastes the food and says to us: 'I, your father, have died, you have mourned for me; live you yet awhile, do not come quickly to death; and may you hoe plenty of food and have no hunger.' If we leave out this ritual with the beans the fertility of our gardens [789] disappears and we have great hunger, we eat nothing.

QUESTION: Why the circling to the harp and crumbling oil-seeds?

KAKUNE: The ointment (made from the oil-seeds) is to finish the ritual. The song (*ukalende*) is to say good-bye, to the shade, it means 'farewell', it is to drive him away. We circle round because our father was an active man, he walked round seeing his friends, he danced; that is why we circle round the fire. [In Kakune's family they do not [184] cry the war shout of triumph, they only dance to the harp.]

QUESTION: Why the pebbles? [I told him what Mwasalemba had said and he agreed heartily.]

KAKUNE: Yes, that's it! We throw them away, this means 'We have driven you away now.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

764 porridge—sausages of porridge are buried in the ground and bitten off by the principals who stoop down to do it.

QUESTION: What does it mean?

KAKUNE: It means that we are about to honour them; they eat, and he whom we have buried also remains below, he also eats, we bury the sausage in the earth and we say we are burying him also, then he will fear to come to the house.

QUESTION: And this porridge is a symbol of the filth which those who run mad eat?

KAKUNE (laughing): Yes, because if we omit to do these things the children become feeble, their hearts say 'He! he!' [panting and excited] and they rush off to the road and eat dirt (*imindo*).

QUESTION: Why should the shades do this to them? How are they interested in dirt (*imindo*)?

KAKUNE: I don't know. We say it is because we have not accompanied them on the road and on account of this the shade is very angry and says: 'We shall see whether their children flourish!' He has bewitched them (*abalogile*).

QUESTION: And what about the circling round with the harp and the trampling at the fire?

KAKUNE: That is not very important, Mwaipaja [G. W.], it is because he cultivated food and danced at beer drinks when he was alive, so we dance for him now that he is dead. . . . A widow must lie
[587 with her husband the night before she comes to do the (*ingotolo*) ritual,
833] and she comes with his filth on her, she does not wash. If she comes without having lain with him the night before then we all get the
[753] disease. The disease comes from the new husband, it comes from his seed, the seed that begets us men. When his seed enters her womb then she is heavy (*nsito*) and if she eats or drinks out of our dishes and pots while we are empty (*bwasi*), before we have stopped ourselves with medicines, then she gives us the disease. She has not given us the protective medicine (*imbosyo*).

764 If a woman changes from one husband to another and both are
753 alive, there is no danger and no ritual. It is death that brings the danger, because that man [her first husband] has died; he has died and rotted below, and from that disease comes. The disease only comes from this situation. If no relative has died there is no *ingotolo*. But if my wife has run off with another man and then comes back to me with his semen in her, then I take some powdered medicine and eat some and throw a little on the fire, and if I do not do this then my legs will hurt, I shall be unable to walk properly, and my body will become weak. Neither she nor her relatives take medicine, nor does her new husband, if she goes to him and he pays for her and takes her. He just marries her.

764 If the widow is left with a sucking child and is empty [*bwasi*: i.e. her
587

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

new husband has not been sleeping with her], then at first, before she 764
lies with him, we (her relatives) eat with her. But when the child leaves 587
the breast and her husband begets another then she comes to perform the ritual. Otherwise we cannot eat with her. And so with a pregnant widow—at first we eat with her but when the child is born and has been weaned and her new husband begets another she comes to perform the ritual.

The new husband must send a bull or a sheep with his spear, and we who drink the beer divide the meat, saying: 'Thank you, you have nourished us.' Yesterday he sent 30s., and I, the doctor, got 1s. If it had been a bull I would have got some meat. The husband does not come himself, but he sends a friend to bring the woman. This friend does not eat or drink the medicine, but he drinks the beer without medicine and the cassava we cook. [In the ritual just completed] Mwasalemba provided three pots of beer—we drank one before and two after the ceremony. That was what the men were waiting for.

No, it never happens that one who has drunk the medicine of 764
ingotolo falls sick of it afterwards, never. 753

The spear is taken and kept by the girl's brother at the command of 587
her father, who says: 'Take this spear, your sister has brought it.' It is 602
a symbol (*ikimanyilo*) of kinship, it is like the spear with which a girl was betrothed in the old days. At the betrothal the lover would stick the spear in the ground, the girl pulled it up and took it to her father, sticking it into the ground before him, and he, if he agreed, told her brother to take it up. And if there is any dispute later about cattle then the spear is proof of agreement. It has the same significance at betrothal and at the *ingotolo* ritual. Sometimes the heir has to bring cattle that have not yet been paid by the dead man. When the woman's brother takes the spear into the house at the *ingotolo* ritual, that means: 'Now you[1] have entered into the house—your house—so we bring you in.' And then she can go in.

The calling out of 'Thief' is a custom in the ritual, but it is like a 764
song, it's not important. The firewood is shown to the woman and a bean and a grain of maize are put into a crack of the wood. That means that the ritual is complete.

No, there is no extra safety in coming to the ceremony; those who drink at home are equally protected!

iii. *Evidence of other informants*

CURRENT TALK: Some people have been told by those who have run 158
mad, that they see a man who comes to them sometimes. When that 828
man is with them then they lose the sense of what they are doing. The

[1] It was not clear from the context whether 'you' referred to groom or bride. The symbolism suggests the act of marriage but of this we have no direct evidence.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

593 refuses point blank to feed his visitors, he appeals to
422 another; but it will be obvious that continued churlishness on the part of a wife would lead to trouble. Bananas, rice, and malesi belong to the husband; bananas, because he alone attends to them; rice, because it came from the Europeans; and malesi, because from this cereal beer is made, and the husband is lord of the beer pot once the beer is brewed. Fowls belong to the wife, but though the profits of sale are hers, she usually lays them out in small household necessities, such as salt. She often gets a cow from her father, and her husband may make her a similar gift; and he must not use the milk without her consent, though if it is sold, the money is laid by to pay the tax. All household utensils are hers, except the small dish from which her husband eats; but she leaves everything behind should she be divorced, except the cow she received from her father.

587 If a wife dies while still capable of child-bearing,
765 her father must give another daughter to the widower; or, if he has none, a cow, dressed with flowers, is sent with an apology, and a promise that as soon as possible the dowry cattle will be returned. If the father hopes that another daughter may yet be born to him, an arrangement may be come to by which she will go to the widower. Widows become the "family" of the heir. They wear anklets of cow-skin, and let their hair grow, mixing it with clay. These signs of mourning they wear for about a year. Girls wear similar tokens of mourning if either parent is dead, but not boys.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

which killed the man passing over to those present 764
at the funeral. Those who performed the *post mortem* [783]
take medicine as well. The funeral ox or cow is now killed, and the flesh divided among the various groups. The next stage is to "disinherit" the dead man, to cut him off from all connection with earthly matters. His mats were buried with him; now his bananas are cut down, his hoes are taken to the grave and the hafts broken, while all baskets and pots are destroyed and left to rot there. His cattle go to his heirs, and his [587]
wives build themselves huts in which they live for a year, "covering the footsteps of the dead man"; after which they also go to the heirs. (Much of this is now falling into disuse, especially around Karonga.) The dead man has been dissociated from the living: the bananas grow again, but they are not his; his house may be occupied, but he has only the rights of a ghost in it; and in many places the house is left to decay as soon as the funeral is over, and the wives have built themselves huts not far off. But the belief also prevails, side by side with the desire to cut off the dead man from the living, that by destroying his goods they go with him to the land of spirits.

The Konde have a strange belief, that a dead body [77]
casts no shadow; if it does, it is a sign that the spirit 766
still lingers around, and if he is not driven off, another member of the family will die soon. The most effective way of despatching him to his proper abode is to burn his body. If the diviner finds that a second death in the family is due to the reluctance of the first to go to his fathers, the body is dug up, and

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

584 live with her husband until at least three cows have been given. One of the bulls is only given if the girl is virgin at her initiation rite, and this bull is given to her mother. The laws of inheritance and the system of marriage by cattle payments ensures that cattle will be in the hands of the older men. In general polygynists are men over forty-five.[1]

595 The first wife married is the chief wife, and is entitled to respect and obedience from her co-wives. Her first son is her husband's ultimate heir. A man cannot lightly divorce his first wife during the lifetime of his own father who provided the cattle
586 with which she was married. Divorce is effected by the return of the marriage cattle. Usually the woman has a lover who will pay cows to redeem her; if she refuses to go back to her husband there is no means of compelling her to do so, though in pre-European times her father and the chief might send her back. In such a case the husband would be entitled to his original payments plus their increase.[2] Men do not demand divorce for adultery unless it is persistent.[3] Divorce is often sought for very trivial reasons.[4] If the paternal uncles have helped the groom to collect his marriage cattle, the beasts are redistributed to their original donors after they have been returned to the husband.[5]

587 A man whose wife dies can claim a substitute or the refund of his cattle. When a
768 man dies his widows pass to his heir who takes them all as wives, if he is a brother of the dead man; if the heir is a son he takes all except his own mother and the wives who are her close kin. Inherited wives have the same land rights as others.[6]

Inheritance

428 Brothers inherit before sons, then half-brothers (linked half-brothers before other half-brothers). When all the brothers are dead the property and wives of each pass to each one's eldest son.[7] This rule also applies to the Nyamwanga and Iwa.[8] The heir assumes the full obligations of father to his younger brothers and is responsible for their marriages; they hoe for him and are fed by his wives as are unmarried sons.[9] The sister's son only inherits if all near patrilineal kinsmen are dead or are infants.[10]

The above applies to commoners' inheritance only. For chiefs, succession and inheritance may follow different principles. For instance, in succession to local chiefdoms, two or more sons would divide the chiefdom. Among the Ngonde the Kyungu and the great chiefs were not chosen according to strict genealogical right, but were selected from the appropriate families according to their wealth, generosity, and courage. In the succession to the great chiefdoms, there was formerly a difference of procedure in the two royal lines: that of Ngelenge, where the nobles of Ngonde were sent by the Kyungu to help to select the successor; that of Ngana, the line of the female side, where the nobles of Ngonde merely summoned the great commoners to discuss with them who was to succeed. Nowadays the difference between the two lines has disappeared, and the Ngelenge custom is followed for both. If the genealogical heir

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, pp. 257–9.
[2] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 263.
[3] Ibid., p. 63.
[4] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 55.
[5] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 92.
[6] Wilson, 3, 1938, p. 27.
[7] Ibid., 2, 1936, pp. 264–6; Sanderson, 3, 1903, p. 452.
[8] Cotnhead, 1914, p. 45.
[9] Wilson, 3, 1938, pp. 11 and 28; Johnston, 1897, p. 471.
[10] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 55.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Unmarried children have the right to food partly in virtue of their general relationship to their parents, partly because they themselves assist in the work of the household. From the age of about six years boys herd cattle, from about eleven years they begin to hoe; while girls help their mothers in field work, in the fetching of wood and water and in the care of infants. And, owing to their practical usefulness, there seems to be less difficulty in getting motherless[1] children regularly fed before they marry than in getting them entertained afterwards. Each such child is allotted to one wife and is mainly fed by her. 592 857 241

In some households unmarried sons hoe only the particular plots of their own mothers; but in others the man and his sons work together as a team, hoeing each plot in turn. In ten neighbouring polygynous households I found that in three cases the sons confined themselves to the plots of their own mothers, in seven the man and his sons worked always together. Meals followed the same pattern as the hoeing. In the three cases the mother of each boy alone provided him with food, but in the other seven cases his step-mothers did also.

This variation of custom between different households was thus explained to me: "The custom of hoeing separately, each boy for his own mother only, is sometimes determined by lack of friendship between the women, sometimes by the slackness of their husband in hoeing. If he is slack about hoeing then it falls to the women to organize it, and each calls on her own son to hoe for her alone; and, in that case, if one wife has no son she will just have to enlist the services of other people to hoe for her (rewarding their efforts with food at the end of each day). Sometimes too the custom arises in this way—a boy finds that his step-mothers are reluctant to cook food for him when he comes in from hoeing, he complains that while his own mother cooks for him generously they do not, and so he begins to hoe for his mother alone.

"The custom of hoeing together, on the other hand, is determined by the will of the man, who himself organizes it. And whenever a man is vigorous in hoeing there you will find that he and his sons all hoe together. It is only when a man is slack that the custom of hoeing separately arises from the orders of the women, and if the man is vigorous in hoeing his wives are never reluctant and ungenerous about cooking, they bow to his will just as his sons do."

When their husband dies women pass to his heir. If the heir is a brother of the dead man then he takes them all to wife, if a son he takes 768 587

[1] The custom of marrying two sisters and that of substituting a dead woman's sister or niece in her place considerably reduces the number of such "motherless" children, for the sister of a dead woman treats the latter's children as her own.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

768 all except his own mother, whom he either builds for at a little distance
587 and looks after, or else gives to a half-brother.[1] Inherited wives have the
[421] same land rights as others, and a mother for whom a son builds and hoes is treated by him, in the matter of land, just like a wife.

737 And a married man often supports an old woman—a mother, mother-in-law or elder sister—whose husband, though still alive, is incapable of hoeing and who has no unmarried sons. He may either hoe for her on her own husband's land or else assign to her a plot or two of his own.

241 The gardens of a household are not only worked by its members,
476 other people assist them from time to time. Each married man usually invites a group of his village neighbours to help him with a day's hoeing two or three times a year, entertaining them to food and beer after the work is over. A married woman likewise is often assisted by women friends from neighbouring households in the planting, weeding or reaping of her crops and them she rewards simply with a luxurious meal in the evening, without any beer. Again, as we have seen, a married woman sometimes engages a young man to hoe for her regularly, for a month or more at a time, and pays him by feeding him well for that period.

241 But although this last custom is still common it is beginning to
464 decline; fewer men each year are willing to work for any length of time except for money, and already in some of the more prosperous households young men are found to be employed in hoeing at the rate of 2/- a month in addition to their food. The young men who thus accept employment in hoeing are always the poor ones, those for whom (whether because their fathers are poor in cattle or because they have many elder brothers before them) the prospect of getting married is too distant to stimulate them to any great diligence at home. In the plain of Mungonde, however, where ploughs are extensively used, the owners of ploughs make a considerable profit by hiring themselves out with their ploughs at 2/- a plot (*ulupaka*).

241 Kinsmen and affines also often assist in a household's hoeing. When
592 a man inherits his dead father's wealth then he assumes the position of
602 father towards his own younger brothers and is responsible for the
606 marriages of any who are bachelors; they then hoe for him and are fed by his wives just as unmarried sons do. Sons-in-law, again, are expected to bring their friends now and then to help their father-in-law in hoeing and they often do so, more particularly if they are behindhand with the marriage-cattle. After the day's work is over, however, they are entertained just as sumptuously as an ordinary work-party of neighbours.

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[1] And any kinswoman of his mother (sister or niece) whom his father has married is treated likewise.

7: Sanderson 4-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

582 601 his wife is called *nkusi*, like the wife of a "brother," not *nkogho*. This appears to be the result of the law that a man may have to marry his "grandmothers." (See para. 5.)

601 Similarly a woman calls her "grandson" *ndume*, and his wife *nkusi-mwinangu*.

No distinction is made between the offspring of a "son" and that of a "daughter," either by a man or a woman.

"Grand-daughters" by marriage are not called *nkusi* by a man, nor are "grandsons" by marriage called *ndume* by a woman: the term *mwisukulu-mwinangu* is used in either case. It is of interest to note, however, that the wives and husbands of these relations are called *nkusi* [616] and *ndume* respectively, which is evidently a relic of the period when the whole tribe was divided into two classes, marriageable and unmarriageable: since a "grandchild" by marriage belonged to the latter class, his or her spouse must be included in the former.

(5) All "grandmothers" are termed *nkusi*, except perhaps the sisters of the paternal grandfather; some say that these should be classed as "sister," as the sister of one's *mwinangu* (grandfather), because *nkusi* would not be polite to the *nasenge* of one's father. Others deny this and include all grandmothers as *nkusi*, and it is doubtful whether the objection is not modern. The same applies to the "grandmothers" of a wife.

•587 A man often has to marry his "grandmothers" on the death of his "grandfather," though if the latter were a chief or a rich man the heir would probably marry them as part of the property. The rule appears to be that it is the duty of any man to marry his "grandmothers" if they are destitute.

[582] 601 A woman calls all her "grandfathers" *ndume*, though actual marriage is not permitted. It is difficult to say whether this is due to analogy with the relationship of a man to his "grandmother," or is the corollary of that to his "grand-daughter." Since marriage with a "grand-daughter" is not uncommon in other tribes, it may be that it was originally the reason for a woman calling her grandfather *ndume* among the Wangonde, but that the persistence of the terminology after such a marriage came to be regarded as incestuous is partly due to analogy.

As a result of the similarity of relationship between grandparents and grandchildren the same term *mwisukulu* is used for both. There was formerly a special term for grandparents (*mbaya*), but it is now obsolete.

601 604 (6) The relationship between mother's "brother" and "sister's" son is peculiar, in that the term is used reciprocally (*mwipwa*). A man calls the wife of his

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

was not an individual one. True, a girl gave her formal consent in the marriage ritual, but the pressure on her to accept the husband selected for her by her kinsmen was almost irresistible. In the thirties Christian women who refused their husband's heir and lived alone, or married an unrelated man of their choice, were regarded by their pagan sisters as very daring, and little girls in pagan families took it as a matter of course that they should replace their dead sisters; today the right of a widow to choose whom she will marry is generally accepted, and the custom of replacing a dead woman by her sister has lapsed. 'Every girl wants her own husband nowadays', the old women say. Thus lineage obligations give way to individual freedom of choice in marriage. At the same time the rituals which emphasized the lineage are dropped or modified. The fearful fecundity of a double birth no longer appals men and the twin ritual which used to bring together all the living members of a lineage of three generations is not celebrated at all. At a puberty ritual a pagan girl may be given the *ikipiki* medicine, the symbol of 'the blood of the lineage' by her mother, but there is no seclusion and elaborate feasting, no sacrifice of the bull of puberty that her father's shades may 'move aside a little' to make way for the shades of her husband's lineage. Only at a funeral do kinsmen still gather and celebrate, for many still fear the shades, and at a funeral the heir is installed and the importance of property and the inheritance of it has not diminished one whit. As we have seen, the traditional religion was formulated in terms of kinship; the gods were senior kinsmen; but today God, *Kyala*, is no ancestor; to pagans as well as to Christians he is separate and supreme. Men are still classified by their lineages, and one of the topics of village questions is how Prince Charles can be heir to the British throne when his father is not of the house of Windsor; but already in the economic field, and increasingly in the religious, it is the family of parents and children which is now dominant, not the lineage.

Divorce is far more frequent than formerly, partly because women claim a greater freedom of behaviour than before, as well as the right of choosing their own husbands, and are supported by the courts. As one village headman put it, 'Formerly a father beat his daughter with a stick if she ran home and sent her back to her husband who also beat her.' The women reject the old pattern of subservience which was expressed in crouching to greet a man, and addressing him in a very deferential fashion; the men observe, and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

like most of the leaders of Zionist Churches in the south.[1] 797x

It is noticeable that the two 'independent' Churches have a more elaborate form of service than the Church from which their leaders have sprung, and Ngemela habitually wears conspicuous vestments. There is, of course, great variation between different denominations in the emphasis placed on ritual, some Protestants abjuring it and turning their very insistence on starkness and simplicity into a ritual in itself—a taboo. There seems to be a clear tendency in Southern Africa for 'independent' Churches to express themselves more and more in ritual and less in dogma. In this way they reduce the gap between themselves and the pagans, for the pagan religion is expressed almostly exclusively in ritual, whereas Christianity is expressed in creeds and confessions as well as in the rituals of the Church. 795x 779 [796]

(*e*) THE CONTRAST BETWEEN PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

There are certain common elements in the rituals celebrated by pagans and Christians: some of the occasions are the same, and in the conceptions of sacrifice, of death and rebirth, of confession and cleansing, there are similarities; but there are also profound differences. The conception of life, immortality, replaces the preoccupation with fertility, for though most Nyakyusa Christians, like the pagans, regard celibacy as evidence of physical abnormality, and the conventional desire of a woman is to have six children—a quiverful in Nyakyusa eyes—yet fertility is no longer the end of all being, sought in every ritual. There are profound differences, too, in the values expressed in the rituals regarding sex relations, the range of moral obligations, and social change. In pagan thought polygyny is good—a man should have many children. Child marriage is defended on the ground that a girl 'gets accustomed to her husband' if she goes to him early, and homosexual relations between youths and young men are tolerated since they have no wives and *cannot* marry if the older men are polygynists. What is upheld is the chastity of women, and a total separation of the sex activities of members of successive generations, expressed in the taboos limiting familiarity between mother and son, father and nubile daughter, father-in-law and daughter-law. In Christian thought it is the 'pure in heart' who 'see God' and this is interpreted by the mission Churches to imply monogamy. Only in the 'independent' African Churches is it asserted 797x 795x [842] [589] [595] [584] [838] [836] [561] [183] [595]

[1] The emphasis on healing, so common in the south, is absent.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER II

VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

NYAKYUSA villages (*ifipanga*)[1] are formed by groups of boys or men, all roughly of the same age, together with the wives and young children of those who are married. Women belong to the villages of their husbands, young children to those of their fathers. Girls live at home until they are betrothed, after which they visit their future husbands periodically, and soon after puberty each joins her husband in his village. Boys, who marry later in life, leave home at about the age of ten or eleven and set up villages of their own.

a. The genesis of the village

Between the ages of about six and eleven boys sleep at their fathers' houses and herd their fathers' cattle. This is a full-time, if not a very arduous, occupation. The cattle are driven out about an hour or two after sunrise and return to be milked about 1 p.m.; after an hour they are again driven out and do not come back until sunset. The cattle of a group of neighbours, usually five to ten,[2] are herded together by their young sons; and so these boys spend all day together for several years of their lives. This group of boys is the germ of the future age-village; it is a community with a common activity in the herding of the cattle, with a leader and laws and customs of its own.[3]

When the boys reach the age of ten or eleven, two important changes usually take place in their lives. Firstly, they leave the herding of cows to their younger brothers, and themselves begin the business of hoeing the fields which will occupy them until they die; secondly, they no longer sleep in the houses of their fathers but join an age-village of boys. Nowadays the two changes usually, but not always, take place at the same time, and well before puberty.

[1] cf. Xhosa *intanga*, 'a company of persons or animals of equal age'.

[2] The herd group is smaller in young men's villages where few are cattle-owners, and a very rich man occasionally herds his cattle alone.

[3] G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 51–3.

[p. 19]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

591 Before the establishment of peace by European authority, however, cattle were commonly herded by young men, armed, and
231 only the calves were entrusted to boys, who herded them near
857 the homesteads; therefore moving to a boys' village did not coincide with the change of occupation. Even to-day it is not uncommon for some boys who have reached puberty to be found herding cattle. One we knew herded his father's cattle although he had reached puberty, because he had no younger brothers old enough to take over, and there were only five or six boys in his herd-group altogether. There are also cases where special circumstances put the age of moving later. In one age-village the boys leave home a little later than usual because there are leopards about and it is dangerous for small boys to walk from the village of their fathers to that of the boys, after dark.

857 When a number of the sons of a village of married men have reached the right age, their fathers give them a piece of land to
342 one side of the parent village on which to build. There they build little huts of reeds for themselves, sufficiently well thatched to keep out the heavy rain, and there they sleep (*vide* Plate II). The building of the huts on this land begins in a playful manner, before the boys move. While they are still herding cows and sleeping at home they build miniature huts there in their spare time, but do not sleep in them. When they move they build slightly more substantial huts with better thatch. At the beginning, when a group of boys starts a new village, or when boys join one already formed, they do not all have huts for themselves: two or three friends share a hut. But later, as they grow older, each builds for himself.

857 Until he marries each boy hoes his father's fields in his father's village and eats food cooked by his own mother at his father's
264 house, but he sleeps with his friends. Thus between the time when he leaves home and his marriage each is a member of two
571 villages: economically he still belongs to that of his father; socially to that of his own contemporaries. Though bachelors eat at their parents' home, it is very rarely that they do not eat in the company of their own friends. A bachelor does not simply go home to eat by himself, but a group of bachelors, friends living in the same boys' village, go round together eating at the house of each one's mother in turn.

621 In an age-village of married men there are always several
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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 villages of the great-grandfathers' generation survived, even ritually (*vide* Document, pp. 881–5).[1]

166 Men also move from one village to another and they do not always join a village of their exact contemporaries. A stranger may come and be granted land in a village even though he is considerably older or younger than the bulk of its members. Such movement from one village to another is now very considerable: we estimated that at least 80 per cent of the married men have at some time or other moved from the chiefdom in which they first cultivated gardens of their own. There is also movement from village to village within a chiefdom.

[681] Everyone agreed that moving is not something new. In the past a convicted witch was expelled from his village, and sometimes from the chiefdom; thieves and adulterers were also expelled or fled to take refuge with another chief (*vide infra*, pp. 118–9). But it is probable that movement between villages has increased greatly since the imposition of European control. The main [754] reason for moving nowadays is, as we have said, the fear of witchcraft. Subsidiary reasons are the desire to get suitable land for cultivating cash crops, the desire to be near some centre of employment (such as Tukuyu or Rungwe), and the desire to live with others of like mind, as fellow Christians or fellow pagans, fellow Moravians or fellow adherents of the 'Watch Tower' (*vide infra*, pp. 40–3).

166 Women move from one village to another even more often than men, for, not only do wives move with their husbands, but ● 591 a girl commonly marries a man of a village other than that in 587 which she grew up, and is later inherited by a kinsman of her dead husband who lives in yet another village. Since first wives are usually ten years younger than their husbands, and junior wives may be forty or fifty years younger, most women are inherited at least once during their lives, and some are inherited several times. The modern high divorce rate accelerates this long- [586] established circulation of women from village to village.

[1] It is possible that the existence of villages of four generations was due to the fact that Mwaipopo continued to live long after the 'coming out' of his heir Mwankuga—a survival not usual in traditional practice (*vide supra*, p. 30).

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

595 and children a man has to assist him the more wealth he can produce. The man and his unmarried sons hoe, his wives and young daughters plant, weed and harvest, fetch water, cut firewood and cook the food ; and in other practical activities there is equally fruitful co-operation within the household group.

●591 621 882 When a man marries he takes his wife from her father's village to his own where he lives with a group of contemporaries. Each village is in origin an age-group, formed by the sons of some village of adult men who leave home one by one as they reach the age of ten to twelve years and build together on ground set aside for them by their fathers. It is not decent, the Nyakyusa maintain, for a boy to sleep at home after any vigorous interest in sexual activity has awakened in him ; and so, for the fifteen years or more between leaving home and marriage, he sleeps with bachelor friends in a boys' village. He and a group of friends go round in turn to the houses of their respective parents for meals, and each hoes his own parents' fields, but all return to the boys' village at night.

621 882 361 As the members of the boys' village grow older, younger boys just leaving home begin to be refused admittance to it and so either start a fresh village of their own nearby or else join a village of their own contemporaries which has already been started. Boys' villages are thus forever hiving off from the villages of men. At first a boys' village covers but little ground for, as its members are unmarried, the houses are small and close together and there are no garden lands attached to it. But as the young men marry one by one the village expands, houses are built bigger and further apart and some adjacent ground is brought under cultivation, until at last it assumes the normal aspect of a village of adult men.

621 A village thus consists of a male age-group with wives and children attached. Wives may be of any age and there is no such formal age grouping among them as among the men. And, as time goes on, some men too may enter the village who are not exact contemporaries of its other members. When a man dies his heir, either a younger brother or a son, often comes to live in his village ; nor are strangers who apply for land in a village ever, I think, refused on the ground of unsuitable age. Villages vary considerably in size but average forty to fifty households.

At first a village of boys, as we have said, is built on ground allotted to it by the village of their fathers ; but a new allotment is made ceremonially at the " coming out " (*ubusoka*) of the young chiefs.

631 622 Every generation each chiefdom of the Nyakyusa is divided into two halves, a fact which is hard to understand until it is realized that the Nyakyusa consist of a number of immigrant groups which have, until very recently, been expanding their territory within the district and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

her by his anger, others that the husband was to blame for rejecting medical treatment earlier on. The girl herself was reported to have said to her mother-in-law, when she was lying ill at the doctor's house: 'Are you angry with me and has your anger caused the trouble? Perhaps I did not help you in collecting firewood?' But her mother-in-law replied: 'No, I am not angry with you at all.' And the girl continued: 'I know that my father is angry. Someone might go and ask him to pray for me.' There was also tension with the husband's pagan father who had protested that his son was praying for the death of his own children when he prayed with his Pentecostal friends that God's will be done. 'The Pentecostal people say: "I like to die. I don't take any medicine . . . if someone dies or not it is all the same thing."'

Nevertheless, it is true to say that the field in which natural causation is accepted is much wider among Christians than among pagans. It expands very slowly, but the change is evident. Even two cases of 'madness' (*ukubopa ikigili*), invariably the symptom of the wrath of the gods in pagan thought, were interpreted to us by a Christian teacher in terms of grief and shock. The first was of a young man whose wife and grandmother (who lived with him) both died very suddenly, and whose only cow was taken by other relatives and killed for the funeral feast. The loss of the cow following the loss of his wife and grandmother was held to have shattered him finally—'the lineage was finished'. The other case was of a mother, devoted to her daughter, who was distraught when the daughter went off to a distance, accompanying her husband to his place of work. For a daughter to marry beyond easy visiting distance was traditionally inconceivable.

The vagaries of the weather, attributed by the pagans to the neglect of sacrifices or quarrels between chiefs and priests, are explained in scientific terms by some Christians. Heavy rain fell around Rungwe in October 1937 and prevented people burning their rubbish heaps to fertilize their millet gardens. The pagans insisted that such early rain was unheard of and kept asking each other what could have caused it. A Christian elder assured us that the early rain was *not* very unusual in the hill country; he had seen other seasons like it. And in January of the same year the people of Mwaipopo's country were 'astonished' because no heavy rain had fallen and young maize and millet were shrivelling in the ground. They said: 'It has rained all round' and 'it seems as if we had offended Kyala'. Kasitile went to divine (*vide supra*, p. 119).

423 Thus beyond the established fields in the vicinity of the village itself, the pattern of land holding tended to become confused. The majority of land-holders were still members of the village who were expanding their cultivation outwards, but there was a considerable number of men from neighbouring villages, and even from farther afield where opportunities were more restricted. Some men even began to have a second house, inhabi-
[591] tated by a junior wife, in another village from which to continue the more easily the cultivation of new holdings.

This sort of development was in the event only a short-term process and, had pressure of population on the land not become so critical, it is not possible to say what would have been the final result upon Nyakyusa social and village organisation. It is, nevertheless, important to note that in the beginnings of the extension of arable holdings, cash-crop cultivation operated in a system in which village exclusiveness was breaking down, when residence was no longer an essential prerequisite of land-holding, and when men were neighbours in the fields as farmers without being coevals of a single village.

Once the Nyakyusa, and particularly the more perceptive headmen, began to realise that land was becoming less plentiful, indeed that it was beginning to be scarce in relation to new demands, this novel tendency was stopped fairly quickly and the old traditional principle of land-holding only by residence was reasserted. In the most recent years this has been strongly insisted on. Headmen and their villagers saw that in order to safeguard their
[622] own rights they must prevent scarce, valuable land being held and used by
[186] outsiders. This reaction appears to have been universal and automatic among the Nyakyusa. There was now insufficient land for everyone's demands and each village therefore looked after what it considered to be its own interests. Outsiders who already held fields could not be deprived of them, but they were not allowed to extend their holdings and every opportunity was, and still is, taken to regain control of their fields for allocation to villagers proper. Inheritance was often disallowed unless the heir agreed to come and live permanently in the village; gifts or loans to outsiders (kin or friends) were no longer permitted and most headmen seized the opportunity to re-allocate to their own villagers any alien-held plots which were not consistently maintained in cultivation.

In response to the new situation, almost everywhere village boundaries were clearly demarcated – not without a certain amount of dispute and a new recognition of inter-village opposition. Nowhere now is it possible for a man to take up land over which there is no firmly established village ownership. The significant principle has now emerged that not only does a village, as a corporate and distinct group, own its own land and is represented in this by its headman; but all land is now owned by some village. Further, at least in the high-density regions, there is no longer any vacant land to be taken up
[622] and any land temporarily falling vacant comes immediately under the allocating authority of the headman.

423 This process, the application of this principle, is not yet quite universal
178 in the Lake Plains, and it is sometimes still possible to see it coming into operation. Still in the northerly parts of the Lake Plains – the low-density region – one may see fields occupied by a variety of outsiders, for there the realisation of the significance of land shortage has been slowest to come. For example, in Mwakipesile's chiefdom in the late 1940s and early 1950s it was the practice of men from the congested villages nearer the Lake to obtain valuable, virgin paddy land in the newly opened areas in the north (near Ipinda) without residential qualifications. Many men reserved their original holdings in their own villages for food crops and had their main paddy fields in this distant area. By 1955, however, it had become virtually impossible for a non-resident to obtain extra land in this way, although still

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

796 the wife or the widow (even though she be old), as well as proof of
775 the support of the shades for the husband or heir. A symbol of the
831 ritual connection, the *ilibalaga*, is offered to the shades of both lineages. Indeed, the rituals of death and twin birth, as well as the ritual of puberty and marriage, may be interpreted as a celebration of the union of husband and wife. For the parents of twins the end of the ritual marks the resumption of married life after a break during which contact between them was felt to be dangerous; for a widow and the heir of a dead man the end of the death ritual marks the beginning of their union.

796 The admonition of a widow or the mother of twins on her proper behaviour as a wife,[1] like a girl at her first marriage, underlines the fact that the death and twin-birth rituals are, in a sense, also marriage rituals.

592 The parts of the homestead connected with the shades are: first,
775 those associated with the procreative activities of husband and wife—the hearth, the bed, and the doorway of the hut. Prayer may be made at the hearth, and offerings are poured out on the hearth-bricks, or left overnight under the bed. 'The doorway is the shades' and much of the action in ritual takes place there. As has already been shown, the hearth is explicitly associated with the sexual life of husband and wife: hearth-bricks are planted at marriage, making fire by friction is a symbol of the marriage union, firewood is associated with a woman's reproductive capacity, and the hearth must not be approached by sexually active people other than the owner of the hut and her husband. The bed is the marriage bed. The doorway is identified with the vagina. Secondly, a defined grove of bananas, usually those nearest the doorway of the chief wife's hut, is thought to be frequented by the shades. It has been shown that plantains and sweet bananas are the symbols of male and female in all the rituals: in the sacred banana grove only plantains are grown. Bananas are propagated by suckers and the symbolism implied (but never explicitly stated) is that the root at which the offering of meat to the shades is placed represents the lineage which continually reproduces itself. What is explicit is that
[778] the banana grove is sacred, and that offerings are placed or buried at the root of a banana plant. We were told: '*ilikemo*[2] *lyabatata*

[1] We did not see this at the twin ritual observed, but were told that the mother of twins was sometimes admonished by her husband's sisters.

[2] *Ilikemo*: a single banana plant from the sacred banana grove, a ritual killing of cattle in the sacred grove of a chief; *inyikemo*: sacrificial meat; *ifikemo*: Holy Communion (modern usage).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

 592

kijenja, ko bikwiputa, the sacred place of the fathers is the banana 775
grove, there they pray.'

The virility of a lineage is symbolized by the *ikipiki* medicine, 796
interpreted as 'our blood' or 'semen'. With it mourners, menstru- 602
ating girls, bride and groom, the new-born babies and their 789
mothers are treated. To provide it or use it is to acknowledge agnatic kinship: husband and wife wash with it together in acknowledgement that the wife is now 'one blood' with her husband; the grandmother gives it to her son's child in acknowledgement of its legitimacy; in the death rituals the mourners eat food with it acknowledging their kinship with the shade. To belong to a lineage is to be protected practically and spiritually, and the *ikipiki* medicine is held to protect those who are 'empty' and weak—the 'hollow men'—from those who are 'heavy' with real semen or medicines.

The shade, *unsyuka*,[1] 'he who is risen from the dead', may be 796
interpreted as the principle of life, but at the same time he is 'the 775
one beneath', *ugwa pasi*, filthy, and fearful. What men worship is life; what they fear is death, corruption; and for the pagan Nyakyusa, as for the Christian,[2] the two are inextricably mingled. *Imindu* (sing. *ilindu*) means dirt, dust, rubbish, the litter of the seclusion hut, and also the shade. When '*mindu*' is cited as the cause of some disease it is the shades (as things rather than persons) which are meant: 'dust to dust' is an image of pagan as of Christian theology. We have spoken of the Nyakyusa disgust for filth (*ubunyali*), which is associated with a corpse, menstruation, childbirth, intercourse, faeces, and all these are identified in some fashion with the shade. Faeces 'go below to the land of the shades'. The hair of a corpse is the shade's, the hair of a girl at puberty is 'the filth of her menstrual blood'. In all the rituals the filth is [783]
buried, shaved off, burnt, washed away, and at the death ritual 'he who is risen' is brought 'to warm himself' at the family hearth, but yet he dwells in the earth and is 'dirty'.

The conception of impurity, uncleanness, associated with phy- 783
siological functions of coition, excretion, menstruation, childbirth and death is, as we have already suggested, a very widespread one.

[1] *Ukusyuka*: to rise from the dead. For the noun the personal class is most commonly used, but some of the old men always spoke of *imisyuka* rather than *abasyuka*. A young man, commenting on this, explained: 'The shades are not people like us, but *imindu*', i.e. they are things—dust—not persons.

[2] 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' John xii, 24.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

One by one the villagers emerge from the houses, and sit in the sun, greeting neighbours with a polite 572 "Have you slept well?" if there are any neighbours [576] near. Then the husband milks the cattle, and the boys come to drive them out to the pasture, where they will remain until the early afternoon, when they are again milked.

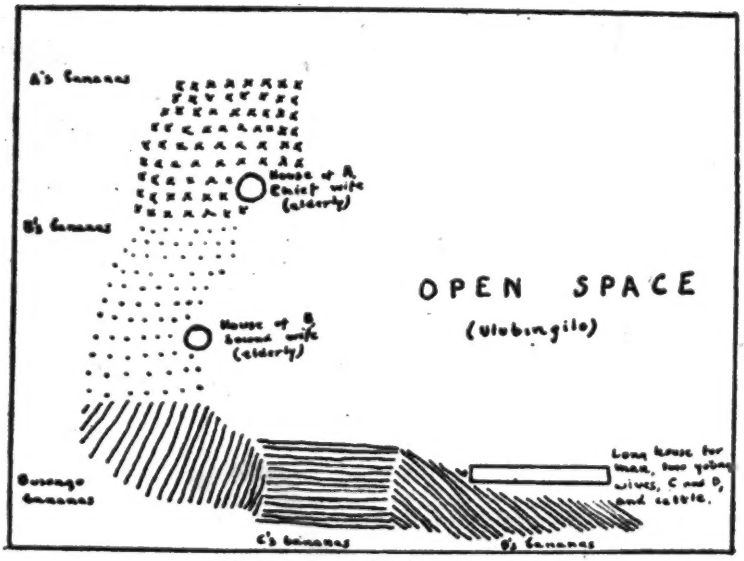
Generally the cattle sleep in the same house as their 231 owners, tied up to stakes fixed deep in the floor; but 592 where there are grown-up sons not yet married, a separate house is built in which the parents sleep with the little ones, while the young men guard the cattle from raiding thieves.

The bed is frequently no more than a mat spread 573 on the mud floor, with a single blanket for covering, and no pillow, unless it is a piece of roughly trimmed wood. The more prosperous natives, earning good pay in the employment of Europeans, have well-made beds fully equipped, in many cases even with mosquito nets hung from the roof. The poorer consider that they have made a great step forward if they have been able to save up enough money to buy a single blanket, and not seldom even that belongs to the father, the mother and children having to be content with meagre coverings of calico or grass mats. But [354] the house is warm, often too warm, for the fire is always burning, the door is closed, there are no windows, and there is no ventilation in the roof; and all the inmates sleep with their feet to the fire, which is in the middle of the floor.

Here and there one will come upon rows of tiny 342 houses, each built and occupied by two or three small 561

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Plan B



The Homestead of a Rich Man

Each married man has at least one house and, if he is a polygynist, he often has several; young wives may sometimes share a house, older wives normally have one apiece. The land immediately surrounding a man's houses belongs to him and his wives and will be referred to in this paper as their " building site " or " homestead " (*akaja*). Each homestead is sufficient in size to hold not only the houses of one man but also his bananas and, maybe, a few small plots of beans, ground-nuts or some other crop as well; and it is there, under the bananas, that coffee trees are planted. But there is no room on it for the main gardens of the household. In the centre of every homestead is an open space (*ulubingilo*) carefully weeded and swept by the owner and his wives, who usually take great pride in thus keeping it clean.

At some distance from the homestead—a distance varying from a few yards to two miles or more—lie the main gardens (*imigunda*) of the household, near those of other people. Each year different types of gardens are hoed together by groups of villagers; millet in one place, potatoes in another, maize and beans in another; so that the gardens of one particular household are scattered in different spots.

After the man and his sons have hoed the gardens, clearing the ground first if necessary, his wives are each given portions of their own to plant, weed and reap. In hoeing for any particular crop the land is

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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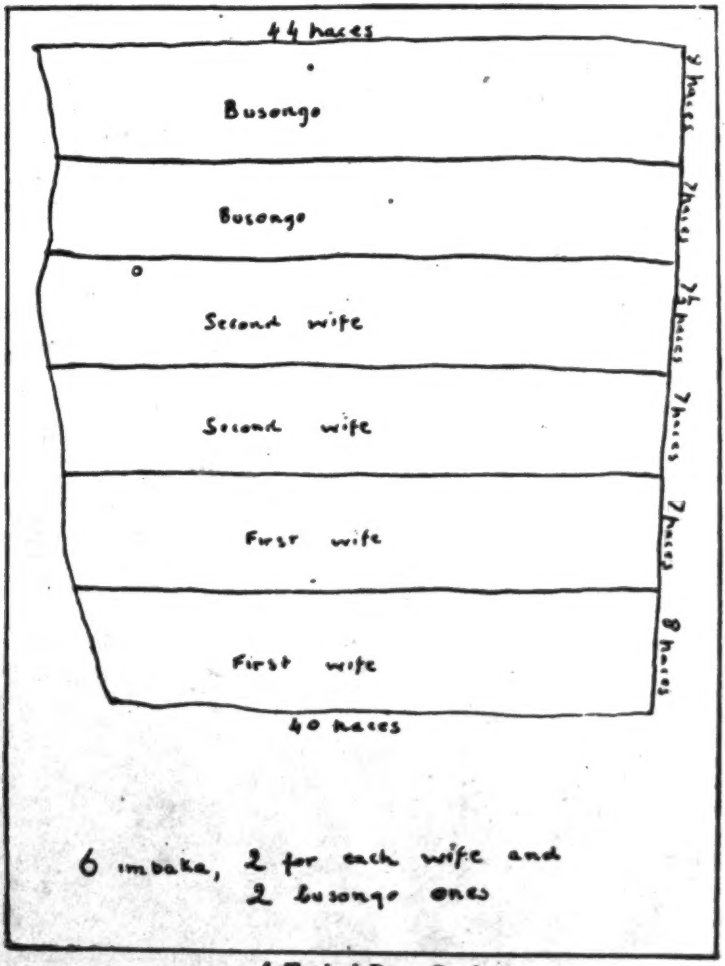
421

divided up into separate plots (*imbaka*) all roughly of the same size, and one or two of these plots are assigned to each wife. There is no standard size for a plot (*ulupaka*), the only important thing being that there should be equality between the several wives of one man in the areas allotted to them.

The rights of a woman to dispose of the crops of her own gardens (*imigunda*), that is of the plots (*imbaka*) allotted to her by her husband,

Plan C



A Typical Bean Garden

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

vary in different circumstances. Millet and rice, the two most valuable crops, belong to the man and are stored by him ; so that the division of a millet or rice garden into plots and their assignment to different wives is rather a division of labour than of property. But of all other crops the woman on whose plots they have grown is an effective owner. She stores them herself in her own house and no other wife of her husband can touch them ; it is only with him that her rights are in any way shared. 241 592 421

The main use of the crops which the Nyakyusa grow is to provide food for each separate household group. Next in importance is the provision of food and beer for hospitality, and for the making of gifts both in everyday life and on special ceremonial occasions. And, finally, there is the barter or sale of surplus crops to obtain salt, pots, clothes, cattle and to pay tax. Each married woman, therefore, first uses her own crops to feed her husband, her own children and herself. If she is the only wife then she cooks for her husband every day, but, even if she is one of many, she is yet careful to cook for him frequently, in order to keep his affection and the various advantages which go with it. 592 593 574 [437]

When cooking for her husband she must, when necessary, prepare sufficient for guests, for a man very often has friends and neighbours eating with him ; and if he wishes to make a gift of cooked food, she cooks it for him from her own store. To provide meals for him and his guests and cooked food for gifts is an obligation which she normally fulfils quite willingly, as we have hinted above ; she may be fond of him ; it is in any case to her interest to play her part in the co-operative relationship which binds them together and from which both alike benefit. He hoes for her and builds her house, he gives her a share of the household milk, which he himself controls, he sleeps with and is gentle to her ; he has, without the aid of any legal, moral or conventional sanctions, a great hold over her, as she, on her side, has over him. But, if either fails to play their part in willing co-operation, then there are, for both alike, these other sanctions to fall back upon. A quarrel develops between them and leads to violence, perhaps he strikes her, perhaps she viciously repels him, one night, from her bed ; and then the immediately injured party appeals to the neighbours for support. They discuss the matter, censure one or the other, and try to make it up between them ; if they fail to do so the case may go to Court and one will then have to pay compensation to the other. Or it may happen, without any violent quarrel, without any formal appeal to the neighbours, that one of them becomes aware that his conduct is provoking their mockery and criticism ; and then in shame he mends his ways. Or, finally, one of them may fall sick and suspect that wrong-doing on his part has been followed by spiritual retribution in the form of witchcraft. 593 [574] [627] [626] [754]

A woman, then, uses her stores of food to cook not only for herself

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Unmarried children have the right to food partly in virtue of their general relationship to their parents, partly because they themselves assist in the work of the household. From the age of about six years boys herd cattle, from about eleven years they begin to hoe; while girls help their mothers in field work, in the fetching of wood and water and in the care of infants. And, owing to their practical usefulness, there seems to be less difficulty in getting motherless[1] children regularly fed before they marry than in getting them entertained afterwards. Each such child is allotted to one wife and is mainly fed by her. 592 857 241

In some households unmarried sons hoe only the particular plots of their own mothers; but in others the man and his sons work together as a team, hoeing each plot in turn. In ten neighbouring polygynous households I found that in three cases the sons confined themselves to the plots of their own mothers, in seven the man and his sons worked always together. Meals followed the same pattern as the hoeing. In the three cases the mother of each boy alone provided him with food, but in the other seven cases his step-mothers did also.

This variation of custom between different households was thus explained to me: "The custom of hoeing separately, each boy for his own mother only, is sometimes determined by lack of friendship between the women, sometimes by the slackness of their husband in hoeing. If he is slack about hoeing then it falls to the women to organize it, and each calls on her own son to hoe for her alone; and, in that case, if one wife has no son she will just have to enlist the services of other people to hoe for her (rewarding their efforts with food at the end of each day). Sometimes too the custom arises in this way—a boy finds that his step-mothers are reluctant to cook food for him when he comes in from hoeing, he complains that while his own mother cooks for him generously they do not, and so he begins to hoe for his mother alone.

"The custom of hoeing together, on the other hand, is determined by the will of the man, who himself organizes it. And whenever a man is vigorous in hoeing there you will find that he and his sons all hoe together. It is only when a man is slack that the custom of hoeing separately arises from the orders of the women, and if the man is vigorous in hoeing his wives are never reluctant and ungenerous about cooking, they bow to his will just as his sons do."

When their husband dies women pass to his heir. If the heir is a brother of the dead man then he takes them all to wife, if a son he takes 768 587

[1] The custom of marrying two sisters and that of substituting a dead woman's sister or niece in her place considerably reduces the number of such "motherless" children, for the sister of a dead woman treats the latter's children as her own.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

768 all except his own mother, whom he either builds for at a little distance
587 and looks after, or else gives to a half-brother.[1] Inherited wives have the
[42] same land rights as others, and a mother for whom a son builds and hoes is treated by him, in the matter of land, just like a wife.

737 And a married man often supports an old woman—a mother, mother-in-law or elder sister—whose husband, though still alive, is incapable of hoeing and who has no unmarried sons. He may either hoe for her on her own husband's land or else assign to her a plot or two of his own.

241 The gardens of a household are not only worked by its members,
476 other people assist them from time to time. Each married man usually invites a group of his village neighbours to help him with a day's hoeing two or three times a year, entertaining them to food and beer after the work is over. A married woman likewise is often assisted by women friends from neighbouring households in the planting, weeding or reaping of her crops and them she rewards simply with a luxurious meal in the evening, without any beer. Again, as we have seen, a married woman sometimes engages a young man to hoe for her regularly, for a month or more at a time, and pays him by feeding him well for that period.

241 But although this last custom is still common it is beginning to
464 decline; fewer men each year are willing to work for any length of time except for money, and already in some of the more prosperous households young men are found to be employed in hoeing at the rate of 2/- a month in addition to their food. The young men who thus accept employment in hoeing are always the poor ones, those for whom (whether because their fathers are poor in cattle or because they have many elder brothers before them) the prospect of getting married is too distant to stimulate them to any great diligence at home. In the plain of Mungonde, however, where ploughs are extensively used, the owners of ploughs make a considerable profit by hiring themselves out with their ploughs at 2/- a plot (*ulupaka*).

241 Kinsmen and affines also often assist in a household's hoeing. When
● 592 a man inherits his dead father's wealth then he assumes the position of
602 father towards his own younger brothers and is responsible for the
606 marriages of any who are bachelors; they then hoe for him and are fed by his wives just as unmarried sons do. Sons-in-law, again, are expected to bring their friends now and then to help their father-in-law in hoeing and they often do so, more particularly if they are behindhand with the marriage-cattle. After the day's work is over, however, they are entertained just as sumptuously as an ordinary work-party of neighbours.

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[1] And any kinswoman of his mother (sister or niece) whom his father has married is treated likewise.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

by horizontal bamboo joists, at right angles to the principal beams of the ceiling. This ceiling never covers the entire room, but only the greater part, and always the part directly above the hearth. Up here firewood is placed to dry. A fine black basket is hung from the ceiling above the fire. Access to the loft is by means of a ladder. 342 [372]

When you read reports by the 'first' Europeans on these peoples and their houses, they always refer to a round house with rerlining walls and a conical roof. Merensky (1894) mentions and illustrates such a house (pages 141 et seq.). Fülleborn (1906) mentions and illustrates several houses (Text Volume pages 376 et seq., and Atlas, plates 64-67). The inner surface of the walls of the house was decorated with patterns impressed into the mud layer which covers the bamboo poles. The three stones that form the hearth are shown, and also the bed behind a low permanent partition wall. These were exceptionally fine houses with beautiful, decorated and painted doors. The entrance had relief ornaments, often of coloured clay. Fülleborn notes that the mud houses are the dwellings of married people. [352]

There is no doubt that the round house is the original type of dwelling. In 1955, I saw no round houses like the ones described by the above scholars, but I know that formerly they were often seen, at least as late as 1932. Professor Monica Wilson of Cape Town has told me that she saw them everywhere in 1932, but that during a visit to the district in 1955 she found only one single house of this type, in the village of Masoko. 178 342

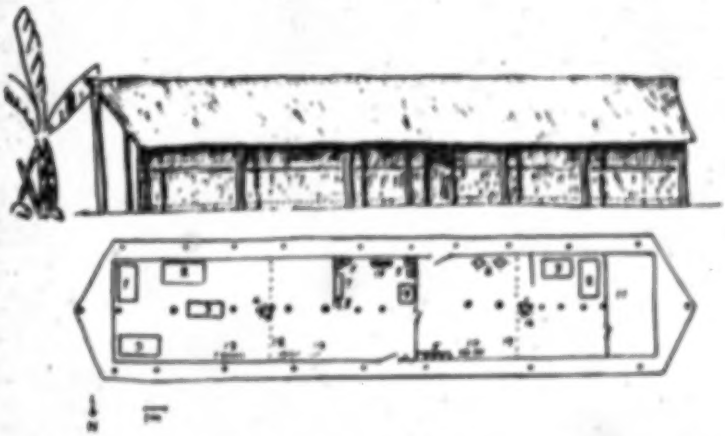
At the time of my visit, round houses could be seen, but not the type having walls inclining inwards near the ground, and they were not by far as imposing as the houses mentioned above; and there were not many of them. I had the opportunity to make drawings of three houses, all occupied by old people. 342

The round house is called an *isinga*. In one of these *isinga* there lived an old man whose wife, Malia, lived across the courtyard in a rectangular hut of the old Nyakyusa type (see infra). The husband's house was 6.5 metres across, and was divided in halves by a fence made from sticks. One half was where the man lived; it had one bed for him, and one for his grandchildren, who would come to visit him, now and then. Near the wall were two iron chests; also, a board had been hung at the wall as a roost for the chicken. A hen's nest, a small wicker basket, was placed about 3 ft. above the floor in the furcation of a four or five-pronged stick. These hen's nests are seen in all houses. The ceiling was supported by seven upright posts, seemingly placed entirely at random. The under side of the roof was strengthened by eight circular-running fascines of bamboo. In the centre, a heavy log (not bamboo) reached up to the pointed top of the roof. [592] [353] [352] [231]

The other half of the house was reserved for the cattle, three cows and two calves; there were five posts to which the cattle were tied at night. [231]

The house had an outer door at each end, but there was no passage from the man's half to that of the cattle.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa



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An ikhaya in the village of Kiwondela, the district of Rungwe, belonging to a man with two wives. The rooms have bamboo ceilings from dotted lines to either gable. Posts reaching to ridge of roof are filled in. 1, husband's bed; 2, wife's bed; 3, child's bed; 4, hearth; 5, hens' nests; 6, water jar; 7, roast; 8, ladder; 9, table; 10, stools; 11, store-room; 12, dotted lines show limitation of ceiling; 13, small objects; 14, working material; 15, sleeping mat.

born. On page 357, he reports how the boys, when 7 or 10 years old, will leave their parents' house to live in long, rectangular cowhouse-like houses big or small, in a special youngsters' quarter at the far end of the village. On page 358 he writes: In many cases you do not know for certain whether you are dealing with a youngsters' house or a cowhouse—for the cattle may well be kept in these houses—or the herdsmen may sleep in the cowhouses. However, this mostly holds true of the low-lying Konde country, while on the other hand, in the high country, the cattle is usually kept in the dwelling houses. On pages 371 and 372, he relates how the cattle is tied to posts at night, and he shows a picture of a cowhouse.

[343] [184 201]

He also refers (on page 376) to the use of the rectangular house for married men besides the boys. The difference is seen in the fact that these houses are not roughcast with mud, as this work is the province of women. Finally, he reports that, during the last few years of his stay in the Konde country, he saw Konde houses being built under increasing influence of the coastal culture, in imitation of the Swahili houses. They were roughcast with mud inside and out, and had a verandah supported by posts.

[462] [177]

In 1955, many ikhaya could be seen. Some were for the cattle, but most were dwelling houses for married people. (Boys aged 7–10 and upwards until the marriageable age lived in ramshackle boys' houses, the material of which was not bamboo, but a thinner grass, resembling bamboo very much. These houses stood

[824] [859]

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

352 two water jars, baskets, stools, a ladder leading to the loft, and a table. The rooms
415 were large and spacious, 3 m by 14 m, and in two places low partitions were
353 used to effect a sub-division of the rooms. One may well wonder at the great
length of these houses, but probably it is quite true what is said, that, when—in
392 1891—the Germans took charge of the region and imposed a tax on houses, the
177 Nyakyusa men made their women move in under their own roofs—only at the
same time extending the houses, using the technique they already knew from
the cowhouses.

648 Fülleborn reports on this payment of taxes, and finds it reasonable enough,
178 because, he says, "it fosters in the people an understanding of work and discipline,"
342 and of the house tax he says, "It works to abolish polygamy, since every woman,
following the traditions of her country, has her own house, for which her husband
must pay the tax."

But the Banyakyusa seems to have adapted themselves to the new law and have moved their wives in the very long houses, thus escaping part of the taxes....

The third type of house was a rectangular house with a hipped roof. This type
342 is called ikowa, which means tent. It was also called isiwa, the meaning of which I have not been able to ascertain; maybe it means chicken-breast, to which it bears much likeness.

This is the modern house-type to which Fülleborn may be referring when he talks about rectangular houses, "... the very rare instances when a hipped roof is seen ..." (page 375).

According to statements made by people who have lived in the district for a
342 third of a century, this type of house is thought to have come from the south some
177 40 years ago. I have not visited the Ngonde who live further south, but Sir Harry Johnston (1897) depicts a group of people called "Wankonde (North Nyasa)" in front of a house which looks very much like the modern ikowa of the Banyakyusa. It seems therefore reasonable to assume that the roof-construction design of the Ngonde has now reached the district of the Banyakyusa. Johnston also informs us that the rectangular type is not actually the original type in East Africa, but that it was probably introduced by the Arabs.

This ikowa or isiwa is shorter than the long ikhaya; seldom more than 11
342 metres in length. But its interior design does not differ. For instance, this holds true of the placing of the hearth, of the equal distances between posts supporting the roof, of the bamboo ceiling covering about half the room, of half-partitions from bamboo and in some cases mud, of extra-rooms in the far end of the house, accessible through an inner door.

● [517] In an ikowa I have never been more than one hearth, which means that the house is inhabited by one woman. A house in the village of Kikoto presented an example of the peculiar tradition of the peoples of the Highlands, viz. the tying of the turtle to posts in the dwelling-houses. My drawings are all from the Highlands, where, in the ikhaya, as also noted by Fülleborn, the inner tradition is

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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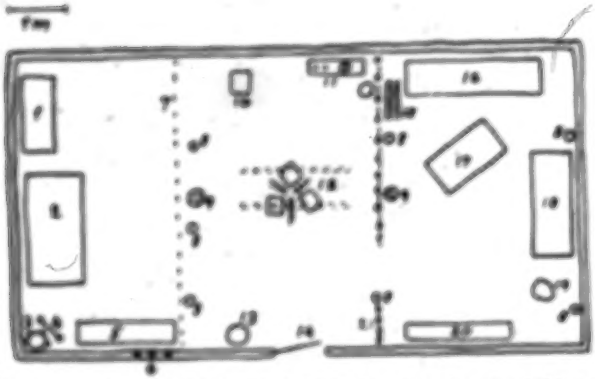

Inelosa's house. 1, cupboard with shelves; 2, children's bed; 3, hen's nest; 4, ladder; 5, roost; 6, barred window; 7, from dotted line towards the right is the bamboo ceiling; 8, from here issue 3 horizontal bamboo sticks on which the bamboo ceiling is supported; 9, Posts supporting roof; 10, chair; 11, low shelf with two bamboo jars and a water jar; 12, hearth with three hearthstones and sticks under ceiling for carrying the fire basket, and corn-cobs hung up to dry, etc.; 13, beer jar; 14, door; 15, mats behind the low partition; 16, shelf for domestic utensils; 17, child's bed; 18, Inelosa's bed; 19, baskets; 20, domestic utensils; 21, low partition between rooms.

found. In the front part of the Kikoda house, serving as an entrance room, were four posts called *ikingi*, to which two cows were tied at night.

This part, which we may call the cowhouse, also housed hen's nests, the roost, [231]
and the mortar to be used for maize, etc.

The hearth, consisting of one square and two round hearthstones, was placed [354]
in the centre of the living-room part. Here were also water jars and the woman's bed. This means that even if this type of house had a roof of a different shape and was always provided with a verandah with posts supporting its roof, the [542]
interior was really designed on the same lines as the short *dikaga*, but it was meant to house only one woman, or one man, as we shall see below.

We may imagine that one of the reasons why the type of roof was changed, was the weakness of the pollard roof of the *dikaga*. It could often be seen to have a tendency to fall in, and had to be supported by a post. Even in Fülleborn's Illustrations, e.g. plate 64 c, a kind of reinforcement can be seen at the edge of the roof. No doubt the roof of the *dama* does not suffer to the same extent from this flaw.

342
178

Now houses were being built to this design, and I suppose that a little more than half the number of the houses were of the *dikaga* type, and a little than half the *dama*.

342

In the village of Ilolo, I surveyed three houses belonging to one family, a [361]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

through each group of full brothers, until, when the last full brother is dead, and the son of the eldest is an adult, the family stock comes to him. Thus few men under forty (other than chiefs) have more than one wife. Of 3,000 tax-payers (presumed to be 18 years and over) in Selya, 34 per cent were bachelors, 37 per cent monogamists, and 29 per cent polygynists. Plural marriages breed wealth, for the polygynist is likely to command the labour of many sons as well as several wives, and in due course he expects to receive the marriage cattle of many daughters.

Social status turns primarily on age, sex, and the control and distribution of wealth. As we have seen, the position of a chief is hereditary, but kinship with a chief does not carry office, nor are the kinsmen of chiefs conspicuously wealthy. Every man in turn hopes to control the property attaching to the house into which he was born, and all who live long enough do so. But there is a delayed right of primogeniture, for the senior son of a senior son inherits the bulk of the family stock when it passes to his generation, and the eldest of each group of full brothers has a special claim to the cattle coming in from the marriages of his sisters.

Seniority, whether within the context of the lineage, or of the hierarchy of age-villages, is something respected in itself, but wealth carries authority and prestige only in so far as it is used generously, in hospitality: one man is great and distinguished (*saiya*) because he feeds people, another of little account because he is poor or mean.

Women occupy a position very subordinate to men in Nyakyusa society. They play no part in public life, except in so far as the two great wives of a chief, and the first wife of a village headman co-operate with their husbands in rituals; and in the relationship of husband and wife, as well as in that of father and daughter, a woman is expected to show obedience and respect. Her deference is expressed conventionally in her crouching to greet men (*vide* Plate IX), and in her use of the submissive *ioa* ('Yes, my lord') when addressed by them. Having no great chiefs and little regard for rank, Nyakyusa men show no trace of subservience in their manner to each other, but they expect a meek compliance from all women. The only relationships with a male in which a woman may in some measure assert herself are those which she has with a brother, and with a brother's sons. Leader-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

time, and providing meat feasts at funerals and at the initiation and marriage of daughters.

As it is proper for men to eat with their equals it is improper for them to eat with their juniors, or with women. In the past fathers and sons never ate or drank together. Nowadays they sometimes do so, even though conservative pagans, especially if the fathers and sons have been working together. Three reasons are adduced for the change: first, the example of Europeans and Swahili; secondly, the fact that the country is at peace and it is safe for all the men to drink together, whereas formerly, when there was constant danger of attack, the young men were forbidden to drink at all; and thirdly the fact that young men earn money and buy beer for themselves which they may invite a 'father' to share (*vide* Document p. 194). When the Nyakyusa drink beer they replenish the pot repeatedly with boiling water, and men expect to have the water boiled for them by a woman. As Mwambuputa explained, 'Sometimes my son brings his pot (of beer) to my place and calls his friends saying: "We will take the pot to mother's house and she will pour in water for us." Then they come to my place, and they invite me to drink, and I accept, and we drink together. How can I grudge my son beer when I have some? Did he and his friends not entertain me?' The change turns on the fact that a young man can earn money and buy beer for himself while yet unmarried. Formerly no unmarried man commanded millet for brewing. Now, when he is drinking in his father's homestead he cannot but invite his father to join him.

Women commonly eat alone with their young children and unmarried daughters. Sometimes co-wives who are good friends eat together, but they have no obligation to do so, and in a big homestead perhaps only two wives will eat together and each of the others eat alone. More usually a woman sends a dish of food to each co-wife to eat in her own hut. For a woman to eat food with a man is considered quite impossible. In those families in which men no longer ate with neighbours one or two ate with their young sons, but we heard of none who ate with their wives. The example of Europeans did not influence them to this extent.

It is admitted that women also enjoy company and profit from it, and it is considered good that they should get on with their fellows, but there is no suggestion that it is a woman's duty to

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 then if the father says his son has done wrong his neighbours reply: "You have caused him to do wrong yourself. Did you
572 suppose him to be a boy that you did not provide marriage-cattle for him?" Then the father becomes more ready to pay damages for his son.' And again, 'If a young man finds that his father objects to his marrying the girl he loves, he complains to his father's neighbours (*pamafumu abapalamani ba gwise*). Then they discuss the matter and say to the father: "Do you want him to teach you a lesson by taking a chief's wife or daughter, for whom many cattle must be given?" So the father agrees.'

768 Neighbours are concerned, too, to see a fair distribution of a deceased fellow's estate, and the fulfilment of the heir's obliga-
621 tions to his wards. 'It is not the relatives, but "the fathers of the village" who watch over a young boy's interests when his father is dead' (*vide infra*, p. 106). We listened to one discussion of a
[654] quarrel over inheritance which was believed to have led to kinsmen working sorcery against each other. At this discussion four village neighbours of the sick man (thought to be suffering from the sorcery of his father's brother's son), as well as ten relatives, attended.

684 The father's neighbours are also asked to mediate when a son has wronged his father and seeks forgiveness. For example,
•593 Mwangobola's son had committed adultery with his father's
621 wife. He paid six head of cattle and then went off to the coast, where he remained a long time. When he returned he brought
783 two cows and approached his father's neighbours, asking them to take the cows to his father. When they took the cows his father said: 'He must find a bull as well, and brew beer, because he is my eldest son.' So he got a bull and brewed beer, and the father also brewed. 'Then', said the old man who reported the case, 'the fathers of the village came together and the bull was killed and they ate the meat and drank the beer. . . . Thus the son made friends with his father.'

621 Here we have the ritual of reconciliation between relatives in which neighbours of the senior must participate, for their anger
783 is held to be as dangerous to the junior as that of his senior relative. Informal giving of advice merges into the practice of arbitration, and of murmuring against a wrong-doer, and thus, it is thought, causing him misfortune. These latter practices are discussed in ensuing chapters.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

156 ments and fine clothes, or a splendid herd of cattle—all these are forms of *ukumoga*.

Traditionally Nyakyusa women wore only a bark-cloth belt 291 tied around the waist and drawn between the legs to fall in streamers in front (cf. Plate XIII), and the pagan women cling to 177 this dress, maintaining that it is only 'Swahili women with dirty diseases' who have to wear clothes to cover their sores, and if a pagan woman has a cloth she will probably wave it like a flag or hang it over one shoulder, when she dances. Except for the Christians, few Nyakyusa women regularly wear clothes. The Christians like a brightly coloured cloth tied under the armpits, and hanging to the knees (cf. Plate IX). Women make their own [287] bark-cloths with great care, and decorate them with geometrical patterns in red and black, the red dye being imported from the Livingstone mountains; they mix this same dye with a fatty [386] ointment made from the seeds of the *unsyunguti* tree, and rub it all over themselves. The most prized ornament (worn by both [301] sexes) are body rings of coiled brass or copper wire (cf. Plate XIII). In the past men went naked except for these body rings[1] but, unlike the women, they have taken enthusiastically to clothes, and swagger around in brilliant loin-cloths or flowing white togas; or, if rather more sophisticated, in freshly pressed shorts and shirts, or lounge suits and topees.

535 The series of ceremonies at a girl's initiation and marriage, and 156 at a funeral, are regular occasions for dancing, and the birth and death rates are so high that these occur very frequently within a chiefdom of 3,000 men. Once in a generation the eagerly anticipated 'coming out' ceremony offers an even greater opportunity for display. Skill in dancing is admired and the young people are encouraged to practise. A bride's mother does a great deal of the heavy work for her daughter, saying '*amoge tan*', which means literally 'let her display herself first', and implies 'let her have a good time while she can'; and a father may use the same phrase of his son. Angombwike explained: 'The old men used to take 156 great pride in their sons; often a man would say to his son: "Don't • 593 you hoe for me, I'll do the hoeing myself, you go and swagger about." Sometimes a man would sell a cow and buy a huge-bladed spear and give it to his son. Then, if he heard that his son

[1] cf. Elmo, op. cit., p. 322; H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, p. 18.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

was a fierce man in war, and always quarrelling with and spearing his fellows, he would say with pride: "He is my son!" And if he heard people saying: "The son of so and so is a fierce man", he would rejoice. And if the son wished to marry young his father would refuse him cows, saying: "Swagger first."' That truculence (*ubukali*) is a form of swaggering for men, is still evident in the funeral dance, when men charge up and down with spears, displaying their strength, and take umbrage at the slightest thing (*vide infra*, p. 151). And marriage was deliberately delayed partly because a bachelor was thought to be a fiercer warrior than a married man.

This admiration of truculence, as shown in the funeral dance, reveals a contradiction in Nyakyusa values. On the one hand urbanity and good temper are praised—they are intrinsic to *ukwangala*—on the other truculence. Is the opposition one between old and new values, or is the contradiction itself traditional? It is obvious that a readiness to fight was a quality valuable to the village in the days of inter-village warfare, and the Nyakyusa tell of murderers and even thieves being reprieved just because they were so useful in war. 'We did not drive away violent men (*abagasi*) in the old days; we said: "They will fight along with us in the future"'; whereas since the pacification of the country, quarrelsome men have become nothing but a liability, likely to get their fellows and their chief into trouble with the Administration. The Christian emphasis, also, is all on the virtue of peaceableness. There has probably been some change in values with the disappearance of war from the villages, but we think that a certain contradiction always existed: swaggering young men were admired, and children were warned not to be quarrelsome (*nkali*) towards their fellows, lest they be accused of practising witchcraft, or rouse the anger of a witch. The contradiction is not, of course, peculiar to Nyakyusa society, and it may be resolved by defining the groups within which fighting is excluded, and those in which it is approved. Most Nyakyusa would hold that in the old days quarrelsomeness within the village was bad, that towards members of another village of the same chiefdom it was allowable, and towards members of another chiefdom it was good. In the wider society of to-day the same distinctions are apparent: the war dance at funerals is limited lest it lead to fighting between villages (*vide infra*, p. 151) but admir-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

587 woman. It is scarcely surprising that the seduction of the young
835 wives of an ageing father is a common theme for scandal. We do not suggest that the Oedipus complex involving own mother and son never occurs among the Nyakyusa; what we are concerned to show is that the relationship between a man and his stepmothers is particularly likely to be ambivalent.

593 It may be asked why there is so much emphasis on the segrega-
584 tion of sons from their parents, and not of daughters. The answer again lies in the sex difference in the marriage age. Betrothed girls pay long visits to their husbands even before puberty, and directly after the initiation which follows first menstruation they leave their fathers' home to join their husbands. During her initiation a girl carefully avoids her father and his contemporaries in the village, and after marriage, when she returns home to visit, she must observe certain restrictions not applicable to an unmarried girl: notably she must not approach her parents' bed, and informants interpret the taboo as being due to the danger of mixing the sex activities of mother and daughter.

621 In short, we argue that there is a connection between the exis-
835 tence of age-villages and the fear of incest between father-in-law and daughter-in-law on the one hand, and between stepson and stepmother on the other, and we suggest that certain features of the Nyakyusa social system facilitate incest of the second type. The incest theme elaborated in one fashion among people organized in clans and practising clan exogamy, and in another among people practising brother—sister avoidance, finds yet a different expression in age-villages, of which the overt purpose is the separation of sons and mothers, of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

c. *Good company*

The emphasis on the separation of parents and children is
577 matched by the value laid on good fellowship (*ukwangala*)
621 between contemporaries. A main end of age-villages, in the Nyakyusa view, is to allow men the enjoyment of congenial company, that is the company of friends and equals. The value of *ukwangala* is, indeed, directly linked with the age-village organization: to attain it men must build not only in villages, rather than in scattered homesteads, but also with contemporaries rather than with kin, since there can be no free and easy inter-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

like activities; things which are felt to be alike are often felt to be antagonistic. We have shown that certain of the pregnancy taboos are interpreted in terms of the opposition between seed in plants and seed in the womb, and between pumpkins in the field and pumpkins in the vagina, and we have touched on the opposition between procreation and war. Sexual intercourse, 'the war of the mats', is directly compared with war; the two are felt to be alike and therefore incompatible. Association with a menstruating or parturient woman is felt to be weakening to a warrior; continence of a warrior before battle is enjoined—'men feared to die quickly if they slept with their wives just before war.' Moreover, a menstruating wife never touches her husband's weapons lest they be weakened.

Hunting is classed with war and the same taboos apply. Added to them is the notion that, since a pregnant woman is often angry, the animals her husband hunts will be angry also, and he is in much greater danger than an ordinary hunter.

ANGOMBWIKE: If you go into the bush and you have left your wife heavy, at home, if you meet a lion it will not run off, but will injure you, maul you. And if you are many, a leopard or a lion will attack you, the heavy one, not the others.

QUESTION: Why?

ANGOMBWIKE: It is as if there was much anger. And we've noticed something else, if a lion attacks cattle it always attacks a cow in calf. And another thing. If a woman is heavy she is very bad-tempered (*nkali*), it's like a passion. Perhaps the woman is bad-tempered or perhaps good, and you, the husband, are bad-tempered. Pregnancy shows in many ways. . . .

A pregnant woman has a great fire in her body, she sweats a lot and is passionate (*nelyojo*), she is fierce (*nkali*). That fire is strong; we all flee from the woman, we all dislike her. And when pregnancy begins the animals in the bush wish to kill you, the husband. That fierceness [the fire] makes them hate you; you are like a twin. A first-born child is very fierce (*nkali*), so a woman is very passionate and sweats a great deal.

His wife's pregnancy puts a man in danger from wild animals, and so does a quarrel with her, quite apart from the pregnancy which tends to produce such quarrels. Mwaisumo said: 'If I go hunting after quarrelling with my wife it is very dangerous, I might be killed by a wild animal.'

Besides the idea that animals will *attack* the husband of a preg-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 man. Women murmur but it only makes them sick themselves
775 [laughter]. But my father's sister (*unnasengá*) can murmur, she is a man like my father. . . . If my mother is old and I do not care for her she will murmur and fall sick herself, she will never make me sick. My mother is no relative in my homestead, she is no relative to the shades.

However, Mwakwelebeja (a very old and conservative man) held that 'People sometimes say: "My mother beneath is angry" though it's not common', and Kasitile was quite positive that a mother was also a shade with power to inflict misfortune, as the following conversation shows:

QUESTION: What shades influence a man or woman?

KASITILE AND HIS YOUNGEST WIFE: *Imindu* of father is there, and *imindu* of mother. Yes, indeed, *imindu* of mother exists. Once I had not put beer in the house and I fell ill. The divination said: 'It is *imindu* of your mother. She is angry not to find anything in your house.' Because we chiefs always put beer in a little calabash in the house, it stays there always.

QUESTION: When it goes bad?

KASITILE: We put some more. There is a little millet flour there now. Sometimes we put flour, sometimes beer. And when I come to die they bury beer with me. . . . Once the offering was not there, and my mother who was dead came to look and did not find anything. Then she went to father, who was dead, and said: 'I went to our child. His house was without anything.' Then father said: 'Let us go and look!' They did not find anything, then they shook me up. Then the oracle said: 'It is the *imindu* of your mother.'

QUESTION: And a wife?

KASITILE: Both her father and her mother punish [lit. hit] her at their place, even though she is with me, also they punish her.

QUESTION: But your shades?

KASITILE: How can they punish in-laws? They do not punish her, but the child whom she has borne, their grandchild, him they punish.

●[593] Though Kasitile and others denied that the husband's shades could punish a wife, nevertheless she suffers from their anger through the child, through a difficult labour, or through the beer she brews going bad.

578 PYAGILAMO: It is said that when a woman who has quarrelled with
775 her husband is brewing beer and it goes bad, that means the shades are angry. The shades of the husband have made the beer go bad. The husband has murmured and the shades have heard. When a wife is
[845] pregnant it is taboo for her to quarrel with her husband; she will have a difficult labour. The husband murmurs and the shades hear. The

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 The diviner does not divine by himself, but he who goes to inquire of him says: 'Perhaps it is so-and-so who is angry, perhaps it is so-and-so because I did not give him such and such a thing, perhaps it is so-and-so, I have heard a rumour that he is angry.' Then if he mentions someone whom the diviner has also heard say that he is angry because his brother has not given him something, the diviner assents, saying: 'Yes, it is that.'

783 MWAISELAGE (a middle-aged pagan): When I inherited from Mwakisisile, my elder brother, I was just about puberty, and my senior brother [i.e. half-brother], Mwakasoule, took me to his place with all the wives, to bring me up. He was there in Mwangomo's country. I went to his home and two years running I hoed millet and it refused to grow. Then my sister said: 'Consult an oracle and see why it is.' So I went to the diviner who said: 'Your elder brother is angry because you left his grave, because you do not sweep his grave.' So I asked what to do and he told me to get millet and brew beer. So I brewed beer and left a little in a calabash overnight in the banana grove, and prayed with water. Also I left a cock. I killed a cock because I had no bull, and I left all the meat there also overnight. Then the next day the children, Angombwike and others [Angombwike was a son of the deceased] drank the beer and ate the cock. They ate all the cock, and took the first drink of the beer, and I finished it off. The diviner had told me to let the children begin first. Then next year the millet was very plentiful. I never did it again because I have never had trouble over food. If the crops had not grown I would have done it again.

593 783 AMBILIKILE (a Christian teacher): When I was a boy my mother's brother once went to fish and caught two fish in his trap. He gave them to two of his wives, the third being absent. When she came back she was angry, saying: 'They have stinted me of food'. For a long time after that he found no fish in his traps. At last he consulted an oracle. The oracle attributed it to the third wife, because she had been angry. People said that she had been angry, and that the shades of her husband were angry too, and had stopped the fish entering the trap. So my mother's brother went to the wife and said: 'The oracle attributed it to you, were you angry?' She admitted it, saying: 'I was angry, but now I am satisfied. It's all right.' So then my mother's brother took his calabash cup and went in the evening to the banana grove and prayed with water. Next morning, before noon, when men always go to examine the fish traps, he found his traps full and overflowing with fish: they were leaping about inside. Indeed, it was very remarkable. I was there, for I grew up at my mother's brother's home.

Yes, the shades hear wives, though wives never pray to them; they listen to their anger.

The first catch after such a prayer is offered to the shades.

783 MWANDISI: The fish, when they have been cooked, remain overnight

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

misfortune and the rituals are distinct. In theory, when the shades 578
are angry the essential offering is that made in the sacred banana 775
grove or on the hearth; it is eaten by the grandsons of the most 783
recently dead, and whether neighbours partake or not depends upon the generosity of the officiant; whereas when neighbours are angry there is no offering in the grove or at the hearth, the neighbours are feasted, admit anger and express forgiveness.

However, neighbours are slow to admit responsibility (for to 789
curse someone comes close to witchcraft) and in some cases there is both a formal feast for the neighbours and a prayer to the shades, and it is left uncertain where final responsibility rests. The following texts illustrate this:

MWAIKAMBO: It is the custom among us Nyakyusa to marry many 595
wives, mature ones and young ones, so if a man has sons at his home it 837
sometimes happens that one of them makes love to one of his father's wives. Perhaps they commit adultery in secret, perhaps he runs off with her to a distant chiefdom. Then the father breaks off relations with him.

The son, wherever he is, learns that he has been cursed by his father 593
and his body becomes like goose flesh. If the son is wise he gathers his 789
property and returns to his father. He takes a friend with him and goes 783
into the house of one of his father's neighbours. His friend and his 621
father's neighbour speak together. 'I have come to return unto my father because I have done wrong.' He tells the neighbour what they have brought to offer the father—usually a cow and a bull. Then that neighbour seeks three comrades or perhaps four or five, and they go to pacify their irate fellow, saying: 'Our child has returned. He knows that he has done wrong towards you, but we have received him because he has confessed humbly and begged forgiveness.' His father refuses furiously and almost spears himself in his passion. His fellows pacify him for the whole day, or perhaps two or three days, then at last he agrees. Then the young man and his fellows bring the cow and the bull. The father also calls together many of his fellows and he seeks beer and 593
cooks food. They gather together at the father's homestead and the 789
father says: 'My son has come and admitted that he has done wrong, 783
asking that I forgive him and saying: 'I did not know what I was doing, these are the cattle which I have brought', and the others agree. Then they kill the bull. They roast some meat. The father catches one side of it, the son the other and the village headman cuts it in the middle, and the father and son each eat their piece. This is the blessing (*ulusajo*), meaning that there is kinship between them now. They eat together. Then all the people eat. Also with the beer it is like this. The village headman picks a straw and puts it in the beer, hands it to the father who drinks, and then to the son. Then other people drink, and they

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

593 send the son into his father's house. He walks through the whole house
789 and the mothers acclaim him. This is the sign to show everybody that
783 he has entered his father's house. The women call the *akalulu*. They are rejoicing because he has entered.

There are, however, some who do not return to their fathers. They remain strangers [*abandu* as opposed to *abakamu*] until their death. There is a young man at my home who took his father's wife. Where he fled to no one knows because he is still in hiding. His father separated from him altogether.

A son must always bring something and the father must collect his friends. If they just agree with one another and people do not eat anything, then the son will not be settled in well. He will be ill. They say
[753] that the illness comes from the shades. If the father is angry he mutters (*ikwibunesya*) and they hear. At first the people are not angry, but later on, when they have heard from the father about the matter, they also are angry. It is as if they help the father to mutter. Their shades are not there, only those of the father's lineage, but his shades have regard to the people. If the people do not eat anything and are not present, they are not satisfied even though the father is satisfied. The father prays to his shades alone in the evening with water in his mouth, and they pour out beer on the hearth-bricks.

764 KASITILE: If a rich commoner has died and the heir buries him with
556 only one cow, the shades and people are angry with the heir, breath
783 falls on his body; perhaps he falls ill, or perhaps his child falls ill. But they do not meet; people, the witches, are angry and the shades are angry; the shades because they have buried him with only one cow, people because they have not eaten meat, but the shades and people are independent of each other. The oracle says: 'The shades are angry,' it does not speak of people. It knows that people also are angry, but it speaks only of the shades. And when he makes amends he prays in the evening; the next day he calls people and kills a cow and he throws the *ija mmapa* meat in the banana grove and says: 'Here it is, Father,' and people say: 'Indeed, he did wrong, his father was angry.' But they do not confess, saying: 'We were angry.' No, they say: 'The shades were angry.'

754 Another type of case is that in which 'the breath of men' is
783 believed to have fallen on an infant because of its mother's disrespectful behaviour towards her husband's parents or husband's father's sister. When a child is thin and ailing with *ingoto*, the cure is for the mother to confess to the doctor who comes to treat the child all the rude things she has said, and provide beer (exceptionally a bull) to offer to her injured parents-in-law. They drink the beer with their neighbours and wish her well. Ambilikile's wife

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Certain siblings perform the ritual, but not all of them. We 788
have referred already to the heir, who is commonly a dead man's 593
younger brother, and who must perform it whether he is a full brother or half-brother, and to a woman's related co-wife who may be either a younger sister or a brother's daughter. The brother or sister 'who followed at the mother's breast', i.e. the sibling immediately younger, must always perform it. Nyakyusa find it very difficult to formulate the rules—there were lively arguments between well-informed people when the question was posed —but these principles emerge from a study of those who actually participated in eight funeral rituals.

Since the funeral ritual is directed to the shades, men can only 764
perform it in the homesteads of their agnatic kinsmen, or of their 602
maternal grandfather or his heir: they can never perform it at the homestead of affines (*kubuko*) for there they are not kinsmen (*abakamu*) but in-laws (*abako*). Hence a husband performs the ritual for his senior wife at his own homestead and her father (or his heir) at his. 'According to custom "the husbands" (*abalume*) perform the ritual, then, when they have done so, she whom we have put in place of the dead comes to us and says: "Fathers, we have performed the ritual, perform it yourselves." ' We never saw a ritual of farewell to a dead woman at her father's house but believe it to be a modified form of the ritual performed at her husband's.

Because of the rules of avoidance, a father-in-law and daughter- 606
in-law cannot, together, go through a ritual which involves the 764
close proximity of the principals. When, therefore, a man performs the death ritual for a son or son's child, he performs it at his own home, and the daughter-in-law concerned does so at her husband's homestead. The widow or parents must begin, and the father or grandparents follow. Thus when Mwandisi's son's son died, the parents of the child first performed the ritual at their home and Mwandisi and his wife then followed at theirs. But in a twin ritual, where participants can be secluded, father-in-law and daughter-in-law may attend the same performance.

A woman can perform a ritual either at her father's or her hus- 788
band's (as well as at her mother's father's) and she may even per- 593
form it according to two different forms, following that of her father's lineage when she is visiting him, and that of her husband's lineage when she is performing it at his homestead.

It is possible that, on the death of a man, his sisters' children 764
602

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 sometimes perform the ritual, but we lack conclusive evidence.
602 One case in which a sister's daughter of the deceased man performed the ritual was recorded, but at other funerals girls in the same relationship did not. Kakune, the doctor, asserted that a boy would perform the ritual for his mother's brother for 'he is mother, the brother of mother (*jo juba ulilumbu gwa juba*)', but in a number of cases we observed women performing the rituals for their brothers though their sons did not. A man's children may possibly perform the ritual for his sister but we traced no case of their doing so.

768 Those who drink the ritual beer when a widow returns to her
602 father's house after her union with the heir are her father and the men of his lineage—brothers, half-brothers, sons, and some of his brother's sons; the wives and children of these; and daughters of the lineage, her own sisters and half-sisters, and sisters of her father, but *not* the husbands or children of daughters of the lineage. At one *ingotolo* ritual we attended there were present eleven men of the lineage, eighteen daughters, and thirty-two wives, as well as numerous children (cf. genealogy, Table (e)).

764 When a woman has died those who come to cut the banana
● 593 grove and give medicated meat to her children are the *abipwa*—her brother (or his heir) and his wives.

764 The principals at a death ritual, then, are children and grand-
602 children, parents and grandparents, spouses, and certain siblings of the deceased, together with some of their children. If a woman dies, or a widow is inherited, her agnatic kin and their wives are concerned as well.

845 The group which takes protective medicine after an abnormal
602 birth is larger. All the wives and children and grandchildren of the father of twins must come, his full siblings with their children
751 and grandchildren, and the wives of his brothers, but not the husbands of his sisters; some of his half-brothers, with wives and children, some of the children of his father's brothers' sons (but not of father's brothers' daughters) and of his father's sisters' sons. On the mother's side her father, or his heirs, must take part with his wives and children, and her sisters. At the ritual for Mwakobela and his wife, previously described, we counted 136 relatives taking part, of which 24 were men, 19 boys, 33 women, 12 girls, and 35 babies (cf. genealogy, Table (a)).

845 When the mother of twins took the *ilibalaga* back to her 'father',
602 her brother (heir to her father), with his wives and children, her

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 has been a quarrel in the family, those members of the lineage
602 who have been at variance must attend and share the meat or beer, and bless one another. Grandchildren, 'comrades of the shades', must eat the offering left overnight in the banana grove.

•593 If a son has quarrelled with his father and comes to beg pardon
621 the father calls his *neighbours* who must be present and partake of a
783 feast and bless the young men. 'If father and son just agree with one another and people do not eat anything, then the son will not be settled in well.'

585 At a puberty-marriage ritual the principals are the nubile girl
881 and her father or brother, her husband, and sometimes her mother
602 or mother-in-law. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest son's wife, or with her eldest daughter, if she is initiated at home. At an ordinary birth the principals are the mother and infant.

764 Besides these principals who undergo the full ritual there are
602 many minor actors. At a funeral there are the grave-diggers who,
621 traditionally among the Nyakyusa, were mature men, relatives or village neighbours.[1] They wash after the burial and are rewarded with a special leg of the funeral beef. As we have seen, the affines (*abako*), that is the fathers-in-law and sons-in-law of the deceased or of 'the owner of the funeral', come with cattle to kill or cloth. When a woman dies, her husband and her father, or her brother, kill cattle, and their affines bring cloths or, occasionally, cattle. Kinsmen—members of the lineage and their wives—and neighbours bring gifts of food to cook for the crowd of mourners, and small gifts of millet which are presented to the shade and used for making the ritual beer. After an abnormal birth, village neigh-
845 bours have their legs splashed with scalding medicine but do not
621 drink medicines or shave. The cattle of the village are also splashed. At the puberty ritual the bride's maids keep her com-
881 pany during her seclusion. The co-wives and neighbours of her
621 mother and mother-in-law assist in instructing her, and the neigh-
602 bours of her father join with him first in avoiding her and then in giving her gifts. Her father-in-law is identified with his brothers and his father's brothers' sons, whom she avoids, as well as his sisters, and her mother-in-law's brothers, and sisters' husbands. They, in turn, avoid her sisters, as well as herself.

621 By the 'congregation' we mean those who attend rituals to ex-
788 press sympathy, and whose presence is felt to be necessary to the

[1] In Ngonde they are *abalasi*, cross-cousins.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

585 between' accompanies 'the mothers-in-law' when they go to induct or instruct the bride, and the wife of her father's 'go-between' is one of the group of mothers which takes the bride to her husband. The duties of a 'go-between' do not end at marriage: the [351] groom's 'go-between' is responsible for taking to the bride's people the hen to announce the birth of the first child, and, among the Lugulu, the 'go-between' of the father is master of ceremonies at the ritual of vituperation.

789 602 The ideas that emerge from this analysis are, that in the *protective* rituals—after death, twin birth, spearing, binding with ropes, and death from sorcery—the parents, children, grandchildren, and some siblings, and siblings' children of the person primarily affected undergo the ritual. Links through females as well as males are recognized—daughters' children as well as sons' children attend—but they are not traced so far, and a brother's or half-brother's children attend far more often than a sister's children. Moreover, children of an unrelated co-wife perform the death ritual for a woman rather than her sister's children.

● 593 Wives always attend rituals in which their husbands are concerned—indeed, they often come with their children when their husbands stay away—but when the wife is concerned as a sister or daughter, her husband never accompanies her.

593 602 The closest relatives, such as own children, children of the heir or of a related co-wife, and proximate full siblings, must *all* participate, but the more distant relatives select representatives.

602 The range of relations concerned varies with the particular ritual—it is widest in the twin ritual and narrowest for an ordinary birth—and is also modified by proximity, for relatives who live near come when those in the same category living twenty miles away do not.

Affines (*abako*) never perform a ritual together even when they are next-door neighbours and close friends, but *abako* in one generation are *abipwa* (mother's kin) in the next, and a man and his *abipwa* can participate together, as in the protection against sorcery described. More often, however, the members of each lineage act separately.

602 621 613 Our Nyakyusa informants distinguished the officiants—*abanyage*—from those undergoing a ritual but they did not make distinctions of the sort attempted here between principals and kin who do not undergo the ritual. The distinctions they drew were between kinsmen and neighbours and between lineages. At a death

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngohde FN17
Nyakyusa

find it. There are many cases like that. My friends in the age-village will go to a diviner who will declare that the shades are angry because I do not care for my father.' If a daughter makes a runaway marriage her father is angry and it is believed that either she may not conceive or her baby may be ailing until the marriage-cattle and bull of puberty have been given by her husband and accepted by her father.

The respect and obedience due to a father is due to his heir, and in certain circumstances to his sister also; while on his part the heir has the same obligations to his juniors as the deceased had. Fibombe cited the example, already quoted, of a man quarrelling with his dead father's sister over the distribution of the marriage-cattle for his own sister, and the girl failing to conceive because of the anger of her father's sister. If a son, whose parents are dead, neglects to provide his sister with the customary gifts of food when she returns to her husband after a visit to her 'father', he may become impotent: 'Those below are angry and when he has begotten twins he will have trouble at the ritual.' Or the girl may fall ill. 'She thinks: "Who is my father? This is my father, but he does not care for me." ' The mystical power of a senior relative is linked directly with his obligation to give gifts:

> My father's elder half-brother has power over me only if he has given marriage-cattle for my father or nurtured him. If he has given him cattle to marry a wife then he has power over him. . . . My superior (*mbale gwangu*) is he who gives me everything.

Favouritism in a polygynous family, shown in the unfair division of milk or meat or fish by the husband between his wives, is thought to anger the shades, which cause his cows to bleed from the udder when milked, or prevent fish entering his traps, and so do the bad temper and insulting language of a quarrelsome wife. Mwakwelebeja explained that:

> If a woman is bad-tempered when she is making beer the beer goes sour. If my wife and I quarrel my shades are angry and the beer is spoiled. I say to my wife: 'You have spoiled the beer because you do not listen to what I say.'

Neglect of his wards by the heir is a wrong-doing frequently mentioned.

> It is said that if I neglect my brother's children he and my father will be very angry, they will not come to meet me when I die, as the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

595 There are a few heathen women who do not wish their husbands to take other wives, but many who urge them to do so. Another wife is like a servant in the house, and the position of the principal wife (who is not necessarily the first) is improved when her husband adds to the number of her more or less obedient juniors. Formally they are her sisters; in reality they are her servants, and must always answer her demands with the polite response "*ta*." The husband also gains in importance as he acquires one wife after another. When the children are grown up, they are dispersed to various villages, and the father is always "feared" in such places, because he has sons or daughters who will see to it that he is properly honoured when he pays them a visit.

553 585 Husband and wife take new names at marriage; but they are for private use only, the old names being used by their friends. The new names, which are given in the presence of witnesses, indicate that the old life is past, and that new duties and privileges now bind the couple to each other.

• 593 The position of the wife is guarded in many ways. 422 Her father and brothers are always ready to take up her quarrel, even to the extent of fighting her husband [586] if need be. She owns property, but she retains it only so long as she is a wife: divorce separates her from husband and children, and also from all the household goods of which she is otherwise mistress. The husband hoes the garden, but the produce belongs to the wife; he may not take anything without her consent, even to feed his friends. If one wife

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

593 422 refuses point blank to feed his visitors, he appeals to another; but it will be obvious that continued churlishness on the part of a wife would lead to trouble. Bananas, rice, and malesi belong to the husband; bananas, because he alone attends to them; rice, because it came from the Europeans; and malesi, because from this cereal beer is made, and the husband is lord of the beer pot once the beer is brewed. Fowls belong to the wife, but though the profits of sale are hers, she usually lays them out in small household necessities, such as salt. She often gets a cow from her father, and her husband may make her a similar gift; and he must not use the milk without her consent, though if it is sold, the money is laid by to pay the tax. All household utensils are hers, except the small dish from which her husband eats; but she leaves everything behind should she be divorced, except the cow she received from her father.

587 765 If a wife dies while still capable of child-bearing, her father must give another daughter to the widower; or, if he has none, a cow, dressed with flowers, is sent with an apology, and a promise that as soon as possible the dowry cattle will be returned. If the father hopes that another daughter may yet be born to him, an arrangement may be come to by which she will go to the widower. Widows become the "family" of the heir. They wear anklets of cow-skin, and let their hair grow, mixing it with clay. These signs of mourning they wear for about a year. Girls wear similar tokens of mourning if either parent is dead, but not boys.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

583 The dowry cattle are usually found by the father of the bridegroom; if he does not own them himself, the boy's uncles come to his aid; and in the event of divorce, they are re-distributed, with the increase, in the proportion in which each contributed. The father of the bride, who receives the cattle, as a rule divides them among his relatives, one going, in the case of the first daughter to be married, to the village headman.

•593 562 It is usual to commiserate the sad lot of the African wife. I am not sure that much commiseration is called for. If the husband converts his duties of natural guardian into those of oppressor, he will answer to her father and brothers. As I have indicated, she owns property in a small measure; she is mistress in her own house; even her husband seldom interferes with her decisions, and no one else ever does. She has to work hard, it is true, working up till old age at tasks that would quickly kill a European woman. But she is not unhappy; indeed one sees more happy faces among them than unhappy; and she is blessed beyond imagination in comparison with the horrible conditions in which some women in our own country lived during the earlier part of the Industrial Revolution; and large numbers of them are happy in their husbands and children. Although many girls are married before they know what is happening to them, and many are unhappily yoked, as revealed by the great numbers who run away later with young men of their own age; yet there are countless happy families, where deep affection binds

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

husband and wife by strong ties; and where a possibility of parting faces them, as in the case of men wishing to join the Christian Church, and so having to put away all wives except the first, it brings with it in very many cases a pain, keen and poignant, such as one might imagine would be felt by Europeans in similar circumstances. I know not a few cases where a young husband and wife began their married life by serious quarrelling; but after a while not only became reconciled, but discovered that something had happened to them not unlike falling in love with each other. And, while there are too many instances of the opposite, it is further true that at least in the presence of strangers, husband and wife treat each other with a mutual courtesy and dignity, which would form no inappropriate model for peoples of higher development.

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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 so insulted him. This does not apply to an invitation
578 to drink beer, but no one can explain why there is a difference.

3. Accusations against a man of good character come under the same heading. Some evil has been done, and the wrong-doer has not been discovered. Then, perhaps in joke, or it may be out of personal dislike, some one says that so and so did it. The person referred to knows that his days will not be long in the land. "Did I ever do a thing like that?" he asks indignantly. "Why, then, am I accused?" It can only be *kusikura*, and he expects to die, at the best, within a year or two.

787 4. If the spirits, in dreams, offer food, it must not
828 be accepted, even in the dream: to accept it means death.

Connected with the foregoing, but having a
787 different name among the Konde, are insults or
578 injuries to parents. A man who fights with his father,
593 and throws him down, has achieved the final wickedness. Whether the old man was right or wrong in the matter in dispute is of no consequence; the whole community expresses its abhorrence of the deed. "Has this man reached even to God?" that is to say, does he consider himself the equal of God, that he does such things? Word is sent to the chief, and the whole district is informed of the evil thing that has been done. There is no formal denunciation, no spoken curse; but the *ikugune*, the curse of all fathers, and of all ancestors, is upon the son. He becomes lame; then unable to stand upright; finally he

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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crawls about on his buttocks, a helpless object. The curse has taken effect. 593

After a time good-natured people try to bring father and son together again. The son is persuaded to make his father an offering of an ox or a cow in token of repentance. If the father agrees, a day is fixed, and the whole community, including the little children, assembles at the house of the injured father. Beer is prepared, the ox is killed, the son publicly expresses his repentance, and the father his acceptance thereof. Then the people, having heard all the details of the crime,* express their feelings in a prolonged groan. A dose of medicine is now given to the son, a stick is put into his hands, and he is bidden to rise and walk, which he does in the presence of all! A similar curse falls upon the man who does evil with one of his father's wives; and there are a very few other crimes which automatically bring on the same punishment. 578 593 783

It is not difficult, from the point of view of modern mental science, to explain the facts. The disability is due to the conviction in the mind of the younger man, strengthened by a similar conviction in the mind of the whole community, that such results always follow deeds like his. Similar phenomena are by no means unknown among Europeans, where the response to each other of mind and body is not so immediate as it is among the more unsophisticated Konde. The man bearing his sin is mentally, perhaps, rather than physically, unable to stand upright; and the conviction having been removed from his mind, 000

* [Fighting and throwing down son's father — Analyst]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

754 all speed to its "father." Should the victim have the good fortune to kill it, it will return to its original elements, and appear before him as a mere root of a tree.

The next class of people who possess destructive powers are the poisoners. Direct evidence is naturally hard to get, for the poisoner must act in secret. The poison need not be administered directly, though that is often done; if placed where the victim will touch it, it is enough; over the door, where it will drip on his head, or on the threshold, where he will touch it with his foot. Death will follow. In 1905 a man called Ulukamba had a quarrel with a neighbour, and sent his son to place medicine in the doorway of his enemy. Two days later a son of the latter died suddenly. The boy who placed the medicine gave away the secret, by telling some one, and Ulukamba was put to the poison test, which condemned him, and he was ordered to pay over two cows. He refused, threatened to inform the magistrate that the chief had consented to the poison ordeal, and the case had to be dropped. But the belief that he killed the boy is still firmly held by all the people of his village. There was no case against the boy who placed the medicine, as he was obeying orders issued by his father.

828 The destructive power of anger is firmly believed
893 in by the Konde. To speak the name of a brother in anger, is strictly forbidden, for it may lead to his death. The process is rationalized thus: the spirits hear the words of anger, and, assuming that there is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

good reason for it, send a disease, or engineer an accident, which kills the person named. A well-known doctor, named Mwenekasangamara, now dead, was credited with wider powers. If he spoke in anger the name of any person within his family, and that was a very wide circle, that person would die. But he had the privilege of withdrawing, and so neutralizing the effect of his anger. The underlying idea is that it is contrary to God's law to speak evil of dignities; if the person spoken against, like Mwenekasangamara, heard of it, his anger would be aroused, and the spirits would come to his support.

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A daughter who despised her father, might be punished with barrenness if her father so desired. Mwenekasangamara imposed this punishment on a married daughter, and the curse was not removed until she had made proper atonement, and soon afterwards her infirmity was corrected. Another well-known case is that of a man called Songwe, living at Lupembe, whose daughter aroused his wrath to such a degree that he called upon his ancestors to destroy her. She became ill the same day, and died the next. This was in December, 1912. In the light of modern psychological beliefs, there is nothing impossible in the story.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Nyakyusa are, predominantly, a patrilineal people, for inheritance normally follows the male line. They differ, however, from the patrilineal peoples of Europe in that brothers inherit before sons. Inherited wealth is thus mainly kept in the hands of the older men, though they are under certain obligations towards their "sons" (whether own or classificatory) in their use of it. Marriage involves a transfer of anything from four to thirty head of cattle from the bridegroom to his father-in-law, and consequently the chief obligation which an older man has, both to his own sons and to the sons of any kinsman from whom he has inherited, is to provide them, in due time, with cattle for marriage. But this obligation is not an absolute one, it depends, in part, upon the due fulfilment by each "son" of his filial duties, which are, firstly, to hoe his father's fields diligently and, secondly, to maintain a respectful bearing towards him. Unmarried men have no gardens of their own, they work their fathers' land and eat the produce of it which their mothers cook. 611 425 583 593

Under modern conditions money for tax and clothes is necessary both to father and son, and very many young men visit the nearby Lupa gold fields regularly, for periods of a few months at a time, to earn it. A youth who always brings back to his parents after each spell of absence tax money and some presents is held to have done all his duty and he will be given marriage cattle just as soon and as readily as if he had spent all his time hoeing at home. And if he earns more, sufficient to purchase some of his marriage cattle for himself, still his father benefits, for the old man has then to spend fewer beasts from his own stock. But the Lupa needs food as well as labour and some unmarried men stay continuously at home and engage in the production of crops; after the family needs have been met the surplus is sold and from the proceeds the father pays his own tax and his sons' and buys clothes for them as well. 167 593

Hoeing, which is the hardest part of Nyakyusa cultivation, is normally done by men, planting; weeding, reaping and cooking by women. But some women nowadays do some hoeing too—if their husbands are away at work or if for any other reason they find it difficult to get enough ground prepared for them. Traditionally, I was told, women never used a hoe at all. 241 462

Polygyny is the rule rather than the exception among middle-aged men, and in a polygynous household, as we shall see, each wife has her own garden plots. The institution of polygyny has many other elements besides the economic, but the economic is not the least important of them: the taking of additional wives is the best capital investment which is open to an ordinary, uneducated, Nyakyusa peasant. A Nyakyusa wife is not her husband's property, she is his wife; but as family relationships are, among the Nyakyusa, the basis of economic activity, so the more wives 595

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

vary in different circumstances. Millet and rice, the two most valuable crops, belong to the man and are stored by him; so that the division of a millet or rice garden into plots and their assignment to different wives is rather a division of labour than of property. But of all other crops the woman on whose plots they have grown is an effective owner. She stores them herself in her own house and no other wife of her husband can touch them; it is only with him that her rights are in any way shared. 241 592 421

The main use of the crops which the Nyakyusa grow is to provide food for each separate household group. Next in importance is the provision of food and beer for hospitality, and for the making of gifts both in everyday life and on special ceremonial occasions. And, finally, there is the barter or sale of surplus crops to obtain salt, pots, clothes, cattle and to pay tax. Each married woman, therefore, first uses her own crops to feed her husband, her own children and herself. If she is the only wife then she cooks for her husband every day, but, even if she is one of many, she is yet careful to cook for him frequently, in order to keep his affection and the various advantages which go with it. 592 593 574 [437]

When cooking for her husband she must, when necessary, prepare sufficient for guests, for a man very often has friends and neighbours eating with him; and if he wishes to make a gift of cooked food, she cooks it for him from her own store. To provide meals for him and his guests and cooked food for gifts is an obligation which she normally fulfils quite willingly, as we have hinted above; she may be fond of him; it is in any case to her interest to play her part in the co-operative relationship which binds them together and from which both alike benefit. He hoes for her and builds her house, he gives her a share of the household milk, which he himself controls, he sleeps with and is gentle to her; he has, without the aid of any legal, moral or conventional sanctions, a great hold over her, as she, on her side, has over him. But, if either fails to play their part in willing co-operation, then there are, for both alike, these other sanctions to fall back upon. A quarrel develops between them and leads to violence, perhaps he strikes her, perhaps she viciously repels him, one night, from her bed; and then the immediately injured party appeals to the neighbours for support. They discuss the matter, censure one or the other, and try to make it up between them; if they fail to do so the case may go to Court and one will then have to pay compensation to the other. Or it may happen, without any violent quarrel, without any formal appeal to the neighbours, that one of them becomes aware that his conduct is provoking their mockery and criticism; and then in shame he mends his ways. Or, finally, one of them may fall sick and suspect that wrong-doing on his part has been followed by spiritual retribution in the form of witchcraft. 543 [627] [626] [754]

A woman, then, uses her stores of food to cook not only for herself

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

A woman, then, uses her stores of food to cook not only for herself

421 and her children but also for her husband, and his guests and for gifts; she
593 has, however, every right both to entertain her own women friends to meals
595 and to make gifts of food to her relatives, and she does so when she chooses wihtout consulting her husband. Co-wives entertain one another if they are on friendly terms and even sometimes make a habit of taking their meals together; but this is entirely a matter of personal inclination, it is in no way necessarily inherent in their relationship; there is no community of property between them.

421 This sharp division of property between fellow wives is well exempli-
595 fied in the following story from a Kukwe family. I was discussing with a young man what happened if, in a polygynous household, the crops of one wife were a failure. He assured me that no action could possibly be taken to compel the others to give her a share of their crops, either for food or for seed; if they did give her a share it was kindness and goodwill alone that would prompt their doing so: "I saw it happen once," he continued, "in my own father's house. He had three wives and had hoed maize plots for them and divided them up, and each had planted her own maize. But, when it began to grow, that on one wife's plot was very poor while that on the others' plots was abundant, and at the harvest the one wife reaped very little maize indeed. So when the harvest was all gathered my father asked the other two whether, as they had plenty of maize, they would not give some of it to their fellow. At first they refused emphatically to give her any, saying that it had just happened so, they had reaped plenty and she had reaped little or none, but it was not their custom to divide up their crops and she, if she had reaped plenty and they had reaped little or none, would certainly not have given any of her crop to them. And they asked whether she was his favourite that he made such a suggestion. Let him, they said, spend a shilling or two on buying food for her himself. My father entreated them but still they refused.

"But day after day for a long time he went on entreating and persuading them, pointing out that she had children to feed and asking if they wished her to die of hunger; he, he said, was not in any way compelling them to hand over their food, it was entirely for them to decide whether they would not each give her a little; if they disliked doing so, well there was no more to be said. And at last they began to be persuaded, they discussed it all, the two of them together, and the fact that she had children to feed, and each gave her a portion of her own crop. And later, when this maize had all been consumed, they gave her seed also for the next year's planting."

I then asked if the one whose crop had failed was, in fact, his father's favourite wife or not. "No, she was not, one of the other two was his

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

may call in against her husband, if she desires divorce. And, it is hinted, this particular force may sometimes be successfully invoked by a plausible woman even without good cause. 421 626

In disposing of the surplus of their crops and bananas the respective rights of a married woman and her husband vary in detail, though little in substance, according as he has or has not made a formal division between them. It is not infrequent for a man to reserve for his own use one or two plots and some banana stems, which are then called *busongo* plots or bananas (*imbaka* or *ifijinja fya busongo*). In the planting, weeding and reaping of the *busongo* plots all the man's wives co-operate if he has several, but the final product is absolutely his own, it is stored by him and they have no part in it. Conversely, however, the rights of each woman to dispose of the surplus crop of the plots allotted to her are thereby greatly increased, for her husband cannot then touch it at all. 421 593

In any case, whether or not *busongo* plots and bananas have been set aside, a woman's obligations to provide food for her husband's con-

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authority can possibly either act over the whole area or command general approval and support for its actions.

But in primitive society it is otherwise. In a small and isolated group largely composed of personal acquaintances it is difficult to escape from one's friends; while the facts of every dispute, of every breach of law, are soon widely known; and in consequence, it is there perfectly possible at times for legal sanctions to be effective without the intervention of any central authority at all. The neighbours, or the kinsmen, or the affines of a lawbreaker are in themselves a large and important section of his society, and he can only with difficulty escape their authority; he can not lose himself in a great city as can his civilised counterpart. And so the typical method of legal procedure in a primitive society is for action to be taken against a lawbreaker by those more nearly concerned, supported by general public approval. And it frequently happens that the only effective action is taken singlehanded by the injured party; nevertheless if that action is supported and strengthened by any generally expressed approval we can not deny that it possesses a legal form.

In a primitive group any request which an individual may make to his kinsmen or neighbours for practical assistance against a lawbreaker, any appeal to their opinion in a dispute is a legal procedure, for it is an appeal to authority. It is they upon whom he is in practice most dependent. Nor is it only in "private life" that he depends upon them, for, owing to the smallness of the group, the distinction between "public" and "private life" hardly exists. In many situations they hold in their hands the whole force of his society; their actions and opinions are checked or supported by the informal but nonetheless effective jury of widespread public discussion; and if they are against him he has nowhere else to turn.

Now Nyakyusa society to-day is no longer isolated and primitive, neither has it yet fully taken its place in the social system of the world; it is in process of transition. Legal procedure is, quite inevitably, becoming everyday more and more an affair of the central territorial authorities, of the Governor in Council and the High Court of Tanganyika and of their appointed deputies: the local Magistrates, the District Officers and the Native Courts. But the process is not complete. In many situations of social life the new impersonal relationships with the great world are still, for the moment, more or less irrelevant and in them the old primitive sanctions retain their power. [178 692]

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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sumption, for hospitality and for gifts are very much the same ; but there, if he has *busongo* plots and bananas of his own, her obligations cease. Bananas demanded by the chief, money for tax and for his own clothes he provides for himself by making use of his *busongo* crops, and he may even keep some of them as a security against possible famine ; and so he leaves her free to dispose of her own surplus as she pleases. If, however, he has reserved no plots for himself then the surplus of each wife's plot is jointly owned by her and her husband. Neither can rightly dispose of it, in any large quantity, without consulting the other ; neither can be denied the right to dispose of it, after consultation with the other, for any urgent need.

Sometimes however a division is made by the husband between himself and his wife not of land but of crops ; after the harvest he takes a portion of the crop of her plots for his own use, leaving the bulk of it to her for cooking and for her own needs. In that case, once the division is made, their respective rights are just the same as if the portion kept for himself had been grown on a *busongo* plot.

The following words of a young Kukwe man make these points clear. I had asked him about the respective rights of husband and wife to dispose of maize and beans for cash : " Normally," he replied, " if the man has not kept any *busongo* plot separate and the crop is in consequence their common property, he will speak to his wife and ask her to take some of the beans and sell them and buy him a cloth with the proceeds. But an inconsiderate husband may just take them without consultation. So with the woman, if she wants a cloth she tells her husband and suggests taking some beans and selling them in order to buy one ; and her husband agrees that she should, because there has been no division made, the crop is their common property. And if the man is in trouble for tax money he consults his wife about selling some maize or beans and she agrees, for otherwise he would be arrested. If, however, the man has kept a *busongo* plot separate then he takes and sells his own food and his wife hers, without consulting one another ; because a division has been made."

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" And supposing," I asked, " that a man has three wives, whom does he consult about selling food, if there is no *busongo* plot ? " " In that case," he replied, " if, maybe, he wants to procure tax money and has no *busongo* plot, then he speaks to his chief wife and tells her that they must assist him or he will be arrested and she suggests that they all consult together. So he calls his wives to him and they agree to give each so much from her store of food ; maybe he shows them a basket for each to fill once ; and then he puts it all together and sells it and pays his tax."

" This custom of keeping a *busongo* plot," he volunteered, " is only rarely followed nowadays in Bukukwe in the case of maize and beans, but it is quite common with cassava and with bananas."

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

"Why with cassava?" I asked "Because the husband thinks of cassava as a security against famine; if a famine comes he takes his *busongo* cassava and gives some to each of his wives." 421 543 [261]

"And why with bananas?" "Because if he has bananas of his own then when the chief sends the great-commoner round to collect bananas for guests, or to send to the hospital in Tukuyu, the man cuts one of his bananas. He realizes that, as he has two wives, if he takes a banana bunch from one of them she will be angry and wonder why he cut her bunch and not that of her fellow wife."

"So it is only polygynists who keep separate *busongo* bananas?" "Certainly, no monogamist would ever do so."

"A man named Mwaisaka," he told me later, "once disputed with his wife over the selling of maize. They had just begun harvesting the crop when the woman told her husband that she intended to take some of the maize to the shops and sell it and buy some cloths; for her child was naked and she had neither cloth nor skin to carry him in on her back, she had to hold him in her arms. Mwaisaka, however, told her to wait a little until all the maize was harvested, when he would divide it up. His wife thereupon protested that the crop was their joint property and that he himself could take some for sale whenever he wished, so why not she also; and she pointed out that many other people had already begun to sell their maize and buy cloths. So they quarrelled and Mwaisaka struck his wife, who then ran complaining to the great-commoner. The great-commoner heard the case and judged that Mwaisaka was in the wrong because his wife had no skin for carrying her baby and was in trouble therefore. If, he said, she had not been in such trouble over carrying the child they would have given their opinion against her for refusing to agree with her husband's proposal to wait and finish harvesting first, but as it was they thought that Mwaisaka was in the wrong; no division of plots or crop had been made and the food was their common property. And Mwaisaka admitted that he was wrong." "Did he pay his wife any compensation for the blow?" I asked. "No, they reconciled them to one another." 421 578 593 627

"And if a man," I enquired further, "takes some of the food which belongs to himself and his wife jointly and sells it without telling her, will she make a case against him?" "She may, but if she is a gentle wife she argues it out alone with her husband; she asks him why he did not consult her, for there is now but little left and she wonders what they will eat. And her husband, if he is a sensible man, agrees with her and admits that he was in fault. But if, instead, the man makes out that he had every right to take it, for the food is as much his as hers, and if he is indignant at her protest then that attitude will bring a quarrel between them." 421 578 593

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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The most important reason which traditionally impelled men to reserve *busongo* plots and bananas was, so the old men told me, the frequent lack of affection and generosity in women towards their married step-children. If one of his wives had died or left him, then a man might find that his children by her, when they came to visit him, received but scanty entertainment from his other wives and went away home empty-handed. So to obviate this state of affairs he would set aside *busongo* plots and bananas, and take food and gifts for these motherless children thence. In the old days married children nearly always lived within a mile or two of their father's house and visits were frequent. Nowadays this reason, which still continues to operate, tends to be overshadowed by the desire on the man's part to have a definite portion of the crop marked out for sale to the Indian traders. Nevertheless many men prefer community of property to an anti-harvest contract with their wives and so do not keep any *busongo* plots at all.

"What," I asked an elderly man in Selya, "is a *busongo* plot?" "The word *busongo*, used either of bananas or of garden plots, means that they belong only to me, not to my wives; so that when my daughter comes I cut for her a banana bunch of my own and give her my own food. Not all men keep *busongo* plots; some like the customs but others do not. I myself have only one wife and no *busongo* plots, all my bananas are hers and all my gardens too."

And another elderly man, also of Selya, said to me one day: "Some men like to have *busongo* plots, others do not. Nowadays these plots are used to grow crops for sale, but in the old days they were for feeding a man's children. I myself divide up all my gardens amongst my wives (he has three living with him at present). Even though three of my wives have diedand one has left me, even so I do not keep a *busongo* plot; when my children come to visit me they are given food by Jane (his chief wife, who is also his favourite). At first I divided up the children (i.e. the grown-up children whose mothers had either died or left him, and who in consequence had no special claim on any one of his present wives) assigning some to one, some to another of my wives, but the others grudged them food so now they all come to Jane." He here suggests that the meanness of two of his wives and the existence of many motherless children gave him good reason to reserve *busongo* plots and bananas, but he did not do so, he preferred to rely on the generosity of his favourite wife.

And besides providing entertainment for adult but motherless children, beside providing a definite portion of the crop for the husband to sell, *busongo* plots and bananas are also useful, as we have seen, to meet the demands of the chief and to secure the household against a shortage of food.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tive capital, Tukuyu, and it is still thus used to distinguish this group 101
from others. This group will here be referred to as " *Nyakyusa proper*." Those in the North of the district to the West and East of Mount Rungwe call themselves *Kukwe* and *Mwamba* respectively, and there is a group of chiefdoms to the East, under the Livingstone Mountains, called *Selya*. All these four groups share a common culture, distinguished by minor [184]
local peculiarities of dialect and custom. Immediately bordering the Nyakyusa to the South West are the *Ngonde* (Europeanized as " *Konde* ") in Northern Nyasaland ; they belong to the same cultural group but are distinguished by greater differences of custom and speech than the others. I have not yet visited them.

In the hills to the West of the Rift live the *Ndali*, who are included in this administrative district ; and on the plateau under these hills, to the West of the Kukwe, live the *Penja*. Both these small groups have old languages of their own which, though related to that of the Nyakyusa are [197]
more or less unintelligible to them ; and they have equally distinct cultures. But they are now rapidly being assimilated to the Nyakyusa both in [177]
speech and in law.

I use the name Nyakyusa, in accordance with modern usage, to include the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, Mwamba, and Selya groups, but to exclude the Ndali, the Penja, and the Konde. The Nyakyusa together with the Ndali and Penja number 150,000 ; the Konde of Nyasa- [161]
land 30,000.[3]

Members of the Berlin and Moravian Missions were the first Euro- 797
peans to settle in the district, where they have lived now for forty-five 177
years and have made numerous converts. The German Administrators followed them closely, and later came a few planters. But pronounced economic change is a matter of the past five to ten years during which time the Lupa Gold Fields of South Tanganyika have been opened up and have employed increasing numbers of Africans on the diggings. During the past few years the young men of the Nyakyusa have developed [166
the habit of going for a few months, now and again, to the Gold Fields to 464]
earn money for tax and clothes. They seldom stay more than six months at a time, often only one or two ; so that their absence does not cause the same difficulties in their own community that are found in other areas where the men spend longer periods away from home.

The Family, together with a sketch of wider Kinship Groupings

The relationships of husband and wife, parent and child, sibling and 593
sibling are continually visible in the culture of the Nyakyusa. The

[3] Government Census figures.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

593 holding of land and the economics of life in general, the rules and procedure of law, the emotional forms of ceremony, the dogma, rite, morality and symbol of religion, the forms of knowledge and opinion—all are interpenetrated by these relationships.

593 595 The word *family* is used in this paper to mean the organized group of a man, his wife or wives, and their children of any age, but not to include any other relatives. A Nyakyusa family, as we shall see, does not become extinct when the father dies; his younger full-brother or his senior son steps into his place and the group continues very much as before. In this society families are sometimes monogamous, sometimes polygynous; and, in consequence, two more relationships with which we are not familiar in our own culture are included in the Nyakyusa family; one is the relationship of co-wives and the other is that of half-siblings. Within a ploygynous family the different wives and their respective children form groups to some extent distinct from one another; and the term *individual family* is here used to denote the group of a man, one wife and their children, whether that group is part of a polygynous family or forms a complete monagamous family by itself.

593 595 601 The Nyakyusa themselves have no separate word for either of these small groups; the word *ekekɔlɔ* is sometimes used in the restricted sense to which we have here confined the word "family," but more usually means the whole of any single person's recognized blood kindred, living or dead, both in the male and female lines; and it is translated in this paper as *kindred*, *kinsfolk*, or *kinsmen*. They also have a word *ovokamu* which includes the whole of any one person's *ekekɔlɔ* together with all his recognized affines, and this is here translated *relatives*. The term *affines* is used to translate the Nyakyusa word *avakɔ*, which is identical in meaning with it.

[585] [435] 436 Marriage is legally effected by the handing over of four to thirty cows, together with one or two bulls, by the groom to his wife's father. And this transfer of cattle is the key to the whole Nyakyusa system of blood and affinal relationship. Cattle have a very high value because of their production of milk and meat, which are the most highly prized foods, and because of their scarcity; they are in constant circulation, and by their movement from one man to another they forever create and maintain the bonds of kinship and affinity. Cattle circulate rapidly; few except chiefs have more than six cows in their herds at any one time, more often each man has only two or three, while some have no cows at all; and yet every mature man has paid out, for his own and his sons' marriages, five, ten or twenty times the number of cattle that he at

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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837 her and then returns to her first husband the cows he had given for her with two in addition as adultery fine. But this return is usually made only after the first husband has brought a lawsuit against him.

837 Adultery is extremely common now-a-days; when a man runs off
684 with, or is discovered seducing, a married woman and has not enough
177 cows to marry her, he is legally compelled to pay two cows for the adultery to her husband. In pre-European days an adulterer, if caught, was usually punished by the husband and his neighbours with death or extreme torture, and the old men tell me that adultery was then a rarer event.

584 The extent to which a girl is usually allowed to choose whom she
177 will marry is difficult to guage, and varies in different circumstances. Opportunities of meeting and flirting with young men at dances and ceremonies are frequent; and the older men say that, owing to the abolition by the Europeans of the old severe punishments for adultery, girls
[582] are freer now than they used to be, for their lovers no longer fear to run off with them if they are married or bespoken (which is in Nyakyusa law very much the same thing). The custom of betrothing infant girls is, they declare, less common than it used to be; they are now more chary of pledging their daughters "for when they grow up they just run off with someone else." A girl's choice is, however, limited by the necessity of finding a lover who has cows, and few young men have enough to secure her if she is already married, though they may have enough to pay an adultery fine.

[428] Owing, in part, to the laws of inheritance, by which a commoner's[5]
593 full-brother inherits before his son, it is the older men who control the cattle. Every bachelor is largely or wholly dependent on his own father (or his dead father's heir) for the cows for his first marriage, and he must hoe his father's fields for many years before he is given enough to secure a wife and to set up a family of his own. Economic reciprocity is an element in most human relationships, and it enters into the Nyakyusa relationship of father and son. It is well understood, in this society, that
593 after a certain length of time spent hoeing his father's fields a young man
685 is entitled to some cows, if his father has any; and if his father delays too long the young man either stops hoeing for his father or else he takes legal action and enforces his claim. Between father and son such law cases are rare, but they are frequent between a young man and the brother of his father who has inherited his father's wives, property, and position in the family.

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[5] The laws of inheritance for a chief are, in certain respects, different; vide infra, "The Chiefdom."
[Cat. 116 pp. 278 ff. -- Analysis]

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done.

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In a polygynous family each wife has her own fields (*mbuka*), hoed by her husband and her own sons, which she plants, weeds and reaps with the help of her own daughters, and the produce of which she uses to cook for her husband, her own children and herself. The relative rights of husband and wife to dispose of produce vary with different crops, but no co-wife has any rights over a woman's food. She may, and often does, ask her co-wives to help in her fields and sends them presents of cooked food from her own fire, she may help them and receive presents in return; but they have no rights over her fields or her food, only her husband and herself. And the fields which are hoed by a bachelor son belong to his own mother, who in her turn cooks food for him to eat.

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Each wife has either a hut to herself, or else a separate alcove in a large hut, and there she has her fire for cooking. She fetches her own firewood and water or sends an unmarried daughter for them.

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At meals the ages and the sexes eat separately; in some polygynous families each wife sends a dish to the husband, in others the wives take it in turns to cook for him. The husband eats alone or with neighbours of his own age[7] to share his dish, the older boys and their friends[7] eat separately from the younger children, and each mother again usually eats with her own daughters, apart.

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In the relationship of husband and wife the chief elements are sexual intercourse, co-operation in work, the procreation of children and factors of personal inclination, character and temperament. By men women are praised for sexual skill, cleanliness and beauty, for good cooking and hard work, for their fecundity, and for gentleness of speech and behaviour, and those with opposite qualities are criticized. Among women men are praised for sexual skill and attentiveness, for vigour in hoeing and skill in house-building, and for kindness; while sexual neglect, laziness, impotence and cruelty are disliked and may cause a woman to leave her husband for another man.

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The birth of children is a most important factor in the marriage relationship, for children are greatly desired both by men and women. They are desired for themselves and also because they bring their parents wealth and prestige; a boy will one day work in the fields of his father and mother, a girl will bring in cattle from her marriage. And the possession of children brings compliments and respect both to man and woman.

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[7] *Vide infra* "The Age-Village."
[Cat. 116, pp. 269 ff. — Analyst]

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

but his wife refused to go and fetch her on the ground that he was a bad 595
husband.

The children of one man and two close kinswomen have almost the 593
relationship of full-siblings, but not quite, and I propose to call their relationship that of *linked half-siblings* (*vide infra*).

In a polygynous family the first wife married, the chief wife (*oyhusi-* 595
hulo), is in a privileged position; she is entitled to the respect and 586
obedience of her co-wives and her eldest son is her husband's ultimate heir. A man cannot lightly divorce his first wife during his own father's lifetime, for while the other wives he obtains by his own efforts, with his own cattle, she is married with cattle given him by his father, who must be consulted before she is divorced and who is offended if she is sent away without good cause.

Besides the chief wife there is, in most polygynous households a 595
favourite wife (*oyhondwe*), who in fact has greater privileges. Ideally a man is supposed to be fair to all his wives and to distribute milk, land and sexual attentions equally between them, with perhaps a slight bias in favour of his chief wife. But usually one wife is her husband's favourite and is given by him an undue share of the household's milk supply, and sometimes he hoes more land for her than for the others, as well.

Divorce is legally effected by the return of the marriage-cattle. No 586
pagan woman in this society ever desires to live si gle, and so when a wife leaves her husband it is always with the intention of marrying some other man. Usually she has a particular man in mind who has been making love to her and who has cows enough to redeem her, but not always. A woman may, as we have described already, run off with a lover and then, as soon as he has returned the marriage-cattle and the adultery fine to her former husband, she becomes his legal wife, and her children by him are legitimate. If she has no lover to run off with, or if her lover wishes to avoid the adultery fine, the woman goes to Court* (before 1926 she went to her own chief) and publicly refuses to live with her husband. She may or may not give a reason for leaving him, but if she persistently refuses to go back to him there is now no way of compelling her to do so. The judges say to her: "Well you must find the cattle," and so she stays, either with her father or in the charge of a court official, until some man comes to marry her. Then the cows are returned to her first husband and the divorce is effected. In pre-European times, I am told, such a woman was frequently compelled to return to her husband by

*Vide infra. The Children.
[Cf. 116, pp. 278 ff. — Analysis]

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17 Nyakyusa

586 her own father and the chief. A man has the right to divorce his wife, that is to send her away and demand back his cows, if she is dirty or lazy in housework or if she commits adultery, but men do not often demand a divorce for adultery unless it is persistent. If a man sends his wife away for some such reason she returns to her father and he, if he has cows available, sends back to her husband his marriage-cattle, if he has not got the cows the husband must wait until the girl is remarried.

593 857 Into the relationship of mother and daughter economic co-operation and reciprocity enter. The care of young children is largely in the hands of their elder sisters, and the girls also help their own mothers in field-work and in fetching and carrying. In return their mothers cook for them, teach them how to cook themselves and how to make mats.

585 593 Each mother is responsible also for her own daughter's virginity. One of the bulls which a young man brings during the initiation of his betrothed wife is only given if the girl is found on examination to be still virgin, or if he has deflowered her himself. If it is given this bull belongs to the girl's mother to eat with her own friends. But, in spite of her [664] mother's responsibility for her, a girl learns nothing positive from her mother about sex, but from her own slightly older friends; with them she discusses the technique of love-making in detail, but never with her mother.

593 The relationships of siblings are, in general, closer than those of half-siblings, and the eldest son in each individual family is privileged above his brothers. A boy's claim for cattle is, as we have seen, partly based on the time and energy he has put into hoeing his parents' fields; but it also depends, in part, on having full-sisters of his own. When a girl marries the cows come to her father, but her own full-brothers expect to receive these cows, in time, for their own marriages, in the order of their age. Though the father controls the cattle the brothers speak of them as "our cows" and they have an ultimate legal claim to them, which only gross laziness or insult to their father can altogether vitiate. The eldest of a group of full-brothers is the first to draw on these cows and to marry, his juniors wait longer. Full-brothers are bound together in many ways; the eldest, who is privileged, is bound to help his juniors in any way he can, and they in turn respect him and in time give to him some cows from the marriages of their own daughters; 593 and each makes the others' quarrels his own. What chiefly unites them 428 is the law of inheritance, for though the eldest has first right to the cattle from their sisters' marriages, and though the younger ones, later in life, give cattle from their daughters' marriages to him, yet they are his heirs, and all his privileges in time pass to them. When the eldest dies his next

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

full-brother steps into his place, takes his wives, huts, land and cows and looks after his children; after him the next full-brother inherits and so on, until, when all are dead, the property and wives of each pass to each one's senior son.*

The heir has exactly the same obligations to his predecessor's children that the dead man had himself while alive, but frequently he has less will to perform them; and his conformity is often only assured by the pressure of legal and religious sanctions.

This rule of inheritance is part of a more general fact, which is that, in Nyakyusa society, death does not break a family and its relationships, but simply alters the particular people between whom these relationships obtain. Only rarely does death leave a man or woman widowed, or a child orphaned; nearly always some one is at once substituted in place of the one who has died. When a woman dies young her parents are bound either to give another daughter to her husband or else to return the marriage-cattle to him so that he can obtain another wife; when a man dies his wives and children are not left alone but taken by his heir. If the heir is a brother he takes all the women as his wives, if a son he builds a separate hut for his own mother and takes the others. And the heir is now "the father" of the dead man's children. Even when a man and all his full-brothers are dead the families of each are still united for some purposes under the leadership of each one's senior son (eldest son of chief wife). The senior son is now called "father" by his siblings and half-siblings, he is religiously responsible for them all (*vide infra*), he normally exchanges cows with the eldest brother in each individual family (*vide infra.*), he is entitled to their respect and obedience.

Half-brothers may, or may not, be linked especially closely together. They may, as we have seen, be linked by blood when their two mothers are either sisters or close kinswomen, they may also be linked by an exchange of cattle, by "milking each other's cows" (*ukukamanela*). Each group of full brothers regards the cows that come in from the marriages of their sisters as their own cattle, but the father disposes of these cattle as he wishes. If he gives some of their cows to a half-brother, he thereby creates between the eldest of the group and this man the special relationship of "milking each other's cows;" and it is expected that the cows given will in time be returned by this half-brother from the marriage-cattle either of a full sister or of a daughter of his own. And the exchange once begun goes on; as their sisters and daughters marry

* This refers to commoner's inheritance only.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

593 they continually give each other cows; between their respective sons also the exchange usually continues, but between their grandsons it lapses. 593 686 Reciprocity is expected and can be legally enforced, but it is not insisted upon so long as the two men concerned are friends, and its legal enforcement at once breaks the relationship. If two such half-brothers (or their sons) quarrel, one may take legal action for "separation" (*ukukana*) against the other. The cows that have been handed over by both sides since the beginning of the relationship (perhaps twenty or thirty years before) are counted up, and one or the other is ordered to pay over the balance to make the numbers equal. After this the two are "no longer kinsmen," they have no mutual obligations and do not attend each other's funerals.

593 428 It is usual for a father to create this relationship between his senior son and the eldest of each group of full-brothers, so that by this exchange of cows the family is held together. The linkage of half-brothers, whether by blood or by "milking each others cows," is important in inheritance. If a man with no full-brother dies and leaves no sons, or sons too young to inherit, then the inheritance passes to a linked half-brother; to a half-brother linked by blood if there is one, if there is not then to one linked by exchange of cows.

771 Religion enters continually into family life and helps to maintain wider kinship bonds also. The Nyakyusa religion falls, broadly, into three parts: The Ancestor cult, Witchcraft and Magic. Taken as a whole their religion, as they believe, secures for them many of the most important values of life, health, good crops and success in various enterprises; it provides an intelligible explanation of death and misfortune by tracing them to the ill-will either of the ancestral spirits or of living men acting through witchcraft or magic; in its rituals it resolves fear and replaces it by hope and confidence; while the believed destructive action of the ancestors and of men is generally, though not entirely, linked with morality.[28] The commonest explanation of misfortune is that some wrong done by the victim, or by his close kinsman, has provoked the spirits or his fellow men to anger.

769 753 As long as a man has alive a father, a father's full-brother, or a senior brother or half-brother[29] of his own, this senior kinsman deals with the ancestral spirits, not only on his behalf, but also on behalf of his wives and children; and health is the chief value which his prayers are believed to secure for them. In the absence of sickness or misfortune no appeal is

[28] cf. Godfrey Wilson. "An African Morality." *Africa*. Jan. 1936.
[29] Provided the relationship between them has not been legally broken (*vide supra*).

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

173 The balance between chiefs and commoners is explicit. So
773 also is their dependence on *bush* cultivation and herding, and it
[643] should be noted that, though the Nyakyusa speak of themselves
as stock men, they are not pastoralists to the same extent as
[233] the Masai or the Nuer. The number of cattle in Rungwe District today is less than half the human population, and men traditionally have done the heaviest share of cultivation.

773 In every version of the myth the tension between father and
595 son, or older and younger brother, is stressed. In Nyakyusa
561 society the father (or his eldest son who replaces him) controls
173 the family property and exacts obedience from his juniors who
[764] continue to show their respect after his death by sacrifices. The tale of Kyala and Lwembe celebrates the triumph of the junior. Thus, at the heart of the very ritual which sanctifies seniority there is the assertion of the victory of the son and younger brother. The myth expresses the aspirations of subordinates—of commoners and junior kinsmen—as well as the power of chiefs and seniors.

173 As we have already noted, the heroic cycle makes no reference
773 to the peculiar Nyakyusa institution of age-villages. Their charter
561 is a quite separate myth[1] which tells of a chief who looked on his
621 daughter-in-law and loved her and took her, and this so shocked
606 men that in future fathers and sons built separately, so that a father-in-law should never see his daughter-in-law.

There are other hints of the eternal theme. Besides the saga of
173 Lwembe there is another quite different tale of the origin of fire,
773 which is less often related. In it a girl who had angered her father
372 by breaking his drinking calabash fled from BuKinga to the Nyakyusa valley, where she found people who ate their food raw. She made fire and cooked for them and 'all women came to her to learn to cook'. The long-necked calabash, used as a drinking
[915] vessel and in prayer to the shades, is a man's most personal
[768] possession destroyed at his death, and it stands for a husband, while cooking is a symbol of the sexual activity of women, so the myth is perhaps a drama of incest, but we have no direct evidence of this.

173 This last is the only tale in which a woman appears as a
773 benefactor. In general, the mythology is that of a strongly
562 patrilineal society in which men are dominant. The wives of Lwembe who walked behind their lord, shepherded by a lion,

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 83.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IV

THE RESULTS OF LAND SHORTAGE

311 As indicated in the short outline of traditional land tenure in Chapter II, the system developed and worked adequately in the old situation (both before and after European contact) when land was plentiful in relation to the people's demands. Any villager who wanted land had the right to be allocated fields; any established villager who wished to expand his cultivation could do so without difficulty. Movement between villages was easy, and especially after the establishment of European peace, for everywhere newcomers were welcomed to increase the strength and prestige of the village, and land was available for them. The young men in their age-villages were able to obtain sufficient arable land and they were able to establish their economic independence after marriage, if not earlier. Because land was plentiful there was little real concern for security of tenure and disputes over land were both uncommon and unimportant.

By 1955 the basic fact was that there was insufficient land to meet the people's requirements in the alluvial flood plains – as also in many Highland areas – and there remained little or no unused land which could be taken into cultivation.

Inheritance of Land

426 In those earlier and more spacious days, inheritance was chiefly significant in moveable property – cattle pre-eminently, and goats, money and other goods – and also in the matter of widows and the custody of children. 431 The rules of inheritance were the same in principle for all this property. Inheritance was by groups of full-brothers rather than by individuals, and therefore when a man died, his sons, his widows and his wealth were taken by the oldest surviving full-brother; failing a full-brother, a half-brother would inherit (the oldest surviving at the time). Only when all the deceased's brothers were dead, or if they had moved away and severed practical relations, were the dead man's sons able to take up the property in their own right. Then each group of full-brothers tended to inherit as separate, corporate groups. Although the separation into "houses" was not as strong and notable as amongst some African peoples,[1] yet there was a fairly strong solidarity between full-brothers such that, for instance, their cattle were regarded as a distinct and separate herd, over which the senior brother had principal control and in which half-brothers had little direct rights.

Originally land inheritance did not follow this scheme because it was an unimportant matter, for ideally a man obtained his building plot and arable land at the time of the formal establishment of his age-village, and he preferred if possible to continue to live amongst his coevals. Consequently, when a man died, his brothers and his sons and nephews normally had land of their own and did not wish for more elsewhere, especially as the deceased's land would probably be in another age-village. Out of respect for the dead man and his contemporaries, the chief heir often made a token residence at the deceased's homestead and then, after a brief period, would obtain the approval of the villagers to return to his own village and holding again – perhaps at the cost of some beer or a goat. Sometimes the heir or another member of the lineage might take the opportunity to leave his own village

1. See Wilson, M. 1936, pp. 1-18. Cf. also the Tiv family circle, Laughlin, 1956, Chapters 3 and 4, for a description of a strongly conjugal family system.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(e.g. for fear of witchcraft) and take up the vacant holding. Nevertheless in general the holding was allowed to lapse and it could be re-allocated by the village headman if need arose; or the elderly widows might be allowed to continue to reside and cultivate as long as they wished. 428 421

Once land began to become scarce and valuable this loose system could no longer continue. Junior brothers and half-brothers were no longer content to permit the chief heir to take the whole of the deceased's holding to do with it as he wished, and a systematised division had to be adopted. At first, naturally enough, land was gradually brought under the same system which controlled the inheritance of other property, but this proved inadequate – inadequate not only in itself as being, perhaps, too complicated and conducive of disagreement and quarrelling in so far as land is concerned, but also because that system itself was already beginning to break down under the impact of individualism. 423 [78] [428]

It was felt that because sons assist their father in his homestead and fields and in their turn rely on him for a share in the cash-and-kind profits of peasant farming, therefore they should have priority in the inheritance of their father's property. Their father's brothers, it was said, would in any case already have their own holdings in which likewise their sons have prime interest. Conversely, older Nyakyusa men began to be reluctant to take a brother's land (and other property too) on his death, for fear that, in their turn, control of their own land would descend at their deaths to their brothers' sons rather than to their own sons.

As a result of these attitudes a strong desire arose to modify the customary laws in this matter, and the Rungwe African District Council, with the approval of the Government, has by formal resolution established a new law under which sons may inherit direct from their own fathers. [546]

This law is not universally accepted by the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains and sons still will sometimes waive their novel rights in favour of the traditional claims of their fathers' brothers. They say that they do not desire to see the break up of the wider lineage which, in effect, this new law encourages; they are also afraid of the anger and jealousy, and thus of the witchcraft, of their uncles. It appears however that the change is accepted by the large majority of the people, for it follows the trend of modern values and kinship sentiments. [754] [578]

The principal heir is now the eldest son, but in general he has little direct control over the property and land of his half-brothers unless they are still young, in which case he has a moral duty to act as guardian and custodian. Sons inherit that part of the paternal holding which had been allocated to their mother by their father in his lifetime, plus any other pieces he might have given to any of them direct as individuals. Each group of full-brothers determines the way in which it divides up its own inheritance. The eldest brother of such a house has a definite obligation to see that his juniors obtain shares of the land in so far as its extent and their number will allow. On the whole it is expected by Nyakyusa that the eldest brother will secure the best holding for himself, as befits his new status, but he cannot deny his younger brothers' claims. Disputes in this matter are not uncommon and the local courts have already shown their determination to support the claims of younger brothers. 423 428 [593]

Very commonly – though it has not yet crystallised as compulsory social behaviour – a father will grant a portion of his holding to his son on the latter's marriage, or as soon after as the son decides to give up labour migration and settle down. It is thought that a married man should be independent economically and that he should be able to maintain his own household; it is realised that there is most likely to be friction in the relations between father and son, especially in this society where it is traditionally [163] [196] [593]

433 believed that parents and children should live apart.[1] In the same way, and
288 for similar reasons, an elder brother tries to make provision for his junior
[68] when the latter marries if their father is already dead. The practice of the
father is not a legally required one, although it is nowadays increasingly
common and sons have begun to expect it: the practice of an elder brother
is now legally required in the matter of land and probably always has been
in the matter of cattle.

The difficulties are obvious when a man dies and leaves several sons
[240] but only a small-sized holding. To date no clear ruling has emerged and
unfortunately the African District Council did not deal specifically with
such details when introducing the new law. How much land an eldest
brother can reasonably retain for himself is perhaps not determinable in
practice except in specific relation to the nature, locality and fertility of the
holding in question, the plots already held by the man himself, the needs
and number of the younger brothers and any holdings they may have, and
[54] the location of the villages in which they severally live. There is also plenty
of scope for disagreement between half-brothers over portions of the paternal
holding which had been retained by the father himself for his own use; over
portions allocated to a wife who has borne no sons or whose sons have died,
and over permanent trees. The situation is still fluid and there has not yet
been time enough for a common and generally acceptable solution to be
established. Consequently each group of sons tries to solve its own particular
problems in this matter as best it can, torn between old values and new
attitudes and needs.

593 Relations between both full-brothers and half-brothers tend often to
428 be severely tried at times of inheritance. It is not primarily, I think, a case of
brothers' greed for valued land tending to overcome bonds of fraternity
and co-operation; but it is rather that a father's arable holding is often not
able to provide adequate amounts of arable land for each of his sons, and
yet they find the very greatest difficulty in obtaining land elsewhere. Already
the traditional kin-group comprising the sons and grandsons of a group of
[182] full-brothers had begun to break down even before land shortage became
serious. Now the group of full-brothers itself tends to be dispersed as men
obtain land where they can and it is endangered by dissensions over land
rights and land division. Increasingly, it seems, a Nyakyusa man is becoming
detached from his brothers and he tends to establish an independent family
unit comprising his immediate family alone – that is, himself with his wives
and children. We cannot attribute the whole cause of this modern trend to
land shortage and economic difficulties, of course, for involved also are
new ideas of individualism and of personal effort and reward, and the
decreasing need for the common support of brothers in social, economic
and ritual activities.

578 Younger brothers may, and sometimes do in fact, agree that the
423 paternal holding is already too small for further sub-division, or that the
428 small parts which can be made available to them are scarcely worth having –
especially if they live some distance away. On the other hand, the eldest
brother may already have obtained a holding in his own village and is
therefore willing to make only a small claim or none at all in the interests
of his juniors, and he may then divide the inheritance amongst them alone.
Usually, so acute is the dearth of land, the holding is divided between two
[311] or more brothers. It is split into small plots so that each brother has a share
of paddy, food-crop and banana land, and there are commonly a half acre
or even less in size nowadays. As already mentioned, by a kind of modern
[84] equity the local African courts generally favour the claims of the younger

[1] See Wilson, M., 1951, p. 129 and passim. "The social structure of the village is the expression of some one
[illegible] of independence and dependence etc." Ibid. p. 130.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 F167 Ngonde F167
Nyakyusa

423 all. Field boundaries have lost their earlier fluidity, when a plenty of land did not call for precise demarcation, and the only important changes now result from the land being left vacant or by the inevitable division of established holdings by inheritance or anticipatory inheritance.

In brief, then, the high premium given to land because of its modern scarcity value, and the enhanced authority of the headman in land affairs act together to preserve the individual's rights. The residual rights of the village, as group-owner of all land within the village boundary, do not affect the land-holder during his continued residence there.

[423] [691] The commonest type of dispute in land matters arises in inheritance, where a younger brother sues his senior in order to obtain or increase his share of the paternal holding (see page 21). That is to say, in general only where established holdings are being broken up does dispute arise and then, of course, only between the sons of the dead man. Disputes between neighbours in a village seldom are grave enough to be brought to court or even before the headman.

There are also many petty, semi-domestic laws which faithfully reflect the frequently poor relations between Nyakyusa husbands and wives in modern times.[1]

TABLE IV

NYAKYUSA LAND DISPUTES: CIVIL CASES, 1956

			No. of civil cases	*Land cases* No.	*Land cases* %	*Population per land case*	*Density of population*
691 423 [191]	Lake Plains ...	.. ..	1,277	186	1	867	201
	N.E. Highlands	.. ..	962	78	1.1	1,842	150
	Central Region	.. ..	1,900	15	1.1	6,000	100
	N.W. Highlands	.. ..	1,300	8	0.6	7,000	101

Based on returns of civil cases in local courts of first instance (W. Courts) for 1956. In 1955 the percentages were almost exactly the same as in 1956.

Several interesting points are suggested by these figures. Firstly, there is the larger proportion of land cases and the much smaller population per case in the Lake Plains, where land shortage is worst in relation to local demand, not only because of the higher density of population as such, but also because of the relatively larger acreages required for paddy cultivation. Secondly, in the Central Region of Nyakyusa country there is also a high density of population, but nevertheless only a few land cases; this may be attributed to the absence of cash-cropping and the absence, therefore, of a keen demand for land. On the other hand, the relatively numerous cases, or small population per case, in the north-eastern Highlands seem to result directly from a particularly densely populated area (Mwakaleli) where coffee cultivation is long established and the demand for land is exceptionally keen. In other words, as far as the figures for 1956 and 1955 show, there is a direct connection between land scarcity and the incidence of land disputes before the local courts (i.e. the more intractable disputes which go beyond the village headmen). General observation supports this conclusion. It may be expected in the future, therefore, that such cases will increase unless administrative action is taken to rationalize the inheritance laws with a view to minimizing the area of potential disagreement amongst the sons of a deceased man.

691 423 191 For comparative interest, in so far as they offer some indication, I append here data on other Districts in the Territory where land disputes are common.

1. In 1955, 38 per cent. of all civil cases in the lower courts were married disputes, including divorce cases, but there was only divorce only for every 27 which ended living in the country in that year.

311
233 Whereas in the Highland and Central regions the large numbers of cattle – in relation, that is, to the available pasture resources – are causing over-grazing and soil erosion, particularly in the hilly areas so often nowadays relegated to pasturage, on the other hand in the flood plains there does not appear, at least to the layman, to have been any serious effects on the land.
[24] The natural manuring of the paddy fields in the dry season is advantageous. In the Lake Plains it is the cattle rather than the land which suffer, but so far the Nyakyusa have done virtually nothing to meet the new conditions, other than to complain bitterly and fruitlessly.

The Young Men: Land Shortage and Labour Migration

423 The younger Nyakyusa men find increasing difficulty in obtaining arable land now that there are no longer vacant areas to be taken up, and the older men are no longer prepared to cede their land rights in favour of the younger generation, as they traditionally did. When occasional fields are left vacant, the young men must take their turn with their elders, who themselves are so chronically short of land – and the headmen commonly favour the older villagers with families as against the younger men. This means that in the high-density regions the majority of men under the age of about 30 years have little or no arable land, nor can they hope for it until the deaths of their fathers. In the congested village sites even their bananas plots may be smaller than is desirable for the provision of the staple food.

[28] The young man, then, is compelled to remain dependent on his father's
[29] and elder brother's holding; indeed, headmen often justify their refusals to allocate plots to young men on the express grounds that the latter must share their elders' fields. Thus the valued independence of the young Nyakyusa is severely restricted and it seems that tensions and difficulties are beginning
[30] to arise between fathers and sons, and between brothers, because of this. Sons are blamed for not doing their fair share in the family cultivation, fathers are blamed for giving their sons inadequate shares in crops and crop incomes. It will be remembered that one of the fundamental principles underlying Nyakyusa society and its age-village organization is the spatial segregation of parents and children (cf. page 22). Now they are inevitably being put into competition with one another over inadequate fields in a single holding.

The young men are severely restricted, if not altogether cut off, from the
[34] opportunity to cultivate paddy in their own fields and thus to earn their
[35] income at home, for paddy-growing is the only way of earning a living in the Lake Plains. Yet it is these younger men whose money demand is greatest, to buy clothing, bicycles and other store-goods, and to buy cattle for marriage payments. They are therefore strongly attracted by the ready opportunities for taking up wage-labour abroad, in the mines of the Rhodesias and South Africa where wages are high (see Gulliver, 1955).

With the best will in the world, where, as in the very high-density region, the average holding is little more than an acre and a half – when, that is, the older men themselves desire larger acreages for their own cultivation needs – it is not possible for a father to allow his son to take large shares in his fields. In some cases a father does give outright to his adult sons strips of his holding, but plots so provided are necessarily small. Quite as frequently a father does not consider it possible to break up his holding in his own lifetime, and sons are expected to assist in the common cultivation and to continue merely to be given a share in the family proceeds at harvest. It is not
[37] surprising, therefore, that very large numbers of young men from the Lake Plains migrate abroad to work. Only about one man in 20 has not been away at all before the age of about 25 years. Much higher proportions of men and larger numbers absolutely are temporarily absent from the Lake

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 F507 Nguude F507
Nyakyusa

and other duties applicable to a girl after marriage. The practical instruction takes place in or before a special hut in the village under the leadership of the *ebwepage* (*ewepage*). The girl is admonished by the *ewepage* to obey her parents without any delay, to perform the commands of her mother immediately, e. g. to clean the hut, and especially to show obedience when guests are present. Should the mother blame her daughter unjustly, she should not reply. (The girl had been blamed in the earlier discussion that she had not swept the hut when her mother required her to do it). Then her duties and conduct towards her future husband were inculcated. As a wife she must never accept anything from the hands of her husband without kneeling and stretching out both hands, and turning away her face with eyes cast down. Also as a wife she must not hold her head up

Some of the drummers.

when she is addressed by a man. As a wife she must be anxious to prepare her husband's meal always at the right time, that means, it has to be ready when her husband returns from the field. If she sees her husband coming from the field, then she has to go to meet him, and take his hatchet from him. Should her husband scold her, she is not to reply; but she may ask her neighbours for help. It is one of her duties to take care of the regular cleaning of the hut[a]. The ashes must always be removed by her from the fireplace. If there are only a few ashes on the fireplace she must remove them with her hands[b].

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[a] The place near the house where the *ewepage* are thrown down is called *ewepagilo*.

[b] Cf. *Marbesone*, p. 51, who refers to such moral instructions connected with puberty customs, probably at *Kawanga*; cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 88 (*Nyguude* people).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sons, between whom economic and religious bonds were strong, 121
might be liable to isolate themselves, but could not do so when 182
each brother and son lived in a different village. As among the northern Nguni and Tswana, who were organized in age regiments,[1] the principle of generation balanced the lineage principle, each holding the other in check.

Every society values co-operation: 'mutual aid' of one sort or another is a condition of social survival. The Nyakyusa rituals of kinship constantly reaffirm the mutual dependence of members of a lineage. They are 'members of one another' by virtue of their common blood, and what injures one may injure all. This is very clearly expressed in the rituals of death, twin birth, spearing, rotting the ropes, and protection against sorcery. The desire for health and plenty is the lever used to compel co-operation.

The elementary family of parents and children exists in every 121
society of which we have evidence and may be taken as an institu- 594
tion necessary to survival, biological and social, though its form varies. In the death, and puberty, and birth rituals the close character of the bonds between parents and children, between siblings, and between spouses, is expressed; and the polygynous form of the Nyakyusa family, the closer bonds between a man and his first wife and those of the same 'house', and the identification of alternate generations, are also manifested. Thus the importance of the primary ties of parents and children, and of the 'house' within the polygynous family, is enhanced.

Differences in status exist in every society and must do so since 121
leadership is necessary. Individuals move from one position to 554
another during the course of their lives, and all societies celebrate such changes, thereby compelling public acceptance of them, and impressing on the individuals concerned their new duties and responsibilities. These are expressed very pointedly in the Nyakyusa admonition to a bride, or widow, or the mother of twins; in the greeting accorded to the heir to the father of a family; and in the oration to the shade. The rituals are a symbolic weaning from childhood, from the bride's father's lineage, from a former marriage, or from deceased parents, and compel acceptance of a new position; clinging to the old spells madness and death. The conception of being 'born again' and making a new start, is directly

[1] Among the Pedi it was taken for full brothers to be initiated into the same regiment. G. M. Pope, 'Traditional systems of male education among the Pedi', *African Studies*, 9 (1950), p. 109.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

was not an individual one. True, a girl gave her formal consent in the marriage ritual, but the pressure on her to accept the husband selected for her by her kinsmen was almost irresistible. In the thirties Christian women who refused their husband's heir and lived alone, or married an unrelated man of their choice, were regarded by their pagan sisters as very daring, and little girls in pagan families took it as a matter of course that they should replace their dead sisters; today the right of a widow to choose whom she will marry is generally accepted, and the custom of replacing a dead woman by her sister has lapsed. 'Every girl wants her own husband nowadays', the old women say. Thus lineage obligations give way to individual freedom of choice in marriage. At the same time the rituals which emphasized the lineage are dropped or modified. The fearful fecundity of a double birth no longer appals men and the twin ritual which used to bring together all the living members of a lineage of three generations is not celebrated at all. At a puberty ritual a pagan girl may be given the *ilipiki* medicine, the symbol of 'the blood of the lineage' by her mother, but there is no seclusion and elaborate feasting, no sacrifice of the bull of puberty that her father's shades may 'move aside a little' to make way for the shades of her husband's lineage. Only at a funeral do kinsmen still gather and celebrate, for many still fear the shades, and at a funeral the heir is installed and the importance of property and the inheritance of it has not diminished one whit. As we have seen, the traditional religion was formulated in terms of kinship; the gods were senior kinsmen; but today God, *Kyala*, is no ancestor; to pagans as well as to Christians he is separate and supreme. Men are still classified by their lineages, and one of the topics of village questions is how Prince Charles can be heir to the British throne when his father is not of the house of Windsor; but already in the economic field, and increasingly in the religious, it is the family of parents and children which is now dominant, not the lineage.

Divorce is far more frequent than formerly, partly because women claim a greater freedom of behaviour than before, as well as the right of choosing their own husbands, and are supported by the courts. As one village headman put it, 'Formerly a father beat his daughter with a stick if she ran home and sent her back to her husband who also beat her.' The women reject the old pattern of subservience which was expressed in crouching to greet a man, and addressing him in a very deferential fashion; the men observe, and

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

563 constitution (about which they asked many questions) was a
622 democratic one; for, they said, the Administration always supported the chiefs against the commoners.

621 The villages to which commoner leaders are appointed differ from all other Bantu villages of which we have knowledge in that they consist of groups of age-mates, not groups of kinsmen; boys build with contemporaries and remain with them through life; girls join the villages of their husbands at marriage; therefore relatives, other than husband and wife and young children, do
622 not live together. Nevertheless kinship ties are important, for property circulates within the kinship group rather than within the village, and kinsmen are believed to be mystically interdependent, in a way in which fellow villagers are not. The most prized
[556] possession of the Nyakyusa are cattle, for cattle enable a man to marry, to live in comfort, to gain prestige by feasting his friends; and cattle pass along the roads of kinship. They pass between brothers, and half-brothers, and the sons of brothers; between fathers and sons; and between affines. Kinsmen also participate in common rituals, praying to common ancestors, and seeking protection from mystical dangers which are thought to travel, like
[578] cattle, along the roads of kinship. Ever fearful lest a quarrel among them should bring misfortune on all, they strive to live in harmony.

The range of kinship recognized varies somewhat with the status of the family concerned and the proximity and personalities of its members, but, generally speaking, economic and religious co-operation link the descendants of a common grandfather, and marriage between the descendants of a common great-grand-
[581] father is excluded. A legal marriage is effected by the passage of cattle from the groom's group to the bride's, and it is this passage which is said to create kinship (*ubukwa*), with the consequent mystical interdependence, between a man and his wife, and between the one partner in a marriage and the close kinsmen of
585 the other. Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan, and it is made
428 possible by the ten years' difference in the average marriage age of men and women. Girls are betrothed very young and finally join their husbands at puberty, while few pagan men marry under twenty-five. Inherited cattle are controlled by the older generation and polygyny is the prerogative of age. For property passes not directly from father to son, but from brother to brother,

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

rough each group of full brothers, until, when the last full 595
rother is dead, and the son of the eldest is an adult, the family 428
ock comes to him. Thus few men under forty (other than chiefs)
ave more than one wife. Of 3,000 tax-payers (presumed to be
8 years and over) in Selya, 34 per cent were bachelors, 37 per
ent monogamists, and 29 per cent polygynists. Plural marriages 595
reed wealth, for the polygynist is likely to command the labour 556
f many sons as well as several wives, and in due course he ex-
ects to receive the marriage cattle of many daughters.

Social status turns primarily on age, sex, and the control and 554
istribution of wealth. As we have seen, the position of a chief is 428
ereditary, but kinship with a chief does not carry office, nor are
e kinsmen of chiefs conspicuously wealthy. Every man in turn
opes to control the property attaching to the house into which
e was born, and all who live long enough do so. But there is a
elayed right of primogeniture, for the senior son of a senior
on inherits the bulk of the famly stock when it passed to his
eneration, and the eldest of each group of full brothers has a
pecial claim to the cattle coming in from the marriages of his
isters.

Seniority, whether within the ontext of the lineage, or of the 554
ierarchy of age-villages, is something respected in itself, but 556
ealth carries authority and presige only in so far as it is used
enerously, in hospitality: one man is great and distinguished
nkiya) because he feeds people, nother of little account because
e is poor or mean.

Women occupy a position very subordinate to men in Nyak- 562
ysa society. They play no part in public life, except in so far as [593]
e two great wives of a chief, and the first wife of a village head-
an co-operate with their husbands in rituals; and in the rela-
onship of husband and wife, as well as in that of father and
aughter, a woman is expected to show obedience and respect.
er deference is expressed conventionally in her crouching to [576]
eet men (*cide* Plate IX), and in her use of the submissive *tas*
Yes, my lord') when addressed by them. Having no great chiefs
nd little regard for rank, Nyakyusa men show no trace of sub-
rvience in their manner to each other, but they expect a meek
mpliance from all women. The only relationships with a male in
hich a woman may in some measure assert herself are those
hich she has with a brother, and with a brother's sons. Leader-

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 643 184 [764] a ruler.' It is relevant to add that cuttings of this tree strike easily in the soil and climate of Nyakyusa country. When a chief dies he is buried beside his trees, and gradually a thicket—a sacred grove—forms round them.

The young men spend much time feasting and dancing. Formerly not only did they raid cattle for food from neighbouring chiefdoms, but they also took cattle, milk, and bananas from their fathers' villages. And they still do the latter, for they say: 'We are now the owners of the country.' The milk and bananas are often sent by the old chief, but 'if the chief is stingy, they teach him a lesson by going and *taking* bananas, saying: "We are important people."' Great emphasis is laid on this right of the young men to take food: one group, the mates of the first heir of a senior chief, boasted to us: 'We came out with grandeur, we ate many men's cattle.'

342 621 After a month or two the members of each new village move off to build on a site of their own, and the wives of those who are married join them. Wives do not come to the first temporary shelters. The senior of the new villages remains on the site of the temporary shelters where fire was made, the ritual trees planted, and the hearth-stones of the senior headman established with magic. Gradually each member builds himself a permanent hut.

621 561 The old men move aside to make room for their sons. If land is short they may move on to the site on which a boys' village formerly was, or there may be other land available. Whatever the position, adequate land must be provided for the young men's villages. And, we were told, 'We old men are glad to move, we are glad our sons are so many and we leave the land to them.' Or again: 'The old men move because new fire has come; the young men have made themselves into new people, hence they cannot build on their old sites but on new ones. Perhaps the old men will succeed them, for they may build in the boys' village where their sons were, or if there is space they go elsewhere. But the old men rejoice greatly, for their sons have "come out".' Nevertheless there are sometimes disputes between villages of different generations regarding a particular site (*vide* Document, p. 188).

643 582 585 A few months after the 'coming out' each of the two young chiefs marries two wives. A young chief may be married already, but the two whom he now takes rank as his great wives (*abeke*

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

abakulumba) and their eldest sons are his two heirs in the chieftainship. Young girls, daughters of neighbouring chiefs, are carried off with a show of force from their fathers' homes, by the young chief's men, who themselves later contribute to the herd of cows sent to regularize the position. The two great wives are thus married not solely with the cows of their husband, but also with those of the men whose sons their sons will one day rule. The duty of arranging the match lies with the village headmen of the old chief, and it is said that they are often guided in their choice by dreams. 643 582 595 [622]

The girls who are carried off are just about to reach puberty, and they stay at the house of one of the men of the old chief until their periods begin. When both have reached puberty they are initiated, not at their fathers' houses, as are ordinary girls, but in the country of their husband, and both together. At their initiation the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the old retiring chief) play the part normally played by a girl's parents and their neighbours, while the young chief and his men take the usual part of a husband and his friends. And then, after the ceremonies are over, the two girls are given to the young chief as his wives. Houses are built for them separately, i.e. in the senior age-village of the new chiefdom for the first wife, in the next senior village for the second wife; and in this separation of dwelling place is already apparent the future division of the chiefdom between their sons. 643 583 595 881

Within the chiefdom, and among the wives and children of the chief two 'sides' (*imibafa*) are recognized. Usually, in each country there are, at its beginning, at least two age-villages and half the wives of the chief on either side. This distinction of two sides is important in succession, a son from each side eventually inheriting half the country. 428 616

From the time of the 'coming out' of the two young chiefs till the day of their own father's death there exists between him and them a delicate balance of prestige and power. Each of the three, traditionally, has judicial authority in his own age-villages, but appeals in difficult cases may be taken from either of the young chiefs and their village headmen to the old chief and his village headmen, while the religious duties of chieftainship are exercised entirely by the old chief. But in the old days it was the young chief who fought and fed men. 'Young chiefs used to lead their 643 642

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

time, and providing meat feasts at funerals and at the initiation and marriage of daughters. 264 574

As it is proper for men to eat with their equals it is improper for them to eat with their juniors, or with women. In the past fathers and sons never ate or drank together. Nowadays they sometimes do so, even though conservative pagans, especially if the fathers and sons have been working together. Three reasons are adduced for the change: first, the example of Europeans and Swahili; secondly, the fact that the country is at peace and it is safe for all the men to drink together, whereas formerly, when there was constant danger of attack, the young men were forbidden to drink at all; and thirdly the fact that young men earn money and buy beer for themselves which they may invite a 'father' to share (*vide* Document p. 194). When the Nyakyusa drink beer they replenish the pot repeatedly with boiling water, and men expect to have the water boiled for them by a woman. As Mwambuputa explained, 'Sometimes my son brings his pot (of beer) to my place and calls his friends saying: "We will take the pot to mother's house and she will pour in water for us." Then they come to my place, and they invite me to drink, and I accept, and we drink together. How can I grudge my son beer when I have some? Did he and his friends not entertain me?' The change turns on the fact that a young man can earn money and buy beer for himself while yet unmarried. Formerly no unmarried man commanded millet for brewing. Now, when he is drinking in his father's homestead he cannot but invite his father to join him. 264 593 178

Women commonly eat alone with their young children and unmarried daughters. Sometimes co-wives who are good friends eat together, but they have no obligation to do so, and in a big homestead perhaps only two wives will eat together and each of the others eat alone. More usually a woman sends a dish of food to each co-wife to eat in her own hut. For a woman to eat food with a man is considered quite impossible. In those families in which men no longer ate with neighbours one or two ate with their young sons, but we heard of none who ate with their wives. The example of Europeans did not influence them to this extent. 264 595

It is admitted that women also enjoy company and profit from it, and it is considered good that they should get on with their fellows, but there is no suggestion that it is a woman's duty to 264 462 574

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 that adolescent sons are not permitted to visit their homes after
834 dark, and when they come by day for their meals they are
606 often required to eat in the open court-yard and not 'hide in the bananas or huts' lest they make love to their fathers' wives. They do not sit about in the men's village. Thus, although the villages of fathers and sons adjoin until the sons 'come out', the young men are physically separated from their young 'mothers'.

The feeling that sons should not be cognizant of the sex activities of parents, and that father-in-law and daughter-in-law should avoid one another is not, of course, peculiar to the Nyakyusa; all we seek to show is that the extreme elaboration of these avoidances among the Nyakyusa is dependent upon the existence of age-villages. Whereas a Pondo daughter-in-law must never [171] walk across the courtyard of the kinship village in which she lives, or approach the cattle byre or the men's side of her mother-in-law's hut, lest she come too near her father-in-law, yet, living in the same village, she necessarily sees him daily; the Nyakyusa daughter-in-law, living in a separate village, need not (and should not) set eyes on her father-in-law after her marriage. Where the territorial segregation of fathers and sons is blurred (as at Rungwe) there father- daughter-in-law avoidance is less strictly observed. The Nyakyusa regard this extreme form of avoidance as a peculiarity of their culture which has been imparted by them to the small groups (such as Ndali, Penja, and Nyika) whom they are assimilating.

Father- and daughter-in-law incest is clearly a potential danger in a society in which cattle are controlled by middle-aged and elderly men, who frequently have to choose between taking another wife themselves and giving cattle for a son's marriage, and who are accustomed to marrying young girls of an age suitable to be wives to their sons. But we cannot show that the danger is *greater* among the Nyakyusa than it is among other patrilineal cattle people such as the Pondo, Zulu, or Swazi, who do not find it necessary to segregate fathers- and daughters-in-law in different villages.

On the other hand the danger (common to all polygynous societies) of sons seducing their fathers' wives is exaggerated among the Nyakyusa by the absence of circumcision, the late
595 marriage age of men, the very early betrothal and marriage of
582 girls, the high degree of polygyny, and the practice of sons

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

inheriting their stepmothers. Where circumcision is practised a grown woman scorns sex relations with an uncircumcised boy, therefore uncircumcised youths are not potential lovers of their fathers' junior wives; but with the Nyakyusa there is no ceremony to mark the sexual maturity of a male, and adolescent youths are acceptable to young married women of their own age. And not only does the wide difference in the age of men and girls at first marriage allow of a high degree of polygyny, but the very early betrothal of girls (over whom their future husbands have exclusive sexual rights except during the initiation ritual) means that there are very few girls available to the unmarried men. The institution of girls' huts (*isaka*) has disappeared among the Nyakyusa owing to the lack of nubile girls who are not already betrothed, and the period of seclusion at initiation (when betrothed girls are available to men other than their husbands) is short. The contrast with Ngoni society, in which girls do not marry until sixteen to twenty-two, and have several years of great sex freedom before marriage[1] is marked. We suggest that it is because unmarried girls are so scarce and lusty bachelors so many, that the seduction of the wives of polygynists is frequent, and homosexual practices are general.[2] Nyakyusa insist that formerly seduction was rare,[3] and possibly the impulse towards it was indeed less strong when girls married rather later and *isaka* existed (*vide supra*, p. 87).

Lastly, the Nyakyusa permit the inheritance of a father's widows by his sons, a practice regarded as improper by certain other peoples (e.g. the Pondo[4]) who practise the levirate. A son is required to treat all his father's wives as 'mothers' while his father and father's full brothers are alive, and intercourse with a father's wife is treated as a heinous offence necessitating special purification; but after the death of the father and his full brothers these same women become wives of their former 'sons'—with the limitation that a man cannot inherit his own mother or her kins-

[1] Shaxon, op. cit., pp. 180-6; M. Kohler, *Marriage Customs in Southern Natal*, pp. 10-22; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 135-6.

[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, p. 408 (footnote), hints that similar practices exist among the Nyamwezi Tonga and elsewhere before adolescence only. The Nyakyusa certainly continue after puberty.

[3] MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 63, states that the unacknowledged child of an adulterous union was equally put to death.

[4] Shaxon, op. cit., p. 200.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the Kikuyu)[1] that the equalitarian emphasis is related to the emphasis on age-organization. As we have seen, hereditary office exists among the Nyakyusa but the power of chief and hereditary priest is limited at every point by the power of the leaders of age-sets who are chosen each generation from among commoners. That democratic (*i.e.* non-hereditary) leadership is not a necessary concomitant of a developed age-organization is, however, proved by the fact that among the Zulu, Swazi, Pedi, and Tswana, whose military organization was based on age-regiments, rank is stressed, and the leaders of age-sets are always sons or kinsmen of the chief. 621 561

It is possible, however, that the low status of Nyakyusa women relative to men is partly dependent on the age-village organization. It is most obviously related to the high degree of polygyny, and the fact that the position of the various wives is not clearly determined by date of marriage, birth, or allocation of property. For a commoner the first wife betrothed is his great wife, who takes precedence in ritual, but there is no ranking of houses and allocation of the bulk of property to different houses as among the Nguni, nor the same strong pressure on a husband to visit each wife in rotation. Instead there is acute competition between a man's various wives for the position of favourite, with a disproportionate share of milk and meat and of her husband's attention. We do not suggest that there is no competition among the wives of a Pondo or Zulu polygynist, but we argue that competitive tendencies have freer play among the Nyakyusa,[2] and that this competition depresses the status of women in relation to men. 562 595

Like the kinship organization, the age-village organization favours men. As we have seen, a main end of age-villages, in the Nyakyusa view, is to allow men the enjoyment of congenial company, that is the company of friends and equals. A village consists of a group of male contemporaries and their dependants; ideally, the men live together all their lives and form a close-knit group of equals, between whom mutual loyalty, hospitality, and affability is fostered from childhood. Those who move tend to go to villages in which they already have close friends. The women, 621 561 562

[1] J. Kenyatta, op. cit., pp. 188-9.

[2] Unfair division of milk between wives is said by some Nyakyusa to anger the ancestors who cause the cows to give blood in place of milk; nevertheless unequal allocation of milk is a much commoner cause of complaint than it is among the Pondo.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 561 562 on the other hand, come from many villages, and they move from village to village more than men, because most women are inherited at least once in their lives. Nor do the women form an age-set, for men inherit wives as old, or older than themselves, and they continue to marry young brides until they themselves are elderly. A village thus contains women of all ages, the older ones often being quite late-comers to it. There is neither the unity of a kinship group, with leadership of mother or grandmother, as among a matrilineal people like the Bemba, nor the leadership of the mother-in-law as among the patrilineal Nguni and Sotho peoples. It is true that among the latter peoples the leadership of women devolves on a man's senior wife when his mother is dead, but the pattern has developed in a society in which daughters-in-law usually live for a long time in the same homestead as their mother-in-law, whereas among the pagan Nyakyusa a woman rarely joins her own son until she is decrepit, long after his marriage. When the Nguni or Sotho chief wife is obeyed by her co-wives it is as the successor of her mother-in-law; indeed on the latter's death she is often referred to by junior wives as 'mother'. Where women have authority in a patrilineal society it is usually as mother, or grandmother, or father's sister. But there are none with such positions in the context of the age-village; the office of headman is not hereditary so there is no mother of the heir, and the headman's own mother and sisters normally live elsewhere.

562 613 595 Such solidarity and leadership as exist among women in pagan Nyakyusa society are within the group of women of the same lineage who live together. Great emphasis is laid on the propriety of a wife bringing a younger sister, or brother's daughter, as a junior wife for her husband (ukwabela): this is felt to be a compliment to the husband and a comfort to the wife, proof that the marriage has been a success. Co-wives who are of the same lineage are very closely identified, their children being treated almost as full siblings, and they themselves co-operating in everything.

562 795 One of the marked changes in contemporary Nyakyusa society is the development of leadership among women in the Christian congregations.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Nganda F317
Nyakyusa

misfortune and the rituals are distinct. In theory, when the shades are angry the essential offering is that made in the sacred banana grove or on the hearth; it is eaten by the grandsons of the most recently dead, and whether neighbours partake or not depends upon the generosity of the officiant; whereas when neighbours are angry there is no offering in the grove or at the hearth, the neighbours are feasted, admit anger and express forgiveness.

However, neighbours are slow to admit responsibility (for to curse someone comes close to witchcraft) and in some cases there is both a formal feast for the neighbours and a prayer to the shades, and it is left uncertain where final responsibility rests. The following texts illustrate this:

MWAIKAMBO: It is the custom among us Nyakyusa to marry many wives, mature ones and young ones, so if a man has sons at his home it sometimes happens that one of them makes love to one of his father's wives. Perhaps they commit adultery in secret, perhaps he runs off with her to a distant chiefdom. Then the father breaks off relations with him.

The son, wherever he is, learns that he has been cursed by his father and his body becomes like goose flesh. If the son is wise he gathers his property and returns to his father. He takes a friend with him and goes into the house of one of his father's neighbours. His friend and his father's neighbour speak together. 'I have come to return unto my father because I have done wrong.' He tells the neighbour what they have brought to offer the father—usually a cow and a bull. Then that neighbour seeks three comrades or perhaps four or five, and they go to pacify their irate fellow, saying: 'Our child has returned. He knows that he has done wrong towards you, but we have received him because he has confessed humbly and begged forgiveness.' His father refuses furiously and almost spears himself in his passion. His fellows pacify him for the whole day, or perhaps two or three days, then at last he agrees. Then the young man and his fellows bring the cow and the bull. The father also calls together many of his fellows and he seeks beer and cooks food. They gather together at the father's homestead and the father says: 'My son has come and admitted that he has done wrong, asking that I forgive him and saying: 'I did not know what I was doing, these are the cattle which I have brought', and the others agree. Then they kill the bull. They roast some meat. The father carries one side of it, the son the other and the village headman cuts it in the middle, and the father and son each eat their piece. This is the blessing (ubungi), meaning that there is kinship between them now. They eat together. Then all the people eat. Also with the beer it is like this. The village headman picks a straw and puts it in the beer, hands it to the father who drinks, and then to the son. Then other people drink, and they

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngoñde FN17
Nyakyusa

find it. There are many cases like that. My friends in the age-village will go to a diviner who will declare that the shades are angry because I do not care for my father.' If a daughter makes a runaway marriage her father is angry and it is believed that either she may not conceive or her baby may be ailing until the marriage-cattle and bull of puberty have been given by her husband and accepted by her father.

The respect and obedience due to a father is due to his heir, and in certain circumstances to his sister also; while on his part the heir has the same obligations to his juniors as the deceased had. Filombe cited the example, already quoted, of a man quarrelling with his dead father's sister over the distribution of the marriage-cattle for his own sister, and the girl failing to conceive because of the anger of her father's sister. If a son, whose parents are dead, neglects to provide his sister with the customary gifts of food when she returns to her husband after a visit to her 'father', he may become impotent: 'Those below are angry and when he has begotten twins he will have trouble at the ritual.' Or the girl may fall ill. 'She thinks: "Who is my father? This is my father, but he does not care for me."' The mystical power of a senior relative is linked directly with his obligation to give gifts:

> My father's elder half-brother has power over me only if he has given marriage-cattle for my father or nurtured him. If he has given him cattle to marry a wife then he has power over him. . . . My superior (*mkale gwanga*) is he who gives me everything.

Favouritism in a polygynous family, shown in the unfair division of milk or meat or fish by the husband between his wives, is thought to anger the shades, which cause his cows to bleed from the udder when milked, or prevent fish entering his traps, and so do the bad temper and insulting language of a quarrelsome wife. Mwakwelebeja explained that:

> If a woman is bad-tempered when she is making beer the beer goes sour. If my wife and I quarrel my shades are angry and the beer is spoiled. I say to my wife: 'You have spoiled the beer because you do not listen to what I say.'

Neglect of his words by the heir is a wrong-doing frequently mentioned.

> It is said that if I neglect my brother's children he and my father will be very angry, they will not come to meet me when I die, as the

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

he takes such children away, leaving a cow as payment 586
to his late wife for bringing them up. The frantic appeals of the mother, when her child is being taken away from her, make a most distressing scene. I have been implored by mothers, kneeling at my feet, or rolling on the ground in agony, to intercede for them; but native and British law here coincide, and, apart from an appeal to the husband to forego his rights, nothing can be done. And any interference is inadvisable for the child's own sake, for there is reason to suspect that fathers deprived of what they consider their rights, take measures quietly to put the children to death. In the past the acknowledged [illegible]
child of adultery was openly put to death; to-day the husband may claim it if it is a girl, for a girl is "cattle"; but a boy he, in most cases, entirely ignores.

There is formally no limit to the number of wives 595
a man may have, except the limit of his ability to part with cattle. But while polygamy was always lawful, it was not always expedient: warriors were often monogamous in practice until they reached an age when but little fighting was likely to be expected of them. And there were always men who never had more than one wife, two being a very common number for others. While there is a sentiment among some women in favour of monogamy, it is a very slow growth. There are women who will not marry Christians, because the wife of a Christian, being alone, has to do all the work, whereas in the other case, many wives make light work for each.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

595 There are a few heathen women who do not wish their husbands to take other wives, but many who urge them to do so. Another wife is like a servant in the house, and the position of the principal wife (who is not necessarily the first) is improved when her husband adds to the number of her more or less obedient juniors. Formally they are her sisters; in reality they are her servants, and must always answer her demands with the polite response "*ta*." The husband also gains in importance as he acquires one wife after another. When the children are grown up, they are dispersed to various villages, and the father is always "feared" in such places, because he has sons or daughters who will see to it that he is properly honoured when he pays them a visit.

553 585 Husband and wife take new names at marriage; but they are for private use only, the old names being used by their friends. The new names, which are given in the presence of witnesses, indicate that the old life is past, and that new duties and privileges now bind the couple to each other.

593 422 The position of the wife is guarded in many ways. Her father and brothers are always ready to take up her quarrel, even to the extent of fighting her husband if need be. She owns property, but she retains it [586] only so long as she is a wife: divorce separates her from husband and children, and also from all the household goods of which she is otherwise mistress. The husband hoes the garden, but the produce belongs to the wife; he may not take anything without her consent, even to feed his friends. If one wife

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

576 the road, and all spears must be lowered from the "ready" position, as must axes or other weapons. It is *mwiko* to attend to one's personal comfort in a public place.

583 584 The prohibitions connected with women are very numerous, and only a selection is given. A pregnant woman may not go near food in any condition, growing, being threshed, or being cooked; nor may she go near beer that is being prepared. If she goes out of the house, she must not turn back in the doorway; the ancestors are there; she must go right out, and if she needs to go in again, she must do it from a pace or so from the door. The penalty is the death of the child she is carrying. An interesting prohibition is that against going behind anyone, and it applies specially though not exclusively to women. The incised medicine of the person behind whom she passes loses its virtue; but the evil may be averted by the person turning round to face her. A woman must not sweep rubbish out of the house; she must lift it out; to sweep it out is to scatter her husband's wealth.

595 The younger wife must not begin sewing or planting until the elder has begun; she must not sleep at night nearer the fire than the elder; she must carry loads for the elder wife, and be generally in a subordinate position. There is no reluctance on the part of the first wife to see her husband taking others; the more he has the greater is her position. A singular prohibition is that which forbids a man to take his widowed mother home to care for her; he must care

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

for her where she is, or at any rate at a distance from his own house. 575

Twins are among the greatest of misfortunes; and along with twins are counted children born feet first. This subject is dealt with separately, and it needs only to be noted that parents are segregated, must not speak even to each other except in whispers, must not drink milk, lest the cow should dry up, or give only water. The mother must not pass behind anyone without asking for permission, which is given by clapping hands; nor may she pass her own father without a ceremony in which she throws dust over his head. This goes on until another child is born, or until about five years have elapsed. 745 784

It is *mwiko* for a dog to drink the milk of a cow that has recently calved; the cow will dry up. The same result will follow if strangers go into the house while cows are being milked. It is forbidden to common people to eat new season's food until chiefs and village headmen and twins have eaten first; and even they eat only when the first fruits have been mixed with medicine by the doctor. The first fish of the season must not be taken to the village. It is eaten at the river by the boys. It belongs to the spirits. To make a sucking noise with the lips is *mwiko*, being a token of impudence; it may also lead to accusation of witchcraft. Never steal from a blacksmith; the scraps of iron you steal will produce a noise in your throat like the noise of his bellows, and presently you will die. 784

For a man to see his daughter-in-law, no matter 606

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FW17 Nigeria FW17
Nigeria

600 important relationships of kinship and affinity. Marriage cattle are not kept by the bride's father, but are distributed by him among her brothers for their marriages, and among his own brothers and half-brothers, who in turn give him cattle when their own daughters marry.

● 98 Half-brothers do not generally exchange cattle, but unless they do so there are no strong bonds of kinship between them. A polygynist usually counts the relationship of 'milking each other's cows', between his senior son and the oldest of each group of full-brothers by his other wives. He gives some of the marriage cows received for a daughter to one of her half-brothers, the latter being placed under an obligation to return the cows to the girl's oldest full brother some day from the marriage cattle of a sister or daughter of his own. The exchange cows begin usually continues as sisters and daughters marry, and only lapses in the third generation, before the principals quarrel and take legal action for 'separation'. There is balance in drawn up of the cows exchanged from the beginning of the relationship, and the kinship is broken. The two then 'separated' have no mutual obligations and do not attend each other's funerals.

602 Half-brothers may be linked by blood if their mothers are close kin; they may also
938 be linked by cattle exchanges. The laws of inheritance make the full brothers of a man his few heirs, then his half-brothers linked by blood, then those linked by cattle have precedence over other half-brothers.[1]

604 The bond between a man and his mother's brother is expressed in terms of the passage of cattle. As the mother's brother married with the mother's cattle, her eldest son has the right to make free with his property in his lifetime, the right to receive one cow to set up a herd of his own, and a reversionary right of inheritance, if the mother's brother dies without heirs, but son can claim the particular with obtained with and the particular property of the cattle given for his own mother.

606 There is a strict custom of father and daughter-in-law avoidance. A woman may never speak to, approach, or look at her husband's father, on pain of death through the witchcraft of malignant neighbours. The prohibition is extended from her own father-in-law to all his classificatory brothers, and in the basis of the age-village system.[2] A man must also avoid his mother-in-law, but this prohibition is relaxed after the birth of a child.[3] The affinal relationship is also expressed by the obligation of a man to bring a cow to the funeral of his wife's father or brother, and to give one at the death of his own son-in-law. The former may count as part of his marriage payments in case of a claim for refund.[4]

601 The main kinship terms are as follows:

Ndama = brother-in-law or sister-in-law; used by a man for all husbands of his 'sisters', all 'brothers' of his wives, and for the son of his wife's brother, since he has a right to marry that man's sister; by a woman for all wives of her 'brothers' and all 'sisters' of her husband.

Mkaphe = parent-in-law or child-in-law; used for the husband of a daughter, or for the parent of a wife or husband (a daughter-in-law is called by the special name of *Mamamma*). The wife of the wife's brother is called *Mkaphe*, as she is the mother of a potential wife, and of a brother-in-law.

[1] Wilson, n. [illegible] & [illegible], n. [illegible] & n.
[2] Ibid., n. [illegible] (pp. [illegible]); Mackenzie, [illegible], pp. [illegible] and [illegible].
[3] Mackenzie, n. [illegible], p. [illegible].
[4] Wilson, n. [illegible]

534 live with her husband until at least three cows have been given. One of the bulls is only given if the girl is virgin at her initiation rite, and this bull is given to her mother. The loss of inheritance and the system of marriage by cattle payments ensure that cattle will be in the hands of the elder men. In polygamous men are seen over forty-five.[1]

535 The first wife married is the chief wife, and is entitled to respect and obedience from her co-wives. Her first son is her husband's chosen heir. A man cannot lightly divorce his first wife during the lifetime of his own father who provided the cattle
536 with which she was married. Divorce is effected by the return of the marriage cattle. Usually the woman has a lover who will pay cows to redeem her; if she refuses to go back to her husband there is no means of compelling her to do so, though in pre-European times her father and the chief might send her back. In such a case the husband would be entitled to his original payments plus their increase.[2] Men do not demand divorce for adultery unless it is persistent.[3] Divorce is often sought for very trivial reasons.[4] If the parental uncles have helped the groom to collect his marriage cattle, the beasts are redistributed to their original donors after they have been returned to the husband.[5]

537 A man whose wife dies can claim a substitute or the refund of his cattle. When a
538 man dies his widows pass to his heir who takes them all as wives, if he is a brother of the dead man; if the heir is a son he takes all except his own mother and the wives who are his close kin. Inherited wives have the same land rights as others.[6]

Inheritance

539 Brothers inherit before sons, then half-brothers (Sukwi half-brothers before other half-brothers). When all the brothers are dead the property and wives of each pass to each son's eldest son.[7] This rule also applies to the Ngonongo and Iwa.[8] The heir assumes the full obligations of father to his younger brothers and is responsible for their marriages; they live for him and are fed by his wives as are unmarried sons.[9] The sister's son only inherits if all men patrilineal kinsmen are dead or are minors.[10]

The above applies to commoners' inheritance only. For chiefs, succession and inheritance may follow different principles. For instance, in succession to local chiefdoms, two or more sons would divide the chiefdom. Among the Ngonde the Kyungu and the great chiefs were not chosen according to strict genealogical right, but were selected from the appropriate lineage according to their wealth, generosity, and courage. In the succession to the great chiefdoms, there was formerly a difference of procedure in the two royal lines: that of Ngidenge, where the nobles of Ngonde were seen by the Kyungu to help to select the successor; that of Ngwira, the line of the female side, where the nobles of Ngonde merely announced the great consequence to discuss with them who was to succeed. Nowadays the difference between the two lines has disappeared, and the Ngidenge custom is followed for both. If the genealogical heir

[1] Wilson, n. verb. on corr. n.
[2] Wilson, n. verb. p. 40.
[3] Ibid., p. 41.
[4] Ibid., n. verb. on chg. 41. Gardiner, n. verb. p. 40.
[5] Wilson, n. verb. on 11 and 40. Johnston, chap. p. 407.
[6] Gardiner, verb. p. 40.
[7] Gardiner, verb. p. 40.
[8] Wilson, n. verb. p. 41.
[9] Gardiner, verb. p. 40.
[10] Wilson, n. verb. p. 40.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Nyakyusa are, predominantly, a patrilineal people, for inheritance normally follows the male line. They differ, however, from the patrilineal peoples of Europe in that brothers inherit before sons. Inherited wealth is thus mainly kept in the hands of the older men, though they are under certain obligations towards their "sons" (whether own or classificatory) in their use of it. Marriage involves a transfer of anything from four to thirty head of cattle from the bridegroom to his father-in-law, and consequently the chief obligation which an older man has, both to his own sons and to the sons of any kinsman from whom he has inherited, is to provide them, in due time, with cattle for marriage. But this obligation is not an absolute one, it depends, in part, upon the due fulfilment by each "son" of his filial duties, which are, firstly, to hoe his father's fields diligently and, secondly, to maintain a respectful bearing towards him. Unmarried men have no gardens of their own, they work their fathers' land and eat the produce of it which their mothers cook.

Under modern conditions money for tax and clothes is necessary both to father and son, and very many young men visit the nearby Lupa gold fields regularly, for periods of a few months at a time, to earn it. A youth who always brings back to his parents after each spell of absence tax money and some presents is held to have done all his duty and he will be given marriage cattle just as soon and as readily as if he had spent all his time hoeing at home. And if he earns more, sufficient to purchase some of his marriage cattle for himself, still his father benefits, for the old man has then to spend fewer beasts from his own stock. But the Lupa sands food as well as labour and some unmarried men stay continuously at home and engage in the production of crops; after the family needs have been met the surplus is sold and from the proceeds the father pays his own tax and his sons' and buys clothes for them as well.

Hoeing, which is the hardest part of Nyakyusa cultivation, is normally done by men, planting; weeding, reaping and cooking by women. But some women nowadays do some hoeing too—if their husbands are away at work or if for any other reason they find it difficult to get enough ground prepared for them. Traditionally, I was told, women never used a hoe at all.

Polygyny is the rule rather than the exception among middle-aged men, and in a polygynous household, as we shall see, each wife has her own garden plots. The institution of polygyny has many other elements besides the economic, but the economic is not the least important of them: the taking of additional wives is the best capital investment which is open to an ordinary, uneducated, Nyakyusa peasant. A Nyakyusa wife is not her husband's property, she is his wife; but as family relationships are, among the Nyakyusa, the basis of economic activity, so the more wives

S:Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and children a man has to assist him the more wealth he can produce. The man and his unmarried sons hoe, his wives and young daughters plant, weed and harvest, fetch water, cut firewood and cook the food; and in other practical activities there is equally fruitful co-operation within the household group.

When a man marries he takes his wife from her father's village to his own where he lives with a group of contemporaries. Each village is in origin an age-group, formed by the sons of some village of adult men who leave home one by one as they reach the age of ten to twelve years and build together on ground set aside for them by their fathers. It is not decent, the Nyakyusa maintain, for a boy to sleep at home after any vigorous interest in sexual activity has awakened in him; and so, for the fifteen years or more between leaving home and marriage, he sleeps with bachelor friends in a boys' village. He and a group of friends go round in turn to the houses of their respective parents for meals, and each hoes his own parents' fields, but all return to the boys' village at night.

As the members of the boys' village grow older, younger boys just leaving home begin to be refused admittance to it and so either start a fresh village of their own nearby or else join a village of their own contemporaries which has already been started. Boys' villages are thus forever hived off from the villages of men. At first a boys' village covers but little ground for, as its members are unmarried, the houses are small and close together and there are no garden lands attached to it. But as the young men marry one by one the village expands, houses are built bigger and further apart and some adjacent ground is brought under cultivation, until at last it assumes the normal aspect of a village of adult men.

A village thus consists of a male age-group with wives and children attached. Wives may be of *any* age and there is no such formal age grouping among them as among the men. And, as time goes on, some men too may enter the village who are not exact contemporaries of its other members. When a man dies his heir, either a younger brother or a son, often comes to live in his village; sons are strangers who apply for land in a village over, I think, refused on the ground of unsuitable age. Villages vary considerably in size but average forty to fifty households.

At first a village of boys, as we have said, is built on ground allotted to it by the village of their fathers; but a new allotment is made ceremonially at the "coming out" (*ubusoke*) of the young chiefs.

Every generation each chiefdom of the Nyakyusa is divided into two halves, a fact which is hard to understand until it is realized that the Nyakyusa consist of a number of immigrant groups which have, until very recently, been expanding their territory within the district and

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

A woman, then, uses her share of food to feed not only herself

and her children but also for her husband, and his guests and for gifts; she has, however, every right both to entertain her own women friends to meals and to make gifts of food to her relatives, and she does so when she chooses without consulting her husband. Co-wives entertain one another if they are on friendly terms and even sometimes make a habit of taking their meals together; but this is entirely a matter of personal inclination, it is in no way necessarily inherent in their relationship; there is no community of property between them.

This sharp division of property between fellow wives is well exemplified in the following story from a Kukwe family. I was discussing with a young man what happened if, in a polygynous household, the crops of one wife were a failure. He assured me that no action could possibly be taken to compel the others to give her a share of their crops, either for food or for seed; if they did give her a share it was kindness and good-will alone that would prompt their doing so: "I saw it happen once," he continued, "in my own father's house. He had three wives and had hoed maize plots for them and divided them up, and each had planted her own maize. But, when it began to grow, that on one wife's plot was very poor while that on the others' plots was abundant, and at the harvest the one wife reaped very little maize indeed. So when the harvest was all gathered my father asked the other two whether, as they had plenty of maize, they would not give some of it to their fellow. At first they refused emphatically to give her any, saying that it had just happened so, they had reaped plenty and she had reaped little or none, but it was not their custom to divide up their crops and she, if she had reaped plenty and they had reaped little or none, would certainly not have given any of her crop to them. And they asked whether she was his favourite that he made such a suggestion. Let him, they said, spend a shilling or two on buying food for her himself. My father entreated them but still they refused.

"But day after day for a long time he went on entreating and persuading them, pointing out that she had children to feed and asking if they wished her to die of hunger; he, he said, was not in any way compelling them to hand over their food, it was entirely for them to decide whether they would not each give her a little; if they disliked doing so, well there was no more to be said. And at last they began to be persuaded, they discussed it all, the two of them together, and the fact that she had children to feed, and each gave her a portion of her own crop. And later, when this maize had all been consumed, they gave her seed also for the next year's planting."

I then asked if the one whose crop had failed was, in fact, his father's favourite wife or not. "No, she was not, one of the other two was his

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

favourite. What they said about her being, perhaps, his favourite was just their way of putting it." 421 515

Before passing to the discussion of the disposal of surplus crops we must dwell a little on the importance of a fair division of land between the several wives of a polygynist. Not only garden plots but also the bananas growing on the homestead are divided between them. Each wife is allotted a number of banana stems and is responsible for keeping their roots clear of weeds and she is also expected to weed and sweep the adjacent portion of the open space (ulubingile). In the sweeping her husband will often assist her, her fellow wife will not. The bunches which grow on her own banana stems are her property and not even her husband will eat them without consulting her, save in exceptional circumstances. In every polygynous household, then, a division of garden plots and bananas is made between the wives, and, as it is made by the husband, it is a most important element of their relationships with one another.

For every man with more than one wife has a favourite, and, if he allows his affection for her to express itself in an inequitable division of land, then there is trouble in store: "Each wife is the owner of a plot (ulupaka) and each harvests and weeds it and keeps the food separately. The wives help each other if friendly but each wife must have her own plot—a maize plot, a bean plot, a cassava plot, a plot of sweet-potatoes, and so on. The bananas also are divided between the wives.

"A polygynist when he hoes his gardens is always afraid to give to any one wife a bigger plot than to another. For it is thought that the wife who gets the smaller plot will whisper complaints of her husband among the people; and whispering complaints of a man brings witches to kill him. It is feared that in such a case, either the husband or else the favoured wife will be killed (by witchcraft). In consequence a man is always exceedingly careful, in dividing his garden into plots, to treat his wives fairly. But even so he will perhaps give to the wife whom he loves the plot with the best soil. And it happens sometimes that a polygynist's wife, where given a smaller plot than her co-wives, will sulk and refuse to plant: "Why," she asks, "do you give me such a small garden plot? Did I not work for you while you were hoeing?" And, if her husband then loses his temper and strikes her, she will make a case before the neighbours. And they will say to him: "Friend, you should make a just division, you will only set your wives against one another by not doing so and make them kill one another." By this they mean that if one wife is angered she will bring the witches to kill her fellow wives! [754] [757]

"And if a woman is restless with her husband and is herself considering leaving him then she will be forever going and complaining to her 586

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

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consumption, for hospitality and for gifts are very much the same; but there, if he has *bwanga* plots and because of his own, her obligations cease. Because demanded by the chief, money for tax and for his own clothes he provides for himself by making use of his *bwanga* crops, and he may even keep some of them as a security against possible famine; and so he leaves her free to dispose of her own surplus as she pleases. If, however, he has reserved no plots for himself then the surplus of each wife's plot is jointly owned by her and her husband. Neither can rightly dispose of it, in any large quantity, without consulting the other; neither can be denied the right to dispose of it, after consultation with the other, for any urgent need.

Sometimes however a division is made by the husband between himself and his wife not of field but of crops; after the harvest he takes a portion of the crop of her plots for his own use, leaving the bulk of it to her for cooking and for her own needs. In that case, once the division is made, their respective rights are just the same as if the portion kept for himself had been grown on a *bwanga* plot.

The following words of a young Kokwe man make these points clear. I had asked him about the respective rights of husband and wife to dispose of maize and beans for cash: "Normally," he replied, "if the man has not kept any *bwanga* plot separate and the crop is in consequence their common property, he will speak to his wife and ask her to take some of the beans and sell them and buy him a cloth with the proceeds. But an inconsiderate husband may just take them without consultation. So with the woman, if she wants a cloth she tells her husband and suggests taking some beans and selling them in order to buy one; and her husband agrees that she should, because there has been no division made, the crop is their common property. And if the man is in trouble for tax money he consults his wife about selling some maize or beans and she agrees, for otherwise he would be arrested. If, however, the man has kept a *bwanga* plot separate then he takes and sells his own food and his wife hers, without consulting one another; because a division has been made."

[575] "And supposing," I asked, "that a man has three wives, whom does he consult about selling food, if there is no *bwanga* plot?" "In that case," he replied, "if, maybe, he wants to procure tax money and has no *bwanga* plot, then he speaks to his chief wife and tells her that they must assist him or he will be arrested and she suggests that they all consult together. So he calls his wives to him and they agree to give each as much from her store of food; maybe he shows them a basket for each to fill own; and then he puts it all together and sells it and pays his tax."

"This custom of keeping a *bwanga* plot," he volunteered, "is only rarely followed nowadays in Bukokwe in the case of maize and beans, but it is quite common with cassava and with bananas."

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

is generally admitted that all chiefs are less affected by this fear than they used to be. The secularization of the constitution tends, in this connection, to make it more autocratic.

On the economic side it is difficult to exaggerate the change in the relative wealth of rulers and people. The change is temporarily obscured by the historical accident of the present Kyungu's personal fortune, but this, when he dies, will go to this own heir, not to his successor in the Kyungship. The Kyungu's total official salary in 1937 was £72 a year and three of the "Sub-chiefs" varied from about £4 10s. to £12 a year. The nobles of Ngonde all received either 10s. or 15s. a year, with the exception of Mulowa who received 30s. These salaries, which are paid out of the Native Treasury, are the modern substitute for the profits of the ivory-trade, which the Kyungu shared with his subordinates, together with the regular tribute of food and the proceeds of tribal warfare and of punitive expeditions, all of which sources of income have now dried up. And these salaries do not make possible the giving of any valuable gifts to subordinates and subjects. The local rulers also receive slight financial subsidies from the Native Treasury. Each "Village Headman" is allowed to retain 3d. from the tax of every adult male subject of his own and the "Important Headmen" (great chiefs) receive in addition subsidies ranging from 5s. to 60s. a year. This custom has replaced that of the requisitioning of food; but, owing to the smallness of all the present chiefdoms and fiefs of the plain, few "Village Headmen" receive more than £1 a year from this source.[1]

It is open to commoners, on the other hand, to become as rich or richer than most of their rulers. The head clerk in the Boma in 1937 received £32 a year, and there were fifty-three other Government employees who all received £12 or over; Native Christian Ministers and Evangelists all received many times the salary of Mulowa while young men often returned from the Lupa gold-fields with savings of several pounds.

The decline of polygyny in Ngonde again reduces the relative wealth of the subordinate chiefs and nobles in comparison with their people. Women are increasingly reluctant, for various reasons, to be married by polygynists, and the old style of entertainment is changing. Few chiefs and nobles, save the present Kyungu himself, now have sufficient wives and unmarried children to be able to entertain on a large scale. In the case of ordinary chiefs and territorial nobles (the "Village Headmen" of to-day) this poverty is not in itself very significant, for with the dwindling

[1] The average receipts of the one hundred and twenty-four "Village Headmen" in the Ngonde plain were about exactly 16/- per annum in 1936. They had, that is, an average of forty tax-payers each.

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nwane is very nearly a translation of the word nabo, and may be used either 601
of things or of forbidden degrees of relationship.

2. The following points are noteworthy :—

(1) The wife of a "brother," whether elder or younger, uterine or not, is called 601
by the same term (ukwi) as a wife. I am informed that sexual intercourse, 602
though not countenanced, is not uncommon, and such cases are apt to 537
be treated leniently should they come to (native) court. This might be regarded as evidence of former "group marriages," but it should be noted that a man's first heir is his brother, who succeeds to the wives in common with the rest of the "property."

The same term (ukwi) is used by a woman for the "brothers" 601
of her husband as for the husband himself, and their wives are unkwinsale (= "her fellow-wives").

(2) The "sisters" of a wife are also called ukwi. The husband of the elder 601
of a family has a prior right to marry her uterine sisters, and a semi- 595
right to her other "sisters"; such marriages are very common. Any man who marries a woman to whom another has a prior right becomes nwaphwini (or kinwi) to the custed one. (See Definitions.) Reciprocally a woman calls her "sister's" husband ukwe, even after her marriage to another.

(3) A man has the right to marry the daughter of his wife's "brother" as 532
among the Thonga,[1] and the wife of the wife's "brother" is called 601
ukwiko (see Definitions); the son of the wife's "brother" is often called ukwe instead of nwane. There is a special term for a father's sister, which is reciprocally used by a woman for her "brother's" daughter; the term ukwi-mwinangu (= "my fellow-wife") does not appear to be used by her unless and until her husband actually marries the girl. This special term is nwange, and it can hardly be mere coincidence that it so closely resembles the Nandi term *ungat* for father's sister[2] (nw- being a common Bantu prefix, usually honorific, and, on the other hand, the terminal *-t* merely formative).

A woman calls the son of her husband's "sister" ukwe. (See para. (6) below.)

(4) All "grand-daughters," except those by marriage, are called ukwi, but marriage has never been allowed within living memory; the husband of these "grand-daughters" are called nwaphwini (kinwi). A "grandson" is not called ukwe but (nwinukulu) mwinangu (= "my compeer");

[1] E. J. Salisbury, "The relationship systems of the Nandi, Masai and Thonga," *Man*, April, 1917, 49 (quoting Junod).
[2] Salisbury, loc. cit., quoting Hobley, "The Nandi."

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

593 holding of land and the economics of life in general, the rules and procedure of law, the emotional forms of ceremony, the dogma, rite, morality and symbol of religion, the forms of knowledge and opinion—all are interpenetrated by these relationships.

593 595 The word *family* is used in this paper to mean the organised group of a man, his wife or wives, and their children of any age, but not to include any other relatives. A Nyakyusa family, as we shall see, does not become extinct when the father dies; his younger full-brother or his senior son steps into his place and the group continues very much as before. In this society families are sometimes monogamous, sometimes polygynous; and, in consequence, two more relationships with which we are not familiar in our own culture are included in the Nyakyusa family; one is the relationship of co-wives and the other is that of half-siblings. Within a ploygynous family the different wives and their respective children form groups to some extent distinct from one another; and the term *individual family* is here used to denote the group of a man, one wife and their children, whether that group is part of a polygynous family or forms a complete monogamous family by itself.

593 595 601 The Nyakyusa themselves have no separate word for either of these small groups; the word *ukukó* is sometimes used in the restricted sense to which we have here confined the word "family," but more usually means the whole of any single person's recognised blood kindred, living or dead, both in the male and female lines; and it is translated in this paper as *kindred*, *kinsfolk*, or *kinsmen*. They also have a word *umkowe* which includes the whole of any one person's *ukukó* together with all his recognised affines, and this is here translated *relatives*. The term *affine* is used to translate the Nyakyusa word *umko*, which is identical in meaning with it.

[585] [595] 936 Marriage is legally effected by the handing over of four to thirty cows, together with one or two bulls, by the groom to his wife's father. And this transfer of cattle is the key to the whole Nyakyusa system of blood and affinal relationship. Cattle have a very high value because of their production of milk and meat, which are the most highly prized foods, and because of their scarcity; they are in constant circulation, and by their movement from one man to another they forever create and maintain the bonds of kinship and affinity. Cattle circulate rapidly; few except chiefs have more than six cows in their herds at any one time, more often each man has only two or three, while some have no cows at all; and yet every stature man has paid out, for his own and his sons' marriages, five, ten or twenty times the number of cattle that he at

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done.

In a polygynous family each wife has her own fields (*ambuko*), hoed by her husband and her own sons, which she plants, weeds and reaps with the help of her own daughters, and the produce of which she uses to cook for her husband, her own children and herself. The relative rights of husband and wife to dispose of produce vary with different crops, but no co-wife has any rights over a woman's food. She may, and often does, ask her co-wives to help in her fields and sends them presents of cooked food from her own fire, she may help them and receive presents in return; but they have no rights over her fields or her food, only her husband and herself. And the fields which are hoed by a bachelor son belong to his own mother, who in her turn cooks food for him to eat.

Each wife has either a hut to herself, or else a separate alcove in a large hut, and there she has her fire for cooking. She fetches her own firewood and water or sends an unmarried daughter for them.

At meals the men and the women eat separately; in some polygynous families each wife sends a dish to the husband, in others the wives take it in turns to cook for him. The husband eats alone or with neighbours of his own age[1] to share his dish, the older boys and their friends[2] eat separately from the younger children, and each mother again usually eats with her own daughters, apart.

In the relationship of husband and wife the chief elements are sexual intercourse, co-operation in work, the procreation of children and factors of personal inclination, character and temperament. By men women are praised for sexual skill, cleanliness and beauty, for good cooking and hard work, for their fecundity, and for gentleness of speech and behaviour, and those with opposite qualities are criticized. Among women men are praised for sexual skill and attractiveness, for vigour in hoeing and skill in house-building, and for kindness; while sexual neglect, laziness, impotence and cruelty are disliked and may cause a woman to leave her husband for another man.

The birth of children is a most important factor in the marriage relationship, for children are greatly desired both by men and women. They are desired for themselves and also because they bring their parents wealth and prestige; a boy will one day work in the fields of his father and mother, a girl will bring in cattle from her marriage. And the possession of children brings compliments and respect both to man and woman.

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[1] Vide infra "The Age-Village."
[2] [Vol. 1 (1), pp. 219 ff. — *Author*]

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

892 Impotence and barrenness are well known facts, and magic is much used
895 to cure them; but apart from their operation it is believed that such
891 conception directly depends upon the frequency with which a man visits his wife. And thus the bearing of children is, for a woman, a demonstration of her husband's great affection for her. People adduce the number of children that a woman has borne to prove, in conversation, that she is her husband's favourite.

895 Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan Nyakyusa: a plurality of wives is necessary, in this society, for full sexual satisfaction, wives being a man wealth, prestige and authority, the more wives he has the more children, he thinks, will be born to him.

853 It is believed that any contact with the sexual fluids is dangerous to a
831 young child's health, and so, after a woman has borne a child, her husband is supposed wholly to refrain from intercourse with her for about a year, until the child is old enough to play by itself and allow its mother time to wash in the mornings before touching it. Then he may begin to visit her again, but still she must not become pregnant until the child is weaned. "If she does her breasts become rotten" and the first child is harmed. As children are not weaned for two or three years, this rule involves the
[833 847] couple in yet another year or more either of entire abstinence or of infrequent intercourse (which also is believed to avoid conception). These taboos on intercourse after a child's birth are to some extent observed in practice, and are one of the reasons for polygyny among the Nyakyusa.
[845]

864 Another reason is the absence of hired labour. With a few minor
865 exceptions the only way a man can increase the supply of labour at his disposal is by marrying more wives. Polygyny is the mark of a wealthy man, conditioned by his control of cattle, conditioning his supply of food. And the cattle spent in marriage come back again with interest as the polygynist's daughters begin to be betrothed and married.

893 It is extremely common for a man to take as his second or third wife the sister, half-sister, or brother's daughter of his first or second wife. By doing so a man pays a great compliment to the wife whose sister, or sister, he takes and to her family; his action implies complete satisfaction with her and friendship with her family. He sends his wife home "to fetch out (her kinswoman) into the open" (ubwalula); but she will not agree to do so unless she approves of him as a husband, and so, if she does agree, her action likewise compliments him. I know of one case in which a man wished to take his second wife's younger sister in this way,

8:W Ison E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

but his wife refused to go and fetch her on the ground that he was a bad husband. 595

The children of one man and two close kinswomen have almost the relationship of full-siblings, but not quite, and I propose to call their relationship that of *limited half-siblings* (*ndo ngha*). 593

In a polygynous family the first wife married, the *chief wife* (*ngkwa-Bele*), is in a privileged position; she is entitled to the respect and obedience of her co-wives and her eldest son is her husband's ultimate heir. A man cannot lightly divorce his first wife during his own father's lifetime, for while the other wives he obtains by his own efforts, with his own cattle, she is married with cattle given him by his father, who must be consulted before she is divorced and who is offended if she is sent away without good cause. 595 586

Besides the chief wife there is, in most polygynous households a favourite wife (*ngkwadee*), who is first has greater privileges. Ideally a man is supposed to be fair to all his wives and to distribute milk, land and sexual attentions equally between them, with perhaps a slight bias in favour of his chief wife. But usually one wife is her husband's favourite and is given by him an undue share of the household's milk supply, and sometimes he loses more land for her than for the others, as well. 595

Divorce is legally effected by the return of the marriage-cattle. No 586 pagan woman in this society ever desires to live single, and so when a wife leaves her husband it is always with the intention of marrying some other man. Usually she has a particular man in mind who has been making love to her and who has cows enough to redeem her, but not always. A woman may, as we have described already, run off with a lover and then, as soon as he has returned the marriage-cattle and the adultery fine to her former husband, she becomes his legal wife, and her children by him are legitimate. If she has no lover to run off with, or if her lover wishes to avoid the adultery fine, the woman goes to Court* (before 1928 she went to her own chief) and publicly refuses to live with her husband. She may or may not give a reason for leaving him, but if she persistently refuses to go back to him there is now no way of compelling her to do so. The judges say to her: "Well you must had the cattle," and so she stays, either with her father or in the charge of a court official, until some man comes to marry her. Then the cows are returned to her first husband and the divorce is effected. In pre-European times, I am told, such a woman was frequently compelled to return to her husband by

* See below, The Chieftainship, [illegible]

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

656 177 578 *supra*). Only one of them can receive the salary and they commonly dispute about it. Quarrels are particularly frequent over the position of senior chief, for the presidency of a Court carries with it a relatively large salary. Old senior chiefs cling to the position long after their sons have "come out" and when they die their full-brothers still dispute the position with the sons because of the salary involved. Such a situation could not have arisen before 1926, for then there was no comparable issue between them.

656 622 177 And the introduction of salaries has also had a most profound effect upon the relative status of the two young chiefs who "come out" together. When an ordinary chief, with a small salary, dies the Government recognises the first son alone as chief and pays the whole salary to him. This reduces the second son to the position of a minor chief as effectively as a defeat in war might have done in the old days. But, while the action of warfare only occasionally led to the subordination of one of the brothers, this action of the Government does so invariably, and always subordinates the younger brother. When a senior chief dies, on the other hand, the salary is usually divided: the bulk of it goes to the first son, together with the position of senior chief, while to the second son is given the salary of an ordinary chief.

354 622 As the prestige and authority of a father in his family, or of a man among his neighbours, is closely connected with his wealth on the one hand, and with his believed religious powers on the other, so also the status of a chief among his people. He has more cows, more wives, more food than other men; he is spiritually responsible for the fertility of the land, the women and the cattle of his chiefdom. But he is no autocrat, and all his public functions require for their exercise the co-operation of his great commoners.

622 595 Polygyny is, above all, the mark of a chief. Few commoners have more than five or six wives, but a chief frequently marries fifteen, thirty, fifty or even more; his wives weed and glean the fields which their unmarried sons hoe, and there is plenty of food for guests. Chiefs themselves hoe when they have time, and often they employ a poor man to hoe for them as well, rewarding him after a year or two with a cow. It is not 617 possible for one man to satisfy so many women sexually, and it is generally said that every chief's wife, save the five or six who are his favourites, has a lover. But intrigues must be carried on with care, for their discovery causes a great public scandal.

The extent of a chief's polygyny is conditioned by his control of cattle, and his income in cattle is derived mainly from inheritance and the

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

marriages of his kinsmen. When his father dies his father's wives £22
and cows pass to his father's full-brother, but they come to him and his 1/19
brother eventually when this man dies. While, if the young chiefs have "come out" it is common for their father's brother to hand over some, or even the bulk of the cattle, to them before his own death. And in his own hall of the family, among his siblings and half-siblings on that side, a chief has far greater rights both of inheritance and of receiving marriage-cattle, than those possessed by the senior son of a commoner. So much is clear from my evidence, but it is not yet sufficiently detailed for an exact statement of rules.

Before 1901 fighting between chiefdoms was common and, except £31
between brother chiefs, the usual aim of fighting was, not conquest, but 7/21
cows; wars were generally just cattle raids. And a substantial proportion of the cows captured in a successful raid went to increase the herds of the chief. This last source of income is now supplied by Government £35
salaries, which vary from 5/- to £15 a month.[*] The price of a cow is £2; 1/42
but many shillings are spent on clothes, bicycles and beer, as well as on cows.

A chief, like any other rich man, maintains his prestige by hospitality, £22
he constantly entertains his more notable subjects with beer, at the 1/27
ceremonies of his family all his people gather in their age-villages and he kills cattle for them to eat. Chiefs seldom nowadays kill cattle except on ceremonial occasions, but in the old days of warfare they used also, I am told, to entertain their subjects with meat from time to time, in order to keep up their spirits for fighting. History is full of stories of Nyakyusa chiefs who attracted many men to their countries, and so gained great military strength, by the generosity and abundance of their feasts.

Every time a man or woman dies, a message must be sent to the £33
chief, and at the burial he is given the whole breast and ribs (*ukubwa*) of 7/17
one of the cows which are killed by the family of the dead person at that time. He has the right to take food or milk from any of his subjects if he has need of it; but he cannot take any man's beast without later returning another to him.

Apart from the now abandoned pursuit of cattle raiding the only £21
profitable enterprise in which the members of a whole chiefdom jointly 4/76
participate are those of hunting and fishing; in some chiefdoms, but not

[*] Salaries above £5 a month are only paid to senior chiefs. Six minor chief gets a Government salary, one the great-commoner. The local value of money is shown (a) by the tax (8/- p.a.), (b) by the wages of unskilled labour (6/- to 8/- p.m.)

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1939
F317 Ngomde F317
Nyakyusa

by immersion and were strict about not eating the flesh of animals without a cloven hoof, and avoiding beer, but made a point of not being sabbatarian and working in their fields on Sundays—these were the things they emphasized to us. They were also pacifist and would not join the Police or King's African Rifles, since Rutherford taught that all Government was evil.

(d) 'INDEPENDENT' AFRICAN CHURCHES

There is a great cleavage between the mission Churches and the 'independent' African Churches, which also claim to be Christian, read the Gospels at their services, and recite the Apostles' creed, but whose rules of life are commonly based on the Old Testament rather than the New (*vide* p. 150). Both the 'independent' Churches operating in BuNyakyusa approve polygyny; the bulk of their members are middle-aged polygynists and they have at least as many men as women among them. Nyamuro's statement on polygyny was interesting:

> When we young men went to join the mission we found that many of our fathers were attracted by it. They said to us: 'If only the Europeans would let us come in with all our wives we would come.' . . . Sometimes it would happen that the son of an old man's second wife would join the mission and become a preacher and he would preach even to his father, saying: 'You pagans do wrong, you marry many women, you must repent, your ways are evil.' Then his father would say to him: 'On the contrary, it is not I who do wrong, if I had married only one wife you would never have been born, and you young men take one wife only and then what happens? You steal other men's wives, continually, in secret, and the country is full of lawsuits about women. It is our custom which is good.' . . . And so we, now, we have our Church and our fathers come in with us. It is our aim to take the old people with us, not ourselves to go forward alone. All the other customs which the missionaries brought to us we think are good, only this European custom of marriage is difficult.

Nyamuro and Ngomele had both been suspended from the Church of Scotland Mission for marrying second wives, and Nyamuro, a man of fifty-three, had four wives when we knew him. He kindly provided us with a copy of a statement on the beliefs and constitution of the African National Church, which is worth quoting in full:

St Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

May they all go away.

Our Church is calling everyone to come in so that the house of marriage may be filled. It is Thy work to give them all new dresses.

May they all go away.

We are taking beer as wild animals; we forget worship which is our life. Teach us to drink beer moderately, Father.

May they all go away.

We have forgotten all the laws You gave to our forefathers. We have married women by snatching. Turn us to a life of new marriages according to the ways of our forefathers, Father.

May they all go away.

Father, Son and Holy Ghost, One God, now and ever. Do unto us according to what we have said. Amen, amen, amen.

In spite of the assertion in the constitution that the rules of faith are based on the first five books of the Bible, a sermon we heard was based on New Testament parables; candidates at baptism must give their assent to Athanasius' creed; and the doctrine of the resurrection is preached at funerals, John xi. 23-6, and Job xix. 25-7, being read.

The African National Church has five schools at which half the fees charged in corresponding classes in mission schools are levied, but not all of them succeed in keeping their pupils. In 1937 there was a 'strike' by African National Church parents against sending their children to one school because 'the children of the leaders in this area are attending the Livingstonia schools and some goes to their own National Schools'. [872]

The members of Ngonde's Church were less sophisticated than those of the African National Church and we heard of no written constitution. The services were also simpler. The only sermon we heard was on repentance.

Repent and repent anew; do not delay! Repent in your hearts! There is no virtue in baptism; it is just water; but let your hearts be washed clean. The world is full of things which excite wonder and envy. Many when they see the riches of their fellow say to themselves: 'I will go and steal his things', but we must not do that. Many go and commit adultery in the long grass, but we must not do that. God has sent us the Gospel. These are the words of Christ and some other are his words (building up the New Testament). Our Forbears had never heard of it, but we have, and Christ calls us to repent. In the old days when a

* Referring, Nyakyusa said, to the view of polygamists. Many women in Ngonde objected to polygamy on the ground that where there were several wives they were not properly clothed. [995]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

[777] [778] [779] [780] [781] [782] [783] [784] [785] [786] [787] [788] [789] [790] [791] [792] [793] [794] [795] [796] [797] [798] [799] [800] [801] [802] [803] [804] [805] [806] [807] [808] [809] [810] [811] [812] [813] [814] [815] [816]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F7417 Ngonde F7417
Nyakyusa

like most of the leaders of Zionist Churches in the south.[1] 797[x]

It is noticeable that the two 'independent' Churches have a more elaborate form of service than the Church from which their leaders have sprung, and Ngemela habitually wears conspicuous vestments. There is, of course, great variation between different denominations in the emphasis placed on ritual, some Protestants abjuring it and turning their very insistence on starkness and simplicity into a ritual in itself—a taboo. There seems to be a clear tendency in Southern Africa for 'independent' Churches to express themselves more and more in ritual and less in dogma. In this way they reduce the gap between themselves and the pagans, for the pagan religion is expressed almostly exclusively in ritual, whereas Christianity is expressed in creeds and confessions as well as in the rituals of the Church. 795[x] 779 [796]

(*e*) THE CONTRAST BETWEEN PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

There are certain common elements in the rituals celebrated by pagans and Christians: some of the occasions are the same, and in the conceptions of sacrifice, of death and rebirth, of confession and cleansing, there are similarities; but there are also profound differences. The conception of life, immortality, replaces the preoccupation with fertility, for though most Nyakyusa Christians, like the pagans, regard celibacy as evidence of physical abnormality, and the conventional desire of a woman is to have six children—a quiverful in Nyakyusa eyes—yet fertility is no longer the end of all being, sought in every ritual. There are profound differences, too, in the values expressed in the rituals regarding sex relations, the range of moral obligations, and social change. In pagan thought polygyny is good—a man should have many children. Child marriage is defended on the ground that a girl 'gets accustomed to her husband' if she goes to him early, and homosexual relations between youths and young men are tolerated since they have no wives and *cannot* marry if the older men are polygynists. What is upheld is the chastity of women, and a total separation of the sex activities of members of successive generations, expressed in the taboos limiting familiarity between mother and son, father and nubile daughter, father-in-law and daughter-law. In Christian thought it is the 'pure in heart' who 'see God' and this is interpreted by the mission Churches to imply monogamy. Only in the 'independent' African Churches is it asserted 797[x] 795[x] [842] [589] [595] [584] [838] [836] [561] [183] [595]

[1] The emphasis on healing, so common in the south, is absent.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

that polygyny is compatible with Christianity, and indeed sanctioned by the example of many of the heroes of the Old Testament. It is here that the cleavage between pagan and Christian ways of life is felt to be greatest: the desire to marry or inherit a second wife is the main reason for many men leaving the mission Churches. The traditional way for the well-to-do man to expend his capital and maintain his position was to marry again and the wealth of the lineage was concentrated in the senior line through the rule of inheritance of widows.

Again and again in sermons Nyakyusa preachers came back to the problem of polygyny. 'Let not those who know not the law deceive you saying, "You, Christian, what is one poor little wife? (*ibilikali bimo lyene*) See, do not your children also die (like those of pagans) and constantly fall ill? Take a second wife." Perhaps the BaNgemela tell you that God also favours that. If you agree you are uprooted. What, after all, is a second wife? In Jesus there is life.' (2 Peter iii. 17.)

Young men are also caught in a contradiction of values when their fathers have betrothed them while still quite young.

It is very difficult for a man to refuse a girl whom his father has engaged for him. To a pagan man it does not matter very much because, provided he has cattle, he can always marry a girl of his own choice as well, but a Christian cannot. Such was the case of a friend of ours, A, a Christian teacher. When he was a child, before he was baptized, his father, a senior village headman and a powerful and wealthy man, engaged for him B, a little girl who could barely walk. A got on well at school and when he was growing up the missionary said to him: 'When you marry choose a girl of some education, because it is good for an educated man to marry an educated girl.' A fell in love with C, a Christian, who had learnt to read and write, and sew and launder, and who consequently was one of the best-educated girls in the district. They came to an understanding together, our informant being the 'go-between'. A went to the elders of the congregation and told them he wished to marry C. They replied: 'We, on our part agree; go and ask your father.' Then A's father said: 'Well, no, B is your wife (though she was still a child and the marriage had not been consummated), but you are my eldest son, I have many cattle, I agree to arrange marriages with them both for you at once.' So A thought and thought and went back to the elders and told them saying: 'My father refuses, he won't hear of it unless I marry

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1939
F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

[577] some copy, the manners of Europeans towards their wives, but
[584] neither husband nor wife is quite sure what the change in manners implies, and both are often inconsistent in their behaviour. As an educated Nyakyusa put it: 'They do not know what to expect from each other.'

[585] Marriage relationships are complicated by the disproportion
[42] in the numbers of men and women; a disproportion which continues while the rule of monogamy is preached and accepted
[582] by many. The first effect of the increase in wealth in Rungwe district was for the marriage age of women to go down; in Mr. Punch's phrase 'too many cattle were chasing too few wives'; but the combined pressure of missions and Administration, and some acquaintance with the customs of the outside world, has reversed that tendency, and the marriage of girls before puberty, which was general among pagans in 1938, now appears to be exceptional. Many girls are still betrothed before puberty, but
[584] they do not go to their husbands until after that time, and to be still single at puberty with no betrothed to play his part in the ritual is no longer embarrassing to a girl, for the puberty ritual is not celebrated in full. The ruling of the District Council that a man may not recover more than one cow given for a girl who has not reached puberty, if the marriage is dissolved, discourages men from giving cattle for girls who have not grown up. At the same time the marriage age of men is going down. Marriage in the
[582] early twenties or even the late teens is common now, for young men who have been to work on the mines can buy marriage cattle for themselves, and Christians who are well-to-do provide for the marriages of young sons instead of taking additional wives. Therefore the gap in the marriage age of men and women is very considerably diminished, but it still exists, and combined with the disproportion in the total number of males and females it means that a considerable proportion of the women (perhaps 30 per cent)[1] must become the junior wives of polygynists or remain unmarried altogether, or live alone as widows.

595 Among pagans polygyny is approved, but young men are irked by their responsibility for elderly widows, a responsibility that was formerly accepted as a matter of course. Able-bodied wives are still economically an asset even now that trade goods are in general use. For Nyakyusa men—pagans—have insisted that as

[1] The masculinity rate is calculated at 87·9 : 100 (adult males) and the average difference in the marriage age may well be six years.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

their wives took to wearing cloth they should earn it for themselves by growing and selling millet and brewing beer, and many women do the clearing and hoeing in their fields, work that used to fall to men; but it is difficult for a chief to refuse to provide a man to hoe the ridges in his wife's field, or to refuse an elderly woman a cloth or some salt, and young heirs grumble much about their encumbrances.

In the political field there has been a sustained attempt to make local government more democratic and to include in it the educated men. Between 1891, when the German Government first assumed control of the area, and 1938, the tendency was for the power of the chiefs to be increased at the expense of that of the commoners. This was admitted by the chiefs themselves, as we have seen. In 1949 there was established a system of Rural Councils, on which chiefs, village headmen (*mafumu*), and ordinary commoners are represented. Four[8] of each category are chosen as representatives on the Council in their area by an electoral college itself elected by all taxpayers. Rungwe District is divided into five areas. The policy of treating some chiefs as senior to others has been abandoned and each of the seventy-eight recognized rulers (*abatwe*) is eligible for election as a chief's representative on his local Rural Council. Village headmen (two from each chiefdom) and the ordinary commoners are similarly chosen. The five Rural Councils in turn elect one man of each sex to the District Council.[9] The system allows for, and seems to have achieved, a combination of men with traditionally high status and those who are conspicuous by reason of their education or success as coffee or rice farmers. The old feeling that education was not necessary to a chief's son, though it might be useful to a poor man, has vanished, and a considerable number of the educated leaders of the district are sons or grandsons of chiefs. The elected president of the District Council, Mr. Gordon Mwamsamo (1886) is of the Nyakyusa chiefs' lineage, though not of the most senior line. In the Rural Councils the presidents elected have all, with one exception, been ruling chiefs, but it is not necessarily the genealogically senior who is chosen. There is scope for selection on the grounds of character and ability.

[8] Five in the populous plain, Ntokela (Ma'Ngonde).

[9] *cf.* J. E. Kingdon, 'The Initiation of a System of Local Government by African Rural Councils in Rungwe District of Tanganyika', *Journal of African Administration*, vol. iii, 4 (1951).

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1955
F307 Nyakyusa F307
Nyakyusa

structure? And how far does the new economic and political organization produce a change in religion? These theoretical questions can be answered only by a series of comparative studies. Here there is evidence for one area alone, and the conclusions which we postulate can be established only if they hold in a whole range of societies.

Christianity implies an emergence from the sense of kinship, for the worshipping group is two or three believers, not a body of kinsmen, and conversion is a personal choice. This is more obvious in a missionary church than in one long established, for, as we have seen, the convert in a pagan community must withdraw from his kinship to become a Christian,[9] but it remains true, even in a Christian society. The new doctrine implies a body of believers—a Church. The particular form varies, but the Church has appeared wherever the Christian faith has been established. In short, we argue that the change in religion necessarily disrupts an organization based primarily on kinship and establishes a new type of organization based partly on voluntary association. With the change from the ritual of the lineage to the ritual of the Church the authority and leadership of senior kinsmen is diminished; they are replaced by 'elders' and priests or pastors whose basis of authority is not birth, but selection by the Church. Furthermore, association for worship becomes a pattern for association in other fields, and the Church is the training ground among the Nyakyusa, as it has been among so many other peoples, for organizations of other types of association.

And not only is kinship subordinated to faith; the forms of kinship are themselves modified. From the time of their first arrival the missionaries have taught that Christianity implies monogamy and they have baptized no polygynist who does not put away his additional wives. This teaching has been questioned by many Africans and by some European missionaries themselves, who doubt the wisdom of persuading a man already married to send away his wives—or even of countenancing such an action. But the rule of monogamy has remained as a condition of membership in all the Churches with European connexions.[9] It has been rejected, as we have seen, by two of the 'independent' African

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 1[illegible]-[illegible].

[9] The rule was suspended for a brief period in one mission working not far from the Nyakyusa area, but was later enforced. cf. Lyndon Harries in *Survey of African Marriage and Family Life* (edited by A. Phillips), pp. [illegible]-[illegible].

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F927 Ngonde F927
Nyakyusa

182 Churches in the area. Nevertheless the bulk of professing Christians
595 are monogamists, though it is still customary and, in Rungwe
777 District, commercially profitable, for a rich man who is not a Christian to have more than one wife. The difficulties of establishing monogamy are accentuated by the great disproportion in the numbers of men and women. If the figures available are accurate, a general acceptance of monogamy would mean that only about 70 per cent of the women could be married; therefore the Church is necessarily concerned in seeking an adjustment in the disproportion of the population—in keeping the men alive if our assumption that the shortage of men is due to a heavy male death rate is true.

182 The yeast of the gospel permeates still further. It is taken to
777 imply the freedom of an individual to accept or reject a partner in
584 marriage. This has been maintained from the first in the Nyakyusa Church, and is enforced by the courts, which apply a conception of personal rights springing from the Christian tradition.

182 Most Nyakyusa men attribute the rapid rise in the divorce rate
586 to this new 'freedom' of women. Christian teaching stresses the
777 family and the sanctity of marriage, but it ignores the lineage. In the traditional rituals of kinship the lineage is represented again and again, while in Christian ritual it is the elementary family and the Church that are pictured. The preoccupation with fertility and the reproductive cycle was linked with the glorification of the lineage itself, and it disappears when the lineage ceases to be the basis of social grouping.

182 How closely linked are symbols to other aspects of a society?
61 Our hypothesis is that they are relatively free, but it can be shown
178 that many of the symbols used in the traditional rituals of the Nyakyusa reflect the economy, and vary somewhat from one area to another, with the staple crops. The development of trade or of new crops is a prerequisite for using the symbols of bread and wine traditional in the Christian rituals, and even the 'independent' African Churches use new foods, not the beer and bananas of the country; thus change in material symbols and change in economy may be directly connected. The imagery changes also with the changing social structure; Kyala ceases to be pictured as a senior kinsman, when the lineage organization begins to weaken; he is God the father of a family rather than an early member of the royal lineage. But there is no evidence that

land on hire. Young men compete with one another, with their elder brothers and with their fathers for allocations of land left vacant. We also saw, however, that often in the larger families not all the sons are able to get a share of the paternal holding, or at least not a share of practicable size. These younger sons are forced to resort to trying to obtain vacant land elsewhere – probably within the same village, but as often as not outside. Finally, the young man on his new holding may find his neighbours to be of any age; certainly they will not have been members of his own original coeval founder.

The way for this changing concept of village life and the new sort of village was prepared in the years before land shortage became important. The changed political system has been briefly noted already, but no less important was the great increase in inter-village movements in earlier European days when peace and personal security had been established. During this period Wilson (1936, page 32) reckoned that perhaps 80 per cent. of Nyakyusa shifted at least once from the place where they first obtained fields. This estimate, while perhaps holding good for Highland Nyakyusa amongst whom Wilson mainly worked, was too high for the people of the Lake Plains, where about 40 per cent. is more correct according to my genealogical and village surveys. That is still a relatively high degree of mobility for a mainly subsistence, peasant society such as it was in those years. It is clear that the pseudo-fraternal bond of coevality could not permit as a main element of village life and consciousness, when in fact as many as half of the members of a village were not original coeval founders but had come in from elsewhere. Before the land shortage, movements did not entail the shifting of young men to other young men's villages, or of older men to other older men's villages. It was, at least eventually, promiscuous movement, ignoring age-categories. The complications of land shortage were, in retrospect, only to have followed existing lines of village development and to have begun the completion of the process.

In the Lake Plains, therefore, the village persists as a close, territorial, land-owning group and as a specific cluster of homesteads and huts, usually with a village street, the whole closely bounded in by continuous banana groves. Beyond this lie the arable lands, usually food-crop fields nearby and paddy fields further off. In jealously protecting what is already built, the village has gained a new exclusiveness, for the security of the individual land-holder is maintained by the corporate ownership of the village and by excluding outsiders as far as possible. On the other hand, it is no longer an age-village either in fact or intention, and it cannot be, for age-villages were consistent only with an expanding territorial system and a subsistence economy.

This brief analysis of Nyakyusa village organization in recent times applies only to the Lake Plains. In some parts of both the Central Region and the Northern Highlands the age-basis of Nyakyusa villages had most probably already been seriously weakened in pre-European times.[1] On the other hand, elsewhere, and particularly in the more conservative parts less affected by modern trends and the cash economy, the traditional age-village still exists in something like its old form.

Land shortage has appeared in the Highlands together with a developing cash economy, but the basis of agricultural and economic change lies mainly in cotton cultivation, which, of course, requires relatively smaller fields than does paddy in the Lake Plains, but it needs more care and attention from the grower for moderate success. As far as I could see in the course of

1. Perhaps it still the same amongst the older and many middle-aged men, and therefore a factor also [595]
2. According to other informants in Western Kabwe, Mwakaleli and some coeval chiefdoms, and also the evidence of old village sites.

12: Biegeard E-5 (2955) 1962 FMU7 Ngonde FMU7
Nyakyusa
Haya FMU

H 392 As indicated above, the floor is covered with grass. Various domestic utensils may be seen, much into this screens of plant material.

H 392 171 But this old, beautiful type of hut is very much on the decline. It is costly to make and to keep in repair, and the thick straw roof is, admittedly, highly inflammable. A flying trip round Lake Victoria clearly shows how the straw roofs in the banana groves are being replaced by corrugated iron. This change may even have another reason, viz. the fact that fodder for cattle is in short supply and that the grass for roofs is hard to come by. No doubt, it is a question of time when the fine old Haya hut will have disappeared.

N 104 In the Southern Highlands, where I was given the opportunity to stay for three months at various Danish mission stations, I visited the village round the Rungwe mission, the neighbouring villages of Ibole and Kikota, and some villages near the Kyerwaporto mission station. I made a trip to Lake Nyasa and another to the Poroto mountains. I must admit to a limited knowledge of dwelling anthropology and of house construction, but I have collected a number of houses and sketched their plan and also the furnishings I found in them. The positioning of the various objects has been established.

N 361 [342] 362 The high standard of dwellings of the Nyakyusa is truly to be wondered at. The houses, clustered in villages, often along a winding street, lie intermingled with banana and coffee bushes. The houses are large and their interior is clean. Often two or three houses belong to one family, and, if so, will be grouped round a courtyard.

N 342 [324] Even if you could find houses built from sun-dried bricks and fired tiles, most were from bamboo with a grass roofing.

All houses stand on a clay base which, though not very high, no doubt means some protection against penetration of ground moisture during the heavy rains of April-June.

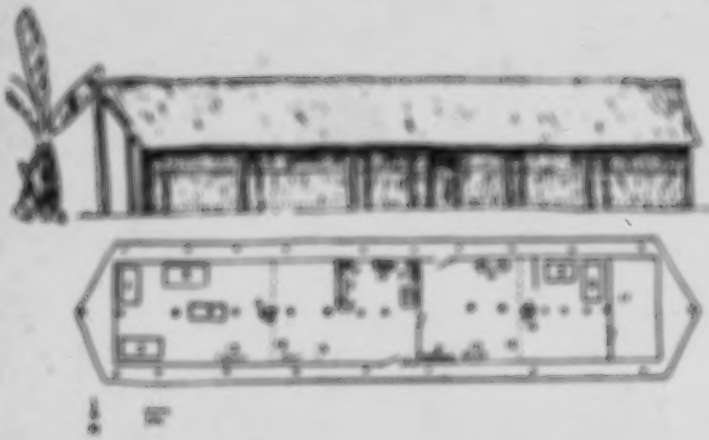
N [324] Besides bamboos, sometimes the bark of tree ferns, mabele, is used in outer walls. Such tree fern stems have not the carrying capacity of bamboos, but they are far more resistant to rot. Among the other common features of the existing types of houses, should be mentioned the mud cleats, the size of rolls that from the inside are pressed between the vertical bamboo poles; also, the inner wall is roughcast with a mixture of mud and cow manure; the floor is from tamped clay. In some places you find very fine floors in which a pattern has been rolled into the wet clay; to this end a short length of the stem of the banana cluster has been employed, viz. the length between the seats of the male and the female flowers. Also employed are another plant stem, or an empty corn cob.

N [287] [531]

N 359 ● 515 In all houses where women live, there are one or more hearths. The presence of two hearths in one house usually means that the husband has two wives, each with having her own hearth, either in the common house or in a house of her own.

N 342 The houses always have a kind of ceiling made from bamboo sticks and carried

U: Diagnard E-5 (1955) 1962 F'967 Ngonde F'967
Nyakyusa

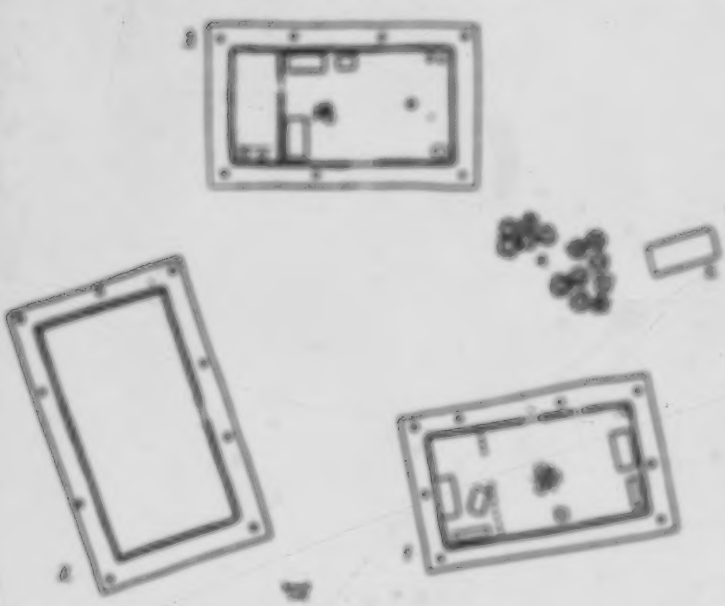


An dabaga in the village of Kiwanjala, the district of Rungwe, belonging to a man with two wives. The rooms have bamboo ceilings from dotted lines to either gable. Pass starting to edge of roof are filled in: 1, husband's bed; 2, wife's bed; 3, child's bed; 4, hearth; 5, bread oven; 6, water jar; 7, oven; 8, ladder; 9, table; 10, stools; 11, storeroom; 12, dotted lines show footprint of ceiling; 13, small objects; 14, working material; 15, sleeping mat.

leave. On page 355, he reports how the boys, when 5 or 10 years old, will leave their parents' house to live in long, rectangular cowhouse-like houses big or small, in a special youngsters' quarter at the far end of the village. On page 358 he writes: In many cases you do not know for certain whether you are dealing with a youngsters' house or a cowhouse—for the cattle may well be kept in these houses—or the herdsmen may sleep in the cowhouses. However, this mostly holds true of the low-lying Kondé country, while on the other hand, in the high country, the cattle is usually kept in the dwelling houses. On pages 371 and 372, he relates how the cattle is tied to posts at night, and he shows a picture of a cowhouse.

He also refers (on page 378) to the use of the rectangular house for married men besides the boys. The difference is seen in the fact that these houses are not roughcast with mud, as this work is the province of women. Finally, he reports that, during the last few years of his stay in the Kondé country, he saw Kondé houses being built under increasing influence of the coastal culture, in imitation of the Swahili houses. They were roughcast with mud inside and out, and had a verandah supported by posts.

In 1955, many dabagas could be seen. Some were for the cattle, but most were dwelling houses for married people. (Boys aged 7–10 and upwards until the marriageable age lived in rumbuckle boys' houses, the material of which was not bamboo, but a thinner grass, resembling bamboo very much. These houses stood



Three houses belonging to one family, situated round a common courtyard; the doors open on to the yard. The village seen in along the back of the house at top. a, Sefelwa's house; c, Ruba's house; g, Ellen's house; g, banana plants; g, fowl-coop.

houses existed which were fix metres in length. It had the same width as Malia's house, approximately 3 metres. The roof was supported by posts along the sides and at the gables.

Two women lived in this house, both married to the same man. Consequently, there were two hearths, the stones of which were cylindrical-conical, broadening slightly at the top. All were decorated. Each woman had her part of the house, both with an outer door, and further there was a door, slightly narrower, between the two parts, and a fourth door to a store-room. No less than twelve posts supported the roof, all reaching to the ridge. The two parts were a bit unequal in size; nearly half of each had the well-known loft for firewood, etc. One part contained beds for the woman and her husband (one bed had two straw mats). The children had two beds. The husband had still another house, a short distance away at the foot of a hill, they said. I did not see it. The other woman's room held her bed and a cot.

The hearths of both rooms were placed in the centre, between two upright posts. Utensils and furnishings did not differ much from the usual: hen's eggs,

19: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

he had received the object from his ancestors and it must always hang on this spot, as the ancestral spirits (*ubungaka*)[29] themselves controlled its presence. It consisted of an *wuwigaru*, i. e. the tail of an ox, but the upper part of it was hollow. In this hollow part medicines (*ipuqiu*)[30] were kept. Yet another magical medicine, in the shape of a piece of bark of the tree called *Erythrophleum Guineense*[31] was fastened at the upper end of this sign. When my European attendant immediately said to the chief: "And from this piece you make your *uwaji*[32], the chief exclaimed in astonishment: "Unwe wowa Kyaru!" (You are sons of Kyaru! i. e. You Europeans know everything.)

After this there was no more delay in revealing to us some more features of this sign of dignity. According to the belief of his fathers this object possessed a special *uwaka* (power)[33], e. g. to defeat enemies, if the chief were to hold it directly against them. Also if a thief were to try to enter the room by force, by making a hole beneath the wall of this part of the hut, he would be stricken by power coming from the *ubungaka* and it would have the impression that eyes are directed against him, and so be driven away.

After these interesting communications I went to visit the hut of one of his wives, which still revealed the *ingenge*, the old-fashioned round structure of bamboo poles diverging from their upper end and thatched with grass[34].

9. The frequent walks in company with the chief or some of his *amafumu* gave me several opportunities for enquiries. On one occasion,

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[29] Cf. Wilson, Burial, p. 9: *uwapuka* (Sing.); Mackenzie, p. 191: *bapuka* (Kerunga).

[30] Cf. Mackenzie, p. 275: *ifugiro* (Kerunga).

[31] The pharmacological substance of the bark (Cortex Erythrophleii, „Sassa-bark") is the alcaloid Erythrophleïn which produces the same typical effects on the heart as the Digitalis-group (cf. *C. G. Santesson*: Pfeilgiftstudien XII. Arkiv för Botanik 27 A, No. 4, Stockholm 1935, p. 6).

[32] Cf. Wilson, Land Rights, p. 32; *Merensky*, p. 134; *Fülleborn*, p. 309.

[33] *uwaka* is not a specific expression for „magical" or (religious) „supernatural" power, although, from the European standpoint this meaning may be connected with the word in specific cases, but generally it means any striking expression or effect of a quality of a person or object, e. g. *upika ubi ngalowa uwaka*, in this wood is power. This word is, therefore, a parallel to the Austronesian, especially Polynesian word *mana*, examined in my treatise „Mana. The term of that what is exceedingly striking". Staatliches Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde. I. Reihe. Ethnographie. Vol. 2. Leipzig. 1933. If the Nyakyusa wishes to say that a phenomenon is "supernatural", then he connects it with Kyaru, or he names it directly "Kiaru" (cf. *Merensky*, p. 110 [197, 218]).

[34] Cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 277, fig. 140: Schematical average of a round-hut (as also to be found with the Nyakyusa still today).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selps, Mr. Ngonde

maids and always carries a mat or cloth to screen her face from [8]
her father and his contemporaries, her father's full sisters, her
older brothers,[1] and her 'mothers-in-law' (*abakamwana*).[2] These
she must fear and respect (*akatile*) and so avoid. Her father-in-law
and his brothers she avoids altogether from the time of her engage-
ment, or at least after she has reached the age of 8 or 9. Her com-
panions do not *akatile* with her, though those of them who are
already betrothed will, of course, avoid their own fathers-in-law.

During the period of seclusion the girls have two specific tasks:
to weave the fine mats used as beds, and to fetch firewood. Every [28 9]
bride should take to her husband's home at least one fine mat
(*ahwpase*) which she has made herself, as well as several coarse
ones (*amingh*),[3] and weaving a fine mat is a lengthy task, occupying
a skilled woman a month. Each girl weaves for herself, but the
firewood that each must fetch is stacked in the bride's mother's
hut. The bride also occupies herself hammering out bark-cloth, [29]
pleating it for the strip worn between the legs, and decorating
bark-cloth belts (*ride* plate 3), so that she may have the fresh
ones required during the ritual, and a supply to take with her to
her husband's; but this work is not emphasized as an obligation:
rather it is a recreation. Women take great pride in the decora- [33]
tion of their belts—we watched several brides making them and
handing them round for the admiration of their fellows. The
maids may work in the fields if required to do so, but the bride
herself does not, and 'she gets fat because she does not have much
work to do'. The whole ritual normally lasts about three months,
but if, for some reason such as a pressing need to go out to work,
the husband is in a hurry for its completion, various acts may be
telescoped. The time-table depends primarily on when the mar-
riage-cattle and food for the various feasts are ready.

From the time of first menstruation until she does it ritually, a [8]
bride should neither wash nor oil herself. The prohibition is felt 515
to be a very onerous one and some girls now break it, but women 177
said 'in the old days we did not wash'. 'Girls nowadays are more
cunning. We were afraid.'

[1] Some informants denied that she avoided father's sisters or brothers. Others insisted that she must avoid them because 'brothers are fathers, and father's full sisters are father'. [18]

[2] i.e. her husband's own mother and other women he calls mother. In this account the plural 'mothers' indicates own and classificatory mothers. [40]

[3] Nyakyusa beds are made of layers of mats laid on rollers between two logs at head and feet. One chief's bed we noted was made up of sixty-eight mats. [352]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Mgonde F3617
Nyakyusa
Selja, Malgonde

my father-in-law, father.'[1] She says: 'I have grown up finally, I am a woman.' 'As I have grown up, I am a daughter-in-law (*ukwamwene*).' 'If a girl looks at her father (during the ritual) she is proud (*umutinge*).' 'She used to be beaten if she looked at her father's friends. She is proud if she does. Her mothers will beat her.' She also fears ridicule—'We *ukutile* because we laugh at one another'—and mystical sanctions. 'If she does not *ukutile* (her father) she gets thin and brown. Since she has grown up she must avoid people.' 'She would become light in colour if she did not *ukutile* during the ritual.' 'She will grow thin and her body will be brown instead of black. We think that ugly.'

Mwandisi (the old blind chief), asked why a bride should *ukutile* her father, replied:

She avoids him and he gives her a gift to break the taboo. During puberty it is taboo. Kyala has created us so. Because if her father looks at her she grows thin, those below [i.e. the shades] are angry.

QUESTION: And those above?

MWANDISI: Yes! Do they not injure them? Do they not give those who throw out the liver a bull that they may eat?

Mwakisonde (the doctor), asked the same question, replied:

It is because of the in-law relationship (*ukwamwene*). If I, the father, look at her she will grow thin and waste away, but at the beer we give her gifts of bark-cloth to break the taboo and say: 'You have come out (*ukutile*). You have come out, my child. I am sorry about the fire, I am sorry.' Then she looks at us. She avoids me, the father, and my younger brothers and my fellows in the age-village who are all, according to our customs, her fathers.

Ukutile of her mother-in-law (shielding her face with a mat or skin) was interpreted by Mwakisonde in this way:

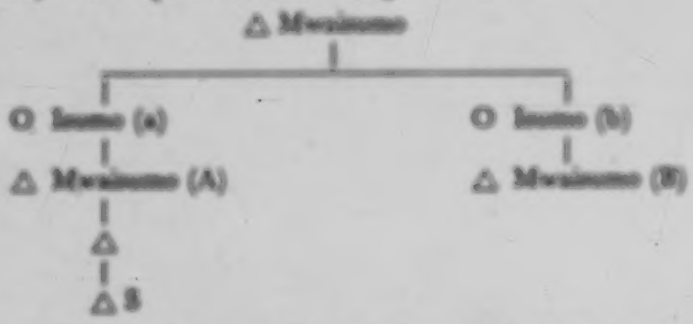
It is on account of the dignity of her mother-in-law who says: 'She is my child, see, she respects and avoids me, saying: "She bore my husband."' I am her superior. She acknowledges my dignity. She is wise, she respects me, her mother.'

Everyone was agreed that 'the bull of puberty' (*ingombele jabusunge*) is both a sacrifice to the shades, who are asked to bless the girl and make her fertile, and a feast for the mothers and that, strictly, it is only brought if the girl is virgin. 'We throw the *ijabusunge* meat in the banana grove and put a stone on top of it so that those below may eat, and we pray that the girl may bear a

[1] Some aspects of father-in-law and daughter-in-law avoidance are discussed in *Good Company*, pp. 83-6.

sister immediately older than herself, the sister's daughter, and the sister immediately younger than herself, took part. 605 602

At the ritual of sprinkling, the principals are the children and grandchildren of the slayer and the slain, their brothers, their mother's kin (*abipuo*) and their wives. We were not able to watch any case of treatment against *ulalunga* and are not certain exactly how far the infection is thought to spread. Our informants were agreed that the number of kinsmen concerned is less than in a twin ritual, but we traced one case in which a minor chief, Mwainumo (B.), forbade the father of a man who had killed S., the great grandson of Mwainumo's mother's sister, to enter his country lest he spread disease among his relatives. 783 602 682



At a ritual to 'rot the ropes' those concerned are the descendants of the one who has been bound and their wives, siblings and siblings' children. At the one ritual we saw there were present 27 members of the dead man's own lineage (3 sons, 2 younger half-brothers, 1 full sister, 4 half-sisters, 3 sons, 5 daughters, 2 grandsons, 7 granddaughters), one wife, the wives of 4 sons, one father's sister's son, one son and 6 daughters of his sisters or half-sisters. 783 602

The ritual for protection against sorcery which we attended was performed at the home of the senior brother (heir to his father) of the dead woman. There were present her two brothers, their wives and children; her father's brother's daughter; two wives and one daughter of her sister's sons; her mother, two of her mother's brothers with their wives and children; two of her mother's sisters and the daughters of one of them. Her husband (who lived next door) could not take the medicine at his in-law's house, but some was sent for him to use at his home with his wives and kinsfolk. 789 602 754

In the simple ritual of prayer to the shades the senior kinsman who offers the prayer and blows out water acts alone but, if there 782 602

2: Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

613 followed so is not necessarily an ancestor of those who speak of him. In the rituals the participants look towards the direction from which their ancestors came, and the details vary both with the cultural area and with the particular lineage, but similarity in ritual observance is no ground for claiming kinship. The one recognized bond is common participation—attending one another's funerals and observing the rules of avoidance.

The segmentation of lineages is by houses. Ties between full siblings are closer than those between half-siblings and this is immediately apparent in the attendance at, and participation in rituals, as the genealogy of Mwakobelela (Table (a)) shows. Full siblings, particularly successive and linked siblings, are closely identified. The most important link between men or women is inheritance. The heir takes the name and social position of the deceased, succeeding to his or her rights and obligations, and observing the same avoidances. 'A shade is resurrected in the body of his child.' The heir is a junior[1] man or woman of the lineage, preferably a full brother or sister, but possibly a half-brother or sister, or parallel cousin, or a son, or brother's son, or brother's daughter.

613 When the heir is a son, or brother's son or daughter, the separa-
●601 tion so strictly maintained between generations is bridged for that individual only; he or she changes generation and a man is treated by his former comrades as a 'father' and referred to by his wives as 'father-in-law', even though they are still his wives and live with him.

The identification of alternate generations is expressed in calling grandchildren ('the comrades of the shades') to eat the sacrificial meat or fish, or take the first sip of beer, as well as in the absence of taboos between affines of such alternate generations. A woman does *not* avoid her husband's grandfather. Thus, though the lineage is treated in some respects as a unit, one man (or woman) of it being able to replace another and override the distinction between successive generations, the unity is not pushed as far as among many other peoples, such as the Fondo, where the form of behaviour appropriate to a father-in-law applies to *all* senior members of his lineage irrespective of generation.

[71]

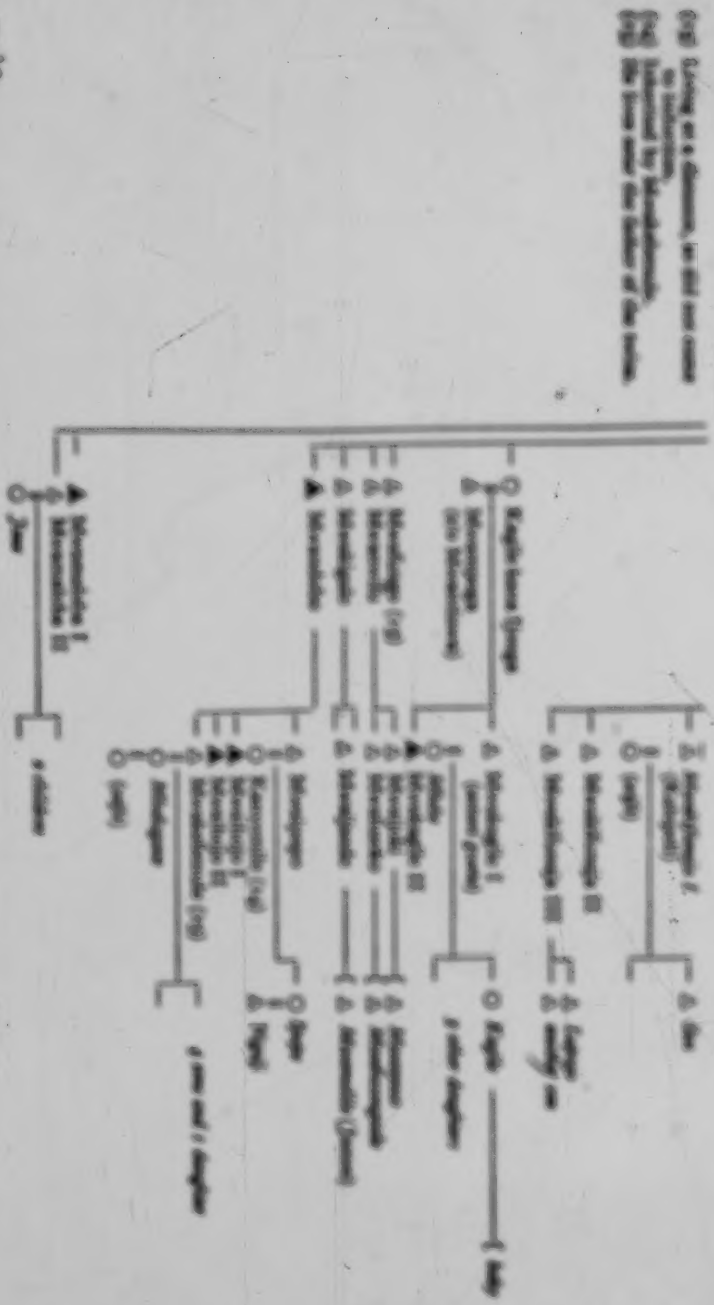
613 Differences in status within the lineage are clearly shown in the
559 rituals. In their observance seniors precede juniors, men precede

[1] If there is no junior full brother, a senior full brother may inherit provided that he has not previously inherited from his father and so become 'father'.

[Category 116, facing p. 270. – Analyst]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

●601
545

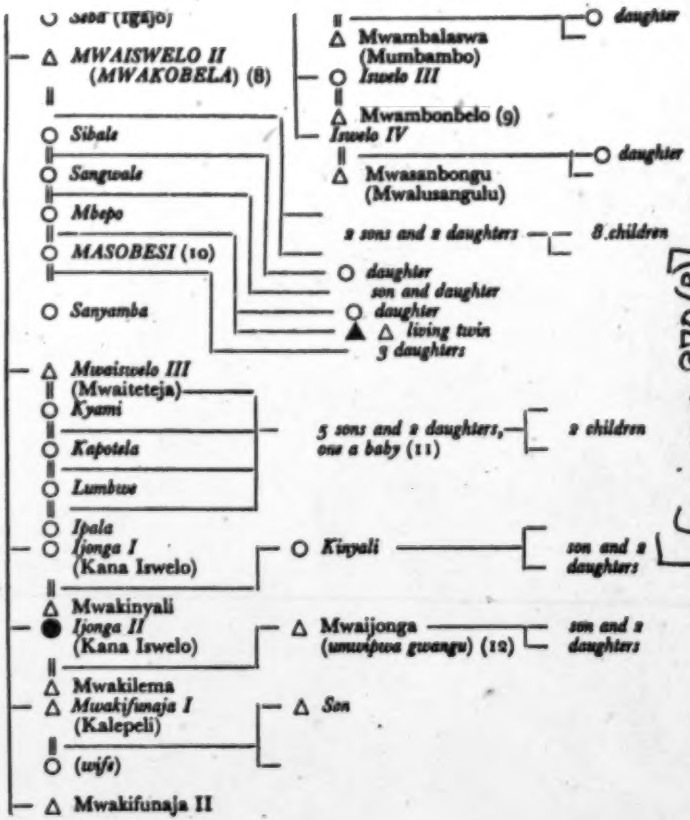


[facing p. 270(A)]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Key:
Persons participating in the ritual shown in italics.
△ ○ = alive. ▲ ● = dead.

NOTES:
(1) Do not come.
(2) 'Owner' of the ritual.
(3) Took medicine.
(4) At home of brother of mother of twins.
(5) Moved to Mwipande.
(6) Sick for 'washing'.
(7) Chief at Masoko.
(8) Father of the twins.
(9) Clerk at Tukuyu.
(10) Mother of the twins.
(11) The third daughter is 'a wanderer with no home'.
(12) He left children and went away. He himself had twins before.
(13) Living at a distance, so did not come to induction.
(14) Inherited by Mwakabenule.
(15) He lives near the father of the twins.



[Facing p. 270 (B)]

●601
845

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

601
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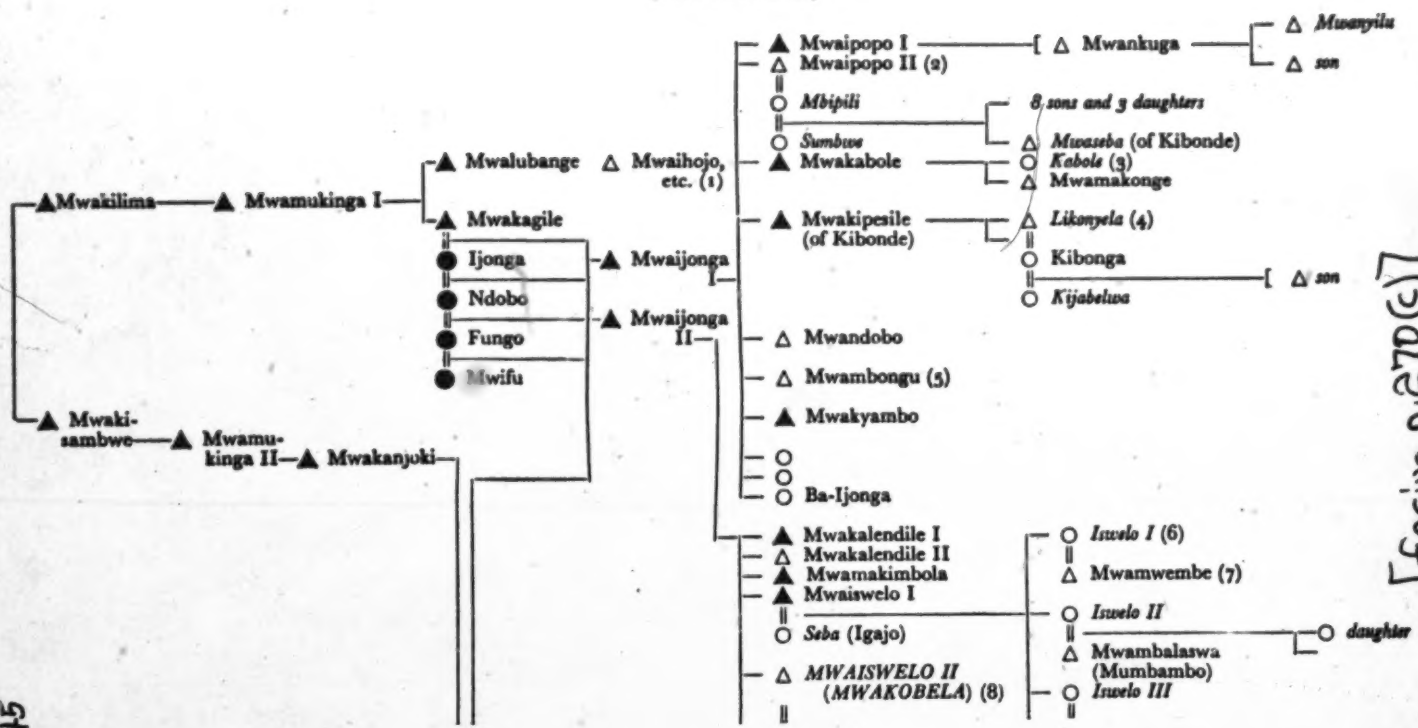
TABLE (a) *See pp.* 153—162.

GENEALOGY OF MWAKOBELA
(TWIN RITUAL)

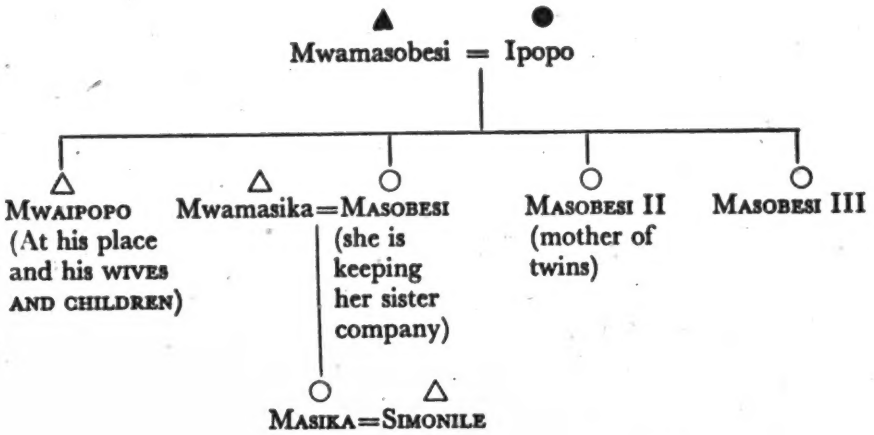


[facing p. 270(c)]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

601

THE RELATIVES OF MWAKOBELA'S WIFE

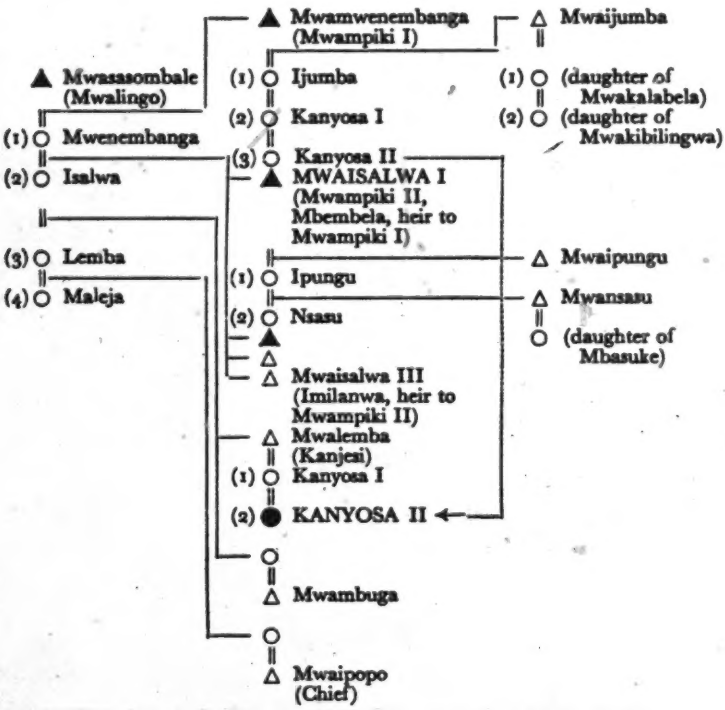


2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

TABLE (c) *See pp.* 244–250.

601

TRUNCATED GENEALOGY OF MWAMPIKI TO SHOW RELATIONSHIP OF PERSONS MENTIONED IN TEXT



Key: △ ○ = alive. ▲ ● = dead.
Names in Capitals = persons for whom rituals were performed.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

601 764

TABLE (d)

GENEALOGY OF MWAMULENGA III, SON OF MWEGAMA (DEATH RITUAL)

- ▲ Mwaikono
  - (1) Bufugo
    - (2) Nsambe
      - (3) Mugobole
        - ▲ Mwabufugo I[1]
          - ▲ Mwanjala (no issue)
          - (1) Njala[2]
            - ● Kanakapesa
          - (2) Kapesa[3]
            - ▲ Mwabufugo II
              - △ (Sent stem of bananas for ritual)
              - ○ (Lives far away. Did not come. No message sent. Would have sent for a twin ritual)
        - ▲ Mwansambe I (Mwegama I)
          - (1) Kapesa (inherited from Mwabufugo)
            - △ Mwakapesa (the head of the family did not attend ritual)
              - △ *Ijalisi*
              - △ *Kabaliko*
            - ○ Kanakapesa*
          - (2) Ipopo I
            - △ Mwaipopo I (Sya pa Bwingi)*
              - △ *Kwima*
          - (3) Ipopo II
            - △ Maipopo II (Mwanjinga)*
            - ○ KanaIpopo
            - ○ KanaIpopo
          - (4) Ipalu I
            - ○ KanaIpalu*
            - △ Mwaipalu I*
            - △ Mwaipalu II
            - △ Mwaipalu III
            - △ Mwaipalu IV
          - (5) Ipalu II
        - ▲ Mwansambe II (Mwegama II)
          - (1) Ipopo (inherited from Mwansambe I)
          - (2) Ipalu (inherited from Mwansambe I)
          - (3) Lwesi
            - ○ *Kanalwesi* (Bapala)
            - △ *Mwamulenga I* (Mpogo) the heir
              - △ *Banogile*
              - ○ *Apwandi*
              - △ *Ambelikile*
              - ○ *Mumbonyege*
              - △ (Sick)
          - (4) Mulenga
            - △ Mwamulenga II* (Mwilabege) a postulant Christian
              - △ *Mwanjabuka*
              - △ *Kusulila*
          - (5) Maloba I (No issue)
            - ▲ Mwamulenga III (the dead man)
              - ▲
          - (6) Maloba II (divorced)
            - (1) ● Lukosa
            - (2) ○ *Kalukwa* (no issue) (inherited by Mwamulenga I)
            - △ Mwamaloba (away at work)
            - △ *Mwakibinga* (Mwambulo)
          - (7) Kibenga (a kinswoman of the Ipopos)
        - ○ Kana Nsambe*
          - ○ Sikatula*
          - △*
        - ○
        - △ Mwamugobole
          - ○*
          - ○

Names in italics = performed ritual.
* = present but did not perform ritual.
▲ ● = dead. △ ○ = alive.

[1] Mwabufugo I was a village headman. The people refused Mwabufugo II (his rightful heir) as headman and the office fell to Mwansambe.
[2] Njala was divorced. Her cattle went to Mwabufugo II.
[3] Kapesa refused Mwabufugo II and went to Mwansambe.
Note. Inheritance by an elder brother was possible in this case because he had not inherited from his father.

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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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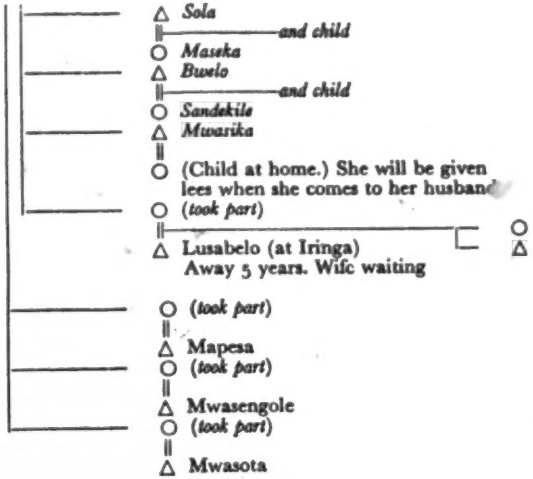
783
768



Key: △ ○ = alive. ▲ ● = dead.

Name in capitals = Widow inherited. Names in italics = participated in ritual. † = Christian.

Participants:

Men of lineage	11	Father + his full brother + 4/6 his half-brothers + widow's 2 full brothers + 2/3 half-brothers; son of half-brother.
Daughters of lineage	18	6/8 half-sisters (1 Christian, 1 away), 8/10 father's half-sisters (1 Christian, 1 away did not), 4 unmarried daughters of half-brother.
Wives	32	Mother, 2 co-wives of mother, 2 wives of father's brother, 15 wives of father's half-brothers (including chief) (1 sick, drank at home), 3 Christian did not come, 4 wives of own full brothers, 3 wives of half-brothers, 1 widow of grandfather, 4 wives of father's half-brother's sons.
Children		of brothers, of father's brothers, and half-brothers.

N.B. Sons-in-law do not participate.

[Facing p. 274 (A)]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

601
783
768

(7) ○ Nsole (inherited by Mwasalemba)

○ Malija† (Did not come, no medicine sent)
△ Ulinyelusi†

○
△ Filipo† (Gone to Dar-es-Salaam)

△ *Johani*
(1) ○ *Ngota*
children
(2) ○ *Sambwele*

○ (*took part*)
Kilongo
△ Undekile

○ (*took part:* came without children)
△ Mpekele

○ (*took part*)
△ Mwasota

▲
●
△ *Sola*
and child
○ *Maseka*
△ *Bwelo*
and child
○ *Sandekile*
△ *Mwasika*
○ (Child at home.) She will be given lees when she comes to her husband
○ (*took part*)
△ Lusabelo (at Iringa) ○ △
Away 5 years. Wife waiting

[Facing p. 274 (B)]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

● 601 763 768

- ● Kalukwa
  - ▲ Mwakajoki
- ● Ndelele
  - ▲ Umbelikile†
- △ Mwasakalija II (*Mwakilima*)
  - (1) ○ *Konyumbele* (No issue)
  - (2) ○ *Syapatale* (No issue)
  - △ Porokoto (Sceptic.) All *wives* (10 seen) came except 3 Christians. No medicine sent to them. Some Christian wives came. All children came, including Syakuhomba (Mwakapenga) and his wife: *4 nubile daughters of Porokoto, 3 wives of Porokoto's sons.*
  - △ Nsajigwa (Sakabeto)
    - (1) ○ *Nyambele* — *children*
    - (2) ○ Iseje (sick, drinking at home)
  - ○ *Syakunuma*
    - △ Mwandabela
  - ○ Malija† (Did not come, no medicine sent)
    - △ Ulinyelusi†
  - ○
    - △ Filipo† (Gone to Dar-es-Salaam)

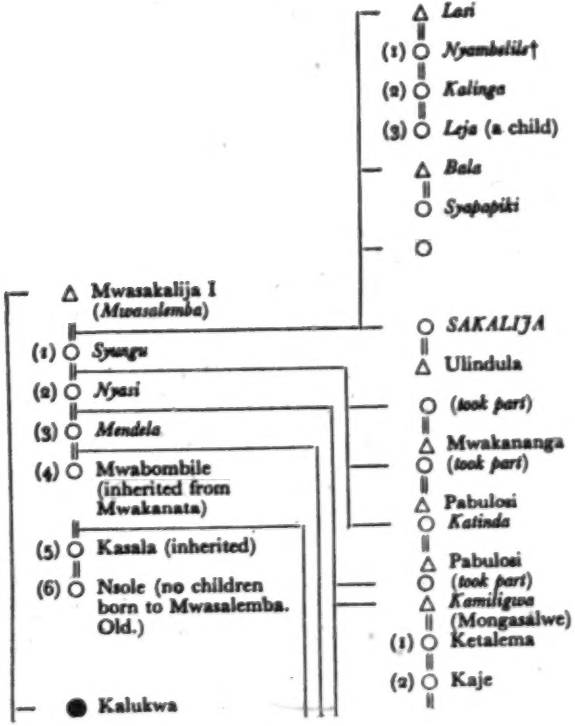
▲ Mwakanata
- (1) ● Sakalija
- (2) ● Sanjala
- (3) ○ Kapesu (divorced after 3 children)
- (4) ○ *Sambwiga* (Ndiabo) (lives w. Mwasalemba)
- (5) ○ Mwahombile (alive)
- (6) ○ Kasala (inherited by Mwasalemba)
- (7) ○ Nsole (inherited by Mwasalemba)

- (1) ○ Ketalema
- (2) ○ Kaje
- (3) ○ Lija
  - △ Jebala (at school at Malangali)
- ○† — △ Mambokile† } (They are both at the Lupa working and we will give them fees when they get back)
- ○ (*took part*)
- ○ (*took part:* not yet engaged)
- ○† — △ Ndengenye† (Pentecostal) } They refused to come
- ○ (*took part*)

[facing p. 274 (c)]

TABLE (c) (*See pp.* 43, 192).

GENEALOGY OF MWASALEMBA (RITUAL OF THE GASPING COUGH)



[FACING p. 274(D)]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

601
783
768

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

602 important relationships of kinship and affinity. Marriage cattle are not kept by the bride's father, but are distributed by him among her brothers for their marriages, and among his own brothers and half-brothers, who in turn give him cattle when their own daughters marry.

595 Half-brothers do not generally exchange cattle, but unless they do so there are no strong bonds of kinship between them. A polygynist usually creates the relationship of 'milking each other's cows', between his senior son and the eldest of each group of full-brothers by his other wives. He gives some of the marriage cows received for a daughter to one of her half-brothers, the latter being placed under an obligation to return the cows to the girl's eldest full brother some day from the marriage cattle of a sister or daughter of his own. The exchange once begun usually continues as sisters and daughters marry, and only lapses in the third generation, unless the principals quarrel and take legal action for 'separation'. Then a balance is drawn up of the cows exchanged from the beginning of the relationship, and the kinship is broken. The two thus 'separated' have no mutual obligations and do not attend each other's funerals.

602 428 Half-brothers may be linked by blood if their mothers are close kin; they may also be linked by cattle exchanges. The laws of inheritance make the full brothers of a man his first heirs, then his half-brothers linked by blood, then those linked by cattle have precedence over other half-brothers.[1]

604 The bond between a man and his mother's brother is expressed in terms of the passage of cattle. As the mother's brother married with the mother's cattle, her eldest son has the right to make free with his property in his lifetime, the right to receive one cow to set up a herd of his own, and a residuary right of inheritance; if the mother's brother dies without heir, her son can claim the particular wife obtained with and the particular progeny of the cattle given for his own mother.

606 There is a strict custom of father and daughter-in-law avoidance. A woman may never speak to, approach, or look at her husband's father, on pain of death through the witchcraft of indignant neighbours. The prohibition is extended from her own father-in-law to all his classificatory brothers, and is the basis of the age-village system.[2] A man must also avoid his mother-in-law, but this prohibition is relaxed after the birth of a child.[3] The affinal relationship is also expressed by the obligation of a man to bring a cow to the funeral of his wife's father or brother, and to give one at the death of his own son-in-law. The former may count as part of his marriage payments in case of a claim for refund.[4]

601 The main kinship terms are as follows:

Ndamu = brother-in-law or sister-in-law; used by a man for all husbands of his 'sisters', all 'brothers' of his wives, and for the son of his wife's brother, since he has a right to marry that man's sister; by a woman for all wives of her 'brothers' and all 'sisters' of her husband.

Nhugho = parent-in-law or child-in-law; used for the husband of a daughter, or for the parent of a wife or husband (a daughter-in-law is called by the special name of *Nhaumamu*). The wife of the wife's brother is called *Nhugho*, as she is the mother of a potential wife, and of a brother-in-law.

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 265; 4, 1939, p. 2.
[2] Ibid., 2, 1936, pp. 267–8; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 45 and 106.
[3] Sanderson, 3, 1923, p. 454.
[4] Wilson, 4, 1939.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

601 *Mwinuhulu* = grandparent or grandchild; but a man addresses his male grandparents as *Mwinangu* (my compeer) and his female grandparents as *Nkazi* (wife). A woman addresses her male grandparents as *Ndume* (husband) and her female grandparents as *Mwinangu* (my compeer).

Ndume = husband, extended for a woman to include the husbands of 'sisters', male grandparents, male grandchildren, husbands of female grandparents or grandchildren; all 'brothers' of a husband, husband of a father's sister, and grandfathers of a husband, and finally, the husband's sister's son.

Nkazi = wife; for a man it includes the wives of 'brothers', female grandparents and grandchildren, or wives of male ones; all sisters of wife, daughters of wife's brothers, wives of grandsons by marriage, the 'grandmothers' of a wife, and the wife of a maternal uncle.[1]

605 The Ngonde do not seem to distinguish cross-cousins from ortho-cousins as clearly as do the Maravi, or the Yao, Makua, and Makonde peoples.

MARRIAGE

582 There are no exogamous clans, but the descendants of a common grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are forbidden to marry.[2] The descendants of a common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry, but sometimes they do so before the relationship is discovered; they then simply drink a special medicine, but do not break the marriage. The old men speak of a now abandoned custom of preferential cross-cousin marriage.[3] The husband of the eldest girl of a family has the prior right to marry her full sisters, and such marriages are very common. A man also has the right to marry the daughter of his wife's brother, therefore the wife of the wife's brother is classed as a parent-in-law in kinship terminology.[4]

583 The passage of cattle makes children of a marriage legitimate. A child of a man who has given no cattle belongs either to the mother's husband or to her father. Cattle are in rapid circulation. Few men possess more than six cows at any time, yet marriage payments range from four to thirty cows (formerly only one or two were given). Marriage involves considerable expenditure and months of preliminary economic activity.[5] The cattle are seldom handed over all at once, but in ones or twos over a period of years. Full brothers have a claim to the cattle of their sister's marriage, and at the marriage of his eldest daughter the father hands one of the cows to the village headman.[6]

584 A girl commonly goes to visit and sleep with her betrothed husband for several years before she finally sets up house for him. The ideal procedure is by negotiation with the girl's father, but a man without cows may run off with a girl and satisfy her father with cows later on, or a man with cattle may seduce a married woman and pay her husband the adultery fine of two cows, plus the cows originally given for her marriage. A girl may be betrothed before puberty, and may visit her husband, but she is supposed to be virgin at her initiation ceremony, and is generally not allowed to

[1] Sanderson, 3, 1923.

[2] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 55.

[3] See Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 267; but according to Sanderson, 3, 1923, p. 453, cross-cousins are classed as sisters, and all first cousins are unmarriageable; according to Johnston, 1897, p. 415, and to Mackenzie 1925, p. 55, cousin marriage was not allowed.

[4] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 262; Sanderson, op. cit., p. 451.

[5] Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 11.

[6] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 65.

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

THE RELATIONSHIP SYSTEMS OF THE WANGONDE AND WAHENGA TRIBES, NYASALAND.

By MEREDITH SANDERSON, M.R.C.S., F.R.G.S.

I.—THE WANGONDE.

1. THE Wangonde are a Bantu tribe inhabiting that part of Central Africa adjacent to the north-west shores of Lake Nyasa. They are a somewhat primitive people, as yet little contaminated by European civilization; they are intensely conservative and their customs differ from those of neighbouring tribes. As a result of this conservatism their system of relationship still bears, in its nomenclature, evidence of its evolution from exogamy in its most primitive form, and of all Nyasaland tribes the Wangonde have probably been least influenced by contact with others. In recent history they were victimised from time to time both by Arab slavers and by the Angoni, but neither appear to have left any trace of their domination. It should be mentioned, however, that the chieftainship was usurped some 10 (?) generations ago by an adventurer who, according to tradition, came from the north-west (towards Tanganyika) and whose descendants still form the ruling caste. It may be that some new customs were introduced at this time, though this is denied by the descendants of the old nobility, who still retain a large share of influence in tribal council.

2. *Definitions.*—ILUMBU = "brother"[1] to "sister," or "sister" to "brother." A man calls his elder "brother" *mkulumungu*; a younger one *mung'una*: the same terms are used by a woman for her "sisters." All children of uncles and aunts are regarded as "brothers" and "sisters," including those of maternal uncle and of paternal aunt; those of father's elder "brother," of mother's elder "sister," and of mother's "brother," are called *mukulu*, irrespective of age.

The term *wamyitu* is often used, irrespective of sex, as alternative for "brother" or "sister"; its real meaning is rather "kinsman," and it may also be used for any relative or connection except the age-classes immediately above or below that of the speaker (*e.g.*, father or son), as it implies a degree of intimacy not permitted with those degrees. *Wamyitu* means "my" (lit. "our") "kinsman"; the second and third persons are *wamyinu* and *wamyuo* respectively: there is no singular form.

[1] The use of inverted commas with English terms of relationship indicates that they are used in the full classificatory sense.

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

● 601 MWINANGU ("my compeer"—other forms, *mwinako*, "thy" or "one's compeer," *mwinaki*, *mwinitu*, *mwinina*, *mwinao*, "his," "our," "your," "their compeer"; plural, *winangu*, etc.). This term is used much as *wamgitu*, but its meaning is slightly different, as it definitely implies equality, and may be applied to a companion as opposed to a relative. When coupled to a term of relationship it has the meaning of "fellow," *e.g.*, *nkasi-mwinangu*, "my fellow-wife"; or it indicates an absence of formality in intercourse with that degree of relationship. Thus *mwiukulu-mwinangu* is always used in preference to *mwiukulu* by itself, and indicates that a grandson is treated as a "brother," a younger "brother," but an equal.

NDAMU is used by a man for men only and by a woman for women only. Of a man the term includes the husbands of his "sisters" and the "brothers" of all women who are his *wakasi*. A woman's *ndamu* are the wives of her "brothers" and the "sisters" of any man whom she calls *ndamu*. (See *nkasi* and *ndamu*.)

NKOGBO ("thy" or "one's *nko-*") is the husband of a daughter, or the parent, male or female, of a wife or husband. Seeing that a grand-daughter is called *nkasi*, it is possible that a man formerly married the daughter of his daughter, and called the husband of his daughter *nkogbo* as a potential father-in-law.[1] If this be so, it would suggest that marriage with a son's daughter was not permitted, as the term *nkogbo* may be used for either a man or a woman, and a son's wife is always called *nkumatoma*, never *nkogbo*. The use of the term *nkasi* for the daughter of a son may have arisen subsequently, by analogy, after marriage with a daughter's daughter had fallen into desuetude. A senior *nkogbo* (*e.g.*, parent of wife) is usually addressed as *Tata* or *Yawa*, and a son-in-law as *mamangu*.

MWIUKULU = any grand-relation, male or female: it includes grandfather and grandmother, grandson and grand-daughter. A male *mwiukulu* is called *mwinangu* by a man and *ndamu* by a woman; a female *mwiukulu* is called *nkasi* by a man and *mwinangu* by a woman. (See also para. 3 (4) below.)

NYENYA (*cf.* the ChiHenga word *nyenye* = "far") is a great grand-relation, male or female, senior or junior.

NKATINKATI similarly is a great-great-grand-relation of any kind.

NKASI includes wife of a "brother," uterine or otherwise; female *wiukulu*, including wives of "grandsons" and of "grandfathers," but excluding "grand-daughters" of wife; all "sisters" of a wife; daughters of a wife's "brothers"; wives of "grandsons" by marriage, and the "grandmothers" of a wife; wife of maternal uncle; and, of course, own wife.

Similarly NDUME includes husband of a "sister"; male *wiukulu* including husbands of "grand-daughters" and of "grandmothers"; all "brothers" of a husband; sons of all "sisters" of a husband; husband of father's "sister";

[1] Mrs. Seligman called to my notice a similar possibility among the WaYao, and I am indebted to her for the suggestion.

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

601 husbands of "grand-daughters" by marriage (but not "grandsons" by marriage); the "grandfathers" of a husband; and own husband.

TATA includes own father, his "brothers" and "sisters," and the husband of father's "sister"; also husband of mother's sister. By courtesy the term is used for all "fathers" of a wife or husband (instead of *nkogho*), or to any superior in station or age, whether related or not.

YUWA (mother) includes own mother, her "brothers" and "sisters" the wives of the father's "brothers" and the wives of a woman's maternal uncle. The term may also be used for the mothers of a wife or husband, or as a mere term of respect.

These terms (TATA and YUWA) are used only in speaking of one's own fathers or mothers, the possessive adjective, "my" or "our," being invariably omitted. For other persons, the old Bantu words WISE and NYINA are substituted; *e.g.*, *ghuso*, *uwise*, *uwisemwe*, *uwisao* ("thy," "his," "your," "their father"), plurals *awatata*, *awauso*, *awawise*, etc. ("my" or "our," "thy," "his fathers," etc.). So *unyoko*, *unyina*, *unyinemwe*, *unyinawo* ("thy," "his," "your," "their mother"), plurals *awayuwa*, *awanyoko*, *awanyina*, etc. ("my" or "our," "thy," "his mother").

MWANA = son or daughter, including, of course, those of "brothers" and "sisters," and of wife.

NKAMWANA, obviously derived from *nkazi wa mwana* ("wife of a son"), may be used by either a man or a woman for that degree of relationship.

MWEGHANISI (= *mu-egha-na-uswe*, "marry with us," from *kwegha*, "to marry") or KITWASI (= *Ki-twala-na-uswe*, "marry with us," from *kutwala*, "to marry").
[177] The former is said to be a *Kinyakyusa* word,[1] now in general use, and the latter the old *Kingonde* word; either may be used to denote a paramour of one's wife, and as a result the term *mwinangu* is usually added when referring to a husband of the speaker's potential wife, which is its special meaning, in order to deprive it of any suggestion of offence.

NKASI-MWINANGU ("my fellow-wife") is the corresponding term used by a woman for the wife of a potential husband, but it is not generally used among the potential wives of a man, as such. The actual wives of a man, however, refer to each other by means of this term, and to their husband's potential wives.

NASENGE denotes a father's sister of either a man or a woman, and reciprocally a "brother's" child of a woman. It probably has reference to the right of marriage possessed by a man with the daughter of his wife's "brother." (See para. 3 (3) below.)

MWIPWA includes mother's brother and sister's son or daughter of a man, and mother's brother of a woman. A woman calls her sister's son *ndume*. (See para. 3 (6) below.)

[1] The Wanyakyusa are a tribe racially allied to the Wankonde, and inhabiting neighbouring territory.

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

MWIKO is very nearly a translation of the word *tabu*, and may be used either 601
of things or of forbidden degrees of relationship.

3. The following points are noteworthy :—

(1) The wife of a "brother," whether older or younger, uterine or not, is called 601
by the same term (*nkasi*) as a wife. I am informed that sexual intercourse, 602
though not countenanced, is not uncommon, and such cases are apt to 837
be treated leniently should they come to (native) court. This might be regarded as evidence of former "group marriages," but it should be noted that a man's first heir is his brother, who succeeds to the wives in common with the rest of the "property."

The same term (*ndume*) is used by a woman for the "brothers" 601
of her husband as for the husband himself, and their wives are *wakasi-winake* (= "her fellow-wives").

(2) The "sisters" of a wife are also called *nkasi*. The husband of the eldest 601
of a family has a prior right to marry her uterine sisters, and a semi- 595
right to her other "sisters"; such marriages are very common. Any man who marries a woman to whom another has a prior right becomes *mweghanisi* (or *kitwasi*) to the ousted one. (See Definitions.) Reciprocally a woman calls her "sister's" husband *ndume*, even after her marriage to another.

(3) A man has the right to marry the daughter of his wife's "brother" as 582
among the Thonga,[1] and the wife of the wife's "brother" is called 601
nkogho (see Definitions); the son of the wife's "brother" is often called *ndamu* instead of *mwana*. There is a special term for a father's sister, which is reciprocally used by a woman for her "brother's" daughter; the term *nkasi-mwinangu* (= "my fellow-wife") does not appear to be used by her unless and until her husband actually marries the girl. This special term is *nasenge*, and it can hardly be mere coincidence that it so closely resembles the Nandi term *senget* for father's sister[2] (*na-* being a common Bantu prefix, usually honorific, and, on the other hand, the terminal *-t* merely formative).

A woman calls the son of her husband's "sister" *ndume*. (See para. (6) below.)

(4) All "grand-daughters," except those by marriage, are called *nkasi*, but marriage has never been allowed within living memory; the husband of these "grand-daughters" are called *mweghanisi* (*kitwasi*). A "grandson" is not called *ndamu* but (*mwisukulu*) *mwinangu* (= "my compeer");

[1] B. Z. Seligman, "The relationship systems of the Nandi, Masai and Thonga, *Man*, April, 1917, 46 (quoting Junod).

[2] Seligman, *loc. cit.*, quoting Hollis, "The Nandi."

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

582 601 his wife is called *nkasi*, like the wife of a "brother," not *nkogho*. This appears to be the result of the law that a man may have to marry his "grandmothers." (See para. 5.)

601 Similarly a woman calls her "grandson" *ndume*, and his wife *nkasi-mwinangu*.

No distinction is made between the offspring of a "son" and that of a "daughter," either by a man or a woman.

"Grand-daughters" by marriage are not called *nkasi* by a man, nor are "grandsons" by marriage called *ndume* by a woman: the term *mwisukulu-mwinangu* is used in either case. It is of interest to note, however, that the wives and husbands of these relations are called *nkasi* and *ndume* respectively, which is evidently a relic of the period when the whole tribe was divided into two classes, marriageable and unmarriageable: since a "grandchild" by marriage belonged to the latter class, his or her spouse must be included in the former.

[616]

(5) All "grandmothers" are termed *nkasi*, except perhaps the sisters of the paternal grandfather; some say that these should be classed as "sister," as the sister of one's *mwinangu* (grandfather), because *nkasi* would not be polite to the *nasenge* of one's father. Others deny this and include all grandmothers as *nkasi*, and it is doubtful whether the objection is not modern. The same applies to the "grandmothers" of a wife.

587 A man often has to marry his "grandmothers" on the death of his "grandfather," though if the latter were a chief or a rich man the heir would probably marry them as part of the property. The rule appears to be that it is the duty of any man to marry his "grandmothers" if they are destitute.

[582] 601 A woman calls all her "grandfathers" *ndume*, though actual marriage is not permitted. It is difficult to say whether this is due to analogy with the relationship of a man to his "grandmother," or is the corollary of that to his "grand-daughter." Since marriage with a "grand-daughter" is not uncommon in other tribes, it may be that it was originally the reason for a woman calling her grandfather *ndume* among the Wangonde, but that the persistence of the terminology after such a marriage came to be regarded as incestuous is partly due to analogy.

As a result of the similarity of relationship between grandparents and grandchildren the same term *mwisukulu* is used for both. There was formerly a special term for grandparents (*mbuya*), but it is now obsolete.

601 604 (6) The relationship between mother's "brother" and "sister's" son is peculiar, in that the term is used reciprocally (*mwipwa*). A man calls the wife of his

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

maternal uncle *nkasi*, and she calls him *ndume*. As a sister's son comes very low down in the table of succession, this cannot be due to their prospective relationship should the maternal uncle die, and it may be that the relationship of husband's sister's son is (or was) regarded as analogous to that of wife's brother's daughter. On the other hand, if the father of X exercises his right to marry his wife's brother's daughter, this girl, from being the "sister" of X, becomes his "mother," and her mother (the wife of X's maternal uncle) becomes his "grandmother" and therefore his *nkasi*. 601 604

(7) Cross-cousins are classed as "brothers" and "sisters," and all first cousins are, therefore, unmarriageable. 605 601

(8) It is of interest to note that a kind of marriage by capture is still in vogue among the Wangonde. It may be performed either with or without the consent of the woman, but, except in the case of a woman to whom the man has a right by relationship, her father's sanction is necessary, and at least part of the dowry must be paid beforehand: usually, the woman is aware that the marriage has been proposed. 583

The bridegroom, assisted by some friends, either lies in wait for the woman, on the way to the water-supply for instance, or decoys her out of the village by means of a spurious message, and carries her off to his home. Her relatives would be bound in honour to rescue her if the bridegroom were so maladroit as to make it impossible for them to affect ignorance of the abduction. It is said that the marriage is sometimes consummated by force with the assistance of the companions of the bridegroom: in any case, a small present to the girl personally is necessary before consummation.

4. *Succession.*—The order of succession is liable to modification if the legal heir is considered unsuitable for any reason. The relationships are put in the following order of precedence:— 428

(1) Younger brother by same father and mother.

(2) Younger brother by same father and different mother.

(3) Any younger "brother."

Note.—It would be considered *infra dig.* for an elder "brother" to take the name of his junior, so that, although he has a prior right to the property, he would appoint a younger "brother" to the name. In such a case he may choose which of the "wives" of the deceased he likes, in addition to the cattle.

(4) Eldest surviving son (own begetting).

(5) Eldest son of elder brother (by the same father).

(6) Eldest son of younger brother (by the same father).

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

593 holding of land and the economics of life in general, the rules and procedure of law, the emotional forms of ceremony, the dogma, rite, morality and symbol of religion, the forms of knowledge and opinion—all are interpenetrated by these relationships.

593 The word *family* is used in this paper to mean the organized group
595 of a man, his wife or wives, and their children of any age, but not to include any other relatives. A Nyakyusa family, as we shall see, does not become extinct when the father dies; his younger full-brother or his senior son steps into his place and the group continues very much as before. In this society families are sometimes monogamous, sometimes polygynous; and, in consequence, two more relationships with which we are not familiar in our own culture are included in the Nyakyusa family; one is the relationship of co-wives and the other is that of half-siblings. Within a ploygynous family the different wives and their respective children form groups to some extent distinct from one another; and the term *individual family* is here used to denote the group of a man, one wife and their children, whether that group is part of a polygynous family or forms a complete monagamous family by itself.

593 The Nyakyusa themselves have no separate word for either of these
595 small groups; the word *ekekɔlɔ* is sometimes used in the restricted
601 sense to which we have here confined the word "family," but more usually means the whole of any single person's recognized blood kindred, living or dead, both in the male and female lines; and it is translated in this paper as *kindred*, *kinsfolk*, or *kinsmen*. They also have a word *ovokamu* which includes the whole of any one person's *ekekɔlɔ* together with all his recognized affines, and this is here translated *relatives*. The term *affines* is used to translate the Nyakyusa word *avakɔ*, which is identical in meaning with it.

[585] Marriage is legally effected by the handing over of four to thirty
[435] cows, together with one or two bulls, by the groom to his wife's father. And this transfer of cattle is the key to the whole Nyakyusa system of
436 blood and affinal relationship. Cattle have a very high value because of their production of milk and meat, which are the most highly prized foods, and because of their scarcity; they are in constant circulation, and by their movement from one man to another they forever create and maintain the bonds of kinship and affinity. Cattle circulate rapidly; few except chiefs have more than six cows in their herds at any one time, more often each man has only two or three, while some have no cows at all; and yet every mature man has paid out, for his own and his sons' marriages, five, ten or twenty times the number of cattle that he at

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

563 constitution (about which they asked many questions) was a
622 democratic one; for, they said, the Administration always supported the chiefs against the commoners.

621 The villages to which commoner leaders are appointed differ from all other Bantu villages of which we have knowledge in that they consist of groups of age-mates, not groups of kinsmen; boys build with contemporaries and remain with them through life; girls join the villages of their husbands at marriage; therefore relatives, other than husband and wife and young children, do
602 not live together. Nevertheless kinship ties are important, for property circulates within the kinship group rather than within the village, and kinsmen are believed to be mystically interdependent, in a way in which fellow villagers are not. The most prized
[556] possession of the Nyakyusa are cattle, for cattle enable a man to marry, to live in comfort, to gain prestige by feasting his friends; and cattle pass along the roads of kinship. They pass between brothers, and half-brothers, and the sons of brothers; between fathers and sons; and between affines. Kinsmen also participate in common rituals, praying to common ancestors, and seeking protection from mystical dangers which are thought to travel, like
[578] cattle, along the roads of kinship. Ever fearful lest a quarrel among them should bring misfortune on all, they strive to live in harmony.

The range of kinship recognized varies somewhat with the status of the family concerned and the proximity and personalities of its members, but, generally speaking, economic and religious co-operation link the descendants of a common grandfather, and marriage between the descendants of a common great-grand-
[581] father is excluded. A legal marriage is effected by the passage of cattle from the groom's group to the bride's, and it is this passage which is said to create kinship (*ubukamu*), with the consequent mystical interdependence, between a man and his wife, and between the one partner in a marriage and the close kinsmen of
595 the other. Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan, and it is made
428 possible by the ten years' difference in the average marriage age of men and women. Girls are betrothed very young and finally join their husbands at puberty, while few pagan men marry under twenty-five. Inherited cattle are controlled by the older generation and polygyny is the prerogative of age. For property passes not directly from father to son, but from brother to brother,

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Theoretically the territorial arrangement is one in which the villages of the ruling generation lie at the centre of the country, each surrounded by satellite villages of their sons, while smaller villages of old men lie on the boundaries. In practice—at least nowadays—the pattern is more complex, with old men's villages squeezed in between those of the ruling generation. From the time of its establishment as a separate chiefdom at the 'coming out', the future division of the country is adumbrated: there is a senior headman in each half of the country with villages subordinate to him, and the mother of an heir in each half. On the boundary between the halves stand the ritual trees, landmarks for all to see. 631 621

Age and locality coincide, while kinship cuts across local grouping, fathers and sons, and very often brothers, being in different villages. But kinsmen tend to be established in the same side of a country, and so to remain within one chiefdom. Kinship terms are extended in some measure to the villages of the chiefdom, which are classified as those of 'our fathers', 'our elder brothers', 'our young brothers', and 'our sons'. Women have no direct share in the age-organization: their membership of a village turns on their relationship to some man—father, husband, husband's heir—and the age-range of women within one village is very wide. 621 602 [562]

Villages vary considerably in size. Boys' villages, as we have seen, begin with a dozen members or less, and the villages of old men are often very small also; we knew one with only 10 households, another with 11. The villages of young and middle-aged men commonly vary between 20 and 50 households, with 30 as a fair average in the hills. In Mwaipopo's country there were 540 taxpayers on the roll and we recorded 19 established villages and 6 boys' villages.[1] Some members of the boys' villages, and some elderly men, were not on the tax-roll, so that the average was over 20 boys or men in each village. Villages in the plain are somewhat larger, averaging around 40 households. 621

Men's villages are usually subdivided into sections under the leadership of assistant headmen, appointed by the headman of the village. These assistants do not share in the 'coming out' cere- 621 624

[1] *Vide infra*, pp. 181 ff. The tax registers are no guide to the number of villages since in them several villages are commonly lumped together as one under a senior village headman.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER III

ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

602 THE primary economic units in Nyakyusa society are the kinship
476 groups—the elementary family, the cattle-owing lineage, and the group of cognates who co-operate in production and exchange many gifts, and among whom cattle circulate.[1] However, fellow villagers also work together, exchange food, and have a common interest in certain property.

a. Land

423 The village is the land-holding group. As we have seen, land
245 is allocated to a boys' village, at its commencement, by the parent village, that is the village to which the fathers of most of the boys belong. Little boys' huts are usually to be seen going up on a strip of pasture-land, adjoining the block of banana groves which shroud their fathers' houses. The boys' land is primarily a building site, but very soon after moving into their huts they turn over the ground and plant banana suckers (*vide* Plate II). Bananas begin to bear very quickly, and so in a little more than a year after the establishment of a boys' village, its members have bananas of their own, which they cook for themselves and eat with their
241 friends at odd times during the day. But they have, as yet, no
423 fields, for the cultivation of fields requires the co-operation of a wife. Bachelors continue to eat their main meals at their parents' village. As the boys grow up and marry they begin to cultivate garden-land adjacent to their village. Some of these gardens are acquired by individuals from their own fathers and fathers-in-law, but whether there may also be a block grant of garden-land by the parent village as a whole to the boys' village as a whole we
423 are not certain. In any case the land of boys' villages is limited, and at the 'coming out' the old men move aside and the young men enter their inheritance. The allotment to each village is

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe Brown and Daryll Forde.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

f. Housekeeping

356 Every married woman has her own hearth and granary, and
476 she works very largely alone when cooking and cleaning; but in
313 one essential activity women who are neighbours in a village regularly co-operate, and that is in fetching firewood. We never saw a woman going alone; usually there is a group of three or four up to a dozen or more. Firewood must be fetched two or three times a week, and the journey and the collection of the wood takes from four to ten hours, depending upon the distance of the village from a patch of forest or bush. Thus the women spend up to thirty hours a week fetching wood, and it is with village neighbours that this time is spent, not with relatives from other villages. If a woman is ill her friends will help in bringing wood and cooked food for her. Some co-wives co-operate in this way, fetching wood together, and helping each other in sickness, but whether they do or not depends upon personal friendship. Often it is with an unrelated neighbour, rather than with a co-wife, that a woman works most closely. Only when co-wives are sisters, or aunt and niece, are they expected to work together regularly.

476 Village neighbours—women—also co-operate in the preparation of feasts, as we shall see in the following chapter.

g. Economic co-operation beyond the village

476 The economic relations of fellow villagers, and the changes taking place in these relations, cannot be understood without
•602 some reference to economic co-operation beyond the village boundaries. As we have already indicated, co-operation with relatives living in other villages is very important: cattle, the most prized possession of the Nyakyusa, circulate within kinship groups, between father and son, brother and brother, and between affines, and these same relatives assist one another in cultivation and building. But beyond the circle of kinsmen and village-mates there was formerly little economic co-operation.
[438] Each village and kinship group was largely self-sufficient, buying from outside little save iron spears and hoes, medicines, salt, cosmetics, and brass or copper wire for ornament.

326 Smiths were essential to the Nyakyusa economy for they

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Another informant added: 'Boys usually move of their own accord; if they don't their fellows mock them saying: "Why do you sleep with your mother and see the evil things of your mother when she puts on her bark-cloth? . . . You sleep with your mother and see the evil things of your father and mother. Perhaps they think you are asleep, but you see them."' 834

Sons and mothers are separated at night, but the boys come to their mothers' houses for food; fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law are completely segregated from the time a girl is betrothed or, if she has been betrothed in infancy, from the time she is about eight years old. Her father-in-law is pointed out once to the newly betrothed girl, and after that she must never look at him. She never enters a house in which he is, and she leaves a path if she catches a glimpse of him, or is warned by her friends that he is approaching; she also avoids his name and anything associated with him, being particularly careful to avoid going near the bed in her mother-in-law's house, should she visit her mother-in-law during her father-in-law's absence. The avoidance is extended to a large group of kinsmen—her father-in-law's brothers and cousins, her mother-in-law's brothers, the husbands of her mother-in-law's sisters, and the fathers-in-law (direct and by extension) of each of her own sisters;[1] but it is *not* extended to the father-in-law's village-mates. In practice, the forms of avoidance vary with the actual relationship—the more distant the connection the less strictly are the rules observed—and with the locality, for the Nyakyusa proper avoid in-laws more carefully than the Kukwe do. A Nyakyusa wife, for example, should *never* enter her father-in-law's house, but a Kukwe wife may do so during his absence. 834 606 602

The Nyakyusa argue, cogently enough, that it would be quite impossible for father-in-law and daughter-in-law to live in the same village and avoid one another as they do; and indeed the difficulties of avoidance are apparent at ceremonies when members of different villages are congregated. Then the women are on the watch all the time, and one or another is constantly taking refuge in a hut, or in the bananas, as her friends warn her of the approach of a 'father-in-law'. The practical difficulties were obvious when we attended a funeral ceremony at Mwambelike's 606

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 cannot be appointed as headman in any village of his own generation, and villages of past generations disappear. When a headman
769 dies, his village still being in existence, his place is taken by his
622 heir who may be a son, but this office is only temporary. The village ceases to exist when its original members die off. Moreover, there is no suggestion that the shade of a headman's father broods over the village as the shade of a chief is thought to brood over the land he ruled.

775 The Nyakyusa have a lively belief in the power of shades, a belief closely connected with the dependence of the members of a lineage upon one another for cattle,[1] and with the office of 'divine king', but such belief scarcely affects village relationships, for the shades are not thought to be concerned with behaviour between neighbours, as distinct from relatives.

775 It is true that the proper performance of family rituals includes feasting neighbours, but the implication always is that the shades
621 are concerned only in enforcing obligations towards themselves and fellow kinsmen, not towards non-relatives. On the other
602 hand, neighbours are concerned in the enforcement of kinship obligations. When a son insults his father, the father's neighbours are insulted also; when a daughter-in-law peeps at her father-in-law the shocked astonishment of the neighbours may cause her children to pine. And so, when an erring son begs pardon of his father, he must provide a feast for the neighbours, 'that they may see that his father is satisfied'.

775 A situation often arises in which both the shades and 'the breath of men' operate, sometimes 'the breath' of shocked neighbours
626 supporting the shades, and sometimes shades and men each
754 exacting their due. One illustration of this was given us by Kalunda: 'If you do not carry out the burial rites for your father, people are angry, they throttle you, and the shade is angry also, he comes on your body. No, the witches do not call the ancestors to help; both are angry on their own account. To-day the black ones, the witches, come and throttle you; to-morrow the ancestors come. People are angry because they do not eat meat; the shade is angry because you did not perform the burial rites for him. He says: "See, I left much property, why did you not bury me properly?"' And in discussing the obligation of a daughter-in-

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'An African Morality', *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936); Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 area, during a given period, so we cannot either assert or deny that accusations of witchcraft are more frequent in age-villages than in kinship villages.

578 There are two sets of loyalties in Nyakyusa society: those to a kinship group and those to an age-village. Does conflict arise 621 from a clash between them? We have no evidence that it does. It is true that kin may support a sick relative against his age- 602 group, referring to his illness as due to witchcraft, whereas neighbours will attribute it to his own sin and their legitimate anger; but very often the ancestors and the 'defenders' are believed to work together to punish wrong-doers—those who break avoidance and incest taboos, those who insult seniors, those who neglect traditional rituals (*vide supra*, p. 122). Amity between relatives is sanctioned by neighbours as well as by senior kinsmen, and the importance of enjoying the company of village mates is constantly stressed by relatives. Where a village does appear to support a member against his kin, it is usually on the side of the ancestors and 'justice', in terms of the Nyakyusa code, as when neighbours share a father's anger at the insolence of his son, or after his death protect his son against unjust treatment by the heir. The values of village solidarity and of kinship solidarity are thus coherent.

e. The form of witch beliefs

621 There is, however, a connection between the age-village 754 organization and the *form* of witch beliefs. As we have seen, great emphasis is laid on feasting neighbours, and it is believed that 626 the impulse to witchcraft comes from the lust for milk and meat. The Nyakyusa argue thus: witchcraft comes from neighbours, and neighbours must be fed or they get angry; feeding a witch on milk or beef pacifies him (*vide supra*, p. 92). An explicit connection is made between neglecting to provide feasts on the proper occasions and suffering from 'the breath' of justly angry neighbours whose blighting power springs from the same root as witchcraft. The contrast with the witch beliefs of the Pondo is marked: among them it is held that the drive to witchcraft is sex lust, and all witches have familiars with whom they have sex relations.[1]

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 275–88.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

g. Kith and kin

602 621 The tendency to identify neighbours and kinsmen—kith and kin—appears not only in religious belief, the two groups being credited with somewhat similar mystical power; but also in verbal usage—'fathers of the village', 'mothers of the village', 'sisters of the village', etc.; in the obligation to respect a father's fellows, to run errands for them and obey their orders; in the belief that a father's neighbours are insulted by an insult to the father, and must be pacified as well as the real father; and in the responsibility of villagers for certain torts of a fellow. The distinction between neighbours and kinsmen is, however, clear-cut in marriage, in rituals, and in the control of cattle. Fellow villagers marry each other's daughters; they neither perform the elaborate ritual at death or twin birth believed to be necessary for the safety of relatives, nor are they required to help each other with cattle for marriages, funeral rites, and fines, as are kinsmen.[1]

Kinsmen are bound together by their common interest in the inherited stock of the lineage and in the cattle coming in for its daughters; by co-operation in cultivation and building; and by the belief that they are mystically interdependent—the contagion of defilement and of certain diseases caused by sorcery travelling along the roads of kinship. Village neighbours are bound together by occupation and ownership of common land; by co-operation in herding and cultivation; and by common defence against enemies 'by day and by night'. In both groups discipline is thought to be maintained by mystical as well as material sanctions, the anger of neighbours bringing ill-health like the anger of senior relatives; and both groups have certain responsibilities for their members in relations with other like groups.

h. Relative social status

621 561 The Nyakyusa material suggests certain further connections between the age-village organization and other aspects of the social structure which comparative study shows to be false. For example, it might be argued for the Nyakyusa (as it has been for

[1] Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage.*

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER II

BURIAL RITES[1]

(a) *The form of burial*

WHENEVER a death takes place, whether of man, woman, or child, 764
a series of funeral rites lasting a month or more begins. The first of the series is the burial (*ifwa*) which, in the case of most adults, lasts three or four days, though for a rich man it may continue for a week, and for a child it is over in a day. For the sake of convenience the account of burial is given mainly in reference to the burials of men; those of women are very similar and occasional references are made to them; but the constant qualifications of statement that would be necessary to give a complete description of both would be wearisome and are unnecessary for our purpose.

As soon as death occurs the women who are present begin wail- 763
ing and messages are sent to the chief, the village headman, and 764
the dead man's kinsmen and affines, to announce the fact and bid them to the burial. The first message is sent to the father, or to a senior brother, if one is still alive, or failing them to the heir of the dead man, and he it is who sends out the other messages. If the father or a senior brother is alive the burial may take place at his homestead, the body being carried there at once; otherwise the dead man is buried at his own home: the choice rests with his father. A married woman is buried at her husband's home if she has borne children, otherwise at her father's; an elderly widow is buried by her son.

Messages must be sent to all the fathers-in-law and all the sons- 602 ●
in-law both of the dead man and of the senior kinsman who 763
buries him, to all the dead man's full and half-brothers, to the husbands of his sisters, to any classificatory brothers with whom he exchanged cows, to his mother's father or brother, to the full and half-brothers of his father, and to his sons. If any one of these

[1] This description is an amended version of that published by Godfrey Wilson in 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, 1939. The theoretical analysis differs somewhat from that offered in the paper, for the ritual element appears to me to be dominant at the burial as well as in the later 'farewell to the dead'. Between us we attended thirty funerals, in whole or in part.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

602 763 is forgotten he will be angry: 'It happens sometimes that a kinsman comes in later, after the man is buried, and is very angry because no message was sent to him; he comes in a passion, and perhaps he beats his brother [the one who should have sent him a message]. Then the others catch hold of him and say: "Why do you not come soberly and greet us decently with the appropriate words? Come now, why?" And if he does not stop they beat him.'

602 764 These kinsmen and affines, with their wives and children, are under obligation to come to the burial, unless they are sick. Young children under the age of 10 or 11 are not obliged to come, though they often do, but older children must do so. One reason for the continuance of the burial ceremonies for three or four days is that this gives time for relatives from a distance to receive the messages and come. Deliberately to refuse to send a message or, on the [578] other side, to refuse to come to a burial for no good reason, is a symbolic breaking of the bond of kinship and no one ever does either, unless there is a serious quarrel and all economic and social relations are being broken off between the two families concerned.

621 764 577 The village neighbours also are obliged to come to every burial in the village. They normally wish to do so, but, even if they do not, they still come for shame or for fear of being accused of witchcraft if they stay away. Where there is friendship the neighbours come in grief and sympathy and quarrels are softened by the fact of death, but, if the memory of enmity still persists, then the last sanctions are shame and fear: 'Some people mourn more than others.' 'The men who knew him say: "Let us go and mourn him." ' 'Those who did not know him intimately mourn because each thinks: "He has died, my neighbour, and so will it be with me one day." ' 'If I have quarrelled with my neighbour and he dies, I go to his burial for I say to myself: "It is true that while he lived we quarrelled, but now he is dead and we shall never meet again. I too will go to his burial and mourn him." ' 'If a village neighbour does not come to a burial we say he is unkindly and unsociable.' 'And if a man does not go to his neighbour's burial then at once people say: "It was you who bewitched him. Why else do you not come to bury him?" ' Several of the accusations of witchcraft recorded had been occasioned by a man's absence from a village neighbour's funeral. For it is believed that witches are chary of going to the burials of their victims lest the dead should rise and denounce them.

643 764 A chief normally goes to all burials in his own country, except

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

it seems as if there was another disease in the corpse itself, it is a 764
stinking mass of disease.' Traditionally they use two medicinal plants to wash with, but in some chiefdoms near mission stations they now wash without them. The chief of one such country explained: 'In the old days they feared very much to eat before bathing—but now sometimes they just wash their hands and eat. [177]
Of old they feared death, they feared lest the disease should spread, they wished to rid themselves of the contamination of the corpse. They used to wash with two plants—as medicine. Now they just bathe in the stream or sometimes only just wash their hands.' But, [184]
particularly in chiefdoms at a distance from the centres of European influence, the fear of the contagion of death is still very strong.

Death then is, for the majority of pagan Nyakyusa, a fearful as 761
well as a grievous event; less fearful than it used to be to their 184
fathers, but more fearful by far to them than it is to their Christian neighbours.

(c) *The sacrifice*

At all except the very poorest burials one or more head of cattle 764
are killed. Cows are provided whenever possible, but, if no cows are available, bulls may be used instead. If the man who has died left cattle of his own, one at least of his herd is killed; if he has left none, his family make every effort to buy or borrow one, or else they provide one themselves from their own herds. If the dead man was rich, several of his cows will be killed. If his senior son has cattle of his own, he should kill one for his father (*ikumbamba*) and if there are a number of grown-up sons the senior of each group of full brothers will offer a cow.

Not only the immediate family of a dead man but also the 764
fathers (or brothers) of his wives and the husbands of his full 602
sisters and daughters are expected to provide cows for killing at his burial, and if he is buried at his 'father's' place then his 'father's' affinal relatives also are expected to bring cattle or cloths. When a married woman dies, her husband and her own 'father' are expected each to provide a cow or a bull. Occasionally other affines of her husband bring calves, but less usually. More cattle are killed for men than for women. For a young child nothing is killed.

The cattle are killed either by the dead man's 'father' or by his 764
heir; if a woman has died, then by her husband. At a man's burial 768

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

ever, insisted that it was performed whether there was a girl to 765
send or not, but if several sisters were married to the same man it 184
was carried out only for the eldest of them.

We do this whether we are substituting another woman or not, but we do it only for the senior sister. There were three Sebas married to Mwaipopo, and when the two junior ones died we did not go to cut the bananas, but now the senior Seba has died, we do cut the bananas.

Mwaiselage explained that his brother-in-law would come to 765
cut bananas when his senior wife, Lyandileko, died, whether she died before or after her junior sister who is her co-wife, but the brother would not cut bananas at the death of the junior sister.

MWAKWELEBEJA: We cut the banana grove again when all the children of those women, the kinswomen married to one man, are dead. That is, their mother's brother's son (*untani*) does it, for their mother's brother will be dead by then. It means the same thing: 'The kinship is finished.' They pay to say: 'No, Father, it still continues.'

A woman to replace the dead is asked for even though her 587
husband has predeceased her. X, describing the ritual added: 765

And when my mother dies (if my father has died first) still her relatives, my *abipwa*, come to cut the banana grove. I throw them a cloth crying: 'Not the bananas.' Also they bring me another woman. If they do not, I go to them and say: 'Give me another mother to look after me.' They give me a girl whom I give to a half-brother (as his wife). If there is no girl they give me a cow, saying: 'That's your mother.'

Ibaso and Mwaijamba explained:

If, when a woman has died, her people are poor, having no child to replace her, they say: 'We are sorry, but there is nothing at all here, this cow is for drawing water with.' And formerly they returned all the cattle later on; but now, since we have stopped claiming calves, we divide the cows. . . . But when there is a daughter and they give her to me, the husband, we give marriage cattle again. Kinship does not [602]
come to an end.

To recapitulate, the main events of the ritual of death are the 765
formal recognition of the heir (if the deceased was a married man); 768
the burial of a flowering head of bananas and the rubbing in earth from the grave; washing; a ritual eating of bananas with certain seeds; sweeping out the mourning hut; circling the hearth and putting an old pot on the fire with various foods; the presentation of millet by relatives and friends, and a ritual grinding; a second

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

new husband has not been sleeping with her], then at first, before she 764
lies with him, we (her relatives) eat with her. But when the child leaves 587
the breast and her husband begets another then she comes to perform the ritual. Otherwise we cannot eat with her. And so with a pregnant widow—at first we eat with her but when the child is born and has been weaned and her new husband begets another she comes to perform the ritual.

The new husband must send a bull or a sheep with his spear, and we who drink the beer divide the meat, saying: 'Thank you, you have nourished us.' Yesterday he sent 30s., and I, the doctor, got 1s. If it had been a bull I would have got some meat. The husband does not come himself, but he sends a friend to bring the woman. This friend does not eat or drink the medicine, but he drinks the beer without medicine and the cassava we cook. [In the ritual just completed] Mwasalemba provided three pots of beer—we drank one before and two after the ceremony. That was what the men were waiting for.

No, it never happens that one who has drunk the medicine of 764
ingotolo falls sick of it afterwards, never. 753

The spear is taken and kept by the girl's brother at the command of 587
her father, who says: 'Take this spear, your sister has brought it.' It is 602
a symbol (*ikimanyilo*) of kinship, it is like the spear with which a girl was betrothed in the old days. At the betrothal the lover would stick the spear in the ground, the girl pulled it up and took it to her father, sticking it into the ground before him, and he, if he agreed, told her brother to take it up. And if there is any dispute later about cattle then the spear is proof of agreement. It has the same significance at betrothal and at the *ingotolo* ritual. Sometimes the heir has to bring cattle that have not yet been paid by the dead man. When the woman's brother takes the spear into the house at the *ingotolo* ritual, that means: 'Now you[1] have entered into the house—your house—so we bring you in.' And then she can go in.

The calling out of 'Thief' is a custom in the ritual, but it is like a 764
song, it's not important. The firewood is shown to the woman and a bean and a grain of maize are put into a crack of the wood. That means that the ritual is complete.

No, there is no extra safety in coming to the ceremony; those who drink at home are equally protected!

iii. *Evidence of other informants*

CURRENT TALK: Some people have been told by those who have run 158
mad, that they see a man who comes to them sometimes. When that 828
man is with them then they lose the sense of what they are doing. The

[1] It was not clear from the context whether 'you' referred to groom or bride. The symbolism suggests the act of marriage but of this we have no direct evidence.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

The bundle of medicine and the belt are burnt with the litter at the coming out. And whenever a child is born, every time, not only at the birth of the first or second, it is washed by the husband's mother with this same powdered medicine from the store in her pot. If this is not done they fear that perhaps the child will go mad or something dreadful will happen. They say of the powdered medicine: 'It is our kinship, it is our blood (*Bo bakamu bwetu, lyo ilopa lyetu*).' And if a girl runs off with a lover in the veld they mock her and say: 'Who has given you powdered medicine? You are no relative.' They say: 'She is not our relative, she has not got our blood. . . .' The medicine is to create relationship (*ubukamu*). Using it means that the bride is now of my lineage (*ikikolo*). You know that burial customs differ. When they have used the medicine they will bury my wives as they bury me, either sitting up or lying down, as the case may be. We Christians do not do this because we have another way. We take hands before the priest and say: 'This is my relative (*ukamu gwangu*).' 789 [846] 581 [608] [775]

Another informant (a pagan), questioned separately, gave a similar interpretation. He said: 'Washing with the medicine means, "my wife has come. She is now my relative (*ukamu gwangu*)."'

As already indicated, the act of washing with her husband proclaims the seniority of a wife. Washing with her own mother and her father or young brother, is to proclaim kinship. 'The girl washes with a brother to show that she has brothers and sisters. If she does not do so it shows that she is a poor person without relatives.' 'She has washed at her husband's place, then she comes home and her father honours her by looking for a boy, not an old one but a young one, to wash with her. Then the girl thinks: "I have fathers, I am no bastard." But if she washed alone she would think: "Perhaps I am not their child, perhaps I have no relatives."' Kasitile said: 'If she washes with me, her father, it means: "She is my child, I begot her myself, she is my first-born."' Mwakiongde, after discussing the circumstances under which a father washes, said: 'To wash is to admit that I have lived and borne a child and grown up.' 'And if a brother does it?' we asked. 'It means: "You young man, you are her father." If they ever quarrel the brother says: "Why do you not respect me, your father? We washed together in water."' A young brother is chosen 'because the grown-up boys are going about. They want one who has not made love to girls.' 788 602

Standing in the doorway of her mother's hut (or of the woman acting in place of her mother if the latter is dead or divorced) is 602 585

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Sehya, Mul Ngonde

602 585 again an acknowledgment of kinship. 'If she washed outside it would mean that she was not the daughter of her father.'

585 833 The two fresh leaves of plantain and sweet banana on which the officiant places her soiled bark-cloth, and on top of which she kneels to eat bananas are, as already stated, symbols of male and female. Everyone understood this. Fewer people were aware of the symbolism of eating the banana, but Kasitile and one or two others were fully conscious of it and forthright in discussion. He said:

> At the 'putting her in' (*ukuingenis*) the mothers-in-law bring a new bark-cloth and dress her in it; the old one is thrown away on the litter. They mix together bananas and *ikipiki* medicine which she receives. Don't you understand? They treat her. The plantain is the symbol of the man, of his penis, we are treating her, may she 'cook well' for her husband [i.e. be proficient in intercourse], may she bear children. She eats on that bark-cloth which means may the blood go to make children, this is your husband. Eating is a symbol (*ikimanyilo*) of sexual intercourse. She eats the plantain, meaning she has intercourse with her husband.

He connected this with the admonition at the end of the ritual. When she eats the banana nothing is said, it is only implied, but [842] at the drinking of beer they teach her, saying: "Look after your husband well; if you are sweeping the house and he catches hold of you don't be startled, accept him, and catch hold of him also. . . . Men when they do this beget children." '

783 881 585 The second washing at the groom's, which is performed for every wife and not only for a senior one, is interpreted as a cleansing ritual. In the morning the officiant calls the husband and wife and says: 'Come and wash now and clean off the filth.'

Shaving is both a purification and a sign of the completion of the ritual. 'The hair of a girl who has reached puberty is the filthiness of puberty, of the menstrual blood which she produces then. She throws it away.' Mwakwelebeja and his wife said: 'The shaving is to show that she has awakened to puberty (*alembwike ubusungu*). During the ritual she did not shave. We perform the rite of shaving that she may begin to shave again, and to let her smear herself [765] with brown ointment. It is like a burial. If a man's close relative dies he does not shave or wash.' Mwaihojo said: 'The shaving is to show that the *ubusungu* ritual is finished.'

Clearing the litter which is 'filthy', contaminated with the menstrual blood of the girl, is also a symbol of purification. The washing in a leaf basin into which *ikipiki* medicine had been

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

881 her mother-in-law covers her head with a red cloth 'for display'.
585 'We are rejoicing because our child has grown up,' and she too takes her on her shoulders and dances with her. When the 'husbands' come to dance the stamping dance: 'It too is a rejoicing. It shows I have married a wife now.' All through there is rejoicing over the fine food, and the celebration and feasting is primarily among the women. The culmination comes when the girl is publicly shown to be a virgin and the mothers can claim the bull crying in exultation: 'It's ours, it's ours.'

881 An interesting sidelight on the attitude of girls towards the ritual
585 came from a young man, a Christian, who was betrothed to a
184 pagan girl and had forbidden her to go through the ritual. He
795 said:

> Once my wife, when she had reached puberty, asked me why I objected to her undergoing the puberty ritual. I said it was forbidden for us Christians to participate in it, and I asked her if she wished to do so. She said 'Yes', and I asked why. She said: 'When the ritual is performed for us we are famed. People tell each other that so-and-so's daughter has grown up and people from far away come to sing songs, so we become very well known. See, now I have grown up, but no one sees that I have done so. Only you know.' Then I said: 'We Christians also have the custom of celebrating growing up at the handing over of marriage-cattle to the father (*ukukwa*). We do not hand over cattle when girls are still small, so everyone sees that a girl has grown up when we do so.' She agreed and said: 'I, also, have seen a little of the handing over of cattle among Christians.'

In fact, the *ukukwa* is the occasion for a great feast among Christians to which many young men and girls come to sing and dance.

881 The giving of presents to the bride by her father and his con-
585 temporaries is interpreted as part of the rejoicing.
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> To give presents (*ukubonola*) is to rejoice. It's an occasion for display and rejoicing, because the girl has grown up. The father gives her a present because he rejoices that she has grown up. He says to her: 'Congratulations, you have grown up, you are going away to your husband, you are going away to gain a child!'

881 During the period of seclusion the girl's father is spoken of as
585 her father-in-law (*unkamwana*). She must *ukutila* (respect and
602 avoid) him:

> Because he is her father who begot her. She thinks: 'I must respect

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

my father-in-law, father.'[1] She says: 'I have grown up finally, I am a woman.' 'As I have grown up, I am a daughter-in-law (*unkamwana*).' 'If a girl looks at her father (during the ritual) she is proud (*namatingo*).' 'She used to be beaten if she looked at her father's friends. She is proud if she does. Her mothers will beat her.' She also fears ridicule—'We *ukutila* because we laugh at one another'—and mystical sanctions. 'If she does not *ukutila* (her father) she gets thin and brown. Since she has grown up she must avoid people.' 'She would become light in colour if she did not *ukutila* during the ritual.' 'She will grow thin and her body will be brown instead of black. We think that ugly.' 881 585 602

Mwandisi (the old blind chief), asked why a bride should *ukutila* her father, replied:

She avoids him and he gives her a gift to break the taboo. During puberty it is taboo. Kyala has created us so. Because if her father looks at her she grows thin, those below [i.e. the shades] are angry.

QUESTION: And those above?

MWANDISI: Yes! Do they not injure them? Do they not give those who throw out the litter a bull that they may eat?

Mwakionde (the doctor), asked the same question, replied:

It is because of the in-law relationship (*ubukamwana*). If I, the father, look at her she will grow thin and waste away, but at the beer we give her gifts of bark-cloth to break the taboo and say: 'You have come out (*usokile*). You have come out, my child. I am sorry about the fire, I am sorry.' Then she looks at us. She avoids me, the father, and my younger brothers and my fellows in the age-village who are all, according to our custom, her fathers. [601]

Ukutila of her mother-in-law (shielding her face with a mat or skin) was interpreted by Mwakionde in this way:

It is on account of the dignity of her mother-in-law who says: 'She is my child, see, she respects and avoids me, saying: "She bore my husband." I am her superior. She acknowledges my dignity. She is wise, she respects me, her mother.'

Everyone was agreed that 'the bull of puberty' (*ingambako jabusungu*) is both a sacrifice to the shades, who are asked to bless the girl and make her fertile, and a feast for the mothers and that, strictly, it is only brought if the girl is virgin. 'We throw the *ija mnapa* meat in the banana grove and put a stone on top of it so that those below may eat, and we pray that the girl may bear a 585 881

[1] Some aspects of father-in-law and daughter-in-law avoidance are discussed in *Good Company*, pp. 83–6.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

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blood of another lineage mingles with hers, but it has not reached her mother because they have not met. To drink water together from one calabash is to meet. Then the mother has diarrhœa because her body is not accustomed to the blood of another lineage. To have diarrhœa is to go bad, to expel (*ukusosya*) the filth. The *ilibuko* of the fowl is the body of the groom which mingles with the body of the girl's parents that they may be one blood with him. [753]

Thus, not only husband and wife, but also parents and son-in-law become one flesh. 602 842

As in Selya, a direct connection is made between the parents receiving a bull for the bride's virginity, and her bearing a child to her husband. Mwasalemba explained: 'Kyala together with the shades have made the girl grow up. If the girl runs off with her husband and I, the father, have not received cattle, then the earth is angry, the shades say: "We shall see if she will flourish there." Then the girl does not conceive, and the diviner says: "The shades are angry." The groom's people bring cattle, then I, the father, pray for my child and she conceives, her belly swells.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

vomit by tickling the back of my throat with a hen's feather, while I 783
am standing under the fall with the water coming down on my head. The blood of him you have killed is in the waterfall. May it not come! May it all go out of the body! You vomit because it is there in the body. May it go out! Then a medicine is cooked and the legs of the slayer and his relatives are scalded with it. It is the medicine of twins: the twin medicine and the spearing medicine are one because they are a rejection of the blood. When people's legs have been splashed then we all shave; that is to drive away him whom we have killed.

But even after such treatment the kin of the slayer and the slain 783
fear to eat together. 'We remain enemies. If we eat with them it 602
makes us thin.'

Those who drink protective medicines are the agnatic kin of the slayer and the slain, their mothers' kin (*abipwa*) and their wives, but not their affines. 'Those who must be treated are wives, and blood relatives but not affines. Affines are of different blood, but wives are of your flesh.'

The spearing ritual is not a joint ritual in which a large group 783
of kin participate; married men, even brothers, make their own arrangements for taking protective medicine.

We do not meet together with all our relatives, the descendants of one man, no, it is not like the twin ritual. We drink it each man with his wives and children in his house. If I have a married brother he also goes to a doctor to ask for medicines for himself. He seeks his own doctor, not the one to whom I went. We drink separately, we do not meet together when we drink.

Only if a daughter had been given in compensation for a murder 783
(as sometimes happened) and later he who married her took mar- 682
riage cattle to her father to establish kinship, then, our informants said, the two parties should drink the 'medicine of spearing' (*unkota gwa lukwego*) together.

(*b*) *Rotting the ropes*

A man who has been bound with ropes (*ingoje*), or has committed 753
suicide by hanging,[1] or raided cattle and tethered them, is also 681

[1] What the incidence of suicide is among the Nyakyusa we do not know. The Rev. Merensky, one of the first Europeans to live in the area, speaks of it being 'not uncommon'. We recorded two cases: one of a man whose wife and children had died; the other a woman forced to leave her lover and marry against her will. X, a Christian whom we knew well, swore to his pagan elder brother that he would commit suicide if his brother insisted on the pagan practice of performing an autopsy on the body of their dead sister. [762]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VIII

THE PARTICIPANTS

(a) *Categories of participants*

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THE people who take part in rituals have been referred to repeatedly and now it is possible to define who they are. They fall into four categories: the principals, the minor actors, the congregation, and the officiants or priests. The principals are those who undergo the full ritual lest they go mad; they are always close kin, but what category of kin depends on the type of ritual and the status of the person for whom it is performed. After a death, those who *must* perform the ritual to drive away the shade are the children and grandchildren of the deceased—all of them, the widows and the heir, if a man has died, or, if it is a woman and a senior wife, the widower and her related co-wife if she has one.[1] A man does not perform the ritual for a junior wife or one he has inherited. Children of a related co-wife are treated, for the purposes of ritual, as her own children, and all must undergo the ritual, but only some of the children of other co-wives are selected to perform it. When a man dies the children of the heir perform it, but only some of the children of his other brothers and half-brothers. 'We choose some and leave the others until their own father dies.' The genealogy given on p. 273 to show who performed the ritual on a particular occasion illustrates this. A mother (unless she has been divorced) performs the ritual for all her own children, and the children of a sister who is a co-wife. A divorced woman may come to mourn her dead child at her former husband's homestead but she takes no part in the ritual. 'I, the husband, perform the ritual alone; the woman comes to weep and returns to her new husband. I, the husband, say: "The blood is mine; that bag was bought (*alyokigwa*) with cattle; she was divorced and bought with cattle again."' A man performs the ritual for a son and daughter of each wife, and grandparents perform it for some, but not all, grandchildren.

[1] Probably also the younger sister or brother's daughter who replaces her as a wife, but we have no conclusive evidence on this point.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Certain siblings perform the ritual, but not all of them. We have referred already to the heir, who is commonly a dead man's younger brother, and who must perform it whether he is a full brother or half-brother, and to a woman's related co-wife who may be either a younger sister or a brother's daughter. The brother or sister 'who followed at the mother's breast', i.e. the sibling immediately younger, must always perform it. Nyakyusa find it very difficult to formulate the rules—there were lively arguments between well-informed people when the question was posed —but these principles emerge from a study of those who actually participated in eight funeral rituals. 788 593

Since the funeral ritual is directed to the shades, men can only perform it in the homesteads of their agnatic kinsmen, or of their maternal grandfather or his heir: they can never perform it at the homestead of affines (*kubuko*) for there they are not kinsmen (*abakamu*) but in-laws (*abako*). Hence a husband performs the ritual for his senior wife at his own homestead and her father (or his heir) at his. 'According to custom "the husbands" (*abalume*) perform the ritual, then, when they have done so, she whom we have put in place of the dead comes to us and says: "Fathers, we have performed the ritual, perform it yourselves." ' We never saw a ritual of farewell to a dead woman at her father's house but believe it to be a modified form of the ritual performed at her husband's. 764 602

Because of the rules of avoidance, a father-in-law and daughter-in-law cannot, together, go through a ritual which involves the close proximity of the principals. When, therefore, a man performs the death ritual for a son or son's child, he performs it at his own home, and the daughter-in-law concerned does so at her husband's homestead. The widow or parents must begin, and the father or grandparents follow. Thus when Mwandisi's son's son died, the parents of the child first performed the ritual at their home and Mwandisi and his wife then followed at theirs. But in a twin ritual, where participants can be secluded, father-in-law and daughter-in-law may attend the same performance. 606 764

A woman can perform a ritual either at her father's or her husband's (as well as at her mother's father's) and she may even perform it according to two different forms, following that of her father's lineage when she is visiting him, and that of her husband's lineage when she is performing it at his homestead. 788 593

It is possible that, on the death of a man, his sisters' children 764 602

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 sometimes perform the ritual, but we lack conclusive evidence.
●602 One case in which a sister's daughter of the deceased man performed the ritual was recorded, but at other funerals girls in the same relationship did not. Kakune, the doctor, asserted that a boy would perform the ritual for his mother's brother for 'he is mother, the brother of mother (*jo juba ulilumbu gwa juba*)', but in a number of cases we observed women performing the rituals for their brothers though their sons did not. A man's children may possibly perform the ritual for his sister but we traced no case of their doing so.

768 Those who drink the ritual beer when a widow returns to her
602 father's house after her union with the heir are her father and the men of his lineage—brothers, half-brothers, sons, and some of his brother's sons; the wives and children of these; and daughters of the lineage, her own sisters and half-sisters, and sisters of her father, but *not* the husbands or children of daughters of the lineage. At one *ingotolo* ritual we attended there were present eleven men of the lineage, eighteen daughters, and thirty-two wives, as well as numerous children (cf. genealogy, Table (e)).

764 When a woman has died those who come to cut the banana
593 grove and give medicated meat to her children are the *abipwa*—her brother (or his heir) and his wives.

764 The principals at a death ritual, then, are children and grand-
602 children, parents and grandparents, spouses, and certain siblings of the deceased, together with some of their children. If a woman dies, or a widow is inherited, her agnatic kin and their wives are concerned as well.

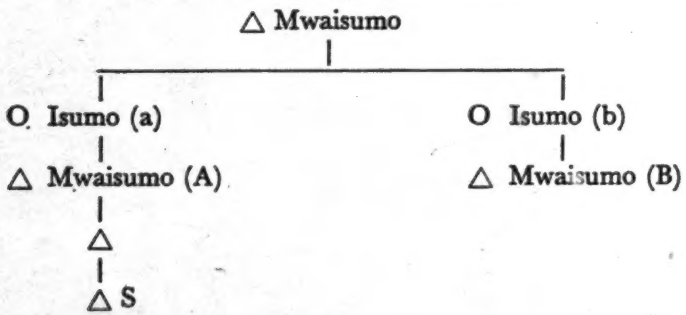
845 The group which takes protective medicine after an abnormal
602 birth is larger. All the wives and children and grandchildren of the father of twins must come, his full siblings with their children
751 and grandchildren, and the wives of his brothers, but not the husbands of his sisters; some of his half-brothers, with wives and children, some of the children of his father's brothers' sons (but not of father's brothers' daughters) and of his father's sisters' sons. On the mother's side her father, or his heirs, must take part with his wives and children, and her sisters. At the ritual for Mwakobela and his wife, previously described, we counted 136 relatives taking part, of which 24 were men, 19 boys, 33 women, 12 girls, and 35 babies (cf. genealogy, Table (a)).

845 When the mother of twins took the *ilibalaga* back to her 'father',
602 her brother (heir to her father), with his wives and children, her

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sister immediately older than herself, the sister's daughter, and the sister immediately younger than herself, took part. 845 602

At the ritual of spearing, the principals are the children and grandchildren of the slayer and the slain, their brothers, their mother's kin (*abipwa*) and their wives. We were not able to watch any case of treatment against *ulukwego* and are not certain exactly how far the infection is thought to spread. Our informants were agreed that the number of kinsmen concerned is less than in a twin ritual, but we traced one case in which a minor chief, Mwaisumo (B.), forbade the father of a man who had killed S., the great grandson of Mwaisumo's mother's sister, to enter his country lest he spread disease among his relatives. 783 602 682



[601]

At a ritual to 'rot the ropes' those concerned are the descendants of the one who has been bound and their wives, siblings and siblings' children. At the one ritual we saw there were present 27 members of the dead man's own lineage (3 sons, 2 younger half-brothers, 1 full sister, 4 half-sisters, 3 sons, 5 daughters, 2 grandsons, 7 granddaughters), one wife, the wives of 4 sons, one father's sister's son, one son and 6 daughters of his sisters or half-sisters. 783 602

The ritual for protection against sorcery which we attended was performed at the home of the senior brother (heir to his father) of the dead woman. There were present her two brothers, their wives and children; her father's brother's daughter; two wives and one daughter of her sister's sons; her mother, two of her mother's brothers with their wives and children; two of her mother's sisters and the daughters of one of them. Her husband (who lived next door) could not take the medicine at his in-law's house, but some was sent for him to use at his home with his wives and kinsfolk. 789 602 754

In the simple ritual of prayer to the shades the senior kinsman who offers the prayer and blows out water acts alone but, if there 782 602

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 has been a quarrel in the family, those members of the lineage
602 who have been at variance must attend and share the meat or beer, and bless one another. Grandchildren, 'comrades of the shades', must eat the offering left overnight in the banana grove.

593 If a son has quarrelled with his father and comes to beg pardon
621 the father calls his *neighbours* who must be present and partake of a
783 feast and bless the young men. 'If father and son just agree with one another and people do not eat anything, then the son will not be settled in well.'

585 At a puberty–marriage ritual the principals are the nubile girl
881 and her father or brother, her husband, and sometimes her mother
602 or mother-in-law. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest son's wife, or with her eldest daughter, if she is initiated at home. At an ordinary birth the principals are the mother and infant.

764 Besides these principals who undergo the full ritual there are
602 many minor actors. At a funeral there are the grave-diggers who,
621 traditionally among the Nyakyusa, were mature men, relatives or village neighbours.[1] They wash after the burial and are rewarded with a special leg of the funeral beef. As we have seen, the affines (*abako*), that is the fathers-in-law and sons-in-law of the deceased or of 'the owner of the funeral', come with cattle to kill or cloth. When a woman dies, her husband and her father, or her brother, kill cattle, and their affines bring cloths or, occasionally, cattle. Kinsmen—members of the lineage and their wives—and neighbours bring gifts of food to cook for the crowd of mourners, and small gifts of millet which are presented to the shade and used for making the ritual beer. After an abnormal birth, village neigh-
845 bours have their legs splashed with scalding medicine but do not
621 drink medicines or shave. The cattle of the village are also splashed. At the puberty ritual the bride's maids keep her com-
881 pany during her seclusion. The co-wives and neighbours of her
621 mother and mother-in-law assist in instructing her, and the neigh-
602 bours of her father join with him first in avoiding her and then in giving her gifts. Her father-in-law is identified with his brothers and his father's brothers' sons, whom she avoids, as well as his sisters, and her mother-in-law's brothers, and sisters' husbands. They, in turn, avoid her sisters, as well as herself.

621 By the 'congregation' we mean those who attend rituals to ex-
788 press sympathy, and whose presence is felt to be necessary to the

[1] In Ngonde they are *abatani*, cross-cousins.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

585 between' accompanies 'the mothers-in-law' when they go to induct or instruct the bride, and the wife of her father's 'go-between' is one of the group of mothers which takes the bride to her husband. The duties of a 'go-between' do not end at marriage: the [851] groom's 'go-between' is responsible for taking to the bride's people the hen to announce the birth of the first child, and, among the Lugulu, the 'go-between' of the father is master of ceremonies at the ritual of vituperation.

789 The ideas that emerge from this analysis are, that in the *protec-* ●602 *tive* rituals—after death, twin birth, spearing, binding with ropes, and death from sorcery—the parents, children, grandchildren, and some siblings, and siblings' children of the person primarily affected undergo the ritual. Links through females as well as males are recognized—daughters' children as well as sons' children attend—but they are not traced so far, and a brother's or half-brother's children attend far more often than a sister's children. Moreover, children of an unrelated co-wife perform the death ritual for a woman rather than her sister's children.

593 Wives always attend rituals in which their husbands are concerned—indeed, they often come with their children when their husbands stay away—but when the wife is concerned as a sister or daughter, her husband never accompanies her.

593 The closest relatives, such as own children, children of the heir 602 or of a related co-wife, and proximate full siblings, must *all* participate, but the more distant relatives select representatives.

602 The range of relations concerned varies with the particular ritual—it is widest in the twin ritual and narrowest for an ordinary birth—and is also modified by proximity, for relatives who live near come when those in the same category living twenty miles away do not.

Affines (*abako*) never perform a ritual together even when they are next-door neighbours and close friends, but *abako* in one generation are *abipwa* (mother's kin) in the next, and a man and his *abipwa* can participate together, as in the protection against sorcery described. More often, however, the members of each lineage act separately.

602 Our Nyakyusa informants distinguished the officiants—*abanyago* 621 —from those undergoing a ritual but they did not make distinc- 613 tions of the sort attempted here between principals and kin who do not undergo the ritual. The distinctions they drew were between kinsmen and neighbours and between lineages. At a death

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ritual they distinguish *abakamu* (kinsmen) from *abandu itolo* (non-relatives) or *abapakipanga* (villagers), and *abakikolo* (those of the lineage of a dead man) from *abako* (affines) and mother's relatives (*abipwa*). These categories have different functions.

(*b*) *Christians*

The performance of family rituals is complicated by the fact that 16 per cent of the Nyakyusa are professing Christians, and in almost every lineage there are individuals who withdraw from the full performance of traditional rituals at death, puberty, and marriage, birth, and misfortune. In most cases such a withdrawal is treated tolerantly by the pagan kinsmen: the Christian kinsmen come to mourn, to congratulate the bride, to express sympathy with the parents of twins; and their non-participation in the washing and shaving and avoidance of ritual meat and beer is accepted. At the funeral of Mwamulenga his preceding full brother, who should have been a principal in the death ritual, was a Christian, and he took no part, though his children went through it. At the funeral of Mwampiki (p. 248) one boy was left untreated on the ground that he was a Christian and a Christian 'should not have two gods'. At the puberty ritual of Mwaihojo's daughter (p. 91) the brother called to wash with her was influenced by Christians and was reluctant to take part, though he finally did so.

Only when a son who is heir to family wealth, or to the office of chieftainship or priesthood refuses the inheritance of widows (as a Christian must do) is there very strong pressure on him to conform to traditional custom: the union of the heir with the widows is held essential to their health. Sometimes also there is acute conflict between different members of the family over the performance of an autopsy, the pagans pressing for it and the Christians opposing it. This we saw in the death of E. when her pagan senior brother wished to examine her, and her Christian junior brother opposed him vehemently.

That Christians cannot take part in certain of the rituals[1] and do not suffer if they omit them is generally accepted. The farewell to the dead at the homestead of the deceased, and the treatment of kinsmen of twins, fall into this category. About certain other rituals, such as the ritual of the gasping cough and the protection against sorcery, opinions are divided. Some of our Christian friends insisted that 'the gasping cough is a real illness' and cited

[1] There are minor differences in the rules of the different missions.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

431 between the groom's lineage and that of the bride during the puberty–marriage ritual.

431 613 Within a lineage, also, there is some circulation of property. A young man is provided with marriage-cattle by his father, or father's heir; a father kills a cow at his son's funeral, a son does likewise for his father; and if a son offends his father he begs pardon with a gift. A daughter is given a gift by her father at the close of the puberty ritual, and he or his heir kills a cow at her funeral.

431 621 Village neighbours are closely identified with the father, and feast on the bull of puberty and the offering provided by an erring son, and give gifts to a daughter when she reaches maturity.

431 Kinsmen and neighbours are expected to help provide food, and firewood on which to cook it, for the guests at a funeral or marriage or at a twin-birth ritual. On the first day of a funeral guests are fed on food provided by the bereaved household, on the following day on that provided by their kinsmen, and on the third day on that provided by the village neighbours. Before the marriage-cattle are brought for his daughter, a man asks his kinsmen and immediate neighbours to help him cook for 'the husbands'—not to ask for such help is unfriendly. Kinsmen and neighbours also bring gifts of millet at a funeral and after an abnormal birth, which is used for brewing the ritual beer.

(*d*) *The symbolism of participation and exchange*

431 ●602 What is implied by undergoing a ritual or offering gifts? Participation in a ritual implies close kinship. We see, in the rituals performed after death, or spearing, or binding with ropes, the unity of the group composed of parents, children, grandparents, and siblings; the acknowledgement of a closer link between some siblings than between others; a recognition that wives are of 'one blood' with their husbands; and a separation between kinsmen and affines who are of another blood. In the twin ritual the limits of recognized kinship are expressed by participation and in the death ritual they are expressed by attendance. Observance of the taboo of avoidance, like attendance at rituals, is taken as evidence of kinship.

554 602 The difference in the status of senior and junior wives, and of eldest and junior daughters and sons, also appears in the rituals at puberty and marriage and at death. The unity between living and dead agnatic kin and, in a lesser degree, mother's kin, is ex-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

pressed again and again in the pagan rituals. The Christian withdrawal from them implies a partial break with the closed circle of kin, a movement from the nexus of kinship to that of association, from the kinship group to the congregation of believers. 554 602

The passage of cattle at marriage implies first the establishment of a bond of kinship with the wife for whom they are given. 'Kinship is cattle' (*ubukamu syo ngombe*) and a woman for whom cattle have not been given is never kin (*unkamu*) to her husband. 431 602

The passage of marriage-cattle determines the legal position of the children borne by the woman for whom they have been given. Whoever has given the cattle controls the children; and, if no cattle have passed, the girl's father (or brother) can claim them. If the woman for whom cattle have been given leaves the lineage which gave them, the cattle (traditionally all of them, together with their progeny) must then be returned, even though her original husband is dead; and when she dies she should be replaced. Kinship between lineages once linked by marriage should ideally be permanent, and the link is reasserted in the ritual in which, when a woman dies, her brother goes to cut down the bananas at her husband's homestead and to seize her children, and has to be persuaded with a gift to desist. The identification made between women and cattle exchanged is suggested in the phrase conventionally used when no girl is available to take the place of a dead wife and a cow is offered in her place 'for drawing water with'.

The killing of cattle at a funeral, and the burial of cloths and other goods, is an expression of the idea that the dead take wealth with them. When a man requires cattle to pay compensation for some wrong committed and has not sufficient stock to do so, he turns for help to his affines, his sons-in-law and fathers-in-law, and so, when he dies, and is in need of cattle, it is felt appropriate that they should help him. 775 764 431

But the gifts offered at rituals have many other implications. Men take cattle and cloths to a funeral '*ukuti ndaga*'—to express sympathy—and gifts are given to a bride also '*ukuti ndaga*', which then implies congratulation rather than condolence. And gifts are used when begging pardon—a son who has sinned against his father first sends a hen and later offers a bull; and a daughter-in-law who has looked at her father-in-law or sworn at her mother-in-law must offer beer or a bull. Lastly, they are used in lifting a ban, putting an end to an avoidance. When a girl's father and his 431

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

kijenja, ko bikwiputa, the sacred place of the fathers is the banana grove, there they pray.'

The virility of a lineage is symbolized by the *ikipiki* medicine, interpreted as 'our blood' or 'semen'. With it mourners, menstruating girls, bride and groom, the new-born babies and their mothers are treated. To provide it or use it is to acknowledge agnatic kinship: husband and wife wash with it together in acknowledgement that the wife is now 'one blood' with her husband; the grandmother gives it to her son's child in acknowledgement of its legitimacy; in the death rituals the mourners eat food with it acknowledging their kinship with the shade. To belong to a lineage is to be protected practically and spiritually, and the *ikipiki* medicine is held to protect those who are 'empty' and weak—the 'hollow men'—from those who are 'heavy' with real semen or medicines.

The shade, *unsyuka*,[1] 'he who is risen from the dead', may be interpreted as the principle of life, but at the same time he is 'the one beneath', *ugwa pasi*, filthy, and fearful. What men worship is life; what they fear is death, corruption; and for the pagan Nyakyusa, as for the Christian,[2] the two are inextricably mingled. *Imindu* (sing. *ilindu*) means dirt, dust, rubbish, the litter of the seclusion hut, and also the shade. When '*mindu*' is cited as the cause of some disease it is the shades (as things rather than persons) which are meant: 'dust to dust' is an image of pagan as of Christian theology. We have spoken of the Nyakyusa disgust for filth (*ubunyali*), which is associated with a corpse, menstruation, childbirth, intercourse, faeces, and all these are identified in some fashion with the shade. Faeces 'go below to the land of the shades'. The hair of a corpse is the shade's, the hair of a girl at puberty is 'the filth of her menstrual blood'. In all the rituals the filth is buried, shaved off, burnt, washed away, and at the death ritual 'he who is risen' is brought 'to warm himself' at the family hearth, but yet he dwells in the earth and is 'dirty'.

The conception of impurity, uncleanness, associated with physiological functions of coition, excretion, menstruation, childbirth and death is, as we have already suggested, a very widespread one.

[1] *Ukusyuka*: to rise from the dead. For the noun the personal class is most commonly used, but some of the old men always spoke of *imisyuka* rather than *abasyuka*. A young man, commenting on this, explained: 'The shades are not people like us, but *imindu*', i.e. they are things—dust—not persons.

[2] 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' John xii, 24.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

find it. There are many cases like that. My friends in the age-village will go to a diviner who will declare that the shades are angry because I do not care for my father.' If a daughter makes a runaway marriage her father is angry and it is believed that either she may not conceive or her baby may be ailing until the marriage-cattle and bull of puberty have been given by her husband and accepted by her father.

The respect and obedience due to a father is due to his heir, and in certain circumstances to his sister also; while on his part the heir has the same obligations to his juniors as the deceased had. Fibombe cited the example, already quoted, of a man quarrelling with his dead father's sister over the distribution of the marriage-cattle for his own sister, and the girl failing to conceive because of the anger of her father's sister. If a son, whose parents are dead, neglects to provide his sister with the customary gifts of food when she returns to her husband after a visit to her 'father', he may become impotent: 'Those below are angry and when he has begotten twins he will have trouble at the ritual.' Or the girl may fall ill. 'She thinks: "Who is my father? This is my father, but he does not care for me." ' The mystical power of a senior relative is linked directly with his obligation to give gifts:

> My father's elder half-brother has power over me only if he has given marriage-cattle for my father or nurtured him. If he has given him cattle to marry a wife then he has power over him. . . . My superior (*mbala gwangu*) is he who gives me everything.

Favouritism in a polygynous family, shown in the unfair division of milk or meat or fish by the husband between his wives, is thought to anger the shades, which cause his cows to bleed from the udder when milked, or prevent fish entering his traps, and so do the bad temper and insulting language of a quarrelsome wife. Mwakwelebeja explained that:

> If a woman is bad-tempered when she is making beer the beer goes sour. If my wife and I quarrel my shades are angry and the beer is spoiled. I say to my wife: 'You have spoiled the beer because you do not listen to what I say.'

Neglect of his wards by the heir is a wrong-doing frequently mentioned.

> It is said that if I neglect my brother's children he and my father will be very angry, they will not come to meet me when I die, as the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

women, daughters of the lineage precede wives. Seniority, of course, does not depend solely on age, and we once saw a little boy precede his father in the performance of a ritual for his grandmother, with whose generation he was identified. The relative status of husband and wife is expressed in the taboo on a woman 'overstepping' her husband physically or metaphorically, and 'overstepping' is symbolized (oddly to a Christian) by the sign of a cross. The precedence of the chief wife is very marked. In commoner families she alone washes with her husband using the *ikipiki* medicine, and he performs the death ritual for her only. A chief may do this for two wives. In Selya a father washes in the puberty ritual with his senior daughter, and among the Kukwe a woman washes with her daughter or eldest son's first wife. 'To wash is to admit that I have lived, and borne a child, and grown up.'

All the rituals celebrate a change in status, and danger lies in not recognizing or admitting the change, in clinging to the past. This is most obvious in the death ritual, which is directed to the separation of the living and the dead. The mourners have the corpse 'on their bodies', they may not separate themselves from him by washing till the appropriate moment, and they share their food and *ikipiki* medicine with the shade, thereby recognizing him as a kinsman; but in due course they drive him off: 'You were our kinsman before but now it is finished, you are a stranger.' 'You are no relative of ours.' 'We are not corpses.' And at the same time they bring him back transformed, as a beneficent spirit in the home. The pattern is a common one in Bantu Africa: the Nyakyusa peculiarity is (1) the speed with which the transformation is achieved (commonly the 'bringing back' of the spirit is delayed a year, whereas the Nyakyusa may delay only a month); and (2) the close correspondence between the change in status of the dead and the change in status of the older generation, who 'move aside' at the 'coming out'. Each generation has its day and must give place to the next.

All through the rituals the dominance of the agnatic lineage is evident, but it does not exclude the recognition of kinship in the female line. Daughters' children *must* perform the ritual at death, twin birth, spearing, and binding with ropes, for their grandparents, while some sisters' children, and father's sisters' sons, may do so also. What is clear from the genealogies is that kinship links in the female line are not traced as far as in the male line and,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

613 602 though wives are assimilated to their husbands' lineages for ritual purposes, men play no part in the rituals of their wives' lineages.

613 577 The second fundamental principle expressed in the rituals of kinship is that a moral law holds within the lineage. Senior kinsmen, living and dead, have a mystical power over their juniors, but their anger is dangerous only if it is just. They cannot mutter irresponsibly. Kinsmen are 'members of one another' in the sense that the life and death of one affect the others. The sins of a father are visited on his children, his juniors in the lineage (though a woman's sins affect only her own husband and children), and the very fact of kinship makes a mystical bond between agnatic kin, descendants of a common great-grandfather, and a man and his daughters or sister's children. The moral law is thought to operate also within the age-village, where the just are protected and the evil punished by 'the breath of men'; but within both lineage and village irresponsible and malicious injury by witches or sorcerers is possible.

777 787 When misfortune occurs the sufferer, and his kinsmen and neighbours, seek an explanation in conflicts and ritual omissions, and interpret the misfortune in terms of these, putting the possible alternatives before the oracle. Thus the danger of conflict with kinsmen and neighbours, and of neglect of ritual, is constantly before men's minds. In practice, there is a strong tendency to push the blame for misfortune outside the lineage of living and dead on to the neighbours.

000 (*b*) *The celebration of rituals and maintenance of the structure*

In any society the practical, intellectual, and emotional aspects are mutually dependent; the practical organization is dependent upon, and at the same time supports, an intellectual system—certain cosmological ideas—and attitudes. It has been argued very cogently that these ideas and attitudes are maintained by their expression in myth and rite[1] but little evidence for this has been published. Can objective evidence be collected? The anthropologist cannot look into men's minds; he is not concerned with personal religion—with the varieties of religious experience. Can he observe any effect of participation in ritual upon the behaviour of groups and categories of people? It must be admitted that our evidence here is thin.

[1] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Andaman Islanders* (1922), pp. 236 ff.; *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (1952), pp. 157 ff.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
SelyA

764 Mpogo began to admonish the wives. This went on for two hours or more. I heard one of the sisters remark: 'The wives tremble now, their husband has died, their Kyala has died.' There was a great noise. Mpogo said to me: 'Our sisters are men, those our wives have married. It is the custom to admonish the wives because our sisters have been angry.' 'And at a twin ritual?' 'Yes, then also.'

764 602 I was told later: 'Mpogo's sisters punished all their sisters-in-law because when they had gone to their brothers the sisters-in-law did not receive them well, they were stingy to them with food. One said: "I went to my brother's home. When I was approaching I passed through a sweet potato garden; I took a potato without fearing because I said to myself: 'It's the garden of my mother.' When I arrived with the one sweet potato I had dug up she said: 'Who are you with a sweet potato?' And she began to shout, saying: 'Whose is it? You do not listen.' My body began to shrink and I said to myself: 'Ha! Why does she not come to look closely? She says a thief comes by day.' And I sat down." And so they went on.'

764 While this continued the principals were all given ointment (*isyemba*) by the officiant and smeared themselves. 'This is the first time they've done so since the death.' Then at the other door of the hut all the principals were collected 'to see the litter (*ukaketa ulufumbo*)'. They watched while the officiant sat inside the door, took some dry banana leaves handed to her, and sprinkled powder on them in the form of a cross. Then she went out of the door holding the leaves and rubbed them lightly on the ground in the form of a cross, and put them outside to be thrown away.

At last the admonitions of the brothers' wives stopped.

Then came the putting of food into the pot. The officiant held an old pot in her hand and circled round the hearth-bricks with it while her assistant dropped in food and all the women sang '*Ilimwenwe*'. The food was transferred to another pot and put on the fire. The officiant then touched the hearth-bricks with different parts of her body, or made gestures as if to do so, while she and they said: 'The foot is also put on the fire,' and so on. For all the parts the prefix *ne* was used, implying 'his'. The officiant also said, stamping: 'You pass by me, I your wife, your friend.'

Then came a symbolic pouring out of millet into a basket. The gifts of millet were not available, so a little, provided by the family, was used symbolically. Two small winnowing baskets were emptied into a large grain basket by the officiant, while another woman said names—of relatives for the first basket and of neighbours for a second: 'So-and-so and So-and-so has brought millet'—ending up with 'all' in each case. 'This,' they said, 'is a symbol (*ikimanyilo*), we shall each bring our gift of millet later.'

Four stems of bananas had been brought and were now divided up—

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

167 of the new area. Their culture differs from that of the indigenous tribes, so that they remain largely unassimilated. The cause of the exodus is partly shortage of land;[1] the Nyakyusa are skilled cultivators; the active soil-conservation campaign promoted by the Agricultural Department in Rungwe district involved farmers in additional effort, so that land in Mbeya was attractive in so far as the soil conservation scheme only started there two years later. The main motive, however, was to shorten the transport haul between the farmer and the market at Lupa. The demand for supplies of beans and grain from Rungwe district was decreasing even before the 1939 war, partly because production on the goldfields was declining, and partly because the produce of Mbeya district was increasing (largely through the work of the immigrant Nyakyusa farmers). The main problems for the administration arising from the Nyakyusa immigration into Mbeya district is the lack of control by the Native Authorities and congestion in the river valleys. The Safwa, who vacated the valleys of the Nsefwe and Mbalizi rivers after their wars with the Sangu, retreated into the hills before the flood of Nyakyusa immigrants, who now populate the valleys almost exclusively with their own compact endogamous groups.[2]

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Kinship and Local Grouping

62! (The following section is compiled from information applying equally to Nyakyusa
561 and Ngonde.)

The distinctive feature of the social organization is the system of age-villages. An age-village consists of a male age-group with wives of any age and children. When a man dies his heir may come to live in his village, and strangers applying for land are never refused on grounds of age, but the original constitution of the village is based on the principle of identity of age. Up to the age of ten years the small boys herd cattle in groups. Then they start to hoe for their fathers, and leave their fathers' houses to go to sleep with friends. After two or three years they build for themselves in an age-village of young men. They continue to hoe the fields and eat the food of their mothers until marriage, after which they hoe mainly for themselves, on land adjacent to their own huts.[3]

● 602 If a young man, instead of hoeing, goes out to work, he is expected to bring back tax-money for his father. By his service he earns the right to be given cattle for marriage. A young man whose father is poor in cattle will often attach himself to the household of a rich kinsman, brother of his father or mother, and hoe regularly for him, eventually receiving from him a large portion of his marriage cattle.[4] Sons-in-law are expected to bring their friends now and again to hoe for their father-in-law, who will afterwards entertain the workers.[5]

[611] Descent and inheritance are patrilineal, but there are no clans, and no descent group with a common name and definite membership.[6] The sons of a group of effective kinsmen are not all themselves effective kinsmen, and in the third generation the bonds of kinship may often have been forgotten. Cattle exchanges signalize the most

[1] Wilson, 3, 1938, p. 5.
[2] Wilson, 1, 1938, p. 38.
[3] Ibid., p. 28.
[4] Hall, 1935.
[5] Ibid., p. 29.
[6] Ibid., 4, 1938, p. 167; 4, 1939, p. 2.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

602 important relationships of kinship and affinity. Marriage cattle are not kept by the bride's father, but are distributed by him among her brothers for their marriages, and among his own brothers and half-brothers, who in turn give him cattle when their own daughters marry.

Half-brothers do not generally exchange cattle, but unless they do so there are no strong bonds of kinship between them. A polygynist usually creates the relationship of 'milking each other's cows', between his senior son and the eldest of each group of full-brothers by his other wives. He gives some of the marriage cows received for a daughter to one of her half-brothers, the latter being placed under an obligation to return the cows to the girl's eldest full brother some day from the marriage cattle of a sister or daughter of his own. The exchange once begun usually continues as sisters and daughters marry, and only lapses in the third generation, unless the principals quarrel and take legal action for 'separation'. Then a balance is drawn up of the cows exchanged from the beginning of the relationship, and the kinship is broken. The two thus 'separated' have no mutual obligations and do not attend each other's funerals.

602 428 Half-brothers may be linked by blood if their mothers are close kin; they may also be linked by cattle exchanges. The laws of inheritance make the full brothers of a man his first heirs, then his half-brothers linked by blood, then those linked by cattle have precedence over other half-brothers.[3]

604 The bond between a man and his mother's brother is expressed in terms of the passage of cattle. As the mother's brother married with the mother's cattle, her eldest son has the right to make free with his property in his lifetime, the right to receive one cow to set up a herd of his own, and a residuary right of inheritance; if the mother's brother dies without heir, her son can claim the particular wife obtained with and the particular property of the cattle given for his own mother.

606 There is a strict custom of father and daughter-in-law avoidance. A woman may never speak to, approach, or look at her husband's father, on pain of death through the witchcraft of indignant neighbours. The prohibition is extended from her own father-in-law to all his classificatory brothers, and in the basis of the age-village system.[1] A man must also avoid his mother-in-law, but this prohibition is relaxed after the birth of a child.[2] The affinal relationship is also expressed by the obligation of a man to bring a cow to the funeral of his wife's father or brother, and to give one at the death of his own son-in-law. The former may count as part of his marriage payments in case of a claim for refund.[3]

601 The main kinship terms are as follows:

Ndamu — brother-in-law or sister-in-law; used by a man for all husbands of his 'sisters', all 'brothers' of his wives, and for the son of his wife's brother, since he has a right to marry that man's sister; by a woman for all wives of her 'brothers' and all 'sisters' of her husband.

Nkaphe — parent-in-law or child-in-law; used for the husband of a daughter, or for the parent of a wife or husband (a daughter-in-law is called by the special name of *Nkamwanza*). The wife of the wife's brother is called *Nkaphe*, as she is the mother of a potential wife, and of a brother-in-law.

[1] Wilson, n. 1936, p. 163; n. 1939, p. 6.
[2] Ibid., n. 1936, pp. 167–8; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 23 and 106.
[3] Sanderson, j. 1913, p. 270.

[1] Wilson, n. 1939.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

BURIAL

764 The death of any ordinary commoner and those of less important great commoners were announced to their local chiefs. On the death of a chief or noble or of a prominent great commoner, a hen was sent to the Kyungu to announce the death, and he returned one of the cloths obtained from the Arabs. If a prominent commoner or great commoner died, the great chief got a hen and sent a cloth. The funeral of the Kyungu was entirely carried out by the nobles of Ngonde.[1]

Attendance at ceremonies is a constituent factor of kinship and affinity. Attendance at burial is obligatory for members of the same village. Messages are sent to all the fathers-in-law and all the sons-in-law of the dead man, and of the senior kinsman who buries him, to all the dead man's full and half-brothers, to the husbands of his sisters, to any classificatory brothers-with whom he has exchanged cows, to his mother's father, or brother, and to full and half-brothers of his father, and to his sons. These, with their wives and older children, are obliged to come. A chief normally goes to all burials in his chiefdom (excepting those of very young children), and a special part of the burial meat is given to him.

The ceremonies last about a month, starting with the burial ceremonies of three or four days. Any contact with the dead body is considered to be magically dangerous, and to require special purification. A few personal possessions are buried with the body. The funeral rites are believed to enable a man to join his ancestors. To decide the cause of death by studying the condition of the intestines, a post-mortem examination was formerly always made, the diagnosis afterwards being checked by the diviner. The ceremonies end with war dances (now become rather dances of sexual display), and with the killing of cattle to feed the mourners and honour the dead.

At all except the poorest burials, one or more head of cattle is killed. Not only the immediate family, but also the fathers of the dead man's wives and the husbands of his full-sisters and daughters are expected to provide cows for killing, and if he is buried at his father's place, the father's affinal relations are expected to bring cows. More cows are killed for a man than for a woman, but her husband and father are both supposed to provide a cow for her burial. The heir, when the inheritance is settled, should kill the bunsu, and thereby establish his claim if doubt arises later. Many relatives and friends bring cloths, some of which are buried with the dead; others are kept by his family. The bunsu grown of the dead are in part destroyed. A month after the funeral there is a commemorative beer feast and some beer is taken to the grave as an offering. After mourning all relatives and friends of the dead shave their heads.[2]

Utani ½

764 According to Mowan, the Nyakyusa can cite three or more tribes having utani alliances with them. They also have utani relations between clans and between individuals. When a burial takes place, every utani within reach is under at least as strong an obligation as any relative to attend the funeral and to contribute to the expenses.[3]

602

[1] Wilson, 1, 1939, p. 66. According to Dr. Kerr-Cross, 1891, p. 184, the Ngonde used to bury people alive with the Kyungu.

[2] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 190 sq.; Wilson, 1, 1939; Johnston, 1897, pp. 442-3.

[3] Mowan, 1941, pp. 3-6.

½ [A type of joking relationship. — Analyst]

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

768 all except his own mother, whom he either builds for at a little distance
587 and looks after, or else gives to a half-brother.[1] Inherited wives have the
[421] same land rights as others, and a mother for whom a son builds and hoes is treated by him, in the matter of land, just like a wife.

737 And a married man often supports an old woman—a mother, mother-in-law or elder sister—whose husband, though still alive, is incapable of hoeing and who has no unmarried sons. He may either hoe for her on her own husband's land or else assign to her a plot or two of his own.

241 The gardens of a household are not only worked by its members,
476 other people assist them from time to time. Each married man usually invites a group of his village neighbours to help him with a day's hoeing two or three times a year, entertaining them to food and beer after the work is over. A married woman likewise is often assisted by women friends from neighbouring households in the planting, weeding or reaping of her crops and them she rewards simply with a luxurious meal in the evening, without any beer. Again, as we have seen, a married woman sometimes engages a young man to hoe for her regularly, for a month or more at a time, and pays him by feeding him well for that period.

241 But although this last custom is still common it is beginning to
464 decline; fewer men each year are willing to work for any length of time except for money, and already in some of the more prosperous households young men are found to be employed in hoeing at the rate of 2/- a month in addition to their food. The young men who thus accept employment in hoeing are always the poor ones, those for whom (whether because their fathers are poor in cattle or because they have many elder brothers before them) the prospect of getting married is too distant to stimulate them to any great diligence at home. In the plain of Mungonde, however, where ploughs are extensively used, the owners of ploughs make a considerable profit by hiring themselves out with their ploughs at 2/- a plot (*ulupaka*).

241 Kinsmen and affines also often assist in a household's hoeing. When
582 a man inherits his dead father's wealth then he assumes the position of
●602 father towards his own younger brothers and is responsible for the
606 marriages of any who are bachelors; they then hoe for him and are fed by his wives just as unmarried sons do. Sons-in-law, again, are expected to bring their friends now and then to help their father-in-law in hoeing and they often do so, more particularly if they are behindhand with the marriage-cattle. After the day's work is over, however, they are entertained just as sumptuously as an ordinary work-party of neighbours.

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[1] And any kinswoman of his mother (sister or niece) whom his father has married is treated likewise.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Further, if a young man's own father is poor in cattle, he will often attach himself to the household of a rich kinsman, a brother of his father or of his mother, and hoe regularly for him. This is far more paying than hiring himself out to a mere neighbour, for he thereby places his rich kinsman *in loco parentis* and eventually gets from him a substantial proportion of his marriage cattle. 464 602

6. *INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS IN RELATION TO VILLAGE GROUP AND CHIEF*

Land is not owned in any absolute sense either by the man and his household who live on and cultivate it, or by the village group, or by the chief, but by all of them together. Land tenure among the Nyakyusa is a coherent system of rights in which the chief as overlord, the age-village under the leadership of its great-commoner, the individual male holder, his wives and children all participate. In this the Nyakyusa are in no way peculiar, for "absolute ownership" of land is a fiction nowhere realized; even in Western Europe the use of land is hedged by state and municipal regulations while the security of every owner's tenure is dependent upon political conditions which are not necessarily permanent. Everywhere, whether in civilized or in primitive society, the holding of land is "communal" in the sense that the individual's rights are dependent upon his social relationships, upon his membership of some group with a definite cultural idiom and social organization of its own; everywhere the holding of land is "individual" in the sense that particular people have, at any one moment, definite rights to participate in the use and to share the produce of particular pieces of ground. 423

There is however at the present time a difference of type between the land-tenure systems of Western Europe and those of the Central African tribes. Rapidly though these latter groups are being integrated with the world-wide organization of modern civilization, the process is not yet complete; and these systems of land-tenure still have some characteristics of the old primitive state wherein small and isolated groups were worlds unto themselves. For in some respects they are still isolated. The Nyakyusa, for example, are 400 miles from the nearest railway and, with the exception of a few small missions and plantations, they remain in occupation of all that traditional tribal land. Now in small and isolated social groups personal relationships necessarily dominate the holding of land for there are few or no impersonal relationships within their society at all. In the land-tenure systems of the vast social organizations of civilized society, on the other hand, impersonal relationship necessarily play an important part, though the precise legal emphasis which is laid

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Burier of men!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Mpeta![1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kipoa[1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kyabala![1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Striker and Stabber! —Great Father! Great Father!—O Mwenende![2]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Mpolombasambo![1]—Great Father! Great Father! —Dweller in the hot sun!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Fish-eater! O Banana-eater!—Great Father! Great Father!'" The general form of this praise-song was identical with that of the prayers in the sacred groves and so it is literally true to say that the nobles of Ngonde worshipped the living Kyungus. 643 644

But the majority of their subjects only worshipped from afar in fear and trembling. At Mbande no ordinary commoner was ever conducted into the sacred enclosure but only the territorial nobles and the elder chiefs, and they only occasionally; while when the Kyungu travelled through his country all men save the very oldest fled from his approach: "In former times we commoners never looked on the face of the Kyungu, we feared him far too much. When he journeyed through Ngonde we all used to flee from him, men, women and children; only the very oldest stayed to watch him as he came; and they would fall down and clap their hands in grateful worship."

Even in speech fearful circumlocutions were used to refer to his journeying—"The country is on the move"—"The great hill is moving"—"The mystery is coming." While it was taboo both for the old men who then stayed to see him and for those who entered the sacred enclosure, ever to greet him in the usual way. Falling down and clapping the hands was the only greeting for the Kyungu, never the ordinary "how-do-you-do?" From the nobles and great chiefs men did not flee; but the great chiefs, at least, were greeted by falling down and handclapping, not in the ordinary way. [195] [576]

From the wives of the Kyungu also men fled in terror, fearing lest they be compromised and thrown over the cliff, and this both added to the atmosphere of terror which surrounded him and was an expression of it.

On the other hand the various gifts of the Kyungu to his subjects were, in their ceremonial aspect, an expression of personal relationship to them, of paternal interest in them; and so also the tribute which they brought to him was, in its ceremonial aspect, an expression of filial respect. As in all primitive groups personal rather than impersonal relationships were dominant in the old Ngonde. The Kyungu was 643 602 [43]

[1] Names of early Kyungus.
[2] Archic words which I do not understand.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 "the father of all." All the chiefs were his kinsmen, many of the nobles were related to him by marriage, most of them were personally acquainted
602 with him; and these facts were fundamental in the old constitution of Ngonde.

And so also the great chiefs and their subordinates, and the local
602 rulers and their subjects were united by personal bonds which were given
764 frequent ceremonial expression. At every funeral,[1] in particular, whether
431 of chief, noble or commoner, ceremonial gifts of meat, beer, ordinary food, and other gifts also were made along the lines of the political hierarchy.

764 On the death of a chief, a noble or any commoner who had, during his life, had many personal dealings with Mbande, a hen was sent to the
431 Kyungu to announce the death, and the Kyungu then returned one of
[765] the imported cloths. When other prominent commoners or great-commoners died a hen was sent to the great chief of the area, who also returned an imported cloth. The deaths of ordinary commoners and less prominent great-commoners were announced only to the local ruler (chief or noble) without the gift of a hen, and no cloth was returned.

Similarly when cattle were killed at the funeral of any great-commoner or commoner a special portion of the meat of one beast (the breast and ribs) was always given to the local ruler.[2] In the case of a prominent commoner or great-commoner, however, a similar portion might be given to the great-chief as well. "Such an action was taken on the initiative of the family concerned, the great-chief never claimed it as of right." But if he himself came to the funeral it was normally done. The local rulers themselves, with their wives, attended the funerals of their subjects, and their wives brought food with them, to assist the family in its entertainment of the neighbours. And, finally, at the death of a local ruler or of one of his family, his subjects attended the funeral, bringing gifts of food.[3]

8. *THE CHRONICLE OF NGONDE COMPLETED* (1875-1937)

We have now finished our systematic analysis of the constitution of Ngonde as it was before the coming of the Europeans. We have had to rely largely on oral tradition and that by itself is always in some degree suspect. Nevertheless the richness and coherence of what is remembered to-day, together with the observable continuity of modern institutions

[1] This amount excludes the funeral of the Kyungu, which was secretly carried out by the nobles of Ngonde.
[2] This was certainly so in the chieftains, evidence for the fiefs is here lacking.
[3] Vide Wilson "Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial."

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

MWIKO is very nearly a translation of the word *tabu*, and may be used either 601
of things or of forbidden degrees of relationship.

3. The following points are noteworthy :—

(1) The wife of a "brother," whether older or younger, uterine or not, is called 601
by the same term (*nkazi*) as a wife. I am informed that sexual intercourse, 602
though not countenanced, is not uncommon, and such cases are apt to 837
be treated leniently should they come to (native) court. This might be regarded as evidence of former "group marriages," but it should be noted that a man's first heir is his brother, who succeeds to the wives in common with the rest of the "property."

The same term (*ndume*) is used by a woman for the "brothers" 601
of her husband as for the husband himself, and their wives are *unkazi-winake* (— "her fellow-wives").

(2) The "sisters" of a wife are also called *nkazi*. The husband of the eldest 601
of a family has a prior right to marry her uterine sisters, and a semi- 595
right to her other "sisters"; such marriages are very common. Any man who marries a woman to whom another has a prior right becomes *mumyhanini* (or *hitwane*) to the ousted one. (See Definitions.) Reciprocally a woman calls her "sister's" husband *ndume*, even after her marriage to another.

(3) A man has the right to marry the daughter of his wife's "brother" as 582
among the Thonga,[1] and the wife of the wife's "brother" is called 601
nkuphe (see Definitions); the son of the wife's "brother" is often called *ndume* instead of *mwenu*. There is a special term for a father's sister, which is reciprocally used by a woman for her "brother's" daughter; the term *nkazi-mwinangu* (— "my fellow-wife") does not appear to be used by her unless and until her husband actually marries the girl. This special term is *nsengu*, and it can hardly be mere coincidence that it so closely resembles the Nandi term *sengot* for father's sister[2] (*un-* being a common Bantu prefix, usually honorific, and, on the other hand, the terminal *-t* merely formative).

A woman calls the son of her husband's "sister" *ndume*. (See para. (6) below.)

(4) All "grand-daughters," except those by marriage, are called *nkazi*, but marriage has never been allowed within living memory; the husband of these "grand-daughters" are called *mumyhanini* (*hitwane*). A "grandson" is not called *ndume* but (*mwinukulu*) *mwinangu* (— "my compeer");

[1] R. E. Seligman, "The relationship systems of the Nandi, Masai and Thonga. *Man*, April, 1917, 48 (quoting *Junod*).
[2] Seligman, *loc. cit.*, quoting Hollis, "The Nandi."

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

582 they sometimes do so before the relationship is discovered, and then simply drink a protective medicine but do not break the marriage. The old men speak of a now abandoned custom of preferential cross-cousin marriage.

604 The bond between a man and his mother's brother (*omwipwa*) is mainly constituted by the passage of cattle. "My real mother's brother," they say "is the one who took the bulk of the marriage-cattle which my father gave for my mother", and it is between this particular brother and a woman's eldest son that the bond is strongest. Because this brother of his mother has taken "our cattle" and married with them the young man has a certain right of making free with his property during his life, the right to receive from him one cow to set up a herd of his own with, and a residuary right of inheritance if this uncle dies childless and leaves no brothers. If his mother's brother does die without other heirs, it is only the particular wife obtained with and the particular progeny of his father's marriage-cattle that the young man can claim.

602 764 Ceremonies, and particularly funerals, are the occasions on which the effective relatives of any one family meet all together, both kinsmen and affines. I have even heard kinship defined by attendance at funerals: One man argued that he was not related to another because, though they were admittedly genealogically related they did not attend the funerals in each other's families and were not therefore really kinsmen at all.

602 572 Known blood-kinship is a common occasion of friendship, but it does not necessarily produce it, while the absence of friendship can render many of the normal kinship bonds quite inoperative. We have seen already that quarrels may destroy the relationship between half-brothers and lead to a judicial separation. On the other hand, I have observed two men meet for the first time, discover a common great-grandfather and at once become friends. A few months later the sister of one of them died and the other went to the funeral and behaved there like a close kinsman.

Proximity is another factor of great importance in the relations of kinsfolk, for while nearness of dwelling does not always make for friendship, yet a considerable distance tends to lessen it and to make attendance at funerals impossible.

606 One of the most stringent taboos in Nyakyusa life is that which separates father and daughter-in-law. A woman may never speak to, approach, or look at her husband's father. If she does it is believed that she will die, through the witchcraft of indignant neighbours, a painful and lingering death. And the taboo is extended from her own father-in-

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 As we have seen, the chief's fearsome medicine *inyifwila* is
778 thought to be very dangerous, and too much in the tails may cause
622 them 'to fly about throttling men and cattle', but a chief is never
[754] accused of working witchcraft; it is inconceivable to the Nyakyusa that he could be. If the tails have got out of hand they are treated
[789] by a doctor 'to close them up'; no one suggests that the chief should get rid of them. It is commoners, 'black people', who are witches —cannibals, the eaters of raw flesh—as opposed to chiefs who, since the dawn of history, have killed cattle for meat and cooked their food like civilized men. But the distinction does not extend very far; junior kinsmen of the chief are 'commoners' and may well be accused of practising witchcraft.

There was a delicate balance of power in the Nyakyusa con-
[184] stitution between hereditary chief and commoner headmen and the belief in the power of medicines and of witchcraft was an integral part of it. The chief provided fruitfulness by the power of his own body and his medicines; all men depended upon him for their well-being—food, cattle, children, success in war; but he in his turn depended upon the goodwill of his men led by their village headmen; without it he shivered and fell ill, only to be buried by them 'with the breath still in his body' lest the power of growth disappear with his breathless corpse.

Something of the quality of this mutual dependence and fear is conveyed in Kasitile's account of his own illness quoted in Chapter VIII.

(*e*) THE NECESSITY FOR HARMONY

182 The welfare of the chiefdom is thought to depend upon
643 harmony between the chief and his village headmen and priests,
622 and also between the chief and his kinsmen. Any friction between
793 them may result in public misfortune as well as sickness to the individual at fault. The quarrel of Kasitile, the priest, first with
[753] the Kinga priests, and then with the commoner priests of Mwai-
[821] popo's chiefdom was believed to affect the crops and the weather, as well as Kasitile's own health (*vide infra*, pp. 124-41), and Mwaipopo's failure to tell Kasitile formally of the death of their
[688] kinsman led to rain which spoiled the funeral dance. A quarrel between the lineages of two chiefs which should have sacrificed
643 together was said to have been followed by a very poor millet
602 crop (*vide infra*, pp. 79-80, 118, 136).
578 How the personal relationship of a chief with his kinsmen is

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

thought to affect the whole country was illustrated in Mwaihojo's chiefdom where the people were plagued by wild pig destroying their gardens. Mwaihojo (147) had a longstanding quarrel with his half-brother, Mwakyonde (148), whose country he had seized after their 'coming out'. Mwakyonde became famous as a doctor, and he was a great raconteur and beer-drinker, a regular Silenus, the boon companion of many influential men, whereas his brother was cold and irascible; so although he had lost his chieftaincy, Mwakyonde had considerable power. In February 1937, four lions were seen in the adjoining chiefdom of Mwaipopo (116), and we heard pig squealing as it was killed. Angombwike (whose father lived near Mwakyonde in Mwaihojo's country) explained to us: 'People say that these are Mwakyonde's lions. . . . Lion-makers have bundles of twigs which they put into the long grass, and which turn into lions. Long ago Mwakyonde made lions and they came and killed all the pigs, and the country (Mwaihojo's) was at peace, but he quarrelled with Mwaihojo and put his bundles of twigs into his box and locked it up. Then the country was filled with pig, and buck, and elephant, and all the crops were spoiled, and so it is still. Now Mwakyonde has begun to be friendly with Mwaipopo (116); they enjoy each other's company and drink beer together, and so he is making lions again in Kipungu, the land where Mwaipopo is hoeing, to kill the pig for Mwaipopo. They say Mwaipopo has given him a country in secret.' Now Mwaihojo claimed as his the forest country, which Mwaipopo's men had begun to colonize, therefore to aid Mwaipopo there was an effective slap at Mwaihojo. The lions came into Mwaihojo's country—we heard them repeatedly close to our camp—but they did not clear the pig.

Then, in March, Mwakyonde was supposed to be using a new medicine he had obtained to scare off pig from the fields. We asked him about it. 'Oh, it has failed. The pigs are still there eating. I've done everything I should but without effect. I think that the pigs are possessed by the shades (*sili nimindu ingulube*).' 'Why?' we asked. 'Because my elder brother (Mwaihojo) and I are not on good terms (*tutikwangala kanunu*) the shades are angry.'

So the destruction of men's gardens was traced to the quarrel between the chief and his brother.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

361 leaving a strip of pasture between them, but when the area became
561 crowded the junior heir would establish a colony at some distance.
631 With the increasing density of population, and of the acreage cultivated by each family, the buffer strips between chiefdoms are disappearing.

The more closely related chiefs are the nearer their chiefdoms are likely to be, as will be apparent if the map on p. 87 is compared with the genealogies I and II, but the pattern of splitting and expansion was continually modified by conquest and absorption. For example, the descendants of Mwaipasi (81) of the junior line have no chiefdom, and the descendants of Mwamwifu (84) were defeated and absorbed by Mwaipopo II (116), and the junior house of Mwakisambwe (30) appears never to have established itself. His second son named in the genealogy, Mwamukinga II (44), was a full brother of the senior heir Mwamukinga I (43), not the heir of the second house. And of the descendants of Mwankyuse (33) only one heir appears to have established himself in each generation.

Although a chiefdom was surrounded by pasture land with unoccupied savannah forest beyond it, when the heirs 'came out' their fathers moved. The old men gave the senior heir a site in the centre of the country, not exactly where his father had lived, but somewhere near the senior village of the past generation, and the old men moved aside to make room for the new village. The old men's villages diminished in size for many members had died and not all the heirs had come to live where their fathers had lived, and the homesteads were built on the periphery of the young men's villages. Traditionally most of the cultivated land was reallocated at the 'coming out' also, but that no longer happens. Nowadays, even where the 'coming out' is celebrated, the old men continue to cultivate until their death most of the fields they cultivated before the 'coming out', vacating only their homestead sites and adjoining gardens. The dominance of the younger generation is reflected in their compact villages, forming wide, straight avenues, in central positions in the country, while the villages of older men are often split, and their homesteads scattered without order. The avenues are felt to contribute to the dignity of the ruling generation and the older men are content to withdraw that their sons may 'display themselves' (*ukumoga*).

● [602] Age, territorial, and kinship grouping interlock in a complex

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

fashion. Each village is occupied by an age-set and men are emphatic that age and friendship, not kinship, are the basis of a village, but the villages of fathers, sons, and grandsons commonly, though not invariably, adjoin one another, as Bujege, Igembe, and Lupando, or Lupondo, Njisi, and Iringa in Mwaipopo's chiefdom (*vide* plan, p. 101). Each section of a chiefdom comprises half the ruling generation, and interspersed with their villages are those of their fathers and sons. Men are identified by the name of their village, section, and chief; the village name defines their age-set, the name of section and chief their generation. The section name is always that of the senior village which leads it. Generation succeeds generation in office when their heirs 'come out', but the relative position of villages (age-sets) within a generation remains constant. Since chiefdoms traditionally split each generation at the 'coming out' the men of the retired generation who remained belonged to one section only; those of the other section of their generation were members of another chiefdom. The territorial arrangements reflected in the plan of Mwaipopo's chiefdom on p. 101 are modified by the fact that the chiefdom has not split for four generations. In generation I Kibonde was the portion of the junior heir, Mwafungo (83), but he died young and his land and widow were inherited by the senior brother, Mwaijonga (82). The son of this leviratical union, Mwakipesile (118), went through the 'coming out' in generation II along with Mwaijonga's heirs, Ijonga (114, representing her full brother 115), and Mwakabule (117). Mwakipesile inherited Kibonde and Mwakabule inherited Kituli, but both were later defeated in war by Mwaipopo II and their land incorporated in his chiefdom. Mwakipesile's heir, Likosyela, and Mwakabule remained as subordinate chiefs. Though the girl Ijonga celebrated the 'coming out' in place of her unborn brother she could not rule, and Mwaiteteja, son of Mwaijonga II (younger full brother of 82) acted for her. He was finally defeated by Mwaipopo II and fled to the periphery of the country. Kabula was his village, and he was subordinate to Mwaipopo, not independen

In generation III the chiefdom did not split because by that time the British administration was in control, and the territorial division remained much the same, Igembe and Njisi becoming the senior villages in place of Bujege and Lupondo, with Mwankuga (150) and Mwaseba (152) as the young chiefs. Kibonde,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 Kituli, and Kabula still remained somewhat detached. In generation IV the second heir, Mwabungulu (178), has moved out to the forest and the area occupied and ruled by Mwaijonga and Mwaipopo is still one, with a division between Lupando and Iringa. Kibonde is fully absorbed into Lupando, and Kituli and Kabula into Iringa—no descendants of Mwakipesile of Kibonde and Mwakabule of Kituli went through the 'coming out' with Mwanyilu as chiefs. Kibonde, Kituli, and Kabula are subdivided into age-villages of three generations, but these are not shown on the plan. They are spoken of by outsiders by the inclusive names.

To a European the most surprising fact about the age-organization is that a young man of the ruling generation may still choose to move into the homestead of his deceased father or elder brother. We knew one young man, who had been spoken of as a possible village headman at the coming out of Mwanyilu, but shortly before the 'coming out' he chose to move into the homestead of his deceased father in Lupondo village (where his father in turn had inherited) even though he might have inherited his father's wealth in wives and stock and returned to his own village of Masoko, after completing the ritual of death and inheritance. Our informants insisted that, though the young men might rule, the older generation were the more honoured, and in inheriting from his father this man was classified as a member of his father's generation. Nevertheless many young men do *not* choose to move into the village of the father or elder brother from whom they inherit, and the villages of old men decrease in size and finally disappear altogether.

The relation between kinship and territorial grouping cannot easily be indicated by plans and genealogies for though in theory each village consists of 'sons' of a village of the previous generation (as shown in the table facing p. 91) there is considerable movement from one village to another, and the members of any adult village usually prove to have come from a number of different villages, though a boy's village consists of sons of adjoining villages. The table of members of three of the villages of Mwaipopo's chiefdom illustrates this (*vide* pp. 224-6). An analysis of genealogies showing where different members live gives much the same picture. Though the shortage of land in the coffee-growing chiefdoms of the hills and the rice-growing chiefdoms of the plain is tending to obliterate the age-village organization, the old

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

system is still the accepted form in Mwaipopo's chiefdom; the advantages of separating kinsmen in different villages are explicitly stated, and the contrast between the Nyakyusa and their neighbours in this respect emphasized. 'Certainly we do not live with kinsmen here but the Kinga do.' 'It is not good for a son to live close to his father, they will quarrel.' 'When we move to another village we consider friendship not kinship in selecting it.'

(b) THE BALANCE BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND SECTIONS

The ritual cycle of the 'coming out' and the sacrifices in the groves helped to maintain a balance of power between generations, as well as between chiefs and commoners. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) in 1953 it was Mwabuputa, the senior village headman of his father, who took the leading part. He was described as 'the greatest man in the country' who 'brings out the chief' and his manner indicated that he was well aware of his power. During the reign of Mwaipopo (116) the power of his father's village headmen, Njobakosa and Ngulyo, was apparent at every ritual. Spiritual power was shared between chiefs and commoners, but exercised ideally by a virile chief of the ruling generation and the experienced headmen of the retired generation.

Those chosen as senior village headmen at the 'coming out' are commonly older than the young chief, but village headmen are thought of as surviving their chief—it is they who were responsible for smothering him, and performing the sacrifices in his grove. The headmanship is an *office* and so long as the office is necessary an incumbent is found for it, in the person of the heir of the original holder who is so closely identified with the deceased that most precise inquiry is often necessary to establish whether a given individual is the original holder, the succeeding heir, or a later heir, successor to the successor. The Ngulyo who officiated at the rituals in 1935 was the heir of the original Ngulyo (some said the *grandson*, not the son) and he was criticized by Kasitile as being 'a young man who knew nothing'. The principle, so familiar in Central Africa, of a perpetual office[1] emerges, among the

[1] I. Cunnison, *Kinship and Local Organization on the Luapula*, Communications of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute No. 5 (1950), pp. 14-15; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), p. 122; A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, O.U.P. (1939), p. 24; 'Some Types of Family Structure among the Central Bantu, in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, p. 224; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, London (1911), p. 3.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 clearly inclined to the shades as it had before the divination, but as
753 before the certain conviction was lacking.

Four days later (12/2/37) Kasitile went to Nsesa in Kituli village to consult the oracle again 'for that of Nsoki went wrong'. He told us afterwards 'This oracle supported the finding of Ndembwe's. It said:
[775] Your kinsman who is dead is angry; he says, "Why did you not
[769] celebrate the ritual? I am tired of the hair (*Ngatele nasyo inwili*). And what did you offer your father after cutting that tree?"' Here yet another cause of Kasitile's illness is suggested—the neglect of the death ritual of a kinsman. The implication is that the chief mourners have
[765] not yet performed the concluding rite of shaving which makes it
[302] possible for the deceased to join his fathers. The hair which the mourners shave off is called 'the hair of the corpse'.

QUESTION: What are you going to do then?

KASITILE: I shall charge the young man, son of my dead kinsman, with
[688] neglect, and tell him to celebrate the ritual that the shades which have
[602] bound me may go out of my body.

QUESTION: And the bull?

KASITILE: If I can find one I shall kill it.

QUESTION: Who will be there?

[793] KASITILE: The priests will be there, Ngulyo, Kissogota, Njobakosa, Mwalukuta and Mwakasukula,[1] and also Mwaipopo (116) himself. Were I a commoner I should kill alone with my younger brothers, but since I am a public personage (*ndi nkulumba*) the village headmen are there. (To Mwaikambo, the clerk.) It is good at your home in the hills; here things are bad.

QUESTION: But they also have shades?

[775] KASITILE: But they are not important. Look you, I just cut a tree and they have seized me and dwell in my body. Are there sacred groves in
[178] the hills? Do men visit them? There in the hills rituals have died; the puberty ritual and the rituals of the groves are celebrated very little.

On 27th March Kasitile looked in to say that he was going to con-
787 sult a visiting Sangu doctor 'from very far off' about his cough, but
791 G.W. had better not come lest his presence spoil the divination.
753 Kasitile came again after the consultation, full of excitement. 'What a doctor! That is a doctor indeed! That is a diviner! He took an axe and divined with it; he took coppers which I brought and threw them in a little pot, together with the axe, and ash, and he said: "You also take ash and throw it in" and I did so. Then he looked into the little pot and said: "You built on the plain!" He knew this without being told! I said: "Yes".'

SANGU: There was a quarrel there.

[1] The last two are priests of Mbyanga (*vide* p. 80) who did not in fact come. Mwamakunda, Kasitile's assistant, who did come is not mentioned.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(b) MEDICINES AND MORALITY

Doctors classify most of their medicines in terms of the supposed mystical causes of disease, and the determining factor in diagnosis is what quarrels have occurred in the patient's circle of kinsmen and friends, or what wrongdoing he has on his conscience. The medicines mentioned to us by various doctors were for treatment of sickness caused by 'the breath of men', by sorcery, by vengeance magic, by the protective medicine put on wives, by the anger of the shades or living senior relatives, by incest, by spearing or binding with ropes,[1] or abnormal birth. Only a few of the medicines listed were for the treatment of observable symptoms such as fever, too frequent periods, or swelling after snake-bite, rather than the supposed mystical cause. 278 753

The emphasis on discovering the mystical cause and counteracting it was shown very clearly when Godfrey Wilson accompanied Mwakyonde, the doctor, to the home of a patient, a young man so weak that he could not lift a limb. Mwakyonde spent two minutes examining him, and provided leaves with which he was poulticed, and a medicine which was rubbed into cuts made all over his body, but the greater part of the day was devoted to discussing the quarrel between kinsmen, from which his illness was thought to have arisen, to persuading the kinsmen to 'speak out', and to preparing and administering a medicine which would cause the death of any one of them who was working sorcery against another. 753 578 [757]

Medicine for the treatment of a disease is held to be ineffective —at the best a temporary palliative—unless the underlying cause is discovered and dealt with. For example, doctors spoke of possessing a medicine against *ilyepa*, the disease caused by a kinsman to whom a debt in cattle is due, but it is not effective alone. 'The wrongdoer drinks medicine and pays his kinsman. He must pay, for though the medicine may cure him temporarily the disease will come again if he does not pay his debt.'

The ultimate cause of disease is believed to be friction in social relationships—a breach in moral law—and so the study of medicines takes us directly to problems of morality. There is a deep-rooted conviction that medicines will not be effective if there is quarrelling in the family which uses them. This applies not only to medicines used in sickness, but also to those for protection [602]

[1] *op. cit.*, pp. 172-9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

structure? And how far does the new economic and political organization produce a change in religion? These theoretical questions can be answered only by a series of comparative studies. Here there is evidence for one area alone, and the connexions which we postulate can be established only if they hold in a whole range of societies. 182 769 797

Christianity implies an emergence from the nexus of kinship, for the worshipping group is two or three believers, not a body of kinsmen, and conversion is a personal choice. This is more obvious in a missionary church than in one long established, for, as we have seen, the convert in a pagan community must withdraw from his kinsfolk to become a Christian,[1] but it remains true, even in a Christian society. The new doctrine implies a body of believers—a Church. The particular form varies, but the Church has appeared wherever the Christian faith has been established. In short, we argue that the change in religion necessarily disrupts an organization based primarily on kinship and establishes a new type of organization based partly on voluntary association. With the change from the ritual of the lineage to the ritual of the Church the authority and leadership of senior kinsmen is diminished; they are replaced by 'elders' and priests or pastors whose basis of authority is not birth, but selection by the Church. Furthermore, association for worship becomes a pattern for association in other fields, and the Church is the training ground among the Nyakyusa, as it has been among so many other peoples, for organizers of other types of societies. 182 797 795 602

And not only is kinship subordinated to faith; the forms of kinship are themselves modified. From the time of their first arrival the missionaries have taught that Christianity implies monogamy and they have baptized no polygynist who does not put away his additional wives. This teaching has been questioned by many Africans and by some European missionaries themselves, who doubt the wisdom of persuading a man already married to send away his wives—or even of countenancing such an action. But the rule of monogamy has remained as a condition of membership in all the Churches with European connexions.[2] It has been rejected, as we have seen, by two of the 'independent' African 182 595 797

[1] *ibid.*, pp. 197-9.

[2] The rule was suspended for a brief period in one mission working not far from the Nyakyusa area, but was later enforced. cf. Lyndon Harries in *Survey of African Marriage and Family Life* (edited by A. Phillips), pp. 341-2.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

MWANDISI: The sausages of porridge stuck in the ground and 764
sprinkled with powdered medicine which each stoops and bites mean that you should be heavy in your belly (*musito munda*) and not have diarrhœa, it is to make faeces hard (not watery). Some we leave and bury [the end of each sausage of porridge is left in the ground]; that [753]
means that people should step over it and take away the disease, may they have diarrhœa at their homes! They will get it really!

QUESTION: Why do the dead man's sisters admonish their sisters-in- 607
law, his widows? 764

MWANDISI: Because we have all met together. They say: 'Do not grudge him food, go on cooking for him. He dies of hunger! Begin again! And why do you not cook for us when we come? You grudge us food!' We scold them very much and they weep tears.

QUESTION: They say in Selya that you both drive away a shade and 764
bring him back to the house.

MWANDISI: No, we drive him away, we do not bring him back to 775
the house.

QUESTION: But you go to the stream with a stem of bananas, a hen and a fresh strip of bark, the bananas you throw away, but you come back with the hen and the bark. Is that the shade?

MWANDISI: These do not come back home. The officiant has them and takes them to her house. . . .

The stem of bananas we throw in the stream, it is sickness, it is the corpse, it goes to Kyala there. The hen and the bark we give to the doctor, the officiant, because it is she who caught hold of the sickness. She is always an unrelated person, not a relative; we pay her. If we have not performed the ritual we run mad, the shades have not come out, they are still there within.

QUESTION: You performed the ritual for Lubabelo's child yourselves? 764

MWANDISI: Yes, she was our grandchild. We grandparents don't matter, we carry out the ritual but it's not important; if, however, it is [603]
our own child [who has died] then it is taboo. It is taboo up to the point that connections are not relatives. [A grandchild in this context—though not in other contexts—is treated as not a relative]. The ritual *must* be performed for all *relatives* (*abakamu*). . . .

First the stem of bananas and then the millet and pumpkin-seeds are passed between the straddled legs of the principals. The winnowing basket (containing millet and seeds) is pushed along with the officiant's elbow. In performing this ritual we finish the mating of man and woman, for that which comes out of the man in front [i.e. the semen] is the shades, when the participants have spat out we drive the shades away. If we have not performed the ritual we go mad. The shades have not come out but are still within. When, however, we have finished, then they have come out of the body. But they come again, we always have them. (*Apa tukunyagula tukumaleya mboleli munyambala munkikulu, po*

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

845 783 and the statement cannot be altogether devoid of truth. The influence of the mind upon the body is universally admitted: may it not be that the consciousness of guilt has the effect of contracting the muscles, and the relaxation which follows confession renders birth less painful? And may it not be that even a false confession, wrung from a despairing sufferer, brings a momentary relief sufficient to bring the child to the birth? One is glad to add, however, that many women have the courage to refuse altogether to submit to this shameful ordeal, insisting that their trouble is due, not to the wrath of the spirits, but to other causes, and that they will die rather than confess what is not true.

844 846 When birth has taken place, the cord is cut with a bamboo knife, and the placenta buried in the family place of prayer, a small part protruding to leave a connection which insures further children. All this time no one in the house may swallow saliva. The father calls out to know the sex of the child, but he must not yet enter (for the party have entered the house as soon as possible after the birth). After a few days the mother is anointed with oil and shaved, along with her child, and powdered with medicine. Meantime intimation has been sent to the grandparents; a cock if a boy, a hen if a girl, telling them all that they wish to know. The mother may now resume her household duties.

851 603 431 But in about a week she goes to show the child to her own parents, and at the end of her visit, which lasts some weeks, great preparations are made by both

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

sets of grandparents. The mother sets out from her father's house with a train of friends carrying food, and a very special friend who carries the baby. Arrived at the paternal grandfather's, the food is laid down, and the child is taken by the grandfather, who presents a hoe to the maternal grandmother; and then, with the child in his arms, goes to the *ikiyinja* (the family place of prayer). He spits into the palm of his hand, and, laying it in blessing upon the child's head, he prays: 851 603 431

> "May it be well with you, my child. Ye spirits, be not surprised at this child of yours whom I present to you. I am old: let him take my place. Care for him in this world of sickness. I was alone, and ye have multiplied me and made me a company. Be not angry, but bless the child; and in the sight of God let him be acceptable."

The mother sits with head covered, for she must not be seen by her father-in-law. The parties now exchange gifts of food, and eat separately, after which the grandfather gives the child a gift, usually now a small coin, over which the little hand is closed. Next, the grandmother takes the infant and hands it to its mother, who, with a pot of beer on her head, goes off with her husband to their home. Arrived there, but not till then, the father takes the child in his arms, and thanks it for the gift it has brought, a foretoken of more yet to be earned. [606]

Lingering here and there in certain families are strange customs, probably belated survivals from 946

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

abanyage have no more general authority than the doctors who divine or treat the sick. Their parallels among men are the priests (also called *abanyage*) who perform the rain ritual and the sacrifices to dead chiefs. 627

The one position which endows a woman with legal authority is that of father's sister. A senior sister has a joint responsibility, along with the headman of the village, for the distribution of her dead brother's property, and her brother's children may appeal to her to arbitrate if they have a dispute with their father while he is yet alive: this is particularly important in the families of chiefs, since a chief's son cannot bring his father before commoners for arbitration. The authority of a father's sister is, however, exercised only within the lineage and does not extend even to wives of lineage members. Co-wives may take a dispute for arbitration to their husband, but if, as often happens, he is thought to be prejudiced, they go to a male neighbour, or to the headman of the village, in the same way as when the dispute is with an unrelated person (cf. p. 140). 627 768 613 604

Only in the group of unmarried girls in a village does there appear to be the germ of control by seniors of the same sex. We traced one case in which a quarrel between two girls nearing the age of puberty was settled by the slightly older girls of the same village, who punished one who had beaten her fellow without justification, and then lied to them when they inquired into the case, by scratching her with their nails. As they reach puberty the girls, who have grown up together in one village and formed a closely knit group, become scattered among the different age-villages of their husbands and there leadership among women is not developed (*vide infra*, pp. 171–2). This does not mean, however, that women are excluded from arbitration; they can, and frequently do, bring cases on their own account, not necessarily acting through husband or father. Unlike the pagans, Christian women who have quarrelled do sometimes ask a leading woman of their congregation to arbitrate. At Rungwe the women leaders were the sister of the chief and the wife of a teacher, both personalities; and it was to them that their fellows went to relate their troubles and ask for an opinion. We traced two such cases. Very often, however, Christian women go to a man, the Christian leader of the village, as their husbands do. 627 795 627

The Administration has not attempted to suppress arbitration 627

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mulungude

764 Then they explained to me that formerly it was forbidden to
177 scrape bananas at a death, you eat them with the ash on, for if you scrape you will scrape your body also, that is, you will scratch and scratch. But now that custom is finished. Three men were scraping away.

784 Mwaikambo said: 'In all rituals it is forbidden to scrape bananas —in the puberty and twin rituals also.'

184 KASTILE: It is forbidden to scrape bananas only at a death ritual,
784 not at other rituals. If you scrape bananas you scrape your own body. It is the corpse. We have died, we are the corpse. . . .

●604 The mother's brother (*ssenipuse*) hands bananas and meat over his
781 shoulder to the children who are treated, then he goes off home and
764 they go home without looking back at one another. If they do look back at one another the child will grow feeble and go mad. If the mother's brother does not come to cut the banana grove and do this, if the child sees others eating that banana it becomes feeble and goes mad. The banana and the meat are the filth which madmen take hold of, they are filth. Yes, it is like the banana which they eat at the pumpkin-seeds ritual.

QUESTION: Why the mother's brother?

KASTILE: Who should give it to them? Their kinsman (*ssukuru*) should give it to them, he who looks after everything for them.

ii. *Mwandisi's interpretation.*[1]

764 QUESTION: What do you do in the death ritual, what does it mean?

MWANDISI: When a child has died I do not approach the women, my wives, until we have finished the ritual. On the night of the day we drink the beer then we come together. It is a ritual! Yes, the coming
[833] together of man and woman is a ritual (*ku kupage*). If we come together before the beer then we overstep our child, Lubabelo, he will be impotent and not beget children. No, his children are not relatives (*ku kunda*) they are my comrades (*kubisanga*) but if Lubabelo forestalls (*akukinda*) the ritual with his wife then he oversteps (*akukinda*) his children. And when we have finished the ritual Lubabelo begins[2] and goes first to his wife. We follow him at our home. If we begin we would overstep him, it is taboo (*musiko*). At the ritual of pumpkin-seeds, we drive away the shade, we say: 'Do not rise from the dead and come to us, go to the land of the shades, that we may bear and beget another child, you prevent us doing so!'

[1] His son Lubabelo, who was with us during the earlier part of the conversation, left so that we could speak freely. There was no difficulty about Mwandisi's wife being present.

[2] Mwandisi was referring to a ritual performed on the death of his son Lubabelo's child.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

602 important relationships of kinship and affinity. Marriage cattle are not kept by the bride's father, but are distributed by him among her brothers for their marriages, and among his own brothers and half-brothers, who in turn give him cattle when their own daughters marry.

585 Half-brothers do not generally exchange cattle, but unless they do so there are no strong bonds of kinship between them. A polygynist usually creates the relationship of 'milking each other's cows', between his senior son and the eldest of each group of full-brothers by his other wives. He gives some of the marriage cows received for a daughter to one of her half-brothers, the latter being placed under an obligation to return the cows to the girl's eldest full brother some day from the marriage cattle of a sister or daughter of his own. The exchange once begun usually continues as sisters and daughters marry, and only lapses in the third generation, unless the principals quarrel and take legal action for 'separation'. Then a balance is drawn up of the cows exchanged from the beginning of the relationship, and the kinship is broken. The two thus 'separated' have no mutual obligations and do not attend each other's funerals.

602 428 Half-brothers may be linked by blood if their mothers are close kin; they may also be linked by cattle exchanges. The laws of inheritance make the full brothers of a man his first heirs, then his half-brothers linked by blood, then those linked by cattle have precedence over other half-brothers.[1]

● 604 The bond between a man and his mother's brother is expressed in terms of the passage of cattle. As the mother's brother married with the mother's cattle, her eldest son has the right to make free with his property in his lifetime, the right to receive one cow to set up a herd of his own, and a residuary right of inheritance; if the mother's brother dies without heir, her son can claim the particular wife obtained with and the particular progeny of the cattle given for his own mother.

606 There is a strict custom of father and daughter-in-law avoidance. A woman may never speak to, approach, or look at her husband's father, on pain of death through the witchcraft of indignant neighbours. The prohibition is extended from her own father-in-law to all his classificatory brothers, and in the basin of the age-village system.[2] A man must also avoid his mother-in-law, but this prohibition is relaxed after the birth of a child.[3] The affinal relationship is also expressed by the obligation of a man to bring a cow to the funeral of his wife's father or brother, and to give one at the death of his own son-in-law. The former may count as part of his marriage payments in case of a claim for refund.[4]

601 The main kinship terms are as follows:

Ndawa — brother-in-law or sister-in-law; used by a man for all husbands of his 'sisters', all 'brothers' of his wives, and for the son of his wife's brother, since he has a right to marry that man's sister; by a woman for all wives of her 'brothers' and all 'sisters' of her husband.

Ndagho — parent-in-law or child-in-law; used for the husband of a daughter, or for the parent of a wife or husband (a daughter-in-law is called by the special name of *Nkamwanna*). The wife of the wife's brother is called *Ndagho*, as she is the mother of a potential wife, and of a brother-in-law.

[1] Wilson, G. 1936, p. 182; G. 1939, p. 9.
[2] Ibid., G. 1936, pp. 187-8; Mitchemann, 1903, pp. 43 and 106.
[3] Rattemann, J. 1903, p. 102.
[4] Wilson, G. 1939.

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

[582] 601 his wife is called *ukani*, like the wife of a "brother," not *ulupho*. This appears to be the result of the law that a man may have to marry his "grandmothers." (See para. 5.)

601 Similarly a woman calls her "grandson" *ukwae*, and his wife *ukani-mwimanga*.

No distinction is made between the offspring of a "son" and that of a "daughter," either by a man or a woman.

"Grand-daughters" by marriage are not called *ukani* by a man, nor are "grandsons" by marriage called *ukwae* by a woman: the term *mwimbulu-mwimanga* is used in either case. It is of interest to note, however, that the wives and husbands of these relations are called *ukani* and *ukwae* respectively, which is evidently a relic of the period when the whole tribe was divided into two classes, marriageable and unmarriageable: since a "grandchild" by marriage belonged to the latter class, his or her spouse must be included in the former.

[614] (5) All "grandmothers" are termed *ukani*, except perhaps the sisters of the paternal grandfather: some say that these should be classed as "sisters," or the sister of one's *mwimanga* (grandfather), because *ukani* would not be polite to the *mwimanga* of one's father. Others deny this and include all grandmothers as *ukani*, and it is doubtful whether the objection is not modern. The same applies to the "grandmothers" of a wife.

587 A man often has to marry his "grandmothers" on the death of his "grandfather," though if the latter were a chief or a rich man the heir would probably marry them as part of the property. The rule appears to be that it is the duty of any man to marry his "grandmothers" if they are destitute.

[582] 601 A woman calls all her "grandfathers" *ukwae*, though actual marriage is not permitted. It is difficult to say whether this is due to analogy with the relationship of a man to his "grandmother," or is the corollary of that to his "grand-daughter." Since marriage with a "grand-daughter" is not uncommon in other tribes, it may be that it was originally the reason for a woman calling her grandfather *ukwae* among the Wangonde, but that the persistence of the terminology after such a marriage came to be regarded as inveterate is partly due to analogy.

As a result of the similarity of relationship between grandparents and grandchildren the same term *mwimbulu* is used for both. There was formerly a special term for grandparents (*ubuga*), but it is now obsolete.

601 604 (6) The relationship between mother's "brother" and "sister's" son is peculiar, in that the term is used reciprocally (*mwipwa*). A man calls the wife of his

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

maternal uncle *ukwi*, and she calls him *ukwenu*. As a sister's son comes very low down in the table of succession, this cannot be due to their prospective relationship should the maternal uncle die, and it may be that the relationship of husband's sister's son is (or was) regarded as analogous to that of wife's brother's daughter. On the other hand, if the father of X exercises his right to marry his wife's brother's daughter, this girl, from being the "sister" of X, becomes his "mother," and her mother (the wife of X's maternal uncle) becomes his "grandmother" and therefore his *ukwi*. 601 604

(7) Cross-cousins are classed as "brothers" and "sisters," and all first cousins are, therefore, unmarriageable. 606 607

(8) It is of interest to note that a kind of marriage by capture is still in vogue among the Wangonde. It may be performed either with or without the consent of the woman, but, except in the case of a woman to whom the man has a right by relationship, her father's sanction is necessary, and at least part of the dowry must be paid beforehand: usually, the woman is aware that the marriage has been proposed. 583

The bridegroom, assisted by some friends, either lies in wait for the woman, on the way to the water-supply for instance, or decoys her out of the village by means of a spurious message, and carries her off to his home. Her relatives would be bound in honour to rescue her if the bridegroom were so maladroit as to make it impossible for them to affect ignorance of the abduction. It is said that the marriage is sometimes consummated by force with the assistance of the companions of the bridegroom: in any case, a small present to the girl personally is necessary before consummation.

4. *Succession.*—The order of succession is liable to modification if the legal heir is considered unsuitable for any reason. The relationships are put in the following order of precedence:— 623

(1) Younger brother by same father and mother.

(2) Younger brother by same father and different mother.

(3) Any younger "brother."

Note.—It would be considered *infra dig.* for an elder "brother" to take the name of his junior, so that, although he has a prior right to the property, he would appoint a younger "brother" to the name. In such a case he may choose which of the "wives" of the deceased he likes, in addition to the estate.

(4) Eldest surviving son (own begetting).

(5) Eldest son of elder brother (by the same father).

(6) Eldest son of younger brother (by the same father).

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

582 they sometimes do so before the relationship is discovered, and then simply drink a protective medicine but do not break the marriage. The old men speak of a now abandoned custom of preferential cross-cousin marriage.

604 The bond between a man and his mother's brother (*omsipwa*) is mainly constituted by the passage of cattle. "My real mother's brother," they say " is the one who took the bulk of the marriage-cattle which my father gave for my mother ", and it is between this particular brother and a woman's eldest son that the bond is strongest. Because this brother of his mother has taken " our cattle " and married with them the young man has a certain right of making free with his property during his life, the right to receive from him one cow to set up a herd of his own with, and a residuary right of inheritance if this uncle dies childless and leaves no brothers. If his mother's brother does die without other heirs, it is only the particular wife obtained with and the particular progeny of his father's marriage-cattle that the young man can claim.

602 764 Ceremonies, and particularly funerals, are the occasions on which the effective relatives of any one family meet all together, both kinsmen and affines. I have even heard kinship defined by attendance at funerals. One man argued that he was not related to another because, though they were admittedly genealogically related they did not attend the funerals in each other's families and were not therefore really kinsmen at all.

602 572 Known blood-kinship is a common occasion of friendship, but it does not necessarily produce it, while the absence of friendship can render many of the normal kinship bonds quite inoperative. We have seen already that quarrels may destroy the relationship between half-brothers and lead to a judicial separation. On the other hand, I have observed two men meet for the first time, discover a common great-grandfather and at once become friends. A few months later the sister of one of them died and the other went to the funeral and behaved there like a close kinsman.

Proximity is another factor of great importance in the relations of kinship, for while neighbourhood of dwelling does not always make for friendship, yet a considerable distance tends to lessen it and to make attendance at funerals impossible.

606 One of the most stringent taboos in Nyakyusa life is that which separates father and daughter-in-law. A woman may never speak to, approach, or look at her husband's father. If she does it is believed that she will die, through the witchcraft of indignant neighbours, a painful and lingering death. And the taboo is extended from her own father-in-

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

601 *Mwinikulu* = grandparent or grandchild; but a man addresses his male grandparents as *Mwinangu* (my compeer) and his female grandparents as *Nkusi* (wife). A woman addresses her male grandparents as *Ndume* (husband) and her female grandparents as *Mwinangu* (my compeer).

Ndume = husband, extended for a woman to include the husbands of 'sisters', male grandparents, male grandchildren, husbands of female grandparents or grandchildren; all 'brothers' of a husband, husband of a father's sister, and grandfathers of a husband, and finally, the husband's sister's son.

Nkusi = wife; for a man it includes the wives of 'brothers', female grandparents and grandchildren, or wives of male ones; all sisters of wife, daughters of wife's brothers, wives of grandsons by marriage, the 'grandmothers' of a wife, and the wife of a maternal uncle.[1]

605 The Ngonde do not seem to distinguish cross-cousins from ortho-cousins as clearly as do the Maravi, or the Yao, Makua, and Makonde peoples.

MARRIAGE

582 There are no exogamous clans, but the descendants of a common grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are forbidden to marry.[2] The descendants of a common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry, but sometimes they do so before the relationship is discovered; they then simply drink a special medicine, but do not break the marriage. The old men speak of a now abandoned custom of preferential cross-cousin marriage.[3] The husband of the eldest girl of a family has the prior right to marry her full sisters, and such marriages are very common. A man also has the right to marry the daughter of his wife's brother, therefore the wife of the wife's brother is classed as a parent-in-law in kinship terminology.[4]

583 The passage of cattle makes children of a marriage legitimate. A child of a man who has given no cattle belongs either to the mother's husband or to her father. Cattle are in rapid circulation. Few men possess more than six cows at any time, yet marriage payments range from four to thirty cows (formerly only one or two were given). Marriage involves considerable expenditure and months of preliminary economic activity.[5] The cattle are seldom handed over all at once, but in ones or twos over a period of years. Full brothers have a claim to the cattle of their sister's marriage, and at the marriage of his eldest daughter the father hands one of the cows to the village headman.[6]

584 A girl commonly goes to visit and sleep with her betrothed husband for several years before she finally sets up house for him. The ideal procedure is by negotiation with the girl's father, but a man without cows may run off with a girl and satisfy her father with cows later on, or a man with cattle may seduce a married woman and pay her husband the adultery fine of two cows, plus the cows originally given for her marriage. A girl may be betrothed before puberty, and may visit her husband, but she is supposed to be virgin at her initiation ceremony, and is generally not allowed to

[1] Sanderson, 3, 1923.
[2] See Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 267; but according to Sanderson, 3, 1923, p. 453, cross-cousins are classed as sisters, and all first cousins are unmarriageable; according to Johnston, 1897, p. 415, and to Mackenzie 1925, p. 55, cousin marriage was not allowed.
[3] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 260; Sanderson, op. cit., p. 451.
[4] Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 11.
[5] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 55.
[6] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 65.

7: Sanderson U-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

maternal uncle *nkasi*, and she calls him *ndume*. As a sister's son comes very low down in the table of succession, this cannot be due to their prospective relationship should the maternal uncle die, and it may be that the relationship of husband's sister's son is (or was) regarded as analogous to that of wife's brother's daughter. On the other hand, if the father of X exercises his right to marry his wife's brother's daughter, this girl, from being the "sister" of X, becomes his "mother," and her mother (the wife of X's maternal uncle) becomes his "grandmother" and therefore his *nkasi*. 601 604

(7) Cross-cousins are classed as "brothers" and "sisters," and all first cousins are, therefore, unmarriageable. 605 601

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The bridegroom, assisted by some friends, either lies in wait for the woman, on the way to the water-supply for instance, or decoys her out of the village by means of a spurious message, and carries her off to his home. Her relatives would be bound in honour to rescue her if the bridegroom were so maladroit as to make it impossible for them to affect ignorance of the abduction. It is said that the marriage is sometimes consummated by force with the assistance of the companions of the bridegroom: in any case, a small present to the girl personally is necessary before consummation.

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(5) Eldest son of elder brother (by the same father).

(6) Eldest son of younger brother (by the same father).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Another informant added: 'Boys usually move of their own accord; if they don't their fellows mock them saying: "Why do you sleep with your mother and see the evil things of your mother when she puts on her bark-cloth? . . . You sleep with your mother and see the evil things of your father and mother. Perhaps they think you are asleep, but you see them."' 834

Sons and mothers are separated at night, but the boys come to their mothers' houses for food; fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law are completely segregated from the time a girl is betrothed or, if she has been betrothed in infancy, from the time she is about eight years old. Her father-in-law is pointed out once to the newly betrothed girl, and after that she must never look at him. She never enters a house in which he is, and she leaves a path if she catches a glimpse of him, or is warned by her friends that he is approaching; she also avoids his name and anything associated with him, being particularly careful to avoid going near the bed in her mother-in-law's house, should she visit her mother-in-law during her father-in-law's absence. The avoidance is extended to a large group of kinsmen—her father-in-law's brothers and cousins, her mother-in-law's brothers, the husbands of her mother-in-law's sisters, and the fathers-in-law (direct and by extension) of each of her own sisters;[1] but it is *not* extended to the father-in-law's village-mates. In practice, the forms of avoidance vary with the actual relationship—the more distant the connection the less strictly are the rules observed—and with the locality, for the Nyakyusa proper avoid in-laws more carefully than the Kukwe do. A Nyakyusa wife, for example, should *never* enter her father-in-law's house, but a Kukwe wife may do so during his absence. 834 606 602

The Nyakyusa argue, cogently enough, that it would be quite impossible for father-in-law and daughter-in-law to live in the same village and avoid one another as they do; and indeed the difficulties of avoidance are apparent at ceremonies when members of different villages are congregated. Then the women are on the watch all the time, and one or another is constantly taking refuge in a hut, or in the bananas, as her friends warn her of the approach of a 'father-in-law'. The practical difficulties were obvious when we attended a funeral ceremony at Mwambelike's 606

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

606 house, one pouring wet day, when sitting or cooking out of doors was impossible. Mwambelike's wife was cooking for us and other visitors. Suddenly there was a cry from her husband and others, 'Father-in-law!' She ran out of the room, leaving her cooking. The man who came in was a mother's brother's son (*untani*) of Mwambelike's father, and counted as a mother's brother (*umwipa*) to Mwambelike. Mwambelike explained to him that his wife was cooking and asked him to stay 'at the door', so he went out, and the woman came back. She cooked placidly for half an hour. Mwambelike said: 'Tell my daughter to come and help you with the cooking', then, looking round, he said: 'Oh no, she can't, her father-in-law is here too.' This was her betrothed husband's mother's brother. Mwambelike's daughter was about thirteen years old and had not yet reached puberty. Some time later the wife called to this girl to bring her some water. Nothing was said by the men and after three calls the girl scurried in giggling, put the water down, and scurried out. Then the men took notice, the 'father-in-law' said nothing, but Mwambelike said apologetically: 'It's all right; she did not look at him.' When the wife had finished cooking our food she went out, and the men called her 'father-in-law' in. He stayed about five minutes then, realizing that all the men were hungry, he said: 'I will go away. Let her get on with her cooking'; so he went out and she came back and cooked for the other guests.

606 177 795 The strength of the feeling against seeing one's father-in-law is apparent in the behaviour of Christian women. The missionaries have taught that avoidance is unnecessary and inconvenient, if not unchristian, and that a daughter-in-law should behave as a daughter to her husband's father. Various Christian women assured us that they 'did not avoid their fathers-in-law', though most admitted to 'avoiding a little'. One day S—, who had volunteered that she did not avoid her father-in-law, had come to tea with us, together with another Christian woman. S—'s father-in-law a chief, came along the veranda on an unexpected visit. Before he was visible S— leapt up, gasped 'father-in-law!' and hid herself in the corner of the room behind the door, facing the wall with her face buried in her hands. She stood there a few seconds gasping, then came back to her place and pushing away her chair, sat down on the floor, whispering determinedly: 'I *won't* avoid him, I *won't* avoid him.' Her friend also slipped off

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

her chair and sat on the floor. We said to Mwaipopo as he entered: 'There is a daughter-in-law here.' He said: 'That's all right, she is enjoying the company of Kagile (M.W.)', but he was obviously restive, and went outside as soon as food appeared. He said to G.W.: 'That's quite all right, let them go on enjoying each other's company. She (i.e. S—) does not avoid me because M— (a local missionary) brought her to me one day and I killed a bull for them, but let us stay outside now, for they would be ashamed to eat.' The women protested very much saying *they* would go out, but the chief would not agree. As soon as they had drunk their tea they hurried off, and crouching down with their backs towards the men they answered their farewell greetings.

In reply to queries as to why they insist that father-in-law and daughter-in-law avoid one another, the Nyakyusa relate a myth of incest between them: 'Long ago a chief's son married a very beautiful wife. The boy's father saw the girl and after one look desired her, for she was very beautiful, and he said: "She is fit to be a chief's wife (*umwehe*)." Men said this was a very bad thing and agreed that in future they would not look at their daughters-in-law. That is how avoidance began. It was for fear of fathers making love to their sons' wives.' This myth is related with some diffidence, and not everyone knows it, but it was told us, or referred to, repeatedly, and may be taken as current in the society. One informant, a very intelligent woman doctor, also associated seeing a father-in-law with seeing his sexual activities. 'We think that to see your husband's father is very rude, because it is as if you saw him sleeping with your husband's mother. You compare, you see, your husband's body and you see your husband's father's body. It is very bad.'

Age-villages are then associated with the feeling that fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law must be kept completely separate lest they should commit incest, and that adolescent youths should not have any glimpse of the sexual activities of their parents; but the separation of the generations is not complete, for marriage with the daughter of a village neighbour is approved, provided he is not an *immediate* neighbour. Mwakionde explained that in the old days people disliked marriage with the daughter of a next-door neighbour because she was 'like a daughter'—'the fathers ate *embalaga* (a dish made with bananas) together'—but marriage with the daughters of other village-mates was always approved.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sets have club houses in which young men sleep. Among the Cewa, though boys do not move out of the parent village, they have a special hut in which they sleep together from the age of five or six.[1] But among all these people the age-set scatters at marriage, each young man building his permanent home, to which he brings his wife, alongside his kinsmen or, in the case of the Cewa, alongside his wife's kin.

The peculiarity of the Nyakyusa then consists in the fact that contemporaries live together permanently through life, not merely as bachelors: age-villages appear in an isolated area surrounded (so far as we know) by people with no similar institution.

We cannot hope to explain how, or when, age-villages developed among the Nyakyusa: there is no reference to them in such documents as exist, and we could trace no oral tradition regarding their origin. Even the historian Mwandesi (cf. p. vi) had no idea whether age-villages were introduced by the incoming Nyakyusa chiefs, or were found by them among the previous inhabitants of the valley, or were invented after the conquest. We can, however, inquire into the social characteristics associated with age-villages. *What are the peculiarities of Nyakyusa society not found in societies with kinship villages?* In this chapter we attempt to answer that question.

b. Age-villages and incest

The Nyakyusa themselves associate living in age-villages with decency in sex life—the separation of the sex activities of successive generations, and the avoidance of incest. When asked why small boys build apart from their parents they refer to the danger of a growing boy overhearing lewd talk between his parents, or seeing them unclothed (*vide supra*, p. 82); and they enlarge on the difficulties of father- and daughter-in-law avoidance were father and son to live in the same village—an avoidance which is consciously related to the fear of incest between father- and daughter-in-law (*vide supra*, p. 85). We may add also the fear of young men seducing their fathers' junior wives, who are often girls of their own age. Nyakyusa informants did not mention this last point as a reason for living in age-villages, but it is significant

[1] A. G. O. Hodgson, 'Notes on the Achewa and Angoni of the Dowa District of Nyasaland Protectorate', *J.R.A.I.*, LXIII (1933), p. 129.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 that adolescent sons are not permitted to visit their homes after dark, and when they come by day for their meals they are 834 often required to eat in the open court-yard and not 'hide in 606 the bananas or huts' lest they make love to their fathers' wives. They do not sit about in the men's village. Thus, although the villages of fathers and sons adjoin until the sons 'come out', the young men are physically separated from their young 'mothers'.

The feeling that sons should not be cognizant of the sex activities of parents, and that father-in-law and daughter-in-law should avoid one another is not, of course, peculiar to the Nyakyusa; all we seek to show is that the extreme elaboration of these avoidances among the Nyakyusa is dependent upon the existence of age-villages. Whereas a Pondo daughter-in-law must never [171] walk across the courtyard of the kinship village in which she lives, or approach the cattle byre or the men's side of her mother-in-law's hut, lest she come too near her father-in-law, yet, living in the same village, she necessarily sees him daily; the Nyakyusa daughter-in-law, living in a separate village, need not (and should not) set eyes on her father-in-law after her marriage. Where the territorial segregation of fathers and sons is blurred (as at Rungwe) there father- daughter-in-law avoidance is less strictly observed. The Nyakyusa regard this extreme form of avoidance as a peculiarity of their culture which has been imparted by them to the small groups (such as Ndali, Penja, and Nyika) whom they are assimilating.

Father- and daughter-in-law incest is clearly a potential danger in a society in which cattle are controlled by middle-aged and elderly men, who frequently have to choose between taking another wife themselves and giving cattle for a son's marriage, and who are accustomed to marrying young girls of an age suitable to be wives to their sons. But we cannot show that the danger is *greater* among the Nyakyusa than it is among other patrilineal cattle people such as the Pondo, Zulu, or Swazi, who do not find it necessary to segregate fathers- and daughters-in-law in different villages.

On the other hand the danger (common to all polygynous societies) of sons seducing their fathers' wives is exaggerated among the Nyakyusa by the absence of circumcision, the late 545 marriage age of men, the very early betrothal and marriage of 582 girls, the high degree of polygyny, and the practice of sons

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

585
354 new home, and her mother-in-law provides her with fire and a pot.

783 After the bride has had full intercourse with her husband she cannot return home, or see her own parents, until she has taken them the ritual *ilibalaga*. After sexual intercourse she wipes her husband's genitals with her hands, then wipes them on a fowl and some millet: these together form the *ilibalaga*. In the morning she goes off without washing—'with the filth of intercourse on her'—to her parents' house, taking the fowl and millet with her. The fowl is killed on a path and cooked with *ikipiki* medicine and, if the bride is the eldest daughter of one of the father's first two wives, her father and mother eat it together. Her mother eats alone if she is a younger daughter, or the mother is a junior wife. If the father is a chief the husband may kill a young bull and beef is sent in place of the hen.

834 After eating the *ilibalaga* her parents resume intercourse[1] which has been taboo from the time the girl first menstruated. If no hen is brought because the husband is poor, the parents still resume sexual intercourse, but the bride, when she visits her home, must not take water from her mother's pot. Someone else draws for her and she drinks it outside from a separate calabash. If she drinks [753] inside, or if her mother uses the calabash she has used, it is believed that her mother will get diarrhœa. She also avoids her father's bed and stool.

• 606 With the ritual of marriage must be included the negative ritual of avoidance between a woman and her husband's father and between those identified with him or her. The taboo applies from the time of betrothal or, if the girl has been betrothed as an infant, from well before she reaches puberty, and forbids father-in-law and daughter-in-law ever to look at one another or meet face to face on the pathway, or enter the same house, much less speak together. As we have seen, a similar taboo applies between the bride and her own father during her seclusion, but is relaxed when he [184] has given her a gift. Between a woman and her father-in-law, however, it is never relaxed, except among the more sophisticated 773 Christians. A myth of origin tells of a case of incest between father-
606 in-law and daughter-in-law which led to the establishment of the
811

[1] Kasitile maintained that if the mother has not reached the menopause the parents do not lie together until the daughter's pregnancy is apparent. 'For the mother to conceive before the daughter is forbidden, but old women are fruits sucked dry.' Mwakionde denied any danger in mother conceiving before daughter.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

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taboo, and the practical difficulties of observing the taboo if fathers 773
and sons live in the same village is cited as a reason for the age- 811
village organization.[1]

The marriage ritual may be said to finish with the eating of the 585
ilibalaga, but avoidance of father-in-law and daughter-in-law con- 606
tinues until death and no clear line can be drawn between the marriage ritual proper and the rituals of pregnancy and birth which follow.

It is plain from the events described that the *ubunyago bwa-* 881
busungu is a marriage as well as a puberty ritual and that the hus- 585
band and his family play an essential part in it, but if a girl is not betrothed before puberty a curtailed ritual is still performed for her when she grows up. She drinks the *undumila* medicine, she washes with a brother, and her mothers put her formally into the hut of seclusion. They cook for the various feasts, and they tell her brothers to call their friends to help dance the stamping dance. The litter is cleared by her mothers in due course, and she is shaved and instructed. When she is eventually married, only the rites of slaughtering the bull of virginity, taking her to her husband, and returning with the *ilibalaga* are performed. She does not wash with him ritually.

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

The avowed purpose of the *ubusungu* ritual is to protect the 782
physical and mental health of the girl and to ensure her fertility. 755
'If the ritual is not performed the girl will fall ill, go mad, or not 881
bear children.' Numerous informants were agreed on this point. Angombwike expanded it, saying: 'It is said that if they do not perform the ritual of *ubusungu* the bride will go mad. When she is sick of the madness they perform the ritual. If the doctor says: "Those below are angry," then the father of the girl takes water and prays in the banana grove saying: "My father and my grandfather, let the child recover from her sickness." Sometimes the doctor says: "The so-and (naming a village) have cursed her"; then the father seeks a bull and they eat it. It is the curse which comes from the mouths of people when many whisper saying: "Why have they not performed the ritual? Why have they not performed it?" It comes from their evil breath.' Neglect of the puberty ritual is therefore thought both to anger the shades and to shock the neighbours, who expect to feast on this occasion.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 80–6.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

881 overstep our child, she will be barren and not bear children, but when
585 she has lain with her husband then we two lie together again.
783
753 Kasitile identified the hen with the body of the girl, the millet
834 with the seed of her husband, and a daughter going to the back of her mother's hut (*kasofu*), or drinking out of the common calabash, as meeting with her mother.

If she does this before she has brought a fowl she soils her mother. Her mother develops diarrhœa. That is getting rid of the dirt (*kokusoya ubunyali*). . . . The mother's diarrhœa is like that from adultery. If my wife lies with a man in the bush, and I lie with her also, she soils the food which I eat with her, it is dirty, and I have diarrhœa, it is to get rid of the filth. . . . Yes, even though we do not lie together, I get a little diarrhœa, the filth of my wife.

QUESTION: Is the *ilibalaga* to drive away the shade again?

KASITILE: No, it is something else. It is to save the mother that she may not have diarrhœa and may not become weak.

881 The explanation given of the Kukwe *ilibuko* rite makes clear
585 that it is a symbolic mingling of 'the blood' of son-in-law and mother-in-law, which makes contact between them (through the bride) safe.

881 Failure to bring the *ilibalaga* is thought sometimes to result
585 in very serious illness. One of the wives of our neighbour,
753 Mwakobela, was delirious. We asked what the cause was. He replied:

Her daughter reached puberty and went to her husband, but refused to drink with her mother. She just came and took water in the calabash cup, she brought nothing from her husband. . . . If the husband is poor a girl brings a fowl for drinking with her mother. . . . The divination said: 'It's the girl.'

QUESTION: Why did she not bring a hen from her husband?

MWAKOBELA: He is not a man of wisdom, he's very harsh, and a fool.

881 After the *ilibalaga* has been eaten by her parents a bride is no
585 longer dangerous to them, and she, fortified by the various treat-
606 ments with *usukwila* and *ikipiki* medicines, no longer fears the 'heavy ones'. The critical periods of first menstruation and first intercourse are past. But the rule of avoidance between her and her father-in-law (and those identified with him) continues through life and is directly associated by the Nyakyusa with the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selm, Mu Ngonde

danger of incest. They account for the rule by a myth which tells how a certain chief looked on his son's wife and saw that she was beautiful and took her, and men were shocked, and forbade a father-in-law and daughter-in-law ever to see one another again. And this taboo, they say, is the reason why fathers and sons must live in separate villages. To avoid (*ukutila*) is 'to fear, to show respect'. Avoidance occurs between women in a limited degree—a girl shows respect to her father's sister, a daughter-in-law to her mother-in-law and her husband's father's sister by not looking at them directly or touching their backs; but these women are in some measure identified with father and father-in-law, and the taboos are most stringent regarding things or actions which are associated with sexual activity. The behaviour of Nyakyusa women suggests very strongly that the fundamental idea in *ukutila* is avoidance of incest.[1] Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is the primary rule of good manners and morals in domestic relations, and is constantly expressed in everyday activities.

Besides being a celebration of the change from childhood to womanhood, and of movement from the lineage of her father to that of her husband, the puberty—marriage ritual includes a legal contract. Either at the betrothal, or when the bulk of the marriage-cattle are handed over, the groom's go-between thrusts a spear into the earth of the swept courtyard and there, publicly, before her kinsfolk and neighbours, the bride must pluck it out and hand it to her father, in token of her consent to the marriage. 'It means: "With this spear you may slay me if I run away from my husband." And her father keeps the spear and may kill her if she does—some fathers did so in the old days.'

After taking the spear the father plucks a banana leaf and hands his daughter the mid-rib with which she strikes one of the cows brought by her husband, and all the women of the homestead acclaim her. Thus her acceptance of the marriage is demonstrated. And each time an instalment of the marriage-cattle is handed over, the go-between of her father and the go-between of the husband must both be present as witnesses; and they notify their sons of the contracts they have so witnessed so that the sons may give evidence after the death of their fathers if necessary.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 83-6, 108, 123, 180-2; 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde, p. 127-8.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

(from under the bed) in the morning it has the filth of intercourse on it, then the father and mother should eat it. If this is not done they will fall ill with diarrhoea. If the hen is taken alive some eat it and others do not.' 585 881 763

After discussing this rite Mwasalemba went on:

You know, also, that when a girl has gone through the puberty ritual at her husband's she must not take firewood from her mother's rafters (*kwijala*) until she is obviously pregnant. Before then, while she is lying with her husband, she must not. We say: 'How can you take your mother's firewood when you are sleeping with your husband?' It is just the same whether the mother is old or young. If the bride goes through the ritual without sleeping with her husband that is all right; it is when she begins to sleep with him that she begins to avoid her mother's loft. At that time I, the father, may meet her mother and sleep with her, but with *coitus interruptus*. I must not make her pregnant. The daughter must begin. As soon as she is pregnant then we parents can begin to conceive a child again. If we do so before our daughter, then she will never bear a child at all, and others will say: 'How could you overstep your daughter?' 789 842 [896]

Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is observed as in Selya, but is slightly less strict. 604 184

(b) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

As has already been indicated, the symbolism of the Kukwe ritual of puberty is similar to that of Selya. The same actions are interpreted in exactly the same way and, where actions differ somewhat, they are still interpreted as expressing the same general conceptions. For example, the Kukwe bride and groom make fire together by friction and eat porridge cooked on it, whereas a bride in Selya eats bananas with powdered medicine, but both actions are symbols of sexual intercourse. Both in Selya and in Kukwe country the bride is purified and, as part of the process of purification, the shade of her father's lineage is driven from her body; but only among the Kukwe is this symbolised by sitting in a running stream and allowing the water to wash away pebbles from between her fingers and toes. 585 881 184

That there may be no doubt about the interpretation of the Kukwe ritual we again quote a number of statements by Nyakyusa informants. These refer specifically to the Kukwe form of the puberty ritual. 585 881

Chief Porokoro's wives, discussing the ritual together, were em-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

Certain siblings perform the ritual, but not all of them. We have referred already to the heir, who is commonly a dead man's younger brother, and who must perform it whether he is a full brother or half-brother, and to a woman's related co-wife who may be either a younger sister or a brother's daughter. The brother or sister 'who followed at the mother's breast', i.e. the sibling immediately younger, must always perform it. Nyakyusa find it very difficult to formulate the rules—there were lively arguments between well-informed people when the question was posed—but these principles emerge from a study of those who actually participated in eight funeral rituals. 788 595

Since the funeral ritual is directed to the shades, men can only perform it in the homesteads of their agnatic kinsmen, or of their maternal grandfather or his heir: they can never perform it at the homestead of affines (*bubale*) for there they are not kinsmen (*abalume*) but in-laws (*abale*). Hence a husband performs the ritual for his senior wife at his own homestead and her father (or his heir) at his. 'According to custom "the husbands" (*abalume*) perform the ritual, then, when they have done so, the whom we have put in place of the dead comes to us and says: "Fathers, we have performed the ritual, perform it yourselves."' We never saw a ritual of farewell to a dead woman at her father's house but believe it to be a modified form of the ritual performed at her husband's. 764 602

Because of the rules of avoidance, a father-in-law and daughter-in-law cannot, together, go through a ritual which involves the close proximity of the principals. When, therefore, a man performs the death ritual for a son or son's child, he performs it at his own home, and the daughter-in-law concerned does so at her husband's homestead. The widow or parents must begin, and the father or grandparents follow. Thus when Mwandisi's son's son died, the parents of the child first performed the ritual at their home and Mwandisi and his wife then followed at theirs. But in a twin ritual, where participants can be secluded, father-in-law and daughter-in-law may attend the same performance. 604● 764

A woman can perform a ritual either at her father's or her husband's (as well as at her mother's father's) and she may even perform it according to two different forms, following that of her father's lineage when she is visiting him, and that of her husband's lineage when she is performing it at his homestead. 788 595

It is possible that, on the death of a man, his sisters' children 764 602

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

431 neighbours give her gifts after her initiation it is that she may 'cease to avoid them', and a woman may give a small gift to her husband's father's sister, and thereafter look at her. Nowadays, a [206] father-in-law, in exceptional cases, kills a bull for his daughter-in-law so that she may look at him.[1]

556 577 Great prestige attaches to generosity, particularly generosity with food. A chief or village headman is one who *feeds* people, and generosity is displayed both in informal feasts for neighbours and on the formal occasions of ritual. A father who is generous in the feasts provided for his daughter at her initiation and marriage gains prestige; if he is stingy his affines and his neighbours comment on it; he both loses their respect and fears lest he may even fall ill from 'the breath of men'. If the groom's family fail to provide sufficient, the bride's father does not hesitate to scold them for it, and they reply with humility which may be so exaggerated as to verge on boasting. It is conventional for the groom to plead poverty but at the same time he and his kin compete with the bride's family in preparing quantities of fine food. The pride and excitement over feasts is clearly brought out in the comments on funerals, the remarks of a mother on the return of her daughter to her husband after the birth of the first child, and Angombwike's account of marriage negotiations and gifts (pp. 31–4, 148, 253–5). The principals in any ritual are the centre of attention and may gain prestige from its performance, as a bride does, but what concerns the Nyakyusa much more is the reputation of the family serving the feast. Here the emphasis is very different from what it [171] is in the Pondo ritual for the initiation of diviners, or the Lunda rituals of misfortune.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 85.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya

one by the wife of Mwabufugo (she had returned home the day before yesterday), one by the wife of Mwamgobole, one by Sikatula, one by Kana Ipalu (cf. genealogy). 764

A fresh bark-cloth was taken from the tree and hammered a little: 'Until this moment it was taboo to hammer bark-cloth, the hammer belonged to the dead man.' The bark-cloth was placed on a fresh banana leaf beneath a grindstone and a little millet ground into it. Then leaf and bark-cloth were taken away. This flour was used for the shaving. Another leaf was put under and more flour ground for porridge.

Roast plantains were handed round for eating. There was a discussion about shaving the 'hair of the corpse'. As it was late, Mpogo wanted to leave it until the gifts of millet were brought, but the others overruled him: 'It must be done now.' They decided to smear their heads with millet paste in preparation for shaving now, and to shave to-morrow.

Kalukwa has to avoid Kana Nsambe (her husband's father's sister) as an in-law. Once, when she came close for eating of mash, Kana Nsambe put a cloth over her head. But when Kalukwa was in the hut at a distance (e.g. standing in a line) no precaution was taken. Kana Nsambe said: 'It is I who buried Mwegama, she avoids me.' Mpogo explained that 'She avoids, but only a little, if she gives a gift to Kana Nsambe she can look at her'. [204]

Then all the principals stood in a line, the assistant officiant crawled round them sweeping the dust on to their legs, while they, and the other women, began to wail a dirge: 'Farewell, Mwalikono!' The women, cheerful a moment before, were weeping at once. This continued for five minutes or so. The principals stood with legs apart while the officiant pushed a flat basket of millet, pumpkin-seeds, and lentils, between the legs of each in the row—she crawled along doing so and then dragged the basket back to the right side. Then she put it on the head of each in turn, and she put a pinch of millet flour on the left shoulder of each.

A stem of bananas and a bunch of feathers (representing a hen) were brought out, and each of the principals in turn sat on the feathers. Kalukwa when, as always, was heavily plaited in up-stand grass to cover her shoulder on a string. The officiant took a leaf for each principal, touched her own body in various places with it, and then put it round the wrist of the principal—to each in turn she did this. As they came out of the hut she held a banana sapling across the doorway so that as each stooped coming out his head collided with it.

Another line was formed outside, facing BuKinga (as in the hut), and again the basket was put by the officiant on the head of each, but this time she threw a few seeds out over their left shoulders and the basket rested for a moment on their heads. They then went to bathe, and Kalukwa threw away the bananas and feathers in the stream.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

sets of grandparents. The mother sets out from her 851
father's house with a train of friends carrying food, 683
and a very special friend who carries the baby. Arrived 431
at the paternal grandfather's, the food is laid down, and the child is taken by the grandfather, who presents a hoe to the maternal grandmother; and then, with the child in his arms, goes to the *ikiyinja* (the family place of prayer). He spits into the palm of his hand, and, laying it in blessing upon the child's head, he prays:

> "May it be well with you, my child. Ye spirits, be not surprised at this child of yours whom I present to you. I am old: let him take my place. Care for him in this world of sickness. I was alone, and ye have multiplied me and made me a company. Be not angry, but bless the child; and in the sight of God let him be acceptable."

The mother sits with head covered, for she must [606]
not be seen by her father-in-law. The parties now exchange gifts of food, and eat separately, after which the grandfather gives the child a gift, usually now a small coin, over which the little hand is closed. Many the grandmother takes the infant and hands it to its mother, who, with a pot of beer on her head, goes off with her husband to their home. Arrived there, but not till then, the father takes the child in his arms, and thanks it for the gift it has brought, a foretoken of more yet to be earned.

Lingering here and there in certain families are 944
strange customs, probably belated survivals from

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

for her where she is, or at any rate at a distance from 595
his own house.

Twins are among the greatest of misfortunes; and 345-
along with twins are counted children born feet first. 784
This subject is dealt with separately, and it needs only to be noted that parents are segregated, must not speak even to each other except in whisper, must not drink milk, lest the cow should dry up, or give only water. The mother must not pass behind anyone without asking for permission, which is given by clapping hands; nor may she pass her own father without a ceremony in which she throws dust over his head. This goes on until another child is born, or until about five years have elapsed.

It is *mwiko* for a dog to drink the milk of a cow that 784
has recently calved; the cow will dry up. The same result will follow if strangers go into the house while cows are being milked. It is forbidden to common people to eat new season's food until chiefs and village headmen and twins have eaten first; and even they eat only when the first fruits have been mixed with medicine by the doctor. The first fish of the season must not be taken to the village. It is eaten at the river by the boys. It belongs to the spirits. To make a sucking noise with the lips is *mwiko*, being a token of impudence; it may also lead to accusation of witchcraft. Never steal from a blacksmith; the scraps of iron you steal will produce a noise in your throat like the noise of his bellows, and presently you will die.

For a man to see his daughter-in-law, no matter 606

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

606 how unwittingly, is one of the gravest of misfortunes. "He will never die," say some; but this apparently startling fate means no more than he will fall into one sickness after another, and finally will die in a weak and undesirable old age. Others believe in a different kind of ill-luck. The man will be accursed, and will be unable to stand upright, but will be obliged to crawl on his buttocks all his life, scourged by an evil spirit which dwells in him. If the daughter-in-law [576] sees her husband's father, she has merely committed a breach of good manners, and suffers no evil in consequence.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Ngokyusa

important relationships of kinship and affinity. Marriage cattle are not kept by the bride's father, but are distributed by him among her brothers for their marriages, and among his own brothers and half-brothers, who in turn give him cattle when their own daughters marry.

Half-brothers do not generally exchange cattle, but unless they do so there are no strong bonds of kinship between them. A polygynist usually creates the relationship of 'walking each other's cows', between his senior son and the oldest of each group of full-brothers by his other wives. He gives some of the marriage cows received for a daughter to one of her half-brothers, the latter being placed under an obligation to return the cows to the girl's oldest full brother some day from the marriage cattle of a sister or daughter of his own. The exchange cows begun usually continues as sisters and daughters marry, and only lapses in the third generation, before the principals quarrel and take legal action for 'separation'. Then a balance is drawn up of the cows exchanged from the beginning of the relationship, and the kinship is broken. The two then 'separated' have no mutual obligations and do not attend each other's funerals.

Half-brothers may be linked by blood if their mothers are close kin; they may also be linked by cattle exchanges. The laws of inheritance make the full brothers of a man his first heirs, then his half-brothers linked by blood, then those linked by cattle have precedence over other half-brothers.[1]

The bond between a man and his mother's brother is expressed in terms of the passage of cattle. As the mother's brother married with the mother's cattle, her oldest son has the right to make free with his property in his lifetime, the right to receive one cow to set up a herd of his own, and a reversionary right of inheritance, if the mother's brother dies without heirs, her son can claim the particular wife obtained with and the particular progeny of the cattle given for his own mother.

There is a strict custom of father and daughter-in-law avoidance. A woman may never speak to, approach, or look at her husband's father, on pain of death through the witchcraft of indignant neighbours. The prohibition is extended from her own father-in-law to all his classificatory brothers, and is the basis of the age-village system.[2] A man must also avoid his mother-in-law, but this prohibition is relaxed after the birth of a child.[3] The affinal relationship is also expressed by the obligation of a man to bring a cow to the funeral of his wife's father or brother, and to give one at the death of his own son-in-law. The former may count as part of his marriage payments in case of a claim for refund.[4]

The main kinship terms are as follows:

Nikomo — brother-in-law or sister-in-law; used by a man for all husbands of his 'sisters', all 'brothers' of his wives, and for the son of his wife's brother, since he has a rights to marry that man's sister [illegible] and all 'sisters' of her husband.

Mkaghe — parent-in-law or child-in-law; used for the husband of a daughter, or for the parent of a wife or husband (a daughter-in-law is called by the special name of *Nkamwanza*). The wife of the wife's brother is called *Mkaghe*, as she is the mother of a potential wife, and of a brother-in-law.

[1] Wilson, G. [illegible]
[2] Gluckman, [illegible]
[3] Gluckman, [illegible]
[4] Wilson, G. [illegible]

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

all except his own mother, whom he either builds for at a little distance and looks after, or else gives to a half-brother.[1] Inherited wives have the same land rights as others, and a mother for whom a son builds and hoes is treated by him, in the matter of land, just like a wife.

And a married man often supports an old woman[1]—a mother, mother-in-law or elder sister—whose husband, though still alive, is incapable of hoeing and who has no unmarried sons. He may either hoe for her on her own husband's land or else assign to her a plot or two of his own.

The gardens of a household are not only worked by its members, other people assist them from time to time. Each married man usually invites a group of his village neighbours to help him with a day's hoeing two or three times a year, entertaining them to food and beer after the work is over. A married woman likewise is often assisted by women friends from neighbouring households in the planting, weeding or reaping of her crops and them she rewards simply with a luxurious meal in the evening, without any beer. Again, as we have seen, a married woman sometimes engages a young man to hoe for her regularly, for a month or more at a time, and pays him by feeding him well for that period.

But although this last custom is still common it is beginning to decline; fewer men each year are willing to work for any length of time except for money, and already in some of the more prosperous households young men are found to be employed in hoeing at the rate of 2/- a month in addition to their food. The young men who thus accept employment in hoeing are always the poor ones, those for whom (whether because their fathers are poor in cattle or because they have many elder brothers before them) the prospect of getting married is too distant to stimulate them to any great diligence at home. In the plain of Mungonde, however, where ploughs are extensively used, the owners of ploughs make a considerable profit by hiring themselves out with their ploughs at 2/- a plot (*ulupaka*).

Kinsmen and affines also often assist in a household's hoeing. When a man inherits his dead father's wealth then he assumes the position of father towards his own younger brothers and is responsible for the marriages of any who are bachelors; they then hoe for him and are fed by his wives just as unmarried sons do. Sons-in-law, again, are expected to bring their friends now and then to help their father-in-law in hoeing and they often do so, more particularly if they are behindhand with the marriage-cattle. After the day's work is over, however, they are entertained just as sumptuously as an ordinary work-party of neighbours.

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[1] And any kinswomen of his mother (sister or sister) whom his father has [illegible] to [illegible] likewise.

7: Sanderson U-S (ca. 1920) 1923 FN17 Ngonde FN17

(7) Eldest *mwipwa*, *i.e.*, eldest son of eldest sister. 1-28

(8) Eldest son of a younger sister.

(9) Eldest grandson of the father's elder brother.

(10) Eldest grandson of the father's younger brother.

(11) Eldest grandson of the father's sister.

(12) Eldest grandson of the mother's sister.

(13) Eldest grandson of the mother's brother.

(14) Eldest grandson of the eldest brother by the same mother (not father).

(15) Eldest son of own son or daughter.

(16) Eldest grandson of a younger brother.

(17) Eldest grandson of a sister.

5. All *ukuko* must be "feared," *i.e.*, avoided on all occasions; a woman must cover her head if unavoidably in their presence. These rules do not differ greatly from those found in other parts of the world, except that a man's "fear" of his wife's mother is greatly lessened after the birth of a child to the couple. They have to be much more strictly observed by a woman than by a man. 606

II.—THE WANYUA.

1. The term WaHonga is somewhat loosely applied to a group of Bantu people living to the south of the Wangonde, and is often used as synonymous with WaTumbuka, Wakamanga, and WaPoka. It is adopted here for convenience, though properly only applicable to those living in the valley of the S. Rukuru River, often called the Honga Valley; the word *honga* means "chief" in some Bantu languages, but the valley is said to have been named after a chief who settled in it.

The information detailed here as to relationships has been derived from natives whose birthplace is the Nkhamanga plains to the north of the S. Rukuru River and west of the "Honga Valley." But so far as has been ascertained it applies equally to the rest of the group. These people prefer to be called *Wakamanga*, and they have a tradition that their forefathers came from the East across the Lake (Nyasa); they are now, however, so mixed by inter-marriage with the other small groups mentioned above that the practice of including them all under the term WaHonga has been followed here.

2. *Definitions.*—MOTWEWO = "brother" to "sister," or "sister" to "brother." An elder "brother" is MAYUO, a younger one MOTWE'UWA, of a man; the same terms are used by a woman of her "sisters." The children of the father's elder brother are called WAYUO irrespective of age, as also those of the mother's elder sister.

NWAMWEWAE ("my fellow-child," other forms NWAMWEWIWO, NWAMWEWAEK, etc., "your" "his fellow-child"). This term is often used as equivalent to "brother" or "sister" by either a man or a woman.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

582 they sometimes do so before the relationship is discovered, and then simply drink a protective medicine but do not break the marriage. The old men speak of a now abandoned custom of preferential cross-cousin marriage.

604 The bond between a man and his mother's brother (omujeua) is mainly constituted by the passage of cattle. "My real mother's brother," they say " is the one who took the bulk of the marriage-cattle which my father gave for my mother ", and it is between this particular brother and a woman's eldest son that the bond is strongest. Because this brother of his mother has taken " our cattle " and married with them the young man has a certain right of making free with his property during his life, the right to receive from him one cow to set up a herd of his own with, and a residuary right of inheritance if this uncle dies childless and leaves no brothers. If his mother's brother does die without other heirs, it is only the particular wife obtained with and the particular progeny of his father's marriage-cattle that the young man can claim.

602 764 Ceremonies, and particularly funerals, are the occasions on which the effective relatives of any one family meet all together, both kinsmen and affines. I have even heard kinship defined by attendance at funerals: One man argued that he was not related to another because, though they were admittedly genealogically related they did not attend the funerals in each other's families and were not therefore really kinsmen at all.

602 572 Known blood-kinship is a common occasion of friendship, but it does not necessarily produce it, while the absence of friendship can render many of the normal kinship bonds quite inoperative. We have seen already that quarrels may destroy the relationship between half-brothers and lead to a judicial separation. On the other hand, I have observed two men meet for the first time, discover a common great-grandfather and at once become friends. A few months later the sister of one of them died and the other went to the funeral and behaved there like a close kinsman.

Proximity is another factor of great importance in the relations of kinship, for while nearness of dwelling does not always make for friendship, yet a considerable distance tends to lessen it and to make attendance at funerals impossible.

606 One of the most stringent taboos in Nyakyusa life is that which separates father and daughter-in-law. A woman may never speak to, approach, or look at her husband's father. If she does it is believed that she will die, through the witchcraft of indignant neighbours, a painful and lingering death. And the taboo is extended from her own father-in-

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

law to all his classificatory brothers. The normal routine of life is 606
constantly interrupted by women's avoidance of these men, they crouch and hide and make wide detours to avoid them, a man comes into a room and a woman runs out hastily, a father cannot enter his son's house while his son's wives are cooking there, ceremonies are duplicated to avoid bringing them in contact. Few people seem to realize the meaning of 606
this taboo, but occasionally a man is found who tells a story which makes 773
its function abundantly clear. It is said that an old chief, long ago before the taboo was instituted, fell in love with his son's wife and took her, and such was the horror of everyone at what he had done that this taboo was instituted. This story expresses the necessity, in a society where the old men are accustomed to take the young women as wives, of guarding in some way against the possibility of a father desiring his own son's wife for himself; more particularly perhaps because the cows for her marriage have come from him.

This taboo, separating father and daughter-in-law is one of the 606
reasons for the age-village system which we must next discuss. For in 621
Nyakyusa society father and son live in different villages.

Age-Villages

The most characteristic relationships of the Nyakyusa people are 621
those which centre in the age-village. Villages and age-groups are 561
common enough in other societies, and are familiar to all of us, but it is rare to find them combined; it is very uncommon to find, as we do among the Nyakyusa, that local groups of contemporaries live together for most or all of their lives.

Age-villages are formed by groups of men, all roughly of the same age, their wives and young children. Women belong to the villages of their husbands, young children to those of their fathers. The number of households in an age-village varies, but thirty is probably a fair average. Girls, as we have seen, live at home until they marry, which they normally do soon after puberty, and then each goes to the house and joins the village of her husband. But boys, who marry later in life, leave home at about the age of ten or eleven and set up villages of their own.

(a) *Herd-Boys*

Between the ages of about six and eleven the boys sleep at their 957
fathers' houses and herd their fathers' cattle. This is a full-time if not a very arduous occupation; the cattle are driven out about an hour after sunrise and return to be milked about 1 p.m.; after an hour they are again driven out and do not come back until nearly sunset. The cattle of eight

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173 The balance between chiefs and commoners is explicit. So
773 also is their dependence on *fesh* cultivation and herding, and it
[643] should be noted that, though the Nyakyusa speak of themselves
as stock men, they are not pastoralists to the same extent as
[233] the Masai or the Nuer. The number of cattle in Rungwe District
today is less than half the human population, and men traditionally have done the heaviest share of cultivation.

773 In every version of the myth the tension between father and
593 son, or older and younger brother, is stressed. In Nyakyusa
561 society the father (or his eldest son who replaces him) controls
173 the family property and exacts obedience from his juniors who
[769] continue to show their respect after his death by sacrifices. The tale of Kyala and Lwembe celebrates the triumph of the junior. Thus, at the heart of the very ritual which sanctifies seniority there is the assertion of the victory of the son and younger brother. The myth expresses the aspirations of subordinates—of commoners and junior kinsmen—as well as the power of chiefs and seniors.

173 As we have already noted, the heroic cycle makes no reference
773 to the peculiar Nyakyusa institution of age-villages. Their charter
56 is a quite separate myth[1] which tells of a chief who looked on his
621 daughter-in-law and loved her and took her, and this so shocked
606 men that in future fathers and sons built separately, so that a father-in-law should never see his daughter-in-law.

There are other hints of the eternal theme. Besides the saga of
173 Lwembe there is another quite different tale of the origin of fire,
773 which is less often related. In it a girl who had angered her father
372 by breaking his drinking calabash fled from BuKinga to the Nyakyusa valley, where she found people who ate their food raw. She made fire and cooked for them and 'all women came to her to learn to cook'. The long-necked calabash, used as a drinking
[415] vessel and in prayer to the shades, is a man's most personal
[768] possession destroyed at his death, and it stands for a husband, while cooking is a symbol of the sexual activity of women, so the myth is perhaps a drama of incest, but we have no direct evidence of this.

173 This last is the only tale in which a woman appears as a
773 benefactor. In general, the mythology is that of a strongly
562 patrilineal society in which men are dominant. The wives of Lwembe who walked behind their lord, shepherded by a line,

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 83.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The negative rituals—the taboos which surround the pro- 797x
creative functions—disappear rather slowly, but a Christian 795x
father will enter his wife's hut to greet her after she has given [834]
birth to a child, and will eat food cooked by her a week or two [262]
later, which the pagans think extremely rash. An atmosphere of scepticism and experiment begins to develop; a few Christians spoke of breaking even the deeply-entrenched taboos surrounding menstruation 'to see what happened'. But that many Christians, especially women, feared the old taboos was apparent when one [606] watched the behaviour of Christian daughters-in-law towards their fathers-in-law. In theory Christians disregarded the rules of avoidance if their fathers-in-law are Christian, or avoid 'only a little', but in practice a Christian woman is usually embarrassed and fearful if, by mischance, she meets her father-in-law face to face.[1]

Christians withdraw from the pagan communal rituals even [7%] more completely than they do from the rituals of kinship. No Christian takes any part in the sacrifices to the heroes, or at the groves of chiefs, or in cleansing the country, or in rain-making, or sprinkling the homesteads. As for the ritual of chieftainship, from that also Christians withdraw. At the time we were first in BuNyakyusa only two chiefs were professing Christians, one of whom was already baptized before his installation. The 'coming out' performed for him was much curtailed since he refused to use the traditional medicines and, because of the difficulty over medicine Christians were not acceptable as village headmen. In Ngonde, where the proportion of Christians was much greater, there were Christian headmen and chiefs, but the ritual of 'coming out' had disappeared altogether, and the Kyungu had delegated the celebration of all pagan rituals to one of his councillors who still believed in them, he himself being a sceptic.

There are tales of the early missionaries visiting the groves to [777] challenge pagan belief. The pagans believe that they were confounded and some of the more conservative Christians also think that the terror of the grove drove the Reverend — Jauer from Lubaga (*vide supra*, p. 29) and that *because* the Reverend — Klous summoned the teachers and school children to a feast in the grove of Mbyanga, and killed 'a black cow' for them there, a season of plenty followed. 'Many people said: "He seems to have [778] been advised by someone, why did he go to Mbyanga and sing

[1] For an account of such a meeting, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 8-9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

particular symbols are tied to a particular social structure; the poet makes his choice within the whole range of the familiar. 182 181

The impetus to change has come both from the religious field and from the secular. For example, the pressure towards monogamy among the Nyakyusa has been religious; given plentiful land and cash crops additional wives are an economic asset, not a liability. In this respect the contrast with the Ciskei in South Africa, where families are dependent for food on wage-earners in towns, and no man can support two families,[1] is marked. On the other hand, the decay of Nyakyusa age-villages is primarily due to economic pressure, though it is facilitated by the insistence of Christians that there is no danger in father-in-law and daughter-in-law meeting one another. The first generation of Christians living on mission land built villages apart for their sons, despite the teaching that avoidance of a father-in-law by his daughter-in-law was foolish, if not sinful. But a radical change in pagan observance of ritual avoidance is brought about by the general practice of going out to work for long periods, and the competition for coffee and rice-lands, which makes the territorial separation of fathers and sons impossible. As we have shown, young men going to work commonly leave their wives in their fathers' homesteads, valuing the support and supervision given them there above the old stringency of avoidance and, where land is scarce and valuable, fathers do not move aside each generation to make way for their sons. Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law [606] continues only in an attenuated form. 178 178 797 795

From German times control by a European government has compelled a modification of the traditional sacrifices to the heroes and of the ritual of chieftainship. How the Kinga priests came to Lubaga 'in secret' and how they failed to instal a new Lwembe after the death of Mwakisiya about 1914 has been described. Killing a child to anoint a drum or make medicine for the fields, compelling a man to accept a dangerous office, killing chiefs because they are ailing, or plucking off their nails before they die; all these are actions which are held, and must be held, to be 'contrary to natural justice' by any Western government. Here the change in political organisation compels a change in ritual and there is evidence that belief in the traditional forms is much diminished, though not dead. The European government also 177 648 796

[1] Keiskammahoek Rural Survey. Vol. ii, *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, by D. H. Houghton and E. M. Walton; vol. iii, *Social Structure*, by M. Wilson *et al.*

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

881 I went to the place and got permission to enter the hut in which the first part of the ceremony took place. I found there the parents of the girl, the girl sitting enveloped in clothes in one corner of the hut, and some older females, one of whom was the acting *unnyago*. Some male guests were also present[20]. As the girl had had her first catamenia the present ceremony marked at the same time the end of her preparation for marriage.

[273 278] The *unnyago* prepared a beverage of beer in which a light-brown medical powder *(imbondanya)* was put. First the girl had to drink from it, then the parents followed. This beverage was believed to strengthen *(ubusisya)* the consumers. Then a spear was handed to the girl by her father, and the girl handed it in turn to some relatives of the bridegroom waiting near the hut. These persons had to bring the [582 583] spear to the girl's bridegroom as a sign that he could now marry the girl[21], but not before he had brought a bull to the girl's father. After [431] this the girl, now sitting in the middle of the hut, was given small gifts from the participants in the ceremony.

[391 342 516 868 415]

Practical instruction of premature girls in house-hold matters.

[302] Following this the whole body of the girl was anointed before the door of the hut. The *unnyago* began by anointing her legs; then the [278] girl herself continued it. The ointment was prepared from castor oil and a powder of red wood *(Kipimba*, found commonly in the environment of Lake Rukwa). At this moment a male participant in the cere- [606] mony chanced to, come out of the hut, and suddenly a young woman

[20] Cf. Wilson, Introduction, p. 258; The Study of African Society, p. 11 (The Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. 2, 1938).

[21] ukwega: to take (also as regards marrying); ubwegia: nuptials.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sitting there on the yard got up, as quickly as possible held her hands before her eyes and rushed off. This was because this man was her father-in-law. The strict social tabu in such circumstances is well know[22]. 88 [606]

The next act consisted in shaving the girl's hair on her temples by the *unnyago;* the father was shaved by a younger brother of his in the same manner. (I cannot remember whether it was also the case with the mother of the girl.) [302]

[342 622]

The old fashioned hut of the chief's wife.

Then the further ceremony took place again inside the hut. All the *participants sat down on mats, and the unnyago accepted the complaints* of the parents on the former conduct of their daughter. Sometimes the discussion between these parties, where the *unnyago* played the role of a mediator as is the case with the *unjobi* (or speaker) in the court, reached such a pitch of excitement that I thought a serious quarrel had broken out. The excitement was, perhaps, only of a ceremonial character; I was told, however, that in former times corporeal punishment has been inflicted, if, indeed, the girl had shown misconduct in the times before. [152] [68]

Next, the girl was instructed by the *unnyago* in her duties as a wife. These instructions were of a theoretical or moral nature concerning the correct conduct of the girl towards her parents also after the ceremony and towards her future husband. The practical part of the initiation instructions sometimes comes before this ceremony at the end of initiation. These practical instructions cover the preparing of food 88 867 868

[22] Cf. *Merensky*, p. 123; *Mackenzie*, p. 100 (at Karonga?). According to *Merensky* the daughter-in-law has to observe this tabu also towards the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

MWAMBIM: The sausages of porridge stuck in the ground and sprinkled with powdered medicine which each stoops and bites mean that you should be heavy in your belly (*masite mwada*) and not have diarrhoea, it is to make faeces hard (not watery). Some we leave and bury [the end of each sausage of porridge is left in the ground]; that means that people should step over it and take away the disease, may they have diarrhoea at their homes! They will get it really! 764 [753]

QUESTION: Why do the dead man's sisters admonish their sisters-in-law, his widows? 607 764

MWAMBIM: Because we have all met together. They say: 'Do not grudge him food, go on cooking for him. He dies of hunger! Begin again! And why do you not cook for us when we come? You grudge us food!' We scold them very much and hey weep tears.

QUESTION: They say in Selya that you both drive away a shade and bring him back to the house. 764 775

MWAMBIM: No, we drive him away, we do not bring him back to the house.

QUESTION: But you go to the stream with a stem of bananas, a hen and a fresh strip of bark, the bananas you throw away, but you come back with the hen and the bark. Is that the shade?

MWAMBIM: These do not come back home. The officiant has them and takes them to her house. . . .

The stem of bananas we throw in the stream, it is sickness, it is the corpse, it goes to Kyala there. The hen and the bark we give to the doctor, the officiant, because it is she who caught hold of the sickness. She is always an unrelated person, not a relative; we pay her. If we have not performed the ritual we run mad, the shades have not come out, they are still there within.

QUESTION: You performed the ritual for Lubabeko's child yourselves? 764

Mwambim: No, who was our grandchild. We grandparents don't matter, we carry out the ritual but it's not important; if, however, it is our own child [who has died] then it is taboo. It is taboo up to the point that connections are not relatives. [A grandchild in this context—though not in other contexts—is treated as not a relative]. The ritual must be performed for all relatives (*abakaswa*). . . . [603]

First the stem of bananas and then the millet and pumpkin-seeds are passed between the straddled legs of the principals. The winnowing basket (containing millet and seeds) is pushed along with the officiant's elbow. In performing this ritual we finish the mating of man and woman, for that which comes out of the man in front [i.e. the semen] is the shades, when the participants have spat out we drive the shades away. If we have not performed the ritual we go mad. The shades have not come out but are still within. When, however, we have finished, then they have come out of the body. But they come again, we always have them. (*Apo tukwapagula tukwendaya ukulili nayumbwale ambilude, pe*

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 tains to the north-east corner of Nyasa, and went on through Nyakyusa country to Lake Tanganyika.[1]

169 Despite the isolation of the Nyakyusa and their own fear of travelling in foreign chiefdoms, they were not inhospitable to these white strangers: Elton and all his party (some of whom were delayed by illness and travelled separately), and later Thomson, walked up the Nyakyusa valley in safety though it was 'teaming with armed warriors', who carried 'most cruel-looking spears'. Elton remarks that 'the people of Konde, though not unfriendly, are passively obstructive, and being in want of nothing are disinclined to render any services whatsoever to strangers'.[2] But Thomson appears to have been on the best of terms with the Nyakyusa he met. The Kukwe fled from their villages at Thomson's approach, but were usually persuaded to return.[3]

177 After these journeys of discovery, mission work and trade
724 developed quickly. The African Lakes Corporation, a company formed to develop legitimate trade in Central Africa as a means of combating the slave trade, established a station at Karonga; and a road was surveyed from Karonga through to Lake Tanganyika.[4] Out-stations of the Livingstonia mission were set up at Chirenji (Mwini Wanda) in the hills north-west of Karonga, and at Kararamuka near Tukuyu.[5] Meantime, an Arab slaver, Mlozi, had settled in Ngonde, and a protracted struggle ensued between him and his Hongo allies on the one side, and the people of Ngonde and the Europeans on the other, during which many Ngonde were enslaved or killed and their villages destroyed. Five thousand Nyakyusa spearmen came to the aid of the Europeans but, being more concerned with loot than with the defeat of the Arabs, they returned home with the goods they had taken instead of pursuing Mlozi and his men when they had the chance to do so.[6] Lord (then Captain) Lugard was for some months in command of the exiguous European force and its allies, and nearly

[1] Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 260-61.
[2] Elton, op. cit., p. 330.
[3] Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 282-9.
[4] Fetherstonhaugh, op. cit.; F. L. M. Moir, *After Livingstone* (1923).
[5] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyasa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI, 1890, pp. 282-93.
[6] Fetherstonhaugh, op. cit., pp. 117-23.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

is granted to a stranger by the villagers concerned, acting through their headman, not by the chief, who is usually informed, but seldom interferes. Only if a member of the chief's own family is moving within the chiefdom from one village to another, or if a very important stranger comes from outside, he may go to the chief and ask for a building plot, and the chief may then exercise his right of overlordship and grant the request. But this is a special and unusual case. It is villagers who grant land to an ordinary new-comer[1] and thereby accept him as one of themselves. His own wishes are taken into account whenever possible; if he sees a piece of ground which attracts him, and no one else has a claim to it, then it will be his.

We must emphasize the willingness with which strangers are received both by the villagers and the chief. Men are still scarcer than land in most places and the prestige and prosperity of villages and chiefdoms are increased by each addition to their membership. As we have said, part of the magical treatment at the 'coming out' is directly designed to attract followers to chiefs and village headmen. Strangers to a village are always given a house to sleep in while they are building their own and are usually given food as well, both formally by the chiefs and village headmen and informally by the neighbours. This formal giving of food has lapsed in Porukoto's chiefdom, which adjoins Rungwe mission, and to which very considerable immigration has taken place in the last forty years; there the relative scarcity of land is reflected in a decline of hospitality to new-comers, though none have yet been refused land. But the usual custom still is to receive them generously.

The granting of land to a new-comer is subject to the rights of a villager who has moved but may return. As we have seen, moves from one village to another are frequent, and unless a man has been expelled for witchcraft or some other serious crime his building site and gardens are kept for him, at least for a time. Anyone who occupies them does so on the understanding that he must vacate them should the former owner, or his heir, return. Further, a man who moves retains certain rights over bamboos, *amiyungwi* and coffee-trees. The precise conditions under which individuals who have moved may reclaim their land have been discussed in *The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa*.[2]

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 41. [2] pp. 38-41.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

512 low, again rising to a perfect fury of rapid sounds,
535 not without a certain rhythm, but with rasping effect upon the nerves of Europeans tossing sleeplessly in the warm humid air.

[321] After harvest comes the house-building; and when
484 that is finished the men are free to go out to seek
464 work. They usually set out in companies, for the
[509] Konde dislikes being alone on a journey. Like all home-loving people, they are suspicious of strangers, and if they have to pass through another tribe, they take great care to guard their small possessions; seldom more than they are wearing, and a spear or a club to guard them from the more obvious dangers of the way. There will be a few youths going out for the first time, with a wild flutter at the heart, of fear and expectancy. Fear, for they have heard strange tales of the white men and their ways; expectancy, because of the wonderful things they will see: the great houses, steamers, trains, motors; and what must seem countless white men to those who have been accustomed only to the missionary, the magistrate, and the storekeeper, and even these perhaps some days' journey from home. And who knows but he will come back with money in his pocket, wearing gorgeous raiment, a helmet perhaps, and, above all other things to be desired, a pair of boots! Those who stay long
[42] come back with the spoils of civilisation; highly coloured cloths, cheap clocks, melodeons, mouth-organs, worthless pocket-knives, which they deal out to admiring friends and acquaintances.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

now, they are most anxious to prove to him that his tacit suspicions are unfounded, they wish to rid themselves of the slur of witchcraft. To invite him back is to express affection for him and so to demonstrate that he could not have been bewitched for, see, everyone likes him! 166 621

Such an invitation is often, but by no means always accepted. If the man refuses the first time then the villagers may or may not go again later to ask him back; but if he was an important member of the village—the great-commoner, a noted doctor, the son of an old family—the invitations may go on being repeated for years; and he will then almost certainly return in the end. Whether or not he accepts a particular invitation depends again largely upon his own health and that of his family and upon his relations with his new neighbours at the time it is made. Sickness and suspected witchcraft, or quarrels and insults in the new village will incline him to go home. And a man can always return, even without an invitation, unless he was originally expelled for being himself a witch.

I asked a young man of Selya whether of those who moved from their home chiefdoms the majority came back again or not. "The majority do come back, only a few stay permanently away. Some move for better food, the great majority because they fall sick and wish to recollect themselves in the tranquillity of another chiefdom—this is the main reason for moving; but they come back in the end. Whenever a man is slighted in the country to which he has gone, whenever he falls sick there—back he goes home! For when he is slighted he remembers that in his own country he belongs to an old family and that it is not as if he had moved under suspicion of being a witch, he only moved because he fell sick, and now he will return home. A man does not lose his affection for home, for there is his sacred grove, his fathers' graves. But the real reason for returning is that in every other place a man is less respected than at home. He is made light of; but in his own country he is known to belong to an old family and is treated with great respect, his neighbours call to mind the days when he and they herded cows together as boys and the fact that his father is buried among them. That is why people go home again." [609]

"And what of those who move to find better food?" I enquired. "They come back too; if they are slighted in the place to which they have moved they come back home."

"For example there was a man who built here in the village of Igomba, he prospered greatly and his house was very long; we young men grew up to find him here and thought he was one of our own people, we had no idea that he belonged to Mawdo. And then one day he was insulted, and immediately he moved and went home. He had lived with us for many, many years."

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

land automatically reverted to the common pool. An established villager might decide to use part of it perhaps, but not before prudently gaining the approval of the headman, lest the migrant return later and accuse him of unlawful and unfriendly seizure. If the headman agreed, as he would after a time in most cases, the newly acquired plot became part of that villager's holding with as secure a title as the rest. Such vacated land could also be allocated by the headman to a newcomer or, before the sons' village was established, to the son of a villager.

If a man had more land than he could cultivate – because, for example, his sons had left him to cultivate in their own villages, or his wife had died – he was under no essential obligation to give up any part. The headman might, if the need arose, try to persuade him to release a portion in order to make it available to someone in need; but the land-holder could refuse and the headman had to accept his refusal. As a chief depended on the support of his headmen, so did a headman's position ultimately depend upon at least the passive support of his villagers, from whose ranks he was chosen.

At the next "coming-out" ceremony the men of a village of the old chiefdom might be required to move aside in order to allow the young men, their sons, to take up the better building sites and farming land. This they traditionally did voluntarily and they built new homesteads on one side and cleared new arable plots. Once re-established in this manner, these older men would not be disturbed again and they remained secure in their new holdings. How often in fact such a displacement took place I cannot say, but it certainly seems to have occurred sometimes, for one can still trace old village sites which appear to bear out the common Nyakyusa story.

In all this it must be remembered that the spirit of village unity and coevality was held in far higher esteem than land in such a fertile country where land was plentiful and subsistence farming required but small-sized holdings. Security of tenure and defined rights to particular plots are notions belonging to a different situation and age, when land begins to be scarce and to have an economic value, and when there is danger of men not being able to obtain as much as they need roughly where they need it.

Newcomers were invariably welcomed to a village: they were supplied with a house site and an arable holding and were assisted with food until the first harvest. They were an addition to the numerical size and physical strength of the village, and they increased a headman's prestige. Their rights were no less assured than those of founder-members of the village, although their social position was less secure, at least at first, for they had not shared in the history of the community and had not grown up with the ties of village association and comradeship amounting almost to kinship.

Traditional rights in trees may be mentioned briefly. Trees were inherited without difficulty along with the land on which they stood, and a brother or son would commonly inherit the deceased's valuable trees without bothering to take the arable land around. If a man left his village and thus forfeited his land there, the position was different. Banana trees went with the land and a new occupant simply took them over; bananas are of no great value as they grow so readily and ubiquitously. Bamboos are more valuable (being used extensively in house-building) and any left behind in this way could be claimed in the first instance not by the village but by the chief. If the chief wanted them they became his property, or he could grant them to any man he favoured. Usually a chief was content to leave them: then the local kinsmen of the departed man had first claim, and if they had no use for them, or if no kinsmen were resident in the village, they became village property to be allocated by the headman. *Uyungati* trees[1] were regarded as

1. These are valued oil-bearing trees planted by the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plain, the botanical name of which I do not know.

10:Culliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F307 Ngwale F307
Nyakyusa

number of separate plots per holding was less than where land was scarcer; at the same time the average size of separate plots was smaller in these more land-hungry villages. The reader may refer to Table III (page 13) for some illustrative figures. Though differences are not yet very great, nevertheless there seems to be a fairly clear correlation between the average size of villagers' holdings on the one hand, and on the other the number and size of separate plots, and this is entirely borne out by my general information obtained in villages where actual measurements were not made. The inescapable conclusion must be that increasing scarcity of land in the Lake Plains leads to increasing fragmentation and dispersion of holdings; further, the present land situation and land tenure system can only lead to a continuation of this trend.

To emphasize the actual situation in 1955, let me reinforce the results of my own village surveys in the very high density region. In a village in Kaswe's chiefdom only a quarter of the younger men had paddy land of their own, holdings averaging about three-quarters of an acre; in a village in Mwakipande's chiefdom, only 17 per cent. of the younger men had paddy land and holdings averaged about half an acre (cf. Table VII, page 17). These two examples are taken from the areas of most severe land shortage and are not therefore altogether typical of the whole Lake Plains. Nevertheless, I do not think that they are entirely atypical; more importantly, they indicate the present trend. Within another generation this fragmentation and scatter of holdings may well be the common feature everywhere in the flood plains unless the system of tenure and inheritance is modified. If the increase in population is quickened through improved medical facilities, better diet and housing, and improved conditions generally, then the position will become more acute. Such an increase is only to be expected. The Nyakyusa have definitely entered a money economy and they have learnt to seek higher standards of living. Only from their fields, by cash-cropping, can they expect to earn their livings and the demand for better living will not be curtailed – nor, of course, is it desirable that it should be.

There is another aspect of this whole matter which must be considered. It relates to the movement of individuals between villages. Such movement was, in earlier European days, a crucial factor in the age-village structure, for it was not only exceedingly frequent, but also it tended to undermine the idealized moral basis of village life. Movement between villages is increasingly difficult now, for a newcomer naturally cannot easily obtain land, nor as much land as he would desire even at a moderate demand. Nevertheless, the reasons for movement persist, and they will do so whilst the fear of witchcraft remains and whilst illness and misfortune are attributable to the unfavourable aura of a place. There remains also the tradition of moving so that a man may escape from bad relations with kinsfolk or neighbours, or from the obloquy resulting from his own disapproved actions. Much social and psychological tension is being created now as a result of the new difficulty of movement, and so far the Nyakyusa have not evolved alternative methods.

On the other hand, so deeply engrained is the notion of the prestige and power which accrues to a village by virtue of the number of its inhabitants, that headmen and villagers alike remain most reluctant to refuse to accept newcomers, even when it inevitably means that the present inhabitants must meet a further decrease in the average amount of land available per family, for a newcomer must be allocated a holding if he is to remain. Consequently, if a holding is for any reason left vacant, a headman tends to refuse to re-allocate some or all of it amongst his villagers and thus to augment their holdings, but instead he keeps it in reserve pending the hoped-for arrival of another newcomer. Men desiring to leave their own village try to get

[54]

[54.1]

[54.2]
[54.3]

[54.4]
[54.5]

[illegible] and Waphia, although very little of these is sold. Ploughs have been introduced into the area as it is flat and the total number in use in 1962 is about 400. The first ploughing is carried out in June or July when the ground is still wet, and the second ploughing in October to February. Planting, which is all broadcast, is carried out in November to the middle of March and the harvesting is done in May to September.

[illegible] A rice mill was erected at Ipyana on the lake shore in 1962 with a capacity of 9 tons of rice in 17 hours. Another is now on its way from India with a capacity of 10 tons of rice in 17 hours and should be erected some time in 1964.

[illegible] A small acreage of cotton is also sown along the Songwe River boundary, which borders on Nyasaland, with seed obtained from that Colony. Conditions, however, are not suitable on the remainder of the lake shore and cotton is not encouraged.

[illegible] A list of exports from the district with approximate weights for 1962 is appended:—

Article					Weight in tons
Wheat bran					[illegible]
Cattle					[illegible]
Groundnuts					[illegible]
Beans					[illegible]
Potatoes					[illegible]
Pyrethrum pyrethrum					[illegible]
Rice					[illegible]
Vegetables					[illegible]
Fish					[illegible]
Sesame seed					[illegible]
Cassava flour					[illegible]
Chapati, sellers					[illegible]
Tea (Europeans producers)					[illegible]
				Total	[illegible]

Land Tenure and Economics of the People

[illegible] In theory all land belongs to the chiefs or sub-chiefs, but in practice once a man has cultivated a plot, that plot belongs to him until he leaves the area to which he lives. If he leaves, the land reverts to the chief or sub-chief and may be given by him through his headman or elder to anyone in his area who is short of land or to a newcomer who wants a plot. Should a man go away and return after a long period and ask for a plot, he is bound to be given one but not necessarily the plot he had before he left. Newcomers are welcomed and are given land, as the amount of tax collected in an area is an indication of the importance of a chief.

[illegible] Cash growing is a problem which is coming more and more to the fore. The number of

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

salutations with his hand upon his mouth. Beer mixed with medicine is handed to him, and, all the others drinking one by one from a calabash, he takes a little into his mouth and squirts it upon each as he or she drinks. The final stage comes about a month later, when, in the presence of the doctor, without whom nothing can be done, all the grandparents and both parents drink beer amid a circle of shouting villagers, and then, laying hold of the calabash, break it in pieces. After one more sprinkling of all, the doctor departs, taking with him a cow as fee for his many exertions. But until another child is born, the parents must eat alone, or with other parents of twins; and the mother may not pass behind anyone without warning them and receiving their consent, signified by clapping the hands. 845 783

The naming of the child. The Konde child possesses a varied selection of names. When he is grown he will offer a European employer one or another, sometimes in perfect honesty, sometimes with intent to hide the fact that under a previously given name he had a bad character. But the names are all genuine. Descent is through the father, and the new-born child takes the personal name of its paternal grandfather, let us say Ambangire. But his mother must never refer to her father-in-law by name, nor may she use the name in referring to any other person who bears it; her son therefore takes her own name; if she is called Kalukwa, he will be named Mwakalukwa; next he takes the family name of his father, say Mwakasungula. 551 [611]

167 of the new area. Their culture differs from that of the indigenous tribes, so that they remain largely unassimilated. The cause of the exodus is partly shortage of land;[1] the Nyakyusa are skilled cultivators; the active soil-conservation campaign promoted by the Agricultural Department in Rungwe district involved farmers in additional effort, so that land in Mbeya was attractive to us for as the soil conservation scheme only started there two years later. The main matter, however, was to shorten the transport haul between the farmer and the market at Lupa. The demand for supplies of beans and grain from Rungwe district was decreasing even before the 1939 war, partly because production on the goldfields was declining, and partly because the produce of Mbeya district was increasing (largely through the work of the immigrant Nyakyusa farmers). The main problems for the administration arising from the Nyakyusa immigration into Mbeya district is the lack of control by the Native Authorities and congestion in the river valleys. The Ngwe, who vacated the valleys of the Nzovwe and Mbalizi rivers after their wars with the Sangu, retreated into the hills before the flood of Nyakyusa immigrants, who now populate the valleys almost exclusively with their own compact endogamous groups.[2]

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Kinship and Local Groups

62! (The following section is compiled from information applying equally to Nyakyusa
561 and Ngonde.)

The distinctive feature of the social organization is the system of age-villages. An age-village consists of a male age-group with wives of any age and children. When a man dies his heir may come to live in his village, and strangers applying for land are never refused on grounds of age, but the original constitution of the village is based on the principle of identity of age. Up to the age of ten years the small boys herd cattle in groups. Then they start to live for their fathers, and have their fathers' houses to go to sleep with friends. After two or three years they build for themselves in an age-village of young men. They continue to live the fields and eat the food of their mothers until marriage, after which they live mainly for themselves, on land adjacent to their own huts.[3]

602 If a young man, instead of herding, goes out to work, he is expected to bring back his money for his father. By his service he earns the right to be given cattle for marriage. A young man whose father is poor in cattle will often attach himself to the household of a rich kinsman, brother of his father or mother, and live regularly for him, eventually receiving from him a large portion of his marriage cattle.[4] Sons-in-law are expected to bring their friends now and again to live for their father-in-law, who will afterwards entertain the workers.[5]

●[64] Descent and inheritance are patrilineal, but there are no clans, and no descent group with a common name and definite membership.[6] The sons of a group of affective kinsmen are not all themselves affective kinsmen, and in the third generation the bonds of kinship may often have been forgotten. Cattle exchanges signalize the most

[1] Wilson, o. cit., p. 5.
[2] Wilson, o. cit., p. 16.
[3] Ibid., p. 18.
[4] Ibid., cited.
[5] Ibid., p. 18.
[6] Ibid., o. cit., p. 18; cf., o. cit., p. 4.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Nyakyusa are, predominantly, a patrilineal people, for inheritance normally follows the male line. They differ, however, from the patrilineal peoples of Europe in that brothers inherit before sons. Inherited wealth is thus mainly kept in the hands of the older men, though they are under certain obligations towards their "sons" (whether own or classificatory) in their use of it. Marriage involves a transfer of anything from four to thirty head of cattle from the bridegroom to his father-in-law, and consequently the chief obligation which an older man has, both to his own sons and to the sons of any kinsman from whom he has inherited, is to provide them, in due time, with cattle for marriage. But this obligation is not an absolute one, it depends, in part, upon the due fulfilment by each "son" of his filial duties, which are, firstly, to hoe his father's fields diligently and, secondly, to maintain a respectful bearing towards him. Unmarried men have no gardens of their own, they work their fathers' land and eat the produce of it which their mothers cook.

Under modern conditions money for tax and clothes is necessary both to father and son, and very many young men visit the nearby Lupa gold fields regularly, for periods of a few months at a time, to earn it. A youth who always brings back to his parents after each spell of absence tax money and some presents is held to have done all his duty and he will be given marriage cattle just as soon and as readily as if he had spent all his time hoeing at home. And if he earns more, sufficient to purchase some of his marriage cattle for himself, still his father benefits, for the old man has then to spend fewer beasts from his own stock. But the Lupa needs food as well as labour and some unmarried men stay continuously at home and engage in the production of crops; after the family needs have been met the surplus is sold and from the proceeds the father pays his own tax and his sons' and buys clothes for them as well.

Hoeing, which is the hardest part of Nyakyusa cultivation, is normally done by men, planting; weeding, reaping and cooking by women. But some women nowadays do some hoeing too—if their husbands are away at work or if for any other reason they find it difficult to get enough ground prepared for them. Traditionally, I was told, women never used a hoe at all.

Polygyny is the rule rather than the exception among middle-aged men, and in a polygynous household, as we shall see, each wife has her own garden plot. The institution of polygyny has many other elements besides the economic, but the economic is not the least important of them: the taking of additional wives is the best capital investment which is open to an ordinary, uneducated, Nyakyusa peasant. A Nyakyusa wife is not her husband's property, she is his wife; but as family relationships are, among the Nyakyusa, the basis of economic activity, as the more wives

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

over made to the spirits, but when some member of a family or his wife or child falls sick the anger of the spirits is often suspected as a possible cause. There are usually other reasons suspected as well, and so the sickness is taken to a diviner for diagnosis. Various causes are suggested to the diviner and he selects one among them. If the anger of the spirits is selected then this senior kinsman must pray for the one who is sick, if he is to recover. When half-brothers live at a distance from one another, after their father and his brothers have died, then each may pray to the spirits to cure a little sickness in his own family but if the sickness persists then a message must be sent to the senior kinsman. And, as the anger of the spirits is due to wrong doing, the sinner must reform his ways as well.

The wrongs which cause the spirits to anger are usually breaches of family morality. If a son does not respect his father or insults him, if an heir neglects to feed and provide for the dead man's children, then when sickness falls on him or his own children it will probably be traced to the anger of the spirits at his behaviour.

Space does not allow any full analysis of religion in family life and in the relationships of kinsmen and affines. Not only the ancestor cult but witchcraft and magic are factors in them. A man's neglect of a wife or his cruelty to her may, it is believed, lead to his falling sick through her witchcraft and that of sympathetic neighbours; his relations with his father-in-law are affected by the fear that if he offends him, his father-in-law may, by magical means, kill his children, and so on.

Wider kinship groupings than the family gather at ceremonies and are recognized in the rules against incest. But there are no clans; there is no descent group continuous down the generations with a common name and definite membership. Each individual family has its own personnel of kindred, the effective kindred of a man and his son, or of two half-brothers are not all the same, while each single person is especially related by respect, affection and mutual obligations to particular kinsmen beyond his own family. Descent, as we have seen, is patrilineal except in the case of illegitimate children. A man asked for his *ukhukwe* always recites first the names of his paternal forbears as far as he can remember. But if he is related through mother or grandmother to a chief he usually volunteers this fact as part of his *ukhukwe*; and questions always elicit some knowledge of his mother's paternal kindred and a statement that "they are my *ukhukwe* too." Descendants of a common grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are to-day forbidden to marry, and no case of infringement has come to my notice; descendants of a common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry but, I am told,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IV

THE RITUAL OF CHIEFTAINSHIP

(a) THE 'COMING OUT'

The ritual which arouses the greatest excitement in Bufiyakyusa and in which every man, woman, and child participates, is the 'coming out' when the two heirs of a chief are acknowledged as rulers, and the government of the country is handed over to them and their village headmen.[1] This ritual occurs but once in a generation, when the chief's senior sons are between thirty and thirty-five years old; they, and their slightly older contemporaries and juniors 'come out' together. Should one, or even both heirs of a chief die after their 'coming out' and before their sons are grown up, the ritual is not celebrated again—it cannot be, for it concerns not individuals but a generation. Instead the young chiefs are replaced by their younger 'brothers', full or classificatory. And should a village headman die he also is replaced by his heir; the office does not lapse. Therefore there are two types of change in status: the great communal ritual when the old men retire and their sons take office, and the family ritual when a dead man is succeeded by his younger brother or his son. An individual may inherit from his father, succeeding to his office and moving into his homestead at any time, and when he has done so he is treated formally as a member of his father's generation; but the celebration throughout the chiefdom of sons succeeding fathers only takes place twice in a century. Each chiefdom celebrates separately. There is no attempt to synchronize with neighbours.

It was usual, traditionally, for two sons to succeed their father, and divide his country between them. The division was foreshadowed at the father's 'coming out' when he married two senior wives and settled them in different sections of his country; but it sometimes happened that a chief had a favourite for whom he built separately, and whose son went through the 'coming out' with his brothers and became independent, unless he was defeated in war and subjugated. Even a son who had no expectations of a

[1] Outline of an area a 'coming out' in Sub Chiefdom Wilson was the conclusion of the coming out of the heirs of Mwaungulu (19) in November 1955 and in April 1956 I was able to observe the ceremonial changes brought about by Mwaungulu's (1-2) 'coming out' in December 1959.

9: Wilson E-5 (1954-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

Nyakyusa, where sacrifices are continued in the grove of a dead chief such as Mwakisambwe (91), for an indefinite number of generations, and the heirs of his senior village headmen serve as his priests, taking the name of the first holder of the office. Most of the priests of Lubaga hold perpetual titles of this sort. The conception of the *corporation sole* is familiar enough in the western tradition, but European observers in Africa are sometimes confused by the use of a personal name and the almost complete identification of each holder with his predecessors, as well as by the practice of treating certain kinship relationships as if they were offices.

Generation was determined among the Nyakyusa by association with a chief. There was no name for those who 'came out' together other than that of their chief, who was the focus of the ritual. On the other hand, however, a 'coming out' concerned a whole generation, and it could not be held out of season. If the heir died he was replaced by a brother, as were Mwaipopo I (115) and Mwenkuga I (130). If a chief had no male heir of the right age in his senior house his daughter might represent an heir. For example, at the coming out of the sons of Mwaijonga, it was a *girl* Ijonga (114) who performed the leading part in the ritual which fell due before the birth of Mwaipopo I (115). When Mwaipopo I was born and grew up he assumed office, but he died young and was replaced by his younger brother without a further celebration. Because the 'coming out' was thus linked to the maturity of a whole generation we have felt some confidence in assigning approximate dates to the arrival of the heroes. The period between each 'coming out' we estimate at thirty to thirty-five years, though the higher figure is probably more nearly correct. There must in fact have been some flexibility in the timing of the 'coming out' to account for the difference in the number of generations of ruling chiefs in different segments of the lineage. Some of the differences may be due to errors (e.g. it is possible that 70 is an elder brother not the father of 98, and that a generation has been omitted between Mwakupeje (34) and Mwakage (75), but even where there is little possibility of error the number of generations does not always tally.

In theory a man always belongs to the generation succeeding that of his father, irrespective of his age, provided he has not inherited from a man of the previous generation and taken his status, but in practice, since men often have sons of very different

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

shown by the way in which one fearing witchcraft, or accused of practising it, moves to another village. Sometimes he goes to another chiefdom, but often he only moves to another village in the same chiefdom—the chief himself may feel safe in one village of his country and not in another (*vide* Document, p. 190). It is on his fellow villagers that the good man depends for protection, and it is they whom the evil-doer fears.

Accusations within the lineage are rare. At first we were told that they did not occur at all; later a number of elderly informants agreed that this was not true—'the young men have misled you', they said; but careful inquiry only elicited three concrete cases[1] of witchcraft within the lineage (cf. table, p. 204). As we have seen, fellow members of a lineage normally live in different villages, and just how the idea of attacks by kinsmen is reconciled with the theory of village defence is not clear. Possibly it is argued that the witch attacks while visiting his kinsman, for it is in terms of visiting that the effect of 'the breath of men' on erring sons or younger brothers is explained. Where 'the breath of men' is thought to have affected someone of another village, it is argued that he or she came frequently to visit in the village of the attacker (cf. Document, p. 237), and the heir who neglects his elder brother's or father's funeral rites, and who is thought to suffer from 'the breath' of the deceased's justly indignant neighbours, is supposed to fall ill when he comes to their village to enter into his inheritance, or to make arrangements for the disposal of his property.

Even within the village it is the immediate neighbours that are primarily concerned in a case of suspected witchcraft. In the large villages of the plains the leader of a section, 'he of the heap of hot ashes', has the specific duty of protecting the herd which stands in the smoke of his fire against witches; and in smaller villages, also, a witchcraft case commonly begins with murmuring among a few next-door neighbours. Suspicion of witchcraft falls first on a member of the same village-section, then on a fellow villager; only rarely, and in peculiar circumstances, does it fall on a member of another village, and never on someone outside the chiefdom.

Differences of rank are relatively slight in Nyakyusa society

[1] A possible fourth is quoted on p. 146, but the exact relationship of the accused to the victim was not known to our informants.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

abanyage have no more general authority than the doctors who divine or treat the sick. Their parallels among men are the priests (also called *abanyage*) who perform the rain ritual and the sacrifices to dead chiefs. 627

The one position which endows a woman with legal authority is that of father's sister. A senior sister has a joint responsibility, along with the headman of the village, for the distribution of her dead brother's property, and her brother's children may appeal to her to arbitrate if they have a dispute with their father while he is yet alive: this is particularly important in the families of chiefs, since a chief's son cannot bring his father before commoners for arbitration. The authority of a father's sister is, however, exercised only within the lineage and does not extend even to wives of lineage members. Co-wives may take a dispute for arbitration to their husband, but if, as often happens, he is thought to be prejudiced, they go to a male neighbour, or to the headman of the village, in the same way as when the dispute is with an unrelated person (cf. p. 140). 627 768 613 604

Only in the group of unmarried girls in a village does there appear to be the germ of control by seniors of the same sex. We traced one case in which a quarrel between two girls nearing the age of puberty was settled by the slightly older girls of the same village, who punished one who had beaten her fellow without justification, and then lied to them when they inquired into the case, by scratching her with their nails. As they reach puberty the girls, who have grown up together in one village and formed a closely knit group, become scattered among the different age-villages of their husbands and there leadership among women is not developed (*vide infra*, pp. 171–2). This does not mean, however, that women are excluded from arbitration; they can, and frequently do, bring cases on their own account, not necessarily acting through husband or father. Unlike the pagans, Christian women who have quarrelled do sometimes ask a leading woman of their congregation to arbitrate. At Rungwe the women leaders were the sister of the chief and the wife of a teacher, both personalities; and it was to them that their fellows went to relate their troubles and ask for an opinion. We traced two such cases. Very often, however, Christian women go to a man, the Christian leader of the village, as their husbands do. 627 795 627

The Administration has not attempted to suppress arbitration 627

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F2617 Ngonde F2617
Nyakyusa

This practice of having official witnesses to every contract, and summoning them to give evidence should a dispute later arise, is one of the most important means of maintaining order in Nyakyusa society, and village neighbours are the usual witnesses.

c. Communal responsibility of the age-village

Formerly, in Nyakyusa law two forms of group responsibility were emphasized: the mutual responsibility of kinsmen, and the mutual responsibility of fellow villagers. A case of murder or manslaughter was primarily the concern of the agnatic lineage if the victim was a male or an unmarried girl, and of the lineages of both husband and father if the victim was a married woman. The kinsmen either killed the murderer, or brought him before the chief, who imposed a fine which went to the injured relatives. The Nyakyusa make a distinction between "spearing by day" (direct physical injury) and "spearing by night" (witchcraft); and only in the latter type of case did the fine go to the chief. Witchcraft was thus treated as an offence against the state—the chiefdom—while murder or manslaughter was an offence against the kinsmen of the dead. The concern of the state in witchcraft, and the joint responsibility of kinsmen on the one hand, and of fellow villagers on the other, was evident when, as sometimes happened, both groups were required by the chief to clear themselves of suspicion of witchcraft by each providing a representative to take the poison ordeal. Should the representative of either group fail to vomit then the responsible individual within that group was sought out by means of divination and the ordeal (*vide supra*, p. 108).

In a case of adultery the injured husband, together with his kinsmen, pursued and attempted to kill, or torture and kill, the adulterer: self-help was not only permitted but expected in this situation,* and a man's near kinsmen were obliged to assist him. Neighbours were not obliged to assist in executing vengeance, but they might be victims of it, for if the injured husband did not find the adulterer he might kill any village-mate of his enemy. Such an attack commonly led to war between the two villages;

* Cf. R. Hamilton, *The Spear-Builder's Goods* (1935), p. 61, says: "The injured husband has the right to inflict death on the paramour. This is an ancient rule of the past but a prize fact to-day . . . cases of this nature are very numerous."

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951-FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

on the other hand, come from many villages, and they move from village to village more than men, because most women are inherited at least once in their lives. Nor do the women form an age-set, for men inherit wives as old, or older than themselves, and they continue to marry young brides until they themselves are elderly. A village thus contains women of all ages, the older ones often being quite late-comers to it. There is neither the unity of a kinship group, with leadership of mother or grandmother, as among a matrilineal people like the Bemba, nor the leadership of the mother-in-law as among the patrilineal Nguni and Sotho peoples. It is true that among the latter peoples the leadership of women devolves on a man's senior wife when his mother is dead, but the pattern has developed in a society in which daughters-in-law usually live for a long time in the same homestead as their mother-in-law, whereas among the pagan Nyakyusa a woman rarely joins her own son until she is decrepit, long after his marriage. When the Nguni or Sotho chief wife is obeyed by her co-wives it is as the successor of her mother-in-law; indeed on the latter's death she is often referred to by junior wives as 'mother'. Where women have authority in a patrilineal society it is usually as mother, or grandmother, or father's sister. But there are none with such positions in the context of the age-village; the office of headman is not hereditary so there is no mother of the heir, and the headman's own mother and sisters normally live elsewhere.

Such solidarity and leadership as exist among women in pagan Nyakyusa society are within the group of women of the same lineage who live together. Great emphasis is laid on the propriety of a wife bringing a younger sister, or brother's daughter, as a junior wife for her husband (*ukwabala*): this is felt to be a compliment to the husband and a comfort to the wife, proof that the marriage has been a success. Co-wives who are of the same lineage are very closely identified, their children being treated almost as full siblings, and they themselves co-operating in everything.

One of the marked changes in contemporary Nyakyusa society is the development of leadership among women in the Christian congregations.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selected, No Ngonde

787 would never dry up.' Kasitile said: 'The work of the *undemile* and
899 *ikipili* are the same, they are together. The heavy ones will over-
step the girl, they are going to injure her so that she is barren,
constantly menstruating, with painful periods.' Lyandileko, a
woman doctor, and exceptionally intelligent, said: 'The bride
[75] uses the *ikipili* medicine because she is empty (*bwai*). So she
washes and eats bananas with *ikipili*. If she does not wash with it
she will have diarrhoea.'

787 The *ikipili* is also said to make a bride 'patient and polite'. 'If
577 the girl did not wash with the powdered medicine (*ikipili*) she
might be rude and proud when she went to her husband's home
and insult men there.' This was the statement of Mwakwelebeja,
an old commoner particularly well versed in matters of ritual, and
it was separately confirmed both by his wife and by Lyandileko,
the woman doctor, but not everyone knew the connection. Mwai-
beja, the chief, who was present when Mwakwelebeja gave his
explanation, said: 'Really! I never knew that!' and his wives,
when applied to, said: 'We don't know. The mothers have died'
(this though some of them were past middle age).

● 613 Angombwike identified the *ikipili* medicine with 'the blood of a
787 lineage and a bride's treatment with it with the union in marriage.
[illegible] He said:

> As soon as a girl grows up people begin to think about her bearing children. They say: 'The mulem iron is discharged, the blood for bearing children has come.' When they grind and brew beer in her honour, they do it in honour of her 'iron' [i.e. menstrual blood]. They give her medicine for disciplining her in the lineage of her husband. When the mothers hear they cry: 'Oum, oum, it has fruited! (*fjoto, fjoto, fjoto*).' The girl is given a bundle of the medicine, powdered, and is made to wear a belt of bark-cloth with the powder in it, the medicine is brought from the husband's home by his mothers. The husband, as it were, says: 'That is my blood [or semen] which I have sent to her.' The little bundle is the symbol (*ikimapili*) of the child she will bear, the belt with medicine on it means that the mulem 'iron' belongs to the blood of that husband. The powdered medicine is brought by the husband's mother. A man's chief wife always has a bamboo flask or a pot full of medicine of their lineage (*ja bikolele* (*ndole*), powdered ready for use. If she dies it goes to the second wife, if the husband dies to the first wife of the eldest son, and by her it is distributed as need. The powdered medicine is the blood (*mdondanga*[*] *ja ikipi*).
>
> [*] i.e. the powder made from the *ikipili*.

2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1957 F3617 :Kgonde F3617
Nyakyusa

difficult labour is from this, not from adultery. And in a case of difficult labour her husband does pray to his shades.

All were agreed that a woman is in the power of the shades of her father's lineage and if her father is angry with her, or with his son-in-law her husband, his shades afflict her, causing her to be barren or to have miscarriages, or ailing children. Hence a woman who is barren or ill, or whose children are sickly, often returns to her father's homestead so that he may pray for her, and she sleeps there on the night of the ritual, for the shades come by night. More rarely, if she has quarrelled with her father, she goes outside her husband's homestead and, facing towards her father's home, she prays herself on the pathway. But in all the cases we traced in which a woman's ancestors were believed to have made her, or her child, ill, there was a dispute between her father (or his heir) and her husband over marriage-cattle or the bull of puberty; and we were told that her father's shades 'are angry only if marriage-cattle have not been paid, and for no other reason', thus it seems that the control of her father's shades over a married woman is in fact somewhat limited.

The characteristic illness sent by the shades is sores round the mouth, and fever—an illness which is not acute and clears up quickly. These symptoms are immediately interpreted as *isinda*, affliction from the shades. Beer going sour before it is mature is also *isinda*, usually thought to be caused by quarrels between husband and wife. But almost any misfortune, mild or serious, is interpreted as *isinda* if members of the lineage are conscious of quarrels between themselves, or with their spouses or fathers-in-law.

The ritual consists in the reconciliation of the living in the presence of the dead and, if the misfortune is serious, a sacrifice of flesh, fish, or fowl. The junior begs pardon of his senior who acknowledges his anger and expresses forgiveness by taking a mouthful of water from his calabash cup (*ulupindi*) and blowing it out (*ukuliputa*) in his sacred banana grove. For the patient to recover, or the blight on crops or fish-traps to be removed, *the senior kinsman must confess his anger*, and spitting, or blowing out water, is a symbol of confession and forgiveness. Mwainumo was explicit on the matter: 'If a father is angry with his son or daughter he may say, some day: "I forgive you now" and spit on the ground: all the anger that is in him comes out like spit.' *Ukuswa* means both 'to

783 epit' and 'to forgive'. *Ulupate* means 'to blow out water' and
ulupate (the reflexive form) means 'to pray', with the implication
of condoning whatever anger or grudge a man may have in his
heart. Full confession both by the wrongdoer and by seniors who
have been angry are held to be essential to the lifting of the
misfortune.

776 The man who prays represents the living members of the lineage
783 and he calls on his immediate seniors, who are dead, for support.
613 'You, Father, you my elder brother, you so-and-so (his grand-
father) named by me, help me, do not be angry, here I am, your
child, your younger brother. I am above here, it was not I who
killed you but Kyala alone.'

He may also remonstrate with the shades, asking why they
should afflict the living. *Ukwikomeya* (lit. 'to cause oneself to blame',
from the root *ukukomela* 'to scold' or 'to blame') is used to mean 'to
sacrifice', and the conception of remonstrating with, or scolding,
troublesome shades is an element of Nyakyusa sacrifice.

783 If beer has been prepared, a libation is poured out either on the
782 hearth-bricks or in the banana grove nearest the door of the house,
which is used by the owner as his sacred grove (*ikyinja kyalo
ikikwa*). If an animal is sacrificed the blood must soak into the
earth for, as already indicated, the 'earth is the shade's'. Furthermore, the rest of the beer or the fish and the *ipa* meats* meat from
the footing of the beam* is left overnight on the ground in the sacred
grove, more rarely under the officiant's bed, and eaten or drunk in
the morning by young boys of the lineage, grandsons* of the last
deceased, for they are 'the comrades of the shades'. Other people
may finish up the beer or meat, but wives of the lineage may not
touch it: they seclude themselves in their huts and remain alone
during the ritual, for 'they fear their fathers-in-law (*bakwilo
abakwenwe*)'.

783 The proper person to approach the shades is (among com-
613 moners) the senior member of a lineage of three generations; but
if he lives at a considerable distance—perhaps twenty miles or
more away—then a junior may pray on his own account, only
asking help from his senior in cases of serious illness. 'If father and
son, or brothers, live far apart, as here in Selya and at Mwaya

[71] * The rat is the same as the Nkwa antelope which is sacred to a Pondo sacrifice, cf. M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 149. Nyakyusa informants denied that the gall is of importance in their ritual as it is among the Ngoni and Tum.

* One rate was collected of a son of the last deceased, still a small child, during the accidental beer.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

(forty miles away), then, if a child is a little ill, you pray yourself, 783
but if it is very ill you send a message to your elder.' The senior 613
knows the shades (*ajimenye imisuki*) and prays alone.

The wives of a lineage avoid everything connected with offerings to the shades in the same way as they avoid a father-in-law, even though their husband's father is not yet dead and they do not avoid his living grandfather: 'If a cock has grown up at my homestead my wives do not eat it. It is taboo. It is the shades'. But my wives may eat a hen. When the cock crows it rouses the house. If a wife eats it she will die soon and people will say: "She has eaten a cock." ' A wife also avoids bananas from the sacred grove, and sacrificial meat and beer, and milk from a cow that has looked into a grave; she must stay alone and secluded in her hut when prayer is made in the grove, and is forbidden to sleep by the hearth at night.

Mwaimomo's account of 'prayer when a child is ill' and descrip- 783
tions of four particular rituals will make the procedure clearer. 775

Mwaimomo: Our regular custom here, when a child is ill with sores on the mouth from *imisuki*, is to pray to the shades (*abaripate bakayaka*), especially to my father, or my elder brother if I have inherited from him. Before I pray I go to a diviner. We consult the oracle, and he tells [787]
me: 'It is *imisuki*, your fathers are angry because you have not performed such and such a ritual, perhaps because you have not killed cattle at the funeral of your brother, or your mother's brother, perhaps you have not performed the later death ritual for them.' So when I come home I tell my relatives and wives all the diviner has told me. Then they complain (*abaripate*) saying: 'Why are they angry? Take water and complain in the evening.'

So at dusk, when the cattle come home, I take my calabash cup (*ulupindi*), and water, and a live coal from the fire, and put it in the calabash. I go out to the banana grove of my father where I always pray. I take a mouthful of water, I blow it out and say: 'Yes, Father, yes so-and-so, yes so-and-so, why are you angry, Father? Since you left me I have nourished the children. How have I wronged you? Even though I have wronged you, forgive me, Father, may the child recover. Guard by me.' When I have finished I enter the house, and next day I may find the child a little better.

Before I pray, if the diviner has told me that they are angry because I have sinned a certain brother of something, I go to tell him and beg his pardon for neglecting him, my brother. Sometimes, if it is a serious case concerning a cow that I have not given him, I seek for a cow with which to ask his forgiveness.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

585 between' accompanies 'the mothers-in-law' when they go to induct or instruct the bride, and the wife of her father's 'go-between' is one of the group of mothers which takes the bride to her husband. The duties of a 'go-between' do not end at marriage: the [95] groom's 'go-between' is responsible for taking to the bride's people the hen to announce the birth of the first child, and, among the Lugulu, the 'go-between' of the father is master of ceremonies at the ritual of vituperation.

787 The ideas that emerge from this analysis are, that in the *protective* rituals—after death, twin birth, spearing, binding with ropes,
602 and death from sorcery—the parents, children, grandchildren, and some siblings, and siblings' children of the person primarily affected undergo the ritual. Links through females as well as males are recognised—daughters' children as well as sons' children attend—but they are not traced so far, and a brother's or half-brother's children attend far more often than a sister's children. Moreover, children of an unrelated co-wife perform the death ritual for a woman rather than her sister's children.

573 Wives always attend rituals in which their husbands are concerned—indeed, they often come with their children when their husbands stay away—but when the wife is concerned as a sister or daughter, her husband never accompanies her.

573 The closest relatives, such as own children, children of the heir
602 or of a related co-wife, and proximate full siblings, must *all* participate, but the more distant relatives select representatives.

602 The range of relations concerned varies with the particular ritual—it is widest in the twin ritual and narrowest for an ordinary birth—and is also modified by proximity, for relatives who live near come when those in the same category living twenty miles away do not.

Affines (*abale*) never perform a ritual together even when they are next-door neighbours and close friends, but *abale* in one generation are *abipwa* (mother's kin) in the next, and a man and his *abipwa* can participate together, as in the protection against sorcery described. More often, however, the members of each lineage act separately.

602 Our Nyakyusa informants distinguished the officiants—*abapage*
621 —from those undergoing a ritual but they did not make distinc-
•613 tions of the sort attempted here between principals and kin who do not undergo the ritual. The distinctions they drew were between kinsmen and neighbours and between lineages. At a death

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ritual they distinguish *abakamu* (kinsmen) from *abandu itulo* (non-relatives) or *abapakipanga* (villagers), and *abakitulo* (those of the lineage of a dead man) from *abaka* (affines) and mother's relatives (*abipuwa*). These categories have different functions.

(*b*) *Christians*

The performance of family rituals is complicated by the fact that 16 per cent of the Nyakyusa are professing Christians, and in almost every lineage there are individuals who withdraw from the full performance of traditional rituals at death, puberty, and marriage, birth, and misfortune. In most cases such a withdrawal is treated tolerantly by the pagan kinsmen: the Christian kinsmen come to mourn, to congratulate the bride, to express sympathy with the parents of twins; and their non-participation in the washing and shaving and avoidance of ritual meat and beer is accepted. At the funeral of Mwamulenga his preceding full brother, who should have been a principal in the death ritual, was a Christian, and he took no part, though his children went through it. At the funeral of Mwampiki (p. 248) one boy was left untreated on the ground that he was a Christian and a Christian 'should not have two gods'. At the puberty ritual of Mwaihojo's daughter (p. 91) the brother called to wash with her was influenced by Christians and was reluctant to take part, though he finally did so.

Only when a son who is heir to family wealth, or to the office of chieftainship or priesthood refuses the inheritance of widows (as a Christian must do) is there very strong pressure on him to conform to traditional custom: the union of the heir with the widows is held essential to their health. Sometimes also there is acute conflict between different members of the family over the performance of an autopsy, the pagans pressing for it and the Christians opposing it. This we saw in the death of E. when her pagan senior brother wished to examine her, and her Christian junior brother opposed him vehemently.

That Christians cannot take part in certain of the rituals[1] and do not suffer if they omit them is generally accepted. The farewell to the dead at the homestead of the deceased, and the treatment of kinsmen of twins, fall into this category. About certain other rituals, such as the ritual of the gasping cough and the protection against sorcery, opinions are divided. Some of our Christian friends insisted that 'the gasping cough is a real illness' and cited

[1] There are minor differences in the rules of the different missions.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

431 between the groom's lineage and that of the bride during the puberty-marriage ritual.

431 Within a lineage, also, there is some circulation of property. A
613 young man is provided with marriage-cattle by his father, or father's heir; a father kills a cow at his son's funeral, a son does likewise for his father; and if a son offends his father he begs pardon with a gift. A daughter is given a gift by her father at the close of the puberty ritual, and he or his heir kills a cow at her funeral.

431 Village neighbours are closely identified with the father, and
621 feast on the bull of puberty and the offering provided by an erring son, and give gifts to a daughter when she reaches maturity.

431 Kinsmen and neighbours are expected to help provide food, and firewood on which to cook it, for the guests at a funeral or marriage or at a twin-birth ritual. On the first day of a funeral guests are fed on food provided by the bereaved household, on the following day on that provided by their kinsmen, and on the third day on that provided by the village neighbours. Before the marriage-cattle are brought for his daughter, a man asks his kinsmen and immediate neighbours to help him cook for 'the husbands'—not to ask for such help is unfriendly. Kinsmen and neighbours also bring gifts of millet at a funeral and after an abnormal birth, which is used for brewing the ritual beer.

(d) The symbolism of participation and exchange

431 What is implied by undergoing a ritual or offering gifts? Parti-
602 cipation in a ritual implies close kinship. We see, in the rituals performed after death, or spearing, or binding with ropes, the unity of the group composed of parents, children, grandparents, and siblings; the acknowledgement of a closer link between some siblings than between others; a recognition that wives are of 'one blood' with their husbands; and a separation between kinsmen and affines who are of another blood. In the twin ritual the limits of recognized kinship are expressed by participation and in the death ritual they are expressed by attendance. Observance of the taboo of avoidance, like attendance at rituals, is taken as evidence of kinship.

554 The difference in the status of senior and junior wives, and of
602 eldest and junior daughters and sons, also appears in the rituals at puberty and marriage and at death. The unity between living and dead agnatic kin and, in a lesser degree, mother's kin, is ex-

2: Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

§29 *rituals*: 'they are customary' (*lalewile*), 'they come to us from long ago', 'our fathers and grandfathers performed them'; and established in the nature of the universe: 'Kyala made us black people like that.'

(3) The nature of the shades

775 The nature of the shades is revealed in Nyakyusa rituals, and
●643 we are now in a position to summarize their attributes.

The shades, 'those who have risen from the dead', are the dead members of a lineage and, unless they were ruling chiefs when alive, they have power only over their own kinsmen, and are concerned only with behaviour between members of the lineage, not with behaviour towards outsiders. As we have seen, the shades of her father's lineage 'move aside a little' from a woman when marriage-cattle and the bull of puberty have been given for her but, if these are still owing, it is thought that her child as well as she herself may be made ill by her father's shades. Membership of a lineage is determined by the passage of marriage-cattle: a child belongs to the group which provided cattle for its mother. Therefore, it is argued, the shades of the lineage which provided the cattle, and they alone, if the payment has been made in full, have power over children. If no cattle have been given the child is in the power of the mother's shades. But there are difficulties over the *ilipili* medicine, for only that of the genitor's lineage can safely be used, and its use implies membership of the lineage that provides it. There is a further idea that shades only have power over those living in a homestead of their lineage. 'A child is never made ill by the mother's shades when it is in the father's homestead, only when it is with its mother's people.'

775 The dead dwell beneath (*pae*), in 'the land of the shades' (*lubaynda*), which is a shadowy reflection of the land of the living, with homesteads and gardens, wives and cattle, villages and chiefdoms.

MWAMBAMBO: People think that in the land of the shades they build homes like we do, they marry wives, they have children, they plant food and build houses. I heard this always from old men, but they only guess. They say: 'Perhaps it is nice, perhaps horrible.' They do not know very much. They fear to die. I have never met any old pagan man who wanted to die, they always fear. Property is important: People are much taken up with the idea that riches are there in the land of the shades. They say: 'If a man dies his fathers come to receive

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER X

THE SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RITUALS OF KINSHIP

(c) *The symbolic expression of structural relationships*

Two rituals of kinship express, first and foremost, the differentiation and the unity of agnatic lineages. In all the rituals we have discussed members of a lineage act together as a distinct group, bound together by common 'blood' which is symbolized by the *dipele* medicine. 'It is our kinship, it is our blood.' A member of the lineage is protected by it, and illegitimate children who are not of the lineage may not share it. The new-born infant drinks it with his mother whose breasts are washed with it; the nubile girl washes with her father or brother, thinking: 'I have fathers, I am no bastard.' Its use is an acknowledgement of agnatic kinship and legitimacy.

A lineage includes the living and dead, who have communion together, sharing *dipele* medicine and food and beer, in most of the rituals of the cycle. 'All the food which we have eaten you have eaten.' And the dead receive the dying of their lineage. 'The shade has created us, we come from him, we die, we go there to him; not to others, but to him.' The shades cause menstruation and sexual desire, and men and women cannot produce children without their support. Therefore reproductive power is controlled by the lineage, and virginity is something valuable to it.

A woman is a member of two lineages. At marriage she is partly transferred to her husband's lineage. She washes with *dipele* medicine with her husband and 'using it means that the bride is now of his lineage'. When the bull of puberty has been handed over the shades of her father must 'move aside a little' that she may conceive by her husband, but still the bond with her father's lineage is not severed. 'The blood' of a married woman is created by her shades and those of her husband together. Both sets control procreation, though the inference is that her father's shades cease to have control when *all* the marriage-cattle have been handed over.

Yet still she remains a daughter of her father's lineage and shares in its rituals as well as in those of her husband's.

Lineages are linked by marriage and kinship between them is established by the passage of cattle. The son-in-law becomes 'one blood' with his parents-in-law when they drink the beer brewed or eat the chickens killed at the consummation of the marriage; some of his semen is buried in his father-in-law's grove, and his spear is placed in his father-in-law's hut. The significance of the link is magnified by the thicket of taboos which surrounds 'mixing blood', and once forged the link should be, and commonly is, sustained long after the deaths of the individuals by whom it was created, for each is replaced, the husband by a brother or son, the wife by a sister or brother's daughter. For each heir the ritual of 'mixing blood' is performed afresh reminding them of their separation and union.

Cattle are closely identified with men and therefore with lineages. The shades watch over them. Like men, they are in danger from women who are ritually impure; at the death of their owner they, too, mourn; and kinship relationships are established and expressed by their transfer from one lineage to another. 'Kinship is cattle.'

The distinction and opposition of lineages is apparent in the ritual of puberty and marriage which expresses both hostility and conciliation. The two lineages dance in rivalry, haggle over cattle, and exchange feasts. Among the Nyakyusa, the opposition is not between men and women, as suggested by some recent writers on rituals elsewhere,[1] but between lineages; though the men and the women, both of the groom's party and the bride's, act separately. The hostility and conciliation reach their culmination in the ritual of vituperation among the Lugulu, where groom's group and bride's insult each other by word and in action and then, at the instance of the master of ceremonies, praise each other and feast together.

Among the Nyakyusa there is no clan organization and no common name for a lineage of many generations like the Pondo izidabi, which identifies agnatic kinship within a large group. A common name is used by members of a lineage of three or four generations at the most, and among commoners there is no invocation of a distant ancestor as among the Pondo. The hero

[1] E. Fortune, *The Forgotten Language*; M. Gluckman, 'The Role of the Sexes in Wiko Circumcision Ceremonies', in *Social Structure*, edited by M. Fortes (1949).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F7617 Ngonde F7617
Nyakyusa

613 referred to is not necessarily an ancestor of those who speak of him. In the rituals the participants look towards the direction from which their ancestors came, and the details vary both with the cultural area and with the particular lineage, but similarity in ritual observance is no ground for claiming kinship. The one recognized bond is common participation—attending one another's funerals and observing the rules of avoidance.

The segmentation of lineages is by houses. Ties between full siblings are closer than those between half-siblings and this is immediately apparent in the attendance at, and participation in rituals, as the genealogy of Mwakabela (Table (a)) shows. Full siblings, particularly successive and linked siblings, are closely identified. The most important link between men or women is inheritance. The heir takes the name and social position of the deceased, succeeding to his or her rights and obligations, and observing the same avoidances. 'A shade is resurrected in the body of his child.' The heir is a junior[1] man or woman of the lineage, preferably a full brother or sister, but possibly a half-brother or sister, or parallel cousin, or a son, or brother's son, or brother's daughter.

613 601 When the heir is a son, or brother's son or daughter, the separation so strictly maintained between generations is bridged for that individual only; he or she changes generation and a man is treated by his former comrades as a 'father' and referred to by his wives as 'father-in-law', even though they are still his wives and live with him.

The identification of alternate generations is expressed in calling grandchildren ('the comrades of the shades') to eat the sacrificial meat or fish, or take the first sip of beer, as well as in the absence of taboos between affines of such alternate generations. A woman does not avoid her husband's grandfather. Thus, though the lineage is treated in some respects as a unit, one man (or woman) of it being able to replace another and override the distinction between successive generations, the unity is not pushed as far as among many other peoples, such as the Fondo, where the form of behaviour appropriate to a father-in-law applies to *all* senior members of his lineage irrespective of generation.

[71]

613 Differences in status within the lineage are clearly shown in the 559 rituals. In their observance seniors precede juniors, men precede

[1] If there is no junior full brother, a senior full brother may inherit provided that he has not previously inherited from his father and so become 'father'.

[Category 116, facing p. 270. – Analyst]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3517 Ngonde F3517
Nyakyusa

women, daughters of the lineage provide wives. Seniority, of course, does not depend solely on age, and we once saw a little boy provide his father in the performance of a ritual for his grandmother, with whose generation he was identified. The relative status of husband and wife is expressed in the taboo on a woman 'overstepping' her husband physically or metaphorically, and 'overstepping' is symbolized (oddly to a Christian) by the sign of a cross. The precedence of the chief wife is very marked. In commoner families she alone washes with her husband using the *dipili* medicine, and he performs the death ritual for her only. A chief may do this for two wives. In Selya a father washes in the puberty ritual with his senior daughter, and among the Kukwe a woman washes with her daughter or eldest son's first wife. 'To wash is to admit that I have lived, and borne a child, and grown up.'

All the rituals celebrate a change in status, and danger lies in not recognizing or admitting the change, in clinging to the past. This is most obvious in the death ritual, which is directed to the separation of the living and the dead. The mourners have the corpse 'on their bodies', they may not separate themselves from him by washing till the appropriate moment, and they share their food and *dipili* medicine with the shade, thereby recognizing him as a kinsman; but in due course they drive him off. 'You were our kinsman before but now it is finished, you are a stranger.' 'You are no relative of ours.' 'We are not corpses.' And at the same time they bring him back transformed, as a beneficent spirit in the home. The pattern is a common one in Bantu Africa: the Nyakyusa peculiarity is (1) the speed with which the transformation is achieved (commonly the 'bringing back' of the spirit is delayed a year, whereas the Nyakyusa may delay only a month); and (2) the close correspondence between the change in status of the dead and the change in status of the older generation, who 'move aside' at the 'coming out'. Each generation has its day and must give place to the next.

All through the rituals the dominance of the agnatic lineage is evident, but it does not exclude the recognition of kinship in the female line. Daughters' children *must* perform the ritual at death, twin birth, spearing, and binding with ropes, for their grandparents, while some sisters' children, and father's sisters' sons, may do so also. What is clear from the genealogies is that kinship links in the female line are not traced as far as in the male line and,

2: Wilson K-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

though wives are assimilated to their husbands' lineages for ritual purposes, men play no part in the rituals of their wives' lineages.

The second fundamental principle expressed in the rituals of kinship is that a moral law holds within the lineage. Senior kinsmen, living and dead, have a mystical power over their juniors, but their anger is dangerous only if it is just. They cannot murder irresponsibly. Kinsmen are 'members of one another' in the sense that the life and death of one affect the others. The sins of a father are visited on his children, his juniors in the lineage (though a woman's sins affect only her own husband and children), and the very fact of kinship makes a mystical bond between agnatic kin, descendants of a common great-grandfather, and a man and his daughters or sister's children. The moral law is thought to operate also within the age-village, where the just are protected and the evil punished by 'the breath of men'; but within both lineage and village irresponsible and malicious injury by witches or sorcerers is possible.

When misfortune occurs the sufferer, and his kinsmen and neighbours, seek an explanation in conflicts and ritual omissions, and interpret the misfortune in terms of these, putting the possible alternatives before the oracle. Thus the danger of conflict with kinsmen and neighbours, and of neglect of ritual, is constantly before men's minds. In practice, there is a strong tendency to push the blame for misfortune outside the lineage of living and dead on to the neighbours.

(b) *The celebration of rituals and maintenance of the structure*

In any society the practical, intellectual, and emotional aspects are mutually dependent; the practical organization is dependent upon, and at the same time supports, an intellectual system—certain cosmological ideas—and attitudes. It has been argued very cogently that these ideas and attitudes are maintained by their expression in myth and rite[1] but little evidence for this has been published. Can objective evidence be collected? The anthropologist cannot look into men's minds; he is not concerned with personal religion—with the varieties of religious experience. Can he observe any effect of participation in ritual upon the behaviour of groups and categories of people? It must be admitted that our evidence here is thin.

[1] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Andaman Islanders* (1922), pp. 238 ff.; *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (1952), pp. 157 ff.

[777] that they have always been cattle men and they need no instruc-
[552] tion on cattle. The tension over stock limitation and soil con-
[242] servation, so acute in many parts of Africa, is only just appearing in Rungwe district, but potentially it is serious.

Pressure on land, and the planting of a valuable long-term crop
[311] such as coffee, have undermined the traditional organization of
[961] age-villages. The old men are no longer prepared to move to
[61] make way for their sons and, without a new deal in land each generation, the territorial separation of the generations is blurred. Boys villages are no longer visible in the hills over Rungwe mission, partly because so many young men are away, either at school or in employment, but largely because some of the land is taken up with coffee gardens. Homesteads are being built further apart as men lay out coffee round their houses, and sons often build on a corner of their father's estate instead of in a separate village. On the plain, also, the pressure of population blurs the boundaries between generations. Only in the least heavily populated middle belt are numerous boys' villages still clearly visible, and here too a 'coming out' has recently been celebrated, with some redistribution of land. The scarcer land, that in old volcanic craters, was always inherited, like cattle, not reallocated each generation, and almost all cultivated land is now treated in this way. In many chiefdoms, therefore, a young man looks to his father or senior brother for land, rather than to the village headman, and inheritance is supremely important. But the form of
[-128] inheritance is changing: property now goes directly from father to son, not as formerly to each of a group of full brothers before reverting to the senior son of the eldest of them. The claims of more distant kinsmen on inherited stock are less than they used to be; such stock becomes the exclusive property of father and son, rather than property in which members of a lineage of three or
[613] four generations have reciprocal rights. The main economic bond which held the lineage together, the exchange of cattle, is thus broken.

Formerly a marriage was a contract between lineages rather
[583] than between individuals. A girl was betrothed before puberty to a
[581] man of her father's choice and should he die she was still regarded as married to his heir. Should she die a sister replaced her. Ideally a marriage bond between lineages lasted for generations, each man who died being replaced by a brother or son, each woman by a sister or brother's daughter. The choice of a partner in marriage

9:Wilson E-5 (0924-0955) 1959
F907 Ngwende F907
Nyakyusa

was not an individual one. Thus, a girl gave her formal consent in the marriage ritual, but the pressure on her to accept the husband selected for her by her kinsmen was almost irresistible. In the thirties Christian women who refused their husband's heir and lived alone, or married an unrelated man of their choice, were regarded by their pagan sisters as very daring, and little girls in pagan families took it as a matter of course that they should replace their dead sisters; today the right of a widow to choose whom she will marry is generally accepted, and the custom of replacing a dead woman by her sister has lapsed. 'Every girl wants her own husband nowadays', the old women say. Thus lineage obligations give way to individual freedom of choice in marriage. At the same time the rituals which emphasized the lineage are dropped or modified. The fearful boundary of a double birth no longer appals men and the twin ritual which used to bring together all the living members of a lineage of three generations is not celebrated at all. At a puberty ritual a pagan girl may be given the *ilipele* medicine, the symbol of 'the blood of the lineage' by her mother, but there is no seclusion and elaborate feasting, no sacrifice of the bull of puberty that her father's shades may 'move aside a little' to make way for the shades of her husband's lineage. Only at a funeral do kinsmen still gather and celebrate, for many still fear the shades, and at a funeral the heir is installed and the importance of property and the inheritance of it has not diminished one whit. As we have seen, the traditional religion was formulated in terms of kinship; the gods were senior kinsmen; but today God, *Kyala*, is no ancestor; to pagans as well as to Christians he is superior and supreme. Men are still classified by their lineages, and one of the topics of village questions is how Prince Charles can be heir to the British throne when his father is not of the house of Windsor; but already in the economic field, and increasingly in the religious, it is the family of parents and children which is now dominant, not the lineage.

Divorce is far more frequent than formerly, partly because women claim a greater freedom of behaviour than before, as well as the right of choosing their own husbands, and are supported by the courts. As one village headman put it, 'Formerly a father beat his daughter with a stick if she ran home and sent her back to her husband who also beat her.' The women reject the old pattern of subservience which was expressed in crouching to greet a man, and addressing him in a very deferential fashion; the men observe, and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

MEMBERSHIP OF VILLAGES

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(d) *Lupande* (Senior village of Generation IV)

Member	*Village of father*	*Village of father's father*	*Known in village*
1. Mwangile (VIII)	Igonda	Bujaga Isoko Lungu Igonda	Half-brother Half-brother married in Isoko Father's half-brother
2. Kibalo (Headman)	Kitali Father's home in Kilonde	Igonda Born in home village	Married half-brother of chief
3. Mkangamabili Mwajipaje	Igonda	Mwangomo's (C of) children	Half-brother of chief
4. Mwalimwile	Bujaga, Moved to Kilonde	Another children	None traced
5. Mwanisamba	Bujaga	Bujaga Moved to Nkala	Married daughter of chief's father's half-brother
6. Mwakalinga	Igonda	Igonda	None traced
7. Mwangoma	Kinyasa	Igonda	None traced
8. Mwalu	Igonda	Igonda	None traced
9. Mwakipanda	Igonda	Igonda	None traced
10. Mwakilasa	Kinyasa	Igonda	None traced
11. Mwakipokwa	Another children	Mwambanyi's children (C of)	None traced
12. Mwakipanda	Another children	Igonda	None traced
13. Mwakalinda	Mwangomo's children (C of)	Mwangomo's children (C of) Kabula	None traced
14. Mwamkilgila	Igonda	Lupande	None traced
15. Mwakinyalabe	Igonda	Mwalinga's children (C of)	None traced
16. Mwakasale	Kilonde	Lupande	None traced
17. Mwajipale	Another children	Another children	None traced
18. Mwamale	Isiki	Igonda Kinyasa	None traced
19. Kinyasa Mwajipaje	Bujaga	Isoko	Half-brother of chief's father
20. Mwangoba	Kinyasa	Igonda	None traced

In, out of twenty members, there are close kinsmen, and two are married to kinsmen of these three. The remaining three members are not connected by kinship ties.

[p. 224]

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

(2) *Kasesela* (Generation III)

Member	*Village of father*	*Village of father's brother*	*Element in village*	*Element elsewhere*
1. Crescentius	Kinyere		Elder brother of 2	One in Nkhata. Elder brother in another chiefdom (C 4)
2. Augustin	Kinyere	Was married	Younger brother of 1	
3. Symphorosa	Kinyere	Lugumbe Kasesela's chiefdom (C 4)		Brother in Great village. Brother in chief's town (C 4). Brother in plain. (All at first built in Kasesela).
4. Kilolo	Bujuge	(a) Bujuge (b) Kinyere	Half-brother of 5	Elder brother Ignatius, moved to C 48. Brother in Christian village Kasesela (at first built in Kasesela). Brother in Ishinga or south. Brother in Ichi (but away at work).
5. Mathew	Bujuge		Half-brother of 4	
6. Mwalumo	Bujuge	(a) Kinyere (b) Mwangomo's country (C 48) (c) Kilomelo	Half-brother of 7	Six full brothers, 4 half-brothers moved to other chiefdoms, another to Zambia. Daughter married Kilomelo, another married Nkhata.
7. Nasen	Bujuge	not married	Half-brother of 6	
8. Nathan	Bujuge	Kilomelo moved to Ignatius		His only son of another, 4 half-brothers in Nkhata.
9. Paloshal	Another chiefdom (C 25)	Nkhyanse		Father's younger brother's son headman of Ichinga.
10. Mwalikali				

Ie, out of ten members, there are one pair of brothers and two pairs of half-brothers, but all have close kinsmen (brothers, half-brothers, or father's brother's sons) in other villages or chiefdoms. Kasesela has diminished from fifty-three members in 1938 to ten in 1955. Many members have died and many have moved, some to the forest colony, some to the plain to plant rice, four to Lugumbe.

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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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Nyakyusa

(c) *Kinship* (Generation IV and V)

Sons (some omitted)		*Father*	*Father's village*
Andile	All brothers	Mwambe (130)	Mlyunga
Mijoni			
Jonjon			
Mkiele			
Pasile	Half-brothers	Mwambe (130)	Mlyunga
Yohaliko			
Lusili			
Kimwaiko			
Mkandikwile		Bwanaile	Mlambo
Andwanile		Nsali	Mlambo
Lalapwe		Mkolanyo	Mlambo
Bwakikwanile		Lusiwo	Mlambo
Anipwile		Mangile	Mlambo
Kafu		Gadin	Mlambo
Kawelile		Mwenyesi	Mlambo
Akiyowile		Mwenkundi	Mlambo
Bajeko		Mwengwi	Mlambo
Akumile		Gwilliam	Mlambo (Inherited in Lupanda)
Kajiwaw		Mwelwamba	Mlambo
Elyin		Antilio	Mlambo
Mwitingi		Simon	Mlambo
Nkolanya		Mwenyajo	Mlambo
Onjah		Mwenjaja	Milundi

i.e. out of twenty-three members, two are full brothers and six others are half-brothers. No other kinship connections were traced.

CONSANGUINEAL PRIESTS MENTIONED

Kilungulaje Kyamba Kindi Nyamiyaya Kilobeko	Hereditary Kings priests who come to Lubaga and visit Kaulile on the way
Kimwale Mwenelungulu Mwenkipili	Hereditary priests of Lubaga
Mwenukunda	Kaulile's eminent priest
Mwilukwa Nyawa	Hereditary priests of Mlyunga, the grove of Mwilukwalwe (90)
Kimagwa Ngolye Njilukwa	Village headmen of Mwaijunga (8a) and priests of his grove
Mwanhupwa Kalunja	Village headmen of Mwaikuga (130) and priests responsible for 'tossing out' of Mwanyilu (177)

Yet still she remains a daughter of her father's lineage and shares 613
in its rituals as well as in those of her husband's.

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established by the passage of cattle. The son-in-law becomes 'one 587
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[1] E. Fischer, *The Forgotten Language*; M. Gluckman, 'The Role of the Sexes in Wiko Circumcision Ceremonies', in *Social Structure*, edited by M. Fortes (1949).

8:WGem E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

over souls to the spirits, but when some member of a family or his wife or child falls sick the anger of the spirits is often suspected as a possible cause. There are usually other reasons suspected as well, and so the sickness is taken to a diviner for diagnosis. Various causes are suggested to the diviner and he selects one among them. If the anger of the spirits is selected then this senior kinsman must pray for the one who is sick, if he is to recover. When half-brothers live at a distance from one another, after their father and his brothers have died, then each may pray to the spirits to cure a little sickness in his own family but if the sickness persists then a message must be sent to the senior kinsman. And, as the anger of the spirits is due to wrong doing, the sinner must reform his ways as well.

The wrongs which cause the spirits to anger are usually breaches of family morality. If a son does not respect his father or insults him, if an heir neglects to feed and provide for the dead man's children, then when sickness falls on him or his own children it will probably be traced to the anger of the spirits at his behaviour.

Space does not allow any full analysis of religion in family life and in the relationships of kinsmen and affines. Not only the ancestor cult but witchcraft and magic are factors in them. A man's neglect of a wife or his cruelty to her may, it is believed, lead to his falling sick through her witchcraft and that of sympathetic neighbours; his relations with his father-in-law are affected by the fear that if he offends him, his father-in-law may, by magical means, kill his children, and so on.

Wider kinship groupings than the family gather at ceremonies and are recognized in the rules against incest. But there are no clans; there is no descent group continuous down the generations with a common name and definite membership. Each individual family has its own genealogies of kinsfolk, the effective kindred of a man and his son, or of two half-brothers are not all the same, while each single person is especially related by respect, affection and mutual obligations to particular kinsmen beyond his own family. Descent, as we have seen, is patrilineal except in the case of illegitimate children. A man asked for his *ekekalo* always recites first the names of his paternal forbears as far as he can remember. But if he is related through mother or grandmother to a chief he usually volunteers this fact as part of his *ekekalo*; and questions always elicit some knowledge of his mother's paternal kinsfolk and a statement that "they are my *ekekalo* too." Descendants of a common grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are to-day forbidden to marry, and no case of infringement has come to my notice; descendants of a common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry but, I am told,

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ababukwende) and their eldest sons are his two heirs in the chief- 643
tainship. Young girls, daughters of neighbouring chiefs, are 582
carried off with a show of force from their fathers' homes, by the 585
young chief's men, who themselves later contribute to the herd of cows sent to regularize the position. The two great wives are thus married not solely with the cows of their husband, but also with those of the men whose sons their sons will one day rule. The duty of arranging the match lies with the village headmen of [522]
the old chief, and it is said that they are often guided in their choice by dreams.

The girls who are carried off are just about to reach puberty, 643
and they stay at the house of one of the men of the old chief until 583
their periods begin. When both have reached puberty they are 585
initiated, not at their fathers' houses, as are ordinary girls, but in 881
the country of their husband, and both together. At their initiation the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the old retiring chief) play the part normally played by a girl's parents and their neighbours, while the young chief and his men take the usual part of a husband and his friends. And then, after the ceremonies are over, the two girls are given to the young chief as his wives. Houses are built for them separately, i.e. in the senior age-village of the new chiefdom for the first wife, in the next senior village for the second wife; and in this separation of dwelling place is already apparent the future division of the chiefdom between their sons.

Within the chiefdom, and among the wives and children of the 428
chief two 'sides' (*imihafo*) are recognized. Usually, in each coun- 616
try there are, at its beginning, at least two age-villages and half the wives of the chief on either side. This distinction of two sides is important in succession, a son from each side eventually inheriting half the country.

From the time of the 'coming out' of the two young chiefs till 643
the day of their own father's death there exists between him and 642
them a delicate balance of prestige and power. Each of the three, traditionally, has judicial authority in his own age-villages, but appeals in difficult cases may be taken from either of the young chiefs and their village headmen to the old chief and his village headmen, while the religious duties of chieftainship are exercised entirely by the old chief. But in the old days it was the young chief who fought and fed men. 'Young chiefs used to lead their

[512] his wife is called *ebuni*, like the wife of a "brother," not *ebuphe*. This appears to be the result of the law that a man may have to marry his "granddaughter." (See para. 5.)

601 Similarly a woman calls her "grandson" *ebuni*, and his wife *ebuni-mwimwapa*.

No distinction is made between the offspring of a "son" and that of a "daughter," either by a man or a woman.

"Grand-daughters" by marriage are not called *ebuni* by a man, nor are "grandsons" by marriage called *ebuni* by a woman; the term *mwimbula-mwimwapa* is used in either case. It is of interest to note, however, that the wives and husbands of these relations are called *ebuni* and *ebuni mwimwapa*, which is evidently a relic of the period when the whole tribe was divided into two classes, marriageable and unmarriageable; since a "granddaughter" by marriage belonged to the latter class, his or her spouse must be included in the former.

*[611] (5) All "granddaughters" are termed *ebuni*, except perhaps the sisters of the personal grandfather; some say that these should be classed as "sisters," or the sister of one's *mwimwapa* (grandfather), because *ebuni* would not be polite to the *mwimwapa* of one's father. Others deny this and include all granddaughters as *ebuni*, and it is doubtful whether the objection is not modern. The same applies to the "granddaughters" of a wife.

587 A man often has to marry his "granddaughters" on the death of his "grandfather," though if the latter were a chief or a rich man the heir would probably marry them as part of the property. The rule appears to be that it is the duty of any man to marry his "granddaughters" if they are destitute.

[512] 601 A woman calls all her "grandfathers" *ebuni*, though actual marriage is not permitted. It is difficult to say whether this is due to analogy with the relationship of a man to his "granddaughter," or is the corollary of that to his "grand-daughter." Since marriage with a "grand-daughter" is not uncommon in other tribes, it may be that it was originally the reason for a woman calling her grandfather *ebuni* among the Wangonde, but that the persistence of the terminology after such a marriage came to be regarded as inconvenient is partly due to analogy.

As a result of the similarity of relationship between grandparents and grandchildren the same term *mwimbula* is used for both. There was formerly a special term for grandparents (*mbuya*), but it is now obsolete.

601 604 (6) The relationship between mother's "brother" and "sister's" son is peculiar, in that the term is used reciprocally (*mwipwa*). A man calls the wife of his

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and by virtue of this great benefit were accepted as chiefs. Such is the myth (*vide infra*, p. 26). It is remembered that the chiefs of different groups such as the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, the Lugulu, and the Saku arrived at different times, but of the proportion of the immigrants to the former occupants, and of the proportion of men to women in the invading groups, we learnt nothing. Some suggest that the chiefs were lighter in colour than the previous inhabitants of the valley,[1] and the term *abatitu*, 'black people', is used for commoners as contrasted with chiefs. But chiefs intermarry freely with commoners and there is no observable difference in physical type between them and their people to-day. The Nyakyusa are without a clan system, and though kinship with a chief may be remembered for three (or perhaps even four) generations, the body of 'kinsmen of the chief' is not defined as it is in tribes which have a 'royal clan' like the Bemba or Pondo. Moreover, among the Nyakyusa the chief's advisers are never his kinsmen, but commoners. Sons or grandsons of a chief are ineligible as village headmen, who are the counsellors of the chief, and who had in the past very great control over him. The contrast is made between chiefs, *abanyafyale*, on the one hand, and commoners, *amafumu*, on the other, and the leaders of villages, chosen each generation by their predecessors (*vide infra*, p. 23), are the *amafumu par excellence*.[2] Words from this *-fumu* root mean 'chief' in various central Bantu languages (Bemba, Tumbuka, Nyanja); and it is tempting to suppose that the *amafumu* were the old chiefs conquered by the invading *abanyafyale*, but that is only a supposition. The important point for the contemporary social structure is that the village leaders are *commoners*; that their position is not hereditary, since they are selected afresh each generation; and that formerly they had very great power over the chief. This power has diminished considerably with the development of European administration. The Nyakyusa, indeed, were astounded to be told that the British

173 622 563 563 622 [618] [623]

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 10 (footnote).

[2] For this reason *ulifumu* was translated by Godfrey Wilson as 'great commoner', in 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. X (1936), and other papers, but this translation has considerable difficulties, and I have preferred to translate *ulifumu* as 'village headman' in the contexts in which it means the leader of the village, and 'commoner' or 'villager' in other contexts. It must be clearly understood that 'village headman' as used in this book means something quite different from 'headman' as used by the Administration (*vide infra*, p. 258).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

563 constitution (about which they asked many questions) was a
622 democratic one; for, they said, the Administration always supported the chiefs against the commoners.

●621 The villages to which commoner leaders are appointed differ from all other Bantu villages of which we have knowledge in that they consist of groups of age-mates, not groups of kinsmen; boys build with contemporaries and remain with them through life; girls join the villages of their husbands at marriage; therefore relatives, other than husband and wife and young children, do
602 not live together. Nevertheless kinship ties are important, for property circulates within the kinship group rather than within the village, and kinsmen are believed to be mystically interdependent, in a way in which fellow villagers are not. The most prized
[556] possession of the Nyakyusa are cattle, for cattle enable a man to marry, to live in comfort, to gain prestige by feasting his friends; and cattle pass along the roads of kinship. They pass between brothers, and half-brothers, and the sons of brothers; between fathers and sons; and between affines. Kinsmen also participate in common rituals, praying to common ancestors, and seeking protection from mystical dangers which are thought to travel, like
[578] cattle, along the roads of kinship. Ever fearful lest a quarrel among them should bring misfortune on all, they strive to live in harmony.

The range of kinship recognized varies somewhat with the status of the family concerned and the proximity and personalities of its members, but, generally speaking, economic and religious co-operation link the descendants of a common grandfather, and marriage between the descendants of a common great-grand-
[581] father is excluded. A legal marriage is effected by the passage of cattle from the groom's group to the bride's, and it is this passage which is said to create kinship (*ubukamu*), with the consequent mystical interdependence, between a man and his wife, and between the one partner in a marriage and the close kinsmen of
595 the other. Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan, and it is made possible by the ten years' difference in the average marriage age
428 of men and women. Girls are betrothed very young and finally join their husbands at puberty, while few pagan men marry under twenty-five. Inherited cattle are controlled by the older generation and polygyny is the prerogative of age. For property passes not directly from father to son, but from brother to brother,

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER II

VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

621 591 NYAKYUSA villages (*ifipanga*)[1] are formed by groups of boys or men, all roughly of the same age, together with the wives and young children of those who are married. Women belong to the villages of their husbands, young children to those of their fathers. Girls live at home until they are betrothed, after which they visit their future husbands periodically, and soon after puberty each joins her husband in his village. Boys, who marry later in life, leave home at about the age of ten or eleven and set up villages of their own.

a. The genesis of the village

857 231 Between the ages of about six and eleven boys sleep at their fathers' houses and herd their fathers' cattle. This is a full-time, if not a very arduous, occupation. The cattle are driven out about an hour or two after sunrise and return to be milked about 1 p.m.; after an hour they are again driven out and do not come back until sunset. The cattle of a group of neighbours, usually five to ten,[2] are herded together by their young sons; and so these boys spend all day together for several years of their lives. This group of boys is the germ of the future age-village; it is a community with a common activity in the herding of the cattle, with a leader and laws and customs of its own.[3]

591 561 857 When the boys reach the age of ten or eleven, two important changes usually take place in their lives. Firstly, they leave the herding of cows to their younger brothers, and themselves begin the business of hoeing the fields which will occupy them until they die; secondly, they no longer sleep in the houses of their fathers but join an age-village of boys. Nowadays the two changes usually, but not always, take place at the same time, and well before puberty.

[1] cf. Xhosa *intanga*, 'a company of persons or animals of equal age'.

[2] The herd group is smaller in young men's villages where few are cattle-owners, and a very rich man occasionally herds his cattle alone.

[3] G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 51–3.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

591 Before the establishment of peace by European authority, how-
231 ever, cattle were commonly herded by young men, armed, and
only the calves were entrusted to boys, who herded them near
857 the homesteads; therefore moving to a boys' village did not coin-
cide with the change of occupation. Even to-day it is not un-
common for some boys who have reached puberty to be found
herding cattle. One we knew herded his father's cattle although
he had reached puberty, because he had no younger brothers old
enough to take over, and there were only five or six boys in his
herd-group altogether. There are also cases where special circum-
stances put the age of moving later. In one age-village the boys
leave home a little later than usual because there are leopards
about and it is dangerous for small boys to walk from the village
of their fathers to that of the boys, after dark.

857 When a number of the sons of a village of married men have
reached the right age, their fathers give them a piece of land to
342 one side of the parent village on which to build. There they build
little huts of reeds for themselves, sufficiently well thatched to
keep out the heavy rain, and there they sleep (*vide* Plate II). The
building of the huts on this land begins in a playful manner,
before the boys move. While they are still herding cows and
sleeping at home they build miniature huts there in their spare
time, but do not sleep in them. When they move they build
slightly more substantial huts with better thatch. At the begin-
ning, when a group of boys starts a new village, or when boys join
one already formed, they do not all have huts for themselves:
two or three friends share a hut. But later, as they grow older,
each builds for himself.

857 Until he marries each boy hoes his father's fields in his father's
village and eats food cooked by his own mother at his father's
264 house, but he sleeps with his friends. Thus between the time
571 when he leaves home and his marriage each is a member of two
villages: economically he still belongs to that of his father;
socially to that of his own contemporaries. Though bachelors eat
at their parents' home, it is very rarely that they do not eat in the
company of their own friends. A bachelor does not simply go
home to eat by himself, but a group of bachelors, friends living
in the same boys' village, go round together eating at the house
of each one's mother in turn.

621 In an age-village of married men there are always several
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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

different herds of cattle; and it is not only those from the same group of herd-boys that set up a new village together, but all the sons of the age-village. Thus when a boy leaves the herd group he joins a larger community, including the friends of his own age who have herded cows with him, and many others as well. Every boys' village consists primarily of the sons of the member of an older village who originally gave the land for its building, but sons of other villages live there too.

The village begins with perhaps a dozen boys, and their younger brothers join them, one by one; but after some years, when the senior members of the boys' village are between sixteen and eighteen years old, the younger ones begin to be refused admittance to the village: 'they are children.' The young ones then either begin a new age-village of their own, or else join a village which has already been started by the sons of a nearby men's village a little junior to that of their own fathers. If you inquire who are the members of such and such a boys' village you are always told that they are the sons of a particular village of men, but detailed investigation reveals the presence of some sons of other men's villages as well. Brothers, half-brothers and other relatives are sometimes members of the same village, but more often not; and if they do belong to the same village that is because they are near each other in age, and were born in the same village, not because they are kinsmen.

The members of the older boys' village, which is now closed and no longer increases in numbers, begin to marry as they reach the age of about twenty-five. Getting married is often a gradual process; but it is not until he has his wife permanently with him that a young man can have fields of his own and eat the produce at his own place. The cultivation of land requires the co-operation of a man and woman, and cooking on any elaborate scale is a woman's business. As the young men marry their village expands. The site is not changed but the houses are built ever bigger and farther apart, and adjacent land is brought under cultivation. The boys' village with which we are best acquainted is in this transitional stage. It has fifty-three members altogether, the majority of whom are single; but some few are married, cultivate their own fields with their wives and eat food cooked by their wives in their own houses. Of those who are single some again are betrothed to girls who visit them from time to time, but each

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

582 still cultivates his father's fields and eats at his father's home. In
241 former days, we were told, the marriage age of men was even
621 later than it is at present (*vide infra*, p. 80). 'Perhaps after twenty a boy would be betrothed, but to a young girl, and he would wait eight years before she grew up.'

857 From the time boys begin to herd they recognize one of their number as a leader. 'When we herd cows as boys', a friend told us, 'there is always one who is obeyed by his fellows whatever he says. No one chooses him, he gains his leadership and his prestige by bodily strength. For always, when we are boys together among the cows, we vie with one another and dispute about going to turn back straying cattle, or about fetching fire to cook the food we have brought with us. And so we start fighting, and we go on fighting until one of us beats all his fellows completely and so becomes the leader. And then it is he who sends others to turn back straying cattle, to fetch fire and to collect firewood. And he is greatly respected. He settles quarrels too. What we quarrel about most as boys is a particular insult: one says to another: "You are only a child, you are, I am your senior." This is always happening and then it is the part of the one who is leader to set those two on to fight. We all stand round and watch and the one who first cries is proved the child.'

622 Later, when the boys have built apart from their fathers, one of their number is often appointed by the headman of their fathers' village to settle disputes between them. Some boys' villages have no such appointed leader, but many of them do. Such appointments are, however, temporary. It is only when political authority is transferred to their generation that the young men's permanent leaders are chosen.

b. The 'coming out' ceremony

561 Eight or ten years after the young men of the senior boys'
622 village of the chiefdom have begun to marry, their fathers hand
621 over the government of the country to them. This transfer of
643 authority is effected in an elaborate ceremony called the 'coming out' (*ubusoka*).

The 'coming out' is a series of legal acts by which the country of an old chief and his village headman (*amafumu*) is, with certain reservations, handed over into the possession and control of his

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

two senior sons and their respective village headmen. These legal acts are accompanied by much pomp and ceremony. It is at once the initiation of all the youth of the chiefdom into public life, the constitution of two new political units and the proclamation of two new chiefs. It consists not only of a series of legal acts but of religious ritual as well, action being taken to increase the personal qualities appropriate in a chief and his village headmen by treatment with medicines.

The 'coming out' comprises six main events: firstly, the public recognition of a number of age-villages of young men, and the selection of headmen to lead them; secondly, the magical treatment of young chiefs and headmen to make them dignified and powerful; thirdly, the public recognition of the two young chiefs; fourthly, a cattle raid; fifthly, the establishment of the young age-villages on adequate land; and sixthly, the marriage of the young chiefs.

When the eldest sons of his contemporaries reach the age of about thirty-three to thirty-five years the old chief is approached by his village headmen who say: 'The sons have grown up, let us make the "coming out" for them.' After a period of delay, for he is unwilling to relinquish his own honour and power, the old chief agrees, and the 'coming out' takes place. He fears lest he may fall ill from 'the breath of men' should he delay too long (*vide infra*, p. 134). His two heirs, together with all the boys and young men, whether married or single, who are sons of the old chief's contemporaries, are summoned to attend, according to their age-villages, at the old chief's principal house. When they arrive they wait there for several days, while the old village headmen discuss with their chief where to give the young men land, and whom they will select as headmen of the young villages. In many of the young village groups there are already leaders previously appointed by the village headmen of their fathers. If they have proved satisfactory their appointments are confirmed by the old village headmen; if not new ones are selected.

In selecting leaders of the young men's villages the old headmen look for men who are wealthy, who come from respected families, who have ability in judging cases, and are popular with their fellows; in the old days they looked also for courage and the ability to lead men in war. These qualities correspond to the village headman's functions. He should be hospitable to his

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

622 neighbours, he judges their cases; he is their leader at ceremonies
157 and in the old days he led them to war also. He represents their desires to the chief, and it is through him, and in consultation with him, that the chief gives orders. Besides this each headman
[754] (*ulifumu*) is believed to protect his own villagers from witchcraft, 'to watch over the country by night', to shield men and cattle from the spiritual forces of evil.[1] To fit them for this task, village headmen are treated with medicines at the 'coming out' to give them the power of seeing and fighting witches.

622 So important is this position of village headman that legal precautions are taken 'to prevent the village headman becoming a chief', as several informants have put it to us. It is illegal to choose a village headman from among the kinsmen of a chief, and it is illegal to elect the son of a village headman to that office in any age-village of his own contemporaries, though he may perhaps inherit the position in his father's village when his father dies.

622 To return to the 'coming out' ceremony: when the old men
621 have made up their minds, one of them goes among the crowd of young men, and catches hold of those they have chosen in order of seniority: first the one who is to be leader of the senior village of the first son of the old chief, then the leader of the senior village of his second son, then the leader of the next senior village of the first son, and so on. There are commonly eight age-villages of young men; of these four will belong to the chiefdom of the first son, four to that of the second. The eight new village headmen are now publicly known, four in each new chiefdom.

622 The young chiefs, together with the senior headman of each,
789 are then treated with medicines that they may be impressive (*nsisya*). From birth a chief undergoes periodical treatment to
643 make him impressive (*nsisya*) 'that we commoners may tremble before him'. The treatment at the 'coming out' is directed towards the same end: 'We treat him, then he will be altogether a chief, men will respect him!' The village headmen now drink the

[192] [1] The essential meaning of a word in one culture is often illuminated by the meaning of a word from the same stem among neighbouring people. In this connection it is significant that *ifumu* in Bemba and *mfumu* in Nyanja mean 'chief', but in Ankole *abafumu* means 'magicians' (including diviners) (*African Political Systems*, p. 145), and among the Sukuma *bafumu* is used in the same sense (*Africa*, Vol. XIX, p. 14). cf. H. H. Johnston, *A Comparative Study of the Bantu and Semi-Bantu Languages*, Vol. II, p. 270.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

spear, and magic horn. In this way the new chiefs are shown to their people.

Chiefs who are to be independent now separate, each moving off with his men to the place where the senior age-village of that chiefdom will eventually be built. All fire in the country is extinguished, even the fires in the homesteads of the old men, and in each of the new independent chiefdoms new fire is made, ceremonially, by the senior headman of the chiefdom and his fellow next in rank. One holds a lion-bone while the other twirls a medicated stick in a groove in the bone. The senior headman and his second each gives fire to the village headman immediately junior to him, and then the latter in turn to his immediate junior, until each of the headmen has fire. At this point the future division of each new chiefdom is foreshadowed, for the second senior headman in each new chiefdom is recognized as the leader of one side of the country. As each village headman lights his fire he calls: 'Come men of such and such a village to me!' and they take fire from him.

Since we are not primarily concerned with symbolism in this book we shall not enter at length into the interpretation of these events.[1] It must suffice to remind our readers of the Nyakyusa myth that their chiefs came down from the Livingstone mountains ten generations ago bringing fire with them, and that they found the previous inhabitants of the valley, who became their subjects, without fire, and eating their food raw. The extinguishing of the old fires and lighting of new is interpreted by the Nyakyusa as a symbol of the new chieftainship. A chief with whom we were well acquainted explained it thus: 'The fire is the fire of lordship (*umoto botwa*). The old chieftainship is coming to an end, the new has come. They extinguish the fires in all the homes, those of the young men and those of the old men, then they make new fire which is taken to every home. For formerly Mwangamilo [the old chief] would have had little power [after the 'coming out'], Mwakyusa and Reubeni [his sons] would have ruled.' But why fire? we asked. 'Because of old,' they relate, we chiefs came with fire, the commoners had not yet got it, they ate raw food only. When we came we slept in men's houses and we made fire and cooked food. Men were astonished, and said:

[1] A full analysis of the symbolism of one ritual necessitates a comparison of all the rituals of the society, which will be made in another book.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

"Ha! what's this?" They were burned; so they said: "These are chiefs because they brought this fire." It is this they remember, even to-day. . . .' And another informant explained: 'The fire means (*kukuti*) that a new chief has come, he brings fire, we throw away the old fire in the house.'

Having lighted their fires the young men cut bamboos and build temporary shelters for themselves, making one or more huts according to their numbers. It is forbidden for them to sleep in old huts, nor may they build on the site on which they lived as boys. Usually their first huts are on what was formerly pasture land, and later their fathers move aside to make room for the new generation. On the new site the two senior headmen of the new chief, together with a doctor, plant with magical ritual two branches of a *ficus* (known in Nyakyusa as *iliyabe*)—a species which is important economically since the bark of saplings provides the traditional dress of Nyakyusa women. These trees, known as *ulupando* and *umpandapanda*, are planted where the future boundary will run between the two halves of the young chief's country, and the senior headman (who is leader of the senior half of the country) builds his house near where the *ulupando* has been planted. He and his colleague, together with the doctor, proceed, after planting the trees, to set up the hearth-stones of his hut. Again magic is performed. Nyakyusa informants were not agreed as to the symbolism of these trees, as they were about the symbolism of the new fire. The root *ukupanda* means to plant a crop, or to set up, or establish the hearth-stones of a house; it is used also for establishing, or treating, with medicines. Some informants interpreted the *ulupando* as the chief and *umpandapanda* as his wife, saying:'We are planting the chief and his wife.' Others said that the two trees represented the two senior headmen of the country, another that they represented the chief's two senior wives. What is certain is that *ulupando* is regarded as more important than *umpandapanda* and that both are taboo. No one may cut the trees. If anyone breaks the taboo it is believed that lions and leopards (closely associated with chiefs) will roar at night, and treatment by a doctor will be necessary to still them. It is also widely believed that the strength of the chief is associated with the growth of the trees. 'If these trees go dry the reign will not be successful, the chief will be defeated in war. If they flourish and grow the reign will be successful, the chief is

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 643 784 [764] a ruler.' It is relevant to add that cuttings of this tree strike easily in the soil and climate of Nyakyusa country. When a chief dies he is buried beside his trees, and gradually a thicket—a sacred grove—forms round them.

The young men spend much time feasting and dancing. Formerly not only did they raid cattle for food from neighbouring chiefdoms, but they also took cattle, milk, and bananas from their fathers' villages. And they still do the latter, for they say: 'We are now the owners of the country.' The milk and bananas are often sent by the old chief, but 'if the chief is stingy, they teach him a lesson by going and *taking* bananas, saying: "We are important people."' Great emphasis is laid on this right of the young men to take food: one group, the mates of the first heir of a senior chief, boasted to us: 'We came out with grandeur, we ate many men's cattle.'

342 621 After a month or two the members of each new village move off to build on a site of their own, and the wives of those who are married join them. Wives do not come to the first temporary shelters. The senior of the new villages remains on the site of the temporary shelters where fire was made, the ritual trees planted, and the hearth-stones of the senior headman established with magic. Gradually each member builds himself a permanent hut.

621 561 The old men move aside to make room for their sons. If land is short they may move on to the site on which a boys' village formerly was, or there may be other land available. Whatever the position, adequate land must be provided for the young men's villages. And, we were told, 'We old men are glad to move, we are glad our sons are so many and we leave the land to them.' Or again: 'The old men move because new fire has come; the young men have made themselves into new people, hence they cannot build on their old sites but on new ones. Perhaps the old men will succeed them, for they may build in the boys' village where their sons were, or if there is space they go elsewhere. But the old men rejoice greatly, for their sons have "come out".' Nevertheless there are sometimes disputes between villages of different generations regarding a particular site (*vide* Document, p. 188).

643 582 585 A few months after the 'coming out' each of the two young chiefs marries two wives. A young chief may be married already; but the two whom he now takes rank as his great wives (*abehe*

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the establishment of the mother of an heir in each, the future division of the country is foreshadowed. Finally, it is the occasion on which power is formally handed over to the younger generation, and the success of the new headmen as war leaders is put to the test.

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c. Relations between villages within one chiefdom

Within each chiefdom, then, there are two sides, each under a senior headman. On each side are two or more age-villages of contemporaries of the chief—men of the ruling generation. Attached to these villages are boys' villages made up of the younger brothers and sons of contemporaries of the chief. They live separately from their fathers and may have their own village leaders, but legally each boys' village is subject to the authority of the headman of its parent village. On each side there are also two or more villages of old men, contemporaries of the chief's father, whose headmen have ritual functions. Each village established at a 'coming out' ceremony has considerable autonomy under its own headman, but it is subject to the senior headman of the side it belongs to in two ways: cases not settled by a village headman go to the senior headman of the side, and a senior headman leads the villages of his side in war and communal hunts. Even villages of old men are subject to the authority of the senior headman of the ruling generation on the side of the country where they live. Boys and young men of the generation which had not yet 'come out' used to fight and hunt as village groups under the leadership of the senior headman (of their fathers' generation) on the side of the country to which they belonged. Whether or not each boys' village was also subject in war and chase, as in legal disputes, to the authority of the headman of its parent village is not clear. Certainly each boys' village formed a defined segment within any larger group.

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To recapitulate, there are always villages of three generations in existence—those of contemporaries of the late chief, the headmen of which have ritual functions; those of mature men, contemporaries of the ruling chief, whose headmen have administrative and military functions; and those of boys and young men, contemporaries of the heir, who have not yet 'come out', and who fight under the leadership of their fathers' senior headman.

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[631] Sometimes, as we shall see presently, villages of a fourth generation exist also.

561 621 Each age-grade, or generation, covers a span of 30 to 35 years, and each village comprises an age-set with a span of 5 to 8 years, though this is longer in sub-chiefdoms (*vide infra*, p. 37). The average age of members in each grade varies with the date of the last 'coming out' ceremony. Just before the ceremony the elders with ritual functions are those over 65 or 70; the mature men of the ruling generation those between 35 and 65; and the 'boys' who have not yet come out, those between 10 and 35. Just after the ceremony the ruling generation consists of those between about 10 and 35, anyone over 35 being an elder. Those just too young to participate in one 'coming out' may be just too old to participate in the next. The village of Katumba in Mwaipopo's country was in this position: it had been created after the 'coming out' of the young chief Mwankuga, but informants were uncertain whether or not it would be established as a separate village at the 'coming out' of his heir Mwanyilu (*vide* Document, p. 183).

622 643 561 621 The two senior headmen of a new chiefdom are chosen from the two senior villages established at a 'coming out' ceremony, so that a commoner's chance of holding high office is greatest when he is just a little older than a chief's heirs. The senior village of one generation begets the senior villages of the next (*vide* Document, pp. 181-5). Thus, though the son of a village headman in one generation cannot become a village headman in the succeeding generation, there is a tendency for leadership within the chiefdom to pass from one *group* of men to their sons. Those who participate in a 'coming out' while very young tend to have least authority in the country, and are superseded when still under forty by the generation of their sons. The immediate contemporaries of a chief, i.e. those with whom he lives during boyhood, have a special bond with him all through life; and it may sometimes happen that when a chief dies young and is replaced by a brother (his own son being too young to inherit) a junior village comes into prominence because its members have been 'the companions' of the new chief. Bulindanajo in Mwaipopo's country was a village of this kind: Mwaipopo I had died young, and was succeeded by his brother Mwaipopo II ('Mwambene') who had 'come out' as a youth in Bulindanajo; and his immediate contemporaries from that village maintained a special bond with him.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Theoretically the territorial arrangement is one in which the villages of the ruling generation lie at the centre of the country, each surrounded by satellite villages of their sons, while smaller villages of old men lie on the boundaries. In practice—at least nowadays—the pattern is more complex, with old men's villages squeezed in between those of the ruling generation. From the time of its establishment as a separate chiefdom at the 'coming out', the future division of the country is adumbrated: there is a senior headman in each half of the country with villages subordinate to him, and the mother of an heir in each half. On the boundary between the halves stand the ritual trees, landmarks for all to see. 631 621

Age and locality coincide, while kinship cuts across local grouping, fathers and sons, and very often brothers, being in different villages. But kinsmen tend to be established in the same side of a country, and so to remain within one chiefdom. Kinship terms are extended in some measure to the villages of the chiefdom, which are classified as those of 'our fathers', 'our elder brothers', 'our young brothers', and 'our sons'. Women have no direct share in the age-organization: their membership of a village turns on their relationship to some man—father, husband, husband's heir—and the age-range of women within one village is very wide. 621 602 [562]

Villages vary considerably in size. Boys' villages, as we have seen, begin with a dozen members or less, and the villages of old men are often very small also; we knew one with only 10 households, another with 11. The villages of young and middle-aged men commonly vary between 20 and 50 households, with 30 as a fair average in the hills. In Mwaipopo's country there were 540 taxpayers on the roll and we recorded 19 established villages and 6 boys' villages.[1] Some members of the boys' villages, and some elderly men, were not on the tax-roll, so that the average was over 20 boys or men in each village. Villages in the plain are somewhat larger, averaging around 40 households. 621

Men's villages are usually subdivided into sections under the leadership of assistant headmen, appointed by the headman of the village. These assistants do not share in the 'coming out' cere- 621 624

[1] *Vide infra*, pp. 181 ff. The tax registers are no guide to the number of villages since in them several villages are commonly lumped together as one under a senior village headman.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 mony, and are clearly distinguished from those who do. Indeed they may be appointed at a considerably later date. The qualities
624 looked for in them, however, are similar to those looked for in the village headmen, namely, wisdom in dealing with men, generosity, wealth, and the respect of their neighbours. They are expected to settle disputes, to pass on the orders of their chief or village headman to the men under them, to entertain their neighbours, and 'to watch over the country by day and by night'. On the hot Lake-shore plain, where the cattle are brought in before noon to stand in the shade of the bananas and are protected from insects by the smoke of a fire specially kindled for the purpose, an assistant headman is called 'he of the heap of hot ashes' (*ugwakyemo*), implying that he is the leader of the group whose cattle are herded together. 'He of the heap of hot ashes' is responsible both for the cows and for their masters. 'If the cows give no milk he will call the ten friends and warn them that if there is a witch among them he will be driven away.' Again, the extent of an assistant headman's influence depends very largely on his personal popularity. 'The village headman chooses a man of wisdom and says: "Build here with your friends": he is there first, and, if he is charitable (*mololo*), more people will come.' Generally speaking the assistants are more important in the large villages of the plains than in the smaller villages of the hills.

621 The distinction between the sub-divisions of a village and two separate villages is theoretically quite clear for the villages of men, since each independent village has been formally established at a 'coming out' ceremony. But in practice the distinction is somewhat blurred; for large villages often split *after* the 'coming out' ceremony into sections which operate very much as independent villages. This became apparent when we analysed in detail the villages of Mwaipopo's chiefdom (*vide* Document pp. 181-5) and found, besides the nineteen established villages, five village-sections which were treated in many respects as independent villages. Boys' villages remain somewhat fluid until the 'coming out'; but those offshoots of a parent village which have been closed to younger brothers may be regarded as separate villages.

361 Boys build their huts close together and plant bananas round them (*vide* Plate II). Then, as they grow older and marry, they build larger huts and space them further apart; but the homestead

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

361 of a married man is close to those of his neighbours, his banana grove probably adjoining theirs, while the main garden-lands of the whole group are all together at a distance (*vide* Plate III). Boundaries between age-villages are thus not always apparent to a stranger. A solid hundred acres or so of houses and bananas may turn out to consist of two or three villages, each with its own organization, and each having a block of garden-lands separate from the others.

If any question arises about the village a man belongs to, the points discussed are: where he has built and where he cultivates —i.e. to what village the land he uses belongs; with whom he herds his cows; and which village headman he goes to in case of a dispute. Membership of a village is therefore defined primarily in terms of economic co-operation and political allegiance.

d. Moving

621 The age-system is somewhat modified by men moving from one village to another. When a man dies his heir frequently comes 166 and lives where the dead man was living, so becoming a member of his age-village. A man's heir is his full brother next to him in [628] age, and only when all the full brothers of a family have died does the property pass to the eldest son of the eldest brother. The difference in the ages of a man and his heir is often, therefore, only a few years; but even if the difference be great, and the heir many years younger than his new neighbours, he is now treated as their contemporary. He sits with them at ceremonies and he shares their rights at any division of meat.

621 Were all heirs to remove to the homesteads of those who had died, the villages of old men would, of course, continue to exist indefinitely. In fact they do not. In Mwaipopo's chiefdom there remained only one small village of old men, the grandfathers of the generation which had last 'come out'. Other villages of this grandfathers' generation were remembered by name; the heirs of former members sometimes used the old name; but they did not live together as a group; they were members of other villages of their own generation. Even the heir of the headman of each old village, who acted as a priest, lived in some other village. It was said that these grandfathers' villages would disappear even in name when Mwaipopo, the father of the young chief died. No

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 villages of the great-grandfathers' generation survived, even ritually (*vide* Document, pp. 881–5).[1]

166 Men also move from one village to another and they do not always join a village of their exact contemporaries. A stranger may come and be granted land in a village even though he is considerably older or younger than the bulk of its members. Such movement from one village to another is now very considerable: we estimated that at least 80 per cent of the married men have at some time or other moved from the chiefdom in which they first cultivated gardens of their own. There is also movement from village to village within a chiefdom.

[681] Everyone agreed that moving is not something new. In the past a convicted witch was expelled from his village, and sometimes from the chiefdom; thieves and adulterers were also expelled or fled to take refuge with another chief (*vide infra*, pp. 118–9). But it is probable that movement between villages has increased greatly since the imposition of European control. The main [759] reason for moving nowadays is, as we have said, the fear of witchcraft. Subsidiary reasons are the desire to get suitable land for cultivating cash crops, the desire to be near some centre of employment (such as Tukuyu or Rungwe), and the desire to live with others of like mind, as fellow Christians or fellow pagans, fellow Moravians or fellow adherents of the 'Watch Tower' (*vide infra*, pp. 40–3).

166 Women move from one village to another even more often than men, for, not only do wives move with their husbands, but 591 a girl commonly marries a man of a village other than that in 587 which she grew up, and is later inherited by a kinsman of her dead husband who lives in yet another village. Since first wives are usually ten years younger than their husbands, and junior wives may be forty or fifty years younger, most women are inherited at least once during their lives, and some are inherited [586] several times. The modern high divorce rate accelerates this long-established circulation of women from village to village.

[1] It is possible that the existence of villages of four generations was due to the fact that Mwaipopo continued to live long after the 'coming out' of his heir Mwankuga—a survival not usual in traditional practice (*vide supra*, p. 30).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

e. Variation in the basic form of village organization

The splitting of a chiefdom into two at the 'coming out', the division of each country into two sides, the establishment of two age-villages of men in each half, and the development of two boys' villages attached to each village of men: all this division and sub-division into two equal parts creates the basic form of Nyakyusa political organization. But there are frequent variations from it. Formerly, in large chiefdoms sometimes three or even four sons went through the 'coming-out' ceremony, each with his own village headmen, and each setting up an independent chiefdom. Very often, we were told, a chief would build a separate royal homestead (*ikitangalala*) for his favourite wife, and her son would 'come out' with his two senior brothers and inherit a small country subordinate to one of them. Again, the division of an old chief's country into two was not always accepted by the young men concerned; quarrels and fighting between them were common and the position established at the 'coming out' was sometimes modified by war. If one of the two decisively defeated the other, he took all his brother's cattle and reduced him to a subordinate position. The land of the Nyakyusa is full of such minor chiefdoms; by the clerks who collect tax they are described as 'villages', but they are radically different from villages in their constitution; for, while they often consist only of a few score families, they are themselves articulated into age-villages, and have at their head not an elected village headman (*ulifumu*) but a hereditary chief (*umalafyale*). A minor chief marries in the ordinary way, like a commoner, and only one of his sons inherits his chieftainship; while his chiefdom, owing to its small size, is often simply divided into two villages, one for the old, one for the young men. 621 643

There is no separate 'coming out' ceremony for a minor chiefdom but the heir goes through the ceremony with his superior, remaining with him during and after the fire-making ceremony. His mates form one village under their own headman, who is subordinate to one of the two senior headmen of the new independent chief, taking fire from him. Great emphasis is laid on the fact that no separate fire, kindled by friction, is lighted for a subordinate chief. 643

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

salary to him. This reduces the second son to the position of a minor chief as effectively as a defeat in war might have done in the old days. But, while the action of warfare only occasionally led to the subordination of one of the brothers, this action of the Government does so invariably, and always subordinates the younger brother. When a senior chief dies, on the other hand, the salary is usually divided; the bulk of it goes to the first son, together with the position of senior chief, while the second son is given the salary of an ordinary chief. 643 171

Nevertheless, whether the junior brother is to become a chief in receipt of a salary or not, he still goes through the 'coming out' ceremony with his brother, and is apportioned villages and headmen. Even in a country in which there are several minor chiefs there still is the division into two, some being regarded as subordinate to the senior heir, and the others to the junior. Division of a chiefdom into two at the 'coming out' is the basic form which is maintained, at least ceremonially, despite all modifications.

The introduction of Courts and salaries has brought a new element into the relationship between the old chief and his heirs. Only one of them can receive the salary and they commonly dispute about it. Quarrels are particularly frequent over the position of senior chief, for the presidency of a Court carries with it a relatively large salary. Old senior chiefs cling to the position long after their sons have 'come out'. There is no compulsory superannuation of chiefs, and the traditional mechanism for getting rid of an old chief when his sons were ready to take over—strangulation by his councillors—no longer operates. The old headmen remain in power along with the old chief. Thus one effect of British Administration in Nyakyusa country has been to maintain the older generation in power much longer than was traditionally usual, and to delay the assumption of full responsibility for government by the younger generation.. 643 177 578

Another modern change which has far-reaching effects is the omission in some chiefdoms of the 'coming out' ceremony. When there is no 'coming out' the old men do not move aside to make room for their sons, and consequently the territorial demarcation between villages of old and young becomes blurred. Among the neighbouring people of Ngonde the 'coming out' ceremony has been dropped. There boys still build apart from their fathers, and the villages of young and old are more or 643 177 621

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 less separate, but as time goes on the demarcation between them becomes less and less clear. In most chiefdoms of the
177 Nyakyusa the ceremony is still observed, but in the country of Porokoto, near Rungwe mission, it has not been performed for a
621 generation, and there the territorial separation between young and old is much less definite than in other chiefdoms. The maintenance of the age-village system is ultimately dependent upon the moving aside of the old men in each generation to make room for their sons.

The reason commonly given for the omission of the ceremony in Ngonde is that since the country has become more densely populated there is no longer room for two chiefs to divide the country of their father. The old system of division was adapted to an expanding population in a relatively empty country; and the two young chiefs ordinarily ruled a greater area, and more men, than their father. Further, it is said, the ritual was in one aspect a preparation for war, and fighting between chiefdoms has ceased. These explanations are obviously not adequate, since the ceremony is still performed in Nyakyusa chiefdoms in which there is neither room for expansion, nor war. Its omission may be related rather to the general abandoning of traditional rituals in Ngonde. Forty-five per cent of the people of Ngonde, including many leading men, are professing Christians, and there is a very general scepticism of the efficacy of traditional rituals. This scepticism extends even to those who are not Church members.

643 In Porokoto's chiefdom the 'coming out' was omitted partly
191 because of a dispute over the succession; but there, also, many of the traditional rituals are not regularly performed (as they are in other parts of Nyakyusa country), because the proportion of Christians is high since Porokoto's chiefdom adjoins the main Moravian mission station, Rungwe, and because pagan faith in these rituals has therefore been shaken. As Porokoto (who is not a professing Christian himself) put it, when explaining why he had not performed the twin ritual for his own twin daughters: 'We see that nothing happens to the Christians when they omit the rituals, so we begin to say "What value have they?"' Thus not only are Christians forbidden by their Churches to participate in the ritual acts of the 'coming out' but pagans themselves begin to doubt their necessity.

The presence of Christians further complicates the traditional

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

village organization since many of them live in separate Christian villages, or sections of villages. When the first German missionaries arrived among the Nyakyusa in 1891, they bought land from the chiefs and village headmen at the different points at which they decided to settle, and villages of Christian converts have grown up on this land. The nucleus of these villages consisted of Ngonde workmen who came from Karonga (where a Scots mission was already established) to help the Germans build their mission houses. Later, local Nyakyusa who came to work at the mission stations built there too, and a party of ninety slaves, rescued by the German administration from the Arab leader, Mlozi, were given into the care of the missionaries and settled on the land they had bought. These slaves were from other tribes, not Nyakyusa, and there was difficulty in repatriating them to their home villages. The foreigners and Nyakyusa who remained on mission land were those who accepted Christian teaching. Practically all the early converts were already working for the missionaries and living near them before their baptism, and later converts were encouraged to move out of their pagan villages and join the new villages of Christians on mission land. On the other hand, any who left the Church, or who were suspended for practising polygyny or for some other cause, were, and still are, liable to be turned off mission land by the missionary in charge. Thus these villages comprise only professing Christians.

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In the villages on mission land there is a certain division of authority between Church and State. Up to 1914 such villages were treated as being outside the control of any chief. A Nyakyusa informant described the position thus: 'The missionaries said that they had bought their land and they would not admit any authority of the chief over it. They collected the taxes for the (German) Government themselves. The chief never sent into "European country" (*KiSungu*) for anything. The people there did not cook for him. The missionary used to be the chief in the European country; but since the English came it is different.' Under the system of Indirect Rule the administrative authority of chiefs over Africans living on mission-owned land is recognized; taxes are paid through the chief, and civil cases between Christians may be taken to the chief's court (*vide infra*, p. 138). But chiefs still treat Christians living on mission land rather differently from those living on land which has not been so allocated. They

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

are, for example, chary of calling out Christians to carry loads when a Government official comes by wanting porters, or of sending their messengers into the mission villages when they require food for any purpose. The leaders of the villages on mission land are not headmen appointed at the 'coming out' (in which the Christian villages do not share), but 'elders' or 'peacemakers' appointed by the Church (usually the missionary and 'session'); and it is under such a leader that the members of a village on mission land rally when they are called out to co-operate in some activity, such as a pig-hunt, in which each village acts as a unit.

Even on mission land, however, the traditional village organization and age-grouping are in some measure maintained. Boys leave their fathers' houses well before they reach puberty and build together a little distance away. There they are joined by younger brothers until the village is closed and the youngsters are told to start a new village of their own. Where there is plenty of land, as at Itete mission in Selya, the division between the generations is still quite clear, but where good building sites are scarce, as on Rungwe mission land, the divisions are blurred. As we have seen, the maintenance of clear territorial divisions between the generations depends upon the old men moving aside and leaving the greater part of the land for the more numerous ruling generation. Such a movement never occurs on mission land, which is not part of the land of any chief. It follows that territorial separation of age groups cannot there continue for long.

Many Nyakyusa Christians nowadays prefer not to live on mission land, on the ground that there is less security of tenure, and less opportunity to develop coffee planting, on mission land than off it (*vide infra*, p. 48). At the same time the Moravian and Berlin missions have ceased to press their early policy of gathering converts at mission stations,[1] so that more and more Christians are coming to live intermingled with pagan neighbours. Very often, however, Christians choose to gather in one section of a village: scholars who have decided to become Christians often get permission to build near their school; they choose to move out of the pagan villages in which they have been living in order to

[1] The Scots mission in Ngonde never sought to gather its converts into separate villages, recommending rather that Christians should remain in their own homes and influence their pagan neighbours.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

build with Christian contemporaries, and sometimes the teacher is himself quite a young man and builds with them. Members of two independent churches, the Watch Tower[1] and the followers of Ngemela, have also built apart with fellow believers. Each such group has its own name, and a sense of unity, and its religious leader is recognized as the leader in secular affairs also, but politically it is a section of a larger pagan village of contemporaries. We know of no case in which a purely Christian group living off mission land has been given status as a village at the 'coming out'.

Since the same word, *ikipanga*,[2] is used both for a village and its sub-divisions the distinction between village and village-section is often not clear in ordinary speech, but it is apparent at the 'coming out', and in legal procedure.

[1] The Watch Tower (Jehovah's Witnesses) is of course a world organization, but Nyakyusa followers were organized under their own leaders and so far as we could discover were subject to no outside supervision between 1935 and 1938.

[2] *Ikipanga* is also used sometimes for the following of a chief, and nowadays for a congregation or church; cf. the Xhosa *ibandla*.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

decided by the old village headmen and chief in consultation, at the commencement of the 'coming out' ceremony. This moving aside of the old men is an essential part of the ceremony and occurs even when there is unoccupied land available. For example, at the 'coming out' of Mwankuga, Mwaipopo's heir, the old men moved aside to make room for their sons, although there is a large area of unoccupied land in the chiefdom, which is slowly being colonized by Mwaipopo's men. 423

Although the main redistribution is at the 'coming out', later readjustments are common enough. If a particular men's village attracts many members, and these members become wealthy in wives and children, then it may be necessary for the old men to move aside a second time, to make yet more room for their sons. The senior headman of the side of the chiefdom concerned, in consultation with the chief and other village headmen, has the power to make equitable adjustments in the land holdings of the villages of his side. We watched one village, whose numbers had diminished, being moved to make more room for a junior one which had flourished. But so long as its members remain together, a village retains its name and identity, though its site may be moved more than once. 'A village', the Nyakyusa say, 'consists in men, not in land.' 621 423 [622]

Boundary disputes between villages of a chiefdom are not unusual. In the old days these often led to war. Nowadays they are taken before the Court, whence there is an appeal to the federal court, the District Officer, the Provincial Commissioner and thence to the High Court (cf. p. 137). One such case, which we observed, had dragged on for years because the chief concerned, who happened to be president of the Court, feared to give judgment lest he be bewitched by the village which lost the case (cf. Document p. 191). 691

The division of the land allotted to each village lies with the members of that village, under the leadership of their own headman. The village headman himself, and other prominent individuals in the group, get first choice of sites: a son does not have a prescriptive right to the building site and gardens of his father when the old men move aside for their sons. 'If you are prominent, and you like your father's old site, that's all right, the others agree; but if you are unimportant ("light"), no; one of the important men takes it; *you* have no power.' Certain building and garden 425 554

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

574 African churches which countenance polygyny. The difficulty is
184 partially overcome in some well-to-do Christian families by hiring labour to work in their fields and to fetch water and wood, and by offering visitors coffee or tea, which are easily prepared, in place of home-brewed beer; nevertheless the conflict between
[182] the value of hospitality (to which pagan and Christian alike subscribe, though they define it rather differently) and the value of monogamy, is often acute.

●621 The mutual obligations of neighbours are not confined to feeding one another, for neighbours share with relatives the obligation of giving sympathy and assistance at the various crises in Nyakyusa life; the concept of *ukwangala* includes keeping on good terms with people by being sympathetic and obliging.

764 All the members of a village (except young children) are
621 obliged to attend every burial of an adolescent or adult in that village; they go to mourn the death of a neighbour or condole with one who is burying a 'son', for if a man dies while his father (or father's full brother, or his own senior brother) is yet alive, he is often buried in his 'father's' homestead.[1] Where a youth or man is buried by his 'father', his fellow villagers must attend the funeral also, but boys and young men need not go to a funeral in their fathers' village unless it is a village-mate of their own who is being buried.

[754] Funerals are occasions for feasting and dancing, so the obligation 'to mourn one another' (*ukulelanela*) does not press hardly, and the Nyakyusa feeling is that no one would fail to come unless he were a witch, and fearful lest his victim rise from the grave and denounce him. 'If a man does not go to his neighbour's burial then at once people say: "It was you who bewitched him. Why else do you not come to bury him?" ' Failure to come is certain evidence that the truant is 'a harsh man who does not keep ōn good terms with people (*nkali, atikwangala kanunu nabandu*)'.

764 One neighbour, 'he who went about most with the dead man', is appointed by the headman of the village to help the relatives dig the grave, and village neighbours must also bring small gifts of food and firewood for the entertainment of the many guests.

[1] A married man whose 'fathers' are dead, or do not choose to exercise their right to bury him, is buried at his own home, and a woman who has borne a child is buried at her husband's home.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Food (other than meat) is provided on the day of the burial by 764
he women of the home at which the burial takes place, on the
ucceeding day by visiting relatives, and on the third day by
illage neighbours. Women neighbours, like woman relatives, [431
ften bring gifts of bark-cloth belts (*amakiba*) with which to bind 292]
p the bellies of their bereaved friends, who are all atremble and
ull of fear, and so support them. These belts symbolize the sym-
athy of friends in the fearful grief of the mourners. 'If a woman
ears many belts at a burial that means that she has many friends;
er passionate grief is comforted by their friendship.'[1] And
eighbours, like relatives and close friends from other chiefdoms,
ay bring cloths which are used to wrap the corpse and bind up
e bellies of the chief mourners. But these gifts of food, fire-
ood, belts, and cloth are the limit of a neighbour's obligations;
ery rarely does a neighbour bring a bull to kill for the funeral
east, whereas close kinsmen and affines are obliged to provide a
ull or cow for this purpose if they have one. And neighbours
ke virtually no share in the elaborate ritual which follows for
leansing relatives from the contagion of death, driving the
ought of the deceased out of their minds, and bringing back his
pirit to bless the home. Their only part is to bring small gifts of
illet from which to brew the beer drunk at the close of this ritual.

At an ordinary birth there is very little ceremony and the [844]
illage as a group is not concerned, though close friends will help
e mother during her confinement, fetching wood and water for 621
er, and bringing occasional gifts of cooked food; but twin births 845
re regarded as fearful and dangerous, and an elaborate ritual is 783
erformed to cleanse relatives from the contagion which, if left
ntreated, is believed to lead to serious swelling of the arms, legs, [753]
nd stomachs, accompanied by diarrhoea. Relatives are treated
ith many medicines, while village neighbours are sprinkled
ith one only, but their cattle, especially the cattle herded with
ose of the man who has begotten twins, are thought to be in
anger. At one twin ritual we watched there was some discussion
hether all the cattle of the age-village should be treated, or
nly those of the herd-group to which the father of the twins
elonged. Finally it was decided that on previous occasions all
e cattle of the village had been treated, and a message was sent

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. III (1939), p. 12.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 to bring all the herds of the village for treatment. The father of these twins explained that neighbours would suffer less than 783 relatives, if left untreated, but 'their legs would ache a little 621 *because we eat with them*'. And here we come to an idea which [264] appears in many situations in Nyakyusa life, the idea that contagion is spread through eating together. Relatives of parents of twins are not thought to be in danger until they eat or drink with one of the parents: the ritual is performed so that they may eat together safely. Similarly a murderer and his relatives are thought to be in magical danger from the relatives of the murdered man only if they should eat or drink with them. So too, the bond between neighbours which puts them in danger from the impurity of one of them is the sharing of food.

881 At the initiation and marriage of a girl, neighbours again assist and identify themselves with the principals. When she reaches 621 puberty a girl is secluded, and her companions in the village—the girls who are her immediate juniors, for the older ones will have joined their husbands—keep her company. Some are her own younger sisters and half-sisters, others are not related at all. Should one girl of the village not join them she is not accused of witchcraft, but it is unusual for one to stay away; to do so would show 'pride' (*amatingo*). These companions (*abapanji*) sleep and eat with the 'bride' (*unsungu*)[1] and share her tasks and lessons, fetching firewood, making mats, learning songs, and listening to the instruction of 'the mothers'. They and the 'bride' go about together as a group and, accompanied by one or two 'mothers', may visit a 'bride' and her maids in another village, the two groups competing in dancing and singing. So keen is the rivalry [578] that formerly, we were told, the visits sometimes led to fighting between the maids and 'mothers' of each 'bride', particularly when the competing groups came from different chiefdoms. At the end of the ritual two of the maids accompany the bride to her [864] husband's house, and spend a few days with her there, sharing the attentions of her husband at night (*vide infra*, p. 87).

During her seclusion the bride avoids her father, whom she refers to as 'father-in-law', and she avoids also all his contem-

[1] *Unsungu* means a girl who has reached puberty but has not yet borne a child. She is usually, though not invariably, betrothed, and her 'husband' has a part in the puberty ritual. There is no exact English translation, and we think that 'bride' is the least misleading in this context.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

poraries, the men of the village. They are forbidden to enter her hut, and if she catches sight of one outside she turns away from him and shields her face with a mat. And at the end of the seclusion each 'village father', as well as her own father, must make her a small gift, before she will greet him. The co-wives and some of the village neighbours of the bride's mother form the group of 'mothers' who treat and instruct the bride, help to provide food for the feasts, and finally take her to her husband. Not all the village neighbours are expected to cook for the marriage feasts of a commoner's daughter, only immediate neighbours and special friends (together with relatives) who have been asked to do so; but if an immediate neighbour is not invited to help he will feel affronted. Twijulege explained that 'If the owner of the homestead overlooks someone who has built close to him, and does not say to him, "They are coming to bring the marriage-cattle for *your* child, please help us to cook", then that friend will be angry, and will think to himself, "Perhaps we are not on good terms (*tutikwangala kanunu*) though I had always thought we were", and he will say to the father of the bride: "Why did you not tell me that they were coming to bring the marriage-cattle for your child that I might help you with the food? I was startled by the rejoicing." ' An old man who had only called one friend, besides relatives and the 'best man', to help cook at the marriage of his daughter, was stigmatized as 'a surly fellow who does not care about being on good terms with people'.

The groom, on his part, is supported by his village-mates, who come in a crowd driving the marriage-cattle, and dancing the stamping marriage dance (*ukukanya nganya*). His mother, who has a share in the ritual and brings gifts of food, follows him, accompanied by some of her co-wives and village neighbours.

Village solidarity is thus exhibited at ceremonies, not only in the allocation of food, but by the manner in which village contemporaries of the same sex rally to each other's help, dance together and, if need be, fight together.

Besides offering sympathy and help when their fellow is in need, it is the duty of neighbours to give him advice, and persuade him to act wisely. If, for example, a man has delayed very long in providing marriage-cattle for his son, his neighbours take the son's part, and try to persuade him to give the cattle. 'Perhaps', said one informant, 'the son may elope with a girl, and

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 then if the father says his son has done wrong his neighbours reply: "You have caused him to do wrong yourself. Did you
572 suppose him to be a boy that you did not provide marriage-cattle for him?" Then the father becomes more ready to pay damages for his son.' And again, 'If a young man finds that his father objects to his marrying the girl he loves, he complains to his father's neighbours (*pamafumu abapalamani ba gwise*). Then they discuss the matter and say to the father: "Do you want him to teach you a lesson by taking a chief's wife or daughter, for whom many cattle must be given?" So the father agrees.'

768 Neighbours are concerned, too, to see a fair distribution of a deceased fellow's estate, and the fulfilment of the heir's obliga-
621 tions to his wards. 'It is not the relatives, but "the fathers of the village" who watch over a young boy's interests when his father
[754] is dead' (*vide infra*, p. 106). We listened to one discussion of a quarrel over inheritance which was believed to have led to kinsmen working sorcery against each other. At this discussion four village neighbours of the sick man (thought to be suffering from the sorcery of his father's brother's son), as well as ten relatives, attended.

684 The father's neighbours are also asked to mediate when a son has wronged his father and seeks forgiveness. For example,
593 Mwangobola's son had committed adultery with his father's
621 wife. He paid six head of cattle and then went off to the coast, where he remained a long time. When he returned he brought
783 two cows and approached his father's neighbours, asking them to take the cows to his father. When they took the cows his father said: 'He must find a bull as well, and brew beer, because he is my eldest son.' So he got a bull and brewed beer, and the father also brewed. 'Then', said the old man who reported the case, 'the fathers of the village came together and the bull was killed and they ate the meat and drank the beer. . . . Thus the son made friends with his father.'

621 Here we have the ritual of reconciliation between relatives in which neighbours of the senior must participate, for their anger
783 is held to be as dangerous to the junior as that of his senior relative. Informal giving of advice merges into the practice of arbitration, and of murmuring against a wrong-doer, and thus, it is thought, causing him misfortune. These latter practices are discussed in ensuing chapters,

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

her chair and sat on the floor. We said to Mwaipopo as he entered: 'There is a daughter-in-law here.' He said: 'That's all right, she is enjoying the company of Kagile (M.W.)', but he was obviously restive, and went outside as soon as food appeared. He said to G.W.: 'That's quite all right, let them go on enjoying each other's company. She (i.e. S—) does not avoid me because M— (a local missionary) brought her to me one day and I killed a bull for them, but let us stay outside now, for they would be ashamed to eat.' The women protested very much saying *they* would go out, but the chief would not agree. As soon as they had drunk their tea they hurried off, and crouching down with their backs towards the men they answered their farewell greetings.

In reply to queries as to why they insist that father-in-law and daughter-in-law avoid one another, the Nyakyusa relate a myth of incest between them: 'Long ago a chief's son married a very beautiful wife. The boy's father saw the girl and after one look desired her, for she was very beautiful, and he said: "She is fit to be a chief's wife (*umwehe*)." Men said this was a very bad thing and agreed that in future they would not look at their daughters-in-law. That is how avoidance began. It was for fear of fathers making love to their sons' wives.' This myth is related with some diffidence, and not everyone knows it, but it was told us, or referred to, repeatedly, and may be taken as current in the society. One informant, a very intelligent woman doctor, also associated seeing a father-in-law with seeing his sexual activities. 'We think that to see your husband's father is very rude, because it is as if you saw him sleeping with your husband's mother. You compare, you see, your husband's body and you see your husband's father's body. It is very bad.'

Age-villages are then associated with the feeling that fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law must be kept completely separate lest they should commit incest, and that adolescent youths should not have any glimpse of the sexual activities of their parents; but the separation of the generations is not complete, for marriage with the daughter of a village neighbour is approved, provided he is not an *immediate* neighbour. Mwakionde explained that in the old days people disliked marriage with the daughter of a next-door neighbour because she was 'like a daughter'—'the fathers ate *embalaga* (a dish made with bananas) together'—but marriage with the daughters of other village-mates was always approved.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

MYSTICAL INTERDEPENDENCE

a. Witchcraft and 'the breath of men'

In the Nyakyusa view two of the main co-operative activities of a village are defence against witches, and the punishment of wrong-doers through sickness brought upon them by the murmuring of their fellows. Fellow villagers are 'members of one another' as much on account of this mystical interdependence as on account of their economic co-operation and enjoyment of each other's company. The village headmen are spoken of as the leaders in the 'war by night' against witches, as they are leaders in war by day, and it is they also who are foremost in bringing 'the breath of men' (*embepo sya bandu*) on a wrongdoer, so that his body becomes cold, and he falls ill. We must therefore examine the concept of witchcraft and of this 'breath of men' in order to understand village relationships.

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i. *The nature of witchcraft*

The Nyakyusa believe that certain people have pythons (*isota*) in their bellies which give them power to harm men and cattle, by throttling, tramping, wounding, and kicking them. These are the witches (*abalosi*). They are said to fly by night on their pythons, or 'on the wind', either singly or in covens, to attack a chosen victim, and to leave on their beds their skins, which 'can feel nothing'. So closely are the witch and his pythons identified that if a python is killed the witch will die. The pythons are thought to be usually inherited from one or other parent, children of both sexes inheriting from either father or mother: children are 'born with witchcraft in their stomachs', and it is developed by accompanying a parent on his or her evil errands. However, not *all* children of a witch are necessarily witches. 'If a man witch marries a woman witch then the whole family are witches, but if the man is pure (*mwelu*), and the woman only a bit of a witch, then she may say to herself when she first bears a child:

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1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

shown by the way in which one fearing witchcraft, or accused of practising it, moves to another village. Sometimes he goes to another chiefdom, but often he only moves to another village in the same chiefdom—the chief himself may feel safe in one village of his country and not in another (*vide* Document, p. 190). It is on his fellow villagers that the good man depends for protection, and it is they whom the evil-doer fears. 754

Accusations within the lineage are rare. At first we were told that they did not occur at all; later a number of elderly informants agreed that this was not true—'the young men have misled you', they said; but careful inquiry only elicited three concrete cases[1] of witchcraft within the lineage (cf. table, p. 204). As we have seen, fellow members of a lineage normally live in different villages, and just how the idea of attacks by kinsmen is reconciled with the theory of village defence is not clear. Possibly it is argued that the witch attacks while visiting his kinsman, for it is in terms of visiting that the effect of 'the breath of men' on erring sons or younger brothers is explained. Where 'the breath of men' is thought to have affected someone of another village, it is argued that he or she came frequently to visit in the village of the attackers (cf. Document, p. 237), and the heir who neglects his elder brother's or father's funeral rites, and who is thought to suffer from 'the breath' of the deceased's justly indignant neighbours, is supposed to fall ill when he comes to their village to enter into his inheritance, or to make arrangements for the disposal of his property. 754 613

Even within the village it is the immediate neighbours that are primarily concerned in a case of suspected witchcraft. In the large villages of the plains the leader of a section, 'he of the heap of hot ashes', has the specific duty of protecting the herd which stands in the smoke of his fire against witches; and in smaller villages, also, a witchcraft case commonly begins with murmuring among a few next-door neighbours. Suspicion of witchcraft falls first on a member of the same village-section, then on a fellow villager; only rarely, and in peculiar circumstances, does it fall on a member of another village, and never on someone outside the chiefdom. 754 621

Differences of rank are relatively slight in Nyakyusa society 754 55

[1] A possible fourth is quoted on p. 246, but the exact relationship of the accused to the victim was not known to our informant.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

objection to marrying the child of one who has been convicted is clearly not pushed to its logical conclusion. No slur is cast on any one lineage when an individual is convicted of witchcraft, for he may have inherited it from either parent, or even got it from a friend; conversely no lineage is cleared by an autopsy, for not all the children of a witch are necessarily witches. Thus a man may have a father or brother or son who is 'pure', yet be a witch himself. As we have seen, even persons belonging to the same lineage may occasionally accuse each other. Nevertheless, when an individual who is reputed to be a witch dies, the close relatives do sometimes insist on an autopsy, in order to clear the deceased of suspicion, and possibly themselves also (*vide supra*, p. 117). In one case we recorded it was a daughter who insisted on the autopsy being performed on her mother, a reputed witch. No witchcraft was found.

So far we have dealt with cases of misfortune befalling an individual, followed by action against a fellow villager who is suspected of being responsible. This type of case is far the commonest within the field of witchcraft. When a general misfortune, such as a plague or epidemic, threatens, the chiefdom acts as a whole, not the villages separately, and the ritual is directed primarily to securing the blessing of the shades. There is some suggestion of ridding the chiefdom of witchcraft at the same time, but the emphasis is on appeasing the ancestors. The traditional new year cleansing (*ukutag' ikikungu*), now rarely performed, was also the concern of chiefdoms not separate villages, and it involved prayer to the ancestors.

b. The age-village and the ancestors

We have dwelt at length on witchcraft and 'the breath of men', for, in Nyakyusa belief, the defence of the village against witches and the punishment of wrong-doers by 'the breath' of their fellows is the main corporate activity of the village in the religious sphere. There are no village rituals directed to the ancestors comparable to those performed on behalf of lineages and chiefdoms. Indeed, belief in the power of shades operates only in situations where social position is determined by descent, as it is in lineages and in the succession to chieftainship. The office of village headman is not hereditary. The son of a village headman

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 769 622 cannot be appointed as headman in any village of his own generation, and villages of past generations disappear. When a headman dies, his village still being in existence, his place is taken by his heir who may be a son, but this office is only temporary. The village ceases to exist when its original members die off. Moreover, there is no suggestion that the shade of a headman's father broods over the village as the shade of a chief is thought to brood over the land he ruled.

775 The Nyakyusa have a lively belief in the power of shades,-a belief closely connected with the dependence of the members of a lineage upon one another for cattle,[1] and with the office of 'divine king', but such belief scarcely affects village relationships, for the shades are not thought to be concerned with behaviour between neighbours, as distinct from relatives.

775 621 602 It is true that the proper performance of family rituals includes feasting neighbours, but the implication always is that the shades are concerned only in enforcing obligations towards themselves and fellow kinsmen, not towards non-relatives. On the other hand, neighbours are concerned in the enforcement of kinship obligations. When a son insults his father, the father's neighbours are insulted also; when a daughter-in-law peeps at her father-in-law the shocked astonishment of the neighbours may cause her children to pine. And so, when an erring son begs pardon of his father, he must provide a feast for the neighbours, 'that they may see that his father is satisfied'.

775 626 754 A situation often arises in which both the shades and 'the breath of men' operate, sometimes 'the breath' of shocked neighbours supporting the shades, and sometimes shades and men each exacting their due. One illustration of this was given us by Kalunda: 'If you do not carry out the burial rites for your father, people are angry, they throttle you, and the shade is angry also, he comes on your body. No, the witches do not call the ancestors to help; both are angry on their own account. To-day the black ones, the witches, come and throttle you; to-morrow the ancestors come. People are angry because they do not eat meat; the shade is angry because you did not perform the burial rites for him. He says: "See, I left much property, why did you not bury me properly?" ' And in discussing the obligation of a daughter-in-

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'An African Morality', *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936); Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

795 nected with it in a Christian village or village-section. The nearest
788 parallel to the pagan ritual of reconciliation is the formal re-
184 admission of a repentant sinner to the congregation.

The change in belief and ritual tends to weaken village solid-
795 arity; for the Christian village is neither a defensive unit, nor is
● 621 it the group from within which retribution and forgiveness come.
184 A Christian does not feel himself dependent upon village neighbours to the same degree as does a pagan. We argue that the extension of the range of interdependence reduces its intensity in the narrower circles of relationship, and this is evident in the religious as in the economic aspect.[1]

622 Since the authority of a village headman is largely dependent
795 upon his supposed mystical power, Christians are rarely appointed
184 to this office by the Nyakyusa. We heard of only one Christian headman and he was in the country of a Christian chief. Christians cannot go through the full 'coming out' ceremony which involves treatment with medicines to give *amanga*, and a Christian headman cannot fulfil the traditional ritual functions in relation to the chief and his ancestors. But in Ngonde, where the percentage of Christians is high (46 per cent as opposed to 15 per cent among the Nyakyusa) and the 'coming out' ceremony has been dropped, there are a number of Christian headmen who simply abstain from the performance of any pagan rituals (as does the Kyungu himself) leaving them to those headmen who are pagan and feel the ritual to be important. And pagan informants whom we asked about defence against witchcraft in a village in which the headman was a Christian, replied: 'Others will protect the country from witchcraft,' implying that there are always other 'defenders' in a village besides its leader.

In Christian village-sections the same difficulties do not arise, for assistant headmen are never treated at the 'coming out', nor have they ritual functions, other than the formal reproof of supposed witches (*vide supra*, p. 109). Hence the recognized leader of any group of Christians living in a pagan village is normally a Christian. In Christian villages on mission land the leaders are, of course, always Christian. These villages do not participate in any 'coming out' ceremony and the leaders are appointed by the missionary in consultation with the 'session' (i.e. representatives of the congregation), not by the old chief and

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 25–41.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

This practice of having official witnesses to every contract, and summoning them to give evidence should a dispute later arise, is one of the most important means of maintaining order in Nyakyusa society, and village neighbours are the usual witnesses. 675

c. Communal responsibility of the age-village

Formerly, in Nyakyusa law two forms of group responsibility were emphasized: the mutual responsibility of kinsmen, and the mutual responsibility of fellow villagers. A case of murder or manslaughter was primarily the concern of the agnatic lineage if the victim was a male or an unmarried girl, and of the lineages of both husband and father if the victim was a married woman. The kinsmen either killed the murderer, or brought him before the chief, who imposed a fine which went to the injured relatives. The Nyakyusa make a distinction between 'spearing by day' (direct physical injury) and 'spearing by night' (witchcraft); and only in the latter type of case did the fine go to the chief. Witchcraft was thus treated as an offence against the state—the chiefdom—while murder or manslaughter was an offence against the kinsmen of the dead. The concern of the state in witchcraft, and the joint responsibility of kinsmen on the one hand, and of fellow villagers on the other, was evident when, as sometimes happened, both groups were required by the chief to clear themselves of suspicion of witchcraft by each providing a representative to take the poison ordeal. Should the representative of either group fail to vomit then the responsible individual within that group was sought out by means of divination and the ordeal (*vide supra*, p. 116). 613 621 672 754 682

In a case of adultery the injured husband, together with his kinsmen, pursued and attempted to kill, or torture and kill, the adulterer: self-help was not only permitted but expected in this situation,[1] and a man's near kinsmen were obliged to assist him. Neighbours were not obliged to assist in executing vengeance, but they might be victims of it, for if the injured husband did not find the adulterer he might kill any village-mate of his enemy. Such an attack commonly led to war between the two villages; 684 696 721

[1] D. R. MacKenzie, *The Spirit-Ridden Konde* (1925), p. 61, says: 'The injured husband has the right to inflict death on the paramour. This is no mere tale of the past but a grim fact to-day . . . cases of this nature are very numerous.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 195! FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

684 and some informants suggested that it only occurred between the
696 villages of different chiefs, though others insisted that it did occur
721 between villages of the same chiefdom. Indeed any seduction of a woman of another village was liable to lead to war. A man of Bulindanajo seduced the wife of the headman of Bujege, Mwansambe. The men of Bulindanajo returned the woman to her husband, saying to their fellow: 'The men of Bujege are fearsome (*basisya*), it's a village of fathers, she's your mother' (cf. Document p. 181). But Mwansambe was angry and made war. The men of Bulindanajo protested, saying: 'We brought the woman back!' but he took no notice and attacked them. He was defeated, and fled.

685 A thief or an obstinate debtor was also a danger to his neigh-
686 bours. For a victim or creditor living in another chiefdom, and so
696 unable to obtain satisfaction in a chief's court—since a chief paid little attention to a complainant who was not his own man—might seize the wife of any village-mate of the man who had his property. Hence, the old men say, thieves and adulterers were liable to be banished from a village[1] just like witches and sorcerers, for they too brought misfortune on their fellows.

War between villages was apparently the usual upshot of an
672 attack on the village neighbour of an enemy, but occasionally a
696 settlement was arranged between the two villages concerned, and the adulterer or thief was held responsible for compensating his injured neighbour, or the latter's kinsmen. Kalunda and Mwalubunju explained: 'In the old days if a man ran off with my wife I should go and kill a village-mate of his. That meant, "Go, you villagers and look for my wife." Yes, this happened even in a village of my own chief. Then the villagers would go and look for my wife and when they found her with their neighbour they would bring her back to me with a spear or hoe as compensation. The man they would accuse, saying: "It was you who killed your fellow", so that he would have to make peace with the family of the dead man, not I. He would give them a daughter of his own to wife, or else pay ten cows, and they would be relatives then. Yes, ten cows they paid for a man's death, though only two for a woman in marriage.' Here the differing responsibilities of kinsmen and fellow villagers are evident.

●621 The village was a fighting unit taking up quarrels on its own
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[1] A cattle thief caught in the act was speared. . . . MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 86.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

account with other villages of the same chiefdom, and forming a detachment under its own headman in the army of the chiefdom. Before an attack each village was harangued by its headman who urged: 'Keep all your spears together. If you abandon your fellow you have a case against you! All return together!' And, as we have seen, it was held that men of the same village should stand shoulder to shoulder in war and in a hunt, that they might be brave.

Cattle raids and adultery cases were the prime causes of war—fighting commonly began with a dispute over a woman, or lust for meat. Less frequently it was a quarrel between two villages or two chiefdoms over a boundary that led to war. Hostilities often flared up at a funeral when men danced the war dance with spears (*ukukina*). The Nyakyusa interpret this dancing at funerals as an expression of anger at death, a protest against death.[1] 'Formerly we protested against death, we said: "Our fellow has died, *aje!* Let us put our friend to rest!" We protested with war, we protested with spears, and people died.' Or as another informant put it, 'The war dance is a way of weeping. We dance the war dance because war is in our hearts.' But the anger at death very easily merged into anger against human enemies. 'If the men of two chiefdoms or two villages were present at a burial they would quarrel and fight. The fight began when one hurled his spear into the ground and thus spewed the earth over someone else. Perhaps there would be only a few dancing at first and many sitting down, but when a neighbouring chief was seen approaching with his men, and the sound of the trumpets was heard, those already there would say: "If we sit still they will say there are no men but only women at this funeral. Let us dance too." So they would all get up and dance, and if the others did anything there would be war. Now the custom of the war dance is dying out. We chiefs control it, and when another chief comes to a funeral we tell all our men to sit down while he and his men dance at the grave, because if we do not, the war of old times is liable to break out.'

In fact peace has been effectively enforced among the Nyakyusa.[2] We neither saw nor heard of a fight in the three years we were there. Thus mutual dependence in war is no longer a strong sanction for village unity. The joint responsibility for certain

[1] *cf.* Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939.)

[2] A contrast to Pondoland or Zululand.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

torts committed by its members has also disappeared. Instead, there is both a great increase in the number of cases treated as offences against the state; murder, manslaughter and grievous bodily injury being no longer treated as offences against a group of kin, but as crimes against the state; and a great extension in the *range* of law. A modern Nyakyusa has no difficulty in suing a debtor, or the seducer of his wife, living in another chiefdom.

Nevertheless neighbours still feel a certain obligation for the maintenance of each other's rights. For example, a certain young man eloped with a very young girl, who, though betrothed, had not yet reached puberty. On their way out of the district they were seen by a 'village father' of the girl, who brought them back to her father, and then joined with him and other neighbours in beating the young man and taking him to the chief. The youth admitted his fault in seducing so young a girl and asked the chief to summon his father-in-law (for he was already married) that he might borrow from his father-in-law the cattle with which to pay the fine for seduction. But his father-in-law was a neighbour of the father of the girl he had seduced, and he refused to lend any cattle, saying, 'You have run off with the daughter of my neighbour in the village: that means you have wronged *me*.'

And a group of herd-boys are still liable to be treated by their fathers as responsible for one another. One informant, discussing a case of bestiality committed by a herd-boy, remarked that the leader of the group forbade the others to mention it at home on the ground that 'if our fathers know they will say that we all (in this herd group) do it.'

d. Social separation

One of the mechanisms for maintaining good relations in Nyakyusa villages (as in all groups) is the separation of the dissident individual from the group.[1] This separation may be compulsory or voluntary. As we have seen, witches, thieves, adulterers, and obstinate debtors were formerly banished from Nyakyusa villages because they were regarded as a danger to their neighbours, liable to harm them directly or to bring retribution upon them. The village, being held responsible for certain actions of its members, and forming a defensive unit against the sup-

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 60–1.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 is another reason also for increasing movement. Formerly, to
578 move to a strange chiefdom was hazardous—a refugee might be
killed, or his wife or cattle seized by the chief; nowadays it is safe.
164 Even to-day a man's status is lower in the village in which he is a stranger than in his home village. The old families of a village, 'the owners of the soil' (*abilema*), are spoken of as *amafumu*, which, in its restricted sense, means village headmen who have 'come out' with the chief, but which is also used more widely for commoners of importance. And in the past, we were told, an individual's security of life and property depended upon the support of his neighbours, the *amafumu*, and a stranger was much less likely to receive this than an 'owner of the soil'. If a chief seized a stranger's wife no one would protest, but if he dared to touch the wife of an 'owner of the soil' the village would rise as one man. Hence the incentive to overcome friction by submission, rather than by moving, was stronger in the old society than it is to-day.[1] It may well become stronger again soon. The present circulation from village to village is possible because men are still scarcer than land in Nyakyusa country, but as the population increases, and the production of crops for sale expands, it is probable that strangers will be less welcome and movement more difficult.

166 To lose a member who has not been expelled is a slur on a
624 village, for the implication is that the man who has moved has suffered from the witchcraft of his neighbours. A good neighbour should persuade a fellow contemplating a voluntary move to stay (*vide infra*, p. 243), and when someone has moved of his own accord (and sometimes even when he has been expelled) his fellows go, after the lapse of a little time, to fetch him back.

When a man moves from his home chiefdom, his village neighbours there, in the majority of cases, follow him within two months and ceremonially invite him back with a show of force by seizing his belongings and carrying them off home to his old village. They may really like and respect him and if, as is usually the case, he has moved because of sickness, they are most anxious to prove to him that his tacit suspicions are unfounded, they wish to rid themselves of the slur of witchcraft. To invite him back is to express affection for him and so to demonstrate that he could

[1] cf. the modern tendency for Pondo homesteads to break up. Hunter, op. cit., pp. 13, 39.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

not have been bewitched, for see, everyone likes him! Such an invitation is often, but by no means always, accepted. If a man refuses the first time then the villagers may or may not go again later to ask him back; but if he was an important member of the village—the headman, a noted doctor, the son of an old family—the invitation may go on being repeated for years; and he will then almost certainly return in the end. Whether or not he accepts a particular invitation depends again largely on his own health and that of his family and upon his relations with his new neighbours at the time it is made. Sickness and suspected witchcraft, or quarrels and insults in the new village will incline him to go home (see Document, p. 267). And a man can always return, even without an invitation, unless he was originally expelled for being himself a witch.'[1]

If an important or popular man is slow to return 'home' his former friends not only go to fetch him, again and again, during the course of years but, if he dies before his return, his corpse may be fetched back to be buried in his original village. He is also summoned to feasts there. The village was a fighting unit, and its strength, like that of the chiefdom, depended upon its numbers; hence the reluctance to lose a man and the readiness to welcome new-comers.

Men who have moved voluntarily usually return 'home' to their original village in the end. As a Selya man explained: 'The majority do come back, only a few stay permanently away. Some move for better food, the great majority because they fall sick and wish to recollect themselves in the tranquillity of another chiefdom—this is the main reason for moving, but they come back in the end. Whenever a man is slighted in the country to which he has gone, whenever he falls sick there—back he goes home. A man does not lose his affection for home, for there is his sacred grove, his fathers' graves. But the real reason for returning is that in every other place a man is less respected than at home, he is made light of; but in his own country he is known to belong to an old family and is treated with great respect, his neighbours call to mind the days when he and they herded cows together as boys, and the fact that his father is buried among them. That is why people go home again.'

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa*, pp. 32-3.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

to rejoin the group in which he is 'known', in which he has 578
'friends with whom he herded cattle as a boy', as that which 166
provides the chief impetus to return. Never once did an informant suggest friction with the village headman as the reason for moving[1] or loyalty to a former headman as the reason for returning. The Nyakyusa village is in no way the personal following of a headman, as the villages of some other central African peoples (such as the Bemba,[2] Yao, and Ngoni[3]) appear to be. It is essentially a group of equals, established before adolescence, whose stability and continuity turn on friendship and co-operation between its members. It is already a corporate group, with very close bonds forged through years between its members, before the permanent leader is chosen, and it continues as a group though its leader dies or moves.

We do not deny that the personality of the village headman— 622
particularly his generosity and his skill in settling disputes 621
between his men—affects the stability and growth of the village; 166
some villages increase noticeably in size after the 'coming out', while others shrink, and headmen (like chiefs) use medicines to attract men to them; but the Nyakyusa themselves imply that it is the character of the villagers rather than the character of the headman which determines movement to and from the village.

The headman, like any private individual in the village, must 622
remain on good terms with the other members lest *he* be driven 626
out. A number of cases were cited in which headmen had moved because they had become unpopular with their men and feared their 'breath' or witchcraft (*vide* pp. 204–8; 268–70) but most of them had returned after the lapse of a little time.

What private individuals and headmen alike fear is not a quarrel with one individual, but the disapproval of the village or village-section as a whole; for 'the breath of men' is but the crystallization of adverse public opinion. The man who has the support of his fellows in a dispute with one neighbour is shielded in 'the war by night'.

[1] Personal friction with a chief occurs (*vide* pp. 191–2).
[2] A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, pp. 110 ff.
[3] M. Gluckman, J. C. Mitchell, and J. A. Barnes, 'The Village Headman in British Central Africa', *Africa*, Vol. XIX (1949), pp. 91, 98, 100.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VII

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN AGE-VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

a. The peculiarity of Nyakyusa villages

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VILLAGES in which contemporaries live together permanently have not been reported among any people in Africa other than the Nyakyusa; such villages are not found among their neighbours, and diligent inquiry from Africans of many tribes has not revealed them elsewhere; it is possible that the Nyakyusa system is unique, but we still know too little of Africa to be sure. A similar system might well exist elsewhere without having been noted by Europeans. The fact that Nyakyusa villages were organized on an age basis was not recorded either by the missionaries[1] or the Administration, though the system of Indirect Rule had been in operation for eight years before we began work in the district.

What is common in Africa is for groups of male contemporaries —age-sets—to live together in temporary villages or club houses before marriage. The warrior-villages of the Masai,[2] the regimental barracks of Zulu[3] and Swazi,[4] the cattle posts of Tswana[5] and Pedi,[6] are all occupied by groups of contemporaries; while among the Kikuyu[7] and the Kipisigis[8] local detachments of age-

[1] D. R. MacKenzie, *The Spirit-Ridden Konde*, speaks of 'small boys' living in 'tiny houses' of their own (pp. 27–8); J. T. Hamilton, *Twenty Years of Pioneer Missions in Nyasaland*, says: 'The elder boys live together in long oblong houses at the end of the village. When one of them marries he builds a house near the boys' quarter, and in this manner the village extends in this direction.' (p. 40.) He does not suggest any further separation of the generations.

[2] L. S. B. Leakey, 'Some Notes on the Masai of Kenya Colony', *J.R.A.I.*, LX (1930), pp. 185–209; D. Storrs Fox, 'Further Notes on the Masai of Kenya Colony', *J.R.A.I.*, LX (1930), pp. 447–65.

[3] E. J. Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus*, pp. 261–7.

[4] H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 117–37.

[5] I. Schapera, *Native Land Tenure in the Bechuanaland Protectorate*, pp. 25, 220–9.

[6] G. M. Pitje, *Some Aspects of Male Education among the Pedi and Cognate Tribes*. (Thesis accepted for the M.A. degree in the University of South Africa. Unpublished.)

[7] W. S. and K. Routledge, *With a Prehistoric People*, p. 118.

[8] J. G. Peristiany, *The Social Institutions of the Kipsigis*, pp. 49–51.

[p. 158]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sets have club houses in which young men sleep. Among the Cewa, though boys do not move out of the parent village, they have a special hut in which they sleep together from the age of five or six.[1] But among all these people the age-set scatters at marriage, each young man building his permanent home, to which he brings his wife, alongside his kinsmen or, in the case of the Cewa, alongside his wife's kin.

The peculiarity of the Nyakyusa then consists in the fact that contemporaries live together permanently through life, not merely as bachelors: age-villages appear in an isolated area surrounded (so far as we know) by people with no similar institution.

We cannot hope to explain how, or when, age-villages developed among the Nyakyusa: there is no reference to them in such documents as exist, and we could trace no oral tradition regarding their origin. Even the historian Mwandesi (cf. p. vi) had no idea whether age-villages were introduced by the incoming Nyakyusa chiefs, or were found by them among the previous inhabitants of the valley, or were invented after the conquest. We can, however, inquire into the social characteristics associated with age-villages. *What are the peculiarities of Nyakyusa society not found in societies with kinship villages?* In this chapter we attempt to answer that question.

b. Age-villages and incest

The Nyakyusa themselves associate living in age-villages with decency in sex life—the separation of the sex activities of successive generations, and the avoidance of incest. When asked why small boys build apart from their parents they refer to the danger of a growing boy overhearing lewd talk between his parents, or seeing them unclothed (*vide supra*, p. 82); and they enlarge on the difficulties of father- and daughter-in-law avoidance were father and son to live in the same village—an avoidance which is consciously related to the fear of incest between father- and daughter-in-law (*vide supra*, p. 85). We may add also the fear of young men seducing their fathers' junior wives, who are often girls of their own age. Nyakyusa informants did not mention this last point as a reason for living in age-villages, but it is significant

[1] A. G. O. Hodgson, 'Notes on the Achewa and Angoni of the Dowa District of Nyasaland Protectorate', *J.R.A.I.*, LXIII (1933), p. 129.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 that adolescent sons are not permitted to visit their homes after dark, and when they come by day for their meals they are
834 often required to eat in the open court-yard and not 'hide in
606 the bananas or huts' lest they make love to their fathers' wives. They do not sit about in the men's village. Thus, although the villages of fathers and sons adjoin until the sons 'come out', the young men are physically separated from their young 'mothers'.

The feeling that sons should not be cognizant of the sex activities of parents, and that father-in-law and daughter-in-law should avoid one another is not, of course, peculiar to the Nyakyusa; all we seek to show is that the extreme elaboration of these avoidances among the Nyakyusa is dependent upon the existence of age-villages. Whereas a Pondo daughter-in-law must never
[171] walk across the courtyard of the kinship village in which she lives, or approach the cattle byre or the men's side of her mother-in-law's hut, lest she come too near her father-in-law, yet, living in the same village, she necessarily sees him daily; the Nyakyusa daughter-in-law, living in a separate village, need not (and should not) set eyes on her father-in-law after her marriage. Where the territorial segregation of fathers and sons is blurred (as at Rungwe) there father- daughter-in-law avoidance is less strictly observed. The Nyakyusa regard this extreme form of avoidance as a peculiarity of their culture which has been imparted by them to the small groups (such as Ndali, Penja, and Nyika) whom they are assimilating.

Father- and daughter-in-law incest is clearly a potential danger in a society in which cattle are controlled by middle-aged and elderly men, who frequently have to choose between taking another wife themselves and giving cattle for a son's marriage, and who are accustomed to marrying young girls of an age suitable to be wives to their sons. But we cannot show that the danger is *greater* among the Nyakyusa than it is among other patrilineal cattle people such as the Pondo, Zulu, or Swazi, who do not find it necessary to segregate fathers- and daughters-in-law in different villages.

On the other hand the danger (common to all polygynous societies) of sons seducing their fathers' wives is exaggerated among the Nyakyusa by the absence of circumcision, the late
595 marriage age of men, the very early betrothal and marriage of
582 girls, the high degree of polygyny, and the practice of sons

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

587 woman. It is scarcely surprising that the seduction of the young
835 wives of an ageing father is a common theme for scandal. We do not suggest that the Oedipus complex involving own mother and son never occurs among the Nyakyusa; what we are concerned to show is that the relationship between a man and his stepmothers is particularly likely to be ambivalent.

583 It may be asked why there is so much emphasis on the segrega-
584 tion of sons from their parents, and not of daughters. The answer again lies in the sex difference in the marriage age. Betrothed girls pay long visits to their husbands even before puberty, and directly after the initiation which follows first menstruation they leave their fathers' home to join their husbands. During her initiation a girl carefully avoids her father and his contemporaries in the village, and after marriage, when she returns home to visit, she must observe certain restrictions not applicable to an unmarried girl: notably she must not approach her parents' bed, and informants interpret the taboo as being due to the danger of mixing the sex activities of mother and daughter.

621 In short, we argue that there is a connection between the exis-
835 tence of age-villages and the fear of incest between father-in-law and daughter-in-law on the one hand, and between stepson and stepmother on the other, and we suggest that certain features of the Nyakyusa social system facilitate incest of the second type. The incest theme elaborated in one fashion among people organized in clans and practising clan exogamy, and in another among people practising brother—sister avoidance, finds yet a different expression in age-villages, of which the overt purpose is the separation of sons and mothers, of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

c. *Good company*

577 The emphasis on the separation of parents and children is
621 matched by the value laid on good fellowship (*ukwangala*) between contemporaries. A main end of age-villages, in the Nyakyusa view, is to allow men the enjoyment of congenial company, that is the company of friends and equals. The value of *ukwangala* is, indeed, directly linked with the age-village organization: to attain it men must build not only in villages, rather than in scattered homesteads, but also with contemporaries rather than with kin, since there can be no free and easy inter-

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

course and sharing of food and beer between fathers and sons. 577
Ukwangala implies eating and drinking together frequently, and 621
cannot be fully enjoyed by people who do not live close to one another.

The value of good fellowship with equals is constantly talked 577
about by the Nyakyusa, and it is dinned into boys from child- 869
hood that enjoyment and morality alike consist in eating and drinking, in talking and learning, in the company of contemporaries. The solitary and aloof, those who enjoy the company of women (as opposed to direct sexual satisfaction) and those who seek intimacy with members of another generation, are derided.

Now this very emphasis on the value of good fellowship with 577
equals is doubtless a reflection of the difficulty of achieving it. 578
The frequent accusations of witchcraft and movement from one village to another are evidence of friction between fellow villagers. Does the friction turn on the age-village organization?

d. The incidence of accusations of witchcraft

As we have seen, witchcraft is believed to operate primarily 578
within the village, and the typical accusation is against a neigh- 754
bour.[1] But in other societies also witchcraft accusations are most commonly made against those with whom one is living, and in close daily contact: in Pondoland it is members of the same homestead or of neighbouring homesteads who suspect one another of witchcraft; among Xhosa-speaking people in towns it is fellow employees, or fellow schoolmates; among the Azande it is members of the same small neighbourhood. Therefore it is not only the Nyakyusa who accuse village neighbours of witchcraft.

Of the *frequency* of accusation in different societies we can 754
make no comparison, for statistics on witchcraft are extremely difficult to collect. Few field-workers could be certain that they were cognizant of *every* accusation of witchcraft within a given

[1] Over a third of the accusations of witchcraft recorded were against neighbours, as distinct from spouses or co-wives or kinsmen and, if one excludes the modern type of accusation against fellow workers in the same camp, the proportion of accusations against neighbours is almost one half. The thirty-eight witchcraft accusations cannot, of course, be taken as a random sample in the technical sense; we recorded every case that came to our ears, but cannot be certain that inquiries brought to light every accusation in the villages investigated. Nevertheless the preponderance of accusations against neighbours is significant (*vide* Document, pp. 198 ff.).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 area, during a given period, so we cannot either assert or deny that accusations of witchcraft are more frequent in age-villages than in kinship villages.

578 There are two sets of loyalties in Nyakyusa society: those to a kinship group and those to an age-village. Does conflict arise 621 from a clash between them? We have no evidence that it does. 602 It is true that kin may support a sick relative against his age-group, referring to his illness as due to witchcraft, whereas neighbours will attribute it to his own sin and their legitimate anger; but very often the ancestors and the 'defenders' are believed to work together to punish wrong-doers—those who break avoidance and incest taboos, those who insult seniors, those who neglect traditional rituals (*vide supra*, p. 122). Amity between relatives is sanctioned by neighbours as well as by senior kinsmen, and the importance of enjoying the company of village mates is constantly stressed by relatives. Where a village does appear to support a member against his kin, it is usually on the side of the ancestors and 'justice', in terms of the Nyakyusa code, as when neighbours share a father's anger at the insolence of his son, or after his death protect his son against unjust treatment by the heir. The values of village solidarity and of kinship solidarity are thus coherent.

e. The form of witch beliefs

621 There is, however, a connection between the age-village 754 organization and the *form* of witch beliefs. As we have seen, great emphasis is laid on feasting neighbours, and it is believed that 626 the impulse to witchcraft comes from the lust for milk and meat. The Nyakyusa argue thus: witchcraft comes from neighbours, and neighbours must be fed or they get angry; feeding a witch on milk or beef pacifies him (*vide supra*, p. 92). An explicit connection is made between neglecting to provide feasts on the proper occasions and suffering from 'the breath' of justly angry neighbours whose blighting power springs from the same root as witchcraft. The contrast with the witch beliefs of the Pondo is marked: among them it is held that the drive to witchcraft is sex lust, and all witches have familiars with whom they have sex relations.[1]

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 275-88.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Nyakyusa emphasis upon lust for food as the incentive to crime is not due to starvation, for they are among the best-fed people in Africa, with a much greater variety and quantity of food at their disposal than the Pondo. Why, then, this emphasis in their witch beliefs? We suggest that it is directly connected with living with non-relatives who have no share in one's inheritance. The most prized possession of the Nyakyusa is cattle, and cattle are controlled by lineages. Neighbours who are not kinsmen, and who cannot hope to benefit by inheritance or through assistance with marriage and funeral cattle from a fellow's herd, are more likely to be jealous of his wealth in cattle than are his brothers and sons who directly share in it through inheritance, and the gift of cattle at marriage and death. The only profit which neighbours derive from the herd of a rich fellow is the milk and meat on which he feasts them. Jealousy of another's wealth is a common enough cause for supposed witchcraft, but the affront of inequality is greater when it is constantly before one's eyes. Nyakyusa live close-packed in villages and can hardly be unaware of what next-door neighbours eat. The statement that the pythons of witches are roused by the *smell* of meat cooking and the *smell* of milk (*vide supra*, p. 92) suggests the envy of a poor neighbour when he smells the roast beef and curds next door. Where the local group consists of a lineage (as among the Pondo) people are not necessarily aware of what non-relatives eat. Among the Pondo the pressure to kill cattle for meat comes from within the lineage, and is associated not with the witches but with the ancestors. Sickness is commonly attributed to the *hunger* of the ancestors (*balambile*), who 'want to eat by means of him' who is ill (*bafuna ukudla ngaye*),[1] a notion quite strange to the Nyakyusa.

In short, we argue that it is because people who do not benefit from each other's herds by inheritance and the provision of marriage and funeral cattle, live close to one another, that so much emphasis is laid on the lust for milk and meat as the drive to witchcraft among the Nyakyusa.

And why the Pondo emphasis on sex? Are they more inhibited than the Nyakyusa? At first sight the Pondon sex code seems a freer one than that of the Nyakyusa. The marriage age of men is no later than among the Nyakyusa, while the marriage age of girls is considerably higher, and unmarried men are free to

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 232, 245.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

g. Kith and kin

602 621 The tendency to identify neighbours and kinsmen—kith and kin—appears not only in religious belief, the two groups being credited with somewhat similar mystical power; but also in verbal usage—'fathers of the village', 'mothers of the village', 'sisters of the village', etc.; in the obligation to respect a father's fellows, to run errands for them and obey their orders; in the belief that a father's neighbours are insulted by an insult to the father, and must be pacified as well as the real father; and in the responsibility of villagers for certain torts of a fellow. The distinction between neighbours and kinsmen is, however, clear-cut in marriage, in rituals, and in the control of cattle. Fellow villagers marry each other's daughters; they neither perform the elaborate ritual at death or twin birth believed to be necessary for the safety of relatives, nor are they required to help each other with cattle for marriages, funeral rites, and fines, as are kinsmen.[1]

Kinsmen are bound together by their common interest in the inherited stock of the lineage and in the cattle coming in for its daughters; by co-operation in cultivation and building; and by the belief that they are mystically interdependent—the contagion of defilement and of certain diseases caused by sorcery travelling along the roads of kinship. Village neighbours are bound together by occupation and ownership of common land; by co-operation in herding and cultivation; and by common defence against enemies 'by day and by night'. In both groups discipline is thought to be maintained by mystical as well as material sanctions, the anger of neighbours bringing ill-health like the anger of senior relatives; and both groups have certain responsibilities for their members in relations with other like groups.

h. Relative social status

621 561 The Nyakyusa material suggests certain further connections between the age-village organization and other aspects of the social structure which comparative study shows to be false. For example, it might be argued for the Nyakyusa (as it has been for

[1] Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage.*

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the Kikuyu)[1] that the equalitarian emphasis is related to the emphasis on age-organization. As we have seen, hereditary office exists among the Nyakyusa but the power of chief and hereditary priest is limited at every point by the power of the leaders of age-sets who are chosen each generation from among commoners. That democratic (i.e. non-hereditary) leadership is not a necessary concomitant of a developed age-organization is, however, proved by the fact that among the Zulu, Swazi, Pedi, and Tswana, whose military organization was based on age-regiments, rank is stressed, and the leaders of age-sets are always sons or kinsmen of the chief. 621 561

It is possible, however, that the low status of Nyakyusa women relative to men is partly dependent on the age-village organization. It is most obviously related to the high degree of polygyny, and the fact that the position of the various wives is not clearly determined by date of marriage, birth, or allocation of property. For a commoner the first wife betrothed is his great wife, who takes precedence in ritual, but there is no ranking of houses and allocation of the bulk of property to different houses as among the Nguni, nor the same strong pressure on a husband to visit each wife in rotation. Instead there is acute competition between a man's various wives for the position of favourite, with a disportionate share of milk and meat and of her husband's attention. We do not suggest that there is no competition among the wives of a Pondo or Zulu polygynist, but we argue that competitive tendencies have freer play among the Nyakyusa,[2] and that this competition depresses the status of women in relation to men. 562 595

Like the kinship organization, the age-village organization favours men. As we have seen, a main end of age-villages, in the Nyakyusa view, is to allow men the enjoyment of congenial company, that is the company of friends and equals. A village consists of a group of male contemporaries and their dependants; ideally, the men live together all their lives and form a close-knit group of equals, between whom mutual loyalty, hospitality, and affability is fostered from childhood. Those who move tend to go to villages in which they already have close friends. The women, 621 561 562

[1] J. Kenyatta, op. cit., pp. 186–9.

[2] Unfair division of milk between wives is said by some Nyakyusa to anger the ancestors who cause the cows to give blood in place of milk; nevertheless unequal allocation of milk is a much commoner cause of complaint than it is among the Pondo.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 561 562 on the other hand, come from many villages, and they move from village to village more than men, because most women are inherited at least once in their lives. Nor do the women form an age-set, for men inherit wives as old, or older than themselves, and they continue to marry young brides until they themselves are elderly. A village thus contains women of all ages, the older ones often being quite late-comers to it. There is neither the unity of a kinship group, with leadership of mother or grandmother, as among a matrilineal people like the Bemba, nor the leadership of the mother-in-law as among the patrilineal Nguni and Sotho peoples. It is true that among the latter peoples the leadership of women devolves on a man's senior wife when his mother is dead, but the pattern has developed in a society in which daughters-in-law usually live for a long time in the same homestead as their mother-in-law, whereas among the pagan Nyakyusa a woman rarely joins her own son until she is decrepit, long after his marriage. When the Nguni or Sotho chief wife is obeyed by her co-wives it is as the successor of her mother-in-law; indeed on the latter's death she is often referred to by junior wives as 'mother'. Where women have authority in a patrilineal society it is usually as mother, or grandmother, or father's sister. But there are none with such positions in the context of the age-village; the office of headman is not hereditary so there is no mother of the heir, and the headman's own mother and sisters normally live elsewhere.

562 613 595 Such solidarity and leadership as exist among women in pagan Nyakyusa society are within the group of women of the same lineage who live together. Great emphasis is laid on the propriety of a wife bringing a younger sister, or brother's daughter, as a junior wife for her husband (*ukusakula*): this is felt to be a compliment to the husband and a comfort to the wife, proof that the marriage has been a success. Co-wives who are of the same lineage are very closely identified, their children being treated almost as full siblings, and they themselves co-operating in everything.

562 795 One of the marked changes in contemporary Nyakyusa society is the development of leadership among women in the Christian congregations.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

i. Constitutional form

Two other negative points are worth noting. First, the Nyakyusa fought among themselves and honoured a brave warrior, but they never developed a military kingdom, nor did they regard battle as the chief end of man. Emphasis on the value of war is not, then, a necessary concomitant of a developed age-organization, as a study of the Masai, Zulu, Swazi, and Pedi material might suggest. Secondly, the constitutional division of a chiefdom once every generation is not dependent upon the age-village organization, for such a division was common enough among the southern Nguni whose age-organizations were of relatively small importance. Among the Pondo and Xhosa the 'great son' and the 'right-hand son' of a chief very often both became independent; the main condition of their separation and independence being that there should be ample land in which they might live, each with his own followers.[1] Nyakyusa chiefdoms could divide in each generation because the Nyakyusa were an expanding population in relatively empty country. 642

j. Necessary conditions of age-villages

The limitations of the connections we have attempted to show must be realized. None of the characteristics cited are *correlates* of age-villages, for in each case either the age-villages could exist without them, or they could exist without age-villages: e.g. fathers- and daughters-in-law could not avoid one another completely if they lived in the same village, but the separate villages in which they live need not necessarily be age-villages; age-villages might be established though father- and daughter-in-law did not avoid one another; and so on. We claim only that these characteristics of Nyakyusa society which have been cited *partly* determine, and are themselves partly determined by, the age-village organization. 621 561

There are, however, certain other characteristics of Nyakyusa society without which age-villages such as we have described could not exist at all. The first of these is the redistribution of 621 561 178

[1] J. H. Soga, *Ama-Xosa Life and Customs*, pp. 25–49; M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, pp. 379–80.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 561 178 land in each generation. The territorial segregation of fathers and sons is directly dependent upon the shifting of the old men after the 'coming out' ceremony, without which the young men would not have sufficient land to establish themselves as a compact group on land adequate to support their growing families. Where no redistribution of land takes place, as on mission land and in the chiefdoms where the 'coming out' ceremony has been dropped, the territorial division between age groups becomes blurred within a generation.

621 425 423 178 Redistribution of land in each generation depends upon two further conditions: the existence of ample land to support the population, and relatively little development of land. As soon as land becomes scarce those in possession of it are reluctant to agree to redistribution. It is significant that the most valuable land of all in Nyakyusa country—that in old craters—is *not* redistributed at a 'coming out' ceremony, but is retained by an individual until his death, and then inherited by kinsmen. And as soon as improvements are made in the form of planting long-term crops, or building durable and expensive houses, the difficulties of redistribution are increased. Nyakyusa land-law recognized the right of an elder who had moved, or of his son, to the bamboos and *imisyunguti* trees he had planted (*vide supra*, p. 46). But such rights become much more complicated when it is not only an odd clump of bamboos or two or three trees which are at stake, but a large patch of coffee; or when, in place of the old-fashioned long hut (*ikibaga*) built with the co-operation of kinsmen and neighbours, there is a more substantial house with expensive doors and windows made by an expert carpenter. It has been shown that where individual rights over trees or other long-term crops are recognized, and such crops are planted on a large scale, individual tenure of land, as opposed to a temporary right of usufruct, tends to develop.[1]

621 476 178 Secondly, the solidarity of the Nyakyusa age-village, as of kinship villages in other African societies, is a function of a small-scale society. Fellow villagers have been hitherto, and are still in a large measure, dependent upon one another for land, for aid in economic undertakings, for sympathy and good fellowship, and for protection 'by night and by day'. But such mutual dependence is visibly decreasing. In the economic field co-opera-

[1] C. K. Meek, *Land Law and Custom in the Colonies*, p. 28.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tion is already as important beyond as within the village, and village control over the main cash crops has not been established, as it was over certain food crops. With increasing centralization the village headman, embodiment of the solidarity and relative autonomy of each village, is losing power to the chiefs and courts, on the one hand, and to the specialist agriculturalists, school teachers, elders, and ministers of religion on the other.

Friendships beyond the age-village are fostered by common experiences at a boarding school or a labour centre, and by common interests as members of a church or a coffee co-operative which does not necessarily include fellow villagers. And most important of all, fellow villagers are not bound to one another in resistance to external dangers as they were formerly. Lion, leopard, and buffalo still exist in the district, but we heard of no recent case of a village combining for defence against dangerous (as distinct from destructive) game: if action were necessary a European sportsman was usually glad of the chance of a bag. With the cessation of cattle-raiding and inter-village warfare, the curtailment of the right of self-help, and the development of courts with power to enforce judgement in cases involving members of different chiefdoms, dependence on fellow villagers for protection from material dangers and the responsibility of a village for the actions of its members, virtually cease. A sense of dependence upon neighbours for mystical protection lingers, but as elementary education, belief in Christian dogma, and the solidarity of Christian congregations increase, this supposed dependence upon the *amanga* or mystical power of neighbours also lessens. Many men who fear sorcery (including poisoning) do not fear witchcraft, and it is only against witches that neighbours are believed to protect one. Thus change in the form of beliefs is correlated with the development of more intense relationships beyond the village.

An age-village organization is probably dependent upon isolation in another fashion also: by their own account the Nyakyusa feeling that close association between successive generations is improper has been blunted by the example of Europeans and Swahili who do not share this feeling (*vide supra*, p. 69). The missionaries teach that avoidance between father- and daughter-in-law is unnecessary, if not in itself sinful, and the implication is that only 'superstition' maintains the taboo (*vide*

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 *supra*, p. 84). The Nyakyusa pattern of avoidance has undoubtedly influenced that of the small groups absorbed by them,
177 but they in turn have been influenced by these groups, and by the
784 example of Christians of neighbouring tribes. In Ilolo avoidance between father- and daughter-in-law is much less strict than in
178 Selya. This was attributed partly to the influence of neighbouring small groups of Nyika and Penja, who had not the same tradition of strict avoidance as the Nyakyusa, and partly to the influence of the Christians, whose number was proportionately greater in Ilolo than in Selya. As Nyakyusa informants argued: the pagans see Christian women disregard avoidance taboos, and they see that nothing dreadful happens to them (as the result of their neglect), so the pagans, too, begin to think that avoidance is of no importance.

621 The relationship between the generations is also modified
561 among the Nyakyusa, as among other African people, by the power of young men to earn money and so command wealth. As
178 we have seen, sons are in a position to *invite* their fathers to drink beer in the father's own homestead. Once fathers and sons have begun to *ukwangala*, drinking beer together, and once the horror of a woman seeing her father-in-law has diminished, then there is much less insistence on the need to buttress separation of the generations by territorial segregation. When convenient, fathers and sons will continue to live apart, but if a building site and arable land near his age-mates is lacking a son may suggest that avoidance does not really matter after all, and his father (if a Christian or a sceptic) may agree to the son building near him.

621 Nyakyusa age-villages still flourish, but they are hardly likely
561 to survive many decades with increasing pressure on land, the planting of coffee and other long-term crops, the development of
178 trade and migration, and a diminishing isolation from the ideas and values of the outside world. Age is no longer the sole basis for village grouping in Rungwe district—common belief and common occupation now provide other grounds for building together. There are Christian villages, an administrative station, a military station, and trading centres such as Mwaya, the Lake port. Tukuyu (the administrative centre) has its police lines, quarters for hospital attendants, traders' quarters, and so on,
COO while Masoko has soldiers' and traders' quarters. This account of age-villages may therefore have some significance as a docu-

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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1. VILLAGES IN MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM (1938)

Information from numerous informants

Generation	Chief	Sub Chief	Senior Headman	Headmen	Village	Category	Legal Authority	Remarks
I[1]	*Mwaijonga*[2]		Njobakoma		IPENDA	Senior village of Mwaijonga		Village survives only ritually—there is no group of men living together as Ipenda. Njobakoma is senior priest of Mwaijonga and eats sacred meat of cow sacrificed in Mwaijonga's grove
				Kisengeta	Ilihi			Not surviving
			Ngulyo (inherited from his father, Mwalkiflingwa)		ITEBE	Second senior[3] village of Mwaijonga	Ngulyo settles disputes but is subject to senior headman of next generation, Mwamambe (below)	Village survives with 11 members (original or their heirs). Ngulyo is a priest of Mwaijonga and eats the sacred meat in Mwaijonga's grove
				Mwainumo ('Mwakyuma')[4] inherited	Bukeba			Not surviving
				Mwalkiflingwa ('Kasebwe')	Itumba			Not surviving
II	*Mwaipopo I* (son of Mwaijonga)		Mwamambe ('Mwaganma') inherited from his father		BUJEGE	Senior village of Mwaipopo. Sons of Ipenda and Ilihi	Mwamambe. Mwamnganga settles disputes during Mwamambe's absence, and subject to him	'Coming out' of Mwaipopo I and his brothers was in this village. Mwamambe at present living in another chiefdom but returns for ceremonies and to hear cases

[1] The names of villages of Mwakaglo, father of Mwaijonga, have perished; the names of Ipenda and Itebe will be forgotten when Mwaipopo (generation II) dies.
[2] Italics indicate that the person named is dead.
[3] Informants were not all agreed about the relative status of villages and headmen of Mwaijonga's time.
[4] Most individuals are known by more than one name—we include two when two were in common use.

[P.181]

1:WD1000-E-5(1954-1958)1951 FN17 Ndgoude FN17
Nyakyusa

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622
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[p. 182]

VILLAGES IN MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM (1956)—contd.

Generation	Chief	Sub Chief	Senior Headman	Headman	Village	Category	Legal Authority	Remarks
II	Mwaipopo II (younger brother and heir of Mwaipopo I, See Table V)			Kaimila (Mwakalembe) inherited	Sojenga[1]		Kaimila	Kikuku who buried Mwaipopo I lives here
					Lugwa[2]	Older section of Sojenga	Its separate leader	Consists of 10 men who moved at 'coming out' of Mwaipopo from Sojenga. The elder men moved, leaving their younger contemporaries (Kikuku, etc.) in Sojenga. Kaimila lives here, also Kaimila, the sub-chief. Directly a section of Sojenga.
					Isalkali	'Younger' children of Mwaipopo who met with him', i.e. son of his generation	Mwakyembela (Tandale) section disperse	Tandale buried Mwaipopo I
						'Offshoot of Sojenga'		Est. established as a separate village at 'coming out' of Mwaipopo, directly a section of Sojenga
				Mwamba	Sulinkanaje	Much younger (last men) of Sojenga and Sojenga and Kyela	Mwamba	Mwaipopo II originally lived here. There was once a feuding between Sulinkanaje and Sojenga (see p. 186).
		Likonjola		Mwakilaale	Kikonde		Mwakilaale	

[1] Sojenga having direct authority over his own village, each senior headman has authority over other villages established at the 'coming out' with their own headmen (see p. 21). The villages subordinate to each senior headman are listed in columns 6 immediately under his own village.
[2] Lugwa is hierarchically separate, and spoken of as a separate village, but structurally it is really a section of Sojenga. Other villages of this type are underlined thus:

I: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

VILLAGES IN MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM (1938)—contd.

Generation	Chief	Sub Chief	Senior Headman	Headman	Village	Category	Legal Authority	Remarks
II	Mwaipopo II		*Mwalikafe* Mwakwese ('Mwakasese') inherited from Mwaikafe		LUPANDO	Second senior village of Mwaipopo. Sons of Bukaba	Mwakwese	Old men have moved to one side. Lupando was originally established as two villages but when the headmen of the senior (Mwalikafe) died, the villages coalesced under Mwakwese
				Kanyeka ('Mwaitula')	Kyesso	Younger brothers of Lupando	Kanyeka	Very, very small. Old men have moved to one side
					Kinyelo			
		Mwakabele		Mwangoko	Kilado			Mwakabele 'came out' here
		Mwakipanda		*Mwakitumange* ('*Kasale*')	Kabula			
III	*Mwankuga I* (son of Mwaipopo I)		Mwambopula ('Mwalunge')		IGEMBE	Senior village of Mwankuga. Sons of Mwaipopo	Mwambopula	Mwankuga I 'came out' here. 'Mwambopula is the greatest (headman) in the country.' Was driven out and later fetched back
	Mwankuga II (younger brother and heir of Mwankuga I)				Kaimbo	'Younger brothers and a few sons of Igembe.' Mwambopula's own sons built here	Mwambopula (no separate leader appointed)	53 sons. Established after the sons (or rest of Mwankuga I. Mostly a section of Igembe. 'Between and between' generations III and IV. Some near contemporaries in Mpugwe
				Nsoso	Lugombo		Nsoso	Nsoso was driven out, later fetched back. Acted for Mwambopula in his absence. Lugombo has a small sub-division, Ibiki.
				Kabulile ('Mwambe')	Ipesso	Younger than rest of Igembe. Sons of Bukaba and Bukabali	Kabulile	20 members. Took over land from Bujonga. They 'came out' when very young men. Kabulile a Christian serious under Akiwa

[p.183]

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VILLAGES IN MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM (1938)—contd.

Generation	Chief	Sub Chief	Senior Headman	Headman	Village	Category	Legal Authority	Remarks
III	Mwaibuga II				Ndongoti	Younger brothers of Ipona	Kabelile, Mwakibilingwa (appointed by Kabelile) settles small disputes	28 members: 27 married. One informant suggested that Ndogoti might be established as a village of the *next* generation at the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu. Others regard it as of generation III and strictly a section of Ipona. Its members include junior sons of Mwaipopo II
					Kiwa		Kabelile (no separate leader appointed)	At present a section of Ipona. May possibly be established as a village of generation IV
				Mwakileka	Kibonde (junior section)	Sons of Kibonde	Mwangulalu trim small cases. Others to Mwambupula	
		Mwaoka	Kakuja		NJEPI	Second senior village of Mwaibuga. Sons of Lupando	Kakuja	
				Mwakaika ('Mwamupe')	Myenga	Younger sons of Lupando	Mwakaika	
				Mwakabombe ('Mwalimba')	Imba	Youngest sons of Lupando	Mwakabombe	Mwakabombe had moved on account of a quarrel. He was recently brought home
		Mwakiwelo		*Mwambupula*	Lukwelo	Sons of Kitula		
		Mwakipondo		*Kaule*	Ndeko	Sons of Kabula		

[p. 184]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

VILLAGES IN MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM (1936)—contd.

Generation	Chief	Sub Chief	Senior Headman	Headman	Village	Category	Legal Authority	Remarks
IV	Mwanyilu (about 10 years old)			None yet appointed as Mwanyilu has not yet come out	Mpagano	Sons of Igembe	Mwambuputa	'Mwanyilu will come out here'
				"	Naanga	Younger sons of Igembe and Lugombe	Mwambuputa	'Mwanyilu will build here first'
				"	Iiings	Sons of Njesi and Mponga	Small cases to Mwakatika. Serious cases to Kakuju	Some members are married
				"	Ipyana	Younger brothers of Iiings	"	None yet married
				"	Kungwe	"	"	None yet married
				"	Isuba (junior section)	Sons of Isuba		

Nineteen independent villages established at the 'coming out' ceremonies of Mwaijonga, Mwaipopo and Mwankuga survive.
There are five village sections treated in some respects as practically independent villages. There are other village sections as Iiiki which are not so independent.
There are six boys' villages, not yet established, but likely to be recognized at the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu.
The dividing line between village and village section is difficult to determine when villages have split *after* the 'coming out' at which they have been established, as did Bujonga. Our recognition of Busikali as a separate village and not Iiiki is somewhat arbitrary.

It is to be noted that villages not only sub-divide but occasionally coalesce. Two independent villages established at the 'coming out' of Mwaipopo coalesced as Lupando, after the death of the headman of one of them.
The traditional organization is modified in that Mwaijonga's country has not been divided or sub-divided into independent chieftainships.

[p.185]

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I: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

a. THE 'COMING OUT' (*UBUSOKA*)

Mwaikambo (clerk and son of a chief).[1]

621 622 643 'The village headmen begin to talk among themselves, saying: "Our sons have grown up, should we not establish them?" So they go to tell the chief, saying: "Our sons have grown up, let us show them to the country." Two chiefs always "come out". We call them the senior and the junior. It is an old custom which is still followed that two chiefs should "come out".

[789] 'So the village headmen seek a doctor to make them a medicine horn and treat the tails of chieftainship with medicine. The village headmen take council together and choose two senior headmen to "come out" with the chiefs. These senior headmen drink medicine (*embondanya*) with the chiefs.

'When many people, together with the two young chiefs, have come together the doctor gives powdered medicine (*embondanya*) to the chiefs and the senior headman chosen for each chief. They give a spear of chieftainship, and a horn, and tail to each of the men chosen as senior headmen—one for each chief. Each senior headman then binds the horn to the blade of the spear, and standing with his own chief and many men and women, raises the spear to the sky. The women trill [535] and each party goes to its place of "coming out" on the pasturage. Each chief, with his followers, goes to his own place. The men dance; sometimes they have drums, sometimes not.

[372] 'Then when each party has reached it own place they make fire with fire sticks. The chief just simulates the action of fire-making then his senior headman takes the sticks and makes fire by friction. When they have built the shelters for sleeping in they warm themselves at the fire they have made; they do not take fire from the houses of men. If there are many of them then there will be three or four shelters, if few, then only one shelter. The men and their chief who has "come out" sleep in these shelters and enjoy themselves together (*nukwangala*). The first day they kill two head of cattle. Also they plant "the tree of coming out" (*umpiki gwa busoka*) which is called *ulupando*. They plant it with a man who has come out previously, a man of their fathers' generation, he begins to plant, then he explains to them what to do, saying "plant", then the new senior headman plants it.

'While they sleep in these shelters with their cattle, they eat food which they take from their fathers, bananas, and milk, and other food.

[1] For a note on conspicuous informants see p. vi.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

35. JOINT RESPONSIBILITY OF NEIGHBOURS

Mwaikambo (*clerk*).

628 621 837 'In former times people did not live at peace as we do now. Because they fought frequently they never were friendly with those of other villages as they are to-day. The occasion for beginning a fight was usually a dispute over women or cattle. If a man had made love to a woman of another village he got a friend to steal her for him. Then if the "owners" of the woman saw them they told their chief that men of such and such a village had run off with "their wife". Their chief allowed all his people to go to recapture "their wife". Also those who had stolen the woman told their chief that they had a case against them, they had stolen someone's wife. Then the chief replied that they should tell everyone to be ready.'

Mwamgwanda (*old pagan man*).

628 621 672 685 'In the old days if one man A, had "eaten" the cow of another, B, living in a different chiefdom, and failed to repay it, though B came frequently to claim his cow, and if the wife of a village neighbour of A visited in B's country, B might seize her and take her to his chief, saying: "This woman is the wife of C, a neighbour of A, who has 'eaten' my cow." Then the chief sent to the chief of A's country, saying that they had caught the wife of C and they wanted the cow due from A. Then A would send the cow and B would send back the wife of C with a bull to say: "Thank you, you have settled my case." Then the husband, C, might demand a hoe as well. If A denied his debt when the message came, and asserted that B's friends had seized the woman without cause, his chief would send him to B's chief, saying: "My man denies the charge. Let them drink *umwafi*." Then A and B would take the ordeal in B's country.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

36. MOVING

Mwanjala.

'Lukama's father had built in the country of the chief, Mwaikuju, and Lukama moved and went to the country of Mwasyika. He returned to Mwaikuju's of his own accord, and when he had been there a considerable time his wife fell ill, so he moved again to Mwasyika's. After three months his fellows came to fetch him, and they put him into his own old house. They told him to choose whether he would go to his own old homestead, or to another, and of his own accord he chose to build on another site, but he occupied his own old house temporarily. After a year and a half had passed, his wife fell very ill again, and he went to Mwasyika's. He had been there a month when his fellows—those from his other age-village (in Mwaikuju country)—came to fetch him. They put him into another man's house and he lived with him there. He ate his own food for he was the owner of the homestead—a stranger eats of the bananas of strangers. After he had been there some time, but before he had built a house, his wife fell ill again, and he went to Mwasyika's country where he is still.' 166 621

In reply to a question: 'It is customary to fetch a man who has moved because people mostly move on account of illness. Hence, the man's fellows say: "If we do not fetch him it appears as if it were we who had driven him away, as if we had done that which caused him to move."'

Kimbolela.

'Mwapefya moved and went to Mwankenja's country. He moved on account of his own illness. Before he had been away long his fellows (i.e. village neighbours) went to fetch him. He was only away perhaps four or five months. When they brought him back they put him into his old house, for no one had taken it. He took his food from where he had cultivated previously, for as he had not been away long there were still sweet potatoes in his field. He came the first time they went to fetch him.'

Details from various informants, in reply to a question about three new huts being built.

'Three young men have just moved from the village of Mwafula to the village of Mwamunda, because someone had accused them, saying 166 684

[p. 267]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

37. FETCHING HOME A PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL

Ilolo village, 19/9/37.

166 Five young men ran past our house (which was on the main village street), carrying mats and calabashes.

621 Angombwike: 'They have gone to fetch one of Porokoto's men who had moved elsewhere. A son of Porokoto (the chief) went with the others to fetch him back. That is as if the chief had gone himself; he loves him. It is customary for people to seize the mats of the man who has moved. If he objects they do not agree to his objections. They say: "You have spent time here. Let's be off!" They just snatch his mats. The man who has moved *agrees and tells them to go, he will follow*, and he comes later.

'When he comes they put him in a house where he stays for two or three days; then he asks: "How about a home, friends?" Then they point out a homestead to him. If he does not like it he refuses it and they agree and tell him to choose one for himself, which he does.

'But if he does not agree to come perhaps he sends a son to build here; perhaps he comes but after he has spent two or three days he says: "I am going; I want to return to where I was, so he goes."

'When they go to fetch a man they always run off with his mats.'

[p.270]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

38. BRINGING HOME A VILLAGE HEADMAN

Mwambuputa's home-coming

Mwambuputa is the senior headman of Mwankuga who had fled to the Lake-shore plain from fear of 'the breath' of his men (cf. pp. 229–30). He was brought back with ceremony. His return also brought to a head an old land dispute (cf. pp. 188–90). For the status of the personalities concerned consult the table of villages and headmen on pp. 181–5. 621 622 166

Record of G. W., 1/5/35.

'I visited Tandale (Mwainyobolela) the village headman of Busikali and the man chosen to bury chiefs. Katolile (the village headman by inheritance of Bujenga, and a brother of Jane, Kasitile's wife) turned up with two others to fetch him to the home-coming of Mwambuputa (Mwafungo)[1] in Igembe. We picked up Kikalango (a junior son of the chief Mwaipopo) on the way and he and Tandale told me the following story: 166

"Mwambuputa went to the Lake-shore plain (MuNgonde). Then Mwankuga I (the young chief), while he was still alive, found a cow and the village headmen went off with it to fetch Mwambuputa home. Mwankuga did not go himself. This cow was kept by Mwambuputa, not eaten. It was to say to him; 'Come back, my headman.' Then Mwambuputa agreed and said: 'I will return, take my son back with you now.' So they came back. Then Mwankuga I died, and Mwambuputa came up to his funeral and put up temporary huts to live in, and he has not since been back to MuNgonde. Yes, he could have built proper houses before this ceremony, had he wished, it is not forbidden."

'Those who come to this gathering are his fathers (i.e. the men of Mwaipopo) and his friends (i.e. the men of Mwankuga), all commoners—no chiefs come to this ceremony. And in fact neither Mwaipopo nor Mwankuga II was there, nor did I see any of Mwaipopo's brothers. Kikalango and Kititu (junior sons of Mwaipopo) came to accompany me. We arrived at Mwambuputa's huts with Ngulyo, about noon. About 100 men were present. I noticed Mwambuputa himself, Kakuju, Ngulyo, Tandale, Katotile, and Mwaseba (Kabolile). 166 183

[1] Some informants used the name 'Mwambuputa', others 'Mwafungo'. To avoid confusion we use only the former.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

602 763 is forgotten he will be angry: 'It happens sometimes that a kinsman comes in later, after the man is buried, and is very angry because no message was sent to him; he comes in a passion, and perhaps he beats his brother [the one who should have sent him a message]. Then the others catch hold of him and say: "Why do you not come soberly and greet us decently with the appropriate words? Come now, why?" And if he does not stop they beat him.'

602 764 These kinsmen and affines, with their wives and children, are under obligation to come to the burial, unless they are sick. Young children under the age of 10 or 11 are not obliged to come, though they often do, but older children must do so. One reason for the continuance of the burial ceremonies for three or four days is that this gives time for relatives from a distance to receive the messages and come. Deliberately to refuse to send a message or, on the [578] other side, to refuse to come to a burial for no good reason, is a symbolic breaking of the bond of kinship and no one ever does either, unless there is a serious quarrel and all economic and social relations are being broken off between the two families concerned.

621 764 577 The village neighbours also are obliged to come to every burial in the village. They normally wish to do so, but, even if they do not, they still come for shame or for fear of being accused of witchcraft if they stay away. Where there is friendship the neighbours come in grief and sympathy and quarrels are softened by the fact of death, but, if the memory of enmity still persists, then the last sanctions are shame and fear: 'Some people mourn more than others.' 'The men who knew him say: "Let us go and mourn him."' 'Those who did not know him intimately mourn because each thinks: "He has died, my neighbour, and so will it be with me one day."' 'If I have quarrelled with my neighbour and he dies, I go to his burial for I say to myself: "It is true that while he lived we quarrelled, but now he is dead and we shall never meet again. I too will go to his burial and mourn him."' 'If a village neighbour does not come to a burial we say he is unkindly and unsociable.' 'And if a man does not go to his neighbour's burial then at once people say: "It was you who bewitched him. Why else do you not come to bury him?"' Several of the accusations of witchcraft recorded had been occasioned by a man's absence from a village neighbour's funeral. For it is believed that witches are chary of going to the burials of their victims lest the dead should rise and denounce them.

643 764 A chief normally goes to all burials in his own country, except

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

misfortune and the rituals are distinct. In theory, when the shades 578
are angry the essential offering is that made in the sacred banana 775
grove or on the hearth; it is eaten by the grandsons of the most 783
recently dead, and whether neighbours partake or not depends upon the generosity of the officiant; whereas when neighbours are angry there is no offering in the grove or at the hearth, the neighbours are feasted, admit anger and express forgiveness.

However, neighbours are slow to admit responsibility (for to 789
curse someone comes close to witchcraft) and in some cases there is both a formal feast for the neighbours and a prayer to the shades, and it is left uncertain where final responsibility rests. The following texts illustrate this:

MWAIKAMBO: It is the custom among us Nyakyusa to marry many 595
wives, mature ones and young ones, so if a man has sons at his home it 837
sometimes happens that one of them makes love to one of his father's wives. Perhaps they commit adultery in secret, perhaps he runs off with her to a distant chiefdom. Then the father breaks off relations with him.

The son, wherever he is, learns that he has been cursed by his father 593
and his body becomes like goose flesh. If the son is wise he gathers his 789
property and returns to his father. He takes a friend with him and goes 783
into the house of one of his father's neighbours. His friend and his 621
father's neighbour speak together. 'I have come to return unto my father because I have done wrong.' He tells the neighbour what they have brought to offer the father—usually a cow and a bull. Then that neighbour seeks three comrades or perhaps four or five, and they go to pacify their irate fellow, saying: 'Our child has returned. He knows that he has done wrong towards you, but we have received him because he has confessed humbly and begged forgiveness.' His father refuses furiously and almost spears himself in his passion. His fellows pacify him for the whole day, or perhaps two or three days, then at last he agrees. Then the young man and his fellows bring the cow and the bull. The
father also calls together many of his fellows and he seeks beer and 593
cooks food. They gather together at the father's homestead and the 789
father says: 'My son has come and admitted that he has done wrong, 783
asking that I forgive him and saying: 'I did not know what I was doing, these are the cattle which I have brought', and the others agree. Then they kill the bull. They roast some meat. The father catches one side of it, the son the other and the village headman cuts it in the middle, and the father and son each eat their piece. This is the blessing (*ulusajo*), meaning that there is kinship between them now. They eat together. Then all the people eat. Also with the beer it is like this. The village headman picks a straw and puts it in the beer, hands it to the father who drinks, and then to the son. Then other people drink, and they

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

cited a case she had seen in which the doctor smeared the child 754 783 with medicine and beer, and the mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law of the erring woman drank the beer and said: 'All right.' T. (a Christian woman) quoted another case:

> One of my mother's co-wives swore at her mother-in-law. . . . When she bore a child it was very thin and ill, so they sought a doctor, and beat the mother and she confessed all she had said in swearing at my grandmother, her mother-in-law. She and the child were treated by the doctor and when her father saw that the child did not recover quickly he brought a cow in payment . . . it is still at my home. From that time the child recovered. If anyone says there is no such thing as the illness of *ingoto* they lie because I have seen it with my own eyes.[1]

When a junior comes to beg pardon of a senior it is the business 783 of the latter's neighbours to persuade him to receive the prodigal. 621 That was indicated in Mwaikambo's account quoted above and reaffirmed by Mwakwelebeja who cited the case of his wife's father, a youngest brother, who had run off with three of his eldest brother's widows allocated to the middle brother, *after* they had been smeared with ash and the heir had slept with them.

> When they had performed the death ritual and finished it and the widows had slept with the heir in the house and had taken the *ilibalaga* to their fathers, . . . then three of the widows ran off with the younger brother. He fled with them to Masoko and to the hills, where he lived a long time and begot children with them. Then later on he brought 'the cow of the ashes (*inombe ja mfwandelo*)' to return to his senior brother. The senior received it and killed it and poured out beer. We ate.
>
> QUESTION: Do people not refuse to receive such a cow, sometimes?
>
> MWAKWELEBEJA: No, they fear to do so, they fear people, because the wrongdoer has come to them and it is they, the neighbours, who tell the senior kinsman: 'He has come, forgive him.' If the senior refuses they will be angry with him. Also we tell him: 'See, that man has strength to beget children with these women, you will eat the cattle.' Then he agrees and says: 'Let us make friends.'

The illness that falls on a widow who rejects the heir after being smeared with the ash is 'like a curse from the ash'. Her lover, 'if he is strong and has medicines he will escape, but if he is not strong he will fall ill . . . because he takes men's lips with him [i.e. suffers from their breath].'

[1] A third case, in which the beer was brought to the woman's husband, is quoted in *Good Company*, p. 236.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 has been a quarrel in the family, those members of the lineage
602 who have been at variance must attend and share the meat or beer, and bless one another. Grandchildren, 'comrades of the shades', must eat the offering left overnight in the banana grove.

593 If a son has quarrelled with his father and comes to beg pardon
●621 the father calls his *neighbours* who must be present and partake of a
783 feast and bless the young men. 'If father and son just agree with one another and people do not eat anything, then the son will not be settled in well.'

585 At a puberty–marriage ritual the principals are the nubile girl
881 and her father or brother, her husband, and sometimes her mother
602 or mother-in-law. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest son's wife, or with her eldest daughter, if she is initiated at home. At an ordinary birth the principals are the mother and infant.

764 Besides these principals who undergo the full ritual there are
602 many minor actors. At a funeral there are the grave-diggers who,
621 traditionally among the Nyakyusa, were mature men, relatives or village neighbours.[1] They wash after the burial and are rewarded with a special leg of the funeral beef. As we have seen, the affines (*abako*), that is the fathers-in-law and sons-in-law of the deceased or of 'the owner of the funeral', come with cattle to kill or cloth. When a woman dies, her husband and her father, or her brother, kill cattle, and their affines bring cloths or, occasionally, cattle. Kinsmen—members of the lineage and their wives—and neighbours bring gifts of food to cook for the crowd of mourners, and small gifts of millet which are presented to the shade and used for making the ritual beer. After an abnormal birth, village neigh-
845 bours have their legs splashed with scalding medicine but do not
621 drink medicines or shave. The cattle of the village are also splashed. At the puberty ritual the bride's maids keep her com-
881 pany during her seclusion. The co-wives and neighbours of her
621 mother and mother-in-law assist in instructing her, and the neigh-
602 bours of her father join with him first in avoiding her and then in giving her gifts. Her father-in-law is identified with his brothers and his father's brothers' sons, whom she avoids, as well as his sisters, and her mother-in-law's brothers, and sisters' husbands. They, in turn, avoid her sisters, as well as herself.

621 By the 'congregation' we mean those who attend rituals to ex-
788 press sympathy, and whose presence is felt to be necessary to the

[1] In Ngonde they are *abatani*, cross-cousins.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

success of the ritual, but who do not play any specially defined 621
part. As we have seen, all who are reckoned kinsmen and all fellow 788
villagers *must* attend a funeral, and a large crowd enhances the status of the kinsmen of the deceased. At a puberty and marriage ritual the 'congregation' is much smaller but is nevertheless important, as is shown by the complaint of the girl marrying a Christian that if she were not initiated she would not be famed. At other rituals all who attend are actors.

The officiants (*abanyago*) for death, puberty and marriage, and 791
birth rituals are almost always elderly women who, by their own choice, have learnt the medicines and observances from some older *unyago* by acting as her assistant. We came across only one man who acted as *unyago* in death and puberty rituals, though at the rituals of spearing, binding with ropes, and protection against sorcery men are more common than women. Often all the elderly women are referred to as '*abanyago*' for 'they help the *unyago*', but the one who has been called upon to provide the medicines and organize the proceedings, and who is paid for her trouble, is clearly recognized. Sometimes she is a kinswoman of the 'owner' of the ritual—if a member of the lineage knows the medicines she will carry out the rituals for all her kin, as did Syungu, wife of Chief Porokoto's half-brother—but she is not necessarily a relative. It is knowledge, not kinship connections, that qualify her. She is the final arbitrator on procedure, and is insistent on exact observance of the details. Because knowledge of medicines is so important Nyakyusa often refer to the officiant at a ritual as *unganga*, a doctor, but *unyago* is the more precise word since *unganga* has other applications.

On the occasion of prayer in sickness, and in the ritual of recon- 791
ciliation, no specialist *unyago* is necessary. The senior kinsman of a 782
lineage prays to his shades direct, and a father and his neighbours 783
receive and bless an erring son without the mediation of any priest; but the doctor called in to treat a sick man may press the kinsmen to confess their anger and bless one another (as Mwakionde did in the case quoted) and come very close to organizing a ritual of reconciliation.

At a marriage ritual there is a 'go-between' (*umfuya*) represent- 585
ing the bride's father and one representing the groom, and, besides
their legal function as witnesses to the passage of cattle, they help [675]
the officiant to organize the ritual, and are specifically responsible for conveying invitations to the feasts. The wife of the groom's 'go-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

585 between' accompanies 'the mothers-in-law' when they go to induct or instruct the bride, and the wife of her father's 'go-between' is one of the group of mothers which takes the bride to her husband. The duties of a 'go-between' do not end at marriage: the [851] groom's 'go-between' is responsible for taking to the bride's people the hen to announce the birth of the first child, and, among the Lugulu, the 'go-between' of the father is master of ceremonies at the ritual of vituperation.

789 602 The ideas that emerge from this analysis are, that in the *protective* rituals—after death, twin birth, spearing, binding with ropes, and death from sorcery—the parents, children, grandchildren, and some siblings, and siblings' children of the person primarily affected undergo the ritual. Links through females as well as males are recognized—daughters' children as well as sons' children attend—but they are not traced so far, and a brother's or half-brother's children attend far more often than a sister's children. Moreover, children of an unrelated co-wife perform the death ritual for a woman rather than her sister's children.

593 Wives always attend rituals in which their husbands are concerned—indeed, they often come with their children when their husbands stay away—but when the wife is concerned as a sister or daughter, her husband never accompanies her.

593 602 The closest relatives, such as own children, children of the heir or of a related co-wife, and proximate full siblings, must *all* participate, but the more distant relatives select representatives.

602 The range of relations concerned varies with the particular ritual—it is widest in the twin ritual and narrowest for an ordinary birth—and is also modified by proximity, for relatives who live near come when those in the same category living twenty miles away do not.

Affines (*abaka*) never perform a ritual together even when they are next-door neighbours and close friends, but *abaka* in one generation are *abipwa* (mother's kin) in the next, and a man and his *abipwa* can participate together, as in the protection against sorcery described. More often, however, the members of each lineage act separately.

602 ●621 613 Our Nyakyusa informants distinguished the officiants—*abayage*—from those undergoing a ritual but they did not make distinctions of the sort attempted here between principals and kin who do not undergo the ritual. The distinctions they drew were between kinsmen and neighbours and between lineages. At a death

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ritual they distinguish *abakamu* (kinsmen) from *abandu itole* (non-relatives) or *abapakipanga* (villagers), and *abakitole* (those of the lineage of a dead man) from *abako* (affines) and mother's relatives (*abipwa*). These categories have different functions.

(*b*) *Christians*

The performance of family rituals is complicated by the fact that 16 per cent of the Nyakyusa are professing Christians, and in almost every lineage there are individuals who withdraw from the full performance of traditional rituals at death, puberty, and marriage, birth, and misfortune. In most cases such a withdrawal is treated tolerantly by the pagan kinsmen: the Christian kinsmen come to mourn, to congratulate the bride, to express sympathy with the parents of twins; and their non-participation in the washing and shaving and avoidance of ritual meat and beer is accepted. At the funeral of Mwamulenga his preceding full brother, who should have been a principal in the death ritual, was a Christian, and he took no part, though his children went through it. At the funeral of Mwampiki (p. 248) one boy was left untreated on the ground that he was a Christian and a Christian 'should not have two gods'. At the puberty ritual of Mwaihojo's daughter (p. 91) the brother called to wash with her was influenced by Christians and was reluctant to take part, though he finally did so.

Only when a son who is heir to family wealth, or to the office of chieftainship or priesthood refuses the inheritance of widows (as a Christian must do) is there very strong pressure on him to conform to traditional custom: the union of the heir with the widows is held essential to their health. Sometimes also there is acute conflict between different members of the family over the performance of an autopsy, the pagans pressing for it and the Christians opposing it. This we saw in the death of E. when her pagan senior brother wished to examine her, and her Christian junior brother opposed him vehemently.

That Christians cannot take part in certain of the rituals[1] and do not suffer if they omit them is generally accepted. The farewell to the dead at the homestead of the deceased, and the treatment of kinsmen of twins, fall into this category. About certain other rituals, such as the ritual of the gasping cough and the protection against sorcery, opinions are divided. Some of our Christian friends insisted that 'the gasping cough is a real illness' and cited

[1] There are minor differences in the rules of the different missions.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

431 between the groom's lineage and that of the bride during the puberty-marriage ritual.

431 613 Within a lineage, also, there is some circulation of property. A young man is provided with marriage-cattle by his father, or father's heir; a father kills a cow at his son's funeral, a son does likewise for his father; and if a son offends his father he begs pardon with a gift. A daughter is given a gift by her father at the close of the puberty ritual, and he or his heir kills a cow at her funeral.

431 621 Village neighbours are closely identified with the father, and feast on the bull of puberty and the offering provided by an erring son, and give gifts to a daughter when she reaches maturity.

431 Kinsmen and neighbours are expected to help provide food, and firewood on which to cook it, for the guests at a funeral or marriage or at a twin-birth ritual. On the first day of a funeral guests are fed on food provided by the bereaved household, on the following day on that provided by their kinsmen, and on the third day on that provided by the village neighbours. Before the marriage-cattle are brought for his daughter, a man asks his kinsmen and immediate neighbours to help him cook for 'the husbands'—not to ask for such help is unfriendly. Kinsmen and neighbours also bring gifts of millet at a funeral and after an abnormal birth, which is used for brewing the ritual beer.

(d) The symbolism of participation and exchange

431 602 What is implied by undergoing a ritual or offering gifts? Participation in a ritual implies close kinship. We see, in the rituals performed after death, or spearing, or binding with ropes, the unity of the group composed of parents, children, grandparents, and siblings; the acknowledgment of a closer link between some siblings than between others; a recognition that wives are of 'one blood' with their husbands; and a separation between kinsmen and affines who are of another blood. In the twin ritual the limits of recognized kinship are expressed by participation and in the death ritual they are expressed by attendance. Observance of the taboo of avoidance, like attendance at rituals, is taken as evidence of kinship.

554 602 The difference in the status of senior and junior wives, and of eldest and junior daughters and sons, also appears in the rituals at puberty and marriage and at death. The unity between living and dead agnatic kin and, in a lesser degree, mother's kin, is ex-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

686 shades usually do, and I shall wander a long time on the way to the land of the shades because I shall have no relatives to show me the way. And then when I get there I shall still have trouble. They will drive me away from them, and I shall live alone, apart from them, quite separate.

775 764 More rarely a shade is said to be angry because his grave has been left unswept, or he has not been buried where he asked to be.

*621 681 The kinds of behaviour believed to be punished by 'the breath of men' are very similar to those thought to be punished by the anger of senior kinsmen; and, indeed, as we have seen, kinsmen and neighbours may murmur together against a son who has seduced his father's wife, a girl who has behaved inelegantly to her parents-in-law, either verbally or by a breach of avoidance, and an heir who has neglected his wards or has neglected the customary ritual for his father, more particularly the customary killing of a cow when he enters into his inheritance. It is said that neglect to provide them with certain customary feasts infuriates neighbours more than anything else.[1]

The misfortunes that threaten from the neglect of rituals, and from the anger of kinsmen and neighbours, are loss of sanity, of life or health or fertility; a difficult labour or a lingering death; repeated miscarriages; loss of beauty (a wicked woman goes bald or turns reddish); scanty crops or sick herds, or, nowadays, unemployment—the man whose father is angry does not find a job. Only rarely is it suggested that punishment may be postponed until after death and then what is feared is that the shades of the lineage will not receive their kinsman.

775 771 658 When Nyakyusa talk about their religion they speak mostly of external things, of the rituals, of the angry words spoken by kinsmen or neighbours and of the fearful effects upon one against whom this anger is directed. Misfortune is said to be brought down on a man by his parents muttering in anger over the fire, by people murmuring against him (the word used is that for the humming of a hive of bees). The emphasis is on outspoken complaint or criticism. But it is also thought that 'the shades see what is within a man': if he stints one wife of fish, then 'even though the woman herself has not said anything, the shades hear the thought of the belly'. Sleeplessness and an unquiet mind are taken as evidence of the anger of the shades or the attacks of witches.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 125-6.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

577 There is much more talk among the Nyakyusa of misfortune
777 from the shades or the anger of neighbours, than of blessing, but
554 there is an idea, somewhat vague but real, that generosity and kindliness will bring blessing (*ufuaje*). Ambilikile, a Christian teacher who had grown up in a pagan home, said:

> My mother tells me that my father was in the habit of feeding people, those who were not his relatives. People went to a distance and brought medicines for fertility and gave them to him, hence they said: 'He is very kind; food never grows short at his home.' She also told me that my father died very old. He did not die of disease, but of old age, no breath being left in him. This was because men were always saying: 'May they stand by him, may they bless him (*kumuwendeje, kumujeje*),' not to his face but to others. They said that he lived long because of the blessing of men. Yes, they say that the food of a kindly man never gets finished, that of a stingy man finishes; he himself suffers hunger.

763 Mwaisumo described a father on his death-bed blessing a favourite son, allocating cattle to him, and telling him:

> Care for the children I have left, keep on good terms with them, then you will be rich in everything like your father. I cared for my children, I was not harsh (*ukali*), so complain to me of anything that troubles you. If you are like this the property in your home will be plentiful, people will be astonished and say: 'He is like his father.'

621 Of a man given a cow by the chief, it was sometimes said: 'The
775 shades have blessed him; he has a righteous (*ugulufu*) shade.'

Although our Nyakyusa informants talked a great deal about
754 the danger of neglecting rituals and angering senior relatives,
673 living and dead, the number of cases of misfortune attributed to
●621 their anger is small in comparison with the number attributed to witchcraft or 'the breath of men'. (Ten as compared with sixty-three.) There is no reason to suppose that one type of case was concealed when the others were reported to us, and it is clear that the Nyakyusa prefer to make neighbours in the age-village, rather than kinsmen, the scapegoat for their misfortunes. Even when the wrong done is against a kinsman it is often the neighbours, rather than the shades, who are said to have brought punishment on the wrong-doer.

777 At the same time, we were assured by one informant after an-
621 other that people blame the shades or Kyala for misfortune when it is really the neighbours who are responsible! Angombwike argued that men fear to accuse the neighbours, who are slow to

admit their anger, and prefer to blame the shades and conciliate the neighbours by feasting. For example:

When someone is ill of a curse the owners of the village do not agree that it is they who have bewitched him. No, that is what others say. . . . When they bless such a person they pray to the shades. As, for example, with M. [informant's father, a wealthy man]. If he falls ill with a disease of the legs, and goes to a diviner, and the diviner says: 'They have bewitched you,' then he goes home and seeks a bull and calls the men of the village, saying: 'Let us enjoy ourselves with this bull.' They say: 'Is it the legs?' He denies it, saying: 'No, I am just giving you something to eat, something with which to enjoy ourselves.' They say: 'Are you a chief to feast us on a bull?' He says: 'I just thought I would like to enjoy myself with you.' He conceals the cause because if he speaks of the illness they will say: 'Ha, he is catching us for witchcraft.' They eat, and at the beer they say: 'You, M., take this stick and stand up. Walk!' And when they go home each prays to his shades, saying: 'Stand by him, may he recover from his sickness!'

In short, the Nyakyusa speak of the danger of angering senior relatives, but they attribute most of their misfortunes to their neighbours, and they say that more misfortunes are due to neighbours and fewer to the shades than is openly admitted!

Perhaps the most striking feature of the family cult among the Nyakyusa is the narrowness of its range. Neighbours are concerned with the fulfilment of family obligations as well as obligations to themselves, but the shades are concerned solely with behaviour between kinsmen. 'If I wrong a kinsman I fear the shades, but not if I wrong another.'

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

167 of the new area. Their culture differs from that of the indigenous tribes, so that they remain largely unassimilated. The cause of the exodus is partly shortage of land; the Nyakyusa are skilled cultivators; the active soil-conservation campaign promoted by the Agricultural Department in Rungwe district involved farmers in additional effort, so that land in Mbeya was attractive in so far as the soil conservation scheme only started there two years later. The main motive, however, was to shorten the transport haul between the farmer and the market at Lupa. The demand for supplies of beans and grain from Rungwe district was decreasing even before the 1939 war, partly because production on the goldfields was declining, and partly because the produce of Mbeya district was increasing (largely through the work of the immigrant Nyakyusa farmers). The main problems for the administration arising from the Nyakyusa immigration into Mbeya district is the lack of control by the Native Authorities and congestion in the river valleys. The Safwa, who vacated the valleys of the Naebwe and Mbalizi rivers after their wars with the Sangu, retreated into the hills before the flood of Nyakyusa immigrants, who now populate the valleys almost exclusively with their own compact endogamous groups.[3]

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Kinship and Local Grouping

62! 56! (The following section is compiled from information applying equally to Nyakyusa and Ngonde.)

The distinctive feature of the social organization is the system of age-villages. An age-village consists of a male age-group with wives of any age and children. When a man dies his heir may come to live in his village, and strangers applying for land are never refused on grounds of age, but the original constitution of the village is based on the principle of identity of age. Up to the age of ten years the small boys herd cattle in groups. Then they start to hoe for their fathers, and leave their fathers' houses to go to sleep with friends. After two or three years they build for themselves in an age-village of young men. They continue to hoe the fields and eat the food of their mothers until marriage, after which they hoe mainly for themselves, on land adjacent to their own home.[1]

602 If a young man, instead of hoeing, goes out to work, he is expected to bring back tax-money for his father. By his service he earns the right to be given cattle for marriage. A young man whose father is poor in cattle will often attach himself to the household of a rich kinsman, brother of his father or mother, and hoe regularly for him, eventually receiving from him a large portion of his marriage cattle.[2] Sons-in-law are expected to bring their friends now and again to hoe for their father-in-law, who will afterwards entertain the workers.[3]

[611] Descent and inheritance are patrilineal, but there are no clans, and no descent group with a common name and definite membership.[4] The name of a group of effective kinsmen are not all themselves effective kinsmen, and in the third generation the bonds of kinship may often have been forgotten. Cattle exchanges signalize the most

[1] Wilson, 1, 1938, p. 1.
[2] Wilson, 1, 1938, p. 38.
[3] Ibid., p. 28.
[4] Hall, 1941.
[5] Ibid., p. 60.
[6] Ibid., 2, 1938, p. 187; 2, 1939, p. 2.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde Fr.

and the great commoners of the most senior villages. The constitution of a chiefdom was that of a limited monarchy, for the chief was dependent on his great commoners for his authority. All the way up the scale, with the exception of the Kyungu himself, each chief had his own great commoners and people directly subordinate to him. The organization of families and villages within the chiefdoms was the same as that of the Nyakyusa, but the organization of a territory ruled by a noble differed in that although there were always at least two age-villages, there were no great commoners.[1]

Villages vary in size, and average from forty to fifty households. In the first instance a boys' village is built on ground allotted to them by the village of their fathers, but a new allotment is made ceremoniously at the 'coming out', *ubunda*, ceremony of the young chiefs, when the old chief and his great commoners formally allot a tract of land to each village of young men, and redraw the boundaries.

In every generation each chiefdom was divided into two (they were originally immigrant groups expanding their territory, and incorporating previous inhabitants). The chief at his accession, or 'coming out', married two 'great wives', whose eldest sons would each be one of his two heirs, and divide his chiefdom. The number of villages which 'came out' with each young chief varied between four and eight. If he was later reduced to a minor position he might be left with only one village of adult men, and one of their sons, as people tended to move away from minor chiefdoms. This was the system which obtained among the Nyakyusa and also among the Ngonde.[2] A summary of the 'coming out' ritual is given here, instead of in the section on ritual, as it indicates some of the features of the political organization.

Usually eight age-villages 'came out' at the same time, four under each of the young chiefs. At this occasion, some thirty years after the old chief's accession, eight new great commoners were chosen. The two young chiefs were secluded for a few hours in the hut of the old chief's first wife, and received magical treatment. Then they 'came out'. The boundaries of the age-villages were forcibly drawn. After the 'coming out', each young chief, whether he was already married or not, married his two great wives, whose first sons would be his heirs. Girls who had not yet reached puberty were carried off from other chiefdoms with a show of force by the chief's men, who have sent some of their own to supplemen the position. The girls stayed at the house of one of the old chief's men until their first menstruation. They were initiated together, not at the house of their fathers, but in the country of their husbands; the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the retiring chief) played the part usually played by the girl's parents and neighbours; the chief and his young men playing the usual part of the husband and his friends. After the ceremonies the girls were given as wives to the young chiefs, and separate huts were built for them in the two senior age-villages of the chiefdom. Wives married subsequently were attached in order of seniority to one or other of the two 'sides' of the chiefdom. Thus the four age-villages normally attached to a young chief were, from the first days of his official marriage, divided into two. If one of the two great wives bore no sons, the succession for that side of the chiefdom would pass to the son of the next senior wife of that side.

Between the 'coming out' of two young chiefs and the death of their own fathers, a delicate balance of prestige and power was maintained, secular power over their own age-villages passing to each young chief, while the old chief retained control over the

[1] Wilson, 1. 1939, pp. 10-9.

[2] Ibid., 1. 1938, pp. 10-15.

S:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

595 and children a man has to assist him the more wealth he can produce. The man and his unmarried sons hoe, his wives and young daughters plant, weed and harvest, fetch water, cut firewood and cook the food; and in other practical activities there is equally fruitful co-operation within the household group.

591 When a man marries he takes his wife from her father's village to his
621 own where he lives with a group of contemporaries. Each village is in
832 origin an age-group, formed by the sons of some village of adult men who leave home one by one as they reach the age of ten to twelve years and build together on ground set aside for them by their fathers. It is not decent, the Nyakyusa maintain, for a boy to sleep at home after any vigorous interest in sexual activity has awakened in him; and so, for the fifteen years or more between leaving home and marriage, he sleeps with bachelor friends in a boys' village. He and a group of friends go round in turn to the houses of their respective parents for meals, and each hoes his own parents' fields, but all return to the boys' village at night.

621 As the members of the boys' village grow older, younger boys just
832 leaving home begin to be refused admittance to it and so either start a
361 fresh village of their own nearby or else join a village of their own contemporaries which has already been started. Boys' villages are thus forever hiving off from the villages of men. At first a boys' village covers but little ground for, as its members are unmarried, the houses are small and close together and there are no garden lands attached to it. But as the young men marry one by one the village expands, houses are built bigger and further apart and some adjacent ground is brought under cultivation, until at last it assumes the normal aspect of a village of adult men.

621 A village thus consists of a male age-group with wives and children attached. Wives may be of any age and there is no such formal age grouping among them as among the men. And, as time goes on, some men too may enter the village who are not exact contemporaries of its other members. When a man dies his heir, either a younger brother or a son, often comes to live in his village; nor are strangers who apply for land in a village ever, I think, refused on the ground of unsuitable age. Villages vary considerably in size but average forty to fifty households.

At first a village of boys, as we have said, is built on ground allotted to it by the village of their fathers; but a new allotment is made ceremonially at the "coming out" (ukwaika) of the young chiefs.

631 Every generation each chiefdom of the Nyakyusa is divided into two
622 halves, a fact which is hard to understand until it is realized that the Nyakyusa consist of a number of immigrant groups which have, until very recently, been expanding their territory within the district and

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

incorporating the previous inhabitants. Now saturation point has been reached; their chiefdoms cover nearly all the available land and include in their membership all the indigenous people; and the custom of dividing chiefdoms into two is doomed. At the moment, however, it is still a vital part of their constitutional law. The division of a chiefdom is apparent from the moment that a ruling chief marries his two great wives, for he builds their houses separately, one in each "side" (*ulubafu*) of his chiefdom. The son of each great wife inherits that side of the chiefdom in which his mother's house is built. 631 622

When the ruling chief begins to get old the two heirs are ceremonially "brought out" and recognized as chiefs, though they do not assume full powers until their father's death. And their "coming out" is also the "coming out" of all the young men, of all the boys' villages which have been built by the sons of the old chief's men. At the "coming out" each such village is formally given land by the old chief and his great-commoners, often in a new place. 622 621

In every village there is a headman whose title, *ulifumu*, is simply a specialized use of the general term for a member of an old family who is not a chief. Every commoner is called an *ulifumu* in his home chiefdom.[1] These two uses of the term I distinguish by calling the village headman a "great-commoner." Great-commoners, then, are selected for their wealth and ability by the older great-commoners of the chiefdom and hold office for life. In the boys' villages before the "coming out" they are chosen by the older great-commoners—those in charge of their fathers' villages—on that side of the chiefdom. If they prove satisfactory their appointments are confirmed by all the great-commoners of the old chiefdom at the "coming out," if not new ones are then selected. 621 624

At the "coming out" the young great-commoners are ritually treated with medicines to give them the power of witchcraft which they are expected to use in the interests of morality, while the young chiefs are treated with medicines to make them fierce and impressive themselves and to ensure the fertility of their land and the prosperity of the people under them. [759] [760]

Traditionally the young chiefs assumed authority, each in the young men's villages which composed his own new chiefdom, immediately after the "coming out" and in the old villages in one side of his father's chiefdom when his father died. To-day the position differs for the Administration does not recognize the young chiefs at all until their father is dead. 621 622

The separation of chiefdoms established at the "coming out" is often modified subsequently. In the old days brother chiefs frequently

[1] Vide infra p. 22.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 fought each other and one was sometimes reduced to a subordinate
622 position by the other. Such subordinate or minor chiefs did not always lose all power, some men often continued to live with them, but not many, for they were poor and could not afford the feasts that prosperous and powerful chiefs gave to their warriors. Nowadays the junior of the two young chiefs, in the majority of cases, becomes subordinate to his brother immediately, for the Administration normally recognizes the senior of the two only, and a salary is paid to him alone on the old chief's death.

The number of villages which "come out" with each young chief usually varies between four and eight. But if a chief is subsequently reduced to a minor position he will often end his life with one village only
[624] of adult men and one village of their sons. For people move from minor chiefdoms and the depleted villages that are left gradually coalesce under the leadership of one of the great-commoners. The son of a minor chief may succeed to his father's position, but only one son will do so; a minor chiefdom is too small to be divided and has no formal "coming out" of its own; its young men attend the "coming out" of the superior chiefdom.

621 So much in outline for the political constitution of the separate
423 Nyakyusa chiefdoms. Some account of it was a necessary preface to the discussion of individual land rights, since it is within this political structure that they have validity. If, for example, the boundaries of a village are changed at the "coming out"—and they very frequently are—then no individual rights to village land can be maintained outside the new boundaries.

631 Prior to the arrival of the Europeans there was no paramount political authority among the Nyakyusa, but a number of tiny independent chiefdoms side by side, with minor chiefdoms in some cases attached to them. Of these traditionally independent chiefdoms there is none, I think, which to-day exceeds 3,000 adult male members, and most of them are far smaller than that. This smallness of scale, which is difficult at first for a European to grasp, is the fundamental characteristic of primitive society, in the organization of which personal relationships are predominant, wherein social relationships, that is, mainly subsist between personal acquaintances. In the old Nyakyusa polity impersonal relationships, effective social bonds linking together men who were personally unknown to one another, though they existed had relatively little importance.

648 Just south of the Nyakyusa, in what is now North Nyasaland, live
184 the Ngonde[1] people, whose language and culture was and is very similar to that of the Nyakyusa. They were, however, slightly more civilized in that they were in closer contact with Arab and Swahili ivory traders; and

[1] Better known to Europeans as Konde.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 754 witchcraft, which consists in the ability to translate evil impulses into effective though immaterial actions and thus to cause sickness and death; but it is never clearly known who all these people are. And so the coincidence of an obstinate illness with any quarrel or social tension of any kind between neighbours gives rise to a suspicion that witchcraft is at work. If the diviners support this theory then almost the only thing to be done nowadays is to move and get out of range; for witchcraft cannot act at a distance. In the old days an alternative course of action was open to the sick man, he might identify the witch with the aid of the [685] *mwafi* ordeal and get him expelled from the chiefdom. Expulsions for witchcraft still occur to-day, but only rarely, for the *mwafi* ordeal, the most certain detector of witches, is no longer legal. There is, however, nothing to prevent a man who thinks himself bewitched from moving. Now this fact of constant movement is of the utmost importance in determining the Nyakyusa system of land tenure since it tends to prevent the development of any exclusive attachment to particular pieces of ground. And the cause of this constant movement is mainly, though not entirely, the fear of witchcraft.

For ordinary commoners only their immediate neighbours are believed to be dangerous and sick men therefore sometimes move only from one village to another of the same chiefdom; but very many move right outside to another chiefdom altogether, preferring to make assurance doubly sure and to put a long distance between themselves and their spiritual persecutors. And in the case of certain men of a high social status, for whom a wider circle is dangerous, it is held to be quite essential to leave the chiefdom.

166 I have no detailed statistics on moving but I estimate that, among the pagan Nyakyusa, at least 80% of the married men have, at some time or other, moved from the chiefdoms in which they first cultivated gardens of their own. They may stay away for a few weeks only, they may stay away for thirty years or they may never return at all. If, however, the chiefdom from which they first moved is the one which they regard as home then they usually do return to it in the end. A man's home chiefdom is pre-eminently the one in which his father lives, or, if dead, spent most of his life and is now buried. And this is normally the one in which he himself also was born and brought up and in which he first took up land.

166 621 When a man moves from his home chiefdom, his village neighbours there, in the majority of cases, follow him within two months and ceremonially invite him back with a show of force by seizing his belongings and carrying them off home to his old village. They may really like and respect him and if, as is usually the case, he has moved because of sick-

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ness, they are most anxious to prove to him that his tacit suspicions are unfounded, they wish to rid themselves of the slur of witchcraft. To invite him back is to express affection for him and so to demonstrate that he could not have been bewitched for, see, everyone likes him! 166 621●

Such an invitation is often, but by no means always accepted. If the man refuses the first time then the villagers may or may not go again later to ask him back; but if he was an important member of the village—the great-commoner, a noted doctor, the son of an old family—the invitations may go on being repeated for years; and he will then almost certainly return in the end. Whether or not he accepts a particular invitation depends again largely upon his own health and that of his family and upon his relations with his new neighbours at the time it is made. Sickness and suspected witchcraft, or quarrels and insults in the new village will incline him to go home. And a man can always return, even without an invitation, unless he was originally expelled for being himself a witch.

I asked a young man of Selya whether of those who moved from their home chiefdoms the majority came back again or not. "The majority do come back, only a few stay permanently away. Some move for better food, the great majority because they fall sick and wish to recollect themselves in the tranquillity of another chiefdom—this is the main reason for moving; but they come back in the end. Whenever a man is slighted in the country to which he has gone, whenever he falls sick there—back he goes home! For when he is slighted he remembers that in his own country he belongs to an old family and that it is not as if he had moved under suspicion of being a witch, he only moved because he fell sick, and now he will return home. A man does not lose his affection for home, for there is his sacred grove, his fathers' graves. But the real reason for returning is that in every other place a man is less respected than at home, he is made light of; but in his own country he is known to belong to an old family and is treated with great respect, his neighbours call to mind the days when he and they herded cows together as boys and the fact that his father is buried among them. That is why people go home again." [609]

"And what of those who move to find better food?" I enquired. "They come back too; if they are slighted in the place to which they have moved they come back home."

"For example there was a man who built here in the village of Igembe, he prospered greatly and his house was very long; we young men grew up to find him here and thought he was one of our own people, we had no idea that he belonged to Masoko. And then one day he was insulted, and immediately he moved and went home. He had lived with us for many, many years."

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 425 In discussing the taking up of land after a move it is therefore necessary to distinguish clearly between men who move to villages in which they are newcomers and those who return, after a period of absence, to their home villages.

166 425 622 624 621 Normally land for building and gardens is granted to a stranger by the villagers concerned acting through their great-commoner, not by the chief, who is usually informed but seldom interferes. Only if a member of the chief's own family is moving within the chiefdom from one village to another or if a very important stranger comes from outside, he may go to the chief and ask for a building plot, and the chief may then exercise his right of overlordship and grant the request. But this is a special and unusual case. Village land is primarily governed by village relationships. It is villagers who grant land to an ordinary newcomer and thereby accept him as one of themselves. His own wishes are taken into account whenever possible; if he sees a piece of ground which attracts him and no one else has a claim to it then it will be his.

An old Kukwe great-commoner thus explained the granting of land to a stranger: "First the stranger from another country comes to a friend in this village and says that he wishes to build here, then the friend brings him to me, the great-commoner,—or he may come directly to me in the first place; and I go and tell the chief. Then the chief, according [43] to the old custom, would say 'Good! Go and cut a banana bunch for him,' and I would cut a banana bunch from my own homestead, not from anyone else's, and the chief would send one of his wives to me with cooked food for our guest the stranger. This custom is now no longer followed in our country but in the more remote chiefdoms they still cut bananas and cook food in such cases; here the stranger now just comes and is not given anything. And again when he wishes to begin building we go and tell the chief, who tells us to give him a plot to build on, and then my friends and I choose a place for him." "Does not the chief have a say in choosing the plot?" I enquired. "No, not the chief; does he know the details of our land-rights? He does not. It is we who choose the place for the newcomer. But if he does not like the plot we give him and has himself seen a place which he prefers he will ask us for it and maybe we will give it him." "Do not people sometimes go directly to the chief to ask for land?" "No, they always come first to us, the commoners, not to the chief; how should a man presume to approach the chief by himself? No, a newcomer always approaches us, and it is we who inform the chief. I, the great-commoner, may go alone to tell the chief or I may take the stranger with me, as I please." And a young Kukwe chief confirmed this, with perhaps a shade more emphasis on the part played by the chief: "The stranger goes first to the great-commoner

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and makes his request for land, then the great-commoner goes to the chief and informs him that so and so has come with a request for land, and he asks his opinion as to which piece to give the stranger. Then the chief suggests that perhaps the great-commoner knows of a suitable plot. So the chief and the great-commoner discuss it together and decide. Then the great-commoner shows the plot to the stranger." 166 425 621 622 624

It is quite clear in my evidence that, though the normal custom is to consult the chief when a newcomer is given land, yet the newcomer's title is in no way invalidated if the great-commoner omits to do so at the time and simply tells the chief later after the grant has been made.

So much for the initial reception of a stranger and the grant of a building plot, the next step is the grant of garden land. But before discussing this we must emphasize the willingness with which strangers are received both by the villagers and the chief. Men are still scarcer than land in most places and the prestige and prosperity of villages and chiefdoms is increased by each addition to their membership. Strangers are always given a house to sleep in while building their own and are usually given food as well, both formally by the chief and great-commoner and informally by the neighbours. The great-commoner who told me that the formal custom of giving food had lapsed in his country belongs to the chiefdom which adjoins Rungwe mission, a small chiefdom to which very considerable immigration has taken place in the last forty years; there the relative scarcity of land is reflected in a decline of hospitality to newcomers, though none have yet been refused land. But the usual custom still is to receive them generously. "It is an ancient custom amongst us to welcome strangers, so that the chiefdom may increase and flourish." [431]

In giving garden-land to a newcomer the procedure differs slightly according to the value of the land in question. The great-commoner takes him out and shows him, if the land is scarce and valuable, an exactly demarcated piece, if it is cheap and plentiful, a vaguely defined area within which he can hoe where he likes. In the upland chiefdoms, for example, the best maize and bean plots are scarce; men hoe the same ground year in year out, planting maize and beans alternately in it or, sometimes, maize only with an interval of a few months fallow each year; and in this case the boundaries of each man's ground are precisely marked. But for the growing of sweet-potatoes and millet there is plenty of good land available and men hoe more or less where they please. "A stranger named Tuskelege," I was told, "came to the village of Ibungila (in Kiukwe country). Amongst other things he asked for a maize-garden, so they gave him the ground of a man Mwasumbi who had moved to Masoko. They told Tuskelege that he could hoe only the same extent of ground 166 425 621 624

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 425 621 624

as Mwasumbi had, because there were some other maize-gardens adjoining it. The other land he asked for was not near anyone else's gardens, so he was told that he could hoe just where he liked."

Such is the custom of giving land to a newcomer, whether he comes from a different chiefdom altogether or from another village of the same chiefdom. He has no claim to any particular land but the villagers welcome him gladly and give some to him. If, however, a man returns after a period of absence to his home village then he has a claim, varying in strength in different circumstances, to enter again into possession of his old building site and gardens. But his claim is never an absolute one, it depends upon his relationship to the villagers and to the chief; they it is who decide it.

166 423 621

Let us first consider building sites. If a man moves from his home village leaving his house standing there and another is given the site, and if he returns before the house has fallen into disrepair, before it has had to be rebuilt, then the occupier will be evicted in his favour, the villagers will always admit his claim to that site. But only, of course, if they are in general prepared to have him back in the village; if he has been expelled for witchcraft or some other serious crime he has no possible claim at all.

When men move and leave their houses behind it usually but not always implies an intention to return in a few months. If they move because of sickness and the suspicion of witchcraft men are often invited back, as we have seen, and sometimes they accept the first invitation; and then, if they and their families remain healthy, all is well. If a more protracted absence is intended from the first then the normal custom is to pull down the house and to carry the bamboos with one.

A young Kukwe great-commoner gave me from his own experience an example of the eviction of a man in occupation of another's house: "While my father was alive I fell sick and moved to Mwankenja's country leaving my house behind without taking it down. And I returned quite soon again, I was not a year away. But meanwhile, when I first moved, a stranger came and was put into my house, he was not told that I might be returning; so he went into my house—but as he was a bachelor the house was too big[1] for him. Afterwards my friends remembered me and went to bring me back, and I came with them; and I said that as another man had been put into my house and as I was myself an owner of the soil (i.e. he was the son of an old family and so had the right to choose any unoccupied plot for himself anywhere he pleased) I would build elsewhere. But they would not hear of it and said that I must go back to my own house. So they informed the newcomer that the owner had returned and gave him another place."

[1] This is a boast, irrelevant to the main argument.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Again if the villagers expect a man to return and if they themselves wish him to do so, then his homestead is normally kept for him. If he refuses their first formal invitation to return they may give his homestead to a newcomer meanwhile, but only provisionally ; and if he does return later, whether by another formal invitation or on his own initiative, then the newcomer is moved elsewhere. 166 423 621

The difficulty arises when a man comes back unexpectedly to find that a newcomer has been given his site unconditionally. Perhaps the villagers are indifferent to his return and so have omitted to keep his site for him ; but far more frequently it is that he has been many years away and has refused several invitations to return, and so has led the villagers to think that he is never going to come back at all. But, whatever the reason, if his site has been given unconditionally to a newcomer, who has then built his own house upon it, the villagers cannot possibly evict the newcomer in his favour ; his only chance of getting the old site back lies in an indirect and tactful approach to the chief. The chief, as overlord, has the power to evict the newcomer if he chooses, but he may not choose to do so. And, if he does not, then the man will have to build elsewhere. 166 423 425 621 [622]

I was discussing these points with one of our servants whose father had recently moved from Bulindanajo, his home village in Mwaipopo's chiefdom in Selya, to a village in the adjoining chiefdom. I asked him to explain to me his father's potential rights, if he were to return later to his home village, to enter again into possession of his old homestead.

" If a man, like my father for instance, has moved and his friends wish him to return they go to fetch him back, but if he then at first refuses to return they may put in a stranger on his homestead. But in doing so they inform the stranger that the owner of the homestead is away in such a country, that he, the stranger, is just eating the bananas meanwhile (i.e. is only in temporary possession) and that, when the owner returns, he will have to leave this place and build on another site which they will then give him for his own. In that case when my father returns, if he wishes for his old site, his friends will move the newcomer away, because they have told him beforehand, and my father will have his own old site.

" As it happens, however, when my father did actually move recently they did not put any newcomer on to his site, but Mwakyoma . . . . one of his neighbours chose to build there himself. And him they do not inform of my father's rights, for he is already aware of them. If my father returns later his friends will turn Mwakyoma out telling him to go back to his own old site. For it always happens with a good homestead on which bananas do well that people covet it, and when the owner moves,

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[1] This is a boast, irrelevant to the main argument.

[This footnote refers to p. 36. — Analyst]

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 423 425 621

someone, coveting the vacant place, goes and builds there. But if it is a neighbour he knows that it is not his own and when the owner returns he relinquishes it and goes back to where he was before.

"It may happen, however, that the owner of a homestead moves and lives many years away; his friends go to fetch him but he continually refuses to return, until they begin to think that he has moved finally and forever. And, in that case, they may, perhaps, put a man in there without informing him of the existence of any other owner. The newcomer builds a house and thrives. And if the previous owner then after all comes back they do not evict the newcomer; shame prevents them, for they never told him of any such possibility. Then the old owner, as it were my father for example, seeing that another is in occupation of his site goes to a different village in the same chiefdom and asks for a site. But the great-commoner to whom he goes asks him why he is approaching him—'It is true,' my father then answers, 'that I have a place in Bulindanajo and the graves of my family and my trees are there, but another man has [622] built upon it.' Then the great-commoner gives him a site, but he also goes to tell the chief what has happened. Then the chief, Mwaipopo, summons the men of Bulindanajo and asks them why they have driven my father away, on his return to the country, from the site that was always his. The villagers admit their mistake but explain to the chief that, as they thought my father was never going to return at all, they put in another man. So they discuss the matter; and the chief, if he so wishes, may summon the present occupier and tell him that his friends deceived him by omitting to inform him of the probable return of the owner of that site and that now, as the owner has returned, they will have to move him and give him another site; and thus the chief evicts the present holder. But such an action must come from the chief, his neighbours cannot evict the occupier, for they gave him no initial warning. So then my father would return to his own old site. But maybe in such a case my father would himself prefer to build elsewhere, he would say to his friends that, as another had built on his site, he would be content to watch over his family graves from afar and to build in a different place."

As for his old garden-land, to that too a man has a title on returning to his home village, but it is only scarce and valuable ground that he will ever trouble to claim if others are in possession. At first, when he moves from the village, his fellows, if they intend to invite him back, keep his gardens for him just as they keep his house site; but if he refuses to return at first then maybe the ground is given to others. But he can always recover it later when he does return. It is easier to get old gardens back than it is to get a house site, for no great hardship is involved for an

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

evicted man. And it is even possible sometimes to make good a claim to the old gardens of one's father, even although one has never hoed them at all oneself; this is more difficult however, the claim may be refused or alternatively a compromise may be effected by dividing the land in question between the claimant and the present possessors. 166 423 425 621

As an example of the keeping of gardens vacant for a man who is expected to return we may cite the story of Nyambo, a Kukwe, as it was told to me by a young man who lived near him. This case is of particular interest as it brings out two points to which we have not yet referred; firstly that the chief himself sometimes takes the initiative in inviting a man back, and that his doing so widens the invitation to include all the villages of the chiefdom, not only the man's old home village; and secondly that it possible to build in one village of a chiefdom and own gardens in another. This second point will be discussed again later. 166 423 621 622

" A man named Nyambo moved because eight of his cows all died in quick succession and he thought that his neighbours, maybe, had bewitched them; but he moved without telling people of this reason. After he had spent eight months away, however, the chief sent his great-commoner to enquire of him why he had moved and left his chief wondering, and Nyambo replied that he had moved because of the death of eight of his cows all within a few days of one another, a fact which had led him to suspect that his neighbours hated him; and he would never, he told the great-commoner to inform the chief, be persuaded to return. So the great-commoner reported all this to the chief. Whereupon the chief suggested that it would be a good thing to go and fetch Nyambo back forcibly. And he, the chief, went in person with a crowd of men from Nyambo's old village and they just seized upon his furniture and drove off his cows and took them all home. But even so Nyambo refused to return and spent another two days where he was. Then they sent again to urge him to come back and at last he agreed because the chief himself had begged him to do so; he said, however, that he would prefer not to build in his old place, because his cows had died there, but rather across the river in the village of a different great-commoner. And so he did. None the less he continued to hoe his old gardens, and he still does so. They had left his gardens vacant because they had always meant to fetch him back. Now that he has returned and gone to live in another village they have given his old building site to a newcomer from Masoko, but his gardens are still his own."

The story of Kalonga, another Kukwe, exemplifies a man's right to reclaim his own old gardens. It will be noticed that the ground which he reclaimed was of particular value. 166 423 425

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 out boundaries, drawing lines on the ground; he divided the land into
423 three portions, one for each. The others were strangers to the chiefdom
425 but had taken a fancy to that piece of land."

622 The sentence in this story "The chief gave the garden land of
624 Mwakajileke to other people" deserves remark for it in no way implies any other custom than the one we have previously described. And it illustrates the dangers of relying too much on verbal statements of custom. When a stranger is given land by a great-commoner after reference to the chief he is commonly said to have been given it by the chief. The chief, from one point of view, is the overlord and the great-commoner acts for him. But, and this is an essential qualification, the great-commoner nearly always so acts for the chief and, save exceptionally, it is wholly incorrect for the chief to grant land directly. The great-commoner acts not only for the chief but also as the representative and leader of the villagers; and in relation to them the chief cannot exercise his rights of overlordship save occasionally and in particular circumstances.

166 The old Kukwe great-commoner whom we have already quoted
423 explained this to me very clearly: "Occasionally one of his own men will
425 ask a chief to give him ground to hoe in another village, 'If indeed you say that the land is yours!' (challenging the chief to assert his right of
●621 overlordship). Then the chief agrees that all the land is most certainly
622 his; but still, if it is possible, he tells the man to go to the commoners of that village and ask them for land. If the chief does not do this (but makes a direct grant of land) we blame him for not being a true chief: 'Who is it,' we ask him, 'that has built up this country? Did you do it all by yourself? It is we the commoners who have built it up! And how is it, then, that you give this man land without consulting us?'"
[754 Nor is the censure of his people mere idle talk for a Nyakyusa chief, he
626] fears that they may bewitch him, that the witches among them, led by the great-commoners of the several villages, may come in dreams at night and cause him to sicken or to die.

166 So much for the initial grants of land to newcomers and the rights of
423 men returning to their home chiefdoms. If a man goes back, after moving, to a chiefdom which is in no sense his home, where, that is to say, he is not a member of an old family but in which he has himself spent some years, he is treated as a newcomer. He is welcomed but he has no rights to the ground, whether building-site or gardens, which he previously occupied.

423 Once established in a village, however, any man can hoe any unowned
425 ground within its borders and thereby make it his own. A newcomer for

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 are used for house building, while the *ryungati* produces a fruit (*indilolo*)
824 which is both delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment (*ieyombo*). Of the two trees the bamboo is the more valuable.

423 Now among the Kukwe and Selya groups rights in these trees are
425 somewhat similar to rights in the valuable crater plots. When a man moves, his bamboos and *ryungati* trees, unlike his bananas, do not revert
●621 to the villagers; normally they continue to belong to his nearest kinsman in that chiefdom, who cuts and uses the bamboos and picks the fruits of the *ryungati* trees. If the villagers give the site to another man then the newcomer has no rights over these trees unless the kinsman himself gives them to him. But it sometimes happens that, where only *ryungati* trees and not bamboos are involved, the kinsfolk do not bother to exercise their rights; then the trees are treated like bananas, picked by the neighbours until a newcomer is given that plot, and then by him.

423 If however, among the Selya and Kukwe groups, a man moves
425 leaving no kinsfolk near at hand, then the chief (*umalafyale*) as the supreme overlord has a right to his trees, and if they are near the chief's own place
622 this right is exercised; he cuts and uses the bamboos and his wives pick the *ryungati* trees. If another man is given the land by the villagers to build on then he goes and asks the chief to allow him some of the *ryungati* trees, and his request is usually granted, the chief gives him two or three of the trees, keeping two or three for himself. But the bamboos, being more valuable, are usually kept altogether by the chief. If, however, the ownerless trees are at a distance from the chief's place then he normally does not trouble to claim the *ryungati* trees but only the bamboos. The former are at first picked by the neighbours and later given by the villagers to a newcomer together with the site. And, even with the bamboos, if they are a long way from the chief's place a "good chief," they say, will allow the newcomer to cut some of them without payment; but it is wholly within the chief's power to keep them all for himself if he wishes, and "bad chiefs" do so. Furthermore a chief does occasionally also exercise his right to claim an ownerless *ryungati* tree at a distance. If one of his wives comes and complains to him that she has no *ryungati* tree of her own, then he takes [illegible] to a site from which someone has recently moved leaving ownerless trees behind and there he gives her one of the trees; the rest he leaves as usual to the villagers and so to the newcomer.

423 Bamboos are men's property and only a man can claim them but
621 *ryungati* trees can be claimed by a kinswoman, a sister or a daughter, of the old owner if none of his male kinsmen have troubled to do so.

423 We must here take note of a most significant modern development.
178 In the old days rights in trees could only be exercised by members of the

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

same chiefdom in which the trees were growing; for between chiefdoms an actual or potential state of war always existed, and a man coming from a hostile group to claim property would have been driven away violently. But to-day under European rule it is now customary for a man to cut his own bamboos, if he is living in a neighbouring chiefdom, instead of leaving them to his resident kinsfolk. The group within which property can be held is gradually widening. 423 178

Such is the custom among the Kukwe and Selya groups; their rights in bamboos and *ryungusi* trees are not normally lost when a man moves provided there are kinsfolk left nearby to exercise them. The one exception to this rule is in the case of expulsion for witchcraft or other serious crime. Then even if the man expelled has left kinsfolk behind him, still the chief takes his trees. 423 681

Among the Nyakyusa proper, on the other hand, the *ryungusi* trees are treated like bananas. When a man moves he loses all rights in them and, unless the chief steps in to take them, as he always may, they are granted by the great-commoner, together with the soil, to the newcomer who is put on that site. Bamboos, as in Selya and Kukwe country, continue to belong to the kinsman of the man who has moved.[1] 423 425 621

Trees introduced by the Europeans, of which coffee trees are the most valuable, have been declared by the Federation of Chiefs to be the property of the planter, even although he has moved to a different chiefdom. This law was made after much anxious discussion between the chiefs, the Administration and the Agricultural Department and is, of course, subject to revision if it is found after trial to be impracticable. In the case of coffee it has inevitably been modified in practice since coffee must be tended continuously if it is to remain free from pests and to bear fruit, and any man who actually looks after coffee trees has a generally admitted claim to the crop unless he is paid by the planter for his labour. The planter, however, in surrendering the trees to him may compel him to pay something for their initial value. 423 177 245

Further, as the Agricultural Officer has the right to uproot any untended coffee trees and must exercise it if pests are to be kept under control, the practice has grown up of his taking over any large number of abandoned trees and keeping them clean with labour paid by the Native Treasury; the trees are subsequently sold to some other man and the proceeds paid into the Native Treasury again. If, however, a planter of coffee trees makes arrangements, when he moves, for the cleaning of his coffee then the trees remain his own.

[1] Some informants deny this and insist that they always pass to the chief. I was not myself long in Mongonde among the Nyakyusa proper and I lack conclusive evidence on the point.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

low to all his classificatory brothers. The normal routine of life is 606
constantly interrupted by women's avoidance of these men, they crouch and hide and make wide detours to avoid them, a man comes into a room and a woman runs out hastily, a father cannot enter his son's house while his son's wives are cooking there, ceremonies are duplicated to avoid bringing them in contact. Few people seem to realize the meaning of 606
this taboo, but occasionally a man is found who tells a story which makes 773
its function abundantly clear. It is said that an old chief, long ago before the taboo was instituted, fell in love with his son's wife and took her, and such was the horror of everyone at what he had done that this taboo was instituted. This story expresses the necessity, in a society where the old men are accustomed to take the young women as wives, of guarding in some way against the possibility of a father desiring his own son's wife for himself; more particularly perhaps because the cows for her marriage have come from him.

This taboo, separating father and daughter-in-law is one of the 604
reasons for the age-village system which we must next discuss. For in 621
Nyakyusa society father and son live in different villages.

Age-Villages

The most characteristic relationships of the Nyakyusa people are 621
those which centre in the age-village. Villages and age-groups are 561
common enough in other societies, and are familiar to all of us, but it is rare to find them combined; it is very uncommon to find, as we do among the Nyakyusa, that local groups of contemporaries live together for most or all of their lives.

Age-villages are formed by groups of men, all roughly of the same age, their wives and young children. Women belong to the villages of their husbands, young children to those of their fathers. The number of households in an age-village varies, but thirty is probably a fair average. Girls, as we have seen, live at home until they marry, which they normally do soon after puberty, and then each goes to the house and joins the village of her husband. But boys, who marry later in life, leave home at about the age of ten or eleven and set up villages of their own.

(a) *Herd-Boys*

Between the ages of about six and eleven the boys sleep at their 957
fathers' houses and herd their fathers' cattle. This is a full-time if not a very arduous occupation; the cattle are driven out about an hour after sunrise and return to be milked about 1 p.m.; after an hour they are again driven out and do not come back until nearly sunset. The cattle of eight

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

As the boys one by one reach the age of ten or eleven, two important changes usually take place in their lives. Firstly they leave the herding of cows to their younger brothers, and themselves begin the business of hoeing the fields which will occupy them until they die; and secondly they no longer sleep in the houses of their fathers but join an age-village of boys. These two changes usually, but not always, take place at the same time and normally at about the age of ten or eleven years, well before puberty. But there are cases where special circumstances put the age of one or both of these changes later; I know one boy who herds his father's cattle although he has reached puberty, because he has no younger brother old enough to take over, and there are only five or six boys in his herd-group altogether. And in general I am told it is not uncommon for some boys who have reached puberty to be found still herding cattle. Again in one age-village the boys have home a little later than usual because there are leopards about and it is dangerous for small boys to walk from the village of their fathers to that of the boys after dark. 257 621 [18]

(3) *The Boys' Village*

When a fair number of the sons of a village of married men have reached the right age, their fathers give them a piece of land to one side of the parent village on which to build. There they build little huts of reeds for themselves, sufficiently well-thatched to keep out the heavy rain, and there they sleep. The building of the huts on this land begins, in a playful manner, before the boys move. While they are still herding the cows and sleeping at home they build miniature huts there in their spare time, but do not sleep in them. When they move they build slightly more substantial huts with a better thatch. Until he marries each boy hoes his father's fields in his father's village and eats food cooked by his own mother at his father's house. But he sleeps with his friends. Thus between the time when he leaves home and his marriage each is a member of two villages, economically he still belongs to that of his father, socially to that of his own contemporaries. Though bachelors eat at their parents' homes, it is very rarely that they do not eat in the company of their own friends. A bachelor does not simply go home to eat but a group of bachelors, friends of the same boys'-village, go round together eating at the house of each one's mother in turn. 621 561 [19]

In an age-village of married men there are always several different herds of cattle; and it is not only those from the same group of herd-boys that set up a new village together, but all the sons of the age-village. When a boy leaves the herd-group he joins a larger community, including the friends of his own age who have herded cows with him, but many

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

(21 others as well. Any boys' village is found to consist primarily of the
64 sons of the members of some older village who originally gave the land for its building, but as we shall see later sons of other villages live there too.

(21 At the beginning, when a group of boys starts a new age-village, or
382 when boys join one already formed, they do not all have a hut to themselves, two or three friends share a hut. But later, as they grow older, each builds for himself. The younger men build their huts of reeds, but the older men try to get a few bamboos from their fathers or senior relatives and build more solid houses. Married men build entirely of bamboo, but often in a boys' village you will find a compromise between bamboo and reed, both being used in the same house; and the houses of bachelors, even though they be all of bamboo, are smaller than those of married men. The technique of good building is not very difficult, and the older boys instruct and help their juniors, as they join the village, to improve the skill playfully acquired as herd-boys so as to build more substantial huts.

245 The chief food of the Nyakyusa is the banana; men plant bananas
212 immediately round their huts, though their fields are mostly at a distance. And bachelors, while they continue to eat their main meals at their parents' village, plant bananas round their own huts as well. Bananas begin to bear very quickly, sometimes within a year of planting, and so, soon after the establishment of a boys' village, its members have bananas of their own, which they cook for themselves and eat with their friends at odd times during the day. But they have as yet no fields.

246 There is no formal initiation of boys at puberty; but, on the other
[illegible] hand, the custom of leaving home and joining a boys' village is directly
277 connected by the Nyakyusa with their ideas of decency in sexual life. They think it is perfectly all right to discuss sex openly among friends of about the same age but altogether wrong to discuss it either in the presence of, or with, their parents or those of their parents' generation. If a boy learns about love-making, in any way, from his parents the Nyakyusa think that he will not respect them properly and that he himself will be a fool. A boy must learn these things from his immediate seniors and friends. One man said to me: "If a boy sleep about ten years old stays at home to sleep, he is laughed at by his friends and his own parents send him away. They say: 'If he sleeps at home he will hear what his parents talk about at night, the night is always full of lewd talk; and he may even see them sodomizing. He will grow up a fool, with little wisdom.' You see at the boys' village" he went on to say, "the older

8:W Baum E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love-making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger ones listen to these things and that is all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn. But we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night; and that is very bad, that is foolishness.—But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to listen, that is how children grow up." §64 §77

On another occasion when I told this same man that in Europe many people thought it a good thing for boys to get sexual instruction from their parents and teachers he was shocked: "But I think it is impossible" he protested "for parents to go into detail with their children; there is too much shame on both sides. And if they did, it would damage the children's respect for them."

There is thus a correlation in this society between the age-village system at its genesis and the belief that a boy's dawning interest in sex must be informed, not by his parents, but by friends only a little older than himself.

Few men marry before twenty-five years of age, but affairs with girls begin before puberty. All affairs are related in detail to friends in the age-village, and the younger ones learn by listening; and they also learn when the older boys send them as messengers to the girls of their fancy. §82 §86 [202]

Besides the more serious love affairs which are carried on in secret, groups of boys from the same age-village commonly flirt with any girls they meet on the way, and it is then that the incest taboos are learnt. If one of the boys is known to be related to one of the girls, either through a common grandfather or great-grandfather, his companions send him away: "Don't you see your sister is here? You cannot come!" §85 §87

Contrary to a general belief about "primitive" societies, homosexual intercourse is common in the boys' villages, between close friends, but there is no real perversion; homosexuality is said to be *always fausse de mieux*. The older men in discussion dismiss it with the tolerant word "adolescence," it is never continued after marriage, and all except the feeble-minded get married sooner or later. §88

But life in a boys' village also gives its members much information and wisdom unconnected with sex. There, as we have seen, boys perfect their skill in building, and there also they learn to argue and express themselves with adult fluency. It is characteristic of the Nyakyusa legal §21 §48 §67

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 system that small cases between neighbours are always first discussed and
868 often finally settled in the presence of some friend or friends who act as
867 arbitrators, without recourse to the constituted political authorities. Small disputes about petty theft, the possession of a cloth or some coppers, the ownership of a banana stem and so on, are as frequent in the boys' village as elsewhere, and as elsewhere the people concerned often argue it out to a finish before some friend or neighbour. And by listening to such disputes, or participating in them either as judge or principal, the boys acquire rhetorical skill and some knowledge of law. In some boys' villages there is a recognized leader appointed by the political authorities of the chiefdom to settle graver disputes, in others there is not. The position of such a leader, where there is one, will be discussed later.

577 Above all the boys' village gives to its members the conversation and
621 company of more of their own contemporaries than did the group of herd boys, and company the Nyakyusa hold to be the greatest of educators. In the most explicit discourse I heard on the value of company my informant explained that cleanliness, together with rhetorical and conversational skill, were all learned in company. These are his exact words: "We say that it is by conversing with our friends that we gain wisdom; it is bad to sit quite silent always in men's company. A man who does this seems to us a fool, he learns no wisdom, he has only his own thoughts. And a man who does not spend time with other people is always dirty, he does not compare himself with any friend. We say that we learn cleanliness of body in company, the dirty ones learn from their more cleanly friends. Again if a man is accused to the chief and is unable to defend himself easily and with eloquence we mock at him and say: 'What is the matter with you? Do you live all by yourself? How is it that you are so foolish?' We think that wisdom and cleanliness are the two great things learnt in company. We think it is bad to live alone far from other people, such a man learns nothing: he never learns to express himself well, to converse eloquently with fellows or to argue a case with eloquence. It is better to live with other people."

621 At first the sons of the parent village continue to join the boys'
54 village as they grow up; but after some years, when the senior members of the boys' village are about seventeen or eighteen years old, the younger ones begin to be refused admittance to the village: "they are children." The young ones then either begin a new age-village of their own, or else join a village which has already been started by the sons of a nearby men's village a little junior to that of their own fathers. If you enquire who are the members of such and such a boys' village you are always told that they are the sons of a particular village of men, but detailed investig-

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tion reveals the presence of some sons of other men's villages as well. Brothers, half-brothers and other relatives are sometimes members of the same village, but more often not; and if they do belong to the same village that is because they are near each other in age, and were born in the same village, not because they are kinsmen.

The members of the boys' village, which is now closed and no longer increases in numbers, continue to grow older, and after a time they begin to get married. Getting married, as we have seen, is often a gradual process; but it is not until he has his wife permanently with him that a young man can have fields of his own and eat their produce at his own place. The cultivation of land requires the co-operation of man and woman, cooking on any elaborate scale is a woman's business.

As the members of a boys' village marry the village does not move but it expands. The houses are built ever bigger and further apart and the adjacent land is brought under cultivation. The boys' village with which I am best acquainted is in this transitional stage; it has fifty-three members altogether, the majority of whom are single, but some few are married, cultivate their own fields with their wives and eat food cooked by their wives in their own houses. Of those who are single some again are betrothed to girls who visit them from time to time, but each still cultivates his father's fields, and eats at his father's home.

(c) *The Men's Village*

It is now necessary to understand the system of men's villages and the general political organization in which the boys' villages finally take their place.

The number of age-villages in one chiefdom, all the members of which are married, varies with different circumstances, but the exact number of them are to receive. The age system is only broken by moving or by death; when a man dies his heir usually comes and lives where the dead man was living in his age-village. There he inherits the wives, the hoes, the cows and the land of his predecessor, he inherits the dead man's position in the village and often takes his personal name as well. The heir may be many years younger than his new neighbours but he is now treated as their contemporary, he sits with them at ceremonies, he shares their rights at any division of meat. The age system in the villages is also broken by moving, for a stranger may come and be granted land in a village even though he is considerably older or younger than the bulk of its members. But otherwise members of a village are roughly contemporaries.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

621 In a village of married men each has one or more bamboo huts for himself and his wives, with bananas round them; his homestead is close to those of his neighbours, while the main garden-lands of the whole group are at a distance all together. Boundaries between age-villages are not always apparent to a stranger, a solid hundred acres or so of houses and bananas may turn out to consist of two or three villages, each with its own organization, and each having a block of garden-lands separate from the others.

622 In each village of married men, and usually in the older boys' villages as well, there is an appointed leader or great commoner (*ulifumu*) who is originally chosen for the position by the great commoners of the senior age-villages of that chieftdom. They try to select a man who is wealthy, who comes from a respected family, who has personal ability in judging cases, who is popular with his fellows, and in the old days they looked also for qualities of courage and the ability to lead men in war. I think, though my evidence for this is as yet only circumstantial, that they also require certain believed spiritual qualities in a man, the power to recognize and to counteract aggressive witchcraft.[*] The qualities which the selectors look for in choosing a new great commoner are the clue to his functions. He is usually extremely hospitable to his neighbours, he judges their cases, he is their leader at ceremonies and in the old days he led them in war also. He represents their desires to the chief and it is through him and in consultation with him that the chief gives orders. Finally each great commoner is believed to protect his own villagers from aggressive witchcraft, to shield people and cattle from the spiritual forces of evil.

So important is this position of great commoner that legal precautions are taken "to prevent the great commoner becoming a chief" as several informants have put it to me. It is illegal to choose a great commoner among the relatives of a chief, it is illegal to elect the son of a great commoner to that office in any age-village of his own contemporaries, though he may perhaps inherit the position in his father's village when his father dies.

623 The relationships which arise from common membership of an age-village are continually apparent in the Nyakyusa culture. Ceremonies and funerals are not only meeting places for relatives but also for the age-villagers; the great commoner in consultation with members of his village grants land and grazing rights to strangers who ask for them; and

[*] It is possible that this power is believed to be induced by magic herbs, I am not sure.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

he settles many legal disputes between his neighbours. The village is, both for men and women, the chief field of friendship, conversation and mutual hospitality; and its members recognize greater obligations towards one another than they do towards those outside. Before the coming of the Europeans the age-village was also a military unit, led by its own great commoner, in the constant fights between chiefdoms.

In most villages there are several herds of cattle which feed separately. The herd boys, as we have seen, then form separate groups within the village, as also do their fathers; the boys are related in the common activity of herding, the men, owners of the herd, by their joint interest in it and their common fear of witchcraft.

In the relationships of villagers the belief in witchcraft is a constantly recurring factor. It is believed that certain people, both men and women, have the power of harming their neighbours and their neighbours' cattle without taking any overt action whatever, without reciting any spells or performing any magical ritual at all.

Their influence, which is exercised at night in dreams, is only fully visible to those who are themselves endowed with this power; and to it is constantly attributed both sickness in men and the failure of cows to give milk. In this belief the elements of actual ill will and quarrelling, of actual sickness and the failure of cows to give milk and of actual dream experiences are combined in a significant whole. Witches are of two kinds, they say, those who use their power rightly (*uwe mwiyo*) and those who use it wrongly (*uwe'ni*). The first kind are said generally to spend their dreams in trying to prevent the others from harming those whom they love. The good witches are the "defenders of the village," and in such villages the great commoner is believed to be the chief among them. In each group of men whose cows are herded together there is, again, commonly one man who has the reputation of defender of the herd, who is believed to protect the cows from the witchcraft of disgruntled individuals whether members of that small group or not. But if, at any time, a single person earns a general unpopularity in the village, whether by his pride, his meanness or by wrongdoing, then it is believed that the defenders themselves lead the spiritual attack against him, and he falls sick. Such a blast of unpopularity acting through the power of witchcraft is called the "breath of man" (*umbuyo gwa umuntu*); and the belief in its efficacy is one of the chief sanctions of the accepted social order of Nyakyusa life.[1]

[1] *cf.* Godfrey Wilson "An African Morality" *Africa* Jan. 1936.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

The age system of the Nyakyusa has been described in detail in *Good Company*,[1] but, since it forms the basis of their social structure, a brief explanation must here be given for the benefit of readers unacquainted with that earlier volume. Within each chiefdom there are a number of villages composed not of kinsmen but of age-mates. Villages begin when small boys of eight or ten years build together at a little distance from their fathers. They are joined by younger brothers, as these reach the age when boys stop sleeping at home, until the eldest are in their middle teens, when the youngsters will be told to begin another village. The boys of a village have their own leader, a 'natural' leader, not specifically appointed, but they are subject to the headman of their fathers' village, and formerly fought as a group under his direction. But at the 'coming out' a headman for each village is selected from among its members by the fathers: if he dies, his heir—a younger brother or son—inherits his position, so that sometimes a young man becomes headman of an old man's village, taking the name and social position of his father. Only commoners are eligible as headmen: we knew one candidate who was rejected because his great-grandfather was a chief.

Two villages in each chiefdom are senior to the others and their headmen are responsible each for half of the country. During the 'coming out' ritual the chief marries two wives, 'mothers of the country', and one is established in each senior village or capital (*ibitungulule*). The eldest sons of these two wives are the heirs, and later divide the old chief's country between them. Most of the chief's junior wives are divided between the capitals but some may be settled in a colonizing village in unoccupied country. All the chief's sons build with commoners in villages appropriate to their age, and all save the two heirs are subject to the commoner headmen of their villages. They are entitled to many honours as 'sons of the chief', and those of strong personality gain a following and settle disputes between their fellows (as may any commoner), but only the two senior sons can claim political authority.

Before the 'coming out' the villages of young men and their fathers adjoin, for the boys have built on their fathers' land, on the fringes of their fathers' villages. But at the 'coming out' there is a new deal in land. The young men are established in the centre of the country and their fathers move to the periphery; it is not merely that fathers and sons exchange land, but all the boundaries

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, 1951.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

re redrawn and only the fields in old craters (the most prized 561
nd fertile of all) are not re-allotted. Thus the villages of kinsmen 621
f two generations adjoin, and often those of three generations. 884

On the old chief's death his village headmen become priests of 423
he grove in which he is buried, and, in co-operation with his sons, 634
he new chiefs, sacrifice there on behalf of the two countries into 799
hich his old chiefdom is divided. There is a nice balance of 622
ower between chief and village headmen in life, and when he
ies his two heirs and the headmen (or their heirs) continue to
hare power, the power which belief in his spiritual force and
heir ability to guide it gives them. The success or failure of rituals
held largely to depend upon the personal relationships of the
ading participants, chiefs and commoner priests.

Besides the ordinary commoner priests (the village headmen of 793
past generation or their heirs) there are priests of the chiefs'
peage, usually belonging to a junior line to which specific ritual
unctions, such as rain-making, have been entrusted, and whose
ffice is hereditary in the same way as that of a chief. Kasitile
(66),[1] the rain-maker, is such a priest: his grandfather was the
rother of a ruling chief (43) and had been appointed as rain-
aker (*umpalefula*) and priest (*ungage*), the two functions being
eparate but overlapping. As rain-maker Kasitile tended the rain
ones, as priest he initiated the rituals in certain of the sacred
roves, though he did not actually officiate himself. Kasitile was
key informant on ritual and a chapter is devoted to his history,
nce it epitomizes the relationships between chiefs and commoners.

As we have shown, most of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde chiefs 634
oin some sort of kinship with one another. Those who are nearly 796
elated pray together at the groves of their common ancestors, 769
nd those more distantly connected join in sacrifice to their
ounding fathers, but in the communal rituals kinship is neither
the dominant theme nor the exclusive principle of association, as
it is in the rituals celebrated by private persons. In the communal
rituals most of the priests are commoners unrelated to the dead
who are honoured, and the sacrifices are held to benefit not only
the descendants of the dead, but all those who live in the countries
they once ruled. Nevertheless, the symbolism of the communal
rituals constantly recalls that of the rituals of kinship; themes
which pervade the death ritual recur again in the rituals of
'coming out' and 'cleansing the country'. This background is

[1] Numerals after a name refer to the genealogy of Nyakyusa chiefs facing p. 9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173 The balance between chiefs and commoners is explicit. So
773 also is their dependence on *ísili* cultivation and herding, and it
[643] should be noted that, though the Nyakyusa speak of themselves
as stock men, they are not pastoralists to the same extent as
[233] the Masai or the Nuer. The number of cattle in Rungwe District
today is less than half the human population, and men traditionally have done the heaviest share of cultivation.

773 In every version of the myth the tension between father and
593 son, or older and younger brother, is stressed. In Nyakyusa
561 society the father (or his eldest son who replaces him) controls
173 the family property and exacts obedience from his juniors who
[769] continue to show their respect after his death by sacrifices. The tale of Kyala and Lwembe celebrates the triumph of the junior. Thus, at the heart of the very ritual which sanctifies seniority there is the assertion of the victory of the son and younger brother. The myth expresses the aspirations of subordinates—of commoners and junior kinsmen—as well as the power of chiefs and seniors.

173 As we have already noted, the heroic cycle makes no reference
773 to the peculiar Nyakyusa institution of age-villages. Their charter
561 is a quite separate myth[1] which tells of a chief who looked on his
● 62 daughter-in-law and loved her and took her, and this so shocked
604 men that in future fathers and sons built separately, so that a father-in-law should never see his daughter-in-law.

There are other hints of the eternal theme. Besides the saga of
173 Lwembe there is another quite different tale of the origin of fire,
773 which is less often related. In it a girl who had angered her father
372 by breaking his drinking calabash fled from BuKinga to the Nyakyusa valley, where she found people who ate their food raw. She made fire and cooked for them and 'all women came to her to learn to cook'. The long-necked calabash, used as a drinking
[915] vessel and in prayer to the shades, is a man's most personal
[768] possession destroyed at his death, and it stands for a husband, while cooking is a symbol of the sexual activity of women, so the myth is perhaps a drama of incest, but we have no direct evidence of this.

173 This last is the only tale in which a woman appears as a
773 benefactor. In general, the mythology is that of a strongly
562 patrilineal society in which men are dominant. The wives of Lwembe who walked behind their lord, shepherded by a lion,

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 83.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ages, they sometimes build in villages of different generations. When it comes to the selection of village headmen, however, care is taken to ensure that they are indeed sons of men who came out with the previous chief, and a village like Katumba which comprised both younger brothers and sons of Mwankuga's generation breaks up, some members 'coming out' with Mwankuga's son, others acting as 'fathers'. Within a village all the members are equal subject to their headman, but a hierarchy of villages is clear. 561 622

The pre-eminence of the two senior village headmen of a chief is marked. They alone make fire with him at the 'coming out'. They alone are handed war tails with which to lead their men in battle. Each is responsible for one half of the country and a dispute not settled by the headman of the village of the defendant is reported to the senior headman in whose side of the country the village lies, and he brings it before the chief. Each senior headman has his own village, the two senior villages of the country, in which the royal ladies live; the senior wife married at the 'coming out' is established close to the senior village headman, the second wife close to the second senior headman. A chief may establish wives in a number of villages, and some at least of those he inherits from his father continue to live in his father's old homestead 'to sweep the graves', but his capitals (*ifisengalala*) are the two senior villages of the country in which his two senior wives and two senior village headmen live[1] and the names of the capitals are used not only for the senior villages but for the half sections of the generation they lead. The importance of the two senior headmen is apparent even when their generation has handed over political authority to their sons. At the sacrifices we have described Njobakosa and Ngulyo, heirs of the senior headmen of the chief Mwaijonga (82) officiated, and at the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) it was Mwambuputa and Kakuja his father's senior headmen who organised the ritual. 631 643 [293] [778]

Each village established at a 'coming out' is a closely defined unit with its own land, and leader, and name, but villages are also segments of larger units, the half-section of the chiefdom under a senior headman, and the whole chiefdom under the leadership of 621 631 561

[1] Mwanyilu (177), though he had two senior headmen, established his two senior wives in one house, close to the house of Kilasile his senior senior headman. This was explained as a temporary measure 'because they were young', but it is not the conditional pattern, and may be linked with the fact that the splitting of the country each generation is no longer accepted as the inevitable pattern.

9! Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

62 561 631 the chief himself. The members of each village co-operate in some measure in cultivation and herding and they form a defensive group against attack 'by day and by night'—i.e. against armed raiders and witches.[1] But there is no great elaboration of ritual for single villages. Such village rituals as occur are connected with [768 754] defence against witchcraft and involve driving out a supposed witch, or receiving back a member who has fled from fear of witchcraft, or protecting the village fields against witches.[2] Most communal rituals are organized on the basis of the chiefdom or group of chiefdoms, and villages or sections participate as segments of the chiefdom.

The principle of generation and that of section hold one another in check. All those who have 'come out' together have a strong sense of unity as opposed to the generations of their fathers and sons, but every generation is split into two sections each led by an heir of the chief, and these sections have a certain territorial solidarity. It is common in Africa for organized age-groups to cut across kinship and territorial groups. The Nyakyusa peculiarity lies in the territorial unity of age-sets which occupy villages, and the manner in which the fissiparous tendencies within a chiefdom have a constitutional outlet in the rivalry between the sections of a ruling generation which become independent at the 'coming out' of the next generation.

The combination of the hereditary and selective principles of leadership among the Nyakyusa is also somewhat different from that among their neighbours. With many Central African people the heir to the holder of the office of village headman or chief is *selected*, and the most capable member of a given lineage or lineage [643 622] segment appointed.[3] Among the Nyakyusa succession is precisely defined and there is no selection of a suitable heir except to the *supreme and greatly feared office of 'divine king', but the selective* principle is given full scope in the 'catching' of leaders for the young men's villages at every 'coming out'. It is this combination of the hereditary and selective principles which binds together chiefs and commoners and successive generations. The rules of

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 44-48, 91-103.

[2] op. cit., pp. 32-4, 109 ff., 134-6, 170-4.

[3] I. Cunnison, 'Headmanship and Ritual of Luapula Villages', *Africa*, xxvi (1956), p. 111; M. G. Marwick, 'The Social Context of Cewa Witch Belief', *Africa*, xxii (1952), pp. 215-21; V. Turner, 'Ndembu Village Structure', *Africa*, xxv (1955), pp. 175-91; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), pp. 137-63.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

inheritance ensure that a limited number of young men are absorbed into the senior generation and live with the older men, sharing their activities and from time to time holding office as headmen or priests of that generation, and the selection in each generation of young men who are not the sons of village headmen, or chiefs, or headmen of the past generation, ensures that commoners without office are constantly recruited to the hierarchy of rulers. In short, power is distributed.

(c) RITUAL AND SECULAR BONDS

As in so many societies, economic and ritual links extended, traditionally, further than political links.[1] Selya was dependent upon BuKinga for iron and the Kinga came to fruitful Selya to pray for fertility. The priests who came to pray brought the hoes. The many independent chiefdoms of Selya and the Mbaka valley acknowledged the spiritual overlordship of the Lwembe by sending sacrifices to him, and it was through the network of hereditary priests like Kasitile, Mwamakunda, Mwalukuta, and Nyama of Selya, and the Kinga priests Kikungubeja, Neyanigwa, Kyamba Kitali, and Silobwike that wider bonds were maintained. Mwaipopo (116) when he was granted a Court which gave him the secular leadership of Selya, failed to make any acknowledgement of Lwembe's traditional power, and it was Kasitile who later urged him to do so. The western chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa will buy medicines and bark-cloth from the Ndali to the west, and have done so for many generations, but no common ritual links them as it does Selya and the plain with BuKinga. The trade was of lesser importance than that to the east, for it does not seem to have included iron, though the Nyiha who share a common culture with the Lambya, the western neighbours of the Nyakyusa, are known to have been skilled smiths.[2] With the Sangu to the

[1] cf. S. Cohen, 'The Pioneer Tongs of Northern Rhodesia' in *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa* (ed. Colson and Gluckman).

A comparison with the frontier in West and South Africa where economic and religious expansion compelled the establishment of Government is instructive. Cf. W. K. Hancock, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs*, vol. ii, part ii, pp. 160-8.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between the Lakes Nyasa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, vi (1890), p. 185; Gitul's suggestion that some of the Nyakyusa iron came from the west is discussed by Cotterill, J. F. Elton, *The Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa* (1879), p. 370 and map, cf. J. Thompson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back*, vol. i, p. 270.

FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Note

621 631 561 [103] [796] It should be realized that (i) the names of the two senior villages of a generation are well known and clear cut, but those of subordinate villages are more fluid. Furthermore a village often has subdivisions, distinguished by its members by name, but known to outsiders only by the general village name. (ii) A village may acquire a new name at the 'coming out'; the senior village of Mwanyilu's generation used to be called 'Mpuguso' but 'came out' as 'Lupando'. (iii) Some villages die out altogether, e.g. Kyemo II. (iv) Some villages straddle generations. Katela in 1955 is in the same sort of position as Katumba in 1935. It includes eight sons of Mpunga who belong to generation III, but also fourteen sons of men of Masoko who 'came out' with Mwanyilu. In the case of Katumba the members who were sons of men of generation III moved to younger villages and 'came out' with Mwanyilu, among them being his senior headman Kilasile, a man of over forty. But Kilasile's contemporaries who were sons of men of generation II could not 'come out' with Mwanyilu, at least not as a group—and the members of Katumba attended the 'coming out' as 'fathers'. Boys join a village of contemporaries but may move later to a village of younger men who are of their own structural generation.

At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu and Mwalungulu five village headmen were 'caught' and secluded with their chiefs. They represented five clear-cut villages. Kilasile and Sikambombo, Mwanyilu's two senior headmen who made fire are leaders of Lupando and Iringa respectively; Pauliki and Batungulu their juniors are leaders of [622] Bujisi (or Ipoma) and Mfumbi (or Isuba), and Mwanjotile the single headman of the junior heir, Mwalungulu, has his own village of Nkuyu established on newly settled land in the forest. The young men of Kibonde were included under Kilasile's authority, and those of Kitali and Kabula under Sikambombo's. The names Lupando and Iringa are well known as those of sections of Mwanyilu's chiefdom, but the names Bujisi and Mfumbi are not: the young men of these villages still use the names of their fathers' villages, Ipoma and Isuba, though there is a clear territorial separation between fathers and sons. Taxes [651] are collected under the names of Igemba, Ipoma, Kibonde, Njisi, Isuba, Kitali, and the three forest villages, Kiboi, Kibobo, and Nkuyu.

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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

elder watches over the morals of his flock and it is his duty to report to the Session any breaches of Church law among his people. Through him the cards entitling members to attend communion are distributed, and cards are withheld from those whom the Session has agreed must be suspended from membership. Each man has, on the average, 125 people to care for. The women elders organize the women's weekly meetings, and take parties of women on preaching tours in pagan villages. They are the leaders in any charitable activities of the congregation and in the instruction of a Christian girl at her marriage. A woman elder settles disputes between two women, and in family quarrels she is often asked by the elder in charge of the village to help him to reconcile the couple. She is also a supervisor of morals and reports to the local elder if she 'hears any woman speaking like a pagan'. Deacons are elected like elders and are primarily responsible for the collection of Church dues and the administration of Church funds, but in a village in which there is no elder a deacon will carry out some of his duties.

In practice, then, each local group—a Christian village or village section—has its chosen leader, a male elder or deacon who conducts daily prayers in the local school house or his own home, and also fulfils many of the functions of an assistant village headman, arbitrating in disputes and acting as the spokesman of his village section. The traditional organization of the age-villages, in which an individual had some choice as to the village he should join, and was not bound by kinship connexions, makes an adaptation to villages in which those of the same faith live together easy. It is noticeable that the Pentecostal and Watch Tower converts build their own village sections apart from Moravians or Lutherans. And since the traditional village leaders are chosen, not hereditary, it is very easy for a leading Christian to become an assistant headman, more or less formally recognized by the village headman named at the 'coming out'.

At first the teachers were more directly under the supervision of the missionary than of the congregation, being selected by him and paid by the mission, but in the middle thirties, when funds from Germany ceased coming to the Moravian and Lutheran missions, the payment of village school teachers fell on the congregations of these denominations. Each village wanting a school had to provide a building, and in this pagans and Christians often co-operated, for many pagans also wanted their children to

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621
613
162
551

MEMBERSHIP OF VILLAGES

(a) *Lupende* (Senior village of Generation IV)

Members	*Village of father*	*Village of father-in-law*	*Kinsmen in village*
1. Mwanyilu (177)	Igembe	Bujoge Isebe Iringa Igembe	Half-brother Half-sister married to headman Father's half-brother
2. Kilaelo (headman)	Kinali Father's heir in Kilonde	Igembe Heir in forest village	Married half-sister of chief
3. Ndungundeli Mwaipopo	Igembe	Mwangomo's (C 08) chieftdom	Half-brother of chief
4. Mwaikambe	Bujoge. Moved to Kilonde	Another chieftdom	None traced
5. Mwambanhele	Bujoge	Bujoge Moved to Ndola	Married daughter of chief's father's half-brother
6. Mwakalinga	Igembe	Igembe	None traced
7. Mwampera	Kinyere	Igembe	None traced
8. Mwika	Ipuma	Ipuma	None traced
9. Mwakipenile	Ipuma	Igembe	None traced
10. Mwakilasa	Kinyere	Igembe	None traced
11. Mwakipekera	Another chieftdom	Mwandanya's chieftdom (C 07)	None traced
12. Mwakipenile	Another chieftdom	Ipuma	None traced
13. Mwakalehela	Mwangomo's chieftdom (C 08)	Mwangomo's chieftdom (C 08) Kalinde	None traced
14. Mwambigile	Igembe	Lupende	None traced
15. Mwakinyahabe	Ipuma	Mwaltujo's chieftdom (C 05)	None traced
16. Mwakanio	Kilonde	Lupende	None traced
17. Mwajijele	Another chieftdom	Another chieftdom	None traced
18. Mwamnile	Isiki	Igembe Kinyere	None traced
19. Kinyere Mwaipopo	Bujoge	Isebelele	Half-brother of chief's father
20. Mwangulu	Kinyere	Igembe	None traced

In one of twenty members, there are close kinsmen, and two are married to kinswomen of these three. The remaining fifteen members are not connected by kinship ties.

[p. 229]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(3) *Katumbe* (Generation III)

621
613
162
551

Members	*Village of father*	*Village of father-in-law*	*Known in village*	*Known elsewhere*
1. Gwemahow	Kinyero		Elder brother of 2	Son in Nibula. Elder brother in another chiefdom (C 27)
2. Angamile	Kinyero	Not married	Younger brother of 1	
3. Syapabwingi	Kinyero	Lugumbo Kasumbula's chiefdom (C 2)		Brother in forest village. Brother in chiefdom (C 2). Brother in plain. (All at first built in Katumba).
4. Kilaka	Bujuge	(a) Bujuge (b) Kinyero	Half-brother of 5	Elder brother Igumbe, moved to C 28. Brother in Christian village Kalumbe (at first built in Katumba). Brother in Mbeya at work. Brother in Iriki (but away at work).
5. Nkakwa	Bujuge		Half-brother of 4	
6. Mwakumwa	Bujuge	(a) Kinyero (b) Mwangomo's country (C 28) (c) Kilumbe	Half-brother of 7	No full brothers. 2 half-brothers moved to other chiefdoms, another to Zanzibar. Daughter married Kilumbe, another married Nibula.
7. Nsaxa	Bujuge	not married	Half-brother of 6	
8. Nathan	Bujuge	Kilumbe moved to Igumbe		His only son of another, a half-brother in Nibula.
9. Pelulual	Another chiefdom (C 27)	Nikapano		Father's younger brother's son headman of Iringa.
10. Mwalilindi				

In, out of ten members, there are one pair of brothers and two pairs of half-brothers, but all have close kinsmen (brothers, half-brothers, or father's brother's sons) in other villages or chiefdoms. Katumba has diminished from fifty-three members in 1918 to ten in 1955. Many members have died and many have moved, some to the forest colony, some to the plain to plant rice, four to Lupanshi.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

621
613
162
551

(c) *Kinde* (Generation IV and V)

Sons (none married)		*Father*	*Father's village*
Andule	full brothers	Mwaulu (194)	Myunga
Alijini			
Jeelim			
Mkinde			
Fwale	half brothers	Mwaulu (194)	Myunga
Tukulile			
Lembi			
Kimambo			
Alumbilumbile		Bwanjilile	Mambo
Andumbile		Pwali	Mambo
Lelapwa		Mbilimapa	Mambo
Bumbilumwile		Imilimo	Mambo
Anigwile		Mungile	Mambo
Kofu		Gunlo	Mambo
Kawwilile		Mwaipwal	Mambo
Akipwele		Mwenkwal	Mambo
Bajebo		Mwengwal	Mambo
Ashumile		Gwilimo	Mambo (Inherited in Lupumbi)
Kajebwe		Mwelumwile	Mambo
Fwjin		Animbo	Mambo
Mwitingi		Simmo	Mambo
Nilelwiqwe		Mwengaje	Mambo
Ongoh		Mwenjaje	Mlondi

I.e. out of twenty-three members, two are full brothers and six others are half-brothers. No other kinship connections were traced.

COMMONER PARENTS MENTIONED

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Kilungubeje Kyumba Kindi Nyamigwe Kilimwile	Hereditary Kings priests who come to Lubaga and visit Kaniile on the way
Kimwale Mwenelungwile Mwenelugali	Hereditary priests of Lubaga
Mwenelimwile	Kaniile's ancestor priest
Mwelukwe Nyamo	Hereditary priests of Mbyunga, the grave of Mwelumwelume (pl)
Kimapwe Ngulim Ngulukwe	Village headmen of Mwenjaje (Sk) and priests of the grave
Mwenelupwe Kalinjo	Village headmen of Mwenkwaje (Ngu) and priests responsible for 'tossing out' of Mwenjaje (Ngu)

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

For example,

In the Northern Highlands there is now a strong tendency for the tight village system to disintegrate as men seek to site their houses, each in his own coffee plot. In the Lake Plains also the structure of the age-village is changing – there the villages persist as such but they cease to be inhabited by men of any age and new villages do not emerge with a new chief. No attempt is made here, however, to analyse these variations for they are only now beginning and no satisfactory, detailed information is available for the post-war cash economy of the highland areas.

The Government of Tanganyika has permitted the publication of this essay, and I wish to express my gratitude for its support. The essay is a modified version of my original Report which was presented to Government in January, 1956. The views expressed in it are my own and not those of Government. As usual in my work as Government Sociologist, I have received much valuable assistance, advice and information from officers stationed in the area. The Nyakyusa themselves, as during my first enquiry, were usually cooperative, and at least some of them welcomed my work as a contribution to the measment of their novel difficulties. It would not have been surprising had they remained obdurate and antagonistic towards my enquiries about their land, for like many modern Africans they have a sense of insecurity which is not susceptible to reason. In fact I was able without much difficulty to make any enquiry I wished, to measure sample areas and to discuss the situation in all its aspects. Perhaps it is that an African people welcome a sympathetic enquirer and in their problems genuinely want assistance. The task of a sociologist is of course in some ways rather easier than that of an administrator or technical officer who has to persuade the people actually to accept and practice new ways and to abandon old ways. It is hoped that this essay may be of assistance both to these officers and to the people whom they are attempting to assist and teach.

Finally, I must thank the East African Institute of Social Research which has accepted this essay for publication, and especially Dr. L. A. Fallers who kindly read and criticised the original draft and who drew the two sketch maps.

Note: The area, the "Lake Plains", as used in this essay is to be understood to cover the major part of the modern local government area under the Mwakaleli Rural Council. Centred are the small groups of Kisi (Ikondwe) and Nkhili (Ngonde) peoples to the extreme east and west respectively. This area contains the alluvial flood plains surrounding the northern tip of Lake Nyasa, and the lower foothills to the north where the country begins its steep incline towards the Poroto Mountains. To the south lies the lake and to the south-east, beyond the meandering Songwe river, lie the foothills of the northern part of the Mwaskaleli Foothills. To the east are the towering Livingstone Mountains and to the north live the other Nyakyusa groups in the highlands.

The area comprises a fairly compact social and economic region with a common historical tradition. Several of the indigenous chieftdoms stretch across the intermediate boundary between flood plains and foothills. With but one exception the present chiefs are lineal descendants, in their various houses, of the original Mwakyusa who led the people into this lowland area five generations ago. The modern inhabitants are pre-eminently the Nyakyusa people.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER II

THE TRADITIONAL SYSTEM

Although this essay is to be primarily concerned with the modern and changing land and population situation among the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains, it is quite essential first to have an understanding of the traditional system of political and territorial organisation and of land tenure. This is not mere historicism, for despite changes the traditional system remains as the basis of contemporary land-holding and land law. Whilst actual conditions on the ground change, the Nyakyusa appreciation of those changes and their attitudes to land lag significantly behind. In brief, the traditional system was geared to a situation where there was plenty of land. Today the people find real difficulty in adjusting themselves to a high density of population and an acute shortage of land, with the result that this new situation is aggravated by outmoded practices, attitudes and cultural values.

The ancestors of the present group of peoples now known collectively as the Nyakyusa, moved into the Rungwe region from the Ukinga Highlands to the east beyond the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains. According to legend, which is probably substantially true, these newcomers found a sparsely populated country which they easily occupied. Later, following immemorial strife, one group under a man called Mwakyusa left the Masoko area in the centre of present-day Rungwe District and moved down into the Lake Plains. There, probably less than 150 years ago, they drove out the Ngonde people and settled. The sons of Mwakyusa took their shares of the country and people and established their independent chiefdoms. The chiefs in 1956 are the lineal descendants, mainly in the fifth generation, of Mwakyusa, and have a well-known genealogy. The only exception to this occurs amongst the group of tiny chiefdoms in the extreme east under the Livingstones, which now form a single administrative chiefdom under Mwakilasa and number some 400 men. They trace descent from pre-Nyakyusa settlers known as the Saka.

Traditionally, as today, the village was the basic unit both in social life generally and in land-holding in particular. The Nyakyusa village was possibly unique in Africa. It was comprised of men of roughly the same age, together with their wives and young children, and it excluded their fathers and sons and also, very often, their older and younger brothers. Each village consisted of a close group of houses (often covered on a broad "village street"), with arable and pastoral land around it. Each village had fairly well-defined boundaries with its neighbours. The village was represented as a group and acted corporately through its headman, *ifumu*, who was the guardian of villagers' land rights, the arbiter in land problems and disputes, and the controller of unused land. He was also the political and ritual leader of the village, but nevertheless he was a commoner chosen from amongst the villagers themselves, and was not a member of a chiefly lineage.

Land was owned by the village as a group. Every man resident in the village had a clear right to a site for his house and kitchen plot and to arable land within the village boundaries; he also had a right to graze his cattle in its communal pastures. Residence gave these rights and members of other villages were excluded. A man who left the village automatically gave up these rights, though if he returned he was able to take up his former holding or its equivalent.

Age-villages continued to form a chiefdom under the hereditary chief, *mwalende*, but active co-operation between villages (for example) was also slight; indeed in the larger chiefdoms there commonly existed considerable animosity which might break out in raiding or even civil war. The integrity of these larger chiefdoms was weak – for example, when the Nyakyusa were attacked by Sangu and Ngoni war-parties, and later by the Germans, villages of the same chiefdom commonly failed to join in common defence. Similarly the best efforts of one village were no concern of any other, and each jealously guarded its own rights.

Size of the chiefdom was large; constituent of scale is typical of Nyakyusa political organization and social attitudes. In 1931 the smallest indigenous chiefdom contained only 36 men. In 1948 31,700 people were divided amongst about 18 indigenous chiefs, but undoubtedly had not the Colonial Government frozen the system there would have been rather more – at least five more. Today there are 12 recognized "administrative chiefs", amongst whom five have each less than 2,000 people under them, and the largest chiefdom contains fewer than 10,000 people – the average is just over 4,000 people.

Nevertheless the chiefdom, the collection of villages, was important, because in the creation of the chiefdom villages were created, and in its development the villages developed, matured and died away. A village survived only so long as its members lived and by the nature of the age-organization there was but little possibility of the recruitment of new members, for villagers' sons left to form their own new villages. Their sons eventually came to comprise the sons of the new chiefdoms.

In connection with the constitution of a Nyakyusa village and with land tenure, the significant feature of the chiefdom was its establishment, together with the induction of a new chief, at the great "coming-out" ceremony, *ukwimba*. In brief, each chief was succeeded by two of his sons – the elder son of each of the senior houses of the chief, i.e., of his first two wives. At the "coming-out" ceremony, when the sons were still young men and their father was not a particularly old man, the old chiefdom was divided into two, each part ruling under one of the new young chiefs. Before the critical ceremony – at which much important ritual was performed – the younger sons of the old chiefdom had already moved away from their fathers' villages and had established their own inferior villages nearby, each now containing a group of recruits. A Nyakyusa boy from the age of about seven years could not continue to live with his father and mother, but, in company with his mates, built his own hut on a site adjacent to the main village as indicated by the fathers' headmen. Until the "coming-out" ceremony these younger villages came under the control of the old village headmen, but with the induction of the new chiefs they achieved independent status, each with its own headman appointed from among its members by the old headmen. Each new village was allocated a new building site and a new arable area, and quite commonly the old villagers, the older men, moved away a little in order to give the younger men adequate access to the land, for it was considered that the young men's needs for land were paramount.

After this wholesale reorganization of the old chiefdom, when new villages were established and new boundaries demarcated,[1] the old chief himself, the old headmen and the older men (the "fathers") gradually retired from active public life. The old chief was supposed to commit suicide after a time (or was quietly killed off) in order to leave the field clear for his sons; the old headmen became the religious and ritual leaders of the new chiefdoms, with the favour of older homesteads, and the old men's

[1] On the [illegible] see [illegible] "Sociology of a [illegible]" [illegible] Oxford, 1951, p. 32.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F367 Ngonde F367
Nyakyusa

villages grew ever smaller and became extinct as their members gradually died off in old age.

A Nyakyusa village, then, owed its being to the most significant political, social and religious event. Each village had its own approximately demarcated, and each headman was ritually and magically strengthened in order to lead and protect his own and their families.

This particular system operated satisfactorily in the demographic and land-using conditions of the old days. By the process of bifurcation, briefly described above, new chiefdoms and new villages were formed for each generation. Although the population appears to have been increasing rapidly there was always sufficient land to create two chiefdoms where one had existed before, and to create new villages and more villages than had existed before in the old chiefdom. The two new chiefs were able easily to move apart and find sufficient and more than sufficient land for their needs.

The system of bifurcation, the ideal of the Nyakyusa, did not always work out so neatly in practice – at any rate it often did not in the Lake Plain. Sometimes it did work; for example, the present chiefdoms of Lusewa and Kyoma are the two parts of their grandfather's single chiefdom, which split up under their respective fathers. Similarly, the present Wiwanyanjala and Mwamunyangala chiefdoms stemmed from a single unit, while the Wasukuma chiefdom itself today is really two indigenous chiefdoms, but the Government would recognize only the senior brother's claim to chiefship and allowed him authority over the whole. Even where a single new chiefdom succeeded the old (frequently as the result of civil war in which one brother subjugated the other) the essential dichotomous arrangement persisted so that the resultant single unit had two distinct halves, each with its own head with his villages and headmen. In any case, whether traditional bifurcation occurred or not, and right down to modern times, new villages have been established at the time of the "coming-out" of the new chief. The basic village system showed greater persistence and conserved more to type than did the chiefdom and the wider political system.

The real authority of a Nyakyusa chief was not in general very great, although individuals here and there achieved personal importance. A chief was accorded a great deal of prestige and honour, and by tribute and gifts he frequently became pre-eminently wealthy. He was supposed to be kept informed by his headmen of all important village affairs and to approve all matters concerning the land; but the village headman was in fact the real land authority, who attended to the details of land allocation and land use within his village. A chief could not do this, and in fact only in so far as he had the support and loyalty of his headmen had he any authority at all. "A chief is a chief because he has headmen," one informant put it to me – he was a prominent chief himself. A villager said: "A chief does not own the chiefdom, or the land. We, the people together, own it." A chief could, without notice or advice, take any unoccupied land for the use of himself or of his kinsmen, but he could not allocate it to others, both headmen and villagers would have indignantly and successfully protested had he tried, as some unwisely did. Land disputes, an uncommon feature in a country where land was plentiful, were settled by the headmen of the village in question; they were the private affairs of the village and the chief had no right of interference. Inter-village disputes first came before a meeting of the headmen concerned, with perhaps the assistance of the senior headmen of the chiefdom. Only if a dispute could not be settled and it seemed likely to threaten general peace within the chiefdom would the disputants go before the chief himself, who was so relied and had to rely heavily on his headmen to secure a settlement. So defective was his position that he might be unable to resolve inter-village disputes for fear of witchcraft reprisals against him by the unsuccessful party.

had accumulatively reverted to the common pool. An established villager might decide to use part of it perhaps, but not before prudently gaining the approval of the headman, lest the migrant return later and assume him of unlawful and unfriendly seizure. If the headman agreed, as he would after a time in most cases, the newly acquired plot became part of that villager's holding with as secure a title as the rest. Such vacated land could also be allocated by the headman to a newcomer or, before the case village was established, to the son of a villager.

If a man had more land than he could cultivate – because, for example, his sons had left him to cultivate in their own villages, or his wife had died – he was under no essential obligation to give up any part. The headman might, if the need arose, try to persuade him to release a portion in order to make it available to someone in need; but the land-holder could refuse and the headman had to accept his refusal. As a chief depended on the support of his headmen, so did a headman's position ultimately depend upon at least the passive support of his villagers, from whom rents he was chosen.

As the next "coming-out" ceremony the men of a village of the old circumcision might be required to move aside in order to allow the young men, their sons, to take up the better building site and farming land. This they traditionally did voluntarily and they built new homesteads on one side and cleared new arable plots. Once re-established in this manner, these older men would not be disturbed again and they remained secure in their new buildings. How often in fact such a displacement took place I cannot say, but it certainly seems to have occurred sometimes, for one can still trace old village sites which appear to bear out the common Nyakyusa story.

In all this it must be remembered that the spirit of village unity and morality was held in far higher esteem than land in such a fertile country where land was plentiful and subsistence farming required but small-sized holdings. Security of tenure and defined rights to particular plots are notions belonging to a different situation and age, when land begins to be scarce and to have an economic value, and when there is danger of men not being able to obtain as much as they need roughly where they need it.

Newcomers were invariably welcomed to a village: they were supplied with a house site and an arable holding and were assured with food until the first harvest. They were an addition to the numerical size and physical strength of the village, and they increased a headman's prestige. These rights were no less secured than those of founder-members of the village, although their social position was less secure, at least at first, for they had not shared in the history of the community and had not grown up with the ties of village association and consequently assuming always to binding.

Traditional rights in trees may be mentioned briefly. Trees were inherited without difficulty along with the land on which they stood, and a brother or son would commonly inherit the deceased's valuable trees without bothering to take the arable land around. If a man left his village and then returned to land there, the position was different. Banana trees were with the land and a new occupant simply took them over; bananas are of so great value as they grow so readily and abundantly. Bamboos are more valuable (being used extensively in house-building) and any left behind in this way could be claimed in the first instance not by the village but by the chief. If the chief secured them they became his property, or he could grant them to any man he favoured. Usually a chief was content to leave them: then the land kinsmen of the departed man had first claim, and if they had no use for them, or if no kinsmen were resident in the village, they became village property to be allocated by the headman. Cleanged coral were regarded as

* There are what appear to be exceptions to the exclusion of the Lake Rukwa, the southern end of Lake Nyasa and Kyela.

423 the same way as bananas, to be allocated along with the vacant surrounding land, although sometimes it seems that a chief might successfully lay claim to them. Trees supplying firewood were generally plentiful in the surrounding bushland. A man would not cut wood on another's holding, and standing trees merely went with the land if it was taken up by anyone else, in the same way as useful stands of thatching grass did.

In conclusion of this summary account the following points may be referred as important to the understanding of the traditional system:—

(i) Land was plentiful in relation to the people's needs and extensive areas were left unscathed.

(ii) Land was owned by the village as a group, acting under its own headman, who was the arbiter and the allocator of fields.

[5-7] (iii) Land was held in usufructuary right only by a resident member of the village, and every resident had the right to a house and banana-grove site, to sufficient arable land and to the use of communal pastures and woodland.

(iv) The individual's security of tenure was good, in so far as this was thought at all important.

[8-13] (v) The power of the chief was slight in land matters; he had no authority to allocate land.

(vi) Other villages, whether of the same chieftdom or not, had no claim in, or authority over, a village's land and land affairs.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

TABLE V

DISTRICTS IN TANGANYIKA WHERE LAND DISPUTES ARE COMMON

1950			No. of land cases	% of total civil cases	Estimated population density	Population per land case
Bukoba District	..	..	1,189	21	60	222
Lushoto Division	..	..	140	11	188	742
Moshi District	..	..	357	21	277	740
Ngara District..	..	..	81	19	119	1,301

The Changing Village

The quickly unique age-village of the Nyakyusa is now undergoing considerable and fairly rapid change in response to the new conditions of land shortage. There is, firstly, an increasing sense of village exclusiveness and, secondly, there has been a breakdown in the essential age-basis of its organisation. That is to say, that whilst the corporate unity of the village as an independent group has been strengthened, yet the social foundations of the village has simultaneously been changed and a different sort of village is emerging. It would take us far beyond the scope of this present essay if a full analysis of the changing village were to be made, nevertheless in so far as these changes are more or less directly the consequences of modern land shortage, land tenure and economic conditions some account is essential. Since the age-village was fundamental in the life and social organisation of these people, the new emerging village is of crucial importance.

Land shortage has definitely exaggerated the unity and exclusiveness of the village in the Lake Plains at a time when, for other reasons, it was beginning to become a more open group. There was always, as we have seen, insistence on the principle that only a member of the village could hold and use village land; but village boundaries were often poorly marked and it was difficult to determine which headman, if any, had genuine jurisdiction over land relatively distant from the established village sites. Nor was it particularly important to be able to do so whilst land was plentiful. As paddy cultivation spread, men began seeking extra fields farther and farther away from home as land nearby was all taken up; and so long as they did not attempt to take land in the immediate vicinity of another village site there was seldom much difficulty in this. The attitudes born of a sufficiency of land persisted and headmen were not disposed to protest against outsiders who sought fields near the limits of their vaguely defined areas. Internecine warfare and raiding had, of course, been abandoned as an expression of and a weapon in inter-village rivalries and animosities. With the establishment of general peace and security, and with increasing movement about the country between villages and chiefdoms, such rivalries and animosities began to die away. Many men came to live in the villages which they themselves had not helped to found; their coevals from their fathers' villages lived elsewhere, many of them widely scattered, and it was not possible to maintain a high degree of village patriotism, and, people began to feel, it was not especially necessary or important any longer.

It began to be possible for a man to hold some of his arable land within the area of another village, so long as members of the second village were not deprived of the opportunity of their own agricultural expansion should they desire it. This was especially the case when a large area of hitherto vacant (i.e. bush) but now valuable paddy land was contained within the approximate boundaries of a village. Outsiders were allowed to acquire fields on the strength of kinship with the headman or with one of the established villagers, or even by giving some small present to the headman (e.g. a little beer or some meat, etc.). Land was still plentiful then, or so it seemed to the Nyakyusa, and future shortages and difficulties were not perceived.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F'NU7 Ngonde F'NU7
Nyakyusa

land on Mwi. Young men compete with one another, with their elder brothers and with their fathers for allocations of land left vacant. We also saw, however, that often in the larger families not all the sons are able to get a share of the parental holding, or at least not a share of practicable size. Thus younger sons are forced to resort to trying to obtain vacant land elsewhere – probably within the same village, but so often as not outside. Finally, the young man on his new holding may find his neighbours to be of any age; certainly they will not have been members of his own original coeval hamlet.

The way for this changing concept of village life and the new sort of village was prepared in the years before land shortage became important. The changed political system has been briefly noted already, but no less important was the great increase in inter-village movement in earlier European days when peace and personal security had been established. During this period Wilson (1938, page 32) reckoned that perhaps 60 per cent. of Nyakyusa shifted at least once from the place where they first obtained fields. This estimate, whilst perhaps holding good for Highland Nyakyusa amongst whom Wilson mainly worked, was too high for the people of the Lake Plains, where about 40 per cent. is more correct according to my genealogical and village surveys. That is still a relatively high degree of mobility for a mainly subsistence, peasant society such as it was in those years. It is clear that the pseudo-fraternal band of coevality could not persist as a main element of village life and consciousness, when in fact as many as half of the members of a village were not original coeval founders but had come in from elsewhere. Before the land shortage, movement did not entail the shifting of young men to other young men's villages, or of older men to other older men's villages. It was, at least eventually, promiscuous movement, ignoring age categories. The complaints of land shortage seem, in retrospect, only to have followed existing lines of village development and to have begun the completion of the process.

In the Lake Plains, therefore, the village persists as a close, territorial, land-owning group and as a specific cluster of homesteads and huts, usually with a village street, the whole closely hemmed in by continuous banana groves. Beyond this lie the arable lands, usually food-crop fields nearby and paddy fields farther off. In jealously protecting what is already fields, the village has gained a new exclusiveness, for the security of the individual land-holder is maintained by the corporate ownership of the village and by excluding outsiders as far as possible. On the other hand, it is no longer an age-village either in fact or intention, and it cannot be, for age-villages were consistent only with an expanding territorial system and a subsistence economy.

This brief analysis of Nyakyusa village organization in recent times applies only to the Lake Plains. In some parts of both the Central Region and the Northern Highlands the age-basis of Nyakyusa villages had most probably already been seriously weakened in pre-European times.[1] On the other hand, elsewhere, and particularly in the more conservative parts less affected by modern roads and the cash economy, the traditional age-village will exists in something like its old form.

Land shortage has appeared in the Highlands together with a developing cash economy, but the basis of agricultural and economic change has mainly in coffee cultivation which, of course, requires relatively smaller fields than does paddy in the Lake Plains, but it needs more care and attention from the grower for moderate success. As far as I could see in the course of

1. Perhaps it will be more apparent the older and more stable age-sets, and therefore a larger elder social class in consequence.

2. According to oral information in Western Kyela, Mwaluanji and some coastal chiefdoms, and also the evidence of old village sites.

Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1956 F307 Ngoude F307
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Briefly to summarize the contemporary land situation: in the Lake Plains it may be said that in the main the traditional land tenure system and land law still continue on the basis of native land holding units. The essential feature in recent years has been the acute land shortage in relation to arable lands under the current system of agriculture. Village unity and village enfranchisement have been increased and so also has the authority of the village headmen in his control and allocation of land rights. Security of tenure has been strengthened, if anything, and one of the most important methods of obtaining land is now by inheritance. The new law establishing inheritance from father to sons, whilst generally acceptable to the people, is producing a number of civil suits which form the greatest proportion of the most important land cases before the local courts.

The shortage of land is principally the result of increased demands for paddy (i.e. rice crop) cultivation, although the population appears to be increasing slowly. In the high density regions almost all men have considerably less land than they could cultivate, especially under the impetus of the co-plough, with the developing desires for money income. In the low density regions of the low foothills there is still some vacant or partly utilized land, though of very inferior quality for paddy cultivation. The shortage hits the younger men severely, and many of them cannot obtain land at all until the death or senility of their fathers. Fragmentation and dispersion of holdings is rapidly becoming serious and without check.

The first question which arises is whether anything can be done to stop the pressure of population on the country by making more land available or by making its distribution more equitable.

The thickly populated parts of the northern region of the Lake Plains offer a meager solution only, for the country is raised above the level of the flood plains and is often broken and hilly. Fertility is low, erosion is a constant danger and the paddy yield (if obtainable at all) is poor. Nyakyusa from the densely populated areas to south and east are therefore most unwilling to move there. In any case the available land, which remains safely and economically open to cultivation, is filling up fairly quickly - mainly by immigration. Certainly I do not think that it can supply sufficient space to meet modern needs. There is, however, no reason why immigrants should make a difficult situation worse, and therefore it is suggested that further immigration from outside the Lake Plains should be carefully controlled if not altogether prevented. Individually outsiders (almost entirely Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who hold land without permanent residence should be prohibited and their holdings reallocated to local inhabitants.

As I have already indicated (page 17), I do not think that the problem of men who hold unusually large acreages is particularly serious. Such large holdings are relatively few and will be inevitably split up by inheritance on the deaths of the present occupiers.

In the flood plains proper there is, so far as I am aware, extremely little new land which could be brought under cultivation. Mechanical assistance in the clearance of dense reed thicket[1] and in drainage schemes would produce

[1] These areas of thicket are barely considered in the old tenure law. If cleared, could be used for a dry season crop.

[illegible] good plains paddy fields where the rainfall is in general too valley. The general advantages of consolidation outside are considerable here.

In view of the demonic, economic and social importance of cattle to the Nyakyusa and their potential value in a mixed subsistence economy, and also in view of the fact that cattle are widely held in very small numbers by individual families, it is suggested that further and more urgent attempts be made to encourage cattle-keeping, especially during the wet season. It is realized that past efforts in this matter have failed, and therefore a thoroughgoing scheme of propaganda and demonstration work is needed. Small fodder crops might be grown in the dry season and there is always plenty of herring fodder on Lake Nyasa.

The problem of the landless young men is likely to remain very difficult (see pages 3[illegible]). It has to be remembered of course, that as they get older men do acquire land gradually. Nevertheless the proportion of landless, or scarcely landless, men is high and is apparently increasing. The large-scale, post-war labour migration to the Rhodesias and South Africa is undoubtedly one of the more important results of land shortage and economic difficulty, and it is a valuable safety valve. As I have written elsewhere: "The serious and increasing land shortage amongst the Nyakyusa raises real doubts if there is any policy at all which can keep the men at home when there is not enough land for them – for the sake of both economic and general social stability it might be preferable in the long run if the continued pressure on the land resources were relieved by a degree of permanent emigration."[1] Since writing that and during the course of my land investigations I have only become more convinced of its rightness. I would now go so far as to say that Nyakyusa men should be encouraged to go abroad to work and even to become permanent wage-followers in the industries and areas which demand labour and offer a higher standard of living. If the Nyakyusa are not to be seriously retarded in their home economic development, land as it must be an agriculture (i.e. on the land), the excess population must find an outlet elsewhere.

The general tendency towards greatly increased exclusiveness in the Nyakyusa village, involving renewed emphasis on the principle of land-holding only by residence and the forfeiture of a holding when changing residence, raises wider issues the future significance of which is not easily seen, especially by the Nyakyusa themselves. This narrow village parochialism does little to meet the increasingly difficult problem of land shortage, while the isolation it fosters is the antithesis of the wider outlook required by a developing society in a world money economy. I am fully aware of the strong native sentiment attached to the village and to village independence, but this was in fact diminishing in earlier European times before the new land scarcity set in (see pages 29-30). I do not think that the village system and the complex of attitudes and values it fosters is adequate to provide for the future – a future which the Nyakyusa do not yet clearly foresee. With some deference, therefore, I offer the following suggestion: a man who already has a holding should be able to retain it when he moves to live in another village. If his new home is too far away for the continued cultivation of all or part of the holding, or for any other valid reason, he should be able to sell or give it to anyone he wishes. Such gift or sale could be supervised by the headmen of the village in which the holding lies. It might well, or first or any rate, be limited to a member of the same village, either an established villager or another man who is willing to come and live there. I think it important that disposal should be outright and not on leasehold terms, for the latter would more propably engender further complications and uncertainty of tenure, which must be avoided.

[1] McCulloch R. S. : A Report on the Migration of African Workers in the Rural Areas by Southern Rhodesia African and general workers in the Territories of Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and Tanganyika, Government Printer, Lusaka, 1954, page 127.

13:LeSamano E-5 (2939) 1951 F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

6. A visit to the chief's father's grave was paid in company with the chief and some of his *amafuma*. It was situated in a banana grove (*ikagatu*[1]) not very remote from the chief's hut. The grave of the present chief's father was on the ground-floor, about one hundred paces from its edge and was characterized by a small circular basalt block about half a metre in height[2] and about forty centimetres in breadth. An *indele*-plant was also standing on the grave about one metre from the basalt block.

On this occasion the chief also told me of the special cases for which sacrifices are offered in this grave. These are performed only in cases of very serious accidents, sickness or famine which may overcome the chieftainship. In such cases a black cow is slaughtered after sunset at the edge of the grave. In the presence of the chief some pieces of meat of the slaughtered beast, together with some bananas, are laid down at the grave. The chief adds a prayer to his ancestors at some distance from the grave, referring to the evil by which the chieftainship or some special village of it has been afflicted. He enumerates all the names of his ancestors and asks them for their help.

The remaining pieces of the meat and other bananas are left in the grave during the night. When the next day dawns, the *amafuma* return and some *abangapo* divide the meat and eat it together. On this occasion the chief orders the removal of all remains of ashes from the hut. The ashes are thrown down in such unclean places as where leprous persons had been buried. After this has been done, the chief in conjunction with an *ongapo*[3] produces a new fire for the hut by twirling, and all other fires of the village, or villages, must be kindled anew from this "seed-fire".

9. The reason for visiting an *ongapo* (*Mwaipo*)[4] who dwelled in Ozungu an older age-set village[5] which seemed to the visitor to be a more ancient part of Ikuumba, was caused by the sickness of the chief's sister. In accordance with the custom of the Nyakyusa to bringing women back to their father's village if they are very sick, the

[1] Cf. *Johnston*, *Uganda*, pl. *ensenkula*, p. 480; *Mackenzie*, *Uganda*, *burial* (*Ham*, p. 300) *mugatu*, grove of the dead (*Mutu*, p. 12); *Wilson*, *Introduction*, p. 207, *ikagatu*, sacred grove; *Mwenebitu*, p. 118.

[2] Cf. *Fiddlebone*, p. 107.

[3] Cf. *o.k.*, p. 6.

[4] Cf. *Johnston*, p. 481.

[5] I propose to call the special form of village found within the Nyakyusa society, which are created on the age-set principle, *age-set village*. *Uhlman Studies*, Vol. II, No. 5, p. 15—19 June 1935, a terminology that does not also C. Wilson statements on the "Age Village" (*Introduction*, p. 208 ff).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631 recognized over 100 chiefdoms, mustering anything from 100 to 3,000 adult men apiece.

Although no centralized political authority existed before the 769 German occupation, certain groups of chiefdoms joined in common 631 rituals directed to common ancestors. We traced four such centres of worship among the Nyakyusa; the most important being Lubaga, in the middle of the valley, where Kings priests (from the top of the Livingstone mountains) join with many Nyakyusa chiefdoms in sacrifice to Lwembe, who is claimed as the ancestor both of the chiefs of the Nyakyusa proper, and of the Kings. At LiKyala, on the Lake-shore plain, Kings also join in sacrifice with the surrounding Nyakyusa chiefdoms. In Ngonde the chief connected with a similar centre of worship, Mbande, developed far-reaching secular as well as religious powers; and by the time the Europeans arrived he was established as a paramount chief with the title of the Kyungu. This development was [439] directly connected with the fact that Ngonde traded with the outside world, and that their Kyungu, through his control of ivory, was able also to control the guns and cloth which came into the country;[1] the Nyakyusa, remaining isolated, remained politically disunited.

Besides sacrificing to a distant ancestor in company with the representatives of a large group of chiefdoms, two or more chiefs who are neighbours participate in a sacrifice at the grove in which their common father, or grandfather, is buried. Thus common worship links both large groups of chiefdoms, whose chiefs are more or less distantly related, and small groups of contiguous chiefdoms whose chiefs are close kinsmen. The sacrifices made are to the chiefs of immediately preceding generations, and to certain great heroes of the distant past, such as Lwembe and Kyala.

769 All these sacrifices are believed to bring rain and fertility, for 769 the well-being of each chiefdom is thought to be bound up with the health of the chief and the goodwill of his ancestors.

The Nyakyusa are all agreed that their chiefs, *abanyafyale*, are 173 'strangers' who came down from the Livingstone mountains 632 eight or ten generations ago, and found the valley already occu- 563 pied by people who had no knowledge of fire, but ate their food raw. The chiefs brought fire with them—some say, cattle also;

[1] Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., pp. 5, 30-38.

I:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and by virtue of this great benefit were accepted as chiefs. Such is the myth (*vide infra*, p. 28). It is remembered that the chiefs of different groups such as the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, the Lupolo, and the Saka arrived at different times, but of the proportion of the immigrants to the former occupants, and of the proportion of men to women in the invading groups, we learnt nothing. Some suggest that the chiefs were lighter in colour than the previous inhabitants of the valley,[1] and the term *abantu*, 'black people', is used for commoners as contrasted with chiefs. But chiefs intermarry freely with commoners and there is no observable difference in physical type between them and their people to-day. The Nyakyusa are without a clan system, and though kinship with a chief may be remembered for three (or perhaps even four) generations, the body of 'kinsmen of the chief' is not defined as it is in tribes which have a 'royal clan' like the Bemba or Ponde. Moreover, among the Nyakyusa the chief's advisers are never his kinsmen, but commoners. Some or perhaps none of a chief's ancestors are intelligible as village headmen, who are the counsellors of the chief, and who had in the past very great control over him. The contrast is made between chiefs, *abanyafyale*, on the one hand, and commoners, *amafumu*, on the other, and the leaders of villages, chosen each generation by their predecessors (*vide infra*, p. 23), are the *amafumu par excellence*.[2] Words from this *-fumu* root mean 'chief' in various central Bantu languages (Bemba, Tumbuka, Nyanja); and it is tempting to suppose that the *amafumu* were the old chiefs conquered by the invading *abanyafyale*, but that is only a supposition. The important point for the contemporary social structure is that the village leaders are *commoners*; that their position is not hereditary, since they are selected afresh each generation; and that formerly they had very great power over the chief. This power has diminished considerably with the development of European administration. The Nyakyusa, indeed, were astounded to be told that the British

[1] *cf.* Godfrey Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 10 (footnote).

[2] For this reason *ifumu* was translated by Godfrey Wilson as 'great commoner', in 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. X (1936), and other papers, but this translation has considerable difficulties, and I have preferred to translate *ifumu* as 'village headman' in the contexts in which it means the leader of the village, and 'commoner' or 'villager' in other contexts. It must be clearly understood that 'village headman' as used in this book means something quite different from 'headman' as used by the Administration (*vide infra*, p. 198).

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

constitution (about which they asked many questions) was a democratic one; for, they said, the Administration always supported the chiefs against the commoners.

The villages to which commoner leaders are appointed differ from all other Bantu villages of which we have knowledge in that they consist of groups of age-mates, not groups of kinsmen; boys build with contemporaries and remain with them through life; girls join the villages of their husbands at marriage; therefore relatives, other than husband and wife and young children, do not live together. Nevertheless kinship ties are important, for property circulates within the kinship group rather than within the village, and kinsmen are believed to be mystically interdependent, in a way in which fellow villagers are not. The most prized possession of the Nyakyusa are cattle, for cattle enable a man to marry, to live in comfort, to gain prestige by feasting his friends; and cattle pass along the roads of kinship. They pass between brothers, and half-brothers, and the sons of brothers; between fathers and sons; and between affines. Kinsmen also participate in common rituals, praying to common ancestors, and seeking protection from mystical dangers which are thought to travel, like cattle, along the roads of kinship. Ever fearful lest a quarrel among them should bring misfortune on all, they strive to live in harmony.

The range of kinship recognized varies somewhat with the status of the family concerned and the proximity and personalities of its members, but, generally speaking, economic and religious co-operation link the descendants of a common grandfather, and marriage between the descendants of a common great-grandfather is excluded. A legal marriage is effected by the passage of cattle from the groom's group to the bride's, and it is this passage which is said to create kinship (*ubuhwe*), with the consequent mystical interdependence, between a man and his wife, and between the one partner in a marriage and the close kinsmen of the other. Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan, and it is made possible by the ten years' difference in the average marriage age of men and women. Girls are betrothed very young and finally join their husbands at puberty, while few pagan men marry under twenty-five. Inherited cattle are controlled by the older generation and polygyny is the prerogative of age. For property passes not directly from father to son, but from brother to brother,

I:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

will cultivate his father's fields and eat at his father's home. In former days, we were told, the marriage age of men was even later than it is at present (*vide infra*, p. 8a). 'Perhaps after twenty a boy would be betrothed, but to a young girl, and he would wait eight years before she grew up.'

From the time boys begin to herd they recognize one of their number as a leader. 'When we herd cows as boys', a friend told us, 'there is always one who is obeyed by his fellows whatever he says. No one chooses him, he gains his leadership and his prestige by bodily strength. For always, when we are boys together among the cows, we vie with one another and dispute about going to turn back straying cattle, or about fetching fire to cook the food we have brought with us. And so we start fighting, and we go on fighting until one of us beats all his fellows completely and so becomes the leader. And then it is he who sends others to turn back straying cattle, to fetch fire and to collect firewood. And he is greatly respected. He settles quarrels too. What we quarrel about most as boys is a particular insult: one says to another: "You are only a child, you are, I am your senior." This is always happening and then it is the part of the one who is leader to set those two on to fight. We all stand round and watch and the one who first cries is proved the child.'

Later, when the boys have built apart from their fathers, one of their number is often appointed by the headmen of their fathers' village to settle disputes between them. Some boys' villages have no such appointed leader, but many of them do. Such appointments are, however, temporary. It is only when political authority is transferred to their generation that the young men's permanent leaders are chosen.

3. *The 'coming out' ceremony*

Eight or ten years after the young men of the senior boys' village of the chiefdom have begun to marry, their fathers hand over the government of the country to them. This transfer of authority is effected in an elaborate ceremony called the 'coming out' (*ubusoke*).

The 'coming out' is a series of legal acts by which the country of an old chief and his village headmen (*amafumu*) is, with certain reservations, handed over into the possession and control of his

I: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

two senior sons and their respective village headmen. These legal acts are accompanied by much pomp and ceremony. It is at once the initiation of all the youth of the chiefdom into public life, the constitution of two new political units and the proclamation of two new chiefs. It consists not only of a series of legal acts but of religious ritual as well, action being taken to increase the personal qualities appropriate in a chief and his village headmen by treatment with medicines.

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The 'coming out' comprises six main events: firstly, the public recognition of a number of age-villages of young men, and the selection of headmen to lead them; secondly, the magical treatment of young chiefs and headmen to make them dignified and powerful; thirdly, the public recognition of the two young chiefs; fourthly, a cattle raid; fifthly, the establishment of the young age-villages on adequate land; and sixthly, the marriage of the young chiefs.

When the eldest sons of his contemporaries reach the age of about thirty-three to thirty-five years the old chief is approached by his village headmen who say: 'The sons have grown up, let us make the "coming out" for them.' After a period of delay, for he is unwilling to relinquish his own honour and power, the old chief agrees, and the 'coming out' takes place. He fears lest he may fall ill from 'the breath of men' should he delay too long (*vide infra*, p. 134). His two heirs, together with all the boys and young men, whether married or single, who are sons of the old chief's contemporaries, are summoned to attend, according to their age-villages, at the old chief's principal house. When they arrive they wait there for several days, while the old village headmen discuss with their chief where to give the young men land, and whom they will select as headmen of the young villages. In many of the young village groups there are already leaders previously appointed by the village headmen of their fathers. If they have proved satisfactory their appointments are confirmed by the old village headmen; if not new ones are selected.

In selecting leaders of the young men's villages the old headmen look for men who are wealthy, who come from respected families, who have ability in judging cases, and are popular with their fellows; in the old days they looked also for courage and the ability to lead men in war. These qualities correspond to the village headmen's functions. He should be hospitable to his

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

neighbours, he judges their cases; he is their leader at ceremonies and in the old days he led them to war also. He represents their desires to the chief, and it is through him, and in consultation with him, that the chief gives orders. Besides this each headman (*ndifwene*) is believed to protect his own villagers from witchcraft, 'to watch over the country by night', to shield men and cattle from the spiritual forces of evil.[1] To fit them for this task, village headmen are treated with medicines at the 'coming out' to give them the power of seeing and fighting witches.

So important is this position of village headman that legal precautions are taken 'to prevent the village headman becoming a chief', as several informants have put it to us. It is illegal to choose a village headman from among the kinsmen of a chief, and it is illegal to elect the son of a village headman to that office in any age-village of his own contemporaries, though he may perhaps inherit the position in his father's village when his father dies.

To return to the 'coming out' ceremony: when the old men have made up their minds, one of them goes among the crowd of young men, and catches hold of those they have chosen in order of seniority: first the one who is to be leader of the senior village of the first son of the old chief, then the leader of the senior village of his second son, then the leader of the next senior village of the first son, and so on. There are commonly eight age-villages of young men; of these four will belong to the chieftdom of the first son, four to that of the second. The eight new village headmen are now publicly known, four in each new chieftdom.

The young chiefs, together with the senior headmen of each, are then treated with medicines that they may be impressive (*nsiye*). From birth a chief undergoes periodical treatment to make him impressive (*nsiye*) 'that we commoners may tremble before him'. The treatment at the 'coming out' is directed towards the same end: 'We treat him, then he will be altogether a chief, men will respect him!' The village headmen now drink the

[1] The essential meaning of a word in one culture is often illuminated by the meaning of a word from the same area among neighbouring people. In this connection it is significant that *fwene* in Bemba and *ndfwene* in Nyanja mean 'chief', but in Ambofu *ndifwene* means 'magician' (including diviner) (*African Political Systems*, p. 127), and among the Nukuma *ndifwene* is used in the same sense (*Africa*, Vol. XIX, p. 10); cf. H. H. Johnston, *A Comparative Study of the Bantu and Semi-Bantu Languages*, Vol. II, p. 270.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

medicines of power for the first time, and these are thought to create or develop in them *uwanga*, that is, the power of seeing and fighting witches (*vide infra*, pp. 96-102). To the senior headman of each young chief is handed a magic horn to attract people to the country. 'The horn is the luck of the chief that many people may come to build.' To each is given also a magic tail, which, it is believed, will enable him to dream of wars that are approaching and which, together with a magic spear, he carries into battle. 'The spear of the chieftainship is to fight battles with, it is manhood, strength.' The horn, the tail, and the spear are emblems of office handed on by the senior village headman of the old chief to the senior headman of the young chiefs. They were treated periodically by a special doctor and a set was provided for each independent chiefdom at the coming out. The treatment of these emblems is now rarely undertaken—we were fortunate to see it once. The Nyakyusa say that since the country has been pacified, it has become unnecessary; its purpose was to secure success in war.

The next stage in the action is the one from which the whole institution takes its name: 'the coming out' (*ukwaika*). The two young chiefs are secluded for a few hours in the hut of the old chief's first wife, where they receive various forms of magical treatment, and when this is finished someone outside knocks at the door and cries 'Come out!' Then, to quote the words of a village headman who told us about his own 'coming out', 'The director of ceremonies said: "Get up!" The chiefs got up and came out (*kwaika*)* of the house to us, and we, the crowd of young men, cried "Come out!" and welcomed them. Then we all ran shouting and calling the war cry towards the next chiefdom. In the old days we should have invaded that country to take cattle and to bring them back and set them at the new huts which we build next. But that is finished now.' The senior headmen of the new chiefdom lead the charge, each grasping his war tail, his

* At the traditional Nyakyusa greeting (now archaic) '*Kwaika!*' literally meaning 'You have come out (of the house)' i.e. 'Good morning!' This greeting was confined to those who had been through the *ukwaika* ceremony.

A comparison of the meaning of the root in other Bantu languages is quite suggestive. In Kinza *ukwaika* means 'to (send circumcised lads into manhood by giving them permission when they come out from their seclusion and are publicly acknowledged as men by the assembly of men' (Krapf, *A Kafir English Dictionary*); *ukwaika* means backslipped, unlikely (of a circumcised man, not a boy).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

622 spear, and magic horn. In this way the new chiefs are shown to
643 their people.

Chiefs who are to be independent now separate, each moving
622 off with his men to the place where the senior age-village of that
372 chiefdom will eventually be built. All fire in the country is ex-
621 tinguished, even the fire in the homesteads of the old men, and
643 in each of the new independent chiefdoms new fire is made, ceremonially, by the senior headman of the chiefdom and his fellow men in rank. One holds a lion-bone while the other twirls a medicated stick in a groove in the bone. The senior headman and his second each gives fire to the village headman immediately junior to him, and then the latter in turn to his immediate junior, until each of the headmen has fire. At this point the future division of each new chiefdom is foreshadowed, for the second senior headman in each new chiefdom is recognized as the leader of one side of the country. As each village headman lights his fire he calls: "Come men of each and each a village to me!" and they take fire from him.

643 Since we are not primarily concerned with symbolism in this
372 book we shall not enter at length into the interpretation of these
773 events.* It must suffice to remind our readers of the Nyakyusa myth that their chiefs came down from the Livingstone mountains ten generations ago bringing fire with them, and that they found the previous inhabitants of the valley, who became their subjects, without fire, and eating their food raw. The extinguishing of the old fires and lighting of new is interpreted by the Nyakyusa as a symbol of the new chieftainship. A chief with whom we were well acquainted explained it thus: "The fire is the fire of lordship (*amato hatwa*). The old chieftainship is coming to an end, the new has come. They extinguish the fires in all the houses, those of the young men and those of the old men, then they make new fire which is taken to every house. For formerly Mwangamila [the old chief] would have had little power [after the 'coming out'], Mwakyusa and Rwelwa [his sons] would have ruled." But why fire? we asked. "Because of old," they relate, "we chiefs came with fire, the commoners had not yet got it, they ate raw food only. When we came we slept in men's houses and we made fire and cooked food. Men were astonished, and said:

* A full analysis of the symbolism of our ritual necessitates a comparison of all the rituals of the society, which will be made in another book.

I:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

abakulumbe) and their eldest sons are his two heirs in the chieftainship. Young girls, daughters of neighbouring chiefs, are carried off with a show of force from their fathers' houses, by the young chief's men, who themselves later contribute to the herd of cows sent to regularize the position. The two great wives are thus married not solely with the cows of their husband, but also with those of the men whose sons their sons will one day rule. The duty of arranging the match lies with the village headmen of the old chief, and it is said that they are often guided in their choice by dreams.

The girls who are carried off are just about to reach puberty, and they stay at the house of one of the men of the old chief until their periods begin. When both have reached puberty they are initiated, not at their fathers' houses, as are ordinary girls, but in the country of their husband, and both together. At their initiation the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the old retiring chief) play the part normally played by a girl's parents and their neighbours, while the young chief and his men take the usual part of a husband and his friends. And then, after the ceremonies are over, the two girls are given to the young chief as his wives. Houses are built for them separately, i.e. in the senior age-village of the new chiefdom for the first wife, in the next senior village for the second wife; and in this separation of dwelling place is already apparent the future division of the chiefdom between their sons.

Within the chiefdom, and among the wives and children of the chief two 'sides' (*mabaga*) are recognized. Usually, in each country there are, at its beginning, at least two age-villages and half the wives of the chief on either side. This distinction of two sides is important in succession, a son from each side eventually inheriting half the country.

From the time of the 'coming out' of the two young chiefs till the day of their own father's death there exists between him and them a delicate balance of prestige and power. Each of the three, traditionally, has judicial authority in his own age-villages, but appeals in difficult cases may be taken from either of the young chiefs and their village headmen to the old chief and his village headmen, while the religious duties of chieftainship are exercised entirely by the old chief. But in the old days it was the young chief who fought and led men. Young chiefs used to lead their

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

men to funerals in other countries and start a fight, and raid cattle. The old chief would say: "I am too old to lead people to war and to funerals, and to find men, I have no cattle, you have the power to do these things now." It was the lusty young men (*abatalwa*) who fought, not the old men.'

Formerly this transition period rarely lasted long, for the old chief usually died shortly after the 'coming out' of his sons. Success in war and probably also the fertility of the country were believed to be dependent upon the virility of the chief. As one informant put it: 'The old chiefs died because there was war: the people would complain of an old chief saying: "He is too old, when we fight we are beaten, he had better die. Perhaps the young chief will help us." ' The old chief's death was commonly interpreted as due to 'the breath' (*vide infra*, p. 101) of his people who loved his sons rather than himself, but we have evidence that chiefs were sometimes ceremonially strangled by their village headmen. Nowadays many chiefs survive for years after the 'coming out' of their sons, and relations between the generations are consequently complicated, as we shall see later.

At the death of the old chief control of the villages of old men passes to the two young chiefs and their village headmen, half to each side. Village headmen of the old chief, relinquishing most of their secular functions to their successors, enter upon new religious duties as priests in the sacrifices to the chief who has just died, and this priesthood they hand on to their sons. The dead chief's full brother is still the religious head of both chiefdoms, but all the secular functions are now exercised by the young chiefs, each in his own country. And the religious functions also fall to them when all their father's full brothers are dead.

The 'coming out' ceremony has been described in some detail, for it is the occasion when chiefdoms and villages are formally established, and the future relations between them are made clear. The splitting of the old chiefdom into two independent halves; the division of every new chiefdom into two sides, each under a senior headman; the boundaries, membership, and relations of the age-villages within each side—all are defined at this ceremony. In the catching field of the village headmen, and in the making of fire, the relative status of leaders and villages and the membership of each village are shown. In the planting of the ritual tree on the boundary between the two sides of the country, and

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

the establishment of the mother of an heir in each, the future division of the country is foreshadowed. Finally, it is the occasion on which power is formally handed over to the younger generation, and the success of the new headmen as war leaders is put to the test.

c. Relations between villages within one chiefdom

Within each chiefdom, then, there are two sides, each under a senior headman. On each side are two or more age-villages of contemporaries of the chief—men of the ruling generation. Attached to these villages are boys' villages made up of the younger brothers and sons of contemporaries of the chief. They live separately from their fathers and may have their own village headers, but legally each boys' village is subject to the authority of the headmen of its parent village. On each side there are also two or more villages of old men, contemporaries of the chief's father, whose headmen have ritual functions. Each village established at a 'coming out' ceremony has considerable autonomy under its own headman, but it is subject to the senior headman of the side it belongs to in two ways: cases not settled by a village headman go to the senior headman of the side, and a senior headman leads the villages of his side in war and communal hoeing. Even villages of old men are subject to the authority of the senior headman of the ruling generation on the side of the country where they live. Boys and young men of the generation which had not yet 'come out' used to fight and hoeing as village groups under the leadership of the senior headman (of their fathers' generation) on the side of the country to which they belonged. Whether or not each boys' village was also subject in war and chase, as in legal disputes, to the authority of the headman of its parent village is not clear. Certainly each boys' village formed a defined segment within any larger group.

To recapitulate, there are always villages of three generations in existence—those of contemporaries of the late chief, the headmen of which have ritual functions; those of mature men, contemporaries of the ruling chief, whose headmen have administrative and military functions; and those of boys and young men, contemporaries of the heir, who have not yet 'come out', and who fight under the leadership of their fathers' senior headmen.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

Sometimes, as we shall see presently, villages of a fourth generation exist also.

Each age-grade, or generation, covers a span of 30 to 35 years, and each village comprises an age-set with a span of 5 to 8 years, though this is longer in sub-chiefdoms (*vide infra*, p. 37). The average age of members in each grade varies with the date of the last 'coming out' ceremony. Just before the ceremony the elders with ritual functions are those over 65 or 70; the mature men of the ruling generation those between 35 and 65; and the 'boys' who have not yet come out, those between 10 and 35. Just after the ceremony the ruling generation consists of those between about 10 and 35, anyone over 35 being an elder. Those just too young to participate in one 'coming out' may be just too old to participate in the next. The village of Katumba in Mwaipopo's country was in this position: it had been created after the 'coming out' of the young chief Mwankuga, but informants were uncertain whether or not it would be established as a separate village at the 'coming out' of his heir Mwinyile (*vide* Document, p. 183).

The two senior headmen of a new chiefdom are chosen from the two senior villages established at a 'coming out' ceremony, so that a commoner's chance of holding high office is greatest when he is just a little older than a chief's heirs. The senior village of one generation begets the senior villages of the next (*vide* Documents, pp. 182-3). Thus, though the son of a village headman in one generation cannot become a village headman in the succeeding generation, there is a tendency for leadership within the chiefdom to pass from one *group* of men to their sons. Those who participate in a 'coming out' while very young tend to have least authority in the country, and are superseded when still under forty by the generation of their sons. The immediate contemporaries of a chief, i.e. those with whom he lives during boyhood, have a special bond with him all through life; and it may sometimes happen that when a chief dies young and is replaced by a brother (his own son being too young to inherit) a junior village comes into prominence because its members have been 'the companions' of the new chief. Bulindanga in Mwaipopo's country was a village of this kind: Mwaipopo I had died young, and was succeeded by his brother Mwaipopo II ('Mwandowe') who had 'come out' as a youth in Bulindanga, and his immediate contemporaries from that village maintained a special bond with him.

1:Wilson E-5(1936-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

decided by the old village headmen and chief in consultation, at the commencement of the 'coming out' ceremony. This moving aside of the old men is an essential part of the ceremony and occurs even when there is unoccupied land available. For example, at the 'coming out' of Mwaitaga, Mwaipopo's heir, the old men moved aside to make room for their sons, although there is a large area of unoccupied land in the chiefdom, which is slowly being colonized by Mwaipopo's men.

Although the main redistribution is at the 'coming out', later readjustments are common enough. If a particular man's village attracts many members, and these members become wealthy in wives and children, then it may be necessary for the old men to move aside a second time, to make yet more room for their sons. The senior headman of the side of the chiefdom concerned, in consultation with the chief and other village headmen, has the power to make equitable adjustments in the land holdings of the villages of his side. We watched one village, whose numbers had diminished, being moved to make more room for a junior one which had flourished. But so long as its members remain together, a village retains its name and identity, though its site may be moved more than once. 'A village', the Nyakyusa say, 'consists in men, not in land.'

Boundary disputes between villages of a chiefdom are not unusual. In the old days these often led to war. Nowadays they are taken before the Court, whence there is an appeal to the federal court, the District Officer, the Provincial Commissioner and thence to the High Court (cf. p. 171). One such case, which we observed, had dragged on for years because the chief concerned, who happened to be president of the Court, feared to give judgment lest he be bewitched by the village which lost the case (cf. Document p. 191).

The division of the land allotted to each village lies with the members of that village, under the leadership of their own headman. The village headman himself, and other prominent individuals in the group, get first choice of sites: a son does not have a prescriptive right to the building site and garden of his father when the old men move aside for their sons. 'If you are prominent, and you like your father's old site, that's all right, the others agree; but if you are unimportant ("light"), no, one of the important men takes it; you have no power.' Certain building and garden

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

To these come some of a man's village-mates and male relatives or special friends from other villages, as well as his sons and sons-in-law with their village-mates. At one such party we noted in the morning eight helpers, of which six were men, two being classificatory brothers of the owner and four of them friends. There were also two young sons of the owner working. In the afternoon a son-in-law came with a party of his village-mates. Such hoeing parties are not the concern of the whole village. Only those who have been specially invited, or very close friends of the owner of the field, come (the number usually ranging between ten and twenty), and some of those invited may be from other villages. It is difficult for one to whom an invitation has been sent to refuse. After work the guests are feasted. Traditionally they were given milk with bananas or beans (a prized food), but nowadays beer is expected. For the party noted above two pots of beer were provided, one being given to the older men and the other to the son-in-law with his friends. Christians, many of whom are forbidden to brew beer, provide meat, rice, or milk—all much prized foods. Possibly the proportion of men attending this type of work party has diminished as opportunity for paid employment has increased—we have no certain evidence.

Mutual assistance in cultivation turns on kinship and personal friendship: all the members of a village or a village-section are not obliged to work with a neighbour. But it is insisted that neighbours should keep in step with one another in cultivation. It will be remembered that their garden-lands are together, and each year different types of garden are hoed by groups of villagers—millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins in one place, potatoes in another, maize and beans in another, so that while the gardens of one particular household are scattered, each crop is in one or two blocks. Neighbours cultivating the same crop in adjoining fields should, according to Nyakyusa ideas, begin each process in cultivation together, and the whole village should keep in step. As one informant put it, 'in hoeing and planting one must be neither ahead of nor behind one's neighbours'.

The idea reaches its fullest development among the Kukwe in regard to three crops planted with the first rains, namely, finger millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins. Traditionally, no Kukwe man might begin to clear ground for these crops until his village headman had begun, or, if he lived in the village of a chief or in

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

on immediately adjoining village, until his chief had begun. Members of other villages do not regard the chief, but wait only for their village headman to begin. Within the family, junior wives must follow senior wives, but there is no precedence between brothers. If two should live in the same village it does not matter which begins sowing first, provided both follow the leader, nor need a junior age-village wait on a senior one to begin. Not only must the headman of the village begin the clearing, but each process in cultivation must be initiated by him or his senior wife; thus clearing, raking, burning, planting, and reaping, are ceremonially begun, and the wife of the headman should be the first to wash her millet, and he the first to eat of the new crop. Further, once a process is initiated, the villagers should press on with their tasks so that all may finish about the same time.

Now the cultivation of millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins[1] is peculiar in that the weeds and grass are not turned in for green manure, as they are for all other crops (except rice), but are collected in heaps and burnt, just before the rains break at the end of the dry season. And the fire for this must be lighted ritually by the headman of the village. Using fire-sticks and 'medicine of plenty' (*umbuto gwa ifuge*[2]) bought by the Kukwe from the Sangu people, he ignites a special fire in his own field and then, if a great wife of the chief lives in the village, he lights the heaps in her field. All the members of the village take fire from him, or from the field of the chief's wife. To take fire from a house is forbidden, because the owner of the house from which it is taken may be a witch, who will rot the heaps so that the millet does not grow, or will not ripen. Roasting food on a burning heap, or taking a brand to light tobacco is likewise forbidden, lest the person who does so has medicine which will rot the millet.

It is thought that if one breaks the rule, beginning a process before the headman, the fields of all the other villagers will suffer. 'If men hoe higgledy piggledy the food in their gardens does not grow, and if they reap higgledy piggledy the yield from all the

[1] Some Kyakwe held that these rules about cultivation applied also to maize and to an old maize crop, sorghum, but the most reliable informants were agreed that the rule was only strictly enforced with regard to the three crops planted 'at the break of the rains, in the new year'.

[2] 'A village headman, upwe (*fuge*), is one who drives off witches and protects the food.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 plained: "The men of the village cut a banana stem and wrap
627 banana leaves round it, and go at night and put it in front of his door; they also pull some of the thatching off the roof and put it with the banana stem. They do this without ever accusing him to his face of being a witch. Then, in the morning, when others pass by, they notice and say to each other: "See, he has been caught, he is a witch!" In the fields men will call out to one another, saying: "Have you heard? So and so has been caught as a witch?" They will call out where he can hear them, and he cannot stand it. He will go away to another chief.'

Instead of using a banana stem his neighbours may barricade his doorway with thorns while he is out. 'This symbolizes', Mwaikambo said, 'that we (your neighbours) wish to spear you; because, if you try to pass, the thorns will spear you. But we have left you, get out!' Or, as another informant explained: 'The thorns are the hearts of men, symbolizing that the men are all angry.' Occasionally, it is said, a brave man will clear away the thorns and remain, but his neighbours whisper about it and later on they will barricade his doorway again, and he will move. Placing the banana stem, or the thorns, is a joint action by the neighbours—should an individual do it on his own his neighbours will bring a charge against him. One informant suggested that the procedure is a new one developed to avoid making a direct accusation of witchcraft, which is a punishable offence under European administration; but this is doubtful.

622 The following case illustrates not only the practice of barricad-
627 ing the doorway of a supposed witch, but also the responsibility
754 of headmen for the defence of the village, together with the belief that a witch may throttle his own child. 'Nsekela was an assistant headman in the village of Mwambuputa, appointed by Mwambuputa himself. Nsekela's child cried by night and Mwambuputa was angry with him because he did not report the matter. "Why did you not tell me that your child was ill here? Why do you hide it? Indeed you are bad, it is you who are making the child ill, get out of our country!" Nsekela watched over a village-section, he was Mwambuputa's assistant, therefore it was that Mwambuputa said: "Why do you hide the fact that your child is ill here, you my assistant? Indeed you have bewitched it yourself." Nsekela denied the charge saying: "It is not I. No!" Then he went away to Selika about a case. While he was away his neighbours

I:Wilson E-9 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

barricaded his doorway with thorns. On his return he found them, and he moved to Mwalujo's country (the adjoining chiefdom).'

Often an accusation of witchcraft is made without resort to divination at all: the behaviour of the accused (as in the case quoted on pp. 110–13) or the word of 'the defender', is taken as evidence. But if there is doubt as to the identity of the witch, the patient or his family may consult a diviner (*undagwa*),[1] putting before him the names of persons they suspect. Whatever the grounds of accusation, however, it was normally confirmed by the *uwoafi* ordeal, if the accused did not admit guilt. The chief might order a suspect to go to the ordeal, or a man or woman accused by his neighbours would appeal to the ordeal, when denying the charge. In such a case the accuser and accused first went to the chief to report and get official witnesses, then, accompanied by these witnesses and other friends, they went to a doctor who had a store of a certain medicine, *uwoafi*, and there, at his homestead, they drank the *uwoafi* together. Those who failed to vomit were judged guilty. The procedure was described by a number of witnesses (*vide* Documents, pp. 241–6). The accuser and the accused, each accompanied by supporters, go to the doctor, who warns them not to drink if what they have said is false. The doctor sprinkles powder into tepid water and gives the accuser and the accused the infusion to drink. He addresses the *uwoafi*, and the supporters address each their own friend. Then, when one vomits his (or her) supporters applaud trilling,[2] and they go home, the man who vomited paying the doctor. Mwandesi described how after one of the two had vomited the other would sit tense and miserable, quite still. He would be left alone awhile, but later the doctor would try to make him bring up the poison: 'Should a man die?' they said. Only rarely, it seems, did anyone die of drinking *uwoafi*.

If the accuser failed to vomit he was judged guilty of witchcraft himself; if neither vomited both were judged guilty; if both vomited the accuser was fined, paying two or more cows to the accused in compensation for slander. If he had no cows he might give a girl in marriage.

[1] For the methods of divination see Godfrey Wilson 'An African Morality', *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936), p. 80.

[2] A high-pitched ulu-ulu-ulu expressing praise and triumph.

1:Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

objection to marrying the child of one who has been convicted is clearly not pushed to its logical conclusion. No clear in case on any one lineage where an individual is convicted of witchcraft, for he may have inherited it from either parent, or even got it from a friend; conversely no lineage is cleared by an autopsy, for not all the children of a witch are necessarily witches. Thus a man may have a father or brother or son who is 'pure', yet he a witch himself. As we have seen, even persons belonging to the same lineage may occasionally accuse each other. Nevertheless, when an individual who is reputed to be a witch dies, the close relatives do sometimes insist on an autopsy, in order to clear the deceased of suspicion, and possibly themselves also (*vide supra*, p. 117). In one case we recorded it was a daughter who insisted on the autopsy being performed on her mother, a reputed witch. No witchcraft was found.

So far we have dealt with cases of misfortune befalling an individual, followed by action against a fellow-villager who is suspected of being responsible. This type of case is far commoner within the field of witchcraft. When a general misfortune, such as a plague or epidemic, threatens, the chiefdom acts as a whole, not the villages separately, and the ritual is directed primarily to securing the blessing of the shades. There is some suggestion of ridding the chiefdom of witchcraft at the same time, but the emphasis is on appeasing the ancestors. The traditional new year cleansing (*ukutuy' ikilungu*), now rarely performed, was also the concern of chiefdoms not separate villages, and it involved prayer to the ancestors.

5. *The age-village and the ancestors*

We have dwelt at length on witchcraft and 'the breath of men', for, in Nyakyusa belief, the defence of the village against witches and the punishment of wrong-doers by 'the breath' of their fellows is the main corporate activity of the village in the religious sphere. There are no village rituals directed to the ancestors comparable to those performed on behalf of lineages and chiefdoms. Indeed, belief in the power of shades operates only in situations where social position is determined by descent, as it is in lineages and in the succession to chieftainship. The office of village headman is not hereditary. The son of a village headman

1:Wilson E-5 (1954-1958) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 cannot be appointed as headman in any village of his own generation, and villages of past generations disappear. When a headman
769 dies, his village still being in existence, his place is taken by his
622 heir who may be a son, but this office is only temporary. The village ceases to exist when its original members die off. Moreover, there is no suggestion that the shade of a headman's father broods over the village as the shade of a chief is thought to brood over the land he ruled.

775 The Nyakyusa have a lively belief in the power of shades, a belief closely connected with the dependence of the members of a lineage upon one another for cattle,[1] and with the office of 'divine king', but such belief scarcely affects village relationships, for the shades are not thought to be concerned with behaviour between neighbours, as distinct from relatives.

775 It is true that the proper performance of family rituals includes feasting neighbours, but the implication always is that the shades
621 are concerned only in enforcing obligations towards themselves
622 and fellow kinsmen, not towards non-relatives. On the other hand, neighbours are concerned in the enforcement of kinship obligations. When a son insults his father, the father's neighbours are insulted also; when a daughter-in-law peeps at her father-in-law the shocked astonishment of the neighbours may cause her children to pine. And so, when an erring son begs pardon of his father, he must provide a feast for the neighbours, 'that they may see that his father is satisfied'.

775 A situation often arises in which both the shades and 'the breath of men' operate, sometimes 'the breath' of shocked neighbours
626 supporting the shades, and sometimes shades and men each
759 exacting their due. One illustration of this was given us by Kalonda: 'If you do not carry out the burial rites for your father, people are angry, they threatile you, and the shade is angry also, he comes on your body. No, the witches do not call the ancestors to help; both are angry on their own account. To-day the black ones, the witches, come and threatile you; to-morrow the ancestors come. People are angry because they do not eat meat; the shade is angry because you did not perform the burial rites for him. He says: "See, I left much property, why did you not bury me properly?"' And in discussing the obligation of a daughter-in-

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'An African Monetary', *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936); Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*.

I: Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

meted with it to a Christian village or village-section. The course parallel to the pagan ritual of reconciliation is the formal readmission of a repentant sinner to the congregation.

The change in belief and ritual tends to weaken village solidarity, for the Christian village is neither a defensive unit, nor is it the group from within which retribution and forgiveness come. A Christian does not feel himself dependent upon village neighbours to the same degree as does a pagan. We argue that the extension of the range of interdependence reduces its intensity in the narrower circles of relationship, and this is evident in the religious as in the economic aspect.[1]

Since the authority of a village headman is largely dependent upon his supposed mystical power, Christians are rarely appointed to this office by the Nyakyusa. We heard of only one Christian headman and he was in the country of a Christian chief. Christians cannot go through the full 'coming out' ceremony which involves treatment with medicines to give courage, and a Christian headman cannot fulfil the traditional ritual functions in relation to the chief and his ancestors. But in Ngonde, where the percentage of Christians is high (46 per cent as opposed to 15 per cent among the Nyakyusa) and the 'coming out' ceremony has been dropped, there are a number of Christian headmen who simply abstain from the performance of any pagan rituals (as does the Kyungu himself) leaving them to those headmen who are pagan and feel the ritual to be important. And pagan informants whom we asked about defence against witchcraft in a village in which the headman was a Christian, replied: 'Others will protect the country from witchcraft,' implying that there are always other 'defenders' in a village besides its leader.

In Christian village-sections the same difficulties do not arise, for assistant headmen are never treated at the 'coming out', nor have they ritual functions, other than the formal reproof of supposed witches (*vide supra*, p. 109). Hence the recognized leader of any group of Christians living in a pagan village is normally a Christian. In Christian villages on mission land the leaders are, of course, always Christian. These villages do not participate in any 'coming out' ceremony and the leaders are appointed by the missionary in consultation with the 'session' (*i.e.* representatives of the congregation), not by the old chief and

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 23-41.

I:Wilson E-5(1936-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

his village headmen. In some villages the 'elder' is both a religious leader and a secular authority, but there is a tendency to separate the two offices and to appoint a 'peacemaker' whose duty it is to settle disputes, collect taxes, and represent the village in its relationships with the chief and the administration, while the 'elder' confines himself to watching over the spiritual welfare of his people. Such division of authority is symptomatic of the growing differentiation of Nyakyusa society.

c. *Witchcraft, medicines, and the British administration*

Under British administration the use of the *umwafi* ordeal, imputation of witchcraft, intimidation or obtaining goods under false pretences by threats of witchcraft or sorcery, or offers of protection against them, are punishable offences. As we have seen, the ordeal is now administered only in the greatest secrecy, and probably very seldom, but accusations of witchcraft are frequent, and are even heard before the Native Courts, though not recorded (*vide* Document, p. 257). In the villages near the Government station more caution is observed in making accusations than in more remote parts of the district: very often the identity of the witch is only hinted at, or thorns are piled at his door by persons who remain anonymous (*vide supra*, p. 114) so that no individual can be convicted of imputing witchcraft. As one man put it: '"The defenders" see the witches, but cannot name them to anyone.' Autopsies continue in conservative villages but they are no longer performed on every corpse, as is said to have been customary in the old days. The chief Porokoto, himself a sceptic, argued that it was no use performing an autopsy when a charge could not be laid. If the members of a village are all convinced that a particular fellow is a witch he is forced to move, since his unpopularity becomes intolerable to him (*supra*, pp. 110–5). As Mwambuputa put it: 'We don't like him, and he doesn't like us either: he does not enjoy our company (*atikwangale na wanw*), so he moves.' But if the friction is only between two individuals, the supposed witch may brazen it out, for without resort to the *umwafi* ordeal there is no sure means of deciding between the accuser and the accused.

The prohibition of witch-finding is not accepted as right and just: the common view is that the Europeans 'protect the witches',

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

both parties, or if he declares the case too difficult and refuses to give an opinion, then it is taken to the headman of the village. Should the headman fail to settle the dispute, it goes to the senior headman of his side of the chieftdom, thence to the chief sitting with his headmen, and nowadays it may go on through the Native Court, and the Native Appeal Court, to the District Officer sitting with native assessors, the Provincial Commissioner, and the High Court of Tanganyika. 627

Village headmen neither have, nor had, power to enforce their decisions; such power lay with the chief alone in the old days—he would send some of his junior kinsmen and men from his capital (*ikitengulule*) to execute judgement—and he alone could order the parties to a dispute to drink the poison ordeal, from which verdict there was no appeal. Nor is a village headman or other arbitrator paid a fee—a pot of beer or a hoe from the plaintiff to 'open the case', and beer (or occasionally a bull) as a thank-offering from the party for whom judgement was given, were the perquisites of a chief alone. The arbitrator's reward is prestige—the honour and respect of his fellows. As we have said, a case may be submitted to anyone for arbitration and no slight to the existing authorities is thereby implied; but if cases are constantly taken to some individual in the section other than himself, a section leader may grow jealous. We heard of one who was reputed to have tried to poison a new-comer to his section, a Christian, who was hospitable and became so popular as an arbitrator that the appointed leader feared lest he might lose all his authority. The hospitable man is respected and his fellows often ask for his opinion on a case as they sit together over a pot of beer. 623 622 627

But though village headmen cannot enforce their decisions, they are not to be ignored. An individual does not take a case direct to the chief; usually his village headman takes it to the senior headman of the side,[1] and the latter then takes it to the chief. Both will have heard something of the case and, if it is not regarded as 'too difficult', will have attempted to reconcile the 622 627

[1] It appears that a village headman *should* proceed through the senior headman of his side, but in Perekwe's chieftdom procedure was modified by the fact that there had been no 'coming out' ceremony. There Mwafula, the headman of a junior village, brought cases direct to the *chief* (*vide infra*, p. 148). It was modified also in Mwaipape's country by the absence of Mwamambo, one of his two senior headmen (*cf.* Document, p. 181).

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

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parties before referring the matter to the chief. And any decisions they may have reached are reported to the chief.

Disputes between members of a boys' village may be settled by the leader of their village, but more serious cases go to the headman of their fathers' village, and may proceed through him to the senior headman of the side. Old men go to their own headmen, but there is an appeal to the senior headman of the ruling generation, on the side in which they live, except in inheritance cases. In these the old men are the ultimate authority. Christians living in sections of pagan villages take their cases to their section leader—himself a Christian, whose position is comparable to that of a pagan assistant headman. Thence a civil case goes to the village headman, but where an offence against the Christian code is involved (as in theft, or adultery, or wife-beating) the case also comes before the court of the congregation, consisting of the minister, elders, and deacons. Disputes between members of Christian villages established on mission land come before the 'elder' or 'peacemaker' of the village, appointed by the Church, and if they are not settled by him they usually go directly to the chief. They also come before the court of the congregation if they involve an offence against Church law (cf. Document, pp. 260–3).

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Disputes between pagan women are settled in the same way as disputes between men. There is neither the leadership and authority of a senior woman of the homestead as among the Nguni and Bemba,[1] nor that of a senior age-set or women's council as among the Meru[2]. The first woman to be settled as a wife in a young men's village is, as we have seen, entitled to the deference of the wives who follow her, but she has no authority over them. In the same way, though a man's senior wife takes precedence in family rituals, and the wife of a headman may lead in a village ritual, or the wife of a chief in one made on behalf of the country, such precedence in ritual does not carry authority over other women. Certain women versed in the rituals performed at puberty, marriage, birth, and death, and knowing the proper medicines to use, are called in on these occasions, but such

[1] Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, pp. 18, 33–41; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 38–9; A. I. Richards, *Bemba Marriage and Present Economic Conditions*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 4, pp. 67–9.

[2] E. M. Hobbing, 'Women's Institutions and the African Church', *International Review of Missions*, July 1948, pp. 290–300.

I:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

to rejoin the group in which he is 'known', in which he has 'friends with whom he herded cattle as a boy', so that which provides the chief impetus to return. Never once did an informant suggest friction with the village headman as the reason for moving[1] or loyalty to a former headman as the reason for returning. The Nyakyusa village is in no way the personal following of a headman, as the villages of some other central African peoples (such as the Bemba,[2] Yao, and Ngoni[3]) appear to be. It is essentially a group of equals, established before adolescence, whose stability and continuity turn on friendship and co-operation between its members. It is already a corporate group, with very close bonds forged through years between its members, before the permanent leader is chosen, and it continues as a group though its leader dies or moves.

We do not deny that the personality of the village headman—particularly his generosity and his skill in settling disputes between his men—affects the stability and growth of the village; some villages increase noticeably in size after the 'coming out', while others shrink, and headmen (like chiefs) use medicines to attract men to them; but the Nyakyusa themselves imply that it is the character of the villagers rather than the character of the headman which determines movement to and from the village.

The headman, like any private individual in the village, must remain on good terms with the other members lest he be driven out. A number of cases were cited in which headmen had moved because they had become unpopular with their men and feared their 'breath' or witchcraft (*vide* pp. 204–8; 268–70) but most of them had returned after the lapse of a little time.

What private individuals and headmen alike fear is not a quarrel with one individual, but the disapproval of the village or village-section as a whole; for 'the breath of men' is but the crystallization of adverse public opinion. The man who has the support of his fellows in a dispute with one neighbour is shielded in 'the war by night'.

[1] Personal friction with a chief occurs (*vide* pp. 190–2).
[2] A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, pp. 110 ff.
[3] M. Gluckman, J. C. Mitchell, and J. A. Barnes, 'The Village Headman in British Central Africa', *Africa*, Vol. XIX (1949), pp. 91, 98, 100.

I:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

anger of neighbours on the one hand, and of kinsmen on the other.

The idea that a Nyakyusa village headman has the mystical power called *amanga*, and leads the attacks of justly enraged neighbours, gives him a position in his village comparable to that of the headman who, among many African peoples, is the senior kinsman in his village. Each has mystical power over the members of his village, and the fact that the Nyakyusa headman's power is derived from 'a python in the stomach', and operates like witchcraft, while the power of a senior kinsman derives from his birth, and operates through the shades, makes relatively little difference to the relations of the village headman with his people.

The Nyakyusa system is peculiar in that the village headman is foremost as the discoverer of, and defender against, witches; he combines the functions fulfilled elsewhere by the village headman and the witch-doctor. The protection which kinship villages in other African cultures seek on the one hand from their ancestors, and on the other from the witch-doctor,[1] the Nyakyusa look for from their village headmen. Doctors who claim to discover witches, and provide medicines for protection against them, exist in Nyakyusa society; some, at least, of them are spoken of as having *amanga*—the same mystical power as the headmen have—through which they are enabled to see and fight the witches; but witch-doctors play a much smaller part than they do among the Azande or the Ponde; in the battle against witches they are quite overshadowed by the village headmen. Defence against witchcraft is a village affair, and the foremost 'defenders' (*abamanga*) are the political authorities. Village rituals directed to the ancestors are conspicuously absent among the Nyakyusa, and our hypothesis is that this absence, together with the belief that the 'python power' of village headmen and others is used to punish wrong-doers and defend the innocent within their village, is dependent upon the age-village organization, in which neighbours are not kinsmen and the position of village headman is not hereditary.

[1] cf. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., pp. 181-82, 231; Junod, op. cit., pp. 395, 516-8. The Thonga 'magician' is also believed to fly and know the witches, because he shows their power.

1. VILLAGES IN MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM (1958)

Information from numerous informants

Map No.	Clan	Sub-Clan	Senior Kinship	Seniority	Village	Category	Legal Authority	Remarks
1	Mwaipopo[1]		Kyalumo		[illegible]	Senior village of Mwaipopo		Village survives only (Kyalumo [illegible] is no group of men living together as family. Kyalumo is [illegible] place of Mwaipopo and only social unit of [illegible] to Mwaipopo's grave
				Kisegere	[illegible]			Not surviving
			Kyalumo (or Kyalumo-Kisegere for Indian Ocean Rights)		[illegible]	Second senior[2] village of Mwaipopo	Kyalumo and/or Kisegere had a subject of one or two families of weak generation. [illegible] Kyalumo [illegible]	Village survives with 12 members [illegible] in Kyalumo family. Kyalumo is a group of Mwaipopo and only [illegible] social unit to Mwaipopo's grave
				Kisamano (Kisamano[3] Kisamano)	Kisamano			Not surviving
				Kisakilangoma (Kisakilangoma)	Kisamano			Not surviving
2	Mwaipopo[1] [illegible] of Mwaipopo		Kimamaporo (Kimamaporo [illegible] for Indian Ocean Rights)		[illegible]	Senior village of Kimamaporo. Home of Kyamba and Kalu	Kimamaporo. Kimamaporo [illegible] Kimamaporo's [illegible], and subject to [illegible]	Founding unit of Mwaipopo I and [illegible] was in this village. Kimamaporo at present living in [illegible] but returns for ceremonies and to bury [illegible]

[1] The names of 1 villages of Mwaipopo, home of Mwaipopo, have perished. Six names of Kyamba and Kalu still be forgotten when Mwaipopo (generation 11) dies.
[2] Senior Kyalumo [illegible] the senior Kalu is dead.
[3] Informants differ and disagree about the relative status of villages and headmen of Mwaipopo's time.
[4] Some individuals are known by more than one name—we include two when we know to confusion set.

[illegible]

VILLAGES IN AFFECTED REGIONS (1993—cont.)

No.	Chief	Sub-Chief	Basic Village	Southern	Village	Changing	Legal Authority	Remarks
[illegible]	[illegible]			[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]
					[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
					[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
						[illegible]		
				[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] Appendix [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
				[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
					[illegible]			
		[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]			[illegible]
		[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]			
[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
				[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
					[illegible]			
				[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
					[illegible]			
				[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

COLLAGE OF MEDICINE CERTIFICATE (MBBS) – [illegible]

Serial No.	Chief	Sub-Chief	Deputy Chief	Drafter	Village	Category	Legal authority	Remarks
[illegible]	[illegible]				[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
					[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]
				[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
		[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
				[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
				[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
		[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
		[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

VILLAGES IN MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM (1938)—contd.

Generation	Chief	Sub Chief	Senior Headman	Headman	Village	Category	Legal Authority	Remarks
IV	Mwanyilu (about 10 years old)			None yet appointed as Mwanyilu has not yet come out	Mpuguso	Sons of Igembe	Mwambuputa	'Mwanyilu will come out here'
				"	Naanga	Younger sons of Igembe and Lugombo	Mwambuputa	'Mwanyilu will build here first'
				"	Itinga	Sons of Njesi and Mponga	Small cases to Mwakatika. Serious cases to Kakuju	Some members are married
				"	Ipyana	Younger brothers of Itinga	"	None yet married
				"	Kungwe	"	"	None yet married
				"	Isuba (junior section)	Sons of Isuba		

Nineteen independent villages established at the 'coming out' ceremonies of Mwaijonga, Mwaipopo and Mwankuga survive.
There are five village sections treated in some respects as practically independent villages. There are other village sections as Itiki which are not so independent.
There are six boys' villages, not yet established, but likely to be recognized at the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu.
The dividing line between village and village section is difficult to determine when villages have split *after* the 'coming out' at which they have been established, as did Bujenga. Our recognition of Bunkali as a separate village and not Itiki is somewhat arbitrary.

It is to be noted that villages not only sub-divide but occasionally coalesce. Two independent villages established at the 'coming out' of Mwaipopo coalesced as Lupando, after the death of the headman of one of them.
The traditional organisation is modified in that Mwaijonga's country has not been divided or sub-divided into independent chieftainships.

[p. 185]

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1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

a. THE 'COMING OUT' (*UBUSOKA*)

Mwaikambo (clerk and son of a chief).[1]

621 'The village headmen begin to talk among themselves, saying: "Our sons have grown up, should we not establish them?" So they go to tell
●622 the chief, saying: "Our sons have grown up, let us show them to the
643 country." Two chiefs always "come out". We call them the senior and the junior. It is an old custom which is still followed that two chiefs should "come out".

[789] 'So the village headmen seek a doctor to make them a medicine horn and treat the tails of chieftainship with medicine. The village headmen take council together and choose two senior headmen to "come out" with the chiefs. These senior headmen drink medicine (*embondanya*) with the chiefs.

'When many people, together with the two young chiefs, have come together the doctor gives powdered medicine (*embondanya*) to the chiefs and the senior headman chosen for each chief. They give a spear of chieftainship, and a horn, and tail to each of the men chosen as senior headmen—one for each chief. Each senior headman then binds the horn to the blade of the spear, and standing with his own chief and many men and women, raises the spear to the sky. The women trill
[535] and each party goes to its place of "coming out" on the pasturage. Each chief, with his followers, goes to his own place. The men dance; sometimes they have drums, sometimes not.

[372] 'Then when each party has reached it own place they make fire with fire sticks. The chief just simulates the action of fire-making then his senior headman takes the sticks and makes fire by friction. When they have built the shelters for sleeping in they warm themselves at the fire they have made; they do not take fire from the houses of men. If there are many of them then there will be three or four shelters, if few, then only one shelter. The men and their chief who has "come out" sleep in these shelters and enjoy themselves together (*nukwangala*). The first day they kill two head of cattle. Also they plant "the tree of coming out" (*umpiki gwa busoka*) which is called *ulupando*. They plant it with a man who has come out previously, a man of their fathers' generation, he begins to plant, then he explains to them what to do, saying "plant", then the new senior headman plants it.

'While they sleep in these shelters with their cattle, they eat food which they take from their fathers, bananas, and milk, and other food.

[1] For a note on conspicuous informants see p. vi.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

cry out, because then the teeth will disappear altogether, but to be silent, then they will reappear. 754

'And another activity of the witches is to take sickness from one country and cast it on some home they choose. So when people die they say this sickness was brought by the witches to so and so.'

Mwandeti (*a very old man famous as a historian*).

'The witches are always naked when they go to choke a person in dreams. A witch leaves his skin (*ungubo*) on his sleeping-mat and goes naked. When his neighbours, "the defenders" (*abamanga*), see him they may snatch his skin; then when he returns he trembles and sits down naked, ugly-looking. He looks as if he had a curse on him. But after a little while he gets another skin.'

Mwaisumo (*clerk*).

'The man of whom we have spoken twice (*vide* pp. 124, 252) is sometimes said to be a witch, he throttles the cattle of the village and men say that he throttles them also. But he is especially notorious for throttling the cattle of the village so that their milk disappears. Once they caught him for witchcraft, saying: "You are throttling us" and they drove him away. He moved to another village but in the same chiefdom, and there also men continually said: "We do not sleep on account of our fellow! If he brings witchcraft to us here he will die, we shall hit him with fists" (meaning that "the defenders" will hit him with fists) when he goes out to throttle his victims. If their cows dry up they say: "We shall hit his python, he will die." For it is said that if a person has a python which throttles the milk, men strike the python and he dies. The python means the witchcraft of throttling cattle or food. Saying "We shall strike his python and he will die" means that we shall strike him when he is throttling our cows and he will die.'

Ntulanongwa (*pagan man*).

'When the chief is good the cows are many and there is much milk. And when the village headman is good, when he forbids witches to come into his village, milk is plentiful. When we say a chief is good (*nnumu*) it means that he never goes to throttle cows, or if we say that the village headman is good it means that he does not go throttling. Formerly chiefs and village headmen were good. If they were great witches, no one came to them. I come from Penja country over there. 754 643 622

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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Mwalukasa was good. We knew he was good because people came to him and cattle increased and people loved him. Some who are quarrelsome lose all their men and are left alone. . . . A village headman or chief *gwa ifugo* is one who always preaches to his fellows that "food should be plentiful among us here, friends; none should bewitch others." "A man of plenty" (*ugwa ifugo*) is a village headman or chief who is angry at witchcraft in his village, and forbids it, who allows no one there who is "clever". The cunning of a witch, of one who has the bowel of witchcraft, is to go around throttling cows and eating people. When they go to throttle they go on high, they fly, they go like the wind. If they went on earth they would be killed by "the defenders". It is said that they eat the meat (flesh) of people, truly they eat it. When they go to "eat" a man, they spear him; they take his meat and eat it. A man does not recover when they have taken his meat; he dies. Those whom they have only speared and whose flesh they have not taken, recover. They roast this human meat and then they eat it; in this their cleverness lies. When they go to "eat" a man and have speared him and taken some of his flesh, they do not roast it at his place, they go to their homes, and there they roast it.'

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

38. BRINGING HOME A VILLAGE HEADMAN

Mwambuputa's home-coming

Mwambuputa is the senior headman of Mwankuga who had fled to the Lake-shore plain from fear of 'the breath' of his men (cf. pp. 229–30). He was brought back with ceremony. His return also brought to a head an old land dispute (cf. pp. 188–90). For the status of the personalities concerned consult the table of villages and headmen on pp. 181–5. 621 622 166

Record of G. W., 1/5/35.

'I visited Tandale (Mwainyobolela) the village headman of Busikali and the man chosen to bury chiefs. Katolile (the village headman by inheritance of Bujenga, and a brother of Jane, Kasitile's wife) turned up with two others to fetch him to the home-coming of Mwambuputa (Mwafungo)[1] in Igembe. We picked up Kikalango (a junior son of the chief Mwaipopo) on the way and he and Tandale told me the following story: 166

"Mwambuputa went to the Lake-shore plain (MuNgonde). Then Mwankuga I (the young chief), while he was still alive, found a cow and the village headmen went off with it to fetch Mwambuputa home. Mwankuga did not go himself. This cow was kept by Mwambuputa, not eaten. It was to say to him; 'Come back, my headman.' Then Mwambuputa agreed and said: 'I will return, take my son back with you now.' So they came back. Then Mwankuga I died, and Mwambuputa came up to his funeral and put up temporary huts to live in, and he has not since been back to MuNgonde. Yes, he could have built proper houses before this ceremony, had he wished, it is not forbidden."

'Those who come to this gathering are his fathers (i.e. the men of Mwaipopo) and his friends (i.e. the men of Mwankuga), all commoners—no chiefs come to this ceremony. And in fact neither Mwaipopo nor Mwankuga II was there, nor did I see any of Mwaipopo's brothers. Kikalango and Kititu (junior sons of Mwaipopo) came to accompany me. We arrived at Mwambuputa's huts with Ngulyo, about noon. About 100 men were present. I noticed Mwambuputa himself, Kakuju, Ngulyo, Tandale, Katotile, and Mwaseba (Kabolile). 166 183

[1] Some informants used the name 'Mwambuputa', others 'Mwafungo'. To avoid confusion we use only the former.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER V

The Chief & his Counsellors

643 THE Chungu of to-day is but a poor shadow of his great ancestors. European power has deprived him of many of his prerogatives, and stripped his person and his office of much that was picturesque, and might well have been preserved. But even in the heyday of their glory, the Chungus were but priest-kings, hampered in their divinity, hedged in their kingship by advisers, limitations, customs, which could not be set aside.

643 622 To-day Chungu is but one chief among many; but in the past chiefs of all ranks in the Karonga district were subject to him; acknowledging his superiority, but yet asserting for themselves a considerable amount of independence, even to the extent of making war. First are the chiefs proper, chiefs of the snake, so called because their insignia of office is a buffalo or zebra tail, in which is a powerful medicine made from the flesh of a fabulous flying serpent, and which is believed to give its possessor great influence and authority. Next in rank, and subordinate to chiefs, are the *amafumu*, men who possess a less powerful medicine; and finally men of still less importance, who exercise a strictly local authority.

643 Chungu himself, however, was, and still is, "the man who speaks with God"; and as such he is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 582 themselves must be free from any kind of blemish. They drink a medicine weaker than that taken by their husband, but sufficiently potent to make them respected by all the other women of the district.

The death of a chief, like that of Chungu, is a 622 766 great event. An immense crowd of men and women gather on these occasions. At the death of Mwafongo, near Karonga, in 1913, fifty head of cattle were killed for the feast. Of these perhaps thirty were the property of the dead chief; the rest were brought by the mourners as a token of respect for the dead man; but for each animal so killed, an equivalent, an ox for an ox, a cow for a cow, was given to the donor from the dead man's herd, so that the herd left by Mwafongo was reduced by fifty at his death. Intense emotion is generated at these gatherings, frequently leading to death. And in the past it was the rule that a chief should not go to his fathers alone. If therefore fighting broke out, and men were killed, it was only right and fitting that this should be so. In 1897 there was a small rising against the Germans, in which the chief Mwakalinga and many of his people were killed. The chief having been killed, it was not surprising that there should be a heavy death-roll among his men. The death of Mwasulama in 1918 was followed, quite naturally, by the influenza which carried off so many of his people.

622 About a month after the death of the chief, the feasting is resumed, this time with immense quantities of beer which has been prepared in the interval. The new chief is now anointed with oil, and the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

shout is raised, "He is our food and our shield." 622
The successor may refuse to act as chief, in which case another is chosen by the *amafumu* (subordinate chiefs).

The duties and privileges of chiefs are similar to those of Chungu. They cannot be deprived of their position, but if a chief proves himself thoroughly unsatisfactory, his people may leave him, and come under another, who will willingly receive them. The position is not always an enviable one. A chief whose people leave him loses position among his fellow-chiefs. And he is not always sure of the respect of his people. In 1923 a decision given by a lake-shore chief so roused the wrath of some of his people that they cut down his bananas, a deadly form of insult, which in this case has not yet been avenged, because the actual perpetrators, though known to many, have not been disclosed. Under the British Government, the chief is responsible for the payment of the taxes by his people; he must see to the upkeep of the roads in his district, to the supply of carriers for the Government when asked to do so; and to the general good behaviour of his people. He gets three to four per cent of the taxes paid in his district.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

684 greeting, and passed on, without constraint of any kind. It turned out that the man was only slightly wounded; but most husbands in such circumstances "mak' siccar."

684 If the guilty paramour escapes, he goes to another chief, who receives and protects him, unless his co-
● 622 sinner is the wife of a chief, in which case the man is sent back to meet whatever punishment awaits him. The woman, as I have already said, is liable to the extreme penalty also, but I know of no case in which it has been inflicted, and I think it is of very rare occurrence. An alternative punishment was to have her ears cut off. There is a woman living in the neighbourhood who, along with her paramour, suffered this penalty lately, but the chief by whose orders it was done was heavily fined by the administrative officer. Other punishments are still in use, which will not bear
[586] the light of print. A wife found guilty is divorced without further question, and the cattle returned to the husband. Divorce is often sought for very trivial reasons, but native courts will not seriously consider ill-supported claims.

685 *Arson.*—There is a general rule that accidental burning of another man's goods must be compensated for, by replacing all that is lost, whether that be a mere shilling's worth, or a house and all its contents. Arson proper, however, is a much more serious crime, and in the past involved the enslavement of the criminal and all his family. Not a few cases of arson are among the crimes that are common to-day. The church at Karonga was burned down in 1921, probably as an act of revenge against a Christian; but a common

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

If a spirit is to be propitiated, beer is poured out and petition made as follows: 241 782

> "Ye fathers, I am about to sow my seed. How can it grow if ye kill what I put into the ground? If ye are gracious to me, let me see the harvest."

Finishing his oblations with the usual squirting of water from the mouth, he next day sows his seed in confidence. If there are no obstacles from the spirits he does not pray. Why should he? There is nothing to pray about.

The ceremonies are practically the same all over the Konde country, but many chiefs have special practices of their own. A very picturesque ceremony is that of the chief Mwaisumo. When the early rains have fallen, and the ground has been hoed, chief and people go to the grave of the ancestral chiefs, carrying their shields of ox-hide. The chief and his headmen, standing in rows, raise their shields above their heads, and Mwaisumo, taking water into his mouth, squirts it upwards, and prays for a good harvest. Immediately all the people break out into rejoicing, dancing, shouting, blowing bamboo whistles, and drumming. The seed may now be sown. 241 782 622

The first hoeing is *ukusebera*, gathering the heaps of dry rubbish and burning them. But even this is not done without ceremony. Every man goes to the doctor to get medicine, which is put into the biggest heap in his garden; then, when the wife of the village headman has set fire to one of the heaps, which must not be one of those in her husband's garden, all the 241 789

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

241 stretched across the garden, and presently the pigs clear off, and there is silence again. Many kinds of game get part at least of their living out of human industry, and have to be laboriously guarded against.

For smaller pests additional aid must be sought. Field mice and rats, *indafu*, a small locust-like creature, grubs, wireworms, and moles, work great injury, and ordinary methods of dealing with them are vain. Take, at sunset, a brand from the fire, and walk over the garden with it, singing "*Kuki Kyaubili?*" Where is the Unseen God? and the pests will clear out.

241 The first maize cobs are taken to the chief; then
622 each head of a family presents a few cobs to his own
769 ancestors; twins also must be presented with early cobs, and it is only then that common people are safe if they begin to eat the new season's crops. When the chief makes an offering to his ancestors, it is usually laid at the *lupando*, the place where the village trees stand. The maize is eaten by mice, but it is credited to the "lion" which is the chief's guardian (Chap. V). In some districts a perhaps more primitive ceremony is observed. With a following of little children, the doctor goes to the grave of the chief's ancestors, and there roasts a few maize cobs, which he divides among the children; on their return, intimation is made that all may now eat the new crops.

251 The food stocks in the barns are protected by a medicine, but this practice is falling out of use, though many still follow it. If a man is too poor to buy the medicine, he begs a handful of the protected grain from his better-off neighbour, confident that the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 Of the persons officially connected with the spirits, the most important is the chief. It has already been
●622 said that "Chungu is the man who speaks with God"; 782 he is also the man who speaks with authority to the spirits. He, and all other chiefs, approach the spirits for the general good, but as heads of families they have the right to offer private prayers as well. Each head of a family may also pray for his own people; but no man may pray so long as his father or elder brother is alive. Next, every chief has an official who may be called a priest; he is the *unnyago*, the man whose duty it is to go daily at the order of the chief to present an offering at the grave where the last chief is buried. He does not pray; he simply lays the offering, usually a few maize cobs, on the grave and departs. When the chief goes in person to pray, as he sometimes does, without any public ceremony, this man goes with him, hears the prayers, and knows the ritual; and it is he who will teach the new chief his duties when the time comes for him to perform them. When, however, the chief dies, the *unnyago* is in great danger, for the spirits take possession of his person, a danger which can only be averted by a powerful medicine supplied by the doctor, and taken as soon as the chief has died. If this is not done, he becomes mad, lives in the bush, gibbering and naming all the dead chiefs of the past, including names known to no living person, but supposed to be those of long-dead chiefs, uttered by themselves through him.

778 With regard to places of worship: the "high place" is always at the grave of the dead chief; and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

driving out all the sorcerers, no one would die of 791
smallpox, but one remaining sorcerer could work 753
unlimited mischief so long as he remained undis- 754
covered.

In a community which practises "subsistence 791
agriculture," it is important to know beforehand 261
when the rains will be late, and it is the duty of the prophets to let the chief know, and through him the people, when this will happen. In such a contingency, the chief issues instructions, varying in minuteness, regulating the kinds of food which are to be used, and warning against greed. Punishment used to follow disregard of the prohibition, but the chiefs, although they still issue orders as before, do not now venture to punish offenders, or at any rate they punish none who would be likely to report them to the Administration.

Famine, however, was not always the result of 731
drought. It was often, in the past, the result of war. When a powerful enemy approached, the people left the villages and took refuge in the bush, sometimes for long periods, leaving all that they could not carry to fall into the hands of the invader. The last occasion on which such a famine was foretold was when the Angoni passed through the land seeking a habitation. The people fled before them, and a famine resulted which is still traditionally remembered. With such a powerful enemy approaching, the prophets had an easy task in foreseeing famine.

The death of chiefs is also foretold. The prophets 622
see in dreams the house of a chief being built in the 787

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

622 spirit-world, and they know that when it is finished
787 the person for whom it is intended must very soon go and occupy it. This vision is not told to the chief, but to those who have the duty of choosing his successor, who quietly make their arrangements while the living chief is still among them. He himself has forewarnings also, for he sees his ancestors beckoning him, and knows that his hour is near. Common people die in the common way.

No prophecies are more interesting than those
787 which concern the European. They are found over a wide area in Bantuland, and among the Konde they were very detailed and definite. Many versions of these prophecies are still current, the most detailed being that ascribed to Mwakipesire of Masoko. With a great multitude of people the prophet climbed a small hill near Masoko, and there delivered his message.

> "A man will come from the lake, white in body, and he will be lord of the whole country. War he will bring to an end, the Angoni he will conquer, the Arab he will expel. He will bring us cloth, and we shall throw away our garments of leaves. Our way of worship will come to an end, for he will tell us how to go direct to God Himself; but he will not come until all who are here to-day have gone to the spirits."

Maseke of Karonga added that the white man would come in a canoe that sent out smoke, that the peace would be so great that none would carry a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

The Bakifuna go to the stream to wash, garlanded with flowers, and carrying a small stone. Flowers and stone are thrown into the stream after the washing, and the company re-enter the house. The doctor takes water and pours it on the roof, upon which all come out one by one, the water dripping on each as he or she passes. Anointed with oil, they all go to the place of burial, where, resting on elbows and knees, they draw themselves along the grave, slightly disturbing the soil as they go. The hair is then cut, and the feast follows. 768

When a chief is *in articulo mortis*, his headmen and his wives are present, and he is addressed, while still living, as common men are addressed at the graveside. "Go to God and the spirits; go to your fathers (naming them). Rest there, and tell them what is happening here above." 766 643 622

After he is dead, the nails of his fingers and toes are clipped, and his hair cut, and given to the doctor, who will make medicine with them to prevent the disease which killed the chief passing over to others. The dead man is now dressed as common men are dressed for burial, but much more elaborately, and, if he is a relative of Chungu, he is placed in a sitting position in the house, where his wives and headmen embrace him for the last time. If he is a very important chief, like Chungu, his death is not yet announced to the people.

Meantime a cow has been killed at the place where the body is to be buried, and the headmen dig the grave, usually by night, if intimation has not been

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

766 made that the chief is dead. The body is brought
to the grave by the headmen, and the dead cow is
643 lowered in first; then the chief, in a sitting position,
•622 facing the Sango country, if that was his original home.
Torches are used if the night is dark. When the grave
is filled in, all partake of the medicine made from the
dead man's nails and hair. The washing ceremonies
are the same as for common men; but the widows
will not go near the men who placed the body in the
grave until the latter have given them a gift of some
kind, though the exact function of the gift is not clear.

No chief of any importance dies a natural death:
643 that is to say, however and whenever a chief dies, it is
761 assumed that some one was responsible. It is believed
that chiefs die more easily than common men, and
are more open to evil influences; but, on the other
hand, they have more powerful medicines to protect
them. When Kabeta died in 1922, all his sons and his
headmen were put to the poison test, and those who
did not vomit were compelled to pay a fine in cattle,
a token that complete confidence in the belief in evil
influences is passing away; for in earlier times the
culprit so discovered would have been attacked as he
ran, and would probably have paid the forfeit of his
own life. The easier punishment may, however, have
been due to fear of the police.

766 Twins were not exposed; but if one of them died,
the body was cast into the bush, and wailing was not
permitted, for it would cause the death of the other.
To-day the body of a twin is buried in the ordinary
way, but without wailing.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

439 given a slave or cow in return. Those who performed hoeing service, *milasa*, were
643 entertained with food and beer.

The ivory trade, although it bound the local rulers to the capital, involved no tribal
622 organization of elephant hunts, and scarcely touched the common people, who never
437 obtained the imported cloths exchanged for ivory, but continued to dress in bark-cloth or in their coarse home-woven cloth. Between each chief and his people economic links were determined on the one hand by his power of requisitioning food, and his greater wealth derived from the higher bride-price given for his daughters, and on the other by his people's expectation of entertainment from him in return for their food. Economic links between local chiefdoms were tenuous. Subsistence agriculture was practised by each family with the help of village neighbours and a few friends and kin; marriage with its economic exchanges was usually within the chiefdom. Of the few specialized craftsmen, representatives of each were usually found in each local group.[1]

Under modern economic conditions, Ngonde country is the only part of north
439 Nyasaland which cannot be called the 'Dead North', and does not suffer from exces-
493 sive migration. The soil is fertile and at present there is no land shortage, though there is likelihood of one developing in the near future. Food is cultivated for export to the Lupa goldfields in Tanganyika, which is the natural market for Ngonde produce. Rice, cattle, and hides are also exported there. Parts of the lake littoral are suitable for cotton cultivation, which was revived in 1934. Ninety tons were sold in 1936. Out of the total effective male population of 12,000, 3,000 grow 'economic crops', and 7,000 grow cash crops only.[2] There are two European coffee estates in the Misuku hills, but they are handicapped by the long dry season.[3] Money is also derived from the fishing industry. An attempt to develop a ghee industry from native butter for sale to Indians in Nyasaland collapsed owing to the apathy of the Ngonde, their neglect of quality, and their insistence on too high a price for their inferior product. The main cash income of the district is derived from emigration to the Lupa goldfields, so that 90 per cent. of the money in circulation in the district is East African currency, which is accepted by the Nyasaland local government, surplus balances being remitted to the District Officer at Tukuyu, Tanganyika.[4]

Periodic Migrations

167 Long-distance labour migration is not a serious problem among the Ngonde, as they are able to earn their main cash income by working in the nearby Lupa goldfields, or by supplying that market with agricultural produce. In north Nyasa district (Ngonde), of 12,052 adult males fit to work for wages, only 11·6 per cent. are labour emigrants, and of these in 1937 only 100 were counted as 'lost ones' (i.e. not heard of since 1930).[5] In Abercorn and Kasama districts, Northern Rhodesia, where the Nyamwanga and Iwa live, 50 per cent. of the able-bodied male adult population is absent.[6]

A local migration of Nyakyusa does constitute a problem for the Tanganyika administration. Up to 1935 some 2,000 families had migrated from Rungwe district to tribal lands in the neighbouring chiefdoms of Mbeya district. By 1941 the figure had increased to 3,000. The immigrants now total 17 per cent. of the whole population

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 39–50.
[2] Murray, 1932, p. 208.
[3] *Bell Report*, 1938, Appendix A.
[4] *Bell Report*, 1938, pp. 100–3.
[5] Smith, 1937, p. 22.
[6] Orde Browne, 1, 1938, maps.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

000 Only the *Ngonde*, the *Nyamwanga*, and the *Iwa* seem to have had any paramount authority. Of these, only that of the Ngonde has been described in detail. The Nyamwanga had a paramount chief, the Mukoma, living over the border in Tanganyika. Under him the Northern Rhodesian Nyamwanga were always ruled by his sister, the Waituika; directly under her were the headmen of villages. The Mukoma used to appoint his own sons or selected friends to be headmen of the larger villages. A nominal tribute, mainly fish, was sent by the Waituika to the Mukoma, and the latter could also command annual labour in his gardens. The Iwa also had a paramount chief, Kafwimbi, who recognized common ancestry with the Mukoma but paid him no tribute. His country was divided into two sections, under two sub-chiefs, Mpanga and Terefya. The succession to the chieftaincy is normally the same as commoner succession, i.e. brothers, then sons of the deceased, but the order need not be rigidly adhered to.[1]

Ngonde Traditional System

643 The section on history briefly indicated the position of the Kyungu. He was wealthy,
565 owing to the ivory trade, and used his wealth to maintain political links with the chiefs
and nobles of the country. At the same time he was kept in strict religious seclusion,
and the real government of the country was in the hands of the nobles of Ngonde,
●622 a group of hereditary nobles, descendants of the original companions of the first
631 Kyungu. The relations of the great chiefs (descendants of sons of Kyungus) and the
territorial nobles to the capital allowed of considerable local autonomy, the Kyungu's prestige being mainly religious. Each territorial noble was succeeded by one son; each chief was succeeded by two or more sons, so that the chiefdoms tended to supplant the territorial nobles in importance and number, and the junior branches of the house of any one great chief formed a hierarchy based on descent. The great chiefs, at their accession, were recognized by the Kyungu with gifts of cloth, and they brought the junior chiefs of their house to perform hoeing service, *milasa*, for the Kyungu. Afterwards the junior chiefs performed *milasa* for their great chief, and were similarly rewarded with entertainment. The great chief might invite the territorial nobles in his neighbourhood to accompany him in performing *milasa*, but he could not command them as he could his junior chiefs. Apart from recognizing a certain authority of superior chiefs in judicial matters, and the right of the latter to command them to hoe, or in war, the junior chiefs had almost complete autonomy in their chiefdoms.[2]

622 Each chief had a traditional right to demand from his own subjects milk and bananas if he needed them, and to evict any man he pleased if he desired the site for his personal use or to give to a kinsman (not to a commoner), offering the evicted tenant another site.[3]

622 The chiefdom[4] consisted of a number of age-villages, older and younger men living
631 apart with their own contemporaries. At the head of each age-village was a headman
624 (called 'great commoner' by Wilson) chosen from among the villagers by the chief

[1] Cushnod, 1914, pp. 44-5.
[2] Ibid., 3, 1938, pp. 48-9.
[3] Wilson, 3, 1939, p. 24.
[4] In the absence of information I do not know whether the following description of Ngonde and Nyakyusa chiefdoms and age-villages is capable of a wider application.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde Fl

622 and the great commoners of the most senior villages. The constitution of a chiefdom
624 was that of a limited monarchy, for the chief was dependent on his great commoners
631 for his authority. All the way up the scale, with the exception of the Kyungu himself, each chief had his own great commoners and people directly subordinate to him. The organization of families and villages within the chiefdoms was the same as that of the Nyakyusa, but the organization of a territory ruled by a noble differed in that although there were always at least two age-villages, there were no great commoners.[1]

361 Villages vary in size, and average from forty to fifty households. In the first instance
621 a boys' village is built on ground allotted to them by the village of their fathers, but a new allotment is made ceremoniously at the 'coming out', ubusuku, ceremony of the young chiefs, when the old chief and his great commoners formally allot a tract of land to each village of young men, and redraw the boundaries.

621 In every generation each chiefdom was divided into two (they were originally
622 immigrant groups expanding their territory, and incorporating previous inhabitants).
631 The chief at his accession, or 'coming out', married two 'great wives', whose eldest sons would each be one of his two heirs, and divide his chiefdom. The number of villages which 'came out' with each young chief varied between four and eight. If he was later reduced to a minor position he might be left with only one village of adult men, and one of their sons, as people tended to move away from minor chiefdoms. This was the system which obtained among the Nyakyusa and also among the Ngonde.[2] A summary of the 'coming out' ritual is given here, instead of in the section on ritual, as it indicates some of the features of the political organization.

621 Usually eight age-villages 'came out' at the same time, four under each of the young
622 chiefs. At this occasion, some thirty years after the old chief's accession, eight new
624 great commoners were chosen. The two young chiefs were secluded for a few hours
583 in the hut of the old chief's first wife, and received magical treatment. Then they 'came out'. The boundaries of the age-villages were freshly drawn. After the 'coming out', each young chief, whether he was already married or not, married his two great wives, whose first sons would be his heirs. Girls who had not yet reached puberty were carried off from other chiefdoms with a show of force by the chief's men, who later sent cows of their own to regularize the position. The girls stayed at the home of one of the old chief's men until their first menstruation. They were initiated together, not at the house of their fathers, but in the country of their husbands; the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the retiring chief) played the part usually played by the girl's parents and neighbours; the chief and his young men playing the usual part of the husband and his friends. After the ceremonies the girls were given as wives to the young chiefs, and separate huts were built for them in the two senior age-villages of the chiefdom. Wives married subsequently were attached in order of seniority to one or other of the two 'sides' of the chiefdom. Thus the four age-villages normally attached to a young chief were, from the first days of his official marriage, divided into two. If one of the two great wives bore no sons, the succession for that side of the chiefdom would pass to the son of the next senior wife of that side.

622 Between the 'coming out' of two young chiefs and the death of their own father, a delicate balance of prestige and power was maintained, secular power over their own age-villages passing to each young chief, while the old chief retained control over the

[1] Wilson, 3, 1939, pp. 10-4.

[2] Ibid., 3, 1938, pp. 12-15.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

622 secular affairs of his own age-villages and full supremacy in religious matters over all. Appeals in difficult cases might be taken from either of the young chiefs to the old chief and his great commoners. After his death, the wives and cows of the old chief were inherited by his full-brother, to whom also his religious authority passed. Full [624] political power over their separate chiefdoms then went to the two sons. The great commoners of the old chief, relinquishing their secular functions to their successors, [193] then entered on their religious duties as priests of the dead chief; this priesthood they handed on to their sons. When all the old chief's full-brothers were dead, the religious functions of chiefship passed to the young chiefs, who were then fully emancipated. The boundaries between their chiefdoms, settled at the 'coming out' ceremony, were sometimes modified by warfare.[1] The age-village is still the chief field of friendship, members recognizing greater obligations to each other than to outsiders; before the European administration the village was also a military unit.[2]

624 The great commoner of every village was very powerful, and measures existed to check his influence; for instance, no kinsman of a chief or son of a great commoner could be elected to that office. His duties were to be hospitable to the villagers, judge their cases, lead them in war, and officiate at their ceremonies. He represented their wishes to the chief, and through him and in consultation with him the chief gave his orders. Each great commoner was believed to be able to protect his own villagers from witchcraft.

Warfare

724 A state of war—actual or potential—always existed among the various Nyakyusa chiefdoms. Among the Ngonde, also, civil war was endemic, the Kyungu neither preventing it nor taking any part. In tribal warfare he did not remain impartial, but gave orders and told the chiefs to pray. They first called on the sacred groves of the buried Kyungus, and then each great chief called on his own predecessors for help. Although the territorial nobles also fought, they did not pray to their ancestors, for tribal war was carried on under royal auspices alone. War was an important source of revenue in cattle and slaves. The recurrent civil wars of the period before the Ngoni invasion show that in spite of the heirarchical façade the centralized political organization was not strong enough to overcome the local autonomy of the chiefdoms, except in the face of a common danger, such as the threat of Bemba or Ngoni invasion.[3]

Justice under the Traditional System of the Ngonde

692 There was no central court of appeal at Mbande to which the ordinary man could bring cases direct, or appeal against the decisions of his local chiefs. At the capital the only cases dealt with by the nobles of Ngonde were cases of treason against the Kyungu (mainly adulterous approach to his wives), which were summarily punished by death. They also used the Kyungu's authority in punitive expeditions against insubordinate chiefs. Each noble of Ngonde decided the cases in his own field. Each great chief held an appeal court to which cases from all the chiefdoms of his house came, for of all the descendants of the Kyungu the great chiefs alone had power to administer the poison ordeal. Some of the territorial nobles also had the power. It was resorted to not only in witchcraft cases, but in appeal cases when evidence for a legal decision was lacking.

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, pp. 278–82. [2] Ibid., p. 276. [3] Ibid., 3, 1939, pp. 59–63.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

692 Many cases were of course decided by the common people among themselves, others by their great commoners, and others by the local chiefs sitting with their great commoners. Although there was no centralized judicial system, the political hierarchy of chiefdoms sometimes could be used to obtain redress in the case of a quarrel between men of different chiefdoms. The weakness of the system is indicated by the fact that restitution for wrong done was often obtained by the method of capturing a hostage.[1]

681 Witchcraft was punished by death. An adulterer, if caught, was killed by the husband. Deliberate murder required compensation up to ten head of cattle and the transfer of a woman, followed by a feast of reconciliation. If the murderer could not be caught a blood feud would be started, ending with a feast of formal reconciliation under the guidance of a diviner. Accidental homicide required compensation, but no feast of reconciliation, as there had been no malice. A cattle-thief caught red-handed might be killed on the spot; arson was settled by payment of compensation.[2]

MODERN GOVERNMENT

(a) *Ngonde*. The British Government in Nyasaland at first applied the system of direct rule. Chiefs and nobles were recognized as 'village' or 'principal' headmen, performing executive duties for the Administration. The Kyungu was one of the 'principal' headmen, but was not recognized as Paramount. In 1924 the system was modified by the setting up of advisory councils in association with the headmen and the District Resident. The members of the councils were nominated and removable by the Government, and there was no intention of reviving tribal government.

622 642 643

In 1933 the system of Indirect Rule was introduced. The Kyungu was recognized as paramount chief, with an appeal court and five sub-chiefs under him. Of these, one, Kilupula, was over the northern part of the Ngonde plain, another ruled the Lambya in the extreme north-west, and the three others were distant territorial nobles ruling groups of alien stock in the hills. The nobles of Ngonde, with twelve prominent nobles and six other assessors, were recognized as members of the Kyungu's court and given nominal salaries. Those of the great chiefs of Ngonde who were not made sub-chiefs were officially termed 'important' headmen, and given nominal salaries. The other chiefs and territorial nobles were still termed 'village' headmen as before 1933. The Kyungu and the five sub-chiefs were each given an area and a court for the area. Village and important headmen could arbitrate in small cases but had no power to execute judgements. That power belonged to the courts alone. The Kyungu's court was also a court of appeal for the whole of Ngonde. A Native Treasury was established, into which one-twelfth of the tax was paid, but this was almost entirely expended on personal emoluments.

The full traditional constitution cannot be revived, as the religious beliefs which supported it have been superseded. Forty-five per cent. of the population profess Christianity, and even the belief in witchcraft, which operated in certain cases as a constitutional check, is less persistent than before. The native rulers are no longer believed to control the rain and the health and fertility of their people, so they stand or fall by the performance of their secular duties alone. Since the Kyungu has come out of religious seclusion the nobles of Ngonde are relegated to advisory status. The secularization of the constitution tends in this respect to make it more autocratic, both

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 48–59. [2] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 82–90.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

622 in the relations between the Kyungu and the nobles, and in those between the local chiefs and their great commoners. On the other hand, there has been a reversal in the relative wealth of commoners and chiefs. The latter have had small salaries substituted for the proceeds of the ivory trade, food tribute, and the booty of war. The decline of polygyny has also reduced the relative wealth of the chiefs. The Kyungu's total official salary in 1937 was £72, and the salaries of sub-chiefs from £4. 10*s*. to £12 per annum. The nobles of Ngonde were paid from 10*s*. to 15*s*. per annum except Mulwa, who got 30*s*. These salaries do not permit of lavish entertainment and gifts to subordinates, and the rulers suffer a consequent loss of prestige. Each village headman is allowed 3*d*. in the tax paid by every adult male subject, and, in addition, the 'important' headmen (former great chiefs) receive subsidies averaging about 10*s*. per annum. These payments have replaced the traditional right to requisition food. Commoners are frequently richer than their rulers. The head clerk in the Boma got £52 in 1937, and fifty-three other government employees got £12 or more. Young men from the goldmines and native Christian ministers now earn more than do the former great chiefs.

By using his private fortune the present Kyungu has been able to maintain the prestige of his office. He revived the *milasa*, hoeing custom, in 1927 on a new basis. To each chief who hoed for him he presented a cow, bought out of the proceeds of the sale of the produce of their labours. The *milasa* profit also enabled him to buy cloth for funeral gifts, a custom which he extended considerably, giving cloths not only at the death of the chiefs, but also to everyone who dies in his part of the plain of Ngonde. The present constitution of Ngonde is more autocratic and more centralized than the old, and thanks to his wealth the Kyungu's secular power is greater than that of his predecessors, in relation to the nobles of Ngonde, and to the chiefs and territorial nobles.

The 'coming out' has ceased since 1913, owing to the smallness of all the present chiefdoms, and the impossibility of finding enough land and followers for two successors to any local chief. Each chief is now succeeded by a brother or one son only. Subjects are still free to move away from the area of an unpopular headmen, thereby reducing his salary by 3*d*. per annum.[1] Although the Nyasaland–Tanganyika boundary cuts his sphere of influence, the Kyungu is still often consulted on tribal affairs across the border.[2]

622 (*b*) *Nyakyusa*. The government of Tanganyika Territory has grouped the 100 or so traditionally independent chiefs into eleven court districts, with one chief as President of the Native Court in each. These eleven chiefs, together with the two presidents of the Ndali and Lambya courts, are federated, and have an appeal court and joint Native Treasury of their own. In the eleven native courts most of the traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their great commoners, and assist the President and his great commoners in the hearing of cases. The bulk of the legal business previously transacted by each chief in his own country is now taken to court, but the power of the great commoners to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages is still the basis of the legal system. A poll tax, fixed at 9*s*. per annum (1938) for adult males, was introduced, and chiefs are paid small salaries, ranging from 5*s*., 10*s*., or 20*s*. a month for ordinary chiefs, to 80*s*. or 100*s*. a month for court presidents.[3]

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 69–85.
[2] *Native Affairs Report*, 1933, p. 6.
[3] Wilson, 3, 1938, p. 15.

643, 622

Ngonde FN 17
Nyakyusa

[Since the Ngonde and the Nyakyusa peoples have slightly different political systems, for the purpose of this file, the Kyungu of the Ngonde people is marked for 643, and the chiefs of the individual chiefdoms for 622; however, when the text is referring to the Nyakyusa people, the chiefs of the individual chiefdoms are marked for 643, and the village headmen for 622.]

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

595 and children a man has to assist him the more wealth he can produce. The man and his unmarried sons hoe, his wives and young daughters plant, weed and harvest, fetch water, cut firewood and cook the food ; and in other practical activities there is equally fruitful co-operation within the household group.

591 621 882 When a man marries he takes his wife from her father's village to his own where he lives with a group of contemporaries. Each village is in origin an age-group, formed by the sons of some village of adult men who leave home one by one as they reach the age of ten to twelve years and build together on ground set aside for them by their fathers. It is not decent, the Nyakyusa maintain, for a boy to sleep at home after any vigorous interest in sexual activity has awakened in him ; and so, for the fifteen years or more between leaving home and marriage, he sleeps with bachelor friends in a boys' village. He and a group of friends go round in turn to the houses of their respective parents for meals, and each hoes his own parents' fields, but all return to the boys' village at night.

621 882 361 As the members of the boys' village grow older, younger boys just leaving home begin to be refused admittance to it and so either start a fresh village of their own nearby or else join a village of their own contemporaries which has already been started. Boys' villages are thus forever hiving off from the villages of men. At first a boys' village covers but little ground for, as its members are unmarried, the houses are small and close together and there are no garden lands attached to it. But as the young men marry one by one the village expands, houses are built bigger and further apart and some adjacent ground is brought under cultivation, until at last it assumes the normal aspect of a village of adult men.

621 A village thus consists of a male age-group with wives and children attached. Wives may be of any age and there is no such formal age grouping among them as among the men. And, as time goes on, some men too may enter the village who are not exact contemporaries of its other members. When a man dies his heir, either a younger brother or a son, often comes to live in his village ; nor are strangers who apply for land in a village ever, I think, refused on the ground of unsuitable age. Villages vary considerably in size but average forty to fifty households.

At first a village of boys, as we have said, is built on ground allotted to it by the village of their fathers ; but a new allotment is made ceremonially at the " coming out " (*ubusoka*) of the young chiefs.

631 622 Every generation each chiefdom of the Nyakyusa is divided into two halves, a fact which is hard to understand until it is realized that the Nyakyusa consist of a number of immigrant groups which have, until very recently, been expanding their territory within the district and

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

incorporating the previous inhabitants. Now saturation point has been reached; their chiefdoms cover nearly all the available land and include in their membership all the indigenous people; and the custom of dividing chiefdoms into two is doomed. At the moment, however, it is still a vital part of their constitutional law. The division of a chiefdom is apparent from the moment that a ruling chief marries his two great wives, for he builds their houses separately, one in each "side" (*ulubafu*) of his chiefdom. The son of each great wife inherits that side of the chiefdom in which his mother's house is built.

When the ruling chief begins to get old the two heirs are ceremonially "brought out" and recognized as chiefs, though they do not assume full powers until their father's death. And their "coming out" is also the "coming out" of all the young men, of all the boys' villages which have been built by the sons of the old chief's men. At the "coming out" each such village is formally given land by the old chief and his great-commoners, often in a new place.

In every village there is a headman whose title, *ulifumu*, is simply a specialized use of the general term for a member of an old family who is not a chief. Every commoner is called an *ulifumu* in his home chiefdom.[1] These two uses of the term I distinguish by calling the village headman a "great-commoner." Great-commoners, then, are selected for their wealth and ability by the older great-commoners of the chiefdom and hold office for life. In the boys' villages before the "coming out" they are chosen by the older great-commoners—those in charge of their fathers' villages—on that side of the chiefdom. If they prove satisfactory their appointments are confirmed by all the great-commoners of the old chiefdom at the "coming out," if not new ones are then selected.

At the "coming out" the young great-commoners are ritually treated with medicines to give them the power of witchcraft which they are expected to use in the interests of morality, while the young chiefs are treated with medicines to make them fierce and impressive themselves and to ensure the fertility of their land and the prosperity of the people under them.

Traditionally the young chiefs assumed authority, each in the young men's villages which composed his own new chiefdom, immediately after the "coming out" and in the old villages in one side of his father's chiefdom when his father died. To-day the position differs for the Administration does not recognize the young chiefs at all until their father is dead.

The separation of chiefdoms established at the "coming out" is often modified subsequently. In the old days brother chiefs frequently

[1] Vide infra p. 33.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 fought each other and one was sometimes reduced to a subordinate position by the other. Such subordinate or minor chiefs did not always
● 622 lose all power, some men often continued to live with them, but not many, for they were poor and could not afford the feasts that prosperous and powerful chiefs gave to their warriors. Nowadays the junior of the two young chiefs, in the majority of cases, becomes subordinate to his brother immediately, for the Administration normally recognizes the senior of the two only, and a salary is paid to him alone on the old chief's death.

The number of villages which "come out" with each young chief usually varies between four and eight. But if a chief is subsequently reduced to a minor position he will often end his life with one village only
[624] of adult men and one village of their sons. For people move from minor chiefdoms and the depleted villages that are left gradually coalesce under the leadership of one of the great-commoners. The son of a minor chief may succeed to his father's position, but only one son will do so; a minor chiefdom is too small to be divided and has no formal "coming out" of its own; its young men attend the "coming out" of the superior chiefdom.

621 So much in outline for the political constitution of the separate
423 Nyakyusa chiefdoms. Some account of it was a necessary preface to the discussion of individual land rights, since it is within this political structure that they have validity. If, for example, the boundaries of a village are changed at the "coming out"—and they very frequently are—then no individual rights to village land can be maintained outside the new boundaries.

631 Prior to the arrival of the Europeans there was no paramount political authority among the Nyakyusa, but a number of tiny independent chiefdoms side by side, with minor chiefdoms in some cases attached to them. Of these traditionally independent chiefdoms there is none, I think, which to-day exceeds 3,000 adult male members, and most of them are far smaller than that. This smallness of scale, which is difficult at first for a European to grasp, is the fundamental characteristic of primitive society, in the organization of which personal relationships are predominant, wherein social relationships, that is, mainly subsist between personal acquaintances. In the old Nyakyusa polity impersonal relationships, effective social bonds linking together men who were personally unknown to one another, though they existed had relatively little importance.

648 Just south of the Nyakyusa, in what is now North Nyasaland, live
184 the Ngonde[1] people, whose language and culture was and is very similar to that of the Nyakyusa. They were, however, slightly more civilized in that they were in closer contact with Arab and Swahili ivory traders; and

[1] Better known to Europeans as *Konde*.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the wealth derived from this trade enabled one of their chiefs, Kyungu, 648
to maintain himself as paramount over all Ngonde. Among his people 184
impersonal relationships thus had a greater importance. And it was, I
believe, the historical isolation of the Nyakyusa from any considerable
commercial contact with the outside world which prevented the rise
among them of a paramount chief.

To-day the Nyakyusa are in process of integration with the civilized 173
society of the world and the independence of their minute chiefdoms has
inevitably passed away. The traditionally sovereign chiefs have been 622
grouped in seven court districts with one chief as President of the Native 692
Court in each ; and these seven chiefs together with the two Presidents of
the Ndali and Lambya Courts are federated, with an Appeal Court and
joint Native Treasury of their own. In the seven Native Courts most of
the traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their great-
commoners, and assist the President and his great-commoners in the
hearing of cases. The bulk of the legal business previously transacted
by each chief in his own country is now taken to Court, but the power of
great-commoners to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages
is still the basis of the legal system.

A poll tax, now (1938) fixed at 9/- per annum for adult males with no 651
additional tax for plural wives, has been introduced and chiefs are paid 622
small salaries ranging from 5/-, 10/- or 20/- a month for ordinary chiefs to
80/- or 100/- a month for the Court Presidents.

The Nyakyusa, as we have previously mentioned, consist of a number 563
of immigrant groups who have spread among and incorporated an indige-
nous population. The main immigrant groups were three in number
and are distinguished to-day by the names of " Nyakyusa," " Kukwe "
and " Selya." As all these three groups together (including those who
are now incorporated in them) call themselves " Nyakyusa " to the outside
world, I distinguish the one group to which the name more particularly
belongs as the " Nyakyusa proper." The Nyakyusa proper live in the
plain of Mungonde and up on the higher ground as far north as Tukuyu,
the Kukwe live north of them around the base of Rungwe Mountain while
the Selya live in the east of the district, between the Nyakyusa proper
and the Kukwe, right under the wall of the Livingstone Mountains.
Between the three groups there are minor differences of dialect and custom.

The extent to which the indigenous groups retain any separate
identity varies in accordance with the number of the immigrants and the
date at which they reached them, but over a large part of the district
fusion has been complete.

We have already discussed the economic relations between the 471
Nyakyusa and the Lupa gold fields which provides them with a market

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 425 In discussing the taking up of land after a move it is therefore necessary to distinguish clearly between men who move to villages in which they are newcomers and those who return, after a period of absence, to their home villages.

166 425 ●622 624 621 Normally land for building and gardens is granted to a stranger by the villagers concerned acting through their great-commoner, not by the chief, who is usually informed but seldom interferes. Only if a member of the chief's own family is moving within the chiefdom from one village to another or if a very important stranger comes from outside, he may go to the chief and ask for a building plot, and the chief may then exercise his right of overlordship and grant the request. But this is a special and unusual case. Village land is primarily governed by village relationships. It is villagers who grant land to an ordinary newcomer and thereby accept him as one of themselves. His own wishes are taken into account whenever possible ; if he sees a piece of ground which attracts him and no one else has a claim to it then it will be his.

An old Kukwe great-commoner thus explained the granting of land to a stranger : " First the stranger from another country comes to a friend in this village and says that he wishes to build here, then the friend brings him to me, the great-commoner,—or he may come directly to me in the first place ; and I go and tell the chief. Then the chief, according [431] to the old custom, would say ' Good ! Go and cut a banana bunch for him,' and I would cut a banana bunch from my own homestead, not from anyone else's, and the chief would send one of his wives to me with cooked food for our guest the stranger. This custom is now no longer followed in our country but in the more remote chiefdoms they still cut bananas and cook food in such cases ; here the stranger now just comes and is not given anything. And again when he wishes to begin building we go and tell the chief, who tells us to give him a plot to build on, and then my friends and I choose a place for him." " Does not the chief have a say in choosing the plot ? " I enquired. " No, not the chief ; does he know the details of our land-rights ? He does not. It is we who choose the place for the newcomer. But if he does not like the plot we give him and has himself seen a place which he prefers he will ask us for it and maybe we will give it him." " Do not people sometimes go directly to the chief to ask for land ? " " No, they always come first to us, the commoners, not to the chief ; how should a man presume to approach the chief by himself ? No, a newcomer always approaches us, and it is we who inform the chief. I, the great-commoner, may go alone to tell the chief or I may take the stranger with me, as I please." And a young Kukwe chief confirmed this, with perhaps a shade more emphasis on the part played by the chief: " The stranger goes first to the great-commoner

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and makes his request for land, then the great-commoner goes to the chief and informs him that so and so has come with a request for land, and he asks his opinion as to which piece to give the stranger. Then the chief suggests that perhaps the great-commoner knows of a suitable plot. So the chief and the great-commoner discuss it together and decide. Then the great-commoner shows the plot to the stranger." 166 425 621 622 624

It is quite clear in my evidence that, though the normal custom is to consult the chief when a newcomer is given land, yet the newcomer's title is in no way invalidated if the great-commoner omits to do so at the time and simply tells the chief later after the grant has been made.

So much for the initial reception of a stranger and the grant of a building plot, the next step is the grant of garden land. But before discussing this we must emphasize the willingness with which strangers are received both by the villagers and the chief. Men are still scarcer than land in most places and the prestige and prosperity of villages and chiefdoms is increased by each addition to their membership. Strangers are always given a house to sleep in while building their own and are usually given food as well, both formally by the chief and great-commoner and informally by the neighbours. The great-commoner who told me that the formal custom of giving food had lapsed in his country belongs to the chiefdom which adjoins Rungwe mission, a small chiefdom to which very considerable immigration has taken place in the last forty years; there the relative scarcity of land is reflected in a decline of hospitality to newcomers, though none have yet been refused land. But the usual custom still is to receive them generously. "It is an ancient custom amongst us to welcome strangers, so that the chiefdom may increase and flourish." [431]

In giving garden-land to a newcomer the procedure differs slightly according to the value of the land in question. The great-commoner takes him out and shows him, if the land is scarce and valuable, an exactly demarcated piece, if it is cheap and plentiful, a vaguely defined area within which he can hoe where he likes. In the upland chiefdoms, for example, the best maize and bean plots are scarce; men hoe the same ground year in year out, planting maize and beans alternately in it or, sometimes, maize only with an interval of a few months fallow each year; and in this case the boundaries of each man's ground are precisely marked. But for the growing of sweet-potatoes and millet there is plenty of good land available and men hoe more or less where they please. "A stranger named Tusekelege," I was told, "came to the village of Ibungila (in Kukwe country). Amongst other things he asked for a maize-garden, so they gave him the ground of a man Mwasumbi who had moved to Masoko. They told Tusekelege that he could hoe only the same extent of ground 166 425 621 624

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Again if the villagers expect a man to return and if they themselves wish him to do so, then his homestead is normally kept for him. If he refuses their first formal invitation to return they may give his homestead to a newcomer meanwhile, but only provisionally ; and if he does return later, whether by another formal invitation or on his own initiative, then the newcomer is moved elsewhere. 166 423 621

The difficulty arises when a man comes back unexpectedly to find that a newcomer has been given his site unconditionally. Perhaps the villagers are indifferent to his return and so have omitted to keep his site for him ; but far more frequently it is that he has been many years away and has refused several invitations to return, and so has led the villagers to think that he is never going to come back at all. But, whatever the reason, if his site has been given unconditionally to a newcomer, who has then built his own house upon it, the villagers cannot possibly evict the newcomer in his favour ; his only chance of getting the old site back lies in an indirect and tactful approach to the chief. The chief, as overlord, has the power to evict the newcomer if he chooses, but he may not choose to do so. And, if he does not, then the man will have to build elsewhere. 166 423 425 621 [622]

I was discussing these points with one of our servants whose father had recently moved from Bulindanajo, his home village in Mwaipopo's chiefdom in Selya, to a village in the adjoining chiefdom. I asked him to explain to me his father's potential rights, if he were to return later to his home village, to enter again into possession of his old homestead.

" If a man, like my father for instance, has moved and his friends wish him to return they go to fetch him back, but if he then at first refuses to return they may put in a stranger on his homestead. But in doing so they inform the stranger that the owner of the homestead is away in such a country, that he, the stranger, is just eating the bananas meanwhile (i.e. is only in temporary possession) and that, when the owner returns, he will have to leave this place and build on another site which they will then give him for his own. In that case when my father returns, if he wishes for his old site, his friends will move the newcomer away, because they have told him beforehand, and my father will have his own old site.

" As it happens, however, when my father did actually move recently they did not put any newcomer on to his site, but Mwakyoma . . . . one of his neighbours chose to build there himself. And him they do not inform of my father's rights, for he is already aware of them. If my father returns later his friends will turn Mwakyoma out telling him to go back to his own old site. For it always happens with a good homestead on which bananas do well that people covet it, and when the owner moves,

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[1] This is a boast, irrelevant to the main argument.

[This footnote refers to p. 36. – Analyst]

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 someone, coveting the vacant place, goes and builds there. But if it is a
423 neighbour he knows that it is not his own and when the owner returns he
425 relinquishes it and goes back to where he was before.
621

"It may happen, however, that the owner of a homestead moves and lives many years away; his friends go to fetch him but he continually refuses to return, until they begin to think that he has moved finally and forever. And, in that case, they may, perhaps, put a man in there without informing him of the existence of any other owner. The newcomer builds a house and thrives. And if the previous owner then after all comes back they do not evict the newcomer; shame prevents them, for they never told him of any such possibility. Then the old owner, as it were my father for example, seeing that another is in occupation of his site goes to a different village in the same chiefdom and asks for a site. But the great-commoner to whom he goes asks him why he is approaching him—'It is true,' my father then answers, 'that I have a place in Bulindanajo and the graves of my family and my trees are there, but another man has
● [622] built upon it.' Then the great-commoner gives him a site, but he also goes to tell the chief what has happened. Then the chief, Mwaipopo, summons the men of Bulindanajo and asks them why they have driven my father away, on his return to the country, from the site that was always his. The villagers admit their mistake but explain to the chief that, as they thought my father was never going to return at all, they put in another man. So they discuss the matter; and the chief, if he so wishes, may summon the present occupier and tell him that his friends deceived him by omitting to inform him of the probable return of the owner of that site and that now, as the owner has returned, they will have to move him and give him another site; and thus the chief evicts the present holder. But such an action must come from the chief, his neighbours cannot evict the occupier, for they gave him no initial warning. So then my father would return to his own old site. But maybe in such a case my father would himself prefer to build elsewhere, he would say to his friends that, as another had built on his site, he would be content to watch over his family graves from afar and to build in a different place."

As for his old garden-land, to that too a man has a title on returning to his home village, but it is only scarce and valuable ground that he will ever trouble to claim if others are in possession. At first, when he moves from the village, his fellows, if they intend to invite him back, keep his gardens for him just as they keep his house site; but if he refuses to return at first then maybe the ground is given to others. But he can always recover it later when he does return. It is easier to get old [illegible] back than it is to get a house site, for no great hardship is involved for [illegible]

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

evicted man. And it is even possible sometimes to make good a claim to the old gardens of one's father, even although one has never hoed them at all oneself; this is more difficult however, the claim may be refused or alternatively a compromise may be effected by dividing the land in question between the claimant and the present possessors. 166 423 425 621

As an example of the keeping of gardens vacant for a man who is expected to return we may cite the story of Nyambo, a Kukwe, as it was told to me by a young man who lived near him. This case is of particular interest as it brings out two points to which we have not yet referred; firstly that the chief himself sometimes takes the initiative in inviting a man back, and that his doing so widens the invitation to include all the villages of the chiefdom, not only the man's old home village; and secondly that it possible to build in one village of a chiefdom and own gardens in another. This second point will be discussed again later. 166 423 621 622

" A man named Nyambo moved because eight of his cows all died in quick succession and he thought that his neighbours, maybe, had bewitched them; but he moved without telling people of this reason. After he had spent eight months away, however, the chief sent his great-commoner to enquire of him why he had moved and left his chief wondering, and Nyambo replied that he had moved because of the death of eight of his cows all within a few days of one another, a fact which had led him to suspect that his neighbours hated him; and he would never, he told the great-commoner to inform the chief, be persuaded to return. So the great-commoner reported all this to the chief. Whereupon the chief suggested that it would be a good thing to go and fetch Nyambo back forcibly. And he, the chief, went in person with a crowd of men from Nyambo's old village and they just seized upon his furniture and drove off his cows and took them all home. But even so Nyambo refused to return and spent another two days where he was. Then they sent again to urge him to come back and at last he agreed because the chief himself had begged him to do so; he said, however, that he would prefer not to build in his old place, because his cows had died there, but rather across the river in the village of a different great-commoner. And so he did. None the less he continued to hoe his old gardens, and he still does so. They had left his gardens vacant because they had always meant to fetch him back. Now that he has returned and gone to live in another village they have given his old building site to a newcomer from Masoko, but his gardens are still his own."

The story of Kalonga, another Kukwe, exemplifies a man's right to reclaim his own old gardens. It will be noticed that the ground which he reclaimed was of particular value. 166 423 425

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 423 425 " Kalonga had moved from the country of Kissokola to Masoko and other people had taken his ground and hoed it. It is the kind of ground which we call *umfweje*, rich soil near water. Kalonga had moved because of illness, several of his children had fallen sick and more than one had died. After he moved his neighbours never went to invite him back.

166 423 425 ●622 " Now Kalonga himself did not come back to live, but he brought back his mother. She had gone with him, but then she began to complain that he had taken her to an unpleasant country and she would prefer to go home ; so he came back just to build a house for her. He did not build for her in his old village but asked another great-commoner (of the same chiefdom) for a site ; he did however go to the chief to reclaim his old garden (the *umfweje* to which we have already referred). Now four men had divided the ground between them ; they had approached the great-commoner and asked for it and he had referred them to the chief, fearing that he might be blamed for giving the ground away if Kalonga should return subsequently. And the chief agreed that they should take it, so as not to let it lie idle.

" So when Kalonga came and reclaimed it the chief pointed out that he had moved and left the country (and so had no claim to the land). But no, Kalonga replied, he had not moved, for see he had brought back his mother and built a house for her, which was exactly equivalent to living in the chiefdom himself. And the chief admitted his argument and agreed that, so soon as the present holders had reaped their standing crops, he should re-enter into possession of his own ground. So now Kalonga comes regularly with his younger brothers and they hoe the land quickly (being many) for their mother and go home again. Kalonga is of an old family and his father is buried in that chiefdom."

166 423 425 622 624 And finally the story of Enoch the son of Mwakajileke, another Kukwe, well illustrates the more limited rights of a son to claim his father's old gardens which he himself has never hoed.

" Mwakajileke built in the village of Ibungila, and he died there in 1925. He had three sons, all of whom moved after his death ; one of these sons, whose name was Enoch, went and built at Kyimbila ; and meanwhile the chief gave the garden-land of Mwakajileke to other people. Part of this land was cultivated by a commoner named Gwaselya but he too, later on, moved into another chiefdom and the land was left unused. Then Enoch returned to the country to find that no one was now hoeing the ground which his father had used to hoe, so he approached Mwangokile, the great-commer, and asked for it : ' As no one is hoeing your father's land,' Mwangokile replied, ' you may go and hoe it yourself, but there are some other men who want it and they have already asked me for it, so I must divide it between you.' So he went with them and marked

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 out boundaries, drawing lines on the ground; he divided the land into
423 three portions, one for each. The others were strangers to the chiefdom
425 but had taken a fancy to that piece of land."

622 The sentence in this story "The chief gave the garden land of
624 Mwakajileke to other people" deserves remark for it in no way implies any other custom than the one we have previously described. And it illustrates the dangers of relying too much on verbal statements of custom. When a stranger is given land by a great-commoner after reference to the chief he is commonly said to have been given it by the chief. The chief, from one point of view, is the overlord and the great-commoner acts for him. But, and this is an essential qualification, the great-commoner nearly always so acts for the chief and, save exceptionally, it is wholly incorrect for the chief to grant land directly. The great-commoner acts not only for the chief but also as the representative and leader of the villagers; and in relation to them the chief cannot exercise his rights of overlordship save occasionally and in particular circumstances.

166 The old Kukwe great-commoner whom we have already quoted
423 explained this to me very clearly: "Occasionally one of his own men will
425 ask a chief to give him ground to hoe in another village, 'If indeed you
621 say that the land is yours!' (challenging the chief to assert his right of
622 overlordship). Then the chief agrees that all the land is most certainly his; but still, if it is possible, he tells the man to go to the commoners of that village and ask them for land. If the chief does not do this (but makes a direct grant of land) we blame him for not being a true chief: 'Who is it,' we ask him, 'that has built up this country? Did you do it all by yourself? It is we the commoners who have built it up! And how is it, then, that you give this man land without consulting us?'" [754 Nor is the censure of his people mere idle talk for a Nyakyusa chief, he
626] fears that they may bewitch him, that the witches among them, led by the great-commoners of the several villages, may come in dreams at night and cause him to sicken or to die.

166 So much for the initial grants of land to newcomers and the rights of
423 men returning to their home chiefdoms. If a man goes back, after moving, to a chiefdom which is in no sense his home, where, that is to say, he is not a member of an old family but in which he has himself spent some years, he is treated as a newcomer. He is welcomed but he has no rights to the ground, whether building-site or gardens, which he previously occupied.

423 Once established in a village, however, any man can hoe any unowned
425 ground within its borders and thereby make it his own. A newcomer for

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 824 are used for house building, while the *syunguti* produces a fruit (*indilolo*) which is both delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment (*inyemba*). Of the two trees the bamboo is the more valuable.

423 425 621 Now among the Kukwe and Selya groups rights in these trees are somewhat similar to rights in the valuable crater plots. When a man moves, his bamboos and *syunguti* trees, unlike his bananas, do not revert to the villagers ; normally they continue to belong to his nearest kinsman in that chiefdom, who cuts and uses the bamboos and picks the fruits of the *syunguti* trees. If the villagers give the site to another man then the newcomer has no rights over these trees unless the kinsman himself gives them to him. But it sometimes happens that, where only *syunguti* trees and not bamboos are involved, the kinsfolk do not bother to exercise their rights ; then the trees are treated like bananas, picked by the neighbours until a newcomer is given that plot, and then by him.

423 425 ●622 If however, among the Selya and Kukwe groups, a man moves leaving no kinsfolk near at hand, then the chief (*umalafyale*) as the supreme overlord has a right to his trees, and if they are near the chief's own place this right is exercised ; he cuts and uses the bamboos and his wives pick the *syunguti* trees. If another man is given the land by the villagers to build on then he goes and asks the chief to allow him some of the *syunguti* trees, and his request is usually granted, the chief gives him two or three of the trees, keeping two or three for himself. But the bamboos, being more valuable, are usually kept altogether by the chief. If, however, the ownerless trees are at a distance from the chief's place then he normally does not trouble to claim the *syunguti* trees but only the bamboos. The former are at first picked by the neighbours and later given by the villagers to a newcomer together with the site. And, even with the bamboos, if they are a long way from the chief's place a " good chief," they say, will allow the newcomer to cut some of them without payment ; but it is wholly within the chief's power to keep them all for himself if he wishes, and " bad chiefs " do so. Furthermore a chief does occasionally also exercise his right to claim an ownerless *syunguti* tree at a distance. If one of his wives comes and complains to him that she has no *syunguti* tree of her own, then he takes her to a site from which someone has recently moved leaving ownerless trees behind and there he gives her one of the trees ; the rest he leaves as usual to the villagers and so to the newcomer.

423 621 Bamboos are men's property and only a man can claim them but *syunguti* trees can be claimed by a kinswoman, a sister or a daughter, of the old owner if none of his near kinsmen have troubled to do so.

423 178 We must here take note of a most significant modern development. In the old days rights in trees could only be exercised by members of the

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 In his tenure of land every Nyakyusa man is related to some chief
● 622 who is his overlord. But their relationship is not confined to the single element of land-tenure, it is just as many-sided and complex as is any other human relationship; and even as we abstract from it the particular set of facts that immediately concerns us here we must at once refer them again to it if they are to be intelligible.

166 When a newcomer is received into a village and given land the chief,
423 as we have seen, is normally a party to the villagers' action, and in most cases he himself ceremonially welcomes the newcomer if he comes from
622 outside the chiefdom by sending to him a present of cooked food. He has gained a new subject and his power and prestige are thereby increased.
[427] As men are quite free to move from one tiny chiefdom to another and as land is still relatively plentiful the phenomenon of rent does not exist among the pagan Nyakyusa, there is no direct charge ever specifically made in return for the right to build and cultivate. Nevertheless a chief is a chief and his subjects' land is his as well as theirs and they are under certain obligations to him.

622 Among these obligations that of providing cooked food for the
551 ceremonies of the chief's own immediate family is probably the most
[585] important. When a chief's daughter, for example, is getting married women from all over the chiefdom bring food to entertain the bridegroom and his friends on the day that they bring the bulk of the cattle. The obligation to bring food, though not a legal one, is both reciprocal and conventional. The chief is expected to kill one or two of the beasts to feed his people and if he is mean about this, killing one where he should have killed two, then on the next occasion his people are more reluctant
[626] to bring food. But there is also the sense of shame constraining individuals. If the majority of households in a village provide food for a chief on such an occasion, and the majority I think nearly always do so, then the shameful meanness and unconventionality of defaulters is the subject of adverse comment among them.

A chief also has the traditional right, still widely admitted to-day, to send and take food, especially milk and bananas, from his subjects if he has need of it. And we have seen already that men with more than one wife are prompted to retain *busongo* bananas for themselves in order to meet his demands without upsetting the peace of their households. This
[177] traditional right however is known not to be admitted by the European Administration, on the grounds that a salary has taken its place, and is therefore beginning to fall into disuse. Chiefs, I was told, often fear to exercise it lest some man refuse obedience and take a complaint to the *Boma*, nor are they willing to confine their demands to those men of whose compliance they are certain. As the salary of an ordinary chief,

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

paid out of the Native Treasury from the taxes, rarely exceeds 10/- a month it may be doubted whether modern conditions are not in this, as in other respects, impoverishing the Nyakyusa chiefs. 622 554

A chief had the right traditionally to evict any man he pleased if he desired his site for his own personal use, giving him another in exchange. But this right is no longer effective: "It is now at an end," as a chief's kinsman told me, "for the man evicted will go to Tukuyu (the administrative capital of the district) and complain that his chief is turning him out of his home without good cause." It is however still perfectly possible for a chief to take any *unoccupied* site he pleases without reference to the local villagers. He may take it for himself or he may give it to a kinsman, and no objection to such an action on his part is ever raised. It is only if he gives it to an ordinary commoner that his people will criticise him. 622 425 178

Land once held by the kinsman of a chief at the latter's gift is more secure to him than any land can be which is granted in the ordinary way by a great-commoner; for no one but the chief himself can ever finally take it from him. If he moves and the villagers wish to give the site to a newcomer then they must either send a message after him and ask his permission to do so or else get explicit permission from the chief, if the newcomer's title is to be in any way secure. 622 425

A case within my own knowledge well illustrates these points: Mwakobela, half-brother of chief Mwaipopo, had been given land in the village of Ipoma by Mwaipopo himself. Subsequently he had moved to Kibonde, a minor chiefdom under the jurisdiction of Mwaipopo, and had spent many years there; and when I first met him he was living there still. But then he fell sick and, suspecting witchcraft, decided to return to Ipoma, only to find his old building-site occupied. For the great-commoner of Ipoma, thinking he had moved for good, had given it to a newcomer. 622 425 624

This grant of land to the newcomer had been irregular in more ways than one: firstly Mwakobela's permission had not been asked, secondly no reference at all had apparently been made to Mwaipopo, who subsequently denied any part in the grant and, thirdly, the great-commoner had not even consulted his fellow villagers; if he had done so they would, so one of them told me in discussing the case, have reminded him of the necessity of first asking Mwakobela's permission. The newcomer however had been given the site unconditionally and when Mwakobela reclaimed it he refused to move; but the rights of Mwakobela were unquestionable and he had no difficulty at all in getting him evicted.

I went to visit Mwakobela a few weeks after he had taken possession of the site and he told me about the eviction: "I approached the great-commoner and asked him who had given Mwangesiye (the newcomer)

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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permission to build on my plot, perhaps, I suggested, it was Mwaipopo (the chief). But no, he told me, it was not Mwaipopo but he himself who had given the permission, and he said, further, that Mwangesieye would have to move, as I wished to come back, and that he would give him another site. But Mwangesieye refused to move and said that the place was his. So the next thing was that, at a funeral . . . . . I asked Mwaipopo who it was that had given my plot to this Mwangesieye who now claimed it as his own and made as if I had never built there, perhaps Mwaipopo himself had given it to him. And all that Mwaipopo replied was no, he had not done so.

"Then I simply brought my sons with bamboos and told them to begin building. Off goes Mwangesieye to Mwaipopo! 'Mwakobela,' he complains, 'is driving me away from my home!' 'Who gave you the plot?' asks Mwaipopo. 'The great-commoner gave it me.' 'And what does he say now?' 'He says I must move.' 'Well then you had better move!'

"And then, next morning, Mwangesieye came to me and said 'My friend I was wrong, the place was always yours, I will move; but the hanging bananas and the coffee trees I shall take with me.' 'Why certainly,' I replied, 'you may cut the banana bunches and transplant your coffee trees, I shall not object.' Thereupon the great-commoner offered him another site with bananas already growing on it, but he refused and said that he intended to return to live in the chiefdom from which he originally came.—And now his sons have carried away his house and there is only left that one hut over there (pointing) which they will take away shortly, and then later they will transplant his coffee trees also."

It was made abundantly clear to me that the important point was the fact that Mwakobela had originally been given the land directly by Mwaipopo, the chief; had he been given it in the ordinary way by the great-commoner with Mwaipopo's concurrence he would have had no claim on it at all. A member of the village of Ipoma explained this to me very lucidly: "If, in the first instance, Mwaipopo had not made the grant, if Mwakobela had approached the great-commoner and said that, as the plot was vacant, he would like to build there and if the great-commoner had agreed to this, then had Mwakobela later moved (as he did) to Kibonde and spent many years there and had the plot meanwhile been given by the great-commoner to Mwangesieye—Mwaipopo all the time being in no way involved—then, if Mwakobela had returned and claimed the plot, the great-commoner would not have admitted his claim. If, in that case, Mwakobela had come to Mwangesieye and tried to evict him Mwangesieye would have complained to the great-commoner, who would then have addressed Mwakobela in some such terms as these:

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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'You, sir, are a chief' (Mwakobela is one of the ruling chiefs' kinsmen, all of whom are entitled 'chiefs,') how then is it that you wish to drive men away? (For chiefs always desire to attract men to them!) Do you wish the two of us, you and I, to live together alone without any men? In the first instance you simply came to me and said that you wished to build here and I agreed that you should; but then you moved and I saw myself that you had built a new house and planted banana trees in another village and I supposed you had moved for good. Nor did you ever tell me that you might be coming back nor ask me to keep your site for you, you only told me that you were moving. So I cannot, as great-commoner, agree to evict Mwangesiye, I will find another site for you...'

"But as it was," my informant continued," the site had been granted by Mwaipopo himself. Mwaipopo had simply informed the great-commoner that he had given Mwakobela a certain vacant plot in his village. And then the great-commoner was at fault in that he gave the place to Mwangesiye without consulting his neighbours;[1] had he consulted us about it, and had he sent a message to Mwakobela to ask his permission to give the vacant site to another man, and had Mwakobela given the permission (he could hardly have refused it unless he were himself intending to return shortly), then again Mwakobela would have had no power at all to evict Mwangesiye. The great-commoner would have disallowed his claim, pointing out that he had been informed at the time and had agreed to Mwangesiye's building there. It was owing to the failure to inform Mwakobela at the time that he now has power to evict Mwangesiye."

"And supposing," I enquired," that Mwakobela had not been the younger brother of Mwaipopo, the ruling chief, but just a commoner, a stranger from another chiefdom, and supposing that none the less he had approached Mwaipopo in the first instance and asked for land, instead of going to the great-commoner, how would that have affected this case?" —" Well, in the first place, *Mwaipopo would have brought the stranger to the great-commoner* and the two of them, the chief and the great-commoner would have discussed together where to give him land and decide to give him a certain vacant plot." "And then," I asked," if the stranger had moved to Kibonde and the great-commoner had given the plot to Mwangesiye, without informing him, could he then have returned later and evicted Mwangesiye, or not?" "No, he could not do so; had he attempted it the great-commoner would have disallowed the claim, asking

[1] It is, of course, never correct for a great-commoner to grant land without consulting his fellow villagers, but the point here is that, had he consulted them, they would have reminded him of the necessity of consulting Mwakobela before making this particular grant.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

425 him if it was his idea that the village should die out and leave him, the
●622 great-commoner, without men? As he had moved, the great-commoner
624 would have continued, the place was presumably distasteful to him and it had now been allotted to another man. The claim would certainly have been disallowed!"

425 The examples in this paper have been taken almost entirely from
797 pagan families. For Christians the situation is very much the same except where they live actually on mission land, there they are tenants of
427 the Mission concerned and pay rent to it. And Christians, wherever they live, tend to be more stable in their occupation of land, since they are not forever moving in fear of witchcraft.

7. *CONCLUSION*

178 I have striven in this paper to make the individual land-rights
423 possessed by Nyakyusa to-day intelligible to the European reader and to demonstrate to him their determining factors. Of these factors the following are the most important. The Nyakyusa were until recently an isolated and primitive people and so bring with them into the modern world a legal tradition based upon small social groups. This tradition is being inevitably modified both in theory and practice under modern conditions, but not out of all recognition; for they are still a relatively isolated people and the system of indirect rule secures them, in general, against arbitrary legal changes. Within their legal system individuals have, as in any system they must have, certain precisely defined and enforceable rights—among them rights in land.

Many kinds of land, however, are plentiful, though less so than of old owing to the growth of population, the opening of new markets for food and the recent introduction of ploughs. And this cheapness of land is reflected at times in a lack of rigour in the enforcement of rights in it which is unfamiliar to the European observer. Sufficient land for all is a fundamental condition of Nyakyusa society in its present form, which has no place for a landless man.

[66 And, finally, the habitual movement of men with their families from
68[] one village to another to escape the witchcraft of their neighbours leads to a constant transfer of homesteads and gardens and is the main cause of difficulty in the administration of their laws of property in land and trees. This difficulty is greatest in the case of the newly introduced coffee trees which need continuous tending.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

themselves, and with the Kisi. With the people of Mwela they exchanged canoes for hoes. And from the Kisi also they got hoes, which the Kisi in their turn had got in exchange from the Kinga.

Then, during the reigns of Mwangonde and his successors "the sons of the Kyungu" began more and more to displace the territorial nobles as rulers of the various districts of the Ngonde plain. They became hereditary chiefs (*avanyafyale*), each of whom was succeeded by two or more sons, who divided his country and tried to extend it. And thus the number of ruling chiefs now began to increase at a great rate. Each of the territorial nobles, on the other hand, was only succeeded by a single heir. Houses of chiefs were set up and a new hierarchy appeared, for the senior chief in each house ranked as the "father" of his juniors. The name of the founder of each house was preserved as a hereditary title borne by each head of that house in turn. Thus to-day we find in the Ngonde plain the house of the Katambas, (or Mwenitetes),[1] the house of the Kalongas, the house of the Mwakasungulas and so on, and, among the chiefs of Ngana, the house of the Mwafongos, the house of the Mwenengubwes, the house of the Kalombos, the house of the Kilupulas and so on. The heads of these houses were the great chiefs of Ngonde, subordinate to the Kyungu and each with a number of junior chiefs traditionally subordinate to him. Most of these great titles can be traced back to some important son either of Mwangonde or of Kasyombe; but in some cases junior branches also have acquired sufficient importance to be distinguished by hereditary titles which are borne by their heads[2]. Whenever the bearer of one of these great titles became the Kyungu, his old title was at once taken by a successor in his house.

The chiefs supplanted the territorial nobles and took their subjects for their own in this way: "A great many territorial nobles have lost their power, for the Kyungus were in the habit of sending their sons to build with them in their countries. A Kyungu would send one of his sons (i.e. a chief) to a certain noble saying 'I send this your son to build with you, his father'—for the nobles were called 'father' by the sons of the Kyungu—, so the noble would welcome him. But in after years the people would give their affection to the son of the Kyungu and the noble would lose his power. And yet, even so, in the old days the two of them, chief and noble, would remain on friendly terms." . . . . "Some of the nobles lost their power through the cunning of the chiefs. For example the noble Mwenifumbo used to have a country of his own,

[1] This house, as we have seen, dates from the early period.
[2] The first Malenga, for instance, was a son of Mwakasungula, the first Kajuni of Mwenengubwes.

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6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

but then he was given a young chief, Mwakijule, to look after as a child. The father of Mwakijule (who was not the Kyungu) asked Mwenifumbo to bring him up; but then when he grew up he became the ruler of the country!" And others lost their power to young chiefs who had married their daughters and then come to live near them. 173 643 565 622

Now all informants agree on three points: Firstly that it was the prestige of the royal blood which was responsible for this loss of power, secondly that the process was a gradual one and thirdly that the chiefs and the dispossessed nobles generally continued to live together on amicable terms. "The people gave their affection to the son of the Kyungu," but not all at once; some men at first would continue to regard themselves as the noble's men while others looked more to the chief. The noble acquiesced in this process and became in the end but the most important and respected commoner of the new chiefdom. For the chiefs apparently always treated such nobles with the greatest consideration, continued to call them "father" and to defer to their advice. The nobles retained all their religious functions and their right to participate in the selection of Kyungus and great chiefs, while their own titles continued to be handed on with due ceremony to their successors. All that they lost was leadership in war, the power of requisitioning food, together with the main responsibility for feasting the common people, and the formal position of chief justice. But in actual fact a noble's opinion on a law case was probably seldom disputed by the chief who had asked for it.

We have already suggested that during this middle period the balance of secular power between the nobles of Ngonde and the divine Kyungu himself began to change, and we have noted his descent from Mbande and the stopping of the killing of his sons as undoubted examples of this. But the nobles of Ngonde still had the real power at Mbande: "they alone conversed with the Kyungu; no one else saw him except when they went in to make obeisance. All orders came from them. Even with the *masano*, the wives of the Kyungu, it was the nobles of Ngonde who put each one into the house of the Kyungu for a week at a time and then took her out and put in another. No one else built their houses near the Kyungu except these nobles (and their own immediate followers.)" 173 643 565

Such incidents as the going to war of Kyungu Mwakasungula, and the abandonment of the custom of building an enclosure (*ulupaso*) in the reign of Mwambelo[1] seem significant in the light of modern developments; but we cannot be sure that any very radical constitutional change would

[1] Vide infra pp. 28-9.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173 643 565 necessarily have followed from them, had modern conditions been different. The evidence is inconclusive.

565 642 622 Now not all territorial nobles in the Ngonde plain have been supplanted by "the sons of the Kyungus" even to-day; while in the hills inland they have mostly retained their power. And so in discussing the political system of Ngonde under the middle Kyungus, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between four different kinds of political unit: (1) the chiefdoms in the plain, each ruled by a hereditary chief related to the Kyungu; (2) the fiefs (if I may adapt this word from a feudal to a primitive context) in the plain, ruled by hereditary nobles unrelated to the Kyungu; (3) the fiefs in the hills inland, also ruled by hereditary nobles, but differing in many ways from the fiefs in the plain, and (4) the chiefdoms of the houses of Nyondo and Kameme in the hills.

642 622 This paper is mainly concerned with chiefdoms and fiefs of the plain. There each of the chiefdoms consisted, as among the Nyakyusa, of a group of age-villages, older and younger men living apart with their own contemporaries. At the head of each village was a headman, or great-commoner (*ulifumu*) chosen for life from among the villagers by the chief and the great-commoners (*amafumu*) of the senior villages of the chiefdom. Except in the case of very small chiefdoms each chief was succeeded by two or more sons who divided the villages among them. The transference of power from the old chief to his sons normally began in his lifetime at the "coming out" (*uwusoka*) when they were formally shown to the country as chiefs and magically treated. The constitution of every chiefdom was that of limited monarchy, for the chief was dependent upon his great-commoners, who advised and, in many ways, controlled him. In the status of chief and great-commoners religious elements played an important part.

642 622 643 565 But, whereas among the Nyakyusa each chiefdom, save the very small ones, was, in secular matters, quite independent of its neighbours and each chief was a sovereign, in Ngonde, on the other hand, the wealth of the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde made them the apex of a political hierarchy. And thus, while among the Nyakyusa the senior of two brother chiefs could only command his junior in religious matters, when they sacrificed to their common father's spirit, in Ngonde he could occasionally command him in other ways also, he could, for example, summon him to war or to hoe,[1] and he had a certain slight judicial authority.[2] Of two brother chiefs the junior was subordinate to the senior; in each of the great houses all other chiefs were subordinate to the head of the house, the great chief with a hereditary title;

[1] Vide infra sections 4 and 6.
[2] Vide infra section 5.

[text continues on p. 24]

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

642 the great chiefs themselves were subordinate to Kyungu. But every
622 ruling chief right up the scale, except the Kyungu himself, had also his
643 own great-commoners and people directly subordinate to him. More-
565 over the subordination of some chiefs to others and of all to Mbande was a very different thing from the subordination of authorities in a civilized state. It was still above all a religious and ceremonial subordination, but in matters of secular justice and administration there was a very large measure of local autonomy.

Within the chiefdom the organization of families and villages was more or less[1] the same as that described in the first paper of this series, and need not be further described here.

642 Among the fiefs of the plain there was another hierarchy, depend-
643 ing not upon seniority of birth but upon priority of arrival in Ngonde.
565 For each important immigrant who entered the country with followers of his own went first to an already established territorial noble, not straight to Mbande; and it was the already established noble, who then acted as his sponsor, took him to Mbande and told the nobles of Ngonde and the Kyungu of his request for land. The normal procedure then was for the nobles of Ngonde to be sent by the Kyungu to arrange with his sponsor where to settle him. And thereafter he ranked, at least for ceremonial purposes, as his sponsor's junior. Thus the territorial noble Kasyombe was junior to his sponsor Mwenekibuta, and so on. But no ruling noble was subordinate to any chief save the Kyungu. The nobles, both territorial and of Ngonde, describe themselves as "the great-commoners (*amafumu*) of the Kyungu," likening the relationship of the fiefs and the Kyungu to that of the villages of a single chiefdom and their chief.

642 The organization of each single fief seems to have resembled in
565 many ways that of a small chiefdom, each was divided into at least two age-villages, so that old men and their sons should live separately; for it was taboo in all the Ngonde plain, as among the Nyakyusa, for father and daughter-in-law ever to meet. Kinship, however, was more emphasized as a reason for living together than in the chiefdoms, and we are told that the inhabitants of the fiefs were usually related, either as kinsmen or affines, to the territorial noble concerned; while the age-villages of a fief had no great-commoners at their head. Otherwise the customs which obtained in the plain, both in the fiefs and the chiefdoms, were, on the whole, homogeneous.

Each of the nobles of Ngonde had a few subject commoners of his own living at Mbande with him, divided up into two age-villages; so

[1] The climatic difference determines certain differences in the system of land-tenure of Ngonde and of the Nyakyusa, but of these we have made no study.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17
NyaKyusa

000 structure. We shall see in later sections how many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions. But the reverse is equally true.
796 Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular content at all, the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle were sent to Lubaga by the other chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and health; but the "clearing out of the ashes" was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruit ritual at all;[1] while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

643 Besides the Kyungus the great chiefs of Ngonde also were believed
622 to be able to avert local droughts and misfortunes in their districts by
565 offerings to their own immediate ancestors; and the lesser chiefs like-
769 wise and the territorial nobles—each in his own little area. While among the territorial nobles, the original owners of the land had wider
731 powers. It will be remembered that to them the first Kyungu is said to have given head-cloths and asked for their prayers. Sometimes people would prophesy future misfortune "at Kisindile", or "at Kaluma" or "at Ifumbo," or would prophesy of present misfortunes that such was their source. Then the territorial noble concerned[2] would be formally visited by the nobles of Ngonde, and he and they together would offer sacrifice to his ancestors on behalf of all Ngonde.

778 And then also there were sacred lagoons near the lake—Nthola,
776 Kambwe, Kibondo, Mulale and Katindi. They were associated not
782 with ancestral spirits at all but with a vaguely defined supreme deity named Mbamba. And beside them also prayers and sacrifices were made from time to time by the nobles of Ngonde.

771 Over these other spiritual powers we need not linger, save to
643 notice one most significant fact. The participation by the Kyungu in
565 the divinity of his ancestors was no isolated phenomenon in Ngonde.
622 The head of every family in the country, whether of chiefs or commoners, was similarly placed; in his own family and, in the case of a chief or noble, in his own area too, he was both a priest and a demi-god; he dealt with the spirits and by virtue of his relation to them shared their powers; his anger could curse. The Kyungus were but the greatest of many divinities. And thus there was in theistic ritual a high degree of local and family autonomy; local or family misfortunes

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[1] Particular people among the Nyakyusa carried it out: reigning chiefs, senior great-commoners, prophets, and any person whose birth was held to be due to magical treatment of a previously barren woman. But only they.

[2] Mwene-kisindile, Mwene-kaluma, Mwen-ifumbo etc.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

were dealt with by the local rulers or by the family-heads, not by the central authorities. It was only occasionally that general fears or misfortunes turned all men's thoughts together to Mbande. 771 643 565

Now the great-commoners of every chief were believed to have independent access to his ancestral spirits and this gave them a spiritual hold over him. If they compared him too unfavourably with his predecessors then, it was believed, those predecessors might hear and afflict him in various ways. And so it was also with the nobles of Ngonde and the reigning Kyungu. But as this belief was intimately linked with the belief in witchcraft it will be more conveniently analysed in that context.[1] 622

(b) *THE MAGICAL ELEMENT.*

Magic (the belief that certain particular objects, events, words or actions, involving particular people in particular situations, possessed in themselves an extraordinary power) was an essential ingredient of the old pagan religion of Ngonde. While the greatest magical object in the country was, traditionally, the body of the Kyungu. And the fact that the central political authority of Ngonde was so largely vested in the nobles of Ngonde was due above all to their responsibility for controlling this magical object in the public interest. 789 643

If the Kyungu cut himself, and more particularly if his blood fell to the ground, then it was the duty of the nobles of Ngonde to kill him, lest the whole land be afflicted with disease; and if he was ill likewise. "They considered that if his blood fell to the ground that was his life falling. And they likened him to a god, considering it taboo for a god to be wounded; they thought that if his blood fell to the ground it would turn into a sickness and all the people would die. And so, when the Kyungu was wounded, they thought it best to put him out of the way and start afresh with a new one. They thought it taboo for him to have even the tiniest wound on his body. And it was equally taboo for him to fall ill; everyone else, it was believed, would fall ill too; it was better to put him out of the way so that the people should keep well." 789 643 784 753

In consequence of this belief elaborate precautions were taken to maintain the Kyungu's health. Sexual impurity was believed to be magically dangerous to health in many ways and so the Kyungu, above all men, must be guarded from it. It was not considered safe even for his own wives to cook his food, lest one of them touch it during a menstrual period, and so young boys who had not yet reached puberty 789 643 834

[1] *Vide infra* section 3 (c).

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 cooked it instead. One of the reasons for killing most of his sons, as we
643 have seen, was to lessen the danger of his wives committing adultery
834 with them, for adultery was a magical cause of sickness. His wives themselves were jealously guarded.

643 Then again a Kyungu might not wade across the river lest the act
784 of doing so should magically bring a deluge of rain from heaven, he
821 had always to be carried.

789 And the breath and the growing parts of a Kyungu's body—his
643 hair and nails and the constantly replaced mucus of his nose—were
764 believed to be magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde
826 plain. When he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was buried "with breath in his body"; while portions of his hair and nails and of his nasal mucus were taken from him beforehand and buried later by the nobles of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This action was believed to "close up the land, to keep it rich and heavy and fertile, as it was when he himself lived in it."

789 Now the Lwembe of Lubaga had equally magical flesh, but the
622 other chiefs of Ngonde and the Nyakyusa had not. They could wade
826 across rivers, fall ill and be wounded without endangering their subjects. But of all alike the breath and the hair and nails had a magical importance. Every ruling chief in both areas had his nostrils stopped by his great-commoners when nearing death, while portions of his hair and nails[1] were taken from him when living and buried after his death in a special place. The hair and nails were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops. "You see these nails of yours," said the man who explained the symbolism to us, "if you cut them do they not grow again?" (They do.) "And where does their growth come from? Does it not come from within the body?" (It does.) "Well then that is the reason, the great-commoners take power of growth from the chief in the form of his nails and hair."

789 Besides his magical body the Kyungu had a host of magical
782 possessions. There was the iron stool *Kisumbi* on which he was set at his accession; once he had sat upon it he could not flee the position or he would die. There was the drum *Mwenekelwa* whose note was believed to be heard by the most distant of the Kyungu's subjects. When it was beaten "all the little nobles from afar off would hear and obey the summons; they would all come together. Then we would tell them that so and so had not brought any ivory for a long time! Then they would come with tusks as tribute, to pay worship to the Kyungu." But sometimes the drum would refuse to sound and they would kill a

[1] We were only told about the nasal mucus in the case of the Kyungu.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 554 643 status it rightly belonged, he would at once fall down dead. And many stories are still told of such happenings in the past.

And besides this there was the fact that the Kyungu, being the richest man in Ngonde and in the most intimate contact with the ivory traders, could secure medicines from a distance, which had a greater reputation than local ones.

789 771 554 But, as in the theistic aspect of the religion of Ngonde there was considerable local and family autonomy, so also was there in the magical aspect; and here there was individual autonomy also. Lesser rulers had lesser magic than Mbande, but still it was magic. Ordinary chiefs, for instance, had magically filled zebra tails which gave their people military success. And every individual could go to a doctor and exchange a little of his surplus food for magic. Success in love and hunting, in warfare and legal disputes, good crops and good health—all alike, it was believed, magic could give.

(c). *THE ELEMENT OF WITCHCRAFT.*

754 622 624 Both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa it was believed that certain commoners had snakes in their stomachs which gave them the power of witchcraft (*uvulosi* or *amanga*[1]) and among those who had this power were the great-commoners of every chiefdom. Normally a ruling chief was spiritually protected by his great-commoners from the malicious attacks of other witches, but, if he did wrong, then the great-commoners, so it was held, would cease to protect him and join in the attack.

Now in many circumstances the great-commoners' power of witchcraft and the power of the chief's dead predecessors were believed to act together. The anger of witches and that of the ancestors were sharply distinguished in theory, but in practice they often coincided. The great-commoners, for example, not only had the power of bewitching their chief but also of appealing to his predecessors to punish him for wrong-doing; and on particular occasions they were often believed to do both at once.[2] And the nobles of Ngonde had similar powers in relation to the Kyungu.[3]

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[1] *Uvulosi* is normally used when the act of witchcraft is disapproved of and *amanga* when it is approved of by the speaker.

[2] A point of considerable theoretical interest is raised by the repeated statements of our best informant on these matters that it was *because* they were witches that the great-commoners had this power of influencing the chief's ancestors, that they went to the chief's ancestors in their capacity of witches and in the manner of witchcraft (i.e. by means of the snakes in their stomachs). But our evidence on this point is not yet conclusive.

[3] So we were told when we put the question; but it was never volunteered. It was the hold which the nobles of Ngonde had over the Kyungu in consequence of his magical flesh which was the more emphasized.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

These twin religious powers of the great-commoners in relation to their chief (or of the nobles of Ngonde in relation to the Kyungu) were important for the balance of the constitution, for they provided a most effective check upon the actions of the chiefs. If a chief kept within the bounds of constitutional usage then any illness that he had would be attributed by the diviners to some such cause, as the infidelity of his wives or the breach of a taboo; but if he broke some constitutional usage then that would be taken to be the cause of his next illness; the great-commoners, it would be held, were angry and so had made him ill.

It is hardly necessary to stress the local and individual autonomy implicit in the faith in witchcraft. Not only were the great-commoners as a group believed to have an irresistible power through their witchcraft over their chief, but so were the great-commoner and the leading witches of every village believed to have an irresistible power over other individuals within that village. And in both cases their powers were strictly limited, save exceptionally, by the bounds of chiefdom or village. Moreover witches did not always act as a group, an individual witch might maliciously cause another individual to fall ill. In all this the political hierarchy was irrelevant. But it was not irrelevant in dealing with accusations of malicious witchcraft; there proof rested with the poison ordeal and a journey had to be made to a great chief or a leading noble.

4. *ECONOMIC ELEMENTS (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

We have suggested in the previous section that the traditional religious paramountcy of the Kyungu and his nobles of Ngonde was an important factor of their secular power. But comparison with the Nyakyusa shows us that their control of wealth was equally important. The religious paramountcy furnished a mould into which the stiffening stream of wealth could run and there be minted into the form of sovereignty. Much of the wealth which reached Mbande did not stay there; it was passed back piecemeal to the local rulers of Ngonde, stamped with the divine impress of the Kyungu.

(a) *THE INCOME OF MBANDE AND OTHER AUTHORITIES.*

Now the traditional income of Mbande consisted of ivory, food, labour, slaves and cattle. Of ivory the Kyungu had a semi-monopoly in the plain and received tribute from the territorial nobles in the hills. Food was brought to him by the chiefs and territorial nobles of the plain, who also, with their men, hoed his public gardens (*imilasa*). Slaves and cattle accrued to him from tribal wars and from his offending

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 The gardens of the Kyungu were divided traditionally into public
652 (*imilasa*) and private ones (*imigunda gya masano*). The produce of the first was mainly devoted to the entertainment of important guests—chiefs, territorial nobles and the ivory traders from over the lake. That of the second to the personal needs of the Kyungu and his household.
643 The public gardens were hoed and weeded by the great chiefs and the
651 nobles of the Ngonde plain with their subordinates and followers, the private ones by the nobles of Ngonde with theirs.

The hoeing of his public gardens by the chiefs and nobles of the plain was as intimately connected with the religious status of the Kyungu as was the bringing of royal tusks to him, for the belief in his rain-making powers provided a moral sanction for it. Drought and disease, as we have seen, were often attributed to the displeasure of the living Kyungu; and the failure of some ruler to bring his people to work the public gardens was, so we were told, the most usual way of displeasing him. The wealth and the divinity of the Kyungu were inextricably linked. Nor without these public gardens could the lucrative ivory trade have been maintained. In the primitive world of Ngonde there were no "purely business relations;" tributaries and buyers alike had to be royally feasted.

643 In the hoeing of the public gardens the political hierarchy of
651 Ngonde was made evident, for each great chief came separately to hoe, accompanied both by the local chiefs of his own house and by those
565 territorial nobles who lived near him. At an appropriate time either
●622 the great chief or one of his noble neighbours would suggest going to Mbande to hoe, and the former would then summon all his local chiefs. But he could not summon the nobles; with them it was a polite arrangement between equals. "When they went to hoe for the Kyungu it might be a neighbouring noble and not the great chief at all who made the first suggestion; and then the two of them would go together with their followers. For the nobles are not subjects of the great chiefs but only of the Kyungu."

651 The main crop grown in the public gardens was millet (*amalesi*) for
241 beer. And at some time during the year all the chiefs and nobles[1] who had brought men to hoe[2] them were summoned to taste "the beer of
476 the *mulasa*." So we see that, in one aspect, the hoeing of the public
273 gardens of the Kyungu was but an extension on a large scale of the

[1] It is clear from our notes that each chief and noble brought to this beer-drink some of his people; but it is not clear whether he brought all those who had worked or only the more important among them.

[2] I speak of "hoeing" and "men." It is fairly certain that the women also came to weed afterwards and that they participated in the beer. We omitted, however, to find this out.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

and say 'This is the new Kyungu.' And when they make obeisance to Kyungu all the rest, both the chiefs and nobles, fall to the ground, but Kalonga alone remains seated, for he is the senior of the whole line." 643

In the succession to the great chiefdoms there was formerly a difference of procedure in the two royal lines, that of Ngelenge and that of Ngana. When a great chief of Ngelenge died, the nobles of Ngonde were sent by the Kyungu, both to the funeral and, later, to assist in the selection of a successor. "With the great chiefs of Ngelenge it is we, the nobles of Ngonde, who have always caught their successors. We catch Kalonga, Mwakasungula Mwambelo, Katamba (or Mwenitete) and Mwambungu.[1] But we have never gone to catch the successors of the lesser chiefs, nor used we to catch the chiefs of Ngana either, for they are of the female line.... When a great chief (of Ngelenge) has died we go and consult secretly with the great-commoners and then, if one of the dead man's immediate heirs is suitable we catch him, but if not we may pass them over and take someone else who is, it maybe, quite junior in that house but who entertains his people generously. Him we hit with a dry stick saying, we have you, you are M—(title of the great chief) now! .... The chosen man we set upon a stool; this is the ancient custom. We always (used to) select mature men for these positions, not just youths[2]." 622 565

"The great titles among the Ngana chiefs" we were told "are five: Mwenengubwe, Mwafongo, Kalambo, Kilupula and Mwabulambo. In the old days the nobles of Ngonde did not go to catch them, because they were only the female line; they would summon their great-commoners to Mbande and enquire who was to succeed and, when they had discussed it with them, tell them to go and catch the selected man to be the new chief. Then the great-commoners would return and discuss it with the other four great chiefs of Ngana, after which they would catch the chosen man." 554

The qualities looked for both in a Kyungu and a great chief were the same, with one exception: he had to be "a ruling chief.... elderly man....one who was respectful in his manner to the leading commoners.....a wise chief who knew how to feed his people." The emphasis on generosity in entertainment is most striking, every informant stresses it above all other qualities. Generosity and the possesion of abundance of food were the supreme traditional marks of a chief both in Ngonde, among the Nyakusa and in many other parts of Africa as 643 622 554

[1] The house of Mwambungu was originally a junior branch of that of Katamba.
[2] Mwenendeka and Kyabinga. Other informants make it clear that not only the nobles of Ngonde but the territorial nobles of the plain also participate in the selection of these great chiefs.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 well. The one additional qualification of a great chief was bravery in
622 war; the Kyungus never fought and so in their case bravery was less
554 important.

565 The succession of the nobles of Ngonde, of the territorial nobles of the plain and of the territorial nobles of the hills was similar to that of the great chiefs: the nobles of Ngonde themselves went and discussed with the leading men of the dead noble which member of his family to appoint in his place; and the immediate heirs were passed over if unsuitable.[1] But in the case of the territorial nobles the successor of the original noble sponsor or protégé of that family also took part in the discussions. It will be remembered that there was an, at least ceremonial, hierarchy among the territorial nobles, depending upon the priority of their arrival in Ngonde and the fact that a later arrival was always introduced at Mbande by some established noble and given land near him. And the relationship then established between the fiefs continued to manifest itself at every subsequent succession.

"Mwenelupembe was a Nyika but then he came here to Ngonde and the Kyungu gave him land by the lake. Then later Mwalugali came from Mwela, and Mwenelupembe told the Kyungu that he had come; whereupon the Kyungu sent the nobles of Ngonde with Mwenelupembe to give him land. And still, when a Mwalugali dies it is Mwenelupembe and the nobles of Ngonde who discuss with his men the choice of a successor. Then, still later, Kasembe came to Mwalugali who told Mwenelupembe, who told the Kyungu. Kasembe came without men; he came from Mwela like Mwalugali but was not a kinsman of his. So the Kyungu said that Kasembe should build with Mwalugali. Then last of all came Songwe with some of his relatives, to Mwalugali. Now Songwe was a kinsman of Kasembe's. Mwalugali told Mwenelupembe who, in his turn, told the Kyungu.——And the Kyungu decided that as Songwe and Kasembe were kinsmen they should be given land together, but a little apart from Mwalugali. And still they are associated, all four, and when one of them dies the other three come to the funeral and together send the message to the Kyungu. And the three of them consult with the nobles of Ngonde about the choice of a successor; they, the nobles of Ngonde and the relatives of the dead noble consult together,

622 The succession to the ordinary local chiefdoms of Ngonde was, like

[1] Later in their conversation it was made clear, however, that, in the case of the more distant territorial nobles, both in the plain to the north and in the hills to the west, it was only to the successors of the most important ones that the nobles of Ngonde went in person. When a lesser noble died then the Kyungu would send to the great chief who was nearest (to Kilupula in the west and to Kalambo in the north), asking him to send men of his own to "catch" the successor.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

that to the independent chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa, tied up with the custom of the "coming out" (*uvusoka*). In both areas the two senior sons of the two great wives of each ruling chief were publicly "brought out" about a generation after the "coming out" of their father; and from that time forwards the old chief went into semi-retirement while they divided his country between them. If it was a big country both of them would very likely be prosperous rulers; if it was not then one of them—the most generous rather than the senior—would probably in time attract the bulk of the people to him, leaving his half-brother little but the name of a chief. 622

Now both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa there was a certain tendency for other sons of an old chief, besides the two senior who were formally "brought out," to collect a few men round them and set up chiefdoms of their own. But it was in Ngonde that this tendency was most marked. And so today the chiefdoms of Ngonde are smaller than those of the Nyakyusa, for they have been far more split up. The reason for this difference appears to have lain in the very great prestige of Mbande, and so of all kinsmen of the Kyungu. There is a saying current in Ngonde: "Every son of the Kyungu is a chief." But no such saying is current among the Nyakyusa. And thus it has happened that often in Ngonde the men of an old chief have been divided up among four or five sons, not among two only; and the most successful of these four or five has not always been one of the two senior. If a junior son was a more generous feaster of men than his seniors he would die a greater chief than they, for many of their followers would leave them and join him. So we see that the formal passing over of a mean or poverty-stricken chief in favour of a richer or more generous junior, in the selection of the great chiefs, was but an extension of a principle which already worked less formally among the little local chiefs themselves. 622 554

And, further, it must be emphasized that the principles of succession to high office in Ngonde and the principles by which property is inherited there were, and still are, wholly distinct. When the immediate heir of a Kyungu or a great chief is passed over in the succession he does not thereby lose his inheritance. The wives and property of the dead man are indisputably his. Full-brothers are the first heirs and after them either sons or half-brothers, in accordance with different circumstances; while a sister's son can only inherit if all near patrilineal kinsmen are either still in their infancy or already dead. 428

The traditional laws of succession to the Kyunguship, the great chiefdoms and the fiefs of Ngonde thus present the student with a most interesting balance between different principles: heredity was modified 643 622 554

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 by election; the election was made by the central power and the leaders of the local populations in agreement; mature wisdom, courtesy and
622 generosity in the use of wealth were all essential qualifications for office.
554 In arranging the succession to the local chiefdoms, on the other hand, the central power of Mbande took no active part. All these chiefs were related to the Kyungu, who was informed of every "coming out" as a matter of form, but that was all. In the case of these local chiefs the hereditary principles were modified only by popular choice, acting gradually over a number of years.

(c) *COMMON LAW.*

692 We must beware of letting our civilized preconceptions blind us to the fact that, though some common law must be maintained in every society, it is not always necessary for it to be maintained by a central political authority. In the primitive world of Ngonde Mbande played little or no direct part in the maintenance of common law; the great chiefs, the local chiefs, the territorial nobles, the great-commoners of the villages played a larger part; but even they usually left whole areas of law untouched to be enforced by the common people among themselves. The laws of marriage for example, seem to have been normally enforced by the two families of each married couple concerned, with the advice and assistance of their neighbours.

In a primitive society a man is far more helplessly dependent upon his relatives, friends and neighbours than he is in our own. He cannot normally escape them, for his world is so small. And this fact enables them often to constrain him effectively without calling in the aid of any constituted political authority whatever. Moreover even when it is necessary to call in the aid of political authorities it is often sufficient to call in those that have a local jurisdiction only. Centralized judicial institutions, covering wide areas, are rare in primitive conditions, because widely extensive social relations are rare also. The modern insistence upon the judicial functions of paramount chiefs in Africa is necessitated by the magnitude and complexity of the modern civilized world, in which law *can* only be maintained by central authorities; but, in many areas at least, this insistence is something new. That many African paramount chiefs had some judicial functions in former times is, of course, a fact, but those functions were often less extensive than they are to-day.

In Ngonde, however, there was traditionally no central court at all in which ordinary men could either bring cases direct or appeal from the decisions of their local authorities. At Mbande only cases of treason and insubordination against the Kyungu or the great chiefs were dealt

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 tional rivals of those of Ngelenge ; most of the traditional reasons which
643 led them to accept the supremacy of a Kyungu of the house of Ngelenge,
692 whenever one was elected, have now ceased to influence them ; while they themselves, as we shall see in a moment, are now barred from the succession. Moreover the Kyungu's supremacy is now mainly operative in the unaccustomed sphere of law. And so a new reason for admitting that supremacy has had to be more forcibly presented to them than to the other rulers of Ngonde.

Once forcibly presented, however, the new reason seems to have been admitted in place of the old ones without much difficulty. For in 1936, the next year, Kilupula spontaneously led his people to the Kyungu and formally handed over a cow to him, thereby re-establishing friendship and mutual respect between the two of them. The dispute has ended in a manifest harmony.[1]

It is relevant to mention here that in the first five months of 1937 only one case was taken on appeal from the Kyungu's court to that of the District Commissioner.

The general status both of the great chiefs and of the local chiefs
178 and nobles (the " Important " and " Village Headmen,") as also of the
565 great-commoners, has been radically altered by the new legal conditions.
● 622 Formerly these authorities were the mainstay of a primitive justice, but
624 to-day they could not possibly enforce any legal decisions without the
692 backing of the central Government. And this backing they do not have. Their sphere of influence is so small[2] that it has not been thought worth while to give them any formal judicial authority ; they are now mere arbitrators and all important cases go to court.

The modern constitution of Ngonde is thus more centralized than
178 the old. The support of the Government is given to, and effective
692 judicial power is concentrated in the hands of half a dozen men, with their own advisers. The new judicial functions of the Kyungu and the selected " Sub-chiefs " have, in fact, been transferred to them from the local rulers. Some such centralization was inevitable under modern conditions but the details are dependent upon the decisions of the Government.

(c) *PETER THE FORTUNATE.*

643 The wealth of the present Kyungu is not only due to his great personal abilities. For twenty years before his appointment as Regent (when he himself became the Kyungu in all but name) he was the full-

[1] This phrase begs no questions about private feelings, upon which we have no evidence.

[2] This is less true of the great chiefs (the " Important Headmen ") than of the rest ; and possibly an understanding of their status will alter the attitude of the Administration to them.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 643 Magemo to Mwakabanga no Kyungu has ever been succeeded by his own immediate heir; the choice of Peter as successor to Mwangalaba was unique, for he was his full brother and the heir to his property, but then Peter's ability and personal wealth were unique also. And in the case of the great chiefs and the nobles also the principle of election is still followed.

178 554 643 The grounds of election have slightly altered. Generosity and wealth are still important, but "wisdom in European ways" is now more looked for than maturity, and shortly before our visit a fairly young man was chosen as Mwakasungula. Bravery in war, of course, no longer matters.

178 565 622 The Administration have so far made little use of any great chiefs except the three who are now "Sub-chiefs;" but the others (the "Important Headmen") could be made into effective local rulers, if their salaries were raised. The ordinary chiefs and nobles (the "Village Headmen") are too numerous and have too few subjects to be very effective links in the chain of modern authority. But many of the great chiefs command the respect of considerable numbers. Moreover the fact that they are already being elected for their "wisdom in European ways" suggests that they will prove competent to deal with modern problems.

The traditional secular procedure of election is still followed, with some exceptions: the nobles of Ngonde are now sent by the Kyungu to participate in the "catching" of the great chiefs of Ngana[1] on the spot; the District Commissioner is informed of the result of every election; while the Kyungu himself, no longer secluded, takes a bigger share in making the choices than his predecessors very well could. And many of the religious elements of the traditional procedure, such as the setting of a new Kyungu on the iron stool *Kiumbi*, have fallen out of use.

The sending by Peter of the nobles of Ngonde to catch the chiefs of Ngana is a sign of the present centralization of power in his hands under Government. When we asked why the old custom had been changed we were told that it was "because now everything is under the control of Government and comes to the Kyungu."

The gradual ousting by chiefs of the few ruling territorial nobles who still remain in the plain has continued in modern times, but the novel conditions have complicated the process and seem to be checking it. A recent quarrel between Kajuni and Mwenelupembe illustrates this. The head of the house of Kajuni, which is a junior branch of the [576]

[1] I think this is also true of the less important territorial nobles of the hills, but am not sure.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Mwenengubwe, has attained more or less the status of a great chief; but his country originally belonged to the noble Mwenelupembe. One of the Kajunis married a daughter of Mwenelupembe and, in the usual way, became the effective ruler of most of the country. But the position was not formally clarified, Kajuni and Mwenelupembe are said to have lived on the best of terms, "and there was no boundary between them." After the arrival of the Europeans Kajuni was recorded in the Government list as the "Headman," for taxation purposes, with the consent of Mwenelupembe. And this meant that Mwenelupembe received no share of the tax money. But then, recently, Kajuni sold some of their land to a European for a tobacco shamba without consulting Mwenelupembe, who was furious, and demanded his own tax register and to have a boundary formally marked out between them. And this has now been done. The present cash value of the status of a ruler has altered the economics of the situation, the decline of the religious status of Mbande lessens the comparative importance of the royal blood, while new occasions of dispute between the rulers are now present.

178 565 622 578

The "coming out" (*wusoka*) has ceased in Ngonde owing to the smallness of all the present chiefdoms, both in area and numbers, and the impossibility of finding sufficient land and followers for two successors to any local chief.[1] There has been no "coming out" since 1913. Each local chief is now succeeded by one younger full-brother (or one son) alone. But still among these "Village Headmen" popular favour determines their position. If his subjects do not like a "Headman" they move away to his neighbours, and every emigration reduces his salary by 3d. a year.

178 622

(e) *CONCLUSION.*

Now the more autocratic form and the greater centralisation of the modern constitution of Ngonde is very largely the product of inevitable social forces. Granted the general conditions of contact between Africans and Europeans in Central Africa, a decline of the religion of Ngonde, with the consequential change in the relations of chiefs with their leading commoners, could not possibly be avoided. Nor could the old local autonomy possibly be fitted in unchanged to any modern administrative system. And Ngonde is not unique in this, similar changes, equally inevitable, can be seen in most areas of Central Africa.

178 642

Nor is the relative poverty of the majority of the Native rulers of Ngonde today a unique phenomenon either. Richards[2] has shown the

[1] Owing to the climatic difference land is scarcer in Ngonde than among the Nyakyusa; but the implications of this fact we did not specially study.
[2] *op. cit.*

The Chiefdom and Wider Groups

(e) The "Coming Out"

128 Space forbids a full description of the relationships of villagers in all their intricate detail, but a short description of the "Coming Out" (*uwesha*) which is at the same time the most important legal act and the most exciting ceremonial of Nyakyusa life, will, I hope, make the nature of the age-village completely clear, and will also provide us with an easy transition to the discussion of the organization of the chiefdom (*ukiso*).

622 631 I have never seen a "Coming Out" properly; on one occasion I travelled to see one and arrived just a day late when all the important action and ceremonial was over, but I have had it fully described to me at different times by several people. Every chief (*umulafyale*) is normally succeeded in his chieftainship by two sons, who divide his country between them. There are sometimes exceptions to this: in very large chiefdoms three or even four sons sometimes succeed, each taking a portion of the country; and in minor chiefdoms, that is in small chiefdoms which have come under the dominion of a neighbouring and powerful chief, only one son of the minor chief succeeds to the whole of that country.[14] But the rule is that two sons divide the country of their father. This rule worked well in the old days, for till quite lately the Nyakyusa have been an expanding people in a district too large for their needs; and the combined countries of the two sons nearly always, in the old days, covered a greater area of effective occupation than the country of their father which they had divided. Now saturation point is approaching, or has come, and the rule makes for ever smaller and smaller chiefdoms. Various forces are tending to the alteration of the rule, but it is still a vital part of the constitution. (*vide infra.*)

The "Coming Out" (*uwesha*) is a series of legal acts by which the country of an old chief and his great commoners is, with certain reservations, divided and handed over into the possession and control of his two sons and their respective great commoners. These legal acts are accompanied by much pomp and ceremony. It is at once the initiation of all the youth of the old chiefdom into public life, the constitution of two new political units and the proclamation of two new chiefs. The "Coming Out" not only consists of a series of legal acts and public ceremonies, but of religious ritual as well, action is taken to increase the personal qualities appropriate in a chief and his great commoners by magical means.

[14] These minor chiefdoms have nothing to do with the present system of subordinating some chiefs to others (*vide infra.* sec. (b))

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

When the eldest sons of his contemporaries reach the age of about 33-35 years the old chief is approached by his great commoners who say: "The sons have grown up, let us make the 'Coming Out' for them." After a period of delay, for he is unwilling to relinquish his own honour and power, the old chief agrees, and the "Coming Out" takes place. His two heirs, together with all the boys and young men, whether married or single, who are sons of the old chief's contemporaries, are summoned to attend, according to their age-villages, at the old chief's principal house. When they arrive they wait there for two days, while the old great commoners discuss with their chief where to give the young men land, and whom they will select as great commoners of the young villages. We have already noted the principles which guide their choice of leaders. In many of the young village groups there are already leaders who have been previously appointed by the old great commoners, but these leaders are, I am told, only temporary, they are never reappointed at the "Coming Out;" at the "Coming Out" "everything is made new," the boundaries of the young age-villages are redrawn, and new great commoners appointed in them; only the groups of young men themselves remain unchanged. (22) (23)

The legal action which now takes place comprises three events: firstly the public selection of new great commoners, secondly the public appearance and the public recognition of the two young chiefs, and thirdly the giving of land to the young age villages.

When the old men have made up their minds, one of them goes among the crowd of young men and catches hold of those they have chosen in order of their seniority: First the one who is to be leader of the senior village of the first son of the old chief, then the leader of the senior village of his second son, then the leader of the next senior village of the first son, and so on. There are usually eight age-villages of young men, of these four will belong to the chiefdom of the first son, four to that of the second. The eight new great commoners are now publicly known, four in each new chiefdom. (24)

The next stage of the action is the one from which the whole institution takes its name; the "Coming Out." The two young chiefs are secluded for a few hours in the hut of the old chief's first wife, there they receive various forms of magical treatment and when it is finished, "then," to quote the words of a great commoner who told me about his own coming out, "the director of ceremonies said: 'Get up!' the chiefs got up, and came out of the house to us, and we, the crowd of young men, said: 'Come on!' and welcomed them. Then we all ran shouting and calling the war cry towards the next chiefdom. In the old days we would (22) [illegible]

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

622 have invaded that country for cows and brought them back and eat
them at the new huts which we built next. But that is finished now
In this way the new chiefs are shown to their people.

631 Finally the young men are told exactly where to go and build, a
the boundaries between the new chiefdoms and the villages of each a
fixed; the old boys' villages are abandoned and the houses gradual
pulled down and put up in their new places. At first the men of the fo
age-villages of each young chief just put up rough shelters to sleep in,
together on the place where the senior age-village of each new chiefdo
will later be built, but after a month or two they separate, each village
its own place, and there they build their houses.

The land is now their own, they are no longer members of boy
villages, living on land given them at the side of the parent villages b
their fathers, they are owners of the soil, full citizens, with chief and gre
commoners to rule them.

(8) *Organization and Life of a Single Chiefdom*

622 583 A few months after the "Coming Out" each of the two young chie
marries two wives. He may be married already, but the two whom h
now takes rank as his great wives (*amake amahalamba*) and their sons a
his two heirs in the chieftainship. Young girls, daughters of neigh
bouring chiefs, are carried off with a show of force from their father
homes by the young chief's men, who, themselves, later send cows t
regularize the position. The two great wives are thus married, not wit
the cows of their husband, but with those of the men whose sons thei
sons will one day rule.

622 585 Girls are carried off who are just about to reach puberty, and the
stay at the house of one of the men of the old chief until their period
begin. When both have reached puberty they are initiated, not at thei
fathers' houses, but in the country of their husband, both together. A
their initiation, the old men and women of the country (contemporarie
of the old, retiring, chief) play the part normally played by a girl's parent
and their neighbours, while the young chief and his men take the usua
part of a husband and his friends. And then, after the ceremonies ar
over, the two girls are given to the young chief as his wives. Houses ar
built for them separately: in the senior age-village of the new chiefdom
for the first wife, in the next senior village for the second wife; and i
this separation of dwelling place is already apparent the future division o
the chiefdom between their sons.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Within the chiefdom, and among the wives and children of the chief, two "sides" (*ensafu*) are recognized. In the normal country there are, at its beginning, two age-villages and half the wives of the chief on either side; for the junior wives, as they are married, are attached in a recognized order of seniority to one or the other of the two great wives, and have their own houses near them. This distinction of two sides is important in succession. If one of the two great wives bears no son, then the great commoners of the chiefdom often publicly accept the son of the next senior wife on that side as the heir to that half of the country; and, even if they do not do so during the old chief's lifetime, such a man has always a strong claim to the succession. And the two heirs each rank as head of one side of their father's family when he and his full-brothers are all dead.

Between the time of the two young chiefs' "Coming Out" and their own father's death there is, between him and them, a delicate balance of prestige and power. Each of the three, traditionally, has political authority in his own age-villages, but appeals in difficult cases may be taken from either of the young chiefs and their great commoners to the old chief and his great commoners, while the religious duties of chieftanship are exercised entirely by the old chief. During this transition period the functions of chieftanship are divided between three men, each with his own great commoners to assist him. It is necessary to understand that an old chief is believed usually to die soon after the "Coming Out" of his sons. The "breath" (i.e. witchcraft) of the people is believed to kill him because men love his sons rather than himself. When I asked about one chief (Mwakalukwa) who did not die till about fifteen years after the "Coming Out" of his sons, I was told that his was an exceptional case; "The people loved him very much because he helped them with the Government." None the less such exceptions are not unusual. But, in any case, it is commonly said that "after his sons' 'Coming Out' the old chief's power decreases, while that of his sons increases." When he dies his wives and cows are inherited by his full-brother, and to this brother also passes the religious leadership of both the two new chiefdoms, but all general or political power now normally[20] passes to the two sons. The period of transition is over, and the control of the age-villages of old men now passes to the two young chiefs and their great commoners, half to each side. The great commoners of the old chief, relinquishing most of their secular functions to their successors, enter upon new religious duties as priests in the worship of the chief who has just died, and this priesthood, as we shall see, they hand on to their

[20] Certain recent events have altered the working of this rule in some chiefdoms. (*vide infra.*)

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631 sons. To the dead chief's full-brother go his wives and cattle, so that property and power are usually inherited separately; in all the cases which I have investigated however, this brother has himself given some of the cows to the young chiefs, but the reasons for his action are still obscure to me. In so far as the dead chief's brother is still the religious head of both chiefdoms the functions of chieftainship may be said still to be divided; but all the secular functions are now normally exercised by the young chiefs. And the religious functions also fall to them when all their father's full-brothers are dead.

Political authority is the general authority of one or more persons within a community, whether local or nomadic, which goes beyond the bounds of a single family; a leadership confined to no one type of behaviour, but ordering a variety of social activities. Such an authority is wielded by a Nyakyusa chief, together with his great commoners, in his own chiefdom. There a number of legal, economic, religious[27] and ceremonial activities are controlled by them; and there, before the coming of the Europeans, they had military leadership also. But before that event no man had any wide political authority beyond the single chiefdom. The chiefs of Lubaga[27] had a far-reaching religious pre-eminence, but no general or political influence at all beyond their own country.

622. The only extensions of political power beyond a single chiefdom
578 before European times, as far as I know, arose from the rivalry of brother chiefs. The division of an old chief's country into two was not always accepted by the young men concerned; quarrels and fighting between them were common, and the position established at the "Coming Out" was sometimes modified by war. If one of the two decisively defeated the other, he took all his brother's cows and reduced him to a subordinate position. The land of the Nyakyusa is full of such minor chiefdoms; by the clerks who collect tax they are described as "villages," but they are
622 radically different from villages in their constitution. For, while they often consist only of a few score families, they are themselves articulated into age-villages and have at their head, not an elected great commoner (*ulifwa*) but a hereditary chief (*umulalyale*). A minor chief marries in the ordinary way, like a commoner, and only one of his sons inherits his chieftainship; while his chiefdom, owing to its small size, is often simply divided into two villages, one for the old, one for the young men. To-day his position carries with it neither wealth nor power; he has some authority over his own people, but less than the great commoners of his powerful

[27] I am now speaking of the position of a chief after his father and all his father's full-brothers are dead, and before his own sons have "cause out." [27] Vide infra. sec: 6(i)

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

kinsman. Though some of the reasons for his subordination are to be found in modern conditions, it is clear that many of the factors have always operated. 622

Wars did not only occur between brothers; but when one chief defeated another who was more distantly related to him, he did not, apparently ever, reduce him to a minor position: He either took his cows and then left him alone, or killed him and set up a brother of his own as an independent though allied chief, or else, more rarely, killed him, took over the country and directly incorporated it in his own. So that, apart from the subordination of a defeated brother and his heirs, political authority always stopped at the boundaries of each separate chiefdom.[14] 622 727

The traditionally independent chiefdoms to-day vary in numbers from 100 to about 3,000 adult men. 631 161

The coming of the German Administration in 1913 introduced a paramount political authority, for the first time, in the persons of European officials; while in 1926, a generation later, the British Administration created new Native Authorities under the District Officer and superior to the chiefs. The traditionally independent chiefs were grouped together in eleven court districts, in each district a "Native Court" was set up, consisting of the various chiefs and their great commoners, under the hereditary presidency of one of the chiefs, who thereby became senior to all the others in that court district. Salaries for chiefs have been introduced, and the senior chiefs receive far higher salaries than the others; while the meetings of each Court are always held in the territory of the senior chief (*omulefyale ophulumbu*); and to it has now been transferred a great deal of the legal business which, before 1926, was transacted by each chief sitting with his own great commoners in his own chiefdom. The chiefs themselves were consulted in the selection of the Court Presidents, and those chosen were normally the chiefs with the greatest number of men in each particular court district. 636 177 [465]

In this account the term *senior chief* (*omulefyale ophulumbu*) denotes the President of a Native Court, *chief* (*omulefyale*) means one of the traditionally independent chiefs, while *minor chief* (*omulefyale omunali*) means one of the subordinate chiefs, often with only 40-60 men under him.

The introduction of Courts and salaries has brought an entirely new element into the relationship between old and young chiefs (vide 636 177 578

[14] Among the Kondo of Nyamlani, I am told, there was a paramount chief Kyungu, with a far-reaching political authority; but there was no such chief among the Nyakyusa.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

636 177 578 *supra*). Only one of them can receive the salary and they commonly dispute about it. Quarrels are particularly frequent over the position of senior chief, for the presidency of a Court carries with it a relatively large salary. Old senior chiefs cling to the position long after their sons have "come out" and when they die their full-brothers still dispute the position with the sons because of the salary involved. Such a situation could not have arisen before 1926, for then there was no comparable issue between them.

636 622 177 And the introduction of salaries has also had a most profound effect upon the relative status of the two young chiefs who "come out" together. When an ordinary chief, with a small salary, dies the Government recognizes the first son alone as chief and pays the whole salary to him. This reduces the second son to the position of a minor chief as effectively as a defeat in war might have done in the old days. But, while the action of warfare only occasionally led to the subordination of one of the brothers, this action of the Government does so invariably, and always subordinates the younger brother. When a senior chief dies, on the other hand, the salary is usually divided: the bulk of it goes to the first son, together with the position of senior chief, while to the second son is given the salary of an ordinary chief.

354 622 As the prestige and authority of a father in his family, or of a man among his neighbours, is closely connected with his wealth on the one hand, and with his believed religious powers on the other, so also the status of a chief among his people. He has more cows, more wives, more food than other men; he is spiritually responsible for the fertility of the land, the women and the cattle of his chiefdom. But he is no autocrat, and all his public functions require for their exercise the co-operation of his great commoners.

622 595 Polygyny is, above all, the mark of a chief. Few commoners have more than five or six wives, but a chief frequently marries fifteen, thirty, fifty or even more; his wives weed and plant the fields which their unmarried sons hoe, and there is plenty of food for guests. Chiefs themselves hoe when they have time, and often they employ a poor man to hoe for them as well, rewarding him after a year or two with a cow. It is not 537 possible for one man to satisfy so many women sexually, and it is generally said that every chief's wife, save the five or six who are his favourites, has a lover. But intrigues must be carried on with care, for their discovery means a great public scandal.

The extent of a chief's polygyny is conditioned by his control of cattle, and his income in cattle is derived mainly from inheritance and the

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

marriages of his kinswomen. When his father dies his father's wives 622
and cows pass to his father's full-brother, but they come to him and his 595
brother eventually when this man dies. While, if the young chiefs have "come out" it is common for their father's brother to hand over some, or even the bulk of the cattle, to them before his own death. And in his own half of the family, among his siblings and half-siblings on that side, a chief has far greater rights both of inheritance and of receiving marriage-cattle, than those possessed by the senior son of a commoner. So much is clear from my evidence, but it is not yet sufficiently detailed for an exact statement of rules.

Before 1893 fighting between chiefdoms was common and, except 631
between brother chiefs, the usual aim of fighting was, not conquest, but 721
cows; wars were generally just cattle raids. And a substantial proportion of the cows captured in a successful raid went to increase the herds of the chief. This lost source of income is now supplied by Government [435
salaries, which vary from 5/- to £15 a month.[19] The price of a cow is £2; 466]
but many shillings are spent on clothes, bicycles and beer, as well as on cows.

A chief, like any other rich man, maintains his prestige by hospitality, 622
he constantly entertains his more notable subjects with beer, at the 527
ceremonies of his family all his people gather in their age-villages and he kills cattle for them to eat. Chiefs seldom nowadays kill cattle except on ceremonial occasions, but in the old days of warfare they used also, I am told, to entertain their subjects with meat from time to time, in order to keep up their spirits for fighting. History is full of stories of Nyakyusa chiefs who attracted many men to their countries, and so gained great military strength, by the generosity and abundance of their feasts.

Every time a man or woman dies, a message must be sent to the 622
chief, and at the burial he is given the whole breast and ribs (*akakua*) of 764
one of the cows which are killed by the family of the dead person at that time. He has the right to take food or milk from any of his subjects if he has need of it; but he cannot take any man's beast without later returning another to him.

Apart from the now abandoned pursuit of cattle raiding the only 631
profitable enterprises in which the members of a whole chiefdom jointly 476
participate are those of hunting and fishing; in some chiefdoms, but not

[19] Salaries above £1 a month are only paid to senior chiefs. No minor chief gets a Government salary, nor do great-commoners. The local value of money is shown (a) by the tax (8/- p.a.), (b) by the wages of unskilled labour (6/- to 8/- p.m.)

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631
476 all, hunting is organized like warfare and fishing is a joint endeavour, both ordered by the chief.

471 Every chief has a title of ownership (*obwene nakyo*) to the land of his chiefdom and can evict any man he pleases, (giving him another plot), if
622 he wishes to build there himself; but his people also have titles of ownership to it, both collectively, under the leadership of the great commoners, and individually, each man to his own ground. It is the great commoners who, in consultation with their neighbours, give to the sons of each village land on which to build; it is they who, together, finally fix the boundaries of the young men's villages at their "Coming Out;" it is they who, again in consultation with their neighbours, grant land to strangers who ask for it, though they must notify the chief and get his approval before doing so.

627 As the single great commoners settle disputes within their own
692 villages so the chief and great commoners together hear and decide cases within the chiefdom. Many of these legal actions are now settled in the Courts, but not all of them; and, even when cases are going to Court, preliminary hearings commonly take place before the chief, first. Cases are conducted and witnesses interrogated by chief and great commoners together, and the decision which the chief pronounces is an expression of their general opinion.

554 Among the great commoners there is an order of seniority. The
624 leaders of the two senior age-villages of the chief's own men play a prominent part at his "Coming Out," they each have a pre-eminent authority in one side of his chiefdom, and the other great commoners rank as their juniors, some on one side, some on the other. In the old days the two senior great commoners each led a whole side of the chiefdom in war.

622 The two most effective checks on the power of a chief are migration
754 and witchcraft. Military strength used to depend upon the number of a chief's adherents, to-day the scale of his salary is similarly dependent; men are quite free to move, and there is a constant flow of adherents from unpopular to popular chiefs. But unpopularity is most feared in its spiritual form of witchcraft. We have seen already that an adverse current of opinion is believed to act invisibly, as the "breath of men," against an unpopular member of a village and to make him sick. So also the adverse opinion of a single village or of a whole chiefdom is believed to have power against a chief, to bring sickness or even death upon him. As in the single village, so in the whole chiefdom the great commoners are the prime sources of this spiritual power; they are believed severally to protect the members of their own villages and jointly to protect their

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

chief from the wanton attacks of witches; but if ever there is a just 622 ●
ground of offence they are believed to join their own power of witchcraft 754
in the general attack. I know one chief who dare not give a judgement in a dispute between two of his villages for fear of the indignant witchcraft of the losing side. And a general unpopularity is believed always to lead, sooner or later to a chief's death.

Chiefs also, like other men, fear the use of sorcery (i.e. destructive magic) against them, and use a number of protective "medicines" (i.e. materials of magic) to protect themselves from it. They also use powerful "medicines" to give themselves personal impressiveness, prestige and authority among their people.

While in the families of commoners an ancestral spirit is only believed 771
to affect the lives of his own descendants, the ancestors of a chief, on the 622
other hand, are supposed to influence, for good or ill, the fortunes of whole chiefdoms. Rain and good crops, the fertility of women and cattle are dependent upon their good will, which in its turn is believed to depend upon a recurrent sacrifice of cows. And for this sacrifice the chiefs, their living descendants, are responsible.[20] But, owing to the continuous division of chiefdoms every generation, several chiefs are concerned in each sacrifice; every dead chief is a source of misfortune or of blessing in the countries of all his direct descendants. And so the discussion of this part of the Nyakyusa religion leads us to the investigation of the groups which extend beyond the boundaries of a single chief-chiefdom.

(c) *Groups wider than the Chiefdom*

When a chief dies he is buried near the house of his senior great wife 778
and trees are planted on his grave. The trees grow and form a sacred 793
grove (*elisyeto*) hedged by taboos. Each of these groves is at first the 764
religious centre of two, later of a number of chiefdoms, and in them the sacrifices are made. Responsibility for finding the cow for sacrifice in a
particular grove rests with one of the living chiefs concerned, but respon- [622]
sibility for initiating the ritual and performing it lies not only with the chiefs but also with the hereditary priests (*avanyago*) in each chiefdom. These hereditary priests are descended, some from the great commoners of the dead chief who is buried in that particular grove, some from his half-brothers. The ritual is esoteric, there is no gathering of the people at the sacrifice, and only chiefs and those with hereditary priesthoods

[20] I am speaking here of the religious customs of the Nyakyusa proper and the Selya people, I believe those of the Kukwe and Mwamba are very similar, but I have not studied them in detail.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 come to it. But, on the other hand, everyone knows when a sacrifice is
778 taking place, and, in spite of the influence of missions, most people in the
793 pagan community believe in its efficacy.

782 Sacrifices are prompted either by actual misfortune or by prophecies
787 of it. The four sacrifices which I have seen myself were all stimulated by an actual shortage of food, and the hereditary priests have often told me that " now-a-days the chiefs do not listen to us until hunger comes." But, traditionally, sacrifices are said to have been usually prompted by prophecies of coming misfortune which was then averted by them. In each chiefdom the ruling great commoners, the hereditary priests and some private persons as well are believed to have the power of dreaming of misfortune (*okokunguluka*) before it comes. And the chiefs are said always to have listened to these dreams, formerly, and to have acted upon them.

778 Among the groves there is an order of seniority ; the older the grove
173 the more chiefdoms are concerned in the sacrifices there. And in Selya is the most important grove of all—Lubaga. All the chiefdoms of Selya, many of the Nyakyusa proper and even some of the neighbouring chiefdoms of the Mwamba are traditionally concerned in its sacrifices. Lubaga, the Nyakyusa say, is the grove of Lwembe, one of the original chiefs who came down the Livingstone Mountains from the East, eight or nine generations ago ; and from him all the present Selya chiefs are descended. The ancestor of the chiefs of the Nyakyusa proper was a brother of Lwembe ; and though the Kukwe and Mwamba chiefs are not related, yet those of the Mwamba who are nearest to Lubaga used to send cows there for sacrifice as well, because of the great reputation that this grove had.

● 622 Sacrifices are still made in the country of the chief of Lubaga
782 (Mwakisisya) for all the surrounding chiefdoms, but the full ritual has not been carried out for fourty years. Traditionally each chief of Lubaga was ritually installed into a position somewhat resembling that of Sir James Frazer's " Divine Kings," a position hedged with taboos, in which not only the sacrifices he made to Lwembe but his own health and fertility also were believed to be intimately connected with the prosperity of his own and neighbouring chiefdoms. But the present chief has never been properly installed, nor was his father before him. The sacrifices at Lubaga are believed to benefit not only the Nyakyusa but also the next
[173] tribe to the East, the Kinga, who live on the heights of the Livingstone Mountains ; for Lwembe, they say, was born a Kinga and moved down the mountains to Lubaga, taking the fertility of the soil with him. And

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Ans. 622
every year two hereditary Kinga priests come a three days journey from 782
their own country to participate in the sacrifice of a black cow to the [674]
spirits of Lwembe and his descendants.

Down by Lake Nyasa, in the extreme South East of the Nyakyusa 778
district, there is another equally sacred spot where sacrifices were, and 1764
believe still are[21] made to Kyala, a younger brother of Lwembe.

The Christians and the Moslems form other religious groups which 795
transcend the boundaries of a single chiefdom, but an examination of the Nyakyusa Christian and Moslem communities is beyond the scope of this paper.

The political group which is constituted by a Court district, though 636
only ten years old, is of great importance in Nyakyusa society; but here again the detailed examination of its organization and the relationships of its members is beyond the scope of this paper.

Conclusion: Culture and Society

The aim of sociology is to describe single forms of society fully and, 121
in comparison with one another, to explain them completely, in so far as 128
reasons can be found within this particular scientific field. Neither full description nor complete explanation of Nyakyusa society has here been attempted: many important facts have been omitted from the account, irregularities of detail have been slurred over, the connections of fact have been only occasionally and sketchily established, and no systematic comparison of this unit with others has been made at all.

But the method of this paper has involved an analysis, summary and 121
general though it has been, of the nature of some of the many institutions in which the Nyakyusa meet, of some of the actual elements in their relationships with one another. It is in their dealings with the earth and their cattle, with the spirits and with men who break the law, in their discussions and arguments, their ceremonial feasts, their giving and receiving, in their loves and hates and in their admiration and mockery of one another that they forever make and remake their own human relationships.

Culture is the matter of which society is the form; inseparable in fact they are only intelligible together. No two men can be related unless they both do something and unless their activities are somehow connected. Nor can either escape relationship with his fellow if what

[21] I have not yet been there to investigate.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

two peoples are distinct. Their languages are not mutually intelligible and the Nyakyusa despise the Kinga as dirty in habit and obsequious in manner. There were two main invasions from BuKinga: (i) that of the 'sons of Lwembe' who settled south and east of Tukuyu, and (ii) that of the 'sons of Ngomale' (or Kukwe), who settled first at Kina below the northern crater of Rungwe volcano, and then at Kabale in the foothills to the south-east. Most of the present chiefs of the Nyakyusa belong to one or other of these two lineages, and the chiefs of Ngonde are claimed by both. The arrival of the chiefs of Lwembe's line may be fixed between 1560 and 1650, i.e. before the settlement at the Cape, but after the death of the first Christian martyr in what is now Rhodesia[1] and the 'sons of Ngomale' followed them some generations later (*vide infra*, genealogies pp. 3, 27; p. 94). Two of the invading heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, became 'divine kings' whose successors claimed spiritual authority over wide areas, and the heirs of Kyungu gradually acquired temporal power also.

About the first inhabitants of the Nyakyusa valley, the *abilema* tradition is vague; however, it is clear that they were not one people, but consisted of small, scattered, independent groups disparate in origin. Some were very early invaders from BuKinga; others came from near Lake Rukwa and were kin to the Bungu of the Rukwa plain. They occupied an almost empty country (as their name indicates) but they found pygmy hunters[2] in the Rungwe forests. The invaders themselves were primarily hunters and honey-gatherers, though some, at least, of them began to cultivate millet, beans, and pumpkins. One group of early inhabitants, the Penja, which was pushed into the north-west corner of the valley, has remained relatively discrete, though for the most part they have fused with the conquerors.

It is clear that nowhere were the invaders allowed to establish themselves as tyrants since, though their descendants rule over the various chiefdoms, their authority is strictly limited by the headmen of the villages who are invariably of commoner stock. Moreover, while the most sacred persons in the country are, or before the coming of the Europeans were, 'divine kings', descendants of the original heroes, chosen by each generation to become the

[1] In 1561, cf. G. M. Theal, *Records of South-East Africa*, vol. ii, p. 196.

[2] The quality of relations with the Pygmies is summed up in the ironical name for them 'Where did you see me?' (*Umbuenekagu?*) The tale is that they were very sensitive about their size and the first question on meeting a Nyakyusa was always: 'Where did you see me?' The only safe reply was: 'Far, far away!'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

561 The age system of the Nyakyusa has been described in detail in
621 *Good Company*,[1] but, since it forms the basis of their social structure, a brief explanation must here be given for the benefit of readers unacquainted with that earlier volume. Within each chiefdom there are a number of villages composed not of kinsmen but of
857 age-mates. Villages begin when small boys of eight or ten years build together at a little distance from their fathers. They are joined by younger brothers, as these reach the age when boys stop sleeping at home, until the eldest are in their middle teens, when
[883] the youngsters will be told to begin another village. The boys of a village have their own leader, a 'natural' leader, not specifically appointed, but they are subject to the headman of their fathers' village, and formerly fought as a group under his direction. But
[622] at the 'coming out' a headman for each village is selected from among its members by the fathers: if he dies, his heir—a younger brother or son—inherits his position, so that sometimes a young man becomes headman of an old men's village, taking the name and social position of his father. Only commoners are eligible as headmen: we knew one candidate who was rejected because his great-grandfather was a chief.

Two villages in each chiefdom are senior to the others and their
[634] headmen are responsible each for half of the country. During the 'coming out' ritual the chief marries two wives, 'mothers of the country', and one is established in each senior village or capital (*ikitangalala*). The eldest sons of these two wives are the heirs, and later divide the old chief's country between them. Most of the chief's junior wives are divided between the capitals but some may be settled in a colonizing village in unoccupied country. All the chief's sons build with commoners in villages appropriate to their age, and all save the two heirs are subject to the commoner headmen of their villages. They are entitled to some respect as 'sons of the chief', and those of strong personality gain a following and settle disputes between their fellows (as may any commoner), but only the two senior sons can claim political authority.

561 Before the 'coming out' the villages of young men and their
621 fathers adjoin, for the boys have built on their fathers' land, on
884 the fringes of their fathers' villages. But at the 'coming out' there is a new deal in land. The young men are established in the centre
423 of the country and their fathers move to the periphery; it is not merely that fathers and sons exchange land, but all the boundaries

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, 1952.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

are redrawn and only the fields in old craters (the most prized and fertile of all) are not re-allotted. Thus the villages of kinsmen of two generations adjoin, and often those of three generations. 561 621 884

On the old chief's death his village headmen become priests of the grove in which he is buried, and, in co-operation with his sons, the new chiefs, sacrifice there on behalf of the two countries into which his old chiefdom is divided. There is a nice balance of power between chief and village headmen in life, and when he dies his two heirs and the headmen (or their heirs) continue to share power, the power which belief in his spiritual force and their ability to guide it gives them. The success or failure of rituals is held largely to depend upon the personal relationships of the leading participants, chiefs and commoner priests. 423 634 793 622

Besides the ordinary commoner priests (the village headmen of a past generation or their heirs) there are priests of the chiefs' lineage, usually belonging to a junior line to which specific ritual functions, such as rain-making, have been entrusted, and whose office is hereditary in the same way as that of a chief. Kasitile (86),[1] the rain-maker, is such a priest: his grandfather was the brother of a ruling chief (43) and had been appointed as rain-maker (*umpelafula*) and priest (*unyago*), the two functions being separate but overlapping. As rain-maker Kasitile tended the rain stones, as priest he initiated the rituals in certain of the sacred groves, though he did not actually officiate himself. Kasitile was a key informant on ritual and a chapter is devoted to his history, since it epitomizes the relationships between chiefs and commoners. 793

As we have shown, most of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde chiefs claim some sort of kinship with one another. Those who are nearly related pray together at the groves of their common ancestors, and those more distantly connected join in sacrifice to their founding fathers, but in the communal rituals kinship is neither the dominant theme nor the exclusive principle of association, as it is in the rituals celebrated by private persons. In the communal rituals most of the priests are commoners unrelated to the dead who are honoured, and the sacrifices are held to benefit not only the descendants of the dead, but all those who live in the countries they once ruled. Nevertheless, the symbolism of the communal rituals constantly recalls that of the rituals of kinship; themes which pervade the death ritual recur again in the rituals of 'coming out' and 'cleansing the country'. This background is 634 796 769

[1] Numerals after a name refer to the genealogy of Nyakyusa chiefs facing p. 3.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

indicated (*vide supra*, p. 35). And, as we shall see later, he also 771
suspected that his quarrels with the Kinga priests and with the [753]
commoner priests of Mwaipopo's chiefdom made him ill. [578]

Chiefs, and even the 'divine king' himself, lived in fear of the
legitimate anger of their people, more particularly of their village 643
headmen and priests, believing that such anger would bring them 753
sickness, and this belief gave headmen and priests a very strong [622]
hold over their lord. How it worked was illustrated by an incident
at Lubaga.

Mwanjala II (78) remarked to Mwakilima (111): 'I sent to summon [796]
Mwasesi (a commoner priest) for the ritual tomorrow but he refused
saying: "I shall not come." He is angry because he was not called to
the ritual at your home, nor was he told formally when the Kinga
came, or when Mwaipaja [G.W.] came.' Mwakilima (111) asked:
'Will you pay him?' [i.e. admit your mistake and offer him compensation]. Mwanjala replied that he would, and Mwakilima expressed disgust. One of the Kinga priests who was listening broke
into the conversation: 'Ignore him if he refuses to come. If it were us [754]
we should leave him and celebrate without him, but you Nyakyusa
are all witches, and you fear to ignore a man who refuses to come to a
ritual saying that he will bewitch you. You are cowards, you are!'

At this Godfrey Wilson asked if there were no witchcraft in BuKinga. The Kinga priest replied: 'There is some, but if the chief gives orders to celebrate a ritual and someone refuses to come we ignore him, and celebrate without him. You Nyakyusa *pay* a man for doing wrong. A man refuses to come when he should and then you *pay* him! If you are afraid of witchcraft why not finish the ritual and send his portion of meat to him afterwards?'

Another priest objected: 'Then he would say it was too small a piece.'

The commoner priests then could control even the Lwembe (for Mwanjala II acted in the place of the Lwembe though he was not installed), but at the same time the mystical power of the Lwembe was feared both by ordinary chiefs and commoners. Mwaijonga (82), who ruled before the European occupation, insulted and fought Mwakisisya the Lwembe (56), and killed some of his men, because 'Lwembe had spoiled the year', but he sent back the cattle that were seized.

In the old days it did not matter killing the Lwembe's men (in war), but [727]
no one dared to take his cattle, they feared lest he would spoil the year
and send too much rain, and a plague of ulcers, and cause the cattle to [789]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 separate inheritance sometimes went through the ritual because he might later be required as a chief, and the son of a conquered chief who had retained limited authority over a small area might be permitted to 'come out' with his senior brothers also. The common pattern, then, was for two sons to 'come out' as principals, but for a variety of reasons one or more 'younger brothers' might join them.

In Ngonde, as opposed to BuNyakyusa, several brothers normally went through the ritual as principals and the reason given us was that power should be distributed. They would say, we were told, 'If we bring out only two they will be boastful and ill-use their people, let them be many therefore, then, if a man has a quarrel with his chief, he can flee to another. . . .' In BuNyakyusa [622] any tendency to tyranny in a chief was effectively curbed by his village headmen; but it is possible that headmen never had as much power in Ngonde as they did in BuNyakyusa.

An analysis of the genealogies of Nyakyusa chiefs shows that very often one half-brother lost power to the other, but occasionally several brothers (e.g. seven sons of Mwaipopo 26) got independent chiefdoms, and a junior brother (e.g. Mwakyusa 38) [669] might attract a larger following of men than his seniors. Mwakyusa led his men from the hills to the more fertile plain and drove out the Kyungu of Ngonde from the lake-shore north of the Songwe river.

The 'coming out' was traditionally the occasion when authority was handed over by the elder generation to the younger. The old [761] chief retired and he was *expected to die shortly*. In Nyakyusa theory he died because his men no longer loved him: 'A chief did not [888] live long after the "coming out" of his sons; he died because there was war and people would complain: "He is too old, when we fight we are beaten, he had better die, perhaps the heir will help us." He died of the "breath of men".' But, as will be shown, his headmen had the duty of smothering a chief who seemed likely to die, and they were much more ready to do this after the 'coming out' of his sons than before. It was right that the sons should come out before their father's death, but not right that the period of coregency should be extended, for the division of authority between old and young was uneasy. When the old chief did die his [793] headmen became the priests (*abanyago*) responsible for the sacri- [622] fices in his grove, and the young men were solely responsible for the defence of the country and the administration of justice.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Since the 'coming out' of his sons spelt not only retirement, but a speedy death to a chief, he was not unnaturally reluctant to hasten it and, we were told, chiefs would try to defer it, but were pressed by their village headmen to celebrate, and had eventually to accept their advice. Indeed we heard of one chief whose illness was attributed to the 'breath' of his men, angry because he refused to hold the 'coming out' which was due. 643 [753]

Nowadays the situation is radically altered by the fact that chiefs continue to live long after the 'coming out' of their sons, and the administration treats the old chief as the sole authority, or the old men find good reasons for not holding the celebration at all.

Before the ritual there is much speculation and excitement throughout the chiefdom, and private discussions between the old chief and his village headmen about suitable candidates for office. They look for men of wisdom (*amahala*),[1] skilled in settling disputes, modest (for boastfulness is judged intolerable in a Nyakyusa age-village as it is in an English public school), and given to hospitality. A leader must feed his men and to do so he requires to be relatively wealthy, therefore the poor have little chance of office. [183] [577]

When the old men are agreed among themselves they summon all the young men to the capital. They come dancing and swaggering with all their cattle, and there the old headmen seize, one by one, those they have chosen as village headmen for the next generation, beginning with the senior headman for each heir, then the second senior for each, and so on. Usually eight are chosen, four for each young chief. We get a glimpse of what it means to one individual in the following statement by the second headman of the chief, Koroso (173): 643 622 796

I made fire at the 1910 'coming out'. I can't tell much because we who were caught were in fear and trembling. I knew beforehand, because my brother was told to come from Ipyana [mission], but he was a Christian and the missionaries refused to allow him to become a village headman—they feared the medicines. He ran away and came here—he wanted to be a headman and the old men wanted him, but then he changed his mind and went off to be a soldier, and so they took me. [177]

Probably word of who have been chosen as village headmen

[1] For a discussion of the content of *amahala*, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 89-90.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 often leaks out, but in theory the young men must not know, and
622 those seized always put up a show of resistance before being
796 bundled into the hut of the senior heir's mother. Once there, no man dare flee lest, like a Lwembe fleeing from the stool, he should
[784] die. The two heirs are seized also and carried into the hut with their headmen. A litter is spread for them, and they remain there in complete seclusion, required to 'talk softly' and avoid quarrelling, guarded by the 'doctor of the coming out' and forbidden to wash except that each of the chiefs and his senior village headman washes with medicines in the doorway of the hut. Each chief also lies down with a commoner and is covered with a black cloth
[789] which, according to Mwandisi (the old blind chief 107) is a symbol of clouds and therefore of plenty. 'It means, may it be heavy—cloudy—above, may food be plentiful; may both heirs bring fruitfulness.' The commoner who lies with the chief is 'one body with him', 'his wife', and continues through life to share with him certain medicines. Some said that the senior village headman performs this function for his chief: others that it is another man altogether. The whole matter is very secret and our information is limited. The period of seclusion varies. Mwanyilu (177), who 'came out' in 1953, remained in the hut a month, and he complained most bitterly of the inconvenience of not washing for so long. During this time the young men are admonished by
[867] their fathers' senior village headmen, and told of their faults and their future duties. According to Mwambuputa (Mwankuga's [150] senior headman who was responsible for bringing out Mwanyilu), he said: 'Listen to the people: they are the real chiefs! Be hospitable! Greet people politely! Don't beat your men!' And the other senior headman, Kakuju, said: 'Do not beat your men, respect them! Feed your people on milk, meat, chickens, beer! Fear your people!'

Then the great moment, from which the ritual takes its name, arrives. Very early in the morning a crowd gathers and a junior kinsman of the chief knocks on the door and shouts: 'Come out! War has come!' Each heir, followed by his senior headman, rushes out and grasps the 'spear of chieftainship' held ready at the
[978] doorway for him, while the headman grasps a medicated zebra tail. The spear has a little horn of medicines bound to it 'to show that the chief has come out', and brandishing it is 'comparable to carrying the chief aloft. We show his greatness to the people and acclaim him.' 'The spear of chieftainship is strength, man-

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

hood.' Some say that it is not the chief himself who grasps the spear but his senior village headman who pauses in the doorway calling the war cry and rejoicing. However that may be, the spear represents the authority of a ruling chief. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) and his junior brother Mwabungulu (178), both were secluded and rushed out of the hut, but for Mwabungulu there was no spear since the chiefdom of their father was not divided into independent units.

The heirs separate, each going to where his village is to stand, whether it be pasture land or the site of a former village. The young men build temporary shelters for themselves and proceed to the most important rite of all, the making of fire by friction, using a lion bone as the trough of the drill and a reed as the shaft. Each of the two young chiefs starts the process, then his senior village headmen take over, one twirling the shaft and the other holding the trough. It is difficult to make fire with the bone and reed and great importance is attached to success; the senior headman may even be replaced if he fails, for it is taken as a sign that his headmanship will be a failure. If he succeeds, he is known in future as *ulifumu gwa lapegwa*—the headman of the fire-making. All the old fires throughout the chiefdom are put out and each appointed headman, in order of precedence, takes fire from his immediate senior and calls to his men: 'You of such and such a village come to me' and gives fire to them. The men, though crowded together in one or two shelters, split into small groups, each with its own fire, to cook. This is interpreted as a symbol of the ending of the old chieftainship and the establishment of the new. 'That fire means a new chief has come, he brings new fire, we throw away the old fire in the houses. . . .' 'The old chieftainship is coming to an end, the new has come. The fires are put out in all the homesteads, those of the young men and those of the old men, they make new fire which is taken to every home. . . .' 'But why fire?' we asked. 'Because of old . . . we chiefs came with fire, the commoners had not yet got it, they ate raw food only. When we came we slept in men's houses and we lighted fires and cooked food. Men were astonished and said: "Ha! What's this?" They were burned so they said: "These are chiefs because they brought this fire." It is this they remember still.' '*Fire is* lordship (*ubutwa*)', therefore a junior chief who goes through the ritual with his brothers does not make fire with his headmen; only those who are to rule do so. In other contexts the lighting of fire by friction is a

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

613 symbol of potency,[1] and we suggest that this also is an element in
622 the ritual of the 'coming out', for the fertility of the chiefdom is
774 thought to be bound up with the virility of the chief.

[372] There are a number of stories about the way in which Mwakyusa (38) surpassed his brothers and one of them tells how each brother made fire and set alight the pasture land (for traditionally parts of the pasture land were fired each season to provide fresh grass for grazing in the early spring), and the fires started by the elder brothers soon died out, but that started by Mwakyusa 'burned for a whole month'. This is interpreted as an omen of his greatness as a chief: fire, potency, lordship are inextricably linked.

At the 'coming out' all things are made new. No matter how [561] crowded the country the young men must move to new sites and the shelters in which they live must be new, though, as will be [356] shown, they do not necessarily move to *unoccupied* country. On their new site the young men live as bachelors, milking their cows and cooking for themselves on their new fires the meat of the cattle they seize, the bananas and grain brought by their wives and mothers. Meat is abundant, for the young chief now rules and has the right to take what cattle he chooses, even from the villages of the old men in his country. 'It was as if there were war, [726] the young men seized cattle, food, and women', and though they did not fight their fathers directly, as the Mere did, they clearly asserted their power. And, as so common further south, the accession of a chief was the occasion for raiding the neighbours: [778] the young men, we were told, went forthwith to test the efficacy of the magic spears and the medicines with which their chief and headmen had been treated. Or the chiefs might lead a battue to clear the country of wild pig, as Mwakatumbula (Mwambete 160) did directly after his 'coming out'. Well fed and exuberant, the [574] young men dance and display their cattle, and entertain visitors lavishly, for every chief seeks to attract men to his country by his hospitality.

Then they set up the sign and memorial of the chieftainship: [829] they plant cuttings of two species[2] of *fosa*, *indole* which is much used as a shade tree, and *umpendapende* from which bark-cloth is [423] made. Close to these the first house of the chief and that of his senior village headmen are built, and the trees also mark the

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 124, 145.

[2] When writing *Good Company* I mistakenly thought that two cuttings of the same species were planted. Cf. *Good Company*, p. 27.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

future boundary between the two halves of the chiefdom, where it will split the next generation. They serve as beacons[1] and are cited as evidence both of the 'coming out' and of the division of land in any later dispute. At the same time the trees are symbols of chieftainship and with their growth the success of the reign is mystically linked. According to one account, 'four headmen fetch the cuttings and the young chief stands between them (*side plate* 6) and tells the trees to grow well, and the others say: "We are planting you likewise, we are at the ritual of establishing a new chieftainship, you are a symbol for our chief, spread branches that our young headmen and other people may rest in your shade."'[2] A doctor assists at the planting, burying at the roots a live white sheep and medicines, which, it is said, later turn into the lions or leopards which protect the trees from the impious (*side infra*, p. 58); and he sweeps beneath the trees, a symbol of what the senior headman must do in future, for it is his duty to 'watch over the trees'. In Nyakyusa thought, village headmen are an integral part of chieftainship—it cannot exist without them—and the trees symbolize *both* the chief and his lady and the two senior headmen. The same informant (well known as a doctor for the 'coming out') told us: 'It means we are planting the chief and his lady; *unpundapunda* is the herd to herd *indele*, which is the more important. *Unpundapunda* is the woman, it may dry up, but *ulupunda* (*indele*) never does; it is the chief, it is familiar (*ulupuge*), but *unpundapunda* is not', and a moment or two later, 'the *ulupunda* is the senior village headman, *unpundapunda* is the junior headman'. The strength of the chief is associated with the growth of the trees. If these trees go dry the reign will not be successful, the chief will be defeated in war. If they flourish and grow the reign will be successful, the chief is a ruler. The *indele* planted for Mwaijonga (B1) is shown proudly by his great-grandson, and Mwambete (16a) who had a long reign and an enormous family boasted of the size of his *unpundapunda*—'a great spreading tree'. Ideally the young chief should, in due course, sit in the shade of his *indele* with his headmen, to settle disputes.

After the trees are planted the young men build their senior headman's house and the doctor sets up his hearth bricks, burying medicine beneath them also. The marriage of the chief follows.[3]

[1] cf. D. Kerr-Cross, 'Central-Lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, v, IV (1895), p. 113.

[2] According to most accounts, but *side infra*, p. 58.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

622 He, like many of his men, may have been married long before the
643 'coming out', but his ritual wedding to the mothers of his heirs
796 follows it, and from the time of his seclusion, until his marriage,
585 he, and all his men, should live as bachelors. The brides are chosen by his village headmen and in theory they are carried off by force, whether betrothed or not, but nowadays, since the [177] Administration discountenances forced marriages, the headmen arrange matters with the girls' families beforehand, very privately, but still they come with a show of force to carry off the brides. Girls are chosen who are approaching puberty and they are taken to the house of a commoner contemporary of their future husband. There they live until both have grown up and the puberty ritual can be celebrated. It follows the usual course except that the [356] neighbours of the man in whose house the brides are secluded play the part of the girls' families, cooking for the groom's party at the prescribed feasts. The chief washes with both girls, thereby acknowledging them as his senior wives; the marriage bed is prepared with medicines and there is great rejoicing. The following morning someone knocks at the door of the nuptial chamber crying: 'War has come', and the chief and his brides rush out to the pasture land, just as the parents of twins do at the end of their ritual.[1] Then[2] a long narrow stone (*ulufige*) is set with medicines [799] in the earth, beside the chief's town as a symbol of his marriage (*ikimanyile kya lungi*) to the mothers of his heirs. 'The stone is the chief' (*ulufige ili je nulufyale*). Hearth-bricks (*amafige*) are then set up for each bride with medicines buried beneath them, and they are given fire from that ritually kindled by their husband and his headmen. Finally they are given medicines to drink in order to develop in them 'the dignity of chief's wives' (*ulusiga kwa lwale*).

No marriage is complete, in Nyakyusa eyes, until cattle have
643 been handed over, and though the chief's brides have been carried
585 off by force, cattle—more than double the normal number—are given to their fathers. The village headmen of the retiring generation should provide these cattle and they or their heirs are recompensed when the oldest daughters born of the two wives are

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 138, 189.

[2] Mbwanyile's marriage apparently preceded the planting of his crops and the phallic stone was erected at the same time as the crops were planted, but the marriages of the sons of Mbwanyile followed the planting of their crops. The order of events seems to vary, and differences are explained as due to the order of the doctors in charge of the ritual. 'Different doctors have different customs.'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and Mwaipopo and Kimagota smeared it over the tails which were then put out with the horns to dry in the sun. Mwaipopo suggested getting Mwaisyelage, the doctor, to treat them further, and the others agreed saying: 'Let Mwaipopo find someone, that the earth may be good, that it be heavy.' Njobakosa had spoken earlier of the cattle giving much milk after the treatment of the tails. And they went on to discuss the fact that the young chief Mwankuga II (151) had begotten no child by the wife inherited from his elder brother (150) whose place he had taken. Thus the function of the chief in creating plenty and fertility was in the priests' minds, and there may be some link between the virility of the chief and success in war—one informant spoke of the chief's senior wives jumping over the tails immediately after the consummation of their marriage—but of this we are not certain. What is common knowledge is that the tails are 'for wining cattle', and they are associated with 'manure and blood'. We were told at the conclusion of the ritual: 'Formerly we should have gone tomorrow, after this treating of the tails, to fight.'

Besides medicines for majesty, courage, and popularity as rulers, chiefs use medicines to protect themselves against the fearfulness of the graves in which they sacrifice, medicines to 'close the country to hunger', to make their capitals grand, and to cause thieves who have stolen, to walk round and round until caught.

Medicines are regarded as essential to authority, victory, and successful rule, and the kind used and the dose given are adjusted to the status and character of the individual. 'Village headmen do not drink the most important *ilingile*; they drink a lesser one, *indinga*; the senior headmen is given most, the junior less.' And the chief's wives do not drink *ilingile* at all, but only a powder suitable for them. But the use of these medicines has its dangers. The chief, like other people who have been drinking protective medicines, does not eat the new crops grown on fields fertilized by ash without fortifying himself. The danger is said to come from the burnt rubbish heaps, because medicines for defence against witches and sorcerers are burnt in them and, as we have seen, certain of the medicines which the chief uses create a power akin to witchcraft. He tastes the new millet ritually in June, the cow peas in September, and pumpkin leaves in November; and he also tastes the 'new earth' at the break of the rains in October or early November. 'We chiefs fear that the medicines we have drunk will

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Njobakosa [the grandfather] ran off with them to Mwalujo in the hills, where he died so that they disappeared and were never returned to his fellow-priests. Therefore they bury the relics by the umuali tree, at his old homestead, lest someone run off with them again. . . . The hair and nails of the chief are buried there, the earth of the chief will always be heavy. All this is very secret. . . . 643 763 766 [778]

Mwandisi (107, the old blind chief) told us that

When a chief dies they take his nails and hair and put them in the house of his wife who buries them with medicine for fertility of the soil (ifuge), then at the time of planting the village headmen come and take that medicine to plant the food with. This was done on the death of the chief Mwakalukwa (141) and the chief Mwakalinga (142) and others for, it is said, the chief goes off with our fertility (imbuto yetu).

Thus, though our informants differed slightly about the details, they were agreed that the power of growth lies in the nails and hair of a chief, and these must be taken from him while he is yet alive, and later used to fertilise the earth.

The burial of a chief's son with a live black calf we saw for ourselves, and the wailing was delayed until after the burial. A distinctive funeral of this sort is accorded to all the sons of a ruling chief and his senior daughter, but not (we were told) to more distant kinsmen. The other mark of a royal funeral is the slaughter of many head of cattle to accompany the deceased and to feed the mourners. At the death of the chief Mwakyembe (99) over 300 head were killed, and Mwaipopo (116) killed thirty head at the funeral of his mother. Since a chief has many wives and daughters he has many affines all of whom must bring cows to kill, and he also has a large herd himself on which to draw. To fail to feed his people at a funeral is to fail as a chief. The whole country mourns for two or three weeks, no one going to work in the fields, or occupying themselves with ordinary business. All smear themselves with mud, as if they were kinsmen, and even the men bind their bellies tightly with mourning belts 'that they may not tremble'. [765]

(d) THE CHIEF AND THE 'BREATH OF MEN'

Fruitfulness, the power of growth (imbuto), lies in the chief's body and the village headmen have no share in it; they only tend it, taking care that it does not disappear with the dead. But the headmen share with the chief and the priests the duty of 'watching 643 778 622

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

643
778
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over the country by day and by night', and power (*mwage*) to see the enemies of darkness (that is, the witches) is thought to come to each priest or village headman from a python in his belly. No one can fulfil his duties as a ruler and defender unless he is 'heavy', but to have a python inside one is also the mark of a witch. Pressed on the point the Nyakyusa hold that a chief or village headman only has one python whereas witches have several, but this distinction is not maintained consistently, and many of our informants were agreed that the power of witchcraft and the power to see and fight witches were one and the same. The essential distinction lies in the use to which the power is put; wrongly used it is 'witchcraft' (*ubulosi*); rightly used to defend the village or to punish evil-doers it is 'the breath of men' (*indepe ya bande*) and how any particular case is labelled depends upon the viewpoint of the speaker. The victim of a misfortune and his kin will indignantly attribute it to 'witchcraft' when other people regarded it as due to his wrongdoing and a punishment brought about by 'the breath of men'.

[759]

Each village headman, together with those of the village who are 'heavy', is thought competent both to defend those of his village whom he judges innocent against witches from outside or within, and to punish wrong-doers, by bringing upon them the chill of fever. Hence those who have angered their neighbours and believe themselves to be attacked by 'witches', take refuge in another village.

The power of witchcraft is believed to be inherited, rarely acquired; but the power of defence is both inherited and increased by drinking medicines, and there seems little doubt that the medicines drunk by chief and village headmen at the 'coming out' to create in themselves *abasipe*—majesty, awesomeness—also develop *mwage*, the power to see and fight witches. Indeed, one of our Christian informants insisted that *abasipe ba bakwe*—'awesomeness is witchcraft'.

These ideas have been discussed in some detail elsewhere.[1] Here I am only concerned to show the importance of the belief in 'the breath of men' in the relationship between chief and village headmen. Not only do village headmen have the ultimate power of life and death over their chief, but they are thought to bring illness upon him if he acts unconstitutionally or disregards their advice, or fails in his duty of providing beef for his men. He may

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 91–130.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

play one village against another and go to sleep in that section of the country which supports him, but he dare not anger all his headmen. In the same way a village headman dare not anger the main body of his men. In short, public opinion is an effective sanction because there in authority believe that the disapproval of their fellows may bring a fever or paralysis upon them. One of our Christian informants was insistent that, were it not for the belief in the 'breath of men', pagan chiefs and headmen would act tyrannically.

The situations in which a chief or headman fears the breath of men are very varied. We have already referred to the chief who thought his illness was due to his refusal to hold the 'coming out' for his sons when advised to do so.[1] Mwaipopo, before whose court a very bitter land dispute between two of his villages had been brought, refused to give judgment and was careful to sleep in the village that had possession of the land, and therefore less cause for anger.[2] Kasitile, the hereditary priest of the chief's lineage who counted as 'a chief' as opposed to 'a commoner', thought he had angered the village headmen of his generation (who had become priests) by not providing meat for them (*vide infra*, p. 103).

The headmen are responsible for the health of their chief and it is they who go to consult an oracle if he is ill and take him to a doctor. Mwenkuga II (1951), heir to Mwaipopo's chieftaincy, had not begotten a son by any of the wives he inherited from his elder brother who had died. His village headmen[3] went to consult an oracle and were told that it was the wrath (*mizimu*) of his father; so they reported the matter to Mwaipopo, who sent a junior kinsman to consult another oracle. The diagnosis was confirmed and Mwaipopo gathered his younger brothers and prayed and told the shades that he had no quarrel with his kinsmen. Then he told the village headmen to take Mwenkuga to a doctor for treatment, but this they did not do, so that Mwenkuga went to consult a doctor on his own. According to Kasitile it was because the headmen had not taken Mwenkuga that the medicine did not work. 'They should take him to the doctor and be present in dreams, to watch over him in dreams.' What the headmen were angry about was not revealed—there was no obvious cause.

[1] op. cit., pp. 1949. [2] op. cit., pp. 1880 ff.

[3] Mwenkuga I who died had 'women and' before Mwenkuga II inherited from him, but Mwaipopo (1-II) continued to rule as chief and draw a Government salary.

F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

As we have seen, the chief's fearsome medicine *ngofwele* is thought to be very dangerous, and too much in the tails may cause them 'to fly about throttling men and cattle', but a chief is never accused of working witchcraft; it is inconceivable to the Nyakyusa that he could be. If the tails have got out of hand they are treated by a doctor 'to close them up'; no one suggests that the chief should get rid of them. It is commoners, 'black people', who are witches—cannibals, the eaters of raw flesh—as opposed to chiefs who, since the dawn of history, have killed cattle for meat and cooked their food like civilized men. But the distinction does not extend very far; junior kinsmen of the chief are 'commoners' and may well be accused of practising witchcraft.

There was a delicate balance of power in the Nyakyusa constitution between hereditary chief and commoner headmen and the belief in the power of medicines and of witchcraft was an integral part of it. The chief provided fruitfulness by the power of his own body and his medicines; all men depended upon him for their well-being—food, cattle, children, success in war; but he in his turn depended upon the goodwill of his men led by their village headmen; without it he shivered and fell ill, only to be buried by them 'with the breath still in his body' lest the power of growth disappear with his breathless corpse.

Something of the quality of this mutual dependence and fear is conveyed in Kasitile's account of his own illness quoted in Chapter VIII.

(e) THE NECESSITY FOR HARMONY

The welfare of the chiefdom is thought to depend upon harmony between the chief and his village headmen and priests, and also between the chief and his kinsmen. Any friction between them may result in public misfortune as well as sickness to the individual at fault. The quarrel of Kasitile, the priest, first with the Kinga priests, and then with the commoner priests of Mwaipepe's chiefdom was believed to affect the crops and the weather, as well as Kasitile's own health (*vide infra*, pp. 124-5), and Mwaipepe's failure to tell Kasitile formally of the death of their kinsman led to rain which spoiled the funeral dance. A quarrel between the lineages of two chiefs which should have sacrificed together was said to have been followed by a very poor millet crop (*vide infra*, pp. 79-80, 118, 136).

How the personal relationship of a chief with his kinsmen is

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for planting, but now all the fields are muddy, we can neither hoe nor plant.' Five days ago there was no rain but locusts, and people did not plant for fear lest the locusts should eat the rice and maize as it sprouted. Kimunde tells me: 'Kyala is very angry. . . . Mwandini (107, the priest-chief) wants to pray to put things right, he has sent Mwalulelwaya to ask Mwakisale (170, the ruling chief) for a cow. Mwalulelwaya and Mwakalebo went and the chief agreed saying: "I have not got one now, but I will look for one!" Then Mwalulelwaya sent me (Kimunde) to fetch it, but the chief refused saying: "I am busy now." Then Mwandini (107), who is blind and infirm, went himself, but still there is no cow.' 769 782 [177] [41]

The priests who minister to dead chiefs, like the priests of Lelonga, are of different types. The senior village headmen of a dead chief are responsible for conducting sacrifices at his grave in co-operation with his heir, and when a headman dies his office is taken over by his heir. Where a grave is much honoured this continues for generations and the heirs of one of the village headmen become hereditary keepers of the grave, each incumbent of the office assuming his name. Secondly, there are chiefs of a junior line, who become hereditary priests on whom the ruling chiefs depend for their prayers, but these priest-chiefs do not actually attend the sacrifices; the celebration is delegated to commoner priests and junior kinsmen. Mwandini (107) mentioned above, Kasitile (88) and Nsumba (91) were all priest-chiefs of this sort. Kasitile prayed at his own home, blowing out water before any celebration in Mwaipopo's country, and he was given the chine of any animal sacrificed on behalf of the country. If this were not done 'all the cattle in the country would die . . . it is the most important part of the meat'. The commoner priests who conducted the ritual always shared the head of the sacrificial beast and the breast went to the chief. With priest-chiefs, as with commoner chiefs, the name of the first incumbent of the office (or an early and famous incumbent) may become a hereditary title, e.g. three generations of priests in Selya have been known as *Kasitile*. 793 622 769

The essential elements in the ritual are: the sacrifice of a black bull or cow in the grove; the offering up of the blood and pieces of the sacred meat from the forelegs, together with the beer, on the earth close to a sacred stone and near a sacred tree; an invocation calling on the shades to come and feast, and petitions for rain, fertility, and health. One piece of meat is thrown down for 769 782

Chart showing position of sections of chart on "Villages of Mwaipopo' Chiefdom." (Facing page 91)

A	B
C	D

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

VILLAGES OF MWAIPOPO'S CH

643
622
103
631
551

Gen.	Chief	Village	Headman	Structural Position	Land
I	*Mwaijonga* (Ba)	IPINDA	*NJOBAKOSA*	Senior village of Mwaijonga	
		Ishi	*Kisopa*		
		ITEME	*NGULYO*	Second senior village of Mwaijonga	Moved for Ip
		Bukoba			
		Isumba			
II	*Mwaipopo I* (119)	BUJEGE	MWANIAMBE (Mwaguma)	Sons of Ipinda and Ishi	Moved for La
	Mwaipopo II (118)				
		Bujinga	Kasolile		Moved for Ip
		Lupeno		Older section of Bujinga	Moved at sam Mwaninga II
		Kinyala			
		Bunikali		Contemporaries of Mwaipopo II	
		Bulindamjo	Mwaseta	Much younger sons than those of Bujinga	
		Kibonde	Mwakikaru		
		LUPONDO	*MWAIKOFU*	Sons of Bukoba	
		Kyenso	*Kaupeka*		
		Kinale	Mwangoba		
		Kabula	*Mwakimanga*		
III	*Mwaninga I* (120)	IGEMBE	MWAMBUPUTA (Mwaninga) b. c. elder section in 1955	Sons of Bujinga	
	Mwaninga II (121) active 1955				
		Kasumbu		Younger brothers and a few sons of Igembe	
		Lugumbu	Nkuna (active 1955)		Moved for I members gon
		Igembe	Kabulile	Sons of Bujinga and Bunikali. Younger sons than in Igembe	Got land from
		Nikangwi		Younger brothers of Igembe	Moved south
		Kibonde (junior section)	Mwakikaka	Sons of Kibonde	
		NJEBE	KAKUJU (died b. Empire 1955)	Sons of Lugumbu	
		Mpungu	Mwakatika	Younger sons of Lugumbu	
		Isoko	Mwakalumbu	Younger sons of Lugumbu	
		Lukwanga	Lyamkinda	Sons of Kinale	
		Nikoko	Nyamkoga	Sons of Kabula	
		Kibwi	Kamisula	New village	Colony in for
		Kiloba	Nkuna (of Lugumbu)	New village	Colony in for

[facing p. 91; section A]

643
622
103
631
551

OF MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM[1]

Land	Numbers (Men or boys) 1955	Comments
		Widows of Mwaipopo live here
		Not surviving
jongo Moved for Iponsa	6	
		Not surviving
		Not surviving
Moved for Lupando	8 (31 wives)	
Moved for Iponsa		
Moved at coming out of Mwanikuga II, but not again		
II	7 (22 wives)	
ne of		First built where Jiki is now. Driven out by Bujoge
		Chiefdom of Mwakipenile
	9	
		Disappeared by 1955
		Chiefdom of Mwakabule
	8 (30 wives)	Mwambuputa new senior point of country. 'Brought out' Mwanyilo.
ne of	10	Junior members including Kilindo moved to Lupando. 37 members in 1958.
Moved for Lupando. Many members gone to forest.		Nsaas new headman of Kilinbo, new village in forest.
Got land from Bujoge		Akinos, son of Mwaipopo II, a former member, moved to forest.
Moved southward		
		Sub-chief Likonyola
	19 (26 wives)	
	8	
		Mwakilwanli sub-chief
Colony in forest	48	Akinos, a junior son of Mwaipopo II, was sent to watch over this colony. In 1955 Mwakonagulo was established as sub-chief of the area.
Colony in forest	158	Freshly subdivided

[Gulsing p.91; section B]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643
622
103
631
551

		Kibende (junior section)	*Mwakilaka*	Sons of Kibende		
		NJESI	KAKUJU (old & fragile 1955)	Sons of Lupondo		
		Mpunga	Mwakatika	Younger sons of Lupondo		
		Inuba	Mwakabumbe	Youngest sons of Lupondo		
		Lukwengo	Lyambilo	Sons of Kitule		
		Ndoko	Nyambage	Sons of Kabula		
		Kilosi	Kasebule	New village		Colony in fore
		Kiloba	Nesna (of Lugumba)	New village		Colony in fore
IV	Mwanyilu (177)	Lupondo	KILASILE MWANSASU	Sons of Igembe Married		Occupies sec by parts of I and Lugumb part of Mwany some member and some sons make room for members of Ig the headman and Lugumba
		Nuanga	KILASILE MWANSASU	Section of Lupondo. Younger sons of Igembe and Lugumba. Married.		
		Iliki	KILASILE MWANSASU	Sons of Igembe and Lugumba some married, some c. 14		
		Ndula	KILASILE MWANSASU	Sons of Igembe and Lugumba. Some married. 12 boys.		
		Bujisi	Pasiliki Mwambapo	Sons of Ipuma. Mostly married.		Occupies the Inube of gro split and has to the north then by Ipu moved some c at 'coming ov Bunkbah II have also mov
		Punjula	Balyuma Mwakasumbula	Sons of Kilunde III		
		IRINGA	SIKAMBOMBO KIGULEWE	Sons of Njisi. Some married.		Occupies land paid by Njisi
		Mumko	SIKAMBOMBO KIGULEWE	Sons of Mpunga and Njisi		
		Kanda	SIKAMBOMBO KIGULEWE	Sons of Mumko and Mpunga. Younger brothers of Iringa. Ages 15-20 years.		
		Mlumbi	Barungulu Mwamunsile	Sons of Inuba		
		Punjula	Barungulu Mwamunsile	Sons of Inuba. Younger brothers of Mlumbi. Ages c. 10-15 yrs.		
		Kimili		Sons of Lukwengo		
		Kalinda		Sons of Ndoko		
		Nkuja	Mwanjatile	New village		Colony in for

[1] A more elaborate version of this table appeared in *Good Company*. Certain misspellings and errors
Capitals = senior village of senior headman of clan/sub.
Italics = dead.
Total No. of taxpayers (including migrant labourers) 1955: 870.

[facing p. 91; Section C]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643
622
103
631
551

		Sub-chief Likosyela
	12 (26 wives)	
	8	
		Mwakibweli sub-chief
Colony in forest	48	Akimu, a junior son of Mwaipopo II, was sent to watch over this colony. In 1953 Mwabungulu was established as sub-chief of the area.
Colony in forest	156	Possibly subdivided
Occupies site previously held by parts of Bujege, Igembe, and Lugombo. At 'coming out' of Mwanyilu bujege split, some members moving north, and some south, some west, to make room for Lupando. Some members of Igembe, including the headman, moved south, and Lugombo moved west.	20 (including Naanga)	Kilasile first built in Katumba. Father was in Igembe. Born c. 1912. Made fire at Mwanyilu's 'coming out'. This village has a new name. It was originally called Mpuguso.
some ried.		These Mwanyilu's mates. He first built here.
come	11	Christian village near school. Mwabungulu (178) first built here but moved to forest. Mwakagile (59) had occupied this site, then Mwaijonga built Itiki I on it.
	25	3 men of Bujege who had to move to make room for Lupando have built at one end of Ndola but this is irregular.
4. Occupies the site first held by Isube of generation I which split and has two tiny sections to the north and south, and then by Ipoma III which moved some distance to south at 'coming out' of Mwanyilu. Busirkali II and Bujinga II have also moved southward.		F. of Pauliki in Busirkali. Bujisi also called Ipoma. New name has scarcely been established.
		No son of Likosyela 'came out' with Mwanyilu.
Occupies land formerly occupied by Njisi	29 (14 wives)	17 men away at work, 12 present. Sikambombo made fire at Mwanyilu's 'coming out'. His father was in Njisi.
	10	
	23	
		Also called Isube
ies of		
		Names of villages of generation IV not ascertained.
		Names of villages of generation IV not ascertained.
Colony in forest	156	New village established for second heir Mwabungulu, who is a sub-chief. Possibly subdivided.

[illegible] and errors have been corrected and the villages established in generation IV added.

[facing p. 91; section D]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

system is still the accepted form in Mwaipopo's chiefdom; the advantages of separating kinsmen in different villages are explicitly stated, and the contrast between the Nyakyusa and their neighbours in this respect emphasized. 'Certainly we do not live with kinsmen here but the Kinga do.' 'It is not good for a son to live close to his father, they will quarrel.' 'When we move to another village we consider friendship not kinship in selecting it.'

631 166 561 361 [183] [602]

(b) THE BALANCE BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND SECTIONS

The ritual cycle of the 'coming out' and the sacrifices in the groves helped to maintain a balance of power between generations, as well as between chiefs and commoners. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) in 1953 it was Mwabuputa, the senior village headman of his father, who took the leading part. He was described as 'the greatest man in the country' who 'brings out the chief' and his manner indicated that he was well aware of his power. During the reign of Mwaipopo (116) the power of his father's village headmen, Njobakosa and Ngulyo, was apparent at every ritual. Spiritual power was shared between chiefs and commoners, but exercised ideally by a virile chief of the ruling generation and the experienced headmen of the retired generation.

643 561 796 [554]

Those chosen as senior village headmen at the 'coming out' are commonly older than the young chief, but village headmen are thought of as surviving their chief—it is they who were responsible for smothering him, and performing the sacrifices in his grove. The headmanship is an *office* and so long as the office is necessary an incumbent is found for it, in the person of the heir of the original holder who is so closely identified with the deceased that most precise inquiry is often necessary to establish whether a given individual is the original holder, the succeeding heir, or a later heir, successor to the successor. The Ngulyo who officiated at the rituals in 1935 was the heir of the original Ngulyo (some said the *grandson*, not the son) and he was criticized by Kasitile as being 'a young man who knew nothing'. The principle, so familiar in Central Africa, of a perpetual office[1] emerges, among the

[622] [782] [554] [769]

[1] I. Cunnison, *Kinship and Local Organization on the Luapula*, Communications of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute No. 5 (1950), pp. 14-15; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), p. 122; A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, O.U.P. (1939), p. 24; 'Some Types of Family Structure among the Central Bantu, in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, p. 224; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, London (1911), p. 3. [113]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 Nyakyusa, when sacrifices are continued in the grove of a dead chief
561 such as Mwakisambwe (30), for an indefinite number of genera-
796 tions, and the heirs of his senior village headmen serve as his
[769] priests, taking the name of the first holder of the office. Most of the
[793] priests of Lubaga held perpetual titles of this sort. The conception of the *corporation sole* is familiar enough in the western tradition, but European observers in Africa are sometimes confused by the use of a personal name and the almost complete identification of each holder with his predecessors, as well as by the practice of treating certain kinship relationships as if they were offices.

Generation was determined among the Nyakyusa by associa-
561 tion with a chief. There was no name for those who 'came out'
796 together other than that of their chief, who was the focus of the
173 ritual. On the other hand, however, a 'coming out' concerned a
634 whole generation, and it could not be held out of season. If the
[611] heir died he was replaced by a brother, as were Mwaipopo I (115) and Mwankuga I (150). If a chief had no male heir of the right age in his senior house his daughter might represent an heir. For example, at the coming out of the sons of Mwaijonga, it was a *girl* Ijonga (114) who performed the leading part in the ritual which fell due before the birth of Mwaipopo I (115). When Mwaipopo I was born and grew up he assumed office, but he died young and was replaced by his younger brother without a further celebration. Because the 'coming out' was thus linked to the maturity of a whole generation we have felt some confidence in assigning approximate dates to the arrival of the heroes. The period between each 'coming out' we estimate at thirty to thirty-five years, though the higher figure is probably more nearly correct. There must in fact have been some flexibility in the timing of the 'coming out' to account for the differences in the number of generations of ruling chiefs in different segments of the lineage. Some of the differences may be due to errors (e.g. it is possible that 70 is an elder brother not the father of 98, and that a generation has been omitted between Mwakapeje (54) and Mwakage (75), but even where there is little possibility of error the number of generations does not always tally.

643 In theory a man always belongs to the generation succeeding
561 that of his father, irrespective of his age, provided he has not
622 inherited from a man of the previous generation and taken his status, but in practice, since men often have sons of very different

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ages, they sometimes build in villages of different generations. When it comes to the selection of village headmen, however, care is taken to ensure that they are indeed sons of men who came out with the previous chief, and a village like Katumba which comprised both younger brothers and sons of Mwankuga's generation breaks up, some members 'coming out' with Mwankuga's son, others acting as 'fathers'. Within a village all the members are equal subject to their headman, but a hierarchy of villages is clear. 561 643 622

The pre-eminence of the two senior village headmen of a chief is marked. They alone make fire with him at the 'coming out'. They alone are handed war tails with which to lead their men in battle. Each is responsible for one half of the country and a dispute not settled by the headman of the village of the defendant is reported to the senior headman in whose side of the country the village lies, and he brings it before the chief. Each senior headman has his own village, the two senior villages of the country, in which the royal ladies live; the senior wife married at the 'coming out' is established close to the senior village headman, the second wife close to the second senior headman. A chief may establish wives in a number of villages, and some at least of those he inherits from his father continue to live in his father's old homestead 'to sweep the graves', but his capitals (*ifitangalala*) are the two senior villages of the country in which his two senior wives and two senior village headmen live[1] and the names of the capitals are used not only for the senior villages but for the half sections of the generation they lead. The importance of the two senior headmen is apparent even when their generation has handed over political authority to their sons. At the sacrifices we have described Njobakosa and Ngulyo, heirs of the senior headmen of the chief Mwaijonga (82) officiated, and at the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) it was Mwambuputa and Kakuju his father's senior headmen who organized the ritual. 631 643 [293] [778]

Each village established at a 'coming out' is a clearly defined unit with its own land, and leader, and name, but villages are also segments of larger units, the half-section of the chiefdom under a senior headman, and the whole chiefdom under the leadership of 621 631 561

[1] Mwanyilu (177), though he had two senior headmen, established his two senior wives in *one house*, close to the house of Kilasile his most senior headman. This was explained as a temporary measure 'because they were young', but it is not the traditional pattern, and may be linked with the fact that the splitting of the country each generation is no longer accepted as the inevitable pattern.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 the chief himself. The members of each village co-operate in some
561 measure in cultivation and herding and they form a defensive
631 group against attack 'by day and by night'—i.e. against armed raiders and witches.[1] But there is no great elaboration of ritual for single villages. Such village rituals as occur are connected with
[788] defence against witchcraft and involve driving out a supposed
[754] witch, or receiving back a member who has fled from fear of witchcraft, or protecting the village fields against witches.[2] Most communal rituals are organized on the basis of the chiefdom or group of chiefdoms, and villages or sections participate as segments of the chiefdom.

The principle of generation and that of section hold one another in check. All those who have 'come out' together have a strong sense of unity as opposed to the generations of their fathers and sons, but every generation is split into two sections each led by an heir of the chief, and these sections have a certain territorial solidarity. It is common in Africa for organized age-groups to cut across kinship and territorial groups. The Nyakyusa peculiarity lies in the territorial unity of age-sets which occupy villages, and the manner in which the fissiparous tendencies within a chiefdom have a constitutional outlet in the rivalry between the sections of a ruling generation which become independent at the 'coming out' of the next generation.

The combination of the hereditary and selective principles of leadership among the Nyakyusa is also somewhat different from that among their neighbours. With many Central African people the heir to the holder of the office of village headman or chief is *selected*, and the most capable member of a given lineage or lineage
[643] segment appointed.[3] Among the Nyakyusa succession is precisely
[622] defined and there is no selection of a suitable heir except to the supreme and greatly feared office of 'divine king', but the selective principle is given full scope in the 'catching' of leaders for the young men's villages at every 'coming out'. It is this combination of the hereditary and selective principles which binds together chiefs and commoners and successive generations. The rules of

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 49-66, 91-127.

[2] *op. cit.*, pp. 52-4, 129 ff., 134-6, 170-4.

[3] I. Cunnison, 'Headmanship and Ritual of Luapula Villages', *Africa*, xxvi (1956), p. 111; M. G. Marwick, 'The Social Context of Cewa Witch Belief', *Africa*, xxii (1950), pp. 215-21; V. Turner, 'Ndembu Village Structure', *Africa*, xxv (1955), pp. 129-41; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), pp. 137-63.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

inheritance ensure that a limited number of young men are absorbed into the senior generation and live with the older men, sharing their activities and from time to time holding office as headmen or priests of that generation, and the selection in each generation of young men who are not the sons of village headmen, or chiefs, or headmen of the past generation, ensures that commoners without office are constantly recruited to the hierarchy of rulers. In short, power is distributed.

(c) RITUAL AND SECULAR BONDS

As in so many societies, economic and ritual links extended, traditionally, further than political links.[1] Selya was dependent upon BuKinga for iron and the Kinga came to fruitful Selya to pray for fertility. The priests who came to pray brought the hoes. The many independent chiefdoms of Selya and the Mbaka valley acknowledged the spiritual overlordship of the Lwembe by sending sacrifices to him, and it was through the network of hereditary priests like Kasitile, Mwamakonda, Mwalukuta, and Nyama of Selya, and the Kinga princes Kikungubija, Nyanigwa, Kyamba Kitali, and Silobwike that wider bonds were maintained. Mwaipopo (116) when he was granted a Court which gave him the secular leadership of Selya, failed to make any acknowledgement of Lwembe's traditional power, and it was Kasitile who later urged him to do so. The western chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa still buy medicines and bark-cloth from the Ndali to the west, and have done so for many generations, but no common ritual links them as it does Selya and the plain with BuKinga. The trade was of lesser importance than that to the east, for it does not seem to have included iron, though the Nyiha who share a common culture with the Lambya, the western neighbours of the Nyakyusa, are known to have been skilled smiths.[2] With the Sangu to the

[1] cf. E. Colson, 'The Plateau Tonga of North-Western Rhodesia' in *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa* (ed. Colson and Gluckman).

A comparison with the frontier in West and South Africa where economic and religious expansion compelled the establishment of Government is instructive. Cf. W. K. Hancock, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs*, vol. ii, part ii, pp. 160-8.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between the Lakes Nyasa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, vi (1890), p. 289. Elliot's suggestion that some of the Nyakyusa iron came from as west as discounted by Cornwallis, J. F. Elton, *The Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa* (1879), p. 370 and map, cf. J. Thompson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back*, vol. i, p. 272.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Note

621 It should be realized that (i) the names of the two senior villages of a
631 generation are well known and clear cut, but those of subordinate
561 villages are more fluid. Furthermore a village often has subdivisions,
distinguished by its members by name, but known to outsiders only by
[103] the general village name. (ii) A village may acquire a new name at the
[796] 'coming out'; the senior village of Mwanyile's generation used to be called 'Mpuguso' but 'came out' as 'Lupando'. (iii) Some villages die out altogether, e.g. Kyemo II. (iv) Some villages straddle generations. Katela in 1955 is in the same sort of position as Katumba in 1935. It includes eight sons of Mpunga who belong to generation III, but also fourteen sons of men of Masoko who 'came out' with Mwanyile. In the case of Katumba the members who were sons of men of generation III moved to younger villages and 'came out' with Mwanyile, among them being his senior headman Kilasile, a man of over forty. But Kilasile's contemporaries who were sons of men of generation II could not 'come out' with Mwanyile, at least not as a group—and the members of Katumba attended the 'coming out' as 'fathers'. Boys join a village of contemporaries but may move later to a village of younger men who are of their own structural generation.

At the 'coming out' of Mwanyile and Mwabungulu five village headmen were 'caught' and included with their chiefs. They represented five clear-cut villages. Kilasile and Sikambombo, Mwanyile's two senior headmen who made five are leaders of Lupando and Iringa respectively; Paulili and Batungulu their juniors are leaders of
[622] Bujisi (or Ipoma) and Mlumbi (or Isoba), and Mwanjotile the single headman of the junior heir, Mwabungulu, has his own village of Nkuyu established on newly settled land in the forest. The young men of Kilonde were included under Kilasile's authority, and those of Kitali and Kabola under Sikambombo's. The names Lupando and Iringa are well known as those of sections of Mwanyile's chiefdom, but the names Bujisi and Mlumbi are not: the young men of these villages still use the names of their fathers' villages, Ipoma and Isoba, though there is a clear territorial separation between fathers and sons. Taxes
[651] are collected under the names of Igumbe, Ipoma, Kilonde, Njisi, Isoba, Kitali, and the three forest villages, Kilosi, Kilolo, and Nkuyu.

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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

754 but I see them. It's taboo to speak. They must seek blood and they go
775 off; we fear them!

Question: Why do you chiefs never speak out if you are threatened?

753 Kaotula: If I speak how many would there be to name? Very many!

[649] For us it's taboo to accuse a man of witchcraft, but the commoners
[554] accuse one another. Look you, do few people keep you company?

Many!

Like us chiefs, everyone comes. It's taboo for us to speak out, we fear. Look you, when Mwambene (Mwaipopo 1:6) and I were alone we feared to throw out the beer, we said: 'If we throw it out will they leave?' But when Kimagoto came, he said: 'All right, I will throw it
[752] out myself.' We fear the fierce great priests, the terrible witches, they are angry.[1] We shrink when they appear.

● [622] The village headmen of the country call on the priests for help against us, they whisper by the fire, the priests come in their witchcraft, they call on my shades saying, 'Let us punish him', also they eat,
[793] together with the shades. Our shades never initiate anything, never; they look to the priests. But with a commoner the shade may initiate matters himself. Yes, people whisper indeed, but is that witchcraft? No! They whisper openly and ask, 'Why did you not perform the ritual?' But even although people are silent, still the shade comes
[648] saying, 'Why did you not perform the ritual? I am on the road.' He initiates the thing himself.

Question: But don't people eat meat at the ritual of a commoner?

Kaotula: Yes, and if he does not celebrate it they accuse him, but they accuse him openly.

Question: If the heir buries him with a few cattle?

668 Kaotula: If a rich commoner dies and the heir buries him with only
775 one cow, the shades are angry and the people also; their chilling
774 breath comes on his body, perhaps he falls ill himself, perhaps his child falls ill, but the people and witches do not meet together, people are angry here, and the shades there; all of them and the shades too, because he has celebrated with one cow only. People are angry because
[787] they wish to eat the meat. But the oracle says, 'The shades are angry.' It does not speak of people, it knows that people also are angry, but it speaks of the shades. And at the celebration he prays in the evening, the next day he calls people and kills a cow, and throws the sacred
[783] meat in the banana grove, saying, 'Here is your meat, father.' People say, 'Indeed he did wrong, his father was angry', but they do not confess saying, 'It was we', no, they say 'the shades' . . .

[826] We chiefs have bodies which are different, the commoners arrived
[554] first in the country, they are raw food, we fear them saying, 'They are raw food.' It is we who followed and brought fire. To us they confess

[1] Antipopo (sakai) witchfolk. The words show implies size, ferocity, and skillfulness.

9:Wilson E-5 (1954-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

elder watches over the morals of his flock and it is his duty to report to the Session any breaches of Church law among his people. Through him the cards entitling members to attend communion are distributed, and cards are withheld from those whom the Session has agreed must be suspended from membership. Each man has, on the average, 125 people to care for. The women elders organize the women's weekly meetings, and take parties of women on preaching tours in pagan villages. They are the leaders in any charitable activities of the congregation and in the instruction of a Christian girl at her marriage. A woman elder settles disputes between two women, and in family quarrels she is often asked by the elder in charge of the village to help him to reconcile the couple. She is also a supervisor of morals and reports to the local elder if she 'hears any woman speaking like a pagan'. Deacons are chosen like elders and are primarily responsible for the collection of Church dues and the administration of Church funds, but in a village in which there is no elder a deacon will carry out some of his duties.

In practice, then, each local group—a Christian village or village section—has its chosen leader, a male elder or deacon who conducts daily prayers in the local school house or his own home, and also fulfils many of the functions of an assistant village headman, arbitrating in disputes and acting as the spokesman of his village section. The traditional organization of the age-villages, in which an individual had some choice as to the village he should join, and was not bound by kinship connexions, makes an adaptation to villages in which those of the same faith live together easy. It is noticeable that the Pentecostal and Watch Tower converts build their own village sections apart from Moravians or Lutherans. And since the traditional village leaders are chosen, not hereditary, it is very easy for a leading Christian to become an assistant headman, more or less formally recognized by the village headman named at the 'coming out'.

At first the teachers were more directly under the supervision of the missionary than of the congregation, being selected by him and paid by the mission, but in the middle thirties, when funds from Germany ceased coming to the Moravian and Lutheran missions, the payment of village school teachers fell on the congregations of those denominations. Each village wanting a school had to provide a building, and in this pagans and Christians often co-operated, for many pagans also wanted their children to

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

marriage is a sacrament, a mystical union of husband and wife who wash together in the 'blood' of the husband's lineage; and at death kinsmen share a communion with the 'faithful departed'.

We have already touched on the changing conception of *Kyala*. The idea of a supreme power, or creator, distinct from the shades and heroes, is clear enough to Christians and is becoming more and more familiar to pagans, a young prince even insisting that his father and Kaitile could bring rain only 'if God willed' (*vide supra*, p. 125). Christians believe that 'God alone sends rain', and they are profoundly sceptical of the pagan rain-maker.

The Christians also speak of Satan (*Satana*) whom some identify with 'Mbusi' (*Lwembe*) and to whom the more orthodox attribute evil dreams of snakes and lions and fighting, which the pagans attribute to witchcraft. To the pagan the snake is the witch come to attack him; to the Christian it is Satan come to tempt him. The orthodox, following the teaching of missionaries, deny the existence of witchcraft, but most admit to a lively fear of sorcery which is rationalized as 'poisoning', though when the conception is examined it can be shown to include much beside poison put in food or drink. Some of our closest Christian friends admitted their fears. X, the Christian wife of a pagan chief, said one day when we were discussing witchcraft: 'You dissemble like all Europeans, you do not wish to admit belief in witchcraft, you are just pretending.' 'You really think we believe in it?' 'Yes, we all know that Europeans just hide their belief.'

Another chief's wife, Y, also a professing Christian, said: 'We all believe in witchcraft, it really exists.' Then she went on to tell how someone had come to 'choke' her one night recently when she was visiting her own people:

> I woke out of a heavy sleep with a pain in the back of my neck and my head. It was as if someone was stamping on my head. I woke up feeling heavy, I was very heavy. I said: 'If I die, you also will die. Who is outside? Who is choking me? Do they not fear God (*Kyala*)?' Then someone kicked the door and I shouted, 'Mother, mother!' and I heard footsteps going away.

When asked whether she believed that village headmen protected their people from witchcraft she went on:

> They fight the witches by night, they protect their people, they see the witches and drive them away.
>
> Question: How do you know that witches really exist, do they admit themselves to be witches?

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

their wives took to wearing cloth they should earn it for themselves by growing and selling millet and brewing beer, and many women do the clearing and hoeing in their fields, work that used to fall to men; but it is difficult for a chief to refuse to provide a man to hoe the ridges in his wife's field, or to refuse an elderly woman a cloth or some salt, and young heirs grumble much about their encumbrances.

In the political field there has been a sustained attempt to make local government more democratic and to include in it the educated men. Between 1891, when the German Government first assumed control of the area, and 1938, the tendency was for the power of the chiefs to be increased at the expense of that of the commoners. This was admitted by the chiefs themselves, as we have seen. In 1949 there was established a system of Rural Councils, on which chiefs, village headmen (*amafumu*), and ordinary commoners are represented. Four[1] of each category are chosen as representatives on the Council in their area by an electoral college itself elected by all taxpayers. Rungwe District is divided into five areas. The policy of wearing some chiefs as senior to others has been abandoned and each of the seventy-eight recognized rulers (*abatwe*) is eligible for election as a chief's representative on his local Rural Council. Village headmen (two from each chiefdom) and the ordinary commoners are similarly chosen. The five Rural Councils in turn elect one man of each sort to the District Council.[2] The system allows for, and seems to have achieved, a combination of men with traditionally high status and those who are conspicuous by reason of their education or success as coffee or rice farmers. The old feeling that education was not necessary to a chief's son, though it might be useful to a poor man, has vanished, and a considerable number of the educated leaders of the district are sons or grandsons of chiefs. The elected president of the District Council, Mr. Gordon Mwaxasana (186) is of the Nyakyusa chiefs' lineage, though not of the most senior line. In the Rural Councils the presidents elected have all, with one exception, been ruling chiefs, but it is not necessarily the genealogically senior who is chosen. There is scope for selection on the grounds of character and ability.

[1] Five in the populous plain, Wimbole (Mbo/Ngonde).

[2] cf. J. S. Kingdon, 'The Initiation of a System of Local Government by African Rural Councils in Rungwe District of Tanganyika', *Journal of African Administration*, vol. iii, 2 (1951).

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

177 The office of chieftainship still carries high prestige and the District Council has actually resolved to select a paramount chief. [643] Competition for this position is fierce and it remains to be seen [648] whether the Council will ever agree on a nomination. The persistent suggestion that the Administration should undertake the invidious task and select a paramount is scarcely likely to be acted upon, since the Administration sees no necessity for establishing such an office.

Chiefs, assisted by their village headmen, are the executive officers of the Rural Councils, but they have lost their judicial functions. There are twenty-four recognized courts with a bench [692] of 'courtholders' appointed annually by the Rural Councils, and [698] one superior court, but the annual appointment ceased in 1938 and more permanent appointments were made. The aim is to develop a specialized judiciary independent of the executive. There is also a very important class of full-time civil servants, secretaries of the District and Rural Councils, and clerks of the courts.

[622] The position of village headman is in a fluid state. Where the 'coming out' ritual has been dropped, the traditional occasion for the formal appointment of village headmen no longer arises, and old men continue in office much longer than before. When a headman dies his heir sometimes takes his position or, if neither the heir nor a junior son will accept it, some other man is appointed by the chief. There is evidence that in many chieftaincies men are reluctant to undertake the position, which carries no salary but involves a considerable amount of work and makes it difficult or impossible for a man to engage in paid employment either within or outside the District. As one woman put it, 'Money has killed the office of village headman' (*Indalama zipyile ubufumu*). There is some evidence from the lake-shore plain, however, of men competing for the office, and indeed of a son claiming in the courts the headmanship his father held. Possibly the competition for land on the plain, and the fact that the allocation of land lies with the village headman, account for this. When all the arable land is taken up, it is probable that acquisition will be [622] through inheritance or sale only, and the present headman's [623] power to allocate land is likely to vanish; but one of the most important assets of a village is its pasture-land, and in controlling and developing this the headman may well play a decisive part in the future. Since village headmen are essential executive officers in local administration, and are integrated into the new system of

9: Wilson E-5 (1954-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

Councils, the importance of establishing machinery for their appointment in chiefdoms where the 'coming out' is no longer held is obvious. [77] [422] [423]

The traditional communal rituals have not been dropped altogether, but their celebration is sporadic and not everyone supports them. Careful enquiries suggest that in less than half of the chiefdoms has the 'coming out' been celebrated when it was due. In the most conservative portion of the district, Selya, there were celebrations in 1952 and 1954, but even in that area a number of the ruling chiefs have never 'come out'. The omission is due partly to the desire of the old men to retain office, partly to the increase in population and the planting of coffee which makes any new deal in land unacceptable, and partly to the feeling of many that the old ritual is an anachronism, if not directly incompatible with their new faith in Christianity. Some chiefs who have not 'come out' would welcome a celebration; one such told us that 'if the "coming out" died chiefleadership would die'; but a young chief's personal wishes are not decisive in this matter. Sacrifices at the graves of chiefs and heroes are not as frequent as before, but they still occur at some graves in time of drought or other emergency. The Kings came to Lufungo in 1954, and they were expected to come and install Kaseile's heir in 1955. In 1954 also there were sacrifices to Mwaijongo (82) and Mwakimenhwe (91) for it was a season of scarcity. Rituals for cleansing the country and sprinkling the homesteads occur sporadically 'when occasion demands', but not annually in any chiefdom and never in some. And when celebrations do occur they do not unite the people of a chiefdom as they used to do. Christians oppose them and many non-Christians are also sceptical. [764] [765] [771]

In 1933 the traditional rituals celebrated by lineages and chiefdoms formed a coherent system. They were directed towards the shades and the heroes, as was manifest in the sacrifices and in the dramas of death and rebirth when these included 'death with the shades' as some lineages held of by migration.[1] The more participants were then conscious, in greater or lesser degree, of the symbolism implicit in the actions they performed. By 1955 the ritual cycle was nowhere celebrated in full: what remained were 'bits and pieces' of ritual, some of them fully intelligible without reference to the complete cycle. The link between the rites and the shades and the heroes was less clear, and the symbolism less [769] [770]

[1] [illegible] pp. 17-38, 70-85; *Rituals of Rivalry*, pp. 31, 38, 101, 111-113, 119.

CHAPTER II

THE TRADITIONAL SYSTEM

Although this essay is to be primarily concerned with the modern and changing land and population situation among the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains, it is quite essential first to have an understanding of the traditional system of political and territorial organization and of land tenure. This is not done immediately, for despite changes the traditional system remains as the basis of contemporary land-holding and land law. While actual conditions on the ground change, the Nyakyusa appreciation of those changes and their attitudes to land lag significantly behind. In brief, the traditional system was geared to a situation where there was plenty of land. Today the people feel real difficulty in adjusting themselves to a high density of population and an severe shortage of land, with the result that this new situation is aggravated by outmoded practices, attitudes and cultural values.

The ancestors of the present group of people now known collectively as the Nyakyusa, moved into the Rungwe region from the Ukinga Highlands to the east beyond the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains. According to legend, which is probably substantially true, these newcomers found a sparsely populated country which they easily occupied. Later, following intermarriage with, one group under a man called Mwakyusa left the Mwaskio area in the centre of present-day Rungwe District and moved down into the Lake Plains. There, probably less than 150 years ago, they drove out the Ngonde people and settled. The sons of Mwakyusa took their shares of the country and people and established their independent chiefdoms. The chiefs in 1956 are the lineal descendants, mainly in the fifth generation, of Mwakyusa, and have a well-known genealogy. The only exception to this occurs amongst the group of tiny chiefdoms in the extreme east under the Livingstones, which now form a single administrative chiefdom under Mwaskiko and number some 400 men. They were descent from pre-Nyakyusa settlers known as the Selwa.

Traditionally, as today, the village was the basic unit both in social life generally and in land-holding in particular. The Nyakyusa village was possibly unique in Africa. It was comprised of men of roughly the same age, together with their wives and young children, and it included their fathers and sons and also, very often, their elder and younger brothers. Each village consisted of a close group of houses (often centred on a local "village street"), with arable and pastoral land around it. Each village had fairly well-defined boundaries with its neighbours. The village was represented as a [illegible] guardian of villagers' land rights, the arbiter in land problems and disputes, and the controller of unused land. He was also the political and ritual leader of the village, but nevertheless he was a commoner chosen from amongst the villagers themselves, and was not a member of a chiefly lineage.

Land was owned by the village as a group. Every man resident in the village had a clear right to a site for his house and farmers plot and to arable land within the village boundaries; he also had a right to graze his cattle in its communal pastures. Residents gave these rights and members of other villages were excluded. A man who left the village automatically gave up these rights, though if he returned he was able to take up his former holding or its equivalent.

A village continued to form a chiefdom under the hereditary chief, [illegible], but active co-operation between villages then established was also slight; indeed in the larger chiefdoms there commonly existed considerable animosity which might break out in nothing or even civil war. The majority of these larger chiefdoms was weak – for example, when the Nyakyusa were attacked by Songe and Ngoni war-parties, and later by the Germans, villages of the same chiefdom conspicuously failed to join in common defence. Similarly the land affairs of one village were no concern of any other, and each jealously guarded its own rights.

Some of the chiefdoms was large; constituent of such is rooted, of Nyakyusa political organization and social attitudes. In 1930 the smallest indigenous chiefdom numbered only 24 men, in 1948 33,700 people were divided amongst about 18 indigenous chiefs, but considerably half are the Colonial Government. Given the system there would have been rather more – at least five more. Today there are 12 recognized "administrative chiefs", amongst whom five have each less than 3,000 people under them, and the largest chiefdom contains fewer than 10,000 people – the average is just over 6,000 people.

Nevertheless the chiefdom, the collection of villages, was important, because in the creation of the chiefdom villages were created, and in its development the villages developed, matured and died away. A village survived only as long as its members lived and by the nature of the age-organization there was but little possibility of the development of new villages, for villagers' sons left to form their own new villages. Thus was eventually come to comprise the core of the new chiefdom.

In accordance with the constitution of a Nyakyusa village and with local custom, the significant feature of the chiefdom was its establishment, together with the initiation of a new chief, at the great "coming-out" ceremony, whereby, in brief, each chief was succeeded by two of his sons – the eldest son of each of the senior houses of the chief, i.e., of his first two wives. At the "coming-out" ceremony, when the sons were still young men and their father was not a particularly old man, the old chiefdom was divided into two, each part coming under one of the new young chiefs. Before this critical ceremony – at which much important ritual was performed – the younger sons of the old chiefdom had already moved away from their fathers' villages and had established their own inferior villages nearby, each one containing a group of [illegible]. A Nyakyusa boy from the age of about seven years could not continue to live with his father and mother, but, in company with his mates, built his own hut on a site adjacent to the main village as indicated by the fathers' headmen. Until the "coming-out" ceremony these youthful villages were under the control of the old village headmen, but with the initiation of the new chiefs they achieved independence, such with by very headmen appointed from among the younger men. [illegible] were [illegible], and quite consequently the old villages, the older men, moved away a little in order to give the younger men adequate room to the land, for it was considered that the young men's needs for land were paramount.

After this wholesale reorganization of the old chiefdom, when new villages were established and new headmen determined, the old chief himself, the old headmen and the elder sons (the "fathers") gradually retired from active public life. The old chief was supposed to commit suicide after a time (or was quietly killed off) in order to leave the field clear for his sons; the old headmen became the religious and ritual leaders of the new chiefdoms, with the favour of elder homesteads, and the old men's

villages grew ever smaller and became extinct as their members gradually died off in old age.

A Nyakyusa village, then, owed its being to two most significant political, social and religious ones. Each village had its own approximately demarcated, and each headman was clearly and magically strengthened in order to lead and protect his own and their families.

This particular system operated satisfactorily in the demographic and land-using conditions of the old days. By the process of bifurcation, briefly described above, new chiefdoms and new villages were formed for each generation. Although the population appears to have been increasing rapidly there was always sufficient land to create two chiefdoms where one had existed before, and to create new villages and more villages than had existed before in the old chiefdom. The two new chiefs were able easily to move apart and find sufficient and more than sufficient land for their needs.

The system of bifurcation, the ideal of the Nyakyusa, did not always work out as neatly in practice – at any rate it often did not in the Lake Plains. Sometimes it did work, for example, the present chiefdoms of Lusewa and Kyela are the two parts of their grandfather's single chiefdom, which split up under their respective fathers. Similarly, the present Wenkyanda and Wenamwangala chiefdoms descend from a single unit, while the Wenkyanda chiefdom (not today a really two indigenous chiefdoms, but the Government would recognize only the senior brother's claim to chiefship and allowed him authority over the whole. Even where a single new chiefdom succeeded the old (frequently as the result of civil war in which one brother subjugated the other) the essential dichotomous arrangement prevailed so that the resultant single unit had two district halves, each with its own head with his villages and headmen. In any case, whether traditional bifurcation occurred or not, and right down to modern times, new villages have been established at the time of the "coming-out" of the new chief. The basic village system showed greater persistence and remained truer to type than did the chiefdom and the wider political system.

The real authority of a Nyakyusa chief was not in general very great, although individuals here and there achieved personal importance. A chief was accorded a great deal of prestige and honour, and by tribute and gifts he frequently became pre-eminently wealthy. He was supposed to be kept informed by his headmen of all important village affairs and to approve all matters concerning the land, but the village headman was in fact the real land authority, who allocated to the heads of land allocation and land use within his village. A chief could not do this, and in fact only in so far as he had the support and loyalty of his headmen had he any authority at all. "A chief is a chief because he has headmen," one informant put it to me – he was a prominent chief himself. A village said: "A chief does not own the chiefdom, or the land. We, the people together, own it." A chief could, without notice or advice, take any unoccupied land for the use of himself or of his kinsmen, but he could not allocate land without his headmen and villagers consulting subsequently and necessarily promised land be used, as some occasionally did. Land disputes, an uncommon feature in a country where land was plentiful, were settled by the headmen of the village in question; they were the private affairs of the village and the chief had no right of interference. Inter-village disputes first came before a meeting of the headmen concerned, with perhaps the assistance of the senior headmen of the chiefdom. Only if a dispute could not be settled and if it seemed likely to threaten general peace within the chiefdom would the disputants go before the chief himself, who even so acted and had to rely heavily on his headmen to secure a settlement. He believed was his position that he might be unable to resolve inter-village dispute for fear of witchcraft reprisals against him by the unsuccessful party.

Sometimes a chief who was a powerful personality rule roughshod over his headmen and achieved a measure of autocracy; but most headmen would not allow this and in their opposition they had the full support of their villagers, as well as the moral backing of public opinion. There are remembered cases in pre-European days when a chief was deposed or reduced to a nonentity by his headmen acting together in the face of what they considered to be encroachments on the inviolability of village unity and independence. In any case, however, even the strongest chiefs were little disposed to interfere in the land matters of their villagers; few wished to be bothered with the details of land rights. A chief could legitimately complain if he were not kept informed by his headmen, but his approval of their actions – and more especially in land matters – was very largely a formality.

Traditional Land Tenure

As already briefly described, a village comes into formal existence at the time of the formation of a new chiefdom. At that time its building site and arable and pastoral areas were roughly demarcated by the retiring headmen of the old chiefdom. Within the village, members were allocated their house plots and each man tended to take the strip of land stretching behind his plot and make his field there. The land was shared out on a friendly, co-operative basis; the new headmen smoothed out any difficulties and settled any disputes. Thus was the pattern of land-holding established. Apart from the relative value of a plot proximate to a man's house, there was little or no cause for dispute as land needs were small and the supply plentiful. An established villager could, without notification or special permission, extend his cultivation to any land which lay vacant – i.e., which was not in use or under fallow by a fellow-villager. There was therefore no need for a man to try at first to grab more land than he immediately required, nor did he need to be jealous of his neighbours' claims.

A villager's rights to the use of his land were quite secure and he had no fear of eviction or of the seizure of part of his holding. It is said that very occasionally a chief might take a man's holding but I think, at least in the Lake Plains, that this must have been most unusual. In fact, of course, so long as a man was allowed to reap his crop there was little value attached to the plot as such when nearly similar ground stood unused. Men sought security not on their plots of land, but in their membership of the village community, which assured them of their continuing rights to adequate opportunity for cultivation over the years. However, virtually every man had an excellent security of tenure on his holding during the mature life of his age-village (i.e. until at least the next "coming-out" ceremony), and if he died his heir, should he wish, could come and live in his house and cultivate his fields without hindrance. The way in which he cultivated, though of course strongly conditioned by custom and convention, was his own affair, and he sub-divided his holding amongst his own family as he thought fit. He could not, however, allocate any of his land to a man living in another village, nor could he permit it to be cultivated by such a stranger.

Through fear of witchcraft, because of persistent illness, misfortune or unfriendliness, in order to live near a relative or friend, or to inherit elsewhere, a man might leave his village and his age-mates. Then he had to give up his land-holding. When a man moved because of witchcraft or illness (much the same thing and a chief cause of movement) his land was normally left idle pending his hoped-for return, and his former neighbours would do all they could to induce him to return to his old home and fields – even to the use of force (see Wilson, G. 1938, pp. 33-5). His departure was an accusation against them, and a disturbance of co-operative unity. If the man consistently refused to return, or if it was known that he had definitely left for good, his

Gulliver K-5 (1954-1955) 1954 F367 Ngoode F367
Nyakyusa

land automatically reverted to the common pool. An established villager might decide to use part of it perhaps, but not before prudently gaining the approval of the headman, lest the migrant return later and accuse him of unlawful and unfriendly seizure. If the headman agreed, as he would after a time in most cases, the newly acquired plot became part of that villager's holding with as secure a title as the rest. Such vacated land could also be allocated by the headman to a newcomer or, before the area[1] village was established, to the son of a villager.

If a man had more land than he could cultivate – because, for example, his sons had left him to cultivate in their own villages, or his wife had died – he was under no essential obligation to give up any part. The headman might, if the need arose, try to persuade him to release a portion in order to make it available to someone in need; but the land-holder could refuse and the headman had to accept his refusal. As a chief depended on the support of his headmen, so did a headman's position ultimately depend upon at least the passive support of his villagers, from whose ranks he was chosen.

At the next "coming-out" ceremony the sons of a village of the old children might be required to move aside in order to allow the young men, their sons, to take up the better building sites and farming land. This they traditionally did voluntarily and they built new homesteads on one side and cleared new arable plots. Once re-established in this manner, these older men would not be disturbed again and they remained secure in their new holdings. How often in fact such a displacement took place I cannot say, but it certainly seems to have occurred sometimes, for one can still trace old village sites which appear to bear out the common Nyakyusa story.

In all this it must be remembered that the spirit of village unity and community was held in far higher esteem than land in such a fertile country where land was plentiful and subsistence farming required but small-sized holdings. Security of tenure and defined rights to particular plots are notions belonging to a different situation and age, when land begins to be scarce and to have an economic value, and when there is danger of men not being able to obtain as much as they need roughly where they need it.

Newcomers were invariably welcomed to a village: they were supplied with a house site and an arable holding and were assisted with food until the first harvest. They were an addition to the numerical size and physical strength of the village, and they increased a headman's prestige. Their rights were no less secured than those of founder-members of the village, although their social position was less secure, at least at first, for they had not shared in the history of the community and had not grown up with the rise of village associations and comradeship amounting almost to kinship.

Traditional rights to trees may be mentioned briefly. Trees were inherited without difficulty along with the land on which they stood, and a brother or son would commonly inherit the deceased's valuable trees without bothering to take the arable land around. If a man left his village and thus forfeited his land there, the position was different. Banana trees went with the land and a new occupant simply took them over; bananas are of no great value as they grow so readily and ubiquitously. Bamboos are more valuable (being used extensively in house-building) and any left behind in this way could be claimed in the first instance not by the village but by the chief. If the chief wanted them they became his property, or he could grant them to any man he favoured. Usually a chief was content to leave them: then the local kinsmen of the departed man had first claim, and if they had no use for them, or if no kinsmen were resident in the village, they became village property to be allocated by the headman. Cleanged trees were regarded in

[1] These are usual alternative terms used in the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plain, the standard name of Ndali, Fipa and Safwa.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F'017 Ngonde F'017
Nyakyusa

plots of maize, sweetcorn, tobacco, etc., and useful trees (bamboo, citrus-mango, kapok, aspergut and firewood). Artificial drainage would, of course, make more land available along the rivers, but this is in general beyond the abilities and resources of the Nyakyusa without considerable outside assistance.

Finally, in this matter it is to be remembered that in addition to a man's arable holding, each of his wives has a banana plot at her house from which she obtains her staple foodstuff. Such plots amount to perhaps about a tenth of an acre on the average. On the other hand, the Nyakyusa are no longer prepared to tolerate a predominantly banana diet. Rice has, in most areas of the Lake Plains, become almost as important as bananas.

Large-sized Holdings

Some blame for this novel shortage of land and the smallness of the average holding has often been laid upon that minority of Nyakyusa who have exceptionally large holdings, and also upon the immigrants from beyond the Lake Plains who have come to settle there during the past decade.

The occupiers of large-sized holdings are rather fewer than has sometimes been supposed. The notoriety of large land-owners, such as some of the modern chiefs with as much as 25-30 acres, has brought more attention to them than is really warranted. Most chiefs and village headmen have arable holdings of above average size, as a result of their privileged positions in the land allocation system and because of their prestige influence; but they remain a small minority and their number is bound to decrease in the future as inheritance causes sub-division of their holdings, for most of them have also more than the average number of wives and sons. In the two high-density regions it is clearly impossible for any man much to increase his present holding. As will be shown later (see page 24) the modern trend is not unnaturally towards a dangerous fragmentation of holdings.

The data obtained in this matter for my eight village samples are summarised in Table III, page 15. In those villages the two men out of 372 who held more than ten acres were a village headman and the father of a chief.[1] There were seven other headmen and one chief as well as some other locally influential men amongst the people covered by my surveys, but none of them held more than ten acres. There are, of course, some commoners amongst the large land-holders; many of them are close relations of the chief or headmen and have thus received preferential treatment. Some, however, are ordinary villagers who were perspicacious enough to see future trends and to obtain land in the early days before men men realised its new value and when vacant areas were still easily available. Such men are tending to become a new, wealthy class, but on the other hand they are particularly susceptible to the begging of kinsmen and friends who have insufficient land. If they are not to be regarded as unneighbourly or even anti-social (perhaps practising witchcraft) they are virtually compelled to be generous sometimes, both with their land and with their profits.

On the whole this minority of men evokes little attention or jealousy among the Nyakyusa, who indeed take it for granted that their chiefs and headmen will have more land than ordinary villagers, as befits their status and prestige. If it be thought that by reducing somehow the size and number of these unusually large holdings then the land shortage might be partly relieved, it is a false hope. I sincerely think that the Nyakyusa would welcome any such attempt at interference by administrative action, but in any case it would only provide minor and temporary relief here and there and would not be worth the executive difficulties involved.

[1] The second man should by a most liberal use of the definition of a "headman" be included in the category of the village and prestige. It is clear that the land is also directly connected with a purely local government office.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

The Problem of Immigrant Land-holders

Undue importance has also been given to immigrants, but their numbers are relatively small and only significant locally. Since about 1948, or a little earlier, there has been an influx of Africans into the Lake Plains: – Nyakyusa from the Highlands (chiefly from the Central Region – Pokati), Ndali from the Ndali Highlands of Rungwe District and Kinga from the Njombe District to the east beyond the Livingstones; from northern Nyasaland have come Ndali, Lambia and Sukwa, and there are also small numbers of Bemba and others from Northern Rhodesia. They have been attracted in the modern era, when local movement is easier, by the possibility of obtaining land in the northern Lake Plains, where rainfall is so high and untouched bushland has been available.[1]

These immigrants have been and continue to be almost entirely restricted to the north in the "low-density region" (see map, facing page 17). This contained the astonishingly empty area of the country and still there remain vacant lands to be taken up. Such land is usually of relatively inferior quality, easily subject to erosion and loss of fertility on the slopes of the foothills and unsuitable for paddy cultivation except in small, isolated basins. The immigrants, that is, have settled in areas rejected by small Nyakyusa. There, locally, the newcomers outnumber the indigenous population. In the flood plains, the high-density regions, the proportion of foreigners cannot be more than one or two per cent. of the population, and in most villages there are none at all.

It is true that these newcomers do occupy land which might well be used to relieve the congestion nearer to the Lake; but in practice this would not be at all easy. To take a single example: the newly opened area in the north of the chiefdom of Mwakyusa between the Kiwira and Songwe rivers is being rapidly taken up by Ndali from the north-west, Nyamalembwe and Mpokyusa from the Central Region (in that order of numerical importance). A few miles to the south, in the centre of the same chiefdom, the inhabitants of the Ikuto area commonly refuse to move although they manifestly cannot meet their land needs within their present villages. They, and others like them, say with some truth that paddy cultivation is less easy and less profitable in these newer and higher areas, and that poor communications make the disposal of produce more difficult. They also say, but more often leave to inference, that they are unwilling to leave their traditional village areas and begin in new parts, even though the move required is only one of a few miles. They have not yet become sufficiently aware of the permanent gravity of modern land shortage to overcome their parochial inertia. By the time they do become aware of it the opportunity may well be lost, for immigrants continue to arrive in twos and threes, and the last vacant land may be taken. To date, however, some vacant lands remain, albeit of poor quality, into which the densely packed Nyakyusa could move, and the immigrants cannot be blamed, at least not yet, for preventing the expansion and resettlement of the local population.

As the moment the chiefs and headmen in these northerly areas are keen to obtain as many of these immigrants as possible in order to swell the number of their commoners, the size of their villages and thus, directly, their own prestige and importance. Newcomers have every opportunity to be allocated as much land as they wish, where they wish, and many are liberally assisted with food in the traditional way until they harvest their first crop. I heard no complaints from either the local Nyakyusa or the immigrants, and relations seemed to be good. Strangers soon conform to Nyakyusa ways of life and to the authority of the headmen and chief, although

[1] Immigrants from Tanganyika are not in any way affected by the introduction of new regulations more prohibiting the alienation of Native Trust Land.

in fact they usually settle on the common East African pattern of scattered homesteads, each in its arable area, and not in the tight Nyakyusa village pattern.

I think that the headmen and chiefs concerned would not welcome a restraint on immigration, for it offers them a chance to emulate the numerically profound prestige of their fellows in the flood plains, to whom at the moment they feel inferior. They would, of course, most probably prefer indigenous Nyakyusa, could the latter be persuaded to settle there. As it is, at least some of the Nyakyusa of these northerly villages are trying to move into the flood plains, where they can more easily cultivate paddy and where they can join in a more active and obedient village life.

One type of foreigner to the Lake Plains is the man (almost invariably a Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who has obtained land but does not settle on it nor in any village. He continues to live in his upland village and comes down to the plains only to cultivate and harvest his paddy field. This is strictly against Nyakyusa land law and custom and, in fact, such an absentee land-holder has often made a substantial monetary gift to the chief or headman for the protection of this extra-legal privilege. These strangers are frequently among the more wealthy upland Nyakyusa, who can afford such payments as these, and often they are of chiefly rank themselves, perhaps having kinship ties with the local chief. There are probably no chiefdoms where such strangers have not obtained paddy fields, though naturally those which contained a good deal of vacant, usable paddy land at the beginning of the cash-cropping era have most.

This does arouse a certain amount of ill-feeling and opposition amongst local villagers who have insufficient land themselves, for they lose land and gain no numerical strength or profit of any kind. The illegal action of the local chief is also condemned, especially as the chiefs should not in any case assume allocatory powers. On the other hand it must be noted that the commoners philosophically accept the supposedly protected prerogatives of their chiefs under European rule and they expect the chiefs to take advantage of them. As with the case of the minority of large land-holders, the actual effect is not particularly great and reformation here would be a minor palliative. Nevertheless in this matter there is a definite and unpopular infringement of villagers' rights and of the local customary law.

One other group of strangers may be noted for the sake of completeness. They is the Kisi, who have for at least two generations been settling along the lake-shore itself from Mwaseni in the east to the Songwe river (and beyond) in the south-west. They have come from the north-eastern shores of the lake and in the Nyakyusa area they are principally fishermen who do not, therefore, compete with the indigenous population economically. They cultivate only tiny plots of manioc and sometimes of finger millet, although a few of the younger generation are now trying to grow a little paddy also. The total number of Kisi involved cannot be more than a few hundred and they have probably not increased much over the past decades. They follow an almost separate existence from their Nyakyusa neighbours, not intermarrying, and following their own way of life.[1]

1. The only Kisi settlement in Rungwe District, as in the Ngonde area, is tribal generally south of the Lake Rukwa, which has public tribal [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

brothers, and this is compelling be increasing and continued fragmentation of holdings at time of inheritance. Even so, if there are several brothers (i.e., sons of the deceased) the youngest among them may still be unable to obtain a plot, or at least not one of an economically viable size, and they are then compelled to try to gain admittance to some other village as newcomers, there to be allocated land.

The shortage of land is, therefore, not only making inheritance very considerably more important, but it is assisting in the establishment of new kinship attitudes and a redefining of fraternal relations. The position is most confused at the moment as the old system continues to exist alongside the new, sometimes more or less successfully, but often in intractable opposition. At the present time the observer can only mention general tendencies, for it is impossible as yet to foresee what the eventual result will be, and there are, in any case, many other factors involved besides those of the inheritance of scarce land.

In so far as we are primarily concerned with land problems in this essay, the basic factors are that land is newly scarce, that there is virtually no alternative activity in the country to the arable use of the land, and that therefore each son must try to obtain a share in the often inadequate holding of his father. I suggest that no form of inheritance can deal with such a situation satisfactorily – at least it is highly doubtful if any has yet emerged in an area of land shortage in Eastern Africa – and thus there are bound to be severe difficulties and a deterioration of inter-personal relations between near kinsmen who are most in competition. The new inheritance law of the Nyakyusa has narrowed the range of potential conflict from the patrilineal descendants of a grandfather to the sons of a single father; but if it has obviated possible hostility between the generations and between paternal cousins, it has also removed most of the common interest and mutual inter-dependence between them.

The Right to Land, and the Authority of the Village Headman

Although the traditional principle still exists that every village has a right to arable land within the village boundaries, yet it is no longer possible to carry it out in practice. Every village headman, in my experience, attempts to ensure that each of his men has land, but he cannot always succeed, and most especially he cannot provide every one with as much land as he would like, because of sheer spatial limitation.

Nowhere any longer does the old principle now hold that an established villager may, without permission or notification, take vacant land into cultivation as part of his holding. When land becomes vacant it must now revert immediately to the village or a group, that is to the common pool from which the headman or village authority makes allocations. There are so many and such varied demands for land nowadays that no man acting on his own can presume to take up vacant land, and only the headman may decide allocation. No person can now obtain land, whether he be an established villager or not, unless he is allocated it by the headman – or, in the many large villages typical of the Lake Plains, by the headman's assistant, sub-headman, who is delegated authority in a section of the village.

Land becomes vacant when a man shifts to another village, when a man dies and leaves no active heir who desires to take up the deceased's holding, or (but seldom today) when a man gives up part of his holding due to his inability to use the whole of it. In all these cases the land is immediately re-allocated by the headman, probably not as a single unit any longer, as first he can among a crowd of land-hungry villagers – established men seeking more land to meet the needs of growing families or for increasing cash-crop

10:Culliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

●622 311 423 production, young men seeking their own independent holding, and newcomers to the villages who seek to settle there.

The modern shortage of land has therefore considerably increased the authority and the activities of the village headman. Nowadays he is the prime mover in all changes in land-holding, other than by inheritance or temporary loans and gifts. In these latter, and particularly in inheritance, he has necessarily become an important interested party whose influence cannot be ignored, whose approval is desired and whose assistance is frequently sought both as arbiter and witness. Much more than before, and directly because of the scarcity and value of land today, he is the principal controller and allocator of land – though, of course, he remains subject to the state of public feeling and the opinions of his villagers. His position has been further strengthened by his status at the base of the administrative hierarchy in modern local government, whereby he is given executive responsibility for his village and its people. As always, disputes over land are taken before him in the first instance and here he acts not only as a judge but also as the expositor of village opinion and public knowledge. Such disputes are increasing in number, giving him more work and responsibility and also more opportunity for the expression of his status. Meanwhile his traditionally crucial ritual and magical (anti-witchcraft) powers continue, though now in somewhat attenuated form.

Fragmentation and Dispersion of Holdings

423 423 311 It has been shown how the inheritance of land, now of increasing importance, results normally in the splitting up of a man's holding.[1] Whether a young man obtains an inherited share of his father's land or he obtains an allocation in another village, its size is likely to be small – smaller than the holdings of his father's generation. Tiny, uneconomic plots are to be seen everywhere in the flood plains.

At the same time a man's holding is tending to comprise a scattered, heterogeneous collection of small plots, as he has obtained land when and where he could. An actual example will illustrate this: a young man had [341] about a tenth of an acre behind his house on which he was growing maize and beans; he had about a quarter of an acre which was his share of his deceased father's land, and another quarter of an acre which had been [343] allocated to him by the headman when a vacated holding was split up, and on both of these he cultivated paddy. This man had only small hope of obtaining more land, unless one of his brothers died without sons, for he had already been refused by the headman a share in a recently vacated holding on the grounds that, unlike many of his contemporaries, he already had at least some arable land.

Even amongst older men the holding of scattered plots is common. This is partly the result of the earlier expansion of cultivation when the formerly unused lands were put under paddy, and partly because older men too, lose no opportunity, in the face of scarcity, to take up any land they can. The Nyakyusa ideal is to have a single large holding, preferably stretching away behind the homestead – or alternatively two fields, one for paddy out in the open plains and one for food crops nearer home. This ideal becomes less and less practicable. There seems to be little or no need for this scatter of plots on account of soil and fertility differences, for these are generally few and unimportant within the area of a single village.

311 423 In my sample villages the average number of separate plots was about three per holding. There was a notable difference between villages in relation to the average size of villagers' holdings. Where land was more plentiful the

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Nyakyusa

number of separate plots per holding was less than where land was scarcer; at the same time the average size of separate plots was smaller in those more land-hungry villages. The reader may refer to Table III (page 15) for some illustrative figures. Though differences are not yet very great, nevertheless there seems to be a fairly clear correlation between the average size of villagers' holdings on the one hand, and on the other the number and size of separate plots, and this is entirely borne out by my general information obtained in villages where actual measurements were not made. The inescapable conclusion must be that increasing scarcity of land in the Lake Plains leads to increasing fragmentation and dispersion of holdings; further, the present land situation and land tenure system can only lead to a continuation of this trend.

To emphasise the actual situation in 1955, let me reiterate the results of my own village surveys in the very high density region. In a village in Kawosa's chieftdom only a quarter of the younger men had paddy land of their own, holdings averaging about three-quarters of an acre; in a village in Mwakipesile's chieftdom, only 17 per cent. of the younger men had paddy land and holdings averaged about half an acre (*cf.* Table VII, page 37). These two examples are taken from the areas of most severe land shortage and are not therefore altogether typical of the whole Lake Plains. Nevertheless, I do not think that they are entirely atypical; more importantly, they indicate the present trend. Within another generation this fragmentation and scatter of holdings may well be the common feature everywhere in the flood plains unless the system of tenure and inheritance is modified. If the increase in population is quickened through improved medical facilities, better diet and housing, and improved conditions generally, then the position will become more acute. Such an increase is only to be expected. The Nyakyusa have decisively entered a money economy and they have learnt to seek higher standards of living. Only from their fields, by cash-cropping, can they expect to earn their livings and the demand for better living will not be curtailed – nor, of course, is it desirable that it should be.

There is another aspect of this whole matter which must be considered. It relates to the movement of individuals between villages. Such movement was, in earlier European days, a crucial factor in the age-village structure, for it was not only exceedingly frequent, but also it tended to undermine the idealized coeval basis of village life. Movement between villages is increasingly difficult now, for a newcomer naturally cannot easily obtain land, nor as much land as he would desire even at a moderate demand. Nevertheless, the reasons for movement persist, and they will do so whilst the fear of witchcraft remains and whilst illness and misfortune are attributable to the unfavourable aura of a place. There remains also the tradition of moving so that a man may escape from bad relations with kinsfolk or neighbours, or from the obloquy resulting from his own disapproved actions. Much social and psychological tension is being created now as a result of the new difficulty of movement, and so far the Nyakyusa have not evolved alternative methods.

On the other hand, so deeply engrained is the notion of the prestige and power which accrues to a village by virtue of the number of its inhabitants, that headmen and villagers alike remain most reluctant to refuse to accept newcomers, even when it inevitably means that the present inhabitants must meet a further decrease in the average amount of land available per family, for a newcomer must be allocated a holding if he is to remain. Consequently, if a holding is for any reason left vacant, a headman tends to refuse to re-allocate some or all of it amongst his villagers and thus to augment their holdings; but instead he keeps it in reserve pending the hoped-for arrival of another newcomer. Men desiring to leave their own village try to get

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news of such reserved land elsewhere. Such land is cultivated in the meantime on a kind of year-to-year lease by one or more of the villagers as allowed by the headman.

Even when no vacant plots exist a headman will still accept newcomers. If they are young men they must be prepared to go landless for the time being (i.e., to remain dependent on their father's fields elsewhere) until such time as land becomes vacant. If the newcomer is an older man, then the headman will try to persuade one or more of his villagers to give up portions of their holdings and he will often cede part of his own land. The newcomer is therefore often allocated small strips and plots here and there in the village arable area and he thereafter joins the land-hungry crowd seeking to expand their holdings. In one village in which I worked where land shortage was critical (Kapugi, Kyrowe's chiefdom), there was not a single patch of arable land unworked; yet here the headman had, with full village approval, assigned three newcomers during the first nine months of 1955. Two of them were young men, one unmarried, and they could not expect to obtain land for some time except for a small banana plot. The third newcomer was a middle-aged man from a village some 12 miles away in another chiefdom. The headman had given him a half-acre plot out of his own paddy field and was laboriously begging pieces of land here and there from his people in order to make up a new holding of perhaps an acre. The headman himself had only about three and a half acres of arable land; he had at least one adult son who had not yet acquired an arable plot and he had other sons and brothers' sons owning only small fields. Yet he favoured this stranger, this newcomer. He was quite firm in his resolution to accept other newcomers in the future and in this he believed that he was acting as a good headman should. As far as I could learn he was supported by his villagers.

[371]

This is not, by any means, an isolated or even unusual phenomenon. It is, I feel, important to bear in mind this illustration of contemporary affairs. Firstly, because it shows another way in which holdings are fragmented and dispersed; and secondly, because it demonstrates how, so far, the Nyakyusa have refused to face the situation of land shortage, and how they continue to follow traditional practices and values associated with village prestige. These people complain of their inability to obtain sufficient arable land, but they are not yet prepared to make the mental and social adjustments which might at least partly relieve their new predicament. On the other hand, they themselves underrated the need for movement and perhaps they are right in their implied insistence not to discard their cultural wealth. Their insistence on accepting newcomers and their willingness (however slowly perceived and expressed) to share their land with the landless are not discreditable attitudes, even if they are economically untenable.

Security of Tenure and Disputes over Land

As already noted, under traditional land-tenure a Nyakyusa had good security in his holding so long as he continued to live in the same village. The only alteration of tenure occurred at the "coming-out" ceremony of a new chief when the older men would, if required, move aside in order to give their sons' generation the best land. This did not invariably happen in any case. Fundamentally, however, security of tenure is not a matter of great importance to a people who have plenty of land, and land which is more or less of the same quality. Indeed, convenience of location in respect of one's own homestead was always the only value land had as such. Occasionally a more dominant chief might try to seize a commoner's field to allow of his own expanded cultivation; it was most unusual for him to succeed, and even if he did the dispossessed villager suffered little real deprivation, for he could easily obtain another field fairly near at hand.

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Security of tenure has continued into European times, and although perhaps weakened slightly in one way through the enlarged powers which accrue to modern Government-supported chiefs, it has been strengthened by the modern peace and rule of law and the more efficient system of justice provided by the established local courts. According to G. Wilson (Wilson, G., 1938, p. 32) the increase in the movement of individuals between villages in earlier European times (i.e., up to about 1940-45) directly caused a lack of attachment to individual plots, and thus security of tenure was not considered particularly important.

The new situation of land shortage does not affect the basic position, or rather, by producing a high security value on land, it has brought about an consolidation of individuals' rights over their holdings. No longer does a chief or headman attempt to contest such illegal acts as the seizure of a villager's field, so long as that villager is not afraid to politicise the affair. A man is not, and cannot afford to be, prepared to lose his field, for he cannot replace it with any certainty, either in a convenient location or elsewhere. A headman may sometimes bring strong pressure to bear on some of the men of his village to try to persuade them to give up portions of their land to assist a newcomer or a landless neighbour, but a villager can and does refuse and there is no legal authority which can override him here, for the land shortage becomes more obvious and more acute as men become less willing to allow their holdings to be touched for any reason, by anyone. The re-allocation or a "coming-out" ceremony appears to have been dropped nowadays and thus a man holds his land undisturbed until his death, when it passes by inheritance to his sons. There are cases now where grandsons of the original holder occupy land through undisturbed and undisputed inheritance. A man can, as he wishes, lease a kimmeso or lease a plot in his holding, or he can make an outright gift. The principal restriction which remains is that a man must continue to live in the village in order to retain these rights; he must relinquish them if he permanently goes to live elsewhere. Nevertheless, the land of a well-established villager would be kept for him pending his hoped-for return, for if he has left in exchange and has because of suspected witchcraft, then he may be persuaded to come back after a time. The headman and his neighbours should in fact persist in their attempts to persuade him, even to the use of force, for this is not only a moral duty of age-mates and fellow-villagers but is also an effort to remove the implications of their alleged witchcraft and anti-social conduct.

Once, therefore, a man obtains land he has absolute rights in it during his continued residence in the village, especially today, under new secular chiefs their lawns and almost all land is now held on a tenure which will be passed on by inheritance.

Boundary disputes are few. Usually, and meaningfully, village boundaries are well known, and field boundaries invariably are. During my field measurements in the sample villages I never met any difficulty with my local guides in quickly establishing the ownership and exact limits of any plot. Boundaries are usually marked by small ridges of accumulated debris or by narrow paths, and these form an intricate and irregular network throughout a village's arable area. They are so well known that there is very little scope for a greedy man to attempt to encroach on a neighbour's holdings at boiling time. If minor disagreements do arise at that season they can be immediately settled – by appeal to neighbours working nearby if necessary – and the headman of his assistant may well not be called in at all.

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1. This is the case in the Lake Rukwa, in some of the areas of recent migration, whether chief or not. Elsewhere in the Mbeya District and Tunduma District of the province, there are chiefs who are in a very subordinate position to the white man, and in the Kyela District, Tanganyika, there is no chief. See the statement of Mwangi Lukwa of Kyela Mwakaleka, in Kyela, 1st August 1955.

423 Thus beyond the established fields in the vicinity of the village itself, the pattern of land holding tended to become confused. The majority of land-holders were still members of the village who were expanding their cultivation outwards, but there was a considerable number of men from neighbouring villages, and even from further afield where opportunities were more restricted, those men even began to live a second home, inhabited by a junior wife, in another village from which to continue the more easily the cultivation of new holdings.

This sort of development was in the event only a short-term process and, had pressure of population on the land not become so critical, it is not possible to say what would have been the final result upon Nyakyusa social and village organisation. It is, nevertheless, important to note that in the beginnings of the extension of cattle holdings, cub-crop cultivation opened in a system in which village exclusiveness was breaking down, when residence was no longer an essential prerequisite of land-holding, and when men were neighbours in the fields as farmers without being cousins of a single village.

Once the Nyakyusa, and particularly the more perceptive headmen, began to realise that land was becoming less partial, indeed that it was beginning to be scarce in relation to new demands, this novel tendency was stopped fairly quickly and the old traditional principle of land-holding only by residence was conserved. In the more recent years this has been strongly insisted on. Headmen and their villagers are then in order to safeguard their own rights they must prevent scarce, valuable land being held and used by outsiders. This reaction appears to have been universal and automatic among the Nyakyusa. There was less troublesome land to everyone's demands and each village therefore looked after what it considered to be its own interests. Outsiders who already held fields could not be ejected of them, but they were not allowed to extend their holdings and very opportunity was, and still is, taken to regain control of their fields for allocation to villagers proper. Inheritance was often disallowed unless or here agreed to come and live permanently in the village, gifts or loans to outsiders (kin or friends) were no longer permitted and most headmen stand the opportunity to re-allocate to their own villagers any alien-held land which were not continually maintained in cultivation.

In response to the new situation, almost everywhere village boundaries were clearly demarcated - not without a certain amount of dispute and a new recognition of inter-village opposition. Nowhere now is it possible for a man to take up land over which there is no firmly established village connection. [illegible] not only does a village, as a corporate and distinct group, own its own land and is represented in this by its headmen, but all land is now owned by some village. Further, as land in the high-density regions, there is no longer any vacant land to be taken up and any land temporarily falling vacant comes immediately under the allocating authority of the headmen.

This process, the application of this principle, is not yet quite universal in the Lake Plains, and it is sometimes still possible to see it coming into operation. Still in the northern parts of the Lake Plains - the low-density region - one may see fields occupied by a variety of outsiders, for there the enforcement of the significance of land shortage has been slowest to come. For example, in Mwakipesile's chiefdom in the late 1940s and early 1950s it was the practice of men from the congested villages nearer the Lake to obtain valuable, virgin paddy land in the newly opened areas in the north (near Ipyela) without residential qualifications. Many men reserved their original holdings in their own villages for food crops and had their main paddy fields in the distant area. By 1955, however, it had become virtually impossible for a non-resident to obtain more land in this way, although still

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Nyakyusa

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my earlier labour migration enquiries in the Highlands, the village as a close residential unit is breaking up as the people are increasingly adopting the more common East African pattern of each family building to own homestead in its own land-holding. These northern Nyakyusa say that they must have their coffee plots sent to their homesteads for the sake of continuous supervision, and that this is impossible (which is true enough) where men live close together in compact villages. Again, coffee plots, with their standing, permanent crop, have become a valuable item of inheritance; men lose no opportunity of taking them irrespective of the locations of their cousins or of the identity of their immediate neighbours. The values of land, cash-crops and material progress are placed much higher than the traditional values of sociability; indeed, such traditional values are largely inconsistent with modern ways and aspirations.

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Thus the Nyakyusa age-village has become almost obsolete and it would seem that it must inevitably vanish altogether even in the remaining conservative areas (e.g., in the east). Furthermore, its disappearance is leading to a distinct divergence between the Lake Plains Nyakyusa and those of the Highlands. How far this divergence will become permanent and basically significant cannot be foreseen as yet in this early stage. Clearly the compact village is best fitted to an arable economy of rice cultivation in the Lake Plains, and at least until there is further agricultural change it will persist as a most important social group.

Nevertheless, with its enhanced exclusiveness and relative social isolation and with reserved rivalry with its neighbours, the Lake Plains village is scarcely conducive to the encouragement of agricultural and economic development. Neither is it anything but harmful towards contemporary efforts in the politico-administrative sphere to reduce parochialism and to foster a sense of unity and co-operation beyond the village and the petty traditional chiefdoms. While supervisory control of the land through the headman is in general excellent, reasonable and readily understandable to the people, yet the mores of exclusiveness, the competitive scrambling for vacated holdings and the jealous fears are surely more than merely unfortunate. There needs to be some modification to lessen the over-rigid strings of village corporate ownership, to regularise the transfer of vacated holdings and to lessen the fears of village against village. These points are taken up again in Chapter V.

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Cattle and Pastoral Requirements

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Unfortunately, no great accuracy can be presumed for the Rungwe District cattle censuses, but the available figures are summarised in Table VI.

TABLE VI
NYAKYUSA CATTLE

	1950				1955	
	No. of cattle	Acres per head	Cattle per person	Cattle per family (1)	No. of cattle	Acres per head
Lake Plains	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Central Rungwe	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
N.E. Highlands	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
N.W. Highlands	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Total Nyakyusa	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

The informal increase in the numbers of cattle may well be attributable only to improved census enumeration by the Veterinary Department.

Although 5.4 acres per head of cattle for all Nyakyusa country, and even 4.1 acres in the Lake Plains, might seem to be adequate in a country so

well covered with vegetation and with an reliable and plentiful a rainfall, yet, of course, the actual pasturage available is very considerably less as so much of the land is taken for arable and building purposes. There is in practice a most acute shortage of grazing land everywhere, except in certain parts of the north-west Highlands (Ukukwe). This shortage is most critical during the wet season, for at other times of the year the herds are able to graze over the arable fields, where herbage grows exceptionally rapidly after harvest as a result of the high rainfall.

Traditionally, each village had a roughly demarcated area of common pasturage which was not, and could not be, used for arable purposes. With the increased demand for arable land, this commonage has almost everywhere in the Lake Plains been gradually whittled away for permanent arable holdings. Headmen who control these pastures, and many of their chiefs too, are much worried about this process, about the break with tradition and the modern pastoral difficulties; but arable needs are given priority over grazing and the practice continues. In the flood plains, the higher-density regions, common pasturage has by now almost disappeared altogether. The little which remains is largely unsuitable for cultivation, consisting of infertile or badly drained areas - often the sandy, coastal strips covered with dense thicket and tall sedges which provide very little useful grazing. During the dry season, after the paddy harvest, the situation is less, but during the cultivation season pasturage is entirely inadequate, and in addition the cattle are compelled to live and graze in extremely arduous conditions of standing water, mud, mosquitoes and flies. They do not obtain enough food then and they lose condition badly. There are many deaths from exhaustion, near-starvation and disease, and this affects the immature stock particularly. Only by abstinence usually on the part of both men and beast can the herds be retained at all. There is no tradition of cut-feeding and so far the Nyakyusa have refused to adopt this measure of alleviation.

Yet, as the Nyakyusa are quick to point out, each family has only a few cattle. Most families have a cow or two, and the average is only about two to three head per family - *cf.* Table VI, page 38. Owners of large herds are relatively few, and herds of more than ten cattle in a single family are very uncommon. Although the cattle population is too great for the pasture resources now available, yet the animals are fairly evenly and thinly distributed amongst the dense human population. Goats and sheep are few - about 400 altogether - in the Lake Plains and of no significance. It is important to note that here we do not have a situation of large herds which might be reduced by some form of culling.

Cattle are held in high esteem by all Nyakyusa as a source of valued milk for the daily diet, as the means to marriage (in bridewealth), as a store of capital, as a symbol of prestige and as an essential element in important ceremonial activity. This kind of value system needs no emphasis here as it is common to much of Eastern Africa, but it may be noted that one of the principle uses of the large sums of money saved from wages in mining employment (labour migration) and from the profits of cash-cropping at home is in the purchase of cattle. It is thought that money is best invested, saved and used in this way, once immediate material needs have been met.

Even with the high proportion of deaths from disease and the unsatisfactory conditions of the wet season, there are indications that the numbers of cattle are not decreasing and there may well be local increases. Apart from natural increase, there is fairly heavy buying from the Nilotic people to the north-west in Rungwe District, and also from further afield in Northern Nyamlanda, and in Nyamwanga and Fipa tribal areas (about Mbala).

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1. Despite the paucity of the cattle census, preliminary examples show quite clearly that the large herds in the Lake Lingadzi cattle commissioner's area, for instance, do not exist in the Nyakyusa.

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Nyakyusa

land authority to date, or how far the Central Government was permitting or even compelling him to use new powers. Part of this novel power has, not inevitably, been used to take over land-related responsibilities to which the chief has no traditional tribal right, and it has led to the claims, sometimes heard in the Courts and upheld in the District Commissioner's Annual Court, that chiefs are the sole, traditional and rightful land authorities. It has led to chiefs assuming, or trying to assume, land allocation and supervisory powers which hitherto were the close right only of the village headmen.

Thus some chiefs have declared that they alone, or at least primarily, have allocatory powers over formerly unutilized tracts which are relatively distant from the villages and which have now become valuable as paddy fields. Others have come to claim rights of interference in village land affairs, even within the long-established village areas. By the unlimited favour of their alleged Government support, by taking advantage of new conditions, they have not infrequently "got away with it". They have insisted that their own nominees be allocated vacant holdings; they have gone over the heads of village headmen and made public their opinion as to who, amongst numbers of applicants, should receive land in villages; they have insisted that headmen should consult them on the details of allocation. The desire for power and further prestige is one impulse behind this development. Sometimes the chiefs, better educated than many of their headmen, are able to understand the modern land situation better and are impatient of their headmen's conservatism and procrastination. Another factor is the potential profit which may accrue as land becomes scarce and thus a valuable commodity, and this became particularly important when the rush developed to take up the formerly vacant lands for paddy cultivation. Gifts in money and kind became common in return for preferential treatment for the donors. These lands are now all allocated and held by someone, but the chiefs have been reluctant to relinquish their new-found authority.

These remarks do not apply to all the chiefs; some have been notably content to use their influence through the traditional avenues by judicious co-operation with their headmen. Some, too, have been too impressive to further to take action at all. Again, some have been forestalled by strong village headmen who would not allow any diminution of their own status and rights. In some of the formerly vacant lands where no headmen could reasonably claim traditional jurisdiction, the operations of the chiefs have probably been beneficial in reducing chiefs' land-grabbing and police visits; even, however, these lands are brought under cultivation there seems to be a good case for their inclusion within the normal Nyakyusa land-control system. The continued existence of a supra-headman authority does not necessarily lead to stability or improved control. Certainly it is not in keeping with the people's values and institutions.

For their charges Government must clearly bear some responsibility and often also the blame for indirectly causing alienations in extra land law and custom by some administrative attitude or ruling in a related sphere. There has been a good deal of well-intentioned insistence on determining and strengthening the "Land Authority" in tribal areas in the interests of stability and efficiency. In Rungwe District the bulk chiefs of Nyakyusa chiefs have been only too readily accepted without question. In fact the traditional analogies, chief, only represented to chieftaincy as a unit, and the lack of real power corresponding to the lack of cohesion within the chieftaincy. The notion of a supreme "Land Authority" is largely incorrect for the Nyakyusa. In a theoretical sense we may perhaps say that the real land of a chieftaincy was and is owned by all of the people in that chieftaincy - chief, headmen and villagers; and therefore we may perhaps recognize the chief, the single individual representing the group as a whole, as the "land owner." In

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Briefly to summarise the contemporary land situation: in the Lake Plains it may be said that in the main the traditional land tenure system and land law will continue on the basis of native land holding today. The essential factors in recent years has been the acute land shortage in relation to arable lands under the current system of agriculture. Village unity and village autonomous have been increased and so also has the authority of the village headmen in the control and allocation of land rights. Security of tenure has been strengthened, if anything, and one of the more important methods of obtaining land is now by inheritance. The new law establishing inheritance from father to sons, while generally acceptable to the people, is producing a number of civil suits which form the greatest proportion of the more important land cases before the local courts.

The shortage of land is principally the result of increased demands for paddy (i.e. wet crop) cultivation, although the population appears to be increasing slowly. In the high density regions almost all men have sufficiently low land than they could cultivate, especially under the impetus of the ox-plough, with the developing desire for money income. In the low density region of the low foothills there is still some vacant or partly utilised land, though of very inferior quality for paddy cultivation. The shortage hits the younger men severely, and many of them cannot obtain land at all until the death or senility of their fathers. Fragmentation and dispersion of holdings is rapidly becoming serious and without check.

The live question which arises is whether anything can be done to ease the pressure of population on the country by making more land available, or by making its distribution more equitable.

The thinly populated parts of the northern region of the Lake Plains offer a meagre solution only, for the country is raised above the level of the flood plains and is often hilly and hilly. Fertility is low, erosion is a constant danger and the paddy yield (if obtainable at all) is poor. Hyekyuse from the densely populated areas to south and east are therefore more unwilling to move there. In any case the available land, which remains safely and economically open to cultivation, is filling up fairly quickly – mainly by immigration. Certainly I do not think that it can supply sufficient space to meet modern needs. There is, however, no reason why immigrants should make a difficult situation worse, and therefore it is suggested that further immigration from outside the Lake Plains should be carefully controlled if not altogether prevented. Indubitably outsiders (almost entirely Hyekyuse from the Highlands) who hold land without permanent residence should be prohibited and their holdings reallocated to local inhabitants.

As I have already indicated (page 17), I do not think that the problem of men who hold unusually large acreages is particularly serious. Such large holdings are relatively few and will be carefully split up by inheritance on the death of the present occupiers.

In the flood plains proper there is, so far as I am aware, extremely little new land which could be brought under cultivation. Mechanised assistance in the clearance of dense reed thicket[1] and in drainage schemes would produce

1 These areas of thicket are thickly inundated in the rainy season but if cleared, could be used for a dry season crop.

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some more land. How much could be made cultivable is beyond my appraisal, but it would be of valuable land assistance and ought not to be neglected. It does not, on the other hand, appear practicable to decrease further the amount of land used for building and village sites – the people themselves have already done this to some extent, and increased congestion in the villages would probably be undesirable on medical grounds.

There remain the local cases where part or all of a holding is not used (excluding genuine fallowing). An old man, or one who has for some reason lost the labour of his wives or sons, is sometimes unable to cultivate the whole of his fields. This is not uncommon, or if it occurs the occupier is usually approached by his kinsmen, friends and neighbours for a loan or gift. Occasionally such land does remain relatively uncultivated and the occupier refuses to release it even at the request of the headman. There is some feeling in the Lake Plains over this matter, and some men have suggested openly that such unused land should compulsorily revert to the village to be re-allocated by the headman.[1] Unless there is overwhelming demand for a new ruling here it would seem not to be a practicable policy and would only weaken security of land-holding and further increase the already over-exaggerated communal claim of the village. It would, of course, be difficult to assess when in fact a man had more land than he could or would cultivate, and it might easily lead to injustice if chiefs or headmen were given powers (however restricted) to interfere in a man's holding. Nevertheless headmen might be encouraged to keep a close watch on unused fields in their villages and to bring pressure to bear either to persuade the occupier to increase his efforts or to make temporary, witnessed loans to a neighbour.

In some cases land is left unused for a period whilst a man is away from home – usually while he is away at work. Where his absence is brief, little can or needs to be done, and already under Nyakyusa law the headman may authorise another villager to cultivate the fields on a year to year tenure: the absentee re-asserting his holding on return. Occasionally, however, a young man may, for example, inherit land but then leave it for a number of years while he migrates to work in the mines. There is no adequate ruling as to the number of years' absence which should elapse before the absentee forfeits his land as an assumed permanent emigrant from the village. Headmen are reluctant to reallocate unused land for fear of the obvious legal and social difficulties should the absentee return, although some headmen are more hasty than others in this matter. Neighbours are often reluctant to borrow the land for fear of losing their opportunity of an outright allocation elsewhere in the village in the meantime. In some cases I saw fields which had lain unused for more than four years for these reasons. Like the unused portions of an old man's holding, these few cases arouse a good deal of land-hungry indignation, beyond their real importance in fact. Nevertheless some limit to the period of absence might well be introduced so that at least headmen know what their authority is in this matter, and so that men not prepared to work the land shall not be able to retain it indefinitely. It may be noted that the average length of absence of men in migratory labour is 18-24 months. A period of three years' continuous absence, at least without special cause, might perhaps be taken to indicate the automatic abdication of right of tenure.

If more land cannot be made available – or only relatively little – the obvious solution is a more intensive and profitable use of the existing resources. The Agricultural Department has long urged this policy and is attempting to put it into effect, pointing out the relatively inferior yields of poultry in the Lake Plains because of poor techniques and inefficient effort.

1 Significantly enough, one of the men in favour of this suggestion is an elder and the Nyakyusa Native Authority Ordinance in the Lake Plains.

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[22] for research, I am very grateful for a grant from the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures[2] which enabled me to start my ethnographical field work among these people. I wish also to express my thanks to the Government of the Tanganyika Territory, the Provincial Commissioner of Mbeya, and the District Officer of Tukuyu for all the courtesy I received during my work.

[14] [123] 3. My first step, after my arrival at Katumba near Mawiko, was to pay a visit to Mwamnaika, the chief (*omulefyale*)[3] of the village and

[291] [516] [622]

The chief Mwamnaika with his counsellors.

of those adjacent. On the open place near his hut he welcomed me in company with his *amafumu*[4], the influential men of his village. My attendant, the interpreter and I were asked to sit on chairs, while the *amafumu* sat down on mats or on large banana leaves on the ground; but the chief remained standing. I explained the aim of my visit, and that I would be very glad of his support. The chief promised it, and he kept his promise excellently. On other occasions the chief also sat on a chair. In the afternoon of the first day I sent to the chief some presents. The following he made a return in form of food. This exchange of gifts is named *ukukwala*, handing over the gift.

[431]

[123] [757] 2. In a small village belonging to Mwamnaika's chieftainship was the residence of a medicine man, to whom I paid a visit as soon as I could. When I met him he was being consulted by a sick male person who had a stomach complaint (*ugwife*). After some negotiations he allowed me

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[2] Cf. Africa, Vol. XI, p. 497.
[3] Cf. Wilson, Introduction, p. 202; Land Rights, p. 44.
[4] Cf. Wilson, Land Rights, p. 12. W. translates *ufumu* (*ufumu*) by „great commoner", Introduction, p. 276, 282.

13: Lehmann R.-S (1999) 1951 P'307 Ngwude P'307
Nyakyusa

The chief Wenondo and his family after he had received from me my old "Kingsley-Wheels" as a gift.

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to enter his hut, where the patient was sitting on the ground with his back to the wall. To heal his patient of the pains, the doctor made some small incisions in his skin over the stomach by means of a triangular-shaped knife, and then he rubbed in the incisions a thick black juice taken from the horn of an antelope (the horn was called Ngwende, pl. ulugwende). The juice was prepared from different roots and herbs as a medicine against stomach pains. In the horn were certain divisions for other medicines, and in each of these divisions was stuck a small (black) stick for removing the specific medicine from it. After this treatment the patient declared that he felt severe pains in the region of his stomach. I asked the doctor for some of his medicines, but he was unwilling to give me anything. Then I promised to bring him next day some European medicines hoping to get in exchange some of his medicinesin.

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The following morning I returned. On this occasion I did acquire some of his medicines in exchange for various European tablets, especially as he was most fascinated with the kaleidoscopes, of which I gave him a few crystals, explaining to him the use and the does; when I dissolved some of the crystals before his eyes, it probably seemed to him to be a mystical process. Among the medicines I received from him was a medicine for luck, called Isawanda. Some of the inhabitants of the village, who had sometime appeared, were very unwilling for him to give me this medicine, and maintained that I would take with me all the luck of the village.

[777]

On this second visit to the medicine-man, there was again a patient present, and I wanted to take a photograph of the scene because it was

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sitting there on the yard got up, as quickly as possible held her hands before her eyes and walked off. This was because this man was her father-in-law. The strict social rules in such circumstances is well known*.

The next act consisted in shaving the girl's hair on her temples by the ovengage; the father was shaved by a younger brother of his in the same manner. (I cannot remember whether it was also the case with the mother of the girl.)

The old initiated hut of the chief's wife

Then the further ceremony took place again inside the hut. All the participants sat down on mats, and the ovengage accepted the complaints of the parents on the former conduct of their daughter. Sometimes the discussion between these parties, where the ovengage played the role of a mediator as is the case with the orator (or speaker) in the court, reached such a pitch of excitement that I thought a serious quarrel had broken out. The excitement was, perhaps, only of a conventional character; I was told, however, that in former times corporal punishment has been inflicted, if, indeed, the girl had shown disobedient to the times before.

Next, the girl was instructed by the ovengage in her duties as a wife. These instructions were of a theoretical or moral nature concerning the correct conduct of the girl towards her parents also after the ceremony and towards her future husband. The practical part of the initiation instructions sometimes comes before this ceremony at the end of initiation. These practical instructions cover the preparing of food

* (1) Shewanda, p (18). Shelumelo, p (18) (or Kwangar?). According to Shewanda the daughter-in-law has to observe this taboo also towards the brothers of her father-in-law. All these persons are called shewanda.

After these admonitions, the mats which the girl had manufactured were inspected. During this examination it was told her that a wife should be seen in the possession of as many beautiful mats as possible, made by her for herself and for her husband. Should the girl reveal such conduct as a wife, chumugafuku (happiness) would be in her hut.

When the proper ceremony seemed to have come to an end, another discussion followed. The girl had told the company, during the above mentioned admonition, that her parents also sometimes exchanged angry words. Therefore, a new discussion between the father and the mother arose, in which also the company was the "speaker", but the other participants of the ceremony also shared in it, and the discussion has become at times heated. Still, after about 10 minutes, it suddenly came to an end, and the matter in dispute was declared settled. With this the whole ceremony ended.

5. One day I asked the chief for permission to visit his hute. He dwelt in a rectangular hut (ikihaga). A very beautiful dikoro (bed) was in the main room, composed of many sleeping mats (ukuiti), pl. ucuiti) and of big round wooden blocks (sections of a tree-trunk), one at the head and a smaller one at the foot of the bed. Each of the four low mats which lay opposite bed a special name. All the mats rested on sticks of reed laid across beams lying on smaller poles on the floor[1]. These mats were naturally of nearly the same height as the wooden block which formed the head part of the dikoro. In some other old-fashioned and better houses in Ryukyuan villages, similar beds were to be seen, but generally the bedsteads are much more simple.

One of the most important permissions granted me by the chief was to enter the "store room", connected with his main room by a door. The objects to be seen here were the same as those to be found in other huts or store-rooms, e. g. the big ijiriko (baskets) for storing grain, up to four feet high, smeared over with cow-dung and clay, and smaller baskets for different purposes. In one corner hung different kinds of fishing lines (urukaqu, ng.) made of hair from the tails of bulls, with five handles of hair. In the dark opposite corner of the same wall there seemed to hang a similar object, but it was wrapped in banana leaf. This was the real sign of the chief's dignity, the symbol of his authority and power, named ufunaigafu. A long discussion was needed to induce the chief to unveil it. Only by constantly consulting by gestures the present emoluments the chief slowly unveiled it. He told us that

[1] Cf. Pfleiderer, p. 90.

[1] Kamiyama 1. c.

[343] [353] [362] [378] [379] [380]

to had received this object from his ancestors and it must always hang on his spot, as the ancestral spirits (shugoda)[*] themselves controlled its possession. It consisted of an ancestgaru, i. e. the tail of an ox, but the upper part of it was hollow. In this hollow part medicines (shugoda)[*] were kept. Yet another magical medicine, in the shape of a piece of bark of the tree called Erythrophleum (Ordeal)[*] was fastened at the upper end of this sign. When my European attendant immediately said to the chief: "And from this piece you make your magic[*]", the chief exclaimed in astonishment: "Tiwa wana Kyere!" (You are sons of Kyere! i. e. You Europeans know everything!)

After this there was no more delay in revealing to us some more features of this sign of dignity. According to the belief of his fathers this object possessed a special smoke (power)[*], e. g. to defeat enemies, if the chief were to hold it directly against them. Also if a thief were to try to enter the room by force, by making a hole beneath the wall of this part of the hut, he would be stricken by power coming from the shuntage and he would have the impression that eyes are directed against him, and so he drives away.

[379] After these interesting communications I went to visit the hut of one of his wives, which still revealed the sepuga, the old-fashioned round structure of bamboo poles diverging from their upper end and thatched with grass[*].

[381] [384] 8. The frequent walks in company with the chief or some of his employees gave me several opportunities for inquiries. On one occasion,

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[*] (1) Ottom, Journ. p. 8: sepuba (dog); Mackenzie, p. 10: Sepuba (Sepuga).

[*] (2) Mackenzie, p. 272: Shugira (Sepuga).

[*] The pharmacological substance of the bark (Cortex Eurthrophleii, Sassa-bark) is the alkaloid Eurthrophleïn which produces the same typical effects on the heart as the digitalis-group (cf. C. C. Mackenzie, Pharmacodynamics XII, Arch. for Schools of N. Ts. 4, Stuttgart, 1906, p. 4).

[*] (1) Ottom, Land Gights, p. 10; Kwamoah, p. 10; Fitzhalem, p. 50.

[*] seems to not a specific expression for „magical" or religious „supernatural" power, although, from the European standpoint this meaning had to correspond with the word in specific cases, but generally it means and strikingly expresses an effect of a quality of a person or object, e. g. spirit, ale spirited smoke, to this word is given. This word is Mandinka, a dialect of the Mahinmandin, especially Polyandrous word being connected to old Coastal Akan. The term of that what is unusually striking, Mandinka Kwamoahgamatiro the Mahinmandin, I Sahin Dikongbaiko. This is language 1906. If the Kwamoah refers to any that a phenomenon is "supernatural", then he usually is with Kyere, or the sunda is directly "Kyere" (cf. Mackenzie, p. 110 (10), 1906).

[*] (2) Fitzhalem, p. 50; Sp. 140. Adscriptical average of a coach-hut (in also to be found with the Kwamoah and Ashanti).

begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done." (G. Wilson, Introduction, p. 200). [26]

The putting of maize-grains so used into the earth is the women's work, the sowing of millet (wulimi) of both sexes. If you ask the men after they had come home from their work: "Mukuendele ifwenga lya nangili?", "Where fields did you hoe?", the answer often may be: "Tukuwendele ifwenga lya tata" "We have hoed the fields of our father. [27] [42]

In former times, the Nyakyusa had a lot of ceremonies relating to the beginning of the hoeing season and of the beginning of the harvest-work. They are, however, nowadays nearly extinguished under the influence of European culture. [19]

With respect to the beginning of the hoeing season, a very complicated ceremony had to be carried out by the chief in community with the ungunga (medicine man) for providing the fields with extraordinary (-ungu) power (amaba): awake awakings, in this case: fertility. [26] [633] [45]

When the crop was ripe, it was (at first) forbidden (mwiko) to take anything from the crop before the chief had given the permission. First the oldest male villagers informed the chief that it may be now the just time to give the crop free for the people, saying: "The people is hungry, we will now give them to eat!" Then the chief ordered that 8 or 9 (malele) corn-cobs were brought to him, and he sent these corn-cobs by a messenger to the (holy) offering-grove where they must be put down. After that he been correctly consulted, he gave the permission for reaping the new crop. [38]

(NB. It was believed that these corn-cobs put into the offering-grove were eaten especially from the leopards. The powdered bones of the leopards were considered important ingredients of the consecration drink which the chief had to take at his initiation ceremonies and which should give him the strength (amaba) of a leopard, so that he also was called "the leopard" or "the leopard chief".) [23] [825]

4. *Herding the Cattle and Cleaning the Stable.* The ontological importance of cattle among the Nyakyusa and the specific position among them of herding the cattle by herdboys, that is also of highly ontological importance for the structure of the Nyakyusa society, is already described by G. Wilson (Introduction, p. 200 f). [23]

The cleaning of the stables of which the Nyakyusa possess a great number of very well built ones, which have also sometimes a considerable length — apart from the cattle herds —, is the task of [23] [34] [42]

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 F317 Nyakyusa F317
Nyakyusa

and by virtue of this great benefit were accepted as chiefs. Such is the myth (*vide infra*, p. 26). It is remembered that the chiefs of different groups such as the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, the Lupaila, and the Saka arrived at different times, but of the proportion of the immigrants to the former occupants, and of the proportion of men to women in the invading groups, we know nothing. Some suggest that the chiefs were lighter in colour than the previous inhabitants of the valley,[1] and the term *abantu*, 'black people', is used for commoners as contrasted with chiefs. But chiefs intermarry freely with commoners and there is no observable difference in physical type between them and their people to-day. The Nyakyusa are without a clan system, and though kinship with a chief may be remembered for three (or perhaps even four) generations, the body of 'kinsmen of the chief' is not defined as it is in tribes which have a 'royal clan' like the Bantu or Pondo. Moreover, among the Nyakyusa the chief's children are never his kinsmen, but commoners. Sons or grandsons of a chief are ineligible as village headmen, who are the counsellors of the chief, and who had in the past very great control over him. The contrast is made between chiefs, *abanyafyale*, on the one hand, and commoners, *amafumu*, on the other, and the headers of villages, chosen each generation by their predecessors (*vide infra*, p. 25), are the *amafumu par excellence*.[2] Words from this *afumu* root mean 'chief' in various central Bantu languages (Bemba, Tumbuka, Nyanja); and it is tempting to suppose that the *amafumu* were the old chiefs conquered by the invading *abanyafyale*, but that is only a supposition. The important point for the contemporary social structure is that the village headers are commoners, that their position is not hereditary, since they are selected afresh each generation, and that formerly they had very great power over the chief. This power has diminished considerably with the development of European administration. The Nyakyusa, indeed, were astounded to be told that the British

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 10 (footnote).

[2] For this reason affinis was rendered by Godfrey Wilson as 'great commoner', in 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. 9 (1935), and other papers, but this translation has considerable difficulties, and I have preferred to translate *afumu* as 'village headman' in the contexts in which it means the header of the village, and 'commoner' or 'villager' in other contexts. It must be clearly understood that 'village headman' as used in this book means something quite different from 'headman' as used by the Administration (*vide infra*, p. 198).

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Theoretically the territorial arrangement is one in which the villages of the ruling generation lie at the centre of the country, each surrounded by smaller villages of their sons, while smaller villages of old men lie on the boundaries. In practice—at least nowadays—the pattern is more complex, with old men's villages squeezed in between those of the ruling generation. From the time of its establishment as a separate chiefdom at the 'coming out', the future division of the country is adumbrated: there is a senior headman in each half of the country with villages subordinate to him, and the mother of an heir in each half. On the boundary between the halves stand the ritual trees, landmarks for all to see.

Age and locality coincide, while kinship cuts across local grouping, fathers and sons, and very often brothers, being in different villages. But kinsmen tend to be established in the same side of a country, and so to remain within one chiefdom. Kinship terms are extended in some measure to the villages of the chiefdom, which are classified as those of 'our fathers', 'our elder brothers', 'our young brothers', and 'our sons'. Women have no direct share in the age organization: their membership of a village turns on their relationship to some man—father, husband, husband's heir—and the age-range of women within one village is very wide.

Villages vary considerably in size. Boys' villages, as we have seen, begin with a dozen members or less, and the villages of old men are often very small also; we knew one with only 10 households, another with 11. The villages of young and middle-aged men commonly vary between 20 and 30 households, with 30 as a fair average in the hills. In Mwaipopo's country there were 340 taxpayers on the roll and we recorded 23 established villages and 6 boys' villages.* Some members of the boys' villages, and some elderly men, were not on the tax-roll, so that the average was over 20 boys or men in each village. Villages in the plain are somewhat larger, averaging around 40 households.

Men's villages are usually subdivided into sections under the headship of minor headmen, appointed by the headman of the village. These minorate do not share in the 'coming out' cere-

* Fieldnotes, pp. 18-8. The tax registers are no guide to the number of villages; three to three several villages are commonly lumped together in one under a minor village headman.

I: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

many, and are clearly distinguished from those who do. Indeed they may be appointed at a considerably later date. The qualities looked for in them, however, are similar to those looked for in the village headmen, namely, wisdom in dealing with men, generosity, wealth, and the respect of their neighbours. They are expected to settle disputes, to pass on the orders of their chief or village headmen to the men under them, to entertain their neighbours, and 'to watch over the country by day and by night'. On the hot Lake-shore plain, where the cattle are brought in before noon to stand in the shade of the bananas and are protected from insects by the smoke of a fire specially kindled for the purpose, an assistant headman is called 'he of the heap of hot ashes' (ngwe-ifyowe), implying that he is the leader of the group whose cattle are herded together. 'He of the heap of hot ashes' is responsible both for the cows and for their manners. 'If the cows give no milk he will call the sex friends and warn them that if there is a witch among them he will be driven away.' Again, the extent of an assistant headman's influence depends very largely on his personal popularity. 'The village headman chooses a man of wisdom and says: "Build here with your friends"; he is there first, and, if he is charitable (amable), more people will come.' Generally speaking the assistants are more important in the large villages of the plains than in the smaller villages of the hills.

The distinction between the sub-divisions of a village and two separate villages is theoretically quite clear for the villages of men, since each independent village has been formally established at a 'coming out' ceremony. But in practice the distinction is somewhat blurred, for large villages often split after the 'coming out' ceremony into sections which operate very much as independent villages. This became apparent when we analysed in detail the villages of Mwaipopo's children (see Document pp. 181-3) and found, besides the nineteen established villages, five village-sections which were treated in many respects as independent villages. Boys' villages remain somewhat fluid until the 'coming out'; but those offshoots of a parent village which have been closed to younger brothers may be regarded as separate villages.

Boys build their huts close together and plant bananas round them (see Plate II). Then, as they grow older and marry, they build larger huts and space them further apart, but the homestead

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

Only the Ngonde, the Nyamwanga, and the Iwa seem to have had any paramount authority. Of these, only that of the Ngonde has been described in detail. The Nyamwanga had a paramount chief, the Mukama, living over the border in Tanganyika. Under him the Northern Rhodesian Nyamwanga were always ruled by his sister, the Watuba; directly under her were the headmen of villages. The Mukama used to appoint his own sons or selected friends to be headmen of the larger villages. A minimal tribute, mainly fish, was sent by the Watuba to the Mukama, and the latter could also command annual labour in his gardens. The Iwa also had a paramount chief, Kafwendo, who recognized common ancestry with the Mukama but paid him no tribute. His country was divided into two sections, under two sub-chiefs, Mpanga and Tembya. The succession to the chieftainry is normally the same as commoner succession, i.e. brothers, then sons of the deceased, but the order could not be rigidly adhered to.[1]

Nyonde Traditional System

The section on history briefly indicated the position of the Kyungu. He was wealthy, owing to the ivory trade, and used his wealth to maintain political links with the chiefs and nobles of the country. At the same time he was kept to strict religious seclusion, and the real government of the country was in the hands of the nobles of Ngonde, a group of hereditary nobles, descendants of the original companions of the first Kyungu. The relations of the great chiefs (descendants of sons of Kyungu) and the territorial nobles to the capital allowed of considerable local autonomy, the Kyungu's prestige being mainly religious. Each territorial noble was succeeded by one son, each chief was succeeded by two or more sons, so that the chieftains tended to supplant the territorial nobles in importance and number, and the junior branches of the house of any one great chief formed a hierarchy based on descent. The great chiefs, at their accession, were recognized by the Kyungu with gifts of cloth, and they brought the junior chiefs of their house to perform hoeing services, unless, for the Kyungu, thereafter the junior chiefs performed unless for their great chief, and were similarly rewarded with entertainment. The great chief might invite the territorial nobles in his neighbourhood to accompany him in performing unless, but he could not command them as he could his junior chiefs. Apart from recognizing a certain authority of superior chiefs in judicial matters, and the right of the latter to command them to live, or to war, the junior chiefs had almost complete autonomy in their chieftaincies.[2]

Each chief had a traditional right to demand from his own subjects milk and tobacco if he needed them, and to seize any man he pleased if he desired the site for his personal use or to give to a Tumwan (not to a commoner), offering the original tenant another site.[3]

The chieftains' constituent of a number of age-villages, elder and younger sons living apart with their own commoners. At the head of each age-village was a headman (called 'great commoner' by Wilson) chosen from among the villagers by the chief

[1] Contrast, varya, see p.[illegible]
[2] Ibid., p. 108; see p.[illegible]
[3] In the absence of informants I do not know whether the following descriptions of Ngonde and Nyakyusa chieftaincies and age-villages is capable of a wider application.

[2] Wilson, p. 108; p. [illegible]

and the great commoners of the most senior villages. The constitution of a chiefdom was that of a limited monarchy, for the chief was dependent on his great commoners for his authority. All the way up the scale, with the exception of the Kyoyo himself, each chief had his own great commoners and people directly subordinate to him. The organization of families and villages within the chiefdoms was the same as that of the Nyakyusa, but the organization of a territory ruled by a noble differed in that although there were always at least two age-villages, there were no great commoners.[1]

Villages vary in size, and average from forty to fifty households. In the few instances a boys' village is built on ground allotted to them by the village of their fathers, but a new dilemma is made ceremonially at the 'coming out', whereby, ceremony of the young chiefs, when the old chief and his great commoners formally allot a tract of land to each village of young men, and reduce the boundaries.

In every generation each chiefdom was divided into two (they were originally immigrant groups expanding their territory, and incorporating previous inhabitants). The chief at his accession, or 'coming out', married two 'great wives', whose eldest sons would each be one of his two heirs, and divide his chiefdom. The number of villages which 'came out' with each young chief varied between four and eight. If he was later reduced to a minor position he might be left with only one village of adult men, and one of their sons, as people tended to move away from minor chiefdoms. This was the system which obtained among the Nyakyusa and also among the Ngonde.[2] A summary of the 'coming out' ritual is given here, instead of in the section on ritual, as it indicates some of the features of the political organization.

Usually eight age-villages 'came out' at the same time, four under each of the young chiefs. At this occasion, some thirty years after the old chief's accession, eight new great commoners were chosen. The two young chiefs were secluded in a few houses in the hut of the old chief's first wife, and received magical treatment. Then they 'came out'. The boundaries of the age-villages were freshly drawn. After the 'coming out', each young chief, whether he was already married or not, married his two great wives, whose first sons would be his heirs. Girls who had not yet reached puberty were carried off from other chiefdoms with a show of force by the chief's men, who here are some of their sons to regulate the position. The girls stayed at the house of one of the old chief's wives until their first menstruation. They were initiated together, not at the house of their fathers, but in the country of their husbands, the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the young chief) played the part usually played by the girl's parents and neighbours, the chief and his young men playing the usual part of the husband and his friends. After the ceremonies the girls were given as wives to the young chiefs, and separate huts were built for them in the two senior age-villages of the chiefdom. Wives married subsequently were attached in order of seniority to one or other of the two 'sides' of the chiefdom. Thus the four age-villages normally attached to a young chief were, from the first days of his official marriage, divided into two. If one of the two great wives bore no sons, the succession for that side of the chiefdom would pass to the son of the next senior wife of that side.

Between the 'coming out' of two young chiefs and the death of their own father, a delicate balance of prestige and power was maintained, similar power over their own age-villages passing to each young chief, while the old chief retained control over the

[1] Wilson, G. <illegible>

[2] Stefi, G. <illegible>

[illegible] secular affairs of his own age-village and full supremacy in religious matters over all. Appeals in difficult cases might be taken from either of the young chiefs to the old chief and his great commoners. After his death, the wives and sons of the old chief were inherited by his full-brother, to whom also his religious authority passed. Full political power over their separate chiefdoms then went to the two sons. The great commoners of the old chief, relinquishing their secular functions to their successors, then entered on their religious duties as priests of the dead chief, the priesthood they handed on to their sons. When all the old chief's full-brothers were dead, the religious functions of chiefship passed to the young chiefs, who were then fully emancipated. The boundaries between their chiefdoms, settled at the 'coming out' ceremony, were sometimes modified by warfare.[1] The age-village is still the chief field of friendship, members recognising greater obligations to each other than to outsiders; before the European administration the village was also a military unit.[2]

[illegible] The great commoners of every village was very powerful, and measures existed to check his influence; for instance, no kinsman of a chief or son of a great commoner could be elected to that office. His duties were to be hospitable to the villagers, judge their cases, lead them to war, and officiate at their ceremonies. He represented their wishes to the chief, and through him and in consultation with him the chief gave his orders. Each great commoner was believed to be able to protect his own villagers from witchcraft.

Warfare

[illegible] A state of war—actual or potential—always existed among the various Nyakyusa chiefdoms. Among the Ngonde, also, civil war was endemic, the Kyungu neither preventing it nor taking any part. In what warfare he did not remain impartial, he gave orders and told the chiefs to pray. They first called on the sacred graves of the buried Kyungas, and then each great chief called on his own predecessors for help. Although the territorial nobles also fought, they did not pray to their ancestors, for what war was carried on under royal auspices alone. War was an important source of revenue to noble and slave. The recurrent civil wars of the period before the Ngoni invasion show that in spite of the hierarchical fealty the centralised political organisation was not strong enough to overcome the local autonomy of the chiefdoms, except in the face of a common danger, such as the threat of Bemba or Ngoni invasion.[3]

Justice versus the Traditional System of the Nyakyusa

[illegible] There was no central court of appeal at Wimbe to which the ordinary man could bring cases direct, or appeal against the decisions of his local chiefs. In the capital the only cases dealt with by the nobles of Ngonde were cases of treason against the Kyungu (mainly adulterous approach to his wives), which were summarily punished by death. They also used the Kyungu's authority in punitive expeditions against insubordinate chiefs. Each noble of Ngonde decided the cases in his own hill. Each great chief held an appeal court to which came from all the chiefdoms of his house cases, for of all the descendants of the Kyungu the great chiefs alone had power to administer the poison ordeal. Some of the territorial nobles also had the power. It was resorted to not only in witchcraft cases, but in appeal cases when evidence for a legal decision was lacking.

[1] Wilson, a, 1938, p. 28. [2] Ibid., p. 28. [3] Ibid., p. 1939, pp. 30-31.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

incorporating the previous inhabitants. Now saturation point has been reached; their chiefdoms cover nearly all the available land and include in their membership all the indigenous people; and the custom of dividing chiefdoms into two is doomed. At the moment, however, it is still a vital part of their constitutional law. The division of a chiefdom is apparent from the manner that a ruling chief marries his two great wives, for he builds their houses separately, one in each "side" (ubuhyle) of his chiefdom. The son of each great wife inherits that side of the chiefdom in which his mother's house is built.

When the ruling chief begins to get old the two boys are ceremonially "brought out" and recognized as chiefs, though they do not assume full powers until their father's death. And their "coming out" is also the "coming out" of all the young men, of all the boys' villages which have been built by the sons of the old chief's wives. At the "coming out" each such village is formally given land by the old chief and his great-commoners, often in a new place.

In every village there is a headman whose title, ukilomo, is simply a specialized use of the general term for a member of an old family who is not a chief. Every commoner is called an ukilomo in his home chiefdom.* These two uses of the term I distinguish by calling the village headman a "great-commoner." Great-commoners, then, are selected for their wealth and ability by the other great-commoners of the chiefdom and hold office for life. In the boys' villages before the "coming out" they are chosen by the other great-commoners—those in charge of their fathers' villages—on that side of the chiefdom. If they prove satisfactory their appointments are confirmed by all the great-commoners of the old chiefdom at the "coming out." If not new ones are then selected.

At the "coming out" the young great-commoners are ritually treated with medicines to give them the power of witchcraft which they are expected to use in the interests of morality, while the young chiefs are treated with medicines to make them brave and impressive themselves and to ensure the fertility of their land and the prosperity of the people under them.

Traditionally the young chiefs assumed authority, each in the young men's village which comprised his own new chiefdom, immediately after the "coming out" and in the old village in one side of his father's chiefdom when his father died. To-day the position differs for the Administration does not recognize the young chiefs at all until their father is dead.

The separation of chiefdoms established at the "coming out" is often modified subsequently. In the old days brother chiefs frequently

* See table p. 10.

3:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(21) (22) fought each other and one was sometimes reduced to a subordinate position by the other. Such subordinate or minor chiefs did not always lose all power, some men often continued to live with them, but not many, for they were poor and could not afford the feasts that prosperous and powerful chiefs gave to their warriors. Nowadays the junior of the two young chiefs, in the majority of cases, becomes subordinate to his brother immediately, for the Administration usually recognizes the senior of the two only, and a salary is paid to him down on the old chief's death.

The number of villages which "come out" with each young chief usually varies between four and eight. But if a chief is subsequently reduced to a minor position he will often end his life with one village only of which men and one village of their wives. For people move from minor chiefdoms and the depleted villages that are left gradually coalesce under the leadership of one of the great commoners. The son of a minor chief may succeed to his father's position, but only one son will do so; a minor chiefdom is too small to be divided and has no formal "coming out" of its sons; its young men attend the "coming out" of the superior chiefdom.

(23) (24) In much to outline for the political constitution of the separate Nyakyusa chiefdoms. Some account of it was a necessary preface to the discussion of individual land rights, since it is within this political structure that they have validity. If, for example, the boundaries of a village are changed at the "coming out"—and they very frequently are—then no individual rights to village land can be maintained outside the new boundaries.

(25) Prior to the arrival of the Europeans there was no paramount political authority among the Nyakyusa, but a number of very independent chiefdoms side by side, with minor chiefdoms in some cases attached to them. Of these traditionally independent chiefdoms there is none, I think, which to-day exceeds 1,000 adult male members, and most of them are far smaller than that. This smallness of scale, which is difficult at first for a European to grasp, is the fundamental characteristic of primitive society, in the organization of which personal relationships are predominant, whereas social relationships, that is, mainly cohesive between personal acquaintances. In the old Nyakyusa policy impersonal relationships, effective social bonds linking together men who were personally unknown to one another, though they existed had relatively little importance.

(26) (27) Just south of the Nyakyusa, in what is now North Nyasaland, live the Ngonde* people, whose language and culture was and is very similar to that of the Nyakyusa. They were, however, slightly more civilized in that they were in closer contact with Arab and Swahili ivory traders; and

*Never known as Europeans as Kinde.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FX17 Ngunda FX17
Nyakyusa

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In discussing the taking up of land after a move it is therefore necessary to distinguish clearly between men who move to villages in which they are newcomers and those who return, after a period of absence, to their home villages.

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Normally land for building and gardens is granted to a stranger by the villagers concerned acting through their great commoner, not by the chief, who is usually informed but seldom interferes. Only if a member of the chief's own family is moving within the chiefdom from one village to another or if a very important stranger comes from outside, he may go to the chief and ask for a building plot, and the chief may then exercise his right of overbidding and grant the request. But this is a special and unusual case. Village land is primarily governed by village relationships. It is villagers who grant land to an ordinary newcomer and formally accept him as one of themselves. His own wishes are taken into account wherever possible; if he sees a piece of ground which attracts him and no one else has a claim to it then it will be his.

An old Kukwa great commoner thus explained the granting of land to a stranger: "Frogs the stranger from another country comes to a friend in this village and says that he wishes to build here, then the friend brings him to me, the great commoner,—or he may come directly to me in the first place; and I go and tell the chief. Then the chief, according to the old custom, would say 'Good! Go and cut a banana bunch for him,' and I would cut a banana bunch from my own homestead, not from anyone else's, and the chief would send one of his wives to me with cooked food for our guest the stranger. This custom is now no longer followed in our country but in the more remote chiefdoms they still cut bananas and cook food in such cases; here the stranger now just comes and is not given anything. And again when he wishes to begin building we go and tell the chief, who tells us to give him a plot to build on, and then my friends and I choose a place for him." "Does not the chief have a say in choosing the plot?" I enquired. "No, not the chief; does he know the details of our land-rights? He does not. It is we who choose the place for the newcomer. But if he does not like the plot we give him and has himself seen a place which he prefers he will ask us for it and maybe we will give it him." "Do not people sometimes go directly to the chief to ask for land?" "No, they always come first to us, the commoners, not to the chief; how should a man presume to approach the chief by himself? No, a newcomer always approaches us, and it is we who inform the chief. I, the great commoner, may go alone to tell the chief or I may take the stranger with me, as I please." And a young Kukwa chief confirmed this, with perhaps a shade more emphasis on the part played by the chief: "The stranger goes first to the great commoner

S:Wilson E-S (1936-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and makes his request for land, then the great-commoner goes to the chief and informs him that so and so has come with a request for land, and he asks his opinion as to which place to give the stranger. Then the chief suggests that perhaps the great-commoner knows of a suitable plot. So the chief and the great-commoner discuss it together and decide. Then the great-commoner shows the plot to the stranger."

It is quite clear in my evidence that, though the normal custom is to consult the chief when a newcomer is given land, yet the newcomer's title is in no way invalidated if the great-commoner omits to do so at the time and simply tells the chief later after the grant has been made.

So much for the initial reception of a stranger and the grant of a building plot, the next step is the grant of garden land. But before discussing this we must emphasize the willingness with which strangers are received both by the villagers and the chief. Men are still scarce than land in most places and the prestige and prosperity of villages and chiefdoms is increased by each addition to their membership. Strangers are always given a house to sleep in while building their own and are usually given food as well, both formally by the chief and great-commoner and informally by the neighbours. The great-commoner who told me that the formal custom of giving food had lapsed in his country belongs to the chiefdom which adjoins Rungwe mission, a small chiefdom to which very considerable immigration has taken place in the last forty years; there the relative scarcity of land is reflected in a decline of hospitality to newcomers, though none have yet been refused land. But the usual custom still is to receive them generously. "It is an ancient custom amongst us to welcome strangers, so that the chiefdom may increase and flourish."

In giving garden land to a newcomer the procedure differs slightly according to the value of the land in question. The great-commoner takes him out and shows him, if the land is scarce and valuable, an exactly demarcated piece, if it is cheap and plentiful, a vaguely defined area within which he can live where he likes. In the upland chiefdoms, for example, the best maize and bean plots are scarce; men hoe the same ground year in year out, planting maize and beans alternately in it or, sometimes, maize only with an interval of a few months fallow each year; and in this case the boundaries of each man's ground are precisely marked. But for the growing of sweet potatoes and millet there is plenty of good land available and men hoe more or less where they please. "A stranger named Tumbalaga," I was told, "came to the village of Mungalo (in Kabwe country). Amongst other things he asked for a maize garden, so they gave him the ground of a man Mwasumbi who had moved to Mwaka. They told Tumbalaga that he could hoe only the same extent of ground

1:Wilson E-4 (1936-1938)1938 F317 Ngende F317
Nyakyusa

as Mwamwiti had, because there were some other main gardens adjoining it. The other land he asked for was not near anyone else's garden, so he was told that he could use just where he liked."

Such is the custom of giving land to a newcomer, whether he comes from a different chiefdom altogether or from another village of the same chiefdom. He has no claim to any particular land but the villagers welcome him gladly and give some to him. If, however, a man returns after a period of absence to his home village then he has a claim, varying in strength in different circumstances, to enter again into possession of his old building site and garden. But his claim is never an absolute one, it depends upon his relationship to the villagers and to the chief; they it is who decide it.

Let us for consider building sites. If a man moves from his home village leaving his house standing there and another is given the site, and if he returns before the house has fallen into disrepair, before it has had to be rebuilt, then the occupier will be evicted in his favour, the villagers will always admit his claim to that site. But only, of course, if they are in general prepared to have him back in the village; if he has been expelled for witchcraft or some other serious crime he has no possible claim at all.

When men move and leave their houses behind it usually but not always implies an intention to return in a few months. If they move because of sickness and the suspicion of witchcraft men are often invited back, as we have seen, and sometimes they accept the first invitation; and then, if they and their families remain healthy, all is well. If a more prolonged absence is intended than the first then the normal custom is to pull down the house and to carry the bamboos with me.

A young Kisyo great-commoner gave me from his own experience an example of the aviation of a man in occupation of another's house: "While my father was alive I fell sick and moved to Mwenkonja's country leaving my house behind without taking it down. And I returned quite soon again, I was not a year away. But meanwhile, when I first moved, a stranger came and was put into my house, he was not told that I might be returning; so he went into my house—but as he was a bachelor the house was too big for him. Afterwards my friends remembered me and went to bring me back, and I came with them; and I said that as another man had been put into my house and as I was myself an owner of the soil (i.e. he was the son of an old family and so had the right to choose any unoccupied plot for himself anywhere he pleased) I would build elsewhere. But they would not hear of it and said that I must go back to my own house. So they informed the newcomer that the owner had returned and gave him another place."

There is a kind of, [illegible] to the same sequence:

S:Wilson E-S (1936-1938)1938 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

"Kalonga had moved from the country of Lundulu to Mundu and other people had taken his ground and lived it. It is the kind of ground which we call ungwejo, rich and rare water. Kalonga had moved because of illness, several of his children had fallen sick and more than one had died. After he moved his neighbours never went to invite him back.

"Now Kalonga himself did not come back to live, but he brought back his mother. She had gone with him, but then she began to complain that he had taken her to an unpleasant country and she would prefer to go home; so he came back just to build a house for her. He did not build for her in his old village but asked another great-commoner (of the same chieftain) for a site; he did however go to the chief to reclaim his old garden (the ungwejo to which we have already referred). Now four men had divided the ground between them; they had approached the great-commoner and asked for it and he had referred them to the chief, having that he might be blamed for giving the ground away if Kalonga should return subsequently. And the chief agreed that they should take it, so as not to let it go idle.

"So when Kalonga came and reclaimed it the chief pointed out that he had moved and left the country (and so had no claim to the land). But no, Kalonga replied, he had not moved, for see he had brought back his mother and built a house for her, which was exactly equivalent to living in the chieftain himself. And the chief admitted his argument and agreed that, as soon as the present holders had reaped their standing crops, he should re-enter into possession of his own ground. So now Kalonga comes regularly with his younger brothers and they hoe the land quickly (being many) for their mother and go home again. Kalonga is of an old family and his father is buried in that chieftain."

And finally the story of Enoch the son of Mwakajitko, another Kalonga, well illustrates the more limited rights of a son to claim his father's old garden which he himself has never lived.

"Mwakajitko built in the village of Dungile, and he died there in 1928. He had three sons, all of whom moved after his death; one of these sons, whose name was Enoch, went and built at Kyimbila; and respectable the chief gave the garden land of Mwakajitko to other people. Part of this land was cultivated by a commoner named Gwanlya but he too, later on, moved into another chieftain and the land was left unused. Then Enoch returned to the country to find that no one was now having the ground which his father had used to live, so he approached Mwangwile, the great-commoner, and asked for it: "So no one is having your father's land," Mwangwile replied, "you may go and live it yourself, but there are some other men who want it and they have already asked me for it, so I must divide it between you." So he went with them and marked

S/Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 out boundaries, drawing lines on the ground; he divided the land into
923 three portions, one for each. The others were strangers to the chiefdom
925 but had taken a fancy to that piece of land."

922 The sentence in this story "The chief gave the garden land of
924 Mwakajilako to other people" deserves remark for it in no way implies any other custom than the one we have previously described. And it illustrates the dangers of relying too much on verbal statements of custom. When a stranger is given land by a great-commoner after reference to the chief he is commonly said to have been given it by the chief. The chief, from one point of view, is the overlord and the great-commoner acts for him. But, and this is an essential qualification, the great-commoner nearly always so acts for the chief and, save exceptionally, it is wholly incorrect for the chief to grant land directly. The great-commoner acts not only for the chief but also as the representative and leader of the villagers; and in relation to them the chief cannot exercise his rights of overlordship save occasionally and in particular circumstances.

166 The old Kukwe great-commoner whom we have already quoted
923 explained this to me very clearly: "Occasionally one of his own men will
926 ask a chief to give him ground to hoe in another village, 'If indeed you
921 say that the land is yours!' (challenging the chief to assert his right of
922 overlordship). Then the chief agrees that all the land is most certainly
his; but still, if it is possible, he tells the man to go to the commoners of that village and ask them for land. If the chief does not do this (but makes a direct grant of land) we blame him for not being a true chief: 'Who is it,' we ask him, 'that has built up this country? Did you do it all by yourself? It is we the commoners who have built it up! And how is it, then, that you give this man land without consulting us?'" Nor is the concern of his people mere idle talk for a Nyakyusa chief, he
[illegible] fears that they may bewitch him, that the witches among them, led by the great-commoners of the several villages, may come in dreams at night and cause him to sicken or to die.

166 So much for the initial grants of land to newcomers and the rights of
923 men returning to their home chiefdoms. If a man goes back, after moving, to a chiefdom which is in no sense his home, where, that is to say, he is not a member of any old family but in which he has himself spent some years, he is treated as a newcomer. He is welcomed but he has no rights to the ground, whether building-site or gardens, which he previously occupied.

923 Once established in a village, however, any man can hoe any unowned
925 ground within its borders and thereby make it his own. A newcomer for

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

paid out of the Native Treasury from the taxes, rarely exceeds 10/- a month it may be doubted whether modern conditions are not in this, as in other respects, impoverishing the Nyakyusa chiefs. 622 554

A chief had the right traditionally to evict any man he pleased if he desired his site for his own personal use, giving him another in exchange. But this right is no longer effective: "It is now at an end," as a chief's kinsman told me, "for the man evicted will go to Tukuyu (the administrative capital of the district) and complain that his chief is turning him out of his home without good cause." It is however still perfectly possible for a chief to take any *unoccupied* site he pleases without reference to the local villagers. He may take it for himself or he may give it to a kinsman, and no objection to such an action on his part is ever raised. It is only if he gives it to an ordinary commoner that his people will criticize him. 622 425 PR

Land once held by the kinsman of a chief at the latter's gift is more secure to him than any land can be which is granted in the ordinary way by a great-commoner; for no one but the chief himself can ever finally take it from him. If he moves and the villagers wish to give the site to a newcomer then they must either send a message after him and ask his permission to do so or else get explicit permission from the chief, if the newcomer's title is to be in any way secure. 622 425

A case within my own knowledge well illustrates these points: Mwakobela, half-brother of chief Mwaipopo, had been given land in the village of Ipoma by Mwaipopo himself. Subsequently he had moved to Kibonde, a minor chiefdom under the jurisdiction of Mwaipopo, and had spent many years there; and when I first met him he was living there still. But then he fell sick and, suspecting witchcraft, decided to return to Ipoma, only to find his old building-site occupied. For the great-commoner of Ipoma, thinking he had moved for good, had given it to a newcomer. 622 425 624

This grant of land to the newcomer had been irregular in more ways than one: firstly Mwakobela's permission had not been asked, secondly no reference at all had apparently been made to Mwaipopo, who subsequently denied any part in the grant and, thirdly, the great-commoner had not even consulted his fellow villagers; if he had done so they would, so one of them told me in discussing the case, have reminded him of the necessity of first asking Mwakobela's permission. The newcomer however had been given the site unconditionally and when Mwakobela reclaimed it he refused to move; but the rights of Mwakobela were unquestionable and he had no difficulty at all in getting him evicted.

I went to visit Mwakobela a few weeks after he had taken possession of the site and he told me about the eviction: "I approached the great-commoner and asked him who had given Mwangesiye (the newcomer)

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Nyakyusa

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permission to build on my plot, perhaps, I supposed, it was Mwaipopo (the chief). But no, he told me, it was not Mwaipopo but he himself who had given the permission, and he said, further, that Mwangesiye would have to move, as I wished to come back, and that he would give him another site. But Mwangesiye refused to move and said that the place was his. So the next thing was that, at a funeral . . . . . I asked Mwaipopo who it was that had given my plot to this Mwangesiye who now claimed it as his own and made as if I had never built there, perhaps Mwaipopo himself had given it to him. And all that Mwaipopo replied was no, he had not done so.

"Then I simply brought my sons with bamboos and told them to begin building. Off goes Mwangesiye to Mwaipopo! "Mwakobela," he complains, "is driving me away from my home!" "Who gave you the plot?" asks Mwaipopo. "The great-commoner gave it me." "And what does he say now?" "He says I must move." "Well then you had better move!"

"And then, next morning, Mwangesiye came to me and said "My friend I was wrong, the place was always yours, I will move; but the hanging bananas and the coffee trees I shall take with me." "Why certainly," I replied, "you may cut the banana bunches and transplant your coffee trees, I shall not object." Thereupon the great-commoner offered him another site with bananas already growing on it, but he refused and said that he intended to return to live in the chiefdom from which he originally came.—And now his sons have carried away his house and there is only left that one hut over there (pointing) which they will take away shortly, and then later they will transplant his coffee trees also."

It was made abundantly clear to me that the important point was the fact that Mwakobela had originally been given the land directly by Mwaipopo, the chief; had he been given it in the ordinary way by the great-commoner with Mwaipopo's concurrence he would have had no claim on it at all. A member of the village of Ipoma explained this to me very lucidly: "If, in the first instance, Mwaipopo had not made the grant, if Mwakobela had approached the great-commoner and said that, as the plot was vacant, he would like to build there and if the great-commoner had agreed to this, then had Mwakobela later moved (as he did) to Kibonde and spent many years there and had the plot meanwhile been given by the great-commoner to Mwangesiye—Mwaipopo all the time being in no way involved—then, if Mwakobela had returned and claimed the plot, the great-commoner would not have admitted his claim. If, in that case, Mwakobela had come to Mwangesiye and tried to evict him Mwangesiye would have complained to the great-commoner, who would then have addressed Mwakobela in some such terms as these:

"Yes, sir, we a chief" (Mwakiketa is one of the ruling chiefs "kiomes," all of whom are entitled "chiefs,") how then is it that you wish to drive men away? (For chiefs always desire to attract men to them!) Do you wish the two of us, you and I, to live together alone without any men? In the first instance you simply came to me and said that you wished to build here and I agreed that you should; but then you moved and I saw myself that you had built a new house and planted bananas from in another village and I supposed you had moved for good. Nor did you ever tell me that you might be coming back nor ask me to keep your site for you, you only told me that you were moving. So I cannot, as great-commoner, agree to evict Mwangoiya. I will find another site for you ..."

"But as it was," my informant continued, "the site had been granted by Mwaipopo himself. Mwaipopo had simply informed the great-commoner that he had given Mwakiketa a certain vacant plot in his village. And then the great-commoner was at fault in that he gave the place to Mwangoiya without consulting his neighbours;[1] had he consulted us about it, and had he sent a message to Mwakiketa to ask his permission to give the vacant site to another man, and had Mwakiketa given the permission (he could hardly have refused it unless he were himself intending to return shortly), then again Mwakiketa would have had no power at all to evict Mwangoiya. The great-commoner would have disallowed his claim, pointing out that he had been informed at the time and had agreed to Mwangoiya's building there. It was owing to the failure to inform Mwakiketa at the time that he now has power to evict Mwangoiya."

"And supposing," I enquired, "that Mwakiketa had not been the younger brother of Mwaipopo, the ruling chief, but just a commoner, a stranger from another chiefdom, and supposing that now the law he had approached Mwaipopo in the first instance and asked for land, instead of going to the great-commoner, how would that have affected this case?" —"Well, in the first place, Mwaipopo would have brought the stranger to the great-commoner and the two of them, the chief and the great-commoner would have discussed together where to give him land and decide to give him a certain vacant plot." "And then," I asked, "if the stranger had moved to Kilondo and the great-commoner had given the plot to Mwangoiya, without informing him, could he then have returned later and evicted Mwangoiya, or not?" "No, he could not do so; had he attempted it the great-commoner would have disallowed the claim, asking

[1] It is, of course, never correct for a great-commoner to grant land without consulting his fellow villagers, but the point here is that, had he consulted them, they would have reminded him of the necessity of consulting Mwakiketa before making this particular grant.

[illegible] for it was for this that the village should die out and leave him, the great-commoner, without man? So he had moved, the great-commoner would have continued, the place was presumably dismantled to him and it had now been allotted to another man. The claim would certainly have been disallowed!"

The examples in this paper have been taken almost entirely from pagan families. For Christians the situation is very much the same except where they live actually on mission land, there they are tenants of the Mission concerned and pay rent to it. And Christians, wherever they live, tend to be more static in their occupation of land, since they are not forever moving in fear of witchcraft.

9. CONCLUSION

I have striven in this paper to make the individual land-rights possessed by Nyakyusa to-day intelligible to the European reader and to demonstrate to him their determining factors. Of these factors the following are the most important. The Nyakyusa were until recently an isolated and primitive people and so bring with them into the modern world a legal tradition based upon small social groups. This tradition is being inevitably modified both in theory and practice under modern conditions, but not out of all recognition; for they are still a relatively isolated people and the system of indirect rule secures them, in general, against arbitrary legal changes. Within their legal system individuals have, as in any system they must have, certain precisely defined and enforceable rights—among these rights is land.

Many kinds of land, however, are plentiful, though less so than of old owing to the growth of population, the opening of new markets for food and the recent introduction of ploughs. And this abundance of land is reflected at times in a lack of rigour in the enforcement of rights in it which is unfamiliar to the European observer. Sufficient land for all is a fundamental condition of Nyakyusa society in its present form, which has no place for a landless man.

And, finally, the habitual movement of men with their families from one village to another to escape the witchcraft of their neighbours leads to a constant transfer of homesteads and gardens and is the main cause of difficulty in the administration of their laws of property in land and trees. This difficulty is greatest in the case of the newly introduced coffee trees which need continuous tending.

G.Wilson E-G (1934-1938)1939 F7017 Ngwondo F7017

that the organization of Mbundu may be described either as a group of small fiefs clustered together or as the capital chiefdom of the Kyanga, to which the nobles of Ngondo acted as the great commoners, each in his own small agro-village. 642. 645

Besides the nobles of Ngondo and their own fellowmen there lived in Mbundu men called mabaka, who acted as the personal messengers and police of the Kyanga. They were not hereditary officials but chosen for their speed by the nobles of Ngondo, who also gave them their orders. Anyone might become a messenger, the son of a chief, or of a commoner, or even a slave. 639 300

Of the customs of the hill fiefs and of the chiefdom, of the houses of Ngondo and Kasanza we know very little; but it is certain that in many of them different dialects were spoken from that of the plain and that their inhabitants called themselves (as they still do to-day) Sabwa, Wenya, Lambya, and so on, rather than "men of Ngondo." And these upland groups were much more loosely attached to the central power at Mbundu than were the people of the plain. 642 645

There is some evidence to show that, even in the early period, the the nobles of Ngondo did not always take the most immediate heir of a dead Kyanga to succeed him; during the middle period it is certain that they did not. The Kyanga had to be taken from the royal family but, within limits, the most suitable man might be chosen. And with the increase in the numbers of the chiefs the area of selection grew constantly wider. The constitutional methods of selection will be discussed in section five.

(4) THE MIDDLE KYONGO: CIVIL WARS

We must now turn to the rivalry between the chiefs of Ngalanga and Ngana. "Mwongonde begot Kalonga, Mpata,[1] and Mwanda. And they, when they grew up, quarrelled with the sons of Kayombo: 'Let them move further off, they are only commoners, we object to their proximity!' So they made war on them and drove them fleeing out of Ngana with only a few men. Before this war began their father Mwongonde had forbidden them to fight and commanded them to be friends." We notice here a point, which will be discussed later in section five, that the Kyanga, though not themselves involved in the civil wars, yet had little or no power to keep the peace. 775

"Then the sons of Kayombo went to the Ndali to make allies of them and they returned together and fought the sons of Mwongonde

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[1] cf. Section 3.

[2] Mpata (sub-tribe) later took the name of Mwakasungula.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FM17 Ngonde FM17

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stone is rightly belonged, he would at once fall down dead. And many stories are still told of such happenings in the past.

And besides this there was the fact that the Kyungu, being the richest man in Ngonde and in the most intimate contact with the ivory traders, could secure medicine from a distance, which had a greater reputation than local ones.

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But, as in the theistic aspect of the religion of Ngonde there was considerable local and family autonomy, so also was there in the magical aspect; and here there was individual autonomy also. Lesser chiefs had lesser magic than Mbande, but still it was magic. Ordinary chiefs, for instance, had magically filled calabashes which gave their people military success. And every individual could go to a doctor and exchange a little of his surplus food for magic. Success in love and hunting, in warfare and legal disputes, good crops and good health—all alike, it was believed, magic could give.

(c). *THE ELEMENT OF WITCHCRAFT.*

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Both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa it was believed that certain commoners had snakes in their stomachs which gave them the power of witchcraft (*uwalosi* or *uwangwi*) and among these who had this power were the great-commoners of every chiefdom. Normally a ruling chief was spiritually protected by his great-commoners from the malicious attacks of other witches, but, if he did wrong, then the great-commoners, so it was held, would cease to protect him and join in the attack.

Now in many circumstances the great-commoners' power of witchcraft and the power of the chief's dead predecessors were believed to act together. The anger of witches and that of the ancestors were sharply distinguished in theory, but in practice they often coincided. The great-commoners, for example, not only had the power of bewitching their chief but also of appealing to his predecessors to punish him for wrong-doing; and on particular occasions they were often believed to do both at once.[1] And the nobles of Ngonde had similar powers in relation to the Kyungu.[2]

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[1] *Uwalosi* is normally used when the act of witchcraft is disapproved of and *uwangwi* when it is approved of by the speaker.

[2] A point of considerable theoretical interest is raised by the repeated statements of our best informant on these matters that it was because they were witches that the great-commoners had this power of influencing the chief's ancestors, that they went to the chief's ancestors in their capacity of witches and, in the manner of witchcraft (i.e. by means of the snakes in their stomachs). But our evidence on this point is not yet conclusive.

[3] So we were told when we put the question; but it was never volunteered. It was the hold which the nobles of Ngonde had over the Kyungu in consequence of his magical fools which was the more emphasised.

G:Wilson E-6 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Nganda FN17

These two religious powers of the great-commoners in relation to their chief (or of the nobles of Ngonde in relation to the Kyungu) were important for the balance of the constitution, for they provided a most effective check upon the actions of the chiefs. If a chief kept within the bounds of constitutional usage then any illness that he had would be ascribed by the diviners to some such cause, as the infidelity of his wives or the breach of a taboo; but if he broke some constitutional usage then that would be taken to be the cause of his next illness; the great-commoners, it would be held, were angry and so had made him ill.

It is hardly necessary to stress the local and individual autonomy implicit in the faith in witchcraft. Not only were the great-commoners as a group believed to have an irresistible power through their witchcraft over their chief, but so were the great-commoner and the leading witches of every village believed to have an irresistible power over other individuals within that village. And in both cases their powers were strictly limited, save exceptionally, by the bounds of chiefdom or village. Moreover witches did not always act as a group, an individual witch might maliciously cause another individual to fall ill. In all this the political hierarchy was irrelevant. But it was not irrelevant in dealing with accusations of malicious witchcraft; there proof rested with the poison ordeal and a journey had to be made to a great chief or a leading noble.

4. *ECONOMIC ELEMENTS (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

We have suggested in the previous section that the traditional religious paramountcy of the Kyungu and his nobles of Ngonde was an important factor of their secular power. But comparison with the Nyakyusa shows us that their control of wealth was equally important. The religious paramountcy furnished a mould into which the ever-flowing stream of wealth could run and there be minted into the form of sovereignty. Much of the wealth which reached Mbande did not stay there; it was passed back piecemeal to the local rulers of Ngonde, stamped with the divine impress of the Kyungu.

(a) *THE INCOME OF MBANDE AND OTHER AUTHORITIES.*

Now the traditional income of Mbande consisted of ivory, food, labour, slaves and cattle. Of ivory the Kyungu had a semi-monopoly in the plain and received tribute from the territorial nobles in the hills. Food was brought to him by the chiefs and territorial nobles of the plain, who also, with their men, hoed his public gardens (*mulima*). Slaves and cattle accrued to him from tribal wars and from his offending

178 643 642 minor chiefs of those of Ugalenge; most of the traditional reasons which led them to accept the supremacy of a Kyanga of the house of Ugalenge, whenever one was elected, have ceased to influence them; while they themselves, as we shall see in a moment, are now barred from the succession. Moreover the Kyanga's supremacy is now mainly operative in the unsuccessful sphere of law. And so a new reason for admitting that supremacy has had to be more forcibly presented to them than to the other rulers of Uganda.

Once forcibly presented, however, the new reason seems to have been admitted in place of the old one without much difficulty. For in 1936, the next year, Kilagala spontaneously led his people to the Kyanga and formally handed over a cow to him, thereby re-establishing friendship and mutual respect between the two of them. The dispute has ended in a manifest harmony.[1]

It is relevant to mention here that in the first five months of 1937 only one case was taken on appeal from the Kyanga's court to that of the District Commissioner.

178 565 632 638 642 The general status both of the great chiefs and of the local chiefs and nobles (the "Important" and "Village Headmen,"[2]) as also of the great communes, has been radically altered by the new legal conditions. Formerly these authorities were the mainstay of a primitive justice, but to-day they could not possibly enforce any legal decisions without the backing of the central Government. And this backing they do not have. Their sphere of influence is so small that it has not been thought worth while to give them any formal judicial authority; they are now mere arbitrators and all important cases go to court.

178 642 The modern constitution of Uganda is thus more centralized than the old. The support of the Government is given to, and effective judicial power is concentrated in the hands of half a dozen men, with their own advisers. The new judicial functions of the Kyanga and the selected "Sub-chiefs" have, in fact, been transferred to them from the local rulers. Some such centralization was inevitable under modern conditions but the details are dependent upon the decisions of the Government.

(c) *PETER THE FORTUNATE.*

642 The wealth of the present Kyanga is not only due to his great personal abilities. For twenty years before his appointment as Regent (when he himself became the Kyanga in all but name) he was the full-

[1] This phrase begs no questions about private feelings, upon which we have no evidence.

[2] This is less true of the great chiefs (the "Important Headmen") than of the rest; and possibly an understanding of their status will alter the attitude of the Administration to them.

6.21 In a village of married men each has one or more huts for himself and his wives, with barns round them; his homestead is close to those of his neighbours, while the main garden-lands of the whole group are at a distance all together. Boundaries between age-villages are not always apparent to a stranger; a solid hundred acres or so of forest and banana may turn out to consist of two or three villages, each with its own organization, and each having a block of garden-lands separate from the others.

6.26 In each village of married men, and usually in the other boys' villages as well, there is an appointed leader or great commoner (*ulifumi*) who is originally chosen for the position by the great commoners of the senior age-villages of that chiefdom. They try to select a man who is wealthy, who comes from a respected family, who has personal ability in judging cases, who is popular with his fellows, and in the old days they looked also for qualities of courage and the ability to lead men in war. I think, though my evidence for this is as yet only circumstantial, that they also require certain believed spiritual qualities in a man, the power to recognize and to counteract aggressive witchcraft.[*] The qualities which the electors look for in choosing a new great commoner are the also to his functions. He is usually extremely hospitable to his neighbours, he judges their cases, he is their leader at ceremonies and in the old days he led them in war also. He represents their desires to the chief and is to through him and in consultation with him that the chief gives orders. Finally each great commoner is believed to protect his own villagers from aggressive witchcraft, to shield people and cattle from the spiritual forces of evil.

So important is this position of great commoner that legal precautions are taken [illegible] to prevent the great commoner becoming a chief [illegible] as several informants have put it to me. It is illegal to choose a great commoner from among the kinsmen of a chief, it is illegal to elect the son of a great commoner to that office in any age-village of his own contemporaries, though he may perhaps inherit the position in his father's village when his father dies.

6.21 The relationships which arise from common membership of an age-village are continually apparent in the Nyakyusa culture. Ceremonies and funerals are not only meeting places for relatives but also for the age-villagers; the great commoner in consultation with members of his village grants land and grazing rights to strangers who ask for them; and

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[*] It is possible that this power is believed to be induced by magic herbs, I am not sure.

When the other sons of his contemporaries reach the age of about 18-20 years the old chief is approached by his great commoners who say: "The sons have grown up, let us make the 'Coming Out' for them." After a period of delay, for he is unwilling to relinquish his own honour and power, the old chief agrees, and the "Coming Out" takes place. The two boys, together with all the boys and young men, whether married or single, who are sons of the old chief's contemporaries, are summoned to attend, according to their age-villages, at the old chief's principal house. When they arrive they wait there for two days, while the old great commoners discuss with their chief where to give the young men land, and whom they will select as great commoners of the young villages. We have already noted the principles which guide their choice of leaders. In many of the young village groups there are already leaders who have been previously appointed by the old great commoners, but these leaders are, I am told, only temporary; they are never reappointed at the "Coming Out"; at the "Coming Out" "everything is made new," the boundaries of the young age-villages are redrawn, and new great commoners appointed to them; only the groups of young men themselves remain unchanged.

The legal action which now takes place comprises three events: firstly the public selection of new great commoners, secondly the public appearance and the public recognition of the two young chiefs, and thirdly the giving of land to the young age-villages.

When the old men have made up their minds, one of them goes among the crowd of young men and catches hold of them they have chosen in order of their seniority: First the one who is to be leader of the senior village of the first son of the old chief, then the leader of the senior village of his second son, then the leader of the next senior village of the first son, and so on. There are usually eight age-villages of young men, of these four will belong to the chieftain of the first son, four to that of the second. The eight new great commoners are now publicly known, four in each new chieftain.

The next stage of the action is the one from which the whole institution takes its name; the "Coming Out." The two young chiefs are secluded for a few hours in the hut of the old chief's first wife, there they receive various forms of magical treatment and when it is finished, "then," to quote the words of a great commoner who told me about his own coming out, "the director of ceremonies said: 'Get up!' the chiefs got up, and came out of the house to us, and we, the crowd of young men, said: 'Come on!' and welcomed them. Then we all ran shouting and calling the war cry towards the next chieftain. In the old days we would

B: W Gwen E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngombe FN17
Nyakyusa

all, hunting is organized like warfare and fishing is a joint endeavour, both ordered by the chief.

Every chief has a title of ownership (*ubwene mulyi*) to the land of his chiefdom and can evict any man he pleases, (giving him another plot), if he wishes to build there himself; but his people also have titles of ownership to it, both collectively, under the leadership of the great commoners, and individually, each man to his own ground. It is the great commoners who, in consultation with their neighbours, give to the sons of each village land on which to build; it is they who, together, finally fix the boundaries of that young man's village at their "Coming Out;" it is they who, again, in consultation with their neighbours, grant land to strangers who ask for it, though they must notify the chief and get his approval before giving so.

In the single great commoners settle disputes within their own villages as the chief and great commoners together hear and decide cases within the chiefdom. Many of these legal actions are now settled in the Courts, but not all of them; and, even when cases are going to Court, preliminary hearings commonly take place before the chief, first. Cases are conducted and witnesses interrogated by chief and great commoners together, and the division which the chief pronounces is an expression of their general opinion.

Among the great commoners there is an order of seniority. The leaders of the two senior age-villages of the chief's own men play a prominent part at his "Coming Out," they each have a pre-eminent authority in one side of his chiefdom, and the other great commoners rank as their juniors, some on one side, some on the other. In the old days the two senior great commoners each led a whole side of the chiefdom in war.

The two most effective checks on the power of a chief are migration and witchcraft. Military strength used to depend upon the number of a chief's adherents, to-day the scale of his salary is similarly dependent; men are quite free to move, and there is a constant flow of adherents from unpopular to popular chiefs. But unpopularity is most feared in its spiritual form of witchcraft. We have seen already that an adverse current of opinion is believed to act invisibly, as the "breath of men," against an unpopular member of a village and to make him sick. So also the adverse opinions of a single village or of a whole chiefdom is believed to have power against a chief, to bring sickness or even death upon him. As in the single village, so in the whole chiefdom the great commoners are the prime sources of this spiritual power; they are believed severally to protect the members of their own villages and jointly to protect their

brothers, and this is compelling the increasing and continual fragmentation of holdings at time of inheritance. Even so, if there are several brothers (i.e., sons of the deceased) the youngest among them may still be unable to obtain a plot, or at least not one of an economically viable size, and they are then compelled to try to gain allotment in some other village or newcomers, there to be allocated land.

The shortage of land is, therefore, not only making inheritance very considerably more important, but it is pointing to the establishment of new kinship attitudes and a redefining of fraternal relations. The position is most confused at the moment as the old system continues to exist alongside the new, sometimes more or less successfully, but often in intractable opposition. At the present time the observer can only mention general tendencies, for it is impossible as yet to foresee what the eventual result will be, and there are, in any case, many other factors involved besides those of the inheritance of scarce land.

In so far as we are primarily concerned with land problems in this essay, the basic factors are that land is overly scarce, that there is virtually no alternative activity in the country to the arable use of the land, and that therefore each son must try to obtain a share in the often contiguous holding of his father. I suggest that no form of inheritance can deal with such a situation satisfactorily – at least it is highly doubtful if any has yet emerged in an area of land shortage in Eastern Africa – and thus there are bound to be severe difficulties and a deterioration of inter-personal relations between near kinsmen who are most in competition. The new inheritance law of the Nyakyusa has narrowed the range of potential conflict from the patrilineal descendants of a grandfather to the sons of a single father; but if it has elevated possible hostility between the generations and between paternal cousins, it has also removed much of the common interest and mutual interdependence between them.

The Right to Land, and the Authority of the Village Headmen

Although the traditional principle still exists that every villager has a right to arable land within the village boundaries, yet it is no longer possible to carry it out in practice. Every village headman, in my experience, attempts to ensure that each of his men has land, but he cannot always succeed, and most especially he cannot provide every one with as much land as he would like, because of their spatial limitation.

Nowhere any longer does the old principle now hold that an established villager may, without permission or notification, take vacant land into cultivation as part of his holding. When land becomes vacant it must now revert immediately to the village as a group, that is to the common pool from which the headman as village authority makes allocations. There are so many and such varied demands for land nowadays that no man acting on his own can presume to take up vacant land, and only the headman may decide allocation. No person can now obtain land, whether he be an established villager or not, unless he is allocated it by the headman – or, in the many large villages typical of the Lake Plains, by the headman's assistant, *ugwakyalwa*, who is delegated authority in a section of the village.

Land becomes vacant when a man shifts to another village, when a man dies and leaves no active heir who desires to take up the deceased's holding, or (but seldom today) when a man gives up part of his holding due to his inability to use the whole of it. In all these cases the land is immediately re-allocated by the headman, probably not as a single unit any longer, as best he can among a crowd of land-hungry villagers – established men seeking extra land to meet the needs of growing families or for increasing cash-crop

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 F317 Ngonde F317

breaks a law; they must be able, if necessary, to call in the aid of some central authority or he will escape them. Many men today, for instance, take wives whose homes are fifty miles or more from their own; and such marriages cannot possibly be regulated by the old primitive procedures. Moreover the rapid and radical changes in the content of law which are occasioned by modern conditions could not be worked out in detail by a number of independent courts without much confusion. And so in the Ngonde of to-day common law is maintained both by a centralised police system and by two central appeal courts, a lower one presided over by the Kyungu, a higher one by the District Commissioner.

A dispute which took place in 1935 will illustrate both the novelty of a central appeal court in Ngonde and the support which the Kyungu now receives from the Administration. And it also shows that the old rivalry between the lines of Ngolonge and Ngana still survives.

The Kyungu in his new judicial capacity decided a land-dispute between two local chiefs of the house of "Sub-chief" Kilupula, who is now the most powerful, though not the senior, of the chiefs of Ngana. The Kyungu's decision reversed that of Kilupula, who thus became angry. The chief who lost the case is reported to have said: "How does the Kyungu come here and divide up our land among us? He knows nothing about it." And Kilupula is reported to have taken much the same view; the new judicial functions of the Kyungu were resented by him. And Mwalonge, another great chief of Ngana, sympathised with his resentment.

Then Kilupula and Mwalonge between them wrote a letter addressed to the Provincial Commissioner complaining of the Kyungu's conduct of this case. The District Commissioner, who received it first, called them in and advised them to burn it, but they insisted that it should be forwarded. But before this was done the Governor of Nyasaland arrived in Ngonde on tour and the two chiefs then asked that the letter should be handed to him. And so it was. Whereupon the Governor publicly reprimanded them for writing the letter and asked the Kyungu, before all the people, to decide how he would punish them, by fine or imprisonment. And the Kyungu fined them each £5.

No more striking expression could have been given of the Kyungu's present position as a trusted servant of the Government than this incident. While the fact that the dispute arose out of his new judicial functions and that it was two chiefs of Ngana who stood against him is most illuminating. The Kyungu has exchanged the support of his ancestors for that of the Nyasaland Government, his divinity for a magisterial office. This change, on the whole, has been made easily enough, but a certain temporary friction was inevitable. The chiefs of Ngana are the tradi-

Nyakyusa generally is in kinship groups, not villages, which eat protective medicines with certain fruit-trees.

Unlike many other cattle-keeping Bantu the Nyakyusa take great pride in cultivation, men boasting about their strength in hoeing, and praising those who are diligent. Significantly, the vocabulary relating to banana varieties is richer than that relating to cattle: we recorded a dozen terms—and there were said to be many more—for varieties of bananas and plantains, which are distinguished by the form and flavour of the fruit, and thirteen terms for types of cattle, distinguished by colour and markings.

Not only does success in cultivation carry prestige in itself, but it provides the wherewithal for hospitality, on which status in a Nyakyusa community turns. To be respected a man must entertain his neighbours with food and millet-beer. Control of grain and vegetables to do this depends upon his own effort in hoeing, as well as upon having wives and sons to work with him. We have seen how the laggard among the Kukwe believes that the fertility of his gardens will be sapped by his neighbours being ahead. There is thus considerable social pressure compelling both men and women to cultivate diligently. At the same time, however, no individual should be too conspicuous. Each must keep in step in cultivation with his neighbours; and though his fields may be a little larger than the average, they must not be a great deal larger. The area cultivated (visible crops and stubble) by seven compound families on the Lake-shore plain in 1935 averaged 6·13 acres per family; which, divided by the number of members in each family, gave rather over half an acre per head (men, women, and children) or 1·3 acres per adult. The acreage ranged from 1·99 to 0·61 per adult.[1]

Cultivation thus involves co-operation primarily within elementary and compound families, but it also involves village co-operation, in that neighbours hold land together, help one another in some measure, and try to carry out each process simultaneously.

The pressure of neighbours still helps to keep laggards up to the mark, and also to keep the most energetic from getting far ahead. But the village control over cultivation is diminishing for, as we have seen, the custom of keeping in step is no longer strictly insisted upon even among the Kukwe, nor does it apply

[1] Monthly report of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu District, July 1933. Figures supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu, 1935.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 F3117 Ngonde F3117
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

MYSTICAL INTERDEPENDENCE

a. *Witchcraft and 'the breath of men'*

In the Nyakyusa view two of the main co-operative activities of a village are defence against witches, and the punishment of wrong-doers through sickness brought upon them by the murmuring of their fellows. Fellow villagers are 'members of one another' as much on account of this mystical inter-dependence as on account of their economic co-operation and enjoyment of each other's company. The village headmen are spoken of as the leaders in the 'war by night' against witches, as they are leaders in war by day, and it is they also who are foremost in bringing 'the breath of men' (*umulopo cya bantu*) on a wrongdoer, so that his body becomes cold, and he falls ill. We must therefore examine the concepts of witchcraft and of this 'breath of men' in order to understand village relationships.

i. *The nature of witchcraft*

The Nyakyusa believe that certain people have pythons (*isoka*) in their bellies which give them power to harm men and cattle, by throttling, tramping, wounding, and kicking them. These are the witches (*abalosi*). They are said to fly by night on their pythons, or 'on the wind', either singly or in covens, to attack a chosen victim, and to leave on their beds their skins, which 'can feel nothing'. So closely are the witch and his pythons identified that if a python is killed the witch will die. The pythons are thought to be usually inherited from one or other parent, children of both sexes inheriting from either father or mother: children are 'born with witchcraft in their stomachs', and it is developed by accompanying a parent on his or her evil errands. However, not *all* children of a witch are necessarily witches. 'If a man witch marries a woman witch then the whole family are witches, but if the man is pure (*musela*), and the woman only a bit of a witch, then she may say to herself when she first bears a child:

I:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

576 In Nyakyusa society it is senior relatives who formally blow
754 out water to express their good will, not suspected witches, as among the Azande. But the admission of anger by the supposed witch or justly shocked neighbours, and their wishes for the patient's good health, are anxiously sought (*vide infra*, p. 101), for such good wishes are thought to lead directly to his recovery.

754 The reverse of this emphasis on the value of confessing anger is the belief that the man who nurses a grudge in secret without ever admitting it is the most dangerous enemy, whether he be a senior relative muttering to the shades, or a neighbour using witchcraft, or a rival who has turned to sorcery. Mwambugwa, a conservative village headman without any school education, was very explicit on the point: 'The root of witchcraft is this—when two people have a quarrel in their hearts and do not let it out. Maybe I have a neighbour who hates me, but he never lets it out, he says nothing and we seem to be on friendly terms—those are the quarrels that are pregnant with witchcraft. But if he lets it out and tells me that I have wronged him in some way then the quarrel has no menace in it. It is when he lets nothing out and stays silent, though angry in his heart, that he comes in dreams to throttle me. That is the root of witchcraft.' Hence the innocence on one accused of witchcraft admitting guilt (*vide infra*, p. 110).

754 'The defenders' are powerful, but it is believed that witches
791 are occasionally able in dreams to get past them, and throttle men against whom they have a grudge, or their cows. ' "The *defenders*" do not go out in dreams to fight the aggressors every night. A witch wanting to throttle a man comes night after night.' 'Nowadays it is much worse than it used to be, since the Europeans prevent us reporting them, and getting them stopped; "the defenders" work hard, but some nights they sleep without dreaming and the witches get past.'

754 Although the primary function of 'the defenders' is to see and
drive off witches, nevertheless they are also thought to use their
791 power to punish a wrong-doer. In doing so they are assisted by
the witches, but, the Nyakyusa argue, the village headman who
676 leads this night attack in dreams is no more breaking the law than he is when he fines a thief in court. In both cases he is exerting power to maintain the law. The Nyakyusa have a lively fear of shocking their neighbours, for it is held that the shocked astonish-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ment of fellow villagers (*bikuswiga*) or their angry murmuring (*bikwibunesya*) will bring on wrong-doers 'the breath of men' (*embepo sya bandu*) causing them, or their children, or cattle, to fall ill, and this breath is the power of the pythons exerted by 'defenders' and witches acting together. We asked Mbukile whether 'the defenders' really came to choke a proud, quarrelsome person. 'Mother! They come. "The defenders" and the witches all call one another. They all go. "The defender" is not angry (at the attack), he says, "The man killed himself, he was a quarrelsome fellow!" ' And another friend explained: 'If a woman witch wishes to choke her husband, perhaps the first night "the defenders" will turn her back, but then she will plead with them and explain that her husband is a bad man and ill-treats her, then perhaps on the second night they will change their minds and come and help her. Yes, "the defenders" turn round sometimes and throttle people.'

'The breath of men' is thought to cause prolonged illness but not death, and should a death occur then a charge of witchcraft may be brought, and the suspects be required to drink the poison ordeal. 'We said, it is forbidden to kill a man. We others were afraid, although we had disliked the victim ourselves, we feared at some later time the witch would kill us.' All our informants accepted this view in theory, but in practice several cases in which the supposed victims died were cited as instances of 'the breath of men' (see table, pp. 206–8).

The effect of 'the breath of men' is spoken of as 'the curse' (*ikigune*)[1] and its typical symptom is sterility, or a paralysis of the legs, which, it is thought, can only be cured when the sinner repents and reforms his behaviour, providing at the same time a feast of beer and meat for men of his village or, if it be against his father that he has sinned, of his father's village. At the feast it is essential that the men of the village should *admit their responsibility* for the sickness, and express hopes for the recovery of the patient. 'Formerly, they would pray and pray, they would let out all their anger, saying: "Certainly we were angry, it was us, but now it is all over." Then life would come back to the sick man and he recovered' (cf. Document, p. 240).

We see then, that a clear distinction is made by the Nyakyusa

[1] *Ikigune* is not used in the Kukwe dialect, but is common usage in Selya, on the Lake-shore plain, and in Ngonde.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 626 between the legal and illegal use of power derived from pythons. 'The breath of men' is the general public opinion of a whole group—of an age-village or chiefdom—acting through the 'python power' of those of its members who happen to be possessed of it, led by one or more village headmen and directed against a single person. On the other hand, individuals proved to be witches are those believed to have acted by themselves, either against the public opinion of their age-village or chiefdom, or at any rate without securing its support. No pagan Nyakyusa doubts that witchcraft is bad, or that 'the breath of men' is used to bring legitimate punishment on evil-doers, but the classification of particular cases varies somewhat with the point of view of the individual. The victim of 'the breath of men' may speak indignantly about the attacks of 'the witches'.[1]

791 576 'The defenders' are regarded as pillars of society, and their exercise of python power as right and proper, yet no one readily admits to the possession of such power; it is a proud and boastful thing to do, and not good manners. Informants, when discussing it, rarely spoke as if they had direct knowledge of the power, usually prefacing their remarks with: 'It is said that', or 'I hear that'. This was true even of village headmen who are all believed to have the power. One such man, to whom a direct question was put, replied: 'I would not go so far as to boast of it myself, but other people in my village have it.' In villages of mature and old men, others besides the headmen are often known by name as having it; and besides this there is the general belief that in each such age-village 'some people', not specified, have it as well.

iv. Witchcraft, 'the breath of men' and morality

754 [626] Now the power of witchcraft and 'the breath of men' is held to operate primarily within one age-village, and it is denied that it can ever extend beyond the chiefdom. 'How could the people of another chiefdom "eat" a man?' said the village headman, Mwafula, 'It is those *here*'. The typical accusations are against neighbours and wives or co-wives and, nowadays, against fellow workers living in the same camp (cf. table, p. 198). The fact that it is within the village that witchcraft is thought to operate is

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'An African Morality' in *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936), pp. 87-8, for such a case.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 and scarcely affect accusations of practising witchcraft, save that
554 the chief himself is never accused, though he is often thought to suffer from the witchcraft, or 'the breath', of his men. The commoners, 'the black people' (*abatitu*), are said to be the real witches, but a study of cases shows that junior brothers and sons of the chiefs are, in fact, sometimes accused. Village headmen may be accused just like the humblest of their followers, and men are accused at least as often as women (cf. table p. 198). Thus though witchcraft is held to be hereditary, and is particularly associated with menstrual blood, it is individual behaviour, not birth, or sex, that determines accusations.

754 What sort of behaviour, then, leads to accusations of witchcraft, and what sort of behaviour is thought to provoke attack by a witch, or bring upon one the chilling breath of men? We found that some quite specific teaching was given to Nyakyusa children on this point.

754 The type most usually described as a witch is the person whose character makes him (or her) to some extent isolated and un-
626 popular—a proud man who treats his neighbours with disdain; a retiring man who always keeps silent in public; a glum wife, or one who fails to greet the other women she meets and to inquire after their children. Such people are treated by their neighbours with less courtesy and hospitality than the traditional ideals of good manners demand. 'Perhaps we do not summon him to drink beer, or to eat with us: and then when our cows fail to give milk we think, "doubtless it is he who is throttling them".'

One who fails to show sympathy with a neighbour in bereavement, neglecting to attend a funeral in the village, or one who does not try to persuade a neighbour to remain, when that neighbour is preparing to move for fear of witchcraft, is immediately suspect. The chief characteristic of witches is always said to be pride (*amatingo*), which includes a cold aloofness, as well as boastfulness and irascibility.

And what sort of people are thought to be attacked by witches? Informants agree that, though they act without public support, witches seldom act without provocation. It is argued on the one hand that they act from greed, and on the other that suppressed hatred drives them to attack (*vide supra*, pp. 92–4 and table, pp. 198–205). The Nyakyusa see no contradiction in this, for they

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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believe that the witches, lusting after food, choose as victims those against whom they have a grudge. The exception is the witch who, having eaten with his fellow witches, fails to provide a victim in his turn and is compelled to offer a kinsman of his own. Mwamunda, talking of witchcraft between relatives, explained: 'Throttling of relatives is of two kinds: firstly, when kinsmen quarrel over something, perhaps cattle, and one throttles the child of his relative; secondly, when there is no quarrel, but a witch has gone with his fellow witches to eat of their food in his dreams, then they come to him and say: "You have eaten our food with us, give us your food. If you don't we shall eat your wife." Then he points out the child of his kinsman to them' (*vide infra*, p. 114). Far more often, however, the witches' attack is attributed to a quarrel, or to envy roused by conspicuous success. Men are said to excite the envy of witches by acquiring many cattle, hoeing a much larger garden than others, earning more at work, or by boasting about the importance of the position they hold in government or other employment. A woman excites envy by becoming the favourite wife of her husband, or by carrying a heavier load than her fellows when she goes with them to fetch firewood (cf. Document, p. 229). Our friends constantly referred to the danger of rousing envy; it is in fact believed to be the motive behind witchcraft in a large proportion of cases.

Good food rouses the envy of witches also, and the man who eats alone is felt to be in danger, but not only from the witches. It is said: 'If you have grudged your neighbours meat . . . those who watch over the village by night, "the defenders", will be angry, and call the witches to help; they will eat you.' Here we come to the legitimate use of python power, 'the breath of men'. Greed at a feast; failure to share whatever meat, or beer, or other fine food one has, whether it be prepared in the village, or brought as a gift from affines; failure to send the customary cut of an animal killed as a gift to the chief; and failure to provide a feast on certain occasions, are all regarded as sins liable to bring on the wrong-doer the 'curse' or 'breath' of his aggrieved neighbours. The feasts specially mentioned as being necessary are those at death and at marriage (*vide supra*, p. 70, and Document, p. 206). As Mwakwelebeja, an old commoner, put it: 'If I did not kill at a funeral, the neighbours, those who eat the meat, would be angry. As they scattered from the funeral they would say: "He is

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 hard, he has not killed a cow for the death of his child." When
626 they go round telling other people like this, they bring down the "breath of men".'

626 But it is not thought that neighbours are concerned only with enforcing hospitality within the village; they are also shocked (*bikuswiga*) by disrespectful behaviour towards parents and parents-in-law; by a wife swearing at her husband or hitting him; by incest; by a woman 'soiling' her lover, i.e. by running off with him repeatedly, and so enraging her husband that he forces him to eat filth; by a woman continuing to bear children after her son has married a girl who has reached puberty; and by any other manifestation of 'pride' (*amatingo*). Their shocked astonishment is held to bring on the wrong-doer their chilling 'breath' which causes sterility, paralysis, or some other lingering illness, or makes the child of a woman who has insulted her mother-in-law, or peeped at her father-in-law, thin and sickly.

'If a woman should look at her father-in-law on purpose her friends shout at her and say: "You are proud (*namatingo*) you look on your father-in-law." Then she won't get children or her child falls ill. It is true also that if she says the name or looks on a father-in-law she will have difficulty when she comes to die. . . . She might die slowly and in pain or she might be old and weary and wish to die, and not be able to do so. . . . It is "the breath of men" that causes her child to be ill. If the father-in-law on whom she looked said nothing about it nothing would happen, but if he told his friends then the woman's child would be made ill by "the breath of men"—the child the woman was carrying when she saw the man, or her first-born child, would suffer' (cf. Document, p. 236).

Another informant said: 'Suppose that a man dies leaving a young son, and his brother, the heir, refuses to give this boy a cow for milk or, later, cows for marriage, then the dead man comes in a dream to the heir and reproaches him. Then he, the heir, fetches his wife and tells her: "We must give him (the ward) a cow, my brother came to me by night and reproached me," and so he will give the boy a cow. If he still refuses to do so, his fellows in the village, fellows of his elder brother (the heir having taken over the elder brother's homestead) will pass judgement on him and there will be much "breath". And if he refuses to provide marriage-cattle for his brother's son and provides them

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for his own son whom he begot saying: "He is my own flesh and blood", then the men of the village will pass judgement.' 626

This 'breath' is thought also to fall on a chief who is harsh towards his people, or who acts unconstitutionally, as in refusing to make a 'coming out' ceremony for his sons when his village headmen advise him; and it falls on a village headman who treats a junior in office unfairly, or is overbearing to his men. Both pagan and Christian informants insisted that fear of 'the breath of men' was a powerful sanction in the traditional system against arbitrary rule. Asagene, a Christian deacon, himself raised the subject one day and said: 'Headmen and chiefs—pagans—would be hard on their people and seize their goods if they (the headmen and chiefs) did not fear witchcraft. Witchcraft is like God to them.'

At every point the solidarity of the village is emphasized; the neighbours themselves are held to be insulted by the bad behaviour of a son—'their son'—to one of their fellows, or by a woman 'soiling their son', or by an heir failing to recognize their concern in the inheritance of a deceased fellow. For example, Mwakanyamale had begotten no child for ten years, and this was attributed to the fact that, after quarrelling with his elder brother and refusing to attend his funeral, he had not admitted his fault to the men of the village when he came back and killed a cow. [842] His impotence was attributed to their curse.

As we have seen, recovery is thought to depend (i) upon the wrong-doer reforming and providing the men of the village, which is angry, with a bull or beer for a feast, acknowledging guilt as he does so; and (ii) upon the men of the village admitting their anger and responsibility for his illness, and expressing good will. 'If a daughter-in-law should have looked on her father-in-law by mistake she makes beer and sends it to her father-in-law. He calls his friends and admits: "Indeed I was angry with her for she looked at me", and the others say: "Yes, indeed, let her child get fat".' (*vide* pp. 235-6). 783 626

It may well be asked, is there any objective reality at the root of this belief in 'the breath of men'? Does the wrong-doer, fearing his neighbours, really become paralysed or impotent? It is possible that a sinner may sometimes develop these symptoms as the result of fear. We do not know, what is certain is that impotence, sterility, lingering illnesses including paralysis, and sickly 626 753

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

626 753 children, are not uncommon; that the penalty of sin is believed often to be delayed, and an illness may be attributed to a wrong committed many years previously; and lastly, that the victim of retribution may be one of several individuals. Parents are thought to be punished by the sickness of their children as well as in their own persons; in a case of sexual transgression it may be either partner who suffers; in the case of a neglected death ritual it may be either the heir or the widow on whose behalf it should have been performed (cf. Document, pp. 206, 236–7). When a [842] woman bears a child after her son is married to a girl who has reached puberty, it is thought that she may fall ill herself, or her husband may be cursed 'because he had agreed to his son marrying a grown girl before the son's mother had grown old'; or the son may have no children because he eloped with his wife, or has 'married a grown girl when his father had only agreed that he should be betrothed to a little girl'.

626 754 869 A lively fear of witchcraft and of the 'breath of men' is inculcated in Nyakyusa children when quite young; Mwaikambo, a Christian, explained that boys learn about witchcraft from their senior play-mates when they are out herding, and in the hut at night in the boys' village, when tales are told. 'Then one fears in one's stomach and thinks: "Father! perhaps I, also, will be eaten by witches."' Ambilikile, another Christian informant, confirmed this, saying: 'We learn about witches from comments on cases of sickness, and from tales. When someone has died people say: "He was a witch, we found a python." Or perhaps of another it is said that "the witches had eaten him". In these tales the witches are said to have eaten people, or speared them, by means of witchcraft, so that the victim dies. We are also told how the witches fight in the power of witchcraft with their fellows from other villages, and how they fly on their pythons. What we hear always makes witchcraft awe-inspiring. I feared it very much.'

We had ample evidence that for most Nyakyusa the fear of witchcraft and of 'the breath of men' continues throughout life, and that it directly affects behaviour. It is, perhaps, the main sanction for moral behaviour within the village.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 cannot be appointed as headman in any village of his own genera-
769 tion, and villages of past generations disappear. When a headman
622 dies, his village still being in existence, his place is taken by his heir who may be a son, but this office is only temporary. The village ceases to exist when its original members die off. Moreover, there is no suggestion that the shade of a headman's father broods over the village as the shade of a chief is thought to brood over the land he ruled.

775 The Nyakyusa have a lively belief in the power of shades, a belief closely connected with the dependence of the members of a lineage upon one another for cattle,[1] and with the office of 'divine king', but such belief scarcely affects village relationships, for the shades are not thought to be concerned with behaviour between neighbours, as distinct from relatives.

775 It is true that the proper performance of family rituals includes
621 feasting neighbours, but the implication always is that the shades
602 are concerned only in enforcing obligations towards themselves and fellow kinsmen, not towards non-relatives. On the other hand, neighbours are concerned in the enforcement of kinship obligations. When a son insults his father, the father's neighbours are insulted also; when a daughter-in-law peeps at her father-in-law the shocked astonishment of the neighbours may cause her children to pine. And so, when an erring son begs pardon of his father, he must provide a feast for the neighbours, 'that they may see that his father is satisfied'.

775 A situation often arises in which both the shades and 'the breath
626 of men' operate, sometimes 'the breath' of shocked neighbours
754 supporting the shades, and sometimes shades and men each exacting their due. One illustration of this was given us by Kalunda: 'If you do not carry out the burial rites for your father, people are angry, they throttle you, and the shade is angry also, he comes on your body. No, the witches do not call the ancestors to help; both are angry on their own account. To-day the black ones, the witches, come and throttle you; to-morrow the ancestors come. People are angry because they do not eat meat; the shade is angry because you did not perform the burial rites for him. He says: "See, I left much property, why did you not bury me properly?"' And in discussing the obligation of a daughter-in-

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'An African Morality', *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936); Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

law to avoid her father-in-law, another informant said: 'It is forbidden to look at fathers-in-law. If we do look then we shall not die well, we shall long to die and not be able to do so, because both those below (the dead) and those above (the living) are angry. Yes, it is the witches we mean when we say "those above".'

c. *The age-village and medicines*

Unlike the belief in witchcraft and 'the breath of men', which mainly affects relationships within a village, or the ancestor cult which is confined to the relations between kinsmen, and between chief and people, the use of medicines (*imikota*)[1] enters into every type of relationship in Nyakyusa society. Medicines are employed to win success in almost every undertaking: cultivating, herding, hunting, love-making, war. They are regarded as one of the main props of authority; the impressiveness (*ubusisya*) of a chief, and the power of a village headman to command, being directly related to the medicines with which they are treated (*vide supra*, pp. 24–5). They are resorted to for the promotion of fertility, for the treatment of the sick, and for protection and retaliation generally, as well as the means of directly harming an enemy. Medicines are believed to operate along with other mystical powers. For example, they are an essential element in rituals directed to the ancestors, and they are used for the discovery of witchcraft (in the ordeal) as well as for protection against it, and for the treatment of patients thought to have been 'eaten' by the witches or chilled by 'the breath of men'. Used alone, medicines are held to be ineffective against witchcraft or 'the breath of men', but they are regarded as a useful complement to other action, such as the banishment of the witch or the repentance of the sinner.

The power of witchcraft or of defence against witches (*amanga*) is connected with medicines, for it is thought often to be acquired for defensive purposes (and more rarely for aggressive purposes) through drinking medicines (*vide* pp. 25, 221). But the powers of witchcraft, or witch defence, and of medicines are quite distinct; the one implies a peculiar physical condition, the presence of one or more pythons in the belly, whereas the other may be bought from a doctor and used by anyone, and its

[1] The root *-kota* implies something derived from a plant. cf. *iki-kota*, a wooden stool.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

795 when members of a pagan village embrace Christianity? Orthodox Nyakyusa Christians, that is, those accepting the teaching of
754 the European missionaries of any of the four denominations at
184 work in the area, deny the reality of witchcraft and of 'the breath of men'; they deny the power of any individual to harm another by virtue of 'a python' in the stomach, or to bring illness to his erring neighbour by murmuring with others about him.

As we have already seen, the profession of Christianity and school education tend to coincide among the Nyakyusa, and the educated tend to be sceptical of witchcraft, while believing in sorcery. Such scepticism is directly related to the dogmatic teaching of missionaries, to instruction in physiology in schools, and to the challenge of certain missionaries and Nyakyusa Christians that pagans should prove the existence of witchcraft at autopsies (*vide* Document, p. 254). The suggestion that 'pythons' are really acute tape-worm (*vide supra* p. 92) or an enlarged kidney is typical of the critical attitude of educated Christians to pagan dogma. We have no doubt that belief in witchcraft is weakening, and that this weakening is directly due to mission teaching.

795 Nevertheless most Christians continue to have some belief in a mystical power exerted by individuals or groups to the harm of
754 others. For a few the contradiction between the traditional and
184 the Christian dogma involves acute mental conflict; for many the conflict is resolved through the concept of 'the curse' (*ikigune*) of
626 the congregation, led by the priest or pastor and elders, and through emphasis on sorcery rather than on witchcraft. Most Christians believe that the just wrath of those set in authority, and of the faithful members of a congregation, may bring misfortune on a sinner. They argue that the power which punishes the wrong-doer comes from God, not from ancestors or from pythons in men's bellies, but that it is brought upon an individual by the anger and murmuring of men.[1] Further, it is believed that

[1] The phrase 'the breath of men' (*embepo sya bandu*) is never used with reference to the punishment of sinners in the Christian congregation, but always 'the curse' (*ikigune*), a word which is used to translate certain phrases in the Gospels, and which conveys an idea felt to be compatible with Christian dogma. As already noted (p. 101) the pagans of the plain and of Selya use 'the curse' (*ikigune*) more or less synonomously with 'the breath of men' (*embepo sya bandu*). For details of cases of misfortune attributed to the curse of Christians see Monica Hunter, 'An African Christian Morality', *Africa*, Vol. X (1937), pp. 265–91.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Christians are only affected by the shocked astonishment of fellow Christians, not by the disapproval of pagans, and the unit within which 'the curse' is commonly spoken of as operating is the congregation. In two of the cases we recorded (*vide* Document, p. 209) it was suggested that illness was due to the anger of neighbours, fellow Christians, over stinginess and greed, but in the other cases it was not village neighbours who were primarily concerned, but the Christian congregation, a group embracing members from many villages.

The type of behaviour believed to be punishable by 'the curse' of fellow Christians also differs somewhat from that thought to be punished by 'the breath of men'. The virtue Christians emphasize most is chastity, and 'the curse' is often said to be a punishment for fornication or adultery. The other sin commonly spoken of as bringing down a curse is disobedience, or disrespectful behaviour to the minister (or priest) or elder of the congregation. Among pagans 'the breath of men' serves also to sanction sexual morals and to sustain respect for those in authority, but their sex code is different. It is incest, or familiarity between father- and daughter-in-law, which they regard as really evil, not sex relations outside marriage. And they emphasize respect to senior relatives and fathers' neighbours rather than to the leaders of any wider group.

Christians lay much less stress on hospitality to neighbours than pagans, and it is generally agreed that they eat alone more than pagans would dare to do. As one Christian put it, a pagan would *always* call his neighbours to share meat or beer when he had it, but a Christian might eat a sheep, or a goat, or even a calf, alone with his family. It is good, the Christians say, to call friends to share a feast, but not an inescapable obligation. Nor do Christians regularly send the saddle and ribs of any animal they kill to the chief, as pagans do; 'for', they say, 'we do not fear "the breath of men".' But hospitality towards strangers is felt to be a condition of salvation. One informant explained that 'If a man is stingy towards his neighbours it does not matter; but if he is stingy towards a stranger from a distance, he might die from lack of food; and that would be the fault of the stingy one. Such a fault would prevent him from entering Heaven.' This statement points to the most striking difference between Christian and pagan morality—the range of moral obligations. A pagan's duties

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 754 the *umwafi* ordeal who moved, now it is often the man who supposes himself a victim of witchcraft who flies for his life (*vide infra*, pp. 153 ff.); and it is probable that circulation between villages has in this way increased very considerably.

754 626 673 Denying the reality of witchcraft, the British administration ignores the belief in the legitimate use of 'python power' to enforce law and morality, any disputes arising out of this being classed as 'witchcraft'. One case turning on the belief in 'the breath of men' was heard by the District Officer of Tukuyu while we were in the district. The facts, as given us by the District Officer concerned, and by Nyakyusa informants, were as follows:

Mwankuga, a chief, fell sick and one of his sons-in-law, a clerk, advised him to get treatment from the European doctor then investigating tuberculosis in the district. When Mwankuga's junior half-brother heard this he came to Mwankuga, along with others, advised him not to go to a European doctor, and offered to cure him himself. He said that *he* had made Mwankuga ill—'had closed his stomach'—because Mwankuga had refused to make the 'coming out' ceremony for his sons when pressed by his village headmen to do so. Mwankuga's half-brother said 'the country was angry' because of the delay in the 'coming out' ceremony. He insisted that Mwankuga's illness was due to 'the breath' of the whole country, not to the sorcery (*ubutege*) of an individual. Mwankuga acknowledged that he had done wrong in refusing to hold the ceremony, and handed over two cows which his half-brother demanded, receiving in turn medicine, which he drank. Five days later Mwankuga gave his half-brother three more cows which were killed at Mwankuga's homestead and eaten by his people. Then, later on, since he did not recover, and one of his sons for whom the 'coming out' should have been held died, Mwankuga reported the matter to a senior chief, Mwakatumbula, president of the court district in which he lived. Mwakatumbula referred the case to the District Officer, and Mwankuga's half-brother was tried for 'obtaining goods by false pretences', under Section 287 of the Penal Code. The accused denied that he had ever said that he was the cause of Mwankuga's illness, and though the latter brought witnesses, the District Officer found that their testimony was 'not sufficiently reliable to substantiate the charge', and 'that there was no reason to suppose that the accused had acted in bad faith'. He referred the

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

case back to Mwakatumbula's court 'for investigation for an offence under Native Law and Custom'. Two points which came out in the examination before the District Officer are significant. First, Mwankuga readily admitted that he had done wrong in delaying the 'coming out' ceremony. He said to the court: 'I did wrong in refusing to hold the *ubusoka*, I did wrong.' Secondly, the court (i.e. the Nyakyusa assessors) specifically inquired whether or not Mwankuga's half-brother had got his share of the meat provided by Mwankuga. It emerged that he had eaten some meat, but the witnesses were not clear as to how much he had got.

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When the case came up again before the Native Court the general opinion was: 'The son of the chief has died. They (i.e. the witches) have "eaten" him. The chief himself has been ill because he refused to hold the "coming out" ceremony.'

Two other so-called 'witchcraft' cases came before the District Officer while we were in Tukuyu District. One turned on the use of vengeance magic to collect a debt, the doctor who had supplied the medicines being the accused (see Document, p. 213). The Nyakyusa view that only the individual who has commissioned a doctor to work sorcery on his behalf, and not the doctor himself, is guilty, if death from sorcery (or poisoning) has been proved, is not, of course, accepted by the Administration. In the other case a Sangu doctor told two individuals that they were threatened with 'witchcraft' and got cattle from them in return for his supposed protection. He was expelled from the district (see Document, pp. 258–61).

The difficulties of administration in this field are obvious. No one with a background of western science can admit the reality of witchcraft or 'the breath of men', as defined by the Nyakyusa, or the possibility of discovering truth through the *umwafi* ordeal. Yet prohibition of the ordeal, when belief in witchcraft is so strong, breeds a sense of insecurity. The only solution is to kill the belief in witchcraft. As we have shown, it is somewhat weakened by elementary education and Christian teaching; and we believe that its disappearance turns on increasing technical control, particularly in the field of disease, on scientific education, and on the development of impersonal relationships.[1]

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 88–95, 102–4.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VI

THE MAINTENANCE OF ORDER

626 VARIOUS forms of social pressure which serve to maintain order in the village have already been discussed: economic reciprocity, the need to be approved, and a supposed mystical interdependence are the foundation of order. We have shown that neighbours depend upon each other for help in many undertakings, that prestige accrues to affability and generosity, that men fear to shock their neighbours lest sickness fall on them, and that they admonish their children not to be proud and quarrelsome lest they be accused of practising witchcraft. The desire for prestige and the fear of sickness, or of gaining the reputation of being a witch, directly modify behaviour towards neighbours. Nevertheless, disputes between fellow villagers occur, and there is a regular legal mechanism for dealing with them.

a. Arbitration

627 The Nyakyusa set great store on arbitration by a friend. It is common practice for individuals who have quarrelled to state their dispute before a respected friend and ask for his opinion on the case. The statement is made in public and any man who happens to be present may offer an opinion. There is no attempt to hush up a quarrel—rather it is held that the expression of it paves the way for reconciliation—and the emphasis is laid on arriving at a settlement which is agreed to by both parties. Arbitration of this sort begins in the herd-group when two small boys will take their dispute to a fellow, the leader of their group, and the practice continues throughout their lives in the villages of youths, mature men, and elders. The respected friend to whom the case is first submitted is most often the leader of the village-section to which one or both parties to the dispute belong. But he need not necessarily be an appointed leader; any respected man may be asked to arbitrate. If his decision is not accepted by

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

to rejoin the group in which he is 'known', in which he has 'friends with whom he herded cattle as a boy', as that which provides the chief impetus to return. Never once did an informant suggest friction with the village headman as the reason for moving[1] or loyalty to a former headman as the reason for returning. The Nyakyusa village is in no way the personal following of a headman, as the villages of some other central African peoples (such as the Bemba,[2] Yao, and Ngoni[3]) appear to be. It is essentially a group of equals, established before adolescence, whose stability and continuity turn on friendship and co-operation between its members. It is already a corporate group, with very close bonds forged through years between its members, before the permanent leader is chosen, and it continues as a group though its leader dies or moves.

We do not deny that the personality of the village headman—particularly his generosity and his skill in settling disputes between his men—affects the stability and growth of the village; some villages increase noticeably in size after the 'coming out', while others shrink, and headmen (like chiefs) use medicines to attract men to them; but the Nyakyusa themselves imply that it is the character of the villagers rather than the character of the headman which determines movement to and from the village.

The headman, like any private individual in the village, must remain on good terms with the other members lest *he* be driven out. A number of cases were cited in which headmen had moved because they had become unpopular with their men and feared their 'breath' or witchcraft (*vide* pp. 204–8; 268–70) but most of them had returned after the lapse of a little time.

What private individuals and headmen alike fear is not a quarrel with one individual, but the disapproval of the village or village-section as a whole; for 'the breath of men' is but the crystallization of adverse public opinion. The man who has the support of his fellows in a dispute with one neighbour is shielded in 'the war by night'.

[1] Personal friction with a chief occurs (*vide* pp. 191–2).
[2] A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, pp. 110 ff.
[3] M. Gluckman, J. C. Mitchell, and J. A. Barnes, 'The Village Headman in British Central Africa', *Africa*, Vol. XIX (1949), pp. 91, 98, 100.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 area, during a given period, so we cannot either assert or deny that accusations of witchcraft are more frequent in age-villages than in kinship villages.

578 There are two sets of loyalties in Nyakyusa society: those to a kinship group and those to an age-village. Does conflict arise 621 from a clash between them? We have no evidence that it does. It is true that kin may support a sick relative against his age-602 group, referring to his illness as due to witchcraft, whereas neighbours will attribute it to his own sin and their legitimate anger; but very often the ancestors and the 'defenders' are believed to work together to punish wrong-doers—those who break avoidance and incest taboos, those who insult seniors, those who neglect traditional rituals (*vide supra*, p. 122). Amity between relatives is sanctioned by neighbours as well as by senior kinsmen, and the importance of enjoying the company of village mates is constantly stressed by relatives. Where a village does appear to support a member against his kin, it is usually on the side of the ancestors and 'justice', in terms of the Nyakyusa code, as when neighbours share a father's anger at the insolence of his son, or after his death protect his son against unjust treatment by the heir. The values of village solidarity and of kinship solidarity are thus coherent.

e. The form of witch beliefs

621 There is, however, a connection between the age-village 754 organization and the *form* of witch beliefs. As we have seen, great emphasis is laid on feasting neighbours, and it is believed that 626 the impulse to witchcraft comes from the lust for milk and meat. The Nyakyusa argue thus: witchcraft comes from neighbours, and neighbours must be fed or they get angry; feeding a witch on milk or beef pacifies him (*vide supra*, p. 92). An explicit connection is made between neglecting to provide feasts on the proper occasions and suffering from 'the breath' of justly angry neighbours whose blighting power springs from the same root as witchcraft. The contrast with the witch beliefs of the Pondo is marked: among them it is held that the drive to witchcraft is sex lust, and all witches have familiars with whom they have sex relations.[1]

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 275–88.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 akin to witchcraft and distinct from the power of senior relatives is used to punish wrong-doers and to protect[1] the village from witches, and in the belief that village headmen are foremost among 'the defenders'.

626 The closest parallel to the Nyakyusa concept of 'the breath of men' of which we have evidence in Africa is the belief in the 789 'conditional curse' among the Meru, Embu, and Kikuyu people. Lambert shows that the main sanction enforcing the judgement of the Council of Elders among the Meru people was the belief that its curse brought misfortune, and he was told in Embu that the Warriors' Council has a similar power over warriors.[2] Kenyatta shows tha among the Kikuyu the conditional curse was used to protect beacons, to enforce the judgement of the Council of Elders, and to guard against bribery.[3] As we have seen, the Nyakyusa of the plain also use a word *ikigune*, which is best translated as 'the curse', when the people of the hills use the phrase 'the breath of men' (*vide supra*, p. 101), and whatever phrase is used the implication is that misfortune comes from the shocked astonishment and the anger of neighbours (or father's neighbours) which has been expressed in 'murmuring'. In the Nyakyusa view a formal cursing is not necessary to bring down misfortune, but the anger must be *expressed* (*vide supra*, p. 106). A belief in the legitimate exercise of mystical power by contemporaries or seniors to punish non-relatives thus appears in four societies with highly developed age-organizations, and further field-work may show that the two are always coincident.

However that may be, the belief in 'the curse' (or 'the breath 626 of men') among the Nyakyusa is shaped by the fact that villages are occupied by age-sets. The social function of 'the breath of men' in a Nyakyusa age-village is strictly parallel to that of the mystical power of senior relatives in a kinship village. Where, as among most African peoples, the neighbours are kinsmen, no distinction is made between the mystical effects of the legitimate

[1] There are indications that the power of witchcraft is thought sometimes to be used for defence among the Thonga (Junod, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 510, 516), and the Azande (Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., pp. 129-30) but the idea does not apparently bulk large, and there is no suggestion of a similar power being used to punish wrong-doers.

H. E. Lambert, *The Use of Indigenous Authorities in Tribal Administration* (Communications from the School of African Studies, University of Cape Town), pp. 9-10, 14-15.

[3] J. Kenyatta, op. cit., pp. 39-40, 221-2.

/1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

anger of neighbours on the one hand, and of kinsmen on the other. 626

The idea that a Nyakyusa village headman has the mystical power called *amanga*, and leads the attacks of justly enraged neighbours, gives him a position in his village comparable to that of the headman who, among many African peoples, is the senior kinsman in his village. Each has mystical power over the members of his village, and the fact that the Nyakyusa headman's power is derived from 'a python in the stomach', and operates like witchcraft, while the power of a senior kinsman derives from his birth, and operates through the shades, makes relatively little difference to the relations of the village headman with his people. 622 789 754

The Nyakyusa system is peculiar in that the village headman is foremost as the discoverer of, and defender against, witches; he combines the functions fulfilled elsewhere by the village headman and the witch-doctor. The protection which kinship villages in other African cultures seek on the one hand from their ancestors, and on the other from the witch-doctor,[1] the Nyakyusa look for from their village headmen. Doctors who claim to discover witches, and provide medicines for protection against them, exist in Nyakyusa society; some, at least, of them are spoken of as having *amanga*—the same mystical power as the headmen have—through which they are enabled to see and fight the witches; but witch-doctors play a much smaller part than they do among the Azande or the Pondo; in the battle against witches they are quite overshadowed by the village headmen. Defence against witchcraft is a village affair, and the foremost 'defenders' (*abamanga*) are the political authorities. Village rituals directed to the ancestors are conspicuously absent among the Nyakyusa, and our hypothesis is that this absence, together with the belief that the 'python power' of village headmen and others is used to punish wrong-doers and defend the innocent within their village, is dependent upon the age-village organization, in which neighbours are not kinsmen and the position of village headman is not hereditary.

[1] cf. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., pp. 161-82, 251; Junod, op. cit., pp. 505, 516-8. The Thonga 'magician' is also believed to fly and know the witches, because he shares their power.

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783
626
673
787

I:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(b) *'The Breath of Men.'*

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—*contd.*

No.	Category of Sufferer	Symptoms	Alleged sin	Diagnosis	Ritual performed
1	Village headman (Mwandiuputa)	(a) 2 children died (b) Further deaths among his children after he moved	Grudged neighbours certain food Failed to perform death ritual of children before leaving		Fled to Lake-shore plain (Mu Ngonde) Returned home. Killed bull. Admitted fault in not performing ritual
2	Widow	Widow ailing	Ritual not performed for her at inheritance	Illness due to 'the breath of men'. Diagnosis by divination	Heir killed beast. Feasted neighbours and relatives. Told of illness. People admitted their anger.[1] Said the illness was finished. She continued ill.
3	Widow	Widow ill	Heir of chief's family had not killed bull or cow at inheritance ritual	Illness due to 'the breath of men' Diagnosis by divination	Heir called neighbours and relatives. Killed. Neighbours admitted their anger
4	Ensi	Ensi ill	Father failed to send a gift of food and beer, when she was taken back to her husband, and she is the daughter of a chief's sister	'The breath' comes from her husband's friends. 'They are angry because of the quarrel over food'	None mentioned. The girl died shortly afterwards and her death was attributed to sorcery
5	Chief	T.B.?	Refused to hold 'coming out' of sons	'The country was angry'	Killed 3 cows for people to feast
6	Married woman	Bore no more children	Ran off with lover three times. Finally husband forced lover to eat filth	His father's village 'shocked' because she had 'ended a man so much'. 'Breath' of village effective because she visits there frequently to see a grandparent. This the diagnosis of the doctor to whom she went for medicines that she might bear children	None mentioned
7	Man (a doctor)	Begotten no child for 10 years	Did not come to bury elder brother with whom he had quarrelled	'The men (of his elder brother's village) were angry. Illness due to the curse (*ishiyong*) of men'	Killed a cow in elder brother's village but did not tell the men of the village about it properly (i.e. admit his fault)
8	Man (A)	Man ill for 2 years (with epilepsy), eye came out of socket	Incest—man lover of father's sister	All men were astonished and cursed A	A killed 4 cows at father's place. Relatives and neighbours ate after cursing at him. A recovered quickly. (He had also been treated in a mission hospital.)

[1] *Ukuripoja*—to complain. The implication is that they expressed, and so got rid of, their anger (cf. pp. 99–101).

[p. 206]

753
783
626
673
787

(b) *'The Breath of Men.'—contd.*

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of Sufferer	Symptoms	Alleged sin	Diagnosis	Ritual performed
9	Senior Village Headman	Paralysed	He encouraged chief to expel junior headman from country when latter [illegible]	'Illness of senior headman due to the breath of his junior colleague. He was cursed because he was reputed to be the favourite of the chief.' Diagnosis by divination	Bull and beer provided by junior headman. Ate and drank with senior headman and made friends
10	Woman	Unable to walk	Told by villagers (*amafumu*) to choose heir of her brother. Refused to do so, asking them to choose	'They (villagers) cursed her'	Nothing yet done. Thought that villagers will deny responsibility, saying: 'It is not our illness' if offered a cow
11	Woman	Her baby ill	Insulted husband's mother	Illness diagnosed as '*ingoto*,' a disease due to 'the breath of man'. No divination; 'knew themselves'.	Woman and child given medicines by a doctor. Woman's father brought a cow for the mother-in-law she insulted.
12	Headman of young men	Ill a long time and still ill	He and his young men built in the village of their fathers before fathers had moved	Illness due to 'the breath of men' (the fathers) because he seized another's office as headman by building in his village. Diagnosis by divination	Nil. Should have asked old men to bless him
13	Heir (son)	Ill a year. Died the next year	Did not drink father's funeral beer in father's village. 'Others ate the food'	Village angry. Their breath fell on him when he came to fetch away property. Diagnosis by divination	After a year's illness, killed a bull. Ate with friends and relatives in father's village
14	Man	Died	Killed large bull for his children (sacrifice to ancestors) and gave only one leg to neighbours	'Perhaps (he died) because he grudged his fellow villagers meat. Neighbours are shocked if a man kills and does not call them to feast'	
15	Woman	Her child ill	Swore at her husband	Illness diagnosed as *ngoto* (an illness due to 'the breath of men'). Diagnosis by divination	Admission of sin. Woman's father gave her millet to brew beer. Her husband called his fellows to drink and admit their anger and speak about the child's recovery (cf. p. 236)
16	Younger brother of chief	Died	Claimed to be a chief	People said 'breath of men'. Family said witchcraft. Diagnosis by divination	

[P. 207]

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

753
783
673

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of Sufferer	Symptoms	Alleged sin	Diagnosis	Ritual performed
17	Village headman	Hurt his hand on a stone directly he reached the Lupa to work	Had left for work without the agreement of his people	'Country was angry because he was a headman' (and had gone to work)	None. Died shortly afterwards. Death attributed to witchcraft of fellow workers (cf. cases of witchcraft No. 22)
18	Young chief Mwankuga heir of his deceased senior brother and so heir to chieftainship	Did not beget a son by his inherited wives	Not specified	Village headmen angry so medicine chief has taken not effective. The headmen showed their anger by not taking chief to doctor as they should have done. He went alone	None when case recorded
19	Kasitile, hereditary priest (of chief's lineage)	Kasitile ill	Did not cook for his village neighbours. 'They complained because I, a great chief, did not cook food for them'	Fell ill night after attending a beer drink at a neighbour's house	Feasted neighbours. Treated by a doctor
20	Kasitile	Kasitile had worms	Provided 1 pot of beer for fellow priests when he should have provided 4 pots or a calf	Sickness due to wrath of men. Diagnosis of a doctor	
21	Kasitile	Kasitile ill	Cut down a sacred tree which he should not have cut	'The whole country is angry'. 'Priests and village headmen are angry'	Feasted other priests on meat and beer
22	Village headman, Nsusa	His cow drowned	Ordered to pay a fine for slander or move, and refused. Complained to the District Officer	'All the village headmen are angry'	Nsusa moved. Later brought home (cf. pp. 268–9)
23	Man (junior brother of chief)	Died	He had cut one branch for an axe-handle from a self-sown tree growing in the cultivated land of a village in which he was a new-comer. He had not asked the villagers' permission to cut wood as he should have done.	'The "owners" of the village were angry and killed him'	None recorded

[p. 208]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN
Nyakyusa

18. GROUNDS OF ACCUSATION OF WITCHCRAFT

An elderly Christian man.

754
626

'The pagans are afraid of what they dream, and secondly, if they have quarrelled with a man and they fall sick they at once think he is throttling them.'

'Without dreams of him?'

'Yes.

'Then again, if a man is given milk by his neighbours and yet goes round in other villages, complaining: "They grudge me milk. I don't drink their milk", and his neighbours hear of it, they say to him "What do you mean by saying we grudge you milk? Scandal-mongering is bad. Indeed, you are a witch." And then, as soon as the cows fall sick, they point to him: "That is the witch who is throttling the cattle." And they drive him out. Yes, without dreams.

'What our parents used to say to us when discussing these things was this: "Pride! If a man is proud and is not sociable with his neighbours; if he boasts, saying: 'I am someone, and others are not people at all,' then we say he is a witch." And if ever the cows fall sick or go dry, then we point to him as the witch who is throttling them and drive him away. This happens without dreams, too.

'And then again, if one man has quarrelled with another and the other falls sick, they may say the one is a witch and drive him out. Perhaps if he was a man of Mwaipopo he goes to live in Mwangomo's country (that of a neighbouring chief). Then one day a man of Mwaipopo's goes to his new village and talks to the people: "I see that you have received so and so here. We drove him out as a witch. He's a great witch, that man." And so when next the cows fall sick or someone dies, they point to him as a witch and drive him away again. Then he goes right up to Mwangoka's (twenty-five miles away) and again someone from Mwaipopo's or Mwangomo's comes up there and repeats the story. A little later the same thing happens and he is driven out again.'

[p. 228]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

19. THINGS WHICH ARE SAID TO ANGER THE WITCHES AND MAKE THEM THROTTLE US

Mwaisumo (clerk):

'Carrying very heavy loads, frequently. They (the witches) wonder (*ukukiba*) at a person and he (or she) falls ill.' 754

'Hoeing a very large field, surpassing others.' 626

'Being more wealthy, as by earning money on the Lupa, like Bingibamo and Kiputa.' 578

'Boasting at work, saying: "I am the senior" like Ramsay and Isiah at Tukuyu.'

'Eating fine food alone. This may be meat, when you have killed a bull or cow, or beer or gifts of food from in-laws, or any other fine food. Mwambuputa was accused of doing this.'

'People are always afraid to carry very heavy things because they think that others will be angry and wonder at it (*ukukiba*). Their astonishment causes illness. Women especially speak of this a great deal when they are fetching firewood. If they carry a very big load others express wonder saying: "It is God who has given you strength surpassing us all." This astonishment brings on serious illness. People fall ill and some even die. Formerly people feared very much to speak to someone who carried a heavy load, saying: "You carry a very heavy load"; they were likely to be fined if they did, because the person to whom they said it would complain, saying: "He wondered at me. He brings down illness on me; he brings the witches by saying I am a strong fellow."

'It is like this also in hoeing; if a man has hoed much he fears lest they (the witches) will kill him; if people say: "He has surpassed us in strength" and are angry, that is what happens—the man falls ill and may die.

'Surpassing others in possessions is said also to anger other people, witches, who kill their fellow because they think that he has a medicine (*unkota*) which enables him to surpass them in wealth. The medicine for surpassing others is the medicine of good fortune (*unkota gwa lusako*). There was a case like this among the Nyangomo—the case of a young man who died quite recently. His name was Bingibamo, the son of Kiputa. This young man was in employment on the Lupa gold-fields . . . and he sent back money to his father to buy cattle. When he had been working for a certain European for a short time

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 only he surpassed the other workers as they searched for gold, and found a very big nugget. He saw it first and picked it up immediately. All the others wished to share it; they all went together to their European (employer) to say that their fellow did not find this nugget alone, but that they had all got it. The employer said: "Yes, of course I shall pay you all for sifting, but he found it. He picked it up. I shall give him something separately." So he gave Bingibamo 100s. and to each of the others he gave 6s. The next morning Bingibamo was ill; the following day he died and they buried him. It is said that his fellows "ate" him, they were angry about the nugget he had got. And those who work there (on the Lupa) regularly say that no one who gets a nugget ever escapes; those who get money always die.

626

578

'It is said that one who boasts at work saying that he has surpassed his fellows in wisdom and seniority dies like Ramsay, who was a clerk at Tukuyu, and Isiah Mwagomba. They died. Some say privately that the sin (*inongwa*) which killed them was boasting—they boasted very much to their fellows. Some say that there is one man among them (the clerks at Tukuyu) who always kills his fellows if they seem likely to surpass him in seniority (i.e. importance). A boastful man (*gwalwitufyo*) is always proud (*gwamatingo*), and as for enjoying the company of his fellows he does not keep on good terms with them at all (*atikwangala nabo kanunu*).

'Eating fine food alone is said to kill a man. If you have killed a bull to eat you must give your fellows some, because if you grudge them they will summon the witches to "eat" you. That is to say the people who saw you will tell of it and at night "the defenders" will be angry and summon the witches to "eat" you. Or when your in-laws bring something when they visit you, and you do not call your fellows, but grudge them a share they will "eat" you, as happened in the case of Mwambuputa. It is said that Mwambuputa grudged his fellows certain food, so they were very angry and two of his children died at home. When he found that sickness was spreading at his homestead he fled to the Lake-shore plain (MuNgonde), but there also he found that death pursued him and he returned home again. It is said that sickness pursued him to the plain because he went off without performing the death ritual for the children who died. So when he returned he found two bulls and killed them, saying: "Friends, I have come. I did wrong because I did not perform the ritual for your children with you."'

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

20. THREATS OF WITCHCRAFT

Mwaisumo (clerk).

'It is said that some witches show themselves openly. When he is angry with his fellow a witch may say openly "*Uligwaki?*" (literally: "What are you?") and his fellow takes ill in the evening, sickness falls on him. Or one who makes love to a woman repeatedly and is refused by her, may say: "Woman, what are you? (*uligwaki?*) You are very proud, you fancy yourself, thinking that you are more beautiful than all others. Dance and show off—we shall see in what a pleasant fashion." 754

'It is now forbidden, as it was in the past, to swear at (*ukufinga*) a person without cause, saying: "What are you?" If someone speaks before others, and the person sworn at is quarrelsome, the man who swears is fined. The man sworn at will go to law, saying: "My fellow swears at men; I do not know what I have taken of his, he wants to make me ill by swearing at me." Sometimes, also, if he does not wish to be paid, he calls one before the court, or before neighbours to say: "This fellow of mine has sworn at me, if anything happens it is he who is responsible." Meaning that if he falls ill that evening it is this fellow who has caused the illness. And some, when they have recovered, make a case, saying: "It is this fellow", and bring him before the village headman accusing him. If he is found guilty he will pay perhaps a bull. Such tales are told, especially by our mothers, teaching us in childhood that it is forbidden to threaten a friend with witchcraft (*ukumfinga unnino bulosi*).[1] If you swear at your friend and he falls ill that evening then he will say it was you who swore at him. 754 683

'But there are some who wish to be feared and thought witches who constantly threaten people. Such a man says: "What are you? You *may* sleep or may not (*ulikagone*), I do not know!" but in great secrecy. Or perhaps sometimes he speaks, saying: "You! Leave me!" He knows that those who are there will tell (his enemy)' 754

Andambike (a young Christian man).

'Some boast of witchcraft, they praise themselves on account of knowledge, or food, or their homestead . . . saying that no one else has built so well; others praise themselves on account of their fields, 754 626

[1] *Ukufinga* means to swear to a statement. In this context it is better translated 'to threaten'.

[p. 231]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754
626

and many things of that sort. . . . I once asked an elderly pagan if it were really true that witchcraft existed. The old man replied: "No, it does not exist, and the reason why I say that is this: Once a man hated his fellows and they were angry, and met at his place. (According to the pagan custom when your fellows are angry they gather at your home and they cut leaves; if you do not move you will die, or perhaps something will happen.) When they had met together at his place they said: 'Perhaps you may sleep or may not!' (implying you will not sleep on account of witchcraft.) When they had gone the man threw away all the leaves on which they had been sitting, the leaves which they say bring sickness to a home.[1] He slept, but those who talked about it said: 'He will not escape, for the custom which has been carried out against him is fatal.' He waited and slept again. The next day he was still well. Then I, for my part, understood that witchcraft does not exist, those men boasted, saying: 'Perhaps you may sleep or may not', but nothing happened. They just wished to frighten him. And one day I myself tried to frighten a certain man. His cow had eaten my seed so I went to his house and complained that his cow had got into my food. The next day again the cow ate my seed again. So then I was angry and said to myself, 'I'll frighten this fellow.' When I said: 'Why is your cow in my seed again?' he replied: 'I don't know. Do *I* herd?' So I said: 'My child, perhaps you may sleep or may not when you answer like that!'

"He said: 'Are you a witch then?'

"I said: 'You thought I was just talking. Know that I am talking to you here angry enough to wish to fight with you, so if you are strong in body you will overcome me at night in dreams.' And I went to tell a neighbour that my child perhaps might sleep, or might not, and not to be startled the next day if something happened to that child of mine. That night I blew a calabash trumpet that he should think I was coming and tremble. When he heard it he set off by night, saying:

[1] Mwaisumo commenting on this said: 'When, as boys, we went round in groups eating at one another's homes we were told by our mothers not to cut too many leaves, but just enough for us to use (to sit on). It's forbidden, they said, to strew leaves at a home. It looks as if there were something against the owners of the homestead, you foretell bad fortune, perhaps sickness or death. So, likewise, if I go to visit a sick friend that does not affect his recovery, but if I shed tears because he is sick men say: "It is forbidden (to weep), you foretell misfortune, perhaps he will die (because you weep)." And here (in the case recounted) the the leaves were a sign that this man had a case against him. Others wonder, asking: "What has happened, what has happened?" It is said that when people wonder something will happen on account of their astonishment. If they know that there is a ritual or a funeral all is well, but if nothing is known then questions are asked, something will happen because people wonder, that is people from other villages, not the neighbours of those who have a case against them.'

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'Wives, let us die from our own disease, not this one, pick up the pot and leave it with someone else immediately, we are leaving this home, he is not going to find anyone.' They hid the pot by night, and they moved. A child died after they had arrived at the place to which they moved.

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"So I began to understand that witchcraft does not exist but that we die of fear. See, I am not a witch at all, I just tried to frighten that man, but their fear killed them. As for frightening people with witchcraft, we frighten them that they may respect us, or that we may get what we want to eat, they think that if they grudge us they will be throttled by witches."

'The old man who told me (Andambike) this is still alive, living in the country of Kilwa, MuNgonde, in Korosso's chiefdom.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

22. 'THE BREATH OF MEN'

Mwaisumo (*clerk*).

' "The breath of men" is a very serious illness; if a person is ill from "the breath of men" he is in great trouble. Such a person never recovers until they pray (*bikwikemesya*). This illness comes especially when a man enters into his inheritance but does not perform the ritual, perhaps to bury him from whom he inherited—his father, or elder brother, or perhaps his mother's brother. As in the case of the estate of our mother's brother, Mwakaliku. When Mwambilike (informant's elder brother) inherited the woman Kyando, he did not perform the ritual for her. The woman was constantly ailing, but no one knew that she was suffering from this illness until they went to divine and found that she was ill from "the breath" because no ritual had been performed for her from the time she was inherited until now. So Mwambilike found a cow and called together all his dependants and his fellows in the village, and he killed the cow and told everyone about this illness. Then people "complained" (*ukwijaja*), and said: "Indeed, may this illness finish." (It was neighbours who complained, not relatives.) From that time the woman concerned has never been ill again. So everyone says: "In truth, 'the breath of men' is very great." 753 626 428

'This illness is very serious, but it never kills people, though they are ill for a long time. If it is not discovered that this is the cause, the patient will be ill for a very long time, perhaps for two or three years. Yes, sometimes it kills when it has spread in the homestead, but people very rarely die from this illness. 753 626

'It is often seen in connection with inheritance. Another case occurred in my country. A certain man built with us who was of a chief's lineage. He inherited from a relative but he did not kill a cow at the death ritual. The wife he inherited was constantly ill until they went to divine and found that it was "the breath of men" (which was making her ill) because he had not performed a ritual since he entered into his inheritance. So he also found a cow and called people (non-relatives) and all his descendants, and killed the cow, and his fellow villagers "complained" (*ukwijaja*). But I do not know whether the illness finished or not. What I do know is that he found a cow—I saw it myself when it was lying there dead and people gathered, relatives, descendants, and neighbours. 753 626 428

'*Ingoto* is a disease of children. It comes from the insults used by the mother of the child. It is commonly said that when a married 753 626

[p. 235]

I: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

753 woman has been angry with her husband, and perhaps quarrelled with him, and has sworn at her husband by "the things" (i.e. the sex organs) 626 of his mother, or perhaps his father, the child she bears will fall sick with *ingoto*. It becomes very thin and does not grow. The disease is recognized when a child is very ill from infancy, and it is very thin but does not die. Then they say it is *ingoto*. Sometimes they inquire of [787] a diviner and the diviner reveals that it is ill of *ingoto*.

'I remember a certain woman who was married to a man, Akayamba. This man had married two wives, and she of whom I speak was the third. This woman was very proud (*namatingo fijo*) and was con- [578] stantly quarrelling with her husband and her co-wives. When she quarrelled with her husband he got angry and beat her. Then she swore at him horribly, about "the things" of his mother or father. She said: "You! So and so of your father! So and so of your mother!" Then this woman bore a girl child and when it had grown a little it became very ill. It was very ill for a whole year. When it began to recover she quarrelled again with her husband and swore at him insultingly, and the child got ill again. So her husband (the father of [787] the child) and she went to inquire of a diviner. The divination revealed *ingoto*. It said: "Your wife has sworn at you about the things of your mother when you were quarrelling." When they got home the husband drove his wife away, saying: "Go to your father!" When she got home the woman told her father everything and he took millet and gave it to her to make beer with which to pay. So she brewed beer and brought it to her husband, saying: "I did wrong, my husband." Her husband called his fellows and they all drank the beer and expressed their anger (*ukwijaja*) and said: "May the child recover and grow well!"

'This happened when I was 13 or 14 years old. The girl (who was ill) is still alive; her body shows signs of not having grown properly.

'The disease comes from "the breath of men" because these insults were made publicly and others heard them. I do not think anything would happen if the insults were private, I am not sure.'

A curse of neighbours for neglect of rituals.
Angombwike (young Christian man).

789 'If I do not do the (death) ritual properly for my father the death of my children is due to the case against me, the dispute with relatives 626 and the curse of people—non-relatives (*nongwa mbukamu, ikigune* 842 *mbandu*).

'Sometimes the villagers (*amafumu*) bind a man's loins so that he cannot beget children with his wife. They are both sterile. Mwakaná-

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

male, the doctor in Selya, is a case of this. He had quarrelled with his elder brother and did not come to bury him. Later he came and killed a cow, but did not tell the men of the village (*amafumu*) properly, and they were angry, and so for the last ten years he has had no child. His wives do not conceive at all. That is due to the curse of men (*ikigune kya bandu*).' 789 626 842

A curse for 'soiling a man'.
Angombwike (young Christian man).

Angombwike cited a case of sterility attributed to *ikigune* because a woman had 'soiled' a man. 789

'She had run away three times with X. Finally her husband forced X to eat her filth and drink her urine. X was very ill but recovered. She bore no further children on her return to her husband. She went to Lyandeleko (the informant's mother) for medicine but the latter said she could not help as it was *ikigune*. Her neighbours were shocked because she had "soiled the child of someone". Also the neighbours of X's father were shocked. Their "breath" takes effect because she visits frequently in their village, going to see a grandparent. They say: "This is the woman who soiled our child." ' 626 842

N.B.—It is the woman who is held to have suffered, not her husband or X.

A curse due to incest.
Grant (young Christian man).

'A, son of B (a chief), made love to his father's sister X. X's husband, C, had married (*ukusakula*) a full sister, Y, of A. A lay with X. A had syphilis and X and her husband C both fell sick of it. C asked X where the disease came from. She accused A. C complained to B. B was very angry and all men were astonished at it. It is forbidden. How could he have intercourse with his mother, the sister of his father! B took four of A's cows and gave them to C. People cursed (*ukuguna*) A, who was very ill for two years. His eye came out of its socket. He went to a mission hospital. 789 626 835

'The villagers (*amafumu*) gathered at B's and said: "This sickness of A is because of that case of his when he lay with X. It is because of that he is sick." So B sent to A and told him to bring four cows, which he did. B called his people and brothers and sisters and said: "Bless your child." They swore and swore at him, and they caught hold of the woman and swore, saying: "How did you agree to sleep with your

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 child? You have both sinned greatly." Then they killed the cows and
626 ate them. I was there. Very quickly A recovered and his eye is all
835 right now.'

A curse on a senior village headman due to the anger of a junior village headman.
Mwandeba (Pagan man).

789 'A young chief, Mwaidemale, called his men to hoe a road at the
626 order of the Government. The third village headman of the country and his men refused to come, saying: "Not we, we have been once already", and they beat Mwaidemale's messenger. So Mwaidemale was very angry, and reported the village headman to his father, who was also very angry and told the headman and all his men (a very big age-village) to move to another chief. And the senior headman agreed, saying: "Indeed, my junior is a proud fellow. Let them go." So they all went to the country of Mwansasu.

'Now the senior headman has fallen ill with the "breath of men". He is unable to walk. The diviner said his illness was due to "the breath" of his junior colleague—he had been cursed because he is reputed to be the favourite of the chief. He was very ill and moved to Korosso's country where he has begun to recover.

'After being away for a year the third headman brought a cow to pay to the chief (Mwakabolofu). The chief refused it, saying: "No, indeed, my country is quarrelsome. Perhaps you think it was you who built it? I do not wish that you should return. Go with your cow." Some of the third village headman's men came back and then Mwakabolofu allowed to build, but he said that he would never let the banished headman back. Many men stayed with their headman and refused to return until he did. Only two years ago (1937) the headman brought two cows to Mwakabolofu who forgave him on the condition that he found something to take to the senior headman, who was ill, to fetch him back from Korosso's country. So the third headman fetched his senior with a huge bull. They came back with it and killed it and drank much beer and made friends. Most of the beer was provided by the third headman, who had spent two years in exile, but some by the senior.

'The mystical power (*amanga*) of the third headman and his men was able to reach the senior headman because a whole village had moved, but had a single man moved he would not have been able to send "breath" to another country, because when "the defenders" come at night in the power of *amanga* (*mmanga gabo*) the owners of the country who remain in it ask them: "Where are you going?" and

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

they reply: "We are just walking about in our country, to our homes", and the owners of the country do not drive them away; but of a single man they ask: "Why are you walking about here?" and they drive him off.' 789 626

'The breath of men' and witchcraft.
Mwambuputa (Senior village headman).

' "The breath of men' (*embepo sya bandu*) and witchcraft (*ubulosi*) go together. If all the members of a village murmur that a certain man is evil then the words of the innocent (*abelu*) have no weight, no strength at all, but those of the heavy ones (*abasito*) have. It is the heavy ones who carry that breath into his body in dreams, they chastise him, but the innocent just talk and murmur against him, that is all.' 789 754 626

Question: 'Then that breath comes from the pythons inside them?'

Mwambuputa: 'Yes, that is where it comes from, it is one with witchcraft, identical. Sometimes they just chastised him a little, he did not die, but just fell sick; and in such a case there was never any drinking of *umwafi*; if he killed a beast for them they would pray (*ukwiputa*) and pray, they would let out all their anger, saying: "Certainly we were angry, it was us, but now it is all over." Then life came back to him and he recovered. That is the curse (*ikigune*).

'But sometimes they would kill him—and then they had to drink *umwafi* . . . if a man died and they found spear-marks, wounds, in his entrails the chief would get angry and say: "You have killed your fellow, drink the *umwafi*." So then the *umwafi* would convict one of witchcraft and he would be expelled from the country. For we said: "It is forbidden to kill a man." We others were afraid, although we had disliked the victim ourselves, we feared that at some later time the witch would kill us.'

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

23. RITUAL OF RECONCILIATION

Mwakionde (doctor, brother of a chief).

789 'If my son has sworn at me, my friends in the village are angry and say: "Why has our child sworn at his father?" Then the youth falls
● 626 ill, and people say: "It is the curse (*ikigune*). It was we who were angry,
783 because he swore at our fellow." Then he seeks something with which to pay—perhaps a bull or cow. If I, the father, am a rich man I brew beer for the people coming to instruct my child and to say: "It was we who were angry, young man, because you swore at your father. Now may you recover!" While they are drinking the beer they kill the bull, which he found, and eat it.'

Mwambelike (pagan man).

'A junior relative who has wronged a senior and later wishes to make friends has to satisfy not only him but his neighbours. For example: A man X seduced a widow of his father who was regarded as the property of his senior half-brother, Y, the heir. (She was not Y's wife, because she was a sister of his mother, but given to deceased's younger half-brother.) Later X paid Y one cow as a fine "for seducing his mother". Then X brought him a bull to re-enter the family and ma e friends, saying: "Indeed, I wronged you, my father." Y said: "If you wish to make friends again you must also bring a cow for the village to eat, so that all shall know that I am satisfied." X brought a heifer calf which was eaten by the village.'

There was no mention of sickness in this case.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 wealth of the family in cattle and the number of its affines. There
556 is a direct relationship between the number of cattle killed and the number of people who come to a burial. On one occasion we were told: 'There are not many people here because there is little meat; they only killed one bull!' And this connection can be observed at any burial; hundreds of people come to mourn the rich, only a few to mourn the poor. And if no meat is killed there is usually no dancing at all. But once a crowd has gathered it is in itself an inducement to others to come. When men were dancing the funeral dance in the rain a neighbour commented: 'They will say there is no rain for many women are present.' We have seen a crowd of 2,000 or more at a funeral, with 100 men dancing at once.

The meat is divided among the chief, the relatives, the neighbours, and the non-relatives from a distance. To the chief of the country is given the breast and ribs of one beast: 'This is to honour him.' To each affine who brings a beast a whole leg is returned to be eaten. To the various groups of non-relatives from other chiefdoms is given sometimes a side, sometimes a leg, and the rest of the meat is divided between the relatives and neighbours who have come from the same or adjoining villages. At large funerals, where many cows are killed and where people gather from all the villages of the chiefdom, a portion of the meat is presented to each of the various village headmen to eat with his men; at smaller funerals the division is made less formally.

'A man's very own cow, that of his lineage, is eaten by the people of the country, not the relatives, because the people [non-relatives] always looked at it thinking: "It's ours." ' A picture of ghoulish expectation? That indeed is an element of Nyakyusa thought. While we were in the country a number of chiefs forbade the
[754] offering of funeral meat to non-relatives, for, it was believed, gluttonous neighbours sometimes killed a man by witchcraft[1] in order to feast at his funeral.

The kinsmen of the dead man gain prestige from a lavish funeral. They are compelled to sacrifice by fear lest the anger of the shades, or the 'breath' of their neighbours, should bring misfortune upon them, and they are rewarded by the admiration of men when they do so.

764 Social pressure is not always exerted upon the members of the
● 626 dead man's family to provide cattle themselves. If he left sufficient cattle to sustain the family dignity they only kill from his own

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 93.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

herd. But if he has not left sufficient, then they are ashamed not to 764
make good the deficiency. 'If no cows are killed at a burial we 626
others [non-relatives] say that it was a mean burial, that the dead man was a pauper without kin, for if he had had kinsmen they would have killed cows for him. So then the relatives grieve their poor griefs alone, we others don't go to that burial.' To a poor burial the members of the same village do in fact come, as they are obliged to do; but few other people come, and there is seldom any dancing.

There is one other situation in which a member of the family is 764
under obligation to kill. If the dead man is buried by his 'father' at his 'father's' place, then one of his 'father's' cows must be killed. But if his 'father' does not choose to exercise his privilege of carrying the body to his place for burial (and he need not do so unless he wishes), then there is no such obligation.

Upon affines, however, the obligation is absolute, unless they actually have not got a cow or bull available. 'If a father-in-law brings no beast to his son-in-law's burial, then his daughter is estranged from him, she asks angrily why he does not bring one, seeing that her husband has died.' 'If a son-in-law does not bring a cow to his father-in-law's burial, though he has one that he might have brought, he is ashamed before men. They say to him: "Your wife's father has died, why did you not bring a cow? Perhaps you think you have a father-in-law still alive (i.e. the dead man's heir, to whom all previous obligations are due, and with whom the relationship of affinity continues very much as before), but he himself, your own father-in-law, has died."' And thus, if insufficient cows are killed to maintain the family dignity, both the family and the affines are made to feel ashamed.

Occasionally a friend of the dead man, who is no relative, brings a bull to kill, as a sign of friendship and affection, but he [572]
has no obligation to do so.

Social position, both in its practical aspect of authority and in 764
its emotion aspect of prestige, depends primarily, among the 556
Nyakyusa, on the generous use of wealth, or, to put it more simply, on feeding people. The Nyakyusa insisted on this again and again in explaining the relative status of different people: one man is great and distinguished (*nsiya*) because he feeds people, another who feeds people less is less distinguished. At a lavish funeral, where many people gather and eat meat, they go home in

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ritual they distinguish *abakamu* (kinsmen) from *abandu itolo* (non-relatives) or *abapakipanga* (villagers), and *abakikolo* (those of the lineage of a dead man) from *abako* (affines) and mother's relatives (*abipwa*). These categories have different functions.

(*b*) *Christians*

The performance of family rituals is complicated by the fact that 16 per cent of the Nyakyusa are professing Christians, and in almost every lineage there are individuals who withdraw from the full performance of traditional rituals at death, puberty, and marriage, birth, and misfortune. In most cases such a withdrawal is treated tolerantly by the pagan kinsmen: the Christian kinsmen come to mourn, to congratulate the bride, to express sympathy with the parents of twins; and their non-participation in the washing and shaving and avoidance of ritual meat and beer is accepted. At the funeral of Mwamulenga his preceding full brother, who should have been a principal in the death ritual, was a Christian, and he took no part, though his children went through it. At the funeral of Mwampiki (p. 248) one boy was left untreated on the ground that he was a Christian and a Christian 'should not have two gods'. At the puberty ritual of Mwaihojo's daughter (p. 91) the brother called to wash with her was influenced by Christians and was reluctant to take part, though he finally did so.

Only when a son who is heir to family wealth, or to the office of chieftainship or priesthood refuses the inheritance of widows (as a Christian must do) is there very strong pressure on him to conform to traditional custom: the union of the heir with the widows is held essential to their health. Sometimes also there is acute conflict between different members of the family over the performance of an autopsy, the pagans pressing for it and the Christians opposing it. This we saw in the death of E. when her pagan senior brother wished to examine her, and her Christian junior brother opposed him vehemently.

That Christians cannot take part in certain of the rituals[1] and do not suffer if they omit them is generally accepted. The farewell to the dead at the homestead of the deceased, and the treatment of kinsmen of twins, fall into this category. About certain other rituals, such as the ritual of the gasping cough and the protection against sorcery, opinions are divided. Some of our Christian friends insisted that 'the gasping cough is a real illness' and cited

[1] There are minor differences in the rules of the different missions.

2; Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

121 554 linked to the physiological cycle of individuals and their close kin, and cannot be detached from it as in Christianity.

121 626 Law is a condition of social survival; no society can exist without it; and in so far as religion helps to maintain law and order it fulfills a necessary social function. Among the Nyakyusa (and perhaps in all societies) order is maintained partly by fear of supernatural sanctions. The rituals we have described both enhance fear and relieve it. They harness fear to social ends.

121 771 The preceding chapters are full of the pagan fear of death, menstruation, childbirth, and shedding blood. The rituals express the fear and teach men what they must do to be saved. They teach them to co-operate with their kinsmen and to follow traditional custom, for in that alone does salvation lie. The fear of madness or sterility compels each generation to follow traditional custom as ordained for them by the heroes: thus is the dependence of man upon his society instilled. The death ritual illustrates this most dramatically. In every society men must overcome death emotionally, they must turn to life. In the death ritual the mourners are distraught, terrified; they express their grief and put it behind them; their relatives and neighbours gather round them, share their sorrow, and help them to overcome it. The dead is replaced. Death is associated with fecundity and so made tolerable. It is no accident that the Nyakyusa interpret all the rituals, and especially the death ritual, as a protection against going mad, against the disintegration of the personality. And safety is assured to the living by following minutely the traditions of their lineage.

[184] That the nature of men's fears is culturally determined is clear from the Nyakyusa evidence, for Christians and pagans alike are agreed that 'the Christians fear much less' than do pagans, and the Christians do in fact ignore taboos which the pagans feel to be binding. But the rituals do not create fear out of nothing. All the situations in which they are performed—birth and death, marriage, and misfortune—are situations of emotional tension in all societies. The rituals heighten the emotions and canalize them. They both teach men to feel, and teach them what it is proper to feel.

771 783 Many writers have shown us that the conception of sacred includes both the idea of holiness and of pollution;[1] that the awful, the fearful, may be conceived both as pure and as filthy. In

[1] See particularly W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (1889), pp. 153, 446–54 (1914 ed.); R. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (1923).

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

MAIN CULTURAL FEATURES

Religion

769 The ancestor cult was the main feature of Ngonde religion. As long as a man had alive a father, father's full brother, or a senior brother, this senior kinsman dealt with the ancestral spirits, not only on his behalf, but also on behalf of his wives and children. In the absence of sickness or misfortune no appeal was made to the spirits. If the diviner diagnosed anger of the ancestors as cause, the senior kinsman had to pray for the sick one. If the half-brothers lived at a distance from each other after the death of their father and uncles, each might pray to the spirits to cure a little sickness, but if it persisted a message had to be sent to the senior kinsman. Wrongs which aroused the anger of the spirits were usually breaches of family morality, insult to a father, neglect of responsibilities by an heir. Offerings consisted of a bull, hen, or beer in the case of commoners, a cow in the case of a chief. The worship of dead chiefs as such was not connected with everyday morality. On the offering of cows by chiefs to their immediate ancestors depended the food and health of the chiefdom and the fertility of women and cows.[1]

769 Each Kyungu was buried in the valley around Mbande, and the grave was planted with trees, making a sacred grove. In times of drought and widespread sickness, sacri-
643 fices were made at the groves under the guidance of a diviner.[2] An insult to the living Kyungu was believed to cause a drought. Each chief or noble was believed to be able to avert local misfortunes for his own people, and the head of every family participated in the divinity of his own ancestors. The great commoners of each chief were believed to have independent access to his ancestral spirits, and so to have a hold upon him. The nobles of Ngonde had a similar power over the Kyungu.

643 As the Kyungu's health was bound up with the welfare of the community, elaborate precautions to maintain his health and to protect him from the danger of sexual impurity were taken, and when he ailed he was killed by suffocation.[3]

778 Sacred lagoons by the lake were associated not with the ancestors, but with a vague supreme deity, *Mbumba*.[4]

There were two important annual rituals for the whole tribe in addition to the
796 special sacrifices to avert misfortune. One was the clearing out of the ashes each year after the break of the rains, which was performed on the order of the Kyungu, given through the nobles of Ngonde. The second was the elaborate first-fruits ceremony: fruits were offered by the nobles of Ngonde, in the grove of the last dead Kyungu, and then by the great chiefs, each in the grove of his own predecessor. The nobles and the chiefs of the hills had similar rituals, but they were not synchronized with those of the plain.[5]

Witchcraft

754 The Ngonde believe that certain men and women have the power of harming their neighbours and neighbours' cattle without taking any overt action. The witchcraft is
●626 hereditary, and of particular virulence if inherited through the mother.[6] Witches exert their influence at night in dreams. There are two kinds of witches, *anamanga*, defender

[1] Wilson, 1, 1938, pp. 256-7; 1, 1938, p. 84; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 191 and 198, also Ch. VII.
[2] Wilson, 3, 1939, pp. 19-30.
[3] Ibid., p. 34; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 178-95.
[4] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 250-69.
[5] Ibid., pp. 34-6.
[6] Wilson, 3, 1939, pp. 19-34.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

754 witches, who use their power beneficently and spend their dreams in efforts to counteract the aggressor witches, *avaloni*, who use their power maliciously. The great commoner is the strongest of the former type, and the 'defender of the village'. A man who earns universal unpopularity is subject to a spiritual attack from the 'defenders', and is liable to fall sick from the blast of unpopularity. Belief in this efficacy of the 'breath of men' is one of the sanctions of the accepted social order.[1]

Only magic is believed to have power to punish wrongdoers who are neither kinsmen nor members of the same chiefdom. Magic exerts an influence on the behaviour of kinsmen and affines. The witchcraft of a neglected wife may cause a man to fall sick, or that of his father-in-law may harm his children.[2] The power of witchcraft never acts between relatives, though it might between husband and wife.[3]

754 An aggressor witch was reported in the old days by the great commoner to the chief, who ordered the poison ordeal. If the accused failed to vomit (the dose was seldom fatal), he was proved guilty and killed or exiled, all his cows and property being taken by the chief and the victims of his aggressive witchcraft. If a private individual accused another, both were put to the ordeal; if both vomited, the accuser had to pay two cows to the other for slander; if either failed to vomit he was punished as guilty. The ordeal is now illegal, but men accused of aggressive witchcraft still find it best to fly the chiefdom. Great commoners normally used their witchcraft powers to protect their chief from attack, but if he erred they would join in the attack on him; the nobles of Ngonde had power to exert a similar constitutional check on the Kyungu.[4]

763 If death by aggressive witchcraft was suspected, it was proved or disproved by a routine post-mortem examination and by subsequent consultation with the diviner.[5]

Birth

844 A child should be born in its own father's house. A difficult birth is a sign of the guilt of adultery, and is eased by confession.[6] A few days after the birth the mother is anointed, shaved, and resumes her household duties. She later goes on a visit of some weeks to show the child to her own parents, returning to her husband after celebration by both sets of grandparents, and exchanges of food and hoes. The birth of twins was a great misfortune, requiring the segregation and ritual purification of both parents.[7]

Initiation

881 There was no puberty or initiation rite for boys. The initiation of a girl was really a pre-marriage rite. She went through a complicated rite to ensure fertility, in which the husband took part. The initiation lasts some months, and includes several exchanges of food between the families of the girl and her betrothed husband, and ceremonies in which her girl friends of the same village and his friends of his village take part. The girl is tested for virginity during the ceremonies. If she is not betrothed before puberty the initiation is carried out in a modified form, but the full significance is lost.[8]

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 277. [2] Ibid., p. 256. [3] Ibid., 1, 1936, p. 91.
[4] Ibid., 5, 1939, p. 58. [5] Johnston, 1897, p. 443.
[6] Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 19; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 42–3.
[7] Ibid., pp. 44–6. According to H. H. Johnston, if the children died in succession the father was expected to kill himself, but it is possible that he is recounting a custom of the Southern Tumbuka (1897, p. 417).
[8] Ibid., 1925, p. 51; Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 11; Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 258.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

vary in different circumstances. Millet and rice, the two most valuable crops, belong to the man and are stored by him ; so that the division of a millet or rice garden into plots and their assignment to different wives is rather a division of labour than of property. But of all other crops the woman on whose plots they have grown is an effective owner. She stores them herself in her own house and no other wife of her husband can touch them ; it is only with him that her rights are in any way shared. 241 592 421

The main use of the crops which the Nyakyusa grow is to provide food for each separate household group. Next in importance is the provision of food and beer for hospitality, and for the making of gifts both in everyday life and on special ceremonial occasions. And, finally, there is the barter or sale of surplus crops to obtain salt, pots, clothes, cattle and to pay tax. Each married woman, therefore, first uses her own crops to feed her husband, her own children and herself. If she is the only wife then she cooks for her husband every day, but, even if she is one of many, she is yet careful to cook for him frequently, in order to keep his affection and the various advantages which go with it. 592 593 574 [437]

When cooking for her husband she must, when necessary, prepare sufficient for guests, for a man very often has friends and neighbours eating with him ; and if he wishes to make a gift of cooked food, she cooks it for him from her own store. To provide meals for him and his guests and cooked food for gifts is an obligation which she normally fulfils quite willingly, as we have hinted above ; she may be fond of him ; it is in any case to her interest to play her part in the co-operative relationship which binds them together and from which both alike benefit. He hoes for her and builds her house, he gives her a share of the household milk, which he himself controls, he sleeps with and is gentle to her ; he has, without the aid of any legal, moral or conventional sanctions, a great hold over her, as she, on her side, has over him. But, if either fails to play their part in willing co-operation, then there are, for both alike, these other sanctions to fall back upon. A quarrel develops between them and leads to violence, perhaps he strikes her, perhaps she viciously repels him, one night, from her bed ; and then the immediately injured party appeals to the neighbours for support. They discuss the matter, censure one or the other, and try to make it up between them ; if they fail to do so the case may go to Court and one will then have to pay compensation to the other. Or it may happen, without any violent quarrel, without any formal appeal to the neighbours, that one of them becomes aware that his conduct is provoking their mockery and criticism ; and then in shame he mends his ways. Or, finally, one of them may fall sick and suspect that wrong-doing on his part has been followed by spiritual retribution in the form of witchcraft. 593 [574] [627] [626] [754]

A woman, then, uses her stores of food to cook not only for herself

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

586 mothers[1] in secret that she is in trouble and that her husband has no regard for her, that he grudges her garden plots and gives her only small ones. Then maybe her mothers will take the initiative in suggesting that she should leave this man who is no husband and who loves her not. And they will tell their husband, her father, that his child is in trouble and—only think of it!—has scarcely a ridge[2] to call her own. So that if the girl does then find life with her husband intolerable and leaves him, her father will not be too hard on his daughter, he will not compel her to go back to him; for he knows that she was in trouble."

421 626 754] This statement, written by an educated Nyakyusa, brings out very clearly both the fact that men do at times divide their land unfairly and the nature of some of the sanctions which operate against such injustice. The faith in witchcraft provides a moral sanction of which, if the man is fool enough to disregard it, he is very likely explicitly reminded in the course of the subsequent legal proceedings; the injured wife has an immediate hold over him in virtue of the relationship of practical co-operation and emotional intimacy in which they stand to each other, a hold which, if he attempts to break it by recourse to violence, is strengthened and given a legal form by the support of their neighbours. The support of her kin is an alternative legal force[3] which an injured wife

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[1] i.e. her father's wives.

[241] [2] For many crops the ground is hoed into ridges.

[3] Some readers may be puzzled by and somewhat critical of the meaning with which the concept of law is employed in this paper. This is not the place to meet their criticisms, but, in order to avoid misunderstanding, it is necessary to define that meaning precisely. Law, then, is here distinguished alike from morality with its religious sanctions, from convention with its constraining sense of shame and from the reciprocity dictated by self-interest—with all of which it is in fact inextricably intertwined. Law is here taken to be that normal or customary form of action in society which is kept in being by the inherent necessities of systematic cooperation among its members. The particular form of law varies in different areas of society in accordance with the particular conditions of each area; but some normal form of action there must be everywhere if social life is to continue; anarchy is, in the strictest sense of the word, impracticable. A breach of law is a course of action, on the part of some individual or minority group, which is inconsistent with the normal and accepted form of cooperative action, and which would therefore, if unchecked, make continued relationship between the lawbreakers and the other members of their society wholly impossible; it threatens to dissolve society into anarchy. But breaches of law are always in fact checked, as they must be, by the actions of those with whom the lawbreakers are in practice related; and it is these actions which are the sanctions of law.

If law is to be preserved it is necessary that the actions which sanction it should have an irresistible force, the lawbreaker must normally be helpless before them; and they are only thus irresistible if the great majority of those people with whom the lawbreaker is effectively related do in fact either participate in or at least approve of them. Now in civilized areas of society, in which vast numbers of people are related, legal sanctions must be applied by a central authority if they are to be effective, for only such a central

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

may call in against her husband, if she desires divorce. And, it is hinted, this particular force may sometimes be successfully invoked by a plausible woman even without good cause. 421 626

In disposing of the surplus of their crops and bananas the respective rights of a married woman and her husband vary in detail, though little in substance, according as he has or has not made a formal division between them. It is not infrequent for a man to reserve for his own use one or two plots and some banana stems, which are then called *busongo* plots or bananas (*imbaka* or *ifijinja fya busongo*). In the planting, weeding and reaping of the *busongo* plots all the man's wives co-operate if he has several, but the final product is absolutely his own, it is stored by him and they have no part in it. Conversely, however, the rights of each woman to dispose of the surplus crop of the plots allotted to her are thereby greatly increased, for her husband cannot then touch it at all. 421 593

In any case, whether or not *busongo* plots and bananas have been set aside, a woman's obligations to provide food for her husband's con-

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authority can possibly either act over the whole area or command general approval and support for its actions.

But in primitive society it is otherwise. In a small and isolated group largely composed of personal acquaintances it is difficult to escape from one's friends; while the facts of every dispute, of every breach of law, are soon widely known; and in consequence, it is there perfectly possible at times for legal sanctions to be effective without the intervention of any central authority at all. The neighbours, or the kinsmen, or the affines of a lawbreaker are in themselves a large and important section of his society, and he can only with difficulty escape their authority; he can not lose himself in a great city as can his civilised counterpart. And so the typical method of legal procedure in a primitive society is for action to be taken against a lawbreaker by those more nearly concerned, supported by general public approval. And it frequently happens that the only effective action is taken singlehanded by the injured party; nevertheless if that action is supported and strengthened by any generally expressed approval we can not deny that it possesses a legal form.

In a primitive group any request which an individual may make to his kinsmen or neighbours for practical assistance against a lawbreaker, any appeal to their opinion in a dispute is a legal procedure, for it is an appeal to authority. It is they upon whom he is in practice most dependent. Nor is it only in "private life" that he depends upon them, for, owing to the smallness of the group, the distinction between "public" and "private life" hardly exists. In many situations they hold in their hands the whole force of his society; their actions and opinions are checked or supported by the informal but nonetheless effective jury of widespread public discussion; and if they are against him he has nowhere else to turn.

Now Nyakyusa society to-day is no longer isolated and primitive, neither has it yet fully taken its place in the social system of the world; it is in process of transition. Legal procedure is, quite inevitably, becoming everyday more and more an affair of the central territorial authorities, of the Governor in Council and the High Court of Tanganyika and of their appointed deputies: the local Magistrates, the District Officers and the Native Courts. But the process is not complete. In many situations of social life the new impersonal relationships with the great world are still, for the moment, more or less irrelevant and in them the old primitive sanctions retain their power. [178 692]

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 out boundaries, drawing lines on the ground; he divided the land into
423 three portions, one for each. The others were strangers to the chiefdom
425 but had taken a fancy to that piece of land."

622 The sentence in this story "The chief gave the garden land of
624 Mwakajileke to other people" deserves remark for it in no way implies any other custom than the one we have previously described. And it illustrates the dangers of relying too much on verbal statements of custom. When a stranger is given land by a great-commoner after reference to the chief he is commonly said to have been given it by the chief. The chief, from one point of view, is the overlord and the great-commoner acts for him. But, and this is an essential qualification, the great-commoner nearly always so acts for the chief and, save exceptionally, it is wholly incorrect for the chief to grant land directly. The great-commoner acts not only for the chief but also as the representative and leader of the villagers; and in relation to them the chief cannot exercise his rights of overlordship save occasionally and in particular circumstances.

166 The old Kukwe great-commoner whom we have already quoted
423 explained this to me very clearly: "Occasionally one of his own men will
425 ask a chief to give him ground to hoe in another village, 'If indeed you
621 say that the land is yours!' (challenging the chief to assert his right of
622 overlordship). Then the chief agrees that all the land is most certainly his; but still, if it is possible, he tells the man to go to the commoners of that village and ask them for land. If the chief does not do this (but makes a direct grant of land) we blame him for not being a true chief: 'Who is it,' we ask him, 'that has built up this country? Did you do it all by yourself? It is we the commoners who have built it up! And how is it, then, that you give this man land without consulting us?'" [754 Nor is the censure of his people mere idle talk for a Nyakyusa chief, he
●626] fears that they may bewitch him, that the witches among them, led by the great-commoners of the several villages, may come in dreams at night and cause him to sicken or to die.

166 So much for the initial grants of land to newcomers and the rights of
423 men returning to their home chiefdoms. If a man goes back, after moving, to a chiefdom which is in no sense his home, where, that is to say, he is not a member of an old family but in which he has himself spent some years, he is treated as a newcomer. He is welcomed but he has no rights to the ground, whether building-site or gardens, which he previously occupied.

423 Once established in a village, however, any man can hoe any unowned
425 ground within its borders and thereby make it his own. A newcomer for

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 In his tenure of land every Nyakyusa man is related to some chief
622 who is his overlord. But their relationship is not confined to the single element of land-tenure, it is just as many-sided and complex as is any other human relationship ; and even as we abstract from it the particular set of facts that immediately concerns us here we must at once refer them again to it if they are to be intelligible.

166 When a newcomer is received into a village and given land the chief, as we have seen, is normally a party to the villagers' action, and in most
423 cases he himself ceremonially welcomes the newcomer if he comes from
622 outside the chiefdom by sending to him a present of cooked food. He has gained a new subject and his power and prestige are thereby increased.
[427] As men are quite free to move from one tiny chiefdom to another and as land is still relatively plentiful the phenomenon of rent does not exist among the pagan Nyakyusa, there is no direct charge ever specifically made in return for the right to build and cultivate. Nevertheless a chief is a chief and his subjects' land is his as well as theirs and they are under certain obligations to him.

622 Among these obligations that of providing cooked food for the
554 ceremonies of the chief's own immediate family is probably the most
[585] important. When a chief's daughter, for example, is getting married women from all over the chiefdom bring food to entertain the bridegroom and his friends on the day that they bring the bulk of the cattle. The obligation to bring food, though not a legal one, is both reciprocal and conventional. The chief is expected to kill one or two of the beasts to feed his people and if he is mean about this, killing one where he should have killed two, then on the next occasion his people are more reluctant
[626] to bring food. But there is also the sense of shame constraining individuals. If the majority of households in a village provide food for a chief on such an occasion, and the majority I think nearly always do so, then the shameful meanness and unconventionality of defaulters is the subject of adverse comment among them.

A chief also has the traditional right, still widely admitted to-day, to send and take food, especially milk and bananas, from his subjects if he has need of it. And we have seen already that men with more than one wife are prompted to retain *busongo* bananas for themselves in order to meet his demands without upsetting the peace of their households. This
[177] traditional right however is known not to be admitted by the European Administration, on the grounds that a salary has taken its place, and is therefore beginning to fall into disuse. Chiefs, I was told, often fear to exercise it lest some man refuse obedience and take a complaint to the *Boma*, nor are they willing to confine their demands to those men of whose compliance they are certain. As the salary of an ordinary chief,

Sometimes a chief who was a powerful personality rode roughshod over his headmen and achieved a measure of autocracy; but most headmen would not allow this and in their opposition they had the full support of their villagers, as well as the moral backing of public opinion. There are remembered cases in pre-European days when a chief was deposed or reduced to a non-entity by his headmen acting together in the face of what they considered to be encroachments on the inviolability of village unity and independence. In any case, however, even the strongest chiefs were little disposed to interfere in the land matters of their villages; few wished to be bothered with the details of land rights. A chief could legitimately complain if he were not kept informed by his headmen, but his approval of their actions – and most especially in land matters – was very largely a formality.

Traditional Land Tenure

As already briefly described, a village comes into formal existence at the time of the formation of a new chiefdom. At that time its building site and arable and pastoral areas were roughly demarcated by the retiring headmen of the old chiefdom. Within the village, members were allocated their house plots and each man tended to take the strip of land stretching behind his plot and make his field there. The land was shared out on a friendly, co-operative basis; the new headman smoothed out any difficulties and settled any disputes. Thus was the pattern of land-holding established. Apart from the relative value of a plot proximate to a man's house, there was little or no cause for dispute as land needs were small and the supply plentiful. An established villager could, without notification or special permission, extend his cultivation to any land which lay vacant – i.e., which was not in use or under fallow by a fellow-villager. There was therefore no need for a man to try at first to grab more land than he immediately required, nor did he need to be jealous of his neighbours' claims.

A villager's rights to the use of his land were quite secure and he had no fear of eviction or of the seizure of part of his holding. It is said that very occasionally a chief might take a man's holding but I think, at least in the Lake Plains, that this must have been most unusual. In fact, of course, so long as a man was allowed to reap his crop there was little value attached to the plot as such when nearly similar ground stood unused. Men sought security not on their plots of land, but in their membership of the village community, which assured them of their continuing rights to adequate opportunity for cultivation over the years. However, virtually every man had an excellent security of tenure on his holding during the mature life of his age-village (i.e. until at least the next "coming-out" ceremony), and if he died his heir, should he wish, could come and live in his house and cultivate his fields without hindrance. The way in which he cultivated, though of course strongly conditioned by custom and convention, was his own affair, and he sub-divided his holding amongst his own family as he thought fit. He could not, however, allocate any of his land to a man living in another village, nor could he permit it to be cultivated by such a stranger.

Through fear of witchcraft, because of persistent illness, misfortune or unfriendliness, in order to live near a relative or friend, or to inherit elsewhere, a man might leave his village and his age-mates. Then he had to give up his land-holding. When a man moved because of witchcraft or illness (much the same thing and a chief cause of movement) his land was normally left idle pending his hoped-for return, and his former neighbours would do all they could to induce him to return to his old home and fields – even to the use of force (see Wilson, G. 1938, pp. 32-3). His departure was an accusation against them, and a disturbance of co-operative unity. If the man consistently refused to return, or if it was known that he had definitely left for good, his

number of separate plots per holding was less than where land was scarcer; 311
at the same time the average size of separate plots was smaller in those more 423
land-hungry villages. The reader may refer to Table III (page 15) for some illustrative figures. Though differences are not yet very great, nevertheless there seems to be a fairly clear correlation between the average size of villagers' holdings on the one hand, and on the other the number and size of separate plots, and this is entirely borne out by my general information obtained in villages where actual measurements were not made. The inescapable conclusion must be that increasing scarcity of land in the Lake Plains leads to increasing fragmentation and dispersion of holdings; further, the present land situation and land tenure system can only lead to a continuation of this trend.

To emphasise the actual situation in 1955, let me reiterate the results of my own village surveys in the very high density region. In a village in Koroso's chiefdom only a quarter of the younger men had paddy land of their own, holdings averaging about three-quarters of an acre; in a village in Mwakipesile's chiefdom, only 17 per cent. of the younger men had paddy land and holdings averaged about half an acre (cf. Table VII, page 37). These two examples are taken from the areas of most severe land shortage and are not therefore altogether typical of the whole Lake Plains. Nevertheless, I do not think that they are entirely atypical; more importantly, they indicate the present trend. Within another generation this fragmentation and scatter of holdings may well be the common feature everywhere in the flood plains unless the system of tenure and inheritance is modified. If the increase in population is quickened through improved medical facilities, better diet and housing, and improved conditions generally, then the position will become more acute. Such an increase is only to be expected. The Nyakyusa have [433] decisively entered a money economy and they have learnt to seek higher standards of living. Only from their fields, by cash-cropping, can they [511] expect to earn their livings and the demand for better living will not be curtailed – nor, of course, is it desirable that it should be.

There is another aspect of this whole matter which must be considered. It relates to the movement of individuals between villages. Such movement [166] was, in earlier European days, a crucial factor in the age-village structure, for it was not only exceedingly frequent, but also it tended to undermine the idealised coeval basis of village life. Movement between villages is increasingly difficult now, for a newcomer naturally cannot easily obtain land, nor [754] as much land as he would desire even at a moderate demand. Nevertheless, [753] the reasons for movement persist, and they will do so whilst the fear of witchcraft remains and whilst illness and misfortune are attributable to the unfavourable aura of a place. There remains also the tradition of moving so [626] that a man may escape from bad relations with kinsfolk or neighbours, or from the obloquy resulting from his own disapproved actions. Much social and psychological tension is being created now as a result of the new [152] difficulty of movement, and so far the Nyakyusa have not evolved alternative [578] methods.

On the other hand, so deeply engrained is the notion of the prestige [554] and power which accrues to a village by virtue of the number of its inhabitants, that headmen and villagers alike remain most reluctant to refuse to accept [609] newcomers, even when it inevitably means that the present inhabitants must meet a further decrease in the average amount of land available per family, [622] for a newcomer must be allocated a holding if he is to remain. Consequently, if a holding is for any reason left vacant, a headman tends to refuse to re-allocate some or all of it amongst his villagers and thus to augment their holdings; but instead he keeps it in reserve pending the hoped-for arrival of another newcomer. Men desiring to leave their own village try to get

Security of tenure has continued into European times, and although perhaps weakened slightly in one way through the exaggerated powers which accrue to modern Government-supported chiefs, it has been strengthened by the modern peace and rule of law and the more efficient system of justice provided by the established local courts. According to G. Wilson (Wilson, G., 1938, p. 32) the increase in the movement of individuals between villages in earlier European times (i.e., up to about 1940-45) directly caused a lack of attachment to individual plots, and thus security of tenure was not considered particularly important.

The new situation of land shortage does not affect the basic position, or rather, by producing a high scarcity value on land, it has brought about an intensification of individuals' rights over their holdings. No longer dare a chief or headman attempt to commit such illegal acts as the seizure of a villager's field, so long as that villager is not afraid to publicise the affair. A man is not, and cannot afford to be, prepared to lose his field, for he cannot replace it with any certainty, either in a convenient location or elsewhere. A headman may sometimes bring strong pressure to bear on some of the men of his village to try to persuade them to give up portions of their land to assist a newcomer or a landless neighbour, but a villager can and does refuse and there is no legal authority which can override him here. As the land shortage becomes more obvious and more acute so men become less willing to allow their holdings to be touched for any reason, by anyone. The re-allocation at a "coming-out" ceremony appears to have been dropped nowadays[1] and thus a man holds his land undisturbed until his death, when it passes by inheritance to his sons. There are cases now where grandsons of the original holder occupy land through undisturbed and undisputed inheritance. A man can, as he wishes, loan a kinsman or friend a plot in his holding, or he can make an outright gift. The principal restriction which remains is that a man must continue to live in the village in order to retain these rights; he must relinquish them if he permanently goes to live elsewhere. Nevertheless, the land of a well-established villager would be kept for him pending his hoped-for return, for if he has left in umbrage and fear because of suspected witchcraft, then he may be persuaded to come back after a time. The headman and his neighbours should in fact persist in their attempts to persuade him, even to the use of force, for this is not only a moral duty of age-mates and fellow-villagers but is also an effort to remove the implications of their alleged witchcraft and anti-social conduct.

Once, therefore, a man obtains land he has absolute rights in it during his continued residence in the village. Especially today, older men seldom shift their homes and almost all land is now held on a tenure which will be passed on by inheritance.

Boundary disputes are few. Usually, and increasingly, village boundaries are well known, and field boundaries invariably are. During my field measurements in the sample villages, I never met any difficulty with my local teams in quickly establishing the ownership and exact limits of any plot. Boundaries are usually marked by small ridges of accumulated debris or by narrow paths, and these form an intricate and irregular network throughout a village's arable area. They are so well known that there is very little scope for a greedy man to attempt to encroach on a neighbour's holding at hoeing time. If minor disagreements do arise at that season they can be immediately settled – by appeal to neighbours working nearby if necessary – and the headman or his assistant may well not be called in at all.

1. This is the case in the Lake Plains. In some of the more conservative Highland chiefdoms where the cash economy is less advanced and land scarcity is not serious, there still appears to be some re-allocation in favour of the young men in the traditional way. In general, however, it is clear that the traditional age-village system of land allocation is obsolete; see pages 29ff.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

v. Procedure in witchcraft cases

Whenever someone is very ill there is anxious speculation among relatives and neighbours as to the cause of the illness. If witchcraft is suspected—and witchcraft is thought to be by far the commonest cause of sickness and death—people begin to whisper (*ukuheha*) that so and so is responsible. Even if the trouble is only a sudden fall in the milk supply there are whispers about witchcraft and the identity of the witch. Then the neighbours meet and complain (*ukwijaja*), or else the leader of the village-section, or even the headman of the village, takes the initiative and, summoning his people, admonishes them. The object of such complaint and exhortation is to warn off the witch. 'People speak very angrily, then the witches are ashamed within themselves, and stop their witchcraft, because they die of shame.' If the warning is effective—that is if the patient or the cows recover—the case will be dropped; but if the trouble continues then the village proceeds to the discovery of the witch. Mwaisumo explained: 'If sickness occurs, the village headman will call his people round him and say: "This village is not right, disease is killing the people, there must be someone who is bewitching them. We warn him to stop!" Then, if he does not stop he will call the people round him again and say: "Well, we must drive him away." Then they discuss their dreams with the headman, it is always by their dreams that they find out the witch, no other way.' A case was quoted in which the milk yield of a village had diminished and the villagers had 'called one another' to come together to complain. While they were complaining a 'defender' called out: 'I have seen the one who is throttling the cows; come together again to-morrow, and no one must stay behind.' When they met the next day one man called the names of each villager in turn, and 'the defender' responded to each with 'Yes', until 'Mwasalutaba' was called. Then he was silent. The name was called three times, and at the third time the whole company groaned. Mwasalutaba got up and, denying the accusation, appealed to the ordeal. He was found guilty by it and was driven from the village (cf. Document, pp. 241–3).

Mwakwelebeja, himself a commoner credited with the power of discovering witches in dreams, made a revealing comment on

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

791 the discovery of witches. He said: 'The witches betray them-
754 selves. When we are sitting discussing the witches throttling people, we may notice one looking nervous and glancing sidelong at his friends, then we, who are innocent, know that he is the man.' Certainly a suspect is closely watched, and if he shows anxiety, or fails to join in the condemnation of witches and the expression of good will, this is brought up against him, as the following case shows.

754 'A certain man called Mwakagugu had a guest staying with him;
62 a soldier on leave. Now this soldier was in the habit of calling in the neighbours to eat when his wife cooked a meal, and M. was always angry in his heart, wishing to eat alone with his guest. When the soldier invited in other people M. would refuse to join them. (The soldier was correct, according to Nyakyusa custom, in what he did. It is good to call in friends to eat.) On one occasion the soldier bought some beer and a crowd of men were drinking it, in another house, not M.'s; but they took a dry bamboo from M.'s place as firewood, to heat the water for the beer. Then M. was very angry indeed and asked: "What do you mean by taking my bamboo?" And his neighbours silently criticized him, thinking "Our friend here has not even bought this beer, and then he gets angry when we take his bamboo!" Another day when the soldier killed a bullock and gave a leg of the meat to some guests of his who were present his child fell ill, its ear swelled up and burst, and it screamed with pain. Later, a neighbour's wife cooked some porridge for her husband without any relish so when she brought the porridge to where the men were sitting, the soldier called to his own wife to bring a chicken she had cooked, as relish, and he offered it to the other men, eating none himself. Again, on yet another occasion, when his wife brought him his porridge she called M. to join him; but M. laughed and said: "Let them (the soldier and his other friends), eat it by themselves." This was the woman's story. And then straight away they were startled by the child screaming and refusing to lie down.

'So then all the neighbours gathered together and gave expression to their anger (*ukwijaja*), asking themselves the cause of the sickness, and why it was that it always became apparent when they were eating. "If the man in question" they said, naming no one, "does it again, we will expel him from the country!" As

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

soon as this was over M. at once began to whisper to a friend: "Why do they ask about this sickness, and all the other sicknesses we have they say nothing about? When we are ill is that not an illness?" His friend answered: "It is taboo to speak like this, they will hear you!" And when M. went on whispering he said: "Get out of my house." When the others heard of this they drove M. away, saying that it was he who was making the child sick. And that night the child's illness reached its height, and was worse than ever before.'

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(In reply to question): 'At first when they met to express their anger they knew it was M. but feared to accuse him openly. When, however, he began to whisper they feared no longer and said openly: "You are a witch!" The headmen have forbidden all private whispering about witchcraft, as distinct from a formal public gathering to express anger; so that when his friend said to M.: "It is forbidden to speak like this", this was what he referred to. What he meant was: "Why did you not say this openly if it pains your heart? Now you seem to be making the illness worse!" In other words, the object of the open expression of anger was to warn M. off, but by continuing to whisper himself he showed that he had not repented. He was still angry. If he had said nothing they would not have expelled him.

'After M.'s neighbours had driven him from his home (by word of mouth only) he moved, but the village headman, Mwambuputa, brought him back to a different part of his village, not to the section of it (*akapanga*) where M. had previously built; he put him in the house of one of his men. Then his neighbours grew angry asking why Mwambuputa, who himself had forbidden murmuring, had brought back one whom they had convicted of witchcraft! So they went to Mwambuputa's place and expressed their anger to him. Then he agreed to go and expel him. I who recount the case, went with them.

'When we reached the house where M. was staying the assistant headman of M.'s old section, Mwakyandwike, stood out and said: "I have a word to say to my father Mwambuputa. I am astonished that you received back M. after I had driven him away because he is an evil man who does not like to have friendly dealings with us his neighbours." Then Mwambuputa replied: "When I fetched him back I did not know you had convicted him of witchcraft, I thought he was simply moving." "Yes,"

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 replied the other, "that is why I have followed him, for your
627 house is my home! If you love M. you too will be expelled!" And the others said: "Had you known about the case, we should have expelled you both!" "Let us tell him then", said Mwambuputa. But M. was not in the house and had to be fetched. When he came Mwambuputa said: "Your neighbours have followed you saying that they have expelled you. You have done some evil, have you not? I, when I received you, did not know of this, I thought you were just moving." "What is their reason for driving me away?" asked M. "That I've not yet asked them, we will ask them together." Then one man said: "You M., when you moved, why did you move?" M.: "The reason was this, our child (*sic*) at home was sick and we met to express our anger; after this I said to a friend, 'Why do they express their anger and say some one of us has eaten the child for there is a great deal of fever about and many children are sick?' This I said, and then found my friends said I was the witch. 'We expel you' they said, so I moved." "Yes," they said, "you knew yourself to be a witch, why else did you not show indignation and surprise and take your friends to Mwambuputa to be tried? Now you've given them power, and they have followed you here!" Another said: "If your friends drive you from the village will you be obstinate?" Then Mwambuputa said: "No more words, leave the village, your fellows tell you to go!" '

754 M. condemned himself in the eyes of his neighbours by
783 suggesting that their hinted accusation was false, after they had gathered to express indignation; and here we come to one of the essential points in the Nyakyusa concept of witchcraft. A witch may repent; if he does repent he is no longer a danger to the village, but an asset, since as a witch he has the power to defend the village as well as to attack; and *admission of guilt is taken as a sign of repentance*. The Nyakyusa hold that a witch is always conscious of his evil activity and they have no ritual expressions of good will such as the Zande blowing on chicken wings, but they stress the obligation of a suspect to admit guilt, either directly or by implication. It is said that in the past, if a suspect admitted guilt, he was not driven out. Very few people, however, do admit guilt; the only case we traced was that of a labourer on the Lupa gold-fields who was accused by his fellows of harming the eyes of one of the gang, who had just discovered a large

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

nugget of gold. This 'witch' was actually expelled from the camp by his fellows, but Nyakyusa, commenting on the case, remarked that had it occurred in one of the home villages, he would only have been fined. 754 783

Sometimes a case begins with the startling shout of 'a defender' in the night, who claims to have seen in his dreams that a witch is attacking either himself or a fellow villager. 'A man who dreams of fighting, or being beaten, will sometimes wake up in the middle of the night and go out of his house and shout: "You, so and so, why do you come and fight with me?" But often he will not mention the name then, but waits till the morning when his friends will come and ask him: "Why were you shouting last night?" Then he tells them the name of the man he dreamed of, and if another man dreams of him in the same way the next night or later, then they say he is a witch.' Such a case was described by Mwaikambo: 'A certain man, Kololo, dreamed of his fellow, and in the morning he called out on the road, "I dreamed of so and so, we fought with him in the night, he was throttling me." So his fellows came to his help and said to the accused man: "You, Moses, we have caught you, move elsewhere!" So Moses [who was a pagan, despite his name] moved to another village in the same chiefdom, that of Korosso.' 754 787

Occasionally a witch reveals himself by threatening a neighbour with whom he has quarrelled, using the stereotyped phrases: 'You *may* sleep or you may not' (*Uligona*), or 'What are you?' (*Uligwaki*), or 'Something may happen!' Here is an actual case as reported to us: 'Mwantibe once ordered a boy, the son of a village neighbour, to go on a message for him, but the boy refused, though it is customary for men to send their neighbours' sons on messages. Then Mwantibe got angry with him and snatched his cloth away, saying in anger: "You, boy, something may happen!" implying that the boy would fall ill. The boy fell ill that very evening, and died shortly afterwards. Mwantibe hurried to return the cloth, but the boy's people drove him away with it saying: "What sort of sorrow have you? Are you pretending, so that we shall not suspect you?" For they said it was he who had "eaten" the boy.' 754

The cases quoted so far all involve a direct accusation of witchcraft against the suspect, but sometimes he is compelled to move without ever being accused face to face. Mwaisumo ex- 754 627

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 plained: 'The men of the village cut a banana stem and wrap banana leaves round it, and go at night and put it in front of his
● 627 door; they also pull some of the thatching off the roof and put it with the banana stem. They do this without ever accusing him to his face of being a witch. Then, in the morning, when others pass by, they notice and say to each other: "See, he has been caught, he is a witch!" In the fields men will call out to one another, saying: "Have you heard? So and so has been caught as a witch?" They will call out where he can hear them, and he cannot stand it. He will go away to another chief.'

Instead of using a banana stem his neighbours may barricade his doorway with thorns while he is out. 'This symbolizes', Mwaikambo said, 'that we (your neighbours) wish to spear you; because, if you try to pass, the thorns will spear you. But we have left you, get out!' Or, as another informant explained: 'The thorns are the hearts of men, symbolizing that the men are all angry.' Occasionally, it is said, a brave man will clear away the thorns and remain, but his neighbours whisper about it and later on they will barricade his doorway again, and he will move. Placing the banana stem, or the thorns, is a joint action by the neighbours—should an individual do it on his own his neighbours will bring a charge against him. One informant suggested that the procedure is a new one developed to avoid making a direct accusation of witchcraft, which is a punishable offence under European administration; but this is doubtful.

622 The following case illustrates not only the practice of barricad-
627 ing the doorway of a supposed witch, but also the responsibility of headmen for the defence of the village, together with the belief
754 that a witch may throttle his own child. 'Nsekela was an assistant headman in the village of Mwambuputa, appointed by Mwambuputa himself. Nsekela's child cried by night and Mwambuputa was angry with him because he did not report the matter. "Why did you not tell me that your child was ill here? Why do you hide it? Indeed you are bad, it is you who are making the child ill, get out of our country!" Nsekela watched over a village-section, he was Mwambuputa's assistant, therefore it was that Mwambuputa said: "Why do you hide the fact that your child is ill here, you my assistant? Indeed you have bewitched it yourself." Nsekela denied the charge saying: "It is not I. No!" Then he went away to Selika about a case. While he was away his neighbours

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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barricaded his doorway with thorns. On his return he found them, and he moved to Mwaihojo's country (the adjoining chiefdom).' 627 754

Often an accusation of witchcraft is made without resort to divination at all: the behaviour of the accused (as in the cases quoted on pp. 110–13) or the word of 'the defender', is taken as evidence. But if there is doubt as to the identity of the witch, the patient or his family may consult a diviner (*undagusi*),[1] putting before him the names of persons they suspect. Whatever the grounds of accusation, however, it was normally confirmed by the *umwafi* ordeal, if the accused did not admit guilt. The chief might order a suspect to go to the ordeal, or a man or woman accused by his neighbours would appeal to the ordeal, when denying the charge. In such a case the accuser and accused first went to the chief to report and get official witnesses, then, accompanied by these witnesses and other friends, they went to a doctor who had a store of a certain medicine, *umwafi*, and there, at his homestead, they drank the *umwafi* together. Those who failed to vomit were judged guilty. The procedure was described by a number of witnesses (*vide* Documents, pp. 241–6). The accuser and the accused, each accompanied by supporters, go to the doctor, who warns them not to drink if what they have said is false. The doctor sprinkles powder into tepid water and gives the accuser and the accused the infusion to drink. He addresses the *umwafi*, and the supporters address each their own friend. Then, when one vomits his (or her) supporters applaud trilling,[2] and they go home, the man who vomited paying the doctor. Mwandesi described how after one of the two had vomited the other would sit tense and miserable, quite still. He would be left alone awhile, but later the doctor would try to make him bring up the poison: 'Should a man die?' they said. Only rarely, it seems, did anyone die of drinking *umwafi*.

787 754 627 695 [201]

If the accuser failed to vomit he was judged guilty of witchcraft himself; if neither vomited both were judged guilty; if both vomited the accuser was fined, paying two or more cows to the accused in compensation for slander. If he had no cows he might give a girl in marriage. 754 627 695

[1] For the methods of divination see Godfrey Wilson 'An African Morality', *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936), p. 80.

[2] A high-pitched *ulu-ulu-ulu* expressing praise and triumph.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 Sometimes the individuals concerned did not actually take the ordeal themselves, but each was represented by one of his or her
• 627 children, as when Mwaisumo's mother was accused of bewitching
695 the village cows, and one of her younger sons drank the *umtwafi* representing her (cf. Document, p. 241). Very often the ordeal was used to discover which *group* was responsible for the trouble, whether it was the father's people or the mother's, or perhaps the village, and a child was chosen to represent each group and given the poison. Mwaisumo himself had drunk *umtwafi* as a child, representing his father's people (cf. Document, p. 244). And a sceptic explained that each family chose a member who vomited readily—his family was always represented by a certain daughter who vomited *umtwafi* immediately.

The ordeal is only administered nowadays in the greatest secrecy, and probably very rarely, for informants who had no hesitation in discussing with us witchcraft accusations and trials of supposed witches, though these were well known to be illegal, denied that the ordeal was administered. The most recent example we traced occurred in 1932.

763 So far we have only dealt with cases in which witchcraft is
787 suspected as the cause of illness among men, or of a decrease in
754 the milk supply. The matter is more serious if someone has actually died. If there is any doubt as to the cause of death, an autopsy is performed, and a diagnosis made from the condition of the stomach and intestines. 'Wounds' or scars in the stomach are taken as evidence of attacks by witches, and a black oily substance in the bowel, or red streaked with black and white, is a mark of sorcery; if the bowel is swollen, or if the entrails burst out of the incision, it is proof that the deceased was himself a witch, and was probably killed in a quarrel with fellow witches. Death due to a relative having been bound with ropes (cf. Document, p. 249), or a disease of the bowels (*ikitatya*) attributed to natural causes, is also thought to be apparent at an autopsy. Some maintain too, that the source of witchcraft can be discovered from the examination, wounds on the right side of the stomach indicating that the witch is a member of the father's family, or of the age-village; wounds on the left indicating that he is a member of the mother's family (cf. Document p. 246).

At the autopsy the crowd is kept at a distance and usually only one or two senior relatives or neighbours, the headman of the

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

his village headmen. In some villages the 'elder' is both a religious leader and a secular authority, but there is a tendency to separate the two offices and to appoint a 'peacemaker' whose duty it is to settle disputes, collect taxes, and represent the village in its relationships with the chief and the administration, while the 'elder' confines himself to watching over the spiritual welfare of his people. Such division of authority is symptomatic of the growing differentiation of Nyakyusa society.

e. Witchcraft, medicines, and the British administration

Under British administration the use of the *umwafi* ordeal, imputation of witchcraft, intimidation or obtaining goods under false pretences by threats of witchcraft or sorcery, or offers of protection against them, are punishable offences. As we have seen, the ordeal is now administered only in the greatest secrecy, and probably very seldom, but accusations of witchcraft are frequent, and are even heard before the Native Courts, though not recorded (*vide* Document, p. 257). In the villages near the Government station more caution is observed in making accusations than in more remote parts of the district: very often the identity of the witch is only hinted at, or thorns are piled at his door by persons who remain anonymous (*vide supra*, p. 114) so that no individual can be convicted of imputing witchcraft. As one man put it: '"The defenders" see the witches, but cannot name them to anyone.' Autopsies continue in conservative villages but they are no longer performed on every corpse, as is said to have been customary in the old days. The chief Porokoto, himself a sceptic, argued that it was no use performing an autopsy when a charge could not be laid. If the members of a village are all convinced that a particular fellow is a witch he is forced to move, since his unpopularity becomes intolerable to him (*supra*, pp. 110–5). As Mwambuputa put it: 'We don't like him, and he doesn't like us either: he does not enjoy our company (*atikwangala na mawe*), so he moves.' But if the friction is only between two individuals, the supposed witch may brazen it out, for without resort to the *umwafi* ordeal there is no sure means of deciding between the accuser and the accused.

The prohibition of witch-finding is not accepted as right and just: the common view is that the Europeans 'protect the witches',

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VI

THE MAINTENANCE OF ORDER

626 VARIOUS forms of social pressure which serve to maintain order in the village have already been discussed: economic reciprocity, the need to be approved, and a supposed mystical interdependence are the foundation of order. We have shown that neighbours depend upon each other for help in many undertakings, that prestige accrues to affability and generosity, that men fear to shock their neighbours lest sickness fall on them, and that they admonish their children not to be proud and quarrelsome lest they be accused of practising witchcraft. The desire for prestige and the fear of sickness, or of gaining the reputation of being a witch, directly modify behaviour towards neighbours. Nevertheless, disputes between fellow villagers occur, and there is a regular legal mechanism for dealing with them.

a. Arbitration

627 The Nyakyusa set great store on arbitration by a friend. It is common practice for individuals who have quarrelled to state their dispute before a respected friend and ask for his opinion on the case. The statement is made in public and any man who happens to be present may offer an opinion. There is no attempt to hush up a quarrel—rather it is held that the expression of it paves the way for reconciliation—and the emphasis is laid on arriving at a settlement which is agreed to by both parties. Arbitration of this sort begins in the herd-group when two small boys will take their dispute to a fellow, the leader of their group, and the practice continues throughout their lives in the villages of youths, mature men, and elders. The respected friend to whom the case is first submitted is most often the leader of the village-section to which one or both parties to the dispute belong. But he need not necessarily be an appointed leader; any respected man may be asked to arbitrate. If his decision is not accepted by

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

both parties, or if he declares the case too difficult and refuses to give an opinion, then it is taken to the headman of the village. Should the headman fail to settle the dispute, it goes to the senior headman of his side of the chiefdom, thence to the chief sitting with his headmen, and nowadays it may go on through the Native Court, and the Native Appeal Court, to the District Officer sitting with native assessors, the Provincial Commissioner, and the High Court of Tanganyika. 627

Village headmen neither have, nor had, power to enforce their decisions; such power lay with the chief alone in the old days—he would send some of his junior kinsmen and men from his capital (*ikitangalala*) to execute judgement—and he alone could order the parties to a dispute to drink the poison ordeal, from which verdict there was no appeal. Nor is a village headman or other arbitrator paid a fee—a pot of beer or a hoe from the plaintiff to 'open the case', and beer (or occasionally a bull) as a thank-offering from the party for whom judgement was given, were the perquisites of a chief alone. The arbitrator's reward is prestige—the honour and respect of his fellows. As we have said, a case may be submitted to anyone for arbitration and no slight to the existing authorities is thereby implied; but if cases are constantly taken to some individual in the section other than himself, a section leader may grow jealous. We heard of one who was reputed to have tried to poison a new-comer to his section, a Christian, who was hospitable and became so popular as an arbitrator that the appointed leader feared lest he might lose all his authority. The hospitable man is respected and his fellows often ask for his opinion on a case as they sit together over a pot of beer. 643 622 627

But though village headmen cannot enforce their decisions, they are not to be ignored. An individual does not take a case direct to the chief; usually his village headman takes it to the senior headman of the side,[1] and the latter then takes it to the chief. Both will have heard something of the case and, if it is not regarded as 'too difficult', will have attempted to reconcile the 622 627

[1] It appears that a village headman *should* proceed through the senior headman of his side, but in Porokoto's chiefdom procedure was modified by the fact that there had been no 'coming out' ceremony. There Mwafula, the headman of a junior village, brought cases direct to the chief (*vide infra*, p. 146). It was modified also in Mwaipopo's country by the absence of Mwanaumbe, one of his two senior headmen (*cf.* Document, p. 181).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

622 parties before referring the matter to the chief. And any decisions they may have reached are reported to the chief.

●627 Disputes between members of a boys' village may be settled by the leader of their village, but more serious cases go to the headman of their fathers' village, and may proceed through him to the senior headman of the side. Old men go to their own headmen, but there is an appeal to the senior headman of the ruling generation, on the side in which they live, except in inheritance cases. In these the old men are the ultimate authority. Christians living in sections of pagan villages take their cases to their section leader—himself a Christian, whose position is comparable to that of a pagan assistant headman. Thence a civil case goes to the 627 village headman, but where an offence against the Christian code 795 is involved (as in theft, or adultery, or wife-beating) the case also comes before the court of the congregation, consisting of the minister, elders, and deacons. Disputes between members of Christian villages established on mission land come before the 'elder' or 'peacemaker' of the village, appointed by the Church, and if they are not settled by him they usually go directly to the chief. They also come before the court of the congregation if they involve an offence against Church law (cf. Document, pp. 262–3).

627 Disputes between pagan women are settled in the same way as disputes between men. There is neither the leadership and authority of a senior woman of the homestead as among the Nguni and Bemba,[1] nor that of a senior age-set or women's council as among the Meru[2]. The first woman to be settled as a wife in a young men's village is, as we have seen, entitled to the deference of the wives who follow her, but she has no authority over them. In the same way, though a man's senior wife takes precedence in family rituals, and the wife of a headman may lead in a village ritual, or the wife of a chief in one made on behalf of the country, such precedence in ritual does not carry authority over other women. Certain women versed in the rituals performed at puberty, marriage, birth, and death, and knowing the proper medicines to use, are called in on these occasions, but such

[1] Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, pp. 18, 35–41; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 38–9; A. I. Richards, *Bemba Marriage and Present Economic Conditions*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 4, pp. 67–9.

[2] E. M. Holding, 'Women's Institutions and the African Church', *International Review of Missions*, July 1942, pp. 290–300.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

abanyago have no more general authority than the doctors who divine or treat the sick. Their parallels among men are the priests (also called *abanyago*) who perform the rain ritual and the sacrifices to dead chiefs. 627

The one position which endows a woman with legal authority is that of father's sister. A senior sister has a joint responsibility, along with the headman of the village, for the distribution of her dead brother's property, and her brother's children may appeal to her to arbitrate if they have a dispute with their father while he is yet alive: this is particularly important in the families of chiefs, since a chief's son cannot bring his father before commoners for arbitration. The authority of a father's sister is, however, exercised only within the lineage and does not extend even to wives of lineage members. Co-wives may take a dispute for arbitration to their husband, but if, as often happens, he is thought to be prejudiced, they go to a male neighbour, or to the headman of the village, in the same way as when the dispute is with an unrelated person (*cf.* p. 140). 627 768 613 604

Only in the group of unmarried girls in a village does there appear to be the germ of control by seniors of the same sex. We traced one case in which a quarrel between two girls nearing the age of puberty was settled by the slightly older girls of the same village, who punished one who had beaten her fellow without justification, and then lied to them when they inquired into the case, by scratching her with their nails. As they reach puberty the girls, who have grown up together in one village and formed a closely knit group, become scattered among the different age-villages of their husbands and there leadership among women is not developed (*vide infra*, pp. 171–2). This does not mean, however, that women are excluded from arbitration; they can, and frequently do, bring cases on their own account, not necessarily acting through husband or father. Unlike the pagans, Christian women who have quarrelled do sometimes ask a leading woman of their congregation to arbitrate. At Rungwe the women leaders were the sister of the chief and the wife of a teacher, both personalities; and it was to them that their fellows went to relate their troubles and ask for an opinion. We traced two such cases. Very often, however, Christian women go to a man, the Christian leader of the village, as their husbands do. 627 795 627

The Administration has not attempted to suppress arbitration 627

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

•627 among the Nyakyusa, though the villagers say they have been told to 'bring all cases to Court and write them in the book', and a District Officer, in fining a man 5s. for accepting a fee of 2s. for adjudicating in a case concerning marriage-cattle, commented: 'I am afraid that arbitration is a common offence.' He went on to say, however, that 'preclusion of headman and elders from hearing cases is repugnant to the native sense of justice', and pointed out that he fined the accused only because he had accepted a fee. Nevertheless the Nyakyusa maintain that individuals submit less readily than formerly to the judgement of village headmen and are anxious to bring cases to the Native Court 'that they may be paid quickly'. European officers are constantly pressing that fines or payments ordered should be handed over quickly, whereas in cases of arbitration payment is often long deferred, even though its justice has been accepted by both parties. Again and again the report of a case before a village headman ended with 'So and so was ordered to pay such and such, but he has not yet done so'. It was suggested that disputants are less ready to reach an amicable settlement, and more prone to press for their pound of flesh than formerly (*vide infra*, p. 147).

The cases settled by friends and village headmen are mainly disputes over the ownership, destruction, or sale of property; often such minor property as a bunch of bananas, a hen, a few cents, or a pot of beer. For example, a certain woman, A, took a hen belonging to her co-wife, B, while the latter was away, and cooked it for their husband. On her return B asked her husband about her hen, but he denied any knowledge of what had happened to it. B's friends, however, told her that A had cooked the hen for their husband while B was away, and B actually asked her husband where the hen he had eaten had come from. He replied that he did not know—possibly it came from A's father. So B brought her co-wife to the headman of the village, who ruled that A and the husband must each pay B a hen. The husband's fault lay in his not asking whence the hen he ate came.

Another woman was carrying a pot of beer to a smith to pay for an axe which her husband had bought. Three young men stopped her on the way and begged her to sell it to them instead, promising the regular price of 1s.; but though they drank the beer they delayed payment, and after some time she sued for it before the headman of their village. The young men admitted their debt,

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

but when the case was recorded 45 c. was still outstanding, one man having paid 30 c., another 25 c., and the third nothing. 627

Another dispute brought for arbitration to a male neighbour was between two women who had together brewed beer for sale. The beer went sour and they quarrelled over the division of the 1s. 10 c. they got for it; they had expended 1s. on millet with which to brew so there was only 10 c. to divide.

Cases involving property of greater value are brought in exactly the same way. For example, one man, A, accused another B, of stealing the cow-bell off one of his cows, when A's herd was grazing near B's homestead. The case was first brought before B's immediate neighbours who thought him guilty, and ordered him to produce the bell. He refused and the case went to the village headman, who also found B guilty and ordered him to pay 10s. fine. B accepted this judgement but had not yet paid the fine when the case was reported.

Very often a claim on a kinsman or an affine to hand over cattle due is also pressed before a friend or village headman, as when a young man, Y, brought his father before one of his father's most respected friends, Kasitile the rain-maker, demanding that his father somehow 'find' a cow which he owed him. The case was as follows: A, the father, had two sons, X and Y. When X's full sister married, one cow from the marriage-cattle was given to Y. When Y's full sister married one cow was duly given in return to X. Then X's sister left her husband and the marriage-cattle had to be returned, plus two for the adultery fine. Y not only lost the cow he had received for her, but A took from him also a cow for the fine. This cow Y had got as an adultery fine for his own wife. Y was therefore demanding one cow back from A, and wanted him to 'look for it among his sons-in-law'. People commenting on this case said that it was perfectly proper for Y to bring his father before a friend, but he should not take the case to Court as he was threatening to do.

Besides the many disputes over property a smaller number of accusations of assault or insulting behaviour are settled by arbitration. In one case a woman complained that her husband had beaten her unjustly. His defence was that he suspected her of adultery. A certain man who had bought a bunch of bananas from his wife had asked for a calabash ladle (for drinking), and when he asked for it they were close together. The husband saw

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

•627 them. Next morning the wife took the bananas to the purchaser. In the evening the husband went off to visit his friends so his wife 'left the hearth empty'. He came home late, and finding no food prepared, accused her of adultery and beat her. The village headman argued that had the husband really suspected adultery he would have 'caught' his wife when she was talking with the man who bought the bananas, and the husband was ordered to pay 2s. to his wife. Accepting the decision he offered her a cloth worth 2s. but she asked for cash which he had not yet found when the case was recorded.

In another case a herd-boy, X, supported by his father, accused a fellow herd-boy, Y, of insulting and beating him. Y had called X a witch and accused him of 'throttling the cattle'. X and his father took the case first to Y's father who ordered Y to pay X 1s. When Y refused, X and his father proceeded to the village headman who ordered Y to pay 2s. which he eventually did.

Accusations of practising witchcraft are also aired in village-section and village, and may be settled there without ever going to the chief. This procedure we have already described.

As is evident from the examples cited, friends and village headmen arbitrate not only in cases between neighbours, but also in those between members of different villages; the plaintiff always applying to the friends or headman of the defendant for an opinion on the case. Very often the disputants are relatives who may choose to apply to another relative to arbitrate, but who have no obligation to do so;[1] fathers and sons, husband and wife bring their disputes as readily before friends and village headmen as before relatives. There is, however, a strong feeling that they should settle by arbitration and not proceed to the chief's court. Indeed it is felt that all cases should be settled amicably by agreement before arbitrators, and not by order of the court; the obligation to reach agreement is all the greater when the disputants are relatives.

We quote a final case in some detail as it exemplifies the emphasis laid on agreement as well as illustrating procedure. The case, which we followed throughout ourselves, was one between two comparative new-comers to the village, a young man almost a boy, called Kenani, and L. a man of forty or more.

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Law', *Africa*, Vol. IX, 1936.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

627

Kenani first came to the chief Porokoto, saying: 'Someone has burnt my maize-field.' The chief replied: 'Is the village headman not there? He takes cases; only if there are hard words does it come up to me.' So Kenani went to the village headman, Mwafula. He arrived about 4.15 p.m. and the man he accused came about 5 p.m. Mwafula sent for four or five neighbours to help him try the case. The two disputants stood up with one of the neighbours between them, as if they were at court. Kenani stated his case, L (the accused) intervening with comments.

K.: 'On Thursday last week [eight days previously] L. was burning the grass and my maize was burnt too.'

L.: 'I was burning to get fresh pasture for my cattle.'

K.: 'But I am not a stranger in this country. The cattle ought not to graze in the village; it's within the village there; sheep ought to graze there, not cattle. That part has never been fired before. I was ill when my food was burnt, but I sent my sister to say to L.: "See, you burn the grass and my maize is destroyed." But he said: "I burnt for fresh pasture only, did I deliberately kindle the rubbish in your field in order to spread the fire to it?"'

Here the arbitrators[1] expressed surprise to each other that L. should insult a man after burning his maize. They asked L.:'Did the woman, his sister, come to ask you about the matter?'

L.: 'Yes, she came, but she said [speaking in her brother's name] "You have burnt my maize and you burnt it deliberately, give me two plots (*imbaka*) of maize." To which I replied: "What! Two plots indeed! Did I kindle the rubbish on your field? I didn't know there was any maize where the fire scorched the field."'

K.: 'It is this which especially hurts me, this talk about "not kindling the rubbish in my field". If he had come to me and said, "Friend, I was burning a patch for fresh pasture, but the fire spread into your field, I am sorry, I am indeed very much to blame." Had he said this, I should not have come here. You see that L. is my senior. I should have said: "Since you, my senior, have admitted that you are at fault I am satisfied. That's all right." But when he began talking about not kindling the rubbish

[1] The same word *abalongi* is used for members of a court of arbitration, and the chief's court, and Native Court. We translate it as 'arbitrator' in the first context and 'judge' in the other two.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

627 in my field, I thought to myself, "He did indeed burn arrogantly and deliberately." And so I have come for a judgement.'

The arbitrators, speaking partly to one another and partly to L.: 'When somebody's crop has been burnt, who would you expect to take offence? Surely the owner of the food, not he who burnt it? It is for the latter to abase himself and say, "I am at fault". The owner of the food is naturally sore at the thought of his burnt food.'

To L. direct: 'Had you spoken to your fellow saying: "It is true, friend, I was burning for fresh pasture and the fire spread," we should have pressed Kenani to forgive you, saying: "Friend, your senior has admitted his fault, forgive him." What have you to say to this?'

L.: 'Do you mean I deny that I did the burning? I was certainly burning, for fresh pasture. If you say, "Pay!" I will pay for the land I burned, but for the maize I will not pay. How should I know its whereabouts?'

Arbitrators: 'For the land you don't pay, it is not his, and it's not yours. There is an owner from whom we always seek land. And you are both new-comers. But you have burned somebody's crop.'

L.: 'I was burning to get fresh pasture for cattle. I did not burn crops.'

K.: 'But cattle should not graze there. It's part of the village.'

Mwafula: 'It is certainly part of the village—I went to see.'

Here the discussion was interrupted by one of the arbitrators, Jacobu, who protested that this was a breach of procedure. Mwafula should not have gone beforehand with only one of the disputants to see about a disputed point, but two arbitrators should have risen now and gone with the disputants to see. He shouted a lot; and so did Mwafula, who explained that when the chief had told Kenani to lay the case before him, he had ordered him to go with Kenani to see the burnt maize. At last they calmed down and Jacobu was rebuked by one of the other judges who said in a quiet voice: 'Perhaps you have been drinking beer —or haven't you?' After this they continued the case, but as it was getting late and both Kenani and L. showed signs of rising temper and began shouting again, the case was deferred to the next morning.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

627

During the proceedings Mwafula was referred to by all parties as 'father', and he addressed the parties singly by name and collectively as 'countrymen' (*mwe ba kisu*). Sometimes the procedure was formal, sometimes not. Sometimes one of the arbitrators addressed the man standing between the disputants who repeated the question to them, and they conveyed the answer in the same way; but sometimes this procedure was omitted and conversation, with even two or three speaking and shouting at once, took its place. There were many repetitions which we have omitted, and the whole case was recapitulated at one point for the benefit of a late-comer.

When the case was resumed the next morning Nsajigwa, a next-door neighbour of Mwafula who had not attended the first sitting, was present, and the case was explained to him. L. was less aggressive than previously and agreed to pay 'for burning for fresh pasturage', in the same words as before, but he did not press the point that he thereby implicitly renounced responsibility for the maize, though he clearly did so. The arbitrators attempted again to get him to make some apology to K. and so have the whole thing settled amicably, but this he would not do.

K.: 'Had L. said, "I am sorry it spread from the pasturage", I should not have come here; but since he only admits to burning rubbish in my field, and offers to pay for the land, refusing to pay anything for the crop, I say he does not care at all that he has destroyed someone's food. He thinks, "The maize was small and the owner is small; the maize was not full grown and the owner is not full grown either." But just as even a hen has a house to enter (for refuge) so I have a shelter, the Law (*ubulongi*), which is a refuge for us all.' Kenani then went on to relate how L. had beaten him with a stick and had had to pay a fine of 7s. for it; and that this was why L. still hated him. But Jacobu told him not to bring up a case already settled.

All the arbitrators were agreed that L. was in the wrong. Some wished to 'cut the case' and name a fine, but Nsajigwa, before they had well begun to discuss the amount, said: 'Since it has come to fining and they do not agree, let the case go up to the chief, we cannot finish it.' He spoke with authority, and the sitting broke up.

Lingering behind we asked Mwafula why they did not give a

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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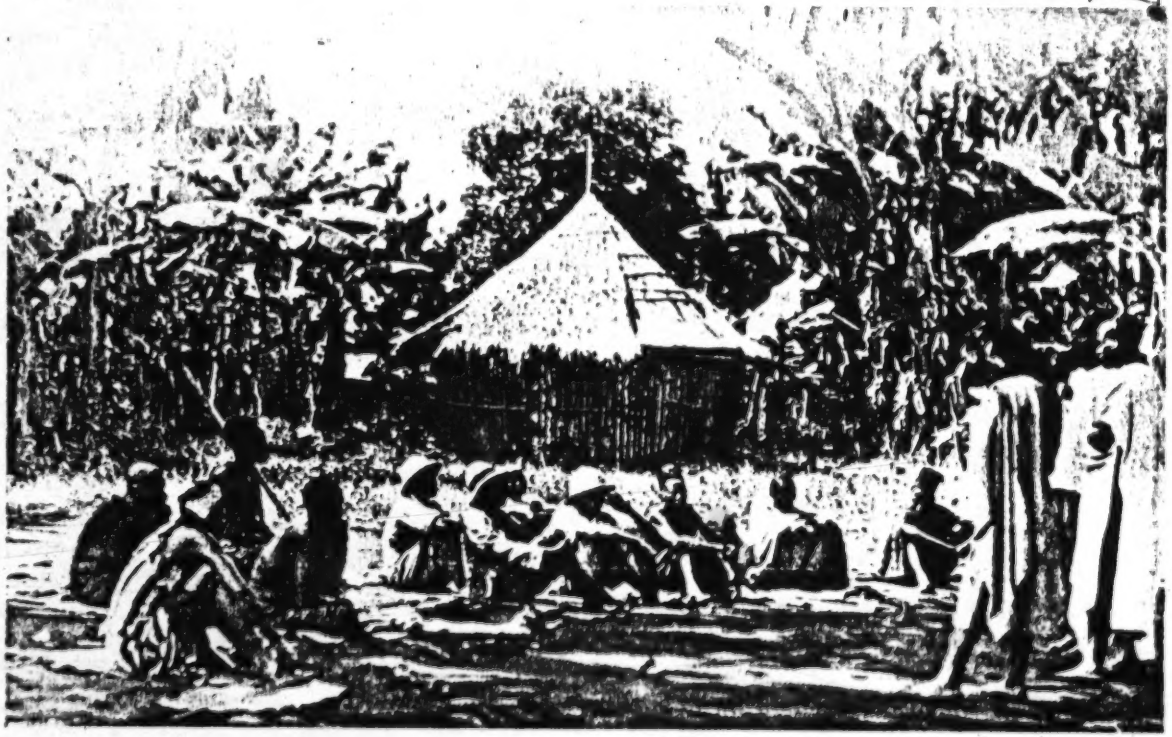
342



XV. SETTLEMENT OF A DISPUTE

The anthropologist (Godfrey Wilson) is sitting with the court. On his right is the chief Mwaihojo, on his left Kasitile the rain-maker. Behind him (in a topee) is Mwaisumo the clerk, and Mwakionde, famous as a doctor and maker of lions. In the background is a half-built hut

[facing p. 146]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

•627 judgement. He replied: 'Because in the villages we only arbitrate, we do not compel people to submit to a decision. If hard words are spoken and the disputants do not agree, then we take the case to the chief. But (turning to another man) we were wrong not to decide on a fine, we ought to have named so many shillings. Then if L. had refused to pay it we should have taken the case to the chief.'

When we arrived at the chief's place he at once sent off two men with the two disputants to count the burnt maize stalks. They found eighty-seven stalks burnt irretrievably and sixty-eight scorched but recovering.

Chief to K., through Mwafula, who acted as spokesman: 'What have you to say? The maize is really burnt.'

K.: 'I say he must pay. Had he expressed regret I should not have come here, but even at Mwafula's he did not apologize, he said: "I will pay for the land, but the maize has not been burnt, I will not pay for that." Though the arbitrators, Mwafula and the others, pressed him to admit his liability, saying: "The fire spread from the pasture", he would not admit it. And even when we went there with witnesses to see the maize he called to some young men, "If the mother or sister of Kenani comes to fetch firewood here tell them I shall imprison them, I have bought this land. I have paid Kenani." (Laughter in court.) And he said to some women who were gathering firewood near by: "Why do you gather firewood on my land?" (More laughter.) It seems that he does not regret at all that my food is burnt. Had we two been alone when he was questioned he would have speared me. He has long sought to injure me and now he is destroying my food. Therefore I have to run to the Law to escape from him.'

Timothy Mwanjesi, who had not heard the case, now arrived and started speaking, saying: 'It always happens when a man has fired the pasture and burnt another's field that he goes to his fellow and says: "Friend, it has spread . . ." and nothing more is done about it.' The judges explained the case to him; after which K. continued: 'If you say he should not pay, then I wish to have a letter to show the European Administration, saying, "L. has burnt the food of K., and has not paid", so that if I should burn your food, Timothy, and you say "Pay", I shall refuse, supported by this letter which proves there is no payment for such things.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

627 One of the other judges: 'How does he seek to injure you?'

K.: 'No, that is another matter, we are only concerned with the case of the maize.'

Porokoto: 'Answer the judge's questions. Tell him.'

K. explained that his sister had run off with a man and that the lovers had hidden in L.'s home. The court messengers searched for them for many days but could not find them, and K. joined in the search, for his sister's husband was pressing him to return the cattle given for her. At last one day K. and a friend called at L.'s home, not searching, just calling, and were startled to find his sister's seducer. The latter seized a stick and fought K, who fled to the chief. The chief sent messengers to fetch the wanted man and L., in whose house he was hiding. They were some time in coming, so the chief sent K. to the top of the hill to bid them hurry up. He did so, and L., coming up first, said: 'Were you calling me?' 'No', said K., 'I was calling the messenger', but L., being an older man, felt insulted, thinking he had been shouted for by a boy, and took a stick and beat K. savagely. He was summoned for this and fined 7s.

Porokoto: 'Oh, it is this you mean when you say he sought to injure you, and now he seeks to destroy your food?'

K.: 'Yes.'

Porokoto: 'You, L., have done wrong in one thing; you insulted K. by saying "Did I kindle the the rubbish on your field?" As it is a fining matter, come to the Court on Monday."

Men at the chief's place, commenting on this case, said it should have been settled amicably. 'The country has decayed, we have turned ourselves into bees instead of men. European times (*ikisungu*) have come, constantly we pay one another. People fear to come and build with us, saying: "See, there they pay, I have cattle, and children" (implying, I am a prosperous man and do not wish to grow poor by going there).'

We asked Porokoto how the case would have been settled in the old days. He replied: 'In the old days L. would have given K. seed to plant again; but a new way has come now, we have discarded our own way; now we pay shillings. When millet was burned in the past they paid a bull, because a basket of millet was sold for a bull.' Turning to an old man, Mwambege, who was there, he asked: 'Was it not so, Mwambege?' 'Yes—perhaps an iron hoe was paid. When I came here from Lugulu country I burnt

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

627 some pasturage and the fire destroyed two plots of millet. I gave the owner an iron hoe.'

627 692 The ideal is settlement by agreement; in practice (at the present time) a large number of cases go (like this one) to the chief, and then on to the Native Court. Thence there are many appeals to the Native Appeal Court, the District and Provincial Officers' Courts, and even to the High Court of Tanganyika. As we have indicated, it is likely that fewer cases are settled by arbitration than formerly; but before the coming of the Europeans, chiefs' courts with power to enforce judgement existed, and were used. There was no 'golden age' in which all cases were settled by agreement.

627 208 The decision of arbitrators is essentially the judgement of public opinion in the village, or the respective villages, of the disputants. Cases are heard in public, neighbours drop in and join in the discussion, and a decision cannot be given contrary to their expressed opinions.

b. Witness to contracts

675 Not only do fellow villagers play a part in settling disputes, they also act as official witnesses in various types of legal transaction. The village headman is an essential witness at an autopsy (*vide supra*, p. 116) and at the distribution of the estate of one of his men. Whenever marriage-cattle are handed over, two or more non-relatives are called upon to serve as witnesses,[1] and those chosen are commonly village neighbours of either the groom or his father-in-law. We heard one man censured by his friends because he had neglected to take a village neighbour with him as witness when he went to summon his son-in-law to his daughter's puberty ritual. He had visited his son-in-law's 'best man' (*umfusya*) as was correct, but had omitted to take a friend with him to witness the conversation that took place. Even in matters that are kept very secret at least one official witness may be summoned. For example, an old man occasionally gives his heir permission to sleep with his wives while he is yet alive, and he does so in the presence of a neighbour or senior relative, for though the affair is very private it is absolutely necessary to have a witness to prove that the right was granted.

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Law', *Africa*, Vol. X (1937).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754
127

8. MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES[1]

Information from numerous informants

(a) *Witchcraft*

Total number of cases 92

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accuser and accused
1	Village cows	Married woman (Mother of Mwaisumo)	Neighbour, a very poor man and a stranger to the village	Same village	She bewitched village cows	Cows went dry	*Mwafi* ordeal (drunk by her son Mwaisumo who vomited)	Accuser had nothing to pay as fine, so beaten	Village neighbours
2	Boy	'Village father' (Mwantibe)	Parents of victim	Parents of victim and accused in same village. Boy in attached boys' village	'Eaten' son of village neighbour	Accused sent boy on a message. Boy refused to go. Accused threatened boy who died shortly afterwards	?	?	Village neighbours
3	Man	Village neighbour (Moses)	Victim	Same village	Bewitching his neighbour	Dream of victim	None. Dream related to neighbours who asked accused to move	Accused moved to another village of same chiefdom	Village neighbours
4	Man	Village neighbour, a doctor	Village neighbours	Same village	Caused neighbour to fall ill	Doctor threatened victim after a quarrel, saying: 'You may sleep'. Victim fell ill. Recovered when treated by doctor who had threatened him	None	Doctor forced by neighbours to treat man he threatened, then driven out of village	Village neighbours
5	Men and cattle	Village neighbour, Kagesya	Village neighbours	Same village	'Ate' people. Bewitched cattle	Death of men. Reduction of milk supply.	Autopsy on victims	Accused driven out and his food seized. He returned to his home village	Village neighbours

[1] Misfortunes attributed to the ancestors are not included in this table.

P. 198

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754
627
578

(c) *Witchcraft—contd.*

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accuser and accused
6	Young men	Village neighbour, Kagweya's son	Victims	Same village	Prevented road on which they were working being completed quickly			Accused driven out	Village neighbours
7	Village cows	Man of the village	Village neighbours (public accusation made)	Same village	Bewitched cows	Decline in milk supply	*Mwafi* ordeal. Accused did not vomit	Accused driven out	Village neighbours
8	Child	Man, neighbour of victim's father	Father of deceased	Same village	Killed child by witchcraft	Death of child. Accused did not attempt to persuade father of victim to remain, when he was packing to go after victim's death.	Autopsy on victim. *Mwafi* ordeal. Accused did not vomit	Accused driven out. Chief seized his cattle	Village neighbours
9	Child of visitor	Host	Village neighbours	Same homestead	Made child ill	Child very ill with ear-ache. Host angry because visitor feasted neighbours. Child worse after such a feast. Host did not express good wishes for recovery (cf. p. 110 ff).	Discussion before assistant headman and village headman	Accused driven out of village	Village neighbours
10	Child	Man, neighbour of victim's father	Victim's father	Same village	Killed child by witchcraft	Father of victim wanted an unreasonable amount of land. Given one field when he joined the village. Wanted another which was refused him by the villagers	None known		Village neighbours

[p. 199]

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngondo FN17
Nyakyusa

754
627
578

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—*contd.*

(*c*) *Witchcraft—contd.*

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accuser and accused
11	Man	2 neighbours (men)	Victim (before his death)	Same village	Sprayed victim internally (by witchcraft)	Illness and death of victim. He dreamed before his death that 2 neighbours (whom he recognized) had sprayed him	Accusers. Internal 'wounds' found	No case made. Agreed by village that 'friends' he saw were ex-ancestors, but their names were not made public	Village neighbours
12	(a) Cows (b) Child	Neighbour of child's father	Victim's father	Same village	Bewitched cows killed child	Death of child. Accused boasted of his witchcraft	?	Accused driven out	Village neighbours
13	Two men	Neighbour (a man, Kimbila)	Victims	Same village	'He had destroyed their potency' by witchcraft	?	?	?	Village neighbours
14	?	Christian elder	Pagan fellow villagers	Same village	?	'Proud'. 'Does not look at people when he greets them.' Built a very big house in a pagan village	?	?	Village neighbours
15	X Lakeshore on the Lupa gold-fields	Fellow lakeshore (a Christian) William	Victim	Same camp	Had injured X's eyes by witchcraft	X had eye trouble. William was seen in a dream by a third lakeshore. William had recently found gold	Meeting of all the workers	William driven away from the camp	Fellow employees

[p.200]

IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

(c) Witchcraft—contd.

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accused	Category of witness	Special relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Special relationship of accused and accused
16	Young man, labourer in Lugu gold fields	Fellow labourers		Same camp	"They charmed me his body to kind of witchcraft"	Alleged that he was thrice saved by causes of which death. Illness while at work and finally death after returning home	Dismissed (Lodge)		Fellow employees
17	Clerk A	Fellows in work camp, especially Clerk B	His friends	Same camp	A made (B by multiplication of which death)	A had explained B to interpreter and B was jealous. A was greedy when eating with his fellows. Illness began when he choked over a piece of food. He was eating with his fellows	None		Fellow employees
18	Labourer on Lugu gold fields	Fellow labourers	European employee (Mr)	Same camp	Fellow workers had 'water' him	Sudden death of labourer. He was lucky in finding gold and his employer's favourite	None	Fellows agreed that one of them had 'water' victim. BIS (Lodge)	Fellow employees
19	Labourer on Lugu gold fields	Fellow labourers	-	Same camp	Fellow workers 'worshiddy' him	Died morning after he had 'worshiddy' him. In point money from his employer (cf. no. 20) (B)	-	-	Fellow employees

[p. 201]

759
627
787
57P

754
G27
T87
S18

(d) Witchcraft—contd.

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Special relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accuser and accused
20	Headboy of European employer on Lupa gold-fields	Fellow employee. Individual not named but rank listed as	Victim	Same camp	'Fright' had bewitched him	Acute illness of victim after dropping with resentment of his European employer. This woman was given in charge of the cook when the European visited other Europeans, but she and the headboy were lovers. Victim and cook hated one another on account of this woman. Victim hated by his fellow employee because he was headboy and looked after everything during his employer's absence	A doctor gave victim medicine which would enable him to see the witches in dreams. He saw two men who hated him, and employer's wife carrying a knife	Slow recovery of victim. He told the dream to his lover	Fellow employee
21	Nyakyusa employer of 11 men on Lupa gold-fields	Employees	Victim	Same camp	Employees had 'spoiled him' (with witchcraft)	Acute stomach pain. Vomiting. 'He had been angry with his cows.'	Divination	Victim recovered	Employer/employee
22	Village headman working as a labourer on Lupa gold-fields	Fellow labourer	?	Same camp	Fellow labourer killed him by witchcraft because he darkened their eyes so that they should not find gold. He himself was a witch.	Sudden death of headman a week after he began work. Gold was scarce and he alone had found some, running 20s. gains money	?		Fellow employee

[p. 202]

1:Wilson E-S(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(a) Witchcraft—contd.

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Special relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accuser and accused
23	Husband	2 wives (not favourite)	Victim	Same homestead	Wives accompanied the witches to 'cut' him. Opened the door for them. One herself was a witch	Illness of husband. Wives jealous of chief wife who was the favourite	Divination	Treatment with medicine. Divorce impossible because one suspect a sister of the favourite wife	Spouses
24	Husband	Wife	?	Same homestead	Caused illness to husband	'He hated her and he fell ill.'	Divination		Spouses
25	Husband	Wife	?	Same homestead	'Killed' husband	Death of husband	?		Spouses
26	Co-wives	Wife (Enjenge)	Husband (first)	Same homestead	'Bewitched hates of co-wives'	Husband did not sleep well with other wives	?	Discussed for witchcraft	Spouses
27	?	Wife (Enjenge)	Husband (second)	Same homestead	?	?	?	Discussed for witchcraft	Spouses
28	Husband's cows	Wife	Husband	Same homestead	Bewitched husband's cows	Cows gave little milk when wife at home, much when wife away	Mzungu medical. Wife consulted	Husband paid a cow and a bull to kin in form	Spouses
29	Adulterer	Husband of woman seduced				Adulterer began to assist adulter had run off with the woman			Husband/wife's lover

[P.203]

754
627
787
57P

754
• 127
781
578

(c) Witchcraft—contd.

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Special relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accuser and accused
30	Adulterer	Husband of woman seduced (no. 29)				Adulterer was very ill with a poisoned hand. Husband of his lover had been previously accused	Divination		Husband/wife's lover
31	Senior half-brother (different mother)	Junior half-brother	Victim	?			*Ifwafi* ordeal. Junior brother vomited	Junior brother judged innocent	Half-brothers
32	Father (junior and senior)	Middle son (Mwalyale)	Brothers (half)	?	Killed father	Death of father	*Ifwafi* ordeal	Accused driven out of chiefdom. He became rich and brothers later made friends with him. They said '*Mwafi* had been mistaken'	Brothers (half)
33	Child	Father of child an assistant headman	Village headman	Same homestead	Made child ill	Child ill. Father did not report illness to village headman	?	Accused driven out of village	Village headman/assistant headman
34	Chief's child	Village headman (Mwandia)	People of the chiefdom	Same chiefdom	Caused child to have sore eyes	Mwandia had gone to the chief alone and said 'witches are eating the child'. He would have gone with other village headmen, had he been innocent	*Ifwafi* ordeal	Chief took Mwandia's 4 cows. He was driven out for one year	People of chiefdom and village headmen

[p. 204]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

(a) *Witchcraft—contd.*

No.	Category of supposed victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accuser and accused
35	Chief	'People of the north'	?	Same chiefdom?		Chief sick	?	Said that chief and his fellows fought and defeated the attackers in dreams	Chief/People?
36	Chief?	Rich man owning 30 head of cattle (Mwatusa)	Chief	Same chiefdom		Chief 'did not sleep'	*Mwafi* ordeal. Mwatusa did not vomit	Chief seized all Mwatusa's cattle. Neighbours seized his crops. He moved with his wives to another country	Chief/rich commoner
37	Anthropologist	A man who had been refused 1s. when he asked for it as a present	Servants and friends of victim. (Nyakyusa)	Same neighbourhood	Caused attack of malaria (by witchcraft)	Attack of malaria day following refusal of present. Accused did not come to inquire for victim as others did.	None	None	European/African
38	Anthropologist	'The witches' individual not specified	Servants and friends of victim. (Nyakyusa)	Same village	Prevented normal recovery from malaria	Prolonged attacks of malaria, not cured by ordinary treatment. 'It was not just malaria—one you drank much medicine for malaria, but still did not recover.'	None	Formal welcome by wife of chief who lived in village on anthropologist's return, and *apology* for the illness	European/African

[P. 205]

754
637
578

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754
784
627
578

(e) *Vengeance Magic* (Ulupembe—*the Horn*) MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of Victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accuser	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case
1	2 brothers M^1 and M^2	A doctor (Makikoje)			Accused used the horn. Did not tell M^1 that he was doing so	Accused said M^1 had stolen his millet. M^1 and M^2 both died	Autopsy revealed death due to 'the horn'	Chief drove accused out of country for not bringing case to court but revenging himself. The doctor had used the horn in his own case
2	1. Seducer of woman 2. Child of seducer's elder brother	Husband of woman seduced (Mwakikulu)	Relatives of deceased seducer		Accused used the horn. Relatives of victims spoke of deaths as due to sorcery (*Ubutege*)	Victim 1 had eloped with accused's wife. Accused boasted that he had revenged himself. Both victims 1 and 2 died suddenly		Woman returned to husband lest others of the family should die
3	Child of A and children of other wives of A's husband	Co-wife B.	A, mother of victim	Same homestead	B used the horn	A had stolen B's bananas and not admitted it when case was taken first to husband and then to chief. B was dissatisfied. The death of child A and children of other wives followed		A paid B for theft. A and other wives went to horn-doctor and drank medicine. They recovered
4	Man C, and woman X with whom he had eloped	Man A who inherited the woman X	Man B, brother of deceased C	Different chiefdoms.	A used the horn	C ran off with X, widow of A's elder brother whom A had inherited. C and X both died. A boasted: 'I killed them with the horn'		B speared A and fled to a distant chiefdom (before Europeans came)

(e) (*Vengeance Magic* (Ulupembe—*the Horn*)—*contd.*

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accuser	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case
5	9 of A's children	B, son-in-law of A	A, father of victims		B used the horn	A's daughter left B. A returned only 2 head of cattle to B. Owed him 10 to 13 cattle. Told him to collect balance from his daughter's second husband. B summoned A to come before horn doctor. A refused. Told B to sue in court. Within 3 years children of A died		A speared B. He was convicted in District Officer's court of manslaughter
6	Gwatabile, his wife, and his full sister's husband	Man (Itupa)	Family of deceased debtor, Gwatabile		Itupa kindled the horn	Gwatabile had a cow belonging to Itupa. The relationship not known. The three victims died		Family paid a cow to Itupa
7	C	Doctor	C ?			A ran off with B's wife. B followed her and found her in C's house. B claimed damages from A, but A objected saying: 'No, she was found with C'. The court gave judgement against A, and he paid damages to B, then subsequently the court gave judgement for A in his case against C, ordering him to return to A the cows A had paid to B. C delayed, so A went to a doctor and got him to make medicine against C. C handed over the cows to A immediately and paid doctor 6s. to counteract his medicine.	Case brought before D.O.	Doctor discharged. Doubt whether or not doctor should be expelled from the chiefdom in which he lived. Opinion of the Nyakyusa divided on this point

[P. 213]

757
784
627
578

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

24. PROCEDURE IN A WITCHCRAFT CASE (TRADITIONAL)

Mwakionde (*doctor, brother of a chief*).

'The custom was that if a man was accused of witchcraft he always went to the chief and said: "They have accused me of witchcraft. Please give me witnesses." The chief would send off the man with his accuser and with witnesses to the doctor. If the accuser was proved wrong he had to pay four or five cows, or if he had no cows, a girl, and then after she had borne a child the accused would come to pay cows and be a relative in the end. 754 627

'If the ordeal (*umwafi*) convicted both, neither vomiting, the chief would be angry and say: "You are both witches." Then each would pay four cows to the chief who would kill two from each of the four for his men to eat, and both men would move from the country. If both vomited the chief would say: "You are fools; be friendly," and the village headmen would say: "Yes, but the accuser must pay cows to the accused for accusing him."

'Men never went to drink the ordeal without first going to the chief.

'Sometimes the one convicted as a witch was speared and all his cows taken by the chief—none went to the accuser. If the accuser was caught and the accused vomited, four cows went to the accused, and the others to the chief because the accuser was himself a witch. Some who were great witches died of the ordeal.' [683]

Mwaisumo (*clerk*).

'There was a nasty little chap (*kaliko akandu kamo*[1]) who came from the hills to live at Bijilila, and who built next door to father. This chap was very poor; mother and the other villagers always gave him food. I remember the chap very well—he was very dirty in his person.

'Well, once there was complaint (*ukwijaja*) because the milk supply in the village was small. So this chap fortified himself within and said: "Do not go on complaining, sons of Kihabia, I have seen the witch who is throttling the cows. It is Kimpunga! Catch her, and let her drink *umwafi*." Mother was astounded at being taken; she was dumbfounded at being "caught" for witchcraft, for in her lineage no one had ever been caught. So then she also said: "Indeed, my husbands,

[1] Mwaisumo speaks of him as a thing rather than a person.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754
627

take me to the ordeal, and let me drink (*umwafi*)." Mwankaje, my older brother next to me in age, went to drink the *umwafi*. He vomited immediately after he had drunk it. So that nasty little chap, Mwasulama, was defeated. He escaped paying a fine for he was so poor—they beat him a little with sticks. Had he been rich he would have paid mother a cow, for it was customary for one who had been accused of witchcraft but had vomited the *umwafi* to claim compensation for slander in court, and to be paid a cow.

'Long ago when I was a child, when the AbaMpulo were young men, the homestead they built was very rich. Ngemela and Mwasalutaba, and Mwakinene, and Kyula, and Swita, and all the others built there. Swita was a witchfinder. He had power (*amanga*) to catch witches when they throttled the cows. He always went out to the pasture when he knew that there were people who wished to throttle the cows. On one occasion the cows in the village did not give milk. Everyone was called together to complain (*ukwijaja*), and Swita (Mwaitulo), the man who caught the throttlers of cows, was among them. When they were speaking he, Swita, fortified himself with medicines within and said: "Why are you complaining all of you? I, I have seen him who throttles the cows. Let us all come together again here to-morrow, and no one must stay behind." So they all met together there. . . . Formerly it was the custom to call out names. They met together and one man who shouted the names stood a little distance off and the witchfinder who responded stood a little distance off, separately. The first man shouted the names and the witchfinder responded, saying: "Yes!" All the names were called out, but when they came to the name of Mwasalutaba the witchfinder was silent; the name was repeated and he was still silent; the third time the whole company groaned together. Mwasalutaba then said: "Friends, I am astonished, I am not a witch, I do not throttle the cows, so I ask for the ordeal." So the witchfinder said: "Yes indeed, drink *umwafi*, and if it does not convict you then I will pay a cow." So they went with him and told everything to a certain doctor who had built in the country of Mwambebule, in the hills. When they got to the doctor's Mwasalutaba drank the *umwafi*. They addressed it, saying: "We think that our fellow throttles cows, but if we are wrong tell us, you medicine." While they were yet speaking the sun went down, so they said: "The *umwafi* has caught our fellow." They returned home, and they drove him away. His cattle escaped capture though it was the custom when someone was convicted of witchcraft for the chief to take his cattle, and if he chose, to kill for those of that village who were innocent to eat meat. But Mwasalutaba escaped—they only drove him out, for the village was not really his own village,

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754
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he came from another side. And he has never moved back to the village, nor has he ever been accused again of witchcraft.

'Swita really knows how to catch those who throttle cows for witchcraft. Here is another tale about it: One of the fellows of the AbaMpulo had begotten a child, and the child died. When they had done the autopsy "the owner of the child" said: "They (the witches) have eaten him", and he prepared to move. Then Swita began to speak in secret saying that the so and so's had killed the child. And they of whom he spoke did not come to persuade their fellow, who was preparing to move, to remain. When the chief heard that a man was preparing to move, and his fellows the so and so's did not come to persuade him to stay he called together the whole village, and was very angry with them. When he found that they all agreed he went to Ngemela (the village headman?) and said: "I think that it is they of whom Swita spoke who have killed the child, their cattle will be taken." Ngemela objected very much to taking their cattle, and the chief went to Ngemela's junior saying the same thing, that it was they (of whom Swita spoke) who had killed the child and he, the chief, would take their cattle. But Ngemela's junior also objected and reported to his senior Ngemela, who agreed that he did not wish to take anyone's cattle. The chief agreed, saying: "All right, I shall not take their cattle." But they, in their foolishness, when they heard that the chief had said that it was they who had killed the child of their fellow, and that he would take their cattle, themselves started the matter saying: "We want the ordeal." Their request was agreed to; they were given *umwafi* to drink, and addressed. But they were killing themselves. When they drank the *umwafi* convicted them; they did not vomit. When this happened and chief said: "See! It is as I thought, it is indeed they who killed the child." And he took their cattle and killed some, and people ate the meat. One cow which he took on account of this case is still there, I know it myself, we call it "Lyakakata". Formerly when people were convicted of witchcraft their goods were taken, or they were driven from the village. This tale was told me by a man belonging to the country in which it happened.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

25. THE ORDEAL (*UMWAFI*)

Mwaisumo (clerk).

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'I was once given *umwafi*. It was long ago but I remember it very well. It was at the funeral of my mother's younger brother my *umwipana unnandi*; he died suddenly, and when he was dead some people of the family said that the disease was from my father's side (i.e. from my father's younger brother, *tata unnandi*, my own father was dead at this time); and others said, no, it was from the side of the deceased's new wife—this was his third wife, recently married—he had run away with her from her husband. Those concerned were the deceased's sisters (and their husbands), brothers, wives, and fellow villagers. They said: "Let us drink *umwafi*." So they took two children, I and another, a girl—she was a daughter of the dead man and represented his own house; if she did not vomit then the disease came from within the house (i.e. from one of the wives); I, in the same way, represented my father's house.

'The doctor took some banana leaves and prepared medicine, putting some into each leaf; after a little while they called us and told us to stand apart, a bit away from the house. First the doctor gave the *umwafi* to the girl from her leaf, and then to me from mine. The leaves are kept separate and there are several for each person. All the family drew closer and sat around us. The doctor addressed each of us in turn. I do not remember the words exactly, but it was something like this: "If it was you that has brought sickness, let us see. We are sure it was you that brought the disease." Then we both vomited, she a little before me. If one does not vomit it may be very serious; the poison stays in you and you may die. Then they said: "Well, we do not know where the disease came from." Then they gave us water to wash in and some meat to eat—food is specially put aside for those that drink *umwafi*. This was the end.

'Afterwards it was said that it was the man who was the woman's first husband who had poisoned my mother's brother. We were being tested for sorcery, not witchcraft, as the autopsy had shown that it was a case of sorcery. Having heard this, we did not spread the news; we kept quiet, waited, and watched. And then after a week the dead man's son, my cousin (*untani*), was dead; and that woman ran away. She was frightened. Then we knew it was her former husband who had killed both by sorcery.[1] The family sought the doctor to get

[1] In another text (quoted on p. 256) Mwaisumo explained that the injured husband had used 'the horn', i.e. vengeance magic. Being of the family which suffered Mwaisumo calls it 'sorcery'.

[p. 244]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the medicine for the prevention of the disease, and then it was finished. The wife was taken back by the first husband, so the disease could not kill us any more.

'When she went back to him he could not come to us again. (True, he had no reason to do so.) Nothing happened to him. It is not our custom to accuse such people to the chief; we do not exactly know if it is the man, and still we have taken his wife. We were all concerned in this because of my mother. It happened four years before my brother died; there were four years between my uncle's death and his. I was in Tukuyu during the influenza after the war—in 1918—and then I went to Selya the next year, 1919, and my uncle died.

'The procedure is similar in an accusation of witchcraft.'

Mwaikambo (clerk).

'*Ummafi* is always used when someone denies practising witchcraft or theft, or denies that he is a liar. When they[1] have "caught" their fellow in the village and say that it is he who is throttling their cows so that they do not get milk, and the accused man denies it, then they take him to drink *ummafi*. When they have come to the doctor's place they tell him their tale. Two men support the accused and two the accuser. They do not eat when they are going to drink *ummafi*. The doctor first says to the accused: "If you are really guilty of throttling the cows, don't trouble the *ummafi*, but confess." And he replies: "Had I been seen as a witch I would not have come here." And both his supporters say: "Our friend is falsely accused; he has never practised witchcraft."

'The doctor questions the accuser in the same way, saying: "Did you really see your fellow as a witch?" and he and his supporters reply that they saw him.

'So then the doctor gives them *ummafi* to drink. He sprinkles a little powder in tepid water; or sometimes (so they say) he sprinkles the *ummafi* on two freshly cut stumps of banana stem, one representing one side, and one the other. Then the stump in which the "new growth" (? sap: *ulufyogo*) first appears is the one that has "vomited". The "growth" appears the same day that they cut it. The doctor addresses the *ummafi* (*ikupangililaga*) and the others present assist, the supporters of each man addressing him. Then one vomits and those on his side trill, but he who has not vomited is very sad. Then they go home and he who has vomited pays the doctor.

'There is very little drinking of *ummafi* nowadays, but much divination (*ubulagusi*).

[1] i.e. 'the defenders'. Mwaikambo explained, 'A witchcraft accusation always begins with "the defenders" seeing the witches in dreams.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 "There are some in our country who were caught for witchcraft, for "eating" people and throttling cows. The name of one of them was
●627 Sumali, but now he is dead; another is Mwaimama. They denied the
695 accusation very strongly; they were brought before the chief (my father) for their case to be judged, and when he had given judgement they said they wished to go to *umuafi*. So they went to the *umuafi*, and when they had drunk it Sumali vomited and Mwaimama was conquered. Nothing happened to him—he was not driven out, they just told him to stop doing such things—but continually, even now, he is accused of witchcraft whenever anything happens. He's not gone to *umuafi* again.

"This happened before I went to school, when I was still herding cows, about 1925 or 1926. I did not see the trial (before the chief) with my own eyes, but I was there when the *umuafi* was administered.

"On another occasion a woman was "caught" for witchcraft when
[763] her child died. When they do an autopsy they sometimes find wounds on the right side or on the left. The right side is the side of the man, the left that of the woman. This time they found them on the side of the woman. The woman (*i.e.* the mother) denied that it was she who had "eaten" the child so they went to *umuafi* and the woman was "conquered" (*i.e.* proved to be lying). It was not she, in her own person, but a member of her lineage who had "eaten" the child. After the *umuafi* had "spoken" they went to a diviner to discover exactly who the individual was.

"I heard about this from others, but Mwasintobile, the father of the child who died, is a man of our country—I know him."

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

27. WIVES DRIVEN AWAY FOR WITCHCRAFT

Mahwebeja (elderly commoner).

'Many wives are driven away for witchcraft. They are driven away by their husbands. If a man has several wives one may be bad and throttle her husband's cattle, or throttle her husband himself. Then the man goes and complains (*akwijeja*), saying: "They have destroyed my cattle", or perhaps, "My neighbours have '-eten' me", whichever it is. When his fellows hear his complaints they say: "Do not accuse outsiders. See! It's your wife." Some women are bad and the husband does not sleep when he is with his other wives; only when he is with her (the witch) does he have a good sleep. She spoils the fertility of her co-wives. Or sometimes all the wives are friendly and agree to spoil the cattle of their husband. 754 627

'There is a woman named Kajonga whose husband drove her away for witchcraft because she bewitched the fertility of her co-wives. A long time after her divorce she was married to another man, Mwinoba by name. From that man also she was driven away for witchcraft, but what wrong she had done was not much known. Some time later she died. 754 627 587

'Women who are driven away for witchcraft always remarry; they do not run off with men.'

Njokakosa.

'When a wife was accused she drank *umwafi*. If she was "caught" by the ordeal sometimes her husband drove her away, sometimes he did not. Usually he did not.'

Nsaa.

'Formerly wives were frequently driven away for witchcraft. Such a wife remarried quickly.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

31. PROCEDURE IN WITCHCRAFT CASES (MODERN)

Nzuse (village headman).

Question: 'How do you manage about witchcraft cases nowadays?' 754

'We judge them openly but we do not have them written in the court book. When "a defender" has seen his fellow throttle someone, he tells us, and we judge that witch. It is "the defenders" (*abamanga*) who see the witches. Perhaps "the defender" comes out of his house by night and calls out: "I see so and so throttling so and so! Listen to-morrow."' 627

'Yes, that happens nowadays.

'When someone tells us in this way we agree; the witch is driven out. Yes, even though he denies it, we say: "You are a witch. You are a thief. Even though you do not admit it, get out of the country." But formerly they went to the ordeal.'

Question: 'Now you just accept the word of the defender?'

'Yes, formerly if a man denied guilt when he was accused he went to the ordeal, and the *umwafi* "caught" the witch. Now since the Europeans have forbidden the use of *umwafi* we accept the word of "the defenders". Look, they (the defenders) *see* witches. Yes, in dreams.' [695]

Question: 'What about the man who accused the wife of Mwakobela?'

'He denied it. He said: "I did not see her", so on that account we said: "Since you have slandered her you must pay thirty shillings." But had he really seen her and told us properly we would have overcome the woman in argument and divorced her from her husband, but he denied it, saying: "I did not see her", and we all said: "The woman is not a witch; who has seen her?"

'If a woman is divorced for witchcraft there is no fine, the husband gets back his cows, that is all.'

Question: 'And the friend of Mwambuputa?'

'He was really a witch. They said: "You, Mwambuputa, we will convict you of witchcraft yourself if you are friendly with him."

'And if a man is fined because he has accused his fellow of witchcraft without seeing him, really, we do not write that in the book either.

'No, *umwafi* is not used; the Europeans and the chiefs and the village headmen have strictly forbidden it.'

[p. 257]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

33. SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES IN CHRISTIAN VILLAGES

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a. *Christian suing a Christian*

Mundekeye (appointed by the Church to settle disputes in villages on Itete mission land).

'Nsangalofu (a Christian elder) accused Jonah's son, Lwimkio, of making love to the wife of Nsangalofu's son, Nkisu. I (Mundekeye) was trying the case between Nkisu and Lwimiko. Lwimiko denied everything, but Nkisu's wife said: "Yes, he was making love to me; he did so on three occasions." I gave judgement, saying: "You Lwimiko, are guilty, because the woman admits it," and ordered Lwimiko to pay a cow. Lwimiko refused, so I took the case to the Court. I reported my decision and Lwimiko's refusal to pay. The Court asked Lwimiko why he refused to pay up when the woman admitted their guilt, and ordered him to pay a cow.

'I reported the case to Mwangomo (the chief in whose country Mundekeye lives), but as it was quite clear I took it direct to Court. Difficult cases I take to Mwangomo before they go on to Court.

'Nsangalofu and Nkisu brought the case to me. I called the elders of the Church to be present at the hearing of the case. The congregation notified Mwakapelela (the European missionary who lives on another station) and he ordered that Lwimiko should move off mission land. Lwimiko and Nkisu had both built in Mpanda (a boys' village on mission land).'

b. *Arbitration between Christians*

Asagwe (Christian deacon in Itete).

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'Mogogo accused Amanise of stealing a cloth belonging to him, and brought Amanise before his fellows. He brought him to Rheuben, (sic) whom he lives.

'Amanise denied the accusation, so the case was taken to Mundekeye (*vide supra*). Mundekeye tried the case with "all the congregation" (i.e. elders and deacons and anyone who cared to attend the court) and found Amanise guilty. The case was then taken before the missionary who ordered that Amanise should be fined 5s. and suspended from membership of the Church. He also ordered that should he refuse to pay he should move off mission land, because this was the

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

second occasion on which he had been found guilty of theft. (The elders of the congregation had suggested turning Amanise off mission land immediately, but the missionary advised giving him a second chance and fining him.)'

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I:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

34. SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES BETWEEN PAGANS AND CHRISTIANS

a. *Christian suing a pagan*

Tuijalaga (Christian man).

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'Adinile (a Christian elder) and Kujobanabatwa (a pagan) had a dispute. Cattle belonging to Adinile and his fellows ate Kujobanabatwa's crop. Adinile went to drive the cattle out of the field and Kukobanabatwa met him as he was driving them out. Kujobanabatwa swore at Adinile. So Adinile got angry and went to the chief; the chief took the case to Court and Kujobanabatwa was found guilty and ordered to pay 10s. He paid up and the case was finished.'

b. *Arbitration between pagan and Christian*

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'L. (a Christian preacher) when he was visiting the Ngoni[1] in the bush country bought rice from a pagan Ngoni, Manana, and promised to pay him later on. He was a long time in paying his debt so the Ngoni went to Ulindula, an elderly Christian living near L., saying: "L. has my shilling. He took my rice." L. agreed that he owed the Ngoni a shilling; he said that he had not yet got the money, but would get it very soon. The Ngoni went home and after some time, as he was not paid, he came again. Ulindula tried to pacify him. The Ngoni said: "If the case defeats you, I shall go to Court." So Ulindula called his fellows Rhuben and Hosesh to pacify the Ngoni, and the latter agreed to wait; but still L. did not pay up. So when the missionary visited, the Ngoni took the case to him. How it was decided (by the missionary) no one knows.'

c. *Pagan suing a Christian*

Mwanzenze (chief).

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'Mwanzepe, a pagan man, has a young son who was once bathing in a stream where Anangiye, a Christian, was down to bathe also. Anangiye said to the boy: "Get out, I want to bathe." The boy replied: "See, I was bathing here first", at which Anangiye got angry and beat the boy.

'Then Mwanzepe and his son hastened to Mundikaye's court

[1] There are one or two villages of Ngoni immigrants in the strip of unoccupied bush country between Ifelye and the Lake-shore plain. They mix very little with the Nyakyusa.

[p. 264]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kakune

come him, it does not wish to come out. And although the faeces are firm they are the corpse. Because we bury a corpse underground, and faeces also go underground to the shades. They disappear by night, that is the shade. If someone excretes faeces and finds it in the grass we say: 'The shade has caught hold of him.'

QUESTION: Are faeces associated with sexual intercourse?

MWAALEMBA: Yes, the shade does both things, he causes diarrhoea and sexual intercourse. If you defaecate firm stools that is not the shade, that is the food we eat, but watery diarrhoea which troubles you repeatedly at night—that is the shade. If you have diarrhoea for three days people say: 'The shades have hammered you' or 'The shade has caught hold of you.'

QUESTION: Madness?

MWAALEMBA: That is the shade because it says: 'Since you have me in your belly, and they have not treated you, I cause this—these faeces are the corpse. A madman defaecates and catches hold of his faeces, perhaps he eats them, perhaps he binds it up in the grass and catches hold of it. It is the corpse.'

Kakune, the doctor, also interpreted the puberty ritual as being, in one aspect, the transference of a girl from her father's group to her husband's and, like Kaitile and Mwaalemba, he identified sexual desire and potency with the shades. He said:

At puberty a girl has left her father's and has gone to others; if she dies he to whom she has gone buries her.

QUESTION: Where does the blood of a woman come from?

KAKUNE: If the girl is unmarried, from her shades; they create her blood, but in the ritual we treat her so that she moves to my place, she comes to my shades; the blood of a married woman is created by my shades and here together. And the 'blood' of a man [i.e. semen] also comes from the shades.

QUESTION: Do the shades reveal themselves at birth?

KAKUNE: Yes, because if I am angry or my father is angry I do not beget a child, but when he has prayed I do so. If I am angry with the woman and she has caught hold of me and injured me, then we do not have a child. The wicked [strongly] [illegible] the woman. She goes to her father who prays. Then we have a child.

QUESTION: Where does the power to bear and beget children come from?

KAKUNE: From the shades, you have the shades in your belly. If they are not there you are all like women in the house, you cannot have an erection, but when the shades work, you have an erection.

QUESTION: Whose shades are present at intercourse?

KAKUNE: Mine, the man's and the woman's, we both have them,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

scrapes bananas when she is menstruating, or conceals that she is menstruating and we have intercourse, then my legs are tired, but I do not have diarrhoea, because it is my blood; she is my relative (*akwe pamoja*), she is my wife, her blood and mine are one. But when she has lain with a man in the bush there is his blood; I have diarrhoea to get rid of it; the food which she cooks for me is dirty, she has made it filthy, I have diarrhoea and get rid of it, she oversteps me. And also if she has concealed that she is menstruating and we have intercourse, I am overstepped. To overstep is to insult—but since the blood is mine I do not get rid of it. That menstrual blood is very dirty! 641 753

If I have always been all right and strong, and I find that I get tired walking and hoeing, I think: 'What is it? See, always I was all right, and now I am very tired.' My friends say: 'It is women, you have lain with one who was menstruating.' And if I eat food and start diarrhoea they say: 'It's women, they have committed adultery.' My wives deny it. We go to divine, and one is caught; if she agrees that's that, but if she denied it, formerly we went to the poison ordeal. The woman drank alone, not I. If she vomited then I was defeated, the woman was good, but if it caught her then her father paid one cow. 652

What we feared greatly in the old days, Mwaipeja, was war. We feared to die. For if my fellow in the village committed adultery with my wife then, when we went to war, we both died; if we went to fight at Mwangomo's [a neighbouring chiefdom], both he and I would be speared. Then people were astonished and said: 'Why, have so-and-so and so-and-so died? Perhaps they both lay with the same woman.' For this reason we drove adulterers from the village, and for this reason the chief was angry with an adulterer, saying: '"This is my place! Why do you kill my people!"' 689 721

Others confirmed Mwamboputa's statement that adultery led to death in battle:

Formerly, when there was war, if your fellow made love to your wife in secret and you all went to fight, you died on one day on account of the woman.

Mwandisi linked the disquiet in a man's belly with the anger of the shades waiting there. 737 783

If a woman has gone behind the house with another man and comes and cooks food for her husband, blowing up the fire and cooking for him, then the food turns round in his stomach and says: 'Is this my kinsman?' She made friends with others behind the house and cooked for them [i.e. committed adultery]. So then the man develops diarrhoea because the food turned round in his stomach. He falls down on the road, he falls down in battle.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

762 the wife of Mpoma, but about this I do not know much. When they
[718] stopped speaking Kanyamale was ill. Then her husband charged her
759 with witchcraft and she said: 'What is the case about? I have been ill
since we come from confusing anger.' Then Kanyamale grew milky
and gathered up her mats and went with them to her child's place.
Mpoma said: 'I must follow her,' but his fellows soothed him and he
turned back. Then he borrowed a spear from his fellows and went to
drive off the game which were eating his crops. When he found no
animals he went home. On his return, when he was still outside, he
heard the wives whispering about some case. He asked them to open
the door for him, but they were silent and did not open the door of the
hut. Then he pushed it open. When he entered the hut he closed it and
he cross-examined the wives, asking what they were talking about. One
said: 'I was just asleep.' He said: 'With whom were you speaking?
You are hiding a man in this house.' One woman got up immediately
and opened the door. Mpoma cross-examined them both. He said:
'Why did you open the door if indeed there is no man in the hut?'
Mpoma got in a passion and went elsewhere. He returned again and
said: 'Marry the child. I will not destroy him,' and he went away alone.
• [27] He took the case to Mwakinsya, the village headman, and lost it. Then
the court said: 'You get the children. Let them come here, though their
mother is not here.'

757 Later on it was like this: Mwakisonde went to attend to the medicines
754 to give to the sick man to drink; they began by putting powdered medi-
cines in a pot, then they put in some water, then they put in three sorts
of powdered medicine, one black and two red. Mwakisonde, because
he was the doctor, began; he put in the water first. Mpoma, the senior,
followed him, then all the others. When the water boiled, they stirred
up porridge with a spoon, then they gave the sick man some to drink,
and the relatives drank. If there were one who was working sorcery
against his fellows, he would die when he drank that medicine. But the
sick man, before he drank this medicine, drank something else. When
the water boiled, they mixed a medicine and smeared themselves all
over their bodies.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

residence there, I never locked my doors, and the only 674
theft of which I had to complain was the pendulum of a clock taken from an open building!

Murder.—Murder is, from the native point of view, 682
a much less serious crime than cattle stealing. But it 673
should be remembered that British law calls crimes murder which are not so called by the Konde. A man who kills his wife's paramour has not committed murder: he has exacted a just revenge, and no more. In a case of real murder, the murderer or his friends usually pay a fine, or rather a compensation, of up to ten head of cattle; and the loss to the family of the murdered man is further made good by the other family handing over a daughter. This girl must never be spoken of as a substitute, for that would cause her children, when she has them, to die. It is needless to add that under British law compensation of any kind to the family of the murdered person does not acquit the murderer. What follows, therefore, is purely native law, which, if administered at all, is administered only when there is reason to believe that the police will never come to hear of it.

When a murder was committed, the chief directed 627
the friends of the murderer to bring him for trial, but 783
if they chose to put him to death themselves, the case was ended. Should it be impossible to discover the murderer, a friend of his, it hardly mattered who, was put to death, and a wide-extending vendetta might be the result. When the law is satisfied, a formal reconciliation between the two families takes place. Under the guidance of the medicine man, who is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•627 783 master of ceremonies on all such occasions, a sheep, provided by the family of the murderer, is killed, and taken hold of by the parties, while the doctor divides the carcase into two parts, each side taking its share. Medicine is poured into a pot, and a red-hot spear is plunged into it. The carcase of the sheep, cooked with this medicine, is placed upon banana leaves, and the feast of reconciliation is partaken of, along with beer which also has been doctored. The reconciliation, however, is not complete until the girl has been handed over: until that is done, the feast has only stayed action on the part of the murdered man's relatives. If the murderer is not known, the relatives of the victim drink a medicine, without which, if they happened unwittingly to drink water in the culprit's house, they would themselves also die.

682 673 The murder of a pregnant woman is a very serious matter, for it is really a double murder, and the chief has to be compensated for the loss of dependents. It is more heinous to murder a woman than a man, for the woman, being dead, bears no more children, and loss to the community results.

682 672 For accidental death there are numerous regulations. If a man dies, or is killed, while in the employment of another, or on a journey with him, compensation must be paid to the relatives. There is no feast of reconciliation, for the thing was not done in malice. When a person is killed by an ox or a cow, the owner pays a cow, and kills the offending animal, lest it lead him into further trouble and expense of the same kind. If one is cutting down a tree, and some one is killed by

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

682 754 be convinced that the real facts are otherwise than as I have stated. The clumsy methods of murder favoured by the cleverest of European criminals take an inferior place before the successful malignity of this kind of thing.

683 754 627 *Witchcraft.*—No crime is regarded with so much abhorrence among Bantu peoples as the crime of witchcraft. It is a crime against the whole community, anti-social, destructive; and the punishment, in many cases, was death. That punishment cannot now be inflicted, but a recent Ordinance against pretended witchcraft has given much satisfaction to the people, even although the punishment is less than they think the crime demands. To them there is no pretence about it; it is a grave reality. If the poison cup proved a person guilty, he was immediately attacked with any weapon that came handy, and as a rule he was dead before he reached the end of the gauntlet; but if, as now and again happened, he got off alive, he lost no time in getting away to another district. In the not so very remote past, the guilty person was burned to death in his own house, and not always did his family escape a like fate. A special punishment was reserved for witchcraft by crocodile. This particular crime consists in bewitching a crocodile to kill an enemy. The criminal, when discovered, was put into the water in a large fish-trap, and left there until a crocodile came and made an end.

684 *Adultery.*—This offence is said to have increased greatly since the coming of the white man, who will not permit the death penalty to be inflicted. But the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

781 a conation which passes over into the physical motor response" (Tansley). The image in the mind, of the divining rod acting in the manner conceived, tends to become a physical fact, and the rod comes to a halt in obedience to a previously formed decision, of which the operator is, in most cases, not consciously aware. Nevertheless the opportunities for deception are many.

Ifipendo, the lot. The lot is resorted to in a variety of cases, but its application is much more limited than that of divination.

I. When divination has decided that an illness is 781 due to poison, the lot is invoked to find the poisoner. 627 Little pieces of dough are kneaded into as many tiny cups as there are persons suspected. Into each is put a small quantity of *mwafi* (the poison used for the ordeal), and the suspected persons are then invited to take each the cup that he selects for himself, the preparations having been made, of course, in their absence. The guilty person is he who takes the cup in which the poison remains unabsorbed into the dough, the others being assumed to have vomited. This might just as well be called a way of undergoing the poison ordeal, but as it is called *ifipendo* it is included here.

II. In cases of disputed inheritance no poison is put into the cups, but a little dry flour. The claimant who selects the cup in which the moisture from the dough has penetrated to the dry flour is declared to be the rightful heir.

781 When the rain stops, and no natural cause can be assigned, it is assumed to be the act of some person

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

unknown. Now when a common man stops the rain, 787
he must first have obtained the assistance of his chief; and the chief, being discovered by the method just described, must take measures to have the evil undone.

III. If a question arises as to the ownership of some article, small sticks are set upright in the ground. The claimants sit each opposite his own stick, and he whose stick first falls, if it falls towards him, is the rightful owner. But if the stick falls towards another person, then that person is declared the owner. Finally, if goods of any kind are divided into lots, one lot for each of a number of persons, sticks are taken, marked to correspond with the lots. Each shareholder picks out a stick, the marks, of course, not being shown to him, and gets the goods which correspond to the marks. There is no appeal, the decision of the lot is final.

The poison ordeal, though now prohibited, and 787
administered only in secret, was, until European 627
government began to put it down, so common that a description of it comes in appropriately in any chapter dealing with native life; and as it has been referred to here already, the method of administering to individuals will be given now, leaving administration to a whole community for the chapter on "Witchcraft." The ordeal was applied for reasons grave or trivial, from an accusation of murder down to a petty family quarrel of no importance except in a moment of ill-temper. Both parties to a quarrel or an accusation went to the doctor, and stated their case. He took a piece of bark of the *mwafi* tree for each, raised it a little in

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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his hand and let it fall to the ground; if one turned round in falling and the other fell without turning, the doctor knew beforehand which was the guilty person—he whose bark turned round in falling. The poison was then prepared from the bark by the doctor, by whom it was administered next day. The one who vomited was in the right, the other in the wrong.

Assuming that the poison was honestly administered, that is to say, that the doctor did not give a strong mixture to one and a weak to another, which he very probably did in many cases, must it be assumed that the result was merely fortuitous? Is it not a psychological possibility that the consciousness of guilt in the one case, and of innocence in another, causes the poison in the stomach to act in the way that generations of belief in its efficacy has led the whole community to expect that it would act? I do not suggest that this happened in all cases. No doubt the generations have seen countless cases of tragic miscarriage of justice; on the other hand, so many confessions have followed conviction under the ordeal, that it is difficult to believe that in all cases the discovery of the guilty person was a mere fortuity.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

at all, it is done in secret. But other methods are in 754
use that are not so easy to detect. A suspected person is mercilessly beaten, and there are many who have, under stress of such thrashings, confessed their guilt, lest the thrashing end in death. In the good old days, before the Europeans began to interfere, guilty persons might be burned to death with all their family. To-day, if the chief is afraid to take more 754
drastic steps, the suspected person is warned to 627
depart. Coming out in the morning he finds at his door a banana stem, with leaves tied to the top; and if he refuses the hint, he may be mobbed the same day. Native law gives him the privilege of challenging the poison test, and the unhappy chief in that case must either agree and risk being denounced to the magistrate, or refuse to apply the test and withdraw the charge. The lot of the chief who has to steer his way between native and British law is not always a happy one. In the case I am supposing, if he agrees to the poison test in the hope of escaping the attentions of the police, he may find himself with two deaths on his hands, for both accuser and accused must take the test, and although the poison is usually administered in a weak decoction, still accidents have been known to happen.

A plague of mice is also brought on by witchcraft. 754
At Karonga, a man called Ndambasya, still living at Mfuru, on the Rukuru River, possesses this gift. His grandfather was put to death for the offence, but Ndambasya pursues his nefarious practices under the ægis of the British Government, which is far too

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

754 witches, who use their power beneficently and spend their dreams in efforts to counter-
626 act the aggressor witches, *avalosi*, who use their power maliciously. The great commoner is the strongest of the former type, and the 'defender of the village'. A man who earns universal unpopularity is subject to a spiritual attack from the 'defenders', and is liable to fall sick from the blast of unpopularity. Belief in this efficacy of the 'breath of men' is one of the sanctions of the accepted social order.[1]

Only magic is believed to have power to punish wrongdoers who are neither kinsmen nor members of the same chiefdom. Magic exerts an influence on the behaviour of kinsmen and affines. The witchcraft of a neglected wife may cause a man to fall sick, or that of his father-in-law may harm his children.[2] The power of witchcraft never acts between relatives, though it might between husband and wife.[3]

754 An aggressor witch was reported in the old days by the great commoner to the chief, who ordered the poison ordeal. If the accused failed to vomit (the dose was seldom
● 627 fatal), he was proved guilty and killed or exiled, all his cows and property being taken by the chief and the victims of his aggressive witchcraft. If a private individual accused another, both were put to the ordeal; if both vomited, the accuser had to pay two cows to the other for slander; if either failed to vomit he was punished as guilty. The ordeal is now illegal, but men accused of aggressive witchcraft still find it best to fly the chiefdom. Great commoners normally used their witchcraft powers to protect their chief from attack, but if he erred they would join in the attack on him; the nobles of Ngonde had power to exert a similar constitutional check on the Kyungu.[4]

763 If death by aggressive witchcraft was suspected, it was proved or disproved by a routine post-mortem examination and by subsequent consultation with the diviner.[5]

Birth

844 A child should be born in its own father's house. A difficult birth is a sign of the
845 guilt of adultery, and is eased by confession.[6] A few days after the birth the mother is
851 anointed, shaved, and resumes her household duties. She later goes on a visit of some weeks to show the child to her own parents, returning to her husband after celebration by both sets of grandparents, and exchanges of food and hoes. The birth of twins was a great misfortune, requiring the segregation and ritual purification of both parents.[7]

Initiation

861 There was no puberty or initiation rite for boys. The initiation of a girl was really a pre-marriage rite. She went through a complicated rite to ensure fertility, in which the husband took part. The initiation lasts some months, and includes several exchanges of food between the families of the girl and her betrothed husband, and ceremonies in which her girl friends of the same village and his friends of his village take part. The girl is tested for virginity during the ceremonies. If she is not betrothed before puberty the initiation is carried out in a modified form, but the full significance is lost.[8]

[1] Wilson, 2, 1938, p. 277.
[2] Ibid., 3, 1939, p. 36.
[3] Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 19; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 42–3.
[4] Ibid., pp. 42–6. According to H. H. Johnston, if the children died in succession the father was expected to kill himself, but it is possible that he is confusing a custom of the Southern Tonga (1897, p. 477).
[5] Ibid., 1925, p. 51; Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 11; Wilson, 2, 1938, p. 258.
[6] Ibid., p. 258.
[7] Ibid., 1, 1938, p. 91.
[8] Johnston, 1897, p. 443.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

vary in different circumstances. Millet and rice, the two most valuable crops, belong to the man and are stored by him; so that the division of a millet or rice garden into plots and their assignment to different wives is rather a division of labour than of property. But of all other crops the woman on whose plots they have grown is an effective owner. She stores them herself in her own house and no other wife of her husband can touch them; it is only with him that her rights are in any way shared. 241 592 421

The main use of the crops which the Nyakyusa grow is to provide food for each separate household group. Next in importance is the provision of food and beer for hospitality, and for the making of gifts both in everyday life and on special ceremonial occasions. And, finally, there is the barter or sale of surplus crops to obtain salt, pots, clothes, cattle and to pay tax. Each married woman, therefore, first uses her own crops to feed her husband, her own children and herself. If she is the only wife then she cooks for her husband every day, but, even if she is one of many, she is yet careful to cook for him frequently, in order to keep his affection and the various advantages which go with it. 592 593 574 [437]

When cooking for her husband she must, when necessary, prepare sufficient for guests, for a man very often has friends and neighbours eating with him; and if he wishes to make a gift of cooked food, she cooks it for him from her own store. To provide meals for him and his guests and cooked food for gifts is an obligation which she normally fulfils quite willingly, as we have hinted above; she may be fond of him; it is in any case to her interest to play her part in the co-operative relationship which binds them together and from which both alike benefit. He hoes for her and builds her house, he gives her a share of the household milk, which he himself controls, he sleeps with and is gentle to her; he has, without the aid of any legal, moral or conventional sanctions, a great hold over her, as she, on her side, has over him. *But, if either fails to play their part* in willing co-operation, then there are, for both alike, these other sanctions to fall back upon. A quarrel develops between them and leads to violence, perhaps he strikes her, perhaps she viciously repels him, one night, from her bed; and then the immediately injured party appeals to the neighbours for support. They discuss the matter, censure one or the other, and try to make it up between them; if they fail to do so the case may go to Court and one will then have to pay compensation to the other. Or it may happen, without any violent quarrel, without any formal appeal to the neighbours, that one of them becomes aware that his conduct is provoking their mockery and criticism; and then in shame he mends his ways. Or, finally, one of them may fall sick and suspect that wrong-doing on his part has been followed by spiritual retribution in the form of witchcraft. 543 [579] [627] [626] [759]

A woman, then, uses her stores of food to cook not only for herself

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

favourite. What they said about her being, perhaps, his favourite was just their way of putting it." 421 515

Before passing to the discussion of the disposal of surplus crops we must dwell a little on the importance of a fair division of land between the several wives of a polygynist. Not only garden plots but also the bananas growing on the homestead are divided between them. Each wife is allotted a number of banana stems and is responsible for keeping their roots clear of weeds and she is also expected to weed and sweep the adjacent portion of the open space (*alubingilo*). In the sweeping her husband will often assist her, her fellow wife will not. The bunches which grow on her own banana stems are her property and not even her husband will cut them without consulting her, save in exceptional circumstances. In every polygynous household, then, a division of garden plots and bananas is made between the wives, and, as it is made by the husband, it is a most important element of their relationships with one another.

For every man with more than one wife has a favourite, and, if he allows his affection for her to express itself in an inequitable division of land, then there is trouble in store: "Each wife is the owner of a plot (*alupaka*) and each harvests and weeds it and keeps the food separately. The wives help each other if friendly but each wife must have her own plot—a maize plot, a bean plot, a cassava plot, a plot of sweet-potatoes, and so on. The bananas also are divided between the wives.

"A polygynist when he hoes his gardens is always afraid to give to any one wife a bigger plot than to another. For it is thought that the wife who gets the smaller plot will whisper complaints of her husband among the people; and whispering complaints of a man brings witches to kill him. It is feared that in such a case, either the husband or else the favoured wife will be killed (by witchcraft). *In consequence a man is* always exceedingly careful, in dividing his garden into plots, to treat his wives fairly. But even so he will perhaps give to the wife whom he loves the plot with the best soil! And it happens sometimes that a polygynist's wife, when given a smaller plot than her co-wives, will sulk and refuse to plant: 'Why,' she asks, 'do you give me such a small garden plot? Did I not cook for you while you were hoeing?' And, if her husband then loses his temper and strikes her, she will make a case before the neighbours. And they will say to him: 'Friend, you should make a just division, you will only set your wives against one another by not doing so and make them kill one another.' By this they mean that if one wife is angered she will bring the witches to kill her fellow wives! [754] [827]

"And if a woman is restless with her husband and is herself considering leaving him then she will be forever going and complaining to her 586

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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"Why with cassava?" I asked "Because the husband thinks of cassava as a security against famine; if a famine comes he takes his *busongo* cassava and gives some to each of his wives."

"And why with bananas?" "Because if he has bananas of his own then when the chief sends the great-commoner round to collect bananas for guests, or to send to the hospital in Tukuyu, the man cuts one of his bananas. He realises that, as he has two wives, if he takes a banana bunch from one of them she will be angry and wonder why he cut her bunch and not that of her fellow wife."

"So it is only polygynists who keep separate *busongo* bananas?" "Certainly, no monogamist would ever do so."

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"A man named Mwaisaka," he told me later, "once disputed with his wife over the selling of maize. They had just begun harvesting the crop when the woman told her husband that she intended to take some of the maize to the shops and sell it and buy some cloths; for her child was naked and she had neither cloth nor skin to carry him in on her back, she had to hold him in her arms. Mwaisaka, however, told her to wait a little until all the maize was harvested, when he would divide it up. His wife thereupon protested that the crop was their joint property and that he himself could take some for sale whenever he wished, so why not she also; and she pointed out that many other people had already begun to sell their maize and buy cloths. So they quarrelled and Mwaisaka struck his wife, who then ran complaining to the great-commoner. The great-commoner heard the case and judged that Mwaisaka was in the wrong because his wife had no skin for carrying her baby and was in trouble therefore. If, he said, she had not been in such trouble over carrying the child they would have given their opinion against her for refusing to agree with her husband's proposal to wait and finish harvesting first, but as it was they thought that Mwaisaka was in the wrong; no division of plots or crop had been made and the food was their common property. And Mwaisaka admitted that he was wrong." "Did he pay his wife any compensation for the blow?" I asked. "No, they reconciled them to one another."

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"And if a man," I enquired further," takes some of the food which belongs to himself and his wife jointly and sells it without telling her, will she make a case against him?" "She may, but if she is a gentle wife she argues it out alone with her husband; she asks him why he did not consult her, for there is now but little left and she wonders what they will eat. And her husband, if he is a sensible man, agrees with her and admits that he was in fault. But if, instead, the man makes out that he had every right to take it, for the food is as much his as hers, and if he is indignant at her protest then that attitude will bring a quarrel between them."

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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476 all, hunting is organised like warfare and fishing is a joint endeavour, both ordered by the chief.

471 Every chief has a title of ownership (*ebwene nakya*) to the land of his
622 chiefdom and can evict any man he pleases, (giving him another plot), if he wishes to build there himself; but his people also have titles of ownership to it, both collectively, under the leadership of the great commoners, and individually, each man to his own ground. It is the great commoners who, in consultation with their neighbours, give to the sons of each village land on which to build; it is they who, together, finally fix the boundaries of the young men's villages at their "Coming Out;" it is they who, again in consultation with their neighbours, grant land to strangers who ask for it, though they must notify the chief and get his approval before doing so.

● 627 As the single great commoners settle disputes within their own
692 villages so the chief and great commoners together hear and decide cases within the chiefdom. Many of these legal actions are now settled in the Courts, but not all of them; and, even when cases are going to Court, preliminary hearings commonly take place before the chief, first. Cases are conducted and witnesses interrogated by chief and great commoners together, and the decision which the chief pronounces is an expression of their general opinion.

554 Among the great commoners there is an order of seniority. The
624 leaders of the two senior age-villages of the chief's own men play a prominent part at his "Coming Out," they each have a pre-eminent authority in one side of his chiefdom, and the other great commoners rank as their juniors, some on one side, some on the other. In the old days the two senior great commoners each led a whole side of the chiefdom in war.

622 The two most effective checks on the power of a chief are migration
754 and witchcraft. Military strength used to depend upon the number of a chief's adherents, to-day the scale of his salary is similarly dependent; men are quite free to move, and there is a constant flow of adherents from unpopular to popular chiefs. But unpopularity is most feared in its spiritual form of witchcraft. We have seen already that an adverse current of opinion is believed to act invisibly, as the "breath of men," against an unpopular member of a village and to make him sick. So also the adverse opinion of a single village or of a whole chiefdom is believed to have power against a chief, to bring sickness or even death upon him. As in the single village, so in the whole chiefdom the great commoners are the prime sources of this spiritual power; they are believed severally to protect the members of their own villages and jointly to protect their

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Scotland—and it is with their organization that we are primarily concerned.

Each denomination is divided into congregations, local groups living in villages surrounding a central Church which usually has its own pastor or minister—European or African—in charge, though the shortage of men and funds after 1914 meant that one minister was sometimes in charge of two congregations. For the fifteen congregations of the three Churches mentioned there were eleven ministers in 1937, three of them Africans, and the congregations varied in size from just over 600 to 3,000 members. They included communicant members—that is, adults who had been baptized, and the children of Christians who, after having been baptized in infancy, were confirmed during adolescence—children of Christians who had been baptized but not yet confirmed; 'hearers' and catechumens who were undergoing a two or three years' period of instruction before baptism, and members under discipline who, because of some serious breach of Church law were not, for the time being, admitted to communion. Women members outnumbered the men by more than three to one in the congregations in Ngonde (where many men were away as labour migrants) and by three to two in the Moravian congregations in BuNyakyusa.

The functions of the congregation are worship, evangelization, religious instruction, and sometimes, general education and welfare. Each congregation chooses elders from among its members and they, together with the minister, form the 'Session' or Church Court which deals with matters of discipline and administration within its area, as well as discussing matters of Church policy which may later be brought up before a higher court or council.

Both men and women are eligible for office as elders, but their duties are somewhat different. Each male elder is in charge of the Christians in a given area, usually those living in one age-village. He organizes services in the village, often taking them himself, and choosing suitable people from among the residents to help him. He instructs candidates for baptism, holding the weekly classes for 'hearers' and catechumens; he visits the sick; above all he must try and compose quarrels among his people. It is customary among pagans for a husband and wife who quarrel to take their dispute to a senior kinsman or to a neighbour; among Christians such disputes are usually taken to the elder, since the Church is immediately concerned in maintaining the marriage bond. The

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

elder watches over the morals of his flock and it is his duty to report to the Session any breaches of Church law among his people. Through him the cards entitling members to attend communion are distributed, and cards are withheld from those whom the Session has agreed must be suspended from membership. Each man has, on the average, 125 people to care for. The women elders organize the women's weekly meetings, and take parties of women on preaching tours in pagan villages. They are the leaders in any charitable activities of the congregation and in the instruction of a Christian girl at her marriage. A woman elder settles disputes between two women, and in family quarrels she is often asked by the elder in charge of the village to help him to reconcile the couple. She is also a supervisor of morals and reports to the local elder if she 'hears any woman speaking like a pagan'. Deacons are elected like elders and are primarily responsible for the collection of Church dues and the administration of Church funds, but in a village in which there is no elder a deacon will carry out some of his duties.

In practice, then, each local group—a Christian village or village section—has its chosen leader, a male elder or deacon who conducts daily prayers in the local school house or his own house, and also fulfils many of the functions of an assistant village headman, arbitrating in disputes and acting as the spokesman of his village section. The traditional organization of the age-villages, in which an individual had some choice as to the village he should join, and was not bound by kinship connexions, makes an adaptation to villages in which those of the same faith live together easy. It is noticeable that the Pentecostal and Watch Tower converts build their own village sections apart from Moravians or Lutherans. And since the traditional village leaders are chosen, not hereditary, it is very easy for a leading Christian to become an assistant headman, more or less formally recognized by the village headman named at the 'coming out'.

At first the teachers were more directly under the supervision of the missionary than of the congregation, being selected by him and paid by the mission, but in the middle thirties, when funds from Germany ceased coming to the Moravian and Lutheran missions, the payment of village school teachers fell on the congregations of those denominations. Each village wanting a school had to provide a building, and in this pagans and Christians often co-operated, for many pagans also wanted their children to

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F'N17 Ngonde F'N17
Nyakyusa

Security of tenure has continued into European times, and although perhaps weakened slightly in one way through the suggested powers which accrue to modern Government-supported chiefs, it has been strengthened by the modern peace and rule of law and the more efficient system of justice provided by the established local courts. According to G. Wilson (Wilson, G., 1938, p. 32) the increase in the movement of individuals between villages in earlier European times (i.e., up to about 1940-45) directly caused a lack of attachment to individual plots, and thus security of tenure was not considered particularly important.

The new situation of land shortage does not affect the basic position, or rather, by producing a high scarcity value on land, it has brought about an [illegible] of individuals' rights over their holdings. No longer does a chief or headman attempt to commit such illegal acts as the seizure of a villager's field, so long as that villager is not afraid to publicise the affair. A man is not, and cannot afford to be, prepared to lose his field, for he cannot replace it with any certainty, either in a convenient location or elsewhere. A headman may sometimes bring strong pressure to bear on some of the men of his village to try to persuade them to give up portions of their land to assist a newcomer or a landless neighbour, but a villager can and does refuse and there is no legal authority which can override him here. As the land shortage becomes more obvious and more acute so men become less willing to allow their holdings to be touched for any reason, by anyone. The re-allocation or a "coming-out" ceremony appears to have been dropped nowadays and thus a man holds his land undisturbed until his death, when it passes by inheritance to his sons. There are cases, now where grandsons of the original holder occupy land through undisturbed and undisputed inheritance. A man can, or he wishes, lent a kinsman or friend a plot in his holding, or he can make an outright gift. The principal reservation which remains is that a man must continue to live in the village in order to retain these rights; he must relinquish them if he permanently goes to live elsewhere. Nevertheless, the land of a well-established villager would be kept for him pending his hoped-for return, for if he has left in underage and fear because of suspected witchcraft, then he may be persuaded to come back after a time. The headman and his neighbours should in fact persist in their attempts to persuade him, even to the use of force, for this is not only a moral duty of age-mates and fellow-villagers but is also an effort to remove the implications of their alleged witchcraft and anti-social conduct.

Once, therefore, a man obtains land he has absolute rights in it during his continued residence in the village. Especially today, older men within each their homes and almost all land is now held on a tenure which will be passed on by inheritance.

Boundary disputes are few. Usually, and increasingly, village boundaries are well known, and field boundaries invariably are. During my field measurements in the sample villages, I never met any difficulty with my local teams in quickly establishing the ownership and exact limits of any plot. Boundaries are usually marked by small ridges of accumulated debris or by narrow paths, and these form an intricate and irregular network throughout a village's arable area. They are so well known that there is very little scope for a greedy man to attempt to encroach on a neighbour's holding at hoeing time. If minor disagreements do arise at that season they can be immediately settled – by appeal to neighbours working nearby if necessary – and the headman or his assistant may well not be called in at all.

1. This is the case in the Lake Rukwa, in some of the so-called Highland Gulikuma where the only [illegible]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

35. JOINT RESPONSIBILITY OF NEIGHBOURS

Mwaikambo (chief).

628 621 837 'In former times people did not live at peace as we do now. Because they fought frequently they never were friendly with those of other villages as they are to-day. The occasion for beginning a fight was usually a dispute over women or cattle. If a man had made love to a woman of another village he got a friend to steal her for him. Then if the "owners" of the woman saw them they told their chief that men of such and such a village had run off with "their wife". Their chief allowed all his people to go to recapture "their wife". Also those who had stolen the woman told their chief that they had a case against them, they had stolen someone's wife. Then the chief replied that they should tell everyone to be ready.'

Mwangwanda (old pagan man).

628 621 672 685 'In the old days if one man A, had "eaten" the cow of another, B, living in a different chiefdom, and failed to repay it, though B came frequently to claim his cow, and if the wife of a village neighbour of A visited in B's country, B might seize her and take her to his chief, saying: "This woman is the wife of C, a neighbour of A, who has 'eaten' my cow:" Then the chief sent to the chief of A's country, saying that they had caught the wife of C and they wanted the cow due from A. Then A would send the cow and B would send back the wife of C with a bull to say: "Thank you, you have settled my case." Then the husband, C, might demand a hoe as well. If A denied his debt when the message came, and asserted that B's friends had seized the woman without cause, his chief would send him to B's chief, saying: "My man denies the charge. Let them drink *umwafi*." Then A and B would take the ordeal in B's country.'

[p. 266]

Age-villages continued to form a chiefdom under the hereditary chief, *mwalende*, but active co-operation between villages then constituted was often slight; indeed in the larger chiefdoms there commonly existed considerable animosity which might break out in raiding or even civil war. The integrity of these larger chiefdoms was weak – for example, when the Nyakyusa were attacked by Sangu and Ngoni war-parties, and later by the Germans, villages of the same chiefdom commonly failed to join in common defence. Similarly the land affairs of one village were no concern of any other, and each jealously guarded its own rights.

None of the chiefdoms was large; smallness of scale is typical of Nyakyusa political organization and social attitudes. In 1931 the smallest indigenous chiefdom contained only 36 men. In 1948 15,700 people were divided amongst about 18 indigenous chiefs, but undoubtedly half not the Colonial Government frozen the system then would have been rather more – at least five more. Today there are 12 recognized "administrative chiefs", amongst whom five have each less than 3,000 people under them, and the largest chiefdom contains fewer than 10,000 people – the average is just over 4,000 people.

Nevertheless the chiefdom, the collection of villages, was important, because in the creation of the chiefdom villages were created, and in its development the villages developed, matured and died away. A village survived only as long as its members lived and by the nature of the age-organization there was but little possibility of the recruitment of new members, for villagers' sons left to form their own new villages. Their sons eventually came to comprise the core of the new chiefdoms.

In connection with the constitution of a Nyakyusa village and with land tenure, the significant feature of the chiefdom was its establishment, together with the installation of a new chief, at the great "coming-out" ceremony, *ukwimba*. In brief, each chief was succeeded by two of his sons – the eldest son of each of the senior houses of the chief, i.e., of his first two wives. At the "coming-out" ceremony, when the sons were still young men and their father was not a particularly old man, the old chiefdom was divided into two, each part coming under one of the new young chiefs. Before the critical occasion – at which much important ritual was performed – the younger sons of the old chiefdom had already moved away from their fathers' villages and had established their own inferior villages nearby, each one containing a group of *ntembo*. A Nyakyusa boy from the age of about seven years could not continue to live with his father and mother, but, in company with his age-mates, built his own hut on a site adjacent to the main village as followed by the fathers' households. Until the "coming-out" ceremony these younger villages were under the control of the old village headmen; but with the installation of the new chiefs they achieved independent status, each with its own headman appointed from among its members by the old headmen. Each new village was allocated a new building site and a new arable area, and quite commonly the old villages, the older men, moved away a little in order to give the younger men adequate access to the land, for it was considered that the young men's needs for land were paramount.

After this wholesale reorganization of the old chiefdom, when new villages were constituted and new boundaries determined,[1] the old chief himself, the old headmen and the older men (the "fathers") gradually retired from active public life. The old chief was supposed to commit suicide after a time (or was quietly killed off) in order to leave the field clear for his sons; the old headmen became the religious and ritual leaders of the new chiefdoms, with the favour of older womanhood, and the old men's

1. [illegible]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1954 F307 Ngenda F307
Nyakyusa

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there remained scattered plots here and there which could be taken up, and some existing holdings in the area are too large for the agricultural capabilities of their occupiers. The temporary safety valve was shut off. The local headman had become seriously worried over the large-scale alienation of his land resources without any equivalent increase in the number of his villagers, and he also wished to conserve the remaining land against the now better understood needs of his own people.

The principle of no land without residence also means that a villager who wishes to move most economically forfeit his land-holding in the village. A little earlier he would most probably have been able to retain at least his fields beyond the immediate vicinity of the houses – in so far as his new residence was not too far away to allow continued cultivation. This has been especially important for younger men who, wishing to take up a vacant holding elsewhere, also desire to retain their share of the parental holding obtained by inheritance. Commonly, they are now unable to move on to their father's holding and yet retain their fields in their own village. Such men must now make a permanent decision between the utility of, perhaps, two inadequate holdings which, however, combined together might be of satisfactory size.

As a consequence of this, inter-village opposition is probably greater than it has ever been in European times, and no less strong perhaps than it was in the old days. Men feel that the security of their holdings, the future of their sons, and the possibility of increasing their profile cultivation lies wholly within the security and stability of their own village. They tend to see other villages and other villagers as a potential threat to their own land requirements; they often suspect the worst of neighbouring villages who, they think, will, given the chance, seize some of their land. Headmen and villagers would refuse to cross the boundary into another village when they accompanied me during my investigations, lest they be accused of contemplating appropriation of the land there. Such aliens who still retained land in a village were regarded with some animosity. Nyakyusa would not look beyond their own village boundaries in an attempt to make an appreciation of the modern overall land situation. They evident only tenaciously to cling to what they already had and to guard it jealously; they were only too inclined to believe that other villagers nearby were better off and to use them as scapegoats for their own difficulties and shortage. It must be said that this extreme insistence on village exclusiveness and the inviolability of village boundaries has in fact tended to make for a certain inequality of land-holding according to the perceptiveness and alertness with which people have claimed authority over formerly vacant lands. This condition is, however, overaggregated in men's claims today, and in any case it is tending to disappear under the pressure of inter-village movement.

The Nyakyusa village in the Lake Plains, with its intensified independence and aggressive exclusiveness, and jealous of its believed permanent boundaries, has not at the same time been able to retain its traditional central basis. Whereas formerly the youths of a village moved to one side, there to build their own hamlet and eventually to acquire their own fields in association with its establishment as a full village in its own right, now this is no longer feasible or even possible, for the land is not available for this sort of expansion. The young men are driven back on a dependence on the fields already held by their fathers in the old village. They gradually move into their fathers' places and take over the parental holdings; or, as we have seen, they seek elsewhere for new allocations in any other village where they can gain admittance. The central basis of village living is lost.

The boys and youths will leave their fathers' homes and build their own, small huts together on a site somewhere adjacent to the main village site,

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

died of wounds and fever. Because the Europeans lacked arms the war dragged on,[1] and the power of the slavers was finally broken only in 1895, when Sir Harry Johnston came up the Lake with a well-armed force.[2]

German missionaries of the Berlin and Moravian missions arrived in 1891, and established themselves at a number of stations in Nyakyusa country.[3] The Songwe had by that time been agreed upon as the boundary between Nyasaland and German East Africa, and the German administration followed hard on the heels of the missionaries.[4] Twenty years later war broke out between England and Germany; there was fighting throughout Rungwe district, and many Nyakyusa were impressed as carriers. The absorption of the Nyakyusa into a world society was considerably accelerated by war.

d. *The form of Nyakyusa society*

Not only was the Nyakyusa valley long isolated from the outside world, but it was divided into a number of small, independent chiefdoms, whose members had few dealings with people beyond their own chiefdoms and those immediately adjoining. Each family produced for its own needs, so that trade was the merest trickle; and marriage outside the boundaries of the chiefdom was discouraged, since beyond the jurisdiction of one's own chief there was no security for life and property. A plea against a man of a neighbouring chiefdom might not be heard by the defendant's chief. Nyakyusa men enlarged to us on the dangers and difficulties of travelling even twenty miles from home, before the coming of the Europeans; a journey from Selya to Tukuyu (twenty-five miles) was said to take three days, because travellers had to seek cover as often.

The number and size of chiefdoms varied; for a continuous process of splitting, together with periodical conquest and re-absorption, was going on and, as we have seen, the area of Nyakyusa occupation was expanding. In 1938 the Nyakyusa themselves

[1] Leonard, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 50–60.
[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa* (1897), p. 143.
[3] A. Mennicke, *Deutsche Arbeit am Nyasa* (1898); T. Hamilton, *Twenty Years of Pioneer Missions in Nyasaland* (1901).
[4] F. Fülleborn, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, Band IX (1906).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

●631 recognized over 100 chiefdoms, mustering anything from 100 to 3,000 adult men apiece.

Although no centralized political authority existed before the
769 German occupation, certain groups of chiefdoms joined in com-
631 mon rituals directed to common ancestors. We traced four such centres of worship among the Nyakyusa; the most important being Lubaga, in the middle of the valley, where Kings priests (from the top of the Livingstone mountains) join with many Nyakyusa chiefdoms in sacrifice to Lwembe, who is claimed as the ancestor both of the chiefs of the Nyakyusa proper, and of the Kings. At LiKyala, on the Lake-shore plain, Kings also join in sacrifice with the surrounding Nyakyusa chiefdoms. In Ngonde the chief connected with a similar centre of worship, Mbande, developed far-reaching secular as well as religious powers; and by the time the Europeans arrived he was established as a paramount chief with the title of the Kyungu. This development was
[439] directly connected with the fact that Ngonde traded with the outside world, and that their Kyungu, through his control of ivory, was able also to control the guns and cloth which came into the country:[1] the Nyakyusa, remaining isolated, remained politically disunited.

Besides sacrificing to a distant ancestor in company with the representatives of a large group of chiefdoms, two or more chiefs who are neighbours participate in a sacrifice at the grove in which their common father, or grandfather, is buried. Thus common worship links both large groups of chiefdoms, whose chiefs are more or less distantly related, and small groups of contiguous chiefdoms whose chiefs are close kinsmen. The sacrifices made are to the chiefs of immediately preceding generations, and to certain great heroes of the distant past, such as Lwembe and Kyala.

769 All these sacrifices are believed to bring rain and fertility, for
769 the well-being of each chiefdom is thought to be bound up with the health of the chief and the goodwill of his ancestors.

The Nyakyusa are all agreed that their chiefs, *abanyafyale*, are
173 'strangers' who came down from the Livingstone mountains
622 eight or ten generations ago, and found the valley already occu-
563 pied by people who had no knowledge of fire, but ate their food raw. The chiefs brought fire with them—some say, cattle also;

[1] Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., pp. 9, 30-38.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

the establishment of the mother of an heir in each, the future division of the country is foreshadowed. Finally, it is the occasion on which power is formally handed over to the younger generation, and the success of the new headmen as war leaders is put to the test.

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c. Relations between villages within one chiefdom

Within each chiefdom, then, there are two sides, each under a senior headman. On each side are two or more age-villages of contemporaries of the chief—men of the ruling generation. Attached to these villages are boys' villages made up of the younger brothers and sons of contemporaries of the chief. They live separately from their fathers and may have their own village leaders, but legally each boys' village is subject to the authority of the headman of its parent village. On each side there are also two or more villages of old men, contemporaries of the chief's father, whose headmen have ritual functions. Each village established at a 'coming out' ceremony has considerable autonomy under its own headman, but it is subject to the senior headman of the side it belongs to in two ways: cases not settled by a village headman go to the senior headman of the side, and a senior headman leads the villages of his side in war and communal hunts. Even villages of old men are subject to the authority of the senior headman of the ruling generation on the side of the country where they live. Boys and young men of the generation which had not yet 'come out' used to fight and hunt as village groups under the leadership of the senior headman (of their fathers' generation) on the side of the country to which they belonged. Whether or not each boys' village was also subject in war and chase, as in legal disputes, to the authority of the headman of its parent village is not clear. Certainly each boys' village formed a defined segment within any larger group.

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To recapitulate, there are always villages of three generations in existence—those of contemporaries of the late chief, the headmen of which have ritual functions; those of mature men, contemporaries of the ruling chief, whose headmen have administrative and military functions; and those of boys and young men, contemporaries of the heir, who have not yet 'come out', and who fight under the leadership of their fathers' senior headman.

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[63] Sometimes, as we shall see presently, villages of a fourth generation exist also.

561 621 Each age-grade, or generation, covers a span of 30 to 35 years, and each village comprises an age-set with a span of 5 to 8 years, though this is longer in sub-chiefdoms (*vide infra*, p. 37). The average age of members in each grade varies with the date of the last 'coming out' ceremony. Just before the ceremony the elders with ritual functions are those over 65 or 70; the mature men of the ruling generation those between 35 and 65; and the 'boys' who have not yet come out, those between 10 and 35. Just after the ceremony the ruling generation consists of those between about 10 and 35, anyone over 35 being an elder. Those just too young to participate in one 'coming out' may be just too old to participate in the next. The village of Katumba in Mwaipopo's country was in this position: it had been created after the 'coming out' of the young chief Mwankuga, but informants were uncertain whether or not it would be established as a separate village at the 'coming out' of his heir Mwanyilu (*vide* Document, p. 183).

622 643 561 621 The two senior headmen of a new chiefdom are chosen from the two senior villages established at a 'coming out' ceremony, so that a commoner's chance of holding high office increases when he is just a little older than a chief's heirs. The senior village of one generation begets the senior villages of the next (*vide* Document, pp. 180-3). Thus, though the son of a village headman in one generation cannot become a village headman in the succeeding generation, there is a tendency for leadership within the chiefdom to pass from one *group* of men to their sons. Those who participate in a 'coming out' while very young tend to have least authority in the country, and are superseded when still under forty by the generation of their sons. The immediate contemporaries of a chief, i.e. those with whom he lives during boyhood, have a special bond with him all through life; and it may sometimes happen that when a chief dies young and is replaced by a brother (his own son being too young to inherit) a junior village comes into prominence because its members have been 'the companions' of the new chief. Bulindanajo in Mwaipopo's country was a village of this kind: Mwaipopo I had died young, and was succeeded by his brother Mwaipopo II ('Mwambene') who had 'come out' as a youth in Bulindanajo; and his immediate contemporaries from that village maintained a special bond with him.

Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

ovetically the territorial arrangement is one in which the (63)
s of the ruling generation lie at the centre of the country, (62)
surrounded by satellite villages of their sons, while smaller
s of old men lie on the boundaries. In practice—at least
days—the pattern is more complex, with old men's villages
ated in between those of the ruling generation. From the
of its establishment as a separate chiefdom at the 'coming
he future division of the country is adumbrated: there is a
headman in each half of the country with villages sub-
ate to him, and the mother of an heir in each half. On the
dary between the halves stand the ritual trees, landmarks
to see.

and locality coincide, while kinship cuts across local (2)
ing, fathers and sons, and very often brothers, being in (62)
ent villages. But kinsmen tend to be established in the same
f a country, and so to remain within one chiefdom. Kinship
are extended in some measure to the villages of the chief-
which are classified as those of 'our fathers', 'our elder
ers', 'our young brothers', and 'our sons'. Women have no [62]
share in the age-organization: their membership of a village
on their relationship to some man—father, husband, bro-
heir—and the age-range of women within one village is
wide.

ages vary considerably in size. Boys' villages, as we have (62)
begin with a dozen members or less, and the villages of old
are often very small also; we knew one with only 10 house-
, another with 11. The villages of young and middle-aged
ommonly vary between 20 and 30 households, with 30 as a
verage in the hills. In Mwaipopo's country there were 340
ges on the roll and we recorded 19 established villages and
' villages.[1] Some members of the boys' villages, and some
y men, were not on the tax-roll, so that the average was
20 boys or men in each village. Villages in the plain are
what larger, averaging around 40 households.

n's villages are usually subdivided into sections under the (62)
ship of assistant headmen, appointed by the headmen of the (62)
. These assistants do not share in the 'coming out' cere-

[1] See p. 19, n. 1. The tax registers are no guide to the number of villages
n, there several villages are commonly lumped together as one under a
village headman.

●631 In the chiefdom of Mwaipopo,[1] with which we were well acquainted, there are three such minor chiefdoms. In one no heir survived; but the heirs in the other two went through the 'coming out' ceremony with their superior chiefs, and the young men from each of the three formed a separate village, attached to one or other of Mwaipopo's two heirs. How many generations these subordinate chiefdoms survive as separate groups is not certain: the three in Mwaipopo's country were chiefdoms of his junior brothers which had lost their independence to him. In his case four brothers had 'come out' together, and the senior had conquered the others. Probably at the coming out of Mwaipopo's grandson these subordinate chiefdoms will appear only as villages, and no heir from them will be treated as a chief.

This formation of subordinate chiefdoms is a traditional variation of the standard pattern still going on. There are further modifications which are modern.

f. Modern modifications

683 177 In 1926, as has been noted, the British Administration created new 'Native Authorities'. The traditionally independent chiefs of the Nyakyusa were grouped together into eleven court districts,[1] and in each district a 'Native Court' was set up, consisting of the various chiefs and their village headmen, under the hereditary presidency of one of the chiefs, who thereby became senior to all the others in that Court district. Salaries for chiefs were introduced, the senior chiefs receiving far higher salaries than the others; the meetings of each Court are now always held in the territory of the senior chief (*umalifyale umkulwende*), and to this Court has been transferred a great deal of the legal business which, before 1926, was transacted by each chief sitting with his own village headmen in his own chiefdom. The chiefs themselves were consulted in the selection of the Court presidents, and those chosen were normally the chiefs with the greatest number of men in each particular Court district.

The introduction of salaries has had a profound effect upon the relative status of the two young chiefs who 'come out' together. When an ordinary chief, with a small salary, dies, the Government recognizes the first son alone as chief and pays the whole

[1] There are two other courts in Rungwe district for Ndali and Lambya.

1. VILLAGES IN MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM (1958)

Information from numerous informants

Chief's [illegible]	Chief	Sub-Chief	Senior Headmen	Headmen	Village	Category	Legal Authority	Remarks
1	Mwaipopo[1]		Nyakuba		[illegible]	Senior village of Mwaipopo		Village survives only [illegible]
				Kiangoro	Tabi			Not surviving
			Senior [illegible]		[illegible]	Second senior village of Mwaipopo	Senior matrilineal [illegible]	Village survives with 12 [illegible]
				Mwaiwoto (Mwaipopo's[2] kinsmen)	Kalanda			Not surviving
				Mwajilikiyoto (Kapelele)	Tawala			Not surviving
2	Mwaipopo / [illegible] of Mwaipopo		Mwaipopo (Young man?) [illegible]		[illegible]	Senior village of Mwaipopo. Home of Lyoola and Tabi	Mwaipopo. Mwaipopo's [illegible]	Coming out of Mwaipopo I and his brother was in this village. Mwaipopo at present living in [illegible]

1. The name of villages of Mwaipopo, before of Mwaipopo, have perished; the names of Lyoola and Tabi will be forgotten when Mwaipopo (generation [illegible]) dies.
2. Italics indicate that the person listed is dead.
3. Informants were not agreed about the relative status of villages and headmen of Mwaipopo's town.
4. Most individuals are known by more than one name—we include only those we were in contact with.

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VILLAGES OF NWAUPONYO CHIEFDOM (1956)—*contd.*

Serial No.	Chief	Sub-Chief	Senior Headman	Headman	Village	Category	Legal Authority	Remarks
[illegible]	Nwaupongo II (Kalonga) [illegible]			Kanyala (Kalonga's [illegible])	Kalonga[1]		Kanyala	Kanyala, after buried Nwaupongo I [illegible]
					Lusunzi[2]	Other sections of Kalonga	No separate leader	Consists of 15 men who moved at 'coming out' of Nwaupongo from Kalonga. The elder men decided, having their younger contemporaries [illegible], etc.) in Kalonga. Kanyala born here, also Kanyala the sub-chief. Actually a section of Kalonga
					Chaulindi	'Younger' sections of Nwaupongo, who lived with him', i.e. sons of the greatest kin	Nwaupongo[illegible] (Sub-Chief) [illegible]	Chaulindi buried Nwaupongo I
						'Children of Kalonga'		Not established as a separate village at 'coming out' of Nwaupongo, but actually a section of Kalonga
				Nwaunda	Nwaunda	Much younger (first men) of Kalonga and Kalonga and Kalonda	Nwaunda	Nwaunda II originally lived here. There was [illegible] a Nyala [illegible] Nwaunda and Nyala [illegible] p. 184).
		Likungulu		Nwaulindu	Nwaulindu		Nwaulindu	

[1] Headmen having direct authority over his own village, each senior headman has authority over other villages established at the 'coming out' with their own headmen (see p. 181). The villages subordinate to such senior headmen are listed in column 2 immediately under his own village.

[2] Lusunzi is functionally separate, and spoken of as a separate village, but structurally it is really a section of Kalonga. Other villages of this type are underlined thus ———.

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Nyakyusa

VILLAGES OF MWAUPONYA CHIEFDOM (1955—cont.)

Serial No.	Chief	Sub-Chief	Name Variations	Sub-area	Village	Category	Legal Authority	Remarks
[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
				[illegible] (Mwaulowe)	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]			[illegible]
		[illegible]		[illegible] (Ecole)	[illegible]			
[illegible]	[illegible] / [illegible]		[illegible] (Mzu Lage)		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]				[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
				[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]
				[illegible] (Mwaulowe)	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

VILLAGES IN NEW-LOYOLA CONFIRMATION (1901) - cont.

Serial No.	Chief	Sub-Chief	Name (English)	Employer	Village	Category	Legal Authority	Remarks
[illegible]	[illegible]				[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
					[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]
				[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
				[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
				[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
		[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	

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VILLAGES IN MWAPUTCH CHIEFDOM (1931—cont.)

Serial Nos.	Chief	Sub-Chief	Headman (Headman)	Headman	Village	Category	Legal Authority	Remarks
10	Mwapuchi, Lubale (or Jasen Ali)			Kwa, yet an gadzi of Mwapuchi has one pile cotton [illegible]	Kyagwa	Kwa of Ignatio	Mwachiyala	"Mwapuchi with some sub-kwa"
				"	Kwaga	Kyagwa area of Ignatio and Kyagwa	Mwachiyala	"Mwapuchi with build kwa kwa"
				"	Kiage	Kwa of Chief and Mpinge	Small area to Mwapuchi, Section sale to Kwaga	Cross-boundaries are marked
				"	Ignatio	Kyagwa Headman of Kiage	"	Kwa yet a-cotel
				"	Kwagwa	"	"	Kwa yet marked
				"	Gadzi (Lubale section)	Kwa of Gadzi		

Nineteen independent villages established at the 'coming out' ceremonies of Mwapuchi, Kwaiyeri and Kwaiyage marries.
There are five village-groups treated in some reports as practically independent villages. These are cross village-divisions which are not independent.
There are six local villages, not yet established, but likely to be recognized at the 'coming out' of Mwapuchi.
The dividing line between village and village-section is difficult to determine since villages have split after the 'coming out' ceremony. Pap have been established, as did Kyagwa. The recognition of Gadzi as a separate village and not Sub-village is somewhat arbitrary.

It is to be noted that villages will only sub-divide but exceptionally coalesce. Two independent villages established at the 'coming out' of Kwaiyage (indicated by asterisk) after the death of the headman of one of them.
The additional signature in section is that Kwaiyage's country has not been divided or sub-divided into independent distributaries.

4: Taw E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Sukwa, Wenya, Lambya, are politically subordinate, but culturally distinct.[1] They are probably remnants of the original inhabitants of the country. But Wilson also mentions elsewhere that the *Nkuli* and *Lambya* of the upper Songwe river are two cultural groups closely related to the Nyakyusa.[2] We know that many of the small independent neighbours of the Ngonde are related to each other (*Tumbuka, Wandya*, and *Fungwe*),[3] their political independence being mainly due to the mountainous nature of their country.[4] Many of their names, which we take to represent distinct tribes, are merely locality names,[5] and some of the names which appear on the Tribal Map of East Africa represent only very small groups of people: for example, the *Tumbu*, between the Iwa and the Lunangwa river, were estimated in 1911 to be only 700 strong.[6] These peoples are most probably remnants of the original Tumbuka[7] cluster, and through them belong to the Nyanja-Cewa group; some of them may possibly have been forerunners of the *Bisa-Senga* immigration from the Congo, or they may have affiliations with the tribes of Tanganyika, *Fipa* or *Safwa*. It is unprofitable, on the existing information, to speculate on their original ethnic grouping, and impossible, without a survey in the country itself, to discover their present cultural affinities. At present their geographical position is the only *criterion* for grouping them together in the Ngonde cluster. The *Hangu* to the south of the Ngonde are an exception. Their arrival in the country is a matter of historical knowledge,[8] and they certainly belong, not to the Ngonde, but to the Tumbuka cluster.

Similar difficulties are found on the east side of Lake Nyasa. The *Wangi* and *Pawiri* north of the Kinga, the *Pangwa* and *Matengo* on the south, and small tribes on the lake coast, the *Kiu, Sumbu, Mpoto*, &c., appear as names on the maps, but little else is known of them.

Dr. Meinhard considers that the Nyamwanga and Iwa on the west, and the Kinga and Pangwa on the east, are culturally too dissimilar to be counted in the same group with the Ngonde and Nyakyusa.[9] However, information about these peoples is so scanty that it has been necessary in any case to base this report on the Ngonde and Nyakyusa, which have been studied by Godfrey Wilson.

History

As far as available information is concerned, only the history of the Ngonde has been recorded, and it would also seem as if this is the only one of the related groups which has developed a centralized political system, except the Nyamwanga and Iwa. The Nyakyusa, as they spread westwards, were ruled by a number of petty chiefs, each of whom was succeeded by two or more sons, who carved out separate chieftaincies in the new land into which they were expanding. There was no paramount political authority, but a number of tiny chieftaincies, some of which to-day exceede 3,000 adult males, and some of which are far smaller than that. To-day about 100 traditionally

[1] Wilson, 1, supra, p. 2.

[2] On the other hand, the Mbeya District Handbook records that the Lambya are related to the Nyakyusa, and the Nyika have affinities with the Lambya, but the Nkuli are of a different origin.

[3] Cardinall, 1931a, pp. 3 and 38. [4] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 16.

[5] Gerhardt, 1931 (Evidence for Young, T. C.). [6] Gouldsbury and Sheane, 1911, p. 16.

[7] See Young, T. C., 1, supra, p. 60: 'For back in the hills . . . there exists still a Nyika people whose speech has been much less interfered with by the invasions, and which apart from dissimilarity in some chief points, is not far removed from Tumbuka-Kamanga speech.'

[8] Langworthy, 1899, vol. 1, p. 91. [9] Professor M. Wilson mentioned this.

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4: Tew E4 (no date) 1950 F317 Ngonde F317

175 631 independent chiefs have been grouped into eleven court districts, with one chief as President of the Native Court in each. These chiefs, with two presidents of the Ndali and Lambya courts, are federated, and possess one Appeal Court and joint Native Treasury between them.[1]

The following is a summary of the history of the Ngonde, south of the Songwe river:

173 Ngonde tradition records that about 200 years ago a chief of the Kinga, Ngulowe, had two grandsons, Lwembe (from whom descended the Nyakyusa) and Chaware (from whom came the Ngonde, the Iwa, and the Nyamwanga).[2] Chaware left Ukinga and wandered west and south as far as Nkamanga, the capital of the Tumbuka country, returning thence to capture Mbande from Simbowe, the indigenous chief.[3] After this the local chiefs accepted him as their overlord, and he confirmed their status with public gifts of cloth, much as Mlowoka had done with the Tumbuka. There is little information about these earlier inhabitants, but it seems likely that they were similar to the Tumbuka, before the latter were conquered by Mlowoka.[4] There is an old tradition that Mlowoka and Chaware knew each other in their former home, and that their meeting at Nkamanga was as one between equals, at which the boundaries between their territories were formally arranged. According to Tonga tradition certain details of the accompanying ritual and the fact of his prior arrival show Mlowoka to have been recognised by Chaware as a higher authority, but this interpretation together with the circumstantial evidence are repudiated by the Ngonde tradition.[5]

175 Opinions differ as to the actual date of the arrival of the first Ngonde ruler, Kyungu. He came accompanied by five leading men, and was accepted as overlord by the local chiefs. The latter, with the immigrants, formed a class of hereditary nobles, *amahambale*, who divided into two groups according to whether they lived at Mbande (the nobles of Ngonde)[6] or whether they lived at a distance (territorial nobles).[7] Later immigrants joined one or the other group. These nobles ruled the country. The Kyungus, enriched by the ivory trade, were credited with divine powers, and lived in strict religious seclusion. Most of their male children were killed at birth by the nobles of Ngonde, and if they themselves fell sick they were killed. A constitutional change took place after the accession of the tenth Kyungu, Mwangonde: the killing of the sons of the Kyungu was stopped, and such was the prestige of the royal blood that they began to displace the territorial nobles as rulers. The sons of the Kyungu became hereditary chiefs, *ewanyfyale*, each of whom was succeeded by two or more sons, who divided the territory between them as the Nyakyusa do. Each territorial noble was succeeded by only one heir. The effect of this branching of new chiefdoms was to create a number of hierarchies of small chiefdoms under one head, the great chief.[8] The relation of these political units to each other, and to the central authority at Mbande, will be considered in the section on Social Organization.

When the Ngoni first attacked the Ngonde, Mwakasungula was the first Kyungu

[1] Wilson, J. 1938, pp. 12–13, gives seven districts, but the number has been increased.
[2] Ibid., J. 1936, p. 9; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 20–3; Young, T. C., c. 1932, p. 56.
[3] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 305–6.
[4] Young, T. C., c. 1932, pp. 60–1.
[5] Ibid., pp. 57–60: Young also believes that they originally came from the River Chari, near Lake Chad (1933, p. 7).
[6] Wilson's terminology.
[7] Wilson, J. 1936, p. 9; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 68–9.

6: Tow E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

Only the Ngonde, the Nyamwanga, and the Iwa seem to have had any paramount authority. Of these, only that of the Ngonde has been described in detail. The Nyamwanga had a paramount chief, the Mukowa, living over the border in Tanganyika. Under him the Northern Rhodesian Nyamwanga were always ruled by his sister, the Wawuka; directly under her were the headmen of villages. The Mukowa used to appoint his own sons or selected friends to be headmen of the larger villages. A annual tribute, mainly fish, was sent by the Wawuka to the Mukowa, and the latter could also command annual labour in his gardens. The Iwa also had a paramount chief, Kalwindi, who recognized common ancestry with the Mukowa but paid him no tribute. His country was divided into two sections, under two sub-chiefs, Mpanga and Tembya. The succession to the chieftaincy is normally the same as commoner succession, i.e. brothers, then sons of the deceased, but the order need not be rigidly adhered to.[1]

Nonnon Traditional System

The section on history briefly indicated the position of the Kyungu. He was wealthy, owing to the ivory trade, and used his wealth to maintain political links with the chiefs and nobles of the country. At the same time he was kept in strict religious seclusion, and the real government of the country was in the hands of the nobles of Ngonde, a group of hereditary nobles, descendants of the original companions of the first Kyungu. The relations of the great chiefs (descendants of sons of Kyungu) and the territorial nobles to the capital allowed of considerable local autonomy, the Kyungu's prestige being mainly religious. Each territorial noble was succeeded by one son; each chief was succeeded by two or more sons, so that the chieftains tended to supplant the territorial nobles in importance and number, and the junior branches of the house of any one great chief formed a hierarchy based on descent. The great chiefs, at their accession, were recognized by the Kyungu with gifts of cloth, and they brought the junior chiefs of their house to perform hoeing service, *mlimo*, for the Kyungu. Afterwards the junior chiefs performed *mlimo* for their great chief, and were similarly rewarded with entertainment. The great chief might invite the territorial nobles in his neighbourhood to accompany him in performing *mlimo*, but he could not command them as he could his junior chiefs. Apart from recognizing a certain authority of superior chiefs in judicial matters, and the right of the latter to command them to hoe, or in war, the junior chiefs had almost complete autonomy in their chieftaincy.[2]

Each chief had a traditional right to demand from his own subjects milk and bananas if he needed them, and to evict any man he pleased if he desired the site for his personal use or to give to a Nyamwanga (not to a commoner), offering the evicted tenant another site.[3]

The chieftains' council of a number of age-villages, older and younger men living apart with their own contemporaries. At the head of each age-village was a headman (called 'great commoner' by Wilson) chosen from among the villagers by the chief

[1] Cardinal, 1914, pp. 44-5.
[2] Ibid., 1, 1938, pp. 48-9.
[3] In the absence of information I do not know whether the following description of Ngonde and Nyakyusa chieftains and age-villages is capable of a wider application.

[4] Wilson, 1, 1938, p. 64.

4. Tow E-4 (no date) 1953 FRIT Ugande Fb.

and the great commoners of the most senior villages. The constitution of a chiefdom was that of a limited monarchy, for the chief was dependent on his great commoners for his authority. All the way up the scale, with the exception of the Kyoyo himself, each chief had his own great commoners and people directly subordinate to him. The organization of families and villages within the chiefdoms was the same as that of the Nyakyusa, but the organization of a territory ruled by a noble differed in that although there were always at least two age-villages, there were no great commoners.[1]

Villages vary in size, and average from forty to fifty households. In the few instances a new village is built on ground allotted to them by the village of their fathers, but a new allotment is made communally at the 'coming out', ceremony of the young chiefs, when the old chief and his great commoners formally allot a tract of land to each village of young men, and redraw the boundaries.

In every generation each chiefdom was divided into two (they were originally immigrant groups expanding their territory, and incorporating previous inhabitants). The chief at his accession, or 'coming out', married two 'great wives', whose eldest sons would each be one of his two heirs, and divide his chiefdom. The number of villages which 'came out' with each young chief varied between four and eight. If he was later reduced to a minor position he might be left with only one village of adult men, and one of their sons, as people tended to move away from minor chiefdoms. This was the system which obtained among the Nyakyusa and also among the Nyamwezi.[2] A summary of the 'coming out' ritual is given here, instead of in the section on ritual, as it indicates some of the features of the political organization.

Usually eight age-villages 'came out' at the same time, four under each of the young chiefs. At this occasion, some thirty years after the old chief's accession, eight new great commoners were chosen. The two young chiefs were secluded for a few hours in the hut of the old chief's first wife, and received magical treatment. Then they 'came out'. The boundaries of the age-villages were forcibly drawn. After the 'coming out', each young chief, whether he was already married or not, married his two great wives, whose first sons would be his heirs. Girls who had not yet reached puberty were carried off from other chiefdoms with a show of force by the chief's men, who later sent some of their own to regularize the position. The girls stayed at the house of one of the old chief's men until their first menstruation. They were initiated together, not at the house of their fathers, but in the country of their husbands; the old men and women of the country (consequences of the retiring chief) played the part usually played by the girl's parents and neighbours; the chief and his young men playing the usual part of the bridegroom and his friends. After the ceremonies the girls were given as wives to the young chiefs, and separate huts were built for them in the two senior age-villages of the chiefdom. Wives married subsequently were attached in order of seniority to one or other of the two 'sides' of the chiefdom. Thus the four age-villages normally attached to a young chief were, from the first days of his official marriage, divided into two. If one of the two great wives bore no sons, the succession for that side of the chiefdom would pass to the son of the next senior wife of that side.

Between the 'coming out' of two young chiefs and the death of their own father, a delicate balance of prestige and power was maintained, similar power over their own age-villages passing to each young chief, while the old chief retained control over the

[1] Wilson, 1. 1939, pp. 10-9.

[2] Ibid., 1. 1938, pp. 10-13.

S:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[32] [33] twenty miles from Lake Nyasa (1,300 feet). A little compact country, [33] secluded until very recently from any effective external contacts, slightly over 1,000 square miles in extent.[5]

[32] The soil, particularly that of the higher ground in the north of the [34] Nyakyusa country, is not in itself very rich, but, as between 100 and 130 [34] inches of rain usually fall each year, the district is one of the most fertile [34] in the whole of Tanganyika; two crops a year are often grown on the same patch of ground, and the African population is over eighty to the square [28] mile. There is no infected tsetse fly and cattle are the most prized possession of the Nyakyusa.

[63] For historical reasons, which we will discuss in a later section, the Nyakyusa have never been united under any one paramount chief of their own, but live in a number (nearly 100 at the present day) of tiny but traditionally independent chieftdoms. For these chieftdoms the numerous streams which run down from the north into Lake Nyasa and the crests of the ridges of land between them, form natural boundaries.

[33] The country, of course, is not all of equal economic value, parts of it [34] are stony and mountainous, other parts, and particularly the plain in the north, consist of deep and level soil; and the population is heavier on the plain than on the higher ground. Further, on the higher ground, there exist numerous old volcanic craters filled with rich moist soil and these, being more fertile than the surrounding land, are particularly valued by [26] the Nyakyusa. Again, of the two chief economic crops of this district, one, coffee, can only be grown on the higher ground while the other, rice, can only be grown on or near the plain. And at every point their system of land tenure is partially determined by such physical factors as these.

3. *THE USES AND VALUE OF LAND*

[31] The Nyakyusa use their land for building on, for agriculture, for pasture, for hunting and fishing; they collect firewood, reeds, thatching-grass, mushrooms and other wild vegetables there; they draw water from its streams and bathe daily in them; on their land they grow bamboos, bananas, *mwyanguti* trees[6] and coffee; they keep bees; they dance, they fight, they walk and lie down upon it; their land is both the receptacle of refuse and the location of religious ritual, while their doctors continually wander over its surface in search of magical medicines.

Not all these uses of land give rise to laws, moral rules or conventions, but only those uses which tend to lead men into conflict with one another or into mutual embarrassment. The only reasons for the existence of

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[5] The whole of Rungwe District is 1,800 square miles, but this includes the hills of the Nkuli and Lundayo as well.

[6] I have not been able to discover the botanical name of this tree.

S:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

585 and children a man has to assist him the more wealth he can produce. The man and his unmarried sons hoe, his wives and young daughters plant, weed and harvest, fetch water, cut firewood and cook the food; and in other practical activities there is equally fruitful co-operation within the household group.

591 When a man marries he takes his wife from her father's village to his
620 own where he lives with a group of contemporaries. Each village is in
622 origin an age-group, formed by the sons of some village of adult men who leave home one by one as they reach the age of ten to twelve years and build together on ground set aside for them by their fathers. It is not decent, the Nyakyusa maintain, for a boy to sleep at home after any vigorous interest in sexual activity has awakened in him; and so, for the fifteen years or more between leaving home and marriage, he sleeps with bachelor friends in a boys' village. He and a group of friends go round in turn to the houses of their respective parents for meals, and each hoes his own parents' fields, but all return to the boys' village at night.

621 As the members of the boys' village grow older, younger boys just
622 leaving home begin to be refused admittance to it and so either start a
621 fresh village of their own nearby or else join a village of their own contemporaries which has already been started. Boys' villages are thus forever living off from the villages of men. At first a boys' village covers but little ground for, as its members are unmarried, the houses are small and close together and there are no garden lands attached to it. But as the young men marry one by one the village expands, houses are built bigger and further apart and some adjacent ground is brought under cultivation, until at last it assumes the normal aspect of a village of adult men.

621 A village thus consists of a male age-group with wives and children attached. Wives may be of any age and there is no such formal age grouping among them as among the men. And, as time goes on, some men too may enter the village who are not exact contemporaries of its other members. When a man dies his heir, either a younger brother or a son, often comes to live in his village; nor are strangers who apply for land in a village ever, I think, refused on the ground of unsuitable age. Villages vary considerably in size but average forty to fifty households.

At first a village of boys, as we have said, is built on ground allotted to it by the village of their fathers; but a new allotment is made ceremonially at the "coming out" (ubusoke) of the young chiefs.

•631 Every generation each chiefdom of the Nyakyusa is divided into two
622 halves, a fact which is hard to understand until it is realized that the Nyakyusa consist of a number of immigrant groups which have, until very recently, been expanding their territory within the district and

S:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

incorporating the previous inhabitants. Now saturation point has been reached; their chiefdoms cover nearly all the available land and include in their membership all the indigenous people; and the custom of dividing chiefdoms into two is doomed. At the moment, however, it is still a vital part of their constitutional law. The division of a chiefdom is apparent from the moment that a ruling chief marries his two great wives, for he builds their houses separately, one in each "side" (ulubafu) of his chiefdom. The sons of each great wife inherit that side of the chiefdom in which his mother's house is built. 631 622

When the ruling chief begins to get old the two heirs are ceremonially "brought out" and recognized as chiefs, though they do not assume full powers until their father's death. And their "coming out" is also the "coming out" of all the young men, of all the boys' villages which have been built by the sons of the old chief's men. At the "coming out" each such village is formally given land by the old chief and his great-commoners, often in a new place. 622 621

In every village there is a headman whose title, aliftuma, is simply a specialized use of the general term for a member of an old family who is not a chief. Every commoner is called an aliftuma in his home chiefdom.[1] These two uses of the term I distinguish by calling the village headman a "great-commoner." Great-commoners, then, are selected for their wealth and ability by the older great-commoners of the chiefdom and hold office for life. In the boys' villages before the "coming out" they are chosen by the older great-commoners—those in charge of their fathers' villages—on that side of the chiefdom. If they prove satisfactory their appointments are confirmed by all the great-commoners of the old chiefdom at the "coming out," if not new ones are then selected. 621 624

At the "coming out" the young great-commoners are ritually treated with medicines to give them the power of witchcraft which they are expected to use in the interests of morality, while the young chiefs are treated with medicines to make them fierce and impressive themselves and to ensure the fertility of their land and the prosperity of the people under them. [79] [80]

Traditionally the young chiefs assumed authority, each in the young men's villages which composed his own new chiefdom, immediately after the "coming out" and in the old villages in one side of his father's chiefdom when his father died. To-day the position differs for the Administration does not recognize the young chiefs at all until their father is dead. 621 622

The separation of chiefdoms established at the "coming out" is often modified subsequently. In the old days brother chiefs frequently

[1] Vide infra p. 23.

S:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 622 fought each other and one was sometimes reduced to a subordinate position by the other. Such subordinate or minor chiefs did not always lose all power, some men often continued to live with them, but not many, for they were poor and could not afford the feasts that prosperous and powerful chiefs gave to their warriors. Nowadays the junior of the two young chiefs, in the majority of cases, becomes subordinate to his brother immediately, for the Administration normally recognizes the senior of the two only, and a salary is paid to him alone on the old chief's death.

The number of villages which "come out" with each young chief usually varies between four and eight. But if a chief is subsequently reduced to a minor position he will often end his life with one village only of adult men and one village of their sons. For people move from minor [629] chiefdoms and the depleted villages that are left gradually coalesce under the leadership of one of the great-commoners. The son of a minor chief may succeed to his father's position, but only one son will do so; a minor chiefdom is too small to be divided and has no formal "coming out" of its own; its young men attend the "coming out" of the superior chiefdom.

621 623 So much in outline for the political constitution of the separate Nyakyusa chiefdoms. Some account of it was a necessary preface to the discussion of individual land rights, since it is within this political structure that they have validity. If, for example, the boundaries of a village are changed at the "coming out"—and they very frequently are—then no individual rights to village land can be maintained outside the new boundaries.

● 631 Prior to the arrival of the Europeans there was no paramount political authority among the Nyakyusa, but a number of tiny independent chiefdoms side by side, with minor chiefdoms in some cases attached to them. Of these traditionally independent chiefdoms there is none, I think, which to-day exceeds 3,000 adult male members, and most of them are far smaller than that. This smallness of scale, which is difficult at first for a European to grasp, is the fundamental characteristic of primitive society, in the organization of which personal relationships are predominant, wherein social relationships, that is, mainly subsist between personal acquaintances. In the old Nyakyusa polity impersonal relationships, effective social bonds linking together men who were personally unknown to one another, though they existed had relatively little importance.

648 184 Just south of the Nyakyusa, in what is now North Nyasaland, live the Ngonde[1] people, whose language and culture was and is very similar to that of the Nyakyusa. They were, however, slightly more civilized in that they were in closer contact with Arab and Swahili ivory traders; and

[1] Better known to Europeans as *Konde*.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

tion crowds the presence of some sons of other men's villages as well. Brothers, half-brothers and other relatives are sometimes members of the same village, but more often not; and if they do belong to the same village that is because they are near each other in age, and were born in the same village, not because they are kinsmen.

The members of the boys' village, which is now closed and no longer increases in numbers, continue to grow older, and after a time they begin to get married. Getting married, as we have seen, is often a gradual process; but it is not until he has his wife permanently with him that a young man can have fields of his own and eat their produce at his own place. The cultivation of land requires the co-operation of man and woman, cooking on any elaborate scale is a woman's business.

As the members of a boys' village marry the village does not move but it expands. The houses are built ever bigger and further apart and the adjacent land is brought under cultivation. The boys' village with which I am best acquainted is in this transitional stage; it has fifty-three members altogether, the majority of whom are single, but some few are married, cultivate their own fields with their wives and eat food cooked by their wives in their own houses. Of those who are single some again are betrothed to girls who visit them from time to time, but each still cultivates his father's fields, and eats at his father's home.

(c) The Men's Village

It is now necessary to understand the system of men's villages and the general political organization in which the boys' villages finally take their place.

The number of age-villages in one chiefdom, all the members of which are married, varies with different circumstances, but the most usual number is from six to twelve. The age system is only broken by moving or by death; when a man dies his heir usually comes and lives where the dead man was living in his age-village. There he inherits the wives, the huts, the cows and the land of his predecessor, he inherits the dead man's position in the village and often takes his personal name as well. The heir may be many years younger than his new neighbours but he is now treated as their contemporary, he sits with them at ceremonies, he shares their rights at any division of meat. The age system in the villages is also broken by moving, for a stranger may come and be granted land in a village even though he is considerably older or younger than the bulk of its members. But otherwise members of a village are roughly contemporaries.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

The Chieftain and Wider Groups

(a) *The "Coming Out"*

128 Space forbids a full description of the relationships of villagers in all their intricate detail, but a short description of the "Coming Out" (*mwaiko*) which is at the same time the most important legal act and the most exciting ceremonial of Nyakyusa life, will, I hope, make the nature of the age-village completely clear, and will also provide us with an easy transition to the discussion of the organization of the chieftdom (*ubwami*).

122 131 I have never seen a "Coming Out" properly; on one occasion I travelled to see one and arrived just a day late when all the important action and ceremonial was over, but I have had it fully described to me at different times by several people. Every chief (*umulangali*) is normally succeeded in his chieftainship by two sons, who divide his country between them. There are sometimes exceptions to this: in very large chieftdoms three or even four sons sometimes succeed, each taking a portion of the country; and in minor chieftdoms, that is in small chieftdoms which have come under the dominion of a neighbouring and powerful chief, only one son of the minor chief succeeds to the whole of that country.[10] But the rule is that two sons divide the country of their father. This rule worked well in the old days, for till quite lately the Nyakyusa have been an expanding people in a district too large for their needs; and the combined countries of the two sons nearly always, in the old days, covered a greater area of effective occupation than the country of their father which they had divided. Now saturation point is approaching, or has come, and the rule makes for ever smaller and smaller chieftdoms. Various forces are tending to the alteration of the rule, but it is still a vital part of the constitution. (*vide infra.*)

The "Coming Out" (*mwaiko*) is a series of legal acts by which the country of an old chief and his great commoners is, with certain reservations, divided and handed over into the possession and control of his two sons and their respective great commoners. These legal acts are accompanied by much pomp and ceremony. It is at once the initiation of all the youth of the old chieftdom into public life, the constitution of two new [196] political units and the proclamation of two new chiefs. The "Coming Out" not only consists of a series of legal acts and public ceremonies, but of religious ritual as well, action is taken to increase the personal qualities appropriate in a chief and his great commoners by magical means.

[10] These minor chieftdoms have nothing to do with the present system of subordinating some chiefs to others (*vide infra.* sec. (b))

8:WGem E-5 (1934-1936)936 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

When the eldest sons of his contemporaries reach the age of about 22-23 years the old chief is approached by his great commoners who say: "The sons have grown up, let us make the 'Coming Out' for them." After a period of delay, for he is unwilling to relinquish his own honour and power, the old chief agrees, and the "Coming Out" takes place. The two boys, together with all the boys and young men, whether married or single, who are sons of the old chief's contemporaries, are summoned to attend, according to their age-villages, at the old chief's principal house. When they arrive they wait there for two days, while the old great commoners discuss with their chief where to give the young men land, and whom they will select as great commoners of the young villages. We have already noted the principles which guide their choice of leaders. In many of the young village groups there are already leaders who have been previously appointed by the old great commoners, but these leaders are, I am told, only temporary, they are never reappointed at the "Coming Out;" at the "Coming Out" everything is made new, the boundaries of the young age-villages are redrawn, and new great commoners appointed in them; only the groups of young men themselves remain unchanged.

The legal action which now takes place comprises three events: firstly the public selection of new great commoners, secondly the public appearance and the public recognition of the two young chiefs, and thirdly the giving of land to the young age villages.

When the old men have made up their minds, one of them goes among the crowd of young men and catches hold of those they have chosen in order of their seniority: First the one who is to be leader of the senior village of the first son of the old chief, then the leader of the senior village of his second son, then the leader of the next senior village of the first son, and so on. There are usually eight age-villages of young men, of these four will belong to the chiefdom of the first son, four to that of the second. The eight new great commoners are now publicly known, four in each new chiefdom.

The next stage of the action is the one from which the whole institution takes its name; the "Coming Out." The two young chiefs are secluded for a few hours in the hut of the old chief's first wife, there they receive various forms of magical treatment and when it is finished, "then," to quote the words of a great commoner who told me about his own coming out, "the director of ceremonies said: 'Get up!' the chiefs got up, and came out of the house to us, and we, the crowd of young men, said: 'Come on!' and welcomed them. Then we all ran shouting and calling the war cry towards the next chiefdom. In the old days we would

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

630 have invaded that country for cows and brought them back and eaten them at the new huts which we built next. But that is finished now." In this way the new chiefs are shown to their people.

631 Finally the young men are told exactly where to go and build, and the boundaries between the new chiefdoms and the villages of each are fixed; the old boys' villages are abandoned and the houses gradually pulled down and put up in their new places. At first the men of the four age-villages of each young chief just put up rough shelters to sleep in, all together on the place where the senior age-village of each new chiefdom will later be built, but after a month or two they separate, each village to its own place, and there they build their houses.

The land is now their own, they are no longer members of boys' villages, living on land given them at the side of the parent villages by their fathers, they are owners of the soil, full citizens, with chief and great commoners to rule them.

(9) *Organization and Life of a Single Chiefdom*

632 633 A few months after the "Coming Out" each of the two young chiefs marries two wives. He may be married already, but the two whom he now takes rank as his great wives (*amabe amahlombe*) and their sons are his two heirs in the chieftainship. Young girls, daughters of neighbouring chiefs, are carried off with a show of force from their fathers' homes by the young chief's men, who, themselves, later send cows to regularize the position. The two great wives are thus married, not with the cows of their husband, but with those of the men whose sons their sons will one day rule.

634 635 636 Girls are carried off who are just about to reach puberty, and they stay at the house of one of the men of the old chief until their periods begin. When both have reached puberty they are initiated, not at their fathers' houses, but in the country of their husband, both together. At their initiation, the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the old, retiring, chief) play the part normally played by a girl's parents and their neighbours, while the young chief and his men take the usual part of a husband and his friends. And then, after the ceremonies are over, the two girls are given to the young chief as his wives. Houses are built for them separately: in the senior age-village of the new chiefdom for the first wife, in the next senior village for the second wife; and in this separation of dwelling place is already apparent the future division of the chiefdom between their sons.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Within the chiefdom, and among the wives and children of the chief, two "sides" (*mabafu*) are recognized. In the normal country there are, at its beginning, two age-villages and half the wives of the chief on either side; for the junior wives, as they are married, are attached in a recognized order of seniority to one or the other of the two great wives, and have their own houses near them. This distinction of two sides is important in succession. If one of the two great wives bears no son, then the great commoners of the chiefdom often publicly accept the son of the next senior wife on that side as the heir to that half of the country; and, even if they do not do so during the old chief's lifetime, such a man has always a strong claim to the succession. And the two heirs each rank as head of one side of their father's family when he and his full-brothers are all dead. §22 631

Between the time of the two young chiefs' "Coming Out" and their own father's death there is, between him and them, a delicate balance of prestige and power. Each of the three, traditionally, has political authority in his own age-villages, but appeals in difficult cases may be taken from either of the young chiefs and their great commoners to the old chief and his great commoners, while the religious duties of chieftanship are exercised entirely by the old chief. During this transition period the functions of chieftanship are divided between three men, each with his own great commoners to assist him. It is necessary to understand that an old chief is believed usually to die soon after the "Coming Out" of his sons. The "breath" (*i.e.* witchcraft) of the people is believed to kill him because men love his sons rather than himself. When I asked about one chief (Mwakalukwa) who did not die till about fifteen years after the "Coming Out" of his sons, I was told that his was an exceptional case; "The people loved him very much because he helped them with the Government." None the less such exceptions are not unusual. But, in any case, it is commonly said that "after his sons' 'Coming Out' the old chief's power decreases, while that of his sons increases." When he dies his wives and cows are inherited by his full-brother, and to this brother also passes the religious leadership of both the two new chiefdoms, but all general or political power now normally[18] passes to the two sons. The period of transition is over, and the control of the age-villages of old men now passes to the two young chiefs and their great commoners, half to each side. The great commoners of the old chief, relinquishing most of their secular functions to their successors, enter upon new religious duties as priests in the worship of the chief who has just died, and this priesthood, as we shall see, they hand on to their 631

[18] Certain recent events have altered the working of this rule in some chiefdoms. (*vide infra.*)

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631 sons. To the dead chief's full-brother go his wives and cattle, so that property and power are usually inherited separately; in all the cases which I have investigated however, this brother has himself given some of the cows to the young chiefs, but the reasons for his action are still obscure to me. In so far as the dead chief's brother is still the religious head of both chiefdoms the functions of chieftainship may be said still to be divided; but all the secular functions are now normally exercised by the young chiefs. And the religious functions also fall to them when all their father's full-brothers are dead.

Political authority is the general authority of one or more persons within a community, whether local or nomadic, which goes beyond the bounds of a single family; a leadership confined to no one type of behaviour, but ordering a variety of social activities. Such an authority is wielded by a Nyakyusa chief, together with his great commoners, in his own chiefdom. There a number of legal, economic, religious[11] and ceremonial activities are controlled by them; and there, before the coming of the Europeans, they had military leadership also. But before that event no men had any wide political authority beyond the single chiefdom. The chiefs of Lubaga[12] had a far-reaching religious pre-eminence, but no general or political influence at all beyond their own country.

622 578 The only extensions of political power beyond a single chiefdom before European times, as far as I know, arose from the rivalry of brother chiefs. The division of an old chief's country into two was not always accepted by the young men concerned; quarrels and fighting between them were common, and the position established at the "Coming Out" was sometimes modified by war. If one of the two decisively defeated the other, he took all his brother's cows and reduced him to a subordinate position. The land of the Nyakyusa is full of such minor chiefdoms; by the clerks who collect tax they are described as "villages," but they are 622 radically different from villages in their constitution. For, while they often consist only of a few score families, they are themselves articulated into age-villages and have at their head, not an elected great commoner (*alifumo*) but a hereditary chief (*umulafyale*). A minor chief marries in the ordinary way, like a commoner, and only one of his sons inherits his chieftanship; while his chiefdom, owing to its small size, is often simply divided into two villages, one for the old, one for the young men. To-day his position carries with it neither wealth nor power; he has some authority over his own people, but less than the great commoners of his powerful

[11] I am now speaking of the position of a chief after his father and all his father's full-brothers are dead, and before his own sons have "come out."
[12] *Vide infra*, sec: (c)

S:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

kinsmen. Though some of the reasons for his subordination are to be found in modern conditions, it is clear that many of the factors have always operated. 622

Wars did not only occur between brothers; but when one chief defeated another who was more distantly related to him, he did not, apparently ever, reduce him to a minor position: He either took his cows and then left him alone, or killed him and set up a brother of his own as an independent though allied chief, or else, more rarely, killed him, took over the country and directly incorporated it in his own. So that, apart from the subordination of a defeated brother and his heirs, political authority always stopped at the boundaries of each separate chiefdom.[14] 633 727

The traditionally independent chiefdoms to-day vary in numbers from 100 to about 3,000 adult men. 631 161

The coming of the German Administration in 1913 introduced a paramount political authority, for the first time, in the persons of European officials; while in 1926, a generation later, the British Administration created new Native Authorities under the District Officer and superior to the chiefs. The traditionally independent chiefs were grouped together in eleven court districts, in each district a "Native Court" was set up, consisting of the various chiefs and their great commoners, under the hereditary presidency of one of the chiefs, who thereby became senior to all the others in that court district. Salaries for chiefs have been introduced, and the senior chiefs receive far higher salaries than the others; while the meetings of each Court are always held in the territory of the senior chief (*omalafyale ophokomba*); and to it has now been transferred a great deal of the legal business which, before 1926, was transacted by each chief sitting with his own great commoners in his own chiefdom. The chiefs themselves were consulted in the selection of the Court Presidents, and those chosen were normally the chiefs with the greatest number of men in each particular court district. 636 177 [145]

In this account the term *senior chief* (*omalafyale ophokomba*) denotes the President of a Native Court, *chief* (*omalafyale*) means one of the traditionally independent chiefs, while *minor chief* (*omalafyale omwandi*) means one of the subordinate chiefs, often with only 40-60 men under him.

The introduction of Courts and salaries has brought an entirely new element into the relationship between old and young chiefs (*vide* 636 177 578

[14] Among the Konde of Nyasaland, I am told, there was a paramount chief Kyungu, with a far-reaching political authority; but there was no such chief among the Nyakyusa.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

marriages of his kinswomen. When his father dies his father's wives 622
and cows pass to his father's full-brother, but they come to him and his 519
brother eventually when this man dies. While, if the young chiefs have
" come out " it is common for their father's brother to hand over some,
or even the bulk of the cattle, to them before his own death. And in his
own half of the family, among his siblings and half-siblings on that side,
a chief has far greater rights both of inheritance and of receiving marriage-
cattle, than those possessed by the senior son of a commoner. So much
is clear from my evidence, but it is not yet sufficiently detailed for an
exact statement of rules.

Before 1893 fighting between chiefdoms was common and, except 631
between brother chiefs, the usual aim of fighting was, not conquest, but 721
cows; wars were generally just cattle raids. And a substantial proportion
of the cows captured in a successful raid went to increase the herds of the
chief. This last source of income is now supplied by Government 635
salaries, which vary from 5/- to £13 a month.[10] The price of a cow is £2; 86
but many shillings are spent on clothes, bicycles and beer, as well as on
cows.

A chief, like any other rich man, maintains his prestige by hospitality, 622
he constantly entertains his more notable subjects with beer, at the 527
ceremonies of his family all his people gather in their age-villages and he
kills cattle for them to eat. Chiefs seldom nowadays kill cattle except on
ceremonial occasions, but in the old days of warfare they used also, I am
told, to entertain their subjects with meat from time to time, in order to
keep up their spirits for fighting. History is full of stories of Nyakyusa
chiefs who attracted many men to their countries, and so gained great
military strength, by the generosity and abundance of their feasts.

Every time a man or woman dies, a message must be sent to the 622
chief, and at the burial he is given the whole breast and ribs (*ahakwa*) of 764
one of the cows which are killed by the family of the dead person at that
time. He has the right to take food or milk from any of his subjects if he
has need of it; but he cannot take any man's beast without later returning
another to him.

Apart from the new abandoned pursuit of cattle raiding the only 631
profitable enterprises in which the members of a whole chiefdom jointly 476
participate are those of hunting and fishing; in some chiefdoms, but not

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[10] Salaries above £1 a month are only paid to senior chiefs. No minor chief gets a Government salary, nor do great-commoners. The local value of money is shown (a) by the tax (8/- p.a.), (b) by the wages of unskilled labour (6/- to 8/- p.m.)

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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476 all, hunting is organized like warfare and fishing is a joint endeavour, both ordered by the chief.

471 Every chief has a title of ownership (*ubwene nshyi*) to the land of his
622 chiefdom and can evict any man he pleases, (giving him another plot), if he wishes to build there himself; but his people also have titles of ownership to it, both collectively, under the leadership of the great commoners, and individually, each man to his own ground. It is the great commoners who, in consultation with their neighbours, give to the sons of each village land on which to build; it is they who, together, finally fix the boundaries of the young men's villages at their "Coming Out;" it is they who, again in consultation with their neighbours, grant land to strangers who ask for it, though they must notify the chief and get his approval before doing so.

627 As the single great commoners settle disputes within their own
692 villages so the chief and great commoners together hear and decide cases within the chiefdom. Many of these legal actions are now settled in the Courts, but not all of them; and, even when cases are going to Court, preliminary hearings commonly take place before the chief, first. Cases are conducted and witnesses interrogated by chief and great commoners together, and the decision which the chief pronounces is an expression of their general opinion.

556 Among the great commoners there is an order of seniority. The
629 leaders of the two senior age-villages of the chief's own men play a prominent part at his "Coming Out," they each have a pre-eminent authority in one side of his chiefdom, and the other great commoners rank as their juniors, some on one side, some on the other. In the old days the two senior great commoners each led a whole side of the chiefdom in war.

622 The two most effective checks on the power of a chief are migration
754 and witchcraft. Military strength used to depend upon the number of a chief's adherents, to-day the scale of his salary is similarly dependent; men are quite free to move, and there is a constant flow of adherents from unpopular to popular chiefs. But unpopularity is most feared in its spiritual form of witchcraft. We have seen already that an adverse current of opinion is believed to act invisibly, as the "breath of men," against an unpopular member of a village and to make him sick. So also the adverse opinion of a single village or of a whole chiefdom is believed to have power against a chief, to bring sickness or even death upon him. As in the single village, so in the whole chiefdom the great commoners are the prime sources of this spiritual power; they are believed severally to protect the members of their own villages and jointly to protect their

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

available which are only now being settled. Colonies are established, but usually by junior sons, the seniors remaining near where their fathers built; e.g. the descendants of Mwakasungula (21) remained near Lubaga, but Mwakisambwe (31) the junior heir moved to Mbyanga about 1750 and his senior great-great-great-grandson Mwalinjo (147) lives close to Mbyanga still, while Mwalonga (82) the junior heir settled two or three miles away. Mwakyusa (98), a junior son not strictly an heir at all, but personally very popular, was defeated by his older brothers and driven from the hills to the plain, where his descendants now live. It is not an invariable rule that the junior should move away—for example Mwamberte (160) of the junior line lives close to Kambawbela where his ancestor Mwaipaja (21) is buried, and not Mwakibwele (180) of the senior line—but most often it is the junior who moves. The tradition is that the junior heir of a chief leads off his men as colonists at his 'coming out', and this may indeed have happened in the past, but the area of colonization in Mwaipopo's country (which we have observed over twenty years) was first opened by private individuals moving into unoccupied savannah forest land in search of virgin soil for cultivation, and lush grazing. The chief Mwaipopo asserted his claim to the area first by establishing a household there with some of his junior wives, and then by sending the son of a subordinate house (who could have no claim to inheritance of the chieftainship) to live there. Nessa, the second village headman of Mwaipopo's heir Mwankuga (150), also settled in the forest and acted as headman of the men there, but whether his move was primarily to lay claim to the land or because he had quarrelled with his chief, Mwankuga, and the other village headmen, was never very clear.[1] Then in 1953, at the coming out of Mwankuga's heirs, the junior Mwabungulu (178) was established in the colony, and is regarded by the people as 'chief' of that area, though he is not recognized as a chief by the Administration.

When a colony is established several miles are left uncultivated between it and the parent chiefdom. Mwabungulu lives five or six miles from his senior brother Mwanyilu (177) and there is an area without homesteads between them. It seems that, traditionally, each chiefdom was surrounded by a belt of uncultivated land used as pasturage, and very often at the 'coming out' both brothers merely extended their villages on to the adjoining pasture land

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 268-9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1954-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

leaving a strip of pasture between them, but when the area became crowded the junior heir would establish a colony at some distance. With the increasing density of population, and of the acreage cultivated by each family, the buffer strips between chiefdoms are disappearing.

The more closely related chiefs are the nearer their chiefdoms are likely to be, as will be apparent if the map on p. 87 is compared with the genealogies I and II, but the pattern of splitting and expansion was continually modified by conquest and absorption. For example, the descendants of Mwaipasi (81) of the junior line have no chiefdom, and the descendants of Mwamwilli (84) were defeated and absorbed by Mwaipopo II (116), and the junior house of Mwakisambwe (90) appears never to have established itself. His second son named in the genealogy, Mwamukingu II (94), was a full brother of the senior heir Mwamukingu I (93), not the heir of the second house. And of the descendants of Mwankyusa (35) only one heir appears to have established himself in each generation.

Although a chiefdom was surrounded by pasture land with unoccupied savannah forest beyond it, when the heirs 'came out' their fathers moved. The old men gave the senior heir a site in the centre of the country, not exactly where his father had lived, but somewhere near the senior village of the past generation, and the old men moved aside to make room for the new village. The old men's villages diminished in size for many members had died and not all the heirs had come to live where their fathers had lived, and the homesteads were built on the periphery of the young men's villages. Traditionally most of the cultivated land was reallocated at the 'coming out' also, but that no longer happens. Nowadays, even where the 'coming out' is celebrated, the old men continue to cultivate until their death most of the fields they cultivated before the 'coming out', vacating only their homestead sites and adjoining gardens. The dominance of the younger generation is reflected in their compact villages, forming wide, straight avenues, in central positions in the country, while the villages of older men are often split, and their homesteads scattered without order. The avenues are felt to contribute to the dignity of the ruling generation and the older men are content to withdraw that their sons may 'display themselves' (ukumaga).

[602] Age, territorial, and kinship grouping interlock in a complex

Chart showing position of sections of chart on "Villages of Mwaipopo' Chiefdom." (Facing page 91)

A	B
C	D

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

VILLAGES OF MWAIPOPO'S CH

Gen.	Chief	Village	Headman	Structural Position	Land
643 622 103 631 551 I	*Mwaijonga* (112)	IPINDA	*NJOBAKOSA*	Senior village of Mwaijonga	
		Itiki	*Kiungula*		
		ITEBE	*NGULYO*	Second senior village of Mwaijonga	Moved for Ipc
		Bukeba			
		Itumba			
II	*Mwaipopo I* (115)	BUJEGE	MWANSAMBE (Mwegama)	Sons of Ipinda and Itiki	Moved for Lu
	Mwaipopo II (116)				
		Bujinga	Katolile		Moved for Ipc
		Lupaso		Older section of Bujinga	Moved at com Mwankuga II
		Kiye'a			
		Busirkali		Contemporaries of Mwaipopo II	
		Bulindanajo	Mwasota	Much younger men than those of Bujege	
		Kibonde	Mwakika'o		
		LUPONDO	*MWAIKOFU*	Sons of Bukeba	
		Kyemo	*Kapela*		
		Kitule	Mwangoba		
		Kabula	*Musikitsange*		
III	*Mwankuga I* (150)	IGEMBE	MWAMBUPUTA (Mwafungo) b. c. 1880 active in 1955	Sons of Bujege	
	Mwankuga II (151) active 1955				
		Katumba		Younger brothers and a few sons of Igembe	
		Lugombo	Nsusa (active 1955)		Moved for I members gon
		Ipoma	Kabolile	Sons of Bujinga and Busirkali. Younger men than in Igembe	Got land from
		Ndongoti		Younger brothers of Ipoma	Moved south
		Kibonde (junior section)	*Musikilaka*	Sons of Kibonde	
		NJESI	KAKUJU (old & fragile 1955)	Sons of Lupondo	
		Mpunga	Mwakatika	Younger sons of Lupondo	
		Isuba	Mwakabumbe	Youngest sons of Lupondo	
		Lukwego	Lyambelo	Sons of Kitule	
		Ndobo	Nyambege	Sons of Kabula	
		Kilosi	Katelule	New village	Colony in for
		Kiloba	Nsusa (of Lugombo)	New village	Colony in for

[facing p. 91; section A]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643
622
103
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551

OF MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM[1]

	Land	Numbers (Men or boys) 1955	Comments
			Widows of Mwaipopo live here
			Not surviving
jonga	Moved for Ipoma	6	
			Not surviving
			Not surviving
	Moved for Lupando	8 (31 wives)	
	Moved for Ipoma		
	Moved at coming out of Mwankuga II, but not again		
II		7 (22 wives)	
ne of			First built where Itiki is now. Driven out by Bujege
			Chiefdom of Mwakipesile
		9	
			Disappeared by 1955
			Chiefdom of Mwakabule
		8 (30 wives)	Mwambuputa now senior priest of country. 'Brought out' Mwanyilu.
ns of		10	Junior members including Kilasile moved to Lupando. 57 members in 1958.
	Moved for Lupando. Many members gone to forest.		Nsusa now headman of Kiloba, new village in forest.
	Got land from Bujinga		Akimu, son of Mwaipopo II, a former member, moved to forest.
	Moved southward		
			Sub-chief Likosyela
		12 (26 wives)	
		8	
			Mwakibweli sub-chief
	Colony in forest	48	Akimu, a junior son of Mwaipopo II, was sent to watch over this colony. In 1953 Mwabungulu was established as sub-chief of the area.
	Colony in forest	156	Possibly subdivided

[facing p. 91; section B]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643
622
103
631
551

		Kibonde (junior section)	*Mwakilaka*	Sons of Kibonde	
		NJESI	KAKUJU (old & fragile 1955)	Sons of Lupondo	
		Mpunga	Mwakatika	Younger sons of Lupondo	
		Isuba	Mwakabumbe	Youngest sons of Lupondo	
		Lukwego	Lyambelo	Sons of Kitule	
		Ndobo	Nyambege	Sons of Kabula	
		Kilosi	Katelule	New village	Colony in fore
		Kiloba	Nsusa (of Lugombo)	New village	Colony in fore
IV	Mwanyilu (177)	Lupando	KILASILE MWANSASU	Sons of Igembe Married	Occupies site by parts of I and Lugomb out' of Mwany some member and some sout make room for members of Ig the headman and Lugombo
		Nsanga	KILASILE MWANSASU	Section of Lupando. Younger sons of Igembe and Lugombo. Married.	
		Itiki	KILASILE MWANSASU	Sons of Igembe and Lugombo some married, some *c.* 14	
		Ndola	KILASILE MWANSASU	Sons of Igembe and Lugombo. Some married. 12 boys.	
		Bujisi	Pauliki Mwambepo	Sons of Ipoma. Mostly married.	Occupies the Itebe of gen split and has to the north then by Ipo moved some at 'coming ou Busirkali II have also mo
		Ponjola	Balyemo Mwakanumbula	Sons of Kilbonde III	
		IRINGA	SIKAMBOMBO KIGULEWE	Sons of Njisi. Some married.	Occupies lan pied by Njisi
		Masoko	SIKAMBOMBO KIGULEWE	Sons of Mpunga and Njisi	
		Katela	SIKAMBOMBO KIGULEWE	Sons of Masoko and Mpunga. Younger brothers of Iringa. Ages 15-20 years.	
		Mfumbi	Batungulu Mwamusilu	Sons of Isuba	
		Ponjola	Batungulu Mwamusilu	Sons of Isuba. Younger brothers of Mfumbi. Ages *c.* 12-15 yrs.	
		Kitu'i		Sons of Lukwego	
		Kabula		Sons of Ndobo	
		Nluju	Mwanjotile	New village	Colony in fore

[1] A more elaborate version of this table appeared in *Good Company*. Certain misspellings and errors
Capitals = senior village of senior headman of chiefdom.
Italics = dead.
Total No. of taxpayers (including migrant labourers) 1955: 857.

[facing p. 91; section C]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

643
622
103
631
551

			Sub-chief Likosyela
		12 (26 wives)	
		8	
			Mwakibweli sub-chief
	Colony in forest	48	Akimu, a junior son of Mwaipopo II, was sent to watch over this colony. In 1953 Mwabungulu was established as sub-chief of the area.
	Colony in forest	156	Possibly subdivided
	Occupies site previously held by parts of Bujege, Igembe, and Lugombo. At 'coming out' of Mwanyilu Bujege split, some members moving north, and some south, some west, to make room for Lupando. Some members of Igembe, including the headman, moved south, and Lugombo moved west.	20 (including Nsanga)	Kilasile first built in Katumba. Father was in Igembe. Born c. 1912. Made fire at Mwanyilu's 'coming out'. This village has a new name. It was originally called Mpuguso.
sons ried.			These Mwanyilu's mates. He first built here.
ome		11	Christian village near school. Mwabungulu (178) first built here but moved to forest. Mwakagile (59) had occupied this site, then Mwaijonga built Itiki I on it.
		25	3 men of Bujege who had to move to make room for Lupando have built at one end of Ndola but this is irregular.
d.	Occupies the site first held by Itebe of generation I which split and has two tiny sections to the north and south, and then by Ipoma III which moved some distance to south at 'coming out' of Mwanyilu. Busirkali II and Bujinga II have also moved southward.		F. of Pauliki in Busirkali. Bujisi also called Ipoma. New name has scarcely been established.
			No son of Likosyela 'came out' with Mwanyilu.
	Occupies land formerly occupied by Njisi	29 (14 wives)	17 men away at work, 12 present. Sikambombo made fire at Mwanyilu's 'coming out'. His father was in Njisi.
		10	
		23	
			Also called Isuba
ers of			
			Names of villages of generation IV not ascertained.
			Names of villages of generation IV not ascertained.
	Colony in forest	136	New village established for second heir Mwabungulu, who is a sub-chief. Possibly subdivided.

uspellings and errors have been corrected and the villages established in generation IV added.

[facing p. 91; section D]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

fashion. Each village is occupied by an age-set and men are emphatic that age and friendship, not kinship, are the basis of a village, but the villages of fathers, sons, and grandsons commonly, though not invariably, adjoin one another, as Bujege, Igembe, and Lupando, or Lupondo, Njisi, and Iringa in Mwaipopo's chiefdom (*vide* plan, p. 101). Each section of a chiefdom comprises half the ruling generation, and interspersed with their villages are those of their fathers and sons. Men are identified by the name of their village, section, and chief; the village name defines their age-set, the name of section and chief their generation. The section name is always that of the senior village which leads it. Generation succeeds generation in office when their heirs 'come out', but the relative position of villages (age-sets) within a generation remains constant. Since chiefdoms traditionally split each generation at the 'coming out' the men of the retired generation who remained belonged to one section only; those of the other section of their generation were members of another chiefdom. The territorial arrangements reflected in the plan of Mwaipopo's chiefdom on p. 101 are modified by the fact that the chiefdom has not split for four generations. In generation I Kibonde was the portion of the junior heir, Mwafungo (83), but he died young and his land and widow were inherited by the senior brother, Mwaijonga (82). The son of this leviratical union, Mwakipesile (118), went through the 'coming out' in generation II along with Mwaijonga's heirs, Ijonga (114, representing her full brother 115), and Mwakabule (117). Mwakipesile inherited Kibonde and Mwakabule inherited Kituli, but both were later defeated in war by Mwaipopo II and their land incorporated in his chiefdom. Mwakipesile's heir, Likosyela, and Mwakabule remained as subordinate chiefs. Though the girl Ijonga celebrated the 'coming out' in place of her unborn brother she could not rule, and Mwaiteteja, son of Mwaijonga II (younger full brother of 82) acted for her. He was finally defeated by Mwaipopo II and fled to the periphery of the country. Kabula was his village, and he was subordinate to Mwaipopo, not independent.

In generation III the chiefdom did not split because by that time the British administration was in control, and the territorial division remained much the same, Igembe and Njisi becoming the senior villages in place of Bujege and Lupondo, with Mwankuga (150) and Mwaseba (152) as the young chiefs. Kibonde,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 Kituli, and Kabula still remained somewhat detached. In generation IV the second heir, Mwabungulu (178), has moved out to the
631 forest and the area occupied and ruled by Mwaijonga and Mwai-
561 popo is still one, with a division between Lupando and Iringa. Kibonde is fully absorbed into Lupando, and Kituli and Kabula into Iringa—no descendants of Mwakipesile of Kibonde and Mwakabule of Kituli went through the 'coming out' with Mwanyilu as chiefs. Kibonde, Kituli, and Kabula are subdivided into age-villages of three generations, but these are not shown on the plan. They are spoken of by outsiders by the inclusive names.

To a European the most surprising fact about the age-organiza-
561 tion is that a young man of the ruling generation may still choose
428 to move into the homestead of his deceased father or elder brother. We knew one young man, who had been spoken of as a possible village headman at the coming out of Mwanyilu, but shortly before the 'coming out' he chose to move into the homestead of his deceased father in Lupondo village (where his father in turn had inherited) even though he might have inherited his father's wealth in wives and stock and returned to his own village of Masoko, after completing the ritual of death and inheritance. Our informants insisted that, though the young men might rule, the older generation were the more honoured, and in inheriting from his father this man was classified as a member of his father's generation. Nevertheless many young men do *not* choose to move into the village of the father or elder brother from whom they inherit, and the villages of old men decrease in size and finally disappear altogether.

The relation between kinship and territorial grouping cannot
602 easily be indicated by plans and genealogies for though in theory
361 each village consists of 'sons' of a village of the previous
166 generation (as shown in the table facing p. 91) there is con-
561 siderable movement from one village to another, and the members of any adult village usually prove to have come from a number of
631 different villages, though a boy's village consists of sons of adjoining villages. The table of members of three of the villages of Mwaipopo's chiefdom illustrates this (*vide* pp. 224-6). An analysis of genealogies showing where different members live gives much the same picture. Though the shortage of land in the coffee-growing chiefdoms of the hills and the rice-growing chiefdoms of the plain is tending to obliterate the age-village organization, the old

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

system is still the accepted form in Mwaipopo's chiefdom; the advantages of separating kinsmen in different villages are explicitly stated, and the contrast between the Nyakyusa and their neighbours in this respect emphasized. 'Certainly we do not live with kinsmen here but the Kinga do.' 'It is not good for a son to live close to his father, they will quarrel.' 'When we move to another village we consider friendship not kinship in selecting it.'

(b) THE BALANCE BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND SECTIONS

The ritual cycle of the 'coming out' and the sacrifices in the groves helped to maintain a balance of power between generations, as well as between chiefs and commoners. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) in 1953 it was Mwabuputa, the senior village headman of his father, who took the leading part. He was described as 'the greatest man in the country' who 'brings out the chief' and his manner indicated that he was well aware of his power. During the reign of Mwaipopo (116) the power of his father's village headmen, Njobakosa and Ngulyo, was apparent at every ritual. Spiritual power was shared between chiefs and commoners, but exercised ideally by a virile chief of the ruling generation and the experienced headmen of the retired generation.

Those chosen as senior village headmen at the 'coming out' are commonly older than the young chief, but village headmen are thought of as surviving their chief—it is they who were responsible for smothering him, and performing the sacrifices in his grove. The headmanship is an *office* and so long as the office is necessary an incumbent is found for it, in the person of the heir of the original holder who is so closely identified with the deceased that most precise inquiry is often necessary to establish whether a given individual is the original holder, the succeeding heir, or a later heir, successor to the successor. The Ngulyo who officiated at the rituals in 1935 was the heir of the original Ngulyo (some said the *grandson*, not the son) and he was criticized by Kasitile as being 'a young man who knew nothing'. The principle, so familiar in Central Africa, of a perpetual office[1] emerges, among the

[1] I. Cunnison, *Kinship and Local Organization on the Luapula*, Communications of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute No. 5 (1950), pp. 14-15; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), p. 122; A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, O.U.P. (1939), p. 24; 'Some Types of Family Structure among the Central Bantu, in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, p. 224; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, London (1911), p. 3.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ages, they sometimes build in villages of different generations. 561
When it comes to the selection of village headmen, however, 643
care is taken to ensure that they are indeed sons of men who came 622
out with the previous chief, and a village like Katumba which comprised both younger brothers and sons of Mwankuga's generation breaks up, some members 'coming out' with Mwankuga's son, others acting as 'fathers'. Within a village all the members are equal subject to their headman, but a hierarchy of villages is clear.

The pre-eminence of the two senior village headmen of a chief 631
is marked. They alone make fire with him at the 'coming out'. 643
They alone are handed war tails with which to lead their men in [293]
battle. Each is responsible for one half of the country and a dispute [778]
not settled by the headman of the village of the defendant is reported to the senior headman in whose side of the country the village lies, and he brings it before the chief. Each senior headman has his own village, the two senior villages of the country, in which the royal ladies live; the senior wife married at the 'coming out' is established close to the senior village headman, the second wife close to the second senior headman. A chief may establish wives in a number of villages, and some at least of those he inherits from his father continue to live in his father's old homestead 'to sweep the graves', but his capitals (*ifitangalala*) are the two senior villages of the country in which his two senior wives and two senior village headmen live[1] and the names of the capitals are used not only for the senior villages but for the half sections of the generation they lead. The importance of the two senior headmen is apparent even when their generation has handed over political authority to their sons. At the sacrifices we have described Njobakosa and Ngulyo, heirs of the senior headmen of the chief Mwaijonga (82) officiated, and at the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) it was Mwambuputa and Kakuju his father's senior headmen who organized the ritual.

Each village established at a 'coming out' is a clearly defined 621
unit with its own land, and leader, and name, but villages are also 631
segments of larger units, the half-section of the chiefdom under a 561
senior headman, and the whole chiefdom under the leadership of

[1] Mwanyilu (177), though he had two senior headmen, established his two senior wives in *one* house, close to the house of Kilasile his most senior headman. This was explained as a temporary measure 'because they were young', but it is not the traditional pattern, and may be linked with the fact that the splitting of the country each generation is no longer accepted as the inevitable pattern.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the chief himself. The members of each village co-operate in some measure in cultivation and herding and they form a defensive group against attack 'by day and by night'—i.e. against armed raiders and witches.[1] But there is no great elaboration of ritual for single villages. Such village rituals as occur are connected with defence against witchcraft and involve driving out a supposed witch, or receiving back a member who has fled from fear of witchcraft, or protecting the village fields against witches.[2] Most communal rituals are organized on the basis of the chiefdom or group of chiefdoms, and villages or sections participate as segments of the chiefdom.

The principle of generation and that of section hold one another in check. All those who have 'come out' together have a strong sense of unity as opposed to the generations of their fathers and sons, but every generation is split into two sections each led by an heir of the chief, and these sections have a certain territorial solidarity. It is common in Africa for organized age-groups to cut across kinship and territorial groups. The Nyakyusa peculiarity lies in the territorial unity of age-sets which occupy villages, and the manner in which the fissiparous tendencies within a chiefdom have a constitutional outlet in the rivalry between the sections of a ruling generation which become independent at the 'coming out' of the next generation.

The combination of the hereditary and selective principles of leadership among the Nyakyusa is also somewhat different from that among their neighbours. With many Central African people the heir to the holder of the office of village headman or chief is *selected*, and the most capable member of a given lineage or lineage segment appointed.[3] Among the Nyakyusa succession is precisely defined and there is no selection of a suitable heir except to the supreme and greatly feared office of 'divine king', but the selective principle is given full scope in the 'catching' of leaders for the young men's villages at every 'coming out'. It is this combination of the hereditary and selective principles which binds together chiefs and commoners and successive generations. The rules of

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 44-66, 91-127.

[2] *op. cit.*, pp. 52-4, 109 ff., 154-6, 270-4.

[3] I. Cunnison, 'Headmanship and Ritual of Luapula Villages', *Africa*, xxvi (1956), p. 11; M. G. Marwick, 'The Social Context of Cewa Witch Belief', *Africa*, xxii (1952), pp. 219-22; V. Turner, 'Ndembu Village Structure', *Africa*, xxv (1955), pp. 123-4; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), pp. 157-63.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

inheritance ensure that a limited number of young men are absorbed into the senior generation and live with the older men, sharing their activities and from time to time holding office as headmen or priests of that generation, and the selection in each generation of young men who are *not* the sons of village headmen, or chiefs, or headmen of the past generation, ensures that commoners without office are constantly recruited to the hierarchy of rulers. In short, power is distributed.

(c) RITUAL AND SECULAR BONDS

As in so many societies, economic and ritual links extended, traditionally, further than political links.[1] Selya was dependent upon BuKinga for iron and the Kinga came to fruitful Selya to pray for fertility. The priests who came to pray brought the hoes. The many independent chiefdoms of Selya and the Mbaka valley acknowledged the spiritual overlordship of the Lwembe by sending sacrifices to him, and it was through the network of hereditary priests like Kasitile, Mwamakunda, Mwalukuta, and Nyama of Selya, and the Kinga priests Kikungubeja, Nsyanigwa, Kyamba Kitali, and Silobwike that wider bonds were maintained. Mwaipopo (116) when he was granted a Court which gave him the secular leadership of Selya, failed to make any acknowledgement of Lwembe's traditional power, and it was Kasitile who later urged him to do so. The western chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa still buy medicines and bark-cloth from the Ndali to the west, and have done so for many generations, but no common ritual links them as it does Selya and the plain with BuKinga. The trade was of lesser importance than that to the east, for it does not seem to have included iron, though the Nyiha who share a common culture with the Lambya, the western neighbours of the Nyakyusa, are known to have been skilled smiths.[2] With the Sangu to the

[1] cf. E. Colson, 'The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia' in *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa* (ed. Colson and Gluckman).

A comparison with the frontier in West and South Africa where economic and religious expansion compelled the establishment of Government is instructive. Cf. W. K. Hancock, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs*, vol. ii, part ii, pp. 162-8.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between the Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, vi (1890), p. 289. Elton's suggestion that some of the Nyakyusa iron came from the west is discounted by Cotterill. J. F. Elton, *The Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa* (1879), p. 371 and map, cf. J. Thompson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back*, vol. i, p. 272.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

north the Nyakyusa were continually at war; they did not trade or pray with them. Thus we conclude that participation in a common ritual is, in the Nyakyusa case, directly linked with a common origin and essential trade.

The divine kings, Lwembe and Kyungu, were regarded as having power over certain areas, a power closely linked with rainfall. Indeed, one informant argued that the chiefs living around Masoko had never sent sacrifices to Lubaga, 'because when it rains at Lubaga the rain does not come as far as Masoko'. He was mistaken in his facts—the chiefs of Masoko did at one time send to Lubaga as Mwambete (162), chief at Masoko, himself admitted—but the argument points to a conception of supernatural power tied to a rainfall area. This notion was not, however, applied consistently.

The balance between secular and mystical power has altered during the past ten generations. The founding heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, came as conquerors and must surely have led their men personally; but early in the history of Ngonde the Kyungu was secluded, and power was exercised almost exclusively by the nobles (*vide supra*, pp. 40-46); and the Lwembe also was, at one period, 'not seen by ordinary men' and led a life hedged about with taboos. There is sharp contrast in Nyakyusa tradition between the active chiefs who were warriors, and arbitrators, and worked hard in their fields[1] and the 'divine king' who lived in seclusion. As we have seen, the chiefs often delegated ritual functions, with the taboos involved, to a junior kinsman such as Mwamukinga (44) or Mwakihaba (45) (*vide* pp. 79-81, 114) whose heirs succeeded to the office. It is even possible that the first Lwembe at Lubaga (Mwakalebela 19) took over ritual functions from his senior brother, Kalesi (18).[2] The present tendency is for the development of secular power and its separation from mystical power. The Kyungu is no longer a god but an administrator: the heir of the Lwembes sits as an elected representative of chiefs on the Local Council. In the traditional Nyakyusa society ritual played an essential part in maintaining the balance between generations, sections, and social strata, and in

[1] In 1955 a young chief was bitterly criticized by his men because he 'never had a hoe in his hands' whereas his father and grandfather had (to our personal knowledge) been diligent in hoeing.

[2] But according to one excellent informant, Mwakisambwe (30) lived secluded while Mwakilima (31) 'fed men'—i.e. entertained.

9: Wilson
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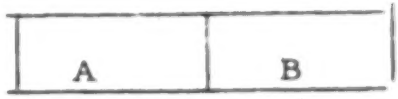
FN17 Ngonde
Nyakyusa

Chart showing position of sections of plan of Mwaipopo's Chiefdom. (Facing p. 100)



9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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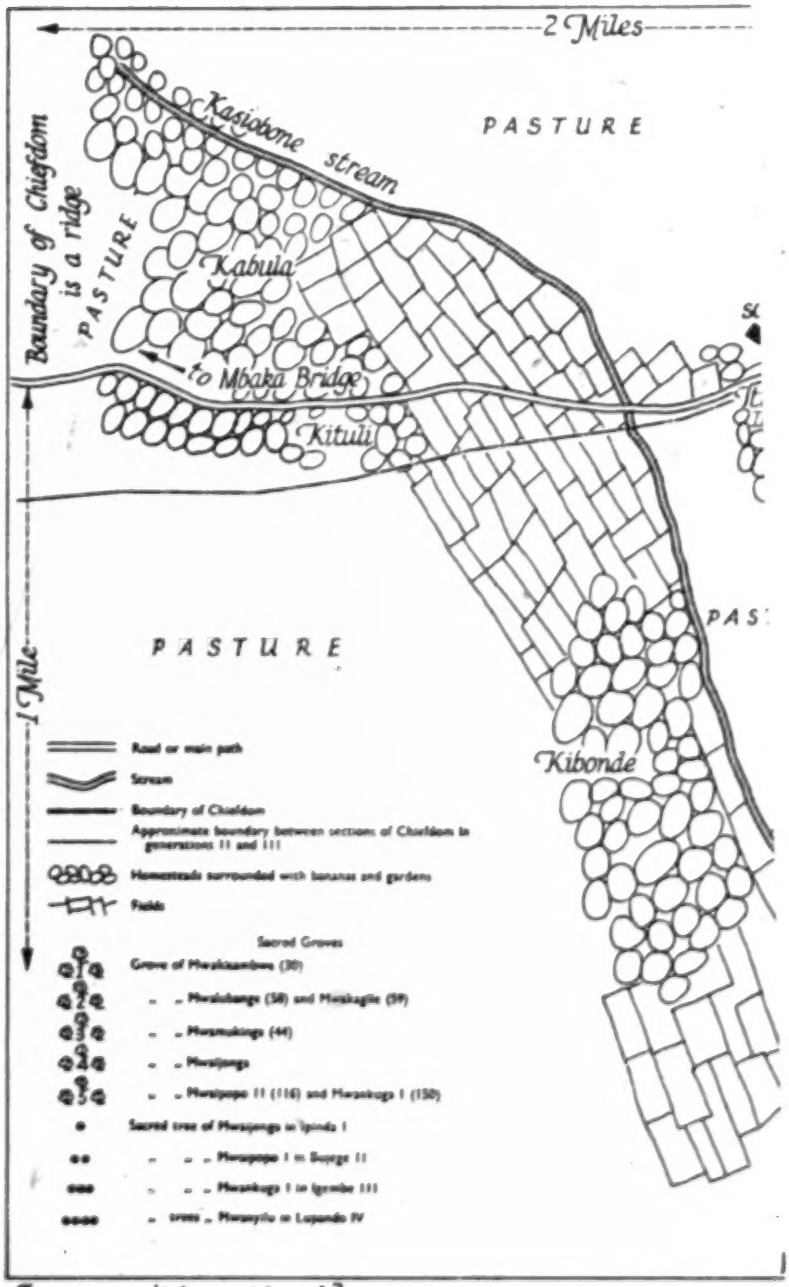

[facing p. 100; section A]

PLAN OF MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM

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Nyakyusa

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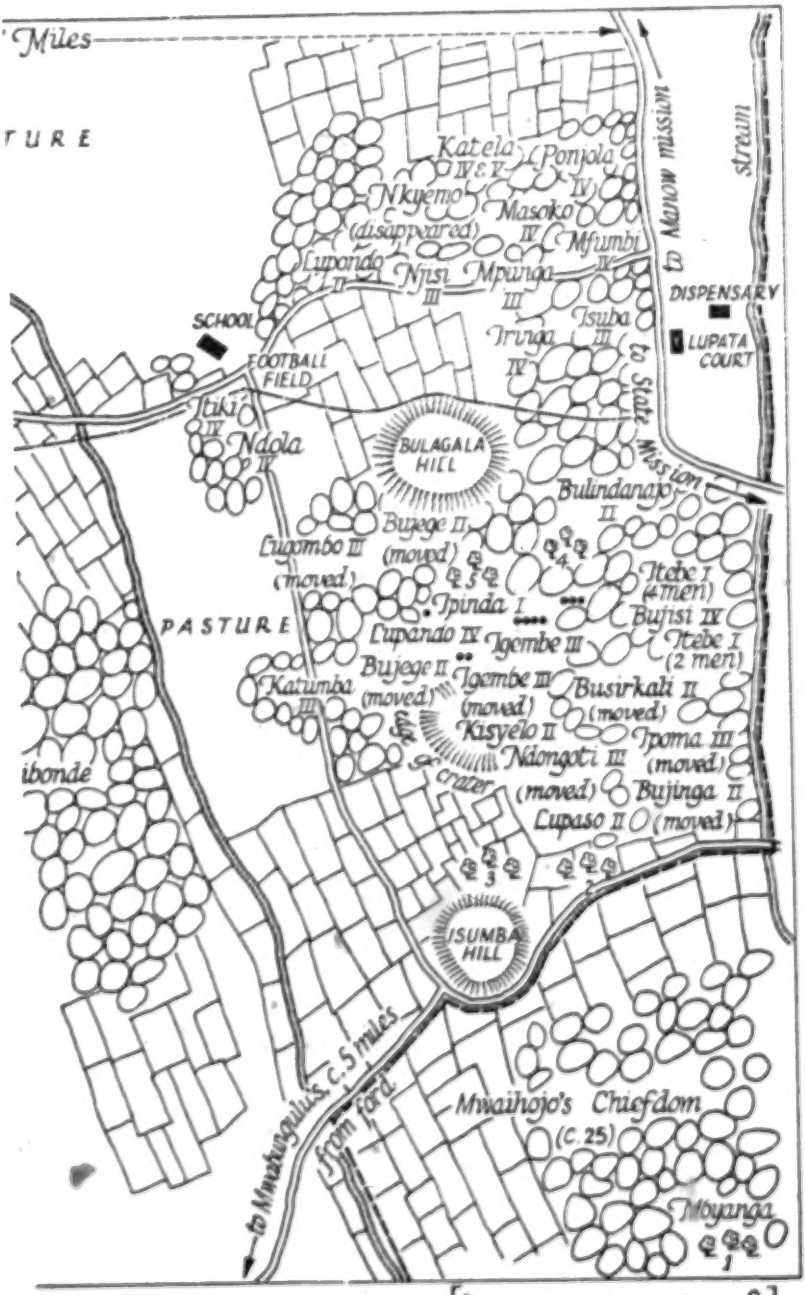

POPO'S CHIEFDOM (C 24) IN 1955 [facing p. 100; section B]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

NOTE

621 It should be realized that (i) the names of the two senior villages of a
631 generation are well known and clear cut, but those of subordinate
561 villages are more fluid. Furthermore a village often has subdivisions,
distinguished by its members by name, but known to outsiders only by
[103] the general village name. (ii) A village may acquire a new name at the
[796] 'coming out'; the senior village of Mwanyilu's generation used to be called 'Mpuguso' but 'came out' as 'Lupando'. (iii) Some villages die out altogether, e.g. Kyemo II. (iv) Some villages straddle generations. Katela in 1955 is in the same sort of position as Katumba in 1935. It includes eight sons of Mpunga who belong to generation III, but also fourteen sons of men of Masoko who 'came out' with Mwanyilu. In the case of Katumba the members who were sons of men of generation III moved to younger villages and 'came out' with Mwanyilu, among them being his senior headman Kilasile, a man of over forty. But Kilasile's contemporaries who were sons of men of generation II could not 'come out' with Mwanyilu, at least not as a group—and the members of Katumba attended the 'coming out' as 'fathers'. Boys join a village of contemporaries but may move later to a village of younger men who are of their own structural generation.

At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu and Mwabungulu five village headmen were 'caught' and secluded with their chiefs. They represented five clear-cut villages. Kilasile and Sikambombo, Mwanyilu's two senior headmen who made fire are leaders of Lupando and Iringa respectively; Pauliki and Batungulu their juniors are leaders of
[622] Bujisi (or Ipoma) and Mfumbi (or Isuba), and Mwanjotile the single headman of the junior heir, Mwabungulu, has his own village of Nkuyu established on newly settled land in the forest. The young men of Kibonde were included under Kilasile's authority, and those of Kituli and Kabula under Sikambombo's. The names Lupando and Iringa are well known as those of sections of Mwanyilu's chiefdom, but the names Bujisi and Mfumbi are not: the young men of these villages still use the names of their fathers' villages, Ipoma and Isuba, though there is a clear territorial separation between fathers and sons. Taxes
[651] are collected under the names of Igembe, Ipoma, Kibonde, Njisi, Isuba, Kituli, and the three forest villages, Kilosi, Kiloba, and Nkuyu.

[p. 101 is blank]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

chieftainship, and the dependence upon medicines as a means of enforcing law were connected with the ineffectiveness of secular authority. Certainly the Kyungu's emergence from seclusion, and the dropping of the taboos which surrounded him were connected with his acquisition of economic power; but we know too little of the conditions that make for elaboration of ritual to postulate any general connexion between the absence of ritual in public life and the effectiveness of secular authority. 182 643 782 796

The cycle of sacrifices to the heroes and dead chiefs among the Nyakyusa is more than an ancestor cult, for it includes non-relatives among its priests and beneficiaries; but it has many of the features of an ancestor cult, among them the identification of piety with conservatism. A good man follows exactly in the footsteps of his father who becomes his god. This is reconciled with a myth of a new beginning, ten generations ago, when civilized life came to the Nyakyusa valley, and the new beginning is celebrated each generation with the 'coming out' of the young chief and his contemporaries. 182 769 [773]

All Nyakyusa rituals are cathartic in the sense that they make explicit and seek to dissipate, by their very expression and rejection, certain anti-social tendencies. In the Nyakyusa view the root of evil is 'anger in the heart' unadmitted and corrosive, and only by an open confession can it be overcome.[1] Hence in every situation of misfortune, public or private, men are pressed to 'speak out' (*ukusoya*) and admit their anger. At the 'coming out' the conflict of generations is expressed in the prolonged debate over the date of the celebration and the detailed arrangements, and in the dancing and slaughter of cattle, and is finally resolved when authority and land are handed over to the young men by their fathers. The fissiparous tendencies of a chiefdom are made explicit and canalized in constitutional form by the division of the old chief's country into two, under his senior sons; and criticism of the young chiefs is made explicit in the formal admonition by the father's village headmen. The rejection of conflict is clearest at the annual purification when men throw out the ashes contaminated by family bickering and the cannibalism of witches, and *fight* one another 'that the homesteads may be peaceful'. This fighting is 'to bring out war from within (*ukusoya*)', 182 783 796 631

[1] cf. *Good Company*, pp. 99-112. The belief that a witch or sorcerer must *confess* if the patient was to recover was the reason for the torture of witches in many African societies.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and is therefore to be interpreted as 'confession of anger', rather than as 'rebellion'.

Sometimes there is an expression of *opposite* tendencies, both implicitly approved. The sacrifices to the heroes and at the groves of the chiefs emphasize seniority and precedence, and express the dependence of junior on senior kinsmen, but the myth, recalled in every celebration, tells of the surpassing power of the son or younger brother in the beginning of time, and the junior brother of a chief often holds office as a priest. Then there is the drama of driving away the shade and bringing him back transformed, which is so characteristic of the rituals of kinship and appears again at the cleansing of the country. Such contradictions are doubtless expressions of ambivalent attitudes among the participants themselves, and of the attempt in ritual to reconcile conflicting social principles—in these instances authority with the rights and duties of juniors, and change with continuity.

In a society without written records legal certainty depends very largely on publicity. This is apparent in the law relating to marriage contracts and family inheritance,[1] and still more so in the law of the chiefdom. The ritual of 'coming out' celebrates radical changes in social status, and the public recognition of the leaders, members, and territorial boundaries of villages, as well as of the heirs to chieftainship. Thus certainty in these matters is assured. There is no positive value of the co-regency of father and son (as in ancient Egypt),[2] but the installation of the young chiefs before the death of their father serves to mitigate conflicts over the succession. Confusion over village boundaries and village leadership often appears when the ritual has not been celebrated, for there is no public definition to refer to.

How close is the link between religious belief and practice and social structure? There is no doubt that the sacrifices to the dead chiefs and heroes and the traditional rituals of kinship supported the former political and kinship structure of the Nyakyusa. Their performance compelled co-operation between kinsmen,[3] between neighbouring chiefs, and between chiefs and people. How far then does the change in religion, begun when the first Christian convert professed his new faith, compel a change in the social

[1] Godfrey Wilson, 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Law', *Africa*, vol. ix, 1937, p. 29.
[2] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, pp. 101-2.
[3] cf. *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 190-200, 227.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and try to understand the nature and reasons for change. There, then, is a good opportunity for the study of social change – not only in land tenure as such, but also in village and family organisation, political authority and economic life.

II

The Nyakyusa are a Bantu people inhabiting the main part of the Rungwe District in southern Tanganyika, immediately to the north of Lake Nyasa. In 1948 they numbered about 199,000 in that District, but about 10,000 men were probably at the time temporarily absent from their homes and in employment in the mines and towns of the Rhodesias and South Africa (see Gulliver, 1957), whilst about 20,000 had migrated to live in the adjacent Mbeya District to the north.

The tribal area comprises a confined geographical basin surrounding the northern end of Lake Nyasa. It extends only about 40 miles from the tip of the lake at 1,550 feet above sea level to the Poroto Mountains in the north at 8,000 feet; and from east to west is only about 30 miles, from the almost sheer walls of the Livingstone Mountains (with peaks up to 10,000 feet) to the Ndali Highlands (rising to about 7,000 feet). There are therefore unusually large ecological differences within so small an area. Three major regions are to be distinguished: the "Northern Highlands" over about 4,500 feet, the low-lying "Lake Plains" in the south, and the "Central Region" in between. Everywhere rainfall is reliable and high, averaging at least 100 inches annually[1], and this amply compensates for a certain poverty and misuse of the soil, although (and particularly in the Central Region) it brings dangers of soil erosion. Except in the highest parts the banana is the staple food, supported by maize, beans, finger millet and groundnuts. In the Northern Highlands coffee has become well established as the principal cash crop: in the Lake Plains paddy rice cultivation provides both a food and a cash crop: in the Central Region the country is too low generally for coffee and too high and dry for rice; consequently cash-cropping is considerably inferior and the people's standard of living is rather poorer.

The Nyakyusa and their country tended for a long time to be relatively isolated from the outside world by high mountain walls and rain-soaked roads. In addition, or because of it perhaps, they developed an almost unique culture which was supported by considerable conservatism and high insularity. They still continue to regard their African neighbours beyond the mountains as their social and cultural inferiors. The turmoil of the slave-trade in Central Africa passed them by; in modern times they have not enthusiastically accepted Christianity and they have refused to take up the use of Swahili, the Territorial *lingua franca*. In recent years, and most especially since the end of World War II, they have, however, accepted and pushed forward with vigour a rapid and extensive economic development, involving particularly the production of coffee and paddy as cash crops, and large-scale labour migration to the south in the high-wage mining industries. The multiplicity of petty, often tiny, independent chiefdoms has been reorganised to provide four local government areas, each under a Rural Council, in which the old chiefdoms have become something like parishes[2]. Although much of the old conservatism and narrow parochialism persists, yet there is now an atmosphere of accepted change, of a keen desire for economic development, and a general acceptance of a cash economy.

Probably the most significant feature of modern life in the Nyakyusa country is the increasing scarcity of land for agriculture in relation to the

1. At Tukuyu, in the Northern Highlands, annual rainfall averaged 99.21 inches between 1919 and 1952; at Kyela, in the Lake Plains, the average between 1940 and 1951 was 106.21 inches.
2. See Kingdon, Z.R.: The introduction of a system of local government by African rural councils in the Rungwe District, Tanganyika; *The Journal of African Administration*, iii, 4, October, 1951.

631 Age-villages combined to form a chiefdom under the hereditary chief,
628 *omuke/yale*, but active co-operation between villages thus associated was often slight; indeed in the larger chiefdoms there commonly existed intermittent animosity which might break out in raiding or even civil war. The
[721] integrity of these larger chiefdoms was weak – for example, when the Nyakyusa were attacked by Sangu and Ngoni war-parties, and later by the
[648] Germans, villages of the same chiefdom conspicuously failed to join in common defence. Similarly the land affairs of one village were no concern of any other, and each jealously guarded its own rights.

None of the chiefdoms was large; smallness of scale is typical of
631 Nyakyusa political organisation and social attitudes. In 1955 the smallest
162 indigenous chiefdom contained only 36 men. In 1948 55,700 people were divided amongst about 18 indigenous chiefs, but undoubtedly had not the Colonial Government frozen the system there would have been rather more – at least five more. Today there are 12 recognised "administrative chiefs", amongst whom five have each less than 3,000 people under them, and the largest chiefdom contains fewer than 10,000 people – the average is just over 4,000 people.

Nevertheless the chiefdom, the collection of villages, was important,
631 because in the creation of the chiefdom villages were created, and in its
361 development the villages developed, matured and died away. A village survived only so long as its members lived and by the nature of the age-organisation there was but little possibility of the recruitment of new members, for villagers' sons left to form their own new villages. Their sons eventually came to comprise the core of the new chiefdoms.

642 In connection with the constitution of a Nyakyusa village and with
643 land tenure, the significant feature of the chiefdom was its establishment, together with the induction of a new chief, at the great "coming-out"
[796] ceremony, *ubusoke*. In brief, each chief was succeeded by two of his sons – the
[498] eldest son of each of the senior houses of the chief, i.e., of his first two wives. At the "coming-out" ceremony, when the sons were still young men and their father was not a particularly old man, the old chiefdom was divided into two, each part coming under one of the new young chiefs. Before this critical occasion – at which much important ritual was performed – the younger men of the old chiefdom had already moved away from their fathers villages and had established their own incipient villages nearby, each one containing a group of coevals. A Nyakyusa boy from the age of about seven years could not continue to live with his father and mother, but, in company with his equals, built his own hut on a site adjacent to the main village as indicated by the fathers' headman. Until the "coming-out" cere-
631 mony these youths' villages came under the control of the old village head-
[342] men; but with the induction of the new chiefs they achieved independent status, each with its own headman appointed from among its members by the old headmen. Each new village was allocated a new building site and a new arable area, and quite commonly the old villages, the older men, moved away a little in order to give the younger men adequate access to the land,
631 for it was considered that the young men's needs for land were paramount.

After this wholesale reorganisation of the old chiefdom, when new
[178] villages were established and new boundaries demarcated,[1] the old chief
[622] himself, the old headmen and the older men (the "fathers") gradually retired from active public life. The old chief was supposed to commit suicide
[643] after a time (or was quietly killed off) in order to leave the field clear for his sons; the old headmen became the religious and ritual leaders of the new
[888] chiefdoms, with the flavour of elder statesmanship, and the old men's

1. "At the "coming-out" it is said that "everything is made new", boundaries are redrawn and the new chiefdoms and villages of the young men are [illegible] incorporated". Wilson, G., 1938, p. 31.

villages grew ever smaller and became extinct as their members gradually died off in old age.

A Nyakyusa village, then, owed its being to this most significant political, social and religious event. Each village had its area approximately demarcated, and each headman was ritually and magically strengthened in order to lead and protect his men and their families.

This particular system operated satisfactorily in the demographic and land-using conditions of the old days. By the process of bifurcation, briefly described above, new chiefdoms and new villages were formed for each generation. Although the population appears to have been increasing rapidly there was always sufficient land to create two chiefdoms where one had existed before, and to create new villages and more villages than had existed before in the old chiefdom. The two new chiefs were able easily to move apart and find sufficient and more than sufficient land for their needs.

The system of bifurcation, the ideal of the Nyakyusa, did not always work out so neatly in practice – at any rate it often did not in the Lake Plains. Sometimes it did work; for example, the present chiefdoms of Lazarus and Koroso are the two parts of their grandfather's single chiefdom, which split up under their respective fathers. Similarly, the present Mwakipesile and Mwamasangula chiefdoms stemmed from a single unit, whilst the Mwakipesile chiefdom itself today is really two indigenous chiefdoms, but the Government would recognise only the senior brother's claim to chiefship and allowed him authority over the whole. Even where a single new chiefdom succeeded the old (frequently as the result of civil war in which one brother subjugated the other) the essential dichotomous arrangement persisted so that the resultant single unit had two distinct halves, each with its own head with his villages and headmen. In any case, whether traditional bifurcation occurred or not, and right down to modern times, new villages have been established at the time of the "coming-out" of the new chief. The basic village system showed greater persistence and remained truer to type than did the chiefdom and the wider political system.

The real authority of a Nyakyusa chief was not in general very great, although individuals here and there achieved personal importance. A chief was accorded a great deal of prestige and honour, and by tribute and gifts he frequently became pre-eminently wealthy. He was supposed to be kept informed by his headmen of all important village affairs and to approve all matters concerning the land; but the village headman was in fact the real land authority, who attended to the details of land allocation and land use within his village. A chief could not do this, and in fact only in so far as he had the support and loyalty of his headmen had he any authority at all. "A chief is a chief because he has headmen," one informant put it to me – he was a prominent chief himself. A villager said: "A chief does not own the chiefdom, or the land. We, the people together, own it." A chief could, without notice or advice, take any unoccupied land for the use of himself or of his kinsmen, but he could not allocate it to others; both headman and villagers would have indignantly and successfully protested had he tried, as some occasionally did. Land disputes, an uncommon feature in a country where land was plentiful, were settled by the headman of the village in question; they were the private affairs of the village and the chief had no right of interference. Inter-village disputes first came before a meeting of the headmen concerned, with perhaps the assistance of the senior headman of the chiefdom. Only if a dispute could not be settled and if it seemed likely to threaten general peace within the chiefdom would the disputants go before the chief himself, who even so relied and had to rely heavily on his headmen to secure a settlement. So delicate was his position that he might be unable to resolve inter-village disputes for fear of witchcraft reprisals against him by the unsuccessful party.

of the father. The old principle that every man had the right to arable land applied no less strongly to the young men, married or bachelors. Today most headmen will refuse to entertain the applications of young bachelors for land, and in this they merely represent general public opinion. But many young husbands likewise cannot obtain land, or only an insufficient amount.

Consequently, the following case-history, which I recorded for one young man, is not unusual. In 1955 he lived in the Mlangali young-men's hamlet, attached to Mpunguti village in Mwakipesile's chiefdom, where his father lives. He was about 27 years old and had a wife and one child. Twice he had been to work in the mines and from the profits of this employment he had completed his bridewealth payment and had bought, in addition, three cattle, a bicycle and some good clothing. He thought he would probably go away again. Behind his house his wife had about 300 square yards of bananas and there was a tiny patch of cassava. This man had no other land, but he assisted in the heavy labour on his father's holding (about 1.7 acres in all) and by family convention he normally took for his own use the paddy crop of a small strip there; he insisted, however, that he had not been given this strip outright and that it remained at his father's pleasure. He had an unmarried half-brother about 22 years old who had not obtained even that concession at the time. Their father was about 55 years old and had two other sons who were still boys. The young man himself had been refused an allocation of land by the headman on the grounds that (as the headman well knew) he had the use of this strip of his father's land, and also because, as the eldest son, he would be the principal heir on his father's death. He was clearly worried about his future, for he did not wish to go abroad again and leave his wife and child; but he did not see how he could stay at home without seriously lowering his standard of living to little above subsistence level.

I quote this brief case-history not necessarily as typical – though I think it probably is – but as an actual illustration of the present state of affairs as they affect an individual.

The Modern "Chief" and the Land

Most of the traditional chiefs, *abanyafyale*, have been recognised and salaried under the Native Authority, and they are officially referred to today as *abatwa* (s. *ntwa*). Some of the smallest chiefdoms have been absorbed administratively by their larger neighbours, and, although they are still recognised by the people, their *abanyafyale* have lost very much of their earlier prestige and authority. In the Lake Plains the modern chiefdoms are often rather larger than is usual amongst the Nyakyusa,[1] but they are, of course, small in comparison with the size of most African chiefdoms in Tanganyika.

The slightness of the traditional authority of the chief in land matters has already been noted (pages 7-8) and in general this still holds. In European times, however, the recognised chiefs have been given an increased authority and prestige as the local intermediaries between Government and people, and until recent years they were almost the only local instruments of the Government amongst the Nyakyusa. They have been backed by the all-powerful European, who preferred to deal with single, recognised individuals thought to have prime authority in a locality, and the European officer has been encouraged in this notion by an over-enthusiastic policy of indirect rule. Such chiefs were able to assume a degree of power well beyond the traditional limits, and to aggrandize themselves thereby. The ordinary commoner was never quite sure how far his chief was individually claiming more than he

1. On the numerical size of chiefdoms see supra, page 6.

11:Thwaites C-5 (ca. 1942) 1944
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P. 236 A]

WANYAKYUSA AGRICULTURE

By D. H. Thwaites, Agricultural Assistant, Tanganyika Territory

131 The Wanyakyusa occupy the District of Rungwe in the Southern Highlands Province. The district lies between 9° and 9½° S. latitude at the northern tip of Lake Nyasa. The altitude 133 ranges from 1,500 feet to 9,500 feet. The district is divided into twelve chiefdoms. The 631 Administrative Headquarters are at Tukuyu, which was known before the British occupation as Neu Langenberg.

Inhabitants

The local people are not indigeneous to this 101 area. They came, tradition has it, from [173] Mahenge via Ukinga after many tribal fights. They are akin to the Wahenga in Nyasaland bordering on the Tanganyika boundary. It is 191 estimated that only 10 per cent of the Wanyakyusa speak Kiswahili. According to the 1935 161 census the total poulation was 153,204. The 162 total number of tax-payers in 1942 was 35,304, or 23.04 per cent of the total population.

The people themselves are extremely in- 181 dustrious and intelligent. As there are 90 people to the square mile, living conditions are 105 crowded and emigration is continually taking place. The people are partial to litigation over cattle and women. The number of cases heard annually in the Native Courts is about 6,000. There is no one historical and traditional head of the tribe. The twelve Chiefs are, in reality, hereditary Headmen who have been selected by Government to be Chiefs. They are in effect only *primi inter pares* in native eyes, the outlook of the people being unusually democratic for a native tribe.

105 The people live in houses made of wattle and daub or bamboo frame, with thatched 342 roof, and villages are sited mostly along ridges. 361 Rectangular houses are now built instead of the round huts of former days. They often stand in rows with a main street down the middle with bananas in the background. The more progressive natives build with sun-dried or burnt brick. Stock are stalled in the same house owing to the prevalence of thieving, but sleep in separate rooms.

Climate

132 The rainfall of the district varies in the different areas. In Tukuyu itself the annual average for 25 years (1918-1942) is 100.22 inches. On the Lake shore the average is probably higher, but no continuous statistics are available. The heaviest rainfall months are from December to May, but, in most years,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

561 The age system of the Nyakyusa has been described in detail in
621 *Good Company*,[1] but, since it forms the basis of their social structure, a brief explanation must here be given for the benefit of readers unacquainted with that earlier volume. Within each chiefdom there are a number of villages composed not of kinsmen but of age-mates. Villages begin when small boys of eight or ten years
857 build together at a little distance from their fathers. They are joined by younger brothers, as these reach the age when boys stop sleeping at home, until the eldest are in their middle teens, when
[883] the youngsters will be told to begin another village. The boys of a village have their own leader, a 'natural' leader, not specifically appointed, but they are subject to the headman of their fathers' village, and formerly fought as a group under his direction. But at the 'coming out' a headman for each village is selected from
[622] among its members by the fathers: if he dies, his heir—a younger brother or son—inherits his position, so that sometimes a young man becomes headman of an old men's village, taking the name and social position of his father. Only commoners are eligible as headmen: we knew one candidate who was rejected because his great-grandfather was a chief.

Two villages in each chiefdom are senior to the others and their
[634] headmen are responsible each for half of the country. During the 'coming out' ritual the chief marries two wives, 'mothers of the country', and one is established in each senior village or capital (*ikitangalala*). The eldest sons of these two wives are the heirs, and later divide the old chief's country between them. Most of the chief's junior wives are divided between the capitals but some may be settled in a colonizing village in unoccupied country. All the chief's sons build with commoners in villages appropriate to their age, and all save the two heirs are subject to the commoner headmen of their villages. They are entitled to some respect as 'sons of the chief', and those of strong personality gain a following and settle disputes between their fellows (as may any commoner), but only the two senior sons can claim political authority.

561 Before the 'coming out' the villages of young men and their
621 fathers adjoin, for the boys have built on their fathers' land, on the fringes of their fathers' villages. But at the 'coming out' there
884 is a new deal in land. The young men are established in the centre
423 of the country and their fathers move to the periphery; it is not merely that fathers and sons exchange land, but all the boundaries

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, 1952.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

are redrawn and only the fields in old craters (the most prized and fertile of all) are not re-allotted. Thus the villages of kinsmen of two generations adjoin, and often those of three generations.

On the old chief's death his village headmen become priests of the grove in which he is buried, and, in co-operation with his sons, the new chiefs, sacrifice there on behalf of the two countries into which his old chiefdom is divided. There is a nice balance of power between chief and village headmen in life, and when he dies his two heirs and the headmen (or their heirs) continue to share power, the power which belief in his spiritual force and their ability to guide it gives them. The success or failure of rituals is held largely to depend upon the personal relationships of the leading participants, chiefs and commoner priests.

Besides the ordinary commoner priests (the village headmen of a past generation or their heirs) there are priests of the chiefs' lineage, usually belonging to a junior line to which specific ritual functions, such as rain-making, have been entrusted, and whose office is hereditary in the same way as that of a chief. Kasitile (86),[1] the rain-maker, is such a priest: his grandfather was the brother of a ruling chief (43) and had been appointed as rain-maker (*umpelafula*) and priest (*unyago*), the two functions being separate but overlapping. As rain-maker Kasitile tended the rain stones, as priest he initiated the rituals in certain of the sacred groves, though he did not actually officiate himself. Kasitile was a key informant on ritual and a chapter is devoted to his history, since it epitomizes the relationships between chiefs and commoners.

As we have shown, most of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde chiefs claim some sort of kinship with one another. Those who are nearly related pray together at the groves of their common ancestors, and those more distantly connected join in sacrifice to their founding fathers, but in the communal rituals kinship is neither the dominant theme nor the exclusive principle of association, as it is in the rituals celebrated by private persons. In the communal rituals most of the priests are commoners unrelated to the dead who are honoured, and the sacrifices are held to benefit not only the descendants of the dead, but all those who live in the countries they once ruled. Nevertheless, the symbolism of the communal rituals constantly recalls that of the rituals of kinship; themes which pervade the death ritual recur again in the rituals of 'coming out' and 'cleansing the country'. This background is

[1] Numerals after a name refer to the genealogy of Nyakyusa chiefs facing p. 3.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

accessible in an earlier book, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*,[1] and the details need not be recapitulated here.

Perhaps the reader has already noted a certain difficulty over tenses: 'is' tends to merge into 'was'. When we first visited BuNyakyusa in 1934 missionaries of various denominations had already been at work, and a foreign government in control, for forty years past. Between 1934 and my last visit in 1955 the changes have been great, but I use the present tense for things seen at first hand, whether earlier or later, and a separate chapter is devoted to the twenty years' change. It is well to recognize at the outset, however, that in 1934 the sanctity and power of the 'divine kings' was already questioned and their rituals were curtailed, and even the pagan cosmology of the Nyakyusa was beginning to exhibit traces of Christian influence. One striking example was the changing, or rather the fluid, connotation of the name *Kyala*.

Two new types of organization developed in BuNyakyusa with the arrival of the Europeans: churches which are based on a principle of association wholly new to the pagan tradition—common belief as opposed to kinship or contiguity; and a centralized system of government. To these have now been added trading concerns, of which the most important are co-operative societies exporting coffee and rice.

The subject of this book is (i) the traditional rituals celebrated on behalf of chiefdoms and groups of chiefdoms, and (ii) the changing ideas and values apparent as a section of the Nyakyusa turn from paganism to Christianity. In the concluding chapters an attempt is made to demonstrate the links between the changes in social structure and the changes in ritual.

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*, 1957.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

area, the Penja, have a grove, Lukata, where they worship their founding ancestor, and the Nyika living on the west bank of the Kiwira river have their grove, Lubaga, twenty miles or more from the Lubaga in Selya and unconnected with it. A third distinct group, the Saku, who were the first inhabitants of the south-eastern part of Rungwe District, have their own grove, Nkeso, where their progenitors Mwamakula and Mwalukinge were buried. None of these has anything like the prestige and sanctity of the Lwembe or the Kyungu, but they are probably the prototype from which the 'divine kings' developed. 769 782

What circumstances produced a 'divine king' at Lubaga and not (so far as our limited knowledge goes) at Kabale we do not know, but we can show how the 'divine kingship' at Mbande, near the Lake shore, developed rather differently from the originally similar institution at Lubaga which is forty miles from the Lake. The Kyungu gradually acquired political power in a way in which the Lwembe did not. Among the Nyakyusa the 'sons of Lwembe' spread through the country establishing themselves as independent chiefs. They acknowledged the mystical supremacy of the Lwembe, and sent cattle to him to sacrifice, but they were sovereigns in their own territories. Just what this mystical supremacy of Lwembe implied was and still is often a matter of dispute, as we shall see. On the death of a chief his country was normally divided into two independent sections, each ruled by one of his sons. One heir sometimes fought the other and reduced him to a subordinate position, but the number of independent chiefdoms appears to have increased fairly steadily, and their size did not diminish in proportion, for the Nyakyusa chiefs have been expanding their area of occupation over a long period, establishing themselves as rulers over scattered and unorganized peoples with less developed techniques than their own, or colonizing unoccupied forest country. Expansion into uncultivated forest is still going on (1955), and were it not for the vigilance of the British Administration it is almost certain that the Safwa people would have been conquered and absorbed like the Penja, Lugulu, and others before them.[1] In 1936 over 100 independent chiefdoms were recognized by the people themselves, and they varied in size from 100 to 3,000 adult men. 769 643 [773] [173] [636] [173] [634]

In Ngonde the development was different. In the early period all the sons of the Kyungu, save two, were killed, and the territorial 173 643

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 4.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173 rulers were not of the royal blood but 'nobles' (*amakambara*),
643 descendants of the five leading men who had arrived with the Kyungu, of those he found already occupying the country, and of those who arrived after him. Later the slaughter of the Kyungu's
[634] sons ceased, and as they grew up they were established as subordinate chiefs through his territories, gradually taking over power from the commoners who had previously ruled, by a process familiar in other parts of Africa.[1] But the 'nobles' retained considerable power. At Lubaga the descendants of the two men who had arrived with the first Lwembe, and of some of those who were there before him, became priests, and priests only; in Ngonde those of similar origin developed secular, as well as ritual, functions.

The reasons why the office of Kyungu developed into a paramount chieftainship, and that of the Lwembe did not, have been examined in a previous publication,[2] and may therefore be dealt with very briefly here. The most important factor was that
[439] the Kyungu exported ivory and amassed wealth which was used
[556] to bind territorial rulers to him, while the Lwembe remained cut off from the outside world and did not trade at all. The geographical situation largely accounts for this. The ivory of Ngonde first went north, and later south-east, across the Lake, and Mbande was well situated for both routes. It lies eight miles from the Lake and close to a defile which leads from the lakeshore plain to an open table-land stretching north to Lake Tanganyika, the very route which engineers later selected for the Stevenson road. Lubaga, on the other hand, is forty miles from the Lake and the only routes northward lay over broken country and passes 8,000 feet high. Giraud remarks in his journal that the Nyakyusa were the only people he had come across among whom the chiefs did not claim at least one tusk of every elephant killed;[3] they did not claim it, for they had no use for the ivory; but the Kyungu's right to a tusk from every elephant killed was enforced.

The growth of a paramount chieftainship in Ngonde was slow. The early Kyungus lived within an enclosure on Mbande to which only their personal servants and the nobles of Ngonde had

[1] cf. M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 380; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*,
[113] pp. 13-14; I. Schapera, in *African Political Systems* (edited Fortes and Evans-Pritchard), pp. 60-1.

[2] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3 (1939).

[3] V. Giraud, *Les Lacs d'Afrique Equatoriale* (1890), p. 186.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 Nyakyusa, when sacrifices are continued in the grove of a dead chief
561 such as Mwakisambwe (30), for an indefinite number of genera-
796 tions, and the heirs of his senior village headmen serve as his
[769] priests, taking the name of the first holder of the office. Most of the
[793] priests of Lubaga held perpetual titles of this sort. The conception of the *corporation sole* is familiar enough in the western tradition, but European observers in Africa are sometimes confused by the use of a personal name and the almost complete identification of each holder with his predecessors, as well as by the practice of treating certain kinship relationships as if they were offices.

Generation was determined among the Nyakyusa by associa-
561 tion with a chief. There was no name for those who 'came out'
796 together other than that of their chief, who was the focus of the
173 ritual. On the other hand, however, a 'coming out' concerned a
● 634 whole generation, and it could not be held out of season. If the
[611] heir died he was replaced by a brother, as were Mwaipopo I (115) and Mwankuga I (150). If a chief had no male heir of the right age in his senior house his daughter might represent an heir. For example, at the coming out of the sons of Mwaijonga, it was a *girl* Ijonga (114) who performed the leading part in the ritual which fell due before the birth of Mwaipopo I (115). When Mwaipopo I was born and grew up he assumed office, but he died young and was replaced by his younger brother without a further celebration. Because the 'coming out' was thus linked to the maturity of a whole generation we have felt some confidence in assigning approximate dates to the arrival of the heroes. The period between each 'coming out' we estimate at thirty to thirty-five years, though the higher figure is probably more nearly correct. There must in fact have been some flexibility in the timing of the 'coming out' to account for the differences in the number of generations of ruling chiefs in different segments of the lineage. Some of the differences may be due to errors (e.g. it is possible that 70 is an elder brother not the father of 98, and that a generation has been omitted between Mwakapeje (54) and Mwakage (75), but even where there is little possibility of error the number of generations does not always tally.

643 In theory a man always belongs to the generation succeeding
561 that of his father, irrespective of his age, provided he has not
622 inherited from a man of the previous generation and taken his status, but in practice, since men often have sons of very different

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

kinsman. Though some of the reasons for his subordination are to be 622
found in modern conditions, it is clear that many of the factors have always operated.

Wars did not only occur between brothers; but when one chief 622
defeated another who was more distantly related to him, he did not, 727
apparently ever, reduce him to a minor position: He either took his cows and then left him alone, or killed him and set up a brother of his own as an independent though allied chief, or else, more rarely, killed him, took over the country and directly incorporated it in his own. So that, apart from the subordination of a defeated brother and his heirs, political authority always stopped at the boundaries of each separate chiefdom.[18]

The traditionally independent chiefdoms to-day vary in numbers 631
from 100 to about 3,000 adult men. 161

The coming of the German Administration in 1893 introduced a 636
paramount political authority, for the first time, in the persons of European 177
officials; while in 1926, a generation later, the British Administration created new Native Authorities under the District Officer and superior to the chiefs. The traditionally independent chiefs were grouped together in eleven court districts, in each district a "Native Court" was set up, consisting of the various chiefs and their great commoners, under the hereditary presidency of one of the chiefs, who thereby became senior to all the others in that court district. Salaries for chiefs have been intro- [465]
duced, and the senior chiefs receive far higher salaries than the others; while the meetings of each Court are always held in the territory of the senior chief (*omalafyale oykolomba*); and to it has now been transferred a great deal of the legal business which, before 1926, was transacted by each chief sitting with his own great commoners in his own chiefdom. The chiefs themselves were consulted in the selection of the Court Presidents, and those chosen were normally the chiefs with the greatest number of men in each particular court district.

In this account the term *senior chief* (*omalafyale oykolomba*) denotes the President of a Native Court, *chief* (*omalafyale*) means one of the traditionally independent chiefs, while *minor chief* (*omalafyale onnandi*) means one of the subordinate chiefs, often with only 40-60 men under him.

The introduction of Courts and salaries has brought an entirely 636
new element into the relationship between old and young chiefs (*vide* 177
578

[18] Among the Konde of Nyasaland, I am told, there was a paramount chief Kyungu, with a far-reaching political authority; but there was no such chief among the Nyakyusa.

636 177 578 *supra*). Only one of them can receive the salary and they commonly dispute about it. Quarrels are particularly frequent over the position of senior chief, for the presidency of a Court carries with it a relatively large salary. Old senior chiefs cling to the position long after their sons have " come out " and when they die their full-brothers still dispute the position with the sons because of the salary involved. Such a situation could not have arisen before 1926, for then there was no comparable issue between them.

636 622 177 And the introduction of salaries has also had a most profound effect upon the relative status of the two young chiefs who " come out " together. When an ordinary chief, with a small salary, dies the Government recognizes the first son alone as chief and pays the whole salary to him. This reduces the second son to the position of a minor chief as effectively as a defeat in war might have done in the old days. But, while the action of warfare only occasionally led to the subordination of one of the brothers, this action of the Government does so invariably, and always subordinates the younger brother. When a senior chief dies, on the other hand, the salary is usually divided: the bulk of it goes to the first son, together with the position of senior chief, while to the second son is given the salary of an ordinary chief.

554 622 As the prestige and authority of a father in his family, or of a man among his neighbours, is closely connected with his wealth on the one hand, and with his believed religious powers on the other, so also the status of a chief among his people. He has more cows, more wives, more food than other men; he is spiritually responsible for the fertility of the land, the women and the cattle of his chiefdom. But he is no autocrat, and all his public functions require for their exercise the co-operation of his great commoners.

622 595 Polygyny is, above all, the mark of a chief. Few commoners have more than five or six wives, but a chief frequently marries fifteen, thirty, fifty or even more; his wives weed and plant the fields which their unmarried sons hoe, and there is plenty of food for guests. Chiefs themselves hoe when they have time, and often they employ a poor man to hoe for them as well, rewarding him after a year or two with a cow. It is not [837] possible for one man to satisfy so many women sexually, and it is generally said that every chief's wife, save the five or six who are his favourites, has a lover. But intrigues must be carried on with care, for their discovery means a great public scandal.

The extent of a chief's polygyny is conditioned by his control of cattle, and his income in cattle is derived mainly from inheritance and the

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

And. 622
every year two hereditary Kinga priests come a three days journey from 782
their own country to participate in the sacrifice of a black cow to the [574]
spirits of Lwembe and his descendants.

Down by Lake Nyasa, in the extreme South East of the Nyakyusa 778
district, there is another equally sacred spot where sacrifices were, and 1764
believe still are[21] made to Kyala, a younger brother of Lwembe.

The Christians and the Moslems form other religious groups which 795
transcend the boundaries of a single chiefdom, but an examination of the Nyakyusa Christian and Moslem communities is beyond the scope of this paper.

The political group which is constituted by a Court district, though 636
only ten years old, is of great importance in Nyakyusa society; but here again the detailed examination of its organization and the relationships of its members is beyond the scope of this paper.

Conclusion: Culture and Society

The aim of sociology is to describe single forms of society fully and, 121
in comparison with one another, to explain them completely, in so far as 128
reasons can be found within this particular scientific field. Neither full description nor complete explanation of Nyakyusa society has here been attempted: many important facts have been omitted from the account, irregularities of detail have been slurred over, the connections of fact have been only occasionally and sketchily established, and no systematic comparison of this unit with others has been made at all.

But the method of this paper has involved an analysis, summary and 121
general though it has been, of the nature of some of the many institutions in which the Nyakyusa meet, of some of the actual elements in their relationships with one another. It is in their dealings with the earth and their cattle, with the spirits and with men who break the law, in their discussions and arguments, their ceremonial feasts, their giving and receiving, in their loves and hates and in their admiration and mockery of one another that they forever make and remake their own human relationships.

Culture is the matter of which society is the form; inseparable in fact they are only intelligible together. No two men can be related unless they both do something and unless their activities are somehow connected. Nor can either escape relationship with his fellow if what

[21] I have not yet been there to investigate.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

area, the Penja, have a grove, Lukata, where they worship their founding ancestor, and the Nyika living on the west bank of the Kiwira river have their grove, Lubaga, twenty miles or more from the Lubaga in Selya and unconnected with it. A third distinct group, the Saku, who were the first inhabitants of the south-eastern part of Rungwe District, have their own grove, Nkeso, where their progenitors Mwamakula and Mwalukinge were buried. None of these has anything like the prestige and sanctity of the Lwembe or the Kyungu, but they are probably the prototype from which the 'divine kings' developed. 769 782

What circumstances produced a 'divine king' at Lubaga and not (so far as our limited knowledge goes) at Kabale we do not know, but we can show how the 'divine kingship' at Mbande, near the Lake shore, developed rather differently from the originally similar institution at Lubaga which is forty miles from the Lake. The Kyungu gradually acquired political power in a way in which the Lwembe did not. Among the Nyakyusa the 'sons of Lwembe' spread through the country establishing themselves as independent chiefs. They acknowledged the mystical supremacy of the Lwembe, and sent cattle to him to sacrifice, but they were sovereigns in their own territories. Just what this mystical supremacy of Lwembe implied was and still is often a matter of dispute, as we shall see. On the death of a chief his country was normally divided into two independent sections, each ruled by one of his sons. One heir sometimes fought the other and reduced him to a subordinate position, but the number of independent chiefdoms appears to have increased fairly steadily, and their size did not diminish in proportion, for the Nyakyusa chiefs have been expanding their area of occupation over a long period, establishing themselves as rulers over scattered and unorganized peoples with less developed techniques than their own, or colonizing unoccupied forest country. Expansion into uncultivated forest is still going on (1955), and were it not for the vigilance of the British Administration it is almost certain that the Safwa people would have been conquered and absorbed like the Penja, Lugulu, and others before them.[1] In 1936 over 100 independent chiefdoms were recognized by the people themselves, and they varied in size from 100 to 3,000 adult men. 769 643 [773] [173] [636] [173] [634]

In Ngonde the development was different. In the early period all the sons of the Kyungu, save two, were killed, and the territorial 173 643

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 4.

10:Culliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

trader brought in other seed. The trader himself planted a large plot and his success seems to have stimulated the Nyakyusa to follow suit. There was a slow but gradual development of planting and by 1932 it was estimated that some 500 tons of hand-hulled rice were sold. It had become clear that the alluvial flood plains around the northern tip of Lake Nyasa were ideally suited to paddy growing. Until 1942 the people continued to hand-hull their crop and sell the rice, but in that year they were persuaded to sell the paddy direct to a locally established mill. Following initial difficulties in milling, handling and marketing, the Government built a store capable of holding 14,000 bags and it also took over the whole of the marketing with a seconded District Officer in charge. In 1947 the cultivators formed their first co-operative society. This movement has been encouraged by Government and the local Co-operative Union now deals with storage and marketing with the guidance of a Government Co-operative Officer.

The figures of sales of rice and paddy are given in Table II.[1]

Paddy has become a well-established crop, not only as the single cash crop of the region, but also as a food crop second only (or even equal) to the traditionally staple banana. About four-fifths of all arable holdings are paddy fields – though parts of these are used for dry season crops of maize, beans, etc. Virtually every Nyakyusa land-holder now grows paddy, and the vast majority regard it as their main crop. Cultivation is mainly by ox-plough followed by broadcast sowing and hand-weeding. Government efforts to encourage nurseries and planting out in rows have so far been entirely unsuccessful. Yields and perhaps quality too are thought to be lower than need be; the chief factor in production seems to be the degree of natural flooding during the wet season.

TABLE II

SALES OF RICE AND PADDY, 1932-56*

		tons			tons
1932	..	500	1945	..	1,200
1933	..	600	1946	..	2,700
1934	..	600	1947	..	3,300
1935	..	600	1948	..	2,100
1936	..	700	1949	..	3,700
1938	..	700	1950	..	2,300
1939	..	1,200	1951	..	1,200
1940	..	1,500	1952	..	2,000
1941	..	1,600	1953	..	3,700
1942	..	2,300	1954	..	3,900
1943	..	2,800	1955	..	3,700
1944	..	2,900	1956	..	3,000

*1932-41—hand-hulled rice, estimates only.
1942-47—paddy, sold through Government agency.
1948-56—paddy, sold through cultivators' co-operatives.

The cultivation of paddy requires relatively large-sized holdings due to the nature of the crop and the local extensive method of agriculture – for example, to produce a given income requires a far larger area of paddy in the Lake Plains than of coffee in the Northern Highlands of Nyakyusa country. As paddy cultivation became established, men increased their arable holdings in order to earn their money incomes. Larger holdings, rather than improved agricultural techniques, have become directly connected with higher incomes, and so the demand for more land set in. Assisted by the now general use of ploughs, paddy growing increased rapidly wherever it was found ecologically possible – i.e., within the alluvial flood plains and the coterminous area of annual natural flooding. Before this new demand for land emerged there were, even in the most highly populated parts, extensive areas which were more or

1. Information has been supplied by the Co-operative Officer, Tukuyu.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FNIT Ngonde FNIT
Nyakyusa

562 ship among the women themselves is, moreover, less developed than in many other African societies.

178 The isolation and self-sufficiency of the Nyakyusa are diminishing rapidly, for considerable economic and political develop-
439 ment followed the 1914–18 war. Coffee (first introduced by the German missionaries) has been developed as a native crop for
444 export, and the cultivation of rice (which had been fostered by the British to provide food for their troops) has expanded. Gold-digging began some fifty miles beyond the borders of the Nyakyusa country, on the Lupa river, and there Nyakyusa men have found both employment as labourers and a ready market for much of their produce, so that by 1936 Rungwe district was exporting goods worth £24,000 annually.[1] In addition to this peasant production there are a small number of European estates
[167] producing coffee and tea for export.[2] We estimate the number of Nyakyusa working outside the district as migrant labourers at about 8,000 or 25 per cent of the able-bodied men. There were about 7,000 Nyakyusa men on the Lupa gold-fields in 1937,[3] and a small number on the coffee plantations of Mboni. These are all within a hundred miles of home; and the Lupa labourers return usually after two or three months' work. A considerable number of Nyakyusa are also at work on the sisal plantations of the coast, and employed as domestic servants or in other semi-skilled jobs through Tanganyika, who remain away for periods up to two or three years. Nyakyusa labourers are regarded by European employers as intelligent and capable of heavy work, but lacking in all the subservient virtues.

482 The system of Indirect Rule was established in 1926, and a
177 consistent attempt has been made to develop a centralized Native Authority for the Rungwe district. The traditionally sovereign chiefs of the Nyakyusa have been grouped in eleven court districts with one chief as president of the Native Court in each (see Map III); these eleven chiefs, together with the two presidents of the Ndali and Lambya courts, belong to a single federation, with an appeal court and joint Native treasury of its own. In the eleven Native Courts (which are courts of record) most of the

[1] Figure estimated on the basis of information supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu.

[2] In 1938 the total area alienated was 26,000 ac.; only 2,000 ac. of this was being worked.

[3] Estimate of the Labour Officer on the [illegible], 4 June 1937.

[Missing in the original – Analyst]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their village headmen, and assist the president and his village headmen in the hearing of cases. Much of the legal business previously transacted by each chief in his own country is now taken to court (*KuiKoroti*); but the power of village headmen to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages is still the basis of the legal system.

Though the Administration has worked through the traditional authorities it has consciously and deliberately modified the traditional system; and, as part of its policy of development, it has established schools, dispensaries, and nurseries for coffee-seedlings and other plants. There are three schools in Rungwe district receiving Government grants: one directly under the Administration, one under the Native Authority, and one a mission school. There are also a great number of 'bush schools', that is, mission village schools under uncertificated teachers giving instruction in the three R's and in religion. Over 19,000 children (12·6 per cent of the population served) are enrolled in the various schools; but 96 per cent of these are in 'bush schools', many of whom never learn even to read and write.

The structure of Nyakyusa society has been further complicated by the conversion of a substantial minority (16 per cent in 1938)[1] of the people to Christianity. The Christians form a group with values radically different from those of the pagans, on whom they react in innumerable ways.[2] The growth of this diversity in the society is a direct effect of its diminishing isolation.

To treat of Nyakyusa villages as if missions, or the Administration, or migrant labour and coffee export did not exist would simplify, but distort our analysis. We have therefore included some account of the differences in behaviour between pagan and Christian, of the effects of centralization on the position of village headmen, and of the influence of trade and migration on economic co-operation in the village. A discussion of the organization of schools and Christian congregations; of the development of courts of record, and 'court districts'; of the relation between

[1] Calculated from figures supplied by the courtesy of the missions and the independent African Churches working in the district.

[2] Moslems are very few and they have little influence on the community as a whole. These few are mostly Swahili traders, Ngoni settlers, or soldiers of the K.A.R. from Nyasaland. We heard of only two or three Nyakyusa who had turned Moslem.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

abakulumba) and their eldest sons are his two heirs in the chieftainship. Young girls, daughters of neighbouring chiefs, are carried off with a show of force from their fathers' homes, by the young chief's men, who themselves later contribute to the herd of cows sent to regularize the position. The two great wives are thus married not solely with the cows of their husband, but also with those of the men whose sons their sons will one day rule. The duty of arranging the match lies with the village headmen of the old chief, and it is said that they are often guided in their choice by dreams.

The girls who are carried off are just about to reach puberty, and they stay at the house of one of the men of the old chief until their periods begin. When both have reached puberty they are initiated, not at their fathers' houses, as are ordinary girls, but in the country of their husband, and both together. At their initiation the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the old retiring chief) play the part normally played by a girl's parents and their neighbours, while the young chief and his men take the usual part of a husband and his friends. And then, after the ceremonies are over, the two girls are given to the young chief as his wives. Houses are built for them separately, i.e. in the senior age-village of the new chiefdom for the first wife, in the next senior village for the second wife; and in this separation of dwelling place is already apparent the future division of the chiefdom between their sons.

Within the chiefdom, and among the wives and children of the chief two 'sides' (*imibafu*) are recognized. Usually, in each country there are, at its beginning, at least two age-villages and half the wives of the chief on either side. This distinction of two sides is important in succession, a son from each side eventually inheriting half the country.

From the time of the 'coming out' of the two young chiefs till the day of their own father's death there exists between him and them a delicate balance of prestige and power. Each of the three, traditionally, has judicial authority in his own age-villages, but appeals in difficult cases may be taken from either of the young chiefs and their village headmen to the old chief and his village headmen, while the religious duties of chieftainship are exercised entirely by the old chief. But in the old days it was the young chief who fought and fed men. 'Young chiefs used to lead their

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 men to funerals in other countries and start a fight, and raid cattle. The old chief would say: "I am too old to lead people to
642 war and to funerals, and to feed men, I have no cattle, you have the power to do these things now." It was the lusty young men (*abatubwa*) who fought, not the old men.'

643 Formerly this transition period rarely lasted long, for the old chief usually died shortly after the 'coming out' of his sons. Success in war and probably also the fertility of the country were believed to be dependent upon the virility of the chief. As one informant put it: 'The old chiefs died because there was war: the people would complain of an old chief saying: "He is too old, when we fight we are beaten, he had better die. Perhaps the young chief will help us." ' The old chief's death was commonly interpreted as due to 'the breath' (*vide infra*, p. 101) of his people who loved his sons rather than himself, but we have evidence that chiefs were sometimes ceremonially strangled by their village headmen. Nowadays many chiefs survive for years after the 'coming out' of their sons, and relations between the generations are consequently complicated, as we shall see later.

643 At the death of the old chief control of the villages of old men passes to the two young chiefs and their village headmen, half to
622 each side. Village headmen of the old chief, relinquishing most of their secular functions to their successors, enter upon new religious duties as priests in the sacrifices to the chief who has just died, and this priesthood they hand on to their sons. The dead chief's full brother is still the religious head of both chiefdoms, but all the secular functions are now exercised by the young chiefs, each in his own country. And the religious functions also fall to them when all their father's full brothers are dead.

The 'coming out' ceremony has been described in some detail, for it is the occasion when chiefdoms and villages are formally established, and the future relations between them are made clear. The splitting of the old chiefdom into two independent halves; the division of every new chiefdom into two sides, each under a senior headman; the boundaries, membership, and relations of the age-villages within each side—all are defined at this ceremony. In the catching-hold of the village headmen, and in the making of fire, the relative status of leaders and villages and the membership of each village are shown. In the planting of the ritual trees on the boundary between the two sides of the country, and

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

i. Constitutional form

Two other negative points are worth noting. First, the Nyakyusa fought among themselves and honoured a brave warrior, but they never developed a military kingdom, nor did they regard battle as the chief end of man. Emphasis on the value of war is not, then, a necessary concomitant of a developed age-organization, as a study of the Masai, Zulu, Swazi, and Pedi material might suggest. Secondly, the constitutional division of a chiefdom once every generation is not dependent upon the age-village organization, for such a division was common enough among the southern Nguni whose age-organizations were of relatively small importance. Among the Pondo and Xhosa the 'great son' and the 'right-hand son' of a chief very often both became independent; the main condition of their separation and independence being that there should be ample land in which they might live, each with his own followers.[1] Nyakyusa chiefdoms could divide in each generation because the Nyakyusa were an expanding population in relatively empty country. 642

j. Necessary conditions of age-villages

The limitations of the connections we have attempted to show must be realized. None of the characteristics cited are *correlates* of age-villages, for in each case either the age-villages could exist without them, or they could exist without age-villages: e.g. fathers- and daughters-in-law could not avoid one another completely if they lived in the same village, but the separate villages in which they live need not necessarily be age-villages; age-villages might be established though father- and daughter-in-law did not avoid one another; and so on. We claim only that these characteristics of Nyakyusa society which have been cited *partly* determine, and are themselves partly determined by, the age-village organization. 621 561

There are, however, certain other characteristics of Nyakyusa society without which age-villages such as we have described could not exist at all. The first of these is the redistribution of 621 561 178

[1] J. H. Soga, *Ama-Xosa Life and Customs*, pp. 25–29; M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, pp. 379–80.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

692 Many cases were of course decided by the common people among themselves, others by their great commoners, and others by the local chiefs sitting with their great commoners. Although there was no centralized judicial system, the political hierarchy of chiefdoms sometimes could be used to obtain redress in the case of a quarrel between men of different chiefdoms. The weakness of the system is indicated by the fact that restitution for wrong done was often obtained by the method of capturing a hostage.[1]

681 Witchcraft was punished by death. An adulterer, if caught, was killed by the husband. Deliberate murder required compensation up to ten head of cattle and the transfer of a woman, followed by a feast of reconciliation. If the murderer could not be caught a blood feud would be started, ending with a feast of formal reconciliation under the guidance of a diviner. Accidental homicide required compensation, but no feast of reconciliation, as there had been no malice. A cattle-thief caught red-handed might be killed on the spot; arson was settled by payment of compensation.[2]

MODERN GOVERNMENT

622 (*a*) *Ngonde*. The British Government in Nyasaland at first applied the system of direct rule. Chiefs and nobles were recognized as 'village' or 'principal' headmen, ●642 performing executive duties for the Administration. The Kyungu was one of the 'principal' headmen, but was not recognized as Paramount. In 1924 the system was 643 modified by the setting up of advisory councils in association with the headmen and the District Resident. The members of the councils were nominated and removable by the Government, and there was no intention of reviving tribal government.

In 1933 the system of Indirect Rule was introduced. The Kyungu was recognized as paramount chief, with an appeal court and five sub-chiefs under him. Of these, one, Kilupula, was over the northern part of the Ngonde plain, another ruled the Lambya in the extreme north-west, and the three others were distant territorial nobles ruling groups of alien stock in the hills. The nobles of Ngonde, with twelve prominent nobles and six other assessors, were recognized as members of the Kyungu's court and given nominal salaries. Those of the great chiefs of Ngonde who were not made sub-chiefs were officially termed 'important' headmen, and given nominal salaries. The other chiefs and territorial nobles were still termed 'village' headmen as before 1933. The Kyungu and the five sub-chiefs were each given an area and a court for the area. Village and important headmen could arbitrate in small cases but had no power to execute judgements. That power belonged to the courts alone. The Kyungu's court was also a court of appeal for the whole of Ngonde. A Native Treasury was established, into which one-twelfth of the tax was paid, but this was almost entirely expended on personal emoluments.

The full traditional constitution cannot be revived, as the religious beliefs which supported it have been superseded. Forty-five per cent. of the population profess Christianity, and even the belief in witchcraft, which operated in certain cases as a constitutional check, is less persistent than before. The native rulers are no longer believed to control the rain and the health and fertility of their people, so they stand or fall by the performance of their secular duties alone. Since the Kyungu has come out of religious seclusion the nobles of Ngonde are relegated to advisory status. The secularization of the constitution tends in this respect to make it more autocratic, both

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 48–59.

[2] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 82–90.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

622 in the relations between the Kyungu and the nobles, and in those between the local chiefs and their great commoners. On the other hand, there has been a reversal in the relative wealth of commoners and chiefs. The latter have had small salaries substituted for the proceeds of the ivory trade, food tribute, and the booty of war. The decline of polygyny has also reduced the relative wealth of the chiefs. The Kyungu's total official salary in 1937 was £72, and the salaries of sub-chiefs from £4. 10*s*. to £12 per annum. The nobles of Ngonde were paid from 10*s*. to 15*s*. per annum except Mulwa, who got 30*s*. These salaries do not permit of lavish entertainment and gifts to subordinates, and the rulers suffer a consequent loss of prestige. Each village headman is allowed 3*d*. in the tax paid by every adult male subject, and, in addition, the 'important' headmen (former great chiefs) receive subsidies averaging about 10*s*. per annum. These payments have replaced the traditional right to requisition food. Commoners are frequently richer than their rulers. The head clerk in the Boma got £52 in 1937, and fifty-three other government employees got £12 or more. Young men from the goldmines and native Christian ministers now earn more than do the former great chiefs.

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By using his private fortune the present Kyungu has been able to maintain the prestige of his office. He revived the *milasa*, hoeing custom, in 1927 on a new basis. To each chief who hoed for him he presented a cow, bought out of the proceeds of the sale of the produce of their labours. The *milasa* profit also enabled him to buy cloth for funeral gifts, a custom which he extended considerably, giving cloths not only at the death of the chiefs, but also to everyone who dies in his part of the plain of Ngonde. The present constitution of Ngonde is more autocratic and more centralized than the old, and thanks to his wealth the Kyungu's secular power is greater than that of his predecessors, in relation to the nobles of Ngonde, and to the chiefs and territorial nobles.

The 'coming out' has ceased since 1913, owing to the smallness of all the present chiefdoms, and the impossibility of finding enough land and followers for two successors to any local chief. Each chief is now succeeded by a brother or one son only. Subjects are still free to move away from the area of an unpopular headmen, thereby reducing his salary by 3*d*. per annum.[1] Although the Nyasaland–Tanganyika boundary cuts his sphere of influence, the Kyungu is still often consulted on tribal affairs across the border.[2]

622 (*b*) *Nyakyusa*. The government of Tanganyika Territory has grouped the 100 or so traditionally independent chiefs into eleven court districts, with one chief as President of the Native Court in each. These eleven chiefs, together with the two presidents of the Ndali and Lambya courts, are federated, and have an appeal court and joint Native Treasury of their own. In the eleven native courts most of the traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their great commoners, and assist the President and his great commoners in the hearing of cases. The bulk of the legal business previously transacted by each chief in his own country is now taken to court, but the power of the great commoners to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages is still the basis of the legal system. A poll tax, fixed at 9*s*. per annum (1938) for adult males, was introduced, and chiefs are paid small salaries, ranging from 5*s*., 10*s*., or 20*s*. a month for ordinary chiefs, to 80*s*. or 100*s*. a month for court presidents.[3]

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[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 69–85.
[2] *Native Affairs Report*, 1933, p. 6.
[3] Wilson, 3, 1938, p. 15.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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My wife and I were engaged in researches among the Nyakyusa from September 1934 to January 1938; and our informants constantly told us of the general similarity between their own customs and those of the Ngonde plain. They made it clear, however, that while they and the men of the Ngonde plain shared an otherwise almost identical culture they yet differed markedly in their political systems. The Nyakyusa, when the Europeans reached them, were organized in small independent chiefdoms, the people of Ngonde possessed a paramount chief, the Kyungu. More recently, among the Nyakyusa, a sustained attempt by the Tanganyika Administration to set up two paramount chiefs had failed; in Ngonde, on the other hand, where the Kyungu's supremacy had, until recently, been officially unrecognized by the Nyasaland Administration, his position seemed to be quite secure. The contrast was an interesting one and demanded investigation. Nor was this the only difference between the Nyakyusa political system and that of Ngonde; besides a paramount chief Ngonde possessed a group of hereditary nobles (*amakambala*) which was apparently quite unparalleled among the Nyakyusa.

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So in July 1937 we crossed the Songwe and spent some time in Ngonde studying these differences. Our visit confirmed the fact that the traditional culture and social system of the Ngonde plain was in almost all respects identical with that of the Nyakyusa. The patrilineal kinship organization with marriage by cattle, the age-villages each with its great-commoner or headman (*ulifumu*), the little chiefdoms each consisting of a group of age-villages united under a hereditary chief (*umalafyale*), all were there.[1] The descriptions we were given of the traditional rituals at death, at girls' puberty, at the birth of twins and at the "coming out" of young chiefs seemed to be identical in general significance and almost identical in detail with the rituals we knew among the Nyakyusa. Language also was similar, though here the similarity had been less close in former times. And yet there were the two great differences: at the apex of the political system of Ngonde was the Kyungu, while a group of hereditary nobles formed an integral part of it. Again and again our informants confirmed this general identity, these specific differences: "Everything is just the same among us as among the Nyakyusa, only in the case of the Kyungu and his nobles (*amakambala*) is there any dissimilarity." How then was this dissimilarity to be accounted for?

[1] This social system is discussed in the first paper of this series—*The Land Rights of Individuals among the Nyakyusa* (1938), and also in papers contributed to *Bantu Studies*, one in September 1936—"An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society," another in April 1939—"Nyakyusa Burial Conventions."

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

It is unusual for a sociologist to find such a simple problem[1] for analysis as this and it was not long before the answer was plain. The Nyakyusa, until a few decades before the coming of the Europeans, had been largely isolated from any vigorous external contacts; Ngonde, on the other hand, had been effectively related to the outside world for generations. The Nyakyusa actually possessed in the Lwembes, the hereditary chiefs of Lubaga, a line of spiritual paramounts or high priests, whose religious functions were remarkably similar to those of the Kyungus in Ngonde; but, poor and isolated as they were, they had never developed any secular paramountcy at all. The reasons for the greater elaboration of the traditional political system of Ngonde were to be found above all in the ivory trade and in the constant influx of immigrant groups. 642 177

And it further became clear that the prestige which the present Kyungu enjoys in the changed conditions to-day is due in large part to his having followed the mercantile traditions of his predecessors, mastered the business methods of the Scots, made a fortune, and then kept up his position out of his own private means.

2. *THE CHRONICLE OF NGONDE (TO 1875).*

In studying the present constitution of Ngonde and the profound changes now taking place in it, we cannot find any point of time at which the process of change began. In its present radical form social change in Ngonde arises from the ferment of a host of new social conditions imported by European missionaries, traders and Government officials. But the Arabs also brought change to Ngonde and before the Arabs the Ngoni, while before the coming of the Ngoni there is evidence to suggest that changes had arisen, on more than one occasion, in the normal behaviour of the men of Ngonde which were stimulated, not by any new contacts with the outside world, but simply by accidents of their own internal history. Social change in Ngonde, as far as we can see, has always been going on. 177 178

In this section the political history of Ngonde is described in outline from the its beginnings to the coming of the Europeans in 1875, in so far as it can be recovered from the oral tradition. In later sections a systematic analysis is attempted, first of the constitution of Ngonde just prior to that date, and then of the changes in it which have since taken place. 173

(a) *THE EARLY KYUNGUS.*

It is generally agreed that the ancestors of the Kyungus, the present hereditary chiefs of Ngonde, came from the Livingstone Mountains in 173 643

[1] [The dissimilarity between the Ngonde and the Nyakyusa political systems. — Analyst]

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173 643 565 necessarily have followed from them, had modern conditions been different. The evidence is inconclusive.

565 642 622 Now not all territorial nobles in the Ngonde plain have been supplanted by "the sons of the Kyungus" even to-day; while in the hills inland they have mostly retained their power. And so in discussing the political system of Ngonde under the middle Kyungus, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between four different kinds of political unit: (1) the chiefdoms in the plain, each ruled by a hereditary chief related to the Kyungu; (2) the fiefs (if I may adapt this word from a feudal to a primitive context) in the plain, ruled by hereditary nobles unrelated to the Kyungu; (3) the fiefs in the hills inland, also ruled by hereditary nobles, but differing in many ways from the fiefs in the plain, and (4) the chiefdoms of the houses of Nyondo and Kameme in the hills.

642 622 This paper is mainly concerned with chiefdoms and fiefs of the plain. There each of the chiefdoms consisted, as among the Nyakyusa, of a group of age-villages, older and younger men living apart with their own contemporaries. At the head of each village was a headman, or great-commoner (*ulifumu*) chosen for life from among the villagers by the chief and the great-commoners (*amafumu*) of the senior villages of the chiefdom. Except in the case of very small chiefdoms each chief was succeeded by two or more sons who divided the villages among them. The transference of power from the old chief to his sons normally began in his lifetime at the "coming out" (*wousoka*) when they were formally shown to the country as chiefs and magically treated. The constitution of every chiefdom was that of limited monarchy, for the chief was dependent upon his great-commoners, who advised and, in many ways, controlled him. In the status of chief and great-commoners religious elements played an important part.

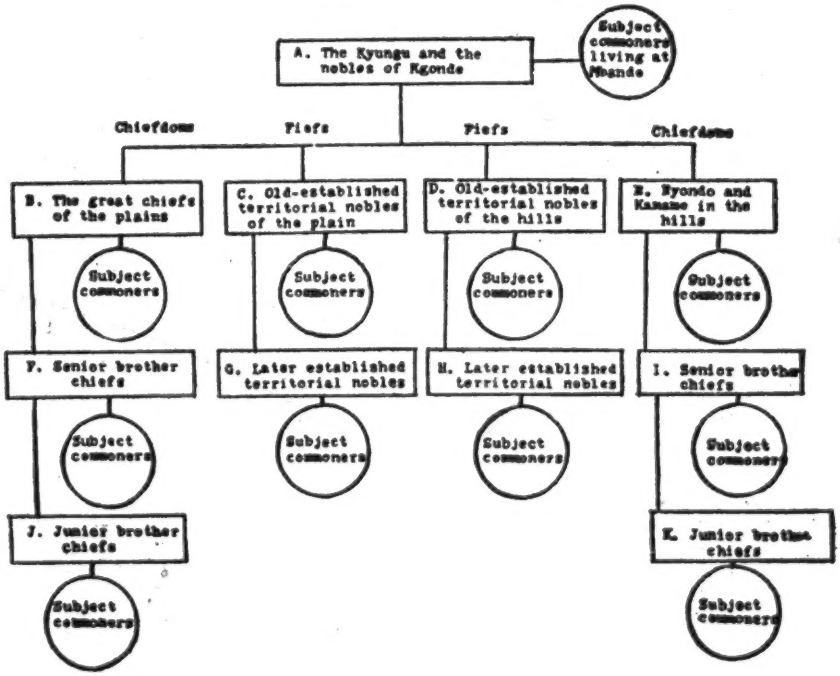
642 622 643 565 But, whereas among the Nyakyusa each chiefdom, save the very small ones, was, in secular matters, quite independent of its neighbours and each chief was a sovereign, in Ngonde, on the other hand, the wealth of the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde made them the apex of a political hierarchy. And thus, while among the Nyakyusa the senior of two brother chiefs could only command his junior in religious matters, when they sacrificed to their common father's spirit, in Ngonde he could occasionally command him in other ways also, he could, for example, summon him to war or to hoe,[1] and he had a certain slight judicial authority.[2] Of two brother chiefs the junior was subordinate to the senior; in each of the great houses all other chiefs were subordinate to the head of the house, the great chief with a hereditary title;

[1] Vide infra sections 4 and 6.
[2] Vide infra section 5.

[text continues on p. 24]

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

THE CONSTITUTION OF NGONDE IN THE MIDDLE PERIOD



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6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

642 622 643 565 the great chiefs themselves were subordinate to Kyungu. But every ruling chief right up the scale, except the Kyungu himself, had also his own great-commoners and people directly subordinate to him. Moreover the subordination of some chiefs to others and of all to Mbande was a very different thing from the subordination of authorities in a civilized state. It was still above all a religious and ceremonial subordination, but in matters of secular justice and administration there was a very large measure of local autonomy.

Within the chiefdom the organization of families and villages was more or less[1] the same as that described in the first paper of this series, and need not be further described here.

642 643 565 Among the fiefs of the plain there was another hierarchy, depending not upon seniority of birth but upon priority of arrival in Ngonde. For each important immigrant who entered the country with followers of his own went first to an already established territorial noble, not straight to Mbande; and it was the already established noble, who then acted as his sponsor, took him to Mbande and told the nobles of Ngonde and the Kyungu of his request for land. The normal procedure then was for the nobles of Ngonde to be sent by the Kyungu to arrange with his sponsor where to settle him. And thereafter he ranked, at least for ceremonial purposes, as his sponsor's junior. Thus the territorial noble Kasyombe was junior to his sponsor Mwenekibuta, and so on. But no ruling noble was subordinate to any chief save the Kyungu. The nobles, both territorial and of Ngonde, describe themselves as "the great-commoners (*amafumu*) of the Kyungu," likening the relationship of the fiefs and the Kyungu to that of the villages of a single chiefdom and their chief.

642 565 The organization of each single fief seems to have resembled in many ways that of a small chiefdom, each was divided into at least two age-villages, so that old men and their sons should live separately; for it was taboo in all the Ngonde plain, as among the Nyakyusa, for father and daughter-in-law ever to meet. Kinship, however, was more emphasized as a reason for living together than in the chiefdoms, and we are told that the inhabitants of the fiefs were usually related, either as kinsmen or affines, to the territorial noble concerned; while the age-villages of a fief had no great-commoners at their head. Otherwise the customs which obtained in the plain, both in the fiefs and the chiefdoms, were, on the whole, homogeneous.

Each of the nobles of Ngonde had a few subject commoners of his own living at Mbande with him, divided up into two age-villages; so

[1] The climatic difference determines certain differences in the system of land-tenure of Ngonde and of the Nyakyusa, but of these we have made no study.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

that the organization of Mbande may be described either as a group of small fiefs clustered together or as the capital chiefdom of the Kyungu, in which the nobles of Ngonde acted as the great commoners, each in two small age-villages. 642 565

Besides the nobles of Ngonde and their own followers there lived at Mbande men called *valukuta*, who acted as the personal messengers and police of the Kyungu. They were not hereditary officials but chosen for their speed by the nobles of Ngonde, who also gave them their orders. Anyone might become a messenger, the son of a chief, or of a commoner, or even a slave. 624 202

Of the customs of the hill fiefs and of the chiefdom, of the houses of Nyondo and Kameme we know very little; but it is certain that in many of them different dialects were spoken from that of the plain and that their inhabitants called themselves (as they still do to-day) Sukwa, Wenya, Lambya, and so on, rather than "men of Ngonde." And these upland groups were much more loosely attached[1] to the central power at Mbande than were the people of the plain. 642 565

There is some evidence to show that, even in the early period, the the nobles of Ngonde did not always take the most immediate heir of a dead Kyungu to succeed him; during the middle period it is certain that they did not. The Kyungu had to be taken from the royal family but, within limits, the most suitable man might be chosen. And with the increase in the numbers of the chiefs the area of selection grew constantly wider. The constitutional metheds of selection will be discussed in section five.

(d) *THE MIDDLE KYUNGUS: CIVIL WARS.*

We must now turn to the rivalry between the chiefs of Ngelenge and Ngana. "Mwangonde begot Kalonga, Mpeta,[2] and Mwansele. And they, when they grew up, quarrelled with the sons of Kasyombe: 'Let them move further off, they are only commoners, we object to their proximity!' So they made war on them and drove them fleeing out of Ngana with only a few men. Before this war began their father Mwangonde had forbidden them to fight and commanded them to be friends." We notice here a point, which will be discussed later in section five, that the Kyungus, though not themselves involved in the civil wars, yet had little or no power to keep the peace. 173

"Then the sons of Kasyombe went to the Ndali to make allies of them and they returned together and fought the sons of Mwangonde

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[1] cf. Section 5.
[2] Mpeta (*vide infra*) later took the name of Mwakasungula.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

These twin religious powers of the great-commoners in relation to their chief (or of the nobles of Ngonde in relation to the Kyungu) were important for the balance of the constitution, for they provided a most effective check upon the actions of the chiefs. If a chief kept within the bounds of constitutional usage then any illness that he had would be attributed by the diviners to some such cause, as the infidelity of his wives or the breach of a taboo; but if he broke some constitutional usage then that would be taken to be the cause of his next illness; the great-commoners, it would be held, were angry and so had made him ill. 754 622 624 642

It is hardly necessary to stress the local and individual autonomy implicit in the faith in witchcraft. Not only were the great-commoners as a group believed to have an irresistible power through their witchcraft over their chief, but so were the great-commoner and the leading witches of every village believed to have an irresistible power over other individuals within that village. And in both cases their powers were strictly limited, save exceptionally, by the bounds of chiefdom or village. Moreover witches did not always act as a group, an individual witch might maliciously cause another individual to fall ill. In all this the political hierarchy was irrelevant. But it was not irrelevant in dealing with accusations of malicious witchcraft; there proof rested with the poison ordeal and a journey had to be made to a great chief or a leading noble.

4. *ECONOMIC ELEMENTS (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

We have suggested in the previous section that the traditional religious paramountcy of the Kyungu and his nobles of Ngonde was an important factor of their secular power. But comparison with the Nyakyusa shows us that their control of wealth was equally important. The religious paramountcy furnished a mould into which the stiffening stream of wealth could run and there be minted into the form of sovereignty. Much of the wealth which reached Mbande did not stay there; it was passed back piecemeal to the local rulers of Ngonde, stamped with the divine impress of the Kyungu.

(a) *THE INCOME OF MBANDE AND OTHER AUTHORITIES.*

Now the traditional income of Mbande consisted of ivory, food, labour, slaves and cattle. Of ivory the Kyungu had a semi-monopoly in the plain and received tribute from the territorial nobles in the hills. Food was brought to him by the chiefs and territorial nobles of the plain, who also, with their men, hoed his public gardens (*imilasa*). Slaves and cattle accrued to him from tribal wars and from his offending 643 652

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

and wealth." Once again we see how closely connected were the religious powers of the Kyungu with his wealth. 727 567

And the military authority of Mbande, like that of the lesser rulers, was correlated both as cause and as effect with the other factors of its general political status. The central power rested in part on its military functions : it was a tribal rallying point for defence against alien attacks, together with the hierarchy which depended upon it, it provided the necessary large-scale organization for military success, its religious powers were never more valued than in wartime, while victory brought wealth and prestige both to the Kyungu and his subordinates. But, as comparison with the Nyakyusa shows,[1] it was only the flow of wealth up and down the hierarchy, in combination with the religious functions of Mbande, that made this large-scale military organization possible. 721

(c) *WARFARE AND AUTONOMY.*

Now warfare is, at one and the same time, an example of order and of disorder in human society. By social order I mean the systematic overcoming of lesser autonomies within existing wider groups : the overcoming of individual autonomy within the family and the local community, the overcoming of family, local and other autonomies within the tribe or state, the overcoming of tribal and state autonomies within still wider groups. By social disorder I mean the temporary overcoming by a lesser autonomy of the forces of some existing wider group. Legal procedure is one of most obvious examples of order, crime is one of the most obvious examples of disorder. 600

But warfare falls between these two extremes. Seldom are lesser autonomies so completely overcome as they are within a group at war, never is the autonomy of that group more clearly dominant over the forces making for a wider order. And it is of fundamental importance for the understanding of any social field to see which groups within it have both sufficient unity and sufficient autonomy to engage in recurrent warfare with one another. The size of the groups which go to war is one of the marks by which we distinguish primitive from civilized societies ——the smaller the warring groups the more primitive the society.

Now the recurrent civil wars of Ngonde in the middle period of its history show us that, beneath its hierarchical facade, it was a society of the same kind as that of the Nyakyusa across the Songwe; the centralized political organization was too weak permanently to overcome the local autonomies of village, fief and chiefdom. It is true that the mercantile divinity of Mbande gave sufficient unity to Ngonde to enable it to fight as 721 642

[1] *Vide infra p. 64.*

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

721 642 a whole against the Bemba and the Ngoni, and that the poverty-stricken divinity of Lubaga was unable to do this for the Nyakyusa;[1] but neither of them gave their people any high degree of unity among themselves.

For, while in both cases the hierarchical organization touched the common people in its religious and ceremonial aspects, in neither case did it much affect their everyday actions. In Ngonde, as we have seen, the wealth of the Kyungu, which he derived from the ivory trade, enabled him and his nobles of Ngonde to bind the other chiefs and nobles to him, in a way that the Lwembe and his hereditary priests could not do across the Songwe. But this wealth only touched the common people slightly and did not much alter the economic organization of the local groups. Nor had Ngonde any other common activities save tribal wars, religious rituals, and the hoeing of the *milasa*.

Horizontal as well as vertical relations must bind social groups together if their autonomy is to be permanently overcome, and in Ngonde, no less than among the Nyakyusa, the horizontal relations between the local groups were weak; while the religious seclusion of the Kyungus weakened the vertical relations also. The constitution of Ngonde consisted of a number of small and primitive local groups, all firmly attached to Mbande, but each one capable of swinging free[2] and of breaking the tenuous horizontal bonds that joined them among themselves.

Now a distinction must be made between these civil wars and the tribal wars with the Bemba and Ngoni. The civil wars point us to the disorder of Ngonde, a disorder which existed in spite of unifying factors; the tribal wars point us to lack of order which was hardly opposed by any unifying factors at all. No doubt there were occasional peaceful contacts between Ngonde and these other tribes, but they were clearly very slight indeed.

7. *POLITICAL CEREMONIAL.*

643 644 In every relationship of life there is some ceremonial expression of feeling. And towards the Kyungus of the middle period their subjects frequently expressed the feelings of worship and terror appropriate to an irascible divinity.

"At Mbande the nobles of Ngonde would sit round praising the Kyungu; the drums went '*kindé! kindé!*' And they would praise him in antiphony: 'O Kyungu!—Great Father! Great Father!—

[1] The Nyakyusa were attacked both by Sango and Ngoni but no tribal alliance was formed to meet these attacks.

[2] In the case of the chiefdoms this metaphor must be qualified by the intervention of the great chiefs between the local chiefdoms and Mbande, and the occasional unifying effect of this fact upon whole groups of chiefdoms.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

to appoint a regent and, with the consent of the nobles of Ngonde and of Mwangalaba himself, Peter was appointed ; and in 1932 he succeeded his brother as the Kyungu. He is still the Kyungu to-day. Both before and after his succession he has used his private fortune without stint to maintain his public position ; and the historical accident of his personal ability and wealth has played a very large part in shaping the course of the political and social revolution though which Ngonde is passing.

It is Peter who has completed the emergence of the Kyungus from their religious seclusion at Mbande. He has, in the first place, abandoned all claims to divinity and, with them, all interest in the traditional prayers and sacrifices to his ancestors which the nobles of Ngonde still occasionally undertake. And in the second place, he has built his capital, not at Mbande with the nobles of Ngonde, but at Bwiba, half way between Mbande and the Government Boma at Karonga—a position symbolic of the new age.

The Government of the Protectorate at first applied a system of direct rule. In Ngonde most of the chiefs and ruling nobles were designated either as " Village " or as " Principal Headmen " and officially allowed to exercise executive duties. It appears that traditional rulers only were selected, though, theoretically, anyone at all might have been. The " Principal Headmen " included the Kyungu but he was not recognized as paramount over the others. " In 1924 certain modifications were made in their position, but it was officially stated ' that the new system is no way intended to revivify or perpetuate governance by Native chiefs.' Under the 1924 system ' Village ' and ' Principal Headmen ' still had executive duties on behalf of Government, but no authority to administer their people in their own right."[1] With the appointed headmen councils were associated consisting of " members nominated and removeable by the Government," and a similar district council was set up " to advise the District Resident in such matters as may come before him."

But in 1933 the system was changed to one of " Indirect Rule " or " Local Self-Government," by which the traditional political institutions of Ngonde were taken as the basis of administration. The Kyungu was now recognised as " Paramount Chief,"[2] with an appeal court and with five " Sub-chiefs "[3] under him. Of these five Kilupula was one of the

[1] The quotations in this paragraph are taken from L. P. Mair's *Native Policies in Africa* pages 114-116.

[2] In order to avoid confusion between traditional and modern titles I shall, from now on, use the former without quotation marks, the latter with them.

[3] These five had all been " Principal Headmen " under the previous ordinance. Since our visit Kalonga, the senior great chief of Ngelenge, has also been made a " Sub-chief."

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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great chiefs of Ngana, three others (Mwenemisuku, Mwenewenya, and Nthalile) were distant territorial nobles who ruled groups of alien stock in the hills, while the last, Nyondo, who was, we remember, traditionally related to the Kyungu, ruled the Lambya group in the extreme north west. The nobles of Ngonde, together with twelve prominent territorial nobles and six other assessors, were recognised as members of the Kyungu's court and given nominal salaries. Those of the great chiefs of Ngonde who were not made "Sub-chiefs" in the new regime were now officially termed "Important Headmen," and given nominal salaries also. The other chiefs and those territorial nobles who had men of their own under them were still termed "Village Headmen" as they were before 1933.

The Kyungu and the five "Sub-chiefs" each had an area allotted to him, and each was given a court for his area. "Village" and "Important Headmen" might arbitrate in small cases, but had no power to execute judgments; that power belonged to the courts alone. Thus the Ngonde plain was split up into the two areas of the Kyungu (in the south) and of Kilupula (in the north). The Kyungu's court was both a court of first instance for his own area and also a court of appeal for the whole of Ngonde.

The modern title "Village Headman," seems at first to be a particularly confusing one since its bearer rules, not a village, but either a chiefdom or a fief which is itself sub-divided into age-villages. Further in the case of chiefdoms, unless they are very small, each age-village has its own great-commoner; and it is he who is the traditional village headman. But the confusion seems more natural when we realise the number of very small chiefdoms and fiefs which have now come into being by the continual sub-division of the former and the gradual shrinkage of the latter. There are some ruling chiefs and nobles to-day, still recognised as such, who have only half-a-dozen adult male tax payers under them. And it takes a pedantic anthropologist to see in such a group *two* age-villages! It is true that one does find the two or three old men in it still building a little apart from the three or four young ones, but most likely they are now all Christians and no longer observe the father-daughter-in-law taboos; for all practical purposes they constitute but one village-group. In the larger chiefdoms, however, the traditional articulation into age-villages each under its own great-commoner, still survives as a living fact.

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Like the Nyakyusa, but unlike many other Central African peoples, the people of Ngonde have a fairly easy adjustment to make to modern economic conditions. It is true that a large proportion of the able-bodied men, estimated by the District Commissioner in 1937 to be 25%, are now

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

always away, but the great majority of these go to the nearby Lupa Gold Fields in Tanganyika and return home regularly after short periods of three or four months at work there. Nor are they by any means solely dependent upon the sale of their labour for the money which is now necessary to them. Cotton and a certain amount of coffee, rice, beans, maize and beeswax are now being produced in Ngonde for sale to the outside world. Of cotton, the most important economic crop of this district, ninety tons were exported in 1936 and brought in, for distribution among the thousand men who had planted it, about a thousand pounds.

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The question of the ultimate title to the land of Ngonde at various times since the coming of the Europeans has been the subject of dispute; but in actual fact only a little was ever alienated to European firms or individuals. These alienations were followed, in some cases, by a shifting of the African population off the land taken up, but not on any large scale. And since 1933 Native rights have been secured by law. There are now only three or four small estates occupied by Europeans in Ngonde.

In the constitutional sphere, again, a Native treasury has been set up into which one twelfth of the tax money is paid; but as this money is almost entirely used up in personal emoluments, the new treasury has so far little significance.

The whole scale and perspective of life is now changed. Ngonde is no longer a world in itself but a tiny province in a great empire. The Kyungu is no longer either a god or a sovereign, but a little secular chief visibly supported and controlled by the Nyasaland Government. Nearly half his people profess Christianity. A quarter of his young men are always outside Ngonde working for wages. Mission education in local schools and at the neighbouring central station of Livingstonia, opens to increasing numbers each year the knowledge of a vast new world. The primitive Ngonde was a world of personal relationships; only rarely were people much affected by the behaviour of any save their personal acquaintances. But to-day impersonal relationships are all-important in Ngonde; world markets, imperial policies and world history in general largely determine the behaviour of its people.

9. *THE PRESENT CONSTITUTION OF NGONDE.*

(a) *CHANGE AND CONTINUITY.*

The constitution of Ngonde in the middle period of its history consisted of a mercantile divinity superimposed on a number of relatively autonomous local groups. The central power was mainly determined by the two factors of divine kingship and the ivory trade: the local autonomy was mainly determined by the absence of any large number of

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6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

642 permanent social relationships beyond the local groups of chiefdom and fief, and by the religious seclusion of the Kyungu. Now every one of these factors has today ceased to operate. And it is worth dwelling on this, for it follows that the constitution of the middle period has ceased to exist and something radically different has been developed in its place. Divine kingship and the ivory trade are dead, a host of complex and permanent relationships now covers Ngonde and links it to the outside world, the Kyungu rules his people in person, under Government. And the continuity which is aimed at by a policy of "indirect rule" is thus only possible in Ngonde to a very limited extent.

On the other hand, as some continuity is inevitable even through the most radical political change, so an acceptance by the Government of that inevitability is itself a factor of political order. It is far easier to rule Ngonde to-day through the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde than it would be, say, through a committee of commoners chosen for their personal ability; for the successors of the traditional rulers still have a status in Ngonde which is continuous, though not identical with that of the past.

178 Christianity has gained a great hold on Ngonde,[1] and has helped to
771 undermine the old pagan faith even among those who do not profess it.
797 And the whole hierarchically organized system of pagan ritual is almost dead. A few days after our arrival in Ngonde, in July 1937, the nobles of Ngonde organized the clearing out of the ashes, for a special purpose. A bad plague of rats had appeared in the country and an old woman had announced prophetically that it was due to the anger of the spirits. Mulwa did all the organizing, for, as he said to us: "The present Kyungu renounced all interest in these things years ago and told me to manage without him. So I went and told Kalonga and Mwakasungula and Mwenengubwe, who is the senior of the chiefs of Ngana; it is their business to tell their juniors." But of the hundred odd chiefs and nobles in the Ngonde plain only four chiefs and a few nobles responded to the summons to put out their old fires and to bring the ashes to Kyimbwe. How many commoners put out their fires I do not know, for we did not hear of the ritual until it was over. Even this, however, was an exceptional occasion and the regular yearly performance of the ritual has ceased. Neither is the old first-fruit ritual any longer performed.

The Scots Mission in Ngonde concentrated from the first on the conversion and education of the sons of leading men, so that now many of the rulers themselves are either Christians or ex-Christians. The present Kyungu was, as we have seen, a Christian, and, though he has

[1] 45% of the population profess Christianity.

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THE CONSTITUTION OF NGONDE IN 1937

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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now abandoned his Christianity and taken a number of wives, he appears to be wholly sceptical of pagan beliefs. "It is I who have killed the custom of praying in the sacred groves," he told us, "for my brother, Mwangalaba, used to give the nobles of Ngonde cattle for sacrifice; but I have never once given them a beast, nor do I give them bens, nor beer, nor flour." He subsequently admitted, however, that he did sometimes give them "a few pence" to buy a hen for sacrifice. Many of the old magical taboos he certainly no longer observes and we have no evidence that he observes any; while the magical possessions of his predecessors are mostly lost.

That the old beliefs survive in the minds of many men in Ngonde, both pagan and Christian, we have certain evidence; but upon those beliefs little public action is now taken. The profession of Christianity is normal among the younger people, and their attitude to the ritual which occurred during our visit was one of amusement. And even the belief in witchcraft, which has proved in many parts of Africa to be most persistent, is beginning in Ngonde to be publicly called in question by some of the pagans themselves.[1]

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The present Native rulers of Ngonde are thus no longer generally believed to control the destinies of their people; rain, health and fertility are no longer in their gift. And this brings radical changes into all political relationships. It is by their secular functions alone that the present Native rulers stand or fall. The hoeing of the public gardens of the Kyungu by his people, for instance, was largely kept up in former times because of his rain-making powers; he gave them rain, they gave him service. But, if he is now still able to claim this service from them, it is because he gives them other things than rain.[2]

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Then again the decline of the old beliefs inevitably alters the balance of power between the different political authorities. The Kyungu is no longer a magical object carefully secluded and controlled by the nobles of Ngonde; and so he now rules his people in person. It is he himself who now takes all the major decisions, within the sphere of responsibility allowed him by the Government. The nobles of Ngonde are reduced to a merely advisory status. While the decline of the old theistic and witchcraft beliefs brings a similar change into the relations of every chief with his great-commoners. Many chiefs in Ngonde still fear that they will fall ill if they offend their great-commoners, but some do not,[3] and it

[1] The same cannot be said of the Nyakyusa, among whom, for various reasons, the missions have made far fewer converts in proportion to the total population. Among the Nyakyusa the old rituals and beliefs are still very much alive.

[2] *Vide infra* p. 80

[3] One of the chiefs, for example, is an ordained minister of the Church of Central Africa (Presbyterian).

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

is generally admitted that all chiefs are less affected by this fear than they used to be. The secularization of the constitution tends, in this connection, to make it more autocratic.

On the economic side it is difficult to exaggerate the change in the relative wealth of rulers and people. The change is temporarily obscured by the historical accident of the present Kyungu's personal fortune, but this, when he dies, will go to this own heir, not to his successor in the Kyungship. The Kyungu's total official salary in 1937 was £72 a year and those of the "Sub-chiefs" varied from about £4 10s. to £12 a year. The nobles of Ngonde all received either 10s. or 15s. a year, with the exception of Mulwa who received 30s. These salaries, which are paid out of the Native Treasurery, are the modern substitute for the profits of the ivory-trade, which the Kyungu shared with his subordinates, together with the regular tribute of food and the proceeds of tribal warfare and of punitive expeditions, all of which sources of income have now dried up. And these salaries do not make possible the giving of any valuable gifts to subordinates and subjects. The local rulers also receive slight financial subsidies from the Native Treasury. Each "Village Headman" is allowed to retain 3d. from the tax of every adult male subject of his own and the "Important Headmen" (great chiefs) receive in addition subsidies ranging from 3s. to 40s. a year. This custom has replaced that of the requisitioning of food; but, owing to the smallness of all the present chiefdoms and fiefs of the plain, few "Village Headmen" receive more than £1 a year from this source.[1]

It is open to commoners, on the other hand, to become as rich or richer than most of their rulers. The head clerk in the Boma in 1937 received £32 a year, and there were fifty-three other Government employees who all received £12 or over; Native Christian Ministers and Evangelists all received many times the salary of Mulwa while young men often returned from the Lupa gold-fields with savings of several pounds.

The decline of polygyny in Ngonde again reduces the relative wealth of the subordinate chiefs and nobles in comparison with their people. Women are increasingly reluctant, for various reasons, to be married by polygynists, and the old style of entertainment is changing. Few chiefs and nobles, save the present Kyungu himself, now have sufficient wives and unmarried children to be able to entertain on a large scale. In the case of ordinary chiefs and territorial nobles (the "Village Headmen" of to-day) this poverty is not in itself very significant, for with the dwindling

[1] The average receipts of the one hundred and twenty-four "Village Headmen" in the Ngonde plain were almost exactly 10/- per annum in 1936. They had, that is, an average of forty tax-payers each.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 565 in size of the groups they rule, they have fewer subjects to entertain. But the "Sub-chiefs" and the "Important Headmen" cannot cease to entertain largely without losing much of their pre-eminent status.

178 692 The outlawing by Government of civil and tribal war, combined with the new economic and religious conditions, has enormously extended the normal range of social relationships among the people of Ngonde; and a centralised judicial system has necessarily been developed to deal with the new situation. The old forms of local autonomy have ceased.

178 642 The continuity which is observable between the present constitution of Ngonde and that of the middle period is mainly determined by three factors. In the first place the Government of the Protectorate deliberately supports in positions of high authority the legitimate successors of some of the old rulers. In the second place the judicial functions of those successors, which have been greatly extended, have replaced, to some extent, the old religious and military functions. And, in the third place, the present Kyungu is, as it happens, a rich man. A decentralised mercantile divinity has been transformed into a centralised Native Authority with some continuity of personnel, with the substitution of new functions for old and with the assistance of a private fortune.

(b) *FROM GOD TO MAGISTRATE.*

178 692 The first two of these factors of continuity—Government support and the increase of judicial functions—must be discussed together, for it is mainly because of their utility as subordinate magistrates that the Government supports the Native rulers of Ngonde.

Modern conditions, in the sphere of law, bring about two great changes. Firstly the integration of the one-time primitive society of Ngonde with the civilized world greatly increases the range of social relationships among its people, and so renders ineffective much of the traditional legal machinery. And, secondly, the introduction of Christianity, of political control by the British and of European economic enterprise inevitably changes the context of the law. Granted the general conditions of contact between Africans and Europeans in Central Africa a transformation of all its traditional legal systems is seen to be an inescapable necessity.

Common law must now be maintained by a hierarchy of legal authorities reaching far beyond the boundaries of Ngonde, if it is to be maintained among its people at all. As I write these words in Livingstone, a thousand miles by road from Mbande, there is a man of Ngonde working in a shop within a hundred yards of my office. While in Ngonde itself it is no longer true that a man's friends and neighbours, or even his immediate rulers, can ever be sure of constraining him effectively if he

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Owing to the accident of Peter's private fortune the elements which tend to make the present constitution of Ngonde more autocratic and more centralized than the old are, in his case alone, uncounteracted by the element of poverty. And his secular power is thus far greater in Ngonde than that of his predecessors. The nobles of Ngonde have lost the old religious holds over him, most of the subordinate rulers have lost their judicial functions, he alone is considerably richer than the common people. 178 642 643

Personal links between rulers, subordinates and subjects are not only characteristic of primitive societies. In our own society these links normally take the form of entertainment: The King, cabinet ministers, colonial governors, and the mayors of towns entertain the leading citizens, and their position in part depends upon doing so. And it is thus probable that personal economic links will still be necessary in the Ngonde of the future, when its integration with world society is more complete. Their form may change, but wealth will still have to be expended on their maintenance. Now there are only two ways of securing that such links will be maintained: either special allowances must be paid to the Native rulers of Ngonde as they are paid to European rulers, to enable them to keep up their position in this way, or else rich men of public spirit must be found to fill these offices. The second solution depends upon the existence of rich men and the constitutional possibility of giving them office; but it is very unlikely indeed that, in the near future, other Peters will be available, who combine wealth both with royal blood and the general eligibility for which the nobles look. Moreover it is worth noting here that quite soon the majority of the Native rulers of Ngonde will probably be Christian monogamists and the old economic resources of polygynous marriage will then no longer exist for them at all. The first solution, however, always remains practicable. 178 642

(4) CONSTITUTIONAL LAW.

It is generally accepted in Ngonde to-day that all future Kyungus should be taken from the one house of Mwakasungula and all the three Kyungus since the deposition of Mwabulambo have been members of it. The nobles of Ngonde insist that the chiefs of Ngana were only taken in the middle period *facie de mieux*, when either no suitable chiefs of the Ngalonge line could be found, or it seemed to be dwindling dangerously under the onslaughts of the Ngoni. And the chiefs of Ngana accept this fact. Why the house of Mwambelo has fallen out of the succession I am not sure, but, as the house of Mwakasungula is now very numerous, I suppose it is not considered necessary to look beyond it. 178 643

But still the principle obtains of election within the house. From

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Mwenengubwe, has attained more or less the status of a great chief; but his country originally belonged to the noble Mwenelupembe. One of the Kajunis married a daughter of Mwenelupembe and, in the usual way, became the effective ruler of most of the country. But the position was not formally clarified, Kajuni and Mwenelupembe are said to have lived on the best of terms, "and there was no boundary between them." After the arrival of the Europeans Kajuni was recorded in the Government list as the "Headman," for taxation purposes, with the consent of Mwenelupembe. And this meant that Mwenelupembe received no share of the tax money. But then, recently, Kajuni sold some of their land to a European for a tobacco shamba without consulting Mwenelupembe, who was furious, and demanded his own tax register and to have a boundary formally marked out between them. And this has now been done. The present cash value of the status of a ruler has altered the economics of the situation, the decline of the religious status of Mbande lessens the comparative importance of the royal blood, while new occasions of dispute between the rulers are now present.

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The "coming out" (*wuroka*) has ceased in Ngonde owing to the smallness of all the present chiefdoms, both in area and numbers, and the impossibility of finding sufficient land and followers for two successors to any local chief.[1] There has been no "coming out" since 1913. Each local chief is now succeeded by one younger full-brother (or one son) alone. But still among these "Village Headmen" popular favour determines their position. If his subjects do not like a "Headman" they move away to his neighbours, and every emigration reduces his salary by 3d. a year.

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(c) *CONCLUSION.*

Now the more autocratic form and the greater centralization of the modern constitution of Ngonde is very largely the product of inevitable social forces. Granted the general conditions of contact between Africans and Europeans in Central Africa, a decline of the religion of Ngonde, with the consequential change in the relations of chiefs with their leading commoners, could not possibly be avoided. Nor could the old local autonomy possibly be fitted in unchanged to any modern administrative system. And Ngonde is not unique in this, similar changes, equally inevitable, can be seen in most areas of Central Africa.

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Nor is the relative poverty of the majority of the Native rulers of Ngonde today a unique phenomenon either. Richards[2] has shown the

[1] Owing to the climatic difference land is scarcer in Ngonde than among the Nyakyusa; but the implications of this fact we did not specially study.
[2] *op. cit.*

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 642 same thing among the Bemba and Read among the Ngoni ;[1] and it is, in fact, the wealth of Peter which is unusual. Wealth and chieftainship are no longer normally synonymous terms as they were in the old days ; and this again is largely the result of the operation of inevitable forces.

And wherever an increase of centralization and of autocracy is combined with a decrease of the relative wealth of the Native rulers there the modern constitutions of Central Africa must inevitably become very difficult and, in the end, impossible to work. For a central political power cannot be effectively exercized unless it includes the control of wealth ; nor can able and wealthy commoners be permanently barred from sharing it.

But the policies of the Government, backed by the overwhelming power and wealth at their command, are themselves social forces which, while they cannot prevent the other forces from operating, can counterbalance them. No Government, for instance, can maintain the old tribal religions in being against the forces making for their decay, nor can it now restore the old sources of wealth to the chiefs, nor can it prevent some commoners from becoming wealthy men, nor can it bring back the old small-scale, isolated, relatively autonomous, local communities. But it is possible for a Government to raise the salaries of chiefs and their advisers and deliberately to encourage new forms of local representation and popular control. It is possible ; but whether it is desirable a scientist cannot say.

[1] Margaret Read Native Standards of Living and Culture Change. Supplement to *Africa*. 1938.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE peoples with whom this book is concerned, the Nyakyusa and the Ngonde, occupy an area shut in by mountains at the northern end of Lake Nyasa, and enjoy a culture which, though varying locally, clearly springs from a common basis and is traditionally attributed to similar origins. The most conspicuous features of their political organization are (i) the balance of power between chiefs and commoners; (ii) the 'coming out' ritual in which a generation of men which has governed for approximately thirty years retires and hands over the administration to its sons, retaining only ritual functions; and (iii) the system of age-villages.

All are agreed that chiefs and commoners belong to different stocks; the commoners being descended from the original occupants of the country while the chiefs trace their descent to a line of invaders who came down from the Livingstone mountains eight generations ago. According to the myth, they brought with them fire, and cattle, and iron tools, and they found a people who ate their food raw in a land 'without trees'.[1] Commoners are *abatitu*, black people, while Ngulube, an early ancestor of the chiefs, was 'pale'[2] and chiefs (*abanyafyale*) generally are said to have been lighter in colour and 'different in their bodies'. After generations of intermarriage between chiefs and commoners there is no consistent difference in physical type between them, but the range of physical type among the Nyakyusa as a whole is wide.[3]

Nyakyusa and Ngonde historians say that their chiefs are related to those of the Kinga, who live high above the Nyakyusa valley to the east in the Livingstone mountains, whence the chiefs came. The Kinga acknowledge the connexion and join with the Nyakyusa in sacrifice to their common heroes, but culturally the

[1] Possibly the lake-shore plain. The hills until cultivated are covered with either savannah or rain forest.

[2] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3, p. 10 (1939). According to the Ngonde version Ngulube was the *first* ancestor.

[3] cf. F. Fülleborn, *Beiträge zur physischen Anthropologie der Nord-Nyassaländer* (1906). *Das Deutsche Nyassa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet Atlas* (1906).

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'Lwembe listens to him'. 'If Kinga messengers went [to Lubaga] without going through Mwakalukwa's country there would be much hunger. . . . Once Mwemusi and Kyelela [Kinga chiefs] conspired together and sent off men with hoes to Lubaga, without reference to Mwakalukwa. They carried ten hoes. But when they got back disease killed many in the country, and they paid Mwakalukwa and did not do it again.'

It is true that an independent Nyakyusa chief *can* send an offering to Lubaga on his own; it is received by the priests of Lubaga and sacrificed in the grove, and such a sacrifice is held to be in some measure efficient, but drought or sickness in the country as a whole is often attributed to one or other of the participating groups failing to play their part. Moreover, such a failure is thought to be dangerous to the chief or priest who neglects his duties, as we shall see in the case of Kasitile.

The priests of Lubaga ministered to the Lwembe but they had also the right and duty of admonishing him if he did wrong, just as village headmen have the right and duty of admonishing their chief. If the Lwembe broke a taboo 'then Kissoule and the other priests would be very angry and reproach him for bathing and making hunger, and he would pay them a bull in recompense.' Even the 'divine king' was subject to the rule of law. All through the political organization and ritual patterns of the Nyakyusa there is this balance and reciprocity between chiefs and commoners and it is here that the Nyakyusa system differs radically from that described by Professor Frankfort for ancient Egypt.[1] The heroes had brought the gift of chieftainship to the Nyakyusa but it had not ousted another, perhaps older, tradition of democratic leadership; instead, the two were welded in a partnership which, to the Nyakyusa, is so much part of the necessary order of the universe that they speak of commoner priests and headmen as 'wives' of the chiefs. The Kissoule in office is 'the wife' of the Lwembe.

In the grove at Lubaga sacrifices of black cattle and sheep and libations of millet beer were offered by the Nyakyusa, while the Kinga brought hoes, bamboo beer, salt, the sacred drum *ngoma*, and *ifika*, that is, marvels whose nature, Kasitile averred, he did not know himself. The shrine of Lubaga, and the actors and actions connected with it, are miraculous and terrible, terrible even to the actors themselves who tremble when they enter the grove, and

[1] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (1948), pp. 51-6.

631 Age-villages combined to form a chiefdom under the hereditary chief,
628 *amalaf'yale*, but active co-operation between villages thus associated was often slight; indeed in the larger chiefdoms there commonly existed intermittent animosity which might break out in raiding or even civil war. The
[721] integrity of these larger chiefdoms was weak – for example, when the
[648] Nyakyusa were attacked by Sangu and Ngoni war-parties, and later by the Germans, villages of the same chiefdom conspicuously failed to join in common defence. Similarly the land affairs of one village were no concern of any other, and each jealously guarded its own rights.

631 None of the chiefdoms was large; smallness of scale is typical of
162 Nyakyusa political organisation and social attitudes. In 1955 the smallest indigenous chiefdom contained only 36 men. In 1948 55,700 people were divided amongst about 18 indigenous chiefs, but undoubtedly had not the Colonial Government frozen the system there would have been rather more – at least five more. Today there are 12 recognised "administrative chiefs", amongst whom five have each less than 3,000 people under them, and the largest chiefdom contains fewer than 10,000 people – the average is just over 4,000 people.

631 Nevertheless the chiefdom, the collection of villages, was important,
361 because in the creation of the chiefdom villages were created, and in its development the villages developed, matured and died away. A village survived only so long as its members lived and by the nature of the age-organisation there was but little possibility of the recruitment of new members, for villagers' sons left to form their own new villages. Their sons eventually came to comprise the core of the new chiefdoms.

642 In connection with the constitution of a Nyakyusa village and with
643 land tenure, the significant feature of the chiefdom was its establishment, together with the induction of a new chief, at the great "coming-out"
[796] ceremony, *ubusaka*. In brief, each chief was succeeded by two of his sons – the
[498] eldest son of each of the senior houses of the chief, i.e., of his first two wives. At the "coming-out" ceremony, when the sons were still young men and their father was not a particularly old man, the old chiefdom was divided into two, each part coming under one of the new young chiefs. Before this critical occasion – at which much important ritual was performed – the younger men of the old chiefdom had already moved away from their fathers villages and had established their own incipient villages nearby, each one containing a group of coevals. A Nyakyusa boy from the age of about seven years could not continue to live with his father and mother, but, in company with his equals, built his own hut on a site adjacent to the main village as indicated by the fathers' headman. Until the "coming-out" cere-
621 mony these youths' villages came under the control of the old village head-
[342] men; but with the induction of the new chiefs they achieved independent status, each with its own headman appointed from among its members by the old headmen. Each new village was allocated a new building site and a new arable area, and quite commonly the old villages, the older men, moved away a little in order to give the younger men adequate access to the land,
631 for it was considered that the young men's needs for land were paramount.

After this wholesale reorganisation of the old chiefdom, when new
[178] villages were established and new boundaries demarcated,[1] the old chief
[622] himself, the old headmen and the older men (the "fathers") gradually retired from active public life. The old chief was supposed to commit suicide after a time (or was quietly killed off) in order to leave the field clear for his
643 sons; the old headmen became the religious and ritual leaders of the new
[888] chiefdoms, with the flavour of elder statesmanship, and the old men's

1. "At the "coming-out" it is said that "everything is made new", boundaries are redrawn and the new chiefdoms and villages of the young men are [illegible]". Wilson, G., 1938, p. 31.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

582 still cultivates his father's fields and eats at his father's home. In
241 former days, we were told, the marriage age of men was even
621 later than it is at present (*vide infra*, p. 80). 'Perhaps after twenty a boy would be betrothed, but to a young girl, and he would wait eight years before she grew up.'

857 From the time boys begin to herd they recognize one of their number as a leader. 'When we herd cows as boys', a friend told us, 'there is always one who is obeyed by his fellows whatever he says. No one chooses him, he gains his leadership and his prestige by bodily strength. For always, when we are boys together among the cows, we vie with one another and dispute about going to turn back straying cattle, or about fetching fire to cook the food we have brought with us. And so we start fighting, and we go on fighting until one of us beats all his fellows completely and so becomes the leader. And then it is he who sends others to turn back straying cattle, to fetch fire and to collect firewood. And he is greatly respected. He settles quarrels too. What we quarrel about most as boys is a particular insult: one says to another: "You are only a child, you are, I am your senior." This is always happening and then it is the part of the one who is leader to set those two on to fight. We all stand round and watch and the one who first cries is proved the child.'

622 Later, when the boys have built apart from their fathers, one of their number is often appointed by the headman of their fathers' village to settle disputes between them. Some boys' villages have no such appointed leader, but many of them do. Such appointments are, however, temporary. It is only when political authority is transferred to their generation that the young men's permanent leaders are chosen.

b. The 'coming out' ceremony

561 Eight or ten years after the young men of the senior boys'
622 village of the chiefdom have begun to marry, their fathers hand
621 over the government of the country to them. This transfer of authority is effected in an elaborate ceremony called the 'coming
643 out' (*ubusoka*).

The 'coming out' is a series of legal acts by which the country of an old chief and his village headman (*amafumu*) is, with certain reservations, handed over into the possession and control of his

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

two senior sons and their respective village headmen. These legal acts are accompanied by much pomp and ceremony. It is at once the initiation of all the youth of the chiefdom into public life, the constitution of two new political units and the proclamation of two new chiefs. It consists not only of a series of legal acts but of religious ritual as well, action being taken to increase the personal qualities appropriate in a chief and his village headmen by treatment with medicines.

The 'coming out' comprises six main events: firstly, the public recognition of a number of age-villages of young men, and the selection of headmen to lead them; secondly, the magical treatment of young chiefs and headmen to make them dignified and powerful; thirdly, the public recognition of the two young chiefs; fourthly, a cattle raid; fifthly, the establishment of the young age-villages on adequate land; and sixthly, the marriage of the young chiefs.

When the eldest sons of his contemporaries reach the age of about thirty-three to thirty-five years the old chief is approached by his village headmen who say: 'The sons have grown up, let us make the "coming out" for them.' After a period of delay, for he is unwilling to relinquish his own honour and power, the old chief agrees, and the 'coming out' takes place. He fears lest he may fall ill from 'the breath of men' should he delay too long (*vide infra*, p. 134). His two heirs, together with all the boys and young men, whether married or single, who are sons of the old chief's contemporaries, are summoned to attend, according to their age-villages, at the old chief's principal house. When they arrive they wait there for several days, while the old village headmen discuss with their chief where to give the young men land, and whom they will select as headmen of the young villages. In many of the young village groups there are already leaders previously appointed by the village headmen of their fathers. If they have proved satisfactory their appointments are confirmed by the old village headmen; if not new ones are selected.

In selecting leaders of the young men's villages the old headmen look for men who are wealthy, who come from respected families, who have ability in judging cases, and are popular with their fellows; in the old days they looked also for courage and the ability to lead men in war. These qualities correspond to the village headman's functions. He should be hospitable to his

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

622 neighbours, he judges their cases; he is their leader at ceremonies
157 and in the old days he led them to war also. He represents their desires to the chief, and it is through him, and in consultation with him, that the chief gives orders. Besides this each headman
[754] (*ulifumu*) is believed to protect his own villagers from witchcraft, 'to watch over the country by night', to shield men and cattle from the spiritual forces of evil.[1] To fit them for this task, village headmen are treated with medicines at the 'coming out' to give them the power of seeing and fighting witches.

622 So important is this position of village headman that legal precautions are taken 'to prevent the village headman becoming a chief', as several informants have put it to us. It is illegal to choose a village headman from among the kinsmen of a chief, and it is illegal to elect the son of a village headman to that office in any age-village of his own contemporaries, though he may perhaps inherit the position in his father's village when his father dies.

622 To return to the 'coming out' ceremony: when the old men
621 have made up their minds, one of them goes among the crowd of young men, and catches hold of those they have chosen in order of seniority: first the one who is to be leader of the senior village of the first son of the old chief, then the leader of the senior village of his second son, then the leader of the next senior village of the first son, and so on. There are commonly eight age-villages of young men; of these four will belong to the chiefdom of the first son, four to that of the second. The eight new village headmen are now publicly known, four in each new chiefdom.

622 The young chiefs, together with the senior headman of each,
789 are then treated with medicines that they may be impressive (*nsisya*). From birth a chief undergoes periodical treatment to
● 643 make him impressive (*nsisya*) 'that we commoners may tremble before him'. The treatment at the 'coming out' is directed towards the same end: 'We treat him, then he will be altogether a chief, men will respect him!' The village headmen now drink the

[192] [1] The essential meaning of a word in one culture is often illuminated by the meaning of a word from the same stem among neighbouring people. In this connection it is significant that *ifumu* in Bemba and *mfumu* in Nyanja mean 'chief', but in Ankole *abafumu* means 'magicians' (including diviners) (*African Political Systems*, p. 145), and among the Sukuma *bafumu* is used in the same sense (*Africa*, Vol. XIX, p. 14). cf. H. H. Johnston, *A Comparative Study of the Bantu and Semi-Bantu Languages*, Vol. II, p. 270.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

medicines of power for the first time, and these are thought to create or develop in them *amanga*, that is, the power of seeing and fighting witches (*vide infra*, pp. 96-102). To the senior headman of each young chief is handed a magic horn to attract people to the country. 'The horn is the luck of the chief that many people may come to build.' To each is given also a magic tail, which, it is believed, will enable him to dream of wars that are approaching and which, together with a magic spear, he carries into battle. 'The spear of the chieftainship is to fight battles with, it is manhood, strength.' The horn, the tail, and the spear are emblems of office handed on by the senior village headman of the old chief to the senior headmen of the young chiefs. They were treated periodically by a special doctor and a set was provided for each independent chiefdom at the coming out. The treatment of these emblems is now rarely undertaken—we were fortunate to see it once. The Nyakyusa say that since the country has been pacified, it has become unnecessary; its purpose was to secure success in war.

622 789 643

The next stage in the action is the one from which the whole institution takes its name: 'the coming out' (*ubusoka*). The two young chiefs are secluded for a few hours in the hut of the old chief's first wife, where they receive various forms of magical treatment, and when this is finished someone outside knocks at the door and cries 'Come out!' Then, to quote the words of a village headman who told us about his own 'coming out', 'The director of ceremonies said: "Get up!" The chiefs got up and came out (*basokile*)[1] of the house to us, and we, the crowd of young men, cried "Come on!" and welcomed them. Then we all ran shouting and calling the war cry towards the next chiefdom. In the old days we should have invaded that country to take cattle and to bring them back and eat them at the new huts which we build next. But that is finished now.' The senior headmen of the new chiefdom lead the charge, each grasping his war tail, his

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[1] cf. the traditional Nyakyusa greeting (now archaic) '*Sokile!*' literally meaning 'You have come out (of the house)' i.e. 'Good morning!' This greeting was not confined to those who had been through the *ubusoka* ceremony.

[576]

A comparison of the meaning of the root in other Bantu languages is again suggestive. In Xhosa *ukusoka* means 'to install circumcised lads into manhood by giving them presents when they come out from their seclusion and are publicly acknowledged as men by the assembly of men' (Kropf, *A Kaffir English Dictionary*); *ubusoka* means bachelorhood, celibacy (of a circumcised man, not a boy).

[192]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

spear, and magic horn. In this way the new chiefs are shown to their people.

Chiefs who are to be independent now separate, each moving off with his men to the place where the senior age-village of that chiefdom will eventually be built. All fire in the country is extinguished, even the fires in the homesteads of the old men, and in each of the new independent chiefdoms new fire is made, ceremonially, by the senior headman of the chiefdom and his fellow next in rank. One holds a lion-bone while the other twirls a medicated stick in a groove in the bone. The senior headman and his second each gives fire to the village headman immediately junior to him, and then the latter in turn to his immediate junior, until each of the headmen has fire. At this point the future division of each new chiefdom is foreshadowed, for the second senior headman in each new chiefdom is recognized as the leader of one side of the country. As each village headman lights his fire he calls: 'Come men of such and such a village to me!' and they take fire from him.

Since we are not primarily concerned with symbolism in this book we shall not enter at length into the interpretation of these events.[1] It must suffice to remind our readers of the Nyakyusa myth that their chiefs came down from the Livingstone mountains ten generations ago bringing fire with them, and that they found the previous inhabitants of the valley, who became their subjects, without fire, and eating their food raw. The extinguishing of the old fires and lighting of new is interpreted by the Nyakyusa as a symbol of the new chieftainship. A chief with whom we were well acquainted explained it thus: 'The fire is the fire of lordship (*umoto botwa*). The old chieftainship is coming to an end, the new has come. They extinguish the fires in all the homes, those of the young men and those of the old men, then they make new fire which is taken to every home. For formerly Mwangamilo [the old chief] would have had little power [after the 'coming out'], Mwakyusa and Reubeni [his sons] would have ruled.' But why fire? we asked. 'Because of old,' they relate, we chiefs came with fire, the commoners had not yet got it, they ate raw food only. When we came we slept in men's houses and we made fire and cooked food. Men were astonished, and said:

[1] A full analysis of the symbolism of one ritual necessitates a comparison of all the rituals of the society, which will be made in another book.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

"Ha! what's this?" They were burned; so they said: "These are chiefs because they brought this fire." It is this they remember, even to-day. . . .' And another informant explained: 'The fire means (*kukuti*) that a new chief has come, he brings fire, we throw away the old fire in the house.'

Having lighted their fires the young men cut bamboos and build temporary shelters for themselves, making one or more huts according to their numbers. It is forbidden for them to sleep in old huts, nor may they build on the site on which they lived as boys. Usually their first huts are on what was formerly pasture land, and later their fathers move aside to make room for the new generation. On the new site the two senior headmen of the new chief, together with a doctor, plant with magical ritual two branches of a *ficus* (known in Nyakyusa as *iliyabe*)—a species which is important economically since the bark of saplings provides the traditional dress of Nyakyusa women. These trees, known as *ulupando* and *umpandapanda*, are planted where the future boundary will run between the two halves of the young chief's country, and the senior headman (who is leader of the senior half of the country) builds his house near where the *ulupando* has been planted. He and his colleague, together with the doctor, proceed, after planting the trees, to set up the hearth-stones of his hut. Again magic is performed. Nyakyusa informants were not agreed as to the symbolism of these trees, as they were about the symbolism of the new fire. The root *ukupanda* means to plant a crop, or to set up, or establish the hearth-stones of a house; it is used also for establishing, or treating, with medicines. Some informants interpreted the *ulupando* as the chief and *umpandapanda* as his wife, saying: 'We are planting the chief and his wife.' Others said that the two trees represented the two senior headmen of the country, another that they represented the chief's two senior wives. What is certain is that *ulupando* is regarded as more important than *umpandapanda* and that both are taboo. No one may cut the trees. If anyone breaks the taboo it is believed that lions and leopards (closely associated with chiefs) will roar at night, and treatment by a doctor will be necessary to still them. It is also widely believed that the strength of the chief is associated with the growth of the trees. 'If these trees go dry the reign will not be successful, the chief will be defeated in war. If they flourish and grow the reign will be successful, the chief is

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 a ruler.' It is relevant to add that cuttings of this tree strike easily
643 in the soil and climate of Nyakyusa country. When a chief dies
154 he is buried beside his trees, and gradually a thicket—a sacred
[644] grove—forms round them.

The young men spend much time feasting and dancing. Formerly not only did they raid cattle for food from neighbouring chiefdoms, but they also took cattle, milk, and bananas from their fathers' villages. And they still do the latter, for they say: 'We are now the owners of the country.' The milk and bananas are often sent by the old chief, but 'if the chief is stingy, they teach him a lesson by going and *taking* bananas, saying: "We are important people."' Great emphasis is laid on this right of the young men to take food: one group, the mates of the first heir of a senior chief, boasted to us: 'We came out with grandeur, we ate many men's cattle.'

342 After a month or two the members of each new village move
621 off to build on a site of their own, and the wives of those who are married join them. Wives do not come to the first temporary shelters. The senior of the new villages remains on the site of the temporary shelters where fire was made, the ritual trees planted, and the hearth-stones of the senior headman established with magic. Gradually each member builds himself a permanent hut.

621 The old men move aside to make room for their sons. If land
561 is short they may move on to the site on which a boys' village formerly was, or there may be other land available. Whatever the position, adequate land must be provided for the young men's villages. And, we were told, 'We old men are glad to move, we are glad our sons are so many and we leave the land to them.' Or again: 'The old men move because new fire has come; the young men have made themselves into new people, hence they cannot build on their old sites but on new ones. Perhaps the old men will succeed them, for they may build in the boys' village where their sons were, or if there is space they go elsewhere. But the old men rejoice greatly, for their sons have "come out".' Nevertheless there are sometimes disputes between villages of different generations regarding a particular site (*vide* Document, p. 188).

643 A few months after the 'coming out' each of the two young
572 chiefs marries two wives. A young chief may be married already;
585 but the two whom he now takes *rash* as his great wives (*ukuke*

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ohukulumbe) and their eldest sons are his two heirs in the chieftainship. Young girls, daughters of neighbouring chiefs, are carried off with a show of force from their fathers' homes, by the young chief's men, who themselves later contribute to the herd of cows sent to regularize the position. The two great wives are thus married not solely with the cows of their husband, but also with those of the men whose sons their sons will one day rule. The duty of arranging the match lies with the village headmen of the old chief, and it is said that they are often guided in their *choice by dreams*.

The girls who are carried off are just about to reach puberty, and they stay at the house of one of the men of the old chief until their periods begin. When both have reached puberty they are initiated, not at their fathers' houses, as are ordinary girls, but in the country of their husband, and both together. At their initiation the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the old retiring chief) play the part normally played by a girl's parents and their neighbours, while the young chief and his men take the usual part of a husband and his friends. And then, after the ceremonies are over, the two girls are given to the young chief as his wives. Houses are built for them separately, *i.e.* in the senior age-village of the new chiefdom for the first wife, in the next senior village for the second wife; and in this separation of dwelling place is already apparent the future division of the chiefdom between their sons.

Within the chiefdom, and among the wives and children of the chief two 'sides' (*imibafu*) are recognized. Usually, in each country there are, at its beginning, at least two age-villages and half the wives of the chief on either side. This distinction of two sides is important in succession, a son from each side eventually inheriting half the country.

From the time of the 'coming out' of the two young chiefs till the day of their own father's death there exists between him and them a delicate balance of prestige and power. Each of the three, traditionally, has judicial authority in his own age-villages, but appeals in difficult cases may be taken from either of the young chiefs and their village headmen to the old chief and his village headmen, while the religious duties of chieftainship are exercised entirely by the old chief. But in the old days it was the young chief who fought and fed men. 'Young chiefs used to lead their

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 642 men to funerals in other countries and start a fight, and raid cattle. The old chief would say: "I am too old to lead people to war and to funerals, and to feed men, I have no cattle, you have the power to do these things now." It was the lusty young men (*abatabwa*) who fought, not the old men.'

643 Formerly this transition period rarely lasted long, for the old chief usually died shortly after the 'coming out' of his sons. Success in war and probably also the fertility of the country were believed to be dependent upon the virility of the chief. As one informant put it: 'The old chiefs died because there was war: the people would complain of an old chief saying: "Ma la-ton-ldi., when we fight we are beaten, he had better die. Perhaps the young chief will help us." ' The old chief's death was commonly interpreted as due to 'the breath' (*vide infra*, p. 101) of his people who loved his sons rather than himself, but we have evidence that chiefs were sometimes ceremonially strangled by their village headmen. Nowadays many chiefs survive for years after the 'coming out' of their sons, and relations between the generations are consequently complicated, as we shall see later.

643 622 At the death of the old chief control of the villages of old men passes to the two young chiefs and their village headmen, half to each side. Village headmen of the old chief, relinquishing most of their secular functions to their successors, enter upon new religious duties as priests in the sacrifices to the chief who has just died, and this priesthood they hand on to their sons. The dead chief's full brother is still the religious head of both chiefdoms, but all the secular functions are now exercised by the young chiefs, each in his own country. And the religious functions also fall to them when all their father's full brothers are dead.

The 'coming out' ceremony has been described in some detail, for it is the occasion when chiefdoms and villages are formally established, and the future relations between them are made clear. The splitting of the old chiefdom into two independent halves; the division of every new chiefdom into two sides, each under a senior headman; the boundaries, membership, and relations of the age-villages within each side—all are defined at this ceremony. In the catching-hold of the village headmen, and in the making of fire, the relative status of leaders and villages and the membership of each village are shown. In the planting of the ritual trees on the boundary between the two sides of the country, and

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the establishment of the mother of an heir in each, the future division of the country is foreshadowed. Finally, it is the occasion on which power is formally handed over to the younger generation, and the success of the new headmen as war leaders is put to the test.

c. *Relations between villages within one chiefdom*

Within each chiefdom, then, there are two sides, each under a senior headman. On each side are two or more age-villages of contemporaries of the chief—men of the ruling generation. Attached to these villages are boys' villages made up of the younger brothers and sons of contemporaries of the chief. They live separately from their fathers and may have their own village leaders, but legally each boys' village is subject to the authority of the headman of its parent village. On each side there are also two or more villages of old men, contemporaries of the chief's father, whose headmen have ritual functions. Each village established at a 'coming out' ceremony has considerable autonomy under its own headman, but it is subject to the senior headman of the side it belongs to in two ways: cases not settled by a village headman go to the senior headman of the side, and a senior headman leads the villages of his side in war and communal hunts. Even villages of old men are subject to the authority of the senior headman of the ruling generation on the side of the country where they live. Boys and young men of the generation which had not yet 'come out' used to fight and hunt as village groups under the leadership of the senior headman (of their fathers' generation) on the side of the country to which they belonged. Whether or not each boys' village was also subject in war and chase, as in legal disputes, to the authority of the headman of its parent village is not clear. Certainly each boys' village formed a defined segment within any larger group.

To recapitulate, there are always villages of three generations in existence—those of contemporaries of the late chief, the headmen of which have ritual functions; those of mature men, contemporaries of the ruling chief, whose headmen have administrative and military functions; and those of boys and young men, contemporaries of the heir, who have not yet 'come out', and who fight under the leadership of their fathers' senior headmen.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[631] Sometimes, as we shall see presently, villages of a fourth generation exist also.

561 621 Each age-grade, or generation, covers a span of 30 to 35 years, and each village comprises an age-set with a span of 5 to 8 years, though this is longer in sub-chiefdoms (*vide infra*, p. 37). The average age of members in each grade varies with the date of the last 'coming out' ceremony. Just before the ceremony the elders with ritual functions are those over 65 or 70; the mature men of the ruling generation those between 35 and 65; and the 'boys' [illegible] between 10 and 35. Just after the ceremony the ruling generation consists of those between about 10 and 35, anyone over 35 being an elder. Those just too young to participate in or 1 'coming out' may be just too old to participate in the next. The village of Katumba in Mwaipopo's country was in this position: it had been created after the 'coming out' of the young chief Mwankuga, but informants were uncertain whether or not it would be established as a separate village at the 'coming out' of his heir Mwanyilu (*vide* Document, p. 183).

622 643 561 621 The two senior headmen of a new chiefdom are chosen from the two senior villages established at a 'coming out' ceremony, so that a commoner's chance of holding high office is greatest when he is just a little older than a chief's heirs. The senior village of one generation begets the senior villages of the next (*vide* Document, pp. 181-3). Thus, though the son of a village headman in one generation cannot become a village headman in the succeeding generation, there is a tendency for leadership within the chiefdom to pass from one *group* of men to their sons. Those who participate in a 'coming out' while very young tend to have least authority in the country, and are superseded when still under forty by the generation of their sons. The immediate contemporaries of a chief, *i.e.* those with whom he lives during boyhood, have a special bond with him all through life; and it may sometimes happen that when a chief dies young and is replaced by a brother (his own son being too young to inherit) a junior village comes into prominence because its members have been 'the companions' of the new chief. Bulindanajo in Mwaipopo's country was a village of this kind: Mwaipopo I had died young, and was succeeded by his brother Mwaipopo II ('Mwambene') who had 'come out' as a youth in Bulindanajo; and his immediate contemporaries from that village maintained a special bond with him.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

e. Variation in the basic form of village organization

The splitting of a chiefdom into two at the 'coming out', the division of each country into two sides, the establishment of two age-villages of men in each half, and the development of two boys' villages attached to each village of men: all this division and sub-division into two equal parts creates the basic form of Nyakyusa political organization. But there are frequent variations from it. Formerly, in large chiefdoms sometimes three or even four sons went through the 'coming-out' ceremony, each with his own village headmen, and each setting up an independent chiefdom. Very often, we were told, a chief would build a separate royal homestead (*ihitangalala*) for his favourite wife, and her son would 'come out' with his two senior brothers and inherit a small country subordinate to one of them. Again, the division of an old chief's country into two was not always accepted by the young men concerned; quarrels and fighting between them were common and the position established at the 'coming out' was sometimes modified by war. If one of the two decisively defeated the other, he took all his brother's cattle and reduced him to a subordinate position. The land of the Nyakyusa is full of such minor chiefdoms; by the clerks who collect tax they are described as 'villages', but they are radically different from villages in their constitution; for, while they often consist only of a few score families, they are themselves articulated into age-villages, and have at their head not an elected village headman (*ukifwemu*) but a hereditary chief (*umalafyale*). A minor chief marries in the ordinary way, like a commoner, and only one of his sons inherits his chieftainship; while his chiefdom, owing to its small size, is often simply divided into two villages, one for the old, one for the young men.

There is no separate 'coming out' ceremony for a minor chiefdom but the heir goes through the ceremony with his superior, remaining with him during and after the fire-making ceremony. His mates form one village under their own headman, who is subordinate to one of the two senior headmen of the new independent chief, taking fire from him. Great emphasis is laid on the fact that no separate fire, kindled by friction, is lighted for a subordinate chief.

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

431 In the chiefdom of Mwaipopo, with which we were well acquainted, there are three such minor chiefdoms. In one no heir survived; but the heirs in the other two went through the 'coming out' ceremony with their superior chiefs, and the young men from each of the three formed a separate village, attached to one or other of Mwaipopo's two heirs. How many generations these subordinate chiefdoms survive as separate groups is not certain: Ce three in Mwaipopo's country were chiefdoms of his junior brothers which had lost their independence to him. In his case four brothers had 'come out' together, and the senior had conquered the others. Probably at the coming out of Mwaipopo's grandson these subordinate chiefdoms will appear only as villages, and no heir from them will be treated as a chief.

This formation of subordinate chiefdoms is a traditional variation of the standard pattern still going on. There are further modifications which are modern.

f. Modern modifications

● 483 177 In 1926, as has been noted, the British Administration created new 'Native Authorities'. The traditionally independent chiefs of the Nyakyusa were grouped together into eleven court districts,[1] and in each district a 'Native Court' was set up, consisting of the various chiefs and their village headmen, under the hereditary presidency of one of the chiefs, who thereby became senior to all the others in that Court district. Salaries for chiefs were introduced, the senior chiefs receiving far higher salaries than the others; the meetings of each Court are now always held in the territory of the senior chief (*umulefyale umukulumbe*), and to this Court has been transferred a great deal of the legal business which, before 1926, was transacted by each chief sitting with his own village headman in his own chiefdom. The chiefs themselves were consulted in the selection of the Court presidents, and those chosen were normally the chiefs with the greatest number of men in each particular Court district.

The introduction of salaries has had a profound effect upon the relative status of the two young chiefs who 'come out' together. When an ordinary chief, with a small salary, dies, the Government recognises the first son alone as chief and pays the whole

[1] There are two other courts in Rungwe district for Ndali and Lambya.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

salary to him. This reduces the second son to the position of a minor chief as effectively as a defeat in war might have done in the old days. But, while the action of warfare only occasionally led to the subordination of one of the brothers, this action of the Government does so invariably, and always subordinates the younger brother. When a senior chief dies, on the other hand, the salary is usually divided; the bulk of it goes to the first son, together with the position of senior chief, while the second son is given the salary of an ordinary chief. 643 177

Nevertheless, whether the junior brother is to become a chief in receipt of a salary or not, he still goes through the 'coming out' ceremony with his brother, and is apportioned villages and headmen. Even in a country in which there are several minor chiefs there still is the division into two, some being regarded as subordinate to the senior heir, and the others to the junior. Division of a chiefdom into two at the 'coming out' is the basic form which is maintained, at least ceremonially, despite all modifications.

The introduction of Courts and salaries has brought a new element into the relationship between the old chief and his heirs. Only one of them can receive the salary and they commonly dispute about it. Quarrels are particularly frequent over the position of senior chief, for the presidency of a Court carries with it a relatively large salary. Old senior chiefs cling to the position long after their sons have 'come out'. There is no compulsory superannuation of chiefs, and the traditional mechanism for getting rid of an old chief when his sons were ready to take over—strangulation by his councillors—no longer operates. The old headmen remain in power along with the old chief. Thus one effect of British Administration in Nyakyusa country has been to maintain the older generation in power much longer than was traditionally usual, and to delay the assumption of full responsibility for government by the younger generation. 643 177 578

Another modern change which has far-reaching effects is the omission in some chiefdoms of the 'coming out' ceremony. When there is no 'coming out' the old men do not move aside to make room for their sons, and consequently the territorial demarcation between villages of old and young becomes blurred. Among the neighbouring people of Ngonde the 'coming out' ceremony has been dropped. There boys still build apart from their fathers, and the villages of young and old are more or 643 177 621

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

less separate, but as time goes on the demarcation between them becomes less and less clear. In most chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa the ceremony is still observed, but in the country of Porukoto, near Rungwe mission, it has not been performed for a generation, and there the territorial separation between young and old is much less definite than in other chiefdoms. The maintenance of the age-village system is ultimately dependent upon the moving aside of the old men in each generation to make room for their sons.

The reason commonly given for the omission of the ceremony in Ngonde is that since the country has become more densely populated there is no longer room for two chiefs to divide the country of their father. The old system of division was adapted to an expanding population in a relatively empty country; and the two young chiefs ordinarily ruled a greater area, and more men, than their father. Further, it is said, the ritual was in one aspect a preparation for war, and fighting between chiefdoms has ceased. These explanations are obviously not adequate, since the ceremony is still performed in Nyakyusa chiefdoms in which there is neither room for expansion, nor war. Its omission may be related rather to the general abandoning of traditional rituals in Ngonde. Forty-five per cent of the people of Ngonde, including many leading men, are professing Christians, and there is a very general scepticism of the efficacy of traditional rituals. This scepticism extends even to those who are not Church members.

In Porukoto's chiefdom the 'coming out' was omitted partly because of a dispute over the succession; but there, also, many of the traditional rituals are not regularly performed (as they are in other parts of Nyakyusa country), because the proportion of Christians is high since Porukoto's chiefdom adjoins the main Moravian mission station, Rungwe, and because pagan faith in these rituals has therefore been shaken. As Porukoto (who is not a professing Christian himself) put it, when explaining why he had not performed the twin ritual for his own twin daughters: 'We see that nothing happens to the Christians when they omit the rituals, so we begin to say "What value have they?"' Thus not only are Christians forbidden by their Churches to participate in the ritual acts of the 'coming out' but pagans themselves begin to doubt their necessity.

The presence of Christians further complicates the traditional

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

village organization since many of them live in separate Christian villages, or sections of villages. When the first German missionaries arrived among the Nyakyusa in 1891, they bought land from the chiefs and village headmen at the different points at which they decided to settle, and villages of Christian converts have grown up on this land. The nucleus of these villages consisted of Ngonde workmen who came from Karonga (where a Scots mission was already established) to help the Germans build their mission houses. Later, local Nyakyusa who came to work at the mission stations built there too, and a party of ninety slaves, rescued by the German administration from the Arab leader, Mlozi, were given into the care of the missionaries and settled on the land they had bought. These slaves were from other tribes, not Nyakyusa, and there was difficulty in repatriating them to their home villages. The foreigners and Nyakyusa who remained on mission land were those who accepted Christian teaching. Practically all the early converts were already working for the missionaries and living near them before their baptisms, and later converts were encouraged to move out of their pagan villages and join the new villages of Christians on mission land. On the other hand, any who left the Church, or who were suspended for practising polygyny or for some other cause, were, and still are, liable to be turned off mission land by the missionary in charge. Thus these villages comprise only professing Christians.

In the villages on mission land there is a certain division of authority between Church and State. Up to 1914 such villages were treated as being outside the control of any chief. A Nyakyusa informant described the position thus: "The missionaries said that they had bought their land and they would not admit any authority of the chief over it. They collected the taxes for the (German) Government themselves. The chief never went into "European country" (*Kilimapa*) for anything. The people there did not cook for him. The missionary used to be the chief in the European country; but since the English came it is different." Under the system of Indirect Rule the administrative authority of chiefs over Africans living on mission-owned land is recognized; taxes are paid through the chief, and civil cases between Christians may be taken to the chief's court (*vide infra*, p. 138). But chiefs still treat Christians living on mission land rather differently from those living on land which has not been so allocated. They

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643
291
142

V. THE CHIEF MWAMPONDO

[facing p.50]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

both parties, or if he declares the case too difficult and refuses to give an opinion, then it is taken to the headman of the village. Should the headman fail to settle the dispute, it goes to the senior headman of his side of the chiefdom, thence to the chief sitting with his headmen, and nowadays it may go on through the Native Court, and the Native Appeal Court, to the District Officer sitting with native assessors, the Provincial Commissioner, and the High Court of Tanganyika. 627

Village headmen neither have, nor had, power to enforce their decisions; such power lay with the chief alone in the old days—he would send some of his junior kinsmen and men from his capital (*ihitangalala*) to execute judgement—and he alone could order the parties to a dispute to drink the poison ordeal, from which verdict there was no appeal. Nor is a village headman or other arbitrator paid a fee—a pot of beer or a hoe from the plaintiff to 'open the case', and beer (or occasionally a bull) as a thank-offering from the party for whom judgement was given, were the perquisites of a chief alone. The arbitrator's reward is prestige—the honour and respect of his fellows. As we have said, a case may be submitted to anyone for arbitration and no slight to the existing authorities is thereby implied; but if cases are constantly taken to some individual in the section other than himself, a section leader may grow jealous. We heard of one who was reputed to have tried to poison a new-comer to his section, a Christian, who was hospitable and became so popular as an arbitrator that the appointed leader feared lest he might lose all his authority. The hospitable man is respected and his fellows often ask for his opinion on a case as they sit together over a pot of beer. 643 622 627

But though village headmen cannot enforce their decisions, they are not to be ignored. An individual does not take a case direct to the chief; usually his village headman takes it to the senior headman of the side,[1] and the latter then takes it to the chief. Both will have heard something of the case and, if it is not regarded as 'too difficult', will have attempted to reconcile the 622 627

[1] It appears that a village headman *should* proceed through the senior headman of his side, but in Porobwe's chiefdom procedure was modified by the fact that there had been no 'coming out' ceremony. There Mwafula, the headman of a junior village, brought cases direct to the chief (*vide infra*, p. 148). It was modified also in Mwaipopo's country by the absence of Mwamambo, one of his two senior headmen (*cf.* Document, p. 181).

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621
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643

1. VILLAGES IN MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM (1938)

Information from numerous informants

Generation	Chief	Sub Chief	Senior Headman	Headman	Village	Category	Legal Authority	Remarks
I[1]	*Mwaijonga*[2]		Njobokwa		IPENDA	Senior village of Mwaijonga		Village survives only vitually—there is no group of men living together as Ipenda. Njobokwa is senior priest of Mwaijonga and rain sacred meat of cow sacrificed in Mwaijonga's grove
				Kisongola	Ishi			Not surviving
			Ngolyo (inherited from his father, Mwakibilingwa)		ITESE	Second senior[3] village of Mwaijonga	Ngolyo active disputes but is subject to senior headmen of next generation, Mwamsoke (below)	Village survives with 11 members (original or their heirs). Ngolyo is a priest of Mwaijonga and rain the sacred meat in Mwaijonga's grove
				Mwamsoke ('Mwakyusa')[4] (inherited)	Itubulu			Not surviving
				Mwakibilingwa ('Kambwe')	Itumba			Not surviving
II	*Mwaijonga I* (son of Mwaijonga)		Mwamsoke ('Mwakyusa') inherited from his father		SOJEGE	Senior village of Mwaijonga. (Sons of Ipenda and Ishi)	Mwamsoke. Mwamsoke active disputes during Mwamsoke's absence, and subject to him	'Coming out' of Mwaijonga I and his brothers was in this village. Mwamsoke at present living in another chiefdom but returns for ceremonies and to bear cows

[1] The names of villages of Mwakaglo, father of Mwaijonga, have perished; the names of Ipenda and Ishi will be forgotten when Mwaijonga (generation II) dies.
[2] Italics indicate that the person named is dead.
[3] Informants were not all agreed about the relative status of villages and headmen of Mwaijonga's time.
[4] Most individuals are known by more than one name—we include two when two were in common use.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621
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VILLAGES IN MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM (1938)—contd.

Generation	Chief	Sub Chief	Senior Headman	Headman	Village	Category	Legal Authority	Remarks
II	Mwaipopo II (younger brother and heir of Mwaipopo I (See Plate V)			Katotile ('Mwakalembe') inherited	Bujenga[1]		Katotile	Kikuku who buried Mwankuga I lives here
					Lupaso[2]	Older section of Bujenga	No separate leader	Consists of 10 men who moved at 'coming out' of Mwankuga from Bujenga. The older men moved, leaving their younger contemporaries (Kikuku, etc.) in Bujenga. Katotile lives here, also Kasitile, the rain-maker. Strictly a section of Bujenga
					Busikali	'Younger brothers of Mwaipopo who eat with him', i.e. are of his generation	Mwainyobolela (Tandale) settles disputes	Tandale buried Mwaipopo I
						'Offshoot of Bujenga'		Not established as a separate village at 'coming out' of Mwaipopo. Is strictly a section of Bujenga
	"			Mwasota	Bulindanajo	Much younger than men of Bujenga and Bujenga and Kyemo	Mwasota	Mwaipopo II originally lived here. There was once a battle between Bulindanajo and Bujenga (*vide* p. 150).
		Likoyala		Mwakikato	Kibonde		Mwakikato	

[1] Besides having direct authority over his own village, each senior headman has authority over other villages established at the 'coming out' with their own headmen (see p. 31). The villages subordinate to each senior headman are listed in column 6 immediately under his own village.
[2] Lupaso is territorially separate, and spoken of as a separate village, but structurally it is really a section of Bujenga. Other villages of this type are underlined thus:

[P. 182]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

VILLAGES IN MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM (1938)—contd.

Generation	Chief	Sub Chief	Senior Headman	Headman	Village	Category	Legal Authority	Remarks
II	Mwaipopo II		*Mwaikofu* Mwakwese ('Mwaisumo') inherited from Mwaikofu		LUPANDO	Second senior village of Mwaipopo. Sons of Bukeba	Mwakwese	Old men have moved to one side. Lupando was originally established as two villages but when the headman of the senior (Mwaikofu) died, the villages coalesced under Mwakwese
				Kanyeka ('Mwasibata')	Kyemo	Younger brothers of Lupando	Kanyeka	Very, very small. Old men have moved to one side
					Kisyelo			
		Mwakabole		Mwangoba	Kitole			Mwakabole 'came out' here
		Mwakipesile		*Mwakituange* ('*Kasele*')	Kabula			
III	*Mwankuga I* (son of Mwaipopo I)		Mwambuputa ('Mwafungo')		IGEMBE	Senior village of Mwankuga. Sons of Mbujege	Mwambuputa	Mwankuga I 'came out' here. 'Mwambuputa is the greatest (headman) in the country.' Was driven out and later fetched back
	Mwankuga II (younger brother and heir of Mwankuga I)				Katumba	'Younger brothers and a few sons of Igembe.' Mwambuputa's own son built here	Mwambuputa (no separate leader appointed)	53 men. Established *after* the coming out of Mwankuga I. Strictly a section of Igembe. 'Betwixt and between' generations III and IV. Some near contemporaries in Mpuguso
				Nsusa	Lugombo		Nsusa	Nsusa was driven out, later fetched back. Acted for Mwambuputa in his absence. Lugombo has a small sub-division, Itiki.
				Kabolile ('Mwaseba')	Ipoma	Younger than men of Igembe. Sons of Bujenga and Busikali	Kabolile	20 members. Took over land from Bujenga. They 'came out' when very young men. Includes a Christian section under Akimu

[p.183]

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I:WBoon E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621
631
622
643

[p.184]

VILLAGES IN MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM (1938)—*contd.*

Generation	Chief	Sub Chief	Senior Headman	Headman	Village	Category	Legal Authority	Remarks
III	Mwankuga II				Ntongoti	Younger brothers of Ipuma	Kabelile. Mwakilingwa (appointed by Kabelile) settles small disputes	20 members: 17 married. One informant suggested that Ntongoti might be established as a village of the next generation as the 'moving out' of Mwaipopo. Others regard it as of generation III and strictly a section of Ipuma. Its members include junior sons of Mwaipopo II
					Kilwa		Kabelile (no separate leader appointed)	At present a section of Ipuma. May possibly be established as a village of generation IV
				Mwakileka	Kihonde (junior section)	Sons of Kihonde	Mwangulaba (who hears small cases. Others to Mwambuputa	
		Mwaseba	Kakuja		NJEHI	Second senior village of Mwankuga. Sons of Lupando	Kakuja	
				Mwakatika ('Mwanenje')	Mpunga	Younger sons of Lupando	Mwakatika	
				Mwakalombe ('Mwaitebela')	Inuba	Youngest sons of Lupando	Mwakalombe	Mwakalombe had moved on account of a quarrel. He was recently brought home
		Mwakibwale		*Mwambegeja*	Lukwebo	Sons of Kitale		
		Mwakipunile		*Kasale*	Nzobo	Sons of Kabula		

VILLAGES IN MWAIPOPO CHIEFDOM (1956)—*contd.*

Chief's diary	Chief	Sub Chief	Senior Headmen	Headmen	Village	Category	Legal Authority	Remarks
77	Mwaipopo (Adult 70 years old)			Name yet unpublished as Mwaipopo has not yet come out	Mpagaso	Sons of Ignoko	Mwaichupula	'Mwaipopo will come out first'
				"	Mwaiga	Younger sons of Ignoko and Lugwako	Mwaichupula	'Mwaipopo will build here first'
				"	Ulungu	Sons of Ujiwi and Mpangu	Small cases to Mwaichupula. Serious cases to Kalunjo	Some members are married
				"	Igwana	Younger brothers of Ulungu	"	Name yet unpublished
				"	Kwagawa	"	"	Name yet unpublished
				"	Isoko (Junior section)	Sons of Isoko		

Nineteen independent villages established at the 'coming out' ceremonies of Mwaipopo, Mwalipano and Mwaulanga survive.
There are five village sections treated in some respects as previously independent villages. There are other village divisions or links which are not so independent.
There are six 'lost' villages, not yet established, but likely to be recognized at the 'coming out' of Mwaipopo.
The dividing line between village and village section is difficult to determine when villages have split after the 'coming out' at which they have been established, as did Kwagwa. Our recognition of Kalindi as a separate village and not Ulungu is somewhat arbitrary.
It is to be noted that villages not only sub-divide but occasionally coalesce. Two independent villages established at the 'coming out' of Mwaipopo coalesced as Lugwako, after the death of the headmen of one of them.
The traditional organization is modified in that Mwaipopo's country has not been divided or sub-divided into independent chieftainships.

Nyamkyoma
1:MWAMBE-S(1956-1959)1951 FN17 Nyambe FN13

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

6. THE 'COMING OUT' (*UBUSOKA*)

Mwakondo (clerk and son of a chief).[1]

621 "The village headmen begin to talk among themselves, saying: "Our sons have grown up, should we not establish them?" So they go to tell
622 the chief, saying: "Our sons have grown up, let us show them to the
643 country." Two chiefs always "come out". We call them the senior and the junior. It is an old custom which is still followed that two chiefs should "come out".

[769] "So the village headmen seek a doctor to make them a medicine horn and treat the tails of chieftainship with medicine. The village headmen take council together and choose two senior headmen to "come out" with the chiefs. These senior headmen drink medicine (*ewdondawya*) with the chiefs.

"When many people, together with the two young chiefs, have come together the doctor gives powdered medicine (*ewdondawya*) to the chiefs and the senior headman chosen for each chief. They give a spear of chieftainship, and a horn, and tail to each of the men chosen as senior headmen—one for each chief. Each senior headman then binds the horn to the blade of the spear, and standing with his own chief and many men and women, raises the spear to the sky. The women will
[772] and each party goes to its place of "coming out" on the pasturage. Each chief, with his followers, goes to his own place. The men dance; sometimes they have drums, sometimes not.

[773] "Then when each party has reached it own place they make fire with fire sticks. The chief just simulates the action of fire-making then his senior headman takes the sticks and makes fire by friction. When they have built the shelters for sleeping in they warm themselves at the fire they have made; they do not take fire from the houses of men. If there are many of them then there will be three or four shelters, if few, then only one shelter. The men and their chief who has "come out" sleep in these shelters and enjoy themselves together (*nukwangula*). The first day they kill two head of cattle. Also they plant "the tree of coming out" (*ewpiki gwa bwoko*) which is called *ubgwondo*. They plant it with a man who has come out previously, a man of their fathers' generation, he begins to plant, then he explains to them what to do, saying "plant", then the new senior headman plants it.

"While they sleep in these shelters with their cattle, they eat food which they take from their fathers, bananas, and milk, and other food.

[1] For a note on complimentary informants see p. 16.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

From time to time their father, the chief, gives them a bull to kill. During the "coming out" food is very plentiful. If people pass on the road they honour them and give them food, and make love to them that they may build there. They remain in their shelters, they do not go about much. If the chief is stingy they teach him a lesson by taking bananas; they say: "Know that we are important people, we are those who have 'come out' and we are your parents." Later on they play drums—I think only in recent years. And the village headmen seize a woman, the daughter of a commoner, as a wife for the chief.

"The horn is the luck of the chiefs, that many people may come to build. Binding the horn to the blade of the spear is to show that the chief is one who has "come out" (asuka); it is as if he were carried aloft (i.e. "chaired")*. We show his greatness ("seniority") to people, then we will.

"The fire made with fire sticks is to symbolize the new chieftainship. We do not take the old fire of the old men.

"The medicine is to make the chief heavy (asite), that it may be apparent that he is a chief.

"The ukpando tree is a memorial of the "coming out", that men may come and say: "So and so planted this tree when he came out." Some say it is to show the power (amaka) of the chief, because if it does not grow it is said that his chieftainship will perhaps not flourish; then they will say: "Let us move and plant elsewhere." It is said that the spear of chieftainship is to fight battles; it is strength, manhood; it is treated with medicines.

"The tails are those with which battles are fought. When men go to war the senior headmen grasps the tail. If the tail does not lead them well they return from the fight. It, also, they treat with medicines."

* A bride at a puberty-marriage ritual is carried about shoulder high.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

cry out, because then the teeth will disappear altogether, but if he be silent, then they will reappear. 754

'And another activity of the witches is to take sickness from one country and cast it on some home they choose. So when people die they say this sickness was brought by the witches to so and so.'

Mwandai (a very old man famous as a historian).

'The witches are always naked when they go to choke a person in dreams. A witch leaves his skin (*ungude*) on his sleeping-mat and goes naked. When his neighbours, "the defenders" (*abamunga*), see him they may snatch his skin; then when he returns he trembles and sits down naked, ugly-looking. He looks as if he had a curse on him. But after a little while he gets another skin.'

Mwaiwawo (clerk).

'The man of whom we have spoken twice (*vide* pp. 124, 252) is sometimes said to be a witch, he throttles the cattle of the village and men say that he throttles them also. But he is especially notorious for throttling the cattle of the village so that their milk disappears. Once they caught him for witchcraft, saying: "You are throttling us" and they drove him away. He moved to another village but in the same chiefdom, and there also men continually said: "We do not sleep on account of our fellow! If he brings witchcraft to us here he will die, we shall hit him with fists" (meaning that "the defenders" will hit him with fists) when he goes out to throttle his victims. If their cows dry up they say: "We shall hit his python, he will die." For it is said that if a person has a python which throttles the milk, men strike the python and he dies. The python means the witchcraft of throttling cattle or food. Saying "We shall strike his python and he will die" means that we shall strike him when he is throttling our cows and he will die.'

Mulamagwa (pagan man).

'When the chief is good the cows are many and there is much milk. And when the village headman is good, when he forbids witches to come into his village, milk is plentiful. When we say a chief is good (*mwema*) it means that he never goes to throttle cows, or if we say that the village headman is good it means that he does not go throttling. Formerly chiefs and village headmen were good. If they were great witches, no one came to them. I came from Pangu country over there. 754 643 622

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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Mwalukasa was good. We knew he was good because people came to him and cattle increased and people loved him. Some who are quarrelsome lose all their men and are left alone. . . . A village headman or chief *gwe ifuge* is one who always preaches to his fellows that "food should be plentiful among us here, friends; none should bewitch others." "A man of plenty" (*agwe ifuge*) is a village headman or chief who is angry at witchcraft in his village, and forbids it, who allows no one there who is "clever". The cunning of a witch, of one who has the bowel of witchcraft, is to go around throttling cows and eating people. When they go to throttle they go on high, they fly, they go like the wind. If they went on earth they would be killed by "the defenders". It is said that they eat the meat (flesh) of people, truly they eat it. When they go to "eat" a man, they spear him; they take his meat and eat it. A man does not recover when they have taken his meat; he dies. Those whom they have only speared and whose flesh they have not taken, recover. They roast this human meat and then they eat it; in this their cleverness lies. When they go to "eat" a man and have speared him and taken some of his flesh, they do not roast it at his place, they go to their homes, and there they roast it.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

602 763 is forgotten he will be angry: 'It happens sometimes that a kinsman comes in later, after the man is buried, and is very angry because no message was sent to him; he comes in a passion, and perhaps he beats his brother [the one who should have sent him a message]. Then the others catch hold of him and say: "Why do you not come soberly and greet us decently with the appropriate words? Come now, why?" And if he does not stop they beat him.'

602. 764 These kinsmen and affines, with their wives and children, are under obligation to come to the burial, unless they are sick. Young children under the age of 10 or 11 are not obliged to come, though they often do, but older children must do so. One reason for the continuance of the burial ceremonies for three or four days is that this gives time for relatives from a distance to receive the messages and come. Deliberately to refuse to send a message or, on the [578] other side, to refuse to come to a burial for no good reason, is a symbolic breaking of the bond of kinship and no one ever does either, unless there is a serious quarrel and all economic and social relations are being broken off between the two families concerned.

631 764 577 The village neighbours also are obliged to come to every burial in the village. They normally wish to do so, but, even if they do not, they still come for shame or for fear of being accused of witchcraft if they stay away. Where there is friendship the neighbours come in grief and sympathy and quarrels are softened by the fact of death, but, if the memory of enmity still persists, then the last sentiments are shame and fear: 'Some people mourn more than others.' 'The men who knew him say: "Let us go and mourn him."' 'Those who did not know him intimately mourn because each thinks: "He has died, my neighbour, and so will it be with me one day."' 'If I have quarrelled with my neighbour and he dies, I go to his burial for I say to myself: "It is true that while he lived we quarrelled, but now he is dead and we shall never meet again. I too will go to his burial and mourn him."' 'If a village neighbour does not come to a burial we say he is unkindly and unsociable.' 'And if a man does not go to his neighbour's [illegible] "Why else do you not come to bury him?"' Several of the accusations of witchcraft recorded had been occasioned by a man's absence from a village neighbour's funeral. For it is believed that witches are chary of going to the burials of their victims lest the dead should rise and denounce them.

● 693 764 A chief normally goes to all burials in his own country, except

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F?117 Ngonde F?117
Nyakyusa

those of very young children. 'He goes because it is his subject who has died: he is like the senior kinsman of the whole country, he rules all.' 'If a chief omits to go to a burial people say nothing, they know that he is always going to burials and they think that perhaps he has some urgent business. But if he constantly misses burials then people say that he has no affection for his people, that he does not come to bury them as is fit; and if a chief hears them saying this then he is ashamed.' Sometimes a chief who is busy will send a son to represent him. And he sends the drums to beat the lament. 'The drum is the chief . . . they cannot beat the drum before the chief has spoken.'

Besides the chief, the villagers, the relatives, and the drummers, there come also personal friends of the dead man from other villages and chiefdoms. And beyond all these there often come others who are attracted not so much by grief and sympathy, nor even by the obligation to express those feelings, but rather by the dancing, the crowds and the possibility of getting some meat to eat. Not all those who come stay the whole three or four days, while the relatives who live at a distance often do not arrive until the second or third day.

The Nyakyusa believe that in order to protect the living and avenge the dead it is most important to discover the cause of death. To do this they summon a doctor to perform an autopsy,[1] an operation fearful and repugnant, but felt to be necessary. The symptoms are interpreted in terms of witchcraft or sorcery, or other supposed causes of disease.

On the first, or early on the second, day after death, the burial takes place. The grave is dug in the swept and beaten earth that immediately surrounds the huts. The first spit of earth is always turned by the eldest son of the one who has died. At one burial we saw the young eldest son of a dead man being helped to do this. He was too small to manage a hoe by himself so he caught the handle near the blade while an older relative held it behind to steady it for him. The digging after the first spit is done by a skilled grave-digger, who may be a kinsman or not, with the help of others. The grave is ten or more feet deep with a cave at the bottom to one side. Some graves are oblong, some round or oval,

[1] This is certainly traditional, cf. H. Rose-Crass, 'Upper Lake North of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, V (1895), p. 159. The custom is also reported for the Kyaxamanga. For a description of the autopsy, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 247-50.

2: Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

764 the killing has a legal implication, for the death of a man involves
768 the transfer of his wives and property to another. If the inheritance is quite clear and disputes are unlikely, then a 'father' of the dead man tells the heir to kill the burial cattle. All the people present see him do this and know that he is the heir. And if the inheritance is, after all, denied him later, then the fact that he killed the cattle at his brother's (or father's) funeral gives him a strong *prima facie* claim to its recovery in the courts. If the inheritance is doubtful then a 'father' of the dead man kills the cattle. It is known that he himself cannot inherit and his killing of the cattle is an assertion of his authority to decide who shall do so.

773 When a man of the chief's lineage dies, a live cow is buried with
769 him and the more general custom of taking a cow or bull to look into the grave is interpreted as being 'like burying the cow'. The cattle used in this way must be of the lineage stock and are reserved for sacrifice.

769 All the cattle killed are thought to go with the shade to the land
775 of the dead (*abale nayo kabayako*) and it is believed that if he goes without any cattle he may be rejected by his kinsmen there. Tales are told of meeting dead men in the bush with their cattle which were killed for them. A cloth is a substitute for a cow and cloths which are buried likewise go with the dead. 'We will meet in the land of the shades and he will be wearing these cloths.' At one burial we saw, the dead man had left no cows of his own but his brothers killed two cows for him, these beasts were brought by affines, and sixteen cloths were brought by kinsmen, affines, and friends. 'Why', we asked, 'do you spend so much wealth at death?' 'Because, we say, as the owner has died let him take his wealth with him to the place of the shades. If he dies in lonely poverty he goes with nothing.' At another burial two beasts were brought by kinsmen, six by affines and one by a friend. There were thirty-two cloths, fifteen brought by kinsmen, twelve by affines, and five by friends. 'The bringing of cloths is to express sympathy (*kukati ukhwali*): we bring strings of cloth with the company and some we leave over, which we bind on as mourning belts (*amakibe*). Of old, people brought the cloth the Ndwa weave, and brass body-rings. It means: "May our fellow go with them; may he swagger with them—with the cloth and body-rings (*ku kati amaimbo ahalage ngfw, a mpaga ngfw*)." And we pour out food that he may take it with him.'

769 During the course of the war-dance (described below) the young
[771]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Colin Ballinger

It is forbidden for the heir to lie with the dead man's wives before the ritual is over. But at the time of the bow, when the drinking is finished, we put him into the house and he lies with them. If he has lain with them previously the omens refuse to come. . . . But if all goes well the officiants raise the cry of triumph (*ahylale*) and shake a winnowing basket of seeds by the door and cry: 'Oum, oum, we marvel at the thing, we marvel at the thing (*ifyela, ifyela, tupumuzile ifindi*).' If he fails they go to divine and the diviner says: '*Mfinda* (sickness from the shades), he has forestalled the ritual (*ahindile ahupuge*).' Then they pray in the bananas. He must have intercourse with all the women he is inheriting; yes, however old they may be, he must lie with them that night or else they will lose their strength of body or mind, or else their legs will swell. With the old cows he will never lie again! He drinks fresh milk to give him strength beforehand! Fresh milk gives strength, it produces semen.

The next morning each of the wives goes off to her father with *ifibalaga* and with meat; the fire is buried in the bananas, it goes to the place of the shades, the meat is eaten. And the man too goes with his *ifibalaga* to his own father. Each wife makes her *ifibalaga* by wiping her own and her husband's genitals with her hands and then taking cooked bananas in them. He himself does likewise at the end.

The *ifibalaga* goes to the place of the shades, it is to drive away the shade of the dead man; before this he had not reached the place of shades but was on the way. In this manner we tell the shade that we have put another in his place, we tell him to go and join the other shades now and to come back with them to warm themselves by the fire in his old house.

Question: How can a chief who inherits many wives lie with them all in one night?

Kaotele: I do not know how. Kwale gives him strength! . . . He has intercourse with them all. Yes, really this does happen. . . . But if the man is old and fails to lie with them all, perhaps the wives will conceal the fact. He lies on one side of a partition wall with his wives and the people (for many come to sleep in his house that night) on the other. Then if he fails altogether . . . no one beats the partition with a stick, they all stay quiet all morning; but if he succeeds at first, and fails at the last few, they may perhaps conceal it. One of the wives is told by the officiant to beat the partition with a stick when he has lain with all his wives. When she does this the officiants who are in the doorway shake up beans and millet and pumpkin-seeds in a winnowing basket and call out: 'Oum, oum! We marvel at the thing!' If he fails altogether they stay quiet and next day go to divine; the diviner says: '*Mfinda*.' Then they pray and pray, and praise all the shades of old, and that night he tries again and the omens come.

The seeds of beans, millet and pumpkin are symbols of the shades, the

[*i.e. the powers to the dead.* — *Ed.*]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selpp, Ne Ngonde

the groom's mothers began to dance again. They approached the group of girls and the groom's own mother took the mat off the kneeling bride and spread a large scarlet cloth over her. Then she lifted her on to her shoulders and danced with her. The two parties coalesced and danced together, singing the ritual song *Tulalalala akala* (We sing a dirge). Everyone was smiling and joyful despite the song. By 3.40 the dancing was over and a large mat was spread for the 'mothers-in-law' to sit down in the shade. The bride knelt again with bent head covered by her mat and surrounded by her maids.

At this point Mwailunjo, her father, began scolding angrily because the groom's party had not brought a bull. 'Always when people come to marry my daughters they bring a bull, always. It looks as if the girl had been to visit her husband and you had found fault with her and did not like her.' The groom's mothers replied: 'We are poor.'

Mwailunjo: 'How can you say you are poor? You can find the marriage-cattle, you say. Why didn't you bring some of them? Then I would have killed one to eat now. See, I have killed a bull already. If I had known that you were not going to bring one I'd have killed another.'

The groom's mothers sat with downcast heads. For a commoner's daughter bananas and milk are adequate for the *ukwingwa* feast, but a chief has the right to expect a bull.

Presently the groom's own mother and one of her companions entered Kyobwe's hut to roast bananas and grind some of the bark of a tree they had brought for medicine. The powder was put into a small calabash with water. The bride knelt in the doorway of Kyobwe's hut and, as her mother-in-law poured out the medicated water, she washed her hands and wrists and mouth in it. The bride's half-brother, a lad of 15 or 16 years, was washed also, standing by the doorway of Kyobwe's hut, though he was most reluctant to co-operate. He kept looking towards his elder brother Lazarus, a Christian, and did not submit until Lazarus said: 'All right, go ahead!' Kyobwe, seeing his reluctance, said: 'You need not wash if you don't wish to, it doesn't matter. Perhaps we'll leave it out as it's European times now.' Then finally she said: 'Well, just hold out one hand,' and she washed it. Had the bride been the eldest daughter of either of her father's two senior wives he would have washed in place of her brother, and had her own mother not been divorced she would have washed also.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

though there are no cattle they carry him thus.' The corpse was then 764
taken to be washed. 'We do not examine him; yesterday's corpse we 184
did indeed examine but not this one. He was a senior, a chief,' said his
son, and Kakuje confirmed it. 'We do not examine him. We refuse
because he was a senior person.' More cattle appeared—'those of his [643]
son at Masoko'. 'It is the custom,' I was told. 'All the cattle come to
mourn. These are the cattle of Mwanaasu, the first lot were Mbembela's own. Most (or all of them) were kept by Mwaipungu, the eldest son.'

The drums began again and dancing recommenced. The drums had
been warmed up by a fire. About 200 women and 100 men were [536]
present.

Mbaneke, father-in-law of Mwanaasu, brought a heifer calf. Three cows were killed, two after the burial, all belonging to Mbembela and his sons. The heads of the cows killed point towards Sangu country. There was a dispute about one of these cows. They had killed one already which had come for the marriage of a daughter of the family, and they had taken another from the same son-in-law. There was objection, some saying: 'No, we should take one which came from another son-in-law.' All the cattle of Mwanaasu and of the deceased were driven through the homestead together, a herd of twenty or so. Then they were gathered at the side, facing the grave. The corpse was carried out to the side of the grave. The chief mourners stood holding the corpse and all the men and women stood up to watch. The noise of wailing was terrific. A son seemed entirely to have lost control. 'Alas Father! Alas Father!' he cried, his body trembling and sweating, the tears running down his face, his hand pointing, shaking, towards the corpse and the grave. A friend was wailing, holding his head with his hands: 'My friend, my friend!' The corpse was laid down by the women and wrapped in more cloths. This took about half an hour. Still we stood and watched while the women began to sit down. Two men (Mwaisalwa III and a half-brother) and one woman (his widow) got into the grave—a tight fit. The corpse was buried with a new pot (a small one, used for serving food), several calabashes including a calabash cup, and a calabash of beer. Some of the beer was taken out just beforehand and left above ground. 'That means he should not go with all our fertility.' A huge calabash had been smashed before this by a son, in an ecstasy of grief. Now another was brought but it was decided not to bury it.

Kitiro explained about the beer: 'Always, when a person has drunk beer during his illness before his death, the remains are buried with him. If he has not drunk beer during his illness none is sought.'

No door was available so a cloth was fixed across the opening of the cave. The women got out of the grave while the men remained in to stamp down the earth. Many people threw handfuls of earth.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

opened a trading store at Karonga, under Mr. Monteith Fotheringham, a man of great vigour and capacity. His presence aroused the hostility of the Arabs, who feared the loss of their slaving profits, and a period of fighting followed, in which the Konde took sides with the white man as their one hope. After a great encounter with their enemies, the defeated Konde took refuge in the Kambwe lagoon, the dry reeds on the margin of which were set on fire by the victors. The helpless natives leaped into the water, where many were drowned, and numbers were taken by the crocodiles which swarmed in the lagoon. In 1895 a small force was moved up by Sir Harry Johnston, High Commissioner for the newly formed British Protectorate, and the Arabs were defeated, and their leader, Mlozi, hanged the same day. From that time the Konde have progressed in peace under the influence of Government, Trade, and Missions. 175

One incident, very striking in itself, may be given as indicating the influence of Chongo. On one of her trips the *Domira*, the steamer of the African Lakes Corporation, went ashore on the sands near Karonga. Vigorous but unsuccessful efforts were made, with the help of great gangs of natives, to float her; and at length Chongo was asked to lend his powerful aid. This was Chongo Mwakasungula II. Taking with him a white cock, he went with his councillors to where the stranded steamer lay helpless on the sand. The following prayer, which he offered, was given to 175 782 643

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

175 782 643 me by the son of one of the councillors who stood near him:

> "Art Thou angry with me, O God, who didst redeem me from slavery? The Angoni mocked me, the Arabs mocked me; then didst Thou cause me to see these mighty ones (the Europeans); and I said, 'Rejoice, for God has heard my prayers.' Who, then, of my ancestors is angry? Against whom have I sinned? For it is they who are my helpers in speaking to Thee. Many of them died by the spear; they saw their families destroyed; they suffered hunger again and again, before the mighty ones came. Now, O God, be merciful, and let the feet of these men come up out of the water."

Then taking water in his mouth he squirted it north and south saying, "I am lord of that country, I Magemo: I am lord of that country, I Kyabara," to which the assembled councillors responded, "E! Magemo; E! Kyabara." Then whirling the cock over his head and dipping it in the water, he gave the signal to the men hanging on the ropes to pull. And the steamer floated off into the water!

185 187 Meantime in the north internal warfare went on intermittently, but no man of outstanding capacity arose to give cohesion to the various families of the Nyakyusa. Before the arrival of the Moravian missionaries in the area in 1891, various Europeans visited the district. Hunters came and went, and for a brief space there was a station of the Livingstonia Mission not far from Tukuyu. In 1893 the German

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Men
of social position are known by the number of *manyeta* 291
(body rings worn on the waist) which they wear: [301
one for a man or woman just "above the common"; 554]
six or seven for a man of high standing. A few women have begun, to their own great discomfort, to wear the immense coils of brass or iron on wrists or ankles which are so popular among other tribes.

Clothes, says an acknowledged authority on the 291
subject, make the man. Not among the Konde. 683
Chungu is a great chief, but his greatness does not 554
depend on what he wears, although there are occasions when he dresses more carefully than at other times. This almost naked man is regarded with a reverence greater than is granted to any but a very few Europeans, and out of all recognition greater than is felt for the native who swaggers about in boots and helmet and white man's clothes. The respect which is accorded to a European depends to-day (though it did not in the past) upon his personal character, his control of resources, the authority which has been bestowed upon him by others. But Chungu, with hundreds of other chiefs throughout Bantu Africa, has a respect which is gained in a totally different fashion. He is in close touch with unseen powers. His prayers have a compelling power, his benediction is priestly, his curse of fearful validity. He is a channel through which may come weal or woe upon the land; and hence his authority depends in no degree upon such an accident as dress.

By almost all who know them the Konde are re- 461
garded as lazy. And to the bustling, and perhaps

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER V

The Chief & his Counsellors

THE Chungu of to-day is but a poor shadow of his great ancestors. European power has deprived him of many of his prerogatives, and stripped his person and his office of much that was picturesque, and might well have been preserved. But even in the heyday of their glory, the Chungus were but priest-kings, hampered in their divinity, hedged in their kingship by advisers, limitations, customs, which could not be set aside.

To-day Chungu is but one chief among many; but in the past chiefs of all rank in the Karonga district were subject to him; acknowledging his superiority, but yet asserting for themselves a considerable amount of independence, even to the extent of making war. First are the chiefs proper, chiefs of the snake, so called because their insignia of office is a buffalo or zebra tail, in which is a powerful medicine made from the flesh of a fabulous flying serpent, and which is believed to give its possessor great influence and authority. Next in rank, and subordinate to chiefs, are the *amafumu*, men who possess a less powerful medicine; and finally men of still less importance, who exercise a strictly local authority.

Chungu himself, however, was, and still is, "the man who speaks with God"; and as such he is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

hedged with a real divinity, which the limitations to which he has to submit, and the independence of the once-subordinate chiefs, have not yet destroyed. He remains pre-eminently the man of prayer, who carries to the ancestral spirits the petitions of the community, and speaks to them with an authority which no other possesses.

Far excelling in power and authority even the greatest of the chiefs were, and, shorn of much of their glory are, the *amakambara*, the councillors of Chungu. These men are in many cases chiefs of high rank, but even when they are not so, their position endows them with great influence and authority. The principal duties of the councillors were to put the reigning Chungu to death when he became seriously ill, a duty which has necessarily lapsed under British rule; to select, with the help of divination, his successor; to instruct him in his duties, to advise him in all matters which demand decision; and to depose him if he is unsatisfactory.

The health of the priest-king and the welfare of the whole community were inseparably bound up together. A Chungu in health and vigour meant a land yielding its fruits, rain coming in its season, evil averted. But a weak and ailing Chungu meant disasters of many kinds. Smaller illnesses Chungu, very excusably, concealed from his councillors, hoping that his ancestors would hear the prayers which he offered secretly by night. But when serious illness overtook him, the councillors were called to a full meeting by those who were about the person of the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 645 771 chief. For Chungu must not die a natural death; the land would be turned into water should such a calamity be allowed to happen. Having decided that the illness is really grave, the councillors, one by one, give their voice in the formula, "*Siku na mwaka*," literally, day and year; but actually meaning, "Does God die?" In solemn procession these terrible persons enter the house, and, having turned out the chief's wives, lay him down on the floor. Two keep him in that posture, while a third stops his breath by holding his mouth and nostrils, a fourth meanwhile gently slapping him all over the body until the life has gone out of him.

643 645 766 No announcement of the death was made. One of the councillors lived in the royal dwelling, so that if any came to consult Chungu a response might be given, and as he was rarely seen by common men, it was easy to keep up the deception. The councillors with their own hands digged the grave, and on their shoulders, at midnight, carried the body, anointed with lion fat, and enswathed in cloth, to the place of burial. Six or eight slaves, who did not return, went with them. Four went down into the grave to receive the body of their dead master, two at the head and two at the feet, and, in sitting position, held him in their arms. The remaining slaves being placed on the top, the soil was filled in on living and dead.

[367] [782]

After the lapse of about a month, a big iron drum, now lost, was beaten, and it conveyed only one message to the people. "*Kutsiir ku Mphande*," Mphande (the royal residence) has done its work;

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Chungu is dead. Then the chiefs and their men, fully armed, gathered to the mourning. Weeping there was none, for Chungu must not be wept for; and women were not present, for the mourning for Chungu is war; quarrels may break out among the men, and there may be many deaths before the mourning is over. The chiefs bring oxen for the feast, and gifts of ivory to be laid up in the house where Chungu goes to pray when he prays alone.

The councillors now address themselves to the task of selecting a successor. There are no candidates; for not only must Chungu himself be helped out of the world, but all his sons, born after his accession, are put to death at birth. Daughters are allowed to live, and sons born before their father attained to the chief dignity, are not under the ban. Here again British rule steps in, but British rule has not yet been able to sweep all fear of the past out of the minds of the people. From among the *Bakerenge*, a circle of families within which the new Chungu must be found, name after name is presented to the spirits by the diviner, and when the divining rod indicates that the right name has been presented, the formula is uttered, "*Abapani biniko*," the underworld has spoken.

At a great feast, at which all men of royal blood must be present, Mulwa, one of the councillors, by hereditary right offers prayer to the spirits, as if the selection had not already been made:

"Ye chiefs, we pray you to show us our lord, who shall be our leader in all things. Let him be the man of your appointing, not of our desire; to

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 645

whom all the land shall look; who shall go to the holy place to pray for us, who shall guard the sacred objects of lordship. Let him be our food and our shield; let his name be safety for all. I pray to you, chiefs of the past, ye who kill or save alive."

Mulwa, carrying in his hand the "rod of lordship," stands out and looks around on the assembled chiefs. Suddenly he throws the rod at the man selected. Immediately he is seized, with a shout of triumph, "He is our food and our shield." The wailing of his female relatives, who weep as for a dead man, is drowned in the shouting and drumming with which the new Chungu is brought to the sacred house, where he is anointed with lion fat, and seated on the lion skins with which the house is carpeted. In this house are kept all the objects of which he is guardian, the tails of eland, zebra, buffalo, elephant, containing the medicine made from the body of the great snake *isyifwira*; skins and heads of lions; ivory, cloth, and the rod of lordship.

643 After about three months of strict seclusion, during which his health is carefully noted, lest, being a weakling, he should be a menace to the land, the new ruler is brought to the dwelling which in the meantime has been built for him, and his reign is fairly begun.

643 644 The person of Chungu was regarded with extraordinary reverence. He was not approached by the common people, who were not allowed even to see the man who speaks with God. An immense

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

enclosure surrounded his dwelling of many houses, 643
where he lived with his wives and slaves, and, always 644
present, some of his councillors. The arrival of visitors was announced by the young men who kept the gates; but only visitors of very high standing were actually admitted to the presence of the chief. If Chungu left the enclosure wearing his crown of black cloth with long streamers, the people hid themselves. When he went on a journey, the older people claimed the right of seeing him and even saluting him as he passed; the younger were rigorously kept out of the way. When he crossed a river the men who carried him must not allow his feet to touch water, which he himself must never touch with his foot, for a flood would follow which would do much damage to the country.

To maintain his dignity, the chief received taxes 643
in kind. His gardens were hoed, and his houses built, 651
by the people. If an elephant was killed its tusks, and part of the flesh, were brought to him. Buffalo was royal game, and the whole carcase was his; his, too, were skins and tails of lion, leopard, and zebra; tusks of hippopotamus, horns of rhinoceros. Once in two years each chief brought him a young cow; and a portion of all spoils of war in prisoners, cattle, and other things, was his due.

Out of his abundance Chungu gave gifts to 643
favourites or valued servants. He received and 644
entertained distinguished visitors, though not all were admitted to his presence. They arrived with horns blowing and drums beating, the leader shouting,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 "Ho, ho, ho, we go to him who kills and saves alive."
644 On arrival, such as had the honour of a personal interview, received his blessing, "May God be gracious to you"; the visitor lying on his back and clapping hands. At parting, perhaps a month later, he was pressed to stay, but the parting benediction was given: "God be with you. May lion and leopard and hyena, snake and tree and personal enemy, be still before you. May you find your family in health." Then taking water, and squirting it from his mouth, he prayed the spirits to care for the departing guest.

643 The duties and powers of Chungu, as they were in the past, and, in diminished glory and extent, still are, may be briefly stated.

1. First and foremost, Chungu is the man who speaks with God, and offers up the prayers of the community in time of war, pestilence, drought, or famine.

[787] 2. Dreams by the official dreamers were brought to him by the councillors, and measures taken to meet the approaching evil by offerings at the graves of his ancestors, and by personal intercession.

3. After consulting his ancestors, he decided questions of peace or war.

643 4. Along with his councillors he heard important
645 lawsuits, and appeals against the decisions of other chiefs.

5. He confirmed in their position subordinate chiefs when recommended by his council to do so.

6. The whole land being his, he gave possessions to

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F7617 Ngonde F7617

new-comers, and drove out undesirables; but always with the concurrence of the council. 643 645

7. He gave periodical feasts to all chiefs and their followers.

8. In general, it was the duty of Chungu to keep the land in peace; but no decision of his was valid without the approval of his council.

In the north, across the Songwe, the failure to attain unity of control had as its natural consequence the failure to attain the same imposing ceremonial as at Karonga. The chiefs each retained his independence, and what has now to be said applies equally to the independent chiefs of the north, and to those of the south who were at one time under the dominion of Chungu. 643

A convenient starting-point is the installation of the heir and successor of a chief. The installation of Reuben, which began on 18th September, and ended on 19th November, 1921, is typical of all, and the description which follows was given to me by himself. 643 644 796

On the appointed day he left his home, and accompanied by eight young men who were to be his subordinate chiefs, and official dreamers, and all the young men of his father's principal village, he went to the place which was to be the site of his own village. There good huts were built for him and the eight young chiefs, and more shelters for the others. The first item in a long ceremonial was the tree-planting. The medicine man took two pots into which he put two *indipite* (lion-making medicines), and having filled the pots with earth, he planted a young

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F317 Ngonde F317

•643 644 746 smelling in each, *indole* in one, and *inhandapanda* in the other. Pits to receive the pots were digged by the doctor, and held in position by the two most important of the subordinate chiefs, who, with closed eyes, filled in the soil all around. The two *indipita* become later the two lions of the young chief. Every chief has these mysterious lions, which are quite harmless except to evil-doers; if any common person creates or controls a lion, it is the duty of these two to slay it. No one may eat food at harvest time until a portion has been set aside for these lions. The two trees in time provide the shade under which the chief's court will sit, and so long as they stand his residence must not be removed from their neighbourhood.

The doctor now took a broom, and swept the dust into the faces of Reuben and his subordinates, praying that the men under them would be in number as the dust of the earth. All the old fires were extinguished, [372] and new fire was made by the young chief and his fellows; at present from two pieces of wood rubbed together, but in the past, the lower was the bone of a leopard or lion specially dried for the purpose. In the old warlike days this fire kindled the courage of the chiefs, but with the peace that has been brought in by the white men such courage is not called for. From the fire thus made, brands were given out to all householders in the district, and no other from old fires were allowed to remain in any house.

Next came the great medicine drinking, which was to give authority to the new chiefs. It is indeed a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F917 Ngonde F917

fearsome mixture: ground flesh of *inyifuora* (the flying serpent); heart and nose of hyena, which enables one to see danger ahead; heart of hawk, giving power to see danger from behind; and heart of the fish-eagle, which swoops down upon its prey. Thus furnished the young rulers can foresee the future, deal with the present, and be a terror to all evil-doers. This powerful medicine is drunk by all chiefs at their installation, and spread under the beds to make them see in dreams what is coming in the future. But never may the chief eat food that is not freshly cooked, for that would take away all virtue even from these potent drugs.

From that time until the 19th November, the young men led a happy, care-free life. Their food was daily provided; cattle were set apart for them; they did not shave all that time, and no girls were allowed to go near them. On the closing day of the ceremonial, the fathers of all the young rulers came and stood at a distance, and the younger brother of Reuben was given a spear with which he knocked on the closed door of the hut in which Reuben and his companions were waiting, and called out, "There is war outside; come out." Immediately all rushed to where the elders were standing, and after greetings, the company formed itself into a boundary commission, to fix the limits of Reuben's authority. Finally, the same day, the new chief was married to the two girls whose offspring will be his successors. They must be daughters of men of note, not cowards in battle, of no opprobrium in the tribe; and the girls

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 582 themselves must be free from any kind of blemish. They drink a medicine weaker than that taken by their husband, but sufficiently potent to make them respected by all the other women of the district.

The death of a chief, like that of Chungu, is a great event. An immense crowd of men and women gather on these occasions. At the death of Mwafongo, near Karonga, in 1913, fifty head of cattle were killed for the feast. Of these perhaps thirty were the property of the dead chief; the rest were brought by the mourners as a token of respect for the dead man; but for each animal so killed, an equivalent, an ox for an ox, a cow for a cow, was given to the donor from the dead man's herd, so that the herd left by Mwafongo was reduced by fifty at his death. Intense emotion is generated at these gatherings, frequently leading to death. And in the past it was the rule that a chief should not go to his fathers alone. If therefore fighting broke out, and men were killed, it was only right and fitting that this should be so. In 1897 there was a small rising against the Germans, in which the chief Mwakalinga and many of his people were killed. The chief having been killed, it was not surprising that there should be a heavy death-roll among his men. The death of Mwasulama in 1918 was followed, quite naturally, by the influenza which carried off so many of his people.

522 766

522 About a month after the death of the chief, the feasting is resumed, this time with immense quantities of beer which has been prepared in the interval. The new chief is now anointed with oil, and the

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 Of the persons officially connected with the spirits, the most important is the chief. It has already been 622 said that "Chungu is the man who speaks with God"; 782 he is also the man who speaks with authority to the spirits. He, and all other chiefs, approach the spirits for the general good, but as heads of families they have the right to offer private prayers as well. Each head of a family may also pray for his own people; but no man may pray so long as his father or elder brother is alive. Next, every chief has an official who may be called a priest; he is the *wwyage*, the man whose duty it is to go daily at the order of the chief to present an offering at the grave where the last chief is buried. He does not pray; he simply lays the offering, usually a few maize cobs, on the grave and departs. When the chief goes in person to pray, as he sometimes does, without any public ceremony, this man goes with him, hears the prayers, and knows the ritual; and it is he who will teach the new chief his duties when the time comes for him to perform them. When, however, the chief dies, the *wwyage* is in great danger, for the spirits take possession of his person, a danger which can only be averted by a powerful medicine supplied by the doctor, and taken as soon as the chief has died. If this is not done, he becomes mad, lives in the bush, gibbering and naming all the dead chiefs of the past, including names known to no living person, but supposed to be those of long-dead chiefs, uttered by themselves through him.

778 With regard to places of worship: the "high place" is always at the grave of the dead chief; and

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F5617 Ngonde F5617

782 here given is obtained from descriptions by persons who were actually present at prayer offered by Chungu. [643] The decision to pray does not originate with the chief himself; it comes from the people, who approach Chungu through the subordinate chiefs, and Chungu, after reminding them that only God can give rain, consents to pray.

In the past a human sacrifice was offered, and the flesh of the victim, burned and ground to powder, was distributed over the district as a "medicine" guaranteed to ensure a good crop. This has long ceased at Karungu; the last known occurrence of it further north was in 1907, when a boy of about ten was sacrificed; and in 1917 a boy mysteriously disappeared, not without suspicion that he was offered in sacrifice. I have been told that human sacrifice is offered in the Kings Mountains even now; but, except for repeated statements, I have no evidence. The victim, always a boy, is made to drink beer until he dies, when his body is burned and ground to powder for distribution. The child is selected in secret conclave by the chiefs, and no one knows that the tragedy has taken place until public announcement has been made, except the parents of the boy, whose disappearance must have been known to them. Weeping for the victim is prohibited.

For the ordinary sacrifice offered to-day, a black or white ox or cow, preferably the latter, has to be found, and brought to Chungu. The owner must be paid, and there is a case known where refusal to do so led to the failure of the whole ceremony. When the

J. Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F7517 Ngonde F7517

The Bálífuta go to the stream to wash, garlanded with flowers, and carrying a small stone. Flowers and stone are thrown into the stream after the washing, and the company re-enter the house. The doctor takes water and pours it on the roof, upon which all come out one by one, the water dripping on each as he or she passes. Anointed with oil, they all go to the place of burial, where, resting on elbows and knees, they draw themselves along the grave, slightly disturbing the soil as they go. The hair is then cut, and the feast follows.

When a chief is *in articulo mortis*, his headmen and his wives are present, and he is addressed, while still living, as common men are addressed at the graveside. "Go to God and the spirits; go to your fathers (naming them). Rest there, and tell them what is happening here above."

After he is dead, the nails of his fingers and toes are clipped, and his hair cut, and given to the doctor, who will make medicine with them to prevent the disease which killed the chief passing over to others. The dead man is now dressed as common men are dressed for burial, but much more elaborately, and, if he is a relative of Chungu, he is placed in a sitting position in the house, where his wives and headmen embrace him for the last time. If he is a very important chief, like Chungu, his death is not yet announced to the people.

Meanwhile a cow has been killed at the place where the body is to be buried, and the headmen dig the grave, usually by night, if intimation has not been

F3617 Ngonde F3617

made that the chief is dead. The body is brought to the grave by the headmen, and the dead cow is lowered in first; then the chief, in a sitting position, facing the Songo country, if that was his original home. Torches are used if the night is dark. When the grave is filled in, all partake of the medicine made from the dead man's nails and hair. The washing ceremonies are the same as for common men; but the widows will not go near the men who placed the body in the grave until the latter have given them a gift of some kind, though the exact function of the gift is not clear.

No chief of any importance dies a natural death: that is to say, however and whenever a chief dies, it is assumed that some one was responsible. It is believed that chiefs die more easily than common men, and are more open to evil influences; but, on the other hand, they have more powerful medicines to protect them. When Kalonto died in 1920, all his sons and his headmen were put to the poison test, and those who did not vomit were compelled to pay a fine in cattle, a token that complete confidence in the belief in evil influences is passing away; for in earlier times the culprit so discovered would have been attacked as he ran, and would probably have paid the forfeit of his own life. The easier punishment may, however, have been due to fear of the police.

Twins were not exposed; but if one of them died, the body was cast into the bush, and wailing was not permitted, for it would cause the death of the other. To-day the body of a twin is buried in the ordinary way, but without wailing.

according to the *Bell Report*. Cattle and kidos are exported to Tanganyika.[1] The Kyoomanga herds were reduced, partly tsetse-wise, and partly by rinderpest.[2]

Domestic Architecture

Uganda homesteads are famous in Kyoshland for their peculiar style and manner of execution. They are made of bamboos, specially grown for the purpose. They are oblong, with the ends slightly tapering upwards so that they present a ship-like appearance. The huts are erected in rows facing each other, at a distance of about 20 yards. This arrangement is kept scrupulously clean.[3] The Nyabusa live in round or long huts of bamboo or grass.[4] Kiaga homesteads are scattered, they live in round huts of bamboo and straw.[5] The Jaa formerly lived in large enclosed villages, but these are now broken up.[6]

Implements and Tools

The Uganda were accomplished iron-workers; iron was dug, smelted, and made into hoes and spears.[7] The Iwa were formerly noted as iron-workers. Both they and the Kyoomanga grew tobacco on a large scale.[8]

A rough kind of cloth was made on native looms. The Uganda made hollowed canoes, but were not good sailors. In fishing they used poison, traps, nets, and traps. Pottery and basket-making were carried on.[9]

The Uganda were the most civilized of the chiefs of Kyoo, owing to their closer contact with Arab and English traders who used the lake as a waterway.[10] The Kyoomanga also had opportunities of contact with Arab and English traders at the south end of Lake Tanganyika,[11] but information about the effect of this on their economic life is lacking. By comparison with the Uganda the Nyabusa were isolated from contact with the outside world,[12] and this is probably one of the other reasons of the group. Among the Uganda, in spite of the political hierarchy and central religious authority of Kyoogo, economic links between separate local groups were few. The ivory trade was a source of wealth for the Kyoogo and for the nobles of Uganda at Mbanda, but its benefits had a strictly limited effect on the rest of the people. The economic links between the capital and the chieftdoms followed the lines of the political system. The income of Kyoogo in slaves and cattle depended on the judicial process and on warfare. He had a semi-monopoly of the ivory of the country (the right tusk of every elephant killed was his). His expenditure consisted of entertainments for all important visitors to the capital, and gifts of cloths, obtained through the ivory trade, to nobles and chiefs. The free Kyoogo gave land-cloths to the indigenous rulers, who, in accepting them, accepted his overlordship, and the practice was continued every time a new chief or territorial noble succeeded to office. The nobles of Uganda got cloth every time the chief visitors came. Cloth bringing food to Mbanda, the capital, was

[1] Bell Report, op. cit., p. [illegible], 1921.
[2] Kyoo-Uganda, Abaa Mbanda, [illegible], op. cit., p. [illegible].
[3] Bell, op. cit.
[4] Abaabaaba, [illegible], op. cit. Kyoo-Uganda, Abaa, op. cit.
[5] Gualdhaaro and Ghaaba, 1911, p. [illegible].
[6] Tibaaba, op. cit., p. [illegible].
[7] Gualdhaaro, 1912, p. [illegible].
[8] Gualdhaaro and Ghaaba, 1911, p. [illegible].
[9] Gualdhaaro of Kyoogo Bell Report, p. [illegible].
[10] Gualdhaaro and Ghaaba, 1911, p. [illegible].
[11] Abaabaaba, [illegible], op. cit., p. [illegible].
[12] Bell, op. cit., p. [illegible].

given a slave or cow in return. Those who performed boring service, unless, were entertained with food and beer.

The ivory trade, although it bound the local rulers to the capital, involved no tribal organization of elephant hunts, and scarcely touched the common people, who never obtained the imported cloths exchanged for ivory, but continued to dress in bark-cloth or in their coarse home-woven cloth. Between each chief and his people economic links were determined on the one hand by his power of requisitioning food, and his greater wealth derived from the higher bride-price given for his daughters, and on the other by his people's expectation of entertainment from him in return for their food. Economic links between local chieftains were tenuous. Subsistence agriculture was practised by each family with the help of village neighbours and a few friends and kin; marriage with its economic exchanges was usually within the chieftain. Of the few specialized craftsmen, representatives of each were usually found in each local group.[1]

Under modern economic conditions, Nyanda country is the only part of north Nyasaland which cannot be called the 'Dead North', and does not suffer from excessive migration. The soil is fertile and at present there is no land shortage, though there is likelihood of one developing in the near future. Food is cultivated for export to the Luya goldfields in Tanganyika, which is the natural market for Nyanda produce. Rice, cattle, and hides are also exported there. Parts of the lake littoral are suitable for cotton cultivation, which was revived in 1939. Ninety tons were sold in 1956. Out of the total effective male population of 12,000, 3,000 grow 'economic crops', and 7,000 grow cash crops only.[2] There are two European coffee estates in the Mzuzu hills, but they are handicapped by the long dry season.[3] Money is also derived from the fishing industry. An attempt to develop a glue industry from native butter for sale to Indians in Nyasaland collapsed owing to the apathy of the Nyanda, their neglect of quality, and their insistence on too high a price for their inferior product. The main cash income of the district is derived from emigration to the Luya goldfields, so that 90 per cent. of the money in circulation in the district is East African currency, which is accepted by the Nyasaland local government, surplus balances being remitted to the District Officer at Tukuyu, Tanganyika.[4]

Present Migrations

Long-distance labour migration is not a serious problem among the Nyanda, as they are able to earn their main cash income by working in the nearby Luya goldfields, or by supplying that market with agricultural produce. In north Nyasa district (Nyanda), of 12,000 adult males fit to work for wages, only 11·6 per cent. are labour emigrants, and of these in 1951 only 120 were counted as 'lost sons' (i.e. not heard of since 1951).[5] In Rumpwe and Kasungu districts, Northern Rhodesia, where the Nyamwanga and Fwa live, 50 per cent. of the able-bodied male adult population is absent.[6]

A local migration of Nyakyusa does constitute a problem for the Tanganyika administration. Up to 1951 some 2,000 families had migrated from Rungwe district to tribal lands in the neighbouring chieftaincy of Mbeya district. By 1951 the figure had increased to 3,000. The immigrants now total 17 per cent. of the whole population

[1] Wilson, 1, 1951, pp. 20–30.
[2] Gluckman, 1951, p. 208.
[3] Bell Report, 1956, Appendix G.
[4] Bell Report, 1956, pp. 100–3.
[5] Gluckman, 1951, p. 21.
[6] Gluckman, 1, 1956, map.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

Only the Ngonde, the Nyamwanga, and the Iwa seem to have had any paramount authority. Of these, only that of the Ngonde has been described in detail. The Nyamwanga had a paramount chief, the Mukoma, living over the border in Tanganyika. Under him the Northern Bhakonian Nyamwanga were always ruled by his sister, the Watulile; directly under her were the headmen of villages. The Mukoma used to appoint his own sons or selected friends to be headmen of the larger villages. A nominal tribute, mainly fish, was sent by the Watulile to the Mukoma, and the latter could also command annual labour in his gardens. The Iwa also had a paramount chief, Kafwimbi, who recognized common ancestry with the Mukoma but paid him no tribute. His country was divided into two sections, under two sub-chiefs, Mpungu and Tembya. The succession to the chieftaincy is normally the same as consecutive succession, i.e. brothers, then sons of the deceased, but the order need not be strictly followed so.[1]

Nyonde Traditional Income

The section on history briefly indicated the position of the Kyungu. He was wealthy, owing to the ivory trade, and used his wealth to maintain political links with the chiefs and nobles of the country. At the same time he was kept in strict religious seclusion, and the real government of the country was in the hands of the nobles of Ngonde, a group of hereditary nobles, descendants of the original companions of the first Kyungu. The relations of the great chiefs (descendants of sons of Kyungu) and the territorial nobles to the capital allowed of considerable local autonomy, the Kyungu's prestige being mainly religious. Each territorial noble was succeeded by one son; each chief was succeeded by two or more sons, so that the chieftains tended to supplant the territorial nobles in importance and number, and the junior branches of the house of any one great chief formed a hierarchy based on descent. The great chiefs, at their accession, were recognized by the Kyungu with gifts of cloth, and they brought the junior chiefs of their house to perform hoeing service, mulasa, for the Kyungu. Afterwards the junior chiefs performed mulasa for their great chief, and were similarly rewarded with entertainment. The great chief might invite the territorial nobles in his neighbourhood to accompany him in performing mulasa, but he could not command them as he could his junior chiefs. Apart from recognizing a certain authority of superior chiefs in judicial matters, and the right of the latter to command them to hoe, or to war, the junior chiefs had almost complete autonomy in their chieftaincy.[2]

Each chief had a traditional right to demand from his own subjects milk and honeycomb if he needed them, and to every man he pleased if he desired the ox for his personal use or to give to a friendman (not to a commoner), offering the owner another ox.[3]

The chieftain[2] consisted of a number of age-villages, elder and younger men living apart with their own concubines. At the head of each age-village was a headman (called 'great commoner' by Wilson) chosen from among the villagers by the chief

[1] Contrast, [illegible] the [illegible].
[2] Sic; [illegible] [illegible].
[3] In the absence of information I do not know whether the following descriptions of Ngonde and Nyakusa chieftains and age-villages is capable of a wider application.

[2] Wilson, [illegible] op. cit.

692 Many cases were of course decided by the common people among themselves, others by their great commoners, and others by the local chiefs sitting with their great commoners. Although there was no centralized judicial system, the political hierarchy of chieftains sometimes could be used to obtain redress in the case of a quarrel between men of different chieftaincies. The weakness of the system is indicated by the fact that restitution for wrong done was often obtained by the method of capturing a hostage.[1]

Witchcraft was punished by death. An adulterer, if caught, was killed by the husband. Deliberate murder required compensation up to ten head of cattle and the number of a woman, followed by a feast of reconciliation. If the murderer could not be caught a blood feud would be started, ending with a feast of formal reconciliation under the guidance of a diviner. Accidental homicide required compensation, but no feast of reconciliation, as there had been no malice. A cattle-thief caught red-handed might be killed on the spot; arson was settled by payment of compensation.[2]

631

Native Government

(a) Ngonde. The British Government in Nyasaland at first applied the system of direct rule. Chiefs and subhiefs were recognized as 'village' or 'principal' headmen, performing executive duties for the Administration. The Kyungu was one of the 'principal' headmen, but was not recognized as Paramount. In 1929 the system was modified by the setting up of advisory councils in association with the headmen and the District Resident. The members of the councils were nominated and removable by the Government, and there was no intention of reviving tribal government.

692

692

693

In 1933 the system of Indirect Rule was introduced. The Kyungu was recognized as paramount chief, with an appeal court and five sub-chiefs under him. Of these, one, Kilupula, was over the northern part of the Ngonde plain, another ruled the Lantiya in the narrow north-east, and the three others were distant territorial subhiefs ruling groups of alien stock in the hills. The subhiefs of Ngonde, with twelve prominent subhiefs and six other assessors, were recognized as members of the Kyungu's court subject to nominal salaries. Those of the great chiefs of Ngonde who were not made sub-chiefs were officially termed 'important' headmen, and given nominal salaries. The other chiefs and territorial subhiefs were still termed 'village' headmen as before 1929. The Kyungu and the five sub-chiefs were each given an area and a court to the area. Village and important headmen could arbitrate in [illegible] but had no power to execute judgements. That power belonged to the courts alone. The Kyungu's court was also a court of appeal for the whole of Ngonde. A Native Treasury was established, into which one-twelfth of the tax was paid, but this was almost entirely expended on personal emoluments.

The full traditional constitution cannot be revived, as the religious beliefs which supported it have been superseded. Forty-five per cent. of the population profess Christianity, and even the belief in witchcraft, which operated in certain cases as a constitutional check, is less prominent than before. The native rulers are no longer believed to control the rain and the health and fertility of their people, so they stand to fall by the performance of their secular duties alone. Since the Kyungu has come out of religious seclusion the subhiefs of Ngonde are relegated to advisory status. The amalgamation of the constitution tends in this respect to make it more autocratic, both

[1] Wilson, op. cit., p. 48.

[2] Mackenzie, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

in the relations between the Kyanga and the nobles, and in those between the local chiefs and their great connexions. On the other hand, there has been a reversal in the relative wealth of connexions and chiefs. The latter have had small salaries substituted for the proceeds of the ivory trade, land tribute, and the heavy of war. The decline of polygyny has also reduced the relative wealth of the chiefs. The Kyanga's total official salary in 1937 was £70, and the salaries of sub-chiefs from £40 down to £10 per annum. The nobles of Ugenda were paid from 100 to 150 per annum except Mulira, who got 300. These salaries do not permit of lavish entertainment and gifts to subordinates, and the rulers suffer a consequent loss of prestige. Each village headman is allowed 50 to the tax paid by every adult male subject, and, in addition, the 'important' headmen (former great chiefs) receive subsidies averaging about 100 per annum. These payments have replaced the traditional right to requisition food. Commoners frequently rulers than their rulers. The head chiefs to the Bunas get £20 in 1937, and fifty-three other government employees get £10 or more. Young men from the gentlemen and native Christian ministers were more than do the former great chiefs.

By using his private fortune the present Kyanga has been able to maintain the prestige of his office. He revived the mulira, having ceased, in 1927 on a new basis. To each chief who had for him he presented a cow, bought out of the proceeds of the sale of the produce of their labours. The mulira profit also enabled him to buy cloth for honoured gifts, a custom which he extended considerably, giving cloths not only at the death of the chiefs, but also to everyone who dies in his part of the plain of Ugenda. The present constitution of Ugenda is more autocratic and more centralized than the old, and thanks to his wealth the Kyanga's secular power is greater than that of his predecessors, in relation to the nobles of Ugenda, and to the chiefs and commoners.

The 'coming out' has ceased since 1919, owing to the smallness of all the present chieftaincies, and the impossibility of finding enough land and followers for two successors to any land chief. Each chief is now succeeded by a brother or one son only. Subjects are still free to move away from the area of an unpopular headman, thereby reducing his salary by 50 per annum.[1] Although the Nyamdowi-Tengeyiko boundary cuts his sphere of influence, the Kyanga is still often consulted on tribal affairs across the border.[2]

(b) Nyakoro. The government of Tengeyiko Territory has grouped the 100 or so traditionally independent chiefs into eleven court districts, with one chief as President of the Native Court in each. These eleven chiefs, together with the two presidents of the Nibil and Lantiya courts, are federated, and have an appeal court and joint Native Treasury of their own. In the eleven native courts most of the traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their great connexions and assist the President and his great connexions in the hearing of cases. The bulk of the legal business previously transacted by each chief in his own country is now taken to court, but the power of the great connexions to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages is still the basis of the legal system. A poll tax, fixed at 40 per annum (1938) for adult males, was introduced, and chiefs are paid small salaries, ranging from 30, 20, or ten a month for ordinary chiefs, to five or ten a month for court presidents.[3]

[1] Wilson, op. cit., pp. 60-61. [2] Native Affairs Report, 1933, p. 6.
[3] Wilson, op. cit., p. 62.

PEOPLES OF THE LAKE NYASA REGION
MAIN CULTURAL FEATURES

Religion

The ancestor cult was the main feature of Ngonde religion. As long as a man had alive relatives, father's full brother, or a senior brother, the senior kinsman dealt with the ancestral spirits, not only on his behalf, but also on behalf of his wives and children. In the absence of sickness or misfortune no appeal was made to the spirits. If the divinar diagnosed anger of the ancestors as cause, the senior kinsman had to pray for the sick one. If the half-brothers lived at a distance from each other after the death of their father and uncles, each might pray to the spirits to cure a little sickness, but if it persisted a message had to be sent to the senior kinsman. Wrongs which aroused the anger of the spirits were usually breaches of family morality, insult to a father, neglect of responsibilities by an heir. Offerings consisted of a bull, hen, or beer in the case of commoners, a cow in the case of a chief. The worship of dead chiefs as such was not connected with everyday morality. On the offering of cows by chiefs to their immediate ancestors depended the food and health of the chiefdom and the fertility of women and cows.[1]

Each Kyungu was buried in the valley around Mbande, and the grave was planted with cows, making a sacred grove. In times of drought and widespread sickness, such bows were made at the graves under the guidance of a diviner.[2] An tooth in the living Kyungu was believed to cause a drought. Each chief or subhe was believed to be able to cause bad misfortune for his own people, and the head of every family participated in the divinity of his own ancestors. The great commoners of each chief were believed to have independent access to his ancestral spirits, and so to have a hold upon him. The subhes of Ngonde had a similar power over the Kyungu.

As the Kyungu's health was bound up with the welfare of the community, elaborate precautions to maintain his health and to protect him from the danger of sexual impurity were taken, and when he died he was killed by suffocation.[3]

Sacred lagoons by the lake were associated not with the ancestors, but with a regular supreme deity, Mbande.[4]

There were two important annual rituals for the whole tribe in addition to the special sacrifices to ward misfortune. One was the sharing out of the salve each year after the bonds of the cows, which was performed on the order of the Kyungu, given through the subhes of Ngonde. The second was the distribute from Ngonde ceremony. Fruits were offered by the subhes of Ngonde, in the grove of the last dead Kyungu, and then by the great chiefs, each in the grove of his own predecessor. The subhes and the chiefs of the hills had similar rituals, but they were not synchronized with those of the plain.[5]

Witchcraft

The Ngonde believe that certain men and women have the power of harming their neighbours and neighbours' cattle without taking any overt action. The witchcraft is hereditary, and of particular evidence if inherited through the mother.[6] Witches exert their influence at night in dreams. There are two kinds of witches, sorcerers, diviners

[1] Wilson, n. (pp. [illegible]) = (pp. [illegible]) in the Manuscript, vary, pp. [illegible] and (pp. [illegible]). [illegible]
[2] Wilson, n. (pp. [illegible]) [illegible]
[3] Ibid., p. [illegible] Manuscript, [illegible] (pp. [illegible]) [illegible]
[4] Wilson, n. (pp. [illegible]) [illegible]
[5] Manuscript, vary, (pp. [illegible]).

[Since the Ngonde and the Nyakyusa peoples have slightly different political systems, for the purpose of this file, the Kyungu of the Ngonde people is marked for 643, and the chiefs of the individual chiefdoms for 622; however, when the text is referring to the Nyakyusa people, the chiefs of the individual chiefdoms are marked for 643, and the village headmen for 622.]

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 F317 Nguni F317

It is unusual for a sociologist to find such a simple problem for analysis as this and it was not long before the answer was plain. The Nyakyusa, until a few decades before the coming of the Europeans, had been largely isolated from any vigorous external contacts; Ngonde, on the other hand, had been effectively related to the outside world for generations. The Nyakyusa actually possessed in the Lwanzimo, the hereditary chiefs of Lubaga, a line of spiritual paramounts or high priests, whose religious functions were remarkably similar to those of the Kyungu in Ngonde; but, poor and isolated as they were, they had never developed any secular paramountcy at all. The reasons for the greater elaboration of the traditional political system of Ngonde were to be found above all in the ivory trade and in the constant influx of immigrant groups. 642 177

And it further became clear that the prestige which the present Kyungu enjoys in the changed conditions to-day is due in large part to his having followed the mercantile traditions of his predecessors, mastered the business methods of the Boma, made a fortune, and then kept up his position out of his own private means.

5. THE CHRONICLE OF NGONDE (TO 1873).

In studying the present constitution of Ngonde and the profound changes now taking place in it, we cannot find any point of time at which the process of change began. In its present radical form social change in Ngonde arises from the ferment of a host of new social conditions imported by European missionaries, traders and Government officials. But the Arabs also brought change to Ngonde and before the Arabs the Ngoni, while before the coming of the Ngoni there is evidence to suggest that changes had arisen, on more than one occasion, in the normal behaviour of the men of Ngonde which were stimulated, not by any new contacts with the outside world, but simply by accidents of their own internal history. Social change in Ngonde, so far as we can see, has always been going on. 177 178

In this section the political history of Ngonde is described in outline from the its beginnings to the coming of the Europeans in 1878, in so far as it can be recovered from the oral tradition. In later sections a systematic analysis is attempted, first of the constitution of Ngonde just prior to that date, and then of the changes in it which have since taken place. 173

(a) THE EARLY KYUNGUS.

It is generally agreed that the ancestors of the Kyungus, the present hereditary chiefs of Ngonde, came from the Livingstone Mountains in [The similarity between the Ngonde and the Nyakyusa political systems. — Analysis] 173 643

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6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 F317 Ngonde, F317

173
613

the north east; that they passed westwards over Rungwe Mountain and out into "the country of the Ron," only to turn eastwards again to the Songwe River. Then they journeyed southwards through the hills to the present Kamanga and finally turned back to Mbande.

In the Livingstone Mountains, the country of the Kings, the first name which the men of Ngonde remember is that of Ngulube;[1] and from him not only the Kyungu but also the chiefs of the Nyakyusa and of the Kings are said to be descended. While on his tortuous journey from the Livingstone Mountains to Mbande the Kyungu is said to have started out with three brothers and a sister, and to have left them all behind at different places. One brother founded a line of Isumwaga chiefs, another of Ile chiefs, while the third, Mwenumbaka, together with their sister, followed the Kyungu to the Lambya near the upper Songwe and stayed there. Mwenumbaka had a son Katowa and his sister had a son Ngondo, and still to-day there is rivalry between their two houses for the leadership of the group of Lambya.

On reaching Mbande the Kyungu found it already occupied by Sinkolwa.[2] "Sinkolwa built on Mbande before the Kyungu; he was a clever hunter. He found that elephants were very plentiful here and so built on Mbande. He was a Fipa by birth and had come from the north." Then the Kyungu drove Sinkolwa from Mbande back to the land of the Fipa and captured a great deal of ivory. The usual version of this story is full of miraculous incident, telling, first, how he hid from Sinkolwa in a tiny pile of grass and, then, how he took Mbande without a blow by creating elephants, buffaloes and guinea-fowl for Sinkolwa and his people to hunt, and climbing the hill when it was deserted. Once on top he beat his drum and the men of Sinkolwa heard it and fled. Miraculous power and the possession of ivory—

[1] One of our best informants to history, the late Reuben Mwenilupembe, said the legend further back still: "He came from the country of the Kings, yes, but originally he came from the north; his body was pale and he came to the land of the Kings and took a wife and was said 'he is pipi' (pale), because his body was pale. He spoke the language of the Abakungwe (half or half-Arab traders). Then they gave him the name Ngulube (to pipi) and then—married in Kings country and begot Lwanbale."

He was also directly supported this, but from the present Kyungu, who said: "In the secret grove of the old Kyungu there used to be two implements as ancient as our history—horns, canoes and spears. The Kyungu brought them with him from the north when he first came. I have seen them myself . . . but now the hard horn have stolen them all. Just on the hill Mbande I have seen very old pottery." And he also maintained, as we shall see, that the early Kyungu used to walk over northwards from Ngonde. And Reuben Mwenilupembe said that the first Kyungu brought cloth with him when he came. Thus, though proof is impossible, there is a suggestion in the legends of Ngonde that the chiefs in this part of the world are direct descendants of early Arab or half-Arab traders from the East African coast.

[2] The similarity of this name to "Sinkolwa" appears to be accidental.

6:Wilson E-5 (1924-1938)1939 F917 Ngonde F917

already in the earliest legends are collected the twin sources of the Kyungu' says ...ory, for, as we shall see, they combined divine kingship with wholesale ivory trading.

The Kyungu who took Mbande was not alone; he brought with him into Ngonde five leading men whose names are still borne by their descendants: Kasungu, Malewa, Kyumba, Mbuma and Ngosi. Nor did he find the country empty; besides Simbalowe, who was himself a recent immigrant, there were: Mwyasi, Mwenulelo, Mwenukelumu, Mwenikwimbe, Mwenilumbe and others; they all had men of their own, and, with the exception of Simbalowe who fled, they all accepted the Kyungu as their overlord. To this day some of their names also survive in Ngonde. The Kyungu, according to the late Mwenilumbe,[1] brought cloth with him and used it to consolidate his position: "Then the Kyungu gave headcloths to us nobles, to Mwenukelumu, Mwenilumbe and the others; and he said to us: 'You are the people, you the indigenous owners of the land, do you pray for me that I, the chief, may stay in peace.'"

I make no attempt here to date the arrival of the Kyungu in Ngonde, for to do so would require a careful collation of this tradition with those of neighbouring tribes. The present Kyungu is said to be about the eighteenth of that title in Ngonde, but, as the reigns of many Kyungus were very short and as some early names have probably been forgotten, this fact alone tells us little.

For the period from the coming of the first Kyungu to the birth of Mwangonde (who was about the tenth Kyungu in Ngonde) the legends are scanty and vague; but the following facts are generally assumed by them. The leading men among the Kyungu's followers, together with the rulers of the indigenous population, came to form a class of hereditary nobles (*amalumbwe*), within which, as we shall see, two groups were distinguished, those who lived near Kyungu at Mbande and those who did not. Important immigrants with followers of their own continued to enter Ngonde after the coming of the Kyungu and they also became hereditary nobles, either in the one group or in the other. The Kyungu, though credited with divine powers and enriched by the ivory trade, had but limited powers of secular action; they lived a life of religious seclusion, while the nobles ruled the country. Most of the male children of the Kyungu were killed at birth, and they themselves were killed when they fell sick, lest their sickness should spread magically among their people.

These early Kyungus lived with their wives on the top of the hill Mbande, inside a great enclosure. Near them, near at Mbande, some say, lived a group of nobles. This group, which is specifically referred

[1] Kwelem Mwenilumbe. He has died since we left Ngonde.

6 Wilson.E.-5 (1936-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173
693
696

to as "the nobles of Ngonde" (*Abangonde*) included, firstly, the successors of those five leading men whom the first Kyungu brought with him[1], secondly the successors of one of the indigenous rulers whom the Kyungu had found in the country and who happened to live near Mbande[2] and, thirdly, seven others who joined the group later.[3] These fourteen nobles lived at Mbande, each with a group of followers and exercised the central power at the Kyungu's command, or at least in his name. The names of all fourteen are still borne as hereditary titles by their successors in Ngonde to-day and, with two exceptions,[4] all their successors still rank as nobles of Ngonde.

Besides the nobles of Ngonde near Mbande there were the other nobles "who lived at a distance," some in the plain, some in the hills. In the language of Ngonde they are simply referred to by the general term "nobles" (*amakolokolo*) but, in order to distinguish them from the nobles of Ngonde, I shall here call them "territorial nobles."

They consisted, firstly, of those indigenous rulers whom the first Kyungu found in Ngonde but who did not happen to live near Mbande, and, secondly, of numerous immigrants who constantly arrived in Ngonde with followers of their own and were given land. Some of these immigrants came from the east across the lake, others from the west, from what is now Northern Rhodesia. The present Kyungu gave us a list of thirty-seven families of territorial nobles, of whom only five or six were found in Ngonde by the first Kyungu, the remainder having entered afterwards. How many of these thirty odd immigrants came during the period of the early Kyungus and how many later we do not know.

In the middle period of Ngonde's history, as we shall see, two tendencies are manifest: the Kyungus begin to emerge from their religious seclusion and slightly to increase their secular power at the expense of the nobles of Ngonde, while the "sons of the Kyungu" continue to multiply, set up hereditary chieftaincies under him and gradually oust the territorial nobles from the Ngonde plain. But in this early period the nobles were the only effective rulers. At Mbande the nobles of Ngonde

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[1] Kyungu, Mpiwa, Kyumba, Mbowe and Ngwi.

[2] Mwenda and Mwamwaba.

[3] Mwenda and Kyungu were both of Ilungu line or Mwamwi but original connexions lost in bands of more heterogeneous kind and both became nobles of Ngonde. Both were others from the line of Mwamwaba—Kyiza and Mbambamwaba—did the same. Bandu-Kyungu, three of the later immigrants became nobles of Ngonde. There was Mwamwambula who, says legend, "was a great sleep-eater and so was too far for the Kyungu to come and live at Mbande." There was Mwamwikondwa, who came from Mbala (Abercorn), and there was Kyaba, whose name we do not know.

[4] The two exceptions are Kyumba and Ngwi. Once one of the Kyumbas enlisted a wife of the Kyungu and lost it for his life across the Kingdom; while Kyaba's descendants have become just ordinary commoners for some reason unknown to us.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173
643
565

reviled between the divine Kyungu and the outer world, while both in the hills and in the plain the territorial nobles governed each his own people without royal rivals—for most of the sons of the Kyungu were killed at birth.

The exact conditions which led to this state of affairs are beyond our knowledge; there is no detailed evidence to explain just how the descendants of a wandering adventurer who succeeded to the camp and the ivory of "a great elephant hunter" should have become divine kings jealously controlled by their subordinates. All we can do is to set down in all its vagueness and uncertainty, such information as the tradition offers us.

The three crucial facts were, firstly the wealth of the Kyungu, which gave the other rulers a similar interest in them, secondly the constant immigration of important men, which kept up the numbers of these other rulers, and, thirdly, the killing of most of the sons of the Kyungu at birth; a custom whereby the territorial nobles were rid of possible rivals and the nobles of Ngonde were rid of possible supporters of the Kyungu against themselves. Sculpsy Mwanifumbo told us: "They feared that, if the Kyungu had many sons, they might seduce his wives and so bring sickness on him himself and on the country.* And they also feared that, if many of the Kyungu's sons grew up, they might destroy the nobles, they might ask, when the Kyungu died, how it was that he had died so suddenly!—I refer to his being killed when he fell sick or cut himself.—If there were only a few sons they could not prevent (being only few), but if there had been many then all the nobles might have had their throats cut. So they kept two sons only alive. This was told me by the old Malwa,* the father of the present Malwa. He knew a great deal about the things of old. I asked him one day why the sons of Kyungu had been killed and he answered what I have just told you." Two reasons are given here: first the magical danger to the Kyungu (and through him to his people) of infidelity on the part of his wives, for his sons would naturally have more access to the secret enclosure than other men; and second the danger that his sons might prevent his being killed when sick. The danger that they would supplant the territorial nobles is not mentioned, but it is hard to believe that the nobles were not conscious of it.

643
565

The nobles, both territorial and of Ngonde, still speak of themselves to-day as a single group with common interests opposed, to some extent, to those of the Kyungu and the chiefs; and, when we compare Ngonde with the Nyakyusa, it seems probable that there was some causal connection between the wealth of the Kyungu and the constant increase

* (Cf. infra Section 3 (b).
* Malwa is the present noble of Ngonde.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

(43)
946

in the nobles' numbers by immigration, on the one hand, and the close hold maintained by the nobles of Ngonde over the family life of the early Kyungas, on the other. The Lwembe of Lubaga was, like the Kyunga, an immigrant into his district and he also had a group of hereditary priests living with him who, both in their origin and their religious functions exactly corresponded to the nobles of Ngonde; and they used to kill the Lwembe when he fell sick. But they neither developed many similar functions themselves nor ever prevented the royal family of the Lwembe from increasing. The sons of the Lwembe founded hereditary chieftaincies from the first. There had been indigenous rulers among the Nyakyusa prior to the coming of the Lwembe, but they were soon displaced by his sons and did not maintain themselves within the constitution. But then the Lwembe was poor, and among the Nyakyusa there was not the constant immigration of important men unrelated to the Lwembe* as there was into Ngonde of important men unrelated to the Kyunga. The comparison thus suggests very strongly a causal connection between these facts; but the exact mechanism of the connection is obscure.

(73
(43)
946

The reasons for the killing of the Kyunga himself will be fully discussed in section three. But it must be mentioned here that the history of Ngonde is full of refusals on the part of prospective heirs to accept the position of Kyunga, and that one of the reasons for refusal was the short life that a Kyunga so often had. In order to refuse it was usually necessary to flee, for an heir once forcibly seized by the nobles of Ngonde and set on the stool of the Kyunga could not abdicate; if he did it was believed he would die. And thus was founded the house of Kasulilu (or Mwenitumi) in the plain north of Songwe River. One of the early Kyungas died and "two of his sons, Kasulilu and a younger brother, fled across the Songwe to Isoso, to their grandfather; for the same Mwenitumi is in origin a noble not a royal name, the Kyunga had married the daughter of the noble Mwenitumi. They fled because they feared to die on Mbande!"

In Isoso the house of Kasulilu became hereditary chiefs and began to spread their power through all the surrounding plain. But later the Nyakyusa came down from the hills and drove them back across Songwe. The boundaries of Ngonde* in this early period, were thus wider than they are to-day. The plain north of the Songwe (which the

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* There was another immigration into the district of the Nyakyusa, but it was not, on such traditions, by a close kinsman of the Lwembe, whose sons, like the Lwembe's own, became hereditary chiefs. (The Kukwe are ignored in this discussion.)

* Using "Ngonde" always in the sense of the area of the Kyunga's supremacy.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 F317 Ngonde F317

Nyakyusa chiefs afterwards conquered, but which is still known as "Mu-Ngonde") was certainly included in it. And the men of Ngonde also claim that Mawimba of the Nkali hills, and Mujumbe and others in the present Northern Rhodesia were sublins of the Kyungu and were him tribute.

How much earlier power the Kyungu and sublins of Ngonde then had we cannot know; but, as in the later period it can be proved to have been more effective on the plain near Mbande than in the hills, it is not unreasonable to suppose that so it was in the early period also.

Trade with the outer world there was, as legend says, from the first, and this trade were earth. The present Kyungu told us: "The Kyungu used to send ivory to the coast, they went men over the hills of the Nkali; the ivory that they took from Kimbulwe went that way. And the men used to come back with cloths and iron goods and white crockery. This I heard from Wenkalengula who died as a very, very old man in the year 1900 or perhaps it was 1901."

In later times the central power of the Kyungu and the sublins of Ngonde can be proved to have rested on the twin bases of religious faith and the control of great wealth; as these two conditions seem both to have been present in the early period we can assert with some confidence that then also they were the real bases of the central power.

(b) A TURNING POINT.

"Kyungu Mugomo had a sister who was married to Kamanga, one of the sublins of Ngonde. And one day when the other sublins of Ngonde went to Ngusa (a district of Ngonde) to fish—for fish were plentiful in Ngusa—this woman followed them, and there she married Wenkamkale a man of Ngusa. So the sublins returned and told Mugomo that his sister had been taken to wife in Ngusa, and all he said was, 'very well.' Later she bore a son to Wenkamkale and Kyungu Mugomo named him Kanyemba."

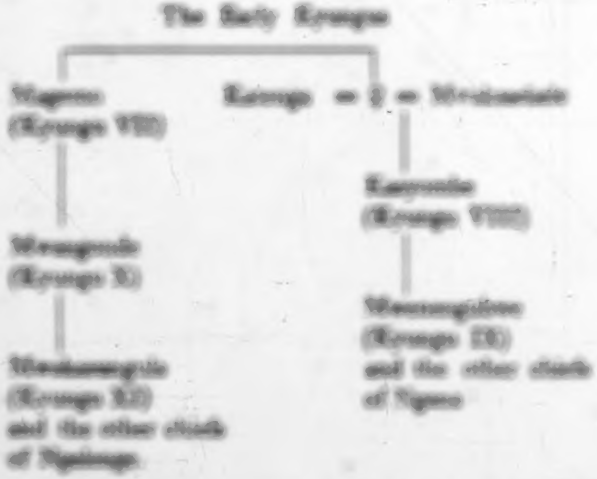
Now Mugomo himself when he died left only one son, Mwangonde, and he had only survived by an accident. Mwangonde's mother came from Bumbo (in the present Northern Rhodesia) and was a distant relative of Malewa, another sublin of Ngonde. Her delivery was unexpected and took place in the house of one of Malewa's poor kinsmen. So Malewa hid her and the child, and then sent her away to Bumbo. The other sublins of Ngonde sensed him of having done so and were angry, for they wished to kill the child if it were a boy. Malewa denied his action, but afterwards they heard that the child was a boy and alive. Now but for Malewa the direct line of the Kyungu would have died out,

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173
G43

for apparently three sons of Mugonu who had been kept alive died before him, and Mwangonde was his only surviving son. But even as Mwangonde was far too young to inherit when Mugonu died, he was only an infant; and on the orders of Ngonde took Kanyemba both to inherit Mugonu's wives and to be the Kyungu.

The Early Kyungus



This was a turning point in Ngonde's history: Kanyemba's descendants are the "chiefs of Ngonde," or "the creation" (*Ubumbwi*), Mwangonde's descendants are the "chiefs of Ngulunga,"[10] the direct line; and Ngonde's history from this time on is full of their rivalry. Not only did two royal houses result from this event but other momentous political changes as well. For Kanyemba when he succeeded had an adult son, Mwalunga, who had been brought up in Ngonde and was not afraid of the orders at Mbande.[11] When they took Kanyemba to be the

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[10] It is also said that Mugonu "even said and ruled his own children."

[11] These are territorial and not family or clan names. Kanyemba and his descendants are called chiefs of Ngonde because his mother's husband, the successor Mwalunga, lived in Ngonde. And as for Mwangonde, when he returned from the hills, settled in Ngulunga and begot children there before he was taken to be Kyungu. And so his sons are called chiefs of Ngulunga.

[12] The point is this: the two sons of the Kyungu who had been normally allowed to survive, in the early period, were brought up at Mbande to support and fear the orders of Ngonde as their "father," and he was seen to have many personal followers of their own. Moreover if both survived their own father, the Kyungu, then both would be prospective successors and each would be far too much supported with his own district to worry about anything else (cf. the story of Kanyemba on page 57). But Mwalunga was an outsider and so had a far greater freedom of action; and he seems to have had followers of his own.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 F317 Ngonde F317

173
643

Kyungu his son. Mwalunge approached the nobles and said that if they killed either his father or any of his brothers then he would kill them all. And thus it was that the chiefs of Ngonde increased so greatly. But as for killing the Kyungu, the nobles did so in spite of Mwalunge's threats! And when Mwangonde succeeded, the chiefs of Ngonde came again to the nobles and forbade them to kill his sons; so thus the chiefs of Ngolonge increased also. And yet, seeing that there were only a few sons of Mwangonde and many daughters we think that, after all, some of his sons were put away! When one of Mwangonde's wives whose father was an important man bore a son, then they would let him live, fearing lest the chiefs of Ngonde be told; but if her father was a man of no great weight then they would kill her son."

On the wives of Magomo Kanyumbe begot Mwamungulwe, Kalumbe, Kilingwin, Mwabulambo and other sons too; while Mwangonde, when he grew up begot Kalonga, Mpeta, Mwamele, Mbonta and so on. The killing of the sons of Kyungu was, if not quite abandoned, at least limited; and from that time onwards the power of the nobles began to lessen.

There seems no reason to doubt the accuracy of this story, which is universally current in Ngonde to-day; and if we can accept it we have here one of those historical points at which chance circumstances have radically altered the customary behaviour of a group of people. Had Mwangonde not been saved by Malwa the line of Ngonde would have succeeded alone and finally* to the Kyungship, had Mwangonde been either when Magomo died it would not have succeeded at all; and in neither case would two royal houses have been set up. Had Kanyumbe not happened to have a determined and forceful son, the killing of the sons of Kyungu would not then have been stopped. But, as it was, the existence of the two lines of chiefs, together with the continual increase of both led to a transformation of Ngonde's constitution.

And there is another minor change which tradition traces to this same event. In the times of the early Kyungus, we are told, Katenga was the premier noble of Ngonde; but after his wife left him for Mwakumbole, without permit from his royal brother-in-law, he retired for a time from public life and Malwa, who soon afterwards gained fame as the saviour of the Ngolonge line, took his place. And Malwa is still the premier noble of Ngonde to-day.

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* But what of the line of the Kanyumbe? There is here an old constitutional principle involved which we did not sufficiently study. It appears that once a son of the Kyungu had fled from succession his descendants could never succeed again. (cf. The case of Kalonga pp. 37-8). But this principle no longer operates to-day, for both the premier Kyungu and his predecessor were sons of Mwamba, who himself fled from the succession (cf. p. 67).

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

173
643

(c) *THE MIDDLE KYUNGUS: CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE.*

When Kasyombe died Mwenengubwe succeeded, for Mwangonde, though now grown up, was still living in Butambo. Mwenengubwe was the eldest of those sons whom Kasyombe had begotten on the wives of Magemo, and he began that process of gradual emergence from religious seclusion which the present Kyungu has completed. The early Kyungus had all lived on the top of Mbande, cut off from the outside world not only by their enclosure but also by the steep sides of the hill; Mwenengubwe and his successors lived in the plain at its foot, by the Lukulu River. This change appears to have been connected with the unsuccessful effort of the chiefs of Ngusa to control the killing of the Kyungus. Three of the present nobles of Ngonde took me up Mbande and explained on the way: "At first all the Kyungus were installed on the summit of the hill, but Mwenengubwe came down to the valley; Kasyombe was the last to live on the summit. The Kyungus came down to the valley because they were afraid to live on the hill, they thought that no Kyungu ever lived long on Mbande, always they died quite soon. And so, after Mwenengubwe had come down from the hill, they installed his successors in the valley, in the house of the Kyungu." But still they lived at Mbande in the midst of the nobles of Ngonde, and still their houses were surrounded with an enclosure that only the nobles of Ngonde might freely enter.

On the death of Mwenengubwe, Mwangonde succeeded.[1] From now onwards the traditions of Ngonde are full of warfare, civil and tribal; but more important than the wars themselves are the accompanying constitutional and commercial changes of which we get occasional glimpses.

173
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439

About this time the direction of the trade in ivory changed. The present Kyungu told us: "Later, after the first Kyungus, Mwangonde and his successors used to exchange the ivory with Marabi who came from across the lake; the men of Mweia rowed them across. These traders brought cloths, red and white and dark cloths. But when the first Kyungu arrived in Ngonde there was no trade-route across the lake at all." And one of the Kyungus about this time is said to have "struck the lake and walked over to Mweia to marry a woman, Mapunda." And the present Kyungu told us that, besides the trade with these Marabi, there had also been trade with the men of Mweia

[1] "When Kasyombe died Mwenengubwe inherited the position of Kyungu. Mwangonde refused it and continued living with his mother's family in Butambo. But the nobles discussed together and decided it was not fitting that Mwangonde should live in another country and they went to invite him back. He agreed to come; at first he only paid a short visit to Ngonde and went back again, but the second time he came and stayed. So when Mwenengubwe died they set Mwangonde on Mbande."

6:Wilson E-5 (1956-1958)1959 F317 Ngonde F317

themselves, etc. with the Kisi. With the people of Mwala they exchanged cows for hoes. And from the Kisi also they got hoes, which the Kisi in their turn had got in exchange from the Kings.

Then, during the reigns of Mwangonde and his successors "the sons of the Kyungu" began more and more to displace the territorial nobles as rulers of the various districts of the Ngonde plain. They became hereditary chiefs (*amapofyale*), each of whom was succeeded by two or more sons, who divided his country and tried to extend it. And thus the number of ruling chiefs now began to increase at a great rate. Each of the territorial nobles, on the other hand, was only succeeded by a single heir. Houses of chiefs were set up and a new hierarchy appeared, for the senior chief in each house ranked as the "father" of his juniors. The name of the founder of each house was perpetuated as a hereditary title borne by each head of that house in turn. Thus to-day we find in the Ngonde plain the house of the Kasambas, (or Mwenitetes),[1] the house of the Kalungas, the house of the Mwakasungulas and so on, and, among the chiefs of Ngoma, the house of the Mwalongas, the house of the Mwangulubwes, the house of the Kalombas, the house of the Kilapulas and so on. The heads of these houses were the great chiefs of Ngonde, subordinate to the Kyungu and each with a number of junior chiefs traditionally subordinate to him. Most of these great titles can be traced back to some important son either of Mwangonde or of Kanyombe; but in some cases junior branches also have acquired sufficient importance to be distinguished by hereditary titles which are borne by their heads[2]. Whenever the bearer of one of these great titles became the Kyungu, his old title was at once taken by a successor in his house.

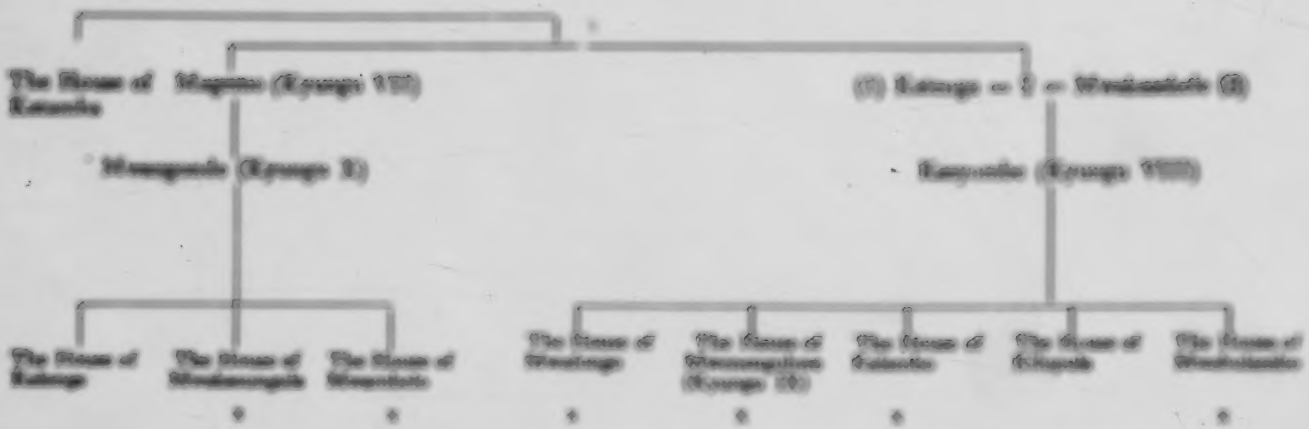
The chiefs supplanted the territorial nobles and took their subjects for their own in this way: "A great many territorial nobles have lost their power, for the Kyungus were in the habit of sending their sons to build with them in their countries. A Kyungu would send one of his sons (*i.e.* a chief) to a certain noble saying 'I send this your son to build with you, his father'—for the nobles were called 'father' by the sons of the Kyungu—, so the noble would welcome him. But in after years the people would give their affection to the son of the Kyungu and the noble would lose his power. And yet, even so, in the old days the two of them, chief and noble, would remain on friendly terms." .... "Some of the nobles lost their power through the cunning of the chiefs. For example the noble Mwenifumbo used to have a country of his own,

[1] This house, as we have seen, dates from the early period.
[2] The first Maleme, for instance, was a son of Mwakasungula, the first Kajoni of Mwangulubwe.

[text continues on p. 21]

THE TWO ROYAL LINES (MIDDLE PERIOD).

THE EARLY KYONGIO



* = Houses which actually provided Kyongos in the middle period.

6-Wilson E-6 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

but then to one given a young chief, Mwakijele, to look after as a child. The father of Mwakijele (who was not the Kyungu) asked Mwaulimbo to bring him up; but then when he grew up he became the ruler of the country.[1] And others lost their power to young chiefs who had married their daughters and then come to live near them.

Now all informants agree on three points: Firstly that it was the prestige of the royal blood which was responsible for this loss of power, secondly that the process was a gradual one and thirdly that the chiefs and the displaced nobles generally continued to live together as amicable terms. "The people gave their affection to the son of the Kyungu," but not all at once; some men or few would continue to regard themselves as the noble's men while others looked more to the chief. The noble acquiesced in this process and became in the end but the most important and respected commoner of the new chiefdom. For the chiefs apparently always treated such nobles with the greatest consideration, continued to call them "father" and to defer to their advice. The nobles retained all their religious functions and their right to participate in the selection of Kyungus and great chiefs, while their own tribe continued to be herded on with due ceremony to their enclosures. All that they lost was leadership in war, the power of requisitioning food, together with the main responsibility for feasting the common people, and the formal position of chief justice. But in actual fact a noble's opinion on a law case was probably seldom disposed by the chief who had asked for it.

We have already suggested that during this middle period the balance of secular power between the nobles of Ngonde and the divine Kyungu himself began to change, and we have noted his descent from Mbande and the stopping of the killing of his sons as individual examples of this. But the nobles of Ngonde still had the real power at Mbande: "they alone conversed with the Kyungu; no one else saw him except when they went in to make obeisance. All orders came from them. Even with the mamas, the wives of the Kyungu, it was the nobles of Ngonde who put each one into the house of the Kyungu for a week at a time and then took her out and put in another. No one else built their houses near the Kyungu except these nobles (and their own immediate followers.)"

Such incidents as the going to war of Kyungu Mwakamongola, and the abandonment of the custom of building an enclosure (ulupaso) in the reign of Mwaulimbo[2] were significant in the light of modern developments; but we cannot be sure that any very radical constitutional change would

[1] Vide infra pp. 56-8.

6:Wilson.E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

[73] [72] [56] commonly have followed from them, had modern conditions been different. The evidence is inconclusive.

[545] [682] [622] Now are all territorial nobles in the Ngonde plain have been supplanted by "the sons of the Kyungu" even to-day; while in the hills inland they have mostly retained their power. And so in discussing the political system of Ngonde under the middle Kyungus, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between four different kinds of political unit: (1) the chieftdoms in the plain, each ruled by a hereditary chief related to the Kyungu; (2) the fiefs (if I may adapt this word from a feudal to a primitive context) in the plain, ruled by hereditary nobles unrelated to the Kyungu; (3) the fiefs in the hills inland, also ruled by hereditary nobles, but differing in many ways from the fiefs in the plain, and (4) the chieftdoms of the houses of Nyondo and Karonga in the hills.

[682] [622] This paper is mainly concerned with chieftdoms and fiefs of the plain. There each of the chieftdoms consisted, as among the Nyakyusa, of a group of age-villages, older and younger men living apart with their own contemporaries. At the head of each village was a headman, or great-commoner (*ulipwa*) chosen for life from among the villagers by the chief and the great-commoners (*amapwa*) of the senior villages of the chieftdom. Except in the case of very small chieftdoms each chief was assisted by two or more sons who divided the villages among them. The transference of power from the old chief to his sons normally began in his lifetime at the "coming out" (*umusoke*) when they were formally shown to the country as chiefs and magically treated. The constitution of every chieftdom was that of limited monarchy, for the chief was dependent upon his great-commoners, who advised and, in many ways, controlled him. In the status of chief and great-commoners religious elements played an important part.

[682] [622] [683] [546] But, whereas among the Nyakyusa each chieftdom, save the very small ones, was, in secular matters, quite independent of its neighbours and each chief was a sovereign, in Ngonde, on the other hand, the wealth of the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde made them the apex of a political hierarchy. And thus, while among the Nyakyusa the senior of two brother chiefs could only command his junior in religious matters, when they sacrificed to their common father's spirit, in Ngonde he could ceremonially command him in other ways also, he could, for example, summon him to war or to law,[1] and he had a certain slight judicial authority.[2] Of two brother chiefs the junior was subordinate to the senior; in each of the great houses all other chiefs were subordinate to the head of the house, the great chief with a hereditary title;

[1] Vide infra sections 4 and 6.
[2] Vide infra section 5.

[text continues on p. 24]

6:Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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the great chiefs themselves were subordinate to Kyungu. But every ruling chief right up the scale, except the Kyungu himself, had also his own great-commoners and people directly subordinate to him. Moreover the subordination of some chiefs to others and of all to Mbande was a very different thing from the subordination of authorities in a civilized state. It was still above all a religious and ceremonial subordination, but in matters of secular justice and administration there was a very large measure of local autonomy.

Within the chiefdom the organization of families and villages was more or less[2] the same as that described in the first paper of this series, and need not be further described here.

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Among the fefs of the plain there was another hierarchy, depending not upon seniority of birth but upon priority of arrival in Ngonde. For each important immigrant who entered the country with followers of his own went first to an already established territorial noble, not straight to Mbande; and it was the already established noble, who then acted as his sponsor, took him to Mbande and told the nobles of Ngonde and the Kyungu of his request for land. The normal procedure then was for the nobles of Ngonde to be sent by the Kyungu to arrange with his sponsor where to settle him. And thereafter he ranked, at least for ceremonial purposes, as his sponsor's junior. Thus the territorial noble Kanyanda was junior to his sponsor Mwanakibuta, and so on. But no ruling noble was subordinate to any chief save the Kyungu. The nobles, both territorial and of Ngonde, describe themselves as "the great-commoners (*amafumu*) of the Kyungu," likening the relationship of the fefs and the Kyungu to that of the villages of a single chiefdom and their chief.

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The organization of each single fief seems to have resembled in many ways that of a small chiefdom, each was divided into at least two age-villages, so that old men and their sons should live separately; for it was taboo in all the Ngonde plain, as among the Nyakyusa, for father and daughter-in-law ever to meet. Kinship, however, was more emphasized as a reason for living together than in the chiefdoms, and we are told that the inhabitants of the fefs were usually related, either as kinsmen or affines, to the territorial noble concerned; while the age-villages of a fief had no great-commoners at their head. Otherwise the customs which obtained in the plain, both in the fefs and the chiefdoms, were, on the whole, homogeneous.

Each of the nobles of Ngonde had a few subject commoners of his own living at Mbande with him, divided up into two age-villages; as

[2] The slightly different terminology denotes certain differences in the system of land-tenure of Ngonde and of the Nyakyusa, but of these we have made no study.

6:Wilson E-6 (1934-1938)1929 FN17 Nguonde FN17

help. Mwakaungula led the forces of Ngonde and was the hero of the war; he defeated the Bemba and killed Kyungula, returning to Ngonde with a host of Bemba captives who were there enslaved.[1]

173

173
173

Mbowa and Mwamba Kyungas

Line of Ngulunga.	*Line of Ngoma.*
Magoma.	
	Kaiyonda.
	Mwaungulwa.
Mwaungonde.	
Mwakaungula.	
Mwambelo.	
	Gwa Sapati.
	Mwalunga.
(The European series 1877).	
	Mwalulambo (deposed 1894).
Mwakalunga (1894-1906).	
Mwangulube (1906-1952).	
Peter (the reigning Kyunga).	

When Mwaungonde died Mwakaungula was taken as the Kyunga, but not until Kalunga had refused the position for himself. The first holder of the name "Kalunga," as we have seen, had been killed in civil war. But after his death one of his younger half-brothers, Mbowa (or Kanyigi), inherited his name and his wives. Now, as the first Kalunga had been the senior son of Mwaungonde, so Mbowa, by inheriting from him, became the senior in his turn. Though much younger than Mwakaungula he ranked above him. But when the nobles of Ngonde tried to install him as the Kyunga "he himself refused the position, he smeared ash on his body and refused, he forswore the position saying 'I do not desire the name of Kyunga; my brother Mwakaungula here was our father's companion for many years and all the medicines of chieftainship are in his possession; how is it that you take me instead

173

[1] *Bemba tradition.* The present Bemba chief Mwamba told me that this campaign took place in the reign of the Citimukulu Cepela. Cepela did not himself go to fight but his brother, Mwamba, did and was defeated by the men of Ngonde. He died of his wounds on his way home.

It thus appears that the country of Malanda was then just on the boundary between the Bemba sphere of influence and that of Ngonde.

6:Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1939 F3017 Ngonde F3017

Mwanfuti, younger brother of Mwakasungula, succeeded and abandoning the enclosure at Wimalo, went to live by the lake shore.[1] And so yet another step was taken from the traditional religious seclusion. His successors returned to Wimalo; but the custom of building an enclosure round the houses of the Kyungu was not resumed. 173

In his reign Mwaitilitwa, chief of the east tribe to the south of Ngonde, sought aid against the Ngoni and the men of Ngonde responded and won a battle. But the Ngoni then replied with another night raid in which they found Mwanfuti alone in his house and killed him and returned home. Another attack followed before a new Kyungu had been installed, but it was repulsed, "for this time they had come by day!"

"And then the nobles of Ngonde made Gwa Sapani Kyungu; he was a son of Kalambo, a chief of Ngonde; for they said that, as so many of the chiefs of Ngolonge had been killed by the Ngoni, they would now take one of their number again as the Kyungu." And now at last Ngonde submitted to the Ngoni. Gwa Sapani, with the concurrence of all the chiefs and all the nobles save one[2] sent a tusk of ivory to the Ngoni chief Mtwalo. "And from that time forwards the Ngoni never fought with us again."

A few years later, in 1877, after Gwa Sapani had died and been succeeded by Mwalonge, the Europeans first visited Ngonde. Arab slave traders established themselves there about the same time, and with the struggle between the two races for the possession of Ngonde the modern period begins. 175

2. *RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

The traditional status of the Kyungu had in part a religious basis.[3] The ruling Kyungu and the spirits of his dead predecessors were believed to form one divine company, the anger of any one of whom had terrible effects: while in his own flesh and in some of his possessions magical power was believed to reside. But the Kyungu was not alone in his religious potency, he was but the greatest of many. The nobles of Ngonde and the territorial nobles, the chiefs both great and small, professional rainmakers and doctors, the great-commoners of the villages, heads of families and even ordinary men and women—all alike were believed to have some access to, some dealings with divine or 643 769 781

[1] These nobles of Ngonde, in recounting this story, maintained that Mwanfuti was mad.

[2] He was Mwaninongo, whose story is omitted here for lack of space.

[3] As this paper is concerned only with political institutions no full analysis of the tribal religions of Ngonde is here attempted, only those aspects of it are dealt with which have political significance.

693 731 789 magical powers. And the faith alike in ancestors and in witchcraft gave to every group of subjects a religious hold over their rulers.

(c) THE TRADITIONAL ELEMENT

693 731 789 778 Though the early Kyungas had lived on the stony top of Mbande some of them had been buried there, for "the ground was too hard to dig graves in." They and their successors were all buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungas who is buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. Thus Kyungs Mwangonde is referred to as "He of Devils," Kyungs Wankumangala as "He of Ignis," and so on.

693 731 787 782 Now drought and widespread sickness were believed to be caused by the anger either of some dead Kyungs or of the living one. "In time of drought they (the nobles of Ngonde) would go to a diviner to enquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the names of the sacred groves of the Kyungas in turn and he would tell them that it was so and so. So they would tell the (living) Kyungs. And he would give them either a bull or a sheep, together with some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own house, one of the pots which were continually brought by his people as tribute.[8] And he would give them some flour and some cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove. Now the diviner would have told them that he (the dead Kyungs) was angry because they had omitted (for so long) to build his house. So they would begin by building his house in the grove, they would build a miniature hut with rafters.[9] Now they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the tree they would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fix some of the pieces to the house in the grove—an action which they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And, finally, they would pour out (some of) the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a house in the grove of the Kyungs whom the diviner had mentioned.

693 731 787 "But occasionally if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the Kyungs, they concluded that it was the living Kyungs himself who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the names of the dead Kyungs, but he would refuse to accept any of them: 'No—no.'

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[8] Vide infra section 4.

[9] This is the custom traditional in the sacred groves of all important chiefs, both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa. We have seen it done among the Nyakyusa. The hut which we saw built was between two and three feet high.

6-Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Nguzu FN17

And at length he would tell them that it was the living Kyungu who was angry because so and so had insulted him. Then there would be no sacrifice in the grove at all, but the nobles of Ngonde would go to the one who had insulted the Kyungu and charge him with it, asking him what he meant by thus killing them all, would not the whole land starve! And so the wrongdoer would take a cow to the Kyungu who, thereupon, would address the nobles of Ngonde, saying: 'If it was my anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been some one (of the dead Kyungus) whom you forgot to ask about.' And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again!

"If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would; and then the diviner would tell them that it was so and so (one of the dead Kyungus), and they would go and sacrifice at his grave."

Thus the belief in the power of the dead Kyungus, a power in which their living successor participated, was one of the factors of the central political institutions of Ngonde. The Kyungu did not himself sacrifice in the sacred groves but the nobles of Ngonde did so, with materials provided by him, and from these sacrifices the whole plain was believed to benefit. While to insult the Kyungu was not only reasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. And we have already seen, in the story of Mwakaungule's return from exile,[3] that other prominent members of the royal family also were believed to share this power.

The absence of central political institutions among the Nyakyusa was, as we shall see, mainly due to economic causes; but in part also this difference can be traced to the climatic difference acting upon similar religious faiths. The Nyakyusa had in the Lwembes, the hereditary chiefs of Lubaga, a line of religious paramounts. Chiefs from all over the district sent gifts to them to ask for health and rain. That they never achieved any secular paramountcy at all was mainly because they were poor. But the difference of rainfall was important too. Droughts in Ngonde occurred frequently, and each one made the people remember their Kyungu's power. North of the Songwe droughts were rare and slight.

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[3] p. 27.

6 Wilson E-6 (1934-1938) 1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 769 778 Not wine rain and health the only blessings which were sought in the sacred grove round Mbande, general fertility, the peace of the country, the absence of rats and the success of the ivory trade were believed to depend in part on the favour of the dead Kyungas. And we have a little evidence that some of these other blessings also were believed to be withheld by the anger of a living Kyungu.

The religious powers of dead and living Kyungas, however, were only believed to be effective in the Ngonde plain; the fate of the hills, certainly, and, as far as we know, the chiefdoms of the Nyondwe and Kamanga also, were unaffected by them. And this fact is correlated with the slighter secular hold which Mbande had over the hills as compared with the plain.

769 776 Two notable religious rituals of the plain must now be mentioned. It was customary, first, to clear out the ashes (*ubugole ubhungu*) each year after the break of the rains. In traditional belief the spirits of the ancestors, whether of chiefs or of commoners, were closely associated with the fires in the houses of their descendants; and so it was only by clearing out the old fires regularly that the spirits and their potential anger could be driven away. Every religious ritual which deals with the ancestors, whether in Ngonde or among the Nyakyusa, has the function of driving them away. For, while the Christians believe that continued communion with God may be a blessed state, the pagans in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa believe that continued communion with the ancestral spirits is always terrible and dangerous; prophecy may flow from it, but if the communion is not broken, if it continues too long, then evil will result; and prophecy is nearly always prophecy of evil. In pagan belief the spirits of the dead come constantly to "bread" on man and his works and have constantly to be satisfied and driven away by ritual.

[767] "Always they used to clear-out the ashes at the new year, at the first hoeing, at the break of the rains in December. They feared that death and famine would spread through the land if they continued living with the old fires, that the spirits in the ground, both the spirits of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry; let them drive the spirits away and hoe in peace. They always remembered to do so each new year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually, they never forgot. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to clear out the ashes; and then they would hoe in peace. And at other times too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the ashes again."

The nobles of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave the order to clear out the ashes; messages were sent to the great chiefs and

6:Wilson E-6 (1926-1928)1929 FN17 Ngonde FN17

the senior territorial nobles of the plain, and they told their juniors. A sacrifice was made in one of the sacred groves of the Kyungu and all fires in the whole Ngonde plain were put out. And then "all the chiefs from every country near Mbande and the nobles and all the great-commoners and all the ordinary men and the women too went to Kyimbwa." At Kyimbwa, which is a cross-roads in the bush, they threw away the ashes of their old fires; while those few people who could not get to Kyimbwa threw them away near their own houses on the same day as the others. At Kyimbwa new fire was made with fire-sticks by the nobles of Ngonde and distributed to the whole plain in order. Great chiefs and senior nobles took it first and passed it to their juniors, chiefs passed to great-commoners, and in each group the common people got it from their own ruling noble or their own great-commoner.

And then, later in the year when the first maize and the first pumpkin leaves were ready to eat, an elaborate first-fruit ceremony was carried out. The first-fruits were offered by the nobles of Ngonde in the grove of the previous Kyungu, the one who had last died. "Then the great chiefs would do as now—Kalonga, Mwakasungula, Mwamlala, Karumba and the chiefs of Ngoma also, each in his own sacred grove (*i.e.* at the grove of his own predecessor in the title). . . . . And then after them everyone, both chiefs and people, each at his father's grave. All offered first-fruits to their own spirits. And finally they would eat themselves, each with his chief wife. But beforehand they would not eat for fear of angering the spirits."

These two rituals concerned the plain alone; the nobles and chiefs of the hills are said to have had similar rituals of their own but they were not synchronized with or dependent upon those of the plain.

In time of tribal war also the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde led the people in prayer. All chiefs and nobles were summoned from the plain and the great ones entered the Kyungu's house to receive their instructions: "When he had finished speaking he would tell them to go to pray. So they would leave his house and gather all together, all chiefs and men, and pray. The premier noble of Ngonde would begin, asking each of the sacred groves of the Kyungu in turn to bless them in the fight. And then the great chiefs would pray after them" (each addressing his own predecessors in his title). The territorial nobles did not pray, for it was the royal family alone whose spirits were then addressed. Here again it was the plain alone that was concerned.

Now this organization of religious ritual in the Ngonde plain was both a factor of and itself determined by the general political

G. Wilson E-5 (1936-1938) 1939 FN17 Nguonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ancestors. We shall see in later sections how many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions. But the reverse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular content at all, the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle were sent to Lubaga by the other chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and health; but the "clearing out of the ashes" was done by each chieftain separately; there was no general fire-drum ritual at all;[1] while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chieftain alone.

Besides the Kyungu the great chiefs of Ngonde also were believed to be able to avert local droughts and misfortunes in their districts by offerings to their own immediate ancestors; and the lesser chiefs likewise and the territorial nobles—each in his own little area. While among the territorial nobles, the original owners of the land had wider powers. It will be remembered that to them the first Kyungu is said to have given head-cloths and asked for their prayers. Sometimes people would prophesy future misfortune "at Kumbila", or "at Kalunu" or "at Ilumba," or would prophesy of present misfortunes that such was their source. Then the territorial noble concerned[2] would be formally visited by the nobles of Ngonde, and he and they together would offer sacrifice to his ancestors on behalf of all Ngonde.

And there also there were sacred lagoons near the lake—Ndiola, Kambwe, Kihondo, Malala and Kaindi. They were associated not with ancestral spirits at all but with a vaguely defined supreme deity named Mbumba. And beside them also prayers and sacrifices were made from time to time by the nobles of Ngonde.

Over these other spiritual powers we need not linger, save to notice one most significant fact. The participation by the Kyungu in the divinity of his ancestors was no isolated phenomenon in Ngonde. The head of every family in the country, whether of chiefs or commoners, was similarly placed; in his own family and, in the case of a chief or noble, in his own area too, he was both a priest and a demi-god; he dealt with the spirits and by virtue of his relation to them shared their powers; his anger could curse. The Kyungu were but the greatest of many divinities. And thus there was in theistic ritual a high degree of local and family autonomy; local or family misfortunes

[1] Particular people among the Nyakyusa carried it out; neighbouring chiefs, senior grass-cutters, prophets, and any person whose birth was held to be due to magical treatment of a previously barren woman. But only they.
[2] Mwene-Kumbila, Mwene-Kalunu, Mwene-Ilumba etc.

6 Wilson E-S (1936-1938)1939 FW17 Ngonde FW17

were dealt with by the local rulers or by the family-heads, not by the central authorities. It was only occasionally that general fears or misfortunes turned all men's thoughts together to Mbande.

Now the great-commoners of every chief were believed to have independent access to his ancestral spirits and this gave them a spiritual hold over him. If they compared him too unfavourably with his predecessors then, it was believed, those predecessors might hear and afflict him in various ways. And so it was also with the nobles of Ngonde and the reigning Kyungu. But as this belief was intimately linked with the belief in witchcraft it will be more conveniently analysed in that manner.[1]

(b) THE MAGICAL ELEMENT.

Magic (the belief that certain particular objects, events, words or actions, involving particular people in particular situations, possessed in themselves an extraordinary power) was an essential ingredient of the old pagan religion of Ngonde. White the greatest magical object in the country was, traditionally, the body of the Kyungu. And the fact that the central political authority of Ngonde was so largely vested in the nobles of Ngonde was due above all to their responsibility for controlling this magical object in the public interest.

If the Kyungu cut himself, and more particularly if his blood fell to the ground, then it was the duty of the nobles of Ngonde to kill him, lest the whole land be afflicted with disease; and if he was ill likewise. "They considered that if his blood fell to the ground that was his life falling. And they likened him to a god, considering it taboo for a god to be wounded; they thought that if his blood fell to the ground it would turn into a sickness and all the people would die. And so, when the Kyungu was wounded, they thought it best to put him out of the way and start afresh with a new one. They thought it taboo for him to have even the tiniest wound on his body. And it was equally taboo for him to fall ill; everyone else, it was believed, would fall ill too; it was better to put him out of the way so that the people should keep well."

In consequence of this belief elaborate precautions were taken to maintain the Kyungu's health. Sexual impurity was believed to be magically dangerous to health in many ways and so the Kyungu, above all men, must be guarded from it. It was not considered safe even for his own wives to cook his food, lest one of them touch it during a menstrual period, and so young boys who had not yet reached puberty

[1] Vide infra section 3 (c).

G. Wilson E.-G (1936-1939)939 F317 Ngonde F317

[illegible] confined to colonial. One of the reasons for killing most of his sons, as we have seen, was to lessen the danger of his wives committing adultery with them, for adultery was a magical cause of sickness. His wives themselves were jealously guarded.

There again a Kyungu might not wade across the river lest the act of doing so should magically bring a deluge of rain from heaven, he had always to be carried.

And the breath and the growing parts of a Kyungu's body—the hair and nails and the constantly replaced *mnyan* of his sons—were believed to be magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde plain. When he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was buried "with breath in his body"; their portions of his hair and nails and of his sons' *mnyan* were taken from him beforehand and buried later by the sublim of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This action was believed to "clean up the land, makes it rich and heavy and fertile, as it was when he himself lived in it."

Now the Lwembe of Lubaga had equally magical flesh, but the other chiefs of Ngonde and the Nyakyusa had not. They could wade across rivers, fall ill and be wounded without endangering their subjects. But of all alike the breath and the hair and nails had a magical importance. Every ruling chief in both areas had his nostrils stopped by his great-commoners when nearing death, while portions of his hair and nails[1] were taken from him when living and buried after his death in a special place. The hair and nails were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops. "You see these nails of yours," said the man who explained the symbolism to us, "if you cut them do they not grow again?" (They do.) "And where does their growth come from? Does it not come from within the body?" (It does.) "Well then that is the reason, the great-commoners take power of growth from the chief in the form of his nails and hair."

Besides his magical body the Kyungu had a host of magical possessions. There was the iron stool *Kisumbi* on which he was set at his accession; once he had sat upon it he could not flee the position or he would die. There was the drum *Mwambelwa* whose note was believed to be heard by the most distant of the Kyungu's subjects. When it was beaten "all the little nobles from afar off would hear and obey the commoners; they would all come together. Then we would tell them that so and so had not brought any ivory for a long time! Then they would come with tusks as tribute, to pay worship to the Kyungu." But sometimes the drum would refuse to sound and they would kill a

[1] We were only told about the nail reason in the case of the Kyungu.

6:Wilson E-6 (1936-1938)1939 F317 Ngonde F317

shrug over it; if it still refused they would kill a cow; and if it still refused then they would kill a human being, the child of a commoner.

Then there was *Malima*, a porous piece of iron "like a mouth organ," which the Kyungu used to make rain. If he held it up out of doors with its holes clear, so that he could see right through them, then it would be fine, but if he stopped up the holes and then held it up out of doors the sky would at once become overcast and rain would fall. And there were his wives tails set in horn handles, with medicine in the handles, which his people carried to war to give them victory; and his spear *Kamin*, and so on.

There is no sharp distinction in the pagan religion of Ngonde and the Nyakyusa between its magical and its theistic elements. Sometimes the magical, sometimes the theistic predominates, but often they are inextricably mixed. In the prayers and sacrifices to the ancestors magic enters at every turn: particular people, a particular place, particular materials and gestures, particular words are held to be essential to their success. Nor are the more permanent and obvious magical objects always free from divine associations. When we asked, for example, why the drum *Mumukelwa* had needed occasional human sacrifices to make it work properly we got this answer: "It was because their god[1] had given this drum to the Kyungu saying: 'I alone am war, there is none other war save me.' It (the human sacrifice) was like a prayer. The refusal of *Mumukelwa* to sound was like the prophetic fit that falls on people (from the spirits) commanding sacrifice (to the graves)." Or, again, it is clear from our evidence that the living Kyungu's power of causing a drought was believed to arise both from his relationship to the spirits and from his possession and use of *Malima* together. His magical body and possessions, being inherited from his predecessors, were part of his relationship to them.

Now one of the material facts which had magical significance in Ngonde was that of general social status. The magical powers of the Kyungu not only contributed to the general political authority of Mbande but were, in part, magically derived from it. Only the greatest in the land could possess the greatest magic without endangering his life. There were, for example, a number of chiefs' medicines (*ifwejile*), and if a chief used a medicine which was above his status then it was believed that, on meeting the Kyungu or some great chief, to whose

[1] The phrase "their god" (*Kyala yawe*) is normally used by pagans nowadays to mean the ancestral spirits, or some one among them. The term *Kyala*, which originally referred only to one of the most influential Nyakyusa spirits, has now been identified either with the Christian God or with divinity in general throughout all this area.

6:Wilson E-S (1936-1938)1939 FM17 Ngonde FM17

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statue is rightly belonged, he would at once fall down dead. And many stories are still told of such happenings in the past.

And besides this there was the fact that the Kyungu, being the richest man in Ngonde and in the most intimate contact with the ivory traders, could secure medicines from a distance, which had a greater reputation than local ones.

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But, as in the thetic aspect of the religion of Ngonde there was considerable local and family autonomy, so also was there in the magical aspect; and here there was individual autonomy also. Lesser chiefs had lesser magic than Mbande, but still it was magic. Ordinary chiefs, for instance, had magically filled calabashes which gave their people military success. And every individual could go to a doctor and exchange a little of his surplus food for magic. Success in love and hunting, in warfare and legal disputes, good crops and good health—all alike, it was believed, magic could give.

(c). THE ELEMENT OF WITCHCRAFT.

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Both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa it was believed that certain commensals had snakes in their stomachs which gave them the power of witchcraft (*uwalosi* or *uwangafi*) and among those who had this power were the great-commensals of every chieftain. Normally a ruling chief was spiritually protected by his great-commensals from the malicious attacks of other witches, but, if he did wrong, then the great-commensals, as it was held, would cease to protect him and join in the attack.

Now in many circumstances the great-commensals' power of witchcraft and the power of the chief's dead predecessors were believed to act together. The anger of witches and that of the ancestors were sharply distinguished in theory, but in practice they often coincided. The great-commensals, for example, not only had the power of bewitching their chief but also of appealing to his predecessors to punish him for wrong-doing; and on particular occasions they were often believed to do both at once.[2] And the nobles of Ngonde had similar powers in relation to the Kyungu.[3]

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[1] *Uwalosi* is normally used when the act of witchcraft is disapproved of and *uwangafi* when it is approved of by the speaker.

[2] A point of considerable theoretical interest is raised by the repeated statements of our best informant on these matters that it was because they were witches that the great-commensals had this power of influencing the chief's ancestors, that they went to the chief's ancestors in their capacity of witches and in the manner of witchcraft (i.e. by means of the snakes in their stomachs). But our evidence on this point is not yet conclusive.

[3] So we were told when we put the question; but it was never volunteered. It was the hold which the nobles of Ngonde had over the Kyungu in consequence of his magical flesh which was the more emphasized.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

These twin religious powers of the great-commoners in relation to their chief (or of the nobles of Ngonde in relation to the Kyungu) were important for the balance of the constitution, for they provided a most effective check upon the actions of the chiefs. If a chief kept within the bounds of constitutional usage then any illness that he had would be attributed by the diviners to some such cause, as the infidelity of his wives or the breach of a taboo; but if he broke some constitutional usage then that would be taken to be the cause of his next illness; the great-commoners, it would be held, were angry and so had made him ill.

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It is hardly necessary to stress the local and individual autonomy implicit in the faith in witchcraft. Not only were the great-commoners as a group believed to have an irresistible power through their witchcraft over their chief, but so were the great-commoner and the leading witches of every village believed to have an irresistible power over other individuals within that village. And in both cases their powers were strictly limited, save exceptionally, by the bounds of chiefdom or village. Moreover witches did not always act as a group, an individual witch might maliciously cause another individual to fall ill. In all this the political hierarchy was irrelevant. But it was not irrelevant in dealing with accusations of malicious witchcraft; there proof rested with the poison ordeal and a journey had to be made to a great chief or a leading noble.

4. *ECONOMIC ELEMENTS (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

We have suggested in the previous section that the traditional religious paramountcy of the Kyungu and his nobles of Ngonde was an important factor of their secular power. But comparison with the Nyakyusa shows us that their control of wealth was equally important. The religious paramountcy furnished a mould into which the stiffening stream of wealth could run and there be minted into the form of sovereignty. Much of the wealth which reached Mbande did not stay there; it was passed back piecemeal to the local rulers of Ngonde, stamped with the divine impress of the Kyungu.

(a) *THE INCOME OF MBANDE AND OTHER AUTHORITIES.*

Now the traditional income of Mbande consisted of ivory, food, labour, slaves and cattle. Of ivory the Kyungu had a semi-monopoly in the plain and received tribute from the territorial nobles in the hills. Food was brought to him by the chiefs and territorial nobles of the plain, who also, with their men, hoed his public gardens (*imilasa*). Slaves and cattle accrued to him from tribal wars and from his offending

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6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 652 subjects. The great bulk of this income was employed for public purposes, but no exact line can be drawn between his public and his personal expenditure[1].

643 651 224 "The right tusk of an elephant was called the royal, the left the common tusk. All royal tusks were the Kyungu's but common tusks belonged to the hunter who killed the elephant. Whenever a hunter here in the Ngonde plain killed an elephant he would take the royal tusk to his own chief (or noble) who would then tell him to bear it to the lord of the country, and so he would take it to the Kyungu. But in the distant hills the local ruler[2] would keep the royal tusks and so cheat the Kyungu. He might come to visit him from time to time, bringing two or three tusks only; and in that case the Kyungu would not claim the others from him. If, however, the Kyungu had heard that many elephants had been killed in so and so's country, and if no subsequent visit had been made to him, he would get angry and send a messenger, and then the territorial noble would come in haste to visit him. But very many tusks they stole and never brought." Whether the commoner from the plain who brought the ivory to Mbande received a gift from the Kyungu in return we do not know; he was not conducted into the sacred enclosure, and he left the tusk with the nobles of Ngonde. But the distant territorial nobles who brought ivory were royally entertained, and even entered the presence of the Kyungu.

Now the sanction for bringing to Mbande the royal tusks of the plain was a moral one, arising from religious faith. It was believed that any huntsman in the plain who had killed an elephant and kept both tusks, instead of taking the right to his own chief or noble and thence on to Mbande, would never kill another; for the spirits of the dead Kyungus would be angry and frustrate his best efforts. It was believed that this would be so even though the living authorities at Mbande had been successfully hoodwinked; it was impossible to hoodwink the dead.

But in the distant hills the sanction was entirely different. The Kyungu and his ancestors were only local divinities, they were only believed to control the fate of the plain. In the hills what was feared was military force. If Nthalile or Mwenewenya refused to obey a summons to Mbande then the Kyungu would order his sons, the chiefs, to go and "burn him out" for insolence[3]. The sanction of force, however, was not the only reason for their acquiescence; it was profit-

[1] No such line can be drawn in England either. We distinguish the King's Civil List from the rest of the budget, but then the state which His Majesty keeps has a public significance.
[2] i.e. the territorial noble.
[3] *Vide infra* section 5 (a).

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

able also for distant nobles to bring ivory to Mbande, since they were given in return valuable gifts of cloth which they could not easily get elsewhere. And besides this it is said that "they desired the Kyungu's favour and to have their importance recognised by him." 643 651 224

Of the tusks which were retained by the hunters in the plain a good many were bought up afterwards by the Kyungu or by the chiefs in return for cloths or cattle or slaves.

Food was brought both by the chiefs and the territorial nobles of the plain, either on their own initiative or in answer to a royal command; and sometimes the less distant nobles of the hills brought food also. Mwenemisuku, for example, was called upon for the beans for which his country is still famous to-day. But, as the following quotation shows, not all the food brought reached the personal possession of the Kyungu. 643 651

"In the old days the nobles of Ngonde had most cunning ways, they would send a message to some territorial noble by the lake to say that the Kyungu desired fish and he must bring him some. Whereupon the noble would bring maybe ten or twenty baskets of fish. He would bring it to the nobles of Ngonde, who would then go and inform the Kyungu that so and so had come bringing fish. And the Kyungu would bid them thank him and tell them to give him a hoe. They would do so and the visiting noble would go home. And then the nobles of Ngonde would bring two baskets of fish in to the Kyungu, dividing the remainder among themselves.

"So likewise they would send to Mwenemisuku for beans and to other nobles for maize or millet; and always they would tell Kyungu of these nobles' arrival; but he would never see what they had brought with them! Sometimes the Kyungu might tell them to send one away without any gift, to another he might give something, just as the fancy took him. But always the nobles of Ngonde would keep the bulk of what had been brought for themselves and bring a little of it only into Kyungu's house. When sending thus for food they sent the *valukuta* who were their messengers."

And the lesser authorities likewise, great chiefs, local chiefs and territorial nobles, took a certain tribute from their own subjects; they could not take the royal tusks, but they could and did take food. Every ruler in Ngonde (and also among the Nyakyusa) had the power of sending at need to any of his subjects and taking some food—bananas, milk, beer and so on. This power was correlated with the view that the local rulers, in relation to their people, were the ultimate owners of the land which their people used. And so also in the relation of the Kyungu with the local rulers, the view that he had given (or allowed them to retain) their land was correlated with the tribute of food.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 652 The gardens of the Kyungu were divided traditionally into public (*imilasa*) and private ones (*imigunda gya masano*). The produce of the first was mainly devoted to the entertainment of important guests—chiefs, territorial nobles and the ivory traders from over the lake. That of the second to the personal needs of the Kyungu and his household. 643 651 The public gardens were hoed and weeded by the great chiefs and the nobles of the Ngonde plain with their subordinates and followers, the private ones by the nobles of Ngonde with theirs.

The hoeing of his public gardens by the chiefs and nobles of the plain was as intimately connected with the religious status of the Kyungu as was the bringing of royal tusks to him, for the belief in his rain-making powers provided a moral sanction for it. Drought and disease, as we have seen, were often attributed to the displeasure of the living Kyungu; and the failure of some ruler to bring his people to work the public gardens was, so we were told, the most usual way of displeasing him. The wealth and the divinity of the Kyungu were inextricably linked. Nor without these public gardens could the lucrative ivory trade have been maintained. In the primitive world of Ngonde there were no "purely business relations;" tributaries and buyers alike had to be royally feasted.

643 651 565 622 In the hoeing of the public gardens the political hierarchy of Ngonde was made evident, for each great chief came separately to hoe, accompanied both by the local chiefs of his own house and by those territorial nobles who lived near him. At an appropriate time either the great chief or one of his noble neighbours would suggest going to Mbande to hoe, and the former would then summon all his local chiefs. But he could not summon the nobles; with them it was a polite arrangement between equals. "When they went to hoe for the Kyungu it might be a neighbouring noble and not the great chief at all who made the first suggestion; and then the two of them would go together with their followers. For the nobles are not subjects of the great chiefs but only of the Kyungu."

651 241 476 273 The main crop grown in the public gardens was millet (*amalesi*) for beer. And at some time during the year all the chiefs and nobles[1] who had brought men to hoe[2] them were summoned to taste "the beer of the *mulasa*." So we see that, in one aspect, the hoeing of the public gardens of the Kyungu was but an extension on a large scale of the

[1] It is clear from our notes that each chief and noble brought to this beer-drink some of his people; but it is not clear whether he brought all those who had worked or only the more important among them.

[2] I speak of "hoeing" and "men." It is fairly certain that the women also came to weed afterwards and that they participated in the beer. We omitted, however, to find this out.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

ordinary custom of hoeing parties which is still followed by every chief and commoner in this whole area. Every man, two or three times a year, invites his neighbours to hoe for him and rewards them with a beer-drink in the evening. Where the hoeing of the Kyungu's public gardens differed from this custom was in the religious sanction behind it and in its political organization.

After the local chiefs had finished the *mulasa* for the Kyungu they would next return and hoe a small garden for their great chief who had led them to Mbande. But in this the territorial nobles took no part. Such gardens were not called *milasa* and there was no distinction made between them and the great chief's private ones. For this custom also there was a moral sanction; for the great chiefs, we remember, also participated in divinity. "If his people forgot to hoe for Mwakasungula then perhaps a little local epidemic of some kind would break out and the diviners, when questioned, would attribute it to their forgetfulness. Or perhaps a prophetic fit would fall on some one and he would tell them to go and hoe (or they would rue it!)"

And, still lower in the hierarchy, among a group of chiefs who were half-brothers, the senior chief used sometimes to summon his juniors to bring their men and hoe; but "their acquiescence depended on their friendship for him"; it seems to have had no effective moral sanction.

The private gardens of the Kyungu were traditionally very small indeed, for the constant income of food from the plain made them all but unnecessary. Such as they were, they were worked by the people of Mbande, i.e. the nobles of Ngonde and their followers. The wives of the Kyungu lived like ladies and had all the normal work of a woman, including weeding, done for them.

The income of the Kyungu in slaves and cattle cannot be understood save in the context of judicial procedure and warfare with which we have not yet dealt[1].

The income of Mbande reached others besides the Kyungu and his wives. We have already seen how the nobles of Ngonde took their share of the food which was brought in; and some of it they gave to their messengers, the *valukuta*. Neither the nobles of Ngonde nor the messengers, according to the present Kyungu, used to have any large gardens of their own; they also were maintained at the public expense. And the nobles of Ngonde shared also in the proceeds of the ivory.

With the exception of a pile of tusks upon which the Kyungu slept, most of the ivory which reached Mbande, from the time of Mwangonde

[1] *Vide infra* sections 5 and 6.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

and beer; their position depended upon doing so. Up and down the hierarchy the stream of wealth travelled and this stream, in its ebb and flow, was the lifeblood of the old constitution. 652 431

(c) *THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE IVORY TRADE.*

Now it was the scarce and valuable cloths derived from the ivory trade which enabled Mbande to bind the subordinate chiefs and nobles to it in secular matters. Lubaga, lacking this wealth, had no such secular power. But it is very easy to exaggerate the secular power which Mbande had. Personal loyalty to the Kyungu and the great chiefs was enforced throughout Ngonde,[1] the nobles of Ngonde participated in the selection of territorial nobles and great chiefs,[2] tribal war was organized from Mbande,[3] but that was all. In everyday life the sovereignty of the local rulers was scarcely limited. Civil war was endemic in Ngonde,[4] and secular justice had no central organization[5]. 643 439

The central power of Mbande rested on the combination of divine kingship with wealth derived from the ivory-trade. But both in religious and economic matters there was a very high degree of local autonomy. We have already discussed the local autonomy in religion[6] and must now discuss it in the economic sphere.

The economic relations of men in the middle period of Ngonde's history were largely confined to the little local groups of chiefdom and fief. Subsistence agriculture was practised by each family, with the assistance of village neighbours and of a few friends and relatives who normally lived in the same chiefdom or fief. Marriage, with all the exchanges of cattle and food which marriage involved, was usually a local matter also; men only occasionally went beyond the chiefdom or the fief for their wives; while of the few specialised craftmen, such as smiths, a representative was usually to be found in each such local group. Economic links between the local groups existed: men moved from one chiefdom or fief to another leaving relatives behind, some marriages took place across the local boundaries, famous craftmen or doctors attracted clients from far afield. But these links were far fewer in number than those which obtained between the members of each separate local group. 433

And the ivory trade added little to the economic links between the local groups. It involved no tribal organization of elephant hunts, or anything of the kind; it touched the common people only slightly. Commoners and chiefs however did occasionally exchange tusks either 439

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[1] *Vide infra* 5 (a)
[2] *Vide infra* 5 (b)
[3] *Vide infra* 6 (b)
[4] *Vide infra* 6 (a)
[5] *Vide infra* 5 (c)
[6] *Vide supra* 3

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

687 profitable to them and it increased their sense of importance. And Mbande further maintains that the nobles of Ngonde themselves went to their funerals and took part in the selection of their successors.[1] But, as we did not travel to the hills to get their own account, the official account of Mbande must be accepted with caution.

The details of these punitive expeditions, however, were, in all except the occasion, similar to those of a tribal war and will be discussed in that context.

(b) *CONSTITUTIONAL LAW: SUCCESSION.*

643 But the punishment of traitors, insubordinate juniors and tribute-defaulters is only, as it were, the negative side of the maintenance of a constitution. It is also necessary to have some orderly machinery by which the places of authority can be filled. And Mbande derived part of its own authority from its constitutional functions in the appointment of its subordinates.

In the middle period, with which we are dealing, none of the great offices in Ngonde were filled in accordance with purely genealogical right. The Kyunguship and the great chiefdoms passed, on the death of their holders, to men constitutionally chosen from the appropriate families; they did not necessarily pass to the holders' own immediate heirs. And so it was also with the fiefs, both in the plain and the hills. In filling the local chiefdoms the strictly genealogical principle was more emphasised in theory but even there it was often in practice modified.

The Kyungu might be taken from any of the great houses of Ngonde which traced their descent either to Mwangonde or Kasyombe, with the one exception of the house of Kalonga. It was usual to take one of the great chiefs themselves, it was essential to take a generous ruling chief. The traditional procedure, which still continues, is as follows: "When a Kyungu dies it is the nobles of Ngonde, those who live near Kyungu, who initiate the discussion of a successor. They confer among themselves and agree that so and so of such and such a house is a suitable man and should be caught as the Kyungu. When they have thus conferred they then call a meeting of all the nobles (of the plain) and discuss the matter again with them. And then, when all are agreed, they go and tell Kalonga and discuss it all over again with him, because he is the senior of all." ("Has Kalonga the power of vetoing their agreed choice, then?" we asked). "Yes, if he considers that the man they suggest is unsuitable he says so and the discussion begins again. So then they catch the chosen man. In the old days they used to go with him to the hill Mbande but nowadays they go to the Government

[1] *Vide infra*, p. 54.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

and say 'This is the new Kyungu.' And when they make obeisance to Kyungu all the rest, both the chiefs and nobles, fall to the ground, but Kalonga alone remains seated, for he is the senior of the whole line." 643

In the succession to the great chiefdoms there was formerly a difference of procedure in the two royal lines, that of Ngelenge and that of Ngana. When a great chief of Ngelenge died, the nobles of Ngonde were sent by the Kyungu, both to the funeral and, later, to assist in the selection of a successor. "With the great chiefs of Ngelenge it is we, the nobles of Ngonde, who have always caught their successors. We catch Kalonga, Mwakasungula Mwambelo, Katamba (or Mwenitete) and Mwambungu.[1] But we have never gone to catch the successors of the lesser chiefs, nor used we to catch the chiefs of Ngana either, for they are of the female line.... When a great chief (of Ngelenge) has died we go and consult secretly with the great-commoners and then, if one of the dead man's immediate heirs is suitable we catch him, but if not we may pass them over and take someone else who is, it maybe, quite junior in that house but who entertains his people generously. Him we hit with a dry stick saying, we have you, you are M—(title of the great chief) now! .... The chosen man we set upon a stool; this is the ancient custom. We always (used to) select mature men for these positions, not just youths[2]." 622 565

"The great titles among the Ngana chiefs" we were told "are five: Mwenengubwe, Mwafongo, Kalambo, Kilupula and Mwabulambo. In the old days the nobles of Ngonde did not go to catch them, because they were only the female line; they would summon their great-commoners to Mbande and enquire who was to succeed and, when they had discussed it with them, tell them to go and catch the selected man to be the new chief. Then the great-commoners would return and discuss it with the other four great chiefs of Ngana, after which they would catch the chosen man." 554

The qualities looked for both in a Kyungu and a great chief were the same, with one exception: he had to be "a ruling chief.... elderly man....one who was respectful in his manner to the leading commoners.....a wise chief who knew how to feed his people." The emphasis on generosity in entertainment is most striking, every informant stresses it above all other qualities. Generosity and the possesion of abundance of food were the supreme traditional marks of a chief both in Ngonde, among the Nyakusa and in many other parts of Africa as 643 622 554

[1] The house of Mwambungu was originally a junior branch of that of Katamba.
[2] Mwenendeka and Kyabinga. Other informants make it clear that not only the nobles of Ngonde but the territorial nobles of the plain also participate in the selection of these great chiefs.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 well. The one additional qualification of a great chief was bravery in
622 war; the Kyungus never fought and so in their case bravery was less
554 important.

565 The succession of the nobles of Ngonde, of the territorial nobles of the plain and of the territorial nobles of the hills was similar to that of the great chiefs: the nobles of Ngonde themselves went and discussed with the leading men of the dead noble which member of his family to appoint in his place; and the immediate heirs were passed over if unsuitable.[1] But in the case of the territorial nobles the successor of the original noble sponsor or protégé of that family also took part in the discussions. It will be remembered that there was an, at least ceremonial, hierarchy among the territorial nobles, depending upon the priority of their arrival in Ngonde and the fact that a later arrival was always introduced at Mbande by some established noble and given land near him. And the relationship then established between the fiefs continued to manifest itself at every subsequent succession.

"Mwenelupembe was a Nyika but then he came here to Ngonde and the Kyungu gave him land by the lake. Then later Mwalugali came from Mwela, and Mwenelupembe told the Kyungu that he nad come; whereupon the Kyungu sent the nobles of Ngonde with Mwenelupembe to give him land. And still, when a Mwalugali dies it is Mwenelupembe and the nobles of Ngonde who discuss with his men the choice of a successor. Then, still later, Kasembe came to Mwalugali who told Mwenelupembe, who told the Kyungu. Kasembe came without men; he came from Mwela like Mwalugali but was not a kinsman of his. So the Kyungu said that Kasembe should build with Mwalugali. Then last of all came Songwe with some of his relatives, to Mwalugali. Now Songwe was a kinsman of Kasembe's. Mwalugali told Mwenelupembe who, in his turn, told the Kyungu.——And the Kyungu decided that as Songwe and Kasembe were kinsmen they should be given land together, but a little apart from Mwalugali. And still they are associated, all four, and when one of them dies the other three come to the funeral and together send the message to the Kyungu. And the three of them consult with the nobles of Ngonde about the choice of a successor; they, the nobles of Ngonde and the relatives of the dead noble consult together,

622 The succession to the ordinary local chiefdoms of Ngonde was, like

[1] Later in their conversation it was made clear, however, that, in the case of the more distant territorial nobles, both in the plain to the north and in the hills to the west, it was only to the successors of the most important ones that the nobles of Ngonde went in person. When a lesser noble died then the Kyungu would send to the great chief who was nearest (to Kilupula in the west and to Kalambo in the north), asking him to send men of his own to "catch" the successor.

6:Wilscn E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

that to the independent chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa, tied up with the custom of the "coming out" (*uvusoka*). In both areas the two senior sons of the two great wives of each ruling chief were publicly "brought out" about a generation after the "coming out" of their father; and from that time forwards the old chief went into semi-retirement while they divided his country between them. If it was a big country both of them would very likely be prosperous rulers; if it was not then one of them—the most generous rather than the senior—would probably in time attract the bulk of the people to him, leaving his half-brother little but the name of a chief. 622

Now both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa there was a certain tendency for other sons of an old chief, besides the two senior who were formally "brought out," to collect a few men round them and set up chiefdoms of their own. But it was in Ngonde that this tendency was most marked. And so today the chiefdoms of Ngonde are smaller than those of the Nyakyusa, for they have been far more split up. The reason for this difference appears to have lain in the very great prestige of Mbande, and so of all kinsmen of the Kyungu. There is a saying current in Ngonde: "Every son of the Kyungu is a chief." But no such saying is current among the Nyakyusa. And thus it has happened that often in Ngonde the men of an old chief have been divided up among four or five sons, not among two only; and the most successful of these four or five has not always been one of the two senior. If a junior son was a more generous feaster of men than his seniors he would die a greater chief than they, for many of their followers would leave them and join him. So we see that the formal passing over of a mean or poverty-stricken chief in favour of a richer or more generous junior, in the selection of the great chiefs, was but an extension of a principle which already worked less formally among the little local chiefs themselves. 622 554

And, further, it must be emphasized that the principles of succession to high office in Ngonde and the principles by which property is inherited there were, and still are, wholly distinct. When the immediate heir of a Kyungu or a great chief is passed over in the succession he does not thereby lose his inheritance. The wives and property of the dead man are indisputably his. Full-brothers are the first heirs and after them either sons or half-brothers, in accordance with different circumstances; while a sister's son can only inherit if all near patrilineal kinsmen are either still in their infancy or already dead. 428

The traditional laws of succession to the Kyunguship, the great chiefdoms and the fiefs of Ngonde thus present the student with a most interesting balance between different principles: heredity was modified 643 622 554

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 622 554 by election; the election was made by the central power and the leaders of the local populations in agreement; mature wisdom, courtesy and generosity in the use of wealth were all essential qualifications for office. In arranging the succession to the local chiefdoms, on the other hand, the central power of Mbande took no active part. All these chiefs were related to the Kyungu, who was informed of every "coming out" as a matter of form, but that was all. In the case of these local chiefs the hereditary principles were modified only by popular choice, acting gradually over a number of years.

(c) *COMMON LAW.*

692 We must beware of letting our civilized preconceptions blind us to the fact that, though some common law must be maintained in every society, it is not always necessary for it to be maintained by a central political authority. In the primitive world of Ngonde Mbande played little or no direct part in the maintenance of common law; the great chiefs, the local chiefs, the territorial nobles, the great-commoners of the villages played a larger part; but even they usually left whole areas of law untouched to be enforced by the common people among themselves. The laws of marriage for example, seem to have been normally enforced by the two families of each married couple concerned, with the advice and assistance of their neighbours.

In a primitive society a man is far more helplessly dependent upon his relatives, friends and neighbours than he is in our own. He cannot normally escape them, for his world is so small. And this fact enables them often to constrain him effectively without calling in the aid of any constituted political authority whatever. Moreover even when it is necessary to call in the aid of political authorities it is often sufficient to call in those that have a local jurisdiction only. Centralized judicial institutions, covering wide areas, are rare in primitive conditions, because widely extensive social relations are rare also. The modern insistence upon the judicial functions of paramount chiefs in Africa is necessitated by the magnitude and complexity of the modern civilized world, in which law *can* only be maintained by central authorities; but, in many areas at least, this insistence is something new. That many African paramount chiefs had some judicial functions in former times is, of course, a fact, but those functions were often less extensive than they are to-day.

In Ngonde, however, there was traditionally no central court at all in which ordinary men could either bring cases direct or appeal from the decisions of their local authorities. At Mbande only cases of treason and insubordination against the Kyungu or the great chiefs were dealt

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

721 642 a whole against the Bemba and the Ngoni, and that the poverty-stricken divinity of Lubaga was unable to do this for the Nyakyusa;[1] but neither of them gave their people any high degree of unity among themselves.

For, while in both cases the hierarchical organization touched the common people in its religious and ceremonial aspects, in neither case did it much affect their everyday actions. In Ngonde, as we have seen, the wealth of the Kyungu, which he derived from the ivory trade, enabled him and his nobles of Ngonde to bind the other chiefs and nobles to him, in a way that the Lwembe and his hereditary priests could not do across the Songwe. But this wealth only touched the common people slightly and did not much alter the economic organization of the local groups. Nor had Ngonde any other common activities save tribal wars, religious rituals, and the hoeing of the *milasa*.

Horizontal as well as vertical relations must bind social groups together if their autonomy is to be permanently overcome, and in Ngonde, no less than among the Nyakyusa, the horizontal relations between the local groups were weak; while the religious seclusion of the Kyungus weakened the vertical relations also. The constitution of Ngonde consisted of a number of small and primitive local groups, all firmly attached to Mbande, but each one capable of swinging free[2] and of breaking the tenuous horizontal bonds that joined them among themselves.

Now a distinction must be made between these civil wars and the tribal wars with the Bemba and Ngoni. The civil wars point us to the disorder of Ngonde, a disorder which existed in spite of unifying factors; the tribal wars point us to lack of order which was hardly opposed by any unifying factors at all. No doubt there were occasional peaceful contacts between Ngonde and these other tribes, but they were clearly very slight indeed.

7. *POLITICAL CEREMONIAL.*

643 644 In every relationship of life there is some ceremonial expression of feeling. And towards the Kyungus of the middle period their subjects frequently expressed the feelings of worship and terror appropriate to an irascible divinity.

"At Mbande the nobles of Ngonde would sit round praising the Kyungu; the drums went '*kindé! kindé!*' And they would praise him in antiphony: 'O Kyungu!—Great Father! Great Father!—

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[1] The Nyakyusa were attacked both by Sango and Ngoni but no tribal alliance was formed to meet these attacks.

[2] In the case of the chiefdoms this metaphor must be qualified by the intervention of the great chiefs between the local chiefdoms and Mbande, and the occasional unifying effect of this fact upon whole groups of chiefdoms.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Burier of men!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Mpeta![1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kiposa[1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kyabala![1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Striker and Stabber! —Great Father! Great Father!—O Mwenende![2]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Mpolombasambo![2]—Great Father! Great Father! —Dweller in the hot sun!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Fish-eater! O Banana-eater!—Great Father! Great Father!'" The general form of this praise-song was identical with that of the prayers in the sacred groves and so it is literally true to say that the nobles of Ngonde worshipped the living Kyungus. 643 644

But the majority of their subjects only worshipped from afar in fear and trembling. At Mbande no ordinary commoner was ever conducted into the sacred enclosure but only the territorial nobles and the elder chiefs, and they only occasionally; while when the Kyungu travelled through his country all men save the very oldest fled from his approach: "In former times we commoners never looked on the face of the Kyungu, we feared him far too much. When he journeyed through Ngonde we all used to flee from him, men, women and children; only the very oldest stayed to watch him as he came; and they would fall down and clap their hands in grateful worship."

Even in speech fearful circumlocutions were used to refer to his journeying—"The country is on the move"—"The great hill is moving"—"The mystery is coming." While it was taboo both for the old men who then stayed to see him and for those who entered the sacred enclosure, ever to greet him in the usual way. Falling down and clapping the hands was the only greeting for the Kyungu, never the ordinary "how-do-you-do?" From the nobles and great chiefs men did not flee; but the great chiefs, at least, were greeted by falling down and handclapping, not in the ordinary way. [195] [576]

From the wives of the Kyungu also men fled in terror, fearing lest they be compromised and thrown over the cliff, and this both added to the atmosphere of terror which surrounded him and was an expression of it.

On the other hand the various gifts of the Kyungu to his subjects were, in their ceremonial aspect, an expression of personal relationship to them, of paternal interest in them; and so also the tribute which they brought to him was, in its ceremonial aspect, an expression of filial respect. As in all primitive groups personal rather than impersonal relationships were dominant in the old Ngonde. The Kyungu was 643 602 [431]

[1] Names of early Kyungus.
[2] Archic words which I do not understand.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 602 "the father of all." All the chiefs were his kinsmen, many of the nobles were related to him by marriage, most of them were personally acquainted with him; and these facts were fundamental in the old constitution of Ngonde.

602 764 431 And so also the great chiefs and their subordinates, and the local rulers and their subjects were united by personal bonds which were given frequent ceremonial expression. At every funeral,[1] in particular, whether of chief, noble or commoner, ceremonial gifts of meat, beer, ordinary food, and other gifts also were made along the lines of the political hierarchy.

764 431 [763] On the death of a chief, a noble or any commoner who had, during his life, had many personal dealings with Mbande, a hen was sent to the Kyungu to announce the death, and the Kyungu then returned one of the imported cloths. When other prominent commoners or great-commoners died a hen was sent to the great chief of the area, who also returned an imported cloth. The deaths of ordinary commoners and less prominent great-commoners were announced only to the local ruler (chief or noble) without the gift of a hen, and no cloth was returned.

Similarly when cattle were killed at the funeral of any great-commoner or commoner a special portion of the meat of one beast (the breast and ribs) was always given to the local ruler.[2] In the case of a prominent commoner or great-commoner, however, a similar portion might be given to the great-chief as well. "Such an action was taken on the initiative of the family concerned, the great-chief never claimed it as of right." But if he himself came to the funeral it was normally done. The local rulers themselves, with their wives, attended the funerals of their subjects, and their wives brought food with them, to assist the family in its entertainment of the neighbours. And, finally, at the death of a local ruler or of one of his family, his subjects attended the funeral, bringing gifts of food.[3]

8. *THE CHRONICLE OF NGONDE COMPLETED* (1875-1937)

000 We have now finished our systematic analysis of the constitution of Ngonde as it was before the coming of the Europeans. We have had to rely largely on oral tradition and that by itself is always in some degree suspect. Nevertheless the richness and coherence of what is remembered to-day, together with the observable continuity of modern institutions

[1] This account excludes the funeral of the Kyungu, which was secretly carried out by the nobles of Ngonde.
[2] This was certainly so in the chiefdoms, evidence for the fiefs is here lacking.
[3] *Vide* Wilson "Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial."

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

breaks a law; they must be able, if necessary, to call in the aid of some central authority or he will escape them. Many men today, for instance, take wives whose homes are fifty miles or more from their own; and such marriages cannot possibly be regulated by the old primitive procedures. Moreover the rapid and radical changes in the content of law which are necessitated by modern conditions could not be worked out in detail by a number of independent courts without much confusion. And so in the Ngonde of to-day common law is maintained both by a centralized police system and by two central appeal courts, a lower one presided over by the Kyungu, a higher one by the District Commissioner.

178 692 [625]

A dispute which took place in 1935 well illustrates both the novelty of a central appeal court in Ngonde and the support which the Kyungu now receives from the Administration. And it also shows that the old rivalry between the lines of Ngelenge and Ngana still survives.

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The Kyungu in his new judicial capacity decided a land-dispute between two local chiefs of the house of "Sub-chief" Kilupula, who is now the most powerful, though not the senior, of the chiefs of Ngana. The Kyungu's decision reversed that of Kilupula, who then became angry. The chief who lost the case is reported to have said: "How dare the Kyungu come here and divide up our land among us? He knows nothing about it." And Kilupula is reported to have taken much the same view; the new judicial functions of the Kyungu were resented by him. And Mwafongo, another great chief of Ngana, sympathised with his resentment.

Then Kilupula and Mwafongo between them wrote a letter addressed to the Provincial Commissioner complaining of the Kyungu's conduct of this case. The District Commissioner, who received it first, called them in and advised them to burn it, but they insisted that it should be forwarded. But before this was done the Governor of Nayasaland arrived in Ngonde on tour and the two chiefs then asked that the letter should be handed to him. And so it was. Whereupon the Governor publicly reprimanded them for writing the letter and asked the Kyungu, before all the people, to decide how he would punish them, by fine or imprisonment. And the Kyungu fined them each £5.

No more striking expression could have been given of the Kyungu's present position as a trusted servant of the Government than this incident. While the fact that the dispute arose out of his new judicial functions and that it was two chiefs of Ngana who stood against him is most illuminating. The Kyungu has exchanged the support of his ancestors for that of the Nyasaland Government, his divinity for a magisterial office. This change, on the whole, has been made easily enough, but a certain temporary friction was inevitable. The chiefs of Ngana are the tradi-

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 643 692 tional rivals of those of Ngelenge ; most of the traditional reasons which led them to accept the supremacy of a Kyungu of the house of Ngelenge, whenever one was elected, have now ceased to influence them ; while they themselves, as we shall see in a moment, are now barred from the succession. Moreover the Kyungu's supremacy is now mainly operative in the unaccustomed sphere of law. And so a new reason for admitting that supremacy has had to be more forcibly presented to them than to the other rulers of Ngonde.

Once forcibly presented, however, the new reason seems to have been admitted in place of the old ones without much difficulty. For in 1936, the next year, Kilupula spontaneously led his people to the Kyungu and formally handed over a cow to him, thereby re-establishing friendship and mutual respect between the two of them. The dispute has ended in a manifest harmony.[1]

It is relevant to mention here that in the first five months of 1937 only one case was taken on appeal from the Kyungu's court to that of the District Commissioner.

178 565 622 624 692 The general status both of the great chiefs and of the local chiefs and nobles (the " Important " and " Village Headmen,") as also of the great-commoners, has been radically altered by the new legal conditions. Formerly these authorities were the mainstay of a primitive justice, but to-day they could not possibly enforce any legal decisions without the backing of the central Government. And this backing they do not have. Their sphere of influence is so small[2] that it has not been thought worth while to give them any formal judicial authority ; they are now mere arbitrators and all important cases go to court.

178 692 The modern constitution of Ngonde is thus more centralized than the old. The support of the Government is given to, and effective judicial power is concentrated in the hands of half a dozen men, with their own advisers. The new judicial functions of the Kyungu and the selected " Sub-chiefs " have, in fact, been transferred to them from the local rulers. Some such centralization was inevitable under modern conditions but the details are dependent upon the decisions of the Government.

(c) *PETER THE FORTUNATE.*

643 The wealth of the present Kyungu is not only due to his great personal abilities. For twenty years before his appointment as Regent (when he himself became the Kyungu in all but name) he was the full-

[1] This phrase begs no questions about private feelings, upon which we have no evidence.

[2] This is less true of the great chiefs (the " Important Headmen ") than of the rest ; and possibly an understanding of their status will alter the attitude of the Administration to them.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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brother of the reigning Kyungu, and this fact was half his opportunity. It was a tradition in Ngonde that Mbande was a centre of trade as well as of government, and so when Peter went into trade he had a great advantage over all his rivals. He tells with great gusto the story of how, in 1911 when the price of cotton[1] was high, two firms competed for the crop of the Ngonde plain—and the firm which employed him to buy it secured it all. For as soon as the people heard that the Kyungu's brother was buying cotton they all came to him to sell. And throughout his business career the same factor has operated.

From 1899 to 1912 Peter was a employee of European trading firms, from 1913 to 1918 he worked in partnership with them and from 1919 onwards he worked on his own. Now from 1914 to 1923 trade boomed and this fact was the other half of his opportunity. In 1913 his own capital was about £50, in 1923 it was well over £1,000, and he had four shops of his own.

After the war he employed men to hoe cotton for him also; and here he was greatly assisted by shrewd advice from European friends who watched the market. In 1920 the price of cotton suddenly dropped and he gained nothing, but he was advised to persevere and did so; and in the next two years he made a profit of £120. But in 1923 when the price of cotton dropped again he advisedly planted none.[2]

Now from 1923 onwards the pressure of his administrative duties began to drive him out of business and from 1924 he kept one shop only open. His savings he turned either into cattle or into burnt-brick houses for his wives and so passed safely through the world-wide slump. In 1937 he still had a herd of cattle worth about £400 and six brick houses, whose total cost was £155, together with a small stock of cloth in his one remaining shop. Figures have a purely relative significance, and these figures in Ngonde represent great wealth.[3]

The effect of this private fortune on the present constitution of Ngonde is very great indeed, for it enables the Kyungu to maintain a state comparable to that of his predecessors. Had he only his official salary to rely upon he could not do this and his authority and prestige in Ngonde would be less than they are. His successor and his heir will not be the same man; and it follows inescapably that, if the present rate of salary remains substantially unchanged and if other factors remain equal too, then his successor's authority and prestige will be less than his. [556]

[1] Native cotton planting was early encouraged in Ngonde.

[2] Soon afterwards a boll-weevil scare caused cotton-planting to be suspended in Ngonde for many years.

[3] Very few chiefs or commoners in Ngonde have more than £20 worth of stock in their herds. There are c. 30,000 cattle in Ngonde, which gives an average of c. 3 head per adult male, and 3 head are worth about £4.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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The present Kyungu has gardens hoed for him like his predecessors, and these gardens are still called *milasa*; but the subtraction of the religious element from this custom has radically altered both its form and its significance. Of old the *milasa* were hoed by the great chiefs and their people because they wanted rain, to-day they go on hoeing them because the Kyungu gives them cattle; of old they came of themselves fearing drought, to-day they come because he summons them; of old the produce of the *milasa* was mostly used for the entertainment of guests from a distance, to-day the produce is mostly turned into cash and used in other ways for the maintenance of the Kyungu's position in his own immediate district. But still, as of old, the custom brings him honour.

The late Kyungu, Mwangalaba, is said to have refused to accept this traditional service in the third year of his reign (1907), and certainly for twenty years afterwards no *milasa* were hoed. Mwangalaba is said to have been a timid man, but it is also possible that he was forced to realize that the mere hope of rain would not be sufficient to maintain the custom much longer in the new economic and religious conditions; he may have preferred to refuse his people's services rather than see them gradually refused to him. For he had nothing but the hope of rain to offer them; he was a poor man; he had neither the ivory of his predecessors nor the private fortune of his successor.

But in 1927 when Peter became Regent, the custom was revived on a new basis. The initiative apparently came from the great chiefs, six of whom in that year led their people to hoe *milasa* for Peter,[1] who, as soon as the hoeing was over, gave each of them a cow. Such a return gift was quite unprecedented. And now every year he sends a message to the three or four senior great chiefs, which they pass on to the others, telling them to come and hoe. One or two beasts are always given to each one who comes. In the first half of 1937 three great chiefs had brought their people to hoe *milasa* and to the two who had finished he had given respectively two bulls and a cow and a bull.

The bulk of the produce of the *milasa* he now sells to his people, by the basket, for money, using the money so obtained firstly to buy cattle to replace the ones given to the chiefs and secondly to buy cloths for funeral gifts. The figures which he gave us himself for the year 1927 showed that he was able in that year to replace the cattle expended and in addition to buy £3 or £4 worth of cloths, enough for about a dozen funerals.[2] The custom has become a mildy profitable business enterprise for the Kyungu.

[1] But no such gardens, I think, are now hoed for the great chiefs themselves. Our evidence is here incomplete.

[2] Expenditure on cattle for chiefs—£11 or £12. Proceeds of sale of *milasa* crop—£15. Profit spent on cloths—£3 or £4.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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But it is more than that, for its maintainance establishes a certain continuity of sentiment between present and past. By hoeing the Kyungu's *milasa* the people of Ngonde no longer do worship to an irascible divinity, but they still do honour to their greatest chief. "Where are our manners? Where is our respect?" asked the chief who, in 1927, took the initiative in hoeing Peter's *milasa*. "It seems almost as if they have died in us." And it is worth noting that the one who said this was Kajuni, a chief of Ngana.

Those who have read Richards on the Bemba constitution[1] will wonder how Peter manges at the same time to sell the produce of his *milasa* and also to provide the necessary entertainment for his leading men. The answer is twofold. Distances in Ngonde, in the first place are far shorter than among the Bemba, and the members of Peter's court can attend it regularly while sleeping and eating at home. The main traditional use of the *milasa* in Ngonde was to provide for the distant nobles who brought ivory and for the ivory traders themselves; but nowadays distant guests are rare. Nevertheless his subordinates and leading men are sometimes entertained lavishly by him, and his prestige in part depends upon this. Whether the necessary food and beer is actually taken from the *milasa* or from his private gardens I do not know, but the fact is unimportant as his private gardens are now big enough to provide the necessary surplus by themselves. For he is, in the second place, the possessor of about ten able-bodied wives who, no longer jealously secluded, work in his fields with their children; and he also hires labour to help them, paying for it out of his private fortune.

The nobles of Ngonde only rarely nowadays bring their people to hoe, for their relationship with the Kyungu is less profitable to them than it was in the days of the ivory trade, and the old organization of Mbande has decayed. With the removal of Peter to Bwiba the nobles of Ngonde and their followers began to scatter; only six of them now live at Mbande, with a mere handful of commoners. The other six are dispersed over the Ngonde plain, and only one of them[2] has any considerable personal following.

The requisitioning of food by the Kyungu and the local rulers has now almost ceased, for various reasons. Food can now be turned into cash by sale; and so men are far more reluctant to give their surplus to their rulers than before. Moreover I think that Government has disallowed the custom.[3]

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[1] *Op. cit.*
[2] Ngosi, who ranks as a "Headman" with a few subjects of his own.
[3] We did not investigate this point in Ngonde, but among the Nyakyusa it is certainly so.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 431 643

The present Kyungu maintains his position by a continual distribution of material gifts, as the Kyungus did in the past, but many of the details of this distribution are now altered. Besides the cattle which he now gives the great chiefs he also gives away far more funeral gifts than his predecessors. But on the other hand, the traditional distribution of cloth and ivory, after a visit from the ivory traders, and of slaves and cattle to those who brought tribute in food has now ceased. The traditional procedure of giving a newly elected noble a cloth still continues.

178 431 643 764

Previous Kyungus only sent cloths to the funerals of the most important of their subjects—chiefs, nobles, great-commoners and a few others. But Peter sends a cloth to nearly every funeral in his own half of the Ngonde plain ; though in Kilupula's half and in the hills he only sends cloths to the funerals of chiefs and nobles.

Nearly every family in his own half of the plain now sends a hen (worth 3d.) to Peter to announce a death and he returns a cloth (worth 2s, 3s. or 4s.) as a funeral gift. More important families (chiefs or rich great-commoners) from all over Ngonde send a bull-calf (worth maybe 7s. or 8s.) and to them he returns a cloth or blanket worth anything from 8s. to 12s. In 1934, a year with many deaths, he spent £57 on such funeral gifts and he can hardly have received more than a tenth of that value in hens and calves.

It is this custom above all which gives Peter the status of a paramount chief (as opposed to a subordinate official of the British Administration) in the Ngonde of to-day. And it is only his private fortune which makes it possible. The profits of the *milasa* never reach any such proportions, while, if he spent his official salary on funeral gifts, he would be quite unable to clothe himself, his wives and children.

Now the extension by Peter of the custom of sending cloths to funerals is significant both in relation to the new legal situation and to the present poverty of the other rulers of Ngonde. In his own portion of the plain Peter is the only Native judicial authority who can execute judgments, he is also the only Native ruler who can afford to keep up, on any large scale, the bountiful activities traditionally associated with chieftainship. And he has thus largely replaced the local rulers and the great chiefs, in relation to the common people, both as judge and as plutocrat.

Though we made no intensive study of the areas of the "Sub-chiefs," it is clear that they are not in a position to give any valuable gifts to their people, and that their prestige is in consequence far lower in their own areas than is the Kyungu's in his ; they are but subordinate magistrates with traditional affiliations. Moreover the Kyungu, both through his appeal court and through the sending of funeral gifts to chiefs and nobles is still able to maintain his paramount position in their areas.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Owing to the accident of Peter's private fortune the elements which nd to make the present constitution of Ngonde more autocratic and ore centralized than the old are, in his case alone, uncounteracted by e element of poverty. And his secular power is thus far greater in gonde than that of his predecessors. The nobles of Ngonde have lost e old religious holds over him, most of the subordinate rulers have lost eir judicial functions, he alone is considerably richer than the common eople. 178 642 643

Personal links between rulers, subordinates and subjects are not only aracteristic of primitive societies. In our own society these links ormally take the form of entertainment : The King, cabinet ministers, lonial governors, and the mayors of towns entertain the leading citizens, d their position in part depends upon doing so. And it is thus probable at personal economic links will still be necessary in the Ngonde of the ture, when its integration with world society is more complete. Their rm may change, but wealth will still have to be expended on their aintenance. Now there are only two ways of assuring that such links ill be maintained : either special allowances must be paid to the Native lers of Ngonde as they are paid to European rulers, to enable them to ep up their position in this way, or else rich men of public spirit must found to fill these offices. The second solution depends upon the istence of rich men and the constitutional possibility of giving them fice ; but it is very unlikely indeed that, in the near future, other Peters ill be available, who combine wealth both with royal blood and the neral eligibility for which the nobles look. Moreover it is worth oting here that quite soon the majority of the Native rulers of Ngonde ill probably be Christian monogamists and the old economic resources polygynous marriage will then no longer exist for them at all. The st solution, however, always remains practicable. 178 642

(d) *CONSTITUTIONAL LAW.*

It is generally accepted in Ngonde to-day that all future Kyungus ould be taken from the one house of Mwakasungula and all the three yungus since the deposition of Mwabulambo have been members of it. he nobles of Ngonde insist that the chiefs of Ngana were only taken in e middle period *faute de mieux*, when either no suitable chiefs of the gelenge line could be found, or it seemed to be dwindling dangerously der the onslaughts of the Ngoni. And the chiefs of Ngana accept this ct. Why the house of Mwambelo has fallen out of the succession I am t sure, but, as the house of Mwakasungula is now very numerous, I ppose it is not considered necessary to look beyond it. 178 643

But still the principle obtains of election within the house. From

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 643 Magemo to Mwakabanga no Kyungu has ever been succeeded by his own immediate heir; the choice of Peter as successor to Mwangalaba was unique, for he was his full brother and the heir to his property, but then Peter's ability and personal wealth were unique also. And in the case of the great chiefs and the nobles also the principle of election is still followed.

178 554 643 The grounds of election have slightly altered. Generosity and wealth are still important, but "wisdom in European ways" is now more looked for than maturity, and shortly before our visit a fairly young man was chosen as Mwakasungula. Bravery in war, of course, no longer matters.

178 565 622 The Administration have so far made little use of any great chiefs except the three who are now "Sub-chiefs;" but the others (the "Important Headmen") could be made into effective local rulers, if their salaries were raised. The ordinary chiefs and nobles (the "Village Headmen") are too numerous and have too few subjects to be very effective links in the chain of modern authority. But many of the great chiefs command the respect of considerable numbers. Moreover the fact that they are already being elected for their "wisdom in European ways" suggests that they will prove competent to deal with modern problems.

The traditional secular procedure of election is still followed, with some exceptions: the nobles of Ngonde are now sent by the Kyungu to participate in the "catching" of the great chiefs of Ngana[1] on the spot; the District Commissioner is informed of the result of every election; while the Kyungu himself, no longer secluded, takes a bigger share in making the choices than his predecessors very well could. And many of the religious elements of the traditional procedure, such as the setting of a new Kyungu on the iron stool *Kisumbi*, have fallen out of use.

The sending by Peter of the nobles of Ngonde to catch the chiefs of Ngana is a sign of the present centralization of power in his hands under Government. When we asked why the old custom had been changed we were told that it was "because now everything is under the control of Government and comes to the Kyungu."

The gradual ousting by chiefs of the few ruling territorial nobles who still remain in the plain has continued in modern times, but the novel conditions have complicated the process and seem to be checking it. A recent quarrel between Kajuni and Mwenelupembe illustrates this. The head of the house of Kajuni, which is a junior branch of the [578]

[1] I think this is also true of the less important territorial nobles of the hills, but am not sure.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

291
142
301
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THE KYUNGU, PETER

[opposite title page]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

two peoples are distinct. Their languages are not mutually intelligible and the Nyakyusa despise the Kinga as dirty in habit and obsequious in manner. There were two main invasions from BuKinga: (i) that of the 'sons of Lwembe' who settled south and east of Tukuyu, and (ii) that of the 'sons of Ngomale' (or Kukwe), who settled first at Kina below the northern crater of Rungwe volcano, and then at Kabale in the foothills to the south-east. Most of the present chiefs of the Nyakyusa belong to one or other of these two lineages, and the chiefs of Ngonde are claimed by both. The arrival of the chiefs of Lwembe's line may be fixed between 1560 and 1650, i.e. before the settlement at the Cape, but after the death of the first Christian martyr in what is now Rhodesia[1] and the 'sons of Ngomale' followed them some generations later (*vide infra*, genealogies pp. 3, 27; p. 94). Two of the invading heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, became 'divine kings' whose successors claimed spiritual authority over wide areas, and the heirs of Kyungu gradually acquired temporal power also.

About the first inhabitants of the Nyakyusa valley, the *abilema*, tradition is vague; however, it is clear that they were not one people, but consisted of small, scattered, independent groups, disparate in origin. Some were very early invaders from BuKinga, others came from near Lake Rukwa and were kin to the Bungu of the Rukwa plain. They occupied an almost empty country (as their name indicates) but they found pygmy hunters[2] in the Rungwe forests. The invaders themselves were primarily hunters and honey-gatherers, though some, at least, of them began to cultivate millet, beans, and pumpkins. One group of early inhabitants, the Penja, which was pushed into the north-west corner of the valley, has remained relatively discrete, though for the most part they have fused with the conquerors.

It is clear that nowhere were the invaders allowed to establish themselves as tyrants since, though their descendants rule over the various chiefdoms, their authority is strictly limited by the headmen of the villages who are invariably of commoner stock. Moreover, while the most sacred persons in the country are, or before the coming of the Europeans were, 'divine kings', descendants of the original heroes, chosen by each generation to become their

[1] In 1561, cf. G. M. Theal, *Records of South-East Africa*, vol. ii, p. 126.

[2] The quality of relations with the Pygmies is summed up in the ironical name for them 'Where did you see me?' (*Umbwenekugu?*) The tale is that they were very sensitive about their size and the first question on meeting a Nyakyusa was always: 'Where did you see me?' The only safe reply was: 'Far, far away!'

9: Wilson
173
●643

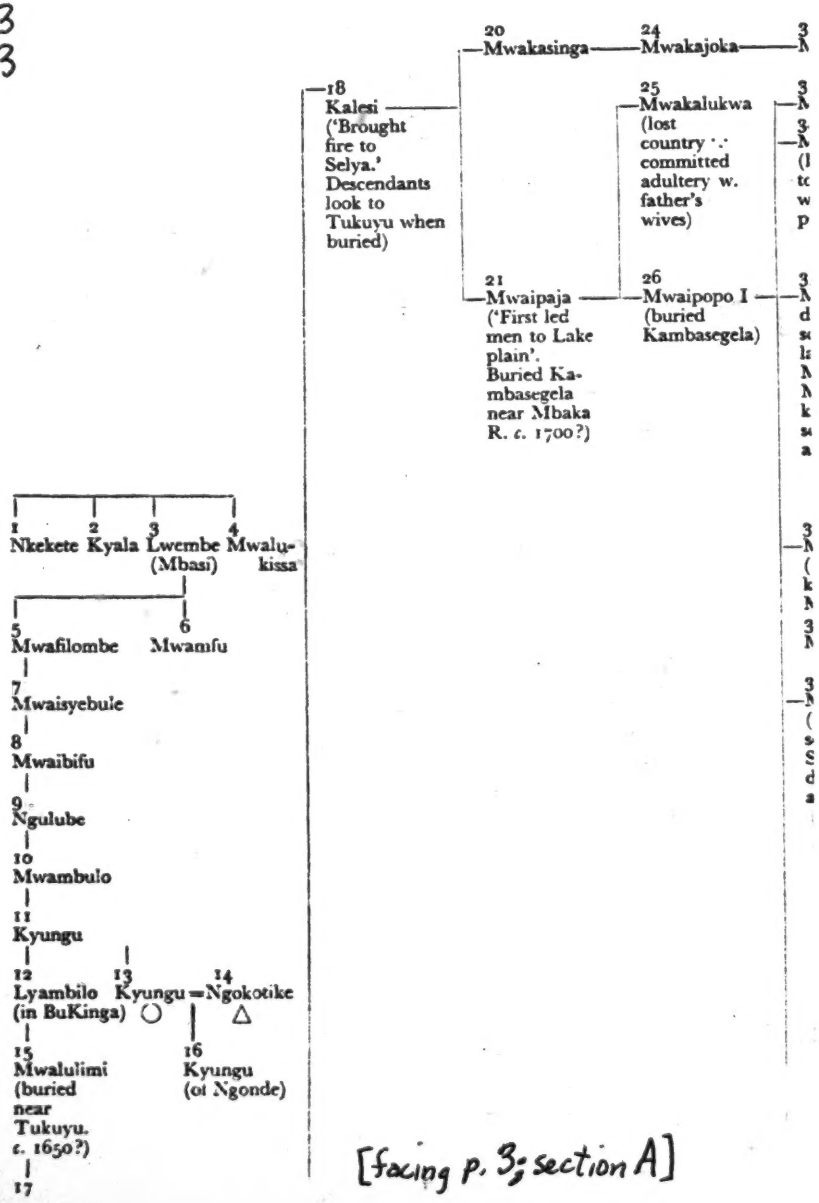
FN17 Ngonde
Nyakyusa

Chart showing position of sections of chart on "Chiefs of Lwembe's Line." (Facing page 3)

A	B	C
D	E	F
G	H	I

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173
643



[facing p. 3; section A]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173
643

CHIEFS OF LWEMBE'S LINE

- 24 Mwakajoka
  - 32 Mwaiseke
    - 46 Mwakajileke
      - 63 Mwakilambo
        - 90 Mwalwembe (Nsamba)*
          - 1 N
- 25 Mwakalukwa (lost country ·.· committed adultery w. father's wives)
  - 33 Mwankyuse
    - 47 Mwakasungu
      - 64 Mwanyombola
        - 91 Mwakanyamale
          - 1 N
  - 34 Mwaiswelo (lost country to Mwakyusa whom men preferred)
    - 48 Mwakipesile
      - 65 Mwansasu (buried Mundwanga near Mbaka R.)
        - 92 Mwanyekule (buried Mbugema)
          - 1 N (N
            - 1 N
        - 93 Swebe
          - 1 N
      - 66 Mwakalendile
        - 94 Mwankuga
          - 1 N
- 26 Mwaipopo I (buried Kambasegela)
  - 35 Mwangulube died while sons young; land to Mwankyuse. Men to Mwakyusa. Descendants are commoners)
  - 36 Mwakibinga (buried Kwikamilo near Mbaka R.)
    - 49 Mwakalasi
      - 67 Mwakalobo II
        - 95 Mwasunabwe
          - 1 N
  - 37 Mulangi
    - 50 Mwakagile
      - 68 Mwaikondela
        - 96 Mwamasangula†
  - 38 Mwakyusa I (with aid of sons and Saku chiefs drove Kyungu across Songwe)
    - 51 Mwakanyamale
      - 69 Mwanyilu
        - 97 Mwaisumo
          - 1 N
      - 70 Mwabulambo
        - 98 Mwaipasi
          - 1 N
    - 52 Mwakipesile (Kiputa. A great warrior)
      - 71 Mwakatundu
        - 99 Mwakyembe I
          - 1 N
          - 100 Mwakyembe II (Mwangamilo)
          - 101 Mwasulama
            - 1 N
          - 102 Mwakilima
            - 1 N
      - 72 Mwankenja
        - 103 Mwaronda
          - 1 N
        - 104 Mwaibambe
          - 1 N

[facing p. 3; section B]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173
643

					Ref. No. of Chiefdom
ıbo	90 Mwalwembe (Nsamba)*	126 Mwangwala	158 Peteli		C 1
bola	91 Mwakanyamale	127 Mwaigw esya	159 Mwakisisile	182 Mwakibwele (Jack)	C 2
			160 Mwajumba		
ga ta	92 Mwanyekule (buried Mbugema)	128 Mwakatumbula (buried Mbugema)	161 Mwaijande (d. shortly after coming out)		
			162 Mwambete† (came out c. 1910, d. 1955)	183 Mwakipesile I d. 1937	C 3
				184 Mwakpesile II	
		129 Mwambuga II	163 Mwakyusa†		C 4
	93 Swebe	130 Mwandembo	164 Mwasumbi	185 Paul	C 5
dile	94 Mwankuga	131 Mwanombora	165 Mwakilima†		C 6
o II	95 Mwasunabwe	132 Mwakalinga			C 7
ela	96 Mwamasangula†				C 8
	97 Mwaisumo	133 Mwakatundu			C 9
ıbo	98 Mwaipasi	134 Mwansasu	166 Mwandulosya	186 Mwansasu† (Gordon)	C 10
du	99 Mwakyembe I	135 Mwakyusa Ruling 1890	167 Mwakitalo		C 11
	100 Mwakyembe II (Mwangamilo)				C 12
	101 Mwasulama	136 Mwakagile†			C 13
	102 Mwakilima	137 Mwakalukwa† (near Songwe)			C 14
	103 Mwanonda	138 Mwakabulufu 'came out' c. 1885	168 Mwailemale	187 Mwakipesile	C 15
	104 Mwaibambe	139 Mwansasu	169 Mwamasangula	188 Mwakalukwa	C 16

[facing p. 9; section C]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

173
643

10
Mwambulo

11
Kyungu

12
Lyambilo
(in BuKinga)

13
Kyungu ○

14
Ngokotike △

15
Mwalulimi
(buried near Tukuyu. *c.* 1650?)

16
Kyungu
(of Ngonde)

17
Mwandoto

19
Mwakalebela
(Lwembe. The first to come to Lubaga? Descendants look to Bu-Kinga when buried)

22
Mwakasangule
(Lwembe. Buried at Lubaga)

27
Mwamapondele
(Lwembe)

28
Mwambongu
(fled from stool and died)

29
Mwatonoka
(Lwembe)

23
Mwanjala

30
Mwakisambwe
(moved to Lupata *c.* 1750? Carried back to Lubaga for burial. Branch from

[facing p. 3; section D]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

173
643

(Kiputa. A great warrior)

100 Mwakyembe II (Mwangamilo)
101 Mwasulama
102 Mwakilima

72 Mwankenja — 103 Mwanonda
104 Mwaibambe

73 Mwamasangula — 105 Mwabwagilo

53 Mwambungu — 74 Mwaisaka — 106 Mwamakula I — Received Elton 1873 Thomson 1879

107 Mwamakula III- (Mwandisi)* = Ijonga 114

39 Mwakyusa II ? — 54 Mwakapeje II (Kamela) — 75 Mwakage — 108 Mwakyusa
109 Mwankili

27 Mwamapondele (Lwembe) — 40 Mwakyoba — 55 Mwakyunjala — 76 Mwasongwe — 110 Mwakalebela

28 Mwambongu (fled from stool and died) — 41 Mwakibibi — 56 Mwakisisya* (Lwembe. d. before 1914) — 77 Mwanjala I (d. before 1914) — 111 Mwakilima (Mwakisisya)
29 Mwatonoka (Lwembe)

78 Mwanjala II* (old and diseased 1938)

42 Mwakilembe — 57 Kitega — 79 Mwanjala III

30 Mwakisambwe (moved to Lupata c. 1750? Carried back to Lubaga for burial. Branch from — 43 Mwamukinga I — 58 Mwalubange — 80 Mwakyambo — 112 Mwakomo

[facing p.3; section E]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

173
643

Ruling 1890

100 Mwakyembe II (Mwangamilo) — C 12

101 Mwasulama — 136 Mwakagile† — C 13

102 Mwakilima — 137 Mwakalukwa† (near Songwe) — C 14

103 Mwanonda — 138 Mwakabulufu 'came out' c. 1885 — 168 Mwailemale — 187 Mwakipesile — C 15

104 Mwaibambe — 139 Mwansasu — 169 Mwamasangula — 188 Mwakalukwa — C 16

ala — 105 Mwabwagilo — 140 Mwanyilu — ?C 17

106 Mwamakula I Received Elton 1873 Thomson 1879 — 141 Mwakalukwa — 170 Mwakisisile — 189 Mwambeje — C 18

171 Mwakisisile III† (Lazarus)

172 Mwakyusa II (Robert)

142 Mwakalinga Died fighting Germans — 173 Mwaitende† (Koroso) — C 19

107 Mwamakula III (Mwandisi)* = Ijonga 114 — 143 Mwakalinga — 174 Mwakyambo

108 Mwakyusa — 144 Mwakyambile — C 20

109 Mwankili

110 Mwakalebela — 145 Mwakalinga — C 21

111 Mwakilima (Mwakisisya) — 146 Mwakikoba — C 22

112 Mwakomo — 147 Mwaihojo (Ruling before 1891. Still alive 1955) — 175 Mwakisisile† — 190 Mwaijenga — C 23

148 Mwakyonde d. 1952

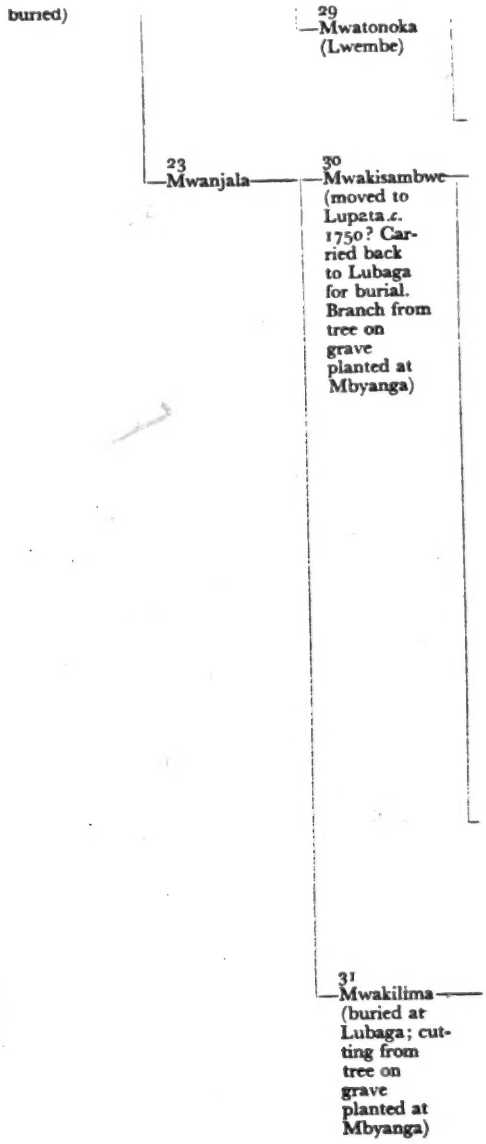
[facing p. 3; section F]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

173
643



Key

┌[=brothers
— =son of
† =chief in 1955
* =priest
= =married

Main informants: 90 : 86 : 107 : 116 : 162 : 171 : 148 : 109. 90 & 107 were very old in 1935 and acknowledged authorities.

The seniority of 90's line is questioned by some.

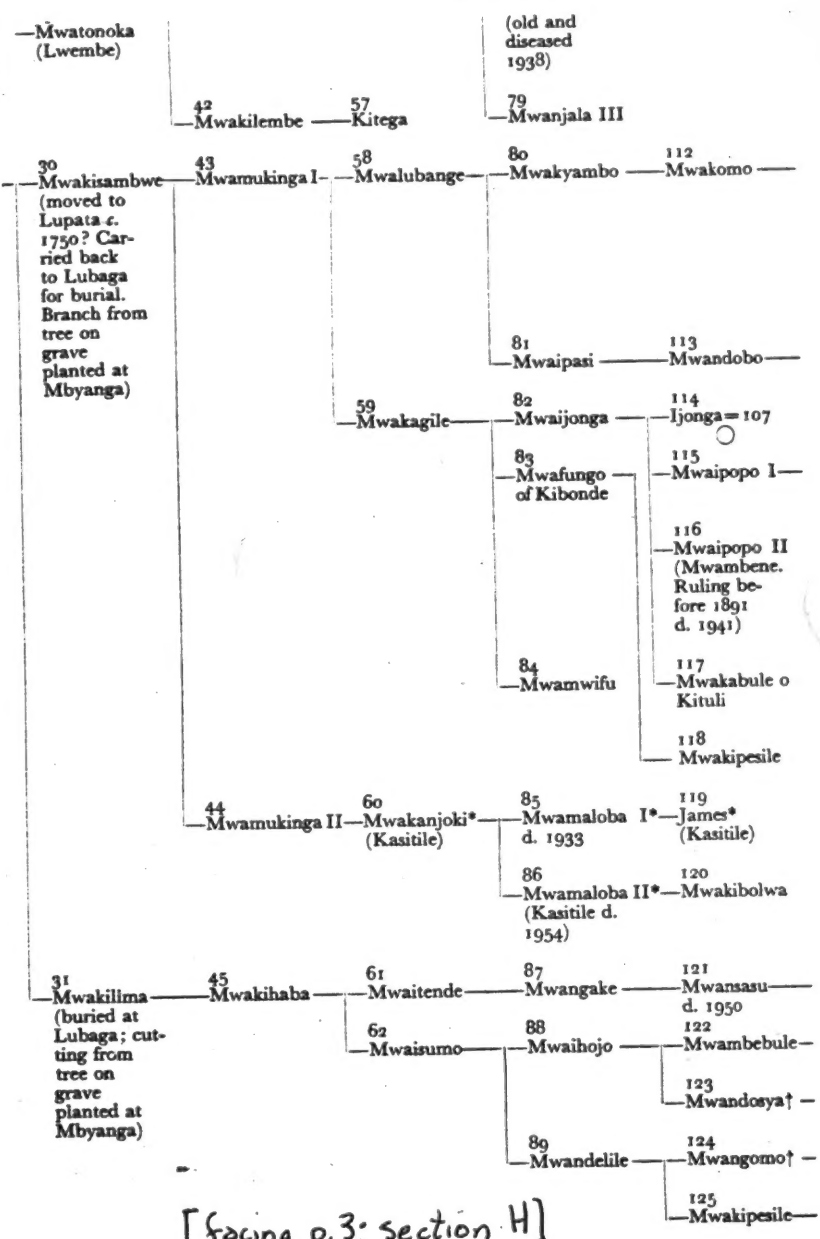
[facing p. 3; section G]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

173
643



[facing p. 3; section H]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173
643

III

bo — 112 Mwakomo — 147 Mwaihojo (Ruling before 1891. Still alive 1955) — 175 Mwakisisile† — 190 Mwaijenga — C 23

148 Mwakyonde d. 1952

113 Mwandobo — 149 Mwakitalima* — 176 Mwakasula

114 Ijonga = 107

115 Mwaipopo I — 150 Mwankuga I d. 1934 — 177 Mwanyilu† came out 1953 — C 24

178 Mwabungulu came out 1953

116 Mwaipopo II (Mwambene. Ruling before 1891 d. 1941) — 151 Mwankuga II

152 Mwaseba

117 Mwakabule o Kituli

118 Mwakipesile

119 James* (Kasitile)

I* —

120 Mwakibolwa

II* —

121 Mwansasu d. 1950 — 153 Mwaihojo† — C 25

122 Mwambebule — 154 Mwaipungu — 179 Mwangunule — C 26

123 Mwandosya† — 155 Mwamupwa — C 27

124 Mwangomo† — 156 Mwaijonga — 180 Mwamasika — C 28

125 Mwakipesile — 157 Mwanjola† — 181 Mwatonoka — C 29

[facing p. 3; section I]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

living representatives, to take their name, and to sacrifice at their groves, it was commoner priests who chose them and, as will be seen, put them to death when it was expedient for the good of the people. It is clear, too, from what source the commoners drew their power. The invaders were supposed to have brought into the country fire, cattle, crops, and iron; they were creators, the guarantors and preservers of fertility; and it was to foster and increase fertility that men worshipped and sacrificed at the groves of the mythical heroes. The aborigines, on the other hand, without fire, without iron, and feeding on raw meat as the myth depicts them, possessed one weapon of terrible potency, witchcraft, which no chief, not even a priest of the chief's lineage, could withstand or would dare to challenge. To the Nyakyusa the essential nature of the universe, established in history and in the institutions of their society, was reciprocity, a balance between chiefs and commoners, between cattle-owners and cultivators, between the creative power of the heroes and the black anger of the witches. The idea of a chief who was a dictator was as foreign as the idea of a single omnipotent creator. Moreover, there was a multiplicity of chiefs, no single central authority.

The heroic tradition, then, accounts for the differences between the chiefs and commoners and for the remarkable equilibrium that obtains between them. It accounts also, as we shall find, for the 'coming out' ritual, at least in part. It is strangely silent, however, about the origin of what is perhaps the most striking feature of Nyakyusa social life, the system of age-villages. The absence of any link between the myths of the heroes and the founding of age-villages is the more surprising in that the pattern of age-organization almost certainly came into the valley from the north-east. Only in East Africa was government based on age groups and the handing over of power from one generation to the next celebrated by whole communities. If the system of age-villages came in with the eastern invaders why is this contribution to civilized living (for the Nyakyusa regard village life as the essence of civilization) never mentioned? The only explanation we can offer is that the age structure is not necessarily linked with chieftainship, whereas the control of cattle and iron was the basis of power, and making fire was a symbol, not only of a new chieftainship, but of the vital creative force in the body of the chief. The heroic cycle justifies the relations between chiefs and commoners, but is not concerned with other institutions of the society.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

634 accessible in an earlier book, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*,[1]
796 and the details need not be recapitulated here.
769 Perhaps the reader has already noted a certain difficulty over tenses: 'is' tends to merge into 'was'. When we first visited
114 BuNyakyusa in 1934 missionaries of various denominations had
797 already been at work, and a foreign government in control, for
777 forty years past. Between 1934 and my last visit in 1955 the changes have been great, but I use the present tense for things seen at first hand, whether earlier or later, and a separate chapter is devoted to the twenty years' change. It is well to recognize at the outset, however, that in 1934 the sanctity and power of the
[643] 'divine kings' was already questioned and their rituals were
[796] curtailed, and even the pagan cosmology of the Nyakyusa was beginning to exhibit traces of Christian influence. One striking example was the changing, or rather the fluid, connotation of the name *Kyala*.

Two new types of organization developed in BuNyakyusa with the arrival of the Europeans: churches which are based on a principle of association wholly new to the pagan tradition—common belief as opposed to kinship or contiguity; and a centralized system of government. To these have now been added trading concerns, of which the most important are co-operative societies exporting coffee and rice.

The subject of this book is (i) the traditional rituals celebrated
121 on behalf of chiefdoms and groups of chiefdoms, and (ii) the changing ideas and values apparent as a section of the Nyakyusa turn from paganism to Christianity. In the concluding chapters an attempt is made to demonstrate the links between the changes in social structure and the changes in ritual.

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*, 1957.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

539 Mwakaleli and came here and died. The Kinga went to BuSangu to buy food, for there was great hunger after Mbasi and Kyala were driven out, and wandering home they came here and met Mbasi. He said, 'Go home, there will be plenty of food, but I want my things.' He had left them at his father's place when he fled with his sister Kyungu. He asked for his leopard and otterskins, his drums, his bows for shooting birds,[1] his harp, mats, a stool, bamboo beer, and twenty hoes. . . . Then the Kinga went back and found their country full of food; and they brought all his things to Mbasi and even things like salt that he had not asked for. . . . This is how the ritual began. . . . Mbasi ruled because he had helped them in their hunger.

173 773 Kasitile (86), the rain-maker, speaking of the same incident, stressed only the hoes. Lwembe 'came to Lubaga and found a good place to settle, then he sent out messengers to Mwemusi (the Kinga chief) and said: "I want my hoes, especially my great, eyed hoe" (*ilikumbulu ilya maso*).' (The old ritual hoes had perforations—'eyes'—on the blades comparable to the perforations on other rain-making instruments.) Still today Kinga priests come to Lubaga to sacrifice to Lwembe (5), and they bring with them hoes.[2]

[778] [782]

The hero of Ngonde, the Kyungu (16), was also associated with iron implements which he had brought with him—a spear, staff, stool, and a sieve used for making rain, which were royal insignia, and razors, spears, and knives of an unusual pattern, which long remained in the groves of the hero and his successors.

[643]

In the commonly-told Nyakyusa myth it was Lwembe who introduced fire to BuNyakyusa—'he found the original occupants eating their food raw'—and the fact that he conferred so great a benefit is the charter for the position of the chiefs, celebrated at every 'coming out'. The Kinga priests push the spread of fire back a little further.

[372]

539 372 Of old in this country [BuKinga] there was no fire, men ate food uncooked; there were very few men in the country, most of it was forest. This was after Mwemusi came to Kinga country. Then one man, a hunter, went into the forest to hunt buck and otter, and he had dogs. And in the forest he made fire with a drill and cooked his food; and gave his friends cooked food to eat, and they were astonished.

[1] The bow and arrow are not now used among the Nyakyusa, but men in their thirties had used them when boys, for shooting birds.

[2] cf. Ludwig Weichert, *Mapikupe i Afrika! Kuhre uinder Afrika* (Berlin, 1927), p. 189, for a photograph of one.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the Kyungu had a miraculous power of creating animals and it was by making elephants, buffaloes, and guinea-fowl for Simbobwe and his men to hunt, and climbing Mbande when it was deserted, that he captured it. Directly he reached the top he struck his drum and 'when Simbobwe heard the drums beaten on the hill he fled to his own country'. This Kyungu's successors on Mbande became 'divine kings' with miraculous power much like that of the Lwembe at Lubaga. One of his brothers became chief of the Namwanga; another of the Iwa; and a third became the rival of his sister's son for the chieftainship of the Lambya. Such is the Ngonde account. The Kukwe say that the Kyungus of Ngonde come from the same line as the chiefs of Kabale, while the men of Lwembe insist that he was descended from a daughter of their line (*vide supra*, p. 2). What connexion existed between the lineages of Lwembe and Ngomale is uncertain, but the assumption is that they, together with the chiefs of the Pangwa and Kisi, sprang from a common stock in BuKinga.

The commonest story of origin is that all the peoples of the area, save the Sangu, emerged from a 'dark house' (*nyumba ndita*) near the present Njombe, and came to Ilongo (KwiLongo) in the forest, in what is now Bena country. Nsamba, a Nyakyusa priest of the chief's lineage, with a reputation as a historian, spoke of a 'few men' coming from 'a rocky shore to the north-west' (Lake Tanganyika?) and travelling to the east shore of Nyasa, where they increased in numbers, and then spread northwards through BuKinga; Mwenifumbo, a noble of Ngonde, spoke of Ngulube the 'pale' having come to BuKinga 'from the north'.[1] But the Kinga priests knew nothing of the 'rocky shore' or northern origin; and if we take the direction in which the corpse faces when buried (the most certain criterion of the direction of origin) then the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people came from BuKinga, some travelling to the north of Rungwe volcano and some to the south, and the Kinga themselves came from the east.

Other evidence also indicates that the chiefs came from the east or north-east rather than the north-west. The cattle they brought were the short-horned Zebú type, like those of the Maasai and other peoples of central and eastern Tanganyika and Kenya. They are quite different from the long-horned cattle of the Hima

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3, p. 10 (1939). According to the Ngonde version, Ngulube was the *first* ancestor, but Nsamba began the genealogy four generations earlier (*vide* chart, facing p. 3).

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and Tutsi who established conquest states to the north-west.[1] 173

Whatever the origin and adventures of the heroes they were 773
important in Nyakyusa and Ngonde history because their [174]
graves became centres of religious ritual which linked together groups that were otherwise largely independent. The myths about them are the charter for chieftainship. They are depicted as benefactors who brought to uncivilized men not only the institution of chieftainship itself, but fire, cattle, iron, seed, and a creative power resident in their own bodies and those of their anointed heirs. But the myths also justify the power of commoners [778]
who first occupied the country and who have witchcraft in their [754]
bellies:

The commoners whom Lwembe found here were extraordinary. They 539
were cultivators, but they had not yet got fire, they ate their food raw. It was we chiefs, it was Lwembe, who brought fire and cattle—he came and found the original occupants without cattle; hence the commoners say, 'We are the earth'. Commoners are different from us physically, they are black; they are awe-inspiring, they are witches. Before you Europeans came the chiefs like Mwaipopo (116) were not [777]
awe-inspiring, they feared the commoners very much; the commoners [754]
hammered the chief with their fists—yes, by daylight. And if the chief [643]
cut a man's bananas that man took the chief's. If the commoners were angry with Mwaipopo they fetched Mwangomo (124 whose chiefdom adjoins Mwaipopo's) at night by their witchcraft; he came in the night with his people and seized the cattle, both those of the chief, Mwaipopo, and those of the commoners. The next day the commoners said: 'It is we, we are angry. Why do you not look after us? Why do you not kill cattle for us?' Then Mwaipopo would kill two head of cattle and all the men in the country ate. . . . Mwaipopo and his equals were not awe-inspiring long ago, it is you Europeans who have created chieftainship and awe.

[1] cf. H. H. Curson and R. W. Thornton, 'A Contribution to the Study of African Native Cattle', *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Science and Animal Industry*, vii, 2 October 1936 (Government Printer, Pretoria). An analysis of the distribution and migration of breeds in Africa. [113]
H. B. Thompson and R. Scott, *Uganda* (1935), pp. 135 ff.
Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 68: 69.
M. Merker, *Die Masai*, pp. 157 ff., 1904, Berlin.
H. H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, 1904, pp. 86, 103 (early photographs of Nyoro cattle).
The short-horn type predominates among the Nyakyusa, but some animals suggest an intermixture with Sanga cattle. The hump is regarded as a great delicacy and is exaggerated in the clay cattle which boys model. Cf. Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 70. The similarity between the ritual and symbolism of the Nyakyusa and those of the Ganda as described by Roscoe is marked. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, 1911. [231] [825] [532]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173 The balance between chiefs and commoners is explicit. So
773 also is their dependence on *both* cultivation and herding, and it
[643] should be noted that, though the Nyakyusa speak of themselves
[733] as stock men, they are not pastoralists to the same extent as the Masai or the Nuer. The number of cattle in Rungwe District today is less than half the human population, and men traditionally have done the heaviest share of cultivation.

773 In every version of the myth the tension between father and
593 son, or older and younger brother, is stressed. In Nyakyusa
561 society the father (or his eldest son who replaces him) controls
173 the family property and exacts obedience from his juniors who
[769] continue to show their respect after his death by sacrifices. The tale of Kyala and Lwembe celebrates the triumph of the junior. Thus, at the heart of the very ritual which sanctifies seniority there is the assertion of the victory of the son and younger brother. The myth expresses the aspirations of subordinates—of commoners and junior kinsmen—as well as the power of chiefs and seniors.

173 As we have already noted, the heroic cycle makes no reference
773 to the peculiar Nyakyusa institution of age-villages. Their charter
561 is a quite separate myth[1] which tells of a chief who looked on his
621 daughter-in-law and loved her and took her, and this so shocked
606 men that in future fathers and sons built separately, so that a father-in-law should never see his daughter-in-law.

There are other hints of the eternal theme. Besides the saga of
173 Lwembe there is another quite different tale of the origin of fire,
773 which is less often related. In it a girl who had angered her father
372 by breaking his drinking calabash fled from BuKinga to the Nyakyusa valley, where she found people who ate their food raw. She made fire and cooked for them and 'all women came to her to learn to cook'. The long-necked calabash, used as a drinking
[415] vessel and in prayer to the shades, is a man's most personal
[768] possession destroyed at his death, and it stands for a husband, while cooking is a symbol of the sexual activity of women, so the myth is perhaps a drama of incest, but we have no direct evidence of this.

173 This last is the only tale in which a woman appears as a
773 benefactor. In general, the mythology is that of a strongly
562 patrilineal society in which men are dominant. The wives of Lwembe who walked behind their lord, shepherded by a lion,

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 85.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER III

THE 'DIVINE KINGS'

17

(a) CHARACTERISTICS OF 'DIVINE KINGS'

THE heroic myths and genealogies proclaim the origin of chieftainship, and point to a distinction between ordinary chiefs and those we call 'divine kings'. Two remote ancestors who were pre-eminent are worshipped as heroes and creators, their graves are centres at which a large number of chiefdoms join in celebration, and living representatives are selected in every generation bearing their names. These are the 'divine kings', the Lwembe of Lubaga (in the centre of Nyakyusa country) and the Kyungu of Mbande near Karonga in Nyasaland. A third hero, Kyala, is associated with the cave, PaliKyala, near Ikombe at the north-east corner of the Lake, and he is worshipped in the same way as the other two, except that the priest of the cave is not his descendant and does not embody him. According to the myth, Kyala was the brother of Lwembe, but died without issue. However, the word for chiefs—*aba-nya-fyale*—is popularly believed to mean 'the sons of Kyala'.[1] 773 769 643

Kyala is one hero among others, but his name is *also* used in the sense of 'the lord': a chief is *kyala gwake* (his lord) to a commoner, a father is *kyala gwake* to his son or daughter 'because he created him' and a shade is *kyala* to his living kinsman (*nanyuka je kyala*).[2] Of one who performs a feat—something difficult—it is said 'he is Kyala'.[3] This usage is said to be very old, but there is yet another meaning of the word which is new. *Kyala* was used by the European missionaries (who first established themselves near PaliKyala) as their translation of 'God'. Today these three conceptions are inextricably mixed: Kyala the hero, Kyala 'the 769 643 [775] [177] [197]

[1] I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Fuzer for drawing my attention to this point. It is doubtful whether *Kyala* and *fyale* in fact come from the same root. *Fyale* in Hehe means the daughter of a chief (A. G. O. Hodgson, 'Some Notes on the Wahehe of Mahenge District', *J.R.A.I.*, lvi (1926), p. 40). In Bena *nafyale* means 'my husband's father or mother' (A. T. and G. M. Culwick, *Ukena of the Rivers*, p. 156). In Ganda *nalyala* means 'lady', mistress of a household and garden (J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, p. 44). cf. Nyika, *fala* 'to beget, to bear' (J. L. Krapf and J. Rebmann, *A Nyika-English Dictionary*, edited by T. H. Sparshott, 1887). [192]

[2] cf. F. R. Lehmann, 'Some field notes on the Nyakyusa', *Sociologus*, New Series, 1951, vol. 3, p. 66. [113]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 lord', and Kyala the Christian deity. In the sacrifices at Lubaga
643 and the groves of various chiefs, the name Kyala was mentioned repeatedly, as will be shown. Some may interpret this as evidence of a traditional belief in an overriding deity. We think that in most cases it is used in the sense of Kyala the hero, or Kyala 'the lord', but after forty years[1] and more of missionary activity it is not possible to establish exactly what the traditional conception of Kyala was. Moreover, it will be obvious that many of the speakers quoted in later chapters now entertain religious notions which [177] have been unconsciously, and sometimes profoundly, modified by Christian ideas, a phenomenon especially noteworthy in their references to Kyala.

All the Nyakyusa proper (that is those of Selya, the Lake plain,
769 and Masoko) send cattle to sacrifice at Lubaga (the grove of
782 Lwembe), and several of the Kinga chiefs send there too. The people of Ngonde send to the Kyungu at Mbande, but not to Lubaga, while the people living north of the Songwe did not ever send to Mbande. Some of the people of the Lake plain (Mu-Ngonde) and various Kinga chiefs send to PaliKyala as well as to Lubaga, but the hill people never send to PaliKyala, nor did the Kisi who lived around PaliKyala send to Lubaga. In other words, Lwembe and Kyala were 'brothers' and it was possible to sacrifice to both, though people living close to one centre did not send to the other. All those living south of the Songwe river looked to Mbande; those north of it to Lubaga or PaliKyala. Lwembe, Kyala, and Kyungu were ancestors, honoured primarily by their own descendants or by those of a brother, but they were also divine heroes who might be appealed to by unrelated people through their priests.

The distinction between a 'divine king' and an early ancestor who established a line of chiefs is not a sharp one, and we have indeed been uncertain whether or not to class Mwangomale (4K),[2] the founder (or at least a notable son) of the Kukwe line, with Lwembe and Kyungu. Sacrifices used to be made to Mwangomale at the grove of Kabale by a number of Kukwe chiefs, but we have no evidence either of the formal installation of a living representative in each generation or of sacrifices by unrelated people, and therefore do not include Mwangomale among the 'divine kings'. The early inhabitants of the Rungwe

[1] Field-work began in 1934.

[2] Numerals followed by K refer to the genealogy of Kukwe chiefs facing p. 27.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

area, the Penja, have a grove, Lukata, where they worship their founding ancestor, and the Nyika living on the west bank of the Kiwira river have their grove, Lubaga, twenty miles or more from the Lubaga in Selya and unconnected with it. A third distinct group, the Saku, who were the first inhabitants of the south-eastern part of Rungwe District, have their own grove, Nkeso, where their progenitors Mwamakula and Mwalukinge were buried. None of these has anything like the prestige and sanctity of the Lwembe or the Kyungu, but they are probably the prototype from which the 'divine kings' developed. 769 782

What circumstances produced a 'divine king' at Lubaga and not (so far as our limited knowledge goes) at Kabale we do not know, but we can show how the 'divine kingship' at Mbande, near the Lake shore, developed rather differently from the originally similar institution at Lubaga which is forty miles from the Lake. The Kyungu gradually acquired political power in a way in which the Lwembe did not. Among the Nyakyusa the 'sons of Lwembe' spread through the country establishing themselves as independent chiefs. They acknowledged the mystical supremacy of the Lwembe, and sent cattle to him to sacrifice, but they were sovereigns in their own territories. Just what this mystical supremacy of Lwembe implied was and still is often a matter of dispute, as we shall see. On the death of a chief his country was normally divided into two independent sections, each ruled by one of his sons. One heir sometimes fought the other and reduced him to a subordinate position, but the number of independent chiefdoms appears to have increased fairly steadily, and their size did not diminish in proportion, for the Nyakyusa chiefs have been expanding their area of occupation over a long period, establishing themselves as rulers over scattered and unorganized peoples with less developed techniques than their own, or colonizing unoccupied forest country. Expansion into uncultivated forest is still going on (1955), and were it not for the vigilance of the British Administration it is almost certain that the Safwa people would have been conquered and absorbed like the Penja, Lugulu, and others before them.[1] In 1936 over 100 independent chiefdoms were recognized by the people themselves, and they varied in size from 100 to 3,000 adult men. 769 643 [773] [173] [636] [173] [634]

In Ngonde the development was different. In the early period all the sons of the Kyungu, save two, were killed, and the territorial 173 643

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 4.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173 rulers were not of the royal blood but 'nobles' (*amakambara*),
●643 descendants of the five leading men who had arrived with the Kyungu, of those he found already occupying the country, and of those who arrived after him. Later the slaughter of the Kyungu's
[634] sons ceased, and as they grew up they were established as subordinate chiefs through his territories, gradually taking over power from the commoners who had previously ruled, by a process familiar in other parts of Africa.[1] But the 'nobles' retained considerable power. At Lubaga the descendants of the two men who had arrived with the first Lwembe, and of some of those who were there before him, became priests, and priests only; in Ngonde those of similar origin developed secular, as well as ritual, functions.

The reasons why the office of Kyungu developed into a paramount chieftainship, and that of the Lwembe did not, have been examined in a previous publication,[2] and may therefore be dealt with very briefly here. The most important factor was that
[439] the Kyungu exported ivory and amassed wealth which was used
[556] to bind territorial rulers to him, while the Lwembe remained cut off from the outside world and did not trade at all. The geographical situation largely accounts for this. The ivory of Ngonde first went north, and later south-east, across the Lake, and Mbande was well situated for both routes. It lies eight miles from the Lake and close to a defile which leads from the lakeshore plain to an open table-land stretching north to Lake Tanganyika, the very route which engineers later selected for the Stevenson road. Lubaga, on the other hand, is forty miles from the Lake and the only routes northward lay over broken country and passes 8,000 feet high. Giraud remarks in his journal that the Nyakyusa were the only people he had come across among whom the chiefs did not claim at least one tusk of every elephant killed;[3] they did not claim it, for they had no use for the ivory; but the Kyungu's right to a tusk from every elephant killed was enforced.

The growth of a paramount chieftainship in Ngonde was slow. The early Kyungus lived within an enclosure on Mbande to which only their personal servants and the nobles of Ngonde had

[113] [1] cf. M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 380; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 13-14; I. Schapera, in *African Political Systems* (edited Fortes and Evans-Pritchard), pp. 60-1.

[2] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3 (1939).

[3] V. Giraud, *Les Lacs d'Afrique Equatoriale* (1890), p. 186.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

access. It was the nobles who were the effective rulers of the country; the divine Kyungu was the centre, a source of mystical power, a numinous symbol of unity, but not a judge or an administrator. Gradually, however, the Kyungus emerged from seclusion; they descended from the hill of Mbande; later they ceased to live within a stockade; in the crises of the Ngoni invasion the Kyungu in office (a notable warrior before his accession to the stool) broke tradition by himself taking arms. 'When the Ngoni came their enmity was like that of the lions and their number like that of the ants, and so Kyungu Mwakasungula, seeing his people were terrified, took up arms in person, and said he would die fighting. And his people heard with awe and astonishment that he himself had come to fight and they determined to die with him.' The next stage was a development of the judicial functions of the Kyungu until, in the present generation, the transformation from god to magistrate was complete.[1] 173 643

We turn now to the detailed description of the rituals at each shrine.

(b) LUBAGA

Lubaga is a hill dominating the central part of the Nyakyusa valley and on its slopes are signs of old and intensive cultivation. There an early Lwembe (19) lived and was buried, there is the grove where he is worshipped, and there his descendant chosen as 'the living Lwembe' should build. According to tradition the 'sons of Lwembe' spread all over the Nyakyusa valley as chiefs, but two senior lineages, that of Mwampondele (27) and that of Mwakisisya (56), remained near Lubaga, and from them was chosen, alternately, the living embodiment of the 'divine king', the Lwembe. Men feared greatly to be chosen, for they feared to be 'killed by the grove', and indeed the Lwembe rarely lived long. He must not fall ill or all the people of the country would do so likewise; therefore if he ailed he was smothered by his priests who stuffed up his nostrils and other passages of his body. Towards the end of our stay in BuNyakyusa Kasitile made a formal statement on this point in the presence of another priest, Mwamakunda: 778 769 [173] 769 643

The Lwembes were not sick. They said: 'I am going, I have eaten food at home, at the place of the shade', and they died that day; they

[1] The change in the position of the Kyungu from the earliest period is discussed in detail by Godfrey Wilson in *The Constitution of Ngonde*.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 were not ill, they were not troubled as we are. For later in the evening,
643 while the Lwembe was still alive, the commoner priests removed his nails and hair; they came near and plucked them off. He shouted: 'Who is snatching at me?' They replied: 'No one', and then they smothered him with cloth in the nostrils and in the anus, and he went away [i.e. he died]. . . . They did it only when he had initiated it himself by saying: 'I have eaten food in the land of the shades'; they
[775] did not begin it themselves. . . . They collected the relics in a little bamboo flask, and a priest treated them so that Lwembe might not go away with the food to the land of the shades, that the fertility of the soil (*ilifugo*), this *ifingila*, might always remain above.

[778] These relics, the hair and the nails, were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops.

While the Lwembe lived he was secluded—ordinary men did
643 not see him—and he was subject to numerous taboos. For example,
[784] he might not tread in water lest the country should be flooded; he never bathed in a stream (as Nyakyusa men do daily) and was carried across any river when travelling; he must not sit on a green banana leaf lest the bananas in the country should fail, but was always provided with a skin to sit upon, and he ate only the middle portion of a banana throwing away the ends for 'if he finished the whole of a banana he would create hunger in the country'. No one might grasp his hand, or drink out of the same calabash as he, save the priests of his own age; if he drank from a calabash when travelling he took it with him, for 'if he left it behind he left hunger in that place'.

The selection of the Lwembe was in the hands of the hereditary priests of Lubaga and the hereditary Kinga priests, who come from BuKinga to sacrifice at Lubaga. The man they choose must be of good character—at the time we were in BuNyakyusa the only willing candidate was rejected because 'he is a bad man, a thief, they refuse to have a thief as priest'—he must exhibit in his own home the power of fertility. 'They don't catch just anyone, but
[842] one with children, and cattle, and fertility of the fields in his own homestead. If the man taken as chief is not fertile and rich there will be many sterile people in the homesteads, and much disease and hunger.'

When the priests had decided upon the man of their choice, they seized him and set him upon a sacred skin and a pad of leaves; and it was believed that once he had been set thereon he
[761] would die if he refused office; tales were told of a younger brother

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(28) of Mwampondele (27) who had fled from the stool and had died. 643 [761]

The chosen man was secluded in a hut, lying on a litter with his priests, who kept him company (*ukumpanja*), just as a nubile girl is secluded and lies on a litter with her maids, or a young chief with his village headmen at his 'coming out'. Here is the account of Mwasesi, the oldest of the priests of Lubaga (a man of about seventy-five) who saw the installation of the last Lwembe, Mwakisisya (56).

A skin and a head-pad of leaves (*ingata*)[1] are brought by the Kinga. The priests catch the chief and set him on these; and then he cannot run away, it is taboo. I, Mwasesi, would sit on one side of him and my friend on the other, and force him to sit on them. Then we plead with him and say: 'You are the Lion, the Leopard, the Snake, the Banana, the Bean, the Millet, the Cow Pea, and the Lentil.' (Lentils are very important, you know, because it is with them that we celebrate the ritual, and with cow peas.) Then, after a time, he says: 'Leave me', and he goes to find the cow; this cow is just for the priests to eat that night. Then we take him into a certain house, cut leaves and spread them for a litter; and we keep him company there on the litter for some time. Then he sends messages to Mwakyusa (38), to Mwankyuse (33), and to Mwakisambe (30), and the Kinga [i.e. their descendants]. Each chief who is Lwembe's descendant sends commoner priests . . . they gather to induct him into Lubaga, he who was in the house. It is just like the 'coming out' ritual for a young chief. 643 788

The Lwembe in his own person, and in a lesser degree his 'sons' 643 who are ordinary chiefs, are identified with the power of growth. Not only must the Lwembe not die with the breath still in his body, or with his hair and nails still upon it, but when he is chosen the priests test whether his reign will be long or short [787] (perhaps whether they can permit him to live or not) by taking a little millet, putting it in a banana leaf and watching to see whether it sprouts or not. 'If it sprouts and grows at once he will live long; if it does not, he will be the priest [i.e. divine king] but will die very soon.'

Because the power of making rain, food, milk and children lay in the body of the Lwembe he was fearful and terrible. 'No one built close to him, it was taboo, no one touched Mwakisisya (56) . . . if he wished to make it rain he would make it rain all 643 784

[1] The Kinga priests spoke of a cloth to wear and a stool and an axe which were kept in the inner part of the hut of the Lwembe's great wife and which no man, save a priest of Lubaga, might see.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 round him and sit at home in the middle in the sun. . . . All the
784 old chiefs inspired fear (*bapala*). It used to be taboo to walk near the house of a chief and approach him unless taken by a village headman . . . nowadays men walk about and enter his home and
[177] even steal his food.'[1] The power came partly from his position as the living Lwembe, and partly from the medicines with which he was treated, especially the terrible *ifingila*.

643 The 'divine king' who came as a conqueror bringing iron is also
[554] associated with victory in battle. Still today a brave fighter is saluted as 'Lwembe', and an iron spear is one of the emblems of chieftainship.

643 The Lwembe was himself a priest—he is often referred to as
793 *unyago*—but he was assisted by commoners. There is a hereditary
782 keeper of the grove of Lubaga named Kissoule who is the descendant of that Kissoule the commoner who fled from BuKinga with Lwembe. It is he who conducts the sacrifices, who daubs the participants with medicines before they enter, and who protects the groves. 'If by mistake the grove was a little burnt then the people here paid a beast to Kissoule, it was his to eat as he liked.' Others of the priests say that Lwembe found their ancestors at Lubaga; they are 'owners of the soil' there, and one of them, Mwasesi, could give us the names of six generations of ancestors who had been priests of Lubaga before him. But the bulk of the commoner priests are not hereditary at all, they are surviving village headmen (or their heirs) of the most recently dead Lwembe.

The success of the sacrifices at Lubaga was held to depend upon the proper co-operation of chiefs and priests: first, on the Lwembe himself (the shortage of food among the Kinga, and of milk among the Nyakyusa, while we were there, was attributed by Kasitile to the fact that there was no living Lwembe); secondly on the commoner priests of Lubaga; thirdly on the commoner Kinga priests; fourthly on Kasitile (86) and certain other priests of Selya; and fifthly on the chiefs of the Nyakyusa and the Kinga who provided the offerings. 'Can a priest celebrate alone?' said Kasitile. 'No, the ritual depends on the chiefs.' The celebrations thus linked together chiefs and people, as well as Kinga and Nyakyusa, and numerous different Nyakyusa chiefdoms. The hereditary Kinga priests live in the country of the Kinga chief Mwakalukwa and

[1] This is inconsistent with Kasitile's statement quoted above. The general opinion was that chiefs were more powerful than formerly, but the living Lwembe less so.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'Lwembe listens to him'. 'If Kinga messengers went [to Lubaga] 643
without going through Mwakalukwa's country there would be 793
much hunger. . . . Once Mwemusi and Kyelela [Kinga chiefs] 782
conspired together and sent off men with hoes to Lubaga, without reference to Mwakalukwa. They carried ten hoes. But when they got back disease killed many in the country, and they paid Mwakalukwa and did not do it again.'

It is true that an independent Nyakyusa chief *can* send an offering to Lubaga on his own; it is received by the priests of Lubaga and sacrificed in the grove, and such a sacrifice is held to be in some measure efficient, but drought or sickness in the country as [753] a whole is often attributed to one or other of the participating [731] groups failing to play their part. Moreover, such a failure is thought to be dangerous to the chief or priest who neglects his duties, as we shall see in the case of Kasitile.

The priests of Lubaga ministered to the Lwembe but they had 643 also the right and duty of admonishing him if he did wrong, just [793] as village headmen have the right and duty of admonishing their chief. If the Lwembe broke a taboo 'then Kissoule and the other [784] priests would be very angry and reproach him for bathing and making hunger, and he would pay them a bull in recompense.' Even the 'divine king' was subject to the rule of law. All through the political organization and ritual patterns of the Nyakyusa [642] there is this balance and reciprocity between chiefs and commoners and it is here that the Nyakyusa system differs radically from that described by Professor Frankfort for ancient Egypt.[1] The heroes had brought the gift of chieftainship to the Nyakyusa but it had not ousted another, perhaps older, tradition of democratic leadership; instead, the two were welded in a partnership which, to the Nyakyusa, is so much part of the necessary order of the universe that they speak of commoner priests and headmen as 'wives' of the chiefs. The Kissoule in office is 'the wife' of the Lwembe.

In the grove at Lubaga sacrifices of black cattle and sheep and 782 libations of millet beer were offered by the Nyakyusa, while the Kinga brought hoes, bamboo beer, salt, the sacred drum *ngoma*, and 789 *ifika*, that is, marvels whose nature, Kasitile averred, he did not 751 know himself. The shrine of Lubaga, and the actors and actions connected with it, are miraculous and terrible, terrible even to the actors themselves who tremble when they enter the grove, and

[1] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (1948), pp. 51-6.

9: Wilson
173
● 643

FN17 Ngonde
Nyakyusa

Chart showing position of sections of chart on "Chiefs of Kukwe's Line." (Facing p. 27)

A	B	C
D	E	F

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173
643

1 Kyungu
2 Mwabinga
3 Kabeba
4 Mwangomale (first at Kabale)
5 Mwakabanga (buried Kabale)
6 Masuba (buried Kabale)
7 Mwakilembe (buried Kabale) (Kalasikakome) (descendants look to Kabale when buried)

8 Mwaituka
12 Mwandampapa (Kibonde)
2 N
2 N
2 N
13 Mwakyusa (buried Igisa)
2 N
2 N
14 Mwakapalila Received missionaries at Rungwe 1891 when a young man
2 N
2 N
3 N

9 Mwakitalima
15 Mwasomola
3 N
3 N

[facing p.27; section A]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173
643

CHIEFS OF THE KUKWE LINE

- 12 Kwandampapa (Kibonde)
  - 23 Mwakyusa II
    - 41 Mwambagi (buried Ibaga)
      - 62 Mwaki
      - 63 Mwaik (Kalal: (buriec
      - 64 Mwail (Kisok
  - 24 Mwangoka III
    - 42 Mwamboneke
      - 65 Mwak
      - 66 Mwak:
    - 43 Mwakubombaki
      - 67 Mwak
      - 68 Mwak
  - 25 Mwangoka IV
    - 44 Mwakilasa (at Kabale)
      - 69 Mwak
- 13 Mwakyusa (buried Igisa)
  - 26 Mwanyangale
    - 45 Mwasakalile
      - 70 Mwak
  - 27 Mwamakula
    - 46 Mwasanguti
      - 71 Mwas
- 14 Mwakapalila Received missionaries at Rungwe 1891 when a young man
  - 28 Mwasyoge
    - 47 Mwankenja
  - 29 Mwakalundwa
    - 48 Mwasampegeti (Kabeta)
      - 72 Mwas
      - 73 Mwa:
  - 30 Mwakan'ata
    - 49 Porokoto
- 15 Mwasomola
  - 31 Mwakyoma I
    - 50 Mwasambili
      - 74 Mwal
    - 51 Mwambipili
      - 75 Mwa
  - 32 Mwakyoma II
    - 52 Mwalujaga
      - 76 Mwa

[facing p. 27; section B]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

UKWE LINE

				Reference no. of chiefdom held by lineage segment
173 643	62 Mwakihwaja	83 Kalulu		C 30
	63 Mwaikambo I (Kalalamuka) (buried Ngana)	84 Mwaikugile		C 31
		85 Mwakajinga (Mwanunu) (buried Ibungila)	97 James	
	64 Mwaikambo II (Kisokola)		98 John	
	65 Mwakihwaja	86 Mwakyambiki ('came out' 1935)		C 32
	66 Mwakamela	87 Mwambupe	99 Mwakabungu	C 33
	67 Mwakilulele	88 Mwankuga	100 Mwakanyemba	C 34
	68 Mwakalukwa	89 Mwaihojo	101 Mwakibinga	C 35
	69 Mwakyambiki	90 Mwasempeta		C 36
	70 Mwakilemwa	91 Mwakitalima		C 37
	71 Mwasasalange			C 38
				C 39
	72 Mwasposya	92 Kanyasa		C 40
	73 Mwasubila	93 Mwakihwaja (of Kikota)		C 41
				C 42
	74 Mwakalobo	94 Mwakisole		C 43
	75 Mwaipojo	95 Mwanjala		C 44
	76 Mwanyebule			C 45

[facing p. 27; section C]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

173
643

7
Mwakilembe (buried Kabale)
(Kalasikakome)
(descendants look to
Kabale when buried)

13
Mwakyusa
(buried Igisa)

14
Mwakapalila
Received mission-
aries at Rungwe
1891 when a young
man

9
Mwakitalima

15
Mwasomola

16
Mwaikusa

17
Mwambonja

18
Mwambapa

10
Mwalukasa

19
Mwandenuka

20
Mwakadwanga

21
Mwakaje

11
Mwakyusa

22
Mwanyangala

Based on genealogies of Kukwe chiefs kindly given me by Mr. John Mwaikambo
the order and number of names before Mwakilembe is very doubtful. I have not pe

[Facing p.27; section D]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

173
643

13 Mwakyusa (buried Igisa)
- 26 Mwanyangale — 45 Mwasakalile — 70 Mwal
- 27 Mwamakula — 46 Mwasanguti — 71 Mwa

14 Mwakapalila — Received missionaries at Rungwe 1891 when a young man
- 28 Mwasyoge — 47 Mwankenja
- 29 Mwakalundwa — 48 Mwasampegeti (Kabeta)
  - 72 Mwa
  - 73 Mwa
- 30 Mwakan'ata — 49 Porokoto

15 Mwasomola
- 31 Mwakyoma I
  - 50 Mwasambili — 74 Mwal
  - 51 Mwambipili — 75 Mwai
- 32 Mwakyoma II
  - 52 Mwalujaga — 76 Mwa
  - 53 Mwasandube — 77 Mwa

6 Mwaikusa — 33 Mwakifumbwa — 54 Mwaipwisi — 78 Mwa

7 Mwamboonja — 34 Mwakibelwa — 55 Mwaiswaswa

8 Mwambapa — 35 Mwakyomo — 56 Mwakalombwe — 79 Mwa

9 Mwandenuka — 36 Mwaitege — 57 Mwasamberenge

10 Mwakadwanga — 37 Mwangosi — 58 Mwabongo — 80 Mwa

11 Mwakaje
- 38 Mwakajela — 59 Mwasele
- 39 Mwakatobe — 60 Mwamboneke — 81 Mwa

wanyangala — 40 Mwasakalili — 61 Mwakilima — 82 Mwa

Mr. John Mwaikambo (98) and Mr. Ernest Kyungu, both of whom had made a s
doubtful. I have not personally checked this genealogy with a member of each line.

[Facing p. 27; Section E]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173
643

	70 Mwakilemwa	91 Mwakitalima	C 37
	71 Mwasasalange		C 38
			C 39
	72 Mwasposya	92 Kanyasa	C 40
	73 Mwasubila	93 Mwakilwaja (of Kikota)	C 41
			C 42
	74 Mwakalobo	94 Mwakisole	C 43
	75 Mwaipojo	95 Mwanjala	C 44
	76 Mwanyebule		C 45
	77 Mwasinoba		C 46
	78 Mwasonda	96 Mwambila	C 47
			C 48
	79 Mwandumbya		C 49
			C 50
	80 Mwangajalo		C 51
			C 52
	81 Mwalukasa		C 53
	82 Mwanjahala		C 54

Abom had made a special study of the subject. They were not in complete agreement and
ember of each line.

[facing p.27; section F]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

778 Lwembe, and the grove of the first Lwembe himself, the last being
782 the most sacred. In it stands a miraculous tree from which, the priests aver, sometimes comes sap like water, and sometimes blood. 'If it is watery there will be a plague of ulcers in the country—
[753] running sores—if it is blood there will be dysentery. But as soon
[755] as the hoes are placed in the grove, or the black bull is killed, then the sick begin to recover.'

Godfrey Wilson attended three celebrations at Lubaga, and we
788 heard of five others which occurred during our period of fieldwork. The ritual is esoteric, that is to say, only the representative of Lwembe and his priests participate, and the details are not revealed to others, but its occurrence is widely known and discussed among older men.

The celebrations observed were modified by the fact that no one
[643] had been installed as Lwembe since the death of Mwakisiya
[793] (56) before 1914. The possible candidates whom the priests had
[177] wished to instal had refused—'they feared the grove'; the only one who was said to be willing was rejected on account of his character. The priests gave 'European times' as the reason for there being no Lwembe. 'When the country was ours before you Europeans came' the elected candidate was compelled to accept office. On the death of Mwakisiya, the Kinga priests ordered that his senior son Mwanjala I (77) should take his place, and when Mwanjala I died (three years after his father) his full brother Mwanjala II (78) succeeded. He took a leading part in the rituals observed, but was not an anointed Lwembe. The priests explained: 'We fear, thinking that if a chief is seized [and compelled to sit on the stool] he will complain to the Government and we shall be punished.' During the period of German rule they had been threatened with imprisonment if they continued the ritual . . . 'we feared and stole through the country by night'. . . . And there is still much secrecy about its truncated celebration. Since the journey down 'the road of Lwembe' with the drum traditionally involved human sacrifice, and the Lwembe was smothered when ailing, there is an absolute incompatibility between a full celebration of the ritual and European administration.

The influence of the Christian minority is also considerable. The
177 view of most Nyakyusa Christians with whom we discussed
788 communal rituals is that they used to be efficient, but are so no longer, since men have been taught a better way of approaching God. 'God said: "They are mistaken but in their hearts they are

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

looking for me", and so if there was much heat he would send rain.' But this no longer happens. 177 788

At the same time both pagans and Christians tell a myth of how a European missionary, Rev. — Jauer (Mwaisumo), who visited the grove of Lubaga intending to remove the hoes in the grove to demonstrate the falsehood of the ritual, was confounded by a miracle (*ifita*). [773] [789]

Once the missionary Mwaisumo wished to go and see the grove of Lubaga. He was warned that if he entered he would fire because there were many marvels there, and the rain would catch him. He said: 'Oh, I shall go, nothing will happen.' So he went and entered the grove, and he found many hoes, some standing up, some lying down, and some of them had 'eyes'. He seized one to take it away, then there was a crash of thunder, and he was afraid and fled. When he ran out of the grove the rain fell in torrents. It is said that he was so frightened he left his jacket behind. From that time people said that indeed there are miracles at Lubaga. 539

'European times' is given as the reason for sacrifices being less frequent and regular than formerly. The occasions were, and still are: any period of hunger or scarcity, such as the Kinga regularly experience during the dry season, and the Nyakyusa also complain of at that time; any irregular misfortune such as a failure of the rains, a plague of locusts or an epidemic; and any prediction of hunger or disease by a prophet (*saulali* or *sakangulake*). But the chiefs are said to be more reluctant to provide the cattle for sacrifice than formerly, and less quickly influenced by the actual occurrence of hunger or by prophecy that famine is imminent. Nevertheless they still 'treat the earth' (*ukutendekeya ansfu*) by sending a black cow to Lubaga when hunger persists. 782 [177]

According to Kasitile (86) and Mwamakunda (his fellow priest) no ritual could be performed in the grove of the first Lwembe when he had no living representative. Formerly, the Kisoule in office and another priest penetrated alone, and there bound a live sheep and left it to bleat until a python took it. 'It is Kyala, he turns himself into a python' (*Jo kyala: ijela ata*). Here Kasitile used *kyala* in the sense of 'the lord' and he was referring to Lwembe. According to another informant, when the heir to any priesthood connected with Lubaga is installed he should sleep in the grove enclosed in a stout wicker hut, and remain there until the python of the grove comes and *licks* him. The case was cited of a priest who had lain captive for two weeks 643 793 792

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and come home 'very thin', but just when this happened was not clear.

We turn now to the account of the three sacrifices witnessed at Lubaga which illustrates (*a*) the occasions of celebration, (*b*) the procedure, and (*c*) the tensions between the participants. In the ritual described on pp. 35-8, Mwakilima (111) complained that most of the chiefs of Selya did not even recognize his ritual supremacy by sending cattle to kill at Lubaga, but Kasitile the priest reported that Mwakilima himself, in his capacity as a chief, was slow to provide the cattle for sacrifice required by his own priests.

In July 1935, two Kinga priests, Kikungubeja and Nyanigwa, came from the Kinga chief Mwakalukwa to Lubaga, with an offering of hoes. A bull, provided by Mwakilima (111) as chief of Lwembe's line, was then killed beside a tree planted at the 'coming out' of Mwakisiya (56), the last Lwembe, on the site on which the house of his second wife, Kitoga, was built, and the meat was thrown into the old banana grove close by. At the end of September the same two priests returned (each accompanied by a grandson) bringing bamboo beer and 10s. and a hoe with which to buy a bull to sacrifice again, for the Kinga were suffering hunger and a prophet in their country had gone into a trance and prophesied cold, disease, and hunger, and urged the chiefs to pray. No fault had brought the hunger, they said, but 'the shades with a cow. The shades say: "Formerly we ate much, now you do not kill cows for us, indeed we wish to eat. . . ." Therefore much hunger affects our country. It is on this account that we Kinga come with a bull and hoes. When the blood of the sacrifice soaks into the earth then the shades are satisfied, and they also receive the meat from the upper forelegs (*ijamsepe*).'[1]

The initiative came from the Kinga who were suffering most severely, but the Nyakyusa were also complaining of scarcity. The weather was very hot and dry and Mwakilima (108) remarked to Kasitile (86) the priest, who had come up to Lubaga for the sacrifice: 'You have killed us with this sun.' He was referring to the unusually small yield of early maize and beans which had been scorched by the drought. Kasitile replied: 'No, all of us [are responsible], the sun has hated us.' Both men smiled.

Five days after the Kinga reached Lubaga (28th September 1935) the sacrifice was offered up. The men concerned gathered in

[1] The sacred cut. cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*, p. 98.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

children, not the married ones with wives. Kissoule and I both have our children anointed now.'

This ritual was not complete because Mwanjala shirked the crucial act of remaining in the grove until a python licked him. The Kinga priests were continually nagging at the Nyakyusa for their failure to provide an acceptable Lwembe, but it is doubtful whether in 1935 Mwanjala II would have been acceptable to any of them since he was old and ailing. It was Mwakilima (111) that men wanted and he steadily refused to be installed.

The next ritual observed at Lubaga was in March 1937. An ordinary commoner of Selya (not a priest) named Kijaja had been prophesying repeatedly: 'I do not sleep, you will not eat the crops you hoe if you do not go to Lubaga.' He was taken to his village headman and thence to the chief Mwaihojo (147) who, finally, two years after he had begun prophesying, agreed to find a bull. Word then came to Kasitile (86) who notified the commoner priests of chief Mwaipopo (116) and sent a message to the priests of Lubaga. Kasitile (86), together with three other priests of Selya (Mwalukuta, Nyama, Mwamakunda) and Godfrey Wilson, set off early one morning from Kasitile's house to take the bull (brown streaked with black, called *isgombe isolola*) to Lubaga. On the way they called in at Munyoso's house, where the Kinga stop on their journey to pour a libation of beer (*vide supra*, p. 27). Kasitile asked Munyoso, 'Shall the bull enter?' and he replied, 'Yes, let it come into the house', so it was tied up inside while the party talked with Munyoso. He was sick and did not want to accompany them. The others pressed him, and at first he refused. Whereupon Mwalukuta said: 'Very well, then, we are at your place, let the bull return and we will go another day', in other words, refusing to go without him. 'No, that is taboo,' said Kasitile, 'once the bull has faced towards Lubaga and entered a house here it is taboo for it to turn back. The shades will be angry.' And so Munyoso went with them.

On the way they passed a group of men hoeing hard. One of them called out: 'Where are you going with that bull? Where are you off enjoying yourselves?' 'Ah, you fellows,' answered Kasitile, 'do you ask where we are going? We visit where our fathers always did.' They understood at once. 'Oh thank you, thank you,' they cried. 'You,' went on Kasitile, 'do you call that work? Are you growing your own food? No, you lie still and eat without effort. It is we who exert ourselves for you' (implying

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

793
643
291
142
[415]

5a. PRIESTS OF LUBAGA (KINGA)

[534
778]

5b. KINGA PRIESTS WITH HORN AND DRUM

[Facing p. 39]

ndicated (*vide supra*, p. 35). And, as we shall see later, he also 771
uspected that his quarrels with the Kinga priests and with the [753]
commoner priests of Mwaipopo's chiefdom made him ill. [578]

Chiefs, and even the 'divine king' himself, lived in fear of the
egitimate anger of their people, more particularly of their village 643
headmen and priests, believing that such anger would bring them 753
ickness, and this belief gave headmen and priests a very strong [622]
old over their lord. How it worked was illustrated by an incident
t Lubaga.

Mwanjala II (78) remarked to Mwakilima (111): 'I sent to summon [796]
Mwaesi (a commoner priest) for the ritual tomorrow but he refused
saying: "I shall not come." He is angry because he was not called to
he ritual at your home, nor was he told formally when the Kinga
came, or when Mwaipaja [G.W.] came.' Mwakilima (111) asked:
'Will you pay him?' [i.e. admit your mistake and offer him com-
ensation]. Mwanjala replied that he would, and Mwakilima ex-
pressed disgust. One of the Kinga priests who was listening broke
into the conversation: 'Ignore him if he refuses to come. If it were us
we should leave him and celebrate without him, but you Nyakyusa [794]
are all witches, and you fear to ignore a man who refuses to come to a
ritual saying that he will bewitch you. You are cowards, you are!'

At this Godfrey Wilson asked if there were no witchcraft in BuKinga.
The Kinga priest replied: 'There is some, but if the chief gives orders to
celebrate a ritual and someone refuses to come we ignore him, and
celebrate without him. You Nyakyusa *pay* a man for doing wrong. A
man refuses to come when he should and then you *pay* him! If you are
afraid of witchcraft why not finish the ritual and send his portion of
meat to him afterwards?'

Another priest objected: 'Then he would say it was too small a
piece.'

The commoner priests then could control even the Lwembe (for
Mwanjala II acted in the place of the Lwembe though he was
not installed), but at the same time the mystical power of the
Lwembe was feared both by ordinary chiefs and commoners.
Mwaijonga (89), who ruled before the European occupation,
insulted and fought Mwakileiya the Lwembe (56), and killed
some of his men, because 'Lwembe had spoiled the year', but
he sent back the cattle that were seized.

In the old days it did not matter killing the Lwembe's men (in war), but [727]
no one dared to take his cattle, they feared lest he would spoil the year
and send too much rain, and a plague of ulcers, and cause the cattle to [789]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 753 [781] die. . . . People feared very much because the Lwembe had medicines for smearing on his body, which could cause rain, sickness, food, ulcers, anything.

And they feared lest they might get ulcers if they killed one of Lwembe's men 'on the road'—i.e. a traveller. In short, Lwembe's mystical power afforded the first feeble beginnings of a 'king's peace' in a land of warring chiefdoms, where strangers were fair game.

(c) Mbande

778 Mbande is a hill on the plain of north Nyasaland with a commanding view of the surrounding country and well suited to defence. The west side is precipitous and below the scarp edge there used to be a marsh; to the north the hill is protected by a wide reach of the Lukulu river. It is a sacred place and for many 643 generations was the home of the 'divine king', the Kyungu. Like the Lwembe he was the living representative of a hero, and was selected by a group of hereditary nobles from one of two related lineages, the office alternating (if suitable candidates were available) between the two. They sought a big man,[1] one who had begotten children and whose sons were already married, not a young man for, the nobles said, 'young men always want war, and destroy the country'. He must be a man of wisdom (*gwa mahala*) and generous in feeding his people.

The Kyungu's life was governed by taboos even more rigorous than those surrounding the Lwembe. He must not fall ill, or [784] [753] suffer a wound, or even scratch himself and bleed a little, for his ill health, or his blood falling on the earth would bring sickness to the whole country. 'Men feared when Kyungu's blood fell on the ground, they said, "It is his life".' 'If he had a headache his wives (if they loved him) told him not to mention it, they hid his illness; but if the nobles entered and found him ill they dug the grave and put him in it, saying, "He is the ruler (*atemi*), it's taboo for him to be ill". Then he thought: "Perhaps it is so" (with a gesture of resignation).'

Great precautions were taken to preserve his health. He lived 751 in a separate house with his powerful medicines. His food was 643 prepared by boys below the age of puberty lest a menstruating [941] woman, or a youth who had lain with a woman, should touch it [644] and so bring sickness upon him; and his numerous wives were [753]

[1] *Ekyumbula ensoma*. It implies both big physically and important.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

immured in the royal enclosure—a great stockade—and jealously 643
guarded, for any infidelity on their part was thought to make [644]
their husband ill, and with him the whole country. [753]

When the Kyungu did fall ill he was smothered by the nobles
who lived around him at Mbande, and buried in great secrecy, 643
with a score or more of living persons—slaves—in the grave 766
beneath him, and one or two wives and the sons of commoners
above. And in the midst of all this slaughter the nobles brought a
sheep to look into the grave that the dead Kyungu might be [825]
gentle (*mololo*) like the sheep!

The living Kyungu was thought to create food and rain, and his
breath and the growing parts of his body—his hair and nails and
the constantly replaced mucus of his nose—were believed to be [778]
magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde plain. When
he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was buried 'with
the breath in his body'; while portions of his hair and nails and of
his nasal mucus were taken from him beforehand and buried by [789]
the nobles of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This was
'to defend the country against hunger', 'to close up the land, to
keep it rich and heavy and fertile as it was when he himself lived
in it'.

His death was kept secret—a relatively easy matter since he 643
lived in seclusion—and one of the nobles (*Ngoni*) impersonated
him wearing his clothes. After a month or two when the nobles 768
had decided whom to choose as the new Kyungu, the luckless man
was summoned to Mbande: 'Your father calls you.' Then he
came with his companions and entered the house to make
obeisance; they seized him and put the sacred cloth on him and
set him on the stool "Kisumbi", saying, "Thou Kyungu, thou art
he", and he became the Kyungu. Then they struck the drum,
Mwenekelwa, and everyone knew that the Kyungu had died and
another had been installed.' Men feared greatly to be seized as
the Kyungu, just as they feared to be seized as the Lwembe,
because the life of a divine king was short. Ngonde historians
quote a number of cases of sons of the Kyungu who fled to escape
being set on the stool; once they had sat on it they dared not flee
lest they die.

Though[1] the early Kyungus had lived on the stony top of 643
Mbande none of them had been buried there, for 'the ground was 778
766

[1] The following section is quoted, with additions and amendments, from Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, pp. 29 ff.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 too hard to dig graves in'. They and their successors were all
778 buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves
[766] trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. . . . We traced sixteen groves in the plain surrounding Mbande and the nobles who pointed them out remembered participating in celebrations at all except that of the last Kyungu. The ruling Kyungu and the spirits of his
[769] dead predecessors were believed to form one divine company, the anger of any one of whom had terrible effects, and both living and dead were placated with offerings.

778 In time of drought the nobles of Ngonde would go to a diviner
787 to inquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the
782 names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would tell them that it was so and so. They would inform the living
821 Kyungu and he would give them a bull or a sheep, together with
643 some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own house, brought by his people as tribute. And he would give them some flour and cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove and build a miniature hut. Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fasten some of the pieces on to the hut in the grove—an action they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And finally, they would pour out some of the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a hut and make an offering in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

643 But occasionally, if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the
688 Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself
787 who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any
689 of them: 'No . . . no.' And at length he would tell them that it was the living Kyungu who was angry because so-and-so had in-
821 sulted him. Then there would be no sacrifice at the grove at all, but the nobles of Ngonde would go to the one who had insulted the Kyungu and charge him with it, asking him what he meant by thus killing them all, would not the whole land starve? And
643 so the wrongdoer would take a cow to the Kyungu who, there-
821 upon, would address the nobles of Ngonde, saying: 'If it was my

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been someone [of the dead Kyungus] whom you forgot to ask about.' 'And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again.' If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry, and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would, and then the diviner would tell them that it was so-and-so (one of the dead Kyungus) and they would go and sacrifice in his grove.

Thus to insult Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. An 'insult' might mean any neglect of the obligations of the chiefs and nobles and commoners of the plain to their lord.

The people of Ngonde hoed large fields as tribute to the Kyungu and if they failed to do so 'he grew angry and poured all the water out of the pot in which he kept his rain stones' (*vide infra*, p. 114) and 'the sky dried up'. Then the chiefs called their men to hoe. . . . 'They hoed and hoed and hoed and their wives planted, then the rain came in a torrent. . . . Kyungu created much rain.'

Or if an elephant hunter neglected to send the Kyungu one of the tusks of any elephant he killed he would not kill another. 'The country beneath was angry . . . the shades of the dead Kyungus . . . they were angry saying: "Why do you stint our child?" '

The rainfall in the Ngonde plain is less than half what it is in the Nyakyusa valley and anxiety about rainfall was constantly shown in the communal rituals; elephant hunting was also a matter of concern in a way in which it was not among the Nyakyusa and this too is reflected in rituals; but there was also the preoccupation with health and fertility, as in the prayers at Lubaga. In the groves circling Mbande the nobles prayed: 'May the sterile bear children, may the cattle and fowls increase, may the children sleep and not cry at night, may the witches not injure anyone.' And as we shall see, it was health and fertility that men had in mind when they cleared out the ashes each year after the break of the rains.

Towards Christmas time, when the first maize and the first

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 796 pumpkin leaves were ready to eat, an elaborate first-fruit ceremony was formerly carried out. The new season's food was offered first by the nobles of Ngonde in the grove of the previous Kyungu, the one who had last died.

[778] The great chiefs would do so next, each at his own sacred grove (the grave of his own predecessor in the title). And after them everyone, both chiefs and people, each at his father's grave. All offered first fruits to their own shades. And finally they would themselves eat, each with his chief wife. But they would not eat beforehand for fear of angering the shades.

● 643 796 [721] In time of tribal war also the Kyungu and nobles of Ngonde led the people in prayer. All chiefs and nobles were summoned from the plain and the great ones entered the Kyungu's house to receive their instructions:

[782] When he had finished speaking he would tell them to go and pray. So they would leave his house and gather all together, all the chiefs, and the other men, and pray. The premier noble of Ngonde would begin asking each of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn to bless them in the fight. And then the great chiefs would pray after him.

This organization of religious ritual in the Ngonde plain was both a factor of and itself determined by the general political structure. Many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions, but the reverse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular significance, the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle [782] were sent to Lubaga by the chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and health; but the 'clearing out of the ashes' was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruits ritual at all; while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

643 789 The majesty (*ubusiya*) of the Kyungu was cultivated in a variety of ways. He smeared himself with ointment made from lion fat, and his bed was built up with elephant tusks and lion pelts. He [352] [293] was enthroned on the sacred iron stool called Kisumbi, he had a spear, Kamisa, and Mulima, a porous piece of iron 'like a mouth organ' used to make rain, all handed down from the first Kyungu. [778] His zebra tails, set with medicines in horn handles, were waved in

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

war and during prayer to the shades, and he also had the famous drum on which the blood of a child was poured: 643 789 [778]

The Kyungu had a drum, called Mwenekelwa, which sometimes refused to sound when struck, then they asked: 'What does it wish, friends?' and they killed a sheep and poured the blood over Mwenekelwa; if it refused to sound when they struck it again, they killed a cow and poured the blood over it and if it still refused to sound when they struck it again, they said: 'What does it want now? It wants a man.' And they took the child of a commoner and cut his throat and poured the blood over the drum and struck it and it sounded loudly. If the drum did not sound when struck it was as if it had boomed an order; its silence was like a prayer. The drum was to show the majesty (*ubusiya*) of the Kyungu, that all the little chiefs at a distance might say: 'Something is happening, let us hear what it is.' Then they all gathered and were told to bring ivory. . . . They needed the blood of a man because their Lord (*Kyala gwabo*, i.e. the Kyungu) had fastened up the drum saying 'I myself am war, there is no other war' . . . [782]

The corpses of those sacrificed to the drum, like those condemned to death, were thrown over the scarp edge of Mbande, to be sucked into the marsh beneath.

Towards the early Kyungus their subjects expressed the feelings of worship and terror appropriate to an irascible divinity. 643 782

At Mbande the nobles of Ngonde would sit round praising the Kyungu —the drums went *kinde! kinde!* And they would praise him in antiphony: 'Oh, Kyungu! . . . Great Father! Great Father!—burier of men!—Great Father! Great Father!—Great Father!—O Mpeta![1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kiposa[1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kyabala![1]—Great Father! Great Father! O Striker and Stabber! Great Father! Great Father! O Mwenende! Great Father! Great Father! O Mpolombasambo! Great Father! Great Father! Dweller in the hot sun!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Fish-eater! O Banana-eater!—Great Father! Great Father!' [539]

The general form of this praise-song was identical with that of the prayers in the sacred groves and so it is literally true to say that the nobles of Ngonde worshipped the living Kyungus.

But the majority of their subjects only worshipped from afar in fear and trembling. At Mbande no ordinary commoner was ever conducted into the sacred enclosure, but only the territorial nobles and the elder chiefs, and they only occasionally; while when the Kyungu travelled through his country all men save the 643

[1] These names are obscure.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 very oldest fled from his approach. Even in speech fearful circumlocutions were used to refer to his journeying—'The country is on the move'—'the great hill is moving'—'the mystery is coming'. It was taboo both for the old men who stayed to see him, and for those who entered the sacred enclosure, ever to greet him in the usual way. Falling down and clapping the hands was the only greeting for the Kyungu.

From the wives of the Kyungu also men fled in terror, fearing lest they be compromised and thrown over the cliff of Mbande, and this both added to the atmosphere of terror which surrounded him and was an expression of it.

Of the effects of personal relationships upon public events we heard much less in Ngonde than in Selya for we lived there for a much shorter period, but there were indications that, as in Selya, public misfortune was traditionally attributed to quarrels between the nobles of Mbande and within the family of the [731] Kyungu. One fearful drought was thought to have been caused by the exile of Kyungu's son, Mwakasungula,[1] and men tell how the rain came down in torrents on his return. The nobles also asserted their power of calling on the shades of the Kyungu to [769] punish him when he did wrong, and rebuking him over beer telling him, 'It was we who caused you to be ill, don't do it again'. Since he was killed by his nobles if he really fell ill their power over him was inexorable.

(*d*) PALIKYALA

778 PaliKyala is a cave at the north-east corner of Lake Nyasa where sacrifices are made to the hero, Kyala (2). It is on the 769 border between Nyakyusa, Kisi, and Kinga country; the chiefs are Nyakyusa, but of Kinga extraction,[2] while many of the commoners are Kisi. Nyakyusa is generally spoken as the first language, Kisi as the second, and Nyakyusa, Kinga, and Kisi all sacrifice to Kyala. As indicated in the myth already quoted (*vide supra*, p. 8) the location of the shrine has changed from one cave to another; according to one version, Kyala was driven out by Europeans; according to another, 'the Lake rose and roared and destroyed all the pots in the cave and the roar was heard in the mountains by the Kinga' and after that Kyala moved.

793 The ritual differs from that at Lubaga and Mbande in that

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, p. 26.
[2] They are not of the lineage of Lwembe.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Kyala has no living representative—in the myth he had no descendants—but only a priest. However, the priest is sometimes referred to as 'Kyala' as were the early missionaries who preached about Kyala.[1] The present priest (1936) is a young man who, by his own account, would be a Christian were it not for his public responsibility in providing food for the country. His grandfather, Mwakinyasa, was a Kisi who came as an immigrant doctor from Kubajila in Kisi country to the south, and was the first of his family to hold office at PaliKyala. Before that the chiefs of the line of Mwampasa themselves celebrated the ritual. According to Mwampasa's descendant, the present chief Mwandula, 'We planted food and the crops failed, but when "the owner of food" (Mwakinyasa) came with many medicines it grew, there was much food in the homesteads, hence we said: "Kyala has indeed loved this man, let us give him the duty of sacrificing", so the chiefs gave him cattle of his own and said: "Let the ritual come out of our bodies and go to Mwakinyasa." ' It was Mwakinyasa who (according to his grandson) introduced a variety of crops—beans, maize, cowpeas and groundnuts—to the people of Ikombe; before that they grew only bananas and *mapemba*,[2] so the myth of the hero who brought benefits is linked to the new line of priests. But there is no tradition that the priest of Mwampasa's line was once a 'divine king' like the Lwembe and the Kyungu.

Those who sacrifice at PaliKyala are the local chiefs (descendants of Mwampasa), the Kinga chiefs Mwakalukwa and Kyelela (to whom Mwampasa was related), and various chiefs of the Nyakyusa plain as far west as Mwandisi (107) near Mwaya. The Kinga priests bring bamboo beer, hoes, sheep, and occasionally goats or cattle; the local people offer white fowls, flour, cattle, and, traditionally, pots, which are produced in quantity near by, and which were being sold at the market at Ikombe when the Europeans first arrived in the country.[3] The Nyakyusa of the plain send black (or black and white) cattle and sheep. According to the Kinga priests they themselves offer black animals in Bu-Kinga when they want rain—black clouds—and white animals when they want sun and a clear sky. At Lubaga only dark animals are offered, but at PaliKyala white fowls and black, or white (or

[1] F. Fülleborn, *Das Deutsche Njassa- und Ruvuma-Gebiet*, p. 317.
[2] *Mapemba*—maize in Penja, but here it is contrasted with *ifilombe* (maize).
[3] Joseph Thomson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back* (1881), v. I, pp. 262-3. The missionary, Dr. A. Merensky, saw hatchets and choppers, as well as pots, on the floor of the cave. F. Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IV

THE RITUAL OF CHIEFTAINSHIP

49

(a) THE 'COMING OUT'

THE ritual which arouses the greatest excitement in BuNyakyusa and in which every man, woman, and child participates, is the 'coming out' when the two heirs of a chief are acknowledged as rulers, and the government of the country is handed over to them and their village headmen.[1] This ritual occurs but once in a generation, when the chief's senior sons are between thirty and thirty-five years old; they, and their slightly older contemporaries and juniors 'come out' together. Should one, or even both heirs of a chief die after their 'coming out' and before their sons are grown up, the ritual is not celebrated again—it cannot be, for it concerns not individuals but a generation. Instead the young chiefs are replaced by their younger 'brothers', full or classificatory. And should a village headman die he also is replaced by his heir; the office does not lapse. Therefore there are two types of change in status: the great communal ritual when the old men retire and [561] their sons take office, and the family ritual when a dead man is [611] succeeded by his younger brother or his son. An ~~individual~~ may inherit from his father, succeeding to his office and moving into his homestead at any time, and when he has done so he is treated formally as a member of his father's generation; but the celebration throughout the chiefdom of sons succeeding fathers only takes place thrice in a century. Each chiefdom celebrates separately. There is no attempt to synchronize with neighbours.

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It was usual, traditionally, for two sons to succeed their father, and divide his country between them. The division was foreshadowed at the father's 'coming out' when he married two senior [583] wives and settled them in different sections of his country; but it sometimes happened that a chief had a favourite for whom he built separately, and whose son went through the 'coming out' with his brothers and became independent, unless he was defeated in war and subjugated. Even a son who had no expectation of a

[1] Neither of us saw a 'coming out' in full. Godfrey Wilson saw the conclusion of the coming out of the heirs of Mwangoka (24) in November 1935 and in April 1955 I was able to observe the territorial changes brought about by Mwanyilu's (117) 'coming out' in December 1953.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 separate inheritance sometimes went through the ritual because he might later be required as a chief, and the son of a conquered chief who had retained limited authority over a small area might be permitted to 'come out' with his senior brothers also. The common pattern, then, was for two sons to 'come out' as principals, but for a variety of reasons one or more 'younger brothers' might join them.

In Ngonde, as opposed to BuNyakyusa, several brothers normally went through the ritual as principals and the reason given us was that power should be distributed. They would say, we were told, 'If we bring out only two they will be boastful and ill-use their people, let them be many therefore, then, if a man has a quarrel with his chief, he can flee to another. . . .' In BuNyakyusa [622] any tendency to tyranny in a chief was effectively curbed by his village headmen; but it is possible that headmen never had as much power in Ngonde as they did in BuNyakyusa.

An analysis of the genealogies of Nyakyusa chiefs shows that very often one half-brother lost power to the other, but occasionally several brothers (e.g. seven sons of Mwaipopo 26) got independent chiefdoms, and a junior brother (e.g. Mwakyusa 38) [669] might attract a larger following of men than his seniors. Mwakyusa led his men from the hills to the more fertile plain and drove out the Kyungu of Ngonde from the lake-shore north of the Songwe river.

The 'coming out' was traditionally the occasion when authority was handed over by the elder generation to the younger. The old [761] chief retired and he was *expected to die shortly*. In Nyakyusa theory he died because his men no longer loved him: 'A chief did not [888] live long after the "coming out" of his sons; he died because there was war and people would complain: "He is too old, when we fight we are beaten, he had better die, perhaps the heir will help us." He died of the "breath of men".' But, as will be shown, his headmen had the duty of smothering a chief who seemed likely to die, and they were much more ready to do this after the 'coming out' of his sons than before. It was right that the sons should come out before their father's death, but not right that the period of coregency should be extended, for the division of authority between old and young was uneasy. When the old chief did die his [793] headmen became the priests (*abanyago*) responsible for the sacri- [622] fices in his grove, and the young men were solely responsible for the defence of the country and the administration of justice.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Since the 'coming out' of his sons spelt not only retirement, but speedy death to a chief, he was not unnaturally reluctant to asten it and, we were told, chiefs would try to defer it, but were ressed by their village headmen to celebrate, and had eventually o accept their advice. Indeed we heard of one chief whose illness vas attributed to the 'breath' of his men, angry because he efused to hold the 'coming out' which was due. 643 [753]

Nowadays the situation is radically altered by the fact that chiefs ontinue to live long after the 'coming out' of their sons, and the dministration treats the old chief as the sole authority, or the ld men find good reasons for not holding the celebration at all.

Before the ritual there is much speculation and excitement hroughout the chiefdom, and private discussions between the old hief and his village headmen about suitable candidates for office. They look for men of wisdom (*amahala*),[1] skilled in settling disputes, modest (for boastfulness is judged intolerable in a Nyakyusa ge-village as it is in an English public school), and given to ospitality. A leader must feed his men and to do so he requires to e relatively wealthy, therefore the poor have little chance of ffice. [183] [577]

When the old men are agreed among themselves they summon ll the young men to the capital. They come dancing and swaggering with all their cattle, and there the old headmen seize, one by one, those they have chosen as village headmen for the next generation, beginning with the senior headman for each heir, then he second senior for each, and so on. Usually eight are chosen, our for each young chief. We get a glimpse of what it means to ne individual in the following statement by the second headman f the chief, Koroso (173): 643 622 796

I made fire at the 1910 'coming out'. I can't tell much because we who were caught were in fear and trembling. I knew beforehand, because my brother was told to come from Ipyana [mission], but he was a Christian and the missionaries refused to allow him to become a village headman—they feared the medicines. He ran away and came here—he wanted to be a headman and the old men wanted him, but then he changed his mind and went off to be a soldier, and so they took me. [177]

Probably word of who have been chosen as village headmen

[1] For a discussion of the content of *amahala*, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 89-90.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 often leaks out, but in theory the young men must not know, and
622 those seized always put up a show of resistance before being
796 bundled into the hut of the senior heir's mother. Once there, no man dare flee lest, like a Lwembe fleeing from the stool, he should
[784] die. The two heirs are seized also and carried into the hut with their headmen. A litter is spread for them, and they remain there in complete seclusion, required to 'talk softly' and avoid quarrelling, guarded by the 'doctor of the coming out' and forbidden to wash except that each of the chiefs and his senior village headman washes with medicines in the doorway of the hut. Each chief also lies down with a commoner and is covered with a black cloth
[789] which, according to Mwandisi (the old blind chief 107) is a symbol of clouds and therefore of plenty. 'It means, may it be heavy—cloudy—above, may food be plentiful; may both heirs bring fruitfulness.' The commoner who lies with the chief is 'one body with him', 'his wife', and continues through life to share with him certain medicines. Some said that the senior village headman performs this function for his chief: others that it is another man altogether. The whole matter is very secret and our information is limited. The period of seclusion varies. Mwanyilu (177), who 'came out' in 1953, remained in the hut a month, and he complained most bitterly of the inconvenience of not washing for so long. During this time the young men are admonished by
[867] their fathers' senior village headmen, and told of their faults and their future duties. According to Mwambuputa (Mwankuga's [150] senior headman who was responsible for bringing out Mwanyilu), he said: 'Listen to the people: they are the real chiefs! Be hospitable! Greet people politely! Don't beat your men!' And the other senior headman, Kakuju, said: 'Do not beat your men, respect them! Feed your people on milk, meat, chickens, beer! Fear your people!'

Then the great moment, from which the ritual takes its name, arrives. Very early in the morning a crowd gathers and a junior kinsman of the chief knocks on the door and shouts: 'Come out! War has come!' Each heir, followed by his senior headman, rushes out and grasps the 'spear of chieftainship' held ready at the
[978] doorway for him, while the headman grasps a medicated zebra tail. The spear has a little horn of medicines bound to it 'to show that the chief has come out', and brandishing it is 'comparable to carrying the chief aloft. We show his greatness to the people and acclaim him.' 'The spear of chieftainship is strength, man-

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

hood.' Some say that it is not the chief himself who grasps the spear but his senior village headman who pauses in the doorway calling the war cry and rejoicing. However that may be, the spear represents the authority of a ruling chief. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) and his junior brother Mwabungulu (178), both were secluded and rushed out of the hut, but for Mwabungulu there was no spear since the chiefdom of their father was not divided into independent units.

The heirs separate, each going to where his village is to stand, whether it be pasture land or the site of a former village. The young men build temporary shelters for themselves and proceed to the most important rite of all, the making of fire by friction, using a lion bone as the trough of the drill and a reed as the shaft. Each of the two young chiefs starts the process, then his senior village headmen take over, one twirling the shaft and the other holding the trough. It is difficult to make fire with the bone and reed and great importance is attached to success; the senior headman may even be replaced if he fails, for it is taken as a sign that his headmanship will be a failure. If he succeeds, he is known in future as *ulifumu gwa lupegeso*—the headman of the fire-making. All the old fires throughout the chiefdom are put out and each appointed headman, in order of precedence, takes fire from his immediate senior and calls to his men: 'You of such and such a village come to me' and gives fire to them. The men, though crowded together in one or two shelters, split into small groups, each with its own fire, to cook. This is interpreted as a symbol of the ending of the old chieftainship and the establishment of the new. 'That fire means a new chief has come, he brings new fire, we throw away the old fire in the houses. . . .' 'The old chieftainship is coming to an end, the new has come. The fires are put out in all the homesteads, those of the young men and those of the old men, they make new fire which is taken to every home. . . .' 'But why fire?' we asked. 'Because of old . . . we chiefs came with fire, the commoners had not yet got it, they ate raw food only. When we came we slept in men's houses and we lighted fires and cooked food. Men were astonished and said: "Ha! What's this?" They were burned so they said: "These are chiefs because they brought this fire." It is this they remember still.' 'Fire *is* lordship (*ubutwa*)', therefore a junior chief who goes through the ritual with his brothers does not make fire with his headmen; only those who are to rule do so. In other contexts the lighting of fire by friction is a

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643
824

6. YOUNG CHIEF WITH HIS TREES

[Facing p. 54]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

symbol of potency,[1] and we suggest that this also is an element in the ritual of the 'coming out', for the fertility of the chiefdom is thought to be bound up with the virility of the chief.

There are a number of stories about the way in which Mwakyusa (98) surpassed his brothers and one of them tells how each brother made fire and set alight the pasture land (for traditionally parts of the pasture land were fired each season to provide fresh grass for grazing in the early spring), and the fires started by the elder brothers soon died out, but that started by Mwakyusa 'burned for a whole month'. This is interpreted as an omen of his greatness as a chief: fire, potency, lordship are inextricably linked.

At the 'coming out' all things are made new. No matter how crowded the country the young men must move to new sites and the shelters in which they live must be new, though, as will be shown, they do not necessarily move to *unoccupied* country. On their new site the young men live as bachelors, milking their cows and cooking for themselves on their new fires the meat of the cattle they seize, the bananas and grain brought by their wives and mothers. Meat is abundant, for the young chief now rules and has the right to take what cattle he chooses, even from the villages of the old men in his country. 'It was as if there were war, the young men seized cattle, food, and women', and though they did not fight their fathers directly, as the Meru did, they clearly asserted their power. And, as so common further south, the accession of a chief was the occasion for raiding the neighbours: the young men, we were told, went forthwith to test the efficacy of the magic spears and the medicines with which their chief and headmen had been treated. Or the chiefs might lead a battue to clear the country of wild pig, as Mwakatumbula (Mwambete 16e) did directly after his 'coming out'. Well fed and exuberant, the young men dance and display their cattle, and entertain visitors lavishly, for every chief seeks to attract men to his country by his hospitality.

Then they set up the sign and memorial of the chieftainship: they plant cuttings of two species[2] of *ficus*, *isdale* which is much used as a shade tree, and *umpandapanda* from which bark-cloth is made. Close to these the first house of the chief and that of his senior village headmen are built, and the trees also mark the

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 124, 143.

[2] When writing *Good Company* I mistakenly thought that two varieties of the same species were planted. Cf. *Good Company*, p. 17.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643
291
142

7. NEAR TO A CHIEFDOM
(Mwaipele in 1938)

[Facing p. 55]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

future boundary between the two halves of the chiefdom, where it will split the next generation. They serve as beacons[1] and are cited as evidence both of the 'coming out' and of the division of land in any later dispute. At the same time the trees are symbols of chieftainship and with their growth the success of the reign is mystically linked. According to one account, 'four headmen fetch the cuttings and the young chief stands between them (*side plate* 6) and tells the trees to grow well, and the others say: "We are planting you likewise, we are at the ritual of establishing [illegible] chieftainship, you are a symbol" [illegible] branches that our young headmen and other people may rest in your shade.'[2] A doctor assists at the planting, burying at the roots a live white sheep and medicines, which, it is said, later turn into the lions or leopards which protect the trees from the impious (*side infra*, p. 58); and he sweeps beneath the trees, a symbol of what the senior headman must do in future, for it is his duty to 'watch over the trees'. In Nyakyusa thought, village headmen are an integral part of chieftainship—it cannot exist without them—and the trees symbolize *both* the chief and his lady and the two senior headmen. The same informant (well known as a doctor for the 'coming out') told us: 'It means we are planting the chief and his lady; *ungundapunda* is the herd to herd *indele*, which is the more important. *Ungundapunda* is the woman, it may dry up, but *ulupunda* (*indele*) never dries; it is the chief, it is familiars (*ulupuge*). Not *ungundapunda* is not', and a moment or two later, 'the *ulupunda* is the senior village headman, *ungundapunda* is the junior headman'. The strength of the chief is associated with the growth of the trees. If these trees go dry the reign will not be successful, the chief will be defeated in war. If they flourish and grow the reign will be successful, the chief is a ruler. The *indele* planted for Mwaijonga (Ro) is shown proudly by his great-grandson, and Mwambete (r6a) who had a long reign and an enormous family boasted of the size of his *ungundapunda*—'a great spreading tree'. Ideally the young chief should, in due course, sit in the shade of his *indele* with his headmen, to settle disputes.

After the trees are planted the young men build their senior headman's house and the doctor sets up his hearth bricks, burying medicine beneath them also. The marriage of the chief follows.[3]

[1] cf. D. Kerr-Cross, 'Central-Lake north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, v, IV (1895), p. 113.

[2] According to most accounts, but *side infra*, p. 58.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

He, like many of his men, may have been married long before the 'coming out', but his ritual wedding to the mothers of his heirs follows it, and from the time of his seclusion, until his marriage, he, and all his men, should live as bachelors. The brides are chosen by his village headmen and in theory they are carried off by force, whether betrothed or not, but nowadays, since the Administration discountenances forced marriages, the headmen arrange matters with the girls' families beforehand, very privately, but still they come with a show of force to carry off the brides. Girls are chosen who are approaching puberty and then they are taken to the house of a commoner contemporary of their future husband. There they live until both have grown up and the puberty ritual can be celebrated. It follows the usual course except that the neighbours of the man in whose house the brides are secluded play the part of the girls' families, cooking for the groom's party at the prescribed feasts. The chief washes with both girls, thereby acknowledging them as his senior wives; the marriage bed is prepared with medicines and there is great rejoicing. The following morning someone knocks at the door of the nuptial chamber crying: 'War has come', and the chief and his brides rush out to the pasture land, just as the parents of twins do at the end of their ritual.[1] Then[2] a long narrow stone (*ulufge*) is set with medicines in the earth, beside the chief's trees as a symbol of his marriage (*ilimanyile kya bwegi*) to the mothers of his heirs. 'The stone *is* the chief' (*ulufge ili je malefyale*). Hearth-bricks (*amafige*) are then set up for each bride with medicines buried beneath them, and they are given fire from that ritually kindled by their husband and his headman. Finally they are given medicines to drink in order to develop in them 'the dignity of chief's wives' (*ubuuiga bwa bwale*).

No marriage is complete, in Nyakyusa eyes, until cattle have been handed over, and though the chief's brides have been carried off by force, cattle—more than double the normal number—are given to their fathers. The village headmen of the retiring generation should provide these cattle and they or their heirs are recompensed when the eldest daughters born of the two wives are

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 138, 189.

[2] Mwanyile's marriage apparently preceded the planting of his trees and the phallic stone was erected at the same time as the trees were planted, but the marriages of the sons of Mwaungulu followed the planting of their trees. The order of events seems to vary, and differences are explained as due to the order of the doctor in charge of the ritual. 'Different doctors have different customs.'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

narried. Thus, yet another bond is forged between chief and 643
eadman, for he who provides marriage cattle is 'father' to him
who marries, and the chief's wives acknowledge this by avoiding 583
he village headmen of the senior generation as they do their
ather-in-law. Once the chief's ritual marriage is complete the
ex taboo is lifted and such of his men as are already married are [834]
oined by their wives. In theory, though not nowadays in practice,
he taboo is observed until the marriage of the chief.

All through the ritual of the 'coming out' the idea of a new 643
eginning is expressed—a new site for the villages, new houses, 561
ew fire, new power for the young men. The events of this ritual, 796
he seclusion, the lying on a litter, the prohibition on washing, 181
vashing with medicines in the doorway of the hut, the admonition,
re directly parallel to the events of the rituals of death and
uberty which, we have argued in a previous book,[1] are drama-
izations of death and rebirth. There seems little doubt that the
coming out' is yet another celebration of this theme. The young
nen enter an enclosed house—that of the senior's mother—
nd 'come out' (*ukuseka*) renewed as a child 'comes out' (*ukuseka*)
f the mother's womb. No Nyakyusa informant volunteered such
n interpretation, but, when it was suggested, it was eagerly
ccepted as expressing the real meaning of 'coming out'.

(*b*) THE CHIEF'S MEDICINES

Reference has already been made to medicines used by chiefs 643
nd by village headmen at the 'coming out' and we must now 778
xamine them more closely. The great medicines of chieftainship
re *ifingila* and their function is to create *amanga*, i.e. spiritual
ower, and *ubunisya*, i.e. dignity, majesty, in order to make the
hief fearful 'so that men obey him'. The medicines are com-
arable to robes of office for they are designed to give their user
ssurance and fill the commonality with awe. The Nyakyusa
lso think that chiefs and headmen should be 'heavy' with 'pythons [787]
n their bellies' which give them the power to see and fight
itches. Without such a 'python' a chief or village headman [754]
annot fulfil his duty of 'watching over the country by day and
y night' and if a man is not born with one he may develop it
hrough the proper use of medicines. This notion has been ex-
mined elsewhere.[2] The *ifingila* medicines are also thought to give
ourage and ferocity (*ubugasi*) in war, with luck in seizing enemy

[1] *op. cit.*, p. 205. [2] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 97-102.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

cattle and protecting one's own, and to attract men to the country.

The two senior sons of a chief are given powdered *ilingile* to drink from early childhood; at the 'coming out' they lie on it and drink it again with their village headmen, some is buried beneath their ritual trees, and the chief's homestead is treated with it periodically. One form of *ilingile* is made of the heart of a lion and the heart of a leopard, together with the scrapings from a charred root, and one of its qualities is to create lions or leopards which guard the trees under which it is buried. 'They make anyone who has cut a branch of one of the trees for firewood tremble at night, he trembles and returns the wood; they do not kill, but they stay staring there until he repents.' Now part of the dignity (*ubunge*) of a chief is that lions and leopards attend him; they roam his country; they are his familiars (*indege*). 'The sons of Lwembe' lack the fearful power of their great ancestor who 'rode a lion like a donkey', but they are believed to command familiars which clear the country of the wild pig that destroy man's gardens, and protect the sacred groves by terrifying any sacrilegious person who dares chop wood where he should fear. But they do not kill men or cattle. That is what distinguishes them from 'God's lions which kill cattle even by day' and the man-eaters made by sorcerers to destroy those they hate. There is no hint of lycanthropy—our informants denied emphatically that chiefs, dead or alive, turned into *indege*, but they 'follow the chief' when he travels.

A second *ilingile*, sprinkled on the chief's mat when he is secluded, and drunk with his two senior village headmen, is made of red, black, and shining white or yellow pebbles, which are ground up and mixed with *indinga*, a medicine brought by the Kinga, but the symbolism of these ingredients remains obscure.

The greatest of the *ilingile*, used only for the chief himself, is *isyifuule*, a terrible substance with power perilously like that of witchcraft. When either of the senior wives of a chief gives birth to a son a little is hidden in the litter on which she lies; it is put into the litter on which the heirs lie at the 'coming out'; and into the sacred tails and trumpets which are carried into battle. Like other medicines of chieftainship, *isyifuule* is used to give the chief majesty (*ubunge*), 'that people who meet him may fear him'; that he and his warriors may appear fierce; that they may be 'heavy and strong' in war; that when the trumpet is blown it

9: Wilson E-S (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

may 'make the enemy fearful and sue for peace'; and that even men who have left his country may return to him. And it is so powerful that the dose must be carefully adapted to the individual. If a chief is already 'heavy' with an inherited python he is given the merest fragment, but a gentle fellow thought to be 'light', 'empty', is given more, that his words may carry weight. Too much will make a chief harsh (*ukali*)—'he will always be beating men'—and he must be given an antidote to calm him down. Too much in the tails causes them to 'fly through the air at night, gleaming, and throttle the cows'. This is the danger of *isyifuile*, that it may act like the python in the bellies of witches and kill men and cattle. Controlled by a chief it is held to be reasonably safe, though Kalolo, Mwaipopo's (116) second wife, who was grumbling because no tail had been lodged in her house was told that she did not know how lucky she was for 'isyifuile is very fearful—it enters the belly, it makes itself into familiars'.

The use of *isyifuile* is forbidden to commoners. In Ngonde, with its hierarchy of chiefs, it was the danger of attempting to equal one of superior rank that was emphasized. 'If a commoner sprinkles *isyifuile* on himself saying, "Let me surpass my fellows", and he meets a chief (who is entitled to use it) then he dies immediately because he said to himself, "I also am a chief"'; and 'If an Ngana chief dances and sprinkles his spear with *isyifuile* . . . and then meets Kyungu, he dies.' In the more democratic atmosphere of BuNyakyusa chiefs were 'very angry' if commoners used it, but it was the danger of its acting like witchcraft and threatening men and cattle and, eventually, its owner, that men spoke of most. We heard of half a dozen men—among them the most successful trader of Selya—who were reputed to use it 'to surpass their fellows' and 'get rich' and one case actually came to Court. Mwaipopo, the chief (116), raised the matter himself:

> Why does this thing go about at night? I have seen it myself, it shines, I know it. It is that with which the doctors treat us chiefs to make us impressive [i.e. *isyifuile*]. Do you not know, you commoners, that we chiefs have prohibited its use in our country? Ask your fellow Mandala! He is bad, he planted this thing, it kills you people.

So two village headmen went and called Mandala who lived near Ngulya, and brought him to Court. There he was asked: 'Why did you keep this which kills people?' Mandala denied vehemently saying, 'I have not planted this.' But Mwaipopo

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[918] replied: 'Why does he deny it? He told me once: "I have a thing
[919] which kills people!"' Then, turning to the man: 'Go and fetch it
[920] out into the light.' Mandala went and we heard that he brought
[921] out another medicine, not the one asked for, he brought it to the
[922] headmen and Mwaipopo. Mwaipopo (who, being a chief, knew
[923] *isyifaile*) rejected the one Mandala brought saying: 'This is
[924] not it.' Then Mandala brought out another and again the
[925] chief rejected it saying: 'This is not the one we want.' Then he
[926] brought out a little bag made of bark-cloth. They sought a doctor
[927] to clear it out. All this happened in secret; we heard of it but did
[928] not see it. But in Court Mwaipopo turned Mandala out of his
[929] country 'because he had admitted that he was wicked', and
[930] Mwaipopo reminded the other chiefs in Court of a previous case
[931] of a man in Mwangomo's country who had used this medicine.

Isyifaile is made out of a python 'as thick as a man's thigh'
[932] which has been killed by crawling over razors. In Ngonde we
[933] were told:

> A certain snake they call *ngwe* is killed in the hills to the west. They
> build a hut, closed, with a man inside singing a cow bell and razors
> all over the roof. The snake comes and crawls over the roof, trying to
> get in and so dies. Then the doctors come to 'close it up'. When they
> have done so they cut it up for medicine—*isyifaile*; some is brought to
> Kyungu diwan . . . some is taken to the doctors, and it is the doctors
> who give it to the chief.

A similar story was told in BaNyakyusa but they get their
[934] *isyifaile* from the Songa and Hehe, to the north and east, not
[935] from the west, and in their account the trap was baited with a
[936] goat, not a man, and it was the blood of the python (*isoto*) shed
[937] on the surrounding grass and on the trap itself which was used for
[938] medicine. To test the medicine the doctors gave a little to a
[939] chicken; if the chicken died the medicine was satisfactory; and
[940] the remains of the chicken were burnt and the ashes used as
[941] treated *isyifaile*.

'That snake is awful (*ulupe fye*), no one approaches to kill it.
[942] No! If it were speared everyone would die.' And because the
[943] python which is so terrible is thought to be linked with the rain-
[944] bow it, too, is disliked. 'We fear the rainbow very much, we say
[945] it appears when a python looks up to the sky; if we are near a
[946] river we run from it for pythons live near rivers. . . . No, we are
[947] not mistaken, it is so.' The essential quality of the python is
[948] *ubunge* (fearfulness, majesty, dignity) and this is what is required

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

in rulers and is thought to be transferred to them in the medicine brewed out of python blood.

It will be noticed that the central mystery of Lubaga and the sources of the most powerful medicine are the same, and the medicine is akin to witchcraft. The charms, medicines, and witchcraft are distinguished and are thought to operate independently, but they are all manifestations of a mystical power which is logically one, though some of our informants saw it as that.

We referred earlier to the function of the chiefs' medicines in giving courage in war and luck in raiding. Certain emblems of chieftainship are carried in war: a sacred spear, a bamboo trumpet (*ililanga*) or a great war-horn (*ngumbulumbu*), and several giraffe or zebra tails (*mwinigala*), and all of these have little horns filled with *ipyifule* attached to them. Of the trumpet it was said: 'You hear it and your heart swells and a great trembling comes over you and you fight.' 'The chiefs forbid them to be blown now because their blowing always brings war.' Each of the senior village headmen is given a tail at the 'coming out' and he went into battle with it bound on to his upper arm. A notable warrior was sometimes given one also. To lose a tail in battle was comparable to losing the regimental colours and there are epics of their loss and recovery. If the leader who carried it saw that he was surrounded he would try to pass it back, or he might hide it on the ground:

then that night they would go back to the spot and they would find it because it shone with a light and made a bubbling noise, *bwabwa, bwabwa, bwabwa*. . . .

In the old days the medicine [in the tails] was frequently renewed; for there was war, and it gave the headmen the power of dreaming of the course of war. . . . But now, since you have brought peace to the land, no one renews it, and it has gone rotten.

However, the tails in Mwaipopo's chiefdom were thus treated in December 1933, and we saw it done. The four tails, with six tiny medicine horns and a calabash of medicated ointment, were formally handed over to the care of Kalinga, Mwaipopo's (108) chief wife, having previously been in the care of his mother. Mwaipopo himself was there with two kinsmen and the three commoner priests Kiangoza, Njobokoa, and Ngelyo, but not Kasitle (88) since he was 'father-in-law' to Kalinga and could not meet her, though he was informed of the ritual. Kalobo, the elected senior wife, looked on. Kalinga poured out the ointment

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 and Mwaipopo and Kimogota smeared it over the tails which
778 were then put out with the horns to dry in the sun. Mwaipopo
789 suggested getting Mwaisyelage, the doctor, to treat them further, and the others agreed saying: 'Let Mwaipopo find someone, that the earth may be good, that it be heavy.' Njobakosa had spoken earlier of the cattle giving much milk after the treatment of the tails. And they went on to discuss the fact that the young chief Mwaskuga II (131) had begotten no child by the wife inherited from his elder brother (150) whose place he had taken. Thus the function of the chief in creating plenty and [642] fertility was in the priests' minds, and there may be some link between the virility of the chief and success in war—one informant spoke of the chief's senior wives jumping over the tails immediately after the consummation of their marriage—but of this we are not certain. What is common knowledge is that the tails are 'for seizing cattle', and they are associated with 'manure and blood'. We were told at the conclusion of the ritual: 'Formerly we should have gone tomorrow, after this treating of the tails, to fight.'

Besides medicines for majesty, courage, and popularity as rulers, chiefs use medicines to protect themselves against the fearfulness of the graves in which they sacrifice, medicines to 'close the country to hunger', to make their capitals grand, and to cause thieves who have stolen, to walk round and round until caught.

Medicines are regarded as essential to authority, victory, and successful rule, and the kind used and the dose given are adjusted to the status and character of the individual. 'Village headmen [622] do not drink the most important *ikingile*; they drink a lesser one, *isekinge*; the senior headman is given most, the junior less.' And the chief's wives do not drink *ikingile* at all, but only a powder suitable for them. But the use of these medicines has its dangers. The chief, like other people who have been drinking protective medicines, does not eat the new crops grown on fields fertilized [759] by ash without fortifying himself. The danger is said to come from the burnt rubbish heaps, because medicines for defence against witches and sorcerers are burnt in them and, as we have seen, certain of the medicines which the chief uses create a power akin to witchcraft. He tastes the new millet ritually in June, the cow [788] peas in September, and pumpkin leaves in November; and he also tastes the 'new earth' at the break of the rains in October or early November. 'We chiefs fear that the medicines we have drunk will

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

turn round in the belly; people say the earth will go bad in us.' 643
'A child who has drunk medicines will be ill, the smell of the new 778
food or the wet earth goes to the belly.' 789 [788]

The chief eats the first fruits and medicines with the commoner who lies down with him at the commencement of his 'coming out' and 'is his wife to taste with him the first fruits and powdered medicines' and is 'fearful' like the medicines. He is identified with [644] the chief's body and may be compared with the *inithumu* of the Pondo chief[1] or the *isula* of the Swazi.[2] His function is to protect the chief against the medicines themselves.

(*e*) DEATH AND BURIAL OF A CHIEF

Both because of a chief's descent, and because of his use of 643 medicines, mystical power resides in his body. 763 766

In the old days a ruling chief was not allowed to die, but was buried while still living, because they feared that if he became unconscious before death he would take away all the food with him, and great hunger would come on us. Men feared *ifegila* medicine in his belly. They said: 'If he dies naturally many of his people will die. . . . He should go alive.' And formerly they buried him with the son of a commoner, also alive, for they said, 'Let him enjoy the company of his man on the road.' When a chief was sick before the coming out of his sons they tried to keep him alive if possible, but if he was clearly going to die then they buried him like this; after the coming out they hastened his death—but only if he were ill. That was why the chiefs fear the 'coming out' of their sons so greatly. Had Mwaipopo lived in the old days and his heir been alive he would have been buried during his last illness.

When a ruling chief was sick the village headmen sent the chief's wives away and looked after him themselves. Then, if they thought he would, or should, die, they tore off all his nails, those of his toes and those of his fingers, and pulled out his hair, and put them in a pot. After that they buried him by night still alive, with a live person, the child of a commoner whom they had seized very secretly. The pot stood in the house of the senior wife of the chief who had died, and they said, 'It is the chief, we are with him still.' This was the sacred [778] pot for the sacred beer.[3] They kept silence about the death for a month or perhaps two months, saying: 'Let the chief go away first.'

And when a younger brother, a junior chief, died, though he died

[1] M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 350.
[2] H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p. 58.
[3] Kaulile Sudy denied this, *vide infra*, p. 64.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 naturally and was buried dead, and no human was buried with him,
763 yet they buried a live cow with him in imitation of the custom of the
senior, because the junior was also a chief, and the cow was like a
766 person. And now in European times the ruling chiefs are buried with a cow, not with a man, in imitation of the custom of the juniors; but still they are buried at night.

Kasitile denied that chiefs were buried before death, but he admitted that they were smothered.

[793] When the chief was very ill we priests came, Njobakosa and Ngulyo, and I. We took his nails and his hair, we tore them off while he was still alive, he started up and we hid ourselves that he should not see us. Then we attended to him.

Here he made a gesture of stopping up the nostrils. That is, they hastened his death as soon as the nails and hair had been stripped off.

And we dug the grave; we buried him by night, when he had died, when he had gone, with a live cow; we did this at night for it was taboo
[784] for people to see the burial of a senior chief. We killed a cow in the sacred grove and we ate it, we the priests, before people heard that he had died. The chief Mwakagile (59) when his death was approaching said: 'My body is sick.' After waiting two days, the village headmen said, 'This illness has defeated us', and they tore off his nails—yes,
[778] before he died. If they had waited until after his death, would not the *ifungila*, the power of chieftainship, have passed away? But they did not smother him, he just died. . . . His nails and hair were put into a little reed, which they hid beneath an *umuali* (*Chrophora excelsa*) tree at the village headman's, the *umuali* which grew at the homestead of Njobakosa [the grandfather of the present Njobakosa]. They buried it at a commoner's place, as if to say: 'We commoners are the earth, we have
[778] taken the power of growth (*ifuge*) from the chief, those nails and the hair are the power of growth of the country (*ifyala fila umuili fye ifuge fye kim*).

Kasitile took Godfrey Wilson's hand and explained: 'Because, Mwaipaja (G.W.), when you cut these nails of yours do they not grow again?' 'Yes, they grow again.' 'Well, then, where does their growth come from? Does it not come from the body?' 'Yes.' 'Well, so it is, the village headmen take the power of growth (*ilifuge*) from the chief, his nails and his hair.'

On another occasion Kasitile explained that formerly the relics had been kept in a pot in the house, but that when Mwaipopo (116) succeeded

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Njobakosa [the grandfather] ran off with them to Mwaihojo in the hills, where he died so that they disappeared and were never returned to his fellow-priests. Therefore they bury the relics by the *umuali* tree, at his old homestead, lest someone run off with them again. . . . The hair and nails of the chief are buried there, the earth of the chief will always be heavy. All this is very secret. . . . 643 763 766 [778]

Mwandisi (107, the old blind chief) told us that

When a chief dies they take his nails and hair and put them in the house of his wife who buries them with medicine for fertility of the soil (*ifuge*), then at the time of planting the village headmen come and take that medicine to plant the food with. This was done on the death of the chief Mwakalukwa (141) and the chief Mwakalinga (142) and others for, it is said, the chief goes off with our fertility (*imbeto yetu*).

Thus, though our informants differed slightly about the details, they were agreed that the power of growth lies in the nails and hair of a chief, and these must be taken from him while he is yet alive, and later used to fertilize the earth.

The burial of a chief's son with a live black calf we saw for ourselves, and the wailing was delayed until after the burial. A distinctive funeral of this sort is accorded to all the sons of a ruling chief and his senior daughter, but not (we were told) to more distant kinsmen. The other mark of a royal funeral is the slaughter of many head of cattle to accompany the deceased and to feed the mourners. At the death of the chief Mwakyembe (99) over 300 head were killed, and Mwaipopo (116) killed thirty head at the funeral of his mother. Since a chief has many wives and daughters he has many affines all of whom must bring cows to kill, and he also has a large herd himself on which to draw. To fail to feed his people at a funeral is to fail as a chief. The whole country mourns for two or three weeks, no one going to work in the fields, or occupying themselves with ordinary business. All smear themselves with mud, as if they were kinsmen, and even the men bind their bellies tightly with mourning belts 'that they may not tremble'. [765]

(*d*) THE CHIEF AND THE 'BREATH OF MEN'

Fruitfulness, the power of growth (*imbeto*), lies in the chief's body and the village headmen have no share in it; they only tend it, taking care that it does not disappear with the dead. But the headmen share with the chief and the priests the duty of 'watching 643 778 622

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 778 622 over the country by day and by night', and power (*amanga*) to see the enemies of darkness (that is, the witches) is thought to come to each priest or village headman from a python in his belly. No one can fulfil his duties as a ruler and defender unless he is 'heavy', but to have a python inside one is *also* the mark of a witch. Pressed on the point the Nyakyusa hold that a chief or [759] village headman only has one python whereas witches have several, but this distinction is not maintained consistently, and many of our informants were agreed that the power of witchcraft and the power to see and fight witches were one and the same. The essential distinction lies in the use to which the power is put; wrongly used it is 'witchcraft' (*ubulosi*); rightly used to defend the village or to punish evil-doers it is 'the breath of men' (*imbepo ya bandu*) and how any particular case is labelled depends upon the viewpoint of the speaker. The victim of a misfortune and his kin will indignantly attribute it to 'witchcraft' when other people regarded it as due to his wrongdoing and a punishment brought about by 'the breath of men'.

Each village headman, together with those of the village who are 'heavy', is thought competent both to defend those of his village whom he judges innocent against witches from outside or within, and to punish wrong-doers, by bringing upon them the chill of fever. Hence those who have angered their neighbours and believe themselves to be attacked by 'witches', take refuge in another village.

The power of witchcraft is believed to be inherited, rarely acquired; but the power of defence is both inherited and increased by drinking medicines, and there seems little doubt that the medicines drunk by chief and village headmen at the 'coming out' to create in themselves *ubusiya*—majesty, awesomeness—also develop *amanga*, the power to see and fight witches. Indeed, one of our Christian informants insisted that *ubusiya bo bulosi*—'awesomeness *is* witchcraft'.

These ideas have been discussed in some detail elsewhere.[1] Here I am only concerned to show the importance of the belief in 'the breath of men' in the relationship between chief and village headmen. Not only do village headmen have the ultimate power of life and death over their chief, but they are thought to bring illness upon him if he acts unconstitutionally or disregards their advice, or fails in his duty of providing beef for his men. He may

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 32-35.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

play one village against another and go to sleep in that section of the country which supports him, but he dare not anger all his headmen. In the same way a village headman dare not anger the main body of his men. In short, public opinion is an effective sanction because those in authority believe that the disapproval of their fellows may bring a fever or paralysis upon them. One of our Christian informants was insistent that, were it not for the belief in the 'breath of men', pagan chiefs and headmen would act tyrannically. 643 778 622

The situations in which a chief or headman fears the breath of men are very varied. We have already referred to the chief who thought his illness was due to his refusal to hold the 'coming out' for his sons when advised to do so.[1] Mwaipopo, before whose court a very bitter land dispute between two of his villages had been brought, refused to give judgement and was careful to sleep in the village that had possession of the land, and therefore less cause for anger.[2] Kasitile, the hereditary priest of the chief's lineage who counted as 'a chief' as opposed to 'a commoner', thought he had angered the village headmen of his generation (who had become priests) by not providing meat for them (*vide infra*, p. 125). [754]

The headmen are responsible for the health of their chief and it is they who go to consult an oracle if he is ill and take him to a doctor. Mwankuga II (151), heir to Mwaipopo's chiefdom, had not begotten a son by any of the wives he inherited from his elder brother who had died. His village headmen[3] went to consult an oracle and were told that it was the wrath (*imindu*) of his father; so they reported the matter to Mwaipopo, who sent a junior kinsman to consult another oracle. The diagnosis was confirmed and Mwaipopo gathered his younger brothers and prayed and told the shades that he had no quarrel with his kinsmen. Then he told the village headmen to take Mwankuga to a doctor for treatment, but this they did not do, so that Mwankuga went to consult a doctor on his own. According to Kasitile it was because the headmen had not taken Mwankuga that the medicine did not work. 'They should take him to the doctor and be present in dreams, to watch over him in dreams.' What the headmen were angry about was not revealed—there was no obvious cause. [847] [753] [787] [782]

[1] *op. cit.*, pp. 134-5 [2] *op. cit.*, pp. 188-90.

[3] Mwankuga I who died had 'come out' before Mwankuga II inherited from him, but Mwaipopo (116) continued to rule as chief and draw a Government salary.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 As we have seen, the chief's fearsome medicine *inyifwila* is
778 thought to be very dangerous, and too much in the tails may cause
622 them 'to fly about throttling men and cattle', but a chief is never
[754] accused of working witchcraft; it is inconceivable to the Nyakyusa that he could be. If the tails have got out of hand they are treated
[789] by a doctor 'to close them up'; no one suggests that the chief should get rid of them. It is commoners, 'black people', who are witches —cannibals, the eaters of raw flesh—as opposed to chiefs who, since the dawn of history, have killed cattle for meat and cooked their food like civilized men. But the distinction does not extend very far; junior kinsmen of the chief are 'commoners' and may well be accused of practising witchcraft.

There was a delicate balance of power in the Nyakyusa con-
[182] stitution between hereditary chief and commoner headmen and the belief in the power of medicines and of witchcraft was an integral part of it. The chief provided fruitfulness by the power of his own body and his medicines; all men depended upon him for their well-being—food, cattle, children, success in war; but he in his turn depended upon the goodwill of his men led by their village headmen; without it he shivered and fell ill, only to be buried by them 'with the breath still in his body' lest the power of growth disappear with his breathless corpse.

Something of the quality of this mutual dependence and fear is conveyed in Kasitile's account of his own illness quoted in Chapter VIII.

(*e*) THE NECESSITY FOR HARMONY

182 The welfare of the chiefdom is thought to depend upon
643 harmony between the chief and his village headmen and priests,
622 and also between the chief and his kinsmen. Any friction between
793 them may result in public misfortune as well as sickness to the individual at fault. The quarrel of Kasitile, the priest, first with
[753] the Kinga priests, and then with the commoner priests of Mwal-
[821] popo's chiefdom was believed to affect the crops and the weather, as well as Kasitile's own health (*vide infra*, pp. 124-41), and
[688] Mwaipopo's failure to tell Kasitile formally of the death of their kinsman led to rain which spoiled the funeral dance. A quarrel between the lineages of two chiefs which should have sacrificed
643 together was said to have been followed by a very poor millet
602 crop (*vide infra*, pp. 79-80, 118, 136).
578 How the personal relationship of a chief with his kinsmen is

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

thought to affect the whole country was illustrated in Mwaihojo's chiefdom where the people were plagued by wild pig destroying their gardens. Mwaihojo (147) had a longstanding quarrel with his half-brother, Mwakyonde (148), whose country he had seized after their 'coming out'. Mwakyonde became famous as a doctor, and he was a great raconteur and beer-drinker, a regular Silenus, the boon companion of many influential men, whereas his brother was cold and irascible; so although he had lost his chieftaincy, Mwakyonde had considerable power. In February 1937, four lions were seen in the adjoining chiefdom of Mwaipopo (116), and we heard pig squealing as it was killed. Angombwike (whose father lived near Mwakyonde in Mwaihojo's country) explained to us: 'People say that these are Mwakyonde's lions. . . . Lion-makers have bundles of twigs which they put into the long grass, and which turn into lions. Long ago Mwakyonde made lions and they came and killed all the pigs, and the country (Mwaihojo's) was at peace, but he quarrelled with Mwaihojo and put his bundles of twigs into his box and locked it up. Then the country was filled with pig, and buck, and elephant, and all the crops were spoiled, and so it is still. Now Mwakyonde has begun to be friendly with Mwaipopo (116); they enjoy each other's company and drink beer together, and so he is making lions again in Kipungu, the land where Mwaipopo is hoeing, to kill the pig for Mwaipopo. They say Mwaipopo has given him a country in secret.' Now Mwaihojo claimed as his the forest country, which Mwaipopo's men had begun to colonize, therefore to aid Mwaipopo there was an effective slap at Mwaihojo. The lions came into Mwaihojo's country—we heard them repeatedly close to our camp—but they did not clear the pig.

Then, in March, Mwakyonde was supposed to be using a new medicine he had obtained to scare off pig from the fields. We asked him about it. 'Oh, it has failed. The pigs are still there eating. I've done everything I should but without effect. I think that the pigs are possessed by the shades (*sili nimindu ingulube*).' 'Why?' we asked. 'Because my elder brother (Mwaihojo) and I are not on good terms (*tutikwangala kanunu*) the shades are angry.'

So the destruction of men's gardens was traced to the quarrel between the chief and his brother.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

SACRIFICES AT THE GROVES OF CHIEFS

(a) THE PLACE, OCCASION, AND FORM OF SACRIFICE

778. 769 [137] A CHIEF is buried near the trees planted at his 'coming out' and around the grave a thicket grows up. It is taboo for men to cut saplings or brushwood there and since trees grow very fast in the climate and soil of the Nyakyusa valley, the thicket soon becomes a grove, and there sacrifices to the dead chief are made. The priests look for the stone planted at his marriage, and place the offering beside it. How long a chief is so honoured depends on how conspicuous he was as a ruler or warrior, and perhaps also on [782] whether the sacrifices are judged to be efficient in producing rain and health or not. Mbyanga and Kabale, two groves which are particularly honoured, were the shrines of founders of expanding lineages. At Mbyanga was planted a cutting of a tree which sprouted from the grave of Mwakisambwe (30) who had first occupied the country in which Mbyanga is situated. He is often spoken of as having been 'buried' at Mbyanga, in fact he was carried back ten miles to Lubaga, whence he had come, for burial. But he is worshipped at Mbyanga and we attended a sacrifice there for which his great-great-great-grandson, Mwaihojo (147) the chief, provided a cow, and Mwaihojo's grandsons ate the holy food. In contrast to this, the grave of Mwaipopo's (116) younger brother, who had once ruled a country but was defeated in war and whose sons had died, was completely neglected; no one sacrificed there. We knew more than a dozen chiefs' groves at which sacrifices were made, and there must have been a great many more in different parts of BuNyakyusa.

643 769 Since every ruling chief normally had two heirs, sacrifices involved co-operation between independent chiefdoms—two chiefs at the grove of their father, four at that of their grandfather, and so on. But if there is friction between the chiefs, some branches of the lineage cease to participate, saying that the connexion is 'too distant', and celebrate at the groves of their nearer ancestors only. This happened at the sacrifice of Mbyanga which we [578] [688] attended (*vide infra*, pp. 79-81). The sanction for co-operation is the belief that quarrelling between kinsmen annoys the shades and

[p. 70]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

may nullify any ritual, but often it is not strong enough to overcome the fissiparous tendencies of the lineage. In theory a celebration at the grove of a senior should precede that at the grove of a junior and sacrifices at Lubaga would be followed by sacrifices at the groves of the 'sons of Lwembe' in order of seniority, but this does not happen in practice nowadays and we doubt whether it ever did, since a hierarchy was not organized and maintained by a central authority as in Ngonde. In 1935 a celebration at the grove of Mwaijonga (82) preceded one at the grove of his great-grandfather Mwakisambwe (30) by a month, as we shall see. 643 769 [578] [688]

Sacrifices are made when a drought or flood occurs, or a plague of locusts, or an epidemic among men or cattle; when fishing is poor in the chiefdoms of the plain, or war is imminent. They occur most often during the 'winter' in the hills, when a malaria-sodden people feel the chill of damp mists and cool south winds, and in October, just before the break of the rains, when the country is parched; but they are not confined to these periods. In theory the village headmen and the priests who 'watch over the country' foresee *coming* misfortune in dreams, and avert it by making the appropriate sacrifices. And they are helped by ordinary people who are dreaming repeatedly or falling into a trance or fit, and prophesying evil and jabbering of 'a black cow, a black cow' or some other appurtenance of sacrifice. But in practice the prophecies generally occur when there is hunger or plague in the land, or an omen (such as a python or a ground hornbill behaving oddly) has been seen. [731] [782] [787]

The dreamers are *abasololi* or *abakunguluka*, and, as these names indicate, they are believed to have descended into the land of the shades. *Ukusoloka*[1] means to go down into something, like the roots of a tree into the earth, and *ukukungula ingungula* means to pluck a banana flower which (as was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*) is a symbol for a corpse and is buried; so the *abakunguluka* are those who have been buried in the earth. '*Abakunguluka* go to the land of the shades and return. . . . An *unkunguluka* plucks up the "blessed grass" (*ikisajelo*) in his swept courtyard and goes beneath and sees.[2] . . . He goes down into the earth beneath and takes the chief to the land of the shades when he dies, and he also sees the witches. . . .' More rarely, the *unsololi* or *unkunguluka* is 791 787

[1] *Ukusoloka*—a breech presentation, the implication being that the infant's head is in *lusuka*, but children born in this way are not necessarily prophets. [845]

[2] *cf.* Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 77, 212.

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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

said just to become aware of future events without any dream.

Abakunguluka are distinguished from those who suffer from fits or fall into trances (*abakom' amalago*), but a woman in a trance may also prophesy and induce the chief and priests to celebrate a ritual, for it is thought that she too is in communication with the shades. Men say 'The shade has entered her' or 'Kyala catches hold of her that she may speak of the matter'. This type of prophecy is something new among the Nyakyusa. Mwandisi (107) told us that 'it did not exist in BuKinga whence we came', but had been introduced from the south, through Ngonde, and it is mainly confined to women, whereas the *abakunguluka* are men.

There are many tales of famous prophecies. Nsamba (90) claimed that his father (63) foretold that 'there will come a white thing on the Lake, and it will land on the shore. That will be the man who will make peace', and Mwakalinga (142) who died fighting the Germans is said to have foretold his own death.[1]

Dreams and revelations of the possessed concerning public matters are reported to the local village headman and referred to the other headmen and priests, and a prophecy is accepted as valid only after formal discussion. As we shall see, Kasitile was sceptical about the revelations of one man who was repeatedly 'possessed', perhaps because he threatened to become a rival in interpreting public misfortune. If there is doubt, suspicions are confirmed or problems elucidated, by divination.

When they judged a sacrifice necessary the village headman and priests went to their chief saying, 'We do not sleep', and it was his obligation to secure an animal for sacrifice. He might provide it out of his own herd, but very often the duty of 'finding' sacrificial cattle was delegated to a junior line—the ruling chief gave cattle to a younger brother charging him and his heirs with the function of providing sacrificial cattle when necessary. Today all the chiefs are reluctant to expend cattle on rituals whose validity is questioned, and there is often friction between the senior and junior lines over who should 'find' the cow or bull required. Their reluctance is illustrated by the following passage from Godfrey Wilson's diary:

Mwaya (on the lake shore): 22/10/34

It is still stormy; there has been wind and heavy rain for four days. People are saying: 'We are hungry. It is very bad. We need light rain

[1] According to Mr. Harkin's informant the Saralwe eruption was foretold a year before it occurred. *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, 40 (1955), p. 21.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for planting, but now all the fields are muddy, we can neither hoe nor plant.' Five days ago there was no rain but locusts, and people did not plant for fear lest the locusts should eat the rice and maize as it sprouted. Kisoule tells me: 'Kyala is very angry. . . . Mwandisi (107, the priest-chief) wants to pray to put things right, he has sent Mwalulaboeya to ask Mwakisisile (170, the ruling chief) for a cow. Mwalulaboeya and Mwakalobo went and the chief agreed saying: "I have not got one now, but I will look for one!" Then Mwalulaboeya sent me (Kisoule) to fetch it, but the chief refused saying: "I am busy now." Then Mwandisi (107), who is blind and infirm, went himself, but still there is no cow.' 769 782 [177] [443]

The priests who minister to dead chiefs, like the priests of Lubaga, are of different types. The senior village headmen of a dead chief are responsible for conducting sacrifices at his grove in co-operation with his heir, and when a headman dies his office is taken over by his heir. Where a grove is much honoured this continues for generations and the heirs of one of the village headmen become hereditary keepers of the grove, each incumbent of the office assuming his name. Secondly, there are chiefs of a junior line, who become hereditary priests on whom the ruling chiefs depend for their prayers, but these priest-chiefs do not actually attend the sacrifices; the celebration is delegated to commoner priests and junior kinsmen. Mwandisi (107) mentioned above, Kasitile (86) and Nzamba (90) were all priest-chiefs of this sort. Kasitile prayed at his own home, blowing out water before any celebration in Mwaipopo's country, and he was given the chine of any animal sacrificed on behalf of the country. If this were not done 'all the cattle in the country would die . . . it is the most important part of the meat'. The commoner priests who conducted the ritual always shared the head of the sacrificial beast and the breast went to the chief. With priest-chiefs, as with commoner chiefs, the name of the first incumbent of the office (or an early and famous incumbent) may become a hereditary title, e.g. three generations of priests in Selya have been known as *Kasitile*. 793 622 769

The essential elements in the ritual are: the sacrifice of a black bull or cow in the grove; the offering up of the blood and pieces of the sacred meat from the forelegs, together with the beer, on the earth close to a sacred stone and near a sacred tree; an invocation calling on the shades to come and feast, and petitions for rain, fertility, and health. One piece of meat is thrown down for 769 782

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

[79] I kept the chine for two nights in my house. The shades come to eat—
[82] they left practically nothing. Had I not been ill I would have asked you to come and see since you say they do not eat. . . . The shades come and see that we are celebrating the rituals.

The whole ritual was esoteric. Only the chief with eight of his
[79] agnatic kinsmen, four of his young sons (but not his grown-up
[43] heir or young grandson), and four priests participated, and we
[123] two anthropologists were permitted to look on. Peeping small boys were chased off. The shades were addressed in a conversational tone and, except during the invocation, the priests and
[84] chiefs chatted to one another, but arguments and raised voices were taboo. The boys who ate the meat were told:

[49] See, we your fathers are sacrificing, we are making plenty of food. Follow the custom of your fathers when it is your turn to sacrifice. Learn how to do it.

The same evening Kasitile prayed at his tree again. He explained:

I would not usually pray at all tonight, it is finished. Mwaipopo and I prayed yesterday, today the ritual is finished, but that boy of mine [his heir, 119] does not visit me, he's not been to see me and he did not tell me that he was going to the ritual. . . . I am going to pray to tell my fathers not to be startled, to tell them I am not angry, to tell them to send only a little rain, not a lot, to tell them to accept the sacrifice.

He went to the same place, and chewed the root of 'blessed grass' and blew out water as before. He prayed to about thirty persons, especially to Mwamalobe (8), his elder brother) and Mwakanjoki (60, his father), and also to Mwakaglie (39), Mwaijonga (82), Mwaiposi (81), Mwakabude (117), Mwamwilo (84), Mwafungo (83), Mwakigwile (118), Mwakapale (7), Lyambilo (12), Mwalubange (38), Mwamukinga (45), Mwailonjo (147?), Mwaimende (61), and Kyala (1). No mention was made of the Lubaga chiefs this time, or of sons of Mwaipopo (21) or of 'Jesus'.

You have received your child Mwakaglie (118, identified with his grandfather 39), Mwaijonga (82), you have received the chief, this boy of mine (119) is quarrelling with me, do not be upset, he is a fool, a fool, but let him be . . . go and call your brothers to eat, you Mwaijonga (82), you Mwaipopo (115), and all your younger brothers; call Mwakaglie (39) and Mwakanjoki (60) . . . Mwalubange (38) go to eat with your younger brother, let us find food, millet, bananas, chickens, milk . . . let there be a little rain only, not too much . . . people believe

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

Note

643 103 Chiefdoms do not have names which continue indefinitely. They are referred to by the name of the ruling chief or one of his illustrious ancestors, and often several different names are in common use for one chiefdom. To simplify the map we have assigned a number to each chiefdom held by a segment of the Nyakyusa or Kukwe lineages (*vide* genealogies, pp. 3, 27), and these numbers are plotted on the map. The map is based on that of Mr. R. de Z. Hall (sometime D.C., Tukuyu) and includes all, or almost all, the Nyakyusa and Kukwe chiefdoms recognized by the Administration.[1] The Penja, Nyika, Ndali, Lambya, and Saka chiefdoms on the fringes of the valley are indicated, but not plotted. The map does not include all chiefdoms recognized in some fashion by the Nyakyusa themselves, e.g. Mwabungulu (178) 'came out' in 1953 and has been established at some distance from his elder brother with his own senior headman, but he is not recognized by the Administration as a chief and therefore his domain is not included on the map as a separate chiefdom.

[1] Two names listed by Mr. Hall are omitted, Ali Bin Omari because he is an immigrant and Mwakalinga of Kiwila because he is the son of a commoner appointed as headman by the German Administration, and not a member of either royal lineage.

9:Wilson R-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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Nyakyusa

102
693
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Map II. Nyakyusa valley showing location of chiefdoms

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VI

LAND AND POWER

THE crux of the chiefs' 'coming out' was a redistribution of power and of land, and we must pause in our description of the ritual cycle to discuss the relation between chiefdoms and villages and the land, and to consider more closely the balance of power between successive generations.

(a) THE TERRITORIAL ALIGNMENT OF CHIEFDOMS AND VILLAGES

Tradition makes it clear that the heroes came to a sparsely occupied country and that their descendants gradually spread out as their numbers increased. The settlers chose to live on hillocks overlooking the surrounding country. Lubaga and Mbande, the seats of the two 'divine kings' are commanding sites. The grove of Kabale, where the ancestors of the Kukwe chiefs first established themselves, is on an eminence rising from the plateau, and Kambaekela (near the Mbaka bridge) on which the early chiefs Mwaipaja (21) and Mwaipopo (26) were buried is a hill very like Mbande, overlooking the plain.

Unlike most of their neighbours the Nyakyusa show a preference for cleared and cultivated land, planted with bamboos and the oil-bearing *ungungati* trees (*Trichilia* spp.)[1] as well as the great *umuali* (*Cheraphora amelia*) which, in their view, adds dignity to the homestead.[2] A study of the trees planted at the 'coming out' and the sacred groves in Mwaipopo's chiefdom (C 24)[3] shows that for four generations the ruling chiefs (descendants of Mwaijonga 89) have established their principal villages within a quarter of a mile of one another, and for seven generations the descendants of Mwakisambwe (90) have lived within two or three miles of one another (*side* plan, p. 101), though there were acres of fertile land

[1] I am indebted to Mr. P. B. Nightingale, Forestry Officer, Tukuyu, for giving me the botanical names of these and other trees.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 77-8.

[3] C followed by a number is the reference number of a chiefdom as listed in the genealogies of chiefs.

9: Wilson
●643
622
103
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551

FN17 Ngonde
Nyakyusa

Chart showing position of sections of chart on "Villages of Mwaipopo' Chiefdom." (Facing page 91)

A	B
C	D

9: Wilson E-5 (1954-1955) 1959
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Nyakyusa

FIELD GUIDE OF [illegible]

Gen.	Chief	Village	Headman	Recognized Position	Land
1	Mwaipopo (Mc)	[illegible]	[illegible]	Senior village of Mwaipopo	
		Ishi	Kingale		
		[illegible]	[illegible]	Second senior village of Mwaipopo	Moved for Tpt
		Bukelle			
		Ussafe			
12	Mwaipopo I (14)	[illegible]	[illegible] (Mwaipopo)	Sons of Ipinda and Isike	Moved for Tpt
	Mwaipopo II (14)				
		Bulyaga	Kasolle		Moved for Tpt
		Lupaso		Older section of Bulyaga	Moved or was Mwaipopo II
		Kiapele			
		Bwalkali		Contemporaries of Mwaipopo II	
		Bulindwanga	Mwaseme	Much younger sons than those of Bulyaga	
		Kilwanda	Mwakilaru		
		[illegible]	[illegible]	Sons of Bukelle	
		Kyamo	Kayelle		
		Kilinda	Mwangelle		
		Kabulu	Mwakimange		
03	Mwaipopo I (14)	[illegible]	[illegible] (Mwaipopo) b. c. 1880 active to 1922	Sons of Bulyaga	
	Mwaipopo II (14) active 1922				
		Kamonko		Younger brothers and a few sons of Ipinda	
		Lugenelo	Chuma (active 1922)		Moved for T. [illegible]
		Qamoo	Kabulu	Sons of Bulyaga and Bwalkali. Younger sons than in Ipinda	Gov land from
		[illegible]		Younger brothers of Ipinda	Moved south
		Kilinda (Lower section)	Mwakilaru	Sons of Kilinda	
		[illegible]	[illegible] (left b. Ingale 1922)	Sons of Lugenelo	
		Mkyanga	Mwakaiko	Younger sons of Lugenelo	
		Kalile	Mwakalumbile	Younger sons of Lugenelo	
		Lukwanga	Lyamdole	Sons of Kilinda	
		Nkolwa	Nyamdoga	Sons of Bukelle	
		Kilwal	Kasolle	New village	Gideny to the
		Kilinda	Chuma (of Lugenelo)	New village	Gideny to the

[facing p. 91; Section A]

● 603
632
103
631
551

(P. KINGAPUNYA CHIEFDOM)

Land	Kyaulwa (Who or from)	Comments
		Widows of Mwalipaya live here
		Not surviving
(page) Moved to Ipweso	0	
		Not surviving
		Not surviving
Moved to Lupando	0 (or none)	
Moved to Ipweso		
Moved on coming out of Mwalipaya (1), but not again		
(1)	0 (or none)	
or of		Now hold where Sikki is now. Driven out by Bujiga
		Clientless of Mwalipaya
	0	
		Disappeared for ever
		Clientless of Mwalipaya
	0 (or none)	Mwalipaya's son never gained of country. Brought out Mwalipaya.
or of	no	Junior members including Kikafu moved to Lupando. (2 members in 1958)
Moved to Lupando. Many members gone to Ipweso.		Chief now headman of Kikafu, now village in Ipweso.
Can land from Bujiga		Albino, son of Mwalipaya (1), a female member, moved to Ipweso.
Moved southward		Sub-chief Lukwipile
	(1) (or none)	
	0	
		Moshiliwell sub-chief
Colony in Ipweso	0	Albino, a junior son of Mwalipaya (1), who was in exile over the Libala. Dr. Lucy Mitchell-Hedges was established in exile.
Colony in Ipweso	0	Kaliba established

[Henry p.91; Sikkim B]

[illegible] Digvijaya [illegible]
Hyderabad

649
622
103
63/
551

		[illegible] (under review)	[illegible]	State of [illegible]	
		[illegible]	[illegible] (all [illegible])	State of [illegible]	
		[illegible]	[illegible]	Foreign area of [illegible]	
		[illegible]	[illegible]	Foreign area of [illegible]	
		[illegible]	[illegible]	State of [illegible]	
		[illegible]	[illegible]	State of [illegible]	
		[illegible]	[illegible]	Free village	[illegible]
		[illegible]	[illegible] (Legislative)	Free village	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible] (1-12)	[illegible]	[illegible]	State of [illegible] (Mixed)	[illegible]
		[illegible]	[illegible]	Section of [illegible], Foreign area of [illegible] and [illegible], Mixed	
		[illegible]	[illegible]	State of [illegible] and [illegible] area (mixed), [illegible]	
		[illegible]	[illegible]	State of [illegible] and [illegible], State [illegible] in [illegible]	
		[illegible]	[illegible] (Mixed)	State of [illegible] (Mostly mixed)	[illegible]
		[illegible]	[illegible]	State of [illegible] (1)	
		[illegible]	[illegible]	State of [illegible], State [illegible]	[illegible]
		[illegible]	[illegible]	State of [illegible] and [illegible]	
		[illegible]	[illegible]	State of [illegible], Foreign [illegible] of [illegible]	
		[illegible]	[illegible]	State of [illegible]	
		[illegible]	[illegible]	State of [illegible], Foreign [illegible] of [illegible]	
		[illegible]		State of [illegible]	
		[illegible]		State of [illegible]	
		[illegible]	[illegible]	Free village	[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

643
622
163
631
551

		Sub-chief Likonyelo
	11 (all women)	
	0	
		Mwaulilowali sub-chief
Colony in force	48	Akiwey, a junior son of Mwaijonga II, was sent to watch over this colony. In 1933 Mwalungulu was established as sub-chief of the area.
Colony in force	c38	Possibly subdivided
Occupies site previously held by parts of Ngonde, Ngondo, and Lungwebungu. Its 'crossing out' of Mwaulilo Ngonde split some members among south, and some south, some east, to make room for Lungwebungu. Some members of Ngondo, including the headman, moved south, and Lungwebungu moved east.	20 (including Nkangu)	Kilembo first built in Kyocwelo. Father was in Ngondo. Born c. 1910. Made her at Mwaulilo's 'crossing out'. This village has a new name. It was originally called Mpangwa.
[illegible]		These Mwaulilo's women. He first built here.
[illegible]	11	Christian village near school. Mwalungulu (c.48) first built here but moved to Kwela. Mwalungulu (c.48) had occupied this site, then Mwaijonga built [illegible] on it.
	15	1 wife of Ngonde who had no money to make room for Lungwebungu built at one end of Nkalo but this is temporary.
6. Occupies the site first held by Lidoe of generation I which split and has two tiny sections to the north and south, and then by Ipwana III which moved some distance to south at 'crossing out' of Mwaulilo. Ruchali II and Ngonde II have also moved southward.		F. of Pwaliki in Ruchali. Ruchali also called Ipwana. New name has recently been established.
		The son of Likonyelo 'came out' with Mwaulilo.
Occupies land formerly occupied by Ngoi	15 (14 wives)	11 male proxy or work, 11 present. Mwaulilo made this at Mwaulilo's 'crossing out'. His father was in Ngoi.
	10	
	15	
		Also called Sulle
[illegible]		
		Names of villages of generation IV not ascertained.
		Names of villages of generation IV not ascertained.
Colony in force	c38	New village established for second wife Mwalungulu, who is a sub-chief. Possibly subdivided.

[illegible] and wives have been corrected and the villages established in generation IV added.

[facing p. 91; section D]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F7417 Ngonde F7417
Nyakyusa

fashion. Each village is occupied by an age-set and men are emphatic that age and friendship, not kinship, are the basis of a village, but the villages of fathers, sons, and grandsons commonly, though not invariably, adjoin one another, as Bujege, Igembe, and Lupando, or Lupondo, Njisi, and Iringa in Mwaipopo's chiefdom (*side* plan, p. 101). Each section of a chiefdom comprises half the ruling generation, and interspersed with their villages are those of their fathers and sons. Men are identified by the name of their village, section, and chief; the village name defines their age-set, the name of section and chief their generation. The section name is always that of the senior village which leads it. Generation succeeds generation in office when their heirs 'come out', but the relative position of villages (age-sets) within a generation remains constant. Since chiefdoms traditionally split each generation at the 'coming out' the men of the retired generation who remained belonged to one section only; those of the other section of their generation were members of another chiefdom. The territorial arrangements reflected in the plan of Mwaipopo's chiefdom on p. 101 are modified by the fact that the chiefdom has not split for four generations. In generation I Kibonde was the portion of the junior heir, Mwafungo (83), but he died young and his land and widow were inherited by the senior brother, Mwaijonga (80). The son of this levirateal union, Mwakipesile (118), went through the 'coming out' in generation II along with Mwaijonga's heirs, Ijonga (114, representing her full brother 115), and Mwakabude (117). Mwakipesile inherited Kibonde and Mwakabude inherited Kitali, but both were later defeated in war by Mwaipopo II and their land incorporated in his chiefdom. Mwakipesile's heir, Likoyela, and Mwakabude remained as subordinate chiefs. Though the girl Ijonga celebrated the 'coming out' in place of her unborn brother she could not rule, and Mwaiseoja, son of Mwaijonga II (younger full brother of 80) acted for her. He was finally defeated by Mwaipopo II and fled to the periphery of the country. Kabula was his village, and he was subordinate to Mwaipopo, not independent.

In generation III the chiefdom did not split because by that time the British administration was in control, and the territorial division remained much the same, Igembe and Njisi becoming the senior villages in place of Bujege and Lupondo, with Mwanlaga (130) and Mwaseba (132) as the young chiefs. Kibonde,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

system is still the accepted form in Mwaipopo's chiefdom; the advantages of separating kinsmen in different villages are explicitly stated, and the contrast between the Nyakyusa and their neighbours in this respect emphasised. 'Certainly we do not live with kinsmen here but the Kinga do.' 'It is not good for a son to live close to his father, they will quarrel.' 'When we move to another village we consider friendship not kinship in selecting it.'

(b) THE BALANCE BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND SECTIONS

The ritual cycle of the 'coming out' and the sacrifices in the groves helped to maintain a balance of power between generations, as well as between chiefs and commoners. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) in 1953 it was Mwabuputa, the senior village headman of his father, who took the leading part. He was described as 'the greatest man in the country' who 'brings out the chief' and his manner indicated that he was well aware of his power. During the reign of Mwaipopo (116) the power of his father's village headmen, Njobakosa and Ngulyo, was apparent at every ritual. Spiritual power was shared between chiefs and commoners, but exercised ideally by a virile chief of the ruling generation and the experienced headmen of the retired generation.

Those chosen as senior village headmen at the 'coming out' are commonly older than the young chief, but village headmen are thought of as surviving their chief—it is they who were responsible for smothering him, and performing the sacrifices in his grove. The headmanship is an office and so long as the office is necessary an incumbent is found for it, in the person of the heir of the original holder who is so closely identified with the deceased that most precise inquiry is often necessary to establish whether a given individual is the original holder, the succeeding heir, or a later heir, successor to the successor. The Ngulyo who officiated at the rituals in 1953 was the heir of the original Ngulyo (some said the *grandson*, not the son) and he was criticised by Kasitile as being 'a young man who knew nothing'. The principle, so familiar in Central Africa, of a perpetual office[1] emerges, among the

[1] I. Cunnison, *Kinship and Land Organization on the Lunguda*, Communications of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute No. 3 (1956), pp. 19-23; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), p. 100; A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, O.U.P. (1939), p. 94; 'Some Types of Family Structure among the Central Bantu', in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, p. 109; J. Roscoe, *The Bagesu*, London (1924), p. 9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Nyakyusa, when sacrifices are continued in the grove of a dead chief such as Mwakisambwe (30), for an indefinite number of generations, and the heirs of his senior village headmen serve as his priests, taking the name of the first holder of the office. Most of the priests of Lubaga held perpetual titles of this sort. The conception of the *corporation sole* is familiar enough in the western tradition, but European observers in Africa are sometimes confused by the use of a personal name and the almost complete identification of each holder with his predecessor, as well as by the practice of treating certain kinship relationships as if they were offices.

Generation was determined among the Nyakyusa by association with a chief. There was no name for those who 'came out' together other than that of their chief, who was the focus of the ritual. On the other hand, however, a 'coming out' concerned a whole generation, and it could not be held out of season. If the heir died he was replaced by a brother, as were Mwaipopo I (113) and Mwankuga I (130). If a chief had no male heir of the right age in his senior house his daughter might represent an heir. For example, at the coming out of the sons of Mwaijonga, it was a *girl* Ijonga (114) who performed the leading part in the ritual which fell due before the birth of Mwaipopo I (115). When Mwaipopo I was born and grew up he assumed office, but he died young and was replaced by his younger brother without a further celebration. Because the 'coming out' was thus linked to the maturity of a whole generation we have felt some confidence in assigning approximate dates to the arrival of the heroes. The period between each 'coming out' we estimate at thirty to thirty-five years, though the higher figure is probably more nearly correct. There must in fact have been some flexibility in the timing of the 'coming out' to account for the differences in the *number of generations of ruling chiefs in different segments of the* lineage. Some of the differences may be due to errors (e.g. it is possible that 70 is an elder brother not the father of 98, and that a generation has been omitted between Mwakapeje (94) and Mwakage (75), but even where there is little possibility of error the number of generations does not always tally.

In theory a man always belongs to the generation succeeding that of his father, irrespective of his age, provided he has not inherited from a man of the previous generation and taken his station, but in practice, since men often have sons of very different

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ages, they sometimes build in villages of different generations. When it comes to the selection of village headmen, however, care is taken to ensure that they are indeed sons of men who came out with the previous chief, and a village like Katumba which comprised both younger brothers and sons of Mwankuga's generation breaks up, some members 'coming out' with Mwankuga's son, others acting as 'fathers'. Within a village all the members are equal subject to their headman, but a hierarchy of villages is clear. 561 623 622

The pre-eminence of the two senior village headmen of a chief is marked. They alone make fire with him at the 'coming out'. They alone are handed war tails with which to lead their men in battle. Each is responsible for one half of the country and a dispute not settled by the headman of the village of the defendant is reported to the senior headman in whose side of the country the village lies, and he brings it before the chief. Each senior headman has his own village, the two senior villages of the country, in which the royal ladies live; the senior wife married at the 'coming out' is established close to the senior village headman, the second wife close to the second senior headman. A chief may establish wives in a number of villages, and some at least of those he inherits from his father continue to live in his father's old homestead 'to sweep the grave', but his capitals (*ifumpalala*) are the two senior villages of the country in which his two senior wives and two senior village headmen live[1] and the names of the capitals are used not only for the senior villages but for the half sections of the generation they lead. The importance of the two senior headmen is apparent even when their generation has handed over political authority to their sons. At the sacrifices we have described Njobakwa and Ngulyo, heirs of the senior headmen of the chief Mwaijunga (81) officiated, and at the 'coming out' of Mwanyilo (177) it was Mwambupuzu and Kalunja his father's senior headmen who organised the ritual. 631 643 [293] [778]

Each village established at a 'coming out' is a clearly defined unit with its own land, and leader, and name, but villages are also segments of larger units, the half-section of the chiefdom under a senior headman, and the whole chiefdom under the leadership of 621 631 561

[1] Mwanyilo (177), though he had two senior headmen, established his two senior wives in one house, close to the house of Kilindo his senior headman. This was explained as a temporary measure 'because they were young', but it is not the traditional pattern, and may be linked with the fact that the splitting of the country each generation is no longer accepted as the inevitable pattern.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the chief himself. The members of each village co-operate in some measure in cultivation and herding and they form a defensive group against attack 'by day and by night'—i.e. against armed raiders and witches.[1] But there is no great elaboration of ritual for single villages. Such village rituals as occur are connected with defence against witchcraft and involve driving out a supposed witch, or receiving back a member who has fled from fear of witchcraft, or protecting the village fields against witches.[2] Most communal rituals are organized on the basis of the chiefdom or group of chiefdoms, and villages or sections participate as segments of the chiefdom.

The principle of generation and that of section hold one another in check. All those who have 'come out' together have a strong sense of unity as opposed to the generations of their fathers and sons, but every generation is split into two sections each led by an heir of the chief, and these sections have a certain territorial solidarity. It is common in Africa for organized age-groups to cut across kinship and territorial groups. The Nyakyusa peculiarity lies in the territorial unity of age-sets which occupy villages, and the manner in which the fissiparous tendencies within a chiefdom have a constitutional outlet in the rivalry between the sections of a ruling generation which become independent at the 'coming out' of the next generation.

The combination of the hereditary and selective principles of leadership among the Nyakyusa is also somewhat different from that among their neighbours. With many Central African people the heir to the holder of the office of village headman or chief is *selected*, and the most capable member of a given lineage or lineage segment appointed.[3] Among the Nyakyusa succession is precisely defined and there is no selection of a suitable heir except to the supreme and greatly feared office of 'divine king', but the selective principle is given full scope in the 'catching' of leaders for the young men's villages at every 'coming out'. It is this combination of the hereditary and selective principles which binds together chiefs and commoners and successive generations. The rules of

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 44-66, 91-103.

[2] op. cit., pp. 32-4, 103 ff., 134-6, 170-4.

[3] I. Cunnison, 'Headmanship and Ritual of Luapula Villages', *Africa*, xxvi (1956), p. 101; M. G. Marwick, 'The Social Context of Cewa Witch Belief', *Africa*, xxii (1952), pp. 215-21; V. Turner, 'Ndembu Village Structure', *Africa*, xxv (1955), pp. 123-41; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), pp. 137-63.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

inheritance ensure that a limited number of young men are absorbed into the senior generation and live with the older men, sharing their activities and from time to time holding office as headmen or priests of that generation, and the selection in each generation of young men who are *not* the sons of village headmen, or chiefs, or headmen of the past generation, ensures that commoners without office are constantly recruited to the hierarchy of rulers. In short, power is distributed.

(c) RITUAL AND SECULAR BONDS

As in so many societies, economic and ritual links extended, traditionally, further than political links.[1] Selya was dependent upon BuKinga for iron and the Kinga came to fruitful Selya to pray for fertility. The priests who came to pray brought the hoes. The many independent chiefdoms of Selya and the Mbaka valley acknowledged the spiritual overlordship of the Lwembe by sending sacrifices to him, and it was through the network of hereditary priests like Kasitile, Mwamakunda, Mwalukuta, and Nyama of Selya, and the Kinga priests Kikungubeja, Nsyanigwa, Kyamba Kitali, and Silobwike that wider bonds were maintained. Mwaipopo (116) when he was granted a Court which gave him the secular leadership of Selya, failed to make any acknowledgement of Lwembe's traditional power, and it was Kasitile who later urged him to do so. The western chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa still buy medicines and bark-cloth from the Ndali to the west, and have done so for many generations, but no common ritual links them as it does Selya and the plain with BuKinga. The trade was of lesser importance than that to the east, for it does not seem to have included iron, though the Nyiha who share a common culture with the Lambya, the western neighbours of the Nyakyusa, are known to have been skilled smiths.[2] With the Sangu to the

[1] cf. E. Colson, 'The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia' in *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa* (ed. Colson and Gluckman).

A comparison with the frontier in West and South Africa where economic and religious expansion compelled the establishment of Government is instructive. Cf. W. K. Hancock, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs*, vol. ii, part ii, pp. 160-8.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between the Lakes Nyasa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The British Geographical Magazine*, vi (1891), p. 169. Elton's suggestion that some of the Nyakyusa iron came from the west is discussed by Cotterill, J. F. Elton, *The Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa* (1879), p. 371 and map, cf. J. Thompson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back*, vol. i, p. 270.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631 north the Nyakyusa were continually at war; they did not trade
782 or pray with them. Thus we conclude that participation in a
[721] common ritual is, in the Nyakyusa case, directly linked with a common origin and essential trade.

643 The divine kings, Lwembe and Kyungu, were regarded as
having power over certain areas, a power closely linked with
[789] rainfall. Indeed, one informant argued that the chiefs living
[782] around Masoko had never sent sacrifices to Lubaga, 'because when it rains at Lubaga the rain does not come as far as Masoko'. He
[821] was mistaken in his facts—the chiefs of Masoko did at one time send to Lubaga as Mwambete (162), chief at Masoko, himself admitted—but the argument points to a conception of supernatural power tied to a rainfall area. This notion was not, however, applied consistently.

643 The balance between secular and mystical power has altered
173 during the past ten generations. The founding heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, came as conquerors and must surely have led their men personally; but early in the history of Ngonde the Kyungu was secluded, and power was exercised almost exclusively by the nobles (*vide supra*, pp. 40-46); and the Lwembe also was, at one period, 'not seen by ordinary men' and led a life hedged about with taboos. There is sharp contrast in Nyakyusa tradition between the active chiefs who were warriors, and arbitrators, and worked hard in their fields[1] and the 'divine king' who lived in seclusion. As we have seen, the chiefs often delegated ritual functions, with the taboos involved, to a junior kinsman such as Mwamukinga (44) or Mwakihalu (45) (*vide* pp. 79-81, 114) whose heirs succeeded to the office. It is even possible that the
[178] first Lwembe at Lubaga (Mwakalebela 19) took over ritual functions *from his senior brother, Kalosi (18).*[2] *The present* tendency is for the development of secular power and its separation from mystical power. The Kyungu is no longer a god but an administrator: the heir of the Lwembes sits as an elected representative of chiefs on the Local Council. In the traditional
182 Nyakyusa society ritual played an essential part in maintaining
177 the balance between generations, sections, and social strata, and in

[1] In 1935 a young chief was bitterly criticized by his own kinsmen because he 'never had a hoe in his hands' whereas his father and grandfather had (to our personal knowledge) been diligent in hoeing.

[2] But according to one excellent informant, Mwakimenkwe (30) lived secluded while Mwakilima (31) 'led men'—i.e. entertained.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the shades and the hearths which was stressed; in Porokoto's country people talked mostly of the witches; but it seemed clear that both conceptions were present when men murmured: 'The hearth bricks are bad' (*amafge mabili*) and they sought to cleanse them by clearing out the old fire and lighting new. 'To clear out the ashes means they take away all that dirt, the dirt which the witches have brought and the shades; it is the cause of illness.' When witches are thought to be active there is also a public complaint, and a public warning is given 'to whom it may concern' to desist.[1] This occurred in the ritual after the ground hornbill had eaten the chicken. Above all, men must admit their anger to one another: 'they fight that the homesteads may be peaceful'. The theme so familiar in Nyakyusa rituals—that quarrels must be confessed if they are to be composed—recurs yet again. Though we distinguish the rituals for 'cleansing the country' from sacrifices, on the ground that the whole community participates in the 'cleansing' while the sacrifice is esoteric, the two are closely linked, and a sacrifice commonly precedes or follows the cleansing. We turn now to the detailed accounts of celebrations for 'cleansing' in Ngonde and among the Kukwe.

(*a*) THE RATS

In Ngonde they used to clear out the ashes at the new year, at the first hoeing (in December) after 'the break of the rains'. They feared that death and disease would spread through the land if they continued living with the old fires, that the shades in the earth, both the shades of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry. Let them drive the shades away and hoe in peace. They always remembered to do so each new year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually, they never forgot. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to clear out the ashes; and then they would hoe in peace. And at other times, too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the ashes again. 'It is to drive away the shade with the sickness that he brings. We throw out the ashes and firebrands because he has come to warm himself over the fire in our houses, we throw out the pots and winnowing baskets because he has come to see us eating; let him go there (to the grove) and eat what he asked for—we say the shades ask for food—let him eat here, perhaps a sheep. We say the shades bring sickness to the fire, hence we throw out the ashes and make new fire with a drill.'

The nobles of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 109-13.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 the order to clear out the ashes; messages were sent to the great
796 chiefs and the senior territorial nobles of the plain, and they told
[447] their juniors. A sacrifice was made in one of the sacred groves of the Kyungus and all fires in the whole Ngonde plain were put out. And then

> all the chiefs from every country near Mbonde and the nobles and all the village headmen and all the ordinary men and women, too, went to Kyimbwe where we threw away the sickness of all the country.

At Kyimbwe, which is the crossroads in the bush, they threw away the ashes of their old fires, and some of the pots and baskets in which food is served; while those few people who could not get to Kyimbwe threw them away from their own houses on the same day as the others. At Kyimbwe new fire was made with a
[372] fire-drill by the nobles of Ngonde who

> run with it without looking back and the people danced alongside them and speared one another! . . . They said, 'Let us dance, let us fight that the homesteads may be peaceful'. . . . 'Let us throw out the ashes that death may leave the homesteads and they be at peace.' It is to bring out war from within (*ukwepa*).

The symbolism is the same as in the rituals of kinship when kinsmen gather to admit their quarrels and prem one another to speak out, so that they may cleanse themselves of anger.

The new fire was distributed to the whole plain in order. Great chiefs and senior nobles took it first and passed it to their juniors, chiefs passed to village headmen, and in each group the common people got it from their own ruling noble or their own village headman.

In July 1937, while we were visiting Ngonde, there was a
[73] plague of rats[1] which threatened the food supply, and Bongole,
[156] the wife of a chief and well known as a prophetess, went into a
[791] trance and revealed that the rats were caused by the anger of the
[787] previous Kyungu and could be got rid of only by a ritual 'throwing out the rubbish' and sacrifice. Her husband reported the matter to Mulwa, the premier noble of Ngonde, to whom the present Kyungu, Peter—at one time a Church member—had long since handed over all responsibility for communal rituals. Mulwa called four of the leading chiefs who were pagan and a number of

[1] Nothing new to Ngonde. Lord (then Captain) Lugard suffered from them in 1890. F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), vol. i, p. 107. In 1907 the country swarmed with rats: in our own camp we killed 50 in one such night.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Mwandisi made a great deal of the fact that at the 'throwing out of the rubbish' the village headmen ate meat *raw*. 783 796

Formerly . . . we threw away the ashes and charred brands . . . that is to drive away the shades who warm themselves over the hearth in the house; they bring us sickness, let them warm themselves over there in the long grass! Also in the long grass there we killed meat, and the priests ate it raw: no one saw them doing that there in the long grass; we went by day with drums, people from all the homesteads, a moving multitude . . . then we came home . . . the priests remained with their wives, they threw away their bark-cloths, they cut off morsels of meat and ate them raw. Because the priests are witches it is they who ate raw meat before we chiefs came, the priests are witches. . . . The witches and shades gather and bring sickness together, we kill a cow in the grass, we drive them away. No, they do not eat raw meat in the grass, they cook it. But at the capital if the chief has killed a cow for men to eat the priests eat meat raw. We have seen them. I, Mwandisi, have seen Mwajule and Kalambo the senior village headmen eating raw meat at my place and my wives have seen them also. [262] [753] [793]

'Yes', said one of his wives, 'we saw them and we ran away saying: "Well! Fancy doing it openly!"' Mwandisi continued:

The senior village headmen are witches, children of those who ate raw food long ago. Some village headmen only rush to eat a cow we have killed, but some go to eat a person; those are the witches who eat raw meat! [754]

The function of a chief is to feed his men on beef, and in doing so he placates the witches who are commoners and who, like their forefathers, prefer their meat raw. If they do not get beef then the witches eat men.' [643]

(c) SMALLPOX

The prayer and 'clearing out of the rubbish', traditionally celebrated before an approaching epidemic, was described by an elderly Christian, Filombo. It illustrates very clearly the combination of practical precaution—isolation—and magical protection, and also the idea that sickness was brought into the country by witches. 783 796 753

When the chief had heard that smallpox was coming, or dysentery, he said, 'Let us pray'. Before my baptism I saw it, in the country of the

[illegible]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

789 them first, then his grandfather, and father. Others told us that
778 rain stones always came from Kisi country, a very wet strip of land on the north-east shore of the Lake where the clouds always seem to gather when one looks south from the Nyakyusa valley and plain, and a piece of perforated wood used in Ngonde for making rain came from the hills of Misuku, also a very wet country. Kasitile's stones were of two types, but no direct association of male and female was made. However, the Kukwe spoke of a 'mother' stone having young. 'The rain-maker puts back the stone in the potshard without water (after rain has come) and going later he finds that it has got young, perhaps seven, with the mother there are eight.'

The rain-makers are subject to certain taboos: during the dry
791 season they may not wash lest they drive away the rain nor do they
[784] shave for 'they compare hair and clouds saying, "Let it be black", they compare a bald pate with sunshine.' And the rain-maker
[262] may not eat roasted maize 'for as the maize crackles in the potshard when it is roasted, so the thunder will crackle in the sky'. He may not eat green maize (which is reaped during the rains) until the dry weather begins 'because he creates rain, which means he creates all the food which grows with the rain'. If he begins eating too soon he may stop the growth. And when the rain-maker is manipulating his instruments a sex taboo is observed.
[894] 'When I am making rain,' said Kasitile, 'I do not sleep with my wives for two days, it's taboo. How would Kyala help us if I did?'

In theory the rain-maker always works under the direction of
• [643] the political authority—the Kyungu or a chief—but he is also thought to wreak vengeance on those who anger him. Kasitile was critical of his colleague in the hills above Isumba: 'He never makes a nice gentle rain, it always destroys food. . . . He is always demanding things from men, and, if they refuse, he brings his rain to destroy things. . . . There is a very strong wind and heavy rain which takes roofs off houses.' But when Kasitile himself was
[641] angry, because his son was taken as a tax defaulter to work on the
[687] roads, the weather grew bad.

789 People say I am angry, that this rain is because they came and beat me because of tax. This time the tax collectors came to my place and beat me and when I thought, 'It is not the custom with our forefathers for the tax collectors to come at all to men like me', I grew angry and prayed. . . . When I was in Malignanda the country suffered from hunger, all their children were in trouble. . . . Then I came up, and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

their wives took to wearing cloth they should earn it for themselves by growing and selling millet and brewing beer, and many women do the clearing and hoeing in their fields, work that used to fall to men; but it is difficult for a chief to refuse to provide a man to hoe the ridges in his wife's field, or to refuse an elderly woman a cloth or some salt, and young heirs grumble much about their encumbrances.

In the political field there has been a sustained attempt to make local government more democratic and to include in it the educated men. Between 1891, when the German Government first assumed control of the area, and 1938, the tendency was for the power of the chiefs to be increased at the expense of that of the commoners. This was admitted by the chiefs themselves, as we have seen. In 1949 there was established a system of Rural Councils, on which chiefs, village headmen (*amafumu*), and ordinary commoners are represented. Four[1] of each category are chosen as representatives on the Council in their area by an electoral college itself elected by all taxpayers. Rungwe District is divided into five areas. The policy of treating some chiefs as senior to others has been abandoned and each of the seventy-eight recognized rulers (*abatwe*) is eligible for election as a chief's representative on his local Rural Council. Village headmen (two from each chiefdom) and the ordinary commoners are similarly chosen. The five Rural Councils in turn elect one man of each area to the District Council.[2] The system allows for, and seems to have achieved, a combination of men with traditionally high status and those who are conspicuous by reason of their education or success as coffee or rice farmers. The old feeling that education was not necessary to a chief's son, though it might be useful to a poor man, has vanished, and a considerable number of the educated leaders of the district are sons or grandsons of chiefs. The elected president of the District Council, Mr. Gordon Mwamsumo (c86) is of the Nyakyusa chiefs' lineage, though not of the most senior line. In the Rural Councils the presidents elected have all, with one exception, been ruling chiefs, but it is not necessarily the genealogically senior who is chosen. There is scope for selection on the grounds of character and ability.

[1] Five in the populous plain, Ukukwe (Ukulingamba).

[2] cf. J. S. Kingdon, 'The Initiation of a System of Local Government by African Rural Councils in Rungwe District of Tanganyika', *Journal of African Administration*, vol. iii, 4 (1951).

9: Wilson E-5 (1954-1955) 1959
F927 Ngonde F927
Nyakyusa

The office of chieftainship still carries high prestige and the District Council has actually resolved to select a paramount chief. Competition for this position is fierce and it remains to be seen whether the Council will ever agree on a nomination. The persistent suggestion that the Administration should undertake the invidious task and select a paramount is scarcely likely to be acted upon, since the Administration sees no necessity for establishing such an office.

Chiefs, assisted by their village headmen, are the executive officers of the Rural Councils, but they have lost their judicial functions. There are twenty-four recognized courts with a bench of 'courtbuilders' appointed annually by the Rural Councils, and one superior court, but the annual appointment ceased in 1938 and more permanent appointments were made. The aim is to develop a specialized judiciary independent of the executive. There is also a very important class of full-time civil servants, secretaries of the District and Rural Councils, and clerks of the courts.

The position of village headman is in a fluid state. Where the 'meeting out' ritual has been dropped, the traditional occasion for the formal appointment of village headmen no longer arises, and old men continue in office much longer than before. When a headman dies his heir sometimes takes his position on, if neither the heir nor a junior son will accept it, some other man is appointed by the chief. There is evidence that in many chiefdoms men are reluctant to undertake the position, which carries no salary but involves a considerable amount of work and makes it difficult or impossible for a man to engage in paid employment either within or outside the District. As one woman put it, 'Money has killed the office of village headman' (*Ibulama ngaglo ahafumi*). There is some evidence from the lakeshore plain, however, of men competing for the office, and indeed of a son claiming in the courts the headmanship his father held. Possibly the competition for land on the plain, and the fact that the allocation of land lies with the village headman, account for this. When all the arable land is taken up, it is probable that acquisition will be through inheritance or sale only, and the present headman's power to allocate land is likely to vanish; but one of the most important assets of a village is its pasture-land, and in controlling and developing this the headman may well play a decisive part in the future. Since village headmen are essential executive officers in local administration, and are integrated into the new system of

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

Gomulia, the importance of establishing machinery for their appointment in chiefdoms where the 'coming out' is no longer held is obvious.

The traditional communal rituals have not been dropped altogether, but their celebration is sporadic and not everyone supports them. Careful enquiries suggest that in less than half of the chiefdoms has the 'coming out' been celebrated when it was due. In the most conservative portion of the district, Selya, there were celebrations in 1952 and 1954, but even in that area a number of the ruling chiefs have never 'come out'. The omission is due partly to the desire of the old men to remain office, partly to the increase in population and the planting of coffee which makes any new deal in land unacceptable, and partly to the feeling of many that the old ritual is an anachronism, if not directly incompatible with their new faith in Christianity. Some chiefs who have not 'come out' would welcome a celebration; one such told us that 'if the "coming out" died chiefdomship would die'; but a young chief's personal wishes are not decisive in this matter. Sacrifices at the graves of chiefs and heroes are not as frequent as before, but they still occur at some graves in time of drought or other emergency. The Kings came to Lufungo in 1954, and they were expected to come and inend Kaitele's lair in 1955. In 1954 also there were sacrifices to Mwenjongo (81) and Mwahimanlowe (91) for it was a season of scarcity. Rituals for cleansing the country and sprinkling the homesteads occur sporadically 'where occasion demands', but not annually in any chiefdom and never in some. And when celebrations do occur they do not unite the people of a chiefdom as they used to do. Christians oppose them and many non-Christians are also sceptical.

In 1955 the traditional rituals celebrated by lineages and chiefdoms formed a coherent system. They were directed towards the shades and the heroes, as was sacrifice in the sacrifices and in the dramas of death and rebirth when these included 'fools with the shades' or were 'caught hold of' by Kyala.[1] The older participants were then conscious, in greater or lesser degree, of the symbolism implicit in the actions they performed. By 1955 the ritual cycle was nowhere celebrated in full: what remained were 'bits and pieces' of ritual, some of them fully intelligible without reference to the complete cycle. The link between the rites and the shades and the heroes was less clear, and the symbolism less

[1] [illegible]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XIV

RELIGION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

In this chapter we shall seek to show how the traditional communal rituals both reflect and maintain the traditional political structure, and to consider in what measure the change from paganism to Christianity compels a change in other aspects of the society, or, alternatively, how far the economic and political changes taking place among the Nyakyusa compel a change in religion.

The heroic myths are the charter for chieftainship. The heroes from whom the chiefs are descended are pictured as creators and benefactors, the authors of fertility and civilized living. But myth and ritual also entrench the rights of commoners and unify people of different stocks by asserting their complementary diversity. No ritual can be celebrated without the participation of commoner priests. They 'speak out' at rituals and bring public opinion directly to bear on the chief, whose own health is held to depend upon their goodwill; at the same time the whole country looks to the chief as the source of fertility in man and beast and field.

Ritual was the integrating force with the widest range in the traditional society. Independent chiefs, even those whose people were culturally as different as the Nyakyusa and Kinga, joined in sacrifice to Lwembe and Kyala and were mystically dependent upon one another. As Kasitile put it 'the Kinga come (to Lubaga) both when there is trouble in our land and in theirs'. In Ngonde the 'divine king', the Kyonga, who controlled a flourishing trade in ivory, developed secular as well as ritual functions and emerged as a paramount chief, but in the Nyakyusa valley the ritual bond had no secular backing save the exchange of iron and salt for food, which linked Kinga and Nyakyusa in a tenuous partnership. The sacrifices to the Lwembe did not exclude war between chiefs who acknowledged him, nor did sacrifice to their common ancestor exclude war between Mwaipopo (116) and Mwaihojo (141), but the urgency of co-operation in sacrifice compelled later reconciliation. Perhaps the insistence on the sacredness of the heroes and their living representatives, the elaborate ritual of

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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Nyakyusa

chieftainship, and the dependence upon medicines as a means of enforcing law were connected with the ineffectiveness of secular authority. Certainly the Kyungu's emergence from seclusion, and the dropping of the taboos which surrounded him were connected with his acquisition of economic power; but we know too little of the conditions that make for elaboration of ritual to postulate any general connexion between the absence of ritual in public life and the effectiveness of secular authority. 162 643 792 796

The cycle of sacrifices to the heroes and dead chiefs among the Nyakyusa is more than an ancestor cult, for it includes non-relatives among its priests and beneficiaries; but it has many of the features of an ancestor cult, among them the identification of piety with conservatism. A good man follows exactly in the footsteps of his father who becomes his god. This is reconciled with a myth of a new beginning, ten generations ago, when 'civilized life came to the Nyakyusa valley, and the new beginning is celebrated each generation with the 'coming out' of the young chief and his contemporaries. 162 769 [773]

All Nyakyusa rituals are cathartic in the sense that they make explicit and seek to dissipate, by their very expression and rejection, certain anti-social tendencies. In the Nyakyusa view the root of evil is 'anger in the heart' unadmitted and corrosive, and only by an open confession can it be overcome.[1] Hence in every situation of misfortune, public or private, men are pressed to 'speak out' (ukunyepe) and admit their anger. At the 'coming out' the conflict of generations is expressed in the prolonged debate over the date of the celebration and the detailed arrangements, and in the dancing and slaughter of cattle, and is finally resolved when authority and land are handed over to the young men by their fathers. The fissiparous tendencies of a chiefdom are made explicit and canalized in constitutional form by the division of the old chief's country into two, under his senior sons; and criticism of the young chiefs is made explicit in the formal admonition by the father's village headmen. The rejection of conflict is clearest at the annual purification when men throw out the ashes contaminated by family bickering and the cannibalism of witches, and *fight* one another 'that the homesteads may be peaceful'. This fighting is 'to bring out war from within (ukunyepe)', 162 783 796 631

[1] cf. *Good Company*, pp. 99-110. The belief that a witch so uncovered must confess if the patient was to recover was the reason for the torture of witches in many African societies.

9: Wilson E-5 (1954-1955) 1959
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Nyakyusa

and is therefore to be interpreted as 'confusion of anger', rather than as 'rebellion'.

Sometimes there is an expression of opposite tendencies, both implicitly approved. The sacrifices to the heroes and at the graves of the chiefs emphasize seniority and precedence, and express the dependence of junior on senior kinsmen, but the myth, recalled in every celebration, tells of the surpassing power of the son or younger brother in the beginning of time, and the junior brother of a chief often holds office as a priest. There thus is the drama of driving away the chiefs and bringing him back transformed, which is so characteristic of the rituals of kinship and appears again at the cleansing of the country. Such contradictions are doubtless expressions of ambivalent attitudes among the participants themselves, and of the attempt to reconcile conflicting social principles—in these instances authority with the rights and duties of juniors, and change with continuity.

In a society without written records legal continuity depends very largely on publicity. This is apparent in the law relating to marriage contracts and family inheritance,[2] and still more so in the law of the chieftaincy. The ritual of 'coming out' celebrates radical changes in social status, and the public recognition of the leaders, members, and territorial boundaries of villages, as well as of the heirs to chieftainship. Thus continuity in these matters is assured. There is no positive value of the coexistence of father and son (as in ancient Egypt),[3] but the installation of the young chiefs before the death of their father serves to mitigate conflicts over the succession. Confusion over village boundaries and village headship often appears when the ritual has not been celebrated, for there is no public definition to refer to.

How close is the link between religious belief and practice and social structure? There is no doubt that the sacrifices to the dead chiefs and heroes and the traditional rituals of kinship supported the former political and kinship structure of the Nyakyusa. Their performances compelled co-operation between kinsmen,[1] between neighbouring chiefs, and between chiefs and people. How far then does the change in religion, begun when the first Christian converts professed his new faith, compel a change in the social

[1] Godfrey Wilson, 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Law', *Africa*, vol. ix, 1936, p. 1[illegible].
[2] M. Fortes, *Kinship and the Law*, pp. [illegible].
[3] *cf. Rituals of Kinship*, pp. [illegible].

A village continued to form a chiefdom under the hereditary chief, undoubtedly, but active co-operation between villages first emerged very often (high) indeed in the larger chiefdoms there commonly existed inter-[illegible] antipathy which might break out in nothing or even civil war. The majority of these larger chiefdoms was weak – for example, when the Ryukyuan were attacked by Satsu and Tiguri war-parties, and later by the Chinese, villages of the same chiefdom commonly failed to join in common defence. Similarly the land offices of one village were no concern of any other, and each jealously guarded its own rights.

Some of the chiefdoms was large; continuals of ends in control of Ryukyuan political organization and social attitudes. In 1902 the smallest indigenous chiefdom numbered only 34 men. In 1902 15,700 people were divided amongst about 18 indigenous chiefs, but unfortunately had not the Colonial Government frozen the system there would have been rather more – at least five more. Today there are 12 recognized 'administrative chiefs', amongst whom five have each less than 1,000 people under them, and the largest chiefdom contains fewer than 10,000 people – the average is just over 4,000 people.

Nevertheless the chiefdom, the collection of villages, was important, because in the creation of the chiefdom villages were created, and in its development the villages developed, matured and died away. A village survived only as long as its members lived and by the nature of the age-organization there was but little possibility of the recruitment of new members, for villagers' sons left to form their own new villages. Their sons eventually came to comprise the core of the new chiefdoms.

In connection with the constitution of a Ryukyuan village and with land tenure, the significant feature of the chiefdom was its establishment, together with the initiation of a new chief, at the great 'coming-out' ceremony, whereby, in brief, each chief was succeeded by two of his sons – the elder son of each of the senior houses of the chief, i.e., of his first two wives. At the 'coming-out' ceremony, when the sons were still young men and their father was not a particularly old man, the old chiefdom was divided into two, each part ruling under one of the new young chiefs. Before this critical ceremony – at which each hereditary chief was performed – the younger sons of the old chiefdom had already moved away from their fathers' villages and had established their own 'fathers' villages' nearby, each son commanding a group of recruits. A Ryukyuan boy from the age of about seven years could not continue to live with his father and mother, but, in company with his mates, built his own hut on a site adjacent to the main village as indicated by the fathers' headmen. Until the 'coming-out' ceremony these youths' villages were under the control of the old village headmen; but with the initiation of the new chiefs they achieved independent status, with with to new headmen appointed from among its members by the old headmen. Each new village was allocated a new building site and a new arable area, and quite commonly the old villages, the older men, moved away a little in order to give the younger men adequate room to the land, for it was considered that the young men's needs for land were paramount.

After this wholesale reorganization of the old chiefdoms, when new villages were established and new boundaries determined, the old chief himself, the old headmen and the older men (the 'fathers') gradually retired from active public life. The old chief was supposed to commit suicide after a time (or was quietly killed off) in order to leave the field clear for his sons; the old headmen became the religious and ritual leaders of the new chiefdoms, with the favour of elder homosexuality, and the old men's

villages grew ever smaller and became extinct as their members gradually died off in old age.

A Nyakyusa village, then, used to being in the most significant political, social and religious sense. Each village had its own approximately democratic, and each headman was closely and magically strengthened in order to lead and protect its men and their families.

This particular system operated satisfactorily in the demographic and land-using conditions of the old days. By the process of bifurcation, briefly described above, new chiefdoms and new villages were formed for each generation. Although the population appears to have been increasing rapidly there was always sufficient land to create new chiefdoms where one had existed before, and to create new villages and more village than had existed before in the old chiefdom. The new new chiefs were able easily to move apart and had sufficient and more than sufficient land for their needs.

The system of bifurcation, the ideal of the Nyakyusa, did not always work out as neatly in practice – at any rate it often did not in the Lake Plains. Sometimes it did work; for example, the present chiefdoms of Lusaya and Kyesa are the two parts of their grandfather's single chiefdom, which split up under their respective fathers. Similarly, the present Wenkyanda and Wenmwangala chiefdoms descend from a single unit, while the Wenkyanda chiefdom itself today is really two indigenous chiefdoms, but the Government would recognise only the senior brother's claim to chiefship and allowed him authority over the whole. Even where a single new chiefdom succeeded the old (frequently as the result of civil war in which one brother subjugated the other) the essential dichotomous arrangement persisted so that the resultant single unit had two distinct halves, each with its own head with his villages and headmen, in any case, whether traditional bifurcation occurred or not, and right down to modern times, new villages have been established at the time of the 'coming-out' of the new chief. The base village system showed greater persistence and remained more to type than did the chiefdom and the wider political system.

The real authority of a Nyakyusa chief was not in general very great, although individuals here and there achieved personal importance. A chief was accorded a great deal of prestige and honour, and by tribute and gifts he frequently became prominently wealthy. He was supposed to be kept informed by his headmen of all important village affairs and to approve all matters concerning the land, but the village headmen were in fact the real land authority, who attended to the details of land allocation and land use within the village. A chief could not do this, and in fact only in so far as he had the support and loyalty of his headmen had he any authority at all. "A chief is a chief because he has headmen," one informant put it to me – he was a prominent chief himself. A village said: "A chief does not own the chiefdom or the land. We, the people together, own it." A chief could, without notice or advice, take any unoccupied land for the use of himself or of his kinsmen, but he could not allocate it to others; both headmen and villagers would have indignantly and successfully protested had he tried, as some occasionally did. Land disputes, an uncommon feature in a country where land was plentiful, were settled by the headmen of the village in question; they were the private affairs of the village and the chief had no right of interference. Inter-village disputes had once been before a meeting of the headmen concerned, with perhaps the assistance of the senior headmen of the chiefdom. Only if a dispute could not be settled and if it seemed likely to threaten general peace within the chiefdom would the disputants go before the chief himself, who could be called and had to rely heavily on his headmen to secure a settlement. In defence was his position that he might be unable to resolve inter-village disputes for fear of sickness against him by the unsuccessful party.

Sometimes a chief who was a powerful personality could neighbour over the headmen and achieved a semblance of autocracy; but most headmen would not allow this and in their opposition they had the full support of their villagers, as well as the moral backing of public opinion. There are considerable cases in pre-European days where a chief was deposed or reduced to a nonentity by his headmen acting together in the face of what they considered to be encroachments on the inviolability of village unity and independence. In any case, however, even the strongest chiefs were little disposed to interfere in the land matters of their villagers. Not wished to be bothered with the details of land rights, a chief could legitimately countenance if he were not kept informed by his headmen, but his approval of their actions — and more especially in land matters — was very largely a formality.

Traditional Land Tenure

As already briefly described, a village comes into formal existence at the time of the formation of a new chiefdom. In their rise to building site and arable and pastoral areas were roughly demarcated by the retiring headmen of the old chiefdom. Within the village, members were allocated their house plots and each was enabled to take the strip of land stretching behind his plot and make his field there. The land was shared out on a friendly, co-operative basis; the new headmen encountered not any difficulties and settled any disputes. Thus was the pattern of land-holding constituted. Apart from the relative value of a plot proximate to a man's house, there was little or no cause for dispute as land needs were small and the supply plentiful. An established villager could, without notification or special permission, extend his cultivation to any land which his neighbour — i.e., which was not in use or under fallow by a fellow-villager. There was therefore no need for a man to try to find or grab more land than he immediately required, nor did he need to be jealous of his neighbours' claims.

A villager's rights to the use of his land were quite secure and he had no fear of eviction or of the seizure of part of his holding. It is said that very occasionally a chief might take a man's holding but I think, at least in the Lake Plain, that this must have been most unusual. In fact, of course, as long as a man was allowed to stay his strip there was little value attached to the plot as such when nearly similar ground could abound. This sought security not on their plots of land, but in their membership of the village community, which ensured them of their continuing rights to adequate opportunity for cultivation over the years. However, virtually every man had an excellent security of tenure on his holding during the mature life of his age-village (i.e. until at least the next "moving-out" ceremony), and if he died his kin, should he wish, could come and live in the house and cultivate the fields without hindrance. The way in which he cultivated, though of course strongly conditioned by custom and convention, was his own affair, and he sub-divided his holding amongst his own family as he thought fit. He could not, however, alienate any of his land to a man living in another village, nor could he permit it to be cultivated by such a stranger.

Through loss of wholeheart, because of persistent illness, misfortune or unfriendliness, in order to live near a relative or friend, or to absent elsewhere, a man might leave the village and his age-mates. Then he had to give up his land-holding. When a man moved because of wholeheart or illness (much the more rare and a chief cause of movement) his land was normally left idle awaiting his hoped-for return, and his former neighbours would do all they could to induce him to return to his old home and fields — even to the use of force (see Wilson, G. 1938, pp. 33-4). His departure was an occasional happenstance, and a disturbance of co-operative unity. If the man consistently refused to return, or if it was known that he had definitely left for good, his

the same way as homesteads, to be allocated along with the vacant surrounding land, although sometimes it seems that a chief might successfully lay claim to them. Trees supplying firewood were generally plentiful in the surrounding bushland. A man would not cut wood on another's holding, and standing trees merely went with the land if it was taken up by anyone else, in the same way as useful stands of thatching grass did.

In conclusion of this summary account the following points may be mentioned as important to the understanding of the traditional system:—

(i) Land was plentiful in relation to the people's needs and extensive areas were left uncultivated.

(ii) Land was owned by the village as a group, acting under its own headman, who was the arbiter and the allocator of lands.

(iii) Land was held in usufructuary right only by a resident member of the village, and every resident had the right to a house and house-grown site, to sufficient arable land and to the use of communal pastures and woodland.

(iv) The individual's security of tenure was good, in so far as this was thought at all important.

(v) The power of the chief was slight in land matters; he had no authority to allocate land.

(vi) Other villages, whether of the same chiefdom or not, had no claim in, or authority over, a village's land and land affairs.

Sh:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F367 Ngonde F367
Nyakyusa

plots of maize, wimbim, tobacco, etc., and useful trees (banana, citrus, mango, kapok, mpapai and furcraea). Artificial drainage would, of course, make more land available along the rivers, but this is in general beyond the abilities and resources of the Nyakyusa without considerable outside assistance.

Finally, in this matter it is to be remembered that in addition to a man's arable holding, each of his wives has a banana plot at her house from which she obtains her staple foodstuff. Such plots amount to perhaps about a tenth of an acre on the average. On the other hand, the Nyakyusa are no longer prepared to tolerate a predominantly banana diet. Rice has, in most areas of the Lake Plains, become almost as important as banana.

Large-sized Holdings

Some blame for this acute shortage of land and the smallness of the average holding has often been laid upon that minority of Nyakyusa who have exceptionally large holdings, and also upon the immigrants from beyond the Lake Plains who have come to settle there during the past decade.

The occupiers of large-sized holdings are rather fewer than has sometimes been supposed. The minority of large land-owners, such as some of the modern chiefs with as much as 25-30 acres, has brought more attention to them than is really warranted. Most chiefs and village headmen have arable holdings of above average size, as a result of their privileged positions in the land allocation system and because of their prestige influence; but they remain a small minority and their number is bound to decrease in the future as inheritance causes sub-division of their holdings, for most of them have also more than the average number of wives and sons. In the two high-density regions it is clearly impossible for any man much to increase his present holding. As will be shown later (see page 26) the modern trend is not unanimously towards a dangerous fragmentation of holdings.

The data obtained in this matter for my eight village samples are summarised in Table III, page 15. In these villages the two men out of 172 who held more than ten acres were a village headman and the father of a chief.* There were seven other headmen and one chief as well as some other locally influential men amongst the people covered by my surveys, but none of them held more than ten acres. There are, of course, some commoners amongst the large land-holders; many of them are close relatives of the chief or headmen and have thus received preferential treatment. Some, however, are ordinary villagers who were perspicacious enough to see future trends and to obtain land in the early days before men were realised to have value and when vacant areas were still easily available. Such men are tending to become a new, wealthy class, but on the other hand they are particularly susceptible to the begging of kinsmen and friends who have insufficient land. If they are not to be regarded as unneighbourly or even anti-social (perhaps practising witchcraft) they are virtually compelled to be generous sometimes, both with their land and with their profits.

On the whole this minority of men evokes little attention or jealousy among the Nyakyusa, who indeed take it for granted that their chiefs and headmen will have more land than ordinary villagers, as befits their status and prestige. If it be thought that by reducing somehow the size and number of these unusually large holdings then the land shortage might be partly relieved, it is a false hope. I earnestly think that the Nyakyusa would welcome any such attempt at interference by administrative action, but in any case it would only provide minor and temporary relief here and there and would not be worth the executive difficulties involved.

* The chief was found to [illegible] land [illegible] in his village [illegible] the headman [illegible] the chief's father [illegible] village [illegible] prestige [illegible] land [illegible] the chief's father [illegible] probably [illegible] prestige [illegible]

The Problem of Immigrant Land-Seekers

Undue importance has also been given to immigrants, but their numbers are relatively small and only significant locally. Since about 1948, or a little earlier, there has been an influx of Africans into the Lake Plains: - Nyakyusa from the Highlands (chiefly from the Central Region - Poland), Nilotic from the Nilotic Highlands of Kungwe District and Kitage from the Mpanda District to the east beyond the Lintugrowe; from northern Nyamalenda have come Nilotic, Lambo and Sukwa, and there are also small numbers of Bemba and others from Northern Rhodesia. They have been accepted in the modern era, when land movement is easier, by the possibility of obtaining land in the northern Lake Plains, where rainfall is so high and uncultivated bushland has been available.*

These immigrants have been and continue to be almost entirely restricted to the north in the "low-density region" (see map facing page 10). This contained the comparatively empty area of the country and still there remain vacant lands to be taken up. Such land is usually of relatively inferior quality, easily subject to erosion and low of fertility on the slopes of the foothills and unsuitable for paddy cultivation except in small, isolated basins. The immigrants, that is, have settled in areas rejected by most Nyakyusa. There, locally, the newcomers outnumber the indigenous population. In the flood plains, the high-density regions, the proportions of foreigners cannot be more than one or two per cent. of the population, and in most villages there are none at all.

It is true that these newcomers do occupy land which might well be used to relieve the congestion nearer to the Lake; but in practice this would not be so all easy. To take a single example: the newly opened area in the north of the district of Wondwe between the Kiwira and Songwe rivers is being rapidly taken up by Nilotic from the north-west, Nyamalenda and Nyakyusa from the Central Region (in that order of numerical importance). A few miles to the south, in the centre of the same district, the intelligent of the Nyakyusa are consistently refuse to move although they manifestly cannot meet their land needs within their present villages. They, and others like them, say with some truth that paddy cultivation is too risky and too profitable in these newer and higher areas, and that poor communications make the disposal of produce more difficult. They also say, but more often have to inference, that they are unwilling to leave their traditional village areas and begin in new parts, even though the move required is only one of a few miles. They have not yet become sufficiently aware of the permanent gravity of modern land shortage to overcome their parochial inertia. By the time they do become aware of it the opportunity may well be lost, for immigrants continue to arrive in twos and threes, and the last vacant land may be taken. To date, however, some vacant lands remain, albeit of poor quality, into which the densely packed Nyakyusa could move, and the immigrants cannot be blamed, at least not yet, for preventing the expansion and resettlement of the local population.

As the manner the chiefs and headmen in these northern areas are keen to obtain as many of these immigrants as possible in order to swell the number of their connections, the size of their villages and thus, directly, their own prestige and importance. Strangers have every opportunity to be allocated as much land as they wish, where they wish, and many are liberally assisted with food in the traditional way until they harvest their first crop. I heard no complaints from either the local Nyakyusa or the immigrants, and relations seemed to be good. Strangers must conform to Nyakyusa ways of life and to the authority of the headmen and chief, although

* Immigrants from Tanganyika are part of a long-term movement following the introduction of new agricultural crops, particularly the cultivation of cash, subsist the 1930s.

In fact they usually settle on the common East African pattern of scattered homesteads, each in its arable area, and not in the tight Nyakyusa village pattern.

I think that the landlord and chiefs concerned would not welcome a restraint on immigration, for it offers them a chance to weaken the customarily profound prestige of their fellows in the flood plains, to whom at the moment they feel inferior. They would, of course, most probably prefer indigenous Nyakyusa, could the latter be persuaded to settle there. As it is, at least some of the Nyakyusa of these northerly villages are trying to move into the flood plains, where they can more easily cultivate paddy and where they can join in a more active and gladhand village life.

One type of foreigner in the Lake Plains is the man (almost invariably a Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who has obtained land but does not settle on it nor in any village. He continues to live in his upland village and comes down to the plains only to cultivate and harvest his paddy field. This is strictly against Nyakyusa land law and custom and, in fact, such an absentee landholder has often made a substantial monetary gift to the chief or headman for the protection of this non-legal privilege. These strangers are frequently among the more wealthy upland Nyakyusa, who can afford such payments or fines, and often they are of chiefly rank themselves, perhaps having kinship ties with the local chief. There are probably no chiefdoms where such strangers have not obtained paddy fields, though naturally those which contained a good deal of vacant, suitable paddy land at the beginning of the nineteenth-century have more.

This has given rise to certain amount of ill-feeling and competition amongst local villagers who have insufficient land themselves, for they lose land and gain no numerical strength or profit of any kind. The illegal action of the local chief in this condoned, especially as the chiefs should not in any case assume allocatory powers. On the other hand it must be noted that the commoners philosophically accept the supposedly protected propagation of their chiefs under European rule and they expect the chiefs to take advantage of them. As with the case of the minority of large land-holders, the actual effect is not particularly great and reformation here would be a minor palliative. Nevertheless in this matter there is a definite and unpopular infringement of villagers' rights and of the local customary law.

One other group of strangers may be noted for the sake of completeness. They is the Kisi, who have for at least two generations been settling along the lake-shore (and from Mwaseng to the east to the Songwe river (and beyond) to the south-west. They have come from the north-eastern shores of the lake and in the Nyakyusa area they are precisely fishermen who do not, therefore, compete with the indigenous population economically. They cultivate only tiny plots of manioc and sometimes of finger millet, although a few of the younger generation are now trying to grow a little paddy also. The total number of Kisi involved cannot be more than a few hundred and they have probably not increased much over the past decades. They follow an almost separate existence from their Nyakyusa neighbours, not intermarrying, and following their own way of life.*

* The name for [illegible] is Kwesi. There is a [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

some of such reserved land elsewhere. Such land is cultivated in the meantime on a kind of year-to-year lease by one or more of the villagers as allowed by the headman.

Even where no vacant plots exist a headman will still accept newcomers. If they are young men they must be prepared to go headman for the time being (i.e., to remain dependent on their father's fields elsewhere) until such time as land becomes vacant. If the newcomer is an older man, then the headman will try to persuade one or more of his villagers to give up portions of their holdings and he will allot sole part of his own land. The newcomer is therefore often allocated small strips and plots here and there in the village arable area and he thereafter joins the land-hungry scrub seeking to expand their holdings. In one village in which I worked where land shortage was critical (Kyangi, Kyoma's chiefdom), there was not a single patch of arable land unoccupied, yet here the headman had, with full village approval, accepted three newcomers during the first nine months of 1955. Two of them were young men, one unmarried, and they could not expect to obtain land for some time except for a small tenancy plot. The third newcomer was a middle-aged man from a village some 12 miles away in another chiefdom. The headman had given him a half-acre plot out of his own arable field and was laboriously begging pieces of land here and there from his people in order to make up a new holding of perhaps an acre. The headman himself had only about three and a half acres of arable land, he had a few one adult son who had not yet acquired an arable plot and he had other sons and brothers' sons cultivating only small fields. Yet he favoured this stranger, this newcomer. He was quite firm in his resolution to accept other newcomers in the future and in fact he believed that he was acting as a good headman should. So far as I could learn he was supported by his villagers.

This is not, by any means, an isolated or even unusual phenomenon. It is, I feel, important to bear in mind this illustration of contemporary affairs. Firstly, because it shows another way in which holdings are fragmented and dispersed, and secondly, because it demonstrates how, so far, the Nyakyusa have refused to face the situation of land shortage, and how they continue to follow traditional practices and values associated with village prestige. These people complain of their inability to obtain sufficient arable land, but they are not yet prepared to make the mental and social adjustments which might at least partly relieve their own predicament. On the other hand, they themselves understand the need for movement and perhaps they are right in their implied insistence not to discard their cultural ideals. Their insistence on accepting newcomers and their willingness (however dimly perceived and expressed) to share their land with the landless are not thoroughly irrational, even if they are economically unsound.

Security of Tenure and Disputes over Land

As already noted, under traditional land tenure a Nyakyusa had good security in his holding so long as he continued to live in the same village. The only alienation of tenure occurred at the "coming-out" ceremony of a new child when the elder sons would, if required, move aside in order to give their sons' generation the best land. This did not invariably happen in any case. Fundamentally, however, security of tenure is not a matter of great importance to a people who have plenty of land, and land which is more or less of the same quality. Indeed, convenience of location in regard of one's own homestead was always the only value land had as such. Occasionally a more dominant chief might try to seize a commoner's field to allow of his own expanded cultivation. It was most unusual for him to succeed, and even if he did the dispossessed villager suffered little real deprivation, for he could easily obtain another field fairly near at hand.

Oh/Gulliver R-5 (1954-1955) 1954 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

Security of tenure has continued into European times, and although perhaps weakened slightly in one way through the exaggerated powers which accrue to modern Government-supported chiefs, it has been strengthened by the modern peace and rule of law and the more efficient system of justice provided by the established local courts. According to C. Wilson (Wilson, G., 1938, p. 32) the increase in the movement of individuals between villages in earlier European times (i.e., up to about 1940-45) directly caused a lack of attachment to individual plots, and thus security of tenure was not considered particularly important.

The new situation of land shortage does not affect the basic position, as stated, by producing a high security value on land, it has brought about an introduction of individuals' rights over their holdings. No longer does a chief or headman attempt to commit such illegal acts as the seizure of a villager's field, as long as that villager is not afraid to publicise the affair. A man is not, and cannot afford to be, prepared to lose his field, for he cannot replace it with any certainty, either in a convenient location or elsewhere. A headman may sometimes bring strong pressure to bear on some of the men of his village to try to persuade them to give up portions of their land to assist a newcomer or a landless neighbour, but a villager can and does refuse and there is no legal authority which can override him here. As the land shortage becomes more obvious and more acute as men become less willing to allow their holdings to be touched for any reason, by anyone. The re-allocation of a "taking-out" ceremony appears to have been dropped nowadays and [illegible] a man holds his land undisturbed until his death, when it passes by inheritance to his sons. There are cases now where grandsons of the original holder occupy land through undisturbed and undisputed inheritance. A man can, if he wishes, lend a kinsman or friend a plot in his holding, or he can make an outright gift. The principal conviction which remains is that a man must continue to live in the village in order to retain these rights; he must relinquish them if he permanently goes to live elsewhere. Nevertheless, the land of a well-established villager would be kept for him pending his [illegible] return, for if he has left in exchange and has because of suspected witchcraft, then he may be persuaded to come back after a time. The headman and his neighbours should in fact persist in their attempts to persuade him, even to the use of force, for this is not only a moral duty of age-mates and fellow-villagers but is also an effort to remove the implications of their alleged witchcraft and anti-social conduct.

Thus, therefore, a man always land he has absolute rights in it during his continued residence in the village. Especially today, older men without adult sons hesitate and always all land is now held on a tenure which will be passed on by inheritance.

Boundary disputes are few. Usually, and meaningfully, village boundaries are well known, and field boundaries invariably are. During my field measurements in the sample villages, I never met any difficulty with my local guides in quickly establishing the ownership and exact limits of any plot. Boundaries are usually marked by small ridges of accumulated debris or by narrow paths, and these form an intricate and irregular network throughout a village's arable area. They are so well known that there is very little scope for a greedy man to attempt to encroach on a neighbour's holding or hoeing time. If minor disagreements do arise at that season they can be immediately settled – by appeal to neighbours working nearby if necessary – and the headman of the assistant may well not be called in at all.

[illegible]

well covered with vegetation and with an reliable and plentiful a rainfall, yet, of course, the actual pasturage available is very considerably less as a result of the land is taken for arable and building purposes. There is in practice a most acute shortage of grazing land everywhere, except in certain parts of the north-west Highlands (Ukukwe). This shortage is most critical during the wet season, for at other times of the year the herds are able to graze over the arable fields, where herbage grows exceptionally rapidly after harvest as a result of the high rainfall. 3/1 253 [192]

Traditionally, each village had a roughly demarcated area of common pasturage which was not, and could not be, used for arable purposes. With the increased demand for arable land, the commonage has almost everywhere in the Lake Plains been gradually whittled away for permanent arable holdings. Headmen who control these pastures, and many of their chiefs too, are much worried about this process, about the break with tradition and the modern pastoral difficulties, but arable needs are given priority over grazing and the practice continues. In the Road plains, the higher-density regions, common pasturage has by now almost disappeared altogether. The little which remains is largely unusable for cultivation, consisting of infertile or badly drained areas – often the sandy, coarse strips covered with dense thicket and tall sedges which provide very little useful grazing. During the dry season, after the paddy harvest, the situation is fair, but during the cultivation season pasturage is entirely inadequate, and in addition the cattle are compelled to live and graze in extremely arduous conditions of standing water, mud, mosquitoes and flies. They do not obtain enough food then and they lose condition badly. There are many deaths from exhaustion, starvation and disease, and this affects the immature stock particularly. Only by ultimate cruelty on the part of both men and beast can the herds be removed at all. There is no tradition of cut-feeding and so far the Nyakyusa have refused to adopt this measure of alleviation. [193] [194]

Yet, as the Nyakyusa are quick to point out, each family has only a few cattle. Most families have a cow or two, and the average is only about two to three head per family – cf. Table VI, page 36. Owners of large herds are relatively few, and herds of more than six cattle to a single family are very uncommon. Although the cattle population is too great for the pasture resources now available, yet the animals are fairly evenly and thinly distributed amongst the dense human population. Goats and sheep are few – about 600 altogether – in the Lake Plains and of no significance. It is important to note that here we do not have a situation of large herds which might be reduced by some form of culling.

Cattle are held in high esteem by all Nyakyusa as a source of valued milk for the daily diet, as the means to marriage (in bridewealth), as a store of capital, as a symbol of prestige and as an essential element in important ceremonial activity. The kind of value system needs no emphasis here as it is common to much of Eastern Africa, but it may be noted that one of the principle uses of the large sums of money saved from wages in mining employment (labour migration) and from the profits of cash-cropping at home is in the purchase of cattle. It is thought that money is best invested, saved and used in this way, even immediate material needs have been met. [195] [196]

Even with the high proportion of deaths from disease and the appalling conditions of the wet season, there are indications that the numbers of cattle are not decreasing and there may well be local increases. Apart from natural increase, there is fairly heavy buying from the Nilotic people to the north-west in Rungwe District, and also from further afield in Northern Nyamlanzi, and in Nyamwanga and Fipa tribal areas (albeit illegally).

* Having the pattern of the herds (those being mainly cows) the small steady increase that occurs in the other subsidiary herds (sheep and goats) is the number of stock this would be.

of the father. The old principle that every man had the right to enough land
applied no less strongly to the young men, married or bachelors. Today
most bachelors will refuse to undertake the exploitation of young bachelors
for land, and in this they merely represent general public opinion. But many
young bachelors likewise cannot obtain land, or only an insufficient amount.

Consequently, the following case-history, which I recorded for one
young man, is not unusual. In 1955 he lived in the Mbaspati young-men's
hamlet, attached to Myungati village in Mwalipamba's chiefdom, where his
father lived. He was about 27 years old and had a wife and one child. Twice
he had been to work in the mines and from the profits of this employment
he had completed his bridewealth payment and had bought, in addition,
three cattle, a bicycle and some good clothing. He thought he would prob-
ably go away again. Behind his house his wife had about 300 square yards of
banana and there was a tiny patch of cassava. This man had no other land,
but he assured me that he was entitled to a share on his father's holding (about 1.7 acres
in all) and by family convention he normally took for his own use the paddy
crop of a small strip there; he insisted, however, that he had not been given
this strip outright and that it remained at his father's pleasure. He had an
unmarried half-brother about 22 years old who had not obtained even that
concession at the time. Their father was about 55 years old and had two
other sons who were still boys. The young man himself had been refused an
allocation of land by the headman on the grounds that (as the headman
said) there is not land enough for all the sons of his father's land, and also because,
as the oldest son, he would be the principal heir on his father's death. He was
clearly worried about his future, for he did not wish to go abroad again and
leave his wife and child, but he did not see how he could stay at home
without seriously lowering the standard of living to little above subsistence
level.

I quote this brief case-history not necessarily as typical – though I
think it probably is – but as an actual illustration of the present state of
affairs as they affect an individual.

The Modern "Chief" and the Land

Most of the traditional chiefs, abwanyisi, have been recognized and
salaried under the Native Authority, and they are officially referred to rather
as abatwe (s. atwe). Some of the smaller chiefdoms have been absorbed
administratively by their larger neighbours, and, although they are still
recognized by the people, their abwanyisi have lost very much of their
earlier prestige and authority. In the Lake Plains the modern chiefdoms are
often rather larger than is usual amongst the Nyakyusa,[1] but they are,
of course, small in comparison with the size of most African chiefdoms in
Tanganyika.

The eclipse of the traditional authority of the chief in land matters has
already been noted (page 7-8) and is general this still holds. In European
areas, however, the recognized chiefs have been given an increased authority
and prestige as the local intermediaries between Government and people,
and until recent years they were almost the only local instruments of the
Government amongst the Nyakyusa. They have been backed by the all-
powerful Europeans, who preferred to deal with single, recognized individuals
thought to have prime authority in a locality, and the European officer has
been encouraged in this notion by an over-enthusiastic policy of indirect rule.
Such chiefs were able to assume a degree of power well beyond the traditional
limits, and to aggrandize themselves thereby. The ordinary commoner was
never quite sure how far his chief was individually claiming more than he

1. See the numerical data of chiefdoms on page 3.

land authority to claim, or have for the Central Government was permitting or even compelling him to use new powers. Part of this novel power has, not necessarily, been used to hold over land-control responsibilities to which the chief has no traditional tribal right, and it has led to the claim, sometimes heard in the Courts and upheld in the District Commissioner's Appeal Court, that chiefs are the sole, traditional and rightful land authorities. It has led to chiefs assuming, or trying to assume, land allocation and supervisory powers which hitherto were the close right only of the village headmen.

Thus some chiefs have declared that they alone, or at least primarily, have allocatory powers over formerly uncultivated tracts which are relatively distant from the villages and which have now become valuable as public fields. Others have come to claim rights of interference in village land affairs, even within the long-established village areas. By the unbridled force of their alleged Government support, by taking advantage of new conditions, they have not infrequently "got away with it". They have caused that their own nominees be allocated vacant holdings; they have gone over the heads of village headmen and made public their opinion as to who, amongst numbers of aspirants, should receive land in villages; they have caused that headmen should consult them on the details of allocation. The desire for power and further prestige is one impulse behind this development. Sometimes the chiefs, better educated than many of their headmen, are able to understand the modern land situation better and are impatient of their headmen's conservatism and procrastination. Another factor is the potential profit which may accrue as land becomes scarce and thus a valuable commodity, and this became particularly important when the rail developed to offer up the formerly vacant lands for paddy cultivation. Gifts in money and kind became common in return for preferential treatment for the donors. These lands are now all allocated and held by someone, but the chiefs have been reluctant to relinquish their new-found authority.

These remarks do not apply to all the chiefs: some have been readily content to use their influence through the traditional system by judicious co-operation with their headmen. Some, too, have been too impressive to further to take action at all. Again, some have been forestalled by strong village headmen who would not allow any diminution of their own status and rights. In some of the formerly vacant lands where no headmen could reasonably claim traditional jurisdiction, the operations of the chiefs have probably been beneficial in reducing chiefly land-grabbing and petine rivalry; even, however, these lands are brought under cultivation there seems to be a good case for their inclusion within the normal Nyakyusa land-control system. The continued existence of a supra-headman authority does not necessarily lead to stability or improved control. Certainly it is not in keeping with the people's values and institutions.

For these changes Government must clearly bear some responsibility and often also the blame for indirectly causing disruptions in native land law and custom by some administrative attitude or ruling in a distant sphere. There has been a good deal of well-intentioned insistence on determining and recognizing the "Land Authority" in tribal areas in the interests of stability and efficiency. In Rungwe District the basic chiefs of Nyakyusa chiefs have been, only too readily accepted without question. In fact the traditional analysis, chief, only represented to chiefdom as a unit, and the lack of real power corresponded to the lack of cohesion within the chiefdom. The notion of a supreme "Land Authority" is largely incorrect for the Nyakyusa. In a theoretical sense we may perhaps say that the real land of a chiefdom was and is owned by all of the people in that chiefdom - chief, headmen and villagers; and therefore we may perhaps recognize the chief, the single individual representing the group as a whole, as the "land-owner." In

[illegible]

[illegible]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F3617 Ngonde F3617

643 whom all the land shall look; who shall go to the
645 holy place to pray for us, who shall guard the sacred objects of lordship. Let him be our food and our shield; let his name be safety for all. I pray to you, chiefs of the past, ye who kill or save alive."

Mulwa, carrying in his hand the "rod of lordship," stands out and looks around on the assembled chiefs. Suddenly he throws the rod at the man selected. Immediately he is seized, with a shout of triumph, "He is our food and our shield." The wailing of his female relatives, who weep as for a dead man, is drowned in the shouting and drumming with which the new Chango is brought to the sacred house, where he is anointed with lion fat, and seated on the lion skins with which the house is carpeted. In this house are kept all the objects of which he is guardian, the tails of eland, zebra, buffalo, elephant, containing the medicine made from the body of the great snake *inyifwiwa*; skins and heads of lions; ivory, cloth, and the rod of lordship.

643 After about three months of strict seclusion, during which his health is carefully noted, lest, being a weakling, he should be a menace to the land, the new ruler is brought to the dwelling which in the meantime has been built for him, and his reign is fairly begun.

643 The person of Chango was regarded with extra-
649 ordinary reverence. He was not approached by the common people, who were not allowed even to see the man who speaks with God. An immense

3; Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F917 Ngonde F917

enclosure surrounded his dwelling of many houses, where he lived with his wives and slaves, and, always present, some of his councillors. The arrival of visitors was announced by the young men who kept the gate; but only visitors of very high standing were actually admitted to the presence of the chief. If Chungu left the enclosure wearing his crown of black cloth with long streamers, the people hid themselves. When he went on a journey, the older people claimed the right of seeing him, and even saluting him as he passed; the younger were rigorously kept out of the way. When he crossed a river the men who carried him must not allow his feet to touch water, which he himself must never touch with his feet, for a flood would follow which would do much damage to the country. 643 644

To maintain his dignity, the chief received taxes in kind. His gardens were hoed, and his houses built, by the people. If an elephant was killed its tusks, and part of the flesh, were brought to him. Buffalo was royal game, and the whole carcass was his; his, too, were skins and tails of lion, leopard, and zebra; tusks of hippopotamus, horns of rhinoceros. Once in two years each chief brought him a young cow; and a portion of all spoils of war in prisoners, cattle, and other things, was his due. 643 651

Out of his abundance Chungu gave gifts to favourites or valued servants. He received and entertained distinguished visitors, though not all were admitted to his presence. They arrived with horns blowing and drums beating, the leader shouting, 643 644

3: Mackenzie M-5 (cn. 1925) 1925
F7517 Ngonde F7517

643 "He, he, he, we go to him who kills and saves alive."
644 On arrival, each as had the honour of a personal interview, received his blessing, "May God be gracious to you"; the visitor lying on his back and clapping hands. At parting, perhaps a month later, he was pressed to stay, but the parting benediction was given: "God be with you. May lion and leopard and hyena, snake and tree and personal enemy, be still before you. May you find your family in health." Then taking water, and squirting it from his mouth, he prayed the spirits to care for the departing guest.

643 The duties and powers of Chungu, as they were in the past, and, in diminished glory and extent, still are, may be briefly stated.

1. First and foremost, Chungu is the man who speaks with God, and offers up the prayers of the community in time of war, pestilence, drought, or famine.

[643] 2. Dreams by the official dreamers were brought to him by the councillors, and measures taken to meet the approaching evil by offerings at the graves of his ancestors, and by personal intercession.

3. After consulting his ancestors, he decided questions of peace or war.

643 4. Along with his councillors he heard important
645 lawsuits, and appeals against the decisions of other chiefs.

5. He confirmed in their position subordinate chiefs when recommended by his council to do so.

6. The whole land being his, he gave possessions to

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F3117 Ngonde F3117

new-comers, and drove out undesirables; but always with the concurrence of the council. 643 645

7. He gave periodical feasts to all chiefs and their followers.

8. In general, it was the duty of Chungu to keep the land in peace; but no decision of his was valid without the approval of his council.

In the north, across the Songwe, the failure to attain unity of control had as its natural consequence the failure to attain the same imposing ceremonial as at Kyungu. The chiefs each retained his independence, and what has now to be said applies equally to the independent chiefs of the north, and to those of the south who were at one time under the dominion of Chungu. 643

A convenient starting-point is the installation of the heir and successor of a chief. The installation of Kyelwa, which began on 18th September, and ended on 19th November, 1921, is typical of all, and the description which follows was given to me by himself. 643 644 796

On the appointed day he left his home, and accompanied by eight young men who were to be his subordinate chiefs, and official drummers, and all the young men of his father's principal village, he went to the place which was to be the site of his own village. There good huts were built for him and the eight young chiefs, and more shelters for the others. The first item in a long ceremonial was the tree-planting. The medicine man took two pots into which he put two *ndipite* (lion-making medicines), and having filled the pots with earth, he planted a young

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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seedling in each, *indela* in one, and *imbandapanda* in the other. Pits to receive the pots were digged by the doctor, and held in position by the two most important of the subordinate chiefs, who, with closed eyes, filled in the soil all around. The two *imbigita* become later the two lions of the young chief. Every chief has these mysterious lions, which are quite harmless except to evil-doers; if any common person creates or controls a lion, it is the duty of these two to slay it. No one may eat food at harvest time until a portion has been set aside for these lions. The two trees in time provide the shade under which the chief's court will sit, and as long as they stand his residence must not be removed from their neighbourhood.

The doctor now took a broom, and swept the dust into the faces of Reuben and his subordinates, praying that the men under them would be in number as the dust of the earth. All the old fires were extinguished, [372] and new fire was made by the young chief and his fellows; at present from two pieces of wood rubbed together, but in the past, the lower was the bone of a leopard or lion specially dried for the purpose. In the old warlike days this fire kindled the courage of the chiefs, but with the peace that has been brought in by the white men such courage is not called for. From the fire thus made, brands were given out to all householders in the district, and no ashes from old fires were allowed to remain in any house.

Next came the great medicine drinking, which was to give authority to the new chiefs. It is indeed a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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fearsome mixture: ground flesh of *inyifwira* (the flying serpent); heart and nose of hyena, which enables one to see danger ahead; heart of hawk, giving power to see danger from behind; and heart of the fish-eagle, which swoops down upon its prey. Thus furnished the young rulers can foresee the future, deal with the present, and be a terror to all evil-doers. This powerful medicine is drunk by all chiefs at their installation, and spread under the beds to make them see in dreams what is coming in the future. But never may the chief eat food that is not freshly cooked, for that would take away all virtue even from these potent drugs.

From that time until the 19th November, the young men led a happy, care-free life. Their food was daily provided; cattle were set apart for them; they did not shave all that time, and no girls were allowed to go near them. On the closing day of the ceremonial, the fathers of all the young rulers came and stood at a distance, and the younger brother of Reuben was given a spear with which he knocked on the closed door of the hut in which Reuben and his companions were waiting, and called out, "There is war outside; come out." Immediately all rushed to where the elders were standing, and after greetings, the company formed itself into a boundary commission, to fix the limits of Reuben's authority. Finally, the same day, the new chief was married to the two girls whose offspring will be his successors. They must be daughters of men of note, not cowards in battle, of no reproach in the tribe; and the girls

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

724 642 a whole against the Bemba and the Ngoni, and that the poverty-stricken divinity of Lubaga was unable to do this for the Nyakyusa.[2] But neither of them gave their people any high degree of unity among themselves.

For, while in both cases the hierarchical organisation touched the common people in its religious and ceremonial aspects, in neither case did it much affect their everyday actions. In Ngonde, as we have seen, the wealth of the Kyungu, which he derived from the ivory trade, enabled him and his nobles of Ngonde to bind the other chiefs and nobles to him, in a way that the Lwembe and his hereditary priests could not do across the Songwe. But this wealth only touched the common people slightly and did not much alter the economic organisation of the local groups. Nor had Ngonde any other common activities save tribal wars, religious rituals, and the hoeing of the relons.

Horizontal as well as vertical relations must bind social groups together if their autonomy is to be permanently overcome, and in Ngonde, no less than among the Nyakyusa, the horizontal relations between the local groups were weak; while the religious exclusion of the Kyungus weakened the vertical relations also. The constitution of Ngonde consisted of a number of small and primitive local groups, all firmly attached to Mbande, but each one capable of swinging free[1] and of breaking the tenuous horizontal bonds that joined them among themselves.

Now a distinction must be made between these civil wars and the tribal wars with the Bemba and Ngoni. The civil wars point us to the disorder of Ngonde, a disorder which existed in spite of unifying factors; the tribal wars point us to lack of order which was hardly opposed by any unifying factors at all. No doubt there were occasional peaceful contacts between Ngonde and these other tribes, but they were clearly very slight indeed.

7. *POLITICAL CEREMONIAL.*

643 644 In every relationship of life there is some ceremonial expression of feeling. And towards the Kyungus of the middle period their subjects frequently expressed the feelings of worship and terror appropriate to an irascible divinity.

"At Mbande the nobles of Ngonde would sit round praising the Kyungu; the drums went '*hindi! hindi!*' And they would praise him in antiphony: 'O Kyungu!—Great Father! Great Father!—

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[1] The Nyakyusa were attacked both by Sangu and Ngoni but no tribal alliance was formed to meet these attacks.

[2] In the case of the chieftains this metaphor must be qualified by the intervention of the great chiefs between the local chieftains and Mbande, and the ceremonial unifying effect of this fact upon whole groups of chieftains.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Bearer of eyes!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Mpuru!*—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kipumi*—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kyabale!*—Great Father! Great Father!—O Stroker and Stabber!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Mwanamba!*—Great Father! Great Father!—O Mpulumbumbu!*—Great Father! Great Father!—Dweller in the hot sun!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Fiskesuse! O Bazuwa-suse!—Great Father! Great Father!"* The general form of this praise-song was identical with that of the prayers in the sacred groves and so it is literally true to say that the nobles of Ngonde worshipped the living Kyungu.

But the majority of their subjects only worshipped from afar in fear and trembling. An Mbande to ordinary commoner was ever conducted into the sacred enclosure but only the ministerial nobles and the other chiefs, and they only occasionally; while when the Kyungu travelled through his country all men save the very oldest fled from his approach: "In former times we commoners never looked on the face of the Kyungu, we feared him far too much. When he journeyed through Ngonde we all used to flee from him, men, women and children; only the very oldest stayed to watch him as he came; and they would fall down and clap their hands in grateful worship."

Even in speech fearful circumlocutions were used to refer to his journeying—"The country is on the move"—"The great hill is moving"—"The mystery is coming." While it was taboo both for the old men who then stayed to see him and for those who entered the sacred enclosure, ever to greet him in the usual way. Falling down and clapping the hands was the only greeting for the Kyungu, never the ordinary "how-do-you-do?" From the nobles and great chiefs men did not flee; but the great chiefs, at least, were greeted by falling down and handclapping, not in the ordinary way.

From the wives of the Kyungu also men fled in terror, fearing lest they be compromised and thrown over the cliff, and this both added to the atmosphere of terror which surrounded him and was an expression of it.

On the other hand the various gifts of the Kyungu to his subjects were, in their ceremonial aspect, an expression of personal relationship to them, of paternal interest in them; and so also the tribute which they brought to him was, in its ceremonial aspect, an expression of filial respect. As in all primitive groups personal rather than impersonal relationships were dominant in the old Ngonde. The Kyungu was

* Names of early Kyungus.
* Archaic words which I do not understand.

[illegible] CONSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE KYONGS

[illegible] ...People feared very much because the Lwombe had medicine for sneezing on his body, which could cause rain, sickness, food, stone, anything.

And they feared lest they might get stone if they killed one of Lwombe's men 'on the road'—i.e. a traveller. In short, Lwombe's mystical power affected the free fluid beginnings of a 'king's power' in a kind of sapping chiefdom, where strangers were his guns.

(c) Mbonde

Mbonde is a hill on the plain of north Nyamland with a commanding view of the surrounding country and well suited to defence. The west side is precipitous and below the scarp edge there used to be a marsh; to the north the hill is protected by a wide reach of the Lukulu river. It is a sacred place and for many generations was the home of the 'divine king', the Kyongs. Like the Lwombe he was the living representative of a hero, and was selected by a group of hereditary nobles from one of two related lineages, the office alternating (if suitable candidates were available) between the two. They sought a big man,* one who had begotten children and whose sons were already married, not a young man for, the nobles said, 'young men always want war, and destroy the country'. He must be a man of wisdom (*gwe mutale*) and generous in feeding his people.

The Kyongs's life was governed by taboos even more rigorous than those surrounding the Lwombe. He must not fall ill, or suffer a wound, or even scratch himself and bleed a little, for his ill health, or his blood falling on the earth would bring sickness to the whole country. 'Men feared when Kyongs's blood fell on the ground, they said, "It is his life".' 'If he had a headache his wives (if they loved him) told him not to mention it, they hid his illness; but if the nobles entered and found him ill they dug the grave and put him in it, saying, "He is the *ruler* (*mwa*), it's taboo for him to be ill". Then he thought: "Perhaps it is so" (with a gesture of resignation).'

Great precautions were taken to preserve his health. He lived in a separate house with his powerful medicines. His food was prepared by boys below the age of puberty but a menstruating woman, or a youth who had lain with a woman, should touch it and so bring sickness upon him; and his numerous wives were

* Ciyambalu *mwamu*. It implies both big physically and important.

[illegible] to the royal enclosure—a great enclosure—and jealously guarded, for any infidelity on their part was thought to make their husband ill, and with him the whole country.

When the Kyanga did fall ill he was confined by the nobles who lived around him at Mbanda, and buried in great secrecy, with a score or more of living persons—slaves—in the grave beneath him, and one or two wives and the men of commoners above. And in the midst of all this slaughter the nobles brought a sheep to lick into the grave that the dead Kyanga might be gentle (noble) like the sheep!

The living Kyanga was thought to create food and rain, and his breath and the growing parts of his body—his hair and nails and the constantly replaced mucus of his nose—were believed to be magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde plain. When he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was buried 'with the breath in his body'; while portions of his hair and nails and of his nasal mucus were taken from him beforehand and buried by the nobles of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This was 'to defend the country against hunger', 'to clear up the land, to keep it rich and heavy and fertile as it was when he himself lived in it'.

His death was kept secret—a relatively easy matter since he lived in seclusion—and one of the nobles (Ngui) impersonated him wearing his clothes. After a month or two when the nobles had decided whom to choose as the new Kyanga, the fictitious man was announced to Mbanda: 'Your father calls you.' Then he came with his companions and entered the house to make obeisance; they wound him and put the sacred cloth on him and set him on the stool 'Kimutbi', saying, 'Thou Kyanga, thou art he', and he became the Kyanga. Then they struck the drum, Mbamkulwa, and everyone knew that the Kyanga had died and another had been installed.[1] Men feared greatly to be seized as the Kyanga, just as they feared to be seized as the Lwembe, because the life of a divine king was short. Ngonde historians quote a number of cases of men of the Kyanga who fled to escape being set on the stool; once they had set on it they dared not flee lest they die.

Though[1] the early Kyangas had lived on the stony top of Mbanda some of them had been buried there, for 'the ground was

[1] The following section is quoted, with additions and amendments, from Geoffrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, pp. 19 ff.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F307 Ugande F307
Nyakyusa

turn round in the belly; people say the earth will go bad in us.'[1] 'A child who has death medicines will be ill, the smell of the new food or the wet earth goes to the belly.'[2]

The chief sets the first fruits and medicines with the commoner who lies down with him at the commencement of his 'coming out' and 'is his wife to taste with him the first fruits and prominent medicines' and is 'fearful' like the medicines. He is identified with the chief's body and may be compared with the *ishikomo* of the Pondo chief[3] or the *isala* of the Swazi.[4] His function is to protect the chief against the medicines themselves.

(c) DEATH AND BURIAL OF A CHIEF

Both because of a chief's descent, and because of his use of medicines, mystical power resides in his body.

In the old days a ruling chief was not allowed to die, but was buried while still living, because they feared that if he became unconscious before death he would take away all the food with him, and great hunger would come on us. Men feared *ifingile* medicine in his belly. They said: 'If he dies naturally many of his people will die. . . . He should go alive.' And formerly they buried him with the son of a commoner, also alive, for they said, 'Let him enjoy the company of his man on the road.' When a chief was sick before the coming out of his sons they tried to keep him alive if possible, but if he was clearly going to die then they buried him like this; after the coming out they lamented his death—but only if he were ill. That was why the chiefs fear the 'coming out' of their sons so greatly. Had Mwaipopo lived in the old days and his heir been alive he would have been buried during his last illness.

When a ruling chief was sick the village headmen sent the chief's wives away and looked after him themselves. Then, if they thought he would, or should, die, they tore off all his nails, those of his toes and those of his fingers, and pulled out his hair, and put them in a pot. After that they buried him by night still alive, with a live person, the child of a commoner whom they had seized very secretly. The pot stayed in the house of the senior wife of the chief who had died, and they said, 'It is the chief, we are with him still.' This was the sacred pot for the sacred heir.[5] They kept silence about the death for a month or perhaps two months, saying: 'Let the chief go away first.'

And when a younger brother, a junior chief, died, though he died

[1] M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. [illegible].
[2] H. Kopp, *Ein Afrikan Schicksal*, p. 38.
[3] Kaulula Rudy Amaral this, *ubi infra*, p. 4[illegible].

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F3017 Ngonde F3017

helped with a real divinity, which the limitations to which he has to submit, and the independence of the once-subordinate chiefs, have not yet destroyed. He remains pre-eminently the man of prayer, who carries to the ancestral spirits the petitions of the community, and speaks to them with an authority which no other possesses.

For excelling in power and authority even the greatest of the chiefs were, and, shorn of much of their glory are, the *amalembwa*, the councillors of Chungu. These men are in many cases chiefs of high rank, but even when they are not so, their position endows them with great influence and authority. The principal duties of the councillors were to put the reigning Chungu to death when he became seriously ill, a duty which has necessarily lapsed under British rule; to select, with the help of divination, his successor; to instruct him in his duties, to advise him in all matters which demand decision; and to depose him if he is unsatisfactory.

The health of the priest-king and the welfare of the whole community were inseparably bound up together. A Chungu in health and vigour meant a land yielding its fruits, rain coming in its season, evil averted. But a weak and ailing Chungu meant disasters of many kinds. Smaller illnesses Chungu, very excusably, concealed from his councillors, hoping that his ancestors would hear the prayers which he offered secretly by night. But when serious illness overtook him, the councillors were called to a full meeting by those who were about the person of the

3: Mechanics M-S (no. 1925) 1925
FN17 Mpande FN17

chief. For Chaqa must not die a natural death; the land would be cursed into water should such a calamity be allowed to happen. Having decided that the illness is really grave, the councillors, one by one, give their voice in the formula, "*Sika na mnala*," literally, day and year; but actually meaning, "Does God die?" In solemn procession these terrible persons enter the house, and, having turned out the chief's wives, lay him down on the floor. Two keep him in that posture, while a third stops his breath by holding his mouth and nostrils, a fourth meanwhile gently slapping him all over the body until the life has gone out of him.

No announcement of the death was made. One of the councillors lived in the royal dwelling, so that if any came to consult Chaqa a response might be given, and as he was rarely seen by common men, it was easy to keep up the deception. The councillors with their own hands digged the grave, and on their shoulders, at midnight, carried the body, anointed with lion fat, and enwrapped in cloth, to the place of burial. Six or eight slaves, who did not return, went with them. Four went down into the grave to receive the body of their dead master, two at the head and two at the feet, and, in sitting position, held him in their arms. The remaining slaves being placed on the top, the soil was filled in on living and dead.

After the lapse of about a month, a big iron drum, now lost, was beaten, and it conveyed only one message to the people. "*Kaabiir ka Mpande*," Mpande (the royal residence) has done its work;

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Sigmoto FN17

Chango is dead. Then the chiefs and their men, fully armed, gathered to the mourning. Weeping there was none, for Chango must not be wept for; and women were not present, for the mourning for Chango is war; quarrels may break out among the men, and there may be many deaths before the mourning is over. The chiefs bring oxen for the feast, and gifts of ivory to be laid up in the house where Chango goes to pray when he prays alone.

The councillors now address themselves to the task of selecting a successor. There are no candidates; for not only must Chango himself be helped out of the world, but all his sons, born after his accession, are put to death at birth. Daughters are allowed to live, and sons born before their father attained to the chief dignity, are not under the ban. Here again British rule steps in, but British rule has not yet been able to sweep all fear of the past out of the minds of the people. From among the *Bakwange*, a circle of families within which the new Chango must be found, name after name is presented to the spirits by the diviner, and when the divining rod indicates that the right name has been presented, the formula is uttered, "*Ekpaxi kinke*," the underworld has spoken.

At a great feast, at which all men of royal blood must be present, Malwa, one of the councillors, by hereditary right offers prayer to the spirits, as if the selection had not already been made:

"Ye chiefs, we pray you to show us our lord, who shall be our leader in all things. Let him be the man of your appointing, not of our desire; to

1: Mackenzie M-5 (cn. 1925) 1925
FN17 Sgoude FN17

> 643 whom all the land shall look; who shall go to the
> •645 holy place to pray for us, who shall guard the sacred objects of lordship. Let him be our food and our shield; let his name be safety for all. I pray to you, chiefs of the past, ye who kill or save alive."

Mulwa, carrying in his hand the "rod of lordship," stands out and looks around on the assembled chiefs. Suddenly he throws the rod at the man selected. Immediately he is seized, with a shout of triumph, "He is our food and our shield." The wailing of his female relatives, who weep as for a dead man, is drowned in the shouting and drumming with which the new Chungu is brought to the sacred house, where he is anointed with lion fat, and seated on the lion skins with which the house is carpeted. In this house are kept all the objects of which he is guardian, the tails of eland, zebra, buffalo, elephant, containing the medicine made from the body of the great snake *ceyifuiva*; skins and heads of lions; ivory, cloth, and the rod of lordship.

643 After about three months of strict seclusion, during which his health is carefully noted, lest, being a weakling, he should be a menace to the land, the new ruler is brought to the dwelling which in the meantime has been built for him, and his reign is fairly begun.

643 644 The person of Chungu was regarded with extraordinary reverence. He was not approached by the common people, who were not allowed even to see the man who speaks with God. An immense

D: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F3617 Ngonde F3617

643 "Ho, ho, ho, we go to him who kills and saves alive."
644 On arrival, such as had the honour of a personal interview, received his blessing, "May God be gracious to you"; the visitor lying on his back and clapping hands. At parting, perhaps a month later, he was pressed to stay, but the parting benediction was given: "God be with you. May lion and leopard and hyena, snake and tree and personal enemy, be still before you. May you find your family in health." Then taking water, and squirting it from his mouth, he prayed the spirits to care for the departing guest.

643 The duties and powers of Chongu, as they were in the past, and, in diminished glory and extent, still are, may be briefly stated.

1. First and foremost, Chongu is the man who speaks with God, and offers up the prayers of the community in time of war, pestilence, drought, or famine.

[787] 2. Dreams by the official dreamers were brought to him by the councillors, and measures taken to meet the approaching evil by offerings at the graves of his ancestors, and by personal intercession.

3. After consulting his ancestors, he decided questions of peace or war.

643 4. Along with his councillors he heard important
644 lawsuits, and appeals against the decisions of other chiefs.

5. He confirmed in their position subordinate chiefs when recommended by his council to do so.

6. The whole land being his, he gave possessions to

3: Mackenzie M-5 (on. 1925) 1925
F7517 Bigonde F7517

new-comers, and drove out undesirables; but always with the concurrence of the council. 643 645

7. He gave periodical feasts to all chiefs and their followers.

8. In general, it was the duty of Chongo to keep the land in peace; but no decision of his was valid without the approval of his council.

In the north, across the Songwe, the failure to attain unity of control had as its natural consequence the failure to attain the same imposing ceremonial as at Kyongo. The chiefs each retained his independence, and what has now to be said applies equally to the independent chiefs of the north, and to those of the south who were at one time under the dominion of Chongo. 643

A convenient starting-point is the installation of the heir and successor of a chief. The installation of Reuben, which began on 18th September, and ended on 19th November, 1921, is typical of all, and the description which follows was given to me by himself. 643 644 796

On the appointed day he left his home, and accompanied by eight young men who were to be his subordinate chiefs, and official drummers, and all the young men of his father's principal village, he went to the place which was to be the site of his own village. There good huts were built for him and the eight young chiefs, and mere shelters for the others. The first item in a long ceremonial was the tree-planting. The medicine man took two pots into which he put two *imbigita* (lion-making medicines), and having filled the pots with earth, he planted a young

[illegible] who took to weaving cloth they should sure it for themselves by growing and selling cotton and brewing beer, and many women do the clearing and hoeing in their fields, work that used to fall to men; but it is difficult for a chief to refuse to provide a man to hoe the ridges in his wife's field, or to refuse an elderly woman a cloth or some salt, and young heirs grumble much about their inconvenience.

In the political field there has been a sustained attempt to make local government more democratic and to include in it the educated men. Between 1951, when the German Government first assumed control of the area, and 1958, the tendency was for the power of the chiefs to be increased at the expense of that of the commoners. This was admitted by the chiefs themselves, as we have seen. In 1959 there was established a system of Rural Councils, on which chiefs, village headmen (*mafuma*), and ordinary commoners are represented. Four[7] of each category are chosen as representatives on the Council in their area by an electoral college itself elected by all taxpayers. Rungwe District is divided into five areas. The policy of treating some chiefs as senior to others has been abandoned and each of the seventy-eight recognized *ndola* (*ubutwa*) is eligible for election as a chief's representative on his local Rural Council. Village headmen (two from each chiefdom) and the ordinary commoners are similarly chosen. The five Rural Councils in turn elect one man of each sort to the District Council.[8] The system allows for, and seems to have achieved, a combination of men with traditionally high status and those who are conspicuous by reason of their education or success as coffee or rice farmers. The old feeling that education was not necessary to a chief's son, though it might be useful to a poor man, has vanished, and a considerable number of the educated leaders of the district are sons or grandsons of chiefs. The elected president of the District Council, Mr. Gordon Mwaisumo (1961) is of the Nyakyusa chiefs' lineage, though not of the most senior line. In the Rural Councils the presidents elected have all, with one exception, been ruling chiefs, but it is not necessarily the genealogically senior who is chosen. There is scope for selection on the grounds of character and ability.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] for fear of witchcraft and take up the vacant holding. Nevertheless in general the holding was allowed to lapse and a could be re-allocated by the village headman if need arose, or the elderly widows might be allowed to continue to reside and cultivate as long as they wished.

Once land began to become scarce and valuable the loose system could no longer continue. Junior brothers and half-brothers were no longer content to permit the chief heir to take the whole of the deceased's holding to do with it as he wished, and a commonland division had to be adopted. As land, naturally enough, had was gradually brought under the same system which controlled the inheritance of other property, but this period inadequate - landlessness not only in itself so long, perhaps, was complicated and conducive of disagreement and quarrelling as so far as land is concerned, but also because this system itself was already beginning to break down under the impact of individualism.

It was felt that because sons assist their father in his homestead and fields and in their turn rely on him for a share in the cash-and-kind profits of peasant farming, therefore they should have priority in the inheritance of their father's property. Their father's brothers, it was said, would in any case already have their own holdings in which likewise their sons have prior interest. Conversely, older Nyakyusa were bigger to be reluctant to take a brother's land and other property not on his death, for fear that, in their turn, control of their own land would descend on their death to their brothers' sons rather than to their own sons.

As a result of these attitudes a strong desire arose to modify the customary law in this matter, and the Rungwe African District Council, with the approval of the Government, has by formal resolution established a new law under which sons may inherit direct from their own fathers.

This law is not universally accepted by the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains and some still will sometimes waive their novel rights in favour of the traditional claims of their fathers' brothers. They say that they do not desire to see the break up of the wider lineage which, in effect, this new law encourages; they are also afraid of the magic and poisons, and then of the witchcraft, of their uncles. It appears however that the change is accepted by the large majority of the people, for it follows the trend of modern values and kinship sentiments.

The principal heir is now the eldest son, but in general he has little direct control over the property and land of his half-brothers unless they are still young, in which case he has a moral duty to act as guardian and custodian. Some others that part of the personal holding which had been allocated to their mother by their father as his lifetime, plus any other gifts he might have given to any of them direct as individuals. Each group of half-brothers determines the way in which it divides up its own inheritance. The eldest brother of such a house has a definite obligation to see that his younger siblings share of the land is so far as extent and their number will allow. On the whole it is expected by Nyakyusa that the eldest brother will secure the less holding for himself, as fathers has new wives, but he cannot deny his younger brothers' claims. Disputes in this matter are not uncommon and the local courts have already shown their determination to support the claims of younger brothers.

Very commonly - though it has not yet crystallised as compulsory social behaviour - a father will grant a portion of his holding to his son on the latter's marriage, or on most after as the son decides to give up labour migration and settle down. It is thought that a married man should be independent economically and that he should be able to maintain his own household; it is realised that there is more likely to be friction in the relations between father and son, especially in this society where it is traditionally

[423] believed that parents and children should live apart.[1] In the same way, and
[424] for similar reasons, an elder brother tries to make provision for his junior
[425] when the latter marries if their father is already dead. The practice of the
latter is not a legally enjoined one, although it is nowadays increasingly
common and even here begins to expect it; the practice of an elder brother
is more legally enjoined in the matter of land and probably always has been
in the matter of cattle.

The difficulties are obvious when a man dies and leaves several sons
[240] but only a small-sized holding. To date no clear ruling has emerged and
unfortunately the African District Courts did not deal specifically with
such details when introducing the new law. How much land an elder
brother can reasonably retain for himself is perhaps not determinable in
precise money in specific relation to the nature, locality and fertility of the
holding in question, the plots already held by the man himself, the needs
and number of the younger brothers and any holdings they may have, and
[249] the location of the villages in which they severally live. There is also plenty
of scope for disagreement between half-brothers over portions of the paternal
holding which had been retained by the latter himself for his own use, over
portions allocated to a wife who has borne no sons or whose sons have died,
and over permanent trees. The situation is still fluid and there has not yet
been time enough for a common and generally acceptable solution to be
established. Consequently each group of sons tries to solve its own particular
problems in this matter as best it can, torn between old values and new
attitudes and needs.

[573] Relations between both full-brothers and half-brothers tend often to
[428] be severely tried at times of inheritance. It is not primarily, I think, a case of
brothers' greed for valued land tending to overcome bonds of fraternity
and co-operation; but it is rather that a father's arable holding is often not
able to provide adequate amounts of arable land for each of his sons, and
yet they feel the very greatest difficulty in obtaining land elsewhere. Already
the traditional kin-group comprising the sons and grandsons of a group of
[183] full-brothers had begun to break down even before land shortage became
serious. Now the group of full-brothers itself tends to be dispersed as sons
obtain land where they can and it is endangered by dissensions over land
rights and land divisions. Increasingly, it seems, a Nyakyusa man is becoming
detached from his brothers and he tends to establish an independent family
unit comprising his immediate family alone – that is, himself with his wives
and children. We cannot attribute the whole cause of this modern trend to
land shortage and economic difficulties, of course, for involved also are
new ideas of individualism and of personal effort and reward, and the
decreasing need for the economic support of brothers in social, economic
and ritual activities.

[571] Younger brothers may, and sometimes do in fact, agree that the
[423] paternal holding is already too small for further sub-division, or that the
[428] small parts which can be made available to them are scarcely worth having –
especially if they live some distance away. On the other hand, the elder
brother may already have obtained a holding in his own village and is
therefore willing to make only a small claim or none at all in the interests
of his juniors, and he may then divide the inheritance amongst them alone.
Usually, as scarcity in the dearth of land, the holding is divided between two
[311] or more brothers. It is split into small plots so that each brother has a share
of paddy, food-crop and banana land, and these are commonly a half acre
[312] or even less in size nowadays. As already mentioned, by a kind of modern
equity the local African courts generally favour the claim of the younger

1. See Wilson, M., 1951, p. 139 and passim. "The social purpose of age-villages is the separation of sons and brothers, of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law." Ibid. p. 139.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 fought each other and one was sometimes reduced to a subordinate
622 position by the other. Such subordinate or minor chiefs did not always lose all power, some men often continued to live with them, but not many, for they were poor and could not afford the feasts that prosperous and powerful chiefs gave to their warriors. Nowadays the junior of the two young chiefs, in the majority of cases, becomes subordinate to his brother immediately, for the Administration normally recognizes the senior of the two only, and a salary is paid to him alone on the old chief's death.

The number of villages which "come out" with each young chief usually varies between four and eight. But if a chief is subsequently reduced to a minor position he will often end his life with one village only
[624] of adult men and one village of their sons. For people move from minor chiefdoms and the depleted villages that are left gradually coalesce under the leadership of one of the great-commoners. The son of a minor chief may succeed to his father's position, but only one son will do so; a minor chiefdom is too small to be divided and has no formal "coming out" of its own; its young men attend the "coming out" of the superior chiefdom.

621 So much in outline for the political constitution of the separate
423 Nyakyusa chiefdoms. Some account of it was a necessary preface to the discussion of individual land rights, since it is within this political structure that they have validity. If, for example, the boundaries of a village are changed at the "coming out"—and they very frequently are—then no individual rights to village land can be maintained outside the new boundaries.

631 Prior to the arrival of the Europeans there was no paramount political authority among the Nyakyusa, but a number of tiny independent chiefdoms side by side, with minor chiefdoms in some cases attached to them. Of these traditionally independent chiefdoms there is none, I think, which to-day exceeds 3,000 adult male members, and most of them are far smaller than that. This smallness of scale, which is difficult at first for a European to grasp, is the fundamental characteristic of primitive society, in the organization of which personal relationships are predominant, wherein social relationships, that is, mainly subsist between personal acquaintances. In the old Nyakyusa polity impersonal relationships, effective social bonds linking together men who were personally unknown to one another, though they existed had relatively little importance.

●648 Just south of the Nyakyusa, in what is now North Nyasaland, live
184 the Ngonde[1] people, whose language and culture was and is very similar to that of the Nyakyusa. They were, however, slightly more civilized in that they were in closer contact with Arab and Swahili ivory traders; and

[1] Better known to Europeans as *Konde*.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the wealth derived from this trade enabled one of their chiefs, Kyungu, to maintain himself as paramount over all Ngonde. Among his people impersonal relationships thus had a greater importance. And it was, I believe, the historical isolation of the Nyakyusa from any considerable commercial contact with the outside world which prevented the rise among them of a paramount chief.

To-day the Nyakyusa are in process of integration with the civilized society of the world and the independence of their minute chiefdoms has inevitably passed away. The traditionally sovereign chiefs have been grouped in seven court districts with one chief as President of the Native Court in each ; and these seven chiefs together with the two Presidents of the Ndali and Lambya Courts are federated, with an Appeal Court and joint Native Treasury of their own. In the seven Native Courts most of the traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their great-commoners, and assist the President and his great-commoners in the hearing of cases. The bulk of the legal business previously transacted by each chief in his own country is now taken to Court, but the power of great-commoners to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages is still the basis of the legal system.

A poll tax, now (1938) fixed at 9/- per annum for adult males with no additional tax for plural wives, has been introduced and chiefs are paid small salaries ranging from 5/-, 10/- or 20/- a month for ordinary chiefs to 80/- or 100/- a month for the Court Presidents.

The Nyakyusa, as we have previously mentioned, consist of a number of immigrant groups who have spread among and incorporated an indigenous population. The main immigrant groups were three in number and are distinguished to-day by the names of " Nyakyusa," " Kukwe " and " Selya." As all these three groups together (including those who are now incorporated in them) call themselves " Nyakyusa " to the outside world, I distinguish the one group to which the name more particularly belongs as the " Nyakyusa proper." The Nyakyusa proper live in the plain of Mungonde and up on the higher ground as far north as Tukuyu, the Kukwe live north of them around the base of Rungwe Mountain while the Selya live in the east of the district, between the Nyakyusa proper and the Kukwe, right under the wall of the Livingstone Mountains. Between the three groups there are minor differences of dialect and custom.

The extent to which the indigenous groups retain any separate identity varies in accordance with the number of the immigrants and the date at which they reached them, but over a large part of the district fusion has been complete.

We have already discussed the economic relations between the Nyakyusa and the Lupa gold fields which provides them with a market

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE peoples with whom this book is concerned, the Nyakyusa and the Ngonde, occupy an area shut in by mountains at the northern end of Lake Nyasa, and enjoy a culture which, though varying locally, clearly springs from a common basis and is traditionally attributed to similar origins. The most conspicuous features of their political organization are (i) the balance of power between chiefs and commoners; (ii) the 'coming out' ritual in which a generation of men which has governed for approximately thirty years retires and hands over the administration to its sons, retaining only ritual functions; and (iii) the system of age-villages.

All are agreed that chiefs and commoners belong to different stocks; the commoners being descended from the original occupants of the country while the chiefs trace their descent to a line of invaders who came down from the Livingstone mountains eight generations ago. According to the myth, they brought with them fire, and cattle, and iron tools, and they found a people who ate their food raw in a land 'without trees'.[1] Commoners are *abatitu*, black people, while Ngulube, an early ancestor of the chiefs, was 'pale'[2] and chiefs (*abanyafyale*) generally are said to have been lighter in colour and 'different in their bodies'. After generations of intermarriage between chiefs and commoners there is no consistent difference in physical type between them, but the range of physical type among the Nyakyusa as a whole is wide.[3]

Nyakyusa and Ngonde historians say that their chiefs are related to those of the Kinga, who live high above the Nyakyusa valley to the east in the Livingstone mountains, whence the chiefs came. The Kinga acknowledge the connexion and join with the Nyakyusa in sacrifice to their common heroes, but culturally the

[1] Possibly the lake-shore plain. The hills until cultivated are covered with either savannah or rain forest.

[2] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3, p. 10 (1930). According to the Ngonde version Ngulube was the *first* ancestor.

[3] cf. F. Fülleborn, *Beiträge zur physischen Anthropologie der Nord-Nyassander* (1902). *Das Deutsche Njassa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet Atlas* (1906).

9. Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 are said to give their wives a medicine (without their know-
751 ledge) which will cause any man who lies with them to fall ill
754 of gonorrhoea or some other venereal disease. Many Christians
[753] believe in this medicine and some inquired whether Europeans did not use it also. One family of doctors are specialists in it:

[791] The sons of Manyafu are very famous, they are great doctors. People fear them very much. No one can steal anything belonging to them or run off with their wives. If a man runs off with a wife of theirs, he will return their wife and pay. . . . Because when he has slept with the woman by night they stink in each other's nostrils, the woman stinks in the face of the man and he likewise in hers. And if rain falls by night the roof comes off the hut in which they sleep and the rain enters. Perhaps the man quarrels with the woman, perhaps frogs and snakes are numerous, perhaps gourds sprout in the house—sometimes they sprout bringing evil. So it is also if a man has run off with the wife of another and the husband goes to the sons of Manyafu. They agree to work, but he must pay them.

[681] Lyandileko, whose husband's family have owned a 'horn' for generations, was very insistent that vengeance magic maintained law and order for it could injure only the guilty. 'A thief feared to steal lest he be caught by my father-in-law (Mwaisyelage). He feared the horn if he used sorcery. He feared to seize another's cow thinking, "They will go to Mwaisyelage".'
[684] And protective medicines which cause an adulterer to fall ill of gonorrhoea, or a thief to die, are considered perfectly legitimate; the misfortune would not have befallen the man unless he had done wrong.

[648] The prohibition by the government of the *mwafi* oracle has puzzled people. Medicines are admittedly dangerous, but it is held that Europeans 'encourage' witches and sorcerers by forbidding the use of the one effective weapon against them, and doctors with vengeance magic or other strong medicines 'fear the fate of the *mwafi* doctors'. There is an inescapable contradiction here, the Nyakyusa relying on *mwafi* and vengeance magic as a means of discovering criminals, and the Europeans punishing any doctor found administering poison, or intimidating people by threats. Furthermore, it is widely believed that Europeans them-
[186] selves use strong medicines made up with blood. Any Europeans without an obvious occupation are suspect of being *abanyambuta*, who go around killing people and taking their blood for the Government to use for medicines. One of our European friends,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XII

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

(a) THE GROWTH OF A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

×797 ×795 WITH the arrival of European missionaries at the end of the nineteenth century[1] a new set of religious ideas was introduced and a new form of social grouping established. The early missionaries settled on land which they bought from various chiefs and gathered round them workers and refugees—the survivors of slave-raids in neighbouring areas—many of whom gradually became converts. In BuNyakyusa a new type of village, a Christian village, was established on mission land and the converts who occupied it were largely withdrawn from the authority of the chief, looking instead to the missionary as their leader. In Ngonde the development was rather different. The converts were not gathered on mission land but stayed in their own villages, where they were expected to spread the gospel among their neighbours. The difference was partly due to a difference in policy between the Scottish mission operating[2] in Ngonde, and the Moravian and Lutheran[3] missions operating in BuNyakyusa, but it was emphasized by differences in the history of the two areas. In Ngonde the missionaries became the allies of the Ngonde against the Arab [567] slavers, whereas in BuNyakyusa there was no such alliance. The [648] Scottish mission deliberately sought to convert and train the traditional leaders, and so gain the whole community, whereas the Moravians and Lutherans preferred to withdraw their converts from the surrounding pagan community.[4]

The number of converts increased much more rapidly in Ngonde than in BuNyakyusa, but after forty years of missionary [361] activity the structural pattern was growing similar. More and more

[1] For an account of the first contacts of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde with Europeans, and bibliography on it, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 81-1, 275-6.

[2] The Livingstonia Mission of the Free Church of Scotland which later united with the Church of Scotland. It is still referred to in Ngonde as 'Free Church'.

[3] The Berlin Society (Berlin I).

[4] For an admirable account of the development of mission policy in East Africa, see Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (1952). Dr. Oliver describes the withdrawal of converts on to mission stations as typical of the *first* phase of mission activity and this is true for the Moravian and Lutheran missions, but Christians in Ngonde were never so withdrawn.

[p. 166]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

their wives took to wearing cloth they should earn it for themselves by growing and selling millet and brewing beer, and many women do the clearing and hoeing in their fields, work that used to fall to men; but it is difficult for a chief to refuse to provide a man to hoe the ridges in his wife's field, or to refuse an elderly woman a cloth or some salt, and young heirs grumble much about their encumbrances.

In the political field there has been a sustained attempt to make local government more democratic and to include in it the educated men. Between 1891, when the German Government first assumed control of the area, and 1938, the tendency was for the power of the chiefs to be increased at the expense of that of the commoners. This was admitted by the chiefs themselves, as we have seen. In 1949 there was established a system of Rural Councils, on which chiefs, village headmen (*amafumu*), and ordinary commoners are represented. Four[1] of each category are chosen as representatives on the Council in their area by an electoral college itself elected by all taxpayers. Rungwe District is divided into five areas. The policy of treating some chiefs as senior to others has been abandoned and each of the seventy-eight recognized rulers (*abatwa*) is eligible for election as a chief's representative on his local Rural Council. Village headmen (two from each chiefdom) and the ordinary commoners are similarly chosen. The five Rural Councils in turn elect one man of each sort to the District Council.[2] The system allows for, and seems to have achieved, a combination of men with traditionally high status and those who are conspicuous by reason of their education or success as coffee or rice farmers. The old feeling that education was not necessary to a chief's son, though it might be useful to a poor man, has vanished, and a considerable number of the educated leaders of the district are sons or grandsons of chiefs. The elected president of the District Council, Mr. Gordon Mwansasu (186) is of the Nyakyusa chiefs' lineage, though not of the most senior line. In the Rural Councils the presidents elected have all, with one exception, been ruling chiefs, but it is not necessarily the genealogically senior who is chosen. There is scope for selection on the grounds of character and ability.

[1] Five in the populous plain, Ntebela (MuNgonde).

[2] cf. Z. E. Kingdon, 'The Initiation of a System of Local Government by African Rural Councils in Rungwe District of Tanganyika', *Journal of African Administration*, vol. iii, 4 (1951).

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 The office of chieftainship still carries high prestige and the District Council has actually resolved to select a paramount chief. [643] Competition for this position is fierce and it remains to be seen [648] whether the Council will ever agree on a nomination. The persistent suggestion that the Administration should undertake the invidious task and select a paramount is scarcely likely to be acted upon, since the Administration sees no necessity for establishing such an office.

Chiefs, assisted by their village headmen, are the executive officers of the Rural Councils, but they have lost their judicial functions. There are twenty-four recognized courts with a bench [692] of 'courtholders' appointed annually by the Rural Councils, and [648] one superior court, but the annual appointment ceased in 1956 and more permanent appointments were made. The aim is to develop a specialized judiciary independent of the executive. There is also a very important class of full-time civil servants, secretaries of the District and Rural Councils, and clerks of the courts.

[622] The position of village headman is in a fluid state. Where the 'coming out' ritual has been dropped, the traditional occasion for the formal appointment of village headmen no longer arises, and old men continue in office much longer than before. When a headman dies his heir sometimes takes his position or, if neither the heir nor a junior son will accept it, some other man is appointed by the chief. There is evidence that in many chiefdoms men are reluctant to undertake the position, which carries no salary but involves a considerable amount of work and makes it difficult or impossible for a man to engage in paid employment either within or outside the District. As one woman put it, 'Money has killed the office of village headman' (*Indalama sigogile ubufumu*). There is some evidence from the lake-shore plain, however, of men competing for the office, and indeed of a son claiming in the courts the headmanship his father held. Possibly the competition for land on the plain, and the fact that the allocation of land lies with the village headman, account for this. When all the arable land is taken up, it is probable that acquisition will be [622] through inheritance or sale only, and the present headman's [423] power to allocate land is likely to vanish; but one of the most important assets of a village is its pasture-land, and in controlling and developing this the headman may well play a decisive part in the future. Since village headmen are essential executive officers in local administration, and are integrated into the new system of

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

particular symbols are tied to a particular social structure; the poet makes his choice within the whole range of the familiar.

The impetus to change has come both from the religious field and from the secular. For example, the pressure towards monogamy among the Nyakyusa has been religious; given plentiful land and cash crops additional wives are an economic asset, not a liability. In this respect the contrast with the Ciskei in South Africa, where families are dependent for food on wage-earners in towns, and no man can support two families,[1] is marked. On the other hand, the decay of Nyakyusa age-villages is primarily due to economic pressure, though it is facilitated by the insistence of Christians that there is no danger in father-in-law and daughter-in-law meeting one another. The first generation of Christians living on mission land built villages apart for their sons, despite the teaching that avoidance of a father-in-law by his daughter-in-law was foolish, if not sinful. But a radical change in pagan observance of ritual avoidance is brought about by the general practice of going out to work for long periods, and the competition for coffee and rice-lands, which makes the territorial separation of fathers and sons impossible. As we have shown, young men going to work commonly leave their wives in their fathers' homesteads, valuing the support and supervision given them there above the old stringency of avoidance and, where land is scarce and valuable, fathers do not move aside each generation to make way for their sons. Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law [606] continues only in an attenuated form.

From German times control by a European government has compelled a modification of the traditional sacrifices to the heroes and of the ritual of chieftainship. How the Kinga priests came to Lubaga 'in secret' and how they failed to instal a new Lwembe after the death of Mwakisisya about 1914 has been described. Killing a child to anoint a drum or make medicine for the fields, compelling a man to accept a dangerous office, killing chiefs because they are ailing, or plucking off their nails before they die; all these are actions which are held, and must be held, to be 'contrary to natural justice' by any Western government. Here the change in political organization compels a change in ritual and there is evidence that belief in the traditional forms is much diminished, though not dead. The European government also

[1] Keiskammahoek Rural Survey. Vol. ii, *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, by D. H. Houghton and E. M. Walton; vol. iii, *Social Structure*, by M. Wilson *et al.*

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 found the administration of the poison ordeal, driving out people
648 alleged to be witches, and killing supposed sorcerers 'contrary to
796 natural justice'. Here the change is not in the celebration of a ritual but in the execution of 'justice' based on traditional religious beliefs.

797 The early missionaries were very important as employers of
177 labour and a market for produce; indeed at one time they were the *sole* source of western trade-goods among the Nyakyusa. For long they provided the only skilled medical attention. They were the source of new learning, teaching, from the start, reading and writing and new manual skills, and the link between learning and religion, so familiar in the history of Europe, is still strong. Therefore acceptance of Christianity *tended* to go along with acceptance of the new economic and political structure, but it was never identified with it. Already in the thirties a popular song contrasted Christians with Europeans, and African nationalism was finding expression in 'independent' Churches.

178 Secularism fits as well with the new economic and political
171 structure as Christianity, and it has been argued elsewhere that
648 one of the characteristics of the change from a small-scale, isolated, self-sufficient people to a large-scale society is increasing secularism.[1] The evidence from BuNyakyusa does not so far support this, but there is a *separation* of religious and other activities. Religion is not interwoven with the modern political system as it was with the old. Traditionally the fusion between ritual and political activities was almost complete; village headmen became priests as they grew old, and chiefs became gods. Now there is a separation between Church and state, between Government and mission, which co-operate closely only in the organization of schools. It is true that Christian congregations pray regularly for 'those set in authority over us', but for the most part religious ritual does not enter into state functions. The flag is hoisted and saluted at sunrise and sunset at administrative and military centres; certain occasions, such as the Queen's birthday or the visit of the Queen's representative, the Governor, are celebrated with secular ceremonial. Only at the Coronation, to which African representatives from Rungwe district were sent, did the state ceremonial and the Christian ritual merge.[2] Political tension is not now directly

[1] R. Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, Chicago (1941); *A Village that Chose Progress*, Chicago (1950).

[2] 'The entire solemnity of the Coronation, from start to finish, is distinctly a religious rite.' Canon Charles Smyth, 'The Coronation Rite', *The Listener*, 28th May 1953.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

expressed or resolved in ritual. The place for *ukusosya*—speaking out—is the council chamber not the sacred grove or the homestead where the shades gather, and the reconciliation of conflicts between chiefs, or between chiefs and District Commissioner or chiefs and commoners, is sought in a committee rather than a Church. Perhaps the greatest difficulty in modern administration in Africa lies in this very separation of activities, in the *thinness* of the bonds across the colour line, in the cleavage between secular and sacred. Some separation of the different aspects of a society is a concomitant of the increase in scale—it is one manifestation of specialization—but it is greater in Tanganyika with its diversity of religious traditions than it is in Britain with its common Christian history.

171 178 648

That there is a connexion between the form of faith and ritual and the form of social structure few would deny. The concern of the anthropologist is to define it; to plot the limits of autonomy between different aspects within societies. This can be done only by the patient analysis and comparison of many societies and this book is offered as a humble contribution towards such a comparative study.

182 121

631 Age-villages combined to form a chiefdom under the hereditary chief,
628 *malafyale*, but active co-operation between villages thus associated was often slight; indeed in the larger chiefdoms there commonly existed intermittent animosity which might break out in raiding or even civil war. The
[721] integrity of these larger chiefdoms was weak – for example, when the Nyakyusa were attacked by Sangu and Ngoni war-parties, and later by the
[648] Germans, villages of the same chiefdom conspicuously failed to join in common defence. Similarly the land affairs of one village were no concern of any other, and each jealously guarded its own rights.

631 None of the chiefdoms was large; smallness of scale is typical of
162 Nyakyusa political organisation and social attitudes. In 1955 the smallest indigenous chiefdom contained only 36 men. In 1948 55,700 people were divided amongst about 18 indigenous chiefs, but undoubtedly had not the Colonial Government frozen the system there would have been rather more – at least five more. Today there are 12 recognised "administrative chiefs", amongst whom five have each less than 3,000 people under them, and the largest chiefdom contains fewer than 10,000 people – the average is just over 4,000 people.

631 Nevertheless the chiefdom, the collection of villages, was important,
361 because in the creation of the chiefdom villages were created, and in its development the villages developed, matured and died away. A village survived only so long as its members lived and by the nature of the age-organisation there was but little possibility of the recruitment of new members, for villagers' sons left to form their own new villages. Their sons eventually came to comprise the core of the new chiefdoms.

642 In connection with the constitution of a Nyakyusa village and with
643 land tenure, the significant feature of the chiefdom was its establishment, together with the induction of a new chief, at the great "coming-out"
[796] ceremony, *ubusoka*. In brief, each chief was succeeded by two of his sons – the
[428] eldest son of each of the senior houses of the chief, i.e., of his first two wives. At the "coming-out" ceremony, when the sons were still young men and their father was not a particularly old man, the old chiefdom was divided into two, each part coming under one of the new young chiefs. Before this critical occasion – at which much important ritual was performed – the younger men of the old chiefdom had already moved away from their fathers villages and had established their own incipient villages nearby, each one containing a group of coevals. A Nyakyusa boy from the age of about seven years could not continue to live with his father and mother, but, in company with his equals, built his own hut on a site adjacent to the main
621 village as indicated by the fathers' headman. Until the "coming-out" cere-
[342] mony these youths' villages came under the control of the old village headmen; but with the induction of the new chiefs they achieved independent status, each with its own headman appointed from among its members by the old headmen. Each new village was allocated a new building site and a new arable area, and quite commonly the old villages, the older men, moved away a little in order to give the younger men adequate access to the land,
631 for it was considered that the young men's needs for land were paramount.

[178] After this wholesale reorganisation of the old chiefdom, when new villages were established and new boundaries demarcated,[1] the old chief
[622] himself, the old headmen and the older men (the "fathers") gradually retired from active public life. The old chief was supposed to commit suicide after a time (or was quietly killed off) in order to leave the field clear for his
[643] sons; the old headmen became the religious and ritual leaders of the new
[888] chiefdoms, with the flavour of elder statesmanship, and the old men's

1. 'At the "coming-out" it is said that "everything is made new", boundaries are redrawn and the new chiefdoms and villages of the young men are ceremonially incorporated'. Wilson, G., 1938, p. 31.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

plots of maize, squashes, tobacco, etc., and useful trees (bamboo, citrus, mango, kapok, *usyunguti* and firewood). Artificial drainage would, of course, make more land available along the rivers, but this is in general beyond the abilities and resources of the Nyakyusa without considerable outside assistance.

Finally, in this matter it is to be remembered that in addition to a man's arable holding, each of his wives has a banana plot at her house from which she obtains her staple foodstuff. Such plots amount to perhaps about a tenth of an acre on the average. On the other hand, the Nyakyusa are no longer prepared to tolerate a predominantly banana diet. Rice has, in most areas of the Lake Plains, become almost as important as bananas.

Large-sized Holdings

Some blame for this novel shortage of land and the smallness of the average holding has often been laid upon that minority of Nyakyusa who have exceptionally large holdings, and also upon the immigrants from beyond the Lake Plains who have come to settle there during the past decade.

The occupiers of large-sized holdings are rather fewer than has sometimes been supposed. The notoriety of large land-owners, such as some of the modern chiefs with as much as 25-30 acres, has brought more attention to them than is really warranted. Most chiefs and village headmen have arable holdings of above average size, as a result of their privileged positions in the land allocation system and because of their prestige influence; but they remain a small minority and their number is bound to decrease in the future as inheritance causes sub-division of their holdings, for most of them have also more than the average number of wives and sons. In the two high-density regions it is clearly impossible for any man much to increase his present holding. As will be shown later (see page 24) the modern trend is not unnaturally towards a dangerous fragmentation of holdings.

The data obtained in this matter for my eight village samples are summarised in Table III, page 15. In those villages the two men out of 372 who held more than ten acres were a village headman and the father of a chief.[1] There were seven other headmen and one chief as well as some other locally influential men amongst the people covered by my surveys, but none of them held more than ten acres. There are, of course, some commoners amongst the large land-holders; many of them are close relatives of the chief or headman and have thus received preferential treatment. Some, however, are ordinary villagers who were perspicacious enough to see future trends and to obtain land in the early days before most men realised its new value and when vacant areas were still easily available. Such men are tending to become a new, wealthy class, but on the other hand they are particularly susceptible to the begging of kinsmen and friends who have insufficient land. If they are not to be regarded as unneighbourly or even anti-social (perhaps practising witchcraft) they are virtually compelled to be generous sometimes, both with their land and with their profits.

On the whole this minority of men excites little attention or jealousy among the Nyakyusa, who indeed take it for granted that their chiefs and headmen will have more land than ordinary villagers, as befits their status and prestige. If it be thought that by reducing somehow the size and number of these unusually large holdings then the land shortage might be partly relieved, it is a false hope. I scarcely think that the Nyakyusa would welcome any such attempt at interference by administrative action, but in any case it would only provide minor and temporary relief here and there and would not be worth the executive difficulties involved.

1. This second man should be a chief himself but he was dismissed by Government on his imprisonment for peculation. He still holds much of the prestige and privilege of a chief for his son is only allowed authority in purely local government affairs.

423 as determined by the village headman. But even building sites with the
178 essentially associated banana groves are becoming increasingly scarce and
[882] valuable, for no one desires to decrease the amount of arable by enlarging the
[361] built-up areas – rather the reverse. The number of young men's villages is
[56] therefore diminishing and congestion of their huts is increasing to the stage very often where no more than a narrow passage if left between adjacent houses. There comes to be a wider age range in the young men's hamlets where, often, a large village provides only one for all its sons. Smaller villages sometimes provide no accommodation at all for their sons, who are thus compelled to seek membership of a neighbouring group. These hamlets are mainly regarded nowadays as temporary residential areas for the young men until such time as they move on to an existing holding – their father's or some other. There is therefore no attempt to provide sufficient space for an adequate banana grove with each young man's house, let alone a food-crop plot behind it. The arable land beyond the congested huts already belongs to inhabitants of the main village. When a young man is able to leave and take up a holding, his vacated site (together, often, with the hut) is taken over by a waiting youth who has probably been sharing with another hitherto.

361 These young men's hamlets do not, any longer, eventually mature and
311 become villages in their own right with their own headman and arable lands.
178 Formerly, when this occurred, they would probably have taken over a good deal of the lands of the old village, as the young men exercised the privileges of their new maturity against their elders with the emergence of the new chiefdom. New chiefdoms, and with them new villages, no longer emerge,
● [648] and this is mainly because Government has prohibited the bifurcation of petty chiefdoms on the death of the old chief, as it is considered inconsistent with the development of stable, modern local government. Additionally, however, the shortage of land can no longer allow of the traditional expanding politico-territorial organisation. The elder men's villages are not now prepared to yield ground to the young men, and the latter cannot expand elsewhere. Thus political requirements and land restriction work together to make the old system obsolete and to freeze the spatial distribution of villages as it existed in early European times. As far as I could ascertain in the chiefdoms of the Lake Plains, probably no new village had emerged in the past 20 or more years, except for a few cases of large ones splitting into two for administrative and social convenience. Many villages there date back to pre-European days often now under the son, or even the grandson, of the original headman (though this is not essential or invariable in any way).

561 The age-basis of the Nyakyusa village is thus disappearing; indeed, in
178 many villages it has already disappeared in everything but the young men's hamlets. Where the process has gone least far, there is still apparent a rough
428 division of the single village into the old men's sector (men at least 50 years of age, and many much older); the middle-aged men's sector (men between about 30 and 50 years old, being the younger brothers or elder sons of the old men); and the young men's and youths' sector. On inheritance, sons tend to show a continued reluctance to move and live on their father's house-site and to become immediate neighbours of older men; they avoid it if possible,
178 often allowing a middle-aged man to shift there instead. Nevertheless even this sort of age-division is rapidly vanishing and in very many villages a
428 man's neighbour may be of any age.

[423] We have seen that inheritance is now one of the chief methods of obtaining land. Under the new inheritance rules, this means that sons follow their fathers and take up their fathers' arable holdings, building sites and banana groves. Some young men inherit early, others inherit late; there is no longer any notion or possibility of the younger generation entering into its

of the father. The old principle that every man had the right to arable land applied no less strongly to the young men, married or bachelors. Today most headmen will refuse to entertain the applications of young bachelors for land, and in this they merely represent general public opinion. But many young husbands likewise cannot obtain land, or only an insufficient amount.

Consequently, the following case-history, which I recorded for one young man, is not unusual. In 1955 he lived in the Mlangali young-men's hamlet, attached to Mpunguti village in Mwakipesile's chiefdom, where his father lives. He was about 27 years old and had a wife and one child. Twice he had been to work in the mines and from the profits of this employment he had completed his bridewealth payment and had bought, in addition, three cattle, a bicycle and some good clothing. He thought he would probably go away again. Behind his house his wife had about 300 square yards of bananas and there was a tiny patch of cassava. This man had no other land, but he assisted in the heavy labour on his father's holding (about 1.7 acres in all) and by family convention he normally took for his own use the paddy crop of a small strip there; he insisted, however, that he had not been given this strip outright and that it remained at his father's pleasure. He had an unmarried half-brother about 22 years old who had not obtained even that concession at the time. Their father was about 55 years old and had two other sons who were still boys. The young man himself had been refused an allocation of land by the headman on the grounds that (as the headman well knew) he had the use of this strip of his father's land, and also because, as the eldest son, he would be the principal heir on his father's death. He was clearly worried about his future, for he did not wish to go abroad again and leave his wife and child; but he did not see how he could stay at home without seriously lowering his standard of living to little above subsistence level.

I quote this brief case-history not necessarily as typical – though I think it probably is – but as an actual illustration of the present state of affairs as they affect an individual.

The Modern "Chief" and the Land

Most of the traditional chiefs, *abanyafyale*, have been recognised and salaried under the Native Authority, and they are officially referred to today as *abatwa* (s. *ntwa*). Some of the smallest chiefdoms have been absorbed administratively by their larger neighbours, and, although they are still recognised by the people, their *abanyafyale* have lost very much of their earlier prestige and authority. In the Lake Plains the modern chiefdoms are often rather larger than is usual amongst the Nyakyusa,[1] but they are, of course, small in comparison with the size of most African chiefdoms in Tanganyika.

The slightness of the traditional authority of the chief in land matters has already been noted (pages 7-8) and in general this still holds. In European times, however, the recognised chiefs have been given an increased authority and prestige as the local intermediaries between Government and people, and until recent years they were almost the only local instruments of the Government amongst the Nyakyusa. They have been backed by the all-powerful European, who preferred to deal with single, recognised individuals thought to have prime authority in a locality, and the European officer has been encouraged in this notion by an over-enthusiastic policy of indirect rule. Such chiefs were able to assume a degree of power well beyond the traditional limits, and to aggrandize themselves thereby. The ordinary commoner was never quite sure how far his chief was individually claiming more than he

1. On the numerical sizes of chiefdoms see supra, page 6.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

had authority to claim, or how far the Central Government was permitting or even compelling him to use new powers. Part of this novel power has, not unnaturally, been used to take over land-control responsibilities to which the chief has no traditional tribal right, and it has led to the claims, sometimes heard in the Courts and upheld in the District Commissioner's Appeal Court, that chiefs are the sole, traditional and rightful land authorities. It has led to chiefs assuming, or trying to assume, land allocation and supervisory powers which hitherto were the close right only of the village headmen.

Thus some chiefs have declared that they alone, or at least primarily, have allocatory powers over formerly uncultivated tracts which are relatively distant from the villages and which have now become valuable as paddy fields. Others have come to claim rights of interference in village land affairs, even within the long-established village areas. By the undefined threat of their alleged Government support, by taking advantage of new conditions, they have not infrequently "got away with it". They have insisted that their own nominees be allocated vacant holdings; they have gone over the heads of village headmen and made public their opinion as to who, amongst numbers of aspirants, should receive land in villages; they have insisted that headmen should consult them on the details of allocation. The desire for power and further prestige is one impulse behind this development. Sometimes the chiefs, better educated than many of their headmen, are able to understand the modern land situation better and are impatient of their headmen's conservatism and procrastination. Another factor is the potential profit which may accrue as land becomes scarce and thus a valuable commodity, and this became particularly important when the rush developed to take up the formerly vacant lands for paddy cultivation. Gifts in money and kind became common in return for preferential treatment for the donors. These lands are now all allocated and held by someone, but the chiefs have been reluctant to relinquish their new-found authority.

These remarks do not apply to all the chiefs: some have been notably content to use their influence through the traditional system by judicious co-operation with their headmen. Some, too, have been too imperceptive to bother to take action at all. Again, some have been forestalled by strong village headmen who would not allow any diminution of their own status and rights. In some of the fomerly vacant lands where no headman could reasonably claim traditional jurisdiction, the operations of the chiefs have probably been beneficial in reducing chaotic land-grabbing and jealous rivalry; once, however, these lands are brought under cultivation there seems to be a good case for their inclusion within the normal Nyakyusa land-control system. The continued existence of a supra-headman authority does not necessarily lead to stability or improved control. Certainly it is not in keeping with the people's values and institutions.

For these changes Government must clearly bear some responsibility and often also the blame for indirectly causing alterations in native land law and custom by some administrative attitude or ruling in a related sphere. There has been a good deal of well-intentioned insistence on determining and strengthening the "Land Authority" in tribal areas in the interests of stability and efficiency. In Rungwe District the facile claims of Nyakyusa chiefs have been only too readily accepted without question. In fact the traditional *umalafyale*, chief, only represented his chiefdom as a unit, and his lack of real power corresponded to the lack of cohesion within the chiefdom. The notion of a supreme "Land Authority" is largely incorrect for the Nyakyusa. In a theoretical sense we may perhaps say that the total land of a chiefdom was and is owned by all of the people in that chiefdom – chief, headmen and villagers; and therefore we may perhaps categorise the chief, the single individual representing the group as a whole, as the "land-owner." To

[498 423 643] do this is however, seriously to strain the facts and values beyond what the average Nyakusa would understand or allow. The chief does not, as we have seen, allocate land either to villages as individual units or to the villagers separately; new, traditional villages obtained their land by allocation from the old headmen, and individual villagers were and are allocated their holdings by their own headman. The chief can act as arbitrator between villagers and villages, but his decisions have been notoriously difficult to enforce. Undoubtedly commoners resent the attempts by their chief to interfere in their own village affairs.

Now it may, of course, be desirable to widen and thus facilitate the [433] scope of land authority, allocatory responsibility and equitable supervision, especially in the interests of a developing cash economy in a situation of a critical shortage of land. But if this significant change in native land law is to be introduced, it should surely be as a result of a proper appreciation of the facts and the existing law, and it must be in conformity with the interests and desires of the people themselves. It ought not to be a gradual sliding into a new situation as a result of other factors – as a by-product of local government development, for example, or as a matter of administrative convenience unsupported by real understanding. To make the chiefs the executive agents of the local government system does not necessarily mean – or it should not – that they should be passively allowed to usurp the land allocation powers of their headmen. Further, in view of modern Territorial policy aimed at bringing the people and their village leaders into the local government system, it seems perhaps unwise that at the same time chiefs should be allowed to assert non-traditional, autocratic land powers which are resented by villagers and headmen, and which may do little to improve the already difficult situation. When the additional powers of the chiefs are used at least partly, if not mainly, for self-aggrandizement or for personal profit, then it is a trend which needs to be strictly curtailed and controlled.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

311
423

some more land. How much could be made cultivable is beyond my appraisal, but it would be of valuable local assistance and ought not to be neglected. It does not, on the other hand, appear practicable to decrease further the amount of land used for building and village sites – the people themselves have already done this to some extent, and increased congestion in the villages would probably be undesirable on medical grounds.

There remain the local cases where part or all of a holding is not used (excluding genuine fallowing). An old man, or one who has for some reason lost the labour of his wives or sons, is sometimes unable to cultivate the whole of his fields. This is not common, or if it occurs the occupier is usually approached by his kinsmen, friends and neighbours for a loan or gift. Occasionally such land does remain relatively unutilised and the occupier refuses to release it even at the request of the headman. There is some feeling in the Lake Plains over this matter, and some men have suggested openly that such unused land should compulsorily revert to the village to be re-allocated by the headman.[1] Unless there is overwhelming demand for a new ruling here it would seem not to be a practicable policy and would only weaken security of land-holding and further increase the already over-exaggerated communal claim of the village. It would, of course, be difficult to assess when in fact a man had more land than he could or would cultivate, and it might easily lead to injustice if chiefs or headmen were given powers (however restricted) to interfere in a man's holding. Nevertheless headmen might be encouraged to keep a close watch on unused fields in their villages and to bring pressure to bear either to persuade the occupier to increase his efforts or to make temporary, witnessed loans to a neighbour.

In some cases land is left unused for a period whilst a man is away from home – usually while he is away at work. Where his absence is brief, little can or needs to be done, and already under Nyakyusa law the headman may authorise another villager to cultivate the fields on a year to year tenure: the absentee re-entering his holding on return. Occasionally, however, a young man may, for example, inherit land but then leave it for a number of years whilst he migrates to work in the mines. There is no adequate ruling as to the number of years' absence which should elapse before the absentee forfeits his land as an assumed permanent emigrant from the village. Headmen are reluctant to reallocate unused land for fear of the obvious legal and social difficulties should the absentee return, although some headmen are more hasty than others in this matter. Neighbours are often reluctant to borrow the land for fear of losing their opportunity of an outright allocation elsewhere in the village in the meantime. In some cases I saw fields which had lain unused for more than four years for these reasons. Like the unused portions of an old man's holding, these few cases arouse a good deal of land-hungry indignation, beyond their real importance in fact. Nevertheless some limit to the period of absence might well be introduced so that at least headmen know what their authority is in this matter, and so that men not prepared to work the land shall not be able to retain it indefinitely. It may be noted that the average length of absence of men in migratory labour is 18-24 months. A period of three years' continuous absence, at least without special cause, might perhaps be taken to indicate the automatic abdication of right of tenure.

[622]

If more land cannot be made available – or only relatively little – the obvious solution is a more intensive and profitable use of the existing resources. The Agricultural Department has long urged this policy and is attempting to put it into effect, pointing out the relatively inferior yields of paddy in the Lake Plains because of poor techniques and inefficient effort.

[649]

1. Significantly enough, one of the men to bring this suggestion to my notice was the Nyakyusa Senior Agricultural Instructor in the Lake Plains.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

This is not the province of the Sociologist, and all that can be said here is that it seems the most practical and valuable policy that could be adopted: it should be made the chief line of attack on contemporary problems. Unfortunately the Nyakyusa do not appreciate the value of this sort of solution – at least not yet – and therefore they are not inclined to learn and to increase their efforts and to change their practices in the fields. They have not yet rid themselves of the notion that increased production of crops and thus increased profits from agriculture are correlated only with increased holdings. In view of the critical land shortage a crucial change of attitude and understanding is required. The Nyakyusa must learn that increased production and higher profits can come from new and more efficient techniques – i.e. intensive cultivation. They must also learn what is so difficult for the African, that quality of production is no less important than quantity and that therefore cash incomes and standards of living can be raised by improving the standard of crops to be sold. Indeed, with a tendency for world agricultural prices to fall due to increasing supply, quality of produce is of the greatest importance. This is notably so in the case of rice. Tanganyika African rice is reckoned as of lower quality than that from South-east Asia, which therefore commands not only the better price but also the main share of the keenly competitive market. But it is a difficult idea for the Nyakyusa to grasp. It seems obvious to them, inheriting attitudes of a former subsistence age, that three poor cattle are better than two good ones – and in fact so they were in the hazardous time of their grandfathers. Cash crop production is based on the same premise, but it cannot hold in a modern cash economy and in dealings with world markets. 311 423 181

If, however, the present land shortage continues unchecked by the successful introduction of new attitudes, ideas and techniques there may well be serious social and political repercussions in the not too distant future. Current schemes of tribal development will surely be rendered futile if economic activity is restricted and if land discontent is allowed to become important.

A second agricultural policy, and one of which less is heard, would be to stop the present dangerous monoculture – the persistence with paddy alone – and to attempt on a large scale to introduce second and third cash crops, particularly such crops as require intensive cultivation on small acreages. This may be forced on the people in any case if the gloomy prognostications of world rice prices are borne out in the next few years. Such a development would allow of a more stable economy and a more balanced agriculture, in addition to assisting towards a reduction of land difficulties. Experiments on a small scale in robusta coffee, palm oil and other crops have already been started by the Agricultural Department but, at least from the layman's point of view, they need priority in finance, attention and effort as a main part of an agricultural programme for the Lake Plains. [LAB]

In the time available for my investigations it was not possible to enquire with sufficient care into the details and exact procedure of Nyakyusa land law (*c.f.* page 3) and therefore I am reluctant to suggest any drastic changes. The new inheritance law (page 21) is a step in the right direction and is clearly in keeping with modern trends, but it is suggested that its detailed operation on the ground and in the courts should be studied by the Native Authority and the Administration in order to attempt to define its meaning more clearly and to reduce the number of disputes. In order to check fragmentation before it has gone too far, it should be considered whether some minimum limit might not be imposed on the size of fields. Voluntary schemes for the consolidation of holdings, which have achieved some success elsewhere in Africa, might also be considered. These would be particularly valuable in the 311 423 [118] [128]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

311
423

Thus men wishing to move could seek to obtain, that is to buy, a holding from another man living in a village to which he is willing to move; a man leaving a village could either retain his holding in cultivation or obtain some compensation for the loss of his holding there. It is not likely that this would produce a rush of land sales, for only a relatively few men would wish to relinquish their holdings. It would, however, facilitate freer movement between villages. Secondly, it would assist younger men to obtain holdings when they have earned and saved money at work.[1] Thirdly, it would assist profit-making cultivators to enlarge their holdings. Fourthly, it would help to bring to the Nyakyusa a realisation of the implications of the new money economy which they have inevitably and irrevocably entered, and it would demonstrate the value of holdings in relation to other commodities and activities. This kind of system would allow the village to retain much of its valued unity and control whilst reducing its excessive and potentially harmful exclusiveness. Such disposals of land, especially if by money sale, could be performed before the headman and other reliable village witnesses and they could be registered formally at the local court. There would need also to be some ruling limiting the maximum size of holdings (to prevent excessive buying) and preventing alienation to Africans from outside the Lake Plains. In this matter the village headman would probably be the executive authority.

[366]

Although the suggestion could be introduced simply as a scheme enabling the buying and selling of land, I am here more concerned with the problem of freer movement and the limitation of the reversionary rights of the headman on behalf of the village, whilst retaining his useful controls. A more general recognition of the economic value of land would probably follow, and if it proved practicable and useful, an extended and refined scheme could be introduced later.

My suggestions are, then, as follows:—

1. (*a*) an immediate restriction of immigration into the Lake Plains from whatever origin, and the encouragement of the movement of people from the congested areas into the lightly populated areas, accompanied by local development programmes there;

(*b*) the consideration of the practicability of drainage and thicket clearance schemes in order to make more land available;

(*c*) the absolute abolition of land-holding by non-residents and the reallocation through the local headmen of land so held to local inhabitants;

(*d*) the sympathetic encouragement of village headmen to watch unused portions of villagers' holdings with a view to their voluntary and temporary reallocation to neighbours in need.

2. (*a*) a detailed enquiry into the operation and administration of the new inheritance law, with a view to improving its details;

(*b*) an enquiry into the possibility of imposing a minimum limit on the size of holdings and plots;

(*c*) the introduction of local, voluntary schemes for the consolidation of holdings.

3. Covering the whole field of Nyakyusa land problems must necessarily be a progressive agricultural programme aimed, firstly, at a more intensive and a more efficient use of the land by improved cultivation methods, and, secondly, the abolition of monoculture by the introduction of other cash crops. This is, of course, the policy of the Agricultural Department, but it needs more urgent application despite the obvious difficulties raised.

[648]

Stall-feeding of cattle, especially in the wet season, would assist to improve the living conditions of the herds and to increase their domestic and economic value.

1. It would also provide an alternative cash investment to the present purchase of cattle.

12: Biegaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

352 415 two water jars, baskets, stools, a ladder leading to the loft, and a table. The rooms were large and spacious, 5 m by 14 m, and in two places low partitions were
353 used to effect a sub-division of the rooms. One may well wonder at the great length of these houses, but probably it is quite true what is said, that, when—in
392 177 1891—the Germans took charge of the region and imposed a tax on houses, the Nyakyusa men made their women move in under their own roofs—only at the same time extending the houses, using the technique they already knew from the cowhouses.

648 178 342 Fülleborn reports on this payment of taxes, and finds it reasonable enough, because, he says, "it fosters in the people an understanding of work and discipline," and of the house tax he says, "it works to abolish polygamy, since every woman, following the traditions of her country, has her own house, for which her husband must pay the tax."

But the Banyakyusa seems to have adapted themselves to the new law and have moved their wives to the very long houses, thus escaping part of the taxes...

342 The third type of house was a rectangular house with a hipped roof. This type is called *ikema*, which means tent. It was also called *itowo*, the meaning of which I have not been able to ascertain: maybe it means chicken-breast, to which it bears much likeness.

This is the modern house-type to which Fülleborn may be referring when he talks about rectangular houses, "... the very rare instances when a hipped roof is seen ..." (page 375).

342 177 According to statements made by people who have lived in the district for a third of a century, this type of house is thought to have come from the south some 50 years ago. I have not visited the Ngonde who live farther south, but Sir Harry Johnston (1897) depicts a group of people called "Wankonde (North Nyasa)" in front of a house which looks very much like the modern *ikema* of the Banyakyusa. It seems therefore reasonable to assume that the roof-construction design of the Ngonde has now reached the district of the Banyakyusa. Johnston also informs us that the rectangular type is not actually the original type in East Africa, but that it was probably introduced by the Arabs.

342 This *ikema* or *itowo* is shorter than the long *ikibaga*; seldom more than 11 metres in length. But its interior design does not differ. For instance, this holds true of the placing of the hearth, of the equal distance between posts supporting the roof, of the bamboo ceiling covering about half the room, of half-partitions from bamboo and in some cases mud, of store-rooms in the far end of the house, accessible through an inner door.

[592] In an *ikema* I have never seen more than one hearth, which means that the house is inhabited by one woman. A house in the village of Kikota presented an example of the peculiar tradition of the peoples of the Highlands, viz. the tying of the cattle to posts in the dwelling-houses. My drawings are all from the Highlands, where, in the *ikibaga*, as also noted by Fülleborn, the same tradition is

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

439 The modern position is quite different. Each village still produces almost all its own food, but very considerable quantities of clothing, metal utensils, and tools are imported, in addition to salt, medicines, and ornaments. All the men and some of the women wear cloth. Every man possesses at least one loin-cloth, [651] a hoe, and an axe, and he must pay an annual tax of 12s. with an additional 2s. for every wife after the first. These essential expenses are met by the sale of produce and labour. Rungwe district is one of the main sources of food for the nearby Lupa gold-fields, while its native-grown coffee is sold on the London market. In 1936 produce to the value of some £24,000[1] was sold from Rungwe district to the outside world, and considerable quantities of produce were also sold within the district to Government officials, missionaries, traders, and their servants. At the same time an exchange of different types of produce, particularly of rice from the plains for ground-nuts from the hills, is developing, and markets flourish at several centres.

441 Trade is in the hands of Indians and Swahili settled in the Government station, Tukuyu, the military station, Masoko, and 443 the Lake-shore port, Mwaya. These traders employ Nyakyusa agents on a commission basis, to sell their goods and bring in produce; and there are many small shops scattered through the district, where commercially-minded Nyakyusa sell cloth, salt, paraffin, matches, hoes, knives, tin dishes, padlocks, soap, and cigarettes; and buy produce. But the shop is not a village centre. In the first place, one shop usually serves several villages; in the second, dependence on trade-goods is not yet so great that shopping close at hand is a necessary convenience, and when a purchase is to be made the buyer often prefers to go to one of the three main trading centres where his choice is greater. There was no sign of a Nyakyusa shop serving as a meeting-place for a village or a group of villages, as does the trading store of the Transkei.[2] Tukuyu market is indeed a social centre but it attracts custom from all over Rungwe district, not merely from one village or group of villages. Trading thus draws men outside their village; it does not nourish relationships within the village.

445 Employment for wages is the second means of meeting essential expenses, and we estimated that in 1936 approximately

[1] *Vide supra*, p. 16.
[2] Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 336.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Life is never dull for the African. There are marriages and funerals here as elsewhere; the former always a joyous occasion, the latter not always or necessarily the reverse. A walk through a populous village will bring one upon net making, pot making, basket or cloth weaving, and one may hear the sharp tap-tap of the bark cloth worker, or, in an iron-working district, the clang of the blacksmith's stone hammer, beating out hoes or spears upon a rough stone anvil. And many drive dullness away with beer. Sometimes it is a small party. A few friends gather in a house, and sit around a pot or two of beer provided by the wife of the host. They drink to the strumming of a *pango* or the beating of a small drum, for they like to have music at their feasts, even when only a few are gathered. But if it is a village feast, given by the chief, it may go on all night with terrific noise, shouting, singing, and drumming; and not always does the feast end without fighting.

Sometimes the villagers receive visitors. The native evangelist on his rounds is always hospitably welcomed. The tax collector is not exactly welcomed—who ever welcomes a tax collector?—but he is received well enough, for his coming has at least this advantage, that those who are ready to pay the sum demanded will not have to go later and pay at the *boma* (magistrate's office), which may be a long distance away. Sometimes a native trader comes along, his packs carried by attendants, for he never carries them himself, even when beginning on a small scale. Visitors

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

enclosure surrounded his dwelling of many houses, 643
where he lived with his wives and slaves, and, always 644
present, some of his councillors. The arrival of visitors was announced by the young men who kept the gates; but only visitors of very high standing were actually admitted to the presence of the chief. If Chungu left the enclosure wearing his crown of black cloth with long streamers, the people hid themselves. When he went on a journey, the older people claimed the right of seeing him, and even saluting him as he passed; the younger were rigorously kept out of the way. When he crossed a river the men who carried him must not allow his feet to touch water, which he himself must never touch with his foot, for a flood would follow which would do much damage to the country.

To maintain his dignity, the chief received taxes 643
in kind. His gardens were hoed, and his houses built, 651
by the people. If an elephant was killed its tusks, and part of the flesh, were brought to him. Buffalo was royal game, and the whole carcase was his; his, too, were skins and tails of lion, leopard, and zebra; tusks of hippopotamus, horns of rhinoceros. Once in two years each chief brought him a young cow; and a portion of all spoils of war in prisoners, cattle, and other things, was his due.

Out of his abundance Chungu gave gifts to 643
favourites or valued servants. He received and 644
entertained distinguished visitors, though not all were admitted to his presence. They arrived with horns blowing and drums beating, the leader shouting,

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the wealth derived from this trade enabled one of their chiefs, Kyungu, 648
to maintain himself as paramount over all Ngonde. Among his people 184
impersonal relationships thus had a greater importance. And it was, I believe, the historical isolation of the Nyakyusa from any considerable commercial contact with the outside world which prevented the rise among them of a paramount chief.

To-day the Nyakyusa are in process of integration with the civilized 173
society of the world and the independence of their minute chiefdoms has 622
inevitably passed away. The traditionally sovereign chiefs have been 692
grouped in seven court districts with one chief as President of the Native Court in each ; and these seven chiefs together with the two Presidents of the Ndali and Lambya Courts are federated, with an Appeal Court and joint Native Treasury of their own. In the seven Native Courts most of the traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their great-commoners, and assist the President and his great-commoners in the hearing of cases. The bulk of the legal business previously transacted by each chief in his own country is now taken to Court, but the power of great-commoners to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages is still the basis of the legal system.

A poll tax, now (1938) fixed at 9/- per annum for adult males with no 651
additional tax for plural wives, has been introduced and chiefs are paid 622
small salaries ranging from 5/-, 10/- or 20/- a month for ordinary chiefs to 80/- or 100/- a month for the Court Presidents.

The Nyakyusa, as we have previously mentioned, consist of a number 563
of immigrant groups who have spread among and incorporated an indigenous population. The main immigrant groups were three in number and are distinguished to-day by the names of " Nyakyusa," " Kukwe " and " Selya." As all these three groups together (including those who are now incorporated in them) call themselves " Nyakyusa " to the outside world, I distinguish the one group to which the name more particularly belongs as the " Nyakyusa proper." The Nyakyusa proper live in the plain of Mungonde and up on the higher ground as far north as Tukuyu, the Kukwe live north of them around the base of Rungwe Mountain while the Selya live in the east of the district, between the Nyakyusa proper and the Kukwe, right under the wall of the Livingstone Mountains. Between the three groups there are minor differences of dialect and custom.

The extent to which the indigenous groups retain any separate identity varies in accordance with the number of the immigrants and the date at which they reached them, but over a large part of the district fusion has been complete.

We have already discussed the economic relations between the 471
Nyakyusa and the Lupa gold fields which provides them with a market

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 652 subjects. The great bulk of this income was employed for public purposes, but no exact line can be drawn between his public and his personal expenditure[1].

643 651 224 "The right tusk of an elephant was called the royal, the left the common tusk. All royal tusks were the Kyungu's but common tusks belonged to the hunter who killed the elephant. Whenever a hunter here in the Ngonde plain killed an elephant he would take the royal tusk to his own chief (or noble) who would then tell him to bear it to the lord of the country, and so he would take it to the Kyungu. But in the distant hills the local ruler[2] would keep the royal tusks and so cheat the Kyungu. He might come to visit him from time to time, bringing two or three tusks only; and in that case the Kyungu would not claim the others from him. If, however, the Kyungu had heard that many elephants had been killed in so and so's country, and if no subsequent visit had been made to him, he would get angry and send a messenger, and then the territorial noble would come in haste to visit him. But very many tusks they stole and never brought." Whether the commoner from the plain who brought the ivory to Mbande received a gift from the Kyungu in return we do not know; he was not conducted into the sacred enclosure, and he left the tusk with the nobles of Ngonde. But the distant territorial nobles who brought ivory were royally entertained, and even entered the presence of the Kyungu.

Now the sanction for bringing to Mbande the royal tusks of the plain was a moral one, arising from religious faith. It was believed that any huntsman in the plain who had killed an elephant and kept both tusks, instead of taking the right to his own chief or noble and thence on to Mbande, would never kill another; for the spirits of the dead Kyungus would be angry and frustrate his best efforts. It was believed that this would be so even though the living authorities at Mbande had been successfully hoodwinked; it was impossible to hoodwink the dead.

But in the distant hills the sanction was entirely different. The Kyungu and his ancestors were only local divinities, they were only believed to control the fate of the plain. In the hills what was feared was military force. If Nthalile or Mwenewenya refused to obey a summons to Mbande then the Kyungu would order his sons, the chiefs, to go and "burn him out" for insolence[3]. The sanction of force, however, was not the only reason for their acquiescence; it was profit-

[1] No such line can be drawn in England either. We distinguish the King's Civil List from the rest of the budget, but then the state which His Majesty keeps has a public significance.
[2] i.e. the territorial noble.
[3] *Vide infra* section 5 (a).

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

able also for distant nobles to bring ivory to Mbande, since they were given in return valuable gifts of cloth which they could not easily get elsewhere. And besides this it is said that "they desired the Kyungu's favour and to have their importance recognised by him." 643 651 224

Of the tusks which were retained by the hunters in the plain a good many were bought up afterwards by the Kyungu or by the chiefs in return for cloths or cattle or slaves.

Food was brought both by the chiefs and the territorial nobles of the plain, either on their own initiative or in answer to a royal command; and sometimes the less distant nobles of the hills brought food also. Mwenemisuku, for example, was called upon for the beans for which his country is still famous to-day. But, as the following quotation shows, not all the food brought reached the personal possession of the Kyungu. 643 651

"In the old days the nobles of Ngonde had most cunning ways, they would send a message to some territorial noble by the lake to say that the Kyungu desired fish and he must bring him some. Whereupon the noble would bring maybe ten or twenty baskets of fish. He would bring it to the nobles of Ngonde, who would then go and inform the Kyungu that so and so had come bringing fish. And the Kyungu would bid them thank him and tell them to give him a hoe. They would do so and the visiting noble would go home. And then the nobles of Ngonde would bring two baskets of fish in to the Kyungu, dividing the remainder among themselves.

"So likewise they would send to Mwenemisuku for beans and to other nobles for maize or millet; and always they would tell Kyungu of these nobles' arrival; but he would never see what they had brought with them! Sometimes the Kyungu might tell them to send one away without any gift, to another he might give something, just as the fancy took him. But always the nobles of Ngonde would keep the bulk of what had been brought for themselves and bring a little of it only into Kyungu's house. When sending thus for food they sent the *valukuta* who were their messengers."

And the lesser authorities likewise, great chiefs, local chiefs and territorial nobles, took a certain tribute from their own subjects; they could not take the royal tusks, but they could and did take food. Every ruler in Ngonde (and also among the Nyakyusa) had the power of sending at need to any of his subjects and taking some food—bananas, milk, beer and so on. This power was correlated with the view that the local rulers, in relation to their people, were the ultimate owners of the land which their people used. And so also in the relation of the Kyungu with the local rulers, the view that he had given (or allowed them to retain) their land was correlated with the tribute of food.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 652 The gardens of the Kyungu were divided traditionally into public (*imilasa*) and private ones (*imigunda gya masano*). The produce of the first was mainly devoted to the entertainment of important guests—chiefs, territorial nobles and the ivory traders from over the lake. That of the second to the personal needs of the Kyungu and his household. 643 651 The public gardens were hoed and weeded by the great chiefs and the nobles of the Ngonde plain with their subordinates and followers, the private ones by the nobles of Ngonde with theirs.

The hoeing of his public gardens by the chiefs and nobles of the plain was as intimately connected with the religious status of the Kyungu as was the bringing of royal tusks to him, for the belief in his rain-making powers provided a moral sanction for it. Drought and disease, as we have seen, were often attributed to the displeasure of the living Kyungu; and the failure of some ruler to bring his people to work the public gardens was, so we were told, the most usual way of displeasing him. The wealth and the divinity of the Kyungu were inextricably linked. Nor without these public gardens could the lucrative ivory trade have been maintained. In the primitive world of Ngonde there were no "purely business relations;" tributaries and buyers alike had to be royally feasted.

643 651 565 622 In the hoeing of the public gardens the political hierarchy of Ngonde was made evident, for each great chief came separately to hoe, accompanied both by the local chiefs of his own house and by those territorial nobles who lived near him. At an appropriate time either the great chief or one of his noble neighbours would suggest going to Mbande to hoe, and the former would then summon all his local chiefs. But he could not summon the nobles; with them it was a polite arrangement between equals. "When they went to hoe for the Kyungu it might be a neighbouring noble and not the great chief at all who made the first suggestion; and then the two of them would go together with their followers. For the nobles are not subjects of the great chiefs but only of the Kyungu."

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6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

ordinary custom of hoeing parties which is still followed by every chief and commoner in this whole area. Every man, two or three times a year, invites his neighbours to hoe for him and rewards them with a beer-drink in the evening. Where the hoeing of the Kyungu's public gardens differed from this custom was in the religious sanction behind it and in its political organization.

After the local chiefs had finished the *mulasa* for the Kyungu they would next return and hoe a small garden for their great chief who had led them to Mbande. But in this the territorial nobles took no part. Such gardens were not called *milasa* and there was no distinction made between them and the great chief's private ones. For this custom also there was a moral sanction; for the great chiefs, we remember, also participated in divinity. "If his people forgot to hoe for Mwakasungula then perhaps a little local epidemic of some kind would break out and the diviners, when questioned, would attribute it to their forgetfulness. Or perhaps a prophetic fit would fall on someone and he would tell them to go and hoe (or they would rue it!)"

And, still lower in the hierarchy, among a group of chiefs who were half-brothers, the senior chief used sometimes to summon his juniors to bring their men and hoe; but "their acquiescence depended on their friendship for him"; it seems to have had no effective moral sanction.

The private gardens of the Kyungu were traditionally very small indeed, for the constant income of food from the plain made them all but unnecessary. Such as they were, they were worked by the people of Mbande, i.e. the nobles of Ngonde and their followers. The wives of the Kyungu lived like ladies and had all the normal work of a woman, including weeding, done for them.

The income of the Kyungu in slaves and cattle cannot be understood save in the context of judicial procedure and warfare with which we have not yet dealt[1].

The income of Mbande reached others besides the Kyungu and his wives. We have already seen how the nobles of Ngonde took their share of the food which was brought in; and some of it they gave to their messengers, the *valukuta*. Neither the nobles of Ngonde nor the messengers, according to the present Kyungu, used to have any large gardens of their own; they also were maintained at the public expense. And the nobles of Ngonde shared also in the proceeds of the ivory.

With the exception of a pile of tusks upon which the Kyungu slept, most of the ivory which reached Mbande, from the time of Mwangonde

[1] *Vide infra* sections 5 and 6.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been someone [of the dead Kyungus] whom you forgot to ask about.' 'And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again.' If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry, and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would, and then the diviner would tell them that it was so-and-so (one of the dead Kyungus) and they would go and sacrifice in his grove.

Thus to insult Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. An 'insult' might mean any neglect of the obligations of the chiefs and nobles and commoners of the plain to their lord.

The people of Ngonde hoed large fields as tribute to the Kyungu and if they failed to do so 'he grew angry and poured all the water out of the pot in which he kept his rain stones' (*vide infra*, p. 114) and 'the sky dried up'. Then the chiefs called their men to hoe. . . . 'They hoed and hoed and hoed and their wives planted, then the rain came in a torrent. . . . Kyungu created much rain.'

Or if an elephant hunter neglected to send the Kyungu one of the tusks of any elephant he killed he would not kill another. 'The country beneath was angry . . . the shades of the dead Kyungus . . . they were angry saying: "Why do you stint our child?" '

The rainfall in the Ngonde plain is less than half what it is in the Nyakyusa valley and anxiety about rainfall was constantly shown in the communal rituals; elephant hunting was also a matter of concern in a way in which it was not among the Nyakyusa and this too is reflected in rituals; but there was also the preoccupation with health and fertility, as in the prayers at Lubaga. In the groves circling Mbande the nobles prayed: 'May the sterile bear children, may the cattle and fowls increase, may the children sleep and not cry at night, may the witches not injure anyone.' And as we shall see, it was health and fertility that men had in mind when they cleared out the ashes each year after the break of the rains.

Towards Christmas time, when the first maize and the first

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

NOTE

621 It should be realized that (i) the names of the two senior villages of a
631 generation are well known and clear cut, but those of subordinate
561 villages are more fluid. Furthermore a village often has subdivisions,
distinguished by its members by name, but known to outsiders only by
[103] the general village name. (ii) A village may acquire a new name at the
[796] 'coming out'; the senior village of Mwanyilu's generation used to be called 'Mpuguso' but 'came out' as 'Lupando'. (iii) Some villages die out altogether, e.g. Kyemo II. (iv) Some villages straddle generations. Katela in 1955 is in the same sort of position as Katumba in 1935. It includes eight sons of Mpunga who belong to generation III, but also fourteen sons of men of Masoko who 'came out' with Mwanyilu. In the case of Katumba the members who were sons of men of generation III moved to younger villages and 'came out' with Mwanyilu, among them being his senior headman Kilasile, a man of over forty. But Kilasile's contemporaries who were sons of men of generation II could not 'come out' with Mwanyilu, at least not as a group—and the members of Katumba attended the 'coming out' as 'fathers'. Boys join a village of contemporaries but may move later to a village of younger men who are of their own structural generation.

At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu and Mwabungulu five village headmen were 'caught' and secluded with their chiefs. They represented five clear-cut villages. Kilasile and Sikambombo, Mwanyilu's two senior headmen who made fire are leaders of Lupando and Iringa respectively; Pauliki and Batungulu their juniors are leaders of
[622] Bujisi (or Ipoma) and Mfumbi (or Isuba), and Mwanjotile the single headman of the junior heir, Mwabungulu, has his own village of Nkuyu established on newly settled land in the forest. The young men of Kibonde were included under Kilasile's authority, and those of Kituli and Kabula under Sikambombo's. The names Lupando and Iringa are well known as those of sections of Mwanyilu's chiefdom, but the names Bujisi and Mfumbi are not: the young men of these villages still use the names of their fathers' villages, Ipoma and Isuba, though there is a clear territorial separation between fathers and sons. Taxes
[651] are collected under the names of Igembe, Ipoma, Kibonde, Njisi, Isuba, Kituli, and the three forest villages, Kilosi, Kiloba, and Nkuyu.

[p. 101 is blank]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 for the local investment of savings are the most important
[474] economic undertaking in the District. The seven coffee co-
[454] operatives handled a crop of 950 tons in 1955, worth about £427,500, and are organized so efficiently as to be able to return over 90 per cent of the price of the coffee on Moshi market to the producer, after the heavy transport costs (14 per cent) have been paid. One Government-paid officer assists these societies.

In the educational and recreational field also, associations are
526 emerging: football clubs; companies of Scouts and Guides;
575 'Welfare Centres' with classes in reading for adult illiterates,
177 indoor games, and Saturday-night dances; Women's Clubs for handwork and recreation; and in Tukuyu itself an inter-racial club with its own premises, whose members meet to play games, and get to know one another and discuss common problems. These associations make a visible mark on the face of the country in the shape of new brick Churches, co-operative stores, football fields, and, more rarely, a village club-house.

177 The change from a subsistence to a money economy, and from a
651 system of government through chiefs and village headmen who were dependent primarily on inherited wealth, which secured to them the labour of many able-bodied wives and sons, to a system of government through European officials, chiefs, and clerks paid out of taxes, and assisted by unpaid village headmen, implies the collection and administration of taxes. The District Council has
177 the responsibility for the budgeting and expenditure of over £60,000 per annum. The greater part of it is spent on the salaries
652 of chiefs, secretaries, and clerks engaged in administration, on courts, on schools, dispensaries, and roads. The development of associations with paid officers also implies the collection of dues and budgeting. As in so many countries the difficulty of building
177 up a tradition of honesty in administration is great. Tax clerks,
685 court clerks, council secretaries, and co-operative society secretaries, and even church elders handle sums of money relatively large in proportion to their earnings and one of the tasks of European officials and missionaries is to secure a sound system of accounting and check corruption. In the traditional society stock theft was a capital offence, but money has not the sanctity of cattle, and often the clerk who has appropriated public funds is treated by others as 'unfortunate' rather than immoral. At the same time villagers show great anxiety lest a man entrusted with some common fund should spend it for himself. The risk of theft

241 Other foodstuffs grown are coca-yams, cow peas, pigeon peas, Bambarra groundnuts, ginger, cardamon, groundnuts, wheat, pumpkins, peppers, citrus, sugar cane and European [177] vegetables, including a quantity of European potatoes.

Economic Crops

245 One of the main cash crops is coffee, which was introduced about 1900 by the Berlin 177 Lutheran Mission, but it was not grown by natives until 1930 when an attempt was made to organize an industry. It had already been tried from 1924 onwards by Europeans but had gradually died out, giving place to tea.

245 Native coffee has not been truly successful and many reasons are suspected for this. In effect, the coffee suffers from many pests and diseases and yields are so low as to be almost uneconomical even to a tribe of very low individual annual income. It has become obvious that coffee can only be grown by natives if shaded by bananas and mulched heavily with banana trash. Multiple-stem pruning is gaining favour.

Seedlings are planted out in December and the first crop is obtained four years after. The area planted rose in 1939 to 5,864 acres and the number of native planters to 7,966. Yields, however, are low, varying from 131.4 kg. to 20.4 kg. parchment to the acre. Hemeleia [136] leaf disease and yellow and white borer are prevalent all over the coffee-growing area. Over the period since 1932 the price paid to natives has averaged 44 cents a kg. for parchment.

[438] All coffee is collected and sold by Native Authority after rough grading and, in order to [432] encourage better preparation, much lower payments are made for the inferior grades. A native staff is employed to visit coffee plots and to give instructions, and it is noticeable that the quality of preparation varies with the price.

175 The cultivation of rice on the lake shore was started by Chief Koroso in 1896 with seed 243 obtained from Arab traders in Nyasaland and the Moravian Mission issued further seed in 1898. Being an innovation, rice was not popular and little was grown except for small [651] local sales. In 1917 the Government issued seed and tax was paid in rice instead of money. Interest was hereby aroused and the cultivation of rice was started. In 1932 several other kinds of seed were issued and now sixteen varieties 243 are found. "Faya", which was issued in 1929, gives the best yields and is the variety chiefly grown, other varieties being Bungala, Marula

243 and Mapiko, although very little of these is sold. Ploughs have been introduced into the area as it is flat and the total number in use in 1942 is about 400. The first ploughing is carried out in June or July when the ground is still wet, and the second ploughing in October to February. Planting, which is all broadcast, is carried out in November to the middle of March and the harvesting is done in May to September.

256 A first mill was erected at Ipyana on the lake shore in 1942 with a capacity of 9 tons of rice in 15 hours. Another is now on its way from India with a capacity of 14 tons of rice in 15 hours and should be erected some time in 1944.

248 A small acreage of cotton is also sown along the Songwe River boundary, which borders on Nyasaland, with seed obtained from that Colony. Conditions, however, are not suitable on the remainder of the lake shore and expansion is not encouraged.

241 439 A list of exports from the district with approximate weights for 1942 is appended:—

Article	Weight in tons
	Tons
Mixed beans	550
Coffee	50
Groundnuts	50
Maize..	1,500
Onions	20
European potatoes	200
Rice	1,500
Vegetables	40
Fruit	100
Banana flour	300
Cassava flour	50
Finger millet	150
Tea (European produce)	215
Total ..	4,725

Land Tenure and Economics of the People

423 In theory all land belongs to the chiefs or sub-chiefs, but in practice once a man has cultivated a plot, that plot belongs to him until he leaves the area in which he lives. If he leaves, the land reverts to the chief or sub-chief and may be given by him through his headman or elder to anyone in his area who is short of land or to a newcomer who wants a plot. Should a man go away and return after a long period and ask for a plot, he is bound to be given one but not necessarily the plot he had before he left. Newcomers are welcomed and are given land, as the amount of tax collected in an area is an indication of the importance of a chief.

554 609 651

233 Stock grazing is a problem which is coming more and more to the fore. The number of

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

These twin religious powers of the great-commoners in relation to their chief (or of the nobles of Ngonde in relation to the Kyungu) were important for the balance of the constitution, for they provided a most effective check upon the actions of the chiefs. If a chief kept within the bounds of constitutional usage then any illness that he had would be attributed by the diviners to some such cause, as the infidelity of his wives or the breach of a taboo; but if he broke some constitutional usage then that would be taken to be the cause of his next illness; the great-commoners, it would be held, were angry and so had made him ill. 754 622 624 642

It is hardly necessary to stress the local and individual autonomy implicit in the faith in witchcraft. Not only were the great-commoners as a group believed to have an irresistible power through their witchcraft over their chief, but so were the great-commoner and the leading witches of every village believed to have an irresistible power over other individuals within that village. And in both cases their powers were strictly limited, save exceptionally, by the bounds of chiefdom or village. Moreover witches did not always act as a group, an individual witch might maliciously cause another individual to fall ill. In all this the political hierarchy was irrelevant. But it was not irrelevant in dealing with accusations of malicious witchcraft; there proof rested with the poison ordeal and a journey had to be made to a great chief or a leading noble.

4. *ECONOMIC ELEMENTS (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

We have suggested in the previous section that the traditional religious paramountcy of the Kyungu and his nobles of Ngonde was an important factor of their secular power. But comparison with the Nyakyusa shows us that their control of wealth was equally important. The religious paramountcy furnished a mould into which the stiffening stream of wealth could run and there be minted into the form of sovereignty. Much of the wealth which reached Mbande did not stay there; it was passed back piecemeal to the local rulers of Ngonde, stamped with the divine impress of the Kyungu.

(a) *THE INCOME OF MBANDE AND OTHER AUTHORITIES.*

Now the traditional income of Mbande consisted of ivory, food, labour, slaves and cattle. Of ivory the Kyungu had a semi-monopoly in the plain and received tribute from the territorial nobles in the hills. Food was brought to him by the chiefs and territorial nobles of the plain, who also, with their men, hoed his public gardens (*imilasa*). Slaves and cattle accrued to him from tribal wars and from his offending 643 652

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 652

subjects. The great bulk of this income was employed for public purposes, but no exact line can be drawn between his public and his personal expenditure[1].

643 651 224

"The right tusk of an elephant was called the royal, the left the common tusk. All royal tusks were the Kyungu's but common tusks belonged to the hunter who killed the elephant. Whenever a hunter here in the Ngonde plain killed an elephant he would take the royal tusk to his own chief (or noble) who would then tell him to bear it to the lord of the country, and so he would take it to the Kyungu. But in the distant hills the local ruler[2] would keep the royal tusks and so cheat the Kyungu. He might come to visit him from time to time, bringing two or three tusks only; and in that case the Kyungu would not claim the others from him. If, however, the Kyungu had heard that many elephants had been killed in so and so's country, and if no subsequent visit had been made to him, he would get angry and send a messenger, and then the territorial noble would come in haste to visit him. But very many tusks they stole and never brought." Whether the commoner from the plain who brought the ivory to Mbande received a gift from the Kyungu in return we do not know; he was not conducted into the sacred enclosure, and he left the tusk with the nobles of Ngonde. But the distant territorial nobles who brought ivory were royally entertained, and even entered the presence of the Kyungu.

Now the sanction for bringing to Mbande the royal tusks of the plain was a moral one, arising from religious faith. It was believed that any huntsman in the plain who had killed an elephant and kept both tusks, instead of taking the right to his own chief or noble and thence on to Mbande, would never kill another; for the spirits of the dead Kyungus would be angry and frustrate his best efforts. It was believed that this would be so even though the living authorities at Mbande had been successfully hoodwinked; it was impossible to hoodwink the dead.

But in the distant hills the sanction was entirely different. The Kyungu and his ancestors were only local divinities, they were only believed to control the fate of the plain. In the hills what was feared was military force. If Nthalile or Mwenewenya refused to obey a summons to Mbande then the Kyungu would order his sons, the chiefs, to go and "burn him out" for insolence[3]. The sanction of force, however, was not the only reason for their acquiescence; it was profit-

[1] No such line can be drawn in England either. We distinguish the King's Civil List from the rest of the budget, but then the state which His Majesty keeps has a public significance.

[2] i.e. the territorial noble.

[3] *Vide infra* section 5 (a).

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

so the increment that accrued to them was also greater than usual. And thus they normally had more cattle than ordinary men. 556 583

Some of these extra cattle they expended in marrying more wives of their own, who bore them more children. The girl children later brought in more marriage-cattle, and meanwhile the wives and unmarried children worked in the fields and so enabled the rulers to entertain more often and more lavishly than their less married subjects. And it was by lavish entertainment above all that the prestige of a ruler was maintained.

(b) *THE EXPENDITURE OF MBANDE AND OTHER AUTHORITIES.*

All important guests at Mbande, whether traders or subordinates, were, as we have seen, entertained at the Kyungu's expense. Now the entertainment of guests and subordinates is a quite indispensable function of every primitive political authority; power and prestige cannot possibly be maintained without it. Its importance in primitive constitutions has recently been pointed out by Richards in a paper[1] on the constitution of the Bemba tribe in Northern Rhodesia; and the facts of Ngonde tradition bear out her conclusions. Chiefs and nobles were given food and beer when they visited Mbande and the position of Mbande could not otherwise have been maintained. And the Kyungu, like the Citimukulu of the Bemba, also gave to his subordinates gifts of more permanent value. 652

Cloths were given both to chiefs and nobles. We remember that the very first Kyungu at Mbande is said to "have given headcloths to the indigenous rulers" who, in accepting them, accepted also his overlordship; and from that time onwards the practice continued. Whenever a territorial noble died the nobles of Ngonde came from the Kyungu and formally presented his successor with a dark headcloth, which he then wore turban-fashion as a symbol of his status. And other gifts of cloths were made to them also, from time to time. The nobles of Ngonde likewise were formally presented with dark headcloths on succession and, as we have seen, got gifts of cloth each time the traders came. 652 431

And the custom grew up in the middle period of giving cloths to the chiefs also, the sons of the Kyungu. When the chiefs heard that the Kyungu had been buying cloths they used to come, each alone with one man, and be given some. Our evidence does not make clear whether

[1] Audrey Richards "Tribal Government in Transition." Supplement to *J.R.A.I.* Oct. 1935.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

652 431 this was done by all chiefs or only by the great chiefs; but it is certain that the great chiefs possessed more of these cloths than their juniors.

652 431 784 But perhaps the most important traditional use of cloth by the Kyungu was for funeral gifts.[1] The social significance of funeral ceremonial in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa is hard to exaggerate;[2] for both the economic and the emotional aspects not only of kinship but also of village and political relationships are given formal expression most frequently at funerals. And a gift at a funeral carries greater weight than one on any other occasion.

652 431 567 583 Then, again, chiefs and nobles who brought food to Mbande were often given either a beast or a woman slave in return. "When one of the chiefs had caught a great many fish . . . . . he would gather his men and go to Mbande . . . . . Then the Kyungu would tell one of the nobles of Ngonde to go and fetch a beast or, if no beast were available—and cattle were scarce in the old days—he would give him a woman. And if the chief liked her he would take her in marriage and she would become his lady,[3] but if he did not, then he would take her to his own country and sell her there for a cow." (We expressed some surprise at the rate of exchange.) "Yes, truly, for one cow only, cows were very scarce in those days." And sometimes, in order to make sure he would like her, the visiting chief would be allowed to choose his own girl. "When one of his sons came to visit him the Kyungu would sometimes give orders that he should be shown all the (slave) girls and choose the one he liked best; and so the chief would choose a local girl[4] and marry her. And he could never then sell her, once he had chosen her in love."

Now the gift of a woman slave had many social implications. If she was taken to wife the recipient regarded the Kyungu thereafter as his father-in-law, as well as his "father." She herself became free and her children spoke of the Kyungu as their grandfather. And these gifts did more than any others to strengthen the bonds of kinship between the Kyungu and his subordinate chiefs.

652 431 To his common subjects also, if they had deserved well of him, the Kyungu would occasionally give either cloths or a woman or a cow; and the great chiefs of Ngonde likewise and even ordinary chiefs and nobles did the same. And these subordinate authorities, as we have seen, also used to entertain their own subjects generously with food

[1] *Vide infra* section 7.
[2] Cf. Wilson, "Nyakyusa Ceremonies of Burial," *Bantu Studies*, March 1939.
[3] I use "lady" here to translate "*ensele*" which is the title of honour used for a chief's wife; the implication is that she then ceased to be a slave.
[4] Slaves were of two kinds, the relatives of criminals and war captives (*vide infra* sections 5 and 6). It was apparently customary to choose one of the first kind on such occasions.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

and beer: their position depended upon doing so. Up and down the hierarchy the stream of wealth travelled and this stream, in its ebb and flow, was the lifeblood of the old constitution. 652 431

(c) *THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE IVORY TRADE.*

Now it was the scarce and valuable cloths derived from the ivory trade which enabled Mbande to bind the subordinate chiefs and nobles to it in secular matters. Lubaga, lacking this wealth, had no such secular power. But it is very easy to exaggerate the secular power which Mbande had. Personal loyalty to the Kyungu and the great chiefs was enforced throughout Ngonde,[1] the nobles of Ngonde participated in the selection of territorial nobles and great chiefs,[2] tribal war was organized from Mbande,[3] but that was all. In everyday life the sovereignty of the local rulers was scarcely limited. Civil war was endemic in Ngonde,[4] and secular justice had no central organization[5]. 643 439

The central power of Mbande rested on the combination of divine kingship with wealth derived from the ivory-trade. But both in religious and economic matters there was a very high degree of local autonomy. We have already discussed the local autonomy in religion[6] and must now discuss it in the economic sphere.

The economic relations of men in the middle period of Ngonde's history were largely confined to the little local groups of chiefdom and fief. Subsistence agriculture was practised by each family, with the assistance of village neighbours and of a few friends and relatives who normally lived in the same chiefdom or fief. Marriage, with all the exchanges of cattle and food which marriage involved, was usually a local matter also; men only occasionally went beyond the chiefdom or the fief for their wives; while of the few specialised craftmen, such as smiths, a representative was usually to be found in each such local group. Economic links between the local groups existed: men moved from one chiefdom or fief to another leaving relatives behind, some marriages took place across the local boundaries, famous craftmen or doctors attracted clients from far afield. But these links were far fewer in number than those which obtained between the members of each separate local group. 433

And the ivory trade added little to the economic links between the local groups. It involved no tribal organization of elephant hunts, or anything of the kind; it touched the common people only slightly. Commoners and chiefs however did occasionally exchange tusks either 439

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[1] *Vide infra* 5 (a)
[2] *Vide infra* 5 (b)
[3] *Vide infra* 6 (b)
[4] *Vide infra* 6 (a)
[5] *Vide infra* 5 (c)
[6] *Vide supra* 3

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

439 direct with the ivory traders or with the Kyungu, for cloths or cattle or slaves. And groups of chiefdoms and fiefs co-operated in hoeing the *milasa*.

Nor did the ivory trade enter very deeply into the economic relations of [291] the local rulers with their subjects. The common people usually dressed in exiguous pieces of bark cloth or of a coarse cloth which they manufactured themselves from a kind of cotton; the scarce imported cloths, which came through Mbande, were normally used by chiefs and nobles only. They added to the prestige of the chiefs and nobles by linking them visibly with the opulence of Mbande, but did not much increase their own subjects' economic dependence on them. Though here again we must note the occasional exchanges of ivory and other wealth between [652] commoners and chiefs or nobles. The important economic links between local rulers and their subjects were determined, on the one hand, by the differential bride-price, by polygyny and by their power of requisitioning food, and, on the other hand, by their position as chief hosts to their people.

The ivory-trade, in fact, enabled Mbande to bind the local rulers to it in a kind of permanent hierarchical alliance, but neither the constitution of the local groups nor their autonomy in relation to one another was very much affected thereby.

5. *LEGAL ELEMENTS (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

000 We now come to a third element of the central power of Mbande, the traditional part which it played in the maintenance of law. We will take this topic in two parts: first, the ways in which Mbande maintained its own authority and that of its subordinates, and, second, the part played by Mbande and those lesser authorities in maintaining the common law of Ngonde.

(a). *CONSTITUTIONAL LAW: TREASON ETC.*

687 Treason against the Kyungu was summarily punished with little or
567 no legal argument. The commonest form of treason seems to have been too near an approach to one of his wives. We remember that his wives were very closely guarded from all men, for their adultery might magically bring sickness on him, and if he fell ill then the whole land was magically endangered. One side of the hill Mbande is precipitous, and over this cliff (*Ipunga*) all traitors were thrown, including such as had looked on his wives naked; while many members of the traitors' families were subsequently enslaved.

"If a man had looked on the wives of the Kyungu bathing, he himself would be killed by being thrown over the cliff and all his

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

is generally admitted that all chiefs are less affected by this fear than they used to be. The secularization of the constitution tends, in this connection, to make it more autocratic. 178 642 771

On the economic side it is difficult to exaggerate the change in the relative wealth of rulers and people. The change is temporarily obscured by the historical accident of the present Kyungu's personal fortune, but this, when he dies, will go to this own heir, not to his successor in the Kyunguship. The Kyungu's total official salary in 1937 was £72 a year and those of the " Sub-chiefs " varied from about £4 10s. to £12 a year. The nobles of Ngonde all received either 10s. or 15s. a year, with the exception of Mulwa who received 30s. These salaries, which are paid out of the Native Treasurery, are the modern substitute for the profits of the ivory-trade, which the Kyungu shared with his subordinates, together with the regular tribute of food and the proceeds of tribal warfare and of punitive expeditions, all of which sources of income have now dried up. And these salaries do not make possible the giving of any valuable gifts to subordinates and subjects. The local rulers also receive slight financial subsidies from the Native Treasury. Each " Village Headman " is allowed to retain 3d. from the tax of every adult male subject of his own and the " Important Headmen " (great chiefs) receive in addition subsidies ranging from 5s. to 40s. a year. This custom has replaced that of the requisitioning of food ; but, owing to the smallness of all the present chiefdoms and fiefs of the plain, few " Village Headmen " receive more than £1 a year from this source.[1] 178 565 652 465

It is open to commoners, on the other hand, to become as rich or richer than most of their rulers. The head clerk in the Boma in 1937 received £52 a year, and there were fifty-three other Government employees who all received £12 or over ; Native Christian Ministers and Evangelists all received many times the salary of Mulwa while young men often returned from the Lupa gold-fields with savings of several pounds.

The decline of polygyny in Ngonde again reduces the relative wealth of the subordinate chiefs and nobles in comparison with their people. Women are increasingly reluctant, for various reasons, to be married by polygynists, and the old style of entertainment is changing. Few chiefs and nobles, save the present Kyungu himself, now have sufficient wives and unmarried children to be able to entertain on a large scale. In the case of ordinary chiefs and territorial nobles (the " Village Headmen " of to-day) this poverty is not in itself very significant, for with the dwindling 178 565 595 178 565

[1] The average receipts of the one hundred and twenty-four " Village Headmen " in the Ngonde plain were almost exactly 10/- per annum in 1936. They had, that is, an average of forty tax-payers each.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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The present Kyungu has gardens hoed for him like his predecessors, and these gardens are still called *milasa ;* but the subtraction of the religious element from this custom has radically altered both its form and its significance. Of old the *milasa* were hoed by the great chiefs and their people because they wanted rain, to-day they go on hoeing them because the Kyungu gives them cattle ; of old they came of themselves fearing drought, to-day they come because he summons them ; of old the produce of the *milasa* was mostly used for the entertainment of guests from a distance, to-day the produce is mostly turned into cash and used in other ways for the maintenance of the Kyungu's position in his own immediate district. But still, as of old, the custom brings him honour.

The late Kyungu, Mwangalaba, is said to have refused to accept this traditional service in the third year of his reign (1907), and certainly for twenty years afterwards no *milasa* were hoed. Mwangalaba is said to have been a timid man, but it is also possible that he was forced to realize that the mere hope of rain would not be sufficient to maintain the custom much longer in the new economic and religious conditions ; he may have preferred to refuse his people's services rather than see them gradually refused to him. For he had nothing but the hope of rain to offer them ; he was a poor man ; he had neither the ivory of his predecessors nor the private fortune of his successor.

But in 1927 when Peter became Regent, the custom was revived on a new basis. The initiative apparently came from the great chiefs, six of whom in that year led their people to hoe *milasa* for Peter,[1] who, as soon as the hoeing was over, gave each of them a cow. Such a return gift was quite unprecedented. And now every year he sends a message to the three or four senior great chiefs, which they pass on to the others, telling them to come and hoe. One or two beasts are always given to each one who comes. In the first half of 1937 three great chiefs had brought their people to hoe *milasa* and to the two who had finished he had given respectively two bulls and a cow and a bull.

The bulk of the produce of the *milasa* he now sells to his people, by the basket, for money, using the money so obtained firstly to buy cattle to replace the ones given to the chiefs and secondly to buy cloths for funeral gifts. The figures which he gave us himself for the year 1927 showed that he was able in that year to replace the cattle expended and in addition to buy £3 or £4 worth of cloths, enough for about a dozen funerals.[2] The custom has become a mildy profitable business enterprise for the Kyungu.

[1] But no such gardens, I think, are now hoed for the great chiefs themselves. Our evidence is here incomplete.

[2] Expenditure on cattle for chiefs = £11 or £12. Proceeds of sale of *milasa* crop = £15. Profit spent on cloths = £3 or £4.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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But it is more than that, for its maintainance establishes a certain continuity of sentiment between present and past. By hoeing the Kyungu's *milasa* the people of Ngonde no longer do worship to an irascible divinity, but they still do honour to their greatest chief. "Where are our manners? Where is our respect?" asked the chief who, in 1927, took the initiative in hoeing Peter's *milasa*. "It seems almost as if they have died in us." And it is worth noting that the one who said this was Kajuni, a chief of Ngana.

Those who have read Richards on the Bemba constitution[1] will wonder how Peter manges at the same time to sell the produce of his *milasa* and also to provide the necessary entertainment for his leading men. The answer is twofold. Distances in Ngonde, in the first place are far shorter than among the Bemba, and the members of Peter's court can attend it regularly while sleeping and eating at home. The main traditional use of the *milasa* in Ngonde was to provide for the distant nobles who brought ivory and for the ivory traders themselves; but nowadays distant guests are rare. Nevertheless his subordinates and leading men are sometimes entertained lavishly by him, and his prestige in part depends upon this. Whether the necessary food and beer is actually taken from the *milasa* or from his private gardens I do not know, but the fact is unimportant as his private gardens are now big enough to provide the necessary surplus by themselves. For he is, in the second place, the possessor of about ten able-bodied wives who, no longer jealously secluded, work in his fields with their children; and he also hires labour to help them, paying for it out of his private fortune.

The nobles of Ngonde only rarely nowadays bring their people to hoe, for their relationship with the Kyungu is less profitable to them than it was in the days of the ivory trade, and the old organization of Mbande has decayed. With the removal of Peter to Bwiba the nobles of Ngonde and their followers began to scatter; only six of them now live at Mbande, with a mere handful of commoners. The other six are dispersed over the Ngonde plain, and only one of them[2] has any considerable personal following.

The requisitioning of food by the Kyungu and the local rulers has now almost ceased, for various reasons. Food can now be turned into cash by sale; and so men are far more reluctant to give their surplus to their rulers than before. Moreover I think that Government has disallowed the custom.[3]

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[1] *Op. cit.*
[2] Ngosi, who ranks as a "Headman" with a few subjects of his own.
[3] We did not investigate this point in Ngonde, but among the Nyakyusa it is certainly so.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 for the local investment of savings are the most important
[474] economic undertaking in the District. The seven coffee co-
[454] operatives handled a crop of 950 tons in 1955, worth about £427,500, and are organized so efficiently as to be able to return over 90 per cent of the price of the coffee on Moshi market to the producer, after the heavy transport costs (14 per cent) have been paid. One Government-paid officer assists these societies.

In the educational and recreational field also, associations are
526 emerging: football clubs; companies of Scouts and Guides;
575 'Welfare Centres' with classes in reading for adult illiterates,
177 indoor games, and Saturday-night dances; Women's Clubs for handwork and recreation; and in Tukuyu itself an inter-racial club with its own premises, whose members meet to play games, and get to know one another and discuss common problems. These associations make a visible mark on the face of the country in the shape of new brick Churches, co-operative stores, football fields, and, more rarely, a village club-house.

177 The change from a subsistence to a money economy, and from a
651 system of government through chiefs and village headmen who were dependent primarily on inherited wealth, which secured to them the labour of many able-bodied wives and sons, to a system of government through European officials, chiefs, and clerks paid out of taxes, and assisted by unpaid village headmen, implies the collection and administration of taxes. The District Council has
177 the responsibility for the budgeting and expenditure of over £60,000 per annum. The greater part of it is spent on the salaries
652 of chiefs, secretaries, and clerks engaged in administration, on courts, on schools, dispensaries, and roads. The development of associations with paid officers also implies the collection of dues and budgeting. As in so many countries the difficulty of building
177 up a tradition of honesty in administration is great. Tax clerks,
685 court clerks, council secretaries, and co-operative society secretaries, and even church elders handle sums of money relatively large in proportion to their earnings and one of the tasks of European officials and missionaries is to secure a sound system of accounting and check corruption. In the traditional society stock theft was a capital offence, but money has not the sanctity of cattle, and often the clerk who has appropriated public funds is treated by others as 'unfortunate' rather than immoral. At the same time villagers show great anxiety lest a man entrusted with some common fund should spend it for himself. The risk of theft

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their village headmen, and assist the president and his village headmen in the hearing of cases. Much of the legal business previously transacted by each chief in his own country is now taken to court (*KwiKoroti*); but the power of village headmen to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages is still the basis of the legal system.

Though the Administration has worked through the traditional authorities it has consciously and deliberately modified the traditional system; and, as part of its policy of development, it has established schools, dispensaries, and nurseries for coffee-seedlings and other plants. There are three schools in Rungwe district receiving Government grants: one directly under the Administration, one under the Native Authority, and one a mission school. There are also a great number of 'bush schools', that is, mission village schools under uncertificated teachers giving instruction in the three R's and in religion. Over 19,000 children (12·6 per cent of the population served) are enrolled in the various schools; but 96 per cent of these are in 'bush schools', many of whom never learn even to read and write.

The structure of Nyakyusa society has been further complicated by the conversion of a substantial minority (16 per cent in 1938)[1] of the people to Christianity. The Christians form a group with values radically different from those of the pagans, on whom they react in innumerable ways.[2] The growth of this diversity in the society is a direct effect of its diminishing isolation.

To treat of Nyakyusa villages as if missions, or the Administration, or migrant labour and coffee export did not exist would simplify, but distort our analysis. We have therefore included some account of the differences in behaviour between pagan and Christian, of the effects of centralization on the position of village headmen, and of the influence of trade and migration on economic co-operation in the village. A discussion of the organization of schools and Christian congregations; of the development of courts of record, and 'court districts'; of the relation between

[1] Calculated from figures supplied by the courtesy of the missions and the independent African Churches working in the district.

[2] Moslems are very few and they have little influence on the community as a whole. These few are mostly Swahili traders, Ngoni settlers, or soldiers of the K.A.R. from Nyasaland. We heard of only two or three Nyakyusa who had turned Moslem.

N 233 cattle in the district in the 1941 census was about 2.3 head per taxpayer or 55 head per N [184 square mile. Certain land is set aside each year for grazing, where stock is not able to 635] interfere with the produce plots. Compensation for trespass of cattle on cultivated land is only paid among people of the lake shore.

N 656 Parts of the land to the west of Tukuyu have been badly eroded by cultivation and 134 over-grazing, and it is only since 1935 that anti-erosion rules have been made to check 185 the tendency for bad cultivation. Since they 242 were brought in, however, the majority of the tribe have become very keen on seeing the effect that well-controlled cultivation has on crops. The following are the Native Authority Rules concerning anti-erosion:—

"Throughout the Rungwa District, all natives shall follow orders regarding cultivation designed to prevent soil erosion as demonstrated and enjoined by the Agricultural Officer.

(*a*) All ridges and terraces shall be contoured and not follow the slope of the hill.

(*b*) In the case of cultivation done on the flat and not on ridges or terraces, a large ridge and ditch shall be dug at the top of the plot to remain permanently and be repaired from time to time."

N 439 The Wanyakyusa have never been dependant on outside sources for any of their food, N but in their own territory there is no iron for [135] making hoes nor clay for making earthenware pots. The former they were accustomed to get from Ukinga, on the eastern boundary of the district in the Livingstone mountains, and the pots were, and are still, made only by about 500 members of the Wakisi tribe living in a K village on the lake shore at the extreme south-439 western point of the district. The Wakisi are 101 really of Ukinga origin and inhabit the eastern, northern and western shores of Lake Nyasa. They grow no food except cassava, and that only recently, and apart from the one village that makes the pots, their only work is as paddlers of canoes and fishermen. Most of their fish and pots are exchanged for food.

N 443 Since the Tukuyu District is so thickly populated and the inhabitants concentrated, it has been found necessary to create produce markets at comparatively short distances. N Transport from these markets, during war-438 time, has become difficult. The natural outlet for Tukuyu native foodstuffs is the Lupa 316 Goldfields, which lie about 100 miles to the

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14: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

233 343 462 [413] the women, but the men are responsible for keeping the floor of the stable in good repair. For this purpose a specific tool is used, called *ukutoba indobelu*. It is round on top, flattened on the lower side and provided with a handle.

224 5. *Hunting.* Sometimes the Nyakyusa go out to hunt, but nowadays hunting is much more restricted than in former times as described e. g by Mackenzie in his book: "The spirit-ridden Konde" (London 1925). This record, however, deals mostly with the Ngonde of the environment of Karonga whose interesting social history was unsurpassably revealed to us by Mr. Godfrey Wilson's treatise: "The Constitution of Ngonde" (The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, Number Three. Livingstone, Northern Rhodesia 1939.) Hunting in the Nyakyusa country is now [656] curtailed by governmental regulations. Hunting *(ukufuema)*, therefore, does not supply an essential part of the food requirements of the [136] natives. The colobus apes on the slopes of the Rungwe volcano and the [656] Poroto Mountains are sometimes killed for their attractive black and white skins, but fortunately this is now forbidden by the government. Otherwise these apes would be exterminated in quite a short time, [439] since the skins of these apes are in great demand with some Europeans for rugs and covers. Naturally, the hunting of lions and especially of leopards, which even nowadays still cause great damage, is not restricted.

224 231 The hunting of game for food is often done with dogs *(imbwa)* which have small bells *(inyesi)* on collars round their necks. Thereby the hunter *(umfuemi)* always knows the whereabouts of his dog. The chase is continued till the dog or dogs are exhausted. The object of the hunt *(umfuemu)* is generally a small type of antelope *(akasya)*, e. g. in the [656] environment of Mwakalele, as I was instructed. The usual time for hunting is the cooler season, but to-day a permit of the government is also required.

223 Catching birds by means of traps *(untegu*, pl. *imitegu)* is still common in the Nyakyusa area. I have also seen such traps constructed by means of the flicking-gallow's principle also in the vicinity of Utengule among the Safwa. The herd boys especially set traps to catch quails *(imbesi)* when the *malesi* (millet) harvest is over. Sometimes smaller birds are also coursed until they are exhausted and then slain. One day I found a stick vertically put on the soil and with a triangle made of smaller sticks at its top. The horizontal part of which was smeared with an adhesive substance. I was told that this was a trap for birds,

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news of such reserved land elsewhere. Such land is cultivated in the meantime on a kind of year-to-year lease by one or more of the villagers as allowed by the headman.

Even when no vacant plots exist a headman will still accept newcomers. If they are young men they must be prepared to go landless for the time being (i.e., to remain dependent on their father's fields elsewhere) until such time as land becomes vacant. If the newcomer is an older man, then the headman will try to persuade one or more of his villagers to give up portions of their holdings and he will often cede part of his own land. The newcomer is therefore often allocated small strips and plots here and there in the village arable area and he thereafter joins the land-hungry crowd seeking to expand their holdings. In one village in which I worked where land shortage was critical (Kapugi, Koroso's chiefdom), there was not a single patch of usable land unworked; yet here the headman had, with full village approval, accepted three newcomers during the first nine months of 1955. Two of them were young men, one unmarried, and they could not expect to obtain land for some time except for a small banana plot. The third newcomer was a middle-aged man from a village some 12 miles away in another chiefdom. The headman had given him a half-acre plot out of his own paddy field and was laboriously begging pieces of land here and there from his people in order to make up a new holding of perhaps an acre. The headman himself had only about three and a half acres of arable land; he had at least one adult son who had not yet acquired an arable plot and he had other sons and brothers' sons owning only small fields. Yet he favoured this stranger, this newcomer. He was quite firm in his resolution to accept other
[577] newcomers in the future and in this he believed that he was acting as a good headman should. As far as I could learn he was supported by his villagers.

This is not, by any means, an isolated or even unusual phenomenon. It is, I feel, important to bear in mind this illustration of contemporary affairs. Firstly, because it shows another way in which holdings are fragmented and dispersed; and secondly, because it demonstrates how, so far, the Nyakyusa have refused to face the situation of land shortage, and how they continue to follow traditional practices and values associated with village prestige. These people complain of their inability to obtain sufficient arable land, but they are not yet prepared to make the mental and social adjustments which might at least partly relieve their new predicament. On the other hand, they themselves understand the need for movement and perhaps they are right in their implied insistence not to discard their cultural ideals. Their insistence on accepting newcomers and their willingness (however dimly perceived and expressed) to share their land with the landless are not discreditable attitudes, even if they are economically untenable.

Security of Tenure and Disputes over Land

As already noted, under traditional land tenure a Nyakyusa had good
[561] security in his holding so long as he continued to live in the same village. The only alteration of tenure occurred at the "coming-out" ceremony of a new chief when the older men would, if required, move aside in order to give their sons' generation the best land. This did not invariably happen in any case. Fundamentally, however, security of tenure is not a matter of great importance to a people who have plenty of land, and land which is more or less of the same quality. Indeed, convenience of location in respect of one's own homestead was almost the only value land had as such. Occasionally a more dominant chief might try to seize a commoner's field
[661] to allow of his own expanded cultivation; it was most unusual for him to
[643] succeed, and even if he did the dispossessed villager suffered little real deprivation, for he could easily obtain another field fairly near at hand.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

had authority to claim, or how far the Central Government was permitting or even compelling him to use new powers. Part of this novel power has, not unnaturally, been used to take over land-control responsibilities to which the chief has no traditional tribal right, and it has led to the claims, sometimes heard in the Courts and upheld in the District Commissioner's Appeal Court, that chiefs are the sole, traditional and rightful land authorities. It has led to chiefs assuming, or trying to assume, land allocation and supervisory powers which hitherto were the close right only of the village headmen.

Thus some chiefs have declared that they alone, or at least primarily, have allocatory powers over formerly uncultivated tracts which are relatively distant from the villages and which have now become valuable as paddy fields. Others have come to claim rights of interference in village land affairs, even within the long-established village areas. By the undefined threat of their alleged Government support, by taking advantage of new conditions, they have not infrequently "got away with it". They have insisted that their own nominees be allocated vacant holdings; they have gone over the heads of village headmen and made public their opinion as to who, amongst numbers of aspirants, should receive land in villages; they have insisted that headmen should consult them on the details of allocation. The desire for power and further prestige is one impulse behind this development. Sometimes the chiefs, better educated than many of their headmen, are able to understand the modern land situation better and are impatient of their headmen's conservatism and procrastination. Another factor is the potential profit which may accrue as land becomes scarce and thus a valuable commodity, and this became particularly important when the rush developed to take up the formerly vacant lands for paddy cultivation. Gifts in money and kind became common in return for preferential treatment for the donors. These lands are now all allocated and held by someone, but the chiefs have been reluctant to relinquish their new-found authority.

These remarks do not apply to all the chiefs: some have been notably content to use their influence through the traditional system by judicious co-operation with their headmen. Some, too, have been too imperceptive to bother to take action at all. Again, some have been forestalled by strong village headmen who would not allow any diminution of their own status and rights. In some of the fomerly vacant lands where no headman could reasonably claim traditional jurisdiction, the operations of the chiefs have probably been beneficial in reducing chaotic land-grabbing and jealous rivalry; once, however, these lands are brought under cultivation there seems to be a good case for their inclusion within the normal Nyakyusa land-control system. The continued existence of a supra-headman authority does not necessarily lead to stability or improved control. Certainly it is not in keeping with the people's values and institutions.

For these changes Government must clearly bear some responsibility and often also the blame for indirectly causing alterations in native land law and custom by some administrative attitude or ruling in a related sphere. There has been a good deal of well-intentioned insistence on determining and strengthening the "Land Authority" in tribal areas in the interests of stability and efficiency. In Rungwe District the facile claims of Nyakyusa chiefs have been only too readily accepted without question. In fact the traditional *umalafyale*, chief, only represented his chiefdom as a unit, and his lack of real power corresponded to the lack of cohesion within the chiefdom. The notion of a supreme "Land Authority" is largely incorrect for the Nyakyusa. In a theoretical sense we may perhaps say that the total land of a chiefdom was and is owned by all of the people in that chiefdom – chief, headmen and villagers; and therefore we may perhaps categorise the chief, the single individual representing the group as a whole, as the "land-owner." To

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

x 797 by immersion and were strict about not eating the flesh of animals
x 795 without a cloven hoof, and avoiding beer, but made a point of not
being sabbatarian and working in their fields on Sundays—
[852] these were the things they emphasized to us. They were also
[262] pacifist and would not join the Police or King's African Rifles,
[688] since Rutherford taught that all Government was evil.
[668]

(*d*) 'INDEPENDENT' AFRICAN CHURCHES

There is a great cleavage between the mission Churches and the 'independent' African Churches, which also claim to be Christian, read the Gospels at their services, and recite the Apostles' creed, but whose rules of life are avowedly based on the Old Testament rather than the New (*vide* p. 191). Both the 'independent'
[595] Churches operating in BuNyakyusa approve polygyny; the bulk of their members are middle-aged polygynists and they have at least as many men as women among them. Nyasuru's statement on polygyny was interesting:

> When we young men went to join the mission we found that many of our fathers were attracted by it. They said to us: 'If only the Europeans would let us come in with all our wives we would come.' . . . Sometimes it would happen that the son of an old man's second wife would join the mission and become a preacher and he would preach even to his father, saying: 'You pagans do wrong, you marry many women, you must repent, your ways are evil.' Then his father would say to him: 'On the contrary, it is not I who do wrong, if I had married only one wife you would never have been born, and you young men take one wife only and then what happens? You steal other men's wives,
> [684] continually, in secret, and the country is full of lawsuits about women. It is our custom which is good.' . . . And so we, now, we have our Church and our fathers come in with us. It is our aim to take the old people with us, not ourselves to go forward alone. All the other matters which the missionaries brought to us we think are good, only this European custom of marriage is difficult.

[595] Nyasuru and Ngemela had both been suspended from the
[688] Church of Scotland Mission for marrying second wives, and Nyasuru, a man of fifty-three, had four wives when we knew him. He kindly provided us with a copy of a statement on the beliefs and constitution of the African National Church, which is worth quoting in full:

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

692 in the religious seclusion of the Kyungu. No Kyungu ever sat in public to judge his people until Mwakabanga, who reigned from 1894 to 1904. And if the nobles of Ngonde, who acted for the Kyungu in most mundane matters, only exercised judicial authority in matters immediately affecting his personal position, that was, I believe, because nothing more would have been tolerated by the chiefs. I cannot prove this point, for it only occurred to us after leaving Ngonde, but it seems probable that only under the presidency of the Kyungu himself could a central court have maintained itself; for the nobles of Ngonde were not of royal blood. Comparative evidence supports this hypothesis, and the ease with which the present Kyungu maintains his central appeal court to-day makes it still more probable.

6. *WARFARE. (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

(a) *CIVIL WAR.*

579 The endemic civil war of Ngonde appears rather to have resembled a series of rugby football matches without referees than the scientific mass-killing of modern Europe. "In the old days we used frequently to engage in little local fights. But always, when some occasion for war arose we used to send a message beforehand to tell the other side that we meant to fight them the next day at a certain time. And perhaps, if we had mentioned the morning, they would refuse and say they preferred the afternoon, and we would agree." (Was this always done?) "Yes, always; for if ever any group attacked suddenly and unexpectedly then everyone used to mock them for their cowardice and compare them with the Nguni——for it was by unexpected night attacks that the Nguni overcame us."

"And how did war start?" we asked. "Maybe a couple of boys would begin fighting, just with their fists, and as they fought another would come and join in to help his friend, then another on the other side, ——until at last yet another would join in with a spear and wound someone. Then the wounded man would be taken home bleeding, and the next day there would be war!" (And what was the point of fighting such a war?) "So that the others should be underneath and we on top. We used to fight from infancy onwards: we began as children by using mushrooms, then we took to reeds and finally, as we grew up, to sharpened stakes and spears." Such warfare seldom or never lasted for more than a single day. Cattle might be captured and houses burnt, but there was no acquisition of territory.

669 It was the territorial aim of the wars between the chiefs of Ngelenge and of Nguna which distinguished them from other civil wars; though

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

even here it was rather position than area that was at stake: "We object to their proximity, let them move further off," said the chiefs of Ngelenge. 669

Civil wars varied in size and importance from little local fights between neighbouring villages, fiefs or chiefdoms to more extensive fights between groups or even whole houses of chiefs. And in every case the political organization took on, for the time, a military character. Great-commoners led their villagers to war, chiefs their great-commoners; the senior of a group of brother chiefs summoned his juniors to help him, while a great chief summoned all the local chiefs of his house. But only the Kyungu himself could summon the territorial nobles.

New leadership in war is a factor of political authority; the great chiefs, nobles, chiefs and great-commoners derived part of their status from their military functions. But, on the other hand, it is equally true to say that it was the other factors of their status which enabled them to exercise this military authority.

In every war, for instance, there were religious elements. Chiefs had war medicines and prayed to their ancestors for success; while the loyalty of the great-commoners and people to their chief had both a spiritual and an economic importance. Sometimes, in peace, the leading commoners would dream of war and, if they dreamt of running away, then their chief would hastily kill meat for them. Such dreams were witchcraft and, unless promptly dealt with by a feast, were held to be a certain harbinger of future defeat. [789] [787]

"In civil warfare the Kyungu never took any part at all, he remained impartial at Mbande. His sons fought one another by themselves." (But what of the war, between Ngelenge and Ngana, did he not help his own sons in any way?) "No, he did not. For both 'the cousins' and 'the sons' alike were his children, he was the father of all."

(b) *TRIBAL WAR.*

The procedure of tribal warfare and that of the occasional punitive expeditions against the Kyungu's subordinates was the same. Messages were sent by the nalubele to all chiefs and nobles of the plain to come to Mbande. There the more important of them entered the Kyungu's house and were given their orders by him personally: "And then, when the Kyungu had told them whom to go and fight, he would finish up by saying 'That is all then, go away now and call down blessings on your arms.' So they would leave his house and gather all together, chiefs and their men, and pray." 721 [202]

The premier noble of Ngonde would begin, reciting all the names of the sacred groves of the Kyungu and asking each one to bless them in their fight. Then after him each great chief in turn would pray in like 726

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 separate inheritance sometimes went through the ritual because he might later be required as a chief, and the son of a conquered chief who had retained limited authority over a small area might be permitted to 'come out' with his senior brothers also. The common pattern, then, was for two sons to 'come out' as principals, but for a variety of reasons one or more 'younger brothers' might join them.

In Ngonde, as opposed to BuNyakyusa, several brothers normally went through the ritual as principals and the reason given us was that power should be distributed. They would say, we were told, 'If we bring out only two they will be boastful and ill-use their people, let them be many therefore, then, if a man has a quarrel with his chief, he can flee to another. . . .' In BuNyakyusa [622] any tendency to tyranny in a chief was effectively curbed by his village headmen; but it is possible that headmen never had as much power in Ngonde as they did in BuNyakyusa.

An analysis of the genealogies of Nyakyusa chiefs shows that very often one half-brother lost power to the other, but occasionally several brothers (e.g. seven sons of Mwaipopo 26) got independent chiefdoms, and a junior brother (e.g. Mwakyusa 38) [669] might attract a larger following of men than his seniors. Mwakyusa led his men from the hills to the more fertile plain and drove out the Kyungu of Ngonde from the lake-shore north of the Songwe river.

The 'coming out' was traditionally the occasion when authority was handed over by the elder generation to the younger. The old [761] chief retired and he was *expected to die shortly*. In Nyakyusa theory he died because his men no longer loved him: 'A chief did not [888] live long after the "coming out" of his sons; he died because there was war and people would complain: "He is too old, when we fight we are beaten, he had better die, perhaps the heir will help us." He died of the "breath of men".' But, as will be shown, his headmen had the duty of smothering a chief who seemed likely to die, and they were much more ready to do this after the 'coming out' of his sons than before. It was right that the sons should come out before their father's death, but not right that the period of coregency should be extended, for the division of authority between old and young was uneasy. When the old chief did die his [793] headmen became the priests (*abapyage*) responsible for the sacri- [622] fices in his grove, and the young men were solely responsible for the defence of the country and the administration of justice.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER VI

Law & Crime

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LAW, morals, and religion are inseparably bound up together. The old idea, still hard to kill, that in the native mind morals and religion have no connection with each other, is the reverse of the truth; but African ideas of morality do not always coincide with European, and to this disparity may be traced the belief that there is no morality in African religion. The sinless man is the man who has broken no law. He is said to be *mwera*, without offence. Now as law and custom are one, and as the spirits are jealous for the retention of all customs that were in force while they were on earth, the man who is assured of a good reception in the underworld is he who has either broken no law of custom, or, having broken the law, has made the required atonement to the injured person.

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Everything was settled in the long distant past by the fathers, and all one has to do is to conform. For the long domination of ancient custom in law, morals, and religion, meant that life had attained to a condition of stable equilibrium, before the coming of the white man set all in confusion again for many of the people. The ancient equilibrium was disturbed by

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

• 671 law-breaking, and the balance was restored when the law was vindicated. The idea that stable equilibrium means stagnation is alien to the Konde mind. To disturb the balance in order to advance to new conditions is a European, not a Bantu idea, and wherever the European stimulus has been removed, the wheels of custom drag heavily again.

692 695 A native court is not, to a white man, an imposing spectacle; though no doubt it is fearsome enough to some trembling rascal, who has little reason to hope that his misdeeds will escape their due reward. The court meets under the village tree, or, if the weather is bad, on the verandah of the chief or judge. There the chief sits with his headmen if the case is an important one, and there are usually a few old men present also, in whose memories are stored up records of previous cases which may have some bearing on the one in hand. The persons concerned are among the audience, which sits facing the court; and when called upon, they rise in turn, and conduct the case from where they stand. The native is a keen disputer. I have known a clever man fight his case with amazing skill and perseverance; even after it was clear that the evidence against him was complete, he would go on adducing fact after fact with a dialectical skill that would not disgrace a European lawyer at cross-examination. If the judge is a man with a [332] sense of humour, he often announces his decision by relating some well-known story, the point of which is taken by all, as, with expressions of approval or otherwise, they rise and go. Execution of sentence

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

in fact they usually settle on the common East African pattern of scattered homesteads, each in its arable area, and not in the tight Nyakyusa village pattern.

I think that the headmen and chiefs concerned would not welcome a restraint on immigration, for it offers them a chance to emulate the numerically produced prestige of their fellows in the flood plains, to whom at the moment they feel inferior. They would, of course, most probably prefer indigenous Nyakyusa, could the latter be persuaded to settle there. As it is, at least some of the Nyakyusa of these northerly villages are trying to move into the flood plains, where they can more easily cultivate paddy and where they can join in a more active and ebullient village life.

One type of foreigner to the Lake Plains is the man (almost invariably a Nyakyusa from the Highlands) who has obtained land but does not settle on it nor in any village. He continues to live in his upland village and comes down to the plains only to cultivate and harvest his paddy field. This is strictly against Nyakyusa land law and custom and, in fact, such an absentee land-holder has often made a substantial monetary gift to the chief or headman for the protection of this extra-legal privilege. These strangers are frequently among the more wealthy upland Nyakyusa, who can afford such payments as these, and often they are of chiefly rank themselves, perhaps having kinship ties with the local chief. There are probably no *chiefdoms where such strangers have not obtained paddy fields, though* naturally those which contained a good deal of vacant, usable paddy land at the beginning of the cash-cropping era have most.

This does arouse a certain amount of ill-feeling and opposition amongst local villagers who have insufficient land themselves, for they lose land and gain no numerical strength or profit of any kind. The illegal action of the local chief is also condemned, especially as the chiefs should not in any case assume allocatory powers. On the other hand it must be noted that the commoners philosophically accept the supposedly protected prerogatives of their chiefs under European rule and they expect the chiefs to take advantage of them. As with the case of the minority of large land-holders, the actual effect is not particularly great and reformation here would be a minor palliative. Nevertheless in this matter there is a definite and unpopular infringement of villagers' rights and of the local customary law.

One other group of strangers may be noted for the sake of completeness. That is the Kisi, who have for at least two generations been settling along the lake shore itself from Matema in the east to the Songwe river (and beyond) in the south-west. They have come from the north-eastern shores of the lake and in the Nyakyusa area they are principally fishermen who do not, therefore, compete with the indigenous population economically. They cultivate only tiny plots of cassava and sometimes of finger millet, although a few of the younger generation are now trying to grow a little paddy also. The total number of Kisi involved cannot be more than a few hundred and they have probably not increased much over the past decades. They follow an almost separate existence from their Nyakyusa neighbours, not intermarrying, and following their own way of life.[1]

1. The early first settlements in European Tanganyika are in the Ngonde area, on national grounds south of the Lake Malawi, which they number about 1,000. A number [illegible] are employed as salaried government staff in the remainder [illegible] people, living [illegible] children. They are widely dispersed on plantations, and they are [illegible] their course for natural [illegible] of Nyakyusa [illegible] Kisi.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

This practice of having official witnesses to every contract, and summoning them to give evidence should a dispute later arise, is one of the most important means of maintaining order in Nyakyusa society, and village neighbours are the usual witnesses. 675

c. Communal responsibility of the age-village

Formerly, in Nyakyusa law two forms of group responsibility were emphasized: the mutual responsibility of kinsmen, and the mutual responsibility of fellow villagers. A case of murder or manslaughter was primarily the concern of the agnatic lineage if the victim was a male or an unmarried girl, and of the lineages of both husband and father if the victim was a married woman. The kinsmen either killed the murderer, or brought him before the chief, who imposed a fine which went to the injured relatives. The Nyakyusa make a distinction between 'spearing by day' (direct physical injury) and 'spearing by night' (witchcraft); and only in the latter type of case did the fine go to the chief. Witchcraft was thus treated as an offence against the state—the chiefdom—while murder or manslaughter was an offence against the kinsmen of the dead. The concern of the state in witchcraft, and the joint responsibility of kinsmen on the one hand, and of fellow villagers on the other, was evident when, as sometimes happened, both groups were required by the chief to clear themselves of suspicion of witchcraft by each providing a representative to take the poison ordeal. Should the representative of either group fail to vomit then the responsible individual within that group was sought out by means of divination and the ordeal (*vide supra*, p. 116). 613 621 672 754 682

In a case of adultery the injured husband, together with his kinsmen, pursued and attempted to kill, or torture and kill, the adulterer: self-help was not only permitted but expected in this situation,[1] and a man's near kinsmen were obliged to assist him. Neighbours were not obliged to assist in executing vengeance, but they might be victims of it, for if the injured husband did not find the adulterer he might kill any village-mate of his enemy. Such an attack commonly led to war between the two villages; 684 696 721

[1] D. R. MacKenzie, *The Spirit-Ridden Konde* (1925), p. 61, says: 'The injured husband has the right to inflict death on the paramour. This is no mere tale of the past but a grim fact to-day . . . cases of this nature are very numerous.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

684 and some informants suggested that it only occurred between the villages of different chiefs, though others insisted that it did occur
696 between villages of the same chiefdom. Indeed any seduction of
721 a woman of another village was liable to lead to war. A man of Bulindanajo seduced the wife of the headman of Bujege, Mwansambe. The men of Bulindanajo returned the woman to her husband, saying to their fellow: 'The men of Bujege are fearsome (*basisya*), it's a village of fathers, she's your mother' (cf. Document p. 181). But Mwansambe was angry and made war. The men of Bulindanajo protested, saying: 'We brought the woman back!' but he took no notice and attacked them. He was defeated, and fled.

685 A thief or an obstinate debtor was also a danger to his neigh-
686 bours. For a victim or creditor living in another chiefdom, and so unable to obtain satisfaction in a chief's court—since a chief paid
696 little attention to a complainant who was not his own man—might seize the wife of any village-mate of the man who had his property. Hence, the old men say, thieves and adulterers were liable to be banished from a village[1] just like witches and sorcerers, for they too brought misfortune on their fellows.

672 War between villages was apparently the usual upshot of an attack on the village neighbour of an enemy, but occasionally a
696 settlement was arranged between the two villages concerned, and the adulterer or thief was held responsible for compensating his injured neighbour, or the latter's kinsmen. Kalunda and Mwalubunju explained: 'In the old days if a man ran off with my wife I should go and kill a village-mate of his. That meant, "Go, you villagers and look for my wife." Yes, this happened even in a village of my own chief. Then the villagers would go and look for my wife and when they found her with their neighbour they would bring her back to me with a spear or hoe as compensation. The man they would accuse, saying: "It was you who killed your fellow", so that he would have to make peace with the family of the dead man, not I. He would give them a daughter of his own to wife, or else pay ten cows, and they would be relatives then. Yes, ten cows they paid for a man's death, though only two for a woman in marriage.' Here the differing responsibilities of kinsmen and fellow villagers are evident.

621 The village was a fighting unit taking up quarrels on its own
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[1] A cattle thief caught in the act was speared. . . . MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 86.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

account with other villages of the same chiefdom, and forming a detachment under its own headman in the army of the chiefdom. Before an attack each village was harangued by its headman who urged: 'Keep all your spears together. If you abandon your fellow you have a case against you! All return together!' And, as we have seen, it was held that men of the same village should stand shoulder to shoulder in war and in a hunt, that they might be brave. 621 701

Cattle raids and adultery cases were the prime causes of war—fighting commonly began with a dispute over a woman, or lust for meat. Less frequently it was a quarrel between two villages or two chiefdoms over a boundary that led to war. Hostilities often flared up at a funeral when men danced the war dance with spears (*ukukina*). The Nyakyusa interpret this dancing at funerals as an expression of anger at death, a protest against death.[1] 'Formerly we protested against death, we said: "Our fellow has died, *aje!* Let us put our friend to rest!" We protested with war, we protested with spears, and people died.' Or as another informant put it, 'The war dance is a way of weeping. We dance the war dance because war is in our hearts.' But the anger at death very easily merged into anger against human enemies. 'If the men of two chiefdoms or two villages were present at a burial they would quarrel and fight. The fight began when one hurled his spear into the ground and thus spewed the earth over someone else. Perhaps there would be only a few dancing at first and many sitting down, but when a neighbouring chief was seen approaching with his men, and the sound of the trumpets was heard, those already there would say: "If we sit still they will say there are no men but only women at this funeral. Let us dance too." So they would all get up and dance, and if the others did anything there would be war. Now the custom of the war dance is dying out. We chiefs control it, and when another chief comes to a funeral we tell all our men to sit down while he and his men dance at the grave, because if we do not, the war of old times is liable to break out.' 721 764

In fact peace has been effectively enforced among the Nyakyusa.[2] We neither saw nor heard of a fight in the three years we were there. Thus mutual dependence in war is no longer a strong sanction for village unity. The joint responsibility for certain 721 672 673 177

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939.)

[2] A contrast to Pondoland or Zululand.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

torts committed by its members has also disappeared. Instead, there is both a great increase in the number of cases treated as offences against the state; murder, manslaughter and grievous bodily injury being no longer treated as offences against a group of kin, but as crimes against the state; and a great extension in the *range* of law. A modern Nyakyusa has no difficulty in suing a debtor, or the seducer of his wife, living in another chiefdom.

Nevertheless neighbours still feel a certain obligation for the maintenance of each other's rights. For example, a certain young man eloped with a very young girl, who, though betrothed, had not yet reached puberty. On their way out of the district they were seen by a 'village father' of the girl, who brought them back to her father, and then joined with him and other neighbours in beating the young man and taking him to the chief. The youth admitted his fault in seducing so young a girl and asked the chief to summon his father-in-law (for he was already married) that he might borrow from his father-in-law the cattle with which to pay the fine for seduction. But his father-in-law was a neighbour of the father of the girl he had seduced, and he refused to lend any cattle, saying, 'You have run off with the daughter of my neighbour in the village: that means you have wronged *me*.'

And a group of herd-boys are still liable to be treated by their fathers as responsible for one another. One informant, discussing a case of bestiality committed by a herd-boy, remarked that the leader of the group forbade the others to mention it at home on the ground that 'if our fathers know they will say that we all (in this herd group) do it.'

d. Social separation

One of the mechanisms for maintaining good relations in Nyakyusa villages (as in all groups) is the separation of the dissident individual from the group.[1] This separation may be compulsory or voluntary. As we have seen, witches, thieves, adulterers, and obstinate debtors were formerly banished from Nyakyusa villages because they were regarded as a danger to their neighbours, liable to harm them directly or to bring retribution upon them. The village, being held responsible for certain actions of its members, and forming a defensive unit against the sup-

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 60–1.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

35. JOINT RESPONSIBILITY OF NEIGHBOURS

Mwaikambo (clerk).

628 621 837 'In former times people did not live at peace as we do now. Because they fought frequently they never were friendly with those of other villages as they are to-day. The occasion for beginning a fight was usually a dispute over women or cattle. If a man had made love to a woman of another village he got a friend to steal her for him. Then if the "owners" of the woman saw them they told their chief that men of such and such a village had run off with "their wife". Their chief allowed all his people to go to recapture "their wife". Also those who had stolen the woman told their chief that they had a case against them, they had stolen someone's wife. Then the chief replied that they should tell everyone to be ready.'

Mwamgwanda (old pagan man).

628 621 672 685 'In the old days if one man A, had "eaten" the cow of another, B, living in a different chiefdom, and failed to repay it, though B came frequently to claim his cow, and if the wife of a village neighbour of A visited in B's country, B might seize her and take her to his chief, saying: "This woman is the wife of C, a neighbour of A, who has 'eaten' my cow." Then the chief sent to the chief of A's country, saying that they had caught the wife of C and they wanted the cow due from A. Then A would send the cow and B would send back the wife of C with a bull to say: "Thank you, you have settled my case." Then the husband, C, might demand a hoe as well. If A denied his debt when the message came, and asserted that B's friends had seized the woman without cause, his chief would send him to B's chief, saying: "My man denies the charge. Let them drink *umwafi*." Then A and B would take the ordeal in B's country.'

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

627 783 master of ceremonies on all such occasions, a sheep, provided by the family of the murderer, is killed, and taken hold of by the parties, while the doctor divides the carcase into two parts, each side taking its share. Medicine is poured into a pot, and a red-hot spear is plunged into it. The carcase of the sheep, cooked with this medicine, is placed upon banana leaves, and the feast of reconciliation is partaken of, along with beer which also has been doctored. The reconciliation, however, is not complete until the girl has been handed over: until that is done, the feast has only stayed action on the part of the murdered man's relatives. If the murderer is not known, the relatives of the victim drink a medicine, without which, if they happened unwittingly to drink water in the culprit's house, they would themselves also die.

682 673 The murder of a pregnant woman is a very serious matter, for it is really a double murder, and the chief has to be compensated for the loss of dependents. It is more heinous to murder a woman than a man, for the woman, being dead, bears no more children, and loss to the community results.

682 672 For accidental death there are numerous regulations. If a man dies, or is killed, while in the employment of another, or on a journey with him, compensation must be paid to the relatives. There is no feast of reconciliation, for the thing was not done in malice. When a person is killed by an ox or a cow, the owner pays a cow, and kills the offending animal, lest it lead him into further trouble and expense of the same kind. If one is cutting down a tree, and some one is killed by

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

its fall; or if one sends another up a tree to get fruit, or for any other purpose, and the person falls down and is killed, a cow must be paid in compensation; if he is only injured, some smaller payment is made. If I permit a suicide to take place in my house, I must pay a cow, for I ought to have taken better care of my house. If a man kills himself with my spear I come under a similar penalty, and for the same reason. If a woman suckles another woman's child and it dies, the law of compensation holds good, and a cow must be paid. Very many regulations of this kind, which it would be a weariness to repeat, exist among the Konde people. 682 672

The spear with which a murder has been committed is cut off short at the haft, and the blade bent over with a stone, and it is then hung up in the roof of the house of a relative of the murderer.

Murder is frequently committed by means of poison and by witchcraft; and in either case it is difficult to trace the criminal. As an instance: a man is very quarrelsome in his village, an intolerable nuisance in fact. After a while he goes off to work somewhere, and now is the opportunity to get rid of him. In a few months news comes that he has been killed in a quarrel; but the quarrel was brought on by witchcraft. His fellow-villagers went to a sorcerer, and persuaded him to stir up the quarrelsome one to some disagreement in his new home, which would be sure to end in his death. No British magistrate would consider a charge of murder in such a case, except against the actual murderers, but the Konde will not 682 754

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 754 the *umwafi* ordeal who moved, now it is often the man who supposes himself a victim of witchcraft who flies for his life (*vide infra*, pp. 153 ff.); and it is probable that circulation between villages has in this way increased very considerably.

754 626 ●673 Denying the reality of witchcraft, the British administration ignores the belief in the legitimate use of 'python power' to enforce law and morality, any disputes arising out of this being classed as 'witchcraft'. One case turning on the belief in 'the breath of men' was heard by the District Officer of Tukuyu while we were in the district. The facts, as given us by the District Officer concerned, and by Nyakyusa informants, were as follows:

Mwankuga, a chief, fell sick and one of his sons-in-law, a clerk, advised him to get treatment from the European doctor then investigating tuberculosis in the district. When Mwankuga's junior half-brother heard this he came to Mwankuga, along with others, advised him not to go to a European doctor, and offered to cure him himself. He said that *he* had made Mwankuga ill—'had closed his stomach'—because Mwankuga had refused to make the 'coming out' ceremony for his sons when pressed by his village headmen to do so. Mwankuga's half-brother said 'the country was angry' because of the delay in the 'coming out' ceremony. He insisted that Mwankuga's illness was due to 'the breath' of the whole country, not to the sorcery (*ubutege*) of an individual. Mwankuga acknowledged that he had done wrong in refusing to hold the ceremony, and handed over two cows which his half-brother demanded, receiving in turn medicine, which he drank. Five days later Mwankuga gave his half-brother three more cows which were killed at Mwankuga's homestead and eaten by his people. Then, later on, since he did not recover, and one of his sons for whom the 'coming out' should have been held died, Mwankuga reported the matter to a senior chief, Mwakatumbula, president of the court district in which he lived. Mwakatumbula referred the case to the District Officer, and Mwankuga's half-brother was tried for 'obtaining goods by false pretences', under Section 287 of the Penal Code. The accused denied that he had ever said that he was the cause of Mwankuga's illness, and though the latter brought witnesses, the District Officer found that their testimony was 'not sufficiently reliable to substantiate the charge', and 'that there was no reason to suppose that the accused had acted in bad faith'. He referred the

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

case back to Mwakatumbula's court 'for investigation for an offence under Native Law and Custom'. Two points which came out in the examination before the District Officer are significant. First, Mwankuga readily admitted that he had done wrong in delaying the 'coming out' ceremony. He said to the court: 'I did wrong in refusing to hold the *ubusoka*, I did wrong.' Secondly, the court (i.e. the Nyakyusa assessors) specifically inquired whether or not Mwankuga's half-brother had got his share of the meat provided by Mwankuga. It emerged that he had eaten some meat, but the witnesses were not clear as to how much he had got.

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When the case came up again before the Native Court the general opinion was: 'The son of the chief has died. They (i.e. the witches) have "eaten" him. The chief himself has been ill because he refused to hold the "coming out" ceremony.'

Two other so-called 'witchcraft' cases came before the District Officer while we were in Tukuyu District. One turned on the use of vengeance magic to collect a debt, the doctor who had supplied the medicines being the accused (see Document, p. 213). The Nyakyusa view that only the individual who has commissioned a doctor to work sorcery on his behalf, and not the doctor himself, is guilty, if death from sorcery (or poisoning) has been proved, is not, of course, accepted by the Administration. In the other case a Sangu doctor told two individuals that they were threatened with 'witchcraft' and got cattle from them in return for his supposed protection. He was expelled from the district (see Document, pp. 258–61).

The difficulties of administration in this field are obvious. No one with a background of western science can admit the reality of witchcraft or 'the breath of men', as defined by the Nyakyusa, or the possibility of discovering truth through the *umtwafi* ordeal. Yet prohibition of the ordeal, when belief in witchcraft is so strong, breeds a sense of insecurity. The only solution is to kill the belief in witchcraft. As we have shown, it is somewhat weakened by elementary education and Christian teaching; and we believe that its disappearance turns on increasing technical control, particularly in the field of disease, on scientific education, and on the development of impersonal relationships.[1]

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 88–95, 102–4.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

account with other villages of the same chiefdom, and forming a detachment under its own headman in the army of the chiefdom. Before an attack each village was harangued by its headman who urged: 'Keep all your spears together. If you abandon your fellow you have a case against you! All return together!' And, as we have seen, it was held that men of the same village should stand shoulder to shoulder in war and in a hunt, that they might be brave. 621 701

Cattle raids and adultery cases were the prime causes of war—fighting commonly began with a dispute over a woman, or lust for meat. Less frequently it was a quarrel between two villages or two chiefdoms over a boundary that led to war. Hostilities often flared up at a funeral when men danced the war dance with spears (*ukukina*). The Nyakyusa interpret this dancing at funerals as an expression of anger at death, a protest against death.[1] 'Formerly we protested against death, we said: "Our fellow has died, *aje!* Let us put our friend to rest!" We protested with war, we protested with spears, and people died.' Or as another informant put it, 'The war dance is a way of weeping. We dance the war dance because war is in our hearts.' But the anger at death very easily merged into anger against human enemies. 'If the men of two chiefdoms or two villages were present at a burial they would quarrel and fight. The fight began when one hurled his spear into the ground and thus spewed the earth over someone else. Perhaps there would be only a few dancing at first and many sitting down, but when a neighbouring chief was seen approaching with his men, and the sound of the trumpets was heard, those already there would say: "If we sit still they will say there are no men but only women at this funeral. Let us dance too." So they would all get up and dance, and if the others did anything there would be war. Now the custom of the war dance is dying out. We chiefs control it, and when another chief comes to a funeral we tell all our men to sit down while he and his men dance at the grave, because if we do not, the war of old times is liable to break out.' 721 764

In fact peace has been effectively enforced among the Nyakyusa.[2] We neither saw nor heard of a fight in the three years we were there. Thus mutual dependence in war is no longer a strong sanction for village unity. The joint responsibility for certain 721 672 673 177

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939.)

[2] A contrast to Pondoland or Zululand.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

724 torts committed by its members has also disappeared. Instead,
672 there is both a great increase in the number of cases treated as
673 offences against the state; murder, manslaughter and grievous
177 bodily injury being no longer treated as offences against a group of kin, but as crimes against the state; and a great extension in the *range* of law. A modern Nyakyusa has no difficulty in suing a debtor, or the seducer of his wife, living in another chiefdom.

621 Nevertheless neighbours still feel a certain obligation for the maintenance of each other's rights. For example, a certain young
672 man eloped with a very young girl, who, though betrothed, had not yet reached puberty. On their way out of the district they were seen by a 'village father' of the girl, who brought them back to her father, and then joined with him and other neighbours in beating the young man and taking him to the chief. The youth admitted his fault in seducing so young a girl and asked the chief to summon his father-in-law (for he was already married) that he might borrow from his father-in-law the cattle with which to pay the fine for seduction. But his father-in-law was a neighbour of the father of the girl he had seduced, and he refused to lend any cattle, saying, 'You have run off with the daughter of my neighbour in the village: that means you have wronged *me*.'

839 And a group of herd-boys are still liable to be treated by their fathers as responsible for one another. One informant, discussing
672 a case of bestiality committed by a herd-boy, remarked that the leader of the group forbade the others to mention it at home on the ground that 'if our fathers know they will say that we all (in this herd group) do it.'

d. Social separation

681 One of the mechanisms for maintaining good relations in Nyakyusa villages (as in all groups) is the separation of the dissident individual from the group.[1] This separation may be compulsory or voluntary. As we have seen, witches, thieves, adulterers, and obstinate debtors were formerly banished from Nyakyusa villages because they were regarded as a danger to their neighbours, liable to harm them directly or to bring retribution upon them. The village, being held responsible for certain actions of its members, and forming a defensive unit against the sup-

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 60–1.

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No.	Category of Sufferer	Symptoms	Alleged sin	Diagnosis	Ritual performed
1	Village headman (Mwambwyaina)	(a) 2 children died (b) Further deaths among his children (also in course)	Grudged neighbours certain food Failed to perform death ritual of children before burying		Fled to Lake-shore plain (Mt. Nyondo) Returned home. Killed bull. Admitted fault in not performing ritual
2	Widow	Widow ailing	Ritual not performed for her at inheritance	Illness due to 'the breath of men'. Diagnosis by divination	Huts killed bull. Feasted neighbours and relatives. Told of illness. People admitted their anger.[1] Said the witch was finished. The continued ill.
3	Widow	Widow ill	Chief of chief's family had not killed bull or sow at inheritance ritual	Illness due to 'the breath of men' Diagnosis by divination	Huts called neighbours and relatives. Killed. Neighbours admitted their anger
4	Kwai	Kwai ill	Father failed to send a gift of food and beer, when she was taken back to her husband, and she is the daughter of a chief's sister	'The breath' come from her husband's friends. 'They are angry because of the gourd she had'	None mentioned. The girl died shortly afterwards and her death was attributed to sorcery
5	Child	I.S.1	Refused to hold 'running out' of sons	'The sorcery was angry'	Killed 3 cows for people to feast
6	Married woman	Does no more children	Ran off with lover three times. Finally husband turned over to her kin	Her father's village 'shocked' because she had 'spoil a man to marry'. 'Breath' of village affection because she visits them frequently to see a gentleman. Thirdly diagnosis of the doctor to whom she went for confession that she might have children	None mentioned
7	Man (a deviant)	Impotence on child for 10 years	Did not come to bury elder brother with whom he had quarrelled	'The sorcerer (of his elder brother's village) was angry. Illness due to the same (disgust) of men'	Killed a cow in elder brother's village but did not let the cow of the village stand in property (i.e. which he feasts)
8	Man (b)	Man (b) for 2 years (with dysphasia, eyes upset out of socket	Incest—cross lover of father's sister	(b) cow were admonished and cursed b	b killed 4 cows at father's place. Relatives and neighbours are also cursing at him. A renowned guardy. (He had also been treated in a mission hospital.)

[1] Ukuzipja = to complain. The implication is that they repented, and so got rid of, their anger (cf. pp. 99–101).

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No.	Category of Sufferer	Symptoms	Alleged site	Diagnosis	Medal performed
9	Senior Village Headman	Paralysed	He encouraged child to report [illegible] [illegible] which [illegible] to [illegible] road	"Cause of [illegible] [illegible] due to the [illegible] of the [illegible] villagers. He was [illegible] [illegible] to be [illegible] of the child." Diagnosis by Embodiko	[illegible] and [illegible] provided for [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] with [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible]
10	Women	Unable to walk	Said by villagers (neighbors) to [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]	"They (villagers) [illegible] her"	[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
11	Women	Her baby ill	[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]	[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]	[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

MISFORTUNE ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of Sufferer	Symptoms	Alleged sin	Diagnosis	Ritual performed
17	Village headman	Hurt his hand on a stone directly he reached the Lapu to work	Had left for work without the agreement of his people	'Country was angry because he was a headman' (and had gone to work)	None. Died shortly afterwards. Death attributed to breakaway of Lakia Kuskus (cf. case of widowed No. 10)
18	Young child Nwanlapu, heir of his deceased senior brother and, as heir to chieftainship	Did not beget a son by his beloved wives	Not specified	Village headman angry at confiding child has taken will effective. The headmen showed their anger by not taking child to doctor as they should have done. He went alone	None when case recorded
19	Kaulilo, hereditary priest (of chief's lineage)	Kaulilo ill	Did not work for his village neighbours. 'They complained because I, a great chief, did not work hard for them'	Fell ill night after attending a beer drink at a neighbour's house	Frantic neighbours. Treated by a doctor
20	Kaulilo	Kaulilo had women	Provided 1 pot of beer for fellow priests when he should have provided 4 pots or a calf	Sickness due to wrath of men. Diagnosis of a doctor	
21	Kaulilo	Kaulilo ill	Cut down a sacred tree which he should not have cut	'The whole country is angry'. 'Priests and village headmen are angry'	Frantic other priests so cured and been
22	Village headman, Ntuta	His sow drowned	Ordered to pay a fine for disorder or worse, and refused. Complained to the District Officer	'All the village headmen are angry'	None secured. Later brought home (cf. pp. [illegible])
23	Man (junior brother of chief)	Died	He had cut one branch for an axe-haft in from a self-sown tree growing in the cultivated land of a village in which he was a new-comer. He had not asked the villagers' permission to cut wood as he should have done.	'The "owners" of the village were angry and killed him'	None recorded

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INFORMATION ATTACHED TO SPECIAL CASES—contd.

No.	Category of [illegible]	Malcontent	Alleged sin	Category of individual or group believed to have called down a curse
1	Ex-scholarship	Cannot get a job	Disobeyed his Hydayana teacher	Teacher
2	Ex-scholarship	Dismissed from government job. Reason unknown. Unemployed	Sent to boarding school with relation money, then refused to work for relation. Latter reported 10 times. He also stole	The congregation
3	Teacher, son of elder	Fainted by a crocodile (seven years after stoning)	Committed adultery with daughter of chief. Spoke against the church	The congregation
4	Son of elder	Died of venereal disease	Committed adultery	The congregation
5	Pagan man	Died	Refused food to travelling Christian elder	The elder
6	Mohammedan man	Cut his leg with his knife	Stood on Sunday	Two Christian men
7	Ex-scholarship	Always lost his job, though clever and good English speaker. Now a labourer and little English to his fall	Sin known	European missionary
8	Ex-boarding scholarship	Cannot get a job. 'Feel feeling like mentioned people'	Eloped with a girl betrothed to a fellow Christian	European missionary
9	Christian woman	Paralysed for sixteen years	Took an certain share of meat at feasts	Christian neighbours
10	Man servant of missionary	Married several times. Each time with chief	Stopped in missionary's children and ran as table pretending to invite with his pen	European missionary
11	Sick man	Property disappeared	Caught with a woman and treated having man called adultery	European missionary (said to have uttered a malicious curse: 'If you are (plug all your property will disappear')
12	Woman	Became a mendicant	Stole things from left of mother-in-law's hut. Destroyed husband and complained of him to neighbours. Admit her drivers	European missionary
13	Young man, newly married	Did not begat a child	Did not make a wedding feast for his neighbours in Christian village	Christian neighbours (complaining that had eaten no meat). Young man's [illegible] husband [illegible] of drivers and ate the [illegible]

[p. 209]

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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

775 and appearance—the mind of a child is tenacious. If one comes whom
828 I never knew, I note his appearance in the dream and next day I tell my friends and relatives about it. Then perhaps an old woman, my grandmother, will say: 'That is how So-and-so used to look.' Perhaps I dream of someone wearing brass body-rings, with a plume nodding on his head. Then the older ones know him and tell me it is So-and-so. In the old days, in the days of our mothers, if we dreamed of eating food like this my relatives would say: 'They have come to fetch him; he will get disease and die soon; he has eaten the food of the shades.'
778 But in European times now it is different. . . . Our mothers fear such
828 dreams; there is a medicine to put on the walls. If I always dream like
177 this they bring it and say: 'It's forbidden to dream of the shades.'

Quarrow: And now?

Kenyo: Now if dreams come true we say that the man who had dreamed is a prophet.

828 Quarrow: Are all dreams pregnant with trouble?

Kenyo: Yes, dreams usually mean trouble. Suppose I love a girl and want to marry her, and then I dream of marriage, of having the cattle and going and being accepted by her fathers who are all present [in the dream], then I rejoice and I hope.[1] Then I begin to think of going to earn the cattle, and I go to work and come back with three or four cattle and go to hand over the marriage-cattle. All ends happily, but it might not. Perhaps they will accept me, perhaps not.

At work I dream that a sister has died, and I find it is true, then I think other dreams will be true. . . . I fear that perhaps my death is near. I go to a doctor and say I want a medicine, he gives me some to put under my head and sleep on. He grinds a medicine and tell me to sprinkle it in the room.

775 It is generally agreed that dreams of the dead are not welcomed:
828 If I speak of the recently dead others will say: 'Don't speak of them, they are dead.' Then I take a coal from the fire and say: 'Do not come in dreams.' If the shade comes it always means trouble.

Aren't the only occasions of prayer to the shades are when men are in trouble and anticipate misfortune.

We never pray except when there is trouble. No, we never pray to give thanks. Why should we? There is nothing to grumble at!

● 673 (c) *Relief and Behaviour*

753 In the Nyakyusa view there is a direct and immediate link be-
777 tween misfortune and wrong-doing. When illness befalls a man,

[1] Kenyo's father delayed long in providing him with marriage-cattle. The following year he eloped with a girl.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

or his crops fail, or his cattle die, he reflects on any quarrels he may have had with kinsmen or affines or neighbours, and on any rituals he should have performed and has omitted wholly or in part. He may be quite clear in his own mind that the misfortune is due to some particular wrong-doing (*insengwa*)—perhaps a quarrel with a brother, or neglect to kill for his new neighbours on his inheritance from his father—and proceed directly to patch up the quarrel and perform the neglected ritual. More often he thinks of several possible causes and lays them before the oracle, relying upon it to select between them. How several possible causes of misfortune occurred to the chief sufferers, their kinsmen and neighbours, is shown in the cases of Enesi, Katasya, Mwambuputa and Mpoma quoted at the end of the book (pp. 258 ff.).

No linguistic distinction is made between an offence punished by the courts and one thought to be punished by the shades; both are wrong-doings (*insengwa*), and there is no sharp distinction between an offence against a living kinsman and an offence against a dead one. In short, there is no clear conception of 'sin' as opposed to 'tort' or 'crime'.

There are two themes constantly recurring in Nyakyusa theology: firstly, men must observe the traditional rituals (both positive and negative) or they will go mad; and secondly, the anger of senior relatives and neighbours will injure unless it is confessed and goodwill expressed.

The first conception is a magical one:[1] what is required is the performance or avoidance of particular acts in a particular form on particular occasions; the second is sacramental, it is 'anger in the heart' that is dangerous, and no ritual is held to be efficacious without a change of heart.

Often the two conceptions are not consciously related to one another: again and again one is told: 'The rituals must be performed or men will go mad,' and there is no reference to the state of mind of the performers; but on certain occasions they overlap explicitly, as when Kasitile adjured his kinsmen to confess all while they were performing the ritual to 'rot the ropes'; and always there is a symbolic connection, for the rituals themselves express the value of amity between kinsmen, of respect for seniors and obligation towards juniors.

The neglect of the marriage ritual is itself an expression of disrespect for parents or parents-in-law, and a breach of the sex code,

[1] In the sense defined by G. & M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 89-95.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[585] of which the basic rule is the separation of the reproductive
834 activities of successive generations.

> If my wife goes to the inner part of my mother's house, it is a wrong. Perhaps she will bear a thin and sickly child. She has gone to the inner part of her in-law's house and my mother is angry with her for going where my father goes. Perhaps, when she is first pregnant, my wife goes to the back of her own mother's house. That is a wrong, too. Perhaps she will have a difficult labour. The trouble in both cases comes from the anger of the elders, my mother's in the first case, her mother's in the second. It is said that if my wives have seen my father by inheritance, then, when I die, the fathers who are dead will not receive me because I have injured ('kept back') their younger brother. I think, for my part, that the pagans honour this custom [of avoidance] very much because they say that the shades will be angry if it is neglected.

775 Apart from the neglect of rituals, the types of behaviour com-
•673 monly believed to be directly punished by the shades are (1) quar-
578 rels between father and son or between brothers, turning on the
681 seduction of a senior's wife by his junior, on the sharing of marriage-cattle or, nowadays, on the sharing of the earnings of a young man working for wages, or on his seduction of women which necessitates the payment of fines by his father; (2) quarrels between father and daughter or father-in-law and son-in-law turning on the handing over of marriage-cattle by the son-in-law and the provision of gifts for his daughter by the father; (3) quarrels between husband and wife; (4) quarrels between relatives of all sorts over failure to attend, or to invite to, rituals; and (5) the neglect of his wards by the heir.

578 Cases of family quarrels over seduction leading to misfortune
775 have already been quoted (pp. 134–5; 187–8). One concerning cattle and earnings was cited by Mwakwelebeja. A young man, X., went out to work and left the cattle he earned with his elder full brother. When he married he took all these cattle and gave them to his father-in-law. His elder brother was very angry. X. said: 'I take all the cattle for you have never given me any of yours.' His brother replied: 'How could I give you cows? I have no children.' Then all the cattle X. had given to his father-in-law died and had to be replaced. 'The shades were angry because when the younger brother took the cows his elder brother complained very much.' And if a young man goes out to work and gives his father no share of his earnings the shades are angry: 'Perhaps I will fall ill; perhaps when I look for work I shall not

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

577 There is much more talk among the Nyakyusa of misfortune
777 from the shades or the anger of neighbours, than of blessing, but
556 there is an idea, somewhat vague but real, that generosity and kindliness will bring blessing (*ulusaje*). Ambilikile, a Christian teacher who had grown up in a pagan home, said:

> My mother tells me that my father was in the habit of feeding people, those who were not his relatives. People went to a distance and brought medicines for fertility and gave them to him, hence they said: 'He is very kind; food never grows short at his home.' She also told me that my father died very old. He did not die of disease, but of old age, no breath being left in him. This was because men were always saying: 'May they stand by him, may they bless him (*bamumwemelege, bamusajege*),' not to his face but to others. They said that he lived long because of the blessing of men. Yes, they say that the food of a kindly man never gets finished, that of a stingy man finishes; he himself suffers hunger.

763 Mwaisumo described a father on his death-bed blessing a favourite son, allocating cattle to him, and telling him:

> Care for the children I have left, keep on good terms with them, then you will be rich in everything like your father. I cared for my children, I was not harsh (*akali*), so complain to me of anything that troubles you. If you are like this the property in your home will be plentiful, people will be astonished and say: 'He is like his father.'

431 Of a man given a cow by the chief, it was sometimes said: 'The
775 shades have blessed him; he has a righteous (*agolefu*) shade.'

Although our Nyakyusa informants talked a great deal about
754 the danger of neglecting rituals and angering senior relatives,
• 673 living and dead, the number of cases of misfortune attributed to
621 their anger is small in comparison with the number attributed to witchcraft or 'the breath of men'. (Ten as compared with sixty-three.) There is no reason to suppose that one type of case was concealed when the others were reported to us, and it is clear that the Nyakyusa prefer to make neighbours in the age-village, rather than kinsmen, the scapegoat for their misfortunes. Even when the wrong done is against a kinsman it is often the neighbours, rather than the shades, who are said to have brought punishment on the wrong-doer.

777 At the same time, we were assured by one informant after an-
621 other that people blame the shades or Kyala for misfortune when it is really the neighbours who are responsible! Angombwike argued that men fear to accuse the neighbours, who are slow to

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO SHADES

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Ref.	Category of sufferer	Misfortune	Category of shade	Alleged sin	Investigation	Ritual performed
1.	Man. Kataaya	(a) Crops did not grow (b) Kataaya died	'Abapasi'	Quarrelling with kinsmen	Autopsy disproved this. Found to be sorcery	Killed a bull for family
2.	Children of village headman	Death of several children	Father of village headman	Village headman moved to father's homestead though told by father's neighbours he should remain in young man's village where he was headman	Autopsy	Prayer
3.	Cattle	Cattle died at father-in-law's (and would have to be replaced)	Shades were angry. His brother complained very much when he took all the cattle	Younger brother took all cattle he had from elder full brother to whom they had been handed on his return from work, and gave them for his marriage	—	—
4.	Two girls	Girls died	—	A wrong (*isungwe*) not specified	Autopsy Divination	—
5.	Younger brother	Died	Elder brother	Elder brother not buried where he asked to be	Divination	Buried where elder brother had asked

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Ref.	Category of sufferer	Misfortune	Category of shade	Alleged sin	Investigation	Ritual performed
6.	Son	Millet crop cultivated by son failed	Father	Had moved from father's homestead. Left grave unswept	Divination	Prayer
7.	Husband	No fish in traps	—	Stinted one wife of fish	Divination	Prayed in banana grove. Wife confessed her anger
8.	Kasitile	Kasitile fell ill	Mother	Neglected to leave flour or beer in his hut for shades	Divination	—
9.	Married woman (wife of Mwakobela)	Woman delirious		Her newly-married daughter returned from husband without bringing a hen or anything, and drank from mother's calabash cup	Divination	—
10.	Child	Death of child	Father's sister?	Father neglected death ritual of his sister	Autopsy. 'The ritual entered the stomach of the child'	Neglected death ritual performed

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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

residence there, I never locked my doors, and the only 674
theft of which I had to complain was the pendulum of a clock taken from an open building!

Murder.—Murder is, from the native point of view, 682
a much less serious crime than cattle stealing. But it 673
should be remembered that British law calls crimes murder which are not so called by the Konde. A man who kills his wife's paramour has not committed murder: he has exacted a just revenge, and no more. In a case of real murder, the murderer or his friends usually pay a fine, or rather a compensation, of up to ten head of cattle; and the loss to the family of the murdered man is further made good by the other family handing over a daughter. This girl must never be spoken of as a substitute, for that would cause her children, when she has them, to die. It is needless to add that under British law compensation of any kind to the family of the murdered person does not acquit the murderer. What follows, therefore, is purely native law, which, if administered at all, is administered only when there is reason to believe that the police will never come to hear of it.

When a murder was committed, the chief directed 627
the friends of the murderer to bring him for trial, but 783
if they chose to put him to death themselves, the case was ended. Should it be impossible to discover the murderer, a friend of his, it hardly mattered who, was put to death, and a wide-extending vendetta might be the result. When the law is satisfied, a formal reconciliation between the two families takes place. Under the guidance of the medicine man, who is

627 783 master of ceremonies on all such occasions, a sheep, provided by the family of the murderer, is killed, and taken hold of by the parties, while the doctor divides the carcase into two parts, each side taking its share. Medicine is poured into a pot, and a red-hot spear is plunged into it. The carcase of the sheep, cooked with this medicine, is placed upon banana leaves, and the feast of reconciliation is partaken of, along with beer which also has been doctored. The reconciliation, however, is not complete until the girl has been handed over: until that is done, the feast has only stayed action on the part of the murdered man's relatives. If the murderer is not known, the relatives of the victim drink a medicine, without which, if they happened unwittingly to drink water in the culprit's house, they would themselves also die.

The murder of a pregnant woman is a very serious 682 matter, for it is really a double murder, and the chief •673 has to be compensated for the loss of dependents. It is more heinous to murder a woman than a man, for the woman, being dead, bears no more children, and loss to the community results.

For accidental death there are numerous regulations. 682 If a man dies, or is killed, while in the employment of 672 another, or on a journey with him, compensation must be paid to the relatives. There is no feast of reconciliation, for the thing was not done in malice. When a person is killed by an ox or a cow, the owner pays a cow, and kills the offending animal, lest it lead him into further trouble and expense of the same kind. If one is cutting down a tree, and some one is killed by

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

776 understand that the chief desire of the people is to induce Him to go away again. "Go far hence, O God, to the Sango, for Thy House is very large," is a prayer which is not seldom heard, when it is believed [821] that He is near. An eclipse is a special visitation, and is met with wild drumming and shouting, confession of sins, and entreaties, for the consciousness of sin is by no means absent from their minds. Offerings are brought to the spirits to induce them to intercede, but no offerings are made to *Ndorombwike* Himself, for nothing can be offered that has any value for Him. "God is calling in the waterfall," "God has kindled a fire in the pool," are cries of dread alarm to this day, only in a small degree comparable to the fear that is inspired when it is declared that a spirit, of however great a man, is angry. God is an ever present terror, and the idea of communion with Him for any purpose, is one that has not entered the Konde mind. He is *Tenende*, the Owner of the world, and it is for men to see that He is not offended. Of the many sins •[673] which bring the wrath of God and the spirits on the community, the most important are widespread sexual sin, and neglect of sacrifices.

And yet God is *Tata Twesa*, the Father of us all, from whom help may be expected when men deserve it. The remarkable incident of the floating of the *Domira*, referred to in Chapter I, bears its own evidence of native thinking about the Deity. "Then I said, Rejoice, for God has heard my prayers." It does not seem open to reasonable doubt that Chungu was casting himself upon unseen powers, making, in

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ever made to the spirits, but when some member of a family or his wife or 769
child falls sick the anger of the spirits is often suspected as a possible 753
cause. There are usually other reasons suspected as well, and so the [787]
sickness is taken to a diviner for diagnosis. Various causes are suggested to the diviner and he selects one among them. If the anger of the spirits is selected then this senior kinsman must pray for the one who is sick, if he is to recover. When half-brothers live at a distance from one another, after their father and his brothers have died, then each may pray to the spirits to cure a little sickness in his own family but if the sickness persists then a message must be sent to the senior kinsman. And, as the anger of the spirits is due to wrong doing, the sinner must reform his ways as well.

The wrongs which rouse the spirits to anger are usually breaches of 673
family morality. If a son does not respect his father or insults him, if an heir neglects to feed and provide for the dead man's children, then when sickness falls on him or his own children it will probably be traced to the anger of the spirits at his behaviour.

Space does not allow any full analysis of religion in family life and in 754
the relationships of kinsmen and affines. Not only the ancestor cult but 771
witchcraft and magic are factors in them. A man's neglect of a wife or his cruelty to her may, it is believed, lead to his falling sick through her witchcraft and that of sympathetic neighbours; his relations with his father-in-law are affected by the fear that if he offends him, his father-in-law may, by magical means, kill his children, and so on.

Wider kinship groupings than the family gather at ceremonies and 614
are recognized in the rules against incest. But there are no clans; there is no descent group continuous down the generations with a common name and definite membership. Each individual family has its own penumbra of kinsfolk, the effective kindred of a man and his son, or of two half-brothers are not all the same, while each single person is especially related by respect, affection and mutual obligations to particular kinsmen beyond his own family. Descent, [illegible] have seen, is patrilineal 611
except in the case of illegitimate children. A man ruled for his *ekekolo* 614
always recites first the names of his paternal forbears as far as he can [614-8]
remember. But if he is related through mother or grandmother to a chief he usually volunteers this fact as part of his *ekekolo*; and questions always elicit some knowledge of his mother's paternal kinsfolk and a statement that "they are my *ekekolo* too." Descendants of a common grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are to-day forbidden to marry, 582
and no case of infringement has come to my notice; descendants of a common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry but, I am told,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

692 does not delay, but is carried out immediately. The
695 loser may, however, appeal to another judge for a rehearing of the case. Compensation in some form, usually cattle, or hoes, or, in a few cases, a daughter, is the sentence.

• 694 *Theft.*—The extraordinary boldness and skill of the Nyakyusa thieves are widely known. Outside their own country their reputation is perhaps greater than they deserve, great though that is. At one place guards are doubled when it is known that Nyakyusa carriers have arrived. No European house has escaped their attentions, to the greater or smaller loss of the owner. They break through brick walls, enter by door or window, conduct their operations by day or night, with equal indifference and success; and the speed with which recognizable goods are disposed of, adds to the mystery of their methods.

A white man was recently robbed while reading in bed with dogs beside him, the thieves quietly lifting and carrying off a heavy trunk, which they believed to contain a large amount of cash, before the owner knew that they were in the room. Another had the whole of his kit taken while he himself was in the next room; a medical man had his hand-bag taken from his bedroom at about five in the afternoon; in yet another case the sum of two hundred shillings was quietly carried off from a table while three Europeans were sitting in the next room at breakfast. Sheets have been taken off beds, and the owners knew nothing of their loss until bed-time revealed the fact. Rifles and accoutrements have been removed from

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F317 Ngonde F317

beside sleeping native soldiers, and blankets taken 674
from under sleeping men. A few months ago all the contents of a native house were taken off at midday; and a workman of mine, returning to his home at five in the evening, found that everything had been taken in his absence, though his house is in a village of considerable size. Considerations of nearness never hinder a thief when an opportunity presents itself. One Saturday, some time ago, an old widow, in preparation for the Sunday service in the Mission Church, washed her one garment, and spread it out on a bush to dry. Having nothing else to wear, she lay down behind another bush; and presently along came a man who snatched off the garment and ran, pursued by the shrill objurgations of the disconsolate widow, the only punishment he ever received.

The thieving community forms a kind of federation, and gangs are made up from many different districts. There is a family some distance from here which boasts that they were thieves before the white man came and taught them! The thieves are known in the villages to which they belong, but they are never betrayed, either because of the fear which they undoubtedly inspire; or, in some cases, because the chiefs get a share of the proceeds of the industry. The number of thieves, and the amount of thieving, has greatly increased since the British occupation of Tanganyika Territory, to the disgust of honest men, who openly express their admiration for other aspects of British rule, but are very frank in their criticism of what they call our softness in dealing with evil-doers.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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The complaint is not seldom made that in this respect they were better off under the Germans, for the Germans had a vigorous way with rascals, while now criminals are cared for in comfortable prisons, while honest men suffer loss for which they get no compensation. Professional thieves openly jeer at the sentences imposed: good feeding, houses, fires, blankets, and back to your "work" in fatter and fitter condition than when you left it!

So openly, so far as their own immediate neighbourhoods are concerned, are thieving operations carried on, that both the doctor and the diviner (the two offices are often combined in one person) are consulted; the former to find out whether the proposed plans will be successful, the latter to supply the necessary medicines. Watchers being stationed to give the alarm, medicine is thrown on the roof of the house to be robbed, to make sure that the inmates shall sleep soundly; and on the door, to make it open of itself, as many seriously believe. On entering, the first man in begins by handing out all weapons, so rendering the owner defenceless should he awaken; then a brand from the fire, which is always burning in every house, is waved about to fill the place with smoke; and a third medicine is placed under the heads of the sleeping people of the house. If the thieves dig in, as they often do, the work is performed with remarkable silence. When the hole is big enough, a large banana leaf is thrust in and moved about, to test if the inmates are really sleeping. Then one man goes in feet first, for a spear-wound in the foot from a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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watchful householder is less serious than the thrust through the chest which ended the life of an incautious robber a year ago. 674

When everything has been handed out to confederates, the doors are opened, and the cattle taken out; for the latter sleep in the same house as their owners; a custom which is attributed to the conviction that in no other way is there any chance at all of defending their property. If the owner has been killed in the house, the cattle, I am assured, will refuse to move; but they will pass over the dead body if placed in the doorway, and give no further trouble. Murder is a not infrequent accompaniment of cattle stealing. A woman was killed with a blow of an axe, not five miles from my house, because she awoke and cried out when thieves were making off with their booty. There is a story, which has been only partially confirmed by the police, that in 1923 six persons were killed by the owners of cattle with which they were making off. The cattle lowed while being removed, the owners were roused, and overtook the thieves, who were killed in the fight which ensued.

Old stories say that thieves possess medicine which make it impossible for them to be recognized should the victim waken up while they are still in the house. They ask him if he knows who they are; and as death may be the penalty of an affirmative answer, it is easy to believe that it is rarely given. So confident are the thieves of the power of the drug, that they sometimes coolly arouse their victims, and compel 674 189

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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674 789 them to cook for them. One brave man, thus occupied, suddenly thrust a blazing brand into the face of one of his spoilers, whereupon he and his confederates bolted.

685 The native law of reprisal is the same as the old American law of horse stealing—death on the spot if caught. The chief did not interfere in such cases. On the contrary, he was indignant if criminals of this kind were brought to him. He refused to look at them, and reminded the captors that it was their duty to kill them where they were caught: let them be taken off and dealt with according to the law without further parley. Hanging on a tree was the commonest mode of disposing of captured thieves.

But the Konde loves his cattle, and not all the fear of the thieves and their medicines will hinder some individuals from doing all in their power to recover their property. An old man came some time ago to ask the loan of forty shillings. He explained that he had been robbed, and that his plan was to go through the country offering to buy a cow, in the hope that the thieves, not recognizing him, would offer him his own animal. It is pleasing to relate that the old man's plan was completely successful. *Per contra*, thieves sometimes bring intelligence, of a kind, to bear upon their profession, and cases are known where they have actually charged the real owner with having stolen their cattle, and had them awarded to them.

674 In strong contrast to the Nyakyusa of the north, the people of Karonga, though they steal from each other, do not steal from Europeans. During five years

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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residence there, I never locked my doors, and the only 674
theft of which I had to complain was the pendulum of a clock taken from an open building!

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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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the favour of the white man for any reason, can be supplied with a charm which will secure the end he has in view. For a few moments after the interview begins, he chews at the charm, then removes it from his mouth, trusting for the rest to what has been incised in his forehead. A favourable result may be confidently expected.

Thieving charms are also in use, and men who operate under such protection are called *kalebi*. A drug unknown to me is tied up in a leaf, and thrown on to the roof of the house to be rubbed, and also at the door, to make the inmates sleep. The thieves enter, either by opening the now facile door, or by digging; and immediately place another drug under the heads of the sleeping owners of the house. "May they sleep heavily; may they dream dreams," is their incantation. Another medicine is worn on the wrists. So bold are the robbers thus protected that, when they have removed everything they wish, they awaken the sleepers, and demand food (which is given to them), without fear of being recognized; but it is not perhaps surprising, considering the fear in which these criminals are held, that the victims never admit that they recognize the thieves.

The house, however, may be protected. Powdered root of *ikinda* is spread all over the house, and any thief who enters will have sores breaking out on his lips, a thing which happens only to thieves who have ignored this charm.

Kondeland should be a paradise for debtors, for the man who knows the ropes can arrange to put off pay-

I:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

some pasturage and the fire destroyed two plots of millet. I gave the owner an iron hoe.'

The ideal is settlement by agreement; in practice (at the present time) a large number of cases go (like this one) to the chief, and then on to the Native Court. Thence there are many appeals to the Native Appeal Court, the District and Provincial Officers' Courts, and even to the High Court of Tanganyika. As we have indicated, it is likely that fewer cases are settled by arbitration than formerly; but before the coming of the Europeans, chiefs' courts with power to enforce judgement existed, and were used. There was no 'golden age' in which all cases were settled by agreement.

The decision of arbitrators is essentially the judgement of public opinion in the village, or the respective villages, of the disputants. Cases are heard in public, neighbours drop in and join in the discussion, and a decision cannot be given contrary to their expressed opinions.

3. *Witness to contracts*

Not only do fellow villagers play a part in settling disputes, they also act as official witnesses in various types of legal transaction. The village headman is an essential witness at an autopsy (*vide supra*, p. 116) and at the distribution of the estate of one of his men. Whenever marriage-cattle are handed over, two or more non-relatives are called upon to serve as witnesses,[1] and these chosen are commonly village neighbours of either the groom or his father-in-law. We heard one man censured by his friends because he had neglected to take a village neighbour with him as witness when he went to summon his son-in-law to his daughter's puberty rituals. He had visited his son-in-law's 'best man' (*ambatya*) as was correct, but had omitted to take a friend with him to witness the conversation that took place. Even in matters that are kept very secret at least one official witness may be summoned. For example, an old man occasionally gives his hair permission to sleep with his wives while he is yet alive, and he does so in the presence of a neighbour or senior relative, for though the affair is very private it is absolutely necessary to have a witness to prove that the right was granted.

[1] Cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Law', *Africa*, Vol. X (1937).

g: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

This practice of having official witnesses to every contract, and summoning them to give evidence should a dispute later arise, is one of the most important means of maintaining order in Nyakyusa society, and village neighbours are the usual witnesses. 675

c. *Communal responsibility of the age-village*

Formerly, in Nyakyusa law two forms of group responsibility were emphasized: the mutual responsibility of kinsmen, and the mutual responsibility of fellow villagers. A case of murder or manslaughter was primarily the concern of the agnatic lineage if the victim was a male or an unmarried girl, and of the agnatic lineage of both husband and father if the victim was a married woman. The kinsmen either killed the murderer, or brought him before the chief, who imposed a fine which went to the injured relatives. The Nyakyusa make a distinction between 'spearing by day' (direct physical injury) and 'spearing by night' (witchcraft); and only in the latter type of case did the fine go to the chief. Witchcraft was thus treated as an offence against the state—the chiefdom—while murder or manslaughter was an offence against the kinsmen of the dead. The concern of the state in witchcraft, and the joint responsibility of kinsmen on the one hand, and of fellow villagers on the other, was evident when, as sometimes happened, both groups were required by the chief to clear themselves of suspicion of witchcraft by each producing a representative to take the poison ordeal. Should the representative of either group fail to vomit then the responsible individual within that group was sought out by means of divination and the ordeal (*vide supra*, p. 116). 613 621 672 754 682

In a case of adultery the injured husband, together with his kinsmen, pursued and attempted to kill, or torture and kill, the adulterer: self-help was not only permitted but expected in this situation,[3] and a man's near kinsmen were obliged to assist him. Neighbours were not obliged to assist in executing vengeance, but they might be victims of it, for if the injured husband did not find the adulterer he might kill any village-mate of his enemy. Such an attack commonly led to war between the two villages; 684 696 721

[3] D. R. MacKenzie, *The Spirit-Ridden Konds* (1925), p. 61, says: "The injured husband has the right to inflict death on the paramour. This is no mere rule of the past but a prize fact to-day . . . cases of this nature are very numerous."

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

success of the ritual, but who do not play any specially defined 621
part. As we have seen, all who are reckoned kinsmen and all fellow 788
villagers must attend a funeral, and a large crowd enhances the status of the kinsmen of the deceased. At a puberty and marriage ritual the 'congregation' is much smaller but is nevertheless important, as is shown by the complaint of the girl marrying a Christian that if she were not initiated she would not be famed. At other rituals all who attend are actors.

The officiants (*abanyage*) for death, puberty and marriage, and 791
birth rituals are almost always elderly women who, by their own choice, have learnt the medicines and observances from some older *anyage* by acting as her assistant. We came across only one man who acted as *anyage* in death and puberty rituals, though at the rituals of spearing, binding with ropes, and protection against sorcery men are more common than women. Often all the elderly women are referred to as '*abanyage*' for 'they help the *anyage*', but the one who has been called upon to provide the medicines and organize the proceedings, and who is paid for her trouble, is clearly recognized. Sometimes she is a kinswoman of the 'owner' of the ritual—if a member of the lineage knows the medicines she will carry out the rituals for all her kin, as did Syungu, wife of Chief Porokoto's half-brother—but she is not necessarily a relative. It is knowledge, not kinship connections, that qualify her. She is the final arbitrator on procedure, and is insistent on exact observance of the details. Because knowledge of medicines is so important Nyakyusa often refer to the officiant at a ritual as *anyanga*, a doctor, but *anyage* is the more precise word since *anyanga* has other applications.

On the occasion of prayer in sickness, and in the ritual of recon- 791
ciliation, no specialist *anyage* is necessary. The senior kinsman of a 792
lineage prays to his shades direct, and a father and his neighbours 793
receive and bless an erring son without the mediation of any priest; but the doctor called in to treat a sick man may press the kinsmen to confess their anger and bless one another (as Mwakisonde did in the case quoted) and come very close to organizing a ritual of reconciliation.

At a marriage ritual there is a 'go-between' (*anyange*) representing the bride's father and one representing the groom, and, besides 515
their legal function as witnesses to the passage of cattle, they help 679
the officiant to organize the ritual, and are specifically responsible for conveying invitations to the feasts. The wife of the groom's 'go-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 villages of the great-grandfathers' generation survived, even ritually (*vide* Document, pp. 881–5).[1]

166 Men also move from one village to another and they do not always join a village of their exact contemporaries. A stranger may come and be granted land in a village even though he is considerably older or younger than the bulk of its members. Such movement from one village to another is now very considerable: we estimated that at least 80 per cent of the married men have at some time or other moved from the chiefdom in which they first cultivated gardens of their own. There is also movement from village to village within a chiefdom.

[681] Everyone agreed that moving is not something new. In the past a convicted witch was expelled from his village, and sometimes from the chiefdom; thieves and adulterers were also expelled or fled to take refuge with another chief (*vide infra*, pp. 118–9). But it is probable that movement between villages has increased greatly since the imposition of European control. The main [684] reason for moving nowadays is, as we have said, the fear of witchcraft. Subsidiary reasons are the desire to get suitable land for cultivating cash crops, the desire to be near some centre of employment (such as Tukuyu or Rungwe), and the desire to live with others of like mind, as fellow Christians or fellow pagans, fellow Moravians or fellow adherents of the 'Watch Tower' (*vide infra*, pp. 40–3).

166 Women move from one village to another even more often than men, for, not only do wives move with their husbands, but 591 a girl commonly marries a man of a village other than that in 587 which she grew up, and is later inherited by a kinsman of her dead husband who lives in yet another village. Since first wives are usually ten years younger than their husbands, and junior wives may be forty or fifty years younger, most women are inherited at least once during their lives, and some are inherited several times. The modern high divorce rate accelerates this long- [684] established circulation of women from village to village.

[1] It is possible that the existence of villages of four generations was due to the fact that Mwaipopo continued to live long after the 'coming out' of his late bloodsuckings—a survival not usual in traditional practice (*vide infra*, p. 50).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

724 torts committed by its members has also disappeared. Instead,
672 there is both a great increase in the number of cases treated as
673 offences against the state; murder, manslaughter and grievous
177 bodily injury being no longer treated as offences against a group of kin, but as crimes against the state; and a great extension in the range of law. A modern Nyakyusa has no difficulty in suing a debtor, or the seducer of his wife, living in another chiefdom.

Nevertheless neighbours still feel a certain obligation for the
621 maintenance of each other's rights. For example, a certain young
672 man eloped with a very young girl, who, though betrothed, had not yet reached puberty. On their way out of the district they were seen by a 'village father' of the girl, who brought them back to her father, and then joined with him and other neighbours in beating the young man and taking him to the chief. The youth admitted his fault in seducing so young a girl and asked the chief to summon his father-in-law (for he was already married) that he might borrow from his father-in-law the cattle with which to pay the fine for seduction. But his father-in-law was a neighbour of the father of the girl he had seduced, and he refused to lend any cattle, saying, 'You have run off with the daughter of my neighbour in the village: that means you have wronged me.'

And a group of herd-boys are still liable to be treated by their
639 fathers as responsible for one another. One informant, discussing
672 a case of bestiality committed by a herd-boy, remarked that the leader of the group forbade the others to mention it at home on the ground that 'if our fathers know they will say that we all (in this herd group) do it.'

d. Social separation

• 681 One of the mechanisms for maintaining good relations in Nyakyusa villages (as in all groups) is the separation of the dissident individual from the group.[1] This separation may be compulsory or voluntary. As we have seen, witches, thieves, adulterers, and obstinate debtors were formerly banished from Nyakyusa villages because they were regarded as a danger to their neighbours, liable to harm them directly or to bring retribution upon them. The village, being held responsible for certain actions of its members, and forming a defensive unit against the out-

[1] M. G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. [illegible].

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

posed action of witches, exercised the right of expelling members thought to be dangerous to it. Nowadays, since a village is no longer held responsible for the torts of its members, men are not often banished for theft or adultery, but supposed witches and sorcerers are still frequently compelled to move. 681

There is also a great deal of voluntary movement to escape friction in the village. This is commonly expressed in terms of witchcraft—a family moves to avoid the witchcraft of its neighbours; but neighbours are not feared unless there has been a quarrel. It is when the parties to some dispute have *not* been reconciled that fear of witchcraft germinates, and illness precipitates a move. 166 578

Among ordinary commoners only their immediate neighbours are believed to be dangerous and such men therefore sometimes move only from one village to another of the same chiefdom; but very many move right outside to another chiefdom altogether, preferring to make assurance doubly sure and to put a long distance between themselves and their spiritual persecutors. And in the case of certain men of high social status, such as senior village headmen who are the advisers of the chief, and priests, for whom a wider circle is dangerous, it is held to be essential to leave the chiefdom.

We have argued (*vide supra*, p. 36) that movement from village to village has always occurred among the Nyakyusa but that it is increasing. The change is almost certainly a symptom of increasing friction within the village. One traditional mechanism of settling disputes—the ordeal—has lapsed, while fear of one's neighbours' witchcraft continues. It is possible also that the incidence of disease, and hence of suspected witchcraft and sorcery, has increased among the Nyakyusa—tuberculosis and venereal diseases are said to have spread greatly since 1914[1] and, in the opinion of the German missionaries, malaria is much more prevalent at the higher altitudes than it was before 1914; but there 166 578 164

[1] The incidence of tuberculosis in Rungwe district is now thought to be about thirteen per thousand (C. Wilcocks, *Tuberculosis in Tanganyika Territory*, Government Printer, Dar-es-salaam, 1938). Dr. D. Kerr-Cross, in a list of diseases encountered during ten years' practice in north Nyasaland before 1895 reports that he only saw one case of 'pulmonary tubercular phthisis', but syphilis (which the natives called 'the disease of the Arabs'), was very prevalent. Dr. Kerr-Cross was a missionary doctor who travelled extensively in Nyakyusa country. (See his articles already cited and H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, pp. 472-3.)

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa
Selpa, Mulingonde

(*kwyali*), they are in the body at first, they shake it and you fall ill; 764
they say: 'You are still muddy, you have not done the ritual.' . . . 765
When a man dies his heart (*ndumbula*) and his body (*umfinda*) separate, 775
they are divorced, the heart with the blood (*ililopa*) and the shadow 828
(*ilikyungula*) are separated from the corpse which rots in the ground. The corpse is filth, it is excrement. And so when a madman, for whom they have not performed the ritual, eats filth, that is the corpse, he is still holding it, they have not done the ritual for him. If they have not done the ritual for the shade his fellows drive him back and say: 'You cannot come yet, you are still muddy, they have not bathe you in the river.' . . .

Yes, that which they do to my body, to me the heir (or the relative) they do to the shade himself. He, the corpse, is earthy, muddy. That is why we smear ourselves with mud, we mourners; it is this earth that we drive away in the ritual, it is mud, it is the corpse. . . .

The hair of the mourners which we shave in the ritual is one with the hair of the corpse, it is his. We wash and shave and anoint him and he goes to his own place. . . .

First we bite the banana with the seeds stuck into it in the ground, and then we eat bananas and seeds in the usual way. It is the food which he, the shade, ate. . . .

They seize the heir and widows at the pumpkin-seed ritual. The officiant is there, she smears ashes on their chests and puts a strand of *ilingolongofwa* creeper on their necks, then if the woman refuses the man later there is a case and she must pay the fine for adultery. If she refuses before this there is no case, and she does not pay. The ashes and creeper are signs of death, of mourning, of the corpse—they cast them away into the river. [837 681]

QUESTION: The rubbing in earth—what does it represent?

KAMTULE: The banana flower is the corpse. We are saying to him: 'You corpse, we have finished with you, do not come here again, it is finished for ever, do not look towards us, go away.' This earth is the same as the mud with which we smear ourselves at the burial. We bathe, we cast it away.

QUESTION: The washing at the door with medicine?

KAMTULE: We wash with powdered medicine at the door because we are just going to take filth (*indyb*) in our hands—to take the bananas and pumpkin-seeds. We bathe, we wash, and then they give us the bananas. It is taboo (*mwiko*) to eat before washing. The calabash used for this washing is hung up in the porch and used for the beer later, the beer which they drink on the path after scattering themselves.

QUESTION: The bananas and lentils and pumpkin-seeds?

KAMTULE: At the eating of bananas and pumpkin-seeds we do not separate them, everything is then pressed together in one place; but the banana flower we bury is separate, that is the corpse. And at the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

vomit by tickling the back of my throat with a hen's feather, while I 783
am standing under the fall with the water coming down on my head. The blood of him you have killed is in the waterfall. May it not come! May it all go out of the body! You vomit because it is there in the body. May it go out! Then a medicine is cooked and the legs of the slayer and his relatives are scalded with it. It is the medicine of twins: the twin medicine and the spearing medicine are one because they are a rejection of the blood. When people's legs have been splashed then we all shave; that is to drive away him whom we have killed.

But even after such treatment the kin of the slayer and the slain 783
fear to eat together. 'We remain enemies. If we eat with them it 602
makes us thin.'

Those who drink protective medicines are the agnatic kin of the slayer and the slain, their mothers' kin (*abipuo*) and their wives, but not their affines. 'Those who must be treated are wives, and blood relatives but not affines. Affines are of different blood, but wives are of your flesh.'

The spearing ritual is not a joint ritual in which a large group 783
of kin participate; married men, even brothers, make their own arrangements for taking protective medicine.

We do not meet together with all our relatives, the descendants of one man, no, it is not like the twin ritual. We drink it each man with his wives and children in his house. If I have a married brother he also goes to a doctor to ask for medicines for himself. He seeks his own doctor, not the one to whom I went. We drink separately, we do not meet together when we drink.

Only if a daughter had been given in compensation for a murder 783
(as sometimes happened) and later he who married her took mar- 682
riage cattle to her father to establish kinship, then, our informants said, the two parties should drink the 'medicine of spearing' (*ufuta gwa lukunge*) together.

(3) Rotting the rope

A man who has been bound with rope (*ingopi*), or has committed 753
suicide by hanging,[1] or raided cattle and tethered them, is also 681 ●
[762]

[1] What the incidence of suicide is among the Nyakyusa we do not know. The Rev. Shewanda, one of the first Europeans to live in the area, speaks of it being 'not uncommon'. We recorded two cases: one of a man whose wife and children had died; the other a woman forced to leave her lover and marry against her will. E, a Christian whom we know well, swore to his pagan elder brother that he would commit suicide if his brother insisted on the pagan practice of performing an autopsy on the body of their dead sister.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

753 believed to be a danger to his kin and descendants, but in a man-
481 ner somewhat different from the one who has killed another. The sickness is thought to come from the ropes and is called *ingyi* after them.

Mwaikambo explained:

[783] If one member of a family commits suicide by hanging then his surviving relatives, if they do not drink a medicine, will die of the 'ropes', always. If a man hangs himself all his relatives fear; if a woman only her children.

Kasiile's wife, Kilaleli, had borne ten children, but all save one had died. He said:

It is because of the ropes of her father. They bound him at Tukeyu; he died in gaol; it is those ropes which are killing my children. I said to her father [i.e. the heir]: 'Let us go to divine,' but he has not yet agreed to do so.

The death of Mukwahila, a junior kinsman of the Chief Mwaipopo, whose funeral we attended, was attributed to the ropes used to tether cattle raided by his grandfather. Kasiile, himself a distant agnatic kinsman, explained this case also:

One of the fathers of Mukwahila was killed by the hill people. They seized him on the road. So in revenge Mwamunkie, the father of
[317] Mukwahila, took twenty cows belonging to the hill people as they passed north, coming from the salt lick. This was long ago. Then Mukwahila's father omitted to kill a cow for those who had helped him to secure the cows. So they were angry and brought *ingyi*—the disease of ropes—upon him. After seizing the cattle he moved to Mwambetwale's country in the hills and he was quite well, but then he came back to live here, first sending two cows to the Chief Mwaipopo, but killing none for the people, who were angry and said: 'Why does he not kill for us? What sort of chief is he?' He got weak and fell ill and died. They
[K3] did not perform an autopsy, saying it was forbidden to do it on a chief, and his son died also and was not examined, but now when the younger son died, Mwaipopo said: 'Let us examine him so that we may know.' And it is that old *ingyi*. . . .

The sickness of ropes (*ingyi*) is of three sorts coming from: (1) the suicide (by hanging) of a relative long ago; (2) the binding of a man by other people, as distinct from a man binding himself; and (3) the
[K4] drunkest unconsciousness of men and their breath. In dreams they put the sickness of ropes into his stomach, they say: 'May the sickness of ropes come into his stomach.' The sickness of ropes lies in wait for an heir. A man dies and the sickness comes on his heir, others are all right; so it

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

gues on. Mwamnuka was never bound, but we say it was that sickness 753
of the ropes of the cattle that he seized from the hill people. Perhaps the 68
people of that country were shocked, and the sickness is due to their
breath, to witchcraft. Perhaps the owners of the cattle took the ropes
they had used for tying up the cattle which were stolen, to a doctor to
be cooked with medicine. We have not discovered the details yet, we [767]
have not yet been to divine; the divination will tell us, however. But
the medicine for rotting the ropes (*mbeye*) is the same for all these ill-
nesses from ropes, so we cook it immediately, before going to divine.
We divine when we clear away the litter. The cooking of medicine at
the grave now is to rot him who has died that the sickness of ropes
(*ngopi*) may not come on us. Yes, only the heir fears to die, but we
others fear lest we fall ill, coughing. The sickness of ropes does not kill
us, but makes us ill and thin. Yes, I drank and ate the medicine myself.
After the divination we drink another medicine, in beer, not the
female beer. They brew another lot just for the medicine.

We saw the drinking of medicine 'to rot the ropes' at Mukwa- 753
bile's funeral. He was buried at Kaitile's homestead and Kaitile 769
was organizing the proceedings. The doctor dug a hole at the foot
of the grave and put into it a length of green wood which pro-
jected a foot or so above the level of the ground. On this was
balanced a pot, and a fire was lighted beneath it. In the pot she
boiled certain leaves and roots. She took a large drinking calabash,
put in some ash from a fire-brand, added some of the same species
of leaves as had gone into the pot, and stirred up the mixture with
water. This mixture was drunk by the relatives present and fifteen
or twenty leaf cups were made to send to those who had not come.
Medicated porridge was also made and some was eaten by the
relatives present.

Then the pot was taken off the fire. We were told: 'We are
praying (*tulipokeipate*). We want to take the pot off the fire.' No
words were said, but the medicines were taken out of the pot by
the deceased's father's sister (the oldest surviving member of the
lineage) to prepare more porridge for those relatives who had not
attended, and the officiant poured the water into a hole which she
made in the middle of the grave. She covered it again with earth.

While the officiant was preparing the medicine at the grave,
Kaitile, who was helping her, said to a half-brother of the
deceased:

> Pray earnestly with this medicine, be on good terms with others.
> Hold [illegible]: Ho! What can we do against me!

[535] of which the basic rule is the separation of the reproductive
534 activities of successive generations.

If my wife goes to the inner part of my mother's house, it is a wrong. Perhaps she will bear a thin and sickly child. She has gone to the inner part of her in-law's house and my mother is angry with her for going where my father goes. Perhaps, when she is first pregnant, my wife goes to the back of her own mother's house. That is a wrong, too. Perhaps she will have a difficult labour. The trouble in both cases comes from the anger of the elders, my mother's in the first case, her mother's in the second. It is said that if my wives have seen my father by inheritance, then, when I die, the fathers who are dead will not receive me because I have injured ('kept back') their younger brother. I think, for my part, that the pagans honour this custom [of avoidance] very much because they say that the shades will be angry if it is neglected.

775 Apart from the neglect of rituals the types of behaviour com-
673 monly believed to be directly punished by the shades are (1) quar-
578 rels between father and son or between brothers, turning on the
●581 seduction of a senior's wife by his junior, on the sharing of marriage-cattle or, nowadays, on the sharing of the earnings of a young man working for wages, or on his seduction of women which necessitates the payment of fines by his father; (2) quarrels between father and daughter or father-in-law and son-in-law turning on the handling over of marriage-cattle by the son-in-law and the provision of gifts for his daughter by the father; (3) quarrels between husband and wife; (4) quarrels between relatives of all *sorts over failure to attend, or to* swine to, rituals; and (5) the neglect of his wards by the heir.

578 Cases of family quarrels over seduction leading to misfortune
775 have already been quoted (pp. 158-5; 187-8). One concerning cattle and earnings was cited by Mwakwelebeja. A young man, X., went out to work and left the cattle he earned with his elder full brother. When he married he took all these cattle and gave them to his father-in-law. His elder brother was very angry. X. said: 'I take all the cattle for you have never given me any of yours.' His brother replied: 'How could I give you cows? I have no children.' Then all the cattle X. had given to his father-in-law died and had to be replaced. 'The shades were angry because when the younger brother took the cows his elder brother complained very much.' And if a young man goes out to work and gives his father no share of his earnings the shades are angry: 'Perhaps I will fall ill, perhaps when I look for work I shall not

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

686 shades usually do, and I shall wander a long time on the way to the land of the shades because I shall have no relatives to show me the way. And then when I get there I shall still have trouble. They will drive me away from them, and I shall live alone, apart from them, quite separate.

775 More rarely a shade is said to be angry because his grave has
764 been left unswept, or he has not been buried where he asked to be.

621 The kinds of behaviour believed to be punished by 'the breath
●681 of men' are very similar to those thought to be punished by the anger of senior kinsmen; and, indeed, as we have seen, kinsmen and neighbours may murmur together against a son who has seduced his father's wife, a girl who has behaved insultingly to her parents-in-law, either verbally or by a breach of avoidance, and an heir who has neglected his wards or has neglected the customary ritual for his father, more particularly the customary killing of a cow when he enters into his inheritance. It is said that neglect to provide them with certain customary feasts infuriates neighbours more than anything else.[1]

The misfortunes that threaten from the neglect of rituals, and from the anger of kinsmen and neighbours, are loss of sanity, of life or health or fertility; a difficult labour or a lingering death; repeated miscarriages; loss of beauty (a wicked woman goes bald or turns reddish); scanty crops or sick herds, or, nowadays, unemployment—the man whose father is angry does not find a job. Only rarely is it suggested that punishment may be postponed until after death and then what is feared is that the shades of the lineage will not receive their kinsman.

775 When Nyakyusa talk about their religion they speak mostly of
771 external things, of the rituals, of the angry words spoken by kins-
681 men or neighbours and of the fearful effects upon one against whom this anger is directed. Misfortune is said to be brought down on a man by his parents muttering in anger over the fire, by people murmuring against him (the word used is that for the humming of a hive of bees). The emphasis is on outspoken complaint or criticism. But it is also thought that 'the shades see what is within a man': if he stores one wife of fish, then 'even though the woman herself has not said anything, the shades hear the thought of the belly'. Sleeplessness and an unquiet mind are taken as evidence of the anger of the shades or the attacks of witches.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 175-6.

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F3617 Ngonde F3617

has ever been able, or willing, to give me the name of either slave or owner in a single case. Yet such is the terrifying influence which some natives exert over others, that it is not difficult to believe that here and there throughout the country there may be individuals to whom continued slavery is a smaller evil than the wrath of an exposed owner, and therefore the fact of their bondage is not reported to the authorities. 567

Many circumstances might combine to make the freeman a slave, and the slave a freeman. A man who led astray the wife of a chief, if discovered, paid a son or daughter to the husband. So also, one found stealing from a garden was similarly penalized. Mocking at a lame man was a crime which could only be atoned for by the same kind of payment; and a man who could not pay just debts might himself be taken by the creditor. Prisoners of war, it need hardly be added, were slaves. On the other hand, the owner might find himself obliged by circumstances to restore children so obtained; if not, he was obliged to find wives or husbands for them. A slave might be a member of the council, and there are cases where slaves acquitted themselves so well in battle that they were granted their freedom. So long as it remained purely domestic, it was not an altogether intolerable condition. There was an ex-slave living at Karonga not long ago, who supported as long as she lived the old woman who was once his owner, and that, as he assured me, from genuine affection. On the other hand, a man, not yet beyond the prime of life, was present when a slave was buried alive along with the

567 Gl.

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642 Many cases were of course decided by the common people among themselves, others by their great commoners, and others by the local chiefs acting with their great commoners. Although there was no centralized judicial system, the political hierarchy of chieftains sometimes could be used to obtain redress in the case of a quarrel between men of different chieftains. The weakness of the system is indicated by the fact that restitution for wrong done was often obtained by the method of capturing a hostage.[1]

Witchcraft was punished by death. Its antidote, if caught, was killed by the husband. Deliberate murder required compensation up to ten head of cattle and the murder of a woman, followed by a feast of reconciliation. If the murderer could not be caught a blood feud would be started, ending with a feast of formal reconciliation under the guidance of a diviner. Accidental homicide required compensation, but no feast of reconciliation, as there had been no malice. A cattle-thief caught red-handed might be killed on the spot, arson was settled by payment of compensation.[2]

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Modern Government

642 643 (a) Uganda. The British Government in Uganda at first applied the system of direct rule. Chiefs and nobles were recognized as 'village' or 'principal' headmen, performing executive duties for the Administration. The Kyonga was one of the 'principal' headmen, but was not recognized as Paramount. In 1919 the system was modified by the setting up of advisory councils in association with the headmen and the District Resident. The members of the councils were nominated and removable by the Government, and there was no intention of creating tribal government.

In 1923 the system of Indirect Rule was introduced. The Kyonga was recognized as paramount chief, with an appeal court and five sub-chiefs under him. Of these, one, Kilupula, was over the northern part of the Uganda plain, another ruled the Lantiya in the mission north-west, and the three others were distant territorial nobles ruling groups of alien stock in the hills. The nobles of Uganda, with twelve prominent nobles and six other assessors, were recognized as members of the Kyonga's court and given nominal salaries. Those of the great chiefs of Uganda who were not made sub-chiefs were officially termed 'important' headmen, and given nominal salaries. The other chiefs and territorial nobles were still termed 'village' headmen as before 1923. The Kyonga and the five sub-chiefs were each given an area and a court for the area. Village and important headmen could adjudicate in small cases but had no power to execute judgements. That power belonged to the courts alone. The Kyonga's court was also a court of appeal for the whole of Uganda. A Native Treasury was established, into which one-twelfth of the tax was paid, but this was almost entirely expended on personal emoluments.

The full traditional constitution cannot be revived, as the religious beliefs which supported it have been superseded. Forty-five per cent. of the population profess Christianity, and even the belief in witchcraft, which operated to certain cases as a constitutional check, is less pertinent than before. The native rulers are no longer believed to control the rain and the health and fertility of their people, so they stand to fall by the performance of their secular duties alone. Since the Kyonga has come out of religious seclusion the nobles of Uganda are relegated to advisory status. The modernization of the constitution tends in this region to make it more autocratic, both

[1] Wilson, p. xxxi, p. 48-50. [2] Mackenzie, xxxi, pp. 81-90.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

same chiefdom to which the trees were growing; for between chiefdoms an actual or potential state of war always existed, and a man coming from a hostile group to claim property would have been driven away violently. But to-day under European rule it is now customary for a man to cut his own bamboos, if he is living in a neighbouring chiefdom, instead of leaving them to his resident kinsfolk. The group within which property can be held is gradually widening.

Such is the custom among the Kukwe and Selye groups; their rights in bamboos and quequti trees are not normally lost when a man moves provided there are kinsfolk left nearby to exercise them. The one exception to this rule is in the case of expulsion for witchcraft or other serious crime. Then even if the man expelled has left kinsfolk behind him, still the chief takes his trees.

Among the Nyakyusa proper, on the other hand, the quequti trees are treated like bamboos. When a man moves he loses all rights in them and, unless the chief steps in to take them, as he always may, they are granted by the great-commoner, together with the soil, to the newcomer who is put on that site. Bamboos, as in Selye and Kukwe country, continue to belong to the kinsmen of the man who has moved.[1]

Trees introduced by the Europeans, of which coffee trees are the most valuable, have been declared by the Federation of Chiefs to be the property of the planter, even although he has moved to a different chiefdom. This law was made after much anxious discussion between the chiefs, the Administration and the Agricultural Department and is, of course, subject to revision if it is found after trial to be impracticable. In the case of coffee it has inevitably been modified in practice since coffee must be tended continuously if it is to remain free from pests and to bear fruit, and any man who actually looks after coffee trees has a generally admitted claim to the crop unless he is paid by the planter for his labour. The planter, however, in surrendering the trees to him may compel him to pay something for their initial value.

Further, as the Agricultural Officer has the right to uproot any stunted coffee trees and must exercise it if pests are to be kept under control, the practice has grown up of his taking over any large number of abandoned trees and keeping them clean with labour paid by the Native Treasury; the trees are subsequently sold to some other man and the proceeds paid into the Native Treasury again. If, however, a planter of coffee trees makes arrangements, when he moves, for the cleaning of his coffee then the trees remain his own.

[1] Some informants deny this and insist that they always pass to the chief. I was not myself long in Mungonde among the Nyakyusa proper and I lack conclusive evidence on the point.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

he settles many legal disputes between his neighbours. The village is, both for men and women, the chief field of friendship, conversation and mutual hospitality; and its members recognize greater obligations towards one another than they do towards those outside. Before the coming of the Europeans the age-village was also a military unit, led by its own great commoner, in the constant fights between chiefdoms. 231

In most villages there are several herds of cattle which feed separately. The herd boys, as we have seen, thus form separate groups within the village, as also do their fathers; the boys are related in the common activity of herding, the men, owners of the herd, by their joint interest in it and their common fear of witchcraft. 232

In the relationships of villagers the belief in witchcraft is a constantly recurring factor. It is believed that certain people, both men and women have the power of harming their neighbours and their neighbours' cattle without taking any overt action whatever, without reciting any spells or performing any magical ritual at all. 754 791

Their influence, which is exercised at night in dreams, is only fully visible to those who are themselves endowed with this power; and to it is constantly attributed both sickness in men and the failure of cows to give milk. In this belief the elements of actual ill will and quarrelling, of actual sickness and the failure of cows to give milk and of actual dream experiences are combined in a significant whole. Witches are of two kinds, they say, those who use their power rightly (*ana mwiyo*) and those who use it wrongly (*ana bi*). The first kind are said generally to spend their dreams in trying to prevent the others from harming those whom they love. The good witches are the "defenders of the village," and in each village the great commoner is believed to be the first among them. In each group of men whose cows are herded together there is, again, commonly one man who has the reputation of defender of the herd, who is believed to protect the cows from the witchcraft of disgruntled individuals whether members of that small group or not. But if, at any time, a single person earns a general unpopularity in the village, whether by his pride, his meanness or by wrongdoing, then it is believed that the defenders themselves lead the spiritual attack against him, and he falls sick. Such a blast of unpopularity acting through the power of witchcraft is called the "breath of man" (*umbuyo gwa umuntu*); and the belief in its efficacy is one of the chief sanctions of the accepted social order of Nyakyusa life.[9]

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[9] Cf. Godfrey Wilson, "An African Ghostlore," *Africa* Ian. 1938.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

the shades and the hearths which was strewed; in Pumbani's country people talked mostly of the witches; but it seemed clear that both conceptions were present when men murmured: 'The hearth bricks are bad' (*amafiga mabibi*) and they sought to cleanse them by cleaning out the old fire and lighting new. 'To clear out the ashes means they take away all that dirt, the dirt which the witches have brought and the shades; it is the cause of illness.' When witches are thought to be active there is also a public complaint, and a public warning is given 'to whom it may concern' to desist.[1] This occurred in the ritual after the ground hornbill had eaten the chicken. Above all, men must admit their anger to one another: 'they fight that the homesteads may be peaceful'. The theme so familiar in Nyakyusa rituals—that quarrels must be confessed if they are to be composed—occurs yet again. Though we distinguish the rituals for 'cleansing the country' from sacrifices, on the ground that the whole community participates in the 'cleansing' while the sacrifice is exoteric, the two are closely linked, and a sacrifice commonly precedes or follows the cleansing. We turn now to the detailed accounts of celebrations for 'cleansing' in Ngonde and among the Kukwe.

(*a*) THE RATS

In Ngonde they used to clear out the ashes at the new year, at the first hoeing (in December) after 'the break of the rains'. They feared that death and disease would spread through the land if they continued living with the old fires, that the shades in the earth, both the shades of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry. Let them drive the shades away and hoe in peace. They always remembered to do so each new year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually, they never forgot. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to clear out the ashes; and then they would hoe in peace. And at other times, too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the ashes again. 'It is to drive away the shade with the sickness that he brings. We throw out the ashes and firebrands because he has come to warm himself over the fire in our houses, we throw out the pots and winnowing baskets because he has come to see us eating; let him go there (to the grove) and eat what he asked for—we say the shades ask for food—let him eat here, perhaps a sheep. We say the shades bring sickness to the fire, hence we throw out the ashes and make new fire with a drill.'

The nobles of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 109-13.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F307 Ngwale F307
Nyakyusa

are said to give their wives a medicine (without their knowledge) which will cause any man who lies with them to fall ill of gonorrhoea or some other venereal disease. Many Christians believe in this medicine and some inquired whether Europeans did not use it also. One family of doctors are specialists in it:

The sons of Manyelo are very furious, they are great doctors. People fear them very much. No one can steal anything belonging to them or run off with their wives. If a man runs off with a wife of theirs, he will return their wife and pay. . . . Because when he has slept with the woman by night they stick in each other's mouths, the woman sticks in the face of the man and he likewise in hers. And if rain falls by night the roof comes off the hut in which they sleep and the rain enters. Perhaps the man quarrels with the woman, perhaps frogs and snakes are numerous, perhaps guards sprout in the house—sometimes they sprout bringing evil. So it is also if a man has run off with the wife of another and the husband goes to the sons of Manyelo. They agree to work, but he must pay them.

Lyandilolo, whose husband's family have owned a 'horn' for generations, was very insistent that witchcraft magic maintained law and order for it could injure only the guilty. 'A thief feared to steal lest he be caught by my father-in-law (Mwaisyelage). He feared the horn if he used sorcery. He feared to wise another's cow thinking, "They will go to Mwaisyelage"'. And protective medicines which cause an adulterer to fall ill of gonorrhoea, or a thief to die, are considered perfectly legitimate; the misfortune would not have befallen the man unless he had done wrong.

The prohibition by the government of the *mwafi* oracle has puzzled people. Medicines are admittedly dangerous, but it is held that Europeans 'encourage' witches and sorcerers by forbidding the use of the one effective weapon against them, and doctors with witchcraft magic or other strong medicines 'fear the face of the *mwafi* doctors'. There is an irreconcilable contradiction here, the Nyakyusa relying on *mwafi* and witchcraft magic as a means of discovering criminals, and the Europeans punishing any doctor found administering poison, or intimidating people by threats. Furthermore, it is widely believed that Europeans doctors use strong medicines made up with blood. Any Europeans without an obvious occupation are suspect of being *abapumbulu*, who go around killing people and taking their blood for the Government to use for medicines. One of our European friends,

Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

out all the anger that is within', 'admitting that I have done wrong', begging pardon (*ubupolepe*) and also a symbol of ostracism and as of driving off the shades (*vide supra*, pp. 104, 108-109, 180). Good health depends upon good social relationships, and of one who is ailing it is commonly said: 'It seems as if they (unspecified) had hated him.' Further, the proper working of the natural order is held to depend upon the proper working of the social order. Drought, or 'cold', or pestilence falls on a chiefdom if there is quarrelling between chief and priests, and the anger of the Lwembe with his 'wife' will delayed the crops of Selya. The heroes, the shades, many of the men of power (*abamanga*), and many medicines help to maintain an orderly universe; only the witches and sorcerers work against it. In short, order and right living are an integral part of Nyakyusa religion as they are of Christianity.

The ultimate good is the power of fertility, of generation, which lies in the heroes and shades; the punishment for evil-doing is ill-health of body or mind and sterility. And towards the heroes and shades, who are both life-giving and avengers, the attitude of men is clearly ambivalent: the shades are driven away—'let them warm themselves over there in the long grass', men say when they drive out the other (*vide supra*, pp. 109-111) but they bring them home again to 'warm themselves by the hearth'.

In analysing the rituals of the Nyakyusa, I have been driven to the conclusion that they are, in fact, dogged by a sense of guilt,[1] for this is the only hypothesis on which the linking of misfortune and sin, the preoccupation with 'filth', and the recurring acts of purification can be explained. One of the sources of this sense of guilt is, I suggest, awareness of anger within, for it is believed that such anger injures others. An act of confession is essential to many rituals, and what must be confessed are anger, hard thoughts, ill will against others. The anger is acknowledged to come primarily from men—it is the angry person who causes the shades to action by muttering over the fire—but the guilt, the filth, is projected on to the shade or the hero. It is when they 'tread on' men that men are contaminated. A shade or a man that is upright—good, righteous—is one without a grudge, without anger against anyone, free of witchcraft, and free of sex transgression—'there is no accusation against him'.

[1] Instead this notion, cf. 'Nyakyusa Ritual and Symbolism', *American Anthropologist*, v. 56 (1954), pp. 228-241.

Williams E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3027 Ilgwede F3027
Hynkyram

going about visiting them in their homes and leading them to a Christian life and to report to his Session all the offending members.

It shall be the duties of a Preacher to go about preaching the Gospel to beginners as well as helping Pastors to encourage members at the Church on Sundays. He should keep records of his itinerary and report the same to his district Pastor.

It shall be the duties of every Deacon whether male or female, to see that all members pay their monthly contribution which is one penny per month and to bring monies or foodstuffs to his or her Pastor at the end of every month, and to bring to the Session those who neglect to pay.

Pastors through the Presiding Pastor are empowered to administer Sacraments—to Baptize and dispense Holy Communion and to exhort or remove any Elder, Preacher or Deacon who neglects his or her duties, and to report their activities to their Presiding Pastor.

To clear away conditions among the people, Christians or non-Christians, Pastor or Pastors in the district if found guilty of misconduct or any case of adultery shall be brought to this Session to be tried, and if found guilty shall be suspended from the ministerial duties until his case is referred to the Annual General Conference by his District Pastor.

Any Presiding Pastor or Pastors found intentionally violating these rules as constituted and approved by the Annual General Conference shall, at the discretion of the said General Conference, be suspended or expelled from the Church.

All monies of the Church shall within three months' time be forwarded to the Secretary of Religion who shall Bank same in the Savings Bank.

The term of service for Elders and Deacons or Deaconesses shall be for two years only, but an office-bearer may also be suspended before the end of his or her term if:

He or she has committed misconduct.
He or she neglects to fulfil his or her duties.
He or she does not attend Church worship.
He or she is a drunkard.
He or she is unruly.
He or she marries unlawfully against Native law which binds African marriages.

No office-bearer of any rank shall be found preaching when he is drunk, but shall hand the Service over to someone else.

Every member of the African National Church shall hand down when praying. One who is preaching can hand or stand.

Every member of the African National Church shall come to drink

[79] [77] [76] [64] Saving worshipping hours, but shall reserve some until evening when worshipping is over.

Any member found commencing from rules shall be dealt with by the Station and if found guilty shall be suspended or expelled from the Church.

The term of Chairman for the Annual Conference shall be two years, but he shall be elected again if required.

The Annual General Conference shall be composed of a body of men chosen from each division, viz. Pastors, Elders, Deacons, and other notable men.

A general confession with words and music composed by one of the Pastors of the African National Church, Rulers Sunday, is used as an alternative to the Ten Commandments. Numbers numbers 6 to 10 from the original Tombolo.

[78] [65] Almighty God we have come before Thee to worship and to confess our sins which we have done during the week.

Response: Why they all go away (*from Bishop*)?

We have sinned before Thee in speaking to people, we have offended Thy creatures, we have spoken bad words, we have grieved their hearts, Father.

Why they all go away.

We have sinned against Thee in thoughts coveting the wives and husbands of others, we have broken the Ten Commandments, Father. We have done wrong in our village, Father. Witchcraft, adultery, and hatred, all these are in our village. We pray forgive all, Father.

Why they all go away.

Our chiefs do not love one another in their hearts. Take such hearts from them and give them new hearts.

Why they all go away.

A new commandment you have given unto us all to love one another as in Heaven, where there is no quarrelling. Teach us all to keep Thy Word, Father.

Why they all go away.

Our new chiefs may be one in loving and ruling their country and their people, and lead us all well. This we pray, father, grant us.

Why they all go away.

The old worship is broken down; we have come to offer animals which are without God. Call us again to worship, Father.

Why they all go away.

Jesus is the head of our forefathers. We have damaged her with our new ways, by leaving all the ways of our forefathers, ways which gave power to the country, Father.

* The phrase used in the pagan ritual for cleansing the country of a vile.

sitting there on the yard got up, as quickly as possible held her hands before her eyes and rushed off. This was because this man was her father-in-law. The strict social taboo in such circumstances is well known*.

The next act consisted in shaving the girl's hair on her temples by the ewegage; the father was shaved by a younger brother of his in the same manner. (I cannot remember whether it was also the case with the mother of the girl.)

The old-fashioned hut of the chief's wife.

Then the further ceremony took place again inside the hut. All the participants sat down on mats, and the ewegage accepted the complaints of the parents on the former conduct of their daughter. Sometimes the discussion between these parties, where the ewegage played the role of a mediator as is the case with the ungabi (or speaker) in the court, reached such a pitch of excitement that I thought a serious quarrel had broken out. The excitement was, perhaps, only of a conventional character; I was told, however, that in former times corporal punishment has been inflicted, if, indeed, the girl had shown misconduct in the times before.

Next, the girl was instructed by the ewegage in her duties as a wife. These instructions were of a theoretical or moral nature concerning the correct conduct of the girl towards her parents also after the ceremony and towards her future husband. The practical part of the initiation instructions sometimes comes before this ceremony at the end of initiation. These practical instructions cover the preparing of food

* Cf. Kawendy, p 120; Sichwale, p 100 (at Kyungu?). According to Kawendy the daughter-in-law has to observe this taboo also towards the children of her father-in-law. All these persons are named chwamwa.

1:Wilson E-9(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

This practice of having official witnesses to every contract, and summoning them to give evidence should a dispute later arise, is one of the most important means of maintaining order in Nyakyusa society, and village neighbours are the usual witnesses. 675

c. *Communal responsibility of the age-village*

Formerly, in Nyakyusa law two forms of group responsibility were emphasized: the mutual responsibility of kinsmen, and the mutual responsibility of fellow villagers. A case of murder or manslaughter was primarily the concern of the agnatic lineage if the victim was a male or an unmarried girl, and of the lineages of both husband and father if the victim was a married woman. The kinsmen either killed the murderer, or brought him before the chief, who imposed a fine which went to the injured relatives. The Nyakyusa make a distinction between "spearing by day" (direct physical injury) and "spearing by night" (witchcraft); and only in the latter type of case did the fine go to the chief. Witchcraft was thus treated as an offence against the state—the chiefdom—while murder or manslaughter was an offence against the kinsmen of the dead. The concern of the state in witchcraft, and the joint responsibility of kinsmen on the one hand, and of fellow villagers on the other, was evident when, as sometimes happened, both groups were required by the chief to clear themselves of suspicion of witchcraft by each providing a representative to take the poison ordeal. Should the representative of either group fail to vomit then the responsible individual within that group was sought out by means of divination and the ordeal (vide supra, p. 146). 613 621 672 754 682

In a case of adultery the injured husband, together with his kinsmen, pursued and attempted to kill, or seized and kill, the adulterer: self-help was not only permitted but expected in this situation,[1] and a man's near kinsmen were obliged to assist him. Neighbours were not obliged to assist in executing vengeance, but they might be victims of it, for if the injured husband did not find the adulterer he might kill any village-mate of his enemy. Such an attack commonly led to war between the two villages, 684 686 721

[1] D. R. Mackenzie, *The Spirit-Ridden Konde* (1925), p. 61, says: "The injured husband has the right to inflict death on the perpetrator. This is an even rule of the past but a grim fact to-day . . . cases of this nature are very numerous."

CHAPTER VII

RITUALS OF MISFORTUNE

[145] An abnormal birth is the most dangerous misfortune that can befall a family in Nyakyusa society, and the ritual to ward off its expected results is the most elaborate, but there are lesser misfortunes also, which may be averted by simpler rituals.

[146] *(a) Cleansing after spearing*

[152] When one man has speared another and killed him, even though the action was legitimate (as slaying an enemy in battle, or a cattle thief or an adulterer caught *in flagrante delicto*), the slayer and his relatives dare not eat together with the relatives of the slain, or enter their houses, but they themselves, and the kinsmen of the slain also, fall ill, coughing, spitting blood, and wasting away. This sickness is known as *ulubanga*, 'the disease of spearing'.* Both parties are thought to suffer primarily from contact with each other and both protect themselves by drinking medicines, but they drink separately, each engaging a doctor to treat them. We were told:

[161] If one man kills another it does not finish. He begets children and they die; an enemy is performed and reveals fighting with spears (*ungwa*).* The disease may not injure the slayer or his children, but the relatives with whom he eats and drinks, and so also on the other side; it may not hurt the children of the dead man, but those relatives with whom his children eat and drink.

We all fall ill, especially the brothers of the slain. The medicine always concentrated to drink the medicine because he knew that he had killed someone, but when your brother was slain perhaps you forgot to drink the medicine. Then, afterwards, if you drank beer with someone, not knowing that it was he who had killed your brother, you fall ill.

[163] The manner of treatment is as follows:

If I have killed someone they take me to a waterfall and make me

* *Ngungu*: a spear. * *Ungungu*: to fight together with spears.

vomit by rubbing the back of my throat with a hen's feather, while I 785
am standing under the fall with the water coming down on my head. The blood of him you have killed is in the waterfall. Why is not come? Why is all go out of the body? You vomit because it is there in the body. Why is go out? Then a medicine is cooked and the legs of the dayer and his relatives are washed with it. It is the medicine of twins: the twin medicine and the sparring medicine are one because they are a rejection of the blood. When people's legs have been splashed then we all dance; that is to drive away him whom we have killed.

But even after such treatment the kin of the dayer and the dain 786
fear to eat together. 'We remain enemies. If we eat with them it 787
makes us die.'

Those who drink protective medicines are the agnatic kin of the dayer and the dain, their mothers' kin (ubipwa) and their wives, but not their affines. Those who must be treated are wives, and blood relatives but not affines. Affines are of different blood, but wives are of your flesh.'

The sparring ritual is not a joint ritual in which a large group 788
of kin participate; married men, even brothers, make their own arrangements for taking protective medicine.

We do not meet together with all our relatives, the descendants of our sons, no, it is not like the twin ritual. We drink it each man with his wives and children in his house. If I have a married brother he also goes to a doctor to ask for medicine for himself. He asks his own doctor, not the one to whom I went. We drink separately, we do not meet together when we drink.

Only if a daughter had been given in compensation for a murder 789
(as sometimes happened) and later he who married her took mar- 790
riage cattle to her father to establish kinship, then, our informants said, the two parties should drink the 'medicine of sparring' (ambo gwa ishangi) together.

(f) Rubbing the rope

A man who has been bound with ropes (ingwji), or has committed 791
suicide by hanging,* or raided cattle and released them, is also 792

[784]

* When the incidence of suicide is among the Nyakyusa we do not know. The Rev. Shewsky, one of the few Europeans to live in the area, speaks of a 'young boy on occasion'. We recorded two cases: one of a man whose wife and children had died, the other a woman forced to leave her home and marry against her will. S, a Christian whom we knew well, swore to the pagan elder brother that he would commit suicide if his brother insisted on the pagan practice of performing an oblation on the body of their dead sister.

2: W.Geen E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F7017 Ngonde F7017
Nyakyusa

sister immediately older than herself, the sister's daughter, and the sister immediately younger than herself, took part.

At the ritual of spearing, the principals are the children and grandchildren of the slayer and the slain, their brothers, their mother's kin (*abipani*) and their wives. We were not able to watch any case of treatment against *ukulunga* and are not certain exactly how far the infection is thought to spread. Our informants were agreed that the number of kinsmen concerned is less than in a twin ritual, but we traced one case in which a minor chief, Mwainumo (B), forbade the father of a man who had killed S., the great grandson of Mwainumo's mother's sister, to enter his country lest he spread disease among his relatives.

As a ritual to 'rub the rope' those concerned are the descendants of the one who has been wound and their wives, siblings and siblings' children. At the one ritual we saw there were present 27 members of the dead man's own lineage (3 sons, 2 younger half-brothers, 1 full sister, 4 half-sisters, 3 sons, 3 daughters, 2 grandsons, 7 granddaughters), one wife, the wives of 4 sons, one father's sister's son, one son and 6 daughters of his sisters or half-sisters.

The ritual for protection against sorcery which we attended was performed at the house of the senior brother (heir to his father) of the dead woman. There were present her two brothers, their wives and children; her father's brother's daughter; two wives and one daughter of her sister's sons; her mother, two of her mother's brothers with their wives and children; two of her mother's sisters and the daughters of one of them. Her husband (who lived near Ibwe) could not take the medicine at his in-law's house, but some was sent for him to use at his home with his wives and kindred.

In the simple ritual of prayer to the shades the senior kinsman who offers the prayer and blows out water acts alone but, if there

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F7617 Ngonde F7617

residence there, I never locked my doors, and the only 674
theft of which I had to complain was the pendulum of a clock taken from an open building!

Murder.—Murder is, from the native point of view, 682
a much less serious crime than cattle stealing. But it 673
should be remembered that British law calls crimes murder which are not so called by the Konde. A man who kills his wife's paramour has not committed murder: he has exacted a just revenge, and no more. In a case of real murder, the murderer or his friends usually pay a fine, or rather a compensation, of up to ten head of cattle; and the loss to the family of the murdered man is further made good by the other family handing over a daughter. This girl must never be spoken of as a substitute, for that would cause her children, when she has them, to die. It is needless to add that under British law compensation of any kind to the family of the murdered person does not acquit the murderer. What follows, therefore, is purely native law, which, if administered at all, is administered only when there is reason to believe that the police will never come to hear of it.

When a murder was committed, the chief directed 627
the friends of the murderer to bring him for trial, but 783
if they chose to put him to death themselves, the case was ended. Should it be impossible to discover the murderer, a friend of his, it hardly mattered who, was put to death, and a wide-extending vendetta might be the result. When the law is satisfied, a formal reconciliation between the two families takes place. Under the guidance of the medicine man, who is

3; Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F3617 Ngonde F3617

627 703 matter of ceremonies on all such occasions, a sheep, provided by the family of the murderer, is killed, and taken hold of by the parties, while the doctor divides the carcass into two parts, each side taking its share. Medicine is poured into a pot, and a red-hot spear is plunged into it. The carcass of the sheep, cooked with this medicine, is placed upon banana leaves, and the feast of reconciliation is partaken of, along with beer which also has been doctored. The reconciliation, however, is not complete until the girl has been handed over: until that is done, the feast has only stayed action on the part of the murdered man's relatives. If the murderer is not known, the relatives of the victim drink a medicine, without which, if they happened unwittingly to drink water in the culprit's house, they would themselves also die.

• 672 673 The murder of a pregnant woman is a very serious matter, for it is really a double murder, and the child has to be compensated for the loss of dependants. It is more heinous to murder a woman than a man, for the woman, being dead, bears no more children, and has to the community results.

672 672 For accidental death there are numerous regulations. If a man dies, or is killed, while in the employment of another, or on a journey with him, compensation must be paid to the relatives. There is no feast of reconciliation, for the thing was not done in malice. When a person is killed by an ox or a cow, the owner pays a cow, and kills the offending animal, lest it lead him into further trouble and expense of the same kind. If one is cutting down a tree, and some one is killed by

3: Mackenzie M-5 (co. 1925) 1925
F3117 Ngonde F3117

its fall; or if one sends another up a tree to get fruit, or for any other purpose, and the person falls down and is killed, a cow must be paid in compensation; if he is only injured, some smaller payment is made. If I permit a suicide to take place in my house, I must pay a cow, for I ought to have taken better care of my house. If a man kills himself with my spear I come under a similar penalty, and for the same reason. If a woman suckles another woman's child and it dies, the law of compensation holds good, and a cow must be paid. Very many regulations of this kind, which it would be a wearisome to repeat, exist among the Konde people.

The spear with which a murder has been committed is cut off short at the hafts, and the blade bent over with a stone, and it is then hung up in the roof of the house of a relative of the murderer.

Murder is frequently committed by means of poison and by witchcraft; and in either case it is difficult to trace the criminal. As an instance: a man is very quarrelsome in his village, an intolerable nuisance in fact. After a while he goes off to work somewhere, and now is the opportunity to get rid of him. In a few months news comes that he has been killed in a quarrel; but the quarrel was brought on by witchcraft. His fellow-villagers went to a sorcerer, and persuaded him to stir up the quarrelsome one to some disagreement in his new home, which would be sure to end in his death. The British magistrate would consider a charge of murder in such a case, except against the actual murderer, but the Konde will not

3: Mackenzie M-5 (co. 1925) 1925
F3517 Ngonde F3517

be convinced that the real facts are otherwise than as I have stated. The clumsy methods of murder favoured by the element of European criminals take an inferior place before the successful malignity of this kind of thing.

Witchcraft.—No crime is regarded with so much abhorrence among Bemba peoples as the crime of witchcraft. It is a crime against the whole community, anti-social, destructive; and the punishment, in many cases, was death. That punishment cannot now be inflicted, but a recent Ordinance against pretended witchcraft has given much satisfaction to the people, even although the punishment is less than they think the crime demands. To them there is no pretence about it; it is a grave reality. If the poison cup proved a person guilty, he was immediately attacked with any weapon that came handy, and as a rule he was dead before he reached the end of the parade; but if, as now and again happened, he got off alive, he lost no time in getting away to another district. In the not so very remote past, the guilty person was burned to death in his own house, and not always did his family escape a like fate. A special punishment was reserved for witchcraft by crocodile. This particular crime consists in bewitching a crocodile to kill an enemy. The criminal, when discovered, was put into the water in a large fish-trap, and left there until a crocodile came and made an end.

Adultery.—This offence is said to have increased greatly since the coming of the white man, who will not permit the death penalty to be inflicted. But the

3. Mackenzie M-5 (co. 1925) 1925
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explanation among the heathen is that it was the work of an ex-Christian who had died the previous day, and took the earliest opportunity, in his new state, of being revenged on those who had expelled him from the Church. In any case the act cost the Christian community at Kavunga a large sum of money. Burning a house is a method frequently resorted to of "getting one's own back" from one's enemy, and detection is extremely difficult. 685

The Land Laws.—All the land belongs to the chief, who divides it among his various headmen, and they in turn give it out to their immediate followers. Newcomers are admitted and given lands by the headmen, but the grant must be confirmed by the chief, without whose consent no arrangement is final. This ownership by the chief is not mere theory, but, on the other hand, the individual has practically permanent rights to his property. He cannot be turned out at the mere caprice of anyone, and he hands on his lands to his heirs. Absence, even for many years, does not affect ownership, provided that wife or friends cultivate the land in the meantime. 623

The law of trespass was very severe in the past, and would remain so if the natives had their way. Trespass, however, does not mean merely walking over another man's ground; in that case there is no trespass. It means interaction with the law; and if, in the fight which followed discovery, the trespasser was killed, a charge of murder did not lie against the owner; but if the owner was killed, the trespasser was indicted for murder. If the case was remitted to the 685 686

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F3617 Ngonde F3617

chief, a cow was paid in compensation, for the man could not be put to death in cold blood.

A thief caught in a garden stealing growing crops is stripped of his *mawyete* (body rings) if he has them: otherwise whatever he has is taken. This law is still nominally in force, but the culprit often prefers to take his trial at the hands of the administrative officer. And the owner has no choice, for if he takes possession by force of what native law considers his rights, he is likely to find himself accused of an illegal act.

Will the Europeans allow it?' And so (instead of bringing a charge of witchcraft) he sues his kinsman for a shilling. Later he sues him for a cow, and some even get a court order to collect the cow. Another man in such a position may claim a legal separation from his kinsman and their reciprocal debts in cattle are repaid.' It's a case indeed, that!'

Mwamunda came from Rungwe, not far from the administrative centre, Tukuyu, hence perhaps his hesitation in preferring a charge of witchcraft; in more remote parts cases concerning witchcraft are taken to the courts. Nsoma explained: 'We judge cases concerning witchcraft openly, but we do not have them written in the court book. When "a defender" has seen his fellow divulging someone to tells us, and we judge that witch. It is "the defenders" who see the witches. Perhaps "the defender" comes out of his house by night and calls out: "I see so and so divulging so and so! Listen to-morrow!" Yes, that happens nowadays. When someone tells us this we agree, the witch is convicted, even though he denies it. We say: "You are a witch, a thief, even though you do not admit it, get out of the country." Formerly when the accused denied he was a witch they went to the ordeal, and the ordeal caught the witch, now, since the Europeans have forbidden the use of ordeals, we accept the word of "the defenders". For you have the defenders see the witches! Is divulged! 'What about the man who accused the wife of Mwakatale?' we asked. 'He denied it, he said: "I did not see her". So on that account we said: "Since you have slandered her you must pay thirty shillings." If he had really seen her and told us properly we should have decided against the woman and divorced her from her husband, but he denied it, saying: "I did not see her", and we all said: "The woman is not a witch, who has seen her?" And if a man is fined because he has accused his fellow of witchcraft without seeing him really, we do not write that in the book either.'

Formerly, when a man was convicted of witchcraft, and did not admit it, he was compelled to move from his village, and often to leave the chiefdom altogether. Often his cattle and crops were taken by the chief, who killed one or more for 'the income' to eat. No compensation was paid to relatives as is an ordinary

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, 'Witchcraft Cleansing' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*.

1: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1951 FM17 Ngonde FM17
Nyakyusa

homicide. 'Was he speared by day?' say the Nyakyusa. On the other hand, if relatives themselves brought the accusation, the chief could not take the accused's property. Since kinsmen themselves were driving the man out, whose property should the chief take? Everything went to the kinsmen, save one cow, which they gave the man they were driving out, that he might start a herd in his new home. A wife convicted of witchcraft was commonly divorced, being sent back to her father, who had then to return the marriage-cattle given for her. Rarely was a suspected witch killed.

As we have seen, suspected witches are still often banished if men, or divorced if women, but property is no longer seized, the practice having been effectively stopped by the British Administration. There is considerable variation in the actual treatment of suspected witches at the present time. Some husbands do not divorce their wives when they are convicted of witchcraft, others do so immediately; some chiefs drive suspected witches out of their country, and others allow them to settle in another village of the chiefdom. We have no evidence that those who are suspected to have killed others by witchcraft are usually treated more severely than those whose crime is causing sickness or a decrease in the milk supply. The punishment seems to vary, and to have varied formerly, rather with the status and personal popularity of the accused in his village, or with the affection a man has for his wife, than with the nature of the crime.

Those who have been convicted of witchcraft are not ostracized. A wife divorced on account of her witchcraft commonly remarries soon after; a man driven out for witchcraft is admitted to another village. The attitude is: 'Perhaps he bewitched his fellows there, we do not know, but he has not bewitched us.' Often a man who has been driven away by neighbours is invited back again, a year or more later. Such was the case with the village headman Mwamila, who went to his chief and said: 'People are eating your child'—one of the chief's children had a disease of the eyes which blinded him. The chief ordered his people (i.e. their representatives) to take the ordeal. Then all were angry at Mwamila for going to the chief, because he went alone to whisper about them. Had he gone with others they would have been satisfied, but to go alone was not right. The ordeal indicated Mwamila himself, and the chief took all his four

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

554 crown. No, they did not take his food and mats, was he not a village headman? He moved, but, after one year only, they went to fetch him back.'

Here, in the accusation against a village headman, who, by virtue of his office has the power of defence and of bringing 'the breath' on wrong-doers, we come to the root of the ambivalence towards those accused of witchcraft. Witches are dangerous, but the very power which makes them dangerous also makes them valuable as 'defenders', for no distinction between the power of attack and defence is consistently maintained. The essential difference lies in the use of the power. Hence, Mwaisumo declared, people actually like it when a man who has admitted witchcraft builds among them. 'They say he has the power of defence, and they think that a man who has once admitted witchcraft will not throttle them.' A parallel attitude towards homicides and cattle-thieves existed in the traditional culture, when chiefs were sometimes urged to rescue a homicide from the vengeance of a dead man's kin, or a cattle-thief from enraged victims, on the grounds that one who had proved himself such a fierce warrior (by killing another) or so skilful in lifting cattle, was too useful in war to be lost to the chiefdom.

754 Nevertheless, if a person who has once been accused of witchcraft makes himself (or herself) unpopular again, the old case is raked up against him or her, and there are men who have been
683 driven from one chiefdom to another, each time accused by their neighbours, and wives who have been divorced for witchcraft by one husband after another. This is the terrible fate held up before 'proud' children.

584 And what of the shar on the family when a member is convicted of witchcraft? We have seen that witchcraft is considered
571 hereditary in all but a few exceptional cases, and the stock
582 reaction to an accusation is: 'We are astounded! No one in our family has ever been convicted of witchcraft!' In practice, parents are loath to allow a son or daughter to marry into a family in which either parent has a reputation of witchcraft; two or three cases were cited in which parents had opposed a marriage for this reason (vide Document, p. 232). But such arguments are private within the family, and the family feared by one group of neighbours need not be considered dangerous by people from another village. Since practically every adult marries at least once, the

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

which witchcraft and 'the breath of men' operate, but their supposed fields of action are relatively distinct.

In the past, the punishment for sorcery was death with torture by impaling, not merely confiscation of property and banishment. Proof of the practice of sorcery depended upon the evidence of the doctor who had supplied the medicine (who was not regarded as implicated in the crime) and upon the *umwafi* ordeal. The Nyakyusa insist that the practice of sorcery was formerly rare, and that it has increased enormously, much more than the practice of witchcraft. This belief is to be related to two facts. First, Nyakyusa co-operate much more than they formerly did with people who live in different villages. The clerks who work together in Government offices, and who have a fearsome reputation as sorcerers, do not necessarily live in the same village; and being apart at night when the witches fly, they cannot be supposed to bewitch one another. But there is frequent occasion for friction between them and therefore a standing temptation to employ sorcery. So also in other types of employment, in trade and on journeys, individuals are frequently in contact with men of different villages. Secondly, belief in sorcery is felt to be compatible with the acceptance of a scientific explanation of causes of disease in a way that belief in witchcraft is not. *Ubutege* is commonly translated as 'poisoning' by those who speak English, whether the medicine is or is not put into food or drink, or whether it is supposed to affect all who eat it or only the individual against whom it is directed. All types of sorcery tend to be rationalized as 'poisoning'; and many educated Nyakyusa who deny the reality of witchcraft admit to a lively fear of sorcerers.

As the table on pp. 198–213 shows, however, accusations of witchcraft are still much more common than accusations of sorcery in the community as a whole. We heard of thirty-eight cases of supposed witchcraft to eleven of sorcery, and there was no reason to think that our friends were more likely to mention the one type of case than the other.

d. The age-village and Christianity

Since common action against witches, and to punish transgressors through 'the breath of men', is one of the primary functions of an age-village, what happens in a Christian village, or

4. A BOUNDARY DISPUTE

Heard by the Lupata Court (president, Mwangomo), 16/3/35.

Man A brought case against man B for assault.

Plaintiff and defendant gave their accounts, and also Mwangomo, chief of the country concerned. 423

A and B had quarrelled over the boundary of their adjoining homesteads, which are in different villages of the same chieftdom. There was an old quarrel about the boundary of the village. Mwangomo stated: 'The week before this quarrel I went with my brothers and the young village headmen (leaving behind the old village headmen because I thought they would quarrel) to settle the dispute. We walked over the boundary and said to the people concerned: "It is here." 695 683

'A and his two friends (not in court) were not satisfied with my demarcation and grumbled openly saying: "Who is Mwangomo to take from us the place where our fathers lived, and from which they ate the bananas, and give it to our neighbours? We will take it and not care for Mwangomo" . . . or again: "We do not believe that Mwangomo really decided like this, we shall act as if the line was as before." So when I heard that they were talking like this I asked all the people to watch for any man who might do anything against the decision, and I told one man in particular to watch.'

A and B gave evidence, telling much the same story.

A went to cut the banana leaves (*i.e* prune) on the old boundary, with a bill-hook (*ovuge*), and B came and told him to stop. They quarrelled, each claiming that the land had been his father's, and that his father had eaten the bananas off it. Then B caught hold of the bill-hook, and in the struggle A was cut. A now brings a case for assault against B.

Mwangomo: 'B is in the right, and what makes it worse is that since his father died A has never been in the country. He has lived in MuNgonde (the Lake-shore plain); he has only been back a few days in my country and he brings war into it and spoils it.' Mwangomo spoke angrily, and asked that A should be imprisoned.

The Court: 'We follow what you, the chief, say; if people resist you and speak against you it is very bad, but we disagree about imprisoning him, he has only just returned to the country and it is not a good custom to imprison a man who has only just come to a country. Bring his two friends who have lived long in your country.' 695 683

[p.191]

I:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 F7017 Ngombe F7017
Nyakyusa

Mwakinyo (another chief sitting in court): 'What about the other man you drove away without bringing him into court? Mwangomo has approved the quarrel, he should have called all the men from both villages together and judged the case there.'

The Court, to A: 'Where have you been staying since the fight? Where have you put all your things?'

A: 'In Mwangoko's country.'

Court: 'You mean that Mwangomo had driven you out?'

A: 'Yes.'

The Court: 'Then if you have left the country why do you bring this case, troubling us?'

Mwangomo then decided to drive A and his two friends out of the country and said nothing more about punishing A. So the case ended.

60. THREATS OF WITCHCRAFT

Mmakwaa (*chief*).

"It is said that some witches show themselves openly. When he is angry with his fellow a witch may say openly "*Ofiyaadi*" (literally: "What are you?") and his fellow takes it in the evening, sickness falls on him. Or one who makes love to a woman repeatedly and is refused by her, may say: "Woman, what are you? (*ofiyaadi*) You are very proud, you fancy yourself, thinking that you are more beautiful than all others. Dance and show off—we shall see to what a pleasure fashion."

"It is now forbidden, as it was in the past, to swear at (*ahwefuopa*) a person without cause, saying: "What are you?" If someone speaks before others, and the person swears at in quarrelsome, the man who swears is fined. The man swears at will go to law, saying: "My fellow swears at me; I do not know what I have taken of his, he wants to make me ill by swearing at me." Sometimes, also, if he does not wish to be paid, he calls one before the court, or before neighbours to say: "This fellow of mine has sworn at me, if anything happens it is to who is responsible." Meaning that if he falls ill that evening it is this fellow who has swarn the illness. And some, when they have sworn, make a case, saying: "It is this fellow", and bring him before the village headmen accusing him. If he is found guilty he will pay perhaps a bull. Such tales are told, especially by our mothers, teaching us in childhood that it is forbidden to threaten a friend with witchcraft (*ahwefuopa ammo hulor*).* If you swear at your friend and he falls ill that evening then he will say it was you who swore at him.

"But there are some who wish to be feared and thought witches who constantly threaten people. Such a man says: "What are you? You may sleep or may not (*ahfuopa*), I do not know!" but in great secrecy. Or perhaps sometimes he speaks, saying: "You! Leave me!" He knows that those who are there will tell (his enemy)'

Andwinkie (*a young Christian man*).

"Some boast of witchcraft, they praise themselves on account of knowledge, or food, or their homestead . . . saying that no one else has built so well; others praise themselves on account of their fields,

* (*Ahefuopa ammo to swear to a statement. In this context it is better translated 'to threaten'.*

[p. 231]

6a. PROCEDURE IN A WITCHCRAFT CASE (TRADITIONAL)

Mwalimuk (doctor, brother of a chief).

"The custom was that if a man was accused of witchcraft he always came to the chief and said: "They have accused me of witchcraft. Give me witnesses." The chief would send off the man with his accuser and with witnesses to the doctor. If the accuser was proved wrong he had to pay four or five cows, or if he had no cows, a girl, and then after she had borne a child the accused would come to pay cows and be a relative to the end.

"If the ordeal (*umwafi*) convicted both, neither vomiting, the chief would be angry and say: "You are both witches." Then each would pay four cows to the chief who would kill one from each of the four or his cows to eat, and both men would move from the country. If both vomited the chief would say: "You are finds, be friendly," and the village headmen would say: "Yes, but the accuser must pay cows to the accused for accusing him."

"Men never went to drink the ordeal without first going to the chief.

"Sometimes the one convicted as a witch was spared and all his cows taken by the chief—none went to the accuser. If the accuser was caught and the accused vomited, four cows went to the accused, and the others to the chief because the accuser was himself a witch. Some who were great witches died of the ordeal."

Mwalimu (chief).

"There was a nasty little chap (*kalile ulumale kumwi*) who came from the hills to live at Bijilla, and who built next door to father. This chap was very poor; mother and the other villagers always gave him food. I remember the chap very well—he was very dirty in his manners.

"Well, once there was complaint (*ulwaiyisi*) because the milk supply in the village was small. So this chap fortified himself within and said: "Do not go on complaining, cows of Kibalia, I have seen the witch who is throttling the cows. It is Kimpungul Catch her, and let her drink *umwafi*." Mother was astounded at being taken; she was dumbfounded at being "caught" for witchcraft, for in her lineage no one had ever been caught. So there she also said: "Indeed, my husbands,

* Mwalimu speaks of him as a thing rather than a person.

I:Wilson E-5(1926-,9;8)1951 FN17 Ngombe FN17
Nyakyusa

3. DEATHS ATTRIBUTED TO 'THE MOKO'

Mwaisumo (chief).

754 "My mother's brother died from the sorcery (*ubulogo*) of Mwakalika the younger. His death came about in this way: He had run off with a woman whose name I have forgotten now, and the "owner" of the woman continually stirred "the horn" that all those concerned should die, if they did not return his wife. Almost immediately my uncle fell ill and died; shortly afterwards the child of his elder brother, Mwakyusile, fell ill and died three days later. Then we understood that it was this woman who brought the illness, for her husband boasted to people that it was he who had killed members of our family. We drove away the woman in order to end the sickness among us. Perhaps if we had not sent her away the illness would have spread and killed many of us and our wives also."

[p.256]

5a. SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES BETWEEN PAGANS AND CHRISTIANS

a. Christian suing a pagan

Finjudge (Christian court).

691 "Ainsle (a Christian elder) and Kajitusuhawe (a pagan) had a
683 dispute. Cattle belonging to Ainsle and his fellows ate Kajitusuhawe's crop. Ainsle went to drive the cattle out of the field and Kakobusuhawe met him as he was driving them out. Kajitusuhawe swore at Ainsle. So Ainsle got angry and went to the chief, the chief took the case to Court and Kajitusuhawe was found guilty and ordered to pay cow. He paid up and the case was finished."

b. Arbitration between pagan and Christian

627 "L. (a Christian preacher) when he was visiting the Ngoni[1] in the
686 bush country bought rice from a pagan Ngoni, Mutuna, and promised to pay him later on. He was a long time in paying his debt so the Ngoni went to Ulindula, an elderly Christian living near L., saying: "L. has my shilling. He took my rice." L. agreed that he owed the Ngoni a shilling; he said that he had not yet got the money, but would get it very soon. The Ngoni went home and after some time, as he was not paid, he came again. Ulindula tried to pacify him. The Ngoni said: "If the case defeats you, I shall go to Court." So Ulindula called his fellows Ikawbwa and Hosenah to pacify the Ngoni, and the latter agreed to wait; but still L. did not pay up. So when the missionary visited, the Ngoni took the case to him. How it was decided (by the missionary) no one knows."

c. Pagan suing a Christian

Mwaisumo (clerk).

691 "Mwanaeye, a pagan man, has a young son who was once bathing in
683 a stream when Anangiye, a Christian, came down to bathe also. Anangiye said to the boy: "Get out, I want to bathe." The boy replied: "See, I was bathing here first", at which Anangiye got angry and beat the boy.

"Then Mwanaeye and his son hastened to Mundekaye's court

[1] There are one or two villages of Ngoni immigrants in the strip of unoccupied bush country between Selya and the Lake-shore plain. They mix very little with the Nyakyusa.

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(with *ngwa*) and Mundikanya tried the case with his friends and judged that Asangiaye should pay two shillings. Asangiaye refused to pay, so Mundikanya took the case to Mwangomo (the chief in whose country the land on which the Christian village Asangiaye lived is situated) and there judgement was given that Asangiaye should pay three shillings. Asangiaye agreed to do so.' 691/683

"You're making love to my wife", and the man who made the accusation was from the family of the chief. On account of this, they said: "The chief is driving us out. Let us move." All these moved because of this case and are building here. Of the three friends who were supposed to be enticing the minor chief's wife, one had been found at night time in the suspected woman's hut, and had been fined ox for "making love to the woman" though they had not been found together."

Record of G. W., 20/9/32 (from various informants).

"The chief Mwaipopo was sick, and living "in the forest", i.e. in a recently settled and cultivated area at a distance from the main population of his chiefdom. Nsoma, one of the headmen of his classificatory son and heir Mwankuga (cf. p. 183) went to see him. On his return Nsoma said to Mwankuga: "Mwaipopo told me that you, Mwankuga, were poisoning him. Mwkanyonale (a diviner) says that your doctors are in the hills, you went to fetch them there." Then Mwankuga went to his father Mwaipopo and asked him: "Is it true that you are accusing me of working sorcery against you? Do you say so yourself?"

"Mwaipopo said: "Who told you of this Mwankuga?"

"Mwankuga: "Nsoma told me."

"Mwaipopo: "It was Nsoma who told me that you were working sorcery against me! Go and ask him about it, and have it out with him."

"So Mwankuga took the case to Mwakinsya (another chief) for arbitration.

"Mwakinsya said: "Nsoma is in the wrong and must pay a cow to his chief Mwankuga."

Nsoma refused.

"So Mwakinsya said: "All right, we shall go to those who know about the case", and he came with all his men to Mwanangonga, Mwaipopo's senior village headman (i.e. the representative of Mwansambo, *vide* p. 181). There a witness gave evidence, saying: "I was with Mwankuga when Nsoma told him that Mwaipopo accused him of sorcery." Nsoma denied it.

"Mwakinsya said: "I, Mwakinsya, I have finished, Nsoma must pay a cow."

"Nsoma still refused.

"Mwankuga: "Your honour the judge, and others. I have cows, I shall not ask for his cow, but let him leave my country and build elsewhere."

"Nsoma replied that he was hoeing near Mwaipopo in the forest, and

sleeping there, and he refused to move. Then Nsoma wrote a letter (he begged a sheet of paper from the clerk of the court and got a Christian, Mwakigoro, to write for him) and sent it to Tukuyu (i.e. to the District Office.) All the village headmen were very angry.

'Then one of Nsoma's cows fell into a crater lake and was drowned. An autopsy was done and "wounds" were found in the animal's stomach. It was said that it had been killed by witchcraft. Nsoma moved to Mbamba, because, he said, "They are killing my cows". Then Mwaipopo invited him to build in the forest. Nsoma replied that he would prefer to go home, and Mwaipopo agreed, but said he must first pay two cows. "I," said Mwaipopo, "am satisfied, but your friends there are angry, you have done wrong to Mwenkuga; you can go if you pay two cows." Nsoma refused and got angry and wrote to Tukuyu again, saying: "Mwaipopo never comes to Court. He spends all his time drinking in the forest, and I, Nsoma, have judged all the cases myself in Court. Now that I am away from Court the cases are not judged; all is silent."

'The clerks at Tukuyu recognized that the stamp and the handwriting were not those of the court clerk, so they wrote to Mwaipopo. He was angry and imprisoned Nsoma for three months. The District Officer advised Mwaipopo not to let Nsoma return to his country, so when he came out of prison Nsoma built in the country of Mwangomo. This was a year or so ago, and the day before yesterday the village headmen went to fetch him. He is here, sleeping in the house of Kasisi, in Igomba. Eight men went to fetch Nsoma, carrying his household stuff and driving back the cattle. (We saw them.) Yes, Mwaipopo must have agreed, for if a chief drives away a man no commoner can take the initiative in fetching him back.'

'Nsoma killed a bull and also provided two pots of beer, one for the men of Igomba and one for the men of Lugombo. His own village was Lugombo, together with Ikiki (cf. p. 283). He killed the bull at the house of Kasisi where he is staying. He has not yet been given a homestead.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1924-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Lake

[E 8] kind. We take such a one [either type] to a doctor, tying a rope round
757 his waist on the way. For if we leave him free he goes and drowns him-
self in the lake. So then the doctor says 'His heart has suddenly turned
over', and gives him a powdered medicine to eat from a bark-cloth.
Then when he has eaten the medicine the doctor puts a finger at the
back of his tongue to make him vomit, again and again. So then the
fish comes out of him. Then the doctor says: 'Don't eat meat or fish
until I give you other medicine later.' Then he ties some of the same
medicine in two bark-cloths and ties one round his neck, one round his
loins. . . .

[E 9] Sometimes a man in the mad fit finds a woman, then he takes the
758 leaves off his waist, catches hold of her and, forcing her to the ground,
has intercourse with her. Then when the woman returns home she
complains that a man in the mad fit has caught and raped her. Then
her husband says: 'Well, it's all over now. If he'd been in normal
health I'd have sued him for a cow for adultery before the chief, but
seeing he is mad there's no point in my doing so, it's all over now!' . . .

[E 9] Sometimes madness comes by itself, although no ritual has been
759 omitted, sometimes because they have not performed a ritual. The
symptoms of the two kinds are exactly the same, their cause is different.
The one connected with ritual comes because the shades are angry:
'Why have you left that child untreated, without putting mons on its
head . . .? It seems it is of no account.' And then the child goes mad.

757 When madness comes of itself the doctor takes the patient to a
763 waterfall and lets the water tumble on his head; then he makes him
vomit, and the vomit is carried away in the water. But that which
comes from ritual they don't treat in this way; they make him vomit
at home, and then perform the ritual for him.

[E 9] Sometimes madness brings visions (*mjini*)—the man lets everything
762 come in his speech and says of people: 'What sort are they? They are
witches!' And if there is a gathering he speaks out: 'You are a witch—
you bewitch your neighbour's cows!' So then people ask what he means
by letting everything come in his speech like this, and they are told he
has the mad fit on him. The madness gives him power to see the
witches, he sees them surely. And of old if a madman with the fit on
[E 10] him accused you of witchcraft you would go at once to drink the ordeal.
And if the ordeal accused you too then your house was burnt over you!

764 QUESTION: Why the washing and eating porridge?

MWAALEMBA: If we don't do this then the children will vomit a
watery fluid.

I put a direct question to him about the sausages of porridge and he admitted with a smile, rather an embarrassed one: 'Yes, well, you have understood it; yes, it is a symbol of eating excrement . . . we do it at night.'

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F3617 Mgende F3617

682 754 be convinced that the real facts are otherwise than as I have stated. The clumsy methods of murder favoured by the cleverest of European criminals take an inferior place before the successful malignity of this kind of thing.

683 754 627 *Witchcraft.*—No crime is regarded with so much abhorrence among Bantu people as the crime of witchcraft. It is a crime against the whole community, anti-social, destructive; and the punishment, in many cases, was death. That punishment cannot now be inflicted, but a recent Ordinance against pretended witchcraft has given much satisfaction to the people, even although the punishment is less than they think the crime demands. To them there is no pretence about it; it is a grave reality. If the poison cup proved a person guilty, he was immediately attacked with any weapon that came handy, and as a rule he was dead before he reached the end of the gauntlet; but if, as now and again happened, he got off alive, he lost no time in getting away to another district. In the not so very remote past, the guilty person was burned to death in his own house, and not always did his family escape a like fate. A special punishment was reserved for witchcraft by crocodile. This particular crime consists in bewitching a crocodile to kill an enemy. The criminal, when discovered, was put into the water in a large fish-trap, and left there until a crocodile came and made an end.

684 *Adultery.*—This offence is said to have increased greatly since the coming of the white man, who will not permit the death penalty to be inflicted. But the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (co. 1925) 1925
F3017 Mgonde F3017

of witchcraft is made. The people are assembled by order of the chief, and the women walk slowly round the circle, gazing into the eyes of each person, and eliminating the innocent one by one, using no other test than the look in the individual's eyes. Those who remain are guilty. 754 685

Prosperity in another arouses all the evil passions of witches and wizards. But prosperity in itself was, until lately, evidence that the prosperous person was himself a wizard. There is a woman living not far from me who was accused before the British magistrate of pretending to exercise witchcraft, and to obtain cattle and other goods by threatening violence. She was dismissed on technical grounds, but ordered not to return to her own district. In conversation with her after the trial she told me that it was only the presence of the white man that saved her from being burned alive as a witch; the evidence against her being the rapid increase of her live stock. But the increase, she assured me, was "the gift of God." 754 578

Death by burning was the ancient penalty when that was inflicted publicly; but when the witches or wizards themselves undertook to kill a fellow-sorcerer in jealousy, they did it in another way. Leaving their bodies behind them, they go to the house of the victim, enter by the roof, disturbing nothing; and finally enter the stomach of the sleeping person. Thence they wander about to lungs, heart, or liver, and wound him with their "secret spears." Next day the man is ill, and the day following he dies. If the *post mortem* reveals ulcers on heart, lungs, or liver, [683] • 754

621 then if the father says his son has done wrong his neighbours
872 reply: "You have caused him to do wrong yourself. Did you suppose him to be a boy that you did not provide marriage-cattle for him?" Then the father becomes more ready to pay damages for his son.' And again, 'If a young man finds that his father objects to his marrying the girl he loves, he complains to his father's neighbours (*pemaphoma ekupakamani ko pasie*). Then they discuss the matter and say to the father: "Do you want him to teach you a lesson by taking a chief's wife or daughter, for whom many cattle must be given?" So the father agrees.'

768 Neighbours are concerned, too, to see a fair distribution of a
621 deceased fellow's estate, and the fulfilment of the heir's obligations to his wards. 'It is not the relatives, but "the fathers of the village" who watch over a young boy's interests when his father is dead' (*vide infra*, p. 108). We listened to one discussion of a
584 quarrel over inheritance which was believed to have led to kinsmen working sorcery against each other. At this discussion four village neighbours of the sick man (thought to be suffering from the sorcery of his father's brother's son), as well as ten relatives, attended.

• 684 The father's neighbours are also asked to mediate when a son
593 has wronged his father and seeks forgiveness. For example,
621 Mwangukula's son had committed adultery with his father's
783 wife. He paid six head of cattle and then went off to the coast, where he remained a long time. When he returned he brought two cows and approached his father's neighbours, asking them to take the cows to his father. When they took the cows his father said: 'He must find a bull as well, and brew beer, because he is my eldest son.' So he got a bull and brewed beer, and the father also brewed. 'Then', said the old man who reported the case, 'the fathers of the village came together and the bull was killed and they ate the meat and drank the beer. . . . Thus the son made friends with his father.'

621 Here we have the ritual of reconciliation between relatives in
783 which neighbours of the senior must participate, for their anger is held to be as dangerous to the junior as that of his senior relative. Informal giving of advice merges into the practice of arbitration, and of murmuring against a wrong-doer, and thus, it is thought, causing him misfortune. These latter practices are discussed in ensuing chapters.

villages—they begin among boys of ten to fourteen herding cows, and continue among young men until marriage, but they are said never to continue after that, and are regarded simply as a substitute for heterosexual pleasure. 'A man never dreams of making love to another man'—only of making love to a woman. If a boy's own father, or a village father, finds a son with another youth he will beat him, but provided both parties were willing, there is no court case, and the elder men treat the practice informally as a manifestation of childishness. To force a fellow to have homosexual intercourse against his will is a serious offence, comparable to witchcraft (see Document, p. 198). Lesbian practices are said also to exist, but we have no certain evidence of them: if they do occur it is much more likely to be among the older wives of chiefs and other polygynists than among the girls, who have so much attention from young men.'

It is in conversation and play with village contemporaries that most knowledge of sex is acquired. Girls learn about sex from their immediate seniors, and they get some sex experience, along with formal instruction on morals, at the puberty rituals of their seniors in the age-village and at their own initiation. Boys learn from the conversation of their elder fellows at night, in the boys' village. Any suggestion that sex education should be given by parents or middle-aged teachers shocks the Nyakyusa profoundly, for they hold that discussion of sex is totally incompatible with the respect due from children to parents. The taboo on sex talk between members of different generations appears to be absolute among men, but is less emphasized among women, for formal instruction on morals is given to a girl by her mother's fellows during the initiation ritual, and a young wife of her father, or of her father's neighbour, may whisper advice on sex matters even although she is classed as a 'mother'.

As we have already indicated, there are profound differences between pagans and Christians in their sex code. The Christian dogma that sex relations should only take place between adult married persons excludes the freedom of girls to have external sex relations before betrothal, or in the 'bride's' hut; it excludes girls visiting their betrothed husbands before puberty; and it excludes homosexuality, which is regarded as a mortal sin. Segregation of successive generations is not a part of the Christian tradition, hence the modifications in the rules of avoid-

This practice of having official witnesses to every contract, and summoning them to give evidence should a dispute later arise, is one of the most important means of maintaining order in Nyakyusa society, and village neighbours are the usual witnesses. 675

c. Communal responsibility of the age-village

Formerly, in Nyakyusa law two forms of group responsibility were emphasized: the mutual responsibility of kinsmen, and the mutual responsibility of fellow villagers. A case of murder or manslaughter was primarily the concern of the agnatic lineage if the victim was a male or an unmarried girl, and of the lineages of both husband and father if the victim was a married woman. The kinsmen either killed the murderer, or brought him before the chief, who imposed a fine which went to the injured relatives. The Nyakyusa make a distinction between 'spearing by day' (direct physical injury) and 'spearing by night' (witchcraft); and only in the latter type of case did the fine go to the chief. Witchcraft was thus treated as an offence against the state—the chiefdom—while murder or manslaughter was an offence against the kinsmen of the dead. The concern of the state in witchcraft, and the joint responsibility of kinsmen on the one hand, and of fellow villagers on the other, was evident when, as sometimes happened, both groups were required by the chief to clear themselves of suspicion of witchcraft by each providing a representative to take the poison ordeal. Should the representative of either group fail to vomit then the responsible individual within that group was sought out by means of divination and the ordeal (*vide supra*, p. 116). 613 631 672 784 682

In a case of adultery the injured husband, together with his kinsmen, pursued and attempted to kill, or torture and kill, the adulterer: self-help was not only permitted but expected in this situation,[1] and a man's near kinsmen were obliged to assist him. Neighbours were not obliged to assist in executing vengeance, but they might be victims of it, for if the injured husband did not find the adulterer he might kill any village-mate of his enemy. Such an attack commonly led to war between the two villages; 684 696 721

[1] D. R. MacKenzie, *The Spirit-Ridden Konde* (1925), p. 61, says: 'The injured husband has the right to inflict death on the paramour. This is no mere tale of the past but a grim fact to-day . . . cases of this nature are very numerous.'

684 and some informants suggested that it only occurred between the
686 villages of different chiefs, though others insisted that it did occur
721 between villages of the same chiefdom. Indeed any seduction of a woman of another village was liable to lead to war. A man of Bulindamajo seduced the wife of the headman of Bujuga, Mwamumbo. The men of Bulindamajo returned the woman to her husband, saying to their fellow: 'The men of Bujuga are barmen (barmyo), it's a village of fathers, she's your mother' (cf. Documents p. 180). But Mwamumbo was angry and made war. The men of Bulindamajo protested, saying: 'We brought the woman back!' but he took no notice and attacked them. He was defeated, and fled.

685 A thief or an adulterer deliver was also a danger to his neighbours. For a victim or creditor living in another chiefdom, and so
686 unable to obtain satisfaction in a chief's court—since a chief paid
696 little attention to a complainant who was not his own man—might seize the wife of any village-mate of the man who had his property. Hence, the old men say, thieves and adulterers were liable to be banished from a village,[1] just like witches and sorcerers, for they too brought misfortune on their fellows.

672 War between villages was apparently the usual upshot of an
696 attack on the village neighbour of an enemy, but occasionally a settlement was arranged between the two villages concerned, and the adulterer or thief was held responsible for compensating his injured neighbour, or the latter's kinsmen. Kabunda and Mwabungo explained: 'In the old days if a man ran off with my wife I should go and kill a village-mate of his. That meant, "Go, you villagers and look for my wife." Yes, this happened even in a village of my own chief. Then the villagers would go and look for my wife and when they found her with their neighbour they would bring her back to me with a spear or hoe as compensation. The man they would accuse, saying: "It was you who killed your fellow", so that he would have to make peace with the family of the dead man, not I. He would give them a daughter of his own to wife, or else pay ten cows, and they would be relatives then. Yes, ten cows they paid for a man's death, though only two for a woman in marriage.' Here the differing responsibilities of kinsmen and fellow villagers are evident.

621 The village was a fighting unit taking up quarrels on its own
701

[1] A cattle thief caught in the act was speared. . . . MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 56.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

7. HOMOSEXUALITY

X (an exceptionally reliable informant)

838 'When a boy sleeps with his friend they sleep together; it is not forbidden. Everyone thinks it all right. Sometimes when boys sleep together each may have an emission on the other (*bitundanila*). If they are great friends there is no wrong done. If a boy has an emission on his friend in his sleep without the friend knowing there is no case. Boys sometimes agree to dance together (*ukukina*) and work their evil together and that also is no wrong. But they fear very much to dance thus because their parents will be angry, saying: "You are learning adultery; you will be fools when you grow up." Boys do this when they are out herding; then they begin to dance together and to have intercourse together. But there is something which is a great wrong—if one [684] boy, perhaps out herding or perhaps in the boys' village at night, catches hold of his fellow and has an emission on him (*nukutundila*) then it is a great case, involving a fine. One who has been forced by his fellow will tell his parents and they will take him to the village headman to inform the headman. It is a great case and the boy who forced his fellow pays a bull or perhaps a cow. They say that to force [754] a fellow thus is witchcraft (*bo bulosi*); he is not a woman. But when they have agreed and dance together, then even if people find them they say it is adolescence (*lukulilo*), all children are like that. And they say that sleeping together and dancing is also adolescence.

'This custom is mostly among children, it is forbidden for men to sleep together. They do not fear lest when they have soiled a friend they will pay; no, they fear to be shamed. Not many cases of grown men having intercourse together come to light, but only of boys together or of a man and a boy. Some, during intercourse, work in the mouth of their friend, and have an orgasm; those do very, very great wrong. Some have intercourse in the anus, some between the legs—there are many who practise this latter form and this is what boys mostly do. That of the mouth people do very rarely when they dance together, because one who does it may have a great case against him.

'A person never dreams of making love to another man but only when two youths sleep together on a mat, then something evil may take place between them, at night during sleep. Perhaps when one has dreamed that he is having intercourse with a woman but he has been caught and not finished, he soils his friend.

'And when out herding, some of the older boys do evil with the

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

young ones, the older ones persuade the little ones to lie down with them and to do that which is forbidden with them between the legs. Sometimes two older boys who are friends do it together, one gets on top of his fellow, then he gets off and the other mounts. All this which they do together or with a junior is a small wrong. When their parents find them they reprove them and tell them it is forbidden, they beat them a little. But when a little boy is caught hold of by an older boy against his will, and he tells that so and so caught him and had intercourse (*ukulogwa*) with him then the older boy will be fined, perhaps a bull. 838 [684]

'It is altogether forbidden to do evil to a fellow by night. The boy who has been so treated will be angry and run off to the court, and he who did evil to him will be fined. He will pay one cow, because they say it is forbidden to do evil to your fellow by night. There are some who, when they have dreamed at night of a woman, wake up and catch hold of a friend, and have intercourse with him.'

A and J.

A and J agreed that homosexuality occurred frequently in boys' villages. 'A boy has intercourse with his fellow, but a grown man? No, never, we've never heard of it. They always want women; only when a man cannot get a woman he does this, only in youth. A few men do not marry but they are half-wits who have no kind of intercourse at all. [732]

'And there is one famous case in the hills of a man who, though not mad, dresses as a woman; but he has no intercourse either with men or women.'

A case was also quoted of a doctor in Tukuyu who 'is a woman; she has borne children, now her body has grown the sexual organs of a man and her feelings have changed also; but she keeps it very secret, she is spoken of as a woman.' [143]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

36. MOVING

Mwanjala.

'Lukama's father had built in the country of the chief, Mwaikuju, and Lukama moved and went to the country of Mwasyika. He returned to Mwaikuju's of his own accord, and when he had been there a considerable time his wife fell ill, so he moved again to Mwasyika's. After three months his fellows came to fetch him, and they put him into his own old house. They told him to choose whether he would go to his own old homestead, or to another, and of his own accord he chose to build on another site, but he occupied his own old house temporarily. After a year and a half had passed, his wife fell very ill again, and he went to Mwasyika's. He had been there a month when his fellows—those from his other age-village (in Mwaikuju country)—came to fetch him. They put him into another man's house and he lived with him there. He ate his own food for he was the owner of the homestead—a stranger eats of the bananas of strangers. After he had been there some time, but before he had built a house, his wife fell ill again, and he went to Mwasyika's country where he is still.' 166 621

In reply to a question: 'It is customary to fetch a man who has moved because people mostly move on account of illness. Hence, the man's fellows say: "If we do not fetch him it appears as if it were we who had driven him away, as if we had done that which caused him to move."'

Kimbolela.

'Mwapefya moved and went to Mwankenja's country. He moved on account of his own illness. Before he had been away long his fellows (i.e. village neighbours) went to fetch him. He was only away perhaps four or five months. When they brought him back they put him into his old house, for no one had taken it. He took his food from where he had cultivated previously, for as he had not been away long there were still sweet potatoes in his field. He came the first time they went to fetch him.'

Details from various informants, in reply to a question about three new huts being built.

'Three young men have just moved from the village of Mwafula to the village of Mwamunda, because someone had accused them, saying 166 684

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 684 "You're making love to my wife", and the man who made the accusation was from the family of the chief. On account of this, they said: "The chief is driving us out. Let us move." All three moved because of this case and are building here. Of the three friends who were supposed to be seducing the minor chief's wife, one had been found at night-time in the suspected woman's hut, and had been fined 12s. for "making love to the woman" though they had not been found together.'

Record of G. W., 20/4/35 (*from various informants*).

754 683 166 'The chief Mwaipopo was sick, and living "in the forest", i.e in a recently settled and cultivated area at a distance from the main population of his chiefdom. Nsusa, one of the headmen of his classificatory son and heir Mwankuga (cf. p. 183) went to see him. On his return Nsusa said to Mwankuga: "Mwaipopo told me that you, Mwankuga, were poisoning him. Mwkanyamale (a doctor) says that your doctors are in the hills, you went to fetch them there." Then Mwankuga went to his father Mwaipopo and asked him: "Is it true that you are accusing me of working sorcery against you? Do you say so yourself?"

'Mwaipopo said: "Who told you of this Mwankuga?"

'Mwankuga: "Nsusa told me."

'Mwaipopo: "It was Nsusa who told me that you were working sorcery against me! Go and ask him about it, and have it out with him."

'So Mwankuga took the case to Mwakisisya (another chief) for arbitration.

'Mwakisisya said: "Nsusa is in the wrong and must pay a cow to his chief Mwankuga."

Nsusa refused.

'So Mwakisysya said: "All right, we shall go to those who know about the case", and he came with all his men to Mwenanganga, Mwaipopo's senior village headman (i.e. the representative of Mwansambe, *vide* p. 181). There a witness gave evidence, saying: "I was with Mwankuga when Nsusa told him that Mwaipopo accused him of sorcery." Nsusa denied it.

'Mwakisisya said: "I, Mwakisisya, I have finished, Nsusa must pay a cow."

'Nsusa still refused.

'Mwankuga: "Your honour the judge, and others. I have cows, I shall not ask for his cow, but let him leave my country and build elsewhere."

'Nsusa replied that he was hoeing near Mwaipopo in the forest, and

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 535 721 Besides fighting, the dancers indulge in an orgy of destruction, slashing at the bananas and *ficus* saplings (which surround the swept courtyard) with their spears.

764 535 152 The dance was thus, traditionally, a common form for the expression by the dancers of a considerable range of emotions, varying from an intolerable burden of grief and fear to a recognition of and salute to the warlike quality of the dead man and a vivid consciousness of their own. And this last feeling passed easily into actual fighting.

764 534 832 To-day it is not so much into the excitements of warfare that the feelings turn, but rather into those of love. Burial dances are the occasions of much sexual display, of the beginning of some love affairs and the consummation of others, and this is nothing new. 'At a death people did not want war (though it came sometimes), they wanted love-making: they displayed the pride of their strength!' 'We speared one another . . . our wives called the war-cry when they saw the strength of their husbands.'

177 535 837 Dances of sexual display, on occasions other than burials, are traditional among the Nyakyusa; but all our informants are unanimous in declaring that both these other dances and the dances of burial are far more frequently followed by lovers' meetings than they used to be. For the enforcement of peace among the Nyakyusa has been accompanied by the prohibition of violence of any kind; and this has freed sexual passion from its rigid traditional bonds. Girls are married young and engaged younger; and [684] while formerly any man who seduced or even flirted with another man's betrothed or wife was speared or tortured by the husband and his friends if they caught him, such punishments are now illegal and the present fine of cattle is a far less effective deterrent. 'In the old days love-making only went on in secret; if a man stood and talked to a woman he expected to be speared. But now the Europeans have introduced the custom of making love openly!' (i.e. by forbidding the previous penalties.)

764 535 832 For all the younger men and women, save the chief mourners and close friends, the quality of the burial dance is now predominantly and openly sexual. But the older people are, on the one hand, more conscious of its warlike associations and, on the other hand, inclined to regard the whole occasion more soberly than their juniors. 'There are two reasons for coming to a burial: the old men come to mourn their friend, they say: "Let us go and mourn him"; but the young men say: "Let us follow the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

house. Then she goes in and steals a piece of firewood from the 768
loft[1] and runs off with it, laughing. The officiant pursues her and 587
makes her drop it and gives her medicine, while the company cry: 'A thief, a thief!' She takes the firewood back to her husband's home. 'It is a sign that she has entered her father's house, just as the spear is a sign that she has entered the house of another husband.' In rich families the new husband sends a bull which is [556]
killed and eaten at the ritual.

Our informants were agreed that 'there is no fear of the gasping cough if a woman runs away from her husband and goes to a lover', and in practice no ritual is performed when she visits her father after divorce and re-marriage, but it is perhaps significant [586
that such a situation could scarcely have arisen in the past, since 177]
divorce by agreement rarely, if ever, occurred. An adulterer fled, if he could, with his lover to another chiefdom, breaking off all [684]
relations with her kin.

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

Now we turn to the Kukwe interpretation of events. Our two 115
principal informants here were Mwasalemba, an elderly pagan man, brother to the chief Porokoto, whose wife, Syungu, acted as officiant at rituals in the chief's family, and Kakune, a young doctor who had learnt the medicines from his mother. Mwasalemba was much more coherent than Syungu herself, and his interpretation was confirmed by Kakune and numerous other informants. Again I give the interpretation of the two principal informants without any editing other than placing consecutively statements made on different occasions.

i. *Mwasalemba's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. and translated 158
by him soon afterwards.)

MWASALEMBA: Perhaps a youth, perhaps a girl, runs mad; he runs about naked so that we say: 'He's mad, why doesn't he cover himself?' He goes to the place of defaecation and takes filth and eats it: he goes into people's houses and takes things, he might even take some things from you, from a European, without fear; he knows not what he does. Sometimes, after a visit to a doctor, he recovers altogether and never has the fit again—that is the lesser kind of madness. But sometimes he 158
recovers and then the fit takes him again later—that is the more serious 757

[1] The loft (*pijulu*) consists of horizontal beams running at wall level across a portion [422
of the hut. Here every married woman keeps a supply of dry firewood. It is her private store-place which may not be touched without her permission. 417]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

158 kind. We take such a one [either type] to a doctor, tying a rope round
757 his waist on the way. For if we leave him free he goes and drowns himself in the lake. So then the doctor says 'His heart has suddenly turned over', and gives him a powdered medicine to eat from a bark-cloth. Then when he has eaten the medicine the doctor puts a finger at the back of his tongue to make him vomit, again and again. So then the filth comes out of him. Then the doctor says: 'Don't eat meat or fish until I give you other medicine later.' Then he ties some of the same medicine in two bark-cloths and ties one round his neck, one round his loins. . . .

158 Sometimes a man in the mad fit finds a woman, then he takes the
684 leaves off his waist, catches hold of her and, forcing her to the ground, has intercourse with her. Then when the woman returns home she complains that a man in the mad fit has caught and raped her. Then her husband says: 'Well, it's all over now. If he'd been in normal health I'd have sued him for a cow for adultery before the chief, but seeing he is mad there's no point in my doing so, it's all over now!' . . .

158 Sometimes madness comes by itself, although no ritual has been
775 omitted, sometimes because they have not performed a ritual. The symptoms of the two kinds are exactly the same, their cause is different. The one connected with ritual comes because the shades are angry: 'Why have you left that child untreated, without putting stones on its head . . . ? It seems it is of no account.' And then the child goes mad.

757 When madness comes of itself the doctor takes the patient to a
755 waterfall and lets the water tumble on his head; then he makes him vomit, and the vomit is carried away in the water. But that which comes from ritual they don't treat in this way; they make him vomit at home, and then perform the ritual for him.

158 Sometimes madness brings visions (*injosi*)—the man lets everything
787 come in his speech and says of people: 'What sort are they? They are witches!' And if there is a gathering he speaks out: 'You are a witch—you bewitch your neighbour's cows!' So then people ask what he means by letting everything come in his speech like this, and they are told he has the mad fit on him. The madness gives him power to see the witches, he sees them surely. And of old if a madman with the fit on
[683] him accused you of witchcraft you would go at once to drink the ordeal. And if the ordeal accused you too then your house was burnt over you!

764 QUESTION: Why the washing and eating porridge?

MWASALEMBA: If we don't do this then the children will vomit a watery fluid.

I put a direct question to him about the sausages of porridge and he admitted with a smile, rather an embarrassed one: 'Yes, well, you have understood it; yes, it is a symbol of eating excrement . . . we do it at night.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

scrapes bananas when she is menstruating, or conceals that she is menstruating and we have intercourse, then my legs are tired, but I do not have diarrhœa, because it is my blood; she is my relative (*nkamu gwangu*), she is my wife, her blood and mine are one. But when she has lain with a man in the bush there is his blood; I have diarrhœa to get rid of it; the food which she cooks for me is dirty, she has made it filthy, I have diarrhœa and get rid of it, she oversteps me. And also if she has concealed that she is menstruating and we have intercourse, I am overstepped. To overstep is to insult—but since the blood is mine I do not get rid of it. That menstrual blood is very dirty!

If I have always been all right and strong, and I find that I get tired walking and hoeing, I think: 'What is it? See, always I was all right, and now I am very tired.' My friends say: 'It is women, you have lain with one who was menstruating.' And if I eat food and start diarrhœa they say: 'It's women, they have committed adultery.' My wives deny it. We go to divine, and one is caught; if she agrees that's that, but if she denied it, formerly we went to the poison ordeal. The woman drank alone, not I. If she vomited then I was defeated, the woman was good, but if it caught her then her father paid one cow.

What we feared greatly in the old days, Mwaipaja, was war. We feared to die. For if my fellow in the village committed adultery with my wife then, when we went to war, we both died; if we went to fight at Mwangomo's [a neighbouring chiefdom], both he and I would be speared. Then people were astonished and said: 'Why, have so-and-so and so-and-so died? Perhaps they both lay with the same woman.' For this reason we drove adulterers from the village, and for this reason the chief was angry with an adulterer, saying: "This is my place! Why do you kill my people?" '

Others confirmed Mwambuputa's statement that adultery led to death in battle:

Formerly, when there was war, if your fellow made love to your wife in secret and you all went to fight, you died on one day on account of the woman.

Mwandisi linked the disquiet in a man's belly with the anger of the shades seated there.

If a woman has gone behind the house with another man and comes and cooks food for her husband, blowing up the fire and cooking for him, then the food turns round in his stomach and says: 'Is this my kinsman?' She made friends with others behind the house and cooked for them [i.e. committed adultery]. So then the man develops diarrhœa because the food turned round in his stomach. He falls down on the road, he falls down in battle.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

837 QUESTION: The spirits are angry?
753 MWANDISI: Yes, they say: 'That woman for whom we gave marriage-
775 cattle has overstepped her husband.' Yes, it is the shades who are angry in his belly.

842 Kakune, a doctor, made it clear that the danger to the husband
837 when his wife committed adultery came from the semen of another
753 man entering her.

> If your wife commits adultery you get very tired on a journey, you suffer from diarrhœa; in the old days we fell in war.
>
> QUESTION: What if the adulterer practises *coitus interruptus*?
>
> KAKUNE: Yes, if the man is clean he withdraws and the semen falls to the ground. If he always withdraws when he has intercourse with my wife, then I escape, nothing happens. The woman is like a child. See, when your wife who has not yet reached puberty plays with young men on the veld it is no matter. Do they create a child with her? No! But if she is an adulteress he is there in her, and I am there in her, and Kyala says: 'Ha! Are there two?' And he spears you, the owner of the woman. You are soiled by going to the woman; that is filth. But if I catch an adulterer with my wife, even if he has practised *coitus interruptus*, I am angry and kill him—there is jealousy! But as for diarrhœa, I do not suffer from it.

837 The most dangerous adultery of all, according to the Nyakyusa,
● 684 is that of a man with his father's wife. Angombwike explained:

> If a man dies and his son has been lying with his wives in secret, whether with or without his permission, the son is very much afraid to approach his father's place. If he goes near or touches the corpse he will himself die, for he is one flesh with his father; their blood has mingled in the woman's belly. He keeps a long way away and so do the wives with whom he has lain. The leading men of the village are told
> [783] about it and a doctor is fetched and the son and the wives involved are taken to a waterfall and treated there. If he is the eldest son a younger brother kills the cows meanwhile. Then he comes back to the homestead and kills a cow himself. While you were away in Europe I saw a case of this with my own eyes. A man died whose son had been lying with his wives. As soon as the son approached his father's place he fell down sick to death. People picked him up and rushed him away to a distance. Then he began to breathe a little easier. They took him to a
> [783] waterfall and treated him and he recovered, more or less. He is still unwell from time to time. It is not madness, just illness. And if, before the father's death, such a son approaches his father, the old man gets very ill indeed and the elder wives turn the son out of the house. There is none of this trouble if a brother [either a full brother or a half-brother]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

has lain with the dead man's wives. A brother will approach the corpse without fear. But there is another trouble: if a man seduces his brother's wife the husband may have diarrhœa perhaps with bloody stools. Many people do not come to their fathers' funerals before the burial. And also if the father is ill, and they see he is near death, they run away, returning when he has been buried. Because it is said that a man will die if he has slept with his mother, his father's wife, and sees his father or sees the corpse, as did Jones, the son of Kisokora. He slept with his mothers in secret. When his father died (in a different village from that in which Jones lived) Jones seized his father's cattle and ran away with them. When they had buried his father he came to mourn. The women with whom he had slept told on him because he had given them syphilis.

A wife who commits adultery with her husband's son is held to be in great danger also. Mwandisi said:

If they conceal it and approach the grave both the son and the wife will die. Both are washed naked, under a waterfall. The officiant washes them together with a fowl.

QUESTION: Why the waterfall and the nakedness?

MWANDISI: The water is to take away the sickness. Being naked is so that the case may go away and you, the man, may be empty (*bwasi*) and the woman may be empty. For if such a son looks into the grave and approaches to weep, the shades and Kyala are angry and say: 'Are you a relative? How can you look into the grave? It is you who have killed him, by causing him diarrhœa.' And if the woman approaches and holds her dead husband in her arms, then she dies. Those below are angry and say: 'Is she your relative?' And she dies. But if she has committed adultery with someone who is no relation she approaches and does not fear, and the adulterer does not fear either, but approaches.

For a woman, adultery is held to be dangerous also in childbirth:

If she has had lovers, she has a difficult delivery and the child refuses to come out until she confesses. Sometimes she confesses three, then the child comes, it comes out. . . . She confesses the name and takes a bit of stick and spits on it and throws it away, and you will be surprised to see that she gives birth at once. If she is very bad she will tell you three names and throw away three sticks.

Any contact with childbirth is held to be even more dangerous to men than contact with menstruation. It also is thought to cause weakness, and it is warriors who are most affected. Traditionally,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

585 for the latter having been previously collected from house to house, with a snatch of song at each door. After the feast the bride goes in procession to her husband's house, accompanied by a number of girl friends. The happy couple are chased along the road, beaten with sticks as they go, and advised to treat each other as becomes husband and wife. At the door of her future home a final ceremony has to be performed: the wife of the go-between pours water over the husband's hands, and the bride, kneeling at his feet, receives the water as it falls, and washes her own hands therewith.

582 There are strict rules regarding selection. A man may not take a wife from the family either of his father or of his mother, using the word "family" in the native sense, implying the whole circle of relatives from which each originally came. But there are countless bye-laws. A man has two wives from different families; the son of one wife may take a wife from the family of the other, the two families not being related; but a man may not marry the daughter of his paternal uncle, for the latter is his "father," and the girl is his "sister." The daughter of his maternal uncle, again, is his cousin, and he may not marry her, though there is nothing to hinder his father marrying her. The chief Koloso married his father's sister, to the great scandal of his people, although the "father" was really a very distant relative, according to European ideas.

•684 The marriage tie is sacred and binding; how binding on the wife may be judged from the laying up of

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

the spear which is to slay her if she disregards it. The injured husband, too, has the right to inflict death upon the paramour. This is no mere tale of the past, but a grim fact of to-day. Just a very short time ago, two of my workmen asked a day's leave of absence to go and bury a relative who had suffered the extreme penalty at the hands of an outraged husband. Cases of this nature are very numerous, and are necessarily treated by British law as murder; but native law still looks upon them as a just reprisal by the husband. 684

Divorce is granted only for approved reasons. The husband, when he believes he has ground for divorce, requests his go-between to take up the case; but the latter will do so only if he is satisfied that the evidence is sufficient to secure a verdict in his client's favour. The woman's father fixes a day for the public hearing of the case, himself as judge, for there is an appeal to the chief only if either party is dissatisfied with the decision arrived at. The finding of the court is in all cases reported to the chief. 586

The commonest cause is unfaithfulness of the wife, which being proved or admitted, there is no further discussion, although the trouble is sometimes patched up by the gift of a cow to the husband. If a wife has conceived, and does not tell her husband, it is a very grave matter indeed, for she is assumed to be trying to hide from him what is not his, and an action for divorce may follow. Barrenness, if known to be of the wife, is a cause of divorce; but not seldom the wife retorts the charge upon her husband, and cases are not unknown where, by mutual agreement, both [842]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

682 754 be convinced that the real facts are otherwise than as I have stated. The clumsy methods of murder favoured by the cleverest of European criminals take an inferior place before the successful malignity of this kind of thing.

683 754 627 *Witchcraft.*—No crime is regarded with so much abhorrence among Bantu peoples as the crime of witchcraft. It is a crime against the whole community, anti-social, destructive; and the punishment, in many cases, was death. That punishment cannot now be inflicted, but a recent Ordinance against pretended witchcraft has given much satisfaction to the people, even although the punishment is less than they think the crime demands. To them there is no pretence about it; it is a grave reality. If the poison cup proved a person guilty, he was immediately attacked with any weapon that came handy, and as a rule he was dead before he reached the end of the gauntlet; but if, as now and again happened, he got off alive, he lost no time in getting away to another district. In the not so very remote past, the guilty person was burned to death in his own house, and not always did his family escape a like fate. A special punishment was reserved for witchcraft by crocodile. This particular crime consists in bewitching a crocodile to kill an enemy. The criminal, when discovered, was put into the water in a large fish-trap, and left there until a crocodile came and made an end.

•684 *Adultery.*—This offence is said to have increased greatly since the coming of the white man, who will not permit the death penalty to be inflicted. But the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Konde does not resign what he considers his natural right on that account, and will take his chance of the white man's justice, if he can first get in with his own. Dramatically enough, a case occurred while I was working at the first draft of this chapter. A man came into my office, sweating at every pore, excitement in his eyes, and his whole bearing indicating something very unusual. 684

"Well," I said, "who are you? What is your name?"

"I am Mwandobero of Mwakete," he said. "I have killed a man."

"So! And what do you expect me to do about it?"

"Tie me up, and send me to the police."

"It's not my business," I said, "to tie men up. Go to the police yourself."

"Can a man go to the police himself with a story like that?"

"Well," I said, "I will give you a letter, which you can take to the superintendent."

"Thank you, Bwana."

A few questions brought out the facts, which were what I expected them to be. His wife had that morning gone off with another man. The husband pursued the runaway couple, overtook them somewhere in the bush, made a fierce pass at the man with his spear, and then ran the five miles between the scene of the crime and my house. A few hours later I met him, in charge of an armed policeman, going to discover what had actually taken place. He grinned a friendly

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

583 her and then returns to her first husband the cows he had given for her
837 with two in addition as adultery fine. But this return is usually made only after the first husband has brought a lawsuit against him.

837 Adultery is extremely common now-a-days; when a man runs off
684 with, or is discovered seducing, a married woman and has not enough
177 cows to marry her, he is legally compelled to pay two cows for the adultery to her husband. In pre-European days an adulterer, if caught, was usually punished by the husband and his neighbours with death or extreme torture, and the old men tell me that adultery was then a rarer event.

584 The extent to which a girl is usually allowed to choose whom she
177 will marry is difficult to guage, and varies in different circumstances. Opportunities of meeting and flirting with young men at dances and ceremonies are frequent; and the older men say that, owing to the abolition by the Europeans of the old severe punishments for adultery, girls
[582] are freer now than they used to be, for their lovers no longer fear to run off with them if they are married or bespoken (which is in Nyakyusa law very much the same thing). The custom of betrothing infant girls is, they declare, less common than it used to be; they are now more chary of pledging their daughters "for when they grow up they just run off with someone else." A girl's choice is, however, limited by the necessity of finding a lover who has cows, and few young men have enough to secure her if she is already married, though they may have enough to pay an adultery fine.

[428] Owing, in part, to the laws of inheritance, by which a commoner's[5]
593 full-brother inherits before his son, it is the older men who control the cattle. Every bachelor is largely or wholly dependent on his own father (or his dead father's heir) for the cows for his first marriage, and he must hoe his father's fields for many years before he is given enough to secure a wife and to set up a family of his own. Economic reciprocity is an element in most human relationships, and it enters into the Nyakyusa relationship of father and son. It is well understood, in this society, that
593 after a certain length of time spent hoeing his father's fields a young man
685 is entitled to some cows, if his father has any; and if his father delays too long the young man either stops hoeing for his father or else he takes legal action and enforces his claim. Between father and son such law cases are rare, but they are frequent between a young man and the brother of his father who has inherited his father's wives, property, and position in the family.

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[5] The laws of inheritance for a chief are, in certain respects, different; vide infra, "The Chiefdom."
7/A [Cat. 116, pp. 278ff. --Analyst]

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

583 Normally a bachelor is given cows one by one, over a period of years, and, as we have seen, he sends them, as he receives them, to the father of the girl he wants to marry. One cow is sufficient for betrothal, but not until he has given three can he begin openly to sleep with her. And he cannot usually set up his own economy until he has given at least three cows and she has reached puberty and been initiated. He may of course bespeak an already grown girl, but if he engages himself to a young one he is expected to bring two or more bulls as well, during the course of her initiation.

●684 If he chooses to spend his cows in adultery fines, he may, but he will then have to wait longer to get married.

582 561 Thus the system of marriage by a transfer of cattle is, in this society, directly linked with a late marriage age for young men and with a privileged position for older men When a boy gets cattle he at once gives them to an older man in order to secure his daughter as a wife; the labour of every bachelor helps to increase his father's wealth in food; it is in general the older men alone who can afford more than one wife. And there is an average difference of ten years or more in the initial marriage age of men and girls. The tax registers show in part of the district, among 3,000 adult* men, 34% bachelors, 37% monogamists, and 29% polygynists; and investigation proves that, generally speaking, it is the young men who are bachelors, the men over forty-five who are polygynists. [162]

511 574 Though cattle are their most valued form of wealth, it is on agriculture that the economy of the Nyakyusa is primarily based. Meat and milk are luxuries, and daily bread comes from the fields. Hard work in a fertile country provides food for each family, and the millet beer which is the ordinary material of hospitality. Hospitality brings a man prestige and authority among his fellows; on the possession of sufficient food largely depends the contentment of his wives. And in the production, preparation and eating of food the relationships of the family and of the individual family within it, are clearly visible.

241 512 Hoeing is the work of men, planting, weeding, reaping and cooking is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about four hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a.m., on the upland plateau they begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different

*Presumed to be 18 years or over.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

753 entrance to the grove?' Ndembwe told me, 'You will get no cattle',
688 and indeed the cows are aborting. He told me: 'Brew beer and look
[787] for a sheep[1] and pray to your grandfather.'

782 Kasitile did not find an animal for sacrifice. He slaughtered a kid 'just for meat', killing it near the grove, but without praying or taking any of the meat into the grove, for it is not customary to offer goat's meat to the shades. His health improved a little, for a
787 time, but again he got worse and went off to see another diviner, saying: 'Perhaps there is some other cause; perhaps Ndembwe is mistaken.' He decided to go to consult an oracle some distance away 'because the oracle near home does not convince us; those who live near know all our wrongdoings; those at a distance don't know the affairs of the homesteads here'. This time Godfrey Wilson was invited to accompany him 'since he was his friend'.

Record of G.W. 8/2/37

787 We left Isumba about 7 a.m. and walked for an hour over the hills
753 through the bush. Kasitile had sent his wives, Jane and Kiluleli, on ahead to tell the diviner, Nsoki, that we were coming. . . . He came in
[791] from the fields to meet us and was taken aback by the presence of a
[186] European. Kasitile kept saying: 'Do not be startled, he is from home, he is our friend.' . . . Food was served, then Nsoki's wife brought out some cooked millet porridge for the divination. He broke off a large piece and began to roll it between his hands. He smeared ointment on his hands and added powdered medicine. . . . He rolled and rolled, sometimes throwing the ball up and catching it again, spitting on his hands meantime. He murmured as he rolled, then at last he said to Kasitile, 'Speak!' Kasitile called his two wives to come near, and he explained his symptoms and the circumstances, how the sickness had fallen on him just after he had cut the tree in the sacred grove.

Nsoki asked for other possibilities. Kasitile: 'Perhaps the country is angry—I am a senior there. If it is the fathers who are angry I admit
● [684] having done wrong. Perhaps my wives have committed adultery in the long grass and they are the cause of the illness.' Nsoki rolled and rolled the ball of porridge speaking aloud: 'It is Kyala above?' (looking up).
[775] Kasitile interrupted him: 'Yes, indeed, Kyala, but Kyala stands where he stood at home, does he stand alone? He stands with the fathers.' Nsoki (as he rolled the porridge): 'Your fathers are angry about that grove?' Then the ball of porridge flattened out in his hands and he broke off . . . 'No, that is not the cause' (*vide* plate 10*b*).

Rolling it into a ball again he went on: 'Your wives have committed

[1] This was Kasitile's own account. Others told us that he had been advised to look for a *bull*.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

All the time there was a constant refrain of questioning, especially 783
from Mwamakunda (who as Kasitile's assistant acts as his mouthpiece 782
to the others: 'But why has Mwakanjoki (60) gone off in a huff? Why?'
There was a continuous effort to extract reasons.

The meat from the top of the foreleg (*ijammaps*) was cut up into little portions and some was put aside for the boys, sons of Kasitile. Then Kasitile led the way with a bill-hook and Mwamakunda and I followed. Mwamakunda carried the meat in a leaf. We went to the [778] sacred grove, Kinyangwa. When we reached the edge Kasitile told us to wait and he cut a path into the middle with the bill-hook, then we followed.

Mwamakunda threw the meat slowly, piece by piece, into the rotting stump of an old *umwali* tree, from which a lusty growth had sprung, [769] one shoot being 30 feet high. Kasitile prayed: 'Come Mwakanjoki (60), together with Lwembe (3?), Mwakalebela (19), and the Kinga, come, with—with—with—come. We pray of you millet, maize, bananas, all your food.' (Mwamakunda threw a piece of meat at each word.) 'We are still mourning you, we have tears. We finish now, that is all. Bring bananas, bring millet, maize, children, may the cows calve, stand by us Mwakanjoki (60), N—, N—, N— Lwembe (3?), Mwakalebela (19), Nsyanigwe,[1] Kyamba Kitali,[1] Ngulube (9), N—, N—, N—. Don't come again Mwakanjoki, let us sleep well. This is Mwambagoje [i.e. Mwamakunda the younger. It was his first visit to the sacred grove in place of his father]. I have brought him to you. Do not be startled at this Mwaipaja (G.W.), he is innocent, he is our friend. Move out of my body, let this chill go from my body! We have finished! Amen!'

Kasitile and Mwamakunda gave instructions and suggestions to each other in low voices from time to time during the prayer and throwing of the meat. We went out, Kasitile and Mwamakunda looking ahead, and Kasitile warned me: 'Do not look behind, Mwai- [834] paja.' For the next two days Kasitile said he and Mwamakunda would wash with medicines, and refrain from intercourse with their wives 'because they entered the sacred grove'.

Then we rejoined Mwaipopo and the priests and the meat was cut up. Mwaipopo said: 'Indeed people gossip, where does the whispering go? To whom do the words go? Perhaps they went to you (the com- [689] moner) priests?' Kasitile had something on his mind: 'When I returned from Lubaga who came to say: "Thank you, you have arrived back?" [i.e. no one came to greet him formally on his return]. Njobakosa answered this saying that no offence was meant.

Then Njobakosa turned to Mwaipopo (116) and raised the question [684] of his son, Mwaseba (152) who had seduced Mwaipopo's wife, Mpeta.

[1] The hereditary Kinga priests. [793]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 Why had Mwaipopo refused so long to enter into relationship with Mwaseba? Mwaipopo explained that the delay was on account of
782 Mpeta. 'Let my wife come first,' he said, and told how, when the case
[684] first came to light, he had taken Mpeta to his kinsman Mwaiteteja, who took her to Mwaseba's village headman, Kakuju, and he to her people. She must come back the same way, and has not yet done so. Ngulyo said that at first he had been inclined to criticize Mwaipopo, but now saw that he was right. Kasitile spoke of the enormity of Mwaseba's offence, for Mpeta is a kinswoman of Mwaipopo's wife
[835] Kalobo, and on the death of her son Mwakalobo, Mwaseba was put in his place, so he has seduced a woman who, by legal fiction, is his mother, as well as the wife of his father. His act is *doubly* incestuous.

They then spoke of the separation of those who pray at Mbyanga
[686] (*vide supra*, p. 80) and blamed them for it. 'Have they millet though? Kyala judges them himself.' Then Kasitile reproved Mwaipopo (the chief) for another matter. 'But you, Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 59) have little wisdom left. Why did you not give some of the beer which we drank recently at your house[1] to the people of Ipinda, the BaKalinga? The food from a distance you should divide.' And Mwaipopo agreed meekly [i.e. Mwaipopo has built with his young wives away from his inherited wife Kalinga (senior widow of 115) and is apt to neglect her; he must send some of the 'food from a distance'—ceremonial presents from affines—to his senior wives, not give it all to his friends and young wives.]

Then there were mutual compliments and self-depreciation between Kasitile and Kissogota (the commoner priest). Kissogota pointed to Mwaipopo and Kasitile, and said: 'You are impressive you, you are impressive, we are mere cannibals (*balyabanda*).' Kasitile replied: 'You are impressive yourself, if I look at you my body changes.'

Suddenly Kissogota got up and pretended to go: 'I am off, friends!' Ngulyo started to protest: 'We have not yet finished, we are speaking.' But Kissogota said, 'No, you told me to "be off"!' He went outside but returned admitting he had been only pretending. Mwaipopo: 'Yes, do you think we don't know you? Drink! Why do you not drink?'

The Mwamakunda began to ask angrily: 'Why do you shut up words in the heart? Why? Do you wish that Mwakisambwe (i.e. Kasitile, 86, identified with his great-grandfather, 30) should become a fool? Kissogota answered: 'We have not yet done so, Mwambagoje (Mwamakunda), we have not yet; do you think we are angry? Who went to fetch Kasitile from the plain? It was we, we went ourselves.'

Njobakosa took up the matter: 'We have power we have, if we
[754] please we can give the chief worms.' (This was said fiercely; Kasitile and Mwaipopo listened without comments. It was the crucial moment

[1] Sent as a present by Mwaipopo's affines.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

If a man has quarrelled with a kinsman, or is conscious of 751
having bitter enemies, or hears that someone with whom he has [578]
had a dispute has 'gone to the doctors', he is likely to go to a horn doctor for protective medicine, even though he is perfectly well.

'The horn' is believed to discover and punish the guilty whether 789
they are known to the injured or not, but if someone uses it with- 751
out just cause the medicine will recoil on himself. The seven cases 754
of using the horn reported to us[1] were all used in revenge: two for theft, two for seduction, and three for withholding cattle due. And it is revenge that was emphasized in one account of the treatment:

If someone has stolen my cow I go to a doctor and pay him a bull. [685]
Then he prepares the medicine (the horn) and stands facing it, with a spear over his shoulder, pointing towards it, and he speaks aloud saying: 'So-and-so, if you have not taken the cow you will recover, if you have eaten it you will die.' Then the breath (*imbepo*) goes to the man named and if he has really stolen the cow he dies. . . .

But another informant, listing the contents of a 'horn', stressed the [278]
protective element. It contains 'the bile of a crocodile, the skin of a python, and *inyifiwila* medicine (*vide* p. 58) which has been used to kill men' . . .

If a witch comes to throttle and kill you then the bile of the crocodile throttles and strikes him [the witch], and the *inyifiwila* does the same, it is to kill the witches, it spears those who come to throttle you. The skin of the python means that if people come to throttle you they find you have changed yourself into a python.

Another type of vengeance magic, *ilyepa*, is thought to work only between blood relatives.

If your father-in-law is angry it is your children he kills, not yourself. [578]
If the diviner says the disease comes from the woman's side of the family the protective medicine is given only to her, not to the man; if from his side only he is protected, not the wife. The relative who is angry drinks a medicine; he puts a barbed spear into the fire and when it is red hot he slashes a banana sucker with it and speaks the name, then the kinsman who is mentioned dies.

A third type is that used to secure property (*ukusinga*) and [685] [684]
snare thieves or adulterers; for the exclusive rights of a husband over his wife are treated as property rights. Often a medicated stick is placed in a field to ward off thieves, and some husbands

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 212-56.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 are said to give their wives a medicine (without their know-
751 ledge) which will cause any man who lies with them to fall ill
754 of gonorrhoea or some other venereal disease. Many Christians
[753] believe in this medicine and some inquired whether Europeans did not use it also. One family of doctors are specialists in it:

[791] The sons of Manyafu are very famous, they are great doctors. People fear them very much. No one can steal anything belonging to them or run off with their wives. If a man runs off with a wife of theirs, he will return their wife and pay. . . . Because when he has slept with the woman by night they stink in each other's nostrils, the woman stinks in the face of the man and he likewise in hers. And if rain falls by night the roof comes off the hut in which they sleep and the rain enters. Perhaps the man quarrels with the woman, perhaps frogs and snakes are numerous, perhaps gourds sprout in the house—sometimes they sprout bringing evil. So it is also if a man has run off with the wife of another and the husband goes to the sons of Manyafu. They agree to work, but he must pay them.

[681] Lyandileko, whose husband's family have owned a 'horn' for generations, was very insistent that vengeance magic maintained law and order for it could injure only the guilty. 'A thief feared to steal lest he be caught by my father-in-law (Mwaisyelage). He feared the horn if he used sorcery. He feared to seize another's cow thinking, "They will go to Mwaisyelage".' [684] And protective medicines which cause an adulterer to fall ill of gonorrhoea, or a thief to die, are considered perfectly legitimate; the misfortune would not have befallen the man unless he had done wrong.

[648] The prohibition by the government of the *mwafi* oracle has puzzled people. Medicines are admittedly dangerous, but it is held that Europeans 'encourage' witches and sorcerers by forbidding the use of the one effective weapon against them, and doctors with vengeance magic or other strong medicines 'fear the fate of the *mwafi* doctors'. There is an inescapable contradiction here, the Nyakyusa relying on *mwafi* and vengeance magic as a means of discovering criminals, and the Europeans punishing any doctor found administering poison, or intimidating people by threats. Furthermore, it is widely believed that Europeans them-
[186] selves use strong medicines made up with blood. Any Europeans without an obvious occupation are suspect of being *abanyambuta*, who go around killing people and taking their blood for the Government to use for medicines. One of our European friends,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 Sacrifice is offered that a particular shade, or all the shades of
782 the lineage, may be 'satisfied, assuaged'. The word used is *ukuhoboka* which is also used of a man who has been hungry and has eaten well of fine food, of a man who has married a bride who pleases him, and of a living father or father-in-law who has been angry but is now pacified. In its applicative form, *ukuhobokela*, means to forgive. And the act of sacrifice is an offering, a gift, to the shade strictly comparable to the gift a young man makes to his father when 'begging pardon' for some offence. A son who has committed the most heinous offence of all, seducing one of his
[684] father's wives, can 'beg pardon' only by offering a cow; but many
[783] smaller offerings are made by juniors to seniors to beg forgiveness for lesser offences.[1] When a cuckolded father receives his son he kills the cow brought to him and eats with his neighbours. It is held to be essential that the living who are insulted (and a man's neighbours are insulted with him) should share in the meat and express satisfaction.[2]

Other conceptions also are, however, manifest in sacrifices. At the offering to a recently dead chief the sacred cut of the meat is divided between the shade, whose portion is placed on the earth near his grave (ideally beside the stone set up at his marriage), and his young grandsons, who are identified with him. The conclusion that this is a communion between the living and the dead is inescapable. At a sacrifice to Lwembe it is certain of the hereditary priests, and they alone, who may share the sacred cut. At the sacrifices made by private persons the communion between shades and grandchildren is explicit when an offering of fish is made.[3] It is less clear in the sacrifice at a funeral, but is made plain
[764] in the eating of grain or bananas with the *ikipiki* medicine which symbolizes the lineage. Then the shade is told 'all the food we have eaten you have eaten . . . farewell.' The communion of sacrifice is indeed but one manifestation of the identification of the participants in a ritual with the shades for, as has been shown in a previous book, the essential character of all the rituals of kinship is a death and rebirth, a death in which the participants—the kinsmen chiefly concerned—are made one with the shades and born anew,[4] and this theme is repeated in the ritual of the 'coming
769 out'.
783 One paradox remains to be clarified. The shades must be

[1] *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 181-6.
[2] *Rituals of Kinship*, p. 185.
[3] *Good Company*, pp. 107, 240.
[4] *ibid.*, pp. 203-5.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

×797 cook. I want to leave him.' She said to her husband: 'I want to leave
×795 you; I should like to be married to another man. I am not old; I shall
754 not fail to get a husband.' The case went to the Church Session. The
[685] husband was called. He said: 'I am astonished. This woman is just making trouble. I have not harmed her. But she is a thief. She steals my mother's things.' She said: '*He* is mean. He watches me when I am cooking—either ordinary food or meat. He is a wicked man so I am leaving him.' The Session said: 'Go home and think first.' She came again and said: 'I will leave him.' They said: 'Go and think again.' They sent her home three times. After the third time she came, saying: 'I will leave him.' Then the missionary said: 'We do not find any cause for divorcing your husband. It is astonishing that you, a Christian, wish to go to another man. We find many faults on your side and none on your husband's side. I tell you that the trouble which made you quarrel with your husband will always stay in you. Wherever you go it will follow you.' So she has now become a wanderer, just going about from place to place. People say that this is due to the words of the missionary.

This story shows very clearly how a missionary's insight into a woman's character was interpreted as an external cause of her subsequent misfortunes. The idea that character is a direct cause of misfortune is foreign to the pagan community, and has not been assimilated by many Christians.

On one occasion two Christian teachers and a Christian clerk, who had related several stories in which loss of a job was attributed to a curse, asked our opinion of them. When we explained that we thought that the people mentioned had lost their jobs because they were unsatisfactory servants or teachers our friends expressed surprise. 'I had not thought of that,' said the clerk.[1]

Most of the Nyakyusa Christians we talked to believed in a curse exercised by those in authority in the Church: only a few among the better educated of the leaders scouted the idea. And there were lively arguments about the morality of cursing. Many held it was perfectly justified. Others argued that a Christian should only rebuke his fellow 'openly, to his face', and not curse him but leave the punishment of sinners to God; but, as has just been shown, an open rebuke is often interpreted as a curse.

Often a judgement is thought to be delayed. One young man
[684] who committed adultery in particularly offensive circumstances was eaten, seven years later, by a crocodile, and the two facts

[1] Quoted with amendments from 'An African Christian Morality', *Africa*, x (1937), pp. 273-4.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

were connected. And if the expected judgement does not fall when a son has wronged his father it is said: 'The father loves the child so much that he only complains half-heartedly.'

It is admitted (when the point is pressed) that misfortunes *may* fall on good men as well as evil, and then they are interpreted as a discipline, a testing, from God, but this is 'a hard saying', scarcely to be believed. The *inequalities* in the fortunes of men demand explanations and Christians, as well as pagans, find it very difficult to believe that they are 'natural'. They always suspect some human intervention; they believe that men manipulate mystical power to buy fortune for themselves. The reality of pythons in the belly may be doubted by the better educated, but belief in 'medicines' has scarcely diminished, and new medicines are constantly coming in from outside, among them costly patent medicines guaranteed to cure any and every disease, or to make the user popular and successful. Some sort of distinction between medicines which it is permissible for a Christian to use and those, like love-potions and defence against witchcraft, which are not permissible, is attempted, but the line is an arbitrary one. And often there is a conflict in the individual's own mind: as one elderly woman of a chief's family (who would normally have taken the first-fruits medicines) put it: 'It's taboo to use these medicines; even if we do fall ill we say: "No, I will not take it, I look towards God (pointing upwards)."'

Most Christians have pagan kinsfolk who are quick to interpret misfortunes in pagan terms, and the sort of conflict of ideas that arises is illustrated in the case of a young woman who died in childbirth. She and her father were Moravians; her husband had joined the Pentecostal Church which rejects all Nyakyusa medicines. Her first child was still-born, the second died shortly after its birth, and her father insisted that she should have been taking a medicine which it was customary for women in his lineage (he was a Penja) to drink during pregnancy; the girl herself wished to be treated, for she did not accept the teaching of the Pentecostal Church on this point, but her husband refused. During her third pregnancy she was ill and finally, with her husband's consent, she was carried to a Nyakyusa doctor of her father's choosing; nevertheless she died. Her father and her husband had been on bad terms, the father demanding, rather arbitrarily, the balance of the marriage cattle; and there was a great deal of gossip, some neighbours hinting that her own father had killed

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

×797 by immersion and were strict about not eating the flesh of animals
×795 without a cloven hoof, and avoiding beer, but made a point of not
being sabbatarian and working in their fields on Sundays—
[852] these were the things they emphasized to us. They were also
[262] pacifist and would not join the Police or King's African Rifles,
[688] since Rutherford taught that all Government was evil.
[668]

(*d*) 'INDEPENDENT' AFRICAN CHURCHES

There is a great cleavage between the mission Churches and the 'independent' African Churches, which also claim to be Christian, read the Gospels at their services, and recite the Apostles' creed, but whose rules of life are avowedly based on the Old Testament rather than the New (*vide* p. 191). Both the 'independent'
[595] Churches operating in BuNyakyusa approve polygyny; the bulk of their members are middle-aged polygynists and they have at least as many men as women among them. Nyasuru's statement on polygyny was interesting:

> When we young men went to join the mission we found that many of our fathers were attracted by it. They said to us: 'If only the Europeans would let us come in with all our wives we would come.' . . . Sometimes it would happen that the son of an old man's second wife would join the mission and become a preacher and he would preach even to his father, saying: 'You pagans do wrong, you marry many women, you must repent, your ways are evil.' Then his father would say to him: 'On the contrary, it is not I who do wrong, if I had married only one wife you would never have been born, and you young men take one wife only and then what happens? You steal other men's wives,
> ● [684] continually, in secret, and the country is full of lawsuits about women. It is our custom which is good.' . . . And so we, now, we have our Church and our fathers come in with us. It is our aim to take the old people with us, not ourselves to go forward alone. All the other matters which the missionaries brought to us we think are good, only this European custom of marriage is difficult.

[595] Nyasuru and Ngemela had both been suspended from the
[688] Church of Scotland Mission for marrying second wives, and Nyasuru, a man of fifty-three, had four wives when we knew him. He kindly provided us with a copy of a statement on the beliefs and constitution of the African National Church, which is worth quoting in full:

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

going about visiting them in their homes and leading them in a Christian life and to report to his Session all the offending members. 797x

It shall be the duties of a Preacher to go about preaching the Gospel to beginners as well as helping Pastors to encourage members at the Church on Sundays. He should keep records of his itinerary and report the same to his district Pastor. 795x [793]

It shall be the duties of every Deacon whether male or female, to see that all members pay their monthly contribution which is one penny per month and to bring monies or foodstuffs to his or her Pastor at the end of every month, and to bring to the Session those who neglect to pay.

Pastors through the Presiding Pastor are empowered to administer Sacraments—to Baptize and dispense Holy Communion and to ordain or remove any Elder, Preacher or Deacon who neglects his or her duties, and to report their activities to their Presiding Pastor.

To clear away suspicions among the people, Christians or non-Christians, Pastor or Pastors in the district if found guilty of misconduct or any case of adultery shall be brought to their Session to be tried, and if found guilty shall be suspended from the ministerial duties until his case is referred to the Annual General Conference by his District Pastor. [684]

Any Presiding Pastor or Pastors found intentionally violating these rules as constituted and approved by the Annual General Conference shall, at the discretion of the said General Conference, be suspended or expelled from the Church.

All monies of the Church shall within three months' time be forwarded to the Secretary of Religion who shall Bank same in the Savings Bank.

The term of service for Elders and Deacons or Deaconesses shall be for two years only, but an office-bearer may also be suspended before the end of his or her term if:

[681]

He or she has committed misconduct.
He or she neglects to fulfil his or her duties.
He or she does not attend Church worship.
He or she is a drunkard.
He or she is unruly.
He or she marries unlawfully against Native law which binds African marriages.

No office-bearer of any rank shall be found preaching when he is drunk, but shall hand the Service over to someone else.

Every member of the African National Church shall kneel down when praying. One who is preaching can kneel or stand.

Every member of the African National Church shall cease to drink

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

x 797 x 795 583 584 went away to work again and in time I earned four cows which I hid with friends far from home. My father knew nothing about them. Then I wrote to my father from Mwasebe [about twenty miles from where his father lived] where I was working, saying that I had found a girl there, the daughter of a Christian, and please could I have the cows with which to marry her? My father said: "No, she lives too far away." ' Then later he found a Christian girl of whom his father approved and a satisfactory marriage was arranged.

A common topic of discussion among Christian women was whether parents should choose mates for their children, or leave them free to choose for themselves, for though traditionally a girl had to signify her consent to marriage, she was betrothed very young and her freedom of choice was small. The growing insistence on personal freedom in marriage is symptomatic of a radical change in the attitude towards persons.

x 797 x 795 [764] [585] [782] The pagan rituals were the main occasions of recreation. It has been shown, in *Rituals of Kinship*, how pagan funerals and marriages are the occasion for feasting and dancing and display, and how the seclusion hut of a nubile girl is the gathering place for the young men and girls of the neighbourhood. Even a twin ritual is a festival with beer for the older men and some meat for everyone. The sacrifices at the groves were feasts for the leading men of the country, and the 'coming out' was the occasion of the greatest feast of the generation, and dances were practised for months ahead. [796] [688] Partly because of a change in sex morality, and partly because the meat and beer at pagan feasts are offered to the shades, Christians are largely excluded from these festivals. They may not participate in pagan dances, or join in the lewd songs, or attend the initiation hut of a girl, and they are partly debarred from the feasts of the pagans: certain of the Churches (notably the Church of Scotland and, for a time, the Moravians) forbid Christians to drink beer at all. [273]

[796] And the Christian rituals, though some of them are 'festivals of the Church', are scarcely celebrated as such. There has been a separation between ritual and recreation which has left a gap in the Christian community. It is true that the Christian young men and girls sing and dance at funerals and marriages, but the elders, for the most part, look on with dubious eyes, saying that dancing leads to adultery, and several of the dances introduced by [535] [684]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Christians in Ngonde (e.g. *amapenenga*) have been banned by the Kirk Sessions. The European-style dances, such as are sometimes organized by the educated men in centres like Karonga or Tukuyu, are not attended by these men's wives: respectable women avoid them. While we lived near Rungwe mission there was much discussion among the villagers over what recreations were permissible, and hot arguments between those who wished to permit beer drinking and dancing to Christians and those who wished to ban both. It is the Nyakyusa elders who are most puritan in their views—much more so than many of the missionaries who are very conscious of the need for recreation; indeed, the Livingstonia Presbytery once instructed all its Sessions to look into the matter. The chief outlet for young Christians is in ballads. A good singer is much admired and the composer may even sell his songs, with words and music written out. One of the former missionaries is honoured as the man who first taught the Nyakyusa to read music as well as to sing by ear.

In pagan thought moral obligations are limited to kinsmen and neighbours: they do not extend beyond the chiefdom except to those relatives who may live beyond its bounds. As we have shown, the common moral sanctions are the anger of senior relatives, and 'the breath of men', and these operate only within the lineage and age-village. But Christians have read the parable of the Good Samaritan and taken it to heart. Sermons stress this: 'If a Kinga comes and asks for a place to sleep the night and you refuse you are among the goats.' 'If a traveller from the coast asks for a place to sleep and you refuse, do you show love?' 'We tell a bride she should be hospitable to her neighbours if she can, but she *must* cook for those from a distance.' It is one of the points on which the Christians are most conscious of a difference between themselves and the pagans. And the exclusiveness of Europeans is one of the reasons why they are distinguished from Christians in the song on the title page of *Rituals of Kinship*. 'If all Europeans made friends with us (*ukwangala*) like X and Y', we were told, 'the whole country would have been Christian long ago.'

Linked with the concern for strangers is the obligation to preach the Gospel to others—something constantly stressed in sermons, and finding expression both in preaching in the surrounding villages and in tours of more remote areas, often areas of another language. Such tours implied hardship in travelling and a

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

684 and some informants suggested that it only occurred between the villages of different chiefs, though others insisted that it did occur
696 between villages of the same chiefdom. Indeed any seduction of
721 a woman of another village was liable to lead to war. A man of Bulindanajo seduced the wife of the headman of Bujege, Mwansambe. The men of Bulindanajo returned the woman to her husband, saying to their fellow: 'The men of Bujege are fearsome (*basisya*), it's a village of fathers, she's your mother' (cf. Document p. 181). But Mwansambe was angry and made war. The men of Bulindanajo protested, saying: 'We brought the woman back!' but he took no notice and attacked them. He was defeated, and fled.

685 A thief or an obstinate debtor was also a danger to his neighbours. For a victim or creditor living in another chiefdom, and so
686 unable to obtain satisfaction in a chief's court—since a chief paid
696 little attention to a complainant who was not his own man—might seize the wife of any village-mate of the man who had his property. Hence, the old men say, thieves and adulterers were liable to be banished from a village[1] just like witches and sorcerers, for they too brought misfortune on their fellows.

War between villages was apparently the usual upshot of an
672 attack on the village neighbour of an enemy, but occasionally a settlement was arranged between the two villages concerned, and
696 the adulterer or thief was held responsible for compensating his injured neighbour, or the latter's kinsmen. Kalunda and Mwalubunju explained: 'In the old days if a man ran off with my wife I should go and kill a village-mate of his. That meant, "Go, you villagers and look for my wife." Yes, this happened even in a village of my own chief. Then the villagers would go and look for my wife and when they found her with their neighbour they would bring her back to me with a spear or hoe as compensation. The man they would accuse, saying: "It was you who killed your fellow", so that he would have to make peace with the family of the dead man, not I. He would give them a daughter of his own to wife, or else pay ten cows, and they would be relatives then. Yes, ten cows they paid for a man's death, though only two for a woman in marriage.' Here the differing responsibilities of kinsmen and fellow villagers are evident.

621 The village was a fighting unit taking up quarrels on its own
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[1] A cattle thief caught in the act was speared. . . . MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 86.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

33. SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES IN CHRISTIAN VILLAGES

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a. *Christian suing a Christian*

Mundekesye (appointed by the Church to settle disputes in villages on Itete mission land).

'Nsangalofu (a Christian elder) accused Jonah's son, Lwimkio, of making love to the wife of Nsangalofu's son, Nkisu. I (Mundekesye) was trying the case between Nkisu and Lwimiko. Lwimiko denied everything, but Nkisu's wife said: "Yes, he was making love to me; he did so on three occasions." I gave judgement, saying: "You Lwimiko, are guilty, because the woman admits it," and ordered Lwimiko to pay a cow. Lwimiko refused, so I took the case to the Court. I reported my decision and Lwimiko's refusal to pay. The Court asked Lwimiko why he refused to pay up when the woman admitted their guilt, and ordered him to pay a cow.

'I reported the case to Mwangomo (the chief in whose country Mundekesye lives), but as it was quite clear I took it direct to Court. Difficult cases I take to Mwangomo before they go on to Court.

'Nsangalofu and Nkisu brought the case to me. I called the elders of the Church to be present at the hearing of the case. The congregation notified Mwakapelela (the European missionary who lives on another station) and he ordered that Lwimiko should move off mission land. Lwimiko and Nkisu had both built in Mpanda (a boys' village on mission land).'

b. *Arbitration between Christians*

Asagene (Christian deacon in Itete).

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'Mogege accused Amanise of stealing a cloth belonging to him, and brought Amanise before his fellows. He brought him to Rheuben, near whom he lives.

'Amanise denied the accusation, so the case was taken to Mundekesye (*vide supra*). Mundekesye tried the case with "all the congregation" (i.e. elders and deacons and anyone who cared to attend the court) and found Amanise guilty. The case was then taken before the missionary who ordered that Amanise should be fined 5s. and suspended from membership of the Church. He also ordered that should he refuse to pay he should move off mission land, because this was the

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

second occasion on which he had been found guilty of theft. (The elders of the congregation had suggested turning Amanise off mission land immediately, but the missionary advised giving him a second chance and fining him.)'

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

35. JOINT RESPONSIBILITY OF NEIGHBOURS

Mwaikambo (*clerk*).

628 'In former times people did not live at peace as we do now. Because
621 they fought frequently they never were friendly with those of other
837 villages as they are to-day. The occasion for beginning a fight was usually a dispute over women or cattle. If a man had made love to a woman of another village he got a friend to steal her for him. Then if the "owners" of the woman saw them they told their chief that men of such and such a village had run off with "their wife". Their chief allowed all his people to go to recapture "their wife". Also those who had stolen the woman told their chief that they had a case against them, they had stolen someone's wife. Then the chief replied that they should tell everyone to be ready.'

Mwamgwanda (*old pagan man*).

628 'In the old days if one man A, had "eaten" the cow of another, B,
621 living in a different chiefdom, and failed to repay it, though B came frequently to claim his cow, and if the wife of a village neighbour of
672 A visited in B's country, B might seize her and take her to his chief, saying: "This woman is the wife of C, a neighbour of A, who has
685 'eaten' my cow." Then the chief sent to the chief of A's country, saying that they had caught the wife of C and they wanted the cow due from A. Then A would send the cow and B would send back the wife of C with a bull to say: "Thank you, you have settled my case." Then the husband, C, might demand a hoe as well. If A denied his debt when the message came, and asserted that B's friends had seized the woman without cause, his chief would send him to B's chief, saying: "My man denies the charge. Let them drink *umwafi*." Then A and B would take the ordeal in B's country.'

[p. 266]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

674 789 them to cook for them. One brave man, thus occupied, suddenly thrust a blazing brand into the face of one of his spoilers, whereupon he and his confederates bolted.

• 685 The native law of reprisal is the same as the old American law of horse stealing—death on the spot if caught. The chief did not interfere in such cases. On the contrary, he was indignant if criminals of this kind were brought to him. He refused to look at them, and reminded the captors that it was their duty to kill them where they were caught: let them be taken off and dealt with according to the law without further parley. Hanging on a tree was the commonest mode of disposing of captured thieves.

But the Konde loves his cattle, and not all the fear of the thieves and their medicines will hinder some individuals from doing all in their power to recover their property. An old man came some time ago to ask the loan of forty shillings. He explained that he had been robbed, and that his plan was to go through the country offering to buy a cow, in the hope that the thieves, not recognizing him, would offer him his own animal. It is pleasing to relate that the old man's plan was completely successful. *Per contra*, thieves sometimes bring intelligence, of a kind, to bear upon their profession, and cases are known where they have actually charged the real owner with having stolen their cattle, and had them awarded to them.

674 In strong contrast to the Nyakyusa of the north, the people of Karonga, though they steal from each other, do not steal from Europeans. During five years

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

684 greeting, and passed on, without constraint of any kind. It turned out that the man was only slightly wounded; but most husbands in such circumstances "mak' siccar."

684 If the guilty paramour escapes, he goes to another chief, who receives and protects him, unless his co-
622 sinner is the wife of a chief, in which case the man is sent back to meet whatever punishment awaits him. The woman, as I have already said, is liable to the extreme penalty also, but I know of no case in which it has been inflicted, and I think it is of very rare occurrence. An alternative punishment was to have her ears cut off. There is a woman living in the neighbourhood who, along with her paramour, suffered this penalty lately, but the chief by whose orders it was done was heavily fined by the administrative officer. Other punishments are still in use, which will not bear
[586] the light of print. A wife found guilty is divorced without further question, and the cattle returned to the husband. Divorce is often sought for very trivial reasons, but native courts will not seriously consider ill-supported claims.

•685 *Arson.*—There is a general rule that accidental burning of another man's goods must be compensated for, by replacing all that is lost, whether that be a mere shilling's worth, or a house and all its contents. Arson proper, however, is a much more serious crime, and in the past involved the enslavement of the criminal and all his family. Not a few cases of arson are among the crimes that are common to-day. The church at Karonga was burned down in 1921, probably as an act of revenge against a Christian; but a common

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

explanation among the heathen is that it was the work of an ex-Christian who had died the previous day, and took the earliest opportunity, in his new state, of being revenged on those who had expelled him from the Church. In any case the act cost the Christian community at Karonga a large sum of money. Burning a house is a method frequently resorted to of "getting one's own back" from one's enemy, and detection is extremely difficult. 685

The Land Laws.—All the land belongs to the chief, who divides it among his various headmen, and they in turn give it out to their immediate followers. Newcomers are admitted and given lands by the headmen, but the grant must be confirmed by the chief, without whose consent no arrangement is final. This ownership by the chief is not mere theory, but, on the other hand, the individual has practically permanent rights in his property. He cannot be turned out at the mere caprice of anyone, and he hands on his lands to his heirs. Absence, even for many years, does not affect ownership, provided that wife or friends cultivate the land in the meantime. 423

The law of trespass was very severe in the past, and would remain so if the natives had their way. Trespass, however, does not mean merely walking over another man's ground; in that sense there is no trespass. It means annexation with the hoe; and if, in the fight which followed discovery, the trespasser was killed, a charge of murder did not lie against the owner; but if the owner was killed, the trespasser was indicted for murder. If the case was remitted to the 685 682

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•685 chief, a cow was paid in compensation, for the man
682 could not be put to death in cold blood.

A thief caught in a garden stealing growing crops
685 is stripped of his *manyeta* (body rings) if he has them: otherwise whatever he has is taken. This law is still nominally in force, but the culprit often prefers to take his trial at the hands of the administrative officer. And the owner has no choice, for if he takes possession by force of what native law considers his rights, he is likely to find himself accused of an illegal act.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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837 her and then returns to her first husband the cows he had given for her with two in addition as adultery fine. But this return is usually made only after the first husband has brought a lawsuit against him.

837 Adultery is extremely common now-a-days; when a man runs off
684 with, or is discovered seducing, a married woman and has not enough
177 cows to marry her, he is legally compelled to pay two cows for the adultery to her husband. In pre-European days an adulterer, if caught, was usually punished by the husband and his neighbours with death or extreme torture, and the old men tell me that adultery was then a rarer event.

584 The extent to which a girl is usually allowed to choose whom she
177 will marry is difficult to guage, and varies in different circumstances. Opportunities of meeting and flirting with young men at dances and ceremonies are frequent; and the older men say that, owing to the abolition by the Europeans of the old severe punishments for adultery, girls
[582] are freer now than they used to be, for their lovers no longer fear to run off with them if they are married or bespoken (which is in Nyakyusa law very much the same thing). The custom of betrothing infant girls is, they declare, less common than it used to be; they are now more chary of pledging their daughters "for when they grow up they just run off with someone else." A girl's choice is, however, limited by the necessity of finding a lover who has cows, and few young men have enough to secure her if she is already married, though they may have enough to pay an adultery fine.

[428] Owing, in part, to the laws of inheritance, by which a commoner's[5]
593 full-brother inherits before his son, it is the older men who control the cattle. Every bachelor is largely or wholly dependent on his own father (or his dead father's heir) for the cows for his first marriage, and he must hoe his father's fields for many years before he is given enough to secure a wife and to set up a family of his own. Economic reciprocity is an element in most human relationships, and it enters into the Nyakyusa relationship of father and son. It is well understood, in this society, that
593 after a certain length of time spent hoeing his father's fields a young man
● 685 is entitled to some cows, if his father has any; and if his father delays too long the young man either stops hoeing for his father or else he takes legal action and enforces his claim. Between father and son such law cases are rare, but they are frequent between a young man and the brother of his father who has inherited his father's wives, property, and position in the family.

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[5] The laws of inheritance for a chief are, in certain respects, different; vide infra, "The Chiefdom."
7/A [Cat. 116, pp. 278 ff. -- Analyst]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

If a man has quarrelled with a kinsman, or is conscious of having bitter enemies, or hears that someone with whom he has had a dispute has 'gone to the doctors', he is likely to go to a horn doctor for protective medicine, even though he is perfectly well. 751 [578]

'The horn' is believed to discover and punish the guilty whether they are known to the injured or not, but if someone uses it without just cause the medicine will recoil on himself. The seven cases of using the horn reported to us[1] were all used in revenge: two for theft, two for seduction, and three for withholding cattle due. And it is revenge that was emphasized in one account of the treatment: 789 751 754

If someone has stolen my cow I go to a doctor and pay him a bull. Then he prepares the medicine (the horn) and stands facing it, with a spear over his shoulder, pointing towards it, and he speaks aloud saying: 'So-and-so, if you have not taken the cow you will recover, if you have eaten it you will die.' Then the breath (*imbepo*) goes to the man named and if he has really stolen the cow he dies. . . . [685]

But another informant, listing the contents of a 'horn', stressed the protective element. It contains 'the bile of a crocodile, the skin of a python, and *inyifwila* medicine (*vide* p. 58) which has been used to kill men' . . . [278]

If a witch comes to throttle and kill you then the bile of the crocodile throttles and strikes him [the witch], and the *inyifwila* does the same, it is to kill the witches, it spears those who come to throttle you. The skin of the python means that if people come to throttle you they find you have changed yourself into a python.

Another type of vengeance magic, *ilyepa*, is thought to work only between blood relatives.

If your father-in-law is angry it is your children he kills, not yourself. If the diviner says the disease comes from the woman's side of the family the protective medicine is given only to her, not to the man; if from his side only he is protected, not the wife. The relative who is angry drinks a medicine; he puts a barbed spear into the fire and when it is red hot he slashes a banana sucker with it and speaks the name, then the kinsman who is mentioned dies. [578]

A third type is that used to secure property (*ukuringa*) and snare thieves or adulterers; for the exclusive rights of a husband over his wife are treated as property rights. Often a medicated stick is placed in a field to ward off thieves, and some husbands [685] [684]

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 212-58.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

his cave and who, though a creator, is equalled by other heroes and 776
dwells in the bowels of the earth, there was Kyala an ultimate 775
power and first cause, unique and omnipotent, who dwelt in 777
heaven 'above'. The implications of *kumwanya* (above) have 797
changed along with the implications of *Kyala*.

The new balance between the different elements in pagan thought was reflected in everyday speech. In the 1930's men spoke constantly of the shades (*abayuka*), the witches (*abalosi*), and 'the breath of men' (*imbepo yu bandu*); Kyala did not figure much in the conversation of pagans. But in 1955, from the moment when the bus I arrived in skidded off the road and the passengers began assuring each other that *Kyala alimo* (God is present), because no one had been injured, I heard the name constantly. Such a change is hard to prove, but the impression of a marked shift in emphasis was strong.

The conception of the hero Mbasi has also radically altered. 776
During the years before 1914 a man, with two boys in attendance, 685
posed as Mbasi and went round Selya by night, growling in a gruff voice that he was Mbasi, and seizing cattle and fowls and food. He was eventually taken by night, by some Christians, and died after seven months' imprisonment in Tukuyu. Today the [797]
Christians never use 'Mbasi' for God, but sometimes identify him with 'Satan', and the pagans use 'Lwembe' rather than 'Mbasi'.

The range of relationships in space was narrow in the tradi- 782
tional Nyakyusa society, and the range of relationship in time was correspondingly so. Only a limited number of chiefdoms co-operated in sacrifice to a hero (and often they seem to have acted separately, rather than in concert), and all historical time was contained in the genealogies depicted. There was a dawn when 773
men ate food raw and lived without fire, or cattle, or chiefs, but history began when the heroes descended from the mountains, ten or twelve generations ago. Time was telescoped when all the known world lay within 100 miles.

A social revolution occurred once, with the coming of the chiefs, but then time stood still, and ever since the heroic age has remained the pattern of right behaviour. Departure from the [753]
rituals laid down spells madness and death, for 'Kyala created us so'. Part of primeval reality is the conflict of generations expressed in the myth of the seduction of a young wife by her husband's father, in the rules of avoidance, and in the ritual of the 'coming out'. There is no convention of fighting on this last occasion (as

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

797 795 754 [685] cook. I want to leave him.' She said to her husband: 'I want to leave you; I should like to be married to another man. I am not old; I shall not fail to get a husband.' The case went to the Church Session. The husband was called. He said: 'I am astonished. This woman is just making trouble. I have not harmed her. But she is a thief. She steals my mother's things.' She said: '*He* is mean. He watches me when I am cooking—either ordinary food or meat. He is a wicked man so I am leaving him.' The Session said: 'Go home and think first.' She came again and said: 'I will leave him.' They said: 'Go and think again.' They sent her home three times. After the third time she came, saying: 'I will leave him.' Then the missionary said: 'We do not find any cause for divorcing your husband. It is astonishing that you, a Christian, wish to go to another man. We find many faults on your side and none on your husband's side. I tell you that the trouble which made you quarrel with your husband will always stay in you. Wherever you go it will follow you.' So she has now become a wanderer, just going about from place to place. People say that this is due to the words of the missionary.

This story shows very clearly how a missionary's insight into a woman's character was interpreted as an external cause of her subsequent misfortunes. The idea that character is a direct cause of misfortune is foreign to the pagan community, and has not been assimilated by many Christians.

On one occasion two Christian teachers and a Christian clerk, who had related several stories in which loss of a job was attributed to a curse, asked our opinion of them. When we explained that we thought that the people mentioned had lost their jobs because they were unsatisfactory servants or teachers our friends expressed surprise. 'I had not thought of that,' said the clerk.[1]

Most of the Nyakyusa Christians we talked to believed in a curse exercised by those in authority in the Church: only a few among the better educated of the leaders scouted the idea. And there were lively arguments about the morality of cursing. Many held it was perfectly justified. Others argued that a Christian should only rebuke his fellow 'openly, to his face', and not curse him but leave the punishment of sinners to God; but, as has just been shown, an open rebuke is often interpreted as a curse.

Often a judgement is thought to be delayed. One young man [684] who committed adultery in particularly offensive circumstances was eaten, seven years later, by a crocodile, and the two facts

[1] Quoted with amendments from 'An African Christian Morality', *Africa*, x (1937), pp. 173-4.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 for the local investment of savings are the most important
[474] economic undertaking in the District. The seven coffee co-
[454] operatives handled a crop of 950 tons in 1955, worth about £427,500, and are organized so efficiently as to be able to return over 90 per cent of the price of the coffee on Moshi market to the producer, after the heavy transport costs (14 per cent) have been paid. One Government-paid officer assists these societies.

In the educational and recreational field also, associations are
526 emerging: football clubs; companies of Scouts and Guides;
575 'Welfare Centres' with classes in reading for adult illiterates,
177 indoor games, and Saturday-night dances; Women's Clubs for handwork and recreation; and in Tukuyu itself an inter-racial club with its own premises, whose members meet to play games, and get to know one another and discuss common problems. These associations make a visible mark on the face of the country in the shape of new brick Churches, co-operative stores, football fields, and, more rarely, a village club-house.

177 The change from a subsistence to a money economy, and from a
system of government through chiefs and village headmen who
651 were dependent primarily on inherited wealth, which secured to them the labour of many able-bodied wives and sons, to a system of government through European officials, chiefs, and clerks paid out of taxes, and assisted by unpaid village headmen, implies the collection and administration of taxes. The District Council has
177 the responsibility for the budgeting and expenditure of over £60,000 per annum. The greater part of it is spent on the salaries
652 of chiefs, secretaries, and clerks engaged in administration, on courts, on schools, dispensaries, and roads. The development of associations with paid officers also implies the collection of dues and budgeting. As in so many countries the difficulty of building
177 up a tradition of honesty in administration is great. Tax clerks,
685 court clerks, council secretaries, and co-operative society secretaries, and even church elders handle sums of money relatively large in proportion to their earnings and one of the tasks of European officials and missionaries is to secure a sound system of accounting and check corruption. In the traditional society stock theft was a capital offence, but money has not the sanctity of cattle, and often the clerk who has appropriated public funds is treated by others as 'unfortunate' rather than immoral. At the same time villagers show great anxiety lest a man entrusted with some common fund should spend it for himself. The risk of theft

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

of public funds is greater than in England, but it should be added that a European may camp in a Nyakyusa village with nothing locked, and never lose so much as a box of matches. 177 [685]

An attempt has been made to describe the sort of changes which are proceeding in BuNyakyusa. They are not peculiar to that area, but will be familiar to most people who have lived in Africa. Now we turn to the sociological analysis.

N 233 cattle in the district in the 1941 census was about 2.3 head per taxpayer or 55 head per N [184 square mile. Certain land is set aside each year for grazing, where stock is not able to ●635] interfere with the produce plots. Compensation for trespass of cattle on cultivated land is only paid among people of the lake shore.

N 656 Parts of the land to the west of Tukuyu 134 have been badly eroded by cultivation and 185 over-grazing, and it is only since 1935 that 242 anti-erosion rules have been made to check the tendency for bad cultivation. Since they were brought in, however, the majority of the tribe have become very keen on seeing the effect that well-controlled cultivation has on crops. The following are the Native Authority Rules concerning anti-erosion:—

"Throughout the Rungwa District, all natives shall follow orders regarding cultivation designed to prevent soil erosion as demonstrated and enjoined by the Agricultural Officer.

(*a*) All ridges and terraces shall be contoured and not follow the slope of the hill.

(*b*) In the case of cultivation done on the flat and not on ridges or terraces, a large ridge and ditch shall be dug at the top of the plot to remain permanently and be repaired from N time to time."

439 The Wanyakyusa have never been depend- N ant on outside sources for any of their food, but in their own territory there is no iron for [135] making hoes nor clay for making earthenware pots. The former they were accustomed to get from Ukinga, on the eastern boundary of the district in the Livingstone mountains, and the pots were, and are still, made only by about 500 members of the Wakisi tribe living in a K village on the lake shore at the extreme south- 439 western point of the district. The Wakisi are 101 really of Ukinga origin and inhabit the eastern, northern and western shores of Lake Nyasa. They grow no food except cassava, and that only recently, and apart from the one village that makes the pots, their only work is as paddlers of canoes and fishermen. Most of their fish and pots are exchanged for food.

N 443 Since the Tukuyu District is so thickly populated and the inhabitants concentrated, it has been found necessary to create produce markets at comparatively short distances. N Transport from these markets, during war- 438 time, has become difficult. The natural outlet for Tukuyu native foodstuffs is the Lupa 316 Goldfields, which lie about 100 miles to the

(*Received for publication*

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)195! FN17 Ngonde FN1
Nyakyusa

684 and some informants suggested that it only occurred between the villages of different chiefs, though others insisted that it did occur
696 between villages of the same chiefdom. Indeed any seduction of
721 a woman of another village was liable to lead to war. A man of Bulindanajo seduced the wife of the headman of Bujege, Mwansambe. The men of Bulindanajo returned the woman to her husband, saying to their fellow: 'The men of Bujege are fearsome (*basisya*), it's a village of fathers, she's your mother' (cf. Document p. 181). But Mwansambe was angry and made war. The men of Bulindanajo protested, saying: 'We brought the woman back!' but he took no notice and attacked them. He was defeated, and fled.

685 A thief or an obstinate debtor was also a danger to his neighbours. For a victim or creditor living in another chiefdom, and so
● 686 unable to obtain satisfaction in a chief's court—since a chief paid
696 little attention to a complainant who was not his own man—might seize the wife of any village-mate of the man who had his property. Hence, the old men say, thieves and adulterers were liable to be banished from a village[1] just like witches and sorcerers, for they too brought misfortune on their fellows.

War between villages was apparently the usual upshot of an
672 attack on the village neighbour of an enemy, but occasionally a settlement was arranged between the two villages concerned, and
696 the adulterer or thief was held responsible for compensating his injured neighbour, or the latter's kinsmen. Kalunda and Mwalubunju explained: 'In the old days if a man ran off with my wife I should go and kill a village-mate of his. That meant, "Go, you villagers and look for my wife." Yes, this happened even in a village of my own chief. Then the villagers would go and look for my wife and when they found her with their neighbour they would bring her back to me with a spear or hoe as compensation. The man they would accuse, saying: "It was you who killed your fellow", so that he would have to make peace with the family of the dead man, not I. He would give them a daughter of his own to wife, or else pay ten cows, and they would be relatives then. Yes, ten cows they paid for a man's death, though only two for a woman in marriage.' Here the differing responsibilities of kinsmen and fellow villagers are evident.

621 The village was a fighting unit taking up quarrels on its own
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[1] A cattle thief caught in the act was speared. . . . MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 86.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

34. SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES BETWEEN PAGANS AND CHRISTIANS

a. Christian suing a pagan

Twijulege (Christian man).

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683 'Ańisile (a Christian elder) and Kujobanabatwa (a pagan) had a dispute. Cattle belonging to Ańisile and his fellows ate Kujobanabatwa's crop. Ańisile went to drive the cattle out of the field and Kujobanabatwa met him as he was driving them out. Kujobanabatwa swore at Ańisile. So Ańisile got angry and went to the chief; the chief took the case to Court and Kujobanabatwa was found guilty and ordered to pay 10s. He paid up and the case was finished.'

b. Arbitration between pagan and Christian

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686 'L. (a Christian preacher) when he was visiting the Ngoni[1] in the bush country bought rice from a pagan Ngoni, Manana, and promised to pay him later on. He was a long time in paying his debt so the Ngoni went to Ulindula, an elderly Christian living near L., saying: "L. has my shilling. He took my rice." L. agreed that he owed the Ngoni a shilling; he said that he had not yet got the money, but would get it very soon. The Ngoni went home and after some time, as he was not paid, he came again. Ulindula tried to pacify him. The Ngoni said: "If the case defeats you, I shall go to Court." So Ulindula called his fellows Rheuben and Hoseah to pacify the Ngoni, and the latter agreed to wait; but still L. did not pay up. So when the missionary visited, the Ngoni took the case to him. How it was decided (by the missionary) no one knows.'

c. Pagan suing a Christian

Mwaisumo (clerk).

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683 'Mwansepe, a pagan man, has a young son who was once bathing in a stream when Anangisye, a Christian, came down to bathe also. Anangisye said to the boy: "Get out, I want to bathe." The boy replied: "See, I was bathing here first", at which Anangisye got angry and beat the boy.

'Then Mwansepe and his son hastened to Mundekesye's court

[1] There are one or two villages of Ngoni immigrants in the strip of unoccupied bush country between Selya and the Lake-shore plain. They mix very little with the Nyakyusa.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

find it. There are many cases like that. My friends in the age-village will go to a diviner who will declare that the shades are angry because I do not care for my father.' If a daughter makes a runaway marriage her father is angry and it is believed that either she may not conceive or her baby may be ailing until the marriage-cattle and bull of puberty have been given by her husband and accepted by her father.

The respect and obedience due to a father is due to his heir, and in certain circumstances to his sister also; while on his part the heir has the same obligations to his juniors as the deceased had. Fibombe cited the example, already quoted, of a man quarrelling with his dead father's sister over the distribution of the marriage-cattle for his own sister, and the girl failing to conceive because of the anger of her father's sister. If a son, whose parents are dead, neglects to provide his sister with the customary gifts of food when she returns to her husband after a visit to her 'father', he may become impotent: 'Those below are angry and when he has begotten twins he will have trouble at the ritual.' Or the girl may fall ill. 'She thinks: "Who is my father? This is my father, but he does not care for me." ' The mystical power of a senior relative is linked directly with his obligation to give gifts:

> My father's elder half-brother has power over me only if he has given marriage-cattle for my father or nurtured him. If he has given him cattle to marry a wife then he has power over him. . . . My superior (*mbala gwangu*) is he who gives me everything.

Favouritism in a polygynous family, shown in the unfair division of milk or meat or fish by the husband between his wives, is thought to anger the shades, which cause his cows to bleed from the udder when milked, or prevent fish entering his traps, and so do the bad temper and insulting language of a quarrelsome wife. Mwakwelebeja explained that:

> If a woman is bad-tempered when she is making beer the beer goes sour. If my wife and I quarrel my shades are angry and the beer is spoiled. I say to my wife: 'You have spoiled the beer because you do not listen to what I say.'

Neglect of his wards by the heir is a wrong-doing frequently mentioned.

> It is said that if I neglect my brother's children he and my father will be very angry, they will not come to meet me when I die, as the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

686 shades usually do, and I shall wander a long time on the way to the land of the shades because I shall have no relatives to show me the way. And then when I get there I shall still have trouble. They will drive me away from them, and I shall live alone, apart from them, quite separate.

775 764 More rarely a shade is said to be angry because his grave has been left unswept, or he has not been buried where he asked to be.

621 681 The kinds of behaviour believed to be punished by 'the breath of men' are very similar to those thought to be punished by the anger of senior kinsmen; and, indeed, as we have seen, kinsmen and neighbours may murmur together against a son who has seduced his father's wife, a girl who has behaved insultingly to her parents-in-law, either verbally or by a breach of avoidance, and an heir who has neglected his wards or has neglected the customary ritual for his father, more particularly the customary killing of a cow when he enters into his inheritance. It is said that neglect to provide them with certain customary feasts infuriates neighbours more than anything else.[1]

The misfortunes that threaten from the neglect of rituals, and from the anger of kinsmen and neighbours, are loss of sanity, of life or health or fertility; a difficult labour or a lingering death; repeated miscarriages; loss of beauty (a wicked woman goes bald or turns reddish); scanty crops or sick herds, or, nowadays, unemployment—the man whose father is angry does not find a job. Only rarely is it suggested that punishment may be postponed until after death and then what is feared is that the shades of the lineage will not receive their kinsman.

775 771 688 When Nyakyusa talk about their religion they speak mostly of external things, of the rituals, of the angry words spoken by kinsmen or neighbours and of the fearful effects upon one against whom this anger is directed. Misfortune is said to be brought down on a man by his parents muttering in anger over the fire, by people murmuring against him (the word used is that for the humming of a hive of bees). The emphasis is on outspoken complaint or criticism. But it is also thought that 'the shades see what is within a man': if he stints one wife of fish, then 'even though the woman herself has not said anything, the shades hear the thought of the belly'. Sleeplessness and an unquiet mind are taken as evidence of the anger of the shades or the attacks of witches.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 105–6.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

593 they continually give each other cows ; between their respective sons also the exchange usually continues, but between their grandsons it lapses.
593 Reciprocity is expected and can be legally enforced, but it is not insisted
686 upon so long as the two men concerned are friends, and its legal enforcement at once breaks the relationship. If two such half-brothers (or their sons) quarrel, one may take legal action for " separation " (*okolekana*) against the other. The cows that have been handed over by both sides since the beginning of the relationship (perhaps twenty or thirty years before) are counted up, and one or the other is ordered to pay over the balance to make the numbers equal. After this the two are " no longer kinsmen," they have no mutual obligations and do not attend each other's funerals.

593 It is usual for a father to create this relationship between his senior
428 son and the eldest of each group of full-brothers, so that by this exchange of cows the family is held together. The linkage of half-brothers, whether by blood or by " milking each others cows," is important in inheritance. If a man with no full-brother dies and leaves no sons, or sons too young to inherit, then the inheritance passes to a linked half-brother ; to a half-brother linked by blood if there is one, if there is not then to one linked by exchange of cows.

771 Religion enters continually into family life and helps to maintain wider kinship bonds also. The Nyakyusa religion falls, broadly, into three parts : The Ancestor cult, Witchcraft and Magic. Taken as a whole their religion, as they believe, secures for them many of the most important values of life, health, good crops and success in various enterprises ; it provides an intelligible explanation of death and misfortune by tracing them to the ill-will either of the ancestral spirits or of living men acting through witchcraft or magic ; in its rituals it resolves fear and replaces it by hope and confidence ; while the believed destructive action of the ancestors and of men is generally, though not entirely, linked with morality.[10] The commonest explanation of misfortune is that some wrong done by the victim, or by his close kinsman, has provoked the spirits or his fellow men to anger.

769 As long as a man has alive a father, a father's full-brother, or a senior
753 brother or half-brother[11] of his own, this senior kinsman deals with the ancestral spirits, not only on his behalf, but also on behalf of his wives and children ; and health is the chief value which his prayers are believed to secure for them. In the absence of sickness or misfortune no appeal is

[10] cf. Godfrey Wilson. "An African Morality." *Africa*. Jan. 1936.
[11] Provided the relationship between them has not been legally broken (*vide supra*.).

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 Why had Mwaipopo refused so long to enter into relationship with
782 Mwaseba? Mwaipopo explained that the delay was on account of Mpeta. 'Let my wife come first,' he said, and told how, when the case
[684] first came to light, he had taken Mpeta to his kinsman Mwaiteteja, who took her to Mwaseba's village headman, Kakuju, and he to her people. She must come back the same way, and has not yet done so. Ngulyo said that at first he had been inclined to criticize Mwaipopo, but now saw that he was right. Kasitile spoke of the enormity of Mwaseba's offence, for Mpeta is a kinswoman of Mwaipopo's wife
[835] Kalobo, and on the death of her son Mwakalobo, Mwaseba was put in his place, so he has seduced a woman who, by legal fiction, is his mother, as well as the wife of his father. His act is *doubly* incestuous.

They then spoke of the separation of those who pray at Mbyanga
●[686] (*vide supra*, p. 80) and blamed them for it. 'Have they millet though? Kyala judges them himself.' Then Kasitile reproved Mwaipopo (the chief) for another matter. 'But you, Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 59) have little wisdom left. Why did you not give some of the beer which we drank recently at your house[1] to the people of Ipinda, the BaKalinga? The food from a distance you should divide.' And Mwaipopo agreed meekly [i.e. Mwaipopo has built with his young wives away from his inherited wife Kalinga (senior widow of 115) and is apt to neglect her; he must send some of the 'food from a distance'—ceremonial presents from affines—to his senior wives, not give it all to his friends and young wives.]

Then there were mutual compliments and self-depreciation between Kasitile and Kissogota (the commoner priest). Kissogota pointed to Mwaipopo and Kasitile, and said: 'You are impressive you, you are impressive, we are mere cannibals (*balyabandu*).' Kasitile replied: 'You are impressive yourself, if I look at you my body changes.'

Suddenly Kissogota got up and pretended to go: 'I am off, friends!' Ngulyo started to protest: 'We have not yet finished, we are speaking.' But Kissogota said, 'No, you told me to "be off"!' He went outside but returned admitting he had been only pretending. Mwaipopo: 'Yes, do you think we don't know you? Drink! Why do you not drink?'

The Mwamakunda began to ask angrily: 'Why do you shut up words in the heart? Why? Do you wish that Mwakisambwe (i.e. Kasitile, 86, identified with his great-grandfather, 30) should become a fool? Kissogota answered: 'We have not yet done so, Mwambagoje (Mwamakunda), we have not yet; do you think we are angry? Who went to fetch Kasitile from the plain? It was we, we went ourselves.'

Njobakosa took up the matter: 'We have power we have, if we
[754] please we can give the chief worms.' (This was said fiercely; Kasitile and Mwaipopo listened without comments. It was the crucial moment

[1] Sent as a present by Mwaipopo's affines.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

439 direct with the ivory traders or with the Kyungu, for cloths or cattle or slaves. And groups of chiefdoms and fiefs co-operated in hoeing the *milasa*.

Nor did the ivory trade enter very deeply into the economic relations of [291] the local rulers with their subjects. The common people usually dressed in exiguous pieces of bark cloth or of a coarse cloth which they manufactured themselves from a kind of cotton; the scarce imported cloths, which came through Mbande, were normally used by chiefs and nobles only. They added to the prestige of the chiefs and nobles by linking them visibly with the opulence of Mbande, but did not much increase their own subjects' economic dependence on them. Though here again we must note the occasional exchanges of ivory and other wealth between [652] commoners and chiefs or nobles. The important economic links between local rulers and their subjects were determined, on the one hand, by the differential bride-price, by polygyny and by their power of requisitioning food, and, on the other hand, by their position as chief hosts to their people.

The ivory-trade, in fact, enabled Mbande to bind the local rulers to it in a kind of permanent hierarchical alliance, but neither the constitution of the local groups nor their autonomy in relation to one another was very much affected thereby.

5. *LEGAL ELEMENTS (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

000 We now come to a third element of the central power of Mbande, the traditional part which it played in the maintenance of law. We will take this topic in two parts: first, the ways in which Mbande maintained its own authority and that of its subordinates, and, second, the part played by Mbande and those lesser authorities in maintaining the common law of Ngonde.

(a). *CONSTITUTIONAL LAW: TREASON ETC.*

687 Treason against the Kyungu was summarily punished with little or no legal argument. The commonest form of treason seems to have been 567 too near an approach to one of his wives. We remember that his wives were very closely guarded from all men, for their adultery might magically bring sickness on him, and if he fell ill then the whole land was magically endangered. One side of the hill Mbande is precipitous, and over this cliff (*Iponga*) all traitors were thrown, including such as had looked on his wives naked; while many members of the traitors' families were subsequently enslaved.

"If a man had looked on the wives of the Kyungu bathing, he himself would be killed by being thrown over the cliff and all his

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

children and relatives would be apprehended and brought to the Kyungu by the messengers. The Kyungu, or rather the nobles of Ngonde, would select the best-looking girls and let the others go. And then it was all over, any kinsfolk who had fled could return in safety to their homes. For in the old days when a man did wrong there was no legal argument and no trial. All his kinsfolk were terrified and the men fled, but the women, not having the strength to flee far, would be apprehended. The messengers would apprehend not only his full siblings and their children but his half siblings and their children too." Not only girls but boys also were sometimes kept as slaves. One of our informants made it clear, however, that it was always possible for a rich family to redeem them later, both boys and girls, by giving one or two beasts in exchange for each. 687 567

Our enquiries about the statement that "in the old days there was no legal argument and no trial" brought a clear distinction between ordinary cases and cases of treason either against the Kyungu or against the great chiefs: "In cases between two ordinary men, whether commoners or junior chiefs, there was indeed real legal procedure: a chief would take the case, one would pay damages to the other and smooth relationships would be re-established between them. But what we meant was that when a man wronged the Kyungu or one of the great chiefs then there was no sort of legal argument at all!" 687 695

It is not relevant here to enter into any full account of the institution of slavery in Ngonde; but it must be pointed out that it was a very different thing from that introduced by the Arabs in the late 19th century. Few of these early slaves appear to have been sold outside Ngonde, and the Lungwani traders carried away white ivory alone. Nor was there any impassable barrier between slave and free. All our informants maintain that slaves were treated rather as younger sons and daughters than as chattels, with the one exception that they could be sold to another man. A woman slave married by a free man herself at once became free, and the children of two married slaves were free also. 567

Another form of treason against the Kyungu, we were told, was to insult him by whispered criticism. The present Kyungu said that in the old days a Kyungu used occasionally to be insulted by one of his sons, the chiefs, and that then, "if the Kyungu was a fierce man," he would send the other chiefs against him and have all his cows and wealth taken and his houses burnt. The way in which the Kyungu might be insulted was this: after the election of a new Kyungu perhaps one of the other chiefs would begin to ask secretly why on earth they had chosen such an unsuitable man for the position, and suggest that he had none of the qualities of a chief; then if the Kyungu heard of 687

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

687 this he might have him punished. The booty of such a punitive expedition was divided up by the nobles of Ngonde; some going to the Kyungu, some to the chiefs who had done the fighting. (We asked who was in fact summoned to do the fighting.) "He would summon Kalonga and Kalambo and Kilupula. . . . ." ("The Chiefs of Ngana would come too, would they?") "Yes, certainly, they would obey the summons, indignant that anyone should insult the Kyungu; they would carry off the offender's cattle and burn his houses." (We asked for a case of such a punitive expedition:) "I have never heard that any particular chief insulted the Kyungu and so had all his cattle driven off. But I have always heard that this was the custom."

And similar action was taken, so it is said, against any chief or noble who had harmed one of the *valukuta*, the personal messengers of the Kyungu.

Moreover the authority of Mbande is said to have been used to maintain the hierarchical subordination among the lesser chiefs. "The ordinary chiefs obeyed their father, the great chief. If any of them showed himself insolent and disobedient to the great chief then the case would go to Mbande and he would be fined a cow. And if he still refused then the Kyungu would summon all the chiefs to burn him out." We asked for cases of such punitive expeditions, but once again none could be quoted. "We've not heard of any particular cases, for the chiefs were generally far too much afraid to be insolent."

In discussing these occasional punitive expeditions we are on the boundary between legal and military (or violent) procedure,[1] and it is of some importance to draw the distinction correctly. The practicability of organising our modern world for peace depends, in part, upon doing so. Theoretically the distinction is clear, but there will always be particular cases which are at first sight difficult to place certainly on either side of the line. For a punitive action to be legal it is necessary, in the first place, that it fall within an area of established legal order, which meets with no sustained resistance from any social group, and that it be taken by some authority which is there generally recognized as competent;[2] it is necessary, in the second place, that it take a form generally approved by the responsible leaders of the community; and it is necessary, in the third place, that it be directed, not to the destruction, impoverishment or harming of particular persons or groups as such, but solely to the punishment or prevention of particular breaches of

[1] Violence in the more general concept and may be purely individual; warfare is socially organized violence.

[2] Such an authority need not necessarily be political; in the old days in Ngonde fathers as such were in many situations competent to enforce the laws of marriage on their daughters and sons-in-law.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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the accepted law. In as much as any punitive action falls outside this definition, so far it is military (or violent) in character.

Now the punitive expeditions of the other chiefs of the Ngonde plain against one of their number who had insulted the Kyungu or a great chief were, so far as we can tell from this slight and rather dubious evidence, of a truly legal character. At first glance they appear to be military, but further reflection will convince us they were not. The Ngonde plain was not, indeed, an area of well established legal order in all situations of life; local chiefs, as we have already seen, not infrequently went to war with one another and Mbande was powerless to prevent them. Nevertheless, in the constitutional relationship of the local chiefs to the Kyungu legal order was well established. No cases of sustained rebellion against the Kyungu have come down to us in the chronicle of Ngonde, and the evidence suggests that all the other chiefs alike were indignant at any insult to him; for their rain and health, we remember, were believed to be dependent upon his good will. The expeditions, again, were ordered by the Kyungu himself; while once the insolence had been punished, it appears that no further action was taken.

It is, of course, difficult to believe that any great discrimination was shown in the process of punishment, that any careful enquiries were made into the guilt of the various subjects of the chief concerned, or that only the houses of "the guilty" were burned. But this, even if it were proved, would not necessarily divest the punishment of its legal character. We must not be misled by differences between our own conceptions of legal propriety and those of primitive Ngonde. For us careful discrimination between persons is always essential to justice, but in Ngonde this was not so. The children of a commoner who had seen the wives of the Kyungu naked participated in his guilt and might lawfully be enslaved. So too the subjects of a guilty chief may well have been held guilty also and their houses burnt with perfect propriety. We omitted, however, to settle this point with certainty.

But what of the punitive expeditions to the hills, which we have noted in the previous section, to enforce the tribute in ivory from the distant territorial nobles? Was this a recognized legal procedure or was it war? Were these distant nobles really included in the area of constitutional order or not? Here our evidence is tentative and one-sided. It is clear that these distant nobles and their people were in many ways less closely attached to Mbande than the chiefs, nobles and people of the plain; but the present authorities at Mbande declare that these nobles "had been given their land by the Kyungu" and that, in general they accepted his overlordship without resistance; it was

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

687 profitable to them and it increased their sense of importance. And Mbande further maintains that the nobles of Ngonde themselves went to their funerals and took part in the selection of their successors.[1] But, as we did not travel to the hills to get their own account, the official account of Mbande must be accepted with caution.

The details of these punitive expeditions, however, were, in all except the occasion, similar to those of a tribal war and will be discussed in that context.

(b) *CONSTITUTIONAL LAW: SUCCESSION.*

643 But the punishment of traitors, insubordinate juniors and tribute-defaulters is only, as it were, the negative side of the maintenance of a constitution. It is also necessary to have some orderly machinery by which the places of authority can be filled. And Mbande derived part of its own authority from its constitutional functions in the appointment of its subordinates.

In the middle period, with which we are dealing, none of the great offices in Ngonde were filled in accordance with purely genealogical right. The Kyunguship and the great chiefdoms passed, on the death of their holders, to men constitutionally chosen from the appropriate families; they did not necessarily pass to the holders' own immediate heirs. And so it was also with the fiefs, both in the plain and the hills. In filling the local chiefdoms the strictly genealogical principle was more emphasised in theory but even there it was often in practice modified.

The Kyungu might be taken from any of the great houses of Ngonde which traced their descent either to Mwangonde or Kasyombe, with the one exception of the house of Kalonga. It was usual to take one of the great chiefs themselves, it was essential to take a generous ruling chief. The traditional procedure, which still continues, is as follows: "When a Kyungu dies it is the nobles of Ngonde, those who live near Kyungu, who initiate the discussion of a successor. They confer among themselves and agree that so and so of such and such a house is a suitable man and should be caught as the Kyungu. When they have thus conferred they then call a meeting of all the nobles (of the plain) and discuss the matter again with them. And then, when all are agreed, they go and tell Kalonga and discuss it all over again with him, because he is the senior of all." ("Has Kalonga the power of vetoing their agreed choice, then?" we asked). "Yes, if he considers that the man they suggest is unsuitable he says so and the discussion begins again. So then they catch the chosen man. In the old days they used to go with him to the hill Mbande but nowadays they go to the Government

[1] *Vide infra*, p. 54.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been someone [of the dead Kyungus] whom you forgot to ask about.' 'And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again.' If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry, and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would, and then the diviner would tell them that it was so-and-so (one of the dead Kyungus) and they would go and sacrifice in his grove.

Thus to insult Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. An 'insult' might mean any neglect of the obligations of the chiefs and nobles and commoners of the plain to their lord.

The people of Ngonde hoed large fields as tribute to the Kyungu and if they failed to do so 'he grew angry and poured all the water out of the pot in which he kept his rain stones' (*vide infra*, p. 114) and 'the sky dried up'. Then the chiefs called their men to hoe. . . . 'They hoed and hoed and hoed and their wives planted, then the rain came in a torrent. . . . Kyungu created much rain.'

Or if an elephant hunter neglected to send the Kyungu one of the tusks of any elephant he killed he would not kill another. 'The country beneath was angry . . . the shades of the dead Kyungus . . . they were angry saying: "Why do you stint our child?"'

The rainfall in the Ngonde plain is less than half what it is in the Nyakyusa valley and anxiety about rainfall was constantly shown in the communal rituals; elephant hunting was also a matter of concern in a way in which it was not among the Nyakyusa and this too is reflected in rituals; but there was also the preoccupation with health and fertility, as in the prayers at Lubaga. In the groves circling Mbande the nobles prayed: 'May the sterile bear children, may the cattle and fowls increase, may the children sleep and not cry at night, may the witches not injure anyone.' And as we shall see, it was health and fertility that men had in mind when they cleared out the ashes each year after the break of the rains.

Towards Christmas time, when the first maize and the first

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 them first, then his grandfather, and father. Others told us that
778 rain stones always came from Kisi country, a very wet strip of land on the north-east shore of the Lake where the clouds always seem to gather when one looks south from the Nyakyusa valley and plain, and a piece of perforated wood used in Ngonde for making rain came from the hills of Misuku, also a very wet country. Kasitile's stones were of two types, but no direct association of male and female was made. However, the Kukwe spoke of a 'mother' stone having young. 'The rain-maker puts back the stone in the potsherd without water (after rain has come) and going later he finds that it has got young, perhaps seven, with the mother there are eight.'

The rain-makers are subject to certain taboos: during the dry
791 season they may not wash lest they drive away the rain nor do they
[784] shave for 'they compare hair and clouds saying, "Let it be black", they compare a bald pate with sunshine.' And the rain-maker
[262] may not eat roasted maize 'for as the maize crackles in the potsherd when it is roasted, so the thunder will crackle in the sky'. He may not eat green maize (which is reaped during the rains) until the dry weather begins 'because he creates rain, which means he creates all the food which grows with the rain'. If he begins eating too soon he may stop the growth. And when the rain-maker is manipulating his instruments a sex taboo is observed.
[834] 'When I am making rain,' said Kasitile, 'I do not sleep with my wives for two days, it's taboo. How would Kyala help us if I did?'

In theory the rain-maker always works under the direction of
[643] the political authority—the Kyungu or a chief—but he is also thought to wreak vengeance on those who anger him. Kasitile was critical of his colleague in the hills above Isumba: 'He never makes a nice gentle rain, it always destroys food. . . . He is always demanding things from men, and, if they refuse, he brings his rain to destroy things. . . . There is a very strong wind and heavy
[964] rain which takes roofs off homes.' But when Kasitile himself was
[687] angry, because his son was taken as a tax defaulter to work on the roads, the weather grew bad.

789 People say I am angry, that this rain is because they came and beat me because of tax. This time the tax collectors came to my place and beat me and when I thought, 'It is not the custom with our forefathers for the tax collectors to come at all to men like me', I grew angry and prayed. . . . When I was in MuNgonde the country suffered from hunger, all their children were in trouble. . . . Then I came up, and

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngohde FN17
Nyakyusa

find it. There are many cases like that. My friends in the age-village will go to a diviner who will declare that the shades are angry because I do not care for my father.' If a daughter makes a runaway marriage her father is angry and it is believed that either she may not conceive or her baby may be ailing until the marriage-cattle and bull of puberty have been given by her husband and accepted by her father. 578 775

The respect and obedience due to a father is due to his heir, and in certain circumstances to his sister also; while on his part the heir has the same obligations to his juniors as the deceased had. Fibombe cited the example, already quoted, of a man quarrelling with his dead father's sister over the distribution of the marriage-cattle for his own sister, and the girl failing to conceive because of the anger of her father's sister. If a son, whose parents are dead, neglects to provide his sister with the customary gifts of food when she returns to her husband after a visit to her 'father', he may become impotent: 'Those below are angry and when he has begotten twins he will have trouble at the ritual.' Or the girl may fall ill. 'She thinks: "Who is my father? This is my father, but he does not care for me." ' The mystical power of a senior relative is linked directly with his obligation to give gifts: 593 688 602 431

My father's elder half-brother has power over me only if he has given marriage-cattle for my father or nurtured him. If he has given him cattle to marry a wife then he has power over him. . . . My superior (*ndala gwanga*) is he who gives me everything.

Favouritism in a polygynous family, shown in the unfair division of milk or meat or fish by the husband between his wives, is thought to anger the shades, which cause his cows to bleed from the udder when milked, or prevent fish entering his traps, and so do the bad temper and insulting language of a quarrelsome wife. Mwakwelebeja explained that: 595 775 578 825

If a woman is bad-tempered when she is making beer the beer goes sour. If my wife and I quarrel my shades are angry and the beer is spoiled. I say to my wife: 'You have spoiled the beer because you do not listen to what I say.'

Neglect of his wards by the heir is a wrong-doing frequently mentioned. 686

It is said that if I neglect my brother's children he and my father will be very angry, they will not come to meet me when I die, as the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

686 shades usually do, and I shall wander a long time on the way to the land of the shades because I shall have no relatives to show me the way. And then when I get there I shall still have trouble. They will drive me away from them, and I shall live alone, apart from them, quite separate.

775 764 More rarely a shade is said to be angry because his grave has been left unswept, or he has not been buried where he asked to be.

621 681 The kinds of behaviour believed to be punished by 'the breath of men' are very similar to those thought to be punished by the anger of senior kinsmen; and, indeed, as we have seen, kinsmen and neighbours may murmur together against a son who has seduced his father's wife, a girl who has behaved insultingly to her parents-in-law, either verbally or by a breach of avoidance, and an heir who has neglected his wards or has neglected the customary ritual for his father, more particularly the customary killing of a cow when he enters into his inheritance. It is said that neglect to provide them with certain customary feasts infuriates neighbours more than anything else.[1]

The misfortunes that threaten from the neglect of rituals, and from the anger of kinsmen and neighbours, are loss of sanity, of life or health or fertility; a difficult labour or a lingering death; repeated miscarriages; loss of beauty (a wicked woman goes bald or turns reddish); scanty crops or sick herds, or, nowadays, unemployment—the man whose father is angry does not find a job. Only rarely is it suggested that punishment may be postponed until after death and then what is feared is that the shades of the lineage will not receive their kinsman.

775 771 688 When Nyakyusa talk about their religion they speak mostly of external things, of the rituals, of the angry words spoken by kinsmen or neighbours and of the fearful effects upon one against whom this anger is directed. Misfortune is said to be brought down on a man by his parents muttering in anger over the fire, by people murmuring against him (the word used is that for the humming of a hive of bees). The emphasis is on outspoken complaint or criticism. But it is also thought that 'the shades see what is within a man': if he stints one wife of fish, then 'even though the woman herself has not said anything, the shades hear the thought of the belly'. Sleeplessness and an unquiet mind are taken as evidence of the anger of the shades or the attacks of witches.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 105-6.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'*Tutigona* (we do not sleep),' is the formal phrase with which the village headman and other responsible people notify the chief that all is not well with the country, or with which a woman or a junior kinsman prefaces the troubles brought to the notice of the head of the homestead, when these troubles have not obviously materialized in sickness. Anger is dangerous first and foremost to the person against whom it is directed, but there is also the suggestion that it may react on the person who is angry. We have already quoted the remark: 'A woman never murmurs against anyone. If she does she falls sick herself.'

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How the fear of the shades is inculcated in a child is shown in the following text:

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I began by learning the word or name: *umyuka*, and to know that the shade (*umyuka*) was someone who had died, and people said that they were like flickering shadows (*imiyungula*). Also people said a shade is someone very awesome (*asiya*) if he appears to you. When I began to think of the shades at night I could not sleep because I feared the awfulness (*ubusiya*) of which they spoke. And this was specially told: 'If a person dies to-day, and perhaps you have not heard, then that dead man appears to you with cattle. He is smeared with earth on his face and forearms and knees. Then, because you do not know anything, you say: "Friend," and talk with him, saying: "Where are you going with the cattle?" He says: "I am going to my in-laws." Then if you go home and find they are wailing a death, and you tell your tale, they say: "So-and-so has died, you met him." They say you also will die. But you must be silent, and only speak after they have buried him.' So in my belly, in my thought, the shades appeared very fearful. Many people compare the awfulness of the shades with that of wild animals, and say the awfulness of the shades is greater. If a shade is standing here, and a wild animal there, you will flee towards the animal. So I also thought. But later I changed my mind, and said I would go towards the shade.

Once when there was some sickness at home I heard it said that the shades were angry, perhaps because there had been a quarrel, perhaps because he [*sic*] had not killed a cow for a relative's funeral. Once when I was ill with sores round the mouth, people said: '*Misala*, the shades have created them'—that was to be 'beaten' by the shades. So, when they had consulted an oracle, they poured a little beer on the fire-bricks and prayed. Then the illness disappeared very quickly. When I asked my mother about it she said: 'The shades were angry, so you were ill. It was because your father was angry, or perhaps on some other account.' Thus I learnt the work of the shades, little by little, from illnesses among my parents and stories of my elders.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 too hard to dig graves in'. They and their successors were all
778 buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves
[766] trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. . . . We traced sixteen groves in the plain surrounding Mbande and the nobles who pointed them out remembered participating in celebrations at all except that of the last Kyungu. The ruling Kyungu and the spirits of his
[769] dead predecessors were believed to form one divine company, the anger of any one of whom had terrible effects, and both living and dead were placated with offerings.

778 In time of drought the nobles of Ngonde would go to a diviner
787 to inquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the *names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would*
782 tell them that it was so and so. They would inform the living
821 Kyungu and he would give them a bull or a sheep, together with some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own
643 house, brought by his people as tribute. And he would give them some flour and cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove and build a miniature hut. Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fasten some of the pieces on to the hut in the grove—an action they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And finally, they would pour out some of the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a hut and make an offering in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

643 But occasionally, if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the
688 Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself
787 who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any
689 of them: 'No . . . no.' And at length he would tell them that it was the living Kyungu who was angry because so-and-so had in-
821 sulted him. Then there would be no sacrifice at the grove at all, but the nobles of Ngonde would go to the one who had insulted the Kyungu and charge him with it, asking him what he meant by thus killing them all, would not the whole land starve? And
643 so the wrongdoer would take a cow to the Kyungu who, there-
821 upon, would address the nobles of Ngonde, saying: 'If it was my

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been someone [of the dead Kyungus] whom you forgot to ask about.' 'And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again.' If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry, and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would, and then the diviner would tell them that it was so-and-so (one of the dead Kyungus) and they would go and sacrifice in his grove. 643 [821] [787]

Thus to insult Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. An 'insult' might mean any neglect of the obligations of the chiefs and nobles and commoners of the plain to their lord. [687] [688]

The people of Ngonde hoed large fields as tribute to the Kyungu and if they failed to do so 'he grew angry and poured all the water out of the pot in which he kept his rain stones' (*side infra*, p. 114) and 'the sky dried up'. Then the chiefs called their men to hoe. . . . 'They hoed and hoed and hoed and their wives planted, then the rain came in a torrent. . . . Kyungu created much rain.' [651] [789]

Or if an elephant hunter neglected to send the Kyungu one of the tusks of any elephant he killed he would not kill another. 'The country beneath was angry . . . the shades of the dead Kyungus . . . they were angry saying: "Why do you stint our child?" ' [651] [769]

The rainfall in the Ngonde plain is less than half what it is in the Nyakyusa valley and anxiety about rainfall was constantly shown in the communal rituals; elephant hunting was also a matter of concern in a way in which it was not among the Nyakyusa and this too is reflected in rituals; but there was also the preoccupation with health and fertility, as in the prayers at Lubaga. In the groves circling Mbande the nobles prayed: 'May the sterile bear children, may the cattle and fowls increase, may the children sleep and not cry at night, may the witches not injure anyone.' And as we shall see, it was health and fertility that men had in mind when they cleared out the ashes each year after the break of the rains. 643 132 771 788 [782]

Towards Christmas time, when the first maize and the first 769 796

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 black and white) animals are killed, with the same symbolism as
793 in BuKinga.[1] 'We kill a white sheep in the dry season that the
[789] sun may shine—if we killed a black sheep in summer the wet season would last all the year.'

The Kinga pray for fertility of the fields, that illness may pass, that they 'may sleep at home'; the local people[2] for fertility of the fields and that the pots they make (and on the sale of which they largely depend) may not crack in the firing. The more distant chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa plain sacrifice only in drought or plague—the last sacrifice remembered was during a plague of locusts about 1915, but the Kinga chief Kyelela sent a cow in PaliKyala in July 1937.

Like the grove of Lubaga, Kyala's cave is fearful. There is a
778 story of two men who took a length of creeper from near it to tie
688 up their canoe, and when they got home both went mad. Godfrey Wilson's guide, a young Christian, refused to enter the cave on the grounds that his pagan half-brother had once entered and taken away a potsherd and 'when he got home he went mad'.

[177] [323]

[1] Merensky appears to have been misinformed on this point, *op. cit.*, pp. 321-2.

[2] The potters are primarily Kisi, but neighbouring Nyakyusa have taken to this lucrative trade.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

may 'make the enemy fearful and sue for peace'; and that even men who have left his country may return to him. And it is so powerful that the dose must be carefully adapted to the individual. If a chief is already 'heavy' with an inherited python he is given the merest fragment, but a gentle fellow thought to be 'light', 'empty', is given more, that his words may carry weight. Too much will make a chief harsh (*nkali*)—'he will always be beating men'—and he must be given an antidote to calm him down. Too much in the tails causes them to 'fly through the air at night, gleaming, and throttle the cows'. This is the danger of *inyifwila*, that it may act like the pythons in the bellies of witches and kill men and cattle. Controlled by a chief it is held to be reasonably safe, though Kalobo, Mwaipopo's (116) second wife, who was grumbling because no tail had been lodged in her house was told that she did not know how lucky she was for '*inyifwila* is very fearful—it enters the belly, it makes itself into familiars'.

643 778 789 [754]

The use of *inyifwila* is forbidden to commoners. In Ngonde, with its hierarchy of chiefs, it was the danger of attempting to equal one of superior rank that was emphasized. 'If a commoner sprinkles *inyifwila* on himself saying, "Let me surpass my fellows", and he meets a chief (who is entitled to use it) then he dies immediately because he said to himself, "I also am a chief"'; and 'If an Ngana chief dances and sprinkles his spear with *inyifwila* . . . and then meets Kyungu, he dies.' In the more democratic atmosphere of BuNyakyusa chiefs were 'very angry' if commoners used it, but it was the danger of its acting like witchcraft and throttling men and cattle and, eventually, its owner, that men spoke of most. We heard of half a dozen men—among them the most successful trader of Selya—who were reputed to use it 'to surpass their fellows' and 'get rich' and one case actually came to Court. Mwaipopo, the chief (116), raised the matter himself:

[688] [754]

> Why does this thing go about at night? I have seen it myself, it shines, I know it. It is that with which the doctors treat us chiefs to make us impressive [i.e. *inyifwila*]. Do you not know, you commoners, that we chiefs have prohibited its use in our countries? Ask your fellow Mandala! He is bad, he planted this thing, it kills you people.

So two village headmen went and called Mandala who lived near Ngulyo, and brought him to Court. There he was asked: 'Why did you keep this which kills people?' Mandala denied vehemently saying, 'I have not planted this.' But Mwaipopo

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 As we have seen, the chief's fearsome medicine *inyifwila* is
778 thought to be very dangerous, and too much in the tails may cause
622 them 'to fly about throttling men and cattle', but a chief is never
[754] accused of working witchcraft; it is inconceivable to the Nyakyusa that he could be. If the tails have got out of hand they are treated
[789] by a doctor 'to close them up'; no one suggests that the chief should get rid of them. It is commoners, 'black people', who are witches —cannibals, the eaters of raw flesh—as opposed to chiefs who, since the dawn of history, have killed cattle for meat and cooked their food like civilized men. But the distinction does not extend very far; junior kinsmen of the chief are 'commoners' and may well be accused of practising witchcraft.

There was a delicate balance of power in the Nyakyusa con-
[182] stitution between hereditary chief and commoner headmen and the belief in the power of medicines and of witchcraft was an integral part of it. The chief provided fruitfulness by the power of his own body and his medicines; all men depended upon him for their well-being—food, cattle, children, success in war; but he in his turn depended upon the goodwill of his men led by their village headmen; without it he shivered and fell ill, only to be buried by them 'with the breath still in his body' lest the power of growth disappear with his breathless corpse.

Something of the quality of this mutual dependence and fear is conveyed in Kasitile's account of his own illness quoted in Chapter VIII.

(*e*) THE NECESSITY FOR HARMONY

182 The welfare of the chiefdom is thought to depend upon
643 harmony between the chief and his village headmen and priests,
622 and also between the chief and his kinsmen. Any friction between
793 them may result in public misfortune as well as sickness to the individual at fault. The quarrel of Kasitile, the priest, first with
[753] the Kinga priests, and then with the commoner priests of Mwai-
[821] popo's chiefdom was believed to affect the crops and the weather, as well as Kasitile's own health (*vide infra*, pp. 124-41), and
[688] Mwaipopo's failure to tell Kasitile formally of the death of their kinsman led to rain which spoiled the funeral dance. A quarrel between the lineages of two chiefs which should have sacrificed
643 together was said to have been followed by a very poor millet
602 crop (*vide infra*, pp. 79-80, 118, 136).
578 How the personal relationship of a chief with his kinsmen is

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

SACRIFICES AT THE GROVES OF CHIEFS

(a) THE PLACE, OCCASION, AND FORM OF SACRIFICE

778. 769 [137] A CHIEF is buried near the trees planted at his 'coming out' and around the grave a thicket grows up. It is taboo for men to cut saplings or brushwood there and since trees grow very fast in the climate and soil of the Nyakyusa valley, the thicket soon becomes a grove, and there sacrifices to the dead chief are made. The priests look for the stone planted at his marriage, and place the offering beside it. How long a chief is so honoured depends on how conspicuous he was as a ruler or warrior, and perhaps also on [782] whether the sacrifices are judged to be efficient in producing rain and health or not. Mbyanga and Kabale, two groves which are particularly honoured, were the shrines of founders of expanding lineages. At Mbyanga was planted a cutting of a tree which sprouted from the grave of Mwakisambwe (30) who had first occupied the country in which Mbyanga is situated. He is often spoken of as having been 'buried' at Mbyanga, in fact he was carried back ten miles to Lubaga, whence he had come, for burial. But he is worshipped at Mbyanga and we attended a sacrifice there for which his great-great-great-grandson, Mwaihojo (147) the chief, provided a cow, and Mwaihojo's grandsons ate the holy food. In contrast to this, the grave of Mwaipopo's (116) younger brother, who had once ruled a country but was defeated in war and whose sons had died, was completely neglected; no one sacrificed there. We knew more than a dozen chiefs' groves at which sacrifices were made, and there must have been a great many more in different parts of BuNyakyusa.

643 769 Since every ruling chief normally had two heirs, sacrifices involved co-operation between independent chiefdoms—two chiefs at the grove of their father, four at that of their grandfather, and so on. But if there is friction between the chiefs, some branches of the lineage cease to participate, saying that the connexion is 'too distant', and celebrate at the groves of their nearer ancestors only. This happened at the sacrifice of Mbyanga which we [578] [688] attended (*vide infra*, pp. 79-81). The sanction for co-operation is the belief that quarrelling between kinsmen annoys the shades and

[p. 70]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

may nullify any ritual, but often it is not strong enough to overcome the fissiparous tendencies of the lineage. In theory a celebration at the grove of a senior should precede that at the grove of a junior and sacrifices at Lubaga would be followed by sacrifices at the groves of the 'sons of Lwembe' in order of seniority, but this does not happen in practice nowadays and we doubt whether it ever did, since a hierarchy was not organized and maintained by a central authority as in Ngonde. In 1935 a celebration at the grove of Mwaijonga (82) preceded one at the grove of his great-grandfather Mwakisambwe (30) by a month, as we shall see. 643 769 [578] [688]

Sacrifices are made when a drought or flood occurs, or a plague of locusts, or an epidemic among men or cattle; when fishing is poor in the chiefdoms of the plain, or war is imminent. They occur most often during the 'winter' in the hills, when a malaria-sodden people feel the chill of damp mists and cool south winds, and in October, just before the break of the rains, when the country is parched; but they are not confined to these periods. In theory the village headmen and the priests who 'watch over the country' foresee *coming* misfortune in dreams, and avert it by making the appropriate sacrifices. And they are helped by ordinary people who are dreaming repeatedly or falling into a trance or fit, and prophesying evil and jabbering of 'a black cow, a black cow' or some other appurtenance of sacrifice. But in practice the prophecies generally occur when there is hunger or plague in the land, or an omen (such as a python or a ground hornbill behaving oddly) has been seen. [731] [782] [787]

The dreamers are *abasololi* or *abakunguluka*, and, as these names indicate, they are believed to have descended into the land of the shades. *Ukusoloka*[1] means to go down into something, like the roots of a tree into the earth, and *ukukungula ingungula* means to pluck a banana flower which (as was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*) is a symbol for a corpse and is buried; so the *abakunguluka* are those who have been buried in the earth. '*Abakunguluka* go to the land of the shades and return. . . . An *unkunguluka* plucks up the "blessed grass" (*ikisajelo*) in his swept courtyard and goes beneath and sees.[2] . . . He goes down into the earth beneath and takes the chief to the land of the shades when he dies, and he also sees the witches. . . .' More rarely, the *unsololi* or *unkunguluka* is 791 787

[1] *Ukusoloka*—a breach presentation, the implication being that the infant's head is in *lugoka*, but children born in this way are not necessarily prophets. [845]

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 77, 212.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 rain started again and it rained for an hour during the division of the meat; then again it lessened and stopped.

A showery and varied day was turned to account by Kasitile. The way he did it was to keep quite silent about the rain and about the insult, but let the others talk. No one directly connected the rain with him in his presence, but they talked about how heavy it was, now and again. If there is too much or too little rain, or Kasitile is known to be angry the weather is noticed and connected with him. The conclusion that Kasitile sometimes deliberately played up to the credulity of his neighbours is irresistible. But when there was a drought he grew very troubled. In January 1938 there was drought in Mwaipopo's country though in some of the neighbouring chiefdoms there had been heavy rain. We went with Kasitile to visit his fellow priest, Mwamakunda, in the bush country. There was discussion about the drought.

KASITILE: I have put in the rain stones, but nothing has happened, I tremble!

[787] THE OTHERS: Kijaja went into a trance and said: 'Let a cow come from Mwakihaba (45), Mwakilima (31) has driven away his senior kinsmen and refused to send a cow, he has refused to return the cow which was given him by his senior brother. Let him return it, instead of saying: "Let the nasty old man (*ikangale*) celebrate there at his place." Then if it comes there will be much rain and food.' [i.e. Kijaja attributes the

[688] drought to the refusal of the junior line of chiefs to send the customary cow for the sacrifice at Mbyanga, *vide supra*, pp. 79-80].

[787] KASITILE: Kijaja has gone into a trance and prophesied just recently. Kyala has brooded over him recently, he is a new prophet, but I, Kasitile, have not heard [i.e. have not been formally notified]. Had we been together with Kijaja I would have argued with him and silenced him. See! In Mwakihaba's country it has rained; it has rained heavily there, but not here. I would have said: 'Kijaja you are a new prophet. . . .' But I don't know about this rain. . . . Had I consulted an oracle the cause would have come to light.

MWAMAKUNDA (came and sat down): What about this rain? Have you put them in water?

KASITILE: Yes, I have put them in water and nothing happens, I put them in water and nothing happens. I have not consulted an oracle about this rain. . . . I tremble. . . .

MWAMAKUNDA: Yes, indeed! Consult an oracle. . . . Then you did put them in water. . . ?

KASITILE: They have lain there two weeks, but the rain refuses to come.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

. . . I put the stones into water, it is as if someone spilt it out, the sherd dries up. . . . Now Kyala has gone away, the shades have fled, formerly they clapped their hands (indicating satisfaction). . . . There is something about which the shade is angry, because in this homestead we were accustomed to pray frequently. . . . If I boast saying: 'It will rain tomorrow', will it rain? 789 [775]

MWAMAKUNDA THE YOUNGER (gravely, and with hesitation): No, not if Kyala does not wish.

WIFE OF MWAMAKUNDA: But formerly it agreed [i.e. the rain came].

A day or two later Kasitile came in, during the evening, with Mwalusanye, *a young doctor, the son of doctors.*

K.: This rain, do you not ask about it?

G.W.: Have you been to consult the oracle?

K.: Yes. I consulted it the day before yesterday.

G.W.: What did it say?

K.: It said: 'Your fathers are angry, and Kyala and the Holy Spirit (*NuMbepo Mwikemo*)!' [775] [776]

G.W.: What do they say we have done wrong?

K.: Since Mwaipopo received a Court what have the chiefs given us to say 'We did wrong?' Did they give me a cow? They did not. [Here Kasitile was referring to the insult to Lubaga, *vide supra*, pp. 35-8, and he identifies himself with the priests of Lubaga.] In MuNgonde I was a commoner, I ate meat, here I live hungry.

G.W.: And now who will speak out about this matter?

K.: You, you tell Mwaipopo 'Ask Pikumbaba (Kasitile 86) why this rain does not come, what has happened to it?'

G.W. refused and asked: Who should suggest this according to custom?

K.: Mwamakunda.

MWALUSANYE: Because according to custom, Mwaipaja (G.W.), if things were as they are with us now, if the rain refused, our fathers came to Kasitile (60), the father of this one, to ask him saying, 'Kasitile what has happened to the rain?' But now that our fathers are dead, we are bad, we do not ask. [177] [688]

And a few days later the chief said: We have thrown away our food, it's drying up in the ground . . . this drought! Kasitile says: 'It has defeated me . . . the shades (*imindu*) have caught hold of us.' Perhaps they cla[illegible] a cow, perhaps it is because Mwaihojo (147) and his fellows paid here. . . . But those beneath are angry (pointing downwards and speaking with conviction), the owner is angry.

The rain-maker therefore is not conceived of as working independently; the goodwill of the shades of the chief is necessary, and perhaps also those of the rain-maker himself, though this is not quite clear. Nowadays, at least, Kyala is also invoked. In [775] [177]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IX

KASITILE THE PRIEST

WE turn now from the description of rituals to a personal document, an account of the illness of Kasitile (86), the leading priest of Selya, the causes suggested for it, and the rituals performed. *His case* shows: (i) the power of village headmen over chiefs in general, more particularly the power of the commoner priests (village headmen of the previous generation) over hereditary priests of the chief's lineage; (ii) the persistent linking of misfortune with sin in both public and private life; (iii) the function of divination in selecting between possible causes of disease; (iv) the influences of Christian and Muslim teaching and Western medical science on a conservative who goes so far as to invite a Muslim to cut the throat of the sacrificial animal and speaks of turning Christian in his old age; and (v) the very great importance attached to 'speaking out' (*ukusosya*) and not leaving anger to smoulder unconfessed. Beer is necessary for such a ritual 'speaking out' and the participants are pressed to drink deep, for *in vino veritas*.

The *dramatis personae* are:

KASITILE (86) of the chief's lineage, priest of Selya
JANE his senior and favourite wife
JANE'S YOUNGER SISTER and co-wife
KILULELE a third wife suspected of bewitching Kasitile
MWAIPOPO (116) the chief and senior kinsman of Kasitile
MWAKYONDE (148) the doctor who was treating Kasitile
KINGA *priests* (i.e. Kikungubeja Nsyanigwa, Kyamba Kitali, *vide* pp. 24-34)
NGULUYO, NJOBOKOSA, KISOOOTA } Village headmen of Mwaijonga (82) and priests of his grove, *vide* pp. 74-7, 84-5
MWAMAKUNDA THE ELDER a hereditary priest, assistant to Kasitile
MWAMAKUNDA THE YOUNGER (Mwambagoje) son of the elder who often acted in his place

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

younger one[1] gossips with her fellow, she does not go to the witches herself, but just talks to the other wife who calls the witches to her aid. These two wives say: 'The favourite has borne many children to her husband; we are poor' [i.e. the favourite gets an unfair share of her husband's attentions]. 754 753

Kasitile speaks of his wives as 'witches' which, according to Nyakyusa ideas, they were, if they injured him, but he was also in the wrong to have shown his preference for Jane so clearly. [775] As was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*, the shades are thought to [689] punish such favouritism.

Towards the end of August Kasitile went to consult Ndembwe, a diviner and doctor, living nearly a day's journey away in the hills, who used a 'stick in the ground' as a divining rod. On his return Kasitile reported: 791 787

Ndembwe says it's the 'breath of men', not the wives, but the dispute about the beer. I paid him 1*s*. and drank three preparations of medicine at his place. He is coming here—I have found some beer and I am sending to call him tomorrow. Then Kasitile added confidentially: About the source of the 'breath' I am uncertain. Ndembwe suggested testing my wives. He can see the heavy ones, for in Ndali country he has drunk much medicine to give him spiritual power (*amanga*). He told me to come home, not to go back to Mwakyonde's country, and he is coming to give me medicine to drink and also to sprinkle medicine in the house. He will sleep here and see who it is that comes—he will know if the wives are heavy, or if it is the people of the country. 753 [782] [778] [787]

Kasitile's uncertainty was apparent. The first diviner had stated clearly that the sickness came from the witchcraft of the wives, but Kasitile wanted a further test.

We were away from Selya for some time and did not hear of any further developments in Kasitile's illness until early in 1937. By then a new reason for his ill-health had been put forward, viz. his impiety in cutting all the branches off a tree growing at the entrance to a sacred grove which has sprung up over his father's grave. He cut the tree because it was encroaching on his homestead. Then he fell ill and he went to consult Ndembwe again. 753 688

He asked me: 'Have you done something wrong at home?' I replied: 'No, I have done nothing wrong.' 'But the oracle says you have done wrong at home.' I said: 'Perhaps it is because I cut a tree at the [787]

[1] Sister of the favourite Jane. To accuse Jane's sister would cast a slur on Jane, for witchcraft is normally hereditary.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

753 entrance to the grove?' Ndembwe told me, 'You will get no cattle'
688 and indeed the cows are aborting. He told me: 'Brew beer and look
[787] for a sheep[1] and pray to your grandfather.'

782 Kasitile did not find an animal for sacrifice. He slaughtered a kid 'just for meat', killing it near the grove, but without praying or taking any of the meat into the grove, for it is not customary to offer goat's meat to the shades. His health improved a little, for a
787 time, but again he got worse and went off to see another diviner, saying: 'Perhaps there is some other cause; perhaps Ndembwe is mistaken.' He decided to go to consult an oracle some distance away 'because the oracle near home does not convince us; those who live near know all our wrongdoings; those at a distance don't know the affairs of the homesteads here'. This time Godfrey Wilson was invited to accompany him 'since he was his friend'.

Record of G.W. 8/2/37

787 We left Isumba about 7 a.m. and walked for an hour over the hills
753 through the bush. Kasitile had sent his wives, Jane and Kiluleli, on ahead to tell the diviner, Nsoki, that we were coming. . . . He came in from the fields to meet us and was taken aback by the presence of a
[791] European. Kasitile kept saying: 'Do not be startled, he is from home
[186] he is our friend.' . . . Food was served, then Nsoki's wife brought out some cooked millet porridge for the divination. He broke off a large piece and began to roll it between his hands. He smeared ointment on his hands and added powdered medicine. . . . He rolled and rolled sometimes throwing the ball up and catching it again, spitting on his hands meantime. He murmured as he rolled, then at last he said to Kasitile, 'Speak!' Kasitile called his two wives to come near, and he explained his symptoms and the circumstances, how the sickness had fallen on him just after he had cut the tree in the sacred grove.

Nsoki asked for other possibilities. Kasitile: 'Perhaps the country is angry—I am a senior there. If it is the fathers who are angry I admit
[684] having done wrong. Perhaps my wives have committed adultery in the long grass and they are the cause of the illness.' Nsoki rolled and rolled the ball of porridge speaking aloud: 'It is Kyala above?' (looking up)
[775] Kasitile interrupted him: 'Yes, indeed, Kyala, but Kyala stands where he stood at home, does he stand alone? He stands with the fathers.' Nsoki (as he rolled the porridge): 'Your fathers are angry about that grove?' Then the ball of porridge flattened out in his hand and he broke off . . . 'No, that is not the cause' (*vide* plate 10*b*).

Rolling it into a ball again he went on: 'Your wives have committed

[1] This was Kasitile's own account. Others told us that he had been advised to look for a *bull*.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

adultery?' Again the ball flattened. 'It denies it.'[1] Then Kasitile, 787
obviously dissatisfied, spoke: 'Nsoki, three cows have slipped their 753
calves at my home, I sent to Ndembwe and he said: "Your fathers are
angry, you cut a tree, Mwakisambwe (30) is angry; seek something", [775]
so I sought a kid and I recovered. Later I took my bill-hook and cut
all round. Now the illness has begun again, and I thought perhaps it
was because I did not go to BuKinga to buy a bull, because I sought
only a kid?' Nsoki (no longer rolling the porridge): 'Perhaps my oracle
is mistaken, it denies it, Kyala above has sent the breath (*imbepo*) to
discipline you. I asked the oracle saying, "Perhaps it is the fathers?" [776]
but see, it denied it.' Kasitile: 'No, it is not mistaken.' Then he told all
over again the story of his pruning the grove and of his illness and of
his recovery after killing the kid, concluding 'then I cut again and
fell sick.' Nsoki: 'But Kasitile, see! There is much illness about, Kyala
has sent it all through the country, to discipline us.'

Shortly afterwards we left. I apologized to Kasitile for spoiling his divination for it was obvious, from his face, that it had gone wrong. He assured me that I had done no wrong but agreed that Nsoki had been afraid of me. . . . 'He feared your body, Mwaipaja [G.W.], you are impressive (*nsiya*), no one builds together with Europeans, he
feared to speak. . . . Do you suppose that Kyala alone sent the fever? [776]
No! He stands with people, he stands with the shades.' I asked him [775]
what he thought. 'Ndembwe's oracle was not mistaken, the shades were indeed angry, but now Nsoki's oracle denies it. It really denied it, I saw the porridge with my own eyes, so I think the illness is from another source now. When he spoke of the "breath of Kyala" he meant "men".' Kasitile lowered his voice as he said this.

QUESTION: But what quarrel have they with you?

KASITILE: None! The oracle denied this. I have done no wrong . . . (later on) He spoke of the fathers, but he was afraid to speak out—they are angry; I should seek something.

QUESTION: To eat with whom?

KASITILE: With the village headman . . . (later on) See Mwaipaja, I cut [688]
the grove and at once I fell ill. If you come from doing something and
fall ill, do you not begin to wonder? The shades are angry. [775]

He was quite incoherent. First he said the 'breath of men', then the shades, then that the oracle denied the shades—'I saw it do so'—then that it denied witchcraft and that anyway he'd given no occasion for it. The one thing clear was that the divination could not be accepted as
it stood. Kyala never acts alone in Nyakyusa thought, and Kasitile's [776]
conversation reflected the uncertainty of mind which he had gone to Nsoki to have resolved and which had not been resolved. His opinion

[1] He explained later that 'if the porridge becomes fluid and soft, that means it agrees to what has been said; if it does not change, it denies it'.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 clearly inclined to the shades as it had before the divination, but as
753 before the certain conviction was lacking.

Four days later (12/2/37) Kasitile went to Nsesa in Kituli village to consult the oracle again 'for that of Nsoki went wrong'. He told us afterwards 'This oracle supported the finding of Ndembwe's. It said:
[775] Your kinsman who is dead is angry; he says, "Why did you not
[769] celebrate the ritual? I am tired of the hair (*Ngatele nasyo inwili*). And what did you offer your father after cutting that tree?"' Here yet another cause of Kasitile's illness is suggested—the neglect of the death ritual of a kinsman. The implication is that the chief mourners have
[765] not yet performed the concluding rite of shaving which makes it possible for the deceased to join his fathers. The hair which the
[302] mourners shave off is called 'the hair of the corpse'.

QUESTION: What are you going to do then?

KASITILE: I shall charge the young man, son of my dead kinsman, with
[688] neglect, and tell him to celebrate the ritual that the shades which have
[602] bound me may go out of my body.

QUESTION: And the bull?

KASITILE: If I can find one I shall kill it.

QUESTION: Who will be there?

[793] KASITILE: The priests will be there, Ngulyo, Kissogota, Njobakosa, Mwalukuta and Mwakasukula,[1] and also Mwaipopo (116) himself. Were I a commoner I should kill alone with my younger brothers, but since I am a public personage (*ndi nkulumba*) the village headmen are there. (To Mwaikambo, the clerk.) It is good at your home in the hills; here things are bad.

QUESTION: But they also have shades?

[775] KASITILE: But they are not important. Look you, I just cut a tree and they have seized me and dwell in my body. Are there sacred groves in
[178] the hills? Do men visit them? There in the hills rituals have died; the puberty ritual and the rituals of the groves are celebrated very little.

On 27th March Kasitile looked in to say that he was going to con-
787 sult a visiting Sangu doctor 'from very far off' about his cough, but
791 G.W. had better not come lest his presence spoil the divination.
753 Kasitile came again after the consultation, full of excitement. 'What a doctor! That is a doctor indeed! That is a diviner! He took an axe and divined with it; he took coppers which I brought and threw them in a little pot, together with the axe, and ash, and he said: "You also take ash and throw it in" and I did so. Then he looked into the little pot and said: "You built on the plain!" He knew this without being told! I said: "Yes".'

SANGU: There was a quarrel there.

[1] The last two are priests of Mbyanga (*vide* p. 80) who did not in fact come. Mwamakunda, Kasitile's assistant, who did come is not mentioned.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

KASITILE: Yes indeed.
SANGU: Now your body is sick, you are coughing. 787
KASITILE: Yes indeed, I am ill, and I am coughing a great deal. 791
SANGU: Yes, it is that quarrel down there. You came with the cough from the plain. 753
KASITILE: Yes, I came with it.
SANGU: You are a priest, you are a senior priest. (He knew this himself!)
KASITILE: Yes indeed.
SANGU: But the cough comes from the quarrel in the plain. If you were not a priest you would have died.
KASITILE: Indeed, we quarrelled over land, over the boundaries, on the plain. I hoed someone else's land—the land of a commoner there. [578]
SANGU: They placed something to injure you.

Kasitile paused in his narrative and we asked how the 'something' operated.

KASITILE: In dreams, by means of their witchcraft. [754]

The Sangu told me: 'It is this which causes you to cough continually, but there is something else also, you did not move to the plain from here without trouble.'

KASITILE: No, I moved with an accusation against me. [775]
SANGU: Yes indeed, you did wrong and now your fathers are very angry. [776]
KASITILE: Yes, I cut a tree.
SANGU: Mother! You cut a tree? The fathers and Kyala are brooding over you, Kyala is angry and broods over you. Pray, pray very much. It is you who are throttling the cattle of the country.

We expressed surprise and Kasitile continued: 'Yes, indeed. The Sangu said: "It is your wrongdoing (in cutting the tree) which is causing the cows to abort. I will clear out the thing which came with you from the plain. Bring 2s. tomorrow." He's a great doctor, Mwaipaja.' [688]

The astonishing thing was that Kasitile, a man of considerable intelligence and inclined to query the truth of the revelations of some oracles, was so much impressed by the fact that the foreign doctor (staying in the country) knew that he was a priest and had sojourned in the plain, though to anyone knowing KiNyakyusa well his connexion with the plain was apparent in his speech, and his bearing indicated him as a personage.

Talking of the divination three days later, Kasitile told us the Sangu doctor had said: 'You have done wrong at home. This Kyala (pointing to the little pot into which he was looking) knows that Lwembe and the Kinga and your father are angry, your father is very important, he works with Kyala, he is with him.' 755

As a treatment for the cough the doctor put various ingredients with 791

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

755 791 some live coals into a small calabash and held them against Kasitile's chest 'to clear out the blood of coughing'. To pacify the shades a pot of medicines in water was put on the fire; the doctor, Kasitile, and his [769] 'senior wife' (actually her younger sister, as Jane was away) each held the pot with a crooked finger. Then Kasitile and all his wives and children were sprinkled with the hot medicines. And the doctor told Kasitile to sacrifice a bull.

During the following week preparations for the sacrifice went ahead. [793] Kasitile walked for some hours through the forest to call Mwamakunda, his fellow priest who always assisted him in the celebrations at Lubaga and 'sprinkling the country'. Mwamakunda is a very old man, contemporary of Kasitile's father, and he asked: 'Are you bringing your European to the sacrifice?'

KASITILE: Yes.

[186] MWAMAKUNDA: But your father Mwakanjoki (60) did not know any Europeans, he feared them, he died without ever meeting one. After [688] your father died, when your elder brother was alive, Europeans came [177] —Germans—and cut down a tree, the *umuali* tree in the sacred grove near Kamesu; blood gushed out, it shouted so that it was heard in BuKinga.

Kasitile explained that the Germans had wanted timber. Afterwards [782] Mwaipopo (the chief 116) sought a sheep and they tried to put the [783] grove to rights ('close up') by sacrificing it. This was the tree beside which the sacred meat was always put when they sacrificed in the grove. Now one branch has grown up again from the roots.

Mwamakunda went on: 'But you did wrong at the beginning not to take the European to pray, and to tell Mwakanjoki (60) that he should not be afraid, the European has made himself our friend.' Kasitile, reporting the interview to us said: 'I concealed that we went together to the grove to pray (*side supra*, p. 115) and Mwamakunda told me: "Let the European take something, let it stay overnight in the house, and go with him, and pray very much. . . . Mwakanjoki has gone off in a huff from your home, you have offended him yourself. Go with the 753 European, take him to your father's home. Now your father has taken 769 offence, he is shaking your body by night because you cut the tree; you 688 have done wrong." ' i.e. two causes for the anger of the shades and 186 Kasitile's consequent sickness were given: (i) the cutting of the tree by Mwakanjoki's grave and (ii) Godfrey Wilson's presence at rituals and at Kasitile's homestead. So before the sacrifice of expiation for 783 pruning the grove was performed Godfrey Wilson went to be introduced to Kasitile's shades for the second time.
782

Record of G.W. 5/6/37

[778] In the evening as the sun was setting, I went to Kasitile's house with a cloth and 2s. He put them in the house, took down the calabash which

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Record of G.W. 10/4/

783 I was summoned two hours after sunrise and found at Kasitile'
782 Mwaipopo (the chief 116), Kisogota, Ngulyo, and Njobakosa th
commoner priests; Mwamakunda the younger (his father is too we
to come himself), and a half-wit who has attached himself to Kasitil
Mwaipopo asked me: 'Did you escape the rain yesterday evening
I said, 'No, I was caught by it, I'd come without a coat, and I thoug
it quite safe as I lived so near' (a quarter of a mile away). Mwaipo
replied: 'Ah, but you were at prayer. Do they not listen? Did y
think you would escape the rain when you were at prayer?' and
laughed at me. During the afternoon it began to thunder close
Kasitile glanced round and whispered to me out of the corner of
mouth: 'They are listening!'

Drinking continued all day, and all day, with intervals, they d
cussed the case (*ukujoba isangwe*) or spoke out (*ukusoya*) or pray
(*ukwipata*). This half formal prayer (*ukwipata*) over beer is an essen
part of the ritual. They began by discussing the cutting of the tree
[68 8] Kasitile. 'They are angry, Mwakanjoki (60) is angry, he is start
[769] that Mwamaloba (i.e. Kasitile 86) cut him himself. Mwakanjoki s
'Who is there?' [i.e. Kasitile did it without formally telling the sha
about it]. They (*sic*) went off in a huff . . . we have come to fetch h
(*sic*) back.'

Then Kasitile told them about his prayer and how he had admit
his fault saying: 'Indeed, I, your wife, have done wrong, Mwakanj
(60), indeed I come to enter, I Mwamaloba (86), I am a woman.'
you went to Mwalubange's (58) come, if you went to Mwaitende's (
come.' 'Yes,' Kisogota broke in, 'you are a woman, and also you
a man, take the calabash cup and pray. It is you then (who are
fault).' 'Thank you,' said the others, 'thank you Mwakisomb
(Kasitile is identified with his great-grandfather, 30), thank
Mwakagile (Mwaipopo, 116), is identified with his grandfather,
for praying with water.' (Mwaipopo had also prayed at his place.

So the discussion continued. 'We try everything, a sacred stem
bananas from Kalinga (senior widow of 113) is cut, it goes (to
shades), people milk their cows, they collect millet (*side* pp. 84-5, 1
we try everything, we try everything.'

Then Mwamakunda started a new topic, the old *umuali* tree: '
friends, do you say they have gone away now? They went away
ago. Did this *umuali* tree fall when Kasitile (86, father of the pre
one) was alive?' 'When he was dead,' they agreed. 'Well, then, w
has your wisdom disappeared to?' 'Yes indeed,' broke in Kas
'Indeed, but we attended to that. They said, "Mwaipopo se
sheep." They attended to it again. And when I came from the p
I killed a cow, the meat went there, we attended to it.'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

to which all had led up.) Then Mwaipopo (116) spoke: 'We have taken home Mwakanjoki (60), we have taken home Mwakisambwe (30).' And the others agreed: 'We have taken him, we have taken him.' Mwaipopo went on to speak of the tree cutting: 'It was always a swept place, Mwakanjoki (60) built there, let it be a swept place again, let it be clear, let our prayers go beneath to enter the house here [i.e. no matter that the trees have been pruned], prayers go beneath in the swept place. See, we buried our father Mwaijonga (80) in the swept place, was it heavy? [i.e. a sacred grove] Yes, a tree grew later. So if I like I cut that it may be clear again.' To which Kasitile replied: 'Thank you, Mwakagile' (116, identified with his grandfather 59). Mwaipopo continued: 'Let no one whisper. Who whispered? Where do we all look? Here! It is our earth, here, it is our tree, here, it is our fertility of the soil (ndete), here. No one stirred up Mwakisambwe (30); he stirred up himself.'

783 782 [668] [776]

So they prepared to go, saying, 'It's getting dark, it's getting dark.' But Kasitile stopped them. 'Wait, there is one thing left, tell Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 59) that he should seek a cow, let us finish.' They took this up: 'Yes, since we have taken your grandfather to his home, let us go to your father, Mwaijonga (80), and to Mwakabule (117), let us finish them.'

Mwaipopo ignored this. 'It's getting dark, let us go.' And Kasitile softened it by addressing Njobokosa and his fellows: 'But Njobokosa have you cattle?' 'Yes!'

'And has Kimogota got some?'

'Yes.'

'Well, then, is it you who will seek this cow?'

'No!'

'Indeed, it hurts Mwakagile' (116, identified with his grandfather 59) [i.e. it hurts him to have to spend his cows].

'Do not "cut leaves at home" [i.e. summon a crowd and discuss the matter publicly], he will be startled, he will swear at us, speak with him privately.' [576]

So they went off. Jane (wife of Kasitile, 86) took the breast of beef to Mwaipopo's (116) place. One leg went to the priests, Njobokosa, Ngulyo, and Kimogota, one to Mwamakunda and Ndisu (Kasitile's kinsman), and another kinsman who was not present, the hump and neck were sent to me; and two legs and the chine were kept for Kasitile himself and his female relatives.

A couple of weeks later, when Kasitile came to visit, he explained one or two points in the ritual. Asked about Mwamakunda's forceful words 'Why do you shut up words in the heart?' and the reply of Kimogota and Njobokosa, he said: 'That is very important. Mwamakunda is my man, he stands by me, he eats meat with me, he compelled

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 them to speak out, because if they do not admit that it is they, then the
782 ritual fails.'

QUESTION: What does that mean?

KASYULE: It is witchcraft!

754 QUESTION: Witchcraft? (in apparent surprise).

KASYULE: Yes, it is their witchcraft, the priests gathered with the shade, they bring a chill on my body.

QUESTION: Pythons? (still in surprise).

KASYULE: Yes, they fly in their witchcraft to come here, they speak
[775] with the shades, saying: 'Punish him! Let him find us something to eat!' They call the shades to help. Hence I sought something for them to eat that they should be satisfied.

QUESTION: But I thought witchcraft and the shades were quite separate? (still in apparent surprise).

KASYULE: No, they are together, look you, did not Kimagota boast? He said, 'Indeed we came, it is us, it is us. Why did you cut that branch? But now there is no accusation against you.' He boasted very much. He said: 'We have power, if we like we can give him worms.' [It is Njahokona who was heard to say this, but Kasyule's personal quarrel was with Kimagota.] Did I not tell you that I had worms when I came up from the plain? I had them! I went to doctors and the diviners said: 'You are a chief, you were in the plain, why do you not kill a bull on your return?' Then when I killed a bull the worms disappeared! Where did they come from? They came from the priests, they called the shades to their aid. So I admitted to Kimagota, saying: 'Indeed I have done wrong, I your wife, I Molobo' (M, the feminine form of the name is used).

QUESTION: So, a white person (*umuzungu*, *vide infra*, p. 141) cannot be a priest, but only a witch, a heavy one?

KASYULE: Yes, indeed, how can a white person take hold of the ritual? His fellows will drive him away. See! To a ritual do we call everyone?

No!

KASYULE: And is my home near to Kimagota's?

No, he lives at a distance.

KASYULE: Yes, indeed, it is the black ones (*batile*) whom we call because it is they who punish us chiefs.

[668] QUESTION: Well, then, is the anger of the shades always provoked by the witches? What about sores (*imisale*) on the mouth?[1] What about
[775] madness if a commoner does not perform the death ritual?

KASYULE: No, I do not lie, that is different. Sores on the mouth come
[753] from the shades, the witches are not there, and if a commoner fails to perform the ritual, madness also comes from the shades, it comes

[1] Cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 181, 219.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 but I see them. It's taboo to speak. They must seek blood and they go
775 off; we fear them!

Question: Why do you chiefs never speak out if you are throttled?

753 Kasyula: If I speak how many would there be to name? Very many!
[649] For us it's taboo to accuse a man of witchcraft, but the commoners
[554] accuse one another. Look you, do few people keep you company?
Many!

Like us chiefs, everyone comes. It's taboo for us to speak out, we
'see' [illegible] you; [illegible] [illegible] and I were alone
we feared to throw out the beer, we said: 'If we throw it out will they
leave?' But when Kimagota came, he said: 'All right, I will throw it
[952] out myself.' We fear the fierce great priests, the terrible witches, they
are angry.[1] We shrink when they appear.

[622] The village headmen of the country call on the priests for help
against us, they whisper by the fire, the priests come in their witchcraft,
[793] they call on my shades saying, 'Let us punish him', also they eat,
together with the shades. Our shades never initiate anything, never;
they look to the priests. But with a commoner the shade may initiate
matters himself. Yes, people whisper indeed, but is that witchcraft?
No! They whisper openly and ask, 'Why did you not perform the
ritual?' But even although people are silent, still the shade comes
[688] saying, 'Why did you not perform the ritual? I am on the road.' He
initiates the thing himself.

Question: But don't people eat meat at the ritual of a commoner?

Kasyula: Yes, and if he does not celebrate it they accuse him, but they
accuse him openly.

Question: If the heir buries him with a few cattle?

688 Kasyula: If a rich commoner dies and the heir buries him with only
775 one cow, the shades are angry and the people also; their chilling
774 breath comes on his body, perhaps he falls ill himself, perhaps his
child falls ill, but the people and witches do not meet together, people
are angry here, and the shades there; all of them and the shades too,
because he has celebrated with one cow only. People are angry because
[787] they wish to eat the meat. But the oracle says, 'The shades are angry.'
It does not speak of people, it knows that people also are angry, but
it speaks of the shades. And at the celebration he prays in the evening,
the next day he calls people and kills a cow, and throws the sacred
[783] meat in the banana grove, saying, 'Here is your meat, father.' People
say, 'Indeed he did wrong, his father was angry', but they do not
confess saying, 'It was we', no, they say 'the shades' . . .

[826] We chiefs have bodies which are different, the commoners arrived
[554] first in the country, they ate raw food, we fear them saying, 'They eat
raw food.' It is we who followed and brought fire. To us they confess

[1] *Amapepo makali mikululu.* The noun class implies size, ferocity, and dislike.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(their witchcraft); to each other they say: 'It is your father.' Because if they confess to a fellow commoner saying, 'It is we', he says, 'You are "eating" me, drink the ordeal'. The witch is driven out. But to us they admit saying, 'It was we who were angry.' They do not fear us. Commoners are the seniors in the country; they arrived first.

It will be remembered that the commoners are spoken of as 'black people' (*abatitu*) and that the first chiefs were 'pale' (*mwelu*) but these words also have moral implications. 'It is said that a person "has a black heart" or "has black blood", or "is black in his face towards us" when he is thought to be a witch, eating his fellows, or when he is a thief, or a liar, or an adulterer, or dirty. Even though his body is light coloured (*mwelu*) the word "black" (*ntitu*) is used of him metaphorically.' And *mwelu* implies innocent, pure, as well as light in colour. The comparable symbolism of 'nigger' and 'white man' is all too familiar in Johannesburg or Charleston.

That Kasitile himself was much afraid of the commoner chiefs and was relieved by the 'speaking out' was clear, and the people of the country as a whole were glad that the ritual had been celebrated, for they expected an increase in fertility. Some days later Mwakyonde (148), came in and said, laughing, but half serious: 'Congratulations, Mwaipaja (G.W.). You have celebrated the ritual, we rejoice greatly, you give us fertility of the soil, you are a great priest.'

In some moods Kasitile was inclined to become a Christian, but he felt an obligation to the country as priest, and believed too strongly in the efficacy of the traditional rituals to abandon them. He said to G.W. one day, over a pot of beer: 'If it were not for the ritual I would get you to speak to the Europeans of the mission, and I would go with my wife Jane, and be baptized. If my son was old enough and had agreed to carry on the ritual I would do it; perhaps I will when I am old. . . . It is good to have one's heart washed clean, we are dirty inside. The Christians say to us: "You with your four wives each, you are all dirty, you love one and squabble with the rest." Well, it is so with me, I love Jane only; I would like to go and be baptized with her. But I fear for the ritual, I fear hunger, the hunger of the people. For I am the food of the country, I am the maker of food.'

We left Selya shortly after this and were not able to observe the effect of the ritual on political relationships in Selya. Kasitile lived another seventeen years, duly performing his functions, and in 1954 he was succeeded by his brother's son, James.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

amasaga and men should be *mawle*, pure, innocent, without anger in their hearts. But, as has been shown, this quality of purity is the very *opposite* of spiritual power (*amasaga* or *ubusiya*). It is attributed neither to Kyala and the other heroes nor to the priests; according to Kasitile (p. 158) a pure person cannot be a commoner priest and the chiefs themselves, though *mawle*—pale—by comparison with the black commoners who are witches, are also 'heavy' (*asite*) with the medicines they have drunk. Men become *mawle* by confession; 'speaking out' is a condition of efficacy in sacrifice and the officiant blows out water as a symbol of bringing up all the anger that was in his heart. The parents of twins and the priests of Lubaga, having celebrated their awful rituals emerge, crying, '*Tali bela*'—we are pure. The very quality which rituals produce in men is the *opposite* of that which characterises their heroes, their priests, and their rulers. Galahad whose 'strength was as the strength of ten because his heart was pure' is wholly foreign to Nyakyusa thought. 769 753

Truthfulness was never mentioned as a characteristic of the righteous or the pure, nor is it a quality of the heroes or priests. Men censure one another for *ulutengala* which is commonly translated as 'lying', but means rather 'speaking indiscreetly'. In one Nyakyusa text the child who is told certain ritual secrets by his father and reveals them when he should not is *utengala*, and this is an accepted use of the word. No burning concern with truth or falsehood is apparent in the Nyakyusa tradition though they are passionately interested in what they conceive to be right and wrong. [577]

The conception of witchcraft and sorcery implies a freedom, a choice of good or evil, for the individual. Much is determined. In Nyakyusa thought, the sins of the fathers are visited on the children, and a child may fall ill because his great-grandfather shed blood or was bound with ropes, and was not adequately cleansed, or because his father has neglected a ward; moreover, kinsmen are 'members one of another', and a ritual neglected by one may bring suffering to others; but there is also the notion of individual responsibility. A witch or sorcerer acts consciously and voluntarily—our informants scouted the idea of a witch being unaware of his actions—and he may repent and desist. There are now, periodically in Africa, 'revivalist' movements in which a pagan doctor or diviner urges men to throw away their evil medicines and repent from their witchcraft. One such movement [754] [688] [777]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

elder watches over the morals of his flock and it is his duty to report to the Session any breaches of Church law among his people. Through him the cards entitling members to attend communion are distributed, and cards are withheld from those whom the Session has agreed must be suspended from membership. Each man has, on the average, 125 people to care for. The women elders organize the women's weekly meetings, and take parties of women on preaching tours in pagan villages. They are the leaders in any charitable activities of the congregation and in the instruction of a Christian girl at her marriage. A woman elder settles disputes between two women, and in family quarrels she is often asked by the elder in charge of the village to help him to reconcile the couple. She is also a supervisor of morals and reports to the local elder if she 'hears any woman speaking like a pagan'. Deacons are elected like elders and are primarily responsible for the collection of Church dues and the administration of Church funds, but in a village in which there is no elder a deacon will carry out some of his duties.

In practice, then, each local group—a Christian village or village section—has its chosen leader, a male elder or deacon who conducts daily prayers in the local school house or his own home, and also fulfils many of the functions of an assistant village headman, arbitrating in disputes and acting as the spokesman of his village section. The traditional organization of the age-villages, in which an individual had some choice as to the village he should join, and was not bound by kinship connexions, makes an adaptation to villages in which those of the same faith live together easy. It is noticeable that the Pentecostal and Watch Tower converts build their own village sections apart from Moravians or Lutherans. And since the traditional village leaders are chosen, not hereditary, it is very easy for a leading Christian to become an assistant headman, more or less formally recognized by the village headman named at the 'coming out'.

At first the teachers were more directly under the supervision of the missionary than of the congregation, being selected by him and paid by the mission, but in the middle thirties, when funds from Germany ceased coming to the Moravian and Lutheran missions, the payment of village school teachers fell on the congregations of these denominations. Each village wanting a school had to provide a building, and in this pagans and Christians often co-operated, for many pagans also wanted their children to

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

there?" And after he went there was much food.' In fact, it appears that he took the teachers and schoolchildren to the grove that they might no longer be afraid of it: the girls gathered firewood there, and everyone entered and made a noise, thus breaking great taboos. But all this happened long ago (the visit to Mbyanga was in 1913 or 1914) and, as was indicated earlier, the common view among Christians is that pagan rituals *used* to be necessary and efficacious, but are so no longer. We were assured by Christians who themselves took no part in twin rituals that 'formerly people fell ill if they did not celebrate'. 'Yes, of course, they were very sick indeed in the old days, the whole body would swell.' Some even maintained that it was still necessary for pagans to celebrate though not for Christians. A Christian chief explained:

> The sacred grove of Mwakihaba is just here in my country; . . . in the old days they used to take a little fresh milk and an unripe stem of bananas, and put them in the grove. . . . The next day the calabash was full of milk and the stem was ripe. This was really so in the old days, Kyala heard men and agreed to their requests in this way. We went to ask for rain and food in the groves; the chief would kill a cow and Kyala agreed, food and rain came. Now that the Gospel has spread, since the Europeans have opened the Gospel to us Kyala refuses to agree, he says: 'Since they are proud and refuse to hear the Gospel I will discipline them', and he refuses to agree to the old ways.
>
> Question: What about witchcraft?
>
> Perhaps there were people who were witches in the old days; at any rate I know that when milk ran short and a man was accused to the chief of bewitching the cattle, the chief used to take his cattle and drive him out of the country, and then milk was plentiful again. Of that I am sure.
>
> Question: And now?
>
> No, it is not like that now.

Many pagans attribute the decline in fertility which is taking place, and the decrease in the yield of milk, to the decay of the old communal rituals and the unhampered activities of witches.

Nevertheless, as the number of Christians in an area increases, the pagans tend to curtail their rituals more and more. The direct parallel between pagan confession, sacrifice, and communion with the shades, and the Holy Communion of the Christian Church is recognized by many, and one is felt to replace the other. Regarding the rituals of kinship we were repeatedly told: 'We see that the Christians, who say the only rituals are the

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

succession of 'sun', 'rain' and 'cold' into which the Nyakyusa year is divided; but there are parallels in the traditional prayers for rain, and at seedtime and harvest, which the Christians are quick to point out. What is totally new to the Nyakyusa is the division of a year into weeks, each with a day of rest and worship; but the conception once introduced has been accepted very quickly, and it is common to find pagans as well as Christians refraining from work in their fields on a Sunday. This is partly the effect of experience in European employment when Sunday is a day off, but partly, perhaps, it is because the idea of taboo is deeply embedded in pagan thought, and the teaching of some missionaries and converts has been in terms of taboo—of prohibitions connected with 'the Sabbath'.

In the Christian villages and village-sections, some at least of the converts gather for morning and evening prayer and on Sundays in their little mud Church or school-house, and once a month or once a quarter they gather in the main Church of the district. Besides this, those seeking baptism or preparing for confirmation gather for regular weekly instruction over a period of two or three years. There is thus regular common worship and instruction, and a strong sense of community between fellow Christians, particularly when they are in a small minority in an area.

But though the Christian is a member of a Church and worships in community, the emphasis (at least in the Protestant Churches in BuNyakyusa) tends to be on the individual, and some pagans spoke as if turning Christian implied an abandoning of public duties. Kasitile's remark that if it were not for his responsibility for the ritual he would be baptized, has already been quoted (p. 141), and the young priest of PulKyala said the same. Whether these two were serious in wishing to become Christian is irrelevant here; they both believed that they had duties to their community which could not be fulfilled if they were Christians. The 'individualism' of young Christians is a matter of concern to many missionaries who are struggling to create among Christians that very sense of mystical union which pagan kinsmen exhibit.

The idea of the corporate nature of the worshipping group, with all that implies in mutual responsibility, is but one example of the profound similarity between the underlying ideas of pagan and Christian ritual that will be apparent to most readers. In the pagan tradition confession, oblation, and communion are as essential to the sacrifices at the graves as they are to the Christian eucharist;

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Yes, indeed, they boast, they say threateningly (she put her arms akimbo, and imitated a menacing voice) 'Don't speak to me like that!' 797x 795x

All through this discussion Y was excited and spoke with vehemence. Next day she came in looking worried and said: 754

About that choking of which I was telling you, what do *you* think it is when you wake up with pains like that? I'll tell you how it was. I went to see my sister, and found her very ill. She had had a miscarriage and her in-laws had not looked after her properly; they had not sent her to hospital, and when she was lying ill her mother-in-law even refused to come and cook for her. And so I was very, very angry with them. And that night I woke up feeling as if someone were stamping on my head, and I heard the knocking on the door and the footsteps I told you about. What do you make of such things when you dream someone strikes you or is throttling you?

The conception that misfortune is the result of sin, which dominates pagan thought, is reinterpreted in terms of the changing conception of God and the changing social structure. We found that many Christians believed that misfortune had been brought on certain wrong-doers by the 'curse' (*ikiguse*) of a priest or elder, or the anger of their Christian neighbours. A missionary or elder rebuking a man was repeatedly thought to have 'cursed' him,[1] so that he lost his job, or fell ill, or was eaten by a crocodile, and in one case a young couple who had not had a child were said to have been cursed by their Christian neighbours because the young man had provided no feast at his wedding. The Christians who believe in such a 'curse' explain that the power comes from God who 'hears people who murmur'—a direct parallel to the pagan belief in the power of senior relatives and neighbours to bring misfortune on wrong-doers—and it is the *words uttered*—the rebuke of one in authority or the murmuring of neighbours—which are held to be dangerous. [688] [578]

How the reproving words of a missionary may be interpreted as a curse is shown in the following case.

The wife of Z was a thief. She stole things from the loft of her mother-in-law's hut. She herself began to say: 'I am tired of my husband', and she began making love to other men. When her husband asked her to do anything she refused. She complained to neighbours, saying: 'My husband is a hard man. He watches me when I am preparing food to

[1] Thirteen cases of this type are recorded in *Good Company*, p. 109, cf. Monica Hunter, 'An African Christian Morality', *Africa*, 9 (1936), pp. 265-9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

one of the early missionaries the sons of leading men had been 797x
sent to Kondowe to be educated and their influence had been 795x
important in gaining the support of the Kyungu and chiefs for the mission.

In the second generation of Christians not nearly all those baptized in infancy come to be confirmed or 'blessed'—an elder in Ngonde put it at about half. There is, therefore, a large group of people who have been Church members and have been struck off the Church register because they have married a second wife or committed adultery or become drunkards, and show no sign of repentance, and of those who have grown up as Christians, but have not maintained any connexion with a Church in later life. [688]

So far we have talked of Christian rituals and dogma in terms of the three mission Churches whose converts form the great bulk of Christians: differences between them are negligible. The doctrinal differences between Protestant and Roman Catholic do not bulk large to the Nyakyusa, and since the Roman Catholic Church had not been operating for any long period among them and had a membership of under 1,000, many of whom were Ngoni from Songea or Kisi, who had settled in Tukuyu district, it was not possible to make any adequate comparison of the differences between Protestant and Catholic groups.

Two small Churches, the Pentecostal Holiness and the Watch Tower, had certain peculiarities. The Pentecostal Holiness Church holds highly emotional services at which members are expected to 'speak with tongues'; during prayers the whole congregation begins to jabber, each man usually being unintelligible to his neighbour, though words of other languages can be distinguished. Our informants maintained that the attraction of the Church was that its members seemed to 'have more of the Holy Ghost', as demonstrated by the 'speaking with tongues', though the more cynical of outsiders mentioned also 'the loaves and fishes'—cheaper Bibles, and the fact that the European leader was the largest employer of labour in the district and those who belonged to his Church got on best with him. Many of the members had formerly been Moravians. Its rules were strict: members were not permitted to smoke or drink, or use any Nyakyusa medicines. [781] [778] [466] [715]

The Watch Tower members emphasized that their Church, through its leader, Judge Rutherford, interpreted prophecy in a way in which no other Church could do. They practised baptism [852]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

x797 by immersion and were strict about not eating the flesh of animals
x795 without a cloven hoof, and avoiding beer, but made a point of not
being sabbatarian and working in their fields on Sundays—
[952] these were the things they emphasized to us. They were also
262 pacifist and would not join the Police or King's African Rifles,
[688] since Rutherford taught that all Government was evil.
[668]

(d) 'INDEPENDENT' AFRICAN CHURCHES

There is a great cleavage between the mission Churches and the 'independent' African Churches, which also claim to be Christian, read the Gospels at their services, and recite the Apostles' creed, but whose rules of life are avowedly based on the Old Testament rather than the New (*vide* p. 191). Both the 'independent'
[595] Churches operating in BuNyakyusa approve polygyny; the bulk of their members are middle-aged polygynists and they have at least as many men as women among them. Nyasuru's statement on polygyny was interesting:

> When we young men went to join the mission we found that many of our fathers were attracted by it. They said to us: 'If only the Europeans would let us come in with all our wives we would come.' . . . Sometimes it would happen that the son of an old man's second wife would join the mission and become a preacher and he would preach even to his father, saying: 'You pagans do wrong, you marry many women, you must repent, your ways are evil.' Then his father would say to him: 'On the contrary, it is not I who do wrong, if I had married only one wife you would never have been born, and you young men take one wife only and then what happens? You steal other men's wives,
> [684] continually, in secret, and the country is full of lawsuits about women. It is our custom which is good.' . . . And so we, now, we have our Church and our fathers come in with us. It is our aim to take the old people with us, not ourselves to go forward alone. All the other matters which the missionaries brought to us we think are good, only this European custom of marriage is difficult.

[595] Nyasuru and Ngemela had both been suspended from the
[688] Church of Scotland Mission for marrying second wives, and Nyasuru, a man of fifty-three, had four wives when we knew him. He kindly provided us with a copy of a statement on the beliefs and constitution of the African National Church, which is worth quoting in full:

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

A 779 797 x 795 [681]

during worshipping hours, but shall reserve same until evening when worshipping is over.

Any member found contravening these rules shall be dealt with by the Session and if found guilty shall be suspended or expelled from the Church.

The term of Chairman for the Annual Conference shall be two years, but he shall be elected again if required.

The Annual General Conference shall be composed of a body of men chosen from each division, viz. Pastors, Elders, Deacons, and other notable men.

A general confession with words and music composed by one of the Pastors of the African National Church, Robert Sambo, is used as an alternative to the Ten Commandments. Nyasuru translated it for us from the original Tumbuka.

[783] Jehovah God we have come before Thee to worship and to confess our sins which we have done during the week.

[688] *Response:* May they all go away (*fyusa filakage*).[1]

We have sinned before Thee in speaking to people, we have offended Thy creatures, we have spoken bad words, we have grieved their hearts, Father.

May they all go away.

We have sinned against Thee in thoughts coveting the wives and husbands of others; we have broken the Ten Commandments, Father. We have done wrong in our village, Father. Witchcraft, adultery, and hatred, all these are in our village. We pray forgive all, Father.

May they all go away.

Our chiefs do not love one another in their hearts. Take such hearts from them and give them one heart.

May they all go away.

A new commandment you have given unto us all to love one another as in Heaven, where there is no quarrelling. Teach us all to keep Thy Word, Father.

May they all go away.

That our chiefs may be one in loving and ruling their country and their people, and lead us all well. This we pray, father, grant us.

May they all go away.

The old worship is broken down; we have come as wild animals which are without God. Call us again to worship, Father.

May they all go away.

Africa is the land of our forefathers. We have damaged her with our new ways, by leaving all the ways of our forefathers, ways which gave peace to the country, Father.

[1] The phrase used in the pagan ritual for cleansing the country, cf. p. 105.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

May they all go away.

Our Church is calling everyone to come in so that the house of marriage may be filled. It is Thy work to give them[1] all new dresses.

May they all go away.

We are taking beer as wild animals; we forget worship which is our life. Teach us to drink beer moderately, Father.

May they all go away.

We have forgotten all the laws You gave to our forefathers. We have married women by snatching. Turn us to a life of new marriages according to the ways of our forefathers, Father.

May they all go away.

Father, Son and Holy Ghost, One God, ever and ever. Do unto us according to what we have said. Amen, amen, amen.

In spite of the assertion in the constitution that the rules of faith are based on the first five books of the Bible, a sermon we heard was based on New Testament parables; candidates at baptism must give their assent to Apostles' creed; and the doctrine of the resurrection is preached at funerals, John xi. 25-6, and Job xix. 25-7, being read.

The African National Church has five schools at which half the fees charged in corresponding classes in mission schools are levied, but not all of them succeed in keeping their pupils. In 1937 there was a 'strike' by African National Church parents against sending their children to one school because 'the children of the leaders in this area are attending the Livingstonia schools and none goes to their own National Schools'.

The members of Ngemela's Church were less sophisticated than those of the African National Church and we heard of no written constitution. The services were also simpler. The only sermon we heard was on repentance.

Repent and repent soon; do not delay! Repent in your hearts! There is no virtue in baptism; it is just water; but let your hearts be washed clean. The world is full of things which excite wonder and envy. Many when they see the riches of their fellow say to themselves: 'I will go and steal his things', but we must not do that. Many go and commit adultery in the long grass, but we must not do that. God has sent us the Gospel. These are the words of Christ and none other are his words (holding up the New Testament). Our Fathers had never heard of it, but we have, and Christ calls us to repent. In the old days when a

[1] Referring, Nyamuru said, to the wives of polygynists. Many women in Ngonde objected to polygyny on the ground that where there were several wives they were not properly clothed.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

stranger came through the country our fathers lay in wait for him and killed him, but we are learning and have to learn to give him food and a night's shelter. Repent and let your hearts be washed!

We differ from other Christians because we baptize in Jordan, and they baptize in a dish in the church. They say we are wrong, but we say we do what Christ told us to do. They also say we are wrong to marry more than one wife. The words we say are just the same as the creed of those at Kabembe (i.e. Lutherans) with two differences, that of baptism and that of having more than one wife.

Communion services are celebrated half-yearly at each of several different centres by the leaders of the 'independent' Churches, and since they are unable to obtain wine, sweet tea or a light beer are used instead.

The members of Ngemela's Church contribute to buy a bull and rice and beer, and share a feast together after a communion service, and it is alleged by outsiders, though stoutly denied by members, that these are 'love feasts' at which members exchange wives,[1] to show that they are 'one body'. The African National Church also holds feasts after services and some outsiders say these too are 'love feasts', but outside opinion on the African National Church's feasts was much less unanimous than about Ngemela's feasts. It is certain that in Ngemela's church men and women drink sitting together in a manner not conventional among the Nyakyusa. Members of the mission Churches spoke of members of the independent Churches as living 'just like pagans' and averred that, despite their polygyny, their members ran off with other men's wives and were scarcely disciplined for doing so.

It is also clear that the would-be members are baptized almost immediately, with no period of testing and instruction such as is insisted upon by the mission Churches; that very many of them are members who have been suspended by other Churches; and that the 'pastors' have no special training for their task.

Nyasuru's church attracted more educated people than did Ngemela's and, in terms of Dr. Sundkler's classification,[2] his was a typical Ethiopian Church with its emphasis on African nationalism. Ngemela, the son of a minor chief, behaved much like a chief and attracted the less educated. He emphasized 'washing' —baptism by immersion—and repentance, and he was peripatetic

[1] This is also alleged of the Watch Tower in Northern Rhodesia. cf. Ian Cunnison, 'A Watch Tower Assembly in Central Africa', *International Review of Missions*, xl (1951), p. 467.

[2] B. G. M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets*, Lutterworth Press (1948), pp. 55-9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

x 797 x 795 583 584 went away to work again and in time I earned four cows which I hid with friends far from home. My father knew nothing about them. Then I wrote to my father from Mwasebe [about twenty miles from where his father lived] where I was working, saying that I had found a girl there, the daughter of a Christian, and please could I have the cows with which to marry her? My father said: "No, she lives too far away." ' Then later he found a Christian girl of whom his father approved and a satisfactory marriage was arranged.

A common topic of discussion among Christian women was whether parents should choose mates for their children, or leave them free to choose for themselves, for though traditionally a girl had to signify her consent to marriage, she was betrothed very young and her freedom of choice was small. The growing insistence on personal freedom in marriage is symptomatic of a radical change in the attitude towards persons.

x 797 x 795 The pagan rituals were the main occasions of recreation. It has been shown, in *Rituals of Kinship*, how pagan funerals and marriages are the occasion for feasting and dancing and display, and how the [764] [585] seclusion hut of a nubile girl is the gathering place for the young men and girls of the neighbourhood. Even a twin ritual is a festival [782] with beer for the older men and some meat for everyone. The sacrifices at the groves were feasts for the leading men of the country, and the 'coming out' was the occasion of the greatest feast of the generation, and dances were practised for months [796] [688] ahead. Partly because of a change in sex morality, and partly because the meat and beer at pagan feasts are offered to the shades, Christians are largely excluded from these festivals. They may not participate in pagan dances, or join in the lewd songs, or attend the initiation hut of a girl, and they are partly debarred from the feasts of the pagans: certain of the Churches (notably the Church [273] of Scotland and, for a time, the Moravians) forbid Christians to drink beer at all.

[796] And the Christian rituals, though some of them are 'festivals of the Church', are scarcely celebrated as such. There has been a separation between ritual and recreation which has left a gap in the Christian community. It is true that the Christian young men [535] [684] and girls sing and dance at funerals and marriages, but the elders, for the most part, look on with dubious eyes, saying that dancing leads to adultery, and several of the dances introduced by

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

x 797 x 795 leap in sympathy; as one of our friends explained, she found it hard to accept food from the neighbouring Safwa who were 'so dirty in their cooking'.

[577] Both pagans and Christians pin their faith to resurrection, but the interpretations differ radically. To the pagan the shade is [775] resurrected 'in the body of his child', it scarcely has any separate existence. To Christians the personality, the individual soul, is something indestructible and continuing. This theological difference is but one facet of a deep cleavage between the pagan view of a man and his relations with his group, and the Christian view.

[783] Because the traditional religion is a cult of the shades, piety consists in doing just as father did. It is neglect of traditional rituals, departure from traditional ways, that is held to bring madness, sterility, or death. But Christianity is revolutionary; it is the yeast working in society to transform it. That is often forgotten in communities with a Christian tradition, but where the Gospel has been preached only for a generation and confessing Christians are but one in six, it is in men's minds all the time. The Nyakyusa could not be unaware that the Gospel implied changing their society.

[796] In the pagan tradition the meticulous performance of the rituals is stressed: the right medicines; the right persons; the right order of [688] events are all important. The attitude of mind of the participants matters also—if they are on bad terms the ritual will be ineffective —but goodwill and forgiveness alone are useless without the performance of the proper ritual. In the Christian tradition, as interpreted to us by Nyakyusa converts, it is the inward and spiritual attitude of the participants that is stressed.

Finally, all the pagan rituals are directed to driving off the [771] shades or the heroes, whereas the Christian rituals are the 'means of grace', of coming near to God. Christians pray that the Holy Spirit should take up his abode within them; they seek to emulate the saints who 'walked with God'. Our Christian friends were quite clear about the contrast here between the pagan and Christian tradition: it is crystallized in the attitude to dreams: if a pagan dreams of converse (*ukwangala*) with shades, he fears death; 'if a Christian dreams of converse with God he rejoices greatly because it means he is gaining strength in Christianity.'

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

when we went to a field I saw a stick of a special type upright in the soil. It was made of a reed split at the top, with a small bundle of leaves squeezed in the split. A piece of bark stood out from this bundle. I asked the chief for the significance of this and he explained that it was an *ulusingo*, i. e. a tabu sign to prevent anyone from stepping on the field which was an *imasibi* (yam-field). This sign was believed to possess "magical power", to strike an invader with illness. Each owner of a field has the right to protect his field in such a manner, and a chief especially has the right to command tabus regarding plants which are staple food for the whole chieftainship, as, for instance, maize that is not allowed to be reaped before the chief has given his permission. All such tabus are also named *mwiko*[22]. During the time of such a general tabu, visitors, who by chance come through a village under tabu, are not allowed to greet the inhabitants of the village or to speak to them. 241 784 [574]

The chief added that special watchmen are installed during these periods; these men are dressed in a terrifying manner, and have the right to arrest any person transgressing the tabu. The chief may punish the offenders immediately, imposing on them, for instance, a cow as a fine. This was also the case with an ordinary theft in a field, but nowadays such affairs are regulated by the law of the Mandated Government. After the repeal of such a general tabu by the chief, beer will be drunk (e. g. *ubwalwa bwa kutagila bwa kutondelo*, the beer that is poured out at the harvest), and the usual eating community of men will be re-established, for Nyakyusa men like to eat together as comrades, not in families. 241 688 784 [178] [264]

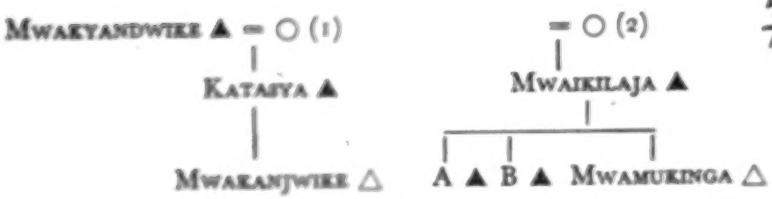
10. When I was in Katumba, dances were held on several days from the afternoon till midnight, very similar in form to that which Mackenzie describes (p. 160) by the name *Ikimbimbi*. 535

The men stood on one side of the open place in several lines, with sticks in their hands; on the opposite side were the women and girls. Between them, more in the background, were the drummers, at the beginning of the dance; then they moved round the place. The principal drummer was a man of great excitability. He performed most extravagant movements with his body and his drumstick, making somersaults, jumping over the drum, treating it as a "living being", running to it and turning just in front of it.

[22] This word *mwiko* (forbidden) has the same wide (profane and ritual) meanings as *tapu* or *tabu* in the Polynesian Languages (cf. *Rud. Lehmann*: Die polynesischen Tabu-Sitten. Stastl. Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde I, 16; Leipzig 1938).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

 428 754



Mwaikilaja, the son of the junior wife, inherited, because when their father, Mwakyandwike, died, Katasya, the son of the senior wife, was a child. Mwamukinga is accused of killing Katasya by sorcery.

Mwakwelebeja came in to take me to the funeral of Katasya. 'It is 764
not the day of burial to-day, but the day of war. On the day of burial they weep very much and it does not go well (*jikanoga*) but to-day it will be well performed.' He was eager and excited at the prospect of good dancing. 'The chief Mwabuga from Masoko, his son-in-law, is coming. He is coming with his drums. The people of Masoko dance well.' At first I refused to go, but he would take no refusal. 'You must come,' he insisted, so finally I went.

On the way we discussed the cause of death. Some say the witches 761
have eaten him. They say that Mwainyopolela is angry on account of the meat. Some say it is the sorcery of Mwaihojo (the chief) because Katasya (a man of Chief Mwaipopo) hoed a big area in the disputed ground. He built a temporary hut and lived there. But we say no. If they had roused up a war between the witches, would they not have gone to Mwakagile (Chief Mwaipopo) and his fellows? But we have not done that. We argue and say: 'Why are you taking our country?' but we are only fighting with words.

QUESTION: The war of the witches?

MWAKWELEBEJA: Yes, the war when they call the witches of a chief- 754
dom by night to fight against those of another chiefdom. But Katasya 721
was indeed wrong to stint his neighbours in Busikali of meat. If he had 689
been wise he would have given them a leg. Mwainyopolela is very generous. Always when he kills a beast he shares the meat with his fellows.

We arrived at the funeral. The women were packed together under a 764
tree to the left, where they [illegible]at with the corpse yesterday. The girls and young women stood wat[illegible]ng the dance and occasionally strolling rhythmically out into the midst of it. The errant son was with the other men to-day. The son-in-law from Masoko came with all his cattle (seven cows, one bull and five calves) of which one will be killed and the others returned. The bull was unusually large with an enormous hump and it caused comment. It was well known. They told each other how, when his father, Mwakabulwa, died, this bull was quiescent. It did not move about at all, and it was a very small calf. It was quiescent

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 too hard to dig graves in'. They and their successors were all
778 buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves
[766] trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. . . . We traced sixteen groves in the plain surrounding Mbande and the nobles who pointed them out remembered participating in celebrations at all except that of the last Kyungu. The ruling Kyungu and the spirits of his
[769] dead predecessors were believed to form one divine company, the anger of any one of whom had terrible effects, and both living and dead were placated with offerings.

778 In time of drought the nobles of Ngonde would go to a diviner
787 to inquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the
782 names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would tell them that it was so and so. They would inform the living
821 Kyungu and he would give them a bull or a sheep, together with some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own
643 house, brought by his people as tribute. And he would give them some flour and cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove and build a miniature hut. Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fasten some of the pieces on to the hut in the grove—an action they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And finally, they would pour out some of the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a hut and make an offering in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

643 But occasionally, if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the
688 Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself
787 who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any
689 of them: 'No . . . no.' And at length he would tell them that it
821 was the living Kyungu who was angry because so-and-so had insulted him. Then there would be no sacrifice at the grove at all, but the nobles of Ngonde would go to the one who had insulted the Kyungu and charge him with it, asking him what he meant by thus killing them all, would not the whole land starve? And
643 so the wrongdoer would take a cow to the Kyungu who, there-
821 upon, would address the nobles of Ngonde, saying: 'If it was my

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F717 Ngonde F717
Nyakyusa

began to prepare my rain, and made the country good. Food started to be plentiful. Why should I be treated thus? I asked. And the shades and Kyala heard me, so it rained *heavily* (too much). Do I grow angry by my own power? I do, and I put the rain stones in water, and when Kyala hears me then it rains too much, my anger has results; but if Kyala does not agree then, when I go the next day to the grove, I find there is no water in the potsherd. . . . I work by Kyala's power; when water is in the sherd I know it is he who has helped me. . . . We don't do it ourselves, it rains if the shades and Kyala help us. I cannot say that I do things alone without their help, it is they who give me breath (*imkepe*) and when they help I feel the power, the rain will fall very heavily. . . .

789 [775]

The way in which the weather was connected by the people of Selya with Kasitile is illustrated by the following entry in Godfrey Wilson's note-book:

Mwaipopo the chief had omitted to tell Kasitile formally that their kinsman, Mwaikyambe, had died. Kasitile had come to the funeral in the morning, and gone off in a huff saying, 'They did not tell me.' Mwaipopo then sent Ngulyo (the priest) after him with 1s. to pacify him. 'Yes, he paid because he had wronged his father.' Kasitile accepted the 1s. and came back. There had been rain during the night, but the early morning was fine. About 11 a.m. it began to rain, softly at first and then hard. I was in Mwaipopo's house drinking beer. They discussed the rain, hinting that it was caused by Kasitile. 'That Kasitile' was the most direct hint I heard. But they discussed the fact that 'this morning it was raining at Kasitile's,' i.e. that the rain began there and spread over the country. The rain was coming from that direction, it was true, but the morning at Kasitile's had been fine. Ngulyo said, 'When I got to Kasitile's place there was rain.' Suddenly there was a hush and someone whispered: 'Sshh! He is at the door, he is coming in', and Kasitile came in. Mwaipopo apologized again, through Ngulyo, for having omitted to call him: 'I had just got back from Tukuyu, I was surprised that no one had told you, Mwakisambwe (identifying Kasitile with his great-grandfather *qv*). You too, Ngulyo and Kisongoza, are at fault, you should have told him. When I got to the funeral this morning and was told that Mwakisambwe had gone away again saying no one had told him then I sent you to tell him.' All this was said in a rather plaintive voice to Ngulyo, Kasitile being next Ngulyo. Kasitile said nothing. At noon, when we got up and went out, the rain had lessened, and it stopped almost at once. On my way back from the funeral later, I heard one of the young men, a son of Mwaipopo, who was with me, say to the other: 'Kasitile has forgiven, but only partially, the rain has spoilt the ritual.' About 1 p.m. the

[649]

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3517 Ngonde F3517
Nyakyusa

illness to neglect of his duty to the Kings. All the time we were in BuNyakyusa he was ailing—possibly he suffered from tuberculosis—and one wrongdoing after another was suggested as the cause of his illness. 793 755 [753]

His case is intelligible only in terms of the conception of 'the breath of men', that is, a power akin to witchcraft thought to be legitimately exercised by village headmen and others to punish wrongdoers, but which is referred to by the victims as 'witchcraft'. This has been discussed at length elsewhere.[1] [754]

On 2nd July 1955, Kasitile had left his own house and was living with a friend in a neighbouring village. His doctor, Mwakyonde, said that he was being 'threatened by the witches' and had invited him to come and recollect himself (*ukwipelekeya*) in the tranquillity of a village of another chiefdom in which there were many people with spiritual power (*ukwanga*) so that 'the witches' could not get at him. This is a common precaution in case of illness, for witches are thought not to have power ordinarily outside their own village and never beyond the chiefdom.[2] 793 754

The cause of the illness was explained as follows: Kasitile had quarrelled with Kisengwa, the commoner priest, and others of the principal men of the country, because he had found them drinking the sacred beer (*ukwikoma*), brewed after the millet harvest (*vide supra*, pp. 84-5) without telling him, or sending him the pot which was his due. They invited him to drink, but he refused and they each sent him 1*s.* to beg pardon. Kasitile bought beer with one of the shillings and called the senior commoner priest, Ngalyo, and his fellows to drink saying, 'I was angry, friends, you "overstepped" me' (*i.e.* they had ignored his rights). He himself should have brewed when he confirmed his anger, and slaughtered a calf or prepared food for them as well, but he had bought only one shilling's worth of beer and provided nothing himself. Then, when they had drunk, Kasitile fell ill. Hence it was said that the commoner priests were angry and 'ate' (*i.e.* bewitched) him. Kasitile's own comment was: 'The fault lies with the young priests (Ngalyo, a young man, had inherited his father's position), they are useless as priests . . . I was not told of that ritual beer, yet the medicine comes from me, from this home where I keep it. They should have come to me to get it and put it with the millet in the holy pot. They drank the beer without medicine. It is they who have brought cold and hunger on the country. I think the 578 753 [649] [751] 789

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 91-101, 1959. [2] *op. cit.*, pp. 100-5.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

younger one' gossips with her fellow, she does not go to the witches herself, but just talks to the other wife who calls the witches to her aid. These two wives say: 'The favourite has borne many children to her husband; we are poor' [i.e. the favourite gets an unfair share of her husband's attentions].

Kasitile speaks of his wives as 'witches' which, according to Nyakyusa ideas, they were, if they injured him, but he was also in the wrong to have shown his preference for Jane so clearly. As was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*, the shades are thought to punish such favouritism.

Towards the end of August Kasitile went to consult Ndembwe, a diviner and doctor, living nearly a day's journey away in the hills, who used a 'stick in the ground' as a divining rod. On his return Kasitile reported:

Ndembwe says it's the 'breath of men', not the wives, but the dispute about the beer. I paid him 1s. and drank three preparations of medicine at his place. He is coming here—I have found some beer and I am sending to call him tomorrow. Then Kasitile added confidentially: About the source of the 'breath' I am uncertain. Ndembwe suggested testing my wives. He can see the heavy ones, for in Ndali country he has drunk much medicine to give him spiritual power (*amangwe*). He told me to come home, not to go back to Mwakyonde's country, and he is coming to give me medicine to drink and also to sprinkle medicine in the house. He will sleep here and see who it is that comes—he will know if the wives are heavy, or if it is the people of the country.

Kasitile's uncertainty was apparent. The first diviner had stated clearly that the sickness came from the witchcraft of the wives, but Kasitile wanted a further test.

We were away from Selya for some time and did not hear of any further developments in Kasitile's illness until early in 1937. By then a new reason for his ill-health had been put forward, viz. his impiety in cutting all the branches off a tree growing at the entrance to a sacred grove which has sprung up over his father's grave. He cut the tree because it was encroaching on his homestead. Then he fell ill and he went to consult Ndembwe again.

He asked me: 'Have you done something wrong at home?' I replied: 'No, I have done nothing wrong.' 'But the oracle says you have done wrong at home.' I said: 'Perhaps it is because I cut a tree at the

[1] Name of the favourite Jane. To accuse Jane's sister would cast a slur on Jane, for witchcraft is normally hereditary.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

All the time there was a constant refrain of questioning, especially [783]
from Mwamakunda (who as Kasitule's assistant acts as his mouthpiece [782]
to the others: 'But why has Mwakanjoki (60) gone off in a huff? Why?'
There was a continuous effort to extract reasons.

The meat from the top of the fireing (*ipumuje*) was cut up into little portions and some was put aside for the boys, sons of Kasitule. Then Kasitule led the way with a bill-hook and Mwamakunda and I followed. Mwamakunda carried the meat in a leaf. We went to the [778] sacred grove, Kinyangwa. When we reached the edge Kasitule told us to wait and he cut a path into the middle with the bill-hook, then we followed.

Mwamakunda threw the meat slowly, piece by piece, into the rotting stump of an old *umuali* tree, from which a hairy growth had sprung, [769] one shoot being 30 feet high. Kasitule prayed: 'Come Mwakanjoki (60), together with Lwembe (37), Mwakalebela (19), and the Kings, come, with—with—with—come. We pray of you millet, maize, bananas, all your food.' (Mwamakunda threw a piece of meat at each word.) 'We are still mourning you, we have tears. We finish now, that is all. Bring bananas, bring millet, maize, children, may the cows calve, stand by us Mwakanjoki (60), N—, N—, N— Lwembe (37), Mwakalebela (19), Neyanigwe,[1] Kyambu Kitali,[1] Ngulube (9), N—, N—, N—. Don't come again Mwakanjoki, let us sleep well. This is Mwambagaje [i.e. Mwamakunda the younger. It was his first visit to the sacred grove in place of his father]. I have brought him to you. Do not be startled at this Mwaipaja (G.W.), he is innocent, he is our friend. Move out of my body, let this chill go from my body! We have finished! Amen!'

Kasitule and Mwamakunda gave instructions and suggestions to each other in low voices from time to time during the prayer and throwing of the meat. We went out, Kasitule and Mwamakunda looking ahead, and Kasitule warned me: 'Do not look behind, Mwaipaja.' For the next two days Kasitule said he and Mwamakunda would [734] wash with medicines, and refrain from intercourse with their wives 'because they entered the sacred grove'.

Then we rejoined Mwaipopo and the priests and the meat was cut up. Mwaipopo said: 'Indeed people gossip, where does the whispering go? To whom do the words go? Perhaps they went to you (the commoner) priests?' Kasitule had something on his mind: 'When I returned [689] from Lubaga who came to say: "Thank you, you have arrived back?"' [i.e. no one came to greet him formally on his return]. Njobakosa answered this saying that no offence was meant.

Then Njobakosa turned to Mwaipopo (116) and raised the question [684] of his son, Mwamba (150) who had seduced Mwaipopo's wife, Mpeta.

[1] The hereditary Kinga priests.

[793]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 but I see them. It's taboo to speak. They must seek blood and they go
775 off; we fear them!

753 QUESTION: Why do you chiefs never speak out if you are throttled?

KASITULE: If I speak how many would there be to name? Very many!

[689] For us it's taboo to accuse a man of witchcraft, but the commoners
[554] accuse one another. Look you, do few people keep you company?

Many!

Like us chiefs, everyone comes. It's taboo for us to speak out, we fear. Look you, when Mwambene (Mwaipopo 116) and I were alone we feared to throw out the beer, we said: 'If we throw it out will they leave?' But when Kimogota came, he said: 'All right, I will throw it
[152] out myself.' We fear the fierce great priests, the terrible witches, they are angry.[1] We shrink when they appear.

[622] The village headmen of the country call on the priests for help against us, they whisper by the fire, the priests come in their witchcraft,
[793] they call on my shades saying, 'Let us punish him', also they eat, together with the shades. Our shades never initiate anything, never; they look to the priests. But with a commoner the shade may initiate matters himself. Yes, people whisper indeed, but is that witchcraft? No! They whisper openly and ask, 'Why did you not perform the ritual?' But even although people are silent, still the shade comes
[688] saying, 'Why did you not perform the ritual? I am on the road.' He initiates the thing himself.

QUESTION: But don't people eat meat at the ritual of a commoner?

KASITULE: Yes, and if he does not celebrate it they accuse him, but they accuse him openly.

QUESTION: If the heir buries him with a few cattle?

688 KASITULE: If a rich commoner dies and the heir buries him with only
775 one cow, the shades are angry and the people also; their chilling
774 breath comes on his body, perhaps he falls ill himself, perhaps his child falls ill, but the people and witches do not meet together, people are angry here, and the shades there; all of them and the shades too, because he has celebrated with one cow only. People are angry because
[787] they wish to eat the meat. But the oracle says, 'The shades are angry.' It does not speak of people, it knows that people also are angry, but
[783] the next day he calls people and kills a cow, and throws the sacred meat in the banana grove, saying, 'Here is your meat, father.' People say, 'Indeed he did wrong, his father was angry', but they do not confess saying, 'It was we', no, they say 'the shades' . . .

[826] We chiefs have bodies which are different, the commoners arrived
[554] first in the country, they ate raw food, we fear them saying, 'They eat raw food.' It is we who followed and brought fire. To us they confess

[1] *Indyanga* (sekei) *nikulula*. The seven class implies size, ferocity, and dislike.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

953 and achievement. An account of the treatment of a field for
578 protection against wild pig emphasizes this.

If people wish to protect a crop from wild pig they go to a doctor to
789 ask for medicine. When he gives it to them he tells them that there
241 must be no quarrelling in the home after they have barricaded the
[449] field. Four women go to the field with the husband of the one who cultivates it. They go after sunset. One woman is shaved; her head is a symbol of the garden devastated by pig. A second woman, who keeps
[302] her hair, ties a head-pad on her head and carries bananas with medicine. She enters the field and eats the bananas. The husband climbs a hill at a little distance, and two of the women go into the long grass close to the field. The bald pate twirls a head-pad and the one with hair smears it with medicine and as they do so they look towards their
[531] husband and abuse him saying, 'You lay with your mother', and he swears at them saying, 'The leather aprons of your fathers' . . . and many other insults. Then the women walk round the edge of the field, sprinkling medicines, and they go out the way they came in. The circular pad is a symbol of the barricade placed round the field. When
[242] they return home they do not eat but go to sleep hungry (though the clever ones eat beforehand). If they quarrel, the pig finishes the food. It is as if quarrelling destroyed the fierceness, the power, of the protective medicine; you must put aside all quarrelling that the medicine may be powerful. If the pigs come it is as if there were a quarrel, as the woman and her husband quarrel in the field mimicking the pig. The husband on the hill is like the pig approaching the field, his wives in the long grass also represent pigs. . . . The husband and his wives quarrel only in the field. If, when the maize is ripe, the husband beats one of his wives for any cause she does not go to pick the maize herself, a friend picks it for her. If she goes in her anger she finds the maize finished, nothing but earth is left.

789 Here the link between medicines and morality is made plain.
689 Quarrelling weakens medicines of all sorts and renders them ineffective. But a mimic quarrel between husband and wives in the fields renders the medicine effective. It represents the battle between the pig and the medicines. There is a suggestion elsewhere (pp. 69, 113) that pigs are sent by the shades when kinsmen
[778] or neighbours quarrel, but in the account just quoted it is implied that quarrelling in the home directly injures the medicine.

In themselves, many medicines are neutral. They may be
278 put to good or evil ends, but because they are mysterious and
754 powerful, they are feared, in the same sort of way as atomic
787 energy is feared in contemporary society. Men use medicines themselves 'for purely peaceful purposes', but they are shocked at

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

the prospect of their enemies using them. The notion that medicines are a weapon which may be used rightly or wrongly is very clearly brought out in the attitude towards 'making' animals. If a private individual 'maker' lion, or leopard, or crocodile which kill men that is sorcery—there is no question about it—and we heard of at least one man who had been driven from his home because he was reputed to have made leopards which killed children and cattle,[1] but when Mwakyonde 'made' lions which drove off pig and did not attack men, that was a public service (*side p. 69*). And when one chief uses lions in his conflict with another the action is felt to be comparable with war, rather than murder. In February 1937, four lions were hunting in a piece of bush country near the salt lick, which two chiefs claimed. Mwanaumbwe, a chief from the hills, had sent some of his men to clear fields in the bush, but Mwakagile (yo, or his heir), the neighbouring chief, objected saying, 'This is my land.' There was a long case and finally the District Officer gave judgment in favour of Mwakagile and refused Mwanaumbwe any compensation for his work in clearing the bush. 'You got a crop for your labour,' he said. Mwanaumbwe was incensed by the judgment and grew even more angry when his men elected to remain on the land they had cleared and became men of Mwakagile. So, everyone said, Mwanaumbwe had sought medicines and created these lions. They killed seven cattle in a few days, attacking even by daylight. 'Yes,' we were told, 'there are always lion in the bush, but they do not ordinarily kill cattle as they have done now.'

Another chief who tried the same sort of thing was not so successful. 'Some time ago the chief Mwakila made elephants, he turned his wives into elephants and they are the bananas of Malaqula, but Malaqula said, "Let's try", and he created moth rain which poured down on to the elephants and those wives died. Then Mwakila was defeated. Now what you disagree? Have you this custom? Do you turn a wife into an animal?'

'No!'

'We have it, if I choose: I give my wife *injiria* and she becomes a lion which roars, it roars and eats people.'[2]

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 104.

[2] This, and the tale of a young man fleeing from justice who obtained a medicine to turn himself into a lion, were the only accounts of lycanthropy we heard—usually the medicines themselves (such as those of a chief) turn into animals, or the young of ordinary lion, leopard, or crocodile 'eaten' the medicines' and become attached to the 'owner' who feeds and commands them.

decided by the old village headmen and chief in consultation, at the commencement of the 'coming out' ceremony. This moving aside of the old men is an essential part of the ceremony and occurs even when there is unoccupied land available. For example, at the 'coming out' of Mwaukuga, Mwaipopo's heir, the old men moved aside to make room for their sons, although there is a large area of unoccupied land in the chiefdom, which is slowly being colonized by Mwaipopo's men.

Although the main redistribution is at the 'coming out', later readjustments are common enough. If a particular men's village attracts many members, and these members become wealthy in wives and children, then it may be necessary for the old men to move aside a second time, to make yet more room for their sons. The senior headman of the side of the chiefdom concerned, in consultation with the chief and other village headmen, has the power to make equitable adjustments in the land holdings of the villages of his side. We watched one village, whose numbers had diminished, being moved to make more room for a junior one which had flourished. But so long as its members remain together, a village retains its name and identity, through its site may be moved more than once. 'A village', the Nyakyusa say, 'consists in men, not in land.'

Boundary disputes between villages of a chiefdom are not unusual. In the old days these often led to war. Nowadays they are taken before the Court, whence there is an appeal to the federal court, the District Officer, the Provincial Commissioner and thence to the High Court (cf. p. 137). One such case, which we observed, had dragged on for years because the chief concerned, who happened to be president of the Court, dared to give judgment lest he be bewitched by the village which lost the case (cf. Document p. 191).

The division of the land allotted to each village lies with the members of that village, under the leadership of their own headman. The village headman himself, and other prominent individuals in the group, get first choice of sites: a son does not have a prescriptive right to the building site and gardens of his father when the old men move aside for their sons. 'If you are prominent, and you like your father's old site, that's all right, the others agree; but if you are unimportant ("light"), no; one of the important men takes it; you have no power.' Certain building and garden

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

3. A LAND DISPUTE BETWEEN VILLAGES OF THE SAME CHIEFDOM

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This case was discussed with a great number of informants. We first quote the account written by Mwaisumo (our clerk) which sums up the earlier discussions. 'Mwanzambe and Mwakalembo are quarrelling over the land of Ipoma. Both are village headmen of the older generation of Mwaipopo (the chief). Mwanzambe is the senior, Mwakalembo the junior. Mwanzambe is senior village headman of Mwaipopo. Mwakalembo is the next on his side (see table, pp. 181–2).

'At the "coming out" of Mwaipopo the old men gave Mwanzambe the land of Bujege, and said that his junior Mwakalembo should build on the land of Bunikali. He (Mwakalembo) built with Mwakwese, the man of Seba.

'When the "coming out" of Mwankuga, Mwaipopo's son, was held, Mwanzambe sent to his junior Mwakalembo, saying: "At your place here we are going to build the house of our wife Kalinga, that is to say we say going to plant the *ulupundo* tree of our child Mwankuga here." Mwakalembo agreed, but in secret he thought to himself: "My senior wants to seize my village! See he is building the great house at my place, and I am a junior!" So they brought out Mwankuga with Mwafungo as his senior headman, and Mwaseba Kabolile as a junior, and they planted the *ulupundo* tree. Mwafungo built with his people and Mwaseba Kabolile with his. Later on Mwanzambe arranged for his "sons", *i.e.* Mwafungo and his fellows, to go to his side, and Mwakalembo thought that his land was saved. He had thought that his senior was taking his country, but lo, the latter had moved!

'At that time Mwafungo went to enter into an inheritance[1] in MuNgonde (*i.e.* on the Lake-shore plain). On his return he went to the side from which he had come. He sought a bull with which to say: "Fathers, I have arrived." Mwanzambe called his junior Mwakalembo saying: "Our son has arrived, they are eating the meat there without our having discussed together where we should kill, or where we should eat the meat." (cf. pp. 171–4.)

'So now Mwanzambe wants to give his child Mwafungo a homestead site in which to build, he wishes to give him one at the *ulupundo* tree where he first established him, and he has told his junior Mwakalembo so. Mwakalembo objected, saying: "How can you give him my homestead? Where shall I go?"

[1] Another reason for the departure of Mwafungo (Ulwanduguni) is given on p. 170.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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"Mwanaambe said they could both build there together.

"Mwakalembo said "No."

"Mwanaambe said: "How can you refuse? The site is mine, and I am your senior. Do you not see the *ulupundo* tree which I planted for my child Mwafungo?"

"Mwakalembo replied: "Yes, I see it, but you went away and left it, you and your children. I gave thanks thinking my land had escaped capture."

"Mwanaambe said: "And the *ulupundo* tree, do you tell us that it was seized also?"

"Mwakalembo replied: "No, I don't deny the *ulupundo* tree, but when you pray you pray in your homestead, in the house of your wife. If you wish you can plant again at your place."

"Mwanaambe said: "Why do you quarrel with me, Mwakalembo, I, your father, your senior, I who gave you land on which I said your fellow, Mwafungo should also build, since you are both my children?"

"Mwakalembo replied: "The land about which we are quarrelling is mine, it is the place of my blood. I spilt blood, I seized it from Mwaipaja when I fought with him."

(For originally this land about which they are quarrelling was Mwakwesa's, it was where Seba's house was built. Then that Mwaipaja of whom they speak was the assistant village headman—a senior man. The followers of Mwakalembo made love to the wives, they approached them when they (the women) went to draw water. Mwaipaja was angry and called out his men to fight with the followers of Mwakalembo. Mwaipaja was defeated, and fled. The followers of Mwakalembo took his homestead. Mwaipaja was driven out: he built at Lupata where Kalunda and his men are now.)

"It is here that Mwanaambe planted the *ulupundo* tree. It is this land that Mwakalembo means when he says that his land escaped seizure by his senior when he went away again with his followers! Mwanaambe says: "See, it is mine also, my father moved Mwaipaja aside, that my junior should build here."

"Mwakalembo says: "I got it by conquest, I spilt my blood."

"People commenting on the case in private say that Mwanaambe is wrong, the country is really Mwakalembo's. Many say that although the case is put off it is not finished, Mwanaambe will be overcome, and so Mwaipopo himself thinks.

"Mwaeba Kabulile and Mwafungo Mwambopata are those who hold the country now, they are the children of Mwanaambe and Mwakalembo. Mwenengenge, who began speaking (at the trial in court), is the junior ('brother') of Mwanaambe but he holds all the seniority of Mwanaambe because Mwanaambe himself is not in the

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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country, he has moved. The Mwakalembo who is standing there is not Mwakalembo himself, but his son. And the Mwenegenga Mwakoloma who is speaking is a junior, but he speaks because he knows how to speak—he has a "good tongue" (*i.e.* is an orator). And Ngulyo also is a junior—he is speaking because he knows how to speak. All of these are village headmen, senior men, fathers of Mwafungo and Mwaseba Kabelile.'

The case was twice discussed at great length in Lopata Court but no judgement was given. Some maintained that were a judgement given war would result, because the losers would attack. Mwaipopo himself, as president of the court, was said to be afraid to give judgement lest he suffer from 'the breath' or witchcraft of the offended parties. He refused to hear the case a third time and, as Kasitile pointed out, sixteen months after the second hearing Mwaipopo was sleeping in the village of Bujenga (Mwakalembo's village), and it was Mwakalembo and his men who were in possession of the disputed land. Mwaipopo feared the witchcraft (or 'breath') of Mwamnembe and his men.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 From the Records of the First Class Subordinate Court of Rungwe

•691 *Criminal case*, 11/1935. *Heard* 5/3/35 *before P. M. Huggins.*
L. Rouquette, prosecuting.
Rex v. *Musa, son of Hassani.*

Charge: 'By action and statement representing himself to have power of witchcraft and supplying instruments of witchcraft (green leaves) to one Mwakalobo, son of Mwakalobo.'

Charge read and explained.

Accused pleaded not guilty.

Mwakalobo, headman[1] *of Kapya, a pagan (complainant).*

754 695 'About two months ago a man called Bakowike came to me at Ikapu, stating that he had been sent by the accused to warn me that there was a conspiracy to bewitch me, on the part of one Mwakagiri and Mwakatumbula, because I was supposed to have taken some of the former's country. I told Bakowike to tell the accused to come and tell his own tale. The accused came that same day at about sundown. We entered the house and then he called me outside to talk to me. Prior to doing this he told me that Mwakagiri had given him four cows to arrange my death as the former stated that I was in possession of his land. He said that if I gave him a cow he would take no action. I did so. He also gave me some ground-up green leaves which he instructed me to mix with water and drink. He alleged that this potion would render me immune from witchcraft.

'The accused went off with the cow. Kikomile (X), Kyungalala (Y), and Mahandi (Z) and three of my wives were present during the above conversation.

'About a week later Mwakagiri came to visit me—I had sent for him. I did not welcome him—I told him I had heard that he was after my life. He asked me who had said this and I indicated the accused. He then told me that the accused had made the same statements about me to him. I then came and reported to the D.O. I threw away the medicine that the accused had given me. Relations have recently been strained between Mwakagiri and myself.'

In reply to question by accused: 'Yes, I sent for you but only because you sent Bakowike to me first to warn me.'

First witness, a brother of the complainant, confirmed his story, having been present when both Bakowike and the accused came to the complainant. He added these points:

[1] Probably a minor chief (*mwalifumbi*), not a village headman (*ulifyense*). The report of the case was in English.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

34. SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES BETWEEN PAGANS AND CHRISTIANS

a. Christian suing a pagan

Twijulaye (Christian man).

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'Adinile (a Christian elder) and Kujobanabatwa (a pagan) had a dispute. Cattle belonging to Adinile and his fellows ate Kujobanabatwa's crop. Adinile went to drive the cattle out of the field and Kukobanabatwa met him as he was driving them out. Kujobanabatwa swore at Adinile. So Adinile got angry and went to the chief; the chief took the case to Court and Kujobanabatwa was found guilty and ordered to pay 10s. He paid up and the case was finished.'

b. Arbitration between pagan and Christian

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'L. (a Christian preacher) when he was visiting the Ngoni[1] in the bush country bought rice from a pagan Ngoni, Mataza, and promised to pay him later on. He was a long time in paying his debt so the Ngoni went to Ulindula, an elderly Christian living near L., saying: "L. has my shilling. He took my rice." L. agreed that he owed the Ngoni a shilling; he said that he had not yet got the money, but would get it very soon. The Ngoni went home and after some time, as he was not paid, he came again. Ulindula tried to pacify him. The Ngoni said: "If the case defeats you, I shall go to Court." So Ulindula called his fellows Rheuben and Hosesh to pacify the Ngoni, and the latter agreed to wait; but still L. did not pay up. So when the missionary visited, the Ngoni took the case to him. How it was decided (by the missionary) no one knows.'

c. Pagan suing a Christian

Mwaiwawa (elder).

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'Mwaiwaye, a pagan man, has a young son who was once bathing in a stream where Anangiaye, a Christian, came down to bathe also. Anangiaye said to the boy: "Get out, I want to bathe." The boy replied: "See, I was bathing here first", at which Anangiaye got angry and beat the boy.

'Then Mwaiwaye and his son hastened to Mundekaye's court

[1] There are one or two villages of Ngoni immigrants in the strip of unoccupied bush country between Selya and the Lake-shore plain. They mix very little with the Nyakyusa.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(*vide supra*) and Mundekesye tried the case with his friends and judged that Anangisye should pay two shillings. Anangisye refused to pay, so Mundekesye took the case to Mwangomo (the chief in whose country the land on which the Christian village Anangisye lived in is situated) and there judgement was given that Anangisye should pay three shillings. Anangisye agreed to do so.' 691 683

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5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

425 him if it was his idea that the village should die out and leave him, the
622 great-commoner, without men? As he had moved, the great-commoner
624 would have continued, the place was presumably distasteful to him and it had now been allotted to another man. The claim would certainly have been disallowed!"

425 The examples in this paper have been taken almost entirely from
797 pagan families. For Christians the situation is very much the same except where they live actually on mission land, there they are tenants of
427 the Mission concerned and pay rent to it. And Christians, wherever they live, tend to be more stable in their occupation of land, since they are not forever moving in fear of witchcraft.

7. *CONCLUSION*

178 I have striven in this paper to make the individual land-rights
423 possessed by Nyakyusa to-day intelligible to the European reader and to demonstrate to him their determining factors. Of these factors the following are the most important. The Nyakyusa were until recently an isolated and primitive people and so bring with them into the modern world a legal tradition based upon small social groups. This tradition is being inevitably modified both in theory and practice under modern conditions, but not out of all recognition; for they are still a relatively isolated people and the system of indirect rule secures them, in general, against arbitrary legal changes. Within their legal system individuals have, as in any system they must have, certain precisely defined and enforceable rights—among them rights in land.

Many kinds of land, however, are plentiful, though less so than of old owing to the growth of population, the opening of new markets for food and the recent introduction of ploughs. And this cheapness of land is reflected at times in a lack of rigour in the enforcement of rights in it which is unfamiliar to the European observer. Sufficient land for all is a fundamental condition of Nyakyusa society in its present form, which has no place for a landless man.

[166 And, finally, the habitual movement of men with their families from one village to another to escape the witchcraft of their neighbours leads to
● 68] a constant transfer of homesteads and gardens and is the main cause of difficulty in the administration of their laws of property in land and trees. This difficulty is greatest in the case of the newly introduced coffee trees which need continuous tending.

10:Culliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 all. Field boundaries have lost their earlier fluidity, when a plenty of land did not call for precise demarcation, and the only important changes now result from the land being left vacant or by the internal division of established holdings by inheritance or anticipatory inheritance.

In brief, then, the high premium given to land because of its modern scarcity value, and the enhanced authority of the headman in land affairs act together to preserve the individual's rights. The residual rights of the village, as group-owner of all land within the village boundary, do not affect the land-holder during his continued residence there.

[428] [578] The commonest type of dispute in land matters arises in inheritance, where a younger brother sues his senior in order to obtain or increase his share of the paternal holding (see page 21). That is to say, in general only where established holdings are being broken up does dispute arise and then, of course, only between the sons of the dead man. Disputes between neighbours in a village seldom are grave enough to be brought to court or even before the headman.

[573] There are also many petty, semi-domestic cases which faithfully reflect the frequently poor relations between Nyakyusa husbands and wives in modern times.[1]

TABLE IV

NYAKYUSA LAND DISPUTES: CIVIL CASES, 1954

			No. of civil cases	Land cases No.	Land cases %	Population per land case	Density of population
Lake Plains	..	..	1,277	104	8	347	283
N.E. Highlands	..	..	963	24	2.5	1,342	199
Central Region	..	..	903	11	1.1	4,092	243
N.W. Highlands	..	..	1,380	8	0.6	7,300	301

Based on returns of civil cases in local courts of five districts (W. Central for 1954, in 1953 the percentages were almost exactly the same as in 1954.

Several interesting points are suggested by these figures. Firstly, there is the larger proportion of land cases and the much smaller population per case in the Lake Plains, where land shortage is worst in relation to local demand, not only because of the higher density of population as such, but also because of the relatively larger acreages required for paddy cultivation. Secondly, in the Central Region of Nyakyusa country there is also a high density of population, but nevertheless only a few land cases; this may be attributed to the absence of cash-cropping and the absence, therefore, of a keen demand for land. On the other hand, the relatively numerous cases, or small population per case, in the north-eastern Highlands seem to result directly from a particularly densely populated area (Mwakaleki) where coffee cultivation is long established and the demand for land is exceptionally keen. In other words, as far as the figures for 1954 and 1953 show, there is a direct connection between land scarcity and the incidence of land disputes before the local courts (i.e. the more intractable disputes which go beyond the village headmen). General observation supports this conclusion. It may be expected in the future, therefore, that such cases will increase unless administrative action is taken to rationalise the inheritance laws with a view to minimising the area of potential disagreement amongst the sons of a deceased man.

For comparative interest, in so far as they offer some indication, I append here data on other Districts in the Territory where land disputes are common.

1. In 1954, 68 per cent. of all civil cases in the Iringa courts were marital disputes, including divorce cases, and there were also divorce cases for every 10 adult males living in the country in that year.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

TABLE V

DISTRICTS IN TANGANYIKA WHERE LAND DISPUTES ARE COMMON

1953			No. of land cases	% of total civil cases	Estimated population density	Population per land case
Bukoba District	..	..	1,549	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Lushoto Division	..	..	240	22	[illegible]	[illegible]
Moshi District	..	..	347	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Mpwapa District	..	..	81	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

The Changing Village

The possibly unique age-village of the Nyakyusa is now undergoing considerable and fairly rapid change in response to the new conditions of land shortage. There is, firstly, an increasing sense of village exclusiveness and, secondly, there has been a breakdown in the essential age-basis of its organization. That is to say, that whilst the corporate unity of the village as an independent group has been strengthened, yet the social foundation of the village has simultaneously been changed and a different sort of village is emerging. It would take us far beyond the scope of this present essay if a full analysis of the changing village were to be made, nevertheless in so far as these changes are more or less directly the consequences of modern land shortage, land tenure and economic conditions some account is essential. Since the age-village was fundamental in the life and social organization of these people, the new emerging village is of crucial importance.

Land shortage has definitely exaggerated the unity and exclusiveness of the village in the Lake Plains at a time when, for other reasons, it was beginning to become a more open group. There was always, as we have seen, insistence on the principle that only a member of the village could hold and use village land; but village boundaries were often poorly marked and it was difficult to determine which headman, if any, had genuine jurisdiction over land relatively distant from the established village sites. Nor was it particularly important to be able to do so whilst land was plentiful. As paddy cultivation spread, men began seeking extra fields further and further away from home as land nearby was all taken up; and so long as they did not attempt to take land in the immediate vicinity of another village site there was seldom much difficulty in this. The attitudes born of a sufficiency of land persisted and headmen were not disposed to protest against outsiders who sought fields near the limits of their vaguely defined areas. Incessant warfare and raiding had, of course, been abolished as an expression of and a weapon in inter-village rivalries and animosities. With the establishment of general peace and security, and with increasing movement about the country between villages and chiefdoms, such rivalries and animosities began to die away. Many men came to live in the villages which they themselves had not helped to found; their cowals from their fathers' villages lived elsewhere, many of them widely scattered, and it was not possible to maintain a high degree of village patriotism, and, people began to feel, it was not especially necessary or important any longer.

It began to be possible for a man to hold some of his arable land within the area of another village, so long as members of the second village were not deprived of the opportunity of their own agricultural expansion should they desire it. This was especially the case where a large area of hitherto vacant (i.e. bush) but now valuable paddy land was contained within the approximate boundaries of a village. Outsiders were allowed to acquire fields on the strength of kinship with the headman or with one of the established villagers, or even by giving some small present to the headman (e.g. a little beer or some meat, etc.). Land was still plentiful then, or so it seemed to the Nyakyusa, and future shortages and difficulties were not perceived.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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MAP III. RUNGWE

[Fig. 2 K(6)]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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GWE DISTRICT

[facing p. 16 (h)]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde F
Nyakyusa

627 some pasturage and the fire destroyed two plots of millet. I g
the owner an iron hoe.'

627 The ideal is settlement by agreement; in practice (at the prese
time) a large number of cases go (like this one) to the chief, a
then on to the Native Court. Thence there are many appeals to t
Native Appeal Court, the District and Provincial Officers' Cour
and even to the High Court of Tanganyika. As we have indicate
it is likely that fewer cases are settled by arbitration than for
erly; but before the coming of the Europeans, chiefs' courts wi
power to enforce judgement existed, and were used. There w
no 'golden age' in which all cases were settled by agreement.

627 The decision of arbitrators is essentially the judgement
228 public opinion in the village, or the respective villages, of t
disputants. Cases are heard in public, neighbours drop in a
join in the discussion, and a decision cannot be given contrary
their expressed opinions.

6. *Witness to contracts*

615 Not only do fellow villagers play a part in settling disput
they also act as official witnesses in various types of legal transo
tion. The village headman is an essential witness at an autop
(*vide supra*, p. 116) and at the distribution of the estate of one
his men. Whenever marriage-cattle are handed over, two or mo
non-relatives are called upon to serve as witnesses,[1] and tho
chosen are commonly village neighbours of either the groom
his father-in-law. We heard one man censured by his friend
because he had neglected to take a village neighbour with him
witness when he went to summon his son-in-law to his daughter
puberty ritual. He had visited his son-in-law's 'best man' (*w
fuya*) as was correct, but had omitted to take a friend with hi
to witness the conversation that took place. Even in matters th
are kept very secret at least one official witness may be sum
moned. For example, an old man occasionally gives his hair pe
mission to sleep with his wives while he is yet alive, and he does
in the presence of a neighbour or senior relative, for though th
affair is very private it is absolutely necessary to have a witnes
to prove that the right was granted.

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Law', *Africa*, Vol.
(1940).

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

671 law-breaking, and the balance was restored when the law was vindicated. The idea that stable equilibrium means stagnation is alien to the Konde mind. To disturb the balance in order to advance to new conditions is a European, not a Bantu idea, and wherever the European stimulus has been removed, the wheels of custom drag heavily again.

692 695 A native court is not, to a white man, an imposing spectacle; though no doubt it is fearsome enough to some trembling rascal, who has little reason to hope that his misdeeds will escape their due reward. The court meets under the village tree, or, if the weather is bad, on the verandah of the chief or judge. There the chief sits with his headmen if the case is an important one, and there are usually a few old men present also, in whose memories are stored up records of previous cases which may have some bearing on the one in hand. The persons concerned are among the audience, which sits facing the court; and when called upon, they rise in turn, and conduct the case from where they stand. The native is a keen disputer. I have known a clever man fight his case with amazing skill and perseverance; even after it was clear that the evidence against him was complete, he would go on adducing fact after fact with a dialectical skill that would not disgrace a European lawyer at cross-examination. If the judge is a man with a [33] sense of humour, he often announces his decision by relating some well-known story, the point of which is taken by all, as, with expressions of approval or otherwise, they rise and go. Execution of sentence

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

692 does not delay, but is carried out immediately. The
695 loser may, however, appeal to another judge for a re-hearing of the case. Compensation in some form, usually cattle, or hoes, or, in a few cases, a daughter, is the sentence.

694 *Theft.*—The extraordinary boldness and skill of the Nyakyusa thieves are widely known. Outside their own country their reputation is perhaps greater than they deserve, great though that is. At one place guards are doubled when it is known that Nyakyusa carriers have arrived. No European house has escaped their attentions, to the greater or smaller loss of the owner. They break through brick walls, enter by door or window, conduct their operations by day or night, with equal indifference and success; and the speed with which recognizable goods are disposed of, adds to the mystery of their methods.

A white man was recently robbed while reading in bed with dogs beside him, the thieves quietly lifting and carrying off a heavy trunk, which they believed to contain a large amount of cash, before the owner knew that they were in the room. Another had the whole of his kit taken while he himself was in the next room; a medical man had his hand-bag taken from his bedroom at about five in the afternoon; in yet another case the sum of two hundred shillings was quietly carried off from a table while three Europeans were sitting in the next room at breakfast. Sheets have been taken off beds, and the owners knew nothing of their loss until bed-time revealed the fact. Rifles and accoutrements have been removed from

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

622 secular affairs of his own age-villages and full supremacy in religious matters over all. Appeals in difficult cases might be taken from either of the young chiefs to the old chief and his great commoners. After his death, the wives and cows of the old chief were inherited by his full-brother, to whom also his religious authority passed. Full political power over their separate chiefdoms then went to the two sons. The great commoners of the old chief, relinquishing their secular functions to their successors, then entered on their religious duties as priests of the dead chief; this priesthood they handed on to their sons. When all the old chief's full-brothers were dead, the religious functions of chieftship passed to the young chiefs, who were then fully emancipated. The boundaries between their chiefdoms, settled at the 'coming out' ceremony, were sometimes modified by warfare.[1] The age-village is still the chief field of friendship, members recognizing greater obligations to each other than to outsiders; before the European administration the village was also a military unit.[2]

624 The great commoner of every village was very powerful, and measures existed to check his influence; for instance, no kinsman of a chief or son of a great commoner could be elected to that office. His duties were to be hospitable to the villagers, judge their cases, lead them in war, and officiate at their ceremonies. He represented their wishes to the chief, and through him and in consultation with him the chief gave his orders. Each great commoner was believed to be able to protect his own villagers from witchcraft.

Warfare

724 A state of war—actual or potential—always existed among the various Nyakyusa chiefdoms. Among the Ngonde, also, civil war was endemic, the Kyungu neither preventing it nor taking any part. In tribal warfare he did not remain impartial, but gave orders and told the chiefs to pray. They first called on the sacred groves of the buried Kyungus, and then each great chief called on his own predecessors for help. Although the territorial nobles also fought, they did not pray to their ancestors, for tribal war was carried on under royal auspices alone. War was an important source of revenue in cattle and slaves. The recurrent civil wars of the period before the Ngoni invasion show that in spite of the heirarchical façade the centralized political organization was not strong enough to overcome the local autonomy of the chiefdoms, except in the face of a common danger, such as the threat of Bemba or Ngoni invasion.[3]

Justice under the Traditional System of the Nyakyusa

●612 There was no central court of appeal at Mbande to which the ordinary man could bring cases direct, or appeal against the decisions of his local chiefs. At the capital the only cases dealt with by the nobles of Ngonde were cases of treason against the Kyungu (mainly adulterous approach to his wives), which were summarily punished by death. They also used the Kyungu's authority in punitive expeditions against insubordinate chiefs. Each noble of Ngonde decided the cases in his own field. Each great chief held an appeal court to which cases from all the chiefdoms of his house came, for of all the descendants of the Kyungu the great chiefs alone had power to administer the poison ordeal. Some of the territorial nobles also had the power. It was resorted to not only in witchcraft cases, but in appeal cases when evidence for a legal decision was lacking.

[1] Wilson, o. cit., pp. 278-80. [2] Ibid., p. 276. [3] Ibid., o. cit., pp. 39-43.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 F917 Ngonde F917

692 Many cases were of course decided by the common people among themselves, others by their great commoners, and others by the local chiefs along with their great commoners. Although there was no centralized judicial system, the political hierarchy of chieftains sometimes could be used to obtain redress in the case of a quarrel between men of different chieftains. The weakness of the system is indicated by the fact that restitution for wrong done was often obtained by the method of capturing a hostage.[1]

681 Witchcraft was punished by death. An adulterer, if caught, was killed by the husband. Deliberate murder required compensation up to ten head of cattle and the transfer of a woman, followed by a feast of reconciliation. If the murderer could not be caught a blood feud would be started, ending with a feast of formal reconciliation under the guidance of a diviner. Accidental homicide required compensation, but no feast of reconciliation, as there had been no malice. A cattle-chief caught red-handed might be killed on the spot; arson was settled by payment of compensation.[2]

Modern Government

622 (a) *Ngonde.* The British Government in Nyasaland at first applied the system of
692 direct rule. Chiefs and nobles were recognized as 'village' or 'principal' headmen,
643 performing executive duties for the Administration. The Kyungu was one of the 'principal' headmen, but was not recognized as Paramount. In 1929 the system was modified by the setting up of advisory councils in association with the headmen and the District Resident. The members of the councils were nominated and removable by the Government, and there was no intention of reviving tribal government.

In 1933 the system of Indirect Rule was introduced. The Kyungu was recognized as paramount chief, with an appeal court and five sub-chiefs under him. Of these, one, Kilupula, was over the northern part of the Ngonde plain, another ruled the Lambya in the extreme north-west, and the three others were distant territorial nobles ruling groups of alien stock in the hills. The nobles of Ngonde, with twelve prominent nobles and six other commoners, were recognized as members of the Kyungu's court and given nominal salaries. Three of the great chiefs of Ngonde who were not made sub-chiefs were officially termed 'important' headmen, and given nominal salaries. The other chiefs and territorial nobles were still termed 'village' headmen as before 1933. The Kyungu and the five sub-chiefs were each given an area and a court for the area. Village and important headmen could arbitrate in small cases but had no power to execute judgements. That power belonged to the courts alone. The Kyungu's court was also a court of appeal for the whole of Ngonde. A Native Treasury was established, into which one-twelfth of the tax was paid, but this was almost entirely expended on personal emoluments.

The full traditional constitution cannot be revived, as the religious beliefs which supported it have been superseded. Forty-five per cent. of the population profess Christianity, and even the belief in witchcraft, which operated in certain cases as a constitutional check, is less persistent than before. The native rulers are no longer believed to control the rain and the health and fertility of their people, so they stand or fall by the performance of their secular duties alone. Since the Kyungu has come out of religious seclusion the nobles of Ngonde are relegated to advisory status. The secularization of the constitution tends in this respect to make it more autocratic, both

[1] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 48-50. [2] Shepherson, 1955, pp. 80-90.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the wealth derived from this trade enabled one of their chiefs, Kyungu, to maintain himself as paramount over all Ngonde. Among his people improved relationships thus had a greater importance. And it was, I believe, the historical isolation of the Nyakyusa from any considerable commercial contact with the outside world which prevented the rise among them of a paramount chief.

To-day the Nyakyusa are in process of integration with the civilized society of the world and the independence of their minute chieftdoms has inevitably passed away. The traditionally sovereign chiefs have been grouped in seven court districts with one chief as President of the Native Court in each; and these seven chiefs together with the two Presidents of the Nkali and Lambya Courts are federated, with an Appeal Court and joint Native Treasury of their own. In the seven Native Courts most of the traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their great-commoners, and assist the President and his great-commoners in the hearing of cases. The bulk of the legal business previously transacted by each chief in his own country is now taken to Court, but the power of great-commoners to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages is still the basis of the legal system.

A poll tax, now (1938) fixed at 5/- per annum for adult males with an additional tax for plural wives, has been introduced and chiefs are paid small salaries ranging from 5/-, 10/- or 20/- a month for ordinary chiefs to 80/- or 100/- a month for the Court Presidents.

The Nyakyusa, as we have previously mentioned, consist of a number of immigrant groups who have spread among and incorporated an indigenous population. The main immigrant groups were three in number and are distinguished to-day by the names of "Nyakyusa," "Kukwe" and "Selya." As all these three groups together (including those who are now incorporated in them) call themselves "Nyakyusa" to the outside world, I distinguish the one group to which the name more particularly belongs as the "Nyakyusa proper." The Nyakyusa proper live in the plain of Mungonde and up on the higher ground as far north as Tukuyu, the Kukwe live north of them around the base of Rungwe Mountain while the Selya live in the east of the district, between the Nyakyusa proper and the Kukwe, right under the wall of the Livingstone Mountains. Between the three groups there are minor differences of dialect and custom.

The extent to which the indigenous groups retain any separate identity varies in accordance with the number of the immigrants and the date at which they reached them, but over a large part of the district fusion has been complete.

We have already discussed the economic relations between the Nyakyusa and the Lupa gold fields which provides them with a market

S:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngundu FN17
Nyakyusa

may call in against her husband, if she desires divorce. And, it is hinted, this particular force may sometimes be successfully invoked by a placable woman even without good cause. 421 626

In disposing of the surplus of their crops and bananas the respective rights of a married woman and her husband vary in detail, though little in substance, according as he has or has not made a formal division between them. It is not infrequent for a man to reserve for his own use one or two plots and some banana stems, which are then called *bwanga* plots or bananas (*indaba ya ifinjo fya bwanga*). In the planting, weeding and reaping of the *bwanga* plots all the man's wives co-operate if he has several, but the final product is absolutely his own, it is stored by him and they have no part in it. Conversely, however, the rights of each woman to dispose of the surplus crop of the plots allotted to her are thereby greatly increased, for her husband cannot then touch it at all. 421 593

In any case, whether or not *bwanga* plots and bananas have been set aside, a woman's obligations to provide food for her husband's con-

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authority can possibly either act over the whole area or command general approval and support for its actions.

But in primitive society it is otherwise. In a small and isolated group largely composed of personal acquaintances it is difficult to escape from one's friends; while the facts of every dispute, of every breach of law, are soon widely known; and in consequence, it is there perfectly possible or even for legal sanctions to be effective without the intervention of any central authority at all. The neighbours, or the friends, or the elders of a lawbreaker are in themselves a large and important section of his society, and he can only with difficulty escape their authority; he can not lose himself in a great city as can his civilized counterpart. And so the typical method of legal procedure in a primitive society is for action to be taken against a lawbreaker by those more nearly concerned, supported by general public approval. And it frequently happens that the only effective action is taking straightforward by the injured party; nevertheless if that action is supported and strengthened by any generally expressed approval we can not deny that it possesses a legal force.

In a primitive group any request which an individual may make to his kinsmen or neighbours for practical assistance against a lawbreaker, any appeal to their opinion in a dispute is a legal procedure, for it is an appeal to authority. It is they upon whom he is in practice most dependent. Nor is it only in "private life" that he depends upon them. By virtue of the smallness of the group, the distinction between "public" and "private life" hardly exists. In many situations they hold in their hands the whole force of his society; their actions and opinions are checked or supported by the informal but sometimes effective jury of widespread public discussion; and if they are against him he has workers due to turn.

Now Nyakyusa society to-day is no longer isolated and primitive, neither has it yet fully taken its place in the social system of the world; it is in process of transition. Legal procedure is, quite inevitably, becoming everyday more and more an affair of the central territorial authorities, of the Governor in Council and the High Court of Tanganyika and of their appointed deputies; the local Magistrates, the District Officers and the Native Courts. But the process is not complete. In many situations of social life the new impersonal relationships with the great world are still, for the moment, more or less irrelevant and in them the old primitive sanctions retain their power. [178 692]

6:Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1939 F317 Ngonde F317

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by election; the election was made by the central power and the leaders of the local populations in agreement; mature wisdom, courtesy and generosity in the use of wealth were all essential qualifications for office. In arranging the succession to the local chieftaincies, on the other hand, the central power of Mbande took no active part. All these chiefs were related to the Kyungu, who was informed of every "coming out" as a matter of form, but that was all. In the case of these local chiefs the hereditary principles were modified only by popular choice, acting gradually over a number of years.

(c) COMMON LAW.

We must beware of letting our civilised preconceptions blind us to the fact that, though some common law must be maintained in every society, it is not always necessary for it to be maintained by a central political authority. In the primitive world of Ngonde Mbande played little or no direct part in the maintenance of common law; the great chiefs, the local chiefs, the territorial nobles, the great-commoners of the villages played a larger part; but even they usually left whole areas of law untouched to be enforced by the common people among themselves. The laws of marriage for example, seem to have been normally enforced by the two families of each married couple concerned, with the advice and assistance of their neighbours.

In a primitive society a man is far more helplessly dependent upon his relatives, friends and neighbours than he is in our own. He cannot normally escape them, for his world is so small. And this fact enables them often to constrain him effectively without calling in the aid of any constituted political authority whatever. Moreover even when it is necessary to call in the aid of political authorities it is often sufficient to call in those that have a local jurisdiction only. Centralised judicial institutions, covering wide areas, are rare in primitive conditions, because widely extensive social relations are rare also. The modern insistence upon the judicial functions of paramount chiefs in Africa is necessitated by the magnitude and complexity of the modern civilised world, in which law can only be maintained by central authorities; but, in many areas at least, this insistence is something new. That many African paramount chiefs had some judicial functions in former times is, of course, a fact, but these functions were often less extensive than they are to-day.

In Ngonde, however, there was traditionally no central court at all to which ordinary men could either bring cases direct or appeal from the decisions of their local authorities. In Mbande only cases of treason and insubordination against the Kyungu or the great chiefs were dealt

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

with, and they were dealt with summarily. Each notle of Ngonde, of course, decided such cases as the members of his own kin might bring him; but for Ngonde as a whole Mbande was not a court of law; it was a shrine, an opulence, a focus of authority and a terror.

Each great chief, however, besides taking ordinary cases among the people of his own chiefdom, also held an appeal court of a kind to which cases could be brought from all the chiefdoms of his house; for the great chiefs alone among the sons of the Kyungu had power to administer the poison-ordeal (*mwafi*); some of the territorial nobles had it also, but not the local chiefs. If any case proved difficult of decision, if either party was not satisfied that justice was being done, then appeal might be made to the *mwafi*. And this brought a great chief something of the prestige of a high-court judge, for he could summon defendants from any chiefdom of his own house. And sometimes, as a guarantee of impartiality in a particularly difficult case, he might send the litigants to to a neighbouring great chief, saying: "Let my brother settle this; otherwise they will say that I showed favour to one or the other and that I influenced the *mwafi*!" Thus Wembungulu is said to have sent cases occasionally to Kalonga.

Now the poison-ordeal was not only appealed to in witchcraft-cases, though it is with them that it is particularly associated, for without it they could never be decided at all; cases of any difficulty could be taken to it, whatever their nature. Nevertheless the procedure of the poison-ordeal was in itself a purely religious ultimatum; the legal argument was not reopened. An appeal to the *mwafi* was an appeal beyond secular justice altogether, to something that knew man's innermost thoughts and their most secret actions. It was believed that the *mwafi* could be influenced, but only in religious ways. The impartiality of the great chief was important, for he owned it and his attitude might be magically conveyed into it; and it was also possible for its decision to be deflected by magical preparations; but forensic rhetoric left it wholly unmoved.

And no cases were ever taken on appeal to the great chiefs to be reopened in a mundane way. Nor among any group of brother chiefs were cases ever taken on appeal from a junior to a senior. In the elaborate political hierarchy which we have described the element of secular judicial procedure was conspicuously slight. Indeed the sons of Ngonde had scarcely any greater judicial facilities than the Nyakyusa, with their independent chiefdoms.

A great many cases, as we have pointed out, were decided by the common people among themselves, others were taken to the government of the separate villages of each chiefdom, others to the

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

692 local chiefs themselves, sitting with their great-commoners, others to the territorial nobles. And this was often sufficient, when the two parties both belonged to the same chieftdom or the same fief. The judgments of these local authorities were effective, in the first place, because (and in so far as) they represented the common legal sense of their groups and the common determination not to allow these groups to be disrupted by litigation. They were effective, in the second place, because, under the primitive conditions of the old Ngonde, individuals were normally helplessly dependent upon these local groups.

694 When the parties belonged to different chieftdoms or fiefs three kinds of legal procedure, other than the poison-ordeal, were open. It was possible, in the first place, "to institute an enquiry" (*ubulolampe*). The plaintiff went to ask the defendant's own chief (or noble) if he would please look into the matter for him; and sometimes satisfaction was obtained in this way. If it was not obtained then appeal could always be made to the *mwafi*.

And, in the second place, if both parties belonged to chieftdoms whose chiefs were closely related, then and only then the political hierarchy did provide a certain judicial assistance. "If one of the men of a junior chief had a case against one of the men of a senior, then the junior chief would go with some of his men to visit his elder brother. On arrival he would bid him not to be surprised at their coming, and explain that one of his men was a thief—' Is he indeed ? '—' Yes ' —' who is it ? '—'So and so '—' You really mean it, he is a thief ? '— ' Certainly ! Why else have we come ? '—Then the senior chief would summon the man concerned and question him until, maybe, he would admit it. And then the senior chief, would send to take what had been stolen and would return it to his brother's subject."

And, again, if the men of two equally junior brother chiefs had a case against each other, the plaintiff's chief might accompany him when he went to institute an enquiry with the defendant's chief; and then both chiefs together would take the case to their elder brother for decision.

It is not certain to what genealogical distance this procedure was effective; our evidence suggests that it normally only obtained between chiefs who were half-brothers.

And, finally, it was possible to catch a hostage and so compel restitution for wrong done. "In the old days if one man had been wronged by another (of a different country) then he would catch and keep the child of some powerful man who lived in the same country as the wrongdoer. Then the father would send to enquire for what reason his child had been caught and would be told that it was because so and

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

so, one of his neighbours, had wronged and defrauded the apprehender. So the father would visit the wrongdoer and tell him that his own child had been caught because of him; and he would enquire into the case and the wrongdoer would pay what was due. After the payment had been made the child would be returned to its father anointed, with its head shaven and bringing a gift." Now this, it must be emphasized, was not a violent but a truly legal procedure. It seems only to have been taken in clear cases when the debt was not seriously disputable at law, and all that was required was machinery to enforce its payment. It was a procedure generally accepted throughout Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa; the father of the child seems not to have resented it, and, being "a powerful man,"[9] he was able to put pressure on his defaulting neighbour.

But these forms of procedure were insufficient to keep the peace in Ngonde. In the Ngonde plain at least, much the same law was common to all the fiefs and chiefdoms, but it was only enforced piecemeal in little local areas, or, beyond them, in occasional clear cases by the enquiry or the hostage method. And so quarrels, either between commoners or chiefs, led not infrequently to violence and war.

Now this situation requires to be explained. Why did the Kyungu and his subordinates not develop an effective judicial system on the lines of the religious and economic hierarchy? I am not confident that our evidence supplies a certain answer, but there are two facts which, in combination, go some way towards doing so.

The crucial point is that, as we have already noticed, the conditions of life in Ngonde in the middle period, did not necessitate the development of such a system. Most of life for most men was confined to the little local areas, within which law was effectively maintained. There it had to be maintained somehow, or life would have been impossible. But beyond them men had only occasional relationships. War was endemic in the society of Ngonde but did not threaten to destroy it; and it is only that threat that can compel men to set up new machinery. The warfare of Ngonde was sporadic only while fights were matters of an hour or two and casualties were slight.

Nevertheless there were other areas in primitive Africa in which paramount chiefs and their subordinates did maintain law and order with some success, and in which civil war, though it occurred, was treated as a crime. Why was this not done in Ngonde? For, though centralized justice may not have been necessary, it would have had many obvious advantages. I believe that the answer to this question lies

[9] i.e. a rich man with a certain local prestige and authority.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

692 in the religious exclusion of the Kyungu. No Kyungu ever sat in public to judge his people until Mwakabenga, who reigned from 1890 to 1904. And if the nobles of Ngonde, who acted for the Kyungu in most mundane matters, only exercised judicial authority in matters immediately affecting his personal position, that was, I believe, because nothing more would have been tolerated by the chiefs. I cannot prove this point, for it only occurred to us after leaving Ngonde, but it seems probable that only under the presidency of the Kyungu himself could a central court have maintained itself; for the nobles of Ngonde were not of royal blood. Comparative evidence supports this hypothesis, and the ease with which the present Kyungu maintains his central appeal court to-day makes it still more probable.

6. *WARFARE. (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

(a) *CIVIL WAR.*

579 The endemic civil war of Ngonde appears rather to have resembled a series of rugby football matches without referees than the scientific mass-killing of modern Europe. "In the old days we used frequently to engage in little local fights. But always, which some occasion for war arose we used to send a message beforehand to all the other side that we meant to fight them the next day at a certain place. And perhaps, if we had mentioned the morning, they would refuse and say they preferred the afternoon, and we would agree." (Was this always done?) "Yes, always; for if ever any group attacked suddenly and unexpectedly then everyone used to mock them for their cowardice and compare them with the Ngoni——for it was by unexpected night attacks that the Ngoni overcame us."

"And how did war start?" we asked. "Maybe a couple of boys would begin fighting, just with their fists, and as they fought another would come and join in to help his friend, then another on the other side, ——until at last yet another would join in with a spear and wound someone. Then the wounded man would be taken home bleeding, and the next day there would be war!" (And what was the point of fighting such a war?) "So that the others should be underneath and we on top. We used to fight from infancy onwards: we began as children by using mudcrowns, then we took to rods and finally, as we grew up, to sharpened sticks and spears." Such warfare seldom or never lasted for more than a single day. Cattle might be captured and houses burnt, but there was no acquisition of territory.

669 It was the territorial aim of the wars between the chiefs of Ngulenge and of Ngaiwa which distinguished them from other civil wars; though

6:Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 in size of the groups they rule, they have fewer subjects to entertain.
645 But the "Sub-chiefs" and the "Important Headmen" cannot cease to entertain largely without losing much of their pre-eminent status.

178 The outlawing by Government of civil and tribal war, combined
682 with the new economic and religious conditions, has enormously extended the normal range of social relationships among the people of Ngonde; and a centralized judicial system has necessarily been developed to deal with the new situation. The old forms of local autonomy have ceased.

178 The continuity which is observable between the present constitution
682 of Ngonde and that of the middle period is mainly determined by three factors. In the first place the Government of the Protectorate deliberately supports in positions of high authority the legitimate successors of some of the old rulers. In the second place the judicial functions of these successors, which have been greatly extended, have replaced, to some extent, the old religious and military functions. And, in the third place, the present Kyungu is, as it happens, a rich man. A decentralized mercantile divinity has been transformed into a centralized Native Authority with some continuity of personnel, with the substitution of new functions for old and with the assistance of a private fortune.

(b) FROM GOD TO MAGISTRATE.

178 The first two of these factors of continuity—Government support
682 and the increase of judicial functions—must be discussed together, for it is mainly because of their utility as subordinate magistrates that the Government supports the Native rulers of Ngonde.

Modern conditions, in the sphere of law, bring about two great changes. Firstly the integration of the one-time primitive society of Ngonde with the civilized world greatly increases the range of social relationships among its people, and so renders ineffective much of the traditional legal machinery. And, secondly, the introduction of Christianity, of political control by the British and of European economic enterprise inevitably changes the content of the law. Granted the general conditions of contact between Africans and Europeans in Central Africa a transformation of all its traditional legal systems is seen to be an inescapable necessity.

Common law must now be maintained by a hierarchy of legal authorities reaching far beyond the boundaries of Ngonde, if it is to be maintained among its people at all. As I write these words in Livingstone, a thousand miles by road from Mbande, there is a man of Ngonde working in a shop within a hundred yards of my office. While in Ngonde itself it is no longer true that a man's friends and neighbours, or even his immediate rulers, can ever be sure of constraining him effectively if he

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

breaks a law; they must be able, if necessary, to call in the aid of some central authority or he will escape them. Many men today, for instance, take wives whose homes are fifty miles or more from their own; and such marriages cannot possibly be regulated by the old primitive procedures. Moreover the rapid and radical changes in the content of law which are necessitated by modern conditions could not be worked out in detail by a number of independent courts without much confusion. And so in the Ngonde of to-day common law is maintained both by a centralized police system and by two central appeal courts, a lower one presided over by the Kyungu, a higher one by the District Commissioner.

A dispute which took place in 1935 well illustrates both the novelty of a central appeal court in Ngonde and the support which the Kyungu now receives from the Administration. And it also shows that the old rivalry between the lions of Ngolenge and Ngawa still survives.

The Kyungu in his new judicial capacity decided a land-dispute between two local chiefs of the house of "Sub-chief" Kilupula, who is now the most powerful, though not the senior, of the chiefs of Ngawa. The Kyungu's decision reversed that of Kilupula, who then became angry. The chief who lost the case is reported to have said: "How dare the Kyungu come here and divide up our land among us? He knows nothing about it." And Kilupula is reported to have taken much the same view; the new judicial functions of the Kyungu were resented by him. And Mwalonge, another great chief of Ngawa, sympathized with his resentment.

Then Kilupula and Mwalonge between them wrote a letter addressed to the Provincial Commissioner complaining of the Kyungu's conduct of this case. The District Commissioner, who received it first, called them in and advised them to burn it, but they insisted that it should be forwarded. But before this was done the Governor of Nyasaland arrived in Ngonde on tour and the two chiefs then asked that the letter should be handed to him. And so it was. Whereupon the Governor publicly reprimanded them for writing the letter and asked the Kyungu, before all the people, to decide how he would punish them, by fine or imprisonment. And the Kyungu fined them each £3.

No more striking expression could have been given of the Kyungu's present position as a trusted servant of the Government than this incident. While the fact that the dispute arose out of his new judicial functions and that it was two chiefs of Ngawa who stood against him is most illuminating. The Kyungu has exchanged the support of his ancestors for that of the Nyasaland Government, his divinity for a magisterial office. This change, on the whole, has been made easily enough, but a certain temporary friction was inevitable. The chiefs of Ngawa are the tradi-

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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tomal rivals of those of Ngelenge; most of the traditional reasons which led them to accept the supremacy of a Kyungu of the house of Ngelenge, whenever one was elected, have now ceased to influence them; while they themselves, as we shall see in a moment, are now barred from the succession. Moreover the Kyungu's supremacy is now mainly operative in the matriarchated sphere of law. And so a new reason for admitting that supremacy has had to be more forcibly presented to them than to the other rulers of Ngonde.

Once forcibly presented, however, the new reason seems to have been admitted in place of the old ones without much difficulty. For in 1936, the next year, Kilupula spontaneously led his people to the Kyungu and formally handed over a cow to him, thereby re-establishing friendship and mutual respect between the two of them. The dispute has ended in a manifest harmony.[2]

It is relevant to mention here that in the first five months of 1937 only one case was taken on appeal from the Kyungu's court to that of the District Commissioner.

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The general status both of the great chiefs and of the local chiefs and nobles (the "Important" and "Village Headmen,") as also of the great-commoners, has been radically altered by the new legal conditions. Formerly these authorities were the mainstay of a primitive justice, but to-day they could not possibly enforce any legal decisions without the backing of the central Government. And this backing they do not have. Their sphere of influence is so small[1] that it has not been thought worth while to give them any formal judicial authority; they are now mere arbitrators and all important cases go to court.

178 642

The modern constitution of Ngonde is thus more centralized than the old. The support of the Government is given to, and effective judicial power is concentrated in the hands of half a dozen men, with their own advisers. The new judicial functions of the Kyungu and the selected "Sub-chiefs" have, in fact, been transferred to them from the local rulers. Some such centralization was inevitable under modern conditions for the details are dependent upon the decisions of the Government.

(c) *PETER THE FORTUNATE.*

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The wealth of the present Kyungu is not only due to his great personal abilities. For twenty years before his appointment as Regent (then he himself became the Kyungu in all but name) he was the full-

[1] This phrase begs no questions about private feelings, upon which we have no evidence.

[2] This is true of the great chiefs (the "Important Headmen") than of the rest; and possibly an understanding of their status will alter the attitude of the Administration to them.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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476 all, hunting is organised like warfare and fishing is a joint endeavour, both ordered by the chief.

471 Every chief has a title of ownership (*ubwene nakyi*) to the land of his
622 chiefdom and can evict any man he pleases, (giving him another plot), if he wishes to build there himself; but his people also have titles of ownership to it, both collectively, under the leadership of the great commoners, and individually, each man to his own ground. It is the great commoners who, in consultation with their neighbours, give to the sons of each village land on which to build; it is they who, together, finally fix the boundaries of the young men's villages at their "Coming Out;" it is they who, again in consultation with their neighbours, grant land to strangers who ask for it, though they must notify the chief and get his approval before doing so.

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692 As the single great commoners settle disputes within their own villages so the chief and great commoners together hear and decide cases within the chiefdom. Many of these legal actions are now settled in the Courts, but not all of them; and, even when cases are going to Court, preliminary hearings commonly take place before the chief, first. Cases are conducted and witnesses interrogated by chief and great commoners together, and the decision which the chief pronounces is an expression of their general opinion.

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629 Among the great commoners there is an order of seniority. The leaders of the two senior age-villages of the chief's own men play a prominent part at his "Coming Out," they each have a pre-eminent authority in one side of his chiefdom, and the other great commoners rank as their juniors, some on one side, some on the other. In the old days the two senior great commoners each led a whole side of the chiefdom in war.

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754 The two most effective checks on the power of a chief are migration and witchcraft. Military strength used to depend upon the number of a chief's adherents, to-day the scale of his salary is similarly dependent; men are quite free to move, and there is a constant flow of adherents from unpopular to popular chiefs. But unpopularity is most feared in its spiritual form of witchcraft. We have seen already that an adverse current of opinion is believed to act invisibly, as the "breath of men," against an unpopular member of a village and to make him sick. So also the adverse opinion of a single village or of a whole chiefdom is believed to have power against a chief, to bring sickness or even death upon him. As in the single village, so in the whole chiefdom the great commoners are the prime sources of this spiritual power; they are believed severally to protect the members of their own villages and jointly to protect their

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1939
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

The office of chieftainship still carries high prestige and the District Council has actually resolved to select a paramount chief. Competition for this position is fierce and it remains to be seen whether the Council will ever agree on a nomination. The persistent suggestion that the Administration should undertake the invidious task and select a paramount is scarcely likely to be acted upon, since the Administration sees no necessity for establishing such an office.

Chiefs, selected by their village headmen, are the executive officers of the Rural Councils, but they have lost their judicial functions. There are twenty-four recognised courts with a bench of 'courtbelders' appointed annually by the Rural Councils, and one superior court, but the annual appointment ceased in 1938 and more permanent appointments were made. The aim is to develop a specialized judiciary independent of the executive. There is also a very important class of full-time civil servants, secretaries of the District and Rural Councils, and clerks of the courts.

The position of village headmen is in a fluid state. Where the 'coming out' ritual has been dropped, the traditional occasion for the formal appointment of village headmen no longer arises, and old men continue in office much longer than before. When a headman dies his heir sometimes takes his position or, if neither the heir nor a junior son will accept it, some other man is appointed by the chief. There is evidence that in many chieftaincies men are reluctant to undertake the position, which carries no salary but involves a considerable amount of work and makes it difficult or impossible for a man to engage in paid employment either within or outside the District. As one woman put it, "Money has killed the office of village headman" (*Indalama ayapile ubufumu*). There is some evidence from the lake-shore plain, however, of men competing for the office, and indeed of a son claiming in the courts the headmanship his father held. Possibly the competition for land on the plain, and the fact that the allocation of land lies with the village headmen, account for this. When all the arable land is taken up, it is probable that acquisition will be through inheritance or sale only, and the present headman's power to allocate land is likely to vanish; but one of the most important assets of a village is its pasture-land, and in controlling and developing this the headmen may well play a decisive part in the future. Since village headmen are essential executive officers in local administration, and are integrated into the new system of

villages grew ever smaller and became violent as their members gradually died off in old age.

A Nyakyusa village, then, owed its being to the most significant political, social and religious event. Each village had its own approximately democratic, and each headman was ritually and magically strengthened in order to lead and protect his own and their fields.

This particular system operated satisfactorily in the demographic and land-using conditions of the old days. By the process of bifurcation, briefly described above, new chiefdoms and new villages were formed for each generation. Although the population appears to have been increasing rapidly there was always sufficient land to create two chiefdoms where one had existed before, and to create new villages and more villages than had existed before in the old chiefdom. The two new chiefs were able easily to move apart and find sufficient and more than sufficient land for their needs.

The system of bifurcation, the ideal of the Nyakyusa, did not always work out so neatly in practice – at any rate it often did not in the Lake Plains. Sometimes it did work; for example, the present chiefdoms of Lusunzu and Kyela are the two parts of their grandfather's single chiefdom, which split up under their respective fathers. Similarly, the present Wenkipenda and Wenamungulu chiefdoms stemmed from a single unit, while the Wenkipenda chiefdom itself today is really two indigenous chiefdoms, but the Government would recognize only the senior brother's claim to chiefship and allowed him authority over the whole. Even where a single new chiefdom succeeded the old (frequently as the result of civil war in which one brother subjugated the other) the essential dichotomous arrangement persisted so that the resultant single unit had two distinct halves, each with its own head with his villages and headmen. In any case, whether traditional bifurcation occurred or not, and right down to modern times, new villages have been established at the time of the "coming-out" of the new chief. The basic village system showed greater persistence and remained truer to type than did the chiefdom and the wider political system.

The real authority of a Nyakyusa chief was not in general very great, although individuals here and there achieved personal importance. A chief was accorded a great deal of prestige and honour, and by tribute and gifts he frequently became pre-eminently wealthy. He was supposed to be kept informed by his headmen of all important village affairs and to approve all matters concerning the land; but the village headman was in fact the real land authority, who attended to the details of land allocation and land use within his village. A chief could not do this, and in fact only in so far as he had the support and loyalty of his headmen had he any authority at all. "A chief is a chief because he has headmen," one informant put it to me – he was a prominent chief himself. A village said: "A chief does not own the chiefdom, or the land. We, the people together, own it." A chief could, without notice or advice, take any unoccupied land for the use of himself or of his kinsmen, but he could not allocate it to others; both headmen and villagers would have indignantly and successfully protested had he tried, as some economically did. Land disputes, an uncommon feature in a country where land was plentiful, were settled by the headmen of the village in question; they were the private affairs of the village and the chief had no right of interference. Inter-village disputes first came before a meeting of the headmen concerned, with perhaps the assistance of the senior headman of the chiefdom. Only if a dispute could not be settled and if it seemed likely to threaten general peace within the chiefdom would the disputants go before the chief himself, who even so relied and had to rely heavily on his headmen to secure a settlement. So deferent was his position that he might be unable to resolve inter-village disputes for fear of witchcraft reprisals against him by the unsuccessful party.

6:Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

local chiefs themselves, sitting with their great-commoners, others to the territorial nobles. And this was often sufficient, when the two parties both belonged to the same chiefdom or the same fief. The judgments of these local authorities were effective, in the first place, because (and in so far as) they represented the common legal sense of their groups and the common determination not to allow these groups to be disrupted by disputes. They were effective, in the second place, because, under the primitive conditions of the old Ngonde, individuals were normally helplessly dependent upon these local groups.

When the parties belonged to different chiefdoms or fiefs three kinds of legal procedure, other than the poison-ordeal, were open. It was possible, in the first place, " to institute an enquiry " (*ubulolwempu*). The plaintiff went to ask the defendant's own chief (or noble) if he would please look into the matter for him; and sometimes satisfaction was obtained in this way. If it was not obtained then appeal could always be made to the *mwafi*.

And, in the second place, if both parties belonged to chiefdoms whose chiefs were closely related, then and only then the political hierarchy did provide a certain judicial assistance. " If one of the men of a junior chief had a case against one of the men of a senior, then the junior chief would go with some of his men to visit his elder brother. On arrival he would bid him not to be surprised at their coming, and explain that one of his men was a thief—' Is he indeed ? '—' Yes ' —' who is it ? '—' So and so '—' You really mean it, he is a thief ? '— ' Certainly ! Why else have we come ? '—Then the senior chief would summon the man concerned and question him until, maybe, he would admit it. And then the senior chief, would send to take what had been stolen and would return it to his brother's subject."

And, again, if the men of two equally junior brother chiefs had a case against each other, the plaintiff's chief might accompany him when he went to institute an enquiry with the defendant's chief; and then both chiefs together would take the case to their elder brother for decision.

It is not certain to what genealogical distance this procedure was effective; our evidence suggests that it normally only obtained between chiefs who were half-brothers.

And, finally, it was possible to catch a hostage and so compel restitution for wrong done. " In the old days if one man had been wronged by another (of a different country) then he would catch and keep the child of some powerful man who lived in the same country as the wrongdoer. Then the father would send to enquire for what reason his child had been caught and would be told that it was because so and

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 F917 Ngonde F917

or, one of his neighbours, had wronged and defrauded the appellant. So the father would visit the wrongdoer and tell him that his own child had been caught because of him; and he would enquire into the case and the wrongdoer would pay what was due. After the payment had been made the child would be returned to its father uninjured, with its head shaven and bringing a gift." Now this, it must be emphasized, was not a violent but a truly legal procedure. It seems only to have been taken in clear cases when the debt was not seriously disputable at law, and all that was required was machinery to enforce its payment. It was a procedure generally accepted throughout Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa; the father of the child seems not to have resented it, and, being "a powerful man,"[9] he was able to put pressure on his defaulting neighbour.

But these forms of procedure were insufficient to keep the peace in Ngonde. In the Ngonde plain at least, much the same law was common to all the fiefs and chiefdoms, but it was only enforced piecemeal in little local areas, or, beyond them, in occasional clear cases by the enquiry or the homage method. And so quarrels, either between commoners or chiefs, led not infrequently to violence and war.

Now this situation requires to be explained. Why did the Kyungu and his subordinates not develop an effective judicial system on the lines of the religious and economic hierarchy? I am not confident that our evidence supplies a certain answer, but there are two facts which, in combination, go some way towards doing so.

The crucial point is that, as we have already noticed, the conditions of life in Ngonde in the middle period, did not necessitate the development of such a system. Most of life for most men was confined to the little local areas, within which law was effectively maintained. There it had to be maintained somehow, or life would have been impossible. But beyond them men had only occasional relationships. War was endemic in the society of Ngonde but did not threaten to destroy it; and it is only that threat that can compel men to set up new machinery. The warfare of Ngonde was sporadic only while fights were matters of an hour or two and casualties were slight.

Nevertheless there were other areas in primitive Africa in which paramount chiefs and their subordinates did maintain law and order with some success, and in which civil war, though it continued, was treated as a crime. Why was this not done in Ngonde? For, though centralized justice may not have been necessary, it would have had many obvious advantages. I believe that the answer to this question lies

[9] i.e. a rich man with a certain local prestige and authority.

I:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

barricaded his doorway with thorns. On his return he found them, and he moved to Mwalioje's country (the adjoining chiefdom).'

Often an accusation of witchcraft is made without resort to divination at all: the behaviour of the accused (as in the case quoted on pp. 110–13) or the word of 'the defender', is taken as evidence. But if there is doubt as to the identity of the witch, the patient or his family may consult a diviner (*undagwa*),[1] putting before him the names of persons they suspect. Whatever the grounds of accusation, however, it was normally confirmed by the *ewusyi* ordeal, if the accused did not admit guilt. The chief might order a suspect to go to the ordeal, or a man or woman accused by his neighbours would appeal to the ordeal, when denying the charge. In such a case the accuser and accused first went to the chief to report and get official witnesses, then, accompanied by these witnesses and other friends, they went to a doctor who had a store of a certain medicine, *ewusyi*, and there, at his homestead, they drank the *ewusyi* together. Those who failed to vomit were judged guilty. The procedure was described by a number of witnesses (*vide* Documents, pp. 240–1). The accuser and the accused, each accompanied by supporters, go to the doctor, who warns them not to drink if what they have said is false. The doctor sprinkles powder into tepid water and gives the accuser and the accused the infusion to drink. He addresses the *ewusyi*, and the supporters address each their own friend. Then, when one vomits his (or her) supporters applaud trilling,[2] and they go home, the man who vomited paying the doctor. Mwandosi described how after one of the two had vomited the other would sit tense and miserable, quite still. He would be left alone awhile, but later the doctor would try to make him bring up the poison: 'Should a man die?' they said. Only rarely, it seems, did anyone die of drinking *ewusyi*.

If the accuser failed to vomit he was judged guilty of witchcraft himself; if neither vomited both were judged guilty; if both vomited the accuser was fined, paying two or more cows to the accused in compensation for slander. If he had no cows he might give a girl in marriage.

[1] For the methods of divination see Godfrey Wilson 'An African Monday', *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936), p. 80.

[2] A high-pitched ululation expressing praise and triumph.

754 Sometimes the individuals concerned did not actually take the
687 ordeal themselves, but each was represented by one of his or her
685 children, as when Mwaisumo's mother was accused of bewitching
the village cows, and one of her younger sons drank the emesis
representing her (cf. Document, p. 141). Very often the ordeal
was used to discover which *group* was responsible for the trouble,
whether it was the father's people or the mother's, or perhaps
the village, and a child was chosen to represent each group and
given the poison. Mwaisumo himself had drunk emesis as a
child, representing his father's people (cf. Document, p. 141).
And a respite explained that each family chose a member who
vomited readily—his family was always represented by a certain
daughter who vomited emesis immediately.

The ordeal is only administered nowadays in the greatest
secrecy, and probably very rarely, for informants who had no
hesitation in discussing with us witchcraft accusations and trials
of supposed witches, though these were well known to be illegal,
denied that the ordeal was administered. The most recent
example we traced occurred in 1936.

763 So far we have only dealt with cases in which witchcraft is
767 suspected as the cause of illness among men, or of a decrease in
754 the milk supply. The matter is more serious if someone has
actually died. If there is any doubt as to the cause of death, an
autopsy is performed, and a diagnosis made from the condition
of the stomach and intestines. "Wounds" or scars in the stomach
are taken as evidence of attacks by witches, and a black oily
substance in the bowel, or red streaked with black and white,
is a mark of sorcery; if the bowel is swollen, or if the entrails
burst out of the incision, it is proof that the deceased was himself
a witch, and was probably killed in a quarrel with fellow-witches.
Death due to a relative having been bewitched (cf. Document,
p. 141), or a disease of the bowels (*ibitanya*) attributed to
natural causes, is also thought to be apparent at an autopsy. Some
maintain too, that the source of witchcraft can be discovered from
the examination, wounds on the right side of the stomach indicat-
ing that the witch is a member of the father's family, or of the same
village; wounds on the left indicating that he is a member of the
mother's family (cf. Document p. 141).

At the autopsy the crowd is kept at a distance and usually only
one or two senior relatives or neighbours, the headman of the

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

4. A BOUNDARY DISPUTE

Heard by the Lupata Court (president, Mwaipopo), 18/3/35.

Man A brought case against man B for assault.

Plaintiff and defendant gave their accounts, and also Mwangomo, chief of the country concerned. 423

A and B had quarrelled over the boundary of their adjoining homesteads, which are in different villages of the same chiefdom. There was an old quarrel about the boundary of the village. Mwangomo stated: "The week before this quarrel I went with my brothers and the young village headmen (leaving behind the old village headmen because I thought they would quarrel) to settle the dispute. We walked over the boundary and said to the people concerned: "It is here." 695 683

'A and his two friends (not in court) were not satisfied with my demarcation and grumbled openly saying: "Who is Mwangomo to take from us the place where our fathers lived, and from which they ate the bananas, and give it to our neighbours? We will take it and not care for Mwangomo" . . . or again: "We do not believe that Mwangomo really decided like this, we shall act as if the line was as before." So when I heard that they were talking like this I asked all the people to watch for any man who might do anything against the decision, and I told one man in particular to watch.'

A and B gave evidence, telling much the same story.

A went to cut the banana leaves (*i.e* prune) on the old boundary, with a bill-hook (*ionge*), and B came and told him to stop. They quarrelled, each claiming that the land had been his father's, and that his father had sown the bananas off it. Then B caught hold of the bill-hook, and in the struggle A was cut. A now brings a case for assault against B.

Mwangomo: 'B is in the right, and what makes it worse is that since his father died A has never been in the country. He has lived in Mu'Ngonde (the Lake-shore plain); he has only been back a few days in my country and he brings war into it and spoils it.' Mwangomo spoke angrily, and asked that A should be imprisoned.

The Court: 'We follow what you, the chief, say; if people resist you and speak against you it is very bad, but we disagree about imprisoning him, he has only just returned to the country and it is not a good custom to imprison a man who has only just come to a country. Bring his two friends who have lived long in your country.' 695 683

[p. 191]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

695 683 Mwakisiya (another chief sitting in court): 'What about the other man you drove away without bringing him into court? Mwangomo has aggravated the quarrel, he should have called all the men from both villages together and judged the case there.'

The Court, to A: 'Where have you been staying since the fight? Where have you put all your things?'

A: 'In Mwangake's country.'

Court: 'You mean that Mwangomo had driven you out?'

A: 'Yes.'

The Court: 'Then if you have left the country why do you bring this case, troubling us?'

Mwangomo then decided to drive A and his two friends out of the country and said nothing more about punishing A. So the case ended.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 F3617 Ngombe F3617
Nyakyusa

25. THE ORDEAL (*UMWAFI*)

Mwaisumo (1938).

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'I was once given *umwafi*. It was long ago but I remember it very well. It was at the funeral of my mother's younger brother my *umwipuo umwandi*; he died suddenly, and when he was dead some people of the family said that the disease was from my father's side (*i.e.* from my father's younger brother, *tatu umwandi*, my own father was dead at this time); and others said, no, it was from the side of the deceased's new wife—this was his third wife, recently married—he had run away with her from her husband. Those concerned were the deceased's sisters (and their husbands), brothers, wives, and fellow villagers. They said: "Let us drink *umwafi*." So they took two children, I and another, a girl—she was a daughter of the dead man and represented his own house; if she did not vomit then the disease came from within the house (*i.e.* from one of the wives); I, in the same way, represented my father's house.

'The doctor took some banana leaves and prepared medicine, putting some into each leaf; after a little while they called us and told us to stand apart, a bit away from the house. First the doctor gave the *umwafi* to the girl from her leaf, and then to me from mine. The leaves are kept separate and there are several for each person. All the family drew closer and sat around us. The doctor addressed each of us in turn. I do not remember the words exactly, but it was something like this: "If it was you that has brought sickness, let us see. We are sure it was you that brought the disease." Then we both vomited, she a little before me. If one does not vomit it may be very serious; the poison stays in you and you may die. Then they said: "Well, we do not know where the disease came from." Then they gave us water to wash in and some meat to eat—food is specially put aside for those that drink *umwafi*. This was the end.

'Afterwards it was said that it was the man who was the woman's first husband who had poisoned my mother's brother. We were being tested for sorcery, not witchcraft, as the autopsy had shown that it was a case of sorcery. Having heard this, we did not spread the news; we kept quiet, waited, and watched. And then after a week the dead man's son, my cousin (*ustawi*), was dead; and that woman ran away. She was frightened. Then we knew it was her former husband who had killed both by sorcery.[1] The family sought the doctor to get

[1] In another text (quoted on p. 256) Mwaisumo explained that the injured husband had used 'the horn', i.e. vengeance magic. Being of the family which suffered Mwaisumo calls it 'sorcery'.

[p. 244]

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the medicine for the prevention of the disease, and then it was finished. The wife was taken back by the first husband, so the disease could not kill us any more.

"When she went back to him he could not come to us again. (True, he had no reason to do so.) Nothing happened to him. It is not our custom to accuse such people to the chief; we do not exactly know if it is the man, and still we have taken his wife. We were all concerned in this because of my mother. It happened four years before my brother died; there were four years between my uncle's death and his. I was in Tukuyu during the influenza after the war—in 1918—and then I went to Isoja the next year, 1919, and my uncle died.

"The procedure is similar in an accusation of witchcraft."

Mwakasebo (cited).

"Uwemaji is always used when someone denies practising witchcraft or theft, or denies that he is a liar. When they[1] have "sought" their fellow in the village and say that it is he who is throttling their cows so that they do not get milk, and the accused man denies it, then they take him to drink uwemaji. When they have come to the doctor's place they tell him their tale. Two men support the accused and two the accuser. They do not eat when they are going to drink uwemaji. The doctor first says to the accused: "If you are really guilty of throttling the cows, don't trouble the uwemaji, but confess." And he replies: "Had I been seen as a witch I would not have come here." And both his supporters say: "Our friend is falsely accused; he has never practised witchcraft."

"The doctor questions the accuser in the same way, saying: "Did you really see your fellow as a witch?" and he and his supporters reply that they saw him.

"So then the doctor gives them uwemaji to drink. He sprinkles a little powder in tepid water; or sometimes (so they say) he sprinkles the uwemaji on two freshly cut stumps of banana stem, one representing one side, and one the other. Then the stump in which the "new growth" (? say: ulufyuga) first appears is the one that has "vomited". The "growth" appears the same day that they cut it. The doctor addresses the uwemaji (ikupangilaga) and the others present assist, the supporters of each man addressing him. Then one vomits and those on his side trill, but he who has not vomited is very sad. Then they go home and he who has vomited pays the doctor.

"There is very little drinking of uwemaji nowadays, but much divination (ukulagwa).

[1] i.e. 'the defenders'. Mwakasebo explained, 'A witchcraft accusation always begins with "the defenders" seeing the witches in dreams.'

I:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngombe FN17
Nyakyusa

"There are some in our country who were caught for witchcraft, for "eating" people and throttling cows. The name of one of them was Somali, but now he is dead, another is Mwainumu. They denied the accusation very strongly; they were brought before the chief (my father) for their case to be judged, and when he had given judgement they said they wished to go to *ewanyi*. So they went to the *ewanyi*, and when they had drunk it Somali vomited and Mwainumu was conquered. Nothing happened to him—he was not driven out, they just told him to stop doing such things—but continually, even now, he is accused of witchcraft whenever anything happens. He's not gone to *ewanyi* again.

"This happened before I went to school, when I was still herding cows, about age or eight. I did not see the trial (before the chief) with my own eyes, but I was there when the *ewanyi* was administered.

"On another occasion a woman was "caught" for witchcraft when her child died. When they do an autopsy they sometimes find wounds on the right side or on the left. The right side is the side of the man, the left that of the woman. This time they found them on the side of the woman. The woman (i.e. the mother) denied that it was she who had "eaten" the child so they went to *ewanyi* and the woman was "conquered" (i.e. proved to be lying). It was not she, in her own person, but a member of her lineage who had "eaten" the child. After the *ewanyi* had "spoken" they went to a diviner to discover exactly who the individual was.

"I heard about this from others, but Mwainchilo, the father of the child who died, is a man of our country—I know him."

I:Wilson E-9[1934-,936]1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

54. PROCEDURE IN WITCHCRAFT CASES (MODERN)

Nsoso (village headman).

Question: 'How do you manage about witchcraft cases nowadays?' 7[v 627]

'We judge them openly but we do not have them written in the court book. When "a defender" has seen his fellow throttle someone, he tells us, and we judge that witch. It is "the defenders" (abamunge) who see the witches. Perhaps "the defender" comes out of his house by night and calls out: "I see so and so throttling so and so! Listen to-morrow."

'Yes, that happens nowadays.

'When someone tells us in this way we agree; the witch is driven out. Yes, even though he denies it, we say: "You are a witch. You are a thief. Even though you do not admit it, get out of the country." But formerly they went to the ordeal.'

Question: 'Now you just accept the word of the defender?'

'Yes, formerly if a man denied guilt when he was accused he went to the ordeal, and the *umwafi* "caught" the witch. Now since the Europeans have forbidden the use of *umwafi* we accept the word of "the defenders". Lo-oh, they (the defenders) are witches. Yes, in dreams.' [695]

Question: 'What about the man who accused the wife of Mwakolaba?'

'He denied it. He said: "I did not see her", so on that account we said: "Since you have abandoned her you must pay thirty shillings." But had he really seen her and told us properly we would have overcome the woman in argument and divorced her from her husband, but he denied it, saying: "I did not see her", and we all said: "The woman is not a witch; who has seen her?"

'If a woman is divorced for witchcraft there is no fine, the husband gets back his cows, that is all.'

Question: 'And the friend of Mwambopata?'

'He was really a witch. They said: "Yes, Mwambopata, we will convict you of witchcraft yourself if you are friendly with him."

'And if a man is fined because he has accused his fellow of witchcraft without seeing him, really, we do not write that in the book either.

'No, *umwafi* is not used; the Europeans and the chiefs and the village headmen have strictly forbidden it.'

[p. 257]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 From the Records of the First Class Subordinate Court of Rungwe

691 *Criminal case, 11/1935.* *Heard 5/2/35 before P. M. Huggins.*
L. Rampotto, prosecuting.
Rex v. Mwa, son of Hamani.

Charge: 'By actions and statement representing himself to have power of witchcraft and supplying instruments of witchcraft (green leaves) to one Mwakalobo, son of Mwakalobo.'

Charge read and explained.

Accused pleaded not guilty.

Mwakalobo, headman[1] *of Kapya, a pagan (complainant).*

754 695 'About two months ago a man called Bakowike came to me at Ikapu, stating that he had been sent by the accused to warn me that there was a conspiracy to bewitch me, on the part of one Mwakagiri and Mwakatumbula, because I was supposed to have taken some of the former's country. I told Bakowike to tell the accused to come and tell his own tale. The accused came that same day at about sundown. We entered the house and then he called me outside to talk to me. Prior to doing this he told me that Mwakagiri had given him four cows to arrange my death as the former stated that I was in possession of his land. He said that if I gave him a cow he would take no action. I did so. He also gave me some ground-up green leaves which he instructed me to mix with water and drink. He alleged that this potion would render me immune from witchcraft.

'The accused went off with the cow. Kikomile (X), Kyungulula (Y), and Mahandi (Z) and three of my wives were present during the above conversation.

'About a week later Mwakagiri came to visit me—I had sent for him. I did not welcome him—I told him I had heard that he was after my life. He asked me who had said this and I indicated the accused. He then told me that the accused had made the same statements about me to him. I then came and reported to the D.O. I threw away the medicine that the accused had given me. Relations have recently been strained between Mwakagiri and myself.'

In reply to question by accused: 'Yes, I sent for you but only because you sent Bakowike to me first to warn me.'

First witness, a brother of the complainant, confirmed his story, having been present when both Bakowike and the accused came to the complainant. He added these points:

[1] Probably a minor chief (*mwalijwale*), not a village headman (*akijwane*). The report of the case was in English.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

354
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'Mwakagiri wished to kill Mwakalobo over a land dispute and sub-chief Mwakatumbula also desired to do so, as he did not obey orders. Mwakalobo said he would not drink the powder (given by the accused) except in the presence of all his sons. . . . Bakowike was known to me, he lives at Isagula in Mwakatumbula's country, and Mwakalobo is married to two of his sisters.'

Second witness, Mwangambo, a classificatory brother of Mwakalobo, entirely confirmed Mwakalobo and the first witness. He also was present when both Bakowike and the accused came. Also, he said:

'I was present subsequently when Mwakalobo sent for Mwakagiri. Both of them stated in conversation that the accused had informed them that each had designs on the life of the other.'

In reply to a question by the accused: 'You did not spend the night with us, nor did you drink beer; there was none. We didn't drink the medicines.'

In reply to a question by the court: 'Yes, Bakowike came back again with the accused.'

A benchman ('capitao') of Mwakalobo confirmed the above stories.

Bakowike confirmed the other stories. He said: 'The accused and Mwakyangile with whom the accused lived (Mwakyangile is also a doctor) came and told me that Mwakagiri had come and informed the accused that he wanted to kill Mwakalobo, and had given him four cows for the purpose. He asked me if I was a relative of Mwakalobo's. I told him that I was; then he advised me to go and warn him, which I did that day. Mwakalobo then told me to fetch Mzee (the accused). I called him and Mwakyangile the same evening.'

In reply to a question by the accused: 'I did not come to your house. I did not give you a goat in exchange for medicine for my wife.'

In reply to a question by the court: 'I had never heard of Mzee before. He lives across a stream about one and a quarter miles away.'

In reply to a question by the accused: 'We did not sleep at Mwakalobo's.'

Note by the court: Impression that this witness had previously met the accused, probably buying medicine from him as stated by the accused, but is afraid of acknowledging the association.

Mwakagiri: 'It is true that Mwakalobo and I have had a dispute about land. I have never met Mwakalobo on any occasion on which we have accused each other of invoking witchcraft against each other, but on various occasions Mwangambo (the second witness) was sent by Mwakalobo to inquire why I was bewitching him. I told Mwangambo I was doing nothing of the sort. This was about a month ago. No one else was present. I did not learn how Mwakalobo came to suspect me.

1:Wilson E-5 (1936-1938) 1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

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I have often met the accused; he came and took a wife from my country. The accused is a doctor. I do not know why Mwakalobo should say that I met him. It is a lie.'

Mwakalobo was called. He said: 'Mwangombo (the second witness) is a nephew of Mwakagiri. I sent him to call Mwakagiri. He came back the same day with Mwakagiri and Nyomileta.'

Mwangombo when recalled confirmed this, adding: 'I live under Mwakalobo.'

Nyomileta: 'I know of no meeting of Mwakalobo and Mwakagiri. They were disputing over land. I heard from Mwakagiri that his nephew Mwangombo had told him that Mwakalobo accused him of exercising witchcraft against him. I am no relative of either party. I never went with Mwakagiri to meet Mwakalobo.'

Note of the court: I am of the impression that Mwakagiri and Nyomileta are hiding something. Their evidence is not given in a straightforward manner.

Accused (Mona): 'I have never received four cows from Mwakagiri. True, I went to Mwakalobo's house. He called me to prescribe for his impotency. He paid me with a cow. I was surprised at this as it is not customary to receive payment till a cure is effected.'

In reply to a question by the court: 'No one approached me with a view to exercising malignant witchcraft. I do not know why I should have been dragged into this. Perhaps Mwakalobo heard I had gone to Mwakagiri's country. I only went there to see my father-in-law. I gave Mwakalobo medicine to cure his impotency. I warned him that it would be no use for his trouble, but he insisted on having it. Yes, he even insisted on giving me the cow as a pledge of friendship. I did not know why he was so positive and wanted to be friendly with me. This is the first gift of that nature that I have received. I have been three months in Isangolo. I am on my way to my home at Mwaya. I stopped at Isangolo because I was suffering from a boil. All my relatives live in Sangu country.'

In reply to a question by the prosecution: 'I was myself surprised that as a resident of three months' standing I should have been suspected by Mwakalobo of witchcraft.'

In reply to a question by the court: 'Mwakyangile was present with me at Mwakalobo's. I went to call him.'

Note by the court: There is no question that this evidence is given glibly, and carries no conviction. The demeanour of the accused is that of a man seeking for a way out of a trying situation.

Mwakyangile told a different story from Mona. 'Mwakalobo wanted treatment for his children, who were suffering from *ikitanya* (a disease). He wanted nothing for himself.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

In reply to a question of the court: 'He did not complain of impotence.' 754

In reply to a question by the accused: 'We did not discuss bewitching anybody.' 695

Order

'There is in my opinion no doubt that the accused is guilty of practising witchcraft for reward, and is causing fear and annoyance. Section 5 of the Witchcraft Ordinance virtually prohibits any effective and rapid steps being taken to combat witchcraft. Section 5 (i) necessitates the delay of trial by High Court, and the offence disclosed is not covered by it, whereas Section 5 (ii) necessitates obtaining from His Excellency the Governor both sanction to prosecute and confirmation of any sentence imposed. Under the circumstances, and in view of the delay that has already taken place, permission is granted by the police to withdrew their request for sanction to prosecute under Section 5 (ii).

'By virtue of the powers conferred on me by Section 8 cap. xx, Mzee, son of Hamani, is ordered to reside at Mbeya and to report once a month at the District Office, pending such decision as the Provincial Commissioner shall make, following a request that he should exercise the powers conferred on him by Section 8 (1) to order Mzee, son of Hamani, to reside in his own domicile, Usangu.'

The Provincial Commissioner agreed to the request and Mzee is now in Sangu country. 696

3: Mackenzie M-3 (cn. 1923) 1923
F3617 Mgonde F3617

671 law-breaking, and the balance was restored when the law was vindicated. The idea that stable equilibrium means stagnation is alien to the Konde mind. To disturb the balance in order to advance to new conditions is a European, not a Bantu idea, and wherever the European stimulus has been removed, the wheels of custom drag heavily again.

692 A native court is not, to a white man, an impressive
•695 spectacle; though no doubt it is fearsome enough to some trembling rascal, who has little reason to hope that his misdeeds will escape their due reward. The court meets under the village tree, or, if the weather is bad, on the verandah of the chief or judge. There the chief sits with his headmen if the case is an important one, and there are usually a few old men present also, in whose memories are stored up records of previous cases which may have some bearing on the one in hand. The persons concerned are among the audience, which sits facing the court; and when called upon, they rise in turn, and conduct the case from where they stand. The native is a keen disputer. I have known a clever man fight his case with amazing skill and perseverance; even after it was clear that the evidence against him was complete, he would go on adducing fact after fact with a dialectical skill that would not disgrace a European lawyer at cross-examination. If the judge is a man with a
[32] sense of humour, he often announces his decision by relating some well-known story, the point of which is taken by all, as, with expressions of approval or otherwise, they rise and go. Execution of sentence

D: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

does not delay, but is carried out immediately. The loser may, however, appeal to another judge for a rehearing of the case. Compensation in some form, usually cattle, or hoes, or, in a few cases, a daughter, is the sentence.

Theft.—The extraordinary boldness and skill of the Nyakyusa thieves are widely known. Outside their own country their reputation is perhaps greater than they deserve, great though that is. At one place guards are doubled when it is known that Nyakyusa carriers have arrived. No European house has escaped their attentions, to the greater or smaller loss of the owner. They break through brick walls, enter by door or window, conduct their operations by day or night, with equal indifference and success; and the speed with which recognizable goods are disposed of, adds to the mystery of their methods.

A white man was recently robbed while reading in bed with dogs beside him, the thieves quietly lifting and carrying off a heavy trunk, which they believed to contain a large amount of cash, before the owner knew that they were in the room. Another had the whole of his kit taken while he himself was in the next room; a medical man had his hand-bag taken from his bedroom at about five in the afternoon; in yet another case the sum of two hundred shillings was quietly carried off from a table while three Europeans were sitting in the next room at breakfast. Sheets have been taken off beds, and the owners knew nothing of their loss until bed-time revealed the fact. Rifles and accoutrements have been removed from

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F?417 Ngonde F?417

day; next, those who destroy men and cattle, and everything else, by means of their hidden powers; and finally, the creators of lions, leopards, crocodiles, and eagles, who are the worst enemies of society, but who are held in such fear that they are seldom molested. The official dreamers, already frequently referred to, have one *insa*, serpent, in the stomach, but they are not called wizards; they are witch destroyers, or at least discoverers, for they have the power of seeing in dreams what these evil men are doing, and in dreams going out to fight them. And if, in the dream, the dreamer kills the snake with which he fights, the owner will be found dead in the morning. 754

Perhaps one of the commonest charges of witchcraft is made in connection with the milk supply. As a rule, in December, the chief sends out word that he expects the milk supply to be good for the year; if it turns out to be less than was expected, and if there has been no drought, it is obvious that there has been undue interference, and that on a great scale, with the cattle. The whole of the people of the affected district are summoned to the chief's village, and put to the test; each person bringing all the cattle he possesses. There are two tests: by the ear, and by the stomach, that is to say by poison. The people sit in a great circle, and one after another comes up to the doctor, who bores the ear with a sharp instrument; if the ear is easily bored, the person is innocent; if the skin is tough, and resists, he is guilty, and is ordered to sit on one side, where he is joined by all others who are found out in the same way. 754 695

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F3617 Ngonde F3617

But each person who is declared innocent goes at once, without further parley, to take charge of the cattle which he brought to the meeting. From the guilty persons everything is taken away: cattle, hoes, cooking pots, food stocks; and men are sent at once to burn down their houses. The live stock is the property of the chief, and it is mostly killed on the spot, and eaten, or dried, before the assembly departs; while the wretched criminals are sent out into the world, homeless and in poverty. They are not always expelled from the district, but they usually prefer to go to another chief.

The poison test has the same results for the guilty; but every individual is not necessarily tested. From each village one man is taken, and he drinks for the whole of that community. If he vomits, not only he, but all the village which he represents is innocent. If he does not, it does not follow that he is himself the guilty person, but only that the criminal (or criminals) will be found in his village. They are taken individually, and the poison administered, the innocent vomiting, and the guilty failing to do so. The decoction is never strong enough among the Konde to kill, and therefore other punishments must be found. Not infrequently a dog or a cock is made to take the poison, the results being credited or debited to the person for whom it stands.

The "smelling out" of witches is not generally practised; but there is a woman at Tukuyu, a stout young woman with a hearty laugh, who has the power of picking out the innocent when a general accusation

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F3617 Ngonde F3617

of witchcraft is made. The people are assembled by order of the chief, and the woman walks slowly round the circle, gazing into the eyes of each person, and eliminating the innocent one by one, using no other test than the look in the individual's eyes. Those who remain are guilty. 254 695

Prosperity in another arouses all the evil passions of witches and wizards. But prosperity in itself was, until lately, evidence that the prosperous person was himself a wizard. There is a woman living not far from me who was accused before the British magistrate of pretending to exercise witchcraft, and to obtain cattle and other goods by threatening violence. She was dismissed on technical grounds, but ordered not to return to her own district. In conversation with her after the trial she told me that it was only the presence of the white man that saved her from being burned alive as a witch; the evidence against her being the rapid increase of her live stock. But the increase, she assured me, was "the gift of God." 754 578

Death by burning was the ancient penalty when that was inflicted publicly; but when the witches or wizards themselves undertook to kill a fellow-sorcerer in jealousy, they did it in another way. Leaving their bodies behind them, they go to the house of the victim, enter by the roof, disturbing nothing; and finally enter the stomach of the sleeping person. Thence they wander about to lungs, heart, or liver, and wound him with their "secret spears." Next day the man is ill, and the day following he dies. If the *post mortem* reveals ulcers on heart, lungs, or liver, [683] 754

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 witchcraft, which consists in the ability to translate evil impulses into
754 effective though immaterial actions and thus to cause sickness and death; but it is never clearly known who all these people are. And so the coincidence of an obstinate illness with any quarrel or social tension of any kind between neighbours gives rise to a suspicion that witchcraft is at work. If the diviners support this theory then almost the only thing to be done nowadays is to move and get out of range; for witchcraft cannot act at a distance. In the old days an alternative course of action was open to the sick man, he might identify the witch with the aid of the mwafi ordeal and get him expelled from the chiefdom. Expulsions for witchcraft still occur to-day, but only rarely, for the mwafi ordeal, the most certain detector of witches, is no longer legal. There is, however, nothing to prevent a man who thinks himself bewitched from moving. Now this fact of constant movement is of the utmost importance in determining the Nyakyusa system of land tenure since it tends to prevent the development of any exclusive attachment to particular pieces of ground. And the cause of this constant movement is mainly, though not entirely, the fear of witchcraft.

For ordinary commoners only their immediate neighbours are believed to be dangerous and sick men therefore sometimes move only from one village to another of the same chiefdom; but very many move right outside to another chiefdom altogether, preferring to make sorcerers doubly sure and to put a long distance between themselves and their spiritual persecutors. And in the case of certain men of a high social status, for whom a wider circle is dangerous, it is held to be quite essential to leave the chiefdom.

166 I have no detailed statistics on moving but I estimate that, among the pagan Nyakyusa, at least 80% of the married men have, at some time or other, moved from the chiefdoms in which they first cultivated gardens of their own. They may stay away for a few weeks only, they may stay away for thirty years or they may never return at all. If, however, the chiefdom from which they first moved is the one which they regard as home then they usually do return to it in the end. A man's home chiefdom is pre-eminently the one in which his father lives, or, if dead, spent most of his life and is now buried. And this is normally the one in which he himself also was born and brought up and in which he first took up land.

166 When a man moves from his home chiefdom, his village neighbours
621 there, in the majority of cases, follow him within two months and ceremonially invite him back with a show of force by seizing his belongings and carrying them off home to his old village. They may really like and respect him and if, as is usually the case, he has moved because of sick-

6:Wilson E-6 (1936-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

children and relatives would be apprehended and brought to the Kyungu by the messengers. The Kyungu, or rather the nobles of Ngonde, would select the best-looking girls and let the others go. And then it was all over, any kinsfolk who had fled could return in safety to their homes. For in the old days when a man did wrong there was no legal argument and no trial. All his kinsfolk were terrified and the man fled, but the women, not having the strength to flee far, would be apprehended. The messengers would apprehend not only his full siblings and their children but his half siblings and their children too." Not only girls but boys also were sometimes kept as slaves. One of our informants made it clear, however, that it was always possible for a rich family to redeem their kin, both boys and girls, by giving one or two beasts in exchange for each.

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Our enquiries about the statement that "in the old days there was no legal argument and no trial" brought a clear distinction between ordinary cases and cases of treason either against the Kyungu or against the great chiefs: "In cases between two ordinary men, whether commoners or junior chiefs, there was indeed real legal procedure: a chief would take the case, one would pay damages to the other and smooth relationships would be re-established between them. But what we meant was that when a man wronged the Kyungu or one of the great chiefs then there was no sort of legal argument at all!"

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It is not relevant here to enter into any full account of the institution of slavery in Ngonde, but it must be pointed out that it was a very different thing from that introduced by the Arabs in the late 19th century. Few of these early slaves appear to have been sold outside Ngonde, and the Longwani traders carried away white ivory alone. Nor was there any impassable barrier between slave and free. All our informants maintain that slaves were treated rather as younger sons and daughters than as chattels, with the one exception that they could be sold to another man. A woman slave married by a free man herself at once became free, and the children of two married slaves were free also.

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Another form of treason against the Kyungu, we were told, was to vanish him by whispered criticism. Thee present Kyungu said that in the old days a Kyungu used occasionally to be insulted by one of his sons, the chiefs, and that then, "if the Kyungu was a fierce man," he would send the other chiefs against him and have all his cows and wealth taken and his houses burnt. The way in which the Kyungu might be insulted was this: after the election of a new Kyungu perhaps one of the other chiefs would begin to ask secretly why on earth they had chosen such an unsuitable man for the position, and suggest that he had none of the qualities of a chief; then if the Kyungu heard of

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6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 F317 Ngonde F317

with, and they were dealt with summarily. Each rattle of Ngonde, of course, decided such cases as the members of his own fief might bring him; but for Ngonde as a whole Mbande was not a court of law; it was a shrine, an epidemic, a fount of authority and a mirror.

Each great chief, however, besides taking ordinary cases among the people of his own chiefdom, also held an appeal court of a kind to which cases could be brought from all the chiefdoms of his house; for the great chiefs alone among the sons of the Kyungu had power to administer the poison-ordeal (*mwaafi*); some of the territorial rattles had it also, but not the local chiefs. If any case proved difficult of decision, if either party was not satisfied that justice was being done, then appeal might be made to the *mwaafi*. And this brought a great chief something of the prestige of a high-court judge, for he could summon defendants from any chiefdom of his own house. And sometimes, as a guarantee of impartiality in a particularly difficult case, he might send the litigants to to a neighbouring great chief, saying: "Let my brother settle this; otherwise they will say that I showed favour to one or the other and that I influenced the *mwaafi*!" Thus Mwakaungulu is said to have sent cases occasionally to Kalonga.

Now the poison-ordeal was not only appealed to in witchcraft-cases, though it is with them that it is particularly associated, for without it they could never be decided at all; cases of any difficulty could be taken to it, whatever their nature. Nevertheless the procedure of the poison-ordeal was in itself a purely religious arbitrament; the legal argument was not reopened. An appeal to the *mwaafi* was an appeal beyond secular justice altogether, to something that knew men's innermost thoughts and their most secret actions. It was believed that the *mwaafi* could be influenced, but only in religious ways. The impartiality of the great chief was important, for he owned it and his attitude might be magically conveyed into it; and it was also possible for its decisions to be deflected by magical preparations; but forensic rhetoric left it wholly unmoved.

And no cases were ever taken on appeal to the great chiefs to be reopened in a mundane way. Nor among any group of brother chiefs were cases ever taken on appeal from a junior to a senior. In the elaborate political hierarchy which we have described the element of secular judicial procedure was conspicuously slight. Indeed the men of Ngonde had scarcely any greater judicial facilities than the Nyakyusa, with their independent chiefdoms.

A great many cases, as we have pointed out, were decided by the common people among themselves, others were taken to the great-commoners of the separate villages of each chiefdom, others to the

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

This practice of having official witnesses to every contract, and summoning them to give evidence should a dispute later arise, is one of the most important means of maintaining order in Nyakyusa society, and village neighbours are the usual witnesses. 675

c. Communal responsibility of the age-village

Formerly, in Nyakyusa law two forms of group responsibility were emphasized: the mutual responsibility of kinsmen, and the mutual responsibility of fellow villagers. A case of murder or manslaughter was primarily the concern of the agnatic lineage if the victim was a male or an unmarried girl, and of the lineages of both husband and father if the victim was a married woman. The kinsmen either killed the murderer, or brought him before the chief, who imposed a fine which went to the injured relatives. The Nyakyusa make a distinction between 'spearing by day' (direct physical injury) and 'spearing by night' (witchcraft); and only in the latter type of case did the fine go to the chief. Witchcraft was thus treated as an offence against the state—the chiefdom—while murder or manslaughter was an offence against the kinsmen of the dead. The concern of the state in witchcraft, and the joint responsibility of kinsmen on the one hand, and of fellow villagers on the other, was evident when, as sometimes happened, both groups were required by the chief to clear themselves of suspicion of witchcraft by each providing a representative to take the poison ordeal. Should the representative of either group fail to vomit then the responsible individual within that group was sought out by means of divination and the ordeal (*vide supra*, p. 116). 613 621 672 754 682

In a case of adultery the injured husband, together with his kinsmen, pursued and attempted to kill, or torture and kill, the adulterer: self-help was not only permitted but expected in this situation,[1] and a man's near kinsmen were obliged to assist him. Neighbours were not obliged to assist in executing vengeance, but they might be victims of it, for if the injured husband did not find the adulterer he might kill any village-mate of his enemy. Such an attack commonly led to war between the two villages; 684 696 721

[1] D. R. MacKenzie, *The Spirit-Ridden Konde* (1925), p. 61, says: 'The injured husband has the right to inflict death on the paramour. This is no mere tale of the past but a grim fact to-day . . . cases of this nature are very numerous.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 195! FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

684 and some informants suggested that it only occurred between the villages of different chiefs, though others insisted that it did occur
696 between villages of the same chiefdom. Indeed any seduction of
721 a woman of another village was liable to lead to war. A man of Bulindanajo seduced the wife of the headman of Bujege, Mwansambe. The men of Bulindanajo returned the woman to her husband, saying to their fellow: 'The men of Bujege are fearsome (*basisya*), it's a village of fathers, she's your mother' (cf. Document p. 181). But Mwansambe was angry and made war. The men of Bulindanajo protested, saying: 'We brought the woman back!' but he took no notice and attacked them. He was defeated, and fled.

685 A thief or an obstinate debtor was also a danger to his neigh-
686 bours. For a victim or creditor living in another chiefdom, and so unable to obtain satisfaction in a chief's court—since a chief paid
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621 The village was a fighting unit taking up quarrels on its own
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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

In reply to a question of the court: 'He did not complain of impotence.' 754

In reply to a question by the accused: 'We did not discuss bewitching anybody.' 695

Order

'There is in my opinion no doubt that the accused is guilty of practising witchcraft for reward, and is causing fear and annoyance. Section 5 of the Witchcraft Ordinance virtually prohibits any effective and rapid steps being taken to combat witchcraft. Section 5 (i) necessitates the delay of trial by High Court, and the offence disclosed is not covered by it, whereas Section 5 (2) necessitates obtaining from His Excellency the Governor both sanction to prosecute and confirmation of any sentence imposed. Under the circumstances, and in view of the delay that has already taken place, permission is granted by the police to withdraw their request for sanction to prosecute under Section J (2).

'By virtue of the powers conferred on me by Section 8 cap. 21, Musa, son of Hassani, is ordered to reside at Mwaya and to report once a month at the District Office, pending such decision as the Provincial Commissioner shall make, following a request that he should exercise the powers conferred on him by Section 8 (3) to order Musa, son of Hassani, to reside in his own domicile, Usangu.'

The Provincial Commissioner agreed to the request and Musa is now in Sangu country. 696

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

232 neck to tail, saying, "You will now give a cow-calf." What remains of the medicine is put into the stall, and the next calf will be a female. A cow that kills her calf in dropping it is given a medicine which will prevent the recurrence of the fatality. Medicine is also given if the milk is not satisfactory in quantity; and by rubbing in a medicine from tail to neck specialists claim to be able to tell whether a calf in the womb is male or female.

232 754 A disease which does not yield to treatment is the work either of the spirits or of a sorcerer. Divination is resorted to, and the particular spirit operating having been discovered, the appropriate offerings are made, and the disease will now yield to treatment. If it is due to witchcraft, the chief is informed, and he publicly announces that if the animal is not well by next day, he will have the poison test applied to discover the culprit. This, however, if done at all to-day, is done in secrecy, for the chief who permits the poison cup to be administered is liable to severe penalties. But so universal is the belief in witchcraft that the suppression of the poison cup is adduced as the cause of a great increase in the number of sorcerers, and consequently of the general insecurity.

• 696 Cattle are sometimes deliberately poisoned. A man has a case at court, and it goes against him, although he is convinced that he is in the right. He is ordered [278] to pay a cow to his antagonist; which he does, but he first poisons it with a slow-working drug, and the animal will die in a few days. The successful litigant, although he knows perfectly the cause of the death,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

696 rarely appeals, convinced, though without reason, that the magistrate will pooh-pooh his story.

231 754 In 1920 a lake-shore chief was fined a large number of cattle ; and the animals, removed to the hills where the veterinary officer lived, did not thrive. The reason is no doubt to be found in the different climate ; but the natives give two quite different ones : many of them were bewitched ; and others were given a slow-working poison by owners who resented the fine. But the fact that many natives willingly bought them when offered for sale seems to indicate not all held the two theories referred to.

231 157 When an epidemic carries off large numbers of cattle, the Konde assume a fatalistic attitude. There is nothing to be done : why worry ? In 1894 immense numbers of cattle died of rinderpest. After learning by divination that neither spirits nor sorcerers had anything to do with it, the people put it down to *Mwanjebe*, a troublesome godlet of the neighbouring Kamanga tribe, against whom there was no appeal, and no protection. They assume the same fatalistic attitude to the interference of the white man, and a supreme distrust of all kinds of injections has arisen in their minds, since the widespread injections of 1918, when many of their cattle died. The chiefs are credited with saying on that occasion, " If the white man wishes to inject, let him inject ! Why make him angry ? Let the cattle die rather." If this is true, it is a testimony to the immense personal prestige of the white man, but is hardly flattering to his veterinary skill. A warning was issued that the flesh of cattle

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the prospect of their enemies using them. The notion that medicines are a weapon which may be used rightly or wrongly is very clearly brought out in the attitude towards 'making' animals. If a private individual 'makes' lion, or leopard, or crocodile which kill men that is sorcery—there is no question about it—and we heard of at least one man who had been driven from his home because he was reputed to have made leopards which killed children and cattle,[1] but when Mwakyonde 'made' lions which drove off pig and did not attack men, that was a public service (*vide* p. 69). And when one chief uses lions in his conflict with another the action is felt to be comparable with war, rather than murder. In February 1937, four lions were hunting in a piece of bush country near the salt lick, which two chiefs claimed. Mwansumbwe, a chief from the hills, had sent some of his men to clear fields in the bush, but Mwakagile (50, or his heir), the neighbouring chief, objected saying, 'This is my land.' There was a long case and finally the District Officer gave judgement in favour of Mwakagile and refused Mwansumbwe any compensation for his work in clearing the bush. 'You got a crop for your labour,' he said. Mwansumbwe was incensed by the judgement and grew even more angry when his men elected to remain on the land they had cleared and became men of Mwakagile. So, everyone said, Mwansumbwe had sought medicines and created these lions. They killed seven cattle in a few days, attacking even by daylight. 'Yes,' we were told, 'there are always lion in the bush, but they do not ordinarily kill cattle as they have done now.'

Another chief who tried the same sort of thing was not so successful. 'Some time ago the chief Mwakila made elephants, he turned his wives into elephants and they ate the bananas of Malapula, but Malapula said, "Let's try", and he created much rain which poured down on to the elephants and those wives died. Then Mwakila was defeated. How about you Europeans? Have you this custom? Do you turn a wife into an animal?'

'No!'

'We have it, if I choose I give my wife *isigita* and she becomes a lion which roars, it roars and eats people.'[2]

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 124.

[2] This, and the tale of a young man fleeing from justice who obtained a medicine to turn himself into a lion, were the only accounts of lycanthropy we heard—usually the medicines themselves (such as those of a chief) turn into animals, or the young of ordinary lion, leopard, or crocodile 'smell the medicines' and become attached to the 'owner' who feeds and commands them.

423 428 [693] believed that parents and children should live apart.[1] In the same way, and for similar reasons, an elder brother tries to make provision for his junior when the latter marries if their father is already dead. The practice of the father is not a legally required one, although it is nowadays increasingly common and sons have begun to expect it: the practice of an elder brother is now legally required in the matter of land and probably always has been in the matter of cattle.

The difficulties are obvious when a man dies and leaves several sons [646] but only a small-sized holding. To date no clear ruling has emerged and unfortunately the African District Council did not deal specifically with such details when introducing the new law. How much land an eldest brother can reasonably retain for himself is perhaps not determinable in practice except in specific relation to the nature, locality and fertility of the holding in question, the plots already held by the man himself, the needs and number of the younger brothers and any holdings they may have, and the location of the villages in which they severally live. There is also plenty [508] of scope for disagreement between half-brothers over portions of the paternal holding which had been retained by the father himself for his own use; over portions allocated to a wife who has borne no sons or whose sons have died, and over permanent trees. The situation is still fluid and there has not yet been time enough for a common and generally acceptable solution to be established. Consequently each group of sons tries to solve its own particular problems in this matter as best it can, torn between old values and new attitudes and needs.

593 Relations between both full-brothers and half-brothers tend often to be severely tried at times of inheritance. It is not primarily, I think, a case of 428 brothers' greed for valued land tending to overcome bonds of fraternity and co-operation; but it is rather that a father's arable holding is often not able to provide adequate amounts of arable land for each of his sons, and yet they find the very greatest difficulty in obtaining land elsewhere. Already the traditional kin-group comprising the sons and grandsons of a group of [182] full-brothers had begun to break down even before land shortage became serious. Now the group of full-brothers itself tends to be dispersed as men obtain land where they can and it is endangered by dissensions over land rights and land division. Increasingly, it seems, a Nyakyusa man is becoming detached from his brothers and he tends to establish an independent family unit comprising his immediate family alone – that is, himself with his wives and children. We cannot attribute the whole cause of this modern trend to land shortage and economic difficulties, of course, for involved also are new ideas of individualism and of personal effort and reward, and the decreasing need for the consistent support of brothers in social, economic and ritual activities.

578 Younger brothers may, and sometimes do in fact, agree that the paternal holding is already too small for further sub-division, or that the 423 small parts which can be made available to them are scarcely worth having – especially if they live some distance away. On the other hand, the eldest 428 brother may already have obtained a holding in his own village and is therefore willing to make only a small claim or none at all in the interests of his juniors, and he may then divide the inheritance amongst them alone. Usually, so acute is the dearth of land, the holding is divided between two [311] or more brothers. It is split into small plots so that each brother has a share of paddy, food-crop and banana land, and these are commonly a half acre or even less in size nowadays. As already mentioned, by a kind of modern [696] equity the local African courts generally favour the claims of the younger

1. See Wilson, M., 1951, p. 139 and *passim*. "The overt purpose (of age-villages) is the separation of sons and mothers, of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law." (*Ibid* p. 162).

brothers, and this is compelling the increasing and continued fragmentation of holdings at time of inheritance. Even so, if there are several brothers (i.e., sons of the deceased) the youngest among them may still be unable to obtain a plot, or at least not one of an economically viable size, and they are then compelled to try to gain admittance to some other village as newcomers, there to be allocated land.

The shortage of land is, therefore, not only making inheritance very considerably more important, but it is assisting in the establishment of new kinship attitudes and a redefining of fraternal relations. The position is most confused at the moment as the old system continues to exist alongside the new, sometimes more or less successfully, but often in intractable opposition. At the present time the observer can only mention general tendencies, for it is impossible as yet to foresee what the eventual result will be, and there are, in any case, many other factors involved besides those of the inheritance of scarce land.

In so far as we are primarily concerned with land problems in this essay, the basic factors are that land is newly scarce, that there is virtually no alternative activity in the country to the arable use of the land, and that therefore each son must try to obtain a share in the often inadequate holding of his father. I suggest that no form of inheritance can deal with such a situation satisfactorily – at least it is highly doubtful if any has yet emerged in an area of land shortage in Eastern Africa – and thus there are bound to be severe difficulties and a deterioration of inter-personal relations between near kinsmen who are most in competition. The new inheritance law of the Nyakyusa has narrowed the range of potential conflict from the patrilineal descendants of a grandfather to the sons of a single father; but if it has obviated possible hostility between the generations and between paternal cousins, it has also removed much of the common interest and mutual interdependence between them.

The Right to Land, and the Authority of the Village Headman

Although the traditional principle still exists that every villager has a right to arable land within the village boundaries, yet it is no longer possible to carry it out in practice. Every village headman, in my experience, attempts to ensure that each of his men has land, but he cannot always succeed, and most especially he cannot provide every one with as much land as he would like, because of sheer spatial limitation.

Nowhere any longer does the old principle now hold that an established villager may, without permission or notification, take vacant land into cultivation as part of his holding. When land becomes vacant it must now revert immediately to the village as a group, that is to the common pool from which the headman as village authority makes allocations. There are so many and such varied demands for land nowadays that no man acting on his own can presume to take up vacant land, and only the headman may decide allocation. No person can now obtain land, whether he be an established villager or not, unless he is allocated it by the headman – or, in the many large villages typical of the Lake Plains, by the headman's assistant, *ugwakyimo*, who is delegated authority in a section of the village.

Land becomes vacant when a man shifts to another village, when a man dies and leaves no active heir who desires to take up the deceased's holding, or (but seldom today) when a man gives up part of his holding due to his inability to use the whole of it. In all these cases the land is immediately re-allocated by the headman, probably not as a single unit any longer, as best he can among a crowd of land-hungry villagers – established men seeking extra land to meet the needs of growing families or for increasing cash-crop

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 195! FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

684 and some informants suggested that it only occurred between the villages of different chiefs, though others insisted that it did occur
696 between villages of the same chiefdom. Indeed any seduction of
721 a woman of another village was liable to lead to war. A man of Bulindanajo seduced the wife of the headman of Bujege, Mwansambe. The men of Bulindanajo returned the woman to her husband, saying to their fellow: 'The men of Bujege are fearsome (*basisya*), it's a village of fathers, she's your mother' (cf. Document p. 181). But Mwansambe was angry and made war. The men of Bulindanajo protested, saying: 'We brought the woman back!' but he took no notice and attacked them. He was defeated, and fled.

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686 unable to obtain satisfaction in a chief's court—since a chief paid
696 little attention to a complainant who was not his own man—might seize the wife of any village-mate of the man who had his property. Hence, the old men say, thieves and adulterers were liable to be banished from a village[1] just like witches and sorcerers, for they too brought misfortune on their fellows.

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1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

account with other villages of the same chiefdom, and forming a detachment under its own headman in the army of the chiefdom. Before an attack each village was harangued by its headman who urged: 'Keep all your spears together. If you abandon your fellow you have a case against you! All return together!' And, as we have seen, it was held that men of the same village should stand shoulder to shoulder in war and in a hunt, that they might be brave.

Cattle raids and adultery cases were the prime causes of war—fighting commonly began with a dispute over a woman, or lust for meat. Less frequently it was a quarrel between two villages or two chiefdoms over a boundary that led to war. Hostilities often flared up at a funeral when men danced the war dance with spears (*ukukina*). The Nyakyusa interpret this dancing at funerals as an expression of anger at death, a protest against death.[1] 'Formerly we protested against death, we said: "Our fellow has died, *aje!* Let us put our friend to rest!" We protested with war, we protested with spears, and people died.' Or as another informant put it, 'The war dance is a way of weeping. We dance the war dance because war is in our hearts.' But the anger at death very easily merged into anger against human enemies. 'If the men of two chiefdoms or two villages were present at a burial they would quarrel and fight. The fight began when one hurled his spear into the ground and thus spewed the earth over someone else. Perhaps there would be only a few dancing at first and many sitting down, but when a neighbouring chief was seen approaching with his men, and the sound of the trumpets was heard, those already there would say: "If we sit still they will say there are no men but only women at this funeral. Let us dance too." So they would all get up and dance, and if the others did anything there would be war. Now the custom of the war dance is dying out. We chiefs control it, and when another chief comes to a funeral we tell all our men to sit down while he and his men dance at the grave, because if we do not, the war of old times is liable to break out.'

In fact peace has been effectively enforced among the Nyakyusa.[2] We neither saw nor heard of a fight in the three years we were there. Thus mutual dependence in war is no longer a strong sanction for village unity. The joint responsibility for certain

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939.)

[2] A contrast to Pondoland or Zululand.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

with the Germans, was struck in the forehead by a 784
bullet, he immediately removed the wound to his leg, where it was harmless. His *amafumu* (subordinate chiefs), however, sternly ordered him to replace it; for he had been toying with Christianity, to the disgust of his subordinates, who, seeing a chance to get rid of him, eagerly seized it, and Mwakalinga passed to his fathers. Mwafongo at Karonga has the same power, and there may be others.

War is attended with so many religious ceremonies 784
that the *tabus* connected with it are best taken under 703
this head. Cowardice in battle is *mwiko*, and the coward gets no share of the spoils. There is a beer feast as part of the preparation for war; but drunkenness before a battle is strictly forbidden. At the approach of war, husbands and wives must not live together, and he who is guilty of illegal intercourse will be killed at the first spear throw, before he has had time to throw his own spear; while a chief who is given to such acts will be defeated, and his men slain.

Prohibitions due to fear of infection are very 784
numerous. One must not pass over the outstretched 753
legs of another, for the offender will be "caught" by any disease from which the offended may be suffering; but a slight nip in the leg of the other by the offender wards off evil consequences. It is *mwiko* to throw a spear at a hyena, for the animal may escape with a wound, and barrenness will result for the offender, unless he goes at once to get counteracting medicines. If your father comes to visit you, you

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

in war, for the victors were enriched with the cattle 722
that went to redeem all captured wives or daughters. Nor were they taken as wives by the victors, although there is at least one well-known case where a woman was the sole objective of a war.

The dead might be buried where they fell, or 727
brought home. The return of the host was awaited by the women in silence if the result of the fighting was not known to them. Each wife or mother recognized husband or son among the returning brave, but if one was told that her husband was coming on behind in another company, she knew that he was dead, and that his body was being brought home. If all returned in safety, and that sometimes happened in these far from desperate encounters, the women and girls set up their shrill cry, as exciting to an African as the pibroch to a Scot, and ran alongside, clapping and shouting in joy. The night was given up to feasting. The captured cattle were divided by the chief, lions' shares going to those who distinguished themselves in the fighting. The defeated chief, if he had any cattle left, also gave his men a feast, for they must not be allowed to lose heart over a single failure, and no doubt there was much boasting on both sides. If the sacred *lusero* with its medicines was taken from the enemy, it was put into the house in which the victorious chief kept his *ifingira*, the very powerful medicines by which his authority was (and is) upheld.

Cowards were held in supreme contempt. But a 703
coward is not a man who runs away; all do that as the struggle sways to and fro; a coward is a man who

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

703 does not enter the battle at all, but hangs in the rear with the old men, afraid to take his part in the fight; or who fails to answer the rallying cry and help to turn the tide of battle. Tokens of contempt were heaped upon him. He got no share of the spoils. When the feast was going on, a piece of roasted flesh was handed to him on the burned end of a stick taken out of the fire; if he dropped it he was beaten, the final disgrace. In very bad cases, his house was pulled down and his wives given to other men. But one who was ordered by the chief to keep out of the battle was not disgraced in this way. He did what he was told.

727 The spoils of war, which were practically always cattle, belonged to the chief. If a man captured ten head, the chief might give him back five or less according to favour or valour. From a headman he would take only one or two; and out of all that fell to him he gave rewards to those who had distinguished themselves in the fighting, but had not taken cattle. No prisoners were taken, and the seriously wounded were killed. To let them live was to increase the number of future enemies, and to gain a reputation for softness which did not make for security against attacks from other quarters. And yet there was a pleasant kindness too; a man who had a friend killed on the other side went freely to the enemy's country to mourn for him, and no one thought of molesting him. The frightful orgies of slaughter in which it would appear that some Bantu tribes indulge, are unknown in Konde warfare. The interminable death-

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

726 protection by the medicine man; and the armed
789 warriors, standing in rows or circles, were sprinkled with medicine from a huge pot, rendering them and their weapons irresistible. In the rising of 1906 in the Songea area, it is said that the fighting men were so confident of the power of the drugs that they rushed up to the mouths of the German guns, only to perish there by the bullets which they believed would be turned into water.

Besides the publicly administered medicine, a more powerful drug was to be had for a fee; and the chief himself was armed and protected at all points in this way. One medicine ensured that his spear would find the heart of an enemy; another that the enemy's spear would fall short; a third he chewed as the fight went on; and a few very great chiefs possess a medicine which enables them to remove a fatal wound to a non-fatal spot. Those who could obtain it attached another medicine to the spear handle, and some carried a charm on their shields.

Fighting men carried spears numbering from six
726 up to twenty; and the greater the number the
• 714 bolder the hero, for a large number of spears indicated a determination not to run until every weapon available had been thrown at the enemy, or otherwise
[567] disposed of. Great heroes were followed by slaves who carried additional supplies of weapons. Some had wide shields of ox-hide, and others had narrow strips strengthened by slim bamboos. On their heads they wore the *ikipuhili*, a plume of red and black feathers, the capture of which from an enemy was

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

the great ambition of every warrior. Arms, legs, and waist were partially covered by strips of hide with the hair attached, but these were meant to give a wild appearance, not to protect the body.

No man went out to battle with an unsettled quarrel hanging over him; the ancestors of the other party to the quarrel would see to it that he did not return. And the chief must be free from offence. One who proposed to go to war with other men's wives on his conscience, was sternly told by his councillors that his conduct made victory impossible, and he must make such amends as the law demanded. Except in cases of hurried attacks, such as the march of Munsoso to avenge an insult, all household fires were extinguished, and new fire obtained by rubbing. The women threw away their old bark-cloths, and used new ones. Just before setting out the chief went to the house of his first wife and prayed to his ancestors to grant him success. The war dance which followed the sprinkling with medicine might last for two or three days, and finally, armed and protected by weapons, medicines, prayers, and a good conscience, the warriors went forth.

The fighting began when the opposing forces came within a spear's throw of each other. Here and there a great hero stood out to hurl insulting language at the enemy, challenging them to "come on," and be scattered by his single arm. When the fighting became close, stabbing took the place of throwing, and if a very few were killed on either side, the losing side retired. But only for a short distance; for a

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

by the Arabs and Bemba, built their huts within a stockade.[1] 131
According to Thomson, the Nyakyusa were unaware even of the 177
existence of Lake Tanganyika in 1879 and their more distant eastern neighbours, the Pangwa, Bena, and Hehe had no communication with them.[2]

Unlike the Nyakyusa, the people of Ngonde were trading with 439
the coast long before the arrival of the Europeans, a fact which 177
had a profound effect on their political institutions;[3] but even they did not suffer from the attacks of slavers until *after* Euro- 721
peans were established in Karonga.

From the point of view of the Nyakyusa-Ngonde people the 721
Europeans came just in time. It was the establishment of British control in Nyasaland which prevented the complete destruction of the people of Ngonde by the slavers, and it is likely that the Nyakyusa also were saved by European intervention, for the raids of Arab slavers and their Sangu allies were becoming serious in Kukwe country in 1889[4] before the German annexation.

The first Europeans known to have sighted Nyakyusa country 177
were a party from the Livingstonia mission (then established at the south of Lake Nyasa) who circumnavigated the Lake in the mission steamer, the *Ilala*, in 1875. They anchored off the north shore but did not land.[5] Two years later, the same steamer sailed by two famous missionaries, Dr. Stewart (of Lovedale) and Dr. Laws (of Livingstonia), landed Frederick Elton, H.B.M. Consul at Mozambique, and a party near the Mbaka mouth.[6] Elton and his party travelled through Selya and Kukwe country to the fort of the Sangu chief, Merere, and thence started for the coast. Elton died on the road, but some of the others got through.[7] In 1879 Joseph Thomson (aged 20), alone with his carriers, travelled through Hehe and Bena country, crossed the Livingstone moun-

[1] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), pp. 286–7; Fotheringham, op. cit., pp. 13–5; 269.

[2] Thomson, op. cit., pp. 248, 276.

[3] Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., *passim*.

[4] Fotheringham, op. cit., pp. 238–41, 288. The Sangu had previously been occupied in a prolonged war with the Hehe. cf. Elton, op. cit., p. 374; Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 229–34.

[5] E. D. Young, 'On a recent Sojourn at Lake Nyassa', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XXI (1877), pp. 230–1.

[6] J. Stewart, 'The Second Circumnavigation of Lake Nyassa', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, 1879, pp. 289–304.

[7] Elton, op. cit., pp. 318–44; Cotterill, op. cit.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tains to the north-east corner of Nyasa, and went on through Nyakyusa country to Lake Tanganyika.[1]

Despite the isolation of the Nyakyusa and their own fear of travelling in foreign chiefdoms, they were not inhospitable to these white strangers: Elton and all his party (some of whom were delayed by illness and travelled separately), and later Thomson, walked up the Nyakyusa valley in safety though it was 'teaming with armed warriors', who carried 'most cruel-looking spears'. Elton remarks that 'the people of Konde, though not unfriendly, are passively obstructive, and being in want of nothing are disinclined to render any services whatsoever to strangers'.[2] But Thomson appears to have been on the best of terms with the Nyakyusa he met. The Kukwe fled from their villages at Thomson's approach, but were usually persuaded to return.[3]

After these journeys of discovery, mission work and trade developed quickly. The African Lakes Corporation, a company formed to develop legitimate trade in Central Africa as a means of combating the slave trade, established a station at Karonga; and a road was surveyed from Karonga through to Lake Tanganyika.[4] Out-stations of the Livingstonia mission were set up at Chirenji (Mwini Wanda) in the hills north-west of Karonga, and at Kararamuka near Tukuyu.[5] Meantime, an Arab slaver, Mlozi, had settled in Ngonde, and a protracted struggle ensued between him and his Henga allies on the one side, and the people of Ngonde and the Europeans on the other, during which many Ngonde were enslaved or killed and their villages destroyed. Five thousand Nyakyusa spearmen came to the aid of the Europeans but, being more concerned with loot than with the defeat of the Arabs, they returned home with the goods they had taken instead of pursuing Mlozi and his men when they had the chance to do so.[6] Lord (then Captain) Lugard was for some months in command of the exiguous European force and its allies, and nearly

[1] Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 260–86.
[2] Elton, op. cit., p. 332.
[3] Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 281–2.
[4] Fotheringham, op. cit.; F. L. M. Moir, *After Livingstone* (1923).
[5] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI, 1890, pp. 281–93.
[6] Fotheringham, op. cit., pp. 117–23.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

died of wounds and fever. Because the Europeans lacked arms the war dragged on,[1] and the power of the slavers was finally broken only in 1895, when Sir Harry Johnston came up the Lake with a well-armed force.[2]

German missionaries of the Berlin and Moravian missions arrived in 1891, and established themselves at a number of stations in Nyakyusa country.[3] The Songwe had by that time been agreed upon as the boundary between Nyasaland and German East Africa, and the German administration followed hard on the heels of the missionaries.[4] Twenty years later war broke out between England and Germany; there was fighting throughout Rungwe district, and many Nyakyusa were impressed as carriers. The absorption of the Nyakyusa into a world society was considerably accelerated by war.

d. The form of Nyakyusa society

Not only was the Nyakyusa valley long isolated from the outside world, but it was divided into a number of small, independent chiefdoms, whose members had few dealings with people beyond their own chiefdoms and those immediately adjoining. Each family produced for its own needs, so that trade was the merest trickle; and marriage outside the boundaries of the chiefdom was discouraged, since beyond the jurisdiction of one's own chief there was no security for life and property. A plea against a man of a neighbouring chiefdom might not be heard by the defendant's chief. Nyakyusa men enlarged to us on the dangers and difficulties of travelling even twenty miles from home, before the coming of the Europeans; a journey from Selya to Tukuyu (twenty-five miles) was said to take three days, because travellers had to seek cover so often.

The number and size of chiefdoms varied; for a continuous process of splitting, together with periodical conquest and reabsorption, was going on and, as we have seen, the area of Nyakyusa occupation was expanding. In 1938 the Nyakyusa themselves

[1] Lugard, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 51-167.
[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa* (1897), p. 143.
[3] A. Merensky, *Deutsche Arbeit am Njassa* (1894); J. T. Hamilton, *Twenty Years of Pioneer Missions in Nyasaland* (1912).
[4] F. Fülleborn, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, Band IX (1906).

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ing audiences watch their friends in the detachment of the King's African Rifles at bayonet drill in Masoko.[1]

Display is felt to be particularly appropriate to young people, and bachelors were held to be the fiercest warriors, but neither dancing nor fighting was confined to young men. The chief Mwaipopo (Plate V) was famous as a skilful and ardent dancer when over seventy, and the leader in war was the senior headman of the country, who, if not already married when he took office, had to marry almost immediately, since his wife shared in the ritual of establishing his house. Furthermore the villages of married men of the ruling generation fought, as well as the villages of their bachelor brothers and sons.

That the Nyakyusa had some skill in warfare is certain, for they defeated and drove off Ngoni raiders and warriors of the Sangu chief Merere,[2] but they never developed a military kingdom like that of the Bemba to the west, or the Hehe to the east, nor did they raid at large like the Masai and Ngoni. Their geographical position sheltered them very considerably from outside attack, and discouraged raiding abroad. They confined themselves mostly to lifting the cattle of neighbouring chiefdoms.

Cattle, whether they be spoils of war or inherited wealth, are displayed. Not only does a long byre add to the dignity of a homestead, but, when there is some ceremony at the home of a rich man, he shows off his herd by driving it round and round the homestead. At other times his sons gallop it along the village street, the iron bells with which the animals are adorned ringing merrily. Nyakyusa smiths make cow-bells in sets,[3] to chime in harmony, and the aim of a rich man is to own a set of bells which ring a full chime, and a herd large enough to carry them. Nowadays those who own bicycles display them in the same sort of way, riding round and round the homestead at a ceremony, and ringing the bells madly.

Unlike the enjoyment of good company (*ukwangala*), display

[1] This detachment was not supposed to include Nyakyusa who were recruited for a detachment stationed outside the district, but in fact Nyakyusa got in by posing as men from Ngonde, Nyasaland.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 119–20; Lugard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 56, speaks of the Nyakyusa as 'brave in war'.

[3] We deposited a set in the Livingstone Memorial Museum, Livingstone, N. Rhodesia.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

This practice of having official witnesses to every contract, and summoning them to give evidence should a dispute later arise, is one of the most important means of maintaining order in Nyakyusa society, and village neighbours are the usual witnesses. 675

c. Communal responsibility of the age-village

Formerly, in Nyakyusa law two forms of group responsibility were emphasized: the mutual responsibility of kinsmen, and the mutual responsibility of fellow villagers. A case of murder or manslaughter was primarily the concern of the agnatic lineage if the victim was a male or an unmarried girl, and of the lineages of both husband and father if the victim was a married woman. The kinsmen either killed the murderer, or brought him before the chief, who imposed a fine which went to the injured relatives. The Nyakyusa make a distinction between 'spearing by day' (direct physical injury) and 'spearing by night' (witchcraft); and only in the latter type of case did the fine go to the chief. Witchcraft was thus treated as an offence against the state—the chiefdom—while murder or manslaughter was an offence against the kinsmen of the dead. The concern of the state in witchcraft, and the joint responsibility of kinsmen on the one hand, and of fellow villagers on the other, was evident when, as sometimes happened, both groups were required by the chief to clear themselves of suspicion of witchcraft by each providing a representative to take the poison ordeal. Should the representative of either group fail to vomit then the responsible individual within that group was sought out by means of divination and the ordeal (*vide supra*, p. 116). 613 621 672 754 682

In a case of adultery the injured husband, together with his kinsmen, pursued and attempted to kill, or torture and kill, the adulterer: self-help was not only permitted but expected in this situation,[1] and a man's near kinsmen were obliged to assist him. Neighbours were not obliged to assist in executing vengeance, but they might be victims of it, for if the injured husband did not find the adulterer he might kill any village-mate of his enemy. Such an attack commonly led to war between the two villages; 684 696 721

[1] D. R. MacKenzie, *The Spirit-Ridden Konde* (1925), p. 61, says: 'The injured husband has the right to inflict death on the paramour. This is no mere tale of the past but a grim fact to-day . . . cases of this nature are very numerous.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 195! FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

684 and some informants suggested that it only occurred between the villages of different chiefs, though others insisted that it did occur
696 between villages of the same chiefdom. Indeed any seduction of
●721 a woman of another village was liable to lead to war. A man of Bulindanajo seduced the wife of the headman of Bujege, Mwansambe. The men of Bulindanajo returned the woman to her husband, saying to their fellow: 'The men of Bujege are fearsome (*basisya*), it's a village of fathers, she's your mother' (cf. Document p. 181). But Mwansambe was angry and made war. The men of Bulindanajo protested, saying: 'We brought the woman back!' but he took no notice and attacked them. He was defeated, and fled.

685 A thief or an obstinate debtor was also a danger to his neigh-
686 bours. For a victim or creditor living in another chiefdom, and so unable to obtain satisfaction in a chief's court—since a chief paid
696 little attention to a complainant who was not his own man—might seize the wife of any village-mate of the man who had his property. Hence, the old men say, thieves and adulterers were liable to be banished from a village[1] just like witches and sorcerers, for they too brought misfortune on their fellows.

War between villages was apparently the usual upshot of an
672 attack on the village neighbour of an enemy, but occasionally a settlement was arranged between the two villages concerned, and
696 the adulterer or thief was held responsible for compensating his injured neighbour, or the latter's kinsmen. Kalunda and Mwalubunju explained: 'In the old days if a man ran off with my wife I should go and kill a village-mate of his. That meant, "Go, you villagers and look for my wife." Yes, this happened even in a village of my own chief. Then the villagers would go and look for my wife and when they found her with their neighbour they would bring her back to me with a spear or hoe as compensation. The man they would accuse, saying: "It was you who killed your fellow", so that he would have to make peace with the family of the dead man, not I. He would give them a daughter of his own to wife, or else pay ten cows, and they would be relatives then. Yes, ten cows they paid for a man's death, though only two for a woman in marriage.' Here the differing responsibilities of kinsmen and fellow villagers are evident.

621 The village was a fighting unit taking up quarrels on its own
701

[1] A cattle thief caught in the act was speared. . . . MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 86.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

account with other villages of the same chiefdom, and forming a detachment under its own headman in the army of the chiefdom. Before an attack each village was harangued by its headman who urged: 'Keep all your spears together. If you abandon your fellow you have a case against you! All return together!' And, as we have seen, it was held that men of the same village should stand shoulder to shoulder in war and in a hunt, that they might be brave.

Cattle raids and adultery cases were the prime causes of war—fighting commonly began with a dispute over a woman, or lust for meat. Less frequently it was a quarrel between two villages or two chiefdoms over a boundary that led to war. Hostilities often flared up at a funeral when men danced the war dance with spears (*ukukina*). The Nyakyusa interpret this dancing at funerals as an expression of anger at death, a protest against death.[1] 'Formerly we protested against death, we said: "Our fellow has died, *aje!* Let us put our friend to rest!" We protested with war, we protested with spears, and people died.' Or as another informant put it, 'The war dance is a way of weeping. We dance the war dance because war is in our hearts.' But the anger at death very easily merged into anger against human enemies. 'If the men of two chiefdoms or two villages were present at a burial they would quarrel and fight. The fight began when one hurled his spear into the ground and thus spewed the earth over someone else. Perhaps there would be only a few dancing at first and many sitting down, but when a neighbouring chief was seen approaching with his men, and the sound of the trumpets was heard, those already there would say: "If we sit still they will say there are no men but only women at this funeral. Let us dance too." So they would all get up and dance, and if the others did anything there would be war. Now the custom of the war dance is dying out. We chiefs control it, and when another chief comes to a funeral we tell all our men to sit down while he and his men dance at the grave, because if we do not, the war of old times is liable to break out.'

In fact peace has been effectively enforced among the Nyakyusa.[2] We neither saw nor heard of a fight in the three years we were there. Thus mutual dependence in war is no longer a strong sanction for village unity. The joint responsibility for certain

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939.)

[2] A contrast to Pondoland or Zululand.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

721 torts committed by its members has also disappeared. Instead,
672 there is both a great increase in the number of cases treated as
673 offences against the state; murder, manslaughter and grievous
177 bodily injury being no longer treated as offences against a group of kin, but as crimes against the state; and a great extension in the *range* of law. A modern Nyakyusa has no difficulty in suing a debtor, or the seducer of his wife, living in another chiefdom.

621 Nevertheless neighbours still feel a certain obligation for the
672 maintenance of each other's rights. For example, a certain young man eloped with a very young girl, who, though betrothed, had not yet reached puberty. On their way out of the district they were seen by a 'village father' of the girl, who brought them back to her father, and then joined with him and other neighbours in beating the young man and taking him to the chief. The youth admitted his fault in seducing so young a girl and asked the chief to summon his father-in-law (for he was already married) that he might borrow from his father-in-law the cattle with which to pay the fine for seduction. But his father-in-law was a neighbour of the father of the girl he had seduced, and he refused to lend any cattle, saying, 'You have run off with the daughter of my neighbour in the village: that means you have wronged *me*.'

839 And a group of herd-boys are still liable to be treated by their
672 fathers as responsible for one another. One informant, discussing a case of bestiality committed by a herd-boy, remarked that the leader of the group forbade the others to mention it at home on the ground that 'if our fathers know they will say that we all (in this herd group) do it.'

d. Social separation

681 One of the mechanisms for maintaining good relations in Nyakyusa villages (as in all groups) is the separation of the dissident individual from the group.[1] This separation may be compulsory or voluntary. As we have seen, witches, thieves, adulterers, and obstinate debtors were formerly banished from Nyakyusa villages because they were regarded as a danger to their neighbours, liable to harm them directly or to bring retribution upon them. The village, being held responsible for certain actions of its members, and forming a defensive unit against the sup-

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 60–1.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 alone as if fighting a single combat. Among the men some of the
535 women move about, singly or in twos and threes, calling the war-cry and swinging their hips in a kind of rhythmical walk. Under a tropical sun in a damp heat, with the thermometer often over 90° F. in the shade, they dance for hours. In the dust and noise and excitement there are no very apparent signs of grief; and yet if you ask the onlookers what it is all about they reply: 'They are mourning the dead.'

764 This burial dance is traditionally a dance of war; now, as also
535 in former times, it provides those men who are most affected by
721 grief and fear with a violent and passionate means of expres-
177 sion, in which their feelings are assuaged by the touch of life; for the others it was, in the old days, an assertion of their own and their dead neighbour's warlike quality, and this significance is still vividly present to their minds; but, after a generation and more of peace, its content is changing and the sexual element, always present in it, is rapidly dominating the old memories.

764 'This war-dance (*ukukina*)', said an old man, 'is mourning, we
535 are mourning the dead man. We dance because there is war in
721 our hearts. A passion of grief and fear exasperates us (*ilyojo likutusila*).' Since this statement is the clue to both the present and the traditional meaning of the war-dance for the chief mourners, we must examine the language carefully. *Ilyojo* means a passion of grief, anger or fear; *ukusila* means to annoy or exasperate beyond endurance. In explaining *ukusila* one man put it like this: 'If a man continually insults me then he exasperates me (*ikusila*) so that I want to fight him.' Death is a fearful and grievous event that exasperates those men nearly concerned and makes them want to fight. The chief mourners and personal friends among the women assuage their feelings in the wailing, among the men in the war-dance. 'A kinsman, when he dances, assuages his passionate grief (*ilyojo*); he goes into the house to weep and then he comes out and dances the war-dance; his passionate grief is made tolerable in the dance (lit. he is able to endure it there, in the dance), it bound his heart and the dance assuages it.'

This exasperated and fearful grief was linked in traditional expression with a general salute to the warlike quality of man. Those of old said: 'The dead man was a lively dancer in battle, and now he is dead we dance for him, he too was a fighting dancer!' 'He was a warrior (lit. a man of the spear), we dance now, as he danced himself, the dance of war.' And this salute at the same time gave

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

to the dancers a heightened sense of their own warlike quality: 764
'We used not actually to fight at burials so much as to dance and 535
become conscious of our strength for future wars against other 721
chiefdoms, when, on another day, we would go to raid their cows.'

But although an actual fight was not a necessary part of the 578
funeral it very frequently occurred; and burials are still one of 764
the most usual occasions of spearing. 'In the old days, before the 721
country was at peace, we men often fought at burials; we ran in 535
front spearing one another, while our wives ran behind calling the war-cry and watching the prowess of their husbands.' So far from rituals having the sole function of promoting social integration, as [182] some would have us believe, the burial rites of the Nyakyusa were occasions on which existing antipathies continually found overt expression in fighting and new antipathies arose; but the quarrels were not within the mourning lineage.

The fights normally followed the lines of division between chiefdom and chiefdom, village and village. Kinship and affinity have always for some men extended beyond the single chiefdom; and to the burials of these people, if they are in any way eminent, the young men of other chiefdoms often come to dance. And while today, with a well-established tradition of peace, there are fewer smouldering enmities between chiefdoms, forty or fifty years ago it was scarcely possible for the young men of two chiefs to meet peaceably; cattle-raids, abductions of women, defeats and victories in battle were too hot in the memory. Sometimes an accidental jostling, sometimes a deliberate insult was the occasion for a running fight.

At burials there was often war. If the men of two chiefdoms were there together at a burial they would quarrel and fight. Sometimes the fight began when one hurled his spear into the ground and then pulled it up so as to pitch earth on to another man. Perhaps there would be only a few men dancing at first and many sitting down; but when a neighbouring chief was heard coming with his men, and the sound of the trumpet and flute[1] came to us, then we said: 'If we sit still they will say there were no men but only women at that burial, let us dance too!' So we would get up and dance, and then if the others did anything there would be war.

And fights sometimes occurred between two villages of the same chief.

[1] The trumpet of horn and the bamboo flute which used to accompany the war-dance. They are now seldom heard; drums have superseded them.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 535 721 Besides fighting, the dancers indulge in an orgy of destruction, slashing at the bananas and *ficus* saplings (which surround the swept courtyard) with their spears.

764 535 152 The dance was thus, traditionally, a common form for the expression by the dancers of a considerable range of emotions, varying from an intolerable burden of grief and fear to a recognition of and salute to the warlike quality of the dead man and a vivid consciousness of their own. And this last feeling passed easily into actual fighting.

764 534 832 To-day it is not so much into the excitements of warfare that the feelings turn, but rather into those of love. Burial dances are the occasions of much sexual display, of the beginning of some love affairs and the consummation of others, and this is nothing new. 'At a death people did not want war (though it came sometimes), they wanted love-making: they displayed the pride of their strength!' 'We speared one another . . . our wives called the war-cry when they saw the strength of their husbands.'

177 535 837 Dances of sexual display, on occasions other than burials, are traditional among the Nyakyusa; but all our informants are unanimous in declaring that both these other dances and the dances of burial are far more frequently followed by lovers' meetings than they used to be. For the enforcement of peace among the Nyakyusa has been accompanied by the prohibition of violence of any kind; and this has freed sexual passion from its rigid traditional bonds. Girls are married young and engaged younger; and [684] while formerly any man who seduced or even flirted with another man's betrothed or wife was speared or tortured by the husband and his friends if they caught him, such punishments are now illegal and the present fine of cattle is a far less effective deterrent. 'In the old days love-making only went on in secret; if a man stood and talked to a woman he expected to be speared. But now the Europeans have introduced the custom of making love openly!' (i.e. by forbidding the previous penalties.)

764 535 832 For all the younger men and women, save the chief mourners and close friends, the quality of the burial dance is now predominantly and openly sexual. But the older people are, on the one hand, more conscious of its warlike associations and, on the other hand, inclined to regard the whole occasion more soberly than their juniors. 'There are two reasons for coming to a burial: the old men come to mourn their friend, they say: "Let us go and mourn him"; but the young men say: "Let us follow the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tradition of the leaping dance and show ourselves to the girls!" 764
And so it is with the women, some of the young women do not 535
come to mourn but to call the war-cry to the boys! Those who 832
come to mourn go into the hut and weep and weep. The young men say that they dance by reason of the women. The old men say that in the past it was different, it was war; the women ran behind the fighters watching the battle and calling the war-cry. And we all say that the present custom of dancing is the softer custom of a peaceful land.'

As the old significance of the dance to the majority of the participants was a lively salute to the dead man's fighting quality and a heightened sense of their own, so now it is his sexual quality which they honour and their own which they enjoy. 'Why', we asked a young man, 'do you dance nowadays at burials? There is little or no warfare and the dead man was never a fighter!' His answer came almost in the traditional form of words: 'We think that he too danced before the women, he was a brave dancer (*mogi*), and so we too dance (*ukukina*) at his death.'

'He too was a brave dancer (*mogi*).' The word *mogi* is from the 535
verb *ukumoga* which refers to the ordinary dances of sexual display 764
in contrast to the war-dance (*ukukina*). It is the war-dance which 721
is still normally danced at death. Not only, however, is its signi- 832
ficance being assimilated to that of the ordinary dances of recre- 177
ation, as this quotation clearly shows, but these other dances are now often performed at burials. Near Rungwe Mission the pagans dance the war-dance on the first day of a burial and sometimes on the second day as well, but always on the third day the dance is changed. The men abandon cloth skirts, spears, and ankle-bells [292]
and put on their best clothes, an ample white toga being particularly fashionable; the women adorn themselves with great care and some put roses in their hair. The dance is no longer a wild mêlée, but is slow and graceful; and its sexual significance is now apparent, not only in the faces of the dancers and the comments of the bystanders, but also in the forms of movement.

This custom is new. None of the chief mourners takes part in the 535
dance, though they watch it. In the war-dance, however, the chief 764
mourners among the men are expected to participate, and some 721
of them always do so. 'The (men) relatives dance if they have 177
strength, they weep first and then dance. For if they all sit still and no one of them dances we others say that they have not mourned him properly.' But they do not all dance. One old man whose

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

535 764 brother had just been buried said: 'Those who are really sad sit
721 quite still and silent.' But he was an old man with little strength
177 for dancing; on the first day of his brother's burial he sat still, but on the second day he danced a little.

As for the women who participate in the war-dance, running about among the men and calling the war-cry, their behaviour is clearly distinguished in accordance with their relationship to the dead man. 'The distant (women) relatives dance in their dirt, they cannot adorn themselves much, but non-relatives adorn themselves. The wives and sisters of a dead man and the nearer women relatives are the chief mourners and they cannot dance at the burial. They are truly grieved. If a wife danced we'd say she did not love her husband—well, perhaps she might wander round distraught to the sound of the drums, but with grief on her face and without looking at the young men! If she looked at the young men we'd say she did not love her husband. If a brother's wife danced we should laugh at her and say she was no kinswoman of the dead man! But for a man it is different, he dances with his grief to enable his heart to bear it. In the old days, if there was a fight, the chief women mourners did not follow and call the war-cry, but the others; all the men went to fight but not all the women to watch.'

535 Our observation shows that there is just as much dancing at the
764 burials of women as at those of men. Here too the dance, as now
177 performed, combines the two functions: assuaging the fearful grief
832 of some people and providing a sexual display in honour of the
727 dead: 'We dance at her burial, for she too was a brave dancer (*mogi*).' But in the old days also there was dancing at women's burials: 'For a woman', one old man explained, 'bears us men, so that she too is a warrior.' 'In the past,' said another old man, 'we did dance at women's burials, only a little, not so much as at men's; we said that she was only a woman, but that none the less she also was concerned in war.'

The change in the quality of the burial dance is one of emphasis only; in the past also the sexual element was present: 'We danced so that the women should see our strength'—but it was not dominant. And the warlike quality which was then dominant has by no means disappeared; we heard of many spear-fights at burial dances. At one of them the chief, in order to prevent its continuance, made the dancers abandon the war-dance and finish the funeral with the ordinary dances of sexual display.

781 764 The emotional quality of mourning (*ukulila*) is different in

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

781 man; but all kinsmen and affines fear contagion, and the family
764 fear spiritual afflictions as well.

[811] These fears are dealt with in two ways: fear is an immediate state of feeling which the Nyakyusa, on this occasion, express and make tolerable in the wailing, the dancing, and so on; but their terror is also rationalized[1] as a fear of certain specific events proceeding from religious causes, and thus is pacified by various ritual actions which are believed effectively to prevent those happenings. The killing of cows, the washing with magical plants, the subsequent ritual of protection—all these are designed to check the occurrence of fearful events.

781 But still the fear, as an actual state of feeling at the time of a
764 death, has to be expressed in some tolerable form. Its expression
721 in the wailing associated with grief is already clear; and it is also
535 proved that the war-dance is, for the men most affected, both an expression and an alleviation of their terrified grief: 'There is war in our hearts—a passion of fear and grief exasperates us—it is made tolerable in the dance.'

781 It is the attitude of the chief mourners that is the clue to the
764 whole ritual; and the contrast between terrified wailing and lively dancing, which seems very strange at first to a European observer, is explained by it. The fear and sorrow of death are only emotionally tolerable if their expression is followed by, or combined with, an assertion of life. This is certainly true of the Nyakyusa, and possibly it is universally true. Having no confident expectation of happiness in a future life, these pagan Africans turn at burial to a realization of present life in its most intense quality, to the war-dance, to sexual display, to lively talk, and to the eating of great quantities of meat.

And to this emotional reaction of the chief mourners the sympathetic vivacity of other people is essential. The Nyakyusa were astonished to hear of the sobriety of an English funeral: 'We talk and dance to comfort the relatives. If we others sat sad and glum, then the grief of the relatives would far exceed ours. If we just sorrowed what depths of grief would they not reach? And so we sit and talk and laugh and dance until the relatives laugh too.' And they were even more surprised at the suggestion that anyone might wish for privacy. 'We are quite different: we keep people company, when a relative has died, to cheer them. I am com-

[1] The word 'rationalize' properly implies neither truth nor falsehood of thought but simply the fact of its existence.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

scrapes bananas when she is menstruating, or conceals that she is men- 841
struating and we have intercourse, then my legs are tired, but I do not 753
have diarrhœa, because it is my blood; she is my relative (*nkamu gwangu*), she is my wife, her blood and mine are one. But when she has lain with a man in the bush there is his blood; I have diarrhœa to get rid of it; the food which she cooks for me is dirty, she has made it filthy, I have diarrhœa and get rid of it, she oversteps me. And also if she has concealed that she is menstruating and we have intercourse, I am overstepped. To overstep is to insult—but since the blood is mine I do not get rid of it. That menstrual blood is very dirty!

If I have always been all right and strong, and I find that I get tired walking and hoeing, I think: 'What is it? See, always I was all right, and now I am very tired.' My friends say: 'It is women, you have lain with one who was menstruating.' And if I eat food and start diarrhœa they say: 'It's women, they have committed adultery.' My wives deny it. We go to divine, and one is caught; if she agrees that's that, but if [627] she denied it, formerly we went to the poison ordeal. The woman drank alone, not I. If she vomited then I was defeated, the woman was good, but if it caught her then her father paid one cow.

What we feared greatly in the old days, Mwaipaja, was war. We 684
feared to die. For if my fellow in the village committed adultery with 721
my wife then, when we went to war, we both died; if we went to fight at Mwangomo's [a neighbouring chiefdom], both he and I would be speared. Then people were astonished and said: 'Why, have so-and-so and so-and-so died? Perhaps they both lay with the same woman.' For this reason we drove adulterers from the village, and for this reason the chief was angry with an adulterer, saying: "This is my place! Why do you kill my people?" '

Others confirmed Mwambuputa's statement that adultery led to death in battle:

Formerly, when there was war, if your fellow made love to your wife in secret and you all went to fight, you died on one day on account of the woman.

Mwandisi linked the disquiet in a man's belly with the anger of 837
the shades seated there. 753

If a woman has gone behind the house with another man and comes and cooks food for her husband, blowing up the fire and cooking for him, then the food turns round in his stomach and says: 'Is this my kinsman?' She made friends with others behind the house and cooked for them [i.e. committed adultery]. So then the man develops diarrhœa because the food turned round in his stomach. He falls down on the road, he falls down in battle.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

828 like activities; things which are felt to be alike are often felt to be
772 antagonistic. We have shown that certain of the pregnancy taboos are interpreted in terms of the opposition between seed in plants and seed in the womb, and between pumpkins in the field and pumpkins in the vagina, and we have touched on the opposition between procreation and war. Sexual intercourse, 'the war of the mats', is directly compared with war; the two are felt to be alike and therefore incompatible. Association with a menstruating or parturient woman is felt to be weakening to a warrior; continence of a warrior before battle is enjoined—'men feared to die quickly if they slept with their wives just before war.' Moreover, a menstruating wife never touches her husband's weapons lest they be weakened.

843 Hunting is classed with war and the same taboos apply. Added
834 to them is the notion that, since a pregnant woman is often angry,
224 the animals her husband hunts will be angry also, and he is in
721 much greater danger than an ordinary hunter.

772 ANGOMBWIKE: If you go into the bush and you have left your wife heavy, at home, if you meet a lion it will not run off, but will injure you, maul you. And if you are many, a leopard or a lion will attack you, the heavy one, not the others.

QUESTION: Why?

ANGOMBWIKE: It is as if there was much anger. And we've noticed something else, if a lion attacks cattle it always attacks a cow in calf. And another thing. If a woman is heavy she is very bad-tempered (*nkali*), it's like a passion. Perhaps the woman is bad-tempered or perhaps good, and you, the husband, are bad-tempered. Pregnancy shows in many ways. . . .

A pregnant woman has a great fire in her body, she sweats a lot and is passionate (*nelyojo*), she is fierce (*nkali*). That fire is strong; we all flee from the woman, we all dislike her. And when pregnancy begins the animals in the bush wish to kill you, the husband. That fierceness [the fire] makes them hate you; you are like a twin. A first-born child is very fierce (*nkali*), so a woman is very passionate and sweats a great deal.

843 His wife's pregnancy puts a man in danger from wild animals,
593 and so does a quarrel with her, quite apart from the pregnancy
772 which tends to produce such quarrels. Mwaisumo said: 'If I go hunting after quarrelling with my wife it is very dangerous, I might be killed by a wild animal.'

843 Besides the idea that animals will *attack* the husband of a preg-
224
772

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

 428 754

Mwaikilaja, the son of the junior wife, inherited, because when their father, Mwakyandwike, died, Katasya, the son of the senior wife, was a child. Mwamukinga is accused of killing Katasya by sorcery.

Mwakwelebeja came in to take me to the funeral of Katasya. 'It is not the day of burial to-day, but the day of war. On the day of burial they weep very much and it does not go well (*jikanoga*) but to-day it will be well performed.' He was eager and excited at the prospect of good dancing. 'The chief Mwabuga from Masoko, his son-in-law, is coming. He is coming with his drums. The people of Masoko dance well.' At first I refused to go, but he would take no refusal. 'You must come,' he insisted, so finally I went. 764

On the way we discussed the cause of death. Some say the witches have eaten him. They say that Mwainyopolela is angry on account of the meat. Some say it is the sorcery of Mwaihojo (the chief) because Katasya (a man of Chief Mwaipopo) hoed a big area in the disputed ground. He built a temporary hut and lived there. But we say no. If they had roused up a war between the witches, would they not have gone to Mwakagile (Chief Mwaipopo) and his fellows? But we have not done that. We argue and say: 'Why are you taking our country?' but we are only fighting with words. 761

QUESTION: The war of the witches?

MWAKWELEBEJA: Yes, the war when they call the witches of a chiefdom by night to fight against those of another chiefdom. But Katasya was indeed wrong to stint his neighbours in Busikali of meat. If he had been wise he would have given them a leg. Mwainyopolela is very generous. Always when he kills a beast he shares the meat with his fellows. 754 721 ● 689.

We arrived at the funeral. The women were packed together under a tree to the left, where they had sat with the corpse yesterday. The girls and young women stood watching the dance and occasionally strolling rhythmically out into the midst of it. The errant son was with the other men to-day. The son-in-law from Masoko came with all his cattle (seven cows, one bull and five calves) of which one will be killed and the others returned. The bull was unusually large with an enormous hump and it caused comment. It was well known. They told each other how, when his father, Mwakabulwa, died, this bull was quiescent. It did not move about at all, and it was a very small calf. It was quiescent 764

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XIII

Konde Warfare

THE men of Munsoso were hunting, and came to the land of Mwakarobo with their "bag." Mwakarobo's men crept up while the tired hunters were resting in the shade of the trees, and carried off the birds. 721

"Why do you steal our birds?" demanded the angry hunters.

"We don't talk with fools," sneeringly replied the others, as they went off with the booty; "get off home, or one man of us will chase the lot of you."

Home the hunters went, and great was the uproar in the village when the tale was told. "I am an old man," cried the indignant chief, "but we must fight."

"Don't speak of it," said his sons, "let the spear talk."

Next day the fighting men went forth at dawn, and burned a few huts in Mwakarobo's village, from which the defenders, unable to prepare a defence, had removed all the women and cattle. A few days later, having made an alliance with some neighbouring chiefs, Munsoso attacked in force, and drove Mwakarobo out of his country, which to this day he has never recovered.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

721 Not all Konde wars arose from such trivial causes, or had results so trifling; but much of it was of this petty nature: wife stealing, cattle stealing, insults, civil war to drive out an unpopular chief, were among the causes. More important were the wars waged to acquire new territory, as in the wars of the first Chungu, and the conquests made by the Sango and Kinga chiefs some generations ago. There were, properly speaking, no religious wars, nor was there any desecration of sacred places; but there is an interesting tradition of a tribe which determined to accept Mbasi as God, contrary to the decision of the other tribes, and was severely defeated in battle; and Mbasi, about whom more will be said in another chapter, has ever since been regarded as a deceiver. If there is anything in the tradition, it indicates a certain amount of loose cohesion among the tribes.

721 787 Approaching war was foretold by prophecy and by portent. The *abakunguluka* (prophets) declared that for the sins of the people war was coming; the same terror was foretokened if the horns of the new moon were not of equal length, or if the cattle bellowed at night without obvious cause. But when a chief wished to go to war he held secret council with his headmen and official advisers, the objective of the war being almost always to "eat" the cattle of another chief. Usually it was agreed literally to sleep upon it. If one of the dreamers had a war-dream, as he might very well have, he told the others, and all together went to inform the chief. In these dreams, the progress of the fight was foreseen, and the result,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

including the individuals killed, was told to the chief. 721
If the dream was favourable, confirmation was sought. 787
The chief took his zebra tail of office, poured oil into it, and hung it up in the house of his chief wife. If during the night it exuded cattle dung and blood, the sign was good; if blood only, it was bad. Blood indicated the death of men, but that was of secondary importance if the dung was there which indicated spoil in cattle as the result of victory. Along with the tail was hung up the chief's spear, which now gleamed and glittered like fire in the night, while the tail moved about with a swishing sound, indicating that the spirits urged battle. All this took place in the presence of the chief and the principal medicine man only; and their report was published in the morning, when the blowing of a horn summoned all males to the meeting-place. "My children," says the chief, "we are hungry. Let us eat the cattle of so and so." But he gives the name, not of the real point of attack, but of some other chief living in another direction; for there was always the possibility of traitors in the community, who would carry warning to the enemy.

A wild scene of hurry followed. Spears were 726
collected and sharpened, defects attended to, new 789
hafts attached. The shields were examined and strengthened if necessary. If there was a blacksmith in the village he was besieged by warriors whose weapons had become rusty or useless, all eager to equip themselves for the spoil. But man and weapon are alike useless until they have been given power and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

roll of the Great War was a terrifying revelation of the unyielding nature of the Europeans in a quarrel. 727

Individual chiefs had special methods of securing victory. Mwamakula's wife, when her husband marched out with his forces, sat on a live sheep as long as the fighting went on: so assuring good luck to her husband in taking cattle, and preventing them running away when taken. Another wife sat on a cooking pot, to keep the enemy in a state of security while the warriors were closing in on them. They would go about as usual, unaware of danger, cooking and eating, until the storm burst, and there was no hope of defence. His sister had a *lusero* similar to the one carried into battle; and one of his old men lay down on the path, each soldier stepping over him as he passed on. While the fight was being waged, this old man sat on his haunches and pulled himself forward in that position, the effect being to make the enemy run. The *lusero* was carried hereditarily by Mfwimi, and when he laid it down it moved forward of itself as the enemy retired. 726 789

In the north there was a great prophet, whose presence in the battle always assured the victory to his own side; but if he retired, even for a moment, the battle turned, and he was brought back, by force if necessary. 726 792

Two great wars still stand out in the minds of the people: the victorious march of the Angoni, and the slaving invasion of the so-called Arabs. Both these enemies brought with them methods of fighting unknown to the Konde, who fled before the Angoni, 721

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

721 driving cattle and carrying what they could carry: men and women flying naked for greater swiftness: until the great Sango chief Merere, who is said to have had three hundred guns, inflicted a severe defeat on the invaders. After that the Konde made a few feeble attempts to stand, but they came to nothing, and the Angoni passed like a scourge through the land. Against the Arabs a better fight was made, but it was with the help of the white men who at that time began to enter the Konde country.

The Konde were and are a timid people. The terror of the Arabs has passed, but the fear of the Angoni is probably a present fact. In August, 1914, some of the leading men at Karonga came to me. "All you white men," they said, "will be summoned to fight in your own country, and we shall be left without protection from the Angoni." I tried to reassure them, but without success. "No," they said, "three days after you go they will be upon us, and take away all our cattle as they did before." Possibly a more courageous spirit now obtains. A band of Angoni were enlisted for special work at Karonga in the early months of the war, and showed themselves so averse from anything like danger, that the reputation of the whole tribe, quite undeservedly, went down to zero. "The fear of the Angoni," said some Konde to me at that time, "is gone. If they were to come upon us now, we would fight them." But it may be doubted whether any but a few have really lost their old fears.

726 The Konde were never organized for war, and there was no military caste. Everything connected with

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

confesses, the party returns to the village, and the diviner is called to discover the culprit. 787 224

If two elephants are found kneeling and facing each other, some one's wife has erred in his absence, and the hunt is stopped until justice is done. An elephant taking up dust with his trunk and offering it to another, shows that some one has offered snuff to another man's wife, a most significant action, demanding immediate satisfaction. If an elephant is seen touching the teats of another, a similar action has been committed in the village, and again the hunt stops for inquiry and punishment. Trumpeting elephants are a sign of quarrelling in the village, and one plastering its face with mud is a sign of death, for the women at the death-wail cover their faces with mud or chalk. The hunters return, and do not resume until all is clear again. It is most important that not only the hunters should be free from evil, but their friends also, for evil brings them into danger, and it is the duty of all in the village to see that the natural dangers of the hunt are not increased by unnatural evil in their homes. 825

7. War was foretold by the prophets, but confirmatory signs were usually not wanting. If the horns of the new moon were of unequal length, an enemy was known to be approaching; necessarily an enemy from a distance, for the phenomenon must have been visible over a wide area. The same terror was announced by a cow bellowing at night, if there was no known cause for its outcry. This, naturally, is a thing of the past, as war, at least native war, has 787 721

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 ceased. What significance would now be attached to
●721 these omens, I do not know. The buffalo, like the
[825] elephant, does not lie, and wise men heed its warnings. Many years ago a man called Masapa went to the Kinga region, where he quarrelled with the people, and barely escaped with his life. His chief, Mwaisumo, took up the quarrel, and prepared to invade the enemy's territory, undeterred by the predictions of defeat which came in dreams to his prophets, until, on the way, one of his men was killed by a buffalo, and this was a warning not to be disregarded. On their return home, they were received by their women folks, not with contempt and mocking, but as wise men, who were too wary to tempt "Providence" by foolish action. One more war omen. If a man, on the point of leaving for the field of battle, was suddenly, but accidentally, seized by the wrist by his wife, he laid down his weapons, and quietly stayed at home; not for him the joy of battle; he would have been killed, and no one thought the worse of him for heeding the omen.

781 8. Foretokens of death are so numerous that it is
763 difficult even to classify them. Whatever is rare, or unnatural, or sudden, may be taken as a warning of approaching death. A mole seen by day, is a rare event, and full of dread. A Christian living near me saw this wonder in February, 1923, and in the same month he got news of the death of a friend a hundred miles away! No connection? He thought there was. To see the *kasuchi*, a small aquatic animal, is to see something so rare that its appearance must be the

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

622 secular affairs of his own age-villages and full supremacy in religious matters over all. Appeals in difficult cases might be taken from either of the young chiefs to the old chief and his great commoners. After his death, the wives and cows of the old chief were inherited by his full-brother, to whom also his religious authority passed. Full [624] political power over their separate chiefdoms then went to the two sons. The great [793] commoners of the old chief, relinquishing their secular functions to their successors, then entered on their religious duties as priests of the dead chief; this priesthood they handed on to their sons. When all the old chief's full-brothers were dead, the religious functions of chiefship passed to the young chiefs, who were then fully emancipated. The boundaries between their chiefdoms, settled at the 'coming out' ceremony, were sometimes modified by warfare.[1] The age-village is still the chief field of friendship, members recognizing greater obligations to each other than to outsiders; before the European administration the village was also a military unit.[2]

624 The great commoner of every village was very powerful, and measures existed to check his influence; for instance, no kinsman of a chief or son of a great commoner could be elected to that office. His duties were to be hospitable to the villagers, judge their cases, lead them in war, and officiate at their ceremonies. He represented their wishes to the chief, and through him and in consultation with him the chief gave his orders. Each great commoner was believed to be able to protect his own villagers from witchcraft.

Warfare

●724 A state of war—actual or potential—always existed among the various Nyakyusa chiefdoms. Among the Ngonde, also, civil war was endemic, the Kyungu neither preventing it nor taking any part. In tribal warfare he did not remain impartial, but gave orders and told the chiefs to pray. They first called on the sacred groves of the buried Kyungus, and then each great chief called on his own predecessors for help. Although the territorial nobles also fought, they did not pray to their ancestors, for tribal war was carried on under royal auspices alone. War was an important source of revenue in cattle and slaves. The recurrent civil wars of the period before the Ngoni invasion show that in spite of the heirarchical façade the centralized political organization was not strong enough to overcome the local autonomy of the chiefdoms, except in the face of a common danger, such as the threat of Bemba or Ngoni invasion.[3]

Justice under the Traditional System of the Ngonde

692 There was no central court of appeal at Mbande to which the ordinary man could bring cases direct, or appeal against the decisions of his local chiefs. At the capital the only cases dealt with by the nobles of Ngonde were cases of treason against the Kyungu (mainly adulterous approach to his wives), which were summarily punished by death. They also used the Kyungu's authority in punitive expeditions against insubordinate chiefs. Each noble of Ngonde decided the cases in his own field. Each great chief held an appeal court to which cases from all the chiefdoms of his house came, for of all the descendants of the Kyungu the great chiefs alone had power to administer the poison ordeal. Some of the territorial nobles also had the power. It was resorted to not only in witchcraft cases, but in appeal cases when evidence for a legal decision was lacking.

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, pp. 278–82. [2] Ibid., p. 276. [3] Ibid., 5, 1939, pp. 59–63.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

so, one of his neighbours, had wronged and defrauded the apprehender. 694
So the father would visit the wrongdoer and tell him that his own child had been caught because of him; and he would enquire into the case and the wrongdoer would pay what was due. After the payment had been made the child would be returned to its father annointed, with its head shaven and bringing a gift." Now this, it must be emphasized, was not a violent but a truly legal procedure. It seems only to have been taken in clear cases when the debt was not seriously disputable at law, and all that was required was machinery to enforce its payment. It was a procedure generally accepted throughout Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa; the father of the child seems not to have resented it, and, being "a powerful man,"[1] he was able to put pressure on his defaulting neighbour.

But these forms of procedure were insufficient to keep the peace 692
in Ngonde. In the Ngonde plain at least, much the same law was common to all the fiefs and chiefdoms, but it was only enforced piecemeal in little local areas, or, beyond them, in occasional clear cases by the enquiry or the hostage method. And so quarrels, either between commoners or chiefs, led not infrequently to violence and war.

Now this situation requires to be explained. Why did the Kyungu and his subordinates not develop an effective judical system on the lines of the religious and economic hierarchy? I am not confident that our evidence supplies a certain answer, but there are two facts which, in combination, go some way towards doing so.

The crucial point is that, as we have already noticed, the conditions of life in Ngonde in the middle period, did not necessitate the development of such a system. Most of life for most men was confined to the little local areas, within which law was effectively maintained. There it had to be maintained somehow, or life would have been impossible. But beyond them men had only occasional relationships. War was [721] endemic in the society of Ngonde but did not threaten to destroy it; and it is only that threat that can compel men to set up new machinery. The warfare of Ngonde was sporadic only while fights were matters of an hour or two and casualties were slight.

Nevertheless there were other areas in primitive Africa in which paramount chiefs and their subordinates did maintain law and order with some success, and in which civil war, though it occurred, was treated as a crime. Why was this not done in Ngonde? For, though centralised justice may not have been necessary, it would have had many obvious advantages. I believe that the answer to this question lies

[1] i.e. a rich man with a certain local prestige and authority.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

even here it was rather position than area that was at stake : " We object to their proximity, let them move further off," said the chiefs of Ngelenge. 669

Civil wars varied in size and importance from little local fights between neighbouring villages, fiefs or chiefdoms to more extensive fights between groups or even whole houses of chiefs. And in every case the political organization took on, for the time, a military character. Great-commoners led their villagers to war, chiefs their great-commoners ; the senior of a group of brother chiefs summoned his juniors to help him, while a great chief summoned all the local chiefs of his house. But only the Kyungu himself could summon the territorial nobles.

Now leadership in war is a factor of political authority ; the great chiefs, nobles, chiefs and great-commoners derived part of their status from their military functions. But, on the other hand, it is equally true to say that it was the other factors of their status which enabled them to exercise this military authority.

In every war, for instance, there were religious elements. Chiefs had war medicines and prayed to their ancestors for success ; while the loyalty of the great-commoners and people to their chief had both a spiritual and an economic importance. Sometimes, in peace, the leading commoners would dream of war and, if they dreamt of running away, then their chief would hastily kill meat for them. Such dreams were witchcraft and, unless promptly dealt with by a feast, were held to be a certain harbinger of future defeat. [789] [787]

" In civil warfare the Kyungu never took any part at all, he remained impartial at Mbande. His sons fought one another by themselves." (But what of the war, between Ngelenge and Ngana, did he not help his own sons in any way?) " No, he did not. For both ' the cousins ' and ' the sons ' alike were his children, he was the father of all."

(b) *TRIBAL WAR.*

The procedure of tribal warfare and that of the occasional punitive expeditions against the Kyungu's subordinates was the same. Messages were sent by the *valukuta* to all chiefs and nobles of the plain to come to Mbande. There the more important of them entered the Kyungu's house and were given their orders by him personally : " And then, when the Kyungu had told them whom to go and fight, he would finish up by saying ' That is all then, go away now and call down blessings on your arms.' So they would leave his house and gather all together, chiefs and their men, and pray." 721 [202]

The premier noble of Ngonde would begin, reciting all the names of the sacred groves of the Kyungu and asking each one to bless them in their fight. Then after him each great chief in turn would pray in like 726

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

726 manner to his own predecessors in his title. The territorial nobles, however, did not then pray to theirs, although they went to fight; tribal war was carried on under royal auspices alone. The Kyungu himself remained behind in his house praying for their success. Some of the nobles of Ngonde went with the expedition, carrying the magic war-tails of the Kyungu, his spear *Kamisa* and a magic horn.

The territorial nobles of the hills, we were told, were not summoned 721 to take part in tribal wars or punitive expeditions. And this fact is perhaps the clearest evidence of the relatively slight hold which Mbande had upon them. Nor, even in the plain, were the Kyungu's orders invariably obeyed without question. It is said that when Mujombe appealed for help against the Bemba chief Kyepele (=Cepela) Kyungu Mwangonde at first ordered the chiefs of Ngana to go alone to the war, without Mwakasungula. For Mwakasungula was his only surviving adult son and he feared to lose him. But the chiefs of Ngana refused to start without Mwakasungula, who in the end went with them.

The same warning that preceded a civil war was given by the men 726 of Ngonde in tribal warfare also. "When the Kyungu sent his people against strangers he always forbade any surprise attacks, let there be parley first and explanation; let them point out that they had no wish for war, that it was the others who had forced war on them by wantonly killing one of their men (or whatever the reason was). We never fought like the Ngoni, always we explained our case first, asking why, if the other side had any just cause for their actions, they had not refrained and come and talked it all over with us. And so it was in the war against Kyepele, we explained our case."

727 We have seen already that the booty of punitive expeditions was divided among the chiefs and nobles who had fought and the Kyungu, 567 and so it was in tribal warfare also. War was an important source of revenue for Mbande, bringing in both cattle and slaves. The war against the Bemba Kyepele (=Cepela) is particularly remembered for the number of slaves which Mwakasungula and the other chiefs brought back from it. While discussing slavery with some men of Ngonde one of us remarked that there had been little or no slavery among the Nyakyusa. "Yes, indeed, that is so: there was a lot of slavery here in Ngonde and very little among the Nyakyusa, because here people were captured in war. From Kyepele, for instance, a great host of slaves was captured and every chief at that time had Bemba slaves.

"And it was the custom for every chief to take a certain proportion of the slaves he had captured and hand them over to the Kyungu." (Why?) "Because they thought that it was his prayers for success that had enabled them to fight so well, to rout the enemy and to capture slaves

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

and wealth." Once again we see how closely connected were the religious powers of the Kyungu with his wealth. 727 567

And the military authority of Mbande, like that of the lesser rulers, was correlated both as cause and as effect with the other factors of its general political status. The central power rested in part on its military functions : it was a tribal rallying point for defence against alien attacks, together with the hierarchy which depended upon it, it provided the necessary large-scale organization for military success, its religious powers were never more valued than in wartime, while victory brought wealth and prestige both to the Kyungu and his subordinates. But, as comparison with the Nyakyusa shows,[1] it was only the flow of wealth up and down the hierarchy, in combination with the religious functions of Mbande, that made this large-scale military organization possible. 721

(c) *WARFARE AND AUTONOMY.*

Now warfare is, at one and the same time, an example of order and of disorder in human society. By social order I mean the systematic overcoming of lesser autonomies within existing wider groups : the overcoming of individual autonomy within the family and the local community, the overcoming of family, local and other autonomies within the tribe or state, the overcoming of tribal and state autonomies within still wider groups. By social disorder I mean the temporary overcoming by a lesser autonomy of the forces of some existing wider group. Legal procedure is one of most obvious examples of order, crime is one of the most obvious examples of disorder. 600

But warfare falls between these two extremes. Seldom are lesser autonomies so completely overcome as they are within a group at war, never is the autonomy of that group more clearly dominant over the forces making for a wider order. And it is of fundamental importance for the understanding of any social field to see which groups within it have both sufficient unity and sufficient autonomy to engage in recurrent warfare with one another. The size of the groups which go to war is one of the marks by which we distinguish primitive from civilized societies ——the smaller the warring groups the more primitive the society.

Now the recurrent civil wars of Ngonde in the middle period of its history show us that, beneath its hierarchical facade, it was a society of the same kind as that of the Nyakyusa across the Songwe; the centralized political organization was too weak permanently to overcome the local autonomies of village, fief and chiefdom. It is true that the mercantile divinity of Mbande gave sufficient unity to Ngonde to enable it to fight as 721 642

[1] *Vide infra p. 64.*

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

721 642 a whole against the Bemba and the Ngoni, and that the poverty-stricken divinity of Lubaga was unable to do this for the Nyakyusa;[1] but neither of them gave their people any high degree of unity among themselves.

For, while in both cases the hierarchical organization touched the common people in its religious and ceremonial aspects, in neither case did it much affect their everyday actions. In Ngonde, as we have seen, the wealth of the Kyungu, which he derived from the ivory trade, enabled him and his nobles of Ngonde to bind the other chiefs and nobles to him, in a way that the Lwembe and his hereditary priests could not do across the Songwe. But this wealth only touched the common people slightly and did not much alter the economic organization of the local groups. Nor had Ngonde any other common activities save tribal wars, religious rituals, and the hoeing of the *milasa*.

Horizontal as well as vertical relations must bind social groups together if their autonomy is to be permanently overcome, and in Ngonde, no less than among the Nyakyusa, the horizontal relations between the local groups were weak; while the religious seclusion of the Kyungus weakened the vertical relations also. The constitution of Ngonde consisted of a number of small and primitive local groups, all firmly attached to Mbande, but each one capable of swinging free[2] and of breaking the tenuous horizontal bonds that joined them among themselves.

Now a distinction must be made between these civil wars and the tribal wars with the Bemba and Ngoni. The civil wars point us to the disorder of Ngonde, a disorder which existed in spite of unifying factors; the tribal wars point us to lack of order which was hardly opposed by any unifying factors at all. No doubt there were occasional peaceful contacts between Ngonde and these other tribes, but they were clearly very slight indeed.

7. *POLITICAL CEREMONIAL.*

643 644 In every relationship of life there is some ceremonial expression of feeling. And towards the Kyungus of the middle period their subjects frequently expressed the feelings of worship and terror appropriate to an irascible divinity.

"At Mbande the nobles of Ngonde would sit round praising the Kyungu; the drums went '*kindé! kindé!*' And they would praise him in antiphony: 'O Kyungu!—Great Father! Great Father!—

[1] The Nyakyusa were attacked both by Sango and Ngoni but no tribal alliance was formed to meet these attacks.

[2] In the case of the chiefdoms this metaphor must be qualified by the intervention of the great chiefs between the local chiefdoms and Mbande, and the occasional unifying effect of this fact upon whole groups of chiefdoms.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

marriages of his kinswomen. When his father dies his father's wives 622
and cows pass to his father's full-brother, but they come to him and his 595
brother eventually when this man dies. While, if the young chiefs have "come out" it is common for their father's brother to hand over some, or even the bulk of the cattle, to them before his own death. And in his own half of the family, among his siblings and half-siblings on that side, a chief has far greater rights both of inheritance and of receiving marriage-cattle, than those possessed by the senior son of a commoner. So much is clear from my evidence, but it is not yet sufficiently detailed for an exact statement of rules.

Before 1893 fighting between chiefdoms was common and, except 631
between brother chiefs, the usual aim of fighting was, not conquest, but 721
cows; wars were generally just cattle raids. And a substantial proportion of the cows captured in a successful raid went to increase the herds of the chief. This lost source of income is now supplied by Government [435
salaries, which vary from 5/- to £15 a month.[19] The price of a cow is £2; 465]
but many shillings are spent on clothes, bicycles and beer, as well as on cows.

A chief, like any other rich man, maintains his prestige by hospitality, 622
he constantly entertains his more notable subjects with beer, at the 527
ceremonies of his family all his people gather in their age-villages and he kills cattle for them to eat. Chiefs seldom nowadays kill cattle except on ceremonial occasions, but in the old days of warfare they used also, I am told, to entertain their subjects with meat from time to time, in order to keep up their spirits for fighting. History is full of stories of Nyakyusa chiefs who attracted many men to their countries, and so gained great military strength, by the generosity and abundance of their feasts.

Every time a man or woman dies, a message must be sent to the 622
chief, and at the burial he is given the whole breast and ribs (*akakwa*) of 764
one of the cows which are killed by the family of the dead person at that time. He has the right to take food or milk from any of his subjects if he has need of it; but he cannot take any man's beast without later returning another to him.

Apart from the now abandoned pursuit of cattle raiding the only 631
profitable enterprizes in which the members of a whole chiefdom jointly 476
participate are those of hunting and fishing; in some chiefdoms, but not

[19] Salaries above £1 a month are only paid to senior chiefs. No minor chief gets a Government salary, nor do great-commoners. The local value of money is shown (a) by the tax (8/- p.a.), (b) by the wages of unskilled labour (6/- to 8/- p.m.)

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 pumpkin leaves were ready to eat, an elaborate first-fruit cere-
796 mony was formerly carried out. The new season's food was offered first by the nobles of Ngonde in the grove of the previous Kyungu, the one who had last died.

[778] The great chiefs would do so next, each at his own sacred grove (the grave of his own predecessor in the title). And after them everyone, both chiefs and people, each at his father's grave. All offered first fruits to their own shades. And finally they would themselves eat, each with his chief wife. But they would not eat beforehand for fear of angering the shades.

643 In time of tribal war also the Kyungu and nobles of Ngonde
796 led the people in prayer. All chiefs and nobles were summoned
[721] from the plain and the great ones entered the Kyungu's house to receive their instructions:

When he had finished speaking he would tell them to go and pray.
[782] So they would leave his house and gather all together, all the chiefs, and the other men, and pray. The premier noble of Ngonde would begin asking each of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn to bless them in the fight. And then the great chiefs would pray after him.

This organization of religious ritual in the Ngonde plain was both a factor of and itself determined by the general political structure. Many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions, but the reverse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular significance, the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle
[782] were sent to Lubaga by the chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and health; but the 'clearing out of the ashes' was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruits ritual at all; while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

643 The majesty (*ubusisya*) of the Kyungu was cultivated in a variety
789 of ways. He smeared himself with ointment made from lion fat, and his bed was built up with elephant tusks and lion pelts. He
[352] was enthroned on the sacred iron stool called Kisumbi, he had a
[293] spear, Kamisa, and Mulima, a porous piece of iron 'like a mouth organ' used to make rain, all handed down from the first Kyungu.
[778] His zebra tails, set with medicines in horn handles, were waved in

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

in rulers and is thought to be transferred to them in the medicine brewed out of python blood. 643 778 789

It will be noticed that the central mystery of Lubaga and the sources of the most powerful medicine are the same, and the medicine is akin to witchcraft. The shades, medicines, and witchcraft are distinguished and are thought to operate independently, but they are all manifestations of a mystical power which is logically one, though none of our informants saw it as that.

We referred earlier to the function of the chiefs' medicines in giving courage in war and luck in raiding. Certain emblems of chieftainship are carried in war: a sacred spear, a bamboo trumpet (*ililonge*) or a great war-horn (*ingangabwite*), and several giraffe or zebra tails (*imiswigala*), and all of these have little horns filled with *inyifwila* attached to them. Of the trumpet it was said: 'You hear it and your heart swells and a great trembling comes over you and you fight.' 'The chiefs forbid them to be blown now because their blowing always brings war.' Each of the senior village headmen is given a tail at the 'coming out' and he went into battle with it bound on to his upper arm. A notable warrior was sometimes given one also. To lose a tail in battle was comparable to losing the regimental colours and there are epics of their loss and recovery. If the leader who carried it saw that he was surrounded he would try to pass it back, or he might hide it on the ground: [293] [721] [726]

> then that night they would go back to the spot and they would find it because it shone with a light and made a bubbling noise, *burukut, burukut, burukut*. . . . [774]
>
> In the old days the medicine [in the tails] was frequently renewed; for there was war, and it gave the headmen the power of dreaming of the course of war. . . . But now, since you have brought peace to the land, no one renews it, and it has gone rotten.

However, the tails in Mwaipopo's chiefdom *were* thus treated in December 1937, and we saw it done. The four tails, with six tiny medicine horns and a calabash of medicated ointment, were formally handed over to the care of Kalinga, Mwaipopo's (116) chief wife, having previously been in the care of his mother. Mwaipopo himself was there with two kinsmen and the three commoner priests Kissogota, Njobakosa, and Ngulyo, but not Kasitile (86) since he was 'father-in-law' to Kalinga and could not meet her, though he was informed of the ritual. Kalobo, the second senior wife, looked on. Kalinga poured out the ointment

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

inheritance ensure that a limited number of young men are absorbed into the senior generation and live with the older men, sharing their activities and from time to time holding office as headmen or priests of that generation, and the selection in each generation of young men who are *not* the sons of village headmen, or chiefs, or headmen of the past generation, ensures that commoners without office are constantly recruited to the hierarchy of rulers. In short, power is distributed.

(c) RITUAL AND SECULAR BONDS

As in so many societies, economic and ritual links extended, traditionally, further than political links.[1] Selya was dependent upon BuKinga for iron and the Kinga came to fruitful Selya to pray for fertility. The priests who came to pray brought the hoes. The many independent chiefdoms of Selya and the Mbaka valley acknowledged the spiritual overlordship of the Lwembe by sending sacrifices to him, and it was through the network of hereditary priests like Kasitile, Mwamakunda, Mwalukuta, and Nyama of Selya, and the Kinga priests Kikungubeja, Nsyanigwa, Kyamba Kitali, and Silobwike that wider bonds were maintained. Mwaipopo (116) when he was granted a Court which gave him the secular leadership of Selya, failed to make any acknowledgement of Lwembe's traditional power, and it was Kasitile who later urged him to do so. The western chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa still buy medicines and bark-cloth from the Ndali to the west, and have done so for many generations, but no common ritual links them as it does Selya and the plain with BuKinga. The trade was of lesser importance than that to the east, for it does not seem to have included iron, though the Nyiha who share a common culture with the Lambya, the western neighbours of the Nyakyusa, are known to have been skilled smiths.[2] With the Sangu to the

[1] cf. E. Colson, 'The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia' in *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa* (ed. Colson and Gluckman).

A comparison with the frontier in West and South Africa where economic and religious expansion compelled the establishment of Government is instructive. Cf. W. K. Hancock, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs*, vol. ii, part ii, pp. 162-8.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between the Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, vi (1890), p. 289. Elton's suggestion that some of the Nyakyusa iron came from the west is discounted by Cotterill. J. F. Elton, *The Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa* (1879), p. 371 and map, cf. J. Thompson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back*, vol. i, p. 272.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

north the Nyakyusa were continually at war; they did not trade or pray with them. Thus we conclude that participation in a common ritual is, in the Nyakyusa case, directly linked with a common origin and essential trade.

The divine kings, Lwembe and Kyungu, were regarded as having power over certain areas, a power closely linked with rainfall. Indeed, one informant argued that the chiefs living around Masoko had never sent sacrifices to Lubaga, 'because when it rains at Lubaga the rain does not come as far as Masoko'. He was mistaken in his facts—the chiefs of Masoko did at one time send to Lubaga as Mwambete (162), chief at Masoko, himself admitted—but the argument points to a conception of supernatural power tied to a rainfall area. This notion was not, however, applied consistently.

The balance between secular and mystical power has altered during the past ten generations. The founding heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, came as conquerors and must surely have led their men personally; but early in the history of Ngonde the Kyungu was secluded, and power was exercised almost exclusively by the nobles (*vide supra*, pp. 40-46); and the Lwembe also was, at one period, 'not seen by ordinary men' and led a life hedged about with taboos. There is sharp contrast in Nyakyusa tradition between the active chiefs who were warriors, and arbitrators, and worked hard in their fields[1] and the 'divine king' who lived in seclusion. As we have seen, the chiefs often delegated ritual functions, with the taboos involved, to a junior kinsman such as Mwamukinga (44) or Mwakihaba (45) (*vide* pp. 79-81, 114) whose heirs succeeded to the office. It is even possible that the first Lwembe at Lubaga (Mwakalebela 19) took over ritual functions from his senior brother, Kalesi (18).[2] The present tendency is for the development of secular power and its separation from mystical power. The Kyungu is no longer a god but an administrator: the heir of the Lwembes sits as an elected representative of chiefs on the Local Council. In the traditional Nyakyusa society ritual played an essential part in maintaining the balance between generations, sections, and social strata, and in

[1] In 1955 a young chief was bitterly criticized by his men because he 'never had a hoe in his hands' whereas his father and grandfather had (to our personal knowledge) been diligent in hoeing.

[2] But according to one excellent informant, Mwakisambwe (90) lived secluded while Mwakilima (91) 'fed men'—i.e. entertained.

631 Age-villages combined to form a chiefdom under the hereditary chief,
628 *amalafyale*, but active co-operation between villages thus associated was often slight; indeed in the larger chiefdoms there commonly existed intermittent animosity which might break out in raiding or even civil war. The
[721] integrity of these larger chiefdoms was weak – for example, when the Nyakyusa were attacked by Sangu and Ngoni war-parties, and later by the
[648] Germans, villages of the same chiefdom conspicuously failed to join in common defence. Similarly the land affairs of one village were no concern of any other, and each jealously guarded its own rights.

631 None of the chiefdoms was large; smallness of scale is typical of Nyakyusa political organisation and social attitudes. In 1955 the smallest
162 indigenous chiefdom contained only 36 men. In 1948 55,700 people were divided amongst about 18 indigenous chiefs, but undoubtedly had not the Colonial Government frozen the system there would have been rather more – at least five more. Today there are 12 recognised "administrative chiefs", amongst whom five have each less than 3,000 people under them, and the largest chiefdom contains fewer than 10,000 people – the average is just over 4,000 people.

631 Nevertheless the chiefdom, the collection of villages, was important,
361 because in the creation of the chiefdom villages were created, and in its development the villages developed, matured and died away. A village survived only so long as its members lived and by the nature of the age-organisation there was but little possibility of the recruitment of new members, for villagers' sons left to form their own new villages. Their sons eventually came to comprise the core of the new chiefdoms.

642 In connection with the constitution of a Nyakyusa village and with
643 land tenure, the significant feature of the chiefdom was its establishment, together with the induction of a new chief, at the great "coming-out"
[796] ceremony, *ubusoka*. In brief, each chief was succeeded by two of his sons – the
[298] eldest son of each of the senior houses of the chief, i.e., of his first two wives. At the "coming-out" ceremony, when the sons were still young men and their father was not a particularly old man, the old chiefdom was divided into two, each part coming under one of the new young chiefs. Before this critical occasion – at which much important ritual was performed – the younger men of the old chiefdom had already moved away from their fathers villages and had established their own incipient villages nearby, each one containing a group of coevals. A Nyakyusa boy from the age of about seven years could not continue to live with his father and mother, but, in company with his equals, built his own hut on a site adjacent to the main
621 village as indicated by the fathers' headman. Until the "coming-out" cere-
[342] mony these youths' villages came under the control of the old village headmen; but with the induction of the new chiefs they achieved independent status, each with its own headman appointed from among its members by the old headmen. Each new village was allocated a new building site and a new arable area, and quite commonly the old villages, the older men, moved away a little in order to give the younger men adequate access to the land,
631 for it was considered that the young men's needs for land were paramount.

[178] After this wholesale reorganisation of the old chiefdom, when new villages were established and new boundaries demarcated,[1] the old chief
[622] himself, the old headmen and the older men (the "fathers") gradually retired from active public life. The old chief was supposed to commit suicide
[643] after a time (or was quietly killed off) in order to leave the field clear for his sons; the old headmen became the religious and ritual leaders of the new
[888] chiefdoms, with the flavour of elder statesmanship, and the old men's

1. 'At the "coming-out" it is said that "everything is made new", boundaries are redrawn and the new chiefdoms and villages of the young men are ceremonially incorporated'. Wilson, G., 1938, p. 31.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

TABLE V

DISTRICTS IN TANGANYIKA WHERE LAND DISPUTES ARE COMMON

1953	No. of land cases	% of total civil cases	Estimated population density	Population per land case
Bukoba District	1,189	23	69	223
Lushoto Division	149	12	188	742
Moshi District	347	25	277	746
Ngara District..	81	29	125	1,393

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The Changing Village

The possibly unique age-village of the Nyakyusa is now undergoing considerable and fairly rapid change in response to the new conditions of land shortage. There is, firstly, an increasing sense of village exclusiveness and, secondly, there has been a breakdown in the essential age-basis of its organisation. That is to say, that whilst the corporate unity of the village as an independent group has been strengthened, yet the social foundation of the village has simultaneously been changed and a different sort of village is emerging. It would take us far beyond the scope of this present essay if a full analysis of the changing village were to be made, nevertheless in so far as these changes are more or less directly the consequences of modern land shortage, land tenure and economic conditions some account is essential. Since the age-village was fundamental in the life and social organisation of these people, the new emerging village is of crucial importance.

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Land shortage has definitely exaggerated the unity and exclusiveness of the village in the Lake Plains at a time when, for other reasons, it was beginning to become a more open group. There was always, as we have seen, insistence on the principle that only a member of the village could hold and use village land; but village boundaries were often poorly marked and it was difficult to determine which headman, if any, had genuine jurisdiction over land relatively distant from the established village sites. Nor was it particularly important to be able to do so whilst land was plentiful. As paddy cultivation spread, men began seeking extra fields farther and farther away from home as land nearby was all taken up; and so long as they did not attempt to take land in the immediate vicinity of another village site there was seldom much difficulty in this. The attitudes born of a sufficiency of land persisted and headmen were not disposed to protest against outsiders who sought fields near the limits of their vaguely defined areas. Internecine warfare and raiding had, of course, been abolished as an expression of and a weapon in inter-village rivalries and animosities. With the establishment of general peace and security, and with increasing movement about the country between villages and chiefdoms, such rivalries and animosities began to die away. Many men came to live in the villages which they themselves had not helped to found; their coevals from their fathers' villages lived elsewhere, many of them widely scattered, and it was not possible to maintain a high degree of village patriotism, and, people began to feel, it was not especially necessary or important any longer.

[423]
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[721]

It began to be possible for a man to hold some of his arable land within the area of another village, so long as members of the second village were not deprived of the opportunity of their own agricultural expansion should they desire it. This was especially the case when a large area of hitherto vacant (i.e. bush) but now valuable paddy land was contained within the approximate boundaries of a village. Outsiders were allowed to acquire fields on the strength of kinship with the headman or with one of the established villagers, or even by giving some small present to the headman (e.g. a little beer or some meat, etc.). Land was still plentiful then, or so it seemed to the Nyakyusa, and future shortages and difficulties were not perceived.

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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

726 hero stood out, and called the others to rally round him, and a few desperate men would drive back the enemy. And so the battle swayed to and fro, until one chief considered that his men had had enough, and made his submission; or perhaps the fight was renewed next day when the tired men had rested. But so long as the chief went on blowing his *isiba* (usually a small horn), the battle went on. The great war horn was blown continuously, and the *ililonge*, a bamboo whistle with a penetrating note, made itself heard above the din.

Behind the fighting-line were the old men, one of whom held the *lusero*, a basket with a great selection of powerful medicines, very sacred, and of vital importance. If it was taken by the enemy, it was hoisted up for all to see, and if it was finally held by them, the dynasty to which it originally belonged died out. It was shaken by the old man who held it, and was carried forward or drawn back, according as the enemy retired or advanced. If the chief was an old man he did not enter the battle, but took his place in the rear, praying; if he was defending his home, he prayed to God and to the spirits; if he was the aggressor, he left out the prayer to the Deity!

•722 After the men went out to fight, the women sat silent and unwashed in the villages until they returned, carefully avoiding quarrels, which would kill the husbands of the participants. They were stripped quite naked, "to give lightness of foot" in case the enemy forced an entrance. Women were never killed

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

in war, for the victors were enriched with the cattle that went to redeem all captured wives or daughters. Nor were they taken as wives by the victors, although there is at least one well-known case where a woman was the sole objective of a war.

The dead might be buried where they fell, or brought home. The return of the host was awaited by the women in silence if the result of the fighting was not known to them. Each wife or mother recognized husband or son among the returning brave, but if one was told that her husband was coming on behind in another company, she knew that he was dead, and that his body was being brought home. If all returned in safety, and that sometimes happened in these far from desperate encounters, the women and girls set up their shrill cry, as exciting to an African as the pibroch to a Scot, and ran alongside, clapping and shouting in joy. The night was given up to feasting. The captured cattle were divided by the chief, lions' shares going to those who distinguished themselves in the fighting. The defeated chief, if he had any cattle left, also gave his men a feast, for they must not be allowed to lose heart over a single failure, and no doubt there was much boasting on both sides. If the sacred *lusero* with its medicines was taken from the enemy, it was put into the house in which the victorious chief kept his *ifingira*, the very powerful medicines by which his authority was (and is) upheld.

Cowards were held in supreme contempt. But a coward is not a man who runs away; all do that as the struggle sways to and fro; a coward is a man who

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 and sniffed at the grave. When this son-in-law arrived, the chief women mourners got up from under the tree and went with him into the hut to wail. They came out all wailing. The women under the tree were wailing all the time with a leader standing up in the middle. But the wailing was drowned by the drums of which there were three sets.

764 Three young men were got up with white clay spots and some had
535 bells on their ankles and loin-cloths. They held spears, and danced and
302 leapt wildly. 'What', I asked Kasitile, 'is the meaning of the white clay?'

KASITILE: It is war paint. During war we painted ourselves with white clay formerly. Then if I saw one with white clay I did not spear him. It was my comrade. But he whom I saw without it was an enemy and I speared him. It was the sign.

725 QUESTION: But did the other side not use it?

KASITILE: We took them by surprise.

Mwanyoso came to visit me in the evening.

764 QUESTION: And what steps are they taking about Kataya's death
789 from sorcery?

MWANYOSO: They sought the doctor, Mwangulombe, for the burial yesterday. He pounded a medicine and burnt it on the grave. Then they buried the dead man and danced on the grave. That means they destroyed the sorcery. The dead man should take it away with him.

QUESTION: And has the doctor given them medicines to drink?

MWANYOSO: He has not yet done so. They will fetch him again to cook the medicine at the home.

QUESTION: What about the payment?

759 MWANYOSO: For yesterday they did not pay anything, now, but when they have fetched him to their home, then they will pay some shillings. But if many people have died, then they fetch a famous doctor such as Mwakionde. Then he comes with all the protective medicines (*amapiego*) and treats them. Then such a doctor gets a cow. The famous doctors in this country are Mwakionde and Kapuguso and Mwakanyamale.

787 QUESTION: Will they consult an oracle?

MWANYOSO: Why should they consult an oracle? They know what it is. It is the sorcery of their brothers!

759 QUESTION: But it might be the sorcery of another. Some say of Mwalhojo (the chief).

MWANYOSO: They are liars. See, Kataya had just come from his brothers. He got the illness at their place. It is they. If it was from Mwalhojo and his people, they would have speared him by night. We would have found wounds and much blood, but we did not find them.

QUESTION: He came from his brothers?

MWANYOSO: Yes, there was a ritual because their father, Mwalikileja, had died. Their senior brother inherited and he also died. Kataya

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

including the individuals killed, was told to the chief. 721
If the dream was favourable, confirmation was sought. 787
The chief took his zebra tail of office, poured oil into it, and hung it up in the house of his chief wife. If during the night it exuded cattle dung and blood, the sign was good; if blood only, it was bad. Blood indicated the death of men, but that was of secondary importance if the dung was there which indicated spoil in cattle as the result of victory. Along with the tail was hung up the chief's spear, which now gleamed and glittered like fire in the night, while the tail moved about with a swishing sound, indicating that the spirits urged battle. All this took place in the presence of the chief and the principal medicine man only; and their report was published in the morning, when the blowing of a horn summoned all males to the meeting-place. "My children," says the chief, "we are hungry. Let us eat the cattle of so and so." But he gives the name, not of the real point of attack, but of some other chief living in another direction; for there was always the possibility of traitors in the community, who would carry warning to the enemy.

A wild scene of hurry followed. Spears were 726
collected and sharpened, defects attended to, new 789
hafts attached. The shields were examined and strengthened if necessary. If there was a blacksmith in the village he was besieged by warriors whose weapons had become rusty or useless, all eager to equip themselves for the spoil. But man and weapon are alike useless until they have been given power and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

726 protection by the medicine man; and the armed
789 warriors, standing in rows or circles, were sprinkled with medicine from a huge pot, rendering them and their weapons irresistible. In the rising of 1906 in the Songea area, it is said that the fighting men were so confident of the power of the drugs that they rushed up to the mouths of the German guns, only to perish there by the bullets which they believed would be turned into water.

Besides the publicly administered medicine, a more powerful drug was to be had for a fee; and the chief himself was armed and protected at all points in this way. One medicine ensured that his spear would find the heart of an enemy; another that the enemy's spear would fall short; a third he chewed as the fight went on; and a few very great chiefs possess a medicine which enables them to remove a fatal wound to a non-fatal spot. Those who could obtain it attached another medicine to the spear handle, and some carried a charm on their shields.

726 Fighting men carried spears numbering from six
714 up to twenty; and the greater the number the bolder the hero, for a large number of spears indicated a determination not to run until every weapon available had been thrown at the enemy, or otherwise
[567] disposed of. Great heroes were followed by slaves who carried additional supplies of weapons. Some had wide shields of ox-hide, and others had narrow strips strengthened by slim bamboos. On their heads they wore the *ikipubili*, a plume of red and black feathers, the capture of which from an enemy was

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

the great ambition of every warrior. Arms, legs, and waist were partially covered by strips of hide with the hair attached, but these were meant to give a wild appearance, not to protect the body. 726 714

No man went out to battle with an unsettled quarrel hanging over him; the ancestors of the other party to the quarrel would see to it that he did not return. And the chief must be free from offence. One who proposed to go to war with other men's wives on his conscience, was sternly told by his councillors that his conduct made victory impossible, and he must make such amends as the law demanded. Except in cases of hurried attacks, such as the march of Munsoso to avenge an insult, all household fires were extinguished, and new fire obtained by rubbing. The women threw away their old bark-cloths, and used new ones. Just before setting out the chief went to the house of his first wife and prayed to his ancestors to grant him success. The war dance which followed the sprinkling with medicine might last for two or three days, and finally, armed and protected by weapons, medicines, prayers, and a good conscience, the warriors went forth. 726

The fighting began when the opposing forces came within a spear's throw of each other. Here and there a great hero stood out to hurl insulting language at the enemy, challenging them to "come on," and be scattered by his single arm. When the fighting became close, stabbing took the place of throwing, and if a very few were killed on either side, the losing side retired. But only for a short distance; for a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•726 hero stood out, and called the others to rally round him, and a few desperate men would drive back the enemy. And so the battle swayed to and fro, until one chief considered that his men had had enough, and made his submission; or perhaps the fight was renewed next day when the tired men had rested. But so long as the chief went on blowing his *isiba* (usually a small horn), the battle went on. The great war horn was blown continuously, and the *ililonge*, a bamboo whistle with a penetrating note, made itself heard above the din.

Behind the fighting-line were the old men, one of whom held the *lusero*, a basket with a great selection of powerful medicines, very sacred, and of vital importance. If it was taken by the enemy, it was hoisted up for all to see, and if it was finally held by them, the dynasty to which it originally belonged died out. It was shaken by the old man who held it, and was carried forward or drawn back, according as the enemy retired or advanced. If the chief was an old man he did not enter the battle, but took his place in the rear, praying; if he was defending his home, he prayed to God and to the spirits; if he was the aggressor, he left out the prayer to the Deity!

722 After the men went out to fight, the women sat silent and unwashed in the villages until they returned, carefully avoiding quarrels, which would kill the husbands of the participants. They were stripped quite naked, "to give lightness of foot" in case the enemy forced an entrance. Women were never killed

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

roll of the Great War was a terrifying revelation of the unyielding nature of the Europeans in a quarrel. 727

Individual chiefs had special methods of securing victory. Mwamakula's wife, when her husband marched out with his forces, sat on a live sheep as long as the fighting went on: so assuring good luck to her husband in taking cattle, and preventing them running away when taken. Another wife sat on a cooking pot, to keep the enemy in a state of security while the warriors were closing in on them. They would go about as usual, unaware of danger, cooking and eating, until the storm burst, and there was no hope of defence. His sister had a *lusero* similar to the one carried into battle; and one of his old men lay down on the path, each soldier stepping over him as he passed on. While the fight was being waged, this old man sat on his haunches and pulled himself forward in that position, the effect being to make the enemy run. The *lusero* was carried hereditarily by Mfwimi, and when he laid it down it moved forward of itself as the enemy retired. 726 789

In the north there was a great prophet, whose presence in the battle always assured the victory to his own side; but if he retired, even for a moment, the battle turned, and he was brought back, by force if necessary. 726 792

Two great wars still stand out in the minds of the people: the victorious march of the Angoni, and the slaving invasion of the so-called Arabs. Both these enemies brought with them methods of fighting unknown to the Konde, who fled before the Angoni, 721

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

721 driving cattle and carrying what they could carry: men and women flying naked for greater swiftness: until the great Sango chief Merere, who is said to have had three hundred guns, inflicted a severe defeat on the invaders. After that the Konde made a few feeble attempts to stand, but they came to nothing, and the Angoni passed like a scourge through the land. Against the Arabs a better fight was made, but it was with the help of the white men who at that time began to enter the Konde country.

The Konde were and are a timid people. The terror of the Arabs has passed, but the fear of the Angoni is probably a present fact. In August, 1914, some of the leading men at Karonga came to me. "All you white men," they said, "will be summoned to fight in your own country, and we shall be left without protection from the Angoni." I tried to reassure them, but without success. "No," they said, "three days after you go they will be upon us, and take away all our cattle as they did before." Possibly a more courageous spirit now obtains. A band of Angoni were enlisted for special work at Karonga in the early months of the war, and showed themselves so averse from anything like danger, that the reputation of the whole tribe, quite undeservedly, went down to zero. "The fear of the Angoni," said some Konde to me at that time, "is gone. If they were to come upon us now, we would fight them." But it may be doubted whether any but a few have really lost their old fears.

• 726 The Konde were never organized for war, and there was no military caste. Everything connected with

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

726 war was haphazard, or nearly so. Mostly a sudden rush to arms of untrained and unprepared men, with not even, in the less important cases, a declaration of war; though in the more important outbreaks a broken spear was sent as a token of hostility. This was the first intimation the Germans had in 1897 that the lake-shore chiefs were determined to fight. Such training as the men had was gained in the open-air sports of the cattle-tending stage; running (a very important accomplishment for a Konde warrior), leaping, spear throwing and stabbing. The only idea of formation was the straight, or rather straggling, line; the only conception of strategy was the sudden night or early morning attack. The man best prepared for battle was the man who had the greatest variety of medicines in or on him; nor can there be any doubt that these protective drugs and charms gave a sense of security which in turn generated a very real courage. Like so many other Bantu tribes, the Konde are a pastoral and agricultural community, so untrained in the arts of war that they did not even have stockades for protection, so common among most of their neighbours. The idea of a standing organization for defence or attack did not rise above their mental horizon, and when war came a wild rush to arms was their only resort.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

the senior territorial nobles of the plain, and they told their juniors. A sacrifice was made in one of the sacred groves of the Kyungus and all fires in the whole Ngonde plain were put out. And then "all the chiefs from every country near Mbande and the nobles and all the great-commoners and all the ordinary men and the women too went to Kyimbwe." At Kyimbwe, which is a cross-roads in the bush, they threw away the ashes of their old fires; while those few people who could not get to Kyimbwe threw them away near their own houses on the same day as the others. At Kyimbwe new fire was made with fire-sticks by the nobles of Ngonde and distributed to the whole plain in order. Great chiefs and senior nobles took it first and passed it to their juniors, chiefs passed to great-commoners, and in each group the common people got it from their own ruling noble or their own great-commoner. 769 796

And then, later in the year when the first maize and the first pumpkin leaves were ready to eat, an elaborate first-fruit ceremony was carried out. The first-fruits were offered by the nobles of Ngonde in the grove of the previous Kyungu, the one who had last died. "Then the great chiefs would do so next—Kalonga, Mwakasungula, Mwembelo, Katamba and the chiefs of Ngana also, each in his own sacred grove (i.e. at the grave of his own predecessor in the title). . . . . And then after them everyone, both chiefs and people, each at his father's grave. All offered first-fruits to their own spirits. And finally they would eat themselves, each with his chief wife. But beforehand they would not eat for fear of angering the spirits."

These two rituals concerned the plain alone; the nobles and chiefs of the hills are said to have had similar rituals of their own but they were not synchronized with or dependent upon those of the plain.

In time of tribal war also the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde led the people in prayer. All chiefs and nobles were summoned from the plain and the great ones entered the Kyungu's house to receive their instructions: "When he had finished speaking he would tell them to go to pray. So they would leave his house and gather all together, all chiefs and men, and pray. The premier noble of Ngonde would begin, asking each of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn to bless them in the fight. And then the great chiefs would pray after them" (each addressing his own predecessors in his title). The territorial nobles did not pray, for it was the royal family alone whose spirits were then addressed. Here again it was the plain alone that was concerned. 643 565 732 726

Now this organization of religious ritual in the Ngonde plain was both a factor of and itself determined by the general political

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

even here it was rather position than area that was at stake : " We object to their proximity, let them move further off," said the chiefs of Ngelenge. 669

Civil wars varied in size and importance from little local fights between neighbouring villages, fiefs or chiefdoms to more extensive fights between groups or even whole houses of chiefs. And in every case the political organization took on, for the time, a military character. Great-commoners led their villagers to war, chiefs their great-commoners ; the senior of a group of brother chiefs summoned his juniors to help him, while a great chief summoned all the local chiefs of his house. But only the Kyungu himself could summon the territorial nobles.

Now leadership in war is a factor of political authority ; the great chiefs, nobles, chiefs and great-commoners derived part of their status from their military functions. But, on the other hand, it is equally true to say that it was the other factors of their status which enabled them to exercise this military authority.

In every war, for instance, there were religious elements. Chiefs had war medicines and prayed to their ancestors for success ; while the loyalty of the great-commoners and people to their chief had both a spiritual and an economic importance. Sometimes, in peace, the leading commoners would dream of war and, if they dreamt of running away, then their chief would hastily kill meat for them. Such dreams were witchcraft and, unless promptly dealt with by a feast, were held to be a certain harbinger of future defeat. [789] [787]

" In civil warfare the Kyungu never took any part at all, he remained impartial at Mbande. His sons fought one another by themselves." (But what of the war, between Ngelenge and Ngana, did he not help his own sons in any way?) " No, he did not. For both ' the cousins ' and ' the sons ' alike were his children, he was the father of all."

(b) *TRIBAL WAR.*

The procedure of tribal warfare and that of the occasional punitive expeditions against the Kyungu's subordinates was the same. Messages were sent by the *valukuta* to all chiefs and nobles of the plain to come to Mbande. There the more important of them entered the Kyungu's house and were given their orders by him personally : " And then, when the Kyungu had told them whom to go and fight, he would finish up by saying ' That is all then, go away now and call down blessings on your arms.' So they would leave his house and gather all together, chiefs and their men, and pray." 721 [202]

The premier noble of Ngonde would begin, reciting all the names of the sacred groves of the Kyungu and asking each one to bless them in their fight. Then after him each great chief in turn would pray in like 726

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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726 The same warning that preceded a civil war was given by the men of Ngonde in tribal warfare also. "When the Kyungu sent his people against strangers he always forbade any surprise attacks, let there be parley first and explanation; let them point out that they had no wish for war, that it was the others who had forced war on them by wantonly killing one of their men (or whatever the reason was). We never fought like the Ngoni, always we explained our case first, asking why, if the other side had any just cause for their actions, they had not refrained and come and talked it all over with us. And so it was in the war against Kyepele, we explained our case."

727 567 We have seen already that the booty of punitive expeditions was divided among the chiefs and nobles who had fought and the Kyungu, and so it was in tribal warfare also. War was an important source of revenue for Mbande, bringing in both cattle and slaves. The war against the Bemba Kyepele (=Cepela) is particularly remembered for the number of slaves which Mwakasungula and the other chiefs brought back from it. While discussing slavery with some men of Ngonde one of us remarked that there had been little or no slavery among the Nyakyusa. "Yes, indeed, that is so: there was a lot of slavery here in Ngonde and very little among the Nyakyusa, because here people were captured in war. From Kyepele, for instance, a great host of slaves was captured and every chief at that time had Bemba slaves.

"And it was the custom for every chief to take a certain proportion of the slaves he had captured and hand them over to the Kyungu." (Why?) "Because they thought that it was his prayers for success that had enabled them to fight so well, to rout the enemy and to capture slaves

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

symbol of potency,[1] and we suggest that this also is an element in the ritual of the 'coming out', for the fertility of the chiefdom is thought to be bound up with the virility of the chief.

There are a number of stories about the way in which Mwakyusa (38) surpassed his brothers and one of them tells how each brother made fire and set alight the pasture land (for traditionally parts of the pasture land were fired each season to provide fresh grass for grazing in the early spring), and the fires started by the elder brothers soon died out, but that started by Mwakyusa 'burned for a whole month'. This is interpreted as an omen of his greatness as a chief: fire, potency, lordship are inextricably linked.

At the 'coming out' all things are made new. No matter how crowded the country the young men must move to new sites and the shelters in which they live must be new, though, as will be shown, they do not necessarily move to *unoccupied* country. On their new site the young men live as bachelors, milking their cows and cooking for themselves on their new fires the meat of the cattle they seize, the bananas and grain brought by their wives and mothers. Meat is abundant, for the young chief now rules and has the right to take what cattle he chooses, even from the villages of the old men in his country. 'It was as if there were war, the young men seized cattle, food, and women', and though they did not fight their fathers directly, as the Meru did, they clearly asserted their power. And, as so common further south, the accession of a chief was the occasion for raiding the neighbours: the young men, we were told, went forthwith to test the efficacy of the magic spears and the medicines with which their chief and headmen had been treated. Or the chiefs might lead a battue to clear the country of wild pig, as Mwakatumbula (Mwambete 162) did directly after his 'coming out'. Well fed and exuberant, the young men dance and display their cattle, and entertain visitors lavishly, for every chief seeks to attract men to his country by his hospitality.

Then they set up the sign and memorial of the chieftainship: they plant cuttings of two species[2] of *ficus*, *indola* which is much used as a shade tree, and *umpandapanda* from which bark-cloth is made. Close to these the first house of the chief and that of his senior village headmen are built, and the trees also mark the

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 124, 143.

[2] When writing *Good Company* I mistakenly thought that two cuttings of the same species were planted. Cf. *Good Company*, p. 27.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

in rulers and is thought to be transferred to them in the medicine brewed out of python blood. 643 778 789

It will be noticed that the central mystery of Lubaga and the sources of the most powerful medicine are the same, and the medicine is akin to witchcraft. The shades, medicines, and witchcraft are distinguished and are thought to operate independently, but they are all manifestations of a mystical power which is logically one, though none of our informants saw it as that.

We referred earlier to the function of the chiefs' medicines in giving courage in war and luck in raiding. Certain emblems of chieftainship are carried in war: a sacred spear, a bamboo trumpet (*ililonge*) or a great war-horn (*ingangabwite*), and several giraffe or zebra tails (*imiswigala*), and all of these have little horns filled with *inyifwila* attached to them. Of the trumpet it was said: 'You hear it and your heart swells and a great trembling comes over you and you fight.' 'The chiefs forbid them to be blown now because their blowing always brings war.' Each of the senior village headmen is given a tail at the 'coming out' and he went into battle with it bound on to his upper arm. A notable warrior was sometimes given one also. To lose a tail in battle was comparable to losing the regimental colours and there are epics of their loss and recovery. If the leader who carried it saw that he was surrounded he would try to pass it back, or he might hide it on the ground: [293] [721] [726]

> then that night they would go back to the spot and they would find it because it shone with a light and made a bubbling noise, *burukut, burukut, burukut*. . . . [774]
>
> In the old days the medicine [in the tails] was frequently renewed; for there was war, and it gave the headmen the power of dreaming of the course of war. . . . But now, since you have brought peace to the land, no one renews it, and it has gone rotten.

However, the tails in Mwaipopo's chiefdom *were* thus treated in December 1937, and we saw it done. The four tails, with six tiny medicine horns and a calabash of medicated ointment, were formally handed over to the care of Kalinga, Mwaipopo's (116) chief wife, having previously been in the care of his mother. Mwaipopo himself was there with two kinsmen and the three commoner priests Kissogota, Njobakosa, and Ngulyo, but not Kasitile (86) since he was 'father-in-law' to Kalinga and could not meet her, though he was informed of the ritual. Kalobo, the second senior wife, looked on. Kalinga poured out the ointment

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the prospect of their enemies using them. The notion that medicines are a weapon which may be used rightly or wrongly is very clearly brought out in the attitude towards 'making' animals. If a private individual 'makes' lion, or leopard, or crocodile which kill men that is sorcery—there is no question about it—and we heard of at least one man who had been driven from his home because he was reputed to have made leopards which killed children and cattle,[1] but when Mwakyonde 'made' lions which drove off pig and did not attack men, that was a public service (*vide* p. 69). And when one chief uses lions in his conflict with another the action is felt to be comparable with war, rather than murder. In February 1937, four lions were hunting in a piece of bush country near the salt lick, which two chiefs claimed. Mwansumbwe, a chief from the hills, had sent some of his men to clear fields in the bush, but Mwakagile (50, or his heir), the neighbouring chief, objected saying, 'This is my land.' There was a long case and finally the District Officer gave judgement in favour of Mwakagile and refused Mwansumbwe any compensation for his work in clearing the bush. 'You got a crop for your labour,' he said. Mwansumbwe was incensed by the judgement and grew even more angry when his men elected to remain on the land they had cleared and became men of Mwakagile. So, everyone said, Mwansumbwe had sought medicines and created these lions. They killed seven cattle in a few days, attacking even by daylight. 'Yes,' we were told, 'there are always lion in the bush, but they do not ordinarily kill cattle as they have done now.'

Another chief who tried the same sort of thing was not so successful. 'Some time ago the chief Mwakila made elephants, he turned his wives into elephants and they ate the bananas of Malapula, but Malapula said, "Let's try", and he created much rain which poured down on to the elephants and those wives died. Then Mwakila was defeated. How about you Europeans? Have you this custom? Do you turn a wife into an animal?'

'No!'

'We have it, if I choose I give my wife *isigita* and she becomes a lion which roars, it roars and eats people.'[2]

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 124.

[2] This, and the tale of a young man fleeing from justice who obtained a medicine to turn himself into a lion, were the only accounts of lycanthropy we heard—usually the medicines themselves (such as those of a chief) turn into animals, or the young of ordinary lion, leopard, or crocodile 'smell the medicines' and become attached to the 'owner' who feeds and commands them.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

535 764 721 177 brother had just been buried said: 'Those who are really sad sit quite still and silent.' But he was an old man with little strength for dancing; on the first day of his brother's burial he sat still, but on the second day he danced a little.

As for the women who participate in the war-dance, running about among the men and calling the war-cry, their behaviour is clearly distinguished in accordance with their relationship to the dead man. 'The distant (women) relatives dance in their dirt, they cannot adorn themselves much, but non-relatives adorn themselves. The wives and sisters of a dead man and the nearer women relatives are the chief mourners and they cannot dance at the burial. They are truly grieved. If a wife danced we'd say she did not love her husband—well, perhaps she might wander round distraught to the sound of the drums, but with grief on her face and without looking at the young men! If she looked at the young men we'd say she did not love her husband. If a brother's wife danced we should laugh at her and say she was no kinswoman of the dead man! But for a man it is different, he dances with his grief to enable his heart to bear it. In the old days, if there was a fight, the chief women mourners did not follow and call the war-cry, but the others; all the men went to fight but not all the women to watch.'

535 764 177 832 ●727 Our observation shows that there is just as much dancing at the burials of women as at those of men. Here too the dance, as now performed, combines the two functions: assuaging the fearful grief of some people and providing a sexual display in honour of the dead: 'We dance at her burial, for she too was a brave dancer (*mogi*).' But in the old days also there was dancing at women's burials: 'For a woman', one old man explained, 'bears us men, so that she too is a warrior.' 'In the past,' said another old man, 'we did dance at women's burials, only a little, not so much as at men's; we said that she was only a woman, but that none the less she also was concerned in war.'

The change in the quality of the burial dance is one of emphasis only; in the past also the sexual element was present: 'We danced so that the women should see our strength'—but it was not dominant. And the warlike quality which was then dominant has by no means disappeared; we heard of many spear-fights at burial dances. At one of them the chief, in order to prevent its continuance, made the dancers abandon the war-dance and finish the funeral with the ordinary dances of sexual display.

781 764 The emotional quality of mourning (*ukulila*) is different in

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

in war, for the victors were enriched with the cattle 722
that went to redeem all captured wives or daughters. Nor were they taken as wives by the victors, although there is at least one well-known case where a woman was the sole objective of a war.

The dead might be buried where they fell, or 727
brought home. The return of the host was awaited by the women in silence if the result of the fighting was not known to them. Each wife or mother recognized husband or son among the returning brave, but if one was told that her husband was coming on behind in another company, she knew that he was dead, and that his body was being brought home. If all returned in safety, and that sometimes happened in these far from desperate encounters, the women and girls set up their shrill cry, as exciting to an African as the pibroch to a Scot, and ran alongside, clapping and shouting in joy. The night was given up to feasting. The captured cattle were divided by the chief, lions' shares going to those who distinguished themselves in the fighting. The defeated chief, if he had any cattle left, also gave his men a feast, for they must not be allowed to lose heart over a single failure, and no doubt there was much boasting on both sides. If the sacred *lusero* with its medicines was taken from the enemy, it was put into the house in which the victorious chief kept his *ifingira*, the very powerful medicines by which his authority was (and is) upheld.

Cowards were held in supreme contempt. But a 703
coward is not a man who runs away; all do that as the struggle sways to and fro; a coward is a man who

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

703 does not enter the battle at all, but hangs in the rear with the old men, afraid to take his part in the fight; or who fails to answer the rallying cry and help to turn the tide of battle. Tokens of contempt were heaped upon him. He got no share of the spoils. When the feast was going on, a piece of roasted flesh was handed to him on the burned end of a stick taken out of the fire; if he dropped it he was beaten, the final disgrace. In very bad cases, his house was pulled down and his wives given to other men. But one who was ordered by the chief to keep out of the battle was not disgraced in this way. He did what he was told.

•727 The spoils of war, which were practically always cattle, belonged to the chief. If a man captured ten head, the chief might give him back five or less according to favour or valour. From a headman he would take only one or two; and out of all that fell to him he gave rewards to those who had distinguished themselves in the fighting, but had not taken cattle. No prisoners were taken, and the seriously wounded were killed. To let them live was to increase the number of future enemies, and to gain a reputation for softness which did not make for security against attacks from other quarters. And yet there was a pleasant kindness too; a man who had a friend killed on the other side went freely to the enemy's country to mourn for him, and no one thought of molesting him. The frightful orgies of slaughter in which it would appear that some Bantu tribes indulge, are unknown in Konde warfare. The interminable death-

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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Individual chiefs had special methods of securing victory. Mwamakula's wife, when her husband marched out with his forces, sat on a live sheep as long as the fighting went on: so assuring good luck to her husband in taking cattle, and preventing them running away when taken. Another wife sat on a cooking pot, to keep the enemy in a state of security while the warriors were closing in on them. They would go about as usual, unaware of danger, cooking and eating, until the storm burst, and there was no hope of defence. His sister had a *lusero* similar to the one carried into battle; and one of his old men lay down on the path, each soldier stepping over him as he passed on. While the fight was being waged, this old man sat on his haunches and pulled himself forward in that position, the effect being to make the enemy run. The *lusero* was carried hereditarily by Mfwimi, and when he laid it down it moved forward of itself as the enemy retired. 726 789

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726 The same warning that preceded a civil war was given by the men of Ngonde in tribal warfare also. "When the Kyungu sent his people against strangers he always forbade any surprise attacks, let there be parley first and explanation; let them point out that they had no wish for war, that it was the others who had forced war on them by wantonly killing one of their men (or whatever the reason was). We never fought like the Ngoni, always we explained our case first, asking why, if the other side had any just cause for their actions, they had not refrained and come and talked it all over with us. And so it was in the war against Kyepele, we explained our case."

727 We have seen already that the booty of punitive expeditions was
567 divided among the chiefs and nobles who had fought and the Kyungu, and so it was in tribal warfare also. War was an important source of revenue for Mbande, bringing in both cattle and slaves. The war against the Bemba Kyepele (=Cepele) is particularly remembered for the number of slaves which Mwakasungula and the other chiefs brought back from it. While discussing slavery with some men of Ngonde one of us remarked that there had been little or no slavery among the Nyakyusa. "Yes, indeed, that is so: there was a lot of slavery here in Ngonde and very little among the Nyakyusa, because here people were captured in war. From Kyepele, for instance, a great host of slaves was captured and every chief at that time had Bemba slaves.

"And it was the custom for every chief to take a certain proportion of the slaves he had captured and hand them over to the Kyungu." (Why?) "Because they thought that it was his prayers for success that had enabled them to fight so well, to rout the enemy and to capture slaves

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

and wealth." Once again we see how closely connected were the religious powers of the Kyungu with his wealth.

And the military authority of Mbande, like that of the lesser rulers, was correlated both as cause and as effect with the other factors of its general political status. The central power rested in part on its military functions: it was a tribal rallying point for defence against alien attacks, together with the hierarchy which depended upon it, it provided the necessary large-scale organization for military success, its religious powers were never more valued than in wartime, while victory brought wealth and prestige both to the Kyungu and his subordinates. But, as comparison with the Nyakyusa shows,[1] it was only the flow of wealth up and down the hierarchy, in combination with the religious functions of Mbande, that made this large-scale military organization possible.

(c) *WARFARE AND AUTONOMY.*

Now warfare is, at one and the same time, an example of order and of disorder in human society. By social order I mean the systematic overcoming of lesser autonomies within existing wider groups: the overcoming of individual autonomy within the family and the local community, the overcoming of family, local and other autonomies within the tribe or state, the overcoming of tribal and state autonomies within still wider groups. By social disorder I mean the temporary overcoming by a lesser autonomy of the forces of some existing wider group. Legal procedure is one of most obvious examples of order, crime is one of the most obvious examples of disorder.

But warfare falls between these two extremes. Seldom are lesser autonomies so completely overcome as they are within a group at war, never is the autonomy of that group more closely dominant over the forces making for a wider order. And it is of fundamental importance for the understanding of any social field to see which groups within it have both sufficient unity and sufficient autonomy to engage in recurrent warfare with one another. The size of the groups which go to war is one of the marks by which we distinguish primitive from civilized societies —the smaller the warring groups the more primitive the society.

Now the recurrent civil wars of Ngonde in the middle period of its history show us that, beneath its hierarchical facade, it was a society of the same kind as that of the Nyakyusa across the Songwe; the centralized political organization was too weak permanently to overcome the local autonomies of village, *kal* and chiefdom. It is true that the mercantile divinity of Mbande gave sufficient unity to Ngonde to enable it to fight as

[1] Vide *infra* p. 64.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

kinsmen. Though some of the reasons for his subordination are to be found in modern conditions, it is clear that many of the factors have always operated. 622

Wars did not only occur between brothers; but when one chief defeated another who was more distantly related to him, he did not, apparently ever, reduce him to a minor position: He either took his cows and then left him alone, or killed him and set up a brother of his own as an independent, though allied, chief, or else, more rarely, killed him, took over the country and directly incorporated it in his own. So that, apart from the subordination of a defeated brother and his heirs, political authority always stopped at the boundaries of each separate chiefdom.* 622 727

The traditionally independent chiefdoms to-day vary in numbers from 100 to about 3,000 adult men. 631 161

The coming of the German Administration in 1913 introduced a paramount political authority, for the first time, in the persons of European officials; while in 1926, a generation later, the British Administration created new Native Authorities under the District Officer and superior to the chiefs. The traditionally independent chiefs were grouped together in eleven court districts, in each district a "Native Court" was set up, consisting of the various chiefs and their great commoners, under the hereditary presidency of one of the chiefs, who thereby became senior to all the others in that court district. Salaries for chiefs have been introduced, and the senior chiefs receive far higher salaries than the others; while the meetings of each Court are always held in the territory of the senior chief (*omulafyale ophokomba*); and to it has now been transferred a great deal of the legal business which, before 1926, was transacted by each chief sitting with his own great commoners in his own chiefdom. The chiefs themselves were consulted in the selection of the Court Presidents, and those chosen were normally the chiefs with the greatest number of men in each particular court district. 636 177 [465]

In this account the term *senior chief* (*omulafyale ophokomba*) denotes the President of a Native Court, *chief* (*omulafyale*) means one of the traditionally independent chiefs, while *minor chief* (*omulafyale omunali*) means one of the subordinate chiefs, often with only 40-60 men under him.

The introduction of Courts and salaries has brought an entirely new element into the relationship between old and young chiefs (see 636 177 578

* Among the Kondé of Nyasaland, I am told, there was a paramount chief Kyungu, with a far-reaching political authority; but there was no such chief among the Nyakyusa.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

indicated (*vide supra*, p. 35). And, as we shall see later, he also 771
suspected that his quarrels with the Kinga priests and with the [753]
commoner priests of Mwaipopo's chiefdom made him ill. [578]

Chiefs, and even the 'divine king' himself, lived in fear of the
legitimate anger of their people, more particularly of their village 643
headmen and priests, believing that such anger would bring them 753
sickness, and this belief gave headmen and priests a very strong [622]
hold over their lord. How it worked was illustrated by an incident
at Lubaga.

Mwanjala II (78) remarked to Mwakilima (111): 'I sent to summon [796]
Mwasesi (a commoner priest) for the ritual tomorrow but he refused
saying: "I shall not come." He is angry because he was not called to
the ritual at your home, nor was he told formally when the Kinga
came, or when Mwaipaja [G.W.] came.' Mwakilima (111) asked:
'Will you pay him?' [i.e. admit your mistake and offer him com-
pensation]. Mwanjala replied that he would, and Mwakilima ex-
pressed disgust. One of the Kinga priests who was listening broke
into the conversation: 'Ignore him if he refuses to come. If it were us
we should leave him and celebrate without him, but you Nyakyusa [754]
are all witches, and you fear to ignore a man who refuses to come to a
ritual saying that he will bewitch you. You are cowards, you are!'

At this Godfrey Wilson asked if there were no witchcraft in BuKinga.
The Kinga priest replied: 'There is some, but if the chief gives orders to
celebrate a ritual and someone refuses to come we ignore him, and
celebrate without him. You Nyakyusa *pay* a man for doing wrong. A
man refuses to come when he should and then you *pay* him! If you are
afraid of witchcraft why not finish the ritual and send his portion of
meat to him afterwards?'

Another priest objected: 'Then he would say it was too small a
piece.'

The commoner priests then could control even the Lwembe (for
Mwanjala II acted in the place of the Lwembe though he was
not installed), but at the same time the mystical power of the
Lwembe was feared both by ordinary chiefs and commoners.
Mwaijonga (82), who ruled before the European occupation,
insulted and fought Mwakisisya the Lwembe (56), and killed
some of his men, because 'Lwembe had spoiled the year', but
he sent back the cattle that were seized.

In the old days it did not matter killing the Lwembe's men (in war), but [727]
no one dared to take his cattle, they feared lest he would spoil the year
and send too much rain, and a plague of ulcers, and cause the cattle to [789]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

231 try, and Lugard speaks of 'enormous herds' in 1888[1] which a rinderpest epidemic decimated in 1892.[2] A few Kukwe keep one or two sheep, but we saw no goats at all in Rungwe district,[3] and neither sheep nor goats figure in ritual: cattle and fowls provide flesh for sacrifice. Every woman keeps fowls, as every man seeks to own cattle.

262 With curds and meat from their cattle, with fowls, fish, bananas, grain, pulses, roots and cucurbits, as well as bean tops and pumpkin tops, and—less generally—fruit, the Nyakyusa are exceptionally well fed. Since the dry season is so short and two crops of maize and pulses are grown in the year, there are no 'hunger months' such as the Bemba and many other African [131] peoples experience. Shortages and famine occur, but rarely. All the early travellers comment on the quantities of food available in Nyakyusa country.[4]

c. Relations with the outside world

131 171 Perhaps the most significant fact in the history of the Nyakyusa is their long isolation, which is mainly the result of their geographical position. Surrounded on three sides by high mountains, and on the fourth by the stormy head waters of the Lake,[5] the district was largely cut off from the outside world. Slave caravans passed to the north, the west, and the south, but never through Nyakyusa country; and though they were repeatedly attacked by the Sangu, who are said to have raided as far as the Nyasa plain,[6] and several times by the Ngoni, the Nyakyusa repulsed both peoples. Certain of the Kukwe chiefs were forced for a period to pay tribute to the Sangu chief, Merere; but according to their own account none did so for long, and some never paid at all. Kerr-Cross comments on the contrast before 1890 between the unfortified villages of the Nyakyusa and Ndali, and those of the Lambya and Nyika, who, living in open country and harried

[1] Lugard, op. cit., p. 131.
[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa* (1897), p. 450; D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., p. 124.
[3] Fotheringham, op. cit., pp. 1, 25, mentions goats in Ngonde.
[4] See especially, Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 268, 274; Lugard, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 131.
[5] In 1898 a Lake steamer, the *Fipya*, sank in a storm near Karonga with heavy loss of life.
[6] Kerr Cross, op. cit., pp. 119-20.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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while being roasted is like the play of lightning, and 791
would bring on a fatal stroke from the sky.

In 1912 "God's rain" fell as usual in December; 782
but in January came drought which continued into 731
February. Urgent messages were sent to Chungu, who replied that he was helpless, as the *mulima* was lost. After diligent inquiry, it was found to be in possession of Mwandosya, who refused to act, because in the distribution of the cattle of a deceased relative another chief, Kasikula, had taken more than his share. Kasikula was ordered by Chungu to restore the balance, but he refused, and only agreed when the men present took up clubs to thrash him into obedience. Prayer was then offered in the usual way, and Mwandosya announced that God had commanded him to forgive the offender. "Rain," he said, "will come at once. You Karonga, will be overtaken by it before you can reach home." And so it fell out. Rain came in torrents, preceded by a great storm which overthrew a number of trees in a neighbouring estate, and greatly injured the fine avenue leading to the Mission House.

Now for some days there had been much thunder, 782
and dark clouds covered the sky; anyone could tell that the rain was near. But for the Konde that was just the point. The rain was there, and it was quite obviously being withheld. Why else did it not fall? And it did fall when the wrong was righted, and the prayers offered. Who but a white man could doubt the relation of cause and effect?

One or two local variations are worth noting. At Karonga an offering of black cloth is made along with

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

driving out all the sorcerers, no one would die of smallpox, but one remaining sorcerer could work unlimited mischief so long as he remained undiscovered. 791 753 754

In a community which practises "subsistence agriculture," it is important to know beforehand when the rains will be late, and it is the duty of the prophets to let the chief know, and through him the people, when this will happen. In such a contingency, the chief issues instructions, varying in minuteness, regulating the kinds of food which are to be used, and warning against greed. Punishment used to follow disregard of the prohibition, but the chiefs, although they still issue orders as before, do not now venture to punish offenders, or at any rate they punish none who would be likely to report them to the Administration. 791 261

Famine, however, was not always the result of drought. It was often, in the past, the result of war. When a powerful enemy approached, the people left the villages and took refuge in the bush, sometimes for long periods, leaving all that they could not carry to fall into the hands of the invader. The last occasion on which such a famine was foretold was when the Angoni passed through the land seeking a habitation. The people fled before them, and a famine resulted which is still traditionally remembered. With such a powerful enemy approaching, the prophets had an easy task in foreseeing famine. 731

The death of chiefs is also foretold. The prophets see in dreams the house of a chief being built in the 622 787

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 769 789 magical powers. And the faith alike in ancestors and in witchcraft gave to every group of subjects a religious hold over their rulers.

(a) *THE THEISTIC ELEMENT.*

643 764 778 Though the early Kyungus had lived on the stony top of Mbande none of them had been buried there, for "the ground was too hard to dig graves in." They and their successors were all buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. Thus Kyungu Mwangonde is referred to as "He of Bwiba," Kyungu Mwakasungula as "He of Ipota," and so on.

643 731 787 782 Now drought and widespread sickness were believed to be caused by the anger either of some dead Kyungu or of the living one. "In time of drought they (the nobles of Ngonde) would go to a diviner to enquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would tell them that it was so and so. So they would tell the (living) Kyungu. And he would give them either a bull or a sheep, together with some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own house, one of the pots which were continually brought by his people as tribute.[1] And he would give them some flour and some cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove. Now the diviner would have told them that he (the dead Kyungu) was angry because they had omitted (for so long) to build his house. So they would begin by building his house in the grove, they would build a miniature hut with rafters.[2] Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fix some of the pieces to the house in the grove—an action which they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And, finally, they would pour out (some of) the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a house in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

643 731 787 "But occasionally if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any of them: 'No—no.'

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[1] *Vide infra* section 4.

[2] This is the custom traditional in the sacred groves of all important chiefs, both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa. We have seen it done among the Nyakyusa. The hut which we saw built was between two and three feet high.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

And at length he would tell them that it was the living Kyungu who was angry because so and so had insulted him. Then there would be no sacrifice in the grove at all, but the nobles of Ngonde would go to the one who had insulted the Kyungu and charge him with it, asking him what he meant by thus killing them all, would not the whole land starve! And so the wrongdoer would take a cow to the Kyungu who, thereupon, would address the nobles of Ngonde, saying: 'If it was my anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been some one (of the dead Kyungus) whom you forgot to ask about.' And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again! 643 731 787

"If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would; and then the diviner would tell them that it was so and so (one of the dead Kyungus), and they would go and sacrifice in his grove."

Thus the belief in the power of the dead Kyungus, a power in which their living successor participated, was one of the factors of the central political institutions of Ngonde. The Kyungu did not himself sacrifice in the sacred groves but the nobles of Ngonde did so, with materials provided by him, and from these sacrifices the whole plain was believed to benefit. While to insult the Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. And we have already seen, in the story of Mwakasungula's return from exile,[1] that other prominent members of the royal family also were believed to share this power. 643 769 782 731

The absence of central political institutions among the Nyakyusa was, as we shall see, mainly due to economic causes; but in part also this difference can be traced to the climatic difference acting upon similar religious faiths. The Nyakyusa had in the Lwembes, the hereditary chiefs of Lubegs, a line of religious paramounts. Chiefs from all over the district sent gifts to them to ask for health and rain. That they never achieved any secular paramountcy at all was mainly because they were poor. But the difference of rainfall was important too. Droughts in Ngonde occurred frequently, and each one made the people remember their Kyungu's power. North of the Songwe droughts were rare and slight. 643 731

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[1] p. 27.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17
NyaKyusa

structure. We shall see in later sections how many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions. But the reverse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular content at all, the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle were sent to Lubaga by the other chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and health; but the "clearing out of the ashes" was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruit ritual at all;[1] while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

Besides the Kyungus the great chiefs of Ngonde also were believed to be able to avert local droughts and misfortunes in their districts by offerings to their own immediate ancestors; and the lesser chiefs likewise and the territorial nobles—each in his own little area. While among the territorial nobles, the original owners of the land had wider powers. It will be remembered that to them the first Kyungu is said to have given head-cloths and asked for their prayers. Sometimes people would prophesy future misfortune "at Kisindile", or "at Kaluma" or "at Ifumbo," or would prophesy of present misfortunes that such was their source. Then the territorial noble concerned[2] would be formally visited by the nobles of Ngonde, and he and they together would offer sacrifice to his ancestors on behalf of all Ngonde.

And then also there were sacred lagoons near the lake—Nthola, Kambwe, Kibondo, Mulale and Katindi. They were associated not with ancestral spirits at all but with a vaguely defined supreme deity named Mbamba. And beside them also prayers and sacrifices were made from time to time by the nobles of Ngonde.

Over these other spiritual powers we need not linger, save to notice one most significant fact. The participation by the Kyungu in the divinity of his ancestors was no isolated phenomenon in Ngonde. The head of every family in the country, whether of chiefs or commoners, was similarly placed; in his own family and, in the case of a chief or noble, in his own area too, he was both a priest and a demi-god; he dealt with the spirits and by virtue of his relation to them shared their powers; his anger could curse. The Kyungus were but the greatest of many divinities. And thus there was in theistic ritual a high degree of local and family autonomy; local or family misfortunes

[1] Particular people among the Nyakyusa carried it out: reigning chiefs, senior great-commoners, prophets, and any person whose birth was held to be due to magical treatment of a previously barren woman. But only they.

[2] Mwene-kisindile, Mwene-kaluma, Mwene-ifumbo etc.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

128 as they do, in their behaviour and their mutual relationships to a common type. Space forbids such an undertaking here; and it is necessary to emphasize that, although the most significant facts are described in an orderly manner, and although certain reasons for these facts are indicated in their specific character and in their connections with one another, yet these reasons are not fully or systematically worked out, and the result is a description which leaves the facts only half-explained. And, in so far as this society is not here fully analyzed, so it is not yet fully comparable with others. The reader of this paper will detect many points of similarity and of difference between Nyakyusa society and some other with which he is familiar, but the comparison cannot be made to yield any propositions about the nature of human societies in general until the facts of both have been fully explained in terms of their particular social, cultural, and external conditions.

Climate, Cultural Groups, and European Contact.

101 The Nyakyusa live in the Rungwe District of South Tanganyika in
131 the Rift Valley at the head of Lake Nyasa. The valley is dominated and
133 closed at its North end by the recently extinct Rungwe volcano, from whose foot the land, starting as an upland plateau 5,000 ft. above sea-level, tumbles southwards for twenty-five miles in a broken cascade of hills, to level out in a plain fifteen or twenty miles from Lake Nyasa. The Lake is 1200 ft. above the sea. The East wall of the Rift rises to 10,000 ft. or more in the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains, but the West wall is two
[132] or three thousand feet lower. The climate is very wet, for about 130″ of rain fall each year, and, at 9° South of the Equator, is also very hot.
[161] The rain and the sun together make the land extremely fertile; the
[731] district is thickly populated (over 100 to the square mile), famine is rare and the Nyakyusa are far better fed than most of their neighbours. Rice
177 was introduced into the plain by Arabs, coffee by the German Missiona-
241 aries in the hills, and these two crops to-day, under the enthusiastic care and guidance of the Government Agricultural Department, bring to many Nyakyusa a small but steadily increasing cash income.

262 Their main foods are bananas, maize, beans, sweet potatoes and a
241 variety of greenstuffs, together with meat and curds from their cattle. Millet is extensively grown and is used both for making beer and for eating in the form of porridge.

101 The name *Nyakyusa* is nowadays used by themselves as a general name for all those who have similar speech and customs and who live in Tanganyika; but formerly it only covered those who live in the South of the district, in the plain and up in the hills as far North as the administra-

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'Lwembe listens to him'. 'If Kinga messengers went [to Lubaga] without going through Mwakalukwa's country there would be much hunger. . . . Once Mwemusi and Kyelela [Kinga chiefs] conspired together and sent off men with hoes to Lubaga, without reference to Mwakalukwa. They carried ten hoes. But when they got back disease killed many in the country, and they paid Mwakalukwa and did not do it again.'

It is true that an independent Nyakyusa chief *can* send an offering to Lubaga on his own; it is received by the priests of Lubaga and sacrificed in the grove, and such a sacrifice is held to be in some measure efficient, but drought or sickness in the country as a whole is often attributed to one or other of the participating groups failing to play their part. Moreover, such a failure is thought to be dangerous to the chief or priest who neglects his duties, as we shall see in the case of Kasitile.

The priests of Lubaga ministered to the Lwembe but they had also the right and duty of admonishing him if he did wrong, just as village headmen have the right and duty of admonishing their chief. If the Lwembe broke a taboo 'then Kissoule and the other priests would be very angry and reproach him for bathing and making hunger, and he would pay them a bull in recompense.' Even the 'divine king' was subject to the rule of law. All through the political organization and ritual patterns of the Nyakyusa there is this balance and reciprocity between chiefs and commoners and it is here that the Nyakyusa system differs radically from that described by Professor Frankfort for ancient Egypt.[1] The heroes had brought the gift of chieftainship to the Nyakyusa but it had not ousted another, perhaps older, tradition of democratic leadership; instead, the two were welded in a partnership which, to the Nyakyusa, is so much part of the necessary order of the universe that they speak of commoner priests and headmen as 'wives' of the chiefs. The Kissoule in office is 'the wife' of the Lwembe.

In the grove at Lubaga sacrifices of black cattle and sheep and libations of millet beer were offered by the Nyakyusa, while the Kinga brought hoes, bamboo beer, salt, the sacred drum *ngoma*, and *ifita*, that is, marvels whose nature, Kasitile averred, he did not know himself. The shrine of Lubaga, and the actors and actions connected with it, are miraculous and terrible, terrible even to the actors themselves who tremble when they enter the grove, and

[1] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (1948), pp. 51-6.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[643] [793] and come home 'very thin', but just when this happened was not clear.

We turn now to the account of the three sacrifices witnessed at Lubaga which illustrates (*a*) the occasions of celebration, (*b*) the procedure, and (*c*) the tensions between the participants. In the ritual described on pp. 35-8, Mwakilima (111) complained that most of the chiefs of Selya did not even recognize his ritual supremacy by sending cattle to kill at Lubaga, but Kasitile the priest retorted that Mwakilima himself, in his capacity as a chief, was slow to provide the cattle for sacrifice required by his own priests.

In July 1935, two Kinga priests, Kikungubeja and Nsyanigwa, came from the Kinga chief Mwakalukwa to Lubaga, with an offering of hoes. A bull, provided by Mwakilima (111) as chief of Lwembe's line, was then killed beside a tree planted at the 'coming out' of Mwakisisya (56), the last Lwembe, on the site on which the house of his second wife, Kitega, was built, and the meat was thrown into the old banana grove close by. At the end of September the same two priests returned (each accompanied by a grandson) bringing bamboo beer and 10*s*. and a hoe with which to buy a bull to sacrifice again, for the Kinga were suffering [787] hunger and a prophet in their country had gone into a trance and prophesied cold, disease, and hunger, and urged the chiefs to pray. No fault had brought the hunger, they said, but 'the shades wish a cow. The shades say: "Formerly we ate much, now you do not kill cows for us, indeed we wish to eat. . . ." Therefore much hunger affects our country. It is on this account that we Kinga come with a bull and hoes. When the blood of the sacrifice soaks into the earth then the shades are satisfied, and they also receive the meat from the upper foreleg (*ijammapa*).'[1]

The initiative came from the Kinga who were suffering most severely, but the Nyakyusa were also complaining of scarcity. [731] The weather was very hot and dry and Mwakilima (108) remarked to Kasitile (36) the priest, who had come up to Lubaga for the sacrifice: 'You have killed us with this sun.' He was referring to the unusually small yield of early maize and beans which had been scorched by the drought. Kasitile replied: 'No, all of us [are responsible], the sun has hated us.' Both men smiled.

Five days after the Kinga reached Lubaga (28th September 1935) the sacrifice was offered up. The men concerned gathered in

[1] The sacred ut. cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*, p. 96.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 (82) grove. According to custom, we should kill a bull here at the same
782 time as one is killed at Lubaga. A messenger from there finds us eating.
796 That was the custom when the chiefs were really chiefs. Now we neglect the rituals. Mwakisisya (111) cut a ripe banana stem for us, but now the bananas are rotting in the homesteads without ripening [owing to our failure to sacrifice]. If our fathers did not sleep they sacrificed cattle, but if we do not sleep we merely offer beer.

Then Kasitile recalled the quarrel between the men of Mwaipopo (116) and those of Lubaga.

Why did you insult Mwakisisya (111) saying 'What remains of your
[344] power?' When we built the Court House in Mwaipopo's country, Mwakisisya's men came to help, and some advised that a beast should be sent to Lubaga to seek blessing on the Court, but others said: 'What use is Lubaga?' . . . Mwakisisya cut a banana stem for us and said 'Seek another cow oh thou Mwakagile' (59, i.e. identifying Kasitile with the grandfather of the chief Mwaipopo whom he represented).

This, however, was an invention of Kasitile's. He continued: 'I, Kasitile, have seen a sacrifice at the grove of Mwaijonga (82) twice, at that of Mwaipopo (115) once, and at that of Mwakabule (117) once, but at Lubaga Kyala has received us frequently.' To which Mwambuputa replied: 'Yes, Kyala has helped us.'

Under pressure from Kasitile and the other priests of his chiefdom Mwaipopo did eventually provide a cow for sacrifice at the grove of his father Mwaijonga (82) but the description of that ritual is deferred to a later chapter.

771 A fundamental conception in Nyakyusa religion is that the proper working of the natural order depends upon harmony of the social order; on proper co-operation between the 'divine king' and his 'sons' the chiefs, between priests and chiefs, and between them and the whole community. If the Lwembe or a rain-
[731] maker is offended, that causes drought or flood in the area of his
[821] influence. When there is heavy rain in Selya it is said, 'There is anger at Lubaga' or 'There is anger at Lwembe's place'. Mwanjala II (78) talking of how angry he had been over an insult remarked, 'Had it been the wet season there would have been a torrent of rain.'

[578] And not only does quarrelling between chiefs and priests bring public misfortune; it reacts upon their own health. How Kasitile
753 linked his ill-health with the quarrel between Mwakisisya (111)
771 of Lubaga and the men of Mwaipopo (116) over the Court, and Mwaipopo's failure to provide cattle for sacrifice has just been

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 very oldest fled from his approach. Even in speech fearful circumlocutions were used to refer to his journeying—'The country is on the move'—'the great hill is moving'—'the mystery is coming'. It was taboo both for the old men who stayed to see him, and for those who entered the sacred enclosure, ever to greet him in the usual way. Falling down and clapping the hands was the only greeting for the Kyungu.

From the wives of the Kyungu also men fled in terror, fearing lest they be compromised and thrown over the cliff of Mbande, and this both added to the atmosphere of terror which surrounded him and was an expression of it.

Of the effects of personal relationships upon public events we heard much less in Ngonde than in Selya for we lived there for a much shorter period, but there were indications that, as in Selya, public misfortune was traditionally attributed to quarrels between the nobles of Mbande and within the family of the
● [731] Kyungu. One fearful drought was thought to have been caused by the exile of Kyungu's son, Mwakasungula,[1] and men tell how the rain came down in torrents on his return. The nobles also asserted their power of calling on the shades of the Kyungu to
[769] punish him when he did wrong, and rebuking him over beer telling him, 'It was we who caused you to be ill, don't do it again'. Since he was killed by his nobles if he really fell ill their power over him was inexorable.

(*d*) PALIKYALA

PaliKyala is a cave at the north-east corner of Lake Nyasa
778 where sacrifices are made to the hero, Kyala (2). It is on the
769 border between Nyakyusa, Kisi, and Kinga country; the chiefs are Nyakyusa, but of Kinga extraction,[2] while many of the commoners are Kisi. Nyakyusa is generally spoken as the first language, Kisi as the second, and Nyakyusa, Kinga, and Kisi all sacrifice to Kyala. As indicated in the myth already quoted (*vide supra*, p. 8) the location of the shrine has changed from one cave to another; according to one version, Kyala was driven out by Europeans; according to another, 'the Lake rose and roared and destroyed all the pots in the cave and the roar was heard in the mountains by the Kinga' and after that Kyala moved.

793 The ritual differs from that at Lubaga and Mbande in that

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, p. 26.
[2] They are not of the lineage of Lwembe.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

may nullify any ritual, but often it is not strong enough to overcome the fissiparous tendencies of the lineage. In theory a celebration at the grove of a senior should precede that at the grove of a junior and sacrifices at Lubaga would be followed by sacrifices at the groves of the 'sons of Lwembe' in order of seniority, but this does not happen in practice nowadays and we doubt whether it ever did, since a hierarchy was not organized and maintained by a central authority as in Ngonde. In 1935 a celebration at the grove of Mwaijonga (82) preceded one at the grove of his great-grandfather Mwakisambwe (30) by a month, as we shall see. 643 769 [578] [688]

Sacrifices are made when a drought or flood occurs, or a plague of locusts, or an epidemic among men or cattle; when fishing is poor in the chiefdoms of the plain, or war is imminent. They occur most often during the 'winter' in the hills, when a malaria-sodden people feel the chill of damp mists and cool south winds, and in October, just before the break of the rains, when the country is parched; but they are not confined to these periods. In theory the village headmen and the priests who 'watch over the country' foresee *coming* misfortune in dreams, and avert it by making the appropriate sacrifices. And they are helped by ordinary people who are dreaming repeatedly or falling into a trance or fit, and prophesying evil and jabbering of 'a black cow, a black cow' or some other appurtenance of sacrifice. But in practice the prophecies generally occur when there is hunger or plague in the land, or an omen (such as a python or a ground hornbill behaving oddly) has been seen. [731] [782] [787]

The dreamers are *abasololi* or *abakunguluka*, and, as these names indicate, they are believed to have descended into the land of the shades. *Ukusoloka*[1] means to go down into something, like the roots of a tree into the earth, and *ukukungula ingungula* means to pluck a banana flower which (as was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*) is a symbol for a corpse and is buried; so the *abakunguluka* are those who have been buried in the earth. '*Abakunguluka* go to the land of the shades and return. . . . An *unkunguluka* plucks up the "blessed grass" (*ikisajelo*) in his swept courtyard and goes beneath and sees.[2] . . . He goes down into the earth beneath and takes the chief to the land of the shades when he dies, and he also sees the witches. . . .' More rarely, the *unsololi* or *unkunguluka* is 791 787

[1] *Ubusoloki*—a breach presentation, the implication being that the infant's head is in *kusoka*, but children born in this way are not necessarily prophets. [845]

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 77, 212.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 the order to clear out the ashes; messages were sent to the great
796 chiefs and the senior territorial nobles of the plain, and they told
[643] their juniors. A sacrifice was made in one of the sacred groves of the Kyungus and all fires in the whole Ngonde plain were put out. And then

> all the chiefs from every country near Mbande and the nobles and all the village headmen and all the ordinary men and women, too, went to Kyimbwe where we threw away the sickness of all the country.

At Kyimbwe, which is the crossroads in the bush, they threw away the ashes of their old fires, and some of the pots and baskets in which food is served; while those few people who could not get to Kyimbwe threw them away from their own houses on the same day as the others. At Kyimbwe new fire was made with a
[372] fire-drill by the nobles of Ngonde who

> ran with it without looking back and the people danced alongside them and speared one another! . . . They said, 'Let us dance, let us fight that the homesteads may be peaceful'. . . . 'Let us throw out the ashes that death may leave the homesteads and they be at peace.' It is to bring out war from within (*ukussya*).

The symbolism is the same as in the rituals of kinship when kinsmen gather to admit their quarrels and press one another to speak out, so that they may cleanse themselves of anger.

The new fire was distributed to the whole plain in order. Great chiefs and senior nobles took it first and passed it to their juniors, chiefs passed to village headmen, and in each group the common people got it from their own ruling noble or their own village headman.

In July 1937, while we were visiting Ngonde, there was a
[731] plague of rats[1] which threatened the food supply, and Bungulu,
136 the wife of a chief and well known as a prophetess, went into a
[791] trance and revealed that the rats were caused by the anger of the
[787] previous Kyungu and could be got rid of only by a ritual 'throwing out the rubbish' and sacrifice. Her husband reported the matter to Mulwa, the premier noble of Ngonde, to whom the present Kyungu, Peter—at one time a Church member—had long since handed over all responsibility for communal rituals. Mulwa called four of the leading chiefs who were pagan and a number of

[1] Nothing new in Ngonde. Lord (then Captain) Lugard suffered from them in 1888: F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), vol. i, p. 127. In 1937 the country swarmed with rats: in our own camp we killed 70 to 100 each night.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

illness to neglect of his duty to the Kinga. All the time we were 793
in BuNyakyusa he was ailing—possibly he suffered from tuber- 755
culosis—and one wrongdoing after another was suggested as the [753]
cause of his illness.

His case is intelligible only in terms of the conception of 'the
breath of men', that is, a power akin to witchcraft thought to be [754]
legitimately exercised by village headmen and others to punish
wrongdoers, but which is referred to by the victims as 'witchcraft'.
This has been discussed at length elsewhere.[1]

On 2nd July 1935, Kasitile had left his own house and was 793
living with a friend in a neighbouring village. His doctor, Mwa- 754
kyonde, said that he was being 'throttled by the witches' and had
invited him to come and recollect himself (*ukwipelekeya*) in the
tranquillity of a village of another chiefdom in which there were
many people with spiritual power (*ubumanga*) so that 'the witches'
could not get at him. This is a common precaution in case of
illness, for witches are thought not to have power ordinarily
outside their own village and never beyond the chiefdom.[2]

The cause of the illness was explained as follows: Kasitile had
quarrelled with Kissogota, the commoner priest, and others of the [578]
principal men of the country, because he had found them drinking [753]
the sacred beer (*ubwikemo*), brewed after the millet harvest (*vide*
supra, pp. 84-5) without telling him, or sending him the pot
which was his due. They invited him to drink, but he refused and
they each sent him 1*s.* to beg pardon. Kasitile bought beer with
one of the shillings and called the senior commoner priest,
Ngulyo, and his fellows to drink saying, 'I was angry, friends, you
"overstepped" me' (i.e. they had ignored his rights). He himself [689]
should have brewed when he confessed his anger, and slaughtered
a calf or prepared food for them as well, but he had bought only
one shilling's worth of beer and provided nothing himself. Then,
when they had drunk, Kasitile fell ill. Hence it was said that the
commoner priests were angry and 'ate' [illegible] bewitched) him.
Kasitile's own comment was: 'The fault [illegible] with the young
priests (Ngulyo, a young man, had inherited his father's position),
they are useless as priests . . . I was not told of that ritual beer, yet
the medicine comes from me, from this home where I keep it.
They should have come to me to get it and put it with the millet
in the holy pot. They drank the beer without medicine. It is they [731]
who have brought cold and hunger on the country. I think the [789]

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 91-101, 187-9.

[2] *op. cit.*, pp. 102-3.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

trouble is that Mwaipopo (the chief 116) is getting old. . . .' Here Kasitile suggested two different causes for the scarcity in the country: (*a*) the negligence of the priests, and (*b*) the senility of the chief. In the old days Mwaipopo would have been smothered, as Angombwike explained (*vide supra*, p. 63).

On the 9th, Kasitile, much troubled by his cough at night, expressed a great desire for the return of the missionary nurse to Kabembe hospital. 'She is killing us by her absence, the black people don't know anything about these things, only the Europeans. Why, I went there and the dresser just gave me an injection without taking my temperature—no European ever does that.'

The following day he sent off his sons with 10 c. to inquire about his case from a diviner. The diviner said: 'The wives at his home are gossiping to other people about their husband. People want the husband's body to be light. It is not Jane, because she is his favourite, but the others.' Kasitile said:

> I shan't do anything, I said 'Let's leave it.' I am still in Butola [the village to which he moved for safety]. Mwakyonde is giving me medicine for my disease. It drives out the cold which is in my body. Yes, the cold is the breath of the witches coming to throttle me—it's due to my wives' gossip. But it started as a quarrel with other people [non-relatives] first. One day I went to drink beer in Bujege and that night I fell sick; that is how it began. Men are complaining because I, a chief, a senior, do not cook food for them. They throttle me on that account. They say: 'Let us see whether he is really a chief, a senior?' But others say: 'He has done no wrong.' Yes, the sickness took me on the way home from the beer. Perhaps Kyala asked: 'What has he done?' and found I had done no wrong. If there had not been a Kyala who saves us I would have been dead.

When I consulted a diviner he struck a spear and looked along it, then he said: 'The disease now is from his wives—the earlier attack was from men, but this one is from his wives. When they gather at the hearth they say: "Come hither, we see him where he sleeps."'

'Are the wives witches?' we asked.
Kasitile replied:

> Yes. They say: 'There is a favourite, we are not beloved.' If a man's wives are good the witches can get into the house, but their cold breath dissipates quickly; you are given medicine and recover quickly; but if the wives are bad they gather together the medicine and press it down, so that it is powerless. One of my wives is very bad, her lineage is bad, it is she who calls to her aid the heavy ones, the witches. The

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F?17 Ngonde F?17
Nyakyusa

young ones, the older ones persuade the little ones to lie down with them and to do that which is forbidden with them between the legs. Sometimes two older boys who are friends do it together, one gets on top of his fellow, then he gets off and the other mounts. All this which they do together or with a junior is a small wrong. When their parents find them they reprove them and tell them it is forbidden, they beat them a little. But when a little boy is caught hold of by an older boy against his will, and he tells that so and so caught him and had intercourse (ukulgwa) with him then the older boy will be fined, perhaps a bull. [84]

'It is altogether forbidden to do evil to a fellow by night. The boy who has been so treated will be angry and run off to the court, and he who did evil to him will be fined. He will pay one cow, because they say it is forbidden to do evil to your fellow by night. There are some who, when they have dreamed at night of a woman, wake up and catch hold of a friend, and have intercourse with him.'

A and J.

A and J agreed that homosexuality occurred frequently in boys' villages. 'A boy has intercourse with his fellow, but a grown man? No, never, we've never heard of it. They always want women; only when a man cannot get a woman he does this, only in youth. A few men do not marry but they are half-wits who have no kind of intercourse at all. [72]

'And there is one famous case in the hills of a man who, though not mad, dresses as a woman; but he has no intercourse either with men or women.'

A case was also quoted of a doctor in Tukuyu who 'is a woman; she has borne children, now her body has grown the sexual organs of a man and her feelings have changed also; but she keeps it very secret, she is spoken of as a woman.' [14]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

273 bed at midnight to break up drunken revels, and drive to bed men who, though sternly refused permission to finish the beer, vowed themselves, in drunken sentimentality, my eternal friends. But not always do beer feasts end so happily. As in other lands, some men become jocular in drink, others quarrelsome, and [519] many a Konde beer feast has ended in a spear fight. Beer is an accompaniment of feasts given at births, marriages, and deaths; but occasion of that sort need not be waited for. The chief may give a feast at any time; or a man who has been long away from home celebrates his return; or the hoeing season provides an excuse; but with or without occasion, an immense amount of beer is drunk every year.

Light beer is made in many ways. A favourite is 272 made from sweet potatoes laid out to dry, pounded into flour, and mixed with flour of maize, cassava, or other material, cooked, and drunk when cool. Groundnuts shelled and ground, put into small baskets with water, and allowed to drip dry, then mixed with *makni* flour, and cooked, is a common drink; as is also a light drink made from the juice of sugar-cane similarly mixed and cooked. All these are non-intoxicating, and are taken along with food, or at any other time as a refreshing drink.

•733 Many of the more progressive chiefs are alive to the injury done by heavy drinking, and do all in their power to stop it; and native Christians who take any part in a beer feast are excluded from the sacraments. By the action of the Government in exercising control over beer, of some of the better chiefs, and of the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Christian Church, a more enlightened public opinion is gradually being formed on the subject; but it is necessarily a slow growth. There are a few chiefs who are opposed to drinking; there are others who are almost continually in a state of intoxication, and their example does much to perpetuate a ruinous evil. 733

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

all except his own mother, whom he either builds for at a little distance and looks after, or else gives to a half-brother.[1] Inherited wives have the same land rights as others, and a mother for whom a son builds and hoes is treated by him, in the matter of land, just like a wife.

And a married man often supports an old woman[1]—a mother, mother-in-law or elder sister—whose husband, though still alive, is incapable of hoeing and who has no unmarried sons. He may either hoe for her on her own husband's land or else assign to her a plot or two of his own.

The gardens of a household are not only worked by its members, other people assist them from time to time. Each married man usually invites a group of his village neighbours to help him with a day's hoeing two or three times a year, entertaining them to food and beer after the work is over. A married woman likewise is often assisted by women friends from neighbouring households in the planting, weeding or reaping of her crops and them she rewards simply with a luxurious meal in the evening, without any beer. Again, as we have seen, a married woman sometimes engages a young man to hoe for her regularly, for a month or more at a time, and pays him by feeding him well for that period.

But although this last custom is still common it is beginning to decline; fewer men each year are willing to work for any length of time except for money, and already in some of the more prosperous households young men are found to be employed in hoeing at the rate of 2/- a month in addition to their food. The young men who thus accept employment in hoeing are always the poor ones, those for whom (whether because their fathers are poor in cattle or because they have many older brothers before them) the prospect of getting married is too distant to stimulate them to any great diligence at home. In the plain of Mungonde, however, where ploughs are extensively used, the owners of ploughs make a considerable profit by hiring themselves out with their ploughs at 2/- a plot (ulupaka).

[illegible] a man inherits his dead father's wealth then he assumes the position of father towards his own younger brothers and is responsible for the marriages of any who are bachelors; they then hoe for him and are fed by his wives just as unmarried sons do. Sons-in-law, again, are expected to bring their friends now and then to help their father-in-law in hoeing and they often do so, more particularly if they are behindhand with the marriage-cattle. After the day's work is over, however, they are entertained just as sumptuously as an ordinary work-party of neighbours.

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[1] And any [illegible] of his mother (sister or sister) whom his father has married in [illegible].

1:Wilson E-9 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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361
991

MAP III. RUNGWE

[facing p. 16(a)]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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692
361
491

GWE DISTRICT

[facing p. 16 (b)]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

[871] learn to read and write. In BuNyakyusa none of these village teachers was qualified and none received Government grants; they taught only the three R's in the vernacular and gave religious instruction. In Ngonde, however, some of them were qualified. Besides the village schools there were by 1935 central schools at mission stations, organized by the missions, and some of them drawing Government grants, which took children up to Standard IV; and at Rungwe and Kondowe (Livingstonia) just south of Ngonde, there were mission boarding schools, giving further education and (at Kondowe) training teachers, evangelists, and ministers. The policy of different missions regarding education varied; the Church of Scotland missionaries believed in it wholeheartedly and achieved a relatively high standard in their village schools; but the Lutherans were doubtful how far it was the function of a Church to give anything except religious instruction, and in their village schools children barely learnt to read. Opinion among the Moravians was divided. But despite these differences, all the missions have, in fact, played a great part in education. [212] The first step—the reduction of the language to writing—was the work of the missionaries alone, and village schools have been very closely linked with congregations because, whatever their views on education in general, Protestant missionaries were agreed that to read the Gospels is the making of a Christian, and so literacy is usually required of candidates for baptism. Hence, the same man is often both teacher and elder, and the German missionaries who questioned the value of education laid the foundation of Nyakyusa literature with an admirable translation of the New Testament.

The missions have also been concerned with medical work. [743] From before 1914 there has been a hospital run by the Lutheran mission at Ipete, and one run by the Church of Scotland at Kondowe and, for a period, a large leper-settlement was run by the White Fathers at Mwakete. Medical activities are not directly the concern of congregations but Christian women are often drawn in as voluntary helpers in one way or another. In Kabumbe [758] the women deacons drew water for the sick and prepared food for a newly confined mother; at Karonga the women's association of the Church made clothes to be distributed through the babies' clinic, and so forth.

The congregations are not wholly self-supporting—the European missionaries are all paid from overseas and, until the middle thirties, funds for paying village teachers and evangelists were

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selja, Mdigonde

881 The first act of the ritual, the giving of the *undumile*[1] medicine
●751 to the girl, is a symbol of sexual intercourse, and it is thought to be a prophylactic against pain in intercourse, frequent or painful periods, and injury from contact with those who are 'heavy'. 'It is given so that her belly may not be painful,' said Mwaisumo's mother, an elderly woman. Kasitile's wife explained: 'The pungent root is the penis of the husband, the cup is her vagina, the salt, also pungent, is the semen of her husband. Biting the root and eating the salt is copulation.' Mwakionde's wife gave a similar interpretation:

881 The *undumile* is put through the leaf of a bark-cloth tree, shaped into
751 a cup, and it is a sign of man and woman, the penis in the vagina. It is similar to the plantains which we give her when we wash her. The plantains are a symbol of the husband. If we do not give her the *ilipili* medicine the blood never dries up, and it is the same with the *undumile*. If it is not given she constantly has periods and is barren. Yes, some have a period twice in one month—those who have rotted. Only a few are like this, not many. . . . The *undumile* is given to the girl at once, in the mouth as soon as she grows up, so that she can go about without fear; otherwise, if she washes without having had it, then a heavy one may walk over her footprints, that is overstep her, and she will not bear a child, she menstruates continually.

Kasitile's wife said much the same: 'If the heavy ones have overstepped her, her body rots. The man is not sterile, but the woman is; the man's semen is fertile, but the woman has painful periods. It is the pain of periods we symbolize in the sharpness of the *undumile* and salt.'

827 The heavy ones (*ubusite*), feared both during the puberty ritual
834 and by a mother with a new-born child, are those who sleep with their husbands. They include women both before and after conception. 'When the pregnancy is advanced and the husband has left off sleeping with his wife, then she is not heavy and she can keep a mother with a new-born baby company and hold the baby. A man who is sleeping with a woman is also heavy. They say: "He will overstep us."' This was the statement of Mwakionde's wife and Kasitile, questioned separately, confirmed every point. We then asked Kasitile: 'How is the heaviness (*ubusite*) from lying with a man dangerous to those going through puberty and childbirth?'

Kasitile: 'Because those who are with their husbands are heavy, they are strong, their fellow the bride (*umwanga*) is empty, light in

[1] *Undumile* is derived from *ukudumila*: to bite, to be painful.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

have thought of it now, this is the cow.' Then, in the evening, the mother's brother blows out water in the banana grove and prays much to the fathers. And when he has prayed he says: 'Send the girl to a doctor to drink medicine.' Then the girl bears a child. The pagans say of us Christians when we have children without performing the ritual: 'You have a medicine, you are baptised with a medicine.'

Mwakobela confirmed that the mother's brother, like the father, may prevent a girl bearing a child.

Yes, it is so, if I do not give marriage-cattle for my wife our child will not bear. We go to divine and the oracle catches hold of my wife saying that the fathers are angry. We ask what they are angry about, and the answer is 'cattle'. Then I, the father of the girl, go with a cow and leave it and return. My wife and daughter remain there. They pray and pray and the girl conceives.

It is clear, therefore, that the shades are present in intercourse and control conception. At marriage the shade of her father must 'move aside a little' so that the bride may conceive, and she herself becomes dangerous to her mother (and in a lesser degree to her father) because she has mingled her blood with that of another lineage. Mingling the blood of different lineages is dangerous and a bride can safely meet her mother only after performing a ritual in which her parents, as well as herself, become 'one flesh' with her husband. 'When a bride brings a hen and millet to her mother it is to say: "Mother, I have wiped my husband's genitals, I have grown up."' All our informants were agreed that this *ilikalaga* or *ilikuka* (both words are used) is to safeguard the mother's *health, particularly to prevent her suffering from diarrhoea.* Mwandisi's statement was clear:

In the puberty ritual, when a bride has come from her husband, having lain with him, she catches hold of a little millet and a fowl without washing herself and carries them to her mother. The mother eats it with the fowl that her belly may be firm. If the daughter does not bring these things, then, when she drinks from the same calabash as her mother, she overcups her mother, who has diarrhoea. Yes, the illness comes from the shades because she has come hot from the bed. . . . This diarrhoea comes from the belly when those below are angry and those above also. They say: 'The mother has overcupped the child' or 'The child has overcupped the mother'. If a girl has reached puberty yet, the parents, do not come together until she has gone to her husband and lain with him. If we have intercourse we

2: Wilson I-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 602 sometimes perform the ritual, but we lack conclusive evidence. One case in which a sister's daughter of the deceased man performed the ritual was recorded, but at other funerals girls in the same relationship did not. Kakune, the doctor, asserted that a boy would performthe ritual for his mother's brother for 'he is mother, the brother of nother (*jo juba ulilambu gwa juba*)', but in a number of cases we observed women performing the rituals for their brothers though their sons did not. A man's children may possibly perform the ritual for his sister but we traced no case of their doing so.

768 602 Those who drink the ritual beer when a widow returns to her father's house after her union with the heir are her father and the men of his lineage—brothers, half-brothers, sons, and some of his brother's sons;the wives and children of these; and daughters of the lineage, her own sisters and half-sisters, and sisters of her father, but not be husbands or children of daughters of the lineage. At one *ingwiko*ritual we attended there were present eleven men of the lineage,eighteen daughters, and thirty-two wives, as well as numerous children (cf. genealogy, Table (c)).

764 593 When a woman has died those who come to cut the banana grove and give medicated meat to her children are the *abipwo*—her brother (or his heir) and his wives.

764 602 The principals at a death ritual, then, are children and grandchildren, parents and grandparents, spouses, and certain siblings of the deceased, together with some of their children. If a woman dies, or a widow is inherited, her agnatic kin and their wives are concerned as well.

845 602 751 The group which takes protective medicine after an abnormal birth is larger. All the wives and children and grandchildren of the father of twins must come, his full siblings with their children and grandchildren, and the wives of his brothers, but not the husbands of his sisters; some of his half-brothers, with wives and children, some of the children of his father's brothers' sons (but not of father's brothers' daughters) and of his father's sisters' sons. On the mother's side her father, or his heirs, must take part with his wives and children, and her sisters. At the ritual for Mwakibele and his wife, previously described, we counted 136 relatives taking part, of which 24 were men, 19 boys, 33 women, 12 girls, and 33 babies (cf. genealogy, Table (a)).

845 602 When the mother of twins took the *ubwalaga* back to her 'father', her brother (heir to her father), with his wives and children, her

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'Lwembe listens to him'. 'If Kinga messengers went [to Lubaga] without going through Mwakalukwa's country there would be much hunger. . . . Once Mwemusi and Kyelela [Kinga chiefs] conspired together and sent off men with hoes to Lubaga, without reference to Mwakalukwa. They carried ten hoes. But when they got back disease killed many in the country, and they paid Mwakalukwa and did not do it again.'

It is true that an independent Nyakyusa chief *can* send an offering to Lubaga on his own; it is received by the priests of Lubaga and sacrificed in the grove, and such a sacrifice is held to be in some measure efficient, but drought *or* sickness in the country as a whole is often attributed to one *or* other of the participating groups failing to play their part. Moreover, such a failure is thought to be dangerous to the chief or priest who neglects his duties, as we shall see in the case of Kasitile.

The priests of Lubaga ministered to the Lwembe but they had also the right and duty of admonishing him if he did wrong, just as village headmen have the right and duty of admonishing their chief. If the Lwembe broke a taboo 'then Kissoule and the other priests would be very angry and reproach him for bathing and making hunger, and he would pay them a bull in recompense.' Even the 'divine king' was subject to the rule of law. All through the political organization and ritual patterns of the Nyakyusa there is this balance and reciprocity between chiefs and commoners and it is here that the Nyakyusa system differs radically from that described by Professor Frankfort for ancient Egypt.[1] The heroes had brought the gift of chieftainship to the Nyakyusa but it had not ousted another, perhaps older, tradition of democratic leadership; instead, the two were welded in a partnership which, to the Nyakyusa, is so much part of the necessary order of the universe that they speak of commoner priests and headmen as 'wives' of the chiefs. The Kissoule in office is 'the wife' of the Lwembe.

In the grove at Lubaga sacrifices of black cattle and sheep and libations of millet beer were offered by the Nyakyusa, while the Kinga brought hoes, bamboo beer, salt, the sacred drum *agoma*, and *ifita*, that is, marvels whose nature, Kasitile averred, he did not know himself. The shrine of Lubaga, and the actors and actions connected with it, are miraculous and terrible, terrible even to the actors themselves who tremble when they enter the grove, and

[1] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (1948), pp. 3-6.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 dare not greet their children on their return without the safeguard
789 of protective medicines. At a celebration the Kinga priests took
751 medicines, 'powdered medicine which comes from Mwemusi and Mwakalukwa [the Kinga chiefs]', and smeared it on Lwembe's forehead and shoulders 'because the grove is great. If you entered it without this medicine you died'; they gave the Lwembe the medicine 'so that Kyala (*vide* pp. 17-18) might not kill him, that he might show respect and escape'.

783 Another medicine, *imbinga*, which is red in colour, was brought
789 from BuKinga to smear on the foreheads of the children of the Lwembe and Kissoule, the priest, when these two returned home after celebrating in the grove. Their senior wives 'would smear the *imbinga* on the children's foreheads, when they would turn round calling: "You hit us", and Mwakisiya (56) (the Lwembe) and Kissoule (the priest) would both reply: "No, I am innocent (*mavelu*)." The medicine was smeared on the children because Mwakisiya and his fellow thought: "How can we meet them, how can they look on our bodies, since we are taboo from the ritual." Yes, the words are the same as in the twin ritual, but the medicine is different.' During one of the rituals we attended, Mwakilima (111) begged the Kinga priests to bring him some of this medicine for the protection of his children.

'119 The numinous quality of everything connected with Lubaga
769 can hardly be exaggerated; the Nyakyusa believe that it overcomes even curious Europeans. The most sacred and terrible object of all was the drum which was polished with blood, the blood of children, who, in Nyakyusa thought, had died for the people, that the country might live and be fertile. 'Formerly,
[782] when the Kinga came with a drum, they said: "Catch the child of a commoner, fat and strong, hide him in the drum." In the old days when the Kinga came beating their drum, ping . . . ping . . . [single strokes with long intervals] we of the country used to run away and women would hide their children for fear lest they be snatched up and put in the drum." The child was strangled

[534] [1] These statements were made by three different groups of informants independently. All had special knowledge of these matters. The *ilibale*, the sacred drum of the Kinga, differs in shape from the Nyakyusa *indingala*. It is made of *ubajo* wood and cowhide and is beaten when a ritual is celebrated and to summon men to war. The Kinga do not dance to drums and the Nyakyusa did not do so formerly either, but after the Europeans arrived Nyakyusa chiefs began to buy *indingala* from outside BuNyakyusa, paying a bull for a set—'a mother drum and her children'. Only quite recently have Nyakyusa craftsmen learnt from a Hunga immigrant to make *indingala*.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

die. . . . People feared very much because the Lwembe had medicines for smearing on his body, which could cause rain, sickness, food, ulcers, anything.

And they feared lest they might get ulcers if they killed one of Lwembe's men 'on the road'—i.e. a traveller. In short, Lwembe's mystical power afforded the first feeble beginnings of a 'king's peace' in a land of warring chiefdoms, where strangers were fair game.

(c) Mbande

Mbande is a hill on the plain of north Nyasaland with a commanding view of the surrounding country and well suited to defence. The west side is precipitous and below the scarp edge there used to be a marsh; to the north the hill is protected by a wide reach of the Lukulu river. It is a sacred place and for many generations was the home of the 'divine king', the Kyungu. Like the Lwembe he was the living representative of a hero, and was selected by a group of hereditary nobles from one of two related lineages, the office alternating (if suitable candidates were available) between the two. They sought a big man,[1] one who had begotten children and whose sons were already married, not a young man for, the nobles said, 'young men always want war, and destroy the country'. He must be a man of wisdom (*gwa mbala*) and generous in feeding his people.

The Kyungu's life was governed by taboos even more rigorous than those surrounding the Lwembe. He must not fall ill, or suffer a wound, or even scratch himself and bleed a little, for his ill health, or his blood falling on the earth would bring sickness to the whole country. 'Men feared when Kyungu's blood fell on the ground, they said, "It is his life".' 'If he had a headache his wives (if they loved him) told him not to mention it, they hid his illness; but if the nobles entered and found him ill they dug the grave and put him in it, saying, "He is the ruler (*ntwa*), it's taboo for him to be ill". Then he thought: "Perhaps it is so" (with a gesture of resignation).'

Great precautions were taken to preserve his health. He lived in a separate house with his powerful medicines. His food was prepared by boys below the age of puberty lest a menstruating woman, or a youth who had lain with a woman, should touch it and so bring sickness upon him; and his numerous wives were

[1] Ukumbalala mwanza. To implies both big physically and important.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

demand among police and soldiers as well as wives.) Then there are medicines used by men and women to make themselves more attractive and persuasive as lovers, litigants, leaders, clients, servants, salesmen, and so on.

Certain Nyakyusa medicines are based on observation of cause and effect. Their pharmacopia includes purges and poisons—for example, castor oil has long been cultivated and used both for making ointment and as an aperient—and some of the drugs administered, and the poulticing with hot leaves, may well be therapeutic; we have no systematic knowledge of the plants used and cannot assess them. But the scientific element is demonstrably limited, for a great many medicines are based on the principle of association, a feeling of likeness between things, and things felt to be alike are believed to react on one another, like producing like, or like things being antagonistic.

No distinction is made by the Nyakyusa themselves between those medicines which one trained in western science would say are based on observation of cause and effect (e.g. a purge or a poison), and those which are based on association—indeed our friends constantly cited supposed observations of cause and effect as evidence of the efficacy of all sorts of medicines and taboos. Mwakyonde used charcoal, mixed with iron from a forge, as a medicine for protection against lightning, burying a little, and powdering a little, and sprinkling it about a homestead, "because at the forge they blow the bellows and it says, '*Mali, mali, mali*' (i.e. boom, boom, boom) and the lightning *ikumalika* (booms). When we blow the bellows at a forge it makes a noise like thunder." There was no hint that he was aware that electricity might be attracted by iron, but he insisted that where he had buried the charcoal and iron the lightning *never* struck again, and he regarded this as cause and effect. Therefore the distinction we have made between observation and association is ours, not theirs.

That the symbolic element is at least as important as the practical was apparent from Lyandileko's treatment for sterility, which was famous for its success. She had three patients one morning, all women wanting to bear children. In front of her she ranged seventeen banana petals and mixed four different medicines in them. Then she chose three young banana shoots and bored a hole in each, inserting into it a length of the mid-rib of a banana leaf, slightly hollowed to form a tunnel. She told an onlooker to bring the first petal full of medicine and poured it into the tunnel.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

A second class of medicines is not neutral at all, but itself selects between right and wrong. The most famous is the *musafi* ordeal which is used to reveal the truth. The *musafi* poison was formerly administered by a doctor,[1] before witnesses, and the innocent were believed to vomit almost immediately, while the guilty did not vomit at all, or were slow to do so, and fell ill, some even dying. Nowadays *musafi* is administered only in the greatest secrecy, but various minor methods of divination, all of which turn on the correct use of medicines, are in common use. The 'divination with porridge' has been described (*vide supra*, p. 128). The medicine added to it is spoken of as 'a kind of *musafi*'. Another method is to rub an inverted wooden cup on a smooth board. Questions are posed, as to the porridge. When the answer is 'no' the cup slips; when the answer is 'yes' the cup sticks. Sometimes a stick of *mutika* wood is rubbed on the ground in place of the cup on the board, and there are half a dozen other methods using bells, horns, segments of bamboo, a pipe, or boiling water. In each case virtue lies in the medicines added to the porridge or rubbed on to the cup or stick, and into scarifications in the diviner's hands. An ordinary man who has not been treated cannot use the instruments, and porridge without '*musafi*' is useless.

Certain medicines used for protection and to wreak vengeance, are also thought to be selective, and to injure only the guilty. These are horns, owned by doctors. Mwanjesi (who came of a family of doctors) told us:

> My father had a water-buck horn filled with medicines and ointment, as a protection against witches. He used it, like other doctors, for burning the grass, for burning the rubbish heaps before planting millet, and for protecting a child. When the millet crops are poor, people say the witches have eaten it, and the next year the chief sends for the doctor and his protective horn. . . . He comes and makes fire and covers the tinder with ointment from his horn, and each pile of weeds is lit from that fire. . . . He sends some to the chief to fire the grass for fresh grazing. Then there is much milk, the cows that eat that grass give much milk for the witches may away and neither eat the millet nor disturb the cows. So with a child, if a man has lost many children and has one left, he calls the doctor to come with his protective medicine (*ifipango*) and treat the child with medicines from his horn as a protection against witches. My father used the same horn for all these things.

[1] For a description of the procedure, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 113-18, 197-8.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

If a man has quarrelled with a kinsman, or is conscious of having bitter enemies, or hears that someone with whom he has had a dispute has 'gone to the doctors', he is likely to go to a horn doctor for protective medicine, even though he is perfectly well. 751 [578]

'The horn' is believed to discover and punish the guilty whether they are known to the injured or not, but if someone uses it without just cause the medicine will recoil on himself. The seven cases of using the horn reported to us[1] were all used in revenge: two for theft, two for seduction, and three for withholding cattle due. And it is revenge that was emphasized in one account of the treatment: 789 751 754

If someone has stolen my cow I go to a doctor and pay him a bull. Then he prepares the medicine (the horn) and stands facing it, with a spear over his shoulder, pointing towards it, and he speaks aloud saying: 'So-and-so, if you have not taken the cow you will recover, if you have eaten it you will die.' Then the breath (*ondupe*) goes to the man named and if he has really stolen the cow he dies. . . . [685]

But another informant, listing the contents of a 'horn', stressed the protective element. It contains 'the bile of a crocodile, the skin of a python, and *isyifwila* medicine (*vide* p. 58) which has been used to kill men' . . . [278]

If a witch comes to throttle and kill you then the bile of the crocodile throttles and strikes him [the witch], and the *isyifwila* does the same, it is to kill the witches, it spears those who come to throttle you. The skin of the python means that if people come to throttle you they find you have changed yourself into a python.

Another type of vengeance magic, *ifyupa*, is thought to work only between blood relatives.

If your father-in-law is angry it is your children he kills, not yourself. If the diviner says the disease comes from the woman's side of the family the protective medicine is given only to her, not to the man; if from his side only he is protected, not the wife. The relative who is angry drinks a medicine; he puts a bor'ed spear into the fire and when it is red hot he slashes a banana sucker with it and speaks the name, then the kinsman who is mentioned dies. [578]

A third type is that used to secure property (*ubwinge*) and scare thieves or adulterers; for the exclusive rights of a husband over his wife are treated as property rights. Often a medicated stick is placed in a field to ward off thieves, and some husbands [685 684]

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 210-38.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

are said to give their wives a medicine (without their knowledge) which will cause any man who lies with them to fall ill of gonorrhoea or some other venereal disease. Many Christians believe in this medicine and some inquired whether Europeans did not use it also. One family of doctors are specialists in it:

The sons of Manyelo are very famous, they are great doctors. People fear them very much. No one can steal anything belonging to them or run off with their wives. If a man runs off with a wife of theirs, he will return their wife and pay . . . . Because when he has slept with the woman by night they stink in each other's nostrils, the woman stinks in the face of the man and he likewise in hers. And if rain falls by night the roof comes off the hut in which they sleep and the rain enters. Perhaps the man quarrels with the woman, perhaps frogs and snakes are numerous, perhaps gourds sprout in the house—sometimes they sprout bringing evil. So it is also if a man has run off with the wife of another and the husband goes to the sons of Manyelo. They agree to work, but he must pay them.

Lyandilicko, whose husband's family have owned a 'horn' for generations, was very insistent that vengeance magic maintained law and order for it could injure only the guilty. 'A thief feared to steal lest he be caught by my father-in-law (Mwaisyelage). He feared the horn if he used sorcery. He feared to seize another's cow thinking, "They will go to Mwaisyelage".' And protective medicines which cause an adulterer to fall ill of gonorrhoea, or a thief to die, are considered perfectly legitimate; the misfortune would not have befallen the man unless he had done wrong.

The prohibition by the government of the *mwafi* oracle has puzzled people. Medicines are admittedly dangerous, but it is held that Europeans 'encourage' witches and sorcerers by forbidding the use of the one effective weapon against them, and doctors with vengeance magic or other strong medicines 'fear the fate of the *mwafi* doctors'. There is an incomplete contradiction here, the Nyakyusa relying on *mwafi* and vengeance magic as a means of discovering criminals, and the Europeans punishing any doctor found administering poison, or intimidating people by dreams. Furthermore, it is widely believed that Europeans themselves use strong medicines made up with blood. Any Europeans without an obvious occupation are suspect of being *abapumulusi*, who go around killing people and taking their blood for the Government to use for medicines. One of our European friends,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

a missionary, was warned by her servants before Godfrey Wilson's arrival in her neighbourhood 'not to go out at night as there were *abagumbwa* about, sent by the Government to kill people and take their blood', and women going for firewood made a long detour to avoid his camp. One was overheard asking when she caught sight of him: 'Is that the man who kills people?' Angumbwike explained that, since all really strong Nyakyusa medicines contained human blood, it was argued that European medicines, which were so powerful, must contain it also. 'They follow their own customs.'

It seems obvious to the Nyakyusa that Europeans must have strong medicines because their confidence and success are so great. Moreover, it is held (in theory) that they are immune to attacks from witchcraft. K, who had been a clerk and lost his job, and was bitter, expanded on this:

> People say that Europeans have *isyifuki* (*vide* p. 98), see they are brave, they do not fear, if someone wears a spear they do not fear, they just come to him, they are very brave. And also the witches say that they are unable to choke Europeans. When we hear people boasting of their mystical power (*amaupe*) we always say to them: 'But if that is so, go and choke a European, show us!' Then they always say, 'Oh no, we can't do that, when we go to a European house at night we find it all lighted up and flaming, we can't get near them.' I think this is the power of the Holy Spirit which you Europeans have.

He came of a well-known family of doctors and perhaps spoke from first-hand knowledge. He just laughed at the suggestion that the light might come from lamps. But the fact that Europeans were held to be immune did not prevent our servants and friends attributing our recurring attacks of malaria to witchcraft.

(c) DOCTORS

Among the Nyakyusa, as perhaps in every society, the doctors with the greatest reputation are those at a distance, and a high proportion of the practitioners in the country are of foreign lineages, their fathers, or grandfathers, or great-grandfathers having come in, bringing medicines with them, and begun to practice. In fact, we were assured that there were no Nyakyusa doctors who were famous, they were all Sangu, or Kinga, or Kisi, or from Ngonde or Mlaka in Nyamlond, but detailed investigations proved this to be false. The trade in medicines from a distance is a very old one and continues today. As we have seen,

9:Wilson R-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

were connected. And if the expected judgement does not fall when a son has wronged his father it is said: 'The father loves the child so much that he only complains half-heartedly.'

It is admitted (when the point is pressed) that misfortunes may fall on good men as well as evil, and then they are interpreted as a discipline, a testing, from God, but this is 'a hard saying', scarcely to be believed. The *impalilire* in the fortunes of men demand explanations and Christians, as well as pagans, find it very difficult to believe that they are 'natural'. They always suspect some human intervention; they believe that men manipulate magical power to buy fortune for themselves. The reality of pythons in the belly may be doubted by the better educated, but belief in 'medicines' has scarcely diminished, and new medicines are constantly coming in from outside, among them costly potent medicines guaranteed to cure any and every disease, or to make the user popular and successful. Some sort of distinction between medicines which it is permissible for a Christian to use and those, like love-potions and defence against witchcraft, which are not permissible, is recognized, but the line is an arbitrary one. And often there is a conflict in the individual's own mind: as one elderly woman of a chief's family (who would normally have taken the fever-drain medicines) put it: 'It's taboo to use those medicines; even if we do fall ill we say: "No, I will not take it, I look towards God (pointing upwards)."'

Most Christians have pagan kindfolk who are quick to interpret misfortunes in pagan terms, and the sort of conflict of ideas that arises is illustrated in the case of a young woman who died in childbirth. She and her father were Moravians; her husband had joined the Pentecostal Church which rejects all Nyakyusa medicines. Her first child was still-born, the second died shortly after its birth, and her father insisted that she should have been taking a medicine which it was customary for women in his lineage (he was a Pangwe) to drink during pregnancy; the girl herself wished to be treated, for she did not accept the teaching of the Pentecostal Church on this point, but her husband refused. During her third pregnancy she was ill and finally, with her husband's consent, she was carried to a Nyakyusa doctor of her father's choosing; nevertheless she died. Her father and her husband had been on bad terms, the father demanding, rather arbitrarily, the balance of the marriage cattle; and there was a great deal of gossip, some neighbours hinting that her own father had killed

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

restored to their places, and the body is burind; and 763
all who had any part in the operation drink medicine
to protect them from the disease from which the
man died.

For wounds in battle an infusion of the roots of 752
kamemena is given to cause vomiting, in case there is 278
blood in the stomach. The wounds are washed with
an infusion of *impigi* roots, and bound with leaves of
untugutu, fresh dressings being applied every day until
the wounds are healed.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Food (other than meat) is provided on the day of the burial by the women of the home at which the burial takes place, on the succeeding day by visiting relatives, and on the third day by village neighbours. Women neighbours, like women relatives, often bring gifts of bark-cloth belts (*amakibe*) with which to bind up the bellies of their bereaved friends, who are all *wambile* and full of fear, and so support them. These belts symbolize the sympathy of friends in the fearful grief of the mourners. 'If a woman wears many belts at a burial that means that she has many friends; her passionate grief is comforted by their friendship.'[1] And neighbours, like relatives and close friends from other chiefdoms, may bring cloths which are used to wrap the corpse and bind up the bellies of the chief mourners. But these gifts of food, firewood, belts, and cloth are the limit of a neighbour's obligations; very rarely does a neighbour bring a bull to kill for the funeral feast, whereas close kinsmen and affines are obliged to provide a bull or cow for this purpose if they have one. And neighbours take virtually no share in the elaborate ritual which follows for cleansing relatives from the contagion of death, driving the thought of the deceased out of their minds, and bringing back his spirit to bless the home. Their only part is to bring small gifts of millet from which to brew the beer drunk at the close of this ritual.

At an ordinary birth there is very little ceremony and the village as a group is not concerned, though close friends will help the mother during her confinement, fetching wood and water for her, and bringing occasional gifts of cooked food; but twin births are regarded as fearful and dangerous, and an elaborate ritual is performed to cleanse relatives from the contagion which, if left untreated, is believed to lead to serious swelling of the arms, legs, and stomachs, accompanied by diarrhoea. Relatives are treated with many medicines, while village neighbours are sprinkled with one only, but their cattle, especially the cattle herded with those of the man who has begotten twins, are thought to be in danger. At one twin ritual we watched there was some discussion whether all the cattle of the age-village should be treated, or only those of the herd-group to which the father of the twins belonged. Finally it was decided that on previous occasions all the cattle of the village had been treated, and a message was sent

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939), p. 10.

I: Wilson E-S (1934-1938) 1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

ment of fellow villagers (*bikwaipa*) or their angry murmuring (*bikwihumya*) will bring on wrong-doers 'the breath of men' (*ondepo ya bandu*) causing them, or their children, or cattle, to fall ill, and this breath is the power of the pythons conveyed by 'defenders' and witches acting together. We asked Mbukile whether 'the defenders' really came to choke a proud, quarrelsome person. 'Mother! They come. "The defenders" and the witches all call one another. They all go. "The defender" is not angry (at the attack), he says, "The man killed himself, he was a quarrelsome fellow!" ' And another friend explained: 'If a woman witch wishes to choke her husband, perhaps the first night "the defenders" will turn her back, but then she will plead with them and explain that her husband is a bad man and ill-treats her, then perhaps on the second night they will change their minds and come and help her. Yes, "the defenders" turn round sometimes and throttle people.'

'The breath of men' is thought to cause prolonged illness but not death, and should a death occur then a charge of witchcraft may be brought, and the suspects be required to drink the poison ordeal. 'We said, it is forbidden to kill a man. We others were afraid, although we had disliked the victim ourselves, we feared at some later time the witch would kill us.' All our informants accepted this view in theory, but in practice several cases in which the supposed victims died were cited as instances of 'the breath of men' (see table, pp. 216–8).

The effect of 'the breath of men' is spoken of as 'the curse' (*ikipwa*)* and its typical symptom is sterility, or a paralysis of the legs, which, it is thought, can only be cured when the sinner repents and reforms his behaviour, providing at the same time a feast of beer and meat for men of his village or, if it be against his father that he has sinned, of his father's village. At the feast it is essential that the men of the village should admit their responsibility for the sickness, and express hopes for the recovery of the patient. 'Formerly, they would pray and pray, they would let out all their anger, saying: "Certainly we were angry, it was us, but now it is all over." Then life would come back to the sick man and he recovered' (cf. Documents, p. 241).

We see then, that a clear distinction is made by the Nyakyusa

* *Ikipwa* is not used in the Kisoko district, but is common usage in Selya, on the Lake-shore plain, and in Ngonde.

1:Wilson E-5(1936-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

for his own son whom he begot saying: "He is my own flesh and blood", then the men of the village will pass judgement.'

This 'breath' is thought also to fall on a chief who is harsh towards his people, or who acts unconstitutionally, as in refusing to make a 'coming out' ceremony for his sons when his village headmen advise him; and it falls on a village headman who treats a junior in office unfairly, or is overbearing to his men. Both pagan and Christian informants insisted that fear of 'the breath of men' was a powerful sanction in the traditional system against arbitrary rule. Angone, a Christian deacon, himself raised the subject one day and said: 'Headmen and chiefs—pagans—would be hard on their people and seize their goods if they (the headmen and chiefs) did not fear witchcraft. Witchcraft is like God to them.'

At every point the solidarity of the village is emphasized; the neighbours themselves are held to be insulted by the bad behaviour of a son—'their son'—to one of their fellows, or by a woman 'selling their son', or by an heir failing to recognize their concern in the inheritance of a deceased fellow. For example, Mwakanyamale had begotten no child for ten years, and this was attributed to the fact that, after quarrelling with his elder brother and refusing to attend his funeral, he had not admitted his fault to the men of the village when he came back and killed a cow. His impotence was attributed to their curse.

As we have seen, anxiety is thought to depend (i) upon the wrong-doer informing and providing the men of the village, which is angry, with a bull or beer for a feast, acknowledging guilt as he does so; and (ii) upon the men of the village admitting their anger and responsibility for his illness, and expressing good will. 'If a daughter-in-law should have looked on her father-in-law by mistake she makes beer and sends it to her father-in-law. He calls his friends and admits: "Indeed I was angry with her for she looked at me", and the others say: "Yes, indeed, let her child get fat".' (*ante* pp. 233-6).

It may well be asked, is there any objective reality at the root of this belief in 'the breath of men'? Does the wrong-doer, fearing his neighbours, really become paralysed or impotent? It is possible that a sinner may sometimes develop these symptoms as the result of fear. We do not know, what is certain is that impotence, sterility, lingering illnesses including paralysis, and sickly

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

children, are not uncommon; that the penalty of sin is believed often to be delayed, and an illness may be attributed to a wrong committed many years previously; and lastly, that the victim of retribution may be one of several individuals. Parents are thought to be punished by the sickness of their children as well as in their own persons; in a case of sexual transgression it may be either partner who suffers; in the case of a neglected death ritual it may be either the heir or the widow on whose behalf it should have been performed (cf. Document, pp. 106, 136–7). When a woman bears a child after her son is married to a girl who has reached puberty, it is thought that she may fall ill herself, or her husband may be cursed 'because he had agreed to his son marrying a grown girl before the son's mother had grown old'; or the son may have no children because he eloped with his wife, or has 'married a grown girl when his father had only agreed that he should be betrothed to a little girl'.

A lively fear of witchcraft and of the 'breath of men' is inculcated in Nyakyusa children when quite young; Mwaikambo, a Christian, explained that boys learn about witchcraft from their senior play-mates when they are out herding, and in the hut at night in the boys' village, when tales are told. 'Then one feers in one's stomach and thinks: "Father! perhaps I, also, will be eaten by witches."' Ambilikile, another Christian informant, confirmed this, saying: 'We learn about witches from comments on cases of sickness, and from tales. When someone has died people say: "He was a witch, we found a python." Or perhaps of another it is said that "the witches had eaten him". In these tales the witches are said to have eaten people, or spoiled them, by means of witchcraft, so that the victim dies. We are also told how the witches fight in the power of witchcraft with their fellows from other villages, and how they fly on their pythons. What we hear always makes witchcraft awe-inspiring. I feared it very much.'

We had ample evidence that for most Nyakyusa the fear of witchcraft and of 'the breath of men' continues throughout life, and that it directly affects behaviour. It is, perhaps, the main sanction for moral behaviour within the village.

D:WGLamm-E-5(1936-1950)1951 PN17 Nigeria PN17
Nigeria

[p.206]

363
363
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(b) 'The Breath of Sin.'

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MORAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of failure	Symptoms	Alleged sin	Diagnosis	Ritual performed
7	Village headman (Kwandayana)	(a) 5 children died (b) Further deaths among his children after he moved	Grudged neighbours certain food Failed to perform death ritual of children before burying		Fled to Lake-dwa plain (Ba Ngombe) Removed home. Killed bull. Admitted fault in not performing ritual
8	Widow	Widow ailing	Ritual not performed for her at others' taboo	Blame due to 'the breath of man'. Diagnosis by divination	Was killed here. Trusted neighbours and relatives. Told of plans. People admitted their guilt. Said she [illegible] was too limited. The ceremonial [illegible]
9	Widow	Widow ill	Son of chief's family had not killed bull or sire at inheritance ritual	Blame due to 'the breath of man'. Diagnosis by divination	Son killed neighbours and relatives. Killed. Neighbours admitted their guilt
10	Child	Child ill	Father failed to avoid a gift of food and fare, when she was taken back to her husband, and she is the daughter of a chief's sister	'The breath' came from her husband's friends. 'They are angry because of the ground she lost'	Was mentioned. The girl died shortly afterwards and her death was attributed to sorcery
11	Chief	Tribe	Refused to hold 'coming out' of man	'The country was angry'	Killed 1 cow for people to eat
12	Married woman	Son or more children	Ran off with lover three times. Finally husband forced lover to run away	Her father's village 'blamed' because she had 'sold a man to death'. 'Death' of village affection because she visits there frequently to see a grandparent. Diviner diagnosed to the lover to show he must be reconciled that he might have children	Was mentioned
13	Man (a Native)	Sometimes sickness (1) death	Did not come to have other brother with whom he had quarrelled	'The sorcerer his other brother's village was angry. Blame due to the same (illegible) of man'	Killed a cow in other brother's village but did not let the son of the village chief in property (i.e. other brothers)
14	Man (b)	Man (b) for 3 years (anti-depleted), was upset and ill during	Invalid—was force of father's [illegible]	All sons were admitted and saved a	2 killed 1 cow at father's place. Relatives and neighbours say after discussing it, 2 accused guilty. (In last also has [illegible] to a [illegible])

[1] (illegible) = to complain. The implication is that they [illegible], and so get rid of, their anger (cf. pp. 99-101).

No.	Category of Sufferer	Symptoms	Alleged sin	Diagnosis	Ritual performed
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

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(b) 'The Death of Men' contd.

MISFORTUNE ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of Sufferer	Symptoms	Alleged sin	Diagnosis	Ritual performed
[illegible]	Village headmen	Could be heard on a cross dressing for [illegible]	Had left his work without the agreement of the people	'Country was angry because he was a headman' (and had gone to work)	Rites. Third shortly afterwards. Death [illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	Village headmen angry at confusion [illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	Kaimbi	Kaimbi had woven	[illegible]	Unknown due to wrath of men. Dogs [illegible]	
[illegible]	Kaimbi	Kaimbi [illegible]	[illegible]	'The whole country is angry'. 'Priests and village headmen are angry'	[illegible]
[illegible]	Village headmen, [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	'[illegible] the village headmen are angry'	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	'The "council" of the village were angry and killed him'	[illegible]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 754 196

ungwe)?" We only liken intercourse and witchcraft; witchcraft is quite different. When a woman is an adulteress I say: "You are a witch (*undoni*); you kill me," but it is just a metaphor (*fye fikoma*). Adultery involves paying for cattle for all of us; it differs from witchcraft. And when I ask a man: "Why, why did you *kupita* with my wife?" that means: "You are like a witch." It is just a metaphor. But (he volunteered), if I catch an adulterer with my wife, even if he has practised *coitus interruptus*, I am angry and kill him from jealousy, though I do not suffer from diarrhoea."

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An adulteress is spoken of as an *undoni* "because she brings illness upon her husband" by her adultery, if intercourse is complete, but not, it is thought, if *coitus interruptus* is practised. The illness commonly thought to be caused by a wife's adultery is diarrhoea.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

16. "THE BREATH OF MEN"

Mwaiwene (cited).

"'The breath of men' is a very serious illness; if a person is ill from "the breath of men" he is in great trouble. Such a person never recovers until they pray (*lilombomwye*). This illness comes especially when a man enters into his inheritance but does not perform the ritual, perhaps to bury him from whom he inherited—his father, or elder brother, or perhaps his mother's brother. As in the case of the estate of our mother's brother, Mwakalika. When Mwamtilike (informant's elder brother) inherited the woman Kyando, he did not perform the ritual for her. The woman was constantly ailing, but no one knew that she was suffering from this illness until they went to divine and found that she was ill from "the breath" because no ritual had been performed for her from the time she was inherited until now. So Mwamtilike found a cow and called together all his dependants and his fellows in the village, and he killed the cow and told everyone about this illness. Then people "complained" (*ahwaipa*), and said: "Indeed, may this illness finish." (It was neighbours who complained, not relatives.) From that time the woman concerned has never been ill again. So everyone says: "In truth, 'the breath of men' is very great."

"This illness is very serious, but it never kills people, though they are ill for a long time. If it is not discovered that this is the cause, the patient will be ill for a very long time, perhaps for two or three years. Yes, sometimes it kills when it has spread to the homestead, but people very rarely die from this illness.

"It is often seen in connection with inheritance. Another case occurred in my country. A certain man built with us who was of a chief's lineage. He inherited from a relative but he did not kill a cow at the death ritual. The wife he inherited was constantly ill until they went to divine and found that it was "the breath of men" (which was making her ill) because he had not performed a ritual since he entered into his inheritance. So he also found a cow and called people (non-relatives) and all his descendants, and killed the cow, and his fellow villagers "complained" (*ahwaipa*). But I do not know whether the illness finished or not. What I do know is that he found a cow—I saw it myself when it was lying there dead and people gathered, relatives, descendants, and neighbours.

"Ingale is a disease of children. It comes from the inside used by the mother of the child. It is commonly said that when a married

woman has been angry with her husband, and perhaps quarrelled with him, and has sworn at her husband by "the things" (*i.e.* the sex organs) of his mother, or perhaps his father, the child she bears will fall sick with *ingulu*. It becomes very thin and does not grow. The disease is recognized when a child is very ill from infancy, and it is very thin but does not die. Then they say it is *ingulu*. Sometimes they inquire of a diviner and the diviner reveals that it is ill of *ingulu*.

'I remember a certain woman who was married to a man, Abyanda. This man had married two wives, and she of whom I speak was the third. This woman was very proud (*amalinga fyo*) and was constantly quarrelling with her husband and her co-wives. When she quarrelled with her husband he got angry and beat her. Then she swore at him humbly, about "the things" of his mother or father. She said: "You! So and so of your father! So and so of your mother!" Then this woman bore a girl child and when it had grown a little it became very ill. It was very ill for a whole year. When it began to recover she quarrelled again with her husband and swore at him insultingly, and the child got ill again. So her husband (the father of the child) and she went to inquire of a diviner. The divination revealed *ingulu*. It said: "Your wife has sworn at you about the things of your mother when you were quarrelling." When they got home the husband drove his wife away, saying: "Go to your father!" When she got home the woman told her father everything and he took millet and gave it to her to make beer with, which to pay. So she brewed beer and brought it to her husband, saying: "I did wrong, my husband." The husband called his fellows and they all drank the beer and expressed their anger (*ukwiqipi*) and said: "May the child recover and grow well!"

'This happened when I was 13 or 14 years old. The girl (who was ill) is still alive; her body shows signs of not having grown properly.

'The disease comes from "the breath of men" because these insults were made publicly and others heard them. I do not think anything would happen if the insults were private, I am not sure.'

A curse of neighbours for neglect of rituals.
Lupumbwile (young Christian man).

'If I do not do the (death) ritual properly for my father the death of my children is due to the case against me, the dispute with relatives and the curse of people—non-relatives (*mapepo ndabwana, chipepo ndondo*).

'Sometimes the villagers (*amafumwe*) bind a man's loins so that he cannot beget children with his wife. They are both sterile. Moreover

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

from ropes, that binding. The women were uncertain.' 'Yes, indeed,' replied Mwalinjo. 'Whenever did women know how to perform an autopsy? They don't know how to do it. They only know how to close the corpse again, that's all.'

A woman lay down with her head to that of the corpse under clothes. The other women told her to do this, saying: 'At the head, at the head! You are both brave, you, too!'

The doctor removed the liver, two other parts, and the bile sack. This latter she squeezed out on to the leaves, saying: 'Medicine, medicine, she drank much medicine.' All these she wrapped up in leaves and buried in the foot of the grave.

It was explained that the ropes (*ingwiji*) were those of Mwakinisile. Mwakinisile, the father, had gone mad (*ahagaga ahipili*) and had drunk medicine before he had married this woman. 'We forgot to give them both medicine later on. When he went mad we bound him with ropes to take him to the doctor.'

(It is believed that the kinsmen of one bound with ropes will suffer from the disease *ngwiji* if treatment is not adequate.)

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

761 765 775 the living and enter the dreams of their kinsmen; but the nature of their survival is uncertain.

775 768 A man, when he dies, is believed to join his ancestors. Until the end of the funeral rites, they say, he is on the way and if the ritual is not properly performed he does not reach them, but troubles the dreams and lives of the survivors until he is properly driven away. 'If you do not perform the ritual for your father or mother you may go mad or else have a slow and lingering death.'

777 775 797 Many of the younger pagans, however, are affected by Christian belief. Young men spoke confidently of going after death 'to a fine country with dancing and feasting and a chief to rule us'. But many old men scoff at such beliefs. 'They have learnt them from the missionaries—how do they know, have they been there to see?' Among some of the younger men also the ritual of death is less important than it used to be. As one Christian said: 'The pagans no longer fear to die away from home—they used to fear very much to die in a strange country (and many still do), they thought: "If I die far from home I shall never reach my ancestors, for people will not bury me properly." Nor do all the young men now fear if they fail to attend a father's funeral ritual.' 'We no longer believe in the old rituals,' said a sophisticated young pagan, 'because we see that the Christians do not do these things and nothing happens to them.'

761 753 754 An additional reason for fearing death is the Nyakyusa belief in the contagious character of many diseases. Death is thought to be caused sometimes by witchcraft, and sometimes by one of a variety of diseases. Of these diseases some are held to be hereditary and to run in families, and they are usually non-contagious; others, and they are usually contagious, are believed to be due to the sorcery of enemies. And the contagion is thought to be spread by a corpse. It is especially dangerous to relatives; other people do not fear these diseases unless they actually hold the corpse in their arms, or dig the grave, or help to bury it, but all relatives are afraid.

764 Besides the contagion of specific diseases, the corpse itself is held always to have a vaguely defined, but none the less fearful, contagion of its own. And, because of this, all who have had any close contact with the body go to bathe immediately after the burial. Those of the chief mourners who hold the body in their arms, the grave-diggers and those who get down into the grave to bury it, all go to bathe. 'Even when death is not due to a contagious disease

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Selya, Malingwe

people say: *'Tukali ulushaya ungwale* (We have not yet bidden farewell to the shade)," *ulushaya* being the word used for bidding a courteous farewell to departing guests. Mwainumo elaborated the point. He said: 'The death ritual is a saying good-bye, it is to see off the dead man accompanying him on his way (*ulusumindikela*); to demonstrate that we have buried him indeed, and to pray that forgetfulness may now come on us.' Another informant explained: 'Touching the earth is to say "Good-bye, friend."'

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The danger of madness was given as the reason both for the whole ritual and for many separate actions in it. 'You go mad if you do not shave after a death,' said the wife of the chief Mwalilejo. 'You go mad if you keep the hair of the corpse (*nwili yo nfindu*),' said Mwandisi, the old blind historian, and he went on: 'Yes, much madness comes from the shades if you have neglected the death ritual for a wife or for parents, and the ritual at puberty also. Madness comes from the shades and from Kyalo. And if a woman refuses to perform the ritual for her husband who has died, and refuses to lie down with the heir, she also goes mad.' If someone does go mad the cause is usually said to be neglect of the death ritual or some mistake in its performance.

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Other types of illness are also attributed to neglect of the death ritual. Kasitile was ailing and thought that his illness was due partly to the fact that he had not completed the death ritual for a relative. Mwilaba said of the sweeping in the ritual: 'They sweep round their legs lest their bodies become swollen and sick. It is said that their bodies will swell if they attend the ritual of someone else and this is done and they themselves have not been swept over.' Several informants mentioned 'a lingering and painful death' (a terror often spoken of by the Nyakyusa) as the penalty for neglecting a ritual, and the last part of the ritual is especially interpreted as a prophylactic against the 'gasping cough'.

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Finally, it is said that the crops will not flourish if the ritual is neglected. Kalonje, a village headman of Selya, was explicit on the point: 'If you do not bury your father properly the food will disappear. They (the diviners) will tell you to find something and when beer has been left overnight outside in the banana grove you pray to the shade.' The fear that the crops will not flourish is not mentioned as frequently as the danger of madness, but it is a general notion.

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The danger of madness or other illness coming on one is thought to be greatest if a man tastes the ritual food or beer, or is sprinkled

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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa
Selja, Mulungushi

[764] hair. It is the ritual we are performing, they are signs of widowhood (*fya bufwabi*), of lamentation (*fya kwa*). The ashes are a sign of lamentation and the *ilingilangufwa* creeper is a sign of lamentation. Yes, all these things are part of the ritual, we cannot have them cut, it is taboo. If we did) those below [i.e. the shades] would be angry and say: 'They have startled me and caused me pain in the heart; they have injured the ritual by breakdowing evil.'

[764] [765] At the end the heir sleeps with the women in the house—before the heir. He performs the ritual with them, the officiants wait for them and ask them: 'How was it?' If he says 'No,' they say: 'Kyala does not stand in the house.' They go and divine at a doctor's who says: 'So-and-so is angry.'

[767] Question: Kyala does not stand in the house (*Kyala alomo ayumba*)?

Mwamsa: It is the shades, they say Kyala does not give support. Then again he performs the ritual (*ibangwala*, i.e. he attempts to have coitus) and they ask him: 'How was it?' They say: 'Yes, they (the shades) have stood with us, Kyala has stood with us.' [He gave both forms as alternatives: *Intawala* and *Kyala ayala*.] Then they clap their hands and raise the shout of triumph (*ukulala*).

Question: Is that the cry: 'Oum, oum!'?

[768] Mwamsa: No, that's the cry of the hill people. With us it's taboo. [769] Then in the morning someone shouts: 'Mor has come.' They come out immediately and run away to the pastoral lands.

[764] Question: Is this 'coming out' (*ukuuka*) the same as that in the coming out of cloth (*ukuuka*) and in the twin ceremony?

Mwamsa: Yes, they run because their legs were heavy (*uzito*) in the house, now they have grown lighter and are strong; because in the twin ceremony the seclusion in the house lasts four months, or the coming out of cloth two months, and that is hard, but at death it is only one, so it is light. But at death and the birth of twins it is the war (*uhwita*) [772] of the men. Is it not war with women? [*uhwita* is used here for sexual intercourse.] Then when they have come out they give one another [773] beer to drink in the doorway. The heir takes beer in his mouth and spits it out and hands the vessel on to his wives and children. Each does the same. They do not swallow it. To do so causes diarrhoea. The man and his wives are burning. They have come from the bed. This giving one another to drink, when each spits and does not swallow, happens after the eating of sausages of porridge on the road.* It is the same in the twin ritual except that whereas it is only the principals who give one another to drink at the death ritual, in the twin ritual not only they, but all relatives, and even non-relatives do it as well!

Question: How about the eating of millet porridge with powdered medicine on the road?

* No other informant mentioned this in the Mulungushi death ritual.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa
Selga, McKenzie

Mwanza: The manage of porridge stuck in the ground and 764
sprinkled with powdered medicine which each corpse and bites mean that you should be heavy in your belly (*mwilo mundi*) and not have diarrhoea, it is to make forces hard (not watery). Some we leave and bury [the end of each manage of porridge is left in the ground]; that [753]
means that people should step over it and take away the disease, may they have diarrhoea at their homes! They will get it really!

Quarrow: Why do the dead man's sisters admonish their sisters-in-law, his widows? 167 764

Mwanza: Because we have all met together. They say: 'Do not grudge him food, go on cooking for him. He dies of hunger! Begin again! And why do you not cook for us when we come? You grudge us food?' We could then very much and they weep tears.

Quarrow: They say in Selya that you both drive away a shade and bring him back to the house. 764 775

Mwanza: No, we drive him away, we do not bring him back to the house.

Quarrow: But you go to the stream with a stem of bananas, a hen and a fresh strip of bark, the bananas you throw away, but you come back with the hen and the bark. Is that the shade?

Mwanza: These do not come back home. The officiant has them and takes them to her house. . . .

The stem of bananas we throw in the stream, it is sickness, it is the corpse, it goes to Kyala there. The hen and the bark we give to the doctor, the officiant, because it is she who caught hold of the sickness. She is always an uncleared person, not a relative; we pay her. If we have not performed the ritual we can read, the shades have not come out, they are still there within.

Quarrow: You performed the ritual for Lubalaki's child yourselves? 764

Mwanza: Yes, she was our grandchild. We grandparents don't matter, we carry out the ritual but it's not important; if, however, it is [401]
our own child [who has died] then it is taboo. It is taboo up to the point that connections are not relations. [A grandchild in this context—though not in other contexts—is treated as not a relative]. The ritual must be performed for all relatives (*abakwe*). . . .

First the stem of bananas and then the millet and pumpkin seeds are passed between the unskilled legs of the principals. The winnowing basket (containing millet and seeds) is pushed along with the officiant's elbow. In performing this ritual we finish the mating of men and women, for that which comes out of the man in front [i.e. the semen] is the shades, when the participants have spat out we drive the shades away. If we have not performed the ritual we go mad. The shades have not come out but are still within. When, however, we have finished, then they have come out of the body. But they come again, we always have them. (*Aba ndwangala ndwendwaye ndwiki mapumbulu mwitibule, pa*

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa
Kilwa

Question: Where is the one who has just died? 764

Mwamlembe: It is him the shade has brooded over. We say: "You 775
shade, look after this child of yours, care for him and don't abandon him. He also should be a shade, let the others speak to him in the future.' When we sing 'Farewell . . .' we lament him who has died.

Question: And the trampling dance (*ukukanya ingenge*)?

Mwamlembe: We say: 'You shade, care for your fellow, don't desert him, may he be with you in your body.' We trample the ground because the shade is in the ground, he is within the body, he is underground, everywhere.

Question: What do you mean by 'in your body'?

Mwamlembe: Because the shade has created us, we came from him, we die, we go there to him; not to others, but to him.

Question: The two leaves and bearing and saying: '*Syoka, syoka* of father, *syoka, syoka* of mother'?

Mwamlembe: Syoka is the name we have been given for the shade. We say: 'The shade, the shade of father, the shade, the shade of mother!' because since a woman has died we speak to the shade as if the husband was 'father' (*ata*) who brooded over his wife. He has brooded over all us living, both me and my wife. That is what these leaves are [i.e. the husband and wife]. We speak to that man who was first buried, saying: 'Perhaps you are within, perhaps you are beneath, oh shade!' We speak to that first man who was the first to die.

Sweeping the house is that it may be clean (*ensele*). Before that it is [753]
dirty. . . .

The shade brooded both over the dead and over me, the living; he brooded over the dead who is with him and over me who am alive; I am in him—we all are. . . .

Question: Why the water on the roof? 764

Mwamlembe: If we neglect this then a child will go mad, he runs 753
off to the water and the water comes into his nose [i.e. he drowns] because we have not given him water in the doorway of the little hut there. If we neglect something then the child goes mad and runs off and catches hold of faeces, he smears faeces on his body and urinates into his hands and washes with the urine.

Question: Why does the shade want him to do these filthy things? 764

Mwamlembe: Because if we do not perform the ritual for him and 775
do not care for him we do not remember him, then he says: 'Since you do not remember me this child will also get dirty, because I have got dirty underground, I am dead. See, you buried me! The earth has entered my mouth and eyes, why do you not care for me?'

Question: But even if you do treat him ritually, still the earth is in his mouth! How is he satisfied?

Mwamlembe: Because this shadow (*ipangule*) [pointing in explanation to the shadows of the banana trees] is what we care for, it is the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KaKaue

for the ritual. We think that when she has slept with her new husband she is full (*asite*) and if she gives us food it will make us ill. 764 587

MWANGWANDA: The new husband gives us relatives a disease by impregnating the girl, he who is no relative of ours, the new husband. *Ingotele* is an illness. [753]

ii. *Kakune's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W.)

KAKUNE: Yes, if we do not perform the ritual the children run mad. They speak foolishly and deliriously, they run about wildly wearing leaves, they eat filth. But they do not fight with their fellows—that is what those do who have the madness of Kyala. It is these of whom we say: 'Perhaps Kyala loved them.' 764 [765]

QUESTION: Why the first washing?

KAKUNE: That is to get rid of the disease, the filth, for they held the corpse in their hands. They do not eat the ritual food until they have washed.

QUESTION: Why the eating of porridge?

KAKUNE: Because of the tears we have wept. We have mourned him; now let us eat and strengthen our bodies again.

QUESTION: Why are beans thrown into the pot in the evening?

KAKUNE: These beans, which we throw into the pot, saying: 'This is my father's death', are an ending of the ritual. They remain all night in the house after they have been cooked, and the shades come and eat. In the morning the doctor [*sangaga*, i.e. the officiant] washes us again with powdered medicine and we eat the beans and finish them. We use beans in the ritual for that is the food which our father hoed. We think: 'Our father has died, he will never hoe for us again', and so we say: 'This is the death of my father.' So then the shade of our father comes at night and tastes the food and says to us: 'I, your father, have died, you have mourned for me; live you yet awhile, do not come quickly to death; and may you hoe plenty of food and have no hunger.' If we leave out this ritual with the beans the fertility of our gardens disappears and we have great hunger, we eat nothing. [789]

QUESTION: Why the circling to the harp and crumbling oil-seeds?

KAKUNE: The ointment (made from the oil-seeds) is to finish the ritual. The song (*ukalende*) is to say good-bye, to the shade, it means 'farewell', it is to drive him away. We circle round because our father was an active man, he walked round seeing his friends, he danced; that is why we circle round the fire. [In Kakune's family they do not cry the war shout of triumph, they only dance to the harp.] [84]

QUESTION: Why the pebbles? [I told him what Mwasalemba had said and he agreed heartily.]

KAKUNE: Yes, that's it! We throw them away, this means 'We have driven you away now.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Kukwa

764 porridge—sausages of porridge are buried in the ground and bitten off by the principals who stoop down to do it.

QUESTION: What does it mean?

KAKUNE: It means that we are about to honour them; they eat, and he whom we have buried also remains below, he also eats, we bury the sausage in the earth and we say we are burying him also, then he will fear to come to the house.

QUESTION: And this porridge is a symbol of the filth which those who run mad eat?

KAKUNE (*laughing*): Yes, because if we omit to do these things the children become feeble, their hearts say "Ho! ho!" [*panting and excited*] and they rush off to the road and eat dirt (*mende*).

QUESTION: Why should the shades do this to them? How are they interested in dirt (*mende*)?

KAKUNE: I don't know. We say it is because we have not accompanied them on the road and on account of this the shade is very angry and says: "We shall see whether their children flourish!" He has bewitched them (*abalupile*).

QUESTION: And what about the circling round with the harp and the trampling at the fire?

KAKUNE: That is not very important, Mwaipeja [G. W.], it is because he cultivated food and danced at beer drinks when he was alive, so we dance for him now that he is dead. . . . A widow must lie
[587 with her husband the night before she comes to do the (*ingotele*) ritual,
833 and she comes with his filth on her, she does not wash. If she comes
without having lain with him the night before then we all get the
• [753 disease. The disease comes from the new husband, it comes from his
seed, the seed that begets us men. When his seed enters her womb then
she is heavy (*neite*) and if she eats or drinks out of our dishes and pots
while we are empty (*bwasi*), before we have stopped ourselves with
medicines, then she gives us the disease. She has not given us the
protective medicine (*endwye*).

764 If a woman changes from one husband to another and both are
753 alive, there is no danger and no ritual. It is death that brings the
danger, because that man [her first husband] has died; he has died and
rotted below, and from that disease comes. The disease only comes
from this situation. If no relative has died there is no *ingotele*. But if my
wife has run off with another man and then comes back to me with
his semen in her, then I take some powdered medicine and eat some
and throw a little on the fire, and if I do not do this then my legs will
hurt, I shall be unable to walk properly, and my body will become
weak. Neither she nor her relatives take medicine, nor does her new
husband, if she goes to him and he pays for her and takes her. He just
marries her.

764 If the widow is left with a sucking child and is empty [*bwasi*: i.e. her
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S: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F3117 Mgonda F3117
Nyakyusa
Kinkuse

new husband has not been sleeping with her[1], then at first, before she lies with him, we (her relatives) eat with her. But when the child leaves the breast and her husband begets another then she comes to perform the ritual. Otherwise we cannot eat with her. And so with a pregnant widow—at first we eat with her but when the child is born and has been weaned and her new husband begets another she comes to perform the ritual.

The new husband must send a bull or a sheep with his spear, and we who drink the beer divide the meat, saying: 'Thank you, you have nourished us.' Yesterday he sent you., and I, the doctor, got it. If it had been a bull I would have got some meat. The husband does not come himself, but he sends a friend to bring the woman. This friend does not eat or drink the medicine, but he drinks the beer without medicine and the camera we cook. [In the ritual just completed] Mwandumba provided three pots of beer—we drank one before and two after the ceremony. That was what the men were waiting for.

No, it never happens that one who has drunk the medicine of *ingonda* falls sick of it afterwards, never.

The spear is taken and kept by the girl's brother at the command of her father, who says: 'Take this spear, your sister has brought in.' It is a symbol (*chimanyilo*) of kinship, it is like the spear with which a girl was betrothed in the old days. At the betrothal the lover would stick the spear in the ground, the girl pulled it up and took it to her father, sticking it into the ground before him, and he, if he agreed, told her brother to take it up. And if there is any dispute later about cattle then the spear is proof of agreement. It has the same significance at betrothal and at the *ingonda* ritual. Sometimes the heir has to bring cattle that have not yet been paid by the dead man. When the woman's brother takes the spear into the house at the *ingonda* ritual, that means: 'Now you' have entered into the house—your house—so we bring you in.' And then she can go in.

The calling out of 'Thief' is a custom in the ritual, but it is like a song, it's not important. The firewood is shown to the woman and a bean and a grain of maize are put into a crack of the wood. That means that the ritual is complete.

No, there is no extra safety in coming to the ceremony; those who drink at home are equally protected!

III. *Evidence of other informants*

CURRENT TALK: Some people have been told by those who have run mad, that they see a man who comes to them sometimes. When that man is with them then they lose the sense of what they are doing. The

[1] It was not clear from the context whether 'you' referred to groom or bride. The symbolism suggests the act of marriage but of this we have no direct evidence.

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604 new home, and her mother-in-law provides her with fire and a pot.

783 After the bride has had full intercourse with her husband she cannot return home, or see her own parents, until she has taken them the ritual *ilibalaga*. After sexual intercourse she wipes her husband's genitals with her hands, then wipes them on a fowl and some millet: these together form the *ilibalaga*. In the morning she goes off without washing—'with the filth of intercourse on her'—to her parents' house, taking the fowl and millet with her. The fowl is killed on a path and cooked with digitalis medicine and, if the bride is the eldest daughter of one of the father's first two wives, her father and mother eat it together. Her mother eats alone if she is a younger daughter, or the mother is a junior wife. If the father is a chief the husband may kill a young bull and beef is sent in place of the hen.

839 After eating the *ilibalaga* her parents resume intercourse[1] which has been taboo from the time the girl first menstruated. If no hen is brought because the husband is poor, the parents still resume sexual intercourse, but the bride, when she visits her home, must not take water from her mother's pot. Someone else draws for her and she drinks it outside from a separate calabash. If she drinks inside, or if her mother uses the calabash she has used, it is believed that her mother will get diarrhoea. She also avoids her father's bed and stool.

[75]

606 With the ritual of marriage must be included the negative ritual of avoidance between a woman and her husband's father and between those identified with him or her. The taboo applies from the time of betrothal or, if the girl has been betrothed as an infant, from well before she reaches puberty, and forbids father-in-law and daughter-in-law ever to look at one another or meet face to face on the pathway, or enter the same house, much less speak together. As we have seen, a similar taboo applies between the bride and her own father during her seclusion, but is relaxed when he has given her a gift. Between a woman and her father-in-law, however, it is never relaxed, except among the more sophisticated Christians. A myth of origin tells of a case of incest between father-in-law and daughter-in-law which led to the establishment of the

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[1] Kaindu maintained that if the mother has not reached the menopause the parents do not lie together until the daughter's pregnancy is apparent. 'For the mother to conceive before the daughter is forbidden, but old women are little sacked dry.' Mwakisunde denied any danger in mother conceiving before daughter.

[FF] would never dry up.' Kaitile said: 'The work of the *mukondo* and
[FF] *dipili* are the same, they are together. The heavy rain will over-
[FF] step the girl, they are going to injure her so that she is barren,
[FF] constantly menstruating, with painful periods.' Lyandiko, a
[FF] woman doctor, and exceptionally intelligent, said: 'The bride
[FF] uses the *dipili* medicine because she is empty (*bunu*). So she
[FF] washes and rubs herself with *dipili*. If she does not wash with it
[FF] she will have diarrhoea.'

[FF] The *dipili* is also said to make a bride 'patient and polite'. 'If
[FF] the girl did not wash with the powdered medicine (*dipili*) she
[FF] might be rude and proud when she went to her husband's home
[FF] and insult men there.' This was the statement of Mwakwelebeja,
[FF] an old commoner particularly well versed in matters of ritual, and
[FF] it was separately confirmed both by his wife and by Lyandiko,
[FF] the woman doctor, but not everyone knew the connection. Mwai-
[FF] beja, the chief, who was present when Mwakwelebeja gave his
[FF] explanation, said: 'Really! I never knew that!' and his wives,
[FF] when applied to, said: 'We don't know. The mothers have died'
[FF] (this though some of them were past middle age).

[FF] Angonelwike identified the *dipili* medicine with the blood of a
[FF] lineage and a bride's ceremonies with it with the union in marriage.
[FF] He said:

> As soon as a girl grown up people begin to think about her bearing children. They say: 'The menses (*ivu*) is discharged, the blood for bearing children has come.' When they grind and brew beer in her honour, they do it in honour of her 'ivu' [i.e. menstrual blood]. They give her medicines for disciplining her to the lineage of her husband. When the mothers hear they cry: 'Ooro, ooro, it has fruited! (*Ooro, ooro, ifipili*).' The girl is given a bundle of the medicine, powdered, and is made to wear a belt of bark-cloth with the powder in it; the medicine is brought from the husband's home by his mothers. The husband, as it were, says: 'That is my blood [or semen] which I have sent to her.' The little bundle is the symbol (*chimapili*) of the child she will bear, the belt with medicine on it means that the mothers 'ivu' belongs to the blood of that husband. The powdered medicine is brought by the husband's mother. A man's chief wife always has a bamboo flask or a pot full of medicine of their lineage (*ja kikolola lyako*), powdered ready for use. If she dies it goes to the second wife, if the husband dies to the first wife of the eldest son, and by her it is distributed as need. The powdered medicine is the blood (*mbomalenge*[1] *ja ilupa*).

[1] i.e. the powder made from the *dipili*.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F'N17 Ngonde F'N17

Nyakyusa
Galya, Ma Ngonde

have thought of it now, this is the cow.' Then, in the evening, the mother's brother blows out water in the banana grove and prays much to the fathers. And when he has prayed he says: 'Send the girl to a doctor to drink medicine.' Then the girl bears a child. The pagans say of us Christians when we have children without performing the ritual: 'You have a medicine, you are baptized with a medicine.'

Mwakisiela confirmed that the mother's brother, like the father, may prevent a girl bearing a child.

Yes, it is so, if I do not give marriage-cattle for my wife our child will not bear. We go to diviner and the oracle catches hold of my wife saying that the fathers are angry. We ask what they are angry about, and the answer is 'cattle'. Then I, the father of the girl, go with a cow and leave it and return. My wife and daughter remain there. They pray and pray and the girl conceives.

It is clear, therefore, that the shades are present in intercourse and control conception. At marriage the shade of her father must 'move aside a little' so that the bride may conceive, and she herself becomes dangerous to her mother (and in a lesser degree to her father) because she has mingled her blood with that of another lineage. Mingling the blood of different lineages is dangerous and a bride can safely meet her mother only after performing a ritual in which her parents, as well as herself, become 'one flesh' with her husband. 'When a bride brings a hen and millet to her mother it is to say: "Mother, I have wiped my husband's genitals, I have grown up."' All our informants were agreed that this *ilikalage* or *ilikale* (both words are used) is to safeguard the mother's health, particularly to prevent her suffering from diarrhoea. Mwandisi's statement was clear:

In the puberty ritual, when a bride has come from her husband, having lain with him, she catches hold of a little millet and a fowl without washing herself and carries them to her mother. The mother eats it with the fowl that her belly may be firm. If the daughter does not bring these things, then, when she drinks from the same calabash as her mother, she overstops her mother, who has diarrhoea. Yes, the illness comes from the shades because she has come hot from the bed. . . . This diarrhoea comes from the belly when those below are angry and those above also. They say: 'The mother has overstopped the child' or 'The child has overstopped the mother'. If a girl has reached puberty we, the parents, do not come together until she has gone to her husband and lain with him. If we have intercourse we

2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mulungushi

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2: Wilson E-9 (1934-1938)1957 F3517 Ngonde F3517
Nyakyusa
Kabwe

[73] phasis that 'if the bride does not wash with powdered medicine she will go mad and she will bury children'.

Syongo, the officiant for all the rituals in Porokoro's lineage, said:

[74] If a girl goes mad, we say, if we have not treated her: 'We neglected the ritual, let us treat her.' She runs about aimlessly and makes bundles of filth. But if we have treated her we say: 'Perhaps Kyale has gone away from us. See! Nothing has been omitted, we have treated her.' And if she does not bear a child as her husband's her in-laws say to her: 'Did your father and mother not treat you?'

[75] Mtengamawo (a middle-aged pagan): It is said that if she eats food with her fellows who sleep with their husbands they will harm (overcome) her, and she has diarrhoea. When she has been given powdered medicine, then she eats with them. . . . To lie on powdered medicine which has been sprinkled on the ground is to give the bride weight (*ubwite*), because if it is not done those who are with their husbands will contemp her and she will have diarrhoea.

[77] Porokoro's Wives: In the old days we put medicine in her porridge so that she would not run away from her husband . . . not now. It's European times now.

[78] Questions: In Selya it is said that if she is not given powdered medicine she will be proud.

Wives: Yes, here too. And if the girl is proud we beat her.

Mtengamawo: Washing and catching in her hands the water that falls from her husband's hands has two meanings. In some families the husband and wife wash separately, in others they wash together. In either case the first meaning is present, in the second both meanings.

[79] It is said that when someone has not washed in the puberty ritual his or her children will die, for that water (with which he neglected to wash) will enter the child's stomach and kill it. The water is in the child's stomach but its symptoms are those of diarrhoea. The mobile girl catching water in her hands teaches us that the woman will receive

[83] everything. The man is like the upper grindstone, the woman like the nether grindstone (we speak of intercourse), which means that the woman receives the semen which comes from the man.

Making fire by friction is a symbol of procreation.[1] If the fire does not kindle we say the couple are sterile. Two fire-sticks are used, one is the man the other the woman, and the fire is the child. The smoke made by the rubbing is the semen.

Kapenda: If the fire does not come the man is sterile and the girl will quarrel with her husband and perhaps run away. It does not mean she will be barren with other men.

[1] *Ukupyuse*: to make fire by friction; *ukupyuse*: to masturbate.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
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blood of another lineage mingles with hers, but it has not reached her mother because they have not met. To drink water together from one calabash is to meet. Then the mother has diarrhoea because her body is not accustomed to the blood of another lineage. To have diarrhoea is to go bad, to expel (*ukwapa*) the filth. The *ifibale* of the fowl in the body of the groom which mingles with the body of the girl's parents that they may be one blood with him.

Thus, not only husband and wife, but also parents and son-in-law become one flesh.

As in Selya, a direct connection is made between the parents receiving a bull for the bride's virginity, and her bearing a child to her husband. Mwanalwelo explained: 'Kyala together with the shades have made the girl grow up. If the girl runs off with her husband and I, the father, have not received cattle, then the earth is angry, the shades say: "We shall see if she will flourish there." Then the girl does not conceive, and the diviner says: "The shades are angry." The groom's people bring cattle, then I, the father, pray for my child and she conceives, her belly swells.'

CHAPTER V

THE RITUAL OF BIRTH*

§42 Kuma (or Lwanda) and the shades create desire in men and women and control conception; when the shades are angry women do not conceive—this is one of the main tenets of pagan Nyakyusa cosmology, and it is combined with a limited knowledge of physiology. It is clearly understood that conception cannot take place without intercourse, and that gestation in humans lasts for nine months, but it is believed that repeated intercourse is necessary
[437] for conception, and formerly, if a man found his wife pregnant after having lain with her only once, he accused her of adultery.

[[91] (c) *Taboos of preservation*

§92 The preservation of children is an ultimate value of Nyakyusa society and the accepted end of marriage, but it is regarded as dangerous under certain conditions and is hedged about with
●763 taboos. These are endeared so that both parents and children may be healthy; a breach of them is thought to result in violent diarrhoea, as well as monstrously swollen legs and weakness in men, general debility in children, and miscarriage or an excessive menstrual flow in women. The onus of observing them falls primarily on women, though their husbands must also co-operate, and a breach of taboo is treated as immoral, for it is believed to endanger the life, or health, or property of others.

§31 Certain general conceptions underlie the taboos. The first is that of *ubwipali*, filth, which is held to come from the sex fluids, menstruation, and childbirth, as well as from a corpse, and the blood of a slain enemy. All these are felt to be both disgusting and dangerous, and the sex fluids are held to be particularly dangerous to an infant, hence the taboo on husband and wife resuming intercourse very soon after childbirth.

§46 At first, when the child is very young, we think it very bad for the parents to sleep together at all, because when the child is very young

* This account came from a score or more women not cited individually, as well as from our regular informants on ritual whose names are mentioned.

Z: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3417 Ngonde F3417
Nyakyusa

the women has constantly to handle it and if, just after intercourse, she has to do this without time to wash first, then the child, we think, will get diarrhoea or grow thin. Women[1] always wash very carefully in the mornings after intercourse, both for the sake of the children and the husband. If the woman touches food unwashed after intercourse we think it will make her husband sick, and he will get unbearably fat. If a child is old enough to play by itself . . . so that the wife can wash properly before attending to it, then it is all right for the couple to have intercourse, but not for the woman to become pregnant again yet. She should not do that until the child is weaned.[2] §96 [514] [758]

Contact with menstrual blood or a menstruating woman is held to be dangerous to a man, more particularly to a warrior, hence there is an absolute taboo on intercourse during menstruation (for five to eight days) and restrictions on cooking for a man. A menstruating woman does not blow up the fire on which her husband's food is cooking, or squeeze the food to test whether it is ready, or scrape ash off bananas or sweet potatoes she has roasted, or serve food, for 'her breath comes from her belly and it is dirty; her belly is dirty on account of the menstrual blood. All her body is dirty. She does not wash. When she washes, you, the husband, think that the flow has dried up and catch hold of her!' So a woman who is menstruating fans the fire instead of blowing it, and calls a co-wife or a child to serve the food she has cooked. She does not even crouch over the fire to warm herself, lest she contaminate it; and she neither uses the common calabash cup for drinking nor scoops water from the household water jar with her hand, but fashions a cup for herself from a leaf, or has her own little water-pot. She avoids passing behind or shaking hands with a man; she avoids a new-born infant; she keeps well away from cattle, neither passing behind them when they are in the homestead nor clearing out dung from the byre; she avoids touching medicines or entering the house of a doctor; and she avoids eating pumpkin or pumpkin leaves, or picking them. These taboos are enforced lest she injure men or infants or cattle or medicines, for 'she is dirty' and her 'dirt' is thought to cause purging and to rot medicines, and she, §44

[1] The 'Doki' is so the wife because she cleanses her husband with her hands.

[2] Coital intercourse is prescribed until the mother is ready to conceive again. 'Formerly it was taboo to make a woman pregnant before her previous child was four or five years old. Her husband's sisters made a great case about it. The child must know how to run before a younger brother was born. We said: "How can a woman carry two children?" Now she becomes pregnant again when the elder is two. Of those who bear again before then it is said: "They kill the elder child." ' (Statement of Nsajigwa, an elderly man.) [833]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[94] for her part, fears lest the medicines with which men protect themselves and their cattle may injure her, causing her menstrual flow to 'last a whole month'. She avoids pumpkins lest she suffer from a small growth in the vagina called a 'pumpkin' and bear sickly children. 'It is said that this disease is due to women picking or eating pumpkins when they are menstruating . . . the menstrual blood resembles the pumpkin and they fight together.'

[95] [96] If a wife fails to warn her husband that she is menstruating and permits him to have intercourse with her, he will be furiously angry and may even divorce her saying: 'You are soiling me, get out!'

[97] [98] Any contact with a menstruating woman is believed to cause him suffering. 'His legs become swollen and painful and he is very tired.' 'Strength leaves the man.' 'He sits back weakly; he has no speed in running.' Kaitilie explained:

> The danger of menstrual blood is that it is filthy; it is an illness. Formerly, if a foolhardy man took his wife when she was menstruating, when he went to war, he fell. We others said: 'Why were you vanquished? Did you cover when your wife was unwell? Do you not know that it is a very serious illness?'

Angombwike added:

> Formerly, the fear was greater than it is to-day. If a man made love to a menstruating woman they said he would fall ill of *ivobolo*, an illness for which there was no remedy. His belly ached and his body grew red; he just lay down. His face swelled and his legs ached. Now pagans are not so much afraid of menstruation; they have listened to the Christians.

Asked why sleeping with a menstruating woman should make a man weary, informants linked the danger from menstrual blood with the danger that bears a husband when his wife commits adultery, and the 'blood' of two men mixes in the woman's womb. Menstrual blood is not so dangerous to a husband as the 'blood' of another man, but yet it is 'filthy'. One of Mwakisonde's wives said:

> My husband gets tired if he sleeps with me when I am menstruating because he has given us our menstrual blood; it is that which has entered into me; there are two bloods, his and mine.

Mwambuputa, a village headman, elaborated further:

[99] > If my wife has committed adultery and cooks my food or draws water for me, then my legs are weary and I also have diarrhoea. If she

2; Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1937 F3117 Ngonde F3117
Nyakyusa

scrapes because when she is menstruating, or conceals that she is menstruating and we have intercourse, then my legs are tired, but I do not have diarrhoea, because it is my blood; she is my relative (above group), she is my wife, her blood and mine are one. But when she has lain with a man in the bush there is his blood; I have diarrhoea to get rid of it; the food which she cooks for me is dirty, she has made it filthy, I have diarrhoea and get rid of it, she converges me. And also if she has concealed that she is menstruating and we have intercourse, I am constipated. To converge is to vomit—but since the blood is mine I do not get rid of it. That menstrual blood is very dirty!

If I have always been all right and strong, and I find that I get tired walking and hoeing, I think: 'What is it? See, always I was all right, and now I am very tired.' My friends say: 'It is women, you have lain with one who was menstruating.' And if I eat food and start diarrhoea they say: 'It's women, they have committed adultery.' My wives deny it. We go to divine, and one is caught; if she agrees that's that, but if she denied it, formerly we went to the poison ordeal. The woman drank alone, not I. If she vomited then I was defeated, the woman was good, but if it caught her then her father paid one cow.

What we feared greatly in the old days, Mwaipaja, was war. We feared to die. For if my fellow in the village committed adultery with my wife then, when we went to war, we both died; if we went to fight at Mwangomo's [a neighbouring chiefdom], both he and I would be speared. Then people were astonished and said: 'Why, here so-and-so and so-and-so died? Perhaps they both lay with the same woman.' For this reason we drove adulterers from the village, and for this reason the chief was angry with an adulterer, saying: "This is my place! Why do you kill my people?" '

Others confirmed Mwamboputa's statement that adultery led to death in battle:

Formerly, when there was war, if your fellow made love to your wife in secret and you all went to fight, you died on one day on account of the women.

Mwandisi linked the disquiet in a man's belly with the anger of the shades seated there.

If a woman has gone behind the house with another man and comes and cooks food for her husband, blowing up the fire and cooking for him, then the food turns round in his stomach and says: 'Is this my kinsman?' She made friends with others behind the house and cooked for them [i.e. committed adultery]. So then the man develops diarrhoea because the food turned round in his stomach. He falls down on the road, he falls down in battle.

§77 Question: The spirits are angry?
§78 Kaleman: Yes, they say: "That woman for whom we gave marriage-cattle has overcrowded her husband." Yes, it is the shades who are angry in his belly.

§62 Kaleman, a doctor, made it clear that the danger to the husband
§17 when his wife committed adultery came from the semen of another
783 man entering her.

If your wife commits adultery you get very tired on a journey, you suffer from diarrhoea, in the old days we fell in war.

Question: What if the adulterer practices *coitus interruptus*?

Kaleman: Yes, if the man is clever he withdraws and the semen falls to the ground. If he always withdraws when he has intercourse with my wife, then I escape, nothing happens. The woman is like a child. See, when your wife who has not yet reached puberty plays with young men on the veld it is no matter. Do they create a child with her? No! But if she is an adulteress he is there in her, and I am there in her, and Kyala says: "Ha! Are there two?" And he spears you, the owner of the woman. You are soiled by going to the women; that is filth. But if I catch an adulterer with my wife, even if he has practised *coitus interruptus*, I am angry and kill him—there is jealousy! But as for diarrhoea, I do not suffer from it.

§37 The most dangerous adultery of all, according to the Nyakyusa,
L86 is that of a man with his father's wife. Angumbwike explained:

If a man dies and his son has been lying with his wives in secret, whether with or without his permission, the son is very much afraid to approach his father's place. If he goes near or touches the corpse he will himself die, for he is one flesh with his father; their blood has mingled in the woman's belly. He keeps a long way away and so do the wives with whom he has lain. The leading men of the village are told
[783] about it and a doctor is fetched and the son and the wives involved are taken to a waterfall and treated there. If he is the eldest son a younger brother kills the cows meanwhile. Then he comes back to the homestead and kills a cow himself. While you were away in Europe I saw a case of this with my own eyes. A man died whose son had been lying with his wives. As soon as the son approached his father's place he fell down sick to death. People picked him up and rushed him away to a distance. Then he began to breathe a little easier. They took him to a
[783] waterfall and treated him and he recovered, more or less. He is still unwell from time to time. It is not madness, just illness. And if, before the father's death, such a son approaches his father, the old man gets very ill indeed and the elder wives turn the son out of the house. There is none of this trouble if a brother [either a full brother or a half-brother]

[96] *Ukulinda* means to pass, to surpass, and *ukulinga* (overstepping). In its metaphorical use, implies that 'one has power and the other is weak, so the powerful one does some injury to the weak one'.

[97] Fourthly, as was made apparent in the puberty ritual, it is held [98] to be dangerous to 'mix bloods'. Adultery is not only an infringe- [99] ment of the exclusive rights of a husband, but it may injure him directly, causing him to have diarrhoea, which is a 'getting rid of the filth' due to contact with a strange 'blood'. It was implied that intercourse with a menstruating woman was in some sense 'mixing bloods' also, and the danger to parents of contact with a newly-married daughter before a propitiatory ritual has been performed, stems from the same thing; the parents, through their daughter, are brought into contact with the blood of another lineage, that of the new son-in-law.

[99] Besides being 'heavy' and therefore liable to 'overcome' others, a pregnant woman is thought to reduce the quantity of any grain she approaches, for the foetus within her is voracious and matches it. Therefore neither she nor her husband (who participates in her condition) may approach other people's millet[1] or beans or oil-seeds spread out to dry, or speak to those who are reaping or grinding or stamping or brewing, without making a gesture of good-will by spitting on a pebble or knotting a leaf, and throwing it into the heap of grain. The sanction is fear of a miscarriage, for the owners of the food may have used medicines 'so that the food may be much and people be astonished'. Her own crops a pregnant woman may handle freely, and a chief's wife does not observe the taboo in her own village.

Two or three quotations will make these conceptions clearer:

ANNAMWEMBE: When my wife has conceived they say we are both 'heavy', both my wife and I. Then, if oil-seeds or millet are out drying in the sun, they tell us not to speak. 'You are heavy men,' they say. So we are silent. They say that if there is talking we will catch hold of the oil-seeds or millet, and it will diminish. Yes, I must avoid the grain even though I am alone, because I am heavy.

KAMUNA: Maize does not vanish but millet and beans. The child which is being made bewitches them; they disappear. . . . The child has opened its mouth wide, its jaws gape.[2] It is that child which is being

[100] [1] Some hold that millet was the only grain affected, others maintained that maize was also.

[2] Literally *ugonde* means alligator. *Ugonde* is used of the gaping jaws of a crocodile.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

§95 this is done by the relative who receives the ilibalaga, after he has finished it. He who receives the ilibalaga buries it, and while he is doing so he looks up country to the origin of the Nyakyusa, who moved down to the plain (MuNgonde); the officiator then tells them all to look up country. . . . The mother of twins meets her family and it means: 'I am all right now. I am clean, I am your friend, Kyala had bewitched me. . . .' On reaching home the women waits on the path . . . her husband (who has been with the ilibalaga to his people) likewise waits for his wife. . . . Then they both advance together and meet, and go into their house [not the temporary hut] and eat and drink together. This eating and drinking together means that their ritual is finished; they say: 'We have survived that rubbishy Kyala who had bewitched us (ngamile kwa jwaKyala ili jwa ngimile).'[1] They eat the food which has come from their own families together, first drinking together the beer. This is the end of the twin ritual as it has always been performed. People avoid the parents of twins for they say: 'He brings disease into our family.'

§96 From the time the twins are born until he moves their mother
§94 ritually, intercourse with any woman is taboo to the father of twins. After the ritual he may live with the mother (though she should not conceive again until the twins are running about), but he cannot visit his other wives. Only when she has given birth again—and had a normal delivery—is he free to live with his other wives. Should he break this taboo it is believed that the wife
•[75] with whom he breaks it will fall grievously ill with swelling of the legs and belly, and her father is entitled to claim a cow as damages. Some polygynists are said to circumvent the taboo in this way:

> The husband will go to the father of one of his wives and will take a cow to him and say: 'I have got twins, I petition for your daughter.' Then he can take her into his house and sleep with her, but with his other wives he cannot sleep until she has borne a child. When she does so, then he goes to the fathers of his other wives, taking a bull to each, and says: 'I have had a twin birth but now it is finished, and I am taking your daughters.' If the first wife thus taken bears no child, then he must take a cow to the father of another and try with her.

But several of our informants hold that no father in his senses would permit his daughter to be taken by her husband after he had fathered twins, until the mother of twins had herself borne a normal child.

§95 The isolation of the parents of twins from cattle also continues for some time. The father of twins does does not milk or enter a

[1] Mwalimbwile, commenting on the text, said: 'It is as if Kyala were finished (yakhisiili).' The causal implies that not a person, as it is usual with the proper name Kyala.

264 787 millet, beans and pumpkin with medicines. 'We fear lest the medicines we have drunk will turn round in the belly';[1] and they must be buried in a hut. 'If they are buried outside there will be drought and famine.'

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

866 862 The overt purpose of the twin ritual is plain to all Nyakyusa. Twin birth is thought to be contagious, causing other twin births, and also to make men and cattle ill. The ritual is to prevent this. Mwambelike, a middle-aged pagan, was explicit on the point:

> People are afraid to go to the house of a man with twins. They think that they will have twins themselves if they do, and we do not like twin births; they are taboo in the country. Or perhaps their legs will swell, or their bellies, or faces, if they go to his house. So we go to a doctor and he comes and sprinkles all the people in the village, even tiny children, and all the cattle. He takes a banana stalk to burn the twin birth (*pakulya ipwa*). He burns us because of the twin birth. The water is hot and medicated. He sprinkles us all with it and when we have all been treated we say we have been burnt because of the twin birth.

● 753 > When a man has begotten twins we are in awe of this Kyala (*ukukola Kyala ipo*). . . . If people drink out of the same vessel as the parents of twins, or if the father of twins sleeps with his other wives, this makes the disease increase, the disease of swelling legs and stomach; men catch it, the wives catch it, the children and fathers of the wives catch it. There is also a twin ceremony for cattle; if a cow drops twin calves we fear the same things. You, your wife and children drink medicines, and the cows are all sprinkled with medicine—but not your other relatives, or neighbours.
>
> Mwakolela himself said:
>
> If I did not wash and went to eat with my relatives, my legs would swell, I should pant and gasp. Swelling of the legs is due to our shades (*imisoko gwetu*) or perhaps Kyala beneath is angry (*Kyala pasi akalele*).

845 References to Kyala as the cause of twins are frequent:

> Kaayuma: The shades are in twin birth, and Kyala is there—it is he who gives two children. We drive them away. Kyala and the shades are together. When we bury the afterlaps in the banana grove I say: 'Kyala, leave my bellows (which means my wife) for me, you shades leave it for me.' If the shades are angry perhaps my penis is broken in copulation.
>
> Mwaikambo: I have not heard people speak of the shades in twin

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 34.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F3517 Ngundo F3517
Nyakyusa

895 and the doctor stands outside at the door. The doctor asks: 'Is it suc-
830 cessful?' [i.e. can you have intercourse with her?] and the man says: 'No, it is not successful.' Then all we *abangwe* (priests, officiants), the fathers of the girl who are there, and the fathers of the man, pray, in words only [i.e. without blowing out water], saying: 'Father, support us, Grandfather, support us, Kyala, support us, let not the ritual go on for ever.' And then the man is able to eject, and he tells the doctor: 'It's all right now.'

895 The disease comes from the twin birth (*ifipasi*) when a couple have
● 753 had twins (*bapasile*). If the relatives speak with them or tread in their footsteps when they [the relatives] are empty (*bawe*), not having drunk medicine, then their legs will swell up and they will have diarrhoea. No, they do not say that the private parts will swell, only the legs. The refusal of the ward to come is due to the shades (*imisimbi*). If a man has angered his father or mother who are alive, or if they are dead and he gives nothing to his sister, then those below, *bafungu*, are angry. *Imisimbi* catches hold of them and then when he begets twins he will have trouble at the ritual.

895 The women refuse to come also if the girl has angered her parents,
853 or if her husband has angered them. It's *imisimbi*. This copulation is an essential part of the ritual. If the parents of twins do not do this and you meet them afterwards, your legs will swell and dysentery will set in. The fearful ones [the parents of twins] have a fire and create sickness in us. We say: 'Kyala has loved [*ela*] you, he has created you so that you bear twin children. Now we speak with you.'

895 Yes, the old people said: 'Kyala and those below.' They said those below beg Kyala to give them two children. This was said of old, before the Europeans came. One who has himself had twins will not fear his relative who has twins for he says: 'I also am heavy (*ndi mito*), I am a fearful one, a parent of twins myself.' No one fears the twins themselves, but their parents are feared.

The child that follows twins (*ndili*), does not anoint himself at any later twin ritual. It is said that he finished before because he followed twins.

When the parents of twins leave the hut they run with a lighted piece of church,[1] followed by all the friends and relatives; the friends and relatives call out: 'You hit us with fire [i.e. you give us the disease].' They reply: 'We are pure (*ndi bola*) [i.e. we have no disease, it is finished]. Kyala has prayed for us.'

895 And at the death of a parent of twins the relatives fear to touch the
764 corpse until the twin doctor comes and puts a medicine in the hand of the corpse and sprinkles hot medicine on the legs of the relatives—then

[1] This was not seen or mentioned in the Selya ritual.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

they take hold of the corpse. But they wait for the doctor; if they do not do so the same disease will come—a swelling of legs and diarrhœa. An ordinary corpse is not feared in this way. 845 764 [753]

Yes, a man fears to take his other wives. He says: 'If I just go to them I shall give them the disease of the twins that I begot with this wife.' The wife he takes without precaution will swell in the legs and stomach, and pass blood with her stools. He first tries to have a child with the wife who bore twins, waiting till the twins are walking about. He lies with the mother of the twins but withdraws, and then, when the children are grown, he impregnates her. He does not go to the other wives. And if he asks for another wife before trying to impregnate the mother of the twins her father will refuse. If he takes her without asking, her father will make him pay a cow. He can only ask for another wife if the mother of the twins does not conceive. For one month[1] the husband refrains altogether from intercourse, then after the ritual he goes to his wife (the mother of the twins) but does not impregnate her. . . . A man is supposed to tell the twin doctor before he begets another child with his wife. He must do it openly, and not in secret. It is taboo to do it secretly. Nothing happens, but the doctor is angry, saying: 'Why did you not tell me, the doctor, the owner of the body?' 845 842 [834]

Themes already familiar from the death and puberty–marriage rituals recur again here. The parents of twins are isolated and cleansed like mourners and nubile girls. Contact with them is held to be dangerous because 'those below'—in this case Kyala and Mbasi rather than the shades—have brooded over them, and must be driven off before normal procreation can be resumed. After their isolation the *ilibalaga*—the symbol of their ritual union—must be offered to the shades of both lineages, that of the man and that of the woman. There is also the eating of balls of porridge, the symbol, in the other rituals, of the actions of a madman, but the fear of madness was not adduced by our informants as the purpose of the twin ritual; rather it is the formidable potency which produces two children instead of one, that is the danger—'the parents of twins have a fire'—and men protect themselves against it by burning themselves with hot medicines. They 'burn the twin birth'. 845 783

[1] Presumably longer when the seclusion and ritual lasted longer.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VII

RITUALS OF MISFORTUNE

845 An abnormal birth is the most dangerous misfortune that can befall a family in Nyakyusa society, and the ritual to ward off its expected results is the most elaborate, but there are lesser misfortunes also, which may be averted by simpler rituals.

753 (a) *Cleansing after spearing*

682 When one man has speared another and killed him, even though the action was legitimate (as slaying an enemy in battle, or a cattle thief or an adulterer caught *in flagrante delicto*), the slayer and his relatives dare not eat together with the relatives of the slain, or enter their houses, lest they themselves, and the kinsmen of the slain also, fall ill, coughing, spitting blood, and wasting away. This sickness is known as *ulukwego*, 'the disease of spearing'.[1] Both parties are thought to suffer primarily from contact with each other and both protect themselves by drinking medicines, but they drink separately, each engaging a doctor to treat them. We were told:

[763] If one man kills another it does not finish. He begets children and they die; an autopsy is performed and reveals fighting with spears (*isengene*)[2] The disease may not injure the slayer or his children, but the relatives with whom he eats and drinks, and so also on the other side; it may not hurt the children of the dead man, but those relatives with whom his children eat and drink.

We all fell ill, especially the brothers of the slain. The murderer always remembered to drink the medicine because he knew that he had killed someone, but when your brother was slain perhaps you forgot to drink the medicine. Then, afterwards, if you drank beer with someone, not knowing that it was he who had killed your brother, you fell ill.

783 The manner of treatment is as follows:

If I have killed someone they take me to a waterfall and make me

[1] *Inguego*: a spear. [2] *Ukusegana*: to fight together with spears.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

vomit by tickling the back of my throat with a hen's feather, while I 783
am standing under the fall with the water coming down on my head. The blood of him you have killed is in the waterfall. May it not come! May it all go out of the body! You vomit because it is there in the body. May it go out! Then a medicine is cooked and the legs of the slayer and his relatives are scalded with it. It is the medicine of twins: the twin medicine and the spearing medicine are one because they are a rejection of the blood. When people's legs have been splashed then we all shave; that is to drive away him whom we have killed.

But even after such treatment the kin of the slayer and the slain 783
fear to eat together. 'We remain enemies. If we eat with them it 602
makes us thin.'

Those who drink protective medicines are the agnatic kin of the slayer and the slain, their mothers' kin (*abipwa*) and their wives, but not their affines. 'Those who must be treated are wives, and blood relatives but not affines. Affines are of different blood, but wives are of your flesh.'

The spearing ritual is not a joint ritual in which a large group 783
of kin participate; married men, even brothers, make their own arrangements for taking protective medicine.

We do not meet together with all our relatives, the descendants of one man, no, it is not like the twin ritual. We drink it each man with his wives and children in his house. If I have a married brother he also goes to a doctor to ask for medicines for himself. He seeks his own doctor, not the one to whom I went. We drink separately, we do not meet together when we drink.

Only if a daughter had been given in compensation for a murder 783
(as sometimes happened) and later he who married her took mar- 682
riage cattle to her father to establish kinship, then, our informants said, the two parties should drink the 'medicine of spearing' (*unkota gwa lukwego*) together.

(*b*) *Rotting the ropes*

A man who has been bound with ropes (*ingoje*), or has committed 753
suicide by hanging,[1] or raided cattle and tethered them, is also 681

[1] What the incidence of suicide is among the Nyakyusa we do not know. The Rev. Merensky, one of the first Europeans to live in the area, speaks of it being 'not uncommon'. We recorded two cases: one of a man whose wife and children had died; the other a woman forced to leave her lover and marry against her will. X, a Christian whom we knew well, swore to his pagan elder brother that he would commit suicide if his brother insisted on the pagan practice of performing an autopsy on the body of their dead sister. [762]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

753 681 believed to be a danger to his kin and descendants, but in a manner somewhat different from the one who has killed another. The sickness is thought to come from the ropes and is called *ingoje* after them.

Mwaikambo explained:

[783] If one member of a family commits suicide by hanging then his surviving relatives, if they do not drink a medicine, will die of the 'ropes', always. If a man hangs himself all his relatives fear; if a woman only her children.

Kasitile's wife, Kiluleli, had borne ten children, but all save one had died. He said:

It is because of the ropes of her father. They bound him at Tukuyu; he died in gaol; it is those ropes which are killing my children. I said to her father [i.e. the heir]: 'Let us go to divine,' but he has not yet agreed to do so.

The death of Mukwabila, a junior kinsman of the Chief Mwaipopo, whose funeral we attended, was attributed to the ropes used to tether cattle raided by his grandfather. Kasitile, himself a distant agnatic kinsman, explained this case also:

One of the fathers of Mukwabila was killed by the hill people. They seized him on the road. So in revenge Mwamusiku, the father of [317] Mukwabila, took twenty cows belonging to the hill people as they passed north, coming from the salt lick. This was long ago. Then Mukwabila's father omitted to kill a cow for those who had helped him to secure the cows. So they were angry and brought *ingoje*—the disease of ropes—upon him. After seizing the cattle he moved to Mwambebule's country in the hills and he was quite well, but then he came back to live here, first sending two cows to the Chief Mwaipopo, but killing none for the people, who were angry and said: 'Why does he not kill for us? What sort of chief is he?' He got weak and fell ill and died. They [763] did not perform an autopsy, saying it was forbidden to do it on a chief, and his son died also and was not examined, but now when the younger son died, Mwaipopo said: 'Let us examine him so that we may know.' And it is that old *ingoje*. . . .

The sickness of ropes (*ingoje*) is of three sorts coming from: (1) the suicide (by hanging) of a relative long ago; (2) the binding of a man by other people, as distinct from a man binding himself; and (3) the shocked astonishment of men and their breath. In dreams they put the sickness of ropes into his stomach, they say: 'May the sickness of ropes [828] come into his stomach.' The sickness of ropes lies in wait for an heir. A man dies and the sickness comes on his heir, others are all right; so it

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

goes on. Mwamusiku was never bound, but we say it was that sickness 753
of the ropes of the cattle that he seized from the hill people. Perhaps the 681
people of that country were shocked, and the sickness is due to their breath, to witchcraft. Perhaps the owners of the cattle took the ropes they had used for tying up the cattle which were stolen, to a doctor to be cooked with medicine. We have not discovered the details yet, we [787] have not yet been to divine; the divination will tell us, however. But the medicine for rotting the ropes (*imbosyo*) is the same for all these illnesses from ropes, so we cook it immediately, before going to divine. We divine when we clear away the litter. The cooking of medicine at the grave now is to rot him who has died that the sickness of ropes (*ingoje*) may not come on us. Yes, only the heir fears to die, but we others fear lest we fall ill, coughing. The sickness of ropes does not kill us, but makes us ill and thin. Yes, I drank and ate the medicine myself. After the divination we drink another medicine, in beer, not the *itemelo* beer. They brew another lot just for the medicine.

We saw the drinking of medicine 'to rot the ropes' at Mukwa- 783
bila's funeral. He was buried at Kasitile's homestead and Kasitile 764
was organizing the proceedings. The doctor dug a hole at the foot of the grave and put into it a length of green wood which projected a foot or so above the level of the ground. On this was balanced a pot, and a fire was lighted beneath it. In the pot she boiled certain leaves and roots. She took a large drinking calabash, put in some ash from a fire-brand, added some of the same species of leaves as had gone into the pot, and stirred up the mixture with water. This mixture was drunk by the relatives present and fifteen or twenty leaf cups were made to send to those who had not come. Medicated porridge was also made and some was eaten by the relatives present.

Then the pot was taken off the fire. We were told: 'We are praying (*tulipakwiputa*). We want to take the pot off the fire.' No words were said, but the medicines were taken out of the pot by the deceased's father's sister (the oldest surviving member of the lineage) to prepare more porridge for those relatives who had not attended, and the officiant poured the water into a hole which she made in the middle of the grave. She covered it again with earth.

While the officiant was preparing the medicine at the grave, Kasitile, who was helping her, said to a half-brother of the deceased:

Pray earnestly with this medicine, be on good terms with others.
HALF-BROTHER: Me? What case was there against me?

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

578
difficult labour is from this, not from adultery. And in a case of difficult 775
labour her husband does pray to his shades.
[845]

All were agreed that a woman is in the power of the shades of 775
her father's lineage and if her father is angry with her, or with his 578
son-in-law her husband, his shades afflict her, causing her to be 613
barren or to have miscarriages, or ailing children. Hence a woman who is barren or ill, or whose children are sickly, often returns to her father's homestead so that he may pray for her, and she sleeps there on the night of the ritual, for the shades come by night. More rarely, if she has quarrelled with her father, she goes outside her husband's homestead and, facing towards her father's home, she prays herself on the pathway. But in all the cases we traced in which a woman's ancestors were believed to have made her, or her child, ill, there was a dispute between her father (or his heir) and her husband over marriage-cattle or the bull of puberty; and we were told that her father's shades 'are angry only if marriage-cattle have not been paid, and for no other reason', thus it seems that the control of her father's shades over a married woman is in fact somewhat limited.

The characteristic illness sent by the shades is sores round the 753
mouth, and fever—an illness which is not acute and clears up 775
quickly. These symptoms are immediately interpreted as *imindu*, 777
affliction from the shades. Beer going sour before it is mature is also *imindu*, usually thought to be caused by quarrels between husband and wife. But almost any misfortune, mild or serious, is interpreted as *imindu* if members of the lineage are conscious of quarrels between themselves, or with their spouses or fathers-in-law.

The ritual consists in the reconciliation of the living in the 783
presence of the dead and, if the misfortune is serious, a sacrifice of flesh, fish, or fowl. The junior begs pardon of his senior who acknowledges his anger and expresses forgiveness by taking a mouthful of water from his calabash cup (*ulupindi*) and blowing it out (*ukwiputa*) in his sacred banana grove. For the patient to recover, or the blight on crops or fish-traps to be removed, *the senior kinsman must confess his anger*, and spitting, or blowing out water, is a symbol of confession and forgiveness. Mwaisumo was explicit on the matter: 'If a father is angry with his son or daughter he may say, some day: "I forgive you now" and spit on the ground: all the anger that is in him comes out like spit.' *Ukuswa* means both 'to

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

593 send the son into his father's house. He walks through the whole house
789 and the mothers acclaim him. This is the sign to show everybody that
783 he has entered his father's house. The women call the *akalulu*. They are rejoicing because he has entered.

There are, however, some who do not return to their fathers. They remain strangers [*abandu* as opposed to *abakamu*] until their death. There is a young man at my home who took his father's wife. Where he fled to no one knows because he is still in hiding. His father separated from him altogether.

A son must always bring something and the father must collect his friends. If they just agree with one another and people do not eat any-
●[753] thing, then the son will not be settled in well. He will be ill. They say that the illness comes from the shades. If the father is angry he mutters (*ikwibunesya*) and they hear. At first the people are not angry, but later on, when they have heard from the father about the matter, they also are angry. It is as if they help the father to mutter. Their shades are not there, only those of the father's lineage, but his shades have regard to the people. If the people do not eat anything and are not present, they are not satisfied even though the father is satisfied. The father prays to his shades alone in the evening with water in his mouth, and they pour out beer on the hearth-bricks.

764 KASITILE: If a rich commoner has died and the heir buries him with
556 only one cow, the shades and people are angry with the heir, breath
783 falls on his body; perhaps he falls ill, or perhaps his child falls ill. But they do not meet; people, the witches, are angry and the shades are angry; the shades because they have buried him with only one cow, people because they have not eaten meat, but the shades and people are independent of each other. The oracle says: 'The shades are angry,' it does not speak of people. It knows that people also are angry, but it speaks only of the shades. And when he makes amends he prays in the evening; the next day he calls people and kills a cow and he throws the *ija mmapa* meat in the banana grove and says: 'Here it is, Father,' and people say: 'Indeed, he did wrong, his father was angry.' But they do not confess, saying: 'We were angry.' No, they say: 'The shades were angry.'

754 Another type of case is that in which 'the breath of men' is
783 believed to have fallen on an infant because of its mother's disrespectful behaviour towards her husband's parents or husband's father's sister. When a child is thin and ailing with *ingoto*, the cure is for the mother to confess to the doctor who comes to treat the child all the rude things she has said, and provide beer (exceptionally a bull) to offer to her injured parents-in-law. They drink the beer with their neighbours and wish her well. Ambilikile's wife

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

775 and appearance—the mind of a child is tenacious. If one comes whom
828 I never knew, I note his appearance in the dream and next day I tell my friends and relatives about it. Then perhaps an old woman, my grandmother, will say: 'That is how So-and-so used to look.' Perhaps I dream of someone wearing brass body-rings, with a plume nodding on his head. Then the older ones know him and tell me it is So-and-so. In the old days, in the days of our mothers, if we dreamed of eating food like this my relatives would say: 'They have come to fetch him; he will get disease and die soon; he has eaten the food of the shades.'
775 But in European times now it is different. . . . Our mothers fear such
828 dreams; there is a medicine to put on the walls. If I always dream like
177 this they bring it and say: 'It's forbidden to dream of the shades.'

QUESTION: And now?

KITITU: Now if dreams come true we say that the man who had dreamed is a prophet.

828 QUESTION: Are all dreams pregnant with trouble?

KITITU: Yes, dreams usually mean trouble. Suppose I love a girl and want to marry her, and then I dream of marriage, of having the cattle and going and being accepted by her fathers who are all present [in the dream], then I rejoice and I hope.[1] Then I begin to think of going to earn the cattle, and I go to work and come back with three or four cattle and go to hand over the marriage-cattle. All ends happily, but it might not. Perhaps they will accept me, perhaps not.

At work I dream that a sister has died, and I find it is true, then I think other dreams will be true. . . . I fear that perhaps my death is near. I go to a doctor and say I want a medicine, he gives me some to put under my head and sleep on. He grinds a medicine and tell me to sprinkle it in the room.

775 It is generally agreed that dreams of the dead are not welcomed:
828 If I speak of the recently dead others will say: 'Don't speak of them, they are dead.' Then I take a coal from the fire and say: 'Do not come in dreams.' If the shade comes it always means trouble.

And the only occasions of prayer to the shades are when men are in trouble and anticipate misfortune.

We never pray except when there is trouble. No, we never pray to give thanks. Why should we? There is nothing to grumble at!

673 (*c*) *Belief and behaviour*

●753 In the Nyakyusa view there is a direct and immediate link be-
777 tween misfortune and wrong-doing. When illness befalls a man,

[1] Kititu's father delayed long in providing him with marriage-cattle. The following year he eloped with a girl.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

or his crops fail, or his cattle die, he reflects on any quarrels he may have had with kinsmen or affines or neighbours, and on any rituals he should have performed and has omitted wholly or in part. He may be quite clear in his own mind that the misfortune is due to some particular wrong-doing (*inongwa*)—perhaps a quarrel with a brother, or neglect to kill for his new neighbours on his inheritance from his father—and proceed directly to patch up the quarrel and perform the neglected ritual. More often he thinks of several possible causes and lays them before the oracle, relying upon it to select between them. How several possible causes of misfortune occurred to the chief sufferers, their kinsmen and neighbours, is shown in the cases of Enesi, Katasya, Mwambuputa and Mpoma quoted at the end of the book (pp. 258 ff.).

No linguistic distinction is made between an offence punished by the courts and one thought to be punished by the shades; both are wrong-doings (*inongwa*), and there is no sharp distinction between an offence against a living kinsman and an offence against a dead one. In short, there is no clear conception of 'sin' as opposed to 'tort' or 'crime'.

There are two themes constantly recurring in Nyakyusa theology: firstly, men must observe the traditional rituals (both positive and negative) or they will go mad; and secondly, the anger of senior relatives and neighbours will injure unless it is confessed and goodwill expressed.

The first conception is a magical one:[1] what is required is the performance or avoidance of particular acts in a particular form on particular occasions; the second is sacramental, it is 'anger in the heart' that is dangerous, and no ritual is held to be efficacious without a change of heart.

Often the two conceptions are not consciously related to one another: again and again one is told: 'The rituals must be performed or men will go mad,' and there is no reference to the state of mind of the performers; but on certain occasions they overlap explicitly, as when Kasitile adjured his kinsmen to confess all while they were performing the ritual to 'rot the ropes'; and always there is a symbolic connection, for the rituals themselves express the value of amity between kinsmen, of respect for seniors and obligation towards juniors.

The neglect of the marriage ritual is itself an expression of disrespect for parents or parents-in-law, and a breach of the sex code,

[1] In the sense defined by G. & M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 89-95.

2:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

went to catch the junior brother who was there, but from that time he 754
has been ill.

QUESTION: Did Mwamukinga (the sorcerer) come to the funeral and 754
did they give him meat? 764

MWANYOSO: Yes, he came.

QUESTION: Is he not ashamed? Do people agree that they have worked sorcery against someone?

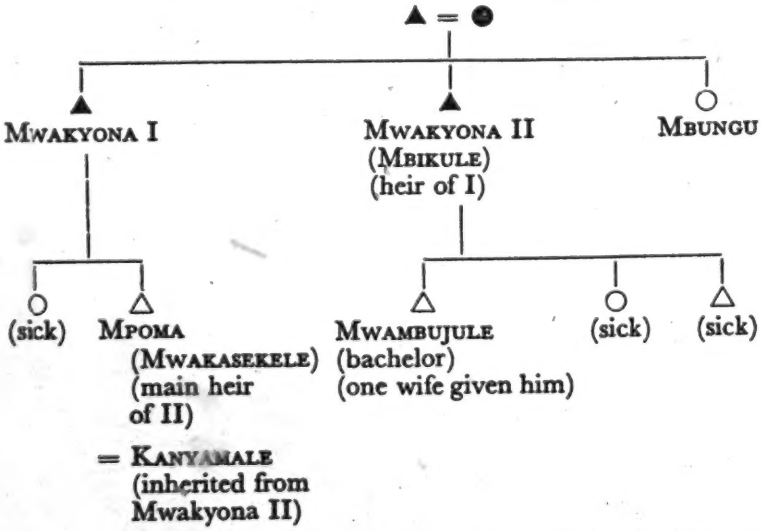
MWANYOSO: They deny it.

QUESTION: Did they give him meat?

MWANYOSO: Yes, they gave it to him.

(b) Sickness in the lineage of Mwakyona

The following case also illustrates how several possible causes of misfortune were considered—sorcery between kinsmen who were quarrelling over inheritance, the anger of the shades, and the jealousy of neighbours were mentioned. It shows, further, how expression of goodwill by those thought to be injuring a man is necessary for his recovery. The doctor treating the patient made the kinsmen confess their anger and gave them a medicine guaranteed to kill anyone working sorcery. 753



MWAIKAMBO: When Mwakyona died, his younger brother, Mwakyona the younger, whom they call Mbikule, inherited. But Mbikule also died, so they sought Mwakionde (the doctor and brother of the chief) and they asked him: 'To whom shall we give the inheritance?' The village elders, their fathers—those of the house—and their father's sisters, were those who saw to the matter of the inheritance. Then 428

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

MPOMA: 'I am ashamed, and also I am very angry, because people say it is I who am working sorcery against them, although when they were ill I carried them to my house.'[1] 754 578

Mpoma turned back on the road when they sent medicine for the sick man (i.e. he did not go to the sick man).

A WOMAN: 'Why do they work sorcery against one another when they are both left?'

ANOTHER WOMAN: 'The wives of Mbikule say Mpoma says: "Let me be alone, let me kill all of them and get everything for myself by cunning."'

MWAMBUJULE: 'Since I carried him to my place I said the illness would not be serious. He also sent a message to *your* place, Mpoma, saying that he was ill, and asking for some milk, but you did not send any.'

MPOMA: 'No one told me.'

THE WOMAN: 'The widows fight with Mpoma. They say: "You have eaten a medicine to work sorcery against your fellows."'

KANYAMALE: 'Also they speak of his wrongdoing, in not approaching the sick man.'

ANOTHER WOMAN: 'Yes, and also you are angry.'

MPOMA: 'See, when they said the present patient was still ill, I prayed, I said aloud: "What am I doing? Get away, what am I doing?" and I sent a medicine and he recovered.'

A WOMAN: 'We consulted an oracle, it said: "It is Mwakyona who is angry," but I said: "What is he angry about?" The oracle said: "He is angry on account of cattle." He says: "Why does he fear me when he has taken cattle?" So we said: "Mwakyona is angry because he has taken cattle."' 787

THE MBUNGUS (Mwakyona's sisters): 'We like him (the shade), let him come.' 753

WOMAN: 'They are jealous of the sick man [i.e. a third cause suggested. The unreasonable jealousy of his neighbours]. He dies like his father. People say: "He eats meat in our houses, he borrows our cloths," and he dies of their unreasonable jealousy (*akabini*)!'

The women and the men said: 'Thank you, Mwakionde, because you have made us think of these things [he had taken the initiative in prayer]. You make us make friends, and make us love one another, and bless one another.'

Mwakionde spoke, saying: 'There are many, many roads on which people travel and there is one road through which illness enters.' They say that if many people are with a sick man then the illness spreads. 782

They also prayed, confessing their anger in the case of Kanyamale, [783]

[1] 'It is the custom to carry people to the "father", the head of the family, when very sick. This is not supposed to cure them, but it is customary (*loluvibo*). That is where we all are ill, at their father's place.'

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

586 parties brought the dispute to the test of intercourse with others. Again, if daughters die one after another, their death is assumed to be due to the [753] disease called *kitasya* in the mother, and she is divorced. A wife who goes out in the morning while her husband is still abed, is doing a very foolish thing, for there is at least the possibility that she is providing ground for divorce. General laziness and uselessness, inability or refusal to carry out the ordinary household duties, if persisted in, lead to divorce.

On the other hand, while ordinary unfaithfulness in the husband gives the wife no ground for an appeal for divorce, no woman will tolerate incest by her husband, but will demand instant release. Beating a wife and starving her will bring down father or brothers in wrath to demand the release of their ward; but beating alone only if merciless and persistent. The right of a husband to beat his wife within reason is not questioned. There are other grounds on which the wife may claim divorce, and also the husband, but in both cases they are such as cannot appear in print.

When a husband's demand for divorce has been granted, all the cattle given to the woman's father are returned, along with the increase which has taken place. British justice, with more fairness, deducts one-fifth or one-quarter of the number of cattle (plus increase) for each child born, the remainder going back to the husband. The children belong to the father, to whom belong also children unborn or too young to leave the mother. When the time comes,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

with the Germans, was struck in the forehead by a 784
bullet, he immediately removed the wound to his leg, where it was harmless. His *amafumu* (subordinate chiefs), however, sternly ordered him to replace it; for he had been toying with Christianity, to the disgust of his subordinates, who, seeing a chance to get rid of him, eagerly seized it, and Mwakalinga passed to his fathers. Mwafongo at Karonga has the same power, and there may be others.

War is attended with so many religious ceremonies 784
that the *tabus* connected with it are best taken under 703
this head. Cowardice in battle is *mwiko*, and the coward gets no share of the spoils. There is a beer feast as part of the preparation for war; but drunkenness before a battle is strictly forbidden. At the approach of war, husbands and wives must not live together, and he who is guilty of illegal intercourse will be killed at the first spear throw, before he has had time to throw his own spear; while a chief who is given to such acts will be defeated, and his men slain.

Prohibitions due to fear of infection are very 784
numerous. One must not pass over the outstretched 753
legs of another, for the offender will be "caught" by any disease from which the offended may be suffering; but a slight nip in the leg of the other by the offender wards off evil consequences. It is *mwiko* to throw a spear at a hyena, for the animal may escape with a wound, and barrenness will result for the offender, unless he goes at once to get counteracting medicines. If your father comes to visit you, you

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

784 must not give him your own mat to sit on; he sits on
753 a leaf, which is thrown away when he leaves you; otherwise your wives will become thin, and will have no children. It is *mwiko* for an aunt to pat a nephew or niece on the buttocks, lest any disease she has may pass over to them. A man in an epileptic fit must not be roused; he who rouses him will himself become epileptic!

784 The saliva is sacred, and is often used in religious ceremonies; but to spit upon a man is *mwiko*, and may bring itch and scab if payment is not made. The kidneys of an animal may be eaten only if given to you by a chief, or handed on the point of a spear; death of your children is the penalty of neglect of this precaution. Disease clings to the drug that is used to cure it; what is left must be thrown away where no one passes, lest a chance passer-by touching it with his foot be smitten by the disease. For possibly similar reasons, the family of a murdered man must not have friendly relations with the family of the murderer until the necessary ceremonies have been attended to: the spear that killed their friend may kill them too; that is to say, they may be smitten with a disease which reasonable men will trace to their folly in being friendly with hostile persons. The leaves upon which a man sat while his case was being tried have mysterious powers in them; a sorcerer may make deadly medicine out of them: therefore it is *mwiko* not to throw them carefully away.

The blood of a lion killed in the hunt must not be

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

262 To-day there are many, even among the heathen, who say grace before food; only the older men now follow the ancient custom of laying aside a small portion of every meal for the spirits. But there are many superstitions nevertheless among young and old. There is a family at Itete which eats neither flesh nor fish, nor ground nuts, any of which cause violent vomiting. Others will eat fish but not flesh, and *vice versa*. 262 Eland and bushbuck bring on leprosy in some •753 families; goat brings ringworm; rhinoceros gives people a white skin; and hippo is very dangerous in the neighbourhood of lepers; for lepers are buried in ant-hills, but they soon remove and betake themselves to the water, and enter the body of a hippo; so, if you eat hippo, you may be eating leper! Nyakyusa women will not eat a fowl, for fowls in the night cry out the names of ancestors! But a cock which gives a faint cry in the early morning is quite safe. There are many who have abandoned all these beliefs, but the vast majority of the people still cling to them.

273 *Drinking.*—Beer is drink for men and gods; or if not for gods, it is a drink urgently demanded by the spirits. With few exceptions, it is offered at all religious ceremonies, but there is no special way of making the beer for the offering; it differs from ordinary beer only in that the cereal (*malesi*) from which it is made is contributed by all the people, while that used at an ordinary feast is made from *malesi* provided by the entertainer. Even at these feasts, however, a little is spilled on the ground

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

bananas, were placed at the door of Mwakindingo his prophet, and if in the morning the quantity was found to be less, it was clear to all that *Mbasi* had come to receive the offerings. 776 782

But the trick worked too often. As the fear of *Mbasi* diminished, men began to take advantage of their still credulous neighbours, and to demand in the name of the fading divinity cattle, beer, food supplies, to be sent to the places indicated by the impersonator of the God. This became so common that the Germans, who then ruled the country, interfered and put it down.

Very long ago there lived near Karonga a man called Firaguli, who after his death became a godlet, and lived on the mountain which now goes by his name. There was also a great man called Kambwe, who entered the ranks of the gods or godlets at his death, and lived in the pool a few miles from Karonga, to which in like manner he has given his name. To both of these divinities the people prayed in long-past times; and both, though able to see to the general welfare of the people, were not strong enough to punish them when evil was prevalent. When punishment was necessary, they called in the help of Mwanjebe, a minor deity of the neighbouring Henga people. Firaguli went south on a favouring breeze to invite his more powerful neighbour to come to his help; and Mwanjebe, who lived in a pool at the foot of a waterfall near the Overtoun Institution, came up on a floating island. Then smallpox broke out among the people, and if a visit to Kambwe showed 776 753 755

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

776 that the pool was bubbling, it was evident that
753 Mwanjebe was there, and must be got rid of as soon
755 as possible. Prayers and promises of repentance were offered, and if that did not satisfy the god, more drastic measures were taken. A great stone was heated and tumbled into the pool, around which gathered a great multitude of people, stabbing fiercely at the water with spears and reeds, to drive off the unwelcome deity. The cessation of the bubbling showed that he had gone, and the fact was still further proved when the smallpox ceased. All three godlets are now mere memories, and, except as memories, they have completely vanished, leaving the field clear for the ancestral spirits and the Supreme Being.

771 There was in the worship, if indeed a determined effort to drive off the deity could be called worship, "no stimulus to the realization of the riches which are given to man in his own nature." The gods presented no problems, for all problems were solved long ago by the fathers; and hence man's relation to them contained nothing upon which the faculties might work and be developed. The religion was stagnant, and the people were stagnant with it.

There was no art; not even rude representations of the gods; no poetry arising out of a feeling of devotion, for devotion there was none. In the case of the godlets I have mentioned, even the qualities which caused them to take rank as gods after death have been forgotten. It may be that the stories of "the brave days of old," to be related in a later chapter, afford us a hint of how the process of deifica-

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

distinguished for the drastic action of the people, who, exasperated by the frequent disappearance of children, tumbled an immense heated stone into the pool, and so drove out the spirits, who to this day dwell in a pool in the Sango country, "where the white men go to see them." 776

Yet another class are the mountain or hill spirits. Offerings are made to them by people climbing steep hill-sides. A stone is picked up, breathed upon, and laid upon a large flat stone, or in the fork of a tree, with the prayer, "May my feet be light." These stones are to be seen to-day in small heaps on many a steep ascent. Sometimes more valuable offerings were made, though these have now ceased. A fowl, a sheep, or a goat, was brought, and left alive to meet whatever fate might be in store for it. These spirits, like those of the water, are pre-human, and hostile to mankind, upon whom they bring many diseases. Belief in them is dying out, and the younger people know little or nothing about them. [753]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

failure of crops, of increase of livestock, of children, 776
by too little or too much rain, or by ill-success in hunting or fishing; and, very emphatically, by a sudden death.

The prayer and ceremony at the presentation of a 782
new-born child have already been given. More pathetic is the prayer offered when a child is ill. Standing at the sacred banana grove, the family representative prays:

> "... and now this little one whom I hold in my hands, be gracious to him. He [she] has come into a world of sickness, of cold, of all the troubles that you yourselves were familiar with. Let him lie in peace. Let none in the spirit-land be angry with him. To-morrow he will be full-grown, and he will bring you beer, flesh, flour. Pray to God for him. O God, who art Lord of all, let thy breath be cool upon him (liti, Let thy spittle be cool upon him)."

Then, spitting on the child's breast and back, he says:

> "And thou child, may there be life in thee. God be gracious unto thee. Live in peace and be not wearied."

Not all diseases are due to the anger of the spirits; [753]
a natural illness is one that yields to treatment. It is the act of God, and when the right medicine has been used, cure will follow, for God does not need to be entreated as the spirits do. Yet the spirits carry their petitions to God, as if He did need to be entreated,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

761 that the sick man should die, and there is nothing more that can be done. Numerous instances have been cited to me of recovery of sick persons when all had been correctly performed; and scepticism on the subject was received with almost incredulous amazement. And there is no reason to doubt that in many cases recovery did follow; for the conviction in the mind of the patient that the wrath of the offended spirit had been averted, would, according to modern ideas of psychology, have a healing effect also upon his body.

•753 Smallpox is the disease most dreaded by the people, and its approach was accompanied with most elaborate 782 ceremonies. The subject is dealt with again under "Witchcraft" and "Medicine." It might come either through the action of the spirits or through [787] witchcraft. In either case its approach is foreseen by the *abakunguluka* (prophets) in dreams, and the chief and his subordinates go to the grave of the ancestors, and there, by night, a black ram is killed. The lungs and liver are roasted, and laid in little heaps on the grave, each ancestor being named as his portion is laid down, and prayer is offered:

> "Ye fathers, look upon us in mercy. Drive away from us this plague, lest our children die, and none be left in the land. Send it to the Basango or the Basafwa, but save us. Pray to God for us. Hear, O God, the words of those we have named. And go to the west, O God, or to the Basango."

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

The flesh is now eaten roasted, and the stomach of the animal, filled with medicines not known to me, is given to an old man, and the skin placed on his back; with these he goes, by night, through the whole district covered by the prayer. If the journey is not finished in one night, he lies in a village until it is dark again, care being taken that he is seen by none, and completes his circuit. On his return, the chief calls all the people together, and declares that if the disease is the work of witchcraft, the evil ones will certainly be discovered and punished; but if it is the work of the spirits, "we have prayed to them to send it far hence to the Basango." Family ceremonies, of a similar nature, follow, each head of a family offering a little beer to his ancestors. At Karonga this latter ceremony has almost entirely been abandoned. There, however, the prophet to whom the coming of smallpox has been revealed goes about the villages, crying, "*ilibofu, ilibofu, ilibofu*" (smell, of dead bodies), a dreadful cry, which brings the people in a mass to the chief to demand the performance of the ceremonies. Similar prayers are offered when mumps, dysentery, or widespread eye disease visits the community.

When a man is about to set out on a journey, his father gives him his blessing, and prays to the spirits for him, adding:

> "May lion and leopard and hyena, crocodile and snake and falling tree, be far from you, and may you return in peace."

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

both still living near the lake shore; but the Germans knew nothing of the prophecy. The effect of it, however, was that no local carriers could be recruited, and most of the carriers employed were found among the Basango to the north. Next, it was asserted that the Germans would evacuate Neu Langenburg without fighting, which is what actually happened; and, finally, about the same time, it was declared that the "first-comers" would become lords of the country. These first-comers were Mr. Moir of Glasgow and his companions, who hunted elephant north of the Songwe River in the early eighties. Dr. Laws of Livingstonia visited the north end of the lake much earlier, but that visit did not make the same impression as the more prolonged stay of Mr. Moir and his fellow-hunters.

Smallpox is the most dreaded scourge in the district. It is believed to come from the south, pass through the land, and finally to disappear among the Basango to the north, to whom the Konde consigned, with much gusto, all the evils that they were threatened or afflicted with. Its coming was foretold by the prophets, who declared that it was an act of God in punishment of wickedness. But smallpox was sometimes brought by the sorcerers. These enemies of society were caught in the act—in dreams—by the prophets, who also, in dreams, went out to meet and repel them. If the evil-doers were caught and beaten, their bodies next day would betray them, for the dream-fight is a stern reality, and the body bears the marks of battle. If the prophets succeeded in

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

driving out all the sorcerers, no one would die of smallpox, but one remaining sorcerer could work unlimited mischief so long as he remained undiscovered.

In a community which practises "subsistence agriculture," it is important to know beforehand when the rains will be late, and it is the duty of the prophets to let the chief know, and through him the people, when this will happen. In such a contingency, the chief issues instructions, varying in minuteness, regulating the kinds of food which are to be used, and warning against greed. Punishment used to follow disregard of the prohibition, but the chiefs, although they still issue orders as before, do not now venture to punish offenders, or at any rate they punish none who would be likely to report them to the Administration.

Famine, however, was not always the result of drought. It was often, in the past, the result of war. When a powerful enemy approached, the people left the villages and took refuge in the bush, sometimes for long periods, leaving all that they could not carry to fall into the hands of the invader. The last occasion on which such a famine was foretold was when the Angoni passed through the land seeking a habitation. The people fled before them, and a famine resulted which is still traditionally remembered. With such a powerful enemy approaching, the prophets had an easy task in foreseeing famine.

The death of chiefs is also foretold. The prophets see in dreams the house of a chief being built in the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

snake. It emerges from the pool, with a *hu hu* sound, and the runner flies for his life towards the hut, pursued by the snake. Attracted by the sprinkled food, it climbs all over the hut, and is cut to pieces on the knives. After a little, and usually at night, the doctor in charge goes out to reconnoitre, and, finding the dead body, sends to tell all the surrounding chiefs and big doctors; who come, protected by a powerful prophylactic, for even the dead *inyifwira* can kill the unprotected. Each chief gets a portion of the flesh, a large share going to Chungu, who in turn distributes it to his leading subordinates and doctors. The blood is collected and sold, a small portion for a cow, to smaller men, who have no natural right to it.

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The dread in which this medicine (*ifingira* it is now called) is held by the common people, is extraordinary. At Karonga in 1923 a man was accused of attempting to poison another. On his person was found a small packet done up in bark-cloth, which no native in the court would touch; and when the magistrate took it into his hands and proceeded to open it, the court was cleared in an instant. Whether it was the medicine made from the *inyifwira* snake, I do not know; but it undoubtedly belonged to that class of medicines.

Illnesses may be due to natural causes, which the native calls God. They yield to treatment without any ceremony. The prayer already quoted indicates the Konde attitude to such diseases. Secondly, illness may be due to witchcraft, and then there is no hope of cure until the sorcerer has been outwitted by

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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde_FN17

753 the use of both drugs and ceremonies. Next, the action of the spirits brings on diseases, and until the cause of their anger has been dealt with, no doctor will undertake to cure the patient. Wounds or injuries in battle, by falling trees, by attack of animals, or by any other means, may be due to any of the above causes.

759 The doctor may be a man or a woman. The fee varies from about a farthing to a sixty shilling cow, and the manner of payment varies also. In some cases payment precedes treatment; in others, it follows; and in still others the degree of cure effected decides the amount to be paid.

757 In what follows, no attempt is made at scientific classification; rather a rough grouping of symptoms guides the sequence of items. Medicines are usually administered in beer or in milk, hot or cold, according to the disease which is being treated. And the place where the decoction is drunk is very important; in snake bite, for instance, it is fatal for the patient to go inside the house before the medicine has been taken which it is hoped will save his life. A native Christian was, in 1913, suspended from ordinances for drinking medicine while seated on a banana stem at a place where two paths met.

828 Mental troubles of various kinds are treated, and not, I am assured, without success in some cases.
757 *Maya* is grief, due to any cause. It is treated by giving
278 an infusion of a plant called *nsabe*, not unlike parsley in appearance. The result is great cheerfulness in the patient, due, no doubt, to exhilarating qualities in

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

were dealt with by the local rulers or by the family-heads, not by the central authorities. It was only occasionally that general fears or misfortunes turned all men's thoughts together to Mbande. 771 643 565

Now the great-commoners of every chief were believed to have independent access to his ancestral spirits and this gave them a spiritual hold over him. If they compared him too unfavourably with his predecessors then, it was believed, those predecessors might hear and afflict him in various ways. And so it was also with the nobles of Ngonde and the reigning Kyungu. But as this belief was intimately linked with the belief in witchcraft it will be more conveniently analysed in that context.[1] 622

(b) *THE MAGICAL ELEMENT.*

Magic (the belief that certain particular objects, events, words or actions, involving particular people in particular situations, possessed in themselves an extraordinary power) was an essential ingredient of the old pagan religion of Ngonde. While the greatest magical object in the country was, traditionally, the body of the Kyungu. And the fact that the central political authority of Ngonde was so largely vested in the nobles of Ngonde was due above all to their responsibility for controlling this magical object in the public interest. 789 643

If the Kyungu cut himself, and more particularly if his blood fell to the ground, then it was the duty of the nobles of Ngonde to kill him, lest the whole land be afflicted with disease; and if he was ill likewise. "They considered that if his blood fell to the ground that was his life falling. And they likened him to a god, considering it taboo for a god to be wounded; they thought that if his blood fell to the ground it would turn into a sickness and all the people would die. And so, when the Kyungu was wounded, they thought it best to put him out of the way and start afresh with a new one. They thought it taboo for him to have even the tiniest wound on his body. And it was equally taboo for him to fall ill; everyone else, it was believed, would fall ill too; it was better to put him out of the way so that the people should keep well." 789 643 784 753

In consequence of this belief elaborate precautions were taken to maintain the Kyungu's health. Sexual impurity was believed to be magically dangerous to health in many ways and so the Kyungu, above all men, must be guarded from it. It was not considered safe even for his own wives to cook his food, lest one of them touch it during a menstrual period, and so young boys who had not yet reached puberty 789 643 834

[1] *Vide infra* section 3 (c).

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

593 they continually give each other cows ; between their respective sons also the exchange usually continues, but between their grandsons it lapses. 593 Reciprocity is expected and can be legally enforced, but it is not insisted 686 upon so long as the two men concerned are friends, and its legal enforcement at once breaks the relationship. If two such half-brothers (or their sons) quarrel, one may take legal action for " separation " (*okolekana*) against the other. The cows that have been handed over by both sides since the beginning of the relationship (perhaps twenty or thirty years before) are counted up, and one or the other is ordered to pay over the balance to make the numbers equal. After this the two are " no longer kinsmen," they have no mutual obligations and do not attend each other's funerals.

593 It is usual for a father to create this relationship between his senior 428 son and the eldest of each group of full-brothers, so that by this exchange of cows the family is held together. The linkage of half-brothers, whether by blood or by " milking each others cows," is important in inheritance. If a man with no full-brother dies and leaves no sons, or sons too young to inherit, then the inheritance passes to a linked half-brother ; to a half-brother linked by blood if there is one, if there is not then to one linked by exchange of cows.

771 Religion enters continually into family life and helps to maintain wider kinship bonds also. The Nyakyusa religion falls, broadly, into three parts : The Ancestor cult, Witchcraft and Magic. Taken as a whole their religion, as they believe, secures for them many of the most important values of life, health, good crops and success in various enterprises ; it provides an intelligible explanation of death and misfortune by tracing them to the ill-will either of the ancestral spirits or of living men acting through witchcraft or magic ; in its rituals it resolves fear and replaces it by hope and confidence ; while the believed destructive action of the ancestors and of men is generally, though not entirely, linked with morality.[10] The commonest explanation of misfortune is that some wrong done by the victim, or by his close kinsman, has provoked the spirits or his fellow men to anger.

769 As long as a man has alive a father, a father's full-brother, or a senior ●753 brother or half-brother[11] of his own, this senior kinsman deals with the ancestral spirits, not only on his behalf, but also on behalf of his wives and children ; and health is the chief value which his prayers are believed to secure for them. In the absence of sickness or misfortune no appeal is

[10] cf. Godfrey Wilson. "An African Morality." *Africa*. Jan. 1936.
[11] Provided the relationship between them has not been legally broken (*vide supra*.).

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ever made to the spirits, but when some member of a family or his wife or 769
child falls sick the anger of the spirits is often suspected as a possible 753
cause. There are usually other reasons suspected as well, and so the [787]
sickness is taken to a diviner for diagnosis. Various causes are suggested to the diviner and he selects one among them. If the anger of the spirits is selected then this senior kinsman must pray for the one who is sick, if he is to recover. When half-brothers live at a distance from one another, after their father and his brothers have died, then each may pray to the spirits to cure a little sickness in his own family but if the sickness persists then a message must be sent to the senior kinsman. And, as the anger of the spirits is due to wrong doing, the sinner must reform his ways as well.

The wrongs which rouse the spirits to anger are usually breaches of 673
family morality. If a son does not respect his father or insults him, if an heir neglects to feed and provide for the dead man's children, then when sickness falls on him or his own children it will probably be traced to the anger of the spirits at his behaviour.

Space does not allow any full analysis of religion in family life and in 754
the relationships of kinsmen and affines. Not only the ancestor cult but 771
witchcraft and magic are factors in them. A man's neglect of a wife or his cruelty to her may, it is believed, lead to his falling sick through her witchcraft and that of sympathetic neighbours; his relations with his father-in-law are affected by the fear that if he offends him, his father-in-law may, by magical means, kill his children, and so on.

Wider kinship groupings than the family gather at ceremonies and 614
are recognized in the rules against incest. But there are no clans; there is no descent group continuous down the generations with a common name and definite membership. Each individual family has its own penumbra of kinsfolk, the effective kindred of a man and his son, or of two half-brothers are not all the same, while each single person is especially related by respect, affection and mutual obligations to particular kinsmen beyond his own family. Descent, as we have seen, is patrilineal 611
except in the case of illigitimate children. A man asked for his *ekekolo* 614
always recites first the names of his paternal forbears as far as he can [848]
remember. But if he is related through mother or grandmother to a chief he usually volunteers this fact as part of his *ekekolo*; and questions always elicit some knowledge of his mother's paternal kinsfolk and a statement that "they are my *ekekolo* too." Descendants of a common grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are to-day forbidden to marry, 582
and no case of infringment has come to my notice; descendants of a common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry but, I am told,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'Lwembe listens to him'. 'If Kinga messengers went [to Lubaga] without going through Mwakalukwa's country there would be much hunger. . . . Once Mwemusi and Kyelela [Kinga chiefs] conspired together and sent off men with hoes to Lubaga, without reference to Mwakalukwa. They carried ten hoes. But when they got back disease killed many in the country, and they paid Mwakalukwa and did not do it again.'

It is true that an independent Nyakyusa chief *can* send an offering to Lubaga on his own; it is received by the priests of Lubaga and sacrificed in the grove, and such a sacrifice is held to be in some measure efficient, but drought or sickness in the country as a whole is often attributed to one or other of the participating groups failing to play their part. Moreover, such a failure is thought to be dangerous to the chief or priest who neglects his duties, as we shall see in the case of Kasitile.

The priests of Lubaga ministered to the Lwembe but they had also the right and duty of admonishing him if he did wrong, just as village headmen have the right and duty of admonishing their chief. If the Lwembe broke a taboo 'then Kissoule and the other priests would be very angry and reproach him for bathing and making hunger, and he would pay them a bull in recompense.' Even the 'divine king' was subject to the rule of law. All through the political organization and ritual patterns of the Nyakyusa there is this balance and reciprocity between chiefs and commoners and it is here that the Nyakyusa system differs radically from that described by Professor Frankfort for ancient Egypt.[1] The heroes had brought the gift of chieftainship to the Nyakyusa but it had not ousted another, perhaps older, tradition of democratic leadership; instead, the two were welded in a partnership which, to the Nyakyusa, is so much part of the necessary order of the universe that they speak of commoner priests and headmen as 'wives' of the chiefs. The Kissoule in office is 'the wife' of the Lwembe.

In the grove at Lubaga sacrifices of black cattle and sheep and libations of millet beer were offered by the Nyakyusa, while the Kinga brought hoes, bamboo beer, salt, the sacred drum *ngoma*, and *ifika*, that is, marvels whose nature, Kasitile averred, he did not know himself. The shrine of Lubaga, and the actors and actions connected with it, are miraculous and terrible, terrible even to the actors themselves who tremble when they enter the grove, and

[1] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (1948), pp. 51-6.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

778 Lwembe, and the grove of the first Lwembe himself, the last being
782 the most sacred. In it stands a miraculous tree from which, the priests aver, sometimes comes sap like water, and sometimes blood. 'If it is watery there will be a plague of ulcers in the country—
[753] running sores—if it is blood there will be dysentery. But as soon
[755] as the hoes are placed in the grove, or the black bull is killed, then the sick begin to recover.'

Godfrey Wilson attended three celebrations at Lubaga, and we
788 heard of five others which occurred during our period of fieldwork. The ritual is esoteric, that is to say, only the representative of Lwembe and his priests participate, and the details are not revealed to others, but its occurrence is widely known and discussed among older men.

The celebrations observed were modified by the fact that no one
[643] had been installed as Lwembe since the death of Mwakisisya
[793] (56) before 1914. The possible candidates whom the priests had wished to instal had refused—'they feared the grove'; the only
[177] one who was said to be willing was rejected on account of his character. The priests gave 'European times' as the reason for there being no Lwembe. 'When the country was ours before you Europeans came' the elected candidate was compelled to accept office. On the death of Mwakisisya, the Kinga priests ordered that his senior son Mwanjala I (77) should take his place, and when Mwanjala I died (three years after his father) his full brother Mwanjala II (78) succeeded. He took a leading part in the rituals observed, but was not an anointed Lwembe. The priests explained: 'We fear, thinking that if a chief is seized [and compelled to sit on the stool] he will complain to the Government and we shall be punished.' During the period of German rule they had been threatened with imprisonment if they continued the ritual . . . 'we feared and stole through the country by night'. . . . And there is still much secrecy about its truncated celebration. Since the journey down 'the road of Lwembe' with the drum traditionally involved human sacrifice, and the Lwembe was smothered when ailing, there is an absolute incompatibility between a full celebration of the ritual and European administration.

The influence of the Christian minority is also considerable. The
177 view of most Nyakyusa Christians with whom we discussed
788 communal rituals is that they used to be efficient, but are so no longer, since men have been taught a better way of approaching God. 'God said: "They are mistaken but in their hearts they are

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 (82) grove. According to custom, we should kill a bull here at the same
782 time as one is killed at Lubaga. A messenger from there finds us eating.
796 That was the custom when the chiefs were really chiefs. Now we neglect the rituals. Mwakisisya (111) cut a ripe banana stem for us, but now the bananas are rotting in the homesteads without ripening [owing to our failure to sacrifice]. If our fathers did not sleep they sacrificed cattle, but if we do not sleep we merely offer beer.

Then Kasitile recalled the quarrel between the men of Mwaipopo (116) and those of Lubaga.

Why did you insult Mwakisisya (111) saying 'What remains of your
[344] power?' When we built the Court House in Mwaipopo's country, Mwakisisya's men came to help, and some advised that a beast should be sent to Lubaga to seek blessing on the Court, but others said: 'What use is Lubaga?' . . . Mwakisisya cut a banana stem for us and said 'Seek another cow oh thou Mwakagile' (59, i.e. identifying Kasitile with the grandfather of the chief Mwaipopo whom he represented).

This, however, was an invention of Kasitile's. He continued: 'I, Kasitile, have seen a sacrifice at the grove of Mwaijonga (82) twice, at that of Mwaipopo (115) once, and at that of Mwakabule (117) once, but at Lubaga Kyala has received us frequently.' To which Mwambuputa replied: 'Yes, Kyala has helped us.'

Under pressure from Kasitile and the other priests of his chiefdom Mwaipopo did eventually provide a cow for sacrifice at the grove of his father Mwaijonga (82) but the description of that ritual is deferred to a later chapter.

771 A fundamental conception in Nyakyusa religion is that the proper working of the natural order depends upon harmony of the social order; on proper co-operation between the 'divine king' and his 'sons' the chiefs, between priests and chiefs, and between them and the whole community. If the Lwembe or a rain-
[731] maker is offended, that causes drought or flood in the area of his
[821] influence. When there is heavy rain in Selya it is said, 'There is anger at Lubaga' or 'There is anger at Lwembe's place'. Mwanjala II (78) talking of how angry he had been over an insult remarked, 'Had it been the wet season there would have been a torrent of rain.'

[578] And not only does quarrelling between chiefs and priests bring public misfortune; it reacts upon their own health. How Kasitile
● 753 linked his ill-health with the quarrel between Mwakisisya (111)
771 of Lubaga and the men of Mwaipopo (116) over the Court, and Mwaipopo's failure to provide cattle for sacrifice has just been

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

indicated (*vide supra*, p. 35). And, as we shall see later, he also suspected that his quarrels with the Kinga priests and with the commoner priests of Mwaipopo's chiefdom made him ill.

Chiefs, and even the 'divine king' himself, lived in fear of the legitimate anger of their people, more particularly of their village headmen and priests, believing that such anger would bring them sickness, and this belief gave headmen and priests a very strong hold over their lord. How it worked was illustrated by an incident at Lubaga.

Mwanjala II (78) remarked to Mwakilima (111): 'I sent to summon Mwasesi (a commoner priest) for the ritual tomorrow but he refused saying: "I shall not come." He is angry because he was not called to the ritual at your home, nor was he told formally when the Kinga came, or when Mwaipaja [G.W.] came.' Mwakilima (111) asked: 'Will you pay him?' [i.e. admit your mistake and offer him compensation]. Mwanjala replied that he would, and Mwakilima expressed disgust. One of the Kinga priests who was listening broke into the conversation: 'Ignore him if he refuses to come. If it were us we should leave him and celebrate without him, but you Nyakyusa are all witches, and you fear to ignore a man who refuses to come to a ritual saying that he will bewitch you. You are cowards, you are!'

At this Godfrey Wilson asked if there were no witchcraft in BuKinga. The Kinga priest replied: 'There is some, but if the chief gives orders to celebrate a ritual and someone refuses to come we ignore him, and celebrate without him. You Nyakyusa *pay* a man for doing wrong. A man refuses to come when he should and then you *pay* him! If you are afraid of witchcraft why not finish the ritual and send his portion of meat to him afterwards?'

Another priest objected: 'Then he would say it was too small a piece.'

The commoner priests then could control even the Lwembe (for Mwanjala II acted in the place of the Lwembe though he was not installed), but at the same time the mystical power of the Lwembe was feared both by ordinary chiefs and commoners. Mwaijonga (82), who ruled before the European occupation, insulted and fought Mwakisisya the Lwembe (56), and killed some of his men, because 'Lwembe had spoiled the year', but he sent back the cattle that were seized.

In the old days it did not matter killing the Lwembe's men (in war), but no one dared to take his cattle, they feared lest he would spoil the year and send too much rain, and a plague of ulcers, and cause the cattle to

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 753 [781] die. . . . People feared very much because the Lwembe had medicines for smearing on his body, which could cause rain, sickness, food, ulcers, anything.

And they feared lest they might get ulcers if they killed one of Lwembe's men 'on the road'—i.e. a traveller. In short, Lwembe's mystical power afforded the first feeble beginnings of a 'king's peace' in a land of warring chiefdoms, where strangers were fair game.

(c) Mbande

778 Mbande is a hill on the plain of north Nyasaland with a commanding view of the surrounding country and well suited to defence. The west side is precipitous and below the scarp edge there used to be a marsh; to the north the hill is protected by a wide reach of the Lukulu river. It is a sacred place and for many 643 generations was the home of the 'divine king', the Kyungu. Like the Lwembe he was the living representative of a hero, and was selected by a group of hereditary nobles from one of two related lineages, the office alternating (if suitable candidates were available) between the two. They sought a big man,[1] one who had begotten children and whose sons were already married, not a young man for, the nobles said, 'young men always want war, and destroy the country'. He must be a man of wisdom (*gwa mahala*) and generous in feeding his people.

The Kyungu's life was governed by taboos even more rigorous than those surrounding the Lwembe. He must not fall ill, or [784] suffer a wound, or even scratch himself and bleed a little, for his [753] ill health, or his blood falling on the earth would bring sickness to the whole country. 'Men feared when Kyungu's blood fell on the ground, they said, "It is his life".' 'If he had a headache his wives (if they loved him) told him not to mention it, they hid his illness; but if the nobles entered and found him ill they dug the grave and put him in it, saying, "He is the ruler (*ntemi*), it's taboo for him to be ill". Then he thought: "Perhaps it is so" (with a gesture of resignation).'

Great precautions were taken to preserve his health. He lived 751 in a separate house with his powerful medicines. His food was 643 prepared by boys below the age of puberty lest a menstruating [841] woman, or a youth who had lain with a woman, should touch it [644] and so bring sickness upon him; and his numerous wives were [753]

[1] *Unyambala umwamu.* It implies both big physically and important.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

immured in the royal enclosure—a great stockade—and jealously guarded, for any infidelity on their part was thought to make their husband ill, and with him the whole country. 643 [644] [753]

When the Kyungu did fall ill he was smothered by the nobles who lived around him at Mbande, and buried in great secrecy, with a score or more of living persons—slaves—in the grave beneath him, and one or two wives and the sons of commoners above. And in the midst of all this slaughter the nobles brought a sheep to look into the grave that the dead Kyungu might be gentle (*mololo*) like the sheep! 643 766 [825]

The living Kyungu was thought to create food and rain, and his breath and the growing parts of his body—his hair and nails and the constantly replaced mucus of his nose—were believed to be magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde plain. When he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was buried 'with the breath in his body'; while portions of his hair and nails and of his nasal mucus were taken from him beforehand and buried by the nobles of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This was 'to defend the country against hunger', 'to close up the land, to keep it rich and heavy and fertile as it was when he himself lived in it'. [778] [789]

His death was kept secret—a relatively easy matter since he lived in seclusion—and one of the nobles (*Ngosi*) impersonated him wearing his clothes. After a month or two when the nobles had decided whom to choose as the new Kyungu, the luckless man was summoned to Mbande: 'Your father calls you.' 'Then he came with his companions and entered the house to make obeisance; they seized him and put the sacred cloth on him and set him on the stool "Kisumbi", saying, "Thou Kyungu, thou art he", and he became the Kyungu. Then they struck the drum, Mwenekelwa, and everyone knew that the Kyungu had died and another had been installed.' Men feared greatly to be seized as the Kyungu, just as they feared to be seized as the Lwembe, because the life of a divine king was short. Ngonde historians quote a number of cases of sons of the Kyungu who fled to escape being set on the stool; once they had sat on it they dared not flee lest they die. 643 768

Though[1] the early Kyungus had lived on the stony top of Mbande none of them had been buried there, for 'the ground was 643 778 766

[1] The following section is quoted, with additions and amendments, from Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, pp. 29 ff.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Since the 'coming out' of his sons spelt not only retirement, but a speedy death to a chief, he was not unnaturally reluctant to hasten it and, we were told, chiefs would try to defer it, but were pressed by their village headmen to celebrate, and had eventually to accept their advice. Indeed we heard of one chief whose illness was attributed to the 'breath' of his men, angry because he refused to hold the 'coming out' which was due. 643 [753]

Nowadays the situation is radically altered by the fact that chiefs continue to live long after the 'coming out' of their sons, and the administration treats the old chief as the sole authority, or the old men find good reasons for not holding the celebration at all.

Before the ritual there is much speculation and excitement throughout the chiefdom, and private discussions between the old chief and his village headmen about suitable candidates for office. They look for men of wisdom (*amahala*),[1] skilled in settling disputes, modest (for boastfulness is judged intolerable in a Nyakyusa age-village as it is in an English public school), and given to hospitality. A leader must feed his men and to do so he requires to be relatively wealthy, therefore the poor have little chance of office. [183] [577]

When the old men are agreed among themselves they summon all the young men to the capital. They come dancing and swaggering with all their cattle, and there the old headmen seize, one by one, those they have chosen as village headmen for the next generation, beginning with the senior headman for each heir, then the second senior for each, and so on. Usually eight are chosen, four for each young chief. We get a glimpse of what it means to one individual in the following statement by the second headman of the chief, Koroso (173): 643 622 796

I made fire at the 1910 'coming out'. I can't tell much because we who were caught were in fear and trembling. I knew beforehand, because my brother was told to come from Ipyana [mission], but he was a Christian and the missionaries refused to allow him to become a village headman—they feared the medicines. He ran away and came here—he wanted to be a headman and the old men wanted him, but then he changed his mind and went off to be a soldier, and so they took me. [177]

Probably word of who have been chosen as village headmen

[1] For a discussion of the content of *amahala*, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 89-90.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

play one village against another and go to sleep in that section of the country which supports him, but he dare not anger all his headmen. In the same way a village headman dare not anger the main body of his men. In short, public opinion is an effective sanction because those in authority believe that the disapproval of their fellows may bring a fever or paralysis upon them. One of our Christian informants was insistent that, were it not for the belief in the 'breath of men', pagan chiefs and headmen would act tyrannically. 643 778 622

The situations in which a chief or headman fears the breath of men are very varied. We have already referred to the chief who thought his illness was due to his refusal to hold the 'coming out' for his sons when advised to do so.[1] Mwaipopo, before whose court a very bitter land dispute between two of his villages had been brought, refused to give judgement and was careful to sleep in the village that had possession of the land, and therefore less cause for anger.[2] Kasitile, the hereditary priest of the chief's lineage who counted as 'a chief' as opposed to 'a commoner', thought he had angered the village headmen of his generation (who had become priests) by not providing meat for them (*vide infra*, p. 125). [754]

The headmen are responsible for the health of their chief and it is they who go to consult an oracle if he is ill and take him to a doctor. Mwankuga II (151), heir to Mwaipopo's chiefdom, had not begotten a son by any of the wives he inherited from his elder brother who had died. His village headmen[3] went to consult an oracle and were told that it was the wrath (*imindu*) of his father; so they reported the matter to Mwaipopo, who sent a junior kinsman to consult another oracle. The diagnosis was confirmed and Mwaipopo gathered his younger brothers and prayed and told the shades that he had no quarrel with his kinsmen. Then he told the village headmen to take Mwankuga to a doctor for treatment, but this they did not do, so that Mwankuga went to consult a doctor on his own. According to Kasitile it was because the headmen had not taken Mwankuga that the medicine did not work. 'They should take him to the doctor and be present in dreams, to watch over him in dreams.' What the headmen were angry about was not revealed—there was no obvious cause. [842] [753] [787] [782]

[1] *op. cit.*, pp. 134-5. [2] *op. cit.*, pp. 188-90.

[3] Mwankuga I who died had 'come out' before Mwankuga II inherited from him, but Mwaipopo (116) continued to rule as chief and draw a Government salary.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 As we have seen, the chief's fearsome medicine *inyifwila* is
778 thought to be very dangerous, and too much in the tails may cause
622 them 'to fly about throttling men and cattle', but a chief is never
[754] accused of working witchcraft; it is inconceivable to the Nyakyusa that he could be. If the tails have got out of hand they are treated
[789] by a doctor 'to close them up'; no one suggests that the chief should get rid of them. It is commoners, 'black people', who are witches —cannibals, the eaters of raw flesh—as opposed to chiefs who, since the dawn of history, have killed cattle for meat and cooked their food like civilized men. But the distinction does not extend very far; junior kinsmen of the chief are 'commoners' and may well be accused of practising witchcraft.

There was a delicate balance of power in the Nyakyusa con-
[182] stitution between hereditary chief and commoner headmen and the belief in the power of medicines and of witchcraft was an integral part of it. The chief provided fruitfulness by the power of his own body and his medicines; all men depended upon him for their well-being—food, cattle, children, success in war; but he in his turn depended upon the goodwill of his men led by their village headmen; without it he shivered and fell ill, only to be buried by them 'with the breath still in his body' lest the power of growth disappear with his breathless corpse.

Something of the quality of this mutual dependence and fear is conveyed in Kasitile's account of his own illness quoted in Chapter VIII.

(*e*) THE NECESSITY FOR HARMONY

182 The welfare of the chiefdom is thought to depend upon
643 harmony between the chief and his village headmen and priests,
622 and also between the chief and his kinsmen. Any friction between
793 them may result in public misfortune as well as sickness to the individual at fault. The quarrel of Kasitile, the priest, first with
[753] the Kinga priests, and then with the commoner priests of Mwai-
[821] popo's chiefdom was believed to affect the crops and the weather, as well as Kasitile's own health (*vide infra*, pp. 124-41), and Mwaipopo's failure to tell Kasitile formally of the death of their
[688] kinsman led to rain which spoiled the funeral dance. A quarrel between the lineages of two chiefs which should have sacrificed
643 together was said to have been followed by a very poor millet
602 crop (*vide infra*, pp. 79-80, 118, 136).
578 How the personal relationship of a chief with his kinsmen is

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the shades and the hearths which was stressed; in Porokoto's 783
country people talked mostly of the witches; but it seemed clear
that both conceptions were present when men murmured: 'The [754]
hearth bricks are bad' (*amafiga mabibi*) and they sought to cleanse [775]
them by clearing out the old fire and lighting new. 'To clear out the ashes means they take away all that dirt, the dirt which the witches have brought and the shades; it is the cause of illness.' When witches are thought to be active there is also a public complaint, and a public warning is given 'to whom it may concern' to desist.[1] This occurred in the ritual after the ground hornbill had eaten the chicken. Above all, men must admit their [578]
anger to one another: 'they fight that the homesteads may be
peaceful'. The theme so familiar in Nyakyusa rituals—that [681]
quarrels must be confessed if they are to be composed—recurs yet again. Though we distinguish the rituals for 'cleansing the country' from sacrifices, on the ground that the whole community participates in the 'cleansing' while the sacrifice is esoteric, the two are closely linked, and a sacrifice commonly precedes or follows the cleansing. We turn now to the detailed accounts of celebrations for 'cleansing' in Ngonde and among the Kukwe.

(*a*) THE RATS

In Ngonde they used to clear out the ashes at the new year, at the 783
first hoeing (in December) after 'the break of the rains'. They feared 796
that death and disease would spread through the land if they continued
living with the old fires, that the shades in the earth, both the shades [753]
of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry. Let them drive the shades [761]
away and hoe in peace. They always remembered to do so each new year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually, they never forgot. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to clear out the ashes; and then they would hoe in peace. And at other
times, too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the [787]
ashes again. 'It is to drive away the shade with the sickness that he brings. We throw out the ashes and firebrands because he has come to warm himself over the fire in our houses, we throw out the pots and winnowing baskets because he has come to see us eating; let him go
there (to the grove) and eat what he asked for—we say the shades ask [775]
for food—let him eat hens, perhaps a sheep. We say the shades bring sickness to the fire, hence we throw out the ashes and make new fire with a drill.'

The nobles of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave [643]

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 109-13.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

MWAPULA: Indeed, may the illness not be great, may the children not cry by night, may the cattle increase, and the fields be fertile, and the fowls also increase. May children sleep. Our fathers always confessed in the house. Now we are shocked at what is happening. 783 796

MWANTIMWA: We say thank you, chiefs, you do not forget us. Let the sickness pass and go away, may the cattle sleep, and you women, may the children grow. May the fields be fertile; may there not be envy of one another. We are sorry because there is much illness. Our fathers say 'Why have the chiefs turned round?'

MWAMULENGA: Chief, we beg you, we thank you, indeed there is sickness. Is there anyone who says in their quarter there is much sickness (more than elsewhere)? Do we say something about sickness?

MWAMUNDA: No, Mwampiki, all of us who have come here are sick.

KILONGO: Yes, we are all rotting.

Mwaikambo commenting on this explained:

If there is sickness one may admit and say, 'It is I, I was angry on account of such and such.' Yes, indeed, they confess openly, because he who sees in his belly (=knows in his heart) that 'It is I who have done this' trembles when his fellows speak many words thinking, 'Perhaps they have seen me.' So he confesses. When he confesses he escapes, they only grumble at him saying, 'Don't do it again.' If someone admits the others say, 'It is he, but we have punished him.' I think that even in the old days he was not driven out, because they hope that, if he has confessed, the illness he caused will go away.

MWAAALEMBA: Have you ever before heard of a hornbill eating a hen? We are horrified. Even the prophets did not speak of such an event. [787]

ANOTHER: Indeed, it has never before happened, we are glad that our chiefs have taken the initiative with these words.

ANOTHER: For this custom is old, it began long ago in the time of our fathers. It is the custom to give hope in the homesteads, that we may grow strong.

MWAMPIKI: Always, if the chief is ill it is said, 'Where are you, oh people?' All the homesteads watch over the chief when he is ill. [Mwaikambo commenting: It is said that people have the work of watching over their chief that no one may bewitch him, hence when he is ill they reproach people saying: 'Where are you?' Let the old customs be observed now (implying that they have left all the old customs and hence there is much sickness in the country).] [754] [177]

ANOTHER: There are some who say 'Let so-and-so die that I may move into his homestead. Let envy which brings sickness also go away.'

ANOTHER: If sickness appears let us tell the chief that we may all express astonishment together, asking where the illness has come from, then it will be light, if we all grumble together. [Mwaikambo commenting: [753]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 They say that complaining drives away illness, even though the witches
796 are not seen, and do not confess saying, 'It is we' yet they are ashamed
thinking 'People have caught me' and they desist.]
[753] MWAMULENGA: Catch anyone you see in your dreams. If someone is ill should we not all gather?
MWAMUNDA: Countrymen, give thanks that there are the chiefs.

And the company assented.

Then there was a discussion about the direction in which the chief should spit and people run. One pointing towards Tukuyu said: 'We always looked that way.' Another said: 'We always reached the boundary.'

Mwafula (a village headman) came with his young son carrying
[778] a calabash of medicated water. Porokoto took a sip and spat out eastward, 'in the direction of the grove of Kabale, to the shades.'

Mwamulenga shouted: 'Now we have prayed, the sickness is
[755] finished, we are present and watch over the homesteads. If we see anyone bringing sickness we will catch him and crush him on the sleeping mat.' There was a roar from the crowd, then all rushed yelling 300 yards or so eastward to the edge of the fields, and back again. Porokoto ran a little way with them, his malacca cane raised, then stopped, looking self-conscious, and strolled homeward. Everyone else scattered, chattering and laughing. On the way back we were greeted: 'You have prayed! Did you catch witches? Whom did you catch?'

Mwaalemba, senior brother of Porokoto and an expert in ritual, added one or two points in explanation:

In the old days we threw out the ashes, but we have not yet done so this time; we begin with the ritual on the pasture land and throw out the ashes afterwards. In the old days we threw them out of all the houses and put in fresh fire, new ash, saying 'Thou Kyala, thou shade,
[775] receive us, let us sleep here, we throw out the ashes, let sickness be
[753] slight.' Those who are angry now are our shades—those of the chiefs—they have gathered with the shades of the commoners. The medicated water means: 'Thou shade, you fathers, may we sleep, use this water for us if we are ill, may we be strong.' The water goes to the shades with these words.

Q.: Why must the women come?

M.: They call the war cry, we run swiftly, the women follow calling the war cry which means, 'You shade, we call the war cry for you that we may be pure—without anger—in our bellies, make us strong also, thou shade, may we also be pure in our bellies, this is your war cry . . .' The running and calling the war cry is to mock at him, to drive him

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

away. We run with him, we leave him over there, we return and bring him in. We drive him off because he brought sickness; when we have done so we return and bring him again that we may be pure—without anger—and he also may be pure. We are with him all the time; we never throw him away. We always have the old one in the belly, an infant is he, and if I die I am with him, this earth (pointing to the earth of his homestead) never goes away, it is he. So if the crops fail when I have hoed I say: 'The shade is angry, this earth.' (*Papo nkulu tulinaguw bwila mundu, matukeke jo jujo, nalonga mfwile ndinaguw—umfu ugu gutijonga nakamu jo jujo—papo lenga ndemile nikuti 'unyuka akalele umfu ugu' bo fuitile.*) Yes, in the death ritual also we drive him away with his sickness, and bring him back, always the old one.

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[753]

After the ritual all have normal intercourse with their wives, but the night before there was no intercourse. How should we do evil on the mats when we have not yet blessed the shade? But when we have blessed him then all of us lie on our mats again. To lie together is to overstep the ritual, the shades are shocked and say, 'How can you do this? You agreed yesterday to bless the shades and you do this, why?' Then later, if a woman bears a child which cries at night, people say, 'You overstepped the ritual, pray for the child.' Or perhaps the woman is barren. We liken the water and the war cry to what we do on the mats—the water is the shade's and the war cry is his, it is his work. When we have spoken to the shade he comes into my belly—then I come together with my wife again.

[833]
[842]

This interpretation by Mwasalemba indicates that the blowing out of water is a symbol of emission. 'It is what men do.' It has been shown in *Rituals of Kinship* that the shades are driven out of the body in the sex act; that the shade and semen are identified; and that driving off the shade is a condition of health and sanity. The fact that blowing out water is *also* a symbol of confession—admission of anger, 'bringing out all that is within'—and supplication does not invalidate Mwasalemba's interpretation, for the same act is symbolized in many ways and the same symbol expresses events which are distinct, but associated. As in so many societies, abstinence is felt to be a necessary preparation for the celebration of a ritual, and the union, real or symbolic, of husband and wife the necessary conclusion.[1] All this is intelligible only in terms of the Nyakyusa ideas about procreation discussed in *Rituals of Kinship*. The shade is the vital force in men

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[1] cf. I. Cunnison, 'Headmanship and Ritual of Luapula Villages', *Africa*, xxvi (1956), pp. 5-13; H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (1927), vol. i, pp. 390-02; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (1911), pp. 48, 53, 55.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Mwandisi made a great deal of the fact that at the 'throwing out of the rubbish' the village headmen ate meat *raw*. 783 796

Formerly . . . we threw away the ashes and charred brands . . . that is to drive away the shades who warm themselves over the hearth in the house; they bring us sickness, let them warm themselves over there in the long grass! Also in the long grass there we killed meat, and the priests ate it *raw*: no one saw them doing that there in the long grass; we went by day with drums, people from all the homesteads, a moving multitude . . . then we came home . . . the priests remained with their wives, they threw away their bark-cloths, they cut off morsels of meat and ate them raw. Because the priests are witches it is they who ate raw meat before we chiefs came, the priests are witches. . . . The witches and shades gather and bring sickness together, we kill a cow in the grove, we drive them away. No, they do not eat raw meat in the grove, they cook it. But at the capital if the chief has killed a cow for men to eat the priests eat meat raw. We have seen them. I, Mwandisi, have seen Mwajole and Kalambo the senior village headmen eating raw meat at my place and my wives have seen them also. [262] [753] [793]

'Yes', said one of his wives, 'we saw them and we ran away saying: "Well! Fancy doing it *openly*!"' Mwandisi continued:

The senior village headmen are witches, children of those who ate raw food long ago. Some village headmen only rush to eat a cow we have killed, but some go to eat a person; those are the witches who eat raw meat! [754]

The function of a chief is to feed his men on beef, and in doing so he placates the witches who are commoners and who, like their forefathers, prefer their meat raw. If they do not get beef then the witches eat men.[1] [643]

(c) SMALLPOX

The prayer and 'clearing out of the rubbish', traditionally celebrated before an approaching epidemic, was described by an elderly Christian, Fibombe. It illustrates very clearly the combination of practical precaution—isolation—and magical protection, and also the idea that sickness was brought into the country by witches. 783 796 753

When the chief had heard that smallpox was coming, or dysentery, he said, 'Let us pray'. Before my baptism I saw it, in the country of the

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 92-4.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

796 Penja chief, Mwalukasa. He called all his people because he heard that
783 smallpox was coming and said: 'Let us pray.' And he called his fellow
753 chiefs, those of the same lineage, and said: 'Let this illness not come, may it go to other chiefs. . . . Listen! I am the chief! We have heard that smallpox is approaching, who is here who rejoices at his approach? Who is here who wishes that it should kill us?'

THE CHIEFS: We, we do not rejoice that it is coming, we reject it, chief Mwalukasa, may it pass by this homestead.

THE COMMONERS: And we also reject it, may it pass by our homesteads.

MWALUKASA: And I, I reject it, may smallpox not come into our country. If there be one who has relatives in a chiefdom where there is smallpox and they come to call him to a funeral let them stay at a distance, and not sleep here, let him not go near until the illness has passed by, at the end of the year. If you witches go to fetch it, you will kill your
[754] fellows with whom you are chatting now. You will not enjoy my company or build with me, the chief, if you go and bring in smallpox and kill your fellows. We pray that it may pass. [For it is believed in this country that the witches go to bring in illness, or wild animals, from a distance.]

THE COMMONERS: Yes, indeed, may it pass by.

MWALUKASA: If you go to bury a brother in a country in which there is smallpox stand afar off, tie the cow you bring to a tree and call to them: 'Here is my cow for killing, come and take it.' Take your cow, but do not go into the homestead.

And the people did as he said. Then he told them to get ready for the ritual. He took his calabash cup and three other chiefs with
[769] calabash cups followed him. They blew water and prayed to Kyala and the shades. Then the people were gathered together; and the chiefs, led by Mwalukasa, ran round facing each group in turn and blowing out water towards them; the men held their shields in front of them and when the chiefs blew they shook their shields violently, as if fighting.

When all was finished then Mwalukasa said: 'When you go home,
[372] throw out the ashes and the fires; all make new fire with drills.' And they all did this.

Finally he had bamboos planted with medicine on the main roads between BuPenja and BuKukwe and BuPenja and BuNyiha. No one
[755] ill with smallpox, or who had lived in contact with smallpox, was allowed to pass, unless he had been ill and recovered. I saw the one bamboo clump on the boundary of Nyiha and Penja country. No one passed it, it was very fearsome (*lusiya fijo*).

As in cultivation there was a combination of ritual and science.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

793 NDEMBWE
755 NSOKI
[551] NSESA
[791] A SANGU
} Diviners consulted by Kasitile

NDISA a kinsman of Kasitile

It will be remembered that, in accordance with the custom of
793 delegating ritual functions to a junior line, Kasitile's grand-
755 father (44) had been appointed rain-maker and priest responsible for receiving the Kinga when they came to sacrifice at Lubaga. Kasitile thus held an important public office. He was living on the plain (where he had inherited the estate of his father's younger brother) where his own elder brother (85) died and he came up into Selya to bury him and succeed to his position. But he failed to notify the Kinga priests of his brother's death and they were
[787] very angry, and told him he would die if he stayed in the homestead, so he fled back to the plain. There he fell ill, and he was carried back to Selya to be treated by the visiting Kinga priests, who told him he was sick 'because he went to the plain in a hurry and they had not given him medicine'. The idea here is that the heir to a chief or priest must cultivate the power that was in his
[778] father's body by drinking medicines: Kasitile was 'losing the *ifingila* of his father by not drinking medicines'. Now *ifingila* implies *both* the medicines of chieftainship and the power which they create in the body of a man.

So Kasitile was treated and we quote his own account of what happened:

> The Kinga came to cook medicine by the tree where I pray—it is where the cattle byre of my elder brother was. They put some medicine for Jane [his senior wife] and me in beer . . . and we drank together . . .
> [783] and they boiled medicines in a pot and told us both to wash with the infusion every day for two months. I found a goat and called the priests Ngulyo, Njobakosa, and Kissogota and . . . they and the Kinga priests ate the meat together, and they told me to stay for two months and return to the plain again, and so I did. Then the Kinga sent for me to come back and I've come up to live. I found a cow, and called the priests and killed it at the sacred grove, Kinyangwa, and all the people ate the meat. Then the Kinga told me to move to my father's old homestead, and I did so this very year.

Before we arrived, therefore, Kasitile had been in conflict with
[753] his fellow priests, and he had been very ill, and attributed his

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

illness to neglect of his duty to the Kinga. All the time we were in BuNyakyusa he was ailing—possibly he suffered from tuberculosis—and one wrongdoing after another was suggested as the cause of his illness. 793 755 [753]

His case is intelligible only in terms of the conception of 'the breath of men', that is, a power akin to witchcraft thought to be legitimately exercised by village headmen and others to punish wrongdoers, but which is referred to by the victims as 'witchcraft'. This has been discussed at length elsewhere.[1] [754]

On 2nd July 1935, Kasitile had left his own house and was living with a friend in a neighbouring village. His doctor, Mwakyonde, said that he was being 'throttled by the witches' and had invited him to come and recollect himself (*ukwipelekesya*) in the tranquillity of a village of another chiefdom in which there were many people with spiritual power (*abamanga*) so that 'the witches' could not get at him. This is a common precaution in case of illness, for witches are thought not to have power ordinarily outside their own village and never beyond the chiefdom.[2] 793 754

The cause of the illness was explained as follows: Kasitile had quarrelled with Kissogota, the commoner priest, and others of the principal men of the country, because he had found them drinking the sacred beer (*ubwikemo*), brewed after the millet harvest (*vide supra*, pp. 84-5) without telling him, or sending him the pot which was his due. They invited him to drink, but he refused and they each sent him 1*s.* to beg pardon. Kasitile bought beer with one of the shillings and called the senior commoner priest, Ngulyo, and his fellows to drink saying, 'I was angry, friends, you "overstepped" me' (i.e. they had ignored his rights). He himself should have brewed when he confessed his anger, and slaughtered a calf or prepared food for them as well, but he had bought only one shilling's worth of beer and provided nothing himself. Then, when they had drunk, Kasitile fell ill. Hence it was said that the commoner priests were angry and 'ate' (i.e. bewitched) him. Kasitile's own comment was: 'The fault lies with the young priests (Ngulyo, a young man, had inherited his father's position), they are useless as priests . . . I was not told of that ritual beer, yet the medicine comes from me, from this home where I keep it. They should have come to me to get it and put it with the millet in the holy pot. They drank the beer without medicine. It is they who have brought cold and hunger on the country. I think the [578] [753] [689] [731] [789]

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 91-121, 167-9. [2] *op. cit.*, pp. 102-3.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

793 trouble is that Mwaipopo (the chief 116) is getting old. . . .'
754 Here Kasitile suggested two different causes for the scarcity in the
[731] country: (*a*) the negligence of the priests, and (*b*) the senility of the
[789] chief. In the old days Mwaipopo would have been smothered, as Angombwike explained (*vide supra*, p. 63).

[753] On the 9th, Kasitile, much troubled by his cough at night,
[757] expressed a great desire for the return of the missionary nurse to Kabembe hospital. 'She is killing us by her absence, the black people don't know anything about these things, only the Europeans. Why, I went there and the dresser just gave me an injection without taking my temperature—no European ever does that.'

[787] The following day he sent off his sons with 10 c. to inquire about
[753] his case from a diviner. The diviner said: 'The wives at his home are gossiping to other people about their husband. People want the husband's body to be light. It is not Jane, because she is his favourite, but the others.' Kasitile said:

> I shan't do anything, I said 'Let's leave it.' I am still in Butola [the village to which he moved for safety]. Mwakyonde is giving me medicine for my disease. It drives out the cold which is in my body. Yes, the cold is the breath of the witches coming to throttle me—it's due to my
> 755 wives' gossip. But it started as a quarrel with other people [non-
> 753 relatives] first. One day I went to drink beer in Bujege and that night I fell sick; that is how it began. Men are complaining because I, a chief, a senior, do not cook food for them. They throttle me on that account. They say: 'Let us see whether he is really a chief, a senior!' But others say: 'He has done no wrong.' Yes, the sickness took me on the way home from the beer. Perhaps Kyala asked: 'What has he
> [776] done?' and found I had done no wrong. If there had not been a Kyala who saves us I would have been dead.
>
> When I consulted a diviner he struck a spear and looked along it,
> [787] then he said: 'The disease now is from his wives—the earlier attack was from men, but this one is from his wives. When they gather at the hearth they say: "Come hither, we see him where he sleeps."'

754 'Are the wives witches?' we asked.
753 Kasitile replied:

> Yes. They say: 'There is a favourite, we are not beloved.' If a man's wives are good the witches can get into the house, but their cold breath dissipates quickly; you are given medicine and recover quickly; but if the wives are bad they gather together the medicine and press it down, so that it is powerless. One of my wives is very bad, her lineage is bad, it is she who calls to her aid the heavy ones, the witches. The

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

younger one[1] gossips with her fellow, she does not go to the witches herself, but just talks to the other wife who calls the witches to her aid. These two wives say: 'The favourite has borne many children to her husband; we are poor' [i.e. the favourite gets an unfair share of her husband's attentions]. 754 753

Kasitile speaks of his wives as 'witches' which, according to Nyakyusa ideas, they were, if they injured him, but he was also in the wrong to have shown his preference for Jane so clearly. [775] As was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*, the shades are thought to punish such favouritism. [689]

Towards the end of August Kasitile went to consult Ndembwe, a diviner and doctor, living nearly a day's journey away in the hills, who used a 'stick in the ground' as a divining rod. On his return Kasitile reported: 791 787

Ndembwe says it's the 'breath of men', not the wives, but the dispute about the beer. I paid him 1*s*. and drank three preparations of medicine at his place. He is coming here—I have found some beer and I am sending to call him tomorrow. Then Kasitile added confidentially: About the source of the 'breath' I am uncertain. Ndembwe suggested testing my wives. He can see the heavy ones, for in Ndali country he has drunk much medicine to give him spiritual power (*amanga*). He told me to come home, not to go back to Mwakyonde's country, and he is coming to give me medicine to drink and also to sprinkle medicine in the house. He will sleep here and see who it is that comes—he will know if the wives are heavy, or if it is the people of the country. 753 [782] [778] [787]

Kasitile's uncertainty was apparent. The first diviner had stated clearly that the sickness came from the witchcraft of the wives, but Kasitile wanted a further test.

We were away from Selya for some time and did not hear of any further developments in Kasitile's illness until early in 1937. By then a new reason for his ill-health had been put forward, viz. his impiety in cutting all the branches off a tree growing at the entrance to a sacred grove which has sprung up over his father's grave. He cut the tree because it was encroaching on his homestead. Then he fell ill and he went to consult Ndembwe again. 753 688

He asked me: 'Have you done something wrong at home?' I replied: 'No, I have done nothing wrong.' 'But the oracle says you have done wrong at home.' I said: 'Perhaps it is because I cut a tree at the [787]

[1] Sister of the favourite Jane. To accuse Jane's sister would cast a slur on Jane, for witchcraft is normally hereditary.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

753 entrance to the grove?' Ndembwe told me, 'You will get no cattle',
688 and indeed the cows are aborting. He told me: 'Brew beer and look
[787] for a sheep[1] and pray to your grandfather.'

782 Kasitile did not find an animal for sacrifice. He slaughtered a kid 'just for meat', killing it near the grove, but without praying or taking any of the meat into the grove, for it is not customary to offer goat's meat to the shades. His health improved a little, for a
787 time, but again he got worse and went off to see another diviner, saying: 'Perhaps there is some other cause; perhaps Ndembwe is mistaken.' He decided to go to consult an oracle some distance away 'because the oracle near home does not convince us; those who live near know all our wrongdoings; those at a distance don't know the affairs of the homesteads here'. This time Godfrey Wilson was invited to accompany him 'since he was his friend'.

Record of G.W. 8/2/37

787 We left Isumba about 7 a.m. and walked for an hour over the hills
753 through the bush. Kasitile had sent his wives, Jane and Kiluleli, on ahead to tell the diviner, Nsoki, that we were coming. . . . He came in
[791] from the fields to meet us and was taken aback by the presence of a
186 European. Kasitile kept saying: 'Do not be startled, he is from home, he is our friend.' . . . Food was served, then Nsoki's wife brought out some cooked millet porridge for the divination. He broke off a large piece and began to roll it between his hands. He smeared ointment on his hands and added powdered medicine. . . . He rolled and rolled, sometimes throwing the ball up and catching it again, spitting on his hands meantime. He murmured as he rolled, then at last he said to Kasitile, 'Speak!' Kasitile called his two wives to come near, and he explained his symptoms and the circumstances, how the sickness had fallen on him just after he had cut the tree in the sacred grove.

Nsoki asked for other possibilities. Kasitile: 'Perhaps the country is angry—I am a senior there. If it is the fathers who are angry I admit
[684] having done wrong. Perhaps my wives have committed adultery in the long grass and they are the cause of the illness.' Nsoki rolled and rolled the ball of porridge speaking aloud: 'It is Kyala above?' (looking up).
[775] Kasitile interrupted him: 'Yes, indeed, Kyala, but Kyala stands where he stood at home, does he stand alone? He stands with the fathers.' Nsoki (as he rolled the porridge): 'Your fathers are angry about that grove?' Then the ball of porridge flattened out in his hands and he broke off . . . 'No, that is not the cause' (*vide* plate 10*b*).

Rolling it into a ball again he went on: 'Your wives have committed

[1] This was Kasitile's own account. Others told us that he had been advised to look for a *bull*.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

adultery?' Again the ball flattened. 'It denies it.'[1] Then Kasitile, 787
obviously dissatisfied, spoke: 'Nsoki, three cows have slipped their 753
calves at my home, I sent to Ndembwe and he said: "Your fathers are
angry, you cut a tree, Mwakisambwe (30) is angry; seek something", [775]
so I sought a kid and I recovered. Later I took my bill-hook and cut
all round. Now the illness has begun again, and I thought perhaps it
was because I did not go to BuKinga to buy a bull, because I sought
only a kid?' Nsoki (no longer rolling the porridge): 'Perhaps my oracle
is mistaken, it denies it, Kyala above has sent the breath (*imbepo*) to
discipline you. I asked the oracle saying, "Perhaps it is the fathers?" [776]
but see, it denied it.' Kasitile: 'No, it is not mistaken.' Then he told all
over again the story of his pruning the grove and of his illness and of
his recovery after killing the kid, concluding 'then I cut again and
fell sick.' Nsoki: 'But Kasitile, see! There is much illness about, Kyala
has sent it all through the country, to discipline us.'

Shortly afterwards we left. I apologized to Kasitile for spoiling his divination for it was obvious, from his face, that it had gone wrong. He assured me that I had done no wrong but agreed that Nsoki had been afraid of me. . . . 'He feared your body, Mwaipaja [G.W.], you are impressive (*nsiya*), no one builds together with Europeans, he feared to speak. . . . Do you suppose that Kyala alone sent the fever? [776]
No! He stands with people, he stands with the shades.' I asked him [775]
what he thought. 'Ndembwe's oracle was not mistaken, the shades were indeed angry, but now Nsoki's oracle denies it. It really denied it, I saw the porridge with my own eyes, so I think the illness is from another source now. When he spoke of the "breath of Kyala" he meant "men".' Kasitile lowered his voice as he said this.

QUESTION: But what quarrel have they with you?

KASITILE: None! The oracle denied this. I have done no wrong . . . (later on) He spoke of the fathers, but he was afraid to speak out—they are angry; I should seek something.

QUESTION: To eat with whom?

KASITILE: With the village headman . . . (later on) See Mwaipaja, I cut [688]
the grove and at once I fell ill. If you come from doing something and [775]
fall ill, do you not begin to wonder? The shades are angry.

He was quite incoherent. First he said the 'breath of men', then the shades, then that the oracle denied the shades—'I saw it do so'—then that it denied witchcraft and that anyway he'd given no occasion for it. The one thing clear was that the divination could not be accepted as it stood. Kyala never acts alone in Nyakyusa thought, and Kasitile's [776]
conversation reflected the uncertainty of mind which he had gone to Nsoki to have resolved and which had not been resolved. His opinion

[1] He explained later that 'if the porridge becomes fluid and soft, that means it agrees to what has been said; if it does not change, it denies it'.

FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 clearly inclined to the shades as it had before the divination, but as
753 before the certain conviction was lacking.

Four days later (12/2/37) Kasitile went to Nsesa in Kituli village to consult the oracle again 'for that of Nsoki went wrong'. He told us afterwards 'This oracle supported the finding of Ndembwe's. It said:
[775] Your kinsman who is dead is angry; he says, "Why did you not
[769] celebrate the ritual? I am tired of the hair (*Ngatele nasyo inwili*). And what did you offer your father after cutting that tree?"' Here yet another cause of Kasitile's illness is suggested—the neglect of the death ritual of a kinsman. The implication is that the chief mourners have
[765] not yet performed the concluding rite of shaving which makes it
[302] possible for the deceased to join his fathers. The hair which the mourners shave off is called 'the hair of the corpse'.

QUESTION: What are you going to do then?

KASITILE: I shall charge the young man, son of my dead kinsman, with
[688] neglect, and tell him to celebrate the ritual that the shades which have
[602] bound me may go out of my body.

QUESTION: And the bull?

KASITILE: If I can find one I shall kill it.

QUESTION: Who will be there?

[793] KASITILE: The priests will be there, Ngulyo, Kissogota, Njobakosa, Mwalukuta and Mwakasukula,[1] and also Mwaipopo (116) himself. Were I a commoner I should kill alone with my younger brothers, but since I am a public personage (*ndi nkulumba*) the village headmen are there. (To Mwaikambo, the clerk.) It is good at your home in the hills; here things are bad.

QUESTION: But they also have shades?

[775] KASITILE: But they are not important. Look you, I just cut a tree and they have seized me and dwell in my body. Are there sacred groves in
[178] the hills? Do men visit them? There in the hills rituals have died; the puberty ritual and the rituals of the groves are celebrated very little.

On 27th March Kasitile looked in to say that he was going to con-
787 sult a visiting Sangu doctor 'from very far off' about his cough, but
791 G.W. had better not come lest his presence spoil the divination.
753 Kasitile came again after the consultation, full of excitement. 'What a doctor! That is a doctor indeed! That is a diviner! He took an axe and divined with it; he took coppers which I brought and threw them in a little pot, together with the axe, and ash, and he said: "You also take ash and throw it in" and I did so. Then he looked into the little pot and said: "You built on the plain!" He knew this without being told! I said: "Yes".'

SANGU: There was a quarrel there.

[1] The last two are priests of Mbyanga (*vide* p. 80) who did not in fact come. Mwamakunda, Kasitile's assistant, who did come is not mentioned.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

KASITILE: Yes indeed.
SANGU: Now your body is sick, you are coughing. 787
KASITILE: Yes indeed, I am ill, and I am coughing a great deal. 791
SANGU: Yes, it is that quarrel down there. You came with the cough from the plain. 753
KASITILE: Yes, I came with it.
SANGU: You are a priest, you are a senior priest. (He knew this himself!)
KASITILE: Yes indeed.
SANGU: But the cough comes from the quarrel in the plain. If you were not a priest you would have died.
KASITILE: Indeed, we quarrelled over land, over the boundaries, on the plain. I hoed someone else's land—the land of a commoner there. [578]
SANGU: They placed something to injure you.

Kasitile paused in his narrative and we asked how the 'something' operated.

KASITILE: In dreams, by means of their witchcraft. [754]

The Sangu told me: 'It is this which causes you to cough continually, but there is something else also, you did not move to the plain from here without trouble.'

KASITILE: No, I moved with an accusation against me.
SANGU: Yes indeed, you did wrong and now your fathers are very angry. [775] [776]
KASITILE: Yes, I cut a tree.
SANGU: Mother! You cut a tree? The fathers and Kyala are brooding over you, Kyala is angry and broods over you. Pray, pray very much. It is you who are throttling the cattle of the country.

We expressed surprise and Kasitile continued: 'Yes, indeed. The Sangu said: "It is your wrongdoing (in cutting the tree) which is causing the cows to abort. I will clear out the thing which came with you from the plain. Bring 2*s.* tomorrow." He's a great doctor, Mwaipaja.' [688]

The astonishing thing was that Kasitile, a man of considerable intelligence and inclined to query the truth of the revelations of some oracles, was so much impressed by the fact that the foreign doctor (staying in the country) knew that he was a priest and had sojourned in the plain, though to anyone knowing KiNyakyusa well his connexion with the plain was apparent in his speech, and his bearing indicated him as a personage.

Talking of the divination three days later, Kasitile told us the Sangu doctor had said: 'You have done wrong at home. This Kyala (pointing to the little pot into which he was looking) knows that Lwembe and the Kinga and your father are angry, your father is very important, he works with Kyala, he is with him.' 755

As a treatment for the cough the doctor put various ingredients with 791

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

755 791 some live coals into a small calabash and held them against Kasitile's chest 'to clear out the blood of coughing'. To pacify the shades a pot of medicines in water was put on the fire; the doctor, Kasitile, and his [769] 'senior wife' (actually her younger sister, as Jane was away) each held the pot with a crooked finger. Then Kasitile and all his wives and children were sprinkled with the hot medicines. And the doctor told Kasitile to sacrifice a bull.

During the following week preparations for the sacrifice went ahead. [793] Kasitile walked for some hours through the forest to call Mwamakunda, his fellow priest who always assisted him in the celebrations at Lubaga and 'sprinkling the country'. Mwamakunda is a very old man, contemporary of Kasitile's father, and he asked: 'Are you bringing your European to the sacrifice?'

KASITILE: Yes.

[186] MWAMAKUNDA: But your father Mwakanjoki (60) did not know any Europeans, he feared them, he died without ever meeting one. After [688] your father died, when your elder brother was alive, Europeans came [177] —Germans—and cut down a tree, the *umwali* tree in the sacred grove near Kamesu; blood gushed out, it shouted so that it was heard in BuKinga.

Kasitile explained that the Germans had wanted timber. Afterwards [782] Mwaipopo (the chief 116) sought a sheep and they tried to put the [783] grove to rights ('close up') by sacrificing it. This was the tree beside which the sacred meat was always put when they sacrificed in the grove. Now one branch has grown up again from the roots.

Mwamakunda went on: 'But you did wrong at the beginning not to take the European to pray, and to tell Mwakanjoki (60) that he should not be afraid, the European has made himself our friend.' Kasitile, reporting the interview to us said: 'I concealed that we went together to the grove to pray (*vide supra*, p. 115) and Mwamakunda told me: "Let the European take something, let it stay overnight in the house, and go with him, and pray very much. . . . Mwakanjoki has gone off in a huff from your home, you have offended him yourself. Go with the 753 European, take him to your father's home. Now your father has taken 769 offence, he is shaking your body by night because you cut the tree; you 688 have done wrong." ' i.e. two causes for the anger of the shades and 186 Kasitile's consequent sickness were given: (i) the cutting of the tree by Mwakanjoki's grave and (ii) Godfrey Wilson's presence at rituals and at Kasitile's homestead. So before the sacrifice of expiation for 783 pruning the grove was performed Godfrey Wilson went to be intro- 782 duced to Kasitile's shades for the second time.

Record of G.W. 9/4/37

[778] In the evening as the sun was setting, I went to Kasitile's house with a cloth and 2*s*. He put them in the house, took down the calabash which

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 them to speak out, because if they do not admit that it is they, then the
782 ritual fails.'

QUESTION: What does that mean?

754 KASITILE: It is witchcraft!

QUESTION: Witchcraft? (in apparent surprise).

KASITILE: Yes, it is their witchcraft, the priests gathered with the shade, they bring a chill on my body.

QUESTION: Pythons? (still in surprise).

KASITILE: Yes, they fly in their witchcraft to come here, they speak
[775] with the shades, saying: 'Punish him! Let him find us something to eat!' They call the shades to help. Hence I sought something for them to eat that they should be satisfied.

QUESTION: But I thought witchcraft and the shades were quite separate? (still in apparent surprise).

KASITILE: No, they are together, look you, did not Kissogota boast? He said, 'Indeed we came, it is us, it is us. Why did you cut that branch? But now there is no accusation against you.' He boasted very much. He said: 'We have power, if we like we can give him worms.' [It is Njobakosa who was heard to say this, but Kasitile's personal quarrel was with Kissogota.] Did I not tell you that I had worms when I came up from the plain? I had them! I went to doctors and the diviners said: 'You are a chief, you were in the plain, why do you not kill a bull on your return?' Then when I killed a bull the worms disappeared! Where did they come from? They came from the priests, they called the shades to their aid. So I admitted to Kissogota, saying: 'Indeed I have done wrong, I your wife, I Maloba' (86, the feminine form of the name is used).

QUESTION: So, a white person (*umwelu*, *vide infra*, p. 141) cannot be a priest, but only a witch, a heavy one?

KASITILE: Yes, indeed, how can a white person take hold of the ritual? His fellows will drive him away. See! To a ritual do we call everyone?

No!

KASITILE: And is my home near to Kissogota's?

No, he lives at a distance.

KASITILE: Yes, indeed, it is the black ones (*batitu*) whom we call because it is they who punish us chiefs.

[648] QUESTION: Well, then, is the anger of the shades always provoked by the witches? What about sores (*imindu*) on the mouth?[1] What about
[775] madness if a commoner does not perform the death ritual?

KASITILE: No, I do not lie, that is different. Sores on the mouth come
● [753] from the shades, the witches are not there, and if a commoner fails to perform the ritual, madness also comes from the shades, it comes

[1] Cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 181, 219.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

indeed from the whispering of men and the shades here, but people speak openly, saying: 'Why does he not celebrate the ritual?' The witches do not come into it. 754 775

QUESTION: Well, when the witches do throttle someone, do they always call shades, or not? 753

KASITILE: No, sometimes they throttle a man alone, and the shades are not there.

QUESTION: But your sickness?

KASITILE: Now the priests in their witchcraft gathered with the shades. [793] The day after we had celebrated Njobakosa came to my place and said: 'We have finished then!' I replied: 'Yes, my body is better now, but the cough is separate, it is from Kyala.' And did you not hear what Mwaipopo asked in his cups—'How did the doctor (the Sangu) know that you are a priest? And that you had done wrong? Indeed they (Kissogota and his fellows) had told him!'

QUESTION: What did he mean by that?

KASITILE: That they had gone to the doctor in dreams to tell him. [787]

Asked about Kissogota's words: 'You are impressive, we are cannibals, we are', Kasitile explained: 'It means, "You chiefs kill cattle for us, you are impressive, that is your impressiveness. Do we kill cattle? No! We eat men, we are witches." Because when we have killed cattle they receive blood, their witchcraft goes away, it stays in its house.'

QUESTION: And your reply, 'You are impressive, you are'?

KASITILE: I replied: 'You are impressive, you are, you are witches, if I were alone what would I do? It is you who brought the chilling breath on me and said I had done wrong. Even though I have not done wrong, you wish to eat meat. If I walk about among you, my body shrinks, it fears.'

Mwaipopo (the chief 116) had also prayed with water the night [782] before the sacrifice, he helps me in prayer and if he prays at his house, I help him. We pray with water to bring out everything; if I do not pray with water then something is left within. I summon all the gods, [776] all the fathers, and all the shades. (*Apa tukwiputa namesi ko kusyosya* [775] *ilisyu loysa, lenga ndikwiputa namesi po lisyele limo nkati. Nikumpala kyala* [539] *gwesa, tata gwesa, abasyuka bosa.*)

QUESTION:

KASITILE: Yes, when Kissogota and his fellows came in their witchcraft to call my shades to their aid, I saw them in dreams, I saw them! And [787] if they correct Mwaipopo like this in witchcraft, together with the shades, he sees them; he complies immediately, he seeks a cow. And if they just come to throttle me I see them. It is the village headmen of the country who come to throttle me, the shades are not there, no, only Kissogota and his fellows, they stand with the shades, not the others they come and suck my blood and they go away again. I do not speak,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 but I see them. It's taboo to speak. They must seek blood and they go
775 off; we fear them!

QUESTION: Why do you chiefs never speak out if you are throttled?

753 KASITILE: If I speak how many would there be to name? Very many!
[689] For us it's taboo to accuse a man of witchcraft, but the commoners
[554] accuse one another. Look you, do few people keep you company?
Many!

Like us chiefs, everyone comes. It's taboo for us to speak out, we fear. Look you, when Mwambene (Mwaipopo 116) and I were alone we feared to throw out the beer, we said: 'If we throw it out will they leave?' But when Kissogota came, he said: 'All right, I will throw it
[152] out myself.' We fear the fierce great priests, the terrible witches, they are angry.[1] We shrink when they appear.

[622] The village headmen of the country call on the priests for help against us, they whisper by the fire, the priests come in their witchcraft, they call on my shades saying, 'Let us punish him', also they eat,
[793] together with the shades. Our shades never initiate anything, never; they look to the priests. But with a commoner the shade may initiate matters himself. Yes, people whisper indeed, but is that witchcraft? No! They whisper openly and ask, 'Why did you not perform the ritual?' But even although people are silent, still the shade comes
[688] saying, 'Why did you not perform the ritual? I am on the road.' He initiates the thing himself.

QUESTION: But don't people eat meat at the ritual of a commoner?

KASITILE: Yes, and if he does not celebrate it they accuse him, but they accuse him openly.

QUESTION: If the heir buries him with a few cattle?

688 KASITILE: If a rich commoner dies and the heir buries him with only
775 one cow, the shades are angry and the people also; their chilling
774 breath comes on his body, perhaps he falls ill himself, perhaps his child falls ill, but the people and witches do not meet together, people are angry here, and the shades there; all of them and the shades too, because he has celebrated with one cow only. People are angry because
[787] they wish to eat the meat. But the oracle says, 'The shades are angry.' It does not speak of people, it knows that people also are angry, but it speaks of the shades. And at the celebration he prays in the evening, the next day he calls people and kills a cow, and throws the sacred
[783] meat in the banana grove, saying, 'Here is your meat, father.' People say, 'Indeed he did wrong, his father was angry', but they do not confess saying, 'It was we', no, they say 'the shades' . . .

[826] We chiefs have bodies which are different, the commoners arrived
[554] first in the country, they ate raw food, we fear them saying, 'They eat raw food.' It is we who followed and brought fire. To us they confess

[1] *Imipago indosi mikalala.* The noun class implies size, ferocity, and dislike.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(b) MEDICINES AND MORALITY

Doctors classify most of their medicines in terms of the supposed mystical causes of disease, and the determining factor in diagnosis is what quarrels have occurred in the patient's circle of kinsmen and friends, or what wrongdoing he has on his conscience. The medicines mentioned to us by various doctors were for treatment of sickness caused by 'the breath of men', by sorcery, by vengeance magic, by the protective medicine put on wives, by the anger of the shades or living senior relatives, by incest, by spearing or binding with ropes,[1] or abnormal birth. Only a few of the medicines listed were for the treatment of observable symptoms such as fever, too frequent periods, or swelling after snake-bite, rather than the supposed mystical cause. 278 753

The emphasis on discovering the mystical cause and counteracting it was shown very clearly when Godfrey Wilson accompanied Mwakyonde, the doctor, to the home of a patient, a young man so weak that he could not lift a limb. Mwakyonde spent two minutes examining him, and provided leaves with which he was poulticed, and a medicine which was rubbed into cuts made all over his body, but the greater part of the day was devoted to discussing the quarrel between kinsmen, from which his illness was thought to have arisen, to persuading the kinsmen to 'speak out', and to preparing and administering a medicine which would cause the death of any one of them who was working sorcery against another. 753 578 [757]

Medicine for the treatment of a disease is held to be ineffective —at the best a temporary palliative—unless the underlying cause is discovered and dealt with. For example, doctors spoke of possessing a medicine against *ilyepa*, the disease caused by a kinsman to whom a debt in cattle is due, but it is not effective alone. 'The wrongdoer drinks medicine and pays his kinsman. He must pay, for though the medicine may cure him temporarily the disease will come again if he does not pay his debt.'

The ultimate cause of disease is believed to be friction in social relationships—a breach in moral law—and so the study of medicines takes us directly to problems of morality. There is a deep-rooted conviction that medicines will not be effective if there is quarrelling in the family which uses them. This applies not only to medicines used in sickness, but also to those for protection [602]

[1] *op. cit.*, pp. 172-9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

753 and achievement. An account of the treatment of a field for
578 protection against wild pig emphasizes this.

If people wish to protect a crop from wild pig they go to a doctor to
789 ask for medicine. When he gives it to them he tells them that there
241 must be no quarrelling in the home after they have barricaded the
[689] field. Four women go to the field with the husband of the one who cultivates it. They go after sunset. One women is shaved; her head is a symbol of the garden devastated by pig. A second woman, who keeps
[302] her hair, has a head-pad on her head and carries bananas with medicine. She enters the field and eats the bananas. The husband climbs a hill at a little distance, and two of the women go into the long grass close to the field. The bald pate twists a head-pad and the one with hair smears it with medicine and as they do so they look towards their
[831] husband and abuse him saying, 'You lay with your mother', and he swears at them saying, 'The leather aprons of your fathers' . . . and many other insults. Then the women walk round the edge of the field, sprinkling medicines, and they go out the way they came in. The circular pad is a symbol of the barricade placed round the field. When
[262] they return home they do not eat but go to sleep hungry (though the clever ones eat beforehand). If they quarrel, the pig finishes the food. It is as if quarrelling destroyed the fierceness, the power, of the protective medicine; you must put aside all quarrelling that the medicine may be powerful. If the pigs come it is as if there were a quarrel, so the woman and her husband quarrel in the field mimicking the pig. The husband on the hill is like the pig approaching the field, his wives in the long grass also represent pigs. . . . The husband and his wives quarrel only in the field. If, when the maize is ripe, the husband beats one of his wives for any cause she does not go to pick the maize herself, a friend picks it for her. If she goes in her anger she finds the maize finished, nothing but earth is left.

789 Here the link between medicines and morality is made plain.
689 Quarrelling weakens medicines of all sorts and renders them ineffective. But a mimic quarrel between husband and wives in the fields renders the medicine effective. It represents the battle between the pig and the medicines. There is a suggestion else-
[775] where (pp. 69, 113) that pigs are *sent* by the shades when kinsmen or neighbours quarrel, but in the account just quoted it is implied that quarrelling in the home directly injures the medicine.

In themselves, many medicines are neutral. They may be
278 put to good or evil ends, but because they are mysterious and
754 powerful, they are feared, in the same sort of way as atomic
789 energy is feared in contemporary society. Men use medicines themselves 'for purely peaceful purposes', but they are shocked at

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 are said to give their wives a medicine (without their know-
751 ledge) which will cause any man who lies with them to fall ill
754 of gonorrhoea or some other venereal disease. Many Christians
[753] believe in this medicine and some inquired whether Europeans did not use it also. One family of doctors are specialists in it:

[791] The sons of Manyafu are very famous, they are great doctors. People fear them very much. No one can steal anything belonging to them or run off with their wives. If a man runs off with a wife of theirs, he will return their wife and pay. . . . Because when he has slept with the woman by night they stink in each other's nostrils, the woman stinks in the face of the man and he likewise in hers. And if rain falls by night the roof comes off the hut in which they sleep and the rain enters. Perhaps the man quarrels with the woman, perhaps frogs and snakes are numerous, perhaps gourds sprout in the house—sometimes they sprout bringing evil. So it is also if a man has run off with the wife of another and the husband goes to the sons of Manyafu. They agree to work, but he must pay them.

[681] Lyandileko, whose husband's family have owned a 'horn' for generations, was very insistent that vengeance magic maintained law and order for it could injure only the guilty. 'A thief feared to steal lest he be caught by my father-in-law (Mwaisyelage). He feared the horn if he used sorcery. He feared to seize another's cow thinking, "They will go to Mwaisyelage".'
[684] And protective medicines which cause an adulterer to fall ill of gonorrhoea, or a thief to die, are considered perfectly legitimate; the misfortune would not have befallen the man unless he had done wrong.

[648] The prohibition by the government of the *mwafi* oracle has puzzled people. Medicines are admittedly dangerous, but it is held that Europeans 'encourage' witches and sorcerers by forbidding the use of the one effective weapon against them, and doctors with vengeance magic or other strong medicines 'fear the fate of the *mwafi* doctors'. There is an inescapable contradiction here, the Nyakyusa relying on *mwafi* and vengeance magic as a means of discovering criminals, and the Europeans punishing any doctor found administering poison, or intimidating people by threats. Furthermore, it is widely believed that Europeans them-
[186] selves use strong medicines made up with blood. Any Europeans without an obvious occupation are suspect of being *abanyambuta*, who go around killing people and taking their blood for the Government to use for medicines. One of our European friends,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

a missionary, was warned by her servants before Godfrey Wilson's arrival in her neighbourhood 'not to go out at night as there were *abapembuta* about, sent by the Government to kill people and take their blood', and women going for firewood made a long detour to avoid his camp. One was overheard asking when she caught sight of him: 'Is that the man who kills people?' Angombwike explained that, since all really strong Nyakyusa medicines contained human blood, it was argued that European medicines, which were so powerful, must contain it also. 'They follow their own customs.' 789 751 754 186

It seems obvious to the Nyakyusa that Europeans must have strong medicines because their confidence and success are so great. Moreover, it is held (in theory) that they are immune to attacks from witchcraft. X, who had been a clerk and lost his job, and was bitter, expanded on this:

> People say that Europeans have *inyifuila* (*side* p. 58), see they are brave, they do not fear, if someone seizes a spear they do not fear, they just come to him, they are very brave. And also the witches say that they are unable to choke Europeans. When we hear people boasting of their mystical power (*amasango*) we always say to them: 'But if that is so, go and choke a European, show us!' Then they always say, 'Oh no, we can't do that, when we go to a European house at night we find it all lighted up and flaming, we can't get near them.' I think this is the power of the Holy Spirit which you Europeans have. [778]

He came of a well-known family of doctors and perhaps spoke from first-hand knowledge. He just laughed at the suggestion that the light might come from lamps. But the fact that Europeans were held to be immune did not prevent our servants and friends attributing our recurring attacks of malaria to witchcraft. [753]

(c) DOCTORS

Among the Nyakyusa, as perhaps in every society, the doctors with the greatest reputation are those at a distance, and a high proportion of the practitioners in the country are of foreign lineages, their fathers, or grandfathers, or great-grandfathers having come in, bringing medicines with them, and begun to practice. In fact, we were assured that there were no Nyakyusa doctors who were famous, they were all Sangu, or Kinga, or Kisi, or from Ngonde or Misuku in Nyasaland, but detailed investigation proved this to be false. The trade in medicines from a distance is a very old one and continues today. As we have seen, 791 [439] [278] [438]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The shade is the principle of life represented by seed, or the root of a banana, or a tree growing by a grave;[1] the hero embodied a vital force which caused grain to sprout and clay cattle to breathe. The line between a hero, the shade of one of his successors, and the shade of a chief is a very faint one. They all have power over people other than their descendants and are approached by hereditary priests. As some elderly men of Ngonde put it: 'The nobles, not the living Kyungu, go to the groves of the Kyungus to pray; they go because the Kyungus who have died are shades to us all (*bo bayuka bete twese*).' 769 775 [793]

The heroes had miraculous power but it differed in degree, rather than in kind, from that possessed by their descendants. Like that of the divine kings and chiefs it lay both in their own bodies and in medicines, especially the *ifingila* which is still used by chiefs. [778]

Kyala and Lwembe dwell 'beneath' (*pasi*) with the shades, as opposed to 'above' (*kumwanya*), which implied traditionally 'on earth' not 'in the sky'. There is no hint of a sky god in the traditional system, and the distinction between black and white offerings, which the early missionaries took to be a distinction between offerings to the shades and to a sky god,[2] was unequivocally interpreted by the priests in another fashion. The white (*musela*) offering to Kyala or Ngulube is a symbol not of purity, but of an unclouded sky, and the numinous quality of the heroes is conceived of as contamination, not holiness. Like the shades, the heroes must be 'driven off' lest men go mad, and it is when they have driven them away that men are *bela*—white, innocent, free of anger. Men should be *bela* but this is never cited as an attribute of the pagan Kyala. It is the terribleness, not the goodness or purity of God of which the Nyakyusa are aware. This is underlined by the fact that a madman who, 'when he comes home rushes off', and 'does not see that his fellows are human beings,' and who 'has a loose heart' (i.e. is passionate and quarrelsome), or 'whose heart curls up like a leaf in the sun, or turns upside down', is called 'Mbasi' or is said to have been 'caught hold of by Kyala'. 775 769 [753] [828]

Kyala is one hero among others but, as has been shown, the name is *also* used in the sense of 'the lord'. Kyala as 'the lord' of a commoner or junior kinsman is distinct from Kyala the hero with his own place in a genealogy and his own shrine. The difference

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 203-3, 211 *et passim*.
[2] F. Fülleborn, *Das Deutsche Nyasa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet*, pp. 310-1.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

his cave and who, though a creator, is equalled by other heroes and 776
dwells in the bowels of the earth, there was Kyala an ultimate 775
power and first cause, unique and omnipotent, who dwelt in 771
heaven 'above'. The implications of *kumwaya* (above) have 797
changed along with the implications of *Kyala*.

The new balance between the different elements in pagan thought was reflected in everyday speech. In the 1930's men spoke constantly of the shades (*abapuke*), the witches (*abalosi*), and 'the breath of men' (*imlepe ya bande*); Kyala did not figure much in the conversation of pagans. But in 1955, from the moment when the bus I arrived in skidded off the road and the passengers began assuring each other that *Kyala alimo* (God is present), because no one had been injured, I heard the name constantly. Such a change is hard to prove, but the impression of a marked shift in emphasis was strong.

The conception of the hero Mbasi has also radically altered. 776
During the years before 1914 a man, with two boys in attendance, 685
posed as Mbasi and went round Selya by night, growling in a gruff voice that he was Mbasi, and seizing cattle and fowls and food. He was eventually taken by night, by some Christians, and died after seven months' imprisonment in Tukuyu. Today the [797]
Christians never use 'Mbasi' for God, but sometimes identify him with 'Satan', and the pagans use 'Lwembe' rather than 'Mbasi'.

The range of relationships in space was narrow in the tradi- 782
tional Nyakyusa society, and the range of relationship in time was correspondingly so. Only a limited number of chiefdoms co-operated in sacrifice to a hero (and often they seem to have acted separately, rather than in concert), and all historical time was contained in the genealogies depicted. There was a dawn when 773
men ate food raw and lived without fire, or cattle, or chiefs, but history began when the heroes descended from the mountains, ten or twelve generations ago. Time was telescoped when all the known world lay within 100 miles.

A social revolution occurred once, with the coming of the chiefs, but then time stood still, and ever since the heroic age has remained the pattern of right behaviour. Departure from the [753]
rituals laid down spells madness and death, for 'Kyala created us so'. Part of primeval reality is the conflict of generations expressed in the myth of the seduction of a young wife by her husband's father, in the rules of avoidance, and in the ritual of the 'coming out'. There is no convention of fighting on this last occasion (as

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

out all the anger that is within', 'admitting that I have done wrong', begging pardon (*ukupelepa*) and *also* a symbol of emission and so of driving off the shades (*vide supra*, pp. 104, 108-110; 139). Good health depends upon good social relationships, and of one who is ailing it is commonly said: 'It seems as if they (unspecified) had hated her.' Further, the proper working of the natural order is held to depend upon the proper working of the social order. Drought, or 'cold', or pestilence falls on a chiefdom if there is quarrelling between chief and priests, and the anger of the Lwembe with his 'sons' will shrivel the crops of Selya. The heroes, the shades, many of the men of power (*abamanga*), and many medicines help to maintain an orderly universe; only the witches and sorcerers work against it. In short, order and right living are an integral part of Nyakyusa religion as they are of Christianity.

The ultimate good is the power of fertility, of generation, which lies in the heroes and shades; the punishment for evil-doing is ill-health of body or mind and sterility. And towards the heroes and shades, who are both life-givers and avengers, the attitude of men is clearly ambivalent: the shades are driven away—'let them warm themselves over there in the long grass', men say when they throw out the ashes (*vide supra*, pp. 109-11) but they bring them home again to 'warm themselves by the hearth'.

In analysing the rituals of the Nyakyusa, I have been driven to the conclusion that they are, in fact, dogged by a sense of guilt,[1] for this is the only hypothesis on which the linking of misfortune and sin, the preoccupation with 'filth', and the recurring acts of purification can be explained. One of the sources of this sense of guilt is, I suggest, awareness of anger within, for it is believed that such anger injures others. An act of confession is essential to many rituals, and what must be confessed are anger, hard thoughts, ill will against others. The anger is acknowledged to come primarily from men—it is the angry parent who rouses the shades to action by muttering over the fire—but the guilt, the filth, is projected on to the shade or the hero. It is when they 'brood on' men that men are contaminated. A shade or a man that is *ugulafo*—good, righteous—is one without a grudge, without anger against anyone, free of witchcraft, and free of sex transgression—'there is no accusation against him'.

[1] I doubted this earlier, cf. 'Nyakyusa Ritual and Symbolism', *American Anthropologist*, v. 56 (1954), pp. 237-8.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

X 797 there?" And after he went there was much food.' In fact, it
X 795 appears that he took the teachers and schoolchildren to the grove
that they might no longer be afraid of it: the girls gathered fire-
[778] wood there, and everyone entered and made a noise, thus breaking
great taboos. But all this happened long ago (the visit to Mbyanga
was in 1913 or 1914) and, as was indicated earlier, the common
view among Christians is that pagan rituals *used* to be necessary
and efficacious, but are so no longer. We were assured by Christ-
ians who themselves took no part in twin rituals that 'formerly
[845] people fell ill if they did not celebrate'. 'Yes, of course, they were
[753] very sick indeed in the old days, the whole body would swell.'
Some even maintained that it was still necessary for pagans to
celebrate though not for Christians. A Christian chief explained:

[778] The sacred grove of Mwakihaba is just here in my country; . . . in
the old days they used to take a little fresh milk and an unripe stem of
[789] bananas, and put them in the grove. . . . The next day the calabash
was full of milk and the stem was ripe. This was really so in the old
days, Kyala heard men and agreed to their requests in this way. We
went to ask for rain and food in the groves; the chief would kill a cow
and Kyala agreed, food and rain came. Now that the Gospel has
spread, since the Europeans have opened the Gospel to us Kyala
refuses to agree, he says: 'Since they are proud and refuse to hear the
Gospel I will discipline them', and he refuses to agree to the old ways.

QUESTION: What about witchcraft?

Perhaps there were people who were witches in the old days; at any
[754] rate I know that when milk ran short and a man was accused to the
chief of bewitching the cattle, the chief used to take his cattle and drive
him out of the country, and then milk was plentiful again. Of that I
am sure.

QUESTION: And now?

No, it is not like that now.

Many pagans attribute the decline in fertility which is taking
[688] place, and the decrease in the yield of milk, to the decay of the
old communal rituals and the unhampered activities of witches.

Nevertheless, as the number of Christians in an area increases,
the pagans tend to curtail their rituals more and more. The
direct parallel between pagan confession, sacrifice, and com-
munion with the shades, and the Holy Communion of the
Christian Church is recognized by many, and one is felt to replace
the other. Regarding the rituals of kinship we were repeatedly
told: 'We see that the Christians, who say the only rituals are the

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

number of separate plots per holding was less than where land was scarcer; 311
at the same time the average size of separate plots was smaller in those more 423
land-hungry villages. The reader may refer to Table III (page 15) for some illustrative figures. Though differences are not yet very great, nevertheless there seems to be a fairly clear correlation between the average size of villagers' holdings on the one hand, and on the other the number and size of separate plots, and this is entirely borne out by my general information obtained in villages where actual measurements were not made. The inescapable conclusion must be that increasing scarcity of land in the Lake Plains leads to increasing fragmentation and dispersion of holdings; further, the present land situation and land tenure system can only lead to a continuation of this trend.

To emphasise the actual situation in 1955, let me reiterate the results of my own village surveys in the very high density region. In a village in Koroso's chiefdom only a quarter of the younger men had paddy land of their own, holdings averaging about three-quarters of an acre; in a village in Mwakipesile's chiefdom, only 17 per cent. of the younger men had paddy land and holdings averaged about half an acre (cf. Table VII, page 37). These two examples are taken from the areas of most severe land shortage and are *not therefore altogether typical of the whole Lake Plains. Nevertheless,* I do not think that they are entirely atypical; more importantly, they indicate the present trend. Within another generation this fragmentation and scatter of holdings may well be the common feature everywhere in the flood plains unless the system of tenure and inheritance is modified. If the increase in population is quickened through improved medical facilities, better diet and housing, and improved conditions generally, then the position will become more acute. Such an increase is only to be expected. The Nyakyusa have decisively entered a money economy and they have learnt to seek higher [433] standards of living. Only from their fields, by cash-cropping, can they expect to earn their livings and the demand for better living will not be [511] curtailed – nor, of course, is it desirable that it should be.

There is another aspect of this whole matter which must be considered. It relates to the movement of individuals between villages. Such movement [166] was, in earlier European days, a crucial factor in the age-village structure, for it was not only exceedingly frequent, but also it tended to undermine the idealised coeval basis of village life. Movement between villages is increasingly difficult now, for a newcomer naturally cannot easily obtain land, nor as much land as he would desire even at a moderate demand. Nevertheless, [954] the reasons for movement persist, and they will do so whilst the fear of [953] ● witchcraft remains and whilst illness and misfortune are attributable to the unfavourable aura of a place. There remains also the tradition of moving so that a man may escape from bad relations with kinsfolk or neighbours, [624] or from the obloquy resulting from his own disapproved actions. Much social and psychological tension is being created now as a result of the new [152] difficulty of movement, and so far the Nyakyusa have not evolved alternative [578] methods.

On the other hand, so deeply engrained is the notion of the prestige and power which accrues to a village by virtue of the number of its inhabitants, [554] that headmen and villagers alike remain most reluctant to refuse to accept [609] newcomers, even when it inevitably means that the present inhabitants must meet a further decrease in the average amount of land available per family, [622] for a newcomer must be allocated a holding if he is to remain. Consequently, if a holding is for any reason left vacant, a headman tends to refuse to re-allocate some or all of it amongst his villagers and thus to augment their holdings; but instead he keeps it in reserve pending the hoped-for arrival of another newcomer. Men desiring to leave their own village try to get

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

622 neighbours, he judges their cases; he is their leader at ceremonies
157 and in the old days he led them to war also. He represents their desires to the chief, and it is through him, and in consultation with him, that the chief gives orders. Besides this each headman
[154] (*ulifumu*) is believed to protect his own villagers from witchcraft, 'to watch over the country by night', to shield men and cattle from the spiritual forces of evil.[1] To fit them for this task, village headmen are treated with medicines at the 'coming out' to give them the power of seeing and fighting witches.

622 So important is this position of village headman that legal precautions are taken 'to prevent the village headman becoming a chief', as several informants have put it to us. It is illegal to choose a village headman from among the kinsmen of a chief, and it is illegal to elect the son of a village headman to that office in any age-village of his own contemporaries, though he may perhaps inherit the position in his father's village when his father dies.

622 To return to the 'coming out' ceremony: when the old men
621 have made up their minds, one of them goes among the crowd of young men, and catches hold of those they have chosen in order of seniority: first the one who is to be leader of the senior village of the first son of the old chief, then the leader of the senior village of his second son, then the leader of the next senior village of the first son, and so on. There are commonly eight age-villages of young men; of these four will belong to the chiefdom of the first son, four to that of the second. The eight new village headmen are now publicly known, four in each new chiefdom.

622 The young chiefs, together with the senior headman of each,
789 are then treated with medicines that they may be impressive
643 (*nsiya*). From birth a chief undergoes periodical treatment to make him impressive (*nsiya*) 'that we commoners may tremble before him'. The treatment at the 'coming out' is directed towards the same end: 'We treat him, then he will be altogether a chief, men will respect him!' The village headmen now drink the

[192] [1] The essential meaning of a word in one culture is often illuminated by the meaning of a word from the same stem among neighbouring people. In this connection it is significant that *fumu* in Bemba and *nfumu* in Nyanja mean 'chief', but in Ankole *abafumu* means 'magicians' (including diviners) (*African Political Systems*, p. 145), and among the Bukuru *bafumu* is used in the same sense (*Africa*, Vol. XIX, p. 14). *cf.* H. H. Johnston, *A Comparative Study of the Bantu and Semi-Bantu Languages*, Vol. II, p. 270.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 villages of the great-grandfathers' generation survived, even ritually (*vide* Document, pp. 881–5).[1]

166 Men also move from one village to another and they do not always join a village of their exact contemporaries. A stranger may come and be granted land in a village even though he is considerably older or younger than the bulk of its members. Such movement from one village to another is now very considerable: we estimated that at least 80 per cent of the married men have at some time or other moved from the chiefdom in which they first cultivated gardens of their own. There is also movement from village to village within a chiefdom.

[681] Everyone agreed that moving is not something new. In the past a convicted witch was expelled from his village, and sometimes from the chiefdom; thieves and adulterers were also expelled or fled to take refuge with another chief (*vide infra*, pp. 118–9). But it is probable that movement between villages has increased greatly since the imposition of European control. The main [759] reason for moving nowadays is, as we have said, the fear of witchcraft. Subsidiary reasons are the desire to get suitable land for cultivating cash crops, the desire to be near some centre of employment (such as Tukuyu or Rungwe), and the desire to live with others of like mind, as fellow Christians or fellow pagans, fellow Moravians or fellow adherents of the 'Watch Tower' (*vide infra*, pp. 40–3).

166 Women move from one village to another even more often than men, for, not only do wives move with their husbands, but 591 a girl commonly marries a man of a village other than that in 587 which she grew up, and is later inherited by a kinsman of her dead husband who lives in yet another village. Since first wives are usually ten years younger than their husbands, and junior wives may be forty or fifty years younger, most women are inherited at least once during their lives, and some are inherited [585] several times. The modern high divorce rate accelerates this long-established circulation of women from village to village.

[1] It is possible that the existence of villages of four generations was due to the fact that Mwaipopo continued to live long after the 'coming out' of his heir Mwankuga—a survival not usual in traditional practice (*vide supra*, p. 30).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

gardens will be small.' And the crops of one who lags behind, 241
when his fellows have planted together, are also said to suffer. For this reason, if one woman is delayed and unable to work along with them, her friends will plant a corner of her field when they plant their own, so that the fertility of her fields may not be lost.

An educated informant explained that 'those who have learnt agriculture may think that late planting is unsuccessful because it is not the right season—the weather is wrong—but others think the failure is due to not planting at the same time as their neighbours.' Christians living on mission land, with their gardens in a block by themselves, do not trouble about planting simultaneously, but many of those living in mixed villages with fields adjoining the fields of pagans conform 'because if they do not plant with them they do not have pleasant social relations'. In some chiefdoms, however, the custom is dying even among pagans. In Porokoto's country we were told: 'The custom is now dead, men just burn higgledy piggledy. A fire blazes up somewhere. We ask, "Whose is it?" "So and so's" comes the reply. "Oh! All right!" The custom has died because the Christians are many and the chiefs have turned to the Christians; their hearts are with the Christians even though they themselves are not baptized, and about this burning of the rubbish heaps for millet they say: "What is it for? Does it avail anything?" '

Among the people of Selya the rule was traditionally less 241
elaborate than among the Kukwe. It is polite and customary for 576
those whose fields adjoin to call one another so that they may begin each process together. 'We speak to each other saying: "Friends, let us hoe a millet field over there, all of us, hunger comes on us." ' And if a son hoes a field next to his father's his 'mothers' call their daughter-in-law to plant with them, since their fields adjoin. But the only sanctions for keeping in step in hoeing and planting are conventional; there is no suggestion that the laggard's crops will fail. If, however, a man *burns* his millet field before his neighbours have heaped their weeds, they have ground for complaint. They say: 'Why have you harmed our crops?'

Underlying the emphasis on neighbours cultivating simul- 241
taneously is the idea that the fertility of fields and crops in ear 754
can be stolen by witchcraft and sorcery, and that if one man's

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241 crop is conspicuously better than that of his neighbours it is at
754 their expense; he has illegally enticed the fertility or grain from their fields into his own; he has, in the Nyakyusa phrase 'overstepped' his neighbours.

Ideas as to what creates 'overstepping' vary slightly in the different local groups, but everywhere it is insisted that no man should get a start of his neighbours by burning his rubbish heaps with medicines before they are ready to do so. And not only does communal burning prevent individuals 'overstepping' their neighbours, but the medicine used is said to be a direct protection against witches and sorcerers. Dependence upon medicines and the elaboration of taboos are thus associated with a technique of cultivation—burning of weeds—in which fertility diminishes rapidly, much more rapidly than it does with the technique of green manuring practised for other crops.

The Nyakyusa have no elaborate communal ritual of the first-
241 fruits, emphasizing precedence, such as plays a great part among many of the Southern Bantu. Significantly, their Ngonde relatives, with a more centralized political organization, forbade any man to eat of the new maize and pumpkin leaves until these had been offered ritually, first at the ancestral grove of their overlord, Kyungu, then at the groves of their chiefs, beginning with the senior, and then to the ancestors of each family. The Kukwe say that the headman of the village should be the first to eat certain of the new crops, just as he is the first to hoe, and plant, and reap, but the people of Selya do not trouble at all about precedence in this matter.

754 Among all the Nyakyusa, however, those who have been drinking the chief's *ifingela* medicine, or medicines for protection against sorcery which return the disease to the sender, must take special precautions when eating food grown on fields fertilized with ash. Now the medicine burnt with the rubbish is said to protect the crops from witches and sorcerers, and both the chief's *ifingela* medicine and retaliatory medicines border on sorcery. The underlying idea seems to be that since those who have been using these dangerous medicines partake in some measure of the nature of sorcerers, they are in danger from food nourished by the ash of that fire.[1] The important point here is that among the

[1] The associations made here will be developed in another book on Nyakyusa symbolism.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Nyakyusa generally it is kinship groups, not villages, which eat protective medicines with certain first-fruits. 754

Unlike many other cattle-keeping Bantu the Nyakyusa take great pride in cultivation, men boasting about their strength in hoeing, and praising those who are diligent. Significantly, the vocabulary relating to bananas matches in richness that relating to cattle: we recorded a dozen terms—and there were said to be many more—for varieties of bananas and plantains, which are distinguished by the form and flavour of the fruit, and thirteen terms for types of cattle, distinguished by colour and markings. 241 192

Not only does success in cultivation carry prestige in itself, but it provides the wherewithal for hospitality, on which status in a Nyakyusa community turns. To be respected a man must entertain his neighbours with food and millet-beer. Control of grain and vegetables to do this depends upon his own effort in hoeing, as well as upon having wives and sons to work with him. We have seen how the laggard among the Kukwe believes that the fertility of his gardens will be sapped by his neighbours being ahead. There is thus considerable social pressure compelling both men and women to cultivate diligently. At the same time, however, no individual should be too conspicuous. Each must keep in step in cultivation with his neighbours; and though his fields may be a little larger than the average, they must not be a great deal larger. The area cultivated (visible crops and stubble) by seven compound families on the Lake-shore plain in 1935 averaged 6·13 acres per family; which, divided by the number of members in each family, gave rather over half an acre per head (men, women, and children) or 1·3 acres per adult. The acreage ranged from 1·99 to 0·61 per adult.[1] 574 241 [626]

Cultivation thus involves co-operation primarily within elementary and compound families, but it also involves village co-operation, in that neighbours hold land together, help one another in some measure, and try to carry out each process simultaneously. 471 241

The pressure of neighbours still helps to keep laggards up to the mark, and also to keep the most energetic from getting far ahead. But the village control over cultivation is diminishing for, as we have seen, the custom of keeping in step is no longer strictly insisted upon even among the Kukwe, nor does it apply 241

[1] Monthly report of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu District, July 1933. Figures supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu, 1935.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

stand protected from insects: hence his title 'he of the heap of hot ashes' (*ugwakyemo*, *vide supra*, p. 34). The protection of their cattle from raiders by day, and witches by night, was one of the main co-operative activities of the village, and each herd-group within the village was particularly concerned with the protection of its own cattle. For the boys of one herd-group the association is very close since they are together on the pasturage for the greater part of the day. Friendships then formed sometimes last a lifetime. 231 476 [572]

A few rich men choose to herd their cattle separately from those of their neighbours. 'They are the men who have many cattle! They want to show off their herd, so that men may say: "That's the herd of so and so."' Sometimes their sons, against orders, foregather with other herd-boys on the pasturage, but they are careful to bring home the herds separately. We knew three men near Rungwe who were spoken of as herding their cattle separately, though in fact their sons often joined friends in the pasturage. To herd alone is regarded as somewhat ostentatious,[1] and only a few individuals do it. 231 476 556

Many rich men do not even keep all their cattle at their homesteads for fear of the jealous witchcraft of their neighbours. Instead, they disperse their herds among friends in other villages (of their own or neighbouring chiefdoms) believing that the cattle may in that way escape danger. Porokoto explained: 'We place cattle with friends (*ukufufya*) on account of sickness and death. Supposing I have three or four cows, and they all calf, but the calves die, then I place the cows with friends. People say: "The cows will escape in another village or chiefdom." If, when cattle die and are cut up, wounds are found in their stomachs,[2] then the owner places the others with friends.' Not all of them are sent to the same place. 231 476 556 754

The fear of witchcraft was traditionally, and is still, the main reason for placing out cattle, but nowadays they are sent away for other reasons also: Nyakyusa living around Rungwe often send cattle to friends on the other side of the mountains in Mbeya district, where grazing is particularly good, and wealthy Christians place out cattle because their wives, working single-handed, 231 476

[1] A beast which gores others may be herded apart without any imputation of pride to the owner.

[2] Taken as evidence that they have been killed by witchcraft, *vide infra*, p. 116.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

African churches which countenance polygyny. The difficulty is partially overcome in some well-to-do Christian families by hiring labour to work in their fields and to fetch water and wood, and by offering visitors coffee or tea, which are easily prepared, in place of home-brewed beer; nevertheless the conflict between the value of hospitality (to which pagan and Christian alike subscribe, though they define it rather differently) and the value of monogamy, is often acute.

The mutual obligations of neighbours are not confined to feeding one another, for neighbours share with relatives the obligation of giving sympathy and assistance at the various crises in Nyakyusa life; the concept of *ukwangala* includes keeping on good terms with people by being sympathetic and obliging.

All the members of a village (except young children) are obliged to attend every burial of an adolescent or adult in that village; they go to mourn the death of a neighbour or condole with one who is burying a 'son', for if a man dies while his father (or father's full brother, or his own senior brother) is yet alive, he is often buried in his 'father's' homestead.[1] Where a youth or man is buried by his 'father', his fellow villagers must attend the funeral also, but boys and young men need not go to a funeral in their fathers' village unless it is a village-mate of their own who is being buried.

Funerals are occasions for feasting and dancing, so the obligation 'to mourn one another' (*ukulelanela*) does not press hardly, and the Nyakyusa feeling is that no one would fail to come unless he were a witch, and fearful lest his victim rise from the grave and denounce him. 'If a man does not go to his neighbour's burial then at once people say: "It was you who bewitched him. Why else do you not come to bury him?" ' Failure to come is certain evidence that the truant is 'a harsh man who does not keep on good terms with people (*nkali, atikwangala kanunu nabandu*)'.

One neighbour, 'he who went about most with the dead man', is appointed by the headman of the village to help the relatives dig the grave, and village neighbours must also bring small gifts of food and firewood for the entertainment of the many guests.

[1] A married man whose 'fathers' are dead, or do not choose to exercise their right to bury him, is buried at his own home, and a woman who has borne a child is buried at her husband's home.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 then if the father says his son has done wrong his neighbours
reply: "You have caused him to do wrong yourself. Did you
572 suppose him to be a boy that you did not provide marriage-cattle
for him?" Then the father becomes more ready to pay damages
for his son.' And again, 'If a young man finds that his father
objects to his marrying the girl he loves, he complains to his
father's neighbours (*pamafumu abapalamani ba gwise*). Then they
discuss the matter and say to the father: "Do you want him to
teach you a lesson by taking a chief's wife or daughter, for whom
many cattle must be given?" So the father agrees.'

768 Neighbours are concerned, too, to see a fair distribution of a
deceased fellow's estate, and the fulfilment of the heir's obliga-
621 tions to his wards. 'It is not the relatives, but "the fathers of the
village" who watch over a young boy's interests when his father
is dead' (*vide infra*, p. 106). We listened to one discussion of a
• [754] quarrel over inheritance which was believed to have led to kins-
men working sorcery against each other. At this discussion four
village neighbours of the sick man (thought to be suffering from
the sorcery of his father's brother's son), as well as ten relatives,
attended.

684 The father's neighbours are also asked to mediate when a son
has wronged his father and seeks forgiveness. For example,
593 Mwangobola's son had committed adultery with his father's
621 wife. He paid six head of cattle and then went off to the coast,
where he remained a long time. When he returned he brought
783 two cows and approached his father's neighbours, asking them
to take the cows to his father. When they took the cows his father
said: 'He must find a bull as well, and brew beer, because he is
my eldest son.' So he got a bull and brewed beer, and the father
also brewed. 'Then', said the old man who reported the case,
'the fathers of the village came together and the bull was killed
and they ate the meat and drank the beer. . . . Thus the son made
friends with his father.'

621 Here we have the ritual of reconciliation between relatives in
which neighbours of the senior must participate, for their anger
783 is held to be as dangerous to the junior as that of his senior rela-
tive. Informal giving of advice merges into the practice of arbitra-
tion, and of murmuring against a wrong-doer, and thus, it is
thought, causing him misfortune. These latter practices are dis-
cussed in ensuing chapters.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

MYSTICAL INTERDEPENDENCE

a. *Witchcraft and 'the breath of men'*

IN the Nyakyusa view two of the main co-operative activities of a village are defence against witches, and the punishment of wrong-doers through sickness brought upon them by the murmuring of their fellows. Fellow villagers are 'members of one another' as much on account of this mystical interdependence as on account of their economic co-operation and enjoyment of each other's company. The village headmen are spoken of as the leaders in the 'war by night' against witches, as they are leaders in war by day, and it is they also who are foremost in bringing 'the breath of men' (*embepo sya bandu*) on a wrongdoer, so that his body becomes cold, and he falls ill. We must therefore examine the concept of witchcraft and of this 'breath of men' in order to understand village relationships.

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i. *The nature of witchcraft*

The Nyakyusa believe that certain people have pythons (*isota*) in their bellies which give them power to harm men and cattle, by throttling, tramping, wounding, and kicking them. These are the witches (*abalosi*). They are said to fly by night on their pythons, or 'on the wind', either singly or in covens, to attack a chosen victim, and to leave on their beds their skins, which 'can feel nothing'. So closely are the witch and his pythons identified that if a python is killed the witch will die. The pythons are thought to be usually inherited from one or other parent, children of both sexes inheriting from either father or mother: children are 'born with witchcraft in their stomachs', and it is developed by accompanying a parent on his or her evil errands. However, not *all* children of a witch are necessarily witches. 'If a man witch marries a woman witch then the whole family are witches, but if the man is pure (*mwelu*), and the woman only a bit of a witch, then she may say to herself when she first bears a child:

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 "This time I will respect my husband and leave the child to him", but the next one she makes her own.' Occasionally, it is said, pythons may be acquired in childhood from a woman, or perhaps even a fellow herd-boy, who is a witch, and who transfers his or her witchcraft by giving the child some mysterious substance to eat, but it is the inherited character of witchcraft which is emphasized.

754 Witchcraft (*ubulosi*) is sharply distinguished from sorcery (*ubutege*), that is, the illegal use of destructive medicines, for it is
763 a physiological condition, not merely the manipulation of certain materials. The pythons are believed to be visible in an autopsy, a 'swollen bowel' (*ubula*) in a corpse being the typical mark of a witch. 'When the bowel is swollen, they take it out and say: "It is a python, he was a witch".' Some educated Nyakyusa maintain that the 'swollen bowel' is, in some cases at least, acute tapeworm; however that may be, the condition of the bowel is taken as conclusive evidence. 'If', said Mwangwanda, 'a man is accused of witchcraft during his lifetime, and then at the autopsy his bowels are found not to be swollen, people admit his innocence, saying: "We accused him falsely, see, he was pure!" '

ii. The supposed activities of witches

754 The typical crime of the witch, in Nyakyusa belief, is to harm men and cattle, and the motive is greed. The pythons are thought to lust for meat and milk, hence witches go in dreams by night to 'eat people inside', and to milk the cows of their neighbours. 'It is said', explained one of our friends, 'that throttling (*ukupita*) is in order to eat delicious food. The witches say that human flesh is delicious, and the milk of cows is also delicious' (cf. Document, p. 218). Another friend elaborated further: 'People say that it is the pythons of a witch that cause him to go and bewitch (*ukuloga*) the milk, because they wish to drink milk. When he has throttled the cows they are satisfied. And they are satisfied with human flesh when "he of the pythons" has eaten a man. So I hear. I have heard too, that if the pythons smell meat (of an animal killed for eating) and if people grudge meat to him (or her) of the pythons, then the pythons will fly with him to throttle people and eat them. Similarly smelling milk leads to the throttling of cows.' The stock myth of witchcraft (cf. Document, p. 217) is about a

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

woman who was once caught by her husband when she came home during the night with human flesh and began to cook it. Domestic fires are thought to become infected, because the witches are in the habit of roasting human flesh over them; sometimes, it is said, they use the victim's hearth, sometimes their own. Fear of such contamination by witches was one of the reasons for clearing out the ashes and lighting new fires, at the new year, and when an epidemic or other misfortune threatened (*vide infra*, p. 121).

The human flesh eaten is always spoken of as that of living victims, never that of corpses, as in some other areas, though the living die of the witches' attacks. Further, it is believed that witches kill people in order to feast on the beef of cows killed at the funeral. 'To what', said old Mwandesi, 'are the many deaths among us due? They are due to meat!' So strong was this feeling that at the end of 1935 the chiefs and village headmen of a number of chiefdoms stretching from Mwaya on the Lake to Mwakeleli in the hills (but not including the western Nyakyusa chiefdoms), decided to abandon the custom of killing many cows at a funeral. 'There is', they said, 'too much death in the country, the witches are killing people so as to have meat. Let us go back to the old custom and kill few cows. . . . If anyone complains that at a burial he was given no meat to eat, he is a witch, and we will turn him out of the country.' Formerly, we were told, two was the maximum number of cows killed at a funeral, and they were not killed until the witch had been discovered by the ordeal.

The theme of the witches' lust for meat is elaborated in various ways. It is said, for example, that the witches never use their own teeth when they go to eat a victim but like to borrow the victim's teeth, and that if startled, they may go off with the teeth altogether. One whose teeth have been used by the witches and then put back, knows about it in the morning because he finds his teeth rather loose. Most fearful of all, those who dream of being chased by witches hear them boasting to one another: 'We will *all* eat!'

It is meat and milk, the most prized foods of the Nyakyusa, which are commonly spoken of as exciting the greed of witches. Millet (from which beer is brewed), beans, and rice, are said to be subject to occasional attacks by witches, e.g. millet (or beans, or rice) ripening in the fields, or drying in the sun, is thought to get

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 less when 'he (or she) of the pythons' has passed by. Mwaisamo explained: 'They say that if the owner of pythons or the owner of medicines passes when food has been spread out to dry, the food will disappear. He bewitches it (*ukuloga*). It is as if he hankers after the food in his heart, and it disappears and becomes less.' Nevertheless, of the thirty-eight accusations of witchcraft recorded, none actually turned on loss of grain or pulse. We heard also that a witch may spoil a brewing of beer, causing it to taste bitter, but again we could trace no case of this.

754 The lust of witches for good food is constantly emphasized by the Nyakyusa and, unlike some other Bantu people, they do not
831 make a direct connection between witchcraft and sex: there is no suggestion of *incubi* or *succubae* such as play a great part in Pondo thought,[1] and sexual dreams are not taken as evidence of witchcraft. The facts that the witches are witches by virtue of 'pythons in the stomach', that they always go naked, and fly through the air riding their pythons when on their evil nocturnal errands, suggest sexual associations, but we cannot prove that the Nyakyusa are conscious of such symbolism. It is, however, significant that the word commonly used for working witchcraft, 'throttling' (*ukupita*), is also used as a polite word for sexual intercourse, and that the other word for working witchcraft *ukuloga*[2] (passive: *ukulogigwa*) is similar to *ukulogwa*, meaning to copulate. Bestiality and homosexuality between a grown man and a boy (but not between two youths) are spoken of as witchcraft (*ubuloni*), and sex play between girls, including stretching of the vaginal opening, is called *ubugalagala*, a word used for the cunning—the wicked cleverness—of witches.

754 An association is also made between witchcraft on the one hand and menstruation and pregnancy on the other. A woman who is
841 a witch is said to pass on her witchcraft to her child by neglecting the menstruation taboos before the child is yet conceived. 'It starts when a woman is menstruating, then she begins to give the child her cunning (*ubugalagala*).' Some of the menstrual blood is

[1] cf. Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, pp. 275–89.

[2] *Ukuloga* and *ubuloni* are from the same root. For its meaning in other Bantu languages cf. H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. II, pp. 505ff. Also E. J. and J. D. Krige, *The Realm of a Rain Queen*, p. 250; C. M. N. White in *Africa*, 1948 (Vol. XVIII), pp. 83 ff.; H. H. Johnston, *A Comparative Study of Bantu and Semi-Bantu Languages*, Vol. II, p. 416. The close similarity of meaning in a number of languages is striking.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

believed to remain in a woman and, if she has neglected the taboos, this blood 'rots' the child later conceived (cf. Document, p. 219). This connection is insisted upon, though witchcraft inherited from the father is spoken of as being carried directly in his blood, which is thought to be transferred to his wife during intercourse. 754 841

Furthermore, a pregnant woman is believed to have some of the attributes of a witch. She, like a witch, causes grain and pulse to diminish if she passes near by when it is spread out to dry, or greets women who are stamping or grinding grain. If she speaks or comes too close 'the child inside catches hold of the food, and it disappears'. And if she should speak inadvertently, forgetting that she is pregnant, she must throw a stone or a piece of stick into the grain, or take a little of the flour in her hand, otherwise the women will say: 'She is proud, that girl, she is a witch, why is she talking?' and it is thought that she will have a miscarriage. A pregnant woman, like a witch, and one who has been using medicine, is spoken of as 'heavy' (*nsito*) in contrast with one who is 'empty' (*bwasi*), having nothing in the belly, and Mwaikambo explained that, 'When they speak of a pregnant woman being "heavy", they think that perhaps the foetus is witchcraft.' The foetus and the python of witchcraft are felt to be somewhat alike; but in most situations they are clearly distinguished, and indeed it is held that a woman may have both. If the afterbirth is delayed it is said that the woman is herself a witch, and her python is closing up the vaginal passage, so that the afterbirth cannot come away. A pregnant woman is not spoken of as a witch unless she harms someone by neglecting the taboos connected with her state, and her husband, who must keep the same taboos, may also be called a witch if he breaks them. 754 843

Sickness and death among men and cattle, and a diminution in the milk yield of cows, are held to be common results of witchcraft, and any 'unnatural' event, such as a case of bestiality, or of sodomy between a grown man and a boy (not between two youths), or of intercourse between a young man and an old woman, or of unusual behaviour among animals or birds, is taken as evidence that witches are at work. It is the 'unnatural' element that is emphasized (cf. Document, p. 225). An owl hooting on one's roof, and someone staring at one, are also taken as indications of witchcraft. 754 [787]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

iii. 'The defenders' and 'the breath of men'

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Proof of the activity and identity of witches is sought first in the dreams of victims and of 'the defenders' (*abamanga*) of his village who are believed to have power to see and to fight witches in dreams. As we have seen, the witches are believed to leave their bodies sleeping and to fly through the air to the house of the man against whom they have a grudge, and there to enter his body while he sleeps, and either 'throttle' (*ukupita*), 'trample' (*ukukwanga*), or 'eat' (*ukulya*) his inside. In the morning, or during the night, the victim wakes up more or less conscious of what has happened to him. If they come often, many nights running, he falls sick and may die, unless he takes steps to defend himself. 'The defenders' (*abamanga*) are believed to be able to see and recognize the identity of the witches and to counter them in two ways. First by turning them back at night, saying: 'Where are you going to throttle your fellow? Go back!' and then driving them off with spears or striking a witch's python, so that the witch dies; and secondly, by reporting to neighbours and to the political authorities the names of the people they have seen engaged in witchcraft. An ordinary person can never recognize the witch who attacks him, even though he may be conscious that he is being throttled. And all these things happen in dreams: 'The witches go out in dreams to throttle people.' 'It is in dreams that "the defenders" recognize them.' Certain dreams, interpreted by a traditional symbolism, are taken as signs of being bewitched: 'If I dream that someone comes to fight me, perhaps he beats me with a stick, perhaps he overwhelms me and crushes me down to earth, perhaps he hits me with his fist; then I wake up and tell people: "Last night they came to throttle me."' 'If I recognize people who come to fight me in my dreams that means I have myself the power of defence; if I do not recognize them then I have not.' 'If I dream that I am flying alone through the air high up at night, that means they have come to throttle me.' 'If I wake up suddenly at night in fear and sweating, even though I do not recollect the dream, I know they have come to throttle me.' 'Dreams of being chased, of being beaten, of the house burning, of one coming to the door and weeping for me as if I were dead, these are all signs of witchcraft.' Close friends tell one another

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

their dreams—provided they have not dreamed of attacking one another—and when more than one of them has dreamed of X as an aggressor, then the presumption is very strong that X is a witch. Dreams to the Nyakyusa are the stuff of religious reality, and the very close association between witchcraft and dreams is apparent in the language—*injosi* meaning a dream, and *ubulosi* (the same root in the abstract noun class) meaning witchcraft. It is perhaps also significant, that *ukugoga* means to dream, and *ukugogwa* (in the passive form) means to be killed. Restless nights are taken as proof that either the witches or ancestors are troubling a man: 'We do not sleep' (*tukigona*) is the formal phrase in which village headmen or priests notify the chief that something is amiss in the country, and a ritual is required; and an ordinary person using the same phrase implies that he is harried either by the ancestors or by witches. 'You *may* sleep or you may not' (*uligona*) is the commonest form in which a threat of witchcraft is made.

The vision and power of 'the defenders' (*abamanga*) comes from the same source as the power of the witches,[1] from pythons in the belly, the essential difference between the witches and 'the defenders' being that the latter use their power in accordance with law and morality, while the witches act for selfish ends, and their activities are illegal. This close association of 'the defenders' with the power of witchcraft is apparent in language, *ukumanga* being sometimes used almost synonomously with *ukulaga* for 'to bewitch', while *abamanga* means 'the defenders'.[2] There are, moreover, certain differences between the pythons of witches, and those of 'defenders'. In the first place, the condition of 'the

[1] For similar concepts among the Thonga and Azande cf. H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. II, p. 516; E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*, pp. 224 ff.

[2] cf. the Bemba *bwanga* discussed by R. J. B. Moore in *Africa*, Vol. XIII, 1940, pp. 211 ff. and *Rhodes Studies*, Vol. 13, 1941, pp. 37 ff.; the note on the use of this root in a number of languages in *Africa*, Vol. XVI, 1946, pp. 119–20; and C. M. N. White in *Africa*, Vol. XVIII, 1948, pp. 83–102.

I translate *-manga* in Nyakyusa as 'mystical power', *aba-manga* 'to exercise mystical power' (for good and evil), and *aba-manga* as 'those possessing mystical power', with the further implication that they use this power for defence. Writing in *Africa*, Vol. IX, 1936, pp. 83, and Vol. X, 1937, pp. 265 ff., we translated *aba-manga* as 'defender witches' and *aba-loi* as 'aggressor witches'. On further reflection, however, I have preferred to confine 'witch' and 'witchcraft' to those acting in a manner disapproved by their society, since this is common usage, and for want of a better term I call *aba-manga* 'the defenders'.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 defenders' is not visible at an autopsy. Secondly, it is maintained
781 that while a witch has several pythons, a defender has only one,
and whereas witchcraft is always inherited or acquired in early
791 childhood, a python of defence may be acquired later, through drinking medicine. Old Mwandesi, recognized by the Nyakyusa themselves as an authority on law and history, explained it to us thus: 'Some are born with pythons; they are those with many pythons, perhaps three. Some get them from medicine made of leaves which is given them to drink at the "coming out", they have only one, it is they who watch over the cattle, they are the village headmen (*amafumu*). He who has many pythons, who is born with them, having inherited them, suns them secretly at his home. He takes them out and suns them, then swallows them again, they are his intestines. Such a man is a great witch; he is the kind who is convicted of witchcraft. But the village headman who has got his python through medicine has only one, he does not sun it, he is not convicted of witchcraft, he only detects the witches in dreams. When he begets a child the latter will have one python only. If his son or daughter goes about throttling people, then his father says: "Where did you get *many* pythons? See! I have only one. It is you woman! (accusing his wife)." So they submit themselves to the poison ordeal. The man vomits and the ordeal catches the woman.' Mwandesi contradicted himself in this statement, first suggesting that the power of defence was only acquired through drinking medicines, and then that the child of a village headman inherited one python from his father. Most Nyakyusa maintain that the power of defence can be acquired in either fashion. The medicines drunk at the 'coming out' develop it even in an 'empty' man, but many men, including assistant headmen and ordinary citizens who are not specially treated at the 'coming out', are believed to have it. It is asserted that no women have it, though many of them are spoken of as witches, and in particular instances informants implied that some women 'saw' the witches (cf. Document, pp. 252–3).

Mbukile confirmed Mwandesi's main point, saying: 'Some of us are empty, pure (*bwela*), we have no pythons, not one; some are 'defenders' and pure, they are those who watch over the country; such a man has only one python to watch over his country. The ruler of the country, the chief, also has one python; for both village headmen and chief watch over the country. Some are

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

witches, they have two or three pythons, it is they who are caught by the poison ordeal.'. 'Watching over the country' implies detecting the witches and turning them back, and also reporting them the next morning to the authorities. Particularly 'the defenders' watch over the cows, and they are said actually to increase the milk yield by sucking the milk from the teats and spitting it out again. Mbukile explained this also: ' "The defender" watches over the cows. He takes milk in his mouth and squirts it on the ground; he does not swallow it in his dream. The next day the milk will be plentiful.' A village headman we knew enlarged further on the point: 'If a man is the son of a true village headman and goes to drink the milk of cows, he drinks from the teats, but his python vomits the milk and the next day the owner of the cow will find much milk and say: "He who came last night was the child of a village headman (*ubifwa*). He was good, he was not a witch, no, but a benefactor."[1] So they say. But if a real witch goes to bewitch the cows then the milk dries up altogether for a time. The owners of the cows will milk none for many days. He is a witch indeed.' Similarly, it is held that if witches can be compelled to vomit the human flesh they have eaten, 'to put back the meat', the patient will recover.

'Emptiness' and 'innocence' are associated in several contexts; and vomiting, spitting, and confession (*ukumonya*) are all taken as expressions of good will and repentance. *Ukumma*, for example, means both 'to spit' and 'to forgive', the symbolism being interpreted in this way: 'If a father is angry with his son or daughter he may say some day, "I forgive you now" and spit on the ground: all the anger that is in him comes out like spit.' Blowing water from the mouth is an essential element in prayers to the ancestors, and the close association between them is apparent in the language: *ukuputa* meaning to 'blow out water' and *ukuiputa* (the reflexive form) meaning 'to pray',[2] with the implication of confessing whatever anger or grudge a man may have in his heart. Kasitile, the rainmaker, explained: 'This prayer with water is to confess *everything*. If I do not pray with water then something is left within.'

[1] For a similar concept among the Thonga cf. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. II, p. 373.

[2] The Zande symbolism is very similar: cf. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, 'Zande Theology' in *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XIX (1936), pp. 11-14.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

576 In Nyakyusa society it is senior relatives who formally blow
754 out water to express their good will, not suspected witches, as among the Azande. But the admission of anger by the supposed witch or justly shocked neighbours, and their wishes for the patient's good health, are anxiously sought (*vide infra*, p. 101), for such good wishes are thought to lead directly to his recovery.

754 The reverse of this emphasis on the value of confessing anger is the belief that the man who nurses a grudge in secret without ever admitting it is the most dangerous enemy, whether he be a senior relative muttering to the shades, or a neighbour using witchcraft, or a rival who has turned to sorcery. Mwambuputa, a conservative village headman without any school education, was very explicit on the point: 'The root of witchcraft is this—when two people have a quarrel in their hearts and do not let it out. Maybe I have a neighbour who hates me, but he never lets it out, he says nothing and we seem to be on friendly terms—these are the quarrels that are pregnant with witchcraft. But if he lets it out and tells me that I have wronged him in some way then the quarrel has no menace in it. It is when he lets nothing out and stays silent, though angry in his heart, that he comes in dreams to throttle me. That is the root of witchcraft.' Hence the insistence on one accused of witchcraft admitting guilt (*vide* infra, p. 112).

754 'The defenders' are powerful, but it is believed that witches are occasionally able in dreams to get past them, and throttle
791 men against whom they have a grudge, or their cows. ' "The defenders" do not go out in dreams to fight the aggressors every night. A witch wanting to throttle a man comes night after night.' 'Nowadays it is much worse than it used to be, since the Europeans prevent us reporting them, and getting them stopped; "the defenders" work hard, but some nights they sleep without dreaming and the witches get past.'

754 Although the primary function of 'the defenders' is to see and drive off witches, nevertheless they are also thought to use their
791 power to punish a wrong-doer. In doing so they are assisted by the witches, but, the Nyakyusa argue, the village headman who
626 leads this night attack in dreams is no more breaking the law than he is when he fines a thief in court. In both cases he is exerting power to maintain the law. The Nyakyusa have a lively fear of shocking their neighbours, for it is held that the shocked astonish-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ment of fellow villagers (*bikawuga*) or their angry murmuring (*bikwibunerya*) will bring on wrong-doers 'the breath of men' (*embepo ya bandu*) causing them, or their children, or cattle, to fall ill, and this breath is the power of the pythons exerted by 'defenders' and witches acting together. We asked Mbukile whether 'the defenders' really came to choke a proud, quarrelsome person. 'Mother! They come. "The defenders" and the witches all call one another. They all go. "The defender" is not angry (at the attack), he says, "The man killed himself, he was a quarrelsome fellow!" ' And another friend explained: 'If a woman witch wishes to choke her husband, perhaps the first night "the defenders" will turn her back, but then she will plead with them and explain that her husband is a bad man and ill-treats her, then perhaps on the second night they will change their minds and come and help her. Yes, "the defenders" turn round sometimes and throttle people.'

'The breath of men' is thought to cause prolonged illness but not death, and should a death occur then a charge of witchcraft may be brought, and the suspects be required to drink the poison ordeal. 'We said, it is forbidden to kill a man. We others were afraid, although we had disliked the victim ourselves, we feared at some later time the witch would kill us.' All our informants accepted this view in theory, but in practice several cases in which the supposed victims died were cited as instances of 'the breath of men' (see table, pp. 206–8).

The effect of 'the breath of men' is spoken of as 'the curse' (*ikigusa*)[1] and its typical symptom is sterility, or a paralysis of the legs, which, it is thought, can only be cured when the sinner repents and reforms his behaviour, providing at the same time a feast of beer and meat for men of his village or, if it be against his father that he has sinned, of his father's village. At the feast it is essential that the men of the village should *admit their responsibility* for the sickness, and express hopes for the recovery of the patient. 'Formerly, they would pray and pray, they would let out all their anger, saying: "Certainly we were angry, it was us, but now it is all over." Then life would come back to the sick man and he recovered' (cf. Document, p. 240).

We see then, that a clear distinction is made by the Nyakyusa

[1] *Ikigusa* is not used in the Kukwe dialect, but is common usage in Selya, on the Lake-shore plain, and in Ngonde.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 626 between the legal and illegal use of power derived from pythons. 'The breath of men' is the general public opinion of a whole group—of an age-village or chiefdom—acting through the 'python power' of those of its members who happen to be possessed of it, led by one or more village headmen and directed against a single person. On the other hand, individuals proved to be witches are those believed to have acted by themselves, either against the public opinion of their age-village or chiefdom, or at any rate without securing its support. No pagan Nyakyusa doubts that witchcraft is bad, or that 'the breath of men' is used to bring legitimate punishment on evil-doers, but the classification of particular cases varies somewhat with the point of view of the individual. The victim of 'the breath of men' may speak indignantly about the attacks of 'the witches'.[1]

791 176 'The defenders' are regarded as pillars of society, and their exercise of python power as right and proper, yet no one readily admits to the possession of such power; it is a proud and boastful thing to do, and not good manners. Informants, when discussing it, rarely spoke as if they had direct knowledge of the power, usually prefacing their remarks with: 'It is said that', or 'I hear that'. This was true even of village headmen who are all believed to have the power. One such man, to whom a direct question was put, replied: 'I would not go so far as to boast of it myself, but other people in my village have it.' In villages of mature and old men, others besides the headmen are often known by name as having it; and besides this there is the general belief that in each such age-village 'some people', not specified, have it as well.

iv. Witchcraft, 'the breath of men' and morality

754 626 Now the power of witchcraft and 'the breath of men' is held to operate primarily within one age-village, and it is denied that it can ever extend beyond the chiefdom. 'How could the people of another chiefdom "eat" a man?' said the village headman, Mwafula, 'It is those *here*'. The typical accusations are against neighbours and wives or co-wives and, nowadays, against fellow workers living in the same camp (cf. table, p. 198). The fact that it is within the village that witchcraft is thought to operate is

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'An African Morality' in *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936), pp. 87-8, for such a case.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

shown by the way in which one fearing witchcraft, or accused of practising it, moves to another village. Sometimes he goes to another chiefdom, but often he only moves to another village in the same chiefdom—the chief himself may feel safe in one village of his country and not in another (*vide* Document, p. 190). It is on his fellow villagers that the good man depends for protection, and it is they whom the evil-doer fears. 754

Accusations within the lineage are rare. At first we were told that they did not occur at all; later a number of elderly informants agreed that this was not true—'the young men have misled you', they said; but careful inquiry only elicited three concrete cases[1] of witchcraft within the lineage (cf. table, p. 204). As we have seen, fellow members of a lineage normally live in different villages, and just how the idea of attacks by kinsmen is reconciled with the theory of village defence is not clear. Possibly it is argued that the witch attacks while visiting his kinsman, for it is in terms of visiting that the effect of 'the breath of men' on erring sons or younger brothers is explained. Where 'the breath of men' is thought to have affected someone of another village, it is argued that he or she came frequently to visit in the village of the attackers (cf. Document, p. 237), and the heir who neglects his elder brother's or father's funeral rites, and who is thought to suffer from 'the breath' of the deceased's justly indignant neighbours, is supposed to fall ill when he comes to their village to enter into his inheritance, or to make arrangements for the disposal of his property. 754 613

Even within the village it is the immediate neighbours that are primarily concerned in a case of suspected witchcraft. In the large villages of the plains the leader of a section, 'he of the heap of hot ashes', has the specific duty of protecting the herd which stands in the smoke of his fire against witches; and in smaller villages, also, a witchcraft case commonly begins with murmuring among a few next-door neighbours. Suspicion of witchcraft falls first on a member of the same village-section, then on a fellow villager; only rarely, and in peculiar circumstances, does it fall on a member of another village, and never on someone outside the chiefdom. 754 621

Differences of rank are relatively slight in Nyakyusa society 754 554

[1] A possible fourth is quoted on p. 248, but the exact relationship of the accused to the victim was not known to our informant.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 and scarcely affect accusations of practising witchcraft, save that
559 the chief himself is never accused, though he is often thought to suffer from the witchcraft, or 'the breath', of his men. The commoners, 'the black people' (*abatito*), are said to be the real witches, but a study of cases shows that junior brothers and sons of the chiefs are, in fact, sometimes accused. Village headmen may be accused just like the humblest of their followers, and men are accused at least as often as women (cf. table p. 198). Thus though witchcraft is held to be hereditary, and is particularly associated with menstrual blood, it is individual behaviour, not birth, or sex, that determines accusations.

754 What sort of behaviour, then, leads to accusations of witchcraft, and what sort of behaviour is thought to provoke attack by a witch, or bring upon one the chilling breath of men? We found that some quite specific teaching was given to Nyakyusa children on this point.

554 The type most usually described as a witch is the person whose
626 character makes him (or her) to some extent isolated and unpopular—a proud man who treats his neighbours with disdain; a retiring man who always keeps silent in public; a glum wife, or one who fails to greet the other women she meets and to inquire after their children. Such people are treated by their neighbours with less courtesy and hospitality than the traditional ideals of good manners demand. 'Perhaps we do not summon him to drink beer, or to eat with us: and then when our cows fail to give milk we think, "doubtless it is he who is throttling them".'

One who fails to show sympathy with a neighbour in bereavement, neglecting to attend a funeral in the village, or one who does not try to persuade a neighbour to remain, when that neighbour is preparing to move for fear of witchcraft, is immediately suspect. The chief characteristic of witches is always said to be pride (*amatinga*), which includes a cold aloofness, as well as boastfulness and irascibility.

And what sort of people are thought to be attacked by witches? Informants agree that, though they act without public support, witches seldom act without provocation. It is argued on the one hand that they act from greed, and on the other that suppressed hatred drives them to attack (*vide supra*, pp. 92–4 and table, pp. 198–203). The Nyakyusa see no contradiction in this, for they

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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believe that the witches, lusting after food, choose as victims those against whom they have a grudge. The exception is the witch who, having eaten with his fellow witches, fails to provide a victim in his turn and is compelled to offer a kinsman of his own. Mwamunda, talking of witchcraft between relatives, explained: 'Throttling of relatives is of two kinds: firstly, when kinsmen quarrel over something, perhaps cattle, and one throttles the child of his relative; secondly, when there is no quarrel, but a witch has gone with his fellow witches to eat of their food in his dreams, then they come to him and say: "You have eaten our food with us, give us your food. If you don't we shall eat your wife." Then he points out the child of his kinsman to them' (*vide infra*, p. 114). Far more often, however, the witches' attack is attributed to a quarrel, or to envy roused by conspicuous success. Men are said to excite the envy of witches by acquiring many cattle, hoeing a much larger garden than others, earning more at work, or by boasting about the importance of the position they hold in government or other employment. A woman excites envy by becoming the favourite wife of her husband, or by carrying a heavier load than her fellows when she goes with them to fetch firewood (cf. Document, p. 229). Our friends constantly referred to the danger of rousing envy; it is in fact believed to be the motive behind witchcraft in a large proportion of cases.

Good food rouses the envy of witches also, and the man who eats alone is felt to be in danger, but not only from the witches. It is said: 'If you have grudged your neighbours meat . . . those who watch over the village by night, "the defenders", will be angry, and call the witches to help; they will eat you.' Here we come to the legitimate use of python power, 'the breath of men'. Greed at a feast; failure to share whatever meat, or beer, or other fine food one has, whether it be prepared in the village, or brought as a gift from afines; failure to send the customary cut of an animal killed as a gift to the chief; and failure to provide a feast on certain occasions, are all regarded as sins liable to bring on the wrong-doer the 'curse' or 'breath' of his aggrieved neighbours. The feasts specially mentioned as being necessary are those at death and at marriage (*vide supra*, p. 70, and Document, p. 206). As Mwakwelebeja, an old commoner, put it: 'If I did not kill at a funeral, the neighbours, those who eat the meat, would be angry. As they scattered from the funeral they would say: "He is

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 626 hard, he has not killed a cow for the death of his child." When they go round telling other people like this, they bring down the "breath of men".'

626 But it is not thought that neighbours are concerned only with enforcing hospitality within the village; they are also shocked (*bikanwiga*) by disrespectful behaviour towards parents and parents-in-law; by a wife swearing at her husband or hitting him; by incest; by a woman 'soiling' her lover, i.e. by running off with him repeatedly, and so enraging her husband that he forces him to eat filth; by a woman continuing to bear children after her son has married a girl who has reached puberty; and by any other manifestation of 'pride' (*amatingo*). Their shocked astonishment is held to bring on the wrong-doer their chilling 'breath' which causes sterility, paralysis, or some other lingering illness, or makes the child of a woman who has insulted her mother-in-law, or peeped at her father-in-law, thin and sickly.

'If a woman should look at her father-in-law on purpose her friends shout at her and say: "You are proud (*namatingo*) you look on your father-in-law." Then she won't get children or her child falls ill. It is true also that if she says the name or looks on a father-in-law she will have difficulty when she comes to die. . . . She might die slowly and in pain or she might be old and weary and wish to die, and not be able to do so. . . . It is "the breath of men" that causes her child to be ill. If the father-in-law on whom she looked said nothing about it nothing would happen, but if he told his friends then the woman's child would be made ill by "the breath of men"—the child the woman was carrying when she saw the man, or her first-born child, would suffer' (cf. Document, p. 236).

Another informant said: 'Suppose that a man dies leaving a young son, and his brother, the heir, refuses to give this boy a cow for milk or, later, cows for marriage, then the dead man comes in a dream to the heir and reproaches him. Then he, the heir, fetches his wife and tells her: "We must give him (the ward) a cow, my brother came to me by night and reproached me," and so he will give the boy a cow. If he still refuses to do so, his fellows in the village, fellows of his elder brother (the heir having taken over the elder brother's homestead) will pass judgement on him and there will be much "breath". And if he refuses to provide marriage-cattle for his brother's son and provides them

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

626 753 children, are not uncommon; that the penalty of sin is believed often to be delayed, and an illness may be attributed to a wrong committed many years previously; and lastly, that the victim of retribution may be one of several individuals. Parents are thought to be punished by the sickness of their children as well as in their own persons; in a case of sexual transgression it may be either partner who suffers; in the case of a neglected death ritual it may be either the heir or the widow on whose behalf it should have been performed (cf. Document, pp. 206, 236–7). When a [842] woman bears a child after her son is married to a girl who has reached puberty, it is thought that she may fall ill herself, or her husband may be cursed 'because he had agreed to his son marrying a grown girl before the son's mother had grown old'; or the son may have no children because he eloped with his wife, or has 'married a grown girl when his father had only agreed that he should be betrothed to a little girl'.

626 754 869 A lively fear of witchcraft and of the 'breath of men' is inculcated in Nyakyusa children when quite young; Mwaikambo, a Christian, explained that boys learn about witchcraft from their senior play-mates when they are out herding, and in the hut at night in the boys' village, when tales are told. 'Then one fears in one's stomach and thinks: "Father! perhaps I, also, will be eaten by witches."' Ambilikile, another Christian informant, confirmed this, saying: 'We learn about witches from comments on cases of sickness, and from tales. When someone has died people say: "He was a witch, we found a python." Or perhaps of another it is said that "the witches had eaten him". In these tales the witches are said to have eaten people, or speared them, by means of witchcraft, so that the victim dies. We are also told how the witches fight in the power of witchcraft with their fellows from other villages, and how they fly on their pythons. What we hear always makes witchcraft awe-inspiring. I feared it very much.'

We had ample evidence that for most Nyakyusa the fear of witchcraft and of 'the breath of men' continues throughout life, and that it directly affects behaviour. It is, perhaps, the main sanction for moral behaviour within the village.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

c. Procedure in witchcraft cases

Whenever someone is very ill there is anxious speculation among relatives and neighbours as to the cause of the illness. If witchcraft is suspected—and witchcraft is thought to be by far the commonest cause of sickness and death—people begin to whisper (*ukuheha*) that so and so is responsible. Even if the trouble is only a sudden fall in the milk supply there are whispers about witchcraft and the identity of the witch. Then the neighbours meet and complain (*ukwijaja*), or else the leader of the village-section, or even the headman of the village, takes the initiative and, summoning his people, admonishes them. The object of such complaint and exhortation is to warn off the witch. 'People speak very angrily, then the witches are ashamed within themselves, and stop their witchcraft, because they die of shame.' If the warning is effective—that is if the patient or the cows recover—the case will be dropped; but if the trouble continues then the village proceeds to the discovery of the witch. Mwaisumo explained: 'If sickness occurs, the village headman will call his people round him and say: "This village is not right, disease is killing the people, there must be someone who is bewitching them. We warn him to stop!" Then, if he does not stop he will call the people round him again and say: "Well, we must drive him away." Then they discuss their dreams with the headman, it is always by their dreams that they find out the witch, no other way.' A case was quoted in which the milk yield of a village had diminished and the villagers had 'called one another' to come together to complain. While they were complaining a 'defender' called out: 'I have seen the one who is throttling the cows; come together again to-morrow, and no one must stay behind.' When they met the next day one man called the names of each villager in turn, and 'the defender' responded to each with 'Yes', until 'Mwasalutaba' was called. Then he was silent. The name was called three times, and at the third time the whole company groaned. Mwasalutaba got up and, denying the accusation, appealed to the ordeal. He was found guilty by it and was driven from the village (cf. Document, pp. 241–3).

Mwakwelebeja, himself a commoner credited with the power of discovering witches in dreams, made a revealing comment on

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

791 the discovery of witches. He said: 'The witches betray them-
754 selves. When we are sitting discussing the witches throttling people, we may notice one looking nervous and glancing sidelong at his friends, then we, who are innocent, know that he is the man.' Certainly a suspect is closely watched, and if he shows anxiety, or fails to join in the condemnation of witches and the expression of good will, this is brought up against him, as the following case shows.

754 'A certain man called Mwakagugu had a guest staying with him;
62 a soldier on leave. Now this soldier was in the habit of calling in the neighbours to eat when his wife cooked a meal, and M. was always angry in his heart, wishing to eat alone with his guest. When the soldier invited in other people M. would refuse to join them. (The soldier was correct, according to Nyakyusa custom, in what he did. It is good to call in friends to eat.) On one occasion the soldier bought some beer and a crowd of men were drinking it, in another house, not M.'s; but they took a dry bamboo from M.'s place as firewood, to heat the water for the beer. Then M. was very angry indeed and asked: "What do you mean by taking my bamboo?" And his neighbours silently criticized him, thinking "Our friend here has not even bought this beer, and then he gets angry when we take his bamboo!" Another day when the soldier killed a bullock and gave a leg of the meat to some guests of his who were present his child fell ill, its ear swelled up and burst, and it screamed with pain. Later, a neighbour's wife cooked some porridge for her husband without any relish so when she brought the porridge to where the men were sitting, the soldier called to his own wife to bring a chicken she had cooked, as relish, and he offered it to the other men, eating none himself. Again, on yet another occasion, when his wife brought him his porridge she called M. to join him; but M. laughed and said: "Let them (the soldier and his other friends), eat it by themselves." This was the woman's story. And then straight away they were startled by the child screaming and refusing to lie down.

'So then all the neighbours gathered together and gave expression to their anger (*ukwijaja*), asking themselves the cause of the sickness, and why it was that it always became apparent when they were eating. "If the man in question" they said, naming no one, "does it again, we will expel him from the country!" As

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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soon as this was over M. at once began to whisper to a friend: "Why do they ask about this sickness, and all the other sicknesses we have they say nothing about? When we are ill is that not an illness?" His friend answered: "It is taboo to speak like this, they will hear you!" And when M. went on whispering he said: "Get out of my house." When the others heard of this they drove M. away, saying that it was he who was making the child sick. And that night the child's illness reached its height, and was worse than ever before.'

(In reply to question): 'At first when they met to express their anger they knew it was M. but feared to accuse him openly. When, however, he began to whisper they feared no longer and said openly: "You are a witch!" The headmen have forbidden all private whispering about witchcraft, as distinct from a formal public gathering to express anger; so that when his friend said to M.: "It is forbidden to speak like this", this was what he referred to. What he meant was: "Why did you not say this openly if it pains your heart? Now you seem to be making the illness worse!" In other words, the object of the open expression of anger was to warn M. off, but by continuing to whisper himself he showed that he had not repented. He was still angry. If he had said nothing they would not have expelled him.

'After M.'s neighbours had driven him from his home (by word of mouth only) he moved, but the village headman, Mwambuputa, brought him back to a different part of his village, not to the section of it (*akapanga*) where M. had previously built; he put him in the house of one of his men. Then his neighbours grew angry asking why Mwambuputa, who himself had forbidden murmuring, had brought back one whom they had convicted of witchcraft! So they went to Mwambuputa's place and expressed their anger to him. Then he agreed to go and expel him. I who recount the case, went with them.

'When we reached the house where M. was staying the assistant headman of M.'s old section, Mwakyandwike, stood out and said: "I have a word to say to my father Mwambuputa. I am astonished that you received back M. after I had driven him away because he is an evil man who does not like to have friendly dealings with us his neighbours." Then Mwambuputa replied: "When I fetched him back I did not know you had convicted him of witchcraft, I thought he was simply moving." "Yes,"

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 replied the other, "that is why I have followed him, for your
627 house is my home! If you love M. you too will be expelled!" And the others said: "Had you known about the case, we should have expelled you both!" "Let us tell him then", said Mwambuputa. But M. was not in the house and had to be fetched. When he came Mwambuputa said: "Your neighbours have followed you saying that they have expelled you. You have done some evil, have you not? I, when I received you, did not know of this, I thought you were just moving." "What is their reason for driving me away?" asked M. "That I've not yet asked them, we will ask them together." Then one man said: "You M., when you moved, why did you move?" M.: "The reason was this, our child (*sic*) at home was sick and we met to express our anger; after this I said to a friend, 'Why do they express their anger and say some one of us has eaten the child for there is a great deal of fever about and many children are sick?' This I said, and then found my friends said I was the witch. 'We expel you' they said, so I moved." "Yes," they said, "you knew yourself to be a witch, why else did you not show indignation and surprise and take your friends to Mwambuputa to be tried? Now you've given them power, and they have followed you here!" Another said: "If your friends drive you from the village will you be obstinate?" Then Mwambuputa said: "No more words, leave the village, your fellows tell you to go!" '

754 M. condemned himself in the eyes of his neighbours by
783 suggesting that their hinted accusation was false, after they had gathered to express indignation; and here we come to one of the essential points in the Nyakyusa concept of witchcraft. A witch may repent; if he does repent he is no longer a danger to the village, but an asset, since as a witch he has the power to defend the village as well as to attack; and *admission of guilt is taken as a sign of repentance*. The Nyakyusa hold that a witch is always conscious of his evil activity and they have no ritual expressions of good will such as the Zande blowing on chicken wings, but they stress the obligation of a suspect to admit guilt, either directly or by implication. It is said that in the past, if a suspect admitted guilt, he was not driven out. Very few people, however, do admit guilt; the only case we traced was that of a labourer on the Lupa gold-fields who was accused by his fellows of harming the eyes of one of the gang, who had just discovered a large

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

nugget of gold. This 'witch' was actually expelled from the camp by his fellows, but Nyakyusa, commenting on the case, remarked that had it occurred in one of the home villages, he would only have been fined. 754 783

Sometimes a case begins with the startling shout of 'a defender' in the night, who claims to have seen in his dreams that a witch is attacking either himself or a fellow villager. 'A man who dreams of fighting, or being beaten, will sometimes wake up in the middle of the night and go out of his house and shout: "You, so and so, why do you come and fight with me?" But often he will not mention the name then, but waits till the morning when his friends will come and ask him: "Why were you shouting last night?" Then he tells them the name of the man he dreamed of, and if another man dreams of him in the same way the next night or later, then they say he is a witch.' Such a case was described by Mwaikambo: 'A certain man, Kololo, dreamed of his fellow, and in the morning he called out on the road, "I dreamed of so and so, we fought with him in the night, he was throttling me." So his fellows came to his help and said to the accused man: "You, Moses, we have caught you, move elsewhere!" So Moses [who was a pagan, despite his name] moved to another village in the same chiefdom, that of Korosso.' 754 787

Occasionally a witch reveals himself by threatening a neighbour with whom he has quarrelled, using the stereotyped phrases: 'You *may* sleep or you may not' (*Uligona*), or 'What are you?' (*Uligwaki*), or 'Something may happen!' Here is an actual case as reported to us: 'Mwantibe once ordered a boy, the son of a village neighbour, to go on a message for him, but the boy refused, though it is customary for men to send their neighbours' sons on messages. Then Mwantibe got angry with him and snatched his cloth away, saying in anger: "You, boy, something may happen!" implying that the boy would fall ill. The boy fell ill that very evening, and died shortly afterwards. Mwantibe hurried to return the cloth, but the boy's people drove him away with it saying: "What sort of sorrow have you? Are you pretending, so that we shall not suspect you?" For they said it was he who had "eaten" the boy.' 754

The cases quoted so far all involve a direct accusation of witchcraft against the suspect, but sometimes he is compelled to move without ever being accused face to face. Mwaisumo ex- 754 627

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 plained: 'The men of the village cut a banana stem and wrap banana leaves round it, and go at night and put it in front of his
627 door; they also pull some of the thatching off the roof and put it with the banana stem. They do this without ever accusing him to his face of being a witch. Then, in the morning, when others pass by, they notice and say to each other: "See, he has been caught, he is a witch!" In the fields men will call out to one another, saying: "Have you heard? So and so has been caught as a witch?" They will call out where he can hear them, and he cannot stand it. He will go away to another chief.'

Instead of using a banana stem his neighbours may barricade his doorway with thorns while he is out. 'This symbolizes', Mwaikambo said, 'that we (your neighbours) wish to spear you; because, if you try to pass, the thorns will spear you. But we have left you, get out!' Or, as another informant explained: 'The thorns are the hearts of men, symbolizing that the men are all angry.' Occasionally, it is said, a brave man will clear away the thorns and remain, but his neighbours whisper about it and later on they will barricade his doorway again, and he will move. Placing the banana stem, or the thorns, is a joint action by the neighbours—should an individual do it on his own his neighbours will bring a charge against him. One informant suggested that the procedure is a new one developed to avoid making a direct accusation of witchcraft, which is a punishable offence under European administration; but this is doubtful.

622 The following case illustrates not only the practice of barricad-
627 ing the doorway of a supposed witch, but also the responsibility of headmen for the defence of the village, together with the belief
754 that a witch may throttle his own child. 'Nsekela was an assistant headman in the village of Mwambuputa, appointed by Mwambuputa himself. Nsekela's child cried by night and Mwambuputa was angry with him because he did not report the matter. "Why did you not tell me that your child was ill here? Why do you hide it? Indeed you are bad, it is you who are making the child ill, get out of our country!" Nsekela watched over a village-section, he was Mwambuputa's assistant, therefore it was that Mwambuputa said: "Why do you hide the fact that your child is ill here, you my assistant? Indeed you have bewitched it yourself." Nsekela denied the charge saying: "It is not I. No!" Then he went away to Selika about a case. While he was away his neighbours

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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barricaded his doorway with thorns. On his return he found them, and he moved to Mwaihojo's country (the adjoining chiefdom).' 627 754

Often an accusation of witchcraft is made without resort to divination at all: the behaviour of the accused (as in the cases quoted on pp. 110–13) or the word of 'the defender', is taken as evidence. But if there is doubt as to the identity of the witch, the patient or his family may consult a diviner (*undagusi*),[1] putting before him the names of persons they suspect. Whatever the grounds of accusation, however, it was normally confirmed by the *umwafi* ordeal, if the accused did not admit guilt. The chief might order a suspect to go to the ordeal, or a man or woman accused by his neighbours would appeal to the ordeal, when denying the charge. In such a case the accuser and accused first went to the chief to report and get official witnesses, then, accompanied by these witnesses and other friends, they went to a doctor who had a store of a certain medicine, *umwafi*, and there, at his homestead, they drank the *umwafi* together. Those who failed to vomit were judged guilty. The procedure was described by a number of witnesses (*vide* Documents, pp. 241–6). The accuser and the accused, each accompanied by supporters, go to the doctor, who warns them not to drink if what they have said is false. The doctor sprinkles powder into tepid water and gives the accuser and the accused the infusion to drink. He addresses the *umwafi*, and the supporters address each their own friend. Then, when one vomits his (or her) supporters applaud trilling,[2] and they go home, the man who vomited paying the doctor. Mwandesi described how after one of the two had vomited the other would sit tense and miserable, quite still. He would be left alone awhile, but later the doctor would try to make him bring up the poison: 'Should a man die?' they said. Only rarely, it seems, did anyone die of drinking *umwafi*. 787 754 627 695 [201]

If the accuser failed to vomit he was judged guilty of witchcraft himself; if neither vomited both were judged guilty; if both vomited the accuser was fined, paying two or more cows to the accused in compensation for slander. If he had no cows he might give a girl in marriage. 754 627 695

[1] For the methods of divination see Godfrey Wilson 'An African Morality', *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936), p. 80.

[2] A high-pitched ulu-ulu-ulu expressing praise and triumph.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 627 695 Sometimes the individuals concerned did not actually take the ordeal themselves, but each was represented by one of his or her children, as when Mwaisumo's mother was accused of bewitching the village cows, and one of her younger sons drank the *umwafi* representing her (cf. Document, p. 241). Very often the ordeal was used to discover which *group* was responsible for the trouble, whether it was the father's people or the mother's, or perhaps the village, and a child was chosen to represent each group and given the poison. Mwaisumo himself had drunk *umwafi* as a child, representing his father's people (cf. Document, p. 244). And a sceptic explained that each family chose a member who vomited readily—his family was always represented by a certain daughter who vomited *umwafi* immediately.

The ordeal is only administered nowadays in the greatest secrecy, and probably very rarely, for informants who had no hesitation in discussing with us witchcraft accusations and trials of supposed witches, though these were well known to be illegal, denied that the ordeal was administered. The most recent example we traced occurred in 1932.

763 787 754 So far we have only dealt with cases in which witchcraft is suspected as the cause of illness among men, or of a decrease in the milk supply. The matter is more serious if someone has actually died. If there is any doubt as to the cause of death, an autopsy is performed, and a diagnosis made from the condition of the stomach and intestines. 'Wounds' or scars in the stomach are taken as evidence of attacks by witches, and a black oily substance in the bowel, or red streaked with black and white, is a mark of sorcery; if the bowel is swollen, or if the entrails burst out of the incision, it is proof that the deceased was himself a witch, and was probably killed in a quarrel with fellow witches. Death due to a relative having been bound with ropes (cf. Document, p. 249), or a disease of the bowels (*ikitasya*) attributed to natural causes, is also thought to be apparent at an autopsy. Some maintain too, that the source of witchcraft can be discovered from the examination, wounds on the right side of the stomach indicating that the witch is a member of the father's family, or of the age-village; wounds on the left indicating that he is a member of the mother's family (cf. Document p. 246).

At the autopsy the crowd is kept at a distance and usually only one or two senior relatives or neighbours, the headman of the

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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village, and the doctor who operates are present. Occasionally 787
their judgement is challenged. 754

'Once an old pagan woman, whose husband was reputed to have been a witch, demanded an autopsy. When they opened the stomach the entrails (*elitondobeli*) jumped out. [When the entrails jump out this way they say "the python is fighting".] The observers looked, and said to the doctor, "All right, all right, bind him up again!" But the widow objected, saying, "No, come near all of you." She called all the people and went to the corpse, and tore open the stomach. All cried out, saying: "Alas! do not do that. It is forbidden." Then she turned to the old people and said: "Is there anything here? Nothing! He is only a witch by hearsay. Yes, indeed, just because the entrails jumped out you convicted him." ' For detailed accounts of two of the autopsies observed see the Document on pp. 247–50.

In the past the source of witchcraft was always confirmed 787
through the ordeal; nowadays divination with the rubbing-board 754
is sometimes used instead. Mwamunda described the procedure: "The custom of drinking *umuafi* has ceased, but some, when a person has died, perhaps a child, make an autopsy. . . . Then, if they find wounds of witchcraft (*efilonda efya manga*) the father and the mother of the child go to a doctor to divine, but they do not drink *umuafi*, they divine with the rubbing-board. Perhaps the divination indicates the mother. She then goes to her father, and he goes to divine with his wife, the grandmother of the dead child. If he (the grandfather) is then indicated he next takes his kinsmen with him, and when the divination indicates one of them the man will say: "This divination is nonsense; it always deceives." But others will think him guilty and say: "A kinsman was caught, he had eaten his grandchild." Or perhaps the divination indicates the father of the dead child. If so he divines again asking: "Is it relatives, or is it the country?" (For a man has a country, not a woman.) Then perhaps the divination will show that it is not relatives, but the "breath of God" (*Kyala*), that is to say other people, non-relatives. Or perhaps the divination indicates the father of the dead child and his relatives; and if so the father goes with his kinsmen and one of them is indicated. Then the father goes again with the man indicated by the previous divination, to confirm the verdict. Before going to court he asks himself: "How shall I bring a case which depends for evidence on divination?

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 Will the Europeans allow it?" And so (instead of bringing a
754 charge of witchcraft) he sues his kinsman for a shilling. Later he sues him for a cow, and some even get a court order to collect the cow. Another man in such a position may claim a legal separation from his kinsman and their reciprocal debts in cattle are repaid.[1] It's a case indeed, that!'

Mwamunda came from Rungwe, not far from the administrative centre, Tukuyu, hence perhaps his hesitation in preferring a charge of witchcraft; in more remote parts cases concerning witchcraft are taken to the courts. Nsusa explained: 'We judge cases concerning witchcraft openly, but we do not have them written in the court book. When "a defender" has seen his fellow throttling someone he tells us, and we judge that witch. It is "the defenders" who see the witches. Perhaps "the defender" comes out of his house by night and calls out: "I see so and so throttling so and so! Listen to-morrow!" Yes, that happens nowadays. When someone tells us this we agree, the witch is convicted, even though he denies it. We say: "You are a witch, a thief, even though you do not admit it, get out of the country." Formerly when the accused denied he was a witch they went to the ordeal, and the ordeal caught the witch; now, since the Europeans have forbidden the use of *umwafi*, we accept the word of "the defenders". For you know the defenders *see* the witches! In dreams!' 'What about the man who accused the wife of Mwakobela?' we asked. 'He denied it; he said: "I did not see her". So on that account we said: "Since you have slandered her you must pay thirty shillings." If he had really seen her and told us properly we should have decided against the woman and divorced her from her husband, but he denied it, saying: "I did not see her", and we all said: "The woman is not a witch, who has seen her?" And if a man is fined because he has accused his fellow of witchcraft without seeing him really, we do not write that in the book either.'

754 Formerly, when a man was convicted of witchcraft, and did
683 not admit it, he was compelled to move from his village, and often to leave the chiefdom altogether. Often his cattle and crops were taken by the chief, who killed one or more for 'the innocent' to eat. No compensation was paid to relatives as in an ordinary

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

homicide. 'Was he speared by *day*?' say the Nyakyusa. On the other hand, if relatives themselves brought the accusation, the chief could not take the accused's property. Since kinsmen themthemselves were driving the man out, whose property should the chief take? Everything went to the kinsmen, save one cow, which they gave the man they were driving out, that he might start a herd in his new home. A wife convicted of witchcraft was commonly divorced, being sent back to her father, who had then to return the marriage-cattle given for her. Rarely was a supposed witch killed.

As we have seen, supposed witches are still often banished if men, or divorced if women, but property is no longer seized, the practice having been effectively stopped by the British Administration. There is considerable variation in the actual treatment of supposed witches at the present time. Some husbands do not divorce their wives when they are convicted of witchcraft, others do so immediately; some chiefs drive supposed witches out of their country, and others allow them to settle in another village of the chiefdom. We have no evidence that those who are supposed to have killed others by witchcraft are usually treated more severely than those whose crime is causing sickness or a decrease in the milk supply. The punishment seems to vary, and to have varied formerly, rather with the status and personal popularity of the accused in his village, or with the affection a man has for his wife, than with the nature of the crime.

Those who have been convicted of witchcraft are not ostracized. A wife divorced on account of her witchcraft commonly remarries soon after; a man driven out for witchcraft is admitted to another village. The attitude is: 'Perhaps he bewitched his fellows there, we do not know, but he has not bewitched us.' Often a man who has been driven away by neighbours is fetched back again, a year or more later. Such was the case with the village headman Mwamila, who went to his chief and said: 'People are eating your child'—one of the chief's children had a disease of the eyes which blinded him. The chief ordered his people (i.e. their representatives) to take the ordeal. Then all were angry at Mwamila for going to the chief, because he went alone to whisper about them. Had he gone with others they would have been satisfied, but to go alone was not right. The ordeal indicated Mwamila himself, and the chief took all his four

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 cows. No, they did not take his food and mats, was he not a village headman? He moved; but, after one year only, they went to fetch him back.'

Here, in the accusation against a village headman, who, by virtue of his office has the power of defence and of bringing 'the breath' on wrong-doers, we come to the root of the ambivalence towards those accused of witchcraft. Witches are dangerous, but the very power which makes them dangerous also makes them valuable as 'defenders', for no distinction between the power of attack and defence is consistently maintained. The essential difference lies in the use of the power. Hence, Mwaisumo declared, people actually like it when a man who has admitted witchcraft builds among them. 'They say he has the power of defence, and they think that a man who has once admitted witchcraft will not throttle them.' A parallel attitude towards homicides and cattle-thieves existed in the traditional culture, when chiefs were sometimes urged to rescue a homicide from the vengeance of a dead man's kin, or a cattle-thief from enraged victims, on the grounds that one who had proved himself such a fierce warrior (by killing another) or so skilful in lifting cattle, was too useful in war to be lost to the chiefdom.

754 683 Nevertheless, if a person who has once been accused of witchcraft makes himself (or herself) unpopular again, the old case is raked up against him or her, and there are men who have been driven from one chiefdom to another, each time accused by their neighbours, and wives who have been divorced for witchcraft by one husband after another. This is the terrible fate held up before 'proud' children.

754 571 582 And what of the slur on the family when a member is convicted of witchcraft? We have seen that witchcraft is considered hereditary in all but a few exceptional cases, and the stock reaction to an accusation is: 'We are astounded! No one in *our* family has ever been convicted of witchcraft!' In practice, parents are loath to allow a son or daughter to marry into a family in which either parent has a reputation of witchcraft; two or three cases were cited in which parents had opposed a marriage for this reason (*vide* Document, p. 251). But such arguments are private within the family, and the family feared by one group of neighbours need not be considered dangerous by people from another village. Since practically every adult marries at least once, the

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

objection to marrying the child of one who has been convicted is clearly not pushed to its logical conclusion. No slur is cast on any one lineage when an individual is convicted of witchcraft, for he may have inherited it from either parent, or even got it from a friend; conversely no lineage is cleared by an autopsy, for not all the children of a witch are necessarily witches. Thus a man may have a father or brother or son who is 'pure', yet be a witch himself. As we have seen, even persons belonging to the same lineage may occasionally accuse each other. Nevertheless, when an individual who is reputed to be a witch dies, the close relatives do sometimes insist on an autopsy, in order to clear the deceased of suspicion, and possibly themselves also (*vide supra*, p. 117). In one case we recorded it was a daughter who insisted on the autopsy being performed on her mother, a reputed witch. No witchcraft was found.

754 571 572 [763]

So far we have dealt with cases of misfortune befalling an individual, followed by action against a fellow villager who is suspected of being responsible. This type of case is far the commonest within the field of witchcraft. When a general misfortune, such as a plague or epidemic, threatens, the chiefdom acts as a whole, not the villages separately, and the ritual is directed primarily to securing the blessing of the shades. There is some suggestion of ridding the chiefdom of witchcraft at the same time, but the emphasis is on appeasing the ancestors. The traditional new year cleansing (*ukutay' ichisuge*), now rarely performed, was also the concern of chiefdoms not separate villages, and it involved prayer to the ancestors.

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5. *The age-village and the ancestors*

We have dwelt at length on witchcraft and 'the breath of men', for, in Nyakyusa belief, the defence of the village against witches and the punishment of wrong-doers by 'the breath' of their fellows is the main corporate activity of the village in the religious sphere. There are no village rituals directed to the ancestors comparable to those performed on behalf of lineages and chiefdoms. Indeed, belief in the power of shades operates only in situations where social position is determined by descent, as it is in lineages and in the succession to chieftainship. The office of village headman is not hereditary. The son of a village headman

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 cannot be appointed as headman in any village of his own genera-
769 tion, and villages of past generations disappear. When a headman
622 dies, his village still being in existence, his place is taken by his heir who may be a son, but this office is only temporary. The village ceases to exist when its original members die off. Moreover, there is no suggestion that the shade of a headman's father broods over the village as the shade of a chief is thought to brood over the land he ruled.

The Nyakyusa have a lively belief in the power of shades,-a
775 belief closely connected with the dependence of the members of a lineage upon one another for cattle,[1] and with the office of 'divine king', but such belief scarcely affects village relationships, for the shades are not thought to be concerned with behaviour between neighbours, as distinct from relatives.

775 It is true that the proper performance of family rituals includes
621 feasting neighbours, but the implication always is that the shades are concerned only in enforcing obligations towards themselves
622 and fellow kinsmen, not towards non-relatives. On the other hand, neighbours are concerned in the enforcement of kinship obligations. When a son insults his father, the father's neighbours are insulted also; when a daughter-in-law peeps at her father-in-law the shocked astonishment of the neighbours may cause her children to pine. And so, when an erring son begs pardon of his father, he must provide a feast for the neighbours, 'that they may see that his father is satisfied'.

A situation often arises in which both the shades and 'the breath
775 of men' operate, sometimes 'the breath' of shocked neighbours
626 supporting the shades, and sometimes shades and men each
754 exacting their due. One illustration of this was given us by Kalunda: 'If you do not carry out the burial rites for your father, people are angry, they throttle you, and the shade is angry also, he comes on your body. No, the witches do not call the ancestors to help; both are angry on their own account. To-day the black ones, the witches, come and throttle you; to-morrow the ancestors come. People are angry because they do not eat meat; the shade is angry because you did not perform the burial rites for him. He says: "See, I left much property, why did you not bury me properly?"' And in discussing the obligation of a daughter-in-

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'An African Morality', *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936); Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

law to avoid her father-in-law, another informant said: 'It is forbidden to look at fathers-in-law. If we do look then we shall not die well, we shall long to die and not be able to do so, because both those below (the dead) and those above (the living) are angry. Yes, it is the witches we mean when we say "those above".'

c. *The age-village and medicines*

Unlike the belief in witchcraft and 'the breath of men', which mainly affects relationships within a village, or the ancestor cult which is confined to the relations between kinsmen, and between chief and people, the use of medicines (*imikoto*)[1] enters into every type of relationship in Nyakyusa society. Medicines are employed to win success in almost every undertaking: cultivating, herding, hunting, love-making, war. They are regarded as one of the main props of authority; the impressiveness (*abunitya*) of a chief, and the power of a village headman to command, being directly related to the medicines with which they are treated (*vide supra*, pp. 24–5). They are resorted to for the promotion of fertility, for the treatment of the sick, and for protection and retaliation generally, as well as the means of directly harming an enemy. Medicines are believed to operate along with other mystical powers. For example, they are an essential element in rituals directed to the ancestors, and they are used for the discovery of witchcraft (in the ordeal) as well as for protection against it, and for the treatment of patients thought to have been 'eaten' by the witches or chilled by 'the breath of men'. Used alone, medicines are held to be ineffective against witchcraft or 'the breath of men', but they are regarded as a useful complement to other action, such as the banishment of the witch or the repentance of the sinner.

The power of witchcraft or of defence against witches (*amanga*) is connected with medicines, for it is thought often to be acquired for defensive purposes (and more rarely for aggressive purposes) through drinking medicines (*vide* pp. 25, 221). But the powers of witchcraft, or witch defence, and of medicines are quite distinct; the one implies a peculiar physical condition, the presence of one or more pythons in the belly, whereas the other may be bought from a doctor and used by anyone, and its

[1] The root -koto implies something derived from a plant, cf. ifi-koto, a wooden stool.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 efficacy neither depends upon nor affects the user's anatomy.
757 The creation and control of wild animals, for example, is thought
789 to turn on knowing the right medicines, not on any innate power, and is not therefore classed as witchcraft.

The Nyakyusa hold that just as 'python power' may be put to
791 good or evil use, so also medicines may be employed legally or
754 illegally. Particular techniques are not in themselves either good
789 or bad; their morality turns on the purpose which they serve. Thus our friend and neighbour, Mwakisonde, who was believed to have created four lions, which were roaming the neighbourhood, by placing certain bundles of twigs in the long grass, was regarded as a benefactor; for the lions had attacked neither men nor cattle, and besides adding dignity (*ubunya*) to the country were killing the wild pig, which had been destroying the gardens. But a certain X— was driven out of Mwaijande's country because he was alleged to have created leopards which had killed children and cows. 'In 1926 X— was notorious for making leopards. It was said that he got a medicine from Mnuku to make them. His neighbours feared to quarrel with him for in that year leopards infested the whole of Selya, especially the country of Mwaijande. It was said that if one quarrelled with this man one's child would be killed by leopards the following day. He was notorious. Once he quarrelled with a neighbour, saying: "Your cattle are eating my food." Then the following day the child of that man was taken by a leopard. The chief drove X— out. When they questioned him he denied having familiars ("animals") but the chief said: "Move from my country, for your animals are destroying this country." He said: "Chief, give me the ordeal." The chief refused, saying: "Not get out of my country." So he moved, [illegible] in the country of Mwaijande. He returned to the place from which he had moved.'[9]

789 Not all medicines believed to cause sickness and death are illegal; there are many retaliatory medicines which are believed only to harm the evil-doer, e.g. the thief, the adulterer, or the eater of stolen food; and the use of these 'medicines of ownership' (*ifilombeko*) is considered quite legitimate. A man gives his wives medicines to drink (without their knowledge) and then any lover who may sleep with them will, it is said, contract disease in

[9] In another account this man was spoken of as a witch (*pandai*), cf. Doumasse, p. 250.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 :4gonde FN17
Nyakyusa

consequence, though the wives themselves are free. Further the adulterer will pass the disease on to any women he subsequently sleeps with, including his own wives. Gonorrhoea is one of the diseases attributed to this type of medicine. Medicines are also put on houses or fields, for the purpose of bringing upon thieves, or eaters of stolen food, the itch, swollen genitals, dislocation of the knee-cap and thigh, and other ills. One doctor proudly told us of a medicine he possessed which would prevent a thief leaving the field in which he was stealing 'and make him go round and round till daylight, when he is discovered and admits his theft'. Certain protective medicines are thought to cause sorcery to recoil on the sender. But their use is legal; so also is the use of a vengeance magic called 'the hora', *ukupende* (cf. Document, p. 211), and another type, *ilyepa*, which is held to work only between relatives. These medicines are resorted to when one party to a dispute is dissatisfied with the judgement given in court, and occasionally in cases which have never been taken to court. They are held to harm the person against whom they are directed only if he be guilty. If he is innocent, they recoil on the user. What is illegal is the direct use of medicines to harm an enemy, without any safeguard to ensure that the medicine should only harm the guilty. This is *ubusoge*, 'the snaring of men', which we translate here as sorcery.[1] The common techniques of sorcery are said to be putting medicine in an enemy's path, pricking it into his footprints, or putting it into his food and drink.

In theory the distinction between the legal and illegal use of destructive medicines is clear, but the classification of a particular case depends upon the standpoint of the informant. Just as the supposed witchcraft of 'the breath of men' referred anguish to the attacks of 'witches', so informants whose families were alleged to have suffered from 'the hora', referred to it as 'sorcery' (*ubusoge*).

The belief in sorcery and in retaliatory magic is directly parallel to the belief in witchcraft and the 'breath of men', while the belief in protective medicines is parallel to the belief in the power of 'the defenders'. The distinction between the two sets of beliefs turns, however, not only on the difference between the manipulation of medicines, and the exercise of an innate power,

[1] In 'An African Monarchy', *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936) 'sorcery' was used for all destructive magic; I now confine it to the illegal use of destructive medicines.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

but also on the relationships to which they apply. While witchcraft, 'the breath of men', and the power of 'the defenders' are thought to operate primarily within the village and never beyond the chiefdom, sorcery, retaliatory and protective medicines may operate beyond the village and chiefdom as well as within them. Moreover, while the whole village, led by the headman, joins in defence against witchcraft, protective and retaliatory medicines are used primarily by individuals and families. Medicines of vengeance ('the horn' and *ilyepa*) are directed against kinship groups—members of an agnatic lineage, their spouses, and the children of daughters, are all held to be in danger—not local groups. The next-door neighbours of a man attacked will be safe so long as they are not kinsmen or affines.

The one occasion on which the village or village-section, acting as a group, uses medicines, is at the burning of rubbish heaps in the fields, before planting millet and certain other crops (*vide supra*, pp. 50–4). As we have shown, these medicines are supposed to protect the grain from witches and sorcerers, as well as to increase the yield. The Kukwe argue that the headman who lit the medicated fires must also be the first to taste the food grown on the fields, and he takes it with medicines, but this is not insisted upon by all the Nyakyusa; most commonly it is family groups that are careful to eat protective medicines with the first-fruits from their fields.

Envy is what makes men take to sorcery, the Nyakyusa say, envy of another's riches, or power, or employment. As we have seen, envy is cited as a motive for witchcraft also. But it is not the sole motive. Greed is the primary cause (*vide supra*, p. 91). And while witchcraft can only be used to ward off a grudge against a village neighbour, sorcery can be used against anyone. Like witchcraft, the effects of 'the breath of men' are said to be confined to the village. Moreover 'the breath' can only operate against a known sinner—it is the murmuring of neighbours about an individual which causes him to sicken; whereas most retaliatory medicines work against unknown persons, discovering the thief, adulterer, or sorcerer, as well as punishing him. As elsewhere in Africa, the use of sorcery and retaliatory medicines is said to be almost entirely confined to men, though women are often named as witches. In short, the situations in which sorcery and medicines of retaliation are used overlap at one or two points with those in

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

which witchcraft and 'the breath of men' operate, but their supposed fields of action are relatively distinct.

In the past, the punishment for sorcery was death with torture by impaling, not merely confiscation of property and banishment. Proof of the practice of sorcery depended upon the evidence of the doctor who had supplied the medicine (who was not regarded as implicated in the crime) and upon the *ewenji* ordeal. The Nyakyusa insist that the practice of sorcery was formerly rare, and that it has increased enormously, much more than the practice of witchcraft. This belief is to be related to two facts. First, Nyakyusa co-operate much more than they formerly did with people who live in different villages. The clerks who work together in Government offices, and who have a fearsome reputation as sorcerers, do not necessarily live in the same village; and being apart at night when the witches fly, they cannot be supposed to bewitch one another. But there is frequent occasion for friction between them and therefore a standing temptation to employ sorcery. So also in other types of employment, in trade and on journeys, individuals are frequently in contact with men of different villages. Secondly, belief in sorcery is felt to be compatible with the acceptance of a scientific explanation of causes of disease in a way that belief in witchcraft is not. *Ubutepe* is commonly translated as 'poisoning' by those who speak English, whether the medicine is or is not put into food or drink, or whether it is supposed to affect all who eat it or only the individual against whom it is directed. All types of sorcery tend to be rationalized as 'poisoning'; and many educated Nyakyusa who deny the reality of witchcraft admit to a lively fear of sorcery.

As the table on pp. 198–213 shows, however, accusations of witchcraft are still much more common than accusations of sorcery in the community as a whole. We heard of thirty-eight cases of supposed witchcraft to eleven of sorcery, and there was no reason to think that our friends were more likely to mention the one type of case than the other.

d. The age-village and Christianity

Since common action against witches, and to punish trans-gressors through 'the breath of men', is one of the primary functions of an age-village, what happens in a Christian village, or

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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when members of a pagan village embrace Christianity? Orthodox Nyakyusa Christians, that is, those accepting the teaching of the European missionaries of any of the four denominations at work in the area, deny the reality of witchcraft and of 'the breath of men'; they deny the power of any individual to harm another by virtue of 'a python' in the stomach, or to bring illness to his erring neighbour by murmuring with others about him.

As we have already seen, the profession of Christianity and school education tend to coincide among the Nyakyusa, and the educated tend to be sceptical of witchcraft, while believing in sorcery. Such scepticism is directly related to the dogmatic teaching of missionaries, to instruction in physiology in schools, and to the challenge of certain missionaries and Nyakyusa Christians that pagans should prove the existence of witchcraft at autopsies (*vide* Document, p. 254). The suggestion that 'pythons' are really acute tape-worm (*vide supra* p. 92) or an enlarged kidney is typical of the critical attitude of educated Christians to pagan dogma. We have no doubt that belief in witchcraft is weakening, and that this weakening is directly due to mission teaching.

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Nevertheless most Christians continue to have some belief in a mystical power exerted by individuals or groups to the harm of others. For a few the contradiction between the traditional and the Christian dogma involves acute mental conflict; for many the conflict is resolved through the concept of 'the curse' (*ibigoor*) of the congregation, led by the priest or pastor and elders, and through emphasis on sorcery rather than on witchcraft. Most Christians believe that the just wrath of those set in authority, and of the faithful members of a congregation, may bring misfortune on a sinner. They argue that the power which punishes the wrong-doer comes from God, not from ancestors or from pythons in men's bellies, but that it is brought upon an individual by the anger and murmuring of men.[1] Further, it is believed that

[1] The phrase 'the breath of men' (*ivulenge ya bandu*) is never used with reference to the punishment of sinners in the Christian congregation, but always 'the curse' (*ibigoor*), a word which is used to translate certain phrases in the Gospels, and which conveys an idea felt to be compatible with Christian dogma. As already noted (p. 101) the pagans of the plain and of Selwa use 'the curse' (*ibigoor*) more or less synonymously with 'the breath of men' (*ivulenge ya bandu*). For details of cases of misfortune attributed to the curse of Christians see Monica Hunter, 'An African Christian Monthly', *Africa*, Vol. X (1937), pp. 489-90.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Christians are only affected by the shocked astonishment of fellow Christians, not by the disapproval of pagans, and the unit within which 'the curse' is commonly spoken of as operating is the congregation. In two of the cases we recorded (*vide* Document, p. 209) it was suggested that illness was due to the anger of neighbours, fellow Christians, over stinginess and greed, but in the other cases it was not village neighbours who were primarily concerned, but the Christian congregation, a group embracing members from many villages.

The type of behaviour believed to be punishable by 'the curse' of fellow Christians also differs somewhat from that thought to be punished by 'the breath of men'. The virtue Christians emphasize most is chastity, and 'the curse' is often said to be a punishment for fornication or adultery. The other sin commonly spoken of as bringing down a curse is disobedience, or disrespectful behaviour to the minister (or priest) or elder of the congregation. Among pagans 'the breath of men' serves also to sanction sexual morals and to sustain respect for those in authority, but their sex code is different. It is incest, or familiarity between father- and daughter-in-law, which they regard as really evil, not sex relations outside marriage. And they emphasize respect to senior relatives and fathers' neighbours rather than to the leaders of any wider group.

Christians lay much less stress on hospitality to neighbours than pagans, and it is generally agreed that they eat alone more than pagans would dare to do. As one Christian put it, a pagan would always call his neighbours to share meat or beer when he had it, but a Christian might eat a sheep, or a goat, or even a calf, alone with his family. It is good, the Christians say, to call friends to share a feast, but not an inescapable obligation. Nor do Christians regularly send the saddle and ribs of any animal they kill to the chief, as pagans do; 'for', they say, 'we do not fear "the breath of men".' But hospitality towards strangers is felt to be a condition of salvation. One informant explained that 'If a man is stingy towards his neighbours it does not matter; but if he is stingy towards a stranger from a distance, he might die from lack of food; and that would be the fault of the stingy one. Such a fault would prevent him from entering Heaven.' This statement points to the most striking difference between Christian and pagan morality—the range of moral obligations. A pagan's duties

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

his village headmen. In some villages the 'elder' is both a religious leader and a secular authority, but there is a tendency to separate the two offices and to appoint a 'peacemaker' whose duty it is to settle disputes, collect taxes, and represent the village in its relationships with the chief and the administration, while the 'elder' confines himself to watching over the spiritual welfare of his people. Such division of authority is symptomatic of the growing differentiation of Nyakyusa society.

e. Witchcraft, medicines, and the British administration

Under British administration the use of the *wamaji* ordeal, imputation of witchcraft, intimidation or obtaining goods under false pretences by threats of witchcraft or sorcery, or offers of protection against them, are punishable offences. As we have seen, the ordeal is now administered only in the greatest secrecy, and probably very seldom, but accusations of witchcraft are frequent, and are even heard before the Native Courts, though not recorded (*vide* Document, p. 257). In the villages near the Government station more caution is observed in making accusations than in more remote parts of the district: very often the identity of the witch is only hinted at, or thorns are piled at his door by persons who remain anonymous (*vide supra*, p. 114) so that no individual can be convicted of imputing witchcraft. As one man put it: '"The defenders" see the witches, but cannot name them to anyone.' Autopsies continue in conservative villages but they are no longer performed on every corpse, as is said to have been customary in the old days. The chief Forokoto, himself a sceptic, argued that it was no use performing an autopsy when a charge could not be laid. If the members of a village are all convinced that a particular fellow is a witch he is forced to move, since his unpopularity becomes intolerable to him (*supra*, pp. 110–5). As Mwambuputa put it: 'We don't like him, and he doesn't like us either: he does not enjoy our company (*atikwangala na mawe*), so he moves.' But if the friction is only between two individuals, the supposed witch may brazen it out, for without resort to the *wamaji* ordeal there is no sure means of deciding between the accuser and the accused.

The prohibition of witch-finding is not accepted as right and just: the common view is that the Europeans 'protect the witches',

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and they are condemned for doing so. One old man argued in this way: 'Where you Europeans are wrong is in forbidding witchcraft in word only and not in spirit. It does no good to say that witchcraft does not exist; but if you had driven witchcraft out of our hearts that would have been good.' And again: ' "The defenders" still fight the witches, they make great efforts, but they may no longer speak about it. In the old days when a witch went to choke his fellow "the defenders" would see him and turn him back, and then on the morrow they would tell people that he was a witch, and he would have to go to the chief and take the ordeal which would convict him. But now "the defenders" have to be silent because of you Europeans who say there is no witchcraft, so that though the witch is perhaps turned back the first night, the next night he goes again and throttles his fellow.' Many Nyakyusa think that Europeans are hypocrites when they deny belief in witchcraft. One friend, the Christian wife of a chief, said to us: 'You are dissembling like all Europeans, you don't want to admit the reality of witchcraft. You are just dissembling.' Nor are Europeans thought to be immune from witchcraft: the attacks of malaria from which we ourselves suffered were immediately interpreted by our servants and friends as due to witches.

Since most people are sure that evil desires manifesting themselves as witchcraft or sorcery exist, movements of witch-finders partake of the nature of religious revivals. The *Mwakapi* movement, described by Dr. Richards for the Bemba[1] appeared among the Nyakyusa in 1932, and had a brief popularity, dying out again before 1934. The professed aim of the leader was to rid the country of witchcraft and sorcery, and the attitude of most Nyakyusa was expressed in the comment of a Christian friend who said to us: 'He (the witch-finder) did very well because he brought to light all those that killed people and made them hand over the medicines which they had used.'

The sense of insecurity created by a continuing belief in witchcraft along with the prohibition of the traditional means of discovering witches, finds expression in the frequent movement of individuals from village to village. Such movement occurred in the past, and it was often linked with suspicion of witchcraft, but whereas in the old days it was always the individual convicted in

[1] A. I. Richards, 'A Modern Movement of Witch-finders', *Africa*, Vol. VIII (1935), pp. 448-61.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 the *mwafi* ordeal who moved, now it is often the man who sup-
754 poses himself a victim of witchcraft who flies for his life (*vide infra*, pp. 153 ff.); and it is probable that circulation between villages has in this way increased very considerably.

754 Denying the reality of witchcraft, the British administration
626 ignores the belief in the legitimate use of 'python power' to
673 enforce law and morality, any disputes arising out of this being classed as 'witchcraft'. One case turning on the belief in 'the breath of men' was heard by the District Officer of Tukuyu while we were in the district. The facts, as given us by the District Officer concerned, and by Nyakyusa informants, were as follows:

Mwankuga, a chief, fell sick and one of his sons-in-law, a clerk, advised him to get treatment from the European doctor then investigating tuberculosis in the district. When Mwankuga's junior half-brother heard this he came to Mwankuga, along with others, advised him not to go to a European doctor, and offered to cure him himself. He said that *he* had made Mwankuga ill—'had closed his stomach'—because Mwankuga had refused to make the 'coming out' ceremony for his sons when pressed by his village headmen to do so. Mwankuga's half-brother said 'the country was angry' because of the delay in the 'coming out' ceremony. He insisted that Mwankuga's illness was due to 'the breath' of the whole country, not to the sorcery (*ubutego*) of an individual. Mwankuga acknowledged that he had done wrong in refusing to hold the ceremony, and handed over two cows which his half-brother demanded, receiving in turn medicine, which he drank. Five days later Mwankuga gave his half-brother three more cows which were killed at Mwankuga's homestead and eaten by his people. Then, later on, since he did not recover, and one of his sons for whom the 'coming out' should have been held died, Mwankuga reported the matter to a senior chief, Mwakatumbula, president of the court district in which he lived. Mwakatumbula referred the case to the District Officer, and Mwankuga's half-brother was tried for 'obtaining goods by false pretences', under Section 287 of the Penal Code. The accused denied that he had ever said that he was the cause of Mwankuga's illness, and though the latter brought witnesses, the District Officer found that their testimony was 'not sufficiently reliable to substantiate the charge', and 'that there was no reason to suppose that the accused had acted in bad faith'. He referred the

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

case back to Mwakatumbula's court 'for investigation for an offence under Native Law and Custom'. Two points which came out in the examination before the District Officer are significant. First, Mwankuga readily admitted that he had done wrong in delaying the 'coming out' ceremony. He said to the court: 'I did wrong in refusing to hold the *ubusoka*, I did wrong.' Secondly, the court (i.e. the Nyakyusa assessors) specifically inquired whether or not Mwankuga's half-brother had got his share of the meat provided by Mwankuga. It emerged that he had eaten some meat but the witnesses were not clear as to how much he had got.

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When the case came up again before the Native Court the general opinion was: 'The son of the chief has died. They (i.e. the witches) have "eaten" him. The chief himself has been ill because he refused to hold the "coming out" ceremony.'

Two other so-called 'witchcraft' cases came before the District Officer while we were in Tukuyu District. One turned on the use of vengeance magic to collect a debt, the doctor who had supplied the medicines being the accused (see Document, p. 213). The Nyakyusa view that only the individual who has commissioned a doctor to work sorcery on his behalf, and not the doctor himself, is guilty, if death from sorcery (or poisoning) has been proved, is not, of course, accepted by the Administration. In the other case a Sangu doctor told two individuals that they were threatened with 'witchcraft' and got cattle from them in return for his supposed protection. He was expelled from the district (see Document, pp. 258-61).

The difficulties of administration in this field are obvious. No one with a background of western science can admit the reality of witchcraft or 'the breath of men', as defined by the Nyakyusa, or the possibility of discovering truth through the *wamafi* ordeal. Yet prohibition of the ordeal, when belief in witchcraft is so strong, breeds a sense of insecurity. The only solution is to kill the belief in witchcraft. As we have shown, it is somewhat weakened by elementary education and Christian teaching; and we believe that its disappearance turns on increasing technical control, particularly in the field of disease, on scientific education, and on the development of impersonal relationships.[1]

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 88-95, 100-4.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

This practice of having official witnesses to every contract, and summoning them to give evidence should a dispute later arise, is one of the most important means of maintaining order in Nyakyusa society, and village neighbours are the usual witnesses. 675

c. Communal responsibility of the age-village

Formerly, in Nyakyusa law two forms of group responsibility were emphasized: the mutual responsibility of kinsmen, and the mutual responsibility of fellow villagers. A case of murder or manslaughter was primarily the concern of the agnatic lineage if the victim was a male or an unmarried girl, and of the lineages of both husband and father if the victim was a married woman. The kinsmen either killed the murderer, or brought him before the chief, who imposed a fine which went to the injured relatives. The Nyakyusa make a distinction between 'spearing by day' (direct physical injury) and 'spearing by night' (witchcraft); and only in the latter type of case did the fine go to the chief. Witchcraft was thus treated as an offence against the state—the chiefdom—while murder or manslaughter was an offence against the kinsmen of the dead. The concern of the state in witchcraft, and the joint responsibility of kinsmen on the one hand, and of fellow villagers on the other, was evident when, as sometimes happened, both groups were required by the chief to clear themselves of suspicion of witchcraft by each providing a representative to take the poison ordeal. Should the representative of either group fail to vomit then the responsible individual within that group was sought out by means of divination and the ordeal (*vide supra*, p. 116). 613 621 672 754 682

In a case of adultery the injured husband, together with his kinsmen, pursued and attempted to kill, or torture and kill, the adulterer: self-help was not only permitted but expected in this situation,[1] and a man's near kinsmen were obliged to assist him. Neighbours were not obliged to assist in executing vengeance, but they might be victims of it, for if the injured husband did not find the adulterer he might kill any village-mate of his enemy. Such an attack commonly led to war between the two villages; 684 696 721

[1] D. R. MacKenzie, *The Spirit-Ridden Konde* (1925), p. 61, says: 'The injured husband has the right to inflict death on the paramour. This is no mere tale of the past but a grim fact to-day . . . cases of this nature are very numerous.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 A man who has been driven out and then fetched back pro-
783 vides a feast for his friends on his return. This feast is essentially the same as the 'ritual of reconciliation' that takes place when a wrong-doer begs pardon of his own village or that of his father (*vide supra*, p. 101). For a private individual only his own village is concerned, but if the exile happens to be a senior headman then all the villages of the chiefdom participate. A detailed account of such a feast, which we attended, is given on pp. 271–4.

166 In a civilized society social separation overcomes friction in
795 two ways: first, it separates individuals who are personally in-
578 compatible, and secondly, it provides the individual who is a misfit in one group with a choice of groups whose values may be more compatible with his own than those of the group from which he came.[1] In Nyakyusa society villages were formerly all of the same type, with virtually identical group values, therefore the individual only escaped from personal incompatibilities by moving. In the modern society, however, there is a variation of type as between pagan and Christian villages and, among the Christians, as between the several denominations. The convert in a pagan village often moves to a Christian village finding that more compatible, and the son of a Christian, having abandoned Christianity and perhaps married several wives, leaves the Christian village in which he grew up and joins a pagan one with whose members he has more in common.

578 The Nyakyusa, in their rationalizations about witchcraft,
166 recognize the fact that friction is often personal and may be over-
754 come by moving. Constantly villages receive individuals who have been driven out of some other village for practising witchcraft, and when we inquired whether a man who had once been accused was not feared as a neighbour, the reply was always in the same tenor as that of Mwamunda: 'Perhaps he has bewitched his fellows there, we do not know, but he has not bewitched us.' There is also the implication that quarrels may be forgotten after a temporary separation, since those who have moved because they feared witchcraft, and even some who have been accused of practising witchcraft, are welcomed back.

578 When our informants discussed moving and returning to the
166 home village they always emphasized friction with one's fellows (*abanine*) as providing the chief impetus to move, and the desire

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, op. cit., pp. 60–1.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

course and sharing of food and beer between fathers and sons. 577
Ukwangala implies eating and drinking together frequently, and 621
cannot be fully enjoyed by people who do not live close to one another.

The value of good fellowship with equals is constantly talked 577
about by the Nyakyusa, and it is dinned into boys from child- 869
hood that enjoyment and morality alike consist in eating and drinking, in talking and learning, in the company of contemporaries. The solitary and aloof, those who enjoy the company of women (as opposed to direct sexual satisfaction) and those who seek intimacy with members of another generation, are derided.

Now this very emphasis on the value of good fellowship with 577
equals is doubtless a reflection of the difficulty of achieving it. 578
The frequent accusations of witchcraft and movement from one village to another are evidence of friction between fellow villagers. Does the friction turn on the age-village organization?

d. The incidence of accusations of witchcraft

As we have seen, witchcraft is believed to operate primarily 578
within the village, and the typical accusation is against a neigh- 754
bour.[1] But in other societies also witchcraft accusations are most commonly made against those with whom one is living, and in close daily contact: in Pondoland it is members of the same homestead or of neighbouring homesteads who suspect one another of witchcraft; among Xhosa-speaking people in towns it is fellow employees, or fellow schoolmates; among the Azande it is members of the same small neighbourhood. Therefore it is not only the Nyakyusa who accuse village neighbours of witchcraft.

Of the *frequency* of accusation in different societies we can 754
make no comparison, for statistics on witchcraft are extremely difficult to collect. Few field-workers could be certain that they were cognizant of *every* accusation of witchcraft within a given

[1] Over a third of the accusations of witchcraft recorded were against neighbours, as distinct from spouses or co-wives or kinsmen and, if one excludes the modern type of accusation against fellow workers in the same camp, the proportion of accusations against neighbours is almost one half. The thirty-eight witchcraft accusations cases, of course, be taken as a random sample in the technical sense; we recorded every case that came to our ears, but cannot be certain that inquiries brought to light every accusation in the villages investigated. Nevertheless the preponderance of accusations against neighbours is significant (vide Documents, pp. 198 ff.).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 area, during a given period, so we cannot either assert or deny that accusations of witchcraft are more frequent in age-villages than in kinship villages.

578 621 603 There are two sets of loyalties in Nyakyusa society: those to a kinship group and those to an age-village. Does conflict arise from a clash between them? We have no evidence that it does. It is true that kin may support a sick relative against his age-group, referring to his illness as due to witchcraft, whereas neighbours will attribute it to his own sin and their legitimate anger; but very often the ancestors and the 'defenders' are believed to work together to punish wrong-doers—those who break avoidance and incest taboos, those who insult seniors, those who neglect traditional rituals (*vide supra*, p. 122). Amity between relatives is sanctioned by neighbours as well as by senior kinsmen, and the importance of enjoying the company of village mates is constantly stressed by relatives. Where a village does appear to support a member against his kin, it is usually on the side of the ancestors and 'justice', in terms of the Nyakyusa code, as when neighbours share a father's anger at the insolence of his son, or after his death protect his son against unjust treatment by the heir. The values of village solidarity and of kinship solidarity are thus coherent.

c. The form of witch beliefs

621 754 606 There is, however, a connection between the age-village organization and the *form* of witch beliefs. As we have seen, great emphasis is laid on feasting neighbours, and it is believed that the impulse to witchcraft comes from the lust for milk and meat. The Nyakyusa argue thus: witchcraft comes from neighbours, and neighbours must be fed or they get angry; feeding a witch on milk or beef pacifies him (*vide supra*, p. 90). An explicit connection is made between neglecting to provide feasts on the proper occasions and suffering from 'the breath' of justly angry neighbours whose blighting power springs from the same root as witchcraft. The contrast with the witch beliefs of the Ponde is marked: among them it is held that the drive to witchcraft is sex lust, and all witches have familiars with whom they have sex relations.[1]

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 275-88.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Nyakyusa emphasis upon lust for food as the incentive to crime is not due to starvation, for they are among the best-fed people in Africa, with a much greater variety and quantity of food at their disposal than the Pondo. Why, then, this emphasis in their witch beliefs? We suggest that it is directly connected with living with non-relatives who have no share in one's inheritance. The most prized possession of the Nyakyusa is cattle, and cattle are controlled by lineages. Neighbours who are not kinsmen, and who cannot hope to benefit by inheritance or through assistance with marriage and funeral cattle from a fellow's herd, are more likely to be jealous of his wealth in cattle than are his brothers and sons who directly share in it through inheritance, and the gift of cattle at marriage and death. The only profit which neighbours derive from the herd of a rich fellow is the milk and meat on which he feasts them. Jealousy of another's wealth is a common enough cause for supposed witchcraft, but the affront of inequality is greater when it is constantly before one's eyes. Nyakyusa live close-packed in villages and can hardly be unaware of what next-door neighbours eat. The statement that the pythons of witches are roused by the *smell* of meat cooking and the *smell* of milk (*vide supra*, p. 92) suggests the envy of a poor neighbour when he smells the roast beef and curds next door. Where the local group consists of a lineage (as among the Pondo) people are not necessarily aware of what non-relatives eat. Among the Pondo the pressure to kill cattle for meat comes from within the lineage, and is associated not with the witches but with the ancestors. Sickness is commonly attributed to the *hunger* of the ancestors (*kulewhili*), who 'want to eat by means of him' who is ill (*kufuma ukudla ngepyo*),[1] a notion quite strange to the Nyakyusa.

In short, we argue that it is because people who do not benefit from each other's herds by inheritance and the provision of marriage and funeral cattle, live close to one another, that so much emphasis is laid on the lust for milk and meat as the drive to witchcraft among the Nyakyusa.

And why the Pondo emphasis on sex? Are they more inhibited than the Nyakyusa? At first sight the Pondoan sex code seems a freer one than that of the Nyakyusa. The marriage age of men is no later than among the Nyakyusa, while the marriage age of girls is considerably higher, and unmarried men are free to

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 250, 245.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

South Africa. Sex hunger obviously exists in the large group of bachelors and among the wives of elderly polygynists, but its satisfaction through adultery is not regarded as shameful or horrible. Adultery was formerly extremely dangerous, and is now expensive, but it is not disgraceful. Thus desire, being fully conscious, is not transformed into dreams and fantasies.

It is possible that all witch beliefs are an expression of lust, directed by jealousy, envy, and hatred. Certainly sex lust and the lust for good food appear in the accounts of witch beliefs in one area after another in Africa. The Zande fear that a glimpse of the cats associated with women witches, and particularly with Lesbian practices in the harems of princes, will kill a man, is a classic example of the one;[1] while the Lovale,[2] Thonga,[3] and Nyanja[4] belief that witches kill in order to eat the corpses of their victims is an example of the other. We do not suggest that the Nyakyusa alone believe that the lust for prized food is a motive for witchcraft, or that they think it is the sole motive,[5] but that their emphasis on lust for food, and the particular form it takes, is directly related to the age-village organization. It is significant that the stress laid on sharing food in the village diminishes along with the belief in witchcraft, and a rigid insistence on living with age-mates.

f. 'The breath of men'

And what of the belief in 'the defenders' of the village and the chilling 'breath of men'? Is the idea that contemporaries have a mystical power over one another a function of their living together—a correlate of an age-village, as opposed to a kinship village, organization? The Nyakyusa concept of witchcraft is similar in many respects to that of the Azande, the Thonga, and the Lovale, but, as we have shown, the Nyakyusa differ from these other peoples in the emphasis they lay on the lust for food as a motive for witchcraft; they differ also in the belief that a power

[1] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., pp. 21-27.
[2] C. M. N. White, op. cit., pp. 98-9. [3] Junod, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 408.
[4] B. Malinowski, A. Kandauda, C. Chipungulu, M. Chimwaza (Mabuku Akha Nyanja-land Education Department, Zomba (1940).
[5] For the sex associations in Nyakyusa witchcraft see supra, pp. 34-5. There is a hint of the lust for food among the Pondo in the idea that the hideous familiar sulks over, and Thikoloshe steals food. Hunter, op. cit., pp. 279-80, 283.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 akin to witchcraft and distinct from the power of senior relatives is used to punish wrong-doers and to protect[1] the village from witches, and in the belief that village headmen are foremost among 'the defenders'.

626 789 The closest parallel to the Nyakyusa concept of 'the breath of men' of which we have evidence in Africa is the belief in the 'conditional curse' among the Meru, Embu, and Kikuyu people. Lambert shows that the main sanction enforcing the judgement of the Council of Elders among the Meru people was the belief that its curse brought misfortune, and he was told in Embu that the Warriors' Council has a similar power over warriors.[2] Kenyatta shows that among the Kikuyu the conditional curse was used to protect beacons, to enforce the judgement of the Council of Elders, and to guard against bribery.[3] As we have seen, the Nyakyusa of the plain also use a word *ikipwe*, which is best translated as 'the curse', when the people of the hills use the phrase 'the breath of men' (*vide supra*, p. 100), and whatever phrase is used the implication is that misfortune comes from the shocked astonishment and the anger of neighbours (or father's neighbours) which has been expressed in 'murmuring'. In the Nyakyusa view a formal cursing is not necessary to bring down misfortune, but the anger must be *expressed* (*vide supra*, p. 106). A belief in the legitimate exercise of mystical power by contemporaries or seniors to punish non-relatives thus appears in four societies with highly developed age-organizations, and further field-work may show that the two are always coincident.

626 However that may be, the belief in 'the curse' (or 'the breath of men') among the Nyakyusa is shaped by the fact that villages are occupied by age-sets. The social function of 'the breath of men' in a Nyakyusa age-village is strictly parallel to that of the mystical power of senior relatives in a kinship village. Where, as among most African peoples, the neighbours are kinsmen, no distinction is made between the mystical effects of the legitimate

[1] There are indications that the power of witchcraft is thought sometimes to be used for defence among the Thonga (Junod, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 500, 508), and the Azande (Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., pp. 109-91) but the idea does not apparently bulk large, and there is no suggestion of a similar power being used to punish wrong-doers.

[2] H. E. Lambert, *The Use of Indigenous Authorities in Tribal Administration* (Communications from the School of African Studies, University of Cape Town), pp. [illegible], 12-13.

[3] J. Kenyatta, op. cit., pp. [illegible], [illegible].

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

anger of neighbours on the one hand, and of kinsmen on the other.

The idea that a Nyakyusa village headman has the mystical power called *amanga*, and leads the attacks of justly enraged neighbours, gives him a position in his village comparable to that of the headman who, among many African peoples, is the senior kinsman in his village. Each has mystical power over the members of his village, and the fact that the Nyakyusa headman's power is derived from 'a python in the stomach', and operates like witchcraft, while the power of a senior kinsman derives from his birth, and operates through the shades, makes relatively little difference to the relations of the village headman with his people.

The Nyakyusa system is peculiar in that the village headman is foremost as the discoverer of, and defender against, witches; he combines the functions fulfilled elsewhere by the village headmen and the witch-doctor. The protection which kinship villages in other African cultures seek on the one hand from their ancestors, and on the other from the witch-doctor,[1] the Nyakyusa look for from their village headmen. Doctors who claim to discover witches, and provide medicines for protection against them, exist in Nyakyusa society; some, at least, of them are spoken of as having *amanga*—the same mystical power as the headmen have—through which they are enabled to see and fight the witches; but witch-doctors play a much smaller part than they do among the Ababende or the Ponde; in the battle against witches they are quite overshadowed by the village headmen. Defence against witchcraft is a village affair, and the foremost 'defenders' (*abamanga*) are the political authorities. Village rituals directed to the ancestors are conspicuously absent among the Nyakyusa, and our hypothesis is that this absence, together with the belief that the 'python power' of village headmen and others is used to punish wrong-doers and defend the innocent within their village, is dependent upon the age-village organization, in which neighbours are not kinsmen and the position of village headman is not hereditary.

[1] cf. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., pp. 187–89, 271; Junod, op. cit., pp. 429, 518–8. The Thonga 'magicians' is also believed to fly and know the witches, because he shows their power.

I:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 F7617 Ngonde F7617
Nyakyusa

7. HOMOSEXUALITY

X (an exceptionally reliable informant)

[138] "When a boy sleeps with his friend they sleep together; it is not forbidden. Everyone thinks it all right. Sometimes when boys sleep together each may have an emission on the other (*bitendemile*). If they are great friends there is no wrong done. If a boy has an emission on his friend in his sleep without the friend knowing there is no case. Boys sometimes agree to dance together (*ubudinse*) and work their evil together and that also is no wrong. But they fear very much to dance thus because their parents will be angry, saying: "You are learning adultery; you will be fools when you grow up." Boys do this when they are out herding; then they begin to dance together and to have intercourse together. But there is something which is a great wrong—if one [139] boy, perhaps out herding or perhaps in the boys' village at night, catches hold of his fellow and has an emission on him (*wabetumile*) then it is a great case, involving a fine. One who has been forced by his fellow will tell his parents and they will take him to the village headman to inform the headman. It is a great case and the boy who forced his fellow pays a bull or perhaps a cow. They say that to force [154] a fellow thus is witchcraft (*bo bodoi*); he is not a woman. But when they have agreed and dance together, then even if people find them they say it is adolescence (*bubadile*), all children are like that. And they say that sleeping together and dancing is also adolescence.

"This custom is mostly among children, it is forbidden for men to sleep together. They do not fear law when they have seized a friend they will pay; no, they fear to be shamed. Not many cases of grown men having intercourse together come to light, but only of boys together or of a man and a boy. Some, during intercourse, work in the mouth of their friend, and have an orgasm; those do very, very great wrong. Some have intercourse in the anus, some between the legs—there are many who practise this latter form and this is what boys mostly do. That of the mouth people do very rarely when they dance together, because one who does it may have a great case against him.

"A person never dreams of making love to another man but only when two youths sleep together on a mat, then something evil may take place between them, at night during sleep. Perhaps when one has dreamed that he is having intercourse with a woman but he has been caught and not finished, he wills his friend.

"And when out herding, some of the older boys do evil with the

[p. 196]

8. MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES[1]

(a) Pitchergh

Total number of cases 30

Information from numerous informants

No.	Nature of supposed victim	Category of victim	Category of victim	Social relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Nature of case	Secured, partially or totally, by accused
1	Village cows	Married woman, member of Brahmanical	Neighbours, a [illegible] and [illegible] in the village	Same village	She bewitched village cows	Cows went dry	Witch-[illegible] [illegible] for the cow. Dead, [illegible] [illegible]	Accused had [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible]	Village [illegible]
2	Boy	"Village [illegible]" [illegible]	Parents of victim	Parents of the boy and accused in same village but in different [illegible] of the village	"Evil" eye of village [illegible]	Accused was [illegible] a [illegible] [illegible] of an [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]	" "	"	Village [illegible]
3	Man	Village [illegible] [illegible]	Victim	Same village	Bewitching his neighbour	Dream of victim	Prior. Dream related to neighbours who [illegible] [illegible] to [illegible]	Accused arrested in another village of [illegible] [illegible]	Village [illegible]
4	Man	Village [illegible], [illegible]	Village [illegible]	Same village	Caused death, [illegible]	Practice [illegible] victim after a quarrel, saying "I'm [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

[1-200]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible

APPLICATIONS ATTACHED TO MEDICAL CLAIMS—cont.

(c) Pitcairn—cont.

Date	Name of injured person	Category of person	Category of accident	Special circumstances of victim and accident	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Outcome of case	Previous convictions of accused
(1)	[illegible]	Police officer		Same camp	Theft, damaged or lost value to level of indictable	Alleged that he on [illegible] reason for cause of which [illegible] Those with [illegible] work and finally death after returning home	Investigation [illegible]		Police employee
(2)	Chief [illegible]	Police in road [illegible]	Six friends	Same camp	A crude [illegible] for [illegible] of which [illegible]	A [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

INVESTIGATIONS ATTRIBUTED TO MEDICAL CAUSES—cont.

#	Original medical title	Original medical cause	Original medical details	Special relationship of victim and assailant	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Outcome of case	Special relationship of assailant and victim
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of deceased person	Category of accused	Category of witness	Social relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case	Structural relationship of accused and accused
[illegible]	Husband	[illegible]	Victim	None demonstrated	Witch accused the witches to 'cut' him. Opened the door for them. One herself was a witch	Shown of husband. Shown jealous of chief wife who was the favourite	Divination	Treatment with medicine. Shown impossible because one suspect a sister of the favourite wife	Spouses
[illegible]	Husband	Wife	?	None demonstrated	Caused illness to husband	'He hated her and he left it'	Divination		Spouses
[illegible]	Husband	Wife	?	None demonstrated	'Eaten' husband	Death of husband	?		Spouses
[illegible]	Co-wife	Wife (Lagos)	Husband (Fula)	None demonstrated	'Bewitched him so [illegible]'	Husband did not sleep well with other wives	?	Shunned for witchcraft	Spouses
[illegible]	?	Wife (Lagos)	Husband (Ibadan)	None demonstrated	?	?	?	Shunned for witchcraft	Spouses
[illegible]	Husband's sister	Wife	Husband	None demonstrated	Bewitched husband's sister	Cows gave little milk when wife at home, much when wife away	Herself ordeal. Well-[illegible]	Husband paid a cow and had to hide in town	Spouses
[illegible]	Children	Husband of [illegible]				Children began to squint after husband run off with the woman			Husband/wife's lover

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1:WIlson E-5(1934-1938)1931 FN17 Nigeria FN17
Nigeria

INCIDENTS ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

(c) Pitchaigh—contd.

#	Place of incident	Character of incident	Religion of witness	Social relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Outcome of case	Sentence, including the accused, if convicted
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]				[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

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[illegible]

APPLICATIONS ATTACHED TO MEDICAL CLAIMS—cont.

(c) Discharge—cont.

No.	Name of medical officer	Category of soldier	Category of grade	Social personality of doctor and patient	Charge	Grounds of application	Consideration	Opinion of case	Decision thereon of medical officer and council
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

[illegible]

(d) Survey (Concluded)

INDICATIONS ATTRIBUTED TO MEDICAL CAUSES—concld.

No.	Complaint of patient	Category of patient	Exposure of patient	Special relationship of patient and witness	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Opinion of case
1	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]		
2	[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]		
3	[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]		
4	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]		
5	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
6	[illegible]	[illegible]				[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

(d) Bombay (Contd.)—concld.

No.	Category of crime	Category of criminal	Category of victim	Social relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Remarks of magistrate	Investigation	Upshot of case
7	Daughter of A. Son of B. Daughter of C. Son of Brother D.	1 accused, D, the grandfather of the victim's mother. 2 accused, E.	A, father and brother of victim.		Use of criminal force and threats.	[illegible]	Suggested by doctor this results due to excess or in anger of grandfather with family quarrel.	Case dismissed. Complainant (father) filed another against accused for assault of daughter.
8	Child of neighbours.	Man.	Neighbours.	Same village.	Entry into forbidden house to kill the child.	Order passed for [illegible] on the plea that [illegible] had quarrelled with accused. [illegible] during the night.	1 [illegible] this origin.	1 [illegible] of property to [illegible] [illegible].
9	Possession and [illegible] A. [illegible] belonging to the [illegible] of the neighbours.	Fellow-[illegible] B.		Same camp.	1 accused, C, killing, 2 for [illegible].	1 [illegible] on the house. 2 [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

(d) Witchcraft Magic (Disposition—the Dead) — MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MORTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of victim	Category of accused	Category of witness	Special relationship of victim and witness	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Nature of case
1	[illegible] (F) and [illegible]	A doctor (Mashalaba)			Accused, said the boys, "Did not kill W" (but he was doing so)	Accused said W had stolen his wallet. W and W both died	Autopsy revealed death due to 'the boys'	Chief Gwaw accused out of country for not bringing case to court but arranging himself. The doctor had said the boys to his own case
2	1. Relative of witness. 2. Child of witness's other brother	Husband of witness (already killed) (Mashalaba Kilo)	Relatives of deceased witness		Accused said the boys. Relatives of victims spoke of doctor as due to sorcery (Charge)	Victim 1 had slept with accused's wife. Accused treated this he had arranged himself. Both victims 1 and 2 died suddenly		Witness returned to husband but others of the family should die
3	Child of A and children of other wives of A's husband	Co-wife B.	A, mother of victim	Same household	B said the boys	A had stolen B's harmonica and not admitted it when one man taken that to husband and then to chief. B was threatened. The death of chief's and children of other wives followed		A paid B for theft, A and other wives went to two doctors and death ceased. They recovered
4	Man C, and woman X, with whom he had eloped	Man A who [illegible] the woman X	Man B, brother of deceased C	Different clansmen	A said the boys	C ran off with X, sister of A's other brother whom A had inherited. C and X both died. A treated. 'I killed them with the boys'		D opened A and had of a distant chief. (before Europeans came)

[illegible]

No.	Complaint of [illegible]	Complaint of [illegible]	Complaint of [illegible]	Qualified [illegible] of [illegible] and provider	Charge	Summary of complaint	Investigation	Rights of [illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]			[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

I:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1931 F317 Ngoma F317
Nyakyusa

5. METHODS OF WITCHCRAFT

Mwalumbe (chief).

• 159 "We people think that the witches have pythons (*ziwa*) in their stomachs. It is these which have power to change so that they fly. We say a man cannot work witchcraft without a python, but only when he has one. The python can come out of the stomach and enter again. When the python has gone to throttle someone only the witch's body remains. It is said that this body has no strength, and cannot get up; sometimes it can speak a little, sometimes it cannot speak. It is referred to as "a hide".

"When the pythons have come to the place where they are going to eat people, they are said to take out the teeth of others which they use to eat with. They do not eat with their own teeth. When they have "eaten" someone they return the teeth. It is said that if a person wakes before they return his teeth, and cries out that his teeth have gone, then his teeth will disappear all together. He will only have gums in his mouth. The witches do not carry spears with which to bewitch. I, and others also, are surprised at this, for when an autopsy is performed I have never heard it said that teeth-sticks have been found, but always that spear wounds have been found. And some, when they wake up in the morning, have said: "My teeth are loose." Then others tell them: "The witches are with your teeth in the night."

[76] "Witches fight a very fierce war in their supernatural strength (*kwanaga gwaiko*). It is said that they fight with spears. Those of one village do not fight, but the village of one chief (*ntu*) fights against the village of another chief. When the witches of one chief try to kill another chief the latter's own fight them and save their chief. Hence it sometimes happens that the chief kills cattle for his people to thank them for having fought for him.

"Sometimes witchcraft is directed at food or a brewing of beer, causing it to rot. When the witches have spoiled the beer it is not nice. The witches spoil other things like this by means of their witchcraft with pythons.

"When the witches go to "eat" a person, two or four may go together or one may go alone. When they go they travel with the strength of the pythons; they leave a "skin", or body only. When they come to the person they throw away their teeth; they take the teeth of him whom they are going to eat, and eat with them. And one whose teeth have been returned knows in the morning that the witches used his teeth. We are warned that if ever we find no teeth in our mouths we must not

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

754

say out, because then the teeth will disappear altogether, but to be silent, then they will reappear.

'And another activity of the witches is to take sickness from one country and cast it on some house they choose. So where people die they say this sickness was brought by the witches to so and so.'

Mwandwi (a very old man famous as a historian).

'The witches are always naked when they go to choke a person in dreams. A witch leaves his skin (*ungwale*) on his sleeping-mat and goes naked. When his neighbours, "the defenders" (*abamunga*), see him they may snatch his skin; then when he returns he trembles and sits down naked, ugly-looking. He looks as if he had a curse on him. But after a little while he gets another skin.'

Mwainawa (chief).

'The man of whom we have spoken twice (*vide* pp. 124, 152) is sometimes said to be a witch, he throttles the cattle of the village and men say that he throttles them also. But he is especially notorious for throttling the cattle of the village so that their milk disappears. Once they caught him for witchcraft, saying: "You are throttling us" and they drove him away. He moved to another village but in the same chieftdom, and there also men continually said: "We do not sleep on account of our fellow! If he brings witchcraft to us here he will die, we shall hit him with fists" (meaning that "the defenders" will hit him with fists) when he goes out to throttle his victims. If their cows dry up they say: "We shall hit his python, he will die." For it is said that if a person has a python which throttles the milk, men strike the python and he dies. The python means the witchcraft of throttling cattle or food. Saying "We shall strike his python and he will die" means that we shall strike him when he is throttling our cows and he will die.'

Mtalamagwa (pagan man).

'When the chief is good the cows are many and there is much milk. And when the village headman is good, when he forbids witches to come into his village, milk is plentiful. When we say a chief is good (*nsowa*) it means that he never goes to throttle cows, or if we say that the village headman is good it means that he does not go throttling. Formerly chiefs and village headmen were good. If they were great witches, no one came to them. I come from Penja country over there.

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1:Wilson E-9(1934-1936)1951 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

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Mwalukasa was good. We know he was good because people came to him and cattle increased and people loved him. Some who are quarrelsome lose all their men and are left alone. . . . A village headman or chief *gwa fagu* is one who always preaches to his fellows that "food should be plentiful among us here, friends; none should bewitch others." "A man of plenty" (*ngwa fagu*) is a village headman or chief who is angry at witchcraft in his village, and forbids it, who allows no one there who is "clever". The cunning of a witch, of one who has the breed of witchcraft, is to go around throttling cows and eating people. When they go to throttle they go on high, they fly, they go like the wind. If they were on earth they would be killed by "the defenders". It is said that they eat the meat (flesh) of people, truly they eat it. When they go to "eat" a man, they spear him; they take his meat and eat it. A man does not recover when they have taken his meat; he dies. Those whom they have only speared and whose flesh they have not taken, recover. They roast this human meat and then they eat it; in this their cleverness lies. When they go to "eat" a man and have speared him and taken some of his flesh, they do not roast it at his place, they go to their homes, and there they roast it."

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

68. A MYTH OF WITCHCRAFT

Mwaisumo (1934).

"This story is often told us by our mothers: A woman once went to bewitch (*ukupita*) leaving her child in her bed. While she was away the child began to cry. So the father woke up and came to see what the trouble was, and he found the mother was not there. When she appeared again he asked her where she had been and she replied: "I was here. I did not go anywhere." This happened several times. One night the father took the crying child to his own bed and made it sleep, but he himself sat awake watching. Then the woman came in and lit her fire and began to cook the human flesh, and he caught her and asked: "Where have you found this meat?" Then she admitted that she'd been to bewitch people and that that was where she had got her meat from. And he said: "You are a witch. You always leave my child crying to go to bewitch people." So he divorced her and sent her home. But people usually say that when a witch goes to throttle people he leaves his skin. The skin stays in the bed, but doesn't feel anything."

I:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 F317 Ngombe F317
Nyakyusa

11. WITCHCRAFT AND LUST FOR MEAT AND MILK

Mwaisumo (cont).

154
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"Some "defenders" (*abamunga*), when they smell something delicious in the house of a relative or a close friend, say: "The meat (if it's meat) smells nice, give me a little to eat, I am a witch, the pythons will rouse up and carry me off to throttle someone." This can only be said (and it is said quite seriously) in the house of a relative or great friend because in no other house can a man ask for meat. Shame prevents him. People think a man who asks for food is a fool.

"Some people, when they have eaten a little and finished, say: "Give me a little more, if we witches are grudged food the pythons rouse up!" It is said that throttling is in order to eat delicious food (*ukupita ku kulya ifiwafu*). The witches say human flesh is delicious, and the milk of cows is also delicious.

Some people will eat cooked food which has been left over-night; others refuse it, and when asked why, say: "It is forbidden for us witches to eat cooked food which has stood over-night." I have heard this said often. "The defenders" say it spoils their pythons. Chiefs do not eat kept food either; it is said to spoil their *ifiwafu* medicine. People say that it is bad for chiefs or witches or "defenders" to eat left-over food because it has been touched by the encounters at night. This is often said by "defenders" as well as others."

[p. 218]

1:Wilson E.-5(1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngunda F317
Nyakyusa

66. INHERITANCE OF WITCHCRAFT

Bwalile (elderly pagan man).

Question: 'How does a mother give her child witchcraft? How does a father give a child witchcraft?' 354 ● [341

'It starts when a woman is menstruating; then she begins to give a child her cunning (ubugulugulu). It is said that when a woman is menstruating she should avoid certain things (ubwalile), particularly she should not pass behind people. For when a woman is menstruating a child has begun in her belly. People know that a certain woman is cunning when they see that she does not avoid people at certain times. Then they say: "Friends, this woman is spoiling the child. Why does she not observe the avoidances? Look, we have seen that she is fruitful (meaning that she is menstruating)." For it is that dirt which creates witchcraft. When a woman does not avoid, then she gives the child in her belly witchcraft. It is from this that witchcraft really comes. When a woman is not cunning, then she always observes the avoidance taboos; she does not go about anyhow. From of old it has been thought important that a menstruating woman should observe certain avoidances. A woman avoids certain things because she fears to spoil the child in her belly. When a woman does not avoid these things, the dirt, that is to say the menstrual blood, goes to where the child is. That is how she spoils the child. On this account women fear to go about anyhow, to pass behind people; they fear those medicines with which we men smear our bodies, all those for good fortune and others. Especially they fear a fierce medicine, that of fire. For there is a medicine with which some people smear themselves which causes a person to faint if the user strikes him over with the flat of his hand. It is this medicine which spoils the child in the belly of a menstruating woman if she passes behind a man. This is the lineage of witchcraft. It comes especially from this, from that dirty little thing (i.e. woman) who does not observe the avoidance rules. Hence, we say she has given her child witchcraft.

'A father gives his child witchcraft because the man's blood goes into the woman, for a woman is a pocket.' [342]

Nyakongwe confirmed the above statement of the origin of witchcraft, and explained:

'A woman does not menstruate when she is pregnant, but some menstrual blood remains in her, which may "spoil" her. We all think that when a woman is menstruating some of the blood remains in her

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

belly, and it is this which spoils the child when a woman does not avoid certain things. There is no other way in which a woman gives her child witchcraft.'

Musikwale (*clerk*).

Some people have witchcraft implanted in them (*ubugonde*) by their parents. Some children are witches; they are born with it in their stomachs. When a child is small, even a tiny baby, the witches may take it with them to bewitch (*kwanaga*) in order that it also may learn the business of witchcraft. Hence sometimes it is said that a mother, or perhaps a father, shielded himself behind her (his) child, meaning that he fought with other witches and when they were going to spear him he put his child in front of him. When such a child grows up he will be skilled in witchcraft.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FM17 Ngonde FM17
Nyakyusa

13. ACQUIRING WITCHCRAFT FROM FRIENDS

Bwalile (elderly pagan man).

"We have heard it said that sometimes, when a woman plays with a friend's child who is growing up a little, she may give it something in food, or offer it something to taste, which causes the child who has eaten it to become a witch. Hence people say: "A stranger gave him (or her) witchcraft; there is none in our family (*ibikulo*)."

"Some make children climb up the walls or hut pole when they wish to give them witchcraft, hence when a child slides down it is said, "He (or she) is pure; he has no trace of witchcraft in his stomach." If he has any in his stomach, then he clings to the walls or pole, and it is said, "He is giving him mystical power (*amanga*)", meaning the witch is giving him the cunning of witchcraft that he also may be "clever". If there is a girl at home who is cunning, her friends shun her. They admonish her, saying: "Don't do those things. It's forbidden at a husband's place. You will always be driven out." She gives her friends things saying: "You eat that, and you that." And boys do likewise. We knew the custom of old. When boys are out herding cattle one friend tells another to dig up a certain plant, saying it will give him cunning. Hence it is said that a cunning boy wants to make his friends cunning also. When girls are secluded at puberty they always play with younger girls, and if one makes another climb the hut pole or wall the mothers are very angry, saying: "No! That's forbidden. Don't do (bad) things to others. It seems as if you were cunning."'

Commenting on this text, Mwaisumo said: 'The witches learn to enter a house by climbing up the wall, instead of going through the door, so that people don't see them come in. If a child has no witchcraft in its stomach at all, no one can give it witchcraft, but if the blood of the mother is dirty with witchcraft it becomes a witch.'

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167

[p. 221]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

14. CONSCIOUSNESS OF WITCHCRAFT

Mwalembe (*cited*).

● 754 'Witches act consciously. That is to say a person caught for witchcraft is not startled at being a witch. And in their business of going to bewitch (*kumunga*) when they "eat" people, they go willingly; nothing compels them. We hear that sometimes when witches go to "eat" people some of them are satisfied. The milk is plentiful for though some of the witches say: "Let us drink it", others disagree. When they have agreed between themselves they leave a person alone.'

1:William E-5 (1924-1938)1951 F317 Sigonda F317
Nyakyusa

15. THE ASSOCIATIONS OF *UKULOGA* AND *UKUPITA*

[illegible] (clerk).

'*Ulodaga* is like *ukupita* but not the same. It is said that when someone is angry with you and has drunk a medicine to give him power to bewitch (*amake ya lodaga*), he greets you and the word alone has power to bring illness. You will be very ill. 789 754

'It is said that when a woman is pregnant and walks round a person who has many medicines, one of them being a medicine *ulodaga*, she will have a miscarriage. There is no case (against the owner of the medicines). 145

'It is said that when the owner of pythons, or the owner of medicines, passes when food has been spread out to dry, the food will disappear. He bewitches it (*ulodaga*). It is as if he hankered after the food in his heart; it disappears and becomes less. When a python man ("lie of pythons")—they speak much of python men, little of medicine men—passes cattle and hankers after milk, he bewitches the milk (*ulodaga*). It disappears. He does not throttle (*ukupita*) the cattle; no, the milk just disappears.

'It is forbidden to say of a child that it is beautiful. It is all right to a close friend but not among ordinary people. To do so is to bewitch (*ulodaga*) the child. The child will fall ill. It is forbidden to say of a cow that its udder is big. If the owner hears he says: "You are bewitching it" (*ulodaga*), meaning the milk will disappear. Everyone fears to admire children or cows in this way; if such a sign is followed by sickness or failure of milk people swear at the man who has expressed admiration, but do not bring a case.

'The work of pythons is especially to steal away the milk, to throttle (*ukupita*). It is reported that some say: "I am a witch, but I have not got a python. I do not throttle the cows." They might mean they "eat" people but do not steal milk.'

Kalugu (pagan man).

'*Ukupita* is to throttle (with hands round the throat).' 789

In reply to a question as to the further meanings of the word *ukupita*, Kalugu said: "When my relatives are there I say: "Have you *kupita* with my wife?" But when we are alone I say: "Did you sleep with my wife?" or "Did you have intercourse with her (*gwalagwa* 754 196

I:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

789 sugar?" We only liken innocuous and witchcraft; witchcraft is quite
• 759 different. When a woman is an adulteress I say: "You are a witch
196 (*ambuti*); you kill me," but it is just a metaphor (*fye fibwani*). Adultery involves paying for cattle for all of us; it differs from witchcraft. And when I ask a man: "Why, why did you begin with my wife?" that means: "You are like a witch." It is just a metaphor. But (he volunteered), if I catch an adulterer with my wife, even if he has practised coitus interruptus, I am angry and kill him from jealousy, though I do not suffer from diarrhoea."

637 An adulteress is spoken of as an *ambuti* "because she brings illness
753 upon her husband" by her adultery, if coitus is complete, but not, it is thought, if coitus interruptus is practised. The illness commonly thought to be caused by a wife's adultery is diarrhoea.

1:Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

4. THINGS ASSOCIATED WITH WITCHCRAFT

Menimen (ibid).

1. 'Bestiality. This is associated with witchcraft (*ya be ibu*) because, it is said, witches eat the flesh of human beings which an ordinary person does not eat—ordinary people all avoid human flesh. One who has intercourse with an animal, a thing which an ordinary person does not do but avoids, is like one who eats human flesh.' 754 839

2. 'Intercourse with a very young girl. This is associated with witchcraft because no one desires it, only this person' (*i.e.* such a desire is abnormal).

3. 'Intercourse with a very old woman. This is associated with witchcraft because no one desires old women.'

4. 'Intercourse between a grown man and a boy. This is associated with witchcraft because grown men always desire women.' 754 839

In reply to a question: 'No, it never happens that two grown men lie together, but youths do. That is not associated with witchcraft, that is abnormal.'

5. 'If a woman takes something very dirty (such as excrement) and puts it on her husband's bed, or in his food, because she hates him, that is associated with witchcraft because it is very, very dirty. No one (normal) does such a thing.' 754

In reply to a question: 'No, if children play with excrement, that is not associated with witchcraft.'

6. 'In Selya we do not eat the meat of a leopard though in Kukwe country they do. If a Selya man tastes it people say: "How can he eat leopard meat which no one eats? It's like witchcraft." Leopard meat is forbidden because leopards kill and eat people. 754 262

'So with the meat of a dog or rat or monkey. A dog is not eaten because it's our friend—a person—and a monkey is a person.'

[p.225]

1:Wilson E-5(1936-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

19. DREAMS AS EVIDENCE OF WITCHCRAFT

Mwaisumo (cont).

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'Suppose I dream we are fighting, and that you knock me down, or that you come to beat me, then I will say to my friends that you bewitched me last night. Men talk with their friends and tell their dreams. If several people dream like this of one man, they say: "Why should we dream of him? He must be a witch (*uwalwi*)." More than one person must dream of the same man before they will say this. If I dream of you, my friend, like this I will not tell you in the morning that I dreamed so, or else you will say to me: "Why do you accuse me of witchcraft?" and you will take it first to the headman, and then to the chief, and make a case. We Christians do not believe this; we say: "It is just a dream" and we tell it to each other, but the pagans tell it to their friends, and if two or more dream of the same man they say: "He is a witch."

'There are a number of dreams—dreams of fighting, of being chased, being beaten, of the house burning, of one coming to the door and weeping for me as if I were dead—which are signs (*ifwanyulo*) of witchcraft. There are other signs, too. An owl (*ingwile*) may come at night and cry on my roof. I go out and chase it away, watching the direction in which it flies; it flies towards your house. Then the next night it comes to another man's house, and he again goes out and chases it and watches its flight, and again it flies towards your house. Then we shall say that you are a witch. Or if you meet a man in the road and stare at him, and that night he falls sick, he will remember and say: "Why did so and so stare at me like that? He is bewitching me."

'A man may dream of a woman, like this, or a woman of a man—of being beaten, etc., and will say it is witchcraft (*ubulwi*). But if they dream of each other and desire each other that is not witchcraft. (Here he laughed.) They will seek each other out. He will tell her: "I dreamed of you last night", or she, if she has any love for him, will say: "I dreamed of you." Yes, that is an invitation. It is queer but it often happens that a man and a woman will dream of each other on the same night.

'Women dream of each other, of fetching firewood and fighting.'

[p.226]

1:Wilson E-5(1924-1938)1931 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

Ali (a young man, a Christian).

"The pagans say that if I dream of flying that means that the witches came and tried to eat me. If I do not dream at all, but wake up in a sweat, then they say: "They came to bewitch you by night." They say that the sweat is the water with which the witches wash their hands before eating. Again, if I dream that someone comes and holds me down so that I cannot get up, they say: "The witches come to kill you." They say a man is a defender (*gwa mungu*) if he does not merely dream, but sees in his dream who it is that came. So with dreams of fighting, if I recognize that my opponent is so and so, then they say I have mystical power (*uwanga*), not otherwise. We Christians have all these dreams but say they mean nothing and do not fear them."

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

18. GROUNDS OF ACCUSATION OF WITCHCRAFT

An elderly Christian man.

754 626 'The pagans are afraid of what they dream, and secondly, if they have quarrelled with a man and they fall sick they at once think he is throttling them.'

'Without dreams of him?'

'Yes.

'Then again, if a man is given milk by his neighbours and yet goes round in other villages, complaining: "They grudge me milk. I don't drink their milk", and his neighbours hear of it, they say to him: "What do you mean by saying we grudge you milk? Scandal-mongering is bad. Indeed, you are a witch." And then, as soon as the cows fall sick, they point to him: "That is the witch who is throttling the cattle." And they drive him out. Yes, without dreams.

'What our parents used to say to us when discussing these things was this: "Pride! If a man is proud and is not sociable with his neighbours; if he boasts, saying: 'I am someone, and others are not people at all,' then we say he is a witch." And if ever the cows fall sick or go dry, then we point to him as the witch who is throttling them and drive him away. This happens without dreams, too.

'And then again, if one man has quarrelled with another and the other falls sick, they may say the one is a witch and drive him out. Perhaps if he was a man of Mwaipopo he goes to live in Mwangomo's country (that of a neighbouring chief). Then one day a man of Mwaipopo's goes to his new village and talks to the people: "I see that you have received so and so here. We drove him out as a witch. He's a great witch, that man." And so when next the cows fall sick or someone dies, they point to him as a witch and drive him away again. Then he goes right up to Mwangoka's (twenty-five miles away) and again someone from Mwaipopo's or Mwangomo's comes up there and repeats the story. A little later the same thing happens and he is driven out again.'

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

19. THINGS WHICH ARE SAID TO ANGER THE WITCHES AND MAKE THEM THROTTLE US

Mwaisumo (clerk):

'Carrying very heavy loads, frequently. They (the witches) wonder (*ukukiba*) at a person and he (or she) falls ill.' 754

'Hoeing a very large field, surpassing others.' 626

'Being more wealthy, as by earning money on the Lupa, like Bingibamo and Kiputa.' 578

'Boasting at work, saying: "I am the senior" like Ramsay and Isiah at Tukuyu.'

'Eating fine food alone. This may be meat, when you have killed a bull or cow, or beer or gifts of food from in-laws, or any other fine food. Mwambuputa was accused of doing this.'

'People are always afraid to carry very heavy things because they think that others will be angry and wonder at it (*ukukiba*). Their astonishment causes illness. Women especially speak of this a great deal when they are fetching firewood. If they carry a very big load others express wonder saying: "It is God who has given you strength surpassing us all." This astonishment brings on serious illness. People fall ill and some even die. Formerly people feared very much to speak to someone who carried a heavy load, saying: "You carry a very heavy load"; they were likely to be fined if they did, because the person to whom they said it would complain, saying: "He wondered at me. He brings down illness on me; he brings the witches by saying I am a strong fellow."

'It is like this also in hoeing; if a man has hoed much he fears lest they (the witches) will kill him; if people say: "He has surpassed us in strength" and are angry, that is what happens—the man falls ill and may die.

'Surpassing others in possessions is said also to anger other people, witches, who kill their fellow because they think that he has a medicine (*unkota*) which enables him to surpass them in wealth. The medicine for surpassing others is the medicine of good fortune (*unkota gwa lusako*). There was a case like this among the Nyangomo—the case of a young man who died quite recently. His name was Bingibamo, the son of Kiputa. This young man was in employment on the Lupa gold-fields . . . and he sent back money to his father to buy cattle. When he had been working for a certain European for a short time

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754
626
578

only he surpassed the other workers as they searched for gold, and found a very big nugget. He saw it first and picked it up immediately. All the others wished to share it; they all went together to their European (employer) to say that their fellow did not find this nugget alone, but that they had all got it. The employer said: "Yes, of course I shall pay you all for sifting, but he found it. He picked it up. I shall give him something separately." So he gave Bingibamo 100s. and to each of the others he gave 6s. The next morning Bingibamo was ill; the following day he died and they buried him. It is said that his fellows "ate" him, they were angry about the nugget he had got. And those who work there (on the Lupa) regularly say that no one who gets a nugget ever escapes; those who get money always die.

'It is said that one who boasts at work saying that he has surpassed his fellows in wisdom and seniority dies like Ramsay, who was a clerk at Tukuyu, and Isiah Mwagomba. They died. Some say privately that the sin (*inongwa*) which killed them was boasting—they boasted very much to their fellows. Some say that there is one man among them (the clerks at Tukuyu) who always kills his fellows if they seem likely to surpass him in seniority (i.e. importance). A boastful man (*gwakwitufyo*) is always proud (*gwamatingo*), and as for enjoying the company of his fellows he does not keep on good terms with them at all (*atikwangala nabo kanunu*).

'Eating fine food alone is said to kill a man. If you have killed a bull to eat you must give your fellows some, because if you grudge them they will summon the witches to "eat" you. That is to say the people who saw you will tell of it and at night "the defenders" will be angry and summon the witches to "eat" you. Or when your in-laws bring something when they visit you, and you do not call your fellows, but grudge them a share they will "eat" you, as happened in the case of Mwambuputa. It is said that Mwambuputa grudged his fellows certain food, so they were very angry and two of his children died at home. When he found that sickness was spreading at his homestead he fled to the Lake-shore plain (MuNgonde), but there also he found that death pursued him and he returned home again. It is said that sickness pursued him to the plain because he went off without performing the death ritual for the children who died. So when he returned he found two bulls and killed them, saying: "Friends, I have come. I did wrong because I did not perform the ritual for your children with you."'

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

20. THREATS OF WITCHCRAFT

Mwaisumo (clerk).

'It is said that some witches show themselves openly. When he is angry with his fellow a witch may say openly "*Uligwaki*?" (literally: "What are you?") and his fellow takes ill in the evening, sickness falls on him. Or one who makes love to a woman repeatedly and is refused by her, may say: "Woman, what are you? (*uligwaki*?) You are very proud, you fancy yourself, thinking that you are more beautiful than all others. Dance and show off—we shall see in what a pleasant fashion." 754

'It is now forbidden, as it was in the past, to swear at (*ukufinga*) a person without cause, saying: "What are you?" If someone speaks before others, and the person sworn at is quarrelsome, the man who swears is fined. The man sworn at will go to law, saying: "My fellow swears at men; I do not know what I have taken of his, he wants to make me ill by swearing at me." Sometimes, also, if he does not wish to be paid, he calls one before the court, or before neighbours to say: "This fellow of mine has sworn at me, if anything happens it is he who is responsible." Meaning that if he falls ill that evening it is this fellow who has caused the illness. And some, when they have recovered, make a case, saying: "It is this fellow", and bring him before the village headman accusing him. If he is found guilty he will pay perhaps a bull. Such tales are told, especially by our mothers, teaching us in childhood that it is forbidden to threaten a friend with witchcraft (*ukumfinga unnino bulosi*).[1] If you swear at your friend and he falls ill that evening then he will say it was you who swore at him. 754 683

'But there are some who wish to be feared and thought witches who constantly threaten people. Such a man says: "What are you? You *may* sleep or may not (*ulikagone*), I do not know!" but in great secrecy. Or perhaps sometimes he speaks, saying: "You! Leave me!" He knows that those who are there will tell (his enemy)' 754

Andambike (a young Christian man).

'Some boast of witchcraft, they praise themselves on account of knowledge, or food, or their homestead . . . saying that no one else has built so well; others praise themselves on account of their fields, 754 626

[1] *Ukufinga* means to swear to a statement. In this context it is better translated 'to threaten'.

[p. 231]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754
626

and many things of that sort. . . . I once asked an elderly pagan if it were really true that witchcraft existed. The old man replied: "No, it does not exist, and the reason why I say that is this: Once a man hated his fellows and they were angry, and met at his place. (According to the pagan custom when your fellows are angry they gather at your home and they cut leaves; if you do not move you will die, or perhaps something will happen.) When they had met together at his place they said: 'Perhaps you may sleep or may not!' (implying you will not sleep on account of witchcraft.) When they had gone the man threw away all the leaves on which they had been sitting, the leaves which they say bring sickness to a home.[1] He slept, but those who talked about it said: 'He will not escape, for the custom which has been carried out against him is fatal.' He waited and slept again. The next day he was still well. Then I, for my part, understood that witchcraft does not exist, those men boasted, saying: 'Perhaps you may sleep or may not', but nothing happened. They just wished to frighten him. And one day I myself tried to frighten a certain man. His cow had eaten my seed so I went to his house and complained that his cow had got into my food. The next day again the cow ate my seed again. So then I was angry and said to myself, 'I'll frighten this fellow.' When I said: 'Why is your cow in my seed again?' he replied: 'I don't know. Do *I* herd?' So I said: 'My child, perhaps you may sleep or may not when you answer like that!'

"He said: 'Are you a witch then?'

"I said: 'You thought I was just talking. Know that I am talking to you here angry enough to wish to fight with you, so if you are strong in body you will overcome me at night in dreams.' And I went to tell a neighbour that my child perhaps might sleep, or might not, and not to be startled the next day if something happened to that child of mine. That night I blew a calabash trumpet that he should think I was coming and tremble. When he heard it he set off by night, saying:

[1] Mwaisumo commenting on this said: 'When, as boys, we went round in groups eating at one another's homes we were told by our mothers not to cut too many leaves, but just enough for us to use (to sit on). It's forbidden, they said, to strew leaves at a home. It looks as if there were something against the owners of the homestead, you foretell bad fortune, perhaps sickness or death. So, likewise, if I go to visit a sick friend that does not affect his recovery, but if I shed tears because he is sick men say: "It is forbidden (to weep), you foretell misfortune, perhaps he will die (because you weep)." And here (in the case recounted) the the leaves were a sign that this man had a case against him. Others wonder, asking: "What has happened, what has happened?" It is said that when people wonder something will happen on account of their astonishment. If they know that there is a ritual or a funeral all is well, but if nothing is known then questions are asked, something will happen because people wonder, that is people from other villages, not the neighbours of those who have a case against them.'

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'Wives, let us die from our own disease, not this one, pick up the pot and leave it with someone else immediately, we are leaving this home, he is not going to find anyone.' They hid the pot by night, and they moved. A child died after they had arrived at the place to which they moved.

754
626

"So I began to understand that witchcraft does not exist but that we die of fear. See, I am not a witch at all, I just tried to frighten that man, but their fear killed them. As for frightening people with witchcraft, we frighten them that they may respect us, or that we may get what we want to eat, they think that if they grudge us they will be throttled by witches."

'The old man who told me (Andambike) this is still alive, living in the country of Kilwa, MuNgonde, in Korosso's chiefdom.'

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

21. CHILDREN LEARNING OF WITCHCRAFT

Mwaikambo (*clerk*).

754
869

'I learned about witchcraft from the accounts related by the elder boys in our boys' village. There we tell about witchcraft; of how the witches fight with people of another village, of their way of travelling to where they commit witchcraft (*kwa kumanga*), that is flying. We tell how they eat people and that the strength of witchcraft is in pythons. And we speak of some who are dead, who each had a python, or perhaps four, and of village headmen who have protective pythons (*isota sya buketi*). We relate cases which always appear true, and make us afraid.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

they reply: "We are just walking about in our country, to our homes", and the owners of the country do not drive them away; but of a single man they ask: "Why are you walking about here?" and they drive him off.' 789 626

'The breath of men' and witchcraft.
Mwambuputa (Senior village headman).

' "The breath of men' (*embepo sya bandu*) and witchcraft (*ubuloti*) go together. If all the members of a village murmur that a certain man is evil then the words of the innocent (*abelu*) have no weight, no strength at all, but those of the heavy ones (*abasito*) have. It is the heavy ones who carry that breath into his body in dreams, they chastise him, but the innocent just talk and murmur against him, that is all.' 789 754 626

Question: 'Then that breath comes from the pythons inside them?'

Mwambuputa: 'Yes, that is where it comes from, it is one with witchcraft, identical. Sometimes they just chastised him a little, he did not die, but just fell sick; and in such a case there was never any drinking of *umwafi*; if he killed a beast for them they would pray (*ukwiputa*) and pray, they would let out all their anger, saying: "Certainly we were angry, it was us, but now it is all over." Then life came back to him and he recovered. That is the curse (*ikigune*).

'But sometimes they would kill him—and then they had to drink *umwafi* . . . if a man died and they found spear-marks, wounds, in his entrails the chief would get angry and say: "You have killed your fellow, drink the *umwafi*." So then the *umwafi* would convict one of witchcraft and he would be expelled from the country. For we said: "It is forbidden to kill a man." We others were afraid, although we had disliked the victim ourselves, we feared that at some later time the witch would kill us.'

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

24. PROCEDURE IN A WITCHCRAFT CASE (TRADITIONAL)

Mwakionde (*doctor, brother of a chief*).

'The custom was that if a man was accused of witchcraft he always went to the chief and said: "They have accused me of witchcraft. Please give me witnesses." The chief would send off the man with his accuser and with witnesses to the doctor. If the accuser was proved wrong he had to pay four or five cows, or if he had no cows, a girl, and then after she had borne a child the accused would come to pay cows and be a relative in the end. 754 627

'If the ordeal (*umwafi*) convicted both, neither vomiting, the chief would be angry and say: "You are both witches." Then each would pay four cows to the chief who would kill two from each of the four for his men to eat, and both men would move from the country. If both vomited the chief would say: "You are fools; be friendly," and the village headmen would say: "Yes, but the accuser must pay cows to the accused for accusing him."

'Men never went to drink the ordeal without first going to the chief.

'Sometimes the one convicted as a witch was speared and all his cows taken by the chief—none went to the accuser. If the accuser was caught and the accused vomited, four cows went to the accused, and the others to the chief because the accuser was himself a witch. Some who were great witches died of the ordeal.' [683]

Mwaisumo (*clerk*).

'There was a nasty little chap (*kaliko akandu kamo*[1]) who came from the hills to live at Bijilila, and who built next door to father. This chap was very poor; mother and the other villagers always gave him food. I remember the chap very well—he was very dirty in his person.

'Well, once there was complaint (*ukwijaja*) because the milk supply in the village was small. So this chap fortified himself within and said: "Do not go on complaining, sons of Kihabia, I have seen the witch who is throttling the cows. It is Kimpunga! Catch her, and let her drink *umwafi*." Mother was astounded at being taken; she was dumbfounded at being "caught" for witchcraft, for in her lineage no one had ever been caught. So then she also said: "Indeed, my husbands,

[1] Mwaisumo speaks of him as a thing rather than a person.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754
627

take me to the ordeal, and let me drink (*umwafi*)." Mwankaje, my older brother next to me in age, went to drink the *umwafi*. He vomited immediately after he had drunk it. So that nasty little chap, Mwasulama, was defeated. He escaped paying a fine for he was so poor—they beat him a little with sticks. Had he been rich he would have paid mother a cow, for it was customary for one who had been accused of witchcraft but had vomited the *umwafi* to claim compensation for slander in court, and to be paid a cow.

'Long ago when I was a child, when the AbaMpulo were young men, the homestead they built was very rich. Ngemela and Mwasalutaba, and Mwakinene, and Kyula, and Swita, and all the others built there. Swita was a witchfinder. He had power (*amanga*) to catch witches when they throttled the cows. He always went out to the pasture when he knew that there were people who wished to throttle the cows. On one occasion the cows in the village did not give milk. Everyone was called together to complain (*ukwijaja*), and Swita (Mwaitulo), the man who caught the throttlers of cows, was among them. When they were speaking he, Swita, fortified himself with medicines within and said: "Why are you complaining all of you? I, I have seen him who throttles the cows. Let us all come together again here to-morrow, and no one must stay behind." So they all met together there. . . . Formerly it was the custom to call out names. They met together and one man who shouted the names stood a little distance off and the witchfinder who responded stood a little distance off, separately. The first man shouted the names and the witchfinder responded, saying: "Yes!" All the names were called out, but when they came to the name of Mwasalutaba the witchfinder was silent; the name was repeated and he was still silent; the third time the whole company groaned together. Mwasalutaba then said: "Friends, I am astonished, I am not a witch, I do not throttle the cows, so I ask for the ordeal." So the witchfinder said: "Yes indeed, drink *umwafi*, and if it does not convict you then I will pay a cow." So they went with him and told everything to a certain doctor who had built in the country of Mwambebule, in the hills. When they got to the doctor's Mwasalutaba drank the *umwafi*. They addressed it, saying: "We think that our fellow throttles cows, but if we are wrong tell us, you medicine." While they were yet speaking the sun went down, so they said: "The *umwafi* has caught our fellow." They returned home, and they drove him away. His cattle escaped capture though it was the custom when someone was convicted of witchcraft for the chief to take his cattle, and if he chose, to kill for those of that village who were innocent to eat meat. But Mwasalutaba escaped—they only drove him out, for the village was not really his own village,

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754
627

he came from another side. And he has never moved back to the village, nor has he ever been accused again of witchcraft.

'Swita really knows how to catch those who throttle cows for witchcraft. Here is another tale about it: One of the fellows of the AbaMpulo had begotten a child, and the child died. When they had done the autopsy "the owner of the child" said: "They (the witches) have eaten him", and he prepared to move. Then Swita began to speak in secret saying that the so and so's had killed the child. And they of whom he spoke did not come to persuade their fellow, who was preparing to move, to remain. When the chief heard that a man was preparing to move, and his fellows the so and so's did not come to persuade him to stay he called together the whole village, and was very angry with them. When he found that they all agreed he went to Ngemela (the village headman?) and said: "I think that it is they of whom Swita spoke who have killed the child, their cattle will be taken." Ngemela objected very much to taking their cattle, and the chief went to Ngemela's junior saying the same thing, that it was they (of whom Swita spoke) who had killed the child and he, the chief, would take their cattle. But Ngemela's junior also objected and reported to his senior Ngemela, who agreed that he did not wish to take anyone's cattle. The chief agreed, saying: "All right, I shall not take their cattle." But they, in their foolishness, when they heard that the chief had said that it was they who had killed the child of their fellow, and that he would take their cattle, themselves started the matter saying: "We want the ordeal." Their request was agreed to; they were given *umwafi* to drink, and addressed. But they were killing themselves. When they drank the *umwafi* convicted them; they did not vomit. When this happened and chief said: "See! It is as I thought, it is indeed they who killed the child." And he took their cattle and killed some, and people ate the meat. One cow which he took on account of this case is still there, I know it myself, we call it "Lyakakata". Formerly when people were convicted of witchcraft their goods were taken, or they were driven from the village. This tale was told me by a man belonging to the country in which it happened.'

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

25. THE ORDEAL (*UMWAFI*)

Mwaisumo (*clerk*).

627
754
695

'I was once given *umwafi*. It was long ago but I remember it very well. It was at the funeral of my mother's younger brother my *umwipwa unnandi*; he died suddenly, and when he was dead some people of the family said that the disease was from my father's side (i.e. from my father's younger brother, *tata unnandi*, my own father was dead at this time); and others said, no, it was from the side of the deceased's new wife—this was his third wife, recently married—he had run away with her from her husband. Those concerned were the deceased's sisters (and their husbands), brothers, wives, and fellow villagers. They said: "Let us drink *umwafi*." So they took two children, I and another, a girl—she was a daughter of the dead man and represented his own house; if she did not vomit then the disease came from within the house (i.e. from one of the wives); I, in the same way, represented my father's house.

'The doctor took some banana leaves and prepared medicine, putting some into each leaf; after a little while they called us and told us to stand apart, a bit away from the house. First the doctor gave the *umwafi* to the girl from her leaf, and then to me from mine. The leaves are kept separate and there are several for each person. All the family drew closer and sat around us. The doctor addressed each of us in turn. I do not remember the words exactly, but it was something like this: "If it was you that has brought sickness, let us see. We are sure it was you that brought the disease." Then we both vomited, she a little before me. If one does not vomit it may be very serious; the poison stays in you and you may die. Then they said: "Well, we do not know where the disease came from." Then they gave us water to wash in and some meat to eat—food is specially put aside for those that drink *umwafi*. This was the end.

'Afterwards it was said that it was the man who was the woman's first husband who had poisoned my mother's brother. We were being tested for sorcery, not witchcraft, as the autopsy had shown that it was a case of sorcery. Having heard this, we did not spread the news; we kept quiet, waited, and watched. And then after a week the dead man's son, my cousin (*untani*), was dead; and that woman ran away. She was frightened. Then we knew it was her former husband who had killed both by sorcery.[1] The family sought the doctor to get

[1] In another text (quoted on p. 256) Mwaisumo explained that the injured husband had used 'the horn', i.e. vengeance magic. Being of the family which suffered Mwaisumo calls it 'sorcery'.

[p. 244]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the medicine for the prevention of the disease, and then it was finished. The wife was taken back by the first husband, so the disease could not kill us any more.

'When she went back to him he could not come to us again. (True, he had no reason to do so.) Nothing happened to him. It is not our custom to accuse such people to the chief; we do not exactly know if it is the man, and still we have taken his wife. We were all concerned in this because of my mother. It happened four years before my brother died; there were four years between my uncle's death and his. I was in Tukuyu during the influenza after the war—in 1918—and then I went to Selya the next year, 1919, and my uncle died.

'The procedure is similar in an accusation of witchcraft.'

Mwaikambo (clerk).

'*Umwafi* is always used when someone denies practising witchcraft or theft, or denies that he is a liar. When they[1] have "caught" their fellow in the village and say that it is he who is throttling their cows so that they do not get milk, and the accused man denies it, then they take him to drink *umwafi*. When they have come to the doctor's place they tell him their tale. Two men support the accused and two the accuser. They do not eat when they are going to drink *umwafi*. The doctor first says to the accused: "If you are really guilty of throttling the cows, don't trouble the *umwafi*, but confess." And he replies: "Had I been seen as a witch I would not have come here." And both his supporters say: "Our friend is falsely accused; he has never practised witchcraft."

'The doctor questions the accuser in the same way, saying: "Did you really see your fellow as a witch?" and he and his supporters reply that they saw him.

'So then the doctor gives them *umwafi* to drink. He sprinkles a little powder in tepid water; or sometimes (so they say) he sprinkles the *umwafi* on two freshly cut stumps of banana stem, one representing one side, and one the other. Then the stump in which the "new growth" (? sap: *ulufyogo*) first appears is the one that has "vomited". The "growth" appears the same day that they cut it. The doctor addresses the *umwafi* (*ikupangililaga*) and the others present assist, the supporters of each man addressing him. Then one vomits and those on his side trill, but he who has not vomited is very sad. Then they go home and he who has vomited pays the doctor.

'There is very little drinking of *umwafi* nowadays, but much divination (*ubulagusi*).

[1] i.e. 'the defenders'. Mwaikambo explained, 'A witchcraft accusation always begins with "the defenders" seeing the witches in dreams.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 627 695 'There are some in our country who were caught for witchcraft, for "eating" people and throttling cows. The name of one of them was Sumali, but now he is dead; another is Mwaimama. They denied the accusation very strongly; they were brought before the chief (my father) for their case to be judged, and when he had given judgement they said they wished to go to *umwafi*. So they went to the *umwafi*, and when they had drunk it Sumali vomited and Mwaimama was conquered. Nothing happened to him—he was not driven out, they just told him to stop doing such things—but continually, even now, he is accused of witchcraft whenever anything happens. He's not gone to *umwafi* again.

'This happened before I went to school, when I was still herding cows, about 1925 or 1926. I did not see the trial (before the chief) with my own eyes, but I was there when the *umwafi* was administered.

'On another occasion a woman was "caught" for witchcraft when her child died. When they do an autopsy they sometimes find wounds [763] on the right side or on the left. The right side is the side of the man, the left that of the woman. This time they found them on the side of the woman. The woman (i.e. the mother) denied that it was she who had "eaten" the child so they went to *umwafi* and the woman was "conquered" (i.e. proved to be lying). It was not she, in her own person, but a member of her lineage who had "eaten" the child. After the *umwafi* had "spoken" they went to a diviner to discover exactly who the individual was.

'I heard about this from others, but Mwasintobile, the father of the child who died, is a man of our country—I know him.'

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

763 jumba coming close and looking, too. 'Come, Mwaijumba, look, so that another time you will know.' He did not give direct instruction—he was far too much worked up—but he insisted on the other coming to see what was being done and discussed.

At several points the doctor was clearly under the stress of emotion and reluctant to do more than was absolutely necessary—she had to be urged on by Mwantembe. 'Now,' Mwantembe said, 'let us dissect, mother! Let us look well. Let us dissect! Do you say it's a person? No, it's just a log, a piece of firewood!' And several times these words were used by Mwantembe and others to urge her on. 'Do you say it's a person? It's just a log!'

The doctor then pulled out all the contents of the stomach so that Mwantembe and the women could see up into the chest—there was nothing unusual there on either side; then we looked downwards into the loins and found something unusual—a round growth full of blood. I asked if it was a foetus but was told: 'No, it is not; we don't know what it is. We don't ordinarily find that. It is something evil (*lindo*, literally "rubbish"). We are afraid.' The growth was taken out, and also the upper intestine, for there was said to be something unusual about that too, and the liver and something else (*akanongo*). These, I think, are always removed. We were not told of anything unusual about them. The doctor herself made few or no suggestions—it was Mwantembe who did that—she just did the operation silently.

The stench was foul—several of the women put stoppers of banana leaf into both nostrils. Half-way through the woman at the head of the corpse got up, looking overwrought, and went away to a distance. The others said: 'It's all right, it's not a person, just a log' (i.e. there is no need for her to stay). At length the doctor pushed the rest of the organs back into the stomach and tied up the body with a cloth—another was tied over it to make all secure.

754 The discussion (which had been going on spasmodically all the
763 time) broke out in a flood. People nodded to each other and said: 'Sorcery (*ubutege*)! Look! Look! Sorcery indeed!' The young man, Mwaijumba, told us: 'I dreamed of a medicine. When they were at the funeral [the dead woman had been taken ill while at a funeral at her classificatory father's homestead], before she fell ill, I dreamed in my sleep, I saw someone giving a child a banana, but I caught hold of the banana (all in my sleep). I broke it open and I found a powder there in the banana. So then I sent a message to her (the next day when I was awake), saying: "Come home. You have mourned sufficiently." And that very day I fell ill myself.' He told this with great excitement. Mwantembe also was obviously moved and said several times during the autopsy: 'I'm afraid. I'm afraid.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Then Kakuju, the village headman, and Kissogata (an old man, a village headman of the previous generation) came to see the results of the autopsy—the things extracted. The doctor had made a small incision in the thing chiefly suspected—the round growth full of blood and measuring five or six inches in diameter. Kakuju got very excited and insisted on her making a bigger incision to see what was inside. 'Look well!' he shouted, 'You are our ordeal (*umwafi*). We know this illness which is killing people in the country. We know it. We know it (passionately). It's sorcery (*ubutege*), is it not?' Mwantembe then said: 'See, it is sorcery, see!' showing him all that had been extracted. Both Kakuju and Kissogota agreed and then Kissogota said: '*Igobe!*' At this word the tension seemed to relax. Kakuju jumped at it. 'Yes, yes (eagerly) *igobe*. Is it not *igobe*, Mwaipaja?' (passionately to me) '*Igobe*,' Mwantembe repeated. '*Igobe*', shouted the women. Kakuju and Kissogota walked away talking. Then all the remains (i.e. the growth, etc.) and the bamboo knives were buried apart in the waste land, and the body was buried in the usual way. 754 763

Angombwike later explained that *igobe* was an old word for *ubutege* (sorcery).

Autopsy (ukupandula), *witnessed by G. W.*, 23/3/37.

Funeral of little granddaughter of Mwaihojo (a chief)—daughter of Mwaihojo's son Mwakisisile—aged one year. Child died last night. Funeral at Mwaihojo's homestead. 763

The doctor, a woman, cut the stomach open crosswise and pulled out the contents of the stomach. 'See that little black thing, branching!' They looked all over thoroughly, up and down. 'Look carefully, people of Selya!' said the doctor. 'You tell lies! You will go and tell lies! Look carefully! See, there is no *ikitasya* (a disease).' All agreed that there was no sign of *ikitasya*, but no positive opinion was expressed till two men had been fetched to look. They came and said: 'Why do you deny it? Why do you not know the disease from ropes (*engoje*)?' 'Yes,' replied the women, 'but we said we should let the men look first.' Before the men came and gave utterance to the word *engoje*, the women had, I think, come to the same conclusion; it was clear from the way the doctor pointed out 'the little black thing, branching' that she was certain what it meant, and they nodded in an understanding way. Only when she asked them: 'Look, what is it?' they would not answer, saying: 'We don't know, you are a doctor who understands these things.' Then, instead of saying what she thought, she asked: 'Aren't the men coming to look?'

The men came back to Mwaihojo and repeated: 'It is the disease

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

27. WIVES DRIVEN AWAY FOR WITCHCRAFT

Makwelebeja (elderly commoner).

'Many wives are driven away for witchcraft. They are driven away by their husbands. If a man has several wives one may be bad and throttle her husband's cattle, or throttle her husband himself. Then the man goes and complains (*ukwijaja*), saying: "They have destroyed my cattle", or perhaps, "My neighbours have 'eaten' me", whichever it is. When his fellows hear his complaints they say: "Do not accuse outsiders. See! It's your wife." Some women are bad and the husband does not sleep when he is with his other wives; only when he is with her (the witch) does he have a good sleep. She spoils the fertility of her co-wives. Or sometimes all the wives are friendly and agree to spoil the cattle of their husband. 754 627

'There is a woman named Kajonga whose husband drove her away for witchcraft because she bewitched the fertility of her co-wives. A long time after her divorce she was married to another man, Mwitoba by name. From that man also she was driven away for witchcraft, but what wrong she had done was not much known. Some time later she died. 754 627 587

'Women who are driven away for witchcraft always remarry; they do not run off with men.'

Njobakosa.

'When a wife was accused she drank *umtoafi*. If she was "caught" by the ordeal sometimes her husband drove her away, sometimes he did not. Usually he did not.'

Nsusa.

'Formerly wives were frequently driven away for witchcraft. Such a wife remarried quickly.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

28. FEAR OF HEREDITARY WITCHCRAFT

Mwaisumo (*clerk*).

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'There are some people who, though they wish to marry a certain woman, fear to do so because the mother or father of the girl is a witch. They are afraid to marry because she is the child of a witch. And sometimes a girl loves a particular young man very much, but if his father is repeatedly accused of witchcraft her parents refuse to allow the marriage, because the young man's father is a witch. Such was the case of a certain young man, in the country of Mwaijande, who loved a particular girl very much. Her father was said to be a witch (*undosi*) a maker of wild animals;[1] he was said especially to make leopards. The parents of the young man objected very much to his marrying this girl whose father was a witch, the mother of the young man objected even more than her husband, saying: "No! She is a witch; witches always go in the lineage (*ikikolo*), and she will also be a witch when she grows up and comes to the house" (i.e. her husband's house). The father of the young man and the father of the girl were next-door neighbours, their homesteads adjoined. The matter was only spoken of in whispers, but I heard about it because the brother-in-law of the young man (the husband of his full sister) was my friend, and he told me about it.

'And again, a certain man who was always said to be a witch made love to a woman who was a widow, the husband who had married her having died. They agreed together that they should marry. When the parents of the woman heard they objected very much, saying: "That man is a witch." The women was not yet old—she was quite young. Her husband had died but there was no one to inherit her. So then she refused the man (who had made love to her) saying: "I do not love you." Her parents argued against the marriage, saying: "We do not like it" and they persuaded her to leave the man, saying: "You know yourself that when he beats you you will think, 'I am married to a witch'." For she was grown up and her parents could not compel her if she loved him, though if she had been a child they would have been able to object and compel her to do what they wished. But she (though she was grown up) followed the advice of her parents and left him and refused to marry him.

[1] There was some doubt whether this man should be classed as a witch or a sorcerer. In this text Mwaisumo refers to him as *undosi*, but elsewhere he was spoken of as a sorcerer (*vide supra*, pp. 124, 252).

[p. 252]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'And again, a long time ago, my brother Mwamoto went to betroth a girl at the place of that man who was a witch. Mwanama objected very much to his younger brother's action, saying: "You should not marry at that man's place, everyone says he is a witch." But Mwamoto paid no attention to any of them—others also tried to persuade him not to marry the child of a witch. He married her and she is with him now, as his wife. 754 582

'People fear witchcraft in a husband or wife lest he or she bring witchcraft into the house, and they have children who become witches when they grow up. As I explained witchcraft runs in a lineage (*ikiholo*). It is especially women who object to their children marrying or being married by a witch, it is they (the women) who forbid the children, and their husbands also object. I remember once that a certain man came to make love to my sister. The mother of this man was spoken of as a witch, and my mother objected very much, saying: "Do not desire this young man's cattle, I do not like him even though you do. His mother's witchcraft is much spoken about." He had come to betroth the girl when she was still very young. The others agreed to what my mother said and refused the young man, saying: "We have not got a child yet (ready for marriage), she of whom you speak must first grow up."'

In reply to questions Mwaisumo explained that people fear to marry witches lest their children be witches and be driven from country to country. 'We say it is bad to be driven out. A man is never driven out because of the witchcraft of his wife—he used to divorce her if it were proved—but a girl's parents will refuse to give their daughter in marriage to a young man from a family of witches because if he is convicted of witchcraft she will be driven out with him.' [586]

We were also told of a young Christian who had been refused by a number of women. It was whispered that this was because his father was a sorcerer. Later on, however, he married and the talk died down.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

29. CHRISTIAN SCEPTICISM OF WITCHCRAFT

Nsangalufu (Christian Elder, an early convert).

754 797 763 'At first when we repented, the missionaries asked us whether we believed in witchcraft, and we said: "Yes, there is witchcraft", and we told them about it and the wounds found in the bellies of people who have been killed by witchcraft. So the missionaries said to us: "When there is a death tell us, and we shall go and look." I was taken once by Klaus (a missionary) to a death. I was afraid to go near the corpse—everyone was afraid—but the missionary stood over the grave and looked at the corpse and even put his hand inside (the stomach). The person was said to have died of *igobe* (a kind of sorcery), but Klaus said he had died of a disease of the chest. He told people to come and look. Mwaipopo (the chief) was there but he refused to come and look; they all refused. After some time I came and Klaus showed me. In this way we have been and examined corpses, and we have never seen the wounds of witchcraft. . . . Klaus used to go round to funerals, examining corpses. . . . Ndabele here has seen a corpse which the pagans said had a python. Last week Ndabele went to a funeral near Itete and the pagans said there was a python inside; the woman (who had died) had been a witch. He said: "Let's see the python, let's see it", but no one could show it to him.'

[p. 254]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

30. SORCERY

Mwakionde (doctor, brother of a chief).

'When they open a dead person and find the intestines red, black and white in different parts, they say the death is due to sorcery (*ubutege*). They go to the doctor and get medicine for the relatives. 754 763

'Sorcery comes very quickly, especially when they have done an autopsy. Then the one who takes the body in her arms, and the one who buries after the operation, die very quickly. If the body has been opened the disease spreads very quickly. In one case thirty people died, mostly relatives. In another case, a wife, a girl child, a mother, a father's sister, and a son-in-law (husband of the girl child) all died. The wife died one day, next day the girl child and her mother, then the father's sister, then the husband of the girl. Autopsies were performed on the first three.'

[p. 255]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

31. DEATHS ATTRIBUTED TO 'THE HORN'

Mwaisumo (clerk).

754 683 'My mother's brother died from the sorcery (*ubutege*) of Mwakaliku the younger. His death came about in this way: He had run off with a woman whose name I have forgotten now, and the "owner" of the woman continually stirred "the horn" that all those concerned should die, if they did not return his wife. Almost immediately my uncle fell ill and died; shortly afterwards the child of his elder brother, Mwakyando, fell ill and died three days later. Then we understood that it was this woman who brought the illness, for her husband boasted to people that it was he who had killed members of our family. We drove away the woman in order to end the sickness among us. Perhaps if we had not sent her away the illness would have spread and killed many of us and our wives also.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

32. PROCEDURE IN WITCHCRAFT CASES (MODERN)

Nsusa (*village headman*).

Question: 'How do you manage about witchcraft cases nowadays?' 754

'We judge them openly but we do not have them written in the court book. When "a defender" has seen his fellow throttle someone, he tells us, and we judge that witch. It is "the defenders" (*abamanga*) who see the witches. Perhaps "the defender" comes out of his house by night and calls out: "I see so and so throttling so and so! Listen to-morrow." 627

'Yes, that happens nowadays.

'When someone tells us in this way we agree; the witch is driven out. Yes, even though he denies it, we say: "You are a witch. You are a thief. Even though you do not admit it, get out of the country." But formerly they went to the ordeal.'

Question: 'Now you just accept the word of the defender?'

'Yes, formerly if a man denied guilt when he was accused he went to the ordeal, and the *umwafi* "caught" the witch. Now since the Europeans have forbidden the use of *umwafi* we accept the word of "the defenders". Look, they (the defenders) *see* witches. Yes, in dreams.' [695]

Question: 'What about the man who accused the wife of Mwakobela?'

'He denied it. He said: "I did not see her", so on that account we said: "Since you have slandered her you must pay thirty shillings." But had he really seen her and told us properly we would have overcome the woman in argument and divorced her from her husband, but he denied it, saying: "I did not see her", and we all said: "The woman is not a witch; who has seen her?"

'If a woman is divorced for witchcraft there is no fine, the husband gets back his cows, that is all.'

Question: 'And the friend of Mwambuputa?'

'He was really a witch. They said: "You, Mwambuputa, we will convict you of witchcraft yourself if you are friendly with him."

'And if a man is fined because he has accused his fellow of witchcraft without seeing him, really, we do not write that in the book either.

'No, *umwafi* is not used; the Europeans and the chiefs and the village headmen have strictly forbidden it.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 From the Records of the First Class Subordinate Court of Rungwe

691 *Criminal case*, 11/1935. *Heard* 5/3/35 *before P. M. Huggins.*
L. Rouquette, prosecuting.
Rex v. *Musa, son of Hassani.*

Charge: 'By actions and statement representing himself to have power of witchcraft and supplying instruments of witchcraft (green leaves) to one Mwakalobo, son of Mwakalobo.'

Charge read and explained.

Accused pleaded not guilty.

Mwakalobo, headman[1] *of Kapya, a pagan* (*complainant*).

754 695 'About two months ago a man called Bakowike came to me at Ikapu, stating that he had been sent by the accused to warn me that there was a conspiracy to bewitch me, on the part of one Mwakagiri and Mwakatumbula, because I was supposed to have taken some of the former's country. I told Bakowike to tell the accused to come and tell his own tale. The accused came that same day at about sundown. We entered the house and then he called me outside to talk to me. Prior to doing this he told me that Mwakagiri had given him four cows to arrange my death as the former stated that I was in possession of his land. He said that if I gave him a cow he would take no action. I did so. He also gave me some ground-up green leaves which he instructed me to mix with water and drink. He alleged that this potion would render me immune from witchcraft.

'The accused went off with the cow. Kikomile (X), Kyongalala (Y), and Mahandi (Z) and three of my wives were present during the above conversation.

'About a week later Mwakagiri came to visit me—I had sent for him. I did not welcome him—I told him I had heard that he was after my life. He asked me who had said this and I indicated the accused. He then told me that the accused had made the same statements about me to him. I then came and reported to the D.O. I threw away the medicine that the accused had given me. Relations have recently been strained between Mwakagiri and myself.'

In reply to question by accused: 'Yes, I sent for you but only because you sent Bakowike to me first to warn me.'

First witness, a brother of the complainant, confirmed his story, having been present when both Bakowike and the accused came to the complainant. He added these points:

[1] Probably a minor chief (*umalafyale*), not a village headman (*ulifsimu*). The report of the case was in English.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'Mwakagiri wished to kill Mwakalobo over a land dispute and sub-chief Mwakatumbula also desired to do so, as he did not obey orders. Mwakalobo said he would not drink the powder (given by the accused) except in the presence of all his sons. . . . Bakowike was known to me, he lives at Isagula in Mwakatumbula's country, and Mwakalobo is married to two of his sisters.' 754 695

Second witness, Mwangambo, a classificatory brother of Mwakalobo, entirely confirmed Mwakalobo and the first witness. He also was present when both Bakowike and the accused came. Also, he said:

'I was present subsequently when Mwakalobo sent for Mwakagiri. Both of them stated in conversation that the accused had informed them that each had designs on the life of the other.'

In reply to a question by the accused: 'You did not spend the night with us, nor did you drink beer; there was none. We didn't drink the medicines.'

In reply to a question by the court: 'Yes, Bakowike came back again with the accused.'

A henchman ('*capitao*') of Mwakalobo confirmed the above stories.

Bakowike confirmed the other stories. He said: 'The accused and Mwakyangile with whom the accused lived (Mwakyangile is also a doctor) came and told me that Mwakagiri had come and informed the accused that he wanted to kill Mwakalobo, and had given him four cows for the purpose. He asked me if I was a relative of Mwakalobo's. I told him that I was; then he advised me to go and warn him, which I did that day. Mwakalobo then told me to fetch Musa (the accused). I called him and Mwakyangile the same evening.'

In reply to a question by the accused: 'I did not come to your house. I did not give you a goat in exchange for medicine for my wife.'

In reply to a question by the court: 'I had never heard of Musa before. He lives across a stream about one and a quarter miles away.'

In reply to a question by the accused: 'We did not sleep at Mwakalobo's.'

Note by the court: Impression that this witness had previously met the accused, probably buying medicine from him as stated by the accused, but is afraid of acknowledging the association.

Mwakagiri: 'It is true that Mwakalobo and I have had a dispute about land. I have never met Mwakalobo on any occasion on which we have accused each other of invoking witchcraft against each other, but on various occasions Mwangambo (the second witness) was sent by Mwakalobo to inquire why I was bewitching him. I told Mwangamo I was doing nothing of the sort. This was about a month ago. No one else was present. I did not learn how Mwakalobo came to suspect me.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 695 I have often met the accused; he came and took a wife from my country. The accused is a doctor. I do not know why Mwakalobo should say that I met him. It is a lie.'

Mwakalobo was called. He said: 'Mwangambo (the second witness) is a nephew of Mwakagiri. I sent him to call Mwakagiri. He came back the same day with Mwakagiri and Nyomilela.'

Mwangambo when recalled confirmed this, adding: 'I live under Mwakalobo.'

Nyomilela: 'I know of no meeting of Mwakalobo and Mwakagiri. They were disputing over land. I heard from Mwakagiri that his nephew Mwangambo had told him that Mwakalobo accused him of exercising witchcraft against him. I am no relative of either party. I never went with Mwakagiri to meet Mwakalobo.'

Note of the court: I am of the impression that Mwakagiri and Nyomilela are hiding something. Their evidence is not given in a straightforward manner.

Accused (Musa): 'I have never received four cows from Mwakagiri. True, I went to Mwakalobo's house. He called me to prescribe for his impotency. He paid me with a cow. I was surprised at this as it is not customary to receive payment till a cure is effected.'

In reply to a question by the court: 'No one approached me with a view to exercising malignant witchcraft. I do not know why I should have been dragged into this. Perhaps Mwakalobo heard I had gone to Mwakagiri's country. I only went there to see my father-in-law. I gave Mwakalobo medicine to cure his impotency. I warned him that it would be no use for his trouble, but he insisted on having it. Yes, he even insisted on giving me the cow as a pledge of friendship. I did not know why he was so positive and wanted to be friendly with me. This is the first gift of that nature that I have received. I have been three months in Isangulu. I am on my way to my home at Mwaya. I stopped at Isangula because I was suffering from a boil. All my relatives live in Sangu country.'

In reply to a question by the prosecution: 'I was myself surprised that as a resident of three months' standing I should have been suspected by Mwakalobo of witchcraft.'

In reply to a question by the court: 'Mwakyangile was present with me at Mwakalobo's. I went to call him.'

Note by the court: There is no question that this evidence is given glibly, and carries no conviction. The demeanour of the accused is that of a man seeking for a way out of a trying situation.

Mwakyangile told a different story from Musa. 'Mwakalobo wanted treatment for his children, who were suffering from *ikitasya* (a disease). He wanted nothing for himself.'

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

In reply to a question of the court: 'He did not complain of impotence.' 754

In reply to a question by the accused: 'We did not discuss bewitching anybody.' 695

Order

'There is in my opinion no doubt that the accused is guilty of practising witchcraft for reward, and is causing fear and annoyance. Section 5 of the Witchcraft Ordinance virtually prohibits any effective and rapid steps being taken to combat witchcraft. Section 5 (i) necessitates the delay of trial by High Court, and the offence disclosed is not covered by it, whereas Section 5 (2) necessitates obtaining from His Excellency the Governor both sanction to prosecute and confirmation of any sentence imposed. Under the circumstances, and in view of the delay that has already taken place, permission is granted by the police to withdraw their request for sanction to prosecute under Section J (2).

'By virtue of the powers conferred on me by Section 8 cap. 21, Musa, son of Hassani, is ordered to reside at Mwaya and to report once a month at the District Office, pending such decision as the Provincial Commissioner shall make, following a request that he should exercise the powers conferred on him by Section 8 (3) to order Musa, son of Hassani, to reside in his own domicile, Usangu.'

The Provincial Commissioner agreed to the request and Musa is now in Sangu country. 696

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 684 "You're making love to my wife", and the man who made the accusation was from the family of the chief. On account of this, they said: "The chief is driving us out. Let us move." All three moved because of this case and are building here. Of the three friends who were supposed to be seducing the minor chief's wife, one had been found at night-time in the suspected woman's hut, and had been fined 12s. for "making love to the woman" though they had not been found together.'

Record of G. W., 20/4/35 (*from various informants*).

754 683 166 'The chief Mwaipopo was sick, and living "in the forest", i.e in a recently settled and cultivated area at a distance from the main population of his chiefdom. Nsusa, one of the headmen of his classificatory son and heir Mwankuga (cf. p. 183) went to see him. On his return Nsusa said to Mwankuga: "Mwaipopo told me that you, Mwankuga, were poisoning him. Mwkanyamale (a doctor) says that your doctors are in the hills, you went to fetch them there." Then Mwankuga went to his father Mwaipopo and asked him: "Is it true that you are accusing me of working sorcery against you? Do you say so yourself?"

'Mwaipopo said: "Who told you of this Mwankuga?"

'Mwankuga: "Nsusa told me."

'Mwaipopo: "It was Nsusa who told me that you were working sorcery against me! Go and ask him about it, and have it out with him."

'So Mwankuga took the case to Mwakisisya (another chief) for arbitration.

'Mwakisisya said: "Nsusa is in the wrong and must pay a cow to his chief Mwankuga."

Nsusa refused.

'So Mwakisysya said: "All right, we shall go to those who know about the case", and he came with all his men to Mwenanganga, Mwaipopo's senior village headman (i.e. the representative of Mwansambe, *vide* p. 181). There a witness gave evidence, saying: "I was with Mwankuga when Nsusa told him that Mwaipopo accused him of sorcery." Nsusa denied it.

'Mwakisisya said: "I, Mwakisisya, I have finished, Nsusa must pay a cow."

'Nsusa still refused.

'Mwankuga: "Your honour the judge, and others. I have cows, I shall not ask for his cow, but let him leave my country and build elsewhere."

'Nsusa replied that he was hoeing near Mwaipopo in the forest, and

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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sleeping there, and he refused to move. Then Nsusa wrote a letter (he begged a sheet of paper from the clerk of the court and got a Christian, Mbokigwe, to write for him) and sent it to Tukuyu (i.e. to the District Officer.) All the village headmen were very angry.

'Then one of Nsusa's cows fell into a crater-lake and was drowned. An autopsy was done and "wounds" were found in the animal's stomach. It was said that it had been killed by witchcraft. Nsusa moved to Mbambo, because, he said, "They are killing my cows". Then Mwaipopo fetched him to build in the forest. Nsusa replied that he would prefer to go home, and Mwaipopo agreed, but said he must first pay two cows. "I," said Mwaipopo, "am satisfied, but your friends there are angry, you have done wrong to Mwankuga; you can go if you pay two cows." Nsusa refused and got angry and wrote to Tukuyu again, saying: "Mwaipopo never comes to Court. He spends all his time drinking in the forest, and I, Nsusa, have judged all the cases myself in Court. Now that I am away from Court the cases are not judged; all is silent."

'The clerks at Tukuyu recognized that the stamp and the handwriting were not those of the court clerk, so they wrote to Mwaipopo. He was angry and imprisoned Nsusa for three months. The District Officer advised Mwaipopo not to let Nsusa return to his country, so when he came out of prison Nsusa built in the country of Mwangomo. This was a year or so ago, and the day before yesterday the village headmen went to fetch him. He is here, sleeping in the house of Kasisi, in Igembe. Eight men went to fetch Nsusa, carrying his household stuff and driving back the cattle. (We saw them.) 'Yes, Mwaipopo must have agreed, for if a chief drives away a man no commoner can take the initiative in fetching him back.'

'Nsusa killed a bull and also provided two pots of beer, one for the men of Igembe and one for the men of Lugombo. His own village was Lugombo, together with Itiki (cf. p. 183). He killed the bull at the house of Kasisi where he is staying. He has not yet been given a homestead.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

761 765 775 the lives and enter the dreams of their kinsmen; but the nature of their survival is uncertain.

775 765 A man, when he dies, is believed to join his ancestors. Until the end of the funeral rites, they say, he is on the way and if the ritual is not properly performed he does not reach them, but troubles the dreams and lives of the survivors until he is properly driven away. 'If you do not perform the ritual for your father or mother you may go mad or else have a slow and lingering death.'

177 775 797 Many of the younger pagans, however, are affected by Christian belief. Young men spoke confidently of going after death 'to a fine country with dancing and feasting and a chief to rule us'. But many old men scoff at such beliefs. 'They have learnt them from the missionaries—how do they know, have they been there to see?' Among some of the younger men also the ritual of death is less important than it used to be. As one Christian said: 'The pagans no longer fear to die away from home—they used to fear very much to die in a strange country (and many still do), they thought: "If I die far from home I shall never reach my ancestors, for people will not bury me properly." Nor do all the young men now fear if they fail to attend a father's funeral ritual.' 'We no longer believe in the old rituals,' said a sophisticated young pagan, 'because we see that the Christians do not do these things and nothing happens to them.'

761 753 754 An additional reason for fearing death is the Nyakyusa belief in the contagious character of many diseases. Death is thought to be caused sometimes by witchcraft, and sometimes by one of a variety of diseases. Of these diseases some are held to be hereditary and to run in families, and they are usually non-contagious; others, and they are usually contagious, are believed to be due to the sorcery of enemies. And the contagion is thought to be spread by an autopsy. It is especially dangerous to relatives; other people do not fear these diseases unless they actually hold the corpse in their arms, or dig the grave, or help to bury it, but all relatives are afraid.

764 Besides the contagion of specific diseases, the corpse itself is held always to have a vaguely defined, but none the less fearful, contagion of its own. And, because of this, all who have had any close contact with the body go to bathe immediately after the burial. Those of the chief mourners who hold the body in their arms, the grave-diggers and those who get down into the grave to bury it, all go to bathe. 'Even when death is no due to a contagious disease

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 wealth of the family in cattle and the number of its affines. There
556 is a direct relationship between the number of cattle killed and the number of people who come to a burial. On one occasion we were told: 'There are not many people here because there is little meat; they only killed one bull!' And this connection can be observed at any burial; hundreds of people come to mourn the rich, only a few to mourn the poor. And if no meat is killed there is usually no dancing at all. But once a crowd has gathered it is in itself an inducement to others to come. When men were dancing the funeral dance in the rain a neighbour commented: 'They will say there is no rain for many women are present.' We have seen a crowd of 2,000 or more at a funeral, with 100 men dancing at once.

The meat is divided among the chief, the relatives, the neighbours, and the non-relatives from a distance. To the chief of the country is given the breast and ribs of one beast: 'This is to honour him.' To each affine who brings a beast a whole leg is returned to be eaten. To the various groups of non-relatives from other chiefdoms is given sometimes a side, sometimes a leg, and the rest of the meat is divided between the relatives and neighbours who have come from the same or adjoining villages. At large funerals, where many cows are killed and where people gather from all the villages of the chiefdom, a portion of the meat is presented to each of the various village headmen to eat with his men; at smaller funerals the division is made less formally.

'A man's very own cow, that of his lineage, is eaten by the people of the country, not the relatives, because the people [non-relatives] always looked at it thinking: "It's ours." ' A picture of ghoulish expectation? That indeed is an element of Nyakyusa thought. While we were in the country a number of chiefs forbade the
[754] offering of funeral meat to non-relatives, for, it was believed, gluttonous neighbours sometimes killed a man by witchcraft[1] in order to feast at his funeral.

The kinsmen of the dead man gain prestige from a lavish funeral. They are compelled to sacrifice by fear lest the anger of the shades, or the 'breath' of their neighbours, should bring misfortune upon them, and they are rewarded by the admiration of men when they do so.

764 Social pressure is not always exerted upon the members of the
626 dead man's family to provide cattle themselves. If he left sufficient cattle to sustain the family dignity they only kill from his own

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 93.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764
not die. That comes from the shades when they are angry and say: 775
'We shall see!' It is to be finished off.

QUESTION: So the shades always come at death?

MWANDISI: Yes. See, Mwafyuma who died [the old Mwafyuma, a 764
classificatory brother of Mwandisi, died the day before yesterday]. I 775
dreamed at night of Mwakalukwa [a classificatory son of Mwandisi 828
who died about 1932] and in the morning I told X here [his son-in-law who lives near was sitting with us and at once assented, 'Yes, he told me'] that I had dreamed of Mwakalukwa, and there were many deaths in the country—the people of Kisale were mourning and the peopleof Ndemba and that Mwakalukwa had said to me: 'Where are we dead to care for those who come?' And I said to X: 'If someone comes from Mwaya you will see that someone has died.' That very day my son here [Pugana his son was sitting near] came and said: 'Mwafyuma has died.'

This dream of Mwandisi's was cited as a proof that the shades come to receive a man at death. They came to Mwandisi in a dream—the shade of Mwakalukwa came, which he took to mean that the death was to be in Mwakalukwa's country, not Mwakalinga's.

QUESTION: You said the shades come to receive a man killed by 764
witches. Have they no power to drive away witches? 775

MWANDISI: No, the shades have not the power to drive away the 754
witches but Kyala drives them away.

QUESTION: Kyala? You mean the headman of the village!

MWANDISI: Yes, the headman drives them off, Kyala gave him the power (or duty).

iii. *Evidence of other informants*

KISSOULE: We begin by burying the flowering head of an *ilitoki* 764
banana—that is a person—then we rub forehead, elbow, and knee in the earth there and go to bathe. We push away the earth, that means our business above here (in the world of the living) is finished, we have really buried you, do not come here above, go to your place (below), in the world of the shades.

MWAILAPE (a Christian): They throw the stem of bananas into the water and the bark and feathers, but if it is a fowl and the bark is good, they take them back and they belong to the officiant. Throwing away the stem of bananas means: 'We are driving you (the shade) away. Be off!' The millet which is tossed in the faces of the participants is also thrown away in the water. Tossing it in their faces means: 'This is your food which you cultivated, go away with it.'

MWAKISISILE AND OTHERS: The touching of the ground is the ex-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 764 KASITILE: You sons of Musika had a case against you . . . you fought.
HALF-BROTHER: But that case concerned a woman.

A discussion of the case followed.

KASITILE: Friend, we pray here. Listen carefully.
HALF-BROTHER: I have spoken and not concealed anything.
KASITILE: That's what I say, let us pray well.
HALF-BROTHER: I performed the ritual for him. Let him die with his hair.
SISTER: Let us confess [lit. vomit] we were angry.
HALF-BROTHER: Yes, it is so, we were angry. The cow made us angry.

783 Mwaisumo described a treatment with *imbosyo* medicines which differed slightly from the one we saw and involved the slaughter of a sheep; according to his account the medicines are coiled in the pot like ropes, and the participants are washed under a waterfall, though they are not made to vomit like the relatives of a murderer. Doubtless the details vary with the officiant, but the principle that medicines are used to rot the ropes remains constant.

754 (*c*) *Protection against sorcery or vengeance magic*

789 783 Sickness caused by sorcery or vengeance magic is believed to spread among kinsmen in much the same way as sickness due to the shedding of blood or binding with ropes, and the ritual performed as a protection against it is very similar to the ritual for 'rotting the ropes' just described. We saw it performed after the death of E. who died on 23 March 1935. Her elder brother (heir to her father) and her husband, who were pagans, wished to perform an autopsy, but her younger brother, a Christian, prevented their doing so. Soon after her burial her mother and husband fell very ill and three weeks later (April 13) the five-year-old son of her elder brother M. died. An autopsy was performed on the child and the diagnosis was that his mother's father, after quarrelling with M., his son-in-law, had drunk medicines to bring death to M's children. M. explained: 'My wife has already buried two [763] children. This boy is the third. Previously we found evidence of *ilyepa*[1] at the autopsy, and this time it is the same. The disease comes from my wife's father.' However, when M. went to confirm

[1] *Ilyepa* is a medicine alleged to be drunk by a seni[illegible]tive, when he is angry, which, if his anger is justified, will cause his junior rela[illegible]fer in his own person or that of his children.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

However, when M. went to confirm
the cause of both deaths with a famous diviner, Sambo, he was 787
told that the boy's death was due to the anger of neighbours who 754
had not been feasted as they should have been, but E's death was due to the sorcery of her first husband. M's report of the divinations is worth quoting:

I have just been to Sambo in the country of Swebi, he has divined and he tells me that the death of E. was due to the sorcery (*ubutege*) of Mwakyusa, her first husband. He also told me the name of the doctor from whom Mwakyusa got the medicine to kill her, the man is K.; he is both a doctor and a smith in the country of X. He told me that Mwakyusa was angry because, when he tore her mouth, he paid to us a cow in damages; he said: 'I have paid the cow, I should have my wife. But they have taken her back and eaten my cow.' E. had left all her things in his house, her bark-cloths, her cloths, everything. Sambo tells me that Mwakyusa took all these things to K. and spoke four names, saying: 'I wish E. my wife, M., and one of M's wives [mother of the dead child] to die. If these die I shall be happy.' So the doctor prepared a medicine which he put into a calabash. He did this while saying the names, and he addressed the names to the cloths, as if one of them was E., one was me, and so on. If E. had left nothing behind he would have had to send a man up with medicine to our place.

He told me to go to Mwakionde, who is a great doctor. Mwakionde 783
will come to my place and cook medicine, we shall all drink it, not only the three people named but all my distant relatives will collect to drink it, N., E's second husband will come too. About the child, Sambo denies that it is *ilyepa*, he says it is due to the wrong-doing of her father. At first my wife was married when very young, but her husband went away and left her, she never lived with him. So when she grew up she said: 'I am tired of being alone, I am going to get married.' So she came to me. I paid five cows to Mwandosia (the chief) who is the mother's brother of her father. Her own father is dead. She has a father by inheritance, but Mwandosia had looked after her a great deal, so I sent the cattle to him, and he sent them on to the elder brother of her first husband. But her father's heir said: 'That finishes the cows to be paid to her husband, but I want one for myself to make six.' Well, at first I was involved in a lawsuit and did not bring the cow, so her father was angry; he came and took her back home; then after a time I found the cow and took it to him, and he sent her back to me, but he did not, as the custom is, cook food for my friends of the village. He should have cooked some chickens and brewed some beer, so that my friends would be happy and say 'Thank you'. So now my friends are angry, they say: 'Why does he not bring his daughter back properly? Perhaps he is not her father!' The breath comes from my friends, they

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 are angry because of food. If I had not given him the cow it would have been his anger, now it is that of my friends. At the other deaths the doctors diagnosed *ilyepa*, but Sambo denies this. It is just the offence to my neighbours. He says I am to send the woman to him, and he will put her right himself.

A month after E's death (April 25) Mwakionde, the doctor, came to her elder brother's home to perform the ritual of protection. He and her second husband were next-door neighbours. The preparation and drinking of medicines was at her brother's homestead, but they moved to her husband's (where she was buried) to treat the grave. Beer had been prepared and the doctor added medicine to it. The mother of E., and one of her brother's wives, ground millet from their own crop, letting it fall on freshly-cut leaves of the sweet banana. This millet was used for the medicine. Meantime, one of the doctor's assistants opened the grave, digging down until he reached the cave in which the corpse had been placed. Then medicine to cause rotting (*imbosyo*), made with the lees of the beer, was poured in and eight pots of water. Mwakionde explained that 'opening the grave is to rot the poison in the body' and the water is put in that it may reach the corpse—the amount depends on the depth of the grave. Then the grave was filled in again and three small lengths of root, anointed with red pigment, were stuck into the fresh earth. These, Mwakionde said, were 'to close the way so that if the medicine comes again it will be turned back'. 'All three pieces of root are to close the way so that if that man comes again to work sorcery we shall escape, if Kyala keeps us.'

Then the doctor prepared a pot with about twenty roots, two varieties of spiny cactus, one impaled on the other, six packets of medicine, and water, and set it to boil on a fire made near the doorway of her brother's hut. The fire was lighted by friction by the male kinsmen, and the old fire was cleared out of the hut. A small bull was killed and its blood added to the brew. Porridge was made from this and the specially ground millet, and eaten by the participants. Then each of them, beginning with her elder brother, was scarified on the back, arms, legs, and feet and medicine from a horn rubbed in.

783 All through Mwakionde spoke only of *protection*, but others,
764 speaking of the rite of filling the grave with water, explained it as a means of making the sorcery recoil on the sender, causing his death, and there is little doubt that this was one object of the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ritual, though not openly admitted. The younger brother pro- 783
tested at the inclusion of the cactus stems and it is likely that they 754
were an ingredient intended to injure the sender of sorcery.

(d) Prayer to the shades

Misfortune is also believed to come from the anger of senior 578
relatives, living and dead. If a junior has angered his senior kins- 775
man the senior is said to 'mutter over the fire'. 'He is so angry 754
that he cannot speak intelligible words, he murmurs and mumbles to himself. . . .' 'I crouch over the fire in the evening and mutter to myself in a low voice: "I am astonished and hurt at my son. Did I not provide marriage-cattle for him? And he does this to me!" ' Then the shades hear him and the wrong-doer falls ill, or is sterile, or his crops or fishing fail. 'No man has the power of making the shades hear like this save Father (*tata*)—he mutters alone and the shades hear him—all of us, pagans and Christians alike, believe in the power of Father to mutter, because whenever a man wrongs his father something always happens to him—he finds blessing nowhere.' The 'father' is a man's own father who begot him, or his heir, or, in a lesser degree, his father's elder full brother, or any kinsman who has given marriage-cattle on his behalf. 'If a man has given me cattle for marriage then he has authority over me (*jo mpala gwangu*)[1] for cattle are important (*imbala*).'

If a senior is at fault (for example, an heir who neglects his wards) the shades may, in theory, punish him also, but more often any misfortune that befalls him is attributed to the just wrath of his neighbours who watch over the interests of the dead man's children. The idea that misfortunes spring from the anger of the living is strong; indeed, one of our best informants, Angombwike, maintained that 'the shades never act alone', and Mwakwelebeja, an old man, said: 'It is really we who get angry, but the shades help a little because they are always with us; we always dream of them.'

The shades are 'the fathers' (*batata*), and prayers are addressed 775
primarily to the men of the lineage, but a father's sister is also 782
classed as a 'father'. Some informants denied that a mother could bring sickness on her children:

754
Women never murmur against their children, only the father, the 775

[1] Literally, 'he is my great one'.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 man. Women murmur but it only makes them sick themselves
775 [laughter]. But my father's sister (*unnasenga*) can murmur, she is a man like my father. . . . If my mother is old and I do not care for her she will murmur and fall sick herself, she will never make me sick. My mother is no relative in my homestead, she is no relative to the shades.

However, Mwakwelebeja (a very old and conservative man) held that 'People sometimes say: "My mother beneath is angry" though it's not common', and Kasitile was quite positive that a mother was also a shade with power to inflict misfortune, as the following conversation shows:

QUESTION: What shades influence a man or woman?

KASITILE AND HIS YOUNGEST WIFE: *Imindu* of father is there, and *imindu* of mother. Yes, indeed, *imindu* of mother exists. Once I had not put beer in the house and I fell ill. The divination said: 'It is *imindu* of your mother. She is angry not to find anything in your house.' Because we chiefs always put beer in a little calabash in the house, it stays there always.

QUESTION: When it goes bad?

KASITILE: We put some more. There is a little millet flour there now. Sometimes we put flour, sometimes beer. And when I come to die they bury beer with me. . . . Once the offering was not there, and my mother who was dead came to look and did not find anything. Then she went to father, who was dead, and said: 'I went to our child. His house was without anything.' Then father said: 'Let us go and look!' They did not find anything, then they shook me up. Then the oracle said: 'It is the *imindu* of your mother.'

QUESTION: And a wife?

KASITILE: Both her father and her mother punish [lit. hit] her at their place, even though she is with me, also they punish her.

QUESTION: But your shades?

KASITILE: How can they punish in-laws? They do not punish her, but the child whom she has borne, their grandchild, him they punish.

[593] Though Kasitile and others denied that the husband's shades could punish a wife, nevertheless she suffers from their anger through the child, through a difficult labour, or through the beer she brews going bad.

578 PYAGILAMO: It is said that when a woman who has quarrelled with
775 her husband is brewing beer and it goes bad, that means the shades are angry. The shades of the husband have made the beer go bad. The husband has murmured and the shades have heard. When a wife is
[845] pregnant it is taboo for her to quarrel with her husband; she will have a difficult labour. The husband murmurs and the shades hear. The

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

593 send the son into his father's house. He walks through the whole house
789 and the mothers acclaim him. This is the sign to show everybody that
783 he has entered his father's house. The women call the *akalulu*. They are rejoicing because he has entered.

There are, however, some who do not return to their fathers. They remain strangers [*abandu* as opposed to *abakamu*] until their death. There is a young man at my home who took his father's wife. Where he fled to no one knows because he is still in hiding. His father separated from him altogether.

A son must always bring something and the father must collect his friends. If they just agree with one another and people do not eat any-
[753] thing, then the son will not be settled in well. He will be ill. They say that the illness comes from the shades. If the father is angry he mutters (*ikwibunesya*) and they hear. At first the people are not angry, but later on, when they have heard from the father about the matter, they also are angry. It is as if they help the father to mutter. Their shades are not there, only those of the father's lineage, but his shades have regard to the people. If the people do not eat anything and are not present, they are not satisfied even though the father is satisfied. The father prays to his shades alone in the evening with water in his mouth, and they pour out beer on the hearth-bricks.

764 KASITILE: If a rich commoner has died and the heir buries him with
556 only one cow, the shades and people are angry with the heir, breath
783 falls on his body; perhaps he falls ill, or perhaps his child falls ill. But they do not meet; people, the witches, are angry and the shades are angry; the shades because they have buried him with only one cow, people because they have not eaten meat, but the shades and people are independent of each other. The oracle says: 'The shades are angry,' it does not speak of people. It knows that people also are angry, but it speaks only of the shades. And when he makes amends he prays in the evening; the next day he calls people and kills a cow and he throws the *ija mmapa* meat in the banana grove and says: 'Here it is, Father,' and people say: 'Indeed, he did wrong, his father was angry.' But they do not confess, saying: 'We were angry.' No, they say: 'The shades were angry.'

754 Another type of case is that in which 'the breath of men' is
783 believed to have fallen on an infant because of its mother's disrespectful behaviour towards her husband's parents or husband's father's sister. When a child is thin and ailing with *ingoto*, the cure is for the mother to confess to the doctor who comes to treat the child all the rude things she has said, and provide beer (exceptionally a bull) to offer to her injured parents-in-law. They drink the beer with their neighbours and wish her well. Ambilikile's wife

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

cited a case she had seen in which the doctor smeared the child 754 783
with medicine and beer, and the mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law of the erring woman drank the beer and said: 'All right.' T. (a Christian woman) quoted another case:

> One of my mother's co-wives swore at her mother-in-law. . . . When she bore a child it was very thin and ill, so they sought a doctor, and beat the mother and she confessed all she had said in swearing at my grandmother, her mother-in-law. She and the child were treated by the doctor and when her father saw that the child did not recover quickly he brought a cow in payment . . . it is still at my home. From that time the child recovered. If anyone says there is no such thing as the illness of *ingoto* they lie because I have seen it with my own eyes.[1]

When a junior comes to beg pardon of a senior it is the business 783
of the latter's neighbours to persuade him to receive the prodigal. 621
That was indicated in Mwaikambo's account quoted above and reaffirmed by Mwakwelebeja who cited the case of his wife's father, a youngest brother, who had run off with three of his eldest brother's widows allocated to the middle brother, *after* they had been smeared with ash and the heir had slept with them.

> When they had performed the death ritual and finished it and the widows had slept with the heir in the house and had taken the *ilibalaga* to their fathers, . . . then three of the widows ran off with the younger brother. He fled with them to Masoko and to the hills, where he lived a long time and begot children with them. Then later on he brought 'the cow of the ashes (*inombe ja mfuandelo*)' to return to his senior brother. The senior received it and killed it and poured out beer. We ate.
>
> QUESTION: Do people not refuse to receive such a cow, sometimes?
>
> MWAKWELEBEJA: No, they fear to do so, they fear people, because the wrongdoer has come to them and it is they, the neighbours, who tell the senior kinsman: 'He has come, forgive him.' If the senior refuses they will be angry with him. Also we tell him: 'See, that man has strength to beget children with these women, you will eat the cattle.' Then he agrees and says: 'Let us make friends.'

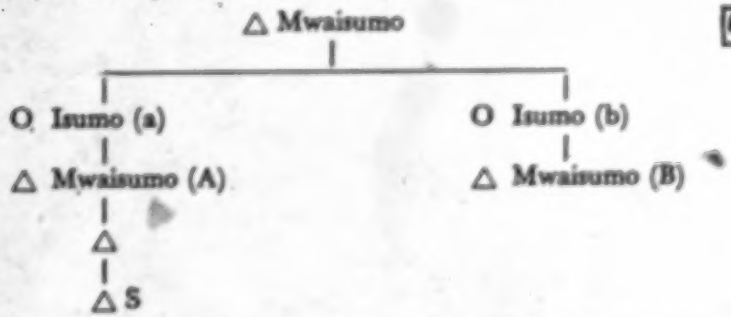
The illness that falls on a widow who rejects the heir after being smeared with the ash is 'like a curse from the ash'. Her lover, 'if he is strong and has medicines he will escape, but if he is not strong he will fall ill . . . because he takes men's lips with him [i.e. suffers from their breath].'

[1] A third case, in which the beer was brought to the woman's husband, is quoted in *Good Company*, p. 256.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sister immediately older than herself, the sister's daughter, and the sister immediately younger than herself, took part. 845 602

At the ritual of spearing, the principals are the children and grandchildren of the slayer and the slain, their brothers, their mother's kin (*abipuse*) and their wives. We were not able to watch any case of treatment against *ulukwego* and are not certain exactly how far the infection is thought to spread. Our informants were agreed that the number of kinsmen concerned is less than in a twin ritual; but we traced one case in which a minor chief, Mwaisumo (B.), forbade the father of a man who had killed S., the great grandson of Mwaisumo's mother's sister, to enter his country lest he spread disease among his relatives. 783 602 682



[601]

At a ritual to 'rot the ropes' those concerned are the descendants of the one who has been bound and their wives, siblings and siblings' children. At the one ritual we saw there were present 27 members of the dead man's own lineage (3 sons, 2 younger half-brothers, 1 full sister, 4 half-sisters, 3 sons, 5 daughters, 2 grandsons, 7 granddaughters), one wife, the wives of 4 sons, one father's sister's son, one son and 6 daughters of his sisters or half-sisters. 783 602

The ritual for protection against sorcery which we attended was performed at the home of the senior brother (heir to his father) of the dead woman. There were present her two brothers, their wives and children; her father's brother's daughter; two wives and one daughter of her sister's sons; her mother, two of her mother's brothers with their wives and children; two of her mother's sisters and the daughters of one of them. Her husband (who lived next door) could not take the medicine at his in-law's house, but some was sent for him to use at his home with his wives and kinsfolk. 789 602 754

In the simple ritual of prayer to the shades the senior kinsman who offers the prayer and blows out water acts alone but, if there 782 602

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

577 There is much more talk among the Nyakyusa of misfortune
777 from the shades or the anger of neighbours, than of blessing, but
556 there is an idea, somewhat vague but real, that generosity and kindliness will bring blessing (*ulusajo*). Ambilikile, a Christian teacher who had grown up in a pagan home, said:

> My mother tells me that my father was in the habit of feeding people, those who were not his relatives. People went to a distance and brought medicines for fertility and gave them to him, hence they said: 'He is very kind; food never grows short at his home.' She also told me that my father died very old. He did not die of disease, but of old age, no breath being left in him. This was because men were always saying: 'May they stand by him, may they bless him (*bammiwemelege, bansajege*),' not to his face but to others. They said that he lived long because of the blessing of men. Yes, they say that the food of a kindly man never gets finished, that of a stingy man finishes; he himself suffers hunger.

763 Mwaisumo described a father on his death-bed blessing a favourite son, allocating cattle to him, and telling him:

> Care for the children I have left, keep on good terms with them, then you will be rich in everything like your father. I cared for my children, I was not harsh (*skali*), so complain to me of anything that troubles you. If you are like this the property in your home will be plentiful, people will be astonished and say: 'He is like his father.'

431 Of a man given a cow by the chief, it was sometimes said: 'The
775 shades have blessed him; he has a righteous (*ngolofu*) shade.'

Although our Nyakyusa informants talked a great deal about
754 the danger of neglecting rituals and angering senior relatives,
673 living and dead, the number of cases of misfortune attributed to
621 their anger is small in comparison with the number attributed to witchcraft or 'the breath of men'. (Ten as compared with sixty-three.) There is no reason to suppose that one type of case was concealed when the others were reported to us, and it is clear that the Nyakyusa prefer to make neighbours in the age-village, rather than kinsmen, the scapegoat for their misfortunes. Even when the wrong done is against a kinsman it is often the neighbours, rather than the shades, who are said to have brought punishment on the wrong-doer.

777 At the same time, we were assured by one informant after an-
621 other that people blame the shades or Kyala for misfortune when it is really the neighbours who are responsible! Angombwike argued that men fear to accuse the neighbours, who are slow to

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

761
that he has killed, they are astonished and say: 'He should have called 678
us. Does he perform ritual alone?'

QUESTION: But why were those beneath angry in the first place? They are not angry without cause.

LUKUSYILA: Indeed, they are never angry without cause. There is always some wrong. But we do not know what it is in this case. If you do not kill cattle for your father's burial they are always angry. But we do not know what wrong Katasya committed to make them angry.

Later Mwanifu came in. He told me that Katasya is still alive, but 754
perhaps he will die this evening. We do not speak with him. He is just 782
breathing. We only ask his wives: 'Does he sleep?' The case is thus: the millet failed in his field and he said: 'I shall pray to my shades and it will grow again.' Then he went to a certain man to get his big bull and gave him a cow in calf, saying: 'Take this and give me your bull,' [437]
and later they will give him a little calf worth 30s. The bull was very big. He killed it. Before he did so he was already slightly ill, but when he had killed it the illness became very much worse. We say they have bewitched him because he stinted his fellows in the village. But they themselves deny it, saying: 'But we always kill and eat ourselves alone. I, Mwainyopolela, killed my animal and ate it alone. Have I died 782
therefore? According to the custom, if I have killed my beast as a sacrifice (*jakuiputela*) then I give my fellows one leg.'

QUESTION: Did Katasya not do so?

MWANIFU: No, Katasya did not give them any. He ate alone. Some wise men give the chief the breast because the chief is the owner of the country. Katasya did not give him that. Yes, if someone dies then the chief is usually given the breast. But when a beast is killed for sacrifice, no one having died, then many eat by themselves. The mourner gives to the chief.

QUESTION: Did he inquire of a diviner or not?

MWANIFU: We do not know. Some inquire of a diviner. Some think 787
for themselves that the fathers are shaking them. Concerning his death, 754
we are only speculating, saying: 'Perhaps they have bewitched him. 761
They were angry on account of the meat.' But perhaps it is sorcery. See, he was sweating very much on his face. Let him die. We will look in his belly. Perhaps he has been speared. They have bewitched him. Perhaps it is sorcery. We only speculate.

In the morning Mwaipopo (the chief) was very, very angry. He said: 763
'Why have you gathered together, you people? Go off home. Do you want to finish off a dying man? It is taboo to gather together. First let a man die, then come to lament the death.'

QUESTION: Is it a Nyakyusa custom to be angry if people gather together at a sick man's house? Is it as if they bewitch him?

MWANIFU: Yes.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

763 QUESTION: Why the gathering?

MWANIFU: We were startled to hear that he had died. They raised the lament of death in the morning and his cattle went home when Kasitile and I were on the pasture land. We were startled to see Katasya's cattle going home and said: 'He has died.' But his relatives saw that he had not died. They said it is taboo to lament when someone is still alive.

QUESTION: Why do cows come home when a man dies?

MWANIFU: It is a form of mourning. They should also weep and say farewell. He had property. For if I, Mwanifu, die, though I do not have cattle myself, yet because I am the son of Mwaipopo cattle are 764 killed at the funeral. It is impressive. But if I were a commoner and 556 had no cattle, then the funeral would be a flop. There would be no meat and people would say: 'He has not yet died, he has left one head.' They count the cattle to kill. If an important commoner dies, one who has cattle, then his funeral is impressive. People dance at his homestead and say: 'Our fellow, who has died, was a strong man who danced the war-dance in the homesteads.' And if he was tough in disputes, if he always got the better of them and no one ever got his cow, then they say: 'A tough fellow has died. May he leave a son as tough as himself. He died with his toughness.' They praise him.

782 QUESTION: Tell me about the killing of Katasya's bull.

MWANIFU: He killed the bull without telling his neighbours, but when he poured out the beer he called Mwainyopolela and Kapuguso and two others. There were four. He had built in Busikali village in which there are ten homesteads, but, customarily, we do not call all the neighbours, only those who are nearest. Only if I have killed a full-grown beast do I call them all and give them a leg. Yes, it was a big bull and perhaps it is on account of that that they are angry. When they came they were startled, saying: 'They are drinking beer! And there is meat lying outside!' They entered and drank a little. Then Katasya divided the meat for his relatives and took his own. He gave to Mwainyopolela and his fellows three ribs. Then M. said to his three fellows: 'Let us go home. I will not take this little piece of meat.' So they all went away. The other three ate the meat, only M. did not.

QUESTION: So they were angry?

754 MWANIFU: Perhaps! We say sometimes: 'They were angry and ate 787 him.' But perhaps it was sorcery, because just now three snakes entered the house of his chief wife—the *inelesi* snakes. One entered and they killed it. Another entered and they killed it. Then they caught the third to take to a doctor, the son of Mwakanyamale. The doctor said: 'This snake is sorcery,' and he will find a medicine to give them to drink that the illness may be slight. But he has not yet done so.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

QUESTION: When he says it is sorcery, does he mean that the snakes 754 have been sent by someone?

MWANIFU: Yes, Mwaipaja (G. W.), you understand.

5/1/38

Katasya died during the night. I came to the burial with the doctor, 764 Mwakaṅamale, meeting Mwamalunda on the road. They told me that the son, Mwakanjwike, had fled from the funeral. 'It is said that he had made love to three of his father's wives. They all fled, the three women and the young man. Yes, they will take them to a waterfall to cleanse them.'

I sat by Mwaipopo, the chief. There was a dispute about the autopsy. 763 Kasitile came to the chief to say: 'They are refusing to examine him.' 'Why are they refusing? There is much illness about. Let us examine him and *know*.' Mwaipopo spoke with heat. Then a relative came and told him: 'Katasya said: "Do not examine me when I die."' Mwaipopo: 'Why? There is that case of the son (incestuous adultery) or perhaps it is sorcery, or perhaps, if the neighbours refuse to examine him, it is a confession that they have bewitched him. Let us examine him. It will trouble us later on. Also, he was praying to the shades, saying: "The millet failed." Then he died! Let us examine him and know.'

Five cows and a bull were killed. About twenty cattle were standing 764 in the herd. The corpse was carried around with wailing and drum- 763 ming and the cattle were driven round also. Then followed the autopsy. I went with Mwanyoso, with Kasitile's relative, Mwakasenga, and with the brother of the dead man. A woman doctor performed it with a bamboo knife. Another woman kept a hand on the head of the dead man meanwhile. 'You brave ones!' was the comment of the other women, two or three of whom stood watching. The doctor hesitated, as if in fear, before the first cut. Mwanyoso encouraged her: 'Go ahead!' As she pulled out the bowels we all crowded round to look. Mwanyoso said: 'Ropes,' but no one else took this up, and he did not 763 mention it again. They looked into the chest and found something 754 wrong. 'He is burned within! It is sorcery!'

MWANYOSO: We chiefs do not fear the commoners, we look for wounds and speak if they are there. But there are none. Look well! If he had been speared there would be much blood, and wounds. But he is burned within. They have worked sorcery against him with Mwangwala. That is the name of the medicine which some Nyakyusa plant. [824] It's sorcery! Then is that of the country (i.e. witchcraft) not there?

It is not there.

How about the son?

That we do not find. He just has diarrhœa.

Mwanyoso then told Mwaipopo (the chief): 'We have examined him, it is sorcery.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

763 As we came away various people stopped us and asked: 'Have you examined him?' 'Yes, it is sorcery.' Great interest was shown by all in the cause of death.

764 When we first arrived, we found the son a little distance from the funeral and he did not, so far as I know, come near at all. He did not go near the grave when the corpse was buried. I asked Kasitile about bathing at the waterfall. 'They will wash him to-night. Katasya died in the afternoon. At night the son and three women fled. They will wash them at night.'

6/1/38

Kasitile came in to see us at breakfast time. I asked why the son of Katasya had not come near the burial though they had bathed him at the waterfall.

KASITILE: It is forbidden, but they have made a mistake. They have washed him irregularly. According to custom they should first have buried the dead, then, on the evening after the burial, they take them to the waterfall to wash them. When they come from washing, then the son takes a torch of burning grass, he throws it down on the grave, and jumps over the grave. Then they say: 'Let him strike the cattle.' He kills one of his own because he does not eat of those which they have killed previously. This is what they did yesterday afternoon, so it is finished now.

QUESTION: What does it symbolize?

KASITILE: It means it is I who overstepped you.

QUESTION: And when he steps over the grave and the fire?

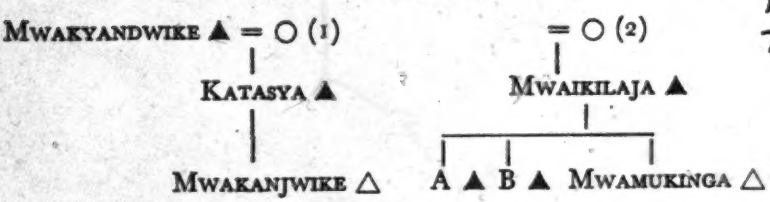
KASITILE: It is the fire which the women kindled for him who has died.

QUESTION: Do they know who worked sorcery against him?

578 KASITILE: Yes, it is the son of Mwaikilaja whose name is Mwamu-
754 kinga, because when their father, Mwakyandwike, died, the elder brother, Katasya, was a child, and the son of the second wife, Mwaikilaja, inherited. But when Katasya grew up they refused to be on good terms with him and quarrelled with him. But they never worked sorcery against each other. So then when Mwaikilaja died, his sons inherited. Katasya lost the inheritance because they said: 'You are not on good terms with your kinsmen. Let the sons inherit.' So he said: 'I, Katasya, agree.' But later on he was on good terms with those sons of his brother. There were three of them. But the eldest and the youngest quarrelled. The youngest, Mwamukinga, worked sorcery against the eldest, so Katasya told them: 'Do not be friendly with Mwamukinga who is working sorcery against you. Let him be at a distance.' Then Mwamukinga was angry and said: 'Is that wretched elder (*ikulu eli*) never going to die?' and he worked sorcery against him. This is the case.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

 428 754



Mwaikilaja, the son of the junior wife, inherited, because when their father, Mwakyandwike, died, Katasya, the son of the senior wife, was a child. Mwamukinga is accused of killing Katasya by sorcery.

Mwakwelebeja came in to take me to the funeral of Katasya. 'It is not the day of burial to-day, but the day of war. On the day of burial they weep very much and it does not go well (*jikanoga*) but to-day it will be well performed.' He was eager and excited at the prospect of good dancing. 'The chief Mwabuga from Masoko, his son-in-law, is coming. He is coming with his drums. The people of Masoko dance well.' At first I refused to go, but he would take no refusal. 'You must come,' he insisted, so finally I went. 764

On the way we discussed the cause of death. Some say the witches have eaten him. They say that Mwainyopolela is angry on account of the meat. Some say it is the sorcery of Mwaihojo (the chief) because Katasya (a man of Chief Mwaipopo) hoed a big area in the disputed ground. He built a temporary hut and lived there. But we say no. If they had roused up a war between the witches, would they not have gone to Mwakagile (Chief Mwaipopo) and his fellows? But we have not done that. We argue and say: 'Why are you taking our country?' but we are only fighting with words. 761

QUESTION: The war of the witches?

MWAKWELEBEJA: Yes, the war when they call the witches of a chiefdom by night to fight against those of another chiefdom. But Katasya was indeed wrong to stint his neighbours in Busikali of meat. If he had been wise he would have given them a leg. Mwainyopolela is very generous. Always when he kills a beast he shares the meat with his fellows. 754 721 689

We arrived at the funeral. The women were packed together under a tree to the left, where they had sat with the corpse yesterday. The girls and young women stood watching the dance and occasionally strolling rhythmically out into the midst of it. The errant son was with the other men to-day. The son-in-law from Masoko came with all his cattle (seven cows, one bull and five calves) of which one will be killed and the others returned. The bull was unusually large with an enormous hump and it caused comment. It was well known. They told each other how, when his father, Mwakabulwa, died, this bull was quiescent. It did not move about at all, and it was a very small calf. It was quiescent 764

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 and sniffed at the grave. When this son-in-law arrived, the chief women mourners got up from under the tree and went with him into the hut to wail. They came out all wailing. The women under the tree were wailing all the time with a leader standing up in the middle. But the wailing was drowned by the drums of which there were three sets.

764 Three young men were got up with white clay spots and some had
535 bells on their ankles and loin-cloths. They held spears, and danced and
302 leapt wildly. 'What', I asked Kasitile, 'is the meaning of the white clay?'

KASITILE: It is war paint. During war we painted ourselves with white clay formerly. Then if I saw one with white clay I did not spear him. It was my comrade. But he whom I saw without it was an enemy and I speared him. It was the sign.

725 QUESTION: But did the other side not use it?

KASITILE: We took them by surprise.

Mwanyoso came to visit me in the evening.

764 QUESTION: And what steps are they taking about Katsaya's death
789 from sorcery?

MWANYOSO: They sought the doctor, Mwangolombe, for the burial yesterday. He pounded a medicine and burnt it on the grave. Then they buried the dead man and danced on the grave. That means they destroyed the sorcery. The dead man should take it away with him.

QUESTION: And has the doctor given them medicines to drink?

MWANYOSO: He has not yet done so. They will fetch him again to cook the medicine at the home.

QUESTION: What about the payment?

759 MWANYOSO: For yesterday they did not pay anything, now, but when they have fetched him to their home, then they will pay some shillings. But if many people have died, then they fetch a famous doctor such as Mwakionde. Then he comes with all the protective medicines (*amapingo*) and treats them. Then such a doctor gets a cow. The famous doctors in this country are Mwakionde and Kapuguso and Mwakanyamale.

787 QUESTION: Will they consult an oracle?

MWANYOSO: Why should they consult an oracle? They know what it is. It is the sorcery of their brothers!

●754 QUESTION: But it might be the sorcery of another. Some say of Mwaihojo (the chief).

MWANYOSO: They are liars. See, Katasya had just come from his brothers. He got the illness at their place. It is they. If it was from Mwaihojo and his people, they would have speared him by night. We would have found wounds and much blood, but we did not find them.

QUESTION: He came from his brothers?

MWANYOSO: Yes, there was a ritual because their father, Mwaikilaja, had died. Their senior brother inherited and he also died. Katasya

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

went to catch the junior brother who was there, but from that time he has been ill. 754

QUESTION: Did Mwamukinga (the sorcerer) come to the funeral and did they give him meat? 754 764

MWANYOSO: Yes, he came.

QUESTION: Is he not ashamed? Do people agree that they have worked sorcery against someone?

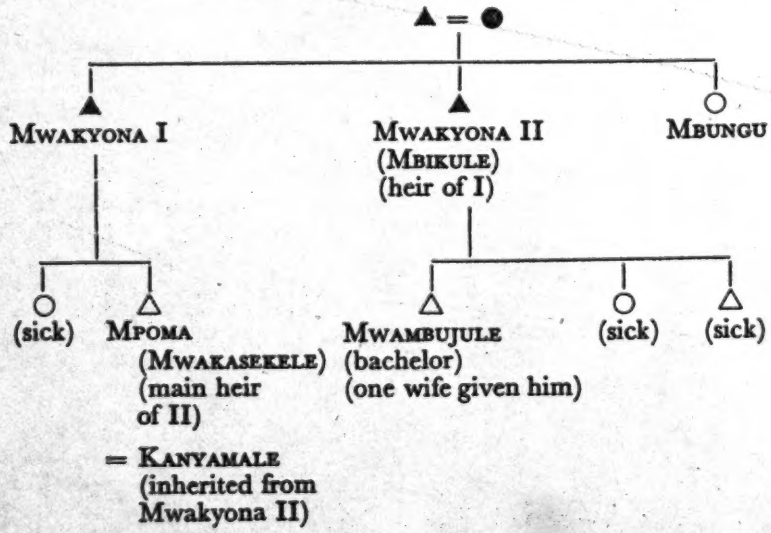
MWANYOSO: They deny it.

QUESTION: Did they give him meat?

MWANYOSO: Yes, they gave it to him.

(*b*) *Sickness in the lineage of Mwakyona*

The following case also illustrates how several possible causes of misfortune were considered—sorcery between kinsmen who were quarrelling over inheritance, the anger of the shades, and the jealousy of neighbours were mentioned. It shows, further, how expression of goodwill by those thought to be injuring a man is necessary for his recovery. The doctor treating the patient made the kinsmen confess their anger and gave them a medicine guaranteed to kill anyone working sorcery. 753



MWAIKAMBO: When Mwakyona died, his younger brother, Mwakyona the younger, whom they call Mbikule, inherited. But Mbikule also died, so they sought Mwakionde (the doctor and brother of the chief) and they asked him: 'To whom shall we give the inheritance?' The village elders, their fathers—those of the house—and their father's sisters, were those who saw to the matter of the inheritance. Then 428

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

428 Mwakionde let Mpoma (Mwakasekele) take the inheritance because he is the eldest. Mwakionde said: 'Let him be their father.' But when they gave the inheritance to Mpoma, they talked to one another and said that Mwambujule should take one wife because he did not have any wife. He was a bachelor. So they gave him one wife, but four wives of the father were inherited by Mpoma. After a little time Mwambujule said: 'My fellow has made a mistake with the property and he has
428 not given me anything.' So he strove to attract the mothers. He said:
578 'Come to me and let me inherit you myself.' The mothers agreed, they ran away and came to his place. Mpoma was angry and went to Mwakionde to tell him that Mwambujule had attracted the mothers and taken them to his house. Mwakionde said: 'Do not make a case.' The village headman went to Mwambujule to admonish him together with the mothers. Then he returned them to Mpoma.

754 Later on, illness appeared. The sister of Mpoma fell ill. They gave
787 her medicines to drink and she recovered. Then the brother of Mwambujule fell ill and the doctors said it was sorcery (*ubutege*), that is, Mwakionde thinks it is sorcery. This is also a common rumour. But, as will be seen later, the diviners, when appealed to, said: '*Mindu*,' that is, the shades.

755 When Mwakionde saw the sick man, he called together all of them
754 that they might grumble (*bijumane*) and drive away the illness, because it is said that when people pray (*ukwiputa*) the sickness from sorcery gets less. It is said if one has worked sorcery against his fellow he always hides himself, he does not appear at his friend's home, because, if he appears, if he comes and says: 'I am sorry for the illness (*ndaga ububine*),' even without praying at all, the illness disappears. Also, if a sick man has died, he does not go or he will die soon. It is said that the dead rise. Yes, it is the same in the case of witchcraft. Then also they say that if someone has 'eaten' his fellow he does not go to him, he hides himself at his own home, and if his fellow has died he does not go or he will die very quickly. The dead rise. In the prayer they especially drive away the shades, because it is said that sickness from the shades comes from us living. If, for example, I have done something bad to my fellow, and the shades are angry, but if he forgives me, they also forgive. He must express forgiveness openly in words of prayer (*amasyu gamo ga lwiputo*). If he forgives me only in his heart, the shades do not forgive. This prayer that we heard during the day had power both against sorcery and against the shades, they spoke of both. In the evening it was completed.

754 Mwakionde called them all together and said: 'Friends, I am astonished that the illness has come again.' The people: 'Hu; this illness puzzles us very much.'

MWAKIONDE: 'For what reason does this man fall ill in the summer, and that man fall ill in the summer, and the other fall ill?'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

MPOMA: 'I am ashamed, and also I am very angry, because people 754
say it is I who am working sorcery against them, although when they 578
were ill I carried them to my house.'[1]

Mpoma turned back on the road when they sent medicine for the sick man (i.e. he did not go to the sick man).

A WOMAN: 'Why do they work sorcery against one another when they are both left?'

ANOTHER WOMAN: 'The wives of Mbikule say Mpoma says: "Let me be alone, let me kill all of them and get everything for myself by cunning."'

MWAMBUJULE: 'Since I carried him to my place I said the illness would not be serious. He also sent a message to *your* place, Mpoma, saying that he was ill, and asking for some milk, but you did not send any.'

MPOMA: 'No one told me.'

THE WOMAN: 'The widows fight with Mpoma. They say: "You have eaten a medicine to work sorcery against your fellows."'

KANYAMALE: 'Also they speak of his wrongdoing, in not approaching the sick man.'

ANOTHER WOMAN: 'Yes, and also you are angry.'

MPOMA: 'See, when they said the present patient was still ill, I prayed, I said aloud: "What am I doing? Get away, what am I doing?" and I sent a medicine and he recovered.'

A WOMAN: 'We consulted an oracle, it said: "It is Mwakyona who 787
is angry," but I said: "What is he angry about?" The oracle said: "He is angry on account of cattle." He says: "Why does he fear me when he has taken cattle?" So we said: "Mwakyona is angry because he has taken cattle."'

THE MBUNGUS (Mwakyona's sisters): 'We like him (the shade), let 753
him come.'

WOMAN: 'They are jealous of the sick man [i.e. a third cause suggested. The unreasonable jealousy of his neighbours]. He dies like his father. People say: "He eats meat in our houses, he borrows our cloths," and he dies of their unreasonable jealousy (*akabini*)!'

The women and the men said: 'Thank you, Mwakionde, because you have made us think of these things [he had taken the initiative in prayer]. You make us make friends, and make us love one another, and bless one another.'

Mwakionde spoke, saying: 'There are many, many roads on which people travel and there is one road through which illness enters.' They 782
say that if many people are with a sick man then the illness spreads.

They also prayed, confessing their anger in the case of Kanyamale, [783]

[1] 'It is the custom to carry people to the "father", the head of the family, when very sick. This is not supposed to cure them, but it is customary (*lolwiho*). That is where we all are ill, at their father's place.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 the wife of Mpoma, but about this I do not know much. When they
[783] stopped speaking Kanyamale was ill. Then her husband charged her
with witchcraft and she said: 'What is the case about? I have been ill
● 754 since we came from confessing anger.' Then Kanyamale grew sulky
and gathered up her mats and went with them to her child's place.
Mpoma said: 'I must follow her,' but his fellows soothed him and he
turned back. Then he borrowed a spear from his fellows and went to
drive off the game which were eating his crops. When he found no
animals he went home. On his return, when he was still outside, he
heard the wives whispering about some case. He asked them to open
the door for him, but they were silent and did not open the door of the
hut. Then he pushed it open. When he entered the hut he closed it and
he cross-examined the wives, asking what they were talking about. One
said: 'I was just asleep.' He said: 'With whom were you speaking?
You are hiding a man in this house.' One woman got up immediately
and opened the door. Mpoma cross-examined them hotly. He said:
'Why did you open the door if indeed there is no man in the hut?'
Mpoma got in a passion and went elsewhere. He returned again and
said: 'Marry the child. I will not destroy him,' and he went away alone.
[627] He took the case to Mwakisisya, the village headman, and lost it. Then
the court said: 'You get the children. Let them come here, though their
mother is not here.'

757 Later on it was like this: Mwakionde went to attend to the medicines
754 to give to the sick man to drink; they began by putting powdered medi-
cines in a pot, then they put in some water, then they put in three sorts
of powdered medicine, one black and two red. Mwakionde, because
he was the doctor, began; he put in the water first. Mpoma, the senior,
followed him, then all the others. When the water boiled, they stirred
up porridge with a spoon, then they gave the sick man some to drink,
and the relatives drank. If there were one who was working sorcery
against his fellows, he would die when he drank that medicine. But the
sick man, before he drank this medicine, drank something else. When
the water boiled, they mixed a medicine and scarified themselves all
over their bodies.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

861 romping glee; and the musical jingle of the tiny bells that most of them wear on their ankles up till three or so is pleasant to the European, and rings with a thrilling response in the heart of the adoring mother, who sits on the ground watching the gambols of her little one.

843 The unborn child is treated with great care, and surrounded with superstitions. The mother must submit to restrictions in regard to diet, and indications of the sex of the coming child are given by the preferences she shows for permitted foods. She must not eat hot food, for that would burn the child's head; nor beans, for they might cause the disease called *ilyulu*. An expectant mother who drinks much milk will bear a son; if she has a great desire for flesh foods, a daughter is known to be coming. A scolding woman need not be surprised if her child is a boy, especially if her husband is the victim of her language. Some women will not eat rice, perhaps because it is a new food, all the possibilities of which have not yet been fully explored.

844 The worst possible place for a woman to have her child born is at her own father's house, unless it is with the consent of her husband; for every one will assume that the child has an unknown father. If an • [754] expectant mother suspects her husband of sorcery she will take care to have her child born at a distance, so that it may not inherit its father's undesirable powers, these being transmissible only at close quarters, and only after birth. With heathen women, the birth, if in the daytime, takes place mostly in the open

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

its fall; or if one sends another up a tree to get fruit, or for any other purpose, and the person falls down and is killed, a cow must be paid in compensation; if he is only injured, some smaller payment is made. If I permit a suicide to take place in my house, I must pay a cow, for I ought to have taken better care of my house. If a man kills himself with my spear I come under a similar penalty, and for the same reason. If a woman suckles another woman's child and it dies, the law of compensation holds good, and a cow must be paid. Very many regulations of this kind, which it would be a weariness to repeat, exist among the Konde people. 682 672

The spear with which a murder has been committed is cut off short at the haft, and the blade bent over with a stone, and it is then hung up in the roof of the house of a relative of the murderer.

Murder is frequently committed by means of poison and by witchcraft; and in either case it is difficult to trace the criminal. As an instance: a man is very quarrelsome in his village, an intolerable nuisance in fact. After a while he goes off to work somewhere, and now is the opportunity to get rid of him. In a few months news comes that he has been killed in a quarrel; but the quarrel was brought on by witchcraft. His fellow-villagers went to a sorcerer, and persuaded him to stir up the quarrelsome one to some disagreement in his new home, which would be sure to end in his death. No British magistrate would consider a charge of murder in such a case, except against the actual murderers, but the Konde will not 682 754

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

682 be convinced that the real facts are otherwise than as I have stated. The clumsy methods of murder
754 favoured by the cleverest of European criminals take an inferior place before the successful malignity of this kind of thing.

683 *Witchcraft.*—No crime is regarded with so much abhorrence among Bantu peoples as the crime of
754 witchcraft. It is a crime against the whole community,
627 anti-social, destructive; and the punishment, in many cases, was death. That punishment cannot now be inflicted, but a recent Ordinance against pretended witchcraft has given much satisfaction to the people, even although the punishment is less than they think the crime demands. To them there is no pretence about it; it is a grave reality. If the poison cup proved a person guilty, he was immediately attacked with any weapon that came handy, and as a rule he was dead before he reached the end of the gauntlet; but if, as now and again happened, he got off alive, he lost no time in getting away to another district. In the not so very remote past, the guilty person was burned to death in his own house, and not always did his family escape a like fate. A special punishment was reserved for witchcraft by crocodile. This particular crime consists in bewitching a crocodile to kill an enemy. The criminal, when discovered, was put into the water in a large fish-trap, and left there until a crocodile came and made an end.

684 *Adultery.*—This offence is said to have increased greatly since the coming of the white man, who will not permit the death penalty to be inflicted. But the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

232 neck to tail, saying, "You will now give a cow-calf." What remains of the medicine is put into the stall, and the next calf will be a female. A cow that kills her calf in dropping it is given a medicine which will prevent the recurrence of the fatality. Medicine is also given if the milk is not satisfactory in quantity; and by rubbing in a medicine from tail to neck specialists claim to be able to tell whether a calf in the womb is male or female.

232 754 A disease which does not yield to treatment is the work either of the spirits or of a sorcerer. Divination is resorted to, and the particular spirit operating having been discovered, the appropriate offerings are made, and the disease will now yield to treatment. If it is due to witchcraft, the chief is informed, and he publicly announces that if the animal is not well by next day, he will have the poison test applied to discover the culprit. This, however, if done at all to-day, is done in secrecy, for the chief who permits the poison cup to be administered is liable to severe penalties. But so universal is the belief in witchcraft that the suppression of the poison cup is adduced as the cause of a great increase in the number of sorcerers, and consequently of the general insecurity.

696 Cattle are sometimes deliberately poisoned. A man has a case at court, and it goes against him, although he is convinced that he is in the right. He is ordered [278] to pay a cow to his antagonist; which he does, but he first poisons it with a slow-working drug, and the animal will die in a few days. The successful litigant, although he knows perfectly the cause of the death,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

696 rarely appeals, convinced, though without reason, that the magistrate will pooh-pooh his story.

231 754 In 1920 a lake-shore chief was fined a large number of cattle ; and the animals, removed to the hills where the veterinary officer lived, did not thrive. The reason is no doubt to be found in the different climate ; but the natives give two quite different ones : many of them were bewitched ; and others were given a slow-working poison by owners who resented the fine. But the fact that many natives willingly bought them when offered for sale seems to indicate not all held the two theories referred to.

231 157 When an epidemic carries off large numbers of cattle, the Konde assume a fatalistic attitude. There is nothing to be done : why worry ? In 1894 immense numbers of cattle died of rinderpest. After learning by divination that neither spirits nor sorcerers had anything to do with it, the people put it down to *Mwanjebe*, a troublesome godlet of the neighbouring Kamanga tribe, against whom there was no appeal, and no protection. They assume the same fatalistic attitude to the interference of the white man, and a supreme distrust of all kinds of injections has arisen in their minds, since the widespread injections of 1918, when many of their cattle died. The chiefs are credited with saying on that occasion, " If the white man wishes to inject, let him inject ! Why make him angry ? Let the cattle die rather." If this is true, it is a testimony to the immense personal prestige of the white man, but is hardly flattering to his veterinary skill. A warning was issued that the flesh of cattle

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

daily for supplies, provided it is again quickly covered up with both sand and flowing water. All this must be done at night lest the hiding-place be revealed to others, and the flesh stolen. 251

Bread is made of twice-ground maize with salt added. It is kneaded into loaves of about three inches thick, and placed in layers, interleaved with banana leaf, in a pot with maize in the bottom. This bread is often taken on a journey, and will keep for five or six days. Eggs are "scrambled," with milk and salt, in a broken pot, but this is a European introduction. No young girl will eat hard-boiled eggs; they produce a snake in the abdomen, which, of course, in turn produces barrenness. 252 [177] [842]

Very unpleasant to our minds are some of the delicious foods the Konde rejoice in: flying ants eaten alive as they are picked up where they fall from their brief honeymoon in the air; crawling white ants, a horrible mass of moving life; the Kungu fly, found on Lake Nyasa, whence it comes ashore in dense clouds, settles on bush and tree, and is shaken off into small baskets, to be taken home and baked into cakes while it is still fresh. In Bundali it is said that some still eat lion's flesh, and once upon a time the crocodile was eaten at Karonga. Sorcerers are accused of devouring human flesh. A new grave is sprinkled with a powerful medicine which makes the corpse come up without disturbing the soil, and the ghoulish feast is enjoyed without leaving a trace of the deed behind. 262 [754 266]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

inspired moments. He is the Maker of sorcerers as well as of common people. "Why do you kill me?" demanded an agonized sorcerer from within the house where they were burning him to death. "Did God not make me as well as you?" "Yes," was the grim reply, "but He also made the grass we burn in November."

776 [754]

The Supreme Being reveals Himself "in divers manners." What is specially great of its kind; a great ox, or even a he-goat; a very big tree, or any other specially impressive object, is called *Kyala*, by which is probably meant that God takes up a temporary abode in them. In a great storm God is walking on the lake. A waterfall, when it is unusually noisy, is His voice. In 1921 God called from a waterfall in the Nserya district during the night, and the message, interpreted by the *abakomwa malago* (inspired persons), was that all must die because of the evil that was rampant in the district. The earthquake is His mighty footstep, and the lightning is *Lesa*, God coming down in anger, when all rational people sit silent or speak in whispers, lest "the anger," hearing them, should smite them down. He sometimes comes in the body of a lion or a snake, and in such a form "He walks among men to see their doings."

He is a God of righteousness, though the Konde idea of righteousness does not always coincide with ours. Unrighteousness is an offence against God, even though they do not always know why, and He never comes except when evil is prevalent, and punishment is needed, a point of view from which it is easy to

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

791 both still living near the lake shore; but the Germans
781 knew nothing of the prophecy. The effect of it, however, was that no local carriers could be recruited, and most of the carriers employed were found among the Basango to the north. Next, it was asserted that the Germans would evacuate Neu Langenburg without fighting, which is what actually happened; and, finally, about the same time, it was declared that the "first-comers" would become lords of the country. These first-comers were Mr. Moir of Glasgow and his companions, who hunted elephant north of the Songwe River in the early eighties. Dr. Laws of Livingstonia visited the north end of the lake much earlier, but that visit did not make the same impression as the more prolonged stay of Mr. Moir and his fellow-hunters.

791 Smallpox is the most dreaded scourge in the district. It is believed to come from the south, pass
753 through the land, and finally to disappear among the
●754 Basango to the north, to whom the Konde consigned, with much gusto, all the evils that they were threatened or afflicted with. Its coming was foretold by the prophets, who declared that it was an act of God in punishment of wickedness. But smallpox was sometimes brought by the sorcerers. These enemies of society were caught in the act—in dreams—by the prophets, who also, in dreams, went out to meet and repel them. If the evil-doers were caught and beaten, their bodies next day would betray them, for the dream-fight is a stern reality, and the body bears the marks of battle. If the prophets succeeded in

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FN17 Ngonde FN17

driving out all the sorcerers, no one would die of 791
smallpox, but one remaining sorcerer could work 753
unlimited mischief so long as he remained undis- 754
covered.

In a community which practises "subsistence 791
agriculture," it is important to know beforehand 261
when the rains will be late, and it is the duty of the prophets to let the chief know, and through him the people, when this will happen. In such a contingency, the chief issues instructions, varying in minuteness, regulating the kinds of food which are to be used, and warning against greed. Punishment used to follow disregard of the prohibition, but the chiefs, although they still issue orders as before, do not now venture to punish offenders, or at any rate they punish none who would be likely to report them to the Administration.

Famine, however, was not always the result of 731
drought. It was often, in the past, the result of war. When a powerful enemy approached, the people left the villages and took refuge in the bush, sometimes for long periods, leaving all that they could not carry to fall into the hands of the invader. The last occasion on which such a famine was foretold was when the Angoni passed through the land seeking a habitation. The people fled before them, and a famine resulted which is still traditionally remembered. With such a powerful enemy approaching, the prophets had an easy task in foreseeing famine.

The death of chiefs is also foretold. The prophets 622
see in dreams the house of a chief being built in the 787

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XX

The Powers of Evil: I. Witchcraft

BELIEF in witchcraft is not among the things that are passing away. So universal is the belief in its malign powers that anyone, except a Christian, who dares to express doubts on the matter, is himself in danger of being denounced as a practiser of the black art. It fills the whole outlook of the common people. If one is persistently ill, and medicines do not cure him, he suspects some one of practising against him; if children die one after the other, both parents cannot escape suspicion, one or other is guilty; if cattle do not give a normal quantity of milk, some one has bewitched them. And there is not a house in all heathen Kondeland that is not, in one way or another, or in many ways, protected by charms and medicines against the power of witchcraft. 754

Witchcraft in Europe is a power gained by traffic with the Evil One, and used by the possessor either for his or her own ends, or hired out for payment. Now among the Konde an *undoi*, witch or wizard, is as much the creation of God as other men are. "God has made men in many images," and upon a few He has bestowed those mysterious and evil powers

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

754 in the presence of which common men, if unprotected, are so helpless.

While common men dread nothing so much as an accusation of witchcraft, there are swaggering fellows, great doctors and others, who boast openly of their powers; and so great is the dread in which they are held, that no one dares to cross them, or to have them brought to trial. All chiefs of any standing are credited with the power of witchcraft, but in their case it is supposed to be a special endowment to enable them to maintain their position against evil-doers.

Witchcraft is hereditary; men and women are born with it; born with two *isota*, serpents, in the stomach, by the power of which they can leave the body, and go about at night, unseen, to work their evil will on man and beast. If a parent is *undosi*, the children will be also; but if an expectant mother knows that her husband is a wizard, she will take care to have her child born at a distance, so that it cannot inherit its father's undesirable powers. If inherited from the mother, it is of peculiar virulence; but if from the father, the powers sometimes lie quiescent, and do no harm to anyone. If the *post mortem* reveals tokens of witchcraft on the left side, it has come from the mother; if on the right, from the father.

The Konde recognize three degrees of power, or of wickedness, in witchcraft. There are the comparatively harmless persons who drink the milk of cows at night, but do no other harm; their punishment, if discovered, is to herd the cattle the whole of the next

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

day; next, those who destroy men and cattle, and everything else, by means of their hidden powers; and finally, the creators of lions, leopards, crocodiles, and eagles, who are the worst enemies of society, but who are held in such fear that they are seldom molested. The official dreamers, already frequently referred to, have one *isota*, serpent, in the stomach, but they are not called wizards; they are witch destroyers, or at least discoverers, for they have the power of seeing in dreams what these evil men are doing, and in dreams going out to fight them. And if, in the dream, the dreamer kills the snake with which he fights, the owner will be found dead in the morning. 754

Perhaps one of the commonest charges of witchcraft is made in connection with the milk supply. As a rule, in December, the chief sends out word that he expects the milk supply to be good for the year; if it turns out to be less than was expected, and if there has been no drought, it is obvious that there has been undue interference, and that on a great scale, with the cattle. The whole of the people of the affected district are summoned to the chief's village, and put to the test; each person bringing all the cattle he possesses. There are two tests: by the ear, and by the stomach, that is to say by poison. The people sit in a great circle, and one after another comes up to the doctor, who bores the ear with a sharp instrument; if the ear is easily bored, the person is innocent: if the skin is tough, and resists, he is guilty, and is ordered to sit on one side, where he is joined by all others who are found out in the same way. 754 695

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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But each person who is declared innocent goes at once, without further parley, to take charge of the cattle which he brought to the meeting. From the guilty persons everything is taken away: cattle, hoes, cooking pots, food stocks; and men are sent at once to burn down their houses. The live stock is the property of the chief, and it is mostly killed on the spot, and eaten, or dried, before the assembly departs; while the wretched criminals are sent out into the world, homeless and in poverty. They are not always expelled from the district, but they usually prefer to go to another chief.

The poison test has the same results for the guilty; but every individual is not necessarily tested. From each village one man is taken, and he drinks for the whole of that community. If he vomits, not only he, but all the village which he represents is innocent. If he does not, it does not follow that he is himself the guilty person, but only that the criminal (or criminals) will be found in his village. They are taken individually, and the poison administered, the innocent vomiting, and the guilty failing to do so. The decoction is never strong enough among the Konde to kill, and therefore other punishments must be found. Not infrequently a dog or a cock is made to take the poison, the results being credited or debited to the person for whom it stands.

The "smelling out" of witches is not generally practised; but there is a woman at Tukuyu, a stout young woman with a hearty laugh, who has the power of picking out the innocent when a general accusation

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

of witchcraft is made. The people are assembled by order of the chief, and the woman walks slowly round the circle, gazing into the eyes of each person, and eliminating the innocent one by one, using no other test than the look in the individual's eyes. Those who remain are guilty. 754 695

Prosperity in another arouses all the evil passions of witches and wizards. But prosperity in itself was, until lately, evidence that the prosperous person was himself a wizard. There is a woman living not far from me who was accused before the British magistrate of pretending to exercise witchcraft, and to obtain cattle and other goods by threatening violence. She was dismissed on technical grounds, but ordered not to return to her own district. In conversation with her after the trial she told me that it was only the presence of the white man that saved her from being burned alive as a witch; the evidence against her being the rapid increase of her live stock. But the increase, she assured me, was "the gift of God." 754 518

Death by burning was the ancient penalty when that was inflicted publicly; but when the witches or wizards themselves undertook to kill a fellow-sorcerer in jealousy, they did it in another way. Leaving their bodies behind them, they go to the house of the victim, enter by the roof, disturbing nothing; and finally enter the stomach of the sleeping person. Thence they wander about to lungs, heart, or liver, and wound him with their "secret spears." Next day the man is ill, and the day following he dies. If the *post mortem* reveals ulcers on heart, lungs, or liver, [683] 754

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

754 it is entirely satisfactory evidence that death was due to witchcraft. The whole population is called up, and the chief directs the application of the poison test, in the manner already described. If the culprits are not discovered, they bring the body of the victim to the surface without disturbing the soil (an art the secret of which is now confined to a very few persons), and indulge in a ghoulish cannibal feast. At Karonga in 1913 a suspicion arose that this had happened, and men who had enjoyed the benefits of many years' training at the Overtoun Institution told me that they did not believe that such things happened now, since Christ had destroyed the powers of evil, but they had no doubt whatever that they happened frequently in the past.

Smallpox is popularly supposed to be due, in many cases, to witchcraft. The witches go to Karonga, or elsewhere, and bring the disease back in a goatskin bag. But not unseen: the ever-watchful dreamers see them, and go out to fight them; but it would seem that there must be occasions when the powers of good are overcome or outwitted by the powers of evil; for smallpox does get in; and the question arises, has it been sent by God, or brought in by wicked persons? The question is soon answered, for plagues brought in by Divine agency never show a long death-roll: God does not do such things. It is the work of the witches, and the test is administered, and the evil-doers punished. It need hardly be added that the poison test is prohibited, and also the ear test, by European government, and that if it is resorted to

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

at all, it is done in secret. But other methods are in use that are not so easy to detect. A suspected person is mercilessly beaten, and there are many who have, under stress of such thrashings, confessed their guilt, lest the thrashing end in death. In the good old days, before the Europeans began to interfere, guilty persons might be burned to death with all their family. To-day, if the chief is afraid to take more drastic steps, the suspected person is warned to depart. Coming out in the morning he finds at his door a banana stem, with leaves tied to the top; and if he refuses the hint, he may be mobbed the same day. Native law gives him the privilege of challenging the poison test, and the unhappy chief in that case must either agree and risk being denounced to the magistrate, or refuse to apply the test and withdraw the charge. The lot of the chief who has to steer his way between native and British law is not always a happy one. In the case I am supposing, if he agrees to the poison test in the hope of escaping the attentions of the police, he may find himself with two deaths on his hands, for both accuser and accused must take the test, and although the poison is usually administered in a weak decoction, still accidents have been known to happen.

A plague of mice is also brought on by witchcraft. At Karonga, a man called Ndambasya, still living at Mfuru, on the Rukuru River, possesses this gift. His grandfather was put to death for the offence, but Ndambasya pursues his nefarious practices under the ægis of the British Government, which is far too

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

754 intelligent to believe such nonsense. The method is to take a male and a female mouse, cover them up in a pot with medicines, and when they have bred they are sent out into the gardens, where they multiply exceedingly. The British method of dealing with this plague is to pay so much for every dead mouse brought in; the Konde believe in getting at the sources of things, and as the source in this case is Ndambasya, he, if left to the tender mercies of his fellows, would die. There was a recrudescence of the plague in the year 1924, and I suspect Ndambasya did not feel too comfortable, for the patience of the people has a habit of coming to a sudden end at times.

The methods by which witches and warlocks work their evil will are many. By the power of the evil eye they stop the milk of cattle, bring illness on children, and cause various kinds of misfortunes to come upon their enemies. One may kill a man by making a wax effigy, and letting it slowly melt before the fire. He will die when the whole has been melted. Pneumonia is brought on by making a small circlet of the leaves or roots from which various kinds of medicines are made, and sticking a wooden pin through it. A banana leaf pinned in four places will lead to the death of the victim, and the *post mortem* will reveal four internal wounds. Certain medicines put into a hole in the ground will turn a blood-red colour. Cover the hole carefully from sight, and in due time your man will cease to trouble you. A sure specific for causing the death of an enemy is made from hair clippings, nail parings, the spittle, earth gathered from

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

the footprints of the victim, and the banana or other leaf on which he sat, mixed with medicines of various kinds. The mixture is not administered to the victim. It is enough that it has been compounded. 754

One more method of operating will be sufficient, though there are many others. The witch or wizard, stark-naked, goes, at night, after all are in bed, to the house of the person he wishes to injure, and there dances the dance called *kuyinga*, and then goes silently away. In the morning a child becomes sick, and shortly dies. Or, if it is not desired to be so unforgiving, the harvest of the victim will be blighted. The wise householder, however, is not without defence. He secures himself and his family, and his gardens, from this kind of thing by placing medicine in the roof of his house, which roots to the spot the dancing wizard, who is found there in the morning, and dealt with.

There is a very complete system of protection, which has been developed during the ages, guarding the person and the community against all kinds of evil, forming, as one writer has remarked, an insurance against accidents and evil powers. The protection against witchcraft is especially complete. 754 789

First, there is the risk of discovery by revelation, as in the dreams already referred to; or by experiment, as when the doctors apply their tests. But although the dreamer sometimes makes his discovery before any evil has been done, he perhaps as frequently fails; and the doctor is never called in until the evil demands drastic treatment.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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Therefore it must be anticipated by the use of powerful medicines, which would probably be called charms in Europe; but as the Konde call them medicines, I prefer to use that term. There is communal protection, and individual. For the former certain herbs are taken, burned into an ash, and mixed with oil. The mixture is put into two horns, one of which is placed in the rafters inside the chief's house, and the other under the eaves outside, and behind. No one may approach the chief's house from behind, for the medicines would destroy him. But, wheels within wheels, another drug is known which can destroy the efficacy of the drugs in the horn, and therefore anyone seen approaching the house from behind would be suspected of trying to nullify the measures taken to ensure public safety. To make this nullifying drug, the leaves of *malimbalimba* and *undurusya* are taken, and their extract added to what is in the horn, which thereupon loses its virtue, and the public are exposed to danger.

To protect individual houses, the leaves of certain trees are taken, and laid on the fire, so that the smoke, spreading through the house, may ensure the safety of the inmates. Then the same leaves, pounded and mixed with water, are sprinkled on the floor; and finally the root of another herb is buried under the doorstep, and will effectually prevent the entrance of witch or warlock. When a new house is being built, this same root is placed in various positions in the foundation, and the house is now protected from turret to foundation-stone, and the inmates dwell in

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

security. As already said, no heathen house is without 789
this protection. Gardens and cattle kraals are pro- 754
tected in similar ways.

But witchcraft spreads its nets far and wide, and it is not enough to protect the house, for a man may be attacked outside. To meet this menace, other measures must be taken. Each person drinks a decoction, and swallows a tiny white stone, found only in the Malila district. The effect of this is to enable him to see in dreams any dangers which threaten him personally from witchcraft; and to make assurance doubly sure, some persons wear charms on neck or wrist or ankle.

No one knows when danger will come upon him. One who looks you steadily in the face is probably a wizard; why else should he look at you so? One who does not return your salutation, or returns it half-heartedly; one who denies the reality of witchcraft; one who is a notorious invader of the rights of husbands; all such men (or women) are to be avoided, for they are all probably dangerous.

And the reproach of witchcraft follows one after 754
death. If the *post mortem* shows marks on the internal 763
organs, the person has died of witchcraft; but if the bowels are swollen or blackened, either to the right or to the left, the dead man was beyond doubt himself a wizard; the swollen condition indicates clearly the presence of the two serpents which were the source of his secret powers. Any suspicion that was formerly entertained against him is now confirmed, and his heirs may find themselves involved in demands for reparation.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

754 789 In 1922 a sorcerer got into the house of the chief Kaloso, near Mwaya. The medicine which is always there brought him to a halt, and when Kaloso rose in the morning, he found him there in the form of an owl! Kaloso is one of the most intelligent chiefs I know; but he sent out word, and his people came in great numbers to see with their own eyes the owl which was a sorcerer caught in the act. The owl was not killed, for who knew what evil might be brought on the district if that were done? I suggested that it was an ordinary owl, which somehow had got into the house the previous evening. But ordinary owls, I was told, do not go into houses, while every one knows that wizards can be changed into owls by the medicine in the chief's house.

754 Sorcerers have naturally means of self-defence not available for common men. One wounded in a fight licks the wound and recovers; or if the wound is inaccessible to his lips, he takes the blood with his hand and swallows it, with the same result. One who has fallen sick of smallpox licks the pustules and recovers.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XXI

The Powers of Evil: II. Destructive Agencies

THE attack upon Society, if one may so describe it, is not confined to the kind of witchcraft dealt with in the preceding chapter. More terrifying perhaps, and certainly more dramatic, is the power which enables certain persons, also called *Abalosi* (witches, wizards), to call up lions, crocodiles, and other agencies of death, and to direct their operations. When a crocodile secures a human victim, it leaves a part for its "father," the witch or wizard. A person killed by a crocodile, but rescued when too late, is not at once buried; the body is watched to see if any token of attack by witchcraft can be detected.

More important, however, is the *umperangalamu*, the lion-maker. Let it be again noted that, as in the cases of smallpox, a long death-roll of people killed by a lion is not the act of God; God does not do such things. It is the work of an evil agent, operating for hire, or to serve his own purposes.

Sir Harry Johnston in his "British Central Africa," tells that when an attack was planned by the British forces upon a certain slave-raiding chief, a friend of

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

754 the latter, unable to send help in men, sent his son to raise all the lions and leopards in the country against the invaders. So confident were the people of the power of this man, that they did not even go out to fight until the British force was upon them; and even then they made but a faint resistance, believing that the lions and leopards would ultimately come to their aid.

At least three men who claim, or are believed to possess, this power, are alive to-day in or near the Konde country. At Deep Bay, Kayiparule is popularly supposed to have it, and at Fulirwa, not far off, Nkurunganga; both of whom now disclaim knowledge of the secret, though they boast that their fathers knew it.

Kabeta of Musomba village, in the Isoko district, is perhaps the most famous of these men. In 1920 he was hired by a man called Mwamswero to kill men, women, and children in the Nyondo district in Nyasaland. The chief Nyondo was believed to have killed the brother of Mwamswero, and had paid only three cows instead of five to the family of the murdered man. The injured family, having no remedy against the chief, determined to call in other resources, and hence the employment of Kabeta. In the year indicated, a lion killed several people in seven different villages, all belonging to the chief Nyondo, and Kabeta demanded payment. Mwamswero offered him four cows, but the lion-maker demanded five, otherwise Mwamswero himself would be the next victim. In a public inquiry, Kabeta acknowledged

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

having received the cattle, but admitted that he was deceiving the people. 754

There is a medicine which protects those who have it against these lions. Kabeta himself, on the occasion referred to, gave medicine to the people of Chinunka, and to the son of Nyondo. To Mwakapalira of Chinunka he gave charms to put on his neck, and a rod to carry in his hand, with the assurance that these gave perfect protection to whoever carried them. One Sunday, Mwakapalira sent his two wives to the garden to get *malesi* to make beer; on the way they met some Christians, who told them that it was Sunday, and they should not do such work; but the women replied that God did not stop working on Sunday, and in any case they were adequately protected. One of the women was killed within an hour by a lion, and belief in Kabeta's charms against his own lions fell to zero. 754 789

Individual protection, however, is not enough, and when such visitations threaten, the chief usually takes measures for the public safety. The following is the method practised by the chief Mwenemusuku: his doctor takes the heart and claws of a lion, which he boils together with the flesh of the dread flying-serpent *inyifiwira;* the chief eats the heart of the lion, and is assured by the doctor that he is now himself a lion. The rest of the medicine is powdered and sent to all the headmen. These send out men to "walk the marches," bearing some of the medicine, and praying as they go:

"Ye spirits, be gracious to us. This evil that is coming upon us, we know not whence it is. If it

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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is the act of God, let it work, His house is great. But if it is the act of men, let it go where the sin is. I and mine have done nothing amiss."

As they go, they chew, for their own protection, the leaves of a shrub called *munyekomaso*, putting the chewed leaves into a small sack at the side. The common people are warned to go in certain directions only for wood and water as long as the lion is known to be about. When it approaches a village, the local headman speaks:

> "You lion, if you have been sent out by men, follow where your prey leads you; if you are from God, His house is great, go where you will."

Just how much effect this has on the lion, need not, perhaps, be too closely investigated.

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There are numerous stories, which, if they do nothing else, illustrate the naïve faith of native Christians in the protecting care of God. A school inspector, going his rounds in 1920, when Kabeta's lion was about, was offered the use of the protecting drugs, but refused. "God Himself," he said, "is my protector." In 1913 an evangelist was followed for some distance by a lion, and at last turned on the brute:

> "You lion," he said, "you have no master. I have a Master, Jesus Christ. I do not fear you. Do not follow me; get off in another direction";

which the lion, after roaring angrily, did! In the same year a lion was moving about on the lake shore,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

but the Christians, secure in their faith, refused to be 781
kept from their gardens. No one, so far as I heard, 797
either Christian or heathen, was killed at that time. A Christian man, walking alone through the bush, was chased by an elephant. "And God said, 'Look,' and I looked, and behold a pit; and I went down into it, and the elephant passed me by; and again God said 'Look,' and I looked, and behold in the pit a very evil snake." There the written report ends; but as I had myself seen this man holding "a very evil snake" alive in his hand, I have no reason to doubt that he acted with promptitude in the pit.

The *inguluka* is a whitish snake, about four feet 754 ●
long, with a deadly bite. That it should exist at all 789
is bad enough; but there are sorcerers who create it for their own purposes. Mwankosore, who lives about two miles from me, is believed to possess this power. He takes the roots of the *pusi* tree, which he puts into a pot along with a powerful medicine, and in a little time a snake emerges. The secret of this medicine is known to a very few, and is guarded by word and by spell. The intending purchaser must face a guard of other snakes sent out to kill him by the makers of the drug; should he, however, kill the snakes, he is acknowledged to be a great doctor, and a supply of the medicine is given to him, for which he pays a cow.

When a sorcerer wishes to kill an enemy, he takes 754
in his hand the snake he has created, and drops it at the house of his intended victim. It immediately makes for the doomed man, strikes, and returns with

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•754 all speed to its "father." Should the victim have the good fortune to kill it, it will return to its original elements, and appear before him as a mere root of a tree.

The next class of people who possess destructive powers are the poisoners. Direct evidence is naturally hard to get, for the poisoner must act in secret. The poison need not be administered directly, though that is often done; if placed where the victim will touch it, it is enough; over the door, where it will drip on his head, or on the threshold, where he will touch it with his foot. Death will follow. In 1905 a man called Ulukamba had a quarrel with a neighbour, and sent his son to place medicine in the doorway of his enemy. Two days later a son of the latter died suddenly. The boy who placed the medicine gave away the secret, by telling some one, and Ulukamba was put to the poison test, which condemned him, and he was ordered to pay over two cows. He refused, threatened to inform the magistrate that the chief had consented to the poison ordeal, and the case had to be dropped. But the belief that he killed the boy is still firmly held by all the people of his village. There was no case against the boy who placed the medicine, as he was obeying orders issued by his father.

828 593 The destructive power of anger is firmly believed in by the Konde. To speak the name of a brother in anger, is strictly forbidden, for it may lead to his death. The process is rationalized thus: the spirits hear the words of anger, and, assuming that there is

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

MAIN CULTURAL FEATURES

Religion

769 The ancestor cult was the main feature of Ngonde religion. As long as a man had alive a father, father's full brother, or a senior brother, this senior kinsman dealt with the ancestral spirits, not only on his behalf, but also on behalf of his wives and children. In the absence of sickness or misfortune no appeal was made to the spirits. If the diviner diagnosed anger of the ancestors as cause, the senior kinsman had to pray for the sick one. If the half-brothers lived at a distance from each other after the death of their father and uncles, each might pray to the spirits to cure a little sickness, but if it persisted a message had to be sent to the senior kinsman. Wrongs which aroused the anger of the spirits were usually breaches of family morality, insult to a father, neglect of responsibilities by an heir. Offerings consisted of a bull, hen, or beer in the case of commoners; a cow in the case of a chief. The worship of dead chiefs as such was not connected with everyday morality. On the offering of cows by chiefs to their immediate ancestors depended the food and health of the chiefdom and the fertility of women and cows.[1]

769 Each Kyungu was buried in the valley around Mbande, and the grove was planted with trees, making a sacred grove. In times of drought and widespread sickness, sacri-
643 fices were made at the groves under the guidance of a diviner.[2] An insult to the living Kyungu was believed to cause a drought. Each chief or noble was believed to be able to avert local misfortunes for his own people, and the head of every family participated in the divinity of his own ancestors. The great commoners of each chief were believed to have independent access to his ancestral spirits, and so to have a hold upon him. The nobles of Ngonde had a similar power over the Kyungu.

643 As the Kyungu's health was bound up with the welfare of the community, elaborate precautions to maintain his health and to protect him from the danger of sexual impurity were taken, and when he ailed he was killed by suffocation.[3]

778 Sacred lagoons by the lake were associated not with the ancestors, but with a vague supreme deity, *Mbumba*.[4]

796 There were two important annual rituals for the whole tribe in addition to the special sacrifices to avert misfortune. One was the clearing out of the ashes each year after the break of the rains, which was performed on the order of the Kyungu, given through the nobles of Ngonde. The second was the elaborate first-fruits ceremony: fruits were offered by the nobles of Ngonde, in the grove of the last dead Kyungu, and then by the great chiefs, each in the grove of his own predecessor. The nobles and the chiefs of the hills had similar rituals, but they were not synchronized with those of the plain.[5]

Witchcraft

754 The Ngonde believe that certain men and women have the power of harming their
626 neighbours and neighbours' cattle without taking any overt action. The witchcraft is hereditary, and of particular virulence if inherited through the mother.[6] Witches exert their influence at night in dreams. There are two kinds of witches, *anamanga*, defender

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, pp. 256–7; 1, 1936, p. 82; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 191 and 196, also Ch. VII.
[2] Wilson, 3, 1939, pp. 29–30.
[3] Ibid., p. 34; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 178–97.
[4] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 230–63.
[5] Ibid., pp. 32–6.
[6] Wilson, 3, 1939, pp. 19–20.

4: Tew E-A (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

757 witches, who use their power beneficently and spend their dreams in efforts to counter-
626 act the aggressor witches, *ewalosi*, who use their power maliciously. The great commoner is the strongest of the former type, and the 'defender of the village'. A man who earns universal unpopularity is subject to a spiritual attack from the 'defenders', and is liable to fall sick from the blast of unpopularity. Belief in this efficacy of the 'breath of men' is one of the sanctions of the accepted social order.[1]

Only magic is believed to have power to punish wrongdoers who are neither kinsmen nor members of the same chiefdom. Magic exerts an influence on the behaviour of kinsmen and affines. The witchcraft of a neglected wife may cause a man to fall sick, or that of his father-in-law may harm his children.[2] The power of witchcraft never acts between relatives, though it might between husband and wife.[3]

759 An aggressor witch was reported in the old days by the great commoner to the chief,
627 who ordered the poison ordeal. If the accused failed to vomit (the dose was seldom fatal), he was proved guilty and killed or exiled, all his cows and property being taken by the chief and the victims of his aggressive witchcraft. If a private individual accused another, both were put to the ordeal; if both vomited, the accuser had to pay two cows to the other for slander; if either failed to vomit he was punished as guilty. The ordeal is now illegal, but men accused of aggressive witchcraft still find it best to fly the chiefdom. Great commoners normally used their witchcraft powers to protect their chief from attack, but if he erred they would join in the attack on him; the nobles of Ngonde had power to exert a similar constitutional check on the Kyungu.[4]

763 If death by aggressive witchcraft was suspected, it was proved or disproved by a routine post-mortem examination and by subsequent consultation with the diviner.[5]

Birth

844 A child should be born in its own father's house. A difficult birth is a sign of the
845 guilt of adultery, and is eased by confession.[6] A few days after the birth the mother is anointed, shaved, and resumes her household duties. She later goes on a visit of some
851 weeks to show the child to her own parents, returning to her husband after celebration by both sets of grandparents, and exchanges of food and hoes. The birth of twins was a great misfortune, requiring the segregation and ritual purification of both parents.[7]

Initiation

861 There was no puberty or initiation rite for boys. The initiation of a girl was really a pre-marriage rite. She went through a complicated rite to ensure fertility, in which the husband took part. The initiation lasts some months, and includes several exchanges of food between the families of the girl and her betrothed husband, and ceremonies in which her girl friends of the same village and his friends of his village take part. The girl is tested for virginity during the ceremonies. If she is not betrothed before puberty the initiation is carried out in a modified form, but the full significance is lost.[8]

[1] Wilson, 1, 1936, p. 277.
[2] Ibid., 3, 1939, p. 38.
[3] Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 11; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 42-3.
[4] Ibid., pp. 42-6. According to H. H. Johnston, if the children died in succession the father was expected to kill himself, but it is possible that he is confusing a custom of the Southern Tumbuka (1897, p. 477).
[5] Ibid., 1925, p. 51; Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 11; Wilson, 1, 1936, p. 256.
[6] Ibid., p. 256.
[7] Ibid., 1, 1936, p. 91.
[8] Johnston, 1897, p. 443.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

incorporating the previous inhabitants. Now saturation point has been reached; their chiefdoms cover nearly all the available land and include in their membership all the indigenous people; and the custom of dividing chiefdoms into two is doomed. At the moment, however, it is still a vital part of their constitutional law. The division of a chiefdom is apparent from the moment that a ruling chief marries his two great wives, for he builds their houses separately, one in each "side" (*ububafa*) of his chiefdom. The son of each great wife inherits that side of the chiefdom in which his mother's house is built. 631 622

When the ruling chief begins to get old the two heirs are ceremonially "brought out" and recognized as chiefs, though they do not assume full powers until their father's death. And their "coming out" is also the "coming out" of all the young men, of all the boys' villages which have been built by the sons of the old chief's men. At the "coming out" each such village is formally given land by the old chief and his great-commoners, often in a new place. 622 621

In every village there is a headman whose title, *ubifumu*, is simply a specialized use of the general term for a member of an old family who is not a chief. Every commoner is called an *ubifumu* in his home chiefdom.[1] These two uses of the term I distinguish by calling the village headman a "great-commoner." Great-commoners, then, are selected for their wealth and ability by the older great-commoners of the chiefdom and hold office for life. In the boys' villages before the "coming out" they are chosen by the older great-commoners—those in charge of their fathers' villages—on that side of the chiefdom. If they prove satisfactory their appointments are confirmed by all the great-commoners of the old chiefdom at the "coming out," if not new ones are then selected. 621 624

At the "coming out" the young great-commoners are ritually treated with medicines to give them the power of witchcraft which they are expected to use in the interests of morality, while the young chiefs are treated with medicines to make them fierce and impressive themselves and to ensure the fertility of their land and the prosperity of the people under them. [759] [760]

Traditionally the young chiefs assumed authority, each in the young men's villages which composed his own new chiefdom, immediately after the "coming out" and in the old villages in one side of his father's chiefdom when his father died. To-day the position differs for the Administration does not recognize the young chiefs at all until their father is dead. 621 622

The separation of chiefdoms established at the "coming out" is often modified subsequently. In the old days brother chiefs frequently

[1] Vide infra p. 33.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

vary in different circumstances. Millet and rice, the two most valuable crops, belong to the man and are stored by him; so that the division of a millet or rice garden into plots and their assignment to different wives is rather a division of labour than of property. But of all other crops the woman on whose plots they have grown is an effective owner. She stores them herself in her own house and no other wife of her husband can touch them; it is only with him that her rights are in any way shared. 241 592 921

The main use of the crops which the Nyakyusa grow is to provide food for each separate household group. Next in importance is the provision of food and beer for hospitality, and for the making of gifts both in everyday life and on special ceremonial occasions. And, finally, there is the barter or sale of surplus crops to obtain salt, pots, clothes, cattle and to pay tax. Each married woman, therefore, first uses her own crops to feed her husband, her own children and herself. If she is the only wife then she cooks for her husband every day, but, even if she is one of many, she is yet careful to cook for him frequently, in order to keep his affection and the various advantages which go with it. 592 593 579 [457]

When cooking for her husband she must, when necessary, prepare sufficient for guests, for a man very often has friends and neighbours eating with him; and if he wishes to make a gift of cooked food, she cooks it for him from her own store. To provide meals for him and his guests and cooked food for gifts is an obligation which she normally fulfils quite willingly, as we have hinted above; she may be fond of him; it is in any case to her interest to play her part in the co-operative relationship which binds them together and from which both alike benefit. He hoes for her and builds her house, he gives her a share of the household milk, which he himself controls, he sleeps with and is gentle to her; he has, without the aid of any legal, moral or conventional sanctions, a great hold over her, as she, on her side, has over him. But, if either fails to play their part in willing co-operation, then there are, for both alike, these other sanctions to fall back upon. A quarrel develops between them and leads to violence, perhaps he strikes her, perhaps she viciously repels him, one night, from her bed; and then the immediately injured party appeals to the neighbours for support. They discuss the matter, censure one or the other, and try to make it up between them; if they fail to do so the case may go to Court and one will then have to pay compensation to the other. Or it may happen, without any violent quarrel, without any formal appeal to the neighbours, that one of them becomes aware that his conduct is provoking their mockery and criticism; and then in shame he mends his ways. Or, finally, one of them may fall sick and suspect that wrong-doing on his part has been followed by spiritual retribution in the form of witchcraft. 593 [579] [627] [626] [759]

A woman, then, uses her stores of food to seek not only for herself

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

favourite. What they said about her being, perhaps, his favourite was just their way of putting it." 421 515

Before passing to the discussion of the disposal of surplus crops we must dwell a little on the importance of a fair division of land between the several wives of a polygynist. Not only garden plots but also the bananas growing on the homestead are divided between them. Each wife is allotted a number of banana stems and is responsible for keeping their roots clear of weeds and she is also expected to weed and sweep the adjacent portion of the open space (*ulubingilo*). In the sweeping her husband will often assist her, her fellow wife will not. The bunches which grow on her own banana stems are her property and not even her husband will cut them without consulting her, save in exceptional circumstances. In every polygynous household, then, a division of garden plots and bananas is made between the wives, and, as it is made by the husband, it is a most important element of their relationships with one another.

For every man with more than one wife has a favourite, and, if he allows his affection for her to express itself in an inequitable division of land, then there is trouble in store: "Each wife is the owner of a plot (*ulupaka*) and each harvests and weeds it and keeps the food separately. The wives help each other if friendly but each wife must have her own plot—a maize plot, a bean plot, a cassava plot, a plot of sweet-potatoes, and so on. The bananas also are divided between the wives.

"A polygynist when he hoes his gardens is always afraid to give to any one wife a bigger plot than to another. For it is thought that the wife who gets the smaller plot will whisper complaints of her husband among the people; and whispering complaints of a man brings witches to kill him. It is feared that in such a case, either the husband or else the favoured wife will be killed (by witchcraft). In consequence a man is always exceedingly careful, in dividing his garden into plots, to treat his wives fairly. But even so he will perhaps give to the wife whom he loves the plot with the best soil! And it happens sometimes that a polygynist's wife, when given a smaller plot than her co-wives, will sulk and refuse to plant: 'Why,' she asks, 'do you give me such a small garden plot? Did I not cook for you while you were hoeing?' And, if her husband then loses his temper and strikes her, she will make a case before the neighbours. And they will say to him: 'Friend, you should make a just division, you will only set your wives against one another by not doing so and make them kill one another.' By this they mean that if one wife is angered she will bring the witches to kill her fellow wives! [754] [627]

"And if a woman is restless with her husband and is herself considering leaving him then she will be forever going and complaining to her 586

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

586 mothers[1] in secret that she is in trouble and that her husband has no regard for her, that he grudges her garden plots and gives her only small ones. Then maybe her mothers will take the initiative in suggesting that she should leave this man who is no husband and who loves her not. And they will tell their husband, her father, that his child is in trouble and—only think of it!—has scarcely a ridge[2] to call her own. So that if the girl does then find life with her husband intolerable and leaves him, her father will not be too hard on his daughter, he will not compel her to go back to him; for he knows that she was in trouble."

421 626 ●754] This statement, written by an educated Nyakyusa, brings out very clearly both the fact that men do at times divide their land unfairly and the nature of some of the sanctions which operate against such injustice. The faith in witchcraft provides a moral sanction of which, if the man is fool enough to disregard it, he is very likely explicitly reminded in the course of the subsequent legal proceedings; the injured wife has an immediate hold over him in virtue of the relationship of practical co-operation and emotional intimacy in which they stand to each other, a hold which, if he attempts to break it by recourse to violence, is strengthened and given a legal form by the support of their neighbours. The support of her kin is an alternative legal force[3] which an injured wife

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[1] i.e. her father's wives.

[2] For many crops the ground is hoed into ridges.

[3] Some readers may be puzzled by and somewhat critical of the meaning with which the concept of law is employed in this paper. This is not the place to meet their criticisms, but, in order to avoid misunderstanding, it is necessary to define that meaning precisely. Law, then, is here distinguished alike from morality with its religious sanctions, from convention with its constraining sense of shame and from the reciprocity dictated by self-interest—with all of which it is in fact inextricably intertwined. Law is here taken to be that normal or customary form of action in society which is kept in being by the inherent necessities of systematic cooperation among its members. The particular form of law varies in different areas of society in accordance with the particular conditions of each area; but some normal form of action there must be everywhere if social life is to continue; anarchy is, in the strictest sense of the word, impracticable. A breach of law is a course of action, on the part of some individual or minority group, which is inconsistent with the normal and accepted form of cooperative action, and which would therefore, if unchecked, make continued relationship between the lawbreakers and the other members of their society wholly impossible; it threatens to dissolve society into anarchy. But breaches of law are always in fact checked, as they must be, by the actions of those with whom the lawbreakers are in practice related; and it is these actions which are the sanctions of law.

If law is to be preserved it is necessary that the actions which sanction it should have an irresistible force, the lawbreaker must normally be helpless before them; and they are only thus irresistible if the great majority of those people with whom the lawbreaker is effectively related do in fact either participate in or at least approve of them. Now in civilized areas of society, in which vast numbers of people are related, legal sanctions must be applied by a central authority if they are to be effective, for only such a central

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

far as as men compete for land that rules of tenure are developed among them. And where competition is weakest there the rules are least strict.

In Nyakyusa society every married man holds land of his own for building and agriculture, for there is still enough for all, and pastures his cattle on the grasslands of some village group. His land rights, in which, as we have seen, his wives and children participate, are conditioned at every point by his membership of a particular village, his allegiance to a particular chief and by the particular cultural idiom of his tribal group. 423

Before the "coming out" a boy's village, as we have seen, is built on land assigned for the purpose by the parent village. A block of land for building is set aside by the great-commoner in consultation with the other men as their sons begin to reach the age of leaving home, and there the boys are often joined later by contemporaries, sons of other villages of men. At first building sites alone are needed, but later, as the boys grow up and get married, they need gardens too and bring the adjacent ground under cultivation. In doing so they are careful not to infringe upon their fathers' land rights, they either hoe land which was previously unowned[1] or else that which has been specifically granted to them by the parent village. Into the nature of such grants of garden land before the "coming out"—whether they are block grants by the parent village as a whole to the boys' village as a whole, or separate grants by individuals to individuals—I omitted to enquire. 361 425

At the "coming out" a whole tract of land is formally allotted to each village of young men by the old chief and his great-commoners and within this tract individuals take up garden land by hoeing it. At the "coming out" it is said that "everything is made new," boundaries are redrawn and the new chiefdoms and villages of the young men are ceremonially incorporated.

The situation in which individual land rights in relation to the village group and the chief are clearest to an observer is that of the taking up of land after a move, for it is in this situation that disputes are most frequent. 423

Mainly owing to their religious beliefs movement from one place to another is constant among the pagan Nyakyusa. If a man or his wife or child falls sick and does not respond quickly to medical treatment the witchcraft of neighbours is at once suspected as a possible cause; there are always other possible causes too so diviners are consulted in order to decide between them; but if the suspicion of neighbourly witchcraft is confirmed then the cure for the sickness is held to lie in moving. In every village "some people" are vaguely believed to have the power of 166 754

[1] Vide infra, pp. 41-2.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 witchcraft, which consists in the ability to translate evil impulses into
759 effective though immaterial actions and thus to cause sickness and death; but it is never clearly known who all these people are. And so the coincidence of an obstinate illness with any quarrel or social tension of any kind between neighbours gives rise to a suspicion that witchcraft is at work. If the diviners support this theory then almost the only thing to be done nowadays is to move and get out of range; for witchcraft cannot act at a distance. In the old days an alternative course of action was
[68] open to the sick man, he might identify the witch with the aid of the *musafi* ordeal and get him expelled from the chiefdom. Expulsions for witchcraft still occur to-day, but only rarely, for the *musafi* ordeal, the most certain detector of witches, is no longer legal. There is, however, nothing to prevent a man who thinks himself bewitched from moving. Now this fact of constant movement is of the utmost importance in determining the Nyakyusa system of land tenure since it tends to prevent the development of any exclusive attachment to particular pieces of ground. And the cause of this constant movement is mainly, though not entirely, the fear of witchcraft.

For ordinary commoners only their immediate neighbours are believed to be dangerous and sick men therefore sometimes move only from one village to another of the same chiefdom; but very many move right outside to another chiefdom altogether, preferring to make assurance doubly sure and to put a long distance between themselves and their spiritual persecutors. And in the case of certain men of a high social status, for whom a wider circle is dangerous, it is held to be quite essential to leave the chiefdom.

166 I have no detailed statistics on moving but I estimate that, among the pagan Nyakyusa, at least 80% of the married men have, at some time or other, moved from the chiefdoms in which they first cultivated gardens of their own. They may stay away for a few weeks only, they may stay away for thirty years or they may never return at all. If, however, the chiefdom from which they first moved is the one which they regard as home then they usually do return to it in the end. A man's home chiefdom is pre-eminently the one in which his father lives, or, if dead, spent most of his life and is now buried. And this is normally the one in which he himself also was born and brought up and in which he first took up land.

166 When a man moves from his home chiefdom, his village neighbours
621 there, in the majority of cases, follow him within two months and ceremonially invite him back with a show of force by seizing his belongings and carrying them off home to his old village. They may really like and respect him and if, as is usually the case, he has moved because of sick-

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 out boundaries, drawing lines on the ground; he divided the land into
423 three portions, one for each. The others were strangers to the chiefdom
425 but had taken a fancy to that piece of land."

622 The sentence in this story "The chief gave the garden land of
624 Mwakajileke to other people" deserves remark for it in no way implies any other custom than the one we have previously described. And it illustrates the dangers of relying too much on verbal statements of custom. When a stranger is given land by a great-commoner after reference to the chief he is commonly said to have been given it by the chief. The chief, from one point of view, is the overlord and the great-commoner acts for him. But, and this is an essential qualification, the great-commoner nearly always so acts for the chief and, save exceptionally, it is wholly incorrect for the chief to grant land directly. The great-commoner acts not only for the chief but also as the representative and leader of the villagers; and in relation to them the chief cannot exercise his rights of overlordship save occasionally and in particular circumstances.

166 The old Kukwe great-commoner whom we have already quoted
423 explained this to me very clearly: "Occasionally one of his own men will
425 ask a chief to give him ground to hoe in another village, 'If indeed you
621 say that the land is yours!' (challenging the chief to assert his right of
622 overlordship). Then the chief agrees that all the land is most certainly his; but still, if it is possible, he tells the man to go to the commoners of that village and ask them for land. If the chief does not do this (but makes a direct grant of land) we blame him for not being a true chief: 'Who is it,' we ask him, 'that has built up this country? Did you do it all by yourself? It is we the commoners who have built it up! And how is it, then, that you give this man land without consulting us?'"

● [164 626] Nor is the censure of his people mere idle talk for a Nyakyusa chief, he fears that they may bewitch him, that the witches among them, led by the great-commoners of the several villages, may come in dreams at night and cause him to sicken or to die.

166 So much for the initial grants of land to newcomers and the rights of
423 men returning to their home chiefdoms. If a man goes back, after moving, to a chiefdom which is in no sense his home, where, that is to say, he is not a member of an old family but in which he has himself spent some years, he is treated as a newcomer. He is welcomed but he has no rights to the ground, whether building-site or garden, which he previously occupied.

423 Once established in a village, however, any man can hoe any unowned
425 ground within its borders and thereby make it his own. A newcomer for

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 559 643 status it rightly belonged, he would at once fall down dead. And many stories are still told of such happenings in the past.

And besides this there was the fact that the Kyungu, being the richest man in Ngonde and in the most intimate contact with the ivory traders, could secure medicines from a distance, which had a greater reputation than local ones.

781 771 559 But, as in the theistic aspect of the religion of Ngonde there was considerable local and family autonomy, so also was there in the magical aspect; and here there was individual autonomy also. Lesser rulers had lesser magic than Mbande, but still it was magic. Ordinary chiefs, for instance, had magically filled zebra tails which gave their people military success. And every individual could go to a doctor and exchange a little of his surplus food for magic. Success in love and hunting, in warfare and legal disputes, good crops and good health—all alike, it was believed, magic could give.

(c). *THE ELEMENT OF WITCHCRAFT.*

759 622 624 Both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa it was believed that certain commoners had snakes in their stomachs which gave them the power of witchcraft (*uwalosi* or *uwanga*[1]) and among those who had this power were the great-commoners of every chiefdom. Normally a ruling chief was spiritually protected by his great-commoners from the malicious attacks of other witches, but, if he did wrong, then the great-commoners, so it was held, would cease to protect him and join in the attack.

Now in many circumstances the great-commoners' power of witchcraft and the power of the chief's dead predecessors were believed to act together. The anger of witches and that of the ancestors were sharply distinguished in theory, but in practice they often coincided. The great-commoners, for example, not only had the power of bewitching their chief but also of appealing to his predecessors to punish him for wrong-doing; and on particular occasions they were often believed to do both at once.[2] And the nobles of Ngonde had similar powers in relation to the Kyungu.[3]

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[1] *Uwalosi* is normally used when the act of witchcraft is disapproved of and *uwanga* when it is approved of by the speaker.

[2] A point of considerable theoretical interest is raised by the repeated statements of our best informants on these matters that it was because they were witches that the great-commoners had this power of influencing the chief's ancestors, that they 'went to the chief's ancestors' in their capacity of witches and in the exercise of witchcraft (i.e. by means of the snakes in their stomachs). But our evidence on this point is not yet conclusive.

[3] So we were told when we put the question; but it was never volunteered. It was the hold which the nobles of Ngonde had over the Kyungu in consequence of his magical feats which was the more emphasised.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

These twin religious powers of the great-commoners in relation to their chief (or of the nobles of Ngonde in relation to the Kyungu) were important for the balance of the constitution, for they provided a most effective check upon the actions of the chiefs. If a chief kept within the bounds of constitutional usage then any illness that he had would be attributed by the diviners to some such cause, as the infidelity of his wives or the breach of a taboo; but if he broke some constitutional usage then that would be taken to be the cause of his next illness; the great-commoners, it would be held, were angry and so had made him ill.

It is hardly necessary to stress the local and individual autonomy implicit in the faith in witchcraft. Not only were the great-commoners as a group believed to have an irresistible power through their witchcraft over their chief, but so were the great-commoner and the leading witches of every village believed to have an irresistible power over other individuals within that village. And in both cases their powers were strictly limited, save exceptionally, by the bounds of chiefdom or village. Moreover witches did not always act as a group, an individual witch might maliciously cause another individual to fall ill. In all this the political hierarchy was irrelevant. But it was not irrelevant in dealing with accusations of malicious witchcraft; there proof rested with the poison ordeal and a journey had to be made to a great chief or a leading noble.

4. *ECONOMIC ELEMENTS (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

We have suggested in the previous section that the traditional religious paramountcy of the Kyungu and his nobles of Ngonde was an important factor of their secular power. But comparison with the Nyakyusa shows us that their control of wealth was equally important. The religious paramountcy furnished a mould into which the stiffening stream of wealth could run and there be minted into the form of sovereignty. Much of the wealth which reached Mbande did not stay there; it was passed back piecemeal to the local rulers of Ngonde, stamped with the divine impress of the Kyungu.

(a) *THE INCOME OF MBANDE AND OTHER AUTHORITIES.*

Now the traditional income of Mbande consisted of ivory, food, labour, slaves and cattle. Of ivory the Kyungu had a semi-monopoly in the plain and received tribute from the territorial nobles in the hills. Food was brought to him by the chiefs and territorial nobles of the plain, who also, with their men, hoed his public gardens (*imilasa*). Slaves and cattle accrued to him from tribal wars and from his offending

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ever made to the spirits, but when some member of a family or his wife or 769
child falls sick the anger of the spirits is often suspected as a possible 753
cause. There are usually other reasons suspected as well, and so the [787]
sickness is taken to a diviner for diagnosis. Various causes are suggested to the diviner and he selects one among them. If the anger of the spirits is selected then this senior kinsman must pray for the one who is sick, if he is to recover. When half-brothers live at a distance from one another, after their father and his brothers have died, then each may pray to the spirits to cure a little sickness in his own family but if the sickness persists then a message must be sent to the senior kinsman. And, as the anger of the spirits is due to wrong doing, the sinner must reform his ways as well.

The wrongs which rouse the spirits to anger are usually breaches of 673
family morality. If a son does not respect his father or insults him, if an heir neglects to feed and provide for the dead man's children, then when sickness falls on him or his own children it will probably be traced to the anger of the spirits at his behaviour.

Space does not allow any full analysis of religion in family life and in 754
the relationships of kinsmen and affines. Not only the ancestor cult but 771
witchcraft and magic are factors in them. A man's neglect of a wife or his cruelty to her may, it is believed, lead to his falling sick through her witchcraft and that of sympathetic neighbours; his relations with his father-in-law are affected by the fear that if he offends him, his father-in-law may, by magical means, kill his children, and so on.

Wider kinship groupings than the family gather at ceremonies and 614
are recognized in the rules against incest. But there are no clans; there is no descent group continuous down the generations with a common name and definite membership. Each individual family has its own penumbra of kinsfolk, the effective kindred of a man and his son, or of two half-brothers are not all the same, while each single person is especially related by respect, affection and mutual obligations to particular kinsmen beyond his own family. Descent, as we have seen, is patrilineal 611
except in the case of illegitimate children. A man asked for his *ekekalo* 614
always recites first the names of his paternal forbears as far as he can [748]
remember. But if he is related through mother or grandmother to a chief he usually volunteers this fact as part of his *ekekalo*; and questions always elicit some knowledge of his mother's paternal kinsfolk and a statement that "they are my *ekekalo* too." Descendants of a common grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are to-day forbidden to marry, 582
and no case of infringement has come to my notice; descendants of a common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry but, I am told,

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

he settles many legal disputes between his neighbours. The village is, 621
both for men and women, the chief field of friendship, conversation and mutual hospitality; and its members recognize greater obligations towards one another than they do towards those outside. Before the coming of the Europeans the age-village was also a military unit, led by its own great commoner, in the constant fights between chiefdoms.

In most villages there are several herds of cattle which feed separately. 231
The herd boys, as we have seen, thus form separate groups within the 621
village, so also do their fathers; the boys are related in the common activity of herding, the men, owners of the herd, by their joint interest in it and their common fear of witchcraft.

In the relationships of villagers the belief in witchcraft is a constantly 754
recurring factor. It is believed that certain people, both men and women 791
have the power of harming their neighbours and their neighbours' cattle without taking any overt action whatever, without reciting any spells or performing any magical ritual at all.

Their influence, which is exercized at night in dreams, is only fully visible to those who are themselves endowed with this power; and to it is constantly attributed both sickness in men and the failure of cows to give milk. In this belief the elements of actual ill will and quarreling, of actual sickness and the failure of cows to give milk and of actual dream experiences are combined in a significant whole. Witches are of two kinds, they say, those who use their power rightly (*awa mangga*) and those who use it wrongly (*awalan*). The first kind are said generally to spend their dreams in trying to prevent the others from harming those whom they hate. The good witches are the "defenders of the village," and in each village the great commoner is believed to be the first among them. In each group of men whose cows are herded together there is, again, commonly one man who has the reputation of defender of the herd, who is believed to protect the cows from the witchcraft of disgruntled individuals whether members of that small group or not. But if, at any time, a single person earns a general unpopularity in the village, whether by his pride, his meanness or by wrongdoing, then it is believed that the defenders themselves lead the spiritual attack against him, and he falls sick. Such a blast of unpopularity acting through the power of witchcraft is called the "breath of men" (*ombepo ya vandu*); and the belief in 681
its efficacy is one of the chief sanctions of the accepted social order of Nyakyusa life.[10]

[10] c.f. Godfrey Wilson "An African Morality" *Africa* Jan. 1936.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631
476 all, hunting is organized like warfare and fishing is a joint endeavour, both ordered by the chief.

471 Every chief has a title of ownership (*obwene nakyo*) to the land of his
622 chiefdom and can evict any man he pleases, (giving him another plot), if he wishes to build there himself; but his people also have titles of ownership to it, both collectively, under the leadership of the great commoners, and individually, each man to his own ground. It is the great commoners who, in consultation with their neighbours, give to the sons of each village land on which to build; it is they who, together, finally fix the boundaries of the young men's villages at their "Coming Out;" it is they who, again in consultation with their neighbours, grant land to strangers who ask for it, though they must notify the chief and get his approval before doing so.

627 As the single great commoners settle disputes within their own
692 villages so the chief and great commoners together hear and decide cases within the chiefdom. Many of these legal actions are now settled in the Courts, but not all of them; and, even when cases are going to Court, preliminary hearings commonly take place before the chief, first. Cases are conducted and witnesses interrogated by chief and great commoners together, and the decision which the chief pronounces is an expression of their general opinion.

554 Among the great commoners there is an order of seniority. The
624 leaders of the two senior age-villages of the chief's own men play a prominent part at his "Coming Out," they each have a pre-eminent authority in one side of his chiefdom, and the other great commoners rank as their juniors, some on one side, some on the other. In the old days the two senior great commoners each led a whole side of the chiefdom in war.

622 The two most effective checks on the power of a chief are migration
754 and witchcraft. Military strength used to depend upon the number of a chief's adherents, to-day the scale of his salary is similarly dependent; men are quite free to move, and there is a constant flow of adherents from unpopular to popular chiefs. But unpopularity is most feared in its spiritual form of witchcraft. We have seen already that an adverse current of opinion is believed to act invisibly, as the "breath of men," against an unpopular member of a village and to make him sick. So also the adverse opinion of a single village or of a whole chiefdom is believed to have power against a chief, to bring sickness or even death upon him. As in the single village, so in the whole chiefdom the great commoners are the prime sources of this spiritual power; they are believed severally to protect the members of their own villages and jointly to protect their

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

chief from the wanton attacks of witches; but if ever there is a just 622
ground of offence they are believed to join their own power of witchcraft 754
in the general attack. I know one chief who dare not give a judgement in a dispute between two of his villages for fear of the indignant witchcraft of the losing side. And a general unpopularity is believed always to lead, sooner or later to a chief's death.

Chiefs also, like other men, fear the use of sorcery (i.e. destructive magic) against them, and use a number of protective "medicines" (i.e. materials of magic) to protect themselves from it. They also use powerful "medicines" to give themselves personal impressiveness, prestige and authority among their people.

While in the families of commoners an ancestral spirit is only believed 771
to affect the lives of his own descendants, the ancestors of a chief, on the 622
other hand, are supposed to influence, for good or ill, the fortunes of whole chiefdoms. Rain and good crops, the fertility of women and cattle are dependent upon their good will, which in its turn is believed to depend upon a recurrent sacrifice of cows. And for this sacrifice the chiefs, their living descendants, are responsible.[20] But, owing to the continuous division of chiefdoms every generation, several chiefs are concerned in each sacrifice; every dead chief is a source of misfortune or of blessing in the countries of all his direct descendants. And so the discussion of this part of the Nyakyusa religion leads us to the investigation of the groups which extend beyond the boundaries of a single chief-chiefdom.

(c) *Groups wider than the Chiefdom*

When a chief dies he is buried near the house of his senior great wife 778
and trees are planted on his grave. The trees grow and form a sacred 793
grove (*eliryeto*) hedged by taboos. Each of these groves is at first the 764
religious centre of two, later of a number of chiefdoms, and in them the sacrifices are made. Responsibility for finding the cow for sacrifice in a
particular grove rests with one of the living chiefs concerned, but respon- [622]
sibility for initiating the ritual and performing it lies not only with the chiefs but also with the hereditary priests (*amayaga*) in each chiefdom. These hereditary priests are descended, some from the great commoners of the dead chief who is buried in that particular grove, some from his half-brothers. The ritual is esoteric, there is no gathering of the people at the sacrifice, and only chiefs and those with hereditary priesthoods

[20] I am speaking here of the religious customs of the Nyakyusa proper and the Selya people, I believe those of the Kukwa and Mwambe are very similar, but I have not studied them in detail.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and Tutsi who established conquest states to the north-west.[1] 173

Whatever the origin and adventures of the heroes they were 773
important in Nyakyusa and Ngonde history because their [174]
graves became centres of religious ritual which linked together groups that were otherwise largely independent. The myths about them are the charter for chieftainship. They are depicted as benefactors who brought to uncivilized men not only the institution of chieftainship itself, but fire, cattle, iron, seed, and a creative power resident in their own bodies and those of their anointed heirs. But the myths also justify the power of commoners [778]
who first occupied the country and who have witchcraft in their [754]
bellies:

The commoners whom Lwembe found here were extraordinary. They 539
were cultivators, but they had not yet got fire, they ate their food raw. It was we chiefs, it was Lwembe, who brought fire and cattle—he came and found the original occupants without cattle; hence the commoners say, 'We are the earth'. Commoners are different from us physically, they are black; they are awe-inspiring, they are witches. Before you Europeans came the chiefs like Mwaipopo (116) were not [177]
awe-inspiring, they feared the commoners very much; the commoners hammered the chief with their fists—yes, by daylight. And if the chief [754]
cut a man's bananas that man took the chief's. If the commoners were [643]
angry with Mwaipopo they fetched Mwangomo (124 whose chiefdom adjoins Mwaipopo's) at night by their witchcraft; he came in the night with his people and seized the cattle, both those of the chief, Mwaipopo, and those of the commoners. The next day the commoners said: 'It is we, we are angry. Why do you not look after us? Why do you not kill cattle for us?' Then Mwaipopo would kill two head of cattle and all the men in the country ate. . . . Mwaipopo and his equals were not awe-inspiring long ago, it is you Europeans who have created chieftainship and awe.

[1] cf. H. H. Curson and R. W. Thornton, 'A Contribution to the Study of African Native Cattle', *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Science and Animal Industry*, vii, 2 [113]
October 1936 (Government Printer, Pretoria). An analysis of the distribution and migration of breeds in Africa.

H. B. Thompson and R. Scott, *Uganda* (1935), pp. 195 ff.

Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 68: 69.

M. Merker, *Die Masai*, pp. 157 ff., 1904, Berlin.

H. H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, 1904, pp. 86, 105 (early photographs of Nyoro cattle).

The short-horn type predominates among the Nyakyusa, but some animals suggest an intermixture with Sanga cattle. The hump is regarded as a great delicacy and is [231]
exaggerated in the clay cattle which boys model. Cf. Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 72. The [825]
similarity between the ritual and symbolism of the Nyakyusa and those of the Ganda [532]
as described by Roscoe is marked. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, 1911.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

indicated (*vide supra*, p. 35). And, as we shall see later, he also 771
suspected that his quarrels with the Kinga priests and with the [753]
commoner priests of Mwaipopo's chiefdom made him ill. [578]

Chiefs, and even the 'divine king' himself, lived in fear of the
legitimate anger of their people, more particularly of their village 643
headmen and priests, believing that such anger would bring them 753
sickness, and this belief gave headmen and priests a very strong [622]
hold over their lord. How it worked was illustrated by an incident
at Lubaga.

Mwanjala II (78) remarked to Mwakilima (111): 'I sent to summon [796]
Mwasesi (a commoner priest) for the ritual tomorrow but he refused
saying: "I shall not come." He is angry because he was not called to
the ritual at your home, nor was he told formally when the Kinga
came, or when Mwaipaja [G.W.] came.' Mwakilima (111) asked:
'Will you pay him?' [i.e. admit your mistake and offer him compensation]. Mwanjala replied that he would, and Mwakilima expressed disgust. One of the Kinga priests who was listening broke
into the conversation: 'Ignore him if he refuses to come. If it were us
we should leave him and celebrate without him, but you Nyakyusa [754]
are all witches, and you fear to ignore a man who refuses to come to a
ritual saying that he will bewitch you. You are cowards, you are!'

At this Godfrey Wilson asked if there were no witchcraft in BuKinga. The Kinga priest replied: 'There is some, but if the chief gives orders to celebrate a ritual and someone refuses to come we ignore him, and celebrate without him. You Nyakyusa *pay* a man for doing wrong. A man refuses to come when he should and then you *pay* him! If you are afraid of witchcraft why not finish the ritual and send his portion of meat to him afterwards?'

Another priest objected: 'Then he would say it was too small a piece.'

The commoner priests then could control even the Lwembe (for Mwanjala II acted in the place of the Lwembe though he was not installed), but at the same time the mystical power of the Lwembe was feared both by ordinary chiefs and commoners. Mwaijonga (82), who ruled before the European occupation, insulted and fought Mwakisisya the Lwembe (56), and killed some of his men, because 'Lwembe had spoiled the year', but he sent back the cattle that were seized.

In the old days it did not matter killing the Lwembe's men (in war), but [727]
no one dared to take his cattle, they feared lest he would spoil the year
and send too much rain, and a plague of ulcers, and cause the cattle to [789]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

married. Thus, yet another bond is forged between chief and headman, for he who provides marriage cattle is 'father' to him who marries, and the chief's wives acknowledge this by avoiding the village headmen of the senior generation as they do their father-in-law. Once the chief's ritual marriage is complete the sex taboo is lifted and such of his men as are already married are joined by their wives. In theory, though not nowadays in practice, the taboo is observed until the marriage of the chief.

All through the ritual of the 'coming out' the idea of a new beginning is expressed—a new site for the villages, new houses, new fire, new power for the young men. The events of this ritual, the seclusion, the lying on a litter, the prohibition on washing, washing with medicines in the doorway of the hut, the admonition, are directly parallel to the events of the rituals of death and puberty which, we have argued in a previous book,[1] are dramatizations of death and rebirth. There seems little doubt that the 'coming out' is yet another celebration of this theme. The young men enter an enclosed house—that of the senior's mother—and 'come out' (*ukusoka*) renewed as a child 'comes out' (*ukusoka*) of the mother's womb. No Nyakyusa informant volunteered such an interpretation, but, when it was suggested, it was eagerly accepted as expressing the real meaning of 'coming out'.

(*b*) THE CHIEF'S MEDICINES

Reference has already been made to medicines used by chiefs and by village headmen at the 'coming out' and we must now examine them more closely. The great medicines of chieftainship are *ifingila* and their function is to create *amanga*, i.e. spiritual power, and *ubusiya*, i.e. dignity, majesty, in order to make the chief fearful 'so that men obey him'. The medicines are comparable to robes of office for they are designed to give their user assurance and fill the commonality with awe. The Nyakyusa also think that chiefs and headmen should be 'heavy' with 'pythons in their bellies' which give them the power to see and fight witches. Without such a 'python' a chief or village headman cannot fulfil his duty of 'watching over the country by day and by night' and if a man is not born with one he may develop it through the proper use of medicines. This notion has been examined elsewhere.[2] The *ifingila* medicines are also thought to give courage and ferocity (*ubugasi*) in war, with luck in seizing enemy

[1] *op. cit.*, p. 205. [2] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 97-102.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 778 cattle and protecting one's own, and to attract men to the country.

The two senior sons of a chief are given powdered *ikingila* to 785 drink from early childhood; at the 'coming out' they lie on it and 643 drink it again with their village headmen, some is buried beneath 778 their ritual trees, and the chief's homestead is treated with it periodically. One form of *ikingila* is made of the heart of a lion and the heart of a leopard, together with the scrapings from a charred root, and one of its qualities is to create lions or leopards which guard the trees under which it is buried. 'They make anyone who has cut a branch of one of the trees for firewood tremble at night, he trembles and returns the wood; they do not kill, but they stay roaring there until he repents.' Now part of the dignity (*ubusiya*) of a chief is that lions and leopards attend him; they roam his country; they are his familiars (*imbege*). 'The sons of Lwembe' [776] lack the fearful power of their great ancestor who 'rode a lion like a donkey', but they are believed to command familiars which clear the country of the wild pig that destroy men's gardens, and protect the sacred groves by terrifying any sacrilegious person who dares chop wood where he should fear. But they do not kill men or cattle. That is what distinguishes them from 'God's lions which kill cattle even by day' and the man-eaters made by sorcerers to destroy those they hate. There is no hint of lycanthropy—our [754] informants denied emphatically that chiefs, dead or alive, turned into *imbege*, but they 'follow the chief' when he travels.

A second *ikingila*, sprinkled on the chief's mat when he is secluded, and drunk with his two senior village headmen, is made of red, black, and shining white or yellow pebbles, which are ground up and mixed with *imbinga*, a medicine brought by the Kinga, but the symbolism of these ingredients remains obscure.

The greatest of the *ifingila*, used only for the chief himself, is *inyifwila*, a terrible substance with power perilously like that of witchcraft. When either of the senior wives of a chief gives birth [844] to a son a little is hidden in the litter on which she lies; it is put into the litter on which the heirs lie at the 'coming out'; and into the sacred tails and trumpets which are carried into battle. Like other medicines of chieftainship, *inyifwila* is used to give the chief majesty (*ubusiya*), 'that people who meet him may fear him'; that he and his warriors may appear fierce; that they may be 'heavy and strong' in war; that when the trumpet is blown it

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

may 'make the enemy fearful and sue for peace'; and that even men who have left his country may return to him. And it is so powerful that the dose must be carefully adapted to the individual. If a chief is already 'heavy' with an inherited python he is given the merest fragment, but a gentle fellow thought to be 'light', 'empty', is given more, that his words may carry weight. Too much will make a chief harsh (*ukali*)—'he will always be beating men'—and he must be given an antidote to calm him down. Too much in the tails causes them to 'fly through the air at night, gleaming, and throttle the cows'. This is the danger of *inyifuila*, that it may act like the pythons in the bellies of witches and kill men and cattle. Controlled by a chief it is held to be reasonably safe, though Kalobo, Mwaipopo's (116) second wife, who was grumbling because no tail had been lodged in her house was told that she did not know how lucky she was for '*inyifuila* is very fearful—it enters the belly, it makes itself into familiars'.

The use of *inyifuila* is forbidden to commoners. In Ngonde, with its hierarchy of chiefs, it was the danger of attempting to equal one of superior rank that was emphasized. 'If a commoner sprinkles *inyifuila* on himself saying, "Let me surpass my fellows", and he meets a chief (who is entitled to use it) then he dies immediately because he said to himself, "I also am a chief" '; and 'If an Ngana chief dances and sprinkles his spear with *inyifuila* . . . and then meets Kyungu, he dies.' In the more democratic atmosphere of BuNyakyusa chiefs were 'very angry' if commoners used it, but it was the danger of its acting like witchcraft and throttling men and cattle and, eventually, its owner, that men spoke of most. We heard of half a dozen men—among them the most successful trader of Selya—who were reputed to use it 'to surpass their fellows' and 'get rich' and one case actually came to Court. Mwaipopo, the chief (116), raised the matter himself:

> Why does this thing go about at night? I have seen it myself, it shines, I know it. It is that with which the doctors treat us chiefs to make us impressive [i.e. *inyifuila*]. Do you not know, you commoners, that we chiefs have prohibited its use in our countries? Ask your fellow Mandala! He is bad, he planted this thing, it kills you people.

So two village headmen went and called Mandala who lived near Ngulyo, and brought him to Court. There he was asked: 'Why did you keep this which kills people?' Mandala denied vehemently saying, 'I have not planted this.' But Mwaipopo

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

replied: 'Why does he deny it? He told me once: "I have a thing
449 which kills people!"' Then, turning to the man: 'Go and fetch it
778 out into the light.' Mandala went and we heard that he brought
789 out another medicine, not the one asked for, he brought it to the
[754] headmen and Mwaipopo. Mwaipopo (who, being a chief, knew *isyifwile*) rejected the one Mandala brought saying: 'This is not it.' Then Mandala brought out another and again the chief rejected it saying: 'This is not the one we want.' Then he brought out a little bag made of bark-cloth. They sought a doctor to clear it out. All this happened in secret; we heard of it but did not see it. But in Court Mwaipopo turned Mandala out of his country 'because he had admitted that he was wicked', and Mwaipopo reminded the other chiefs in Court of a previous case of a man in Mwangomo's country who had used this medicine.

Isyifwile is made out of a python 'as thick as a man's thigh' which has been killed by crawling over razors. In Ngonde we were told:

> A certain snake they call *ngone* is killed in the hills to the west. They build a hut, closed, with a man inside ringing a cow bell and razors all over the roof. The snake comes and crawls over the roof, trying to get in and so dies. Then the doctors come to 'close it up'. When they have done so they cut it up for medicine—*isyifwile*; some is brought to Kyungu direct . . . some is taken to the doctors, and it is the doctors who give it to the chief.

A similar story was told in BuNyakyusa but they got their
[825] *isyifwile* from the Sangu and Hehe, to the north and east, not from the west, and in their account the trap was baited with a goat, not a man, and it was the blood of the python (*isota*) shed on the surrounding grass and on the trap itself which was used for medicine. To test the medicine the doctors gave a little to a
[787] chicken; if the chicken died the medicine was satisfactory; and the remains of the chicken were burnt and the ashes used as tested *isyifwile*.

[illegible] snake is awful (*siya fjo*), no one approaches to kill it.
[875] No! If it were speared everyone would die.' And because the python which is so terrible is thought to be linked with the rain-
[821] bow it, too, is disliked. 'We fear the rainbow very much, we say it appears when a python looks up to the sky; if we are near a river we run from it for pythons live near rivers. . . . No, we are not mistaken, it is so.' The essential quality of the python is *ubusiya* (fearfulness, majesty, dignity) and this is what is required

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 778 789 and Mwaipopo and Kisogota smeared it over the tails which were then put out with the horns to dry in the sun. Mwaipopo suggested getting Mwaisyelage, the doctor, to treat them further, and the others agreed saying: 'Let Mwaipopo find someone, that the earth may be good, that it be heavy.' Njobakosa had spoken earlier of the cattle giving much milk after the treatment of the tails. And they went on to discuss the fact that the young chief Mwankuga II (151) had begotten no child by the wife inherited from his elder brother (150) whose place he had taken. Thus the function of the chief in creating plenty and [842] fertility was in the priests' minds, and there may be some link between the virility of the chief and success in war—one informant spoke of the chief's senior wives jumping over the tails immediately after the consummation of their marriage—but of this we are not certain. What is common knowledge is that the tails are 'for seizing cattle', and they are associated with 'manure and blood'. We were told at the conclusion of the ritual: 'Formerly we should have gone tomorrow, after this treating of the tails, to fight.'

Besides medicines for majesty, courage, and popularity as rulers, chiefs use medicines to protect themselves against the fearfulness of the groves in which they sacrifice, medicines to 'close the country to hunger', to make their capitals grand, and to cause thieves who have stolen, to walk round and round until caught.

Medicines are regarded as essential to authority, victory, and successful rule, and the kind used and the dose given are adjusted to the status and character of the individual. 'Village headmen [622] do not drink the most important *ilisgila*; they drink a lesser one, *isalisga*; the senior headman is given most, the junior less.' And the chief's wives do not drink *ilisgila* at all, but only a powder suitable for them. But the use of these medicines has its dangers. The chief, like other people who have been drinking protective medicines, does not eat the new crops grown on fields fertilized [754] by ash without fortifying himself. The danger is said to come from the burnt rubbish heaps, because medicines for defence against witches and sorcerers are burnt in them and, as we have seen, certain of the medicines which the chief uses create a power akin to witchcraft. He tastes the new millet ritually in June, the cow [789] peas in September, and pumpkin leaves in November; and he also tastes the 'new earth' at the break of the rains in October or early November. 'We chiefs fear that the medicines we have drunk will

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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[759]

over the country by day and by night', and power (*amage*) to see the enemies of darkness (that is, the witches) is thought to come to each priest or village headman from a python in his belly. No one can fulfil his duties as a ruler and defender unless he is 'heavy', but to have a python inside one is *also* the mark of a witch. Pressed on the point the Nyakyusa hold that a chief or village headman only has one python whereas witches have several, but this distinction is not maintained consistently, and many of our informants were agreed that the power of witchcraft and the power to see and fight witches were one and the same. The essential distinction lies in the use to which the power is put; wrongly used it is 'witchcraft' (*ubulozi*); rightly used to defend the village or to punish evil-doers it is 'the breath of men' (*imbepo ya bande*) and how any particular case is labelled depends upon the viewpoint of the speaker. The victim of a misfortune and his kin will indignantly attribute it to 'witchcraft' when other people regarded it as due to his wrongdoing and a punishment brought about by 'the breath of men'.

Each village headman, together with those of the village who are 'heavy', is thought competent both to defend those of his village whom he judges innocent against witches from outside or within, and to punish wrong-doers, by bringing upon them the chill of fever. Hence those who have angered their neighbours and believe themselves to be attacked by 'witches', take refuge in another village.

The power of witchcraft is believed to be inherited, rarely acquired; but the power of defence is both inherited and increased by drinking medicines, and there seems little doubt that the medicines drunk by chief and village headmen at the 'coming out' to create in themselves *ubusipe*—majesty, awesomeness—also develop *amage*, the power to see and fight witches. Indeed, one of our Christian informants insisted that *ubusipe bo bulozi*—'awesomeness *is* witchcraft'.

These ideas have been discussed in some detail elsewhere.[1] Here I am only concerned to show the importance of the belief in 'the breath of men' in the relationship between chief and village headmen. Not only do village headmen have the ultimate power of life and death over their chief, but they are thought to bring illness upon him if he acts unconstitutionally or disregards their advice, or fails in his duty of providing beef for his men. He may

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 31–33.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

play one village against another and go to sleep in that section of the country which supports him, but he dare not anger all his headmen. In the same way a village headman dare not anger the main body of his men. In short, public opinion is an effective sanction because those in authority believe that the disapproval of their fellows may bring a fever or paralysis upon them. One of our Christian informants was insistent that, were it not for the belief in the 'breath of men', pagan chiefs and headmen would act tyrannically.

The situations in which a chief or headman fears the breath of men are very varied. We have already referred to the chief who thought his illness was due to his refusal to hold the 'coming out' for his sons when advised to do so.[1] Mwaipopo, before whose court a very bitter land dispute between two of his villages had been brought, refused to give judgement and was careful to sleep in the village that had possession of the land, and therefore less cause for anger.[2] Kasitile, the hereditary priest of the chief's lineage who counted as 'a chief' as opposed to 'a commoner', thought he had angered the village headmen of his generation (who had become priests) by not providing meat for them (*vide infra*, p. 105).

The headmen are responsible for the health of their chief and it is they who go to consult an oracle if he is ill and take him to a doctor. Mwankuga II (151), heir to Mwaipopo's chiefdom, had not begotten a son by any of the wives he inherited from his elder brother who had died. His village headmen[3] went to consult an oracle and were told that it was the wrath (*imisala*) of his father; so they reported the matter to Mwaipopo, who sent a junior kinsman to consult another oracle. The diagnosis was confirmed and Mwaipopo gathered his younger brothers and prayed and told the shades that he had no quarrel with his kinsmen. Then he told the village headmen to take Mwankuga to a doctor for treatment, but this they did not do, so that Mwankuga went to consult a doctor on his own. According to Kasitile it was because the headmen had not taken Mwankuga that the medicine did not work. 'They should take him to the doctor and be present in dreams, to watch over him in dreams.' What the headmen were angry about was not revealed—there was no obvious cause.

[1] op. cit., pp. 130-3. [2] op. cit., pp. 188-90.

[3] Mwankuga I who died had 'come out' before Mwankuga II inherited from him, but Mwaipopo (108) continued to rule as chief and draw a Government salary.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

As we have seen, the chief's fearsome medicine *ngifisela* is thought to be very dangerous, and too much in the tails may cause them 'to fly about throttling men and cattle', but a chief is never accused of working witchcraft; it is inconceivable to the Nyakyusa that he could be. If the tails have got out of hand they are treated by a doctor 'to close them up'; no one suggests that the chief should get rid of them. It is commoners, 'black people', who are witches—cannibals, the eaters of raw flesh—as opposed to chiefs who, since the dawn of history, have killed cattle for meat and cooked their food like civilized men. But the distinction does not extend very far; junior kinsmen of the chief are 'commoners' and may well be accused of practising witchcraft.

There was a delicate balance of power in the Nyakyusa constitution between hereditary chief and commoner headmen and the belief in the power of medicines and of witchcraft was an integral part of it. The chief provided fruitfulness by the power of his own body and his medicines; all men depended upon him for their well-being—food, cattle, children, success in war; but he in his turn depended upon the goodwill of his men led by their village headmen; without it he shivered and fell ill, only to be buried by them 'with the breath still in his body' lest the power of growth disappear with his breathless corpse.

Something of the quality of this mutual dependence and fear is conveyed in Kaitile's account of his own illness quoted in Chapter VIII.

(c) THE NECESSITY FOR HARMONY

The welfare of the chiefdom is thought to depend upon harmony between the chief and his village headmen and priests, and also between the chief and his kinsmen. Any friction between them may result in public misfortune as well as sickness to the individual at fault. The quarrel of Kaitile, the priest, first with the Kinga priests, and then with the commoner priests of Mwaipepo's chiefdom was believed to affect the crops and the weather, as well as Kaitile's own health (*vide infra*, pp. 104-5), and Mwaipepo's failure to tell Kaitile formally of the death of their kinsman led to rain which spoiled the funeral dance. A quarrel between the lineages of two chiefs which should have sacrificed together was said to have been followed by a very poor millet crop (*vide infra*, pp. 79-80, 118, 136).

How the personal relationship of a chief with his kinsmen is

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

thought to affect the whole country was illustrated in Mwaihojo's chiefdom where the people were plagued by wild pig destroying their gardens. Mwaihojo (147) had a longstanding quarrel with his half-brother, Mwakyonde (148), whose country he had seized after their 'coming out'. Mwakyonde became famous as a doctor, and he was a great raconteur and beer-drinker, a regular Silenus, the boon companion of many influential men, whereas his brother was cold and irascible; so although he had lost his chieftaincy, Mwakyonde had considerable power. In February 1937, four lions were seen in the adjoining chiefdom of Mwaipopo (116), and we heard pig squealing as it was killed. Angombwike (whose father lived near Mwakyonde in Mwaihojo's country) explained to us: 'People say that these are Mwakyonde's lions. . . . Lion-makers have bundles of twigs which they put into the long grass, and which turn into lions. Long ago Mwakyonde made lions and they came and killed all the pigs, and the country (Mwaihojo's) was at peace, but he quarrelled with Mwaihojo and put his bundles of twigs into his box and locked it up. Then the country was filled with pig, and buck, and elephant, and all the crops were spoiled, and so it is still. Now Mwakyonde has begun to be friendly with Mwaipopo (116); they enjoy each other's company and drink beer together, and so he is making lions again in Kipungu, the land where Mwaipopo is hoeing, to kill the pig for Mwaipopo. They say Mwaipopo has given him a country in secret.' Now Mwaihojo claimed as his the forest country, which Mwaipopo's men had begun to colonize, therefore to aid Mwaipopo there was an effective slap at Mwaihojo. The lions came into Mwaihojo's country—we heard them repeatedly close to our camp—but they did not clear the pig.

Then, in March, Mwakyonde was supposed to be using a new medicine he had obtained to scare off pig from the fields. We asked him about it. 'Oh, it has failed. The pigs are still there eating. I've done everything I should but without effect. I think that the pigs are possessed by the shades (*ili simindu ingulube*).' 'Why?' we asked. 'Because my elder brother (Mwaihojo) and I are not on good terms (*tutihoungala kanuma*) the shades are angry.'

So the destruction of men's gardens was traced to the quarrel between the chief and his brother.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the chief himself. The members of each village co-operate in some measure in cultivation and herding and they form a defensive group against attack 'by day and by night'—*i.e.* against armed raiders and witches.[1] But there is no great elaboration of ritual for single villages. Such village rituals as occur are connected with defence against witchcraft and involve driving out a supposed witch, or receiving back a member who has fled from fear of witchcraft, or protecting the village fields against witches.[2] Most communal rituals are organized on the basis of the chiefdom or group of chiefdoms, and villages or sections participate as segments of the chiefdom.

The principle of generation and that of section hold one another in check. All those who have 'come out' together have a strong sense of unity as opposed to the generations of their fathers and sons, but every generation is split into two sections each led by an heir of the chief, and these sections have a certain territorial solidarity. It is common in Africa for organized age-groups to cut across kinship and territorial groups. The Nyakyusa peculiarity lies in the territorial unity of age-sets which occupy villages, and the manner in which the fissiparous tendencies within a chiefdom have a constitutional outlet in the rivalry between the sections of a ruling generation which become independent at the 'coming out' of the next generation.

The combination of the hereditary and selective principles of leadership among the Nyakyusa is also somewhat different from that among their neighbours. With many Central African people the heir to the holder of the office of village headman or chief is *selected*, and the most capable member of a given lineage or lineage segment appointed.[3] Among the Nyakyusa succession is precisely defined and there is no selection of a suitable heir except to the supreme and greatly feared office of 'divine king', but the selective principle is given full scope in the 'establishing' of headmen for the young men's villages at every 'coming out'. It is this combination of the hereditary and selective principles which binds together chiefs and commoners and successive generations. The rules of

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 44-86, 91-103.

[2] op. cit., pp. 52-4, 109 ff., 154-6, 170-4.

[3] I. Cunnison, 'Headmanship and Ritual of Luapula Villages', *Africa*, xxvi (1956), p. 111; M. G. Marwick, 'The Social Context of Cewa Witch Belief', *Africa*, xxii (1952), pp. 215-21; V. Turner, 'Ndembu Village Structure', *Africa*, xxv (1955), pp. 123-4; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), pp. 137-63.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VII

CLEANSING THE COUNTRY

769 SACRIFICES to the heroes and the shades of the chiefs are holy and private—only a handful of priests and chiefs may enter the groves and the details of the rituals are not discussed with other people. But there are other celebrations in which everyone 796 participates; these are the rituals for cleansing the community—783 'throwing out the rubbish' (*ukujala ikikuugo*)—more specifically the *ashes* from all the hearths.

In Ngonde the cleansing is organized for the whole kingdom, from Mbande, but among the Nyakyusa each chiefdom acts independently. Traditionally, we were told, the *ukujala ikikuugo* was an annual celebration, observed at the 'new year', after the break of the rains, but it could also take place if there were much sickness in the country, or plague, or prophecies of evil to come. It was celebrated (in an attenuated form and by a section of the community only) in Ngonde in July 1957, to cleanse the country of a plague of rats, and in September of the same year a somewhat similar ritual was performed in Purukoto's chiefdom because a [787] fearful omen had been seen—a ground horsbill had eaten a [778] chicken. The annual celebrations had been dropped both in Ngonde and BuNyakyusa before 1935.

As has been shown in the *Rituals of Kinship* the Nyakyusa believe [769] that too close an association with the shades is dangerous; all the [755] family rituals are designed to drive them away, to drive them out of the bodies of the mourners, or menstruating girls, or parents of twins; and the purpose of 'throwing out the ashes' in all the [illegible] 783 themselves' at the hearths of their descendants, they 'bring sickness [778] to the hearths' and so the old ashes are cleared out and new fire is lighted. The phrase *ukujala ikikuugo* is used in Ngonde for clearing out the litter (*ulufunde*) after a burial, or an initiation ritual, and for shaving after a ritual, as well as for clearing the ashes from all the hearths in the country.

It is also thought that domestic fires are contaminated by [754] witches who may have cooked the human flesh they steal over [775] their victims' own fires. In Ngonde it was the connexion between

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F2017 Ngonde F2017
Nyakyusa

the shades and the hearths which was strewed; in Perekote's country people talked mostly of the witches; but it seemed clear that both conceptions were present when men murmured: 'The hearth bricks are bad' (*amafigo mabibi*) and they sought to cleanse them by clearing out the old fire and lighting new. 'To clear out the ashes means they take away all that dirt, the dirt which the witches have brought and the shades; it is the cause of illness.' When witches are thought to be active there is also a public complaint, and a public warning is given 'to whom it may concern' to desist.[1] This occurred in the ritual after the ground hornbill had eaten the chicken. Above all, men must admit their anger to one another: 'they fight that the homesteads may be peaceful'. The theme so familiar in Nyakyusa rituals—that quarrels must be confessed if they are to be composed—occurs yet again. Though we distinguish the rituals for 'cleansing the country' from sacrifices, on the ground that the whole community participates in the 'cleansing' while the sacrifice is esoteric, the two are closely linked, and a sacrifice commonly precedes or follows the cleansing. We turn now to the detailed accounts of celebrations for 'cleansing' in Ngonde and among the Kukwe.

(a) THE RATS

In Ngonde they used to clear out the ashes at the new year, at the first hoeing (in December) after 'the break of the rains'. They feared that death and disease would spread through the land if they continued living with the old fires, that the shades in the earth, both the shades of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry. Let them drive the shades away and hoe in peace. They always remembered to do so each new year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually, they never forget. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to clear out the ashes; and then they would hoe in peace. And at other times, too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the ashes again. 'It is to drive away the shade with the sickness that he brings. We throw out the ashes and firebrands because he has come to warm himself over the fire in our houses, we throw out the pots and winnowing baskets because he has come to see us eating; let him go there (to the grave) and eat what he asked for—we say the shades ask for food—let him eat here, perhaps a sheep. We say the shades bring sickness to the fire, hence we throw out the ashes and make new fire with a drill.'

The nobles of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 109-13.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

MWAPULA: Indeed, may the illness not be great, may the children not cry by night, may the cattle increase, and the fields be fertile, and the fowls also increase. May children sleep. Our fathers always confined in the house. Now we are shocked at what is happening. 753 796

MWAMUNDA: We say thank you, chief, you do not forget us. Let the sickness pass and go away, may the cattle sleep, and you women, may the children grow. May the fields be fertile; may there not be envy of one another. We are sorry because there is much illness. Our fathers say 'Why have the chiefs turned round?'

MWAMULANDA: Chief, we beg you, we thank you, indeed there is sickness. Is there anyone who says in their quarter there is much sickness (more than elsewhere)? Do we say something about sickness?

MWAMUNDA: No, Mwampiki, all of us who have come here are sick.

KILOMBO: Yes, we are all rotting.

Mwaikambo commenting on this explained:

If there is sickness one may admit and say, 'It is I, I was angry on account of such and such.' Yes, indeed, they confess openly, because he who sees in his belly (—knows in his heart) that 'It is I who have done this' trembles when his fellows speak many words thinking, 'Perhaps they have seen me.' So he confesses. When he confesses he escapes, they only grumble at him saying, 'Don't do it again.' If someone admits the others say, 'It is he, but we have punished him.' I think that even in the old days he was not driven out, because they hope that, if he has confessed, the illness he caused will go away.

MWAALUMBA: Have you ever before heard of a hornbill eating a hen? We are horrified. Even the prophets did not speak of such an event. [767]

ANOTHER: Indeed, it has never before happened, we are glad that our chiefs have taken the initiative with these words.

ANOTHER: For this custom is old, it began long ago in the time of our fathers. It is the custom to give hope in the homesteads, that we may grow strong.

MWAMPIKI: Always, if the chief is ill it is said, 'Where are you, ok people?' All the homesteads watch over the chief when he is ill. [Mwaikambo commenting: It is said that people have the work of watching over their chief that no-one may bewitch him, hence when he is ill they reproach people saying: 'Where are you?' Let the old customs be observed now (implying that they have left all the old customs and hence there is much sickness in the country).] [754] [771]

ANOTHER: There are some who say 'Let so-and-so die that I may move into his homestead. Let every which brings sickness also go away.'

ANOTHER: If sickness appears let us tell the chief that we may all express astonishment together, asking where the illness has come from, then it will be light, if we all grumble together. [Mwaikambo commenting: [758]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

and women, it is procreative power, fertility. That power is constantly expelled from the belly but returns again and by that expulsion and return men live.

There was a great deal of criticism from the conservatives because no sacrifice had been made.

Mwakanena: Now people are talking much saying, 'We have abandoned that which they did formerly, we are doing something else.' People have many dreams (gesture hand on hand as if heavy with anxiety), many say: 'I have dreamed of the dead, they told me to sacrifice a cow, to pray, we did not pray properly, that is useless, it will not effect anything.' So we have told the chief saying: 'Let us kill a cow at the grave of Mwakan'ata,' he has agreed, but the cow has not yet come.

Formerly, on the night following the day of the prayer we should have eaten the sacrificial cow, the chief would have killed two cows and the headmen from different villages would have come and eaten by night, and drunk beer provided by the chief, in the house of the senior wife of the chief. . . . They ate a little meat, raw, the rest they roasted. Then in the morning, when they had eaten and were satisfied, they would go to clear out the house, to throw out the ashes, and to pray, as we prayed now, and to make new fire by friction in the pasture land. The village headman made fire with medicine which the chief gave him, the name of the medicine is Mkamba, it's a tree. To throw out the ashes means to clear out all the filth, the filth which the witches and the shades have brought to us—the filth that is sickness. . . . Do not the witches eat meat at the fire? Human flesh? Some coast at your fires your bodies which they have seized, some go home with the human flesh to their own fires, hence comes the filth of the ashes. The village headmen eat the sacrificial meat at night with the shades, they celebrate for them with the blood which goes beneath. . . .

If the chief has done something wrong, then these above [i.e. the village headmen] pray to those beneath saying, 'Let us help one another to punish him who has strayed, but we do not wish that he should die, we does (sic) not; perhaps then he will seek something to nourish us.' Again the night before the throwing out of the ashes they confirm their anger and say: 'You beneath, this our child (the chief) has remembered us, there is no accusation against him now, may sickness go away from the country, and children sleep, let us all sleep and the cows calve. We greet those beneath.' In my childhood I was exceedingly surprised at night when my father came in, he had a little parcel of meat. 'Where have you been?' I asked. 'We have been praying.' But since I grew up and became a village headman, and was recorded as such [by the administration] we have never seen sacrificial meat.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Mwandisi made a great deal of the fact that at the 'throwing out of the rubbish' the village headmen ate meat raw. 783 796

Formerly . . . we threw away the ashes and charred brands . . . that is to drive away the shades who warm themselves over the hearth in the house; they bring us sickness, let them warm themselves over there in the long grass! Also in the long grass there we killed meat, and the priests ate it raw: no one saw them doing that there in the long grass; we went by day with drums, people from all the homesteads, a moving multitude . . . then we came home . . . the priests remained with their wives, they threw away their bark-cloths, they cut off morsels of meat and ate them raw. Because the priests are witches it is they who ate raw meat before we chiefs came, the priests are witches. . . . The witches and shades gather and bring sickness together, we kill a cow in the grove, we drive them away. No, they do not eat raw meat in the grove, they cook it. But at the capital if the chief has killed a cow for men to eat the priests eat meat raw. We have seen them. I, Mwandisi, have seen Mwajole and Kalambo the senior village headmen eating raw meat at my place and my wives have seen them also. [262] [753] [793]

'Yes', said one of his wives, 'we saw them and we ran away saying: "Well! Fancy doing it *openly*!"' Mwandisi continued:

The senior village headmen are witches, children of those who ate raw food long ago. Some village headmen only rush to eat a cow we have killed, but some go to eat a person; those are the witches who eat raw meat! [754]

The function of a chief is to feed his men on beef, and in doing so he placates the witches who are commoners and who, like their forefathers, prefer their meat raw. If they do not get beef then the witches eat men.[1] [643]

(c) SMALLPOX

The prayer and 'clearing out of the rubbish', traditionally celebrated before an approaching epidemic, was described by an elderly Christian, Fibombe. It illustrates very clearly the combination of practical precaution—isolation—and magical protection, and also the idea that sickness was brought into the country by witches. 783 796 753

When the chief had heard that smallpox was coming, or dysentery, he said, 'Let us pray'. Before my baptism I saw it, in the country of the

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 90-9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

796 Penja chief, Mwalukasa. He called all his people because he heard that
783 smallpox was coming and said: 'Let us pray.' And he called his fellow
753 chiefs, those of the same lineage, and said: 'Let this illness not come, may it go to other chiefs. . . . Listen! I am the chief! We have heard that smallpox is approaching, who is here who rejoices at his approach? Who is here who wishes that it should kill us?'

THE CHIEFS: We, we do not rejoice that it is coming, we reject it, chief Mwalukasa, may it pass by this homestead.

THE COMMONERS: And we also reject it, may it pass by our homesteads.

MWALUKASA: And I, I reject it, may smallpox not come into our country. If there be one who has relatives in a chiefdom where there is smallpox and they come to call him to a funeral let them stay at a distance, and not sleep here, let him not go near until the illness has passed by, at the end of the year. If you witches go to fetch it, you will kill your
● [754] fellows with whom you are chatting now. You will not enjoy my company or build with me, the chief, if you go and bring in smallpox and kill your fellows. We pray that it may pass. [For it is believed in this country that the witches go to bring in illness, or wild animals, from a distance.]

THE COMMONERS: Yes, indeed, may it pass by.

MWALUKASA: If you go to bury a brother in a country in which there is smallpox stand afar off, tie the cow you bring to a tree and call to them: 'Here is my cow for killing, come and take it.' Take your cow, but do not go into the homestead.

And the people did as he said. Then he told them to get ready for the ritual. He took his calabash cup and three other chiefs with
[759] calabash cups followed him. They blew water and prayed to Kyala and the shades. Then the people were gathered together; and the chiefs, led by Mwalukasa, ran round facing each group in turn and blowing out water towards them; the men held their shields in front of them and when the chiefs blew they shook their shields violently, as if fighting.

When all was finished then Mwalukasa said: 'When you go home,
[372] throw out the ashes and the fires; all make new fire with drills.' And they all did this.

Finally he had bamboos planted with medicine on the main roads between BuPenja and BuKukwe and BuPenja and BuNyiha. No one
[755] ill with smallpox, or who had lived in contact with smallpox, was allowed to pass, unless he had been ill and recovered. I saw the one bamboo clump on the boundary of Nyiha and Penja country. No one passed it, it was very fearsome (*kwiga fye*).

As in cultivation there was a combination of ritual and science.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IX

KASITILE THE PRIEST

We turn now from the description of rituals to a personal document, an account of the illness of Kasitile (86), the leading priest of Selya, the causes suggested for it, and the rituals performed. His case shows: (i) the power of village headmen over chiefs in general, more particularly the power of the commoner priests (village headmen of the previous generation) over hereditary priests of the chief's lineage; (ii) the persistent linking of misfortune with sin in both public and private life; (iii) the function of divination in selecting between possible causes of disease; (iv) the influences of Christian and Muslim teaching and Western medical science on a conservative who goes so far as to invite a Muslim to cut the throat of the sacrificial animal and speaks of turning Christian in his old age; and (v) the very great importance attached to 'speaking out' (*ukusepa*) and not leaving anger to smoulder unconfessed. Beer is necessary for such a ritual 'speaking out' and the participants are pressed to drink deep, for *in vino veritas*.

The *dramatis personae* are:

KASITILE (86) of the chief's lineage, priest of Selya
JANE his senior and favourite wife
JANE'S YOUNGER SISTER and co-wife
KILULELE a third wife suspected of bewitching Kasitile
MWAIPOPO (118) the chief and senior kinsman of Kasitile
MWAKYONGE (148) the doctor who was treating Kasitile
KIMBA *priests* (i.e. Kikungubeja Neyanigwa, Kyumba Kitali, *vide* pp. 24-34)
NGULUYO, NJOBOKONA, KIMBOGOYA — Village headmen of Mwaijonga (82) and priests of his grove, *vide* pp. 74-7, 84-5
MWAMAKUMBA THE ELDER a hereditary priest, assistant to Kasitile
MWAMAKUMBA THE YOUNGER (Mwambagaje) son of the elder who often acted in his place

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

illness to neglect of his duty to the Kinga. All the time we were in BuNyakyusa he was ailing—possibly he suffered from tuberculosis—and one wrongdoing after another was suggested as the cause of his illness. 793 755 [753]

His case is intelligible only in terms of the conception of 'the breath of men', that is, a power akin to witchcraft thought to be legitimately exercised by village headmen and others to punish wrongdoers, but which is referred to by the victims as 'witchcraft'. This has been discussed at length elsewhere.[1] [754]

On 2nd July 1955, Kasitile had left his own house and was living with a friend in a neighbouring village. His doctor, Mwakyonde, said that he was being 'thrown by the witches' and had invited him to come and recollect himself (*ukwipelelaya*) in the tranquillity of a village of another chiefdom in which there were many people with spiritual power (*ukamange*) so that 'the witches' could not get at him. This is a common precaution in case of illness, for witches are thought not to have power ordinarily outside their own village and never beyond the chiefdom.[2] 793 754

The cause of the illness was explained as follows: Kasitile had quarrelled with Kisengota, the commoner priest, and others of the principal men of the country, because he had found them drinking the sacred beer (*ukusikama*), brewed after the millet harvest (*see supra*, pp. 84-5) without telling him, or sending him the pot which was his due. They invited him to drink, but he refused and they each sent him 1*s.* to beg pardon. Kasitile bought beer with one of the shillings and called the senior commoner priest, Ngulyo, and his fellows to drink saying, 'I was angry, friends, you "overstepped" me' (i.e. they had ignored his rights). He himself should have brewed when he confirmed his anger, and slaughtered a calf or prepared food for them as well, but he had bought only one shilling's worth of beer and provided nothing himself. Then, when they had drunk, Kasitile fell ill. Hence it was said that the commoner priests were angry and 'ate' (i.e. bewitched) him. Kasitile's own comment was: 'The fault lies with the young priests (Ngulyo, a young man, had inherited his father's position), they are useless as priests . . . I was not told of that ritual beer, yet the medicine comes from me, from this home where I keep it. They should have come to me to get it and put it with the millet in the holy pot. They drank the beer without medicine. It is they who have brought cold and hunger on the country. I think the [578] [753] [689] [731] [789]

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 91-101, 1959. [2] *op. cit.*, pp. 100-3.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

trouble is that Mwaipopo (the chief 116) is getting old. . . .' Here Kasitile suggested two different causes for the scarcity in the country: (a) the negligence of the priests, and (b) the senility of the chief. In the old days Mwaipopo would have been smothered, as Angombwike explained (*vide supra*, p. 63).

On the 9th, Kasitile, much troubled by his cough at night, expressed a great desire for the return of the missionary nurse to Kabembe hospital. 'She is killing us by her absence, the black people don't know anything about these things, only the Europeans. Why, I went there and the dresser just gave me an injection without taking my temperature—no European ever does that.'

The following day he sent off his sons with 10 c. to inquire about his case from a diviner. The diviner said: 'The wives at his home are gossiping to other people about their husband. People want the husband's body to be light. It is not Jane, because she is his favourite, but the others.' Kasitile said:

I shan't do anything, I said 'Let's leave it.' I am still in Bunda [the village to which he moved for safety]. Mwakyonde is giving me medicine for my disease. It drives out the cold which is in my body. Yes, the cold is the breath of the witches coming to throttle me—it's due to my wives' gossip. But it started as a quarrel with other people [non-relatives] first. One day I went to drink beer in Bujoge and that night I fell sick; that is how it began. Men are complaining because I, a chief, a senior, do not cook food for them. They throttle me on that account. They say: 'Let us see whether he is really a chief, a senior?' But others say: 'He has done no wrong.' Yes, the sickness took me on the way home from the beer. Perhaps Kyala asked: 'What has he done?' and found I had done no wrong. If there had not been a Kyala *who knows so I would have been dead.*

When I consulted a diviner he struck a spear and looked along it, then he said: 'The disease now is from his wives—the earlier attack was from men, but this one is from his wives. When they gather at the hearth they say: "Come hither, we see him where he sleeps."'

'Are the wives witches?' we asked.
Kasitile replied:

Yes. They say: 'There is a favourite, we are not beloved.' If a man's wives are good the witches can get into the house, but their cold breath dissipates quickly; you are given medicine and recover quickly; but if the wives are bad they gather together the medicine and pass it down, so that it is powerless. One of my wives is very bad, her lineage is bad, it is she who calls to her aid the heavy ones, the witches. The

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

younger one[1] gossips with her fellow, she does not go to the witches herself, but just talks to the other wife who calls the witches to her aid. These two wives say: 'The favourite has borne many children to her husband; we are poor' [i.e. the favourite gets an unfair share of her husband's attentions]. 754 753

Kasitile speaks of his wives as 'witches' which, according to Nyakyusa ideas, they were, if they injured him, but he was also in the wrong to have shown his preference for Jane so clearly. [775] As was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*, the shades are thought to punish such favouritism. [689]

Towards the end of August Kasitile went to consult Ndembwe, a diviner and doctor, living nearly a day's journey away in the hills, who used a 'stick in the ground' as a divining rod. On his return Kasitile reported: 791 787

Ndembwe says it's the 'breath of men', not the wives, but the dispute about the beer. I paid him 1*s.* and drank three preparations of medicine at his place. He is coming here—I have found some beer and I am minding to call him tomorrow. Then Kasitile added confidentially: About the source of the 'breath' I am uncertain. Ndembwe suggested testing my wives. He can see the heavy ones, for in Ndali country he has drunk much medicine to give him spiritual power (*amanga*). He told me to come home, not to go back to Mwakyonde's country, and he is coming to give me medicine to drink and also to sprinkle medicine in the house. He will sleep here and see who it is that comes—he will know if the wives are heavy, or if it is the people of the country. 753 [782] [778] [787]

Kasitile's uncertainty was apparent. The first diviner had stated clearly that the sickness came from the witchcraft of the wives, but Kasitile wanted a further test.

We were away from Selya for some time and did not hear of any further developments in Kasitile's illness until early in 1937. By then a new reason for his ill-health had been put forward, viz. his impiety in cutting all the branches off a tree growing at the entrance to a sacred grove which has sprung up over his father's grave. He cut the tree because it was encroaching on his homestead. Then he fell ill and he went to consult Ndembwe again. 753 689

He asked me: 'Have you done something wrong at home?' I replied: 'No, I have done nothing wrong.' 'But the oracle says you have done wrong at home.' I said: 'Perhaps it is because I cut a tree at the [787]

[1] Sister of the favourite Jane. To accuse Jane's sister would cast a slur on Jane, for witchcraft is normally hereditary.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

KASITILE: Yes indeed.
SANGU: Now your body is sick, you are coughing. 787
KASITILE: Yes indeed, I am ill, and I am coughing a great deal. 791
SANGU: Yes, it is that quarrel down there. You came with the cough from the plain. 753
KASITILE: Yes, I came with it.
SANGU: You are a priest, you are a senior priest. (He knew this himself!)
KASITILE: Yes indeed.
SANGU: But the cough comes from the quarrel in the plain. If you were not a priest you would have died.
KASITILE: Indeed, we quarrelled over land, over the boundaries, on the plain. I hoed someone else's land—the land of a commoner there. [578]
SANGU: They placed something to injure you.

Kasitile paused in his narrative and we asked how the 'something' operated.

KASITILE: In dreams, by means of their witchcraft. [754] ●

The Sangu told me: 'It is this which causes you to cough continually, but there is something else also, you did not move to the plain from here without trouble.'

KASITILE: No, I moved with an accusation against me. [775]
SANGU: Yes indeed, you did wrong and now your fathers are very angry. [776]
KASITILE: Yes, I cut a tree.
SANGU: Mother! You cut a tree? The fathers and Kyala are brooding over you, Kyala is angry and broods over you. Pray, pray very much. It is you who are throttling the cattle of the country.

We expressed surprise and Kasitile continued: 'Yes, indeed. The Sangu said: "It is your wrongdoing (in cutting the tree) which is causing the cows to abort. I will clear out the thing which came with you from the plain. Bring us, tomorrow." He's a great doctor, Mwaipaja.' [688]

The astonishing thing was that Kasitile, a man of considerable intelligence and inclined to query the truth of the revelations of some oracles, was so much impressed by the fact that the foreign doctor (staying in the country) knew that he was a priest and had sojourned in the plain, though to anyone knowing KiNyakyusa well his connexion with the plain was apparent in his speech, and his bearing indicated him as a personage.

Talking of the divination three days later, Kasitile told us the Sangu doctor had said: 'You have done wrong at home. This Kyala (pointing to the little pot into which he was looking) knows that Lwembe and the Kings and your father are angry, your father is very important, he works with Kyala, he is with him.' 755

As a treatment for the cough the doctor put various ingredients with 791

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 Why had Mwaipopo refused so long to enter into relationship with Mwaseba? Mwaipopo explained that the delay was on account of
782 Mpeta. 'Let my wife come first,' he said, and told how, when the case
[684] first came to light, he had taken Mpeta to his kinsman Mwaiteteja, who took her to Mwaseba's village headman, Kakuju, and he to her people. She must come back the same way, and has not yet done so. Ngulyo said that at first he had been inclined to criticize Mwaipopo, but now saw that he was right. Kasitile spoke of the enormity of Mwaseba's offence, for Mpeta is a kinswoman of Mwaipopo's wife
[835] Kalobo, and on the death of her son Mwakalobo, Mwaseba was put in his place, so he has seduced a woman who, by legal fiction, is his mother, as well as the wife of his father. His act is *doubly* incestuous.

They then spoke of the separation of those who pray at Mbyanga
[686] (*vide supra*, p. 80) and blamed them for it. 'Have they millet though? Kyala judges them himself.' Then Kasitile reproved Mwaipopo (the chief) for another matter. 'But you, Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 59) have little wisdom left. Why did you not give some of the beer which we drank recently at your house[1] to the people of Ipinda, the BaKalinga? The food from a distance you should divide.' And Mwaipopo agreed meekly [i.e. Mwaipopo has built with his young wives away from his inherited wife Kalinga (senior widow of 115) and is apt to neglect her; he must send some of the 'food from a distance'—ceremonial presents from affines—to his senior wives, not give it all to his friends and young wives.]

Then there were mutual compliments and self-depreciation between Kasitile and Kissogota (the commoner priest). Kissogota pointed to Mwaipopo and Kasitile, and said: 'You are impressive you, you are impressive, we are mere cannibals (*balyakanda*).' Kasitile replied: 'You are impressive yourself, if I look at you my body changes.'

Suddenly Kissogota got up and pretended to go: 'I am off, friends!' Ngulyo started to protest: 'We have not yet finished, we are speaking.' But Kissogota said, 'No, you told me to "be off"!' He went outside but returned admitting he had been only pretending. Mwaipopo: 'Yes, do you think we don't know you? Drink! Why do you not drink?'

The Mwamakunda began to ask angrily: 'Why do you shut up words in the heart? Why? Do you wish that Mwakisambwe (i.e. Kasitile, 86, identified with his great-grandfather, 30) should become a fool? Kissogota answered: 'We have not yet done so, Mwambagoje (Mwamakunda), we have not yet; do you think we are angry? Who went to fetch Kasitile from the plain? It was we, we went ourselves.'

Njobakosa took up the matter: 'We have power we have, if we
• [794] please we can give the chief worms.' (This was said fiercely; Kasitile and Mwaipopo listened without comments. It was the crucial moment

[1] Sent as a present by Mwaipopo's affines.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 them to speak out, because if they do not admit that it is they, then the
782 ritual fails.'

QUESTION: What does that mean?

KASITILE: It is witchcraft!

754 QUESTION: Witchcraft? (in apparent surprise).

KASITILE: Yes, it is their witchcraft, the priests gathered with the shade, they bring a chill on my body.

QUESTION: Pythons? (still in surprise).

KASITILE: Yes, they fly in their witchcraft to come here, they speak
[775] with the shades, saying: 'Punish him! Let him find us something to eat!' They call the shades to help. Hence I sought something for them to eat that they should be satisfied.

QUESTION: But I thought witchcraft and the shades were quite separate? (still in apparent surprise).

KASITILE: No, they are together, look you, did not Kissogota boast? He said, 'Indeed we came, it is us, it is us. Why did you cut that branch? But now there is no accusation against you.' He boasted very much. He said: 'We have power, if we like we can give him worms.' [It is Njobakosa who was heard to say this, but Kasitile's personal quarrel was with Kissogota.] Did I not tell you that I had worms when I came up from the plain? I had them! I went to doctors and the diviners said: 'You are a chief, you were in the plain, why do you not kill a bull on your return?' Then when I killed a bull the worms disappeared! Where did they come from? They came from the priests, they called the shades to their aid. So I admitted to Kissogota, saying: 'Indeed I have done wrong, I your wife, I Maloba' (86, the feminine form of the name is used).

QUESTION: So, a white person (*umuelu*, *vide infra*, p. 141) cannot be a priest, but only a witch, a heavy one?

KASITILE: Yes, indeed, how can a white person take hold of the ritual? His fellows will drive him away. See! To a ritual do we call everyone?

No!

KASITILE: And is my home near to Kissogota's?

No, he lives at a distance.

KASITILE: Yes, indeed, it is the black ones (*kasita*) whom we call because it is they who punish us chiefs.

[668] QUESTION: Well, then, is the anger of the shades always provoked by the witches? What about sores (*imisule*) on the mouth?[1] What about
[775] madness if a commoner does not perform the death ritual?

KASITILE: No, I do not lie, that is different. Sores on the mouth come
[753] from the shades, the witches are not there, and if a commoner fails to perform the ritual, madness also comes from the shades, it comes

[1] Cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 181, 219.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

indeed from the whispering of men and the shades here, but people speak openly, saying: 'Why does he not celebrate the ritual?' The witches do not come into it. 754 775

QUESTION: Well, when the witches do throttle someone, do they always call shades, or not? 753

KASITILE: No, sometimes they throttle a man alone, and the shades are not there.

QUESTION: But your sickness?

KASITILE: Now the priests in their witchcraft gathered with the shades. [793] The day after we had celebrated Njobakosa came to my place and said: 'We have finished then!' I replied: 'Yes, my body is better now, but the cough is separate, it is from Kyala.' And did you not hear what Mwaipopo asked in his cupa—'How did the doctor (the Sangu) know that you are a priest? And that you had done wrong? Indeed they (Kisogota and his fellows) had told him!'

QUESTION: What did he mean by that?

KASITILE: That they had gone to the doctor in dreams to tell him. [787]

Asked about Kisogota's words: 'You are impressive, we are cannibals, we are', Kasitile explained: 'It means, "You chiefs kill cattle for us, you are impressive, that is your impressiveness. Do we kill cattle? No! We eat men, we are witches." Because when we have killed cattle they receive blood, their witchcraft goes away, it stays in its house.'

QUESTION: And your reply, 'You are impressive, you are'?

KASITILE: I replied: 'You are impressive, you are, you are witches, if I were alone what would I do? It is you who brought the chilling breath on me and said I had done wrong. Even though I have not done wrong, you wish to eat meat. If I walk about among you, my body shrinks, it fears.'

Mwaipopo (the chief 116) had also prayed with water the night [782] before the sacrifice, he helps me in prayer and if he prays at his house, I help him. We pray with water to bring out everything; if I do not [776] pray with water then something is left within. I summon all the gods, [775] all the fathers, and all the shades. (*Apa tukuipata namesi ko kuyuya ilisyu lesse, leeya ndikuipata namesi po liyela limo nkati. Nikumpala kyala* [539] *guesa, iste guesa, ahayuka bose.*)

QUESTION:

KASITILE: Yes, when Kisogota and his fellows came in their witchcraft [787] to call my shades to their aid, I saw them in dreams, I saw them! And if they correct Mwaipopo like this in witchcraft, together with the shades, he sees them; he complies immediately, he seeks a cow. And if they just come to throttle me I see them. It is the village headmen of the country who come to throttle me, the shades are not there, no, only Kisogota and his fellows, they stand with the shades, not the others they come and suck my blood and they go away again. I do not speak,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 but I see them. It's taboo to speak. They must seek blood and they go
775 off; we fear them!

753 QUESTION: Why do you chiefs never speak out if you are throttled?

KAMTILA: If I speak how many would there be to name? Very many!
[649] For us it's taboo to accuse a man of witchcraft, but the commoners
[554] accuse one another. Look you, do few people keep you company?
Many!

Like us chiefs, everyone comes. It's taboo for us to speak out, we fear. Look you, when Mwambene (Mwaipopo 116) and I were alone we feared to throw out the beer, we said: 'If we throw it out will they leave?' But when Kimogota came, he said: 'All right, I will throw it
[952] out myself.' We fear the fierce great priests, the terrible witches, they are angry.[1] We shrink when they appear.

[622] The village headmen of the country call on the priests for help against us, they whisper by the fire, the priests come in their witchcraft,
[793] they call on my shades saying, 'Let us punish him', also they eat, together with the shades. Our shades never initiate anything, never; they look to the priests. But with a commoner the shade may initiate matters himself. Yes, people whisper indeed, but is that witchcraft? No! They whisper openly and ask, 'Why did you not perform the ritual?' But even although people are silent, still the shade comes
[688] saying, 'Why did you not perform the ritual? I am on the road.' He initiates the thing himself.

QUESTION: But don't people eat meat at the ritual of a commoner?

KAMTILA: Yes, and if he does not celebrate it they accuse him, but they accuse him openly.

QUESTION: If the heir buries him with a few cattle?

688 KAMTILA: If a rich commoner dies and the heir buries him with only
775 one cow, the shades are angry and the people also; their chilling
774 breath comes on his body, perhaps he falls ill himself, perhaps his child falls ill, but the people and witches do not meet together, people are angry here, and the shades there; all of them and the shades too, because he has celebrated with one cow only. People are angry because
[787] they wish to eat the meat. But the oracle says, 'The shades are angry.' It does not speak of people, it knows that people also are angry, but it speaks of the shades. And at the celebration he prays in the evening, the next day he calls people and kills a cow, and throws the sacred
[783] meat in the banana grove, saying, 'Here is your meat, father.' People say, 'Indeed he did wrong, his father was angry', but they do not confess saying, 'It was we', no, they say 'the shades' . . .

[826] We chiefs have bodies which are different, the commoners arrived
[554] first in the country, they ate raw food, we fear them saying, 'They eat raw food.' It is we who followed and brought fire. To us they confess

[1] *Amapepo ndwi wikalala.* The noun class implies size, ferocity, and dislike.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and achievement. An account of the treatment of a field for protection against wild pig emphasizes this.

If people wish to protect a crop from wild pig they go to a doctor to ask for medicine. When he gives it to them he tells them that there must be no quarrelling in the home after they have barricaded the field. Four women go to the field with the husband of the one who cultivates it. They go after sunset. One women is shaved; her head is a symbol of the garden devastated by pig. A second woman, who keeps her hair, ties a head-pad on her head and carries bananas with medicine. She enters the field and eats the bananas. The husband climbs a hill at a little distance, and two of the women go into the long grass close to the field. The bald pate twists a head-pad and the one with hair smears it with medicine and as they do so they look towards their husband and abuse him saying, 'You lay with your mother', and he swears at them saying, 'The leather aprons of your fathers' . . . and many other insults. Then the women walk round the edge of the field, sprinkling medicines, and they go out the way they came in. The circular pad is a symbol of the barricade placed round the field. When they return home they do not eat but go to sleep hungry (though the clever ones eat beforehand). If they quarrel, the pig finishes the food. It is as if quarrelling destroyed the fierceness, the power, of the protective medicine; you must put aside all quarrelling that the medicine may be powerful. If the pigs come it is as if there were a quarrel, so the woman and her husband quarrel in the field mimicking the pig. The husband on the hill is like the pig approaching the field, his wives in the long grass also represent pigs. . . . The husband and his wives quarrel only in the field. If, when the maize is ripe, the husband beats one of his wives for any cause she does not go to pick the maize herself, a friend picks it for her. If she goes in her anger she finds the maize finished, nothing but earth is left.

Here the link between medicines and morality is made plain. Quarrelling weakens medicines of all sorts and renders them ineffective. But a mimic quarrel between husband and wives in the fields renders the medicine effective. It represents the battle between the pig and the medicines. There is a suggestion elsewhere (pp. 69, 115) that pigs are *sent* by the shades when kinsmen or neighbours quarrel, but in the account just quoted it is implied that quarrelling in the home directly injures the medicine.

In themselves, many medicines are neutral. They may be put to good or evil ends, but because they are mysterious and powerful, they are feared, in the same sort of way as atomic energy is feared in contemporary society. Men use medicines themselves 'for purely peaceful purposes', but they are shocked at

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the prospect of their enemies using them. The notion that medicines are a weapon which may be used rightly or wrongly is very clearly brought out in the attitude towards 'making' animals. If a private individual 'makes' lion, or leopard, or crocodile which kill men that is sorcery—there is no question about it—and we heard of at least one man who had been driven from his home because he was reputed to have made leopards which killed children and cattle,[1] but when Mwakyonde 'made' lions which drove off pig and did not attack men, that was a public service (*side* p. 69). And when one chief uses lions in his conflict with another the action is felt to be comparable with war, rather than murder. In February 1937, four lions were hunting in a piece of bush country near the salt lick, which two chiefs claimed. Mwanaumbwe, a chief from the hills, had sent some of his men to clear fields in the bush, but Mwakagile (*yo*, or his heir), the neighbouring chief, objected saying, 'This is my land.' There was a long case and finally the District Officer gave judgment in favour of Mwakagile and refused Mwanaumbwe any compensation for his work in clearing the bush. 'You got a crop for your labour,' he said. Mwanaumbwe was increased by the judgment and grew even more angry when his men elected to remain on the land they had cleared and became men of Mwakagile. So, everyone said, Mwanaumbwe had sought medicines and created these lions. They killed seven cattle in a few days, attacking even by daylight. 'Yes,' we were told, 'there are always lion in the bush, but they do not ordinarily kill cattle as they have done now.'

Another chief who tried the same sort of thing was not so successful. 'Some time ago the chief Mwakila made elephants, he turned his wives into elephants and they ate the bananas of Malapula, but Malapula said, "Let's try", and he created much rain which poured down on to the elephants and those wives died. Then Mwakila was defeated. How about you Europeans? Have you this custom? Do you turn a wife into an animal?'

'No!'

'We have it, if I choose I give my wife *isipin* and she becomes a lion which roars, it roars and eats people.'[2]

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 184.

[2] This, and the tale of a young man fleeing from justice who obtained a medicine to turn himself into a lion, were the only accounts of lycanthropy we heard—usually the medicines themselves (such as those of a chief) turn into animals, or the young of ordinary lion, leopard, or crocodile 'touch the medicines' and become attached to the 'owner' who feeds and commands them.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

787 [278] A second class of medicines is not neutral at all, but itself selects between right and wrong. The most famous is the *mwaf* ordeal which is used to reveal the truth. The *mwaf* poison was formerly administered by a doctor,[1] before witnesses, and the innocent were believed to vomit almost immediately, while the guilty did not vomit at all, or were slow to do so, and fell ill, some even dying. Nowadays *mwaf* is administered only in the greatest secrecy, but various minor methods of divination, all of which turn on the correct use of medicines, are in common use. The 'divination with porridge' has been described (*side supra*, p. 108). The medicine added to it is spoken of as 'a kind of *mwaf*'. Another method is to rub an inverted wooden cup on a smooth board. Questions are posed, as to the porridge. When the answer is 'no' the cup slips; when the answer is 'yes' the cup sticks. Sometimes a stick of *mutke* wood is rubbed on the ground in place of the cup on the board, and there are half a dozen other methods using bells, horns, segments of bamboo, a pipe, or boiling water. In each case virtue lies in the medicines added to the porridge or rubbed on to the cup or stick, and into scarifications in the diviner's hands. An ordinary man who has not been treated cannot use the instruments, and porridge without '*mwaf*' is useless.

795 797 799 [279] Certain medicines used for protection and to wreak vengeance, are also thought to be selective, and to injure only the guilty. These are horns, owned by doctors. Mwanjisi (who came of a family of doctors) told us:

> My father had a water-buck horn filled with medicines and ointment, as a protection against witches. He used it, like other doctors, for burning the grass, for burning the rubbish heaps before planting millet, and for protecting a child. When the millet crops are poor, people say the witches have eaten it, and the next year the chief sends for the doctor and his protection horn. . . . He comes and makes fire and treats the tinder with ointment from his horn, and each pile of weeds is lit from that fire. . . . He sends some to the chief to fire the grass for fresh grazing. Then there is much milk, the cows that eat that grass give much milk for the witches stay away and neither eat the millet nor throttle the cows. So with a child, if a man has lost many children and has one left, he calls the doctor to come with his protective medicine (*dipungi*) and treat the child with medicines from his horn as a protection against witches. My father used the same horn for all these things.

[1] For a description of the procedure, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 113-18, 140-6.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3517 Ngonde F3517
Nyakyusa

If a man has quarrelled with a kinsman, or is conscious of having bitter enemies, or hears that someone with whom he has had a dispute has 'gone to the doctors', he is likely to go to a horn doctor for protective medicine, even though he is perfectly well. 757 [578]

'The horn' is believed to discover and punish the guilty whether they are known to the injured or not, but if someone uses it without just cause the medicine will recoil on himself. The seven cases of using the horn reported to us[1] were all used in revenge: two for theft, two for seduction, and three for withholding cattle due. And it is revenge that was emphasized in one account of the treatment: 789 751 759

If someone has stolen my cow I go to a doctor and pay him a bull. Then he prepares the medicine (the horn) and stands facing it, with a spear over his shoulder, pointing towards it, and he speaks aloud saying: 'So-and-so, if you have not taken the cow you will recover, if you have eaten it you will die.' Then the breath (*ndope*) goes to the man named and if he has really stolen the cow he dies. . . . [685]

But another informant, listing the contents of a 'horn', stressed the protective element. It contains 'the bile of a crocodile, the skin of a python, and *ipyfuela* medicine (*side p. 38*) which has been used to kill men' . . . [278]

If a witch comes to throttle and kill you then the bile of the crocodile throttles and strikes him [the witch], and the *ipyfuela* does the same, it is to kill the witches, it spears those who come to throttle you. The skin of the python means that if people come to throttle you they find you have changed yourself into a python.

Another type of vengeance magic, *ifyepa*, is thought to work only between blood relatives.

If your father-in-law is angry it is your children he kills, not yourself. If the diviner says the disease comes from the woman's side of the family the protective medicine is given only to her, not to the man; if from his side only he is protected, not the wife. The relative who is angry drinks a medicine; he puts a barbed spear into the fire and when it is red hot he slashes a banana sucker with it and speaks the name, then the kinsman who is mentioned dies. [578]

A third type is that used to secure property (*ubusingi*) and more thieves or adulterers; for the exclusive rights of a husband over his wife are treated as property rights. Often a medicated stick is placed in a field to ward off thieves, and some husbands [685] [684]

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. [illegible].

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

are said to give their wives a medicine (without their knowledge) which will cause any man who lies with them to fall ill of gonorrhoea or some other venereal disease. Many Christians believe in this medicine and some inquired whether Europeans did not use it also. One family of doctors are specialists in it:

The sons of Manyafu are very famous, they are great doctors. People fear them very much. No one can steal anything belonging to them or run off with their wives. If a man runs off with a wife of theirs, he will return their wife and pay. . . . Because when he has slept with the woman by night they stink in each other's nostrils, the woman stinks in the face of the man and he likewise in hers. And if rain falls by night the roof comes off the hut in which they sleep and the rain enters. Perhaps the man quarrels with the woman, perhaps frogs and snakes are numerous, perhaps gourds sprout in the house—sometimes they sprout bringing evil. So it is also if a man has run off with the wife of another and the husband goes to the sons of Manyafu. They agree to work, but he must pay them.

Lyandileko, whose husband's family have owned a 'horn' for generations, was very insistent that vengeance magic maintained law and order for it could injure only the guilty. 'A thief feared to steal lest he be caught by my father-in-law (Mwaisyelage). He feared the horn if he used sorcery. He feared to seize another's cow thinking, "They will go to Mwaisyelage".' And protective medicines which cause an adulterer to fall ill of gonorrhoea, or a thief to die, are considered perfectly legitimate; the misfortune would not have befallen the man unless he had done wrong.

The prohibition by the government of the *musafi* oracle has puzzled people. Medicines are admittedly dangerous, but it is held that Europeans 'encourage' witches and sorcerers by forbidding the use of the one effective weapon against them, and doctors with vengeance magic or other strong medicines 'fear the fate of the *musafi* doctors'. There is an inescapable contradiction here, the Nyakyusa relying on *musafi* and vengeance magic as a means of discovering criminals, and the Europeans punishing any doctor found administering poison, or intimidating people by threats. Furthermore, it is widely believed that Europeans themselves use strong medicines made up with blood. Any Europeans without an obvious occupation are suspect of being *abasyandute*, who go around killing people and taking their blood for the Government to use for medicines. One of our European friends,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

a missionary, was warned by her servants before Godfrey Wilson's arrival in her neighbourhood 'not to go out at night as there were *abayumbuta* about, sent by the Government to kill people and take their blood', and women going for firewood made a long detour to avoid his camp. One was overheard asking when she caught sight of him: 'Is that the man who kills people?' Angombwike explained that, since all really strong Nyakyusa medicines contained human blood, it was argued that European medicines, which were so powerful, must contain it also. 'They follow their own customs.' 789 751 754 186

It seems obvious to the Nyakyusa that Europeans must have strong medicines because their confidence and success are so great. Moreover, it is held (in theory) that they are immune to attacks from witchcraft. X, who had been a clerk and lost his job, and was bitter, expanded on this:

> People say that Europeans have *isyifulu* (*side* p. 58), see they are brave, they do not fear, if someone seizes a spear they do not fear, they just come to him, they are very brave. And also the witches say that they are unable to choke Europeans. When we hear people boasting of their mystical power (*amaugi*) we always say to them: 'But if that is so, go and choke a European, show us!' Then they always say, 'Oh no, we can't do that, when we go to a European house at night we find it all lighted up and flaming, we can't get near them.' I think this is the power of the Holy Spirit which you Europeans have. [771]

He came of a well-known family of doctors and perhaps spoke from first-hand knowledge. He just laughed at the suggestion that the light might come from lamps. But the fact that Europeans were held to be immune did not prevent our servants and friends attributing our recurring attacks of malaria to witchcraft. [753]

(c) DOCTORS

Among the Nyakyusa, as perhaps in every society, the doctors with the greatest reputation are those at a distance, and a high proportion of the practitioners in the country are of foreign lineages, their fathers, or grandfathers, or great-grandfathers having come in, bringing medicines with them, and begun to practice. In fact, we were assured that there were no Nyakyusa doctors who were famous, they were all Sangu, or Kings, or Kisi, or from Ngonde or Misuku in Nyasaland, but detailed investigation proved this to be false. The trade in medicines from a distance is a very old one and continues today. As we have seen, 791 [459] [278] [438]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

managed and men should be *mwela*, pure, innocent, without anger in their hearts. But, as has been shown, this quality of purity is the very *opposite* of spiritual power (*amasye* or *abasiye*). It is attributed neither to Kyala and the other heroes nor to the priests; according to Kasitile (p. 158) a pure person cannot be a commoner priest and the chiefs themselves, though *mwela*—pale—by comparison with the black commoners who are witches, are also 'heavy' (*asite*) with the medicines they have drunk. Men become *mwela* by confession; 'speaking out' is a condition of efficacy in sacrifice and the officiant blows out water as a symbol of bringing up all the anger that was in his heart. The parents of twins and the priests of Lubaga, having celebrated their awful rituals emerge, crying, '*Tuli bela*'—we are pure. The very quality which rituals produce in men is the *opposite* of that which characterizes their heroes, their priests, and their rulers. Gulahad whose 'strength was as the strength of ten because his heart was pure' is wholly foreign to Nyakyusa thought.

Truthfulness was never mentioned as a characteristic of the righteous or the pure, nor is it a quality of the heroes or priests. Men censure one another for *ubutangale* which is commonly translated as 'lying', but means rather 'speaking indirectly'. In one Nyakyusa text the child who is told certain ritual secrets by his father and reveals them when he should not is *mtangale*, and this is an accepted use of the word. No burning concern with truth or falsehood is apparent in the Nyakyusa tradition though they are passionately interested in what they conceive to be right and wrong.

The conception of witchcraft and sorcery implies a freedom, a choice of good or evil, for the individual. Much is determined. In Nyakyusa thought, the sins of the fathers are visited on the children, and a child may fall ill because his great-grandfather shed blood or was bound with ropes, and was not adequately cleansed, or because his father has neglected a ward; moreover, kinsmen are 'members one of another', and a ritual neglected by one may bring suffering to others; but there is also the notion of individual responsibility. A witch or sorcerer acts consciously and voluntarily—our informants scouted the idea of a witch being unaware of his actions—and he may repent and desist. There are now, periodically in Africa, 'revivalist' movements in which a pagan doctor or diviner urges men to throw away their evil medicines and repent from their witchcraft. One such movement

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

of the Nyakyusa converts chose to live, not in Christian villages on mission land, but in Christian sections of pagan villages—often grouped round a school—and after the establishment of Indirect Rule in 1926 the independence of Nyakyusa living on mission land from the authority of chiefs was no longer recognized officially, though in practice they were not regarded as chiefs' men in quite the same way as other people when it came to calling up conscripts for labour service. One of the signs of the difference between pagan and Christian in relation to the chief is that Christians are not punctilious about sending to the chief the customary cut (the breast) of every animal killed, as are pagans, and even the most conservative do not fear the 'breath' of their neighbours if they neglect the tribute.

After the war of 1914-18 three new missions were established in the Nyakyusa valley: the White Fathers, the Benedictines, and the Pentecostal Holiness Association. Two churches of purely African origin emerged: the Last Church of God and His Christ, commonly called the BaNgonde after its leader, and the African National Church led by Paddy Nyasuru, which flourished in Ngonde and had a few members across the Songwe in Ba-Nyakyusa. And there was a small group of Watch Tower[2] with Nyakyusa leaders, but acknowledging a vague affiliation with a Watch Tower mission in Northern Rhodesia, and corresponding with the Watch Tower offices in Cape Town, from which they obtained literature. As the publications sent were in English or Nyanja, neither of which the local Watch Tower members could read,[3] and the correspondence was also in English, the link was a tenuous one, but Rutherford's apocalyptic pamphlets, prophesying a speedy judgement on 'the great class', were carried about reverently.

Therefore, by 1955 there were a number of different religious associations, more or less closely connected. The Moravians, Lutherans, and Church of Scotland worked in different areas and co-operated closely; but between them and the Roman Catholics and Pentecostal and the purely African or 'independent' Churches there was little co-operation and sometimes tension. The great bulk of the Christians (74 per cent) belong to the three long-established missions—Moravian, Lutheran, and Church of

[2] Jehovah's Witnesses. For an account of the course and international organization of this denomination, see Norman Davies, *Christian Dissenters*, O.U.P. (1954), pp. 63 ff.

[3] We members were called upon as scribes and translators.

9: Wilson E-5 (1954-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

Christians. A revealing phrase was used of Ngonde by one of his followers: 'He is our European.'

Two sets of rituals are celebrated in BaNyakyusa, but there are not two communities. Nearly all the Christians have pagan kinsfolk with whom they co-operate in practical affairs, many of the Christians live in pagan villages, though usually in separate sections of them. In the early years of the missions there was clearly some friction—there were accusations of witchcraft against those who learnt to read and write for if they were not witches how could they have learnt? And there was talk of people 'hiding their witchcraft in Christianity'. Pagans averred that in the land of the shades Christians are frogs—a symbol of difference and dislike oddly familiar to Englishmen. But by 1933 it had become almost conventional for a boy who went to school to become Christian, and if later he became betrothed to a pagan girl, she was expected to join a catechumen's class and be baptized also. The opposition from pagan kinsfolk was small except in the case of an heir to wealth or office. Then there was bitter objection. For if a young man became Christian he could neither inherit his father's wives nor increase the influence of the lineage in the approved fashion by marrying several wives himself, and much of the family wealth would pass to a junior line. If a convert were heir to a chieftaincy, or likely to succeed his father as village headman, it was felt that he would not be able to maintain his position with only one wife, and succession to a pagan priesthood was totally impossible.

The Christians, for their part, press their pagan relatives to join them in the Church, and a considerable proportion of conversions occur in this way. It is common for a mother to join her son, or a younger brother his elder brother of the same house. For a father, to whom baptism would mean sending away all his wives save one, the step is a much more difficult one and indeed not pressed by some missionaries, who are aware of the difficulties of elderly women so divorced. But whether kinsfolk worship together or not, there can still be unity and friendship.

Thus, in addition to the traditional system of chieftaincies and villages with groups of chiefs co-operating to perform sacrifices to common ancestors and certain more distant heroes, there are Christian Churches whose members are organized in local congregations, and presbytery or diocese. The traditional religion expresses the unity of lineages and chieftaincies; the new religion

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

there?" And after he went there was much food.' In fact, it appears that he took the teachers and schoolchildren to the grove that they might no longer be afraid of it: the girls gathered firewood there, and everyone entered and made a noise, thus breaking great taboos. But all this happened long ago (the visit to Mbyanga was in 1913 or 1914) and, as was indicated earlier, the common view among Christians is that pagan rituals *used* to be necessary and efficacious, but are so no longer. We were assured by Christians who themselves took no part in twin rituals that 'formerly people fell ill if they did not celebrate'. 'Yes, of course, they were very sick indeed in the old days, the whole body would swell.' Some even maintained that it was still necessary for pagans to celebrate though not for Christians. A Christian chief explained:

> The sacred grove of Mwalikalaba is just here in my country; . . . in the old days they used to take a little fresh milk and an unripe ears of tomatoes, and put them in the grove. . . . The next day the calabash was full of milk and the corn was ripe. This was really so in the old days. Kyala heard men and agreed to their requests in this way. We were to ask for rain and food in the grove; the chief would kill a cow and Kyala agreed, food and rain came. Now that the Gospel has spread, since the Europeans have opened the Gospel to us Kyala refuses to agree, he says: 'Since they are proud and refuse to hear the Gospel I will discipline them', and he refuses to agree to the old ways.
>
> Question: What about witchcraft?
>
> Perhaps there were people who were witches in the old days; at any rate I know that when milk was short and a man was accused to the chief of bewitching the cattle, the chief used to take his cattle and drive him out of the country, and then milk was plentiful again. Of that I am sure.
>
> Question: And now?
>
> No, it is not like that now.

Many pagans attribute the decline in fertility which is taking place, and the decrease in the yield of milk, to the decay of the old communal rituals and the unchampioned activities of witches.

Nevertheless, as the number of Christians in an area increases, the pagans tend to curtail their rituals more and more. The direct parallel between pagan confession, sacrifice, and communion with the shades, and the Holy Communion of the Christian Church is recognized by many, and one is felt to replace the other. Regarding the rituals of kinship we were repeatedly told: 'We see that the Christians, who say the only rituals are the

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

*797 x 795 764 killed that the dead man may be received by the shades of his lineage, and his immediate kin eat *ilipili* medicines with him for the last time, is marked.

Marriages and funerals, and in a lesser degree births, are occasions for gatherings of kinsmen in Western society—such a penetrating study of kinship as *The Forsyte Saga* bears adequate witness to this—but the gathering of kindred is a ceremonial rather than a ritual.[1] The attendance of the Forsyte men at Aunt Ann's burial service is in no way essential to the service, though it is felt to be a mark of respect and 'proper feeling' on their part to come. So also at Nyakyusa Christian funerals, the attendance of relatives and fellow villagers is conventional—people are shocked if they do not come—but the peace of the departed is not thought to depend upon his kinsmen killing cows at his grave and celebrating the 'farewell'; the ritual element is the concern of his fellow Christians, led by the priest or elder, irrespective of kinship connexions. The conventions are binding, however. Though a kinsman or village neighbour is not accused of having killed his [754] fellow if he fails to come to the funeral, nevertheless it would cause offence if he did not come, being free to do so, and should he go to work in the fields on the day of the funeral of a grown man, a neighbour, his position would be intolerable.

At a Christian funeral the emphasis all through is on resurrection and life. The hymns sung to comfort the mourners and the prayers and words of the burial service stress resurrection: 'This [775] corruption has put on incorruption, this mortality immortality' . . . 'the body of the flesh is buried, but the body of the spirit rises.' . . . 'Our friend is not dead but liveth.' . . . 'Oh death where is thy sting, oh grave (*bapaka*) where is thy victory?' And the weeping, though extravagant to English ears, is much more restrained than among pagans. Again and again we were told by Christians: [764] 'We do not fear death as the pagans do', and certainly fear is not played up as in the pagan ritual. As one Christian put it: 'No Christian smears himself with mud; only the pagans fear very much at a death, they are desolate, but we do not fear, we say: "Indeed I shall die, but I shall rise again", so we do not smear ourselves with mud and grieve very much. . . . We say: "Why mud? We shall meet with him above."' And there is no later shaving or other purification, for the mourners are not identified with the corpse.

[1] For a discussion of this distinction, cf. op. cit., p. 9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

797 marriage is a sacrament, a mystical union of husband and wife
795 who wash together in the 'blood' of the husband's lineage; and at
[771] death kinsmen share a communion with the 'faithful departed'.

We have already touched on the changing conception of *Kyala*. The idea of a supreme power, or creator, distinct from the shades and heroes, is clear enough to Christians and is becoming more
797 and more familiar to pagans, a young priest even insisting that his
795 father and Kasitile could bring rain only 'if God willed' (*vide supra*, p. 119). Christians believe that 'God alone sends rain', and they are profoundly sceptical of the pagan rain-maker.

797 The Christians also speak of Satan (*Satana*) whom some identify
795 with 'Mbusi' (*Lwembe*) and to whom the more orthodox attribute
759 evil dreams of snakes and lions and fighting, which the pagans attribute to witchcraft. To the pagan the snake is the witch come to attack him; to the Christian it is Satan come to tempt him. The orthodox, following the teaching of missionaries, deny the existence of witchcraft, but most admit to a lively fear of sorcery which is rationalized as 'poisoning', though when the conception is examined it can be shown to include much beside poison put in food or drink. Some of our closest Christian friends admitted their fears. X, the Christian wife of a pagan chief, said one day when we were discussing witchcraft: 'You dissemble like all Europeans, you do not wish to admit belief in witchcraft, you are just pretending.' 'You really think we believe in it?' 'Yes, we all know that Europeans just hide their belief.'

Another chief's wife, Y, also a professing Christian, said: 'We all believe in witchcraft, it really exists.' Then she went on to tell how someone had come to 'choke' her one night recently when she was visiting her own people:

> I woke out of a heavy sleep with a pain in the back of my neck and my head. It was as if someone was stamping on my head. I woke up feeling heavy, I was very heavy. I said: 'If I die, you also will die. Who is outside? Who is choking me? Do they not fear God (*Kyala*)?' Then someone kicked the door and I shouted, 'Mother, mother!' and I heard footsteps going away.

When asked whether she believed that village headmen
[622] protected their people from witchcraft she went on:

> They fight the witches by night, they protect their people, they see the witches and drive them away.
>
> Question: How do you know that witches really exist, do they admit themselves to be witches?

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

Yes, indeed, they beat, they say threateningly (she put her arms akimbo, and imitated a menacing voice) 'Don't speak to me like that!'

All through this discussion Y was excited and spoke with vehemence. Next day she came in looking worried and said:

About that choking of which I was telling you, what do you think it is when you wake up with pains like that? I'll tell you how it was. I went to see my sister, and found her very ill. She had had a miscarriage and her in-laws had not looked after her properly; they had not sent her to hospital, and when she was lying ill her mother-in-law even refused to come and cook for her. And so I was very, very angry with them. And that night I woke up feeling as if someone were stamping on my head, and I heard the knocking on the door and the footsteps I told you about. What do you make of such things when you dream someone strikes you or is throttling you?

The conception that misfortune is the result of sin, which dominates pagan thought, is reinterpreted in terms of the changing conception of God and the changing social structure. We found that many Christians believed that misfortune had been brought on certain wrong-doers by the 'curse' (*ikipwe*) of a priest or elder, or the anger of their Christian neighbours. A missionary or elder rebuking a man was repeatedly thought to have 'cursed' him,[1] so that he lost his job, or fell ill, or was eaten by a crocodile, and in one case a young couple who had not had a child were said to have been cursed by their Christian neighbours because the young man had provided no feast at his wedding. The Christians who believe in such a 'curse' explain that the power comes from God who 'hears people who murmur'—a direct parallel to the pagan belief in the power of senior relatives and neighbours to bring misfortune on wrong-doers—and it is the *words uttered*—the rebuke of one in authority or the murmuring of neighbours—which are held to be dangerous.

How the reproving words of a missionary may be interpreted as a curse is shown in the following case.

The wife of Z was a thief. She stole things from the loft of her mother-in-law's hut. She herself began to say: 'I am tired of my husband', and she began making love to other men. When her husband asked her to do anything she refused. She complained to neighbours, saying: 'My husband is a hard man. He watches me when I am preparing food to

[1] Thirteen cases of this type are recorded in *Good Company*, p. 109; cf. Monica Hunter, 'An African Christian Morality', *Africa*, 9 (1936), pp. 283-9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

cook. I want to leave him.' She said to her husband: 'I want to leave you; I should like to be married to another man. I am not old; I shall not fail to get a husband.' The case went to the Church Session. The husband was called. He said: 'I am astonished. This woman is just making trouble. I have not harmed her. But she is a thief. She steals my mother's things.' She said: 'He is mean. He watches me when I am cooking—either ordinary food or meat. He is a wicked man so I am leaving him.' The Session said: 'Go home and think first.' She came again and said: 'I will leave him.' They said: 'Go and think again.' They sent her home three times. After the third time she came, saying: 'I will leave him.' Then the missionary said: 'We do not find any cause for divorcing your husband. It is astonishing that you, a Christian, wish to go to another man. We find many faults on your side and none on your husband's side. I tell you that the trouble which made you quarrel with your husband will always stay in you. Wherever you go it will follow you.' So she has now become a wanderer, just going about from place to place. People say that this is due to the words of the missionary.

This story shows very clearly how a missionary's insight into a woman's character was interpreted as an external cause of her subsequent misfortunes. The idea that character is a direct cause of misfortune is foreign to the pagan community, and has not been assimilated by many Christians.

On one occasion two Christian teachers and a Christian clerk, who had related several stories in which loss of a job was attributed to a curse, asked our opinion of them. When we explained that we thought that the people mentioned had lost their jobs because they were unsatisfactory servants or teachers our friends expressed surprise. 'I had not thought of that,' said the clerk.[1]

Most of the Nyakyusa Christians we talked to believed in a curse exercised by those in authority in the Church; only a few among the better educated of the leaders scouted the idea. And there were lively arguments about the morality of cursing. Many held it was perfectly justified. Others argued that a Christian should only rebuke his fellow 'openly, to his face', and not curse him but leave the punishment of sinners to God; but, as has just been shown, an open rebuke is often interpreted as a curse.

Often a judgement is thought to be delayed. One young man who committed adultery in particularly offensive circumstances was eaten, seven years later, by a crocodile, and the two facts

[1] Quoted with amendments from 'An African Christian Morality', *Africa*, [illegible] pp. [illegible].

9r Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

were connected. And if the expected judgement does not fall when [717]
a son has wronged his father it is said: 'The father loves the [718]
child so much that he only complains half-heartedly.' [719]

It is admitted (when the point is pressed) that misfortune may [664]
fall on good men as well as evil, and then they are interpreted as a
discipline, a testing, from God, but this is 'a hard saying', scarcely [774]
to be believed. The inequalities in the fortunes of men demand
explanations and Christians, as well as pagans, find it very difficult
to believe that they are 'natural'. They always suspect some
human intervention; they believe that men manipulate mystical
power to buy fortune for themselves. The reality of pythons in the
belly may be doubted by the better educated, but belief in
'medicines' has scarcely diminished, and new medicines are
constantly coming in from outside, among them costly potent [778]
medicines guaranteed to cure any and every disease, or to make [275]
the user popular and successful. Some sort of distinction between
medicines which it is permissible for a Christian to use and those,
like love-potions and defence against witchcraft, which are not
permissible, is attempted, but the line is an arbitrary one. And
often there is a conflict in the individual's own mind: as one
elderly woman of a chief's family (who would normally have
taken the fore-fruits medicines) put it: 'It's taboo to use those
medicines; even if we do fall ill we say: "No, I will not take it, I
look towards God (pointing upwards)."'

Most Christians have pagan kindfolk who are quick to interpret
misfortunes in pagan terms, and the sort of conflict of ideas that
arises is illustrated in the case of a young woman who died in [751]
childbirth. She and her father were Moravians; her husband had [777]
joined the Pentecostal Church which rejects all Nyakyusa medicines.
Her first child was still-born, the second died shortly after
its birth, and her father insisted that she should have been taking
a medicine which it was customary for women in his lineage
(he was a Penja) to drink during pregnancy; the girl herself
wished to be treated, for she did not accept the teaching of the
Pentecostal Church on this point, but her husband refused. During
her third pregnancy she was ill and finally, with her husband's
consent, she was carried to a Nyakyusa doctor of her father's
choosing; nevertheless she died. Her father and her husband had
been on bad terms, the father demanding, rather arbitrarily, the
balance of the marriage cattle; and there was a great deal of
gossip, some neighbours hinting that her own father had killed

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

her by his anger, others that the husband was to blame for rejecting medical treatment earlier on. The girl herself was reported to have said to her mother-in-law, when she was lying ill at the doctor's house: 'Are you angry with me and has your anger caused the trouble? Perhaps I did not help you in collecting firewood?' But her mother-in-law replied: 'No, I am not angry with you at all.' And the girl continued: 'I know that my father is angry. Someone might go and ask him to pray for me.' There was also tension with the husband's pagan father who had protested that his son was praying for the death of his own children when he prayed with his Pentecostal friends that God's will be done. 'The Pentecostal people say: "I like to die. I don't take any medicine . . . if someone dies or not it is all the same thing."'

Nevertheless, it is true to say that the field in which natural causation is accepted is much wider among Christians than among pagans. It expands very slowly, but the change is evident. Even two cases of 'madness' (*ulukepe ilipili*), invariably the symptom of the wrath of the gods in pagan thought, were interpreted to us by a Christian teacher in terms of grief and shock. The first was of a young man whose wife and grandmother (who lived with him) both died very suddenly, and whose only cow was taken by other relatives and killed for the funeral feast. The loss of the cow following the loss of his wife and grandmother was held to have shattered him finally—'the lineage was finished'. The other case was of a mother, devoted to her daughter, who was distraught when the daughter went off to a distance, accompanying her husband to his place of work. For a daughter to marry beyond easy visiting distance was traditionally inconceivable.

The vagaries of the weather, attributed by the pagans to the neglect of sacrifices or quarrels between chiefs and priests, are explained in scientific terms by some Christians. Heavy rain fell around Rungwe in October 1957 and prevented people burning their rubbish heaps to fertilise their millet gardens. The pagans insisted that such early rain was unheard of and kept asking each other what could have caused it. A Christian elder assured us that the early rain was not very unusual in the hill country; he had seen other seasons like it. And in January of the same year the people of Mwaipopo's country were 'astonished' because no heavy rain had fallen and young maize and millet were shrivelling in the ground. They said: 'It has rained all round' and 'it seems as if we had offended Kyala'. Kasitile went to divine (*vide supra*, p. 1[illegible]).

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

conscious. This disintegration of a former coherence, and a decreasing awareness of the meaning of symbols used, are perhaps characteristic of changing societies in Africa.

Despite the growth of the Christian Church, the great demand for schools, and the dropping of the old rituals directed to family shades and the heroes, belief in the power of medicines flourishes. Probably most deaths and misfortunes are still attributed to an enemy using either witchcraft or sorcery. The traditional belief in witchcraft is rejected by educated people, but belief in the power of medicines is general. Autopsies still take place and occasionally the poison ordeal is administered in secrecy; one case was mentioned which occurred in 1942. As we have seen, medicines have always been regarded as a potential instrument of individual competition. They are used in the rituals of kinship to ensure health, fertility, and good manners and morals; in the ritual of chieftainship to buttress authority, and in 'sprinkling the homesteads' to fertilize the fields; but also by individuals to steal the fertility of their neighbours' fields and to grow rich at the expense of their neighbours, and it is their use as an instrument of individual aggrandisement that is most talked of today. There were many reports of their use by rivals to office as chiefs, and the floods of 1955, which washed away the Mbaka bridge and caused a serious landslide on that river, were interpreted as incidents in a prolonged fight between chiefs who were rivals for the position of paramount. The deaths of the heir of one of them in 1955, and of the other chief himself in 1956, were also attributed to their deal with medicines.

Along with the political changes there has been a development of the Churches, more particularly of the Moravian Church, which is now largely self-supporting, with growing congregations served by African ministers.[1] Until 1938 the two main Protestant missions in Nyakyusa valley, the Moravian and Lutheran, were staffed by Germans and their funds came mainly from Germany. The war meant the withdrawal of the missionaries and the cutting off of funds. After a lapse of three years one Moravian missionary, and later one Lutheran, came to take charge of the missions and they were reinforced by other missionaries after the end of the war, but the whole policy in both missions is to build up self-supporting churches staffed by African pastors.

The work of the White Fathers mission was not interrupted by

[1] Change in Ngonde is not discussed.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

villages grew ever smaller and became extinct as their members gradually died off in old age.

A Nyakyusa village, then, owed its being to this most significant political, social and religious event. Each village had its area approximately demarcated, and each headman was ritually and magically strengthened in order to lead and protect his men and their families.

This particular system operated satisfactorily in the demographic and land-using conditions of the old days. By the process of bifurcation, briefly described above, new chiefdoms and new villages were formed for each generation. Although the population appears to have been increasing rapidly there was always sufficient land to create two chiefdoms where one had existed before, and to create new villages and more villages than had existed before in the old chiefdoms. The two new chiefs were able easily to move apart and find sufficient and more than sufficient land for their needs.

The system of bifurcation, the ideal of the Nyakyusa, did not always work out so neatly in practice – at any rate it often did not in the Lake Plains. Sometimes it did work; for example, the present chiefdoms of Lanerus and Kerewe are the two parts of their grandfather's single chiefdom, which split up under their respective fathers. Similarly, the present Mwakipesile and Mwamnenegela chiefdoms stemmed from a single unit, while the Mwakipesile chiefdom itself today is really two indigenous chiefdoms, but the Government would recognise only the senior brother's claim to chieftaincy and allowed him authority over the whole. Even where a single new chiefdom succeeded the old (frequently as the result of civil war in which one brother subjugated the other) the essential dichotomous arrangement persisted so that the resultant single unit had two distinct halves, each with its own head with his villages and headmen. In any case, whether traditional bifurcation occurred or not, and right down to modern times, new villages have been established at the time of the "coming-out" of the new chief. The basic village system showed greater permanence and remained truer to type than did the chiefdom and the wider political system.

The real authority of a Nyakyusa chief was not in general very great, although individuals here and there achieved personal importance. A chief was accorded a great deal of prestige and honour, and by tribute and gifts he frequently became pre-eminently wealthy. He was supposed to be kept informed by his headmen of all important village affairs and to approve all matters concerning the land; but the village headman was in fact the real land authority, who attended to the details of land alienation and land use within his village. A chief could not do this, and in fact only in so far as he had the support and loyalty of his headmen had he any authority at all. "A chief is a chief because he has headmen," one informant put it to me – he was a prominent chief himself. A villager said: "A chief does not own the chiefdom, or the land. We, the people together, own it." A chief could, without notice or advice, take any unoccupied land for the use of himself or of his kinsmen, but he could not allocate it to others; both headmen and villagers would have indignantly and successfully protested had he tried, as some commonly did. Land disputes, as commonest lawsuits in a country where land was plentiful, were settled by the headmen of the village in question; they were the private affairs of the village and the chief had no right of interference. Inter-village disputes first came before a meeting of the headmen concerned, with perhaps the assistance of the senior headman of the chiefdom. Only if a dispute could not be settled and if it seemed likely to threaten general peace within the chiefdom would the disputants go before the chief himself, who was so relied and had to rely heavily on his headmen to secure a settlement. So delicate was his position that he might be unable to resolve inter-village disputes for fear of witchcraft reprisals against him by the unsuccessful party.

Sometimes a chief who was a powerful personality rode roughshod over his headmen and achieved a measure of autocracy; but most headmen would not allow this and in their opposition they had the full support of their villagers, as well as the moral backing of public opinion. There are remembered cases in pre-European days where a chief was deposed or reduced to a nonentity by his headmen acting together in the face of what they considered to be encroachments on the inviolability of village unity and independence. In any case, however, even the strongest chiefs were little disposed to interfere in the land matters of their villagers; few wished to be bothered with the details of land rights. A chief could legitimately complain if he were not kept informed by his headmen, but his approval of their actions – and more especially in land matters – was very largely a formality.

Traditional Land Tenure

As already briefly described, a village came into formal existence at the time of the formation of a new chieftdom. At that time its building site and arable and pastoral areas were roughly demarcated by the retiring headmen of the old chieftdom. Within the village, members were allocated their house plots and each man needed to take the strip of land stretching behind his plot and make his field there. The land was shared out on a friendly, co-operative basis; the new headmen smoothed out any difficulties and settled any disputes. Thus was the pattern of land-holding established. Apart from the relative value of a plot proximate to a man's house, there was little or no cause for dispute as land needs were small and the supply plentiful. An established villager could, without notification or special permission, extend his cultivation to any land which lay vacant – i.e., which was not in use or under fallow by a fellow-villager. There was therefore no need for a man to try at first to grab more land than he immediately required, nor did he need to be jealous of his neighbours' claims.

A villager's rights to the use of his land were quite secure and he had no fear of eviction or of the seizure of part of his holding. It is said that very occasionally a chief might take a man's holding but I think, at least in the Lake Plains, that this must have been most unusual. In fact, of course, so long as a man was allowed to reap his crop there was little value attached to the plot as such when nearly similar ground stood around. Men sought security not on their plots of land, but in their membership of the village community, which assured them of their continuing rights to adequate opportunity for cultivation over the years. However, virtually every man had an excellent security of tenure on his holding during the mature life of his age-village (i.e. until at least the next "coming-out" ceremony), and if he died his heir, should he wish, could come and live in his house and cultivate his fields without hindrance. The way in which he cultivated, though of course strongly conditioned by custom and convention, was his own affair, and he sub-divided his holding amongst his own family as he thought fit. He could not, however, allocate any of his land to a man living in another village, nor could he permit it to be cultivated by such a stranger.

Through fear of witchcraft, because of persistent illness, misfortune or unfriendliness, in order to live near a relative or friend, or to inherit elsewhere, a man might leave his village and his age-mates. Then he had to give up his land-holding. When a man moved because of witchcraft or illness (much the same thing and a chief cause of movement) his land was normally left idle pending his hoped-for return, and his former neighbours would do all they could to induce him to return to his old house and fields – even to the use of force (see Wilson, G. 1938, pp. 72-3). His departure was an annoyance against them, and a disturbance of co-operative unity. If the man consistently refused to return, or if it was known that he had definitely left for good, his

10;Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

(e.g. for fear of witchcraft) and take up the vacant holding. Nevertheless in general the holding was allowed to lapse and it could be re-allocated by the village headman if need arose; or the elderly widows might be allowed to continue to reside and cultivate as long as they wished.

Once land began to become scarce and valuable this loose system could no longer continue. Junior brothers and half-brothers were no longer content to permit the chief heir to take the whole of the deceased's holding to do with it as he wished, and a systematized division had to be adopted. At first, naturally enough, land was gradually brought under the same system which controlled the inheritance of other property, but this proved inadequate – inadequate not only in itself as being, perhaps, too complicated and conducive of disagreement and quarrelling in so far as land is concerned, but also because that system itself was already beginning to break down under the impact of individualism.

It was felt that because sons assist their father in his homestead and fields and in their turn rely on him for a share in the cash-and-kind profits of peasant farming, therefore they should have priority in the inheritance of their father's property. Their father's brothers, it was said, would in any case already have their own holdings in which likewise their sons have prior interest. Conversely, older Nyakyusa sons began to be reluctant to take a brother's land (and other property too) on his death, for fear that, in their turn, control of their own land would descend at their deaths to their brothers' sons rather than to their own sons.

As a result of these attitudes a strong desire arose to modify the customary laws in this matter, and the Rungwe African District Council, with the approval of the Government, has by formal resolution established a new law under which sons may inherit direct from their own fathers.

This law is not universally accepted by the Nyakyusa of the Lake Plains and sons still will sometimes waive their novel rights in favour of the traditional claims of their fathers' brothers. They say that they do not desire to see the break up of the wider lineage which, in effect, this new law encourages; they are also afraid of the anger and jealousy, and then of the witchcraft, of their uncles. It appears however that the change is accepted by the large majority of the people, for it follows the trend of modern values and kinship sentiments.

The principal heir is now the eldest son, but in general he has little direct control over the property and land of his half-brothers unless they are still young, in which case he has a moral duty to act as guardian and curator. Sons inherit that part of the paternal holding which had been allocated to their mother by their father in his lifetime, plus any other parcels he might have given to any of them direct as individuals. Each group of full-brothers determines the way in which it divides up its own inheritance. The eldest brother of such a house has a definite obligation to see that his junior siblings shares of the land is as far as its extent and their number will allow. On the whole it is expected by Nyakyusa that the eldest brother will secure the best holding for himself, as befits his new status, but he cannot deny his younger brothers' claims. Disputes in this matter are not uncommon and the local courts have already shown their determination to support the claims of younger brothers.

Very commonly – though it has not yet crystallized as compulsory social behaviour – a father will grant a portion of his holding to his son on the latter's marriage, or as soon after as the son decides to give up labour migration and settle down. It is thought that a married man should be independent economically and that he should be able to maintain his own household; it is realized that there is most likely to be friction in the relations between father and son, especially in this society where it is traditionally

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

number of separate plots per holding was less than where land was scarcer; 311
or the mean size the average size of separate plots was smaller in these more 423
land-hungry villages. The reader may refer to Table III (page 13) for some illustrative figures. Though differences are not yet very great, nevertheless there seems to be a fairly clear correlation between the average size of villagers' holdings on the one hand, and on the other the number and size of separate plots, and this is entirely borne out by my general information obtained in villages where actual measurements were not made. The inescapable conclusion must be that increasing scarcity of land in the Lake Plains leads to increasing fragmentation and dispersion of holdings; further, the present land situation and land tenure system can only lead to a continuation of this trend.

To emphasize the actual situation in 1955, let me reiterate the results of my own village surveys in the very high density region. In a village in Kaiser's chiefdom only a quarter of the younger men had paddy land of their own, holdings averaging about three-quarters of an acre; in a village in Mwakipesile's chiefdom, only 17 per cent. of the younger men had paddy land and holdings averaged about half an acre (cf. Table VII, page 27). These two examples are taken from the areas of most severe land shortage and are not therefore altogether typical of the whole Lake Plains. Nevertheless, I do not think that they are entirely atypical; more importantly, they indicate the present trend. Within another generation this fragmentation and scatter of holdings may well be the common feature everywhere in the flood plains unless the system of tenure and inheritance is modified. If the increase in population is quickened through improved medical facilities, better diet and housing, and improved conditions generally, then the position will become more acute. Such an increase is only to be expected. The Nyakyusa have [433]
desirously entered a money economy and they have learnt to seek higher standards of living. Only from their fields, by cash-cropping, can they [511]
expect to earn their livings and the demand for better living will not be curtailed – nor, of course, is it desirable that it should be.

There is another aspect of this whole matter which must be considered. It relates to the movement of individuals between villages. Such movement [144]
was, in earlier European days, a crucial factor in the age-village structure, for it was not only exceedingly frequent, but also it tended to undermine the classical central basis of village life. Movement between villages is increasingly difficult now, for a newcomer naturally cannot easily obtain land, nor [954]
as much land as he would desire even at a moderate demand. Nevertheless, the reasons for movement persist, and they will do so whilst the fear of [953]
witchcraft remains and whilst illness and misfortune are attributable to the unfavourable aura of a place. These reasons also the tradition of moving so [624]
that a man may escape from bad relations with kinsfolk or neighbours, or from the obloquy resulting from his own disapproved actions. Much [152]
social and psychological tension is being created now as a result of the new difficulty of movement, and so far the Nyakyusa have not evolved alternative [978]
methods.

On the other hand, so deeply engrained is the notion of the prestige and power which accrues to a village by virtue of the number of its inhabitants, [554]
that headmen and villagers alike remain most reluctant to refuse to accept newcomers, even when it inevitably means that the present inhabitants must [609]
meet a further decrease in the average amount of land available per family, for a newcomer must be allocated a holding if he is to remain. Consequently, [622]
if a holding in for any reason left vacant, a headman tends to refuse to re-allocate some or all of it amongst his villagers and thus to augment their holdings, but instead he keeps it in reserve pending the hoped-for arrival of another newcomer. Men desiring to leave their own village try to get

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1954 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Security of tenure has continued into European times, and although perhaps weakened slightly in one way through the exaggerated powers which accrue to modern Government-supported chiefs, it has been strengthened by the modern peace and rule of law and the more efficient system of justice provided by the established local courts. According to G. Wilson (Wilson, G., 1938, p. 32) the increase in the movement of individuals between villages in earlier European times (i.e., up to about 1940-45) directly caused a lack of attachment to individual plots, and thus security of tenure was not considered particularly important.

The new situation of land shortage does not affect the basic position, or rather, by producing a high scarcity value on land, it has brought about an intensification of individuals' rights over their holdings. No longer does a chief or headman attempt to commit such illegal acts as the seizure of a villager's field, so long as that villager is not afraid to publicise the affair. A man is not, and cannot afford to be, prepared to lose his field, for he cannot replace it with any certainty, either in a convenient location or elsewhere. A headman may sometimes bring strong pressure to bear on some of the men of his village to try to persuade them to give up portions of their land to assist a newcomer or a landless neighbour, but a villager can and does refuse and there is no legal authority which can override him here. As the land shortage becomes more obvious and more acute so men become less willing to allow their holdings to be touched for any reason, by anyone. The re-allocation or a "turning-out" ceremony appears to have been dropped nowadays[1] and thus a man holds his land undisturbed until his death, when it passes by inheritance to his sons. There are cases now where grandsons of the original holder occupy land through undisturbed and undisputed inheritance. A man can, as he wishes, lease a kinsman or friend a plot in his holding, or he can make an outright gift. The principal conditions which remains in that a man must continue to live in the village in order to retain these rights; he must relinquish them if he permanently goes to live elsewhere. Nevertheless, the land of a well-established villager would be kept for him pending his hoped-for return, for if he has left in outrage and fear because of suspected witchcraft, then he may be persuaded to come back after a time. The headman and his neighbours should in fact persist in their attempts to persuade him, even to the use of force, for this is not only a moral duty of age-mates and fellow-villagers but is also an effort to remove the implications of their alleged witchcraft and anti-social conduct.

Once, therefore, a man obtains land he has absolute rights in it during his continued residence in the village. Especially today, older men seldom shift their homes and almost all land is now held on a tenure which will be passed on by inheritance.

Boundary disputes are few. Usually, and increasingly, village boundaries are well known, and field boundaries invariably are. During my field measurements in the sample villages, I never met any difficulty with any local teams in quickly establishing the ownership and exact limits of any plot. Boundaries are usually marked by small ridges of accumulated debris or by narrow paths, and these form an intricate and irregular network throughout a village's arable area. They are so well known that there is very little scope for a greedy man to attempt to encroach on a neighbour's holding at hoeing time. If minor disagreements do arise at that season they can be immediately settled – by appeal to neighbours working nearby if necessary – and the headman or his assistant may well not be called in at all.

1. This is the case in the Lake Plain, in some of the so-called Highland villages where the new ownership is less advanced and land scarcity is not pressed, there still appears to be some re-allocation in favour of the young men in the traditional way, for example, Kyimbila. It is also true that the traditional age-village system of land allocation is disappearing, see page 108.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 F307 Ngoede F307
Hyakyusa

D3 755 in the open air and not within the hut as on the previous day. But the patient was unwilling to be photographed. He feared, he said, that by the photo I would take „his inner man together with the medicine just accepted" with me to Europe. I tried to calm him, showing him some pictures of my family, and I also let him look through the view-finder of my camera, so that at last he was satisfied. Then, after feeling more confident, he told me the cause of the pains which led him to come to the doctor. He thought he had been bewitched, as he had met a descendant of a man whom some long time ago had killed one of his own ancestors.

The Medicine Man and one of his patients. The medicines are spread out on the mat.

756 Then the medicine man also explained to me how he had come to the position of a doctor. He did not inherit his position from his father, but he was instructed in medical practices by another doctor. The circumstances which had led him to this position were the following.

[839] Before his initiation to the medical practice he had entered into [718] forbidden relations with the wife of another man. To protect himself from the magical revenge of the deceived husband and his kin he went to a medicine man to acquire antidotes against the expected bewitching. He had to pay two cows for this medicine, and as he had paid them, the medicine-man allowed to initiate him into the secrets of the practice of a medicine-man. The character of the client, probably, had won his confidence, and indeed, the medicine-man whose guest I saw was, made a profound impression on me.

754 He also described some forms of bewitching[1] for vengeance. For this purpose the avenger poisons a fowl in his own village utterly chaos

[1] Cf. G. Wilson, Introduction, p.[illegible] (belief in witchcraft).

13:Lehmann E-5 (999) 1951 F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

against the wrong-doer. It is supposed that after this procedure sickness or even death may come to that person. Another method consists of laying a bewitched object on the path usually used by the offender; with the same result. Such bewitching is practised, for instance, when a quarrel has broken out between relatives. With the Nyakyusa any quarrelling with kinsmen is considered a very serious crime, as such a conduct is apt, in their estimation, to destroy the highly-valued family harmony.

3. Another day a ceremony (*ulungaga*)[7] to end mourning was held at Kaiumba. Some time before an older child had died, and now they were gathered to take leave of the dead[8].

At some distance from the hut, on the open space before it, a square represented the grave, in which the blossom of a banana[9] was interred, representing the dead. The mourners knelt at this grave and touched it with their elbows, knees and foreheads[10]. Each of the chief mourners had to do this, according to the belief of the Natives, lest he should fall into madness.

The next act was performed by the *uwyaga*[11], the leading person of the ceremony, one in full knowledge of the rites. Immediately before the door of the hut of the mourning parents, the *uwyaga* threw the collections of corn, brought by the participants in small baskets in honour of the dead, together into a big basket, and uttered the names of the contributors addressing the dead. The other participants repeated these names.

Then the mourners went into the hut; but, after some moments, they reappeared one by one and each one, as he left the door in a crouching position, was softly struck on his neck by the *uwyaga* with a piece of the trunk of a banana plant. It was explained to me that this ceremony would induce new strength to the mourners, who were weakened by the death of their relative.

The portion of the ceremony which followed, consisted in the forming of a line by the mourners between the hut and the grave. The persons now stand straddle-legged on leaves of banana, the *uwyaga* at the

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[7] Cf. Wilson, Ceremonies of Burial, p.8, s.v. *uwyaga*.
[8] Wilson has described burials (*ifwa*, sg.) of adult persons; cremations, I think, my descriptions will be of some value.
[9] Cf. my Chaga Notes; Ethnos Studies, XV, p.[illegible].
[10] Cf. Pilisbury, p.[illegible].
[11] Cf. Mackenzie, p.[illegible], gl. language, p.[illegible]; Wilson, Introduction, p.[illegible], *uwyaga* (hereditary priests).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kakoe

158 kind. We take such a one [either type] to a doctor, tying a rope round
757 his waist on the way. For if we leave him free he goes and drowns himself in the lake. So then the doctor says 'His heart has suddenly turned over', and gives him a powdered medicine to eat from a bark-cloth. Then when he has eaten the medicine the doctor puts a finger at the back of his tongue to make him vomit, again and again. So then the filth comes out of him. Then the doctor says: 'Don't eat meat or fish until I give you other medicine later.' Then he ties some of the same medicine in two bark-cloths and ties one round his neck, one round his loins. . . .

158 Sometimes a man in the mad fit finds a woman, then he takes the
759 leaves off his waist, catches hold of her and, forcing her to the ground, has intercourse with her. Then when the woman returns home she complains that a man in the mad fit has caught and raped her. Then her husband says: 'Well, it's all over now. If he'd been in normal health I'd have sued him for a cow for adultery before the chief, but seeing he is mad there's no point in my doing so, it's all over now!' . . .

158 Sometimes madness comes by itself, although no ritual has been
775 omitted, sometimes because they have not performed a ritual. The symptoms of the two kinds are exactly the same, their cause is different. The one connected with ritual comes because the shades are angry: 'Why have you left that child untreated, without putting stones on its head . . . ? It seems it is of no account.' And then the child goes mad.

757 When madness comes of itself the doctor takes the patient to a
●785 waterfall and lets the water tumble on his head; then he makes him vomit, and the vomit is carried away in the water. But that which comes from ritual they don't treat in this way; they make him vomit at home, and then perform the ritual for him.

158 Sometimes madness brings visions (*injini*)—the man lets everything
717 come in his speech and says of people: 'What sort are they? They are witches!' And if there is a gathering he speaks out: 'You are a witch—you bewitch your neighbour's cows!' So then people ask what he means by letting everything come in his speech like this, and they are told he has the mad fit on him. The madness gives him power to see the witches, he sees them surely. And of old if a madman with the fit on him accused you of witchcraft you would go at once to drink the ordeal.
[159] And if the ordeal accused you too then your house was burnt over you!

764 QUESTION: Why the washing and eating porridge?
MWAKALEMWA: If we don't do this then the children will vomit a watery fluid.

I put a direct question to him about the sausages of porridge and he admitted with a smile, rather an embarrassed one: 'Yes, well, you have understood it; yes, it is a symbol of eating excrement . . . we do it at night.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
K-Vat

us in front, we men, and the woman is also roused. If you have not the 833
shade in you (*shanga ingwaka*)[1], then you are sterile, you are impotent, 775
you do not copulate with women; we say that the shades have brooded over you. Why do they not rouse him to go to women? He just looks at them. Because the shade rouses within a man and says: 'Ha!' It rouses a man to copulate with a woman. If it has brooded on him then it does not rouse him; it is within him, it does not wish to come out.

QUESTION: Why do you let the hair grow in the death ritual?

MWASALEMBA: The hair is very important, it's very important. 764

Mwasalemba identified growing hair after spearing a man, and after the birth of twins and later shaving, with growing hair and shaving in the death ritual.

QUESTION: So letting the hair grow at an ordinary death is part of the ritual?

MWASALEMBA: It [the hair] is the corpse's. We have not yet driven him away. At the shaving we drive him off.

Syungu (wife of Mwasalemba) told me that stones were placed 764
between the toes, not only of the participants in the death ritual, 775
but also of a bride (*uwanga*)[2] and that the stones are children (*amalwe ko bana*). The girl should bear six or ten children to her husband.

'But', I said, 'at the death ritual you throw away the corpse, the shade.'

Syungu answered: 'Yes, it is so, children are born by the power [842]
of the shades (*mmaka ga bayaka*).'

Mwasalemba himself, when asked about this, said: 'The stones are the shade, we throw him away so that when he has gone the girl may bear children.'

SYUNGU: When a girl does not bear children we say: 'Perhaps 842
the shades are angry, the husband has not finished giving marriage- 775
cattle.'

QUESTION: And madness?

SYUNGU: If she goes mad we say, if we have not treated her: 'We 158
have neglected the ritual, we have not treated her!' The girl runs about 755
aimlessly, she smears herself with filth. But when we have treated her and she goes mad then we say: 'Perhaps Kyala has deserted me, see nothing remains, we have treated her.'

[1] He used both the phrases *shanga kuja ingwaka* (to be without the shade) and *ingwaka shamwakatale* (the shade broods on him) for the same phenomenon.

[2] *Uwanga*: a girl who has reached puberty but has not yet borne a child; one undergoing the puberty-marriage ritual (*ukwanga*).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F'N17 Ngonde F'N17
Nyakyusa
Selpy, Mathonde

taboo, and the practical difficulties of observing the taboo if fathers and sons live in the same village is cited as a reason for the age-village organization.[1]

The marriage ritual may be said to finish with the eating of the *ilikalaga*, but avoidance of father-in-law and daughter-in-law continues until death and no clear line can be drawn between the marriage ritual proper and the rituals of pregnancy and birth which follow.

It is plain from the events described that the *ubusungu bwa-basungu* is a marriage as well as a puberty ritual and that the husband and his family play an essential part in it, but if a girl is not betrothed before puberty a curtailed ritual is still performed for her when she grows up. She drinks the *undumile* medicine, she washes with a brother, and her mothers put her formally into the hut of seclusion. They cook for the various feasts, and they tell her brothers to call their friends to help dance the stamping dance. The litter is cleared by her mothers in due course, and she is shaved and instructed. When she is eventually married, only the rites of slaughtering the bull of virginity, taking her to her husband, and returning with the *ilikalaga* are performed. She does not wash with him ritually.

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

The avowed purpose of the *ubusungu* ritual is to protect the physical and mental health of the girl and to ensure her fertility. 'If the ritual is not performed the girl will fall ill, go mad, or not bear children.' Numerous informants were agreed on this point. Angombwike expanded it, saying: 'It is said that if they do not perform the ritual of *ubusungu* the bride will go mad. When she is sick of the madness they perform the ritual. If the doctor says: "Those below are angry," then the father of the girl takes water and prays in the banana grove saying: "My father and my grandfather, let the child recover from her sickness." Sometimes the doctor says: "The so-and-so's (naming a village) have cursed her"; then the father seeks a bull and they eat it. It is the curse which comes from the mouths of people when many whisper saying: "Why have they not performed the ritual? Why have they not performed it?" It comes from their evil breath.' Neglect of the puberty ritual is therefore thought both to anger the shades and to shock the neighbours, who expect to feast on this occasion.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 82-6.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

928 Mwakiondo let Mpoma (Mwakaukele) take the inheritance because he is the eldest. Mwakiondo said: 'Let him be their father.' But when they gave the inheritance to Mpoma, they talked to one another and said that Mwambujule should take one wife because he did not have any wife. He was a bachelor. So they gave him one wife, but four wives of the father were inherited by Mpoma. After a little time Mwambujule said: 'My fellow has made a mistake with the property and he has
928 not given me anything.' So he strove to attract the mothers. He said:
578 'Come to me and let me inherit you myself.' The mothers agreed, they ran away and came to his place. Mpoma was angry and went to Mwakiondo to tell him that Mwambujule had attracted the mothers and taken them to his house. Mwakiondo said: 'Do not make a case.' The village headman went to Mwambujule to admonish him together with the mothers. Then he returned them to Mpoma.

754 Later on, illness appeared. The sister of Mpoma fell ill. They gave
747 her medicines to drink and she recovered. Then the brother of Mwambujule fell ill and the doctors said it was sorcery (*ubwage*), that is, Mwakiondo thinks it is sorcery. This is also a common rumour. But, as will be seen later, the diviners, when appealed to, said: 'Abiade,' that is, the shades.

755 When Mwakiondo saw the sick man, he called together all of them
754 that they might grumble (*kijemene*) and drive away the illness, because it is said that when people pray (*ukuipute*) the sickness from sorcery grow less. It is said if one has worked sorcery against his fellow he always hides himself, he does not appear at his friend's home, because, if he appears, if he comes and says: 'I am sorry for the illness (*ndaga ubelewa*),' even without praying at all, the illness disappears. Also, if a sick man has died, he does not go or he will die soon. It is said that the dead rise. Yes, it is the same in the case of witchcraft. Then also they say that if someone has 'eaten' his fellow he does not go to him, he hides himself at his own home, and if his fellow has died he does not go or he will die very quickly. The dead rise. In the prayer they especially drive away the shades, because it is said that sickness from the shades comes from us living. If, for example, I have done something bad to my fellow, and the shades are angry, but if he forgives me, they also forgive. He must express forgiveness openly in words of prayer (*amaye gawe ga kuipute*). If he forgives me only in his heart, the shades do not forgive. This prayer that we heard during the day had power both against sorcery and against the shades, they spoke of both. In the evening it was completed.

754 Mwakiondo called them all together and said: 'Friends, I am astonished that the illness has come again.' The people: 'Hu; this illness puzzles us very much.'

MWAKIONDO: 'For what reason does this man fall ill in the summer, and that man fall ill in the summer, and the other fall ill?'

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F7617 Ngonde F7617

bananas, were placed at the door of Mwalindingo his prophet, and if in the morning the quantity was found to be less, it was clear to all that *Mkasi* had come to receive the offerings.

But the trick worked too often. As the fear of *Mkasi* diminished, men began to take advantage of their still credulous neighbours, and to demand in the name of the fading divinity cattle, beer, food supplies, to be sent to the places indicated by the impersonator of the God. This became so common that the Germans, who then ruled the country, interfered and put it down.

Very long ago there lived near Karonga a man called *Firagulí*, who after his death became a godlet, and lived on the mountain which now goes by his name. There was also a great man called Kambwe, who entered the ranks of the gods or godlets at his death, and lived in the pool a few miles from Karonga, to which in like manner he has given his name. To both of these divinities the people prayed in long-past times; and both, though able to see to the general welfare of the people, were not strong enough to punish them when evil was prevalent. When punishment was necessary, they called in the help of Mwanjebe, a minor deity of the neighbouring Henga people. Firagulí went south on a favouring breeze to invite his more powerful neighbour to come to his help; and Mwanjebe, who lived in a pool at the foot of a waterfall near the Overtoun Institution, came up on a floating island. Then smallpox broke out among the people, and if a visit to Kambwe showed

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F7617 Ngonde F7617

776 753 755 that the pool was bubbling, it was evident that Mwanjobe was there, and must be got rid of as soon as possible. Prayers and promises of repentance were offered, and if that did not satisfy the god, more drastic measures were taken. A great stone was heated and tumbled into the pool, around which gathered a great multitude of people, stabbing fiercely at the water with spears and reeds, to drive off the unwelcome deity. The cessation of the bubbling showed that he had gone, and the fact was still further proved when the smallpox ceased. All these godlets are now mere memories, and, except as memories, they have completely vanished, leaving the field clear for the ancestral spirits and the Supreme Being.

771 There was in the worship, if indeed a determined effort to drive off the deity could be called worship, "no stimulus to the realization of the riches which are given to man in his own nature." The gods presented no problems, for all problems were solved long ago by the fathers; and hence man's relation to them contained nothing upon which the faculties might work and be developed. The religion was stagnant, and the people were stagnant with it.

There was no art; not even rude representations of the gods; no poetry arising out of a feeling of devotion, for devotion there was none. In the case of the godlets I have mentioned, even the qualities which caused them to take rank as gods after death have been forgotten. It may be that the stories of "the brave days of old," to be related in a later chapter, afford us a hint of how the process of deifica-

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

and kill many people. The chief, Mwenemusulu, 791
protected his land in the manner described in the 789
chapter on "The Powers of Evil," and none of his people were killed, though the total killed by a lion in that year in neighbouring districts was very large. A letter in my possession puts the number at forty, while others say fifty. Where the chief protected his land in the traditional way, the people were safe; where this was not done, the toll of human lives was great.

In 1922 the same woman predicted that, for the sins of the people, a spotted hyena would kill many. Again the chief protected his land, and again no one was killed; while in a neighbouring and unprotected land, the death-roll was considerable. In the same year leopards were predicted in the Nserya district. The chief was urged to sacrifice an ox, but refused. Six people were killed, and a number of mauled men and women were treated by Dr. Brown at the Mission at Itete.

To the Konde, as I have already said, there is no 787
difficulty in connecting prediction and fulfilment. 811
The inspiration of the foretellers is not doubted; the animals came as foretold; why should reasonable men refuse to acknowledge a relation between the two events? At any rate it may be presumed that the native will go on seeing a connection, while the white man will fall back upon the ever-ready doctrine of coincidence, and refuse upon any terms to acknowledge any other relation.

There is, however, spirit possession of another kind, 755
828

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

155 which is still a terror to many people: sheer evil
828 spirits, who seek to take possession of a human being as a dwelling-place. Possessed children hide themselves, crying out, "*Abanda, abanda*" (men, men). Adults reveal their possession by dashing about, dancing, shouting. If the possessed makes for water, it is known that a water spirit has entered into him; if he goes to the hills, it is a mountain spirit. In either case the patient is taken by the medicine man to a waterfall, "where God dwells," and given medicine to drink. If he resists, force is used, but frequently the doctor is impressive enough to succeed without it. A bell is rung; the doctor speaks, "We have found you. Come out of the man." Then he takes water into his mouth and squirts it on the breast and back of the afflicted person, striking him at the same time with the calabash from which he took the water, and holding it for a little over the patient's head. Next he sprinkles the whole body with flour, and the party returns to the village, where every one is required to drink a medicine administered by the doctor; for when the spirit goes out of its present victim, he will seek another dwelling, but the medicine protects all who drink it from invasion. The patient must not shave his head for six to eight months, nor may he eat flesh of any kind. When the period prescribed is over, the doctor comes to shave the head of the patient, who has now recovered, and eats part of a fowl which has been treated with yet another medicine.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F7617 Ngonde F7617

vacuum is created by suction, and the hole in the horn closed with beeswax. In about a quarter of an hour the cup is removed. Pain in the eyes, legs, back, is so treated. 757

Smallpox, the most dreaded of all scourges, has already been dealt with under "Worship" and "Witchcraft," and all that is here necessary is to indicate what is done for the cure of patients. An infusion made from the roots of *ikangawanya* and *sambur* is given to drink, and the body is washed with the same mixture. The pustules are opened with the thorns of *sanda*. But more important than the medicine is a clear conscience in the patient; and prayer to the spirits and confession of sins must be made before the medicine is administered. The father, in the presence of all the family, says: "My son has smallpox; let us be at peace; whoever has anything against him, let him declare it." Any matters against the sick man are now inquired into. It may be a debt, or a quarrel, or a charge of impudence in the case of a boy. The sick man is also questioned, and makes his confession, usually of misconduct with girls, who are forbidden to approach the house. If married women are involved, neither they nor their husbands may come near. A prayer for the removal of the disease is now offered by the family representative, at the door of the house in which the patient lies, and the prayer is accompanied by the usual squirting of water from the mouth, which is never omitted. The medicine may now be administered to the sick man. A prophylactic is used by all the other members of the

757 279 755

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F7617 Ngonde F7617

155 family who have not had smallpox, but it is evidently not greatly trusted, for it is used with the formula, "Protection against smallpox is unknown, but let us try. If God and the spirits agree we shall be safe." After this ceremony there must be no quarrelling. Peace in the village is a condition of immunity from the disease.

759 In a considerable number of cases incisions are made in the skin, and powdered medicine rubbed in. This is done for general pains, rheumatism, backache, elephantiasis, toothache, spleen. For toothache, if the pain is in the right side of the face, incisions are made between the great and second toes of the left foot, and the powder rubbed in; if the pain is in the left, the powder goes in the same way into the right foot.

763 *Post mortems* are still conducted in all cases where there is any doubt as to the cause of death. Until quite recently no one was burind without examination, and in some districts that is still the case. The operation is performed at the graveside by the friends of the dead man, the actual operator being as a rule a near relative. If a black substance is found in the gall-bladder, a diviner is consulted, to find out who brought on the disease. If the examination of the gall-bladder yields no result, the heart is examined. Ulcers on that organ indicate witchcraft as the cause of death; fat indicates leprosy. Next, the intestines are examined; if *mafira* (pus) is found there it indicates a kind of rheumatism accompanied with boils. The examination being over, the parts removed are

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F3617 Ngonde F3617

754 One of the commonest charms is called *ŋipita*, and is worn on neck, wrist, or ankle, as a protection against snakes, crocodiles, lions, or leopards. It guards also against sore eyes, ulcers, evil spirits. This powerful charm, the description of which reads like a patent medicine advertisement, is made as follows: take dry *pepuse* or *mpiyi* roots, reduce to powder, add powdered head of *kitwaki* snake, and a piece of *mpiyi* root; set the whole to boil on the fire in a broken pot. Then cut the roots into four pieces, string them on cords, leave two such cords in the house, and carry another wherever you go. If bitten by a snake, chew quickly at the charm, and then bind it on the wound.

When crossing a river, this charm, strung as before, is tied to the legs, the four pieces in this case hanging at about three inches from each other. Numerous other charms are used for the same purpose, but the one I have described is the favourite.

[755] Children suffering from mumps take small bundles of firewood, and lay them at the cross-roads, where the first passer-by will pick up the disease, and the children will immediately recover.

A youth who finds himself unpopular with maidens, goes to the doctor, who incises a powder between the eyes in the forehead. His unpopularity will assuredly pass away, as will that of a girl similarly treated. An older man who is disliked or distrusted by his fellows, has a different medicine incised into the same place, and with equal success. But, more valuable still, a man who is involved in a lawsuit, before either the magistrate or the local chief, or who wishes to gain

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 426 ment so often that finally it is either not paid at all, or paid when it is quite convenient for the debtor to do so. To secure this desirable result the debtor, when he learns that his creditor is coming to demand payment, slips out into the bush, where he gets the roots of a plant called *kuzini*, which he chews as the creditor approaches. A most amiable conversation ensues, at the end of which the creditor begs his friend on no account to disturb himself about the small matter that lies between them: any other time will do just as well, and he will be delighted to call again in a couple of months or so. The same end is attained by incising a powder into the forehead between the eyes.

789 224 763 Hunting medicines have already been referred to. One is incised along the bone from the thumb to the elbow; another is taken internally, but this latter is dangerous, because it leads to a lingering death. When death draws on, instead of dying as common men do, the whole body of the hunter who drinks this medicine becomes helpless; the heart keeps going, the lips move and talk; death does not come. Then his friends come and sing to him: "*Ndembo syaya mmiyombo*," the elephants are among the trees. The sick man, puffing out his cheeks, emits breath with a whirring sound, which is supposed to resemble a sound made by elephants, and presently he breathes his last.

• 755 But there are few ills, imaginary or otherwise, for which there are no cures, imaginary or otherwise: and the cautious hunter, finding old age creeping on him, and his hunting days becoming a thing of

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F317 Ngonde F317

memories and yarns, eats food made from the flour of a pumpkin, which destroys the virtues of his hunting medicines, and at the same time takes away all probability of his death being the prolonged weariness it would otherwise be.

Fishing nets are drugged to ensure a good catch; but here again caution must be exercised, for a very great catch is an omen of a very large family, which is not always an ambition held by the Konde people.

The mother who has just given birth to a child must not cook food, nor may she warm herself at the common fire; a small fire is kindled for her at which she sits by herself; and when the child goes out of the house for the first time a medicine is put into its mouth to guard it against the ills of the world into which it has come.

Christians do none of these things; but Christians are not as other people. They have passed away from the fear of spirits and from the dread of a world in which anything may happen at any moment; and the fact that they escape the consequences of failure to follow custom is having its effect on the common people, many of whom are cautiously experimenting to see whether they too may live a freer and more unshadowed life; but the belief in the protective powers of such things as I have been describing dies hard.

9: Wilson E-S (1934-1935) 1939
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

778 Lwembe, and the grave of the first Lwembe himself, the last being
782 the most sacred. In it stands a miraculous tree from which, the
priests aver, sometimes comes sap like water, and sometimes blood.
'If it is watery there will be a plague of ulcers in the country—
[783] running sores—if it is blood there will be dysentery. But as soon
● [785] as the bones are placed in the grave, or the black bull is killed,
then the sick begin to recover.'

Godfrey Wilson attended three celebrations at Lufungu, and we
788 heard of five others which occurred during our period of field-
work. The ritual is esoteric, that is to say, only the representative
of Lwembe and his priests participate, and the details are not
revealed to others, but its occurrence is widely known and dis-
cussed among older men.

The celebrations observed were modified by the fact that no one
[693] had been installed as Lwembe since the death of Mwakisiya
[794] (36) before 1914. The possible candidates whom the priests had
[177] wished to instal had refused—'they feared the grave'; the only
one who was said to be willing was rejected on account of his
character. The priests gave 'European times' as the reason for
there being no Lwembe. 'When the country was ours before you
Europeans came' the elected candidate was compelled to accept
office. On the death of Mwakisiya, the Kinga priests ordered that
his senior son Mwanjala I (37) should take his place, and when
Mwanjala I died (three years after his father) his full brother
Mwanjala II (38) succeeded. He took a leading part in the rituals
observed, but was not an anointed Lwembe. The priests ex-
plained: 'We fear, thinking that if a chief is wized [and compelled
to sit on the stool] he will complain to the Government and we
shall be punished.' During the period of German rule they had
been threatened with imprisonment if they continued the ritual . . .
'we feared and stole through the country by night' . . . . And there
is still much secrecy about its truncated celebration. Since the
journey down 'the road of Lwembe' with the drum traditionally
involved human sacrifice, and the Lwembe was smothered when
ailing, there is an absolute incompatibility between a full cele-
bration of the ritual and European administration.

The influence of the Christian minority is also considerable. The
177 view of most Nyakyusa Christians with whom we discussed
788 communal rituals is that they used to be efficient, but are so no
longer, since men have been taught a better way of approaching
God. 'God said: "They are mistaken but in their hearts they are

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VII

CLEANSING THE COUNTRY

769 Sacrifices to the heroes and the shades of the chiefs are fully and private—only a handful of priests and chiefs may enter the groves and the details of the rituals are not discussed with other people. But there are other celebrations in which everyone
786 participates; these are the rituals for cleansing the community—
783 'throwing out the rubbish' (*ukujala ikilunga*)—more specifically the ashes from all the hearths.

In Ngonde the cleansing is organised for the whole kingdom, from Mbande, but among the Nyakyusa each chieftdom acts independently. Traditionally, we were told, the *ukujala ikilunga* was an annual celebration, observed at the 'new year', after the break of the rains, but it could also take place if there were much sickness in the country, or plague, or prophecies of evil to come. It was celebrated (in an announced form and by a section of the community only) in Ngonde in July 1957, to cleanse the country of a plague of rats, and in September of the same year a somewhat similar ritual was performed in Perekano's chieftdom because a
[787] fearful omen had been seen—a ground hawkbill had eaten a
[778] chicken. The annual celebrations had been dropped both in Ngonde and BoNyakyusa before 1933.

As has been shown in the *Rituals of Kinship* the Nyakyusa believe
[769] that too close an association with the shades is dangerous; all the
[755] family rituals are designed to drive them away, to drive them out of the bodies of the mourners, or menstruating girls, or parents of twins; and the purpose of 'throwing out the ashes' in all the homesteads is essentially the same. The shades 'come to warm
783 themselves' at the hearths of their descendants, they 'bring sickness
[778] to the hearths' and so the old ashes are cleared out and new fire is lighted. The phrase *ukujala ikilunga* is used in Ngonde for clearing out the litter (*ulufunde*) after a burial, or an initiation ritual, and for shaving after a ritual, as well as for clearing the ashes from all the hearths in the country.

[754] It is also thought that domestic fires are contaminated by
[775] witches who may have cooked the human flesh they steal over their victims' own fires. In Ngonde it was the connexion between

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FNU? Ngonde FNU?
Nyakyusa

[774] They say that complaining drives away illness, even though the witches
[775] are not seen, and do not confess saying, 'It is us' yet they are ashamed
[776] thinking 'People have caught us' and they desist.]

Mwamtenzwe: Catch anyone you see in your dreams. If someone is ill should we not all gather?

Mwamtenzi: Countrymen, give thanks that there are the chiefs.

And the company assented.

Then there was a discussion about the direction in which the chief should spit and people run. One pointing towards Tukuyu said: 'We always looked that way.' Another said: 'We always reached the boundary.'

Mwafiki (a village headman) came with his young son carrying a calabash of medicated water. Pumkoto took a sip and spat out eastward, 'in the direction of the grove of Kabale, to the shades.'

Mwambenga shouted: 'Now we have prayed, the sickness is finished, we are present and watch over the homestead. If we see anyone bringing sickness we will catch him and crush him on the sleeping mat.' There was a roar from the crowd, then all rushed yelling ten yards or so eastward to the edge of the fields, and back again. Pumkoto ran a little way with them, his malacca cane raised, then stopped, looking self-conscious, and strolled homeward. Everyone else scattered, chattering and laughing. On the way back we were greeted: 'You have prayed! Did you catch witches? Whom did you catch?'

Mwamlenda, senior brother of Pumkoto and an expert in ritual, added one or two points in explanation:

In the old days we threw out the ashes, but we have not yet done so this time; we begin with the ritual on the pasture land and throw out the ashes afterwards. In the old days we threw them out of all the houses and put in fresh fire, new ash, saying 'Thou Kyala, thou shade,
[777] receive us, let us sleep here, we throw out the ashes, let sickness be
[778] slight.' Those who are angry now are our shades—those of the chiefs—they have gathered with the shades of the commoners. The medicated water means: 'Thou shade, you fathers, may we sleep, use this water for us if we are ill, may we be strong.' The water goes to the shades with these words.

Q.: Why must the women come?

M.: They call the war cry, we run swiftly, the women follow calling the war cry which means, 'You shade, we call the war cry for you that we may be pure—without anger—in our bellies, make us strong also, thou shade, may we also be pure in our bellies, this is your war cry . . .' The running and calling the war cry is to mock at him, to drive him

M. Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

away. We run with him, we leave him over there, we return and bring him in. We drive him off because he brought sickness; when we have done so we return and bring him again that we may be pure—without anger—and he also may be pure. We are with him all the time; we never throw him away. We always have the old one in the belly, and [753] [783] [786] [775]
[753]
rubbed in he, and if I die I am with him, this earth (pointing to the earth of his homestead) never goes away, it is he. So if the crops fail when I have heard I say: 'The shade is angry, this earth.' (*Papo shale nilengwe ilaile mmale, mmalale je jaje, nilengwe nyhale nilengwe—ungle nga gwilengwe nalemwe je jaje—ngwe lengwe nilemale nilemi 'ungwale shalale ungle nga' he jaile.*) Yes, in the death ritual also we drive him away with his sickness, and bring him back, always the old one.

After the ritual all have normal intercourse with their wives, but the night before there was no intercourse. How should we do evil on the main when we have not yet blessed the shade? But when we have blessed him then all of us lie on our mats again. To lie together is to commence the ritual, the shades are shocked and say, 'How can you do this? You agreed yesterday to bless the shades and you do this, why?' There have, if a woman bears a child which cries at night, people say, 'You commenced the ritual, pray for the child.' Or perhaps the woman is barren. We liken the water and the war cry to what we do on the main—the water is the shade's and the war cry is his, it is his work. When we have spoken to the shade he comes into my belly—then I come together with my wife again. [838] [842]

This interpretation by Mwaselemba indicates that the blowing out of water is a symbol of emission. 'It is what men do.' It has been shown in *Rituals of Kinship* that the shades are driven out of the body in the sex act; that the shade and semen are identified; and that driving off the shade is a condition of health and sanity. The fact that blowing out water is *also* a symbol of confusion—admission of anger, 'bringing out all that is within'—and supplication does not invalidate Mwaselemba's interpretation, for the same act is symbolized in many ways and the same symbol expresses events which are distinct, but associated. As in so many societies, abstinence is felt to be a necessary preparation for the celebration of a ritual, and the union, real or symbolic, of husband and wife the necessary conclusion.[1] All this is intelligible only in terms of the Nyakyusa ideas about procreation discussed in *Rituals of Kinship*. The shade is the vital force in men [833] [783] [755]

[1] cf. I. Cunnison, 'Headmanship and Ritual of Luapula Villages', *Africa*, xxvi (1956), pp. 3-23; H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (1927), vol. i, pp. 300-02.]. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (1911), pp. 48, 53-55.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

and women, it is procreative power, fertility. That power is constantly expelled from the belly but returns again and by that expulsion and return men live.

There was a great deal of criticism from the conservatives because no sacrifice had been made.

Mwamwenda: Now people are talking much saying, 'We have abandoned that which they did formerly, we are doing something else.' People have many dreams [gesture hand on hand as if heavy with anxiety], many say: 'I have dreamed of the dead, they told me to sacrifice a cow, to pray, we did not pray properly, that is useless, it will not effect anything.' So we have told the chief saying: 'Let us kill a cow at the grave of Mwakan'ete,' he has agreed, but the cow has not yet come.

Formerly, on the night following the day of the prayer we should have eaten the sacrificial cow, the chief would have killed two cows and the headmen from different villages would have come and eaten by night, and drunk beer provided by the chief, in the house of the senior wife of the chief. . . . They ate a little meat, raw, the rest they roasted. Then in the morning, when they had eaten and were satisfied, they would go to clear out the house, to throw out the ashes, and to pray, as we prayed now, and to make new fire by friction in the pasture land. The village headman made fire with medicine which the chief gave him, the name of the medicine is Mlamba, it's a tree. To throw out the ashes means to clear out all the filth, the filth which the witches and the shades have brought to us—the filth that is sickness. . . . Do not the witches eat meat at the fire? Human flesh? Some roast at your fires your bodies which they have seized, some go home with the human flesh to their own fires, hence comes the filth of the ashes. The village headmen eat the sacrificial meat at night with the shades, they celebrate for them with the blood which goes beneath. . . .

If the chief has done something wrong, then those above [i.e. the village headmen] pray to those beneath saying, 'Let us help one another to punish him who has strayed, but we do not wish that he should die, let him be ill; perhaps then he will seek something to nourish us.' Again the night before the throwing out of the ashes they confess their anger and say: 'You beneath, this our child (the chief) has remembered us, there is no accusation against him now, may sickness go away from the country, and children sleep, let us all sleep and the cows calve. We greet those beneath.' In my childhood I was repeatedly surprised at night when my father came in, he had a little parcel of meat. 'Where have you been?' I asked. 'We have been praying.' But since I grew up and became a village headman, and was recorded as such [by the administration] we have never seen sacrificial meat.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

994 Penja chief, Mwalukasa. He called all his people because he heard that
783 smallpox was coming and said: 'Let us pray.' And he called his fellow
753 chiefs, those of the same lineage, and said: 'Let this illness not come,
may it go to other chiefs. . . . Listen! I am the chief! We have heard
that smallpox is approaching, who is here who rejoices at his approach?
Who is here who wishes that it should kill us?'

Ten chiefs: We, we do not rejoice that it is coming, we reject it, chief
Mwalukasa, may it pass by this homestead.

Ten commoners: And we also reject it, may it pass by our homesteads.

Mwalukasa: And I, I reject it, may smallpox not come into our country.
If there be one who has relations in a chiefdom where there is smallpox
and they come to call him to a funeral let them stay at a distance, and
not sleep here, let him not go near until the illness has passed by, at
the end of the year. If you wishes go to fetch it, you will kill your
[754] fellows with whom you are chatting now. You will not enjoy my
company or build with me, the chief, if you go and bring in smallpox
and kill your fellows. We pray that it may pass. [For it is believed in
this country that the witches go to bring in illness, or wild animals,
from a distance.]

Ten commoners: Yes, indeed, may it pass by.

Mwalukasa: If you go to bury a brother in a country in which there is
smallpox stand afar off, tie the cow you bring to a tree and call to
them: 'Here is my cow for killing, come and take it.' Take your cow,
but do not go into the homestead.

And the people did as he said. Then he told them to get ready for
the ritual. He took his calabash cup and three other chiefs with
[728] calabash cups followed him. They blew water and prayed to Kyala
and the shades. Then the people were gathered together; and the
chiefs, led by Mwalukasa, ran round facing each group in turn and
blowing out water towards them; the men held their shields in front
of them and when the chiefs blew they shook their shields violently, as
if fighting.

When all was finished then Mwalukasa said: 'When you go home,
[372] throw out the ashes and the fires; all make new fire with drills.' And
they all did this.

Finally he had bamboos planted with medicine on the main roads
between BuPenja and BuKukwe and BuPenja and BuNyika. No one
● [755] ill with smallpox, or who had lived in contact with smallpox, was
allowed to pass, unless he had been ill and recovered. I saw the one
bamboo clump on the boundary of Nyika and Penja country. No one
passed it, it was very fearsome (*lusiga fje*).

As in cultivation there was a combination of ritual and science.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IX

KASITILE THE PRIEST

WE turn now from the description of rituals to a personal document, an account of the illness of Kasitile (86), the leading priest of Selya, the causes suggested for it, and the rituals performed. His case shows: (i) the power of village headmen over chiefs in general, more particularly the power of the commoner priests (village headmen of the previous generation) over hereditary priests of the chief's lineage; (ii) the persistent linking of misfortune with sin in both public and private life; (iii) the function of divination in selecting between possible causes of disease; (iv) the influences of Christian and Muslim teaching and Western medical science on a conservative who goes so far as to invite a Muslim to cut the throat of the sacrificial animal and speaks of turning Christian in his old age; and (v) the very great importance attached to 'speaking out' (*ukusosya*) and not leaving anger to smoulder unconfessed. Beer is necessary for such a ritual 'speaking out' and the participants are pressed to drink deep, for *in vino veritas*.

The *dramatis personae* are:

KASITILE (86) of the chief's lineage, priest of Selya
JANE his senior and favourite wife
JANE'S YOUNGER SISTER and co-wife
KILULELE a third wife suspected of bewitching Kasitile
MWAIPOPO (116) the chief and senior kinsman of Kasitile
MWAKYONDE (148) the doctor who was treating Kasitile
KINGA *priests* (i.e. Kikungubeja Nsyanigwa, Kyamba Kitali, *vide* pp. 24-34)
NGULUYO, NJOBOKOSA, KISOOOTA } Village headmen of Mwaijonga (82) and priests of his grove, *vide* pp. 74-7, 84-5
MWAMAKUNDA THE ELDER a hereditary priest, assistant to Kasitile
MWAMAKUNDA THE YOUNGER (Mwambagoje) son of the elder who often acted in his place

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

793 NDEMBWE
755 NSOKI
[551] NSESA
[791] A SANGU
} Diviners consulted by Kasitile

NDISA a kinsman of Kasitile

It will be remembered that, in accordance with the custom of
793 delegating ritual functions to a junior line, Kasitile's grand-
755 father (44) had been appointed rain-maker and priest responsible for receiving the Kinga when they came to sacrifice at Lubaga. Kasitile thus held an important public office. He was living on the plain (where he had inherited the estate of his father's younger brother) where his own elder brother (85) died and he came up into Selya to bury him and succeed to his position. But he failed to notify the Kinga priests of his brother's death and they were
[787] very angry, and told him he would die if he stayed in the homestead, so he fled back to the plain. There he fell ill, and he was carried back to Selya to be treated by the visiting Kinga priests, who told him he was sick 'because he went to the plain in a hurry and they had not given him medicine'. The idea here is that the heir to a chief or priest must cultivate the power that was in his
[778] father's body by drinking medicines: Kasitile was 'losing the *ifingila* of his father by not drinking medicines'. Now *ifingila* implies *both* the medicines of chieftainship and the power which they create in the body of a man.

So Kasitile was treated and we quote his own account of what happened:

> The Kinga came to cook medicine by the tree where I pray—it is where the cattle byre of my elder brother was. They put some medicine for Jane [his senior wife] and me in beer . . . and we drank together . . .
> [783] and they boiled medicines in a pot and told us both to wash with the infusion every day for two months. I found a goat and called the priests Ngulyo, Njobakosa, and Kissogota and . . . they and the Kinga priests ate the meat together, and they told me to stay for two months and return to the plain again, and so I did. Then the Kinga sent for me to come back and I've come up to live. I found a cow, and called the priests and killed it at the sacred grove, Kinyangwa, and all the people ate the meat. Then the Kinga told me to move to my father's old homestead, and I did so this very year.

Before we arrived, therefore, Kasitile had been in conflict with
[753] his fellow priests, and he had been very ill, and attributed his

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

illness to neglect of his duty to the Kinga. All the time we were in BuNyakyusa he was ailing—possibly he suffered from tuberculosis—and one wrongdoing after another was suggested as the cause of his illness. 793 755 [753]

His case is intelligible only in terms of the conception of 'the breath of men', that is, a power akin to witchcraft thought to be legitimately exercised by village headmen and others to punish wrongdoers, but which is referred to by the victims as 'witchcraft'. This has been discussed at length elsewhere.[1] [754]

On 2nd July 1935, Kasitile had left his own house and was living with a friend in a neighbouring village. His doctor, Mwakyonde, said that he was being 'throttled by the witches' and had invited him to come and recollect himself (*ukwipelekesya*) in the tranquillity of a village of another chiefdom in which there were many people with spiritual power (*abamanga*) so that 'the witches' could not get at him. This is a common precaution in case of illness, for witches are thought not to have power ordinarily outside their own village and never beyond the chiefdom.[2] 793 754

The cause of the illness was explained as follows: Kasitile had quarrelled with Kissogota, the commoner priest, and others of the principal men of the country, because he had found them drinking the sacred beer (*ubwikemo*), brewed after the millet harvest (*vide supra*, pp. 84-5) without telling him, or sending him the pot which was his due. They invited him to drink, but he refused and they each sent him 1*s.* to beg pardon. Kasitile bought beer with one of the shillings and called the senior commoner priest, Ngulyo, and his fellows to drink saying, 'I was angry, friends, you "overstepped" me' (i.e. they had ignored his rights). He himself should have brewed when he confessed his anger, and slaughtered a calf or prepared food for them as well, but he had bought only one shilling's worth of beer and provided nothing himself. Then, when they had drunk, Kasitile fell ill. Hence it was said that the commoner priests were angry and 'ate' (i.e. bewitched) him. Kasitile's own comment was: 'The fault lies with the young priests (Ngulyo, a young man, had inherited his father's position), they are useless as priests . . . I was not told of that ritual beer, yet the medicine comes from me, from this home where I keep it. They should have come to me to get it and put it with the millet in the holy pot. They drank the beer without medicine. It is they who have brought cold and hunger on the country. I think the [578] [753] [689] [731] [789]

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 91-121, 167-9. [2] *op. cit.*, pp. 102-3.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

793 trouble is that Mwaipopo (the chief 116) is getting old. . . .'
754 Here Kasitile suggested two different causes for the scarcity in the
[731] country: (*a*) the negligence of the priests, and (*b*) the senility of the
[789] chief. In the old days Mwaipopo would have been smothered, as Angombwike explained (*vide supra*, p. 63).

[753] On the 9th, Kasitile, much troubled by his cough at night,
[757] expressed a great desire for the return of the missionary nurse to Kabembe hospital. 'She is killing us by her absence, the black people don't know anything about these things, only the Europeans. Why, I went there and the dresser just gave me an injection without taking my temperature—no European ever does that.'

[787] The following day he sent off his sons with 10 c. to inquire about
[753] his case from a diviner. The diviner said: 'The wives at his home are gossiping to other people about their husband. People want the husband's body to be light. It is not Jane, because she is his favourite, but the others.' Kasitile said:

I shan't do anything, I said 'Let's leave it.' I am still in Butola [the village to which he moved for safety]. Mwakyonde is giving me medicine for my disease. It drives out the cold which is in my body. Yes, the cold is the breath of the witches coming to throttle me—it's due to my
755 wives' gossip. But it started as a quarrel with other people [non-
753 relatives] first. One day I went to drink beer in Bujege and that night I fell sick; that is how it began. Men are complaining because I, a chief, a senior, do not cook food for them. They throttle me on that account. They say: 'Let us see whether he is really a chief, a senior!' But others say: 'He has done no wrong.' Yes, the sickness took me on the way home from the beer. Perhaps Kyala asked: 'What has he
[776] done?' and found I had done no wrong. If there had not been a Kyala who saves us I would have been dead.

When I consulted a diviner he struck a spear and looked along it,
[787] then he said: 'The disease now is from his wives—the earlier attack was from men, but this one is from his wives. When they gather at the hearth they say: "Come hither, we see him where he sleeps."'

754 'Are the wives witches?' we asked.
753 Kasitile replied:

Yes. They say: 'There is a favourite, we are not beloved.' If a man's wives are good the witches can get into the house, but their cold breath dissipates quickly; you are given medicine and recover quickly; but if the wives are bad they gather together the medicine and press it down, so that it is powerless. One of my wives is very bad, her lineage is bad, it is she who calls to her aid the heavy ones, the witches. The

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

KASITILE: Yes indeed.
SANGU: Now your body is sick, you are coughing. 787
KASITILE: Yes indeed, I am ill, and I am coughing a great deal. 791
SANGU: Yes, it is that quarrel down there. You came with the cough from the plain. 753
KASITILE: Yes, I came with it.
SANGU: You are a priest, you are a senior priest. (He knew this himself!)
KASITILE: Yes indeed.
SANGU: But the cough comes from the quarrel in the plain. If you were not a priest you would have died.
KASITILE: Indeed, we quarrelled over land, over the boundaries, on the plain. I hoed someone else's land—the land of a commoner there. [578]
SANGU: They placed something to injure you.

Kasitile paused in his narrative and we asked how the 'something' operated.

KASITILE: In dreams, by means of their witchcraft. [754]

The Sangu told me: 'It is this which causes you to cough continually, but there is something else also, you did not move to the plain from here without trouble.'

KASITILE: No, I moved with an accusation against me. [775]
SANGU: Yes indeed, you did wrong and now your fathers are very angry. [776]
KASITILE: Yes, I cut a tree.
SANGU: Mother! You cut a tree? The fathers and Kyala are brooding over you, Kyala is angry and broods over you. Pray, pray very much. It is you who are throttling the cattle of the country.

We expressed surprise and Kasitile continued: 'Yes, indeed. The Sangu said: "It is your wrongdoing (in cutting the tree) which is causing the cows to abort. I will clear out the thing which came with you from the plain. Bring 2*s.* tomorrow." He's a great doctor, Mwaipaja.' [688]

The astonishing thing was that Kasitile, a man of considerable intelligence and inclined to query the truth of the revelations of some oracles, was so much impressed by the fact that the foreign doctor (staying in the country) knew that he was a priest and had sojourned in the plain, though to anyone knowing KiNyakyusa well his connexion with the plain was apparent in his speech, and his bearing indicated him as a personage.

Talking of the divination three days later, Kasitile told us the Sangu doctor had said: 'You have done wrong at home. This Kyala (pointing to the little pot into which he was looking) knows that Lwembe and the Kinga and your father are angry, your father is very important, he works with Kyala, he is with him.' 755

As a treatment for the cough the doctor put various ingredients with 791

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

755 some live coals into a small calabash and held them against Kasitile's
791 chest 'to clear out the blood of coughing'. To pacify the shades a pot
of medicines in water was put on the fire; the doctor, Kasitile, and his
[769] 'senior wife' (actually her younger sister, as Jane was away) each held
the pot with a crooked finger. Then Kasitile and all his wives and children were sprinkled with the hot medicines. And the doctor told Kasitile to sacrifice a bull.

During the following week preparations for the sacrifice went ahead.
[793] Kasitile walked for some hours through the forest to call Mwamakunda, his fellow priest who always assisted him in the celebrations at Lubaga and 'sprinkling the country'. Mwamakunda is a very old man, contemporary of Kasitile's father, and he asked: 'Are you bringing your European to the sacrifice?'

KASITILE: Yes.

[186] MWAMAKUNDA: But your father Mwakanjoki (60) did not know any
Europeans, he feared them, he died without ever meeting one. After
[688] your father died, when your elder brother was alive, Europeans came
—Germans—and cut down a tree, the *umwali* tree in the sacred grove
[177] near Kamesu; blood gushed out, it shouted so that it was heard in BuKinga.

Kasitile explained that the Germans had wanted timber. Afterwards
[782] Mwaipopo (the chief 116) sought a sheep and they tried to put the
[783] grove to rights ('close up') by sacrificing it. This was the tree beside which the sacred meat was always put when they sacrificed in the grove. Now one branch has grown up again from the roots.

Mwamakunda went on: 'But you did wrong at the beginning not to take the European to pray, and to tell Mwakanjoki (60) that he should not be afraid, the European has made himself our friend.' Kasitile, reporting the interview to us said: 'I concealed that we went together to the grove to pray (*vide supra*, p. 115) and Mwamakunda told me: "Let the European take something, let it stay overnight in the house, and go with him, and pray very much. . . . Mwakanjoki has gone off in
a huff from your home, you have offended him yourself. Go with the
753 European, take him to your father's home. Now your father has taken
769 offence, he is shaking your body by night because you cut the tree; you
688 have done wrong." ' i.e. two causes for the anger of the shades and
186 Kasitile's consequent sickness were given: (i) the cutting of the tree by Mwakanjoki's grave and (ii) Godfrey Wilson's presence at rituals and at Kasitile's homestead. So before the sacrifice of expiation for
783 pruning the grove was performed Godfrey Wilson went to be intro-
782 duced to Kasitile's shades for the second time.

Record of G.W. 9/4/37

[778] In the evening as the sun was setting, I went to Kasitile's house with a cloth and 2*s*. He put them in the house, took down the calabash which

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER X

MEDICINES

278 789 755 THE Nyakyusa regard medicines as an ultimate source of power —given the right ingredients and the 'know how' a man may achieve anything. This conception is integral to their view of reality, moreover the distinctions made regarding the just use of them throw light on the Nyakyusa moral system, and must be examined. But a full analysis of Nyakyusa medicines (*imikota*) would require a book in itself together with an expert knowledge of botany and of the properties of plants. Here we are concerned only with those aspects of the belief and practice in medicines which touch directly on social relationships or which illuminate the Nyakyusa conception of reality and morality, and their use of symbols.

Already many references have been made to medicines for they are an adjunct of most rituals, but their use is not confined to these; often a private individual is treated alone, and such a treatment is not classed by the Nyakyusa as a ritual (*ubunyago*), so we must stray, for a little time, beyond the limits of our title.

(*a*) TYPES OF MEDICINES

278 789 A classification in terms of purpose shows a close conformity with the use of medicines by other peoples in Africa. The use of medicines for protection and cure; for fertility; for success in any chancy undertaking from hunting and fishing to love-making, theft, a court case, or securing a job; for exacting vengeance; and for oracles, is familiar enough. What emerges from a detailed analysis is that the intractability of *persons* is felt to be at least as great a problem as the intractability of *things*, and many treatments are directed towards transforming personalities and developing moral qualities. The medicine given to a bride at puberty is to make her 'patient and polite' as well as fertile; the medicines given to chiefs and village headmen are to make them dignified and wise. A thief is often treated with medicines by his relatives to cure him of his thieving habits; and the famous *gwambemula* medicine is used to control the anger of a husband, a chief, an employer, or a superior officer. (It is said to be much in

[p. 142]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

We remarked to a Christian friend, a deacon, that the rains were late. He replied: 'Well, it is not so very unusual. Sometimes rains begin in one part of the country and not in another. Sometimes we do not get heavy rain down here until the end of January.' In short, the more educated Christians are beginning to think in more general terms: they do not as yet define probabilities statistically in terms of rainfall averages, but they are tending in that direction. 797x 795x [821] [132]

And what of the positive content of Christianity? The supreme attraction, mentioned again and again as the reason for conversion, is: 'There is life' (*ubumi bulipo*), and it is life in a world to come rather than 'more abundant life' here and now that is spoken of. The contrast is between heaven above and the shadowy world 'beneath' of pagan thought, or a fearful fiery hell in which most Christians believe and to which, some think, all pagans are condemned. Constantly in sermons by Nyakyusa preachers there was stress on life, resurrection, and on the rewards and punishments of the future life, and this theme recurs again and again in the dreams of Christians. [775] [772]

There is a gulf also between the pagan conception of 'driving off' the shades and the heroes lest by 'brooding over' a man they bring madness and death, and the Christian ideal of union with God. Sermons stress the goodness and love of God, characteristics quite foreign to the traditional picture of Kyala. [769] [755] [776]

Something of the quality of Christian thought and feeling may be grasped by an examination of the names taken at baptism—the convert from paganism always chooses a new name for himself and the meaning is more immediately obvious to everyone than it is with modern English Christian names derived, as they mostly are, from languages no longer familiar. Many of the Nyakyusa names express a very direct personal relationship with God, the Redeemer: 'He has looked upon me', 'He has roused me', 'He has waited hoping for me', 'He has died for me', 'He gives me courage', 'He has changed me', 'He has chosen me out', 'He has comforted me', and a score more of the same type. Some refer to the Gospels: 'Word of Truth', 'The Word has taken hold of me'. A few speak of purification: 'Make me white', 'He has washed me'. Some express that union with God which the pagans so greatly fear: 'We are with him', 'He has come near', 'He has brooded over me', 'Let us approach', and some thanksgiving: 'Let us sing to Him', 'We praise Him', 'We have rejoiced', and some life: 'He is risen', 797x 795x 551 [553] [852]

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

142
177
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The chief Wwamasika and his family after he had received from me my old "Klepper-Mantle" as a gift.

to enter his hut, where the patient was sitting on the ground with his back to the wall. To heal his patient of the pains, the doctor made some small incisions in his skin near the stomach by means of a triangular-shaped knife, and then he rubbed in the incisions a thick black juice taken from the horn of an antelope (the horn was called *kapembe*, pl. *ulupembe*). The juice was prepared from different roots and herbs as a medicine against stomach pains. In the horn were certain divisions for other medicines, and in each of these divisions was stuck a small (black) stick for removing the specific medicine from it. After this treatment the patient declared that he felt severe pains in the region of his stomach. I asked the doctor for some of his medicines, but he was unwilling to give me anything. Then I promised to bring him next day some European medicines hoping to get in exchange some of his medicaments. 123 757 [415 237]

The following morning I returned. On this occasion I did acquire some of his medicines in exchange for various European tablets, especially as he was most fascinated with the kaliumpermanganatum[1] of which I gave him a few crystals, explaining to him the use and the dose; when I dissolved some of the crystals before his eyes, it probably seemed to him to be a mystical process. Among the medicines I received then from him was a medicine for luck, called *kwarusako*. Some of the inhabitants of the village, who had meantime appeared, were very unwilling for him to give me this medicine, and maintained that I would take with me all the luck of the village. [777]

On this second visit to the medicine-man, there was again a patient present, and I wanted to take a photograph of the scene because it was 123 759

[1] [i.e., KMNO4. – Analyst]

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

123 in the open air and not within the hut as on the previous day. But the
755 patient was unwilling to be photographed. He feared, he said, that by the photo I would take „his inner man together with the medicine just accepted" with me to Europe. I tried to calm him, showing him some pictures of my family, and I also let him look through the view-finder of my camera, so that at last he was satisfied. Then, after feeling more confident, he told me the cause of the pains which led him to come to the doctor. He thought he had been bewitched, as he had met a descendant of a man whom some long time ago had killed one of his own ancestors.

[142 291 516 756]

The Medicine Man and one of his patients. The medicines are spread out on the mat.

756 Then the medicine man also explained to me how he had come to the position of a doctor. He did not inherit his position from his father, but he was instructed in medical practices by another doctor. The circumstances which had led him to this position were the following.

[837] Before his initiation to the medical practice he had entered into forbidden relations with the wife of another man. To protect himself
[789] from the magical revenge of the deceived husband and his kin he went to a medicine man to acquire antidotes against the expected bewitching. He had to pay two cows for this medicine, and as he had paid them, the medicine-man offered to initiate him into the secrets of the practice of a medicine-man. The character of the client, probably, had won his confidence, and indeed, the medicine-man whose guest I now was, made a profound impression on me.

754 He also described some forms of bewitching[5] for vengeance. For this purpose the avenger poisons a fowl in his own village uttering curses

[5] Cf. G. Wilson, Introduction, p. 277 (belief in witchcraft).

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

law to avoid her father-in-law, another informant said: 'It is forbidden to look at fathers-in-law. If we do look then we shall not die well, we shall long to die and not be able to do so, because both those below (the dead) and those above (the living) are angry. Yes, it is the witches we mean when we say "those above".'

c. *The age-village and medicines*

Unlike the belief in witchcraft and 'the breath of men', which mainly affects relationships within a village, or the ancestor cult which is confined to the relations between kinsmen, and between chief and people, the use of medicines (*imikota*)[1] enters into every type of relationship in Nyakyusa society. Medicines are employed to win success in almost every undertaking: cultivating, herding, hunting, love-making, war. They are regarded as one of the main props of authority; the impressiveness (*ubusisya*) of a chief, and the power of a village headman to command, being directly related to the medicines with which they are treated (*vide supra*, pp. 24–5). They are resorted to for the promotion of fertility, for the treatment of the sick, and for protection and retaliation generally, as well as the means of directly harming an enemy. Medicines are believed to operate along with other mystical powers. For example, they are an essential element in rituals directed to the ancestors, and they are used for the discovery of witchcraft (in the ordeal) as well as for protection against it, and for the treatment of patients thought to have been 'eaten' by the witches or chilled by 'the breath of men'. Used alone, medicines are held to be ineffective against witchcraft or 'the breath of men', but they are regarded as a useful complement to other action, such as the banishment of the witch or the repentance of the sinner.

The power of witchcraft or of defence against witches (*amanga*) is connected with medicines, for it is thought often to be acquired for defensive purposes (and more rarely for aggressive purposes) through drinking medicines (*vide* pp. 25, 221). But the powers of witchcraft, or witch defence, and of medicines are quite distinct; the one implies a peculiar physical condition, the presence of one or more pythons in the belly, whereas the other may be bought from a doctor and used by anyone, and its

[1] The root *-kota* implies something derived from a plant. cf. *iki-kota*, a wooden stool.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 efficacy neither depends upon nor affects the user's anatomy.
757 The creation and control of wild animals, for example, is thought
789 to turn on knowing the right medicines, not on any innate power, and is not therefore classed as witchcraft.

The Nyakyusa hold that just as 'python power' may be put to
791 good or evil use, so also medicines may be employed legally or
754 illegally. Particular techniques are not in themselves either good or bad; their morality turns on the purpose which they serve.
789 Thus our friend and neighbour, Mwakionde, who was believed to have created four lions, which were roaming the neighbourhood, by placing certain bundles of twigs in the long grass, was regarded as a benefactor; for the lions had attacked neither men nor cattle, and besides adding dignity (*ubusisya*) to the country were killing the wild pig, which had been destroying the gardens. But a certain X— was driven out of Mwaijande's country because he was alleged to have created leopards which had killed children and cows. 'In 1926 X— was notorious for making leopards. It was said that he got a medicine from Misuku to make them. His neighbours feared to quarrel with him for in that year leopards infested the whole of Selya, especially the country of Mwaijande. It was said that if one quarrelled with this man one's child would be killed by leopards the following day. He was notorious. Once he quarrelled with a neighbour, saying: "Your cattle are eating my food." Then the following day the child of that man was taken by a leopard. The chief drove X— out. When they questioned him he denied having familiars ("animals") but the chief said: "Move from my country, for your animals are destroying this country." He said: "Chief, give me the ordeal." The chief refused, saying: "No! get out of my country." So he moved. Now he is back in the country of Mwaijande. He returned to the place from which he had moved.'[1]

789 Not all medicines believed to cause sickness and death are illegal; there are many retaliatory medicines which are believed only to harm the evil-doer, e.g. the thief, the adulterer, or the eater of stolen food; and the use of these 'medicines of ownership' (*ifilembeko*) is considered quite legitimate. A man gives his wives medicines to drink (without their knowledge) and then any lover who may sleep with them will, it is said, contract disease in

[1] In another context this man was spoken of as a witch (*undoni*), cf. Document, p. 252.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

house. Then she goes in and steals a piece of firewood from the 768
loft[1] and runs off with it, laughing. The officiant pursues her and 587
makes her drop it and gives her medicine, while the company cry: 'A thief, a thief!' She takes the firewood back to her husband's home. 'It is a sign that she has entered her father's house, just as the spear is a sign that she has entered the house of another husband.' In rich families the new husband sends a bull which is [556]
killed and eaten at the ritual.

Our informants were agreed that 'there is no fear of the gasping cough if a woman runs away from her husband and goes to a lover', and in practice no ritual is performed when she visits her father after divorce and re-marriage, but it is perhaps significant [556
that such a situation could scarcely have arisen in the past, since 177]
divorce by agreement rarely, if ever, occurred. An adulterer fled, if he could, with his lover to another chiefdom, breaking off all [684]
relations with her kin.

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

Now we turn to the Kukwe interpretation of events. Our two 115
principal informants here were Mwasalemba, an elderly pagan man, brother to the chief Porokoto, whose wife, Syungu, acted as officiant at rituals in the chief's family, and Kakune, a young doctor who had learnt the medicines from his mother. Mwasalemba was much more coherent than Syungu herself, and his interpretation was confirmed by Kakune and numerous other informants. Again I give the interpretation of the two principal informants without any editing other than placing consecutively statements made on different occasions.

i. *Mwasalemba's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. and translated 158
by him soon afterwards.)

MWASALEMBA: Perhaps a youth, perhaps a girl, runs mad; he runs about naked so that we say: 'He's mad, why doesn't he cover himself?' He goes to the place of defaecation and takes filth and eats it: he goes into people's houses and takes things, he might even take some things from you, from a European, without fear; he knows not what he does. Sometimes, after a visit to a doctor, he recovers altogether and never has the fit again—that is the lesser kind of madness. But sometimes he 158
recovers and then the fit takes him again later—that is the more serious 757

[1] The loft (*pijula*) consists of horizontal beams running at wall level across a portion [422
of the hut. Here every married woman keeps a supply of dry firewood. It is her private 417]
store-place which may not be touched without her permission.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

158 kind. We take such a one [either type] to a doctor, tying a rope round
757 his waist on the way. For if we leave him free he goes and drowns himself in the lake. So then the doctor says 'His heart has suddenly turned over', and gives him a powdered medicine to eat from a bark-cloth. Then when he has eaten the medicine the doctor puts a finger at the back of his tongue to make him vomit, again and again. So then the filth comes out of him. Then the doctor says: 'Don't eat meat or fish until I give you other medicine later.' Then he ties some of the same medicine in two bark-cloths and ties one round his neck, one round his loins. . . .

158 Sometimes a man in the mad fit finds a woman, then he takes the
684 leaves off his waist, catches hold of her and, forcing her to the ground, has intercourse with her. Then when the woman returns home she complains that a man in the mad fit has caught and raped her. Then her husband says: 'Well, it's all over now. If he'd been in normal health I'd have sued him for a cow for adultery before the chief, but seeing he is mad there's no point in my doing so, it's all over now!' . . .

158 Sometimes madness comes by itself, although no ritual has been
775 omitted, sometimes because they have not performed a ritual. The symptoms of the two kinds are exactly the same, their cause is different. The one connected with ritual comes because the shades are angry: 'Why have you left that child untreated, without putting stones on its head . . . ? It seems it is of no account.' And then the child goes mad.

757 When madness comes of itself the doctor takes the patient to a
755 waterfall and lets the water tumble on his head; then he makes him vomit, and the vomit is carried away in the water. But that which comes from ritual they don't treat in this way; they make him vomit at home, and then perform the ritual for him.

158 Sometimes madness brings visions (*injosi*)—the man lets everything
787 come in his speech and says of people: 'What sort are they? They are witches!' And if there is a gathering he speaks out: 'You are a witch—you bewitch your neighbour's cows!' So then people ask what he means by letting everything come in his speech like this, and they are told he has the mad fit on him. The madness gives him power to see the witches, he sees them surely. And of old if a madman with the fit on
[683] him accused you of witchcraft you would go at once to drink the ordeal. And if the ordeal accused you too then your house was burnt over you!

764 QUESTION: Why the washing and eating porridge?

MWASALEMBA: If we don't do this then the children will vomit a watery fluid.

I put a direct question to him about the sausages of porridge and he admitted with a smile, rather an embarrassed one: 'Yes, well, you have understood it; yes, it is a symbol of eating excrement . . . we do it at night.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 the wife of Mpoma, but about this I do not know much. When they
[783] stopped speaking Kanyamale was ill. Then her husband charged her
754 with witchcraft and she said: 'What is the case about? I have been ill since we came from confessing anger.' Then Kanyamale grew sulky and gathered up her mats and went with them to her child's place. Mpoma said: 'I must follow her,' but his fellows soothed him and he turned back. Then he borrowed a spear from his fellows and went to drive off the game which were eating his crops. When he found no animals he went home. On his return, when he was still outside, he heard the wives whispering about some case. He asked them to open the door for him, but they were silent and did not open the door of the hut. Then he pushed it open. When he entered the hut he closed it and he cross-examined the wives, asking what they were talking about. One said: 'I was just asleep.' He said: 'With whom were you speaking? You are hiding a man in this house.' One woman got up immediately and opened the door. Mpoma cross-examined them hotly. He said: 'Why did you open the door if indeed there is no man in the hut?' Mpoma got in a passion and went elsewhere. He returned again and said: 'Marry the child. I will not destroy him,' and he went away alone.
[627] He took the case to Mwakisisya, the village headman, and lost it. Then the court said: 'You get the children. Let them come here, though their mother is not here.'

757 Later on it was like this: Mwakionde went to attend to the medicines
754 to give to the sick man to drink; they began by putting powdered medicines in a pot, then they put in some water, then they put in three sorts of powdered medicine, one black and two red. Mwakionde, because he was the doctor, began; he put in the water first. Mpoma, the senior, followed him, then all the others. When the water boiled, they stirred up porridge with a spoon, then they gave the sick man some to drink, and the relatives drank. If there were one who was working sorcery against his fellows, he would die when he drank that medicine. But the sick man, before he drank this medicine, drank something else. When the water boiled, they mixed a medicine and scarified themselves all over their bodies.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

is finished; then the host will offer a greeting, but 234
no further conversation takes place until all the milking is over. Even his wife will not talk to a man milking. And women themselves do not milk as a rule. I was once called to see an old woman who had been terribly mauled by an enraged cow, which she had attempted to milk during her husband's illness. What enraged the cow I do not know, but the Konde believe that it was the sex of the milker, though men also are sometimes injured by enraged animals, usually a cow suckling her first calf.

Milk that is not drunk fresh is put into large pots, [252]
and the milk of five to ten days added day by day. It is covered over very carefully, and eaten, when thick, along with potatoes, bananas, or other food. The whey, which is poured off when the pot is full, is also [757]
drunk for its cathartic properties. The pots, of which a family with a large herd may have up to ten, are thoroughly cleansed after use with boiling water, and then laid on the fire for perfect disinfection. Sometimes the milk is further hardened by being allowed to drip from a closely woven basket for several days, when it becomes hard and slightly tough, with a flavour like that of milk cheese.

I have more than once proved the sustaining quali- 000
ties and pleasant taste of thick milk prepared in the Konde fashion. On one occasion I was separated from my carriers, and, about two in the afternoon, having tramped since six in the morning, I stumbled into a village, and dropped exhausted under a great spreading tree. The chief, observing my exhausted condi-

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XXII

Sickness & Medicine

757 THE Konde possess a surprisingly wide knowledge of the uses of herbs. I have in my possession a collection of over a hundred specimens of leaves and roots, brought to me by the doctors who used them, and who described to me the disease for which each was a cure, and the manner of applying the drug. Knowledge of these plants is handed down from generation to generation. In a prayer to be given presently, the doctor pleads that he has not departed from the knowledge of his ancestors, as a reason why he should be assisted now; an attitude which is not, perhaps, a guarantee of progress, but certainly is a guarantee of honesty. The knowledge is quite real so far as it goes. I was myself in 1912 cured instantaneously of a raging toothache by an old native doctor, and two years passed before the trouble returned. The old man boiled in water some rootlets of a tree which grows in the neighbourhood, and the liquid, when cool, was applied to the tooth with a leaf, when the pain vanished as by magic. A few years later another doctor undertook to cure me of a severe attack of neuritis, but I preferred the attentions of a European doctor; a decision which I

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

have often regretted, not because the European did not cure me, but because I missed an opportunity of testing the native. 757

A European well known in the country told me recently that in 1901 he was cured of black-water fever by a native doctor on the Zambesi. Water boiled with roasted rice was given him in large quantities, and a small sack, filled with boiled leaves of a tree not known to me, was bound around the abdomen. His recovery was rapid, and he has himself successfully used the same cure in other cases. Another European was cured of persistent dysentery by an old native doctor.

Doubtless there is much pretence; drugs are administered without real knowledge; but in the main the doctors are honourable men, fulfilling an important place in the life of the community, relieving much pain, and achieving striking successes, which are too well authenticated to admit of doubt. That in many cases they ruin the patient for life, is unfortunately also only too true. But however that may be, they have not forfeited the confidence of the people. The advent of the scientifically trained European doctor has diminished indeed, but by no means destroyed, the influence of his African confrère in science. Hundreds still consult the native doctor, many in preference to, and not a few after having tried, the white man's medicine. A medical friend of mine tells a good story against himself. He was asked by one of his own employees for the loan of two shillings; but the applicant was most unwilling to tell what the 759

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

759 money was to be used for. It came out, however, that it was to pay a native doctor, to whom he was taking his wife for consultation! The native's fee was two shillings. The fee at the dispensary would not have been one-tenth of that sum, but the patient preferred the high fee and the unqualified adviser. Nor is this surprising, when it is remembered that so much of the troubles which afflict the native, are believed to be due to the interference of spirits, with which the European doctor will have nothing to do; while the Konde doctor will consult them as part at least, if not the whole, of his diagnosis. Hence the confidence in him. He is in touch with the sources of the trouble.

759 789 And this same conviction, that the native doctors are in touch with the sources of the trouble, leads to some of the most foolish beliefs of the common people, and of the most mischievous practices of the doctors. It is the source of the absurd confidence in the power of medicine to turn bullets into water, for example. In 1897 medicine was prepared which would cause the white man, in what was then the Neu Langenburg area, to disappear. It is believed by many natives with whom I have been in touch, that some doctors are seeking for a "formula" to-day, which will succeed where the previous one so obviously failed; suggestive of a state of mind similar perhaps to that of our own alchemists of centuries ago; but suggestive also of a desire, at least in some quarters, to see the last of the white man.

757 782 Both the gathering of herbs, and the administration

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

757 of the medicine, is a religious act. Mwenekasanga-
782 mara, the doctor referred to in the previous chapter, used the following prayer, when gathering herbs; it was given to me by his son, who got it from his father. And Mwenekasangamara claimed that it had descended through many generations in his family.

> "Be merciful to me, thou Creator. The medicine which I am seeking is the same that my fathers sought, and it was Thou that didst open their eyes. Show me the roots, and I shall know them. But if my patient is not to recover, hide them from me, and I shall know that it is Thy will."

The following, used when medicine is being administered in a case of ulcer that has resisted treatment, is rather a statement than a prayer:

> "If this disease has come from God, medicine will heal it; for God, who made us, made also the trees, and gave us intelligence to know their properties. But if it has come from men, I cannot heal it."

The last sentence means that witchcraft or the anger of a spirit is at the root of the trouble, and steps must be taken to discover the facts. Then, but only then, the ulcer will yield to treatment.

789 But behind both the prayer and the medicine, or at any rate in addition to them, there is something else. There are certain medicines which are never administered to patients; their function is to give power to the doctor himself; administered to a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

the plant. *Ipingu* is sadness, or anger. The parents or relatives of an absent friend, having no news of him for some time, give way to grief or anger, and the emotion causes illness in the absent one. The latter goes to the diviner to learn why he is ill, and is told. The leaves of a plant called *inyekenyeke* are pounded and boiled in water, and the infusion drunk, the patient saying in the presence of the doctor:

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> "Let the words of those people fall back upon them. I have spoken no evil; I am not a hard man. God and the spirits behold me. May I get sleep."

Minyenya is nightmare. The actual meaning of the word is *ancestors*, and the bad dreams are due to their action. It is cured by an infusion of the plant *kateteya*, taken while repeating the incantation: "We drive you away, you who trouble us. Leave our friend that he may sleep." *Amahelu* is disobedience to parents or relatives. Take the fruit of *imbangala* and *munyu*, and add the flesh of the fish *ingumba*; reduce to a powder, and mix with beer in a small calabash. This the disobedient one is forced to drink three or four times, nothing being left in the calabash. I have no doubt at all that most children find obedience less obnoxious than the mixture. Similar success attends the use of a drug made from the *mulombwa* tree. The *kasoka* is a tiny creature which covers itself with scraps of grass, and moves by using its head as a lever. It is a sovereign remedy, when mixed with other drugs, for madness, as well as for that form of madness which

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

828 makes a woman unfaithful to her husband. For *impulamutu*, a brain trouble which makes the sufferer
757 strike his head against trees, or other hard objects,
278 there is a cure, but I have not discovered what it is. For dizziness, an infusion is made from the roots of the *kalemerera* plant, and the patient first drinks, then washes his face with, the infusion. Epilepsy is treated with a mixture made from the roots and leaves of many plants. The mouth is forced open if necessary when the drink is being administered. Natives assert that cures are effected, but I know of no cases that have been cured.

757 There is no disease more common among the Bantu peoples than ulcers, sores, abscesses. The
278 common *kironda* is treated with a wash made from the infusion of pounded *burungo* leaves. If it does not yield to treatment, it is due to witchcraft or spirits, and in either case the necessary preliminaries must be gone through. A special form of this disease is found when the ulcers break out on the breast or in the mouth. The diseased part is washed with an infusion of *indobo* bark, and another infusion is taken internally twice a day for a few days. A more malignant form is called *ndoroka*, for which the leaves of the plant *kanga* are infused, and applied as for *kironda*, with the same ceremonies, if a cure is not effected within a reasonable time. *Mpenga* is a slightly different form of *ndoroka*. *Kabimba* is something of the nature of an inside tumour which must be let out. Roots of the *tubimba* shrub are reduced to a dry powder, spread on the leaf of the *untugutu* tree, and bound to

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

the place with a cord made from fibre of *kabumbu*; in about ten minutes the swelling will burst and the matter escape. The same results follow from binding the place with cord made from *unguluka* shrub. Gourds are often used instead of leaves, and are tied on with cords passing through holes bored in the sides of the gourd. For syphilis (*kaswendi*) the roots of the *indabi* shrub are infused and drunk, and a powder made from *indobo* shrub is rubbed into the wounds or sores. 757• 278

Kitasya is intussusception of the bowels, found mostly in children, and usually fatal. When one child after another in a family dies, an examination is made of the bowels, bamboo knives being used for the operation. If *kitasya* is indicated, the parents drink an infusion made from the leaves of a creeper called *inguiuka*, which is taken with beer. Then the bed is turned so that the head is where the feet were. The woman wears on her neck, tied up in a piece of bark, a section of the plant from which the infusion is made. But in giving this medicine, as in many others, the doctor will say, "This medicine is not mine; it is God's; He must work in you." When another child is born, the doctor is called to give it medicine, and to shave its head. The fee is a cow; and a hoe is paid when the child reaches the age of three.

For other internal conditions, a mere enumeration must suffice. Internal pains, dysentery, diarrhœa, constipation, worms, vomiting, indigestion, and wasting diseases are all treated in similar fashion, each having its own specific drug or mixture of drugs. 757

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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Fever, if due to natural causes, is treated with the infusion of the leaves of *amafumbo;* if due to the action of the spirits, a prayer for mercy is added. *Sekema* is malaria with headache. The patient must sit in the open, where he can see the sun, and drink from a closely woven basket an infusion of *lusisigembe;* and in some cases the extracted juice of *moromoro* is put into one ear. There is a " general sickness " called *bukanye*, due to witchcraft. To neutralize the witchcraft, the whole body is washed with an infusion of *ulukanganunya*, and a drink is given made from the leaves of the *mungwina* tree. Severe burning is generally believed to be the work of the spirits if it occurs at night, and it is at night that most burns occur. The native is a heavy sleeper, and he lies with his feet stretched out towards the fire. A brand falls upon a foot, and he is burned before he has properly awakened; but it was the work of the spirits, who have now to be placated with cloth, or a goat, or a fowl. Then the burned parts are smeared with the honey of a small insect called *umunya*, and washed with the infusion of the leaves of the *kasambanya* shrub. Scalding is treated with castor oil.

Muscular pains like *ikiraso* and *ilyuru*, which are probably pneumonia and rheumatism, are treated first as due to natural causes, and if this fails, witchcraft is assumed to be the cause, and steps taken accordingly. Prayer is offered, if the following can be called prayer:

" You *kiraso*, if you have come from God, the medicine will cure you. If you have been sent by

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

men, are not they also flesh? They fail, they die; but first they kill us. Let this disease fly away from me." 757 278

An infusion of the roots of *indobo* tree already mentioned, is now given to the patient.

Diseases of the eyes, ears, teeth, gums are also treated. A list would be tedious, and a detailed statement there is no space for. Enough to say that a person qualified for the task could write a good-sized book on the subject of native medicine. There are, however, still some diseases and practices of which some brief account must be given.

Snake bite. Naturally in a land where snakes are numerous, antidotes are in use, and are claimed to be successful. The roots of *kisongora* infused and drunk, are said to be a sure remedy, if taken in time. A rich man, however, would not be advised to take this alone, for his riches bring him under suspicion of being a sorcerer, and the snake may have bitten him by command of his jealous fellow-sorcerers. To overcome this an incantation must be used.

"May you be defeated! The goods I have, I stole from no man. They are my own. This is true, as God sees me."

Another remedy is the root of *kitumbo*, the infusion mixed with soot from the inside of the house. The mixture must be drunk outside, for if the patient goes in he will die. A method favoured by other doctors is to hold the part bitten over a fire to which has been added the leaves of the *unkwesi*, a large tree. Presently

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

757 the fang will drop out, and the man will be saved!
278 There are men living near me who claim to have seen this being done.

844 The birth of children is accompanied by loving care, gross superstition, and much medical treatment, useful or otherwise. All women at that time are given a drink of *indobo* leaves, pounded and mixed with water. If the placenta has not come away satisfactorily, castor oil is given. And if pain supervenes, the bark of *indobo* is again given, pounded and mixed with water. For a child weak at birth, roots of *unsuba* and *mungwina* are taken, pounded, mixed with water, and the child is washed in the
842 mixture. Sterility in man or woman can be removed by the right drugs; and when a woman is getting on in years and wishes no more children, a mixture is in
847 use which will have the desired effect. Medicines for producing abortion are widely known, and
832 frequently used, as also are love potions.

757 Steaming is resorted to in cases of great pain or weakness. Water is cooked in a large pot, with the bark of *mparampara* added. When the pot has boiled, it is taken off the fire, and the patient, covered with a mat, kneels over it, supported if very weak, for about ten minutes. Massaging also is employed when one is very tired, the leaves of *muyoka* being pounded to give a juice for lubrication, or, as the people themselves say, to get into the body through the pores. Cupping is employed for headache and rheumatic pains. Eight cuts are made in two lines, on each side of the head; a small horn is put over the cuts; a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

vacuum is created by suction, and the hole in the horn 757
closed with beeswax. In about a quarter of an hour the cup is removed. Pain in the eyes, legs, back, is so treated.

Smallpox, the most dreaded of all scourges, has 757
already been dealt with under "Worship" and 270
"Witchcraft," and all that is here necessary is to indicate what is done for the cure of patients. An infusion made from the roots of *ikanganunya* and *sambwe* is given to drink, and the body is washed with the same mixture. The pustules are opened with the thorns of *unsuba*. But more important than the medicine 755
is a clear conscience in the patient; and prayer to the spirits and confession of sins must be made before the medicine is administered. The father, in the presence of all the family, says: "My son has smallpox; let us be at peace; whoever has anything against him, let him declare it." Any matters against the sick man are now inquired into. It may be a debt, or a quarrel, or a charge of impudence in the case of a boy. The sick man is also questioned, and makes his confession, usually of misconduct with girls, who are forbidden to approach the house. If married women are involved, neither they nor their husbands may come near. A prayer for the removal of the disease is now offered by the family representative, at the door of the house in which the patient lies, and the prayer is accompanied by the usual squirting of water from the mouth, which is never omitted. The medicine may now be administered to the sick man. A prophylactic is used by all the other members of the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

755 family who have not had smallpox, but it is evidently not greatly trusted, for it is used with the formula, "Protection against smallpox is unknown, but let us try. If God and the spirits agree we shall be safe." After this ceremony there must be no quarrelling. Peace in the village is a condition of immunity from the disease.

757 In a considerable number of cases incisions are made in the skin, and powdered medicine rubbed in. This is done for general pains, rheumatism, backache, elephantiasis, toothache, spleen. For toothache, if the pain is in the right side of the face, incisions are made between the great and second toes of the left foot, and the powder rubbed in; if the pain is in the left, the powder goes in the same way into the right foot.

763 *Post mortems* are still conducted in all cases where there is any doubt as to the cause of death. Until quite recently no one was buried without examination, and in some districts that is still the case. The operation is performed at the graveside by the friends of the dead man, the actual operator being as a rule a near relative. If a black substance is found in the gall-bladder, a diviner is consulted, to find out who brought on the disease. If the examination of the gall-bladder yields no result, the heart is examined. Ulcers on that organ indicate witchcraft as the cause of death; fat indicates leprosy. Next, the intestines are examined; if *mafira* (pus) is found there it indicates a kind of rheumatism accompanied with boils. The examination being over, the parts removed are

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

793 trouble is that Mwaipopo (the chief 116) is getting old. . . .'
754 Here Kasitile suggested two different causes for the scarcity in the
[731] country: (*a*) the negligence of the priests, and (*b*) the senility of the
[789] chief. In the old days Mwaipopo would have been smothered, as Angombwike explained (*vide supra*, p. 63).

[753] On the 9th, Kasitile, much troubled by his cough at night,
[757] expressed a great desire for the return of the missionary nurse to Kabembe hospital. 'She is killing us by her absence, the black people don't know anything about these things, only the Europeans. Why, I went there and the dresser just gave me an injection without taking my temperature—no European ever does that.'

[787] The following day he sent off his sons with 10 c. to inquire about
[753] his case from a diviner. The diviner said: 'The wives at his home are gossiping to other people about their husband. People want the husband's body to be light. It is not Jane, because she is his favourite, but the others.' Kasitile said:

> I shan't do anything, I said 'Let's leave it.' I am still in Butola [the village to which he moved for safety]. Mwakyonde is giving me medicine for my disease. It drives out the cold which is in my body. Yes, the cold is the breath of the witches coming to throttle me—it's due to my
> 755 wives' gossip. But it started as a quarrel with other people [non-
> 753 relatives] first. One day I went to drink beer in Bujege and that night I fell sick; that is how it began. Men are complaining because I, a chief, a senior, do not cook food for them. They throttle me on that account. They say: 'Let us see whether he is really a chief, a senior!' But others say: 'He has done no wrong.' Yes, the sickness took me on the way home from the beer. Perhaps Kyala asked: 'What has he
> [776] done?' and found I had done no wrong. If there had not been a Kyala who saves us I would have been dead.
>
> When I consulted a diviner he struck a spear and looked along it,
> [787] then he said: 'The disease now is from his wives—the earlier attack was from men, but this one is from his wives. When they gather at the hearth they say: "Come hither, we see him where he sleeps."'

754 'Are the wives witches?' we asked.
753 Kasitile replied:

> Yes. They say: 'There is a favourite, we are not beloved.' If a man's wives are good the witches can get into the house, but their cold breath dissipates quickly; you are given medicine and recover quickly; but if the wives are bad they gather together the medicine and press it down, so that it is powerless. One of my wives is very bad, her lineage is bad, it is she who calls to her aid the heavy ones, the witches. The

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(*b*) MEDICINES AND MORALITY

Doctors classify most of their medicines in terms of the supposed mystical causes of disease, and the determining factor in diagnosis is what quarrels have occurred in the patient's circle of kinsmen and friends, or what wrongdoing he has on his conscience. The medicines mentioned to us by various doctors were for treatment of sickness caused by 'the breath of men', by sorcery, by vengeance magic, by the protective medicine put on wives, by the anger of the shades or living senior relatives, by incest, by spearing or binding with ropes,[1] or abnormal birth. Only a few of the medicines listed were for the treatment of observable symptoms such as fever, too frequent periods, or swelling after snake-bite, rather than the supposed mystical cause. 278 753

The emphasis on discovering the mystical cause and counteracting it was shown very clearly when Godfrey Wilson accompanied Mwakyonde, the doctor, to the home of a patient, a young man so weak that he could not lift a limb. Mwakyonde spent two minutes examining him, and provided leaves with which he was poulticed, and a medicine which was rubbed into cuts made all over his body, but the greater part of the day was devoted to discussing the quarrel between kinsmen, from which his illness was thought to have arisen, to persuading the kinsmen to 'speak out', and to preparing and administering a medicine which would cause the death of any one of them who was working sorcery against another. 753 578 [757]

Medicine for the treatment of a disease is held to be ineffective —at the best a temporary palliative—unless the underlying cause is discovered and dealt with. For example, doctors spoke of possessing a medicine against *ilyepa*, the disease caused by a kinsman to whom a debt in cattle is due, but it is not effective alone. 'The wrongdoer drinks medicine and pays his kinsman. He must pay, for though the medicine may cure him temporarily the disease will come again if he does not pay his debt.'

The ultimate cause of disease is believed to be friction in social relationships—a breach in moral law—and so the study of medicines takes us directly to problems of morality. There is a deep-rooted conviction that medicines will not be effective if there is quarrelling in the family which uses them. This applies not only to medicines used in sickness, but also to those for protection [602]

[1] *op. cit.*, pp. 172-9.

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

122 for research, I am very grateful for a grant from the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures[2] which enabled me to start my ethnographical field work among these people. I wish also to express my thanks to the Government of the Tanganyika Territory, the Provincial Commissioner of Mbeya, and the District Officer of Tukuyu for all the courtesy I received during my work.

114 123 1. My first step, after my arrival at Katumba near Masoko, was to pay a visit to Mwamasika, the chief *(omalafyale)*[3] of the village and

[291 516 622]

The chief Wwamasika with his councillors.

of those adjacent. On the open place near his hut he welcomed me in company with his *amafumu*[4], the influential men of his villages. My attendant, the interpreter and I were asked to sit on chairs, while the *amafumu* sat down on mats or on large banana leaves on the ground; but the chief remained standing. I explained the aim of my visit, and that I would be very glad of his support. The chief promised it, and he kept his promise excellently. On other occasions the chief also sat [431] on a chair. In the afternoon of the first day I sent to the chief some presents. The following he made a return in form of food. This exchange of gifts is named *ukubonola*, handing over the gift.

123 757 2. In a small village belonging to Mwamasika's chieftainship was the residence of a medicine man, to whom I paid a visit as soon as I could. When I met him he was being consulted by a sick male person who had a stomach complaint *(agaju)*. After some negotiations he allowed me

[2] Cf. Africa. Vol. XI, p. 497.
[3] Cf. Wilson, Introduction, p. 283; Land Rights, p. 44.
[4] Cf. Wilson, Land Rights, p. 13. W. translates *ulifumu (olifumu)* by „great commoner", Introduction, p. 276, 282.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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The chief Wwamasika and his family after he had received from me my old "Klepper-Mantle" as a gift.

to enter his hut, where the patient was sitting on the ground with his back to the wall. To heal his patient of the pains, the doctor made some small incisions in his skin near the stomach by means of a triangular-shaped knife, and then he rubbed in the incisions a thick black juice taken from the horn of an antelope (the horn was called *kapembe*, pl. *ulupembe*). The juice was prepared from different roots and herbs as a medicine against stomach pains. In the horn were certain divisions for other medicines, and in each of these divisions was stuck a small (black) stick for removing the specific medicine from it. After this treatment the patient declared that he felt severe pains in the region of his stomach. I asked the doctor for some of his medicines, but he was unwilling to give me anything. Then I promised to bring him next day some European medicines hoping to get in exchange some of his medicaments. 123 757 [415 237]

The following morning I returned. On this occasion I did acquire some of his medicines in exchange for various European tablets, especially as he was most fascinated with the kaliumpermanganatum,* of which I gave him a few crystals, explaining to him the use and the dose; when I dissolved some of the crystals before his eyes, it probably seemed to him to be a mystical process. Among the medicines I received then from him was a medicine for luck, called *kwarusako*. Some of the inhabitants of the village, who had meantime appeared, were very unwilling for him to give me this medicine, and maintained that I would take with me all the luck of the village. [777]

On this second visit to the medicine-man, there was again a patient present, and I wanted to take a photograph of the scene because it was 123 755

* [i.e., KMNO4. – Analyst]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

x795 x797 [871] learn to read and write. In BuNyakyusa none of these village teachers was qualified and none received Government grants; they taught only the three R's in the vernacular and gave religious instruction. In Ngonde, however, some of them were qualified. Besides the village schools there were by 1935 central schools at mission stations, organized by the missions, and some of them drawing Government grants, which took children up to Standard IV; and at Rungwe and Kondowe (Livingstonia) just south of Ngonde, there were mission boarding schools, giving further education and (at Kondowe) training teachers, evangelists, and ministers. The policy of different missions regarding education varied; the Church of Scotland missionaries believed in it wholeheartedly and achieved a relatively high standard in their village schools; but the Lutherans were doubtful how far it was the function of a Church to give anything except religious instruction, and in their village schools children barely learnt to read. Opinion among the Moravians was divided. But despite these differences, all the missions have, in fact, played a great part in education. [212] The first step—the reduction of the language to writing—was the work of the missionaries alone, and village schools have been very closely linked with congregations because, whatever their views on education in general, Protestant missionaries were agreed that to read the Gospels is the making of a Christian, and so literacy is usually required of candidates for baptism. Hence, the same man is often both teacher and elder, and the German missionaries who questioned the value of education laid the foundation of Nyakyusa literature with an admirable translation of the New Testament.

The missions have also been concerned with medical work. [743] From before 1914 there has been a hospital run by the Lutheran mission at Itete, and one run by the Church of Scotland at Kondowe and, for a period, a large leper-settlement was run by the White Fathers at Mwakete. Medical activities are not directly the concern of congregations but Christian women are often drawn in as voluntary helpers in one way or another. In Kabembe [758] the women deacons drew water for the sick and prepared food for a newly confined mother; at Karonga the women's association of the Church made clothes to be distributed through the babies' clinic, and so forth.

The congregations are not wholly self-supporting—the European missionaries are all paid from overseas and, until the middle thirties, funds for paying village teachers and evangelists were

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

fashioned iron hoes for cultivation and spears for hunting and war; they also made the cow-bells with which rich men loved to decorate their cattle. Doctors were equally important, for the medicines supplied by them were believed to influence health, fertility, and success in every undertaking. Neither smiths nor doctors served only their own home villages—the number of smiths was much smaller than the number of villages—and doctors living at a distance were generally preferred to those living near by. The need for iron goods and for medicines therefore took men out of their own villages and made links with other villages, often in other chiefdoms. Some at least of the iron ore which the smiths smelted was obtained from the distant Kinga mountains outside the Nyakyusa area all together (*vide supra*, p. 7), and many medicines came from the Kinga or Sangu. *Umwafi* for the poison ordeal was bought from Ngonde. Three other commodities also came from far—these were salt, which Kinga bought from Bena country and sold to the Nyakyusa; a red root (*ikipimba*) used as a dye and cosmetic, bought by the Mahasi from the Sangu and sold to the Nyakyusa; and brass or copper wire for making body rings (*amanyeta*).[1] There was scarcely any cloth in the country when the Europeans first arrived.[2] Pots were sold throughout the Lake-shore plain by the Kisi—Thomson found the Kisi pot-market operating in 1879[3]—and in the hills by Penja specialists. The details of this trade will be discussed when we come to consider the wider relations of the Nyakyusa: here we are only concerned to show that though villagers were dependent on outsiders for a little iron and salt, together with some medicines and ornaments, the bulk of the trade remained very small—salt and iron were extremely scarce—and economic relations beyond the village and kinship group were tenuous.

[1] We do not know by what route the wire came in: it is possible that it was as scarce as cloth before the first contact with Europeans. Elton speaks of spear shafts 'beautifully inlaid with a delicate tracery of brass and copper wire' (op. cit., p. 323), but the first reference we have traced to *amanyeta* in Nyakyusa country is in D. Kerr-Cross 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 118, his observation having been made in 1893. At that time he says 'you could buy anything for brass wire'. c.f. Moir, op. cit., p. 89. Fotheringham (op. cit., p. 27) says that the brass wire used in Ngonde (before 1889) was imported from Britain.

[2] Elton, op. cit., pp. 316, 320, 322, 331; Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 268, 274.

[3] Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 263. The market was at Pupangenda, at the N.E. corner of the Lake, on the narrow strip of land between the escarpment of the Livingstones and the water.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 and sniffed at the grave. When this son-in-law arrived, the chief women mourners got up from under the tree and went with him into the hut to wail. They came out all wailing. The women under the tree were wailing all the time with a leader standing up in the middle. But the wailing was drowned by the drums of which there were three sets.

764 Three young men were got up with white clay spots and some had
535 bells on their ankles and loin-cloths. They held spears, and danced and
302 leapt wildly. 'What', I asked Kasitile, 'is the meaning of the white clay?'

KASITILE: It is war paint. During war we painted ourselves with white clay formerly. Then if I saw one with white clay I did not spear him. It was my comrade. But he whom I saw without it was an enemy and I speared him. It was the sign.

725 QUESTION: But did the other side not use it?

KASITILE: We took them by surprise.

Mwanyoso came to visit me in the evening.

764 QUESTION: And what steps are they taking about Katuaya's death
789 from sorcery?

MWANYOSO: They sought the doctor, Mwangolombe, for the burial yesterday. He pounded a medicine and burnt it on the grave. Then they buried the dead man and danced on the grave. That means they destroyed the sorcery. The dead man should take it away with him.

QUESTION: And has the doctor given them medicines to drink?

MWANYOSO: He has not yet done so. They will fetch him again to cook the medicine at the home.

QUESTION: What about the payment?

759 MWANYOSO: For yesterday they did not pay anything, now, but when they have fetched him to their home, then they will pay some shillings. But if many people have died, then they fetch a famous doctor such as Mwakionde. Then he comes with all the protective medicines (*amapingo*) and treats them. Then such a doctor gets a cow. The famous doctors in this country are Mwakionde and Kapuguso and Mwakanyamale.

787 QUESTION: Will they consult an oracle?

MWANYOSO: Why should they consult an oracle? They know what it is. It is the sorcery of their brothers!

754 QUESTION: But it might be the sorcery of another. Some say of Mwaihojo (the chief).

MWANYOSO: They are liars. See, Katuaya had just come from his brothers. He got the illness at their place. It is they. If it was from Mwaihojo and his people, they would have speared him by night. We would have found wounds and much blood, but we did not find them.

QUESTION: He came from his brothers?

MWANYOSO: Yes, there was a ritual because their father, Mwaikilaja, had died. Their senior brother inherited and he also died. Katuaya

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

have often regretted, not because the European did not cure me, but because I missed an opportunity of testing the native. 757

A European well known in the country told me recently that in 1901 he was cured of black-water fever by a native doctor on the Zambesi. Water boiled with roasted rice was given him in large quantities, and a small sack, filled with boiled leaves of a tree not known to me, was bound around the abdomen. His recovery was rapid, and he has himself successfully used the same cure in other cases. Another European was cured of persistent dysentery by an old native doctor.

Doubtless there is much pretence; drugs are administered without real knowledge; but in the main the doctors are honourable men, fulfilling an important place in the life of the community, relieving much pain, and achieving striking successes, which are too well authenticated to admit of doubt. That in many cases they ruin the patient for life, is unfortunately also only too true. But however that may be, they have not forfeited the confidence of the people. The advent of the scientifically trained European doctor has diminished indeed, but by no means destroyed, the influence of his African confrère in science. Hundreds still consult the native doctor, many in preference to, and not a few after having tried, the white man's medicine. A medical friend of mine tells a good story against himself. He was asked by one of his own employees for the loan of two shillings; but the applicant was most unwilling to tell what the 759

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•759 money was to be used for. It came out, however, that it was to pay a native doctor, to whom he was taking his wife for consultation! The native's fee was two shillings. The fee at the dispensary would not have been one-tenth of that sum, but the patient preferred the high fee and the unqualified adviser. Nor is this surprising, when it is remembered that so much of the troubles which afflict the native, are believed to be due to the interference of spirits, with which the European doctor will have nothing to do; while the Konde doctor will consult them as part at least, if not the whole, of his diagnosis. Hence the confidence in him. He is in touch with the sources of the trouble.

759 789 And this same conviction, that the native doctors are in touch with the sources of the trouble, leads to some of the most foolish beliefs of the common people, and of the most mischievous practices of the doctors. It is the source of the absurd confidence in the power of medicine to turn bullets into water, for example. In 1897 medicine was prepared which would cause the white man, in what was then the Neu Langenburg area, to disappear. It is believed by many natives with whom I have been in touch, that some doctors are seeking for a "formula" to-day, which will succeed where the previous one so obviously failed; suggestive of a state of mind similar perhaps to that of our own alchemists of centuries ago; but suggestive also of a desire, at least in some quarters, to see the last of the white man.

757 782 Both the gathering of herbs, and the administration

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde_FN17

753 the use of both drugs and ceremonies. Next, the action of the spirits brings on diseases, and until the cause of their anger has been dealt with, no doctor will undertake to cure the patient. Wounds or injuries in battle, by falling trees, by attack of animals, or by any other means, may be due to any of the above causes.

759 The doctor may be a man or a woman. The fee varies from about a farthing to a sixty shilling cow, and the manner of payment varies also. In some cases payment precedes treatment; in others, it follows; and in still others the degree of cure effected decides the amount to be paid.

757 In what follows, no attempt is made at scientific classification; rather a rough grouping of symptoms guides the sequence of items. Medicines are usually administered in beer or in milk, hot or cold, according to the disease which is being treated. And the place where the decoction is drunk is very important; in snake bite, for instance, it is fatal for the patient to go inside the house before the medicine has been taken which it is hoped will save his life. A native Christian was, in 1913, suspended from ordinances for drinking medicine while seated on a banana stem at a place where two paths met.

828 Mental troubles of various kinds are treated, and not, I am assured, without success in some cases.
757 *Maya* is grief, due to any cause. It is treated by giving
278 an infusion of a plant called *nsabe*, not unlike parsley in appearance. The result is great cheerfulness in the patient, due, no doubt, to exhilarating qualities in

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tween the kinsmen about the amount of property to be destroyed. 764
Once we saw the sons of a dead man tugging at two fine mats which his sister was folding into the cave. She wished to put them in but the sons opposed her, saying: 'Why should we spend all the mats? We have buried him, he is dead.'

It is held to be most important that earth should not touch the corpse's face, but once the cave has been closed the chief mourners each push a few handfuls of earth into the grave, the rest of the earth is filled in, and the dancers stamp it hard. Soon no sign of the grave remains.

(*b*) *The terror of death*

Death to the Nyakyusa is a fearful thing. They believe that the 761
spirit (*unsyuka*) of a dead man survives underground (*pasi*) in the 775
place of the shades (*ubusyuka*) and that it can and does visit sur- 765
viving relatives in dreams and materially affect their destinies. The shades of the dead are one of the final causes with which their religion deals. But contact with them is feared and the function of the ritual at the funeral is 'to drive the shade away'. This ritual begins during the burial (*ifwa*) and continues in a series of rites which last for a month or longer. At the burial itself people's attention is mainly concerned with the death as an emotional event, with the fact that a father, a mother, a kinsman or a neighbour has died; but into the emotional quality of death their religious beliefs enter. With the shades they desire no close contact, for the most usual dreams of the dead are those in which they reproach a man for some sin, or foretell his death; their commonest activity is believed to be the sending of madness and misfortune upon sinful men. Nor is it desirable to join the shades oneself. The place of the shades is a vague and shadowy land where no certain happiness is traditionally believed to be. 'No one', said an old man, 'has ever been there and come back to tell us about it. When the dead come to us in dreams they do not show us where they live nor tell us about their life. We do not know what we shall find there. But we do not think that we shall have happiness, or friendly intercourse.' 'He has died and we shall never meet again,' said another man of his dead neighbour. Some old men, however, have definite theories about the place of the spirits, and all agree that wealth is important there; but these theories have no certainty: 'We are just guessing.' It is certain that the dead continue to live somehow, for they are believed to affect

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

761 765 775 the lives and enter the dreams of their kinsmen; but the nature of their survival is uncertain.

775 765 A man, when he dies, is believed to join his ancestors. Until the end of the funeral rites, they say, he is on the way and if the ritual is not properly performed he does not reach them, but troubles the dreams and lives of the survivors until he is properly driven away. 'If you do not perform the ritual for your father or mother you may go mad or else have a slow and lingering death.'

177 775 797 Many of the younger pagans, however, are affected by Christian belief. Young men spoke confidently of going after death 'to a fine country with dancing and feasting and a chief to rule us'. But many old men scoff at such beliefs. 'They have learnt them from the missionaries—how do they know, have they been there to see?' Among some of the younger men also the ritual of death is less important than it used to be. As one Christian said: 'The pagans no longer fear to die away from home—they used to fear very much to die in a strange country (and many still do), they thought: "If I die far from home I shall never reach my ancestors, for people will not bury me properly." Nor do all the young men now fear if they fail to attend a father's funeral ritual.' 'We no longer believe in the old rituals,' said a sophisticated young pagan, 'because we see that the Christians do not do these things and nothing happens to them.'

761 753 754 An additional reason for fearing death is the Nyakyusa belief in the contagious character of many diseases. Death is thought to be caused sometimes by witchcraft, and sometimes by one of a variety of diseases. Of these diseases some are held to be hereditary and to run in families, and they are usually non-contagious; others, and they are usually contagious, are believed to be due to the sorcery of enemies. And the contagion is thought to be spread by an autopsy. It is especially dangerous to relatives; other people do not fear these diseases unless they actually hold the corpse in their arms, or dig the grave, or help to bury it, but all relatives are afraid.

764 Besides the contagion of specific diseases, the corpse itself is held always to have a vaguely defined, but none the less fearful, contagion of its own. And, because of this, all who have had any close contact with the body go to bathe immediately after the burial. Those of the chief mourners who hold the body in their arms, the grave-diggers and those who get down into the grave to bury it, all go to bathe. 'Even when death is no due to a contagious disease

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

it seems as if there was another disease in the corpse itself, it is a 764
stinking mass of disease.' Traditionally they use two medicinal plants to wash with, but in some chiefdoms near mission stations they now wash without them. The chief of one such country explained: 'In the old days they feared very much to eat before bathing—but now sometimes they just wash their hands and eat. [177]
Of old they feared death, they feared lest the disease should spread, they wished to rid themselves of the contamination of the corpse. They used to wash with two plants—as medicine. Now they just bathe in the stream or sometimes only just wash their hands.' But, [184]
particularly in chiefdoms at a distance from the centres of European influence, the fear of the contagion of death is still very strong.

Death then is, for the majority of pagan Nyakyusa, a fearful as 761 ●
well as a grievous event; less fearful than it used to be to their 184
fathers, but more fearful by far to them than it is to their Christian neighbours.

(c) *The sacrifice*

At all except the very poorest burials one or more head of cattle 764
are killed. Cows are provided whenever possible, but, if no cows are available, bulls may be used instead. If the man who has died left cattle of his own, one at least of his herd is killed; if he has left none, his family make every effort to buy or borrow one, or else they provide one themselves from their own herds. If the dead man was rich, several of his cows will be killed. If his senior son has cattle of his own, he should kill one for his father (*ikumbamba*) and if there are a number of grown-up sons the senior of each group of full brothers will offer a cow.

Not only the immediate family of a dead man but also the 764
fathers (or brothers) of his wives and the husbands of his full 602
sisters and daughters are expected to provide cows for killing at his burial, and if he is buried at his 'father's' place then his 'father's' affinal relatives also are expected to bring cattle or cloths. When a married woman dies, her husband and her own 'father' are expected each to provide a cow or a bull. Occasionally other affines of her husband bring calves, but less usually. More cattle are killed for men than for women. For a young child nothing is killed.

The cattle are killed either by the dead man's 'father' or by his 764
heir; if a woman has died, then by her husband. At a man's burial 768

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764 *ifi fikusoka kukyeni munyambala bo basyuka, bo baputile abasyuka tukubakaga: lenga tukanyagwila tukubopa ikigili! Abasyuka bo bakasokaga bikujamo; papo lenga tumalile po basokile munda. Loli bikwandesya kangi tukuja nabo bwila!*)

842 What we do comes from the shades and from Kyala himself. The
831 blood is theirs and his together. Those who create (*ukubumba*) a child say: 'I am just eating at a woman,' but Kyala creates a child! If Kyala and the shades do not 'cook' [i.e. do not cause desire] you will do nothing, the penis is flaccid, but if Kyala has 'cooked' then you really do something, your heart (*indumbula*) is full of desire. Always the shades are there and we drive them away, they are there and we drive them away. . . .

775 A shade is resurrected in the body of his child (*Unsyuka ikusyuka itolo mumbeli gwa mwanake*). . . .

764 Passing the basket of pumpkin-seeds, millet, and lentils between the
775 legs and on to the head and throwing to one side means: 'Here between the legs there is work, may they go out in intercourse, and from the head where we dream, may they go out also.' Because in the ritual we say: 'Let them come into the body' at first, then we drive them away. Rubbing ourselves in the earth and passing millet between the legs means: 'May they come';[1] throwing millet and so on to one side it is to drive them away, that they may go out.

QUESTION: Which shade do you drive away?

MWANDISI: He who has just died, we drive him away.

QUESTION: What about the first ancestor?

MWANDISI: He is there at their place [the place of the shades], we drove him away long ago, he just receives him [the newly deceased].

QUESTION: Why the pumpkin-seeds in the bananas?

MWANDISI: It is the semen (*ulukungu*) for begetting children. . . .

QUESTION: Do the shades always come when a man dies?

MWANDISI: Yes, they always come, they receive their fellow. Yes, even though he has died from sorcery they come and receive him, and even though he has died from witchcraft they come, the shades receive him, and if it is from illness he has died they also come. There is no
● [761] death without the shades, they always come to receive their fellow.

When the witches have 'eaten' someone the shades come to receive
764 him. No, the witches eat him alone, but the shades receive him. Some-
775 one may get up in the morning and say: 'I dreamed they ate me and I
763 was with the shades!' Then he is about to die. Sometimes someone
828 dreams and says: 'In the night I was in the land of the shades with so-and-so, I left him there, I escaped myself and came home.' Then his friend is about to die.

764 If you do not perform the ritual you go mad (*kukyembela ikigili*) or
775 perhaps you get very thin, and are unable to die, you are ailing and do

[1] i.e. the participants identify themselves with the deceased.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

764

QUESTION: The water dripping from the little hut?

MWASALEMBA: If we omit this then the children when young don't go mad, but they vomit a watery fluid, and people say that we have not performed the ritual of water for them.

QUESTION: The meaning of leaves and fruit of bananas?

MWASALEMBA: Yes, it is because those who run mad throw away their clothes and wear leaves. So in the ritual we make them wear leaves; we think that if we don't do this they will have the madness and throw away their clothes. The leaves of plantain belong to the man (the father), those of sweet banana to the woman (the mother). They signify the completion of the ritual, both of their father and of their mother. We make them wear both kinds of leaf, even if one parent is still alive, because they begot them together, their blood is one, the man's blood and the woman's blood. The plantain fruit which they insert in the leaves in front is the procreative power of the father, it is like his penis; the sweet banana which they insert behind is the fertility of the mother, it is like a bark-cloth. We throw them away in the water so that they may float away, it is a sign of death; the blood of our parents which was one is finished now!

QUESTION: The leaves on the neck?

MWASALEMBA: When they run mad people do this, they wear leaves on head and neck.

QUESTION: The stones on the head, in ears, mouth and fingers?

MWASALEMBA: That is a symbol of death. Does not the corpse resemble a stone? It neither speaks nor hears; it does not hoe, or work with its hands at all. He whom we have buried is like a stone. We throw his death away into the stream.

QUESTION: The little hut?

MWASALEMBA: That is for cooking food in; we don't cook for him [the dead man] in the house because we did not bury him there but outside, so we cook for him outside. . . . We grind millet in the doorway [778] because the doorway belongs to the shade. We say: 'Receive us, oh shade, since a person has died, receive us!' Because if we enter into the house we are with the shade, and when we come out we are with him, the doorway is the shade's (*ikifigo kya nsyuka*). It is like the pouring of water on the thatch; when we have come from bathing, we enter and come out again, the doorway is the shade's. And at other times, if someone is ill and the shade has been brooding over him, he stands in the doorway and prays to the shade (*ikumputa unsyuka*). Yes, when a man dies the shade broods over (*ikutobatela*) us living.

QUESTION: Does death come from the shades? [761] ●

MWASALEMBA: Yes, when I have lain down at night, in the morning I tell my children: 'So-and-so and so-and-so came to me, I have eaten their food, they came to carry me off.' Then there is sickness and they say: 'The shades have brooded over you, you will die.' It is death in- 763

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

byre or strike a beast with a stick 'until the twins had grown up' 845
(an elastic phrase), 'but if he has no sons to milk a doctor comes and gives him a medicine to drink in the house, then he can milk the cows outside. To enter the byre is altogether taboo.' He and his attendant during his seclusion drink the milk of one cow only, which has been specially treated. All his wives avoid milk until the end of the ritual and the mother of twins herself 'can only begin to clean the byre after she has borne at least one other child'—some say two or three other children. If a cow is given her for milk (after the end of the ritual) it is taboo for others to share that milk. If these taboos are broken it is said that the cattle will purge and die, or their legs will swell.

It is also taboo for a parent of twins to pass behind people—he (or she) must always pass in front. 'They fear that if he passes behind, he (the parent) will always have twins.'

Twins, and their parents who have been through the full ritual, are thereafter immune from the danger of twin birth and may even go in to greet a mother of twins—Mwakobela's sister, who herself had borne twins, entered his wife's seclusion hut. There are, however, two or three taboos which apply to twins in later life. It is taboo for one of a pair of twin girls to get married without the 584
other. Angombwike explained:

> If a man comes wooing the first he must do it secretly, and when he speaks to her father he must do it secretly, he may bring cows but no one knows about it; if it becomes known they say the younger might curse herself (*ukwibuna*) and die. Then when another has come wooing the other, secretly, the father tells them both to come wooing openly *on the same day*. They come with cows. Then the father summons all his children, and the twin girls, and tells them: 'These men have come to marry you, do you like them?' And he asks the elder (*mbasa*): 'Which do you like?' She chooses. Even if she chooses the man who came for her sister he must accept, and if he tries to protest people will hush him up at once, for it is the custom for the elder to get married first. Then the younger (*musindeka*) says she likes the other one and their father takes the cattle. If either one is wooed secretly before the other she must stay quietly at home till a wooer comes for her sister. If she did not (whichever way it happened) the other might die. It is common knowledge in the boys' village here that of X's twin daughters a lover has only come for the younger, none for the elder. And so both are still unmarried. [761]

Twins and their parents, the fearful ones (*abipasya*), and other 264
people who have been treated with medicines, eat first-fruits of 789

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

V. CAUSES OF MISFORTUNE

761 (*a*) *The death of Katasya*

The following account of the death of Katasya is quoted in full [128] because it illustrates how several possible causes of misfortune were considered. Possible causes mentioned were:

(a) The anger of his junior kinsmen
(b) The witchcraft of his wives
(c) The anger of his shades
(d) The anger of his neighbours because he had given them too small a cut of a bull killed as a sacrifice to his shades
(e) The adultery of his son with three of his wives
(f) The sorcery of his half-brother's son, Mwamukinga, with whom there was a long-standing quarrel over inheritance and whom he had accused of killing his (Mwamukinga's) full brother
(g) The sorcery of the Chief Mwaihojo, for Katasya, a man of the neighbouring Chief Mwaipopo, had built and cultivated on land claimed by both Mwaihojo and Mwaipopo

Record of G. W., 4/1/38

761 Angombwike told me at midday that Katasya had died. He was a village headman of Mwaipopo, the fellow of Mwainyopolela. His case (*inongwa*) was thus:

The millet did not grow in his field, so he called all his children to 782 his homestead and killed a big bull for them, saying: 'Perhaps my children are angry at home. Perhaps my wives have worked witchcraft.' But to the neighbours he gave one leg and the children at home ate the rest. He did not, however, live long. He died immediately. It is said that the meat is still there. They have not eaten it. Such is the case of his death.

Kasitile, when I called on him yesterday, was out and his wife said he had gone to see Katasya who was ill.

Later in the day—4.1.38. Likusyila came in and I asked about Katasya's death.

But he has not died, he is still just alive. We heard that the millet [787] failed in his field and the maize and beans in all his gardens. They all failed. One of his wives went into a trance repeatedly. She said: 'Those beneath are angry. Seek a bull and kill it.' Then he sought one, but 761 now they have killed him. Perhaps he stinted his fellows in the village 578 of meat, because if a man kills his animal alone and his fellows hear

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

that he has killed, they are astonished and say: 'He should have called us. Does he perform ritual alone?' 761 578

QUESTION: But why were those beneath angry in the first place? They are not angry without cause.

LUKUSYILA: Indeed, they are never angry without cause. There is always some wrong. But we do not know what it is in this case. If you do not kill cattle for your father's burial they are always angry. But we do not know what wrong Katasya committed to make them angry.

Later Mwanifu came in. He told me that Katasya is still alive, but perhaps he will die this evening. We do not speak with him. He is just breathing. We only ask his wives: 'Does he sleep?' The case is thus: the millet failed in his field and he said: 'I shall pray to my shades and it will grow again.' Then he went to a certain man to get his big bull and gave him a cow in calf, saying: 'Take this and give me your bull,' and later they will give him a little calf worth 30s. The bull was very big. He killed it. Before he did so he was already slightly ill, but when he had killed it the illness became very much worse. We say they have bewitched him because he stinted his fellows in the village. But they themselves deny it, saying: 'But we always kill and eat ourselves alone. I, Mwainyopolela, killed my animal and ate it alone. Have I died therefore? According to the custom, if I have killed my beast as a sacrifice (*jakwiputela*) then I give my fellows one leg.' 754 782 [437] 782

QUESTION: Did Katasya not do so?

MWANIFU: No, Katasya did not give them any. He ate alone. Some wise men give the chief the breast because the chief is the owner of the country. Katasya did not give him that. Yes, if someone dies then the chief is usually given the breast. But when a beast is killed for sacrifice, no one having died, then many eat by themselves. The mourner gives to the chief.

QUESTION: Did he inquire of a diviner or not?

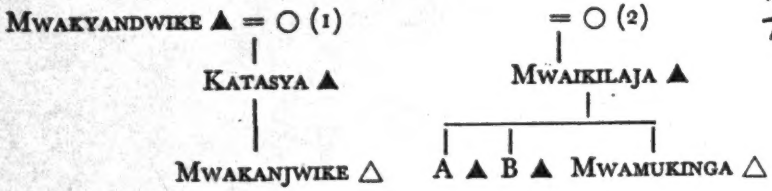
MWANIFU: We do not know. Some inquire of a diviner. Some think for themselves that the fathers are shaking them. Concerning his death, we are only speculating, saying: 'Perhaps they have bewitched him. They were angry on account of the meat.' But perhaps it is sorcery. See, he was sweating very much on his face. Let him die. We will look in his belly. Perhaps he has been speared. They have bewitched him. Perhaps it is sorcery. We only speculate. 787 754 761

In the morning Mwaipopo (the chief) was very, very angry. He said: 'Why have you gathered together, you people? Go off home. Do you want to finish off a dying man? It is taboo to gather together. First let a man die, then come to lament the death.' 763

QUESTION: Is it a Nyakyusa custom to be angry if people gather together at a sick man's house? Is it as if they bewitch him?

MWANIFU: Yes.

 428 754



Mwaikilaja, the son of the junior wife, inherited, because when their father, Mwakyandwike, died, Katasya, the son of the senior wife, was a child. Mwamukinga is accused of killing Katasya by sorcery.

Mwakwelebeja came in to take me to the funeral of Katasya. 'It is not the day of burial to-day, but the day of war. On the day of burial they weep very much and it does not go well (*jikanoga*) but to-day it will be well performed.' He was eager and excited at the prospect of good dancing. 'The chief Mwabuga from Masoko, his son-in-law, is coming. He is coming with his drums. The people of Masoko dance well.' At first I refused to go, but he would take no refusal. 'You must come,' he insisted, so finally I went. 764

On the way we discussed the cause of death. Some say the witches have eaten him. They say that Mwainyopolela is angry on account of the meat. Some say it is the sorcery of Mwaihojo (the chief) because Katasya (a man of Chief Mwaipopo) hoed a big area in the disputed ground. He built a temporary hut and lived there. But we say no. If they had roused up a war between the witches, would they not have gone to Mwakagile (Chief Mwaipopo) and his fellows? But we have not done that. We argue and say: 'Why are you taking our country?' but we are only fighting with words. 761

QUESTION: The war of the witches?

MWAKWELEBEJA: Yes, the war when they call the witches of a chiefdom by night to fight against those of another chiefdom. But Katasya was indeed wrong to stint his neighbours in Busikali of meat. If he had been wise he would have given them a leg. Mwainyopolela is very generous. Always when he kills a beast he shares the meat with his fellows. 754 721 689

We arrived at the funeral. The women were packed together under a tree to the left, where they had sat with the corpse yesterday. The girls and young women stood watching the dance and occasionally strolling rhythmically out into the midst of it. The errant son was with the other men to-day. The son-in-law from Masoko came with all his cattle (seven cows, one bull and five calves) of which one will be killed and the others returned. The bull was unusually large with an enormous hump and it caused comment. It was well known. They told each other how, when his father, Mwakabulwa, died, this bull was quiescent. It did not move about at all, and it was a very small calf. It was quiescent 764

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

were killed by a tree, who were killed in war, by lightning, by lion or leopard, I call you all to come; and whosoever has been forgotten, let him come. I pray to you all, let my dog be well, let him lie down in peace. He is the saliva of God. O God, be merciful, and turn back the disease." 782

The beer that he brought and laid on the ground before him, is now poured into the palms of little children, who drink it in that way. If a flesh offering is also made, it is laid down in small pieces, and each ancestor is named as his portion is laid down. When ants come out to feast on it, it is known that the spirits have accepted the offering, and all present run away lest the spirits should work evil upon them.

Little children are affectionately referred to as dogs, especially when they commit a fault, which the father apologizes for. "How can you be angry with the little one? He has no more sense of what is fitting than a dog." But to call a person a dog in any other connection is a great insult, and must be atoned for. Spitting on a person is another insult, but when done ceremonially, it is believed to have great virtue, and is no doubt connected with the idea of the "Spittle of God" referred to above. 576

If the sick person does not recover, the fault is not in the system. Some mistake has been made, the diviner is unskilful, his wife is "unclean," or some other cause prevents the expected result from following; for, when the proper ceremonies have been performed, the patient recovers. But a final cause of failure is always kept in hand; it is the will of God 761

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

761 that the sick man should die, and there is nothing more that can be done. Numerous instances have been cited to me of recovery of sick persons when all had been correctly performed; and scepticism on the subject was received with almost incredulous amazement. And there is no reason to doubt that in many cases recovery did follow; for the conviction in the mind of the patient that the wrath of the offended spirit had been averted, would, according to modern ideas of psychology, have a healing effect also upon his body.

753 782 Smallpox is the disease most dreaded by the people, and its approach was accompanied with most elaborate ceremonies. The subject is dealt with again under "Witchcraft" and "Medicine." It might come either through the action of the spirits or through [787] witchcraft. In either case its approach is foreseen by the *abakunguluka* (prophets) in dreams, and the chief and his subordinates go to the grave of the ancestors, and there, by night, a black ram is killed. The lungs and liver are roasted, and laid in little heaps on the grave, each ancestor being named as his portion is laid down, and prayer is offered:

> "Ye fathers, look upon us in mercy. Drive away from us this plague, lest our children die, and none be left in the land. Send it to the Basango or the Basafwa, but save us. Pray to God for us. Hear, O God, the words of those we have named. And go to the west, O God, or to the Basango."

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XXIV

Death & Burial

•761 AMONG the Konde, as among other Bantu peoples, no man dies " unwept, unhonoured, or unsung." However contemptible he may have been in life, he has now passed to a sphere in which he is clothed with fresh powers, which, for good or ill, he can direct upon his living descendants, who take care to give no cause of offence. He cannot, however, punish them for any evil they may have done him while alive ; only *post mortem* sins can be visited upon them : neglect of ceremonies, refusal of beer at the funeral, omission of his name when prayer is made, and other tokens of forgetfulness. And the power for harm of each spirit is limited to his own descendants ; but chiefs, naturally, can bring misfortune upon the whole of the community over which they ruled in life.

763 765 Immediately a man has died, his eldest child, son or daughter, unless an infant, begins the mourning.

"Alas, my father, I too have met trouble ! " Then the women, "Ah ! trouble comes to you as to others." Next the leader, " My father, my lion, my leopard," naming all the strong and fierce animals to which the dead man is compared ; the women say, " Now indeed you are poor " ; and the boy replies, " Yes, my

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

766 made that the chief is dead. The body is brought
to the grave by the headmen, and the dead cow is
643 lowered in first; then the chief, in a sitting position,
622 facing the Sango country, if that was his original home.
Torches are used if the night is dark. When the grave
is filled in, all partake of the medicine made from the
dead man's nails and hair. The washing ceremonies
are the same as for common men; but the widows
will not go near the men who placed the body in the
grave until the latter have given them a gift of some
kind, though the exact function of the gift is not clear.

No chief of any importance dies a natural death:
643 that is to say, however and whenever a chief dies, it is
•761 assumed that some one was responsible. It is believed
that chiefs die more easily than common men, and
are more open to evil influences; but, on the other
hand, they have more powerful medicines to protect
them. When Kabeta died in 1922, all his sons and his
headmen were put to the poison test, and those who
did not vomit were compelled to pay a fine in cattle,
a token that complete confidence in the belief in evil
influences is passing away; for in earlier times the
culprit so discovered would have been attacked as he
ran, and would probably have paid the forfeit of his
own life. The easier punishment may, however, have
been due to fear of the police.

766 Twins were not exposed; but if one of them died,
the body was cast into the bush, and wailing was not
permitted, for it would cause the death of the other.
To-day the body of a twin is buried in the ordinary
way, but without wailing.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 were not ill, they were not troubled as we are. For later in the evening,
643 while the Lwembe was still alive, the commoner priests removed his nails and hair; they came near and plucked them off. He shouted: 'Who is snatching at me?' They replied: 'No one', and then they smothered him with cloth in the nostrils and in the anus, and he went away [i.e. he died]. . . . They did it only when he had initiated it himself by saying: 'I have eaten food in the land of the shades'; they
[775] did not begin it themselves. . . . They collected the relics in a little bamboo flask, and a priest treated them so that Lwembe might not go away with the food to the land of the shades, that the fertility of the soil (*ilifugo*), this *ifingila*, might always remain above.

[778] These relics, the hair and the nails, were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops.

While the Lwembe lived he was secluded—ordinary men did
643 not see him—and he was subject to numerous taboos. For example,
[784] he might not tread in water lest the country should be flooded; he never bathed in a stream (as Nyakyusa men do daily) and was carried across any river when travelling; he must not sit on a green banana leaf lest the bananas in the country should fail, but was always provided with a skin to sit upon, and he ate only the middle portion of a banana throwing away the ends for 'if he finished the whole of a banana he would create hunger in the country'. No one might grasp his hand, or drink out of the same calabash as he, save the priests of his own age; if he drank from a calabash when travelling he took it with him, for 'if he left it behind he left hunger in that place'.

The selection of the Lwembe was in the hands of the hereditary priests of Lubaga and the hereditary Kinga priests, who come from BuKinga to sacrifice at Lubaga. The man they choose must be of good character—at the time we were in BuNyakyusa the only willing candidate was rejected because 'he is a bad man, a thief, they refuse to have a thief as priest'—he must exhibit in his own home the power of fertility. 'They don't catch just anyone, but
[842] one with children, and cattle, and fertility of the fields in his own homestead. If the man taken as chief is not fertile and rich there will be many sterile people in the homesteads, and much disease and hunger.'

When the priests had decided upon the man of their choice, they seized him and set him upon a sacred skin and a pad of leaves; and it was believed that once he had been set thereon he
● [761] would die if he refused office; tales were told of a younger brother

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(28) of Mwampondele (27) who had fled from the stool and had died. 643 [761]

The chosen man was secluded in a hut, lying on a litter with his priests, who kept him company (*ukumpanja*), just as a nubile girl is secluded and lies on a litter with her maids, or a young chief with his village headmen at his 'coming out'. Here is the account of Mwasesi, the oldest of the priests of Lubaga (a man of about seventy-five) who saw the installation of the last Lwembe, Mwakisisya (56).

A skin and a head-pad of leaves (*ingata*)[1] are brought by the Kinga. The priests catch the chief and set him on these; and then he cannot run away, it is taboo. I, Mwasesi, would sit on one side of him and my friend on the other, and force him to sit on them. Then we plead with him and say: 'You are the Lion, the Leopard, the Snake, the Banana, the Bean, the Millet, the Cow Pea, and the Lentil.' (Lentils are very important, you know, because it is with them that we celebrate the ritual, and with cow peas.) Then, after a time, he says: 'Leave me', and he goes to find the cow; this cow is just for the priests to eat that night. Then we take him into a certain house, cut leaves and spread them for a litter; and we keep him company there on the litter for some time. Then he sends messages to Mwakyusa (38), to Mwankyuse (33), and to Mwakisambe (30), and the Kinga [i.e. their descendants]. Each chief who is Lwembe's descendant sends commoner priests . . . they gather to induct him into Lubaga, he who was in the house. It is just like the 'coming out' ritual for a young chief. 643 788

The Lwembe in his own person, and in a lesser degree his 'sons' who are ordinary chiefs, are identified with the power of growth. Not only must the Lwembe not die with the breath still in his body, or with his hair and nails still upon it, but when he is chosen the priests test whether his reign will be long or short (perhaps whether they can permit him to live or not) by taking a little millet, putting it in a banana leaf and watching to see whether it sprouts or not. 'If it sprouts and grows at once he will live long; if it does not, he will be the priest [i.e. divine king] but will die very soon.' 643 [787]

Because the power of making rain, food, milk and children lay in the body of the Lwembe he was fearful and terrible. 'No one built close to him, it was taboo, no one touched Mwakisisya (56) . . . if he wished to make it rain he would make it rain all 643 784

[1] The Kinga priests spoke of a cloth to wear and a stool and an axe which were kept in the inner part of the hut of the Lwembe's great wife and which no man, save a priest of Lubaga, might see.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 separate inheritance sometimes went through the ritual because he might later be required as a chief, and the son of a conquered chief who had retained limited authority over a small area might be permitted to 'come out' with his senior brothers also. The common pattern, then, was for two sons to 'come out' as principals, but for a variety of reasons one or more 'younger brothers' might join them.

In Ngonde, as opposed to BuNyakyusa, several brothers normally went through the ritual as principals and the reason given us was that power should be distributed. They would say, we were told, 'If we bring out only two they will be boastful and ill-use their people, let them be many therefore, then, if a man has a quarrel with his chief, he can flee to another. . . .' In BuNyakyusa [622] any tendency to tyranny in a chief was effectively curbed by his village headmen; but it is possible that headmen never had as much power in Ngonde as they did in BuNyakyusa.

An analysis of the genealogies of Nyakyusa chiefs shows that very often one half-brother lost power to the other, but occasionally several brothers (e.g. seven sons of Mwaipopo 26) got independent chiefdoms, and a junior brother (e.g. Mwakyusa 38) [669] might attract a larger following of men than his seniors. Mwakyusa led his men from the hills to the more fertile plain and drove out the Kyungu of Ngonde from the lake-shore north of the Songwe river.

The 'coming out' was traditionally the occasion when authority was handed over by the elder generation to the younger. The old [761] chief retired and he was *expected to die shortly*. In Nyakyusa theory he died because his men no longer loved him: 'A chief did not [888] live long after the "coming out" of his sons; he died because there was war and people would complain: "He is too old, when we fight we are beaten, he had better die, perhaps the heir will help us." He died of the "breath of men".' But, as will be shown, his headmen had the duty of smothering a chief who seemed likely to die, and they were much more ready to do this after the 'coming out' of his sons than before. It was right that the sons should come out before their father's death, but not right that the period of regency should be extended, for the division of authority between old and young was uneasy. When the old chief did die his [793] headmen became the priests (*abapyage*) responsible for the sacri- [622] fices in his grove, and the young men were solely responsible for the defence of the country and the administration of justice.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the shades and the hearths which was strewed; in Porokoto's 783
country people talked mostly of the witches; but it seemed clear
that both conceptions were present when men murmured: 'The [754]
hearth bricks are bad' (*amafigo mabibi*) and they sought to cleanse [775]
them by clearing out the old fire and lighting new. 'To clear out the ashes means they take away all that dirt, the dirt which the witches have brought and the shades; it is the cause of illness.' When witches are thought to be active there is also a public complaint, and a public warning is given 'to whom it may concern' to desist.[1] This occurred in the ritual after the ground hornbill had eaten the chicken. Above all, men must admit their [578]
anger to one another: 'they fight that the homesteads may be [681]
peaceful'. The theme so familiar in Nyakyusa rituals—that quarrels must be confessed if they are to be composed—recurs yet again. Though we distinguish the rituals for 'cleansing the country' from sacrifices, on the ground that the whole community participates in the 'cleansing' while the sacrifice is esoteric, the two are closely linked, and a sacrifice commonly precedes or follows the cleansing. We turn now to the detailed accounts of celebrations for 'cleansing' in Ngonde and among the Kukwe.

(*a*) THE RATS

In Ngonde they used to clear out the ashes at the new year, at the 783
first hoeing (in December) after 'the break of the rains'. They feared 796
that death and disease would spread through the land if they continued
living with the old fires, that the shades in the earth, both the shades [753]
of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry. Let them drive the shades [761]
away and hoe in peace. They always remembered to do so each new year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually, they never forgot. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to clear out the ashes; and then they would hoe in peace. And at other
times, too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the [787]
ashes again. 'It is to drive away the shade with the sickness that he brings. We throw out the ashes and firebrands because he has come to warm himself over the fire in our houses, we throw out the pots and winnowing baskets because he has come to see us eating; let him go there (to the grove) and eat what he asked for—we say the shades ask [775]
for food—let him eat here, perhaps a sheep. We say the shades bring sickness to the fire, hence we throw out the ashes and make new fire with a drill.'

The nobles of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave [643]

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 109-13.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

x 797 x 795 764

killed that the dead man may be received by the shades of his lineage, and his immediate kin eat *ihipiki* medicines with him for the last time, is marked.

Marriages and funerals, and in a lesser degree births, are occasions for gatherings of kinsmen in Western society—such a penetrating study of kinship as *The Forsyte Saga* bears adequate witness to this—but the gathering of kinsfolk is a ceremonial rather than a ritual.[1] The attendance of the Forsyte men at Aunt Ann's burial service is in no way essential to the service, though it is felt to be a mark of respect and 'proper feeling' on their part to come. So also at Nyakyusa Christian funerals, the attendance of relatives and fellow villagers is conventional—people are shocked if they do not come—but the peace of the departed is not thought to depend upon his kinsmen killing cows at his grave and celebrating the 'farewell'; the ritual element is the concern of his fellow Christians, led by the priest or elder, irrespective of kinship connexions. The conventions are binding, however. Though a kinsman or village neighbour is not accused of having killed his [754] fellow if he fails to come to the funeral, nevertheless it would cause offence if he did not come, being free to do so, and should he go to work in the fields on the day of the funeral of a grown man, a neighbour, his position would be intolerable.

At a Christian funeral the emphasis all through is on resurrection and life. The hymns sung to comfort the mourners and the [775] prayers and words of the burial service stress resurrection: 'This corruption has put on incorruption, this mortality immortality' . . . 'the body of the flesh is buried, but the body of the spirit rises.' . . . 'Our friend is not dead but liveth.' . . . 'Oh death where is thy sting, oh grave (*bupaka*) where is thy victory?' And the weeping, though extravagant to English ears, is much more restrained than among pagans. Again and again we were told by Christians: [764] 'We do not fear death as the pagans do', and certainly fear is not played up as in the pagan ritual. As one Christian put it: 'No Christian smears himself with mud; only the pagans fear very much at a death, they are desolate, but we do not fear, we say: "Indeed I shall die, but I shall rise again", so we do not smear ourselves with mud and grieve very much. . . . We say: "Why mud? We shall meet with him above."' And there is no later shaving or other purification, for the mourners are not identified with the corpse.

[1] For a discussion of this distinction, cf. op. cit., p. 9.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

vomit by tickling the back of my throat with a hen's feather, while I 783
am standing under the fall with the water coming down on my head. The blood of him you have killed is in the waterfall. May it not come! May it all go out of the body! You vomit because it is there in the body. May it go out! Then a medicine is cooked and the legs of the slayer and his relatives are scalded with it. It is the medicine of twins: the twin medicine and the spearing medicine are one because they are a rejection of the blood. When people's legs have been splashed then we all shave; that is to drive away him whom we have killed.

But even after such treatment the kin of the slayer and the slain 783
fear to eat together. 'We remain enemies. If we eat with them it 602
makes us thin.'

Those who drink protective medicines are the agnatic kin of the slayer and the slain, their mothers' kin (*abipwa*) and their wives, [illegible] blood relatives but not affines. Affines are of different blood, but wives are of your flesh.'

The spearing ritual is not a joint ritual in which a large group 783
of kin participate; married men, even brothers, make their own arrangements for taking protective medicine.

We do not meet together with all our relatives, the descendants of one man, no, it is not like the twin ritual. We drink it each man with his wives and children in his house. If I have a married brother he also goes to a doctor to ask for medicines for himself. He seeks his own doctor, not the one to whom I went. We drink separately, we do not meet together when we drink.

Only if a daughter had been given in compensation for a murder 783
(as sometimes happened) and later he who married her took mar- 682
riage cattle to her father to establish kinship, then, our informants said, the two parties should drink the 'medicine of spearing' (*unkota gwa lukwego*) together.

(b) Rotting the ropes

A man who has been bound with ropes (*ingeje*), or has committed 753
suicide by hanging,[1] or raided cattle and tethered them, is also 681

[1] What the incidence of suicide is among the Nyakyusa we do not know. The Rev. Merensky, one of the first Europeans to live in the area, speaks of it being 'not uncommon'. We recorded two cases: one of a man whose wife and children had died; the other a woman forced to leave her lover and marry against her will. X, a Christian whom we knew well, swore to his pagan elder brother that he would commit suicide if his brother insisted on the pagan practice of performing an autopsy on the body of their dead sister. [762]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya

SELECT RECORDS

I. REPORTS OF PARTICULAR FUNERALS

(a) *Farewell to Mwamulenga III,*[1] *son of Mwegama (Selya)*

Record of G. W. 10/3/37

764 Mwamulenga III hanged himself seventeen days ago, after the [762] death of one of his wives and his only child. This ritual was held at his own house in Katumba but he was buried at the place where his father, Mwegama, had lived, and the mourning was carried out in the hills by Mwakapesa, the head of the family, who has moved there. The litter was at Mwakapesa's and was taken out about a week ago.

Mwaikambo and I arrived about 10 a.m. with Sikatula (wife of Gwamungonde), who is a cross-cousin (*untani*) of the family. The women were gathered inside the house wailing dirges—words were clearly audible but not, to me, distinguishable: one woman was the leader. There was more wailing than singing. The dirge was punctuated by slow handclaps. Mpogo, the eldest full brother of the dead man, and the heir, told me: 'It is the custom to wail just before the ritual, like this.'

764 Food was brought out about 11 a.m. The women had come close to 515 talk to me; when food came out the men told them to go away. I asked why. 'We wash constantly, but women only wash a little, also they look after children and their bark-cloth belts are dirty. When they cook they wash, but for eating they wash little.'

764 I asked who would perform the ritual.

Mpogo: 'Kalukwa (the widow) will perform the ritual, also each of his brothers and half-brothers will select one or two children to do it too. The rest of our children just look on, for we ourselves are not yet dead.'

Kana Nhamre: 'It is our custom to leave some people over, not to perform it on all.'

Later I asked why Bapala (Kana Lwesi) did the ritual and not Kana Ipalu whose relationship to the dead man was exactly the same. 'We leave some out, they will do it at some other later death.' Actually thirteen people performed it. 'Mwamaloba (son of Mwegama II) will not do the ritual when he returns—it does not matter; but if he'd been a son of the dead man then he would do so. The wives of the dead man's brothers never do the ritual. The ritual for Lukosa (dead wife of

[1] cf. Genealogy on p. 273.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

765 837 the number of cattle has increased so greatly since European administration commenced, that there are many who can pay the fine imposed; or again, that since civilized government will not permit the fighting that used to take place, the emotion generated has to find other outlets.

765 As parties from a distance come to the mourning, they go first to the "owner" of the dead, and offer their sympathies. In return they are given a long account of the progress of the disease, and of the measures that were taken by relatives to prevent death. A man approaching a widow, will sit at a distance of about a yard to offer his condolences, but a woman throws her arms around the neck of the bereaved.

762 The Konde do not attach the same value to life as we do, and suicide is not uncommon. I have known of suicide due to small money troubles, loss of a law-suit, continued poverty, prolonged illness, leprosy, quarrels at home, and finally to disappointment in love; this last, I am told, only on the part of the man; a woman disappointed in love does not commit suicide. For people who die by their own act, there is less mourning than for an ordinary death, and the parting words at the graveside are not the same; "since it was by your own desire that you went." The spirits require an explanation from every one who comes to them in this way; but any answer seems to satisfy them. Ordinarily the new-comers are received with the words, "Come and rest." This information comes from persons who "died" and returned, though a more common belief is that the dead do not return.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 "This time I will respect my husband and leave the child to him", but the next one she makes her own.' Occasionally, it is said, pythons may be acquired in childhood from a woman, or perhaps even a fellow herd-boy, who is a witch, and who transfers his or her witchcraft by giving the child some mysterious substance to eat, but it is the inherited character of witchcraft which is emphasized.

754 Witchcraft (*ubulosi*) is sharply distinguished from sorcery (*ubutege*), that is, the illegal use of destructive medicines, for it is
763 a physiological condition, not merely the manipulation of certain materials. The pythons are believed to be visible in an autopsy, a 'swollen bowel' (*ubula*) in a corpse being the typical mark of a witch. 'When the bowel is swollen, they take it out and say: "It is a python, he was a witch".' Some educated Nyakyusa maintain that the 'swollen bowel' is, in some cases at least, acute tapeworm; however that may be, the condition of the bowel is taken as conclusive evidence. 'If', said Mwangwanda, 'a man is accused of witchcraft during his lifetime, and then at the autopsy his bowels are found not to be swollen, people admit his innocence, saying: "We accused him falsely, see, he was pure!" '

ii. The supposed activities of witches

754 The typical crime of the witch, in Nyakyusa belief, is to harm men and cattle, and the motive is greed. The pythons are thought to lust for meat and milk, hence witches go in dreams by night to 'eat people inside', and to milk the cows of their neighbours. 'It is said', explained one of our friends, 'that throttling (*ukupita*) is in order to eat delicious food. The witches say that human flesh is delicious, and the milk of cows is also delicious' (cf. Document, p. 218). Another friend elaborated further: 'People say that it is the pythons of a witch that cause him to go and bewitch (*ukuloga*) the milk, because they wish to drink milk. When he has throttled the cows they are satisfied. And they are satisfied with human flesh when "he of the pythons" has eaten a man. So I hear. I have heard too, that if the pythons smell meat (of an animal killed for eating) and if people grudge meat to him (or her) of the pythons, then the pythons will fly with him to throttle people and eat them. Similarly smelling milk leads to the throttling of cows.' The stock myth of witchcraft (cf. Document, p. 217) is about a

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 Sometimes the individuals concerned did not actually take the ordeal themselves, but each was represented by one of his or her
627 children, as when Mwaisumo's mother was accused of bewitching
695 the village cows, and one of her younger sons drank the *umwafi* representing her (cf. Document, p. 241). Very often the ordeal was used to discover which *group* was responsible for the trouble, whether it was the father's people or the mother's, or perhaps the village, and a child was chosen to represent each group and given the poison. Mwaisumo himself had drunk *umwafi* as a child, representing his father's people (cf. Document, p. 244). And a sceptic explained that each family chose a member who vomited readily—his family was always represented by a certain daughter who vomited *umwafi* immediately.

The ordeal is only administered nowadays in the greatest secrecy, and probably very rarely, for informants who had no hesitation in discussing with us witchcraft accusations and trials of supposed witches, though these were well known to be illegal, denied that the ordeal was administered. The most recent example we traced occurred in 1932.

763 So far we have only dealt with cases in which witchcraft is suspected as the cause of illness among men, or of a decrease in
787 the milk supply. The matter is more serious if someone has
754 actually died. If there is any doubt as to the cause of death, an autopsy is performed, and a diagnosis made from the condition of the stomach and intestines. 'Wounds' or scars in the stomach are taken as evidence of attacks by witches, and a black oily substance in the bowel, or red streaked with black and white, is a mark of sorcery; if the bowel is swollen, or if the entrails burst out of the incision, it is proof that the deceased was himself a witch, and was probably killed in a quarrel with fellow witches. Death due to a relative having been bound with ropes (cf. Document, p. 249), or a disease of the bowels (*ikitasya*) attributed to natural causes, is also thought to be apparent at an autopsy. Some maintain too, that the source of witchcraft can be discovered from the examination, wounds on the right side of the stomach indicating that the witch is a member of the father's family, or of the age-village; wounds on the left indicating that he is a member of the mother's family (cf. Document p. 246).

At the autopsy the crowd is kept at a distance and usually only one or two senior relatives or neighbours, the headman of the

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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village, and the doctor who operates are present. Occasionally 787
their judgement is challenged. 754

'Once an old pagan woman, whose husband was reputed to have been a witch, demanded an autopsy. When they opened the stomach the entrails (*elitondobeli*) jumped out. [When the entrails jump out this way they say "the python is fighting".] The observers looked, and said to the doctor, "All right, all right, bind him up again!" But the widow objected, saying, "No, come near all of you." She called all the people and went to the corpse, and tore open the stomach. All cried out, saying: "Alas! do not do that. It is forbidden." Then she turned to the old people and said: "Is there anything here? Nothing! He is only a witch by hearsay. Yes, indeed, just because the entrails jumped out you convicted him." ' For detailed accounts of two of the autopsies observed see the Document on pp. 247–50.

In the past the source of witchcraft was always confirmed 787
through the ordeal; nowadays divination with the rubbing-board 754
is sometimes used instead. Mwamunda described the procedure: 'The custom of drinking *umwafi* has ceased, but some, when a person has died, perhaps a child, make an autopsy. . . . Then, if they find wounds of witchcraft (*efilonda efya manga*) the father and the mother of the child go to a doctor to divine, but they do not drink *umwafi*, they divine with the rubbing-board. Perhaps the divination indicates the mother. She then goes to her father, and he goes to divine with his wife, the grandmother of the dead child. If he (the grandfather) is then indicated he next takes his kinsmen with him, and when the divination indicates one of them the man will say: "This divination is nonsense; it always deceives." But others will think him guilty and say: "A kinsman was caught, he had eaten his grandchild." Or perhaps the divination indicates the father of the dead child. If so he divines again asking: "Is it relatives, or is it the country?" (For a man has a country, not a woman.) Then perhaps the divination will show that it is not relatives, but the "breath of God" (*Kyala*), that is to say other people, non-relatives. Or perhaps the divination indicates the father of the dead child and his relatives; and if so the father goes with his kinsmen and one of them is indicated. Then the father goes again with the man indicated by the previous divination, to confirm the verdict. Before going to court he asks himself: "How shall I bring a case which depends for evidence on divination?

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

objection to marrying the child of one who has been convicted is clearly not pushed to its logical conclusion. No slur is cast on any one lineage when an individual is convicted of witchcraft, for he may have inherited it from either parent, or even got it from a friend; conversely no lineage is cleared by an autopsy, for not all the children of a witch are necessarily witches. Thus a man may have a father or brother or son who is 'pure', yet be a witch himself. As we have seen, even persons belonging to the same lineage may occasionally accuse each other. Nevertheless, when an individual who is reputed to be a witch dies, the close relatives do sometimes insist on an autopsy, in order to clear the deceased of suspicion, and possibly themselves also (*vide supra*, p. 117). In one case we recorded it was a daughter who insisted on the autopsy being performed on her mother, a reputed witch. No witchcraft was found.

So far we have dealt with cases of misfortune befalling an individual, followed by action against a fellow villager who is suspected of being responsible. This type of case is far the commonest within the field of witchcraft. When a general misfortune, such as a plague or epidemic, threatens, the chiefdom acts as a whole, not the villages separately, and the ritual is directed primarily to securing the blessing of the shades. There is some suggestion of ridding the chiefdom of witchcraft at the same time, but the emphasis is on appeasing the ancestors. The traditional new year cleansing (*ukutag' ikikungu*), now rarely performed, was also the concern of chiefdoms not separate villages, and it involved prayer to the ancestors.

b. The age-village and the ancestors

We have dwelt at length on witchcraft and 'the breath of men', for, in Nyakyusa belief, the defence of the village against witches and the punishment of wrong-doers by 'the breath' of their fellows is the main corporate activity of the village in the religious sphere. There are no village rituals directed to the ancestors comparable to those performed on behalf of lineages and chiefdoms. Indeed, belief in the power of shades operates only in situations where social position is determined by descent, as it is in lineages and in the succession to chieftainship. The office of village headman is not hereditary. The son of a village headman

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

623 his village headmen. In some villages the 'elder' is both a religious
795 leader and a secular authority, but there is a tendency to separate
184 the two offices and to appoint a 'peacemaker' whose duty it is to settle disputes, collect taxes, and represent the village in its relationships with the chief and the administration, while the 'elder' confines himself to watching over the spiritual welfare of his people. Such division of authority is symptomatic of the growing differentiation of Nyakyusa society.

e. Witchcraft, medicines, and the British administration

754 Under British administration the use of the *umwafi* ordeal, im-
177 putation of witchcraft, intimidation or obtaining goods under
627 false pretences by threats of witchcraft or sorcery, or offers of protection against them, are punishable offences. As we have seen, the ordeal is now administered only in the greatest secrecy, and probably very seldom, but accusations of witchcraft are frequent, and are even heard before the Native Courts, though not recorded (*vide* Document, p. 257). In the villages near the Government station more caution is observed in making accusations than in more remote parts of the district: very often the identity of the witch is only hinted at, or thorns are piled at his door by persons who remain anonymous (*vide supra*, p. 114) so that no individual can be convicted of imputing witchcraft. As one man put it: '"The defenders" see the witches, but cannot name them to anyone.'
[763] Autopsies continue in conservative villages but they are no longer performed on every corpse, as is said to have been customary in the old days. The chief Porokoto, himself a sceptic, argued that it was no use performing an autopsy when a charge could not be laid. If the members of a village are all convinced that a particular fellow is a witch he is forced to move, since his unpopularity becomes intolerable to him (*supra*, pp. 110–5). As Mwambuputa put it: 'We don't like him, and he doesn't like us either: he does not enjoy our company (*atikwangala na nuswe*), so he moves.' But if the friction is only between two individuals, the supposed witch may brazen it out, for without resort to the *umwafi* ordeal there is no sure means of deciding between the accuser and the accused.

754 The prohibition of witch-finding is not accepted as right and
177 just: the common view is that the Europeans 'protect the witches',

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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(d) *Sorcery* (Ubutege)

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accuser	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case
1	Chief	'People'	Chief and one of his village headman	Other chiefdoms	Made chief ill	Envy of chief having a court. Illness of chief.		
2	Conquered chief	Conquering chief (pre-European)		Different villages but same country (after the conquest)	Conquered had killed conqueror by sorcery	Mwamakula had taken Mwaseba's country. Death of conqueror		
3	Christian who became very popular by feeding men. People said he would 'kill' the position of the accused because of his popularity	Senior village headman X		Same village	X sought medicine to work sorcery against the Christian	X envied popularity of new-comer. He was overheard by neighbours saying he would work sorcery. Serious illness of Christian followed		
4	Child of P.	Classificatory brother of P.	P., father of victim	Different chiefdoms		Quarrel over inheritance of cattle. P's brother claimed cows from him. Case went to court of defendant's chief. Decided in his favour		
5	Man (Mwanyilu) and his wife	Not specified	Son of deceased (Mwambete)			Death of Mwanyilu and his wife	Autopsy on Mwanyilu. Found a powder, thought to be *ubutege* medicine, in his stomach. No autopsy on wife but 'know that she died from the same disease'	Family drank protective medicine
6	2 wives of X. Sister of X. 1 married daughter and another child. Husband of married daughter					All died within a short time of one another. Sorcery spread through autopsies	Autopsies	Family drank medicines provided by a doctor and the illness ceased

[p. 210]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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(d) *Sorcery* (Ubutege)—*contd.*

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accuser	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case
7	Daughter of A. Son and daughter of A's full brother B	A accused X, his parallel cousin (child of A's father's brother). X accused A	A, father and brother of victims		Use of sorcery against one another	Junior brother's son wanted inheritance divided. Elder brother's son (A) did not. This was followed by illness of victims	Suggested by doctor that trouble due to sorcery or to anger of ancestors over family quarrel	Open discussion of quarrel (*ukwiputa*). Drank medicine against sorcery. Also prayer to ancestors
8	Child of neighbour B	Man X	Neighbour B.	Same village	Sent his leopard to kill the child	Child killed by leopard on day after X had quarrelled with accuser B, saying B's cattle were eating his crops	X asked for ordeal. This refused	X driven out of country by chief. Later returned
9	Foreman and clerk A, very lucky in striking gold and favourite of his employer	Fellow clerk B.		Same camp	B accused of killing A by sorcery	A died suddenly at his house. B was very jealous of A's wealth, and had spoken in secret of his desire to kill A by sorcery, saying 'may he die at his house'		
10	Wife of village headman					Death	Autopsy. Symptoms of sorcery found	
11	Man who had run off with another's wife	Injured husband	Victim	Victim on Lupa. Injured husband in Iringa (300 miles distant)	Husband blowing medicines at the seducer of his wife (i.e. working sorcery—*ubutege*. The husband's friends might have classed this as vengeance magic)	Continued illness of victim	Divination by a doctor	Victim treated with medicines. Moved to another house. He finally recovered, but his host fell ill

[p.211]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

9. METHODS OF WITCHCRAFT

Mwaikambo (clerk).

754 'We people think that the witches have pythons (*isota*) in their stomachs. It is these which have power to change so that they fly. We say a man cannot work witchcraft without a python, but only when he has one. The python can come out of the stomach and enter again. When the python has gone to throttle someone only the witch's body remains. It is said that this body has no strength, and cannot get up; sometimes it can speak a little, sometimes it cannot speak. It is referred to as "a hide".

'When the pythons have come to the place where they are going to eat people, they are said to take out the teeth of others which they use to eat with. They do not eat with their own teeth. When they have "eaten" someone they return the teeth. It is said that if a person wakens before they return his teeth, and cries out that his teeth have gone, then his teeth will disappear all together. He will only have gums in his mouth. The witches do not carry spears with which to bewitch. I, and others also, are surprised at this, for when an autopsy is performed I have never heard it said that tooth-marks have been found, [763] but always that spear wounds have been found. And some, when they wake up in the morning, have said: "My teeth are loose." Then others tell them: "The witches ate with your teeth in the night."

'Witches fight a very fierce war in their supernatural strength (*kumanga gwabo*). It is said that they fight with spears. Those of one village do not fight, but the village of one chief (*sic*) fights against the village of another chief. When the witches of one chief try to kill another chief the latter's men fight them and save their chief. Hence it sometimes happens that the chief kills cattle for his people to thank them for having fought for him.

'Sometimes witchcraft is directed at food or a brewing of beer, causing it to rot. When the witches have spoiled the beer it is not nice. The witches spoil other things like this by means of their witchcraft with pythons.

'When the witches go to "eat" a person, two or four may go together or one may go alone. When they go they travel with the strength of the python; they leave a "skin", or body only. When they come to the person they throw away their teeth; they take the teeth of him whom they are going to eat, and eat with them. And one whose teeth have been returned knows in the morning that the witches used his teeth. We are warned that if ever we find no teeth in our mouths we must not

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 627 695 'There are some in our country who were caught for witchcraft, for "eating" people and throttling cows. The name of one of them was Sumali, but now he is dead; another is Mwaimama. They denied the accusation very strongly; they were brought before the chief (my father) for their case to be judged, and when he had given judgement they said they wished to go to *umwafi*. So they went to the *umwafi*, and when they had drunk it Sumali vomited and Mwaimama was conquered. Nothing happened to him—he was not driven out, they just told him to stop doing such things—but continually, even now, he is accused of witchcraft whenever anything happens. He's not gone to *umwafi* again.

'This happened before I went to school, when I was still herding cows, about 1925 or 1926. I did not see the trial (before the chief) with my own eyes, but I was there when the *umwafi* was administered.

'On another occasion a woman was "caught" for witchcraft when [763] her child died. When they do an autopsy they sometimes find wounds on the right side or on the left. The right side is the side of the man, the left that of the woman. This time they found them on the side of the woman. The woman (i.e. the mother) denied that it was she who had "eaten" the child so they went to *umwafi* and the woman was "conquered" (i.e. proved to be lying). It was not she, in her own person, but a member of her lineage who had "eaten" the child. After the *umwafi* had "spoken" they went to a diviner to discover exactly who the individual was.

'I heard about this from others, but Mwasintobile, the father of the child who died, is a man of our country—I know him.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

26. THE AUTOPSY

Note.—It was not easy to see an autopsy among the Nyakyusa—one never knew beforehand when such an operation would be held, and since imputations of witchcraft and sorcery are punishable offences, people were often reluctant to perform it when Europeans were there. There was only one European doctor in Rungwe district, and he was a very busy man with a hospital and dispensaries to supervise. All the operations witnessed were performed over twenty-five miles from his headquarters and far off any road. Therefore, we were never able to arrange for a qualified practitioner to be present at a Nyakyusa autopsy, as we wished. The following layman's accounts, though lacking any anatomical detail, explain the method of procedure, and the Nyakyusa reactions. 763 ● 123

Autopsy (ukupandula) *witnessed by G. W.*, 16/3/37.

Funeral of the wife of Mwampiki: Mwampiki himself is dead, but his homestead and wives have been inherited by a younger half-brother, Mwisalwa. The dead woman is a wife of another half-brother, Mwalemba. Kakuju, the village headman, called me to the funeral. 764

The body was carried apart, away from the crowd of women, behind a clump of bananas, by five or six women, who then washed it and put on a bark-cloth and a cloth (folded tight like a bark-cloth) round the loins. Then the young man, Mwaijumba, and I were allowed to come and watch.

The doctor, a woman, had five little knives of bamboo, made for the autopsy, and thrown away with the rubbish afterwards. Before she began to cut the stomach open another woman, a wife of Mwampiki (wearing mourning belts and smeared with mud) came and crouched down with her face close to that of the corpse, and a cloth covering her head and that of the corpse. 'That is the Nyakyusa custom', the young man explained. 'She is helping the doctor. The fearsomeness (*ubuniya*) of a human body is less when someone else is at the head.' 763 764

Then the doctor, using the bamboo knives, made an incision across the stomach, and cut through the flesh until the intestines showed. The stomach was swollen up. Mwantembe, a classificatory brother of Mwampiki, had joined us by this time. He was fetched by Mwaijumba to come and examine the corpse. He urged the doctor to make the incision wider and she did so. Mwantembe also insisted on Mwai- 763

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

763 jumba coming close and looking, too. 'Come, Mwaijumba, look, so that another time you will know.' He did not give direct instruction—he was far too much worked up—but he insisted on the other coming to see what was being done and discussed.

At several points the doctor was clearly under the stress of emotion and reluctant to do more than was absolutely necessary—she had to be urged on by Mwantembe. 'Now,' Mwantembe said, 'let us dissect, mother! Let us look well. Let us dissect! Do you say it's a person? No, it's just a log, a piece of firewood!' And several times these words were used by Mwantembe and others to urge her on. 'Do you say it's a person? It's just a log!'

The doctor then pulled out all the contents of the stomach so that Mwantembe and the women could see up into the chest—there was nothing unusual there on either side; then we looked downwards into the loins and found something unusual—a round growth full of blood. I asked if it was a foetus but was told: 'No, it is not; we don't know what it is. We don't ordinarily find that. It is something evil (*lindo*, literally "rubbish"). We are afraid.' The growth was taken out, and also the upper intestine, for there was said to be something unusual about that too, and the liver and something else (*ahanongo*). These, I think, are always removed. We were not told of anything unusual about them. The doctor herself made few or no suggestions—it was Mwantembe who did that—she just did the operation silently.

The stench was foul—several of the women put stoppers of banana leaf into both nostrils. Half-way through the woman at the head of the corpse got up, looking overwrought, and went away to a distance. The others said: 'It's all right, it's not a person, just a log' (i.e. there is no need for her to stay). At length the doctor pushed the rest of the organs back into the stomach and tied up the body with a cloth—another was tied over it to make all secure.

757 The discussion (which had been going on spasmodically all the time) broke out in a flood. People nodded to each other and said:
763 'Sorcery (*ubutege*)! Look! Look! Sorcery indeed!' The young man, Mwaijumba, told us: 'I dreamed of a medicine. When they were at the funeral [the dead woman had been taken ill while at a funeral at her classificatory father's homestead], before she fell ill, I dreamed in my sleep, I saw someone giving a child a banana, but I caught hold of the banana (all in my sleep). I broke it open and I found a powder there in the banana. So then I sent a message to her (the next day when I was awake), saying: "Come home. You have mourned sufficiently." And that very day I fell ill myself.' He told this with great excitement. Mwantembe also was obviously moved and said several times during the autopsy: 'I'm afraid. I'm afraid.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Then Kakuju, the village headman, and Kissogota (an old man, a village headman of the previous generation) came to see the results of the autopsy—the things extracted. The doctor had made a small incision in the thing chiefly suspected—the round growth full of blood and measuring five or six inches in diameter. Kakuju got very excited and insisted on her making a bigger incision to see what was inside. 'Look well!' he shouted, 'You are our ordeal (*umuuji*). We know this illness which is killing people in the country. We know it. We know it (passionately). It's sorcery (*ubutege*), is it not?' Mwantembe then said: 'See, it is sorcery, see!' showing him all that had been extracted. Both Kakuju and Kissogota agreed and then Kissogota said: '*Igobe!*' At this word the tension seemed to relax. Kakuju jumped at it. 'Yes, yes (eagerly) *igobe*. Is it not *igobe*, Mwaipaja?' (passionately to me) '*Igobe*,' Mwantembe repeated. '*Igobe*', shouted the women. Kakuju and Kissogota walked away talking. Then all the remains (*i.e.* the growth, etc.) and the bamboo knives were buried apart in the waste land, and the body was buried in the usual way. 764 763

Angombwike later explained that *igobe* was an old word for *ubutege* (sorcery).

Autopsy (ukupandula), *witnessed by G. W.*, 23/3/37.

Funeral of little granddaughter of Mwaihojo (a chief)—daughter of Mwaihojo's son Mwakisisile—aged one year. Child died last night. Funeral at Mwaihojo's homestead. 763

The doctor, a woman, cut the stomach open crosswise and pulled out the contents of the stomach. 'See that little black thing, branching!' They looked all over thoroughly, up and down. 'Look carefully, people of Selya!' said the doctor. 'You tell lies! You will go and tell lies! Look carefully! See, there is no *ikitanya* (a disease).' All agreed that there was no sign of *ikitanya*, but no positive opinion was expressed till two men had been fetched to look. They came and said: 'Why do you deny it? Why do you not know the disease from ropes (*engoje*)?' 'Yes,' replied the women, 'but we said we should let the men look first.' Before the men came and gave utterance to the word *engoje*, the women had, I think, come to the same conclusion; it was clear from the way the doctor pointed out 'the little black thing, branching' that she was certain what it meant, and they nodded in an understanding way. Only when she asked them: 'Look, what is it?' they would not answer, saying: 'We don't know, you are a doctor who understands these things.' Then, instead of saying what she thought, she asked: 'Aren't the men coming to look?'

The men came back to Mwaihojo and repeated: 'It is the disease

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

763 from ropes, that binding. The women were uncertain.' 'Yes, indeed,' replied Mwalhojo. 'Whenever did women know how to perform an autopsy? They don't know how to do it. They only know how to close the corpse again, that's all.'

A woman lay down with her head to that of the corpse under cloths. The other women told her to do this, saying: 'At the head, at the head! You are both brave, you, too!'

The doctor removed the liver, two other parts, and the bile sack. This latter she squeezed out on to the leaves, saying: 'Medicine, medicine, she drank much medicine.' All these she wrapped up in leaves and buried in the foot of the grave.

It was explained that the ropes (*ungwje*) were those of Mwakisisile. Mwakisisile, the father, had gone mad (*abapaga ibipili*) and had drunk medicine before he had married this woman. 'We forgot to give them both medicine later on. When he went mad we bound him with ropes to take him to the doctor.'

753 (It is believed that the kinsmen of one bound with ropes will suffer from the disease *ungwje* if treatment is not adequate.)

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

29. CHRISTIAN SCEPTICISM OF WITCHCRAFT

Ntengalefu (Christian Elder, an early convert).

'At first when we repented, the missionaries asked us whether we believed in witchcraft, and we said: "Yes, there is witchcraft", and we told them about it and the wounds found in the bellies of people who have been killed by witchcraft. So the missionaries said to us: "When there is a death tell us, and we shall go and look." I was taken once by Klaus (a missionary) to a death. I was afraid to go near the corpse—everyone was afraid—but the missionary stood over the grave and looked at the corpse and even put his hand inside (the stomach). The person was said to have died of *igobe* (a kind of sorcery), but Klaus said he had died of a disease of the chest. He told people to come and look. Mwaipopo (the chief) was there but he refused to come and look; they all refused. After some time I came and Klaus showed me. In this way we have been and examined corpses, and we have never seen the wounds of witchcraft. . . . Klaus used to go round to funerals, examining corpses. . . . Ndabele here has seen a corpse which the pagans said had a python. Last week Ndabele went to a funeral near Itete and the pagans said there was a python inside; the woman (who had died) had been a witch. He said: "Let's see the python, let's see it", but no one could show it to him.'

[p. 254]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

30. SORCERY

Mwakionde (doctor, brother of a chief).

'When they open a dead person and find the intestines red, black and white in different parts, they say the death is due to sorcery (*ubutege*). They go to the doctor and get medicine for the relatives. 754 763

'Sorcery comes very quickly, especially when they have done an autopsy. Then the one who takes the body in her arms, and the one who buries after the operation, die very quickly. If the body has been opened the disease spreads very quickly. In one case thirty people died, mostly relatives. In another case, a wife, a girl child, a mother, a father's sister, and a son-in-law (husband of the girl child) all died. The wife died one day, next day the girl child and her mother, then the father's sister, then the husband of the girl. Autopsies were performed on the first three.'

[p. 255]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER II

BURIAL RITES[1]

(a) *The form of burial*

WHENEVER a death takes place, whether of man, woman, or child, 764
a series of funeral rites lasting a month or more begins. The first of the series is the burial (*ifwa*) which, in the case of most adults, lasts three or four days, though for a rich man it may continue for a week, and for a child it is over in a day. For the sake of convenience the account of burial is given mainly in reference to the burials of men; those of women are very similar and occasional references are made to them; but the constant qualifications of statement that would be necessary to give a complete description of both would be wearisome and are unnecessary for our purpose.

As soon as death occurs the women who are present begin wail- 763
ing and messages are sent to the chief, the village headman, and 764
the dead man's kinsmen and affines, to announce the fact and bid them to the burial. The first message is sent to the father, or to a senior brother, if one is still alive, or failing them to the heir of the dead man, and he it is who sends out the other messages. If the father or a senior brother is alive the burial may take place at his homestead, the body being carried there at once; otherwise the dead man is buried at his own home: the choice rests with his father. A married woman is buried at her husband's home if she has borne children, otherwise at her father's; an elderly widow is buried by her son.

Messages must be sent to all the fathers-in-law and all the sons- 602
in-law both of the dead man and of the senior kinsman who 763
buries him, to all the dead man's full and half-brothers, to the husbands of his sisters, to any classificatory brothers with whom he exchanged cows, to his mother's father or brother, to the full and half-brothers of his father, and to his sons. If any one of these

[1] This description is an amended version of that published by Godfrey Wilson in 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, 1939. The theoretical analysis differs somewhat from that offered in the paper, for the ritual element appears to me to be dominant at the burial as well as in the later 'farewell to the dead'. Between us we attended thirty funerals, in whole or in part.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

602 is forgotten he will be angry: 'It happens sometimes that a kins-
●763 man comes in later, after the man is buried, and is very angry because no message was sent to him; he comes in a passion, and perhaps he beats his brother [the one who should have sent him a message]. Then the others catch hold of him and say: "Why do you not come soberly and greet us decently with the appropriate words? Come now, why?" And if he does not stop they beat him.'

602 These kinsmen and affines, with their wives and children, are
764 under obligation to come to the burial, unless they are sick. Young children under the age of 10 or 11 are not obliged to come, though they often do, but older children must do so. One reason for the continuance of the burial ceremonies for three or four days is that this gives time for relatives from a distance to receive the messages and come. Deliberately to refuse to send a message or, on the
[578] other side, to refuse to come to a burial for no good reason, is a symbolic breaking of the bond of kinship and no one ever does either, unless there is a serious quarrel and all economic and social relations are being broken off between the two families concerned.

621 The village neighbours also are obliged to come to every burial
764 in the village. They normally wish to do so, but, even if they do
577 not, they still come for shame or for fear of being accused of witchcraft if they stay away. Where there is friendship the neighbours come in grief and sympathy and quarrels are softened by the fact of death, but, if the memory of enmity still persists, then the last sanctions are shame and fear: 'Some people mourn more than others.' 'The men who knew him say: "Let us go and mourn him."' 'Those who did not know him intimately mourn because each thinks: "He has died, my neighbour, and so will it be with me one day."' 'If I have quarrelled with my neighbour and he dies, I go to his burial for I say to myself: "It is true that while he lived we quarrelled, but now he is dead and we shall never meet again. I too will go to his burial and mourn him."' 'If a village neighbour does not come to a burial we say he is unkindly and unsociable.' 'And if a man does not go to his neighbour's burial then at once people say: "It was you who bewitched him. Why else do you not come to bury him?"' Several of the accusations of witchcraft recorded had been occasioned by a man's absence from a village neighbour's funeral. For it is believed that witches are chary of going to the burials of their victims lest the dead should rise and denounce them.

693 764 A chief normally goes to all burials in his own country, except

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

those of very young children. 'He goes because it is his subject who has died: he is like the senior kinsman of the whole country, he rules all.' 'If a chief omits to go to a burial people say nothing, they know that he is always going to burials and they think that perhaps he has some urgent business. But if he constantly misses burials then people say that he has no affection for his people, that he does not come to bury them as is fit; and if a chief hears them saying this then he is ashamed.' Sometimes a chief who is busy will send a son to represent him. And he sends the drums to beat the lament. 'The drum *is* the chief . . . they cannot beat the drum before the chief has spoken.' 643 764

Besides the chief, the villagers, the relatives, and the drummers, there come also personal friends of the dead man from other villages and chiefdoms. And beyond all these there often come others who are attracted not so much by grief and sympathy, nor even by the obligation to express these feelings, but rather by the dancing, the crowds and the possibility of getting some meat to eat. Not all those who come stay the whole three or four days, while the relatives who live at a distance often do not arrive until the second or third day. 764 572 571

The Nyakyusa believe that in order to protect the living and avenge the dead it is most important to discover the cause of death. To do this they summon a doctor to perform an autopsy,[1] an operation fearful and repugnant, but felt to be necessary. The symptoms are interpreted in terms of witchcraft or sorcery, or other supposed causes of disease. 763

On the first, or early on the second, day after death, the burial takes place. The grave is dug in the swept and beaten earth that immediately surrounds the huts. The first spit of earth is always turned by the eldest son of the one who has died. At one burial we saw the young eldest son of a dead man being helped to do this. He was too small to manage a hoe by himself so he caught the handle near the blade while an older relative held it behind to steady it for him. The digging after the first spit is done by a skilled grave-digger, who may be a kinsman or not, with the help of others. The grave is ten or more feet deep with a cave at the bottom to one side. Some graves are oblong, some round or oval, 764

[1] This is certainly traditional, cf. D. Kerr-Cross, 'Greater Lakes North of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, V (1895), p. 119. The custom is also reported for the Nyamwanga. For a description of the autopsy, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 247-50. [171]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MaNgonde

764 *(Ikuuka kukyeni nuyambala bo baryuka, bo bapatile abaryuka tukabakaga: lenga tukanyaguula tukabepa ikigili! Abaryuka bo bakaaskage bikujemo; papo lenga tumalile po bazokile munda. Loli bikwandeya kangi tukuja nabo bwila!)*

842 What we do comes from the shades and from Kyala himself. The
831 blood is theirs and his together. Those who create (*akabumba*) a child say: 'I am just eating at a woman,' but Kyala creates a child! If Kyala and the shades do not 'cook' [i.e. do not cause desire] you will do nothing, the penis is flaccid, but if Kyala has 'cooked' then you really do something, your heart (*indumbala*) is full of desire. Always the shades are there and we drive them away, they are there and we drive them away. . . .

775 A shade is resurrected in the body of his child (*Uuyuka ikuyuka itolo mumbali gwa mwanake*). . . .

764 Passing the basket of pumpkin-seeds, millet, and lentils between the
775 legs and on to the head and throwing to one side means: 'Here between the legs there is work, may they go out in intercourse, and from the head where we dream, may they go out also.' Because in the ritual we say: 'Let them come into the body' at first, then we drive them away. Rubbing ourselves in the earth and passing millet between the legs means: 'May they come';[1] throwing millet and so on to one side it is to drive them away, that they may go out.

QUESTION: Which shade do you drive away?

MWANDEE: He who has just died, we drive him away.

QUESTION: What about the first ancestor?

MWANDEE: He is there at their place [the place of the shades], we drove him away long ago, he just receives him [the newly deceased].

QUESTION: Why the pumpkin-seeds in the bananas?

MWANDEE: It is the semen (*alakange*) for begetting children. . . .

QUESTION: Do the shades always come when a man dies?

MWANDEE: Yes, they always come, they receive their fellow. Yes, even though he has died from sorcery they come and receive him, and even though he has died from witchcraft they come, the shades receive him, and if it is from illness he has died they also come. There is no
[761] death without the shades, they always come to receive their fellow.

When the witches have 'eaten' someone the shades come to receive
764 him. No, the witches eat him alone, but the shades receive him. Some-
775 one may get up in the morning and say: 'I dreamed they ate me and I
● 763 was with the shades!' Then he is about to die. Sometimes someone
828 dreams and says: 'In the night I was in the land of the shades with so-and-so, I left him there, I escaped myself and came home.' Then his friend is about to die.

764 If you do not perform the ritual you go mad (*kukyembala ikigili*) or
775 perhaps you get very thin, and are unable to die, you are ailing and do

[1] i.e. the participants identify themselves with the deceased.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

764

QUESTION: The water dripping from the little hut?

MWASALEMBA: If we omit this then the children when young don't go mad, but they vomit a watery fluid, and people say that we have not performed the ritual of water for them.

QUESTION: The meaning of leaves and fruit of bananas?

MWASALEMBA: Yes, it is because those who run mad throw away their clothes and wear leaves. So in the ritual we make them wear leaves; we think that if we don't do this they will have the madness and throw away their clothes. The leaves of plantain belong to the man (the father), those of sweet banana to the woman (the mother). They signify the completion of the ritual, both of their father and of their mother. We make them wear both kinds of leaf, even if one parent is still alive, because they begot them together, their blood is one, the man's blood and the woman's blood. The plantain fruit which they insert in the leaves in front is the procreative power of the father, it is like his penis; the sweet banana which they insert behind is the fertility of the mother, it is like a bark-cloth. We throw them away in the water so that they may float away, it is a sign of death; the blood of our parents which was one is finished now!

QUESTION: The leaves on the neck?

MWASALEMBA: When they run mad people do this, they wear leaves on head and neck.

QUESTION: The stones on the head, in ears, mouth and fingers?

MWASALEMBA: That is a symbol of death. Does not the corpse resemble a stone? It neither speaks nor hears; it does not hoe, or work with its hands at all. He whom we have buried is like a stone. We throw his death away into the stream.

QUESTION: The little hut?

MWASALEMBA: That is for cooking food in; we don't cook for him [the dead man] in the house because we did not bury him there but outside, so we cook for him outside. . . . We grind millet in the doorway [778] because the doorway belongs to the shade. We say: 'Receive us, oh shade, since a person has died, receive us!' Because if we enter into the house we are with the shade, and when we come out we are with him, the doorway is the shade's (*ikifigo kya nsyuka*). It is like the pouring of water on the thatch; when we have come from bathing, we enter and come out again, the doorway is the shade's. And at other times, if someone is ill and the shade has been brooding over him, he stands in the doorway and prays to the shade (*ikumputa unsyuka*). Yes, when a man dies the shade broods over (*ikutobatela*) us living.

QUESTION: Does death come from the shades? [761]

MWASALEMBA: Yes, when I have lain down at night, in the morning 763 I tell my children: 'So-and-so and so-and-so came to me, I have eaten their food, they came to carry me off.' Then there is sickness and they say: 'The shades have brooded over you, you will die.' It is death in-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

763 deed. We wash at the eating of millet to say: 'You shade, this millet which we eat comes to you because you brooded over us.' We wash our hands and mouths.

764 QUESTION: Why do you eat millet?

775 MWASALEMBA: The millet belongs to the shade. When we brew beer we put some in a calabash cup, but it is not drunk, it is left for five days and becomes lees [i.e. the liquid dries up], then we say: 'The shade has drunk it.'[1] We pray to him and say: 'He is angry.' We brew beer and pour it out in the banana grove, and say: 'You shade, what are you angry about, why have you brooded over the beer?' (They go first to divine.) We speak in the evening in the banana grove and all the children listen, and my wife in the house.

Similarly, if a cow calves and then does not take to its calf, does not lick it, then doctors say: 'The shades have caught hold of the cow, they have brooded over it. Then I pray with water only [in the other case there is both blowing out water and pouring of beer], and I speak as before. Then in the evening the cow takes to its calf and we say: 'The shades refused to let it recognize its calf.' That beer stays for two days —it's not strong!

764 QUESTION: The licking porridge off the mid-rib of the banana leaf?

MWASALEMBA: We eat porridge and he [the shade] eats. We eat off the mid-rib of the banana leaf because the banana grove is the shade's. When someone has died we cut the banana grove, and in the banana grove we pray. It is the shade's own.

764 QUESTION: Throwing beans into the pot?

775 MWASALEMBA: We say: 'You shade! We are eating these beans. Since you have brooded over our fellow who has died, receive him.' For we do not pray to him who has died now, but to that first one who died first. If we do not give him beans then the beans dry up, they shrivel in the fields and people say: 'The shade is angry. We have made a mistake in not giving him beans, we have not taken care of our fellow, his child.' Because the shade creates the beans. Yes, he, the shade, creates all foods, millet and maize and all.

764 QUESTION: The stealing of bananas?

MWASALEMBA: The millet and beans used are those of the house, but the stem of bananas must come from the house of a friend because bananas belong to the shade. Do you pray to him in the hoed fields? In the millet? You pray to him in the banana grove! Because of this you seek another's banana stem!

764 QUESTION: Circling round the fire to the harp and singing?

775 MWASALEMBA: The first shade who has died we have within us, he has brooded over us, we make him circle round, we are with him.

[1] At the drinking of the beer of inheritance in the Ndali ritual the shades are called upon. 'If the beer froths up that means the shades have heard', and the calabash cup is dashed to pieces on the hearth.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VII

RITUALS OF MISFORTUNE

845 An abnormal birth is the most dangerous misfortune that can befall a family in Nyakyusa society, and the ritual to ward off its expected results is the most elaborate, but there are lesser misfortunes also, which may be averted by simpler rituals.

753 (*a*) *Cleansing after spearing*

682 When one man has speared another and killed him, even though the action was legitimate (as slaying an enemy in battle, or a cattle thief or an adulterer caught *in flagrante delicto*), the slayer and his relatives dare not eat together with the relatives of the slain, or enter their houses, lest they themselves, and the kinsmen of the slain also, fall ill, coughing, spitting blood, and wasting away. This sickness is known as *ulukwego*, 'the disease of spearing'.[1] Both parties are thought to suffer primarily from contact with each other and both protect themselves by drinking medicines, but they drink separately, each engaging a doctor to treat them. We were told:

[763] If one man kills another it does not finish. He begets children and they die; an autopsy is performed and reveals fighting with spears (*isengene*)[2] The disease may not injure the slayer or his children, but the relatives with whom he eats and drinks, and so also on the other side; it may not hurt the children of the dead man, but those relatives with whom his children eat and drink.

We all fell ill, especially the brothers of the slain. The murderer always remembered to drink the medicine because he knew that he had killed someone, but when your brother was slain perhaps you forgot to drink the medicine. Then, afterwards, if you drank beer with someone, not knowing that it was he who had killed your brother, you fell ill.

783 The manner of treatment is as follows:

If I have killed someone they take me to a waterfall and make me

[1] *Ingwego*: a spear. [2] *Ukusegana*: to fight together with spears.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

753 believed to be a danger to his kin and descendants, but in a man-
681 ner somewhat different from the one who has killed another. The sickness is thought to come from the ropes and is called *ingoje* after them.

Mwaikambo explained:

[783] If one member of a family commits suicide by hanging then his surviving relatives, if they do not drink a medicine, will die of the 'ropes', always. If a man hangs himself all his relatives fear; if a woman only her children.

Kasitile's wife, Kiluleli, had borne ten children, but all save one had died. He said:

It is because of the ropes of her father. They bound him at Tukuyu; he died in gaol; it is those ropes which are killing my children. I said to her father [i.e. the heir]: 'Let us go to divine,' but he has not yet agreed to do so.

The death of Mukwabila, a junior kinsman of the Chief Mwaipopo, whose funeral we attended, was attributed to the ropes used to tether cattle raided by his grandfather. Kasitile, himself a distant agnatic kinsman, explained this case also:

One of the fathers of Mukwabila was killed by the hill people. They seized him on the road. So in revenge Mwamusiku, the father of [317] Mukwabila, took twenty cows belonging to the hill people as they passed north, coming from the salt lick. This was long ago. Then Mukwabila's father omitted to kill a cow for those who had helped him to secure the cows. So they were angry and brought *ingoje*—the disease of ropes—upon him. After seizing the cattle he moved to Mwambebule's country in the hills and he was quite well, but then he came back to live here, first sending two cows to the Chief Mwaipopo, but killing none for the people, who were angry and said: 'Why does he not kill for us? What sort of chief is he?' He got weak and fell ill and died. They
• [763] did not perform an autopsy, saying it was forbidden to do it on a chief, and his son died also and was not examined, but now when the younger son died, Mwaipopo said: 'Let us examine him so that we may know.' And it is that old *ingoje*. . . .

The sickness of ropes (*ingoje*) is of three sorts coming from: (1) the suicide (by hanging) of a relative long ago; (2) the binding of a man by other people, as distinct from a man binding himself; and (3) the shocked astonishment of men and their breath. In dreams they put the sickness of ropes into his stomach, they say: 'May the sickness of ropes [828] come into his stomach.' The sickness of ropes lies in wait for an heir. A man dies and the sickness comes on his heir, others are all right; so it

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 KASITILE: You sons of Musika had a case against you . . . you fought.
764 HALF-BROTHER: But that case concerned a woman.

A discussion of the case followed.

KASITILE: Friend, we pray here. Listen carefully.
HALF-BROTHER: I have spoken and not concealed anything.
KASITILE: That's what I say, let us pray well.
HALF-BROTHER: I performed the ritual for him. Let him die with his hair.
SISTER: Let us confess [lit. vomit] we were angry.
HALF-BROTHER: Yes, it is so, we were angry. The cow made us angry.

783 Mwaisumo described a treatment with *imbosyo* medicines which differed slightly from the one we saw and involved the slaughter of a sheep; according to his account the medicines are coiled in the pot like ropes, and the participants are washed under a waterfall, though they are not made to vomit like the relatives of a murderer. Doubtless the details vary with the officiant, but the principle that medicines are used to rot the ropes remains constant.

754 (*c*) *Protection against sorcery or vengeance magic*
789 Sickness caused by sorcery or vengeance magic is believed to
783 spread among kinsmen in much the same way as sickness due to the shedding of blood or binding with ropes, and the ritual performed as a protection against it is very similar to the ritual for 'rotting the ropes' just described. We saw it performed after the death of E. who died on 23 March 1935. Her elder brother (heir to her father) and her husband, who were pagans, wished to perform an autopsy, but her younger brother, a Christian, prevented their doing so. Soon after her burial her mother and husband fell very ill and three weeks later (April 13) the five-year-old son of her elder brother M. died. An autopsy was performed on the child and the diagnosis was that his mother's father, after quarrelling with M., his son-in-law, had drunk medicines to bring death to M's children. M. explained: 'My wife has already buried two
● [763] children. This boy is the third. Previously we found evidence of *ilyepa*[1] at the autopsy, and this time it is the same. The disease
000 comes from my wife's father.' However, when M. went to confirm

[1] *Ilyepa* is a medicine alleged to be drunk by a senior relative, when he is angry, which, if his anger is justified, will cause his junior relative to suffer in his own person or that of his children.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ritual they distinguish *abakamu* (kinsmen) from *abandu itolo* (non-relatives) or *abapakipanga* (villagers), and *abakikolo* (those of the lineage of a dead man) from *abako* (affines) and mother's relatives (*abipwa*). These categories have different functions.

(*b*) *Christians*

The performance of family rituals is complicated by the fact that 16 per cent of the Nyakyusa are professing Christians, and in almost every lineage there are individuals who withdraw from the full performance of traditional rituals at death, puberty, and marriage, birth, and misfortune. In most cases such a withdrawal is treated tolerantly by the pagan kinsmen: the Christian kinsmen come to mourn, to congratulate the bride, to express sympathy with the parents of twins; and their non-participation in the washing and shaving and avoidance of ritual meat and beer is accepted. At the funeral of Mwamulenga his preceding full brother, who should have been a principal in the death ritual, was a Christian, and he took no part, though his children went through it. At the funeral of Mwampiki (p. 248) one boy was left untreated on the ground that he was a Christian and a Christian 'should not have two gods'. At the puberty ritual of Mwaihojo's daughter (p. 91) the brother called to wash with her was influenced by Christians and was reluctant to take part, though he finally did so.

Only when a son who is heir to family wealth, or to the office of chieftainship or priesthood refuses the inheritance of widows (as a Christian must do) is there very strong pressure on him to conform to traditional custom: the union of the heir with the widows is held essential to their health. Sometimes also there is acute conflict between different members of the family over the performance of an autopsy, the pagans pressing for it and the Christians opposing it. This we saw in the death of E. when her pagan senior brother wished to examine her, and her Christian junior brother opposed him vehemently.

That Christians cannot take part in certain of the rituals[1] and do not suffer if they omit them is generally accepted. The farewell to the dead at the homestead of the deceased, and the treatment of kinsmen of twins, fall into this category. About certain other rituals, such as the ritual of the gasping cough and the protection against sorcery, opinions are divided. Some of our Christian friends insisted that 'the gasping cough is a real illness' and cited

[1] There are minor differences in the rules of the different missions.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

577 There is much more talk among the Nyakyusa of misfortune
777 from the shades or the anger of neighbours, than of blessing, but
556 there is an idea, somewhat vague but real, that generosity and kindliness will bring blessing (*ulusajo*). Ambilikile, a Christian teacher who had grown up in a pagan home, said:

> My mother tells me that my father was in the habit of feeding people, those who were not his relatives. People went to a distance and brought medicines for fertility and gave them to him, hence they said: 'He is very kind; food never grows short at his home.' She also told me that my father died very old. He did not die of disease, but of old age, no breath being left in him. This was because men were always saying: 'May they stand by him, may they bless him (*bammwemelege, bansajege*),' not to his face but to others. They said that he lived long because of the blessing of men. Yes, they say that the food of a kindly man never gets finished, that of a stingy man finishes; he himself suffers hunger.

●763 Mwaisumo described a father on his death-bed blessing a favourite son, allocating cattle to him, and telling him:

> Care for the children I have left, keep on good terms with them, then you will be rich in everything like your father. I cared for my children, I was not harsh (*nkali*), so complain to me of anything that troubles you. If you are like this the property in your home will be plentiful, people will be astonished and say: 'He is like his father.'

431 Of a man given a cow by the chief, it was sometimes said: 'The
775 shades have blessed him; he has a righteous (*ngolofu*) shade.'

Although our Nyakyusa informants talked a great deal about
754 the danger of neglecting rituals and angering senior relatives,
673 living and dead, the number of cases of misfortune attributed to
621 their anger is small in comparison with the number attributed to witchcraft or 'the breath of men'. (Ten as compared with sixty-three.) There is no reason to suppose that one type of case was concealed when the others were reported to us, and it is clear that the Nyakyusa prefer to make neighbours in the age-village, rather than kinsmen, the scapegoat for their misfortunes. Even when the wrong done is against a kinsman it is often the neighbours, rather than the shades, who are said to have brought punishment on the wrong-doer.

777 At the same time, we were assured by one informant after an-
621 other that people blame the shades or Kyala for misfortune when it is really the neighbours who are responsible! Angombwike argued that men fear to accuse the neighbours, who are slow to

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

younger half-brother, Mwaisalwa. The dead woman is a wife of Mwalemba (Kanjesi) another half-brother. Kanjesi was an old inhabitant of this village but he moved to Masebe. His wife was on a visit to her 'fathers' at Mwakalobo's place in the hills. She went to a funeral there and fell sick and died there yesterday. The corpse was brought here this morning. It is now 10 a.m. and the grave is half-dug. The owner of the homestead, Mwampiki II (Mwaisalwa), is not here, he is sick at Masoko where he had gone for a case. The husband is not yet here either; they have sent for him to Masebe. The dead woman's elder sister and co-wife is here, and their mother. 764 184

They went to fetch a doctor to perform an autopsy, offering him 20 cents, but came back without him. 'He refused,' they said. 'Well then,' said Kakuju, 'take him a cloth, doctors do not agree to come for just a little.' So they took him a cloth. [763 435]

Kakuju told the women to come out of the house as it was too small to hold them all. The corpse was carried out into the shade of an *unsyunguti* tree. All the women gathered round wailing, about seventy of them, and about twenty men.

No cows have been killed yet as neither the husband nor Mwampiki II are here. No drums are here yet either. The grave was finished about 11 a.m. I asked Kakuju about dancing at death. He agreed that in the old days they had only danced the war-dance. 'That was our old custom. Formerly we fought and killed people—the men of Mwangomo (another chief) who came to the funeral!' Mwambuga (the husband of the dead woman's husband's sister), who had been quite cheerful heretofore, suddenly began weeping and crying. He walked over to the women and joined in the wailing. Some small and naked children started climbing joyfully on the piled-up earth from the grave. [177]

Now it is noon and there are thirty-five to forty men present and ninety to one hundred women. A doctor has agreed to come (to perform the autopsy) but has not yet arrived. Although the corpse was outside male mourners went into the house on their arrival to weep. An older woman got up and led a dirge. I heard her say a number of names, among which 'Mwampiki' was distinguishable. Clapping followed her words. Often she just called the war-cry (*akalulu*). The others wailed and joined in the war-cry. She accompanied her wailing with rhythmic movements of the body and arms. After a time she sat down but continued to lead the wailing.

Mwakalabela (Mbalakatela) arrived with a cow. His daughter is married to young Mwaijumba, the son of Mwampiki. The autopsy followed (for description see *Good Company*, pp. 247–9).

17/3/37

Angombwike told me at breakfast that now Mwampiki himself was dead. He died yesterday at Masoko and was carried here last night.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO SHADES

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Ref.	*Category of sufferer*	*Misfortune*	*Category of shade*	*Alleged sin*	*Investigation*	*Ritual performed*
1.	Man. Katasya	(a) Crops did not grow (b) Katasya died	'Abapasi'	Quarrelling with kinsmen	Autopsy disproved this. Found to be sorcery	Killed a bull for family
2.	Children of village headman	Death of several children	Father of village headman	Village headman moved to father's homestead though told by father's neighbours he should remain in young man's village where he was headman	Autopsy	Prayer
3.	Cattle	Cattle died at father-in-law's (and would have to be replaced)	Shades were angry. His brother complained very much when he took all the cattle	Younger brother took all cattle he had from elder full brother to whom they had been handed on his return from work, and gave them for his marriage	—	—
4.	Two girls	Girls died	—	A wrong (*isengwa*) not specified	Autopsy Divination	—
5.	Younger brother	Died	Elder brother	Elder brother not buried where he asked to be	Divination	Buried where elder brother had asked

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Ref.	Category of sufferer	Misfortune	Category of shade	Alleged sin	Investigation	Ritual performed
6.	Son	Millet crop cultivated by son failed	Father	Had moved from father's homestead. Left grave unswept	Divination	Prayer
7.	Husband	No fish in traps	—	Stinted one wife of fish	Divination	Prayed in banana grove. Wife confessed her anger
8.	Kasitile	Kasitile fell ill	Mother	Neglected to leave flour or beer in his hut for shades	Divination	—
9.	Married woman (wife of Mwakobela)	Woman delirious		Her newly-married daughter returned from husband without bringing a hen or anything, and drank from mother's calabash cup	Divination	—
10.	Child	Death of child	Father's sister?	Father neglected death ritual of his sister	Autopsy. 'The ritual entered the stomach of the child'	Neglected death ritual performed

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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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that he has killed, they are astonished and say: 'He should have called 578
us. Does he perform ritual alone?'

QUESTION: But why were those beneath angry in the first place? They are not angry without cause.

LUKUNYILA: Indeed, they are never angry without cause. There is always some wrong. But we do not know what it is in this case. If you do not kill cattle for your father's burial they are always angry. But we do not know what wrong Katasya committed to make them angry.

Later Mwanifu came in. He told me that Katasya is still alive, but 784
perhaps he will die this evening. We do not speak with him. He is just 782
breathing. We only ask his wives: 'Does he sleep?' The case is thus: the millet failed in his field and he said: 'I shall pray to my shades and it will grow again.' Then he went to a certain man to get his big bull and gave him a cow in calf, saying: 'Take this and give me your bull,' [437] and later they will give him a little calf worth 30s. The bull was very big. He killed it. Before he did so he was already slightly ill, but when he had killed it the illness became very much worse. We say they have bewitched him because he stinted his fellows in the village. But they themselves deny it, saying: 'But we always kill and eat ourselves alone. I, Mwainyopolela, killed my animal and ate it alone. Have I died 782
therefore? According to the custom, if I have killed my beast as a sacrifice (*jakusipatala*) then I give my fellows one leg.'

QUESTION: Did Katasya not do so?

MWANIFU: No, Katasya did not give them any. He ate alone. Some wise men give the chief the breast because the chief is the owner of the country. Katasya did not give him that. Yes, if someone dies then the chief is usually given the breast. But when a beast is killed for sacrifice, no one having died, then many eat by themselves. The mourner gives to the chief.

QUESTION: Did he inquire of a diviner or not?

MWANIFU: We do not know. Some inquire of a diviner. Some think 787
for themselves that the fathers are shaking them. Concerning his death, 784
we are only speculating, saying: 'Perhaps they have bewitched him. 761
They were angry on account of the meat.' But perhaps it is sorcery. See, he was sweating very much on his face. Let him die. We will look in his belly. Perhaps he has been speared. They have bewitched him. Perhaps it is sorcery. We only speculate.

In the morning Mwaipopo (the chief) was very, very angry. He said: 763
'Why have you gathered together, you people? Go off home. Do you want to finish off a dying man? It is taboo to gather together. First let a man die, then come to lament the death.'

QUESTION: Is it a Nyakyusa custom to be angry if people gather together at a sick man's house? Is it as if they bewitch him?

MWANIFU: Yes.

•763 QUESTION: Why the gathering?

MWANIPU: We were startled to hear that he had died. They raised the lament of death in the morning and his cattle went home when Kasitile and I were on the pasture land. We were startled to see Katanya's cattle going home and said: 'He has died.' But his relatives saw that he had not died. They said it is taboo to lament when someone is still alive.

QUESTION: Why do cows come home when a man dies?

MWANIPU: It is a form of mourning. They should also weep and say farewell. He had property. For if I, Mwanifo, die, though I do not have cattle myself, yet because I am the son of Mwaipopo cattle are
764 killed at the funeral. It is impressive. But if I were a commoner and
536 had no cattle, then the funeral would be a flop. There would be no meat and people would say: 'He has not yet died, he has left one head.' They count the cattle to kill. If an important commoner dies, one who has cattle, then his funeral is impressive. People dance at his homestead and say: 'Our fellow, who has died, was a strong man who danced the war-dance in the homesteads.' And if he was tough in disputes, if he always got the better of them and no one ever got his cow, then they say: 'A tough fellow has died. May he leave a son as tough as himself. He died with his toughness.' They praise him.

782 QUESTION: Tell me about the killing of Katanya's bull.

MWANIPU: He killed the bull without telling his neighbours, but when he poured out the beer he called Mwainyopolela and Kapuguso and two others. There were four. He had built in Bonkali village in which there are ten homesteads, but, customarily, we do not call all the neighbours, only those who are nearest. Only if I have killed a full-grown beast do I call them all and give them a leg. Yes, it was a big bull and perhaps it is on account of that that they are angry. When they came they were startled, saying: 'They are drinking beer! And there is meat lying outside!' They entered and drank a little. Then Katanya divided the meat for his relatives and took his own. He gave to Mwainyopolela and his fellows three ribs. Then M. said to his three fellows: 'Let us go home. I will not take this little piece of meat.' So they all went away. The other three ate the meat, only M. did not.

QUESTION: So they were angry?

754 MWANIPU: Perhaps! We say sometimes: 'They were angry and ate
787 him.' But perhaps it was sorcery, because just now three snakes entered the house of his chief wife—the *isebe* snakes. One entered and they killed it. Another entered and they killed it. Then they caught the third to take to a doctor, the son of Mwakanyamale. The doctor said: 'This snake is sorcery,' and he will find a medicine to give them to drink that the illness may be slight. But he has not yet done so.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

QUESTION: When he says it is sorcery, does he mean that the snakes have been sent by someone? 754

MWANYUMO: Yes, Mwaipaja (G. W.), you understand.

5/1/38

Kataya died during the night. I came to the burial with the doctor, Mwakalamale, meeting Mwamalunda on the road. They told me that the son, Mwakanjwike, had fled from the funeral. 'It is said that he had made love to three of his father's wives. They all fled, the three women and the young man. Yes, they will take them to a waterfall to cleanse them.' 764

I sat by Mwaipopo, the chief. There was a dispute about the autopsy. Kasitile came to the chief to say: 'They are refusing to examine him.' 763
'Why are they refusing? There is much illness about. Let us examine him and *know*.' Mwaipopo spoke with heat. Then a relative came and told him: 'Kataya said: "Do not examine me when I die."' Mwaipopo: 'Why? There is that case of the son (incestuous adultery) or perhaps it is sorcery, or perhaps, if the neighbours refuse to examine him, it is a confession that they have bewitched him. Let us examine him. It will trouble us later on. Also, he was praying to the shades, saying: "The millet failed." Then he died! Let us examine him and know.'

Five cows and a bull were killed. About twenty cattle were standing in the herd. The corpse was carried around with wailing and drumming and the cattle were driven round also. Then followed the autopsy. I went with Mwanyomo, with Kasitile's relative, Mwakasenga, and with the brother of the dead man. A woman doctor performed it with a bamboo knife. Another woman kept a hand on the head of the dead man meanwhile. 'You brave ones!' was the comment of the other women, two or three of whom stood watching. The doctor hesitated, as if in fear, before the first cut. Mwanyomo encouraged her: 'Go ahead!' As she pulled out the bowels we all crowded round to look. Mwanyomo said: 'Ropes,' but no one else took this up, and he did not mention it again. They looked into the chest and found something wrong. 'He is burned within! It is sorcery!' 764 763 763 754

MWANYOMO: We chiefs do not fear the commoners, we look for wounds and speak if they are there. But there are none. Look well! If he had been speared there would be much blood, and wounds. But he is burned within. They have worked sorcery against him with Mwangwala. That is the name of the medicine which some Nyakyusa plant. It's sorcery! Then is that of the country (i.e. witchcraft) not there? [324]

It is not there.

How about the son?

That we do not find. He just has diarrhoea.

Mwanyomo then told Mwaipopo (the chief): 'We have examined him, it is sorcery.'

763 As we came away various people stopped us and asked: 'Have you examined him?' 'Yes, it is sorcery.' Great interest was shown by all in the cause of death.

764 When we first arrived, we found the son a little distance from the funeral and he did not, so far as I know, come near at all. He did not go near the grave when the corpse was buried. I asked Kasitile about bathing at the waterfall. 'They will wash him to-night. Katasya died in the afternoon. At night the son and three women fled. They will wash them at night.'

6/1/38

Kasitile came in to see us at breakfast time. I asked why the son of Katasya had not come near the burial though they had bathed him at the waterfall.

KASITILE: It is forbidden, but they have made a mistake. They have washed him irregularly. According to custom they should first have buried the dead, then, on the evening after the burial, they take them to the waterfall to wash them. When they come from washing, then the son takes a torch of burning grass, he throws it down on the grave, and jumps over the grave. Then they say: 'Let him strike the cattle.' He kills one of his own because he does not eat of those which they have killed previously. This is what they did yesterday afternoon, so it is finished now.

QUESTION: What does it symbolize?

KASITILE: It means it is I who overstepped you.

QUESTION: And when he steps over the grave and the fire?

KASITILE: It is the fire which the women kindled for him who has died.

QUESTION: Do they know who worked sorcery against him?

578 754 KASITILE: Yes, it is the son of Mwaikilaja whose name is Mwamukinga, because when their father, Mwakyandwike, died, the elder brother, Katasya, was a child, and the son of the second wife, Mwaikilaja, inherited. But when Katasya grew up they refused to be on good terms with him and quarrelled with him. But they never worked sorcery against each other. So then when Mwaikilaja died, his sons inherited. Katasya lost the inheritance because they said: 'You are not on good terms with your kinsmen. Let the sons inherit.' So he said: 'I, Katasya, agree.' But later on he was on good terms with those sons of his brother. There were three of them. But the eldest and the youngest quarrelled. The youngest, Mwamukinga, worked sorcery against the eldest, so Katasya told them: 'Do not be friendly with Mwamukinga who is working sorcery against you. Let him be at a distance.' Then Mwamukinga was angry and said: 'Is that wretched elder (*ikule ali*) never going to die?' and he worked sorcery against him. This is the case.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

784 snakes, lions, crocodiles, must not be carelessly killed. Kill a frog, and you will become a leper; the spirit that lived in the frog will see to that. Not that a spirit dwells in every frog; but why take unnecessary risks! As for the lizard, what harm has it ever done to anyone? The stronger and more dangerous animals can take care of themselves; but again, not every one of these is inhabited by a spirit; one that kills people may be safely killed. The two-headed snake, *Ndumirakosa*, may be the temporary dwelling of God Himself, and must not be killed. The owl is perhaps in a different category: it is a favourite dwelling of sorcerers; and some insist on killing it for that very reason, while others say that to kill it is *mwiko*.

Hair must not be swept up, but picked up, and all foreign matter separated; else death may follow, either by witchcraft, or by the action of the spirits. It must not be left lying about, lest goats should eat it; in which case the late owner will assuredly become bald! The hair on the chest again, must not be cut, for one's children will die. All this no doubt had a religious sanction in the past; but no Konde will admit that it is any more than a custom handed down, and for that reason to be carefully observed.

•763 784 The jealousy of the spirits demands that a child dying during the life of its paternal grandfather, be buried at the house of the latter, not at its own father's; that the child of a second wife be buried at the house of the principal wife; and that a man who would die well, should die at the house of his

first wife, for it is there only that the spirits meet him; and if he becomes ill anywhere else, he has himself removed as soon as possible to the place where it is proper for him to die, if die he must. 763 784

A man who has been falsely reported dead in a far land, must not, on his return home, enter the village without ceremony. Letters sent on ahead to assure his relatives that he is alive, are not enough; his father comes out to meet him; but he takes care not to see his son until assurance has been given that he is a true man, not a spirit; whereupon the father throws some food over his son's head, and both enter the village in peace. 784

It is *mwiko* to kill a python unless one is sure that it is dangerous. If it is found in the feeding ground, and the cows that day give a specially good milking, then it has been herding the cattle, and is not to be sought for afterwards with hostile intent. But the boys who saw it must go to the doctor to get medicine. Further, God Himself may be in it, or the spirit of a dead chief, and therefore it must be watched for assurance of its friendliness. If it enters a house a fowl is thrown to it, with which, if it makes off, all is well.

Very interesting are some of the prohibitions connected with the white man; and it is obvious that these are of recent growth, so that we actually see *tabu* in the making. It is *mwiko* to go into a white man's house, for the pictures on his walls are the spirits of his ancestors, who are specially dangerous at night, when they may launch an unseen spear at 784 177

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 path. But if the serpent crosses to the other side and
825 into the bush, the way is closed, and the travellers will return to their homes, no matter how near their destination they may be. What will happen if they continue their journey is not clear; some undefined evil will overtake them. Parties on the war-path heeded this warning, for it was an omen of defeat if they went on, which, naturally, they never did. If
[763] the snake escapes into a hole, it indicates a death at the nearest village; and if a python is seen on the road, the travellers, whose path is not closed, may expect to find the death-wail going on at the first village they come to.

A two-headed snake, whatever that may be, is a
[763] sure sign of death at the place one is going to; and two snakes fighting indicate coming evil, which can only be averted by returning to the place whence one has set out. A tree falling across a path, is another warning, which no man disregards; but the tree must fall within view of the person to whom the hint is given; trees that have fallen otherwise have no significance. But it is worth noting that natives travelling with white men pay no heed to any omens. They are protected by the power of the European, and any significance the omens may have is his affair.

787 4. Travellers have their tokens on the way: the
825 people to whom they go have foretokens of their approach. If the fire "speaks," if it makes a burring noise in the flame; if the hens go about uttering low cries; if *amayogdova*, small black birds with white

J: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 ceased. What significance would now be attached to
721 these omens, I do not know. The buffalo, like the
[8]xF elephant, does not lie, and wise men heed its warnings. Many years ago a man called Masapa went to the Kinga region, where he quarrelled with the people, and barely escaped with his life. His chief, Mwaisumo, took up the quarrel, and prepared to invade the enemy's territory, undeterred by the predictions of defeat which came in dreams to his prophets, until, on the way, one of his men was killed by a buffalo, and this was a warning not to be disregarded. On their return home, they were received by their women folks, not with contempt and mocking, but as wise men, who were too wary to tempt "Providence" by foolish action. One more war omen. If a man, on the point of leaving for the field of battle, was suddenly, but accidentally, seized by the wrist by his wife, he laid down his weapons, and quietly stayed at home; not for him the joy of battle; he would have been killed, and no one thought the worse of him for heeding the omen.

781 8. Foretokens of death are so numerous that it is
763 difficult even to classify them. Whatever is rare, or unnatural, or sudden, may be taken as a warning of approaching death. A mole seen by day, is a rare event, and full of dread. A Christian living near me saw this wonder in February, 1923, and in the same month he got news of the death of a friend a hundred miles *away*! No connection? He thought there was. To see the *kawchi*, a small aquatic animal, is to see something so rare that its appearance must be the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

foretoken of widespread death; but no one known to me has had the misfortune to see it. Foxes are said to have increased so greatly since the advent of the white man, that no significance is now attached to their crying; but a generation ago it announced the approaching death of a great chief. There was an interesting recrudescence of this belief in 1914. In July of that year there was a great barking of foxes in the neighbourhood of the Overtoun Institution (outside the Konde country). The news spread far, and the general anticipation of widespread disaster was held to have been amply justified when the first intimation of the Great War was received. A dog howling at night, surely nothing uncommon, still predicts death, and the dog is beaten, not because its howling brings on the evil, or because the beating can avert it; it foretells misfortune, and the forecast is unwelcome, and the unfortunate retailer of information must suffer for lack of common sense.

A cock crowing at night, when no cock should crow, is a foretoken of death, and in the first place of its own; no second time would that cock be the harbinger of news so unwelcome. Sudden things, again, an unexpected collapse of a house which looks strong, or of a tree which shows no sign of decay; or of a grave which is being digged, or a pot of beer which falls without obvious cause; these are all of dreadful omen, indicating the death of a chief. The father of the present chief Kabeta, living near Rungwe, was a great planter of trees. As he lay dying, all the trees which he had planted in his youth

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

781 fell one after another, and when Kabeta went to his
fathers, he had no more trees to his credit than when
763 he was born. The fall of the village tree, planted at the installation of the chief, shows that he in whose honour it was planted is about to go to the spirit-land.

781 9. The heavens give very few signs. If the full moon is red, with a red circle around it, plague is
821 coming. If the sun "builds a house" (*nimbus*), some woman is about to give birth to twins. Worst of all, naturally, is an eclipse. "*Kyala asambwike*," they say, "God has lost patience, He is going to kill us all," and they go out with drums and wild shoutings to induce the Supreme Being to go away to the Basango.

781 What has been described in the foregoing paragraphs is called *kusura*, to foreshadow, forecast, the agent being entirely unconscious of the significance of the action. There is another class of actions which also forecast; but although the difference is not very obvious, a different word is used, *kusikura*, which sometimes means to insult, but commonly to act as a pointer to coming evil. Such actions are mostly unnatural; many of them are in themselves evil, and their occurrence is regarded as a portent.

1. Unnatural anger. Anger in a child is a phenomenon of awe. If a grown-up person arouses it—not in his own child—that person has received warning that his death is near. How this comes about is not clear. Some natives say that the anger is a sign, which cannot be explained; others that the child

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

security. As already said, no heathen house is without 789
this protection. Gardens and cattle kraals are pro- 754
tected in similar ways.

But witchcraft spreads its nets far and wide, and it is not enough to protect the house, for a man may be attacked outside. To meet this menace, other measures must be taken. Each person drinks a decoction, and swallows a tiny white stone, found only in the Malila district. The effect of this is to enable him to see in dreams any dangers which threaten him personally from witchcraft; and to make assurance doubly sure, some persons wear charms on neck or wrist or ankle.

No one knows when danger will come upon him. One who looks you steadily in the face is probably a wizard; why else should he look at you so? One who does not return your salutation, or returns it half-heartedly; one who denies the reality of witchcraft; one who is a notorious invader of the rights of husbands; all such men (or women) are to be avoided, for they are all probably dangerous.

And the reproach of witchcraft follows one after 754
death. If the *post mortem* shows marks on the internal 763
organs, the person has died of witchcraft; but if the bowels are swollen or blackened, either to the right or to the left, the dead man was beyond doubt himself a wizard; the swollen condition indicates clearly the presence of the two serpents which were the source of his secret powers. Any suspicion that was formerly entertained against him is now confirmed, and his heirs may find themselves involved in demands for reparation.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

755 family who have not had smallpox, but it is evidently not greatly trusted, for it is used with the formula, "Protection against smallpox is unknown, but let us try. If God and the spirits agree we shall be safe." After this ceremony there must be no quarrelling. Peace in the village is a condition of immunity from the disease.

757 In a considerable number of cases incisions are made in the skin, and powdered medicine rubbed in. This is done for general pains, rheumatism, backache, elephantiasis, toothache, spleen. For toothache, if the pain is in the right side of the face, incisions are made between the great and second toes of the left foot, and the powder rubbed in; if the pain is in the left, the powder goes in the same way into the right foot.

•763 *Post mortems* are still conducted in all cases where there is any doubt as to the cause of death. Until quite recently no one was buried without examination, and in some districts that is still the case. The operation is performed at the graveside by the friends of the dead man, the actual operator being as a rule a near relative. If a black substance is found in the gall-bladder, a diviner is consulted, to find out who brought on the disease. If the examination of the gall-bladder yields no result, the heart is examined. Ulcers on that organ indicate witchcraft as the cause of death; fat indicates leprosy. Next, the intestines are examined; if *mafra* (pus) is found there it indicates a kind of rheumatism accompanied with boils. The examination being over, the parts removed are

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

restored to their places, and the body is buried; and 763
all who had any part in the operation drink medicine to protect them from the disease from which the man died.

For wounds in battle an infusion of the roots of 752
kamemena is given to cause vomiting, in case there is 278
blood in the stomach. The wounds are washed with an infusion of *impigi* roots, and bound with leaves of *untugutu*, fresh dressings being applied every day until the wounds are healed.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 ment so often that finally it is either not paid at all,
426 or paid when it is quite convenient for the debtor to do so. To secure this desirable result the debtor, when he learns that his creditor is coming to demand payment, slips out into the bush, where he gets the roots of a plant called *butini*, which he chews as the creditor approaches. A most amiable conversation ensues, at the end of which the creditor begs his friend on no account to disturb himself about the small matter that lies between them: any other time will do just as well, and he will be delighted to call again in a couple of months or so. The same end is attained by incising a powder into the forehead between the eyes.

789 Hunting medicines have already been referred to.
224 One is incised along the bone from the thumb to the elbow; another is taken internally, but this latter is
•763 dangerous, because it leads to a lingering death. When death draws on, instead of dying as common men do, the whole body of the hunter who drinks this medicine becomes helpless; the heart keeps going, the lips move and talk, dance dances come. Then his friends come and sing to him: "*Ndembo ryaya mmiyembo*," the elephants are among the trees. The sick man, puffing out his cheeks, emits breath with a whirring sound, which is supposed to resemble a sound made by elephants, and presently he breathes his last.

755 But there are few ills, imaginary or otherwise, for which there are no cures, imaginary or otherwise: and the cautious hunter, finding old age creeping on him, and his hunting days becoming a thing of

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XXIV

Death & Burial

761 AMONG the Konde, as among other Bantu peoples, no man dies "unwept, unhonoured, or unsung." However contemptible he may have been in life, he has now passed to a sphere n which he is clothed with fresh powers, which, for god or ill, he can direct upon his living descendants, who take care to give no cause of offence. He camot, however, punish them for any evil they may have done him while alive; only *post mortem* sins can be visited upon them: neglect of ceremonies, refusal of beer at the funeral, omission of his name when prayer is made, and other tokens of forgetfulness. And the power for harm of each spirit is limited to his own descendants; but chiefs, naturally, can bring misfortune upon the whole of the community over which they ruled in life.

763 765 Immediately a man has died, his eldest child, son or daughter, unless an infant, begins the mourning.

"Alas, my father, I too have met trouble!" Then the women, "Ah! trouble comes to you as to others." Next the leader, "My father, my lion, my leopard," naming all the strong and fierce animals to which the dead man is compared; the women say, "Now indeed you are poor"; and the boy replies, "Yes, my

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

mothers, my strength is gone, my hope is broken. 763
How poor am I among men!" If he is a boy he is 765
now taken by a kindly relative and put outside, and told not to weep like a woman. During all this time, and perhaps for three days to come, the drum is beating; a slow tum tum at first, but rising later to a more furious noise, which goes on night and day until the mourning is over.

The women now take up the tale, and one goes 765
over all the virtues of the dead, a long wail from the others following upon each statement. Day by day this goes on, as new parties come to the mourning. The women smear their bodies and their faces with clay, and wear bands of banana fibre or of palm leaf on ankles, wrists, and forehead. The men, at the death of an important person, carry spear and shield.

In the meantime some relatives have gone to dig 764
the grave, and others are dressing the dead man for burial. The body is washed, a man's body by men, and woman's by women, and dressed in *manyeta* (body rings), anklets, wristlets, and finally swathed in as much cloth as his relatives can afford to buy, only the eyes being left uncovered. Before the dressing, however, the body is oiled, and if the dead man was a warrior, his *isambanjani* (feather head-dress) is placed on his head.

The women now take up the body, and carry it 763
through the village, wailing as they go. Having shown the dead man for the last time around the familiar haunts of his life, they lay him down near the grave, where mats are spread to receive him. Now the *posi*

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•763 *mortem* takes place, though in the neighbourhood of Missions and Magistracies the practice is beginning to die out. Only the operators are present, and when it is over the others approach again. The brothers or 764 near relatives of the dead man go down into the grave and receive the body from other relatives who hand it to them. It is not placed in the bottom of the grave, but in a cavity dug into the side, the entrance to which is closed with a bamboo door, before the soil is filled in. The body faces towards the original home of the dead. If the dead man possessed cattle, a curious ceremony now takes place. A cow is brought, and made to look into the grave where her late owner lies, her head being forcibly bent if necessary. The cow is now the property of the spirits, and must never be given away or sold out of the family. Little children of the dead man are handed across the grave, and older children leap over it, and then pull themselves, in a sitting position, over the soil which is presently to be filled in. If this ceremony is properly performed, the dead parent will not disturb the children by nightmares. Its omission is an insult to the dead; but the practice is being abandoned by the more progressive sections of the community. It is at this point that the parting address, given in the chapter on "The Spirits," is spoken. When the soil is filled in, a cutting of *indola* tree is placed at head and foot, to mark the grave.

764 All who took any part in the burying must now 783 wash in running water, which carries off the pollution; and carries off also the danger of the disease

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

754 witches, who use their power beneficently and spend their dreams in efforts to counter-
626 act the aggressor witches, *avalosi*, who use their power maliciously. The great commoner is the strongest of the former type, and the 'defender of the village'. A man who earns universal unpopularity is subject to a spiritual attack from the 'defenders', and is liable to fall sick from the blast of unpopularity. Belief in this efficacy of the 'breath of men' is one of the sanctions of the accepted social order.[1]

Only magic is believed to have power to punish wrongdoers who are neither kinsmen nor members of the same chiefdom. Magic exerts an influence on the behaviour of kinsmen and affines. The witchcraft of a neglected wife may cause a man to fall sick, or that of his father-in-law may harm his children.[2] The power of witchcraft never acts between relatives, though it might between husband and wife.[3]

754 An aggressor witch was reported in the old days by the great commoner to the chief,
627 who ordered the poison ordeal. If the accused failed to vomit (the dose was seldom fatal), he was proved guilty and killed or exiled, all his cows and property being taken by the chief and the victims of his aggressive witchcraft. If a private individual accused another, both were put to the ordeal; if both vomited, the accuser had to pay two cows to the other for slander; if either failed to vomit he was punished as guilty. The ordeal is now illegal, but men accused of aggressive witchcraft still find it best to fly the chiefdom. Great commoners normally used their witchcraft powers to protect their chief from attack, but if he erred they would join in the attack on him; the nobles of Ngonde had power to exert a similar constitutional check on the Kyungu.[4]

● 763 If death by aggressive witchcraft was suspected, it was proved or disproved by a routine post-mortem examination and by subsequent consultation with the diviner.[5]

Birth

844 A child should be born in its own father's house. A difficult birth is a sign of the
845 guilt of adultery, and is eased by confession.[6] A few days after the birth the mother is
851 anointed, shaved, and resumes her household duties. She later goes on a visit of some weeks to show the child to her own parents, returning to her husband after celebration by both sets of grandparents, and exchanges of food and hoes. The birth of twins was a great misfortune, requiring the segregation and ritual purification of both parents.[7]

Initiation

861 There was no puberty or initiation rite for boys. The initiation of a girl was really a pre-marriage rite. She went through a complicated rite to ensure fertility, in which the husband took part. The initiation lasts some months, and includes several exchanges of food between the families of the girl and her betrothed husband, and ceremonies in which her girl friends of the same village and his friends of his village take part. The girl is tested for virginity during the ceremonies. If she is not betrothed before puberty the initiation is carried out in a modified form, but the full significance is lost.[8]

[1] Wilson, o, 1938, p. 277.
[2] Ibid., j, 1939, p. 38.
[3] Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 10; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 40–3.
[4] Ibid., pp. 42–8. According to H. H. Johnston, if the children died in succession the father was supposed to kill himself, but it is possible that he is commenting a custom of the Southern Tumbuka (1897, p. 477).
[5] Ibid., 1925, p. 51; Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 11; Wilson, o, 1938, p. 258.
[6] Ibid., p. 258.
[7] Ibid., c, 1938, p. 92.
[8] Johnston, 1897, p. 443.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 "the father of all." All the chiefs were his kinsmen, many of the nobles
602 were related to him by marriage, most of them were personally acquainted with him; and these facts were fundamental in the old constitution of Ngonde.

And so also the great chiefs and their subordinates, and the local
602 rulers and their subjects were united by personal bonds which were given
764 frequent ceremonial expression. At every funeral,[3] in particular, whether
431 of chief, noble or commoner, ceremonial gifts of meat, beer, ordinary food, and other gifts also were made along the lines of the political hierarchy.

764 On the death of a chief, a noble or any commoner who had, during
431 his life, had many personal dealings with Mbande, a hen was sent to the Kyungu to announce the death, and the Kyungu then returned one of
[763] the imported cloths. When other prominent commoners or great-commoners died a hen was sent to the great chief of the area, who also returned an imported cloth. The deaths of ordinary commoners and less prominent great-commoners were announced only to the local ruler (chief or noble) without the gift of a hen, and no cloth was returned.

Similarly when cattle were killed at the funeral of any great-commoner or commoner a special portion of the meat of one beast (the breast and ribs) was always given to the local ruler.[4] In the case of a prominent commoner or great-commoner, however, a similar portion might be given to the great-chief as well. "Such an action was taken on the initiative of the family concerned, the great-chief never claimed it as of right." But if he himself came to the funeral it was normally done. The local rulers themselves, with their wives, attended the funerals of their subjects, and their wives brought food with them, to assist the family in its entertainment of the neighbours. And, finally, at the death of a local ruler or of one of his family, his subjects attended the funeral, bringing gifts of food.[5]

8. *THE CHRONICLE OF NGONDE COMPLETED* (1875-1937)

We have now finished our systematic analysis of the constitution of
OVO Ngonde as it was before the coming of the Europeans. We have had to rely largely on oral tradition and that by itself is always in some degree suspect. Nevertheless the richness and coherence of what is remembered to-day, together with the observable continuity of modern institutions

[3] This account excludes the funeral of the Kyungu, which was secretly carried out by the nobles of Ngonde.
[4] This was certainly so in the chiefdoms, evidence for the fiefs is here lacking.
[5] Vide Wilson "Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial."

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

turn round in the belly; people say the earth will go bad in us.' 643
'A child who has drunk medicines will be ill, the smell of the new 778
food or the wet earth goes to the belly.' 789 [788]

The chief eats the first fruits and medicines with the commoner who lies down with him at the commencement of his 'coming out' and 'is his wife to taste with him the first fruits and powdered medicines' and is 'fearful' like the medicines. He is identified with [644] the chief's body and may be compared with the *isithumsu* of the Pondo chief[1] or the *isula* of the Swazi.[2] His function is to protect the chief against the medicines themselves.

(*e*) DEATH AND BURIAL OF A CHIEF

Both because of a chief's descent, and because of his use of 643 medicines, mystical power resides in his body. 763 766

In the old days a ruling chief was not allowed to die, but was buried while still living, because they feared that if he became unconscious before death he would take away all the food with him, and great hunger would come on us. Men feared *ifugila* medicine in his belly. They said: 'If he dies naturally many of his people will die. . . . He should go alive.' And formerly they buried him with the son of a commoner, also alive, for they said, 'Let him enjoy the company of his mate on the road.' When a chief was sick before the coming out of his sons they tried to keep him alive if possible, but if he was clearly going to die then they buried him like this; after the coming out they hastened his death—but only if he were ill. That was why the chiefs fear the 'coming out' of their sons so greatly. Had Mwaipopo lived in the old days and his heir been alive he would have been buried during his last illness.

When a ruling chief was sick the village headmen sent the chief's wives away and looked after him themselves. Then, if they thought he would, or should, die, they tore off all his nails, those of his toes and those of his fingers, and pulled out his hair, and put them in a pot. After that they buried him by night still alive, with a live person, the child of a commoner whom they had seized very secretly. The pot stayed in the house of the senior wife of the chief who had died, and [778] they said, 'It is the chief, we are with him still.' This was the sacred pot for the sacred beer.[3] They kept silence about the death for a month or perhaps two months, saying: 'Let the chief go away first.'

And when a younger brother, a junior chief, died, though he died

[1] M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 390.
[2] H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p. 78.
[3] Kamilile Rudy denied this, still alive, p. 64.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 naturally and was buried dead, and no human was buried with him,
763 yet they buried a live cow with him in imitation of the custom of the
766 senior, because the junior was also a chief, and the cow was like a person. And now in European times the ruling chiefs are buried with a cow, not with a man, in imitation of the custom of the juniors; but still they are buried at night.

Kasitile denied that chiefs were buried before death, but he admitted that they were smothered.

[793] When the chief was very ill we priests came, Njobakosa and Ngulyo, and I. We took his nails and his hair, we tore them off while he was still alive, he started up and we bid ourselves that he should not see us. Then we attended to him.

Here he made a gesture of stopping up the nostrils. That is, they hastened his death as soon as the nails and hair had been stripped off.

And we dug the grave; we buried him by night, when he had died, when he had gone, with a live cow; we did this at night for it was taboo
[784] for people to see the burial of a senior chief. We killed a cow in the sacred grove and we ate it, we the priests, before people heard that he had died. The chief Mwakagile (59) when his death was approaching said: 'My body is sick.' After waiting two days, the village headmen said, 'This illness has defeated us', and they tore off his nails—yes, before he died. If they had waited until after his death, would not the
[778] *ifugila*, the power of chieftainship, have passed away? But they did not smother him, he just died. . . . His nails and hair were put into a little reed, which they hid beneath an *umuali* (*Cleistanthus exalta*) tree at the village headman's, the *umuali* which grew at the homestead of Njobakosa [the grandfather of the present Njobakosa]. They buried it at a commoner's place, as if to say: 'We commoners are the earth, we have
[778] taken the power of growth (*ifage*) from the chief, these nails and the hair are the power of growth of the country (*ifuale fila umuali fye ifage fye kwe*).

Kasitile took Godfrey Wilson's hand and explained: 'Because, Mwaipaja (G.W.), when you cut these nails of yours do they not grow again?' 'Yes, they grow again.' 'Well, then, where does their growth come from? Does it not come from the body?' 'Yes.' 'Well, so it is, the village headmen take the power of growth (*ifage*) from the chief, his nails and his hair.'

On another occasion Kasitile explained that formerly the relics had been kept in a pot in the house, but that when Mwaipeye (116) succeeded

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Njobokwa [the grandfather] ran off with them to Mwalujo in the hills, where he died so that they disappeared and were never returned to his fellow-priests. Therefore they bury the relics by the *umuali* tree, at his old homestead, lest someone run off with them again. . . . The hair and nails of the chief are buried there, the earth of the chief will always be heavy. All this is very secret. . . . 643 763 766 [778]

Mwandini (107, the old blind chief) told us that

When a chief dies they take his nails and hair and put them in the house of his wife who buries them with medicine for fertility of the soil (*ifuge*), then at the time of planting the village headmen come and take that medicine to plant the food with. This was done on the death of the chief Mwakalukwa (141) and the chief Mwakalinga (142) and others for, it is said, the chief goes off with our fertility (*ubutu yete*).

Thus, though our informants differed slightly about the details, they were agreed that the power of growth lies in the nails and hair of a chief, and these must be taken from him while he is yet alive, and later used to fertilize the earth.

The burial of a chief's son with a live black calf we saw for ourselves, and the wailing was delayed until after the burial. A distinctive funeral of this sort is accorded to all the sons of a ruling chief and his senior daughter, but not (we were told) to more distant kinsmen. The other mark of a royal funeral is the slaughter of many head of cattle to accompany the deceased and to feed the mourners. At the death of the chief Mwakyembe (99) over 500 head were killed, and Mwaipopo (116) killed thirty head at the funeral of his mother. Since a chief has many wives and daughters he has many affines all of whom must bring cows to kill, and he also has a large herd himself on which to draw. To fail to feed his people at a funeral is to fail as a chief. The whole country mourns for two or three weeks, no one going to work in the fields, or occupying themselves with ordinary business. All smear themselves with mud, as if they were kinsmen, and even the men bind their bellies tightly with mourning belts 'that they may not tremble'. [765]

(d) THE CHIEF AND THE 'BREATH OF MEN'

Fruitfulness, the power of growth (*ubutu*), lies in the chief's body and the village headmen have no share in it; they only tend it, taking care that it does not disappear with the dead. But the headmen share with the chief and the priests the duty of 'watching 643 778 622

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

Christian ones, do not celebrate and nothing happens to them, so we no longer fear ourselves.' By 1957 the pagan rituals of kinship had been largely dropped in Ngonde, and around Rungwe mission they were disappearing, though in Selya no pagan dared neglect them. They were taken more seriously by the women than by the men, and many of the young men were openly scornful. The young men are eclectic in their beliefs, jeering at the twin ritual when they may be fearful of any neglect of the ritual of death; doubting the power of rain-makers, but terrified of a neighbour's sorcery. 797 795 [771]

(e) CHRISTIAN RITUAL AND DOGMA

And what are the alternatives to the traditional rituals? Celebrations at death, marriage, and birth continue—probably some sort of ritual on these occasions is universal in human societies. There is no celebration of a girl's puberty, as among the pagans, but the ritual of confirmation is, in one sense, parallel, for it is an acknowledgment of maturity by the acceptance of an individual into the full fellowship of the Church; but maturity in the Church, and the symbolic death and rebirth, are not necessarily linked with physiological development, as they are in the pagan ritual of *ubwaage*.[1] [151]

All the Christian rituals are *communal* in the sense that they are centred in the Church—the Christian community; none is primarily a ritual of kinship. This is most pointed at a christening, when a child is received into the fellowship of the Church, whereas in the pagan birth ritual it is acknowledged as a member of the father's lineage by being given *ilipili* medicine (which is 'the blood of the lineage') by its paternal grandmother. Sometimes both rituals are celebrated by Christians who interpret the *ilipili* as an acknowledgment of legitimacy, and a medicine necessary to the child's health, but this is frowned upon by the more orthodox. A dying man is comforted by the priest or elders of the Church, and in some communions he receives the sacrament, the symbol of his salvation through Christ and his membership of the community of believers. At a funeral the members of the local Christian congregation take the leading part, comforting the mourners with prayers and hymns, digging the grave, and burying the dead. The contrast with a pagan funeral, in which cattle are [152] [761] [764]

[1] The pagan rituals referred to in this section are described in *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

a ruler.' It is relevant to add that cuttings of this tree strike easily in the soil and climate of Nyakyusa country. When a chief dies he is buried beside his trees, and gradually a thicket—a sacred grove—forms round them.

The young men spend much time feasting and dancing. Formerly not only did they raid cattle for food from neighbouring chiefdoms, but they also took cattle, milk, and bananas from their fathers' villages. And they still do the latter, for they say: 'We are now the owners of the country.' The milk and bananas are often sent by the old chief, but 'if the chief is stingy, they teach him a lesson by going and *taking* bananas, saying: "We are important people."' Great emphasis is laid on this right of the young men to take food: one group, the mates of the first heir of a senior chief, boasted to us: 'We came out with grandeur, we ate many men's cattle.'

After a month or two the members of each new village move off to build on a site of their own, and the wives of those who are married join them. Wives do not come to the first temporary shelters. The senior of the new villages remains on the site of the temporary shelters where fire was made, the ritual trees planted, and the hearth-stones of the senior headman established with magic. Gradually each member builds himself a permanent hut.

The old men move aside to make room for their sons. If land is short they may move on to the site on which a boys' village formerly was, or there may be other land available. Whatever the position, adequate land must be provided for the young men's villages. And, we were told, 'We old men are glad to move, we are glad our sons are so many and we leave the land to them.' Or again: 'The old men move because new fire has come; the young men have made themselves into new people, hence they cannot build on their old sites but on new ones. Perhaps the old men will succeed them, for they may build in the boys' village where their sons were, or if there is space they go elsewhere. But the old men rejoice greatly, for their sons have "come out".' Nevertheless there are sometimes disputes between villages of different generations regarding a particular site (*vide* Document, p. 188).

A few months after the 'coming out' each of the two young chiefs marries two wives. A young chief may be married already; but the two whom he now takes rank as his great wives (*abeke*

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

264 cultivate her mind by conversation, or to eat regularly in com-
462 pany. In more formal hospitality there is the same difference; a
574 woman never invites her friends to drink beer with her, or to a 'dinner party', as her husband must do if he is to have prestige with his neighbours. Women only share the ritual feasts at initiation and marriage, and at death.

585 There are local variations in Nyakyusa rituals, notably between the Kukwe and Nyakyusa proper. But everywhere there is an
764 obligation to provide feasts at the funerals and marriages of de-
574 pendants. When his wife or unmarried child dies, a man must kill cattle for his relatives and neighbours to feast at the burial,[1] while an heir provides a feast for his relatives, and the neighbours of the 'father' from whom he has inherited. At these feasts equal portions of meat are allotted to relatives and neighbours—or were so allotted until the rights of neighbours to meat at funerals were formally limited (*vide infra*, p. 93). An heir must also brew beer, or kill a bull, to feast the deceased's neighbours when he begins to cohabit with his widow, or moves the property from his village. At the initiation and marriage of a girl there is a series of feasts (five in Selya), the food for which is provided partly by the groom's family and partly by the bride's; and if, as is usual, the bride is still a virgin or has been deflowered by the groom himself, he must provide a bull in thanks for her virginity (*ongombako jabusungu*), which is killed to feast the neighbours and relatives of her parents. The carcass is divided into three portions, one for the immediate neighbours of her father (men), one for 'those relatives with whom the father is on good terms and exchanges cattle', and one for the 'mothers' of the bride. Women as well as men eat meat and other fine food at all the marriage and funeral feasts.

574 The third occasion on which a feast for the village neighbours is thought to be essential is when a man or woman has offended
576 his (or her) neighbours, or the neighbours of a 'father'. Thus a woman who has shirked her duty of advising on the division of her brother's inheritance, and is disapproved of by her neighbours on this account, begs pardon of them over a brewing of beer (*vide infra*, pp. 107, 236); a son, having insulted his father's neighbours

[1] For the circumstances under which other relatives must provide cattle for funeral feasts see Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939), p. 18.

I: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

574 by insulting his father, begs pardon of them by bringing a bull
576 which his father may eat with them; or a daughter-in-law, having inadvertently caught sight of her father-in-law, brings beer for him to drink with his neighbours.

574 At all feasts food is allotted in terms of kinship and village
264 affiliation, and this tends to enhance the solidarity of kin groups
764 and villages. For example, funeral meat is first divided between relatives and non-relatives, and that allocated to non-relatives is subdivided by villages, each village headman present being given a share to divide between his people, men and women. When a relative of the chief has died, and the whole country has come to mourn, the chief allots a cow to each of his senior headmen, who then divide the carcasses between the villages in their respective halves of the chiefdom. The meat at a 'coming out' ceremony, and at the great feasts which were held after battle, was divided in the same way, and we saw a division of this kind when a senior headman who had been in exile was welcomed home (cf. pp. 273–4). Thus the right to share in a feast depends either on kinship with the provider, or on membership of a village.

574 The Christians' code of hospitality differs somewhat from that
184 of the pagans: the latter stress feeding *neighbours*, whether it be in the daily eating together, or at informal beer and dinner parties, or at ceremonies, while the Christians stress feeding strangers, quoting the text 'I was a stranger and ye took me in'[1] and the parable of the Good Samaritan.[2] The pagans jibe at the Christians for being inhospitable because (as the Christians themselves admit) they entertain their neighbours less than pagans do; the Christians point to their wider obligations, and the fact that they do feed and house visitors from a distance, especially fellow Christians gathering for Church festivals. The Christians are very conscious also of the difficulties of hospitality in a monogamous household, for a wife must not only do all the cooking for visitors (and many Nyakyusa dishes require considerable labour to prepare), but she must also help to grow the food. The pagan who can afford to entertain much has several wives who share the work between them, whereas a Christian, no matter how rich, cannot have more than one wife and remain a member of his Church—unless it be one of the two small independent

[1] Matthew xxv. 35.
[2] Luke x. 29.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

574 184 African churches which countenance polygyny. The difficulty is partially overcome in some well-to-do Christian families by hiring labour to work in their fields and to fetch water and wood, and by offering visitors coffee or tea, which are easily prepared, in place of home-brewed beer; nevertheless the conflict between [182] the value of hospitality (to which pagan and Christian alike subscribe, though they define it rather differently) and the value of monogamy, is often acute.

621 The mutual obligations of neighbours are not confined to feeding one another, for neighbours share with relatives the obligation of giving sympathy and assistance at the various crises in Nyakyusa life; the concept of *ukwanyale* includes keeping on good terms with people by being sympathetic and obliging.

•764 621 All the members of a village (except young children) are obliged to attend every burial of an adolescent or adult in that village; they go to mourn the death of a neighbour or condole with one who is burying a 'son', for if a man dies while his father (or father's full brother, or his own senior brother) is yet alive, he is often buried in his 'father's' homestead.[1] Where a youth or man is buried by his 'father', his fellow villagers must attend the funeral also, but boys and young men need not go to a funeral in their fathers' village unless it is a village-mate of their own who is being buried.

[198] Funerals are occasions for feasting and dancing, so the obligation 'to mourn one another' (*ukwalomele*) does not press hardly, and the Nyakyusa feeling is that no one would fail to come unless he were a witch, and fearful lest his victim rise from the grave and denounce him. 'If a man does not go to his neighbour's burial then at once people say: "It was you who bewitched him. Why else do you not come to bury him?"' Failure to come is certain evidence that the truant is 'a harsh man who does not keep on good terms with people (*ukali, ukwanyale kwanu nakonde*)'.

764 One neighbour, 'he who went about most with the dead man', is appointed by the headman of the village to help the relatives dig the grave, and village neighbours must also bring small gifts of food and firewood for the entertainment of the many guests.

[1] A married man whose 'fathers' are dead, or do not choose to exercise their right to bury him, is buried at his own house, and a woman who has borne a child is buried at her husband's house.

1:Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

Food (other than meat) is provided on the day of the burial by the women of the home at which the burial takes place, on the succeeding day by visiting relatives, and on the third day by village neighbours. Women neighbours, like woman relatives, often bring gifts of bark-cloth belts (*swakeke*) with which to bind up the bellies of their bereaved friends, who are all atremble and full of fear, and so support them. These belts symbolize the sympathy of friends in the fearful grief of the mourners. 'If a woman wears many belts at a burial that means that she has many friends; her passionate grief is comforted by their friendship.'[1] And neighbours, like relatives and close friends from other chiefdoms, may bring cloths which are used to wrap the corpse and bind up the bellies of the chief mourners. But these gifts of food, firewood, belts, and cloth are the limit of a neighbour's obligations; very rarely does a neighbour bring a bull to kill for the funeral feast, whereas close kinsmen and affines are obliged to provide a bull or cow for this purpose if they have one. And neighbours take virtually no share in the elaborate ritual which follows for cleansing relatives from the contagion of death, driving the thought of the deceased out of their minds, and bringing back his spirit to bless the home. Their only part is to bring small gifts of millet from which to brew the beer drunk at the close of this ritual.

At an ordinary birth there is very little ceremony and the village as a group is not concerned, though close friends will help the mother during her confinement, fetching wood and water for her, and bringing occasional gifts of cooked food; but twin births are regarded as fearful and dangerous, and an elaborate ritual is performed to cleanse relatives from the contagion which, if left untreated, is believed to lead to serious swelling of the arms, legs, and stomachs, accompanied by diarrhoea. Relatives are treated with many medicines, while village neighbours are sprinkled with one only, but their cattle, especially the cattle herded with those of the man who has begotten twins, are thought to be in danger. At one twin ritual we watched there was some discussion whether all the cattle of the age-village should be treated, or only those of the herd-group to which the father of the twins belonged. Finally it was decided that on previous occasions all the cattle of the village had been treated, and a message was sent

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939), p. 10.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

§82 Marriage with the daughter of a father's age-mate is also favoured, though she is called 'a village-sister' (*ndilembwa pa kijanga*), and such a marriage means that a girl has to avoid a father-in-law in her own father's village.

§37 §35 Adultery with the wife of a village neighbour is regarded as a heinous offence, much worse than ordinary adultery, and so also is the seduction of the wife of one's father, or of one of his village neighbours, even though a father's wives are eventually inherited by his son. 'It is bad,' Mwaiwumo said, 'because they are friends of one's own mother.' That is to say, there is a direct extension of the incest taboo so long as the father is alive. A son who has committed adultery with his own father's wives is afraid to attend his father's funeral lest he fall dead.[1]

§74 §84 Since marriage between 'brothers and sisters of the village' is approved, courtship goes on between the youths of a boys' village and the girls of their fathers' village, with this limitation, that brothers and sisters, or cousins—the descendants of a common grandfather or great-grandfather—must not be present at a flirtation. Boys from the same age-village go about together, and they commonly flirt with any group of girls they meet, whether from their fathers' village or not. It is then that the incest taboos are learnt. If one of the boys is known to be related to one of the girls his companions send him away saying: 'Don't you see your sister is here? You cannot come.'

Formerly, we were told, girls of the same village lived together (until they were married) in a girls' house (*ituke*), where they were visited secretly by lovers, who had external relations with them. Such girls' houses no longer exist among the Nyakyusa, each daughter living in her father's homestead until she is married, and sleeping with her own mother, or with a stepmother when her father visits her mother, or with the other children in a separate division of the long house, if her mother is the only wife. Only when she is keeping an older companion company at the initiation ritual does she sleep with the other girls of the village in a hut provided by the 'bride's' father.[2] But permanent girls' houses still exist in Ngonde. There each family

[1] Occasionally an elderly man gives his son leave to sleep with his wives in secret, while he (the father) is still alive; there no elaborate ritual is performed on the father's death.

[2] This hut is referred to as *ituke* also, but only during the initiation; it is to be distinguished from a hut regularly reserved for girls.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

woman who was once caught by her husband when she came home during the night with human flesh and began to cook it. Domestic fires are thought to become infected, because the witches are in the habit of roasting human flesh over them; sometimes, it is said, they use the victim's hearth, sometimes their own. Fear of such contamination by witches was one of the reasons for clearing out the ashes and lighting new fires, at the new year, and when an epidemic or other misfortune threatened (*vide infra*, p. 121).

The human flesh eaten is always spoken of as that of living victims, never that of corpses, as in some other areas, though the living die of the witches' attacks. Further, it is believed that witches kill people in order to feast on the beef of cows killed at the funeral. 'To what', said old Mwandesi, 'are the many deaths among us due? They are due to meat!' So strong was this feeling that at the end of 1935 the chiefs and village headmen of a number of chiefdoms stretching from Mwaya on the Lake to Mwakeleli in the hills (but not including the western Nyakyusa chiefdoms), decided to abandon the custom of killing many cows at a funeral. 'There is', they said, 'too much death in the country, the witches are killing people so as to have meat. Let us go back to the old custom and kill few cows. . . . If anyone complains that at a burial he was given no meat to eat, he is a witch, and we will turn him out of the country.' Formerly, we were told, two was the maximum number of cows killed at a funeral, and they were not killed until the witch had been discovered by the ordeal.

The theme of the witches' lust for meat is elaborated in various ways. It is said, for example, that the witches never use their own teeth when they go to eat a victim but like to borrow the victim's teeth, and that if startled, they may go off with the teeth altogether. One whose teeth have been used by the witches and then put back, knows about it in the morning because he finds his teeth rather loose. Most fearful of all, those who dream of being chased by witches hear them boasting to one another: 'We will *all* eat!'

It is meat and milk, the most prized foods of the Nyakyusa, which are commonly spoken of as exciting the greed of witches. Millet (from which beer is brewed), beans, and rice, are said to be subject to occasional attacks by witches, e.g. millet (or beans, or rice) ripening in the fields, or drying in the sun, is thought to get

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

account with other villages of the same chiefdom, and forming a detachment under its own headman in the army of the chiefdom. Before an attack each village was harangued by its headman who urged: 'Keep all your spears together. If you abandon your fellow you have a case against you! All return together!' And, as we have seen, it was held that men of the same village should stand shoulder to shoulder in war and in a hunt, that they might be brave. 621 701

Cattle raids and adultery cases were the prime causes of war—fighting commonly began with a dispute over a woman, or lust for meat. Less frequently it was a quarrel between two villages or two chiefdoms over a boundary that led to war. Hostilities often flared up at a funeral when men danced the war dance with spears (*ulukiso*). The Nyakyusa interpret this dancing at funerals as an expression of anger at death, a protest against death.[1] 'Formerly we protested against death, we said: "Our fellow has died, *aje!* Let us put our friend to rest!" We protested with war, we protested with spears, and people died.' Or as another informant put it, 'The war dance is a way of weeping. We dance the war dance because war is in our hearts.' But the anger at death very easily merged into anger against human enemies. 'If the men of two chiefdoms or two villages were present at a burial they would quarrel and fight. The fight began when one hurled his spear into the ground and thus spewed the earth over someone else. Perhaps there would be only a few dancing at first and many sitting down, but when a neighbouring chief was seen approaching with his men, and the sound of the trumpets was heard, those already there would say: "If we sit still they will say there are no men but only women at this funeral. Let us dance too." So they would all get up and dance, and if the others did anything there would be war. Now the custom of the war dance is dying out. We chiefs control it, and when another chief comes to a funeral we tell all our men to sit down while he and his men dance at the grave, because if we do not, the war of old times is liable to break out.' 721 764

In fact peace has been effectively enforced among the Nyakyusa.[2] We neither saw nor heard of a fight in the three years we were there. Thus mutual dependence in war is no longer a strong sanction for village unity. The joint responsibility for certain 721 672 673 177

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939).

[2] A constant in Pendleland or Bobbland.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

16. THE AUTOPSY

Note.—It was not easy to see an autopsy among the Nyakyusa—one never knew beforehand when such an operation would be held, and since imputations of witchcraft and sorcery are punishable offences, people were often reluctant to perform it when Europeans were there. There was only one European doctor in Rungwe district, and he was a very busy man with a hospital and dispensaries to supervise. All the operations witnessed were performed over twenty-five miles from his headquarters and far off any road. Therefore, we were never able to arrange for a qualified practitioner to be present at a Nyakyusa autopsy, as we wished. The following layman's accounts, though lacking any anatomical detail, explain the method of procedure, and the Nyakyusa reactions. 763 123

Autopsy (ukupendula) *witnessed by G. W., 16/3/37.*

Funeral of the wife of Mwampiki: Mwampiki himself is dead, but his homestead and wives have been inherited by a younger half-brother, Mwisalwa. The dead woman is a wife of another half-brother, Mwakemba. Kabuja, the village headman, called me to the funeral. 764

The body was carried apart, away from the crowd of women, behind a clump of bananas, by five or six women, who then washed it and put on a bark-cloth and a cloth (folded tight like a bark-cloth) round the loins. Then the young man, Mwaijumba, and I were allowed to come and watch.

The doctor, a woman, had five little knives of bamboo, made for the autopsy, and thrown away with the rubbish afterwards. Before she began to cut the stomach open another woman, a wife of Mwampiki (wearing mourning belts and smeared with mud) came and crouched down with her face close to that of the corpse, and a cloth covering her head and that of the corpse. 'That is the Nyakyusa custom', the young man explained. 'She is helping the doctor. The fearsomeness (ubwaiye) of a human body is less when someone else is at the head.' 763 764

Then the doctor, using the bamboo knives, made an incision across the stomach, and cut through the flesh until the intestines showed. The stomach was swollen up. Mwantumba, a classificatory brother of Mwampiki, had joined us by this time. He was fetched by Mwaijumba to come and examine the corpse. He urged the doctor to make the incision wider and she did so. Mwantumba also insisted on Mwai- 763

[p. 247]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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interpretations scarcely differ. Thus the commonly accepted idea that ritual forms are more stable than the interpretation of symbolism[1] does not hold for the Nyakyusa.

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The account of the ritual cycle begins with an analysis of funeral rites, for of all the family rituals they involve the greatest emotional tension and are the most elaborate, as well as being performed far more frequently than any others. Moreover, in them are adumbrated symbolic patterns which recur again and again throughout the cycle; in them is apparent that preoccupation with fertility characteristic of the cycle—they are a rite of creation as well as a farewell to the dead—and in them lies the key to an understanding of the conception of the *abayuke*, 'those who have risen from the dead', that is, the shades.

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The principal participants in the rituals are immediate kin—parents and children, siblings, grandparents and grandchildren—but the circle included varies with the particular ritual concerned and more distant relatives and neighbours are involved in varying degrees. In order to bring out these differences and avoid repetition, the detailed discussion of who takes part is deferred until after all the rituals have been described.

Should any Nyakyusa, reading this, feel that matters have been revealed which should remain secret, I would remind them that the interpretation of traditional ritual reveals a profound similarity in the phantasies of the Nyakyusa and those of other races; and such understanding of the dark places of men's minds as the *abayuke* possess may swell that body of knowledge which is the heritage of men of all races and cultures.

[1] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (1952), pp. 133-5; A. N. Whitehead, *Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effect* (1928), p. 79.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Nguonde F317
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER II

BURIAL RITES[1]

(a) The form of burial

Whenever a death takes place, whether of man, woman, or child, a series of funeral rites lasting a month or more begins. The first of the series is the burial (*ifwe*) which, in the case of most adults, lasts three or four days, though for a rich man it may continue for a week, and for a child it is over in a day. For the sake of convenience the account of burial is given mainly in reference to the burials of men; those of women are very similar and occasional references are made to them; but the constant qualifications of statement that would be necessary to give a complete description of both would be wearisome and are unnecessary for our purpose.

As soon as death occurs the women who are present begin wailing and messages are sent to the chief, the village headman, and the dead man's kinsmen and affines, to announce the fact and bid them to the burial. The first message is sent to the father, or to a senior brother, if one is still alive, or failing them to the heir of the dead man, and he it is who sends out the other messages. If the father or a senior brother is alive the burial may take place at his homestead, the body being carried there at once; otherwise the dead man is buried at his own home: the choice rests with his father. A married woman is buried at her husband's home if she has borne children, otherwise at her father's; an elderly widow is buried by her son.

Messages must be sent to all the fathers-in-law and all the sons-in-law both of the dead man and of the senior kinsman who buries him, to all the dead man's full and half-brothers, to the husbands of his sisters, to any classificatory brothers with whom he exchanged cows, to his mother's father or brother, to the full and half-brothers of his father, and to his sons. If any one of these

[1] This description is an amended version of that published by Godfrey Wilson in 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, 1939. The theoretical analysis differs somewhat from that offered in the paper, for the ritual element appears to me to be dominant at the burial as well as in the later 'farewell to the dead'. Between us we amended thirty footnotes, in whole or in part.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

602 763 is forgotten he will be angry: 'It happens sometimes that a kinsman comes in later, after the man is buried, and is very angry because no message was sent to him; he comes in a passion, and perhaps he beats his brother [the one who should have sent him a message]. Then the others catch hold of him and say: "Why do you not come soberly and greet us decently with the appropriate words? Come now, why?" And if he does not stop they beat him.'

602. These kinsmen and affines, with their wives and children, are 764 under obligation to come to the burial, unless they are sick. Young children under the age of 10 or 11 are not obliged to come, though they often do, but older children must do so. One reason for the continuance of the burial ceremonies for three or four days is that this gives time for relatives from a distance to receive the messages and come. Deliberately to refuse to send a message or, on the [578] other side, to refuse to come to a burial for no good reason, is a symbolic breaking of the bond of kinship and no one ever does either, unless there is a serious quarrel and all economic and social relations are being broken off between the two families concerned.

621 The village neighbours also are obliged to come to every burial 764 in the village. They normally wish to do so, but, even if they do 577 not, they still come for shame or for fear of being accused of witchcraft if they stay away. Where there is friendship the neighbours come in grief and sympathy and quarrels are suffered by the fact of death, but, if the memory of enmity still persists, then the last sanctions are shame and fear: 'Some people mourn more than others.' 'The men who knew him say: "Let us go and mourn him."' 'Those who did not know him intimately mourn because each thinks: "He has died, my neighbour, and so will it be with me one day."' 'If I have quarrelled with my neighbour and he dies, I go to his burial for I say to myself: "It is true that while he lived we quarrelled, but now he is dead and we shall never meet again. I too will go to his burial and mourn him."' 'If a village neighbour does not come to a burial we say he is unkindly and unsociable.' 'And if a man does not go to his neighbour's burial then at once people say: "It was you who bewitched him. Why else do you not come to bury him?"' Several of the accusations of witchcraft recorded had been occasioned by a man's absence from a village neighbour's funeral. For it is believed that witches are chary of going to the burials of their victims lest the dead should rise and denounce them.

623 764 A chief normally goes to all burials in his own country, except

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

those of very young children. 'He goes because it is his subject 643
who has died: he is like the senior kinsman of the whole country, 764
he rules all.' 'If a chief omits to go to a burial people say nothing, they know that he is always going to burials and they think that perhaps he has some urgent business. But if he constantly misses burials then people say that he has no affection for his people, that he does not come to bury them as is fit; and if a chief hears them saying this then he is ashamed.' Sometimes a chief who is busy will send a son to represent him. And he sends the drums to beat the lament. 'The drum *is* the chief . . . they cannot beat the drum before the chief has spoken.'

Besides the chief, the villagers, the relatives, and the drummers, 764
there come also personal friends of the dead man from other vil- 572
lages and chiefdoms. And beyond all these there often come others 571
who are attracted not so much by grief and sympathy, nor even by the obligation to express these feelings, but rather by the dancing, the crowds and the possibility of getting some meat to eat. Not all those who come stay the whole three or four days, while the relatives who live at a distance often do not arrive until the second or third day.

The Nyakyusa believe that in order to protect the living and 763
avenge the dead it is most important to discover the cause of death. To do this they summon a doctor to perform an autopsy,[1] an operation fearful and repugnant, but felt to be necessary. The symptoms are interpreted in terms of witchcraft or sorcery, or other supposed causes of disease.

On the first, or early on the second, day after death, the burial 764
takes place. The grave is dug in the swept and beaten earth that immediately surrounds the huts. The first spit of earth is always turned by the eldest son of the one who has died. At one burial we saw the young eldest son of a dead man being helped to do this. He was too small to manage a hoe by himself so he caught the handle near the blade while an older relative held it behind to steady it for him. The digging after the first spit is done by a skilled grave-digger, who may be a kinsman or not, with the help of others. The grave is ten or more feet deep with a cave at the bottom to one side. Some graves are oblong, some round or oval,

[1] This is certainly traditional, cf. D. Kerr-Cross, 'Greater Lake North of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, V (1895), p. 119. The custom is also reported for the Nyamwanga. For a description of the autopsy, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 247-50. [17]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

● 76 according to lineage custom. In the round and oval graves the body is placed in the cave in a sitting position; in the oblong graves lying at full length on one arm; but in both the dead man is set to face the direction from which he and his people have [173] traditionally come. The bulk of the Nyakyusa say that they came from the east, eight or ten generations ago, down the Livingstone Mountains into their present country; and it is to the east that they face in death. Those in the north of the district, whose local name is Kukwe, face in death towards their most recent centre of dispersion near Rungwe Mountain, although they have traditions going farther back to a migration from the Livingstone Mountains through the present Sangu country.

Digging a grave is traditionally a dangerous activity, but nowadays it is no longer so much feared as it used to be. Formerly only mature men helped to dig a grave and they were given a whole leg of the burial meat to eat by themselves. Nowadays young men —often Christians—do it.

Before the burial the body is carried in procession round the homestead. The chief mourners surround it wailing, and the dead man's cattle are driven in front. 'We do this to honour the dead man.' Then one of the cattle of the lineage is taken 'to look into the grave'. Two or three people get down into the grave to receive and bury the body. In the case of a man, his chief wife, his sister, and a male kinsman or village neighbour usually bury him. These three line the cave with mats and cloths which are passed down to them; then the body, previously washed and shaved[1] and now wrapped in cloths, is handed down, and they put it in position in the cave together with a few personal possessions such as a pipe, an eating-pot, a little calabash of ointment, and one of beer; nowadays also a looking-glass and perhaps a pencil and a cup. 'He goes with them to the place of the shades.' A woman is given bark-cloth belts and rouge, and a winnowing basket in place of the pipe and pot. They take off the strings of such utensils as are normally hung up. 'If the strings are left on the utensils will still be hanging up and he will be looking for them.' More cloths and mats are then put in with the body, and the cave is closed either with a stiff mat or with the door of the dead man's house, in accordance with local custom. Often there are hot disputes be-

[184] [1] The Kukwe wash the body just before death, the Nyakyusa and Penja after. The Kukwe fear lest their children should die of 'water in the stomach' if they wash a corpse.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tween the kinsmen about the amount of property to be destroyed. 764
Once we saw the sons of a dead man tugging at two fine mats which his sister was folding into the cave. She wished to put them in but the sons opposed her, saying: 'Why should we spend all the mats? We have buried him, he is dead.'

It is held to be most important that earth should not touch the corpse's face, but once the cave has been closed the chief mourners each push a few handfuls of earth into the grave, the rest of the earth is filled in, and the dancers stamp it hard. Soon no sign of the grave remains.

(3) *The terror of death*

Death to the Nyakyusa is a fearful thing. They believe that the 761
spirit (*umyuka*) of a dead man survives underground (*pan*) in the 775
place of the shades (*abapuka*) and that it can and does visit sur- 785
viving relatives in dreams and materially affect their destinies. The shades of the dead are one of the final causes with which their religion deals. But contact with them is feared and the function of the ritual at the funeral is 'to drive the shade away'. This ritual begins during the burial (*ifwa*) and continues in a series of rites which last for a month or longer. At the burial itself people's attention is mainly concerned with the death as an emotional event, with the fact that a father, a mother, a kinsman or a neighbour has died; but into the emotional quality of death their religious beliefs enter. With the shades they desire no close contact, for the most usual dreams of the dead are those in which they reproach a man for some sin, or foretell his death; their commonest activity is believed to be the sending of madness and misfortune upon sinful men. Nor is it desirable to join the shades oneself. The place of the shades is a vague and shadowy land where no certain happiness is traditionally believed to be. 'No one', said an old man, 'has ever been there and come back to tell us about it. When the dead come to us in dreams they do not show us where they live nor tell us about their life. We do not know what we shall find there. But we do not think that we shall have happiness, or friendly intercourse.' 'He has died and we shall never meet again,' said another man of his dead neighbour. Some old men, however, have definite theories about the place of the spirits, and all agree that wealth is important there; but these theories have no certainty: 'We are just guessing.' It is certain that the dead continue to live somehow, for they are believed to affect

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

761 765 775 the lives and enter the dreams of their kinsmen; but the nature of their survival is uncertain.

775 765 A man, when he dies, is believed to join his ancestors. Until the end of the funeral rites, they say, he is on the way and if the ritual is not properly performed he does not reach them, but troubles the dreams and lives of the survivors until he is properly driven away. 'If you do not perform the ritual for your father or mother you may go mad or else have a slow and lingering death.'

777 775 787 Many of the younger pagans, however, are affected by Christian belief. Young men spoke confidently of going after death 'to a fine country with dancing and feasting and a chief to rule us'. But many old men scoff at such beliefs. 'They have learnt them from the missionaries—how do they know, have they been there to see?' Among some of the younger men also the ritual of death is less important than it used to be. As one Christian said: 'The pagans no longer fear to die away from home—they used to fear very much to die in a strange country (and many still do), they thought: "If I die far from home I shall never reach my ancestors, for people will not bury me properly."' Nor do all the young men now fear if they fail to attend a father's funeral ritual.' 'We no longer believe in the old rituals,' said a sophisticated young pagan, 'because we see that the Christians do not do these things and nothing happens to them.'

761 753 754 An additional reason for fearing death is the Nyakyusa belief in the contagious character of many diseases. Death is thought to be caused sometimes by witchcraft, and sometimes by one of a variety of diseases. Of these diseases some are held to be hereditary and to run in families, and they are usually non-contagious; others, and they are usually contagious, are believed to be due to the sorcery of enemies. And the contagion is thought to be spread by an autopsy. It is especially dangerous to relatives; other people do not fear these diseases unless they actually hold the corpse in their arms, or dig the grave, or help to bury it, but all relatives are afraid.

769 Besides the contagion of specific diseases, the corpse itself is held always to have a vaguely defined, but none the less fearful, contagion of its own. And, because of this, all who have had any close contact with the body go to bathe immediately after the burial. Those of the chief mourners who hold the body in their arms, the grave-diggers and those who get down into the grave to bury it, all go to bathe. 'Even when death is not due to a contagious disease

2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

it seems as if there was another disease in the corpse itself, it is a 764
stinking mass of disease.' Traditionally they use two medicinal plants to wash with, but in some chiefdoms near mission stations they now wash without them. The chief of one such country explained: 'In the old days they feared very much to eat before bathing—but now sometimes they just wash their hands and eat. [177]
Of old they feared death, they feared lest the disease should spread, they wished to rid themselves of the contamination of the corpse. They used to wash with two plants—as medicine. Now they just bathe in the stream or sometimes only just wash their hands.' But, [184]
particularly in chiefdoms at a distance from the centres of European influence, the fear of the contagion of death is still very strong.

Death then is, for the majority of pagan Nyakyusa, a fearful as 761
well as a grievous event; less fearful than it used to be to their 184
fathers, but more fearful by far to them than it is to their Christian neighbours.

(v) The sacrifice

At all except the very poorest burials one or more head of cattle 764
are killed. Cows are provided whenever possible, but, if no cows are available, bulls may be used instead. If the man who has died left cattle of his own, one at least of his herd is killed; if he has left none, his family make every effort to buy or borrow one, or else they provide one themselves from their own herds. If the dead man was rich, several of his cows will be killed. If his senior son has cattle of his own, he should kill one for his father (*shambande*) and if there are a number of grown-up sons the senior of each group of full brothers will offer a cow.

Not only the immediate family of a dead man but also the 764
fathers (or brothers) of his wives and the husbands of his full 602
sisters and daughters are expected to provide cows for killing at his burial, and if he is buried at his 'father's' place then his 'father's' official relatives also are expected to bring cattle or cloths. When a married woman dies, her husband and her own 'father' are expected each to provide a cow or a bull. Occasionally other affines of her husband bring calves, but less usually. More cattle are killed for men than for women. For a young child nothing is killed.

The cattle are killed either by the dead man's 'father' or by his 764
heir; if a woman has died, then by her husband. At a man's burial 769

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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1. Sacrifice and dances round the open grave

[facing p. 20]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 the killing has a legal implication, for the death of a man involves
768 the transfer of his wives and property to another. If the inheritance is quite clear and disputes are unlikely, then a 'father' of the dead man tells the heir to kill the burial cattle. All the people present see him do this and know that he is the heir. And if the inheritance is, after all, denied him later, then the fact that he killed the cattle at his brother's (or father's) funeral gives him a strong *prima facie* claim to its recovery in the courts. If the inheritance is doubtful then a 'father' of the dead man kills the cattle. It is known that he himself cannot inherit and his killing of the cattle is an assertion of his authority to decide who shall do so.

643 When a man of the chief's lineage dies, a live cow is buried with
764 him and the more general custom of taking a cow or bull to look into the grave is interpreted as being 'like burying the cow'. The cattle used in this way must be of the lineage stock and are reserved for sacrifice.

764 All the cattle killed are thought to go with the shade to the land
775 of the dead (*abaka nayo bakayuka*) and it is believed that if he goes without any cattle he may be rejected by his kinsmen there. Tales are told of meeting dead men in the bush with their cattle which were killed for them. A cloth is a substitute for a cow and cloths which are buried likewise go with the dead. 'We will meet in the land of the shades and he will be wearing these cloths.' At one burial we saw, the dead man had left no cows of his own but his brothers killed two cows for him, three beasts were brought by affines, and sixteen cloths were brought by kinsmen, affines, and friends. 'Why', we asked, 'do you spend so much wealth at death?' 'Because, we say, as the owner has died let him take his wealth with him to the place of the shades. If he dies in lonely poverty he goes with nothing.' At another burial two beasts were brought by kinsmen, six by affines and one by a friend. There were thirty-two cloths, fifteen brought by kinsmen, twelve by affines, and five by friends. 'The bringing of cloths is to express sympathy (*kulusi ulinge*); we bury many of them with the corpse, and some we leave over, which we bind on as mourning belts (*umukibo*). Of old, people brought the cloth she *kafwa* weave, and brass body-rings. It means: "*May our fellow go with them*; may he swagger with them—with the cloth and body-rings (*ku kuti umuntu akalenge ngfw, a mapepe ngfw*)." And we pour out food that he may take it with him.'

764 During the course of the war-dance (described below) the young
[321]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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a. Leaping on the sandy filled pass

[facing p.21]

: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

men cut down some of the bananas which surround the huts and the open place in front of them. 'The owner has died, it is a sign to men that someone has died there.' 'We do it so that it should not seem as if he was still alive; if the bananas were not cut but all stood they would cause us to remember that he was recently alive.' 'We wish the dead man to take them with him to the land of the shades.' And for exactly the same reasons some of the calabashes and pots of a dead woman are broken at her burial, and saplings of the *fiwa* used for making bark-cloth are cut down. We have seen older men get up and check the dancers from destroying too many bananas. They told us that 'in the old days we used to cut down all the bananas of a dead man and any crops that were growing near the house also; but now we think that if we destroy all the food his children will die of hunger! So we just cut down a few bananas.' This destruction of food is connected with the belief that a man, when he dies, takes the fertility of the land with him, and this loss of fertility can only be avoided by the proper performance of the funeral ritual. The present moderation of the ritual destruction of food is, we think, an index of the decline of the power of the old belief; for the fear of future hunger, which now restrains them, used to encourage them to a greater sacrifice.

764 [535] [77]

(*d*) *The wailing and dancing*

From the time of the death until the end of the three or four days of the burial rites, wailing continues intermittently. 'We weep because we grieve and tremble with fear.' The old women are the most persistent, next come the men and boys. 'The women weep all the time; even at night they only sleep a little, weeping and sleeping and then weeping again! But we men weep just once, when we first arrive, we do not go on and on.' The chief mourners (*abamfwa*: lit. owners of the death) among the women, that is the mother, stepmothers, wives, sisters, daughters, and brothers' wives, spend most of the time inside one of the huts, which is the centre of the wailing. The other women spend some time inside the hut, wailing with the chief mourners, but then they move to make way for others and sit just outside. On the plain and in Selya they sit packed close together and sway rhythmically as they wail in chorus, following a leader who stands in their midst. Tears roll down her face as she chants short phrases ending in the high-pitched wail: 'Alas father! Alas! Aaaaaaaaaaaa! Farewell! Go So-and-so, farewell . . .'. we long for you, Father, farewell!' In the

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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 189 While the women who are outside do not bunch together, and the wailing is both less rhythmical and less abandoned. The people of the plains laugh at them for not wailing properly. 'In the hills their funerals do not go well; each one wails separately. Here we listen to one another.' 'In Selya they lament a death properly; here [in the hills] they do not; they wail higgledy-piggledy, each one on her own. But we of Selya, and the people of MuNgonde and Masoko, we lead the wailing properly. There is always one person as leader and others follow her. If a woman does not follow, the leader will drive her away from the funeral saying "Wail alone". And if a widow wails out of time, they reprove her also saying: "Friend, we have come to lament at your funeral, but if you want to wail alone we will go and leave you with your husband." Then she agrees. . . . The leader speaks of the childhood and adult life of the deceased and concludes: "And then you died, farewell!" '

764 The chief mourners among the men—father, brothers, sons—go into the hut at first and wail with the women, but then they come out and sit with the men. Other male relatives, neighbours, and friends, as they arrive, go to the door of the hut, or just inside, and greet the women sympathetically; then they go and greet the chief mourners among the men and sit down with them. We asked the reason for the sympathetic greeting and were told: 'It is the custom at a burial; and when I die they will come to greet me also.' No exact line of division can be drawn between the wailing of the chief mourners and others, for some of the more distant male relatives go right inside and spend some time wailing and shedding tears. And both among the chief mourners and others the extent to which grief is thus expressed varies considerably.

In the groups of men and boys there is no wailing. The group of women outside wail intermittently at first, but later their attention is diverted to watching the burial dance. Those within the hut wail continuously before and for several hours after the burial, and on succeeding days they begin again each time new arrivals come into the hut to sympathize, and at nightfall as the crowds move off home.

Before the actual burial the body is kept in the hut and the chief women mourners hold it in their arms. One man expressed the opinion that, if a death occurred late in the evening or at night, the body should not be buried before noon the next day, so as to give people time 'to weep and assuage their grief, for they always wail more before the body is buried, when they can see the

2: Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

dead man'. Sometimes, immediately after the burial, the chief 769
mourners, both men and women, wail outside near the newly-filled grave.

Very many of the women relatives, a few of the men relatives, 764
and some of the neighbours smear their heads and faces with mud 177
or pot-black as a sign of grief (*lya kwa*). Such an expression of grief is thought extravagant by the Christians who have themselves abandoned the custom. One Christian explained: 'The pagans smear themselves with mud because they tremble with fear at a death—but we do not tremble; the pagans are very sorrowful because they say: "Our friend has vanished from our eyes and we shall never meet him happily again."'

It is also the custom for the women relatives to bind one 242
another's bellies with strips of bark-cloth, and for their women 764
friends to bind them also. These bark-cloth belts are called *amakiba* and symbolize the fearful grief and mutual sympathy of the mourners, and the sympathy of their friends. One women, who was taking two belts to tie up the bellies of two mourning friends whose husband had died, explained: 'I give them these to tie round their bellies because they are all a-tremble, they are full of fear.' And when she was asked why men did not thus support one another, she replied: 'They are not afraid like women, they do not tremble much.' But there is evidence that, before the coming of the Europeans, men also wore *amakiba* 'and even now if a chief [177] lets his men often wear *amakiba* for one day'. The Christian women have kept the custom, but they emphasize more the aspect of sympathy and less that of fear. 'If a woman wears many belts at a burial that means she has many friends; her passionate grief is [174] comforted by their friendship.'

Sometimes on the first day, and usually on the last two or three 516
days of a burial, there is dancing as well as wailing. Dancing 764
begins late in the morning to the accompaniment of three or four drums, in the swept courtyard of the dead man's homestead; gradually it attracts more and more dancers, more and more of the attention of the onlookers, until the wailing is confined to the chief women mourners inside the hut, and the dance is the most conspicuous part of the proceedings. It is led by young men [212] dressed in a special costume of ankle-bells and cloth skirts and [302] traditionally, bedaubed with red and white clay. All hold spears and leap wildly about, stamping down the soft earth of the grave as they dance. There is little common movement, each dances

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

764 535 alone as if fighting a single combat. Among the men some of the women move about, singly or in twos and threes, calling the war-cry and swinging their hips in a kind of rhythmical walk. Under a tropical sun in a damp heat, with the thermometer often over 90° F. in the shade, they dance for hours. In the dust and noise and excitement there are no very apparent signs of grief; and yet if you ask the onlookers what it is all about they reply: 'They are mourning the dead.'

764 535 721 177 This burial dance is traditionally a dance of war; now, as also in former times, it provides those men who are most affected by grief and fear with a violent and passionate means of expression, in which their feelings are assuaged by the touch of life; for the others it was, in the old days, an assertion of their own and their dead neighbour's warlike quality, and this significance is still vividly present to their minds; but, after a generation and more of peace, its content is changing and the sexual element, always present in it, is rapidly dominating the old memories.

764 535 721 'This war-dance (*ukuhina*)', said an old man, 'is mourning, we are mourning the dead man. We dance because there is war in our hearts. A passion of grief and fear exasperates us (*ifyaje lifuatile*).' Since this statement is the clue to both the present and the traditional meaning of the war-dance for the chief mourners, we must examine the language carefully. *Ifyaje* means a passion of grief, anger or fear; *ukuatile* means to annoy or exasperate beyond endurance. In explaining *ukuatile* one man put it like this: 'If a man continually insults me then he exasperates me (*ikuatile*) so that I want to fight him.' Death is a fearful and grievous event that exasperates those men nearly concerned and makes them want to fight. The chief mourners and personal friends among the women assuage their feelings in the wailing, among the men in the war-dance. 'A kinsman, when he dances, assuages his passionate grief (*ifyaje*); he goes into the house to weep and then he comes out and dances the war-dance; his passionate grief is made tolerable in the dance (lit. he is able to endure it there, in the dance), it bound his heart and the dance assuages it.'

This exasperated and fearful grief was linked in traditional expression with a general salute to the warlike quality of man. Those of old said: 'The dead man was a lively dancer in battle, and now he is dead we dance for him, he too was a fighting dancer!' 'He was a warrior (lit. a man of the spear), we dance now, as he danced himself, the dance of war.' And this salute at the same time gave

Z: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

to the dances a heightened sense of their own warlike quality: 'We used not actually to fight at burials so much as to dance and become conscious of our strength for future wars against other chiefdoms, when, on another day, we would go to raid their cows.'

But although an actual fight was not a necessary part of the funeral it very frequently occurred; and burials are still one of the most usual occasions of spearing. 'In the old days, before the country was at peace, we men often fought at burials; we ran in front spearing one another, while our wives ran behind calling the war-cry and watching the prowess of their husbands.' So far from rituals having the sole function of promoting social integration, as some would have us believe, the burial rites of the Nyakyusa were occasions on which existing antipathies continually found overt expression in fighting and new antipathies arose; but the quarrels were not within the mourning lineage.

The fights normally followed the lines of division between chiefdoms and chiefdoms, village and village. Kinship and affinity have always for some men extended beyond the single chiefdom; and to the burials of these people, if they are in any way eminent, the young men of other chiefdoms often come to dance. And while today, with a well-established tradition of peace, there are fewer smouldering enmities between chiefdoms, forty or fifty years ago it was scarcely possible for the young men of two chiefs to meet peacefully; cattle-raids, abductions of women, defeats and victories in battle were too hot in the memory. Sometimes an accidental jostling, sometimes a deliberate insult was the occasion for a running fight.

At burials there was often war. If the men of two chiefdoms were there together at a burial they would quarrel and fight. Sometimes the fight began when one buried his spear into the ground and then pulled it up so as to pitch earth on to another man. Perhaps there would be only a few men dancing at first and many sitting down; but when a neighbouring chief was heard coming with his men, and the sound of the trumpet and flute[1] came to us, then we said: 'If we sit still they will say there were no men but only women at that burial, let us dance too!' So we would get up and dance, and then if the others did anything there would be war.

And fights sometimes occurred between two villages of the same chief.

[1] The trumpet of horn and the bamboo flute which used to accompany the war-dances. They are now seldom heard; drums have superseded them.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 535 721 Besides fighting, the dancers indulge in an orgy of destruction, slashing at the bananas and *four* saplings (which surround the swept courtyard) with their spears.

764 535 152 The dance was thus, traditionally, a common form for the expression by the dancers of a considerable range of emotions, varying from an intolerable burden of grief and fear to a recognition of and salute to the warlike quality of the dead man and a vivid consciousness of their own. And this last feeling passed easily into actual fighting.

764 534 832 To-day it is not so much into the excitements of warfare that the feelings turn, but rather into those of love. Burial dances are the occasions of much sexual display, of the beginning of some love affairs and the consummation of others, and this is nothing new. 'At a death people did not want war (though it came sometimes), they wanted love-making: they displayed the pride of their strength!' 'We speared one another . . . our wives called the war-cry when they saw the strength of their husbands.'

777 535 837 Dances of sexual display, on occasions other than burials, are traditional among the Nyakyusa; but all our informants are unanimous in declaring that both these other dances and the dances of burial are far more frequently followed by lovers' meetings than they used to be. For the enforcement of peace among the Nyakyusa has been accompanied by the prohibition of violence of any kind; and this has freed sexual passion from its rigid traditional bonds. Girls are married young and engaged younger; and [689] while formerly any man who seduced or even flirted with another man's betrothed or wife was speared or tortured by the husband and his friends if they caught him, such punishments are now illegal and the present fine of cattle is a far less effective deterrent. 'In the old days love-making only went on in secret; if a man stood and talked to a woman he expected to be speared. But now the Europeans have introduced the custom of making love openly!' (i.e. by forbidding the previous penalties.)

764 535 832 For all the younger men and women, save the chief mourners and close friends, the quality of the burial dance is now predominantly and openly sexual. But the older people are, on the one hand, more conscious of its warlike associations and, on the other hand, inclined to regard the whole occasion more soberly than their juniors. 'There are two reasons for coming to a burial: the old men come to mourn their friend, they say: "Let us go and mourn him"; but the young men say: "Let us follow the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F:17 Ngonde F:17
Nyakyusa

tradition of the leaping dance and show ourselves to the girls!' 764
And so it is with the women, some of the young women do not 535
come to mourn but to call the war-cry to the boys! Those who 132
come to mourn go into the hut and weep and weep. The young men say that they dance by reason of the women. The old men say that in the past it was different, it was war; the women ran behind the fighters watching the battle and calling the war-cry. And we all say that the present custom of dancing is the softer custom of a peaceful land.'

As the old significance of the dance to the majority of the participants was a lively salute to the dead man's fighting quality and a heightened sense of their own, so now it is his sexual quality which they honour and their own which they enjoy. 'Why', we asked a young man, 'do you dance nowadays at burials? There is little or no warfare and the dead man was never a fighter?' His answer came almost in the traditional form of words: 'We think that he too danced before the women, he was a brave dancer (*magi*), and so we too dance (*ukukina*) at his death.'

'He too was a brave dancer (*magi*).' The word *magi* is from the 535
verb *ukumaga* which refers to the ordinary dances of sexual display 764
in contrast to the war-dance (*ukukina*). It is the war-dance which 721
is still normally danced at death. Not only, however, is its signi- 132
ficance being assimilated to that of the ordinary dances of recre- 177
ation, as this quotation clearly shows, but these other dances are now often performed at burials. Near Rungwe Mission the pagans dance the war-dance on the first day of a burial and sometimes on the second day as well, but always on the third day the dance is changed. The men abandon cloth skirts, spears, and ankle-bells [292]
and put on their best clothes, an ample white toga being particularly fashionable; the women adorn themselves with great care and some put roses in their hair. The dance is no longer a wild *mêlée*, but is slow and graceful; and its sexual significance is now apparent, not only in the faces of the dancers and the comments of the bystanders, but also in the forms of movement.

This custom is new. None of the chief mourners takes part in the 535
dance, though they watch it. In the war-dance, however, the chief 764
mourners among the men are expected to participate, and some 721
of them always do so. 'The (men) relatives dance if they have 177
strength, they weep first and then dance. For if they all sit still and no one of them dances we others say that they have not mourned him properly.' But they do not all dance. One old man whose

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

535 brother had just been buried said: 'Those who are really sad sit
764 quite still and silent.' But he was an old man with little strength
721 for dancing; on the first day of his brother's burial he sat still, but
177 on the second day he danced a little.

As for the women who participate in the war-dance, running about among the men and calling the war-cry, their behaviour is clearly distinguished in accordance with their relationship to the dead man. 'The distant (women) relatives dance in their dirt, they cannot adorn themselves much, but non-relatives adorn themselves. The wives and sisters of a dead man and the nearer women relatives are the chief mourners and they cannot dance at the burial. They are truly grieved. If a wife danced we'd say she did not love her husband—well, perhaps she might wander round distraught to the sound of the drums, but with grief on her face and without looking at the young men! If she looked at the young men we'd say she did not love her husband. If a brother's wife danced we should laugh at her and say she was no kinswoman of the dead man! But for a man it is different, he dances with his grief to enable his heart to bear it. In the old days, if there was a fight, the chief women mourners did not follow and call the war-cry, but the others; all the men went to fight but not all the women to watch.'

535 Our observation shows that there is just as much dancing at the
764 burials of women as at those of men. Here too the dance, as now
177 performed, combines the two functions: assuaging the fearful grief
832 of some people and providing a sexual display in honour of the
727 dead: 'We dance at her burial, for she too was a brave dancer (*magi*).' But in the old days also there was dancing at women's burials: 'For a woman', one old man explained, 'bears us men, so that she too is a warrior.' 'In the past,' said another old man, 'we did dance at women's burials, only a little, not so much as at men's; we said that she was only a woman, but that none the less she also was concerned in war.'

The change in the quality of the burial dance is one of emphasis only; in the past also the sexual element was present: 'We danced so that the women should see our strength'—but it was not dominant. And the warlike quality which was then dominant has by no means disappeared; we heard of many spear-fights at burial dances. At one of them the chief, in order to prevent its continuance, made the dancers abandon the war-dance and finish the funeral with the ordinary dances of sexual display.

781 The emotional quality of mourning (*ukulila*) is different in
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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

Nyakyusa pagan society from its quality in England. The word ndulile in other contexts means to cry, weep, or complain aloud; at burial it is used to refer specifically to the wailing, and by extension to the whole of the ritual. The quality of Nyakyusa mourning is both more openly terrified and grief-stricken and also more lively than in England. And these two qualities of fearful grief and vivacity are very closely connected.

That some at least of those who attend a Nyakyusa burial are moved by grief it is easy to establish. We have heard people talking regretfully in ordinary conversation of a man's death; we have seen a man whose sister had just died walk over alone towards her grave and weep quietly by himself without any parade of grief; and we have heard of a man killing himself because of his grief for a dead son. But, even among the chief mourners, they are not all grieved: 'There are some men', said an old woman, 'who have no sorrow when their wives die. J., when his wife died, was quite unmoved; and some women are not much upset when they lose their husbands. L. was not when her husband died; perhaps she was thinking of marrying again, for she was quite young. But old women are always grieved for they cannot marry again.'

Whatever their private feelings may be, however, the chief mourners and other relatives are obliged for very shame to show [379] signs of grief. The chief women mourners, as we have seen, may not dance; the more distant women relatives may not adorn themselves; and all the chief mourners, both men and women, are expected to weep and shed tears. We have seen an old man weeping at his half-brother's burial, although the two had, notoriously, been on very bad terms and had hardly spoken to each other for years. And all relatives, however distant, who come to a burial are expected to greet the chief mourners sympathetically. Very many non-relatives do so too, but they may omit the greeting without offence, if there is a great crowd present.

We have plenty of evidence that the grief at death is largely mixed with fear. It is, indeed, probable that the fear of death (fear of their own future death, fear of the shades, fear of the contagion of the corpse) touches some people at a burial more deeply than grief. Be this as it may, it is clear that the mourning is, for some, an expression of real fears. And it is the relatives, above all, who are afraid. Neither contagious diseases nor subsequent affliction by the shades, nor the vague contagion of the corpse concern any non-relatives, except those who dig the grave and bury the dead

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

781 man; but all kinsmen and affines fear contagion, and the family
●764 fear spiritual afflictions as well.

[81] These fears are dealt with in two ways: fear is an immediate state of feeling which the Nyakyusa, on this occasion, express and make tolerable in the wailing, the dancing, and so on; but their terror is also rationalized[1] as a fear of certain specific events proceeding from religious causes, and thus is pacified by various ritual actions which are believed effectively to prevent those happenings. The killing of cows, the washing with magical plants, the subsequent ritual of protection—all these are designed to check the occurrence of fearful events.

781 But still the fear, as an actual state of feeling at the time of a
764 death, has to be expressed in some tolerable form. Its expression
721 in the wailing associated with grief is already clear; and it is also
535 proved that the war-dance is, for the men most affected, both an expression and an alleviation of their terrified grief: 'There is war in our hearts—a passion of fear and grief conquerors us—it is made tolerable in the dance.'

781 It is the attitude of the chief mourners that is the clue to the
764 whole ritual; and the contrast between terrified wailing and lively dancing, which seems very strange at first to a European observer, is explained by it. The fear and sorrow of death are only emotionally tolerable if their expression is followed by, or combined with, an assertion of life. This is certainly true of the Nyakyusa, and possibly it is universally true. Having no confident expectation of happiness in a future life, these pagan Africans turn at burial to a realization of present life in its most intense quality, to the war-dance, to sexual display, to lively talk, and to the eating of great quantities of meat.

And to this emotional reaction of the chief mourners the sympathetic vivacity of other people is essential. The Nyakyusa were astonished to hear of the sobriety of an English funeral: 'We talk and dance to comfort the relatives. If we others sat sad and glum, then the grief of the relatives would far exceed ours. If we just sorrowed what depths of grief would they not reach? And so we sit and talk and laugh and dance until the relatives laugh too.' And they were even more surprised at the suggestion that anyone might wish for privacy. 'We are quite different: we keep people company, when a relative has died, to cheer them. I am com-

[1] The word 'rationalize' properly implies neither truth nor falsehood of thought, but simply the fact of its existence.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

farted, I think people follow the custom, many have come to see me.' 781 784 197

There is no criticism of men or women who come to a burial to dance rather than to weep: 'They are not relatives—it is our custom of mourning.' They are saluting the dead and 'seeing him on his way', they are helping 'to comfort the relatives'. The presence of non-relatives at a burial is variously determined by feelings of affection and grief, of respect and sympathy for the family, by a sense of shame, by fear of being accused of witchcraft, and finally by the attraction of the crowds, the lively conversation, the dancing, and the meat. [E]

At the burial of a Nyakyusa Christian there is little unrestrained wailing and no dancing; instead the young men of the congregation gather round the grieving relatives and sing cheerful hymns, full of the certainty of Heaven, 'to accompany him on his way to God' and 'to comfort the mourners'. 781 764 795 184

(v) Prestige at funerals

As has already been indicated, the length of the mourning depends upon the status of the deceased. It is short for a child—there is no sacrifice and no crowd; for a rich man it is longer than for a poor man; for the kinsman of a chief longer than for a commoner. Mwaikambo explained: 764 555 556

> Many conceal their position (*abafumaki*), it only appears at death. People may never know that a man is rich—only those who build close to him will know—but when he dies many know; many people come to the funeral. For a commoner, an ordinary person, the drums usually play a lament for two days only, sometimes for three, but for a village headman they play the lament for four days, or perhaps a week, and also for a man who has married a chief's daughter it continues for four days or a week. Then people ask why the drums are playing for so long and the reply comes: 'He married into the chief's family. The chief honours him in kinship.' Drums follow the importance of a man.
>
> Those who stay longest at a funeral are kinsmen. If a man has many kinsmen then the funeral will last long because his kinsmen do not return home quickly. A chief has many kinsmen, more than anyone else, because the people of his chiefdom are all like kinsmen. With a village headman also the people who build with him are somewhat like kinsmen, and his funeral lasts a long time.

The size of the crowd at a funeral depends very largely upon the amount of meat provided, and this in turn depends upon the 764 556

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 556 wealth of the family in cattle and the number of its affines. There is a direct relationship between the number of cattle killed and the number of people who come to a burial. On one occasion we were told: 'There are not many people here because there is little meat; they only killed one bull!' And this connection can be observed at any burial; hundreds of people come to mourn the rich, only a few to mourn the poor. And if no meat is killed there is usually no dancing at all. But once a crowd has gathered it is in itself an inducement to others to come. When men were dancing the funeral dance in the rain a neighbour commented: 'They will say there is no rain for many women are present.' We have seen a crowd of 5,000 or more at a funeral, with 100 men dancing at once.

The meat is divided among the chief, the relatives, the neighbours, and the non-relatives from a distance. To the chief of the country is given the breast and ribs of one beast: 'This is to honour him.' To each affine who brings a beast a whole leg is returned to be eaten. To the various groups of non-relatives from other chiefdoms is given sometimes a side, sometimes a leg, and the rest of the meat is divided between the relatives and neighbours who have come from the same or adjoining villages. At large funerals, where many cows are killed and where people gather from all the villages of the chiefdom, a portion of the meat is presented to each of the various village headmen to eat with his men; at smaller funerals the division is made less formally.

'A man's very own cow, that of his lineage, is eaten by the people of the country, not the relatives, because the people [non-relatives] always looked at it thinking: "It's ours."' A picture of ghoulish expectation? That indeed is an element of Nyakyusa thought. While we were in the country a number of chiefs forbade the [754] offering of funeral meat to non-relatives, for, it was believed, gluttonous neighbours sometimes killed a man by witchcraft[1] in order to feast at his funeral.

The kinsmen of the dead man gain prestige from a lavish funeral. They are compelled to sacrifice by fear lest the anger of the shades, or the 'breath' of their neighbours, should bring misfortune upon them, and they are rewarded by the admiration of men when they do so.

764 626 Social pressure is not always exerted upon the members of the dead man's family to provide cattle themselves. If he left sufficient cattle to sustain the family dignity they only kill from his own

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 93.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F?617 Ngonde F?617
Nyakyusa

herd. But if he has not left sufficient, then they are ashamed not to 764
make good the deficiency. 'If no cows are killed at a burial we 626
others [non-relatives] say that it was a mean burial, that the dead man was a pauper without kin, for if he had had kinsmen they would have killed cows for him. So then the relatives grieve their poor grieh alone, we others don't go to that burial.' To a poor burial the members of the same village do in fact come, as they are obliged to do; but few other people come, and there is seldom any dancing.

There is one other situation in which a member of the family is 764
under obligation to kill. If the dead man is buried by his 'father' at his 'father's' place, then one of his 'father's' cows must be killed. But if his 'father' does not choose to exercise his privilege of carrying the body to his place for burial (and he need not do so unless he wishes), then there is no such obligation.

Upon affines, however, the obligation is absolute, unless they actually have not got a cow or bull available. 'If a father-in-law brings no beast to his son-in-law's burial, then his daughter is estranged from him, she asks angrily why he does not bring one, seeing that her husband has died.' 'If a son-in-law does not bring a cow to his father-in-law's burial, though he has one that he might have brought, he is ashamed before men. They say to him: "Your wife's father has died, why did you not bring a cow? Perhaps you think you have a father-in-law still alive (i.e. the dead man's heir, to whom all previous obligations are due, and with whom the relationship of affinity continues very much as before), but he himself, your own father-in-law, has died."' And thus, if insufficient cows are killed to maintain the family dignity, both the family and the affines are made to feel ashamed.

Occasionally a friend of the dead man, who is no relative, brings a bull to kill, as a sign of friendship and affection, but he [572]
has no obligation to do so.

Social position, both in its practical aspect of authority and in 764
its emotion aspect of prestige, depends primarily, among the 556
Nyakyusa, on the generous use of wealth, or, to put it more simply, on feeding people. The Nyakyusa insisted on this again and again in explaining the relative status of different people: one man is great and distinguished (*asiye*) because he feeds people, another who feeds people less is less distinguished. At a lavish funeral, where many people gather and eat meat, they go home in

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

764 the evening saying with admiration that it was a most impressive
856 (saipe) burial; months or years afterwards it is still remembered and described with pride by the family, with admiration by the neighbours. What is chiefly remembered is the number of cattle killed and the number of people present; sometimes the vigour of the women's wailing and of the men's dancing is also described.

(f) *A particular burial* (recorded by G. W.)

764 It is the second day; the man, who was quite young, died yesterday afternoon and was buried early this morning. I arrive at 7.30 a.m. to find that the wailing is the dominant activity. The dead man's house is full of weeping men and women, shedding tears and wailing in the conventional high-pitched voice. His sister, his young wife, a stepmother, a classificatory brother and two half-brothers, with many other women, are inside the house. The noise is considerable. The rest of the women, fifty or more, are seated just outside, in and around an unfinished bamboo house which he died leaving half-built; they too are weeping and wailing. A few men are seated in a group on the opposite side of the swept place facing the women; they are either silent or talking soberly.

764 The emotional pitch is very high. The classificatory brother leaves
781 the house and walks about round the new grave with his hands to his head, shedding tears and calling: 'Alas! Alas! What kin are left? Alas! What kin are left?' He is a mature man about forty years old. Then he takes by the hand a half-sister of the dead man, a woman of thirty or more, smothered in mud and pot-black, her belly supported by many bark-cloths, and with a baby on her back; together they walk over the grave weeping and wailing, addressing each other in words that I fail to distinguish, and stumbling about as though blind with grief. The baby sleeps quietly all the time. Then comes an old woman, stepmother of the dead man, leading a daughter in each hand (his half-sisters), all wailing, shedding tears and calling out indistinguishable words. They sit down on the newly-filled grave with their arms on one another's shoulders rocking to and fro and weeping. More people keep arriving and in the background now is the insistent wailing of seventy or a hundred women in and outside the house.

For the first hour after my arrival the drums are only occasionally beaten, and a few young men rush across the grave brandishing spears, but only spasmodically.

The two half-brothers, after wailing in the house, come outside and walk up and down together still weeping. Then they each take a spear and run back and forth several times wailing the dead man's name.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

One of the half-sisters, inconsolable, rolls over and over in the fresh earth 764
of the grave in passionate contortions, with the tears running down her 781
cheeks. Gradually a group of women relatives collects on the grave, eight or nine of them; they sit huddled up together with their arms on one another's shoulders wailing. One woman, before she sits down, makes a series of tumbling gestures towards the grave, crying out 'Aweee!' in fearful grief.

Then, at last, the drums begin in earnest and the young men start to 764
dance. The insistent vital rhythm of the drums contrasts sharply with 535
the grief and despair of the wailing. The situation begins to change. Still in the house the wailing is loud and continuous, but the women on the grave give place to the dancers and return to the house, while the group of women outside gradually ceases wailing and turns all its attention to the dance. The conversation among the men changes also, none are silent now and the talk is more eager than before. Soon the dancers begin to cut the bananas; one stem falls full on a young man's head, causing loud laughter among the onlookers. But at first the dance, though always lively, is by no means wholly gay. The male kinsmen dance with grief in their looks, calling out 'Alas!' as each shakes his spear.

No women are yet dancing at all; two or three kinswomen wander about distraught, and one of the half-sisters in particular seems quite blind to the dancers, who have to get out of her way. The situation is, however, a lively one, and it becomes livelier still as the young men from another village come to join in, bringing three more drums with them. Six drums are now being beaten and about thirty young men are dancing. Two hours have passed since I first arrived.

At 4.30 p.m. I am back again to find the scene changed once more. There is no sound of wailing, not even inside the house. About a hundred men are either dancing or standing round looking on, with a number of girls walking rhythmically about among the dancers. These girls are non-relatives and adorned with great finish.

The young men leap and dance, some with more agility than others; 764
they stamp, roll on the ground, leap in the air, turn somersaults, hurl 535
their spears into the earth and fight invisible enemies. All the spectators, 781
save the chief women mourners and one or two of the men, seem lively and excited. I see the young wife of the dead man looking tired and sad, and she and the other women chief mourners spend most of the time in the house; but one of the half-brothers, on the other hand, who appeared to be so greatly affected seven or eight hours before, is laughing gaily as he dances.

Two cows have been killed and are now being cut up. As the sun 764
sinks and the dancers go away home, taking their meat with them, the relatives and near neighbours gather round fires and begin to roast and eat the meat. Some is given separately to the groups of friends from

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F'N17 Ngonde F'N17
Nyakyusa

[369] other chieftains; and by the next morning the whole of the two cows is finished. Wailing and dancing continue for two days more. 'It was a grand burial' people say afterwards, 'we have seen him on his way (to the land of shades) properly.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mahagwale

765 768 washing and the throwing away of a corm of bananas and leaves in a stream, and bringing back a hen and bark-cloth; eating a mash on the hearth; the brewing of beer with the millet presented; a ritual drinking and further mourning when this is ripe; an admonition of the heir on his duties and acknowledgement of him as 'father' by the children of the deceased; sexual intercourse between the heir and the widows he inherits; the burial by each inherited woman of some of the fluids from that intercourse in her father's banana grove, and a ritual drinking of beer with her father and other close relatives.

If the deceased is a woman her brother comes to cut her husband's banana grove and seize her children, as a sign that kinship between the lineages has ceased, but he is diminished with gifts, and treats his sister's children with medicines. A sister is sent to replace the dead woman, the widower has intercourse with her at 'the shaving of the sprouting hair', and she returns home to bury some of the fluids in her father's grove, and drink beer with him ritually.

An account of one of the rituals which we attended in Selya which is quoted in the documents (p. 134) may give some reality to this stark outline.

(b) The mort purpose and symbolism

765 764 828 When asked why the ritual of death is performed the first reply of Nyakyusa informants was that they were driving away (*ukukaga*) the dead and that if it were neglected those for whom it should have been performed would go mad (*ukubeya ilighili*). Angombwike explained: 'In the death ritual they drive away the shade (*ungwale*) saying: "Why are you always at me, nagging at me, in dreams?" It is to swear at him (the shade) and drive him away.'

Another informant explained: 'The touching of the earth is the expression of the wish that he will not come into our dreams and thoughts any more, and he does not!' Another confirmed this saying: 'The powdered medicine and touching the earth are alike; 765 they wish to stop him (the deceased) coming into our dreams.' 764 And an Ndali informant said: 'Shaving is to get rid of the shade 775 which was on their bodies.'

There is also the implication of speeding the deceased on his way to the land of the shades, for it is believed that if the ritual is not performed he will not be welcomed by his dead kinsmen and will continue to haunt the living. Of an unfinished death ritual

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F'517 Ngonde F'517
Nyakyusa
Selya, Malingwe

people say: '*Tukali ukudeyo ucyuda* (We have not yet hidden farewell to the shade),' *ukudeyo* being the word used for bidding a courteous farewell to departing guests. Mwaisumo elaborated the point. He said: 'The death ritual is a saying good-bye, it is to see off the dead man accompanying him on his way (*ukusindikula*); to demonstrate that we have buried him indeed, and to pray that forgetfulness may now come on us.' Another informant explained: 'Touching the earth is to say "Good-bye, friend."'

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The danger of madness was given as the reason both for the whole ritual and for many separate actions in it. 'You go mad if you do not shave after a death,' said the wife of the chief Mwaihojo. 'You go mad if you keep the hair of the corpse (*imuili ya nfunda*),' said Mwandisi, the old blind historian, and he went on: 'Yes, much madness comes from the shades if you have neglected the death ritual for a wife or for parents, and the ritual at puberty also. Madness comes from the shades and from Kyala. And if a woman refuses to perform the ritual for her husband who has died, and refuses to lie down with the heir, she also goes mad.' If someone does go mad the cause is usually said to be neglect of the death ritual or some mistake in its performance.

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Other types of illness are also attributed to neglect of the death ritual. Kasitile was ailing and thought that his illness was due partly to the fact that he had not completed the death ritual for a relative. Mwilabe said of the sweeping in the ritual: 'They sweep round their legs lest their bodies become swollen and sick. It is said that their bodies will swell if they attend the ritual of someone else and this is done and they themselves have not been swept over.' Several informants mentioned 'a lingering and painful death' (a terror often spoken of by the Nyakyusa) as the penalty for neglecting a ritual, and the last part of the ritual is expressly interpreted as a prophylactic against the 'gasping cough'.

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Finally, it is said that the crops will not flourish if the ritual is neglected. Kakuju, a village headman of Selya, was explicit on the point: 'If you do not bury your father properly the food will disappear. They (the diviners) will tell you to find something and when beer has been left overnight outside in the banana grove you pray to the shade.' The fear that the crops will not flourish is not mentioned so frequently as the danger of madness, but it is a general notion.

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The danger of madness or other illness coming on one is thought to be greatest if a man tastes the ritual food or beer, or is sprinkled

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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764 by the dust, at some other funeral without having completed the
765 ritual for his own parents, and the danger of the 'gasping cough'
828 exists only when a widow, having lain with the heir, eats or drinks with her own relatives.

796 Everyone knows the connection between madness and the performance of the whole ritual and between coughing and the final act, but not everyone is conscious of the symbolism of the various events. For example, Mwakisisile, a middle-aged pagan man whom we knew well, could not interpret the details of the symbolism and he explained: 'Some ask about these things in the ritual, some do not ask. I have not asked. We only know, many of us, that in the ritual we drive the shade, who is here, away from the body, and that if we do not drive him away we run mad. But we do not understand the details of the ritual such as straining water through a leaf, or passing the baskets between the legs, so as to be able to say: "This detail means this." ' Those most conscious of the symbolism are the *abanyago*, the officiants at the family rituals and the priests of the communal rituals. Kasitile, the hereditary rain-maker of Selya, who was a close friend of Godfrey Wilson's, and formally presented him to his dead ancestors urging them 'not to be startled at a white face', was our foremost authority on the symbolism of the Selya ritual. He was more conscious of the symbolism than most people, but his interpretation was confirmed at almost every point by others. Kasitile was not paid for
[124] information—none of our informants was—but he and Godfrey Wilson exchanged gifts from time to time in the manner customary among the Nyakyusa, and he often had a meal with us. Mwandisi, a very old blind chief living on the Lake-shore plain (MuNgonde) who was regarded by the Nyakyusa themselves as an authority on history and custom, was also a friend prepared to expound the
[184] rituals. His interpretation contradicted Kasitile's on one point only—he denied that one purpose of the ritual was to bring back the shade into the house. Other informants, though less coherent, corroborated Kasitile's interpretation, which may therefore be taken as a general, not a personal one.

764 There are nine main themes in the ritual: first, the driving away
765 of the dead from the dreams of his close kinsmen, and measures to
796 prevent him 'brooding over them' (*ukobatela*)—the word is that used of a hen brooding over her chickens. Widows, in particular, must be separated from the shade of their husband before the heir (or any other man) dare have intercourse with them. Secondly, the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

identification of the mourners with the corpse and the separation of the shade from both of them. 'What they do to the participants they do to the deceased. . . . If they are not cleansed he is still muddy. . . . We throw away the corpse, the contamination of death, into the river . . . we drive the shade away off our bodies to join his fellows . . . we separate the corpse and the shade.' Thirdly, bringing back the shade as a beneficent spirit into the home. 'In the ritual we tell the shade to go away and join his fellows, and then to come back with them and warm himself by the fire in our house. . . . At first the shade is in our bodies, we cast him out . . . at first it is as if we were still holding the corpse in our arms, but we throw the corpse away into the river . . . the shade we bring back into our house.'

Fourthly, a miming of the actions of a madman in eating excrement as a prophylactic against behaviour of that sort. The dead, if not separated from the living, bring madness upon them, and simulating madness is a protection against it.

Fifthly, the corpse and faeces are identified: 'The corpse is filth, it is excrement. And so when a madman for whom they have not performed the ritual eats filth that is the corpse, he is still holding it, they have not done the ritual for him.'

Sixthly, the shades are identified with semen and seeds and their control over potency and fertility is recognized. The Nyakyusa think that they are always present in sexual intercourse, and symbols of sexual intercourse are interpreted as a means of driving out the shade from the participants' bodies.

Seventhly, 'the food which he hoed' is symbolically 'given to the shade' of the man who has just died and he is urged to be satisfied: 'You, shade, do not think there was little food at your ritual. . . . The food which we have eaten you have eaten . . . do not create hunger.'

Eighthly, the shade is acknowledged as a kinsman by eating with him food and beer mixed with *ikipiki*—the symbol of agnatic kinship—before he is driven away.

Lastly, a dead man is formally replaced by his heir, a woman by her sister or her brother's daughter.

These conceptions are expressed in the following texts which are given as they were recorded by Godfrey Wilson. No attempt has been made to systematize Kastile's or Mwandisi's arguments, but the statements made during numerous sessions have been placed in sequence, and are separated only by dots.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

764 i. *Kasitile's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. in Nyakyusa and
765 translated by him shortly afterwards.)[1]
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KASITILE: We go to bathe wearing leaves, we throw them away, we bathe, then we come back and shave our hair. This means we are driving away the shade (*unsyuka*), for at first he is in our bodies. Our fathers told us: 'When I die I shall not reach the place of the shades unless you do the ritual for me; those who preceded me will drive me back saying: "You are not one of us, you cannot come, they have not yet done your ritual." For the shades linger on the way at first, they do not reach their place.' We do the ritual so as to tell the shade: 'We have given you everything, now go away and may your fellow shades receive you, do not come here.'

764 When we return from bathing we put a banana in the ground with
765 a pumpkin-seed and a lentil in it. We stoop and bite a piece off, and then we shave the hair. There is much idiocy (*ubulema*) if you do not
828 perform the ritual, and madness (*ikigili*), or perhaps you will have a lingering death. The shade is in the body, he causes madness (*ikigili*), he says: 'Why have you not done the ritual?' The shades pound and stamp the body.

Mwambuputa (a village headman) joining in the conversation said:

775 All this round us [with a sweeping gesture] is the place of the shades.
764 What we have buried is only the body, to prevent it stinking, but the heart (*indumbula*) stays here.

KASITILE: The banana which we bite in the ground is like the
764 sausages of porridge of the Kukwe, it is excrement, it is filth; because
765 I think that if I do not perform the ritual I may run mad and eat filth.
828 Also before this they beat up a mash of cowpeas, they take it with a spoon and put it against the wall, and one by one we come and eat. This also is eating filth so that we may escape and be clean.

[177] Madness (*ikigili*)[2] is of two kinds, one comes from Kyala (but we used to say from Mbasi, we did not say Kyala) and one from ritual. Mwaipopo (the chief) had the madness (*ikigili*); it is in his family on his mother's side. This is the madness of Mbasi, they do their rituals all right. Mbasi is he who lived with my father here. He called 'Kanjuki! Kanjuki!' from the hillside; then my mother would cook him some food
764 and my father would put something out for him.[3] When we perform
765 the rituals the shades are very pleased to see it; of old you might hear
775 them clapping their hands in the evening here, after we had finished a ritual. But they have gone away now. . . . Yes, the shades are filthy
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[1] I have made minor changes in the translation.
[2] Distinguished from a trance or epileptic fit, *ukukoma amalago*.
[3] See *Communal Rituals among the Nyakyusa* (in preparation).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

(*banyali*), they are in the body at first, they shake it and you fall ill; 764
they say: 'You are still muddy, you have not done the ritual.' . . . 765
When a man dies his heart (*indumbula*) and his body (*umfimba*) separate, 775
they are divorced, the heart with the blood (*ililopa*) and the shadow 828
(*ilisyungulu*) are separated from the corpse which rots in the ground. The corpse is filth, it is excrement. And so when a madman, for whom they have not performed the ritual, eats filth, that is the corpse, he is still holding it, they have not done the ritual for him. If they have not done the ritual for the shade his fellows drive him back and say: 'You cannot come yet, you are still muddy, they have not bathe you in the river.' . . .

Yes, that which they do to my body, to me the heir (or the relative) they do to the shade himself. He, the corpse, is earthy, muddy. That is why we smear ourselves with mud, we mourners; it is this earth that we drive away in the ritual, it is mud, it is the corpse. . . .

The hair of the mourners which we shave in the ritual is one with the hair of the corpse, it is his. We wash and shave and anoint him and he goes to his own place. . . .

First we bite the banana with the seeds stuck into it in the ground, and then we eat bananas and seeds in the usual way. It is the food which he, the shade, ate. . . .

They seize the heir and widows at the pumpkin-seed ritual. The officiant is there, she smears ashes on their chests and puts a strand of *ilingolongofwa* creeper on their necks, then if the woman refuses the man [837 later there is a case and she must pay the fine for adultery. If she 681] refuses before this there is no case, and she does not pay. The ashes and creeper are signs of death, of mourning, of the corpse—they cast them away into the river.

QUESTION: The rubbing in earth—what does it represent?

KASITILE: The banana flower is the corpse. We are saying to him: 'You corpse, we have finished with you, do not come here again, it is finished for ever, do not look towards us, go away.' This earth is the same as the mud with which we smear ourselves at the burial. We bathe, we cast it away.

QUESTION: The washing at the door with medicine?

KASITILE: We wash with powdered medicine at the door because we are just going to take filth (*indafu*) in our hands—to take the bananas and pumpkin-seeds. We bathe, we wash, and then they give us the bananas. It is taboo (*mwiko*) to eat before washing. The calabash used for this washing is hung up in the porch and used for the beer later, the beer which they drink on the path after anointing themselves.

QUESTION: The bananas and lentils and pumpkin-seeds?

KASITILE: At the eating of bananas and pumpkin-seeds we do not separate them, everything is then pressed together in one place; but the banana flower we bury is separate, that is the corpse. And at the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764 water when we bathe we make a separation—they take a stem of
765 bananas, and a bark-cloth, and a hen to the water. The bananas they
775 throw away—that is the corpse; the hen and the bark-cloth they bring
828 back to the homestead and the officiant takes them home with her—that is the shade, is not the shade in the house with us? Do we not pray to him?

QUESTION: Putting food into the pot?

KASITILE: This food is the filth of the body. We say: 'We cast you from us, let our hearts be purified; the mud we smeared on our faces we cast it away, all our body casts you away. We are not corpses; we are putting you to rights and shaving your hair, go away to your fellows.' We begin to get rid of the earth we had on our faces so that we may anoint ourselves again. In our lineage we eat only bean mash, not bananas and millet porridge, we differ in our rituals.

QUESTION: The sweeping of rubbish on to legs and the weeping?

KASITILE: This means: 'We begin to cast you off wholly, let all the ritual that is left come to us, we throw it away.' The measures of millet are to tell the shade that So-and-so has brought millet and is doing his ritual. 'Do not think he is angry with you,' we tell him, 'he has brought this millet.' The throwing of millet from the winnowing basket on to the participants' heads as they stand in a line outside means that we cast him away, we are taking him to the river—at the river we throw away the corpse. They throw away the leaves and the stem of bananas.

QUESTION: Hitting the heads with a banana sapling in the doorway?

KASITILE: They hit the participants on the head, that is the *ndweka* disease of the dead man,[1] we are setting them to rights.

QUESTION: The stem of bananas, hen, and bark-cloth?

KASITILE: The stem of bananas is the corpse, they leave it in the water with the leaves; the bark-cloth and hen are the shade which they bring into the house.

QUESTION: The circling with the pot and putting in of food?

KASITILE: This is the shade whom they bring into the house (*bikumbeka*) when they have brought him from the water. The banana flower they bury is the same as the leaf they wear, it is the corpse which they throw away in the water.

Yes, we separate the corpse and the shade with all our might, the earth we rub our bodies in is the corpse, we throw it into the water and the shade we bring back to the house. The eating of the bean mash on
[177] the wall (the old custom) and on the hearth (both old and contemporary) that is the shade in the house. He warms himself by the fire in the house, we pray to him. Putting food into the pot means: 'Leave our

[1] Not clear to me.—M. W.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

bodies altogether, go away to your friends, sit here by the hearth and warm yourself.'

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QUESTION: The grinding of millet flour on to bark and the subsequent anointing of the participants with this flour in a paste, before shaving?

KASITILE: This means: 'This is your food that you ate, we give it to you.' And the smearing on the hair means: 'We have finished your ritual for you, we have left nothing out, bear us no grudge.'

QUESTION: The sweeping of rubbish (*imindu*) on to the participants' legs?

KASITILE: The rubbish is the rubbish of death, it is dirt. 'Let it come now,' we say. 'Let it not come later, may we never run mad.' The wailing (during sweeping) means: 'Go away, farewell!' We have finished the burial now, it will never be done again save once more at the beer.

QUESTION: The basket of millet between legs and over heads?

KASITILE: That is to drive him away, to tell him: 'Do not return to these your relatives here, you were in their bodies, now you are separate, we have driven you away, you are no relative of ours!' All that we do in the house there means that he is in our bodies and we are going to cast him out. The flour on the shoulder is like the flour paste in the hair, this is the corpse, we throw it away.

QUESTION: The song 'We are startled by the shade' (*Tunyomwike ilindu*)?

KASITILE: The *ilindu* is the shade, we are startled.

QUESTION: How startled?

KASITILE: Ha! Are you not startled when you run mad?[1] The heart is terribly startled, it curls upwards; when they say this phrase: 'We are startled by the *ilindu*' they quiet the heart and make it lie down again. Let him go away and be startled with his fellows!

QUESTION: The word *ilinwanwa* (the croaking bird)?

KASITILE: That is the shade that broods on the body. 'Friend,' we say to him, 'we have put you to rights, do not come to us, oh croaking bird.'

QUESTION: The ritual as a whole?

KASITILE: It means: 'We have given you everything, we have eaten filth on the hearth'—for if one runs mad one eats filth, faeces. . . .

QUESTION: What is the symbolism of pouring water on the thatch and running through the drops?

KASITILE: The ritual has many parts. We teach a person that he should do it properly and not leave out anything. Do we not fear (*ukutila*) the water for washing, the water of the corpse? When heavy rain falls do we not flee from the downpour and enter the house? That is how it is then. We mimic what he did when he was alive. . . .

[1] *Ukunyomoka ilindu* is used also for an epileptic fit.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

lentil is the shade, the millet is the shade, the pumpkin-seed is the 775
shade. The doctor takes them away home and eats them, that means 768
that the shades have gone away. The words they say: 'Ours, ours! We 833
marvel at the thing!' mean: 'The semen is ours, the shades have supported him, they have given us the semen, they have not bound it.' For if the shades are angry they bind him and the semen does not come. . . . If the heir and his dead father (or brother) were on bad terms then, although the ritual is correctly done, yet still the shades will bind his semen at the end of the ritual. Fertility (*imbapo*) does not belong to the shades but to Kyala, but if the shade is angry he binds it. [842]

There are three symbols: the banana is the corpse and the seed is the shade. It is the filth which madmen catch hold of, it is the faeces which they eat. And the banana is the body of the man and the seed is his semen. Eating is sexual intercourse. It is this he has done during his lifetime. It is to send him away and say that we are about to put another in his homestead. It is the body and semen of him who has died. Also when a woman has died the husband eats . . . it [the banana and seed] is what we did. . . .

The seed is the shade, and it is the blood for creating a person [i.e. the semen] because the shade and the semen are brothers.[1]

Yes, they are intermingled, all are together in the ritual: the corpse, and the shade, and the body of the man [i.e. his penis] and the blood [semen] and the filth of madness; all are intermingled. You understand, Mwaipaja (G. W.), you are a priest now, you are a real priest. . . .

When they shake up the millet and lentils and pumpkin-seeds at the beer when he has finished coitus with the women it also has a double symbolism (*fyope fyo fifwani fibili*); the seed is the blood [semen]—Ours, ours—and it is the shade who has gone. Also at puberty it is like this. . . .

Those who say the *ikipiki* is one and the same for birth, puberty and the death ritual are right. It is one only. . . . The *ikipiki* is our blood, it is kept in the house of the senior wife. It pertains both to men and to the shades, for when we marry we do a ritual with it, so the shade says: 'I have eaten it during my life, I was born with it (for it went into his stomach), I married a woman with it (we wash and shave our hair with it at marriage), now that I am dead they perform the ritual with it.' It is one and the same. The *ikipiki* is our intestine.[2] It is one and the same in all lineages.

One day at a funeral roasted bananas were brought. A man 764●
started scraping the ash off his with a spear. Kasitile asked him: 'Do you scrape bananas?' He answered: 'Yes, but if there were the litter in the house we would avoid doing so.'

[1] cf. *Ulukungu*: semen; *inyungu*: pumpkin-seed.
[2] *Ubula bwa kikolo*: 'the intestine of the lineage'; the large intestine.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

764 177 Then they explained to me that formerly it was forbidden to scrape bananas at a death, you eat them with the ash on, for if you scrape you will scrape your body also, that is, you will scratch and scratch. But now that custom is finished. Three men were scraping away.

784 Mwaikambo said: 'In all rituals it is forbidden to scrape bananas —in the puberty and twin rituals also.'

184 784 KASITILE: It is forbidden to scrape bananas only at a death ritual, not at other rituals. If you scrape bananas you scrape your own body. It is the corpse. We have died, we are the corpse. . . .

604 781 764 The mother's brother (*umwipwa*) hands bananas and meat over his shoulder to the children who are treated, then he goes off home and they go home without looking back at one another. If they do look back at one another the child will grow feeble and go mad. If the mother's brother does not come to cut the banana grove and do this, if the child sees others eating that banana it becomes feeble and goes mad. The banana and the meat are the filth which madmen take hold of, they are filth. Yes, it is like the banana which they eat at the pumpkin-seeds ritual.

QUESTION: Why the mother's brother?

KASITILE: Who should give it to them? Their kinsman (*unkamu*) should give it to them, he who looks after everything for them.

ii. *Mwandisi's interpretation.*[1]

764 QUESTION: What do you do in the death ritual, what does it mean?

MWANDISI: When a child has died I do not approach the women, my wives, until we have finished the ritual. On the night of the day we drink the beer then we come together. It is a ritual! Yes, the coming [833] together of man and woman is a ritual (*bo bunyago*). If we come together before the beer then we overstep our child, Lubabelo, he will be impotent and not beget children. No, his children are not relatives (*bo bandu*) they are my comrades (*bobinangu*) but if Lubabelo forestalls (*ukukinda*) the ritual with his wife then he oversteps (*ukukinda*) his children. And when we have finished the ritual Lubabelo begins[2] and goes first to his wife. We follow him at our home. If we begin we would overstep him, it is taboo (*mwiko*). At the ritual of pumpkin-seeds, we drive away the shade, we say: 'Do not rise from the dead and come to us, go to the land of the shades, that we may bear and beget another child, you prevent us doing so!'

[1] His son Lubabelo, who was with us during the earlier part of the conversation, left so that we could speak freely. There was no difficulty about Mwandisi's wife being present.

[2] Mwandisi was referring to a ritual performed on the death of his son Lubalelo's child.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764

QUESTION: The banana and the pumpkin-seeds?

MWANDISI: These are the ritual which we—I the man, and she the woman—perform at the end, they are the sexual intercourse. The pumpkin-seed and the lentil and the millet are the blood of the man, the banana is his procreative power (*mbapo jake*). The pumpkin-seed ritual is important—when we have finished it then I go to my wife and do not fear her, but Lubabelo begins. Before the pumpkin-seed ritual it is completely taboo.

QUESTION: And the beer?

MWANDISI: That is not important, but the pumpkin-seed ritual is. But when a man has died then his wife must not approach the heir until the beer ritual.

QUESTION: Then the lust for copulation always comes from the shades? 833

MWANDISI: Yes, desire comes from the shades. If they are angry you 775 are impotent and cannot beget a child; and sometimes also you are 842 impotent because the umbilical cord (*ululela*) has fallen on your mother.

MWANDISI'S WIFE: When my husband says in his heart: 'I shall go to my wife', that comes from the shades.

QUESTION: The umbilical cord?

MWANDISI'S WIFE: It is completely taboo for it to fall on the loins, then the child will not develop, it will be sterile and not bear (or beget) a child. And the mother herself will not bear again, she will not conceive again. . . . A woman cries a great deal with the pain in her belly until the cord comes away: when it has come away then she is filled with wonder and does not cry.[1]

MWANDISI: Pumpkin-seeds are used by us and the people of Selya; 764 the Kukwe perform the ritual with beans, and the people of Ngonde with fish and beer. . . .

QUESTION: Why do the heir and wife appear to refuse when caught in the ritual?

MWANDISI: Because someone has died. Should they rejoice therefore? If they rejoice it seems as if they wished their relative to die.

QUESTION: Do they fear the dead will harm them if they appear to rejoice?

MWANDISI: No, they fear those above [i.e. the living] lest they laugh at them. They are ashamed. But sometimes a woman really refuses. She fights and fights, and struggles and struggles, and says: 'No.' Her friends (the women) hit her and put her in the house, then when she has come out of the house she runs off, she flees.

QUESTION: The ashes and the *ilingolongofwa* creeper?

MWANDISI: They are signs of mourning, they give them to the

[1] The umbilical cord, *ululela*, is literally the 'cord of weeping'.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

764 heir. It is the ritual we are performing, they are signs of widowhood (*fya bufwele*), of lamentation (*kyo kesa*). The ashes are a sign of lamentation and the *ilingolongofwa* creeper is a sign of lamentation. Yes, all these things are part of the ritual, we cannot leave them out, it is taboo. (If we did) those below [i.e. the shades] would be angry and say: 'They have startled me and caused me pain in the heart; they have injured the ritual by foreshadowing evil.'

768 At the end the heir sleeps with the women in the house—before the
764 beer. He performs the ritual with them, the officiants wait for them and ask them: 'How was it?' If he says 'No,' they say: 'Kyala does not
[787] stand in the house.' They go and divine at a doctor's who says:' So-and-so is angry.'

QUESTION: Kyala does not stand in the house (*Kyala akema nnyumba*)?

MWANDISI: It is the shades, they say Kyala does not give support. Then again he performs the ritual (*ikunyagula*, i.e. he attempts to have coitus) and they ask him: 'How was it?' They say: 'Yes, they (the shades) have stood with us, Kyala has stood with us.' [He gave both forms as alternatives: *batwemile* and *Kyala emile*.] Then they clap their hands and raise the shout of triumph (*akalulu*).

QUESTION: Is that the cry: 'Ours, ours!'?

[184 MWANDISI: No, that's the cry of the hill people. With us it's taboo.
784] Then in the morning someone shouts: 'War has come.' They come out immediately and run away to the pasture-lands.

764 QUESTION: Is this 'coming out' (*ukusoka*) the same as that in the coming out of chiefs (*ubusoka*) and in the twin ceremony?

MWANDISI: Yes, they run because their legs were heavy (*nsito*) in the house, now they have grown lighter and are strong; because in the twin ceremony the seclusion in the house lasts four months, at the coming out of chiefs two months, and that is hard, but at death it is only one, so it is light. But at death and the birth of twins it is the war (*ubwite*)
[833 of the mats. Is it not war with women? [*ubwite* is used here for sexual
195] intercourse.] Then when they have come out they give one another beer to drink in the doorway. The heir takes beer in his mouth and
[753] spits it out and hands the vessel on to his wives and children. Each does the same. They do not swallow it. To do so causes diarrhœa. The man and his wives are burning. They have come from the bed. This giving one another to drink, when each spits and does not swallow, happens after the eating of sausages of porridge on the road.[1] It is the same in the twin ritual except that whereas it is only the principals who give one another to drink at the death ritual, in the twin ritual not only they, but all relatives, and even non-relatives do it as well!

QUESTION: How about the eating of millet porridge with powdered medicine on the road?

[1] No other informant mentioned this in the MuNgonde death ritual.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

MWANDISI: The sausages of porridge stuck in the ground and sprinkled with powdered medicine which each stoops and bites mean that you should be heavy in your belly (*musito munda*) and not have diarrhœa, it is to make faeces hard (not watery). Some we leave and bury [the end of each sausage of porridge is left in the ground]; that means that people should step over it and take away the disease, may they have diarrhœa at their homes! They will get it really! 764 [753]

QUESTION: Why do the dead man's sisters admonish their sisters-in-law, his widows? 607 764

MWANDISI: Because we have all met together. They say: 'Do not grudge him food, go on cooking for him. He dies of hunger! Begin again! And why do you not cook for us when we come? You grudge us food!' We scold them very much and they weep tears.

QUESTION: They say in Selya that you both drive away a shade and bring him back to the house. 764 775

MWANDISI: No, we drive him away, we do not bring him back to the house.

QUESTION: But you go to the stream with a stem of bananas, a hen and a fresh strip of bark, the bananas you throw away, but you come back with the hen and the bark. Is that the shade?

MWANDISI: These do not come back home. The officiant has them and takes them to her house. . . .

The stem of bananas we throw in the stream, it is sickness, it is the corpse, it goes to Kyala there. The hen and the bark we give to the doctor, the officiant, because it is she who caught hold of the sickness. She is always an unrelated person, not a relative; we pay her. If we have not performed the ritual we run mad, the shades have not come out, they are still there within.

QUESTION: You performed the ritual for Lubabelo's child yourselves? 764

MWANDISI: Yes, she was our grandchild. We grandparents don't matter, we carry out the ritual but it's not important; if, however, it is our own child [who has died] then it is taboo. It is taboo up to the point that connections are not relatives. [A grandchild in this context—though not in other contexts—is treated as not a relative]. The ritual *must* be performed for all *relatives* (*abakamu*). . . . [603]

First the stem of bananas and then the millet and pumpkin-seeds are passed between the straddled legs of the principals. The winnowing basket (containing millet and seeds) is pushed along with the officiant's elbow. In performing this ritual we finish the mating of man and woman, for that which comes out of the man in front [i.e. the semen] is the shades, when the participants have spat out we drive the shades away. If we have not performed the ritual we go mad. The shades have not come out but are still within. When, however, we have finished, then they have come out of the body. But they come again, we always have them. (*Apa tukunyagula tukumalesya mboleli munyambala nunkikulu, po*

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

●764 *ifi fikusoka kukyeni nunyambala bo basyuka, bo baputile abasyuka tukubakaga: lenga tukanyagwila tukubopa ikigili! Abasyuka bo bakasokaga bikujamo; papo lenga tumalile po basokile munda. Loli bikwandesya kangi tukuja nabo bwila!*)

842 What we do comes from the shades and from Kyala himself. The
831 blood is theirs and his together. Those who create (*ukubumba*) a child say: 'I am just eating at a woman,' but Kyala creates a child! If Kyala and the shades do not 'cook' [i.e. do not cause desire] you will do nothing, the penis is flaccid, but if Kyala has 'cooked' then you really do something, your heart (*indumbula*) is full of desire. Always the shades are there and we drive them away, they are there and we drive them away. . . .

775 A shade is resurrected in the body of his child (*Unsyuka ikusyuka itolo mumbeli gwa mwanake*). . . .

764 Passing the basket of pumpkin-seeds, millet, and lentils between the
775 legs and on to the head and throwing to one side means: 'Here between the legs there is work, may they go out in intercourse, and from the head where we dream, may they go out also.' Because in the ritual we say: 'Let them come into the body' at first, then we drive them away. Rubbing ourselves in the earth and passing millet between the legs means: 'May they come';[1] throwing millet and so on to one side it is to drive them away, that they may go out.

QUESTION: Which shade do you drive away?

MWANDISI: He who has just died, we drive him away.

QUESTION: What about the first ancestor?

MWANDISI: He is there at their place [the place of the shades], we drove him away long ago, he just receives him [the newly deceased].

QUESTION: Why the pumpkin-seeds in the bananas?

MWANDISI: It is the semen (*ulukungu*) for begetting children. . . .

QUESTION: Do the shades always come when a man dies?

MWANDISI: Yes, they always come, they receive their fellow. Yes, even though he has died from sorcery they come and receive him, and even though he has died from witchcraft they come, the shades receive him, and if it is from illness he has died they also come. There is no
[761] death without the shades, they always come to receive their fellow.

When the witches have 'eaten' someone the shades come to receive
764 him. No, the witches eat him alone, but the shades receive him. Some-
775 one may get up in the morning and say: 'I dreamed they ate me and I
763 was with the shades!' Then he is about to die. Sometimes someone
828 dreams and says: 'In the night I was in the land of the shades with so-and-so, I left him there, I escaped myself and came home.' Then his friend is about to die.

764 If you do not perform the ritual you go mad (*kukyembela ikigili*) or
775 perhaps you get very thin, and are unable to die, you are ailing and do

[1] i.e. the participants identify themselves with the deceased.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngónde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764 775

not die. That comes from the shades when they are angry and say: 'We shall see!' It is to be finished off.

QUESTION: So the shades always come at death?

MWANDISI: Yes. See, Mwafyuma who died [the old Mwafyuma, a classificatory brother of Mwandisi, died the day before yesterday]. I dreamed at night of Mwakalukwa [a classificatory son of Mwandisi who died about 1932] and in the morning I told X here [his son-in-law who lives near was sitting with us and at once assented, 'Yes, he told me'] that I had dreamed of Mwakalukwa, and there were many deaths in the country—the people of Kisale were mourning and the peopleof Ndemba and that Mwakalukwa had said to me: 'Where are we dead to care for those who come?' And I said to X: 'If someone comes from Mwaya you will see that someone has died.' That very day my son here [Pugana his son was sitting near] came and said: 'Mwafyuma has died.'

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This dream of Mwandisi's was cited as a proof that the shades come to receive a man at death. They came to Mwandisi in a dream—the shade of Mwakalukwa came, which he took to mean that the death was to be in Mwakalukwa's country, not Mwakalinga's.

QUESTION: You said the shades come to receive a man killed by witches. Have they no power to drive away witches?

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MWANDISI: No, the shades have not the power to drive away the witches but Kyala drives them away.

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QUESTION: Kyala? You mean the headman of the village!

MWANDISI: Yes, the headman drives them off, Kyala gave him the power (or duty).

iii. *Evidence of other informants*

KISSOULE: We begin by burying the flowering head of an *ilitoki* banana—that is a person—then we rub forehead, elbow, and knee in the earth there and go to bathe. We push away the earth, that means our business above here (in the world of the living) is finished, we have really buried you, do not come here above, go to your place (below), in the world of the shades.

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MWAILAPE (a Christian): They throw the stem of bananas into the water and the bark and feathers, but if it is a fowl and the bark is good, they take them back and they belong to the officiant. Throwing away the stem of bananas means: 'We are driving you (the shade) away. Be off!' The millet which is tossed in the faces of the participants is also thrown away in the water. Tossing it in their faces means: 'This is your food which you cultivated, go away with it.'

MWAKISISILE AND OTHERS: The touching of the ground is the ex-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

764 pression of the wish that he will not come into our dreams and thoughts any more, and he does not.

QUESTION: Why the medicine?

MWAKISISILE: It is a ritual, a custom. The medicine and the touching of the ground are the same thing, they wish to stop him coming into our dreams.

QUESTION: Why do you eat bananas?

MWAKISISILE: We eat the main food of the country.

QUESTION: Why the fighting for the porridge?

MWAKISISILE: This is still to wish him good-bye, it is the end of the ritual. We must finish or he, the dead man, will not go away, half of him will still be there.

QUESTION: Why the beer?

MWAKISISILE: Beer is the drink of the country just as bananas are the food. The drinking is to finish saying good-bye. When we have eaten and drunk then we have done with him altogether. Before this he comes time after time into our dreams. If you do not perform the ritual some people say that when you get sick you will never die, but always be sick. If you are sick they will remember and say: 'Let us make beer for ritual.' That is why all must bring some millet to the ritual to ensure a quiet and easy death. Eating and drinking like this is the custom. Something bad will happen to the lineage if it is not done. To refuse to participate is to separate from your lineage.

MPOGO: At the ritual there should be many foods. The bean is there and we eat it; the lentil is there and we eat it; millet is there and the
764 banana and pumpkin-seed. That means: 'You shade, do not think that
775 there was little food at your ritual; the food which we have eaten with you, you have eaten.' Yes, the shade himself eats. We sprinkle on the earth (*pasi*)[1] whither you (the shade) have gone, meaning: 'Do not create hunger, bless the children that they may eat food and not just wander about.' If we do not perform the ritual properly the children will get thin, the shade says: 'You have not unloosed me, I am just on the road.' There should be many foods which means that we have given you (the shade) all the food which we men eat. The banana in which we put seeds is the corpse. The shades eat food, we dream that we eat with them, and if they are angry the beer in the house goes bad, and the milk goes bad.

764 Angombwike (the Christian son of a famous doctor) agreed, in answer to questions, that 'the eating of filth by madmen is like the filth of death, those faeces are the corpse'.

764 MWANDISI'S FRIEND (a man of 35 or 40): We perform the ritual that
775 Kyala may receive him, that the shades may receive him, because the

[1] *Pasi*: *below* and implies both *on* the ground and *underground*.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde
KuKwe

ritual is powerful. If you do not perform the ritual for your father or 764
perhaps that of your wife then you won't be a person, your body 775
comes to an end and you die, but you are present, you are still alive, you do not die when the body comes to an end, you take faeces as in the ritual. But when they bring millet and say: 'This is so-and-so's, and this so-and-so's' (naming him whose ritual you have omitted) and brew beer and drink it, then you die.

QUESTION: How do the dead appear to us?

ANSWER: They appear before our eyes at night. You dream and in the morning say: 'I was with the so-and-so's in the night, with the so-and-so's!

QUESTION: Where do you go (at death)?

ANSWER: When we die we go above. [177]

QUESTION: That's a new thing?

ANSWER: Yes, indeed, formerly we said we went below; our fathers and grandfathers said that. But we now say we go below to rot and stink only but since we look toward home when they bury us perhaps the heart (*indumbula*) goes above (*kumwanya*) and that is home. We have seen this in European times in books. No, I am not a Christian and I cannot read, I've just learnt this. . . .

KALUNDA (a doctor) AND MWAIJUMBA: The *ikipiki* medicine put into the beer and lees at 'the shaving of the sprouting hair' is the same medicine as that which we eat at the pumpkin-seed ritual. The *ikipiki* of the death ritual and the puberty ritual and the birth ritual is one and the same, but the medicine for twins is different. . . . There is one *ikipiki* used in all the three rituals—puberty, birth, and death—but to it is added another medicine which is different for each of the three. *Ikipiki* is our kinship, it is our blood (*ikipiki bo bukamu bwetu, lyo ilopa lyetu*); when my wife has borne a child and no one wipes its mouth with [851] the *ikipiki* it means it is not my child, it is just a bastard from the veld, it is no relative of mine but a stranger. In the puberty ritual it is the same, we treat the girl with the *ikipiki* of her husband. She moves [881] from our lineage, from that of her father, she is now a stranger, not their relative (*ikusama nkikolo kyetu, kubagwise, mundu leleno, aka nkamu gwabo*). When someone has died it is the same. We eat food together with the deceased, the shade, and his blood. It is like the Swahili custom of eating each other's blood to create kinship. It means: 'You were our [171] kinsman from afore-time, but now it is finished, you are a stranger.' But the medicine for the twin ritual is separate, it is quite different.

2. IN KUKWE COUNTRY

The Kukwe ritual of death differs in detail from that of Selya 764
and MuNgonde, but it is performed with the same overt purpose: 184
to drive away the dead from the bodies and dreams of the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

764 184 mourners, to prevent him 'brooding' over them, lest they run mad or become feeble in mind and body; to speed him on his road to the land of the shades and bring him back as a beneficent spirit in the house. The power of the shades over potency and fertility is acknowledged and the widow goes to her father's house with the 'filth' of intercourse with the heir on her and there drinks beer ritually, lest her relatives die of a gasping cough. In short, the themes which characterize the Selya ritual occur also in the Kukwe ritual.

Many of the symbols employed in the Selya ritual are employed by the Kukwe also: the elaborate washing with medicine and shaving and anointing to separate the mourners from the corpse, the casting away of leaves they wear in the stream, the sweeping out of the litter in the mourning hut, the miming of the action of a madman in eating faeces as a prophylactic against becoming mad, the use of the *ikipiki*—the medicine representing kinship—all these are common to both rituals. But each has distinctive symbols also.

(*a*) *The events*

764 The ritual begins in the evening, four or five days after the death. The participants wash with *nyasati* medicine in the doorway of the mourning hut, and lick lumps of porridge off the mid-rib of a banana leaf. The porridge is prepared by the officiant who grinds the millet at the doorway and then puts the mixture on two banana leaves, one of plantain (*itoki*), the other of sweet banana (*indifu* or *iselya*), which are used throughout as male and female symbols respectively. After sunset, a pot with medicine in it is put on the fire, and each participant in turn throws in a few beans mixed with medicine, and then some water, saying as he or she does so: 'This is the ritual of my mother' (or father, etc., as the case may be). A stem of plantains is 'stolen' from a friend's banana plantation (he having agreed beforehand that it should be taken), then the participants gather round the hearth and bid farewell to the deceased. They circle round the hearth to the music of a harp and sing. As they circle, the participants crumble pods of oil-seed (*inyemba*). Sometimes they also sing: 'It's the twisting up,' and twist up cloths as they do so. Then they dance the stamping dance, (*ukukanya nganya*,) and raise the cry of triumph (*akalulu*). When daylight comes they eat the beans which have stood overnight in the hut and sweep out the rubbish (*imindu*) with a medicine (*imitwati*) and throw it in the banana grove. This is 'clearing out the litter'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

(*ukusosya ulufumbo*). Rich people kill a cow 'to clear out the litter' 764
which, like those killed at the burial, is said to go with the deceased [556]
to the land of the shades.

Some time later (the date varies from one ritual to another) they 764
build a little hut at the intersection of two paths—cross-roads—or, 346
if there is no cross-roads near, on the path to the stream, and in this hut they make a hearth with fire-bricks (*amafiga*); a fire is lighted and each participant in turn puts oil-seeds from the *unsyunguti* tree into a potsherd on the fire, saying as he does so: 'This is the death of my mother (etc.).' The seeds are mixed with 764
medicine and, when they are roasted, are ground for ointment. Then beans are put on with water in the same fashion, each participant pouring a little water and saying: 'This is the ritual of my mother (etc.).' Next, the participants are made to sit down on a bark-cloth. The officiant draws lines on the head of each with a bunch of *ikisajelo* grass dipped in the lees of beer, and as she shaves him she mocks him saying: 'Poor fool, it found its mother was dead, went stealing, and they have speared it on the head.' Then the participants go to wash, each wearing two banana leaves round his loins and two round his neck. One of each pair is a plantain, and it is put on first, the other is a sweet banana and it comes on top. And each participant sticks a plantain into his (or her) waistband in front, and a sweet banana behind. When they [783]
come to the stream each participant sits down in it and the officiant puts pebbles between his fingers and toes, in the crooks of his elbows and knees, in his mouth and ears, and on his head. These, and the leaves and bananas he wore, are allowed to flow away in the water. They return to the temporary hut carrying flowers, *kalengelenge* and *kakesefu*, which they throw on to the roof, and the officiant pours water she has brought in a little calabash on to the thatch above the doorway, while each participant in turn runs through the drops, out at a back door, in again and out through the drops. As they come home millet is scattered on the ground before them, then they eat roasted bananas with lentils (and sometimes pumpkin-seeds) stuck in them as in the Selya ritual, boiled bananas and beans, a bean mash, and roasted chicken or, sometimes, meat. The bananas are from the plantain stem they stole and from a sweet banana stem provided by the family, and some of the food is salted, some unsalted. As they eat they look in the direction from which their lineage came, then the officiant anoints them with ointment (made from the oil-seeds

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KaKwe

764 prepared earlier) and ties a strip of medicated banana bark round the neck of each, and with these necklaces on they must sleep. In one lineage they take little horns and blow into them and walk round calling out: 'We are driving you away, you are a stranger to us, do not come in dreams repeatedly.'

Next morning sausages of millet porridge mixed with medicine are half-buried in the earth at the cross-roads—or somewhere on the pathway—and each participant in turn bends down and bites off a piece, leaving some in the ground. They take off their bark necklaces and throw them into the little hut, which is then destroyed. After they have bathed again the officiant strokes each one on the forehead with a razor.

768 When a married man has died the heir is formally recognized,
587 and the widows are asked whether they accept him as their husband, at some point during the ritual; when Mwaikambo's father died the recognition of the heir preceded the whole ritual; more often it follows it and there is a formal drinking of 'the beer of inheritance'. In any case the first intercourse between the heir and the widows is always delayed for some months and, until it has taken place, the widows may meet their relatives; after it each widow returns to the homestead of her father (or his heir) for the 'ritual of the gasping cough' (*ingotolo*). Old Fibombe, a Christian elder, described it vividly:

768 The parents of the girl brew beer and call her to the beer of *ingotolo*.
177 They also call their relatives. She brings a hoe or a goat (or now a cloth
587 or 1s.). First of all she lifts up the pot of beer into which an officiant has put powdered medicine (*imbondanya*) and takes a mouthful, stirring the rest, then she hands it to another participant and when he has taken a mouthful she spits out, then she stirs and hands it on, and when the next has taken a mouthful she spits, and so it continues until all present have done this. Nowadays people do not take the beer in their mouths, they simply stir and pass it on. Pride prevents them. They say people will laugh at them if they do the things of old. Time is passing and things are like *Mambo Leo* [the Swahili newspaper] now. All
[184] pagans, however, still do this ritual in a modified form, only the Christians leave it undone.

768 This informant omitted two significant points in the ritual
587 which we saw for ourselves: the widow brings a spear belonging to her new husband and thrusts it into the earth outside her father's house. It stands beside the vessel of beer while her kinsmen drink until her brother plucks it out and takes it into the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

158 kind. We take such a one [either type] to a doctor, tying a rope round
757 his waist on the way. For if we leave him free he goes and drowns himself in the lake. So then the doctor says 'His heart has suddenly turned over', and gives him a powdered medicine to eat from a bark-cloth. Then when he has eaten the medicine the doctor puts a finger at the back of his tongue to make him vomit, again and again. So then the filth comes out of him. Then the doctor says: 'Don't eat meat or fish until I give you other medicine later.' Then he ties some of the same medicine in two bark-cloths and ties one round his neck, one round his loins. . . .

158 Sometimes a man in the mad fit finds a woman, then he takes the
684 leaves off his waist, catches hold of her and, forcing her to the ground, has intercourse with her. Then when the woman returns home she complains that a man in the mad fit has caught and raped her. Then her husband says: 'Well, it's all over now. If he'd been in normal health I'd have sued him for a cow for adultery before the chief, but seeing he is mad there's no point in my doing so, it's all over now!' . . .

158 Sometimes madness comes by itself, although no ritual has been
775 omitted, sometimes because they have not performed a ritual. The symptoms of the two kinds are exactly the same, their cause is different. The one connected with ritual comes because the shades are angry: 'Why have you left that child untreated, without putting stones on its head . . . ? It seems it is of no account.' And then the child goes mad.

757 When madness comes of itself the doctor takes the patient to a
755 waterfall and lets the water tumble on his head; then he makes him vomit, and the vomit is carried away in the water. But that which comes from ritual they don't treat in this way; they make him vomit at home, and then perform the ritual for him.

158 Sometimes madness brings visions (*injosi*)—the man lets everything
787 come in his speech and says of people: 'What sort are they? They are witches!' And if there is a gathering he speaks out: 'You are a witch—you bewitch your neighbour's cows!' So then people ask what he means by letting everything come in his speech like this, and they are told he has the mad fit on him. The madness gives him power to see the witches, he sees them surely. And of old if a madman with the fit on
[683] him accused you of witchcraft you would go at once to drink the ordeal. And if the ordeal accused you too then your house was burnt over you!

●764 QUESTION: Why the washing and eating porridge?

MWASALEMBA: If we don't do this then the children will vomit a watery fluid.

I put a direct question to him about the sausages of porridge and he admitted with a smile, rather an embarrassed one: 'Yes, well, you have understood it; yes, it is a symbol of eating excrement . . . we do it at night.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

764

QUESTION: The water dripping from the little hut?

MWASALEMBA: If we omit this then the children when young don't o mad, but they vomit a watery fluid, and people say that we have ot performed the ritual of water for them.

QUESTION: The meaning of leaves and fruit of bananas?

MWASALEMBA: Yes, it is because those who run mad throw away eir clothes and wear leaves. So in the ritual we make them wear aves; we think that if we don't do this they will have the madness and row away their clothes. The leaves of plantain belong to the man he father), those of sweet banana to the woman (the mother). They gnify the completion of the ritual, both of their father and of their other. We make them wear both kinds of leaf, even if one parent is ill alive, because they begot them together, their blood is one, the an's blood and the woman's blood. The plantain fruit which they sert in the leaves in front is the procreative power of the father, it is ke his penis; the sweet banana which they insert behind is the fer-ility of the mother, it is like a bark-cloth. We throw them away in the ater so that they may float away, it is a sign of death; the blood of ur parents which was one is finished now!

QUESTION: The leaves on the neck?

MWASALEMBA: When they run mad people do this, they wear leaves n head and neck.

QUESTION: The stones on the head, in ears, mouth and fingers?

MWASALEMBA: That is a symbol of death. Does not the corpse esemble a stone? It neither speaks nor hears; it does not hoe, or work with its hands at all. He whom we have buried is like a stone. We hrow his death away into the stream.

QUESTION: The little hut?

MWASALEMBA: That is for cooking food in; we don't cook for him [the dead man] in the house because we did not bury him there but outside, so we cook for him outside. . . . We grind millet in the doorway [778] because the doorway belongs to the shade. We say: 'Receive us, oh shade, since a person has died, receive us!' Because if we enter into the house we are with the shade, and when we come out we are with him, the doorway is the shade's (*ikijigo kya nyuka*). It is like the pouring of water on the thatch; when we have come from bathing, we enter and come out again, the doorway is the shade's. And at other times, if someone is ill and the shade has been brooding over him, he stands in the doorway and prays to the shade (*ikumputa nyuka*). Yes, when a man dies the shade broods over (*ikutobatela*) us living.

QUESTION: Does death come from the shades? [761]

MWASALEMBA: Yes, when I have lain down at night, in the morning 763
I tell my children: 'So-and-so and so-and-so came to me, I have eaten their food, they came to carry me off.' Then there is sickness and they say: 'The shades have brooded over you, you will die.' It is death in-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

763 deed. We wash at the eating of millet to say: 'You shade, this millet which we eat comes to you because you brooded over us.' We wash our hands and mouths.

764 QUESTION: Why do you eat millet?

775 MWASALEMBA: The millet belongs to the shade. When we brew beer we put some in a calabash cup, but it is not drunk, it is left for five days and becomes lees [i.e. the liquid dries up], then we say: 'The shade has drunk it.'[1] We pray to him and say: 'He is angry.' We brew beer and pour it out in the banana grove, and say: 'You shade, what are you angry about, why have you brooded over the beer?' (They go first to divine.) We speak in the evening in the banana grove and all the children listen, and my wife in the house.

Similarly, if a cow calves and then does not take to its calf, does not lick it, then doctors say: 'The shades have caught hold of the cow, they have brooded over it. Then I pray with water only [in the other case there is both blowing out water and pouring of beer], and I speak as before. Then in the evening the cow takes to its calf and we say: 'The shades refused to let it recognize its calf.' That beer stays for two days —it's not strong!

764 QUESTION: The licking porridge off the mid-rib of the banana leaf?

MWASALEMBA: We eat porridge and he [the shade] eats. We eat off the mid-rib of the banana leaf because the banana grove is the shade's. When someone has died we cut the banana grove, and in the banana grove we pray. It is the shade's own.

764 QUESTION: Throwing beans into the pot?

775 MWASALEMBA: We say: 'You shade! We are eating these beans. Since you have brooded over our fellow who has died, receive him.' For we do not pray to him who has died now, but to that first one who died first. If we do not give him beans then the beans dry up, they shrivel in the fields and people say: 'The shade is angry. We have made a mistake in not giving him beans, we have not taken care of our fellow, his child.' Because the shade creates the beans. Yes, he, the shade, creates all foods, millet and maize and all.

764 QUESTION: The stealing of bananas?

MWASALEMBA: The millet and beans used are those of the house, but the stem of bananas must come from the house of a friend because bananas belong to the shade. Do you pray to him in the hoed fields? In the millet? You pray to him in the banana grove! Because of this you seek another's banana stem!

764 QUESTION: Circling round the fire to the harp and singing?

775 MWASALEMBA: The first shade who has died we have within us, he has brooded over us, we make him circle round, we are with him.

[1] At the drinking of the beer of inheritance in the Ndali ritual the shades are called upon. 'If the beer froths up that means the shades have heard', and the calabash cup is dashed to pieces on the hearth.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

QUESTION: Where is the one who has just died? 764

MWASALEMBA: It is him the shade has brooded over. We say: 'You 775
shade, look after this child of yours, care for him and don't abandon him. He also should be a shade, let the others speak to him in the future.' When we sing 'Farewell . . .' we lament him who has died.

QUESTION: And the trampling dance (*ukukanya inganya*)?

MWASALEMBA: We say: 'You shade, care for your fellow, don't desert him, may he be with you in your body.' We trample the ground because the shade is in the ground, he is within the body, he is underground, everywhere.

QUESTION: What do you mean by 'in your body'?

MWASALEMBA: Because the shade has created us, we came from him, we die, we go there to him; not to others, but to him.

QUESTION: The two leaves and beating and saying: '*Syeku, syeku* of father, *syeku, syeku* of mother'?

MWASALEMBA: Syeku is the name we have been given for the shade. We say: 'The shade, the shade of father, the shade, the shade of mother!' because since a woman has died we speak to the shade as if the husband was 'father' (*tata*) who brooded over his wife. He has brooded over all us living, both me and my wife. That is what these leaves are [i.e. the husband and wife]. We speak to that man who was first buried, saying: 'Perhaps you are within, perhaps you are beneath, oh shade!' We speak to that first man who was the first to die.

Sweeping the house is that it may be clean (*mwelu*). Before that it is [783]
dirty. . . .

The shade brooded both over the dead and over me, the living; he brooded over the dead who is with him and over me who am alive; I am in him—we all are. . . .

QUESTION: Why the water on the roof? 764

MWASALEMBA: If we neglect this then a child will go mad, he runs 753
off to the water and the water comes into his nose [i.e. he drowns] because we have not given him water in the doorway of the little hut there. If we neglect something then the child goes mad and runs off and catches hold of faeces, he smears faeces on his body and urinates into his hands and washes with the urine.

QUESTION: Why does the shade want him to do these filthy things? 764

MWASAMELMA: Because if we do not perform the ritual for him and 775
do not care for him we do not remember him, then he says: 'Since you do not remember me this child will also get dirty, because I have got dirty underground, I am dead. See, you buried me! The earth has entered my mouth and eyes, why do you not care for me?'

QUESTION: But even if you do treat him ritually, still the earth is in his mouth! How is he satisfied?

MWASALEMBA: Because this shadow (*isyungulu*) [pointing in explanation to the shadows of the banana trees] is what we care for, it is the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Ku Kwe

775 764 shade (*jonsyuka*)! That (which was buried) is just earth, the body has rotted, it is the shade that we care for.

QUESTION: And the necklace of banana bark?

764 MWASALEMBA: We sleep with them. In the morning we bathe again and throw them in the water. . . . Yes, indeed, some throw them away in the little hut. It is the shade, we perform the ritual and throw him away. . . . If we do not perform the ritual we do not sleep, then we pray in the banana grove and are startled.

QUESTION: Why the banana bark?

MWASALEMBA: It is with the banana that we perform the ritual: the plantain is what we steal and the sweet banana what we cut at home, and in the banana grove we pray.

When a man dies his wives sit in a row on a bark-cloth. It's at the shaving of the hair, the doctor shaves them on the bark-cloth. It's a new one because we say: 'You must throw away the bark-cloths which your husband who has died caught hold of, and wear other cloths.' So they sit on a new one.

QUESTION: What do they do with it?

MWASALEMBA: They throw it away on the litter.

QUESTION: Where?

MWASALEMBA: In the little hut. It means: 'Here we have mourned; let us throw away everything, let us wear others.' If a woman has died we men do not sit on the bark-cloth, but if I have died then my wife sits on the bark-cloth and throws away her old ones, and also when a son has died the mother throws away her old bark-cloths, but she does not sit on the bark-cloth! No! And she does not throw away her bark-cloth for the death of a small son, nor for a daughter, even though she be grown up. No! See, she is also a woman and wears a bark-cloth in front. But for a grown son a mother throws away her bark-cloths, saying: 'Because he was my child, I bore him, he sucked my breasts, so I throw away the bark-cloths.' Only for a grown son who has wives in his house does the mother throw away her bark-cloth, not for a bachelor.

764 QUESTION: The stones between the fingers?

775 MWASALEMBA: We throw him away. It is the shade.

QUESTION: Is the first intercourse after a death a ritual or not?

764 MWASALEMBA: No, it is not a ritual; we begin to have intercourse
768 when the ritual is finished. But among the Penja when someone has
171 died and the ritual has been performed and is finished, the husband takes a cow and gives it to the father of his wife, saying: 'I take the woman.' Then he has intercourse with her. But we do not, except in the case of twins.

833 QUESTION: And ordinary intercourse?

775 MWASALEMBA: The shade is together with the heart (*alinajo indumbula*); it is he who is roused and goes to a woman, it is he who stiffens

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

us in front, we men, and the woman is also roused. If you have not the 833
shade in you (*ukanajo unsyuka*)[1], then you are sterile, you are impotent, 775
you do not copulate with women; we say that the shades have brooded over you. Why do they not rouse him to go to women? He just looks at them. Because the shade rouses within a man and says: 'Ha!' It rouses a man to copulate with a woman. If it has brooded on him then it does not rouse him; it is within him, it does not wish to come out.

QUESTION: Why do you let the hair grow in the death ritual?

MWASALEMBA: The hair is very important, it's very important. 764

Mwasalemba identified growing hair after spearing a man, and after the birth of twins and later shaving, with growing hair and shaving in the death ritual.

QUESTION: So letting the hair grow at an ordinary death is part of the ritual?

MWASALEMBA: It [the hair] is the corpse's. We have not yet driven him away. At the shaving we drive him off.

Syungu (wife of Mwasalemba) told me that stones were placed 764
between the toes, not only of the participants in the death ritual, 775
but also of a bride (*unsungu*)[2] and that the stones are children (*amabwe bo bana*). The girl should bear six or ten children to her husband.

'But', I said, 'at the death ritual you throw away the corpse, the shade.'

Syungu answered: 'Yes, it is so, children are born by the power [842]
of the shades (*mmaka ga basyuka*).'

Mwasalemba himself, when asked about this, said: 'The stones are the shade, we throw him away so that when he has gone the girl may bear children.'

SYUNGU: When a girl does not bear children we say: 'Perhaps 842
the shades are angry, the husband has not finished giving marriage- 775
cattle.'

QUESTION: And madness?

SYUNGU: If she goes mad we say, if we have not treated her: 'We 158
have neglected the ritual, we have not treated her!' The girl runs about 755
aimlessly, she smears herself with filth. But when we have treated her and she goes mad then we say: 'Perhaps Kyala has deserted me, see nothing remains, we have treated her.'

[1] He used both the phrases *ukusita kuja nunsyuka* (to be without the shade) and *unsyuka ikummobatela* (the shade broods on him) for the same phenomenon.

[2] *Unsungu*: a girl who has reached puberty but has not yet borne a child; one undergoing the puberty-marriage ritual (*ubusungu*).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

764 QUESTION: What are the stones in the clefts of hands and toes?
773 MWASALEMBA: Kyala when he created men said: 'At the death ritual do this, it is the shade, it is the body.'

775 Mwasalemba went on to discuss the puberty ritual and attributed sexual desire and diarrhœa to the shades. He explained that faeces (which are buried) 'go below to the land of the shades' (*vide* p. 127; 210 ff.).

764 SYUNGU: If we leave out something a child runs off to Mwibonde [158] [wild pasture-land] and catches hold of that which is bad and pants with madness (*ikigili*). Some go to Mwibonde and gather faggots and put them on their heads then throw them away again.

QUESTION: How is it that people ever omit a ritual?

SYUNGU: Some omit some of it. They make mistakes out of ignorance.

QUESTION: But do any omit it altogether?

[184] SYUNGU: No, only the Christians. No pagan neglects it altogether.

QUESTION: But those who have run away and are not there (e.g. women who have eloped with lovers)?

SYUNGU: Yes, indeed, it is they who neglect it, but those who are at home perform the ritual.

QUESTION: How about stealing the banana bunch?

SYUNGU: Yes, we steal it, but we tell the owner beforehand, and when we eat the mash we mix the stolen with the home-grown, that which is stolen is always a plantain and that from home is a sweet banana. The plantain is the man's and the sweet banana the woman's. And when we bathe we wear a plantain leaf, which has been stolen, in front, and a sweet banana leaf, which comes from home, behind.

MWASALEMBA:[1] The girl brought the spear of her husband and stuck it in the ground. At the end Losi (my eldest son and her full brother) pulled it up and it will always be on my wall. The spear is an essential part of the ritual; without it the ritual would go wrong. If she came with no spear we should send her back again to fetch one.

764 We drink the medicine because, when our son-in-law has died and
587 our daughter lies with another who has not been our son-in-law before, if she comes and gives us food with the filth (*indafu*) on her then we gasp and cough with *ingotolo*. It is quite different if she runs away from her husband when he is alive. Then we drink no medicine. Yes, then she comes, with *indafu* on her, and gives us food and nothing happens.
[828] I don't know why. Kyala made us black people like this. It is when her husband dies that we drink. We drink as soon as she lies with her new husband, not after she becomes pregnant. If we see that she is pregnant before she comes we are angry. She should come first to the ritual and then conceive. She does not wait until her periods stop before coming

[1] Referring to the *ingotolo* ritual for his daughter described on p. 66.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

764 587

for the ritual. We think that when she has slept with her new husband she is full (*nsito*) and if she gives us food it will make us ill.

MWANGWANDA: The new husband gives us relatives a disease by impregnating the girl, he who is no relative of ours, the new husband. [753] *Ingotolo* is an illness.

ii. *Kakune's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W.)

764

KAKUNE: Yes, if we do not perform the ritual the children run mad. They speak foolishly and deliriously, they run about wildly wearing leaves, they eat filth. But they do not fight with their fellows—that is what those do who have the madness of Kyala. It is these of whom we say: 'Perhaps Kyala loved them.' [158]

QUESTION: Why the first washing?

KAKUNE: That is to get rid of the disease, the filth, for they held the corpse in their hands. They do not eat the ritual food until they have washed.

QUESTION: Why the eating of porridge?

KAKUNE: Because of the tears we have wept. We have mourned him; now let us eat and strengthen our bodies again.

QUESTION: Why are beans thrown into the pot in the evening?

KAKUNE: These beans, which we throw into the pot, saying: 'This is my father's death', are an ending of the ritual. They remain all night in the house after they have been cooked, and the shades come and eat. In the morning the doctor [*unganga*, i.e. the officiant] washes us again with powdered medicine and we eat the beans and finish them. We use beans in the ritual for that is the food which our father hoed. We think: 'Our father has died, he will never hoe for us again', and so we say: 'This is the death of my father.' So then the shade of our father comes at night and tastes the food and says to us: 'I, your father, have died, you have mourned for me; live you yet awhile, do not come quickly to death; and may you hoe plenty of food and have no hunger.' If we leave out this ritual with the beans the fertility of our gardens disappears and we have great hunger, we eat nothing. [789]

QUESTION: Why the circling to the harp and crumbling oil-seeds?

KAKUNE: The ointment (made from the oil-seeds) is to finish the ritual. The song (*ukalende*) is to say good-bye, to the shade, it means 'farewell', it is to drive him away. We circle round because our father was an active man, he walked round seeing his friends, he danced; that is why we circle round the fire. [In Kakune's family they do not cry the war shout of triumph, they only dance to the harp.] [184]

QUESTION: Why the pebbles? [I told him what Mwasalemba had said and he agreed heartily.]

KAKUNE: Yes, that's it! We throw them away, this means 'We have driven you away now.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

764 QUESTION: Why the leaves and bananas?

KAKUNE: If you do not wear these and throw them away your own children [i.e. children of the participant] will die soon after birth; you beget a daughter and she dies, a son and he dies, then people say: 'See, you did not perform the ritual.' . . .

QUESTION: What is the meaning of the death ritual?

KAKUNE: Because the deceased has died on us (*atufwelile mumbeli*), if we do not treat him, he looks on us, we are together with him, he does not move away at all, so then, we drive him off.

He then described the acts of the ritual in great detail exactly checking what Mwaikambo and I saw when Kalata's mother died (cf. pp. 238–44) except that he did not mention grinding ointment [184] at the circling round. I asked about this and he thought it was not done in his lineage but was not sure.

QUESTION: The stones between the toes?

KAKUNE: It is to make a separation, it is our separation, we are driving him off; we go into the water with pebbles and throw them away, they are the deceased, we drive him off.

QUESTION: And what about running through the house letting the water drip on you after bathing?

KAKUNE: Yes, indeed, we come from the stream carrying water which we have drawn, and flowers in our hands, and we throw the flowers on the thatch.

QUESTION: What does it mean?

764 KAKUNE: It is because we have come from the stream, we have
775 driven him away in the stream, but we bring back water we have drawn and flowers—they are the deceased. It means we are with him for he has not moved (*akasama*); let us drive him out again. We throw away the flowers on the thatch and we pour water on the thatch and it trickles down on the body. It is he [the deceased] whom we receive. If we drive him away altogether at the water what will he say to us?

QUESTION: You receive him and drive him off again?

KAKUNE: We drive him off so that his whole body should not be [828] seen, because we fear to see the dead . . . and at the same time we do *not* drive him away, he will come in dreams to tell us of misdeeds (*ukutubula inongwa*).

When we receive him we drive him away again at the anointing with ointment. The doctor anoints us on the toe, knee, elbow, stomach, and forehead, and says: 'I have finished them, anoint yourselves.' Then we anoint ourselves and say: 'You have moved to another village.' But at the same time we do not throw him away altogether, we pray to him

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

and say: 'You, Father, stand by me.' We bring him back when we have bathed. He also bathed there, he is present![1] 764 775

QUESTION: The meaning of the shaving?

KAKUNE: The doctor takes a bunch of *ikisajelo* grass and a little millet beer and then makes two cross lines in the hair before shaving, and he shaves us.

QUESTION: Why?

KAKUNE: It is the ritual, we drive him off.

Being unable to get any more I then suggested that the *ikisajelo* and beer represented the shade and that they took him on to their bodies in order to throw him off.

Kakune: 'Yes, that's it, you are very intelligent for you understand it! That's it!'

QUESTION: And is the *ikisajelo* grass the shade's which the seers uproot? [824]

KAKUNE: Yes, we have heard that long ago there were three seers (*abakunguluka*), X and Y and Z [I missed the names], who went with two village headmen to look; one seer uprooted the *ikisajelo* grass to look beneath at the land of the shades and he called the village headmen to look. When they shrank back and said 'He!' he said it was a homestead such as those above.

QUESTION: Did this happen in the day-time?

KAKUNE: It happened in the day-time, in the open, not in a dream. But later on, when one village headman had gone he said: 'Let me look again.' He tried to uproot it but the *ikisajelo* grass was stuck, it would not come up. But all that happened a long time ago; seers are not seen nowadays. And when we have finished everything, at the time of destroying the ritual house, the doctor touches us all with the razor, that is the tuft (*itemelo*).

QUESTION: Is this before the beer of inheritance? 764

KAKUNE: Yes, before the beer, on the day of bathing. It means that letting the 'hair of the corpse' grow is finished, we have finished. You may drink freely. And have we written about the roasted chicken and the bananas?[2]

G. W.: No.

KAKUNE: What? No? But we all eat these with our fellow villagers—and a bull if we have killed one, for we kill a bull if we have it—at the bathing in the stream. And in the evening the doctor prepares the

[1] The statement above was not made quite so straightforwardly as it is written down; at certain points Kakune stopped and I prompted him either with: 'And then?' or 'What does that mean?' There were no leading questions and I took down his words exactly.

[2] Our best informants often asked whether what they told us was properly recorded.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

764 porridge—sausages of porridge are buried in the ground and bitten off by the principals who stoop down to do it.

QUESTION: What does it mean?

KAKUNE: It means that we are about to honour them; they eat, and he whom we have buried also remains below, he also eats, we bury the sausage in the earth and we say we are burying him also, then he will fear to come to the house.

QUESTION: And this porridge is a symbol of the filth which those who run mad eat?

KAKUNE (laughing): Yes, because if we omit to do these things the children become feeble, their hearts say 'He! he!' [panting and excited] and they rush off to the road and eat dirt (*imindo*).

QUESTION: Why should the shades do this to them? How are they interested in dirt (*imindo*)?

KAKUNE: I don't know. We say it is because we have not accompanied them on the road and on account of this the shade is very angry and says: 'We shall see whether their children flourish!' He has bewitched them (*abalogile*).

QUESTION: And what about the circling round with the harp and the trampling at the fire?

KAKUNE: That is not very important, Mwaipaja [G. W.], it is because he cultivated food and danced at beer drinks when he was alive, so we dance for him now that he is dead. . . . A widow must lie [587 with her husband the night before she comes to do the (*ingotolo*) ritual, 833] and she comes with his filth on her, she does not wash. If she comes without having lain with him the night before then we all get the [753] disease. The disease comes from the new husband, it comes from his seed, the seed that begets us men. When his seed enters her womb then she is heavy (*nsito*) and if she eats or drinks out of our dishes and pots while we are empty (*bwasi*), before we have stopped ourselves with medicines, then she gives us the disease. She has not given us the protective medicine (*imbosyo*).

764 If a woman changes from one husband to another and both are 753 alive, there is no danger and no ritual. It is death that brings the danger, because that man [her first husband] has died; he has died and rotted below, and from that disease comes. The disease only comes from this situation. If no relative has died there is no *ingotolo*. But if my wife has run off with another man and then comes back to me with his semen in her, then I take some powdered medicine and eat some and throw a little on the fire, and if I do not do this then my legs will hurt, I shall be unable to walk properly, and my body will become weak. Neither she nor her relatives take medicine, nor does her new husband, if she goes to him and he pays for her and takes her. He just marries her.

764 If the widow is left with a sucking child and is empty [*bwasi*: i.e. her
587

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

new husband has not been sleeping with her], then at first, before she 764
lies with him, we (her relatives) eat with her. But when the child leaves 587
the breast and her husband begets another then she comes to perform the ritual. Otherwise we cannot eat with her. And so with a pregnant widow—at first we eat with her but when the child is born and has been weaned and her new husband begets another she comes to perform the ritual.

The new husband must send a bull or a sheep with his spear, and we who drink the beer divide the meat, saying: 'Thank you, you have nourished us.' Yesterday he sent 30s., and I, the doctor, got 1s. If it had been a bull I would have got some meat. The husband does not come himself, but he sends a friend to bring the woman. This friend does not eat or drink the medicine, but he drinks the beer without medicine and the cassava we cook. [In the ritual just completed] Mwasalemba provided three pots of beer—we drank one before and two after the ceremony. That was what the men were waiting for.

No, it never happens that one who has drunk the medicine of 764
ingotolo falls sick of it afterwards, never. 753

The spear is taken and kept by the girl's brother at the command of 587
her father, who says: 'Take this spear, your sister has brought it.' It is 602
a symbol (*ikimanyilo*) of kinship, it is like the spear with which a girl was betrothed in the old days. At the betrothal the lover would stick the spear in the ground, the girl pulled it up and took it to her father, sticking it into the ground before him, and he, if he agreed, told her brother to take it up. And if there is any dispute later about cattle then the spear is proof of agreement. It has the same significance at betrothal and at the *ingotolo* ritual. Sometimes the heir has to bring cattle that have not yet been paid by the dead man. When the woman's brother takes the spear into the house at the *ingotolo* ritual, that means: 'Now you[1] have entered into the house—your house—so we bring you in.' And then she can go in.

The calling out of 'Thief' is a custom in the ritual, but it is like a 764
song, it's not important. The firewood is shown to the woman and a bean and a grain of maize are put into a crack of the wood. That means that the ritual is complete.

No, there is no extra safety in coming to the ceremony; those who drink at home are equally protected!

iii. *Evidence of other informants*

CURRENT TALK: Some people have been told by those who have run 158
mad, that they see a man who comes to them sometimes. When that 828
man is with them then they lose the sense of what they are doing. The

[1] It was not clear from the context whether 'you' referred to groom or bride. The symbolism suggests the act of marriage but of this we have no direct evidence.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

158 and fashions earth with his fingers, tying some up in leaves and rolling
828 some up between his palms, if he does things which they do in the ritual, then they perform the whole ritual. Saga, Jenala's grandmother, did these things, but then they began to perform the ritual and at once she recovered. She just talked to herself and went on moulding earth. She could not throw her clothes away for she was sick, her death was very near. As soon as they had done the ritual and she had recovered, she died. The reason they had not performed a complete ritual for her was because she had been away at the time it was performed. She had run off with a lover. It was the ritual of her mother which was not performed for her.

It is clear that, though informants were not agreed about the distinguishing features of the two types of madness, they were agreed about its general characteristics, and that one form was connected with neglect of rituals.

764 QUESTION: Why the little hut?
346 MWAMULENGA (an old chief): When performing the ritual they build a little hut in which to carry it out. This hut tells us of the man's behaviour when alive, he lived in a house. So that now he is dead we kill his home too, and that is why they destroy the hut at the end of the ritual. They perform the ritual in a house because he lived in a house.

764 QUESTION: Why the stealing of the stem of plantains?

MWAMULENGA: This tells us about driving the disease away, that the disease which killed him should leave our homestead. The stem of bananas is a symbol (*ikimanyilo*) of the disease. We do not know where the disease came from. When we steal the bananas we think that the disease came from some other place and killed him, it has not always been in our house. That is why we go to another homestead to steal the stem of bananas. But when we are driven away with the bananas that is a symbol of driving the disease away again, we drive the disease away. Sometimes the householders come out and drive us away, sometimes they stay still, and we who have come with the thief drive him away. We arrange with the householder beforehand. The meaning is the same in either case.

QUESTION: Why the food?

MWAMULENGA: The salted and unsalted food, the mash, the beans and bananas which they take out separately, the chicken, the roast bananas, those in which they put lentils and pumpkin-seeds—all these they eat, for they are afraid that if they do not, but leave one of them out, then when they eat, in the ritual of other people, some of those they omitted, the ritual will infect them. So that is why they eat everything. If a man doesn't eat any chicken he will catch the disease afterwards from the very smell of a ritual chicken!

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Ku Kwe

764

QUESTION: Why the sitting on a bark-cloth?

MWAMULENGA: The bark-cloth shows death, particularly the death of the woman, it is a sign of grief.

QUESTION: Why drawing lines and mocking?

MWAMULENGA: Sometimes people in a mad fit do the most laughable things. They do not attend to their bodies at all, or perhaps they shave their hair in a most ugly way so that people laugh at them. In the ritual we laugh at the participants and say: 'Poor fool, it found its father dead, went stealing and they speared it on the head!' And then we think that he, as it were, has run mad after his father's death.

QUESTION: Why the flowers?

MWAMULENGA: The holding of a flower (and grass) also shows the actions of madmen. For sometimes the madman goes into the grassland and plays games with the flowers and grass and then, coming home, throws them on the thatch.

MWAIKAMBO: People talk about what madmen do, but I have never seen a mad person, I have only heard what people say. They say a mad person talks to himself like someone in a passion of grief, or anger, or fear, and moulds earth!

Mwafula (the village headman) does the Sangu ritual and did not know why the banana is stolen, though he understood the main function of the ritual. His wife, a Kukwe, did not know, nor did either of the two others. 'The old people have always told us: "If you leave something out of the ritual you will go mad, or perhaps someone will die. You will find the ritual (*ubunyago*) in the belly [at the autopsy]." But they never explained all the details, saying: "This means such and such, and that such and such." We do not know all the ramifications. As for finding the ritual in the stomach of a dead child, they find half-digested food and say: "It is the ritual (*bunyago*)."'

QUESTION: Why do you go and steal another's banana in the ritual?

NSYANI: It means that if your comrade's father has also died he [your comrade] may eat because they have mocked him, he can eat because he has finished; we say: 'Are you not going to take someone else's sickness on you (*utisakukombela ifya bangi*)?'[1] Because those who have not been treated do not eat.

QUESTION: So you act stealing and eating the food in another's ritual?

NSYANI: Yes, indeed [with a gesture of emphatic assent]. So here we mock the mourners, saying: 'That's a thief!' and we steal someone

[1] *Ukukombela*: to catch someone else's sickness, or to take another's quarrel on oneself.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764
291
264
415

3. *The beer of the 'gasping cough.' Mwasalemba on the left*

[facing p. 84]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

764 else's stem of bananas symbolizing that we may eat other people's food, we have finished the ritual. Because during the ritual those who have not completed it eat apart. If they eat ordinarily we say of them: 'You so-and-so, you!' And at the last beer of the death ritual, when they have mixed the beer, we . . . say to the women: 'Where will you go?' 'We will find his cattle.' 'Very well.' Then we drink. But if the widows agree, according to custom, then we give them to our comrade, saying: 'These are your wives.' He sleeps with them in the house and we drink.

QUESTION: What does circling with the harp mean?

NSYANI: We spoke of that before. He who plays the harp is just someone who makes us go in line, they have finished him, he was brooded over. He says: 'Let me help my friend and play the harp for him and make him circle round.'

QUESTION: And what does the stamping dance (*ukukanya inganya*) mean?

[789] NSYANI: It is to drive away sickness, to drive him away, to say: 'Go away with your sickness'.

QUESTION: But how exactly?

NSYANI: Because he who has died trampled the ground long ago when his father died, and we trample now that he has died, and his father trampled for his grandfather, and his grandfather for an ancestor. It means: 'We have finished with you, go away.' And at the bathing we put pebbles between our fingers and let them fall into the stream. . . [He performed a dramatic pantomime of sitting down in the water and falling first one way and then the other, and pushing his hands away so that they let the stones fall out. As he let them fall he said: 'We have driven you away, we have finished with you!']. . .

QUESTION: Why the shelling oil-seeds during the circling round?

NSYANI AND MWANGWANDA: We do not do it, we differ in our rituals. But we do the stealing of the banana bunch and throwing things in the pot at the fire, and hitting the ground and saying: '*Syeku, syeku.*'

QUESTION: Why?

NSYANI AND MWANGWANDA: Because if we don't do it our children run into the pasturage and make balls of rubbish (*ifisaka fya mindu*) and eat; then they become weak and foolish; but if we perform the ritual then they are fine children.

QUESTION: Why the throwing into the pot?

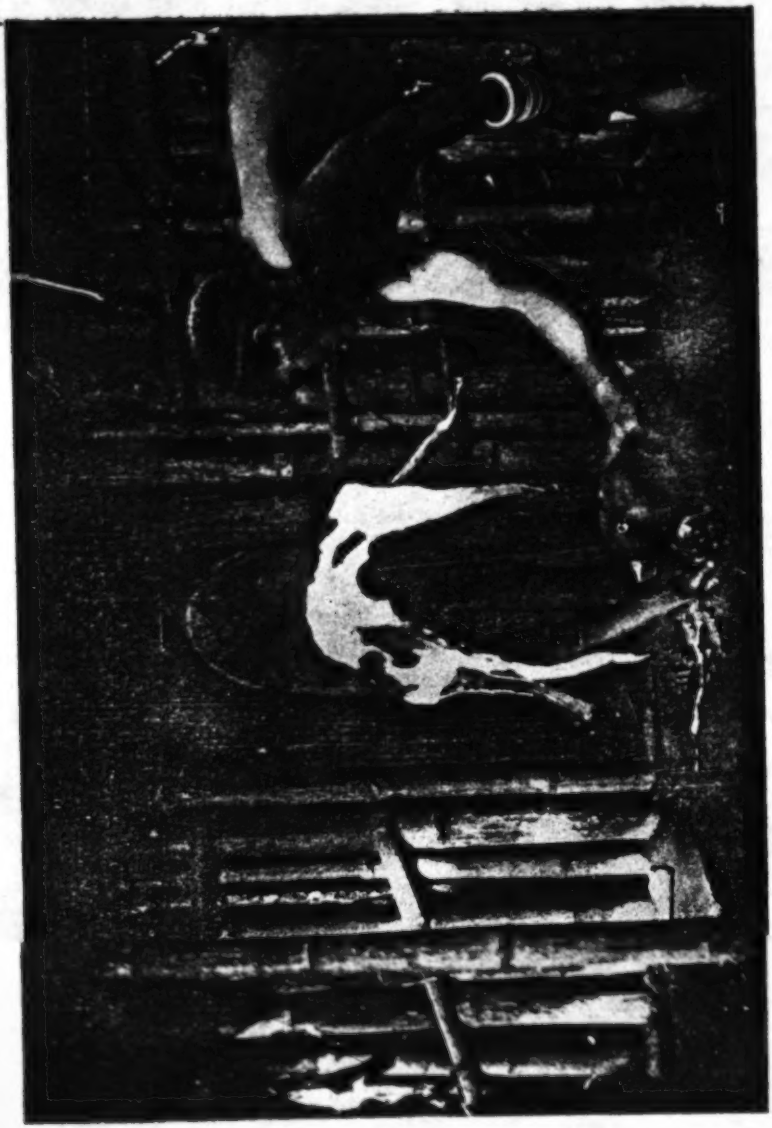
NSYANI AND MWANGWANDA: It means that we have finished with him [with a gesture of throwing away].

QUESTION: Why the washing at first?

MWAFULA: If we do not wash them they become weak and foolish, so we treat them and wash them and give them porridge, and then they recover. If we leave them they go off to the rubbish heap and make dirt (*bipelile mindo*); they take the dirt from the rubbish heap, they

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

●764
301
341



4. *The bride washes with* ikipiki *in the doorway of her mother's hut*

[facing p. 85]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

even defaecate in the house. And at the inheritance, when I have inherited the women, they go to their own homes with a bull if I am wealthy, or perhaps three shillings. They go back to their fathers with the dirt on them—*ingotolo*! 764

QUESTION: Where does the *ingotolo* come from when you do not treat them?

MWAFULA: Kyala is startled and you gasp with *ingotolo*, your breath is short.

QUESTION: Does the husband also go to his place?

MWAFULA: Yes, he always returns to his father's.

QUESTION: Why the two leaves representing a man and a woman at the hitting the ground and saying: '*Syeku, syeku*'?

MWAFULA: Because we are two [holding up two fingers], a man and a woman. Formerly when someone died as a bachelor they took a leaf of the sweet banana and said: 'It is your wife.' They buried it with him, saying: 'Go to the land of the shades because you were never married.'

QUESTION: What does the mocking at shaving mean?

MWAFULA: It is one with stealing the plantain stem. We mock them meaning, may they escape, and not take rubbish from the rubbish heap. And at the shaving of the hair we drive him away, saying: 'Go to your fellows.' He has been alone, he was on the road, may he go.

Porokoto the Chief admitted that the wearing of leaves and 842
bananas in the rituals of death and of puberty were symbols of 881
fertility (*ifimanyilo fya mbapo*); the plantain represents the penis, the sweet banana represents the clitoris, 'for in the old days they wore leaves only, no cloths'. In the puberty ritual the wearing of leaves and bananas is the same. It is a sign of fertility: 'the ritual is now finished and the girl is someone's wife.'

Mwaijumba, who provided the beer of inheritance for the ritual 273
of Njobe Nani, explained to us as he drank: 'We drink beer to 764
drive away our friend. It means that everything is finished: "Come to your house frequently now. It is finished! May the fathers [i.e. the other shades] receive him! May he not return! We have poured out this beer for you, it is finished."'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 and the doctor stands outside at the door. The doctor asks: 'Is it suc-
833 cessful? [i.e. can you have intercourse with her?]' and the man says: 'No, it is not successful.' Then all we *abapaga* (priests, officiants), the fathers of the girl who are there, and the fathers of the man, pray, in words only [i.e. without blowing out water], saying: 'Father, support us, Grandfather, support us, Kyala, support us, let not the ritual go on for ever.' And then the man is able to eject, and he tells the doctor: 'It's all right now.'

845 The disease comes from the twin birth (*ilipasa*) when a couple have
753 had twins (*bapasile*). If the relatives speak with them or tread in their footsteps when they [the relatives] are empty (*bwasi*), not having drunk medicine, then their legs will swell up and they will have diarrhoea. No, they do not say that the private parts will swell, only the legs. The refusal of the seed to come is due to the shades (*imisala*). If a man has angered his father or mother who are alive, or if they are dead and he gives nothing to his sister, then those below, *balanga*, are angry. *Imisala* catches hold of them and then when he begets twins he will have trouble at the ritual.

845 The semen refuses to come also if the girl has angered her parents,
833 or if her husband has angered them. It's *imisala*. This copulation is an essential part of the ritual. If the parents of twins do not do this and you meet them afterwards, your legs will swell and dysentery will set in. The fearful ones [the parents of twins] have a fire and create sickness in us. We say: 'Kyala has loved [*sic*] you, he has created you so that you bear twin children. Now we speak with you.'

845 Yes, the old people said: 'Kyala and those below.' They said those below beg Kyala to give them two children. This was said of old, before the Europeans came. One who has himself had twins will not fear his relative who has twins for he says: 'I also am heavy (*sali saite*), I am a fearful one, a parent of twins myself.' No one fears the twins themselves, but their parents are feared.

The child that follows twins (*salili*), does not anoint himself at any later twin ritual. It is said that he finished before because he followed twins.

When the parents of twins leave the hut they run with a lighted piece of thatch,[1] followed by all the friends and relatives; the friends and relatives call out: 'You hit us with fire [i.e. you give us the disease].' They reply: 'We are pure (*tali bela*) [i.e. we have no disease, it is finished]. Kyala has prayed for us.'

845 And at the death of a parent of twins the relatives fear to touch the
●764 corpse until the twin doctor comes and puts a medicine in the hand of the corpse and sprinkles hot medicine on the legs of the relatives—then

[1] This was not seen or mentioned in the *Sofya* ritual.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

they take hold of the corpse. But they wait for the doctor; if they do not do so the same disease will come—a swelling of legs and diarrhoea. An ordinary corpse is not feared in this way. 845 764 [753]

Yes, a man fears to take his other wives. He says: 'If I just go to them I shall give them the disease of the twins that I begot with this wife.' The wife he takes without precaution will swell in the legs and stomach, and pass blood with her stools. He first tries to have a child with the wife who bore twins, waiting till the twins are walking about. He lies with the mother of the twins but withdraws, and then, when the children are grown, he impregnates her. He does not go to the other wives. And if he asks for another wife before trying to impregnate the mother of the twins her father will refuse. If he takes her without asking, her father will make him pay a cow. He can only ask for another wife if the mother of the twins does not conceive. For one month[1] the husband refrains altogether from intercourse, then after the ritual he goes to his wife (the mother of the twins) but does not impregnate her. . . . A man is supposed to tell the twin doctor before he begets another child with his wife. He must do it openly, and not in secret. It is taboo to do it secretly. Nothing happens, but the doctor is angry, saying: 'Why did you not tell me, the doctor, the owner of the body?' 845 842 [834]

Themes already familiar from the death and puberty-marriage rituals recur again here. The parents of twins are isolated and cleansed like mourners and nubile girls. Contact with them is held to be dangerous because 'those below'—in this case Kyala and Mbasi rather than the shades—have brooded over them, and must be driven off before normal procreation can be resumed. After their isolation the *ilibalaga*—the symbol of their ritual union—must be offered to the shades of both lineages, that of the man and that of the woman. There is also the eating of balls of porridge, the symbol, in the other rituals, of the actions of a madman, but the fear of madness was not adduced by our informants as the purpose of the twin ritual; rather it is the formidable potency which produces two children instead of one, that is the danger—'the parents of twins have a fire'—and men protect themselves against it by burning themselves with hot medicines. They 'burn the twin birth'. 845 783

[1] Presumably longer when the seclusion and ritual lasted longer.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

goes on. Mwamusiku was never bound, but we say it was that sickness 753
of the ropes of the cattle that he seized from the hill people. Perhaps the 681
people of that country were shocked, and the sickness is due to their breath, to witchcraft. Perhaps the owners of the cattle took the ropes they had used for tying up the cattle which were stolen, to a doctor to be cooked with medicine. We have not discovered the details yet, we [787]
have not yet been to divine; the divination will tell us, however. But the medicine for rotting the ropes (*imbaye*) is the same for all these illnesses from ropes, so we cook it immediately, before going to divine. We divine when we clear away the litter. The cooking of medicine at the grave now is to rot him who has died that the sickness of ropes (*ingoje*) may not come on us. Yes, only the heir fears to die, but we others fear lest we fall ill, coughing. The sickness of ropes does not kill us, but makes us ill and thin. Yes, I drank and ate the medicine myself. After the divination we drink another medicine, in beer, not the *itemele* beer. They brew another lot just for the medicine.

We saw the drinking of medicine 'to rot the ropes' at Mukwa- 783
bila's funeral. He was buried at Kasitile's homestead and Kasitile 764
was organizing the proceedings. The doctor dug a hole at the foot of the grave and put into it a length of green wood which projected a foot or so above the level of the ground. On this was balanced a pot, and a fire was lighted beneath it. In the pot she boiled certain leaves and roots. She took a large drinking calabash, put in some ash from a fire-brand, added some of the same species of leaves as had gone into the pot, and stirred up the mixture with water. This mixture was drunk by the relatives present and fifteen or twenty leaf cups were made to send to those who had not come. Medicated porridge was also made and some was eaten by the relatives present.

Then the pot was taken off the fire. We were told: 'We are praying (*salipakusipute*). We want to take the pot off the fire.' No words were said, but the medicines were taken out of the pot by the deceased's father's sister (the oldest surviving member of the lineage) to prepare more porridge for those relatives who had not attended, and the officiant poured the water into a hole which she made in the middle of the grave. She covered it again with earth.

While the officiant was preparing the medicine at the grave, Kasitile, who was helping her, said to a half-brother of the deceased:

> Pray earnestly with this medicine, be on good terms with others.
> HALF-BROTHER: Me? What case was there against me?

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 KASITILE: You sons of Musika had a case against you . . . you fought.
●764 HALF-BROTHER: But that case concerned a woman.

A discussion of the case followed.

KASITILE: Friend, we pray here. Listen carefully.
HALF-BROTHER: I have spoken and not concealed anything.
KASITILE: That's what I say, let us pray well.
HALF-BROTHER: I performed the ritual for him. Let him die with his hair.
SISTER: Let us confess [lit. vomit] we were angry.
HALF-BROTHER: Yes, it is so, we were angry. The cow made us angry.

783 Mwaisumo described a treatment with *imbosyo* medicines which differed slightly from the one we saw and involved the slaughter of a sheep; according to his account the medicines are coiled in the pot like ropes, and the participants are washed under a waterfall, though they are not made to vomit like the relatives of a murderer. Doubtless the details vary with the officiant, but the principle that medicines are used to rot the ropes remains constant.

754 (*c*) *Protection against sorcery or vengeance magic*
789 Sickness caused by sorcery or vengeance magic is believed to
783 spread among kinsmen in much the same way as sickness due to the shedding of blood or binding with ropes, and the ritual performed as a protection against it is very similar to the ritual for 'rotting the ropes' just described. We saw it performed after the death of E. who died on 23 March 1935. Her elder brother (heir to her father) and her husband, who were pagans, wished to perform an autopsy, but her younger brother, a Christian, prevented their doing so. Soon after her burial her mother and husband fell very ill and three weeks later (April 13) the five-year-old son of her elder brother M. died. An autopsy was performed on the child and the diagnosis was that his mother's father, after quarrelling with M., his son-in-law, had drunk medicines to bring death to M's children. M. explained: 'My wife has already buried two
[763] children. This boy is the third. Previously we found evidence of *ilyepa*[1] at the autopsy, and this time it is the same. The disease
000 comes from my wife's father.' However, when M. went to confirm

[1] *Ilyepa* is a medicine alleged to be drunk by a senior relative, when he is angry, which, if his anger is justified, will cause his junior relative to suffer in his own person or that of his children.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 One minor quarrel occurred at a funeral we attended. Kasitile
578 was given only a little meat and he complained, saying: 'Why do
783 you give me a leg, I the owner of the funeral?' He took umbrage and left the funeral with his wives. Then they went to his home to say: 'We are in the wrong, we made a mistake in dividing.' Then Kasitile was satisfied and prayed over a medicine (*nkota*) which they cooked to eat. If he did not pray the medicine would go bad and would not cook. He said in his prayer: 'I have no case against them, let the medicine cook, the young men just played with the meat, it is not a serious case, may the medicine cook at once.'

(*e*) *Reconciliation*

828 A distinction is made by the Nyakyusa between misfortune due
783 to the anger of senior relatives and that due to the anger of neighbours,[1] and the rituals performed are theoretically distinct, though in practice they merge into one another.

578 A man fears the anger of his fellow villagers who murmur
783 against him when he has offended them, and whose cold breath is believed to fall upon him and chill him with fever or cause a paralysis. Mature men or women fear only the anger of their own neighbours, but a young man and his wife also fear their parents' neighbours. The ritual performed to lift the curse of neighbours consists in acknowledging guilt and making an offering of beer or meat for them to feast upon; then, while they eat or drink, they *admit their anger* and express goodwill.

The doctor comes beforehand and gives the sick man medicine to drink. A cow is killed. People are there and say: 'May this medicine help our child.' To drink without people there is like continuing the quarrel. People are there and they speak (*ukwijaja*), saying: 'Someone was angry, but no one is angry now. May this medicine help you.' They drink beer and eat meat saying: 'We are not angry now.' Those who were angry are present and they are satisfied. *Ukwijaja* is to speak many things, and it is like praying (*ukwiputa*) but without actually taking water and spitting.

578 Sometimes responsibility is fixed squarely on *either* shades *or*
775 neighbours, but since neighbours are said to 'help a father to
783 murmur' against an erring son, and since they may share in beef or beer offered to the shades, the rituals merge into one another, and some offerings seem to be intended to pacify *both* the shades and the neighbours, though in Nyakyusa theory the sources of

[1] Discussed in relation to the age-village in *Good Company*, pp. 96–108.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

593 send the son into his father's house. He walks through the whole house
789 and the mothers acclaim him. This is the sign to show everybody that
783 he has entered his father's house. The women call the *akalulu*. They are rejoicing because he has entered.

There are, however, some who do not return to their fathers. They remain strangers [*abandu* as opposed to *abakamu*] until their death. There is a young man at my home who took his father's wife. Where he fled to no one knows because he is still in hiding. His father separated from him altogether.

A son must always bring something and the father must collect his friends. If they just agree with one another and people do not eat any-
[753] thing, then the son will not be settled in well. He will be ill. They say that the illness comes from the shades. If the father is angry he mutters (*ikwibunesya*) and they hear. At first the people are not angry, but later on, when they have heard from the father about the matter, they also are angry. It is as if they help the father to mutter. Their shades are not there, only those of the father's lineage, but his shades have regard to the people. If the people do not eat anything and are not present, they are not satisfied even though the father is satisfied. The father prays to his shades alone in the evening with water in his mouth, and they pour out beer on the hearth-bricks.

●764 KASITILE: If a rich commoner has died and the heir buries him with
556 only one cow, the shades and people are angry with the heir, breath
783 falls on his body; perhaps he falls ill, or perhaps his child falls ill. But they do not meet; people, the witches, are angry and the shades are angry; the shades because they have buried him with only one cow, people because they have not eaten meat, but the shades and people are independent of each other. The oracle says: 'The shades are angry,' it does not speak of people. It knows that people also are angry, but it speaks only of the shades. And when he makes amends he prays in the evening; the next day he calls people and kills a cow and he throws the *ija mmapa* meat in the banana grove and says: 'Here it is, Father,' and people say: 'Indeed, he did wrong, his father was angry.' But they do not confess, saying: 'We were angry.' No, they say: 'The shades were angry.'

754 Another type of case is that in which 'the breath of men' is
783 believed to have fallen on an infant because of its mother's disrespectful behaviour towards her husband's parents or husband's father's sister. When a child is thin and ailing with *ingoto*, the cure is for the mother to confess to the doctor who comes to treat the child all the rude things she has said, and provide beer (exceptionally a bull) to offer to her injured parents-in-law. They drink the beer with their neighbours and wish her well. Ambilikile's wife

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Certain siblings perform the ritual, but not all of them. We have referred already to the heir, who is commonly a dead man's younger brother, and who must perform it whether he is a full brother or half-brother, and to a woman's related co-wife who may be either a younger sister or a brother's daughter. The brother or sister 'who followed at the mother's breast', i.e. the sibling immediately younger, must always perform it. Nyakyusa find it very difficult to formulate the rules—there were lively arguments between well-informed people when the question was posed —but these principles emerge from a study of those who actually participated in eight funeral rituals. 788 593

Since the funeral ritual is directed to the shades, men can only perform it in the homesteads of their agnatic kinsmen, or of their maternal grandfather or his heir: they can never perform it at the homestead of affines (*kubuko*) for there they are not kinsmen (*abakamu*) but in-laws (*abako*). Hence a husband performs the ritual for his senior wife at his own homestead and her father (or his heir) at his. 'According to custom "the husbands" (*abalume*) perform the ritual, then, when they have done so, she whom we have put in place of the dead comes to us and says: "Fathers, we have performed the ritual, perform it yourselves." ' We never saw a ritual of farewell to a dead woman at her father's house but believe it to be a modified form of the ritual performed at her husband's. 764 602

Because of the rules of avoidance, a father-in-law and daughter-in-law cannot, together, go through a ritual which involves the close proximity of the principals. When, therefore, a man performs the death ritual for a son or son's child, he performs it at his own home, and the daughter-in-law concerned does so at her husband's homestead. The widow or parents must begin, and the father or grandparents follow. Thus when Mwandisi's son's son died, the parents of the child first performed the ritual at their home and Mwandisi and his wife then followed at theirs. But in a twin ritual, where participants can be secluded, father-in-law and daughter-in-law may attend the same performance. 606 764

A woman can perform a ritual either at her father's or her husband's (as well as at her mother's father's) and she may even perform it according to two different forms, following that of her father's lineage when she is visiting him, and that of her husband's lineage when she is performing it at his homestead. 788 593

It is possible that, on the death of a man, his sisters' children 764 602

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 sometimes perform the ritual, but we lack conclusive evidence.
602 One case in which a sister's daughter of the deceased man performed the ritual was recorded, but at other funerals girls in the same relationship did not. Kakune, the doctor, asserted that a boy would perform the ritual for his mother's brother for 'he is mother, the brother of mother (*jo juba ulilumbu gwa juba*)', but in a number of cases we observed women performing the rituals for their brothers though their sons did not. A man's children may possibly perform the ritual for his sister but we traced no case of their doing so.

768 Those who drink the ritual beer when a widow returns to her
602 father's house after her union with the heir are her father and the men of his lineage—brothers, half-brothers, sons, and some of his brother's sons; the wives and children of these; and daughters of the lineage, her own sisters and half-sisters, and sisters of her father, but *not* the husbands or children of daughters of the lineage. At one *ingotolo* ritual we attended there were present eleven men of the lineage, eighteen daughters, and thirty-two wives, as well as numerous children (cf. genealogy, Table (e)).

764 When a woman has died those who come to cut the banana
593 grove and give medicated meat to her children are the *abipwa*—her brother (or his heir) and his wives.

764 The principals at a death ritual, then, are children and grand-
602 children, parents and grandparents, spouses, and certain siblings of the deceased, together with some of their children. If a woman dies, or a widow is inherited, her agnatic kin and their wives are concerned as well.

845 The group which takes protective medicine after an abnormal
602 birth is larger. All the wives and children and grandchildren of
751 the father of twins must come, his full siblings with their children and grandchildren, and the wives of his brothers, but not the husbands of his sisters; some of his half-brothers, with wives and children, some of the children of his father's brothers' sons (but not of father's brothers' daughters) and of his father's sisters' sons. On the mother's side her father, or his heirs, must take part with his wives and children, and her sisters. At the ritual for Mwakobela and his wife, previously described, we counted 136 relatives taking part, of which 24 were men, 19 boys, 33 women, 12 girls, and 35 babies (cf. genealogy, Table (a)).

845 When the mother of twins took the *ilibalaga* back to her 'father',
602 her brother (heir to her father), with his wives and children, her

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 has been a quarrel in the family, those members of the lineage
602 who have been at variance must attend and share the meat or beer, and bless one another. Grandchildren, 'comrades of the shades', must eat the offering left overnight in the banana grove.

593 If a son has quarrelled with his father and comes to beg pardon
621 the father calls his *neighbours* who must be present and partake of a
783 feast and bless the young men. 'If father and son just agree with one another and people do not eat anything, then the son will not be settled in well.'

585 At a puberty–marriage ritual the principals are the nubile girl
881 and her father or brother, her husband, and sometimes her mother
602 or mother-in-law. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest son's wife, or with her eldest daughter, if she is initiated at home. At an ordinary birth the principals are the mother and infant.

●764 Besides these principals who undergo the full ritual there are
602 many minor actors. At a funeral there are the grave-diggers who,
621 traditionally among the Nyakyusa, were mature men, relatives or village neighbours.[1] They wash after the burial and are rewarded with a special leg of the funeral beef. As we have seen, the affines (*abako*), that is the fathers-in-law and sons-in-law of the deceased or of 'the owner of the funeral', come with cattle to kill or cloth. When a woman dies, her husband and her father, or her brother, kill cattle, and their affines bring cloths or, occasionally, cattle. Kinsmen—members of the lineage and their wives—and neighbours bring gifts of food to cook for the crowd of mourners, and small gifts of millet which are presented to the shade and used for making the ritual beer. After an abnormal birth, village neigh-
845 bours have their legs splashed with scalding medicine but do not
621 drink medicines or shave. The cattle of the village are also splashed. At the puberty ritual the bride's maids keep her com-
881 pany during her seclusion. The co-wives and neighbours of her
621 mother and mother-in-law assist in instructing her, and the neigh-
602 bours of her father join with him first in avoiding her and then in giving her gifts. Her father-in-law is identified with his brothers and his father's brothers' sons, whom she avoids, as well as his sisters, and her mother-in-law's brothers, and sisters' husbands. They, in turn, avoid her sisters, as well as herself.

621 By the 'congregation' we mean those who attend rituals to ex-
788 press sympathy, and whose presence is felt to be necessary to the

[1] In Ngonde they are *abatani*, cross-cousins.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

pressed again and again in the pagan rituals. The Christian with- 554
drawal from them implies a partial break with the closed circle of 602
kin, a movement from the nexus of kinship to that of association, from the kinship group to the congregation of believers.

The passage of cattle at marriage implies first the establishment 431
of a bond of kinship with the wife for whom they are given. 602
'Kinship is cattle' (*ubukamu syo ngombe*) and a woman for whom cattle have not been given is never kin (*unkamu*) to her husband.

The passage of marriage-cattle determines the legal position of the children borne by the woman for whom they have been given. Whoever has given the cattle controls the children; and, if no cattle have passed, the girl's father (or brother) can claim them. If the woman for whom cattle have been given leaves the lineage which gave them, the cattle (traditionally all of them, together with their progeny) must then be returned, even though her original husband is dead; and when she dies she should be replaced. Kinship between lineages once linked by marriage should ideally be permanent, and the link is reasserted in the ritual in which, when a woman dies, her brother goes to cut down the bananas at her husband's homestead and to seize her children, and has to be persuaded with a gift to desist. The identification made between women and cattle exchanged is suggested in the phrase conventionally used when no girl is available to take the place of a dead wife and a cow is offered in her place 'for drawing water with'.

The killing of cattle at a funeral, and the burial of cloths and 775
other goods, is an expression of the idea that the dead take wealth 764
with them. When a man requires cattle to pay compensation for 431
some wrong committed and has not sufficient stock to do so, he turns for help to his affines, his sons-in-law and fathers-in-law, and so, when he dies, and is in need of cattle, it is felt appropriate that they should help him.

But the gifts offered at rituals have many other implications. 431
Men take cattle and cloths to a funeral '*ukuti ndaga*'—to express sympathy—and gifts are given to a bride also '*ukuti ndaga*', which then implies congratulation rather than condolence. And gifts are used when begging pardon—a son who has sinned against his father first sends a hen and later offers a bull; and a daughter-in-law who has looked at her father-in-law or sworn at her mother-in-law must offer beer or a bull. Lastly, they are used in lifting a ban, putting an end to an avoidance. When a girl's father and his

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

775 Among the Nyakyusa men spoke often of the obligation of the
764 heir to keep the grave of his father swept and tended. Graves are in the open courtyard of the homestead and the meticulous weeding and sweeping of this space by the owner and his young sons is thus an act of piety, as well as a means of achieving 'dignity' in the homestead.[1]

775 The shades are also identified with the earth—'the earth *is* the shades (*umfu bo basyuka*)'—and offerings to them are buried, or laid upon, or poured out on it. To say 'the earth is angry' means: 'the shade is angry.' Stories are told of prophets (*abasololi*) who have descended to the land of the shades and returned, and of others who have seen men in the land of the shades while they are yet alive. That is a sure sign of their future death, though it may be delayed. And there are tales of those who have seen the dead with the cattle killed at his funeral. 'We say those are the shadows (*imisyungulu*) which go to the land of the shades.'

A soft, tufty grass, used as bedding for cattle, is called 'blessed' (*ikisajelo*) and is known as 'the doorway of the shades' (*ikifigo kya basyuka*). The tale of three prophets who uprooted a tuft of it and saw the land of the shades beneath has already been related (p. 77).

> ANGOMBWIKE: As a child at my grandfather's I heard that the water from the blessed grass reaches the land of the shades, and that if the shades wish to come to our place they stand there in the blessed grass and where they have stood there is no dew. Indeed, there is never dew on the blessed grass.

At this point in the conversation one of us went to examine the blessed grass and called back: 'But there is dew on it.' Another man who was listening broke in indignantly: 'Is there much dew? There is very little!' and, indeed, there was less than on other types of grass.

But though the shades dwell beneath and visit the homesteads of their kinsmen seeking food and warmth, they are also *within* men—*munda* (in the belly)—they create desire, they control conception, and are ejected in intercourse as semen. 'If you have not got a shade you are impotent, sterile, you do not go to women.'

The shades delight in cattle, and though they demand certain sacrifices they are unwilling that cattle of the lineage should die unncessarily. Mwakwelebeja told us:

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 77.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

686 shades usually do, and I shall wander a long time on the way to the land of the shades because I shall have no relatives to show me the way. And then when I get there I shall still have trouble. They will drive me away from them, and I shall live alone, apart from them, quite separate.

775 More rarely a shade is said to be angry because his grave has
764 been left unswept, or he has not been buried where he asked to be.

621 The kinds of behaviour believed to be punished by 'the breath
681 of men' are very similar to those thought to be punished by the anger of senior kinsmen; and, indeed, as we have seen, kinsmen and neighbours may murmur together against a son who has seduced his father's wife, a girl who has behaved insultingly to her parents-in-law, either verbally or by a breach of avoidance, and an heir who has neglected his wards or has neglected the customary ritual for his father, more particularly the customary killing of a cow when he enters into his inheritance. It is said that neglect to provide them with certain customary feasts infuriates neighbours more than anything else.[1]

The misfortunes that threaten from the neglect of rituals, and from the anger of kinsmen and neighbours, are loss of sanity, of life or health or fertility; a difficult labour or a lingering death; repeated miscarriages; loss of beauty (a wicked woman goes bald or turns reddish); scanty crops or sick herds, or, nowadays, unemployment—the man whose father is angry does not find a job. Only rarely is it suggested that punishment may be postponed until after death and then what is feared is that the shades of the lineage will not receive their kinsman.

775 When Nyakyusa talk about their religion they speak mostly of
771 external things, of the rituals, of the angry words spoken by kins-
688 men or neighbours and of the fearful effects upon one against whom this anger is directed. Misfortune is said to be brought down on a man by his parents muttering in anger over the fire, by people murmuring against him (the word used is that for the humming of a hive of bees). The emphasis is on outspoken complaint or criticism. But it is also thought that 'the shades see what is within a man': if he stints one wife of fish, then 'even though the woman herself has not said anything, the shades hear the thought of the belly'. Sleeplessness and an unquiet mind are taken as evidence of the anger of the shades or the attacks of witches.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 105–6.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

women, daughters of the lineage precede wives. Seniority, of course, does not depend solely on age, and we once saw a little boy precede his father in the performance of a ritual for his grandmother, with whose generation he was identified. The relative status of husband and wife is expressed in the taboo on a woman 'overstepping' her husband physically or metaphorically, and 'overstepping' is symbolized (oddly to a Christian) by the sign of a cross. The precedence of the chief wife is very marked. In commoner families she alone washes with her husband using the *ikipiki* medicine, and he performs the death ritual for her only. A chief may do this for two wives. In Selya a father washes in the puberty ritual with his senior daughter, and among the Kukwe a woman washes with her daughter or eldest son's first wife. 'To wash is to admit that I have lived, and borne a child, and grown up.'

All the rituals celebrate a change in status, and danger lies in not recognizing or admitting the change, in clinging to the past. This is most obvious in the death ritual, which is directed to the separation of the living and the dead. The mourners have the corpse 'on their bodies', they may not separate themselves from him by washing till the appropriate moment, and they share their food and *ikipiki* medicine with the shade, thereby recognizing him as a kinsman; but in due course they drive him off: 'You were our kinsman before but now it is finished, you are a stranger.' 'You are no relative of ours.' 'We are not corpses.' And at the same time they bring him back transformed, as a beneficent spirit in the home. The pattern is a common one in Bantu Africa: the Nyakyusa peculiarity is (1) the speed with which the transformation is achieved (commonly the 'bringing back' of the spirit is delayed a year, whereas the Nyakyusa may delay only a month); and (2) the close correspondence between the change in status of the dead and the change in status of the older generation, who 'move aside' at the 'coming out'. Each generation has its day and must give place to the next.

All through the rituals the dominance of the agnatic lineage is evident, but it does not exclude the recognition of kinship in the female line. Daughters' children *must* perform the ritual at death, twin birth, spearing, and binding with ropes, for their grandparents, while some sisters' children, and father's sisters' sons, may do so also. What is clear from the genealogies is that kinship links in the female line are not traced as far as in the male line and,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya

SELECT RECORDS

I. REPORTS OF PARTICULAR FUNERALS

(a) *Farewell to Mwamulenga III,*[1] *son of Mwegama (Selya)*

Record of G. W. 10/3/37

764 Mwamulenga III hanged himself seventeen days ago, after the [762] death of one of his wives and his only child. This ritual was held at his own house in Katumba but he was buried at the place where his father, Mwegama, had lived, and the mourning was carried out in the hills by Mwakapesa, the head of the family, who has moved there. The litter was at Mwakapesa's and was taken out about a week ago.

Mwaikambo and I arrived about 10 a.m. with Sikatula (wife of Gwamungonde), who is a cross-cousin (*untani*) of the family. The women were gathered inside the house wailing dirges—words were clearly audible but not, to me, distinguishable: one woman was the leader. There was more wailing than singing. The dirge was punctuated by slow handclaps. Mpogo, the eldest full brother of the dead man, and the heir, told me: 'It is the custom to wail just before the ritual, like this.'

764 515 Food was brought out about 11 a.m. The women had come close to talk to me; when food came out the men told them to go away. I asked why. 'We wash constantly, but women only wash a little, also they look after children and their bark-cloth belts are dirty. When they cook they wash, but for eating they wash little.'

764 I asked who would perform the ritual.

MPOGO: 'Kalukwa (the widow) will perform the ritual, also each of his brothers and half-brothers will select one or two children to do it too. The rest of our children just look on, for we ourselves are not yet dead.'

KANA NSAMBE: 'It is our custom to leave some people over, not to perform it on all.'

Later I asked why Bapala (Kana Lwesi) did the ritual and not Kana Ipalu whose relationship to the dead man was exactly the same. 'We leave some out, they will do it at some other later death.' Actually thirteen people performed it. 'Mwamaloba (son of Mwegama II) will not do the ritual when he returns—it does not matter; but if he'd been a son of the dead man then he would do so. The wives of the dead man's brothers never do the ritual. The ritual for Lukosa (dead wife of

[1] cf. Genealogy on p. 273.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya

the dead man) has been done already; that of to-day is for the dead man and his child together.' 764

c. 11.30 a.m. The women left the house empty; suddenly the men fell on Mpogo and dragged him struggling into the empty house; the women likewise dragged in Kalukwa—still smeared in ashes. The pair were left alone there with the officiant but, as I heard afterwards, they made no attempt to mate now, it is taboo until the beer. After three or four minutes Kana Nsambe called Mwaipalu (see genealogy) to summon them (*ukubasosya*). He went with a stick to the door and pushed it open. Each then came out with a string of green creeper (*nkolonowa*) over the right shoulder. 'This is the sign that we have given him the inheritance.' 'They do not have intercourse, however, until the beer.' Each went to bathe, separately, escorted by friends of the same sex—'to keep them company'. 764 768

The two chief officiants were non-relatives, Sikabile, wife of Mwenenganga, and her assistant Mwanyengenye; but the older female relatives assisted them too, and were referred to as *abanyago*. 764

Sikabile brought a plantain flower, carefully wrapped in a plantain leaf, into the swept place near the door. She dug a little grave and buried it. There was a discussion about the right direction, and it was decided that the point represented the legs of the corpse and must be set to face BuKinga. The leaf was not buried. 'They take a plantain flower because the deceased was a man. If it had been a woman, they would have taken a sweet banana.' Then, one by one, the principals came and rubbed forehead, right elbow, right hand, and right toe in the pile of earth there—once facing BuKinga and then, all over again, facing the other way. Then they went to bathe. One infant was touched with earth in the correct places by the officiant. Boys and their father bathed separately—'it is always taboo for them to bathe together'.

Mpogo told me that he lives in the hills at Mwakilema's, but all the ritual, including the drinking of beer, will be done here. 'If there was millet available,' he said, 'we would start the brewing now; as it is, we must wait for the new millet. We have sown all our millet.'

After all had bathed, the officiant poured water for them with powdered medicine in it, at the doorway. One by one they stood in the doorway and she outside, and they washed hands, and mouth, and both knees; then her assistant handed her for each a banana, roasted and unscraped, with the end broken off and with a pumpkin-seed and a lentil, stuck in it, and some powder on it. The officiant held it near the ground and each stooped to bite it, then took hold of it and ate it—some bit first without touching with the hand, some caught hold of it. To each she gave more roast bananas and seeds separately too. In all the ritual Kalukwa (the widow) came last and Mpogo usually last but one. Now he was last but one.

The women then all gathered inside the house and the sisters of

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
SelyA

764 Mpogo began to admonish the wives. This went on for two hours or more. I heard one of the sisters remark: 'The wives tremble now, their husband has died, their Kyala has died.' There was a great noise. Mpogo said to me: 'Our sisters are men, those our wives have married. It is the custom to admonish the wives because our sisters have been angry.' 'And at a twin ritual?' 'Yes, then also.'

764 602 I was told later: 'Mpogo's sisters punished all their sisters-in-law because when they had gone to their brothers the sisters-in-law did not receive them well, they were stingy to them with food. One said: "I went to my brother's home. When I was approaching I passed through a sweet potato garden; I took a potato without fearing because I said to myself: 'It's the garden of my mother.' When I arrived with the one sweet potato I had dug up she said: 'Who are you with a sweet potato?' And she began to shout, saying: 'Whose is it? You do not listen.' My body began to shrink and I said to myself: 'Ha! Why does she not come to look closely? She says a thief comes by day.' And I sat down." And so they went on.'

764 While this continued the principals were all given ointment (*inyemba*) by the officiant and smeared themselves. 'This is the first time they've done so since the death.' Then at the other door of the hut all the principals were collected 'to see the litter (*ukuketa ulufumbo*)'. They watched while the officiant sat inside the door, took some dry banana leaves handed to her, and sprinkled powder on them in the form of a cross. Then she went out of the door holding the leaves and rubbed them lightly on the ground in the form of a cross, and put them outside to be thrown away.

At last the admonitions of the brothers' wives stopped.

Then came the putting of food into the pot. The officiant held an old pot in her hand and circled round the hearth-bricks with it while her assistant dropped in food and all the women sang '*Ilinwanwa*'. The food was transferred to another pot and put on the fire. The officiant then touched the hearth-bricks with different parts of her body, or made gestures as if to do so, while she and they said: 'The foot is also put on the fire,' and so on. For all the parts the prefix *un* was used, implying 'his'. The officiant also said, stamping: 'You pass by me, I your wife, your friend.'

Then came a symbolic pouring out of millet into a basket. The gifts of millet were not available, so a little, provided by the family, was used symbolically. Two small winnowing baskets were emptied into a large grain basket by the officiant, while another woman said names—of relatives for the first basket and of neighbours for a second: 'So-and-so and So-and-so has brought millet'—ending up with 'all' in each case. 'This,' they said, 'is a symbol (*ikimanyilo*), we shall each bring our gift of millet later.'

Four stems of bananas had been brought and were now divided up—

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya

one by the wife of Mwabufugo (she had returned home the day before yesterday), one by the wife of Mwamgobole, one by Sikatula, one by Kana Ipalu (cf. genealogy). 764

A fresh bark-cloth was taken from the tree and hammered a little: 'Until this moment it was taboo to hammer bark-cloth, the hammer belonged to the dead man.' The bark-cloth was placed on a fresh banana leaf beneath a grindstone and a little millet ground into it. Then leaf and bark-cloth were taken away. This flour was used for the shaving. Another leaf was put under and more flour ground for porridge.

Roast plantains were handed round for eating. There was a discussion about shaving the 'hair of the corpse'. As it was late, Mpogo wanted to leave it until the gifts of millet were brought, but the others overruled him: 'It must be done now.' They decided to smear their heads with millet paste in preparation for shaving now, and to shave to-morrow.

Kalukwa has to avoid Kana Nsambe (her husband's father's sister) as an in-law. Once, when she came close for eating of mash, Kana Nsambe put a cloth over her head. But when Kalukwa was in the hut at a distance (e.g. standing in a line) no precaution was taken. Kana Nsambe said: 'It is I who buried Mwegama, she avoids me.' Mpogo explained that 'She avoids, but only a little, if she gives a gift to Kana Nsambe she can look at her'. [606]

Then all the principals stood in a line, the assistant officiant crawled round them sweeping the dust on to their legs, while they, and the other women, began to wail a dirge: 'Farewell, Mwaikono!' The women, cheerful a moment before, were weeping at once. This continued for five minutes or so. The principals stood with legs apart while the officiant pushed a flat basket of millet, pumpkin-seeds, and lentils, between the legs of each in the row—she crawled along doing so and then dragged the basket back to the right side. Then she put it on the head of each in turn, and she put a pinch of millet flour on the left shoulder of each.

A stem of bananas and a bunch of feathers (representing a hen) were brought out, and each of the principals in turn sat on the feathers. Kalukwa who, as always, was last, picked it up and put it over her shoulder on a string. The officiant took a leaf for each principal, touched her own body in various places with it, and then put it round the wrist of the principal—to each in turn she did this. As they came out of the hut she held a banana sapling across the doorway so that as each stooped coming out his head collided with it.

Another line was formed outside, facing BuKinga (as in the hut), and again the basket was put by the officiant on the head of each, but this time she threw a few seeds out over their left shoulders and the basket rested for a moment on their heads. They then went to bathe, and Kalukwa threw away the bananas and feathers in the stream.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya
Kukwe

764 A mash made of beans, lentils and pumpkin-seeds was salted, to be eaten with millet porridge; one unsalted was prepared to be eaten with bananas. Each principal then washed again with water and powdered medicine at the doorway. The unsalted mash and bananas were handed to each of the principals to eat. The salted mash and porridge (in one ball) was placed on one of the hearth-bricks and each one came and stooped and bit (as with the bananas before outside), then took [177] away the mouthful to eat. 'We used to put it up on the wall, we have abandoned the custom nowadays.' Mpogo begged for 'only a little'. Finally, each principal sat in the doorway and the officiant smeared a cross on his head with a paste of millet flour (previously ground on the bark-cloth) and water.

It was 6 p.m., the sun sinking, as I left.

The kinsmen present are marked on the genealogy on p. 273. There were also three neighbours one of whom was a younger full brother of the village headman, Mwambuputa. The headman was not there himself.

(*b*) *Farewell to Kalata's mother* (*Kukwe*)

Record of G. W. 6/11/36

Kalata's mother died on Monday evening, November 2, and was buried the next day.

KALATA: They will perform the ritual on me and my younger brother and on my son; if we had a sister alive they would do it for her too, but we have none. . . . The officiant is Sijele, wife of Mwainombola. He is a relative of ours, our mothers avoided him. He was their 'father-in-law'. . . . My father is already dead.

[824] A young man present had gone for the *ikipiki* medicine to wash with and brought back a plant, *nyasati*, but the officiant (Sijele) had seen it and gone for another, saying 'that is the *ikipiki* of the Sangu'. However, two older men and the dead woman's younger sister disagreed with her and said *nyasati* was right.

There were present one classificatory father of Kalata with a small son, Kalata's own small son, Kalata's younger brother, Kalata himself, a young man *untani* to Kalata (son of the dead woman's brother) and a small son; the wife and the sister of the *untani*, a younger sister of the dead woman, and another young woman, all with mourning belts tied round them. A fifth young woman had no belt.

The sister's daughter began to grind millet. A young woman went off to look for medicines for sweeping out the rubbish (*imindu*). Everyone gave her advice as to where to find them. Sijele came in with a bunch of twigs for sweeping, and a separate one for washing. There was more discussion of *nyasati*. Sijele said that *nyasati* was for bathing with after the burial, not for washing with now.

A young woman began to clear the rubbish (*ukusosya imindu*) with the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

764

bunch of twigs and to carry them into the bananas. Sijele took over the grinding of the millet.

K's younger brother went off to fetch the wife of M. (who himself died the day before yesterday). As soon as she arrived she insisted on the grinding stone being moved opposite the door (it had been to one side of the door). 'That's the ritual,' she said. She changed two other things: first she said that *nyasati* was the correct plant to wash with, and they accepted her judgement; then she was furious that they'd begun to sweep out the hut: 'You must not do that, to-night you have to dance to the harp on the litter. Actually, you should have started yesterday washing and eating porridge, and swept to-day, now you must sweep to-morrow.' After much discussion it was decided to eat the porridge now, dance to-night, and sweep to-morrow. Some of the litter was still left inside unswept.

M's wife, N., went away again. Kalata told me: 'She is a Christian, she is our officiant, she also is related to us, she and Sijele are those we get to perform the ritual for us.' He also said: 'The rubbish (*imindu*) or litter (*ulufumbo*) is sickness.' The three young men—K., his brother, and *untani*—all took the women's argument over the ritual as a great joke.

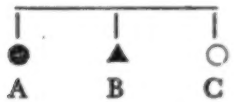
The millet porridge had now been cooked. Kalata's son (aged about 4 years) was stood by the door and a little piece of twig, *nyasati*, put between his hands. Three times the officiant poured water on his hands; and twice she made him hold it in his hand, suck it into his mouth and spit. Then K. and his younger brother in turn each did likewise, washing hands three times and mouth once and spitting. Two leaves were put on the ground, one of sweet banana, one of plantain, on top of each other, in front of the door. Sijele put porridge on them and then, taking a leaf-rib of *isege* she gave a little to each twice in turn, in the same order. To each she gave once when he stood to the west, once when he stood to the east, of the door. She shoved the porridge in great lumps into their mouths amid laughter. The porridge has no medicine in it. The rest of the porridge was finished by 'the officiants'—i.e. Sijele and the dead woman's elderly sister.

I asked the reasons for all this.

'Our ritual is of great importance. When anyone dies they treat us, the children, ritually; they make us lick porridge, they make us wash—for if they don't treat me thus then, if I go to eat other men's ritual food, the disease falls upon me. There are many kinds of ritual; in our Kukwe ritual we eat mash (*ikufuge*). If I come across other people eating maize with beans, as the Ngumba and the Penja do, or anything else but mash, then I don't eat that food, I avoid it and don't go near, I say this is a different ritual. But if I find people eating mash then I eat too. Even then, however, if I haven't had all the ritual performed for me, both of father and of mother, the disease will fall upon me.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

764 'We perform the ritual upon the immediately-following younger brother of a man, on his wife, children, and grandchildren. On the husband, the immediately-following younger sister of a woman, children, and grandchildren. My mother's sister here did not immediately follow her, therefore she does not have the ritual done for her.'



B. died first. A. performed the ritual for him. A. has now died and C. does not perform the ritual.

K. has no wife with him, she's left him.

I returned the same evening just before sunset, as they told me to. We waited a long time. K's classificatory mother asked him: 'What about the stem of bananas?' And he went off to arrange with a neighbour that he should cut and 'steal' a particular stem. As the light faded from the sky, Sijele, the officiant, arrived, walking as she always does with the help of a stick. Still we waited for N., and by the time she came it was full night.

From the moment of Sijele's arrival there was a prolonged discussion as to whether or not we should include maize in this evening's ritual food, or whether beans alone were correct. Precedents were quoted from previous rituals, including that of the dead woman's husband and those of the local chief's family. Sijele left declaring that to include maize was a Sangu custom. After N. arrived, the argument continued and it was finally decided that beans alone were correct. For about half an hour after we were all gathered ready in the hut, round the fire, the talk continued. N. and S. described, with immense enjoyment, the rest of the ritual, particularly the bathing with stones. Although, as [781] we shall see later, the stones symbolize death and the corpse, there was no atmosphere of awe about the description—it was vigorous and expressive and punctuated by the laughter of the listeners. There was no solemnity; no evident sense of awe; the two officiants, the principals, and the rest of us laughed and talked all the time. It was clearly thought most important to perform the ritual correctly, but not, apparently, the least important to spread a 'religious atmosphere' over it.

'Who shall begin? Let the young gentleman (*ulifumu*) begin!' The child was made to begin, K. followed and K's younger brother came last. Kalata held his son's hands open to receive the beans and powdered medicine, in front of the fire. A pot was put on the fire and beans brought in calabash spoons. Sijele began by opening her little packet of powdered medicine and putting a pinch into the pot with a few beans, then she poured in some water from a drinking calabash. As she did each of these activities she said: 'This is the ritual of my wife.' (N.B. she was speaking for the child, grandsons call their grandmothers 'my wife'.) Then the child was helped to do the same thing. Sijele put

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

medicine and beans into his two hands and K. helped him to throw them into the pot. As he did so K. and N. both said for him: 'This is the ritual of my grandmother.' Then Sijele gave him the water calabash and K. helped him to pour, while the same words were said for him again. Sijele did the same for K. and his brother in turn. She began each time by putting powder and beans and pouring water into the pot, and then K. followed suit, and his brother after him. For K. she said: 'This is the ritual of my mother,' and he repeated: 'This is the ritual of my mother, Sandumi'; for the brother she said: 'This is the death of my mother,' and he repeated the same words. 764

The ritual was interrupted once or twice by discussion. The child's hands got burnt in throwing the beans into the pot and there was a pause for comment and comfort. When Sijele said for the child: 'This is the ritual of my wife,' N. said: 'Let him say "of my grandmother".' Neither of the young men was very serious, and each laughed as he finished his words.

We went quietly (by pre-arrangement) to a neighbour's homestead, stumbling in the darkness, and cut a stem of banana. We made a noise doing so but the householder stayed quiet. K's younger brother picked up the stem from the ground and ran off home with it, while the rest of us set up a hue and cry, following him at a run and calling: 'Thief, thief, he's stolen a banana stem!' Still the householder stayed quiet. This is the custom, the owners say nothing, it is the party of the 'thief' that pursue him. This stem, they told me, would be kept and used later.

So we entered the house again. Kalata had previously borrowed a harp (*ilipango*) of four strings and asked a neighbour to come and play it. The three principals, Sijele, and the player, stood up and began to circle round the fire slowly, stepping rhythmically and saying: 'Good-bye, go to father! Good-bye, go to mother!' Sijele and N. had previously told them the words and the tune. The fire burned up brightly and flickered on the circling figures, the leader crouching to his harp, while the beans steamed in the pot. Sijele held a winnowing basket full of dry pods of oil-seeds (*isyemba*) in her hands. The three principals reached into the basket as they circled and crushed them in their fingers till the seeds fell out. Then N. called out: 'Now then, stamp the stamping dance (*akakanya ingenya*)!' The harp-player stopped playing while the three principals stamped and stamped near the fire calling the war-cry as they did so. No words were spoken. [534] 764 535

Two leaves were then placed on the ground, one sweet banana, one plantain, on top of each other. Sijele and the three principals knelt round them, and N. told them the words and the tune. Then these four beat the leaves as if they were hand drums, singing: 'The ritual of my father (*yeka, yeka*), the ritual of my mother: the ritual of Mwaijagila, Mwalibuti, Malambalaga, Kisinile, Lambwe (these are the praise- 764 533

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

533 764 names of their father); Sananbi, Mwilwa, Maluhajegila (these are the praise-names of their mother). The next day they explained their song: 'It is to perform the ritual (*ukuyekala*). They call it *iyekala* (i.e. the ritual) and they say that if they don't perform it the child will be like an idiot, he will run about naked and mad.' In all the songs Sijele acted as leader and the principals as chorus.

Then, finally, a grain basket was brought and turned upside down. Sijele and the principals beat on it with a new rhythm, but still syncopated, singing: 'The two ways of the parent! The two ways of the parent!' And so it finished.

764 I was told that the next morning early the three principals would eat the beans which had now been cooked, but that they must stay for a night first in the hut.

Kalata commenting later said: 'We Kukwe circle and dance the stamping dance, but we beat neither the ground nor the basket. Beating the basket is a Sangu custom.' Kalata is a Kukwe but his mother was a Sangu.[1] 'We Kukwe sing farewell and "*Sjeka, sjeka*", and we dance round to the harp; but we don't sing "the two ways of the parent" at all!'

November 7

I arrived at 8 a.m. to find that the beans had been eaten. 'We came out in the morning cold very early, we washed our hands and ate the beans. Then Sijele, who had slept the night with us, swept out the rubbish (*imisale*) with the bunch of medicine twigs.' When I arrived Kalata was finishing the sweeping outside with an ordinary broom.

November 16 *Record of Musikambo*

764 342 They began by building a little hut on the pathway that goes through the bananas to the stream, near the house. The path went right through the hut, which was built only by the officiants, not by the others. After they had finished building they planted hearth-bricks inside and lit a fire; then, taking some dry oil-seeds and powdered medicine, they called out to summon those for whom the ritual was being performed. When they came into the hut the officiants gave powdered medicine and oil-seeds to the child who received them in both hands and poured them into a potsherd on the fire, saying as he did so: 'This is the death of my grandmother.' They gave them to the two young men likewise, who said: 'This is the death of my mother' (that is to say: 'This is the ritual of my mother'). And then the officiant took all the rest of the oil-seeds and put them in the potsherd to roast.

764 When the seeds were roasted the officiant ground them up and began to prepare ointment. Meanwhile the principals poured water into a

[1] Strictly the ritual should have been Kukwe since a wife follows the ritual of her husband.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

small pot for cooking the beans; each poured a little in turn, as they had done with the oil-seeds, and said the same words as before. The officiants then picked the flowering head of a banana and selected a petal or two to use as a basin to prepare the ointment in. The beans, however, they did not throw into the pot, because they had done this before, they just put some in to cook. When the beans were all ready for making the mash, but before they took them off the fire, the officiants shaved the principals' hair. The officiants made them sit down on a bark-cloth spread on the ground and drew lines where they were going to shave with a bunch of grass called '*ifiepide*', which had been dipped in some lees of beer. They began by shaving along the lines marked with the lees, one from forehead to neck, one from ear to ear over the crown. Then, as they shaved each in turn, they mocked him, saying: 'Poor fool, it found its mother (grandmother) was dead. Went stealing and they've speared it on the head!' After the officiant had shaved the lines and mocked them they helped each other to finish shaving their heads. 764

The mash was made by mixing the beans with the plantain that they had stolen previously, and with a sweet banana which they cut for the occasion. The plantain they say is the man, the sweet banana the woman. While mixing the mash together they took out of it a bean, a plantain and a sweet banana for each of the principals. And to some of the mash they added salt, to some not.

Then they went to bathe. They cut leaves of plantain and of sweet banana. First they tied the plantain leaves round the principals' loins and then the sweet banana leaves on top, and round their necks they tied one plantain leaf also. Then they stuck one plantain in front, and a sweet banana behind, and went to bathe. The principals wore cloths under the leaves because of the women present.

When we reached the stream the principals sat down in the water looking downstream. The doctor twisted grass into pads and put a pad on each one's head with a pebble on the pad. Then she put pebbles in the forks of all their fingers and toes, and in their mouths and ears, and made them hold a flower in each hand. They lay down in the water looking first upstream, for that is the direction of BuKukwe, and then finally downstream again. Stones, leaves and bananas fell into the water and then they bathed themselves in the ordinary way, each still wearing a cloth.

On the way back the doctor picked a kind of water grass (*ishiake*) and a certain flower called *ntempelenge* and made each of the principals hold some grass in one hand and a flower in the other. When we reached the little hut (in the path between house and river) the principals threw the grass and the flower on to its thatch. Also they had brought water in a calabash from the stream, and this they poured on the thatch where they had thrown the flower. As the water dripped [224]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 down from the thatch to the ground, a principal ran through the doorway so that the water trickled on to his body, then they poured more and he ran out again. Each of the three principals did this twice.

One officiant had been left behind to roast a chicken and some plantains, and when they had run through the drips they ate the food. They began with the roasted plantains in which they had stuck cooked lentils, then the boiled plantains and the beans which they had left separate from the mash, then the unsalted mash and finally the salted mash. When they had finished the officiants smeared patches of ointment on themselves and on all the principals—on the little toe, the navel, the forehead and the elbow—and then each anointed his whole body. Then the officiant took some banana bark, twisted it up and smeared it all over with powdered medicine. This she first made as if to tie round her own neck but did not, and then she tied it round the neck of the first principal. She put similar necklaces on the other two and they slept with these necklaces on.

November 17

Early in the morning when they first woke up the officiant brought some medicated millet porridge which they moulded into little sausages, then they went to the path some way off from the village, and there, on the path, they dug little holes into which they inserted the sausages. Then they bent down and put their lips to them, biting a piece off and leaving a piece in the ground, and this they buried. Returning to the little hut, they took off the necklaces and threw them inside, and they pulled down the hut and destroyed it. Then they went to bathe and washed off the ointment they had put on the day before. When they got home the officiant stroked each on the forehead with a razor but made no cut. So it was over.

They said that if any detail was omitted or done wrong the principals would go mad.

II. LOCAL VARIATIONS IN THE DEATH RITUAL

764 (a) *The funeral of Mwampiki and his wife* (see Table (c) p. 272.)
184 This document illustrates the differences between lineages in the details of ritual, and the adjustments made for the children of married daughters. Mwampiki, whose funeral is described, was of a Sangu family, doctors of the chiefdom for the 'coming out', who had lived for two generations in Selya.

Record of G. W. 16/3/37

Kalunju, the village headman, called me to the funeral of 'the wife of Mwampiki' in Ijesi village. Mwampiki (Mwamwenembanga) himself is dead but his homestead and several wives have been inherited by a

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

younger half-brother, Mwaisalwa. The dead woman is a wife of Mwalemba (Kanjesi) another half-brother. Kanjesi was an old inhabitant of this village but he moved to Masebe. His wife was on a visit to her 'fathers' at Mwakalobo's place in the hills. She went to a funeral there and fell sick and died there yesterday. The corpse was brought here this morning. It is now 10 a.m. and the grave is half-dug. The owner of the homestead, Mwampiki II (Mwaisalwa), is not here, he is sick at Masoko where he had gone for a case. The husband is not yet here either; they have sent for him to Masebe. The dead woman's elder sister and co-wife is here, and their mother. 764 184

They went to fetch a doctor to perform an autopsy, offering him 20 cents, but came back without him. 'He refused,' they said. 'Well then,' said Kakuju, 'take him a cloth, doctors do not agree to come for just a little.' So they took him a cloth. [763 435]

Kakuju told the women to come out of the house as it was too small to hold them all. The corpse was carried out into the shade of an *unyaguti* tree. All the women gathered round wailing, about seventy of them, and about twenty men.

No cows have been killed yet as neither the husband nor Mwampiki II are here. No drums are here yet either. The grave was finished about 11 a.m. I asked Kakuju about dancing at death. He agreed that in the old days they had only danced the war-dance. 'That was our old custom. Formerly we fought and killed people—the men of Mwangomo (another chief) who came to the funeral!' Mwambuga (the husband of the dead woman's husband's sister), who had been quite cheerful heretofore, suddenly began weeping and crying. He walked over to the women and joined in the wailing. Some small and naked children started climbing joyfully on the piled-up earth from the grave. [177]

Now it is noon and there are thirty-five to forty men present and ninety to one hundred women. A doctor has agreed to come (to perform the autopsy) but has not yet arrived. Although the corpse was outside male mourners went into the house on their arrival to weep. An older woman got up and led a dirge. I heard her say a number of names, among which 'Mwampiki' was distinguishable. Clapping followed her words. Often she just called the war-cry (*ululula*). The others wailed and joined in the war-cry. She accompanied her wailing with rhythmic movements of the body and arms. After a time she sat down but continued to lead the wailing.

Mwakalabela (Mbalakatela) arrived with a cow. His daughter is married to young Mwaijumba, the son of Mwampiki. The autopsy followed (for description see *Good Company*, pp. 247–9).

17/3/57

Angombwike told me at breakfast that now Mwampiki himself was dead. He died yesterday at Masoko and was carried here last night.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 184 They arrived with him in the middle of the night. The message reached Kakuju at cock-crow. I arrived at 9 a.m. to find the grave finished and one cow (a young one) killed. 'It was his own, and slept with the children'—i.e. it was stabled in his long house in the compartment in which the herdboys, his sons, sleep at night. The drums were being beaten—I heard them begin as I approached—but there was no dancing as yet. The corpse was being held upright (wrapped and hidden in cloths) by the women chief mourners, under the *unyunguti* tree, in the middle of about 150 women. Wailing was in full progress. Two women were standing up to lead the dirges; one was the one who led yesterday. She called out: 'Mwampiki, Mbembela . . .' and other words. She stretched her hands towards the circle of women, towards the men and called out: 'You men, you young men . . .' and she called the villages by name: '. . . Lupondo, Njesi, Bujege, Bujenga'. I asked about this because Angombwike had told me that the Mwampiki family were Sangu and did not wail at a funeral. 'Yes, indeed,' I was told, 'they have changed now, but at the beginning [of the funeral] they did not wail, they were silent, they dug the grave and finished it, they killed a cow, and have only begun to wail now.' Two men stood by the corpse (among the women) wailing, his own eldest son and his brother-in-law. About seventy men were present. Dancing was begun by Mwaisyelage of Ibale who seized a spear and shouted the war-cry and danced. Half a dozen men followed him and several bananas were cut. Kakuju began to shout out words as he sat and then leapt up and joined in the dance. After five minutes the dancing died down and the drums stopped.

The grave, like that of yesterday, is an unusual shape. The hole is small and square and the cave is much bigger than usual. The corpse is laid down with the forehead pointing to Sangu country. 'Yes, the woman was buried just like this,' I was told in reply to my question. 'For though she is a Nyakyusa by birth, since she married a Sangu she looks towards Sangu country.'

A cow was brought by Mwakibilingwa whose daughter is the wife of one of Mwampiki's sons. 'Have you accepted the cow?' I asked. 'No one can yet,' said Mwai'umba, 'the real owner of the cattle is her child, the "owner" of the woman. Mwampiki's younger brother should not receive the cattle. No! But her child, the owner of the woman. If he wishes he will receive it and tell us. If he does not wish he will drive it away and tell us: "I am killing my own cow." We do not know yet.'

The corpse was carried with shouts and the war-cry and wailing about 100 yards, and the dead man's cattle were driven by the side (six full-grown beasts and two calves). 'It is to do honour to him here where he walked about, now that he has died. We do it for all senior people like him, not for juniors. Yes, and for women too, and even

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

though there are no cattle they carry him thus.' The corpse was then taken to be washed. 'We do not examine him; yesterday's corpse we did indeed examine but not this one. He was a senior, a chief,' said his son, and Kakuju confirmed it. 'We do not examine him. We refuse because he was a senior person.' More cattle appeared—'those of his son at Masoko'. 'It is the custom,' I was told. 'All the cattle come to mourn. These are the cattle of Mwansasu, the first lot were Mbembela's own. Most (or all of them) were kept by Mwaipungu, the eldest son.'

The drums began again and dancing recommenced. The drums had been warmed up by a fire. About 200 women and 100 men were present.

Mbasuke, father-in-law of Mwansasu, brought a heifer calf. Three cows were killed, two after the burial, all belonging to Mbembela and his sons. The heads of the cows killed point towards Sangu country. There was a dispute about one of these cows. They had killed one already which had come for the marriage of a daughter of the family, and they had taken another from the same son-in-law. There was objection, some saying: 'No, we should take one which came from another son-in-law.' All the cattle of Mwansasu and of the deceased were driven through the homestead together, a herd of twenty or so. Then they were gathered at the side, facing the grave. The corpse was carried out to the side of the grave. The chief mourners stood holding the corpse and all the men and women stood up to watch. The noise of wailing was terrific. A son seemed entirely to have lost control. 'Alas Father! Alas Father!' he cried, his body trembling and sweating, the tears running down his face, his hand pointing, shaking, towards the corpse and the grave. A friend was wailing, holding his head with his hands: 'My friend, my friend!' The corpse was laid down by the women and wrapped in more cloths. This took about half an hour. Still we stood and watched while the women began to sit down. Two men (Mwaisalwa III and a half-brother) and one woman (his widow) got into the grave—a tight fit. The corpse was buried with a new pot (a small one, used for serving food), several calabashes including a calabash cup, and a calabash of beer. Some of the beer was taken out just beforehand and left above ground. 'That means he should not go with all our fertility.' A huge calabash had been smashed before this by a son, in an ecstasy of grief. Now another was brought but it was decided not to bury it.

Kisiss explained about the beer: 'Always, when a person has drunk beer during his illness before his death, the remains are buried with him. If he has not drunk beer during his illness none is sought.'

No door was available so a cloth was fixed across the opening of the cave. The women got out of the grave while the men remained in to stamp down the earth. Many people threw handfuls of earth.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Farewell to Mwampiki 2/4/37

764 184 Women began to wail about 9 a.m. I saw some arrive with bananas. They stopped wailing after ten minutes or so. Imilanwa (Mwaisalwa) was present. Mwaijumba had not yet come. I met Kakuju on the way. He had not yet been told of the ritual. Mbapa and Maleja (widows of Mwalingo) did most of the work, with Ijumba, widow of Mwampiki. Isalwa sat near and watched while Maleja ground up the ointment. Seeds for making ointment were put on the fire. This was the ointment for anointing oneself in the ritual. Beans were brought in a flat basket. 'We mourn', they said, 'with bean mash and the meat of a cow.'

There was some discussion about killing the cow and a dispute between Imilanwa and Simeni. Just as the cow was about to be killed a woman came and made them bring it to the side of the swept court [262] away from the graves. 'If you kill it near the father-in-law's grave the wives will fear to eat the meat.' The cow was killed by Imilanwa. He then called the men of the family to discuss whether or not they should kill a bull also. One had been sent by the Chief Mwaipopo who is 'our son-in-law. He married a daughter of Maleja'. Imilanwa said: 'Let us kill it,' and they agreed. Only thirteen men were present so far.

[171 177] The meat from the fork of the right foreleg (*ija mmapa*) was taken to eat with the mash. This is a Sangu not a Nyakyusa custom. The men of the family follow the Sangu custom. The women, daughters of Sangu, do likewise, and the women who are wives of Sangu, but the children of daughters who are married to Nyakyusa men from Selya do the Selya custom. If the daughter of a Sangu marries a Selya man then, if her father dies, she does the Sangu ritual at his place, but if her husband dies she does the Selya ritual at his place even if she has borne him no children, and even if she is herself a child or an infant who has not yet been to him. But her children always do the Selya ritual both at their father's home and at their mother's.

The burying of the banana flower and rubbing in earth is a Selya custom and is only done by the children of Selya men. I saw five or six children do it. Then more children came to rub in earth. One was under instruction at the mission. The women told him to rub himself but Mwaijumba broke in: 'If he is a Christian he ought not to perform the ritual.' 'He's under instruction.' 'Very well, he does not perform the ritual, for a Christian should not have two gods (*ba Kyala babili*).' The bull was killed a little way off among the bananas. Mwaijumba explained: 'It is just for meat, it's not for the ritual, the further off one. Christians will eat it.'

Shaving of the sprouting hair *Record of Mwaikambo, 22/4/37*

First the men and women began drinking beer separately. Then they began the ritual. They went to the grave with beer in a small calabash.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Ndali

The officiant prepared some beer mixing it with powdered medicine, 764
and they came one by one to drink. The other officiant made as if to 184
shave them, taking a little hair from the forehead and the neck. When she had done this she put her hands between her legs. Thus the people of Selya perform the ritual. In another calabash they put the lees of the beer that had been drunk, with two pots of water. These lees are poured on to their heads and the water runs over their bodies. When the officiant has done this she puts her hands and the calabash between her legs. They look towards Sangu country. Then they shave their hair. When they have finished they throw away the cloths and bark-cloth which they wear when they wash. Then they anoint themselves with oil, and sleep with it on them, and wash in the morning. The people of Selya shave in the morning; at this time they do not really shave, they only cut the sprouting hair.

In the evening there is the ceremony of handing over the inheritance. The heir sits on a banana stump in the doorway and the chief wife hands him a billhook. Then they say: 'Care for these children whom your elder brother left as if you had begotten them yourself, do not be hard, be kindly as he was.'

And at night he will sleep with the widows. In the morning the chief wife goes to her father without washing off the filth and gives her fathers beer, then they greet one another. Ndingania also goes to his mother's people. They said one woman did not go because her fathers did not know the custom, they are Lugulu. There were only these two women, one grown up and one a girl, to be inherited.

Mwaijumba told me that for Kanyosa their affines will not cut the banana grove for they have no girl to give in her place. 'They will give us cattle, we divide (the marriage-cattle) with them.'

(*b*) *Ndali funeral rites* *Record of Mwaikambo*

When someone has died the Ndali mourn for five days, and the 764
sixth day they sweep and shave the hair. When they are shaving it they 302
take a potsherd and put in it all the hair that is shaved off. When they 184
have finished they choose one senior woman, the chief wife, and they hand her this hair and they go to throw it away at the cross-roads. Giving the woman the hair means that the shade should be at his place and leave others. Shaving is to get rid of the shade which was on their bodies (*ukumwa ko kanssya unyaka uju bali nagwe mu mbili*). And the people who held the corpse in their arms and dug the grave step over a trench of fire when they have come from the bathing. The doctor gives them medicines to bathe with. They say that if they do not step over fire it is as if they had the dead on their bodies (*balinagwe mumbili umfwe*), and he will always come in dreams, so they drive him away.

When some considerable time has passed—a whole year—they do the 765
ilyengule. This word comes from straining beer. To strain the *ilyengule*

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

763 QUESTION: Why the gathering?

MWANIFU: We were startled to hear that he had died. They raised the lament of death in the morning and his cattle went home when Kasitile and I were on the pasture land. We were startled to see Katasya's cattle going home and said: 'He has died.' But his relatives saw that he had not died. They said it is taboo to lament when someone is still alive.

QUESTION: Why do cows come home when a man dies?

MWANIFU: It is a form of mourning. They should also weep and say farewell. He had property. For if I, Mwanifu, die, though I do not have cattle myself, yet because I am the son of Mwaipopo cattle are 764 killed at the funeral. It is impressive. But if I were a commoner and 556 had no cattle, then the funeral would be a flop. There would be no meat and people would say: 'He has not yet died, he has left one head.' They count the cattle to kill. If an important commoner dies, one who has cattle, then his funeral is impressive. People dance at his homestead and say: 'Our fellow, who has died, was a strong man who danced the war-dance in the homesteads.' And if he was tough in disputes, if he always got the better of them and no one ever got his cow, then they say: 'A tough fellow has died. May he leave a son as tough as himself. He died with his toughness.' They praise him.

782 QUESTION: Tell me about the killing of Katasya's bull.

MWANIFU: He killed the bull without telling his neighbours, but when he poured out the beer he called Mwainyopolela and Kapuguso and two others. There were four. He had built in Busikali village in which there are ten homesteads, but, customarily, we do not call all the neighbours, only those who are nearest. Only if I have killed a full-grown beast do I call them all and give them a leg. Yes, it was a big bull and perhaps it is on account of that that they are angry. When they came they were startled, saying: 'They are drinking beer! And there is meat lying outside!' They entered and drank a little. Then Katasya divided the meat for his relatives and took his own. He gave to Mwainyopolela and his fellows three ribs. Then M. said to his three fellows: 'Let us go home. I will not take this little piece of meat.' So they all went away. The other three ate the meat, only M. did not.

QUESTION: So they were angry?

754 MWANIFU: Perhaps! We say sometimes: 'They were angry and ate 787 him.' But perhaps it was sorcery, because just now three snakes entered the house of his chief wife—the *inelesi* snakes. One entered and they killed it. Another entered and they killed it. Then they caught the third to take to a doctor, the son of Mwakanyamale. The doctor said: 'This snake is sorcery,' and he will find a medicine to give them to drink that the illness may be slight. But he has not yet done so.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

QUESTION: When he says it is sorcery, does he mean that the snakes have been sent by someone? 754

MWANIFU: Yes, Mwaipaja (G. W.), you understand.

5/1/38

Katasya died during the night. I came to the burial with the doctor, Mwakańamale, meeting Mwamalunda on the road. They told me that the son, Mwakanjwike, had fled from the funeral. 'It is said that he had made love to three of his father's wives. They all fled, the three women and the young man. Yes, they will take them to a waterfall to cleanse them.' 764

I sat by Mwaipopo, the chief. There was a dispute about the autopsy. Kasitile came to the chief to say: 'They are refusing to examine him.' 763 'Why are they refusing? There is much illness about. Let us examine him and *know*.' Mwaipopo spoke with heat. Then a relative came and told him: 'Katasya said: "Do not examine me when I die."' Mwaipopo: 'Why? There is that case of the son (incestuous adultery) or perhaps it is sorcery, or perhaps, if the neighbours refuse to examine him, it is a confession that they have bewitched him. Let us examine him. It will trouble us later on. Also, he was praying to the shades, saying: "The millet failed." Then he died! Let us examine him and know.'

Five cows and a bull were killed. About twenty cattle were standing in the herd. The corpse was carried around with wailing and drumming and the cattle were driven round also. Then followed the autopsy. 764 763 I went with Mwanyoso, with Kasitile's relative, Mwakasenga, and with the brother of the dead man. A woman doctor performed it with a bamboo knife. Another woman kept a hand on the head of the dead man meanwhile. 'You brave ones!' was the comment of the other women, two or three of whom stood watching. The doctor hesitated, as if in fear, before the first cut. Mwanyoso encouraged her: 'Go ahead!' As she pulled out the bowels we all crowded round to look. Mwanyoso said: 'Ropes,' but no one else took this up, and he did not mention it again. They looked into the chest and found something wrong. 'He is burned within! It is sorcery!' 763 754

MWANYOSO: We chiefs do not fear the commoners, we look for wounds and speak if they are there. But there are none. Look well! If he had been speared there would be much blood, and wounds. But he is burned within. They have worked sorcery against him with Mwangwala. That is the name of the medicine which some Nyakyusa plant. It's sorcery! Then is that of the country (i.e. witchcraft) not there? [824]

It is not there.

How about the son?

That we do not find. He just has diarrhœa.

Mwanyoso then told Mwaipopo (the chief): 'We have examined him, it is sorcery.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

763 As we came away various people stopped us and asked: 'Have you examined him?' 'Yes, it is sorcery.' Great interest was shown by all in the cause of death.

● 764 When we first arrived, we found the son a little distance from the funeral and he did not, so far as I know, come near at all. He did not go near the grave when the corpse was buried. I asked Kasitile about bathing at the waterfall. 'They will wash him to-night. Katasya died in the afternoon. At night the son and three women fled. They will wash them at night.'

6/1/38

Kasitile came in to see us at breakfast time. I asked why the son of Katasya had not come near the burial though they had bathed him at the waterfall.

KASITILE: It is forbidden, but they have made a mistake. They have washed him irregularly. According to custom they should first have buried the dead, then, on the evening after the burial, they take them to the waterfall to wash them. When they come from washing, then the son takes a torch of burning grass, he throws it down on the grave, and jumps over the grave. Then they say: 'Let him strike the cattle.' He kills one of his own because he does not eat of those which they have killed previously. This is what they did yesterday afternoon, so it is finished now.

QUESTION: What does it symbolize?

KASITILE: It means it is I who overstepped you.

QUESTION: And when he steps over the grave and the fire?

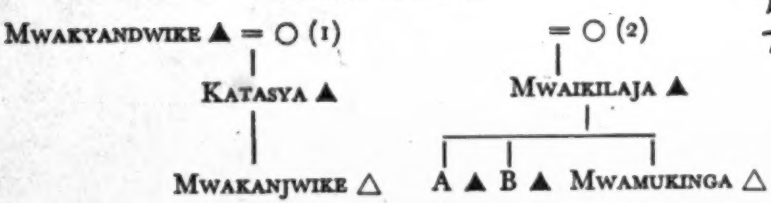
KASITILE: It is the fire which the women kindled for him who has died.

QUESTION: Do they know who worked sorcery against him?

578 754 KASITILE: Yes, it is the son of Mwaikilaja whose name is Mwamukinga, because when their father, Mwakyandwike, died, the elder brother, Katasya, was a child, and the son of the second wife, Mwaikilaja, inherited. But when Katasya grew up they refused to be on good terms with him and quarrelled with him. But they never worked sorcery against each other. So then when Mwaikilaja died, his sons inherited. Katasya lost the inheritance because they said: 'You are not on good terms with your kinsmen. Let the sons inherit.' So he said: 'I, Katasya, agree.' But later on he was on good terms with those sons of his brother. There were three of them. But the eldest and the youngest quarrelled. The youngest, Mwamukinga, worked sorcery against the eldest, so Katasya told them: 'Do not be friendly with Mwamukinga who is working sorcery against you. Let him be at a distance.' Then Mwamukinga was angry and said: 'Is that wretched elder (*ikulu eli*) never going to die?' and he worked sorcery against him. This is the case.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

 428 754



Mwaikilaja, the son of the junior wife, inherited, because when their father, Mwakyandwike, died, Katasya, the son of the senior wife, was a child. Mwamukinga is accused of killing Katasya by sorcery.

Mwakwelebeja came in to take me to the funeral of Katasya. 'It is not the day of burial to-day, but the day of war. On the day of burial they weep very much and it does not go well (*jikanga*) but to-day it will be well performed.' He was eager and excited at the prospect of good dancing. 'The chief Mwabuga from Masoko, his son-in-law, is coming. He is coming with his drums. The people of Masoko dance well.' At first I refused to go, but he would take no refusal. 'You must come,' he insisted, so finally I went. 764

On the way we discussed the cause of death. Some say the witches have eaten him. They say that Mwainyopolela is angry on account of the meat. Some say it is the sorcery of Mwaihojo (the chief) because Katasya (a man of Chief Mwaipopo) hoed a big area in the disputed ground. He built a temporary hut and lived there. But we say no. If they had roused up a war between the witches, would they not have gone to Mwakagile (Chief Mwaipopo) and his fellows? But we have not done that. We argue and say: 'Why are you taking our country?' but we are only fighting with words. 761

QUESTION: The war of the witches?

MWAKWELEBEJA: Yes, the war when they call the witches of a chiefdom by night to fight against those of another chiefdom. But Katasya was indeed wrong to stint his neighbours in Busikali of meat. If he had been wise he would have given them a leg. Mwainyopolela is very generous. Always when he kills a beast he shares the meat with his fellows. 754 721 689

We arrived at the funeral. The women were packed together under a tree to the left, where they had sat with the corpse yesterday. The girls and young women stood watching the dance and occasionally strolling rhythmically out into the midst of it. The errant son was with the other men to-day. The son-in-law from Masoko came with all his cattle (seven cows, one bull and five calves) of which one will be killed and the others returned. The bull was unusually large with an enormous hump and it caused comment. It was well known. They told each other how, when his father, Mwakabulwa, died, this bull was quiescent. It did not move about at all, and it was a very small calf. It was quiescent 764

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 and sniffed at the grave. When this son-in-law arrived, the chief women mourners got up from under the tree and went with him into the hut to wail. They came out all wailing. The women under the tree were wailing all the time with a leader standing up in the middle. But the wailing was drowned by the drums of which there were three sets.

764 Three young men were got up with white clay spots and some had
535 bells on their ankles and loin-cloths. They held spears, and danced and
302 leapt wildly. 'What', I asked Kasitile, 'is the meaning of the white clay?'

KASITILE: It is war paint. During war we painted ourselves with white clay formerly. Then if I saw one with white clay I did not spear him. It was my comrade. But he whom I saw without it was an enemy and I speared him. It was the sign.

725 QUESTION: But did the other side not use it?

KASITILE: We took them by surprise.

Mwanyoso came to visit me in the evening.

764 QUESTION: And what steps are they taking about Katsaya's death
789 from sorcery?

MWANYOSO: They sought the doctor, Mwangolombe, for the burial yesterday. He pounded a medicine and burnt it on the grave. Then they buried the dead man and danced on the grave. That means they destroyed the sorcery. The dead man should take it away with him.

QUESTION: And has the doctor given them medicines to drink?

MWANYOSO: He has not yet done so. They will fetch him again to cook the medicine at the home.

QUESTION: What about the payment?

759 MWANYOSO: For yesterday they did not pay anything, now, but when they have fetched him to their home, then they will pay some shillings. But if many people have died, then they fetch a famous doctor such as Mwakionde. Then he comes with all the protective medicines (*amapingo*) and treats them. Then such a doctor gets a cow. The famous doctors in this country are Mwakionde and Kapuguso and Mwakanyamale.

787 QUESTION: Will they consult an oracle?

MWANYOSO: Why should they consult an oracle? They know what it is. It is the sorcery of their brothers!

754 QUESTION: But it might be the sorcery of another. Some say of Mwaihojo (the chief).

MWANYOSO: They are liars. See, Katasya had just come from his brothers. He got the illness at their place. It is they. If it was from Mwaihojo and his people, they would have speared him by night. We would have found wounds and much blood, but we did not find them.

QUESTION: He came from his brothers?

MWANYOSO: Yes, there was a ritual because their father, Mwaikilaja, had died. Their senior brother inherited and he also died. Katasya

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

went to catch the junior brother who was there, but from that time he 754
has been ill.

QUESTION: Did Mwamukinga (the sorcerer) come to the funeral and 754
did they give him meat? 764

MWANYOSO: Yes, he came.

QUESTION: Is he not ashamed? Do people agree that they have worked sorcery against someone?

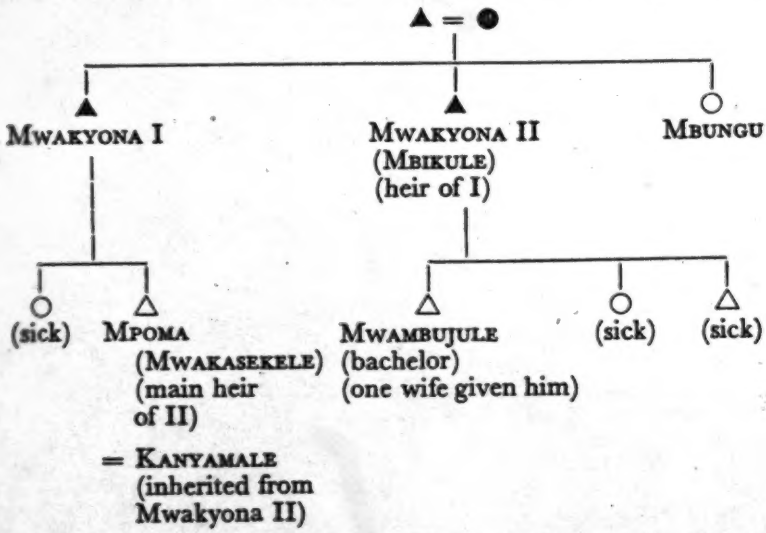
MWANYOSO: They deny it.

QUESTION: Did they give him meat?

MWANYOSO: Yes, they gave it to him.

(b) Sickness in the lineage of Mwakyona

The following case also illustrates how several possible causes of mis- 753
fortune were considered—sorcery between kinsmen who were quarrelling over inheritance, the anger of the shades, and the jealousy of neighbours were mentioned. It shows, further, how expression of goodwill by those thought to be injuring a man is necessary for his recovery. The doctor treating the patient made the kinsmen confess their anger and gave them a medicine guaranteed to kill anyone working sorcery.



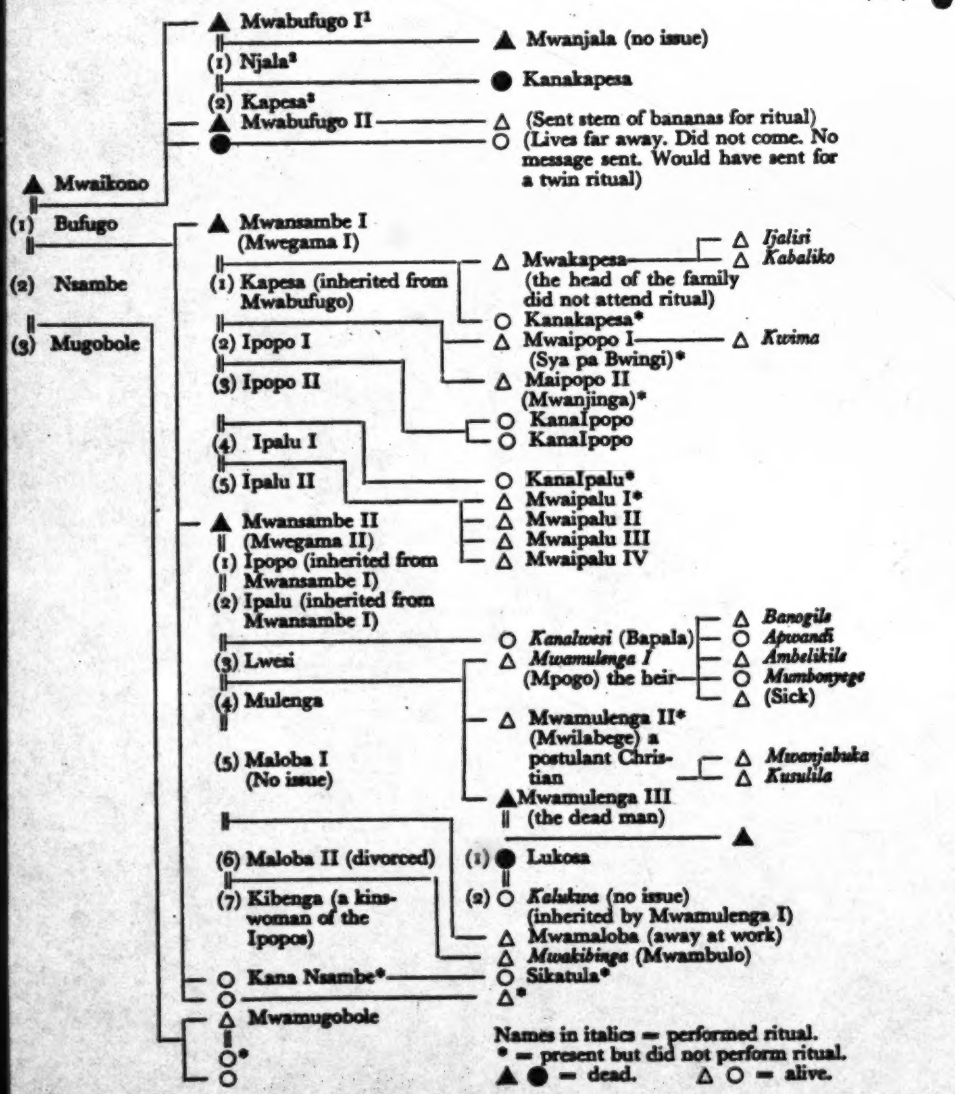
MWAIKAMBO: When Mwakyona died, his younger brother, Mwak- 428
yona the younger, whom they call Mbikule, inherited. But Mbikule also died, so they sought Mwakionde (the doctor and brother of the chief) and they asked him: 'To whom shall we give the inheritance?' The village elders, their fathers—those of the house—and their father's sisters, were those who saw to the matter of the inheritance. Then

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

601
764

TABLE (d)

GENEALOGY OF MWAMULENGA III, SON OF MWEGAMA (DEATH RITUAL)



[1] Mwabufugo I was a village headman. The people refused Mwabufugo II (his rightful heir) as headman and the office fell to Mwansambe.
[2] Njala was divorced. Her cattle went to Mwabufugo II.
[3] Kapesa refused Mwabufugo II and went to Mwansambe.
Note. Inheritance by an elder brother was possible in this case because he had not inherited from his father.

[p. 274 is blank]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

784 that the classes tend to shade into each other, leaving no clear line of demarcation between one class and another; but there are some that are quite definitely religious, and with these we may begin.

It is forbidden to mock at the lame, the deaf, the blind, the dumb, or persons otherwise unfortunate. The wrath of God is aroused, and the offender will suffer the disability he laughs at in others. "Who mocks an orphan," says an old proverb; "let him beware; God is watching him." To insult one's father is a crime so great that nothing can avert the curse which follows, and follows automatically. The prohibition against the use of names, too, has in some cases certainly, in others probably, a religious sanction. It is *mwiko* for anyone but the family representative to pray to the spirits; though, in a case known to me, where a Christian prayed in an assembly of chiefs and others gathered for the purpose, and the rain asked for duly came, the older people acknowledged that the event justified the breach of custom.

764 Omission of the customary funeral rites is disgraceful, and the dead man will not fail to avenge himself upon the offender. A case came to my knowledge quite recently where a son refused to perform the usual ceremonies for his just-departed father, and the life of his own son was barely saved, so every one believed, by a timely surrender. It is an interesting fact that no opprobrium attaches to a Christian who omits these rites, nor does any visitation follow from the spirit land, while upon a heathen the punishment

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

falls automatically. If the family "priest" becomes a Christian, and therefore ceases to pray to the spirits, no one will take up his religious duties until he has been publicly appointed by the family to do so. 764

To offer a blemished animal in sacrifice, to eat the blood of a sacrificed animal, to eat animals that do not divide the hoof, are all forbidden; though the double qualification, to divide the hoof and chew the cud, is not insisted upon. This has direct religious sanction, but whether the prohibition against eating beasts of prey is so founded, I do not know. The Bandali even now will eat lion's flesh, and at Karonga long ago, though not now, the crocodile was eaten. 784

Night belongs to the spirits, and certain things must not be done then. If a woman sweeps out the house at night, her husband will indignantly ask her why she is driving off his ancestors! The spirits cut their hair at night, therefore living men must not. If bark-cloth is beaten out at night, the cattle will die; and if food is pounded or firewood cut up, leopards will come, and kill cattle, and perhaps people. It is *mwiko* to clap the hands at night (except openly in the dance), for the spirits do so, and imitation might be regarded by them as mockery, not flattery. A fire should not be kindled at night, nor should one lie on his back if lightning is playing around, for the lightning gets at one more easily in that position. To sit in the doorway at night is to usurp the place of the spirits when ceremonies are being performed.

Animals in which the spirits dwell, frogs, lizards,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

775 given to them. There is no conception more firmly fixed in the Konde mind than that "the dead do not return"; they do not resume earthly life in bodily form; though they do return in spirit form, and sometimes exert themselves very energetically. The dead are with God: this is a conviction so universal that it cannot be the result of Christian teaching. And God is not above, as in our cosmology, but below. "*Kumwanya kuno malabasya*," is a frequent expression on the lips of some people. *Kwirabasya* means to be idle when one might be working; and the meaning of the phrase is that man's permanent home is not "above" on earth, but "below," very much as in the statement of St. Paul, "our citizenship is in heaven."

764 At death, or rather at burial, the head of the family, calling for silence from the wailing women, addresses the spirits by name, praying them to receive their friend. Then addressing the dead man directly, he says:

> "And you, friend, go to the land of spirits. Go in peace. Go to meet all whom we have named. They will recognize you. Salute them all. Tell them that we are paying taxes, that those men are an affliction to us. It was not we who killed you. Nay, we weep for your death."

The words, "these men are affliction to us," refer to the Europeans, and are still in use, though of recent years they have been gradually dropping out of the valedictory address at the grave. Another expression

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

still sometimes used, is "God will judge between us and the white man," a clear indication that the white man is not received everywhere as an unmixed blessing. 764

The entrance to the spirit world is the grave; and all that is done there is intended to give the dead man a favourable entrance upon his new state; well dressed, well supplied with all the necessaries of life; for he goes to God. The conditions of life below are the same as those above. The chief is a chief still, and the slave a slave. The rich man continues to be rich, and the poor goes on in his poverty. The wife goes to her husband, children to their parents. There is no retribution, no righting of wrongs. The judgment of God against the white man will be manifested here on earth, not in the future state. The unmarried man remains unmarried, and his body is smeared with charcoal, so that he may not, on arrival, be mistaken for a married man. Cattle are there, but they need no tending; bananas, but they require no cultivation. There is bush for the hunter, and streams for the fisher. But everything is small: cattle, houses, crops, even the spirits themselves, are *sekere*, thin, unsubstantial. 764 775

Prior to the arrival of the first human spirits, the place was inhabited by the owners of the land; and "these are they who see God, for God is a Spirit." Therefore human beings going there are strangers, but are well received, and given all necessaries, including land. 775 776

Although the dwelling of the spirits is below, they 775

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

533
764

A Death Dance.

The dance is in honour of the dead person, and is not seldom an illustrated copy of conditions let loose. If spear and shield are carried, fighting may take place, ending in wounds and death, especially at the burial of a chief, who should not go to his ancestors unattended.

[facing p. 288]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

mothers, my strength is gone, my hope is broken. 763
How poor am I among men!" If he is a boy he is 765
now taken by a kindly relative and put outside, and told not to weep like a woman. During all this time, and perhaps for three days to come, the drum is beating; a slow tum tum at first, but rising later to a more furious noise, which goes on night and day until the mourning is over.

The women now take up the tale, and one goes 765
over all the virtues of the dead, a long wail from the others following upon each statement. Day by day this goes on, as new parties come to the mourning. The women smear their bodies and their faces with clay, and wear bands of banana fibre or of palm leaf on ankles, wrists, and forehead. The men, at the death of an important person, carry spear and shield.

In the meantime some relatives have gone to dig 764
the grave, and others are dressing the dead man for burial. The body is washed, a man's body by men, and woman's by women, and dressed in *mawyria* (body rings), anklets, wristlets, and finally swathed in as much cloth as his relatives can afford to buy, only the eyes being left uncovered. Before the dressing, however, the body is oiled, and if the dead man was a warrior, his *isambanjusi* (feather head-dress) is placed on his head.

The women now take up the body, and carry it 763
through the village, wailing as they go. Having shown the dead man for the last time around the familiar haunts of his life, they lay him down near the grave, where mats are spread to receive him. Now the *pasi*

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

763 *mortem* takes place, though in the neighbourhood of Missions and Magistracies the practice is beginning to die out. Only the operators are present, and when it is over the others approach again. The brothers or
764 near relatives of the dead man go down into the grave and receive the body from whoever who hands it to them. It is not placed in the bottom of the grave, but in a cavity dug into the side, the entrance of which is closed with a bamboo door, before the soil is filled in. The body faces towards the original home of the dead. If the dead man possessed cattle, a curious ceremony now takes place. A cow is brought, and made to look into the grave where her late owner lies, her head being forcibly bent if necessary. The cow is now the property of the spirits, and must never be given away or sold out of the family. Little children of the dead man are handed across the grave, and older children leap over it, and then pull themselves, in a sitting position, over the soil which is presently to be filled in. If this ceremony is properly performed, the dead parent will not disturb the children by nightmares. Its omission is an insult to the dead; but the practice is being abandoned by the more progressive sections of the community. It is at this point that the parting address, given in the chapter on "The Spirits," is spoken. When the soil is filled in, a cutting of *indola* tree is placed at head and foot, to mark the grave.

764 All who took any part in the burying must now
713 wash in running water, which carries off the pollution; and carries off also the danger of the disease

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

which killed the man passing over to those present 764
at the funeral. Those who performed the *post mortem* [783]
take medicine as well. The funeral ox or cow is now
killed, and the flesh divided among the various groups.
The next stage is to "disinherit" the dead man, to
cut him off from all connection with earthly matters.
His mats were buried with him; now his bananas are
cut down, his hoes are taken to the grave and the hafts
broken, while all baskets and pots are destroyed and
left to rot there. His cattle go to his heirs, and his [587]
wives build themselves huts in which they live for a
year, "covering the footsteps of the dead man";
after which they also go to the heirs. (Much of this
is now falling into disuse, especially around Karonga.)
The dead man has been dissociated from the living:
the bananas grow again, but they are not his; his
house may be occupied, but he has only the rights of
a ghost in it; and in many places the house is left to
decay as soon as the funeral is over, and the wives
have built themselves huts not far off. But the belief
also prevails, side by side with the desire to cut off
the dead man from the living, that by destroying his
goods they go with him to the land of spirits.

The Konde have a strange belief, that a dead body [77]
casts no shadow; if it does, it is a sign that the spirit 766
still lingers around, and if he is not driven off, another
member of the family will die soon. The most
effective way of despatching him to his proper abode
is to burn his body. If the diviner finds that a second
death in the family is due to the reluctance of the
first to go to his fathers, the body is dug up, and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Lepers are now buried like ordinary persons. But in the not very distant past, they were placed in a sitting position against a tree, and so left to be devoured. No one of those who carried the body looked behind, lest he also should be "caught" by the disease. 766

About a month after the funeral, the beer feast takes place. A small quantity is taken to the grave, and the dead man is addressed, and bidden again to go to his ancestors. "Take this beer as an offering to them. The ox that we have killed is also for them." The day is given up to eating and drinking, with intervals of wailing, the men in the open, the women in the house of the heir, or near relative of the dead man. 765

The ceremonies for women and children are similar to those described. A small chief, near Karonga, who was utterly neglectful of his mother during her life, impoverished himself in the splendour of her funeral. The grave was completely lined with expensive cloths, and the body was decked out as it never had been in life. The man's grief was genuine; or if it was not grief, it was fear of what the old lady, with her renewed powers, might do, if he did not attend to her now that she was dead. 764

When the mourning is over, all the friends of the dead man shave their heads. Omission of this ceremony involves the careless one in a quarrel with the departed. 765 302

Here and there throughout the country ancient customs survive which have been dropped by the majority of the people. In many places the entrance of the heir upon his new position is accompanied by 768

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

BUMBA.

The death of any ordinary commoner and those of less important great commoners were announced to their local chiefs. On the death of a chief or noble or of a prominent great commoner, a hen was sent to the Kyungu to announce the death, and he returned one of the cloths obtained from the Arabs. If a prominent commoner or great commoner died, the great chief got a hen and sent a cloth. The funeral of the Kyungu was entirely carried out by the nobles of Ngonde.[1]

Attendance at ceremonies is a constituent factor of kinship and affinity. Attendance at burial is obligatory for members of the same village. Messages are sent to all the fathers-in-law and all the sons-in-law of the dead man, and of the senior kinsman who buries him, to all the dead man's full and half-brothers, to the husbands of his sisters, to any classificatory brothers-with whom he has exchanged cows, to his mother's father, or brother, and to full and half-brothers of his father, and to his sons. These, with their wives and older children, are obliged to come. A chief normally goes to all burials in his chiefdom (excepting those of very young children), and a special part of the burial meat is given to him.

The ceremonies last about a month, starting with the burial ceremonies of three or four days. Any contact with the dead body is considered to be magically dangerous, and to require special purification. A few personal possessions are buried with the body. The funeral rites are believed to enable a man to join his ancestors. To decide the cause of death by studying the condition of the intestines, a post-mortem examination was formerly always made, the diagnosis afterwards being checked by the diviner. The ceremonies end with war dances (now become rather dances of sexual display), and with the killing of cattle to feed the mourners and honour the dead.

At all except the poorest burials, one or more head of cattle is killed. Not only the immediate family, but also the fathers of the dead man's wives and the husbands of his full-sisters and daughters are expected to provide cows for killing, and if he is buried at his father's place, the father's affinal relations are expected to bring cows. More cows are killed for a man than for a woman, but her husband and father are both supposed to provide a cow for her burial. The heir, when the inheritance is settled, should kill the beasts, and thereby establish his claim if doubt arises later. Many relatives and friends bring cloths, some of which are buried with the dead; others are kept by his family. The banana groves of the dead are in part destroyed. A month after the funeral there is a commemorative beer feast and some beer is taken to the grave as an offering. After mourning all relatives and friends of the dead shave their heads.[2]

UTAMBI[3]

According to Moreau, the Nyakyusa can cite three or more tribes having stated alliances with them. They also have stated relations between clans and between individuals. When a burial takes place, every stated within reach is under at least an honorary an obligation as any relative to attend the funeral and to contribute to the expenses.[3]

[1] Wilson, A. 1939, p. 66. According to Dr. Kate Crone, 1899, p. 189, the Ngonde used to bury people alive with the Kyungu.
[2] Mackenzie, 1907, pp. 190-95; Wilson, A. 1939; Johnston, 1897, pp. 423-5.
[3] Moreau, 1941, pp. 5-6.

[A type of joking relationship. — Analyst]

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 magical powers. And the faith alike in ancestors and in witchcraft gave
761 to every group of subjects a religious hold over their rulers.
789

(a) *THE THEISTIC ELEMENT.*

643 Though the early Kyungus had lived on the stony top of Mbande
none of them had been buried there, for "the ground was too hard to
764 dig graves in." They and their successors were all buried in the
778 valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. Thus Kyungu Mwangunde is referred to as "He of Bwiba," Kyungu Mwakasungula as "He of Ipota," and so on.

643 Now drought and widespread sickness were believed to be
caused by the anger either of some dead Kyungu or of the living one.
731 "In time of drought they (the nobles of Ngonde) would go to a diviner
787 to enquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the
782 names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would tell them that it was so and so. So they would tell the (living) Kyungu. And he would give them either a bull or a sheep, together with some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own house, one of the pots which were continually brought by his people as tribute.[1] And he would give them some flour and some cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove. Now the diviner would have told them that he (the dead Kyungu) was angry because they had omitted (for so long) to build his house. So they would begin by building his house in the grove, they would build a miniature hut with rafters.[2] Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fix some of the pieces to the house in the grove—an action which they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And, finally, they would pour out (some of) the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a house in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

643 "But occasionally if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the
731 Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself who
787 was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any of them: 'No—no.'

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[1] *Vide infra* section 4.

[2] This is the custom traditional in the sacred groves of all important chiefs, both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa. We have seen it done among the Nyakyusa. The hut which we saw built was between two and three feet high.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 643 834 cooked it instead. One of the reasons for killing most of his sons, as we have seen, was to lessen the danger of his wives committing adultery with them, for adultery was a magical cause of sickness. His wives themselves were jealously guarded.

643 789 821 Then again a Kyungu might not wade across the river lest the act of doing so should magically bring a deluge of rain from heaven, he had always to be carried.

789 643 764 826 And the breath and the growing parts of a Kyungu's body—his hair and nails and the constantly replaced mucus of his nose—were believed to be magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde plain. When he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was buried "with breath in his body"; while portions of his hair and nails and of his nasal mucus were taken from him beforehand and buried later by the nobles of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This action was believed to "close up the land, to keep it rich and heavy and fertile, as it was when he himself lived in it."

789 622 826 Now the Lwembe of Lubega had equally magical flesh, but the other chiefs of Ngonde and the Nyakyusa had not. They could wade across rivers, fall ill and be wounded without endangering their subjects. But of all alike the breath and the hair and nails had a magical importance. Every ruling chief in both areas had his nostrils stopped by his great-commoners when nearing death, while portions of his hair and nails[1] were taken from him when living and buried after his death in a special place. The hair and nails were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops. "You see these nails of yours," said the man who explained the symbolism to us, "if you cut them do they not grow again?" (They do.) "And where does their growth come from? Does it not come from within the body?" (It does.) "Well then that is the reason, the great-commoners take power of growth from the chief in the form of his nails and hair."

789 782 Besides his magical body the Kyungu had a host of magical possessions. There was the iron stool *Kitumbi* on which he was set at his accession; once he had sat upon it he could not flee the position or he would die. There was the drum *Mwenkelwa* whose note was believed to be heard by the most distant of the Kyungu's subjects. When it was beaten "all the little nobles from afar off would hear and obey the summons; they would all come together. Then we would tell them that so and so had not brought any ivory for a long time! Then they would come with tusks as tribute, to pay worship to the Kyungu." But sometimes the drum would refuse to sound and they would kill a

[1] We were only told about the nasal mucus in the case of the Kyungu.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

652 431 this was done by all chiefs or only by the great chiefs; but it is certain that the great chiefs possessed more of these cloths than their juniors.

652 431 764 But perhaps the most important traditional use of cloth by the Kyungus was for funeral gifts.[1] The social significance of funeral ceremonial in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa is hard to exaggerate;[2] for both the economic and the emotional aspects not only of kinship but also of village and political relationships are given formal expression most frequently at funerals. And a gift at a funeral carries greater weight than one on any other occasion.

652 431 567 583 Then, again, chiefs and nobles who brought food to Mbande were often given either a beast or a woman slave in return. "When one of the chiefs had caught a great many fish . . . . . he would gather his men and go to Mbande . . . . . Then the Kyungu would tell one of the nobles of Ngonde to go and fetch a beast or, if no beast were available—and cattle were scarce in the old days—he would give him a woman. And if the chief liked her he would take her in marriage and she would become his lady,[3] but if he did not, then he would take her to his own country and sell her there for a cow." (We expressed some surprise at the rate of exchange.) "Yes, truly, for one cow only, cows were very scarce in those days." And sometimes, in order to make sure he would like her, the visiting chief would be allowed to choose his own girl. "When one of his sons came to visit him the Kyungu would sometimes give orders that he should be shown all the (slave) girls and choose the one he liked best; and so the chief would choose a local girl[4] and marry her. And he could never then sell her, once he had chosen her in love."

Now the gift of a woman slave had many social implications. If she was taken to wife the recipient regarded the Kyungu thereafter as his father-in-law, as well as his "father." She herself became free and her children spoke of the Kyungu as their grandfather. And these gifts did more than any others to strengthen the bonds of kinship between the Kyungu and his subordinate chiefs.

652 431 To his common subjects also, if they had deserved well of him, the Kyungu would occasionally give either cloths or a woman or a cow; and the great chiefs of Ngonde likewise and even ordinary chiefs and nobles did the same. And these subordinate authorities, as we have seen, also used to entertain their own subjects generously with food

[1] Vide infra section 3.

[2] Cf. Wilson "Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial," *Bantu Studies*, March 1939.

[3] I use "lady" here to translate "*nsada*" which is the title of honour used for a chief's wife; the implication is that she then ceased to be a slave.

[4] Slaves were of two kinds, the relatives of criminals and war captives (vide infra sections 5 and 6). It was apparently customary to choose one of the first kind on such occasions.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 "the father of all." All the chiefs were his kinsmen, many of the nobles
602 were related to him by marriage, most of them were personally acquainted with him; and these facts were fundamental in the old constitution of Ngonde.

602 And so also the great chiefs and their subordinates, and the local rulers and their subjects were united by personal bonds which were given
764 frequent ceremonial expression. At every funeral,[1] in particular, whether
431 of chief, noble or commoner, ceremonial gifts of meat, beer, ordinary food, and other gifts also were made along the lines of the political hierarchy.

764 On the death of a chief, a noble or any commoner who had, during his life, had many personal dealings with Mbande, a hen was sent to the
431 Kyungu to announce the death, and the Kyungu then returned one of
[763] the imported cloths. When other prominent commoners or great-commoners died a hen was sent to the great chief of the area, who also returned an imported cloth. The deaths of ordinary commoners and less prominent great-commoners were announced only to the local ruler (chief or noble) without the gift of a hen, and no cloth was returned.

Similarly when cattle were killed at the funeral of any great-commoner or commoner a special portion of the meat of one beast (the breast and ribs) was always given to the local ruler.[2] In the case of a prominent commoner or great-commoner, however, a similar portion might be given to the great-chief as well. "Such an action was taken on the initiative of the family concerned, the great-chief never claimed it as of right." But if he himself came to the funeral it was normally done. The local rulers themselves, with their wives, attended the funerals of their subjects, and their wives brought food with them, to assist the family in its entertainment of the neighbours. And, finally, at the death of a local ruler or of one of his family, his subjects attended the funeral, bringing gifts of food.[3]

8. *THE CHRONICLE OF NGONDE COMPLETED* (1875-1937)

000 We have now finished our systematic analysis of the constitution of Ngonde as it was before the coming of the Europeans. We have had to rely largely on oral tradition and that by itself is always in some degree suspect. Nevertheless the richness and coherence of what is remembered to-day, together with the observable continuity of modern institutions

[1] This account excludes the funeral of the Kyungu, which was secretly carried out by the nobles of Ngonde.
[2] This was certainly so in the chiefdoms, evidence for the fiefs is here lacking.
[3] Vide Wilson "Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial."

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 431 643 The present Kyungu maintains his position by a continual distribution of material gifts, as the Kyungus did in the past, but many of the details of this distribution are now altered. Besides the cattle which he now gives the great chiefs he also gives away far more funeral gifts than his predecessors. But on the other hand, the traditional distribution of cloth and ivory, after a visit from the ivory traders, and of slaves and cattle to those who brought tribute in food has now ceased. The traditional procedure of giving a newly elected noble a cloth still continues.

178 431 643 764 Previous Kyungus only sent cloths to the funerals of the most important of their subjects—chiefs, nobles, great-commoners and a few others. But Peter sends a cloth to nearly every funeral in his own half of the Ngonde plain ; though in Kilupula's half and in the hills he only sends cloths to the funerals of chiefs and nobles.

Nearly every family in his own half of the plain now sends a hen (worth 3d.) to Peter to announce a death and he returns a cloth (worth 2s, 3s. or 4s.) as a funeral gift. More important families (chiefs or rich great-commoners) from all over Ngonde send a bull-calf (worth maybe 7s. or 8s.) and to them he returns a cloth or blanket worth anything from 8s. to 12s. In 1934, a year with many deaths, he spent £57 on such funeral gifts and he can hardly have received more than a tenth of that value in hens and calves.

It is this custom above all which gives Peter the status of a paramount chief (as opposed to a subordinate official of the British Administration) in the Ngonde of to-day. And it is only his private fortune which makes it possible. The profits of the *milasa* never reach any such proportions, while, if he spent his official salary on funeral gifts, he would be quite unable to clothe himself, his wives and children.

Now the extension by Peter of the custom of sending cloths to funerals is significant both in relation to the new legal situation and to the present poverty of the other rulers of Ngonde. In his own portion of the plain Peter is the only Native judicial authority who can execute judgments, he is also the only Native ruler who can afford to keep up, on any large scale, the bountiful activities traditionally associated with chieftainship. And he has thus largely replaced the local rulers and the great chiefs, in relation to the common people, both as judge and as plutocrat.

Though we made no intensive study of the areas of the "Sub-chiefs," it is clear that they are not in a position to give any valuable gifts to their people, and that their prestige is in consequence far lower in their own areas than is the Kyungu's in his ; they are but subordinate magistrates with traditional affiliations. Moreover the Kyungu, both through his appeal court and through the sending of funeral gifts to chiefs and nobles is still able to maintain his paramount position in their areas.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1935 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

582 they sometimes do so before the relationship is discovered, and then simply drink a protective medicine but do not break the marriage. The old men speak of a now abandoned custom of preferential cross-cousin marriage.

604 The bond between a man and his mother's brother (*omuipwa*) is mainly constituted by the passage of cattle. "My real mother's brother," they say "is the one who took the bulk of the marriage-cattle which my father gave for my mother", and it is between this particular brother and a woman's eldest son that the bond is strongest. Because this brother of his mother has taken "our cattle" and married with them the young man has a certain right of making free with his property during his life, the right to receive from him one cow to set up a herd of his own with, and a residuary right of inheritance if this uncle dies childless and leaves no brothers. If his mother's brother does die without other heirs, it is only the particular wife obtained with and the particular progeny of his father's marriage-cattle that the young man can claim.

602 Ceremonies, and particularly funerals, are the occasions on which
●764 the effective relatives of any one family meet all together, both kinsmen and affines. I have even heard kinship defined by attendance at funerals: One man argued that he was not related to another because, though they were admittedly genealogically related they did not attend the funerals in each other's families and were not therefore really kinsmen at all.

602 Known blood-kinship is a common occasion of friendship, but it
572 does not necessarily produce it, while the absence of friendship can render many of the normal kinship bonds quite inoperative. We have seen already that quarrels may destroy the relationship between half-brothers and lead to a judicial separation. On the other hand, I have observed two men meet for the first time, discover a common great-grandfather and at once become friends. A few months later the sister of one of them died and the other went to the funeral and behaved there like a close kinsman.

Proximity is another factor of great importance in the relations of kinsfolk, for while nearness of dwelling does not always make for friendship, yet a considerable distance tends to lessen it and to make attendance at funerals impossible.

606 One of the most stringent taboos in Nyakyusa life is that which separates father and daughter-in-law. A woman may never speak to, approach, or look at her husband's father. If she does it is believed that she will die, through the witchcraft of indignant neighbours, a painful and lingering death. And the taboo is extended from her own father-in-

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

marriages of his kinswomen. When his father dies his father's wives 622
and cows pass to his father's full-brother, but they come to him and his 595
brother eventually when this man dies. While, if the young chiefs have "come out" it is common for their father's brother to hand over some, or even the bulk of the cattle, to them before his own death. And in his own half of the family, among his siblings and half-siblings on that side, a chief has far greater rights both of inheritance and of receiving marriage-cattle, than those possessed by the senior son of a commoner. So much is clear from my evidence, but it is not yet sufficiently detailed for an exact statement of rules.

Before 1893 fighting between chiefdoms was common and, except 631
between brother chiefs, the usual aim of fighting was, not conquest, but 721
cows; wars were generally just cattle raids. And a substantial proportion of the cows captured in a successful raid went to increase the herds of the chief. This lost source of income is now supplied by Government [435
salaries, which vary from 5/- to £15 a month.[18] The price of a cow is £2; 466]
but many shillings are spent on clothes, bicycles and beer, as well as on cows.

A chief, like any other rich man, maintains his prestige by hospitality, 622
he constantly entertains his more notable subjects with beer, at the 527
ceremonies of his family all his people gather in their age-villages and he kills cattle for them to eat. Chiefs seldom nowadays kill cattle except on ceremonial occasions, but in the old days of warfare they used also, I am told, to entertain their subjects with meat from time to time, in order to keep up their spirits for fighting. History is full of stories of Nyakyusa chiefs who attracted many men to their countries, and so gained great military strength, by the generosity and abundance of their feasts.

Every time a man or woman dies, a message must be sent to the 622
chief, and at the burial he is given the whole breast and ribs (*akakwa*) of 764
one of the cows which are killed by the family of the dead person at that time. He has the right to take food or milk from any of his subjects if he has need of it; but he cannot take any man's beast without later returning another to him.

Apart from the now abandoned pursuit of cattle raiding the only 631
profitable enterprises in which the members of a whole chiefdom jointly 476
participate are those of hunting and fishing; in some chiefdoms, but not

[18] Salaries above £1 a month are only paid to senior chiefs. No minor chief gets a Government salary, nor do great-commoners. The local value of money is shown (a) by the tax (8/- p.a.), (b) by the wages of unskilled labour (6/- to 8/- p.m.)

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

chief from the wanton attacks of witches; but if ever there is a just 622
ground of offence they are believed to join their own power of witchcraft 754
n the general attack. I know one chief who dare not give a judgement n a dispute between two of his villages for fear of the indignant witchcraft of the losing side. And a general unpopularity is believed always to ead, sooner or later to a chief's death.

Chiefs also, like other men, fear the use of sorcery (i.e. destructive magic) against them, and use a number of protective "medicines" (i.e. materials of magic) to protect themselves from it. They also use powerful "medicines" to give themselves personal impressiveness, prestige and authority among their people.

While in the families of commoners an ancestral spirit is only believed 771
o affect the lives of his own descendants, the ancestors of a chief, on the 622
other hand, are supposed to influence, for good or ill, the fortunes of whole chiefdoms. Rain and good crops, the fertility of women and cattle are dependent upon their good will, which in its turn is believed to depend upon a recurrent sacrifice of cows. And for this sacrifice the chiefs, their living descendants, are responsible.[20] But, owing to the continuous division of chiefdoms every generation, several chiefs are concerned in each sacrifice; every dead chief is a source of misfortune or of blessing in the countries of all his direct descendants. And so the discussion of this part of the Nyakyusa religion leads us to the investigation of the groups which extend beyond the boundaries of a single chief-chiefdom.

(c) *Groups wider than the Chiefdom*

When a chief dies he is buried near the house of his senior great wife 778
and trees are planted on his grave. The trees grow and form a sacred 793
grove (*ilinyeto*) hedged by taboos. Each of these groves is at first the 764
religious centre of two, later of a number of chiefdoms, and in them the sacrifices are made. Responsibility for finding the cow for sacrifice in a particular grove rests with one of the living chiefs concerned, but respon- [223]
sibility for initiating the ritual and performing it lies not only with the chiefs but also with the hereditary priests (*amayaga*) in each chiefdom. These hereditary priests are descended, some from the great commoners of the dead chief who is buried in that particular grove, some from his half-brothers. The ritual is esoteric, there is no gathering of the people at the sacrifice, and only chiefs and those with hereditary priesthoods

[20] I am speaking here of the religious customs of the Nyakyusa proper and the Ngonde people. I believe those of the Kukwa and Mwambe are very similar, but I have not studied them in detail.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

And. 622
every year two hereditary Kinga priests come a three days journey from 782
their own country to participate in the sacrifice of a black cow to the [574]
spirits of Lwembe and his descendants.

Down by Lake Nyasa, in the extreme South East of the Nyakyusa 778
district, there is another equally sacred spot where sacrifices were, and 1764
believe still are[21] made to Kyala, a younger brother of Lwembe.

The Christians and the Moslems form other religious groups which 795
transcend the boundaries of a single chiefdom, but an examination of the Nyakyusa Christian and Moslem communities is beyond the scope of this paper.

The political group which is constituted by a Court district, though 636
only ten years old, is of great importance in Nyakyusa society; but here again the detailed examination of its organization and the relationships of its members is beyond the scope of this paper.

Conclusion: Culture and Society

The aim of sociology is to describe single forms of society fully and, 121
in comparison with one another, to explain them completely, in so far as 128
reasons can be found within this particular scientific field. Neither full description nor complete explanation of Nyakyusa society has here been attempted: many important facts have been omitted from the account, irregularities of detail have been slurred over, the connections of fact have been only occasionally and sketchily established, and no systematic comparison of this unit with others has been made at all.

But the method of this paper has involved an analysis, summary and 121
general though it has been, of the nature of some of the many institutions in which the Nyakyusa meet, of some of the actual elements in their relationships with one another. It is in their dealings with the earth and their cattle, with the spirits and with men who break the law, in their discussions and arguments, their ceremonial feasts, their giving and receiving, in their loves and hates and in their admiration and mockery of one another that they forever make and remake their own human relationships.

Culture is the matter of which society is the form; inseparable in fact they are only intelligible together. No two men can be related unless they both do something and unless their activities are somehow connected. Nor can either escape relationship with his fellow if what

[21] I have not yet been there to investigate.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 Sacrifice is offered that a particular shade, or all the shades of
782 the lineage, may be 'satisfied, assuaged'. The word used is *ukuhoboka* which is also used of a man who has been hungry and has eaten well of fine food, of a man who has married a bride who pleases him, and of a living father or father-in-law who has been angry but is now pacified. In its applicative form, *ukuhobokela*, means to forgive. And the act of sacrifice is an offering, a gift, to the shade strictly comparable to the gift a young man makes to his father when 'begging pardon' for some offence. A son who has committed the most heinous offence of all, seducing one of his
[684] father's wives, can 'beg pardon' only by offering a cow; but many
[783] smaller offerings are made by juniors to seniors to beg forgiveness for lesser offences.[1] When a cuckolded father receives his son he kills the cow brought to him and eats with his neighbours. It is held to be essential that the living who are insulted (and a man's neighbours are insulted with him) should share in the meat and express satisfaction.[2]

Other conceptions also are, however, manifest in sacrifices. At the offering to a recently dead chief the sacred cut of the meat is divided between the shade, whose portion is placed on the earth near his grave (ideally beside the stone set up at his marriage), and his young grandsons, who are identified with him. The conclusion that this is a communion between the living and the dead is inescapable. At a sacrifice to Lwembe it is certain of the hereditary priests, and they alone, who may share the sacred cut. At the sacrifices made by private persons the communion between shades and grandchildren is explicit when an offering of fish is made.[3] It is less clear in the sacrifice at a funeral, but is made plain
[764] in the eating of grain or bananas with the *ikipiki* medicine which symbolizes the lineage. Then the shade is told 'all the food we have eaten you have eaten . . . farewell.' The communion of sacrifice is indeed but one manifestation of the identification of the participants in a ritual with the shades for, as has been shown in a previous book, the essential character of all the rituals of kinship is a death and rebirth, a death in which the participants—the kinsmen chiefly concerned—are made one with the shades and born anew,[4] and this theme is repeated in the ritual of the 'coming
769 out'.
783 One paradox remains to be clarified. The shades must be

[1] *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 181-6.
[2] *Rituals of Kinship*, p. 185.
[3] *Good Company*, pp. 107, 240.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 203-5.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

expresses the unity of groups of believers who associate in Churches. But the two systems are not wholly exclusive: the Christian still belongs to a lineage and a chiefdom, though he does not worship as a member of either, and thereby impairs their solidarity.

(b) THE CHRISTIAN WITHDRAWAL

What is the attitude of Christian converts to the rituals performed by their pagan kinsmen and neighbours and what replaces the traditional pagan rituals in the Christian community? These questions have already been touched upon in the accounts of pagan rituals, but we must now consider them more fully.

Christians withdraw very largely from the pagan rituals of kinship which, as was shown in a previous book, are directed to the shades. They attend the funerals of pagan kinsmen to weep and comfort the mourners, and they often undertake the work of grave-digging so fearful to pagans, but they take no part in the 'farewell to the dead' nor do the stricter among them eat of the funeral meat, since the cattle killed are an offering to the shades. Christians do not participate in the twin ritual which brings together such a large number of pagan kinsmen, nor do they share in the puberty ritual, and they forbid their daughters to keep a pagan bride company during her seclusion. For the most part their withdrawal is accepted tolerantly by their pagan kin who carry on without them, a pagan father even performing the 'farewell to the dead' for a Christian son who has died, lest his lineage shades be angered by the omission, but occasionally the non-participation of Christians leads to strained relations, as when pagans refuse to visit or eat with a bride or a remarried widow who has not celebrated with them after her union with her husband, and sometimes a Church member, under pressure from pagan relatives or driven by his own fears, celebrates the ritual for a pagan father. The dropping of the elaborate twin ritual creates surprisingly little difficulty considering how much the pagans fear sickness from twins. Their birth is interpreted by Christians as a special blessing —a bounteous increase—rather than 'an illness' as the pagans call it. A Christian woman, asked if a mother of twins was not fearful when the ritual was omitted, gave a classic reply: 'What she thinks in her heart I can't see; what I think in my heart you can't see; but we *do* see that no one avoids her when they meet her face to face.'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Christian ones, do not celebrate and nothing happens to them, so we no longer fear ourselves.' By 1937 the pagan rituals of kinship had been largely dropped in Ngonde, and around Rungwe mission they were disappearing, though in Selya no pagan dared neglect them. They were taken more seriously by the women than by the men, and many of the young men were openly scornful. The young men are eclectic in their beliefs, jeering at the twin ritual when they may be fearful of any neglect of the ritual of death; doubting the power of rain-makers, but terrified of a neighbour's sorcery. 797 795 [771]

(c) CHRISTIAN RITUAL AND DOGMA

And what are the alternatives to the traditional rituals? Celebrations at death, marriage, and birth continue—probably some sort of ritual on these occasions is universal in human societies. There is no celebration of a girl's puberty, as among the pagans, but the ritual of confirmation is, in one sense, parallel, for it is an acknowledgment of maturity by the acceptance of an individual into the full fellowship of the Church; but maturity in the Church, and the symbolic death and rebirth, are not necessarily linked with physiological development, as they are in the pagan ritual of *ubusungu*.[1] [881]

All the Christian rituals are *communal* in the sense that they are centred in the Church—the Christian community; none is primarily a ritual of kinship. This is most pointed at a christening, when a child is received into the fellowship of the Church, whereas in the pagan birth ritual it is acknowledged as a member of the father's lineage by being given *ikipiki* medicine (which is 'the blood of the lineage') by its paternal grandmother. Sometimes both rituals are celebrated by Christians who interpret the *ikipiki* as an acknowledgment of legitimacy, and a medicine necessary to the child's health, but this is frowned upon by the more orthodox. A dying man is comforted by the priest or elders of the Church, and in some communions he receives the sacrament, the symbol of his salvation through Christ and his membership of the community of believers. At a funeral the members of the local Christian congregation take the leading part, comforting the mourners with prayers and hymns, digging the grave, and burying the dead. The contrast with a pagan funeral, in which cattle are [852] [763] [764]

[1] The pagan rituals referred to in this section are described in *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

x797 x795 764

killed that the dead man may be received by the shades of his lineage, and his immediate kin eat *ikipiki* medicines with him for the last time, is marked.

Marriages and funerals, and in a lesser degree births, are occasions for gatherings of kinsmen in Western society—such a penetrating study of kinship as *The Forsyte Saga* bears adequate witness to this—but the gathering of kinsfolk is a ceremonial rather than a ritual.[1] The attendance of the Forsyte men at Aunt Ann's burial service is in no way essential to the service, though it is felt to be a mark of respect and 'proper feeling' on their part to come. So also at Nyakyusa Christian funerals, the attendance of relatives and fellow villagers is conventional—people are shocked if they do not come—but the peace of the departed is not thought to depend upon his kinsmen killing cows at his grave and celebrating the 'farewell'; the ritual element is the concern of his fellow Christians, led by the priest or elder, irrespective of kinship connexions. The conventions are binding, however. Though a kinsman or village neighbour is not accused of having killed his [754] fellow if he fails to come to the funeral, nevertheless it would cause offence if he did not come, being free to do so, and should he go to work in the fields on the day of the funeral of a grown man, a neighbour, his position would be intolerable.

At a Christian funeral the emphasis all through is on resurrection and life. The hymns sung to comfort the mourners and the [775] prayers and words of the burial service stress resurrection: 'This corruption has put on incorruption, this mortality immortality' . . . 'the body of the flesh is buried, but the body of the spirit rises.' . . . 'Our friend is not dead but liveth.' . . . 'Oh death where is thy sting, oh grave (*busyuka*) where is thy victory?' And the weeping, though extravagant to English ears, is much more restrained than among pagans. Again and again we were told by Christians: [761] 'We do not fear death as the pagans do', and certainly fear is not played up as in the pagan ritual. As one Christian put it: 'No Christian smears himself with mud; only the pagans fear very much at a death, they are desolate, but we do not fear, we say: "Indeed I shall die, but I shall rise again", so we do not smear ourselves with mud and grieve very much. . . . We say: "Why mud? We shall meet with him above."' And there is no later shaving or other purification, for the mourners are not identified with the corpse.

[1] For a discussion of this distinction, cf. op. cit., p. 9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The corpse is buried in a coffin, if the kinsmen can afford one, but it is still placed in a niche dug in the wall of the grave, which is usually in the homestead, for though cemeteries have been marked out in the Christian villages most families prefer to bury their dead at home. The Lutherans kill cattle, some distance from the grave, to feed the mourners but the Moravians and Presbyterians do not, on the grounds that the pagans believe that funeral cattle go with the dead and if Christians kill they seem to support the belief. Relatives, especially sons-in-law, are expected to bring white cloths in place of cattle to show their sympathy and these are used as a shroud, or to bind the chief mourners' bellies, to support them. And the family provide as much fine food—rice, chicken, groundnuts—as they can, for the mourners. But the crowd is smaller than at a pagan funeral for a man of equal standing, because the pagans crowd to funerals to enjoy the feasting and dancing. The Christians sing, and their hymns change from mournful to cheerful ones after the burial, and on the second or third day the young people may dance a little, but without the wild exuberance that succeeds the pagan passion of grief. Often, however, the funeral is a mixed one. Most Christians have pagan relatives and family obligations are not obliterated by differences in faith. So we sometimes heard drumming alternating with Christian hymns, or saw a war dance succeed the burial service, or a pagan woman honouring her Christian sister by dancing with her grain basket, and providing for her future comfort by burying her cooking-pot and cosmetics in the grave. All this the Christian elders present take with tolerance: 'It makes no difference if they choose to do it.'

797 x
795 x
764 ●

The wedding celebrations of Nyakyusa Christians are in two parts: there is the solemnization of the marriage in Church and registration by a priest or minister who is a marriage officer, or the blessing of the union by an elder of the Church; and there is the handing over of the marriage cattle accompanied by feasting and dancing and certain other elements of the traditional ritual. The Moravian missionaries are reluctant to celebrate a marriage unless they are very certain of the characters of the bride and bridegroom because of the difficulties and expense of securing a legal divorce if the wife is later deserted by her husband. They prefer that a customary marriage should be blessed by an elder who is not a marriage officer, then, if one partner deserts, a legal divorce is easy.

797 x
795 x
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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

x 797 x 795 583 584 went away to work again and in time I earned four cows which I hid with friends far from home. My father knew nothing about them. Then I wrote to my father from Mwasebe [about twenty miles from where his father lived] where I was working, saying that I had found a girl there, the daughter of a Christian, and please could I have the cows with which to marry her? My father said: "No, she lives too far away." ' Then later he found a Christian girl of whom his father approved and a satisfactory marriage was arranged.

A common topic of discussion among Christian women was whether parents should choose mates for their children, or leave them free to choose for themselves, for though traditionally a girl had to signify her consent to marriage, she was betrothed very young and her freedom of choice was small. The growing insistence on personal freedom in marriage is symptomatic of a radical change in the attitude towards persons.

x 797 x 795 The pagan rituals were the main occasions of recreation. It has been shown, in *Rituals of Kinship*, how pagan funerals and marriages are the occasion for feasting and dancing and display, and how the [764] [585] seclusion hut of a nubile girl is the gathering place for the young men and girls of the neighbourhood. Even a twin ritual is a festival [782] with beer for the older men and some meat for everyone. The sacrifices at the groves were feasts for the leading men of the country, and the 'coming out' was the occasion of the greatest feast of the generation, and dances were practised for months [796] [688] ahead. Partly because of a change in sex morality, and partly because the meat and beer at pagan feasts are offered to the shades, Christians are largely excluded from these festivals. They may not participate in pagan dances, or join in the lewd songs, or attend the initiation hut of a girl, and they are partly debarred from the feasts of the pagans: certain of the Churches (notably the Church [273] of Scotland and, for a time, the Moravians) forbid Christians to drink beer at all.

[796] And the Christian rituals, though some of them are 'festivals of the Church', are scarcely celebrated as such. There has been a separation between ritual and recreation which has left a gap in the Christian community. It is true that the Christian young men [535] [684] and girls sing and dance at funerals and marriages, but the elders, for the most part, look on with dubious eyes, saying that dancing leads to adultery, and several of the dances introduced by

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

was not an individual one. True, a girl gave her formal consent in the marriage ritual, but the pressure on her to accept the husband selected for her by her kinsmen was almost irresistible. In the thirties Christian women who refused their husband's heir and lived alone, or married an unrelated man of their choice, were regarded by their pagan sisters as very daring, and little girls in pagan families took it as a matter of course that they should replace their dead sisters; today the right of a widow to choose whom she will marry is generally accepted, and the custom of replacing a dead woman by her sister has lapsed. 'Every girl wants her own husband nowadays', the old women say. Thus lineage obligations give way to individual freedom of choice in marriage. At the same time the rituals which emphasized the lineage are dropped or modified. The fearful fecundity of a double birth no longer appals men and the twin ritual which used to bring together all the living members of a lineage of three generations is not celebrated at all. At a puberty ritual a pagan girl may be given the *ikipiki* medicine, the symbol of 'the blood of the lineage' by her mother, but there is no seclusion and elaborate feasting, no sacrifice of the bull of puberty that her father's shades may 'move aside a little' to make way for the shades of her husband's lineage. Only at a funeral do kinsmen still gather and celebrate, for many still fear the shades, and at a funeral the heir is installed and the importance of property and the inheritance of it has not diminished one whit. As we have seen, the traditional religion was formulated in terms of kinship; the gods were senior kinsmen; but today God, *Kyale*, is no ancestor; to pagans as well as to Christians he is separate and supreme. Men are still classified by their lineages, and one of the topics of village questions is how Prince Charles can be heir to the British throne when his father is not of the house of Windsor; but already in the economic field, and increasingly in the religious, it is the family of parents and children which is now dominant, not the lineage.

Divorce is far more frequent than formerly, partly because women claim a greater freedom of behaviour than before, as well as the right of choosing their own husbands, and are supported by the courts. As one village headman put it, 'Formerly a father beat his daughter with a stick if she ran home and sent her back to her husband who also beat her.' The women reject the old pattern of subservience which was expressed in crouching to greet a man, and addressing him in a very deferential fashion; the men observe, and

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951.F367 Ngonde F367
Nyakyusa

4. A visit to the chief's father's grave was paid in company with the chief and some of his *amafumu*. It was situated in a banana grove (*ilingeto*[27]) not very remote from the chief's hut. The grave of the present chief's father was on the ground-floor, about one hundred paces from its edge and was characterized by a small sloughed basalt block about half a metre in height[28] and about forty centimetres in breadth. An *indole*-plant was also standing on the grave about one metre from the basalt block. 765 [764]

On this occasion the chief also told me of the special cases for which sacrifices are offered in this grave. These are performed only in cases of very serious accidents, sickness or famine which may overcome the chieftainship. In such cases a black cow is slaughtered after sunset at the edge of the grave. In the presence of the chief some pieces of meat of the slaughtered beast, together with some bananas, are laid down at the grave. The chief adds a prayer to his ancestors at some distance from the grave, referring to the evil by which the chieftainship or some special village of it has been afflicted. He enumerates all the names of his ancestors and asks them for their help. 768 782

The remaining pieces of the meat and other bananas are left in the grave during the night. When the next day dawns, the *amafumu* return and some *abwegego* divide the meat and eat it together. On this occasion the chief orders the removal of all remains of ashes from the huts. The ashes are thrown down in such unclean places as where leprous persons had been buried. After this has been done, the chief in conjunction with an *uwegego*[29] produces a new fire for the huts by twirling, and all other fires of the village, or villages, must be kindled anew from this "seed-fire". [766] [372]

5. The reason for visiting an *undagusi* (diviner)[30] who dwelled in Ibungu an older age-set village[31] which seemed to the visitor to be a more ancient part of Katumba, was caused by the sickness of the chief's sister. In accordance with the custom of the Nyakyusa in bringing women back to their father's village if they are very sick, the 787 [164 884]

[27] Cf. *Johnston*, Gazetteer, pl. *ensensia*, p. 420; *Mackenzie*, *Ilingeto*, burial place, p. 300; *mangeto*, grave of the dead chiefs, p. 131; *Wilson*, Introduction, p. 187, *ilingeto*, sacred grave; *Marwick*, p. 115.

[28] Cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 197.

[29] Cf. o.c., p. 5.

[30] Cf. *Johnston*, p. 401.

[31] I proposed to call the special form of villages found within the Nyakyusa society, which are erected on the age-set principle, „Age-set villages" (African Studies, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 15—19 June 1943), a terminology that does not alter G. Wilson's statements on the "Age Villages" (Introduction, p. 186 ff). [561 621]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tween the kinsmen about the amount of property to be destroyed. 764
Once we saw the sons of a dead man tugging at two fine mats which his sister was folding into the cave. She wished to put them in but the sons opposed her, saying: 'Why should we spend all the mats? We have buried him, he is dead.'

It is held to be most important that earth should not touch the corpse's face, but once the cave has been closed the chief mourners each push a few handfuls of earth into the grave, the rest of the earth is filled in, and the dancers stamp it hard. Soon no sign of the grave remains.

(3) *The terror of death*

Death to the Nyakyusa is a fearful thing. They believe that the 761
spirit (*mpuke*) of a dead man survives underground (*pan*) in the 775
place of the shades (*abapuke*) and that it can and does visit sur- 765
viving relatives in dreams and materially affect their destinies. The shades of the dead are one of the final causes with which their religion deals. But contact with them is feared and the function of the ritual at the funeral is 'to drive the shade away'. This ritual begins during the burial (*ifwa*) and continues in a series of rites which last for a month or longer. At the burial itself people's attention is mainly concerned with the death as an emotional event, with the fact that a father, a mother, a kinsman or a neighbour has died; but into the emotional quality of death their religious beliefs enter. With the shades they desire no close contact, for the most usual dreams of the dead are those in which they reproach a man for some sin, or foretell his death; their commonest activity is believed to be the sending of madness and misfortune upon sinful men. Nor is it desirable to join the shades oneself. The place of the shades is a vague and shadowy land where no certain happiness is traditionally believed to be. 'No one', said an old man, 'has ever been there and come back to tell us about it. When the dead come to us in dreams they do not show us where they live nor tell us about their life. We do not know what we shall find there. But we do not think that we shall have happiness, or friendly intercourse.' 'He has died and we shall never meet again,' said another man of his dead neighbour. Some old men, however, have definite theories about the place of the spirits, and all agree that wealth is important there; but these theories have no certainty: 'We are just guessing.' It is certain that the dead continue to live somehow, for they are believed to affect

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

761 the lives and enter the dreams of their kinsmen; but the nature of
765 their survival is uncertain.

775 A man, when he dies, is believed to join his ancestors. Until the
775 end of the funeral rites, they say, he is on the way and if the ritual
765 is not properly performed he does not reach them, but troubles the dreams and lives of the survivors until he is properly driven away. 'If you do not perform the ritual for your father or mother you may go mad or else have a slow and lingering death.'

177 Many of the younger pagans, however, are affected by Christian
775 belief. Young men spoke confidently of going after death 'to a fine
797 country with dancing and feasting and a chief to rule us'. But many old men scoff at such beliefs. 'They have learnt them from the missionaries—how do they know, have they been there to see?' Among some of the younger men also the ritual of death is less important than it used to be. As one Christian said: 'The pagans no longer fear to die away from home—they used to fear very much to die in a strange country (and many still do), they thought: "If I die far from home I shall never reach my ancestors, for people will not bury me properly." Nor do all the young men now fear if they fail to attend a father's funeral ritual.' 'We no longer believe in the old rituals,' said a sophisticated young pagan, 'because we see that the Christians do not do these things and nothing happens to them.'

761 An additional reason for fearing death is the Nyakyusa belief in
753 the contagious character of many diseases. Death is thought to be
754 caused sometimes by witchcraft, and sometimes by one of a variety of diseases. Of these diseases some are held to be hereditary and to run in families, and they are usually non-contagious; others, and they are usually contagious, are believed to be due to the sorcery of enemies. And the contagion is thought to be spread by an autopsy. It is especially dangerous to relatives; other people do not fear these diseases unless they actually hold the corpse in their arms, or dig the grave, or help to bury it, but all relatives are afraid.

764 Besides the contagion of specific diseases, the corpse itself is held always to have a vaguely defined, but none the less fearful, contagion of its own. And, because of this, all who have had any close contact with the body go to bathe immediately after the burial. Those of the chief mourners who hold the body in their arms, the grave-diggers and those who get down into the grave to bury it, all go to bathe. 'Even when death is no due to a contagious disease

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

CHAPTER III

FAREWELL TO THE DEAD

After spending three or four days weeping, and feasting, and 765 ●
dancing, the main body of mourners scatter to their homes, but the close kinsmen remain for a week or two sleeping at the home of the deceased, awaiting the ritual of farewell. The Nyakyusa themselves distinguish three main events in it: the 'picking up of pumpkin-seeds' (*okusola isyungu*) when the chief mourners first begin to wash; the 'shaving of the sprouting hair' (*okutemula ilitwele*) when the beer of inheritance is brewed and the estate divided; and the 'ritual of the gasping cough' (*ingutule*) when the widows, having lain with the heir, go to visit their parents. The details differ appreciably between Selya and MuNgonde on the one hand, [84] and Kukwe country on the other, and we describe them separately.

1. IN SELYA AND MUNGONDE

(*a*) *The events*

i. *'Picking up pumpkin-seeds.'* The picking up of pumpkin-seeds 768
begins with the formal recognition of the heir, if the deceased was a 765
married man. The heir and widows are suddenly seized and hustled, 796
resisting, into the mourning hut. If they go willingly 'it seems as if they wished their relative to die'. The officiant smears their chests with ash and puts a strand of the *ilingolongyfwa* creeper on each one's right shoulder. These are both signs of mourning, and the creeper is also a sign that we have given him the inheritance. After a few minutes the heir and widows are formally summoned to come out of the hut, and they go off to wash away the ash and creeper in the stream. But first, the flowering head of a banana is buried in the courtyard near the door of the mourning hut and the grave of the deceased. If he was not a married man and there are no widows to be inherited, the ritual begins with this. The banana flower is explicitly identified with the corpse: it must face in the direction from which the ancestors came, as the corpse does; if the deceased is a male the flowering head is from a plantain (*inde*); if a female from a sweet banana (*injali* or *indefe* or

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mr Ngonde

765 *isolya*); and it is wrapped in a leaf (of the same species as the
766 flower) which represents a blanket. The symbolism is interpreted
767 in terms of the habit of growth. A trunk of plantain or sweet banana flowers and fruits only once, then dies and is pruned away, being replaced by a sucker from the same root, hence the association between the flower and the corpse. *Ilitoti* is a large variety of plantain, eaten when it is green and hard; *injali* is a smallish banana eaten when it is ripe and sweet, and it takes nine months to develop. 'When an *injali* stem forms and a woman conceives a child at the same time, the bananas will be ripe and the woman bear her child together.' No one hesitated about this identification of plantain with male, sweet banana with female; it is as obvious in Nyakyusa as the associations of 'breeches' and 'petticoats' in English.

[242]

768 The officiant sprinkles a powdered medicine on to the earth of the grave and all the participants (that is, the heirs, widows, children, and certain siblings of the deceased) rub themselves in it. They rub forehead, right elbow, right knee, and right toe in the pile of earth. Only chiefs and their close relatives and twins refrain, for they have been drinking medicines, and such close contact with a corpse would 'spoil their medicine': 'The medicine would go rotten if they touched the grave which contains medicine,' so the chief's forehead, etc., must not touch the grave. He merely touches the earth with a finger-tip.

769 Having touched the earth, all the participants go to wash in a
770 stream, and when they return they wash again ritually in the doorway of the mourning hut, the doctor pouring out medicated water from a small calabash and each participant catching the water in his hands and rubbing them and his mouth and knees with it. Then they oil themselves. Until this ritual they must remain dirty and dishevelled with the mud and ash of mourning on them, and any who steal away to wash are fined by the other relatives.

771 Next the officiant takes roasted bananas and sticks into each one or more pumpkin-pips (*nyungo*) and one or more lentils (*ismalale*).[1] She half-buries these in the earth at the doorway of the hut, or sits in the doorway holding a banana near the ground, and each participant approaches in turn and stoops and bites off the banana, and eats it.

The *ulufumbe* (the liner of dry banana leaves on which the

[1] Some also add cowpeas (*imbungo*), others oil-seeds (*ingwalo*).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Malagode

mourners eat) is sprinkled with powdered medicine and carried 765 ●
out by the officiant and burnt, or thrown away under the bananas. If the deceased has been buried elsewhere still a bunch of banana leaves representing the *ulufunde* is taken out. 'Until then the rubbish (*ensinde*) is kept in the house and not swept out because they are grieving—a person cannot be clean, it would seem as if he did not grieve.'

Next the officiant takes an old pot and, holding it, circles round the hearth while her assistant drops pumpkin-seeds, beans, lentils and cowpeas into it and the participants sing: 'The croaking bird, the croaking bird (*ilimamme*).' The food is transferred to another pot and put on the fire and the officiant touches the hearth with different parts of her body (or makes gestures as if to do so), she and the participants saying as she does so: 'The knee is also put on (the fire), the heel is also put on, the backs of the knees are also put on, the loins are also put on, the belly is also put on, the back of the head is also put on.' Then she stamps noisily on the hearth, and the participants sing: 'It startles him. . . .'

Relatives and village neighbours are expected to bring small [63]
gifts of millet at this ritual and these are formally received by the officiant, who sits outside the mourning hut with two large baskets beside her and acknowledges each gift as it is brought and emptied into one or other of them. The one is for the millet of kinsmen, the other for that of neighbours. She addresses each giver in terms of his or her relationship to the deceased, announcing: 'Your grandchild has brought a measure, your daughter has brought a measure, your fellow (*i.e.* neighbour) has brought a measure, etc. . . .' This is spoken of as 'measuring the measures' (*ukupele imipele*); it is 'to greet the shade', and if millet is not available at the time the ritual is performed it is done symbolically.

[illegible] makes bark-cloth, hammered a little and placed on a fresh banana leaf and sprinkled with powdered medicine. A grindstone is lifted on to it and the officiant grinds some of the millet just presented and allows it to fall on the bark. During the grinding the officiant says: 'The knee is also ground, the heels are also ground,' and so on, mentioning the belly and loins. From the time of the death until this ritual, hammering of bark-cloth in the home [64]
of the deceased is taboo (*mwiko*), for hammering bark-cloth is a [65]
symbol of sexual intercourse and 'the hammer belonged to him [66]
who died'. The first millet ground is made into a paste and later

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa
Selga, Malingonde.

765 smeared on the heads of the participants as a preparation for shaving 'the hair of the corpse' (*isumili ya efimbe*), the rest is made into porridge.

The participants stand in a line in the mourning hut while the officiant sweeps the dust (*imisala*) on to their legs, and they begin to wail and sing the farewell dirge: 'Good-bye, So-and-so, good-bye. . . .' The other mourners join in the dirge and the women weep. The participants are then told to stand with their legs apart and the officiant pushes a winnowing basket of millet, mixed with a few pumpkin-seeds and lentils,[1] between their legs. She crawls along the ground to do this and then puts the basket on to the head of each participant in turn, and a pinch of the millet flour on each one's shoulder. She takes banana leaves and, after touching her own body in various places with them, she girds them round the waists of the participants. She puts down a stem of bananas[2] and a hen (or a bunch of feathers representing a hen) and each participant in turn sits on them. She holds a banana sapling across the doorway and as each participant passes out of the hut, stooping, he bumps his head against it. Another line is formed in the courtyard and again the basket of millet is put on the head of each participant. Some grains of millet are thrown over them and some sprinkled on the ground. They sing a song, the leader starting: 'The rubbish (*ilinda*) . . .' and the others replying in chorus: 'The rubbish, we were startled at the rubbish (*twaswanile ilinda*)' and they dance the stamping dance for a few minutes.

Then they go off to bathe, taking with them the stem of bananas and the hen and the bark on which the millet was ground. The leaves they wear and the bananas are thrown away in the stream; [illegible] by the officiant as her perquisite. They separate to bathe, the men from the women, the older from the younger.

Returning home, they all run into the mourning hut and out again, one by one, as the officiant pours water, mixed with powdered medicine, on the thatch above the doorway, and the water drops on their bodies. Then each sits down in the doorway and is washed again with water and medicine by the officiant.

A mash of beans and bananas is made, and a few pumpkin-seeds and lentils are mixed in. Some of it is salted, some left unsalted. A little of the unsalted mash is handed to each participant to eat,

[1] Some also add beans. [2] i.e. the whole fruiting head.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Malgonde

but the salted is mixed in a ball with the millet porridge previously prepared, and plastered against the wall of the hut and on the hearthstones, whence the participants must bite it off. They compete for it, jostling one another. Sometimes the officiant also puts some watery porridge in a leaf of the bark-cloth tree and squeezes it into a basket. Again the participants fight to take a little each. 765

Some of the millet paste, previously prepared, is smeared on the head of each participant in the form of a cross, drawn from the forehead and the nape of the neck to the crown, and from each ear to the crown. The officiant then shaves each of them, beginning with the lines along which she smeared them. As she does so she says: 'Alas, he (or she, if the deceased was a woman) stole. . . . They cut his head.'

If the family is wealthy at least one cow is killed by the heir—Kasitile insisted that a sacrifice is essential at the pumpkin-seed ritual—and the authority of the heir is acknowledged at the same time. Lubalelo, discussing the funeral of his kinsman Mwafyuma, remarked that, at the ritual of the pumpkin-seeds, when they had called together all the dead man's children, his son would kill cows. 'Then when he has killed the cows the children will be told "He is your father", and all of them will fall down before him clapping their hands to say: "Thanks be! Father has risen from the dead (*Ndaga! Ndaga! Ayukile tata*)."'

ii. '*Shaving the sprouting hair.*' The remaining millet brought by relatives and neighbours is usually put to soak immediately and, when it has sprouted, the wives of relatives and village neighbours are called to come and help grind it for beer. The women of the village bring firewood to boil water for the beer and, when the brewing is ripe, 'those whose wives came to grind' come to drink. The participants are given some of the beer mixed with *ikipiki* and a powdered medicine in a small calabash at the grave. Then the officiant smears their faces with soot and draws lines on the head of each with a piece of banana stalk dipped in the lees of the beer to which the *ikipiki* and powdered medicine have been added. Again the lines are drawn from forehead and nape of neck to the crown and from each ear to the crown. She shaves the sprouting [302] hair on the forehead and at the nape of the neck of each of them, and also makes some small cuts in these places and rubs in the lees of the beer. Or she may do this for the senior participant only, who then does it for his juniors. This is 'the shaving of the sprouting hair' (*ukumeula ilimeule*) and implies the lifting of a ban. If the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

765 deceased was a man and wealthy, the heir kills a bull or cow for a feast.

765 184 According to one account, 'the heir kills a cow saying: "This is your cow, Father." Then he takes the praying calabash and fills it with beer and goes to the banana grove. The others sit in the courtyard watching from afar. He blows beer and then pours out a little, several times, mentioning the dead man's name and those of three or four prominent dead relatives, and prays for children, health, and food. He takes his own senior son (or the son of his dead brother) with him to see what he does, for he (the son) will do it after his death. Then they come back and the meat is eaten and beer drunk.' But we never saw this happen nor was the prayer in the banana grove mentioned by other informants.

782 765 If the millet put to soak fails to sprout, however, there must be prayer. It is thought that there has been disagreement among the mourners and the shades are angry and have spoilt the millet. The kinsmen gather to confess their quarrels and pray before preparing another batch.

765 At the shaving of the sprouting hair (or some other time during the death ritual) the sisters of the dead man formally admonish his widows on their behaviour as wives. One admonition recorded lasted two hours, and the main theme was the stinginess of the widows in entertaining their sisters-in-law when the latter had come to visit.

765 768 587 On the morning after 'the shaving of the sprouting hair' the participants shave their whole heads and are anointed with ointment by the officiant. In the evening comes the formal handing over of the inheritance, if the deceased was a married man. The heir sits in the doorway of the mourning hut and the senior wife of the deceased hands him a bill-hook, such as is used for pruning bananas. He is adjured by his relatives, his village headman, and his neighbours to care for the children of the deceased as if they were his own, and the widows are told: 'This is your husband who will hoe for you always.' If there is any division of property it is [428] formally made on this occasion, the dead man's sisters and the village headman being primarily responsible for a just allocation. And though, traditionally, women were given no choice about inheritance, this was in fact the occasion on which their protests and preferences were expressed. Then the heir is thrown into the hut with the women he has inherited 'on to the ashes' (*ang'fuwulele*), and must have intercourse with all of them that night. One of

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

them knocks on the wall when he has succeeded, and the officiant 765
raises the *alalala*, the trill of applause and triumph[1] which is also 763
the war-cry, and shakes a basket of seeds by the door shouting: 587
'Ours, ours, we marvel at the thing!' Until this ritual connection the heir and the widows remain continent, and great importance is attached to the success of the heir in having intercourse with all the widows. Should a widow refuse the heir after touching the ash it is said that she will either die herself or cause any man she lies with to die of 'the ash'; but if she escapes before being smeared with ash then she is safe. The heir is also in danger if a widow should refuse him after he has touched the ash.

The morning after the ritual union the heir is formally summoned out of the hut by a man knocking on the door and crying: 'Come out, war has come (*Saka! ulwite lwainile*),' i.e. sexual intercourse has begun. He sits on a stool in the doorway of the hut and is greeted by the children of the deceased: 'Good morning, Father.'

iii. '*The gaping cough.*' Each of the inherited women goes off to 783
her own father's homestead with the filth (*ndafu*) of intercourse 768
on her. She does not even wash her hands, and she takes with her 587
cooked bananas which she has smeared with her husband's semen and her own emission. This she buries in the banana grove in her father's homestead in which he prays to his ancestors. She takes meat to her father if an animal has been killed at the 'shaving of the sprouting hair'. The heir similarly goes to his father's homestead (or that of his father's heir) with cooked bananas to be buried in his father's sacred grove. Each wife drinks beer mixed with medicine with her father and other close relatives. From the time when the heir sleeps with the widows until this ritual is per- [574]
formed, they cannot visit their parents nor can their children do so (though usually children come and go freely in the home of their mother's people) and, more particularly, a widow must not drink from her mother's cup, or eat with her, or sit over her fire, or touch her hand. It is believed that, if the ritual is neglected, those for whom it should have been performed will be seized with a racking cough (*ingutule*) and diarrhoea. Even Christians, who eschew the other parts of the death ritual, often participate in the *ingutule*.

When a woman has died she should be replaced by a sister or 587
brother's daughter, just as the dead man is by a brother or son, 534

[1] The closest equivalent in our society is cheering, but the *alalala* is trained by women.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selyn, M. Ngonde

587 and the widower should refrain from sexual intercourse with his
834 other wives until the ritual union with the 'wife who replaces the dead' (*ussuni*) at the 'shaving of the sprouting hair'. Nowadays, however, widowers do not keep this taboo strictly, and many lie with their other wives after the 'picking up of pumpkin-seeds'.

765 Before the 'shaving of the sprouting hair' for a dead woman her brother (or, if he is dead, his heir) goes to cut down the bananas at her former husband's home, as a sign that kinship between them is at an end, but he is persuaded to desist. Mwakwelebeja, an elderly man who had just performed it after the death of his sister Seba, the wife of the chief Mwaipopo, in company with his neighbour Mwainelage and his wives, thus described the ritual:

> We arrived and our wives and the wives of Mwaipopo went into the house to wail, and we men went in too and cried: 'Alas father! Alas father!' Then we seized my *ussipuse*, the girl Ijonga, the daughter of Seba, and went off with her. The women, the chief's wives, fought with us and cried: 'Bring a cloth, bring a cloth!' They gave us a cloth and we left the girl. Then I seized a hill-hoe[1] and began to cut down the banana grove. I cut indeed! They cried: 'Not the banana grove!' and gave me another cloth.
>
> QUERYOW: What does this mean?
>
> MWAKWELEBEJA: When we seize the girl it is as if we said: 'My child has died, the kinship is finished, it is finished here, I'll be off with my sister's children (*abipuse*), they are *my* children.' And when they give me a cloth they pay saying: 'Father, we pray you, don't! There is still kinship, Father, you are not a stranger! Do not terminate the kinship, it is still there.' And when I cut the banana grove it means the same; it means my child has died here, it is finished here, the kinship has ended. *And when they give me a cloth, they beseech me saying: 'Not the* banana grove, Father, the kinship is not yet finished, it still exists!' Formerly, if they were rich they gave a bull. . . . We were unfortunate, Mwaipopo paid us nothing.
>
> After I had cut the grove I gave bananas and meat (from a cow I had brought to kill) to all my sisters' children, on the roadway (outside the homestead). I stood with my back to them and handed the bananas and meat over my shoulder. They came up behind me one by one, and took the food in their mouths. [This was demonstrated, dramatically.] Yes, it is a ritual. If we do not give them bananas and meat, their legs swell up, they fall ill and become mad.

765 Some of our informants maintained that this ritual of cutting
184 the bananas was performed only when the deceased's family had no girl to send in her place. Mwakwelebeja and Mwainelage, how-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selja, Mulungwide

ever, insisted that it was performed whether there was a girl to 765
send or not, but if several sisters were married to the same man it 184
was carried out only for the eldest of them.

We do this whether we are substituting another woman or not, but we do it only for the senior sister. There were three Sebas married to Mwaipopo, and when the two junior ones died we did not go to cut the bananas, but now the senior Seba has died, we do cut the bananas.

Mwaisalage explained that his brother-in-law would come to 765
cut bananas when his senior wife, Lyandileko, died, whether she died before or after her junior sister who is her co-wife, but the brother would not cut bananas at the death of the junior sister.

Mwakwelambya: We cut the banana grove again when all the children of those women, the kinswomen married to one man, are dead. That is, their mother's brother's son (sesee) does it, for their mother's brother will be dead by then. It means the same thing: 'The kinship is finished.' They pay to say: 'No, Father, it still continues.'

A woman to replace the dead is asked for even though her §37
husband has predeceased her. X, describing the ritual added: 765

And when my mother dies (if my father has died first) still her relations, my abipwa, come to cut the banana grove. I throw them a cloth crying: 'Not the bananas.' Also they bring me another woman. If they do not, I go to them and say: 'Give me another mother to look after me.' They give me a girl whom I give to a half-brother (as his wife). If there is no girl they give me a cow, saying: 'That's your mother.'

Ibano and Mwaijambia explained:

If, when a woman has died, her people are poor, having no child to replace her, they say: 'We are sorry, but there is nothing at all here, this cow is for drawing water with.' And formerly they returned all the cattle later on; but now, since we have stopped claiming calves, we divide the cows. . . . But when there is a daughter and they give her to me, the husband, we give marriage cattle again. Kinship does not [Lost]
come to an end.

To recapitulate, the main events of the ritual of death are the 765
formal recognition of the heir (if the deceased was a married man); 768
the burial of a flowering head of bananas and the rubbing in earth from the grave; washing; a ritual eating of bananas with certain seeds; sweeping out the mourning hut; civiling the hearth and putting an old pot on the fire with various foods; the presentation of millet by relatives and friends, and a ritual grinding; a second

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Ma Ngonde

washing and the throwing away of a stem of bananas and leaves in a stream, and bringing back a hen and bark-cloth; eating a mash on the hearth; the brewing of beer with the millet presented; a ritual drinking and further shaving when this is ripe; an admonition of the heir on his duties and acknowledgement of him as 'father' by the children of the deceased; sexual intercourse between the heir and the widows he inherits; the burial by each inherited woman of some of the fluids from that intercourse in her father's banana grove, and a ritual drinking of beer with her father and other close relatives.

If the deceased is a woman her brother comes to cut her husband's banana grove and seize her children, as a sign that kinship between the lineages has ceased, but he is dissuaded with gifts, and treats his sister's children with medicines. A sister is sent to replace the dead woman, the widower has intercourse with her at 'the shaving of the sprouting hair', and she returns home to bury some of the fluids in her father's grove, and drink beer with him ritually.

An account of one of the rituals which we attended in Selya which is quoted in the documents (p. 234) may give some reality to this stark outline.

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

When asked why the ritual of death is performed the first reply of Nyakyusa informants was that they were driving away (*ukubaga*) the dead and that if it were neglected those for whom it should have been performed would go mad (*ukubaga ikigili*). Angombwike explained: 'In the death ritual they drive away the shade (*ukyuka*) saying: "Why are you always at me, nagging at me, in dreams?" It is to swear at him (the shade) and drive him away.'

Another informant explained: 'The touching of the earth is the expression of the wish that he will not come into our dreams and thoughts any more, and he does not!' Another confirmed this saying: 'The powdered medicine and touching the earth are alike; they wish to stop him (the deceased) coming into our dreams.' And an Ndali informant said: 'Shaving is to get rid of the shade which was on their bodies.'

There is also the implication of speeding the deceased on his way to the land of the shades, for it is believed that if the ritual is not performed he will not be welcomed by his dead kinsmen and will continue to haunt the living. Of an unfinished death ritual

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

people say: '*Tukali ukunkeya unyuka* (We have not yet bidden farewell to the shade),' *ukukeya* being the word used for bidding a courteous farewell to departing guests. Mwaisumo elaborated the point. He said: 'The death ritual is a saying good-bye, it is to see off the dead man accompanying him on his way (*ukunsindikela*); to demonstrate that we have buried him indeed, and to pray that forgetfulness may now come on us.' Another informant explained: 'Touching the earth is to say "Good-bye, friend."'

The danger of madness was given as the reason both for the whole ritual and for many separate actions in it. 'You go mad if you do not shave after a death,' said the wife of the chief Mwaihojo. 'You go mad if you keep the hair of the corpse (*isuili ya mfimba*),' said Mwandisi, the old blind historian, and he went on: 'Yes, much madness comes from the shades if you have neglected the death ritual for a wife or for parents, and the ritual at puberty also. Madness comes from the shades and from Kyala. And if a woman refuses to perform the ritual for her husband who has died, and refuses to lie down with the heir, she also goes mad.' If someone does go mad the cause is usually said to be neglect of the death ritual or some mistake in its performance.

Other types of illness are also attributed to neglect of the death ritual. Kasitile was ailing and thought that his illness was due partly to the fact that he had not completed the death ritual for a relative. Mwilabe said of the sweeping in the ritual: 'They sweep round their legs lest their bodies become swollen and sick. It is said that their bodies will swell if they attend the ritual of someone else and this is done and they themselves have not been swept over.' Several informants mentioned 'a lingering and painful death' (a terror often spoken of by the Nyakyusa) as the penalty for neglecting a ritual, and the last part of the ritual is expressly interpreted as a prophylactic against the 'gasping cough'.

Finally, it is said that the crops will not flourish if the ritual is neglected. Kakuju, a village headman of Selya, was explicit on the point: 'If you do not bury your father properly the food will disappear. They (the diviners) will tell you to find something and when beer has been left overnight outside in the banana grove you pray to the shade.' The fear that the crops will not flourish is not mentioned so frequently as the danger of madness, but it is a general notion.

The danger of madness or other illness coming on one is thought to be greatest if a man tastes the ritual food or beer, or is sprinkled

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764 by the dust, at some other funeral without having completed the
765 ritual for his own parents, and the danger of the 'gasping cough'
828 exists only when a widow, having lain with the heir, eats or drinks with her own relatives.

796 Everyone knows the connection between madness and the performance of the whole ritual and between coughing and the final act, but not everyone is conscious of the symbolism of the various events. For example, Mwakisisile, a middle-aged pagan man whom we knew well, could not interpret the details of the symbolism and he explained: 'Some ask about these things in the ritual, some do not ask. I have not asked. We only know, many of us, that in the ritual we drive the shade, who is here, away from the body, and that if we do not drive him away we run mad. But we do not understand the details of the ritual such as straining water through a leaf, or passing the baskets between the legs, so as to be able to say: "This detail means this." ' Those most conscious of the symbolism are the *abanyage*, the officiants at the family rituals and the priests of the communal rituals. Kasitile, the hereditary rain-maker of Selya, who was a close friend of Godfrey Wilson's, and formally presented him to his dead ancestors urging them 'not to be startled at a white face', was our foremost authority on the symbolism of the Selya ritual. He was more conscious of the symbolism than most people, but his interpretation was confirmed at almost every point by others. Kasitile was not paid for
[124] information—none of our informants was—but he and Godfrey Wilson exchanged gifts from time to time in the manner customary among the Nyakyusa, and he often had a meal with us. Mwandini, a very old blind chief living on the Lake-shore plain (MuNgonde) who was regarded by the Nyakyusa themselves as an authority on history and custom, was also a friend prepared to expound the
[184] rituals. His interpretation contradicted Kasitile's on one point only—he denied that one purpose of the ritual was to bring back the shade into the house. Other informants, though less coherent, corroborated Kasitile's interpretation, which may therefore be taken as a general, not a personal one.

764 There are nine main themes in the ritual: first, the driving away
765 of the dead from the dreams of his close kinsmen, and measures to
796 prevent him 'brooding over them' (*ukubotele*)—the word is that used of a hen brooding over her chickens. Widows, in particular, must be separated from the shade of their husband before the heir (or any other man) dare have intercourse with them. Secondly, the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

identification of the mourners with the corpse and the separation of the shade from both of them. 'What they do to the participants they do to the deceased. . . . If they are not cleansed he is still muddy. . . . We throw away the corpse, the contamination of death, into the river . . . we drive the shade away off our bodies to join his fellows . . . we separate the corpse and the shade.' Thirdly, bringing back the shade as a beneficent spirit into the home. 'In the ritual we tell the shade to go away and join his fellows, and then to come back with them and warm himself by the fire in our house. . . . At first the shade is in our bodies, we cast him out . . . at first it is as if we were still holding the corpse in our arms, but we throw the corpse away into the river . . . the shade we bring back into our house.'

Fourthly, a miming of the actions of a madman in eating excrement as a prophylactic against behaviour of that sort. The dead, if not separated from the living, bring madness upon them, and simulating madness is a protection against it.

Fifthly, the corpse and faeces are identified: 'The corpse is filth, it is excrement. And so when a madman for whom they have not performed the ritual eats filth that is the corpse, he is still holding it, they have not done the ritual for him.'

Sixthly, the shades are identified with semen and seeds and their control over potency and fertility is recognized. The Nyakyusa think that they are always present in sexual intercourse, and symbols of sexual intercourse are interpreted as a means of driving out the shade from the participants' bodies.

Seventhly, 'the food which he hoed' is symbolically 'given to the shade' of the man who has just died and he is urged to be satisfied: 'You, shade, do not think there was little food at your ritual. . . . The food which we have eaten you have eaten . . . do not create hunger.'

Eighthly, the shade is acknowledged as a kinsman by eating with him food and beer mixed with *ishipi*—the symbol of agnatic kinship—before he is driven away.

Lastly, a dead man is formally replaced by his heir, a woman by her sister or her brother's daughter.

These conceptions are expressed in the following texts which are given as they were recorded by Godfrey Wilson. No attempt has been made to systematize Kasitile's or Mwandisi's arguments, but the statements made during numerous sessions have been placed in sequence, and are separated only by dots.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mulungode

764 i. *Kasitile's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. in Nyakyusa and
●765 translated by him shortly afterwards.)[1]
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KASITILE: We go to bathe wearing leaves, we throw them away, we bathe, then we come back and shave our hair. This means we are driving away the shade (*sanyuka*), for at first he is in our bodies. Our fathers told us: 'When I die I shall not reach the place of the shades unless you do the ritual for me; those who preceded me will drive me back saying: "You are not one of us, you cannot come, they have not yet done your ritual." For the shades linger on the way at first, they do not reach their place.' We do the ritual so as to tell the shade: 'We have given you everything, now go away and may your fellow shades receive you, do not come here.'

764 When we return from bathing we put a banana in the ground with
765 a pumpkin-seed and a lentil in it. We stoop and bite a piece off, and
828 then we shave the hair. There is much idiocy (*ubulema*) if you do not perform the ritual, and madness (*ikigili*), or perhaps you will have a lingering death. The shade is in the body, he causes madness (*ikigili*), he says: 'Why have you not done the ritual?' The shades pound and stamp the body.

Mwambuputa (a village headman) joining in the conversation said:

775 All this round us [with a sweeping gesture] is the place of the shades.
764 What we have buried is only the body, to prevent it stinking, but the heart (*indumbula*) stays here.

KASITILE: The banana which we bite in the ground is like the
764 sausages of porridge of the Kukwe, it is excrement, it is filth; becu use
765 I think that if I do not perform the ritual I may run mad and eat filth.
828 Also before this they beat up a mash of cowpeas, they take it with a spoon and put it against the wall, and one by one we come and eat. This also is eating filth so that we may escape and be clean.

[177] Madness (*ikigili*)[2] is of two kinds, one comes from Kyala (but we used to say from Mbasi, we did not say Kyala) and one from ritual. Mwaipopo (the chief) had the madness (*ikigili*); it is in his family on his mother's side. This is the madness of Mbasi, they do their rituals all right. Mbasi is he who lived with my father here. He called 'Kanjuki! Kanjuki!' from the hillside; then my mother would cook him some food
764 and my father would put something out for him.[3] When we perform
765 the rituals the shades are very pleased to see it; of old you might hear
775 them clapping their hands in the evening here, after we had finished a ritual. But they have gone away now. . . . Yes, the shades are filthy
826

[1] I have made minor changes in the translation.
[2] Distinguished from a trance or epileptic fit, *ukukoma umulogo*.
[3] See *Communal Rituals among the Nyakyusa* (in preparation).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

(*kwyali*), they are in the body at first, they shake it and you fall ill; 764
they say: 'You are still muddy, you have not done the ritual.' . . . 765
When a man dies his heart (*indumbula*) and his body (*umfimba*) separate, 775
they are divorced, the heart with the blood (*ililopa*) and the shadow 828
(*ilipungulu*) are separated from the corpse which rots in the ground. The corpse is filth, it is excrement. And so when a madman, for whom they have not performed the ritual, eats filth, that is the corpse, he is still holding it, they have not done the ritual for him. If they have not done the ritual for the shade his fellows drive him back and say: 'You cannot come yet, you are still muddy, they have not bathe you in the river.' . . .

Yes, that which they do to my body, to me the heir (or the relative) they do to the shade himself. He, the corpse, is earthy, muddy. That is why we smear ourselves with mud, we mourners; it is this earth that we drive away in the ritual, it is mud, it is the corpse. . . .

The hair of the mourners which we shave in the ritual is one with the hair of the corpse, it is his. We wash and shave and anoint him and he goes to his own place. . . .

First we bite the banana with the seeds stuck into it in the ground, and then we eat bananas and seeds in the usual way. It is the food which he, the shade, ate. . . .

They seize the heir and widows at the pumpkin-seed ritual. The officiant is there, she smears ashes on their chests and puts a strand of *ilingalungufwa* creeper on their necks, then if the woman refuses the man later there is a case and she must pay the fine for adultery. If she refuses before this there is no case, and she does not pay. The ashes and creeper are signs of death, of mourning, of the corpse—they cast them away into the river. [837 681]

QUERYOW: The rubbing in earth—what does it represent?

KAETULE: The banana flower is the corpse. We are saying to him: 'You corpse, we have finished with you, do not come here again, it is finished for ever, do not look towards us, go away.' This earth is the same as the mud with which we smear ourselves at the burial. We bathe, we cast it away.

QUERYOW: The washing at the door with medicine?

KAETULE: We wash with powdered medicine at the door because we are just going to take filth (*indofu*) in our hands—to take the bananas and pumpkin-seeds. We bathe, we wash, and then they give us the bananas. It is taboo (*mwiko*) to eat before washing. The calabash used for this washing is hung up in the porch and used for the beer later, the beer which they drink on the path after anointing themselves.

QUERYOW: The bananas and lentils and pumpkin-seeds?

KAETULE: At the eating of bananas and pumpkin-seeds we do not separate them, everything is then pressed together in one place; but the banana flower we bury is separate, that is the corpse. And at the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mulungoshe

764 water when we bathe we make a separation—they take a stem of
●765 bananas, and a bark-cloth, and a hen to the water. The bananas they
775 throw away—that is the corpse; the hen and the bark-cloth they bring
828 back to the homestead and the officiant takes them home with her—that is the shade, is not the shade in the house with us? Do we not pray to him?

QUESTION: Putting food into the pot?

KASYULE: This food is the filth of the body. We say: 'We cast you from us, let our hearts be purified; the mud we smeared on our faces we cast it away, all our body casts you away. We are not corpses; we are putting you to rights and shaving your hair, go away to your fellows.' We begin to get rid of the earth we had on our faces so that we may anoint ourselves again. In our lineage we eat only bean mash, not bananas and millet porridge, we differ in our rituals.

QUESTION: The sweeping of rubbish on to legs and the weeping?

KASYULE: This means: 'We begin to cast you off wholly, let all the ritual that is left come to us, we throw it away.' The measures of millet are to tell the shade that So-and-so has brought millet and is doing his ritual. 'Do not think he is angry with you,' we tell him, 'he has brought this millet.' The throwing of millet from the winnowing basket on to the participants' heads as they stand in a line outside means that we cast him away, we are taking him to the river—at the river we throw away the corpse. They throw away the leaves and the stem of bananas.

QUESTION: Hitting the heads with a banana sapling in the doorway?

KASYULE: They hit the participants on the head, that is the *sickness disease of the dead man*,[1] we are setting them to rights.

QUESTION: The stem of bananas, hen, and bark-cloth?

KASYULE: The stem of bananas is the corpse, they leave it in the water with the leaves; the bark-cloth and hen are the shade which they bring into the house.

QUESTION: The circling with the pot and putting in of food?

KASYULE: This is the shade whom they bring into the house (*bilumbeke*) when they have brought him from the water. The banana flower they bury is the same as the leaf they wear, it is the corpse which they throw away in the water.

Yes, we separate the corpse and the shade with all our might, the earth we rub our bodies in is the corpse, we throw it into the water and the shade we bring back to the house. The eating of the bean mash on
[77] the wall (the old custom) and on the hearth (both old and contemporary) that is the shade in the house. He warms himself by the fire in the house, we pray to him. Putting food into the pot means: 'Leave our

[1] Not clear to me.—M. W.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Mgonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Safya, Malingode

bodies altogether, go away to your friends, sit here by the hearth and warm yourself.'

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QUESTION: The grinding of millet flour on to bark and the subsequent smearing of the participants with this flour in a paste, before shaving?

KAMTILE: This means: 'This is your food that you ate, we give it to you.' And the smearing on the hair means: 'We have finished your ritual for you, we have left nothing out, bear us no grudge.'

QUESTION: The sweeping of rubbish (*mimde*) on to the participants' legs?

KAMTILE: The rubbish is the rubbish of death, it is dirt. 'Let it come now,' we say. 'Let it not come later, may we never run mad.' The wailing (during sweeping) means: 'Go away, farewell!' We have finished the burial now, it will never be done again save once more at the beer.

QUESTION: The basket of millet between legs and over heads?

KAMTILE: That is to drive him away, to tell him: 'Do not return to these your relatives here, you were in their bodies, now you are separate, we have driven you away, you are no relative of ours!' All that we do in the house there means that he is in our bodies and we are going to cast him out. The flour on the shoulder is like the flour paste in the hair, this is the corpse, we throw it away.

QUESTION: The song 'We are startled by the shade' (*Tuepumuile dimde*)?

KAMTILE: The *dimde* is the shade, we are startled.

QUESTION: How startled?

KAMTILE: Ha! Are you not startled when you run mad?[1] The heart is terribly startled, it curls upwards; when they say this phrase: 'We *are startled by the dimde*' they quiet the heart and make it lie down again. Let him go away and be startled with his fellows!

QUESTION: The word *dimemme* (the croaking bird)?

KAMTILE: That is the shade that breeds on the body. 'Friend,' we say to him, 'we have put you to rights, do not come to us, oh croaking bird.'

QUESTION: The ritual as a whole?

KAMTILE: It means: 'We have given you everything, we have eaten fish on the hearth'—for if one runs mad one eats fish, fowls. . . .

QUESTION: What is the symbolism of pouring water on the thatch and running through the drops?

KAMTILE: The ritual has many parts. We teach a person that he should do it properly and not leave out anything. Do we not fear (*dhatile*) the water for washing, the water of the corpse? When heavy rain falls do we not flee from the downpour and enter the house? That is how it is done. We mimic what he did when he was alive. . . .

[1] *Dimpumdo dimde* is used also for an epileptic fit.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Nguonde F3617
Nyakyusa
Selga, McNguole

602 583 again an acknowledgment of kinship. 'If she washed outside it would mean that she was not the daughter of her father.'

585 The two fresh leaves of plantain and sweet bananas on which the 589 officiant places her soiled bark-cloth, and on top of which she knerls to eat bananas are, as already stated, symbols of male and female. Everyone understood this. Fewer people were aware of the symbolism of eating the bananas, but Kasitile and one or two others were fully conscious of it and forthright in discussion. He said:

> At the 'putting her in' (*ubwingwiki*) the mothers-in-law bring a new bark-cloth and dress her in it; the old one is thrown away on the litter. They mix together bananas and *ikipili* medicine which the mother-in-law. Don't you understand? They wear her. The plantain is the symbol of the man, of his penis, we are wearing her, may she 'cook well' for her husband [i.e. be proficient in intercourse], may she bear children. She eats on that bark-cloth which means may the blood go to make children, this is your husband. Eating is a symbol (*ibimanyiko*) of sexual intercourse. She eats the plantain, meaning she has intercourse with her husband.

He connected this with the admonition at the end of the ritual. When she eats the bananas nothing is said, it is only implied, but 602 at the drinking of beer they teach her, saying: "Look after your husband well; if you are sweeping the house and he catches hold of you don't be startled, accept him, and catch hold of him also. . . . Men when they do this beget children." '

713 The second washing at the groom's, which is performed for 721 every wife and not only for a senior one, is interpreted as a clean- 725 ing ritual. In the morning the officiate calls the husband and wife and says: 'Come and wash now and clean off the filth.'

Shaving is both a purification and a sign of the completion of the ritual. 'The hair of a girl who has reached puberty is the filthiness of puberty, of the menstrual blood which she produces then. She threw it away.' Mwakwelebeja and his wife said: 'The shaving is to show that she has awakened to puberty (*alembwile ubwenge*). During the ritual she did not shave. We perform the rite of shaving that she may begin to shave again, and to let her smear herself with brown ointment. It is like a burial. If a man's close relative 719 dies he does not shave or wash.' Mwalebeja said: 'The shaving is to show that the *ubwenge* ritual is finished.'

Clearing the litter which is 'filthy', commencing with the menstrual blood of the girl, is also a symbol of purification. The washing in a leaf basin into which *ikipili* medicine had been

Z: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Náali

The officiant prepared some beer mixing it with powdered medicine, 764
and they came one by one to drink. The other officiant made as if to 184
shave them, taking a little hair from the forehead and the neck. When
she had done this she put her hands between her legs. Thus the people
of Selya perform the ritual. In another calabash they put the lees of
the beer that had been drunk, with two pots of water. These lees are
poured on to their heads and the water runs over their bodies. When
the officiant has done this she pots her hands and the calabash between
her legs. They look towards Sangu country. Then they shave their hair.
When they have finished they throw away the cloths and bark-cloth
which they wear when they wash. Then they anoint themselves with
oil, and sleep with it on them, and wash in the morning. The people of
Selya shave in the morning; at this time they do not really shave, they
only cut the sprouting hair.

In the evening there is the ceremony of handing over the inheritance.
The heir sits on a banana stump in the doorway and the chief wife
hands him a billhook. Then they say: 'Care for these children whom
your elder brother left as if you had begotten them yourself, do not be
hard, be kindly as he was.'

And at night he will sleep with the widows. In the morning the chief
wife goes to her father without washing off the filth and gives her
fathers beer, then they greet one another. Ndingwanin also goes to his
mother's people. They said one woman did not go because her fathers
did not know the customs, they are Lugulu. There were only these two
women, one grown up and one a girl, to be inherited.

Mwenjumba told me that for Kanyosa their affines will not cut the
banana grove for they have no girl to give in her place. 'They will give
us cattle, we divide (the marriage-cattle) with them.'

(9) *Náali funeral rites* *Record of Mwalimanda*

When someone has died the Náali mourn for five days, and the 764
sixth day they sweep and shave the hair. When they are shaving is they 302
take a pembwení and put in it all the hair that is shaved off. When they 184
have finished they choose one senior woman, the chief wife, and they
hand her this hair and they go to throw it away at the cross-roads.
Giving the woman the hair means that the shade should be at his place
and leave others. Shaving is to get rid of the shade which was on their
bodies (*akamwe ku kamwipe ungwaka ipa kali ungwe na náali*). And the
people who hold the corpse in their arms and dug the grave stay over a
month of few when they have come from the burying. The doctor gives
them medicines to bathe with. They say that if they do not stay over
few it is as if they had the dead on their bodies (*kalungwi mandili ungfwe*),
and he will always come in dreams, so they drive him away.

When some considerable time has passed—a whole year—they do the 765
ilyangula. This word comes from straining beer. To strain the *ilyangula*

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Nsali

765 they seek two or three officiants, and they build a temporary hut behind the living huts where they strain three pots of beer, which they call 'the beer of the shades'. These officiants do not bathe their bodies because they say: 'Let us be with the shade when we make the beer (*ajiqe nagwe angulu lo ndulombe abandwe*).' The rest of the beer is strained in the house.

When they have brewed it they take one potful from the temporary hut and pour the contents on top of the grave; then they dig a hole on the grave and place in it a little pot of beer. What is left in these two pots they drink, together with the rest of the beer, and there is much drumming.

766 After a long time has passed, perhaps two years, if there has been sickness in the home, they think that the deceased is making them giddy, is causing them to be ill. So they dig up the corpse and take all the bones and finger and toe nails. If one is left the sickness is not cured. When Mulaga, the grandchild of Mwakafunga, was ill they dug up the corpse and the illness ceased very quickly. They pile up the bones which have been dug up.

III. MARRIAGE NEGOTIATIONS AND GIFTS

769 ANGOMEWEE: One of our comrades in Kabembe heard that there was an unmarried girl at the Chief Mwaumbwe's, so one Monday he said to three of us: 'Don't go away, friends, we are going to woo the chief's daughter at Mwaumbwe's.' So we put on our best clothes, those we wear to church, and we went to the home of the father of the girl. He was the younger brother of the Chief Mwaumbwe by the same mother, and he told us: 'I am not the father (*agwise*). She is my own child, but the father is the chief. Go to him' [i.e. authority over his daughter rested with his elder brother]. The girl had reached puberty. Someone else had married her, but her father had received only one cow, so the elder brother, the chief, was angry and took away the girl from her husband. My friend had never met her, never. He had just heard that there was an unmarried girl at that place, because the custom of making love to girls in the long grass is not a traditional one: a girl used to stay at her father's house. A young man went to the father before he spoke with the girl; he never spoke to her in secret. Then the father would send the girl to speak with the young man. She came and sat down and the young man looked at her closely and his friends who accompanied him helped him. Formerly a young man did not wear many clothes, he only wore one cloth in front, and a brass body-ring, so that his whole belly might be seen, and she might look closely. Also he sits high on a stool, while his fellows sit on the ground, that he may be seen by the girl.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

593 422 refuses point blank to feed his visitors, he appeals to another; but it will be obvious that continued churlishness on the part of a wife would lead to trouble. Bananas, rice, and malesi belong to the husband; bananas, because he alone attends to them; rice, because it came from the Europeans; and malesi, because from this cereal beer is made, and the husband is lord of the beer pot once the beer is brewed. Fowls belong to the wife, but though the profits of sale are hers, she usually lays them out in small household necessities, such as salt. She often gets a cow from her father, and her husband may make her a similar gift; and he must not use the milk without her consent, though if it is sold, the money is laid by to pay the tax. All household utensils are hers, except the small dish from which her husband eats; but she leaves everything behind should she be divorced, except the cow she received from her father.

587 765 If a wife dies while still capable of child-bearing, her father must give another daughter to the widower; or, if he has none, a cow, dressed with flowers, is sent with an apology, and a promise that as soon as possible the dowry cattle will be returned. If the father hopes that another daughter may yet be born to him, an arrangement may be come to by which she will go to the widower. Widows become the "family" of the heir. They wear anklets of cow-skin, and let their hair grow, mixing it with clay. These signs of mourning they wear for about a year. Girls wear similar tokens of mourning if either parent is dead, but not boys.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XXIV

Death & Burial

761 AMONG the Konde, as among other Bantu peoples, no man dies "unwept, unhonoured, or unsung." However contemptible he may have been in life, he has now passed to a sphere in which he is clothed with fresh powers, which, for good or ill, he can direct upon his living descendants, who take care to give no cause of offence. He cannot, however, punish them for any evil they may have done him while alive; only *post mortem* sins can be visited upon them: neglect of ceremonies, refusal of beer at the funeral, omission of his name when prayer is made, and other tokens of forgetfulness. And the power for harm of each spirit is limited to his own descendants; but chiefs, naturally, can bring misfortune upon the whole of the community over which they ruled in life.

763 Immediately a man has died, his eldest child, son
765 or daughter, unless an infant, begins the mourning.

"Alas, my father, I too have met trouble!" Then the women, "Ah! trouble comes to you as to others." Next the leader, "My father, my lion, my leopard," naming all the strong and fierce animals to which the dead man is compared; the women say, "Now indeed you are poor"; and the boy replies, "Yes, my

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F?617 Ngonde F?617

mothers, my strength is gone, my hope is broken. 763
How poor am I among men!" If he is a boy he is 765
now taken by a kindly relative and put outside, and told not to weep like a woman. During all this time, and perhaps for three days to come, the drum is beating; a slow tum tum at first, but rising later to a more furious noise, which goes on night and day until the mourning is over.

The women now take up the tale, and one goes 765
over all the virtues of the dead, a long wail from the others following upon each statement. Day by day this goes on, as new parties come to the mourning. The women smear their bodies and their faces with clay, and wear bands of banana fibre or of palm leaf on ankles, wrists, and forehead. The men, at the death of an important person, carry spear and shield.

In the meantime some relatives have gone to dig 764
the grave, and others are dressing the dead man for burial. The body is washed, a man's body by men, and woman's by women, and dressed in *mawyeta* (body rings), anklets, wristlets, and finally swathed in as much cloth as his relatives can afford to buy, only the eyes being left uncovered. Before the dressing, however, the body is oiled, and if the dead man was a warrior, his *isambanjani* (feather head-dress) is placed on his head.

The women now take up the body, and carry it 763
through the village, wailing as they go. Having shown the dead man for the last time around the familiar haunts of his life, they lay him down near the grave, where mats are spread to receive him. Now the *poet*

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F717 Ngonde F717

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Various Movements of the Death Dance.

The performers advance at a run to a dead lion, then stop, moving upward, or slide, shouting and singing, while the drums beat and their percussion clap hum. Individuals rush about, brandishing weapons, and other dancers are forming the death song to re-cry the beats of the thousand.

[facing p. 296]

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

766 medicine placed in the empty grave, which attracts the lizard into which the soul of the dead man has entered. It is thus caught and burned in the grave. The parents or near relatives drink medicine, and the body is carried off by the doctor to be burned in the bush. Among the Bandali, all bodies are dug up after the flesh has rotted away, and the bones are taken into the forest, where they are placed in a sitting position against a tree and left there. A much more gruesome custom, which prevails among the Bandali, is that of keeping the bones on the verandah of the heir's house, done up in banana leaves, which are renewed as required, the bones being occasionally anointed with oil. Here and there throughout Kondeland are places called *Itaga*, so named from the verb *kutaga*, to cast away. In the long past, when a man was dying, and all hope of recovery had been abandoned, he was carried to the *Itaga*, placed in a sitting position, and left to die. After death the flesh was devoured by birds or beasts. Nowhere, so far as I have discovered, is this repulsive practice now followed.

765 The death dance begins as soon as the first wailing is over, and continues as long as people continue coming in to mourn. The men carry spears or sticks, if the dead man was of any importance; the women have leaves or tails. When the dance has fully developed, the men form one line, and the women another, facing them. The two lines approach each other, the men raising their spears and shields, the women waving the leaves or tails; at about a yard apart they retire again, shouting or singing as the drum

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•765 beats out its monotonous noise. In the meantime
535 there may be uncontrolled persons running about, leaping, waving spears, not seldom casting a taunt, which is quickly taken up, and spears are thrown, and wounds, and even death, may be the result.

765 Sometimes the wailing takes place in the house, or
152 in the open, just outside. It is interesting to watch men and women approach the place of mourning: they come with all appearance of *sang-froid*, but suddenly emotion grips them, and they take up the wail with streaming tears. It does not occur to anyone that he should restrain himself; it was not for that that he came. Yet the recovery from this high-pitched emotion is just as rapid. There is a sudden hush, some one addresses to the widow the old, world-old, world-wide comfort that all must die; and, amazing to relate, this is often received with laughter, not mocking laughter, but laughter intended to relieve the strain which all are feeling. Sometimes too, jesting, and even obscene language, are indulged in, with the same end in view. And as emotion rises
765 again, and this especially among the dancers, free rein
137 is given to looseness of language and gesture, and more definite evil follows in the darkness.

It is affirmed that all this looseness has arisen since the coming of the white man; but statements of the harm done by the latter are so common among the Konde and other tribes, that one may well be sceptical. The explanation given is that European government will not permit the old death penalty for adultery, and therefore it has become more common; or that

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•765 the number of cattle has increased so greatly since
837 European administration commenced, that there are many who can pay the fine imposed; or again, that since civilized government will not permit the fighting that used to take place, the emotion generated has to find other outlets.

765 As parties from a distance come to the mourning, they go first to the "owner" of the dead, and offer their sympathies. In return they are given a long account of the progress of the disease, and of the measures that were taken by relatives to prevent death. A man approaching a widow, will sit at a distance of about a yard to offer his condolences, but a woman throws her arms around the neck of the bereaved.

762 The Konde do not attach the same value to life as we do, and suicide is not uncommon. I have known of suicide due to small money troubles, loss of a law-suit, continued poverty, prolonged illness, leprosy, quarrels at home, and finally to disappointment in love; this last, I am told, only on the part of the man; a woman disappointed in love does not commit suicide. For people who die by their own act, there is less mourning than for an ordinary death, and the parting words at the graveside are not the same; "since it was by your own desire that you went." The spirits require an explanation from every one who comes to them in this way; but any answer seems to satisfy them. Ordinarily the new-comers are received with the words, "Come and rest." This information comes from persons who "died" and returned, though a more common belief is that the dead do not return.

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Lepers are now buried like ordinary persons. But in the not very distant past, they were placed in a sitting position against a tree, and so left to be devoured. No one of those who carried the body looked behind, lest he also should be "caught" by the disease. 766

About a month after the funeral, the beer feast takes place. A small quantity is taken to the grave, and the dead man is addressed, and bidden again to go to his ancestors. "Take this beer as an offering to them. The ox that we have killed is also for them." The day is given up to eating and drinking, with intervals of wailing, the men in the open, the women in the house of the heir, or near relative of the dead man. 765

The ceremonies for women and children are similar to those described. A small chief, near Kaporgs, who was utterly neglectful of his mother during her life, impoverished himself in the splendour of her funeral. The grave was completely lined with expensive cloths, and the body was decked out as it never had been in life. The man's grief was genuine; or if it was not grief, it was fear of what the old lady, with her renewed powers, might do, if he did not attend to her now that she was dead. 764

When the mourning is over, all the friends of the dead man shave their heads. Omission of this ceremony involves the careless one in a quarrel with the departed. 765 302

Here and there throughout the country ancient customs survive which have been dropped by the majority of the people. In many places the entrance of the heir upon his new position is accompanied by 768

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

Mpinkwa [the grandfather] ran off with them to Mwalaje in the hills, where he died so that they disappeared and were never returned to his fellow-priests. Therefore they bury the relics by the small tree, at his old homestead, lest someone run off with them again. . . . The hair and nails of the chief are buried there, the earth of the chief will always be heavy. All this is very secret. . . . 641 763 766 778

Mwandisi (125, the old blind chief) told us that

When a chief dies they take his nails and hair and put them in the house of his wife who buries them with medicine for fertility of the soil (*fiqa*), then at the time of planting the village headmen come and take that medicine to plant the food with. This was done on the death of the chief Mwakalukwa (141) and the chief Mwakalinga (142) and others for, it is said, the chief goes off with our fertility (*ubuto yetu*).

Thus, though our informants differed slightly about the details, they were agreed that the power of growth lies in the nails and hair of a chief, and these must be taken from him while he is yet alive, and later used to fertilize the earth.

The burial of a chief's son with a live black calf we saw for ourselves, and the wailing was delayed until after the burial. A distinctive funeral of this sort is accorded to all the sons of a ruling chief and his senior daughter, but not (we were told) to more distant kinsmen. The other mark of a royal funeral is the slaughter of many head of cattle to accompany the deceased and to feed the mourners. At the death of the chief Mwakyembe (99) over 300 head were killed, and Mwaipopo (118) killed thirty head at the funeral of his mother. Since a chief has many wives and daughters he has many affines all of whom must bring cows to kill, and he also has a large herd himself on which to draw. To fail to feed his people at a funeral is to fail as a chief. The whole country mourns for two or three weeks, no one going to work in the fields, or occupying themselves with ordinary business. All smear themselves with mud, as if they were kinsmen, and even the men bind their bellies tightly with mourning belts 'that they may not tremble'. [765]

(d) THE CHIEF AND THE 'BREATH OF NEW'

Fruitfulness, the power of growth (*ubuto*), lies in the chief's body and the village headmen have no share in it; they only tend it, taking care that it does not disappear with the dead. But the headmen share with the chief and the priests the duty of 'washing 641 778 622

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

767 clearly inclined to the shades as it had before the divination, but as
753 before the certain conviction was lacking.

Four days later (12/6/55) Kasitile went to Nsesa in Kiuli village to consult the oracle again 'for that of Nzeki went wrong'. He told us afterwards 'This oracle supported the finding of Nkombwe's. It said: [775] Your kinsman who is dead is angry; he says, "Why did you not [776] celebrate the ritual? I am tired of the hair (*Ngumbi* says *tmuli*). And what did you offer your father after cutting that tree?"' Here yet another cause of Kasitile's illness is supposed—the neglect of the death ritual of a kinsman. The implication is that the chief mourners have not yet performed the concluding rite of shaving which makes it [765] possible for the deceased to join his fathers. The hair which the [762] mourners shave off is called 'the hair of the corpse'.

Quarrow: What are you going to do then?

Kasitile: I shall charge the young man, son of my dead kinsman, with [649] neglect, and tell him to celebrate the ritual that the shades which have [662] bound me may go out of my body.

Quarrow: And the bull?

Kasitile: If I can find one I shall kill it.

Quarrow: Who will be there?

[791] Kasitile: The priests will be there, Ngulyo, Kimagwa, Njelukwa, Mwalukwa and Mwakambule,* and also Mwaipopo (p. 61) himself. Were I a commoner I should kill alone with my younger brothers, but since I am a public personage (*ndi ulalamba*) the village headmen are there. (To Mwakambule, the elder.) It is good at your home in the hills; here things are bad.

Quarrow: But they also have shades?

[775] Kasitile: But they are not important. Look you, I just cut a tree and [778] they have seized me and dwell in my body. Are there sacred groves in the hills? Do men visit them? There in the hills rituals have died; the puberty ritual and the rituals of the groves are celebrated very little.

On 27th March Kasitile looked in to say that he was going to con-
787 sult a visiting Sangu doctor 'from very far off' about his cough, but
791 G.M. had better not come lest his presence spoil the divination.
793 Kasitile came again after the consultation, full of excitement. 'What a doctor! That is a doctor indeed! That is a diviner! He took an axe and divined with it; he took coppers which I brought and threw them in a little pot, together with the axe, and ash, and he said: "You also take ash and throw it in" and I did so. Then he looked into the little pot and said: "You built on the plain!" He knew this without being told! I said: "Yes".'

Scene: There was a quarrel there.

* The last two are priests of Mbwanga (see p. 81) who did not in fact come. Mwakambule, Kasitile's relative, who did come is not mentioned.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

against the wrong-doer. It is supposed that after this procedure sickness or even death may come to that person. Another method consists of laying a bewitched object on the path usually used by the offender; with the same result. Such bewitching is practised, for instance, when a quarrel has broken out between relatives. With the Nyakyusa any quarrelling with kinsmen is considered a very serious crime, as such a conduct is apt, in their estimation, to destroy the highly-valued family harmony.

3. Another day a ceremony (*ubwengwi*)[5] to end mourning was held at Katumba. Some time before an older child had died, and now they were gathered to take leave of the dead[6].

At some distance from the hut, on the open space before it, a square represented the grave, in which the kinsmen of a banana[7] was interred, representing the dead. The mourners knelt at this grave and touched it with their elbows, knees and foreheads[8]. Each of the chief mourners had to do this, according to the belief of the Natives, lest he should fall into madness.

The next act was performed by the *uwengwe*[9], the leading person of the ceremony, one in full knowledge of the rites. Immediately before the door of the hut of the mourning parents, the *uwengwe* threw the millettons of corn, brought by the participants in small baskets in honour of the dead, together into a big basket, and uttered the names of the contributors addressing the dead. The other participants repeated these names.

Then the mourners went into the hut; but, after some moments, they reappeared one by one and each one, as he left the door in a crouching position, was softly struck on his neck by the *uwengwe* with a piece of the trunk of a banana plant. It was explained to me that this ceremony would induce new strength to the mourners, who were enfeebled by the death of their relative.

The portion of the ceremony which followed, consisted in the forming of a line by the mourners between the hut and the grave. The persons now stood straddle-legged on leaves of banana, the *uwengwe* at the

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[5] Cf. Wilson, Ceremonies of Burial, p.8, n.4: *uwengwe*.
[6] Wilson has described burials (*ifwe*, sg.) of adult persons; nevertheless, I think, my description will be of some value.
[7] Cf. my Chaga Notes, Baessler Studien, XV, p.[illegible].
[8] Cf. *Fülleborn*, p.[illegible].
[9] Cf. *Markmann*, p.[illegible], pl. *uwengwe*, p.51; Wilson, Introduction, p.[illegible], *uwengwe* (hereditary priests).

765 head of the line. She was also the first who crawled between the legs
481 of the others, facing the hut, and followed by the others. This ceremony has the same purpose as the preceding act.

[391]

Scene from the abunyagu-ceremony: The mourners returning from the grave to the house crawling through the legs of the others.

765 Then the hair of the mourners was shaved (ukwesua ceutli, to shave
[342] the hair, profane and ritual) and, I was told that a bath would be
565 the last act ending mourning.

[391
516]

Scene from the abunyagu-ceremony: The shaving of the hair.

765 In the afternoon I sent the father of the dead child a cotton kerchief
(23 as a gift, and when I met him later on, he told me I had participated
42 in the burial of his child by that gift, saying, "You have buried my child with me".

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

4. A visit to the chief's father's grave was paid in company with the chief and some of his *ensafwa*. It was situated in a banana grove (*ilingeto*[60]) not very remote from the chief's hut. The grove of the present chief's father was on the ground-floor, about one hundred paces from its edge and was characterized by a small sixedged basalt block about half a metre in height[61] and about forty centimetres in breadth. An indole-plant was also standing on the grave about one metre from the basalt block. 765 [764]

On this occasion the chief also told me of the special cases for which sacrifices are offered in this grove. These are performed only in cases of very serious accidents, sickness or famine which may overcome the chieftainship. In such cases a black cow is slaughtered after sunset at the edge of the grove. In the presence of the chief some pieces of meat of the slaughtered beast, together with some bananas, are laid down at the grove. The chief adds a prayer to his ancestors at some distance from the grove, referring to the evil by which the chieftainship or some special village of it has been afflicted. He enumerates all the names of his ancestors and asks them for their help. 768 782

The remaining pieces of the meat and other bananas are left in the grove during the night. When the next day dawns, the *ensafwa* return and some *abangage* divide the meat and eat it together. On this occasion the chief orders the removal of all remains of ashes from the huts. The ashes are thrown down in such unclean places as where leprous persons had been buried. After this has been done, the chief in conjunction with an *wagage*[62] produces a new fire for the huts by twirling, and all other fires of the village, or villages, must be kindled anew from this "need-fire". [766] [372]

5. The reason for visiting an *undagwa* (diviner)[63] who dwelled in Ibungu an older age-set village[64] which seemed to the visitor to be a more ancient part of Katumba, was caused by the sickness of the chief's sister. In accordance with the custom of the Nyakyusa to bringing women back to their father's village if they are very sick, the 787 [164 484]

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[60] Cf. *Johnston*, *Gazetta*, pl. *ensamata*, p. 436; *Mackenzie*, *Ilingeto*, burial place, p. 300; *ensapita*, grave of the dead chief, p. 121; *Wilson*, Introduction, p. 207, *ilingeto*, sacred grove; *Marwanja*, p. 115.

[61] Cf. *Pilisbury*, p. 207.

[62] Cf. n. 2, p. 5.

[63] Cf. *Johnston*, p. 451.

[64] I proposed to call the special form of villages found within the Nyakyusa society, which are erected on the age-set principle, „age-set villages" (African Studies, Vol. 12, No. 2, p. 19—29 June 1953), a terminology that does not alter C. Wilson's statements on the "Age Villages" (Introduction, p. 208 ff). [56] 621

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F?617 Ngonde F?617
Nyakyusa

forty-five to come and eat. 'Yesterday we just conversed, you did not eat. Now we have come to fetch you.' The mother and infants were in the little hut. Mwakobela was sitting and eating with us. They explained that of old he would not have done so. 'The people in the old days were greatly afraid—the father of twins did not meet and converse with other people, so, they were much afraid. He waited in the bananas. But since the Europeans came we do not fear. The Europeans took the twins in their arms and said: "Don't be afraid." In the old days the father of twins would take a spear and shield and dance the war-dance, and cry the war-cry, but we have dropped this custom nowadays.'

May 14

We visited Mwakobela and found him sitting alone making a bee-hamdle. His wife was in the hut with the infants, attended by her mother.

May 22

We found Mwakobela hoeing a garden for beans. He told us that the elder of the twins had died two nights ago and had been buried early yesterday morning. . . .

No one came to the infant's burial; we buried him ourselves. But had he been a big child then people would have come. The doctor has not come yet [for the induction]. I have not got the millet yet.

July 7

6. *The induction* (*ukwingisha*)

We arrived about 11 a.m. and found Mwakobela and his brother sitting outside the house with several guests. They were cutting a hide to make thongs for tying up cattle. By noon there were present twelve men, twenty-two married women, three adolescent girls, six 'daughters-in-law' sitting apart, and a crowd of children.[1] The doctor, a middle-aged woman and a distant connection of Mwakobela, arrived about noon. With the help of Mwakobela's wives she built a fire outside and cooked a pot of medicines. The women sat round this fire chatting; the little girls built themselves a separate fire, and the small boys yet another. Tiny children were with their mothers. At two-fifteen the doctor started the washing. She took a little powdered medicine from a bamboo flask and put it into a calabash of cold water. She made

[1] The identity and kinship connections of those who participated are discussed in Chapter VIII.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Náali

765 they seek two or three officiants, and they build a temporary hut behind the living huts where they strain three pots of beer, which they call 'the beer of the shades'. These officiants do not bathe their bodies because they say: 'Let us be with the shades when we make the beer (*tujoje ungwe ungaba na nalabombo shandae*).' The rest of the beer is strained in the house.

When they have brewed it they take one potful from the temporary hut and pour the contents on top of the grave; then they dig a hole on the grave and place in it a little pot of beer. What is left in these two pots they drink, together with the rest of the beer, and there is much drumming.

766 After a long time has passed, perhaps two years, if there has been sickness in the house, they think that the deceased is making them giddy, is causing them to be ill. So they dig up the corpse and take all the bones and finger and toe nails. If one is left the sickness is not cured. When Malaga, the grandchild of Mwakalonga, was ill they dug up the corpse and the illness ceased very quickly. They pile up the bones which have been dug up.

III. MARRIAGE NEGOTIATIONS AND GIFTS

767 Anecdotes: One of our comrades in Kalombo heard that there was an unmarried girl at the Chief Mwaambwe's, so one Monday he said to three of us: 'Don't go away, friends, we are going to see the chief's daughter at Mwaambwe's.' So we put on our best clothes, those we wear to church, and we went to the house of the father of the girl. He was the younger brother of the Chief Mwaambwe by the same mother, and he told us: 'I am not the father (*ugwise*). She is my own child, but the father is the chief. Go to him' [i.e. authority over his daughter rested with his elder brother]. The girl had reached puberty. Someone else had married her, but her father had received only one cow, so the elder brother, the chief, was angry and took away the girl from her husband. My friend had never met her, never. He had just heard that there was an unmarried girl at that place, because the custom of making love to girls in the long grass is not a traditional one: a girl used to stay at her father's house. A young man went to the father before he spoke with the girl; he never spoke to her in secret. Then the father would send the girl to speak with the young man. She came and sat down and the young man looked at her closely and his friends who accompanied him helped him. Formerly a young man did not wear many clothes, he only wore one cloth in front, and a brass body-ring, so that his whole body might be seen, and she might look closely. Also he sits high on a stool, while his fellows sit on the ground, that he may
768 *be seen by the girl.*

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F917 Mgonde F917

643 chief. For Changa must not die a natural death;
645 the land would be turned into water should such a
771 calamity be allowed to happen. Having decided that the illness is really grave, the councillors, one by one, give their voice in the formula, "*Sika na mwaka*," literally, day and year; but actually meaning, "Does God die?" In solemn procession these terrible persons enter the house, and, having turned out the chief's wives, lay him down on the floor. Two keep him in that posture, while a third stops his breath by holding his mouth and nostrils, a fourth meanwhile gently slapping him all over the body until the life has gone out of him.

643 No announcement of the death was made. One of
645 the councillors lived in the royal dwelling, so that if
766 any came to consult Changa a response might be given, and as he was rarely seen by common men, it was easy to keep up the deception. The councillors with their own hands digged the grave, and on their shoulders, at midnight, carried the body, anointed with lion fat, and enswathed in cloth, to the place of burial. Six or eight slaves, who did not return, went with them. Four went down into the grave to receive the body of their dead master, two at the head and two at the feet, and, in sitting position, held him in their arms. The remaining slaves being placed on the top, the soil was filled in on living and dead.

After the lapse of about a month, a big iron drum, now lost, was beaten, and it conveyed only one message to the people. "*Kaebiir ka Mphande*," Mphande (the royal residence) has done its work;

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F7617 Ngonde F7617

Chonga is dead. Then the chiefs and their men, fully armed, gathered to the mourning. Weeping there was none, for Chonga must not be wept for; and women were not present, for the mourning for Chonga is war; quarrels may break out among the men, and there may be many deaths before the mourning is over. The chiefs bring corn for the feast, and gifts of ivory to be laid up in the house where Chonga goes to pray when he prays alone. 643 645 766

The councillors now address themselves to the task of selecting a successor. There are no candidates; for not only must Chonga himself be helped out of the world, but all his sons, born after his accession, are put to death at birth. Daughters are allowed to live, and sons born before their father attained to the chief dignity, are not under the ban. Here again British rule steps in, but British rule has not yet been able to sweep all fear of the past out of the minds of the people. From among the *Bakowaga*, a circle of families within which the new Chonga must be found, name after name is presented to the spirits by the diviner, and when the divining rod indicates that the right name has been presented, the formula is uttered, "*Shapasi bitche*," the underworld has spoken. 643 647 787

At a great feast, at which all men of royal blood must be present, Mabwa, one of the councillors, by hereditary right offers prayer to the spirits, as if the selection had not already been made: 643 645

"Ye chiefs, we pray you to show us our lord, who shall be our leader in all things. Let him be the man of your appointing, not of our desire: to

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F917 Sgmode F917

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themselves must be free from any kind of blemish. They drink a medicine weaker than that taken by their husband, but sufficiently potent to make them respected by all the other women of the district.

622

The death of a chief, like that of Chonga, is a great event. An immense crowd of men and women gather on these occasions. At the death of Mwelongo, near Kavongo, in 1913, fifty head of cattle were killed for the feast. Of these perhaps thirty were the property of the dead chief; the rest were brought by the mourners as a token of respect for the dead man; but for each animal so killed, an equivalent, an ox for an ox, a cow for a cow, was given to the donor from the dead man's herd, so that the herd left by Mwelongo was reduced by fifty at his death. Intense emotion is generated at these gatherings, frequently leading to death. And in the past it was the rule that a chief should not go to his fathers alone. If therefore fighting broke out, and men were killed, it was only right and fitting that this should be so. In 1897 there was a small rising against the Germans, in which the chief Mwakalinga and many of his people were killed. The chief having been killed, it was not surprising that there should be a heavy death-roll among his men. The death of Mwambona in 1918 was followed, quite naturally, by the influenza which carried off so many of his people.

622

About a month after the death of the chief, the feasting is resumed, this time with immense quantities of beer which has been prepared in the interval. The new chief is now anointed with oil, and the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (cn. 1925) 1925
F317 Ngonde F317

which killed the man passing over to those present at the funeral. Those who performed the *pati mawu* [p. 13] rule medicine as well. The funeral ox or cow is now killed, and the flesh divided among the various groups. The next stage is to "disinherit" the dead man, to cut him off from all connection with earthly matters. His mats were buried with him; now his bananas are cut down, his hoes are taken to the grave and the hoes broken, while all baskets and pots are destroyed and left to rot there. His cattle go to his heirs, and his [p. 81] wives build themselves huts in which they live for a year, "covering the footsteps of the dead man"; after which they also go to the heirs. (Much of this is now falling into disuse, especially around Karonga.) The dead man has been dissociated from the living: the bananas grow again, but they are not his; his house may be occupied, but he has only the rights of a ghost in it; and in many places the house is left to decay as soon as the funeral is over, and the wives have built themselves huts not far off. But the belief also prevails, side by side with the desire to cut off the dead man from the living, that by destroying his goods they go with him to the land of spirits.

The Konde have a strange belief, that a dead body [p. 77] casts no shadow; if it does, it is a sign that the spirit still lingers around, and if he is not driven off, another member of the family will die soon. The most effective way of despatching him to his proper abode is to burn his body. If the diviner finds that a second death in the family is due to the reluctance of the first to go to his fathers, the body is dug up, and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•766 medicine placed in the empty grave, which attracts the lizard into which the soul of the dead man has entered. It is thus caught and burned in the grave. The parents or near relatives drink medicine, and the body is carried off by the doctor to be burned in the bush. Among the Bandali, all bodies are dug up after the flesh has rotted away, and the bones are taken into the forest, where they are placed in a sitting position against a tree and left there. A much more gruesome custom, which prevails among the Bandali, is that of keeping the bones on the verandah of the heir's house, done up in banana leaves, which are renewed as required, the bones being occasionally anointed with oil. Here and there throughout Kondeland are places called *Isaga*, so named from the verb *kusaga*, to cast away. In the long past, when a man was dying, and all hope of recovery had been abandoned, he was carried to the *Isaga*, placed in a sitting position, and left to die. After death the flesh was devoured by birds or beasts. Nowhere, so far as I have discovered, is this repulsive practice now followed.

765 535 The death dance begins as soon as the first wailing is over, and continues as long as people continue coming in to mourn. The men carry spears or sticks, if the dead man was of any importance; the women have leaves or tails. When the dance has fully developed, the men form one line, and the women another, facing them. The two lines approach each other, the men raising their spears and shields, the women waving the leaves or tails; at about a yard apart they retire again, shouting or singing as the drum

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Lepers are now buried like ordinary persons. But in the not very distant past, they were placed in a sitting position against a tree, and so left to be devoured. No one of those who carried the body looked behind, lest he also should be "caught" by the disease. 766

About a month after the funeral, the beer feast takes place. A small quantity is taken to the grave, and the dead man is addressed, and bidden again to go to his ancestors. "Take this beer as an offering to them. The ox that we have killed is also for them." The day is given up to eating and drinking, with intervals of wailing, the men in the open, the women in the house of the heir, or near relative of the dead man. 765

The ceremonies for women and children are similar to those described. A small chief, near Karonga, who was utterly neglectful of his mother during her life, impoverished himself in the splendour of her funeral. The grave was completely lined with expensive cloths, and the body was decked out as it never had been in life. The man's grief was genuine; or if it was not grief, it was fear of what the old lady, with her renewed powers, might do, if he did not attend to her now that she was dead. 764

When the mourning is over, all the friends of the dead man shave their heads. Omission of this ceremony involves the careless one in a quarrel with the departed. 765 302

Here and there throughout the country ancient customs survive which have been dropped by the majority of the people. In many places the entrance of the heir upon his new position is accompanied by 768

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F7617 Ngonde F7617

The Bakifuna go to the stream to wash, garlanded with flowers, and carrying a small stone. Flowers and stone are thrown into the stream after the washing, and the company re-enter the house. The doctor takes water and pours it on the roof, upon which all come out one by one, the water dripping on each as he or she passes. Anointed with oil, they all go to the place of burial, where, resting on elbows and knees, they draw themselves along the grave, slightly disturbing the soil as they go. The hair is then cut, and the feast follows. 768

When a chief is *in articulo mortis*, his headmen and his wives are present, and he is addressed, while still living, as common men are addressed at the graveside. "Go to God and the spirits; go to your fathers (naming them). Rest there, and tell them what is happening here above." 766 643 622

After he is dead, the nails of his fingers and toes are clipped, and his hair cut, and given to the doctor, who will make medicine with them to prevent the disease which killed the chief passing over to others. The dead man is now dressed as common men are dressed for burial, but much more elaborately, and, if he is a relative of Chungu, he is placed in a sitting position in the house, where his wives and headmen embrace him for the last time. If he is a very important chief, like Chungu, his death is not yet announced to the people.

Meantime a cow has been killed at the place where the body is to be buried, and the headmen dig the grave, usually by night, if intimation has not been

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F3617 Ngonde F3617

•766 made that the chief is dead. The body is brought
to the grave by the headmen, and the dead cow is
643 lowered in first; then the chief, in a sitting position,
622 facing the Sango country, if that was his original home.
Torches are used if the night is dark. When the grave
is filled in, all partake of the medicine made from the
dead man's nails and hair. The washing ceremonies
are the same as for common men; but the widows
will not go near the men who placed the body in the
grave until the latter have given them a gift of some
kind, though the exact function of the gift is not clear.

No chief of any importance dies a natural death:
643 that is to say, however and whenever a chief dies, it is
761 assumed that some one was responsible. It is believed
that chiefs die more easily than common men, and
are more open to evil influences; but, on the other
hand, they have more powerful medicines to protect
them. When Kabeta died in 1922, all his sons and his
headmen were put to the poison test, and those who
did not vomit were compelled to pay a fine in cattle,
a token that complete confidence in the belief in evil
influences is passing away; for in earlier times the
culprit so discovered would have been attacked as he
ran, and would probably have paid the forfeit of his
own life. The easier punishment may, however, have
been due to fear of the police.

766 Twins were not exposed; but if one of them died,
the body was cast into the bush, and wailing was not
permitted, for it would cause the death of the other.
To-day the body of a twin is buried in the ordinary
way, but without wailing.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

immured in the royal enclosure—a great stockade—and jealously guarded, for any infidelity on their part was thought to make their husband ill, and with him the whole country.

When the Kyungu did fall ill he was smothered by the nobles who lived around him at Mbande, and buried in great secrecy, with a score or more of living persons—slaves—in the grave beneath him, and one or two wives and the sons of commoners above. And in the midst of all this slaughter the nobles brought a sheep to look into the grave that the dead Kyungu might be gentle (*mshole*) like the sheep!

The living Kyungu was thought to ensure food and rain, and his breath and the growing parts of his body—his hair and nails and the constantly replaced mucus of his nose—were believed to be magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde plain. When he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was buried 'with the breath in his body'; while portions of his hair and nails and of his nasal mucus were taken from him beforehand and buried by the nobles of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This was 'to defend the country against hunger', 'to close up the land, to keep it rich and heavy and fertile as it was when he himself lived in it'.

His death was kept secret—a relatively easy matter since he lived in seclusion—and one of the nobles (*Ngoa*) impersonated him wearing his clothes. After a month or two when the nobles had decided whom to choose as the new Kyungu, the luckless man was summoned to Mbande: 'Your father calls you.' Then he came with his companions and entered the house to make obeisance; they seized him and put the sacred cloth on him and set him on the stool "Kisumbi", saying, "Thou Kyungu, thou art he", and he became the Kyungu. Then they struck the drum, Mwenkelwa, and everyone knew that the Kyungu had died and another had been installed.' Men feared greatly to be seized as the Kyungu, just as they feared to be seized as the Lwembe, because the life of a divine king was short. Ngonde historians quote a number of cases of sons of the Kyungu who fled to escape being set on the stool; once they had sat on it they dared not flee lest they die.

Though[1] the early Kyungus had lived on the stony top of Mbande some of them had been buried there, for 'the ground was

[1] The following section is quoted, with additions and amendments, from Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, pp. 19 ff.

too hard to dig graves in'. They and their successors were all buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. . . . We traced sixteen groves in the plain surrounding Mbande and the nobles who pointed them out remembered participating in celebrations at all except that of the last Kyungu. The ruling Kyungu and the spirits of his dead predecessors were believed to form one divine company, the anger of any one of whom had terrible effects, and both living and dead were placated with offerings.

In time of drought the nobles of Ngonde would go to a diviner to inquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would tell them that it was so and so. They would inform the living Kyungu and he would give them a bull or a sheep, together with some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own house, brought by his people as tribute. And he would give them some flour and cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove and build a miniature hut. Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they would cut later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fasten some of the pieces on to the hut in the grove—an action they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And finally, they would pour out some of the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a hut and make an offering in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

But occasionally, if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any of them: 'No . . . no.' And at length he would tell them that it was the living Kyungu who was angry because so-and-so had insulted him. Then there would be no sacrifice at the grove at all, but the nobles of Ngonde would go to the one who had insulted the Kyungu and charge him with it, asking him what he meant by thus killing them all, would not the whole land starve? And so the wrongdoer would take a cow to the Kyungu who, thereupon, would address the nobles of Ngonde, saying: 'If it was my

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

turn round in the belly; people say the earth will go bad in us.' 'A child who has drunk medicines will be ill, the smell of the new food or the wet earth goes to the belly.'

The chief eats the first fruits and medicines with the commoner who lies down with him at the commencement of his 'coming out' and 'is his wife to taste with him the first fruits and powdered medicines' and is 'fearful' like the medicines. He is identified with the chief's body and may be compared with the *isikomwa* of the Pondo chief[1] or the *isula* of the Swazi.[2] His function is to protect the chief against the medicines themselves.

(c) DEATH AND BURIAL OF A CHIEF

Both because of a chief's descent, and because of his use of medicines, mystical power resides in his body.

In the old days a ruling chief was not allowed to die, but was buried while still living, because they feared that if he became unconscious before death he would take away all the food with him, and great hunger would come on us. Men feared fragile medicine in his belly. They said: 'If he dies naturally many of his people will die. . . . He should go alive.' And formerly they buried him with the son of a commoner, also alive, for they said, 'Let him enjoy the company of his man on the road.' When a chief was sick before the coming out of his sons they tried to keep him alive if possible, but if he was clearly going to die then they buried him like this; after the coming out they lamented his death—but only if he were ill. That was why the chiefs fear the 'coming out' of their sons so greatly. Had Mwaipopo lived in the old days and his heir been alive he would have been buried during his last illness.

When a ruling chief was sick the village headmen sent the chief's wives away and looked after him themselves. Then, if they thought he would, or should, die, they tore off all his nails, those of his toes and those of his fingers, and pulled out his hair, and put them in a pot. After that they buried him by night still alive, with a live person, the child of a commoner whom they had seized very secretly. The pot stayed in the house of the senior wife of the chief who had died, and they said, 'It is the chief, we are with him still.' This was the sacred pot for the sacred beer.[3] They kept silence about the death for a month or perhaps two months, saying: 'Let the chief go away first.'

And when a younger brother, a junior chief, died, though he died

[1] M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 350.
[2] H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p. 78.
[3] Kaulilo Rudy denied this, *vide infra*, p. 64.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

[697] naturally and was buried dead, and no human was buried with him,
[698] yet they buried a live cow with him in imitation of the custom of the
senior, because the junior was also a chief, and the cow was like a
[699] person. And now in European times the ruling chiefs are buried with
a cow, not with a man, in imitation of the custom of the juniors; but
still they are buried at night.

Kaitile denied that chiefs were buried before death, but he admitted that they were smothered.

[700] When the chief was very ill we priests came, Njobokwa and Ngulye, and I. We took his nails and his hair, we tore them off while he was still alive, he started up and we bid ostriches that he should not see us. Then we attended to him.

Here he made a gesture of stopping up the nostrils. That is, they hastened his death as soon as the nails and hair had been stripped off.

And we dug the grave; we buried him by night, when he had died, when he had gone, with a live cow; we did this at night for it was taboo
[704] for people to see the burial of a senior chief. We killed a cow in the
cattle grove and we ate it, we the priests, before people heard that he had died. The chief Mwakagile (35) when his death was approaching said: 'My body is sick.' After waiting two days, the village headmen said, 'This illness has defeated us', and they tore off his nails—yes,
[705] before he died. If they had waited until after his death, would not the
ifugila, the power of chieftainship, have passed away? But they did not smother him, he just died. . . . His nails and hair were put into a little reed, which they hid beneath an *omuti* (*Ozoroa insignis*) tree at the village headman's, the *omuti* which grew at the homestead of Njobokwa [the grandfather of the present Njobokwa]. They buried it at a commoner's place, as if to say: 'We commoners are the earth, we have
[706] taken the power of growth (*ifuga*) from the chief, these nails and the
hair are the power of growth of the country (*ifuala fia omuti fyo ifuga fyo kim*).

Kaitile took Godfrey Wilson's hand and explained: 'Because, Mwaipaja (G.W.), when you cut these nails of yours do they not grow again?' 'Yes, they grow again.' 'Well, then, where does their growth come from? Does it not come from the body?' 'Yes.' 'Well, so it is, the village headmen take the power of growth (*ifufuga*) from the chief, his nails and his hair.'

On another occasion Kaitile explained that formerly the relics had been kept in a pot in the house, but that when Mwaipopo (116) succeeded

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1959
FMU? Ngonde FMU?
Nyakyusa

Mpokolwa [the grandfather] ran off with them to Mwalisje in the hills, where he died so that they disappeared and were never returned to his fellow-priests. Therefore they bury the relics by the *umuali* tree, at his old homestead, lest someone run off with them again. . . . The hair and nails of the chief are buried there, the earth of the chief will always be heavy. All this is very secret. . . . 643 783 766 [778]

Mwandisi (103, the old blind chief) told us that

When a chief dies they take his nails and hair and put them in the house of his wife who buries them with medicine for fertility of the soil (*ifuge*), then at the time of planting the village headmen come and take that medicine to place the food with. This was done on the death of the chief Mwakalokwa (141) and the chief Mwakalinga (140) and others for, it is said, the chief goes off with our fertility (*imbuto yetu*).

Thus, though our informants differed slightly about the details, they were agreed that the power of growth lies in the nails and hair of a chief, and these must be taken from him while he is yet alive, and later used to fertilize the earth.

The burial of a chief's son with a live black calf we saw for ourselves, and the wailing was delayed until after the burial. A distinctive funeral of this sort is accorded to all the sons of a ruling chief and his senior daughter, but not (we were told) to more distant kinsmen. The other mark of a royal funeral is the slaughter of many head of cattle to accompany the deceased and to feed the mourners. At the death of the chief Mwakyembe (99) over 300 head were killed, and Mwaipopo (116) killed thirty head at the funeral of his mother. Since a chief has many wives and daughters he has many affines all of whom must bring cows to kill, and he also has a large herd himself on which to draw. To fail to feed his people at a funeral is to fail as a chief. The whole country mourns for two or three weeks, no one going to work in the fields, or occupying themselves with ordinary business. All smear themselves with mud, as if they were kinsmen, and even the men bind their bellies tightly with mourning belts 'that they may not tremble'. [765]

(*d*) THE CHIEF AND THE 'BREATH OF MEN'

643 778 622

Fruitfulness, the power of growth (*imbuto*), lies in the chief's body and the village headmen have no share in it; they only tend it, taking care that it does not disappear with the dead. But the headmen share with the chief and the priests the duty of 'watching

13:Lehmann E-9 (999) 1951 F'307 Ngonde F'307
Nyakyusa

4. A visit to the chief's father's grave was paid in company with the chief and some of his *omafuwa*. It was situated in a banana grove (*ilingeta*[11]) not very remote from the chief's hut. The grave of the present chief's father was on the ground-floor, about one hundred paces from its edge and was characterized by a small elongated basalt block about half a metre in height[12] and about forty centimetres in breadth. An *indela*-plant was also standing on the grave about one metre from the basalt block. 765 [764]

On this occasion the chief also told me of the special cases for which sacrifices are offered in this grave. These are performed only in cases of very serious accidents, sickness or famine which may overcome the chieftainship. In such cases a black cow is slaughtered after sunset at the edge of the grave. In the presence of the chief some pieces of meat of the slaughtered beast, together with some bananas, are laid down at the grave. The chief adds a prayer to his ancestors at some distance from the grave, referring to the evil by which the chieftainship or some special village of it has been afflicted. He enumerates all the names of his ancestors and asks them for their help. 768 782

The remaining pieces of the meat and other bananas are left in the grave during the night. When the next day dawns, the *omafuwa* return and some *chwanga* divide the meat and eat it together. On this occasion the chief orders the removal of all remains of ashes from the huts. The ashes are thrown down in such unclean places as where leprous persons had been buried. After this has been done, the chief in conjunction with an *uwanga*[13] produces a new fire for the huts by twirling, and all other fires of the village, or villages, must be kindled anew from this "seed-fire". [762] [372]

5. The reason for visiting an *undagusi* (diviner)[14] who dwelled in Ibungu an older age-set village[15] which seemed to the visitor to be a more ancient part of Katumba, was caused by the sickness of the chief's sister. In accordance with the custom of the Nyakyusa in bringing women back to their father's village if they are very sick, the 787 [164 484]

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[11] Cf. *Johnston*, *Gieleta*, pl. *omaieta*, p. 430; *Markwanie*, *ilingeta*, burial place, p. 280; *mazyeta*, graves of the dead chiefs, p. 121; *Wilson*, Introduction, p. 207, *ilingeta*, sacred grove; *Merensky*, p. 115.

[12] Cf. *Pillsbury*, p. 327.

[13] Cf. n. 5, p. 5.

[14] Cf. *Johnston*, p. 431.

[15] I proposed to call the special form of villages found within the Nyakyusa society, which are erected on the age-set principle, „age-set villages" (African Studies, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 19—18 June 1943), a terminology that does not alter G. Wilson's statements on the "Age Villages" (Introduction, p. 200 ff). [56] 621

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

6221 them if the father says his son has done wrong his neighbours
reply: "You have caused him to do wrong yourself. Did you
572 suppose him to be a boy that you did not provide marriage-cattle
for him?" Then the father becomes more ready to pay damages
for his son.' And again, 'If a young man finds that his father
objects to his marrying the girl he loves, he complains to his
father's neighbours (*pamafwa abapalamani ba pwine*). Then they
discuss the matter and say to the father: "Do you want him to
teach you a lesson by taking a chief's wife or daughter, for whom
many cattle must be given?" So the father agrees.'

768 Neighbours are concerned, too, to see a fair distribution of a
decreased fellow's estate, and the fulfilment of the heir's obliga-
6221 tions to his wards. 'It is not the relatives, but "the fathers of the
village" who watch over a young boy's interests when his father
[illegible] is dead' (*vide infra*, p. 106). We listened to one discussion of a
quarrel over inheritance which was believed to have led to kins-
men working sorcery against each other. At this discussion four
village neighbours of the sick man (thought to be suffering from
the sorcery of his father's brother's son), as well as ten relatives,
attended.

624 The father's neighbours are also asked to mediate when a son
has wronged his father and seeks forgiveness. For example,
5493 Mwangubola's son had committed adultery with his father's
6221 wife. He paid six head of cattle and then went off to the coast,
where he remained a long time. When he returned he brought
7183 two cows and approached his father's neighbours, asking them
to take the cows to his father. When they took the cows his father
said: 'He must find a bull as well, and brew beer, because he is
my eldest son.' So he got a bull and brewed beer, and the father
also brewed. 'Then', said the old man who reported the case,
'the fathers of the village came together and the bull was killed
and they ate the meat and drank the beer. . . . Thus the son made
friends with his father.'

6221 Here we have the ritual of reconciliation between relatives in
which neighbours of the senior must participate, for their anger
7183 is held to be as dangerous to the junior as that of his senior rela-
tive. Informal giving of advice merges into the practice of arbitra-
tion, and of murmuring against a wrong-doer, and thus, it is
thought, causing him misfortune. These latter practices are dis-
cussed in ensuing chapters.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

abanyaga have no more general authority than the doctors who divine or treat the sick. Their parallels among men are the priests (also called *abanyaga*) who perform the rain ritual and the sacrifices to dead chiefs. 627

The one position which endows a woman with legal authority is that of father's sister. A senior sister has a joint responsibility, along with the headman of the village, for the distribution of her dead brother's property, and her brother's children may appeal to her to arbitrate if they have a dispute with their father while he is yet alive: this is particularly important in the families of chiefs, since a chief's son cannot bring his father before commoners for arbitration. The authority of a father's sister is, however, exercised only within the lineage and does not extend even to wives of lineage members. Co-wives may take a dispute for arbitration to their husband, but if, as often happens, he is thought to be prejudiced, they go to a male neighbour, or to the headman of the village, in the same way as when the dispute is with an unrelated person (cf. p. 140). 627 768 613 604

Only in the group of unmarried girls in a village does there appear to be the germ of control by seniors of the same sex. We traced one case in which a quarrel between two girls nearing the age of puberty was settled by the slightly older girls of the same village, who punished one who had beaten her fellow without justification, and then lied to them when they inquired into the case, by scratching her with their nails. As they reach puberty the girls, who have grown up together in one village and formed a closely knit group, become scattered among the different age-villages of their husbands and there leadership among women is not developed (*vide infra*, pp. 171–2). This does not mean, however, that women are excluded from arbitration; they can, and frequently do, bring cases on their own account, not necessarily acting through husband or father. Unlike the pagans, Christian women who have quarrelled do sometimes ask a leading woman of their congregation to arbitrate. At Rungwe the women leaders were the sister of the chief and the wife of a teacher, both personalities; and it was to them that their fellows went to relate their troubles and ask for an opinion. We traced two such cases. Very often, however, Christian women go to a man, the Christian leader of the village, as their husbands do. 627 795 627

The Administration has not attempted to suppress arbitration 627

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

it seems as if there was another disease in the corpse itself, it is a 764
stinking mass of disease.' Traditionally they use two medicinal plants to wash with, but in some chiefdoms near mission stations they now wash without them. The chief of one such country explained: 'In the old days they feared very much to eat before bathing—but now sometimes they just wash their hands and eat. [177]
Of old they feared death, they feared lest the disease should spread, they wished to rid themselves of the contamination of the corpse. They used to wash with two plants—as medicine. Now they just bathe in the stream or sometimes only just wash their hands.' But, [184]
particularly in chiefdoms at a distance from the centres of European influence, the fear of the contagion of death is still very strong.

Death then is, for the majority of pagan Nyakyusa, a fearful as 761
well as a grievous event; less fearful than it used to be to their 184
fathers, but more fearful by far to them than it is to their Christian neighbours.

(c) The sacrifice

At all except the very poorest burials one or more head of cattle 764
are killed. Cows are provided whenever possible, but, if no cows are available, bulls may be used instead. If the man who has died left cattle of his own, one at least of his herd is killed; if he has left none, his family make every effort to buy or borrow one, or else they provide one themselves from their own herds. If the dead man was rich, several of his cows will be killed. If his senior son has cattle of his own, he should kill one for his father (*dambanda*) and if there are a number of grown-up sons the senior of each group of full brothers will offer a cow.

Not only the immediate family of a dead man but also the 764
fathers (or brothers) of his wives and the husbands of his full 602
sisters and daughters are expected to provide cows for killing at his burial, and if he is buried at his 'father's' place then his 'father's' affinal relatives also are expected to bring cattle or cloths. When a married woman dies, her husband and her own 'father' are expected each to provide a cow or a bull. Occasionally other affines of her husband bring calves, but less usually. More cattle are killed for men than for women. For a young child nothing is killed.

The cattle are killed either by the dead man's 'father' or by his 764
heir; if a woman has died, then by her husband. At a man's burial 768

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 the killing has a legal implication, for the death of a man involves
● 765 the transfer of his wives and property to another. If the inheritance is quite clear and disputes are unlikely, then a 'father' of the dead man tells the heir to kill the burial cattle. All the people present see him do this and know that he is the heir. And if the inheritance is, after all, denied him later, then the fact that he killed the cattle at his brother's (or father's) funeral gives him a strong *prima facie* claim to its recovery in the courts. If the inheritance is doubtful then a 'father' of the dead man kills the cattle. It is known that he himself cannot inherit and his killing of the cattle is an assertion of his authority to decide who shall do so.

643 When a man of the chief's lineage dies, a live cow is buried with
764 him and the more general custom of taking a cow or bull to look into the grave is interpreted as being 'like burying the cow'. The cattle used in this way must be of the lineage stock and are reserved for sacrifice.

764 All the cattle killed are thought to go with the shade to the land
775 of the dead (*abala aaya kabaywala*) and it is believed that if he goes without any cattle he may be rejected by his kinsmen there. Tales are told of meeting dead men in the bush with their cattle which were killed for them. A cloth is a substitute for a cow and cloths which are buried likewise go with the dead. 'We will meet in the land of the shades and he will be wearing those cloths.' At one burial we saw, the dead man had left no cows of his own but his brothers killed two cows for him, three beasts were brought by affines, and sixteen cloths were brought by kinsmen, affines, and friends. 'Why', we asked, 'do you spend so much wealth at death?' 'Because, we say, as the owner has died let him take his wealth with him to the place of the shades. If he dies in lonely poverty he goes with nothing.' At another burial two beasts were brought by kinsmen, six by affines and one by a friend. There were thirty-two cloths, fifteen brought by kinsmen, twelve by affines, and five by friends. 'The bringing of cloths is to express sympathy (*kukati ndaga*); we bury many of them with the corpse, and some we leave over, which we bind on as mourning belts (*amakiba*). Of old, people brought the cloth the Safwa weave, and brass body-rings. It means: "May our fellow go with them; may he swagger with them—with the cloth and body-rings (*ku kati nsunisete abakage nafwe, a magege nafwe*)." And we pour out food that he may take it with him.'

764 During the course of the war-dance (described below) the young
[p35]

2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1937 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu'Ngonde

CHAPTER III

FAREWELL TO THE DEAD

After spending three or four days weeping, and feasting, and 765
dancing, the main body of mourners scatter to their homes, but the close kinsmen remain for a week or two sleeping at the home of the deceased, awaiting the ritual of farewell. The Nyakyusa themselves distinguish three main events in it: the 'picking up of pumpkin-seeds' (*ukusola ipungu*) when the chief mourners first begin to wash; the 'shaving of the sprouting hair' (*ukusemula ilisesele*) when the heir of inheritance is betrothed and the estate divided; and the 'ritual of the gaping cough' (*ingwisile*) when the widows, having lain with the heir, go to visit their parents. The details differ appreciably between Selya and Mu'Ngonde on the one hand, [34]
and Kukwe country on the other, and we describe them separately.

1. IN SELYA AND MUNGONDE

(*a*) *The events*

i. *'Picking up pumpkin-seeds.'* The picking up of pumpkin-seeds 768 •
begins with the formal recognition of the heir, if the deceased was a 765
married man. The heir and widows are suddenly seized and hustled, 796
resisting, into the mourning hut. If they go willingly 'it seems as if they wished their relative to die'. The officiant smears their chests with ash and puts a strand of the *ilingolongofwe* creeper on each one's right shoulder. These are both signs of mourning, and the creeper is also 'a sign that we have given him the inheritance'. After a few minutes the heir and widows are formally summoned to come out of the hut, and they go off to wash away the ash and creeper in the stream. But first, the flowering head of a banana is buried in the courtyard near the door of the mourning hut and the grave of the deceased. If he was not a married man and there are no widows to be inherited, the ritual begins with this. The banana flower is explicitly identified with the corpse: it must face in the direction from which the ancestors came, as the corpse does; if the deceased is a male the flowering head is from a plantain (*itoki*); if a female from a sweet banana (*iejali* or *indefu* or

J: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mr Sigwela

765 *isolyo*); and it is wrapped in a leaf (of the same species as the
766 flower) which represents a blanket. The symbolism is interpreted
767 in terms of the habit of growth. A trunk of plantain or sweet bananas flowers and fruits only once, then dies and is pruned away, being replaced by a sucker from the same root, hence the association between the flower and the corpse. *Ilinki* is a large variety of plantain, eaten when it is green and hard; *isyali* is a smallish banana eaten when it is ripe and sweet, and it takes nine months to develop. 'When an *isyali* stem forms and a woman conceives a child at the same time, the bananas will be ripe and the woman bears her child together.' No one hesitated about this identification of plantain with male, sweet banana with female; it is as obvious in Nyakyusa as the associations of 'breeches' and 'petticoats' in English.

768 The officiant sprinkles a powdered medicine on to the earth of the grave and all the participants (that is, the heirs, widows, children, and certain siblings of the deceased) rub themselves in it. They rub forehead, right elbow, right knee, and right toe in the pile of earth. Only chiefs and their close relatives and twins refrain, for they have been drinking medicines, and such close contact with a corpse would 'spoil their medicine': 'The medicine would go rotten if they touched the grave which contains medicine,' so the chief's forehead, etc., must not touch the grave. He merely touches the earth with a finger-tip.

769 Having touched the earth, all the participants go to wash in a
770 stream, and when they return they wash again ritually in the doorway of the mourning hut, the doctor pouring out medicated water from a small calabash and each participant catching the water in his hands and rubbing them and his mouth and knees with it. Then they oil themselves. Until this ritual they must remain dirty and dishevelled with the mud and ash of mourning on them, and any who steal away to wash are fined by the other relatives.

771 Next the officiant takes roasted bananas and sticks into each one or more pumpkin-pips (*isyangu*) and one or more lentils (*inandala*).[1] She half-buries these in the earth at the doorway of the hut, or sits in the doorway holding a banana near the ground, and each participant approaches in turn and stoops and bites off the banana, and eats it.

The *ulyfumbo* (the litter of dry banana leaves on which the

[1] Some also add cowpeas (*imbangi*), others oil-seeds (*ipanda*).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Ma Ngonde.

769 deceased was a man and wealthy, the heir kills a bull or cow for a feast.

765 According to one account, 'the heir kills a cow saying: "This is
184 your cow, Father." Then he takes the praying calabash and fills it with beer and goes to the banana grove. The others sit in the courtyard watching from afar. He blows beer and then pours out a little, several times, mentioning the dead man's name and those of three or four prominent dead relatives, and prays for children, health, and food. He takes his own senior son (or the son of his dead brother) with him to see what he does, for he (the son) will do it after his death. Then they come back and the meat is eaten and beer drunk.' But we never saw this happen nor was the prayer in the banana grove mentioned by other informants.

782 If the millet put to soak fails to sprout, however, there must be
765 prayer. It is thought that there has been disagreement among the mourners and the shades are angry and have spoilt the millet. The kinsmen gather to condone their quarrels and pray before preparing another batch.

765 At the shaving of the sprouting hair (or some other time during the death ritual) the sisters of the dead man formally admonish his widows on their behaviour as wives. One admonition recorded lasted two hours, and the main theme was the stinginess of the widows in entertaining their sisters-in-law when the latter had come to visit.

765 On the morning after 'the shaving of the sprouting hair' the par-
• 768 ticipants shave their whole heads and are anointed with ointment by
587 the officiant. In the evening comes the formal handing over of the inheritance, if the deceased was a married man. The heir sits in the doorway of the mourning hut and the senior wife of the deceased hands him a bill-hook, such as is used for pruning bananas. He is adjured by his relatives, his village headman, and his neighbours to care for the children of the deceased as if they were his own, and the widows are told: 'This is your husband who
[428] will hoe for you always.' If there is any division of property it is formally made on this occasion, the dead man's sisters and the village headman being primarily responsible for a just allocation. And though, traditionally, women were given no choice about inheritance, this was in fact the occasion on which their protests and preferences were expressed. Then the heir is thrown into the hut with the women he has inherited 'on to the ashes' (*umfwandile*), and must have intercourse with all of them that night. One of

2: Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1957 F3117 Ngonde F3117
Nyakyusa
Selgi, Hellegouste

them knocks on the wall when he has succeeded, and the officiant 765
raises the *ulululu*, the trill of applause and triumph[1] which is also 763
the war-cry, and shakes a basket of seeds by the door shouting: 587
'Ours, ours, we marvel at the thing!' Until this ritual connection the heir and the widows remain continent, and great importance is attached to the success of the heir in having intercourse with all the widows. Should a widow refuse the heir after touching the ash it is said that she will either die herself or cause any man she lies with to die of 'the ash'; but if she escapes before being smeared with ash then she is safe. The heir is also in danger if a widow should refuse him after he has touched the ash.

The morning after the ritual union the heir is formally summoned out of the hut by a man knocking on the door and crying: 'Come out, war has come (*Soko' ahoite bwisile*),' i.e. sexual intercourse has begun. He sits on a stool in the doorway of the hut and is greeted by the children of the deceased: 'Good morning, Father.'

iii. '*The gaping cough.*' Each of the inherited women goes off to 783
her own father's homestead with the filth (*ondofo*) of intercourse 763
on her. She does not even wash her hands, and she takes with her 587
cooked bananas which she has smeared with her husband's semen and her own emission. This she buries in the banana grove in her father's homestead in which he prays to his ancestors. She takes meat to her father if an animal has been killed at the 'shaving of the sprouting hair'. The heir similarly goes to his father's homestead (or that of his father's heir) with cooked bananas to be buried in his father's sacred grove. Each wife drinks beer mixed with medicine with her father and other close relatives. From the time when the heir sleeps with the widows until this ritual is performed, they cannot visit their parents nor can their children do so (though usually children come and go freely in the home of their mother's people) and, more particularly, a widow must not drink from her mother's cup, or eat with her, or sit over her fire, or touch her hand. It is believed that, if the ritual is neglected, those for whom it should have been performed will be seized with a racking cough (*ingotsis*) and diarrhœa. Even Christians, who eschew the other parts of the death ritual, often participate in the *ingotsis*. [874]

When a woman has died she should be replaced by a sister or 587
brother's daughter, just as the dead man is by a brother or son, 834

[1] The closest equivalent in our society is cheering, but the *ulululu* is raised by women.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

ever, insisted that it was performed whether there was a girl to 765
send or not, but if several sisters were married to the same man it 184
was carried out only for the eldest of them.

We do this whether we are substituting another woman or not, but we do it only for the senior sister. There were three Sebas married to Mwaipopo, and when the two junior ones died we did not go to cut the bananas, but now the senior Seba has died, we do cut the bananas.

Mwaiselage explained that his brother-in-law would come to 765
cut bananas when his senior wife, Lyandileko, died, whether she died before or after her junior sister who is her co-wife, but the brother would not cut bananas at the death of the junior sister.

MWAKWELEBEJA: We cut the banana grove again when all the children of those women, the kinswomen married to one man, are dead. That is, their mother's brother's son (*untani*) does it, for their mother's brother will be dead by then. It means the same thing: 'The kinship is finished.' They pay to say: 'No, Father, it still continues.'

A woman to replace the dead is asked for even though her 587
husband has predeceased her. X, describing the ritual added: 765

And when my mother dies (if my father has died first) still her relatives, my *abipwa*, come to cut the banana grove. I throw them a cloth crying: 'Not the bananas.' Also they bring me another woman. If they do not, I go to them and say: 'Give me another mother to look after me.' They give me a girl whom I give to a half-brother (as his wife). If there is no girl they give me a cow, saying: 'That's your mother.'

Ibaso and Mwaijamba explained:

If, when a woman has died, her people are poor, having no child to replace her, they say: 'We are sorry, but there is nothing at all here, this cow is for drawing water with.' And formerly they returned all the cattle later on; but now, since we have stopped claiming calves, we divide the cows. . . . But when there is a daughter and they give her to me, the husband, we give marriage cattle again. Kinship does not [602]
come to an end.

To recapitulate, the main events of the ritual of death are the 765
formal recognition of the heir (if the deceased was a married man); 768●
the burial of a flowering head of bananas and the rubbing in earth from the grave; washing; a ritual eating of bananas with certain seeds; sweeping out the mourning hut; circling the hearth and putting an old pot on the fire with various foods; the presentation of millet by relatives and friends, and a ritual grinding; a second

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

765 washing and the throwing away of a stem of bananas and leaves in a
●768 stream, and bringing back a hen and bark-cloth; eating a mash on the hearth; the brewing of beer with the millet presented; a ritual drinking and further shaving when this is ripe; an admonition of the heir on his duties and acknowledgement of him as 'father' by the children of the deceased; sexual intercourse between the heir and the widows he inherits; the burial by each inherited woman of some of the fluids from that intercourse in her father's banana grove, and a ritual drinking of beer with her father and other close relatives.

If the deceased is a woman her brother comes to cut her husband's banana grove and seize her children, as a sign that kinship between the lineages has ceased, but he is dissuaded with gifts, and treats his sister's children with medicines. A sister is sent to replace the dead woman, the widower has intercourse with her at 'the shaving of the sprouting hair', and she returns home to bury some of the fluids in her father's grove, and drink beer with him ritually.

An account of one of the rituals which we attended in Selya which is quoted in the documents (p. 234) may give some reality to this stark outline.

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

765. When asked why the ritual of death is performed the first reply
764 of Nyakyusa informants was that they were driving away (*ukukaga*)
828 the dead and that if it were neglected those for whom it should have been performed would go mad (*ukubopa ikigili*). Angombwike explained: 'In the death ritual they drive away the shade (*unsyuka*) saying: "Why are you always at me, nagging at me, in dreams?" It is to swear at him (the shade) and drive him away.'

Another informant explained: 'The touching of the earth is the expression of the wish that he will not come into our dreams and thoughts any more, and he does not!' Another confirmed this saying: 'The powdered medicine and touching the earth are alike;
765 they wish to stop him (the deceased) coming into our dreams.'
764 And an Ndali informant said: 'Shaving is to get rid of the shade
775 which was on their bodies.'

There is also the implication of speeding the deceased on his way to the land of the shades, for it is believed that if the ritual is not performed he will not be welcomed by his dead kinsmen and will continue to haunt the living. Of an unfinished death ritual

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

768 It is forbidden for the heir to lie with the dead man's wives before
[784] the ritual[1] is over. But at the time of the beer, when the drinking is
[833] finished, we put him into the house and he lies with them. If he has lain with them previously the semen refuses to come. . . . But if all goes well the officiants raise the cry of triumph (*akalulu*) and shake a winnowing basket of seeds by the door and cry: 'Ours, ours, we marvel at the thing, we marvel at the thing (*ifyitu, ifyitu, tuniyomwike ilindu*).' If he fails they go to divine and the diviner says: '*Mindu* (sickness from the shades), he has forestalled the ritual (*akindile ubunyago*).' Then they pray in the bananas. He must have intercourse with all the women he is inheriting; yes, however old they may be, he must lie with them that night or else they will lose their strength of body or mind, or else their legs will swell. With the old ones he will never lie again! He drinks
[831] fresh milk to give him strength beforehand! Fresh milk gives strength, it produces semen.

The next morning each of the wives goes off to her father with *ilibalaga* and with meat; the first is buried in the bananas, it goes to the place of the shades, the meat is eaten. And the man too goes with his *ilibalaga* to his own father. Each wife makes her *ilibalaga* by wiping her own and her husband's genitals with her hands and then taking cooked bananas in them. He himself does likewise at the end.

768 The *ilibalaga* goes to the place of the shades, it is to drive away the
775 shade of the dead man; before this he had not reached the place of shades but was on the way. In this manner we tell the shade that we have put another in his place, we tell him to go and join the other shades now and to come back with them to warm themselves by the fire in his old house.

[643] QUESTION: How can a chief who inherits many wives lie with them all in one night?

643 KASITILE: I do not know how. Kyala gives him strength! . . . He has
768 intercourse with them all. Yes, really this does happen. . . . But if the
833 man is old and fails to lie with them all, perhaps the wives will conceal the fact. He lies on one side of a partition wall with his wives and the people (for many come to sleep in his house that night) on the other. Then if he fails altogether . . . no one beats the partition with a stick, they all stay quiet till morning; but if he succeeds at first, and fails at the last few, they may perhaps conceal it. One of the wives is told by the officiant to beat the partition with a stick when he has lain with all his wives. When she does this the officiants who are in the doorway shake up lentils and millet and pumpkin-seeds in a winnowing basket and call out: 'Ours, ours! We marvel at the thing!' If he fails altogether they stay quiet and next day go to divine; the diviner says: '*Mindu*.' Then they pray and pray, and praise all the shades of old, and that night he tries again and the semen comes.

775 The seeds of lentil, millet and pumpkin are symbols of the shades, the
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[1] [i.e. the farewell to the dead.--Analyst]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

lentil is the shade, the millet is the shade, the pumpkin-seed is the 775
shade. The doctor takes them away home and eats them, that means 768
that the shades have gone away. The words they say: 'Ours, ours! We 833
marvel at the thing!' mean: 'The semen is ours, the shades have supported him, they have given us the semen, they have not bound it.' For if the shades are angry they bind him and the semen does not come. . . . If the heir and his dead father (or brother) were on bad terms then, although the ritual is correctly done, yet still the shades will bind his semen at the end of the ritual. Fertility (*imbapo*) does not belong to the shades but to Kyala, but if the shade is angry he binds it. [842]

There are three symbols: the banana is the corpse and the seed is the shade. It is the filth which madmen catch hold of, it is the faeces which they eat. And the banana is the body of the man and the seed is his semen. Eating is sexual intercourse. It is this he has done during his lifetime. It is to send him away and say that we are about to put another in his homestead. It is the body and semen of him who has died. Also when a woman has died the husband eats . . . it [the banana and seed] is what we did. . . .

The seed is the shade, and it is the blood for creating a person [i.e. the semen] because the shade and the semen are brothers.[1]

Yes, they are intermingled, all are together in the ritual: the corpse, and the shade, and the body of the man [i.e. his penis] and the blood [semen] and the filth of madness; all are intermingled. You understand, Mwaipaja (G. W.), you are a priest now, you are a real priest. . . .

When they shake up the millet and lentils and pumpkin-seeds at the beer when he has finished coitus with the women it also has a double symbolism (*fyope fyo fifwani fibili*); the seed is the blood [semen]—Ours, ours—and it is the shade who has gone. Also at puberty it is like this. . . .

Those who say the *ikipiki* is one and the same for birth, puberty and the death ritual are right. It is one only. . . . The *ikipiki* is our blood, it is kept in the house of the senior wife. It pertains both to men and to the shades, for when we marry we do a ritual with it, so the shade says: 'I have eaten it during my life, I was born with it (for it went into his stomach), I married a woman with it (we wash and shave our hair with it at marriage), now that I am dead they perform the ritual with it.' It is one and the same. The *ikipiki* is our intestine.[2] It is one and the same in all lineages.

One day at a funeral roasted bananas were brought. A man 764
started scraping the ash off his with a spear. Kasitile asked him: 'Do you scrape bananas?' He answered: 'Yes, but if there were the litter in the house we would avoid doing so.'

[1] cf. *Ulukungu*: semen; *inyungu*: pumpkin-seed.
[2] *Ubula bwa kikolo*: 'the intestine of the lineage'; the large intestine.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764 heir. It is the ritual we are performing, they are signs of widowhood (*fya bufwele*), of lamentation (*kyo kesa*). The ashes are a sign of lamentation and the *ilingolongofwa* creeper is a sign of lamentation. Yes, all these things are part of the ritual, we cannot leave them out, it is taboo. (If we did) those below [i.e. the shades] would be angry and say: 'They have startled me and caused me pain in the heart; they have injured the ritual by foreshadowing evil.'

●768 At the end the heir sleeps with the women in the house—before the
764 beer. He performs the ritual with them, the officiants wait for them and ask them: 'How was it?' If he says 'No,' they say: 'Kyala does not
[787] stand in the house.' They go and divine at a doctor's who says:' So-and-so is angry.'

QUESTION: Kyala does not stand in the house (*Kyala akema nnyumba*)?

MWANDISI: It is the shades, they say Kyala does not give support. Then again he performs the ritual (*ikunyagula*, i.e. he attempts to have coitus) and they ask him: 'How was it?' They say: 'Yes, they (the shades) have stood with us, Kyala has stood with us.' [He gave both forms as alternatives: *batwemile* and *Kyala emile*.] Then they clap their hands and raise the shout of triumph (*akalulu*).

QUESTION: Is that the cry: 'Ours, ours!'?

[184 MWANDISI: No, that's the cry of the hill people. With us it's taboo.
784] Then in the morning someone shouts: 'War has come.' They come out immediately and run away to the pasture-lands.

764 QUESTION: Is this 'coming out' (*ukusoka*) the same as that in the coming out of chiefs (*ubusoka*) and in the twin ceremony?

MWANDISI: Yes, they run because their legs were heavy (*nsito*) in the house, now they have grown lighter and are strong; because in the twin ceremony the seclusion in the house lasts four months, at the coming out of chiefs two months, and that is hard, but at death it is only one, so it is light. But at death and the birth of twins it is the war (*ubwite*)
[833 of the mats. Is it not war with women? [*ubwite* is used here for sexual
795] intercourse.] Then when they have come out they give one another beer to drink in the doorway. The heir takes beer in his mouth and
[753] spits it out and hands the vessel on to his wives and children. Each does the same. They do not swallow it. To do so causes diarrhœa. The man and his wives are burning. They have come from the bed. This giving one another to drink, when each spits and does not swallow, happens after the eating of sausages of porridge on the road.[1] It is the same in the twin ritual except that whereas it is only the principals who give one another to drink at the death ritual, in the twin ritual not only they, but all relatives, and even non-relatives do it as well!

QUESTION: How about the eating of millet porridge with powdered medicine on the road?

[1] No other informant mentioned this in the MuNgonde death ritual.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

764 prepared earlier) and ties a strip of medicated banana bark round the neck of each, and with these necklaces on they must sleep. In one lineage they take little horns and blow into them and walk round calling out: 'We are driving you away, you are a stranger to us, do not come in dreams repeatedly.'

Next morning sausages of millet porridge mixed with medicine are half-buried in the earth at the cross-roads—or somewhere on the pathway—and each participant in turn bends down and bites off a piece, leaving some in the ground. They take off their bark necklaces and throw them into the little hut, which is then destroyed. After they have bathed again the officiant strokes each one on the forehead with a razor.

768 When a married man has died the heir is formally recognized,
587 and the widows are asked whether they accept him as their husband, at some point during the ritual; when Mwaikambo's father died the recognition of the heir preceded the whole ritual; more often it follows it and there is a formal drinking of 'the beer of inheritance'. In any case the first intercourse between the heir and the widows is always delayed for some months and, until it has taken place, the widows may meet their relatives; after it each widow returns to the homestead of her father (or his heir) for the 'ritual of the gasping cough' (*ingotolo*). Old Fibombe, a Christian elder, described it vividly:

768 The parents of the girl brew beer and call her to the beer of *ingotolo*.
177 They also call their relatives. She brings a hoe or a goat (or now a cloth
587 or 1s.). First of all she lifts up the pot of beer into which an officiant has put powdered medicine (*imbondanya*) and takes a mouthful, stirring the rest, then she hands it to another participant and when he has taken a mouthful she spits out, then she stirs and hands it on, and when the next has taken a mouthful she spits, and so it continues until all present have done this. Nowadays people do not take the beer in their mouths, they simply stir and pass it on. Pride prevents them. They say people will laugh at them if they do the things of old. Time is passing and things are like *Mambo Leo* [the Swahili newspaper] now. All
[184] pagans, however, still do this ritual in a modified form, only the Christians leave it undone.

768 This informant omitted two significant points in the ritual
587 which we saw for ourselves: the widow brings a spear belonging to her new husband and thrusts it into the earth outside her father's house. It stands beside the vessel of beer while her kinsmen drink until her brother plucks it out and takes it into the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

house. Then she goes in and steals a piece of firewood from the 768
loft[1] and runs off with it, laughing. The officiant pursues her and 587
makes her drop it and gives her medicine, while the company cry: 'A thief, a thief!' She takes the firewood back to her husband's home. 'It is a sign that she has entered her father's house, just as the spear is a sign that she has entered the house of another husband.' In rich families the new husband sends a bull which is [556]
killed and eaten at the ritual.

Our informants were agreed that 'there is no fear of the gasping cough if a woman runs away from her husband and goes to a lover', and in practice no ritual is performed when she visits her father after divorce and re-marriage, but it is perhaps significant that such a situation could scarcely have arisen in the past, since [586
divorce by agreement rarely, if ever, occurred. An adulterer fled, 177]
if he could, with his lover to another chiefdom, breaking off all [684]
relations with her kin.

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

Now we turn to the Kukwe interpretation of events. Our two 115
principal informants here were Mwasalemba, an elderly pagan man, brother to the chief Porokoto, whose wife, Syungu, acted as officiant at rituals in the chief's family, and Kakune, a young doctor who had learnt the medicines from his mother. Mwasalemba was much more coherent than Syungu herself, and his interpretation was confirmed by Kakune and numerous other informants. Again I give the interpretation of the two principal informants without any editing other than placing consecutively statements made on different occasions.

i. *Mwasalemba's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. and translated 158
by him soon afterwards.)

MWASALEMBA: Perhaps a youth, perhaps a girl, runs mad; he runs about naked so that we say: 'He's mad, why doesn't he cover himself?' He goes to the place of defaecation and takes filth and eats it: he goes into people's houses and takes things, he might even take some things from you, from a European, without fear; he knows not what he does. Sometimes, after a visit to a doctor, he recovers altogether and never has the fit again—that is the lesser kind of madness. But sometimes he 158
recovers and then the fit takes him again later—that is the more serious 757

[1] The loft (*pijulu*) consists of horizontal beams running at wall level across a portion [422
of the hut. Here every married woman keeps a supply of dry firewood. It is her private store-place which may not be touched without her permission. 417]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Ku Kwe

775 764 shade (*jonsyuka*)! That (which was buried) is just earth, the body has rotted, it is the shade that we care for.

QUESTION: And the necklace of banana bark?

764 MWASALEMBA: We sleep with them. In the morning we bathe again and throw them in the water. . . . Yes, indeed, some throw them away in the little hut. It is the shade, we perform the ritual and throw him away. . . . If we do not perform the ritual we do not sleep, then we pray in the banana grove and are startled.

QUESTION: Why the banana bark?

MWASALEMBA: It is with the banana that we perform the ritual: the plantain is what we steal and the sweet banana what we cut at home, and in the banana grove we pray.

When a man dies his wives sit in a row on a bark-cloth. It's at the shaving of the hair, the doctor shaves them on the bark-cloth. It's a new one because we say: 'You must throw away the bark-cloths which your husband who has died caught hold of, and wear other cloths.' So they sit on a new one.

QUESTION: What do they do with it?

MWASALEMBA: They throw it away on the litter.

QUESTION: Where?

MWASALEMBA: In the little hut. It means: 'Here we have mourned; let us throw away everything, let us wear others.' If a woman has died we men do not sit on the bark-cloth, but if I have died then my wife sits on the bark-cloth and throws away her old ones, and also when a son has died the mother throws away her old bark-cloths, but she does not sit on the bark-cloth! No! And she does not throw away her bark-cloth for the death of a small son, nor for a daughter, even though she be grown up. No! See, she is also a woman and wears a bark-cloth in front. But for a grown son a mother throws away her bark-cloths, saying: 'Because he was my child, I bore him, he sucked my breasts, so I throw away the bark-cloths.' Only for a grown son who has wives in his house does the mother throw away her bark-cloth, not for a bachelor.

764 QUESTION: The stones between the fingers?

775 MWASALEMBA: We throw him away. It is the shade.

QUESTION: Is the first intercourse after a death a ritual or not?

764 MWASALEMBA: No, it is not a ritual; we begin to have intercourse
● 768 when the ritual is finished. But among the Penja when someone has
171 died and the ritual has been performed and is finished, the husband takes a cow and gives it to the father of his wife, saying: 'I take the woman.' Then he has intercourse with her. But we do not, except in the case of twins.

833 QUESTION: And ordinary intercourse?

775 MWASALEMBA: The shade is together with the heart (*alinajo indumbula*); it is he who is roused and goes to a woman, it is he who stiffens

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 sometimes perform the ritual, but we lack conclusive evidence.
602 One case in which a sister's daughter of the deceased man performed the ritual was recorded, but at other funerals girls in the same relationship did not. Kakune, the doctor, asserted that a boy would perform the ritual for his mother's brother for 'he is mother, the brother of mother (*jo juba ulilumbu gwa juba*)', but in a number of cases we observed women performing the rituals for their brothers though their sons did not. A man's children may possibly perform the ritual for his sister but we traced no case of their doing so.

768 Those who drink the ritual beer when a widow returns to her
602 father's house after her union with the heir are her father and the men of his lineage—brothers, half-brothers, sons, and some of his brother's sons; the wives and children of these; and daughters of the lineage, her own sisters and half-sisters, and sisters of her father, but *not* the husbands or children of daughters of the lineage. At one *ingotolo* ritual we attended there were present eleven men of the lineage, eighteen daughters, and thirty-two wives, as well as numerous children (cf. genealogy, Table (e)).

764 When a woman has died those who come to cut the banana
593 grove and give medicated meat to her children are the *abipwa*—her brother (or his heir) and his wives.

764 The principals at a death ritual, then, are children and grand-
602 children, parents and grandparents, spouses, and certain siblings of the deceased, together with some of their children. If a woman dies, or a widow is inherited, her agnatic kin and their wives are concerned as well.

845 The group which takes protective medicine after an abnormal
602 birth is larger. All the wives and children and grandchildren of the father of twins must come, his full siblings with their children
751 and grandchildren, and the wives of his brothers, but not the husbands of his sisters; some of his half-brothers, with wives and children, some of the children of his father's brothers' sons (but not of father's brothers' daughters) and of his father's sisters' sons. On the mother's side her father, or his heirs, must take part with his wives and children, and her sisters. At the ritual for Mwakobela and his wife, previously described, we counted 136 relatives taking part, of which 24 were men, 19 boys, 33 women, 12 girls, and 35 babies (cf. genealogy, Table (a)).

845 When the mother of twins took the *ilibalaga* back to her 'father',
602 her brother (heir to her father), with his wives and children, her

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya

the dead man) has been done already; that of to-day is for the dead man and his child together.' 764

c. 11.30 a.m. The women left the house empty; suddenly the men fell on Mpogo and dragged him struggling into the empty house; the women likewisedragged in Kalukwa—still smeared in ashes. The pair were left alone here with the officiant but, as I heard afterwards, they made no attempt to mate now, it is taboo until the beer. After three or four minutes Kina Nsambe called Mwaipalu (see genealogy) to summon them (*ukukasosya*). He went with a stick to the door and pushed it open. Each then came out with a string of green creeper (*nkolonowa*) over the right shoulder. 'This is the sign that we have given him the inheritance.' 'They do not have intercourse, however, until the beer.' Each went to bathe, separately, escorted by friends of the same sex—'to keep them company'. 764 768

The two chief officiants were non-relatives, Sikabile, wife of Mwenenganga, and her assistant Mwanyengenye; but the older female relatives assisted them too, and were referred to as *abanyago*. 764

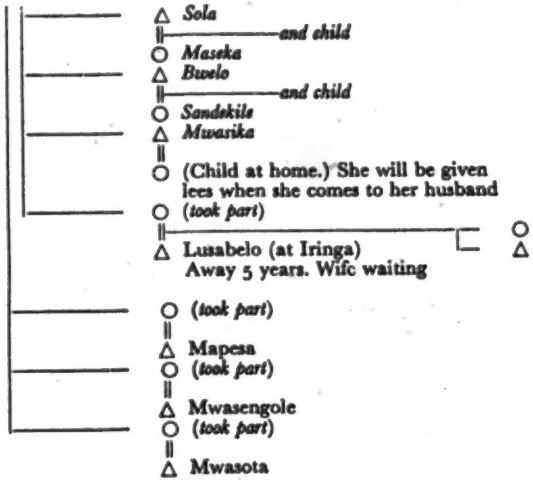
Sikabile brought a plantain flower, carefully wrapped in a plantain leaf, into the swept place near the door. She dug a little grave and buried it. There was a discussion about the right direction, and it was decided that the point represented the legs of the corpse and must be set to face BuKinga. The leaf was not buried. 'They take a plantain flower because the deceased was a man. If it had been a woman, they would have taken a sweet banana.' Then, one by one, the principals came and rubbed forehead, right elbow, right hand, and right toe in the pile of earth there—once facing BuKinga and then, all over again, facing the otherway. Then they went to bathe. One infant was touched with earth in the correct places by the officiant. Boys and their father bathed separately—'it is always taboo for them to bathe together'.

Mpogo told me that he lives in the hills at Mwakilema's, but all the ritual, including the drinking of beer, will be done here. 'If there was millet available,' he said, 'we would start the brewing now; as it is, we must wait for the new millet. We have sown all our millet.'

After all had bathed, the officiant poured water for them with powdered medicine in it, at the doorway. One by one they stood in the doorway and she outside, and they washed hands, and mouth, and both knees; then her assistant handed her for each a banana, roasted and unscraped, with the end broken off and with a pumpkin-seed and a lentil, stuck in it, and some powder on it. The officiant held it near the ground and each stooped to bite it, then took hold of it and ate it—some bit first without touching with the hand, some caught hold of it. To each she gave more roast bananas and seeds separately too. In all the ritual Kalukwa (the widow) came last and Mpogo usually last but one. Now he was last but one.

The women then all gathered inside the house and the sisters of

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa



Key: △ ○ = alive. ▲ ● = dead.
Name in capitals = Widow inherited. Names in italics = participated in ritual. † = Christian.

Participants:

Men of lineage	11	Father + his full brother + 4/6 his half-brothers + widow's 2 full brothers + 2/3 half-brothers; son of half-brother.
Daughters of lineage	18	6/8 half-sisters (1 Christian, 1 away), 8/10 father's half-sisters (1 Christian, 1 away did not), 4 unmarried daughters of half-brother.
Wives	32	Mother, 2 co-wives of mother, 2 wives of father's brother, 15 wives of father's half-brothers (including chief) (1 sick, drank at home), 3 Christian did not come, 4 wives of own full brothers, 3 wives of half-brothers, 1 widow of grandfather, 4 wives of father's half-brother's sons.
Children		of brothers, of father's brothers, and half-brothers.

N.B. Sons-in-law do not participate.

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[Facing p. 274 (A)]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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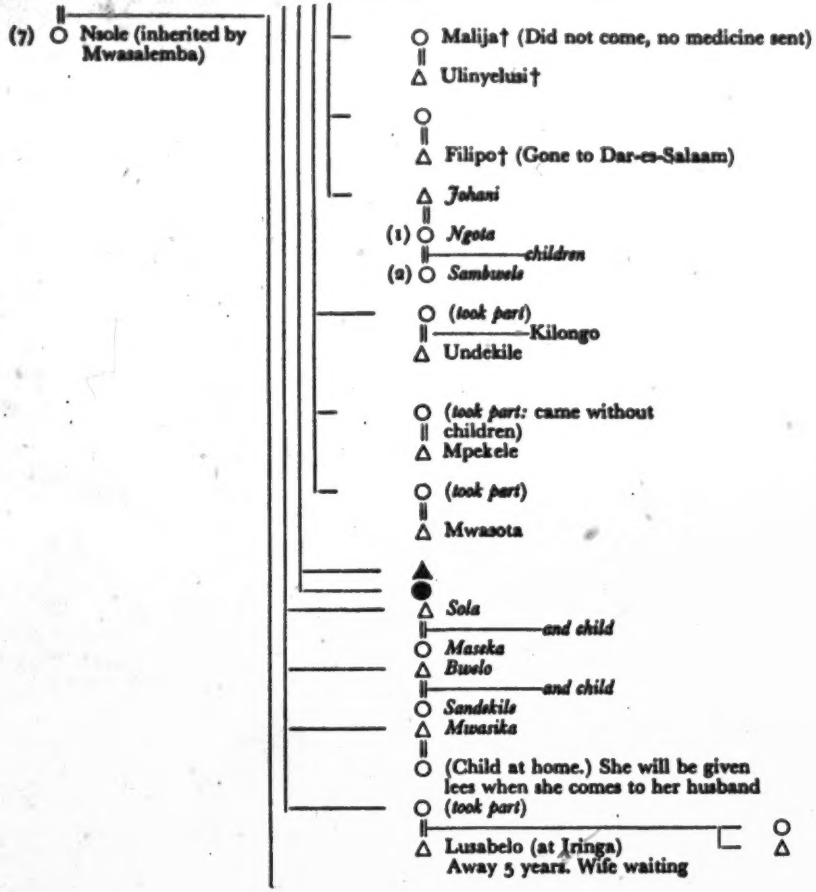
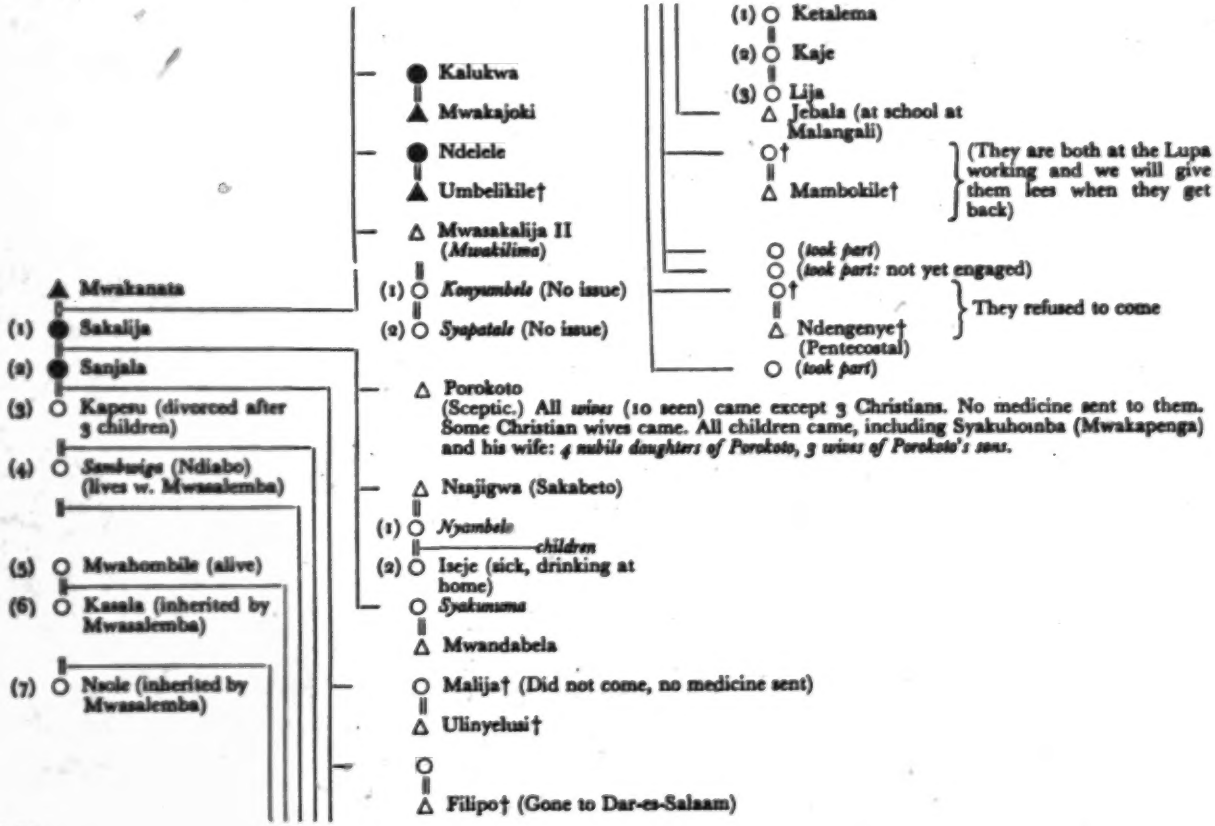


[FACING P. 274 (B)]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa



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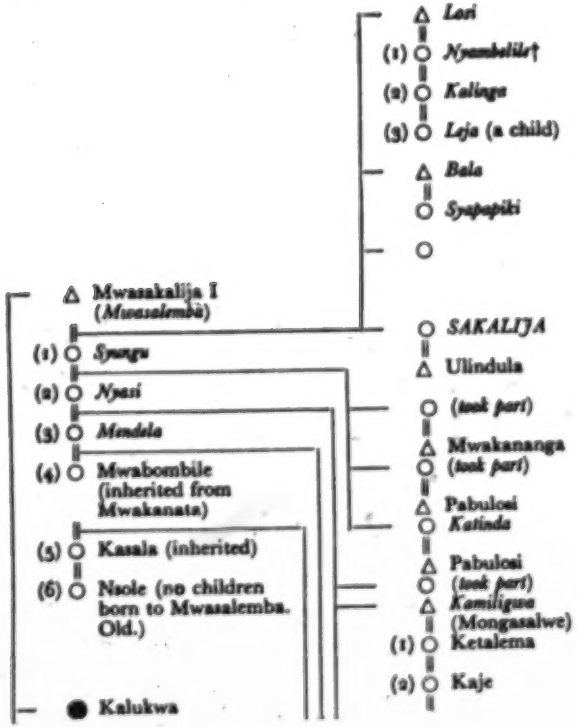
[facing p. 274 (c)]

TABLE (c) (*See pp.* 43, 192).

GENEALOGY OF MWASALEMBA (RITUAL OF THE GASPING COUGH)



[facing p. 274(D)]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Lepers are now buried like ordinary persons. But in the not very distant past, they were placed in a sitting position against a tree, and so left to be devoured. No one of those who carried the body looked behind, lest he also should be "caught" by the disease. 766

About a month after the funeral, the beer feast takes place. A small quantity is taken to the grave, and the dead man is addressed, and bidden again to go to his ancestors. "Take this beer as an offering to them. The ox that we have killed is also for them." The day is given up to eating and drinking, with intervals of wailing, the men in the open, the women in the house of the heir, or near relative of the dead man. 765

The ceremonies for women and children are similar to those described. A small chief, near Karonga, who was utterly neglectful of his mother during her life, impoverished himself in the splendour of her funeral. The grave was completely lined with expensive cloths, and the body was decked out as it never had been in life. The man's grief was genuine; or if it was not grief, it was fear of what the old lady, with her renewed powers, might do, if he did not attend to her now that she was dead. 764

When the mourning is over, all the friends of the dead man shave their heads. Omission of this ceremony involves the careless one in a quarrel with the departed. 765 302

Here and there throughout the country ancient customs survive which have been dropped by the majority of the people. In many places the entrance of the heir upon his new position is accompanied by 768

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•768 strange ceremonies. He is taken hold of by the men, and the wives of the dead by the women, and put into the house, the women being told that this man is now their husband. Presently they come out again, and the man is garlanded with leaves, and his head covered with ashes. When all have washed in running water or in the lake, another ceremony must be gone through. Bananas and small beans are roasted, and the company, led by the doctor, move out on their hips to the road, where the doctor digs a small hole, into which he inserts a banana, and into the banana a bean. One by one the people come up, and stooping down, eat the banana without touching it with their hands, a fresh banana being placed for each until all have eaten. Next, with a white fowl and a bunch of bananas, all go to the stream or the lake, where the fowl and the bananas are dipped twice, and each goes in on hands and knees, completely submerged, turns right round, and comes out again. The wives now go each to her father, to inform him that they have a new husband, and the latter sends to each of his fathers-in-law a gift of a hoe.

In the family of the Nyangomale, the heir washes all the children of the deceased, big or little, by pouring water upon their outstretched hands, himself keeping as far off as he can, for none of the water must touch him. He and his new wife, or wives, are now bound together by the thumbs with bark-cloth, and go to the stream, where they wash, and throw away the bark-cloth which bound them. A feast follows.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

The Bakifuna go to the stream to wash, garlanded with flowers, and carrying a small stone. Flowers and stone are thrown into the stream after the washing, and the company re-enter the house. The doctor takes water and pours it on the roof, upon which all come out one by one, the water dripping on each as he or she passes. Anointed with oil, they all go to the place of burial, where, resting on elbows and knees, they draw themselves along the grave, slightly disturbing the soil as they go. The hair is then cut, and the feast follows. 768

When a chief is *in articulo mortis*, his headmen and his wives are present, and he is addressed, while still living, as common men are addressed at the graveside. "Go to God and the spirits; go to your fathers (naming them). Rest there, and tell them what is happening here above." 766 643 622

After he is dead, the nails of his fingers and toes are clipped, and his hair cut, and given to the doctor, who will make medicine with them to prevent the disease which killed the chief passing over to others. The dead man is now dressed as common men are dressed for burial, but much more elaborately, and, if he is a relative of Chungu, he is placed in a sitting position in the house, where his wives and headmen embrace him for the last time. If he is a very important chief, like Chungu, his death is not yet announced to the people.

Meantime a cow has been killed at the place where the body is to be buried, and the headmen dig the grave, usually by night, if intimation has not been

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

584 live with her husband until at least three cows have been given. One of the bulls is only given if the girl is virgin at her initiation rite, and this bull is given to her mother. The laws of inheritance and the system of marriage by cattle payments ensures that cattle will be in the hands of the older men. In general polygynists are men over forty-five.[1]

595 The first wife married is the chief wife, and is entitled to respect and obedience from her co-wives. Her first son is her husband's ultimate heir. A man cannot lightly divorce his first wife during the lifetime of his own father who provided the cattle
586 with which she was married. Divorce is effected by the return of the marriage cattle. Usually the woman has a lover who will pay cows to redeem her; if she refuses to go back to her husband there is no means of compelling her to do so, though in pre-European times her father and the chief might send her back. In such a case the husband would be entitled to his original payments plus their increase.[2] Men do not demand divorce for adultery unless it is persistent.[3] Divorce is often sought for very trivial reasons.[4] If the paternal uncles have helped the groom to collect his marriage cattle, the beasts are redistributed to their original donors after they have been returned to the husband.[5]

587 A man whose wife dies can claim a substitute or the refund of his cattle. When a man dies his widows pass to his heir who takes them all as wives, if he is a brother of
●768 the dead man; if the heir is a son he takes all except his own mother and the wives who are her close kin. Inherited wives have the same land rights as others.[6]

INHERITANCE

428 Brothers inherit before sons, then half-brothers (linked half-brothers before other half-brothers). When all the brothers are dead the property and wives of each pass to each one's eldest son.[7] This rule also applies to the Nyamwanga and Iwa.[8] The heir assumes the full obligations of father to his younger brothers and is responsible for their marriages; they hoe for him and are fed by his wives as are unmarried sons.[9] The sister's son only inherits if all near patrilineal kinsmen are dead or are infants.[10]

The above applies to commoners' inheritance only. For chiefs, succession and inheritance may follow different principles. For instance, in succession to local chiefdoms, two or more sons would divide the chiefdom. Among the Ngonde the Kyungu and the great chiefs were not chosen according to strict genealogical right, but were selected from the appropriate families according to their wealth, generosity, and courage. In the succession to the great chiefdoms, there was formerly a difference of procedure in the two royal lines: that of Ngelenge, where the nobles of Ngonde were sent by the Kyungu to help to select the successor; that of Ngana, the line of the female side, where the nobles of Ngonde merely summoned the great commoners to discuss with them who was to succeed. Nowadays the difference between the two lines has disappeared, and the Ngelenge custom is followed for both. If the genealogical heir

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, pp. 257–9.
[2] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 263.
[3] Ibid., p. 65.
[4] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 55.
[5] Mackenzie, 1925, p. 92.
[6] Wilson, 3, 1938, p. 27.
[7] Ibid., 2, 1936, pp. 264–6; Sanderson, 3, 1923, p. 453.
[8] Coxhead, 1914, p. 45.
[9] Wilson, 3, 1938, pp. 11 and 28; Johnston, 1897, p. 471.
[10] Wilson, 5, 1939, p. 55.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Unmarried children have the right to food partly in virtue of their general relationship to their parents, partly because they themselves assist in the work of the household. From the age of about six years boys herd cattle, from about eleven years they begin to hoe; while girls help their mothers in field work, in the fetching of wood and water and in the care of infants. And, owing to their practical usefulness, there seems to be less difficulty in getting motherless[1] children regularly fed before they marry than in getting them entertained afterwards. Each such child is allotted to one wife and is mainly fed by her. 592 857 241

In some households unmarried sons hoe only the particular plots of their own mothers; but in others the man and his sons work together as a team, hoeing each plot in turn. In ten neighbouring polygynous households I found that in three cases the sons confined themselves to the plots of their own mothers, in seven the man and his sons worked always together. Meals followed the same pattern as the hoeing. In the three cases the mother of each boy alone provided him with food, but in the other seven cases his step-mothers did also.

This variation of custom between different households was thus explained to me: "The custom of hoeing separately, each boy for his own mother only, is sometimes determined by lack of friendship between the women, sometimes by the slackness of their husband in hoeing. If he is slack about hoeing then it falls to the women to organize it, and each calls on her own son to hoe for her alone; and, in that case, if one wife has no son she will just have to enlist the services of other people to hoe for her (rewarding their efforts with food at the end of each day). Sometimes too the custom arises in this way—a boy finds that his step-mothers are reluctant to cook food for him when he comes in from hoeing, he complains that while his own mother cooks for him generously they do not, and so he begins to hoe for his mother alone.

"The custom of hoeing together, on the other hand, is determined by the will of the man, who himself organizes it. And whenever a man is vigorous in hoeing there you will find that he and his sons all hoe together. It is only when a man is slack that the custom of hoeing separately arises from the orders of the women, and if the man is vigorous in hoeing his wives are never reluctant and ungenerous about cooking, they bow to his will just as his sons do."

When their husband dies women pass to his heir. If the heir is a brother of the dead man then he takes them all to wife, if a son he takes 768 587

[1] The custom of marrying two sisters and that of substituting a dead woman's sister or niece in her place considerably reduces the number of such "motherless" children, for the sister of a dead woman treats the latter's children as her own.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

768 587 [421] all except his own mother, whom he either builds for at a little distance and looks after, or else gives to a half-brother.[1] Inherited wives have the same land rights as others, and a mother for whom a son builds and hoes is treated by him, in the matter of land, just like a wife.

737 And a married man often supports an old woman—a mother, mother-in-law or elder sister—whose husband, though still alive, is incapable of hoeing and who has no unmarried sons. He may either hoe for her on her own husband's land or else assign to her a plot or two of his own.

241 476 The gardens of a household are not only worked by its members, other people assist them from time to time. Each married man usually invites a group of his village neighbours to help him with a day's hoeing two or three times a year, entertaining them to food and beer after the work is over. A married woman likewise is often assisted by women friends from neighbouring households in the planting, weeding or reaping of her crops and them she rewards simply with a luxurious meal in the evening, without any beer. Again, as we have seen, a married woman sometimes engages a young man to hoe for her regularly, for a month or more at a time, and pays him by feeding him well for that period.

241 464 But although this last custom is still common it is beginning to decline; fewer men each year are willing to work for any length of time except for money, and already in some of the more prosperous households young men are found to be employed in hoeing at the rate of 2/- a month in addition to their food. The young men who thus accept employment in hoeing are always the poor ones, those for whom (whether because their fathers are poor in cattle or because they have many elder brothers before them) the prospect of getting married is too distant to stimulate them to any great diligence at home. In the plain of Mungonde, however, where ploughs are extensively used, the owners of ploughs make a considerable profit by hiring themselves out with their ploughs at 2/- a plot (*ulupaka*).

241 592 602 606 Kinsmen and affines also often assist in a household's hoeing. When a man inherits his dead father's wealth then he assumes the position of father towards his own younger brothers and is responsible for the marriages of any who are bachelors; they then hoe for him and are fed by his wives just as unmarried sons do. Sons-in-law, again, are expected to bring their friends now and then to help their father-in-law in hoeing and they often do so, more particularly if they are behindhand with the marriage-cattle. After the day's work is over, however, they are entertained just as sumptuously as an ordinary work-party of neighbours.

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[1] And any kinswoman of his mother (sister or niece) whom his father has married is treated likewise.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

full-brother steps into his place, takes his wives, huts, land and cows and 593
looks after his children ; after him the next full-brother inherits and so 428
on, until, when all are dead, the property and wives of each pass to each one's senior son.[9]

The heir has exactly the same obligations to his predecessor's children that the dead man had himself while alive, but frequently he has less will to perform them ; and his conformity is often only assured by the pressure of legal and religious sanctions.

This rule of inheritance is part of a more general fact, which is that, 768
in Nyakyusa society, death does not break a family and its relationships, but simply alters the particular people between whom these relationships obtain. Only rarely does death leave a man or woman widowed, or a child orphaned ; nearly always some one is at once substituted in place of the one who has died. When a woman dies young her parents are bound either to give another daughter to her husband or else to return the marriage-cattle to him so that he can obtain another wife ; when a man dies his wives and children are not left alone but taken by his heir. If the heir is a brother he takes all the women as his wives, if a son he builds a separate hut for his own mother and takes the others. And the heir is now " the father " of the dead man's children. Even when a man and all his full-brothers are dead the families of each are still united for some purposes under the leadership of each one's senior son (eldest son of chief wife). The senior son is now called " father " by his siblings and half-siblings, he is religiously responsible for them all (*vide infra*), he normally exchanges cows with the eldest brother in each individual family (*vide infra.*), he is entitled to their respect and obedience.

Half-brothers may, or may not, be linked especially closely together. 593
They may, as we have seen, be linked by blood when their two mothers are either sisters or close kinswomen, they may also be linked by an exchange of cattle, by " milking each other's cows " (*okokamanela*). Each group of full brothers regards the cows that come in from the marriages of their sisters as their own cattle, but the father disposes of these cattle as he wishes. If he gives some of their cows to a half-brother, he thereby creates between the eldest of the group and this man the special relationship of " milking each other's cows ; " and it is expected that the cows given will in time be returned by this half-brother from the marriage-cattle either of a full sister or of a daughter of his own. And the exchange once begun goes on ; as their sisters and daughters marry

[9] This refers to commoner's inheritance only.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173 The balance between chiefs and commoners is explicit. So
773 also is their dependence on *both* cultivation and herding, and it
[643] should be noted that, though the Nyakyusa speak of themselves
as stock men, they are not pastoralists to the same extent as
[233] the Masai or the Nuer. The number of cattle in Rungwe District
today is less than half the human population, and men tradition-
ally have done the heaviest share of cultivation.

773 In every version of the myth the tension between father and
593 son, or older and younger brother, is stressed. In Nyakyusa
561 society the father (or his eldest son who replaces him) controls
173 the family property and exacts obedience from his juniors who
[769] continue to show their respect after his death by sacrifices. The
tale of Kyala and Lwembe celebrates the triumph of the junior.
Thus, at the heart of the very ritual which sanctifies seniority
there is the assertion of the victory of the son and younger brother.
The myth expresses the aspirations of subordinates—of com-
moners and junior kinsmen—as well as the power of chiefs and
seniors.

173 As we have already noted, the heroic cycle makes no reference
773 to the peculiar Nyakyusa institution of age-villages. Their charter
561 is a quite separate myth[1] which tells of a chief who looked on his
621 daughter-in-law and loved her and took her, and this so shocked
606 men that in future fathers and sons built separately, so that a
father-in-law should never see his daughter-in-law.

There are other hints of the eternal theme. Besides the saga of
173 Lwembe there is another quite different tale of the origin of fire,
773 which is less often related. In it a girl who had angered her father
372 by breaking his drinking calabash fled from BuKinga to the
Nyakyusa valley, where she found people who ate their food raw.
She made fire and cooked for them and 'all women came to
her to learn to cook'. The long-necked calabash, used as a drinking
[415] vessel and in prayer to the shades, is a man's most personal
[768] possession destroyed at his death, and it stands for a husband,
while cooking is a symbol of the sexual activity of women, so the
myth is perhaps a drama of incest, but we have no direct evidence
of this.

173 This last is the only tale in which a woman appears as a
773 benefactor. In general, the mythology is that of a strongly
562 patrilineal society in which men are dominant. The wives of
Lwembe who walked behind their lord, shepherded by a lion,

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 85.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

immured in the royal enclosure—a great stockade—and jealously guarded, for any infidelity on their part was thought to make their husband ill, and with him the whole country. 643 [644] [753]

When the Kyungu did fall ill he was smothered by the nobles who lived around him at Mbande, and buried in great secrecy, with a score or more of living persons—slaves—in the grave beneath him, and one or two wives and the sons of commoners above. And in the midst of all this slaughter the nobles brought a sheep to look into the grave that the dead Kyungu might be gentle (*mololo*) like the sheep! 643 766 [825]

The living Kyungu was thought to create food and rain, and his breath and the growing parts of his body—his hair and nails and the constantly replaced mucus of his nose—were believed to be magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde plain. When he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was buried 'with the breath in his body'; while portions of his hair and nails and of his nasal mucus were taken from him beforehand and buried by the nobles of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This was 'to defend the country against hunger', 'to close up the land, to keep it rich and heavy and fertile as it was when he himself lived in it'. [778] [789]

His death was kept secret—a relatively easy matter since he lived in seclusion—and one of the nobles (*Ngosi*) impersonated him wearing his clothes. After a month or two when the nobles had decided whom to choose as the new Kyungu, the luckless man was summoned to Mbande: 'Your father calls you.' 'Then he came with his companions and entered the house to make obeisance; they seized him and put the sacred cloth on him and set him on the stool "Kisumbi", saying, "Thou Kyungu, thou art he", and he became the Kyungu. Then they struck the drum, Mwenekelwa, and everyone knew that the Kyungu had died and another had been installed.' Men feared greatly to be seized as the Kyungu, just as they feared to be seized as the Lwembe, because the life of a divine king was short. Ngonde historians quote a number of cases of sons of the Kyungu who fled to escape being set on the stool; once they had sat on it they dared not flee lest they die. 643 768

Though[1] the early Kyungus had lived on the stony top of Mbande none of them had been buried there, for 'the ground was 643 778 766

[1] The following section is quoted, with additions and amendments, from Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, pp. 29 ff.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631 recognized over 100 chiefdoms, mustering anything from 100 to 3,000 adult men apiece.

Although no centralized political authority existed before the ●769 German occupation, certain groups of chiefdoms joined in com-
631 mon rituals directed to common ancestors. We traced four such centres of worship among the Nyakyusa; the most important being Lubaga, in the middle of the valley, where Kinga priests (from the top of the Livingstone mountains) join with many Nyakyusa chiefdoms in sacrifice to Lwembe, who is claimed as the ancestor both of the chiefs of the Nyakyusa proper, and of the Kinga. At LiKyala, on the Lake-shore plain, Kinga also join in sacrifice with the surrounding Nyakyusa chiefdoms. In Ngonde the chief connected with a similar centre of worship, Mbande, developed far-reaching secular as well as religious powers; and by the time the Europeans arrived he was established as a para-
[439] mount chief with the title of the Kyungu. This development was directly connected with the fact that Ngonde traded with the outside world, and that their Kyungu, through his control of ivory, was able also to control the guns and cloth which came into the country:[1] the Nyakyusa, remaining isolated, remained politically disunited.

Besides sacrificing to a distant ancestor in company with the representatives of a large group of chiefdoms, two or more chiefs who are neighbours participate in a sacrifice at the grove in which their common father, or grandfather, is buried. Thus common worship links both large groups of chiefdoms, whose chiefs are more or less distantly related, and small groups of contiguous chiefdoms whose chiefs are close kinsmen. The sacrifices made are to the chiefs of immediately preceding generations, and to certain great heroes of the distant past, such as Lwembe and Kyala.

All these sacrifices are believed to bring rain and fertility, for 769 the well-being of each chiefdom is thought to be bound up with 789 the health of the chief and the goodwill of his ancestors.

The Nyakyusa are all agreed that their chiefs, *abanyafyale*, are 173 'strangers' who came down from the Livingstone mountains 622 eight or ten generations ago, and found the valley already occu-
563 pied by people who had no knowledge of fire, but ate their food raw, The chiefs brought fire with them—some say, cattle also;

[1] Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., pp. 9, 39-48.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

objection to marrying the child of one who has been convicted is clearly not pushed to its logical conclusion. No slur is cast on any one lineage when an individual is convicted of witchcraft, for he may have inherited it from either parent, or even got it from a friend; conversely no lineage is cleared by an autopsy, for not all the children of a witch are necessarily witches. Thus a man may have a father or brother or son who is 'pure', yet be a witch himself. As we have seen, even persons belonging to the same lineage may occasionally accuse each other. Nevertheless, when an individual who is reputed to be a witch dies, the close relatives do sometimes insist on an autopsy, in order to clear the deceased of suspicion, and possibly themselves also (*vide supra*, p. 117). In one case we recorded it was a daughter who insisted on the autopsy being performed on her mother, a reputed witch. No witchcraft was found.

So far we have dealt with cases of misfortune befalling an individual, followed by action against a fellow villager who is suspected of being responsible. This type of case is far the commonest within the field of witchcraft. When a general misfortune, such as a plague or epidemic, threatens, the chiefdom acts as a whole, not the villages separately, and the ritual is directed primarily to securing the blessing of the shades. There is some suggestion of ridding the chiefdom of witchcraft at the same time, but the emphasis is on appeasing the ancestors. The traditional new year cleansing (*ukutag' ikikungu*), now rarely performed, was also the concern of chiefdoms not separate villages, and it involved prayer to the ancestors.

b. The age-village and the ancestors

We have dwelt at length on witchcraft and 'the breath of men', for, in Nyakyusa belief, the defence of the village against witches and the punishment of wrong-doers by 'the breath' of their fellows is the main corporate activity of the village in the religious sphere. There are no village rituals directed to the ancestors comparable to those performed on behalf of lineages and chiefdoms. Indeed, belief in the power of shades operates only in situations where social position is determined by descent, as it is in lineages and in the succession to chieftainship. The office of village headman is not hereditary. The son of a village headman

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 cannot be appointed as headman in any village of his own generation, and villages of past generations disappear. When a headman
●769 dies, his village still being in existence, his place is taken by his
622 heir who may be a son, but this office is only temporary. The village ceases to exist when its original members die off. Moreover, there is no suggestion that the shade of a headman's father broods over the village as the shade of a chief is thought to brood over the land he ruled.

775 The Nyakyusa have a lively belief in the power of shades,-a belief closely connected with the dependence of the members of a lineage upon one another for cattle,[1] and with the office of 'divine king', but such belief scarcely affects village relationships, for the shades are not thought to be concerned with behaviour between neighbours, as distinct from relatives.

775 It is true that the proper performance of family rituals includes feasting neighbours, but the implication always is that the shades
621 are concerned only in enforcing obligations towards themselves
602 and fellow kinsmen, not towards non-relatives. On the other hand, neighbours are concerned in the enforcement of kinship obligations. When a son insults his father, the father's neighbours are insulted also; when a daughter-in-law peeps at her father-in-law the shocked astonishment of the neighbours may cause her children to pine. And so, when an erring son begs pardon of his father, he must provide a feast for the neighbours, 'that they may see that his father is satisfied'.

775 A situation often arises in which both the shades and 'the breath of men' operate, sometimes 'the breath' of shocked neighbours
626 supporting the shades, and sometimes shades and men each
754 exacting their due. One illustration of this was given us by Kalunda: 'If you do not carry out the burial rites for your father, people are angry, they throttle you, and the shade is angry also, he comes on your body. No, the witches do not call the ancestors to help; both are angry on their own account. To-day the black ones, the witches, come and throttle you; to-morrow the ancestors come. People are angry because they do not eat meat; the shade is angry because you did not perform the burial rites for him. He says: "See, I left much property, why did you not bury me properly?"' And in discussing the obligation of a daughter-in-

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'An African Morality', *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936); Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

admit their anger, and prefer to blame the shades and conciliate the neighbours by feasting. For example: 777 621

When someone is ill of a curse the owners of the village do not agree that it is they who have bewitched him. No, that is what others say. . . . When they bless such a person they pray to the shades. As, for example, with M. [informant's father, a wealthy man]. If he falls ill with a disease of the legs, and goes to a diviner, and the diviner says: 'They have bewitched you,' then he goes home and seeks a bull and calls the men of the village, saying: 'Let us enjoy ourselves with this bull.' They say: 'Is it the legs?' He denies it, saying: 'No, I am just giving you something to eat, something with which to enjoy ourselves.' They say: 'Are you a chief to feast us on a bull?' He says: 'I just thought I would like to enjoy myself with you.' He conceals the cause because if he speaks of the illness they will say: 'Ha, he is catching us for witchcraft.' They eat, and at the beer they say: 'You, M., take this stick and stand up. Walk!' And when they go home each prays to his shades, saying: 'Stand by him, may he recover from his sickness!'

In short, the Nyakyusa speak of the danger of angering senior relatives, but they attribute most of their misfortunes to their neighbours, and they say that more misfortunes are due to neighbours and fewer to the shades than is openly admitted!

Perhaps the most striking feature of the family cult among the Nyakyusa is the narrowness of its range. Neighbours are concerned with the fulfilment of family obligations as well as obligations to themselves, but the shades are concerned solely with behaviour between kinsmen. 'If I wrong a kinsman I fear the shades, but not if I wrong another.' 769 621

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

241 stretched across the garden, and presently the pigs clear off, and there is silence again. Many kinds of game get part at least of their living out of human industry, and have to be laboriously guarded against.

For smaller pests additional aid must be sought. Field mice and rats, *indafu*, a small locust-like creature, grubs, wireworms, and moles, work great injury, and ordinary methods of dealing with them are vain. Take, at sunset, a brand from the fire, and walk over the garden with it, singing "*Kuki Kyaubili?*" Where is the Unseen God? and the pests will clear out.

241 The first maize cobs are taken to the chief; then
622 each head of a family presents a few cobs to his own
769 ancestors; twins also must be presented with early cobs, and it is only then that common people are safe if they begin to eat the new season's crops. When the chief makes an offering to his ancestors, it is usually laid at the *lupando*, the place where the village trees stand. The maize is eaten by mice, but it is credited to the "lion" which is the chief's guardian (Chap. V). In some districts a perhaps more primitive ceremony is observed. With a following of little children, the doctor goes to the grave of the chief's ancestors, and there roasts a few maize cobs, which he divides among the children; on their return, intimation is made that all may now eat the new crops.

251 The food stocks in the barns are protected by a medicine, but this practice is falling out of use, though many still follow it. If a man is too poor to buy the medicine, he begs a handful of the protected grain from his better-off neighbour, confident t[illegible]he

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XV

The Ancestral Spirits

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THE importance of the spirits in the everyday life of the Konde can hardly be overestimated. From the day that the month-old infant is presented by the head of the family to the spirits of its ancestors—though this ceremony is dying out at Karonga—until the day of death, when the spirit is directed to go in peace and confidence to meet his forefathers, living and dead are mingled in one stream of life, form one community, and are dependent upon each other for many of the best things "above" on earth here, and "below" where the spirits are. Yet it is by no means easy to define the relation of the living man to the spirits of his fathers who are ever about him. It is, perhaps with more facility than the facts warrant, usually defined as an attitude of worship; but there are at least indications that the attitude is incompletely expressed by the idea of worship.

Sacrifices, or offerings, are made to the spirits; and this, it need not be doubted, is an act of worship. The word used is *ukwikemesya*, which is used by British and German missionaries to denote an act of worship offered to God. On the other hand, the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

food, beer, and other things placed at the graves, are intended to maintain in some way the life of the spirits, to keep them in countenance in their own world. For as men are dependent on the goodwill of the spirits for the best things of life, so do the spirits depend upon their descendants on earth for much of what they require in the other world. 769

The dead are conceived as obtaining a great access of power on passing into the spirit world, power for good or evil, and to placate them is one of the chief preoccupations of Konde life. But while it would not be true to say that compulsion can be brought to bear upon the spirits, that once the appropriate ceremonies are performed, the spirit must fulfil the prayer of the petitioners, yet so complete is the faith of the common man in the power of these ceremonies, that it may be suggested that prayer and answer are inseparably bound up together; if compulsion is too strong a word, obligation, if milder, is perhaps sufficient. 775 769

The spirits are called *basyuka*. The verb *kusyuka* means to rise from the dead, to resume ordinary bodily activities; but the noun formed from this verb, *unsyuka* (of which the plural is *basyuka*), means the inner man, the life of which is independent of the body. Now when the *unsyuka* leaves the body, it does not die, it goes to *ubusyuka*, the land of spirits, where in all respects except that of having a body, it retains its humanity. The spirits are not, however, called *abandu* men; though the related term *imindu*, which, applied to living men, is an insult, is often 775

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

MAIN CULTURAL FEATURES

Religion

769 The ancestor cult was the main feature of Ngonde religion. As long as a man had alive a father, father's full brother, or a senior brother, this senior kinsman dealt with the ancestral spirits, not only on his behalf, but also on behalf of his wives and children. In the absence of sickness or misfortune no appeal was made to the spirits. If the diviner diagnosed anger of the ancestors as cause, the senior kinsman had to pray for the sick one. If the half-brothers lived at a distance from each other after the death of their father and uncles, each might pray to the spirits to cure a little sickness, but if it persisted a message had to be sent to the senior kinsman. Wrongs which aroused the anger of the spirits were usually breaches of family morality, insult to a father, neglect of responsibilities by an heir. Offerings consisted of a bull, hen, or beer in the case of commoners, a cow in the case of a chief. The worship of dead chiefs as such was not connected with everyday morality. On the offering of cows by chiefs to their immediate ancestors depended the food and health of the chiefdom and the fertility of women and cows.[1]

769 Each Kyungu was buried in the valley around Mbande, and the grave was planted with trees, making a sacred grove. In times of drought and widespread sickness, sacri-
643 fices were made at the groves under the guidance of a diviner.[2] An insult to the living Kyungu was believed to cause a drought. Each chief or noble was believed to be able to avert local misfortunes for his own people, and the head of every family participated in the divinity of his own ancestors. The great commoners of each chief were believed to have independent access to his ancestral spirits, and so to have a hold upon him. The nobles of Ngonde had a similar power over the Kyungu.

643 As the Kyungu's health was bound up with the welfare of the community, elaborate precautions to maintain his health and to protect him from the danger of sexual impurity were taken, and when he ailed he was killed by suffocation.[3]

778 Sacred lagoons by the lake were associated not with the ancestors, but with a vague supreme deity, *Mbamba*.[4]

796 There were two important annual rituals for the whole tribe in addition to the special sacrifices to avert misfortune. One was the clearing out of the ashes each year after the break of the rains, which was performed on the order of the Kyungu, given through the nobles of Ngonde. The second was the elaborate first-fruits ceremony: fruits were offered by the nobles of Ngonde, in the grove of the last dead Kyungu, and then by the great chiefs, each in the grove of his own predecessor. The nobles and the chiefs of the hills had similar rituals, but they were not synchronized with those of the plain.[5]

Witchcraft

754 The Ngonde believe that certain men and women have the power of harming their neighbours and neighbours' cattle without taking any overt action. The witchcraft is
626 hereditary, and of particular virulence if inherited through the mother.[6] Witches exert their influence at night in dreams. There are two kinds of witches, *avamanga*, defender

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, pp. 256–7; 1, 1936, p. 84; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 191 and 196, also Ch. VII.
[2] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 29–30.
[3] Ibid., pp. 34–6.
[4] Ibid., p. 34; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 178–97.
[5] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 29–34.
[6] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 250–69.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

kind of grass grows there maize will do well, or maybe ground-nuts. 242
Some grass-lands have very poor soil in which no crop at all will grow properly, the one we call *kyusi* for example, or again the one we call *umyegesi* ("the ant"); no one hoes these lands. Some gardens we hoe on the higher ground, others near the streams, either right in the mud by the water or else in ground that is merely moist. On the higher ground we hoe millet, peas, sweet-potatoes, cassava and some other crops; in the muddy places by the water we hoe yams, building huge ridges for them called *fibimbika*; and there too we sometimes put in (during the dry season) the shoots of sweet potatoes that we shall later plant elsewhere. If the soil is only a little muddy and is mixed with sand, then we plant maize there. The right soil for beans we call *kibumba*—a red soil which is sometimes mixed with sand. Ground-nuts we either plant in the *kibumba* (if it is the sandy kind) or else just in sand. Whenever a man is hoeing a field for millet or ground-nuts or sweet-potatoes, he can tell just from the soil whether his crop will do well or not."[1]

And so also the Nyakyusa well understand the different qualities of 232
pasture. The cattle are herded by small boys but on most mornings one of the men also goes out with the herd to show the boys where to pasture it and what grass-land to avoid.

Into the value of arable land sentiment also enters and men like, 311
ceteris paribus, to hoe their gardens where they themselves or their fathers 769
and brothers have hoed before. So too the value of building plots is determined both by practical and emotional considerations: large and relatively level sites on which bananas grow well are preferred to narrow or steeply sloping ones or to sites where bananas do badly, but, on the other hand, of two equally convenient sites that with family associations is normally preferred. And in the case of building sites religious considerations may also enter. A friend of mine told me that, when his father died, he did not move but left his father's site vacant with the new grave upon it; a year or two later his millet crop unaccountably failed and [787]
the diviner told him that his father's spirit was angry that no one had "swept his grave," i.e. that the plot had been left vacant. My friend did not actually move, even then, for he preferred his own site; he compromised by the performance of a ritual sacrifice to his father's spirit. But in such cases a man will often move to his dead father's site for fear of further misfortunes.

We have discussed briefly the purposes for which and the techniques 000
by means of which the Nyakyusa use their lands and we have indicated a few of the main considerations which lead them to value some particular

[1] Text written for me by a literate Nyakyusa.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Mwambelo, younger brother of Mwakasungula, succeeded and abandoning the enclosure at Mbande, went to live by the lake shore.[1] And so yet another step was taken from the traditional religious seclusion. His successors returned to Mbande; but the custom of building an enclosure round the houses of the Kyungu was not resumed. 173

In his reign Mwafulilwa, chief of the next tribe to the south of Ngonde, sought aid against the Ngoni and the men of Ngonde responded and won a battle. But the Ngoni then replied with another night raid in which they found Mwambelo alone in his house and killed him and returned home. Another attack followed before a new Kyungu had been installed, but it was repulsed, "for this time they had come by day!"

"And then the nobles of Ngonde made Gwa Sapasi Kyungu; he was a son of Kalambo, a chief of Ngana; for they said that, as so many of the chiefs of Ngelenge had been killed by the Ngoni, they would now take one of their cousins again as the Kyungu." And now at last Ngonde submitted to the Ngoni. Gwa Sapasi, with the concurrence of all the chiefs and all the nobles save one[2] sent a tusk of ivory to the Ngoni chief Mtwalo. "And from that time forwards the Ngoni never fought with us again."

A few years later, in 1875, after Gwa Sapasi had died and been succeeded by Mwafongo, the Europeans first visited Ngonde. Arab slaves traders established themselves there about the same time, and with the struggle between the two races for the possession of Ngonde the modern period begins. 175

3. *RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

The traditional status of the Kyungus had in part a religious basis.[3] 643 The ruling Kyungu and the spirits of his dead predecessors were 769 believed to form one divine company, the anger of any one of whom had terrible effects: while in his own flesh and in some of his possessions 789 magical power was believed to reside. But the Kyungu was not alone in his religious potency, he was but the greatest of many. The nobles of Ngonde and the territorial nobles, the chiefs both great and small, professional rainmakers and doctors, the great-commoners of the villages, heads of families and even ordinary men and women—all alike were believed to have some access to, some dealings with divine or

[1] Three nobles of Ngonde, in recounting this story, maintained that Mwambelo was mad.

[2] He was Mwenisungo, whose story is omitted here for lack of space.

[3] As this paper is concerned only with political institutions no full analysis of the tribal religion of Ngonde is here attempted, only those aspects of it are dealt with which have political significance.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

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magical powers. And the faith alike in ancestors and in witchcraft gave to every group of subjects a religious hold over their rulers.

(a) *THE THEISTIC ELEMENT.*

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Though the early Kyungus had lived on the stony top of Mbande none of them had been buried there, for "the ground was too hard to dig graves in." They and their successors were all buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. Thus Kyungu Mwangonde is referred to as "He of Bwiba," Kyungu Mwakasungula as "He of Ipota," and so on.

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Now drought and widespread sickness were believed to be caused by the anger either of some dead Kyungu or of the living one. "In time of drought they (the nobles of Ngonde) would go to a diviner to enquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would tell them that it was so and so. So they would tell the (living) Kyungu. And he would give them either a bull or a sheep, together with some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own house, one of the pots which were continually brought by his people as tribute.[1] And he would give them some flour and some cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove. Now the diviner would have told them that he (the dead Kyungu) was angry because they had omitted (for so long) to build his house. So they would begin by building his house in the grove, they would build a miniature hut with rafters.[2] Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fix some of the pieces to the house in the grove—an action which they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And, finally, they would pour out (some of) the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a house in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

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"But occasionally if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any of them: 'No—no.'

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[1] *Vide infra* section 4.

[2] This is the custom traditional in the sacred groves of all important chiefs, both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa. We have seen it done among the Nyakyusa. The hut which we saw built was between two and three feet high.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

And at length he would tell them that it was the living Kyungu who was angry because so and so had insulted him. Then there would be no sacrifice in the grove at all, but the nobles of Ngonde would go to the one who had insulted the Kyungu and charge him with it, asking him what he meant by thus killing them all, would not the whole land starve! And so the wrongdoer would take a cow to the Kyungu who, thereupon, would address the nobles of Ngonde, saying: 'If it was my anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been some one (of the dead Kyungus) whom you forgot to ask about.' And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again! 643 731 787

"If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would; and then the diviner would tell them that it was so and so (one of the dead Kyungus), and they would go and sacrifice in his grove."

Thus the belief in the power of the dead Kyungus, a power in which their living successor participated, was one of the factors of the central political institutions of Ngonde. The Kyungu did not himself sacrifice in the sacred groves but the nobles of Ngonde did so, with materials provided by him, and from these sacrifices the whole plain was believed to benefit. While to insult the Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. And we have already seen, in the story of Mwakasungula's return from exile,[1] that other prominent members of the royal family also were believed to share this power. 643 769 782 731

The absence of central political institutions among the Nyakyusa was, as we shall see, mainly due to economic causes; but in part also this difference can be traced to the climatic difference acting upon similar religious faiths. The Nyakyusa had in the Lwembes, the hereditary chiefs of Lubaga, a line of religious paramounts. Chiefs from all over the district sent gifts to them to ask for health and rain. That they never achieved any secular paramountcy at all was mainly because they were poor. But the difference of rainfall was important too. Droughts in Ngonde occurred frequently, and each one made the people remember their Kyungu's power. North of the Songwe droughts were rare and slight. 643 731

[1] p. 27.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 Nor were rain and health the only blessings which were sought in the sacred groves round Mbande, general fertility, the peace of the
769 country, the absence of rats and the success of the ivory trade were
778 believed to depend in part on the favour of the dead Kyungus. And we have a little evidence that some of these other blessings also were believed to be withheld by the anger of a living Kyungu.

The religious powers of dead and living Kyungus, however, were only believed to be effective in the Ngonde plain; the fiefs of the hills, certainly, and, as far as we know, the chiefdoms of the Nyondos and Kamemes also, were unaffected by them. And this fact is correlated with the slighter secular hold which Mbande had over the hills as compared with the plain.

769 Two notable religious rituals of the plain must now be mentioned.
It was customary, first, to clear out the ashes (*ukujola ihikungu*) each
786 year after the break of the rains. In traditional belief the spirits of the ancestors, whether of chiefs or of commoners, were closely associated with the fires in the houses of their descendants; and so it was only by clearing out the old fires regularly that the spirits and their potential anger could be driven away. Every religious ritual which deals with the ancestors, whether in Ngonde or among the Nyakyusa, has the function of driving them away. For, while the Christians believe that sustained communion with God may be a blessed state, the pagans in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa believe that sustained communion
[787] with the ancestral spirits is always terrible and dangerous; prophecy may flow from it, but if the communion is not broken, if it continues too long, then evil will result; and prophecy is nearly always prophecy of evil. In pagan belief the spirits of the dead come constantly to "brood" on man and his works and have constantly to be satisfied and driven away by ritual.

"Always they used to clear-out the ashes at the new year, at the first hoeing, at the break of the rains in December. They feared that death and disease would spread through the land if they continued living with the old fires, that the spirits in the ground, both the spirits of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry; let them drive the spirits away and hoe in peace. They always remembered to do so each new year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually, they never forgot. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to clear out the ashes; and then they would hoe in peace. And at other times too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the ashes again."

The nobles of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave the order to clear out the ashes; messages were sent to the great chiefs and

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

the senior territorial nobles of the plain, and they told their juniors. A sacrifice was made in one of the sacred groves of the Kyungus and all fires in the whole Ngonde plain were put out. And then "all the chiefs from every country near Mbande and the nobles and all the great-commoners and all the ordinary men and the women too went to Kyimbwe." At Kyimbwe, which is a cross-roads in the bush, they threw away the ashes of their old fires; while those few people who could not get to Kyimbwe threw them away near their own houses on the same day as the others. At Kyimbwe new fire was made with fire-sticks by the nobles of Ngonde and distributed to the whole plain in order. Great chiefs and senior nobles took it first and passed it to their juniors, chiefs passed to great-commoners, and in each group the common people got it from their own ruling noble or their own great-commoner.

And then, later in the year when the first maize and the first pumpkin leaves were ready to eat, an elaborate first-fruit ceremony was carried out. The first-fruits were offered by the nobles of Ngonde in the grove of the previous Kyungu, the one who had last died. "Then the great chiefs would do so next—Kalonga, Mwakasungula, Mwembelo, Katamba and the chiefs of Ngana also, each in his own sacred grove (i.e. at the grave of his own predecessor in the title). . . . . And then after them everyone, both chiefs and people, each at his father's grave. All offered first-fruits to their own spirits. And finally they would eat themselves, each with his chief wife. But beforehand they would not eat for fear of angering the spirits."

These two rituals concerned the plain alone; the nobles and chiefs of the hills are said to have had similar rituals of their own but they were not synchronized with or dependent upon those of the plain.

In time of tribal war also the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde led the people in prayer. All chiefs and nobles were summoned from the plain and the great ones entered the Kyungu's house to receive their instructions: "When he had finished speaking he would tell them to go to pray. So they would leave his house and gather all together, all chiefs and men, and pray. The premier noble of Ngonde would begin, asking each of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn to bless them in the fight. And then the great chiefs would pray after them" (each addressing his own predecessors in his title). The territorial nobles did not pray, for it was the royal family alone whose spirits were then addressed. Here again it was the plain alone that was concerned.

Now this organization of religious ritual in the Ngonde plain was both a factor of and itself determined by the general political

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17
NyaKyusa

structure. We shall see in later sections how many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions. But the reverse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular content at all, the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle were sent to Lubaga by the other chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and health; but the "clearing out of the ashes" was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruit ritual at all;[1] while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

Besides the Kyungus the great chiefs of Ngonde also were believed to be able to avert local droughts and misfortunes in their districts by offerings to their own immediate ancestors; and the lesser chiefs likewise and the territorial nobles—each in his own little area. While among the territorial nobles, the original owners of the land had wider powers. It will be remembered that to them the first Kyungu is said to have given head-cloths and asked for their prayers. Sometimes people would prophesy future misfortune "at Kisindile", or "at Kaluma" or "at Ifumbo," or would prophesy of present misfortunes that such was their source. Then the territorial noble concerned[2] would be formally visited by the nobles of Ngonde, and he and they together would offer sacrifice to his ancestors on behalf of all Ngonde.

And then also there were sacred lagoons near the lake—Nthola, Kambwe, Kibondo, Mulale and Katindi. They were associated not with ancestral spirits at all but with a vaguely defined supreme deity named Mbamba. And beside them also prayers and sacrifices were made from time to time by the nobles of Ngonde.

Over these other spiritual powers we need not linger, save to notice one most significant fact. The participation by the Kyungu in the divinity of his ancestors was no isolated phenomenon in Ngonde. The head of every family in the country, whether of chiefs or commoners, was similarly placed; in his own family and, in the case of a chief or noble, in his own area too, he was both a priest and a demi-god; he dealt with the spirits and by virtue of his relation to them shared their powers; his anger could curse. The Kyungus were but the greatest of many divinities. And thus there was in theistic ritual a high degree of local and family autonomy; local or family misfortunes

[1] Particular people among the Nyakyusa carried it out: reigning chiefs, senior great-commoners, prophets, and any person whose birth was held to be due to magical treatment of a previously barren woman. But only they.

[2] Mwene-kisindile, Mwene-kaluma, Mwene-ifumbo etc.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

593 they continually give each other cows; between their respective sons also the exchange usually continues, but between their grandsons it lapses. 593 686 Reciprocity is expected and can be legally enforced, but it is not insisted upon so long as the two men concerned are friends, and its legal enforcement at once breaks the relationship. If two such half-brothers (or their sons) quarrel, one may take legal action for "separation" (*okolekana*) against the other. The cows that have been handed over by both sides since the beginning of the relationship (perhaps twenty or thirty years before) are counted up, and one or the other is ordered to pay over the balance to make the numbers equal. After this the two are "no longer kinsmen," they have no mutual obligations and do not attend each other's funerals.

593 It is usual for a father to create this relationship between his senior 428 son and the eldest of each group of full-brothers, so that by this exchange of cows the family is held together. The linkage of half-brothers, whether by blood or by "milking each others cows," is important in inheritance. If a man with no full-brother dies and leaves no sons, or sons too young to inherit, then the inheritance passes to a linked half-brother; to a half-brother linked by blood if there is one, if there is not then to one linked by exchange of cows.

771 Religion enters continually into family life and helps to maintain wider kinship bonds also. The Nyakyusa religion falls, broadly, into three parts: The Ancestor cult, Witchcraft and Magic. Taken as a whole their religion, as they believe, secures for them many of the most important values of life, health, good crops and success in various enterprises; it provides an intelligible explanation of death and misfortune by tracing them to the ill-will either of the ancestral spirits or of living men acting through witchcraft or magic; in its rituals it resolves fear and replaces it by hope and confidence; while the believed destructive action of the ancestors and of men is generally, though not entirely, linked with morality.[10] The commonest explanation of misfortune is that some wrong done by the victim, or by his close kinsman, has provoked the spirits or his fellow men to anger.

769 As long as a man has alive a father, a father's full-brother, or a senior 753 brother or half-brother[11] of his own, this senior kinsman deals with the ancestral spirits, not only on his behalf, but also on behalf of his wives and children; and health is the chief value which his prayers are believed to secure for them. In the absence of sickness or misfortune no appeal is

[10] cf. Godfrey Wilson. "An African Morality." *Africa*. Jan. 1936.
[11] Provided the relationship between them has not been legally broken (*vide supra*.).

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ever made to the spirits, but when some member of a family or his wife or 769
child falls sick the anger of the spirits is often suspected as a possible 753
cause. There are usually other reasons suspected as well, and so the [787]
sickness is taken to a diviner for diagnosis. Various causes are suggested to the diviner and he selects one among them. If the anger of the spirits is selected then this senior kinsman must pray for the one who is sick, if he is to recover. When half-brothers live at a distance from one another, after their father and his brothers have died, then each may pray to the spirits to cure a little sickness in his own family but if the sickness persists then a message must be sent to the senior kinsman. And, as the anger of the spirits is due to wrong doing, the sinner must reform his ways as well.

The wrongs which rouse the spirits to anger are usually breaches of 673
family morality. If a son does not respect his father or insults him, if an heir neglects to feed and provide for the dead man's children, then when sickness falls on him or his own children it will probably be traced to the anger of the spirits at his behaviour.

Space does not allow any full analysis of religion in family life and in 754
the relationships of kinsmen and affines. Not only the ancestor cult but 771
witchcraft and magic are factors in them. A man's neglect of a wife or his cruelty to her may, it is believed, lead to his falling sick through her witchcraft and that of sympathetic neighbours; his relations with his father-in-law are affected by the fear that if he offends him, his father-in-law may, by magical means, kill his children, and so on.

Wider kinship groupings than the family gather at ceremonies and 614
are recognized in the rules against incest. But there are no clans; there is no descent group continuous down the generations with a common name and definite membership. Each individual family has its own penumbra of kinsfolk, the effective kindred of a man and his son, or of two half-brothers are not all the same, while each single person is especially related by respect, affection and mutual obligations to particular kinsmen beyond his own family. Descent, as we have seen, is patrilineal 611
except in the case of illigitimate children. A man asked for his *ekekɔlɔ* 614
always recites first the names of his paternal forbears as far as he can [848]
remember. But if he is related through mother or grandmother to a chief he usually volunteers this fact as part of his *ekekɔlɔ*; and questions always elicit some knowledge of his mother's paternal kinsfolk and a statement that "they are my *ekekɔlɔ* too." Descendants of a common grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are to-day forbidden to marry, 582
and no case of infringment has come to my notice; descendants of a common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry but, I am told,

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 come to it. But, on the other hand, everyone knows when a sacrifice is
778 taking place, and, in spite of the influence of missions, most people in the
793 pagan community believe in its efficacy.

782 Sacrifices are prompted either by actual misfortune or by prophecies
787 of it. The four sacrifices which I have seen myself were all stimulated by an actual shortage of food, and the hereditary priests have often told me that " now-a-days the chiefs do not listen to us until hunger comes." But, traditionally, sacrifices are said to have been usually prompted by prophecies of coming misfortune which was then averted by them. In each chiefdom the ruling great commoners, the hereditary priests and some private persons as well are believed to have the power of dreaming of misfortune (*okokunguluka*) before it comes. And the chiefs are said always to have listened to these dreams, formerly, and to have acted upon them.

778 Among the groves there is an order of seniority ; the older the grove
173 the more chiefdoms are concerned in the sacrifices there. And in Selya is the most important grove of all—Lubaga. All the chiefdoms of Selya, many of the Nyakyusa proper and even some of the neighbouring chiefdoms of the Mwamba are traditionally concerned in its sacrifices. Lubaga, the Nyakyusa say, is the grove of Lwembe, one of the original chiefs who came down the Livingstone Mountains from the East, eight or nine generations ago ; and from him all the present Selya chiefs are descended. The ancestor of the chiefs of the Nyakyusa proper was a brother of Lwembe ; and though the Kukwe and Mwamba chiefs are not related, yet those of the Mwamba who are nearest to Lubaga used to send cows there for sacrifice as well, because of the great reputation that this grove had.

622 Sacrifices are still made in the country of the chief of Lubaga
782 (Mwakisisya) for all the surrounding chiefdoms, but the full ritual has not been carried out for fourty years. Traditionally each chief of Lubaga was ritually installed into a position somewhat resembling that of Sir James Frazer's " Divine Kings," a position hedged with taboos, in which not only the sacrifices he made to Lwembe but his own health and fertility also were believed to be intimately connected with the prosperity of his own and neighbouring chiefdoms. But the present chief has never been properly installed, nor was his father before him. The sacrifices at Lubaga are believed to benefit not only the Nyakyusa but also the next
[173] tribe to the East, the Kinga, who live on the heights of the Livingstone Mountains ; for Lwembe, they say, was born a Kinga and moved down the mountains to Lubaga, taking the fertility of the soil with him. And

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

are redrawn and only the fields in old craters (the most prized and fertile of all) are not re-allotted. Thus the villages of kinsmen of two generations adjoin, and often those of three generations.

On the old chief's death his village headmen become priests of the grove in which he is buried, and, in co-operation with his sons, the new chiefs, sacrifice there on behalf of the two countries into which his old chiefdom is divided. There is a nice balance of power between chief and village headmen in life, and when he dies his two heirs and the headmen (or their heirs) continue to share power, the power which belief in his spiritual force and their ability to guide it gives them. The success or failure of rituals is held largely to depend upon the personal relationships of the leading participants, chiefs and commoner priests.

Besides the ordinary commoner priests (the village headmen of a past generation or their heirs) there are priests of the chiefs' lineage, usually belonging to a junior line to which specific ritual functions, such as rain-making, have been entrusted, and whose office is hereditary in the same way as that of a chief. Kasitile (86),[1] the rain-maker, is such a priest: his grandfather was the brother of a ruling chief (43) and had been appointed as rain-maker (*umpelafula*) and priest (*unyago*), the two functions being separate but overlapping. As rain-maker Kasitile tended the rain stones, as priest he initiated the rituals in certain of the sacred groves, though he did not actually officiate himself. Kasitile was a key informant on ritual and a chapter is devoted to his history, since it epitomizes the relationships between chiefs and commoners.

As we have shown, most of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde chiefs claim some sort of kinship with one another. Those who are nearly related pray together at the groves of their common ancestors, and those more distantly connected join in sacrifice to their founding fathers, but in the communal rituals kinship is neither the dominant theme nor the exclusive principle of association, as it is in the rituals celebrated by private persons. In the communal rituals most of the priests are commoners unrelated to the dead who are honoured, and the sacrifices are held to benefit not only the descendants of the dead, but all those who live in the countries they once ruled. Nevertheless, the symbolism of the communal rituals constantly recalls that of the rituals of kinship; themes which pervade the death ritual recur again in the rituals of 'coming out' and 'cleansing the country'. This background is

[1] Numerals after a name refer to the genealogy of Nyakyusa chiefs facing p. 3.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

accessible in an earlier book, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*,[1] and the details need not be recapitulated here.

Perhaps the reader has already noted a certain difficulty over tenses: 'is' tends to merge into 'was'. When we first visited BuNyakyusa in 1934 missionaries of various denominations had already been at work, and a foreign government in control, for forty years past. Between 1934 and my last visit in 1955 the changes have been great, but I use the present tense for things seen at first hand, whether earlier or later, and a separate chapter is devoted to the twenty years' change. It is well to recognize at the outset, however, that in 1934 the sanctity and power of the 'divine kings' was already questioned and their rituals were curtailed, and even the pagan cosmology of the Nyakyusa was beginning to exhibit traces of Christian influence. One striking example was the changing, or rather the fluid, connotation of the name *Kyala*.

Two new types of organization developed in BuNyakyusa with the arrival of the Europeans: churches which are based on a principle of association wholly new to the pagan tradition—common belief as opposed to kinship or contiguity; and a centralized system of government. To these have now been added trading concerns, of which the most important are co-operative societies exporting coffee and rice.

The subject of this book is (i) the traditional rituals celebrated on behalf of chiefdoms and groups of chiefdoms, and (ii) the changing ideas and values apparent as a section of the Nyakyusa turn from paganism to Christianity. In the concluding chapters an attempt is made to demonstrate the links between the changes in social structure and the changes in ritual.

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*, 1957.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

539 fierce warriors. They were first driven out, then later Lwembe (3) was driven out too. When Lwembe was a child, herding cattle with his fellows, he moulded cattle of clay and they became alive; so with lions and leopards, too; he also took up a handful of earth and it became beans or millet. His fellows told Mwemusi of this and he was astonished. Then Mwemusi sent men to watch; they went early in the morning and hid themselves and watched; they watched him making all these things. Then they wanted to kill him, but the forefather of Mwakalukwa [another Kinga chief] gave him two cows; he was a friend and said: 'Leave the country, they want to kill you, take these cows and eat them on the road.' Lwembe went away with Kissoule and Mwamaloba (Mwamalunguka) and two wives and all his animals.

These three, Nkekete (1), Kyala (2), and Lwembe (3), were driven out by Mwemusi, but Lwembe's younger brothers, the BaMwalukissa (4), were left. When Lwembe went away, Mwemusi's men followed him, wishing to kill him, but they feared his animals, and did not try.

Nkekete (1) set out to the Lake [Nyasa] and went into a stream; he is in the water now, in a stream with pools near the Lake, in Kisi country. Kyala (2) went and built among stones in a cave. When the [177] Europeans came they took rifles and shot at Kyala in the place where he had built, so he moved to a different place. Of old he was in a cave washed by the waters of the Lake, but after the Europeans came he moved to his present cave at the boundary between Kisselelo's and Kisi country. Kyala had fowls there; some saw them in the old days [782] and some did not. Nkekete is in a stream with pools in it; there (at Lumbila in Kisi country) men sacrifice a cow. Kyala's sheep are killed near his cave.

Neither Nkekete nor Kyala had any children, but Lwembe (3), who went off alive, begot many children. We speak with them. Nkekete and Kyala were killed, Lwembe was not. . . . All the Kinga [782] chiefs when praying in the sacred groves say the names of their fathers [769] who have died, and also the names of Nkekete, Kyala, and Lwembe, in that order . . . Lwembe was the youngest of the three brothers . . . Nkekete and Kyala only made crops—millet and beans. We ask for fertility of the soil (*imboto*), and sunshine, and rain from them, but not animals. From Lwembe we ask for milk, and fertility of men and cattle, and snakes, and goats, and sheep, and all crops. Lwembe has everything. We ask for sunshine and rain from Lwembe as well.

When Lwembe went down into Selya he found the hill people (*BaMwamba*) and the people of the plain (Mwakyembe's men)[1] already there. They feared him because he had all things, and they still fear him. He was greater than Nkekete. They cut Nkekete's throat, but they couldn't kill Lwembe. He made the small lakes—all of them. He

[1] In other versions Mwakyembe is a descendant of Lwembe.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173 The balance between chiefs and commoners is explicit. So
773 also is their dependence on *both* cultivation and herding, and it
[643] should be noted that, though the Nyakyusa speak of themselves as stock men, they are not pastoralists to the same extent as
[233] the Masai or the Nuer. The number of cattle in Rungwe District today is less than half the human population, and men traditionally have done the heaviest share of cultivation.

773 In every version of the myth the tension between father and
593 son, or older and younger brother, is stressed. In Nyakyusa
561 society the father (or his eldest son who replaces him) controls
173 the family property and exacts obedience from his juniors who
[769] continue to show their respect after his death by sacrifices. The tale of Kyala and Lwembe celebrates the triumph of the junior. Thus, at the heart of the very ritual which sanctifies seniority there is the assertion of the victory of the son and younger brother. The myth expresses the aspirations of subordinates—of commoners and junior kinsmen—as well as the power of chiefs and seniors.

173 As we have already noted, the heroic cycle makes no reference
773 to the peculiar Nyakyusa institution of age-villages. Their charter
561 is a quite separate myth[1] which tells of a chief who looked on his
621 daughter-in-law and loved her and took her, and this so shocked
606 men that in future fathers and sons built separately, so that a father-in-law should never see his daughter-in-law.

There are other hints of the eternal theme. Besides the saga of
173 Lwembe there is another quite different tale of the origin of fire,
773 which is less often related. In it a girl who had angered her father
372 by breaking his drinking calabash fled from BuKinga to the Nyakyusa valley, where she found people who ate their food raw. She made fire and cooked for them and 'all women came to her to learn to cook'. The long-necked calabash, used as a drinking
[415] vessel and in prayer to the shades, is a man's most personal
[768] possession destroyed at his death, and it stands for a husband, while cooking is a symbol of the sexual activity of women, so the myth is perhaps a drama of incest, but we have no direct evidence of this.

173 This last is the only tale in which a woman appears as a
773 benefactor. In general, the mythology is that of a strongly
562 patrilineal society in which men are dominant. The wives of Lwembe who walked behind their lord, shepherded by a lion,

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 85.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER III

THE 'DIVINE KINGS'

17

(a) CHARACTERISTICS OF 'DIVINE KINGS'

THE heroic myths and genealogies proclaim the origin of chieftainship, and point to a distinction between ordinary chiefs and those we call 'divine kings'. Two remote ancestors who were pre-eminent are worshipped as heroes and creators, their graves are centres at which a large number of chiefdoms join in celebration, and living representatives are selected in every generation bearing their names. These are the 'divine kings', the Lwembe of Lubaga (in the centre of Nyakyusa country) and the Kyungu of Mbande near Karonga in Nyasaland. A third hero, Kyala, is associated with the cave, PaliKyala, near Ikombe at the north-east corner of the Lake, and he is worshipped in the same way as the other two, except that the priest of the cave is not his descendant and does not embody him. According to the myth, Kyala was the brother of Lwembe, but died without issue. However, the word for chiefs—*aba-nya-fyale*—is popularly believed to mean 'the sons of Kyala'.[1] 773 769 643

Kyala is one hero among others, but his name is *also* used in the sense of 'the lord': a chief is *kyala gwake* (his lord) to a commoner, a father is *kyala gwake* to his son or daughter 'because he created him' and a shade is *kyala* to his living kinsman (*unsyuka jo kyala*). Of one who performs a feat—something difficult—it is said 'he is Kyala'.[2] This usage is said to be very old, but there is yet another meaning of the word which is new. *Kyala* was used by the European missionaries (who first established themselves near PaliKyala) as their translation of 'God'. Today these three conceptions are inextricably mixed: Kyala the hero, Kyala 'the 769 643 [775] [177] [797]

[1] I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Fueter for drawing my attention to this point. It is doubtful whether *Kyala* and *fyale* in fact come from the same root. *Fyale* in Hehe means the daughter of a chief (A. G. O. Hodgson, 'Some Notes on the Wahehe of Mahenge District, *J.R.A.I.*, lvi (1926), p. 40). In Bena *nyakiyara* means 'my husband's father or mother' (A. T. and G. M. Culwick, *Ubena of the Rivers*, p. 196). In Ganda *mukyala* means 'lady', mistress of a household and garden (J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, p. 44). cf. Nyika, *fiala* 'to beget, to bear' (J. L. Krapf and J. Rebmann, *A Nyika-English Dictionary*, edited by T. H. Sparshott, 1887). [192]

[2] cf. F. R. Lehmann, 'Some field notes on the Nyakyusa', *Sociologus*, New Series, 1951, vol. 5, p. 66. [113]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 lord', and Kyala the Christian deity. In the sacrifices at Lubaga
643 and the groves of various chiefs, the name Kyala was mentioned repeatedly, as will be shown. Some may interpret this as evidence of a traditional belief in an overriding deity. We think that in most cases it is used in the sense of Kyala the hero, or Kyala 'the lord', but after forty years[1] and more of missionary activity it is not possible to establish exactly what the traditional conception of Kyala was. Moreover, it will be obvious that many of the speakers
[177] quoted in later chapters now entertain religious notions which have been unconsciously, and sometimes profoundly, modified by Christian ideas, a phenomenon especially noteworthy in their references to Kyala.

All the Nyakyusa proper (that is those of Selya, the Lake plain,
769 and Masoko) send cattle to sacrifice at Lubaga (the grove of
782 Lwembe), and several of the Kinga chiefs send there too. The people of Ngonde send to the Kyungu at Mbande, but not to Lubaga, while the people living north of the Songwe did not ever send to Mbande. Some of the people of the Lake plain (Mu-Ngonde) and various Kinga chiefs send to PaliKyala as well as to Lubaga, but the hill people never send to PaliKyala, nor did the Kisi who lived around PaliKyala send to Lubaga. In other words, Lwembe and Kyala were 'brothers' and it was possible to sacrifice to both, though people living close to one centre did not send to the other. All those living south of the Songwe river looked to Mbande; those north of it to Lubaga or PaliKyala. Lwembe, Kyala, and Kyungu were ancestors, honoured primarily by their own descendants or by those of a brother, but they were also divine heroes who might be appealed to by unrelated people through their priests.

The distinction between a 'divine king' and an early ancestor who established a line of chiefs is not a sharp one, and we have indeed been uncertain whether or not to class Mwangomale (4K),[2] the founder (or at least a notable son) of the Kukwe line, with Lwembe and Kyungu. Sacrifices used to be made to Mwangomale at the grove of Kabale by a number of Kukwe chiefs, but we have no evidence either of the formal installation of a living representative in each generation or of sacrifices by unrelated people, and therefore do not include Mwangomale among the 'divine kings'. The early inhabitants of the Rungwe

[1] Field-work began in 1934.

[2] Numerals followed by K refer to the genealogy of Kukwe chiefs facing p. 27.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

area, the Penja, have a grove, Lukata, where they worship their founding ancestor, and the Nyika living on the west bank of the Kiwira river have their grove, Lubaga, twenty miles or more from the Lubaga in Selya and unconnected with it. A third distinct group, the Saku, who were the first inhabitants of the south-eastern part of Rungwe District, have their own grove, Nkeso, where their progenitors Mwamakula and Mwalukinge were buried. None of these has anything like the prestige and sanctity of the Lwembe or the Kyungu, but they are probably the prototype from which the 'divine kings' developed. 769 782

What circumstances produced a 'divine king' at Lubaga and not (so far as our limited knowledge goes) at Kabale we do not know, but we can show how the 'divine kingship' at Mbande, near the Lake shore, developed rather differently from the originally similar institution at Lubaga which is forty miles from the Lake. The Kyungu gradually acquired political power in a way in which the Lwembe did not. Among the Nyakyusa the 'sons of Lwembe' spread through the country establishing themselves as independent chiefs. They acknowledged the mystical supremacy of the Lwembe, and sent cattle to him to sacrifice, but they were sovereigns in their own territories. Just what this mystical supremacy of Lwembe implied was and still is often a matter of dispute, as we shall see. On the death of a chief his country was normally divided into two independent sections, each ruled by one of his sons. One heir sometimes fought the other and reduced him to a subordinate position, but the number of independent chiefdoms appears to have increased fairly steadily, and their size did not diminish in proportion, for the Nyakyusa chiefs have been expanding their area of occupation over a long period, establishing themselves as rulers over scattered and unorganized peoples with less developed techniques than their own, or colonizing unoccupied forest country. Expansion into uncultivated forest is still going on (1955), and were it not for the vigilance of the British Administration it is almost certain that the Safwa people would have been conquered and absorbed like the Penja, Lugulu, and others before them.[1] In 1936 over 100 independent chiefdoms were recognized by the people themselves, and they varied in size from 100 to 3,000 adult men. 769 643 [773] [173] [636] [173] [634]

In Ngonde the development was different. In the early period all the sons of the Kyungu, save two, were killed, and the territorial 173 643

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 4.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

access. It was the nobles who were the effective rulers of the country; the divine Kyungu was the centre, a source of mystical power, a numinous symbol of unity, but not a judge or an administrator. Gradually, however, the Kyungus emerged from seclusion; they descended from the hill of Mbande; later they ceased to live within a stockade; in the crises of the Ngoni invasion the Kyungu in office (a notable warrior before his accession to the stool) broke tradition by himself taking arms. 'When the Ngoni came their enmity was like that of the lions and their number like that of the ants, and so Kyungu Mwakasungula, seeing his people were terrified, took up arms in person, and said he would die fighting. And his people heard with awe and astonishment that he himself had come to fight and they determined to die with him.' The next stage was a development of the judicial functions of the Kyungu until, in the present generation, the transformation from god to magistrate was complete.[1] 173 643

We turn now to the detailed description of the rituals at each shrine.

(b) LUBAGA

Lubaga is a hill dominating the central part of the Nyakyusa valley and on its slopes are signs of old and intensive cultivation. There an early Lwembe (19) lived and was buried, there is the grove where he is worshipped, and there his descendant chosen as 'the living Lwembe' should build. According to tradition the 'sons of Lwembe' spread all over the Nyakyusa valley as chiefs, but two senior lineages, that of Mwampondele (27) and that of Mwakisisya (56), remained near Lubaga, and from them was chosen, alternately, the living embodiment of the 'divine king', the Lwembe. Men feared greatly to be chosen, for they feared to be 'killed by the grove', and indeed the Lwembe rarely lived long. He must not fall ill or all the people of the country would do so likewise; therefore if he ailed he was smothered by his priests who stuffed up his nostrils and other passages of his body. Towards the end of our stay in BuNyakyusa Kasitile made a formal statement on this point in the presence of another priest, Mwamakunda: 778 769 [173] 769 643

The Lwembes were not sick. They said: 'I am going, I have eaten food at home, at the place of the shade', and they died that day; they

[1] The change in the position of the Kyungu from the earliest period is discussed in detail by Godfrey Wilson in *The Constitution of Ngonde*.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 643 were not ill, they were not troubled as we are. For later in the evening, while the Lwembe was still alive, the commoner priests removed his nails and hair; they came near and plucked them off. He shouted: 'Who is snatching at me?' They replied: 'No one', and then they smothered him with cloth in the nostrils and in the anus, and he went away [i.e. he died]. . . . They did it only when he had initiated it himself by saying: 'I have eaten food in the land of the shades'; they [775] did not begin it themselves. . . . They collected the relics in a little bamboo flask, and a priest treated them so that Lwembe might not go away with the food to the land of the shades, that the fertility of the soil (*ilifugo*), this *ifingila*, might always remain above.

[778] These relics, the hair and the nails, were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops.

While the Lwembe lived he was secluded—ordinary men did 643 not see him—and he was subject to numerous taboos. For example, [784] he might not tread in water lest the country should be flooded; he never bathed in a stream (as Nyakyusa men do daily) and was carried across any river when travelling; he must not sit on a green banana leaf lest the bananas in the country should fail, but was always provided with a skin to sit upon, and he ate only the middle portion of a banana throwing away the ends for 'if he finished the whole of a banana he would create hunger in the country'. No one might grasp his hand, or drink out of the same calabash as he, save the priests of his own age; if he drank from a calabash when travelling he took it with him, for 'if he left it behind he left hunger in that place'.

The selection of the Lwembe was in the hands of the hereditary priests of Lubaga and the hereditary Kinga priests, who come from BuKinga to sacrifice at Lubaga. The man they choose must be of good character—at the time we were in BuNyakyusa the only willing candidate was rejected because 'he is a bad man, a thief, they refuse to have a thief as priest'—he must exhibit in his own home the power of fertility. 'They don't catch just anyone, but [842] one with children, and cattle, and fertility of the fields in his own homestead. If the man taken as chief is not fertile and rich there will be many sterile people in the homesteads, and much disease and hunger.'

When the priests had decided upon the man of their choice, they seized him and set him upon a sacred skin and a pad of leaves; and it was believed that once he had been set thereon he [761] would die if he refused office; tales were told of a younger brother

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 Lwembe, this is your millet beer, we complain of hunger, oh thou
796 Mwampondele (27), thou Lwembe.

Then the milk was poured likewise and again they prayed for milk and calves, for children and health:

Here is your milk . . . may the locusts pass, may sickness be slight, may milk be plentiful, may the cows calve!

Finally the bamboo beer was poured out, too, and both the Kinga priests prayed in Kinga speaking of hunger. Mwanjala, instructed by Nsyanigwa, took some bamboo beer into his mouth and blew it three times in different directions, saying, between blowing: 'May the rain come.'

The bull was killed by Mwanjande (?). Nsyanigwa first gave the axe and knife to Mwanjala saying: 'This axe and knife [an unhafted and very old spearhead] I, Nsyanigwa, brought from BuKinga to kill the bull, go and kill it.' Mwanjala asked: 'Shall I not give the axe to my younger brother?' and Nsyanigwa replied: 'Yes, give it to him.' So Mwanjala gave it to Mwanjande who killed the bull with one blow at the back of the head. Mwansasa (a commoner priest) cut up the carcass, collecting the first stream of blood in a pot. Then the sacred meat was taken from the fore-
[778] legs, that from the right leg being placed on a plantain leaf, that from the left on a leaf of sweet banana. It was cut up and carried by Kitega (heir of 57?), who walked behind Mwanjala and the two Kinga priests, to the tree where they had poured the beer and milk. Mwanjala turned to the group of those sitting talking and shouting and said: 'Friends, a spear will go to the shades
●[769] [i.e. the shades will be offended by your noise], be quiet', and they fell silent until the offering of meat was made. Then Mwanjala scraped a hollow in the cleared earth at the root of the tree with his foot and threw into it seven or eight pieces. He and the Kinga prayed, while Kitega stood silently holding the rest of the meat:

Oh thou Lwembe, thou Mwampondele (27), stand by us, this is your bull. . . . Give us children, milk, cattle, food; may sickness be slight . . . stand by us.

All this meat was taken from the plantain leaf—the men's portion. At the end, as they walked away Kitega asked: 'What about the women's meat?' And Mwanjala repeated his question. The Kinga replied: 'Are there two sacred places? No! There is no sacrifice

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

instructed us, you have taught us the customs, we did not know them, we thought that when the food came that was all.' 782 796

Kasitile said: 'Yes, I do it as our fathers did it.' Then they discussed the dispute between Mwakisisya and Kasitile and agreed that Kasitile had got the better of Mwakisisya with the reference to his own reluctance to provide cattle for sacrifice.

Kasitile was determined to extract a cow for sacrifice from the chief Mwaipopo (116) also, and presently he said:

Friends, listen, let us report at home that we used hard words, we insulted Mwakisisya, we said there is nothing left to eat though we are not really starving. What has come over me? Why am I ill? Let Mwaipopo pay a cow.

The following day Mwamalunguka, one of the priests of Lubaga, explained what was meant by the complaint of insults from Selya:

The people of Mwaipopo (116) do really insult us, and since the Europeans have given them a Court they have begun to say that Mwakisisya (111) is a priest, not a chief, but just an old priest (*inyago*), and we his men are all angry to hear this because Mwakisisya was always the senior. And they do not send us cattle to sacrifice, they say: 'It's European times now, all that is finished.' [177] [578]

But of Kasitile's retort that Mwakisisya himself did not listen to his priests at home, Mwamalunguka said: 'Indeed it is so, that was an excellent reply.'

The party going up to Lubaga and back travelled dry, but on the return journey Kasitile noticed that the road was wet and he remarked, 'The rain follows us again', and it was true, clouds were gathering quickly. An hour and a half after they got home heavy rain began and continued for three or four hours. During the preceding weeks there had been many heavy showers and bright spells, unnoticed and of no particular significance, but the downpour on the day of the sacrifice was immediately connected with it.

Three weeks later the rain had almost stopped and people were talking of drought. Kasitile was quick to link this with the failure to follow up the offering at Lubaga with sacrifices in the groves of the chiefs. On the sixth of April he spoke his mind to Mwambuputa, the senior village headman of Mwaipopo, when both were visiting us. 769 782 796

Where is the rain? [said Kasitile] I am at fault, and my child Mwaipopo (116) also. He ought to provide a cow to kill at Mwaijonga's

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 (82) grove. According to custom, we should kill a bull here at the same
782 time as one is killed at Lubaga. A messenger from there finds us eating.
796 That was the custom when the chiefs were really chiefs. Now we neglect the rituals. Mwakisisya (111) cut a ripe banana stem for us, but now the bananas are rotting in the homesteads without ripening [owing to our failure to sacrifice]. If our fathers did not sleep they sacrificed cattle, but if we do not sleep we merely offer beer.

Then Kasitile recalled the quarrel between the men of Mwaipopo (116) and those of Lubaga.

Why did you insult Mwakisisya (111) saying 'What remains of your
[344] power?' When we built the Court House in Mwaipopo's country, Mwakisisya's men came to help, and some advised that a beast should be sent to Lubaga to seek blessing on the Court, but others said: 'What use is Lubaga?' . . . Mwakisisya cut a banana stem for us and said 'Seek another cow oh thou Mwakagile' (59, i.e. identifying Kasitile with the grandfather of the chief Mwaipopo whom he represented).

This, however, was an invention of Kasitile's. He continued: 'I, Kasitile, have seen a sacrifice at the grove of Mwaijonga (82) twice, at that of Mwaipopo (115) once, and at that of Mwakabule (117) once, but at Lubaga Kyala has received us frequently.' To which Mwambuputa replied: 'Yes, Kyala has helped us.'

Under pressure from Kasitile and the other priests of his chiefdom Mwaipopo did eventually provide a cow for sacrifice at the grove of his father Mwaijonga (82) but the description of that ritual is deferred to a later chapter.

771 A fundamental conception in Nyakyusa religion is that the proper working of the natural order depends upon harmony of the social order; on proper co-operation between the 'divine king' and his 'sons' the chiefs, between priests and chiefs, and between them and the whole community. If the Lwembe or a rain-
[731] maker is offended, that causes drought or flood in the area of his
[821] influence. When there is heavy rain in Selya it is said, 'There is anger at Lubaga' or 'There is anger at Lwembe's place'. Mwanjala II (78) talking of how angry he had been over an insult remarked, 'Had it been the wet season there would have been a torrent of rain.'

[578] And not only does quarrelling between chiefs and priests bring public misfortune; it reacts upon their own health. How Kasitile
753 linked his ill-health with the quarrel between Mwakisisya (111)
771 of Lubaga and the men of Mwaipopo (116) over the Court, and Mwaipopo's failure to provide cattle for sacrifice has just been

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 too hard to dig graves in'. They and their successors were all
778 buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves
[766] trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. . . . We traced sixteen groves in the plain surrounding Mbande and the nobles who pointed them out remembered participating in celebrations at all except that of the last Kyungu. The ruling Kyungu and the spirits of his
[769] dead predecessors were believed to form one divine company, the anger of any one of whom had terrible effects, and both living and dead were placated with offerings.

778 In time of drought the nobles of Ngonde would go to a diviner
787 to inquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the
782 names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would tell them that it was so and so. They would inform the living
821 Kyungu and he would give them a bull or a sheep, together with some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own
643 house, brought by his people as tribute. And he would give them some flour and cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove and build a miniature hut. Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fasten some of the pieces on to the hut in the grove—an action they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And finally, they would pour out some of the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a hut and make an offering in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

643 But occasionally, if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the
688 Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself
787 who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the
689 names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any of them: 'No . . . no.' And at length he would tell them that it
821 was the living Kyungu who was angry because so-and-so had insulted him. Then there would be no sacrifice at the grove at all, but the nobles of Ngonde would go to the one who had insulted the Kyungu and charge him with it, asking him what he meant by thus killing them all, would not the whole land starve? And
643 so the wrongdoer would take a cow to the Kyungu who, there-
821 upon, would address the nobles of Ngonde, saying: 'If it was my

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been someone [of the dead Kyungus] whom you forgot to ask about.' 'And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again.' If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry, and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would, and then the diviner would tell them that it was so-and-so (one of the dead Kyungus) and they would go and sacrifice in his grove. 643 [821] [787]

Thus to insult Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. An 'insult' might mean any neglect of the obligations of the chiefs and nobles and commoners of the plain to their lord. [687] [688]

The people of Ngonde hoed large fields as tribute to the Kyungu and if they failed to do so 'he grew angry and poured all the water out of the pot in which he kept his rain stones' (*vide infra*, p. 114) and 'the sky dried up'. Then the chiefs called their men to hoe. . . . 'They hoed and hoed and hoed and their wives planted, then the rain came in a torrent. . . . Kyungu created much rain.' [651] [789]

Or if an elephant hunter neglected to send the Kyungu one of the tusks of any elephant he killed he would not kill another. 'The country beneath was angry . . . the shades of the dead Kyungus . . . they were angry saying: "Why do you stint our child?" ' [651] [769]

The rainfall in the Ngonde plain is less than half what it is in the Nyakyusa valley and anxiety about rainfall was constantly shown in the communal rituals; elephant hunting was also a matter of concern in a way in which it was not among the Nyakyusa and this too is reflected in rituals; but there was also the preoccupation with health and fertility, as in the prayers at Lubaga. In the groves circling Mbande the nobles prayed: 'May the sterile bear children, may the cattle and fowls increase, may the children sleep and not cry at night, may the witches not injure anyone.' And as we shall see, it was health and fertility that men had in mind when they cleared out the ashes each year after the break of the rains. 643 132 771 789 [782] 769

Towards Christmas time, when the first maize and the first 796

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 796 pumpkin leaves were ready to eat, an elaborate first-fruit ceremony was formerly carried out. The new season's food was offered first by the nobles of Ngonde in the grove of the previous Kyungu, the one who had last died.

[778] The great chiefs would do so next, each at his own sacred grove (the grave of his own predecessor in the title). And after them everyone, both chiefs and people, each at his father's grave. All offered first fruits to their own shades. And finally they would themselves eat, each with his chief wife. But they would not eat beforehand for fear of angering the shades.

643 79[illegible] In time of tribal war also the Kyungu and nobles of Ngonde led the people in prayer. All chiefs and nobles were summoned [721] from the plain and the great ones entered the Kyungu's house to receive their instructions:

[782] When he had finished speaking he would tell them to go and pray. So they would leave his house and gather all together, all the chiefs, and the other men, and pray. The premier noble of Ngonde would begin asking each of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn to bless them in the fight. And then the great chiefs would pray after him.

This organization of religious ritual in the Ngonde plain was both a factor of and itself determined by the general political structure. Many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions, but the reverse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular significance, the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle [782] were sent to Lubaga by the chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and health; but the 'clearing out of the ashes' was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruits ritual at all; while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

643 789 The majesty (*ulusiye*) of the Kyungu was cultivated in a variety of ways. He smeared himself with ointment made from lion fat, and his bed was built up with elephant tusks and lion pelts. He [952] was enthroned on the sacred iron stool called Kisumbi, he had a [293] spear, Kamisa, and Mulima, a porous piece of iron 'like a mouth organ' used to make rain, all handed down from the first Kyungu. [778] His *ortwa* tails, set with medicines in horn handles, were waved in

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 very oldest fled from his approach. Even in speech fearful circumlocutions were used to refer to his journeying—'The country is on the move'—'the great hill is moving'—'the mystery is coming'. It was taboo both for the old men who stayed to see him, and for those who entered the sacred enclosure, ever to greet him in the usual way. Falling down and clapping the hands was the only greeting for the Kyungu.

From the wives of the Kyungu also men fled in terror, fearing lest they be compromised and thrown over the cliff of Mbande, and this both added to the atmosphere of terror which surrounded him and was an expression of it.

Of the effects of personal relationships upon public events we heard much less in Ngonde than in Selya for we lived there for a much shorter period, but there were indications that, as in Selya, public misfortune was traditionally attributed to quarrels between the nobles of Mbande and within the family of the [731] Kyungu. One fearful drought was thought to have been caused by the exile of Kyungu's son, Mwakasungula,[1] and men tell how the rain came down in torrents on his return. The nobles also asserted their power of calling on the shades of the Kyungu to [729] punish him when he did wrong, and rebuking him over beer telling him, 'It was we who caused you to be ill, don't do it again'. Since he was killed by his nobles if he really fell ill their power over him was inexorable.

(d) PALIKYALA

PaliKyala is a cave at the north-east corner of Lake Nyasa 778 where sacrifices are made to the hero, Kyala (2). It is on the 769 border between Nyakyusa, Kisi, and Kinga country; the chiefs are Nyakyusa, but of Kinga extraction,[2] while many of the commoners are Kisi. Nyakyusa is generally spoken as the first language, Kisi as the second, and Nyakyusa, Kinga, and Kisi all sacrifice to Kyala. As indicated in the myth already quoted (*vide supra*, p. 8) the location of the shrine has changed from one cave to another; according to one version, Kyala was driven out by Europeans; according to another, 'the Lake rose and roared and destroyed all the pots in the cave and the roar was heard in the mountains by the Kinga' and after that Kyala moved.

793 The ritual differs from that at Lubaga and Mbande in that

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, p. 16.
[2] They are not of the lineage of Lwembe.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769
782
142
291
516

E. COMMUNION WITH THE SHADES

[Facing p. 70]

9. Wilson Z-3 (1934-1935) 1939
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

SACRIFICES AT THE GROVES OF CHIEFS

(a) THE PLACE, OCCASION, AND FORM OF SACRIFICE

778. A CHIEF is buried near the trees planted at his 'coming out' and around the grave a thicket grows up. It is taboo for men to cut 769 saplings or brushwood there and since trees grow very fast in the [137] climate and soil of the Nyakyusa valley, the thicket soon becomes a grove, and there sacrifices to the dead chief are made. The priests look for the stone planted at his marriage, and place the offering beside it. How long a chief is so honoured depends on how conspicuous he was as a ruler or warrior, and perhaps also on [782] whether the sacrifices are judged to be efficient in producing rain and health or not. Mbyanga and Kabale, two groves which are particularly honoured, were the shrines of founders of expanding lineages. At Mbyanga was planted a cutting of a tree which sprouted from the grave of Mwakisambwe (30) who had first occupied the country in which Mbyanga is situated. He is often spoken of as having been 'buried' at Mbyanga, in fact he was carried back ten miles to Lubaga, whence he had come, for burial. But he is worshipped at Mbyanga and we attended a sacrifice there for which his great-great-great-grandson, Mwaihojo (147) the chief, provided a cow, and Mwaihojo's grandsons ate the holy food. In contrast to this, the grave of Mwaipopo's (116) younger brother, who had once ruled a country but was defeated in war and whose sons had died, was completely neglected; no one sacrificed there. We knew more than a dozen chiefs' groves at which sacrifices were made, and there must have been a great many more in different parts of BuNyakyusa.

643 Since every ruling chief normally had two heirs, sacrifices involved co-operation between independent chiefdoms—two 769 chiefs at the grove of their father, four at that of their grandfather, and so on. But if there is friction between the chiefs, some branches of the lineage cease to participate, saying that the connexion is 'too distant', and celebrate at the groves of their nearer ancestors only. This happened at the sacrifice of Mbyanga which we [578] [688] attended (*vide infra*, pp. 79-81). The sanction for co-operation is the belief that quarrelling between kinsmen annoys the shades and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

may nullify any ritual, but often it is not strong enough to overcome the fissiparous tendencies of the lineage. In theory a celebration at the grove of a senior should precede that at the grove of a junior and sacrifices at Lubaga would be followed by sacrifices at the groves of the 'sons of Lwembe' in order of seniority, but this does not happen in practice nowadays and we doubt whether it ever did, since a hierarchy was not organized and maintained by a central authority as in Ngonde. In 1935 a celebration at the grove of Mwaijonga (82) preceded one at the grove of his great-grandfather Mwakisambwe (30) by a month, as we shall see. 643 769 [578] [688]

Sacrifices are made when a drought or flood occurs, or a plague of locusts, or an epidemic among men or cattle; when fishing is poor in the chiefdoms of the plain, or war is imminent. They occur most often during the 'winter' in the hills, when a malaria-sodden people feel the chill of damp mists and cool south winds, and in October, just before the break of the rains, when the country is parched; but they are not confined to these periods. In theory the village headmen and the priests who 'watch over the country' foresee *coming* misfortune in dreams, and avert it by making the appropriate sacrifices. And they are helped by ordinary people who are dreaming repeatedly or falling into a trance or fit, and prophesying evil and jabbering of 'a black cow, a black cow' or some other appurtenance of sacrifice. But in practice the prophecies generally occur when there is hunger or plague in the land, or an omen (such as a python or a ground hornbill behaving oddly) has been seen. [731] [782] [787]

The dreamers are *abasololi* or *abakunguluka*, and, as these names indicate, they are believed to have descended into the land of the shades. *Ukusoloka*[1] means to go down into something, like the roots of a tree into the earth, and *ukukungula ingungula* means to pluck a banana flower which (as was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*) is a symbol for a corpse and is buried; so the *abakunguluka* are those who have been buried in the earth. '*Abakunguluka* go to the land of the shades and return. . . . An *unkunguluka* plucks up the "blessed grass" (*ikisajele*) in his swept courtyard and goes beneath and sees.[2] . . . He goes down into the earth beneath and takes the chief to the land of the shades when he dies, and he also sees the witches. . . .' More rarely, the *unsololi* or *unkunguluka* is 791 787

[1] *Ukusoloka*—a breach pronunciation, the implication being that the infant's head is in *kayoka*, but children born in this way are not necessarily prophets. [845]

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 77, 212.

said just to become aware of future events without any dream.

Abakunguluka are distinguished from those who suffer from fits or fall into trances (*abakom' amalago*), but a woman in a trance may also prophesy and induce the chief and priests to celebrate a ritual, for it is thought that she too is in communication with the shades. Men say 'The shade has entered her' or 'Kyala catches hold of her that she may speak of the matter'. This type of prophecy is something new among the Nyakyusa. Mwandisi (107) told us that 'it did not exist in BuKinga whence we came', but had been introduced from the south, through Ngonde, and it is mainly confined to women, whereas the *abakunguluka* are men.

There are many tales of famous prophecies. Nsamba (90) claimed that his father (63) foretold that 'there will come a white thing on the Lake, and it will land on the shore. That will be the man who will make peace', and Mwakalinga (142) who died fighting the Germans is said to have foretold his own death.[1]

Dreams and revelations of the possessed concerning public matters are reported to the local village headman and referred to the other headmen and priests, and a prophecy is accepted as valid only after formal discussion. As we shall see, Kasitile was sceptical about the revelations of one man who was repeatedly 'possessed', perhaps because he threatened to become a rival in interpreting public misfortune. If there is doubt, suspicions are confirmed or problems elucidated, by divination.

When they judged a sacrifice necessary the village headman and priests went to their chief saying, 'We do not sleep', and it was his obligation to secure an animal for sacrifice. He might provide it out of his own herd, but very often the duty of 'finding' sacrificial cattle was delegated to a junior line—the ruling chief gave cattle to a younger brother charging him and his heirs with the function of providing sacrificial cattle when necessary. Today all the chiefs are reluctant to expend cattle on rituals whose validity is questioned, and there is often friction between the senior and junior lines over who should 'find' the cow or bull required. Their reluctance is illustrated by the following passage from Godfrey Wilson's diary:

Mwaya (on the lake shore): 22/12/34

It is still stormy; there has been wind and heavy rain for four days. People are saying: 'We are hungry. It is very bad. We need light rain

[1] According to Mr. Harkin's informant the Saraboe eruption was foretold a year before it occurred. *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, 40 (1955), p. 61.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for planting, but now all the fields are muddy, we can neither hoe nor plant.' Five days ago there was no rain but locusts, and people did not plant for fear lest the locusts should eat the rice and maize as it sprouted. Kissoule tells me: 'Kyala is very angry. . . . Mwandisi (107, the priest-chief) wants to pray to put things right, he has sent Mwalulabosya to ask Mwakisisile (170, the ruling chief) for a cow. Mwalulabosya and Mwakalobo went and the chief agreed saying: "I have not got one now, but I will look for one!" Then Mwalulabosya sent me (Kissoule) to fetch it, but the chief refused saying: "I am busy now." Then Mwandisi (107), who is blind and infirm, went himself, but still there is no cow.'

The priests who minister to dead chiefs, like the priests of Lubaga, are of different types. The senior village headmen of a dead chief are responsible for conducting sacrifices at his grove in co-operation with his heir, and when a headman dies his office is taken over by his heir. Where a grove is much honoured this continues for generations and the heirs of one of the village headmen become hereditary keepers of the grove, each incumbent of the office assuming his name. Secondly, there are chiefs of a junior line, who become hereditary priests on whom the ruling chiefs depend for their prayers, but these priest-chiefs do not actually attend the sacrifices; the celebration is delegated to commoner priests and junior kinsmen. Mwandisi (107) mentioned above, Kasitile (86) and Nsamba (90) were all priest-chiefs of this sort. Kasitile prayed at his own home, blowing out water before any celebration in Mwaipopo's country, and he was given the chine of any animal sacrificed on behalf of the country. If this were not done 'all the cattle in the country would die . . . it is the most important part of the meat'. The commoner priests who conducted the ritual always shared the head of the sacrificial beast and the breast went to the chief. With priest-chiefs, as with commoner chiefs, the name of the first incumbent of the office (or an early and famous incumbent) may become a hereditary title, e.g. three generations of priests in Selya have been known as *Kasitile*.

The essential elements in the ritual are: the sacrifice of a black bull or cow in the grove; the offering up of the blood and pieces of the sacred meat from the forelegs, together with the beer, on the earth close to a sacred stone and near a sacred tree; an invocation calling on the shades to come and feast, and petitions for rain, fertility, and health. One piece of meat is thrown down for

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 each name mentioned: 'We give this meat to you so-and-so.'
[782] 'May the children sleep, may we all sleep, may it rain, may there be much food, may milk be plentiful.' Then follows a communion in which young 'grand-children' of the dead share the sacred meat and beer. 'The shades eat together, they break off firewood
[775] there from the tree, they rejoice, some clap their hands to give thanks.' Finally, a hut is built for the shades and half-formed bananas and sweet milk are left in it to 'ripen'. It was thought that if the sacrifice were accepted they did so miraculously quickly and the milk increased in quantity, the bananas in size. Among the Kukwe a white and grey cock and a hen were offered as well as the cow or bull. An account of two of the sacrifices we attended will make this clearer.

(*b*) SACRIFICE TO MWAIJONGA

769 In July 1935, two days after the Kinga had sacrificed at
782 Lubaga (*vide supra*, p. 30), the chief Mwaipopo (116) came to tell us that he was going to sacrifice at the grove of his father, Mwaijonga (82). Ngulyo, heir to Mwaijonga's second senior headman and now his priest, came with the chief, and he remarked,

> Kasitile (86) summoned us some time ago. He and Njobakosa and Kissogota[1] and I thought that the hunger was very great indeed, and Kasitile sent us to tell Mwaipopo (116) to look for a cow and sacrifice. Then Mwaipopo agreed, because the hunger is indeed very great; he has not yet found the cow; when he has, we shall inform Kasitile and then kill it in Mwaijonga's grove.

Mwaipopo 'found' the cow at once for next morning Kasitile told us

> Mwambene (Mwaipopo, 116) came with Ngulyo yesterday to say he had found the cow. This evening, after sunset, because there is a moon (second quarter) I shall pray at my place with water; and Mwaipopo will pray at his homestead also with water. Tomorrow morning they will kill the cow. I shall not be there—I never go—I stay at home and they [i.e. the shades] find me at home.

The same evening (10 July 1935) Godfrey Wilson went to Kasitile's homestead just after sunset. Kasitile took a calabash cup
[778] hanging under the eaves saying: 'No one ever drinks from this cup, it is for praying only. At my death it will go to my heir to use for prayer.' He filled the cup from his wife's water-pot, and then

[1] Heirs of two other village headmen of Mwaijonga, also priests of his grove.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

plunged into it a glowing brand from the fire. Then he went to a low tree in the middle of a cultivated field where the byre of his senior brother (85) had been. He took a root of 'blessed grass' with him, and as he stood before the tree he took a couple of bites of the root and two sips of water. Then he blew out the water in a cloud twice and he spoke for twenty minutes and mentioned thirty-five names or more: 'Thou Mwakanjoki (60), . . . thou Kalesi (18), Mwakalebela (19), . . . Mwakirisya (56) and Mwampondele (27), . . . Kikungubeja, Silobwike, Kyamba Kitali, Nsyanigwa,[1] . . . Mwaipaja (21.) He talked about the punishment of 'Mwakagile their child' (i.e. of Mwaipopo (116) who was here identified with his grandfather) . . . 'Kyala is there . . . he sees Mwaipopo. He says "Do this ritual, I am rejoiced".' At another point Kasitile added the name 'Jesus' to a list of ancestors. He prayed for food, children, and cattle. . . . 'Give us bananas, millet, maize, may children be born in the morning and in the evening, may cows calve in the morning and in the evening.' He spoke of the old sacrifices of Mwalubange (58) and others which had been accepted . . .

Now Mwaipopo has found a cow, he has learnt his lesson, he has agreed; receive him tomorrow, grant him food, give food to all in Selya . . . to Mwaisumo (62), Mwaitende (61). . . . You are proud (*uli namatingo*) to send so much hunger. . . . When I went down to the plain men asked me 'Are you taking all the food with you?' I said 'Yes', but now I have come up, the earth has come up. You alone remain and hold back. I ask you to send food again. I alone remain of all the contemporaries of Mwaijonga (82). I alone am Kasitile. All the people of Kyungu (16), of Mwakyusa (38), all know I am Kasitile. I alone remain. The birds say, the snakes say that I am Kasitile. There is trouble all round in BuNdali, BuSangu, BuKinga, but we thought here there would be no trouble in the country of Mwakilima (111) and Mwanjala (77), but there is. They have sacrificed, the Kinga have come to Lubaga. Mwakisisya (111) has begun, Mwakagile [i.e. Mwaipopo, 116, here identified with his grandfather, 59] sleeps with hunger, receive him tomorrow. I 'treat' the earth, all treat their earth, all over the country.

Next morning early the chiefs and priests met near Mwaijonga's grove which is some hundreds of yards from Ipinda, his senior village, where his *indola* tree still stands.[2] The talk turned on the

[1] These four are the Kinga priests with hereditary titles, who serve at Lubaga.

[2] Why the grave was not beside the *indola* tree as it usually is was not made clear to us.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 weather, and the ritual. 'We prayed yesterday at Ipinda, Mwai-
782 popo and all of us, we prayed and prayed. Did you feel the cold as much as usual last night? Did you hear the banana leaves rustle as usual?' 'No.' 'Well, Kyala has heard our prayer.'

At 7.45 a.m. they moved into the grove. A black cow had already been killed. 'We killed it at cock-crow, while it was still dark, we were all there. Mwambene (the chief Mwaipopo 116) handed the axe to Mwanyoso (his junior kinsman *vide* p. 84) who killed the cow.' Bananas were brought and all roasted them and ate, waiting for the other priests, Njobakosa and Kissogata. After a [578] discussion about certain persons who had not come because the last time they got no meat, one of them said: 'Don't talk of what is [784] forbidden in the sacred grove, don't let's make a noise; no, we pray to Mwakagile (59). . . . If we quarrel and make a noise the shades will not hear our prayer.' James (119), Kasitile's heir, was there but not Kasitile (86) himself. Someone asked whether Tandale ought to be summoned. But one said: 'We have never asked this Tandale to come here; we used to ask his father.[1] . . . Tandale lives in the boys' village. He has not the position of Ngulyo and Kissogota,'

Mwaipopo: 'Why do you argue about this today and not before?'

After an hour's delay Njobakosa arrived, and shortly after him Kissogota, who apologized, saying: 'I am late because my child has just died.'

Kissogota and Ngulyo flayed the cow, letting the blood pour out on to the ground. There was some discussion over the division of the meat, and they cut out the chine, saying: 'We send it with the tail to Kasitile—if we sever the tail we have spoiled it.'

Ngulyo took the sacred meat (*isyammapa*) from both forelegs, [778] and with Kissogota's help he chopped off twenty-three small pieces. The rest of this meat was left for the children. At 10.10 all gathered to go to the grave. A sacred stone (*ulufiga*)[2] was found under a tree. Mwaiteteja (Mwaipopo's junior kinsman) cleared the undergrowth with his bill-hook and dug a hole close to the stone, then he threw the meat which Kissogota was holding on two leaves, placed the leaves on top and filled in the earth. Five or six men spoke:

[1] Tandale the senior had buried the previous chief, Mwaipopo I (115).

[2] It was not clear whether this was the one planted at Mwajonga's coming out or not, since his *indola* was some hundreds of yards away.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Here is your cow, your food. We pray to Kyala. May theft go away. Give us food and beans and millet, may we eat and be satisfied. . . . It is said that the sweet potatoes are scarce now, help us. You Mwakabule (117), Mwakomo (112). . . . This is your cow Mwaijonga (82). This is your meat. I shall seek another also which we shall give you like this. 769 782

NGULYO: May the locusts go away. It is you who have caused theft because there is hunger.

KISOOOTA: At night since we eat scraps of food our bellies are disquieted . . . may we be satisfied. People are eating millet porridge;[1] when food is plentiful they say it's horrible. When someone eats millet porridge he dies, it kills a man. We pray to him, this Kyala, because we do not know him, so we say: 'You Mwaijonga (82) drive away the hunger. Give all of us, Mwaipopo's people, food, and hear us all.' [262]

Mwaipopo's young sons (not the older ones) ate the rest of the sacred meat (*vide* plate 8). Other boys who approached were chased away: 'They thought because their friends were getting meat they would too.' Then the remainder of the carcass was divided: two legs went to the chiefs, two to the commoners, the chine to Kasitile, the breast to Mwaipopo (the chief) who gave half to his sons and half to his daughters—his wives may not eat it. The head went to the priests Ngulyo and his fellows—and some entrails were sent to Seba, widow of Mwaijonga (82). There was some discussion about the disposal of the head: 'Let it be put in Ngulyo's house', they said. Mwaipopo commenting later, explained: [262]

We leave the head in the house of a commoner near the sacred grove in order that the shades can come and eat it. So also with the chine. . . . Kasitile leaves it so that his shades may eat it. We throw the meat by a tree which was planted long ago. He whom we have buried looks towards it, he sits facing the tree and the meat is thrown beside it.[2] He sees the meat we throw. We offer the meat of the upper forelegs (*ijammapa*), this is the sacred meat, the rest we eat ourselves. The blood pours out on to the ground, it goes beneath, which means that the owners, the shades, receive it, because they are beneath. The shades say: 'We are angry because you have not given us cows to treat the grove, we are angry and send this hunger. Treat the grove frequently!' [775]

Kasitile also discussed the ritual with us later and he remarked:

[1] Millet is ordinarily used only for brewing beer. The Nyakyusa regard millet porridge as very distasteful and eat it only during extreme scarcity. [273]

[2] We omitted to ask why, in this case, a hut had not been built in the grove.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 782 I kept the chine for two nights in my house. The shades came to eat—they left practically nothing. Had I not been ill I would have asked you to come and see since you say they do not eat. . . . The shades come and see that we are celebrating the rituals.

The whole ritual was esoteric. Only the chief with eight of his [793] agnatic kinsmen, four of his young sons (but not his grown-up [643] heir or young grandson), and four priests participated, and we [123] two anthropologists were permitted to look on. Peeping small boys were chased off. The shades were addressed in a conversational tone and, except during the invocation, the priests and [784] chiefs chatted to one another, but arguments and raised voices were taboo. The boys who ate the meat were told:

[869] See, we your fathers are sacrificing, we are making plenty of food. Follow the custom of your fathers when it is your turn to sacrifice. Learn how to do it.

The same evening Kasitile prayed at his tree again. He explained:

I would not usually pray at all tonight, it is finished. Mwaipopo and I prayed yesterday, today the ritual is finished, but that boy of mine [his heir, 119] does not visit me, he's not been to see me and he did not tell me that he was going to the ritual. . . . I am going to pray to tell my fathers not to be startled, to tell them I am not angry, to tell them to send only a little rain, not a lot, to tell them to accept the sacrifice.

He went to the same place, and chewed the root of 'blessed grass' and blew out water as before. He prayed to about thirty persons, especially to Mwamaloba (85, his elder brother) and Mwakanjoki (60, his father), and also to Mwakagile (59), Mwaijonga (82), Mwaipasi (81), Mwakabule (117), Mwamwifu (84), Mwafungo (83), Mwakipesile (118), Mwakapala (?), Lyambilo (12), Mwalubange (58), Mwamukinga (43), Mwaihojo (147?), Mwaitende (61), and Kyala (2). No mention was made of the Lubaga chiefs this time, or of sons of Mwaipaja (21) or of 'Jesus'.

You have received your child Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 59), Mwaijonga (82), you have received the chief, this boy of mine (119) is quarrelling with me, do not be upset, he is a fool, a fool, but let him be . . . go and call your brothers to eat, you Mwaijonga (82), you Mwaipopo (115), and all your younger brothers; call Mwakagile (59) and Mwakanjoki (60) . . . Mwalubange (58) go to eat with your younger brother, let us find food, millet, bananas, children, milk . . . let there be a little rain only, not too much . . . people believe

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

that I can speak, that when I speak food comes tomorrow; let it be so. 769

Three points call for comment here. First, it will be noted that if the crops failed Kasitile had a scapegoat in his heir who was quarrelling with him. The sacrifice was performed correctly but a quarrel between any of the leading actors could destroy its efficacy, and Kasitile made it clear that he was being very forbearing with a difficult 'son'. 782

Secondly, a great many names were mentioned in the prayers, but they were not mentioned in any discernible order. This is obvious if the prayers are compared with the genealogy facing p. 3 And since Kasitile was a famous priest, acknowledged to be an expert in ritual and tradition we must conclude that the order was not thought important: all that was required was to mention the names of dead members of the lineage, including even one (Mwakabule 117) who was junior both to Mwaipopo and Kasitile who were sacrificing. [793]

Thirdly, what did Kasitile imply by his reference to the moon? (p. 74). We omitted to ask Kasitile himself, but a number of informants insisted that there is no necessary connexion between the celebration of a ritual and the phases of the moon. However, rain is expected with the *waning* moon, therefore rituals which are intended to produce rain are usually performed with the waning moon, and the sacrifice to Mwaijonga in which sun and warmth were sought, was performed with the waxing moon. This may or may not be what Kasitile had in mind. 769 782 821

Everyone agreed afterwards that the rituals had been effective for the weather grew slightly warmer. Before the sacrifice at Lubaga on 7th July, the temperature was 62° F. at sunset, but from the 9th onward the cloud cleared, and by the 14th the sunset temperature was 68° F. Whether or not the Kinga priests living high on their mountains with a view down the Lake whence storms come are weatherwise, and time their visits carefully, we do not know. Certainly any change in the weather after a celebration is interpreted as a direct answer to prayer. [132]

(c) SACRIFICE TO MWAKISAMBWE

A month later a sacrifice was made to Mwaijonga's great-great-grandfather Mwakisambwe (30) in the grove Mbyanga. The chief Mwaipopo was not concerned this time, but the senior line of Mwaihojo (147) and a junior line who had traditionally the responsibility of providing cows for celebrations at Mbyanga. 769 782

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 782 Mwalukuta, the hereditary priest of Mbyanga, had been pressing the chiefs to sacrifice for some time. He had sent messengers in March, April, May, and again in July, saying: 'At Mbyanga things have gone back, it is bad, see hunger kills!' At last, in August, Mwaihojo agreed to provide a cow if Mwaitende of the junior line finally refused. Mwalukuta, the priest of the grove, ex-
[793] plained:

> We went to Mwaitende (121, identified with his grandfather 61) and asked him to sacrifice. He said: 'No, I am not coming; do the work there at Mbyanga yourselves.' We said: 'Why do you refuse to come, to return a cow? Our grandfathers gave you a cow, why don't you return it? They gave you cows on the understanding that you would bring them back, one by one, and kill them in the sacred grove here. Why do you refuse to return them?' It has always been the custom for the junior brothers to find cows for sacrifice. Their seniors give them wealth and appoint them priests to bring cattle to the sacred grove.
> [177] But in European times they refuse to come, each man kills at his own place. . . . I must go and tell Kasitile (86) and also Kifubuka, or rather his son—the father refuses to come he had a lawsuit with Kasitile. . . . Kifubuka used to kill the cow, then Kasitile said Makuli should kill the cow, but now Makuli has refused to come so I go to fetch Kifubuka [the younger]. Makuli was a chief who ate the meat. . . . Mwaitende (61) used to send the cow to him and Mwaluseke to bring to Mbyanga . . . as he now refuses to send the cow they say: 'What should we bring?' and have refused to come here.

There had been another spell of cold weather and the tempera-
[132] ture on the night of 8th August was down to 59° F., but fine weather was visibly approaching from the Lake. On the 9th the ritual was to have been held, but not everyone had been formally summoned and it was put off to the 10th.

Only eight men came, Mwalukuta I, the priest of the grove,
[793] and his younger brother Mwalukuta II, two other priests (Nyama and Mwakasukula) and Mwakyonde (148), younger brother of Mwaihojo the chief who provided the cow, and three other young men of the chief's lineage. One of the young chiefs was
[291] wearing a red cloth and was scolded by Mwakyonde for doing so: 'It's taboo in the sacred grove.' 'Why?' 'Because it's like a rainbow.'[1] And he took it off.

The mother of Nyama brought a bundle of saplings for building the hut for the shade, and Kisisile, the senior wife of Mwaihojo the

[1] The rainbow is a symbol of misfortune. cf. p. 60.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

chief, brought a bundle of firewood. Mwalukuta I was not expected to enter the grove and he went off soon. His brother and Nyama took a little basket of maize and millet. The chiefs stayed on the edge of the grove and the three commoners entered alone. Mwalukuta II and Nyama built a little hut five feet from the 'grave' with the saplings brought by Nyama's mother. 'We put firewood and food and a little calabash which we have prepared in it, it's for the shades.' The calabash contained millet, maize, pumpkin seeds, ground nuts, and cow peas; and a stem of bananas was put beside it. Mwalukuta swept the 'grave' which was marked by a few small trees, and Mwakasukula killed the cow, which must lie facing east to BuKinga. Mwalukuta spoke the invocation: 'Thou Mwakisambwe (30) . . . Mwakihaba (45) has gone back, but Mwamukinga (44) is here still. . . . Mwakihaba says, "I am no longer a relative, I have gone out." ' Then they took the sacred meat from the forelegs of the cow: that from the right leg was buried near the 'grave', that from the left by an *nkuju* tree (a species of *ficus*) forty paces away. The priests ate some roasted meat and intestines with bananas, and the rest of the meat was divided between them and the chiefs. The head went to Nyama's house and was kept for three nights. The priests explained that they are forbidden to bathe for three days or lie with their wives, but on the fourth day they eat the head and after that they bathe and resume married life. 769 782 [515] [834]

Eighteen days after the sacrifice Mwalukuta went to look and found the stem of bananas which had been left in the little hut had ripened, and the earth on the grave had been disturbed. This was a good omen. But later his legs began to trouble him—he could scarcely walk—and it was said that certain priests who should have been called to the ritual had not been summoned and were angry and had cursed him. He fled to a distance and sought a bull to kill for his fellows. [787] [783]

(*d*) SACRIFICE AT KABALE

The form of sacrifice among the Kukwe is very similar. We never saw a sacrifice at Kabale—our friends assured us that they had been dropped before 1935—but a description by two of the leading priests of the grove of Kabale demonstrates the similarity between the rituals there and in Selya. The only points of difference were that the Kukwe sacrificed fowls as well as cattle, and granddaughters shared the sacred food with grandsons.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 782 In this grove of Kabale three chiefs in particular gather together, Mwakilulele (67 K) and his brothers Mwakalukwa (68 K) and Mwangoka (24 K) [or his son], with the younger brothers Mwakamela (66 K) and Mwakilasa (69 K) in whose country the grove is situated. The senior, Mwakilulele, initiates matters; it is he who calls his fellows saying: 'Let us pray in the grove.' Then Mwakilulele seeks a black cow and Mwangoka seeks a black bull, Mwakilasa brews beer and brings two fowls, a black and grey cock, and a black and yellow hen. So they go to the grave with their children, young boys and girls and the junior chiefs who have lost their positions as ruling chiefs—sons of Mwangomale (4 K)—and their village headmen. In the grove they pour [778] some of the beer over the sacred stones and kill the cattle and take the liver and fat round the stomach and the meat from the upper forelegs (*ijammapa*) and cut it into small pieces and put it on two leaves, sweet banana and plantain. Then they take little pieces of meat and throw them on the ground and pluck out the feathers of the fowls. They praise the shades saying: 'Receive the fowls and beer and meat, may there be fertility of the fields that all the crops may be plentiful.' . . . 'Help us Kyala, thou Ndolombwike (?), thou Kajubili (?), you created us, together with our fathers. Help us that illness may be slight, that we may increase and be many, that all the fowls and cattle may increase and that the fields may be fertile.' When they pluck out the feathers of the hen the praises are for the wives of the chiefs who have died. Then they pick up little pieces of meat and eat them with young children; it is taboo for wives to eat it. Boys drink the beer which is in the calabash cup—they receive it in their hands—and the girls finish the beer in the large calabash. Then the men drink the rest of the beer and divide the meat. . . . The calabash cup and the large calabash and the head are left in the grove overnight . . . then the large calabash [784] and the cup are taken home and hung under the eaves—it is taboo to put them in the house—women must not approach them. When they have finished and come out of the grove rain pours down immediately and they rejoice saying: 'Kyala has helped us' . . . or 'the fathers have heard'.

Pouring out the beer on the ground and throwing down little pieces of meat, and sticking feathers into the ground means: 'May the fathers beneath receive them, may they bless the crops so that they flourish and food be plentiful. . . .' Children finish the food because they are like the shades—when the children have eaten they say the shades have eaten. They roast the meat at a distance because if they roast it close to the place of sacrifice no shades come there for the smoke drives them off. . . . The large calabash and cup and head which stay there [778] symbolize fertility (*mboto*), so that when we eat they may help us and [784] the food may not fail. The taboo on women—wives—eating the sacrificial meat (the *ijammapa*) and drinking the beer in the calabash

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and cup is because this food is sacrified to their fathers-in-law. Those who are not sons of Ngomale do not drink the sacrificial beer or eat the meat either, because they are of other lineages. A *black* cow is used in the grove because groves are always fearful and darkness falls if something improper is done. So it is said that the blackness of the cow matches the fearfulness (*ubuniye*) of the grove. 769 782 [778] [784] [825]

Besides the sacrifices at Kabale and to their more immediate ancestors, Kukwe chiefs sent offerings to the BaNgumba, earlier occupants of the country. Mwamunda explained:

My grandfather prayed in the grove which is across the river on mission land, in the forest; it was the grove of us BaNgumba; we were owners of the soil, the Kukwe chiefs found us here. If ever a chief sent my grandfather and his fellows to pray there they went with an unripe stem of bananas, and sweet milk, and unripe maize, and small sweet potatoes; then they prayed and came home again and the next day, when they went to look they found the stem of bananas had ripened, the maize had hardened, the milk was thick and the sweet potatoes large; everything which was unripe had ripened. Then they said Kyala [that is Kyala and the shades] had stood by us. . . . We spoke of Kyala even before the Europeans had come. . . .[1]

They say that very long ago we BaNgumba, we sons of Kasyapula, had not yet got fire, the chiefs brought it. It is this they commemorate in the 'coming out' ritual. We, the owners of the soil, were always here, the chiefs came and built, and when others came the firstcomers fled. They are like you Europeans who fight wars; we owners of the soil think only of hoeing. [173]

(*e*) MODERN CHANGES

It is quite clear that, though sacrifices to the heroes and at the groves of chiefs were still made while we were among the Nyakyusa (and more frequently than our friends at first admitted), the cycle was attenuated. Not only had human sacrifice probably ceased but the chiefs were reluctant to part with cattle. . . . Kasitile (86) said one day: 769 782 177

Since you [Europeans] came into the country the rituals have disappeared. Mwaipopo (116) never thinks of the rituals now. . . . It is cold and there is hunger; I went to Mwaipopo and told him to tell his

[1] According to the records of the first missionaries, sacrifices on Rungwe were to *Mbumba* but the same passage refers to *Mbumba or Kiala* meaning God. It is not clear whether the two names were equated by Kukwe informants or by the missionary himself, who was in touch with missionaries elsewhere in the district. (*Journal de l'Unité des Frères*, 1894.) I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Fueter for drawing my attention to this valuable Journal.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 782 177 priests to sacrifice to his father and elder brother so that fertility may return and men may eat sweet potatoes, but he does nothing.

A conversation between Kasitile and Mwanyoso, his fellow priest (*vide* p. 76), was also instructive on this point:

The soil has changed, we are not like those of old, we are different. Mwakisambwe (30) had power; when he prayed the thunder crashed and rain fell in torrents. In the old days when the Kinga came they came with drums and we all feared them, what they said was done—they did not have to say much—just a few words and it was done. But now they spend all their time explaining things and talking and we do not do anything. . . .

MWANYOSO: I have sent people time and again to Mwaijande (?) for a cow, but he just insults us. . . . I have asked Mwaihojo (147) about celebrating. . . .

KASITILE: What did he say?

MWANYOSO: I don't know . . . if he is wise . . .

KASITILE (*breaking in*): Well, you had better admit that the chiefs do not respect you—the chiefs say: 'It is European times now.'

G.W.: What do they fear? The Government does not affect the ritual, does it?

KASITILE: They are unwilling to part with the cows which I take for sacrifice, they do not like to lose their cows. In the old days they feared, and when we said: 'We do not sleep, celebrate in the grove', they agreed quickly, for they feared that we, their men, would move to another chiefdom.

(f) THE FIRST FRUITS

769 782 [241] [793] [178] No communal ritual of the first fruits is celebrated among the Nyakyusa as in Ngonde,[1] but after the millet harvest a little grain is collected from every homestead and later brewed into beer which is offered to the shades of the chief. In Mwaipopo's country the offerings of millet were collected by the priest, Ngulyo, who, with his colleagues Kissogoia and Njobakosa, took it to Kalinga, senior widow of the late chief (113). She was custodian of a sacred pot inherited by the chief from his predecessors, in which the offerings of millet are stored, and this is the pot which, according to some informants, also contained the power of growth—the nails and hair torn from the dead chief (*vide supra*, pp. 64-5). When the new crop was reaped Kalinga almost emptied the pot, refilled it with the fresh grain, and brewed beer with the old. There had once been a sacred winnowing basket used in preparing the beer, but

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, p. 42.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

it was stolen by Ngoni raiders. When the brewing was ripe, the chief sought a calabash of curds and Kalinga cut a stem of bananas, and the priests ate and drank in her hut, together with junior kinsmen of the chief's family, but not the chief himself. As they drank they prayed: 769 782

Oh thou Mwakagile (59) give us millet, may it be plentiful, and may the milk be plentiful and may the bananas grow.

One pot of beer was due to Kasitile, the priest, and he would leave it overnight in his house.

The shades come and drink a lot, only a little beer is left in the morning. . . . then the bananas flourish and there is much fertility in the homesteads. . . . The sacred pot gives fertility of the soil to the whole country. [775] [778]

A very bitter quarrel flared up while we were in Selya because Kasitile came upon Ngulyo and his colleagues drinking the sacred beer without their having sent him his pot, or even notifying him of the brewing. The repercussions of this are discussed in chapter IX. [578]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FM17 Ngonde FM17
Nyakyusa

system is still the accepted form in Mwaipopo's chiefdom; the advantages of separating kinsmen in different villages are explicitly stated, and the contrast between the Nyakyusa and their neighbours in this respect emphasised. 'Certainly we do not live with kinsmen here but the Kings do.' 'It is not good for a son to live close to his father, they will quarrel.' 'When we move to another village we consider friendship not kinship in selecting it.'

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(b) THE BALANCE BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND SECTIONS

The ritual cycle of the 'coming out' and the sacrifices in the groves helped to maintain a balance of power between generations, as well as between chiefs and commoners. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) in 1955 it was Mwabuputa, the senior village headman of his father, who took the leading part. He was described as 'the greatest man in the country' who 'brings out the chief' and his manner indicated that he was well aware of his power. During the reign of Mwaipopo (116) the power of his father's village headmen, Njobakosa and Ngulyo, was apparent at every ritual. Spiritual power was shared between chiefs and commoners, but exercised ideally by a virile chief of the ruling generation and the experienced headmen of the retired generation.

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Those chosen as senior village headmen at the 'coming out' are commonly older than the young chief, but village headmen are thought of as surviving their chief—it is they who were responsible for smothering him, and performing the sacrifices in his grove. The headmanship is an office and so long as the office is necessary an incumbent is found for it, in the person of the heir of the original holder who is so closely identified with the deceased that most precise inquiry is often necessary to establish whether a given individual is the original holder, the succeeding heir, or a later heir, successor to the successor. The Ngulyo who officiated at the rituals in 1935 was the heir of the original Ngulyo (some said the *grandson*, not the son) and he was criticized by Kaitile as being 'a young man who knew nothing'. The principle, so familiar in Central Africa, of a perpetual office[1] emerges, among the

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[1] I. Cunnison, *Kinship and Local Organization on the Luapula*, Communications of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute No. 5 (1950), pp. 14-15; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), p. 102; A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, O.U.P. (1939), p. 94; 'Some Types of Family Structure among the Central Bantu', in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, p. 204; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, London (1911), p. 3.

[113]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Nyakyusa, when sacrifices are continued in the grove of a dead chief such as Mwaklisambwe (90), for an indefinite number of generations, and the heirs of his senior village headmen serve as his priests, taking the name of the first holder of the office. Most of the priests of Lubaga hold perpetual titles of this sort. The conception of the *perpetuus sacerdos* is familiar enough in the western tradition, but European observers in Africa are sometimes confused by the use of a personal name and the almost complete identification of each holder with his predecessors, as well as by the practice of treating certain kinship relationships as if they were offices.

Generation was determined among the Nyakyusa by association with a chief. There was no name for those who 'came out' together other than that of their chief, who was the focus of the ritual. On the other hand, however, a 'coming out' concerned a whole generation, and it could not be held out of season. If the heir died he was replaced by a brother, as were Mwaipopo I (115) and Mwankuga I (130). If a chief had no male heir of the right age in his senior house his daughter might represent an heir. For example, at the coming out of the sons of Mwaijonga, it was a *girl* Ijonga (114) who performed the leading part in the ritual which fell due before the birth of Mwaipopo I (115). When Mwaipopo I was born and grew up he assumed office, but he died young and was replaced by his younger brother without a further celebration. Because the 'coming out' was thus linked to the maturity of a whole generation we have felt some confidence in assigning approximate dates to the arrival of the heroes. The period between each 'coming out' we estimate at thirty to thirty-five years, though the higher figure is probably more nearly correct. There must in fact have been some flexibility in the timing of the 'coming out' to account for the differences in the number of generations of ruling chiefs in different segments of the lineage. Some of the differences may be due to errors (e.g. it is possible that 70 is an elder brother not the father of 98, and that a generation has been omitted between Mwakapeje (54) and Mwakage (75), but even where there is little possibility of error the number of generations does not always tally.

In theory a man always belongs to the generation succeeding that of his father, irrespective of his age, provided he has not inherited from a man of the previous generation and taken his status, but in practice, since men often have sons of very different

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VII

CLEANSING THE COUNTRY

769 SACRIFICES to the heroes and the shades of the chiefs are holy and private—only a handful of priests and chiefs may enter the groves and the details of the rituals are not discussed with other people. But there are other celebrations in which everyone 786 participates; these are the rituals for cleansing the community—783 'throwing out the rubbish' (*ukujala ikikungu*)—more specifically the *ashes* from all the hearths.

In Ngonde the cleansing is organized for the whole kingdom, from Mbande, but among the Nyakyusa each chiefdom acts independently. Traditionally, we were told, the *ukujala ikikungu* was an annual celebration, observed at the 'new year', after the break of the rains, but it could also take place if there were much sickness in the country, or plague, or prophecies of evil to come. It was celebrated (in an attenuated form and by a section of the community only) in Ngonde in July 1937, to cleanse the country of a plague of rats, and in September of the same year a somewhat similar ritual was performed in Porokoto's chiefdom because a [787] fearful omen had been seen—a ground hornbill had eaten a [788] chicken. The annual celebrations had been dropped both in Ngonde and BuNyakyusa before 1935.

As has been shown in the *Rituals of Kinship* the Nyakyusa believe [769] that too close an association with the shades is dangerous; all the [755] family rituals are designed to drive them away, to drive them out of the bodies of the mourners, or menstruating girls, or parents of twins; and the purpose of 'throwing out the ashes' in all the homesteads is essentially the same. The shades 'come to warm 783 themselves' at the hearths of their descendants, they 'bring sickness [770] to the hearths' and so the old ashes are cleared out and new fire is lighted. The phrase *ukujala ikikungu* is used in Ngonde for clearing out the litter (*ulufumbe*) after a burial, or an initiation ritual, and for shaving after a ritual, as well as for clearing the ashes from all the hearths in the country.

It is also thought that domestic fires are contaminated by [754] witches who may have cooked the human flesh they steal over [775] their victims' own fires. In Ngonde it was the connexion between

FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

796 Penja chief, Mwalukasa. He called all his people because he heard that
783 smallpox was coming and said: 'Let us pray.' And he called his fellow
chiefs, those of the same lineage, and said: 'Let this illness not come,
753 may it go to other chiefs. . . . Listen! I am the chief! We have heard
that smallpox is approaching, who is here who rejoices at his approach?
Who is here who wishes that it should kill us?'

THE CHIEFS: We, we do not rejoice that it is coming, we reject it, chief Mwalukasa, may it pass by this homestead.

THE COMMONERS: And we also reject it, may it pass by our homesteads.

MWALUKASA: And I, I reject it, may smallpox not come into our country. If there be one who has relatives in a chiefdom where there is smallpox and they come to call him to a funeral let them stay at a distance, and not sleep here, let him not go near until the illness has passed by, at the end of the year. If you witches go to fetch it, you will kill your
[754] fellows with whom you are chatting now. You will not enjoy my company or build with me, the chief, if you go and bring in smallpox and kill your fellows. We pray that it may pass. [For it is believed in this country that the witches go to bring in illness, or wild animals, from a distance.]

THE COMMONERS: Yes, indeed, may it pass by.

MWALUKASA: If you go to bury a brother in a country in which there is smallpox stand afar off, tie the cow you bring to a tree and call to them: 'Here is my cow for killing, come and take it.' Take your cow, but do not go into the homestead.

And the people did as he said. Then he told them to get ready for the ritual. He took his calabash cup and three other chiefs with
[769] calabash cups followed him. They blew water and prayed to Kyala and the shades. Then the people were gathered together; and the chiefs, led by Mwalukasa, ran round facing each group in turn and blowing out water towards them; the men held their shields in front of them and when the chiefs blew they shook their shields violently, as if fighting.

When all was finished then Mwalukasa said: 'When you go home,
[372] throw out the ashes and the fires; all make new fire with drills.' And they all did this.

Finally he had bamboos planted with medicine on the main roads between BuPenja and BuKukwe and BuPenja and BuNyiha. No one
[755] ill with smallpox, or who had lived in contact with smallpox, was allowed to pass, unless he had been ill and recovered. I saw the one bamboo clump on the boundary of Nyiha and Penja country. No one passed it, it was very fearsome (*lutiya fje*).

As in cultivation there was a combination of ritual and science.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 clearly inclined to the shades as it had before the divination, but as
753 before the certain conviction was lacking.

Four days later (12/2/37) Kasitile went to Nassa in Kitali village to consult the oracle again 'for that of Neski went wrong'. He told us afterwards 'This oracle supported the finding of Ndembwe's. It said: [775] Your kinsman who is dead is angry; he says, "Why did you not [769] celebrate the ritual? I am tired of the hair (*Ngatale nape isuili*). And what did you offer your father after cutting that tree?"' Here yet another cause of Kasitile's illness is suggested—the neglect of the death ritual of a kinsman. The implication is that the chief mourners have [765] not yet performed the concluding rite of shaving which makes it [302] possible for the deceased to join his fathers. The hair which the mourners shave off is called 'the hair of the corpse'.

QUESTION: What are you going to do then?

[688] KASITILE: I shall charge the young man, son of my dead kinsman, with [602] neglect, and tell him to celebrate the ritual that the shades which have bound me may go out of my body.

QUESTION: And the bull?

KASITILE: If I can find one I shall kill it.

QUESTION: Who will be there?

[793] KASITILE: The priests will be there, Ngulyu, Kisengota, Njobukusa, Mwalukuta and Mwakasukula,[1] and also Mwaipopo (116) himself. Were I a commoner I should kill alone with my younger brothers, but since I am a public personage (*ndi ndalumbe*) the village headmen are there. (To Mwalkambo, the clerk.) It is good at your home in the hills; here things are bad.

QUESTION: But they also have shades?

[775] KASITILE: But they are not important. Look you, I just cut a tree and they have seized me and dwell in my body. Are there sacred groves in [178] the hills? Do men visit them? There in the hills rituals have died; the puberty ritual and the rituals of the groves are celebrated very little.

On 27th March Kasitile looked in to say that he was going to con-
787 sult a visiting Sangu doctor 'from very far off' about his cough, but
791 G.W. had better not come lest his presence spoil the divination.
753 Kasitile came again after the consultation, full of excitement. 'What a doctor! That is a doctor indeed! That is a diviner! He took an axe and divined with it; he took coppers which I brought and threw them in a little pot, together with the axe, and ash, and he said: "You also take ash and throw it in" and I did so. Then he looked into the little pot and said: "You built on the plain!" He knew this without being told! I said: "Yes".'

SANGU: There was a quarrel there.

[1] The last two are priests of Mbwanga (*vide* p. 81) who did not in fact come. Mwanakunda, Kasitile's assistant, who did come is not mentioned.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

755 791 some live coals into a small calabash and held them against Kasitile's chest 'to clear out the blood of coughing'. To pacify the shades a pot of medicines in water was put on the fire; the doctor, Kasitile, and his [769] 'senior wife' (actually her younger sister, as Jane was away) each held the pot with a crooked finger. Then Kasitile and all his wives and children were sprinkled with the hot medicines. And the doctor told Kasitile to sacrifice a bull.

During the following week preparations for the sacrifice went ahead. [793] Kasitile walked for some hours through the forest to call Mwamakunda, his fellow priest who always assisted him in the celebrations at Lubaga and 'sprinkling the country'. Mwamakunda is a very old man, contemporary of Kasitile's father, and he asked: 'Are you bringing your European to the sacrifice?'

KASITILE: Yes.

[186] MWAMAKUNDA: But your father Mwakanjoki (60) did not know any [688] Europeans, he feared them, he died without ever meeting one. After [177] your father died, when your elder brother was alive, Europeans came —Germans—and cut down a tree, the *umuali* tree in the sacred grove near Kameru; blood gushed out, it shouted so that it was heard in BuKinga.

[782] Kasitile explained that the Germans had wanted timber. Afterwards [783] Mwaipopo (the chief 116) sought a sheep and they tried to put the grove to rights ('close up') by sacrificing it. This was the tree beside which the sacred meat was always put when they sacrificed in the grove. Now one branch has grown up again from the roots.

Mwamakunda went on: 'But you did wrong at the beginning not to take the European to pray, and to tell Mwakanjoki (60) that he should not be afraid, the European has made himself our friend.' Kasitile, reporting the interview to us said: 'I concealed that we went together to the grove to pray (*vide supra*, p. 115) and Mwamakunda told me: "Let the European take something, let it stay overnight in the house, and go with him, and pray very much. . . . Mwakanjoki has gone off in a huff from your home, you have offended him yourself. Go with the 753 European, take him to your father's home. Now your father has taken 769 offence, he is shaking your body by night because you cut the tree; you 688 have done wrong."' i.e. two causes for the anger of the shades and 186 Kasitile's consequent sickness were given: (i) the cutting of the tree by Mwakanjoki's grove and (ii) Godfrey Wilson's presence at rituals and at Kasitile's homestead. So before the sacrifice of expiation for 783 pruning the grove was performed Godfrey Wilson went to be intro- 782 duced to Kasitile's shades for the second time.

[778] *Record of G.W. 5/6/37*

In the evening as the sun was setting, I went to Kasitile's house with a cloth and 2s. He put them in the house, took down the calabash which

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

always hangs under the eaves and is only used for prayer, filled it with 783
water and put into it a stone and a live coal from the fire. Then he 782
took some roots from the roof (previously put there ready) and we
went off to the same spot as before (*vide supra*, p. 115). Kasitile chewed [778]
the root, took water and blew it out, and began to pray:

'Do not be startled, come in your own persons, gather together, [769]
with Mwakanjoki (60). You made friends with him before, now he has entered, he has made himself our friend. Indeed I made a mistake, I have come to enter; I cut you on the head, I have done wrong. The sons of Kagile (i.e. 59 + his descendants) complain of me, saying, "It is he who has gone off with the millet, bananas, and maize; and children cry at night behind the huts; we are barren because he has cut Mwakanjoki." I have sought this cow which you wanted. Mwakanjoki (60), Lwembe (37), Mwakalebela (19), Mwatonska (23), Mwalubange (58), Mwakagile (59), Mwaijunga (82), Kyala (2), we have come to attend to you (pointing to the grave). Kikungubeja, Neyanigwa Kyamba Kitali,[1] Lyambilo (12) come to your home if you are at Mwalubange's (58), come if you are at Mwalende's (61), come Mwakanjoki (60) and the Kings and Lwembe (3); Mwakalebela (19) come, give me cattle and millet, and the powerful medicine which you had. Since you are brooding over me go out from my body, go out! I pay my debt. We have come to take you to your home since you have gone off in a huff, come! I will never cut your branches again. I fear you and I will respect the branches. Come to your house, that of Mwamalobe (83), of Kanjoki (mother of 60), come. And he (G.W.) is [123]
innocent (*mwela*), do not fear him. He is the owner of the ritual, he is Mwamalobe (83), he is my senior, I am the junior. Sometimes I wish to embrace him, sometimes I fear that he is going to imprison me.[2]
May the bananas increase! I am left alone! It is I who am here! Move [769]
out of my body! And give us medicine! May the offering increase overnight, may the cattle increase and the maize, and in the morning let me tell Mwaipaja (G.W.) that the bananas and medicine have increased. If there is anything else you are a lie, if this chill begins again then I have gone, I am not here. Amen! (*ee*).'

Very early the following morning the sacrificial bull was killed. [771]
Kasitile had arranged that our Mohammedan cook should come to cut its throat.[3] Then, later in the morning, the crucial drinking and 'speaking out' began. Kasitile had provided two pots of beer.

[1] These Kings priests whose names are titles of office.

[2] In the earlier years of our acquaintance Kasitile had denied both the murdering of an ailing chief and human sacrifice for the drum. It is possible that he had consented in either one or both of these ritual acts. He himself reported that the Sangoma diviner had told him: 'You have a European as a close friend. . . . You enjoy his company much, but there is something left . . .' (i.e. the friendship is not yet complete). [114]

[3] Ostensibly so that he could partake of the meat, but the reason given seemed inadequate.

FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Record of G.W. 10/6/37

783 I was summoned two hours after sunrise and found at Kasitile's:
782 Mwaipopo (the chief 116), Kisugota, Ngulyo, and Njobakusa the commoner priests; Mwamakunda the younger (his father is too weak to come himself), and a half-wit who has attached himself to Kasitile. Mwaipopo asked me: 'Did you escape the rain yesterday evening?' I said, 'No, I was caught by it, I'd come without a coat, and I thought it quite safe as I lived so near' (a quarter of a mile away). Mwaipopo replied: 'Ah, but you were at prayer. Do they not listen? Did you think you would escape the rain when you were at prayer?' and he laughed at me. During the afternoon it began to thunder close by. Kasitile glanced round and whispered to me out of the corner of his mouth: 'They are listening!'

Drinking continued all day, and all day, with intervals, they discussed the case (*ukujeba isengwa*) or spoke out (*ukusuya*) or prayed (*ukwipata*). This half formal prayer (*ukwipata*) over beer is an essential part of the ritual. They began by discussing the cutting of the tree by
[768] Kasitile. 'They are angry, Mwakanjoki (60) is angry, he is startled
[769] that Mwamalaba (i.e. Kasitile 86) cut him himself. Mwakanjoki says, 'Who is there?' [i.e. Kasitile did it without formally telling the shades about it]. They (*ale*) went off in a huff . . . we have come to fetch him (*ale*) back.'

Then Kasitile told them about his prayer and how he had admitted his fault saying: 'Indeed, I, your wife, have done wrong, Mwakanjoki (60), indeed I come to enter, I Mwamalaba (86), I am a woman.' 'If you went to Mwalubange's (58) come, if you went to Mwalende's (61) come.' 'Yes,' Kisugota broke in, 'you are a woman, and also you are a man, take the calabash cup and pray. It is you then (who are at fault).' 'Thank you,' said the others, 'thank you Mwakisambwe (Kasitile is identified with his great-grandfather, 30), thank you Mwakaglie (Mwaipopo, 116), is identified with his grandfather, 55), for praying with water.' (Mwaipopo had also prayed at his place.)

So the discussion continued. 'We try everything, a sacred stem of bananas from Kalinga (senior widow of 115) is cut, it goes (to the shades), people milk their cows, they collect millet (*vide* pp. 84-5, 101), we try everything, we try everything.'

Then Mwamakunda started a new topic, the old smooth tree: 'But friends, do you say they have gone away now? They went away long ago. Did this smooth tree fall when Kasitile (86, father of the present one) was alive?' 'When he was dead,' they agreed. 'Well, then, where has your wisdom disappeared to?' 'Yes indeed,' broke in Kasitile, 'Indeed, but we attended to that. They said, "Mwaipopo seek a sheep."' They attended to it again. And when I came from the plain, I killed a cow, the meat went there, we attended to it.'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

All the time there was a constant refrain of questioning, especially from Mwamakunda (who as Kasitile's assistant acts as his mouthpiece to the others: 'But why has Mwakanjoki (60) gone off in a huff? Why?' There was a continuous effort to extract reasons. 783 782

The meat from the top of the foreleg (*ijammapa*) was cut up into little portions and some was put aside for the boys, sons of Kasitile. Then Kasitile led the way with a bill-hook and Mwamakunda and I followed. Mwamakunda carried the meat in a leaf. We went to the sacred grove, Kinyangwa. When we reached the edge Kasitile told us to wait and he cut a path into the middle with the bill-hook, then we followed. [778]

Mwamakunda threw the meat slowly, piece by piece, into the rotting stump of an old *umuseli* tree, from which a lusty growth had sprung, one shoot being 30 feet high. Kasitile prayed: 'Come Mwakanjoki (60), together with Lwembe (37), Mwakalebela (19), and the Kinga, come, with—with—with—come. We pray of you millet, maize, bananas, all your food.' (Mwamakunda threw a piece of meat at each word.) 'We are still mourning you, we have tears. We finish now, that is all. Bring bananas, bring millet, maize, children, may the cows calve, stand by us Mwakanjoki (60), N—, N—, N— Lwembe (37), Mwakalebela (19), Nyanigwe,[1] Kyamba Kitali,[1] Ngulube (9), N—, N—, N—. Don't come again Mwakanjoki, let us sleep well. This is Mwambaguje [i.e. Mwamakunda the younger. It was his first visit to the sacred grove in place of his father]. I have brought him to you. Do not be startled at this Mwaipaja (G.W.), he is innocent, he is our friend. Move out of my body, let this chill go from my body! We have finished! Amen!' [769]

Kasitile and Mwamakunda gave instructions and suggestions to each other in low voices from time to time during the prayer and throwing of the meat. We went out, Kasitile and Mwamakunda looking ahead, and Kasitile warned me: 'Do not look behind, Mwaipaja.' For the next two days Kasitile said he and Mwamakunda would wash with medicines, and refrain from intercourse with their wives 'because they entered the sacred grove'. [834]

Then we rejoined Mwaipopo and the priests and the meat was cut up. Mwaipopo said: 'Indeed people gossip, where does the whispering go? To whom do the words go? Perhaps they went to you (the commoner) priests?' Kasitile had something on his mind: 'When I returned from Lubaga who came to say: "Thank you, you have arrived back?" [i.e. no one came to greet him formally on his return]. Njobakosa answered this saying that no offence was meant. [689]

Then Njobakosa turned to Mwaipopo (116) and raised the question of his son, Mwaseba (152) who had seduced Mwaipopo's wife, Mpeta. [684]

[1] The hereditary Kinga priests. [793]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 There is no single supreme power; it lies in the several heroes,
775 in medicines, in witches, and with the shades. Kyala is a hero, a forefather, to whom sacrifices are made, and he is comparable to Lwembe and Kyungu, though he left no direct descendants. The evidence suggests that the names Kyala, Lwembe or Mbasi, Kyungu, and Ngulube were used in the same way in different areas, Kyala being the hero of the north-east shore of the Lake, Kyungu of the north-west, Lwembe of the central Nyakyusa valley, and Ngulube of the scarp edge of the Livingstones. Sometimes informants used Lwembe and Kyala alternatively saying they meant the same thing, although, as we have noted, Lwembe (or Mbasi) was specially associated with cattle, whereas Kyala, who was killed and rose again, only controlled crops, and may perhaps be taken as personifying vegetation. The distinction is in no sense clear-cut, but there is a hint of a cultivating people having
[174] been defeated by cattle-keepers with iron weapons, since Kyala was finally killed with a 'razor' (*ubuembe*), and The Razor himself —Lwembe—could not be killed though men tried.

In their creative aspect the heroes and shades are closely identified: 'Kyala creates desire'; 'the shade rouses up in the
[842] belly when a woman conceives'; 'Kyala and the shades stand together'. Kasitile said:

> Lwembe . . . makes a child. I lie with a woman; Lwembe is there, he works. Sometimes, if he is angry he works badly and a leg is missing, or the woman has a miscarriage. Sometimes he works well. Lwembe goes about looking upon the mothers; he is in my bellows (i.e. in my wife). It is he who came from BuKinga . . . and wished first to build at Nsamba's (i.e. where Nsamba go now lives). He failed there and went to Kasambala's and failed there and he seized Lubaga. All is his. A child is his and a cow, and the iron which the Kinga make is his, and food is his. . . . He is in a bull and a man. Where do you get the 'blood' (to beget a child)? Are you alone? . . . No, the Kukwe do not know Lwembe, but the people of the plain do, they are one with us.
> QUESTION: And Kyala?
> KASITILE: He is there, Kyala and Lwembe are together among us and the people of the plain. It is Lwembe who creates twins. You do not. Who has made your body? Who has created you? Who has given you strength and breath so that you are born, and live, and grow up, and marry? It is Lwembe and Kyala together.[1]

[113] [1] cf. J. Buse, 'Die Zwillingsgeburt bei den Nyakyusa', *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 73. Jahrgang, pp. 194ff.; 'Aus dem Leben von *Asyukile Malango*', *Zeitschrift für Eingeborenen-Sprachen*, Band xxiv (1934), p. 210.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The shade is the principle of life represented by seed, or the root of a banana, or a tree growing by a grave;[1] the hero embodied a vital force which caused grain to sprout and clay cattle to breathe. The line between a hero, the shade of one of his successors, and the shade of a chief is a very faint one. They all have power over people other than their descendants and are approached by hereditary priests. As some elderly men of Ngonde put it: 'The nobles, not the living Kyungu, go to the groves of the Kyungus to pray; they go because the Kyungus who have died are shades to us all (*bo basyuka betu twesa*).' 769 775 [793]

The heroes had miraculous power but it differed in degree, rather than in kind, from that possessed by their descendants. Like that of the divine kings and chiefs it lay both in their own bodies and in medicines, especially the *ifingila* which is still used by chiefs. [778]

Kyala and Lwembe dwell 'beneath' (*pasi*) with the shades, as opposed to 'above' (*kamwanya*), which implied traditionally 'on earth' not 'in the sky'. There is no hint of a sky god in the traditional system, and the distinction between black and white offerings, which the early missionaries took to be a distinction between offerings to the shades and to a sky god,[2] was unequivocally interpreted by the priests in another fashion. The white (*musalu*) offering to Kyala or Ngulube is a symbol not of purity, but of an unclouded sky, and the numinous quality of the heroes is conceived of as contamination, not holiness. Like the shades, the heroes must be 'driven off' lest men go mad, and it is when they have driven them away that men are *bela*—white, innocent, free of anger. Men should be *bela* but this is never cited as an attribute of the pagan Kyala. It is the terribleness, not the goodness or purity of God of which the Nyakyusa are aware. This is underlined by the fact that a madman who, 'when he comes home rushes off', and 'does not see that his fellows are human beings,' and who 'has a loose heart' (i.e. is passionate and quarrelsome), or 'whose heart curls up like a leaf in the sun, or turns upside down', is called 'Mbasi' or is said to have been 'caught hold of by Kyala'. 775 769 [753] [825]

Kyala is one hero among others but, as has been shown, the name is *also* used in the sense of 'the lord'. Kyala as 'the lord' of a commoner or junior kinsman is distinct from Kyala the hero with his own place in a genealogy and his own shrine. The difference

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 103-7, 211 *et passim*.
[2] F. Fülleborn, *Das Deutsche Nyasa- und Ruvuma-Gebiet*, pp. 301-2.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 is illustrated in the references made by priests to the python which appears in Lwembe's grove as *kyala* (*vide supra*, pp. 29, 33). This python is 'the lord', Lwembe.

[776] [177] [773] Nowadays Kyala is spoken of as a first cause—the origin of death, and of social institutions, as well as the creator of life. The current version of the myth of the origin of death begins: 'When Kyala created the country and the people at the beginning there was no death. Then he thought there should be death and life. He asked people to choose between life and death, and they chose life.' And when men are asked the reason for a custom or ritual they may answer 'Kyala made us so', 'Kyala made us black people like that'.

Since Kyala is nowadays regarded as the creator of the natural order he is often blamed for the intractability of things—the log that splits, the lorry that skids. Once a vendor of very small potatoes said, when the buyer complained of the size, 'Kyala gave them to us like this', only to be jeered at by the onlookers who admonished him: 'Had you cultivated better they would have been larger.'

776 775 Much of the material quoted is susceptible of the interpretation that Kyala is an overriding power to which the shades, witches, and medicines are subject. 'The medicine will be effective if Kyala wills'; 'rain will fall when the rain-maker soaks his stones if Kyala wills'; 'when the doctor treats the tails they "vomit" (froth over), then if Kyala has helped us the cattle give much milk'. Even in 1935 conservatives like Kasitile sometimes expressed such beliefs, but they did not do so consistently. Their preoccupation was with other forces and acknowledgment of Kyala seemed to be tacked on almost as an afterthought. This came out very clearly in Kasitile's session with the diviner who, fearing the presence of a European, gave 'Kyala' as the cause of Kasitile's disease, and Kasitile rejected the verdict saying: 'Kyala never stands alone.' [177] [171] The influence of Christian teaching on pagan thought was already considerable in 1935—Kasitile added 'Jesus' and 'the Holy Spirit' to the shades invoked—and we believe the mention of Kyala in many of the pagan prayers at that date to have been due to Christian influence. The idea of a supreme power is accepted very readily *as an addition* to the belief in the shades, the witches, and medicines, though it does not easily replace them altogether. By 1955 the shift in emphasis was clear. Besides Kyala 'the lord' of a commoner or junior, and Kyala the hero who is worshipped at

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 782 Sacrifice is offered that a particular shade, or all the shades of the lineage, may be 'satisfied, assuaged'. The word used is *ukuhobeka* which is also used of a man who has been hungry and has eaten well of fine food, of a man who has married a bride who pleases him, and of a living father or father-in-law who has been angry but is now pacified. In its applicative form, *ukuhobokela*, means to forgive. And the act of sacrifice is an offering, a gift, to the shade strictly comparable to the gift a young man makes to his father when 'begging pardon' for some offence. A son who has committed the most heinous offence of all, seducing one of his [684] father's wives, can 'beg pardon' only by offering a cow; but many [783] smaller offerings are made by juniors to seniors to beg forgiveness for lesser offences.[1] When a cuckolded father receives his son he kills the cow brought to him and eats with his neighbours. It is held to be essential that the living who are insulted (and a man's neighbours are insulted with him) should share in the meat and express satisfaction.[2]

Other conceptions also are, however, manifest in sacrifices. At the offering to a recently dead chief the sacred cut of the meat is divided between the shade, whose portion is placed on the earth near his grave (ideally beside the stone set up at his marriage), and his young grandsons, who are identified with him. The conclusion that this is a communion between the living and the dead is inescapable. At a sacrifice to Lwembe it is certain of the hereditary priests, and they alone, who may share the sacred cut. At the sacrifices made by private persons the communion between shades and grandchildren is explicit when an offering of fish is made.[3] It is less clear in the sacrifice at a funeral, but is made plain [764] in the eating of grain or bananas with the *ikipiki* medicine which symbolizes the lineage. Then the shade is told 'all the food we have eaten you have eaten . . . farewell.' The communion of sacrifice is indeed but one manifestation of the identification of the participants in a ritual with the shades for, as has been shown in a previous book, the essential character of all the rituals of kinship is a death and rebirth, a death in which the participants—the kinsmen chiefly concerned—are made one with the shades and born anew,[4] and this theme is repeated in the ritual of the 'coming out'.

769 783 One paradox remains to be clarified. The shades must be

[1] *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 181-6. [2] *Good Company*, pp. 105, 140.
[3] *Rituals of Kinship*, p. 185. [4] *Ibid.*, pp. 203-5.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

assuaged and men should be *mwelu*, pure, innocent, without anger in their hearts. But, as has been shown, this quality of purity is the very *opposite* of spiritual power (*amanga* or *ubusisya*). It is attributed neither to Kyala and the other heroes nor to the priests; according to Kasitile (p. 138) a pure person cannot be a commoner priest and the chiefs themselves, though *mwelu*—pale—by comparison with the black commoners who are witches, are also 'heavy' (*nsito*) with the medicines they have drunk. Men become *mwelu* by confession; 'speaking out' is a condition of efficacy in sacrifice and the officiant blows out water as a symbol of bringing up all the anger that was in his heart. The parents of twins and the priests of Lubaga, having celebrated their awful rituals emerge, crying, '*Tuli belu*'—we are pure. The very quality which rituals produce in men is the *opposite* of that which characterizes their heroes, their priests, and their rulers. Galahad whose 'strength was as the strength of ten because his heart was pure' is wholly foreign to Nyakyusa thought. 769 783

Truthfulness was never mentioned as a characteristic of the righteous or the pure, nor is it a quality of the heroes or priests. Men censure one another for *ubutungulu* which is commonly translated as 'lying', but means rather 'speaking indiscreetly'. In one Nyakyusa text the child who is told certain ritual secrets by his father and reveals them when he should not is *ntungulu*, and this is an accepted use of the word. No burning concern with truth or falsehood is apparent in the Nyakyusa tradition though they are passionately interested in what they conceive to be right and wrong [577]

The conception of witchcraft and sorcery implies a freedom, a choice of good or evil, for the individual. Much is determined. In Nyakyusa thought, the sins of the fathers are visited on the children, and a child may fall ill because his great-grandfather shed blood or was bound with ropes, and was not adequately cleansed, or because his father has neglected a ward; moreover, kinsmen are 'members one of another', and a ritual neglected by one may bring suffering to others; but there is *also* the notion of individual responsibility. A witch or sorcerer acts consciously and voluntarily—our informants scouted the idea of a witch being unaware of his actions—and he may repent and desist. There are now, periodically in Africa, 'revivalist' movements in which a pagan doctor or diviner urges men to throw away their evil medicines and repent from their witchcraft. One such movement [754] [688] [177]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 swept through BuNyakyusa in the early 1930's; perhaps other
783 similar movements preceded it—we do not know. What is clear
[177] is that traditionally there was continuous public pressure to
[185] overcome hatred within the village and the kinship group; to rid
oneself of it by confession and an expression of goodwill. In pagan
[578] thought Utopia is a society without witches or sorcerers and, though it was never achieved, everyone is convinced that formerly these evil-doers were fewer than now, because they were restrained by law, whereas 'witches' now go scot-free.

183 The interests of the Nyakyusa are personal and practical. Health, fertility, and amity between kinsmen and neighbours are what they seek. It is with rain and drought, with the rise of
773 the Lake or the striking of lightning which destroys property; with stock, crops, and the wild animals which prey upon them that the myths are concerned. We could trace no tales of the sun, moon, and stars, and no rituals are directed to them. Reference is made to volcanic disturbance in the myths of the heroes—'the ground rumbled' when Nkekete and Kyala walked, and there are stories of small lakes disappearing and reappearing elsewhere—but the concern shown is surprisingly little if an eruption indeed destroyed villages last century as Mr. Harkin's single informant suggests (*vide supra*, p. 16).

787 Reality is thought to be revealed to men in dreams, by prophets who 'go down thinking like the roots of a tree' to the world of the
791 shades, and by oracles. What men seek to know are the causes of misfortune—public and private—and the identity of witches. Occasionally, it is said, a prophet has looked into the future and foretold drought, or flood, or the coming of Europeans—'white things on the Lake'—against whom it would be foolish to fight, but for the most part they are concerned with the misfortunes
[183] that exist, and urging men to pray in the groves. The contemplative is not honoured in Nyakyusa tradition; the man of spiritual power is a detective—a discoverer of evil-doers—or an administrator whose awfulness adds to his authority.

183 Men are preoccupied with their relationships to other living men—their kinsmen, neighbours, and fellow office-holders—
771 and with their dead fathers. They are not concerned with their relationship to Kyala. The rituals celebrated by kinsmen are directed to the shades not to any supreme God, and it is quarrelling between kinsmen that angers the shades and makes the celebration of certain rituals necessary. The communal rituals are

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

We remarked to a Christian friend, a deacon, that the rains were late. He replied: 'Well, it is not so very unusual. Sometimes rains begin in one part of the country and not in another. Sometimes we do not get heavy rain down here until the end of January.' In short, the more educated Christians are beginning to think in more general terms: they do not as yet define probabilities statistically in terms of rainfall averages, but they are tending in that direction.

And what of the positive content of Christianity? The supreme attraction, mentioned again and again as the reason for conversion, is: 'There is life' (*ubumi bulipo*), and it is life in a world to come rather than 'more abundant life' here and now that is spoken of. The contrast is between heaven above and the shadowy world 'beneath' of pagan thought, or a fearful fiery hell in which most Christians believe and to which, some think, all pagans are condemned. Constantly in sermons by Nyakyusa preachers there was stress on life, resurrection, and on the rewards and punishments of the future life, and this theme recurs again and again in the dreams of Christians.

There is a gulf also between the pagan conception of 'driving off' the shades and the heroes lest by 'brooding over' a man they bring madness and death, and the Christian ideal of union with God. Sermons stress the goodness and love of God, characteristics quite foreign to the traditional picture of Kyala.

Something of the quality of Christian thought and feeling may be grasped by an examination of the names taken at baptism—the convert from paganism always chooses a new name for himself and the meaning is more immediately obvious to everyone than it is with modern English Christian names derived, as they mostly are, from languages no longer familiar. Many of the Nyakyusa names express a very direct personal relationship with God, the Redeemer: 'He has looked upon me', 'He has roused me', 'He has waited hoping for me', 'He has died for me', 'He gives me courage', 'He has changed me', 'He has chosen me out', 'He has comforted me', and a score more of the same type. Some refer to the Gospels: 'Word of Truth', 'The Word has taken hold of me'. A few speak of purification: 'Make me white', 'He has washed me'. Some express that union with God which the pagans so greatly fear: 'We are with him', 'He has come near', 'He has brooded over me', 'Let us approach', and some thanksgiving: 'Let us sing to Him', 'We praise Him', 'We have rejoiced', and some life: 'He is risen',

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Councils, the importance of establishing machinery for their appointment in chiefdoms where the 'coming out' is no longer held is obvious. [77] [622] [423]

The traditional communal rituals have not been dropped altogether, but their celebration is sporadic and not everyone supports them. Careful enquiries suggest that in less than half of the chiefdoms has the 'coming out' been celebrated when it was due. In the most conservative portion of the district, Selya, there were celebrations in 1952 and 1954, but even in that area a number of the ruling chiefs have never 'come out'. The omission is due partly to the desire of the old men to retain office, partly to the increase in population and the planting of coffee which makes any new deal in land unacceptable, and partly to the feeling of many that the old ritual is an anachronism, if not directly incompatible with their new faith in Christianity. Some chiefs who have not 'come out' would welcome a celebration; one such told us that 'if the "coming out" died chieftainship would die'; but a young chief's personal wishes are not decisive in this matter. Sacrifices at the groves of chiefs and heroes are not as frequent as before, but they still occur at some groves in time of drought or other emergency. The Kinga came to Lubaga in 1954, and they were expected to come and instal Kasitile's heir in 1955. In 1954 also there were sacrifices to Mwaijonga (82) and Mwakisambwe (30) for it was a season of scarcity. Rituals for cleansing the country and sprinkling the homesteads occur sporadically 'when occasion demands', but not annually in any chiefdom and never in some. And when celebrations do occur they do not unite the people of a chiefdom as they used to do. Christians oppose them and many non-Christians are also sceptical. [561] [796] [643] [782] [769] [771]

In 1935 the traditional rituals celebrated by lineages and chiefdoms formed a coherent system. They were directed towards the shades and the heroes, as was manifest in the sacrifices and in the dramas of death and rebirth when those secluded 'dwelt with the shades' or were 'caught hold of' by Kyala.[1] The older participants were then conscious, in greater or lesser degree, of the symbolism implicit in the actions they performed. By 1955 the ritual cycle was nowhere celebrated in full: what remained were 'bits and pieces' of ritual, none of them fully intelligible without reference to the complete cycle. The link between the rites and the shades and the heroes was less clear, and the symbolism less [769] [796]

[1] *Vide supra*, pp. 27-48, 70-85; *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 51, 98, 101, 111-13, 205.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 conscious. This disintegration of a former coherence, and a
[769] decreasing awareness of the meaning of symbols used, are perhaps
[796] characteristic of changing societies in Africa.

Despite the growth of the Christian Church, the great demand for schools, and the dropping of the old rituals directed to family
[754] shades and the heroes, belief in the power of medicines flourishes.
[778] Probably most deaths and misfortunes are still attributed to an enemy using either witchcraft or sorcery. The traditional belief in witchcraft is rejected by educated people, but belief in the power of medicines is general. Autopsies still take place and occasionally the poison ordeal is administered in secrecy; one case was mentioned which occurred in 1942. As we have seen, medicines have always been regarded as a potential instrument of individual competition. They are used in the rituals of kinship to ensure health, fertility, and good manners and morals; in the ritual of chieftainship to buttress authority, and in 'sprinkling the homesteads' to fertilize the fields; but also by individuals to steal the fertility of their neighbours' fields and to grow rich at the expense of their neighbours, and it is their use as an instrument of individual aggrandisement that is most talked of today. There were many reports of their use by rivals to office as chiefs, and the floods of 1955, which washed away the Mbaka bridge and caused a serious landslide on that river, were interpreted as incidents in a
[578] prolonged fight between chiefs who were rivals for the position of paramount. The deaths of the heir of one of them in 1953, and of the other chief himself in 1956, were also attributed to their duel with medicines.

Along with the political changes there has been a development
797 of the Churches, more particularly of the Moravian Church,
795 which is now largely self-supporting, with growing congregations served by African ministers.[1] Until 1938 the two main Protestant
177 missions in Nyakyusa valley, the Moravian and Lutheran, were staffed by Germans and their funds came mainly from Germany. The war meant the withdrawal of the missionaries and the cutting off of funds. After a lapse of three years one Moravian missionary, and later one Lutheran, came to take charge of the missions and they were reinforced by other missionaries after the end of the war, but the whole policy in both missions is to build up self-supporting churches staffed by African pastors.

The work of the White Fathers mission was not interrupted by

[1] Change in Ngonde is not discussed.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XIV

RELIGION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

182 In this chapter we shall seek to show how the traditional communal rituals both reflect and maintain the traditional political structure, and to consider in what measure the change from paganism to Christianity compels a change in other aspects of the society, or, alternatively, how far the economic and political changes taking place among the Nyakyusa compel a change in religion.

182 773 769 643 The heroic myths are the charter for chieftainship. The heroes from whom the chiefs are descended are pictured as creators and benefactors, the authors of fertility and civilized living. But myth and ritual also entrench the rights of commoners and unify people of different stocks by asserting their complementary diversity. No ritual can be celebrated without the participation of commoner priests. They 'speak out' at rituals and bring public opinion directly to bear on the chief, whose own health is held to depend upon their goodwill; at the same time the whole country looks to the chief as the source of fertility in man and beast and field.

182 643 796 782 Ritual was the integrating force with the widest range in the traditional society. Independent chiefs, even those whose people were culturally as different as the Nyakyusa and Kinga, joined in sacrifice to Lwembe and Kyala and were mystically dependent upon one another. As Kasitile put it 'the Kinga come (to Lubaga) both when there is trouble in our land and in theirs'. In Ngonde the 'divine king', the Kyungu, who controlled a flourishing trade in ivory, developed secular as well as ritual functions and emerged as a paramount chief, but in the Nyakyusa valley the ritual bond had no secular backing save the exchange of iron and salt for food, which linked Kinga and Nyakyusa in a tenuous partnership. The sacrifices to the Lwembe did not exclude war between chiefs who acknowledged him, nor did sacrifice to their common ancestor exclude war between Mwaipopo (116) and Mwaihojo (147), but the necessity of co-operation in sacrifice compelled later reconciliation. Perhaps the insistence on the sacredness of the heroes and their living representatives, the elaborate ritual of

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

chieftainship, and the dependence upon medicines as a means of enforcing law were connected with the ineffectiveness of secular authority. Certainly the Kyungu's emergence from seclusion, and the dropping of the taboos which surrounded him were connected with his acquisition of economic power; but we know too little of the conditions that make for elaboration of ritual to postulate any general connexion between the absence of ritual in public life and the effectiveness of secular authority.

The cycle of sacrifices to the heroes and dead chiefs among the Nyakyusa is more than an ancestor cult, for it includes non-relatives among its priests and beneficiaries; but it has many of the features of an ancestor cult, among them the identification of piety with conservatism. A good man follows exactly in the footsteps of his father who becomes his god. This is reconciled with a myth of a new beginning, ten generations ago, when civilized life came to the Nyakyusa valley, and the new beginning is celebrated each generation with the 'coming out' of the young chief and his contemporaries.

All Nyakyusa rituals are cathartic in the sense that they make explicit and seek to dissipate, by their very expression and rejection, certain anti-social tendencies. In the Nyakyusa view the root of evil is 'anger in the heart' unadmitted and corrosive, and only by an open confession can it be overcome.[1] Hence in every situation of misfortune, public or private, men are pressed to 'speak out' (*ukusaya*) and admit their anger. At the 'coming out' the conflict of generations is expressed in the prolonged debate over the date of the celebration and the detailed arrangements, and in the dancing and slaughter of cattle, and is finally resolved when authority and land are handed over to the young men by their fathers. The fissiparous tendencies of a chiefdom are made explicit and canalized in constitutional form by the division of the old chief's country into two, under his senior sons; and criticism of the young chiefs is made explicit in the formal admonition by the father's village headmen. The rejection of conflict is clearest at the annual purification when men throw out the ashes contaminated by family bickering and the cannibalism of witches, and *fight* one another 'that the homesteads may be peaceful'. This fighting is 'to bring out war from within (*ukusaya*)',

[1] cf. *Good Company*, pp. 99-112. The belief that a witch or sorcerer must *confess* if the patient was to recover was the reason for the torture of witches in many African societies.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

182 and is therefore to be interpreted as 'confusion of anger', rather
185 than as 'rebellion'.

776 Sometimes there is an expression of *opposite* tendencies, both
631 implicitly approved. The sacrifices to the heroes and at the
groves of the chiefs emphasize seniority and precedence, and
182 express the dependence of junior on senior kinsmen, but the
●769 myth, recalled in every celebration, tells of the surpassing power
783 of the son or younger brother in the beginning of time, and the
561 junior brother of a chief often holds office as a priest. Then there is the drama of driving away the shade and bringing him back transformed, which is so characteristic of the rituals of kinship and appears again at the cleansing of the country. Such contradictions are doubtless expressions of ambivalent attitudes among the participants themselves, and of the attempt in ritual to reconcile conflicting social principles—in these instances authority with the rights and duties of juniors, and change with continuity.

182 In a society without written records legal certainty depends
643 very largely on publicity. This is apparent in the law relating to
561 marriage contracts and family inheritance,[1] and still more so in the law of the chiefdom. The ritual of 'coming out' celebrates radical changes in social status, and the public recognition of the leaders, members, and territorial boundaries of villages, as well as of the heirs to chieftainship. Thus certainty in these matters is assured. There is no positive value of the co-ergency of father and son (as in ancient Egypt),[2] but the installation of the young chiefs before the death of their father serves to mitigate conflicts over the succession. Confusion over village boundaries and village
[423] leadership often appears when the ritual has not been celebrated, for there is no public definition to refer to.

182 How close is the link between religious belief and practice and
769 social structure? There is no doubt that the sacrifices to the dead
797 chiefs and heroes and the traditional rituals of kinship supported the former political and kinship structure of the Nyakyusa. Their performance compelled co-operation between kinsmen,[3] between neighbouring chiefs, and between chiefs and people. How far then does the change in religion, begun when the first Christian convert professed his new faith, compel a change in the social

[1] Godfrey Wilson, 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Law', *Africa*, vol. ix, 1935, p. 19.
[2] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, pp. 101-2.
[3] cf. *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 130-200, 217.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

structure? And how far does the new economic and political organization produce a change in religion? These theoretical questions can be answered only by a series of comparative studies. Here there is evidence for one area alone, and the connexions which we postulate can be established only if they hold in a whole range of societies.

Christianity implies an emergence from the nexus of kinship, for the worshipping group is two or three believers, not a body of kinsmen, and conversion is a personal choice. This is more obvious in a missionary church than in one long established, for, as we have seen, the convert in a pagan community must withdraw from his kinsfolk to become a Christian,[1] but it remains true, even in a Christian society. The new doctrine implies a body of believers—a Church. The particular form varies, but the Church has appeared wherever the Christian faith has been established. In short, we argue that the change in religion necessarily disrupts an organization based primarily on kinship and establishes a new type of organization based partly on voluntary association. With the change from the ritual of the lineage to the ritual of the Church the authority and leadership of senior kinsmen is diminished; they are replaced by 'elders' and priests or pastors whose basis of authority is not birth, but selection by the Church. Furthermore, association for worship becomes a pattern for association in other fields, and the Church is the training ground among the Nyakyusa, as it has been among so many other peoples, for organizers of other types of societies.

And not only is kinship subordinated to faith; the forms of kinship are themselves modified. From the time of their first arrival the missionaries have taught that Christianity implies monogamy and they have baptized no polygynist who does not put away his additional wives. This teaching has been questioned by many Africans and by some European missionaries themselves, who doubt the wisdom of persuading a man already married to send away his wives—or even of countenancing such an action. But the rule of monogamy has remained as a condition of membership in all the Churches with European connexions.[2] It has been rejected, as we have seen, by two of the 'independent' African

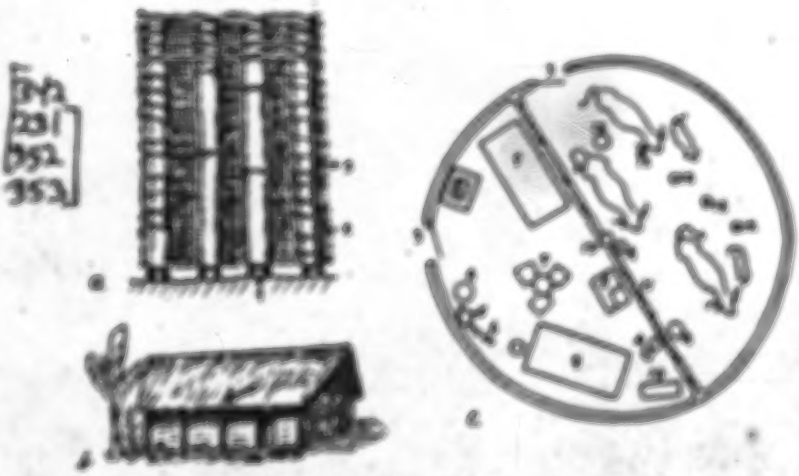
[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 137-9.

[2] The rule was suspended for a brief period in one mission working not far from the Nyakyusa area, but was later enforced. cf. Lyndon Harries in *Survey of African Marriage and Family Life* (edited by A. Phillips), pp. 341-6.

392 353 parts. The partition wall was bamboo and mud. A doorway gave on to the inner part, where Tuhoma had her bed.

394 There were two hearths, one in each room. The front one was not used. In the outer room was a bed for guests—a common feature of all houses. Tuhoma was thought to be well off, and she had plenty of carrying slings, used by the 482 women when they carry loads, often very heavy, on their heads. The inner room was used for stores, including a number of earthen jars. She had there very fine, 352 deep stools. I saw them outside in the sun, but their usual place was no doubt in the outer room, which had the character of a workroom. Here were the large 412 wooden mortar and its long pestle; also the grinding stone and in a corner the small mat, the ulyanyo, which is used to take up the newly ground flour. There 417 was also the ladder, used for fetching down firewood from the loft; you could see 415 the hen's nest, and the large water jar with its painted bottom placed on three stones.

415 The third image belonged to an eighty-year-old woman whose husband had 704 died. She told me how every day she would fill a fine, decorated bamboo mug 83 with milk for him! These mugs, seen in all the houses, mostly have geometrical



Houses belonging to Mabu Ulimwakaya and her husband.

a, Detail of fringe, outer wall. c, one free cross joined to bamboo pole—note aperture for liquid container; d, bamboo pole with plant fiber windings; f, split bamboo—b, Mabu's fringe—c, Plan of image. 1, bed of the owner; 2, iron cleats for garments; 3, door; 4, posts supporting ceiling; 5, fire's nest; 6, bowl and pestle for the maize mortar; 7, hearth; 8, cleats; 9, bed of the grandchildren; 10, mat from hollowed out trunk; 11, low partition; 12, posts for tying cattle; 13, cross pole in top of roof.

13:Lehmann E-5 (0939) 1951 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

4. A visit to the chief's father's grave was paid in company with the chief and some of his *omafuma*. It was situated in a banana grove (*ilingate*[71]) not very remote from the chief's hut. The grave of the present chief's father was on the ground-floor, about one hundred paces from its edge and was characterised by a small sixedged basalt block about half a metre in height[72] and about forty centimetres in breadth. An indola-plant was also standing on the grave about one metre from the basalt block. 765 [764]

On this occasion the chief also told me of the special cases for which sacrifices are offered in this grove. These are performed only in cases of very serious accidents, sickness or famine which may overcome the chieftainship. In such cases a black cow is slaughtered after sunset at the edge of the grove. In the presence of the chief some pieces of meat of the slaughtered beast, together with some bananas, are laid down at the grove. The chief adds a prayer to his ancestors at some distance from the grove, referring to the evil by which the chieftainship or some special village of it has been afflicted. He enumerates all the names of his ancestors and asks them for their help. 769 782

The remaining pieces of the meat and other bananas are left in the grove during the night. When the next day dawns, the *omafuma* return and some *abwegage* divide the meat and eat it together. On this occasion the chief orders the removal of all remains of ashes from the huts. The ashes are thrown down in such unclean places as where leprous persons had been buried. After this has been done, the chief in conjunction with an *uwegage*[73] produces a new fire for the huts by twirling, and all other fires of the village, or villages, must be kindled anew from this "need-fire". [766] [372]

5. The reason for visiting an *uwaganga* (diviner)[74] who dwelled in *Ilungu* an older age-set village[75] which seemed to the visitor to be a more ancient part of Katumba, was caused by the sickness of the chief's sister. In accordance with the custom of the Nyakyusa in bringing women back to their father's village if they are very sick, the 787 [164 484]

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[71] Cf. *Johnston*, *Statistics*, pl. *ornamenta*, p. 420; *Mackenzie*, *Ilayeta*, burial place, p. 300; *mangata*, grave of the dead chiefs, p. 151; *Wilson*, Introduction, p. 307, *ilingata*, sacred grove; *Marwedig*, p. 115.

[72] Cf. *Pilisbury*, p. 327.

[73] Cf. o. 3, p. 3.

[74] Cf. *Johnston*, p. 481.

[75] I proposed to call the special form of villages found within the Nyakyusa society, which are erected on the age-set principle, „age-set villages" (*African Studies*, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 15—18 June 1943), a terminology that does not alter G. Wilsons statements on the "Age Villages" (Introduction, p. 309 ff). [56] 621

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ancestors and of Kyara[17]. At the same time he moved his curved wood 787
to and fro on the ground and when he did so, it indicated a negative [776]
answer from the beings invoked. But when he was asked: "Is the guilt for the sickness to be found in the husband of the chief's sister?", he was unable to move his wood as before; he could only stamp it on the ground, and this meant an affirmative reaction of the invoked spirits. Now, therefore, the meeting had reached its aim.

I asked the diviner to tell me how he had acquired his faculty. He 791
explained that (besides the necessary inner disposition) the payment of a fee for the medical preparation was necessary in order to become a diviner[18]. This outfit consisted in a special vaccination by a learned diviner. For this purpose the neophyte was incised by his master on [304]
different spots on the upper side of the knuckles, and in these small incisions was rubbed a medical powder. By these means the initiate may be inspired by the prophesying spirits. These influences are then felt by the diviner as a power which directs the movements of his hand in the manner described.

6. Near the hut of the chief's principal wife was a "sacred" banana 824
plant, in the grove opposite to the chief's hut and in the grove with 778
the grave of the chief's father already described. At particular times, 782
when any need demands it, the chief offers a prayer in this place to 769
his ancestors[19]. The sickness of his sister, for instance, was such an occasion for him to address the ancestors. I was invited by the chief to witness this act; but I raised objections, telling him that my presence might perhaps rather cause the anger than the help of his ancestors. In reality, I did not want the chief to stage a theatrical act on my [23]
behalf. But the chief rejected my excuses and explained that he would act in the same manner as if I were not present, because he had made up his mind to this prayer. The chief was assisted during this ceremony by Mwainyekule who presented to the chief a calabash of water as he arrived at the banana plant devoted to this purpose. The chief took [illegible] Then he recited the names of his ancestors and begged them to help his sister.

7. During one afternoon, I was told that a ceremony to end the 881
initiation of a (betrothed) girl was going on in a family of the village.

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[17] name of the supreme spiritual being.
[18] Cf. Mackenzie, p. 238.
[19] Mackenzie refers that such a place is named "ikiyinja", "the family place of prayer" (pp. 144, 197), but without indication of the locality, as Kavonga.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

state, and the property of a convicted witch went to the chief. 105
Therefore the lineage was not the unrivalled principle of social grouping among the Nyakyusa as it was among the Tallensi or Nuer, but it was a corporate body.[1]

The existence of three types of groups among the Nyakyusa 105
made for social integration. The divergent interests of villages were 82
checked by the fact that every man had kinsmen in many other villages upon whom he was dependent, economically and ritually; the fissiparous tendencies of lineages were checked by the loyalties of lineage members to different villages; and the villages and lineages were all held to be dependent upon their chief for the fertility of their land, control of the weather, and success in warfare.

Since an account of the Nyakyusa age-villages and an outline of their kinship system have already been published,[2] we may now turn directly to the topic of this book, their religion.

The traditional religion of the Nyakyusa people has three 771
elements: First, there is a lively belief in the survival of the dead 105
and in the power of senior relatives, both living and dead, over their descendants; secondly, there is a belief in medicines, that is, in a mystical power residing in certain material substances which is used by those who have the requisite knowledge; thirdly, there is a belief in witchcraft, that is, an innate power to harm others exercised by certain individuals, and in the mystical power of fellow villagers to punish wrongdoers. This last power, 'the breath of men', is akin to witchcraft. It may be objected that a belief in witchcraft is in no sense 'religious', but to exclude discussion of it in an account of Nyakyusa religion is comparable to excluding a reference to the devil in a discussion of Christianity. Evil is a reality which must be interpreted in one fashion or another in every cosmology.

The belief in the survival of the dead and the power of senior relatives, is expressed in a series of elaborate rituals, one set of which concerns only kinsmen and are directed towards the im-

[1] There appear to be many gradations between a society with no corporate lineages, such as the Lozi, and one like the Tallensi in which the lineage is the basis of all important social groups, just as there are gradations between a stateless society in which all offences are treated as quarrels between groups of kinsmen, and a primitive state in which any serious assault is an offence against the state.

[2] Monica Wilson, op. cit. and 'Nyakyusa kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, ed. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde (1950).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

771 mediate ancestors of the participants, and another set which con-
105 cern chiefdoms and groups of chiefdoms, and are directed towards the immediate ancestors of ruling chiefs and certain distant ancestors of the chiefs' line, heroes in Nyakyusa history. The name of one of these heroes, Kyala, has been used by the missionaries to translate the word 'God', but all the evidence available goes to show that Kyala was, traditionally, but one of several distant ancestors to whom regular sacrifices were made on behalf of a large group of chiefdoms. All the rituals of this type—those directed to family shades, the chiefs' ancestors, and the heroes—are concerned with that which is beneath (*pasi*), not that which is above. Men look to the earth where corpses are buried, not to any sky god.

121 The theme of the present volume is the rituals celebrated by
771 kinsmen at death, at the puberty and marriage of a girl (the last two events usually coinciding), at birth, especially twin birth, and in misfortune. A further volume will deal with the communal rituals celebrated before the annual break of the rains; whenever public misfortune such as drought, flood, famine, or plague occurs or threatens; before battle; and when a chief is succeeded by his sons, and the younger generation take over power from their elders.

881 There is no circumcision or initiation of men other than the 'coming out' ceremony, when a whole generation takes over responsibility for the administration and defence of the chiefdom from their fathers. Some reference to three of the heroes—Kyala, Lwembe, and Mbasi—is made in texts on the rituals of kinsmen, but our discussion of them is postponed to the second book in which the rituals directed to them are described.

775 A section of the Nyakyusa people is Christian and its influence
177 on pagan thought and practice is appreciable; however, discussion
128 of this is also postponed to the second book, since it is most evident in the changing concept of Kyala. There, too, the connections between change in ritual and other aspects of the social structure between 1934 and 1955 are analysed.

121 The Nyakyusa cult of senior relatives (like any ancestor cult) is
771 not intelligible or significant apart from a study of kinship, and it may be argued that this material should be presented only as part of an analysis of Nyakyusa kinship, but we cannot discuss everything at once and some measure of abstraction is necessary. No one ritual among the Nyakyusa is fully intelligible without reference to the whole series of rituals. The principle, propounded forty-five years ago by Professor Radcliffe-Brown, that a symbol

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

recurring in a cycle of rituals is likely to have the same significance in each, holds good for the Nyakyusa: certain symbols of shaving, washing, eating, spreading banana leaves, scattering grain, and so forth were similarly interpreted by our informants in the different rituals of the cycle, and their full significance is only apparent when a comparison of their various uses is made. In this book, therefore, attention is focused on the ritual cycle. A comparison of numerous rites reveals a *symbolic pattern*, the counterpart, in the emotional aspect, of kinship organization in the practical aspect; and the comments of the more self-conscious Nyakyusa on the rites indicate the *intellectual system* linked with this pattern. [2] [77]

As already mentioned, the religious conceptions of the Nyakyusa include the belief in medicines, in 'the breath of men', and in witchcraft, as well as in the power of senior relatives. The importance of medicines in the rituals directed to the shades will be evident in every chapter of this book. References to witchcraft and the 'breath of men' are not so frequent, since these form what is on the whole a separate system of beliefs, and refer to a different set of relationships. The ancestor cult is concerned *mainly* with the relationships of kinsmen, and of the chiefs and their peoples; witchcraft and 'the breath of men' *mainly* with the relationships of fellow villagers—i.e. age mates and their wives—though it also impinges on kinship and political relationships. Only in the relationship of spouses, and that between chief and village headmen, do the two sets of beliefs constantly overlap. An account of the Nyakyusa conception of witchcraft and 'the breath of men' has already been published, and it has been shown that accusations of witchcraft occur most frequently between fellow villagers and, nowadays, between fellow employees, that is, between non-relatives; they are also fairly frequently directed against wives and co-wives; but accusations of witchcraft against kinsmen of the same lineage are very rare.[1] Antagonism between kinsmen occurs and is expressed in accusations of practising sorcery, as well as in fear of the power of senior relatives, but most misfortunes are attributed to the hate and envy of neighbours or wives rather than to the malice of kinsmen. Evil is conceived of as having a personal cause, but as originating generally outside the circle of kin. The mystical power of senior relatives (living and dead) can never be used irresponsibly—it cannot operate unless the cause is just—and therefore misfortune emanating from the shades is always a just [77] [578]

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. [illegible] 198–203.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

• 771 retribution, not an irresponsible assault, like that made by witches.

The religion of the Nyakyusa is expressed in ritual rather than in dogma. Everyone participates, at some time or another, in a variety of rituals; a great deal of time and energy is devoted to them, and they are elaborate. By comparison, the dogma and myth are limited both in content and in influence. Many more people participate in rituals than are fully conscious of dogma and myth; many more people can describe rituals than interpret them. In this analysis, therefore, the rituals are first described and the principal dogmas are deduced from the Nyakyusa interpretation of them.

121 771 The stress is on the Nyakyusa interpretation of their own rituals, for anthropological literature is bespattered with symbolic guessing, the ethnographer's interpretation of the rituals of other people. Now it seems probable that certain symbols are universal in the sense that they express the same ideas in all societies. Many other symbols are emotionally intelligible when interpreted—the following pages are full of examples—but it is foolish to imagine that an individual schooled in one culture can understand the symbolism of another without instruction. For this reason, and at the risk of wearying the reader, many of the texts on which this interpretation is based are quoted. The interpretations of even the most self-conscious Nyakyusa, such as Kasitile the rain-maker, Mwandisi the old blind historian, Mwaalemba, Lyandileko and Kakune the doctors, do not, of course, reveal the whole truth about Nyakyusa rituals, but *any analysis not based on some translation of the symbols used* by people of that culture is open to suspicion. The texts were recorded in the Nyakyusa language by Godfrey or Monica Wilson, or one of our two Nyakyusa clerks, Mwaikambo and Mwaisumo, and the informants most often quoted were selected for their special knowledge. And very many others discussed rituals with us.[1]

Not all Nyakyusa are conscious of all the interpretations given. A few symbols, such as the association of different types of banana with male and female respectively, are known to everyone; but the meaning of many of the events in the rituals was obscure to young men and women. Most of the interpretations quoted have, however, been given by more than one informant (as is shown in the text and documents) and may be taken as *common*, i.e. current in

[1] For the methods of field-work cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. vii-ix.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the group. In the few cases in which our informant may have been /2/ giving his own individual interpretation, 'putting a bucket down /7/ into his subconscious and pulling it up', it was at least a Nyakyusa subconscious, and the interpretation is in terms of the culture. It is with common, not individual, symbols that we are concerned: what is offered in this book is a sociological, not a psychological, analysis.

Similarities between the symbolism of Nyakyusa rituals and the /7/ symbolism of dreams and neuroses in Western society will be /2/ obvious to readers. That preoccupation with anal and oral func- /7/ tions, with 'nakedness' (though the Nyakyusa habitually wore the most exiguous of coverings), with death, coition, and birth, with mastery ('overstepping') and incest, which is characteristic of the rituals we describe, is evident also in any textbook of psychoanalysis dealing with Western Europeans and Americans; and certain symbols such as a house, a doorway, a spear, seed, and so forth are common to both cultures; but here we are not concerned to trace these similarities. Our business is to lay bare the symbolic pattern of the Nyakyusa without reference to the Western tradition.

The material used for the sociological analysis of ritual consists /28 of two types: observation or description of events, and statements /2/ about associations. The greatest difficulty in presenting it has been to choose between a chronological account of each ritual, followed by the Nyakyusa translation or interpretation of the symbolism, and then by the sociological analysis; and an integrated account combining the interpretation and analysis with the description. The advantage of the first method is that the validity of both interpretation and analysis can be more easily judged since the evidence on which it is based is fully set out; the disadvantage is that the description itself implies interpretation and analysis. The symbolism is often implicit in the description of events, and the separation of description from interpretation involves repetition; at the same time the classification of events and symbols is itself a form of analysis, and the separation of description from analysis tends to conceal this. The present study is a compromise between the two approaches. Where events and their symbolism are fairly straightforward, the interpretation accompanies the description; but where, as in the rituals of farewell to the dead, puberty and marriage, and abnormal birth, they are complicated, and the interpretation may well be questioned, accounts of the events are separated from detailed evidence on symbolism. Analysis is neces-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[121] 128 sarily implied all through, but since the argument can only be unfolded step by step (for no one ritual can be fully analysed until all are described) a discussion of it is reserved to the concluding chapters. In interpreting the symbolism, cross reference between the different rituals of the cycles would be too frequent to give in the text. Readers wishing to follow up references to the symbolism of bananas, for example, or *ikipili* medicine, should use the index.

771 577 The link between religious beliefs and morality (in the sense of right behaviour) is very clear among the Nyakyusa. Many misfortunes are attributed to sin, that is, wrong-doings (*amagwe*) thought to be supernaturally punished. Indeed, to the Nyakyusa the idea of the wicked man 'spreading himself like a green bay tree'[1] is inconceivable, and the disciples' question: 'Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'[2] cold common sense. Here we are concerned with the form of morality[3] sanctioned by Nyakyusa religion, with the conception of good and evil, and with [128] the relation between belief and behaviour.[4] A table of private misfortunes attributed to the anger of senior relatives is included in this volume; public misfortunes will be discussed in the succeeding one; and a table of misfortunes attributed to witchcraft, sorcery, and the legitimate anger of neighbours ('the breath of men') has been given in the study of Nyakyusa age-villages already published.[5] While the Nyakyusa lay great emphasis on the correct performance, in every detail, of certain rituals, their very performance implies co-operation between kinsmen, and not only co-operation but amity. For 'anger in the heart', if unconfessed, may bring misfortune. Thus though the outward form is stressed, the inward and spiritual is not totally ignored.

121 We proceed on the assumption that men express in ritual what moves them most; that the form of expression is conventional and obligatory, and that therefore in ritual the values of a group (as opposed to those of individuals) are revealed.

[1] Psalm xxxvii: 35. [2] John ix. 2.

[3] I cannot accept Professor Radcliffe-Brown's definition of morality as the control of conduct by 'public opinion and conscience' as opposed to control by religion. Nor do I accept Professor Macbeath's argument that primitive man has no idea of good quite apart from religion. A. E. Taylor's view of morality comes much closer to the facts as shown in Nyakyusa society.

cf. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*, p. 170; A. Macbeath, *Experiments in Living*, Gifford Lectures 1948-9; A. E. Taylor, *The Faith of a Moralist*, Gifford Lectures 1926-8.

[4] The gem of the book is Godfrey Wilson's 'An African morality', *Africa*, 1936.

[5] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 198-213.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

121 object or action which it is felt to resemble. The images men use,
811 the things they feel to be alike, are determined in a general way by the form of the society, and Nyakyusa images are in terms of bananas, staple grains, cattle, smithing on a primitive forge, lineage organization and so on. There are cultural idioms, accepted forms of expression, which frequently recur, but the particular associations are not predictable any more than the associations made by a poet in our own society—the priest and the doctor are indeed in one aspect poets.[1]

771 The essence of Nyakyusa ritual is that things which are felt to
813 be alike are taken as causally connected. Both positive actions and
843 avoidances or taboos are based on the assumption that like objects or actions react on one another. This was clearly recognized by an informant who remarked: 'avoidances come from resemblances.' The basis is invariably the *feeling* of likeness, but mixed up with this there is often exact observation, as in the following taboo. The husband of a pregnant woman may not hunt big game because, it is said, they will be unusually fierce and attack him particularly. The association made is between a pregnant woman who is irritable, 'fierce' (akali), and the game which is fierce. The husband is identified with his wife, 'and', the Nyakyusa say, 'lion *always* attack a cow in call'. Sometimes like things are felt to be antagonistic, as 'seed in the belly' and seed in the ground, and sometimes sympathetic. Sometimes like is thought to produce like—a pregnant woman is forbidden to sit close to someone lest she bears twins—and sometimes men mime a misfortune as a prophylactic against it.

789 The rituals are magical in the sense that efficacy is held to lie in
184 the particular material form,[1] but they vary in detail with the
771 cultural group, just as the language does.[2] The rituals of the Lakeshore plain in Tanganyika (MuNgonde) and of Selya are almost identical, but those of the Kukwe, the Lungulu, the Saku, the Ndali, the Penja, and the people of Ngonde in Nyasaland are all somewhat different. Differences in ritual are directly connected by the people themselves with differences in lineage, and the principle is maintained that every individual follows the ritual of his or her father's lineage, though a married woman will follow that of her

[1] For a discussion of this characteristic of magic cf. G. & M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change* (1945), pp. 79–83, 88–93.

[2] An account of the various cultural groups included under Nyakyusa, and of related peoples, is given in *Good Company*, pp. 1–5.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

husband when at her husband's home. Kakune, a doctor, explained: 'The ritual for a woman is that of her husband's group, always. My mother was Lugulu, but at her death we did the Kukwe ritual. If my daughter marries a Sangu and dies, they will do the Sangu ritual; she has moved.' We attended a death ritual which was actually performed in two slightly different ways by two sets of mourners. A member of a Sangu family, long established in Selya, had died; sons and daughters of the family performed what was said to be the Sangu ritual, but the children of daughters married to Selya men performed the Selya ritual. Whether the Sangu ritual is really so similar to the Selya ritual as this celebration suggests is doubtful—it seems unlikely, since the Sangu are very different from the Nyakyusa in other respects and their languages are not mutually intelligible—but some sort of adjustment had been made by this foreign family living in Selya and by others in a like position. Our informants *expected* to find parallels to the events of their own rituals in the rituals of neighbouring groups, and they expected also to find *minor* differences. Any variations are explained by the phrase 'that is the custom in their lineage', and the officiant is the final arbitrator as to what is correct. A number of informants also pointed out that the staple foods were used in the death ritual and that these varied somewhat with the area. 'We eat the principal food of the country—it differs with different people. The Kisi and Ngonde (of Nyasaland) use fish, the Ndali use goats, we Nyakyusa cannot use rice but the Swahili would. Our food is bananas.[1] The pumpkin, which we also use, is a very old vegetable and is still much eaten; it is one of the best vegetables.' The Sangu use millet porridge, the Penja maize and beans.

In this book are described the rituals of the main cultural groups of the Nyakyusa—those of the people of Selya and Masoko and the Lake-shore plain (MuNgonde)[2] which are similar, and those of the Kukwe which are different, and a few references are made to other variations. The variations are suggestive, for though the details differ, the values and attitudes expressed are identical. There are also minor differences between families of the same cultural group, and in the practice of different officiants, but their

[1] The Nyakyusa use *ndandi* as a general word for plantains and bananas, though *ndali* is properly one variety of plantain. 'Bananas' is used here to include all varieties of bananas and plantains.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 6.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

interpretation scarcely differ. Thus the commonly accepted idea that ritual forms are more stable than the interpretation of symbolism[1] does not hold for the Nyakyusa.

The account of the ritual cycle begins with an analysis of funeral rites, for of all the family rituals they involve the greatest emotional tension and are the most elaborate, as well as being performed far more frequently than any others. Moreover, in them are adumbrated symbolic patterns which recur again and again throughout the cycle; in them is apparent that preoccupation with fertility characteristic of the cycle—they are a rite of creation as well as a farewell to the dead—and in them lies the key to an understanding of the conception of the *abapyuka*, 'those who have risen from the dead', that is, the shades.

The principal participants in the rituals are immediate kin—parents and children, siblings, grandparents and grandchildren—but the circle included varies with the particular ritual concerned and more distant relatives and neighbours are involved in varying degrees. In order to bring out these differences and avoid repetition, the detailed discussion of who takes part is deferred until after all the rituals have been described.

Should any Nyakyusa, reading this, feel that matters have been revealed which should remain secret, I would remind them that the interpretation of traditional ritual reveals a profound similarity in the phantasies of the Nyakyusa and those of other races; and such understanding of the dark places of men's minds as the *abapyuka* possess may swell that body of knowledge which is the heritage of men of all races and cultures.

[1] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (1952), pp. 153-7; A. N. Whitehead, *Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effects* (1928), p. 75.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

881 When we have finished the
834 ritual I come together with my wife again, but if our child is unmarried
[833] it is taboo to procreate a child, we practise *coitus interruptus*, the semen falls on the mat. . . . This is until the girl goes to her husband, until she is married. If my wife wears a bark-cloth I say to her during our daughter's puberty ritual: 'Arrange your bark-cloth carefully lest I, the man, desire you, I shall catch hold of you and we will cause the shade to make our child barren.' When she has gone to her husband we say our shade has finished, he has gone away in the water. Our child has gone to another shade. Yes, she also has intercourse with her husband at his home, but that does not matter, I have intercourse with my wife.

834 He was emphatic that the parents begin full intercourse as soon as the girl goes to her husband, it is not necessary to wait for her to become pregnant.

833 QUESTION: What do the spirits do in intercourse?
775 MWASALEMBA: The shade causes my penis to stand up and says: 'Go to the woman, there.' And also the woman's shade says: 'Your husband comes into you.' It is the shades which create desire, then we have intercourse, the shades meet together, hers—the woman's—and mine. If I do not go to my wife the shade says: 'Why, what's wrong with my place? Are there thorns? Why do you not enter?' They brood over (*bikebatela*) us both, both me and my wife.

QUESTION: What do they want?

MWASALEMBA: They want to create a child.

838 QUESTION: Why then do men desire masturbation and sodomy? [At
775 first when I asked this he said: 'No, the shade is a woman,' but then he
639 corrected himself].

MWASALEMBA: It is the shade which creates this desire, we have it within. A youth masturbates, the semen falls on the ground—perhaps two youths; it's also the shade. And a woman also masturbates. . .

775 QUESTION: You perform the rituals for many reasons?
● 771 MWASALEMBA: Yes, if we do not perform the rituals the shade broods on us and we do not bear children. Perhaps he broods on the crops, and they do not grow well but poorly, perhaps we run mad.

On another occasion Mwasalemba said:

775
833 The shade is in the heart. It is the shade which desires to go to a woman, which causes us men to have erections and excites desire in women. If you have not got the shade you are impotent, you do not go to women. We say: 'The shade has brooded over this man, why do they not rouse him to go to women?' He just looks at women. Then the shade rouses up in the belly and says: 'Ha!' It rouses up and the man has intercourse with a woman. If it has brooded over him, it does not

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

795 the case of a Christian who had stayed away from a ritual in his
184 family and 'as soon as he met his relatives he fell sick and coughed
788 like an animal. So they got some of the lees of the beer and gave it to him and he recovered.' A number of Christian kinsmen, leaders in the Church, did not come to the gasping-cough ritual which we attended, but others did come and sipped the beer, or had the lees sent to them at their homes. In the ritual for protection against sorcery which we watched a Christian brother and his wife took part.

And some Christians, though they deny the necessity of many of the pagan rituals for themselves as Christians, still believe them to be necessary to their pagan kinsmen. Hence the anomalous (and to the missionaries the highly unorthodox) position of a woman professing Christianity and acting as officiant in a pagan ritual, as did N. in the death ritual for Kalata's mother (p. 239). N., it will be remembered, came by night. The officiant who performed the ritual for Mwakobela's twins was under instruction as a Christian and was proposing to hand on her medicines to her daughter, a pagan, when she herself was received into the Church. She explained this when Mwakobela (her patient) asked her: 'And what shall we do for twin medicine when you become a Christian?' And we had little doubt that she believed in the efficacy of her medicine for pagans.

Though Christians cannot go through pagan rituals as principals they do not withdraw altogether: they often help their pagan neighbours as grave-diggers at a funeral and in the provision of food for guests at funerals and marriages; and the young men and girls may dance as a separate group, singing their own
[578] songs or hymns and ignoring the drums. Sometimes acute rivalry between the two groups of dancers is apparent.

● 771 The effect of Christian teaching on pagan ritual is not limited
177 to the partial withdrawal of professing Christians. In those villages most influenced by missions, such as Ilolo, near Rungwe, there is considerable scepticism among pagans, and many of them curtail the rituals in their families, or do not attend them. The Christian view is that 'the pagans see that the Christians disregard the rituals and nothing happens to them, so they begin to ignore them too'. 'Pagans fear much less than they used to do.'

177 Men who are in European employment either inside or outside
464 the district cannot attend all the rituals. Their case is partially met by keeping the lees of the ritual beer with which to treat them

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

or his crops fail, or his cattle die, he reflects on any quarrels he may have had with kinsmen or affines or neighbours, and on any rituals he should have performed and has omitted wholly or in part. He may be quite clear in his own mind that the misfortune is due to some particular wrong-doing (*inongwa*)—perhaps a quarrel with a brother, or neglect to kill for his new neighbours on his inheritance from his father—and proceed directly to patch up the quarrel and perform the neglected ritual. More often he thinks of several possible causes and lays them before the oracle, relying upon it to select between them. How several possible causes of misfortune occurred to the chief sufferers, their kinsmen and neighbours, is shown in the cases of Enesi, Katasya, Mwambuputa and Mpoma quoted at the end of the book (pp. 258 ff.).

No linguistic distinction is made between an offence punished by the courts and one thought to be punished by the shades; both are wrong-doings (*inongwa*), and there is no sharp distinction between an offence against a living kinsman and an offence against a dead one. In short, there is no clear conception of 'sin' as opposed to 'tort' or 'crime'.

There are two themes constantly recurring in Nyakyusa theology: firstly, men must observe the traditional rituals (both positive and negative) or they will go mad; and secondly, the anger of senior relatives and neighbours will injure unless it is confessed and goodwill expressed.

The first conception is a magical one:[1] what is required is the performance or avoidance of particular acts in a particular form on particular occasions; the second is sacramental, it is 'anger in the heart' that is dangerous, and no ritual is held to be efficacious without a change of heart.

Often the two conceptions are not consciously related to one another: again and again one is told: 'The rituals must be performed or men will go mad,' and there is no reference to the state of mind of the performers; but on certain occasions they overlap explicitly, as when Kasitile adjured his kinsmen to confess all while they were performing the ritual to 'rot the ropes'; and always there is a symbolic connection, for the rituals themselves express the value of amity between kinsmen, of respect for seniors and obligation towards juniors.

The neglect of the marriage ritual is itself an expression of disrespect for parents or parents-in-law, and a breach of the sex code,

[1] In the sense defined by G. & M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 89-95.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

686 shades usually do, and I shall wander a long time on the way to the land of the shades because I shall have no relatives to show me the way. And then when I get there I shall still have trouble. They will drive me away from them, and I shall live alone, apart from them, quite separate.

775 764 More rarely a shade is said to be angry because his grave has been left unswept, or he has not been buried where he asked to be.

621 681 The kinds of behaviour believed to be punished by 'the breath of men' are very similar to those thought to be punished by the anger of senior kinsmen; and, indeed, as we have seen, kinsmen and neighbours may murmur together against a son who has seduced his father's wife, a girl who has behaved insultingly to her parents-in-law, either verbally or by a breach of avoidance, and an heir who has neglected his wards or has neglected the customary ritual for his father, more particularly the customary killing of a cow when he enters into his inheritance. It is said that neglect to provide them with certain customary feasts infuriates neighbours more than anything else.[1]

The misfortunes that threaten from the neglect of rituals, and from the anger of kinsmen and neighbours, are loss of sanity, of life or health or fertility; a difficult labour or a lingering death; repeated miscarriages; loss of beauty (a wicked woman goes bald or turns reddish); scanty crops or sick herds, or, nowadays, unemployment—the man whose father is angry does not find a job. Only rarely is it suggested that punishment may be postponed until after death and then what is feared is that the shades of the lineage will not receive their kinsman.

775 ●771 688 When Nyakyusa talk about their religion they speak mostly of external things, of the rituals, of the angry words spoken by kinsmen or neighbours and of the fearful effects upon one against whom this anger is directed. Misfortune is said to be brought down on a man by his parents muttering in anger over the fire, by people murmuring against him (the word used is that for the humming of a hive of bees). The emphasis is on outspoken complaint or criticism. But it is also thought that 'the shades see what is within a man': if he stints one wife of fish, then 'even though the woman herself has not said anything, the shades hear the thought of the belly'. Sleeplessness and an unquiet mind are taken as evidence of the anger of the shades or the attacks of witches.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 123-4.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'*Tutigona* (we do not sleep),' is the formal phrase with which the village headman and other responsible people notify the chief that all is not well with the country, or with which a woman or a junior kinsman prefaces the troubles brought to the notice of the head of the homestead, when these troubles have not obviously materialized in sickness. Anger is dangerous first and foremost to the person against whom it is directed, but there is also the suggestion that it may react on the person who is angry. We have already quoted the remark: 'A woman never murmurs against anyone. If she does she falls sick herself.'

How the fear of the shades is inculcated in a child is shown in the following text:

I began by learning the word or name: *ungwala*, and to know that the shade (*ungwale*) was someone who had died, and people said that they were like flickering shadows (*imigwangwale*). Also people said a shade is someone very awesome (*ungwe*) if he appears to you. When I began to think of the shades at night I could not sleep because I feared the awfulness (*ubungwe*) of which they spoke. And this was specially told: 'If a person dies to-day, and perhaps you have not heard, then that dead man appears to you with cattle. He is smeared with earth on his face and forearms and knees. Then, because you do not know anything, you say: "Friend," and talk with him, saying: "Where are you going with the cattle?" He says: "I am going to my in-laws." Then if you go home and find they are wailing a death, and you tell your tale, they say: "So-and-so has died, you met him." They say you also will die. But you must be silent, and only speak after they have buried him.' So in my belly, in my thought, the shades appeared very fearful. Many people compare the awfulness of the shades with that of wild animals, and say the awfulness of the shades is greater. If a shade is standing here, and a wild animal there, you will flee towards the animal. So I also thought. But later I changed my mind, and said I would go towards the shade.

Once when there was some sickness at home I heard it said that the shades were angry, perhaps because there had been a quarrel, perhaps because he [*sic*] had not killed a cow for a relative's funeral. Once when I was ill with sores round the mouth, people said: '*Mifuda*, the shades have covered them'—that was to be 'beaten' by the shades. So, when they had consulted an oracle, they poured a little beer on the fireblocks and prayed. Then the illness disappeared very quickly. When I asked my mother about it she said: 'The shades were angry, so you were ill. It was because your father was angry, or perhaps on some other account.' Thus I learnt the work of the shades, little by little, from illnesses among my parents and stories of my elders.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

121 554 linked to the physiological cycle of individuals and their close kin, and cannot be detached from it as in Christianity.

121 626 Law is a condition of social survival; no society can exist without it; and in so far as religion helps to maintain law and order it fulfils a necessary social function. Among the Nyakyusa (and perhaps in all societies) order is maintained partly by fear of supernatural sanctions. The rituals we have described both enhance fear and relieve it. They harness fear to social ends.

121 771 The preceding chapters are full of the pagan fear of death, menstruation, childbirth, and shedding blood. The rituals express the fear and teach men what they must do to be saved. They teach them to co-operate with their kinsmen and to follow traditional custom, for in that alone does salvation lie. The fear of madness or sterility compels each generation to follow traditional custom as ordained for them by the heroes: thus is the dependence of man upon his society instilled. The death ritual illustrates this most dramatically. In every society men must overcome death emotionally, they must turn to life. In the death ritual the mourners are distraught, terrified; they express their grief and put it behind them; their relatives and neighbours gather round them, share their sorrow, and help them to overcome it. The dead is replaced. Death is associated with fecundity and so made tolerable. It is no accident that the Nyakyusa interpret all the rituals, and especially the death ritual, as a protection against going mad, against the disintegration of the personality. And safety is assured to the living by following minutely the traditions of their lineage.

[109] That the nature of men's fears is culturally determined is clear from the Nyakyusa evidence, for Christians and pagans alike are agreed that 'the Christians fear much less' than do pagans, and the Christians do in fact ignore taboos which the pagans feel to be binding. But the rituals do not create fear out of nothing. All the situations in which they are performed—birth and death, marriage, and misfortune—are situations of emotional tension in all societies. The rituals heighten the emotions and canalize them. They both teach men to feel, and teach them what it is proper to feel.

771 783 Many writers have shown us that the conception of sacred includes both the idea of holiness and of pollution;[1] that the awful, the fearful, may be conceived both as pure and as filthy. In

[1] See particularly W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (1889), pp. 152, 446–54 (1914 ed.); R. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (1923).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Nyakyusa thought the emphasis is almost exclusively on the filthy. 771
Awe is expressed in terms of pollution. As we have seen, there is a 783
clear conception of resurrection, of separation between rotting corpse and shade, but still the shades are 'filthy', and the mourner, or the bride, or the mother and newborn child, who is identified with them, is filthy too. There is a conception of purity, innocence, whiteness (*mwele*), which is applied to those free from witchcraft or other crime, and to virgins, but it is not cited as an attribute of the shades or of the heroes; indeed, it is those who have been *separated* from the shades or Kyala who are pure.

Nyakyusa religion is characterised by two things: the general 771
linking of misfortune with sin—the conception that if someone falls ill physically or mentally it is usually because he or his kinsman has done wrong—and the preoccupation with pollution. These are connected. The chief sins are neglect of ritual and quarrelling between kinsmen. Now neglect of ritual is, in essence, failure to purify oneself—failure to separate from the filthy shade—therefore sin and pollution are linked, though not identified. The connection between pollution and quarrelling between kinsmen is less direct but it exists, for rituals, the means of purification, are also the occasion for composing quarrels, and cleansing oneself of anger by confession—spitting it out—is a condition of their efficacy.

That the Nyakyusa are dogged by the sense of guilt is clear, but whether it is more overwhelming in their society than in others, or merely more openly expressed, is arguable. Why some people look down to earth, to the rotting corpse and bodily excretions which are buried in the earth, and express their awe in terms of pollution, corruption, and others look to the sky and express it in terms of light and purity; why some people seek union with God and others separation from Him, we do not know. The answer to these, as to many questions regarding Nyakyusa religion, lies beyond the field of this investigation.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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hedged with a real divinity, which the limitations to which he has to submit, and the independence of the once-subordinate chiefs, have not yet destroyed. He remains pre-eminently the man of prayer, who carries to the ancestral spirits the petitions of the community, and speaks to them with an authority which no other possesses.

Far excelling in power and authority even the greatest of the chiefs were, and, shorn of much of their glory are, the *amalambara*, the councillors of Chungu. These men are in many cases chiefs of high rank, but even when they are not so, their position endows them with great influence and authority. The principal duties of the councillors were to put the reigning Chungu to death when he became seriously ill, a duty which has necessarily lapsed under British rule; to select, with the help of divination, his successor; to instruct him in his duties, to advise him in all matters which demand decision; and to depose him if he is unsatisfactory.

The health of the priest-king and the welfare of the whole community were inseparably bound up together. A Chungu in health and vigour meant a land yielding its fruits, rain coming in its season, evil averted. But a weak and ailing Chungu meant disasters of many kinds. Smaller illnesses Chungu, very excusably, concealed from his councillors, hoping that his ancestors would hear the prayers which he offered secretly by night. But when serious illness overtook him, the councillors were called to a full meeting by those who were about the person of the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 chief. For Changa must not *die* a natural death; 645 the land would be turned into water should such a 271 calamity be allowed to happen. Having decided that the illness is really grave, the councillors, one by one, give their voice in the formula, "*Sifu na musiku*," literally, day and year; but actually meaning, "Does God die?" In solemn procession these terrible persons enter the house, and, having turned out the chief's wives, lay him down on the floor. Two keep him in that posture, while a third stops his breath by holding his mouth and nostrils, a fourth meanwhile gently slapping him all over the body until the life has gone out of him.

643 No announcement of the death was made. One of 645 the councillors lived in the royal dwelling, so that if 766 any came to consult Changa a response might be given, and as he was rarely seen by common men, it was easy to keep up the deception. The councillors with their own hands digged the grave, and on their shoulders, at midnight, carried the body, anointed with lion fat, and enswathed in cloth, to the place of burial. Six or eight slaves, who did not return, went with them. Four went down into the grave to receive the body of their dead master, two at the head and two at the feet, and, in sitting position, held him in their arms. The remaining slaves being placed on the top, the soil was filled in on living and dead.

After the lapse of about a month, a big iron drum, now lost, was beaten, and it conveyed only one message to the people. "*Kaulcie ku Mpande*," Mpande (the royal residence) has done its work;

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER VI

Law & Crime

LAW, morals, and religion are inseparably bound up together. The old idea, still hard to kill, that in the native mind morals and religion have no connection with each other, is the reverse of the truth; but African ideas of morality do not always coincide with European, and to this disparity may be traced the belief that there is no morality in African religion. The sinless man is the man who has broken no law. He is said to be *muvva*, without offence. Now as law and custom are one, and as the spirits are jealous for the retention of all customs that were in force while they were on earth, the man who is assured of a good reception in the underworld is he who has either broken no law of custom, or, having broken the law, has made the required atonement to the injured person.

Everything was settled in the long distant past by the fathers, and all one has to do is to conform. For the long domination of ancient custom in law, morals, and religion, meant that life had attained to a condition of stable equilibrium, before the coming of the white man set all in confusion again for many of the people. The ancient equilibrium was disturbed by

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

231 a cow about to be delivered of a calf was rushed down to running water, and the calf, when delivered, immediately submerged. Then cow and owner ran for their lives, and when the scourge had passed over, the owner, if he survived, took the calf out of the water, resuscitated it, and let it go. The explanation given to me by a medical colleague of the conditions under which such a thing is possible, render it highly probable that if ever it occurred at all, it must have been very rarely, and even less in times of war than in times of peace. What is interesting, however, is the fact that the physiological possibility of it is known to the natives. I have not met anyone who has seen it done.

241 *Agriculture.*—St. Paul would almost certainly have 771 told the Konde that they were "too religious"; not because he would have seen tokens of their religiousness in the streets and villages; no mere passer-by, and no indifferent foreigner, ever sees that. One must look deep, and live long among them, before that side of their life reveals itself to him with any fulness. There is hardly an act of theirs that is not accompanied by a ceremony of some kind, if that is religion, and to them it undoubtedly is. Agriculture is a highly religious occupation on that view, but hardly more so than many others. Leaving native Christians aside, [787] the great majority of the people consult a diviner 241 before beginning to hoe. He may say that all is well; 782 or he may discover that some spirit stands in the way of a good crop, and must be propitiated; or that a certain piece of ground is bewitched, and no good will come of hoeing it until the spell has been removed.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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that the pool was bubbling, it was evident that Mwanjebe was there, and must be got rid of as soon as possible. Prayers and promises of repentance were offered, and if that did not satisfy the god, more drastic measures were taken. A great stone was heated and tumbled into the pool, around which gathered a great multitude of people, stabbing fiercely at the water with spears and reeds, to drive off the unwelcome deity. The cessation of the bubbling showed that he had gone, and the fact was still further proved when the smallpox ceased. All three godlets are now mere memories, and, except as memories, they have completely vanished, leaving the field clear for the ancestral spirits and the Supreme Being.

• 771

There was in the worship, if indeed a determined effort to drive off the deity could be called worship, "no stimulus to the realization of the riches which are given to man in his own nature." The gods presented no problems, for all problems were solved long ago by the fathers; and hence man's relation to them contained nothing upon which the faculties might work and be developed. The religion was stagnant, and the people were stagnant with it.

There was no art; not even rude representations of the gods; no poetry arising out of a feeling of devotion, for devotion there was none. In the case of the godlets I have mentioned, even the qualities which caused them to take rank as gods after death have been forgotten. It may be that the stories of "the brave days of old," to be related in a later chapter, afford us a hint of how the process of deifica-

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

tion, now probably at an end for ever, went on in the past. But the Konde, in common with all Bantu peoples, made the great transition from a vague ill-conceived "power behind an object or an act, to the free being conceived with human attributes and feelings," who can interfere in the affairs of the community, even if it be also true that such gods roused themselves into activity only when evil demanded punishment, remaining quiescent except under such stimulus. 771

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
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CHAPTER XVI

The Worship of the Spirits

771 THE Konde are either a deeply religious, or a deplorably spirit-ridden people; and, having regard to some of the prayers given in this chapter and throughout the book, I am inclined to think that religious is the more correct term. It is true that the prayers are in all cases for material goods, such as health and good fortune, for rain and crops, for protection against pestilence; but if religion means a sense of dependence upon unseen powers, then it cannot be denied that the Konde are religious.

772 776 On all great occasions, prayer and offerings are made; but also when a spirit is believed to be angry: if there is quarrelling in the family; if a man beats his wife; if a girl has arrived at puberty, or a marriage has been arranged, without their being consulted; if a woman has been unfaithful to her husband; if a man neglect his parents; if ceremonies are neglected; or the 776 spirits themselves forgotten. Their wrath is shown very specially by a disease of the lips breaking out on the guilty person, and by fever; but also in many other ways; by the failure of the beer to ferment, by sickness, by a storm in which some one is drowned, by

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
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memories and yarns, eats food made from the flour of a pumpkin, which destroys the virtues of his hunting medicines, and at the same time takes away all probability of his death being the prolonged weariness it would otherwise be.

Fishing nets are dragged to ensure a good catch; but here again caution must be exercised, for a very great catch is an omen of a very large family, which is not always an ambition held by the Konde people.

The mother who has just given birth to a child must not cook food, nor may she warm herself at the common fire; a small fire is kindled for her at which she sits by herself; and when the child goes out of the house for the first time a medicine is put into its mouth to guard it against the ills of the world into which it has come.

Christians do none of these things; but Christians are not as other people. They have passed away from the fear of spirits and from the dread of a world in which anything may happen at any moment; and the fact that they escape the consequences of failure to follow custom is having its effect on the common people, many of whom are cautiously experimenting to see whether they too may live a freer and more unshadowed life; but the belief in the protective powers of such things as I have been describing dies hard.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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structure. We shall see in later sections how many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions. But the reverse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular content at all, the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle were sent to Lubaga by the other chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and health; but the "clearing out of the ashes" was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruit ritual at all;[1] while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

Besides the Kyungu the great chiefs of Ngonde also were believed to be able to avert local droughts and misfortunes in their districts by offerings to their own immediate ancestors; and the lesser chiefs likewise and the territorial nobles—each in his own little area. While among the territorial nobles, the original owners of the land had wider powers. It will be remembered that to them the first Kyungu is said to have given head-cloths and asked for their prayers. Sometimes people would prophesy future misfortune "at Kisindile", or "at Kalumba" or "at Hambo," or would prophesy of present misfortunes that such was their source. Then the territorial noble concerned[2] would be formally visited by the nobles of Ngonde, and he and they together would offer sacrifice to his ancestors on behalf of all Ngonde.

And there also there were sacred places near the lake—Nthola, Kambwe, Kibondo, Malale and Katondi. They were associated not with ancestral spirits at all but with a vaguely defined supreme deity named Mbumba. And beside them also prayers and sacrifices were made from time to time by the nobles of Ngonde.

Over these other spiritual powers we need not linger, save to notice one most significant fact. The participation by the Kyungu in the divinity of his ancestors was no isolated phenomenon in Ngonde. The head of every family in the country, whether of chiefs or commoners, was similarly placed; in his own family and, in the case of a chief or noble, in his own area too, he was both a priest and a demi-god; he dealt with the spirits and by virtue of his relation to them shared their powers; his anger could curse. The Kyungu were but the greatest of many divinities. And thus there was in theistic ritual a high degree of local and family autonomy; local or family misfortunes

[1] Particular people among the Nyakyusa carried it out; reigning chiefs, senior grain-cultivators, prophets, and any person whose birth was held to be due to magical intervention of a previously barren woman. But only then.

[2] Mbwan-Kisindile, Mbwan-Kalumba, Mbwan-Hambo etc.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

were dealt with by the local rulers or by the family-heads, not by the central authorities. It was only occasionally that general fears or misfortunes turned all men's thoughts together to Mbande.

Now the great-commoners of every chief were believed to have independent access to his ancestral spirits and this gave them a spiritual hold over him. If they compared him too unfavourably with his predecessors then, it was believed, those predecessors might hear and afflict him in various ways. And so it was also with the nobles of Ngonde and the reigning Kyungu. But as this belief was intimately linked with the belief in witchcraft it will be more conveniently analysed in that context.[1]

(b) *THE MAGICAL ELEMENT.*

Magic (the belief that certain particular objects, events, words or actions, involving particular people in particular situations, possessed in themselves an extraordinary power) was an essential ingredient of the old pagan religion of Ngonde. While the greatest magical object in the country was, traditionally, the body of the Kyungu. And the fact that the central political authority of Ngonde was so largely vested in the nobles of Ngonde was due above all to their responsibility for controlling this magical object in the public interest.

If the Kyungu cut himself, and more particularly if his blood fell to the ground, then it was the duty of the nobles of Ngonde to kill him, lest the whole land be affected with disease; and if he was ill likewise. "They considered that if his blood fell to the ground that was his life falling. And they likened him to a god, considering it taboo for a god to be wounded; they thought that if his blood fell to the ground it would turn into a sickness and all the people would die. And so, when the Kyungu was wounded, they thought it best to put him out of the way and start afresh with a new one. They thought it taboo for him to have even the tiniest wound on his body. And it was equally taboo for him to fall ill; everyone else, it was believed, would fall ill too; it was better to put him out of the way so that the people should keep well."

In consequence of this belief elaborate precautions were taken to maintain the Kyungu's health. Sexual impurity was believed to be magically dangerous to health in many ways and so the Kyungu, above all men, must be guarded from it. It was not considered safe even for his own wives to cook his food, lest one of them touch it during a menstrual period, and so young boys who had not yet reached puberty

[1] Vide infra section 3 (c).

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

sheep over it; if it still refused they would kill a cow; and if it still refused then they would kill a human being, the child of a commoner.

Then there was *Malima*, a porous piece of iron "like a mouth organ," which the Kyungu used to make rain. If he held it up out of doors with its holes clear, so that he could see right through them, then it would be fine, but if he stopped up the holes and then held it up out of doors the sky would at once become overcast and rain would fall. And there were his zebra tails set in horn handles, with medicine in the handles, which his people carried to war to give them victory; and his spear *Kamina*, and so on.

There is no sharp distinction in the pagan religion of Ngonde and the Nyakyusa between its magical and its theistic elements. Sometimes the magical, sometimes the theistic predominates, but often they are inextricably mixed. In the prayers and sacrifices to the ancestors magic enters at every turn: particular people, a particular place, particular materials and gestures, particular words are held to be essential to their success. Nor are the more permanent and obvious magical objects always free from divine associations. When we asked, for example, why the drum *Mamukelwa* had needed occasional human sacrifices to make it work properly we got this answer: "It was because their god* had given this drum to the Kyungu saying: 'I alone am war, there is none other war save me.' It (the human sacrifice) was like a prayer." The refusal of *Mamukelwa* to sound was like the prophetic fit that falls on people (from the spirits) commanding sacrifice (in the grooves)." Or, again, it is clear from our evidence that the living Kyungu's power of causing a drought was believed to arise both from his relationship to the spirits and from his possession and use of *Malima* together. His magical body and possessions, being inherited from his predecessors, were part of his relationship to them.

Now one of the material facts which had magical significance in Ngonde was that of general social status. The magical powers of the Kyungu not only contributed to the general political authority of Mbande but were, in part, magically derived from it. Only the greatest in the land could possess the greatest magic without endangering his life. There were, for example, a number of chiefs' medicines (*ifingule*), and if a chief used a medicine which was above his status then it was believed that, on meeting the Kyungu or some great chief, to whom

* The phrase "their god" (*Kyala gwabo*) is normally used by pagans nowadays to mean the ancestral spirits, or some one among them. The term *Kyala*, which originally referred only to one of the most influential Nyakyusa spirits, has now been identified either with the Christian God or with divinity in general throughout all this area.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 559 643 status is rightly belonged, he would at once fall down dead. And many stories are still told of such happenings in the past.

And besides this there was the fact that the Kyungu, being the richest man in Ngonde and in the most intimate contact with the ivory traders, could secure medicines from a distance, which had a greater reputation than local ones.

789 771 559 But, as in the theistic aspect of the religion of Ngonde there was considerable local and family autonomy, so also was there in the magical aspect; and here there was individual autonomy also. Lesser rulers had lesser magic than Mkande, but still it was magic. Ordinary chiefs, for instance, had magically filled zebra tails which gave their people military success. And every individual could go to a doctor and exchange a little of his surplus food for magic. Success in love and hunting, in warfare and legal disputes, good crops and good health—all alike, it was believed, magic could give.

(c). *THE ELEMENT OF WITCHCRAFT.*

759 622 624 Both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa it was believed that certain commoners had snakes in their stomachs which gave them the power of witchcraft (*uwalosi* or *uwangwi*[1]) and among those who had this power were the great-commoners of every chiefdom. Normally a ruling chief was spiritually protected by his great-commoners from the malicious attacks of other witches, but, if he did wrong, then the great-commoners, so it was held, would come to protect him and join in the attack.

Now in many circumstances the great-commoners' power of witchcraft and the power of the chief's dead predecessors were believed to act together. The anger of witches and that of the ancestors were sharply distinguished in theory, but in practice they often coincided. The great-commoners, for example, not only had the power of bewitching their chief but also of appealing to his predecessors to punish him for wrong-doing; and on particular occasions they were often believed to do both at once.[2] And the nobles of Ngonde had similar powers in relation to the Kyungu.[3]

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[1] *Uwalosi* is normally used when the act of witchcraft is disapproved of and *uwangwi* when it is approved of by the speaker.

[2] A point of considerable theoretical interest is raised by the repeated statements of our best informant on these matters that it was because they were witches that the great-commoners had this power of influencing the chief's ancestors, that they went to the chief's ancestors in their capacity of witches and in the exercise of witchcraft (i.e. by means of the snakes in their stomachs). But our evidence on this point is not yet conclusive.

[3] So we were told when we put the question; but it was never substantiated. It was the belief which the nobles of Ngonde had over the Kyungu in consequence of his magical feats which was the more emphasised.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

692 permanent social relationships beyond the local groups of chieftaincy and fief, and by the religious mechanism of the Kyungu. Now every one of these factors has today ceased to operate. And it is worth dwelling on this, for it follows that the constitution of the middle period has ceased to exist and something radically different has been developed in its place. Divine kingship and the ivory trade are dead, a host of complex and permanent relationships now covers Ngonde and links it to the outside world, the Kyungu rules his people in person, under Government. And the continuity which is aimed at by a policy of "indirect rule" is thus only possible in Ngonde to a very limited extent.

On the other hand, as some continuity is inevitable even through the most radical political change, so an acceptance by the Government of that inevitability is itself a factor of political order. It is far easier to rule Ngonde to-day through the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde than it would be, say, through a committee of commoners chosen for their personal ability; for the successors of the traditional rulers still have a status in Ngonde which is continuous, though not identical with that of the past.

Christianity has gained a great hold on Ngonde,[1] and has helped to undermine the old pagan faith even among those who do not profess it. And the whole hierarchically organized system of pagan ritual is almost dead. A few days after our arrival in Ngonde, in July 1937, the nobles of Ngonde organized the clearing out of the ashes, for a special purpose. A bad plague of rats had appeared in the country and an old woman had announced prophetically that it was due to the anger of the spirits. Mulwa did all the organizing, for, as he said to us: "The present Kyungu renounced all interest in these things years ago and told me to manage without him. So I went and told Kalonga and Mwakawongola and Mwamugulowe, who is the senior of the chiefs of Ngonde; it is their business to tell their juniors." But of the hundred odd chiefs and nobles in the Ngonde plain only four chiefs and a few nobles responded to the summons to put out their old fires and to bring the ashes to Kyembwe. How many commoners put out their fires I do not know, for we did not hear of the ritual until it was over. Even this, however, was an exceptional occasion and the regular yearly performance of the ritual has ceased. Neither is the old first-fruit ritual any longer performed.

The Scots Mission in Ngonde concentrated from the first on the conversion and education of the sons of leading men, so that now many of the rulers themselves are either Christians or ex-Christians. The present Kyungu was, as we have seen, a Christian, and, though he has

[1] 40% of the population profess Christianity.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

178 now abandoned his Christianity and takes a number of wives, he appears
•771 to be wholly sceptical of pagan beliefs. "It is I who have killed the
747 custom of praying in the sacred groves," he told us, "for my brother, Mwangalaba, used to give the nobles of Ngonde cattle for sacrifice; but I have never once given them a beast, nor do I give them beer, nor *beer*, nor *flour*." He subsequently admitted, however, that he *did* sometimes give them "a few pence" to buy a hen for sacrifice. Many of the old magical taboos he certainly no longer observes and we have no evidence that he observes any; while the magical possessions of his predecessors are mostly lost.

That the old beliefs survive in the minds of many men in Ngonde, both pagan and Christian, we have certain evidence; but upon those beliefs little public action is now taken. The profession of Christianity is normal among the younger people, and their attitude to the ritual which occurred during our visit was one of amusement. And even the belief in witchcraft, which has proved in many parts of Africa to be most persistent, is beginning in Ngonde to be publicly called in question by some of the pagans themselves.[5]

178 The present Native rulers of Ngonde are thus no longer generally
771 believed to control the destinies of their people; rain, health and fertility are no longer in their gift. And this brings radical changes into all political relationships. It is by their secular functions alone that the present Native rulers stand or fall. The bowing of the public gardens of the Kyungu by his people, for instance, was largely kept up in former times because of his rain-making powers; he gave them rain, they gave him service. But, if he is now still able to claim this service from them, it is because he gives them other things than rain.[6]

178 Thus again the decline of the old beliefs inevitably alters the balance
642 of power between the different political authorities. The Kyungu is no
771 longer a magical object carefully secluded and controlled by the nobles of Ngonde; and so he now rules his people in person. It is he himself who now takes all the major decisions, within the sphere of responsibility allowed him by the Government. The nobles of Ngonde are reduced to a merely advisory status. While the decline of the old theistic and witchcraft beliefs brings a similar change into the relations of every chief with his great-commoners. Many chiefs in Ngonde still fear that they will fall ill if they offend their great-commoners, but some do not,[7] and it

[5] The same cannot be said of the Nyakyusa, among whom, for various reasons, the missions have made far fewer converts in proportion to the total population. Among the Nyakyusa the old rituals and beliefs are still very much alive.

[6] Cf. infra p. 10

[7] One of the chiefs, for example, is an ordained minister of the Church of Central Africa (Presbyterian).

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

is generally admitted that all chiefs are less affected by this fear than they used to be. The secularization of the constitution tends, in this connection, to make it more autocratic.

On the economic side it is difficult to exaggerate the change in the relative wealth of rulers and people. The change is temporarily obscured by the historical accident of the present Kyungu's personal fortune, but this, when he dies, will go to this own heir, not to his successor in the Kyungship. The Kyungu's total official salary in 1937 was £72 a year and those of the "Sub-chiefs" varied from about £4 10s. to £12 a year. The nobles of Ngonde all received either 10s. or 15s. a year, with the exception of Mulwa who received 30s. These salaries, which are paid out of the Native Treasurery, are the modern substitute for the profits of the ivory-trade, which the Kyungu shared with his subordinates, together with the regular tribute of food and the proceeds of tribal warfare and of punitive expeditions, all of which sources of income have now dried up. And these salaries do not make possible the giving of any valuable gifts to subordinates and subjects. The local rulers also receive slight financial subsidies from the Native Treasury. Each "Village Headman" is allowed to retain 3d. from the tax of every adult male subject of his own and the "Important Headmen" (great chiefs) receive in addition subsidies ranging from 5s. to 60s. a year. This custom has replaced that of the requisitioning of food; but, owing to the smallness of all the present chiefdoms and fields of the plain, few "Village Headmen" receive more than £1 a year from this source.[1]

It is open to commoners, on the other hand, to become as rich or richer than most of their rulers. The head clerk in the Boma in 1937 received £32 a year, and there were fifty-three other Government employees who all received £12 or over; Native Christian Ministers and Evangelists all received many times the salary of Mulwa while young men often returned from the Lupa gold-fields with savings of several pounds.

The decline of polygyny in Ngonde again reduces the relative wealth of the subordinate chiefs and nobles in comparison with their people. Women are increasingly reluctant, for various reasons, to be married by polygynists, and the old style of entertainment is changing. Few chiefs and nobles, save the present Kyungu himself, now have sufficient wives and unmarried children to be able to entertain on a large scale. In the case of ordinary chiefs and territorial nobles (the "Village Headmen" of to-day) this poverty is not in itself very significant, for with the dwindling

[1] The average receipts of the one hundred and twenty-four "Village Headmen" in the Ngonde plain were almost exactly 10/- per annum in 1936. They had, that is, an average of forty tax-payers each.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN
Nyakyusa

593 they continually give each other cows; between their respective sons
the exchange usually continues, but between their grandsons it lapse
593 Reciprocity is expected and can be legally enforced, but it is not insis
686 upon so long as the two men concerned are friends, and its legal enforc
must at once breaks the relationship. If two such half-brothers (or th
sons) quarrel, one may take legal action for "separation" (ukukka
against the other. The cows that have been handed over by both si
since the beginning of the relationship (perhaps twenty or thirty ye
before) are counted up, and one or the other is ordered to pay over
balance to make the numbers equal. After this the two are "no long
kinsmen," they have no mutual obligations and do not attend each othe
funerals.

593 It is usual for a father to create this relationship between his sons
428 son and the oldest of each group of full-brothers, so that by this exchange
of cows the family is held together. The linkage of half-brother
whether by blood or by "milking each others cows," is important
inheritance. If a man with no full-brother dies and leaves no sons,
sons too young to inherit, then the inheritance passes to a linked hal
brother; to a half-brother linked by blood if there is one, if there is n
then to one linked by exchange of cows.

●771 Religion enters continually into family life and helps to maintai
wider kinship bonds also. The Nyakyusa religion falls, broadly, in
three parts: The Ancestor cult, Witchcraft and Magic. Taken as
whole their religion, as they believe, secures for them many of the mo
important values of life, health, good crops and success in various ente
prises; it provides an intelligible explanation of death and misfortune b
tracing them to the ill-will either of the ancestral spirits or of living men
acting through witchcraft or magic; in its rituals it resolves fear an
replaces it by hope and confidence; while the believed destructive activi
of the ancestors and of men in generally, though not entirely, linked wit
morality.[29] The commonest explanation of misfortune is that some
wrong done by the victim, or by his close kinsman, has provoked the
spirits or his fellow men to anger.

769 As long as a man has alive a father, a father's full-brother, or a senior
783 brother or half-brother[30] of his own, this senior kinsman deals with the
ancestral spirits, not only on his behalf, but also on behalf of his wives and
children; and health is the chief value which his prayers are believed to
secure for them. In the absence of sickness or misfortune no appeal is

[29] Cf. Godfrey Wilson. "An African Morality." *Africa*. Jan. 1938.
[30] Provided the relationship between these two men has been legally broken (vide supra).

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

over made to the spirits, but when some member of a family or his wife or 769
child falls sick the anger of the spirits is often suspected as a possible 753
cause. There are usually other reasons suspected as well, and so the [787]
sickness is taken to a diviner for diagnosis. Various causes are suggested
to the diviner and he selects one among them. If the anger of the spirits
is selected then this senior kinsman must pray for the one who is sick, if
he is to recover. When half-brothers live at a distance from one another,
after their father and his brothers have died, then each may pray to the
spirits to cure a little sickness in his own family but if the sickness persists
then a message must be sent to the senior kinsman. And, as the anger of
the spirits is due to wrong doing, the sinner must reform his ways as well.

The wrongs which cause the spirits to anger are usually breaches of 673
family morality. If a son does not respect his father or insults him, if an
heir neglects to feed and provide for the dead man's children, then when
sickness falls on him or his own children it will probably be traced to the
anger of the spirits at his behaviour.

Space does not allow any full analysis of religion in family life and in 754
the relationships of kinsmen and affines. Not only the ancestor cult but 771
witchcraft and magic are factors in them. A man's neglect of a wife or
his cruelty to her may, it is believed, lead to his falling sick through her
witchcraft and that of sympathetic neighbours; his relations with his
father-in-law are affected by the fear that if he offends him, his father-in-
law may, by magical means, kill his children, and so on.

Wider kinship groupings than the family gather at ceremonies and 619
are recognized in the rules against incest. But there are no clans; there
is no descent group continuous down the generations with a common
name and definite membership. Each individual family has its own
pedigree of kinship, the effective kinship of a man and his son, or of
two half-brothers are not all the same, while each single person is especial-
ly related by respect, affection and mutual obligations to particular
kinsmen beyond his own family. Descent, as we have seen, is patrilineal 618
except in the case of illegitimate children. A man asked for his *ukukolo* 619
always recites first the names of his paternal forbears as far as he can 964
remember. But if he is related through mother or grandmother to a
chief he usually volunteers this fact as part of his *ukukolo*; and questions
always elicit some knowledge of his mother's paternal kinship and a
statement that "they are my *ukukolo* too." Descendants of a common
grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are to-day forbidden to marry, 532
and no case of infringement has come to my notice; descendants of a
common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry but, I am told,

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

chief from the wanton attacks of witches; but if ever there is a just 753
ground of offence they are believed to join their own power of witchcraft 754
in the general attack. I know one chief who dare not give a judgement in a dispute between two of his villages for fear of the indignant witchcraft of the losing side. And a general unpopularity is believed always to lead, sooner or later to a chief's death.

Chiefs also, like other men, fear the use of sorcery (i.e. destructive magic) against them, and use a number of protective "medicines" (i.e. materials of magic) to protect themselves from it. They also use powerful "medicines" to give themselves personal impressiveness, prestige and authority among their people.

While in the families of commoners an ancestral spirit is only believed 771
to affect the lives of his own descendants, the ancestors of a chief, on the 772
other hand, are supposed to influence, for good or ill, the fortunes of whole chiefdoms. Rain and good crops, the fertility of women and cattle are dependent upon their good will, which in its turn is believed to depend upon a successor sacrifice of cows. And for this sacrifice the chiefs, their living descendants, are responsible.* But, owing to the continuous division of chiefdoms every generation, several chiefs are concerned in each sacrifice; every dead chief is a source of misfortune or of blessing to the successors of all his direct descendants. And so the discussion of this part of the Nyakyusa religion leads us to the investigation of the groups which extend beyond the boundaries of a single chief-chiefdom.

(c) *Groups wider than the Chiefdom*

When a chief dies he is buried near the house of his senior great wife 774
and trees are planted on his grave. The trees grow and form a sacred 775
grove (*ubiyeto*) hedged by taboos. Each of these groves is at first the 776
religious centre of two, later of a number of chiefdoms, and in them the sacrifices are made. Responsibility for finding the cow for sacrifice is a particular grove rests with one of the living chiefs concerned, but responsibility for initiating the ritual and performing it lies not only with the chiefs but also with the hereditary priests (*amyaga*) to each chiefdom. These hereditary priests are descended, some from the great commoners of the dead chief who is buried in that particular grove, some from his half-brothers. The ritual is secretly, there is no gathering of the people at the sacrifice, and only chiefs and those with hereditary priesthoods

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*I am speaking here of the religious concerns of the Nyakyusa proper and the Ngonde people. I believe those of the Kukwe and Mwambe are very similar, but I have not studied them in detail.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F7417 Ngonde F7417
Nyakyusa

(8a) grove. According to custom, we should kill a bull here at the same time as one is killed at Lufuga. A messenger from there finds us eating. That was the custom when the chiefs were really chiefs. Now we neglect the rituals. Mwakinaya (111) cut a ripe banana stem for us but now the bananas are rotting in the homesteads without ripening [owing to our failure to sacrifice]. If our fathers did not sleep they enrolled cattle, but if we do not sleep we merely offer beer.

Then Kasitile recalled the quarrel between the men of Mwaipopo (116) and those of Lufuga.

Why did one insult Mwakinaya (111) saying 'What remains of your power?' When we built the Court House in Mwaipopo's country [944] Mwakinaya's men came to help, and some advised that a beer should be sent to Lufuga to seek blessing on the Court, but others said: 'What use is Lufuga?' . . . Mwakinaya cut a banana stem for us and said: 'Seek another cow ch thou Mwakagile' (39, i.e. identifying Kasitile with the grandfather of the chief Mwaipopo whom he represented).

This, however, was an invention of Kasitile's. He continued: 'I, Kasitile, have seen a sacrifice at the grove of Mwaijonga (8a) twice, at that of Mwaipopo (115) once, and at that of Mwakabule (117) once, but at Lufuga Kyala has received us frequently.' To which Mwambuputa replied: 'Yes, Kyala has helped us.'

Under pressure from Kasitile and the other priests of his chiefdom Mwaipopo did eventually provide a cow for sacrifice at the grove of his father Mwaijonga (8a) but the description of that ritual is deferred to a later chapter.

771 A fundamental conception in Nyakyusa religion is that the proper working of the natural order depends upon harmony of the social order; on proper co-operation between the 'divine king' and his 'sons' the chiefs, between priests and chiefs, and between them and the whole community. If the Lwembe or a rain-maker is offended, that causes drought or flood in the area of his influence. When there is heavy rain in Selya it is said, 'There is anger at Lufuga' or 'There is anger at Lwembe's place'. Mwanjale II (98) talking of how angry he had been over an insult remarked, 'Had it been the wet season there would have been a torrent of rain.'

[921] [921]

And not only does quarrelling between chiefs and priests bring public misfortune; it reacts upon their own health. Now Kasitile linked his ill-health with the quarrel between Mwakinaya (111) of Lufuga and the men of Mwaipopo (116) over the Court, and Mwaipopo's failure to provide cattle for sacrifice has just been

[978] 778 771

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

F317 Ngonde F317

Nyakyusa

indicated (*vide supra*, p. 35). And, as we shall see later, he also suspected that his quarrels with the Kings priests and with the commoner priests of Mwaipopo's chieftdom made him ill.

Chiefs, and even the 'divine king' himself, lived in fear of the legitimate anger of their people, more particularly of their village headmen and priests, believing that such anger would bring them sickness, and this belief gave headmen and priests a very strong hold over their lord. How it worked was illustrated by an incident at Lubaga.

Mwanjala II (78) remarked to Mwakilima (111): 'I sent to summon Mwasani (a commoner priest) for the ritual tomorrow but he refused saying: "I shall not come." He is angry because he was not called to the ritual at your home, nor was he told formally when the Kings came, or when Mwaipopo [G.W.] came.' Mwakilima (111) asked: 'Will you pay him?' [i.e. admit your mistake and offer him compensation]. Mwanjala replied that he would, and Mwakilima expressed disgust. One of the Kings priests who was listening broke into the conversation: 'Ignore him if he refuses to come. If it were us we should leave him and celebrate without him, but you Nyakyusa are all witches, and you fear to ignore a man who refuses to come to a ritual saying that he will bewitch you. You are cowards, you are!'

At 6 in Godfrey Wilson asked if there were no witchcraft in Bukingo. The Kings priest replied: 'There is none, but if the chief gives orders to celebrate a ritual and someone refuses to come we ignore him, and celebrate without him. You Nyakyusa *pay* a man for doing wrong. A man refuses to come when he should and then you *pay* him! If you are afraid of witchcraft why not finish the ritual and send his portion of meat to him afterwards?'

Another priest objected: 'Then he would say it was too small a gift.'

The commoner priests then could control even the Lwembe (for Mwanjala II acted in the place of the Lwembe though he was not installed), but at the same time the mystical power of the Lwembe was feared both by ordinary chiefs and commoners. Mwaipopo (81), who ruled before the European occupation, insulted and fought Mwakileya the Lwembe (56), and killed some of his men, because 'Lwembe had spoiled the year', but he sent back the cattle that were seized.

In the old days it did not matter killing the Lwembe's men (in war), but no one dared to take his cattle, they feared lest he would spoil the year and send too much rain, and a plague of storm, and cause the cattle to

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been someone [of the dead Kyungus] whom you forget to ask about.' 'And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again.' If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry, and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would, and then the diviner would tell them that it was so-and-so (one of the dead Kyungus) and they would go and sacrifice to his grave.

Thus to insult Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. An 'insult' might mean any neglect of the obligations of the chiefs and nobles and commoners of the plain to their lord.

The people of Ngonde hoed large fields as tribute to the Kyungu and if they failed to do so 'he grew angry and poured all the water out of the pot in which he kept his rain stones' (*vide infra*, p. 114) and 'the sky dried up'. Then the chiefs called their men to hoe. . . . 'They hoed and hoed and hoed and their wives planted, then the rain came in a torrent. . . . Kyungu created much rain.'

Or if an elephant hunter neglected to send the Kyungu one of the tusks of any elephant he killed he would not kill another. 'The country beneath was angry . . . the shades of the dead Kyungus . . . they were angry saying: "Why do you eaten our child?"'

The rainfall in the Ngonde plain is less than half what it is in the Nyakyusa valley and anxiety about rainfall was constantly shown in the ceremonial rituals; elephant hunting was also a matter of concern in a way in which it was not among the Nyakyusa and this too is reflected in rituals; but there was also the preoccupation with health and fertility, as in the prayers at Lubaga. In the prayer circling Mbande the nobles prayed: 'May the cattle bear children, may the cattle and fowls increase, may the children sleep and not cry at night, may the witches not injure anyone.' And as we shall see, it was health and fertility that men had in mind when they cleared out the ashes each year after the break of the rains.

Towards Christmas time, when the first maize and the first

9: Wilson R-5 (1934-1935) 1939
FNGT Ngonde FNGT
Nyakyusa

among some other peoples with a corresponding ritual), but the young men seize cattle belonging to the older generation, thus asserting their authority. The opposition of generations is taken for granted and given expression in constitutional form: the ritual is a celebration not of 'rebellion' but of growth. For all their reluctance to hand over power the fathers 'rejoice and are glad because their sons have grown up'. Change in the structure of society after the revolution of the heroic age, is not celebrated, and is scarcely admitted, but the process of growth, of death and procreation, is expressed in every ritual. Indeed, the ritual cycle is like a fugue with the theme of death and rebirth constantly recurring.

The pagan universe is just and orderly. There is a sanctity attached to spilling blood or binding a man with ropes. The anger of men,[1] or of the shades who are roused by men, is what brings most misfortune, and often, the Nyakyusa think, such anger is justified. Even medicines may be selective, injuring only the guilty. The good man who celebrates the proper rituals, fulfils his kinship obligations, and keeps on good terms with his neighbours, is protected, while the evil-doer falls ill. But some evil men, witches and sorcerers, attack the innocent out of jealousy and spite. Evil to the Nyakyusa, lies primarily within men: it is 'anger in the heart' which materializes as pythons that throttle others. Because they are aware of angry impulses in themselves the Nyakyusa find it difficult to believe that any society without witchcraft can exist; to say that there is no witchcraft is like suggesting that there is no ill will or anger in a community. And since anger brings misfortune there is an obligation on those whose anger might have caused sickness or ill luck to express goodwill by spitting or blowing out water, and saying, 'May the patient recover' or 'I am without anger'. Among commoners the man required to show goodwill is usually a senior relative, rather than a suspected witch (as among the Azande). But a neighbour or friend who might be a witch or sorcerer should also express goodwill when he visits the sick, and fellow kinsmen who have ill luck may step to declare their goodwill to one another, as we have seen. If a chief or priest-chief is sick the village headmen and priests must with him well and confirm any anger they have felt towards him. The blowing out of water is a symbol of confusion, 'bringing

[1] For a full account of the belief in witchcraft and the 'hands of men', cf. Monica Wilson, Good Company, pp. [illegible], [illegible].

9/Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1959
F307 Ngoodo F307
Nyakyusa

out all the anger that is within', 'admitting that I have done wrong', begging pardon (*ukupolepa*) and also a symbol of contrition and as of driving off the shades (*vide supra*, pp. 104, 108-110; 116). Good health depends upon good social relationships, and of one who is ailing it is commonly said: 'It seems as if they (unspecified) had hated him.' Further, the proper working of the natural order is held to depend upon the proper working of the social order. Drought, or 'cold', or pestilence falls on a chiefdom if there is quarrelling between chief and priests, and the anger of the Lwembe with his 'sons' will derived the crops of Selya. The heroes, the shades, many of the men of power (*abamanga*), and many medicines help to maintain an orderly universe; only the witches and sorcerers work against it. In short, order and right living are an integral part of Nyakyusa religion as they are of Christianity.

The ultimate good is the power of fertility, of generation, which lies in the heroes and shades; the punishment for evil-doing is ill-health of body or mind and sterility. And towards the heroes and shades, who are both life-giving and avengers, the attitude of men is clearly ambivalent: the shades are driven away—'let them warm themselves over there in the long grass', men say when they throw out the ashes (*vide supra*, pp. 109-110) but they bring them home again to 'warm themselves by the hearth'.

In analysing the rituals of the Nyakyusa, I have been driven to the conclusion that they are, in fact, dogged by a sense of guilt,[1] for this is the only hypothesis on which the linking of misfortune and sin, the preoccupation with 'filth', and the recurring acts of purification can be explained. One of the sources of this sense of guilt is, I suggest, overcome of anger within, for it is believed that such anger injures others. An act of confession is essential to many rituals, and what must be confessed are anger, hard thoughts, ill will against others. The anger is acknowledged to come primarily from men—it is the angry person who rouses the shades to action by muttering over the fire—but the guilt, the filth, is projected on to the shade or the hero. It is when they 'brood on' men that men are contaminated. A shade or a man that is upright—good, righteous—is one without a grudge, without anger against anyone, free of witchcraft, and free of sin transgression—'there is no accusation against him'.

[1] Analysed this section, cf. 'Nyakyusa Ritual and Symbolism', *American Anthropologist*, v. 56 (1954), 228, 230-8.

9: Wilson E-5 (1954-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

swept through BaNyakyusa in the early 1930's; perhaps other similar movements preceded it—we do not know. What is clear is that traditionally there was continuous public pressure to overcome hatred within the village and the kinship group; to rid oneself of it by confession and an expression of goodwill. In page thought Utopia is a society without witches or sorcerers and though it was never achieved, everyone is convinced that formerly these evil-doers were fewer than now, because they were restrained by law, whereas 'witches' now go scot-free.

The interests of the Nyakyusa are personal and practical. Health, fertility, and amity between kinsmen and neighbours are what they seek. It is with rain and drought, with the rise of the Lake or the striking of lightning which destroys property with stock, crops, and the wild animals which prey upon them that the myths are concerned. We could trace no tales of the sun, moon, and stars, and no rituals are directed to them. Reference is made to volcanic disturbance in the myths of the heroes—'the ground rumbled' when Nkhoto and Kyala walked, and there are stories of small lakes disappearing and reappearing elsewhere—but the concern shown is surprisingly little if an eruption indeed destroyed villages last century as Mr. Harkin's single informant suggests (*vide supra*, p. 18).

Reality is thought to be revealed to men in dreams, by prophets who 'go down thinking like the roots of a tree' to the world of the shades, and by oracles. What men seek to know are the causes of misfortune—public and private—and the identity of witches. Occasionally, it is said, a prophet has looked into the future and foretold drought, or flood, or the coming of Europeans—'white things on the Lake'—against whom it would be foolish to fight but for the most part they are concerned with the misfortunes that exist, and urging men to pray in the groves. The contemplative is not honoured in Nyakyusa tradition; the man of spiritual power is a detective—a discoverer of evil-doers—or an administrator whose authority adds to his authority.

Men are preoccupied with their relationships to other living men—their kinsmen, neighbours, and fellow office-holders—and with their dead fathers. They are not concerned with their relationship to Kyala. The rituals celebrated by kinsmen are directed to the shades not to any supreme God, and it is quarrelling between kinsmen that angers the shades and makes the celebration of certain rituals necessary. The communal rituals are

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F7417 Ngonde F7417
Nyakyusa

directed towards heroes who are also forefathers, and it is quarrelling between chiefs and priests or village headmen that disturbs the natural order and causes disease and failure of crops. Kasitile was a famous priest, a man of perception, more than usually aware of the deeper implications of the rituals, but he never spoke of any personal relationship with Kyala, and he brushed aside the diviner's suggestion that his sickness was due to Kyala. He was dogged by a sense of guilt which, in pagan terms, could be redeemed only by sacrifice to his father and persuading his fellow priests to 'speak out' and admit their anger against him. Only when he was referring explicitly to Christian doctrine did he hint at redemption by Kyala (*vide supra*, pp. 128-9, 141). The genius of Nyakyusa religion is an awareness of the corrupting power of 'anger in the heart' and the necessity of confession and reconciliation if men are to be healthy in mind and body; they have no developed conception of God comparable to that of the Nuer. To them it is not 'the first and greatest commandment' which is familiar but 'the second which is like unto it'.

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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

Christian ones, do not celebrate and nothing happens to them, so we no longer fear ourselves.' By 1937 the pagan rituals of kinship had been largely dropped in Ngonde, and around Rungwe mission they were disappearing, though in Selya no pagan dared neglect them. They were taken more seriously by the women than by the men, and many of the young men were openly scornful. The young men are eclectic in their beliefs, jeering at the twin ritual when they may be fearful of any neglect of the ritual of death; doubting the power of rain-makers, but terrified of a neighbour's sorcery.

797 795 [771]

(c) CHRISTIAN RITUAL AND DOGMA

And what are the alternatives to the traditional rituals? Celebrations at death, marriage, and birth continue—probably some sort of ritual on these occasions is universal in human societies. There is no celebration of a girl's puberty, as among the pagans, but the ritual of confirmation is, in one sense, parallel, for it is an acknowledgment of maturity by the acceptance of an individual into the full fellowship of the Church; but maturity in the Church, and the symbolic death and rebirth, are not necessarily linked with physiological development, as they are in the pagan ritual of *ubunogo*.[1] [881]

All the Christian rituals are *communal* in the sense that they are centred in the Church—the Christian community; none is primarily a ritual of kinship. This is most pointed at a christening, when a child is received into the fellowship of the Church, whereas in the pagan birth ritual it is acknowledged as a member of the father's lineage by being given *ilipili* medicine (which is 'the blood of the lineage') by its paternal grandmother. Sometimes both rituals are celebrated by Christians who interpret the *ilipili* as an acknowledgment of legitimacy, and a medicine necessary to the child's health, but this is frowned upon by the more orthodox. A dying man is comforted by the priest or elders of the Church, and in some communions he receives the sacrament, the symbol of his salvation through Christ and his membership of the community of believers. At a funeral the members of the local Christian congregation take the leading part, comforting the mourners with prayers and hymns, digging the grave, and burying the dead. The contrast with a pagan funeral, in which cattle are

[152] [763] [764]

[1] The pagan rituals referred to in this section are described in *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1939
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

succession of 'wet', 'rain' and 'cold' into which the Nyakyusa year is divided; but there are parallels in the traditional prayers for rain, and at sowing and harvest, which the Christians are quick to point out. What is totally new to the Nyakyusa is the division of a year into weeks, each with a day of rest and worship; but the conception once introduced has been accepted very quickly, and it is common to find pagans as well as Christians refraining from work in their fields on a Sunday. This is partly the effect of experience in European employment where Sunday is a day off, but partly, perhaps, it is because the idea of taboo is deeply embedded in pagan thought, and the teaching of some missionaries and converts has been in terms of taboo—of prohibitions connected with 'the Sabbath'.

In the Christian villages and village-sections, some at least of the converts gather for morning and evening prayer and on Sundays in their little mud Church or school-house, and once a month or once a quarter they gather in the main Church of the district. Besides this, those seeking baptism or preparing for confirmation gather for regular weekly instruction over a period of two or three years. There is thus regular common worship and instruction, and a strong sense of community between fellow Christians, particularly when they are in a small minority in an area.

But though the Christian is a member of a Church and worships in community, the emphasis (at least in the Protestant Churches in BuNyakyusa) tends to be on the individual, and some pagans spoke as if turning Christian implied an abandoning of public duties. Kasitile's remark that if it were not for his responsibility for the ritual he would be baptized, has already been quoted (p. 141), and the young priest of PulKyala said the same. Whether these two were serious in wishing to become Christian is irrelevant here; they both believed that they had duties to their community which could not be fulfilled if they were Christians. The 'individualism' of young Christians is a matter of concern to many missionaries who are struggling to create among Christians that very sense of mystical union which pagan kinsmen exhibit.

The idea of the corporate nature of the worshipping group, with all that implies in mutual responsibility, is but one example of the profound similarity between the underlying ideas of pagan and Christian ritual that will be apparent to most readers. In the pagan tradition confession, oblation, and communion are as essential to the sacrifices at the groves as they are to the Christian eucharist;

marriage is a sacrament, a mystical union of husband and wife who wash together in the 'blood' of the husband's lineage; and at death kinsmen share a communion with the 'faithful departed'.

We have already touched on the changing conception of *Kyala*. The idea of a supreme power, or creator, distinct from the shades and heroes, is clear enough to Christians and is becoming more and more familiar to pagans, a young priest even insisting that his father and Kaitila could bring rain only 'if God willed' (vide supra, p. 119). Christians believe that 'God alone sends rain', and they are profoundly sceptical of the pagan rain-maker.

The Christians also speak of Satan (*Satana*) whom some identify with 'Mbusi' (*Lwendo*) and to whom the more orthodox attribute evil dreams of snakes and lions and fighting, which the pagans attribute to witchcraft. To the pagan the snake is the witch come to attack him; to the Christian it is Satan come to tempt him. The orthodox, following the teaching of missionaries, deny the existence of witchcraft, but most admit to a lively fear of sorcery which is rationalized as 'poisoning', though when the conception is examined it can be shown to include much beside poison put in food or drink. Some of our closest Christian friends admitted their fears. X, the Christian wife of a pagan chief, said one day when we were discussing witchcraft: 'You dissemble like all Europeans, you do not wish to admit belief in witchcraft, you are just pretending.' 'You really think we believe in it?' 'Yes, we all know that Europeans just hide their belief.'

Another chief's wife, Y, also a professing Christian, said: 'We all believe in witchcraft, it really exists.' Then she went on to tell how someone had come to 'choke' her one night recently when she was visiting her own people:

> I woke out of a heavy sleep with a pain in the back of my neck and my head. It was as if someone was stamping on my head. I woke up feeling heavy, I was very heavy. I said: 'If I die, you also will die. Who is outside? Who is choking me? Do they not fear God (*Kyala*)?' Then someone kicked the door and I shouted, 'Mother, mother!' and I heard footsteps going away.

When asked whether she believed that village headmen protected their people from witchcraft she went on:

> They fight the witches by night, they protect their people, they see the witches and drive them away.
>
> Question: How do you know that witches really exist, do they admit themselves to be witches?

[777] [778] [779] [775] [785] [776] [786] [771]

long in sympathy; as one of our friends explained, she found it hard to accept food from the neighbouring Safwa who were 'so dirty in their cooking'.

Both pagans and Christians pin their faith to conversion, but the interpretations differ radically. To the pagan the shade is conceived 'in the belly of his child', it scarcely has any separate existence. To Christians the personality, the individual soul, is something indestructible and continuing. This theological difference is but one facet of a deep chasm between the pagan view of a man and his relations with his group, and the Christian view.

Because the traditional religion is a cult of the shades, piety consists in doing just as father did. It is neglect of traditional rituals, departure from traditional ways, that is held to bring madness, sterility, or death. But Christianity is revolutionary; it is the yeast working in society to transform it. That is often forgotten in communities with a Christian tradition, but where the Gospel has been preached only for a generation and confirming Christians are but one in six, it is in men's minds all the time. The Nyakyusa could not be unaware that the Gospel implied changing their society.

In the pagan tradition the meticulous performance of the rituals is stressed: the right medicines; the right persons; the right order of events are all important. The attitude of mind of the participants matters also—if they are on bad terms the ritual will be ineffective—but goodwill and forgiveness alone are useless without the performance of the proper ritual. In the Christian tradition, as interpreted to us by Nyakyusa converts, it is the inward and spiritual attitude of the participants that is stressed.

Finally, all the pagan rituals are directed to driving off the shades or the heroes, whereas the Christian rituals are the 'means of grace', of coming near to God. Christians pray that the Holy Spirit should take up his abode within them; they seek to emulate the saints who 'walked with God'. Our Christian friends were quite clear about the contrast here between the pagan and Christian traditions: it is crystallized in the attitude to dreams: if a pagan dreams of converse (ukwangala) with shades, he fears death; 'if a Christian dreams of converse with God he rejoices greatly because it means he is gaining strength in Christianity.'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

Council, the importance of establishing machinery for their appointment in chiefdoms where the 'coming out' is no longer held is obvious. [777] [622] [923]

The traditional communal rituals have not been dropped altogether, but their celebration is sporadic and not everyone supports them. Careful enquiries suggest that in less than half of the chiefdoms has the 'coming out' been celebrated when it was due. In the most conservative portion of the district, Selya, there were celebrations in 1950 and 1954, but even in that area a number of the ruling chiefs have never 'come out'. The omission is due partly to the desire of the old men to retain office, partly to the increase in population and the planting of coffee which makes any new deal in land unacceptable, and partly to the feeling of many that the old ritual is an anachronism, if not directly incompatible with their new faith in Christianity. Some chiefs who have not 'come out' would welcome a celebration; one such told us that 'if the "coming out" died chieftainship would die'; but a young chief's personal wishes are not decisive in this matter. Sacrifices at the graves of chiefs and heroes are not as frequent as before, but they still occur at some graves in time of drought or other emergency. The Kings came to Lubaga in 1954, and they were expected to come and instal Kasitile's heir in 1955. In 1954 also there were sacrifices to Mwaijonga (82) and Mwakisambwe (90) for it was a season of scarcity. Rituals for cleansing the country and sprinkling the homesteads occur sporadically 'when occasion demands', but not annually in any chiefdom and never in some. And when celebrations do occur they do not unite the people of a chiefdom as they used to do. Christians oppose them and many non-Christians are also sceptical. [561] [796] [643] [782] [769] [771]

In 1935 the traditional rituals celebrated by lineages and chiefdoms formed a coherent system. They were directed towards the shades and the heroes, as was manifest in the sacrifices and in the dramas of death and rebirth when those secluded 'dwelt with the shades' or were 'caught hold of' by Kyala.[1] The older participants were then conscious, in greater or lesser degree, of the symbolism implicit in the actions they performed. By 1955 the ritual cycle was nowhere celebrated in full: what remained were 'bits and pieces' of ritual, none of them fully intelligible without reference to the complete cycle. The link between the rites and the shades and the heroes was less clear, and the symbolism less [769] [796]

[1] *Vide supra*, pp. 27-48, 70-83; *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 51, 58, 101, 111-13, 205.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

843

crouch in the belly which matches millet and beans. These are the foods that Kyale said are important.

MWAIKAMBO: When a woman is pregnant she fears to pass people who are at work planting, smithing, milking, or brewing beer, because they say the child in the belly, the weight (*ubusito*), is like a witch, it will damage food like witchcraft; beer is spoiled and turns sour, food does not grow, the smith's iron is not easily worked, the milk is not good. If a pregnant woman comes across her fellows planting she stops them for a few minutes while she passes. If they are brewing they give her a little beer to taste.

ANGOMWEMBE: As for avoiding food, a woman avoids especially when she has been pregnant for one or two months. It is said that if she passes through the gardens, perhaps when people are planting, or when they have already planted but the seed has not yet sprouted, the child in the belly tries to match the millet, and it meets the medicine (for people plant millet with a medicine, saying: 'May my millet not rot in the ground'), then perhaps the mother has a miscarriage. If the child in her belly has sprouted then she does not fear much . . . and if the millet has sprouted she does not fear much, but when it has not yet sprouted then the medicine is fierce.

Besides the symbol of the fetus with 'jaws agape' matching food, there is a symbol of 'seed within' fighting 'seed without'. Mwaikambo was careful to point out that this interpretation was a personal one, assented to, but not volunteered, by others he consulted; however, it was later confirmed by Kasitile.

MWAIKAMBO: A pregnant woman should avoid those planting beans and millet, or straining ointment, sunning millet, or brewing beer, because there is kinship (*ubudama*) between the child in her belly and food, we call all of them seed (*mbeje*). The seed in her belly and that outside fight; that within is fierce and overcomes that outside. To help them plant is to make friends; to knot a leaf is to bind the anger of the human seed. All those with whom I have discussed the matter agreed that this is so, but they have agreed when I began to explain it to them; none of them understand the other symbols. I discussed it with about eleven men.

KASITILE: The taboo against a pregnant woman passing millet and other seed spread out to dry is because these seeds fight with the child inside. It is seed, it defeats them; it is seed, it is water, it is blood. To bind a leaf is to bind that blood within, that it may not kill the seeds out drying. If someone else's food is being planted and a pregnant woman approaches, and does not bind a leaf and throw it in the grain basket, then the seed is insufficient to plant.

A general principle of Nyakyusa thought is the opposition of

828
772

like activities; things which are felt to be alike are often felt to be antagonistic. We have shown that certain of the pregnancy taboos are interpreted in terms of the opposition between seed in plants and seed in the womb, and between pumpkins in the field and pumpkins in the vagina, and we have touched on the opposition between procreation and war. Sexual intercourse, 'the war of the mats', is directly compared with war; the two are felt to be alike and therefore incompatible. Association with a menstruating or parturient woman is felt to be weakening to a warrior; continence of a warrior before battle is enjoined—'men feared to die quickly if they slept with their wives just before war.' Moreover, a menstruating wife never touches her husband's weapons lest they be weakened.

Hunting is classed with war and the same taboos apply. Added to them is the notion that, since a pregnant woman is often angry, the animals her husband hunts will be angry also, and he is in much greater danger than an ordinary hunter.

Amoomwaa: If you go into the bush and you have left your wife heavy, at home, if you meet a lion it will not run off, but will injure you, maul you. And if you are many, a leopard or a lion will attack you, the heavy one, not the others.

Question: Why?

Amoomwaa: It is as if there was much anger. And we've noticed something else, if a lion attacks cattle it always attacks a cow in calf. And another thing. If a woman is heavy she is very bad-tempered (*okali*), it's like a passion. Perhaps the woman is bad-tempered or perhaps good, and you, the husband, are bad-tempered. Pregnancy shows in many ways. . . .

A pregnant woman has a great fire in her body, she sweats a lot and is passionate (*ndyaji*), she is fierce (*okali*). That fire is strong; we all flee from the woman, we all dislike her. And when pregnancy begins the animals in the bush wish to kill you, the husband. That fierceness [the fire] makes them hate you; you are like a twin. A first-born child is very fierce (*okali*), so a woman is very passionate and sweats a great deal.

His wife's pregnancy puts a man in danger from wild animals, and so does a quarrel with her, quite apart from the pregnancy which tends to produce such quarrels. Mwainomo said: 'If I go hunting after quarrelling with my wife it is very dangerous, I might be killed by a wild animal.'

Besides the idea that animals will attack the husband of a preg-

J: Wilson E-9 (1934-1938)1937 F3517 Ngombe F3517
Nyakyusa

east woman there is a notion that they will *flee* from him, and therefore he will be hopelessly unsuccessful in hunting. Isaiah, who persisted in hunting while his wife was pregnant and rarely brought in anything, was the laughing-stock of his neighbours. Lyandilaka, the woman doctor, explained: 'The animals flee because the man smells. He smells because his wife is pregnant.'

Procreation and smithing are also felt to be in opposition because they are felt to be alike. A pregnant woman usually avoids a forge altogether, but she miscarry, and her husband, if he approaches one, remains silent until he has picked up a piece of charcoal, spat on it, and thrown it into the fire. If he neglects to do so, the iron does not coalesce. Kasitile explained the taboo very clearly:

If a woman is pregnant she and her husband both fear to go near a forge lest either the iron or the foetus is spoiled. The foetus is spoiled only because medicines are used on the forge; that is to say, the medicine of the forge spoils the iron in the belly of a woman, and she has a miscarriage. But if there is no medicine then the iron is spoiled; it is difficult to work until the smith has sought a doctor to treat it with medicine; then the iron is all right again.

Kasitile speaks of 'the iron in the belly of the woman' and the details of this symbolism are instructive. Angombwike said:

When a smith forges a spear he does not sleep with his wives[1] because, we say, when a woman conceives the fire blazes within her to forge a person, and the woman's fire and the smith's fire fight. When a smith comes with the fire of his smithy on his body and lies with a woman, the woman has a miscarriage.

The iron of a woman is that within which receives the seed [i.e. the womb]. And we ordinary people who are not smiths, we fear the smith's fire. We do not fear to injure a woman, no, but we fear *ifyendele*, the disease of the forge, in children. If a man sits talking with a smith at his forge and catches hold of the iron being forged there, if his wife at home bears a child, the child will cough: 'He, he.' It's like the cough of *ingwale*, but we call it 'the forge'. Then people say: 'The forge! Indeed, you, the father, must have sat with a smith at the forge.' Then the father thinks, and he remembers, and takes the child to that smith with whom he sat, and the smith lets his bellows play on the child's body

[1] All informants were agreed that a forge is dangerous to a pregnant woman or her husband, but a smith consulted denied that he observed any sex taboos himself. 'The fire is mine.' 'But,' he said, 'if my wife is pregnant or has given birth to twins, when I go to someone else's forge I myself, with the wisdom of a smith, spit on a piece of charcoal and throw it in the fire.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

and that cows him. So, when a man comes to a smith's forge for the first time, he always takes a piece of charcoal from the fire and spits on it and throws it into the fire. This means: 'I have come to your forge, smith, may this fire not come on my body.'

And sometimes the smith's iron does not glow and sparkle well. Then he is angry, saying: 'Heavy cows are present. Some of you have pregnant wives, you are spoiling my fire.' We all pick up pieces of charcoal and spit on them and throw them into the fire again. Then the fire blazes up well and the iron glows and sparks.

Mwaninguta, the village headman, confirmed this:

When my wife is pregnant I fear the smithy. I spit on a piece of charcoal. Until she gives birth I fear, but when we just play together on the mat, and she has not yet conceived, I do not fear. . . . Only when it is seen that the 'iron' is there do I fear.

QUESTION: The iron?

MWANINGUTA: It's the blood of the man. The man is the smith. He forges iron there with the woman. The woman is the bellows. The smithing flourishes because of the sweat. Sometimes a woman conceives if I have lain with her two or three times—if Kyala gives us a child—but some delay, and I sleep with them a whole month.

QUESTION: The woman is a bellows?

MWANINGUTA: Yes, because when she is having intercourse she gasps: 'He, he, he!'

QUESTION: And the man?

MWANINGUTA: Yes, but where do we find the fire? In the body of the woman! It's a great fire. Hence we say the bellows is the woman. It's smithing. Women are the anvil. Is there not fire in their bodies? Therefore I hammer there.

The primary taboo is on the pregnant woman approaching the smithy lest she injure it, but it is also thought that, like grain and cattle, it may be treated with strong medicines which will cause her to miscarry if she breaks the taboo. Hence the Nyakyusa dictum: 'She who has a miscarriage is she who is proud (*ausonage*).'

The conception that like things are antagonistic, and that the sexual activities of different couples must not be mixed, is clearly shown in the taboos relating to fire and the calabash cup used for water. An elderly councillor of Ngonde, himself a Christian, explained it:

It is taboo for married people to blow up the fire in someone else's house, or to drink from the calabash cup; if they do they will bring a

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

coughing disease to the owners of the house. . . . Pagans used to fear to let 784
those who are sleeping together touch the hearth-bricks or blow up the 772
fire in their house for, if they do so, then the owners of the house, both
men and woman, fall sick coughing. They say it is the disease of fires
(*ngwa*). . . . But when a woman has borne a child and is suckling it,
and her husband is not with her, then it is not taboo.

Making fire by friction and, in more general terms, fire, are §31
symbols of sexual intercourse, and 'the fire of the body and the 772
fire of the house fight'. Drinking from a calabash cup is perhaps
also a symbol of intercourse—the shape of the cup suggests it—but
there is no direct evidence of such an association.

The taboo on mixing the sex activities of different couples is §34
pushed to the point that women avoid for a day the milk of a cow 772
that has been with the bull. 'They say: "We will harm the cow.
It will abort." They compare it with themselves as women.'

Two last pregnancy taboos may be noted which turn, not on §43
the feeling that like things are antagonistic, but that like produces 772
like. Things felt to be alike are treated as causally related. We
quote Mwambupuza, the village headman:

> Women fear to stand in a doorway when they are pregnant. They say: 'How should the child stand in the doorway? It will refuse to come out.' Because if birth is delayed, it is as if the child refused to come out of the house. That is the symbol. And I, the husband, feared also [to stand in a doorway]. Now we men do not fear; it is finished; but women still fear.
>
> And another thing, when a woman was pregnant we feared to sit close together, I, the husband, and my child. It was taboo. And for my wife and another woman to sit close together was taboo. It was said that she would bear twins, because we had sat together. Now we men do not fear, but women still do.

(*b*) *The confinement*

A first confinement, like first menstruation, is the occasion for §44
elaborate ritual, and though at later confinements (as at later menstrual periods) certain taboos must be observed, they are less numerous and less strictly enforced than those connected with the birth of the first child, *umuana gwe bwenge*.

A first child should be born at the husband's mother's house, 'and if the first child is a girl they will tell her to come again for the second, saying: "Come that we may treat our husband [i.e. grandson]." ' The woman lies, during labour, on a heap of leaves

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XIX

Omens & Portents

TO us the universe is continually offering the gift of knowledge. The earth and the starry heavens, all that goes on in the human mind, and all men's actions, are subjects of inquiry. But our gift has to be received with toil of heart and brain, for it is granted only to men of mental vigour.

To the Konde, on the other hand, what the universe offers is not so much knowledge as foreknowledge; information rather than education. Prescience, perhaps because the Konde is so distrustful of his own unaided powers, is more to him than the heaped-up lore of the centuries. Everything is in the hands of unseen powers, and it is important for weak men to know beforehand what is the attitude of these powers to any undertaking he may have in mind.

Nature is not, to the African, a fixed system of laws that cannot be interfered with; men can and do interfere with it; stop the rain, injure the crops, make serpents, call up lions and leopards, and many other things. Now it might almost *a priori* be asserted that such a system will not stop at being controllable: it will also be predictive, it will give signs and tokens

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F7017 Ngonde F7017

• 772 of what is coming. But these signs and tokens are not the act of an impersonal universe; they are the act of God, a revelation of His care for men.

781 In Konde omens and portents the dramatic element is slight. I can retail nothing to equal in creepiness the cry of the Irish banshee, or Highland dogs howling at an invisible funeral, or the family ghost clanking its chain in an old English mansion. But a Konde dog howls at night, and sudden silence falls upon the previously laughing and chatting company sitting around the fire, or out in the cool moonlight. Who is going to die? And when? And of what sickness? Or a branch crosses in the forest as one is passing through it at night; and the belated traveller hastens his steps without looking backward, for that way lies death. The bold man who passes the grave of a chief at night, and hears his name called, takes to his heels, eyes front for his very life, for the backward look is death, though to the closed eye there is little danger that cannot be averted.

Omens are offered by nature; they come spontaneously, so far as men are concerned. There are cases in which the omens are consulted, or taken, but generally the information is given by events, rather than discovered by experiment, as with the ancient Roman augurs. And although some men know more about them than others, there are no specialists to whom a fee has to be paid for the interpretation of the omen.

The rough classification which is here attempted, makes no pretence of being exhaustive. Life is full

CHAPTER XI

NYAKYUSA COSMOLOGY

772 We can now piece together, from myth and ritual, the traditional Nyakyusa view of their universe. They have no elaborated system of ideas and the synthesis which follows is more systematic than any uneducated Nyakyusa would formulate.

773 The origin of men was a 'dark house', located high on the Livingstone plateau, and from here the Nyakyusa themselves, and people familiar to them, are thought to have sprung, but there is a hint of the first of the heroes having come 'from the north', and there is also the contradictory notion that the heroes were creators. 'It was Kyala who made us in the beginning with iron ore'; 'Kyala [774] is the smith who forges us'; 'Mbasi is the smith who forges us'; 'Lwembe made Mbande out of clay to be the father of commoners'. But all are agreed that Lwembe (or Mbasi) was the ancestor of the chiefs and no clear distinction is made between creator and progenitor.

Crops and animals and fire were distributed by the heroes. Of their first creation or invention there is no tale for, though Lwembe created animals, he was already a herd-boy when he did so. Moreover, the 'owners of the soil' in the Nyakyusa valley had some crops before Lwembe came bringing them others, together with cattle and fire; but which were the indigenous crops of the valley and which the new is not discussed. If contradictions between the various myths are pointed out they are explained, like divergences in ritual, in terms of differing origin: 'It is the Lambya people to the west who say that cattle came out of an anthill, and the Nyakyusa proper who say they were brought by Lwembe', and so on. Differentiation is epitomized and accounted for by the separation of lineages.

[775] The heroes had a creative force in their own persons, which is inherited by their descendants, the divine kings, and, in a lesser degree, the chiefs; as in Egypt 'the King's potency is felt in the very body and person of each of his subjects'.[1] That potency is partly innate in the royal line, but it is nourished by the use of medicines of which the greatest are reserved to rulers. Vigour is

[1] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, p. 6n.

9: Wilson B-5 (1934-1935) 1959
F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

among some other peoples with a corresponding ritual), but the young men seize cattle belonging to the older generation, thus asserting their authority. The opposition of generations is taken for granted and given expression in constitutional form: the ritual is a celebration not of 'rebellion' but of growth. For all their reluctance to hand over power the fathers 'rejoice and are glad because their sons have grown up'. Change in the structure of society after the revolution of the heroic age, is not celebrated, and is scarcely admitted, but the process of growth, of death and generation, is expressed in every ritual. Indeed, the ritual cycle is like a fugue with the theme of death and rebirth constantly recurring.

The pagan universe is just and orderly. There is a taboo attached to spilling blood or binding a man with ropes. The anger of men,[1] or of the shades who are roused by magic, is what brings man misfortune, and often, the Nyakyusa think, such anger is justified. Even medicines may be selective, injuring only the guilty. The good man who celebrates the proper rituals, fulfils his kinship obligations, and keeps on good terms with his neighbours, is protected, while the evil-doer falls ill. But some evil men, witches and sorcerers, attack the innocent out of jealousy and spite. Evil to the Nyakyusa, lies primarily within men: it is 'anger in the heart' which materializes as pythons that throttle others. Because they are aware of angry impulses in themselves the Nyakyusa find it difficult to believe that any society without witchcraft can exist; to say that there is no witchcraft is like suggesting that there is no ill will or anger in a community. And since anger brings misfortune there is an obligation on those whose anger might have caused sickness or ill luck to express goodwill by spitting or blowing out water, and saying, 'May the patient recover' or 'I am without anger'. Among commoners the man required to show goodwill is usually a senior relative, rather than a suspected witch (as among the Azande). But a neighbour or friend who might be a witch or sorcerer should also express goodwill when he visits the sick, and fellow hunters who have ill luck may stop to declare their goodwill to one another, as we have seen. If a chief or priest-chief is sick the village headmen and priests must wish him well and confess any anger they have felt towards him. The blowing out of water is a symbol of confession, 'bringing

[1] For a full account of the belief in witchcraft and the 'hands of men', cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. [illegible], *ripsdem*.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

out all the anger that is within', 'admitting that I have done wrong', begging pardon (*ukupolaya*) and *also a symbol of contrition* and so of driving off the shades (*vide supra*, pp. 104, 108-110; 139). Good health depends upon good social relationships, and of one who is ailing it is commonly said: 'It seems as if they (unspecified) had hated her.' Further, the proper working of the natural order is held to depend upon the proper working of the social order. Drought, or 'cold', or pestilence falls on a chiefdom if there is quarrelling between chief and priests, and the anger of the Lwembe with his 'sons' will shrivel the crops of Selya. The heroes, the shades, many of the men of power (*abamanga*), and many medicines help to maintain an orderly universe; only the witches and sorcerers work against it. In short, order and right living are an integral part of Nyakyusa religion as they are of Christianity.

The ultimate good is the power of fertility, of generation, which lies in the heroes and shades; the punishment for evil-doing is ill-health of body or mind and sterility. And towards the heroes and shades, who are both life-givers and avengers, the attitude of men is clearly ambivalent: the shades are driven away—'let them warm themselves over there in the long grass', men say when they throw out the ashes (*vide supra*, pp. 109-11) but they bring them home again to 'warm themselves by the hearth'.

In analysing the rituals of the Nyakyusa, I have been driven to the conclusion that they are, in fact, dogged by a sense of guilt,[1] for this is the only hypothesis on which the linking of misfortune and sin, the preoccupation with 'filth', and the recurring acts of purification can be explained. One of the sources of this sense of guilt is, I suggest, awareness of anger within, for it is believed that such anger injures others. An act of confession is essential to many rituals, and what must be confessed are anger, hard thoughts, ill will against others. The anger is acknowledged to come primarily from men—it is the angry parent who rouses the shades to action by muttering over the fire—but the guilt, the filth, is projected on to the shade or the hero. It is when they 'brood on' men that men are contaminated. A shade or a man that is *ngalafa*—good, righteous—is one without a grudge, without anger against anyone, free of witchcraft, and free of sex transgression—'there is no accusation against him'.

[1] I doubted this earlier, cf. 'Nyakyusa Ritual and Symbolism', *American Anthropologist*, v. 56 (1954), pp. 237-8.

Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F927 Ngonde F927
Nyakyusa

We remarked to a Christian friend, a deacon, that the rains were late. He replied: 'Well, it is not so very unusual. Sometimes rains begin in one part of the country and not in another. Sometimes we do not get heavy rain down here until the end of January.' In short, the more educated Christians are beginning to think in more general terms: they do not as yet define probabilities statistically in terms of rainfall coverage, but they are tending in that direction.

And what of the positive content of Christianity? The supreme attraction, mentioned again and again as the reason for conversion, is: 'There is life' (*ubumi bulipo*), and it is life in a world to come rather than 'more abundant life' here and now that is spoken of. The contrast is between heaven above and the shadowy world 'beneath' of pagan thought, or a fearful fiery hell in which most Christians believe and to which, some think, all pagans are condemned. Constantly in sermons by Nyakyusa preachers there was stress on life, resurrection, and on the rewards and punishments of the future life, and this theme recurs again and again in the devotes of Christians.

There is a gulf also between the pagan conception of 'driving off' the shades and the heroes lost by 'brooding over' a man thus being madness and death, and the Christian ideal of union with God. Sermons stress the goodness and love of God, characteristics quite foreign to the traditional picture of Kyala.

Something of the quality of Christian thought and feeling may be grasped by an examination of the names taken at baptism—the convert from paganism always chooses a new name for himself and the meaning is more immediately obvious to everyone than is is with modern English Christian names derived, as they mostly are, from languages no longer familiar. Many of the Nyakyusa names express a very direct personal relationship with God, the Redeemer: 'He has looked upon me', 'He has rescued me', 'He has waited hoping for me', 'He has died for me', 'He gives me courage', 'He has changed me', 'He has chosen me out', 'He has comforted me', and a score more of the same type. Some refer to the Gospels: 'Word of Truth', 'The Word has taken hold of me'. A few speak of purification: 'Make me white', 'He has washed me'. Some express that union with God which the pagans so greatly fear: 'We are with him', 'He has come near', 'He has brooded over me', 'Let us approach', and some thanksgiving: 'Let us sing to Him', 'We praise Him', 'We have rejoiced', and some life: 'He is risen',

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

spear, and magic horn. In this way the new chiefs are shown to their people.

Chiefs who are to be independent now separate, each moving off with his men to the place where the senior age-village of that chiefdom will eventually be built. All fire in the country is extinguished, even the fires in the homesteads of the old men, and in each of the new independent chiefdoms new fire is made, ceremonially, by the senior headman of the chiefdom and his fellow next in rank. One holds a lion-bone while the other twirls a medicated stick in a groove in the bone. The senior headman and his second each gives fire to the village headman immediately junior to him, and then the latter in turn to his immediate junior, until each of the headmen has fire. At this point the future division of each new chiefdom is foreshadowed, for the second senior headman in each new chiefdom is recognized as the leader of one side of the country. As each village headman lights his fire he calls: 'Come men of such and such a village to me!' and they take fire from him.

Since we are not primarily concerned with symbolism in this book we shall not enter at length into the interpretation of these events.[1] It must suffice to remind our readers of the Nyakyusa myth that their chiefs came down from the Livingstone mountains ten generations ago bringing fire with them, and that they found the previous inhabitants of the valley, who became their subjects, without fire, and eating their food raw. The extinguishing of the old fires and lighting of new is interpreted by the Nyakyusa as a symbol of the new chieftainship. A chief with whom we were well acquainted explained it thus: 'The fire is the fire of lordship (*umoto botwa*). The old chieftainship is coming to an end, the new has come. They extinguish the fires in all the homes, those of the young men and those of the old men, then they make new fire which is taken to every home. For formerly Mwangamilo [the old chief] would have had little power [after the 'coming out'], Mwakyusa and Reubeni [his sons] would have ruled.' But why fire? we asked. 'Because of old,' they relate, we chiefs came with fire, the commoners had not yet got it, they ate raw food only. When we came we slept in men's houses and we made fire and cooked food. Men were astonished, and said:

[1] A full analysis of the symbolism of one ritual necessitates a comparison of all the rituals of the society, which will be made in another book.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

"Ha! what's this?" They were burned; so they said: "These are chiefs because they brought this fire." It is this they remember, even to-day. . . .' And another informant explained: 'The fire means (*kukuti*) that a new chief has come, he brings fire, we throw away the old fire in the house.'

Having lighted their fires the young men cut bamboos and build temporary shelters for themselves, making one or more huts according to their numbers. It is forbidden for them to sleep in old huts, nor may they build on the site on which they lived as boys. Usually their first huts are on what was formerly pasture land, and later their fathers move aside to make room for the new generation. On the new site the two senior headmen of the new chief, together with a doctor, plant with magical ritual two branches of a *ficus* (known in Nyakyusa as *iliyabe*)—a species which is important economically since the bark of saplings provides the traditional dress of Nyakyusa women. These trees, known as *ulupando* and *umpandapanda*, are planted where the future boundary will run between the two halves of the young chief's country, and the senior headman (who is leader of the senior half of the country) builds his house near where the *ulupando* has been planted. He and his colleague, together with the doctor, proceed, after planting the trees, to set up the hearth-stones of his hut. Again magic is performed. Nyakyusa informants were not agreed as to the symbolism of these trees, as they were about the symbolism of the new fire. The root *ukupanda* means to plant a crop, or to set up, or establish the hearth-stones of a house; it is used also for establishing, or treating, with medicines. Some informants interpreted the *ulupando* as the chief and *umpandapanda* as his wife, saying: 'We are planting the chief and his wife.' Others said that the two trees represented the two senior headmen of the country, another that they represented the chief's two senior wives. What is certain is that *ulupando* is regarded as more important than *umpandapanda* and that both are taboo. No one may cut the trees. If anyone breaks the taboo it is believed that lions and leopards (closely associated with chiefs) will roar at night, and treatment by a doctor will be necessary to still them. It is also widely believed that the strength of the chief is associated with the growth of the trees. 'If these trees go dry the reign will not be successful, the chief will be defeated in war. If they flourish and grow the reign will be successful, the chief is

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

764 QUESTION: What are the stones in the clefts of hands and toes?
773 MWASALEMBA: Kyala when he created men said: 'At the death ritual do this, it is the shade, it is the body.'

775 Mwasalemba went on to discuss the puberty ritual and attributed sexual desire and diarrhœa to the shades. He explained that faeces (which are buried) 'go below to the land of the shades' (*vide* p. 127; 210 ff.).

764 SYUNGU: If we leave out something a child runs off to Mwibonde
[158] [wild pasture-land] and catches hold of that which is bad and pants with madness (*ikigili*). Some go to Mwibonde and gather faggots and put them on their heads then throw them away again.

QUESTION: How is it that people ever omit a ritual?

SYUNGU: Some omit some of it. They make mistakes out of ignorance.

QUESTION: But do any omit it altogether?

[184] SYUNGU: No, only the Christians. No pagan neglects it altogether.

QUESTION: But those who have run away and are not there (e.g. women who have eloped with lovers)?

SYUNGU: Yes, indeed, it is they who neglect it, but those who are at home perform the ritual.

QUESTION: How about stealing the banana bunch?

SYUNGU: Yes, we steal it, but we tell the owner beforehand, and when we eat the mash we mix the stolen with the home-grown, that which is stolen is always a plantain and that from home is a sweet banana. The plantain is the man's and the sweet banana the woman's. And when we bathe we wear a plantain leaf, which has been stolen, in front, and a sweet banana leaf, which comes from home, behind.

MWASALEMBA:[1] The girl brought the spear of her husband and stuck it in the ground. At the end Losi (my eldest son and her full brother) pulled it up and it will always be on my wall. The spear is an essential part of the ritual; without it the ritual would go wrong. If she came with no spear we should send her back again to fetch one.

764 We drink the medicine because, when our son-in-law has died and
587 our daughter lies with another who has not been our son-in-law before, if she comes and gives us food with the filth (*indafu*) on her then we gasp and cough with *ingotolo*. It is quite different if she runs away from her husband when he is alive. Then we drink no medicine. Yes, then she comes, with *indafu* on her, and gives us food and nothing happens.
[828] I don't know why. Kyala made us black people like this. It is when her husband dies that we drink. We drink as soon as she lies with her new husband, not after she becomes pregnant. If we see that she is pregnant before she comes we are angry. She should come first to the ritual and then conceive. She does not wait until her periods stop before coming

[1] Referring to the *ingotolo* ritual for his daughter described on p. 66.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

585
354 new home, and her mother-in-law provides her with fire and a pot.

783 After the bride has had full intercourse with her husband she cannot return home, or see her own parents, until she has taken them the ritual *ilibalaga*. After sexual intercourse she wipes her husband's genitals with her hands, then wipes them on a fowl and some millet: these together form the *ilibalaga*. In the morning she goes off without washing—'with the filth of intercourse on her'—to her parents' house, taking the fowl and millet with her. The fowl is killed on a path and cooked with *ikipiki* medicine and, if the bride is the eldest daughter of one of the father's first two wives, her father and mother eat it together. Her mother eats alone if she is a younger daughter, or the mother is a junior wife. If the father is a chief the husband may kill a young bull and beef is sent in place of the hen.

834 After eating the *ilibalaga* her parents resume intercourse[1] which has been taboo from the time the girl first menstruated. If no hen is brought because the husband is poor, the parents still resume sexual intercourse, but the bride, when she visits her home, must not take water from her mother's pot. Someone else draws for her and she drinks it outside from a separate calabash. If she drinks [753] inside, or if her mother uses the calabash she has used, it is believed that her mother will get diarrhœa. She also avoids her father's bed and stool.

606 With the ritual of marriage must be included the negative ritual of avoidance between a woman and her husband's father and between those identified with him or her. The taboo applies from the time of betrothal or, if the girl has been betrothed as an infant, from well before she reaches puberty, and forbids father-in-law and daughter-in-law ever to look at one another or meet face to face on the pathway, or enter the same house, much less speak together. As we have seen, a similar taboo applies between the bride and her own father during her seclusion, but is relaxed when he [184] has given her a gift. Between a woman and her father-in-law, however, it is never relaxed, except among the more sophisticated
773 Christians. A myth of origin tells of a case of incest between father-
606 in-law and daughter-in-law which led to the establishment of the
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[1] Kasitile maintained that if the mother has not reached the menopause the parents do not lie together until the daughter's pregnancy is apparent. 'For the mother to conceive before the daughter is forbidden, but old women are fruits sucked dry.' Mwakionde denied any danger in mother conceiving before daughter.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

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taboo, and the practical difficulties of observing the taboo if fathers 773
and sons live in the same village is cited as a reason for the age- 811
village organization.[1]

The marriage ritual may be said to finish with the eating of the 585
ilibalaga, but avoidance of father-in-law and daughter-in-law con- 606
tinues until death and no clear line can be drawn between the marriage ritual proper and the rituals of pregnancy and birth which follow.

It is plain from the events described that the *ubunyago bwa-* 881
busungu is a marriage as well as a puberty ritual and that the hus- 585
band and his family play an essential part in it, but if a girl is not betrothed before puberty a curtailed ritual is still performed for her when she grows up. She drinks the *undumila* medicine, she washes with a brother, and her mothers put her formally into the hut of seclusion. They cook for the various feasts, and they tell her brothers to call their friends to help dance the stamping dance. The litter is cleared by her mothers in due course, and she is shaved and instructed. When she is eventually married, only the rites of slaughtering the bull of virginity, taking her to her husband, and returning with the *ilibalaga* are performed. She does not wash with him ritually.

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

The avowed purpose of the *ubusungu* ritual is to protect the 782
physical and mental health of the girl and to ensure her fertility. 755
'If the ritual is not performed the girl will fall ill, go mad, or not 881
bear children.' Numerous informants were agreed on this point. Angombwike expanded it, saying: 'It is said that if they do not perform the ritual of *ubusungu* the bride will go mad. When she is sick of the madness they perform the ritual. If the doctor says: "Those below are angry," then the father of the girl takes water and prays in the banana grove saying: "My father and my grandfather, let the child recover from her sickness." Sometimes the doctor says: "The so-and-so's (naming a village) have cursed her"; then the father seeks a bull and they eat it. It is the curse which comes from the mouths of people when many whisper saying: "Why have they not performed the ritual? Why have they not performed it?" It comes from their evil breath.' Neglect of the puberty ritual is therefore thought both to anger the shades and to shock the neighbours, who expect to feast on this occasion.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 82–6.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

133 101 and warlike tribe, the latter until recently their oppressed subjects and slaves.

173 The earliest traditions go back to a time when the Konde dwelt in Malongo, in the area now known as [173] Mahenge. There their god Ngeketo, roused to wrath by three attempts to destroy him, abandoned them, and is now the God of the white men. Whether on this account, or for some other reason, a great migration brought them to the country north of the Songwe River, where they settled down, no doubt conquering older inhabitants. At some unknown time, but before the Angoni reached so far north in their great march from Zululand, the Sango, neighbours of the Konde northwards, were driven out of their homes by intertribal warfare. They broke down over the intervening mountains, and overcame the unwarlike Konde, among whom they settled down as chiefs, retaining until now the tradition of their Sango ancestry. Whether at the same or another time, the Kinga, probably for the same reason—pressure from behind—swarmed down the steep mountain passes, and established themselves in the Nserya region.

One of the leading Kinga chiefs was Mwangonde, who, under the name of Chungu, occupied land at Kabari, near the Mwakeleli Mission Station. His son, Kyabara Chungu, setting out with an armed force in search of more fertile garden land, met with varying fortunes, until he was finally obliged to cross the Songwe into what later became Nyasaland. In this region Chungu seems to have made easy con-

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

776 men admit that their fathers ever acknowledged more than one God. And yet, as I have already indicated, the name *Kyala* is by no means restricted to the Supreme Being; and there are legends of human gods which go far back into the past. The Henga, a neighbouring tribe, freely acknowledge the worship, in the past, of a number of minor deities, and belief in them is common among the Bantu peoples generally. This is, perhaps, the point at which the confusion in the Konde mind reveals itself most decidedly, for it is the border line between the spirits of great chiefs still active in the underworld, minor deities, and the Supreme Being Himself.

773 In the land of Marongo, from which the Konde originally came, so say the fathers (who in the same breath will deny the existence of more than one God), there were three gods, *Lyambilo*, *Mbasi*, and *Ngeketo*. Of *Lyambilo* all that need be said is that he is still the god of the Kinga. *Ngeketo* was the youngest of the three, and one day he went with his boy friends to herd the cattle on the plain. While they were there *Ngeketo* took maize and planted it, and lo! it grew, and the same day they ate it roasted in the fire. When the elders of the people and the other two gods heard of it, they were jealous and slew *Ngeketo*. He lay dead for three days, and on the third day he arose, but was killed again in exceeding great anger. Again he arose, and was seen by some, but disappeared, and it was said that he went to the coast, where he became the God of the white man. The older men say that this story has not been modified by Christian influence

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

and it may be so, but there is a variant, which is free 773
from suspicion, in which the God came back to life in the form of a serpent, was cut to pieces by his fellow-gods and the elders, who, when he again came back, served him as before, upon which he went to the white man, who to this day prays to him. At Karonga the old people used to say, " We have smitten the Son of God in the neck," but I have not been able to trace the origin or connection of the saying, except that it is not Christian, and may be connected with traditions of *Ngeketo*.

The story of *Mbasi* is very different. He is the 776
evil one, to whom deceit and wickedness are a pleasure. 792
Europeans are still living who have seen the great stores of ivory and cloth which were offered to him by terror-inspired people, and laid up in a cave at Matema on the lake shore. The cave has now been robbed of its contents, as *Mbasi* himself has been of whatever of dread his name inspired in the past. It is not very long ago that the last prophet of *Mbasi* died. He lived near Masoko, and within living memory he climbed a small eminence there, and proclaimed that *Mbasi* demanded cattle to be sent to him without delay, the prophet himself being the guardian appointed by the God. And the cattle were sent in goodly numbers!

Long ago, says a legend, when *Mbasi* walked 773
the earth, he had men who were always with him. 776
Mwasomola went with him to his friend Mwakanyamata. *Mbasi* told them many things, of witchcraft, of hunger, of diseases that were to come, of the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

773 776 approach of the Angoni warriors, and where to flee for safety when they arrived. He asked for *bhang* and a pipe, and these were laid on the ground, and soon smoke was seen issuing from the earth. For *Mbasi* was not seen ; they only heard his voice. Then he became communicative. " The Angoni are coming now," he told them, " go at once to Masoko with your wives and children and cattle." The unfortunate Mwakanyamata did as he was advised, only to be robbed of all his cattle by another friend of *Mbasi*, to whom the deceitful God sent word to have no mercy on the cattle of a fool like Mwakanyamata, who believed what he was told! And to this day Mwakanyamata is laughed at as the man who allowed himself to be deceived by the wiles of *Mbasi*.

According to another version, *Mbasi* was a rival claimant to Divine honours with *Ndorombwike* Himself. Originally he was a serpent, killed in the dim past by the chief Mwakibinga. *Mbasi* returned to earth as a spirit, seeking to persuade men to worship him, offering them wealth in cattle if they agreed. But men refused, " for the dead do not return." One chief, Mwatonoka, accepted the false God, but was defeated in battle by Mwakarobo, a final proof that *Mbasi* was a deceiver.

776 782 Stories of *Mbasi* and his activities are numerous. He used to do some of his own work ; that is to say, instead of sending one of his prophets to demand what he wanted, he shouted from the great *ilisyeto* (grave of a chief ; place of prayer) at Lubaga in Nserya, and made his own demands. Milk, beer,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

way is to give the lash to the duffers; and they claim that theirs is the more effective method of bringing all up to a high standard. But thrash the ninny to-day, and he is off to the Administrative Officer to lodge his complaint, which the latter must inquire into. And hence much deterioration.

But these are not the facts of which they wish a permanent record to be made. There are other things; things which the pagan native profoundly believes, and which Christians also believe and take pride in, though they think that the missionary will object to their holding what he probably calls silly ideas. These stories include most of the typical tales of olden times: the hero-warrior, the defier of tyrants, the mighty medicine man, the great prophet, the man who has obtained lordship over Nature in some form, and the man who controls the spirits. All these, and many more, are included among the Konde tales, and I do not place them among folk tales, for the people regard them quite differently. A folk tale is to-day, whatever it may have been in the past, either a mere diversion to pass away an idle moment, or a moral for children, or a warning for adolescents. The tales which I am thinking of are, in the native mind, records of facts, facts which they believe to be no longer achievable, but indubitably fact in the past; and no study of the native mind can be complete which does not take this into account.

I. The hero-warrior. Chungu, in his early wanderings in search of a home, came near the hil Mphande, the seat of the Simbove rulers of that day.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Like the English King Alfred, he determined to be his own intelligence department, and, scouting around for the best point of attack, he came upon a woman working alone in the fields, gathering *makuka*, heaps of grass to be burned before the hoeing.

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"Who," he asked the woman, "are the dwellers on that hill?"

"Are you a stranger here," she replied, "that you do not know that that is the hill of the Simbove?"

"I am going there now," said Chungu; "if they pursue me I will come to you, and you shall hide me in the grass heap. If they ask for me you shall say that you know nothing, and if they put you to the poison test, you will be acquitted."

Setting out again, Chungu crept up the stronghold of which he was soon to be master; but he was observed, and presently came rushing back to claim the woman's help. Scarce was the grass well over him ere his enemies broke in with threatening spears, demanding the immediate surrender of the spy. The woman boldly kept her secret, and the poison test having acquitted her, the Simbove set fire to the grass heap by which they were standing, and in which Chungu lay concealed, and went on in their pursuit. How Chungu escaped from the fire must be left to conjecture, but one remembers that he was "the man who speaks with God."

He now brought up a herd of elephants, which when the Simbove saw, they crowded out with spears to the kill; and the invading chief drove the elephants far off, so that all the men of warrior age were drawn away

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

173
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from the defence. Next he brought up a flock of guinea-fowl, and all the old and the feeble, and the women and children, went out after them, only to be drawn away as the men were. Chungu now gave the signal to his warriors, who rushed upon the place, seized it without opposition, and beat the great drum to apprise the whole land that a new lord ruled at Mphande.

II. The defier of tyrants. Long ago there was a chief called Mwambagi. When he killed an ox, he called up all his people, bidding them cut up the animal, and cook the feast in great pots. But when all was ready, he ordered them off to their homes, and sat down to devour the food with his favourites, while the hungry people, with the savour of the well-cooked feast in their nostrils, went sadly to their homes. Next day the tyrant went round among his people.

"I hope you enjoyed the feast yesterday," he leered.

"O yes, sir," they answered, "it was very good indeed."

But there was one man, Kasanda by name, who refused to be humbugged any longer; and when one day, after the people had suffered this grievous disappointment, the chief came round to receive their hungry and disgusted plaudits, the trouble began.

"Did you enjoy the feast yesterday," demanded the chief.

"What feast?" boldly asked Kasanda. "When did you give us a feast?"

"I feasted you yesterday," said the angry tyrant.

"You may have feasted others," was the reply, "but I came back hungry."

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

The enraged bully ordered his men to arrest and bind the rebel, and throw him over a precipice called "Ikisyo." But as he was falling over, Kasanda found that the ropes that bound him untied of their own accord; and as he rolled downwards, the precipice became a gently sloping descent, over which he fell without harm. The chief was amazed.

"How has he escaped?" he anxiously asked his attendants. But they merely shrugged their shoulders.

"Call to him," said the chief, "and tell him that I have erred."

So Kasanda, unharmed by his adventure, walked up the sloping ascent, which had been a precipice, and which became a precipice again as soon as he reached the top, where the chief and his attendants awaited him. To settle the quarrel, the chief gave his daughter to Kasanda, along with four cows, and no more demanded praise for good deeds not done. "And all the people praised Kasanda, saying, 'Thank you.' Such was the cruelty of Mwambagi, and such the courage of Kasanda."

III. The people take a pride in the great doctors of the past; for it is the doctors, and not the prophets, who are the miracle workers. The Hebrew prophets sometimes appeared to control Nature, but in all cases it was the act of God, who intervened at the prayer of the prophet. In the Konde stories the doctor does not pray for Divine intervention, nor are his acts regarded as anything but the expression of his own powers.

There were two great doctors, Kasekenye and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

173
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Gwasa, of equal skill, and deadly rivals in their art. One day at a beer feast, a dispute arose, in the presence of the two, as to which of them was the greater, and a challenge was issued. Gwasa made medicine, and called upon the people to observe the result. Presently the sun began to sink towards the earth, and the people cried out in terror; but at a sign from Gwasa it retreated again, and resumed its accustomed place in the heavens. It was now Kasekenye's turn. Plucking a shrub from the ground, he revealed to the astonished gaze of the people a beautiful village of the underworld, men going about, or lying in the sun, cattle feeding in the meadows, trees and rivers, hills and valleys, just as the fathers had told them of the life of the underworld. He replaced the shrub, and the vision vanished. And no man could tell which of these two wonders was the greater, that of Gwasa, or that of Kasekenye.

But trouble came upon the community. The cattle became thin, sorcerers abounded, and evil fell upon all the people; and the chief called upon the two doctors for help. Each sprinkled the ground with his chosen medicine; but Kasekenye, hoping to steal a march upon his rival, sprinkled another medicine by night. But he was punished. His body broke out into sores, and he was fain to call in his rival to cure him, and the superiority of Gwasa was acknowledged. But one minor chief was not satisfied. He called upon Gwasa to come and cure him of a pretended illness. The angry doctor, immediately perceiving the trap, threw his medicine bag against the wall of his patient's

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

house, where it stuck, and he stalked wrathfully off. 173
The gift of an ox calmed his wounded spirit, and he 773
removed the medicine bag from the wall. "Then did all men know that Gwasa was a great doctor."

IV. Occasionally others besides doctors controlled aspects of Nature. Ntindi was a great prophet, without whose advice his chief would do nothing. If he told the chief to pray, the people were called, and the sacrifices offered. If he foretold smallpox, nothing could avert it, except prayer and repentance. When he foretold war, the people got ready for fight or flight as he advised. He was unlike all other men. Biting ants left him alone; bees never stung him; snakes cleared from his path. Every one admired him. From birth to death his hair was never cut, and no word of his ever fell to the ground. To this day the people protect their houses from biting ants by sprinkling earth from his grave all around, and no ant will pass that sacred barrier, for Ntindi is their lord.

Such stories are very numerous. How did they 000
arise? It may be a vain inquiry; but at any rate they are more than mere words; they witness to something lying deep in the native mind. Were the people, or some of them, convinced that life is bigger potentially than it is in actual fact? and did they invent these stories to satisfy a craving for redemption from the commonplace? Or did they believe that there is power available for certain persons, which is denied to common men? Perhaps uncommon incidents did occur, which were worked up into their present form by unconscious literary genius. It may

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

law to all his classificatory brothers. The normal routine of life is 606
constantly interrupted by women's avoidance of these men, they crouch and hide and make wide detours to avoid them, a man comes into a room and a woman runs out hastily, a father cannot enter his son's house while his son's wives are cooking there, ceremonies are duplicated to avoid bringing them in contact. Few people seem to realize the meaning of 606
this taboo, but occasionally a man is found who tells a story which makes 773
its function abundantly clear. It is said that an old chief, long ago before the taboo was instituted, fell in love with his son's wife and took her, and such was the horror of everyone at what he had done that this taboo was instituted. This story expresses the necessity, in a society where the old men are accustomed to take the young women as wives, of guarding in some way against the possibility of a father desiring his own son's wife for himself; more particularly perhaps because the cows for her marriage have come from him.

This taboo, separating father and daughter-in-law is one of the 606
reasons for the age-village system which we must next discuss. For in 621
Nyakyusa society father and son live in different villages.

Age-Villages

The most characteristic relationships of the Nyakyusa people are 621
those which centre in the age-village. Villages and age-groups are 561
common enough in other societies, and are familiar to all of us, but it is rare to find them combined; it is very uncommon to find, as we do among the Nyakyusa, that local groups of contemporaries live together for most or all of their lives.

Age-villages are formed by groups of men, all roughly of the same age, their wives and young children. Women belong to the villages of their husbands, young children to those of their fathers. The number of households in an age-village varies, but thirty is probably a fair average. Girls, as we have seen, live at home until they marry, which they normally do soon after pubery, and then each goes to the house and joins the village of her husband. But boys, who marry later in life, leave home at about the age of ten or eleven and set up villages of their own.

(a) *Herd-Boys*

Between the ages of about six and eleven the boys sleep at their 857
fathers' houses and herd their fathers' cattle. This is a full-time if not a very arduous occupation; the cattle are driven out about an hour after sunrise and return to be milked about 1 p.m.; after an hour they are again driven out and do not come back until nearly sunset. The cattle of eight

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER II

THE MYTHOLOGICAL CHARTER

7

In Nyakyusa mythology the heroes were creators of crops and animals and were driven out from BuKinga by a jealous father (or elder brother) who sought to kill them; but he found, when they had gone, that they had taken the fertility of the country with them, so he sent offerings after them, and still such offerings are brought to their graves in sacrifice. One of the heroes, Kyala (2), created crops alone, and of him it is said that each time his father or elder brother tried to kill him he rose again; another, Lwembe or Mbasi (3 or 15?), created both crops and animals, brought cattle, fire, and iron to the Nyakyusa valley, and left many descendants who spread over the valley as chiefs, ruling a people who had not known chiefs.

The names and events mentioned vary somewhat from one area to another; in some versions there were three brothers, though the eldest, Nkekete (1), being buried in Kisi country, does not concern the Nyakyusa; in another version the brothers had a sister who was the mother of Kyungu (16), the hero of Ngonde; but the general pattern of heroic ancestors who were creators and discoverers, and who brought to the old inhabitants of the valley such good gifts as crops and stock, fire and iron, and the institution of chieftainship, remains the same. They all had miraculous power and are vaguely connected with volcanic disturbance, such as continued in the area until recent times (*vide infra*, p. 16).

Here is an account by Kikungubeja, one of the priests of BuKinga, whence the heroes came:

Nkekete (1) and Kyala (2) were brothers, Mwemusi [the first Kinga chief] killed them. Mwemusi's men tried first to kill them by cutting their throats, then by throwing them into a little lake, then by heating a great stone and throwing it on top of them. Each time Nkekete and his younger brother Kyala rose again. Then they left the country, the two of them, and the earth rumbled as they walked. Nkekete (1) went to Mbela to build; Kyala (2), the younger, to PaliKyala. Then the men of Mwemusi followed Nkekete with a cow to entreat him because he had taken all the food with him. Mwemusi was angry with him and his younger brother Kyala, because they made food and they were

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

went from Mwemusi's country down the path by Mwakalukwa's to Mwakaleli. He lived a year at Lumbila and found it too cold, and thence he went to Masoko, and thence to Lubaga. All men feared him and his animals. 599

In another version Lwembe's survival is linked with the possession of *ifingila*, the medicine on which still, today, the authority of chiefs is thought largely to depend. [773] [173]

Nkekete had much food and Mwemusi killed him because he had no *ifingila*. He killed him and he rose again. 'Why don't you die?' Mwemusi asked. Nkekete replied: 'I don't know, I have nothing, I am quite alone, I have no *ifingila*.' Mwemusi killed him again and he rose, many times. Then at last Nkekete said, 'I am tired.' And he showed Mwemusi and his men a razor (*ulwembe*) and said 'Kill me by cutting my throat with this', and they did and he stayed dead.

Mwemusi feared to kill Lwembe because he was very 'heavy'. He had *ifingila*, and when they tried to kill him they found his house full of animals, lions and others. . . . Once he turned himself into a stone when they tried to capture him. So Mwemusi told him to go far off, and he went with his two wives and two men, Kissoule and Kimonile. He went off riding on a lion like a donkey, with a lion behind his wives, and men were astonished when they saw him.

It is perhaps significant that Lwembe who survived is 'The Razor', by which Nkekete was killed, and the python from which *ifingila* medicine is made must be killed with razors and in no other way (*vide infra*, p. 60). [789] [825] [278]

It is Lwembe's capacity to make things live and grow which is always emphasized: [773]

Lwembe and another were given millet in their hands; Lwembe's sprouted, but not that of his fellow. He was told, 'You plant here and the other there.' The next day Lwembe's had sprouted, but not that of the other. He and his friend went to a hill in dry weather and wanted water. He just struck the earth and water came out. . . . He created leopards and kept them, and he moulded cattle of clay, he moulded them and they became cows, and his friends did the same and they remained clay.

When the heroes were driven out there was a fearful famine in BuKinga, for they had taken the fertility of the country with them, which is why, the priests say, sacrifices to them were begun by the Kinga. The priests of Lubaga were explicit on the point: [773] [173]

Mbasi (Lwembe 15?) came from BuKinga, he took the road to

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

539 Mwakaleli and came here and died. The Kinga went to BuSangu to buy food, for there was great hunger after Mbasi and Kyala were driven out, and wandering home they came here and met Mbasi. He said, 'Go home, there will be plenty of food, but I want my things.' He had left them at his father's place when he fled with his sister Kyungu. He asked for his leopard and otterskins, his drums, his bows for shooting birds,[1] his harp, mats, a stool, bamboo beer, and twenty hoes. . . . Then the Kinga went back and found their country full of food; and they brought all his things to Mbasi and even things like salt that he had not asked for. . . . This is how the ritual began. . . . Mbasi ruled because he had helped them in their hunger.

173 773 Kasitile (86), the rain-maker, speaking of the same incident, stressed only the hoes. Lwembe 'came to Lubaga and found a good place to settle, then he sent out messengers to Mwemusi (the Kinga chief) and said: "I want my hoes, especially my great, eyed hoe" (*ilikumbulu ilya maso*).' (The old ritual hoes had per-
[778] forations—'eyes'—on the blades comparable to the perforations
[782] on other rain-making instruments.) Still today Kinga priests come to Lubaga to sacrifice to Lwembe (3), and they bring with them hoes.[2]

The hero of Ngonde, the Kyungu (16), was also associated with
[643] iron implements which he had brought with him—a spear, staff, stool, and a sieve used for making rain, which were royal insignia, and razors, spears, and knives of an unusual pattern, which long remained in the groves of the hero and his successors.

In the commonly-told Nyakyusa myth it was Lwembe who
[372] introduced fire to BuNyakyusa—'he found the original occupants eating their food raw'—and the fact that he conferred so great a benefit is the charter for the position of the chiefs, celebrated at every 'coming out'. The Kinga priests push the spread of fire back a little further.

539 Of old in this country [BuKinga] there was no fire, men ate food un-
372 cooked; there were very few men in the country, most of it was forest. This was after Mwemusi came to Kinga country. Then one man, a hunter, went into the forest to hunt buck and otter, and he had dogs. And in the forest he made fire with a drill and cooked his food; and gave his friends cooked food to eat, and they were astonished.

[1] The bow and arrow are not now used among the Nyakyusa, but men in their thirties had used them when boys, for shooting birds.

[2] cf. Ludwig Weichert, *Mpilopo i Afrika/ Kaiser minder Afrika* (Berlin, 1907), p. 109, for a photograph of one.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Then the chiefs took it from him and spread it through the Kinga country . . . and to the Mahasi, the Ndali, the Nyakyusa. . . . It was taken to BuNyakyusa before Lwembe went, when he was a child, before the killing of Nkekete and Kyala. 539 372

In the version told by Mwandisi (107), the old blind chief of MuNgonde, the various events of the cycle are rather differently combined; there were three brothers in BuKinga, Lyambilo (12) or Ngutike, Kyala, and Mbasi, and a sister, Kyumba. Lyambilo discovered how to make fire with a fire drill. Kyala was clever at making food—maize and millet—and Mbasi was clever at making animals—cattle, lions, elephants. 173 773

Then Lyambilo, the eldest, was angry that his younger brothers should be so clever; he was jealous. First he made war on Kyala, he wounded him once, but he did not die; then he wounded him again, but still he didn't die; then the third time Lyambilo put a stone in the fire and made it hot and threw it at Kyala, and he died, and was thrown into the Lake. But as soon as he died there was a great famine, no rain fell and no food grew. So they had to pray to Kyala to give them rain, and they killed a cow to sacrifice to Kyala. And as soon as they had done this much food grew. 539

Still Lyambilo was jealous of Mbasi because he could make animals. But when he went to kill him he found so many animals with him, roaring lions, and elephants, that he was afraid and he ran away. And he brought some hoes to Mbasi to say he was sorry for having tried to kill him. Then Mbasi moved from BuKinga to the Nyakyusa hills (Mwamba). . . . Lyambilo stayed in BuKinga. . . . Mbasi came down to the plain on a visit and went back to the hills, but his sister Kyumba stayed down here and married a man and bore a son. Before she came there was no fire here, she brought fire, and so they called her son Kyungu in honour of his mother because she brought fire.

When Mbasi was at Masukulu (in the hills) he made one cow, but it soon died; then he moved to Mbambo and made another cow and this soon died; then he went to Lubaga (which is still called Mbasi) and there he made one cow again which bore many many calves, and he divided his cattle among his sons. . . . Mbasi was Lwembe.

In Ngonde tradition the first Kyungu (16) was a man, descendant of Ngulube the Kinga chief, and he travelled with three brothers and a sister westwards, passing south of Rungwe volcano, where he and his immediate successor were buried, one of them on Kieyo mountain. Their descendants went on to the 'country of the Bisa', then returned eastward to Mbande, the sacred hill which the Kyungu took from a Fipa hunter, Simbobwe. Like Lwembe, 173 773

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the Kyungu had a miraculous power of creating animals and it was by making elephants, buffaloes, and guinea-fowl for Simbobwe and his men to hunt, and climbing Mbande when it was deserted, that he captured it. Directly he reached the top he struck his drum and 'when Simbobwe heard the drums beaten on the hill he fled to his own country'. This Kyungu's successors on Mbande became 'divine kings' with miraculous power much like that of the Lwembe at Lubaga. One of his brothers became chief of the Namwanga; another of the Iwa; and a third became the rival of his sister's son for the chieftainship of the Lambya. Such is the Ngonde account. The Kukwe say that the Kyungus of Ngonde come from the same line as the chiefs of Kabale, while the men of Lwembe insist that he was descended from a daughter of their line (*vide supra*, p. 2). What connexion existed between the lineages of Lwembe and Ngomale is uncertain, but the assumption is that they, together with the chiefs of the Pangwa and Kisi, sprang from a common stock in BuKinga.

The commonest story of origin is that all the peoples of the area, save the Sangu, emerged from a 'dark house' (*nyumba nditu*) near the present Njombe, and came to Ilongo (KwiLongo) in the forest, in what is now Bena country. Nsamba, a Nyakyusa priest of the chief's lineage, with a reputation as a historian, spoke of a 'few men' coming from 'a rocky shore to the north-west' (Lake Tanganyika?) and travelling to the east shore of Nyasa, where they increased in numbers, and then spread northwards through BuKinga; Mwenifumbo, a noble of Ngonde, spoke of Ngulube the 'pale' having come to BuKinga 'from the north'.[1] But the Kinga priests knew nothing of the 'rocky shore' or northern origin; and if we take the direction in which the corpse faces when buried (the most certain criterion of the direction of origin) then the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people came from BuKinga, some travelling to the north of Rungwe volcano and some to the south, and the Kinga themselves came from the east.

Other evidence also indicates that the chiefs came from the east or north-east rather than the north-west. The cattle they brought were the short-horned Zebu type, like those of the Masai and other peoples of central and eastern Tanganyika and Kenya. They are quite different from the long-horned cattle of the Hima

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3, p. 10 (1950). According to the Ngonde version, Ngulube was the *first* ancestor, but Nsamba began the genealogy four generations earlier (*vide* chart, facing p. 3).

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and Tutsi who established conquest states to the north-west.[1] 173

Whatever the origin and adventures of the heroes they were important in Nyakyusa and Ngonde history because their graves became centres of religious ritual which linked together groups that were otherwise largely independent. The myths about them are the charter for chieftainship. They are depicted as benefactors who brought to uncivilized men not only the institution of chieftainship itself, but fire, cattle, iron, seed, and a creative power resident in their own bodies and those of their anointed heirs. But the myths also justify the power of commoners who first occupied the country and who have witchcraft in their bellies:

773 [174] [778] [754]

The commoners whom Lwembe found here were extraordinary. They were cultivators, but they had not yet got fire, they ate their food raw. It was we chiefs, it was Lwembe, who brought fire and cattle—he came and found the original occupants without cattle; hence the commoners say, 'We are the earth'. Commoners are different from us physically, they are black; they are awe-inspiring, they are witches. Before you Europeans came the chiefs like Mwaipopo (116) were not awe-inspiring, they feared the commoners very much; the commoners hammered the chief with their fists—yes, by daylight. And if the chief cut a man's bananas that man took the chief's. If the commoners were angry with Mwaipopo they fetched Mwangomo (124 whose chiefdom adjoins Mwaipopo's) at night by their witchcraft; he came in the night with his people and seized the cattle, both those of the chief, Mwaipopo, and those of the commoners. The next day the commoners said: 'It is we, we are angry. Why do you not look after us? Why do you not kill cattle for us?' Then Mwaipopo would kill two head of cattle and all the men in the country ate. . . . Mwaipopo and his equals were not awe-inspiring long ago, it is you Europeans who have created chieftainship and awe.

539 [177] [754] [643]

[1] cf. H. H. Curson and R. W. Thornton, 'A Contribution to the Study of African Native Cattle', *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Science and Animal Industry*, vii, 2 October 1936 (Government Printer, Pretoria). An analysis of the distribution and migration of breeds in Africa. [113]

H. B. Thompson and R. Scott, *Uganda* (1935), pp. 195 ff.

Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 68: 69.

M. Merker, *Die Masai*, pp. 157 ff., 1904, Berlin.

H. H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, 1904, pp. 86, 105 (early photographs of Nyoro cattle).

The short-horn type predominates among the Nyakyusa, but some animals suggest an intermixture with Sanga cattle. The hump is regarded as a great delicacy and is exaggerated in the clay cattle which boys model. Cf. Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 72. The similarity between the ritual and symbolism of the Nyakyusa and those of the Ganda as described by Roscoe is marked. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, 1911. [231] [825] [532]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173 The balance between chiefs and commoners is explicit. So
● 773 also is their dependence on *both* cultivation and herding, and it
[643] should be noted that, though the Nyakyusa speak of themselves
[233] as stock men, they are not pastoralists to the same extent as the Masai or the Nuer. The number of cattle in Rungwe District today is less than half the human population, and men traditionally have done the heaviest share of cultivation.

773 In every version of the myth the tension between father and
593 son, or older and younger brother, is stressed. In Nyakyusa
561 society the father (or his eldest son who replaces him) controls
173 the family property and exacts obedience from his juniors who
[769] continue to show their respect after his death by sacrifices. The tale of Kyala and Lwembe celebrates the triumph of the junior. Thus, at the heart of the very ritual which sanctifies seniority there is the assertion of the victory of the son and younger brother. The myth expresses the aspirations of subordinates—of commoners and junior kinsmen—as well as the power of chiefs and seniors.

173 As we have already noted, the heroic cycle makes no reference
773 to the peculiar Nyakyusa institution of age-villages. Their charter
561 is a quite separate myth[1] which tells of a chief who looked on his
621 daughter-in-law and loved her and took her, and this so shocked
606 men that in future fathers and sons built separately, so that a father-in-law should never see his daughter-in-law.

There are other hints of the eternal theme. Besides the saga of
173 Lwembe there is another quite different tale of the origin of fire,
773 which is less often related. In it a girl who had angered her father
372 by breaking his drinking calabash fled from BuKinga to the Nyakyusa valley, where she found people who ate their food raw. She made fire and cooked for them and 'all women came to her to learn to cook'. The long-necked calabash, used as a drinking
[415] vessel and in prayer to the shades, is a man's most personal
[768] possession destroyed at his death, and it stands for a husband, while cooking is a symbol of the sexual activity of women, so the myth is perhaps a drama of incest, but we have no direct evidence of this.

173 This last is the only tale in which a woman appears as a
773 benefactor. In general, the mythology is that of a strongly
562 patrilineal society in which men are dominant. The wives of Lwembe who walked behind their lord, shepherded by a lion,

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 85.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

are remembered, and the names of the two senior wives of a chief are often recited in genealogies because the heirs take their names from their mothers, but she-who-taught-cooking is the only heroine in her own right.

It is worth noting also that the rituals of kinship are linked neither with the heroic tradition nor with primeval incest. We could trace no myths regarding their beginning, save that concerning the origin of avoidance between father and daughter-in-law. The myth of the origin of death is a variation on the theme, so familiar in Bantu-speaking Africa, of the two messengers (a sheep and a dog in this version) sent to men by 'Kyala', one promising life, the other death. It provides no charter for the ritual.

And what of the relation between myth and history? The conquest of cultivators by cattle-keepers is the common theme of traditions in the lacustrine area, and it is quite possible that small groups of invaders, who brought with them iron tools and weapons and cattle, established themselves as chiefs over small unorganized groups of hunters and cultivators in an isolated valley three or four centuries ago.[1] The Nyakyusa valley and the plain of Ngonde have no iron ore, and the inhabitants were dependent, until the coming of the Europeans, on iron (*ikyela*) smelted in the hills to the east for weapons and tools.[2] The original inhabitants are said to have used wooden hoes exclusively—such hoes were still in common use in 1938[3]—so the myth of a Lwembe sending to BuKinga for iron hoes has a firm foundation in historical fact. But that the original inhabitants of the valley did not know the use of fire 300 or 400 years ago (when Lwembe arrived) is incredible. Here the record of one of the greatest events in history is fitted into the shallow time-scale of an isolated people. To them it is not *when* fire arrived that is really important, but *who* brought it; chiefs are chiefs to the Nyakyusa (as to other peoples in Africa) by virtue of this great benefit they brought to men.

[1] Namwanga tradition (recorded in the Mbeya District Book) tells of the introduction of iron fifteen generations ago. The Sangu tradition says that a tall, pale man from 'Somaliland' first brought iron spear-heads to BuSangu and his son established a hegemony by virtue of his superior weapons.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 7. The iron deposits on the Livingstone mountains have recently been investigated by the Colonial Development Corporation. A 'titaniferous iron mountain' in the south of Njombe District was found to be 'smeltable'. *Tanganyika: Annual Reports of the Provincial Commissioners*, 1951, p. 51.

[3] Wilson, *op. cit.*, plate VII.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173 It is surprising to westerners, whose whole framework of
773 reference is shaped by the conception of historical time, that the heroic myth is not more explicitly dated by the volcanic eruptions known to have taken place near Lubaga,[1] but to the Nyakyusa the sequence of events does not appear important except in so far as it determines seniority.

Nowadays, with the changing form of the society, there
[177] develops a new mythology. Kyala is described by younger men as a creator, apart and distinct from any hero or ancestor, and they reject any suggestion that he was once on a footing with Lwembe and Kyungu. The more conservative fit Christian names into the heroic myth. One version goes as follows:

> Kyala had two sons, Kyala the elder who was Mbasi or Satano, and Kyala the younger who was Jesus. Kyala the younger made corn, and cattle, and fire, and cooked meat, and men ate; then Mbasi or Satano was furious because his younger brother was outdoing him, and killed him, and became the only one.

Here the traditional theme of the jealousy of the senior is dominant, but generally it is the power of the heroes over fertility, under the old dispensation, that is stressed.

[787] Many people tell today of old prophecies concerning the
[177] coming of Europeans and of the triumph of a new religion. To the Christians these provide some bridge between the past and the present, for they interpret the words of pagan prophets as evidence of their foreknowledge of a truth they had not yet been taught.

[133] [1] D. A. Harkin, 'The Sarabwe Lava Flow, Kiejo, Rungwe District', *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, September 1955, suggests that the most recent eruption in the district, that of Kiejo, took place about 1800, but this conclusion is based on the description of the eruption by *one* man, and the statement that his great grandfather witnessed it. That *some* ancestor of Andulile Kajigiri witnessed the eruption is likely, but had it taken place only three generations ago it might be expected that other families also would have had a tradition of the event. Kiejo is clearly visible from Mwaipopo's country and had the eruption taken place early in the nineteenth century either the chief Mwakagile (59) or his father Mwamukinga (43) must have observed it. Their descendants are emphatic that there is no tradition of their having done so, though it is commonly known that an eruption of Kiejo occurred in the distant past.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER III

THE 'DIVINE KINGS'

17

(a) CHARACTERISTICS OF 'DIVINE KINGS'

THE heroic myths and genealogies proclaim the origin of chieftainship, and point to a distinction between ordinary chiefs and those we call 'divine kings'. Two remote ancestors who were pre-eminent are worshipped as heroes and creators, their graves are centres at which a large number of chiefdoms join in celebration, and living representatives are selected in every generation bearing their names. These are the 'divine kings', the Lwembe of Lubaga (in the centre of Nyakyusa country) and the Kyungu of Mbande near Karonga in Nyasaland. A third hero, Kyala, is associated with the cave, PaliKyala, near Ikombe at the north-east corner of the Lake, and he is worshipped in the same way as the other two, except that the priest of the cave is not his descendant and does not embody him. According to the myth, Kyala was the brother of Lwembe, but died without issue. However, the word for chiefs—*aba-nya-fyale*—is popularly believed to mean 'the sons of Kyala'.[1] 773 769 643

Kyala is one hero among others, but his name is *also* used in the sense of 'the lord': a chief is *kyala gwake* (his lord) to a commoner, a father is *kyala gwake* to his son or daughter 'because he created him' and a shade is *kyala* to his living kinsman (*unsyuka jo kyala*). Of one who performs a feat—something difficult—it is said 'he is Kyala'.[2] This usage is said to be very old, but there is yet another meaning of the word which is new. *Kyala* was used by the European missionaries (who first established themselves near PaliKyala) as their translation of 'God'. Today these three conceptions are inextricably mixed: Kyala the hero, Kyala 'the 769 643 [775] [177] [797]

[1] I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Fueter for drawing my attention to this point. It is doubtful whether *Kyala* and *fyale* in fact come from the same root. *Fyale* in Hehe means the daughter of a chief (A. G. O. Hodgson, 'Some Notes on the Wahehe of Mahenge District, *J.R.A.I.*, lvi (1926), p. 40). In Bena *nyakiyara* means 'my husband's father or mother' (A. T. and G. M. Culwick, *Ubena of the Rivers*, p. 196). In Ganda *mukyala* means 'lady', mistress of a household and garden (J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, p. 44). cf. Nyika, *fiala* 'to beget, to bear' (J. L. Krapf and J. Rebmann, *A Nyika-English Dictionary*, edited by T. H. Sparshott, 1887). [192]

[2] cf. F. R. Lehmann, 'Some field notes on the Nyakyusa', *Sociologus*, New Series, 1951, vol. 5, p. 66. [113]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

area, the Penja, have a grove, Lukata, where they worship their 769
founding ancestor, and the Nyika living on the west bank of the 782
Kiwira river have their grove, Lubaga, twenty miles or more from the Lubaga in Selya and unconnected with it. A third distinct group, the Saku, who were the first inhabitants of the south-eastern part of Rungwe District, have their own grove, Nkeso, where their progenitors Mwamakula and Mwalukinge were buried. None of these has anything like the prestige and sanctity of the Lwembe or the Kyungu, but they are probably the prototype from which the 'divine kings' developed.

What circumstances produced a 'divine king' at Lubaga and 769
not (so far as our limited knowledge goes) at Kabale we do not 643
know, but we can show how the 'divine kingship' at Mbande, [773]
near the Lake shore, developed rather differently from the originally similar institution at Lubaga which is forty miles from the Lake. The Kyungu gradually acquired political power in a way in which the Lwembe did not. Among the Nyakyusa the [173]
'sons of Lwembe' spread through the country establishing themselves as independent chiefs. They acknowledged the mystical supremacy of the Lwembe, and sent cattle to him to sacrifice, but they were sovereigns in their own territories. Just what this mystical supremacy of Lwembe implied was and still is often a matter of dispute, as we shall see. On the death of a chief his country was normally divided into two independent sections, each ruled by one of his sons. One heir sometimes fought the other and reduced him to a subordinate position, but the number of independent chiefdoms appears to have increased fairly steadily, and their size did not diminish in proportion, for the Nyakyusa chiefs have been expanding their area of occupation over a long period, [636] [173]
establishing themselves as rulers over scattered and unorganized peoples with less developed techniques than their own, or colonizing unoccupied forest country. Expansion into uncultivated forest is still going on (1955), and were it not for the vigilance of the British Administration it is almost certain that the Safwa people would have been conquered and absorbed like the Penja, Lugulu, and others before them.[1] In 1936 over 100 independent [634]
chiefdoms were recognized by the people themselves, and they varied in size from 100 to 3,000 adult men.

In Ngonde the development was different. In the early period 173
all the sons of the Kyungu, save two, were killed, and the territorial 643

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 4.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

looking for me", and so if there was much heat he would send rain.' But this no longer happens. 177 788

At the same time both pagans and Christians tell a myth of how a European missionary, Rev. — Jauer (Mwaisumo), who visited the grove of Lubaga intending to remove the hoes in the grove to demonstrate the falsehood of the ritual, was confounded by a miracle (*ifika*). [773] [789]

Once the missionary Mwaisumo wished to go and see the grove of Lubaga. He was warned that if he entered he would flee because there were many marvels there, and the rain would catch him. He said: 'Oh, I shall go, nothing will happen.' So he went and entered the grove, and he found many hoes, some standing up, some lying down, and some of them had 'eyes'. He seized one to take it away, then there was a crash of thunder, and he was afraid and fled. When he ran out of the grove the rain fell in torrents. It is said that he was so frightened he left his jacket behind. From that time people said that indeed there are miracles at Lubaga. 539

'European times' is given as the reason for sacrifices being less frequent and regular than formerly. The occasions were, and still are: any period of hunger or scarcity, such as the Kinga regularly experience during the dry season, and the Nyakyusa also complain of at that time; any irregular misfortune such as a failure of the rains, a plague of locusts or an epidemic; and any prediction of hunger or disease by a prophet (*unsololi* or *unkunguluka*). But the chiefs are said to be more reluctant to provide the cattle for sacrifice than formerly, and less quickly influenced by the actual occurrence of hunger or by prophecy that famine is imminent. Nevertheless they still 'treat the earth' (*ukutendekesya umfu*) by sending a black cow to Lubaga when hunger presses. 782 [177]

According to Kasitile (86) and Mwamakunda (his fellow priest) no ritual could be performed in the grove of the first Lwembe when he had no living representative. Formerly, the Kissoule in office and another priest penetrated alone, and there bound a live sheep and left it to bleat until a python took it. 'It is Kyala, he turns himself into a python' (*Jo kyala: ipela sota*). Here Kasitile used *kyala* in the sense of 'the lord' and he was referring to Lwembe. According to another informant, when the heir to any priesthood connected with Lubaga is installed he should sleep in the grove enclosed in a stout wicker hut, and remain there until the python of the grove comes and *licks* him. The case was cited of a priest who had lain captive for two weeks 643 793 782

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XI

NYAKYUSA COSMOLOGY

772 We can now piece together, from myth and ritual, the traditional Nyakyusa view of their universe. They have no elaborated system of ideas and the synthesis which follows is more systematic than any uneducated Nyakyusa would formulate.

The origin of men was a 'dark house', located high on the ●773 Livingstone plateau, and from here the Nyakyusa themselves, and people familiar to them, are thought to have sprung, but there is a hint of the first of the heroes having come 'from the north', and there is also the contradictory notion that the heroes were creators. 'It was Kyala who made us in the beginning with iron ore'; 'Kyala [776] is the smith who forges us'; 'Mbasi is the smith who forges us'; 'Lwembe made Mumfu out of clay to be the father of commoners'. But all are agreed that Lwembe (or Mbasi) was the ancestor of the chiefs and no clear distinction is made between creator and progenitor.

Crops and animals and fire were distributed by the heroes. Of their first creation or invention there is no tale for, though Lwembe created animals, he was already a herd-boy when he did so. Moreover, the 'owners of the soil' in the Nyakyusa valley had some crops before Lwembe came bringing them others, together with cattle and fire; but which were the indigenous crops of the valley and which the new is not discussed. If contradictions between the various myths are pointed out they are explained, like divergences in ritual, in terms of differing origin: 'It is the Lambya people to the west who say that cattle came out of an anthill, and the Nyakyusa proper who say they were brought by Lwembe', and so on. Differentiation is epitomized and accounted for by the separation of lineages.

The heroes had a creative force in their own persons, which is [778] inherited by their descendants, the divine kings, and, in a lesser degree, the chiefs; as in Egypt 'the King's potency is felt in the very body and person of each of his subjects'.[1] That potency is partly innate in the royal line, but it is nourished by the use of medicines of which the greatest are reserved to rulers. Vigour is

[1] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, p. 60.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

thought to be embedded in the visibly growing parts of the body of a chief, and the horrifying practice of plucking out the hair and nails of a dying man is an assertion of the value of vitality, energy, force of personality in a leader. 773 [778]

The separate origin of chiefs and people, and the reciprocity between them, are constantly emphasized. Among many primitive peoples a myth of common origin is the charter for unity, and foreign lineages are linked by some fiction to the dominant line; but among the Nyakyusa it is the *reciprocity* between cultivators and cattle-owners, between 'owners of the soil' who ate their food raw and immigrants who brought with them cattle and fire, which is the basis of unity. The chiefs (like the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers or the Voortrekkers) speak of themselves as having brought civilization to a savage land, but they acknowledge the contribution of the previous 'owners of the soil' in a way in which the white Americans and South Africans do not. Characteristically, the dichotomy of chiefs and commoners is couched in terms of descent, but in fact this is a fiction, for the younger sons of chiefs join the ranks of the commoners, and the mother of a chief is often of commoner origin. [182]

The complementary character of the economies of chiefs and commoners is matched, in belief, by a balance in mystical power. The divine kings have an innate creative power while the commoners have pythons in their bellies with which to destroy their enemies. It sounds like a myth of good and evil put about by the chiefs, but we never heard it expressed in that way even by Kasitile, who so feared and hated the commoner priests. The destructive power of the commoners can be used morally, to maintain the established order, as well as irresponsibly by witches. The constitution was a balance between chiefs and commoners, not a dictatorship. Chiefs maintain their position by feasting their men on beef, and this, the Nyakyusa think, prevents the witches from attacking; sated with meat their pythons 'lie quiet'. 778 565

Ultimate power is symbolized by the python, for though the chiefs—like English kings—are commonly associated with lions and leopards, the terror of the grove of Lubaga, and the source of the *ifingila* medicine upon which the potency of divine kings and chiefs depends is a python, like that which lies in the belly of a witch. The most fearful thing of the tropical forest (and the forests on the Livingstone escarpment and Rungwe mountain are but the remains of much greater ones) is a natural symbol for power. [825]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 is illustrated in the references made by priests to the python which appears in Lwembe's grove as *kyala* (*vide supra*, pp. 29, 33). This python is 'the lord', Lwembe.

[776] [177] [773] Nowadays Kyala is spoken of as a first cause—the origin of death, and of social institutions, as well as the creator of life. The current version of the myth of the origin of death begins: 'When Kyala created the country and the people at the beginning there was no death. Then he thought there should be death and life. He asked people to choose between life and death, and they cho-- life.' And when men are asked the reason for a custom or ritual they may answer 'Kyala made us so', 'Kyala made us black people like that'.

Since Kyala is nowadays regarded as the creator of the natural order he is often blamed for the intractability of things—the log that splits, the lorry that skids. Once a vendor of very small potatoes said, when the buyer complained of the size, 'Kyala gave them to us like this', only to be jeered at by the onlookers who admonished him: 'Had you cultivated better they would have been larger.'

776 775 Much of the material quoted is susceptible of the interpretation that Kyala is an overriding power to which the shades, witches, and medicines are subject. 'The medicine will be effective if Kyala wills'; 'rain will fall when the rain-maker soaks his stones if Kyala wills'; 'when the doctor treats the tails they "vomit" (froth over), then if Kyala has helped us the cattle give much milk'. Even in 1935 conservatives like Kasitile sometimes expressed such beliefs, but they did not do so consistently. Their preoccupation was with other forces and acknowledgment of Kyala seemed to be tacked on almost as an afterthought. This came out very clearly in Kasitile's session with the diviner who, fearing the presence of a European, gave 'Kyala' as the cause of Kasitile's disease, and Kasitile rejected the verdict saying: 'Kyala never stands alone.'

[177] [797] The influence of Christian teaching on pagan thought was already considerable in 1935—Kasitile added 'Jesus' and 'the Holy Spirit' to the shades invoked—and we believe the mention of Kyala in many of the pagan prayers at that date to have been due to Christian influence. The idea of a supreme power is accepted very readily *as an addition* to the belief in the shades, the witches, and medicines, though it does not easily replace them altogether. By 1955 the shift in emphasis was clear. Besides Kyala 'the lord' of a commoner or junior, and Kyala the hero who is worshipped at

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

his cave and who, though a creator, is equalled by other heroes and 776
dwells in the bowels of the earth, there was Kyala an ultimate 775
power and first cause, unique and omnipotent, who dwelt in 177
heaven 'above'. The implications of *kumwanya* (above) have 797
changed along with the implications of *Kyala*.

The new balance between the different elements in pagan thought was reflected in everyday speech. In the 1930's men spoke constantly of the shades (*abasyuka*), the witches (*abalosi*), and 'the breath of men' (*imbepo sya bandu*); Kyala did not figure much in the conversation of pagans. But in 1955, from the moment when the bus I arrived in skidded off the road and the passengers began assuring each other that *Kyala alimo* (God is present), because no one had been injured, I heard the name constantly. Such a change is hard to prove, but the impression of a marked shift in emphasis was strong.

The conception of the hero Mbasi has also radically altered. 776
During the years before 1914 a man, with two boys in attendance, 685
posed as Mbasi and went round Selya by night, growling in a gruff voice that he was Mbasi, and seizing cattle and fowls and food. He was eventually taken by night, by some Christians, and died after seven months' imprisonment in Tukuyu. Today the [797]
Christians never use 'Mbasi' for God, but sometimes identify him with 'Satan', and the pagans use 'Lwembe' rather than 'Mbasi'.

The range of relationships in space was narrow in the tradi- 782
tional Nyakyusa society, and the range of relationship in time was correspondingly so. Only a limited number of chiefdoms co-operated in sacrifice to a hero (and often they seem to have acted separately, rather than in concert), and all historical time was contained in the genealogies depicted. There was a dawn when 773 ●
men ate food raw and lived without fire, or cattle, or chiefs, but history began when the heroes descended from the mountains, ten or twelve generations ago. Time was telescoped when all the known world lay within 100 miles.

A social revolution occurred once, with the coming of the chiefs, but then time stood still, and ever since the heroic age has remained the pattern of right behaviour. Departure from the [753]
rituals laid down spells madness and death, for 'Kyala created us so'. Part of primeval reality is the conflict of generations expressed in the myth of the seduction of a young wife by her husband's father, in the rules of avoidance, and in the ritual of the 'coming out'. There is no convention of fighting on this last occasion (as

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

among some other peoples with a corresponding ritual), but the young men seize cattle belonging to the older generation, thus asserting their authority. The opposition of generations is taken for granted and given expression in constitutional form: the ritual is a celebration not of 'rebellion' but of growth. For all their reluctance to hand over power the fathers 'rejoice and are glad because their sons have grown up'. Change in the structure of society after the revolution of the heroic age, is not celebrated, and is scarcely admitted, but the process of growth, of death and procreation, is expressed in every ritual. Indeed, the ritual cycle is like a fugue with the theme of death and rebirth constantly recurring.

The pagan universe is just and orderly. There is a nemesis attached to spilling blood or binding a man with ropes. The anger of men,[1] or of the shades who are roused by men, is what brings most misfortune, and often, the Nyakyusa think, such anger is justified. Even medicines may be selective, injuring only the guilty. The good man who celebrates the proper rituals, fulfils his kinship obligations, and keeps on good terms with his neighbours, is protected, while the evil-doer falls ill. But some evil men, witches and sorcerers, attack the innocent out of jealousy and spite. Evil to the Nyakyusa, lies primarily within men: it is 'anger in the heart' which materializes as pythons that throttle others. Because they are aware of angry impulses in themselves the Nyakyusa find it difficult to believe that any society without witchcraft can exist; to say that there is no *ubulosi* is like suggesting that there is no ill will or anger in a community. And since anger brings misfortune there is an obligation on those whose anger might have caused sickness or ill luck to express goodwill by spitting or blowing out water, and saying, 'May the patient recover' or 'I am without anger'. Among commoners the man required to show goodwill is usually a senior relative, rather than a suspected witch (as among the Azande). But a neighbour or friend who might be a witch or sorcerer should also express goodwill when he visits the sick, and fellow hunters who have ill luck may stop to declare their goodwill to one another, as we have seen. If a chief or priest-chief is sick the village headmen and priests must wish him well and confess any anger they have felt towards him. The blowing out of water is a symbol of confession, 'bringing

[1] For a full account of the belief in witchcraft and the 'breath of men', cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 91-121, 198-261.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 swept through BuNyakyusa in the early 1930's; perhaps other
783 similar movements preceded it—we do not know. What is clear
[177] is that traditionally there was continuous public pressure to
[185] overcome hatred within the village and the kinship group; to rid
oneself of it by confession and an expression of goodwill. In pagan
[578] thought Utopia is a society without witches or sorcerers and, though it was never achieved, everyone is convinced that formerly these evil-doers were fewer than now, because they were restrained by law, whereas 'witches' now go scot-free.

183 The interests of the Nyakyusa are personal and practical. Health, fertility, and amity between kinsmen and neighbours are what they seek. It is with rain and drought, with the rise of
773 the Lake or the striking of lightning which destroys property; with stock, crops, and the wild animals which prey upon them that the myths are concerned. We could trace no tales of the sun, moon, and stars, and no rituals are directed to them. Reference is made to volcanic disturbance in the myths of the heroes—'the ground rumbled' when Nkekete and Kyala walked, and there are stories of small lakes disappearing and reappearing elsewhere—but the concern shown is surprisingly little if an eruption indeed destroyed villages last century as Mr. Harkin's single informant suggests (*vide supra*, p. 16).

787 Reality is thought to be revealed to men in dreams, by prophets
791 who 'go down thinking like the roots of a tree' to the world of the shades, and by oracles. What men seek to know are the causes of misfortune—public and private—and the identity of witches. Occasionally, it is said, a prophet has looked into the future and foretold drought, or flood, or the coming of Europeans—'white things on the Lake'—against whom it would be foolish to fight, but for the most part they are concerned with the misfortunes
[183] that exist, and urging men to pray in the groves. The contemplative is not honoured in Nyakyusa tradition; the man of spiritual power is a detective—a discoverer of evil-doers—or an administrator whose awfulness adds to his authority.

183 Men are preoccupied with their relationships to other living men—their kinsmen, neighbours, and fellow office-holders—
771 and with their dead fathers. They are not concerned with their relationship to Kyala. The rituals celebrated by kinsmen are directed to the shades not to any supreme God, and it is quarrelling between kinsmen that angers the shades and makes the celebration of certain rituals necessary. The communal rituals are

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XIV

RELIGION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

182 In this chapter we shall seek to show how the traditional communal rituals both reflect and maintain the traditional political structure, and to consider in what measure the change from paganism to Christianity compels a change in other aspects of the society, or, alternatively, how far the economic and political changes taking place among the Nyakyusa compel a change in religion.

The heroic myths are the charter for chieftainship. The heroes
182 from whom the chiefs are descended are pictured as creators and
773 benefactors, the authors of fertility and civilized living. But myth
769 and ritual also entrench the rights of commoners and unify people
643 of different stocks by asserting their complementary diversity. No ritual can be celebrated without the participation of commoner priests. They 'speak out' at rituals and bring public opinion directly to bear on the chief, whose own health is held to depend upon their goodwill; at the same time the whole country looks to the chief as the source of fertility in man and beast and field.

Ritual was the integrating force with the widest range in the
182 traditional society. Independent chiefs, even those whose people
643 were culturally as different as the Nyakyusa and Kinga, joined in
796 sacrifice to Lwembe and Kyala and were mystically dependent
782 upon one another. As Kasitile put it 'the Kinga come (to Lubaga) both when there is trouble in our land and in theirs'. In Ngonde the 'divine king', the Kyungu, who controlled a flourishing trade in ivory, developed secular as well as ritual functions and emerged as a paramount chief, but in the Nyakyusa valley the ritual bond had no secular backing save the exchange of iron and salt for food, which linked Kinga and Nyakyusa in a tenuous partnership. The sacrifices to the Lwembe did not exclude war between chiefs who acknowledged him, nor did sacrifice to their common ancestor exclude war between Mwaipopo (116) and Mwaihojo (147), but the necessity of co-operation in sacrifice compelled later reconciliation. Perhaps the insistence on the sacredness of the heroes and their living representatives, the elaborate ritual of

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

chieftainship, and the dependence upon medicines as a means of enforcing law were connected with the ineffectiveness of secular authority. Certainly the Kyungu's emergence from seclusion, and the dropping of the taboos which surrounded him were connected with his acquisition of economic power; but we know too little of the conditions that make for elaboration of ritual to postulate any general connexion between the absence of ritual in public life and the effectiveness of secular authority. 182 643 782 796

The cycle of sacrifices to the heroes and dead chiefs among the Nyakyusa is more than an ancestor cult, for it includes non-relatives among its priests and beneficiaries; but it has many of the features of an ancestor cult, among them the identification of piety with conservatism. A good man follows exactly in the footsteps of his father who becomes his god. This is reconciled with a myth of a new beginning, ten generations ago, when civilized life came to the Nyakyusa valley, and the new beginning is celebrated each generation with the 'coming out' of the young chief and his contemporaries. 182 769 [773]

All Nyakyusa rituals are cathartic in the sense that they make explicit and seek to dissipate, by their very expression and rejection, certain anti-social tendencies. In the Nyakyusa view the root of evil is 'anger in the heart' unadmitted and corrosive, and only by an open confession can it be overcome.[1] Hence in every situation of misfortune, public or private, men are pressed to 'speak out' (*ukusosya*) and admit their anger. At the 'coming out' the conflict of generations is expressed in the prolonged debate over the date of the celebration and the detailed arrangements, and in the dancing and slaughter of cattle, and is finally resolved when authority and land are handed over to the young men by their fathers. The fissiparous tendencies of a chiefdom are made explicit and canalized in constitutional form by the division of the old chief's country into two, under his senior sons; and criticism of the young chiefs is made explicit in the formal admonition by the father's village headmen. The rejection of conflict is clearest at the annual purification when men throw out the ashes contaminated by family bickering and the cannibalism of witches, and *fight* one another 'that the homesteads may be peaceful'. This fighting is 'to bring out war from within (*ukusosya*)'; 182 783 796 631

[1] cf. *Good Company*, pp. 99-112. The belief that a witch or sorcerer must *confess* if the patient was to recover was the reason for the torture of witches in many African societies.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

in rulers and is thought to be transferred to them in the medicine brewed out of python blood. 643 778 789

It will be noticed that the central mystery of Lubaga and the sources of the most powerful medicine are the same, and the medicine is akin to witchcraft. The shades, medicines, and witchcraft are distinguished and are thought to operate independently, but they are all manifestations of a mystical power which is logically one, though none of our informants saw it as that.

We referred earlier to the function of the chiefs' medicines in giving courage in war and luck in raiding. Certain emblems of chieftainship are carried in war: a sacred spear, a bamboo trumpet (*ililonge*) or a great war-horn (*ingangabwite*), and several giraffe or zebra tails (*imiswigala*), and all of these have little horns filled with *inyifwila* attached to them. Of the trumpet it was said: 'You hear it and your heart swells and a great trembling comes over you and you fight.' 'The chiefs forbid them to be blown now because their blowing always brings war.' Each of the senior village headmen is given a tail at the 'coming out' and he went into battle with it bound on to his upper arm. A notable warrior was sometimes given one also. To lose a tail in battle was comparable to losing the regimental colours and there are epics of their loss and recovery. If the leader who carried it saw that he was surrounded he would try to pass it back, or he might hide it on the ground: [293] [721] [726]

then that night they would go back to the spot and they would find it because it shone with a light and made a bubbling noise, *burukut, burukut, burukut*. . . . [774]

In the old days the medicine [in the tails] was frequently renewed; for there was war, and it gave the headmen the power of dreaming of the course of war. . . . But now, since you have brought peace to the land, no one renews it, and it has gone rotten.

However, the tails in Mwaipopo's chiefdom *were* thus treated in December 1937, and we saw it done. The four tails, with six tiny medicine horns and a calabash of medicated ointment, were formally handed over to the care of Kalinga, Mwaipopo's (116) chief wife, having previously been in the care of his mother. Mwaipopo himself was there with two kinsmen and the three commoner priests Kissogota, Njobakosa, and Ngulyo, but not Kasitile (86) since he was 'father-in-law' to Kalinga and could not meet her, though he was informed of the ritual. Kalobo, the second senior wife, looked on. Kalinga poured out the ointment

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 but I see them. It's taboo to speak. They must seek blood and they go
775 off; we fear them!

QUESTION: Why do you chiefs never speak out if you are throttled?

753 KASITILE: If I speak how many would there be to name? Very many!
[689] For us it's taboo to accuse a man of witchcraft, but the commoners
[554] accuse one another. Look you, do few people keep you company?
Many!

Like us chiefs, everyone comes. It's taboo for us to speak out, we fear. Look you, when Mwambene (Mwaipopo 116) and I were alone we feared to throw out the beer, we said: 'If we throw it out will they leave?' But when Kissogota came, he said: 'All right, I will throw it
[152] out myself.' We fear the fierce great priests, the terrible witches, they are angry.[1] We shrink when they appear.

[622] The village headmen of the country call on the priests for help against us, they whisper by the fire, the priests come in their witchcraft, they call on my shades saying, 'Let us punish him', also they eat,
[793] together with the shades. Our shades never initiate anything, never; they look to the priests. But with a commoner the shade may initiate matters himself. Yes, people whisper indeed, but is that witchcraft? No! They whisper openly and ask, 'Why did you not perform the ritual?' But even although people are silent, still the shade comes
[688] saying, 'Why did you not perform the ritual? I am on the road.' He initiates the thing himself.

QUESTION: But don't people eat meat at the ritual of a commoner?

KASITILE: Yes, and if he does not celebrate it they accuse him, but they accuse him openly.

QUESTION: If the heir buries him with a few cattle?

688 KASITILE: If a rich commoner dies and the heir buries him with only
775 one cow, the shades are angry and the people also; their chilling breath comes on his body, perhaps he falls ill himself, perhaps his
774 child falls ill, but the people and witches do not meet together, people are angry here, and the shades there; all of them and the shades too, because he has celebrated with one cow only. People are angry because
[787] they wish to eat the meat. But the oracle says, 'The shades are angry.' It does not speak of people, it knows that people also are angry, but it speaks of the shades. And at the celebration he prays in the evening, the next day he calls people and kills a cow, and throws the sacred
[783] meat in the banana grove, saying, 'Here is your meat, father.' People say, 'Indeed he did wrong, his father was angry', but they do not confess saying, 'It was we', no, they say 'the shades' . . .

[826] We chiefs have bodies which are different, the commoners arrived
[554] first in the country, they ate raw food, we fear them saying, 'They eat raw food.' It is we who followed and brought fire. To us they confess

[1] *Isingogo ndori mikalala.* The noun class implies size, ferocity, and dislike.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(their witchcraft); to each other they say: 'It is your father.' Because if they confess to a fellow commoner saying, 'It is we', he says, 'You are "eating" me, drink the ordeal'. The witch is driven out. But to us they admit saying, 'It was we who were angry.' They do not fear us. Commoners are the seniors in the country; they arrived first. 688 775 774 826 554

It will be remembered that the commoners are spoken of as 'black people' (*abaníta*) and that the first chiefs were 'pale' (*mawela*) but these words also have moral implications. 'It is said that a person "has a black heart" or "has black blood", or "is black in his face towards us" when he is thought to be a witch, eating his fellows, or when he is a thief, or a liar, or an adulterer, or dirty. Even though his body is light coloured (*mawela*) the word "black" (*níta*) is used of him metaphorically.' And *mawela* implies innocent, pure, as well as light in colour. The comparable symbolism of 'nigger' and 'white man' is all too familiar in Johannesburg or Charleston.

That Kasitile himself was much afraid of the commoner chiefs and was relieved by the 'speaking out' was clear, and the people of the country as a whole were glad that the ritual had been celebrated, for they expected an increase in fertility. Some days later Mwakyonde (148), came in and said, laughing, but half serious: 'Congratulations, Mwaipaja (G.W.). You have celebrated the ritual, we rejoice greatly, you give us fertility of the soil, you are a great priest.' [152] [578] 793 778 183

In some moods Kasitile was inclined to become a Christian, but he felt an obligation to the country as priest, and believed too strongly in the efficacy of the traditional rituals to abandon them. He said to G.W. one day, over a pot of beer: 'If it were not for the ritual I would get you to speak to the Europeans of the mission, and I would go with my wife Jane, and be baptized. If my son was old enough and had agreed to carry on the ritual I would do it; perhaps I will when I am old. . . . It is good to have one's heart washed clean, we are dirty inside. The Christians say to us: "You with your four wives each, you are all dirty, you love one and squabble with the rest." Well, it is so with me, I love Jane only; I would like to go and be baptized with her. But I fear for the ritual, I fear hunger, the hunger of the people. For I am the food of the country, I am the maker of food.' [177] [797]

We left Selya shortly after this and were not able to observe the effect of the ritual on political relationships in Selya. Kasitile lived another seventeen years, duly performing his functions, and in 1954 he was succeeded by his brother's son, James.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 769 622 cannot be appointed as headman in any village of his own generation, and villages of past generations disappear. When a headman dies, his village still being in existence, his place is taken by his heir who may be a son, but this office is only temporary. The village ceases to exist when its original members die off. Moreover, there is no suggestion that the shade of a headman's father broods over the village as the shade of a chief is thought to brood over the land he ruled.

775 The Nyakyusa have a lively belief in the power of shades,-a belief closely connected with the dependence of the members of a lineage upon one another for cattle,[1] and with the office of 'divine king', but such belief scarcely affects village relationships, for the shades are not thought to be concerned with behaviour between neighbours, as distinct from relatives.

775 621 602 It is true that the proper performance of family rituals includes feasting neighbours, but the implication always is that the shades are concerned only in enforcing obligations towards themselves and fellow kinsmen, not towards non-relatives. On the other hand, neighbours are concerned in the enforcement of kinship obligations. When a son insults his father, the father's neighbours are insulted also; when a daughter-in-law peeps at her father-in-law the shocked astonishment of the neighbours may cause her children to pine. And so, when an erring son begs pardon of his father, he must provide a feast for the neighbours, 'that they may see that his father is satisfied'.

775 626 754 A situation often arises in which both the shades and 'the breath of men' operate, sometimes 'the breath' of shocked neighbours supporting the shades, and sometimes shades and men each exacting their due. One illustration of this was given us by Kalunda: 'If you do not carry out the burial rites for your father, people are angry, they throttle you, and the shade is angry also, he comes on your body. No, the witches do not call the ancestors to help; both are angry on their own account. To-day the black ones, the witches, come and throttle you; to-morrow the ancestors come. People are angry because they do not eat meat; the shade is angry because you did not perform the burial rites for him. He says: "See, I left much property, why did you not bury me properly?"' And in discussing the obligation of a daughter-in-

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'An African Morality', *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936); Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

law to avoid her father-in-law, another informant said: 'It is forbidden to look at fathers-in-law. If we do look then we shall not die well, we shall long to die and not be able to do so, because both those below (the dead) and those above (the living) are angry. Yes, it is the witches we mean when we say "those above".'

c. *The age-village and medicines*

Unlike the belief in witchcraft and 'the breath of men', which mainly affects relationships within a village, or the ancestor cult which is confined to the relations between kinsmen, and between chief and people, the use of medicines (*imikota*)[1] enters into every type of relationship in Nyakyusa society. Medicines are employed to win success in almost every undertaking: cultivating, herding, hunting, love-making, war. They are regarded as one of the main props of authority; the impressiveness (*ubusitya*) of a chief, and the power of a village headman to command, being directly related to the medicines with which they are treated (*vide supra*, pp. 24–5). They are resorted to for the promotion of fertility, for the treatment of the sick, and for protection and retaliation generally, as well as the means of directly harming an enemy. Medicines are believed to operate along with other mystical powers. For example, they are an essential element in rituals directed to the ancestors, and they are used for the discovery of witchcraft (in the ordeal) as well as for protection against it, and for the treatment of patients thought to have been 'eaten' by the witches or chilled by 'the breath of men'. Used alone, medicines are held to be ineffective against witchcraft or 'the breath of men', but they are regarded as a useful complement to other action, such as the banishment of the witch or the repentance of the sinner.

The power of witchcraft or of defence against witches (*amanga*) is connected with medicines, for it is thought often to be acquired for defensive purposes (and more rarely for aggressive purposes) through drinking medicines (*vide* pp. 25, 221). But the powers of witchcraft, or witch defence, and of medicines are quite distinct; the one implies a peculiar physical condition, the presence of one or more pythons in the belly, whereas the other may be bought from a doctor and used by anyone, and its

[1] The root -kota implies something derived from a plant. cf. ikí-kota, a wooden stool.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

mediate ancestors of the participants, and another set which concern chiefdoms and groups of chiefdoms, and are directed towards the immediate ancestors of ruling chiefs and certain distant ancestors of the chiefs' line, heroes in Nyakyusa history. The name of one of these heroes, Kyala, has been used by the missionaries to translate the word 'God', but all the evidence available goes to show that Kyala was, traditionally, but one of several distant ancestors to whom regular sacrifices were made on behalf of a large group of chiefdoms. All the rituals of this type—those directed to family shades, the chiefs' ancestors, and the heroes—are concerned with that which is beneath (*pasi*), not that which is above. Men look to the earth where corpses are buried, not to any sky god.

The theme of the present volume is the rituals celebrated by kinsmen at death, at the puberty and marriage of a girl (the last two events usually coinciding), at birth, especially twin birth, and in misfortune. A further volume will deal with the communal rituals celebrated before the annual break of the rains; whenever public misfortune such as drought, flood, famine, or plague occurs or threatens; before battle; and when a chief is succeeded by his sons, and the younger generation take over power from their elders. There is no circumcision or initiation of men other than the 'coming out' ceremony, when a whole generation takes over responsibility for the administration and defence of the chiefdom from their fathers. Some reference to three of the heroes—Kyala, Lwembe, and Mbasi—is made in texts on the rituals of kinsmen, but our discussion of them is postponed to the second book in which the rituals directed to them are described.

A section of the Nyakyusa people is Christian and its influence on pagan thought and practice is appreciable; however, discussion of this is also postponed to the second book, since it is most evident in the changing concept of Kyala. There, too, the connections between change in ritual and other aspects of the social structure between 1934 and 1955 are analysed.

The Nyakyusa cult of senior relatives (like any ancestor cult) is not intelligible or significant apart from a study of kinship, and it may be argued that this material should be presented only as part of an analysis of Nyakyusa kinship, but we cannot discuss everything at once and some measure of abstraction is necessary. No one ritual among the Nyakyusa is fully intelligible without reference to the whole series of rituals. The principle, propounded forty-five years ago by Professor Radcliffe-Brown, that a symbol

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tween the kinsmen about the amount of property to be destroyed. 764
Once we saw the sons of a dead man tugging at two fine mats which his sister was folding into the cave. She wished to put them in but the sons opposed her, saying: 'Why should we spend all the mats? We have buried him, he is dead.'

It is held to be most important that earth should not touch the corpse's face, but once the cave has been closed the chief mourners each push a few handfuls of earth into the grave, the rest of the earth is filled in, and the dancers stamp it hard. Soon no sign of the grave remains.

(*b*) *The terror of death*

Death to the Nyakyusa is a fearful thing. They believe that the 761
spirit (*unsyuka*) of a dead man survives underground (*pasi*) in the 775
place of the shades (*ubusyuka*) and that it can and does visit sur- 765
viving relatives in dreams and materially affect their destinies. The shades of the dead are one of the final causes with which their religion deals. But contact with them is feared and the function of the ritual at the funeral is 'to drive the shade away'. This ritual begins during the burial (*ifwa*) and continues in a series of rites which last for a month or longer. At the burial itself people's attention is mainly concerned with the death as an emotional event, with the fact that a father, a mother, a kinsman or a neighbour has died; but into the emotional quality of death their religious beliefs enter. With the shades they desire no close contact, for the most usual dreams of the dead are those in which they reproach a man for some sin, or foretell his death; their commonest activity is believed to be the sending of madness and misfortune upon sinful men. Nor is it desirable to join the shades oneself. The place of the shades is a vague and shadowy land where no certain happiness is traditionally believed to be. 'No one', said an old man, 'has ever been there and come back to tell us about it. When the dead come to us in dreams they do not show us where they live nor tell us about their life. We do not know what we shall find there. But we do not think that we shall have happiness, or friendly intercourse.' 'He has died and we shall never meet again,' said another man of his dead neighbour. Some old men, however, have definite theories about the place of the spirits, and all agree that wealth is important there; but these theories have no certainty: 'We are just guessing.' It is certain that the dead continue to live somehow, for they are believed to affect

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

761
765 the lives and enter the dreams of their kinsmen; but the nature of
●775 their survival is uncertain.

775 A man, when he dies, is believed to join his ancestors. Until the
765 end of the funeral rites, they say, he is on the way and if the ritual is not properly performed he does not reach them, but troubles the dreams and lives of the survivors until he is properly driven away. 'If you do not perform the ritual for your father or mother you may go mad or else have a slow and lingering death.'

177 Many of the younger pagans, however, are affected by Christian
775 belief. Young men spoke confidently of going after death 'to a fine
797 country with dancing and feasting and a chief to rule us'. But many old men scoff at such beliefs. 'They have learnt them from the missionaries—how do they know, have they been there to see?' Among some of the younger men also the ritual of death is less important than it used to be. As one Christian said: 'The pagans no longer fear to die away from home—they used to fear very much to die in a strange country (and many still do), they thought: "If I die far from home I shall never reach my ancestors, for people will not bury me properly." Nor do all the young men now fear if they fail to attend a father's funeral ritual.' 'We no longer believe in the old rituals,' said a sophisticated young pagan, 'because we see that the Christians do not do these things and nothing happens to them.'

761 An additional reason for fearing death is the Nyakyusa belief in
753 the contagious character of many diseases. Death is thought to be
754 caused sometimes by witchcraft, and sometimes by one of a variety of diseases. Of these diseases some are held to be hereditary and to run in families, and they are usually non-contagious; others, and they are usually contagious, are believed to be due to the sorcery of enemies. And the contagion is thought to be spread by an autopsy. It is especially dangerous to relatives; other people do not fear these diseases unless they actually hold the corpse in their arms, or dig the grave, or help to bury it, but all relatives are afraid.

764 Besides the contagion of specific diseases, the corpse itself is held always to have a vaguely defined, but none the less fearful, contagion of its own. And, because of this, all who have had any close contact with the body go to bathe immediately after the burial. Those of the chief mourners who hold the body in their arms, the grave-diggers and those who get down into the grave to bury it, all go to bathe. 'Even when death is no due to a contagious disease

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 the killing has a legal implication, for the death of a man involves
768 the transfer of his wives and property to another. If the inheritance is quite clear and disputes are unlikely, then a 'father' of the dead man tells the heir to kill the burial cattle. All the people present see him do this and know that he is the heir. And if the inheritance is, after all, denied him later, then the fact that he killed the cattle at his brother's (or father's) funeral gives him a strong *prima facie* claim to its recovery in the courts. If the inheritance is doubtful then a 'father' of the dead man kills the cattle. It is known that he himself cannot inherit and his killing of the cattle is an assertion of his authority to decide who shall do so.

643 When a man of the chief's lineage dies, a live cow is buried with
764 him and the more general custom of taking a cow or bull to look into the grave is interpreted as being 'like burying the cow'. The cattle used in this way must be of the lineage stock and are reserved for sacrifice.

764 All the cattle killed are thought to go with the shade to the land
775 of the dead (*abuke nasyo kubusyuka*) and it is believed that if he goes without any cattle he may be rejected by his kinsmen there. Tales are told of meeting dead men in the bush with their cattle which were killed for them. A cloth is a substitute for a cow and cloths which are buried likewise go with the dead. 'We will meet in the land of the shades and he will be wearing these cloths.' At one burial we saw, the dead man had left no cows of his own but his brothers killed two cows for him, three beasts were brought by affines, and sixteen cloths were brought by kinsmen, affines, and friends. 'Why', we asked, 'do you spend so much wealth at death?' 'Because, we say, as the owner has died let him take his wealth with him to the place of the shades. If he dies in lonely poverty he goes with nothing.' At another burial two beasts were brought by kinsmen, six by affines and one by a friend. There were thirty-two cloths, fifteen brought by kinsmen, twelve by affines, and five by friends. 'The bringing of cloths is to express sympathy (*kukuti ndaga*); we bury many of them with the corpse, and some we leave over, which we bind on as mourning belts (*amakiba*). Of old, people brought the cloth the Safwa weave, and brass body-rings. It means: "May our fellow go with them; may he swagger with them—with the cloth and body-rings (*ko kuti umwinetu abukege nafyo, a mogege nafyo*)." And we pour out food that he may take it with him.'

764 During the course of the war-dance (described below) the young

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

765 washing and the throwing away of a stem of bananas and leaves in a
768 stream, and bringing back a hen and bark-cloth; eating a mash on the hearth; the brewing of beer with the millet presented; a ritual drinking and further shaving when this is ripe; an admonition of the heir on his duties and acknowledgement of him as 'father' by the children of the deceased; sexual intercourse between the heir and the widows he inherits; the burial by each inherited woman of some of the fluids from that intercourse in her father's banana grove, and a ritual drinking of beer with her father and other close relatives.

If the deceased is a woman her brother comes to cut her husband's banana grove and seize her children, as a sign that kinship between the lineages has ceased, but he is dissuaded with gifts, and treats his sister's children with medicines. A sister is sent to replace the dead woman, the widower has intercourse with her at 'the shaving of the sprouting hair', and she returns home to bury some of the fluids in her father's grove, and drink beer with him ritually.

An account of one of the rituals which we attended in Selya which is quoted in the documents (p. 234) may give some reality to this stark outline.

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

765. When asked why the ritual of death is performed the first reply
764 of Nyakyusa informants was that they were driving away (*ukukaga*)
828 the dead and that if it were neglected those for whom it should have been performed would go mad (*ukubopa ikigili*). Angombwike explained: 'In the death ritual they drive away the shade (*unsyuka*) saying: "Why are you always at me, nagging at me, in dreams?" It is to swear at him (the shade) and drive him away.'

Another informant explained: 'The touching of the earth is the expression of the wish that he will not come into our dreams and thoughts any more, and he does not!' Another confirmed this saying: 'The powdered medicine and touching the earth are alike;
765 they wish to stop him (the deceased) coming into our dreams.'
764 And an Ndali informant said: 'Shaving is to get rid of the shade which was on their bodies.'

●775 There is also the implication of speeding the deceased on his way to the land of the shades, for it is believed that if the ritual is not performed he will not be welcomed by his dead kinsmen and will continue to haunt the living. Of an unfinished death ritual

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

people say: '*Tukali ukunkesya unsyuka* (We have not yet bidden farewell to the shade),' *ukukesya* being the word used for bidding a courteous farewell to departing guests. Mwaisumo elaborated the point. He said: 'The death ritual is a saying good-bye, it is to see off the dead man accompanying him on his way (*ukunsindikela*); to demonstrate that we have buried him indeed, and to pray that forgetfulness may now come on us.' Another informant explained: 'Touching the earth is to say "Good-bye, friend."'

The danger of madness was given as the reason both for the whole ritual and for many separate actions in it. 'You go mad if you do not shave after a death,' said the wife of the chief Mwaihojo. 'You go mad if you keep the hair of the corpse (*inwili sya mfimba*),' said Mwandisi, the old blind historian, and he went on: 'Yes, much madness comes from the shades if you have neglected the death ritual for a wife or for parents, and the ritual at puberty also. Madness comes from the shades and from Kyala. And if a woman refuses to perform the ritual for her husband who has died, and refuses to lie down with the heir, she also goes mad.' If someone does go mad the cause is usually said to be neglect of the death ritual or some mistake in its performance.

Other types of illness are also attributed to neglect of the death ritual. Kasitile was ailing and thought that his illness was due partly to the fact that he had not completed the death ritual for a relative. Mwilabe said of the sweeping in the ritual: 'They sweep round their legs lest their bodies become swollen and sick. It is said that their bodies will swell if they attend the ritual of someone else and this is done and they themselves have not been swept over.' Several informants mentioned 'a lingering and painful death' (a terror often spoken of by the Nyakyusa) as the penalty for neglecting a ritual, and the last part of the ritual is expressly interpreted as a prophylactic against the 'gasping cough'.

Finally, it is said that the crops will not flourish if the ritual is neglected. Kakuju, a village headman of Selya, was explicit on the point: 'If you do not bury your father properly the food will disappear. They (the diviners) will tell you to find something and when beer has been left overnight outside in the banana grove you pray to the shade.' The fear that the crops will not flourish is not mentioned so frequently as the danger of madness, but it is a general notion.

The danger of madness or other illness coming on one is thought to be greatest if a man tastes the ritual food or beer, or is sprinkled

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

764 i. *Kasitile's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. in Nyakyusa and
765 translated by him shortly afterwards.)[1]

●775 KASITILE: We go to bathe wearing leaves, we throw them away, we bathe, then we come back and shave our hair. This means we are driving away the shade (*unsyuka*), for at first he is in our bodies. Our fathers told us: 'When I die I shall not reach the place of the shades unless you do the ritual for me; those who preceded me will drive me back saying: "You are not one of us, you cannot come, they have not yet done your ritual." For the shades linger on the way at first, they do not reach their place.' We do the ritual so as to tell the shade: 'We have given you everything, now go away and may your fellow shades receive you, do not come here.'

764 When we return from bathing we put a banana in the ground with
765 a pumpkin-seed and a lentil in it. We stoop and bite a piece off, and then we shave the hair. There is much idiocy (*ubulema*) if you do not
828 perform the ritual, and madness (*ikigili*), or perhaps you will have a lingering death. The shade is in the body, he causes madness (*ikigili*), he says: 'Why have you not done the ritual?' The shades pound and stamp the body.

Mwambuputa (a village headman) joining in the conversation said:

775 All this round us [with a sweeping gesture] is the place of the shades.
764 What we have buried is only the body, to prevent it stinking, but the heart (*indumbula*) stays here.

KASITILE: The banana which we bite in the ground is like the
764 sausages of porridge of the Kukwe, it is excrement, it is filth; because
765 I think that if I do not perform the ritual I may run mad and eat filth.
828 Also before this they beat up a mash of cowpeas, they take it with a spoon and put it against the wall, and one by one we come and eat. This also is eating filth so that we may escape and be clean.

[177] Madness (*ikigili*)[2] is of two kinds, one comes from Kyala (but we used to say from Mbasi, we did not say Kyala) and one from ritual. Mwaipopo (the chief) had the madness (*ikigili*); it is in his family on his mother's side. This is the madness of Mbasi, they do their rituals all right. Mbasi is he who lived with my father here. He called 'Kanjuki! Kanjuki!' from the hillside; then my mother would cook him some food
764 and my father would put something out for him.[3] When we perform
765 the rituals the shades are very pleased to see it; of old you might hear
775 them clapping their hands in the evening here, after we had finished a ritual. But they have gone away now. . . . Yes, the shades are filthy
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[1] I have made minor changes in the translation.
[2] Distinguished from a trance or epileptic fit, *ukukoma amalago*.
[3] See *Communal Rituals among the Nyakyusa* (in preparation).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

(*banyali*), they are in the body at first, they shake it and you fall ill; 764
they say: 'You are still muddy, you have not done the ritual.' . . . 765
When a man dies his heart (*indumbula*) and his body (*umfimba*) separate, 775
they are divorced, the heart with the blood (*ililopa*) and the shadow 828
(*ilisyungulu*) are separated from the corpse which rots in the ground. The corpse is filth, it is excrement. And so when a madman, for whom they have not performed the ritual, eats filth, that is the corpse, he is still holding it, they have not done the ritual for him. If they have not done the ritual for the shade his fellows drive him back and say: 'You cannot come yet, you are still muddy, they have not bathe you in the river.' . . .

Yes, that which they do to my body, to me the heir (or the relative) they do to the shade himself. He, the corpse, is earthy, muddy. That is why we smear ourselves with mud, we mourners; it is this earth that we drive away in the ritual, it is mud, it is the corpse. . . .

The hair of the mourners which we shave in the ritual is one with the hair of the corpse, it is his. We wash and shave and anoint him and he goes to his own place. . . .

First we bite the banana with the seeds stuck into it in the ground, and then we eat bananas and seeds in the usual way. It is the food which he, the shade, ate. . . .

They seize the heir and widows at the pumpkin-seed ritual. The officiant is there, she smears ashes on their chests and puts a strand of *ilingolongofwa* creeper on their necks, then if the woman refuses the man [837 later there is a case and she must pay the fine for adultery. If she 681] refuses before this there is no case, and she does not pay. The ashes and creeper are signs of death, of mourning, of the corpse—they cast them away into the river.

QUESTION: The rubbing in earth—what does it represent?

KASITILE: The banana flower is the corpse. We are saying to him: 'You corpse, we have finished with you, do not come here again, it is finished for ever, do not look towards us, go away.' This earth is the same as the mud with which we smear ourselves at the burial. We bathe, we cast it away.

QUESTION: The washing at the door with medicine?

KASITILE: We wash with powdered medicine at the door because we are just going to take filth (*indafu*) in our hands—to take the bananas and pumpkin-seeds. We bathe, we wash, and then they give us the bananas. It is taboo (*muiko*) to eat before washing. The calabash used for this washing is hung up in the porch and used for the beer later, the beer which they drink on the path after anointing themselves.

QUESTION: The bananas and lentils and pumpkin-seeds?

KASITILE: At the eating of bananas and pumpkin-seeds we do not separate them, everything is then pressed together in one place; but the banana flower we bury is separate, that is the corpse. And at the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mungonde

764 water when we bathe we make a separation—they take a stem of
765 bananas, and a bark-cloth, and a hen to the water. The bananas they
● 775 throw away—that is the corpse; the hen and the bark-cloth they bring
828 back to the homestead and the officiant takes them home with her—that is the shade, is not the shade in the house with us? Do we not pray to him?

QUESTION: Putting food into the pot?

KASITILE: This food is the filth of the body. We say: 'We cast you from us, let our hearts be purified; the mud we smeared on our faces we cast it away, all our body casts you away. We are not corpses; we are putting you to rights and shaving your hair, go away to your fellows.' We begin to get rid of the earth we had on our faces so that we may anoint ourselves again. In our lineage we eat only bean mash, not bananas and millet porridge, we differ in our rituals.

QUESTION: The sweeping of rubbish on to legs and the weeping?

KASITILE: This means: 'We begin to cast you off wholly, let all the ritual that is left come to us, we throw it away.' The measures of millet are to tell the shade that So-and-so has brought millet and is doing his ritual. 'Do not think he is angry with you,' we tell him, 'he has brought this millet.' The throwing of millet from the winnowing basket on to the participants' heads as they stand in a line outside means that we cast him away, we are taking him to the river—at the river we throw away the corpse. They throw away the leaves and the stem of bananas.

QUESTION: Hitting the heads with a banana sapling in the doorway?

KASITILE: They hit the participants on the head, that is the *ndweka* disease of the dead man,[1] we are setting them to rights.

QUESTION: The stem of bananas, hen, and bark-cloth?

KASITILE: The stem of bananas is the corpse, they leave it in the water with the leaves; the bark-cloth and hen are the shade which they bring into the house.

QUESTION: The circling with the pot and putting in of food?

KASITILE: This is the shade whom they bring into the house (*bikumbeka*) when they have brought him from the water. The banana flower they bury is the same as the leaf they wear, it is the corpse which they throw away in the water.

Yes, we separate the corpse and the shade with all our might, the earth we rub our bodies in is the corpse, we throw it into the water and the shade we bring back to the house. The eating of the bean mash on
[177] the wall (the old custom) and on the hearth (both old and contemporary) that is the shade in the house. He warms himself by the fire in the house, we pray to him. Putting food into the pot means: 'Leave our

[1] Not clear to me.—M. W.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

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bodies altogether, go away to your friends, sit here by the hearth and warm yourself.'

QUESTION: The grinding of millet flour on to bark and the subsequent anointing of the participants with this flour in a paste, before shaving?

KASITILE: This means: 'This is your food that you ate, we give it to you.' And the smearing on the hair means: 'We have finished your ritual for you, we have left nothing out, bear us no grudge.'

QUESTION: The sweeping of rubbish (*imindu*) on to the participants' legs?

KASITILE: The rubbish is the rubbish of death, it is dirt. 'Let it come now,' we say. 'Let it not come later, may we never run mad.' The wailing (during sweeping) means: 'Go away, farewell!' We have finished the burial now, it will never be done again save once more at the beer.

QUESTION: The basket of millet between legs and over heads?

KASITILE: That is to drive him away, to tell him: 'Do not return to these your relatives here, you were in their bodies, now you are separate, we have driven you away, you are no relative of ours!' All that we do in the house there means that he is in our bodies and we are going to cast him out. The flour on the shoulder is like the flour paste in the hair, this is the corpse, we throw it away.

QUESTION: The song 'We are startled by the shade' (*Tunyomwike ilindu*)?

KASITILE: The *ilindu* is the shade, we are startled.

QUESTION: How startled?

KASITILE: Ha! Are you not startled when you run mad?[1] The heart is terribly startled, it curls upwards; when they say this phrase: 'We are startled by the *ilindu*' they quiet the heart and make it lie down again. Let him go away and be startled with his fellows!

QUESTION: The word *ilinwanwa* (the croaking bird)?

KASITILE: That is the shade that broods on the body. 'Friend,' we say to him, 'we have put you to rights, do not come to us, oh croaking bird.'

QUESTION: The ritual as a whole?

KASITILE: It means: 'We have given you everything, we have eaten filth on the hearth'—for if one runs mad one eats filth, faeces. . . .

QUESTION: What is the symbolism of pouring water on the thatch and running through the drops?

KASITILE: The ritual has many parts. We teach a person that he should do it properly and not leave out anything. Do we not fear (*ukutila*) the water for washing, the water of the corpse? When heavy rain falls do we not flee from the downpour and enter the house? That is how it is then. We mimic what he did when he was alive. . . .

[1] *Ukunyomoka ilindu* is used also for an epileptic fit.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

768 It is forbidden for the heir to lie with the dead man's wives before
[784] the ritual[1] is over. But at the time of the beer, when the drinking is
[833] finished, we put him into the house and he lies with them. If he has lain with them previously the semen refuses to come. . . . But if all goes well the officiants raise the cry of triumph (*akalulu*) and shake a winnowing basket of seeds by the door and cry: 'Ours, ours, we marvel at the thing, we marvel at the thing (*ifyitu, ifyitu, tunyomwike ilindu*).' If he fails they go to divine and the diviner says: '*Mindu* (sickness from the shades), he has forestalled the ritual (*akindile ubunyago*).' Then they pray in the bananas. He must have intercourse with all the women he is inheriting; yes, however old they may be, he must lie with them that night or else they will lose their strength of body or mind, or else their legs will swell. With the old ones he will never lie again! He drinks
[831] fresh milk to give him strength beforehand! Fresh milk gives strength, it produces semen.

The next morning each of the wives goes off to her father with *ilibalaga* and with meat; the first is buried in the bananas, it goes to the place of the shades, the meat is eaten. And the man too goes with his *ilibalaga* to his own father. Each wife makes her *ilibalaga* by wiping her own and her husband's genitals with her hands and then taking cooked bananas in them. He himself does likewise at the end.

768 The *ilibalaga* goes to the place of the shades, it is to drive away the
●775 shade of the dead man; before this he had not reached the place of shades but was on the way. In this manner we tell the shade that we have put another in his place, we tell him to go and join the other shades now and to come back with them to warm themselves by the fire in his old house.

[643] QUESTION: How can a chief who inherits many wives lie with them all in one night?

643 KASITILE: I do not know how. Kyala gives him strength! . . . He has
768 intercourse with them all. Yes, really this does happen. . . . But if the
833 man is old and fails to lie with them all, perhaps the wives will conceal the fact. He lies on one side of a partition wall with his wives and the people (for many come to sleep in his house that night) on the other. Then if he fails altogether . . . no one beats the partition with a stick, they all stay quiet till morning; but if he succeeds at first, and fails at the last few, they may perhaps conceal it. One of the wives is told by the officiant to beat the partition with a stick when he has lain with all his wives. When she does this the officiants who are in the doorway shake up lentils and millet and pumpkin-seeds in a winnowing basket and call out: 'Ours, ours! We marvel at the thing!' If he fails altogether they stay quiet and next day go to divine; the diviner says: '*Mindu*.' Then they pray and pray, and praise all the shades of old, and that night he tries again and the semen comes.

775 The seeds of lentil, millet and pumpkin are symbols of the shades, the
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833

[1] [i.e. the farewell to the dead.--Analyst]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

lentil is the shade, the millet is the shade, the pumpkin-seed is the 775
shade. The doctor takes them away home and eats them, that means 768
that the shades have gone away. The words they say: 'Ours, ours! We 833
marvel at the thing!' mean: 'The semen is ours, the shades have supported him, they have given us the semen, they have not bound it.' For if the shades are angry they bind him and the semen does not come. . . . If the heir and his dead father (or brother) were on bad terms then, although the ritual is correctly done, yet still the shades will bind his semen at the end of the ritual. Fertility (*imbapo*) does not belong to the shades but to Kyala, but if the shade is angry he binds it. [842]

There are three symbols: the banana is the corpse and the seed is the shade. It is the filth which madmen catch hold of, it is the faeces which they eat. And the banana is the body of the man and the seed is his semen. Eating is sexual intercourse. It is this he has done during his lifetime. It is to send him away and say that we are about to put another in his homestead. It is the body and semen of him who has died. Also when a woman has died the husband eats . . . it [the banana and seed] is what we did. . . .

The seed is the shade, and it is the blood for creating a person [i.e. the semen] because the shade and the semen are brothers.[1]

Yes, they are intermingled, all are together in the ritual: the corpse, and the shade, and the body of the man [i.e. his penis] and the blood [semen] and the filth of madness; all are intermingled. You understand, Mwaipaja (G. W.), you are a priest now, you are a real priest. . . .

When they shake up the millet and lentils and pumpkin-seeds at the beer when he has finished coitus with the women it also has a double symbolism (*fyope fyo fifwani fibili*); the seed is the blood [semen]—Ours, ours—and it is the shade who has gone. Also at puberty it is like this. . . .

Those who say the *ikipiki* is one and the same for birth, puberty and the death ritual are right. It is one only. . . . The *ikipiki* is our blood, it is kept in the house of the senior wife. It pertains both to men and to the shades, for when we marry we do a ritual with it, so the shade says: 'I have eaten it during my life, I was born with it (for it went into his stomach), I married a woman with it (we wash and shave our hair with it at marriage), now that I am dead they perform the ritual with it.' It is one and the same. The *ikipiki* is our intestine.[2] It is one and the same in all lineages.

One day at a funeral roasted bananas were brought. A man 764
started scraping the ash off his with a spear. Kasitile asked him: 'Do you scrape bananas?' He answered: 'Yes, but if there were the litter in the house we would avoid doing so.'

[1] cf. *Ulukungu*: semen; *inyungu*: pumpkin-seed.
[2] *Ubula bwa kikolo*: 'the intestine of the lineage'; the large intestine.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764

QUESTION: The banana and the pumpkin-seeds?

MWANDISI: These are the ritual which we—I the man, and she the woman—perform at the end, they are the sexual intercourse. The pumpkin-seed and the lentil and the millet are the blood of the man, the banana is his procreative power (*mbapo jake*). The pumpkin-seed ritual is important—when we have finished it then I go to my wife and do not fear her, but Lubabelo begins. Before the pumpkin-seed ritual it is completely taboo.

QUESTION: And the beer?

MWANDISI: That is not important, but the pumpkin-seed ritual is. But when a man has died then his wife must not approach the heir until the beer ritual.

QUESTION: Then the lust for copulation always comes from the shades?

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MWANDISI: Yes, desire comes from the shades. If they are angry you 775 are impotent and cannot beget a child; and sometimes also you are 842 impotent because the umbilical cord (*ululela*) has fallen on your mother.

MWANDISI'S WIFE: When my husband says in his heart: 'I shall go to my wife', that comes from the shades.

QUESTION: The umbilical cord?

MWANDISI'S WIFE: It is completely taboo for it to fall on the loins, then the child will not develop, it will be sterile and not bear (or beget) a child. And the mother herself will not bear again, she will not conceive again. . . . A woman cries a great deal with the pain in her belly until the cord comes away: when it has come away then she is filled with wonder and does not cry.[1]

MWANDISI: Pumpkin-seeds are used by us and the people of Selya; 764 the Kukwe perform the ritual with beans, and the people of Ngonde with fish and beer. . . .

QUESTION: Why do the heir and wife appear to refuse when caught in the ritual?

MWANDISI: Because someone has died. Should they rejoice therefore? If they rejoice it seems as if they wished their relative to die.

QUESTION: Do they fear the dead will harm them if they appear to rejoice?

MWANDISI: No, they fear those above [i.e. the living] lest they laugh at them. They are ashamed. But sometimes a woman really refuses. She fights and fights, and struggles and struggles, and says: 'No.' Her friends (the women) hit her and put her in the house, then when she has come out of the house she runs off, she flees.

QUESTION: The ashes and the *ilingolongofwa* creeper?

MWANDISI: They are signs of mourning, they give them to the

[1] The umbilical cord, *ululela*, is literally the 'cord of weeping'.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

MWANDISI: The sausages of porridge stuck in the ground and sprinkled with powdered medicine which each stoops and bites mean that you should be heavy in your belly (*musito munda*) and not have diarrhœa, it is to make faeces hard (not watery). Some we leave and bury [the end of each sausage of porridge is left in the ground]; that means that people should step over it and take away the disease, may they have diarrhœa at their homes! They will get it really! 764 [753]

QUESTION: Why do the dead man's sisters admonish their sisters-in-law, his widows? 607 764

MWANDISI: Because we have all met together. They say: 'Do not grudge him food, go on cooking for him. He dies of hunger! Begin again! And why do you not cook for us when we come? You grudge us food!' We scold them very much and they weep tears.

QUESTION: They say in Selya that you both drive away a shade and bring him back to the house. 764

MWANDISI: No, we drive him away, we do not bring him back to the house. 775

QUESTION: But you go to the stream with a stem of bananas, a hen and a fresh strip of bark, the bananas you throw away, but you come back with the hen and the bark. Is that the shade?

MWANDISI: These do not come back home. The officiant has them and takes them to her house. . . .

The stem of bananas we throw in the stream, it is sickness, it is the corpse, it goes to Kyala there. The hen and the bark we give to the doctor, the officiant, because it is she who caught hold of the sickness. She is always an unrelated person, not a relative; we pay her. If we have not performed the ritual we run mad, the shades have not come out, they are still there within.

QUESTION: You performed the ritual for Lubabolo's child yourselves? 764

MWANDISI: Yes, she was our grandchild. We grandparents don't matter, we carry out the ritual but it's not important; if, however, it is our own child [who has died] then it is taboo. It is taboo up to the point that connections are not relatives. [A grandchild in this context—though not in other contexts—is treated as not a relative]. The ritual *must* be performed for all *relatives* (*abakamu*). . . . [603]

First the stem of bananas and then the millet and pumpkin-seeds are passed between the straddled legs of the principals. The winnowing basket (containing millet and seeds) is pushed along with the officiant's elbow. In performing this ritual we finish the mating of man and woman, for that which comes out of the man in front [i.e. the semen] is the shades, when the participants have spat out we drive the shades away. If we have not performed the ritual we go mad. The shades have not come out but are still within. When, however, we have finished, then they have come out of the body. But they come again, we always have them. (*Apa tukunyagula tukumalesya mboleli nunyambala nunkikulu, po*

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764 *ifi fikusoka kukyeni nunyambala bo basyuka, bo baputile abasyuka tukubakaga: lenga tukanyagwila tukubopa ikigili! Abasyuka bo bakasokaga bikujamo; papo lenga tumalile po basokile munda. Loli bikwandesya kangi tukuja nabo bwila!*)

842 What we do comes from the shades and from Kyala himself. The
831 blood is theirs and his together. Those who create (*ukubumba*) a child say: 'I am just eating at a woman,' but Kyala creates a child! If Kyala and the shades do not 'cook' [i.e. do not cause desire] you will do nothing, the penis is flaccid, but if Kyala has 'cooked' then you really do something, your heart (*indumbula*) is full of desire. Always the shades are there and we drive them away, they are there and we drive them away. . . .

● 775 A shade is resurrected in the body of his child (*Unsyuka ikusyuka itolo mumbeli gwa muanake*). . . .

764 Passing the basket of pumpkin-seeds, millet, and lentils between the
775 legs and on to the head and throwing to one side means: 'Here between the legs there is work, may they go out in intercourse, and from the head where we dream, may they go out also.' Because in the ritual we say: 'Let them come into the body' at first, then we drive them away. Rubbing ourselves in the earth and passing millet between the legs means: 'May they come';[1] throwing millet and so on to one side it is to drive them away, that they may go out.

QUESTION: Which shade do you drive away?

MWANDISI: He who has just died, we drive him away.

QUESTION: What about the first ancestor?

MWANDISI: He is there at their place [the place of the shades], we drove him away long ago, he just receives him [the newly deceased].

QUESTION: Why the pumpkin-seeds in the bananas?

MWANDISI: It is the semen (*ulukungu*) for begetting children. . . .

QUESTION: Do the shades always come when a man dies?

MWANDISI: Yes, they always come, they receive their fellow. Yes, even though he has died from sorcery they come and receive him, and even though he has died from witchcraft they come, the shades receive him, and if it is from illness he has died they also come. There is no
[761] death without the shades, they always come to receive their fellow.

When the witches have 'eaten' someone the shades come to receive
764 him. No, the witches eat him alone, but the shades receive him. Some-
775 one may get up in the morning and say: 'I dreamed they ate me and I
763 was with the shades!' Then he is about to die. Sometimes someone
828 dreams and says: 'In the night I was in the land of the shades with so-and-so, I left him there, I escaped myself and came home.' Then his friend is about to die.

764 If you do not perform the ritual you go mad (*kukyembela ikigili*) or
775 perhaps you get very thin, and are unable to die, you are ailing and do

[1] i.e. the participants identify themselves with the deceased.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Ng'Ngonde

not die. That comes from the shades when they are angry and say: 764 775
'We shall see!' It is to be finished off.

QUESTION: So the shades always come at death?

MWANDISI: Yes. See, Mwafyuma who died [the old Mwafyuma, a 764
classificatory brother of Mwandisi, died the day before yesterday]. I 775
dreamed at night of Mwakalukwa [a classificatory son of Mwandisi 828
who died about 1932] and in the morning I told X here [his son-in-law who lives near was sitting with us and at once assented, 'Yes, he told me'] that I had dreamed of Mwakalukwa, and there were many deaths in the country—the people of Kisale were mourning and the peopleof Ndemba and that Mwakalukwa had said to me: 'Where are we dead to care for those who come?' And I said to X: 'If someone comes from Mwaya you will see that someone has died.' That very day my son here [Pugana his son was sitting near] came and said: 'Mwafyuma has died.'

This dream of Mwandisi's was cited as a proof that the shades come to receive a man at death. They came to Mwandisi in a dream—the shade of Mwakalukwa came, which he took to mean that the death was to be in Mwakalukwa's country, not Mwakalinga's.

QUESTION: You said the shades come to receive a man killed by 764
witches. Have they no power to drive away witches? 775

MWANDISI: No, the shades have not the power to drive away the 754
witches but Kyala drives them away.

QUESTION: Kyala? You mean the headman of the village!

MWANDISI: Yes, the headman drives them off, Kyala gave him the power (or duty).

iii. *Evidence of other informants*

KISOULE: We begin by burying the flowering head of an *ilitski* 764
banana—that is a person—then we rub forehead, elbow, and knee in the earth there and go to bathe. We push away the earth, that means our business above here (in the world of the living) is finished, we have really buried you, do not come here above, go to your place (below), in the world of the shades.

MWAILAPE (a Christian): They throw the stem of bananas into the water and the bark and feathers, but if it is a fowl and the bark is good, they take them back and they belong to the officiant. Throwing away the stem of bananas means: 'We are driving you (the shade) away. Be off!' The millet which is tossed in the faces of the participants is also thrown away in the water. Tossing it in their faces means: 'This is your food which you cultivated, go away with it.'

MWAKIBELE AND OTHERS: The touching of the ground is the ex-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selyn, Mulungude

764 pression of the wish that he will not come into our dreams and thoughts any more, and he does not.

QUESTION: Why the medicine?

MWAKISHILE: It is a ritual, a custom. The medicine and the touching of the ground are the same thing, they wish to stop him coming into our dreams.

QUESTION: Why do you eat bananas?

MWAKISHILE: We eat the main food of the country.

QUESTION: Why the fighting for the porridge?

MWAKISHILE: This is still to wish him good-bye, it is the end of the ritual. We must finish or he, the dead man, will not go away, half of him will still be there.

QUESTION: Why the beer?

MWAKISHILE: Beer is the drink of the country just as bananas are the food. The drinking is to finish saying good-bye. When we have eaten and drunk then we have done with him altogether. Before this he comes time after time into our dreams. If you do not perform the ritual some people say that when you get sick you will never die, but always be sick. If you are sick they will remember and say: 'Let us make beer for ritual.' That is why all must bring some millet to the ritual to ensure a quiet and easy death. Eating and drinking like this is the custom. Something bad will happen to the lineage if it is not done. To refuse to participate is to separate from your lineage.

MPOOO: At the ritual there should be many foods. The bean is there and we eat it; the lentil is there and we eat it; millet is there and the
764 banana and pumpkin-seed. That means: 'You shade, do not think that
● 775 there was little food at your ritual; the food which we have eaten with you, you have eaten.' Yes, the shade himself eats. We sprinkle on the earth (*pasi*)[1] whither you (the shade) have gone, meaning: 'Do not create hunger, bless the children that they may eat food and not just wander about.' If we do not perform the ritual properly the children will get thin, the shade says: 'You have not unloosed me, I am just on the road.' There should be many foods which means that we have given you (the shade) all the food which we men eat. The banana in which we put seeds is the corpse. The shades eat food, we dream that we eat with them, and if they are angry the beer in the house goes bad, and the milk goes bad.

764 Angombwike (the Christian son of a famous doctor) agreed, in answer to questions, that 'the eating of filth by madmen is like the filth of death, those faeces are the corpse'.

764 MWANDIN'S FRIEND (a man of 35 or 40): We perform the ritual that
775 Kyala may receive him, that the shades may receive him, because the

[1] *Pasi*: below and implies both on the ground and underground.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde
Kukwe

ritual is powerful. If you do not perform the ritual for your father or 764
perhaps that of your wife then you won't be a person, your body 775
comes to an end and you die, but you are present, you are still alive, you do not die when the body comes to an end, you take faeces as in the ritual. But when they bring millet and say: 'This is so-and-so's, and this so-and-so's' (naming him whose ritual you have omitted) and brew beer and drink it, then you die.

QUESTION: How do the dead appear to us?

ANSWER: They appear before our eyes at night. You dream and in the morning say: 'I was with the so-and-so's in the night, with the so-and-so's!

QUESTION: Where do you go (at death)?

ANSWER: When we die we go above. [177]

QUESTION: That's a new thing?

ANSWER: Yes, indeed, formerly we said we went below; our fathers and grandfathers said that. But we now say we go below to rot and stink only but since we look toward home when they bury us perhaps the heart (*indumbula*) goes above (*kumunepe*) and that is home. We have seen this in European times in books. No, I am not a Christian and I cannot read, I've just learnt this. . . .

KALUMBA (a doctor) AND MWAIYUMBA: The *ikipiki* medicine put into the beer and lees at 'the shaving of the sprouting hair' is the same medicine as that which we eat at the pumpkin-seed ritual. The *ikipiki* of the death ritual and the puberty ritual and the birth ritual is one and the same, but the medicine for twins is different. . . . There is one *ikipiki* used in all the three rituals—puberty, birth, and death—but to it is added another medicine which is different for each of the three. *Ikipiki* is our kinship, it is our blood (*ikipiki be bukama bwetu, ye ikipa* [185]
yetu); when my wife has borne a child and no one wipes its mouth with the *ikipiki* it means it is not my child, it is just a bastard from the [181]
veld, it is no relative of mine but a stranger. In the puberty ritual it is the same, we treat the girl with the *ikipiki* of her husband. She moves from our lineage, from that of her father, she is now a stranger, not their relative (*ikamma ukikale kyetu, kubagwise, mundu kimu, ala ukama gwude*). When someone has died it is the same. We eat food together with the deceased, the shade, and his blood. It is like the Swahili custom of eating each other's blood to create kinship. It means: 'You were our [171]
kinsman from afore-time, but now it is finished, you are a stranger.' But the medicine for the twin ritual is separate, it is quite different.

2. IN KUKWE COUNTRY

The Kukwe ritual of death differs in detail from that of Selya 764
and MuNgonde, but it is performed with the same overt purpose: 134
to drive away the dead from the bodies and dreams of the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kakoe

158 kind. We take such a one [either type] to a doctor, tying a rope round
757 his waist on the way. For if we leave him free he goes and drowns himself in the lake. So then the doctor says 'His heart has suddenly turned over', and gives him a powdered medicine to eat from a bark-cloth. Then when he has eaten the medicine the doctor puts a finger at the back of his tongue to make him vomit, again and again. So then the filth comes out of him. Then the doctor says: 'Don't eat meat or fish until I give you other medicine later.' Then he ties some of the same medicine in two bark-cloths and ties one round his neck, one round his loins. . . .

158 Sometimes a man in the mad fit finds a woman, then he takes the
684 leaves off his waist, catches hold of her and, forcing her to the ground, has intercourse with her. Then when the woman returns home she complains that a man in the mad fit has caught and raped her. Then her husband says: 'Well, it's all over now. If he'd been in normal health I'd have sued him for a cow for adultery before the chief, but seeing he is mad there's no point in my doing so, it's all over now!' . . .

158 Sometimes madness comes by itself, although no ritual has been
775 omitted, sometimes because they have not performed a ritual. The symptoms of the two kinds are exactly the same, their cause is different. The one connected with ritual comes because the shades are angry: 'Why have you left that child untreated, without putting stones on its head . . . ? It seems it is of no account.' And then the child goes mad.

757 When madness comes of itself the doctor takes the patient to a
755 waterfall and lets the water tumble on his head; then he makes him vomit, and the vomit is carried away in the water. But that which comes from ritual they don't treat in this way; they make him vomit at home, and then perform the ritual for him.

158 Sometimes madness brings visions (*injini*)—the man lets everything
787 come in his speech and says of people: 'What sort are they? They are witches!' And if there is a gathering he speaks out: 'You are a witch—you bewitch your neighbour's cows!' So then people ask what he means by letting everything come in his speech like this, and they are told he has the mad fit on him. The madness gives him power to see the witches, he sees them surely. And of old if a madman with the fit on him accused you of witchcraft you would go at once to drink the ordeal.
[159] And if the ordeal accused you too then your house was burnt over you!

764 QUESTION: Why the washing and eating porridge?
MWAKALEMBA: If we don't do this then the children will vomit a watery fluid.

I put a direct question to him about the sausages of porridge and he admitted with a smile, rather an embarrassed one: 'Yes, well, you have understood it; yes, it is a symbol of eating excrement . . . we do it at night.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

763 deed. We wash at the eating of millet to say: 'You shade, this millet which we eat comes to you because you brooded over us.' We wash our hands and mouths.

764 QUESTION: Why do you eat millet?

775 MWASALEMBA: The millet belongs to the shade. When we brew beer we put some in a calabash cup, but it is not drunk, it is left for five days and becomes lees [i.e. the liquid dries up], then we say: 'The shade has drunk it.'[1] We pray to him and say: 'He is angry.' We brew beer and pour it out in the banana grove, and say: 'You shade, what are you angry about, why have you brooded over the beer?' (They go first to divine.) We speak in the evening in the banana grove and all the children listen, and my wife in the house.

Similarly, if a cow calves and then does not take to its calf, does not lick it, then doctors say: 'The shades have caught hold of the cow, they have brooded over it. Then I pray with water only [in the other case there is both blowing out water and pouring of beer], and I speak as before. Then in the evening the cow takes to its calf and we say: 'The shades refused to let it recognize its calf.' That beer stays for two days —it's not strong!

764 QUESTION: The licking porridge off the mid-rib of the banana leaf?

MWASALEMBA: We eat porridge and he [the shade] eats. We eat off the mid-rib of the banana leaf because the banana grove is the shade's. When someone has died we cut the banana grove, and in the banana grove we pray. It is the shade's own.

764 QUESTION: Throwing beans into the pot?

775 MWASALEMBA: We say: 'You shade! We are eating these beans. Since you have brooded over our fellow who has died, receive him.' For we do not pray to him who has died now, but to that first one who died first. If we do not give him beans then the beans dry up, they shrivel in the fields and people say: 'The shade is angry. We have made a mistake in not giving him beans, we have not taken care of our fellow, his child.' Because the shade creates the beans. Yes, he, the shade, creates all foods, millet and maize and all.

764 QUESTION: The stealing of bananas?

MWASALEMBA: The millet and beans used are those of the house, but the stem of bananas must come from the house of a friend because bananas belong to the shade. Do you pray to him in the hoed fields? In the millet? You pray to him in the banana grove! Because of this you seek another's banana stem!

764 QUESTION: Circling round the fire to the harp and singing?

775 MWASALEMBA: The first shade who has died we have within us, he has brooded over us, we make him circle round, we are with him.

[1] At the drinking of the beer of inheritance in the Ndali ritual the shades are called upon. 'If the beer froths up that means the shades have heard', and the calabash cup is dashed to pieces on the hearth.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

QUESTION: Where is the one who has just died? 764

MWASALEMBA: It is him the shade has brooded over. We say: 'You 775
shade, look after this child of yours, care for him and don't abandon him. He also should be a shade, let the others speak to him in the future.' When we sing 'Farewell . . .' we lament him who has died.

QUESTION: And the trampling dance (*ukukanya inganya*)?

MWASALEMBA: We say: 'You shade, care for your fellow, don't desert him, may he be with you in your body.' We trample the ground because the shade is in the ground, he is within the body, he is underground, everywhere.

QUESTION: What do you mean by 'in your body'?

MWASALEMBA: Because the shade has created us, we came from him, we die, we go there to him; not to others, but to him.

QUESTION: The two leaves and beating and saying: '*Syeku, syeku* of *father, syeku, syeku of mother*'?

MWASALEMBA: Syeku is the name we have been given for the shade. We say: 'The shade, the shade of father, the shade, the shade of mother!' because since a woman has died we speak to the shade as if the husband was 'father' (*tata*) who brooded over his wife. He has brooded over all us living, both me and my wife. That is what these leaves are [i.e. the husband and wife]. We speak to that man who was first buried, saying: 'Perhaps you are within, perhaps you are beneath, oh shade!' We speak to that first man who was the first to die.

Sweeping the house is that it may be clean (*usuela*). Before that it is [783]
dirty. . . .

The shade brooded both over the dead and over me, the living; he brooded over the dead who is with him and over me who am alive; I am in him—we all are. . . .

QUESTION: Why the water on the roof? 764

MWASALEMBA: If we neglect this then a child will go mad, he runs 753
off to the water and the water comes into his nose [i.e. he drowns] because we have not given him water in the doorway of the little hut there. If we neglect something then the child goes mad and runs off and catches hold of faeces, he smears faeces on his body and urinates into his hands and washes with the urine.

QUESTION: Why does the shade want him to do these filthy things? 764

MWASAMELMA: Because if we do not perform the ritual for him and 775
do not care for him we do not remember him, then he says: 'Since you do not remember me this child will also get dirty, because I have got dirty underground, I am dead. See, you buried me! The earth has entered my mouth and eyes, why do you not care for me?'

QUESTION: But even if you do treat him ritually, still the earth is in his mouth! How is he satisfied?

MWASALEMBA: Because this shadow (*ipungula*) [pointing in explanation to the shadows of the banana trees] is what we care for, it is the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Ku Kwe

775 764 shade (*jonyuka*)! That (which was buried) is just earth, the body has rotted, it is the shade that we care for.

QUESTION: And the necklace of banana bark?

764 MWASALEMBA: We sleep with them. In the morning we bathe again and throw them in the water. . . . Yes, indeed, some throw them away in the little hut. It is the shade, we perform the ritual and throw him away. . . . If we do not perform the ritual we do not sleep, then we pray in the banana grove and are startled.

QUESTION: Why the banana bark?

MWASALEMBA: It is with the banana that we perform the ritual: the plantain is what we steal and the sweet banana what we cut at home, and in the banana grove we pray.

When a man dies his wives sit in a row on a bark-cloth. It's at the shaving of the hair, the doctor shaves them on the bark-cloth. It's a new one because we say: 'You must throw away the bark-cloths which your husband who has died caught hold of, and wear other cloths.' So they sit on a new one.

QUESTION: What do they do with it?

MWASALEMBA: They throw it away on the litter.

QUESTION: Where?

MWASALEMBA: In the little hut. It means: 'Here we have mourned; let us throw away everything, let us wear others.' If a woman has died we men do not sit on the bark-cloth, but if I have died then my wife sits on the bark-cloth and throws away her old ones, and also when a son has died the mother throws away her old bark-cloths, but she does not sit on the bark-cloth! No! And she does not throw away her bark-cloth for the death of a small son, nor for a daughter, even though she be grown up. No! See, she is also a woman and wears a bark-cloth in front. But for a grown son a mother throws away her bark-cloths, saying: 'Because he was my child, I bore him, he sucked my breasts, so I throw away the bark-cloths.' Only for a grown son who has wives in his house does the mother throw away her bark-cloth, not for a bachelor.

764 QUESTION: The stones between the fingers?

775 MWASALEMBA: We throw him away. It is the shade.

QUESTION: Is the first intercourse after a death a ritual or not?

764 MWASALEMBA: No, it is not a ritual; we begin to have intercourse
768 when the ritual is finished. But among the Penja when someone has
171 died and the ritual has been performed and is finished, the husband takes a cow and gives it to the father of his wife, saying: 'I take the woman.' Then he has intercourse with her. But we do not, except in the case of twins.

833 QUESTION: And ordinary intercourse?

775 MWASALEMBA: The shade is together with the heart (*alenje indumbule*); it is he who is roused and goes to a woman, it is he who stiffens

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

us in front, we men, and the woman is also roused. If you have not the 833
shade in you (*ukanajo unyuka*)[1], then you are sterile, you are impotent, 775
you do not copulate with women; we say that the shades have brooded over you. Why do they not rouse him to go to women? He just looks at them. Because the shade rouses within a man and says: 'Ha!' It rouses a man to copulate with a woman. If it has brooded on him then it does not rouse him; it is within him, it does not wish to come out.

QUESTION: Why do you let the hair grow in the death ritual?

MWASALEMBA: The hair is very important, it's very important. 764

Mwasalemba identified growing hair after spearing a man, and after the birth of twins and later shaving, with growing hair and shaving in the death ritual.

QUESTION: So letting the hair grow at an ordinary death is part of the ritual?

MWASALEMBA: It [the hair] is the corpse's. We have not yet driven him away. At the shaving we drive him off.

Syungu (wife of Mwasalemba) told me that stones were placed 764
between the toes, not only of the participants in the death ritual, 775
but also of a bride (*usungu*)[2] and that the stones are children (*amabwe bo bana*). The girl should bear six or ten children to her husband.

'But', I said, 'at the death ritual you throw away the corpse, the shade.'

Syungu answered: 'Yes, it is so, children are born by the power [842]
of the shades (*mmaka ga bayuka*).'

Mwasalemba himself, when asked about this, said: 'The stones are the shade, we throw him away so that when he has gone the girl may bear children.'

SYUMOU: When a girl does not bear children we say: 'Perhaps 842
the shades are angry, the husband has not finished giving marriage- 775
cattle.'

QUESTION: And madness?

SYUMOU: If she goes mad we say, if we have not treated her: 'We 158
have neglected the ritual, we have not treated her!' The girl runs about 755
aimlessly, she smears herself with filth. But when we have treated her and she goes mad then we say: 'Perhaps Kyala has deserted me, see nothing remains, we have treated her.'

[1] He used both the phrases *ukanio kujo unyuka* (to be without the shade) and *unyuka ikumukatele* (the shade broods on him) for the same phenomenon.

[2] *Usungu*: a girl who has reached puberty but has not yet borne a child; one undergoing the puberty-marriage ritual (*ukusungu*).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

764 QUESTION: What are the stones in the clefts of hands and toes?
773 MWASALEMBA: Kyala when he created men said: 'At the death ritual do this, it is the shade, it is the body.'

775 Mwasalemba went on to discuss the puberty ritual and attributed sexual desire and diarrhœa to the shades. He explained that faeces (which are buried) 'go below to the land of the shades' (*vide* p. 127; 210 ff.).

764 SYUNGU: If we leave out something a child runs off to Mwibonde [158] [wild pasture-land] and catches hold of that which is bad and pants with madness (*ikigili*). Some go to Mwibonde and gather faggots and put them on their heads then throw them away again.

QUESTION: How is it that people ever omit a ritual?

SYUNGU: Some omit some of it. They make mistakes out of ignorance.

QUESTION: But do any omit it altogether?

[184] SYUNGU: No, only the Christians. No pagan neglects it altogether.

QUESTION: But those who have run away and are not there (e.g. women who have eloped with lovers)?

SYUNGU: Yes, indeed, it is they who neglect it, but those who are at home perform the ritual.

QUESTION: How about stealing the banana bunch?

SYUNGU: Yes, we steal it, but we tell the owner beforehand, and when we eat the mash we mix the stolen with the home-grown, that which is stolen is always a plantain and that from home is a sweet banana. The plantain is the man's and the sweet banana the woman's. And when we bathe we wear a plantain leaf, which has been stolen, in front, and a sweet banana leaf, which comes from home, behind.

MWASALEMBA:[1] The girl brought the spear of her husband and stuck it in the ground. At the end Losi (my eldest son and her full brother) pulled it up and it will always be on my wall. The spear is an essential part of the ritual; without it the ritual would go wrong. If she came with no spear we should send her back again to fetch one.

764 We drink the medicine because, when our son-in-law has died and
587 our daughter lies with another who has not been our son-in-law before, if she comes and gives us food with the filth (*indafu*) on her then we gasp and cough with *ingotolo*. It is quite different if she runs away from her husband when he is alive. Then we drink no medicine. Yes, then she comes, with *indafu* on her, and gives us food and nothing happens.
[328] I don't know why. Kyala made us black people like this. It is when her husband dies that we drink. We drink as soon as she lies with her new husband, not after she becomes pregnant. If we see that she is pregnant before she comes we are angry. She should come first to the ritual and then conceive. She does not wait until her periods stop before coming

[1] Referring to the *ingonde* ritual for his daughter described on p. 66.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

764 QUESTION: Why the leaves and bananas?

KAKUNE: If you do not wear these and throw them away your own children [i.e. children of the participant] will die soon after birth; you beget a daughter and she dies, a son and he dies, then people say: 'See, you did not perform the ritual.' . . .

QUESTION: What is the meaning of the death ritual?

KAKUNE: Because the deceased has died on us (*atufwelile mumbeli*), if we do not treat him, he looks on us, we are together with him, he does not move away at all, so then, we drive him off.

He then described the acts of the ritual in great detail exactly checking what Mwaikambo and I saw when Kalata's mother died (cf. pp. 238–44) except that he did not mention grinding ointment [184] at the circling round. I asked about this and he thought it was not done in his lineage but was not sure.

QUESTION: The stones between the toes?

KAKUNE: It is to make a separation, it is our separation, we are driving him off; we go into the water with pebbles and throw them away, they are the deceased, we drive him off.

QUESTION: And what about running through the house letting the water drip on you after bathing?

KAKUNE: Yes, indeed, we come from the stream carrying water which we have drawn, and flowers in our hands, and we throw the flowers on the thatch.

QUESTION: What does it mean?

764 KAKUNE: It is because we have come from the stream, we have
●775 driven him away in the stream, but we bring back water we have drawn and flowers—they are the deceased. It means we are with him for he has not moved (*akasama*); let us drive him out again. We throw away the flowers on the thatch and we pour water on the thatch and it trickles down on the body. It is he [the deceased] whom we receive. If we drive him away altogether at the water what will he say to us?

QUESTION: You receive him and drive him off again?

KAKUNE: We drive him off so that his whole body should not be [828] seen, because we fear to see the dead . . . and at the same time we do *not* drive him away, he will come in dreams to tell us of misdeeds (*ukutubula inongwa*).

When we receive him we drive him away again at the anointing with ointment. The doctor anoints us on the toe, knee, elbow, stomach, and forehead, and says: 'I have finished them, anoint yourselves.' Then we anoint ourselves and say: 'You have moved to another village.' But at the same time we do not throw him away altogether, we pray to him

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

and say: 'You, Father, stand by me.' We bring him back when we have bathed. He also bathed there, he is present![1] 764 775

QUESTION: The meaning of the shaving?

KAKUNE: The doctor takes a bunch of *ikisajelo* grass and a little millet beer and then makes two cross lines in the hair before shaving, and he shaves us.

QUESTION: Why?

KAKUNE: It is the ritual, we drive him off.

Being unable to get any more I then suggested that the *ikisajelo* and beer represented the shade and that they took him on to their bodies in order to throw him off.

Kakune: 'Yes, that's it, you are very intelligent for you understand it! That's it!'

QUESTION: And is the *ikisajelo* grass the shade's which the seers uproot? [824]

KAKUNE: Yes, we have heard that long ago there were three seers (*abakunguluka*), X and Y and Z [I missed the names], who went with two village headmen to look; one seer uprooted the *ikisajelo* grass to look beneath at the land of the shades and he called the village headmen to look. When they shrank back and said 'He!' he said it was a homestead such as those above.

QUESTION: Did this happen in the day-time?

KAKUNE: It happened in the day-time, in the open, not in a dream. But later on, when one village headman had gone he said: 'Let me look again.' He tried to uproot it but the *ikisajelo* grass was stuck, it would not come up. But all that happened a long time ago; seers are not seen nowadays. And when we have finished everything, at the time of destroying the ritual house, the doctor touches us all with the razor, that is the tuft (*itemelo*).

QUESTION: Is this before the beer of inheritance? 764

KAKUNE: Yes, before the beer, on the day of bathing. It means that letting the 'hair of the corpse' grow is finished, we have finished. You may drink freely. And have we written about the roasted chicken and the bananas?[2]

G. W.: No.

KAKUNE: What? No? But we all eat these with our fellow villagers—and a bull if we have killed one, for we kill a bull if we have it—at the bathing in the stream. And in the evening the doctor prepares the

[1] The statement above was not made quite so straightforwardly as it is written down; at certain points Kakune stopped and I prompted him either with: 'And then?' or 'What does that mean?' There were no leading questions and I took down his words exactly.

[2] Our best informants often asked whether what they told us was properly recorded.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

The bundle of medicine and the belt are burnt with the litter at the coming out. And whenever a child is born, every time, not only at the birth of the first or second, it is washed by the husband's mother with this same powdered medicine from the store in her pot. If this is not done they fear that perhaps the child will go mad or something dreadful will happen. They say of the powdered medicine: 'It is our kinship, it is our blood (*Bo bukamu bwetu, lyo ilopa lyetu*).' And if a girl runs off with a lover in the veld they mock her and say: 'Who has given you powdered medicine? You are no relative.' They say: 'She is not our relative, she has not got our blood. . . .' The medicine is to create relationship (*ubukamu*). Using it means that the bride is now of my lineage (*ikikolo*). You know that burial customs differ. When they have used the medicine they will bury my wives as they bury me, either sitting up or lying down, as the case may be. We Christians do not do this because we have another way. We take hands before the priest and say: 'This is my relative (*unkamu gwangu*).'

Another informant (a pagan), questioned separately, gave a similar interpretation. He said: 'Washing with the medicine means, "my wife has come. She is now my relative (*nkamu gwangu*)." '

As already indicated, the act of washing with her husband proclaims the seniority of a wife. Washing with her own mother and her father or young brother, is to proclaim kinship. 'The girl washes with a brother to show that she has brothers and sisters. If she does not do so it shows that she is a poor person without relatives.' 'She has washed at her husband's place, then she comes home and her father honours her by looking for a boy, not an old one but a young one, to wash with her. Then the girl thinks: "I have fathers, I am no bastard." But if she washed alone she would think: "Perhaps I am not their child, perhaps I have no relatives." ' Kasitile said: 'If she washes with me, her father, it means: "She is my child, I begot her myself, she is my first-born." ' Mwakionde, after discussing the circumstances under which a father washes, said: 'To wash is to admit that I have lived and borne a child and grown up.' 'And if a brother does it?' we asked. 'It means: "You young man, you are her father." If they ever quarrel the brother says: "Why do you not respect me, your father? We washed together in water." ' A young brother is chosen 'because the grown-up boys are going about. They want one who has not made love to girls.'

Standing in the doorway of her mother's hut (or of the woman acting in place of her mother if the latter is dead or divorced) is

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

585 881 child at her husband's.' Neglect to kill the bull may result in sterility. Mwaseba, a middle-aged man, said:

> If the officiants, the mothers of the girl, have not eaten, and the father also, the girl will not bear a child, these people are angry and the shades are angry, they (the shades) help them (the living). And if you do not perform the other customs of the litter the shades are angry, the fathers and the mothers. They say: 'What! Have you not treated the child?'

Mwakionde, the doctor, explained:

[843] When a woman conceives and has a miscarriage, it is *mindu*, the shades are angry. Perhaps if we have not killed the bull of puberty we buy one. The shades are angry, saying: 'Why have we not received a libation of blood poured on the ground for our grandchild? They have done wrong towards us, we who created them.' The girl does not bear a child because pouring out the blood of a beast (bull or cow) is to pray (*ukona ililopa lya nombe ko kwiputa*).

Mwakobela, our neighbour, said:

> If we have not eaten the bull of puberty, they bewitch us (*bikundoga*), the child does not bear a child. Our fellows in the lineage bewitch us, they say: 'We have not eaten the puberty meat.' Then, later on, the husband brings the bull and we eat, and the *ija mmapa* meat we throw in the banana grove, and we pray and pray and the girl conceives.

842 775 The fertility of the girl is believed to depend upon driving away the shade of her father's lineage from her body. We have already quoted (p. 98) the prayer: 'Here is the meat! I have eaten the food of others, *come out a little*, may she bear a child at her husband's.' Mwaisilage explained this conception:

> Those of old said: 'We drive away Kyala and the shades, may she bear at her husband's.' She moves to others, to a different lineage. May that lineage rise up from the dead (*kisyukege ikikolo kila*). If we do not treat the girl she will not bear a child at her husband's.

To understand this it is necessary to understand the Nyakyusa theory of conception. It is held that sexual desire in both men and women comes from Kyala and the shades, and without their support a man is impotent, a woman barren. Kasitile was quite explicit on the matter:

> Kyala is in the belly. He causes the blood of a woman which forms a child to flow and the blood of the man also. We say that Kyala is in the belly; he watches over us at the conception of a child. But our fathers,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

Mwakanjoki and his fellows, said that Lwembe is there (in the belly), they did not speak of Kyala. Did you not hear at Lubaga?[1] What did I ask for? 842 775

G. W.: You asked for a child!

KASITILE: Yes, I asked for a child. The menstrual blood is that which we discharge when lying together. I, the man, discharge, and the woman also discharges. If Kyala does not support us, then that blood degenerates, it becomes blood which flows out at the period. 842 841

G. W.: But the girl has periods before intercourse?

KASITILE: Yes, indeed, that is her blood. Does a woman not discharge? If she sleeps alone, as a bachelor, her blood just flows out, it does not create a child. In intercourse we try to discharge together. If I see that the woman is gasping I try to discharge with her. If I am gasping and wish to discharge, I wait for the woman. Yes, there is choice. We are all like that. But our fathers feared that if the woman discharges first she will bear a girl, and if I, the man, discharge first she will bear a boy! The shades of her fathers are there in the body of a girl, and we drive them away. It is like the case of a widow; the situations are just alike. We treat the girl and say: 'Now the woman is free.' At the eating of the bull we seem to say: 'You shade, be present and look upon us. This meat is for you to go away a little. May she bear children.' [833] 842 775

G. W.: So if the shade is in the girl she cannot bear children?

KASITILE: What can the shade go away with if you do not pray?

QUESTION: What happens if she washes and performs all the ritual with a man, a husband, and then leaves him, without having had full intercourse, for another man?

KASITILE: It does not matter. She is freed from the lineage of her father, she has moved to another lineage, so they do not treat her again. (*Sika mbombo, abwike nkikolo kya gwise, asamile nkikolo ikingi, popapo batikuntendekesya kangi.*)

On another occasion Kasitile said that intercourse took place 'when Kyala and the shades have gathered there. They come out in the woman and her belly sprouts [i.e. she conceives].'

Kasitile was not offering a personal interpretation when he talked about conception. Conversation with a number of people showed that the ideas he put forward were generally held. Mwandisi, the old blind chief, when asked where the blood to beget children came from, replied:

It is from him who makes us all do things, Kyala and the shades together.

[1] Rituals are performed on behalf of the country at Lubaga. Kasitile was a hereditary priest. See *Communal Rituals among the Nyakyusa* (forthcoming).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

841 QUESTION: And menses?
●775 MWANDISI: When the shades are angry a woman is constantly menstruating and does not bear a child; if they are not angry she conceives.

833 And on another occasion he said:
842
775 Lust comes from the shades; if they are angry with you you are impotent; you cannot beget a child.

His wife added: 'My husband says in his heart: "Let me go to my wife." It is the shade that makes him.'

One informant after another mentioned *both* Kyala (or Lwembe) *and* the shades as being present in intercourse. Mwakionde, after [843] talking of miscarriages being due to the anger of the shades, went on:

Kyala has created the bowel of desire. If a man is impotent we say Kyala has not given him breath to beget a child.

KAKUJU: If my child runs off with a man, whether a stranger or her husband, before she has reached puberty and I continue angry, if Kyala has helped me she does not bear a child. Then it is said 'her father was angry'. They come to me bringing the remaining marriage-cattle and I pray and she bears a child.

QUESTION: If the husband asked for her properly and deflowered her before puberty?

KAKUJU: There is no case, it was all right, even long ago. I said: 'Finish paying the cattle.' Perhaps he begged me, saying: 'I am poor, Father,' and I was satisfied.

842 No pagan questions the power of the shades over fertility, and
775 this power is believed to be exercised by the mother's lineage, as well as that of the father. Angombwike, the Christian, said:

[881] The pagans fear that if they do not perform the puberty ritual when a girl reaches puberty, she will dry up. The blood will not come again even though she is not pregnant. Then, if her periods do not come for two or three months, like this, she will never bear a child. They say the shades are angry and have bound her fertility. And if she does not reach puberty at all, if menstruation does not begin, her father prays in the banana grove, saying: 'You, fathers, what are you angry about?' And if the girl's mother's brother is angry on account of cattle—perhaps her father has not given marriage-cattle properly for her mother—he, the mother's brother, binds a wisp of the litter (*ulufumbo*) from her puberty ritual in the loft, then the girl will not bear a child. Inquiry is made of a diviner who says: 'The mother's brother has bound her.' The father takes a cow to him and says: 'I am sorry, I have done wrong, I

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

842
have thought of it now, this is the cow.' Then, in the evening, the 775
mother's brother blows out water in the banana grove and prays much to the fathers. And when he has prayed he says: 'Send the girl to a doctor to drink medicine.' Then the girl bears a child. The pagans say of us Christians when we have children without performing the ritual: 'You have a medicine, you are baptized with a medicine.'

Mwakobela confirmed that the mother's brother, like the father, may prevent a girl bearing a child.

Yes, it is so, if I do not give marriage-cattle for my wife our child will not bear. We go to divine and the oracle catches hold of my wife saying that the fathers are angry. We ask what they are angry about, and the answer is 'cattle'. Then I, the father of the girl, go with a cow and leave it and return. My wife and daughter remain there. They pray and pray and the girl conceives.

It is clear, therefore, that the shades are present in intercourse 842
and control conception. At marriage the shade of her father must 833
'move aside a little' so that the bride may conceive, and she her- 775
self becomes dangerous to her mother (and in a lesser degree to her father) because she has mingled her blood with that of another lineage. Mingling the blood of different lineages is dangerous and a bride can safely meet her mother only after performing a ritual in which her parents, as well as herself, become 'one flesh' with her husband. 'When a bride brings a hen and millet to her mother it is to say: "Mother, I have wiped my husband's genitals, I have grown up."' All our informants were agreed that this
ilibalaga or *ilibuko* (both words are used) is to safeguard the mother's [753
health, particularly to prevent her suffering from diarrhœa. 751]
Mwandisi's statement was clear:

In the puberty ritual, when a bride has come from her husband, 881
having lain with him, she catches hold of a little millet and a fowl 585
without washing herself and carries them to her mother. The mother 763
eats it with the fowl that her belly may be firm. If the daughter does 753
not bring these things, then, when she drinks from the same calabash 834
as her mother, she oversteps her mother, who has diarrhœa. Yes, the illness comes from the shades because she has come hot from the bed. . . . This diarrhœa comes from the belly when those below are angry and those above also. They say: 'The mother has overstepped the child' or 'The child has overstepped the mother'. If a girl has reached puberty we, the parents, do not come together until she has gone to her husband and lain with him. If we have intercourse we

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

MUNGASALWA: The bride does not cross water for it is said that the 585 881
blood which began to flow when she reached puberty will not dry on her body if she does.

To sleep on the litter and to refuse to sleep on sleeping-mats is a sign of childhood (for during childhood girls do not think much about [863] cleanliness, but are dirty); it means that they leave behind them [literally 'come out from'] childish things. The litter is burnt because if it has not been burnt the children take bits of it to make a fire and cook food, then, when they have eaten that food, their bodies are sick. We say the body becomes unhealthily fat (*ukujegejala*). Food is collected for a bride because if, later, a woman, who has not had food collected for her, eats food collected for another bride going through the puberty ritual, she will fall sick and her body will grow unhealthily fat. Bringing food for the *ukusumbulila* and giving gifts at the *ukugwa* are to congratulate the bride because she has grown up, she is now an adult.

X: The wearing of banana leaves [at the bringing out] is a sign of fertility. The ritual is finished, the girl is someone's wife now. . . . The [831] plantain represents the penis, the sweet banana the clitoris.

Sitting in a stream and letting water carry away pebbles placed 783
between fingers and toes is a symbol of purification and separation 775
from the shade. The first element—purification—was mentioned by most informants: 'The rite means that the dirt is finished,' said Porokoto's wife; but the more self-conscious identified 'dirt' with the shade. Mwasalemba made the matter quite clear. When asked why pebbles were placed in the clefts of fingers and toes, he replied: 'Kyala, when he created men, said: "At death throw it away, it is the shade, it is the body."'

QUESTION: In the puberty ritual? 881
MWASALEMBA: It is to say that the shade has brooded over the child, 775
since he created blood we throw him away. May the shade go with these stones, then may she bear children; if he does not go, if you do not treat the girl, then Kyala broods over her and she does not bear children.

QUESTION: Why does she avoid her father at this time? 881
MWASALEMBA: Because I, the father, and her mother, perform the 834
ritual for our child. Our shade has entered into her, has brooded over her, therefore we do not come together on the mat until we have finished treating our child; when we have finished, and have treated her, then we do what we will on the mat. If I want to lie with my wife [during the ritual] she refuses, saying: 'Our child has not yet finished, she is still undergoing the puberty ritual.' But if she agrees and we lie together, then our child will never bear. When we have finished the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN1
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

881 When we have finished the
834 ritual I come together with my wife again, but if our child is unmarried
[833] it is taboo to procreate a child, we practise *coitus interruptus*, the semen falls on the mat. . . . This is until the girl goes to her husband, until she is married. If my wife wears a bark-cloth I say to her during our daughter's puberty ritual: 'Arrange your bark-cloth carefully lest I, the man, desire you, I shall catch hold of you and we will cause the shade to make our child barren.' When she has gone to her husband we say our shade has finished, he has gone away in the water. Our child has gone to another shade. Yes, she also has intercourse with her husband at his home, but that does not matter, I have intercourse with my wife.

834 He was emphatic that the parents begin full intercourse as soon as the girl goes to her husband, it is not necessary to wait for her to become pregnant.

833 QUESTION: What do the spirits do in intercourse?
775 MWASALEMBA: The shade causes my penis to stand up and says: 'Go to the woman, there.' And also the woman's shade says: 'Your husband comes into you.' It is the shades which create desire, then we have intercourse, the shades meet together, hers—the woman's—and mine. If I do not go to my wife the shade says: 'Why, what's wrong with my place? Are there thorns? Why do you not enter?' They brood over (*bikobatela*) us both, both me and my wife.

QUESTION: What do they want?

MWASALEMBA: They want to create a child.

838 QUESTION: Why then do men desire masturbation and sodomy? [At
775 first when I asked this he said: 'No, the shade is a woman,' but then he
839 corrected himself].

MWASALEMBA: It is the shade which creates this desire, we have it within. A youth masturbates, the semen falls on the ground—perhaps two youths; it's also the shade. And a woman also masturbates. . .

775 QUESTION: You perform the rituals for many reasons?
771 MWASALEMBA: Yes, if we do not perform the rituals the shade broods on us and we do not bear children. Perhaps he broods on the crops, and they do not grow well but poorly, perhaps we run mad.

On another occasion Mwasalemba said:

775
833 The shade is in the heart. It is the shade which desires to go to a woman, which causes us men to have erections and excites desire in women. If you have not got the shade you are impotent, you do not go to women. We say: 'The shade has brooded over this man, why do they not rouse him to go to women?' He just looks at women. Then the shade rouses up in the belly and says: 'Ha!' It rouses up and the man has intercourse with a woman. If it has brooded over him, it does not

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

775
rouse him, it does not wish to come out. And although the faeces are 833
firm they are the corpse. Because we bury a corpse underground, and faeces also go underground to the shades. They disappear by night, that is the shade. If someone excretes faeces and finds it in the grass we say: 'The shade has caught hold of him.' 514

QUESTION: Are faeces associated with sexual intercourse? 775

MWASALEMBA: Yes, the shade does both things, he causes diarrhœa 833
and sexual intercourse. If you defaecate firm stools that is not the shade, that is the food we eat, but watery diarrhœa which troubles you repeatedly at night—that is the shade. If you have diarrhœa for three days people say: 'The shades have hammered you' or 'The shade has caught hold of you.'

QUESTION: Madness? 158

MWASAMEMBA: That is the shade because it says: 'Since you have me 775
in your belly, and they have not treated you, I cause this—these faeces 514
are the corpse. A madman defaecates and catches hold of his faeces, perhaps he eats them, perhaps he binds it up in the grass and catches hold of it. It is the corpse.'

Kakune, the doctor, also interpreted the puberty ritual as being, 833
in one aspect, the transference of a girl from her father's group to 775
her husband's and, like Kasitile and Mwasalemba, he identified 881
sexual desire and potency with the shades. He said:

At puberty a girl has left her father's and has gone to others; if she dies he to whom she has gone buries her.

QUESTION: Where does the blood of a woman come from?

KAKUNE: If the girl is unmarried, from her shades; they create her blood, but in the ritual we treat her so that she moves to my place, she comes to my shades; the blood of a married woman is created by my shades and hers together. And the 'blood' of a man [i.e. semen] also comes from the shades.

QUESTION: Do the shades reveal themselves at birth?

KAKUNE: Yes, because if I am angry or my father is angry I do not beget a child, but when he has prayed I do so. If I am angry with the woman and she has caught hold of me and injured me, then we do not have a child. The ordeal (*umwafi*) convicts the woman. She goes to [627]
her father who prays. Then we have a child.

QUESTION: Where does the power to bear and beget children come 842
from? 775

KAKUNE: From the shades, you have the shades in your belly. If [931]
they are not there you are all like women in the house, you cannot have an erection, but when the shades work, you have an erection. 833

QUESTION: Whose shades are present at intercourse? 775

KAKUNE: Mine, the man's and the woman's, we both have them,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

833 775 they both work in us, they are not only in one partner. They work in the woman and in the man, they work in both of us.

885 Mwangwanda, an elderly pagan, explained the symbolism of the new hearth-brick at some length:

> We take a new hearth-brick and plant it by the hearth in the bride's house. It means: 'You have grown up, you are a woman, you must always cook a pot,' and she cooks on that hearth-brick. . . . It means: 'You have grown up, the food that your mother sent will come no more, you must cook for your husband yourself.' It is planted for the senior wife only, not for others. If I find that my first wife is not a virgin we do not plant a brick for her—she has lain with another. But if she has a younger sister and she brings her as a junior wife and she is a virgin and I deflower her myself, then the first sister is still the senior wife and we plant a brick for her and her child will inherit as the senior son, for another shut up her womb [i.e. made her virgin again]. If she has no younger sister I may marry her, but she will not be my chief wife. The next one I marry will be my senior wife and for her the brick will be planted and her son will inherit.

881 585 There is also an association, not made explicit by our informants, between a log of firewood and a marriageable woman. One of the tasks of the bride and her maids is to fetch heavy logs of firewood which are stored in her mother's loft. At least one log goes with her when she is taken by her 'mothers' to her husband, and this she keeps all her life, taking it with her if she moves. From it the shades are said to chip splinters when they wish to warm themselves at the dying fire at night. After she has gone to her husband and before she conceives, a bride is forbidden to touch the firewood in her mother's loft, and in the funeral ritual, when a widow returns home for the *ingotolo* she steals a log of firewood from her mother's loft and takes it to her husband's. Into the cracks of this log the officiants press seeds. It seems probable that the reddish log represents a woman in her reproductive capacity, which is formally transferred to her husband and segregated from the reproductive activities of her mother. This, we repeat, is our own interpretation, not formulated by any Nyakyusa.

783 784 The taboo on a bride who has slept with her husband approaching her mother until she has brought the ritual *ilibuko* is associated with the danger of mixing the bloods of different lineages.

> A bride avoids dipping water out of a pot and drinking from a calabash belonging to her relatives for the following reasons: A girl is of one blood (*ililopa*) with her mother, and when she goes to her husband, the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

837 QUESTION: The spirits are angry?
753 MWANDISI: Yes, they say: 'That woman for whom we gave marriage-
●775 cattle has overstepped her husband.' Yes, it is the shades who are angry in his belly.

842 Kakune, a doctor, made it clear that the danger to the husband
837 when his wife committed adultery came from the semen of another
753 man entering her.

> If your wife commits adultery you get very tired on a journey, you suffer from diarrhœa; in the old days we fell in war.
>
> QUESTION: What if the adulterer practises *coitus interruptus*?
>
> KAKUNE: Yes, if the man is clean he withdraws and the semen falls to the ground. If he always withdraws when he has intercourse with my wife, then I escape, nothing happens. The woman is like a child. See, when your wife who has not yet reached puberty plays with young men on the veld it is no matter. Do they create a child with her? No! But if she is an adulteress he is there in her, and I am there in her, and Kyala says: 'Ha! Are there two?' And he spears you, the owner of the woman. You are soiled by going to the woman; that is filth. But if I catch an adulterer with my wife, even if he has practised *coitus interruptus*, I am angry and kill him—there is jealousy! But as for diarrhœa, I do not suffer from it.

837 The most dangerous adultery of all, according to the Nyakyusa,
684 is that of a man with his father's wife. Angombwike explained:

> If a man dies and his son has been lying with his wives in secret, whether with or without his permission, the son is very much afraid to approach his father's place. If he goes near or touches the corpse he will himself die, for he is one flesh with his father; their blood has mingled in the woman's belly. He keeps a long way away and so do the wives with whom he has lain. The leading men of the village are told
> [783] about it and a doctor is fetched and the son and the wives involved are taken to a waterfall and treated there. If he is the eldest son a younger brother kills the cows meanwhile. Then he comes back to the homestead and kills a cow himself. While you were away in Europe I saw a case of this with my own eyes. A man died whose son had been lying with his wives. As soon as the son approached his father's place he fell down sick to death. People picked him up and rushed him away to a distance. Then he began to breathe a little easier. They took him to a
> [783] waterfall and treated him and he recovered, more or less. He is still unwell from time to time. It is not madness, just illness. And if, before the father's death, such a son approaches his father, the old man gets very ill indeed and the elder wives turn the son out of the house. There is none of this trouble if a brother [either a full brother or a half-brother]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

844 behind the huts, moving inside after delivery, on to a litter of banana leaves spread for her. Her mother-in-law attends her and treats her and the new-born child with *ikipiki* medicine. She washes them in a basin made of two banana leaves, one sweet banana, one plantain, and is particularly careful to wash the infant's mouth and the mother's vagina. Powdered *ikipiki* is sprinkled in the water in the form of a cross. This is done 'that the mother and child should not have diarrhœa'. The cross is a symbol of overstepping (*kokutilyasa kuso*, *kokukilasya kuso*, demonstrating a cross) and is made 'because heavy ones, those who are with their husbands on the bed, will come and overstep the mother and child if they are not treated'. Mother and child are also given a roasted banana with powdered *ikipiki* sprinkled on it. In bringing the *ikipiki* the husband's mother acknowledges the legitimacy of the [851 848] child. 'If someone does not give a child *ikipiki* it is a bastard. It is as if the husband said: "Why do you insult your husband by committing adultery with others? Others have created this foetus; it is not mine!" '

The cord is tied with a shred of bark-cloth and then cut with a bamboo knife. 'An iron knife is taboo, it's a spear, other children will die from the spear disease (*alukuwa*); to use a spear is like killing someone.' The after-birth is buried in the banana plantation with a piece of the cord sticking up, and later the litter is burnt at the same place. 'Only officiants (*abasyuga*) eat of these bananas growing over the burying place—no young person may do so for it's the banana grove of the litter.' The cord must be buried upright or 'the mother will not bear again'.

845 A delayed delivery is most commonly attributed to the woman's ●775 adultery,[1] and she is pressed by the midwife to confess the name of her lover or lovers, but it is also believed that it may be due to *imisuku*, that is the shades. The husband consults a diviner who indicates whether the *imisuku* is on his side or that of the woman's father and the one who is thus indicated should pray. 'Sometimes the woman herself tells of a quarrel which would lead to *imisuku* and then her husband or father goes to pray.'

846 Mother and child remain in confinement until the navel cord drops off, sheltered from 'heavy ones', who should not enter or even greet the mother from the doorway, and from men, to whom both mother and child are dangerous. 'Men must not see a tiny

[71] [1] Unlike certain other Central African peoples, the Nyakyusa do not attribute difficulty in childbirth to the adultery of the husband.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ritual, though not openly admitted. The younger brother pro- 783
tested at the inclusion of the cactus stems and it is likely that they 784
were an ingredient intended to injure the sender of sorcery.

(d) Prayer to the shades

Misfortune is also believed to come from the anger of senior 578
relatives, living and dead. If a junior has angered his senior kins- 775
man the senior is said to 'mutter over the fire'. 'He is so angry 784
that he cannot speak intelligible words, he murmurs and mumbles to himself. . . .' 'I crouch over the fire in the evening and mutter to myself in a low voice: "I am astonished and hurt at my son. Did I not provide marriage-cattle for him? And he does this to me!" ' Then the shades hear him and the wrong-doer falls ill, or is sterile, or his crops or fishing fail. 'No man has the power of making the shades hear like this save Father (*tete*)—he mutters alone and the shades hear him—all of us, pagans and Christians alike, believe in the power of Father to mutter, because whenever a man wrongs his father something always happens to him—he finds blessing nowhere.' The 'father' is a man's own father who begot him, or his heir, or, in a lesser degree, his father's elder full brother, or any kinsman who has given marriage-cattle on his behalf. 'If a man has given me cattle for marriage then he has authority over me (*je mpala gwenge*)[1] for cattle are important (*imbala*).'

If a senior is at fault (for example, an heir who neglects his wards) the shades may, in theory, punish him also, but more often any misfortune that befalls him is attributed to the just wrath of his neighbours who watch over the interests of the dead man's children. The idea that misfortunes spring from the anger of the living is strong; indeed, one of our best informants, Angombwike, maintained that 'the shades never act alone', and Mwakwelebeja, an old man, said: 'It is really we who get angry, but the shades help a little because they are always with us; we always dream of them.'

The shades are 'the fathers' (*batata*), and prayers are addressed 776
primarily to the men of the lineage, but a father's sister is also 782
classed as a 'father'. Some informants denied that a mother could bring sickness on her children:

784
Women never murmur against their children, only the father, the 775

[1] Literally, 'he is my great one'.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

759 man. Women murmur but it only makes them sick themselves
775 [laughter]. But my father's sister (*umsumpe*) can murmur, she is a man like my father. . . . If my mother is old and I do not care for her she will murmur and fall sick herself, she will never make me sick. My mother is no relative in my homestead, she is no relative to the shades.

However, Mwakwelebeja (a very old and conservative man) held that 'People sometimes say: "My mother beneath is angry" though it's not common', and Kaitile was quite positive that a mother was also a shade with power to inflict misfortune, as the following conversation shows:

QUESTION: What shades influence a man or woman?

KAITILE AND HIS YOUNGEST WIFE: *Isimde* of father is there, and *isimde* of mother. Yes, indeed, *isimde* of mother exists. Once I had not put beer in the house and I fell ill. The divination said: 'It is *isimde* of your mother. She is angry not to find anything in your house.' Because we chieftains always put beer in a little calabash in the house, it stays there always.

QUESTION: When it goes bad?

KAITILE: We put some more. There is a little millet flour there now. Sometimes we put flour, sometimes beer. And when I come to die they bury beer with me. . . . Once the offering was not there, and my mother who was dead came to look and did not find anything. Then she went to father, who was dead, and said: 'I went to our child. His house was without anything.' Then father said: 'Let us go and look!' They did not find anything, then they shook me up. Then the oracle said: 'It is the *isimde* of your mother.'

QUESTION: And a wife?

KAITILE: Both her father and her mother punish [lit. hit] her at their place, even though she is with me, also they punish her.

QUESTION: But your shades?

KAITILE: How can they punish in-law? They do not punish her, but the child whom she has borne, their grandchild, him they punish.

[593] Though Kaitile and others denied that the husband's shades could punish a wife, nevertheless she suffers from their anger through the child, through a difficult labour, or through the beer she brews going bad.

578 PYAGHAMO: It is said that when a woman who has quarrelled with
775 her husband is brewing beer and it goes bad, that means the shades are angry. The shades of the husband have made the beer go bad. The husband has murmured and the shades have heard. When a wife is
[594] pregnant it is taboo for her to quarrel with her husband; she will have a difficult labour. The husband murmurs and the shades hear. The

2. Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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difficult labour is from this, not from adultery. And in a case of difficult 775
labour her husband does pray to his shades.

[B+5]

All were agreed that a woman is in the power of the shades of 775
her father's lineage and if her father is angry with her, or with his 578
son-in-law her husband, his shades afflict her, causing her to be 613
barren or to have miscarriages, or ailing children. Hence a woman who is barren or ill, or whose children are sickly, often returns to her father's homestead so that he may pray for her, and she sleeps there on the night of the ritual, for the shades come by night. More rarely, if she has quarrelled with her father, she goes outside her husband's homestead and, facing towards her father's home, she prays herself on the pathway. But in all the cases we traced in which a woman's ancestors were believed to have made her, or her child, ill, there was a dispute between her father (or his heir) and her husband over marriage-cattle or the bull of puberty; and we were told that her father's shades 'are angry only if marriage-cattle have not been paid, and for no other reason', thus it seems that the control of her father's shades over a married woman is in fact somewhat limited.

The characteristic illness sent by the shades is sores round the 753
mouth, and fever—an illness which is not acute and clears up 775
quickly. These symptoms are immediately interpreted as *imisala*, 777
affliction from the shades. Beer going sour before it is mature is also *imisala*, usually thought to be caused by quarrels between husband and wife. But almost any misfortune, mild or serious, is interpreted as *imisala* if members of the lineage are conscious of quarrels between themselves, or with their spouses or fathers-in-law.

The ritual consists in the reconciliation of the living in the 783
presence of the dead and, if the misfortune is serious, a sacrifice of flesh, fish, or fowl. The junior begs pardon of his senior who acknowledges his anger and expresses forgiveness by taking a mouthful of water from his calabash cup (*ukapindi*) and blowing it out (*ukuiputa*) in his sacred banana grove. For the patient to recover, or the blight on crops or fish-traps to be removed, *the senior kinsman must confess his anger*, and spitting, or blowing out water, is a symbol of confession and forgiveness. Mwaisumo was explicit on the matter: 'If a father is *un gry* with his son or daughter he may say, some day: "I forgive you now" and spit on the ground: all the anger that is in him comes out like spit.' *Ukuuwa* means both 'to

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 spit' and 'to forgive'. *Ukuputa* means 'to blow out water' and *ukwiputa* (the reflexive form) means 'to pray', with the implication of confessing whatever anger or grudge a man may have in his heart. Full confessions both by the wrongdoer and by seniors who have been angry are held to be essential to the lifting of the misfortune.

● 775 The man who prays represents the living members of the lineage
783 and he calls on his immediate seniors, who are dead, for support.
613 'You, Father, you my elder brother, you so-and-so (his grandfather) stand by me, help me, do not be angry, here I am, your child, your younger brother. I am above here, it was not I who killed you but Kyala alone.'

He may also remonstrate with the shades, asking why they should afflict the living. *Ukuikemeya* (lit. 'to cause oneself to blame', from the root *ukukemela* 'to scold' or 'to blame') is used to mean 'to sacrifice', and the conception of remonstrating with, or scolding, troublesome shades is an element of Nyakyusa sacrifice.

783 If beer has been prepared, a libation is poured out either on the
782 hearth-bricks or in the banana grove nearest the door of the house, which is used by the owner as his sacred grove (*ikijinja kyaka ikikemo*). If an animal is sacrified the blood must soak into the earth for, as already indicated, the 'earth is the shade's'. Furthermore, the rest of the beer or the fish and the *ija mmapa* meat from the foreleg of the beast[1] is left overnight on the ground in the sacred grove, more rarely under the officiant's bed, and eaten or drunk in the morning by young boys of the lineage, grandsons[2] of the last deceased, for they are 'the comrades of the shades'. Other people may finish up the beer or meat, but wives of the lineage may not touch it: they seclude themselves in their huts and remain silent during the ritual, for 'they fear their fathers-in-law (*bikatila abakemmana*)'.

783 The proper person to approach the shades is (among com-
613 moners) the senior member of a lineage of three generations; but if he lives at a considerable distance—perhaps twenty miles or more away—then a junior may pray on his own account, only asking help from his senior in cases of serious illness. 'If father and son, or brothers, live far apart, as here in Selya and at Mwaya

[171] [1] The cut is the same as the Xhosa *intsonyana* which is sacred in a Pondo sacrifice. cf. M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 249. Nyakyusa informants denied that the gall is of importance in their ritual as it is among the Nguni and Nuer.

[2] One case was recorded of a son of the last deceased, still a small child, drinking the sacrificial beer.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(forty miles away), then, if a child is a little ill, you pray yourself, 783
but if it is very ill you send a message to your elder.' The senior 613
knows the shades (*apimaye imisala*) and prays alone.

The wives of a lineage avoid everything connected with offerings to the shades in the same way as they avoid a father-in-law, even though their husband's father is not yet dead and they do not avoid his living grandfather: 'If a cock has grown up at my homestead my wives do not eat it. It is taboo. It is the shades'. But my wives may eat a hen. When the cock crows it rouses the house. If a wife eats it she will die soon and people will say: "She has eaten a cock." ' A wife also avoids bananas from the sacred grove, and sacrificial meat and beer, and milk from a cow that has looked into a grave; she must stay silent and secluded in her hut when prayer is made in the grove, and is forbidden to sleep by the hearth at night.

Mwaisumo's account of 'prayer when a child is ill' and descrip- 783
tions of four particular rituals will make the procedure clearer. 775

MWAISUMO: Our regular custom here, when a child is ill with sores on the mouth from *imisala*, is to pray to the shades (*ukwipata kubayuke*), especially to my father, or my elder brother if I have inherited from him. Before I pray I go to a diviner. We consult the oracle, and he tells [781] me: 'It is *imisala*, your fathers are angry because you have not performed such and such a ritual, perhaps because you have not killed cattle at the funeral of your brother, or your mother's brother, perhaps you have not performed the later death ritual for them.' So when I come home I tell my relatives and wives all the diviner has told me. Then they complain (*ukwijeje*) saying: 'Why are they angry? Take water and complain in the evening.'

So at dusk, when the cattle come home, I take my calabash cup (*ukupindi*), and water, and a live coal from the fire, and put it in the calabash. I go out to the banana grove of my father where I always pray. I take a mouthful of water, I blow it out and say: 'You, Father, you so-and-so, you so-and-so, why are you angry, Father? Since you left me I have nourished the children. How have I wronged you? Even though I have wronged you, forgive me, Father, may the child recover. Stand by me.' When I have finished I enter the house, and next day I may find the child a little better.

Before I pray, if the diviner has told me that they are angry because I have stinted a certain brother of something, I go to tell him and beg his pardon for neglecting him, my brother. Sometimes, if it is a serious case concerning a cow that I have not given him, I seek for a cow with which to ask his forgiveness.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 One minor quarrel occurred at a funeral we attended. Kaitile
578 was given only a little meat and he complained, saying: 'Why do
783 you give me a leg, I the owner of the funeral?' He took umbrage and left the funeral with his wives. Then they went to his home to say: 'We are in the wrong, we made a mistake in dividing.' Then Kaitile was satisfied and prayed over a medicine (*alate*) which they cooked to eat. If he did not pray the medicine would go bad and would not cook. He said in his prayer: 'I have no case against them, let the medicine cook, the young men just played with the meat, it is not a serious case, may the medicine cook at once.'

(*e*) *Reconciliation*

828 A distinction is made by the Nyakyusa between misfortune due
783 to the anger of senior relatives and that due to the anger of neighbours,[1] and the rituals performed are theoretically distinct, though in practice they merge into one another.

578 A man fears the anger of his fellow villagers who murmur
783 against him when he has offended them, and whose cold breath is believed to fall upon him and chill him with fever or cause a paralysis. Mature men or women fear only the anger of their own neighbours, but a young man and his wife also fear their parents' neighbours. The ritual performed to lift the curse of neighbours consists in acknowledging guilt and making an offering of beer or meat for them to feast upon; then, while they eat or drink, they *admit their anger* and express goodwill.

The doctor comes beforehand and gives the sick man medicine to drink. A cow is killed. People are there and say: 'May this medicine help our child.' To drink without people there is like continuing the quarrel. People are there and they speak (*ukwijeje*), saying: 'Someone was angry, but no one is angry now. May this medicine help you.' They drink beer and eat meat saying: 'We are not angry now.' Those who were angry are present and they are satisfied. *Ukwijeje* is to speak many things, and it is like praying (*ukwipata*) but without actually taking water and spitting.

578 Sometimes responsibility is fixed squarely on *either* shades *or*
775 neighbours, but since neighbours are said to 'help a father to
783 murmur' against an erring son, and since they may share in beef or beer offered to the shades, the rituals merge into one another, and some offerings seem to be intended to pacify *both* the shades and the neighbours, though in Nyakyusa theory the sources of

[1] Discussed in relation to the age-village in *Good Company*, pp. 98–108.

misfortune and the rituals are distinct. In theory, when the shades 578
are angry the essential offering is that made in the sacred banana 775
grove or on the hearth; it is eaten by the grandsons of the most 783
recently dead, and whether neighbours partake or not depends upon the generosity of the officiant; whereas when neighbours are angry there is no offering in the grove or at the hearth, the neighbours are feasted, admit anger and express forgiveness.

However, neighbours are slow to admit responsibility (for to 789
curse someone comes close to witchcraft) and in some cases there is both a formal feast for the neighbours and a prayer to the shades, and it is left uncertain where final responsibility rests. The following texts illustrate this:

MWAIKAMBO: It is the custom among us Nyakyusa to marry many 595
wives, mature ones and young ones, so if a man has sons at his home it 837
sometimes happens that one of them makes love to one of his father's wives. Perhaps they commit adultery in secret, perhaps he runs off with her to a distant chiefdom. Then the father breaks off relations with him.

The son, wherever he is, learns that he has been cursed by his father 593
and his body becomes like goose flesh. If the son is wise he gathers his 789
property and returns to his father. He takes a friend with him and goes 783
into the house of one of his father's neighbours. His friend and his 621
father's neighbour speak together. 'I have come to return unto my father because I have done wrong.' He tells the neighbour what they have brought to offer the father—usually a cow and a bull. Then that neighbour seeks three comrades or perhaps four or five, and they go to pacify their irate fellow, saying: 'Our child has returned. He knows that he has done wrong towards you, but we have received him because he has confessed humbly and begged forgiveness.' His father refuses furiously and almost spears himself in his passion. His fellows pacify him for the whole day, or perhaps two or three days, then at last he agrees. Then the young man and his fellows bring the cow and the bull. The father also calls together many of his fellows and he seeks beer and 593
cooks food. They gather together at the father's homestead and the 789
father says: 'My son has come and admitted that he has done wrong, 783
asking that I forgive him and saying: 'I did not know what I was doing, these are the cattle which I have brought', and the others agree. Then they kill the bull. They roast some meat. The father catches one side of it, the son the other and the village headman cuts it in the middle, and the father and son each eat their piece. This is the blessing (ulusaje), meaning that there is kinship between them now. They eat together. Then all the people eat. Also with the beer it is like this. The village headman picks a straw and puts it in the beer, hands it to the father who drinks, and then to the son. Then other people drink, and they

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

pressed again and again in the pagan rituals. The Christian withdrawal from them implies a partial break with the closed circle of kin, a movement from the nexus of kinship to that of association, from the kinship group to the congregation of believers. 554 602

The passage of cattle at marriage implies first the establishment of a bond of kinship with the wife for whom they are given. 'Kinship is cattle' (*ubukamu ipo ngombe*) and a woman for whom cattle have not been given is never kin (*ukamu*) to her husband. 431 602

The passage of marriage-cattle determines the legal position of the children borne by the woman for whom they have been given. Whoever has given the cattle controls the children; and, if no cattle have passed, the girl's father (or brother) can claim them. If the woman for whom cattle have been given leaves the lineage which gave them, the cattle (traditionally all of them, together with their progeny) must then be returned, even though her original husband is dead; and when she dies she should be replaced. Kinship between lineages once linked by marriage should ideally be permanent, and the link is reasserted in the ritual in which, when a woman dies, her brother goes to cut down the bananas at her husband's homestead and to seize her children, and has to be persuaded with a gift to desist. The identification made between women and cattle exchanged is suggested in the phrase conventionally used when no girl is available to take the place of a dead wife and a cow is offered in her place 'for drawing water with'.

The killing of cattle at a funeral, and the burial of cloths and other goods, is an expression of the idea that the dead take wealth with them. When a man requires cattle to pay compensation for some wrong committed and has not sufficient stock to do so, he turns for help to his affines, his sons-in-law and fathers-in-law, and so, when he dies, and is in need of cattle, it is felt appropriate that they should help him. 775 764 431

But the gifts offered at rituals have many other implications. Men take cattle and cloths to a funeral '*ukuti ndaga*'—to express sympathy—and gifts are given to a bride also '*ukuti ndaga*', which then implies congratulation rather than condolence. And gifts are used when begging pardon—a son who has sinned against his father first sends a hen and later offers a bull; and a daughter-in-law who has looked at her father-in-law or sworn at her mother-in-law must offer beer or a bull. Lastly, they are used in lifting a ban, putting an end to an avoidance. When a girl's father and his 431

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

796 fication both with corpse and shade. In other rituals the identification is with the shade alone, but still the participant is felt to be filthy and close to madness. The symbols of purification are
796 many: clearing and burning the litter, burning the clothes or
783 leaves worn during the seclusion, elaborate and repeated washing and shaving, and anointing the body with rouge and oil. One aspect of purification is the driving away of the 'filthy' shade symbolized first by throwing away pebbles or a stem of bananas into a running stream; and, secondly, by casting seeds into a pot which is put on the fire, grinding millet in the doorway and letting it fall on bark-cloth, putting various parts of the body on the fire symbolically and grinding them symbolically, passing a winnowing basket of millet between the legs, scattering millet, and dancing the trampling dance. The second group of symbols all represent sexual intercourse. Seed or grain is identified with semen, fire with intercourse, bark-cloth and the round winnowing basket—a woman's basket *par excellence*—represent the woman, and putting seeds on the fire, grinding, passing the basket of millet between the legs, and probably also the trampling dance[1] represent the sex act. The shade is thought to be ejected from the body as semen, and therefore intercourse is a means of driving the shade from the body.

796 An element of the death ritual is the separation of corpse and
●775 spirit, the final disposal of the corpse, and the bringing of the new shade back 'to warm himself with the other shades' at the family hearth: he is received as the water which drips from the doorway of the hut, and welcomed to the hearth with music; but the distinction between the corpse which is got rid of and the shade which is welcomed is not maintained systematically. Repeatedly our informants spoke of the shade (*ukyuka*) being driven away from dreams and waking thought, and from men's bodies, as well as being separated from the corpse. The aim of Nyakyusa ritual is not that union with God constantly sought in Christian ritual, but a separation both from the shades and the heroes; for close association with the pagan gods spells madness and death, not fullness of life. A measure of separation from the shades is a condition of fertility as well as of sanity. Intercourse cannot be fruitful until the shades of her father's lineage have 'moved aside a little' from the nubile girl, the shade of a deceased husband from his widow.

[1] The action of the trampling dance and the contexts in which it occurs at death and puberty suggest this, but such an interpretation was not explicitly given.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

We interpret the induction, seclusion, and bringing out as symbols of death and rebirth. There can be no doubt that the induction and seclusion represent death. Strewing leaves—or laying a litter—which is an essential act in every induction is a sign of misfortune and death;[1] and at the induction of a bride her 'mothers' sing: 'Go, go and never return', and 'We wail a dirge'. The mourners, the nubile girl, the mother of a new-born child, and the parents of twins are all 'filthy' and one with the dead; Kasitile said of mourners: 'We have died, we *are* the corpse.' The period of seclusion implies a sojourn with the shades, and our hypothesis is that it represents *both* death and gestation. The hut appears as a symbol of the womb in the pregnancy and 'gasping cough' rituals, and the doorway which 'belongs to the shades' is a symbol for the vagina. In the pregnancy ritual, passing through the doorway is explicitly interpreted as a symbol of birth, and in the death ritual mourners come out of the doorway stooping, and bump their heads against an obstruction. In the 'bringing out' in the death and puberty rituals, the mourners and the nubile girl run in and out of the doorway and water drops from the thatch. Kakune, the doctor, interpreted this as a symbol of the mourners' receiving the shade back on to their bodies. We interpret it, rather more widely, as a symbol of rebirth. Both men and spirit are reborn, the shade in the bodies of the participants. 796

All through the rituals the connection of the shades with potency and fertility is emphasized. They cause menstruation and sexual desire; they are present in intercourse and ejected as semen; they control conception; they control fertility in the fields. 'The shade and the semen are brothers.'[2] 'When they shake the millet and pumpkin-seeds (after ritual connection) the seed is semen . . . and it is the shade. . . .' The symbols of male and female, plantain and sweet banana, recur repeatedly. The wearing of them is explicitly interpreted as a symbol of fertility, and laying them together under the litter is perhaps a symbol of the marriage union, like eating the banana with *ikipiki* medicine. Intercourse between husband and wife is the culmination of the rituals of death, puberty, and twin birth, and is held to be essential to the health of 796 775 831

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 232.

[2] cf. Bhaca, *idloci*: shade, semen (W. D. Hammond-Tooke, *A General Ethnographic Survey of the amaBhaca*. Unpublished thesis presented for the degree of Ph.D. in the University of Cape Town); Xhosa, *idloci*: semen virile (A. Kropf, *Kafir-English Dictionary*); Zulu, *idloci*: departed spirit (C. M. Doke and Vilakazi, *A Dictionary of the Zulu Language*). 071 196

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

796 the wife or the widow (even though she be old), as well as proof of
775 the support of the shades for the husband or heir. A symbol of the
831 ritual connection, the *ilibalaga*, is offered to the shades of both lineages. Indeed, the rituals of death and twin birth, as well as the ritual of puberty and marriage, may be interpreted as a celebration of the union of husband and wife. For the parents of twins the end of the ritual marks the resumption of married life after a break during which contact between them was felt to be dangerous; for a widow and the heir of a dead man the end of the death ritual marks the beginning of their union.

796 The admonition of a widow or the mother of twins on her proper behaviour as a wife,[1] like a girl at her first marriage, underlines the fact that the death and twin-birth rituals are, in a sense, also marriage rituals.

592 The parts of the homestead connected with the shades are: first,
775 those associated with the procreative activities of husband and wife—the hearth, the bed, and the doorway of the hut. Prayer may be made at the hearth, and offerings are poured out on the hearth-bricks, or left overnight under the bed. 'The doorway is the shades' and much of the action in ritual takes place there. As has already been shown, the hearth is explicitly associated with the sexual life of husband and wife: hearth-bricks are planted at marriage, making fire by friction is a symbol of the marriage union, firewood is associated with a woman's reproductive capacity, and the hearth must not be approached by sexually active people other than the owner of the hut and her husband. The bed is the marriage bed. The doorway is identified with the vagina. Secondly, a defined grove of bananas, usually those nearest the doorway of the chief wife's hut, is thought to be frequented by the shades. It has been shown that plantains and sweet bananas are the symbols of male and female in all the rituals: in the sacred banana grove only plantains are grown. Bananas are propagated by suckers and the symbolism implied (but never explicitly stated) is that the root at which the offering of meat to the shades is placed represents the lineage which continually reproduces itself. What is explicit is that
[778] the banana grove is sacred, and that offerings are placed or buried at the root of a banana plant. We were told: '*ilikeme*[2] *lyabatata*

[1] We did not see this at the twin ritual observed, but were told that the mother of twins was sometimes admonished by her husband's sisters.

[2] *Ilikeme*: a single banana plant from the sacred banana grove, a ritual killing of cattle in the sacred grove of a chief; *ipilkeme*: sacrificial meat; *ikeme*: Holy Communion (modern usage).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

 592

kijenja, ko bikwiputa, the sacred place of the fathers is the banana 775●
grove, there they pray.'

The virility of a lineage is symbolized by the *ikipiki* medicine, 796
interpreted as 'our blood' or 'semen'. With it mourners, menstru- 602
ating girls, bride and groom, the new-born babies and their 789
mothers are treated. To provide it or use it is to acknowledge agnatic kinship: husband and wife wash with it together in acknowledgement that the wife is now 'one blood' with her husband; the grandmother gives it to her son's child in acknowledgement of its legitimacy; in the death rituals the mourners eat food with it acknowledging their kinship with the shade. To belong to a lineage is to be protected practically and spiritually, and the *ikipiki* medicine is held to protect those who are 'empty' and weak—the 'hollow men'—from those who are 'heavy' with real semen or medicines.

The shade, *unyuka*,[1] 'he who is risen from the dead', may be 796
interpreted as the principle of life, but at the same time he is 'the 775
one beneath', *ugwa pani*, filthy, and fearful. What men worship is life; what they fear is death, corruption; and for the pagan Nyakyusa, as for the Christian,[2] the two are inextricably mingled. *Imindu* (sing. *ilindu*) means dirt, dust, rubbish, the litter of the seclusion hut, and also the shade. When '*mindu*' is cited as the cause of some disease it is the shades (as things rather than persons) which are meant: 'dust to dust' is an image of pagan as of Christian theology. We have spoken of the Nyakyusa disgust for filth (*ubunyali*), which is associated with a corpse, menstruation, childbirth, intercourse, faeces, and all these are identified in some fashion with the shade. Faeces 'go below to the land of the shades'. The hair of a corpse is the shade's, the hair of a girl at puberty is 'the filth of her menstrual blood'. In all the rituals the filth is [783]
buried, shaved off, burnt, washed away, and at the death ritual 'he who is risen' is brought 'to warm himself' at the family hearth, but yet he dwells in the earth and is 'dirty'.

The conception of impurity, uncleanness, associated with phy- 783
siological functions of coition, excretion, menstruation, childbirth and death is, as we have already suggested, a very widespread one.

[1] *Ulunyuka*: to rise from the dead. For the noun the personal class is most commonly used, but some of the old men always spoke of *imiyuka* rather than *abayuka*. A young man, commenting on this, explained: 'The shades are not people like us, but *imindu*', i.e. they are things—dust—not persons.

[2] 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' John xii, 24.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

829 rituals: 'they are customary' (*lulwiho*), 'they come to us from long ago', 'our fathers and grandfathers performed them'; and established in the nature of the universe: 'Kyala made us black people like that.'

(*b*) *The nature of the shades*

775 613 The nature of the shades is revealed in Nyakyusa rituals, and we are now in a position to summarize their attributes.

The shades, 'those who have risen from the dead', are the dead members of a lineage and, unless they were ruling chiefs when alive, they have power only over their own kinsmen, and are concerned only with behaviour between members of the lineage, not with behaviour towards outsiders. As we have seen, the shades of her father's lineage 'move aside a little' from a woman when marriage-cattle and the bull of puberty have been given for her but, if these are still owing, it is thought that her child as well as she herself may be made ill by her father's shades. Membership of a lineage is determined by the passage of marriage-cattle: a child belongs to the group which provided cattle for its mother. Therefore, it is argued, the shades of the lineage which provided the cattle, and they alone, if the payment has been made in full, have power over children. If no cattle have been given the child is in the power of the mother's shades. But there are difficulties over the *ikipiki* medicine, for only that of the genitor's lineage can safely be used, and its use implies membership of the lineage that provides it. There is a further idea that shades only have power over those living in a homestead of their lineage. 'A child is never made ill by the mother's shades when it is in the father's homestead, only when it is with its mother's people.'

775 The dead dwell beneath (*pan*), in 'the land of the shades' (*kabupuka*), which is a shadowy reflection of the land of the living, with homesteads and gardens, wives and cattle, villages and chiefdoms.

MWAIKAMBO: People think that in the land of the shades they build homes like we do, they marry wives, they have children, they plant food and build houses. I heard this always from old men, but they only guess. They say: 'Perhaps it is nice, perhaps horrible.' They do not know very much. They fear to die. I have never met any old pagan man who wanted to die, they always fear. Property is important: People are much taken up with the idea that riches are there in the land of the shades. They say: 'If a man dies his fathers come to receive

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

him, but if they find he has no cows with him they are angry, they do 775
not receive him with rejoicing. If they do not kill some cattle at the burial of a dead man without doubt illness will come to the home. I they consult an oracle then the oracle says: 'Your fathers beneath are angry because you did not kill cattle for the burial of So-and-so.' So then they go and kill a beast. When they kill cattle at a death they do not kill for the mourners to eat, no, but they say it is that the fathers may receive him well, that they may not be angry.

The shades manifest themselves to the living in dreams or as snakes, and they come by night to the homestead to eat food set aside for them in the sacred grove or the senior wife's hut.

Whenever food is cooked a little is left for the shades. It is said that the shades come by night to eat the food. Some people say that they have seen the shades when they come to warm themselves by the fire in the house. If the fire of the shades blazes up, and I look, it is extinguished immediately, and if someone turns round the hut is quite dark. People eat the food which they put for the shades, they do not throw it away. Sometimes, if the food rots, they say it is because the shades have eaten from it. People say that if they do not put aside food the shades will take away the fertility of the fields and we will not have much food.

The hearth is a shrine: the food and beer are left overnight 775
beside the hearth or on the hearth-bricks. Every good housewife 778
has a log of firewood which she keeps by her all her life: she takes it with her when she moves and it is burnt at her funeral. 'It is the shades'. The shades [of her husband] pick bits from it when they want to warm themselves at the fire.' And the wife herself must keep out of the way: 'Some men refuse to let their wives sleep near the fire at night, saying: "You will drive away the shades."'

The association of a small grove of bananas in each homestead with the shades has already been stressed. There meat and beer offered in sacrifice are left. There is also a connection, most obvious among chiefs, but occurring among commoners also, between the shade and a chosen tree. In Ngonde Mwenefumbo said:

The fathers prayed at the grove of their father. If a man moved he 775
took *ilindi*, a branch of the tree at the grove, and carried it to his new 778
home and there put it in a tree he had chosen, saying: 'Now you have 166
arrived, father.' He poured out beer and flour there and invoked all his fathers and grandfathers and ancestors, saying: 'May I sleep! Gather and eat these things! May the children sleep.' Then he blew out water and finished.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

•775 Among the Nyakyusa men spoke often of the obligation of the
764 heir to keep the grave of his father swept and tended. Graves are in the open courtyard of the homestead and the meticulous weeding and sweeping of this space by the owner and his young sons is thus an act of piety, as well as a means of achieving 'dignity' in the homestead.[1]

775 The shades are also identified with the earth—'the earth *is* the shades (*umfu bo basyuka*)'—and offerings to them are buried, or laid upon, or poured out on it. To say 'the earth is angry' means: 'the shade is angry.' Stories are told of prophets (*abasololi*) who have descended to the land of the shades and returned, and of others who have seen men in the land of the shades while they are yet alive. That is a sure sign of their future death, though it may be delayed. And there are tales of those who have seen the dead with the cattle killed at his funeral. 'We say those are the shadows (*imisyungulu*) which go to the land of the shades.'

A soft, tufty grass, used as bedding for cattle, is called 'blessed' (*ikisajelo*) and is known as 'the doorway of the shades' (*ikifigo kya basyuka*). The tale of three prophets who uprooted a tuft of it and saw the land of the shades beneath has already been related (p. 77).

ANOOMBWIKE: As a child at my grandfather's I heard that the water from the blessed grass reaches the land of the shades, and that if the shades wish to come to our place they stand there in the blessed grass and where they have stood there is no dew. Indeed, there is never dew on the blessed grass.

At this point in the conversation one of us went to examine the blessed grass and called back: 'But there is dew on it.' Another man who was listening broke in indignantly: 'Is there much dew? There is very little!' and, indeed, there was less than on other types of grass.

But though the shades dwell beneath and visit the homesteads of their kinsmen seeking food and warmth, they are also *within* men—*munda* (in the belly)—they create desire, they control conception, and are ejected in intercourse as semen. 'If you have not got a shade you are impotent, sterile, you do not go to women.'

The shades delight in cattle, and though they demand certain sacrifices they are unwilling that cattle of the lineage should die unnecessarily. Mwakwelebeja told us:

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 77.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

My bull was wounded. When I tried to kill it, it troubled me, it did not die. I took a banana sapling and chewed it and prayed to my fathers, saying: 'This bull has been wounded because it was destroying people's crops. I am killing it because the people are angry with me and they might spear me in the night if I don't kill it.' My son struck it the third time, then it bellowed and I said: 'Yes, they have heard my prayer,' and it fell down and died. The shades were preventing it dying because they liked it to be alive. The whole country liked this bull because of its beautiful bellowing. 775 782

The shades are very real to an old man like Mwakwelebeja: 775

We live with the shades, constantly the fathers come to us, and also a wife who has died. The shades rise and come to us. In the morning I wake up and tell my wife the shades came to me, I slept with them, and with the wife who has died.

QUESTION: Why do they come?

MWAKWELEBEJA: You just dream. Sometimes they speak something, and in the morning I tell my wife they said so-and-so. Sometimes they bring food. If a sick man dreams that he eats their food he will die. If he dreams that he visits them and they drive him away he will recover. Sometimes I dream of my father or of my mother, sometimes of the villagers, So-and-so, and So-and-so. Yes, we fear to dream of the shades, even if we don't eat food. We fear that if they come often we will follow them. 775 828

And even to young men like Kititu they seem near:

Yes, the shades come to us in dreams at night. Perhaps I dream of my father who has died, he appears, he gives me a cow, I wonder, it seems that I have gained that cow. I rejoice and am glad. This is all in a dream. Perhaps my mother has died and I dream of her. She gives me food as it were on this table. I eat, I drink beer with her. Our grandfathers used to dream of war. When the Ngoni were in the country they would dream that they and the shades, the fathers who had died, were fighting with the Ngoni; in the dream they would spear them and the blood would appear. All men dream, but those whose dreams come true we call *abasololi*—prophets. These men sometimes [791] dream of public matters, as well as private, they go to Kasitile [the priest] and say: 'Hunger is coming, carry out the ritual in the sacred grove.' Then they take a cow, bananas, and milk to the sacred grove as Kasitile says. Then there are those who fall into a fit and the friends of such a man go to Kasitile and tell what he said.

Perhaps I dream of my father or grandfather, and he comes and gives me food. I know him by his appearance in the dream. Perhaps my grandfather died while I was still a child, but I know him by his dress

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

●775 and appearance—the mind of a child is tenacious. If one comes whom
828 I never knew, I note his appearance in the dream and next day I tell my friends and relatives about it. Then perhaps an old woman, my grandmother, will say: 'That is how So-and-so used to look.' Perhaps I dream of someone wearing brass body-rings, with a plume nodding on his head. Then the older ones know him and tell me it is So-and-so. In the old days, in the days of our mothers, if we dreamed of eating food like this my relatives would say: 'They have come to fetch him; he will get disease and die soon; he has eaten the food of the shades.'
775 But in European times now it is different. . . . Our mothers fear such
828 dreams; there is a medicine to put on the walls. If I always dream like
177 this they bring it and say: 'It's forbidden to dream of the shades.'

QUESTION: And now?

KITITU: Now if dreams come true we say that the man who had dreamed is a prophet.

828 QUESTION: Are all dreams pregnant with trouble?

KITITU: Yes, dreams usually mean trouble. Suppose I love a girl and want to marry her, and then I dream of marriage, of having the cattle and going and being accepted by her fathers who are all present [in the dream], then I rejoice and I hope.[1] Then I begin to think of going to earn the cattle, and I go to work and come back with three or four cattle and go to hand over the marriage-cattle. All ends happily, but it might not. Perhaps they will accept me, perhaps not.

At work I dream that a sister has died, and I find it is true, then I think other dreams will be true. . . . I fear that perhaps my death is near. I go to a doctor and say I want a medicine, he gives me some to put under my head and sleep on. He grinds a medicine and tell me to sprinkle it in the room.

775 It is generally agreed that dreams of the dead are not welcomed:
828 If I speak of the recently dead others will say: 'Don't speak of them, they are dead.' Then I take a coal from the fire and say: 'Do not come in dreams.' If the shade comes it always means trouble.

And the only occasions of prayer to the shades are when men are in trouble and anticipate misfortune.

We never pray except when there is trouble. No, we never pray to give thanks. Why should we? There is nothing to grumble at!

673 (*c*) *Belief and behaviour*

753 In the Nyakyusa view there is a direct and immediate link be-
777 tween misfortune and wrong-doing. When illness befalls a man,

[1] Kititu's father delayed long in providing him with marriage-cattle. The following year he eloped with a girl.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[585] of which the basic rule is the separation of the reproductive
834 activities of successive generations.

If my wife goes to the inner part of my mother's house, it is a wrong. Perhaps she will bear a thin and sickly child. She has gone to the inner part of her in-law's house and my mother is angry with her for going where my father goes. Perhaps, when she is first pregnant, my wife goes to the back of her own mother's house. That is a wrong, too. Perhaps she will have a difficult labour. The trouble in both cases comes from the anger of the elders, my mother's in the first case, her mother's in the second. It is said that if my wives have seen my father by inheritance, then, when I die, the fathers who are dead will not receive me because I have injured ('kept back') their younger brother. I think, for my part, that the pagans honour this custom [of avoidance] very much because they say that the shades will be angry if it is neglected.

•775 Apart from the neglect of rituals, the types of behaviour com-
673 monly believed to be directly punished by the shades are (1) quar-
578 rels between father and son or between brothers, turning on the
681 seduction of a senior's wife by his junior, on the sharing of marriage-cattle or, nowadays, on the sharing of the earnings of a young man working for wages, or on his seduction of women which necessitates the payment of fines by his father; (2) quarrels between father and daughter or father-in-law and son-in-law turning on the handing over of marriage-cattle by the son-in-law and the provision of gifts for his daughter by the father; (3) quarrels between husband and wife; (4) quarrels between relatives of all sorts over failure to attend, or to invite to, rituals; and (5) the neglect of his wards by the heir.

578 Cases of family quarrels over seduction leading to misfortune
775 have already been quoted (pp. 134–5; 187–8). One concerning cattle and earnings was cited by Mwakwelebeja. A young man, X., went out to work and left the cattle he earned with his elder full brother. When he married he took all these cattle and gave them to his father-in-law. His elder brother was very angry. X. said: 'I take all the cattle for you have never given me any of yours.' His brother replied: 'How could I give you cows? I have no children.' Then all the cattle X. had given to his father-in-law died and had to be replaced. 'The shades were angry because when the younger brother took the cows his elder brother complained very much.' And if a young man goes out to work and gives his father no share of his earnings the shades are angry: 'Perhaps I will fall ill; perhaps when I look for work I shall not

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

find it. There are many cases like that. My friends in the age-village will go to a diviner who will declare that the shades are angry because I do not care for my father.' If a daughter makes a runaway marriage her father is angry and it is believed that either she may not conceive or her baby may be ailing until the marriage-cattle and bull of puberty have been given by her husband and accepted by her father. 578 775

The respect and obedience due to a father is due to his heir, and in certain circumstances to his sister also; while on his part the heir has the same obligations to his juniors as the deceased had. Fibombe cited the example, already quoted, of a man quarrelling with his dead father's sister over the distribution of the marriage-cattle for his own sister, and the girl failing to conceive because of the anger of her father's sister. If a son, whose parents are dead, neglects to provide his sister with the customary gifts of food when she returns to her husband after a visit to her 'father', he may become impotent: 'Those below are angry and when he has begotten twins he will have trouble at the ritual.' Or the girl may fall ill. 'She thinks: "Who is my father? This is my father, but he does not care for me."' The mystical power of a senior relative is linked directly with his obligation to give gifts: 593 688 602 431

My father's elder half-brother has power over me only if he has given marriage-cattle for my father or nurtured him. If he has given him cattle to marry a wife then he has power over him. . . . My superior (*mbala gwanga*) is he who gives me everything.

Favouritism in a polygynous family, shown in the unfair division of milk or meat or fish by the husband between his wives, is thought to anger the shades, which cause his cows to bleed from the udder when milked, or prevent fish entering his traps, and so do the bad temper and insulting language of a quarrelsome wife. Mwakwelebeja explains that: 595 775 578 [825]

If a woman is bad-tempered when she is making beer the beer goes sour. If my wife and I quarrel my shades are angry and the beer is spoiled. I say to my wife: 'You have spoiled the beer because you do not listen to what I say.'

Neglect of his wards by the heir is a wrong-doing frequently mentioned. 686

It is said that if I neglect my brother's children he and my father will be very angry, they will not come to meet me when I die, as the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

686 shades usually do, and I shall wander a long time on the way to the land of the shades because I shall have no relatives to show me the way. And then when I get there I shall still have trouble. They will drive me away from them, and I shall live alone, apart from them, quite separate.

775 764 More rarely a shade is said to be angry because his grave has been left unswept, or he has not been buried where he asked to be.

621 681 The kinds of behaviour believed to be punished by 'the breath of men' are very similar to those thought to be punished by the anger of senior kinsmen; and, indeed, as we have seen, kinsmen and neighbours may murmur together against a son who has seduced his father's wife, a girl who has behaved insultingly to her parents-in-law, either verbally or by a breach of avoidance, and an heir who has neglected his wards or has neglected the customary ritual for his father, more particularly the customary killing of a cow when he enters into his inheritance. It is said that neglect to provide them with certain customary feasts infuriates neighbours more than anything else.[1]

The misfortunes that threaten from the neglect of rituals, and from the anger of kinsmen and neighbours, are loss of sanity, of life or health or fertility; a difficult labour or a lingering death; repeated miscarriages; loss of beauty (a wicked woman goes bald or turns reddish); scanty crops or sick herds, or, nowadays, unemployment—the man whose father is angry does not find a job. Only rarely is it suggested that punishment may be postponed until after death and then what is feared is that the shades of the lineage will not receive their kinsman.

775 771 688 When Nyakyusa talk about their religion they speak mostly of external things, of the rituals, of the angry words spoken by kinsmen or neighbours and of the fearful effects upon one against whom this anger is directed. Misfortune is said to be brought down on a man by his parents muttering in anger over the fire, by people murmuring against him (the word used is that for the humming of a hive of bees). The emphasis is on outspoken complaint or criticism. But it is also thought that 'the shades see what is within a man': if he stints one wife of fish, then 'even though the woman herself has not said anything, the shades hear the thought of the belly'. Sleeplessness and an unquiet mind are taken as evidence of the anger of the shades or the attacks of witches.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 103-6.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'*Tutigesa* (we do not sleep),' is the formal phrase with which the village headman and other responsible people notify the chief that all is not well with the country, or with which a woman or a junior kinsman prefaces the troubles brought to the notice of the head of the homestead, when these troubles have not obviously materialized in sickness. Anger is dangerous first and foremost to the person against whom it is directed, but there is also the suggestion that it may react on the person who is angy. We have already quoted the remark: 'A woman never murmurs against anyone. If she does she falls sick herself.'

How the fear of the shades is inculcated in a child is shown in the following text:

I began by learning the word or name: *ungwaka*, and to know that the shade (*ungwaka*) was someone who had died, and people said that they were like flickering shadows (*imiyungwale*). Also people said a shade is someone very awesome (*uniye*) if he appears to you. When I began to think of the shades at night I could not sleep because I feared the awfulness (*ubuniye*) of which they spoke. And this was specially told: 'If a person dies to-day, and perhaps you have not heard, then that dead man appears to you with cattle. He is smeared with earth on his face and forearms and knees. Then, because you do not know anything, you say: "Friend," and talk with him, saying: "Where are you going with the cattle?" He says: "I am going to my in-laws." Then if you go home and find they are wailing a death, and you tell your tale, they say: "So-and-so has died, you met him." They say you also will die. But you must be silent, and only speak after they have buried him.' So in my belly, in my thought, the shades appeared very fearful. Many people compare the awfulness of the shades with that of wild animals, and say the awfulness of the shades is greater. If a shade is standing here, and a wild animal there, you will flee towards the animal. So I also thought. But later I changed my mind, and said I would go towards the shade.

Once when there was some sickness at home I heard it said that the shades were angry, perhaps because there had been a quarrel, perhaps because he [*sic*] had not killed a cow for a relative's funeral. Once when I was ill with sores round the mouth, people said: '*Mlinda*, the shades have created them'—that was to be 'beaten' by the shades. So, when they had consulted an oracle, they poured a little beer on the fire-bricks and prayed. Then the illness disappeared very quickly. When I asked my mother about it she said: 'The shades were angry, so you were ill. It was because your father was angry, or perhaps on some other account.' Thus I learnt the work of the shades, little by little, from illnesses among my parents and stories of my elders.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

577 There is much more talk among the Nyakyusa of misfortune
777 from the shades or the anger of neighbours, than of blessing, but
556 there is an idea, somewhat vague but real, that generosity and kindliness will bring blessing (*ukupa*). Ambilikile, a Christian teacher who had grown up in a pagan home, said:

> My mother tells me that my father was in the habit of feeding people, those who were not his relatives. People went to a distance and brought medicines for fertility and gave them to him, hence they said: 'He is very kind; food never grows short at his home.' She also told me that my father died very old. He did not die of disease, but of old age, no breath being left in him. This was because men were always saying: 'May they stand by him, may they bless him (*kwimanwelaya, kwaupaya*),' not to his face but to others. They said that he lived long because of the blessing of men. Yes, they say that the food of a kindly man never gets finished, that of a stingy man finishes; he himself suffers hunger.

763 Mwaisumo described a father on his death-bed blessing a favourite son, allocating cattle to him, and telling him:

> Care for the children I have left, keep on good terms with them, then you will be rich in everything like your father. I cared for my children, I was not harsh (*ukali*), so complain to me of anything that troubles you. If you are like this the property in your home will be plentiful, people will be astonished and say: 'He is like his father.'

631 Of a man given a cow by the chief, it was sometimes said: 'The
●775 shades have blessed him; he has a righteous (*ugulyfu*) shade.'

Although our Nyakyusa informants talked a great deal about
754 the danger of neglecting rituals and angering senior relatives,
673 living and dead, the number of cases of misfortune attributed to
621 their anger is small in comparison with the number attributed to witchcraft or 'the breath of men'. (Ten as compared with sixty-three.) There is no reason to suppose that one type of case was concealed when the others were reported to us, and it is clear that the Nyakyusa prefer to make neighbours in the age-village, rather than kinsmen, the scapegoat for their misfortunes. Even when the wrong done is against a kinsman it is often the neighbours, rather than the shades, who are said to have brought punishment on the wrong-doer.

777 At the same time, we were assured by one informant after an-
621 other that people blame the shades or Kyala for misfortune when it is really the neighbours who are responsible! Angumbwike argued that men fear to accuse the neighbours, who are slow to

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F7617 Ngonde F7617

food, beer, and other things placed at the graves, are intended to maintain in some way the life of the spirits, to keep them in countenance in their own world. For as men are dependent on the goodwill of the spirits for the best things of life, so do the spirits depend upon their descendants on earth for much of what they require in the other world. 769

The dead are conceived as obtaining a great access of power on passing into the spirit world, power for good or evil, and to placate them is one of the chief preoccupations of Konde life. But while it would not be true to say that compulsion can be brought to bear upon the spirits, that once the appropriate ceremonies are performed, the spirit must fulfil the prayer of the petitioners, yet so complete is the faith of the common man in the power of these ceremonies, that it may be suggested that prayer and answer are inseparably bound up together; if compulsion is too strong a word, obligation, if milder, is perhaps sufficient. 775 769

The spirits are called *baryuka*. The verb *baryuka* means to rise from the dead, to resume ordinary bodily activities; but the noun formed from this verb, *uuryuka* (of which the plural is *baryuka*), means the inner man, the life of which is independent of the body. Now when the *uuryuka* leaves the body, it does not die, it goes to *ulwaryuka*, the land of spirits, where in all respects except that of having a body, it retains its humanity. The spirits are not, however, called *abanda* men; though the related term *imiende*, which, applied to living men, is an insult, is often 775

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

• 715 given to them. There is no conception more firmly fixed in the Konde mind than that "the dead do not return"; they do not resume earthly life in bodily form; though they do return in spirit form, and sometimes exert themselves very energetically. The dead are with God: this is a conviction so universal that it cannot be the result of Christian teaching. And God is not above, as in our cosmology, but below. "*Kwenanya kano malabarya*," is a frequent expression on the lips of some people. *Kwirabarya* means to be idle when one might be working; and the meaning of the phrase is that man's permanent home is not "above" on earth, but "below," very much as in the statement of St. Paul, "our citizenship is in heaven."

At death, or rather at burial, the head of the 764 family, calling for silence from the wailing women, addresses the spirits by name, praying them to receive their friend. Then addressing the dead man directly, he says:

> "And you, friend, go to the land of spirits. Go in peace. Go to meet all whom we have named. They will recognize you. Salute them all. Tell them that we are paying taxes, that those men are an affliction to us. It was not we who killed you. Nay, we weep for your death."

The words, "these men are affliction to us," refer to the Europeans, and are still in use, though of recent years they have been gradually dropping out of the valedictory address at the grave. Another expression

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

still sometimes used, is "God will judge between us and the white man," a clear indication that the white man is not received everywhere as an unmixed blessing. 764

The entrance to the spirit world is the grave; and all that is done there is intended to give the dead man a favourable entrance upon his new state; well dressed, well supplied with all the necessaries of life; for he goes to God. The conditions of life below are the same as those above. The chief is a chief still, and the slave a slave. The rich man continues to be rich, and the poor goes on in his poverty. The wife goes to her husband, children to their parents. There is no retribution, no righting of wrongs. The judgment of God against the white man will be manifested here on earth, not in the future state. The unmarried man remains unmarried, and his body is smeared with charcoal, so that he may not, on arrival, be mistaken for a married man. Cattle are there, but they need no tending; bananas, but they require no cultivation. There is bush for the hunter, and streams for the fisher. But everything is small: cattle, houses, crops, even the spirits themselves, are *sekere*, thin, unsubstantial. 764 775

Prior to the arrival of the first human spirits, the place was inhabited by the owners of the land; and "these are they who see God, for God is a Spirit." Therefore human beings going there are strangers, but are well received, and given all necessaries, including land. 775 776

Although the dwelling of the spirits is below, they 775

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•715 are by no means confined to that region, but come up frequently, especially at night, when they sit on the graves and chat, or go to the houses of their descendants seeking food or beer, and to assure themselves that there is still a "fire" there, and fire means descendants. In the house they make a noise, *hw*, *hw*, *hw*, heard by the people within, and morning reveals soiled food and beer grown thick, evidence that cannot be gainsaid of a spirit-visitor. Spirits are sometimes visible, but if addressed by name they will disappear. They cannot be seen in bright moonlight, and fire renders them invisible: a fireless house at night is still a terror to little children. A visit from a spirit is most unwelcome, especially to women and children, though the men claim that they are not afraid. Specially terrifying is a recently dead person who has been buried near the house. "*Panirya panja*" (there is terror outside) they say on a dark night, for the spirit of the dead man may be sitting on the mound which marks his grave. No one willingly passes the grave of a dead chief at night, for one may hear his name called; then woe to the man who looks behind, for he will die; or if he hears his name, but has the will not to look, some lesser evil will overtake him.

Wood noises in a wind, the moaning of the trees, is the voice of a spirit in the tree. If a branch snaps, and the passer-by looks round, evil will come; and if his name is called it is a sign that "his number is up," he has not long to live. But it may happen that the snapping of the branch is quite harmless, being

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

merely intended to make him look round, so that the spirit may get a good view of him, and see if he is his "child." 775

The spirits return to earth for many reasons, but chiefly for two. The first is to assure themselves that they still have descendants on earth; for if the family dies out it is a dreadful calamity for the ghosts: they become frogs. The second reason is to make sure that they are not forgotten by the living, for the spirit to whom no attention is paid by the living becomes of no account in the underworld. Hence the illness or other misfortune which overtakes the living; stern reminder of duty to the dead, who will not permit neglect.

By night the spirits, when they are visible at all, take human form; but by day they come in the form of birds, serpents, lions; and they come as small red or black ants to eat the flesh offered in sacrifice at the grave of a chief. When the spirit takes the form of a serpent, he is testing the loyalty of his descendants: if they try to kill him, it is a bad sign; they ought to [illegible] bite anyone. Only chiefs enter into lions, going about to see how the people are behaving. God Himself also comes in this form, and for the same reason; and the lion, like the serpent, is harmless. The idea, common in some parts of Bantu Africa, that a child who resembles his dead grandfather is that grandfather come back to life, is scoffed at by the Konde. The child is like his grandfather, and that is all.

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XVIII

Divination & the Lot

THE fact of death is not regarded by the tribes of Central Africa as forming a barrier between the living and the dead. The two form one community, and the means of communication between them are naturally therefore well developed. Living and dead are mutually dependent, and a certain amount of goodwill must necessarily exist between them. What the dead cannot do for themselves, the living must do for them; and what the living must know, but do not, the dead can tell them if properly interrogated. It is upon this fact that divination depends, as do omens also to some extent. The use of charms and amulets, however, depends upon the other, and perhaps closely related fact, that Nature is not a fixed system of laws pursuing its way regardless of human needs, but is pliable, responsive, and will advise, protect, injure, according to the means used by those who possess the power.

The idea that the whole system of consultation of the spirits, of the interpretation of omens, and of the use of charms and amulets, is based upon conscious deception—a few clever men in each community

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

which killed the man passing over to those present 764
at the funeral. Those who performed the *post mortem* [83]
take medicine as well. The funeral ox or cow is now
killed, and the flesh divided among the various groups.
The next stage is to "disinherit" the dead man, to
cut him off from all connection with earthly matters.
His mats were buried with him; now his bananas are
cut down, his hoes are taken to the grave and the hafts
broken, while all baskets and pots are destroyed and
left to rot there. His cattle go to his heirs, and his [587]
wives build themselves huts in which they live for a
year, "covering the footsteps of the dead man";
after which they also go to the heirs. (Much of this
is now falling into disuse, especially around Karonga.)
The dead man has been dissociated from the living:
the bananas grow again, but they are not his; his
house may be occupied, but he has only the rights of
a ghost in it; and in many places the house is left to
decay as soon as the funeral is over, and the wives
have built themselves huts not far off. But the belief
also prevails, side by side with the desire to cut off
the dead man from the living, that by destroying his
goods they go with him to the land of spirits.

The Konde have a strange belief, that a dead body [77]
casts no shadow; if it does, it is a sign that the spirit
still lingers around, and if he is not driven off, another 766
member of the family will die soon. The most
effective way of despatching him to his proper abode
is to burn his body. If the diviner finds that a second
death in the family is due to the reluctance of the
first to go to his fathers, the body is dug up, and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F7117 Ngonde F7117
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER III

THE 'DIVINE KINGS'

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(a) CHARACTERISTICS OF 'DIVINE KINGS'

THE heroic myths and genealogies proclaim the origin of chieftainship, and point to a distinction between ordinary chiefs and those we call 'divine kings'. Two remote ancestors who were pre-eminent are worshipped as heroes and creators, their graves are centres at which a large number of chiefdoms join in celebration, and living representatives are selected in every generation bearing their names. These are the 'divine kings', the Lwembe of Lubaga (in the centre of Nyakyusa country) and the Kyungu of Mbande near Karonga in Nyasaland. A third hero, Kyala, is associated with the cave, PaliKyala, near Ikombe at the north-east corner of the Lake, and he is worshipped in the same way as the other two, except that the priest of the cave is not his descendant and does not embody him. According to the myth, Kyala was the brother of Lwembe, but died without issue. However, the word for chiefs—~~ala-ya-fyala~~—is popularly believed to mean 'the sons of Kyala'.[1] 713 769 643

Kyala is one hero among others, but his name is also used in the sense of 'the lord': a chief is *kyala gwako* (his lord) to a commoner, a father is *kyala gwako* to his son or daughter 'because he created him' and a shade is *kyala* to his living kinsman (*anyuka ja kyala*). Of one who performs a feat—something difficult—it is said 'he is Kyala'.[2] This usage is said to be very old, but there is yet another meaning of the word which is new. *Kyala* was used by the European missionaries (who first established themselves near PaliKyala) as their translation of 'God'. Today these three conceptions are inextricably mixed: Kyala the hero, Kyala 'the 769 643 [775] [177] [197]

[1] I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Fuerer for drawing my attention to this point. It is doubtful whether *Kyala* and *fyala* in fact come from the same root. *Fyala* in Hehe means the daughter of a chief (A. C. G. Hodgson, 'Some Notes on the Website of Mdonyo: Ilonion, *J.R.A.I.*, lxi (1931), p. 401). In Bena *ipalyana* means 'my husband's father or mother' (A. T. and G. M. Culwick, *Ubena of the Rivers*, p. 136). In Ganda *mulyala* means 'lady', mistress of a household and garden (J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, p. 24). cf. Nyika, *fala* 'to begin, to bear' (J. L. Krapf and J. Rebmann, *A Nyika-English Dictionary*, edited by T. H. Spendlove, 1887). [192]

[2] cf. P. R. Lehmann, 'Some field notes on the Nyakyusa', *Sociologus*, New Series, 1955, vol. 5, p. 66. [113]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

were not ill, they were not troubled as we are. For later in the evening, while the Lwembe was still alive, the commoner priests removed his nails and hair; they came near and plucked them off. He shouted: 'Who is snatching at me?' They replied: 'No one', and then they smothered him with cloth in the nostrils and in the anus, and he went away [i.e. he died]. . . . They did it only when he had initiated it himself by saying: 'I have eaten food in the land of the shades'; they did not begin it themselves. . . . They collected the relics in a little bamboo flask, and a priest treated them so that Lwembe might not go away with the food to the land of the shades, that the fertility of the soil (*ifiyalo*), this *ifiyalo*, might always remain above.

These relics, the hair and the nails, were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops.

While the Lwembe lived he was secluded—ordinary men did not see him—and he was subject to numerous taboos. For example, he might not tread in water lest the country should be flooded; he never bathed in a stream (as Nyakyusa men do daily) and was carried across any river when travelling; he must not sit on a green banana leaf lest the bananas in the country should fail, but was always provided with a skin to sit upon, and he ate only the middle portion of a banana throwing away the ends for 'if he finished the whole of a banana he would create hunger in the country'. No one might grasp his hand, or drink out of the same calabash as he, save the priests of his own age; if he drank from a calabash when travelling he took it with him, for 'if he left it behind he left hunger in that place'.

The selection of the Lwembe was in the hands of the hereditary priests of Lubaga and the hereditary Kinga priests, who come from BuKinga to sacrifice at Lubaga. The man they choose must be of good character—at the time we were in BuNyakyusa the only willing candidate was rejected because 'he is a bad man, a thief, they refuse to have a thief as priest'—he must calubit in his own home the power of fertility. 'They don't catch just anyone, but one with children, and cattle, and fertility of the fields in his own homestead. If the man taken as chief is not fertile and rich there will be many sterile people in the homesteads, and much disease and hunger.'

When the priests had decided upon the man of their choice, they seized him and set him upon a sacred skin and a pad of leaves; and it was believed that once he had been set thereon he would die if he refused office; tales were told of a younger brother

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

thought to affect the whole country was illustrated in Mwaihojo's chiefdom where the people were plagued by wild pig destroying their gardens. Mwaihojo (147) had a longstanding quarrel with his half-brother, Mwakyonde (148), whose country he had seized after their 'coming out'. Mwakyonde became famous as a doctor, and he was a great raconteur and beer-drinker, a regular Silenus, the boon companion of many influential men, whereas his brother was cold and irascible; so although he had lost his chieftaincy, Mwakyonde had considerable power. In February 1937, four lions were seen in the adjoining chiefdom of Mwaipopo (116), and we heard pig squealing as it was killed. Angombwike (whose father lived near Mwakyonde in Mwaihojo's country) explained to us: 'People say that these are Mwakyonde's lions. . . . Lion-makers have bundles of twigs which they put into the long grass, and which turn into lions. Long ago Mwakyonde made lions and they came and killed all the pigs, and the country (Mwaihojo's) was at peace, but he quarrelled with Mwaihojo and put his bundles of twigs into his box and locked it up. Then the country was filled with pig, and buck, and elephant, and all the crops were spoiled, and so it is still. Now Mwakyonde has begun to be friendly with Mwaipopo (116); they enjoy each other's company and drink beer together, and so he is making lions again in Kipungu, the land where Mwaipopo is hoeing, to kill the pig for Mwaipopo. They say Mwaipopo has given him a country in secret.' Now Mwaihojo claimed as his the forest country, which Mwaipopo's men had begun to colonize, therefore to aid Mwaipopo there was an effective slap at Mwaihojo. The lions came into Mwaihojo's country—we heard them repeatedly close to our camp—but they did not clear the pig.

Then, in March, Mwakyonde was supposed to be using a new medicine he had obtained to scare off pig from the fields. We asked him about it. 'Oh, it has failed. The pigs are still there eating. I've done everything I should but without effect. I think that the pigs are possessed by the shades (*sili simisile ingulube*).' 'Why?' we asked. 'Because my elder brother (Mwaihojo) and I are not on good terms (*tetikuongele kanono*) the shades are angry.'

So the destruction of men's gardens was traced to the quarrel between the chief and his brother.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 each name mentioned: 'We give this meat to you so-and-so.'
[782] 'May the children sleep, may we all sleep, may it rain, may there be much food, may milk be plentiful.' Then follows a communion in which young 'grand-children' of the dead share the sacred meat and beer. 'The shades eat together, they break off firewood
[775] there from the tree, they rejoice, some clap their hands to give thanks.' Finally, a hut is built for the shades and half-formed bananas and sweet milk are left in it to 'ripen'. It was thought that if the sacrifice were accepted they did so miraculously quickly and the milk increased in quantity, the bananas in size. Among the Kukwe a white and grey cock and a hen were offered as well as the cow or bull. An account of two of the sacrifices we attended will make this clearer.

(5) SACRIFICE TO MWAIJONGA

769 In July 1955, two days after the Kinga had sacrificed at
782 Lubaga (*vide supra*, p. 50), the chief Mwaipopo (116) came to tell us that he was going to sacrifice at the grove of his father, Mwaijonga (81). Ngulyo, heir to Mwaijonga's second senior headman and now his priest, came with the chief, and he remarked,

> Kasitile (86) summoned us some time ago. He and Njobokwa and Kisogwa[1] and I thought that the hunger was very great indeed, and Kasitile sent us to tell Mwaipopo (116) to look for a cow and sacrifice. Then Mwaipopo agreed, because the hunger is indeed very great; he has not yet found the cow; when he has, we shall inform Kasitile and then kill it in Mwaijonga's grove.

Mwaipopo 'found' the cow at once for next morning Kasitile told us

> *Mwambene* (Mwaipopo, 116) came with Ngulyo yesterday to say he had found the cow. This evening, after sunset, because there is a moon (second quarter) I shall pray at my place with water; and Mwaipopo will pray at his homestead also with water. Tomorrow morning they will kill the cow. I shall not be there—I never go—I stay at home and they [i.e. the shades] find me at home.

The same evening (19 July 1955) Godfrey Wilson went to Kasitile's homestead just after sunset. Kasitile took a calabash cup
[774] hanging under the eaves saying: 'No one ever drinks from this cup, it is for praying only. At my death it will go to my heir to use for prayer.' He filled the cup from his wife's water-pot, and then

[1] Sister of two other village headmen of Mwaijonga, also priests of his grave.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Here is your cow, your food. We pray to Kyala. May theft go away. Give us food and beans and millet, may we eat and be satisfied. . . . It is said that the sweet potatoes are scarce now, help us. You Mwakalule (117), Mwakomo (116). . . . This is your cow Mwaijonga (82). This is your meat. I shall seek another also which we shall give you like this.

NOELVO: May the locusts go away. It is you who have caused theft because there is hunger.

KAMGONYA: At night since we eat scraps of food our bellies are disquieted . . . may we be satisfied. People are eating millet porridge;[1] when food is plentiful they say it's horrible. When someone eats millet porridge he dies, it kills a man. We pray to him, this Kyala, because we do not know him, so we say: 'You Mwaijonga (82) drive away the hunger. Give all of us, Mwaipopo's people, food, and hear us all.'

Mwaipopo's young sons (not the older ones) ate the rest of the sacred meat (*side plate 8*). Other boys who approached were chased away: 'They thought because their friends were getting meat they would too.' Then the remainder of the carcass was divided: two legs went to the chief, two to the commoners, the chine to Kasitile, the breast to Mwaipopo (the chief) who gave half to his sons and half to his daughters—his wives may not eat it. The head went to the priests Ngulyo and his fellows—and some entrails were sent to Soba, widow of Mwaijonga (82). There was some discussion about the disposal of the head: 'Let it be put in Ngulyo's house', they said. Mwaipopo commenting later, explained:

We leave the head in the house of a commoner near the sacred grove in order that the shades can come and eat it. So also with the chine. . . . Kasitile leaves it so that his shades may eat it. We throw the meat by a tree which was planted long ago. He whom we have buried looks towards it, he sits facing the tree and the meat is thrown beside it.[2] He sees the meat we throw. We offer the meat of the upper forelegs (*ipamapa*), this is the sacred meat, the rest we eat ourselves. The blood pours out on to the ground, it goes beneath, which means that the owners, the shades, receive it, because they are beneath. The shades say: 'We are angry because you have not given us cows to treat the grove, we are angry and send this hunger. Treat the grove frequently!'

Kasitile also discussed the ritual with us later and he remarked:

[1] Millet is ordinarily used only for brewing beer. The Nyakyusa regard millet porridge as very disagreeable and eat it only during extreme scarcity.

[2] We omitted to ask why, in this case, a first fruit not been made to the grove.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

it was stolen by Ngoni raiders. When the brewing was ripe, the chief sought a calabash of curds and Kalinga cut a stem of bananas, and the priests ate and drank in her hut, together with junior kinsmen of the chief's family, but not the chief himself. As they drank they prayed: 769 782

Oh thou Ifwakagile (59) give us millet, may it be plentiful, and may the milk be plentiful and may the bananas grow.

One pot of beer was due to Kasitile, the priest, and he would leave it overnight in his house.

The shade come and drink a lot, only a little beer is left in the morning. . . . ben the bananas flourish and there is much fertility in the homestead. . . . The sacred pot gives fertility of the soil to the whole country. [775] [778]

A very bitter quarrel flared up while we were in Selya because Kasitile came upon Ngulyo and his colleagues drinking the sacred beer without their having sent him his pot, or even notifying him of the brewing. The repercussions of this are discussed in chapter IX. [578]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VII

CLEANSING THE COUNTRY

769 SACRIFICES to the heroes and the shades of the chiefs are holy and private—only a handful of priests and chiefs may enter the groves and the details of the rituals are not discussed with other people. But there are other celebrations in which everyone 796 participates; these are the rituals for cleansing the community— 783 'throwing out the rubbish' (*ukujala ikikungu*)—more specifically the *ashes* from all the hearths.

In Ngonde the cleansing is organized for the whole kingdom, from Mbande, but among the Nyakyusa each chiefdom acts independently. Traditionally, we were told, the *ukujala ikikungu* was an annual celebration, observed at the 'new year', after the break of the rains, but it could also take place if there were much sickness in the country, or plague, or prophecies of evil to come. It was celebrated (in an attenuated form and by a section of the community only) in Ngonde in July 1937, to cleanse the country of a plague of rats, and in September of the same year a somewhat similar ritual was performed in Porokoto's chiefdom because a [787] fearful omen had been seen—a ground hornbill had eaten a [178] chicken. The annual celebrations had been dropped both in Ngonde and BuNyakyusa before 1935.

As has been shown in the *Rituals of Kinship* the Nyakyusa believe [769] that too close an association with the shades is dangerous; all the [755] family rituals are designed to drive them away, to drive them out of the bodies of the mourners, or menstruating girls, or parents of twins; and the purpose of 'throwing out the ashes' in all the homesteads is essentially the same. The shades 'come to warm 783 themselves' at the hearths of their descendants, they 'bring sickness to the hearths' and so the old ashes are cleared out and new fire is [775] lighted. The phrase *ukujala ikikungu* is used in Ngonde for clearing out the litter (*ulufumbe*) after a burial, or an initiation ritual, and for shaving after a ritual, as well as for clearing the ashes from all the hearths in the country.

[759] It is also thought that domestic fires are contaminated by [775] witches who may have cooked the human flesh they steal over their victims' own fires. In Ngonde it was the connexion between

[p. 102]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the shades and the hearths which was stressed; in Porokoto's country people talked mostly of the witches; but it seemed clear that both conceptions were present when men murmured: 'The hearth bricks are bad' (*amafige mabibi*) and they sought to cleanse them by clearing out the old fire and lighting new. 'To clear out the ashes means they take away all that dirt, the dirt which the witches have brought and the shades; it is the cause of illness.' When witches are thought to be active there is also a public complaint, and a public warning is given 'to whom it may concern' to desist.[1] This occurred in the ritual after the ground hornbill had eaten the chicken. Above all, men must admit their anger to one another: 'they fight that the homesteads may be peaceful'. The theme so familiar in Nyakyusa rituals—that quarrels must be confessed if they are to be composed—recurs yet again. Though we distinguish the rituals for 'cleansing the country' from sacrifices, on the ground that the whole community participates in the 'cleansing' while the sacrifice is esoteric, the two are closely linked, and a sacrifice commonly precedes or follows the cleansing. We turn now to the detailed accounts of celebrations for 'cleansing' in Ngonde and among the Kukwe.

(*a*) THE RATS

In Ngonde they used to clear out the ashes at the new year, at the first hoeing (in December) after 'the break of the rains'. They feared that death and disease would spread through the land if they continued living with the old fires, that the shades in the earth, both the shades of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry. Let them drive the shades away and hoe in peace. They always remembered to do so each new year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually, they never forgot. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to clear out the ashes; and then they would hoe in peace. And at other times, too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the ashes again. 'It is to drive away the shade with the sickness that he brings. We throw out the ashes and firebrands because he has come to warm himself over the fire in our houses, we throw out the pots and winnowing baskets because he has come to see us eating; let him go there (to the grove) and eat what he asked for—we say the shades ask for food—let him eat here, perhaps a sheep. We say the shades bring sickness to the fire, hence we throw out the ashes and make new fire with a drill.'

The nobles of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 129-13.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 of intense questioning.) We have not, but perhaps you have?' Then we all denied having heard of such a thing; we had no idea what the portent meant and said: 'Let us consult an oracle.' The chief agreed. . . . Then men went to the doctor and the oracle said: 'It is because you have not celebrated at Mwakan'ata's (30 K) place since his death;[1] you must kill a cow and clear the grass at his place. This [775] ground hornbill is your father Mwakan'ata; seek a cow and celebrate and pray, then you will see what will happen.' They told the chief this and he said: 'Must I find a cow then?' But it is we village headmen 783 who have done wrong because some of us said: 'What's a cow for? Let us just pray; why should we throw away a cow?' Others of us said: 796 'Yes, let a cow be found', but the chief listened to those who opposed killing a cow. So we went and prayed without eating anything.

The ritual was put off three times; the first time the people were summoned men of one village had not come; the second time men of another; the third time a headman was missing and also the women had not been called. Finally, on the morning of 28th September, men and women and children gathered on the pasture land just beyond Ilolo village (where we lived). The men and boys sat, with their headmen, by villages, each forming a segment of the great circle round the chief, while the women all crowded together some distance behind him. . . . 'We all go, except the Christians.'

The chief Porokoto, rather nervous in his manner, stood up and addressed the company after one of the headmen had said pointedly: 'We are all women, a man stands in the middle, it is he who speaks.' For women never pray, blowing out water, and commoners in this situation do not pray, only the chief.

PORORTO: The reason I have called you together is this: there is no peace in the country; there is much cold, many people are shivering with fever, let us drink water and drive away Kyala. This concerns all the homesteads; the cold [i.e. fever] is finishing us. What do you say Mwamunda? [to the headman].
MWAMUNDA: Thank you! We rejoice that you chiefs have remembered. May we sleep well, may there not be illness, may the cold pass, may the children grow well, and all the crops. Indeed we are all in great trouble. Kyala help us, may we be pure (*ajabala*)!

Then the chief called on one village headman after another to speak; and his elder brother, Mwasalemba, also spoke.

[1] Porokoto was already sceptical of pagan ritual and has since become a Christian.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 They say that complaining drives away illness, even though the witches
796 are not seen, and do not confess saying, 'It is we' yet they are ashamed
[753] thinking 'People have caught me' and they desist.]

MWAMULENGA: Catch anyone you see in your dreams. If someone is ill should we not all gather?

MWAMUNDA: Countrymen, give thanks that there are the chiefs.

And the company assented.

Then there was a discussion about the direction in which the chief should spit and people run. One pointing towards Tukuyu said: 'We always looked that way.' Another said: 'We always reached the boundary.'

Mwafula (a village headman) came with his young son carrying
[778] a calabash of medicated water. Porokoto took a sip and spat out eastward, 'in the direction of the grove of Kabale, to the shades.'

Mwamulenga shouted: 'Now we have prayed, the sickness is
[755] finished, we are present and watch over the homesteads. If we see anyone bringing sickness we will catch him and crush him on the sleeping mat.' There was a roar from the crowd, then all rushed yelling 300 yards or so eastward to the edge of the fields, and back again. Porokoto ran a little way with them, his malacca cane raised, then stopped, looking self-conscious, and strolled homeward. Everyone else scattered, chattering and laughing. On the way back we were greeted: 'You have prayed! Did you catch witches? Whom did you catch?'

Mwasalemba, senior brother of Porokoto and an expert in ritual, added one or two points in explanation:

In the old days we threw out the ashes, but we have not yet done so this time; we begin with the ritual on the pasture land and throw out the ashes afterwards. In the old days we threw them out of all the houses and put in fresh fire, new ash, saying 'Thou Kyala, thou shade,
[775] receive us, let us sleep here, we throw out the ashes, let sickness be
[753] slight.' Those who are angry now are our shades—those of the chiefs—they have gathered with the shades of the commoners. The medicated water means: 'Thou shade, you fathers, may we sleep, use this water for us if we are ill, may we be strong.' The water goes to the shades with these words.

Q.: Why must the women come?

M.: They call the war cry, we run swiftly, the women follow calling the war cry which means, 'You shade, we call the war cry for you that we may be pure—without anger—in our bellies, make us strong also, thou shade, may we also be pure in our bellies, this is your war cry . . .' The running and calling the war cry is to mock at him, to drive him

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

away. We run with him, we leave him over there, we return and bring him in. We drive him off because he brought sickness; when we have done so we return and bring him again that we may be pure—without anger—and he also may be pure. We are with him all the time; we never throw him away. We always have the old one in the belly, an infant is he, and if I die I am with him, this earth (pointing to the earth of his homestead) never goes away, it is he. So if the crops fail when I have hoed I say: 'The shade is angry, this earth.' (*Papo ninda ndinagwe bonila mundu, mutulule ja jaja, ndinaga nyfwile ndinagwe—unyfu ugw gutijwaga nakwme ja jaja—papo lunga ndamila nikati 'unyuka ukalele unyfu ugw' bo fainila.*) Yes, in the death ritual also we drive him away with his sickness, and bring him back, always the old one. 783 79% [775] [753]

After the ritual all have normal intercourse with their wives, but the night before there was no intercourse. How should we do evil on the mats when we have not yet blessed the shade? But when we have blessed him then all of us lie on our mats again. To lie together is to overstep the ritual, the shades are shocked and say, 'How can you do this? You agreed yesterday to bless the shades and you do this, why?' Then later, if a woman bears a child which cries at night, people say, 'You overstepped the ritual, pray for the child.' Or perhaps the woman is barren. We liken the water and the war cry to what we do on the mats—the water is the shade's and the war cry is his, it is his work. When we have spoken to the shade he comes into my belly—then I come together with my wife again. [833] [842]

This interpretation by Mwaalemba indicates that the blowing out of water is a symbol of emission. 'It is what men do.' *It has been shown in Rituals of Kinship* that the shades are driven out of the body in the sex act; that the shade and semen are identified; and that driving off the shade is a condition of health and sanity. The fact that blowing out water is also a symbol of confusion—admission of anger, 'bringing out all that is within'—and supplication does not invalidate Mwaalemba's interpretation, for the same act is symbolized in many ways and the same symbol expresses events which are distinct, but associated. As in so many societies, abstinence is felt to be a necessary preparation for the celebration of a ritual, and the union, real or symbolic, of husband and wife the necessary conclusion.[1] All this is intelligible only in terms of the Nyakyusa ideas about procreation discussed in *Rituals of Kinship*. The shade is the vital force in men 833 783 755

[1] cf. I. Cunnison, 'Husbandship and Ritual of Lunguda Villages', *Africa*, xxvi (1956), pp. 3-13; H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (1927), vol. i, pp. [illegible]; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (1911), pp. 48, 55, 57.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

833 and women, it is procreative power, fertility. That power is
783 constantly expelled from the belly but returns again and by that
755 expulsion and return men live.

There was a great deal of criticism from the conservatives because no sacrifice had been made.

177
787 MWAMENDA: Now people are talking much saying, 'We have abandoned that which they did formerly, we are doing something else.' People have many dreams (gesture head on hand as if heavy with anxiety), many say: 'I have dreamed of the dead, they told me to sacrifice a cow, to pray, we did not pray properly, that is useless, it will not effect anything.' So we have told the chief saying: 'Let us kill a cow at the grave of Mwakan'ata,' he has agreed, but the cow has not yet come.

783
796 Formerly, on the night following the day of the prayer we should have eaten the sacrificial cow, the chief would have killed two cows and the headmen from different villages would have come and eaten by night, and drunk beer provided by the chief, in the house of the senior wife of the chief. . . . They ate a little meat, raw, the rest they roasted. Then in the morning, when they had eaten and were satisfied, they would go to clear out the house, to throw out the ashes, and to
[372] pray, as we prayed now, and to make new fire by friction in the pasture land. The village headman made fire with medicine which the chief gave him, the name of the medicine is Mkamba, it's a tree. To throw out the ashes means to clear out all the filth, the filth which the
[754] witches and the shades have brought to us—the filth that is sickness. . . .
[775] Do not the witches eat meat at the fire? Human flesh? Some roast at your fires your bodies which they have seized, some go home with the human flesh to their own fires, hence comes the filth of the ashes. The village headmen eat the sacrificial meat at night with the shades, they celebrate for them with the blood which goes beneath. . . .

If the chief has done something wrong, then those above [i.e. the village headmen] pray to those beneath saying, 'Let us help one another to punish him who has strayed, but we do not wish that he
[754] should die, let him be ill; perhaps then he will seek something to nourish us.' Again the night before the throwing out of the ashes they confess their anger and say: 'You beneath, this our child (the chief) has remembered us, there is no accusation against him now, may sickness go away from the country, and children sleep, let us all sleep and the cows calve. We greet those beneath.' In my childhood I was repeatedly surprised at night when my father came in, he had a little parcel of meat. 'Where have you been?' I asked. 'We have been praying.' But since I grew up and became a village headman, and was recorded as such [by the administration] we have never seen sacrificial meat.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

began to prepare my rain, and made the country good. Food started to be plentiful. Why should I be treated thus? I asked. And the shades and Kyala heard me, so it rained heavily (too much). Do I grow angry by my own power? I do, and I put the rain stones in water, and when Kyala hears me then it rains too much, my anger has results; but if Kyala does not agree then, when I go the next day to the grove, I find there is no water in the potsherd. . . . I work by Kyala's power; when water is in the sherd I know it is he who has helped me. . . . We don't do it ourselves, it rains if the shades and Kyala help us. I cannot say that I do things alone without their help, it is they who give me breath (indope) and when they help I feel the power, the rain will fall very heavily. . . .

789 [775]

The way in which the weather was connected by the people of Selya with Kaitile is illustrated by the following entry in Godfrey Wilson's note-book:

Mwaipopo the chief had omitted to tell Kaitile formally that their kinsman, Mwaikyambe, had died. Kaitile had come to the funeral in the morning, and gone off in a huff saying, 'They did not tell me.' Mwaipopo then sent Ngalyo (the priest) after him with 1s. to partly bribe him. 'Yes, he paid because he had wronged his father.' Kaitile accepted the 1s. and came back. There had been rain during the night, but the early morning was fine. About 11 a.m. it began to rain, softly at first and then hard. I was in Mwaipopo's house drinking beer. They discussed the rain, hinting that it was caused by Kaitile. 'That Kaitile' was the most direct hint I heard. But they discussed the fact that 'this morning it was raining at Kaitile's,' i.e. that the rain began there and spread over the country. The rain was coming from that direction, it was true, but the morning at Kaitile's had been fine. Ngalyo said, 'When I got to Kaitile's place there was rain.' Suddenly there was a hush and someone whispered: 'Sh! He is at the door, he is coming in', and Kaitile came in. Mwaipopo apologized again, through Ngalyo, for having omitted to call him: 'I had just got back from Tukuyu, I was surprised that no one had told you, Mwakimambwe (identifying Kaitile with his great-grandfather yet). You too, Ngalyo and Kimapwa, are at fault, you should have told him. When I got to the funeral this morning and was told that Mwakimambwe had gone away again saying no one had told him then I sent you to tell him.' All this was said in a rather plaintive voice to Ngalyo, Kaitile being next Ngalyo. Kaitile said nothing. As soon, when we got up and went out, the rain had lessened, and it stopped almost at once. On my way back from the funeral later, I heard one of the young men, a son of Mwaipopo, who was with me, say to the other: 'Kaitile has forgiven, but only partially, the rain has spoilt the ritual.' About 1 p.m. the

[681]

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

. . . I put the stones into water, it is as if someone spilt it out, the cloud dries up. . . . Now Kyala has gone away, the shades have fled, formerly they clapped their hands (indicating satisfaction). . . . There is something about which the shade is angry, because in this homestead we were accustomed to pray frequently. . . . If I boast saying: 'It will rain tomorrow', will it rain?

MWAMBENDE THE YOUNGER (gravely, and with hesitation): No, not if Kyala does not wish.

WEN OF MWAMBENDE: But formerly it agreed [i.e. the rain came].

A day or two later Kaitile came in, during the evening, with Mwalumenye, a young doctor, the son of doctors.

K.: This rain, do you not ask about it?

G.W.: Have you been to consult the oracle?

K.: Yes. I consulted it the day before yesterday.

G.W.: What did it say?

K.: It said: 'Your fathers are angry, and Kyala and the Holy Spirit (*Mzimu Mwikulu*)!'

G.W.: What do they say we have done wrong?

K.: Since Mwaipopo received a Court what have the chiefs given us to say 'We did wrong?' Did they give me a cow? They did not. [Here Kaitile was referring to the insult to Lufungu, *sub supra*, pp. 33-4, and he identifies himself with the priests of Lufungu.] In Mufigonde I was a commoner, I ate meat, here I live hungry.

G.W.: And now who will speak out about this matter?

K.: You, you tell Mwaipopo 'Ask Pikumbalu (Kaitile II) why this rain does not come, what has happened to it?'

G.W. refused and asked: Who should suggest this according to custom?

K.: Mwambende.

MWAMBENDE: Because according to custom, Mwaipopo (G.W.), if things were as they are with us now, if the rain refused, our fathers came to Kaitile (Sr), the father of this one, to ask him saying, 'Kaitile what has happened to the rain?' But now that our fathers are dead, we are bad, we do not ask.

And a few days later the chief said: 'We have thrown away our food, it's drying up in the ground . . . this drought! Kaitile says: 'It has deserted me . . . the shades (*mizimu*) have caught hold of us.' Perhaps they claim a cow, perhaps it is because Mwalupa (1918) and his fellows paid here. . . . But those beneath are angry (pointing downwards and speaking with conviction), the owner is angry.

The rain-maker therefore is not conceived of as working independently; the goodwill of the shades of the chief is necessary and perhaps also those of the rain-maker himself, though this is not quite clear. Nowadays, at least, Kyala is also invoked. In

9: Wilson E-5 (1954-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

789 drought, as in Ilonga, a number of possible causes are discuss
[770] and if one possible cause is dealt with and yet the drought persi
[771] another will be put forward. A shrewd priest or doctor can t
this to account and find many reasons for the failure of his rit
as the following case shows.

789 In the wet Nyakyusa valley rain-makers are not concern
791 only with drought, but also with flood, and, in the years 1922
with the rise in the level of the Lake which inundated ma
gardens.[1] On the Nyakyusa plain the rise was attributed to
[821] action of a Kisi doctor, Mwenshi, who had first boasted that
could bring up the Lake and then been commissioned by
chief, Mwakalukwa (141), to do so, 'because there was much g
by the Lake and many mosquitoes, and it was dirty there'.
was told to 'take the Lake up a bit, but not too far' and given
sheep. Then, the following season, in April (a month of torren
rain), Mwakalukwa's son Mwakinisile (170, for Mwakaluk
himself had died) gave him a little bull saying,

[576] 'Send the Lake back, it has come too far. Then the doctor went ho
thinking to himself, 'Why does he give me such a little bull?' and
met a headman of the neighbouring chief, Mwakalulula (178),
said, 'Why should I send the Lake back, Mwakinisile has given m
bull only; had he given me a cow, I'd have done so, but now I
angry.' Then Mwakalulula heard and sent a message to say he wo
provide a cow, since Mwakalukwa was dead. But the doctor refus
'No, Mwakalukwa (the son, 170) is still alive, he must give it.' T
following September, before the usual end of the dry season, there
rain on the plain. It is the Kisi's rain. Mwakinisile (170) refused to g
him anything, he said he was a liar, but the commoners collected
and a goat, and the Kisi performed a ritual just recently, and s
'The Lake will go back, but my strength will bring the rain; it
rain during the dry season this month.' We laughed very much
'Takaya to hear such a prophecy, but it is raining!'

The following year—after the Lake had risen again—anot
reason was given. It was said that a rain-maker at Bejo in
country had died, and just before he died he had thrown a
stone into the Lake.

(F) MAGIC OF FERTILITY

789 We did not learn very much about 'sprinkling the horsetail

[1] There is a periodic rise and fall in the level of the Lake. In 1922 the Lake rose
was confining to what had been the end-row of the District Commissioner's
at Karonga.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

younger one' quarrels with her fellow, she does not go to the witches herself, but just talks to the other wife who calls the witches to her aid. These two wives say: 'The favourite has borne many children to her husband; we are poor' [i.e. the favourite gets an unfair share of her husband's attentions]. 754 753

Kasitule speaks of his wives as 'witches' which, according to Nyakyusa ideas, they were, if they injured him, but he was also in the wrong to have shown his preference for Jane so clearly. As was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*, the shades are thought to punish such favouritism. [775] [669]

Towards the end of August Kasitule went to consult Ndembwe, a diviner and doctor, living nearly a day's journey away in the hills, who used a 'stick in the ground' as a divining rod. On his return Kasitule reported: 791 787

Ndembwe says it's the 'breath of men', not the wives, but the dispute about the beer. I paid him 1s. and drank three preparations of medicine at his place. He is coming here—I have found some beer and I am sending to call him tomorrow. Then Kasitule added confidentially: About the source of the 'breath' I am uncertain. Ndembwe suggested testing my wives. He can see the heavy ones, for in Ndali country he has drunk much medicine to give him spiritual power (*amaga*). He told me to come home, not to go back to Mwakyonde's country, and he is coming to give me medicine to drink and also to sprinkle medicine on the house. He will sleep here and see who it is that comes—he will know if the wives are heavy, or if it is the people of the country. 753 [782] [778] [787]

Kasitule's uncertainty was apparent. The first diviner had stated clearly that the sickness came from the witchcraft of the wives, but Kasitule wanted a further test.

We were away from Selya for some time and did not hear of any further developments in Kasitule's illness until early in 1937. By then a new reason for his ill-health had been put forward, viz. his impiety in cutting all the branches off a tree growing at the entrance to a sacred grove which has sprung up over his father's grave. He cut the tree because it was encroaching on his homestead. Then he fell ill and he went to consult Ndembwe again. 753 689

He asked me: 'Have you done something wrong at home?' I replied: 'No, I have done nothing wrong.' 'But the oracle says you have done wrong at home.' I said: 'Perhaps it is because I cut a tree at the [787]

* Sister of the favourite Jane. To accuse Jane's sister would cast a slur on Jane, for witchcraft is normally hereditary.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

753 entrance to the grove?' Ndembwe told me, 'You will get no cattle',
685 and indeed the cows are aborting. He told me: 'Brew beer and look
[787] for a sheep' and pray to your grandfather.'

782 Kaitile did not find an animal for sacrifice. He slaughtered a kid 'just for meat', killing it near the grove, but without praying or taking any of the meat into the grove, for it is not customary to offer goat's meat to the shades. His health improved a little, for a
787 time, but again he got worse and went off to see another diviner, saying: 'Perhaps there is some other cause; perhaps Ndembwe is mistaken.' He decided to go to consult an oracle some distance away 'because the oracle near home does not convince us; those who live near know all our wrongdoings; those at a distance don't know the affairs of the homesteads here'. This time Godfrey Wilson was invited to accompany him 'since he was his friend'.

Record of G.W. 8/x/37

787 We left Isumba about 7 a.m. and walked for an hour over the hills
753 through the bush. Kaitile had sent his wives, Jane and Kilabili, on ahead to tell the diviner, Nzeki, that we were coming. . . . He came in
[791] from the fields to meet us and was taken aback by the presence of a
[186] European. Kaitile kept saying: 'Do not be startled, he is from home, he is our friend.' . . . Food was served, then Nzeki's wife brought out some cooked millet porridge for the divination. He broke off a large piece and began to roll it between his hands. He smeared ointment on his hands and added powdered medicine. . . . He rolled and rolled, sometimes throwing the ball up and catching it again, spitting on his hands sometimes. He murmured as he rolled, then at last he said to Kaitile, 'Speak!' Kaitile called his two wives to come near, and he explained his symptoms and the circumstances, how the sickness had fallen on him just after he had cut the tree in the sacred grove.

Nzeki asked for other possibilities. Kaitile: 'Perhaps the country is angry—I am a senior there. If it is the fathers who are angry I admit
[684] having done wrong. Perhaps my wives have committed adultery in the long grass and they are the cause of the illness.' Nzeki rolled and rolled the ball of porridge speaking aloud: 'It is Kyala above?' (looking up).
[778] Kaitile interrupted him: 'Yes, indeed, Kyala, but Kyala stands where he stood at home, does he stand alone? He stands with the fathers.' Nzeki (as he rolled the porridge): 'Your fathers are angry about that grove?' Then the ball of porridge flattened out in his hands and he broke off . . . 'No, that is not the cause' (*side glance rest*).

Rolling it into a ball again he went on: 'Your wives have committed

[1] This was Kaitile's own surmise. Others told us that he had been advised to look for a fall.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Nglonda F317
Nyakyusa

sobbery?' Again the bell fortuned. 'It denies it.'[1] Then Kasitule, [767]
obviously disatisfied, spoke: 'Nzeki, three cows have slipped their [753]
calves at my home, I went to Ndembwe and he said: "Your fathers are
angry, you cut a tree, Mwakisambwe (pl) is angry; seek something".
so I sought a kid and I recovered. Later I took my bill-hook and cut [775]
all round. Now the illness has begun again, and I thought perhaps it
was because I did not go to BuKinga to buy a bull, because I sought
only a kid?' Nzeki (no longer rolling the porridge): 'Perhaps my oracle
is mistaken, it denies it, Kyala above has sent the breath (indaga) to
discipline you. I asked the oracle saying, "Perhaps it is the fathers?" [776]
but see, it denied it.' Kasitule: 'No, it is not mistaken.' Then he told all
over again the story of his pruning the grove and of his illness and of
his recovery after killing the kid, concluding 'then I cut again and
fell sick.' Nzeki: 'But Kasitule, see! There is much illness about, Kyala
has sent it all through the country, to discipline us.'

Shortly afterwards we left. I apologized to Kasitule for spoiling his divination for it was obvious, from his face, that it had gone wrong. He assured me that I had done no wrong but agreed that Nzeki had been afraid of me. . . . 'He feared your body, Mwaipaja [G.W.], you are impressive (wizpa), no one builds together with Europeans, he feared to speak. . . . Do you suppose that Kyala alone sent the fever? [776] No! He stands with people, he stands with the shades.' I asked him what he thought. 'Ndembwe's oracle was not mistaken, the shades were indeed angry, but now Nzeki's oracle denies it. It really denied it, I saw the porridge with my own eyes, so I think the illness is from another source now. When he spoke of the "breath of Kyala" he meant "sent".' Kasitule lowered his voice as he said this. [775]

Quarrow: But what quarrel have they with you?

Kasitule: None! The oracle denied this. I have done no wrong . . . (later on) He spoke of the fathers, but he was afraid to speak out—they are angry; I should seek something.

Quarrow: To cut with whom?

Kasitule: With the village headman . . . (later on) See Mwaipaja, I cut the grove and at once I fell ill. If you come from doing something and fell ill, do you not begin to wonder? The shades are angry. [777] [775]

He was quite incoherent. First he said the 'breath of sent', then the shades, then that the oracle denied the shades—'I saw it do so'—then that it denied witchcraft and that anyway he'd given no occasion for it. The one thing clear was that the divination could not be accepted as it stood. Kyala never acts alone in Nyakyusa thought, and Kasitule's [776] consumation reflected the uncertainty of mind which he had gave to Nzeki to have resolved and which had not been resolved. His opinion

[1] He explained later that 'if the porridge becomes fluid and soft, that means it agrees to what has been said; if it does not change, it denies it'.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1939
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

787 clearly inclined to the shades as it had before the divination, but as
753 before the certain conviction was lacking.

Four days later (10/2/37) Kasitile went to Nsesa in Kiwali village to consult the oracle again 'for that of Nsaki went wrong'. He told us afterwards 'This oracle supported the finding of Nkumbwe's. It said: [775] Your kinsman who is dead is angry; he says, "Why did you not [768] celebrate the ritual? I am tired of the hair (*Ngonde mapa mwili*). And what did you offer your father after cutting that tree?"' Here yet another cause of Kasitile's illness is suggested—the neglect of the death ritual of a kinsman. The implication is that the chief mourners have not yet performed the concluding rite of shaving which makes it [765] possible for the deceased to join his fathers. The hair which the [802] mourners shave off is called 'the hair of the corpse'.

Question: What are you going to do then?

Kasitile: I shall charge the young man, son of my dead kinsman, with [691] neglect, and tell him to celebrate the ritual that the shades which have [683] bound me may go out of my body.

Question: And the bull?

Kasitile: If I can find one I shall kill it.

Question: Who will be there?

[791] Kasitile: The priests will be there, Ngulye, Kimapwa, Mwakasa, Mwalubwa and Mwakamkulu,[1] and also Mwaipopo (108) himself. Were I a commoner I should kill alone with my younger brothers, but since I am a public personage (*ndi ulubanda*) the village headmen are there. (To Mwakhandu, the clerk.) It is good at your home in the hills, here things are bad.

Question: But they also have shades?

[775] Kasitile: But they are not important. Look you, I just cut a tree and they have seized me and dwell in my body. Are there sacred groves in [778] the hills? Do men visit them? There in the hills rituals have died; the puberty ritual and the rituals of the groves are celebrated very little.

On 27th March Kasitile looked in to say that he was going to con-
787 sult a visiting Sangu doctor 'from very far off' about his cough, but
791 G.M. had better not come lest his presence spoil the divination.
753 Kasitile came again after the consultation, full of enthusiasm. 'What a doctor! That is a doctor indeed! That is a diviner! He took an axe and divined with it; he took coppers which I brought and threw them in a little pot, together with the axe, and ash, and he said: "You also take ash and throw it in" and I did so. Then he looked into the little pot and said: "You built on the plain?" He knew this without being told! I said: "Yes".'

Event: There was a quarrel there.

[1] The last two are priests of Mbwanga (see p. 81) who did not in fact come. Mwakhandu, Kasitile's assistant, who did come is not mentioned.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

Kamtule: Yes indeed.
Sawo: Now your body is sick, you are coughing. 757
Kamtule: Yes indeed, I am ill, and I am coughing a great deal. 761
Sawo: Yes, it is that quarrel down there. You came with the cough 753
from the plain.
Kamtule: Yes, I came with it.
Sawo: You are a priest, you are a senior priest. (He knew this himself!)
Kamtule: Yes indeed.
Sawo: But the cough comes from the quarrel in the plain. If you were not a priest you would have died.
Kamtule: Indeed, we quarrelled over land, over the boundaries, on [758]
the plain. I lend someone else's land—the land of a commoner there.
Sawo: They placed something to injure you.
Kamtule paused in his narration and we asked how the 'something' operated.
Kamtule: In dreams, by means of their witchcraft. [759]
The Sangu told me: 'It is this which causes you to cough continually, but there is something else also, you did not move to the plain from here without trouble.'
Kamtule: No, I moved with an accusation against me.
Sawo: Yes indeed, you did wrong and now your fathers are very [760] [761]
angry.
Kamtule: Yes, I cut a tree.
Sawo: Mother! You cut a tree? The fathers and Kyala are brooding over you, Kyala is angry and broods over you. Pray, pray very much. It is you who are throttling the cattle of the country.
We expressed surprise and Kamtule continued: 'Yes, indeed. The Sangu said: "It is your wrongdoing (in cutting the tree) which is [762]
causing the cows to abort. I will clear out the thing which came with you from the plain. Bring us, tomorrow." He's a great doctor, Mwaipaja.'
The astonishing thing was that Kamtule, a man of considerable intelligence and inclined to query the truth of the revelations of some oracles, was so much impressed by the fact that the foreign doctor (praying in the country) knew that he was a priest and had sojourned in the plain, though to anyone knowing Kilyakyusa well his connection with the plain was apparent in his speech, and his bearing indicated him as a personage.
Talking of the distraction three days later, Kamtule told us the Sangu doctor had said: 'You have done wrong at home. This Kyala (pointing to the little pot into which he was looking) knows that Lwembe and the Kings and your father are angry, your father is very important, he works with Kyala, he is with him.' 755
As a treatment for the cough the doctor put various ingredients with 751

[763] [762] them to speak out, because if they do not admit that it is they, then the ritual fails.'

Quarrow: What does that mean?

[759] Kaurua: It is witchcraft!

Quarrow: Witchcraft? (in apparent surprise).

Kaurua: Yes, it is their witchcraft, the priests gathered with the shade, they being a chill on my body.

Quarrow: Pythons? (still in surprise).

Kaurua: Yes, they fly in their witchcraft to come here, they speak [775] with the shades, saying: 'Punish him! Let him find no something to eat!' They call the shades to help. Hence I sought something for them to eat that they should be satisfied.

Quarrow: But I thought witchcraft and the shades were quite separate? (still in apparent surprise).

Kaurua: No, they are together, look you, did not Kimagwa beat? He said, 'Indeed we come, it is us, it is us. Why did you cut that branch? But now there is no accusation against you.' He beaten very much. He said: 'We have power, if we like we can give him worms.' [It is Njelukoma who was heard to say this, but Kaurua's personal quarrel was with Kimagwa.] Did I not tell you that I had worms when I came up from the plain? I had them! I went to doctors and the diviners said: 'You are a chief, you were in the plain, why do you not kill a bull on your return?' Then when I killed a bull the worms disappeared! Where did they come from? They came from the priests, they called the shades to their aid. So I admitted to Kimagwa, saying: 'Indeed I have done wrong, I your wife, I Mbidze' (M, the feminine form of the name is used).

Quarrow: So, a white person (*mzungu, vide infra*, p. 191) cannot be a priest, but only a witch, a heavy one?

Kaurua: Yes, indeed, how can a white person take hold of the ritual? His fetishes will drive him away. See! To a ritual do we call everyone?

No!

Kaurua: And is my home near to Kimagwa's?

No, he lives at a distance.

Kaurua: Yes, indeed, it is the black ones (*baite*) whom we call because it is they who punish us chiefs.

[464] Quarrow: Well, then, is the anger of the shades always provoked by the witches? What about sores (*mitale*) on the mouth?* What about [775] madness if a commoner does not perform the death ritual?

[76 1] Kaurua: No, I do not lie, that is different. Sores on the mouth come from the shades, the witches are not there, and if a commoner fails to perform the ritual, madness also comes from the shades, it comes

* Cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 18, 119.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3517 Ngonde F3517
Nyakyusa

indeed from the whispering of men and the shades here, but people speak openly, saying: 'Why does he not celebrate the ritual?' The witches do not come into it. 759 775 ●

Question: Well, when the witches do throttle someone, do they always call shades, or not? 753

Kasitule: No, sometimes they throttle a man alone, and the shades are not there.

Question: But your sickness?

Kasitule: Now the priests in their witchcraft gathered with the shades. [791] The day after we had celebrated Nyhakusa came to my place and said: 'We have finished then?' I replied: 'Yes, my body is better now, but the cough is separate, it is from Kyala.' And did you not hear what Mwaipopo asked in his cups—'How did the doctor (the Sangu) know that you are a priest? And that you had done wrong? Indeed they (Kimagwa and his fellows) had told him?'

Question: What did he mean by that?

Kasitule: That they had gone to the doctor in dreams to tell him. [787]

Asked about Kimagwa's words: 'You are impressive, we are cannibals, we are', Kasitule explained: 'It means, "You chiefs kill cattle for us, you are impressive, that is your impressiveness. Do we kill cattle? No! We eat men, we are witches." Because when we have killed cattle they receive blood, their witchcraft goes away, it stays in its house.'

Question: And your reply, 'You are impressive, you are'?

Kasitule: I replied: 'You are impressive, you are, you are witches, if I were alone what would I do? It is you who brought the chilling breath on me and said I had done wrong. Even though I have not done wrong, you wish to eat meat. If I walk about among you, my body shrinks, it frays.'

Mwaipopo (the chief 1:8) had also prayed with water the night [782] before the sacrifice, he helps me in prayer and if he prays at his house, I help him. We pray with water to bring out everything; if I do not pray with water there something is left within. I summon all the gods, [776] all the fathers, and all the shades. (*Aba nakuipaio nawei ko kuyapa* [775] *diyo kyoo, kwyo nakuipaio nawei yo kyoio kwa ulaki. Nkwapaio kyala* [539] *gwaa, kwa gwaa, ukwyaka kwa.*)

Question:

Kasitule: Yes, when Kimagwa and his fellows came in their witchcraft to call my shades to their aid, I saw them in dreams, I saw them! And [787] if they convert Mwaipopo like this in witchcraft, together with the shades, he sees them; he complies immediately, he sends a cow. And if they just come to throttle me I see them. It is the village headmen of the country who come to throttle me, the shades are not there, no, only Kimagwa and his fellows, they stand with the shades, not the others they come and suck my blood and they go away again. I do not speak,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

but I see them. It's taboo to speak. They must seek blood and they go off; we fear them!

Question: Why do you chiefs never speak out if you are threatened?

Kaswila: If I speak how many would there be to come? Very many! For us it's taboo to accuse a man of witchcraft, but the commoners accuse one another. Look you, do few people keep you company?

Many!

Like us chiefs, everyone comes. It's taboo for us to speak out, we fear. Look you, when Mwaitiwe (Mwaipopo 1:6) and I were alone we feared to throw out the beer, we said: 'If we throw it out will they leave?' But when Kimagota came, he said: 'All right, I will throw it out myself.' We fear the fierce great priests, the terrible witches, they are angry.* We shrink when they appear.

The village headmen of the country call on the priests for help against us, they whisper by the fire, the priests come in their witchcraft, they call on my shades saying, 'Let us punish him', also they eat, together with the shades. Our shades never initiate anything, never; they look to the priests. But with a commoner the shade may initiate matters himself. Yes, people whisper indeed, but is that witchcraft? No! They whisper openly and ask, 'Why did you not perform the ritual?' But even although people are silent, still the shade comes saying, 'Why did you not perform the ritual? I am on the road.' He initiates the thing himself.

Question: But don't people eat meat at the ritual of a commoner?

Kaswila: Yes, and if he does not celebrate it they accuse him, but they accuse him openly.

Question: If the heir buries him with a few cattle?

Kaswila: If a rich commoner dies and the heir buries him with only one cow, the shades are angry and the people also; their chilling breath comes on his body, perhaps he falls ill himself, perhaps his child falls ill, but the people and witches do not meet together, people are angry here, and the shades there; all of them and the shades too, because he has celebrated with one cow only. People are angry because they wish to eat the meat. But the oracle says, 'The shades are angry.' It does not speak of people, it knows that people also are angry, but it speaks of the shades. And at the celebration he prays in the evening, the next day he calls people and kills a cow, and throws the sacred meat in the banana grove, saying, 'Here is your meat, father.' People say, 'Indeed he did wrong, his father was angry', but they do not continue saying, 'It was we', no, they say 'the shades' . . .

We chiefs have bodies which are different, the commoners arrived first in the country, they are raw food, we fear them saying, 'They are raw food.' It is we who followed and brought fire. To us they continue

* Antipopo (sabai sabiala). The seven class (sapiso sim, fowsity, and fishin.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Mgonde F3617
Nyakyusa

(their witchcraft); to each other they say: 'It is your father.' Because if they confess to a fellow commoner saying, 'It is we', he says, 'You are "eating" me, drink the ordeal'. The witch is driven out. But to us they admit saying, 'It was we who were angry.' They do not fear us. Commoners are the seniors in the country; they arrived first. 685 777 779 826 559

It will be remembered that the commoners are spoken of as 'black people' (abatim) and that the first chiefs were 'pale' (*mwale*) but these words also have moral implications. 'It is said that a person "has a black heart" or "has black blood", or "is black in his face towards us" when he is thought to be a witch, eating his fellows, or when he is a thief, or a liar, or an adulterer, or dirty. Even though his body is light coloured (*mwale*) the word "black" (*mtim*) is used of him metaphorically.' And *mwale* implies innocent, pure, as well as light in colour. The comparable symbolism of 'nigger' and 'white man' is all too familiar in Johannesburg or Charleston.

That Kasitule himself was much afraid of the commoner chiefs and was relieved by the 'speaking out' was clear, and the people of the country as a whole were glad that the ritual had been celebrated, for they expected an increase in fertility. Few days later Mwakyonde (148), came in and said, laughing, but half serious: 'Congratulations, Mwaipaja (G.W.). You have celebrated the ritual, we rejoice greatly, you give us fertility of the soil, you are a great priest.' [152] [578] 793 778 183

In some moods Kasitule was inclined to become a Christian, but he felt an obligation to the country as priest, and believed too strongly in the efficacy of the traditional rituals to abandon them. He said to G.W. one day, over a pot of beer: 'If it were not for the ritual I would get you to speak to the Europeans of the mission, and I would go with my wife Jane, and be baptized. If my son was old enough and had agreed to carry on the ritual I would do it; perhaps I will when I am old. . . . It is good to have one's heart washed clean, we are dirty inside. The Christians say to us: "You with your four wives each, you are all dirty, you love one and squabble with the rest." Well, it is so with me, I love Jane only; I would like to go and be baptized with her. But I fear for the ritual, I fear hunger, the hunger of the people. For I am the food of the country, I am the maker of food.' [777] [787]

We left Selya shortly after this and were not able to observe the effect of the ritual on political relationships in Selya. Kasitule lived another seventeen years, duly performing his functions, and in 1954 he was succeeded by his brother's son, James.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngende F317
Nyakyusa

and achievement. An account of the treatment of a field for protection against wild pig emphasizes this.

If people wish to protect a crop from wild pig they go to a doctor to ask for medicine. When he gives it to them he tells them that there must be no quarrelling in the house after they have barricaded the field. Four women go to the field with the husband of the one who cultivates it. They go after sunset. One woman is shaved; her head is a symbol of the garden devastated by pig. A second woman, who keeps her hair, has a head-pad on her head and carries bananas with medicine. She enters the field and eats the bananas. The husband climbs a hill at a little distance, and two of the women go into the long grass close to the field. The bald pate twists a head-pad and the one with hair smears it with medicine and as they do so they look towards their husband and abuse him saying, 'You lay with your mother', and he swears at them saying, 'The leather apron of your father' . . . and many other insults. Then the women walk round the edge of the field, sprinkling medicines, and they go out the way they came in. The circular pad is a symbol of the barricade placed round the field. When they return home they do not eat but go to sleep hungry (though the eleven ones eat beforehand). If they quarrel, the pig finishes the food. It is as if quarrelling destroyed the ferocious, the power, of the protective medicine; you must put aside all quarrelling that the medicine may be powerful. If the pigs come it is as if there were a quarrel, as the woman and her husband quarrel in the field mimicking the pig. The husband on the hill is like the pig approaching the field, his wives in the long grass also represent pigs. . . . The husband and his wives quarrel only in the field. If, when the maize is ripe, the husband beats one of his wives for any cause she does not go to pick the maize herself, a friend picks it for her. If she goes in her anger she finds the maize finished, nothing but earth is left.

Here the link between medicines and morality is made plain. Quarrelling weakens medicines of all sorts and renders them ineffective. But a mimic quarrel between husband and wives in the fields renders the medicine effective. It represents the battle between the pig and the medicine. There is a suggestion elsewhere (pp. 69, 113) that pigs are sent by the shades when kinsmen or neighbours quarrel, but in the account just quoted it is implied that quarrelling in the house directly injures the medicine.

In themselves, many medicines are neutral. They may be put to good or evil ends, but because they are mysterious and powerful, they are feared, in the same sort of way as atomic energy is feared in contemporary society. Men use medicines themselves 'for purely peaceful purposes', but they are shocked at

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1935
FM17 Ngonde FM17
Nyakyusa

There is no single supreme power; it lies in the animal heroes, in medicines, in witches, and with the shades. Kyala is a hero, a forefather, to whom sacrifices are made, and he is comparable to Lwembe and Kyungu, though he left no direct descendants. The evidence suggests that the names Kyala, Lwembe or Mbasi, Kyungu, and Ngulube were used in the same way in different areas, Kyala being the hero of the north-east shore of the Lake, Kyungu of the north-west, Lwembe of the central Nyakyusa valley, and Ngulube of the scarp edge of the Livingstones. Sometimes informants used Lwembe and Kyala alternatively saying they mean the same thing, although, as we have noted, Lwembe (or Mbasi) was specially associated with cattle, whereas Kyala, who was killed and rose again, only controlled crops, and may perhaps be taken as personifying vegetation. The distinction is in no sense clear-cut, but there is a line of a cultivating people having [174] been defeated by cattle-keepers with iron weapons, since Kyala was finally killed with a 'razor' (*ishumbi*), and The Razor himself —Lwembe—could not be killed though men tried.

In their creative aspect the heroes and shades are closely identified: 'Kyala creates desire'; 'the shade comes up in the [175] belly when a woman conceives'; 'Kyala and the shades stand together'. Kaitile said:

> Lwembe . . . makes a child. I lie with a woman; Lwembe is there, he works. Sometimes, if he is angry he works badly and a leg is missing, or the woman has a miscarriage. Sometimes he works well. Lwembe goes about looking upon the mothers; he is in my bellows (i.e. in my wife). It is he who came from Bufiingo . . . and wished first to build at Nsambo's (i.e. where Nsambo go now live). He failed there and went to Kasumbalesa and failed there and he stood Lubaga. All is his. A child is his and a cow, and the iron which the Kings make is his, and food is his . . . He is in a bull and a man. Where do you get the 'blood' (to beget a child)? Are you alone? . . . No, the Kabwe do not know Lwembe, but the people of the plain do; they are one with us.
> Question: And Kyala?
> Kaitile: He is there, Kyala and Lwembe are together among us and the people of the plain. It is Lwembe who creates twins. You do not. Who has made your body? Who has created you? Who has given you strength and breath so that you are born, and live, and grow up, and marry? It is Lwembe and Kyala together.*

[175] * cf. J. Bass, 'Die Gottesgegenwart bei den Nyakyusa', *Zeitschrift für Missionskunde und Religionswissenschaft*, 'Von dem Leben von Jesaiah Mwaungu', *Zeitschrift für Missionskunde und Religionswissenschaft*, Band xxxv (1920), p. xxx.

9: Wilson E-5 (1954-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

The shade is the principle of life represented by seed, or the 769
root of a banana, or a tree growing by a grave;[1] the hero embodied 775
a vital force which caused grain to sprout and clay cattle to
breathe. The line between a hero, the shade of one of his ne-
cessors, and the shade of a chief is a very faint one. They all have
power over people other than their descendants and are ap- [783]
proached by hereditary priests. As some elderly men of Ngonde
put it: 'The soldiers, not the living Kyungu, go to the graves of
the Kyungus to pray; they go because the Kyungus who have
died are shades to us all (*be kapuda kula twene*).'

The heroes had miraculous power but it differed in degree, [778]
rather than in kind, from that possessed by their descendants.
Like that of the divine kings and chiefs it lay both in their own
bodies and in medicines, especially the *ifyapo* which is still used
by chiefs.

Kyala and Lwembe dwell 'beneath' (*pasi*) with the shades, as 775
opposed to 'above' (*kumwanga*), which implied traditionally 'on
earth' not 'in the sky'. There is no hint of a sky god in the tradi-
tional system, and the distinction between black and white
offerings, which the early missionaries took to be a distinction
between offerings to the shades and to a sky god,[2] was unequivoca-
lly interpreted by the priests in another fashion. The white 769
(*mwela*) offering to Kyala or Ngulube is a symbol not of purity,
but of an unclouded sky, and the numinous quality of the heroes is
conceived of as contamination, not holiness. Like the shades, the [753]
heroes must be 'driven off' lest men go mad, and it is when they [628]
have driven them away that men are *lela*—white, innocent, free of
anger. Men should be *lela* but this is never cited as an attribute of
the pagan Kyala. It is the unwholeness, not the goodness or purity
of God of which the Nyakyusa are aware. This is underlined by the
fact that a madman who, 'when he comes home rushes off', and
'does not see that his fellows are human beings,' and who 'has a
bad heart' (*i.e.* is passionate and quarrelsome), or 'whose heart
curls up like a leaf in the sun, or turns upside down', is called
'*Mhasi*' or is said to have been 'caught hold of by Kyala'.

Kyala is one hero among others but, as has been shown, the
name is also used in the sense of 'the Lord'. Kyala as 'the lord' of a
commoner or junior kinsman is distinct from Kyala the hero with
his own place in a genealogy and his own shrine. The difference

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. [illegible], [illegible] of practice.
[2] P. Fülleborn, *Das Deutsche Nyassa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet*, pp. [illegible].

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

is illustrated in the reverence made by priests to the python which appears in Lwembe's grove as *Kyala* (*vide supra*, pp. 25, 35). This python is 'the lord', Lwembe.

Nowadays Kyala is spoken of as a first cause—the origin of death, and of social institutions, as well as the creator of life. The current version of the myth of the origin of death begins: 'When Kyala created the country and the people at the beginning there was no death. Then he thought there should be death and life. He asked people to choose between life and death, and they chose life.' And when men are asked the reason for a custom or ritual they may answer 'Kyala made us so', 'Kyala made us black people like that'.

Since Kyala is nowadays regarded as the creator of the natural order he is often blamed for the intractability of things—the log that splits, the berry that shells. Once a vendor of very small potatoes said, when the buyer complained of the size, 'Kyala gave them to us like this', only to be jeered at by the onlookers who admonished him: 'Had you cultivated better they would have been larger.'

Much of the material quoted is susceptible of the interpretation that Kyala is an overriding power to which the shades, witches, and medicines are subject. 'The medicine will be effective if Kyala wills'; 'rain will fall when the rain-maker asks his omen if Kyala wills'; 'when the doctor treats the sick they "vomit" (froth over), then if Kyala has helped us the cattle give much milk'. Even in 1933 conservatives like Kasitile sometimes expressed such beliefs, but they did not do so consistently. Their preoccupation was with other fears and acknowledgment of Kyala seemed to be tacked on almost as an afterthought. This came out very clearly in Kasitile's session with the diviner who, fearing the presence of a European, gave 'Kyala' as the cause of Kasitile's disease, and Kasitile rejected the verdict saying: 'Kyala never stands alone.' The influence of Christian teaching on pagan thought was already considerable in 1933—Kasitile added 'Jesus' and 'the Holy Spirit' to the shades invoked—and we believe the mention of Kyala in many of the pagan prayers at that date to have been due to Christian influence. The idea of a supreme power is accepted very readily as an addition to the belief in the shades, the witches, and medicines, though it does not easily replace them altogether. By 1955 the shift in emphasis was clear. Besides Kyala 'the lord' of a commoner or junior, and Kyala the hero who is worshipped at

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

his cave and who, though a creator, is equalled by other heroes and dwells in the bowels of the earth, there was Kyala an ultimate power and first cause, unique and omnipotent, who dwelt in heaven 'above'. The implications of *kumunya* (above) have changed along with the implications of *Kyala*.

The new balance between the different elements in pagan thought was reflected in everyday speech. In the 1930's men spoke constantly of the shades (*abapyele*), the witches (*abalosi*), and 'the breath of men' (*imbepo ya bantu*); Kyala did not figure much in the conversation of pagans. But in 1955, from the moment when the bus I arrived in skidded off the road and the passengers began assuring each other that *Kyala alimo* (God is present), because no one had been injured, I heard the name constantly. Such a change is hard to prove, but the impression of a marked shift in emphasis was strong.

The conception of the hero Mbasi has also radically altered. During the years before 1914 a man, with two boys in attendance, posed as Mbasi and went round Selya by night, growling in a gruff voice that he was Mbasi, and seizing cattle and fowls and food. He was eventually taken by night, by some Christians, and died after seven months' imprisonment in Tukuyu. Today the Christians never use 'Mbasi' for God, but sometimes identify him with 'Satan', and the pagans use 'Lwembe' rather than 'Mbasi'.

The range of relationships in space was narrow in the traditional Nyakyusa society, and the range of relationship in time was correspondingly so. Only a limited number of chiefdoms co-operated in sacrifice to a hero (and often they seem to have acted separately, rather than in concert), and all historical time was contained in the genealogies depicted. There was a dawn when men are find raw and lived without fire, or cattle, or cloth, but history began when the heroes descended from the mountains, ten or twelve generations ago. Time was telescoped when all the known world lay within 100 miles.

A social revolution occurred once, with the coming of the cloth, but then time stood still, and ever since the heroic age has remained the pattern of right behaviour. Departure from the rituals laid down spells madness and death, for 'Kyala created us all'. Part of primeval reality is the conflict of generations expressed in the myth of the seduction of a young wife by her husband's father, in the rules of avoidance, and in the ritual of the 'coming out'. There is no convention of fighting on this last occasion (as

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

out all the anger that is within', 'admitting that I have done wrong', begging pardon (*ukupalaya*) and also a symbol of emission and so of driving off the shades (*vide supra*, pp. 104, 108-110; 135). Good health depends upon good social relationships, and of one who is ailing it is commonly said: 'It seems as if they (unspecified) had hated her.' Further, the proper working of the natural order is held to depend upon the proper working of the social order. Drought, or 'cold', or pestilence falls on a chiefdom if there is quarrelling between chief and priests, and the anger of the Lwembe with his 'sons' will shrivel the crops of Selya. The heroes, the shades, many of the men of power (*abamanga*), and many medicines help to maintain an orderly universe; only the witches and sorcerers work against it. In short, order and right living are an integral part of Nyakyusa religion as they are of Christianity.

The ultimate good is the power of fertility, of generation, which lies in the heroes and shades; the punishment for evil-doing is ill-health of body or mind and sterility. And towards the heroes and shades, who are both life-givers and avengers, the attitude of men is clearly ambivalent: the shades are driven away—'let them warm themselves over there in the long grass', men say when they throw out the ashes (*vide supra*, pp. 109-11) but they bring them home again to 'warm themselves by the hearth'.

In analysing the rituals of the Nyakyusa, I have been driven to the conclusion that they are, in fact, dogged by a sense of guilt,* for this is the only hypothesis on which the linking of misfortune and sin, the preoccupation with 'filth', and the recurring acts of purification can be explained. One of the sources of this sense of guilt is, I suggest, awareness of anger within, for it is believed that such anger injures others. An act of confession is essential to many rituals, and what must be confessed are anger, hard thoughts, ill will against others. The anger is acknowledged to come primarily from men—it is the angry person who causes the shades to action by muttering over the fire—but the guilt, the filth, is projected on to the shades or the heroes. It is when they 'tread on' men that men are contaminated. A shade or a man that is *upolyo*—good, righteous—is one without a grudge, without anger against anyone, free of witchcraft, and free of sin transgression—'there is no accusation against him'.

* I disclaim this notion, cf. 'Nyakyusa Ritual and Symbolism', *American Anthropologist*, 61, pt 1 (1959), pp. 197-8.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

killed that the dead man may be received by the shades of his lineage, and his immediate kin eat digili medicines with him for the last time, is marked.

Marriages and funerals, and in a lesser degree births, are occasions for gatherings of kinsmen in Western society—such a penetrating study of kinship as *The Fergus Saga* bears adequate witness to this—but the gathering of kindreds is a ceremonial rather than a ritual.[1] The attendance of the Fergus men at Aunt Ann's burial service is in no way essential to the service, though it is felt to be a mark of respect and 'proper feeling' on their part to come. So also at Nyakyusa Christian funerals, the attendance of relations and fellow villagers is conventional—people are shocked if they do not come—but the peace of the departed is not thought to depend upon his kinsmen filling over or his grave and celebrating the 'farewell'; the ritual element is the concern of his fellow Christians, led by the priest or elder, irrespective of kinship connexions. The conventions are binding, however. Though a kinsman or village neighbour is not accused of having killed his fellow if he fails to come to the funeral, nevertheless it would cause offence if he did not come, being free to do so, and should he go to work in the fields on the day of the funeral of a grown man, a neighbour, his position would be intolerable.

At a Christian funeral the emphasis all through is on resurrection and life. The hymns sung to comfort the mourners and the prayers and words of the burial service stress resurrection: 'This corruption has put on incorruption, this mortality immortality' . . . 'the body of the flesh is buried, but the body of the spirit rises.' . . . 'Our friend is not dead but lives.' . . . 'Oh death where is thy sting, oh grave (*hayuda*) where is thy victory?' And the weeping, though extravagant to English eyes, is much more restrained than among pagans. Again and again we were told by Christians: 'We do not fear death as the pagans do', and certainly fear is not played up as in the pagan ritual. As one Christian put it: 'We Christians mourn himself with mud; only the pagans fear very much at a death, they are dumbers, but we do not fear, we say: "Indeed I shall die, but I shall rise again", so we do not smear ourselves with mud and grieve very much. . . . We say: "Why mud? We shall meet with him above."'[1] And there is no hair shaving or other purification, for the mourners are not identified with the corpse.

[1] For a discussion of this distinction, cf. op. cit., p. 4.

Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

We remarked to a Christian friend, a deacon, that the rains were late. He replied: 'Well, it is not so very unusual. Sometimes rains begin in one part of the country and not in another. Sometimes we do not get heavy rain down here until the end of January.' In short, the more educated Christians are beginning to think in more general terms: they do not as yet define probabilities statistically in terms of rainfall averages, but they are tending in that direction.

And what of the positive content of Christianity? The supreme attraction, mentioned again and again as the reason for conversion, is: 'There is life' (*abaw bulipa*), and it is life in a world to come rather than 'more abundant life' here and now that is spoken of. The contrast is between heaven above and the shadowy world 'beneath' of pagan thought, or a fearful fiery hell in which most Christians believe and to which, some think, all pagans are condemned. Constantly in sermons by Nyakyusa preachers there was stress on life, resurrection, and on the rewards and punishments of the future life, and this theme recurs again and again in the dreams of Christians.

There is a gulf also between the pagan conception of 'driving off' the shades and the heroes lost by 'wounding over' a man thus being mauled and death, and the Christian ideal of union with God. Sermons stress the goodness and love of God, characterizing quite foreign to the traditional picture of Kyala.

Something of the quality of Christian thought and feeling may be grasped by an examination of the names taken at baptism—the convert from paganism always chooses a new name for himself and the meaning is more immediately obvious to everyone than it is with modern English Christian name-derived, as they mostly are, from languages no longer familiar. Many of the Nyakyusa names express a very direct personal relationship with God, the Redeemer: 'He has looked upon me', 'He has roused me', 'He has waited longing for me', 'He has died for me', 'He gives me courage', 'He has changed me', 'He has chosen me out', 'He has considered me', and a score more of the same type. Some refer to the Gospels: 'Word of Truth', 'The Word has taken hold of me'. A few speak of purification: 'Make me white', 'He has washed me'. Some express that union with God which the pagans so greatly fear: 'We are with him', 'He has come over', 'He has bounded over me', 'Let us approach', and some thanksgiving: 'Let us sing to Him', 'We praise Him', 'We have rejoiced', and some like: 'He is risen',

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

[77] [76] keep in sympathy; as one of our friends explained, she found it hard to accept food from the neighbouring Safwa who were 'so dirty in their cooking'.

[57] Both pagans and Christians pin their faith to resurrection, but the interpretations differ radically. To the pagan the shade is [75] resurrected 'in the body of his child', it scarcely has any separate existence. To Christians the personality, the individual soul, is something indestructible and continuing. This theological difference is but one facet of a deep cleavage between the pagan view of a man and his relations with his group, and the Christian view.

[61] Because the traditional religion is a cult of the shades, piety consists in doing just as father did. It is neglect of traditional rituals, departure from traditional ways, that is held to bring madness, sterility, or death. But Christianity is revolutionary; it is the yeast working in society to transform it. That is often forgotten in communities with a Christian tradition, but where the Gospel has been preached only for a generation and confirming Christians are but one in six, it is in men's minds all the time. The Nyakyusa could not be unaware that the Gospel implied changing their society.

[76] [68] In the pagan tradition the meticulous performance of the rituals is stressed: the right medicines; the right persons; the right order of events are all important. The attitude of mind of the participants matters also—if they are on bad terms the ritual will be ineffective—but goodwill and forgiveness alone are useless without the performance of the proper ritual. In the Christian tradition, as interpreted to us by Nyakyusa converts, it is the inward and spiritual attitude of the participants that is stressed.

[77] Finally, all the pagan rituals are directed to driving off the shades or the heroes, whereas the Christian rituals are the 'means of grace', of coming near to God. Christians pray that the Holy Spirit should take up his abode within them; they seek to emulate the saints who 'walked with God'. Our Christian friends were quite clear about the contrast here between the pagan and Christian traditions: it is crystallized in the attitude to dreams: 'If a pagan dreams of converse (ukwangala) with shades, he fears death; if a Christian dreams of converse with God he rejoices greatly because it means he is gaining strength in Christianity.'

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

was not an individual one. True, a girl gave her formal consent in the marriage ritual, but the pressure on her to accept the husband selected for her by her kinsmen was almost irresistible. In the thirties Christian women who refused their husband's hair and food alone, or married an unrelated man of their choice, were regarded by their pagan sisters as very daring, and little girls in pagan families took it as a matter of course that they should replace their dead sisters; today the right of a widow to choose whom she will marry is generally accepted, and the custom of replacing a dead woman by her sister has lapsed. 'Every girl wants her own husband nowadays', the old women say. Thus lineage obligations give way to individual freedom of choice in marriage. At the same time the rituals which emphasized the lineage are dropped or modified. The fruitful foundling of a double birth no longer appals men and the twin ritual which used to bring together all the living members of a lineage of three generations is not celebrated at all. At a puberty ritual a pagan girl may be given the *kipiki* medicine, the symbol of 'the blood of the lineage' by her mother, but there is no seclusion and elaborate feasting, no sacrifice of the bull at puberty that her father's shades may 'move aside a little' to make way for the shades of her husband's lineage. Only at a funeral do kinsmen still gather and celebrate, for many still fear the shades, and at a funeral the heir is installed and the importance of property and the inheritance of it has not diminished one whit. As we have seen, the traditional religion was formulated in terms of kinship; the gods were senior kinsmen; but today God, *Kyala*, is no ancestor; to pagans as well as to Christians he is supreme and supreme. Men are still classified by their lineages, and one of the topics of village questions is how Prince Charles can be heir to the British throne when his father is not of the house of Windsor; but already in the economic field, and increasingly in the religious, it is the family of parents and children which is now dominant, not the lineage.

Divorce is far more frequent than formerly, partly because women claim a greater freedom of behaviour than before, as well as the right of choosing their own husbands, and are supported by the courts. As one village headman put it, 'Formerly a father beat his daughter with a stick if she ran home and sent her back to her husband who also beat her.' The women reject the old pattern of subservience which was expressed in crouching to greet a man, and addressing him in a very deferential fashion; the men observe, and

After these admonitions, the mats which the girl had manufactured were inspected. During this examination it was told her that a wife should be seen in the possession of as many beautiful mats as possible, made by her for herself and for her husband. Should the girl reveal such conduct as a wife, ulwangalafu (happiness) would be in her hut.

When the proper ceremony seemed to have come to an end, another discussion followed. The girl had told the ceremony, during the above mentioned admonition, that her parents also sometimes exchanged angry words. Therefore, a new discussion between the father and the mother arose, in which also the ceremony was the "speaker", but the other participants of the ceremony also shared in it, and the discussion too became at times heated. Still, after about 15 minutes, it suddenly came to an end, and the matter in dispute was declared settled. With this the whole ceremony ended.

8. One day I asked the chief for permission to visit his hute. He dwelt in a rectangular hut (ikibaga). A very beautiful dictera (bed) was in the main room, composed of many sleeping mats (ifwiloli, pl. imwiloli) and of big round wooden blocks (sections of a tree-trunk), one at the head and a smaller one at the foot of the bed. Each of the four fine mats which lay upperment had a special name. All the mats rested on sticks of reed laid across beams lying on smaller poles on the floor[8]. These mats were naturally of nearly the same height as the wooden block which formed the head part of the dictera. In some other old-fashioned and better houses in Nyakyusa villages, similar beds were to be seen, but generally the bedsteads are much more simple.

One of the most important permissions granted me by the chief was to enter the "store room", connected with his main room by a door. The objects to be seen here were the same as those to be found in other huts or store-rooms, e. g. the big ifinsha (baskets) for storing grain, up to four feet high, smeared over with cow-dung and clay, and smaller baskets for different purposes. In one corner hung different kinds of dancing fans (ewikoya, sg.) made of hairs from the tails of bulls, with five handles of horn. In the dark opposite corner of the same wall there seemed to hang a similar object, but it was wrapped in banana leaf. This was the real sign of the chief's dignity, the symbol of his authority and power, named ulwangalafu. A long discussion was needed to induce the chief to unroll it. Only by constantly consulting by gifts the present emissaries the chief slowly unrolled it. He told us that

[8] Cf. Fülleborn, p. 90.

[9] Kalanguse 1, 1

13:Lehmann E-5 (2939)991 F907 Ngende F907
Dyakyuak

[342] [353] [632] [778] [779] [320]

he had received this object from his ancestors and it must always hang on this spot, as the ancestral spirits (ulungaki)[28] themselves controlled its presence. It consisted of an ensigore, i. e. the tail of an ox, but the upper part of it was hollow. In this hollow part medicine (ilingita)[29] were kept. Yet another magical medicine, in the shape of a piece of bark of the tree called Erythrophleum Guineense[30] was fastened at the upper end of this sign. When my European attendant immediately said to the chief: "And from this piece you make your magic"[31], the chief exclaimed in astonishment: "Ooee wowe Ejawe" (You are one of Ejawe! i. e. You Europeans know everything!)

After this there was no more delay in revealing to us some more features of this sign of dignity. According to the belief of his fathers this object possessed a special emuka (power)[32], e. g. to defeat enemies, if the chief were to hold it directly against them. Also if a thief were to try to enter the room by force, by making a hole beneath the wall of this part of the hut, he would be stricken by power coming from the ensigore and he would have the impression that eyes are directed against him, and so be driven away.

[319] [319]

After these interesting communications I went to visit the hut of one of his wives, which still revealed the ingenge, the old-fashioned round structure of bamboo poles diverging from their upper end and thatched with grass[33].

[24] [19]

9. The frequent walks in company with the chief or some of his emojuma gave me several opportunities for enquiries. On one occasion,

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[28] Cf. Wilson, Burial, p. 6: ungaki (Sing.); Mackenzie, p. 10: Iungaki (Barongo).

[29] Cf. Mackenzie, p. 270: ilingita (Barongo).

[30] The pharmacological substance of the bark (Cortex Erythrophleli, „Boom-bark") is the alkaloid Erythrophleïn which produces the same typical effects on the heart as the digitalis-group (cf. F. C. Gunsser, Pflanzenkunde Afrikas, Band II, Heft 4, Stuttgart 1909, p. 6).

[31] Cf. Wilson, Land Dyaks, p. 6; Mornefay, p. 130; Pilsbrry, p. 300.

[32] emuka is not a specific expression for „magical" or (religious) „supernatural" power, although, from the European standpoint this meaning can be connected with the word in specific cases, but generally it means any striking expression or effect of a quality of a person or object, e. g. spirit and spiritual emuka, in the word in power. This word is therefore, a parallel to the Australasian, especially Polynesian word mana, connected to our English „Mana. The term of that which is exceedingly striking", Deutsches Pflanzenkundliches für Völkerkunde. I. Band. Bibliographie. Vol. I. Leipzig 1908. If the Dyakyuak wishes to say that a phenomenon is "supernatural", then he necessarily is with Ejawe, or he cause it directly "Ejawe" (cf. Mornefay, p. 130 (197, 242).

[33] Cf. Pilsbrry, p. 271, fig. 130: Schematical arrange of a round-hut (as also to be found with the Dyakyuak still today).

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XIV

The Supreme Being

• 776 OF the Supreme Being there is little that can be said with certainty beyond that He was believed in prior to the coming of the white man and the teachings of Christianity. The existence of this belief cannot be doubted. Indications of it are found everywhere in the native mind inextricably intertwined with life and thought and language, with prayer and sacrifice, with birth and death, with famine and pestilence and sword. For the rest, there is much confusion. That a developed [779] theology does not exist, hardly needs to be said. What one informant will give as common belief, another will say he never heard of; it belongs, he will tell you, to another district, but it was not the belief of his fathers.

776 538 Many parables and proverbs, of the pre-European origin of which there can be no doubt, give evidence of the belief in a Supreme Being. "Who mocks at orphans," says an old proverb, "let him beware: God is watching him." "God will judge between us and the white man," a common saying at funerals, is necessarily of recent origin; but there are scores of other sayings which are certainly ancient. Many

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F3617 Ngonde F3617

of these are expressed in archaic language, which is not in use at all to-day, except in these and similar sayings. Thus we have, "*Chilulu ku ni*," the Great One is everywhere; "*Gwende ewenu*," go where you will (you will hear of God). "*Imbwa yikwesa pa lwigi*," literally means, the dog is fighting at the door, but the actual meaning is, God is within you. Expressions like these are very numerous, and, even in their archaic form, are in common use every day. 775 538

The names in use for the Deity give some indication of how He is regarded. The name most commonly used in Konde is *Kyala*, but although it is now almost exclusively used in public worship, in the translation of the Scriptures, and in hymns, it is, perhaps, the weakest of all the Divine names. For it may be applied to persons in whom the Deity dwells, or to men who, though they lived on earth, were yet *Kyala*. The name is sometimes applied to white men, who are dangerous because they are believed to have closer relations with the source of all power than common men have. Other names are *Tenende*, the Owner of all things; *Nkurumuke*, the Undying One; *Chata*, the Originator; *Kyaubiri*, the Unseen; *Kalesi*, He who is everywhere present. The name *Nderombwike* is the one used on solemn occasions, and comes from the verb *kuteromboka*, to create in a sense in which God only can. *Mperi*, again, is the Maker, applied to God only, though the verb from which it is derived may be applied to men also. 776

Prayer is addressed directly to the ancestral spirits, who in many cases are conceived as having power of 782

1; Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F3617 Ngonde F3617

themselves to great a petition; but more frequently they are entreated to carry the petitions to God, who alone can give what is asked for. "Why do you ask me for rain?" says Chungu, when his impatient people come to him, "God owns the rain, and only He can give it." "But," reply the people, "common men cannot pray. Pray you to your ancestors, and let them carry your prayer to God." There is, however, also direct address in the formula, "Be gracious to us, O God, and hear the prayers of those whom we have named," the reference being to the spirits, to whom the main body of the petition is addressed. At birth, prayer is offered for the welfare of the child, "May God be gracious to you, my son." The dead are with God, and the spirits who were in the underworld before the entrance there of the souls of men, see His face, "for these are they who see God." Sickness also may be a divine infliction, though it may also be due to the wrath of an offended spirit. A heathen chief who came to see me during an illness, said, "You will recover if it is God's will," words which might well be a mere echo of what he had heard from Christian teachers; but the impression they made on me was that he was expressing a pious thought from the depths of his own being.

When I was told that Chungu had once crossed the lake on dry land, and asked how that could be, the answer, quietly and seriously given, was that "Chungu is the man who speaks with God"; why therefore should the statement be doubted? God gives to prophets their dream-visions, and to others their

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F3617 Ngonde F3617

inspired moments. He is the Maker of sorcerers as well as of common people. "Why do you kill me?" demanded an agonized sorcerer from within the house where they were burning him to death. "Did God not make me as well as you?" "Yes," was the grim reply, "but He also made the grass we burn in November."

The Supreme Being reveals Himself "in divers manners." What is specially great of its kind; a great ox, or even a he-goat; a very big tree, or any other specially impressive object, is called *Kyala*, by which is probably meant that God takes up a temporary abode in them. In a great storm God is walking on the lake. A waterfall, when it is unusually noisy, is His voice. In 1921 God called from a waterfall in the Nsenya district during the night, and the message, interpreted by the *abakowesa malaga* (inspired persons), was that all must die because of the evil that was rampant in the district. The earthquake is His mighty footstep, and the lightning is *Lesa*, God coming down in anger, when all rational people sit silent or speak in whispers, lest "the anger," hearing them, should smite them down. He sometimes comes in the body of a lion or a snake, and in such a form "He walks among men to see their doings."

He is a God of righteousness, though the Konde idea of righteousness does not always coincide with ours. Unrighteousness is an offence against God, even though they do not always know why, and He never comes except when evil is prevalent, and punishment is needed, a point of view from which it is easy to

2: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F7017 Ngonde F7017

776 understand that the chief desire of the people is to induce Him to go away again. "Go far hence, O God, to the forge, for Thy House is very large," is a prayer which is not seldom heard, when it is believed [324] that He is near. An eclipse is a special visitation, and is met with wild drumming and shouting, confession of sins, and entreaties, for the consciousness of sin is by no means absent from their minds. Offerings are brought to the spirits to induce them to intercede, but no offerings are made to *Ndowabwike* Himself, for nothing can be offered that has any value for Him. "God is calling in the waterfall," "God has kindled a fire in the pool," are cries of dread alarm to this day, only in a small degree comparable to the fear that is inspired when it is declared that a spirit, of however great a man, is angry. God is an ever present terror, and the idea of communion with Him for any purpose, is one that has not entered the Konde mind. He is *Tewende*, the Owner of the world, and it is for men [373] to see that He is not offended. Of the many sins which bring the wrath of God and the spirits on the community, the most important are widespread sexual sin, and neglect of sacrifices.

And yet God is *Tata Twesa*, the Father of us all, from whom help may be expected when men deserve it. The remarkable incident of the floating of the *Domira*, referred to in Chapter I, bears its own evidence of native thinking about the Deity. "Then I said, Rejoice, for God has heard my prayers." It does not seem open to reasonable doubt that Chungu was casting himself upon unseen powers, making, in

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925); 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

fact, what Christians call the venture of faith; and his men, believing that he was in touch with God, knew that he could give additional strength to their arms, and they pulled successfully. 776

Nevertheless, it is important to guard against exaggerated ideas of the Supreme Being as He is conceived by the Konde. It is not to be supposed that the African idea of Omnipotence has much in common with the Christian and Philosophic ideas on the subject. God is a magnified human being, a being anthropomorphically conceived. Omnipotence is an idea limited by the native capacity to conceive of powers beyond power to do without limit what he himself can do within limits. The vastness of time and space, and the illimitable forces acting throughout the universe, are unrepresented in the native mind, and therefore the conception of a Supreme Being is severely limited. But the point is, that such as He is, He is supreme over men and spirits, and over the forces of Nature as these are understood; and that is sufficient in the minds of the Konde, as it is sufficient in the minds of more highly developed peoples, to place God in a category by Himself, in a position which He shares with no other being.

Do the Konde recognize minor deities? The question is not easy to answer. An old man with whom I was conversing on the subject recently, looked at me with surprise when I brought the conversation round to "other gods." "There is only one *Kyala* (God)," he said with great emphasis, and other old men gave the same decided reply; nor do the younger

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F7617 Ngonde F7617

776 men admit that their fathers ever acknowledged more than one God. And yet, as I have already indicated, the name *Kyala* is by no means restricted to the Supreme Being; and there are legends of human gods which go far back into the past. The Henga, a neighbouring tribe, freely acknowledge the worship, in the past, of a number of minor deities, and belief in them is common among the Bantu peoples generally. This is, perhaps, the point at which the confusion in the Konde mind reveals itself most decidedly, for it is the border line between the spirits of great chiefs still active in the underworld, minor deities, and the Supreme Being Himself.

773 In the land of Marungu, from which the Konde originally came, so say the fathers (who in the same breath will deny the existence of more than one God), there were three gods, *Lyambile*, *Mbasi*, and *Ngbeto*. Of *Lyambile* all that need be said is that he is still the god of the Kings. *Ngbeto* was the youngest of the three, and one day he went with his boy friends to herd the cattle on the plain. While they were there *Ngbeto* took maize and planted it, and lo! it grew, and the same day they ate it roasted in the fire. When the elders of the people and the other two gods heard of it, they were jealous and slew *Ngbeto*. He lay dead for three days, and on the third day he arose, but was killed again in exceeding great anger. Again he arose, and was seen by some, but disappeared, and it was said that he went to the coast, where he became the God of the white man. The older men say that this story has not been modified by Christian influence

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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and it may be so, but there is a variant, which is free 773
from suspicion, in which the God came back to life in the form of a serpent, was cut to pieces by his fellow-gods and the elders, who, when he again came back, served him as before, upon which he went to the white man, who to this day prays to him. At Karonga the old people used to say, "We have smitten the Son of God in the neck," but I have not been able to trace the origin or connection of the saying, except that it is not Christian, and may be connected with traditions of *Ngoleni*.

The story of *Mbazi* is very different. He is the 776
evil one, to whom deceit and wickedness are a pleasure. 792
Europeans are still living who have seen the great stores of ivory and cloth which were offered to him by terror-inspired people, and laid up in a cave at Matema on the lake shore. The cave has now been robbed of its contents, as *Mbazi* himself has been of whatever of dread his name inspired in the past. It is not very long ago that the last prophet of *Mbazi* died. He lived near Masoko, and within living memory he climbed a small eminence there, and proclaimed that *Mbazi* demanded cattle to be sent to him without delay, the prophet himself being the guardian appointed by the God. And the cattle were sent in goodly numbers!

Long ago, says a legend, when *Mbazi* walked 773
the earth, he had men who were always with him. 776
Mwasomola went with him to his friend Mwakanyamata. *Mbazi* told them many things, of witchcraft, of hunger, of diseases that were to come, of the

3: Mackenzie M-S (cn. 1925) 1925
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approach of the Angoni warriors, and where to flee for safety when they arrived. He asked for *Mawg* and a pipe, and these were laid on the ground, and soon smoke was seen issuing from the earth. For *Mbasi* was not seen; they only heard his voice. Then he became communicative. "The Angoni are coming now," he told them, "go at once to Mzenko with your wives and children and cattle." The unfortunate Mwakanyamata did as he was advised, only to be robbed of all his cattle by another friend of *Mbasi*, to whom the deceitful God sent word to have no mercy on the cattle of a fool like Mwakanyamata, who believed what he was told! And to this day Mwakanyamata is laughed at as the man who allowed himself to be deceived by the wiles of *Mbasi*.

According to another version, *Mbasi* was a rival claimant to Divine honours with *Ndorobwale* Himself. Originally he was a serpent, killed in the dim past by the chief Mwakibinga. *Mbasi* returned to earth as a spirit, seeking to persuade men to worship him, offering them wealth in cattle if they agreed. But men refused, "for the dead do not return." One chief, Mwetumka, accepted the false God, but was defeated in battle by Mwakarobo, a final proof that *Mbasi* was a deceiver.

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Stories of *Mbasi* and his activities are numerous. He used to do some of his own work; that is to say, instead of sending one of his prophets to demand what he wanted, he shouted from the great *ilinyete* (grave of a chief; place of prayer) at Lubaga in Nserya, and made his own demands. Milk, beer,

J. Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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bananas, were placed at the door of Mwininlingo his prophet, and if in the morning the quantity was found to be less, it was clear to all that *Mlaci* had come to receive the offerings.

But the trick worked too often. As the fear of *Mlaci* diminished, men began to take advantage of their still credulous neighbours, and to demand in the name of the failing divinity cattle, beer, food supplies, to be sent to the places indicated by the impersonator of the God. This became so common that the Germans, who then ruled the country, interfered and put it down.

Very long ago there lived near Kerungo a man called Firegulli, who after his death became a goblet, and lived on the mountain which now goes by his name. There was also a great man called Kambwe, who entered the ranks of the gods or goblets at his death, and lived in the pool a few miles from Kerungo, to which in like manner he has given his name. To both of these divinities the people prayed in long-past times; and both, though able to see to the general welfare of the people, were not strong enough to punish them when evil was prevalent. When punishment was necessary, they called in the help of Mwanjebe, a minor deity of the neighbouring Hengo people. Firegulli went south on a favouring breeze to invite his more powerful neighbour to come to his help; and Mwanjebe, who lived in a pool at the foot of a waterfall near the Overtoun Institution, came up on a floating island. Then smallpox broke out among the people, and if a visit to Kambwe showed

B: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F3617 Ngonde F3617

that the pool was bubbling, it was evident that Mwanjebe was there, and must be got rid of as soon as possible. Prayers and promises of repentance were offered, and if that did not satisfy the god, more drastic measures were taken. A great stone was heated and tumbled into the pool, around which gathered a great multitude of people, stabbing fiercely at the water with spears and reeds, to drive off the unwelcome deity. The cessation of the bubbling showed that he had gone, and the fact was still further proved when the smallpox ceased. All these godlets are now mere memories, and, except as memories, they have completely vanished, leaving the field clear for the ancestral spirits and the Supreme Being.

There was in the worship, if indeed a determined effort to drive off the deity could be called worship, "no stimulus to the realization of the riches which are given to man in his own nature." The gods presented no problems, for all problems were solved long ago by the fathers; and hence man's relation to them contained nothing upon which the faculties might work and be developed. The religion was stagnant, and the people were stagnant with it.

There was no art; not even rude representations of the gods; no poetry arising out of a feeling of devotion, for devotion there was none. In the case of the godlets I have mentioned, even the qualities which caused them to take rank as gods after death have been forgotten. It may be that the stories of "the brave days of old," to be related in a later chapter, afford us a hint of how the process of deifica-

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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still sometimes used, is "God will judge between us and the white man," a clear indication that the white man is not received everywhere as an unmixed blessing. 764

The entrance to the spirit world is the grave; and all that is done there is intended to give the dead man a favourable entrance upon his new state; well dressed, well supplied with all the necessaries of life; for he goes to God. The conditions of life below are the same as those above. The chief is a chief still, and the slave a slave. The rich man continues to be rich, and the poor goes on in his poverty. The wife goes to her husband, children to their parents. There is no retribution, no righting of wrongs. The judgment of God against the white man will be manifested here on earth, not in the future state. The unmarried man remains unmarried, and his body is smeared with charcoal, so that he may not, on arrival, be mistaken for a married man. Cattle are there, but they need no tending; bananas, but they require no cultivation. There is bush for the hunter, and streams for the fisher. But everything is small: cattle, houses, crops, even the spirits themselves, are *ishwe*, thin, unsubstantial. 764 775

Prior to the arrival of the first human spirits, the place was inhabited by the owners of the land; and "these are they who see God, for God is a Spirit." Therefore human beings going there are strangers, but are well received, and given all necessaries, including land. 775 776

Although the dwelling of the spirits is below, they 775

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
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it is there that prayer for the community at large is offered by the living chief. All over the land there are more or less important graves, where local chiefs pray with their people; but the most important is naturally the one at Mphande, near Karonga, where Chungu goes to pray. At the house of every head of a family there is the *chipinja*, the sacred banana grove, where the family ceremonies are performed. This grove is never cut down, and the wife must not eat the fruit of it, for the spirit of her father-in-law is there if he is dead; if not, of ancestral fathers-in-law. The decay of the spirit hut, a small erection covering the grave of a chief, is attended with great danger to all the people, for the dead chief will some day visit his resentment upon his unworthy successor, whose duty it is to keep the hut in order; and when the chief suffers, his land suffers with him. A sheep or goat is tied up at the place, and if it is found there in the morning, all is well, it is killed, and the hut is rebuilt. But if it has been killed by some prowling beast of prey, the dead chief is very angry, and the diviner must say what else must be done to appease him, before another animal is found for the sacrifice, and the hut rebuilt.

Here and there are to be found traces of non-human spirits. They are not called *kanyaka*, but *mapiri*, a word which in the neighbouring Henga dialect means hills, but the Konde use it in invocation when crossing water. Their dwelling is in the water; and they are pre-human, spirits that were in the world when the whole earth was covered with

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F7817 Ngonde F7817

water. When, later, men came, more favoured of God, the waters retired to the lakes and pools, and there these spirits exist to this day, at enmity with men, whom they seek to destroy. On the lake, during a storm, they are still to be heard, demanding a victim to be thrown to them whom they may "eat." In the past, if a canoe was overtaken by a storm, one of the rowers was thrown into the water, whereupon the storm ceased, and the others arrived in safety.

At many places all over the district there are pools in which these spirits dwell. The most interesting is at Kisyombe, and about it many stories are told, and believed, which throw an interesting light on the Konde mind. When the chief of three generations ago was a very old man, it was prophesied that at his death the lake would recede, the fish would die, bush would grow where water was, and a great disease would carry off many of the people. And it all happened. But the lake, as it receded, left a pool in which some spirits were imprisoned. It is now partly silted up with sand, and treacherous to walk upon. If a man finds himself sinking as he walks over it, he calls out that he belongs to Kisyombe, whereupon he is pushed up from below by the water-spirits, who own Kisyombe's power. A boy who sank right through, but was returned, was directed by the spirits to give a report of all that he saw, and particularly he must insist that these spirits are *abanda* (human beings). If no sacrifice is offered the spirits take their due, by snatching at passing children; but it is long since the last child was taken. The pool at Rungwe is

J. Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1923) 1923
F3617 Ngonde F3617

distinguished for the drastic action of the people, who, exasperated by the frequent disappearance of children, combined an immense heated stone into the pool, and so drove out the spirits, who to this day dwell in a pool in the Songo country, "where the white men go to see them." 776

Yet another class are the mountain or hill spirits. Offerings are made to them by people climbing steep hill-sides. A stone is picked up, breathed upon, and laid upon a large flat stone, or in the fork of a tree, with the prayer, "May my feet be light." These stones are to be seen to-day in small heaps on many a steep ascent. Sometimes more valuable offerings were made, though these have now ceased. A fowl, a sheep, or a goat, was brought, and left alive to meet whatever fate might be in store for it. These spirits, like those of the water, are pre-human, and hostile to mankind, upon whom they bring many diseases. Belief in them is dying out, and the younger people know little or nothing about them. [53]

D: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F3817 Ngonde F3817

CHAPTER XVI

The Worship of the Spirits

THE Konde are either a deeply religious, or a deplorably spirit-ridden people; and, having regard to some of the prayers given in this chapter and throughout the book, I am inclined to think that religious is the more correct term. It is true that the prayers are in all cases for material goods, such as health and good fortune, for rain and crops, for protection against pestilence; but if religion means a sense of dependence upon unseen powers, then it cannot be denied that the Konde are religious.

On all great occasions, prayer and offerings are made; but also when a spirit is believed to be angry: if there is quarrelling in the family; if a man beats his wife; if a girl has arrived at puberty, or a marriage has been arranged, without their being consulted; if a woman has been unfaithful to her husband; if a man neglect his parents; if ceremonies are neglected; or the spirits themselves forgotten. Their wrath is shown very specially by a disease of the lips breaking out on the guilty person,, and by fever; but also in many other ways; by the failure of the beer to ferment, by sickness, by a storm in which some one is drowned, by

3: Mackenzie M-S (co. 1925) 1925
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failure of crops, of increase of livestock, of children, by too little or too much rain, or by ill-success in hunting or fishing; and, very emphatically, by a sudden death. 776

The prayer and ceremony at the presentation of a new-born child have already been given. More pathetic is the prayer offered when a child is ill. Standing at the sacred banana grove, the family representative prays: 782

> ". . . and now this little one whom I hold in my hands, be gracious to him. He [she] has come into a world of sickness, of cold, of all the troubles that you yourselves were familiar with. Let him lie in peace. Let none in the spirit-land be angry with him. To-morrow he will be full-grown, and he will bring you beer, flesh, flour. Pray to God for him. O God, who art Lord of all, let thy breath be cool upon him (lit., Let thy spirit be cool upon him)."

Then, spitting on the child's breast and back, he says:

> "And thou child, may there be life in thee. God be gracious unto thee. Live in peace and be not wearied."

Not all diseases are due to the anger of the spirits; a natural illness is one that yields to treatment. It is the act of God, and when the right medicine has been used, cure will follow, for God does not need to be entreated as the spirits do. Yet the spirits carry their petitions to God, as if He did need to be entreated, [753]

6:Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

structure. We shall see in later sections how many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions. But the converse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular content at all, the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle were sent to Lubaga by the other chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and health; but the "clearing out of the ashes" was done by each chieftain separately; there was no general fire-drum ritual at all.[1] While, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chieftain alone.

Besides the Kyungu the great chiefs of Ngonde also were believed to be able to avert local droughts and misfortunes to their districts by offerings to their own immediate ancestors; and the lesser chiefs likewise and the territorial nobles—each in his own little area. While among the territorial nobles, the original owners of the land had wider powers. It will be remembered that to them the first Kyungu is said to have given head-clothes and asked for their prayers. Sometimes people would prophesy future misfortune "at Kiondile", or "at Kalume" or "at Hambo," or would prophesy of present misfortunes that each was their source. Then the territorial noble concerned[2] would be formally visited by the nobles of Ngonde, and he and they together would offer sacrifice to his ancestors on behalf of all Ngonde.

And then also there were sacred lagoons near the lake—Nikolo, Kambwe, Kibondo, Malale and Kacondi. They were associated not with ancestral spirits at all but with a vaguely defined supreme deity named Mbumba. And beside them also prayers and sacrifices were made from time to time by the nobles of Ngonde.

Over these other spiritual powers we need not linger, save to notice one most significant fact. The participation by the Kyungu in the divinity of his ancestors was no isolated phenomenon in Ngonde. The head of every family in the country, whether of chiefs or commoners, was similarly placed; in his own family and, in the case of a chief or noble, in his own area too, he was both a priest and a demi-god; he dealt with the spirits and by virtue of his relation to them shared their powers; his anger could curse. The Kyungu were but the greatest of many divinities. And thus there was in theistic ritual a high degree of local and family autonomy; local or family misfortunes

[1] Particular people among the Nyakyusa carried it out; reigning chiefs, senior great-commoners, prophets, and any person whose birth was held to be due to magical treatment of a previously barren woman. But only they.
[2] Mwene-kiondile, Mwene-kalume, Mwene-hambo etc.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 778 cattle and protecting one's own, and to attract men to the country.

The two senior sons of a chief are given powdered *ikingila* to 785 drink from early childhood; at the 'coming out' they lie on it and 643 drink it again with their village headmen, some is buried beneath 778 their ritual trees, and the chief's homestead is treated with it periodically. One form of *ikingila* is made of the heart of a lion and the heart of a leopard, together with the scrapings from a charred root, and one of its qualities is to create lions or leopards which guard the trees under which it is buried. 'They make anyone who has cut a branch of one of the trees for firewood tremble at night, he trembles and returns the wood; they do not kill, but they stay roaring there until he repents.' Now part of the dignity (*ubusisya*) of a chief is that lions and leopards attend him; they roam his country; they are his familiars (*imbege*). 'The sons of Lwembe' [776] lack the fearful power of their great ancestor who 'rode a lion like a donkey', but they are believed to command familiars which clear the country of the wild pig that destroy men's gardens, and protect the sacred groves by terrifying any sacrilegious person who dares chop wood where he should fear. But they do not kill men or cattle. That is what distinguishes them from 'God's lions which kill cattle even by day' and the man-eaters made by sorcerers to destroy those they hate. There is no hint of lycanthropy—our [754] informants denied emphatically that chiefs, dead or alive, turned into *imbege*, but they 'follow the chief' when he travels.

A second *ikingila*, sprinkled on the chief's mat when he is secluded, and drunk with his two senior village headmen, is made of red, black, and shining white or yellow pebbles, which are ground up and mixed with *imbinga*, a medicine brought by the Kinga, but the symbolism of these ingredients remains obscure.

The greatest of the *ifingila*, used only for the chief himself, is *inyifwila*, a terrible substance with power perilously like that of witchcraft. When either of the senior wives of a chief gives birth to a son a little is hidden in the litter on which she lies; it is put [844] into the litter on which the heirs lie at the 'coming out'; and into the sacred tails and trumpets which are carried into battle. Like other medicines of chieftainship, *inyifwila* is used to give the chief majesty (*ubusisya*), 'that people who meet him may fear him'; that he and his warriors may appear fierce; that they may be 'heavy and strong' in war; that when the trumpet is blown it

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

. . . I put the stones into water, it is as if someone spilt it out, the sherd dries up. . . . Now Kyala has gone away, the shades have fled, formerly they clapped their hands (indicating satisfaction). . . . There is something about which the shade is angry, because in this homestead we were accustomed to pray frequently. . . . If I boast saying: 'It will rain tomorrow', will it rain? 789 [775]

MWAMAKUNDA THE YOUNGER (gravely, and with hesitation): No, not if Kyala does not wish.

WIFE OF MWAMAKUNDA: But formerly it agreed [i.e. the rain came].

A day or two later Kasitile came in, during the evening, with Mwalusanye, a young doctor, the son of doctors.

K.: This rain, do you not ask about it?

G.W.: Have you been to consult the oracle?

K.: Yes. I consulted it the day before yesterday.

G.W.: What did it say?

K.: It said: 'Your fathers are angry, and Kyala and the Holy Spirit (*NuMbepo Mwikemo*)!' [775] [776]

G.W.: What do they say we have done wrong?

K.: Since Mwaipopo received a Court what have the chiefs given us to say 'We did wrong?' Did they give me a cow? They did not. [Here Kasitile was referring to the insult to Lubaga, *vide supra*, pp. 35-8, and he identifies himself with the priests of Lubaga.] In MuNgonde I was a commoner, I ate meat, here I live hungry.

G.W.: And now who will speak out about this matter?

K.: You, you tell Mwaipopo 'Ask Pikumbaba (Kasitile 86) why this rain does not come, what has happened to it?'

G.W. refused and asked: Who should suggest this according to custom?

K.: Mwamakunda.

MWALUSANYE: Because according to custom, Mwaipaja (G.W.), if things were as they are with us now, if the rain refused, our fathers came to Kasitile (60), the father of this one, to ask him saying, 'Kasitile what has happened to the rain?' But now that our fathers are dead, we are bad, we do not ask. [177] [688]

And a few days later the chief said: We have thrown away our food, it's drying up in the ground . . . this drought! Kasitile says: 'It has defeated me . . . the shades (*imindu*) have caught hold of us.' Perhaps they claim a cow, perhaps it is because Mwaihojo (147) and his fellows paid here. . . . But those beneath are angry (pointing downwards and speaking with conviction), the owner is angry.

The rain-maker therefore is not conceived of as working independently; the goodwill of the shades of the chief is necessary, and perhaps also those of the rain-maker himself, though this is not quite clear. Nowadays, at least, Kyala is also invoked. In [775] [177]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

793 trouble is that Mwaipopo (the chief 116) is getting old. . . .'
754 Here Kasitile suggested two different causes for the scarcity in the
[731] country: (*a*) the negligence of the priests, and (*b*) the senility of the
[789] chief. In the old days Mwaipopo would have been smothered, as Angombwike explained (*vide supra*, p. 63).

[753] On the 9th, Kasitile, much troubled by his cough at night,
[757] expressed a great desire for the return of the missionary nurse to Kabembe hospital. 'She is killing us by her absence, the black people don't know anything about these things, only the Europeans. Why, I went there and the dresser just gave me an injection without taking my temperature—no European ever does that.'

[787] The following day he sent off his sons with 10 c. to inquire about
[753] his case from a diviner. The diviner said: 'The wives at his home are gossiping to other people about their husband. People want the husband's body to be light. It is not Jane, because she is his favourite, but the others.' Kasitile said:

I shan't do anything, I said 'Let's leave it.' I am still in Butola [the village to which he moved for safety]. Mwakyonde is giving me medicine for my disease. It drives out the cold which is in my body. Yes, the cold is the breath of the witches coming to throttle me—it's due to my
755 wives' gossip. But it started as a quarrel with other people [non-
753 relatives] first. One day I went to drink beer in Bujege and that night I fell sick; that is how it began. Men are complaining because I, a chief, a senior, do not cook food for them. They throttle me on that account. They say: 'Let us see whether he is really a chief, a senior!' But others say: 'He has done no wrong.' Yes, the sickness took me on the way home from the beer. Perhaps Kyala asked: 'What has he
[776] done?' and found I had done no wrong. If there had not been a Kyala who saves us I would have been dead.

When I consulted a diviner he struck a spear and looked along it,
[787] then he said: 'The disease now is from his wives—the earlier attack was from men, but this one is from his wives. When they gather at the hearth they say: "Come hither, we see him where he sleeps."'

754 'Are the wives witches?' we asked.
753 Kasitile replied:

Yes. They say: 'There is a favourite, we are not beloved.' If a man's wives are good the witches can get into the house, but their cold breath dissipates quickly; you are given medicine and recover quickly; but if the wives are bad they gather together the medicine and press it down, so that it is powerless. One of my wives is very bad, her lineage is bad, it is she who calls to her aid the heavy ones, the witches. The

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

adultery?' Again the ball flattened. 'It denies it.'[1] Then Kasitile, obviously dissatisfied, spoke: 'Nsoki, three cows have slipped their calves at my home, I sent to Ndembwe and he said: "Your fathers are angry, you cut a tree, Mwakisambwe (30) is angry; seek something", so I sought a kid and I recovered. Later I took my bill-hook and cut all round. Now the illness has begun again, and I thought perhaps it was because I did not go to BuKinga to buy a bull, because I sought only a kid?' Nsoki (no longer rolling the porridge): 'Perhaps my oracle is mistaken, it denies it, Kyala above has sent the breath (*imbepo*) to discipline you. I asked the oracle saying, "Perhaps it is the fathers?" but see, it denied it.' Kasitile: 'No, it is not mistaken.' Then he told all over again the story of his pruning the grove and of his illness and of his recovery after killing the kid, concluding 'then I cut again and fell sick.' Nsoki: 'But Kasitile, see! There is much illness about, Kyala has sent it all through the country, to discipline us.'

Shortly afterwards we left. I apologized to Kasitile for spoiling his divination for it was obvious, from his face, that it had gone wrong. He assured me that I had done no wrong but agreed that Nsoki had been afraid of me. . . . 'He feared your body, Mwaipaja [G.W.], you are impressive (*nsiya*), no one builds together with Europeans, he feared to speak. . . . Do you suppose that Kyala alone sent the fever? No! He stands with people, he stands with the shades.' I asked him what he thought. 'Ndembwe's oracle was not mistaken, the shades were indeed angry, but now Nsoki's oracle denies it. It really denied it, I saw the porridge with my own eyes, so I think the illness is from another source now. When he spoke of the "breath of Kyala" he meant "men".' Kasitile lowered his voice as he said this.

QUESTION: But what quarrel have they with you?

KASITILE: None! The oracle denied this. I have done no wrong . . . (later on) He spoke of the fathers, but he was afraid to speak out—they are angry; I should seek something.

QUESTION: To eat with whom?

KASITILE: With the village headman . . . (later on) See Mwaipaja, I cut the grove and at once I fell ill. If you come from doing something and fall ill, do you not begin to wonder? The shades are angry.

He was quite incoherent. First he said the 'breath of men', then the shades, then that the oracle denied the shades—'I saw it do so'—then that it denied witchcraft and that anyway he'd given no occasion for it. The one thing clear was that the divination could not be accepted as it stood. Kyala never acts alone in Nyakyusa thought, and Kasitile's conversation reflected the uncertainty of mind which he had gone to Nsoki to have resolved and which had not been resolved. His opinion

[1] He explained later that 'if the porridge becomes fluid and soft, that means it agrees to what has been said; if it does not change, it denies it'.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

KASITILE: Yes indeed.
SANGU: Now your body is sick, you are coughing. 787
KASITILE: Yes indeed, I am ill, and I am coughing a great deal. 791
SANGU: Yes, it is that quarrel down there. You came with the cough from the plain. 753
KASITILE: Yes, I came with it.
SANGU: You are a priest, you are a senior priest. (He knew this himself!)
KASITILE: Yes indeed.
SANGU: But the cough comes from the quarrel in the plain. If you were not a priest you would have died.
KASITILE: Indeed, we quarrelled over land, over the boundaries, on the plain. I hoed someone else's land—the land of a commoner there. [578]
SANGU: They placed something to injure you.

Kasitile paused in his narrative and we asked how the 'something' operated.

KASITILE: In dreams, by means of their witchcraft. [754]

The Sangu told me: 'It is this which causes you to cough continually, but there is something else also, you did not move to the plain from here without trouble.'

KASITILE: No, I moved with an accusation against me.
SANGU: Yes indeed, you did wrong and now your fathers are very angry. [775] [776]
KASITILE: Yes, I cut a tree.
SANGU: Mother! You cut a tree? The fathers and Kyala are brooding over you, Kyala is angry and broods over you. Pray, pray very much. It is you who are throttling the cattle of the country.

We expressed surprise and Kasitile continued: 'Yes, indeed. The Sangu said: "It is your wrongdoing (in cutting the tree) which is causing the cows to abort. I will clear out the thing which came with you from the plain. Bring 2*s*. tomorrow." He's a great doctor, Mwaipaja.' [688]

The astonishing thing was that Kasitile, a man of considerable intelligence and inclined to query the truth of the revelations of some oracles, was so much impressed by the fact that the foreign doctor (staying in the country) knew that he was a priest and had sojourned in the plain, though to anyone knowing KiNyakyusa well his connexion with the plain was apparent in his speech, and his bearing indicated him as a personage.

Talking of the divination three days later, Kasitile told us the Sangu doctor had said: 'You have done wrong at home. This Kyala (pointing to the little pot into which he was looking) knows that Lwembe and the Kinga and your father are angry, your father is very important, he works with Kyala, he is with him.' 755

As a treatment for the cough the doctor put various ingredients with 791

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

indeed from the whispering of men and the shades here, but people speak openly, saying: 'Why does he not celebrate the ritual?' The witches do not come into it. 754 775

QUESTION: Well, when the witches do throttle someone, do they always call shades, or not? 753

KASITILE: No, sometimes they throttle a man alone, and the shades are not there.

QUESTION: But your sickness?

KASITILE: Now the priests in their witchcraft gathered with the shades. The day after we had celebrated Njobakosa came to my place and said: 'We have finished then!' I replied: 'Yes, my body is better now, but the cough is separate, it is from Kyala.' And did you not hear what Mwaipopo asked in his cups—'How did the doctor (the Sangu) know that you are a priest? And that you had done wrong? Indeed they (Kissogota and his fellows) had told him!' [793]

QUESTION: What did he mean by that?

KASITILE: That they had gone to the doctor in dreams to tell him. [787]

Asked about Kissogota's words: 'You are impressive, we are cannibals, we are', Kasitile explained: 'It means, "You chiefs kill cattle for us, you are impressive, that is your impressiveness. Do we kill cattle? No! We eat men, we are witches." Because when we have killed cattle they receive blood, their witchcraft goes away, it stays in its house.'

QUESTION: And your reply, 'You are impressive, you are'?

KASITILE: I replied: 'You are impressive, you are, you are witches, if I were alone what would I do? It is you who brought the chilling breath on me and said I had done wrong. Even though I have not done wrong, you wish to eat meat. If I walk about among you, my body shrinks, it fears.'

Mwaipopo (the chief 116) had also prayed with water the night before the sacrifice, he helps me in prayer and if he prays at his house, I help him. We pray with water to bring out everything; if I do not pray with water then something is left within. I summon all the gods, all the fathers, and all the shades. (*Apa tukwiputa namesi ko kusyosya ilisyu loysa, lenga ndikwiputa namesi po lisyele limo nkati. Nikumpala kyala gwesa, tata gwesa, abasyuka bosa.*) [782] [776] [775] [539]

QUESTION:

KASITILE: Yes, when Kissogota and his fellows came in their witchcraft to call my shades to their aid, I saw them in dreams, I saw them! And if they correct Mwaipopo like this in witchcraft, together with the shades, he sees them; he complies immediately, he seeks a cow. And if they just come to throttle me I see them. It is the village headmen of the country who come to throttle me, the shades are not there, no, only Kissogota and his fellows, they stand with the shades, not the others they come and suck my blood and they go away again. I do not speak, [787]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XI

NYAKYUSA COSMOLOGY

772 We can now piece together, from myth and ritual, the traditional Nyakyusa view of their universe. They have no elaborated system of ideas and the synthesis which follows is more systematic than any uneducated Nyakyusa would formulate.

773 The origin of men was a 'dark house', located high on the Livingstone plateau, and from here the Nyakyusa themselves, and people familiar to them, are thought to have sprung, but there is a hint of the first of the heroes having come 'from the north', and there is also the contradictory notion that the heroes were creators. 'It was Kyala who made us in the beginning with iron ore'; 'Kyala [776] is the smith who forges us'; 'Mbasi is the smith who forges us'; 'Lwembe made Mumfu out of clay to be the father of commoners'. But all are agreed that Lwembe (or Mbasi) was the ancestor of the chiefs and no clear distinction is made between creator and progenitor.

Crops and animals and fire were distributed by the heroes. Of their first creation or invention there is no tale for, though Lwembe created animals, he was already a herd-boy when he did so. Moreover, the 'owners of the soil' in the Nyakyusa valley had some crops before Lwembe came bringing them others, together with cattle and fire; but which were the indigenous crops of the valley and which the new is not discussed. If contradictions between the various myths are pointed out they are explained, like divergences in ritual, in terms of differing origin: 'It is the Lambya people to the west who say that cattle came out of an anthill, and the Nyakyusa proper who say they were brought by Lwembe', and so on. Differentiation is epitomized and accounted for by the separation of lineages.

The heroes had a creative force in their own persons, which is [778] inherited by their descendants, the divine kings, and, in a lesser degree, the chiefs; as in Egypt 'the King's potency is felt in the very body and person of each of his subjects'.[1] That potency is partly innate in the royal line, but it is nourished by the use of medicines of which the greatest are reserved to rulers. Vigour is

[1] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, p. 60.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 is illustrated in the references made by priests to the python which appears in Lwembe's grove as *kyala* (*vide supra*, pp. 29, 33). This python is 'the lord', Lwembe.

[776] [177] [773] Nowadays Kyala is spoken of as a first cause—the origin of death, and of social institutions, as well as the creator of life. The current version of the myth of the origin of death begins: 'When Kyala created the country and the people at the beginning there was no death. Then he thought there should be death and life. He asked people to choose between life and death, and they chose life.' And when men are asked the reason for a custom or ritual they may answer 'Kyala made us so', 'Kyala made us black people like that'.

Since Kyala is nowadays regarded as the creator of the natural order he is often blamed for the intractability of things—the log that splits, the lorry that skids. Once a vendor of very small potatoes said, when the buyer complained of the size, 'Kyala gave them to us like this', only to be jeered at by the onlookers who admonished him: 'Had you cultivated better they would have been larger.'

776 775 Much of the material quoted is susceptible of the interpretation that Kyala is an overriding power to which the shades, witches, and medicines are subject. 'The medicine will be effective if Kyala wills'; 'rain will fall when the rain-maker soaks his stones if Kyala wills'; 'when the doctor treats the tails they "vomit" (froth over), then if Kyala has helped us the cattle give much milk'. Even in 1935 conservatives like Kasitile sometimes expressed such beliefs, but they did not do so consistently. Their preoccupation was with other forces and acknowledgment of Kyala seemed to be tacked on almost as an afterthought. This came out very clearly in Kasitile's session with the diviner who, fearing the presence of a European, gave 'Kyala' as the cause of Kasitile's disease, and Kasitile rejected the verdict saying: 'Kyala never stands alone.'

[177] [797] The influence of Christian teaching on pagan thought was already considerable in 1935—Kasitile added 'Jesus' and 'the Holy Spirit' to the shades invoked—and we believe the mention of Kyala in many of the pagan prayers at that date to have been due to Christian influence. The idea of a supreme power is accepted very readily *as an addition* to the belief in the shades, the witches, and medicines, though it does not easily replace them altogether. By 1955 the shift in emphasis was clear. Besides Kyala 'the lord' of a commoner or junior, and Kyala the hero who is worshipped at

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

his cave and who, though a creator, is equalled by other heroes and 776
dwells in the bowels of the earth, there was Kyala an ultimate 775
power and first cause, unique and omnipotent, who dwelt in 177
heaven 'above'. The implications of *kumwanya* (above) have 797
changed along with the implications of *Kyala*.

The new balance between the different elements in pagan thought was reflected in everyday speech. In the 1930's men spoke constantly of the shades (*abasyuka*), the witches (*abalosi*), and 'the breath of men' (*imbepo sya bandu*); Kyala did not figure much in the conversation of pagans. But in 1955, from the moment when the bus I arrived in skidded off the road and the passengers began assuring each other that *Kyala alimo* (God is present), because no one had been injured, I heard the name constantly. Such a change is hard to prove, but the impression of a marked shift in emphasis was strong.

The conception of the hero Mbasi has also radically altered. 776
During the years before 1914 a man, with two boys in attendance, 685
posed as Mbasi and went round Selya by night, growling in a gruff voice that he was Mbasi, and seizing cattle and fowls and food. He was eventually taken by night, by some Christians, and died after seven months' imprisonment in Tukuyu. Today the [797]
Christians never use 'Mbasi' for God, but sometimes identify him with 'Satan', and the pagans use 'Lwembe' rather than 'Mbasi'.

The range of relationships in space was narrow in the tradi- 782
tional Nyakyusa society, and the range of relationship in time was correspondingly so. Only a limited number of chiefdoms co-operated in sacrifice to a hero (and often they seem to have acted separately, rather than in concert), and all historical time was contained in the genealogies depicted. There was a dawn when 773
men ate food raw and lived without fire, or cattle, or chiefs, but history began when the heroes descended from the mountains, ten or twelve generations ago. Time was telescoped when all the known world lay within 100 miles.

A social revolution occurred once, with the coming of the chiefs, but then time stood still, and ever since the heroic age has remained the pattern of right behaviour. Departure from the [753]
rituals laid down spells madness and death, for 'Kyala created us so'. Part of primeval reality is the conflict of generations expressed in the myth of the seduction of a young wife by her husband's father, in the rules of avoidance, and in the ritual of the 'coming out'. There is no convention of fighting on this last occasion (as

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

marriage is a sacrament, a mystical union of husband and wife who wash together in the 'blood' of the husband's lineage; and at death kinsmen share a communion with the 'faithful departed'.

We have already touched on the changing conception of *Kyala*. The idea of a supreme power, or creator, distinct from the shades and heroes, is clear enough to Christians and is becoming more and more familiar to pagans, a young priest even insisting that his father and Kasitile could bring rain only 'if God wills' (*vide supra*, p. 119). Christians believe that 'God alone sends rain', and they are profoundly sceptical of the pagan rain-maker.

The Christians also speak of Satan (*Satano*) whom some identify with 'Mbasi' (Lwembe) and to whom the more orthodox attribute evil dreams of snakes and lions and fighting, which the pagans attribute to witchcraft. To the pagan the snake *is* the witch come to attack him; to the Christian it is Satan come to tempt him. The orthodox, following the teaching of missionaries, deny the existence of witchcraft, but most admit to a lively fear of sorcery which is rationalized as 'poisoning', though when the conception is examined it can be shown to include much beside poison put in food or drink. Some of our closest Christian friends admitted their fears. X, the Christian wife of a pagan chief, said one day when we were discussing witchcraft: 'You dissemble like all Europeans, you do not wish to admit belief in witchcraft, you are just pretending.' 'You really think we believe in it?' 'Yes, we all know that Europeans just hide their belief.'

Another chief's wife, Y, also a professing Christian, said: 'We all believe in witchcraft, it really exists.' Then she went on to tell how someone had come to 'choke' her one night recently when she was visiting her own people:

> I woke out of a heavy sleep with a pain in the back of my neck and my head. It was as if someone was stamping on my head. I woke up feeling heavy, I was very heavy. I said: 'If I die, you also will die. Who is outside? Who is choking me? Do they not fear God (Kyala)?' Then someone kicked the door and I shouted, 'Mother, mother!' and I heard footsteps going away.

When asked whether she believed that village headmen protected their people from witchcraft she went on:

> They fight the witches by night, they protect their people, they see the witches and drive them away.
>
> QUESTION: How do you know that witches really exist, do they admit themselves to be witches?

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

were connected. And if the expected judgement does not fall when a son has wronged his father it is said: 'The father loves the child so much that he only complains half-heartedly.' 797x 795x 754

It is admitted (when the point is pressed) that misfortunes *may* fall on good men as well as evil, and then they are interpreted as a discipline, a testing, from God, but this is 'a hard saying', scarcely to be believed. The *inequalities* in the fortunes of men demand explanations and Christians, as well as pagans, find it very difficult to believe that they are 'natural'. They always suspect some human intervention; they believe that men manipulate mystical power to buy fortune for themselves. The reality of pythons in the belly may be doubted by the better educated, but belief in 'medicines' has scarcely diminished, and new medicines are constantly coming in from outside, among them costly patent medicines guaranteed to cure any and every disease, or to make the user popular and successful. Some sort of distinction between medicines which it is permissible for a Christian to use and those, like love-potions and defence against witchcraft, which are not permissible, is attempted, but the line is an arbitrary one. And often there is a conflict in the individual's own mind: as one elderly woman of a chief's family (who would normally have taken the first-fruits medicines) put it: 'It's taboo to use these medicines; even if we do fall ill we say: "No, I will not take it, I look towards God (pointing upwards)."'

Most Christians have pagan kinsfolk who are quick to interpret misfortunes in pagan terms, and the sort of conflict of ideas that arises is illustrated in the case of a young woman who died in childbirth. She and her father were Moravians; her husband had joined the Pentecostal Church which rejects all Nyakyusa medicines. Her first child was still-born, the second died shortly after its birth, and her father insisted that she should have been taking a medicine which it was customary for women in his lineage (he was a Penja) to drink during pregnancy; the girl herself wished to be treated, for she did not accept the teaching of the Pentecostal Church on this point, but her husband refused. During her third pregnancy she was ill and finally, with her husband's consent, she was carried to a Nyakyusa doctor of her father's choosing; nevertheless she died. Her father and her husband had been on bad terms, the father demanding, rather arbitrarily, the balance of the marriage cattle; and there was a great deal of gossip, some neighbours hinting that her own father had killed

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

We remarked to a Christian friend, a deacon, that the rains were late. He replied: 'Well, it is not so very unusual. Sometimes rains begin in one part of the country and not in another. Sometimes we do not get heavy rain down here until the end of January.' In short, the more educated Christians are beginning to think in more general terms: they do not as yet define probabilities statistically in terms of rainfall averages, but they are tending in that direction.

And what of the positive content of Christianity? The supreme attraction, mentioned again and again as the reason for conversion, is: 'There is life' (*ubumi bulipo*), and it is life in a world to come rather than 'more abundant life' here and now that is spoken of. The contrast is between heaven above and the shadowy world 'beneath' of pagan thought, or a fearful fiery hell in which most Christians believe and to which, some think, all pagans are condemned. Constantly in sermons by Nyakyusa preachers there was stress on life, resurrection, and on the rewards and punishments of the future life, and this theme recurs again and again in the dreams of Christians.

There is a gulf also between the pagan conception of 'driving off' the shades and the heroes lest by 'brooding over' a man they bring madness and death, and the Christian ideal of union with God. Sermons stress the goodness and love of God, characteristics quite foreign to the traditional picture of Kyala.

Something of the quality of Christian thought and feeling may be grasped by an examination of the names taken at baptism—the convert from paganism always chooses a new name for himself and the meaning is more immediately obvious to everyone than it is with modern English Christian names derived, as they mostly are, from languages no longer familiar. Many of the Nyakyusa names express a very direct personal relationship with God, the Redeemer: 'He has looked upon me', 'He has roused me', 'He has waited hoping for me', 'He has died for me', 'He gives me courage', 'He has changed me', 'He has chosen me out', 'He has comforted me', and a score more of the same type. Some refer to the Gospels: 'Word of Truth', 'The Word has taken hold of me'. A few speak of purification: 'Make me white', 'He has washed me'. Some express that union with God which the pagans so greatly fear: 'We are with him', 'He has come near', 'He has brooded over me', 'Let us approach', and some thanksgiving: 'Let us sing to Him', 'We praise Him', 'We have rejoiced', and some life: 'He is risen',

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

was not an individual one. True, a girl gave her formal consent in the marriage ritual, but the pressure on her to accept the husband selected for her by her kinsmen was almost irresistible. In the thirties Christian women who refused their husband's heir and lived alone, or married an unrelated man of their choice, were regarded by their pagan sisters as very daring, and little girls in pagan families took it as a matter of course that they should replace their dead sisters; today the right of a widow to choose whom she will marry is generally accepted, and the custom of replacing a dead woman by her sister has lapsed. 'Every girl wants her own husband nowadays', the old women say. Thus lineage obligations give way to individual freedom of choice in marriage. At the same time the rituals which emphasized the lineage are dropped or modified. The fearful fecundity of a double birth no longer appals men and the twin ritual which used to bring together all the living members of a lineage of three generations is not celebrated at all. At a puberty ritual a pagan girl may be given the *ikipiki* medicine, the symbol of 'the blood of the lineage' by her mother, but there is no seclusion and elaborate feasting, no sacrifice of the bull of puberty that her father's shades may 'move aside a little' to make way for the shades of her husband's lineage. Only at a funeral do kinsmen still gather and celebrate, for many still fear the shades, and at a funeral the heir is installed and the importance of property and the inheritance of it has not diminished one whit. As we have seen, the traditional religion was formulated in terms of kinship; the gods were senior kinsmen; but today God, *Kyala*, is no ancestor; to pagans as well as to Christians he is separate and supreme. Men are still classified by their lineages, and one of the topics of village questions is how Prince Charles can be heir to the British throne when his father is not of the house of Windsor; but already in the economic field, and increasingly in the religious, it is the family of parents and children which is now dominant, not the lineage.

Divorce is far more frequent than formerly, partly because women claim a greater freedom of behaviour than before, as well as the right of choosing their own husbands, and are supported by the courts. As one village headman put it, 'Formerly a father beat his daughter with a stick if she ran home and sent her back to her husband who also beat her.' The women reject the old pattern of subservience which was expressed in crouching to greet a man, and addressing him in a very deferential fashion; the men observe, and

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 sister of the chief had also been brought back to the village of her
[164 brother. I was of the opinion that she was afflicted by a serious
484] tropical ulcer on the ankle of the left foot. The healing of these ulcers commonly takes a very long time, and as this woman had already much suffered, and as the medicine-men consulted seemed to be unable to restore her, she was brought to her brother's village, but there also she had not yet recovered. The chief had, therefore, resolved to ask the diviner, whose name was Mwaigwisya, for the real cause of her sickness.

After he and his *amafumu* had taken their seats on mats, the chief explained to the diviner the reason of his visit. The diviner then grasped a curved piece of wood about 20 cms. in length with his right hand, after he had spat upon his hands. Then he moved the wood round his head, and finally placed it with one of its ends on the even, cleansed ground before his mat, and waited for the questions of the chief. The single questions, as for instance: "Is the sickness caused by Kyara?", or "Is the sickness caused by this or that person?", etc., were put to the diviner by Lamek Mwainyekule, the son of a chief of another chieftainship[16], now belonging to the *amafumu* of Mwamasika, as he now stayed in his village. Mwainyekule seemed to be not only

[291
516]

The Séance with the diviner.

the most intimate adviser of Mwamasika, but alltogether the most
[776 clever man I met among this people. After each of the questions addressed to him the diviner murmured the names of the chief's

[16] A village of this name is to be found on Dr. *Kieperts* map (of 1895), southern to the Kieyo.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ancestors and of Kyara[17]. At the same time he moved his curved wood to and fro on the ground and when he did so, it indicated a negative answer from the beings invoked. But when he was asked: "Is the guilt for the sickness to be found in the husband of the chief's sister?", he was unable to move his wood as before; he could only stamp it on the ground, and this meant an affirmative reaction of the invoked spirits. Now, therefore, the meeting had reached its aim. 787 [776]

I asked the diviner to tell me how he had acquired his faculty. He explained that (besides the necessary inner disposition) the payment of a fee for the medical preparation was necessary in order to become a diviner[18]. This outfit consisted in a special vaccination by a learned diviner. For this purpose the neophyte was incised by his master on different spots on the upper side of the knuckles, and in these small incisions was rubbed a medical powder. By these means the initiate may be inspired by the prophesying spirits. These influences are then felt by the diviner as a power which directs the movements of his hand in the manner described. 791 [304]

6. Near the hut of the chief's principal wife was a "sacred" banana plant, in the grove opposite to the chief's hut and in the grove with the grave of the chief's father already described. At particular times, when any need demands it, the chief offers a prayer in this place to his ancestors[19]. The sickness of his sister, for instance, was such an occasion for him to address the ancestors. I was invited by the chief to witness this act; but I raised objections, telling him that my presence might perhaps rather cause the anger than the help of his ancestors. In reality, I did not want the chief to stage a theatrical act on my behalf. But the chief rejected my excuses and explained that he would act in the same manner as if I were not present, because he had made up his mind to this prayer. The chief was assisted during this ceremony by Mwainyekule who presented to the chief a calabash of water as he arrived at the banana plant devoted to this purpose. The chief took some mouthfuls of the water and squirted it towards the banana plant. Then he recited the names of his ancestors and begged them to help his sister. 824 778 782 769 [23]

7. During one afternoon, I was told that a ceremony to end the initiation of a (betrothed) girl was going on in a family of the village. 881

[17] name of the supreme spiritual being.
[18] Cf. *Mackenzie*, p. 226.
[19] *Mackenzie* refers that such a place is named "ikiyinja", "the familiy place oft prayer" (pp. 144, 197), but without indication of the locality, as Karonga.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

578
difficult labour is from this, not from adultery. And in a case of difficult 775
labour her husband does pray to his shades.
[845]

All were agreed that a woman is in the power of the shades of 775
her father's lineage and if her father is angry with her, or with his 578
son-in-law her husband, his shades afflict her, causing her to be 613
barren or to have miscarriages, or ailing children. Hence a woman who is barren or ill, or whose children are sickly, often returns to her father's homestead so that he may pray for her, and she sleeps there on the night of the ritual, for the shades come by night. More rarely, if she has quarrelled with her father, she goes outside her husband's homestead and, facing towards her father's home, she prays herself on the pathway. But in all the cases we traced in which a woman's ancestors were believed to have made her, or her child, ill, there was a dispute between her father (or his heir) and her husband over marriage-cattle or the bull of puberty; and we were told that her father's shades 'are angry only if marriage-cattle have not been paid, and for no other reason', thus it seems that the control of her father's shades over a married woman is in fact somewhat limited.

The characteristic illness sent by the shades is sores round the 753
mouth, and fever—an illness which is not acute and clears up 775
quickly. These symptoms are immediately interpreted as *imindu*, 777
affliction from the shades. Beer going sour before it is mature is also *imindu*, usually thought to be caused by quarrels between husband and wife. But almost any misfortune, mild or serious, is interpreted as *imindu* if members of the lineage are conscious of quarrels between themselves, or with their spouses or fathers-in-law.

The ritual consists in the reconciliation of the living in the 783
presence of the dead and, if the misfortune is serious, a sacrifice of flesh, fish, or fowl. The junior begs pardon of his senior who acknowledges his anger and expresses forgiveness by taking a mouthful of water from his calabash cup (*ulupindi*) and blowing it out (*ukwiputa*) in his sacred banana grove. For the patient to recover, or the blight on crops or fish-traps to be removed, *the senior kinsman must confess his anger*, and spitting, or blowing out water, is a symbol of confession and forgiveness. Mwaisumo was explicit on the matter: 'If a father is angry with his son or daughter he may say, some day: "I forgive you now" and spit on the ground: all the anger that is in him comes out like spit.' *Ukuswa* means both 'to

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

775 and appearance—the mind of a child is tenacious. If one comes whom
828 I never knew, I note his appearance in the dream and next day I tell my friends and relatives about it. Then perhaps an old woman, my grandmother, will say: 'That is how So-and-so used to look.' Perhaps I dream of someone wearing brass body-rings, with a plume nodding on his head. Then the older ones know him and tell me it is So-and-so. In the old days, in the days of our mothers, if we dreamed of eating food like this my relatives would say: 'They have come to fetch him; he will get disease and die soon; he has eaten the food of the shades.'
775 But in European times now it is different. . . . Our mothers fear such
828 dreams; there is a medicine to put on the walls. If I always dream like
177 this they bring it and say: 'It's forbidden to dream of the shades.'

QUESTION: And now?

KITITU: Now if dreams come true we say that the man who had dreamed is a prophet.

828 QUESTION: Are all dreams pregnant with trouble?

KITITU: Yes, dreams usually mean trouble. Suppose I love a girl and want to marry her, and then I dream of marriage, of having the cattle and going and being accepted by her fathers who are all present [in the dream], then I rejoice and I hope.[1] Then I begin to think of going to earn the cattle, and I go to work and come back with three or four cattle and go to hand over the marriage-cattle. All ends happily, but it might not. Perhaps they will accept me, perhaps not.

At work I dream that a sister has died, and I find it is true, then I think other dreams will be true. . . . I fear that perhaps my death is near. I go to a doctor and say I want a medicine, he gives me some to put under my head and sleep on. He grinds a medicine and tell me to sprinkle it in the room.

775 It is generally agreed that dreams of the dead are not welcomed:
828 If I speak of the recently dead others will say: 'Don't speak of them, they are dead.' Then I take a coal from the fire and say: 'Do not come in dreams.' If the shade comes it always means trouble.

And the only occasions of prayer to the shades are when men are in trouble and anticipate misfortune.

We never pray except when there is trouble. No, we never pray to give thanks. Why should we? There is nothing to grumble at!

673 (*c*) *Belief and behaviour*

753 In the Nyakyusa view there is a direct and immediate link be-
●777 tween misfortune and wrong-doing. When illness befalls a man,

[1] Kititu's father delayed long in providing him with marriage-cattle. The following year he eloped with a girl.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

or his crops fail, or his cattle die, he reflects on any quarrels he may have had with kinsmen or affines or neighbours, and on any rituals he should have performed and has omitted wholly or in part. He may be quite clear in his own mind that the misfortune is due to some particular wrong-doing (*inongwa*)—perhaps a quarrel with a brother, or neglect to kill for his new neighbours on his inheritance from his father—and proceed directly to patch up the quarrel and perform the neglected ritual. More often he thinks of several possible causes and lays them before the oracle, relying upon it to select between them. How several possible causes of misfortune occurred to the chief sufferers, their kinsmen and neighbours, is shown in the cases of Enesi, Katasya, Mwambuputa and Mpoma quoted at the end of the book (pp. 258 ff.).

No linguistic distinction is made between an offence punished by the courts and one thought to be punished by the shades; both are wrong-doings (*inongwa*), and there is no sharp distinction between an offence against a living kinsman and an offence against a dead one. In short, there is no clear conception of 'sin' as opposed to 'tort' or 'crime'.

There are two themes constantly recurring in Nyakyusa theology: firstly, men must observe the traditional rituals (both positive and negative) or they will go mad; and secondly, the anger of senior relatives and neighbours will injure unless it is confessed and goodwill expressed.

The first conception is a magical one:[1] what is required is the performance or avoidance of particular acts in a particular form on particular occasions; the second is sacramental, it is 'anger in the heart' that is dangerous, and no ritual is held to be efficacious without a change of heart.

Often the two conceptions are not consciously related to one another: again and again one is told: 'The rituals must be performed or men will go mad,' and there is no reference to the state of mind of the performers; but on certain occasions they overlap explicitly, as when Kasitile adjured his kinsmen to confess all while they were performing the ritual to 'rot the ropes'; and always there is a symbolic connection, for the rituals themselves express the value of amity between kinsmen, of respect for seniors and obligation towards juniors.

The neglect of the marriage ritual is itself an expression of disrespect for parents or parents-in-law, and a breach of the sex code,

[1] In the sense defined by G. & M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 89-95.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

577 There is much more talk among the Nyakyusa of misfortune
●777 from the shades or the anger of neighbours, than of blessing, but
556 there is an idea, somewhat vague but real, that generosity and kindliness will bring blessing (*ulusajo*). Ambilikile, a Christian teacher who had grown up in a pagan home, said:

> My mother tells me that my father was in the habit of feeding people, those who were not his relatives. People went to a distance and brought medicines for fertility and gave them to him, hence they said: 'He is very kind; food never grows short at his home.' She also told me that my father died very old. He did not die of disease, but of old age, no breath being left in him. This was because men were always saying: 'May they stand by him, may they bless him (*bamumwemelege, bamsajege*),' not to his face but to others. They said that he lived long because of the blessing of men. Yes, they say that the food of a kindly man never gets finished, that of a stingy man finishes; he himself suffers hunger.

763 Mwaisumo described a father on his death-bed blessing a favourite son, allocating cattle to him, and telling him:

> Care for the children I have left, keep on good terms with them, then you will be rich in everything like your father. I cared for my children, I was not harsh (*nkali*), so complain to me of anything that troubles you. If you are like this the property in your home will be plentiful, people will be astonished and say: 'He is like his father.'

431 Of a man given a cow by the chief, it was sometimes said: 'The
775 shades have blessed him; he has a righteous (*ngelofu*) shade.'

Although our Nyakyusa informants talked a great deal about
754 the danger of neglecting rituals and angering senior relatives,
673 living and dead, the number of cases of misfortune attributed to
621 their anger is small in comparison with the number attributed to witchcraft or 'the breath of men'. (Ten as compared with sixty-three.) There is no reason to suppose that one type of case was concealed when the others were reported to us, and it is clear that the Nyakyusa prefer to make neighbours in the age-village, rather than kinsmen, the scapegoat for their misfortunes. Even when the wrong done is against a kinsman it is often the neighbours, rather than the shades, who are said to have brought punishment on the wrong-doer.

777 At the same time, we were assured by one informant after an-
621 other that people blame the shades or Kyala for misfortune when it is really the neighbours who are responsible! Angombwike argued that men fear to accuse the neighbours, who are slow to

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

admit their anger, and prefer to blame the shades and conciliate the neighbours by feasting. For example: 777 621

When someone is ill of a curse the owners of the village do not agree that it is they who have bewitched him. No, that is what others say. . . . When they bless such a person they pray to the shades. As, for example, with M. [informant's father, a wealthy man]. If he falls ill with a disease of the legs, and goes to a diviner, and the diviner says: 'They have bewitched you,' then he goes home and seeks a bull and calls the men of the village, saying: 'Let us enjoy ourselves with this bull.' They say: 'Is it the legs?' He denies it, saying: 'No, I am just giving you something to eat, something with which to enjoy ourselves.' They say: 'Are you a chief to feast us on a bull?' He says: 'I just thought I would like to enjoy myself with you.' He conceals the cause because if he speaks of the illness they will say: 'Ha, he is catching us for witchcraft.' They eat, and at the beer they say: 'You, M., take this stick and stand up. Walk!' And when they go home each prays to his shades, saying: 'Stand by him, may he recover from his sickness!'

In short, the Nyakyusa speak of the danger of angering senior relatives, but they attribute most of their misfortunes to their neighbours, and they say that more misfortunes are due to neighbours and fewer to the shades than is openly admitted!

Perhaps the most striking feature of the family cult among the Nyakyusa is the narrowness of its range. Neighbours are concerned with the fulfilment of family obligations as well as obligations to themselves, but the shades are concerned solely with behaviour between kinsmen. 'If I wrong a kinsman I fear the shades, but not if I wrong another.' 769 621

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

though wives are assimilated to their husbands' lineages for ritual purposes, men play no part in the rituals of their wives' lineages.

The second fundamental principle expressed in the rituals of kinship is that a moral law holds within the lineage. Senior kinsmen, living and dead, have a mystical power over their juniors, but their anger is dangerous only if it is just. They cannot mutter irresponsibly. Kinsmen are 'members of one another' in the sense that the life and death of one affect the others. The sins of a father are visited on his children, his juniors in the lineage (though a woman's sins affect only her own husband and children), and the very fact of kinship makes a mystical bond between agnatic kin, descendants of a common great-grandfather, and a man and his daughters or sister's children. The moral law is thought to operate also within the age-village, where the just are protected and the evil punished by 'the breath of men'; but within both lineage and village irresponsible and malicious injury by witches or sorcerers is possible.

When misfortune occurs the sufferer, and his kinsmen and neighbours, seek an explanation in conflicts and ritual omissions, and interpret the misfortune in terms of these, putting the possible alternatives before the oracle. Thus the danger of conflict with kinsmen and neighbours, and of neglect of ritual, is constantly before men's minds. In practice, there is a strong tendency to push the blame for misfortune outside the lineage of living and dead on to the neighbours.

(b) *The celebration of rituals and maintenance of the structure*

In any society the practical, intellectual, and emotional aspects are mutually dependent; the practical organization is dependent upon, and at the same time supports, an intellectual system—certain cosmological ideas—and attitudes. It has been argued very cogently that these ideas and attitudes are maintained by their expression in myth and rite[1] but little evidence for this has been published. Can objective evidence be collected? The anthropologist cannot look into men's minds; he is not concerned with personal religion—with the varieties of religious experience. Can he observe any effect of participation in ritual upon the behaviour of groups and categories of people? It must be admitted that our evidence here is thin.

[1] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Andaman Islanders* (1922), pp. 236 ff.; *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (1952), pp. 157 ff.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO SHADES

Ref.	*Category of sufferer*	*Misfortune*	*Category of shade*	*Alleged sin*	*Investigation*	*Ritual performed*
1.	Man. Katasya	(a) Crops did not grow (b) Katasya died	'Abapasi'	Quarrelling with kinsmen	Autopsy disproved this. Found to be sorcery	Killed a bull for family
2.	Children of village headman	Death of several children	Father of village headman	Village headman moved to father's homestead though told by father's neighbours he should remain in young man's village where he was headman	Autopsy	Prayer
3.	Cattle	Cattle died at father-in-law's (and would have to be replaced)	Shades were angry. His brother complained very much when he took all the cattle	Younger brother took all cattle he had from elder full brother to whom they had been handed on his return from work, and gave them for his marriage	—	—
4.	Two girls	Girls died	—	A wrong (*inongwa*) not specified	Autopsy Divination	—
5.	Younger brother	Died	Elder brother	Elder brother not buried where he asked to be	Divination	Buried where elder brother had asked

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Ref.	Category of sufferer	Misfortune	Category of shade	Alleged sin	Investigation	Ritual performed
6.	Son	Millet crop cultivated by son failed	Father	Had moved from father's homestead. Left grave unswept	Divination	Prayer
7.	Husband	No fish in traps	—	Stinted one wife of fish	Divination	Prayed in banana grove. Wife confessed her anger
8.	Kasitile	Kasitile fell ill	Mother	Neglected to leave flour or beer in his hut for shades	Divination	—
9.	Married woman (wife of Mwakobela)	Woman delirious		Her newly-married daughter returned from husband without bringing a hen or anything, and drank from mother's calabash cup	Divination	—
10.	Child	Death of child	Father's sister?	Father neglected death ritual of his sister	Autopsy. 'The ritual entered the stomach of the child'	Neglected death ritual performed

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13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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The chief Wwamasika and his family after he had received from me my old "Klepper-Mantle" as a gift.

to enter his hut, where the patient was sitting on the ground with his back to the wall. To heal his patient of the pains, the doctor made some small incisions in his skin near the stomach by means of a triangular-shaped knife, and then he rubbed in the incisions a thick black juice taken from the horn of an antelope (the horn was called *kapembe*, pl. *ulupembe*). The juice was prepared from different roots and herbs as a medicine against stomach pains. In the horn were certain divisions for other medicines, and in each of these divisions was stuck a small (black) stick for removing the specific medicine from it. After this treatment the patient declared that he felt severe pains in the region of his stomach. I asked the doctor for some of his medicines, but he was unwilling to give me anything. Then I promised to bring him next day some European medicines hoping to get in exchange some of his medicaments. 123 757 [415 237]

The following morning I returned. On this occasion I did acquire some of his medicines in exchange for various European tablets, especially as he was most fascinated with the kaliumpermanganatum,[1] of which I gave him a few crystals, explaining to him the use and the dose; when I dissolved some of the crystals before his eyes, it probably seemed to him to be a mystical process. Among the medicines I received then from him was a medicine for luck, called *kwarusako*. Some of the inhabitants of the village, who had meantime appeared, were very unwilling for him to give me this medicine, and maintained that I would take with me all the luck of the village. [777]

On this second visit to the medicine-man, there was again a patient present, and I wanted to take a photograph of the scene because it was 123 755

[1] [i.e., KMNO4. – Analyst]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

From time to time their father, the chief, gives them a bull to kill. During the "coming out" food is very plentiful. If people pass on the road they honour them and give them food, and make love to them that they may build there. They remain in their shelters, they do not go about much. If the chief is stingy they teach him a lesson by taking bananas; they say: "Know that we are important people, we are those who have 'come out' and we are your parents." Later on they play drums—I think only in recent years. And the village headmen seize a woman, the daughter of a commoner, as a wife for the chief.

'The horn is the luck of the chiefs, that many people may come to build. Binding the horn to the blade of the spear is to show that the chief is one who has "come out" (*unsoka*); it is as if he were carried aloft (i.e. "chaired")[1]. We show his greatness ("seniority") to people, then we trill. 643 778

'The fire made with fire sticks is to symbolize the new chieftainship. We do not take the old fire of the old men. 643 [572]

'The medicine is to make the chief heavy (*nsito*), that it may be apparent that he is a chief. [789]

'The *ulupando* tree is a memorial of the "coming out", that men may come and say: "So and so planted this tree when he came out." Some say it is to show the power (*amaka*) of the chief, because if it does not grow it is said that his chieftainship will perhaps not flourish; then they will say: "Let us move and plant elsewhere." It is said that the spear of chieftainship is to fight battles; it is strength, manhood; it is treated with medicines.

'The tails are those with which battles are fought. When men go to war the senior headman grasps the tail. If the tail does not lead them well they return from the fight. It, also, they treat with medicines.' [778]

[1] A bride at a puberty-marriage ritual is carried about shoulder high.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

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QUESTION: The water dripping from the little hut?

MWASALEMBA: If we omit this then the children when young don't go mad, but they vomit a watery fluid, and people say that we have not performed the ritual of water for them.

QUESTION: The meaning of leaves and fruit of bananas?

MWASALEMBA: Yes, it is because those who run mad throw away their clothes and wear leaves. So in the ritual we make them wear leaves; we think that if we don't do this they will have the madness and throw away their clothes. The leaves of plantain belong to the man (the father), those of sweet banana to the woman (the mother). They signify the completion of the ritual, both of their father and of their mother. We make them wear both kinds of leaf, even if one parent is still alive, because they begot them together, their blood is one, the man's blood and the woman's blood. The plantain fruit which they insert in the leaves in front is the procreative power of the father, it is like his penis; the sweet banana which they insert behind is the fertility of the mother, it is like a bark-cloth. We throw them away in the water so that they may float away, it is a sign of death; the blood of our parents which was one is finished now!

QUESTION: The leaves on the neck?

MWASALEMBA: When they run mad people do this, they wear leaves on head and neck.

QUESTION: The stones on the head, in ears, mouth and fingers?

MWASALEMBA: That is a symbol of death. Does not the corpse resemble a stone? It neither speaks nor hears; it does not hoe, or work with its hands at all. He whom we have buried is like a stone. We throw his death away into the stream.

QUESTION: The little hut?

MWASALEMBA: That is for cooking food in; we don't cook for him [the dead man] in the house because we did not bury him there but outside, so we cook for him outside. . . . We grind millet in the doorway [778] because the doorway belongs to the shade. We say: 'Receive us, oh shade, since a person has died, receive us!' Because if we enter into the house we are with the shade, and when we come out we are with him, the doorway is the shade's (*ikifigo kya nsyuka*). It is like the pouring of water on the thatch; when we have come from bathing, we enter and come out again, the doorway is the shade's. And at other times, if someone is ill and the shade has been brooding over him, he stands in the doorway and prays to the shade (*ikumputa unsyuka*). Yes, when a man dies the shade broods over (*ikutobatela*) us living.

QUESTION: Does death come from the shades? [761]

MWASALEMBA: Yes, when I have lain down at night, in the morning 763
I tell my children: 'So-and-so and so-and-so came to me, I have eaten their food, they came to carry me off.' Then there is sickness and they say: 'The shades have brooded over you, you will die.' It is death in-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

796 the wife or the widow (even though she be old), as well as proof of
775 the support of the shades for the husband or heir. A symbol of the
831 ritual connection, the *ilibalaga*, is offered to the shades of both lineages. Indeed, the rituals of death and twin birth, as well as the ritual of puberty and marriage, may be interpreted as a celebration of the union of husband and wife. For the parents of twins the end of the ritual marks the resumption of married life after a break during which contact between them was felt to be dangerous; for a widow and the heir of a dead man the end of the death ritual marks the beginning of their union.

796 The admonition of a widow or the mother of twins on her proper behaviour as a wife,[1] like a girl at her first marriage, underlines the fact that the death and twin-birth rituals are, in a sense, also marriage rituals.

592 The parts of the homestead connected with the shades are: first,
775 those associated with the procreative activities of husband and wife—the hearth, the bed, and the doorway of the hut. Prayer may be made at the hearth, and offerings are poured out on the hearth-bricks, or left overnight under the bed. 'The doorway is the shades' and much of the action in ritual takes place there. As has already been shown, the hearth is explicitly associated with the sexual life of husband and wife: hearth-bricks are planted at marriage, making fire by friction is a symbol of the marriage union, firewood is associated with a woman's reproductive capacity, and the hearth must not be approached by sexually active people other than the owner of the hut and her husband. The bed is the marriage bed. The doorway is identified with the vagina. Secondly, a defined grove of bananas, usually those nearest the doorway of the chief wife's hut, is thought to be frequented by the shades. It has been shown that plantains and sweet bananas are the symbols of male and female in all the rituals: in the sacred banana grove only plantains are grown. Bananas are propagated by suckers and the symbolism implied (but never explicitly stated) is that the root at which the offering of meat to the shades is placed represents the lineage which continually reproduces itself. What is explicit is that
● [778] the banana grove is sacred, and that offerings are placed or buried at the root of a banana plant. We were told: '*ilikemo*[2] *lyabatata*

[1] We did not see this at the twin ritual observed, but were told that the mother of twins was sometimes admonished by her husband's sisters.

[2] *Ilikemo*: a single banana plant from the sacred banana grove, a ritual killing of cattle in the sacred grove of a chief; *inyikemo*: sacrificial meat; *ifikemo*: Holy Communion (modern usage).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

him, but if they find he has no cows with him they are angry, they do 775
not receive him with rejoicing. If they do not kill some cattle at the burial of a dead man without doubt illness will come to the home. I they consult an oracle then the oracle says: 'Your fathers beneath are angry because you did not kill cattle for the burial of So-and-so.' So then they go and kill a beast. When they kill cattle at a death they do not kill for the mourners to eat, no, but they say it is that the fathers may receive him well, that they may not be angry.

The shades manifest themselves to the living in dreams or as snakes, and they come by night to the homestead to eat food set aside for them in the sacred grove or the senior wife's hut.

Whenever food is cooked a little is left for the shades. It is said that the shades come by night to eat the food. Some people say that they have seen the shades when they come to warm themselves by the fire in the house. If the fire of the shades blazes up, and I look, it is extinguished immediately, and if someone turns round the hut is quite dark. People eat the food which they put for the shades, they do not throw it away. Sometimes, if the food rots, they say it is because the shades have eaten from it. People say that if they do not put aside food the shades will take away the fertility of the fields and we will not have much food.

The hearth is a shrine: the food and beer are left overnight 775
beside the hearth or on the hearth-bricks. Every good housewife 778●
has a log of firewood which she keeps by her all her life: she takes it with her when she moves and it is burnt at her funeral. 'It is the shades'. The shades [of her husband] pick bits from it when they want to warm themselves at the fire.' And the wife herself must keep out of the way: 'Some men refuse to let their wives sleep near the fire at night, saying: "You will drive away the shades."'

The association of a small grove of bananas in each homestead with the shades has already been stressed. There meat and beer offered in sacrifice are left. There is also a connection, most obvious among chiefs, but occurring among commoners also, between the shade and a chosen tree. In Ngonde Mwenefumbo said:

The fathers prayed at the grave of their father. If a man moved he 775
took *ilindu*, a branch of the tree at the grave, and carried it to his new 778
home and there put it in a tree he had chosen, saying: 'Now you have 166
arrived, Father.' He poured out beer and flour there and invoked all his fathers and grandfathers and ancestors, saying: 'May I sleep! Gather and eat these things! May the children sleep.' Then he blew out water and finished.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 Of the persons officially connected with the spirits,
the most important is the chief. It has already been
622 said that " Chungu is the man who speaks with God " ;
782 he is also the man who speaks with authority to the
spirits. He, and all other chiefs, approach the spirits
for the general good, but as heads of families they
have the right to offer private prayers as well. Each
head of a family may also pray for his own people ;
but no man may pray so long as his father or elder
brother is alive. Next, every chief has an official who
may be called a priest ; he is the *unnyago*, the man
whose duty it is to go daily at the order of the chief
to present an offering at the grave where the last
chief is buried. He does not pray ; he simply lays the
offering, usually a few maize cobs, on the grave and
departs. When the chief goes in person to pray, as
he sometimes does, without any public ceremony,
this man goes with him, hears the prayers, and knows
the ritual ; and it is he who will teach the new chief
his duties when the time comes for him to perform
them. When, however, the chief dies, the *unnyago*
is in great danger, for the spirits take possession of his
person, a danger which can only be averted by a
powerful medicine supplied by the doctor, and taken as
soon as the chief has died. If this is not done, he
becomes mad, lives in the bush, gibbering and naming
all the dead chiefs of the past, including names known
to no living person, but supposed to be those of long-
dead chiefs, uttered by themselves through him.

•778 With regard to places of worship : the " high
place " is always at the grave of the dead chie[illegible]d

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

it is there that prayer for the community at large is 778
offered by the living chief. All over the land there are more or less important graves, where local chiefs pray with their people; but the most important is naturally the one at Mphande, near Karonga, where Chungu goes to pray. At the house of every head of a family there is the *ikiyinja*, the sacred banana grove, where the family ceremonies are performed. This grove is never cut down, and the wife must not eat the fruit of it, for the spirit of her father-in-law is there if he is dead; if not, of ancestral fathers-in-law. The decay of the spirit hut, a small erection covering the grave of a chief, is attended with great danger to all the people, for the dead chief will some day visit his resentment upon his unworthy successor, whose duty it is to keep the hut in order; and when the chief suffers, his land suffers with him. A sheep or goat is tied up at the place, and if it is found there in the morning, all is well, it is killed, and the hut is rebuilt. But if it has been killed by some prowling [787]
beast of prey, the dead chief is very angry, and the diviner must say what else must be done to appease him, before another animal is found for the sacrifice, and the hut rebuilt.

Here and there are to be found traces of non- 776
human spirits. They are not called *basyuka*, but *mapiri*, a word which in the neighbouring Henga dialect means hills, but the Konde use it in invocation when crossing water. Their dwelling is in the water; and they are pre-human, spirits that were in the world when the whole earth was covered with

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

782 A person involved in a lawsuit was similarly prayed for:

> "Be merciful, and let his case be good. May he escape and return to us; for those men are gods; whom they imprison they imprison, and whom they kill they kill."

The men referred to are the European Administrative Officers, before whom cases are heard. If the case is tried by a native chief, the clause is omitted. A man who has been away at work, in the employment of a white man, gives, on his return in safety, a piece of cloth to the family representative, who, after it has been laid up in the house for a time, asks the permission of the spirits to wear it, for it is theirs; and, taking their permission for granted, leaves a tiny rag to represent it. Less careful persons wear it at once, the rag being enough to keep the spirits in good temper. The numerous other occasions on which worship is offered are described in the appropriate chapters.

Greatest of all Konde ceremonies is the prayer for rain. And around this ceremony much erroneous information has collected; for the so-called "rain-maker" does not make the rain; his duties are quite different. The rain is the gift of God; it is His to give or withhold as He sees fit. All that living men can do is to pray to the spirits, who, in turn, present the petition to God; and God, if there is no obstacle among men themselves, will grant the petition.

782 Of sacred objects connected with rain ceremonies, the most important is the *mulima* (an old word meaning *the world*), which is never seen by anyone except
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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

its guardian, and very rarely even by him. It was originally in the possession of Chungu, but some generations ago was passed secretly by the reigning Chungu to a son who was hated by the people, and not in the least likely to succeed to royal dignity. It is at present guarded by a man called "Tom," though, fortunately perhaps, the honorific name of *Mwakabanga* is used in direct address. As no one sees it, descriptions must be received with caution, and there are many natives who disbelieve in its existence, regarding the whole story as the invention of men who wished to gain honour for themselves. It is commonly described as about the size of a man's fist, with *maso* (eyes) all over it, of the size and colour of a red bean. When the eyes open, rain is coming, when they close it is being withheld. But, as the *mulima* is kept buried in the ground, it is not quite clear how it is known whether the eyes are closed or open. So long as the stone, if it is a stone, is kept in the ground rain will fall normally, but if the guardian has a quarrel with another chief, he will dig it up, a signal to the spirits that something is wrong, which must be dealt with before they go to God to ask for the rain.

Prayer for rain is offered, either when it becomes clear that "God's rain," that is to say, rain that comes without prayer, is not to fall; or when the official dreamers declare that they do not see the rain where they always see it. Numerous variations in the actual words and ceremonies are found, almost every chief having some special form of his own; but what is

MAIN CULTURAL FEATURES

Religion

769 The ancestor cult was the main feature of Ngonde religion. As long as a man had alive a father, father's full brother, or a senior brother, this senior kinsman dealt with the ancestral spirits, not only on his behalf, but also on behalf of his wives and children. In the absence of sickness or misfortune no appeal was made to the spirits. If the diviner diagnosed anger of the ancestors as cause, the senior kinsman had to pray for the sick one. If the half-brothers lived at a distance from each other after the death of their father and uncles, each might pray to the spirits to cure a little sickness, but if it persisted a message had to be sent to the senior kinsman. Wrongs which aroused the anger of the spirits were usually breaches of family morality, insult to a father, neglect of responsibilities by an heir. Offerings consisted of a bull, hen, or beer in the case of commoners, a cow in the case of a chief. The worship of dead chiefs as such was not connected with everyday morality. On the offering of cows by chiefs to their immediate ancestors depended the food and health of the chiefdom and the fertility of women and cows.[1]

769 Each Kyungu was buried in the valley around Mbande, and the grave was planted with trees, making a sacred grove. In times of drought and widespread sickness, sacri-
643 fices were made at the groves under the guidance of a diviner.[2] An insult to the living Kyungu was believed to cause a drought. Each chief or noble was believed to be able to avert local misfortunes for his own people, and the head of every family participated in the divinity of his own ancestors. The great commoners of each chief were believed to have independent access to his ancestral spirits, and so to have a hold upon him. The nobles of Ngonde had a similar power over the Kyungu.

643 As the Kyungu's health was bound up with the welfare of the community, elaborate precautions to maintain his health and to protect him from the danger of sexual impurity were taken, and when he ailed he was killed by suffocation.[3]

●778 Sacred lagoons by the lake were associated not with the ancestors, but with a vague supreme deity, *Mbamba*.[4]

796 There were two important annual rituals for the whole tribe in addition to the special sacrifices to avert misfortune. One was the clearing out of the ashes each year after the break of the rains, which was performed on the order of the Kyungu, given through the nobles of Ngonde. The second was the elaborate first-fruits ceremony: fruits were offered by the nobles of Ngonde, in the grove of the last dead Kyungu, and then by the great chiefs, each in the grove of his own predecessor. The nobles and the chiefs of the hills had similar rituals, but they were not synchronized with those of the plain.[5]

Witchcraft

754 The Ngonde believe that certain men and women have the power of harming their neighbours and neighbours' cattle without taking any overt action. The witchcraft is
626 hereditary, and of particular virulence if inherited through the mother.[6] Witches exert their influence at night in dreams. There are two kinds of witches, *ovamunga*, defender

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, pp. 256–7; 1, 1936, p. 84; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 191 and 196, also Ch. VII.
[2] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 29–30.
[3] Ibid., pp. 34–6.
[4] Ibid., p. 34; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 178–97.
[5] Wilson, 5, 1939, pp. 29–34.
[6] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 250–69.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 769 789 magical powers. And the faith alike in ancestors and in witchcraft gave to every group of subjects a religious hold over their rulers.

(a) *THE THEISTIC ELEMENT.*

643 764 778 Though the early Kyungus had lived on the stony top of Mbande none of them had been buried there, for "the ground was too hard to dig graves in." They and their successors were all buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. Thus Kyungu Mwangonde is referred to as "He of Bwiba," Kyungu Mwakasungula as "He of Ipota," and so on.

643 731 787 782 Now drought and widespread sickness were believed to be caused by the anger either of some dead Kyungu or of the living one. "In time of drought they (the nobles of Ngonde) would go to a diviner to enquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would tell them that it was so and so. So they would tell the (living) Kyungu. And he would give them either a bull or a sheep, together with some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own house, one of the pots which were continually brought by his people as tribute.[1] And he would give them some flour and some cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove. Now the diviner would have told them that he (the dead Kyungu) was angry because they had omitted (for so long) to build his house. So they would begin by building his house in the grove, they would build a miniature hut with rafters.[2] Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fix some of the pieces to the house in the grove—an action which they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And, finally, they would pour out (some of) the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a house in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

643 731 787 "But occasionally if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any of them: 'No—no.'

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[1] *Vide infra* section 4.

[2] This is the custom traditional in the sacred groves of all important chiefs, both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa. We have seen it done among the Nyakyusa. The hut which we saw built was between two and three feet high.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 769 778 Nor were rain and health the only blessings which were sought in the sacred groves round Mbande, general fertility, the peace of the country, the absence of rats and the success of the ivory trade were believed to depend in part on the favour of the dead Kyungus. And we have a little evidence that some of these other blessings also were believed to be withheld by the anger of a living Kyungu.

The religious powers of dead and living Kyungus, however, were only believed to be effective in the Ngonde plain; the fiefs of the hills, certainly, and as far as we know, the chiefdoms of the Nyondos and Kamemes also, were unaffected by them. And this fact is correlated with the slighter secular hold which Mbande had over the hills as compared with the plain.

769 786 Two notable religious rituals of the plain must now be mentioned. It was customary, first, to clear out the ashes (*ukujola ikikungu*) each year after the break of the rains. In traditional belief the spirits of the ancestors, whether of chiefs or of commoners, were closely associated with the fires in the houses of their descendants; and so it was only by clearing out the old fires regularly that the spirits and their potential anger could be driven away. Every religious ritual which deals with the ancestors, whether in Ngonde or among the Nyakyusa, has the function of driving them away. For, while the Christians believe that sustained communion with God may be a blessed state, the pagans in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa believe that sustained communion [787] with the ancestral spirits is always terrible and dangerous; prophecy may flow from it, but if the communion is not broken, if it continues too long, then evil will result; and prophecy is nearly always prophecy of evil. In pagan belief the spirits of the dead come constantly to "brood" on man and his works and have constantly to be satisfied and driven away by ritual.

"Always they used to clear-out the ashes at the new year, at the first hoeing, at the break of the rains in December. They feared that death and disease would spread through the land if they continued living with the old fires, that the spirits in the ground, both the spirits of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry; let them drive the spirits away and hoe in peace. They always remembered to do so each new year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually, they never forgot. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to clear out the ashes; and then they would hoe in peace. And at other times too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the ashes again."

The nobles of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave the order to clear out the ashes; messages were sent to the great chiefs and

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17
NyaKyusa

structure. We shall see in later sections how many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions. But the reverse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular content at all, the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle were sent to Lubaga by the other chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and health; but the "clearing out of the ashes" was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruit ritual at all;[1] while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

Besides the Kyungus the great chiefs of Ngonde also were believed to be able to avert local droughts and misfortunes in their districts by offerings to their own immediate ancestors; and the lesser chiefs likewise and the territorial nobles—each in his own little area. While among the territorial nobles, the original owners of the land had wider powers. It will be remembered that to them the first Kyungu is said to have given head-cloths and asked for their prayers. Sometimes people would prophesy future misfortune "at Kisindile", or "at Kaluma" or "at Ifumbo," or would prophesy of present misfortunes that such was their source. Then the territorial noble concerned[2] would be formally visited by the nobles of Ngonde, and he and they together would offer sacrifice to his ancestors on behalf of all Ngonde.

And then also there were sacred lagoons near the lake—Nthola, Kambwe, Kibondo, Mulale and Katindi. They were associated not with ancestral spirits at all but with a vaguely defined supreme deity named Mbamba. And beside them also prayers and sacrifices were made from time to time by the nobles of Ngonde.

Over these other spiritual powers we need not linger, save to notice one most significant fact. The participation by the Kyungu in the divinity of his ancestors was no isolated phenomenon in Ngonde. The head of every family in the country, whether of chiefs or commoners, was similarly placed; in his own family and, in the case of a chief or noble, in his own area too, he was both a priest and a demi-god; he dealt with the spirits and by virtue of his relation to them shared their powers; his anger could curse. The Kyungus were but the greatest of many divinities. And thus there was in theistic ritual a high degree of local and family autonomy; local or family misfortunes

[1] Particular people among the Nyakyusa carried it out: reigning chiefs, senior great-commoners, prophets, and any person whose birth was held to be due to magical treatment of a previously barren woman. But only they.

[2] Mwene-kisindile, Mwene-kaluma, Mwene-ifumbo etc.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

chief from the wanton attacks of witches; but if ever there is a just ground of offence they are believed to join their own power of witchcraft in the general attack. I know one chief who dare not give a judgement in a dispute between two of his villages for fear of the indignant witchcraft of the losing side. And a general unpopularity is believed always to lead, sooner or later to a chief's death. 622 754

Chiefs also, like other men, fear the use of sorcery (i.e. destructive magic) against them, and use a number of protective "medicines" (i.e. materials of magic) to protect themselves from it. They also use powerful "medicines" to give themselves personal impressiveness, prestige and authority among their people.

While in the families of commoners an ancestral spirit is only believed to affect the lives of his own descendants, the ancestors of a chief, on the other hand, are supposed to influence, for good or ill, the fortunes of whole chiefdoms. Rain and good crops, the fertility of women and cattle are dependent upon their good will, which in its turn is believed to depend upon a recurrent sacrifice of cows. And for this sacrifice the chiefs, their living descendants, are responsible.[10] But, owing to the continuous division of chiefdoms every generation, several chiefs are concerned in each sacrifice; every dead chief is a source of misfortune or of blessing in the countries of all his direct descendants. And so the discussion of this part of the Nyakyusa religion leads us to the investigation of the groups which extend beyond the boundaries of a single chief-chiefdom. 771 622

(c) *Groups wider than the Chiefdom*

When a chief dies he is buried near the house of his senior great wife and trees are planted on his grave. The trees grow and form a sacred grove (*ekiyeto*) hedged by taboos. Each of these groves is at first the religious centre of two, later of a number of chiefdoms, and in them the sacrifices are made. Responsibility for finding the cow for sacrifice in a particular grove rests with one of the living chiefs concerned, but responsibility for initiating the ritual and performing it lies not only with the chiefs but also with the hereditary priests (*asanyago*) in each chiefdom. These hereditary priests are descended, some from the great commoners of the dead chief who is buried in that particular grove, some from his half-brothers. The ritual is esoteric, there is no gathering of the people at the sacrifice, and only chiefs and those with hereditary priesthoods 778 793 764 [222]

[10] I am speaking here of the religious customs of the Nyakyusa proper and the Selya people, I believe those of the Kukwe and Mwambe are very similar, but I have not studied them in detail.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 come to it. But, on the other hand, everyone knows when a sacrifice is
778 taking place, and, in spite of the influence of missions, most people in the
793 pagan community believe in its efficacy.

782 Sacrifices are prompted either by actual misfortune or by prophecies
787 of it. The four sacrifices which I have seen myself were all stimulated by an actual shortage of food, and the hereditary priests have often told me that " now-a-days the chiefs do not listen to us until hunger comes." But, traditionally, sacrifices are said to have been usually prompted by prophecies of coming misfortune which was then averted by them. In each chiefdom the ruling great commoners, the hereditary priests and some private persons as well are believed to have the power of dreaming of misfortune (*okokunguluka*) before it comes. And the chiefs are said always to have listened to these dreams, formerly, and to have acted upon them.

778 Among the groves there is an order of seniority ; the older the grove
173 the more chiefdoms are concerned in the sacrifices there. And in Selya is the most important grove of all—Lubaga. All the chiefdoms of Selya, many of the Nyakyusa proper and even some of the neighbouring chiefdoms of the Mwamba are traditionally concerned in its sacrifices. Lubaga, the Nyakyusa say, is the grove of Lwembe, one of the original chiefs who came down the Livingstone Mountains from the East, eight or nine generations ago ; and from him all the present Selya chiefs are descended. The ancestor of the chiefs of the Nyakyusa proper was a brother of Lwembe ; and though the Kukwe and Mwamba chiefs are not related, yet those of the Mwamba who are nearest to Lubaga used to send cows there for sacrifice as well, because of the great reputation that this grove had.

622 Sacrifices are still made in the country of the chief of Lubaga
782 (Mwakisisya) for all the surrounding chiefdoms, but the full ritual has not been carried out for fourty years. Traditionally each chief of Lubaga was ritually installed into a position somewhat resembling that of Sir James Frazer's " Divine Kings," a position hedged with taboos, in which not only the sacrifices he made to Lwembe but his own health and fertility also were believed to be intimately connected with the prosperity of his own and neighbouring chiefdoms. But the present chief has never been properly installed, nor was his father before him. The sacrifices at Lubaga are believed to benefit not only the Nyakyusa but also the next
[173] tribe to the East, the Kinga, who live on the heights of the Livingstone Mountains ; for Lwembe, they say, was born a Kinga and moved down the mountains to Lubaga, taking the fertility of the soil with him. And

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

And every year two hereditary Kinga priests come a three days journey from their own country to participate in the sacrifice of a black cow to the spirits of Lwembe and his descendants.

Down by Lake Nyasa, in the extreme South East of the Nyakyusa district, there is another equally sacred spot where sacrifices were, and I believe still are[21] made to Kyala, a younger brother of Lwembe.

The Christians and the Moslems form other religious groups which transcend the boundaries of a single chiefdom, but an examination of the Nyakyusa Christian and Moslem communities is beyond the scope of this paper.

The political group which is constituted by a Court district, though only ten years old, is of great importance in Nyakyusa society ; but here again the detailed examination of its organization and the relationships of its members is beyond the scope of this paper.

Conclusion : Culture and Society

The aim of sociology is to describe single forms of society fully and, in comparison with one another, to explain them completely, in so far as reasons can be found within this particular scientific field. Neither full description nor complete explanation of Nyakyusa society has here been attempted : many important facts have been omitted from the account, irregularities of detail have been slurred over, the connections of fact have been only occasionally and sketchily established, and no systematic comparison of this unit with others has been made at all.

But the method of this paper has involved an analysis, summary and general though it has been, of the nature of some of the many institutions in which the Nyakyusa meet, of some of the actual elements in their relationships with one another. It is in their dealings with the earth and their cattle, with the spirits and with men who break the law, in their discussions and arguments, their ceremonial feasts, their giving and receiving, in their loves and hates and in their admiration and mockery of one another that they forever make and remake their own human relationships.

Culture is the matter of which society is the form ; inseparable in fact they are only intelligible together. No two men can be related unless they both do something and unless their activities are somehow connected. Nor can either escape relationship with his fellow if what

[21] I have not yet been there to investigate.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

539 Mwakaleli and came here and died. The Kinga went to BuSangu to buy food, for there was great hunger after Mbasi and Kyala were driven out, and wandering home they came here and met Mbasi. He said, 'Go home, there will be plenty of food, but I want my things.' He had left them at his father's place when he fled with his sister Kyungu. He asked for his leopard and otterskins, his drums, his bows for shooting birds,[1] his harp, mats, a stool, bamboo beer, and twenty hoes. . . . Then the Kinga went back and found their country full of food; and they brought all his things to Mbasi and even things like salt that he had not asked for. . . . This is how the ritual began. . . . Mbasi ruled because he had helped them in their hunger.

173 773 Kasitile (86), the rain-maker, speaking of the same incident, stressed only the hoes. Lwembe 'came to Lubaga and found a good place to settle, then he sent out messengers to Mwemusi (the Kinga chief) and said: "I want my hoes, especially my great, eyed hoe" (*ilikumbulu ilya maso*).' (The old ritual hoes had per- [778] forations—'eyes'—on the blades comparable to the perforations on other rain-making instruments.) Still today Kinga priests [782] come to Lubaga to sacrifice to Lwembe (3), and they bring with them hoes.[2]

The hero of Ngonde, the Kyungu (16), was also associated with [643] iron implements which he had brought with him—a spear, staff, stool, and a sieve used for making rain, which were royal insignia, and razors, spears, and knives of an unusual pattern, which long remained in the groves of the hero and his successors.

In the commonly-told Nyakyusa myth it was Lwembe who [372] introduced fire to BuNyakyusa—'he found the original occupants eating their food raw'—and the fact that he conferred so great a benefit is the charter for the position of the chiefs, celebrated at every 'coming out'. The Kinga priests push the spread of fire back a little further.

539 Of old in this country [BuKinga] there was no fire, men ate food uncooked; there were very few men in the country, most of it was forest. 372 This was after Mwemusi came to Kinga country. Then one man, a hunter, went into the forest to hunt buck and otter, and he had dogs. And in the forest he made fire with a drill and cooked his food; and gave his friends cooked food to eat, and they were astonished.

[1] The bow and arrow are not now used among the Nyakyusa, but men in their thirties had used them when boys, for shooting birds.

[2] cf. Ludwig Weichert, *Mayibye i Africa/ Kehre wieder Afrika* (Berlin, 1927), p. 129, for a photograph of one.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and Tutsi who established conquest states to the north-west.[1] 173

Whatever the origin and adventures of the heroes they were important in Nyakyusa and Ngonde history because their graves became centres of religious ritual which linked together groups that were otherwise largely independent. The myths about them are the charter for chieftainship. They are depicted as benefactors who brought to uncivilized men not only the institution of chieftainship itself, but fire, cattle, iron, seed, and a creative power resident in their own bodies and those of their anointed heirs. But the myths also justify the power of commoners who first occupied the country and who have witchcraft in their bellies:

773 [174] [778] [754]

The commoners whom Lwembe found here were extraordinary. They were cultivators, but they had not yet got fire, they ate their food raw. It was we chiefs, it was Lwembe, who brought fire and cattle—he came and found the original occupants without cattle; hence the commoners say, 'We are the earth'. Commoners are different from us physically, they are black; they are awe-inspiring, they are witches. Before you Europeans came the chiefs like Mwaipopo (116) were not awe-inspiring, they feared the commoners very much; the commoners hammered the chief with their fists—yes, by daylight. And if the chief cut a man's bananas that man took the chief's. If the commoners were angry with Mwaipopo they fetched Mwangomo (124 whose chiefdom adjoins Mwaipopo's) at night by their witchcraft; he came in the night with his people and seized the cattle, both those of the chief, Mwaipopo, and those of the commoners. The next day the commoners said: 'It is we, we are angry. Why do you not look after us? Why do you not kill cattle for us?' Then Mwaipopo would kill two head of cattle and all the men in the country ate. . . . Mwaipopo and his equals were not awe-inspiring long ago, it is you Europeans who have created chieftainship and awe.

539 [177] [754] [643]

[1] cf. H. H. Curson and R. W. Thornton, 'A Contribution to the Study of African Native Cattle', *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Science and Animal Industry*, vii, 2 October 1936 (Government Printer, Pretoria). An analysis of the distribution and migration of breeds in Africa. [113]

H. B. Thompson and R. Scott, *Uganda* (1935), pp. 195 ff.

Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 68: 69.

M. Merker, *Die Masai*, pp. 157 ff., 1904, Berlin.

H. H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, 1904, pp. 86, 105 (early photographs of Nyoro cattle).

The short-horn type predominates among the Nyakyusa, but some animals suggest an intermixture with Sanga cattle. The hump is regarded as a great delicacy and is exaggerated in the clay cattle which boys model. Cf. Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 72. The similarity between the ritual and symbolism of the Nyakyusa and those of the Ganda as described by Roscoe is marked. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, 1911. [231] [825] [532]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

access. It was the nobles who were the effective rulers of the country; the divine Kyungu was the centre, a source of mystical power, a numinous symbol of unity, but not a judge or an administrator. Gradually, however, the Kyungus emerged from seclusion; they descended from the hill of Mbande; later they ceased to live within a stockade; in the crises of the Ngoni invasion the Kyungu in office (a notable warrior before his accession to the stool) broke tradition by himself taking arms. 'When the Ngoni came their enmity was like that of the lions and their number like that of the ants, and so Kyungu Mwakasungula, seeing his people were terrified, took up arms in person, and said he would die fighting. And his people heard with awe and astonishment that he himself had come to fight and they determined to die with him.' The next stage was a development of the judicial functions of the Kyungu until, in the present generation, the transformation from god to magistrate was complete.[1] 173 643

We turn now to the detailed description of the rituals at each shrine.

(b) LUBAGA

Lubaga is a hill dominating the central part of the Nyakyusa valley and on its slopes are signs of old and intensive cultivation. There an early Lwembe (19) lived and was buried, there is the grove where he is worshipped, and there his descendant chosen as 'the living Lwembe' should build. According to tradition the 'sons of Lwembe' spread all over the Nyakyusa valley as chiefs, but two senior lineages, that of Mwampondele (27) and that of Mwakisisya (56), remained near Lubaga, and from them was chosen, alternately, the living embodiment of the 'divine king', the Lwembe. Men feared greatly to be chosen, for they feared to be 'killed by the grove', and indeed the Lwembe rarely lived long. He must not fall ill or all the people of the country would do so likewise; therefore if he ailed he was smothered by his priests who stuffed up his nostrils and other passages of his body. Towards the end of our stay in BuNyakyusa Kasitile made a formal statement on this point in the presence of another priest, Mwamakunda: 778 769 [173] 769 643

The Lwembes were not sick. They said: 'I am going, I have eaten food at home, at the place of the shade', and they died that day; they

[1] The change in the position of the Kyungu from the earliest period is discussed in detail by Godfrey Wilson in *The Constitution of Ngonde*.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 were not ill, they were not troubled as we are. For later in the evening,
643 while the Lwembe was still alive, the commoner priests removed his nails and hair; they came near and plucked them off. He shouted: 'Who is snatching at me?' They replied: 'No one', and then they smothered him with cloth in the nostrils and in the anus, and he went away [i.e. he died]. . . . They did it only when he had initiated it himself by saying: 'I have eaten food in the land of the shades'; they
[775] did not begin it themselves. . . . They collected the relics in a little bamboo flask, and a priest treated them so that Lwembe might not go away with the food to the land of the shades, that the fertility of the soil (*ilifugo*), this *ifingila*, might always remain above.

[778] These relics, the hair and the nails, were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops.

While the Lwembe lived he was secluded—ordinary men did
643 not see him—and he was subject to numerous taboos. For example,
[784] he might not tread in water lest the country should be flooded; he never bathed in a stream (as Nyakyusa men do daily) and was carried across any river when travelling; he must not sit on a green banana leaf lest the bananas in the country should fail, but was always provided with a skin to sit upon, and he ate only the middle portion of a banana throwing away the ends for 'if he finished the whole of a banana he would create hunger in the country'. No one might grasp his hand, or drink out of the same calabash as he, save the priests of his own age; if he drank from a calabash when travelling he took it with him, for 'if he left it behind he left hunger in that place'.

The selection of the Lwembe was in the hands of the hereditary priests of Lubaga and the hereditary Kinga priests, who come from BuKinga to sacrifice at Lubaga. The man they choose must be of good character—at the time we were in BuNyakyusa the only willing candidate was rejected because 'he is a bad man, a thief, they refuse to have a thief as priest'—he must exhibit in his own home the power of fertility. 'They don't catch just anyone, but
[842] one with children, and cattle, and fertility of the fields in his own homestead. If the man taken as chief is not fertile and rich there will be many sterile people in the homesteads, and much disease and hunger.'

When the priests had decided upon the man of their choice, they seized him and set him upon a sacred skin and a pad of leaves; and it was believed that once he had been set thereon he
[761] would die if he refused office; tales were told of a younger brother

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 dare not greet their children on their return without the safeguard
789 of protective medicines. At a celebration the Kinga priests took
751 medicines, 'powdered medicine which comes from Mwemusi and Mwakalukwa [the Kinga chiefs]', and smeared it on Lwembe's forehead and shoulders 'because the grove is great. If you entered it without this medicine you died'; they gave the Lwembe the medicine 'so that Kyala (*vide* pp. 17-18) might not kill him, that he might show respect and escape'.

783 Another medicine, *imbinga*, which is red in colour, was brought
789 from BuKinga to smear on the foreheads of the children of the Lwembe and Kissoule, the priest, when these two returned home after celebrating in the grove. Their senior wives 'would smear the *imbinga* on the children's foreheads, when they would turn round calling: "You hit us", and Mwakisiya (56) (the Lwembe) and Kissoule (the priest) would both reply: "No, I am innocent (*mwelu*)." The medicine was smeared on the children because Mwakisisya and his fellow thought: "How can we meet them, how can they look on our bodies, since we are taboo from the ritual." Yes, the words are the same as in the twin ritual, but the medicine is different.' During one of the rituals we attended, Mwakilima (111) begged the Kinga priests to bring him some of this medicine for the protection of his children.

718 The numinous quality of everything connected with Lubaga
769 can hardly be exaggerated; the Nyakyusa believe that it overcomes even curious Europeans. The most sacred and terrible object of all was the drum which was polished with blood, the blood of children, who, in Nyakyusa thought, had died for the people, that the country might live and be fertile. 'Formerly,
[782] when the Kinga came with a drum, they said: "Catch the child of a commoner, fat and strong, hide him in the drum." In the old days when the Kinga came beating their drum, ping . . . ping . . . [single strokes with long intervals] we of the country used to run away and women would hide their children for fear lest they be snatched up and put in the drum.'[1] The child was strangled

[1] These statements were made by three different groups of informants independ-
[534] ently. All had special knowledge of these matters. The *ilikole*, the sacred drum of the Kinga, differs in shape from the Nyakyusa *indingala*. It is made of *nkuju* wood and ox-hide and is beaten when a ritual is celebrated and to summon men to war. The Kinga do not dance to drums and the Nyakyusa did not do so formerly either, but after the Europeans arrived Nyakyusa chiefs began to buy *indingala* from outside BuNyakyusa, paying a bull for a set—'a mother drum and her children'. Only quite recently have Nyakyusa craftsmen learnt from a Henga immigrant to make *indingala*.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and its body taken to Lubaga and added to the 'medicine for fertility' (*inkots gwa ifuge*) which was sprinkled throughout the country, starting at Lubaga, proceeding to the other sacred groves, and then to the ordinary homesteads. Thus the terror of the grove had objective roots in the fact of human sacrifice, but it is rather a fear of the unknown and miraculous than of death itself; a fight involving casualties was not terrible in the same way as the grove and the throb of the sacred drum.

The Kinga priests travelled 'the road of Lwembe', down the escarpment of the Livingstone mountains from Mwakalukwa's country and across Selya, beating their drum. They stopped to sleep at the home of Kasitile the priest, and poured a libation of beer at 'the places where Lwembe had rested': Isumba, a hill overlooking Kasitile's homestead, Kituli in Mwaipopo's country, and near the homestead of the priest Munyoso.[1] 'He [Lwembe] used to shout on Isumba, the little hill here, then no one would cut the trees on the hill,' said Kasitile. 'It was one of his resting places; he used to come here to tell my grandfather to go and get a cow for Lubaga, and later to tell my father to do so. . . .' The beer is poured at the base of an *nkuju* tree (a variety of *ficus*) at Isumba, in the long grass in Kituli, and at the base of an *nkuju* near Munyoso's homestead. 'They pour [it] out here by the *nkuju*, they beat the drum to say: "We have come", then the people of Munyoso hide their children—that's of old.' Besides the drum the Kinga travelled with a kudu horn[2] (blown in battle in BuKinga) and a sacred drum and horn were lodged in the hut of the Lwembe's chief wife. Before they start the Kinga priests make an offering of millet flour and beer in one of their own groves,[3] and leave there overnight the beer and salt and hoes which they will take to the Lwembe, 'that the aba-Ngulube (9) may see them before they go to Lwembe'.

At Lubaga there were several places of prayer and offering: the trees planted at the installation of the last living Lwembe (*vide infra* pp. 54-5), the trees planted at the installation of a previous

[1] Probably grandson of 84 and representative of a junior lineage to which priestly functions had been delegated.

[2] *Ulutilimo* in Kinga, *ingange bwite* in Nyakyusa. cf. plate 5b.

[3] Nyandala, a Kinga chief, and two priests took Godfrey Wilson to a sacrifice in one of their groves. The form of sacrifice is very similar to that among the Nyakyusa save that the meat-offering is placed in the fork of a tree. The priests had gone very early in the morning 'to tell Bulelile (the dead chief) "Do not be angry, a European comes to greet you".'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

778 Lwembe, and the grove of the first Lwembe himself, the last being
782 the most sacred. In it stands a miraculous tree from which, the priests aver, sometimes comes sap like water, and sometimes blood. 'If it is watery there will be a plague of ulcers in the country—
[753] running sores—if it is blood there will be dysentery. But as soon
[755] as the hoes are placed in the grove, or the black bull is killed, then the sick begin to recover.'

Godfrey Wilson attended three celebrations at Lubaga, and we
788 heard of five others which occurred during our period of field-work. The ritual is esoteric, that is to say, only the representative of Lwembe and his priests participate, and the details are not revealed to others, but its occurrence is widely known and discussed among older men.

The celebrations observed were modified by the fact that no one
[643] had been installed as Lwembe since the death of Mwakisisya
[793] (56) before 1914. The possible candidates whom the priests had
[177] wished to instal had refused—'they feared the grove'; the only one who was said to be willing was rejected on account of his character. The priests gave 'European times' as the reason for there being no Lwembe. 'When the country was ours before you Europeans came' the elected candidate was compelled to accept office. On the death of Mwakisisya, the Kinga priests ordered that his senior son Mwanjala I (77) should take his place, and when Mwanjala I died (three years after his father) his full brother Mwanjala II (78) succeeded. He took a leading part in the rituals observed, but was not an anointed Lwembe. The priests explained: 'We fear, thinking that if a chief is seized [and compelled to sit on the stool] he will complain to the Government and we shall be punished.' During the period of German rule they had been threatened with imprisonment if they continued the ritual . . . 'we feared and stole through the country by night'. . . . And there is still much secrecy about its truncated celebration. Since the journey down 'the road of Lwembe' with the drum traditionally involved human sacrifice, and the Lwembe was smothered when ailing, there is an absolute incompatibility between a full celebration of the ritual and European administration.

The influence of the Christian minority is also considerable. The
177 view of most Nyakyusa Christians with whom we discussed
788 communal rituals is that they used to be efficient, but are so no longer, since men have been taught a better way of approaching God. 'God said: "They are mistaken but in their hearts they are

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the house of Mwamalunguka, a hereditary priest of Lubaga (whose ancestor came with the first Lwembe (*vide* p. 8). There were present five chiefs of Mwakisisya's (56) line, including Mwanjala II (78), who represents the Lwembe, but is ailing and has never been installed; two Kinga priests and a Kinga messenger sent to escort them; four priests of Lubaga (including Mwamalunguka himself), Kasitile the priest of Selya, and Godfrey Wilson. 782

Mwanjala brought a small black bull worth 12*s*., bought with the money and a hoe provided by the Kinga, and sent for a stem of bananas and a flask of fresh milk. A rowdy discussion began about the procedure: 'In the old days we used to pour whey over our hands to wash them, and to wash our mouths, and in the sacred grove we would pour it away. . . .' Then the party went to a small grove surrounded by cultivated land, and Nsyanigwa, the Kinga priest, stopped at the stump of a tree, still alive, on the edge of the grove, saying: 'This is the *umpandapanda* tree [a *ficus* planted at the coming out of a chief] where we used to pour the beer,' but Mwanjala denied it saying 'No, they have hoed over it, the tree was here in the bean patch.' After some dispute they agreed to go right into the grove to sacrifice. The grove is on the site at which the trees were planted at the 'coming out' of Mwakisisya (56) the last Lwembe, and the house of his senior wife, Njala, was built. She is buried there, where her swept courtyard used to be, and during Mwakisisya's lifetime the beer used to be poured out beside this sacred tree. The last sacrifice here was when Kissoule was a boy (1885-90), hence the uncertainty as to the place, but just why the beer sacrifices had all been at the homestead of Kitega (*vide supra*) was not clear. 782 796 [778]

Nsyanigwa (the Kinga priest) asked Mwamalunguka (the priest of Lubaga) to bring over the three calabashes, one of millet beer, one of milk and one of bamboo beer, but Mwamalunguka refused and Nsyanigwa had to fetch them himself. It was the Kinga who had insisted on the Nyakyusa providing millet beer saying: 'If we first pour out our bamboo beer we will go off with all the fertility of the country, let them begin with theirs.' Mwanjala, summoned by Nsyanigwa, came and stood at the foot of the tree while Nsyanigwa poured millet beer first into his hands and then at the foot of the tree, and the priests prayed, Mwanjala and Nsyanigwa in Nyakyusa, Kikungubeja in Kinga: [842]

Oh thou Mwambipili, thou Kissoule, thou Mwamalunguka,[1] thou

[1] Three hereditary priests of Lubaga.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 Lwembe, this is your millet beer, we complain of hunger, oh thou
796 Mwampondele (27), thou Lwembe.

Then the milk was poured likewise and again they prayed for milk and calves, for children and health:

Here is your milk . . . may the locusts pass, may sickness be slight, may milk be plentiful, may the cows calve!

Finally the bamboo beer was poured out, too, and both the Kinga priests prayed in Kinga speaking of hunger. Mwanjala, instructed by Nsyanigwa, took some bamboo beer into his mouth and blew it three times in different directions, saying, between blowing: 'May the rain come.'

The bull was killed by Mwanjande (?). Nsyanigwa first gave the axe and knife to Mwanjala saying: 'This axe and knife [an unhafted and very old spearhead] I, Nsyanigwa, brought from BuKinga to kill the bull, go and kill it.' Mwanjala asked: 'Shall I not give the axe to my younger brother?' and Nsyanigwa replied: 'Yes, give it to him.' So Mwanjala gave it to Mwanjande who killed the bull with one blow at the back of the head. Mwansasu (a commoner priest) cut up the carcass, collecting the first stream of blood in a pot. Then the sacred meat was taken from the fore-
● [778] legs, that from the right leg being placed on a plantain leaf, that from the left on a leaf of sweet banana. It was cut up and carried by Kitega (heir of 57?), who walked behind Mwanjala and the two Kinga priests, to the tree where they had poured the beer and milk. Mwanjala turned to the group of those sitting talking and shouting and said: 'Friends, a spear will go to the shades
[769] [i.e. the shades will be offended by your noise], be quiet', and they fell silent until the offering of meat was made. Then Mwanjala scraped a hollow in the cleared earth at the root of the tree with his foot and threw into it seven or eight pieces. He and the Kinga prayed, while Kitega stood silently holding the rest of the meat:

Oh thou Lwembe, thou Mwampondele (27), stand by us, this is your bull. . . . Give us children, milk, cattle, food; may sickness be slight . . . stand by us.

All this meat was taken from the plantain leaf—the men's portion. At the end, as they walked away Kitega asked: 'What about the women's meat?' And Mwanjala repeated his question. The Kinga replied: 'Are there two sacred places? No! There is no sacrifice

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

793
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142
[415]

5*a*. PRIESTS OF LUBAGA (KINGA)

[534]
[778]

5*b*. KINGA PRIESTS WITH HORN AND DRUM

[Facing p. 39]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 753 [781] die. . . . People feared very much because the Lwembe had medicines for smearing on his body, which could cause rain, sickness, food, ulcers, anything.

And they feared lest they might get ulcers if they killed one of Lwembe's men 'on the road'—i.e. a traveller. In short, Lwembe's mystical power afforded the first feeble beginnings of a 'king's peace' in a land of warring chiefdoms, where strangers were fair game.

(c) Mbande

778 Mbande is a hill on the plain of north Nyasaland with a commanding view of the surrounding country and well suited to defence. The west side is precipitous and below the scarp edge there used to be a marsh; to the north the hill is protected by a wide reach of the Lukulu river. It is a sacred place and for many 643 generations was the home of the 'divine king', the Kyungu. Like the Lwembe he was the living representative of a hero, and was selected by a group of hereditary nobles from one of two related lineages, the office alternating (if suitable candidates were available) between the two. They sought a big man,[1] one who had begotten children and whose sons were already married, not a young man for, the nobles said, 'young men always want war, and destroy the country'. He must be a man of wisdom (*gwa mahala*) and generous in feeding his people.

The Kyungu's life was governed by taboos even more rigorous than those surrounding the Lwembe. He must not fall ill, or [784] suffer a wound, or even scratch himself and bleed a little, for his [753] ill health, or his blood falling on the earth would bring sickness to the whole country. 'Men feared when Kyungu's blood fell on the ground, they said, "It is his life".' 'If he had a headache his wives (if they loved him) told him not to mention it, they hid his illness; but if the nobles entered and found him ill they dug the grave and put him in it, saying, "He is the ruler (*ntemi*), it's taboo for him to be ill". Then he thought: "Perhaps it is so" (with a gesture of resignation).'

Great precautions were taken to preserve his health. He lived 751 in a separate house with his powerful medicines. His food was 643 prepared by boys below the age of puberty lest a menstruating [841] woman, or a youth who had lain with a woman, should touch it [644] and so bring sickness upon him; and his numerous wives were [753]

[1] *Unyambala umwamu.* It implies both big physically and important.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

immured in the royal enclosure—a great stockade—and jealously 643
guarded, for any infidelity on their part was thought to make [644]
their husband ill, and with him the whole country. [753]

When the Kyungu did fall ill he was smothered by the nobles
who lived around him at Mbande, and buried in great secrecy, 643
with a score or more of living persons—slaves—in the grave 766
beneath him, and one or two wives and the sons of commoners
above. And in the midst of all this slaughter the nobles brought a
sheep to look into the grave that the dead Kyungu might be [825]
gentle (*mololo*) like the sheep!

The living Kyungu was thought to create food and rain, and his
breath and the growing parts of his body—his hair and nails and
the constantly replaced mucus of his nose—were believed to be [778]
magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde plain. When
he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was buried 'with
the breath in his body'; while portions of his hair and nails and of
his nasal mucus were taken from him beforehand and buried by
the nobles of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This was [789]
'to defend the country against hunger', 'to close up the land, to
keep it rich and heavy and fertile as it was when he himself lived
in it'.

His death was kept secret—a relatively easy matter since he 643
lived in seclusion—and one of the nobles (*Ngosi*) impersonated
him wearing his clothes. After a month or two when the nobles 768
had decided whom to choose as the new Kyungu, the luckless man
was summoned to Mbande: 'Your father calls you.' 'Then he
came with his companions and entered the house to make
obeisance; they seized him and put the sacred cloth on him and
set him on the stool "Kisumbi", saying, "Thou Kyungu, thou art
he", and he became the Kyungu. Then they struck the drum,
Mwenekelwa, and everyone knew that the Kyungu had died and
another had been installed.' Men feared greatly to be seized as
the Kyungu, just as they feared to be seized as the Lwembe,
because the life of a divine king was short. Ngonde historians
quote a number of cases of sons of the Kyungu who fled to escape
being set on the stool; once they had sat on it they dared not flee
lest they die.

Though[1] the early Kyungus had lived on the stony top of 643
Mbande none of them had been buried there, for 'the ground was 778
766

[1] The following section is quoted, with additions and amendments, from Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, pp. 29 ff.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 too hard to dig graves in'. They and their successors were all
778 buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves
[766] trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. . . . We traced sixteen groves in the plain surrounding Mbande and the nobles who pointed them out remembered participating in celebrations at all except that of the last Kyungu. The ruling Kyungu and the spirits of his
[769] dead predecessors were believed to form one divine company, the anger of any one of whom had terrible effects, and both living and dead were placated with offerings.

778 In time of drought the nobles of Ngonde would go to a diviner
787 to inquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the
782 names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would tell them that it was so and so. They would inform the living
821 Kyungu and he would give them a bull or a sheep, together with some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own
643 house, brought by his people as tribute. And he would give them some flour and cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove and build a miniature hut. Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fasten some of the pieces on to the hut in the grove—an action they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And finally, they would pour out some of the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a hut and make an offering in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

643 But occasionally, if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the
688 Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself
787 who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any
689 of them: 'No . . . no.' And at length he would tell them that it was the living Kyungu who was angry because so-and-so had in-
821 sulted him. Then there would be no sacrifice at the grove at all, but the nobles of Ngonde would go to the one who had insulted the Kyungu and charge him with it, asking him what he meant by thus killing them all, would not the whole land starve? And
643 so the wrongdoer would take a cow to the Kyungu who, there-
821 upon, would address the nobles of Ngonde, saying: 'If it was my

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 pumpkin leaves were ready to eat, an elaborate first-fruit cere-
796 mony was formerly carried out. The new season's food was offered first by the nobles of Ngonde in the grove of the previous Kyungu, the one who had last died.

[778] The great chiefs would do so next, each at his own sacred grove (the grave of his own predecessor in the title). And after them everyone, both chiefs and people, each at his father's grave. All offered first fruits to their own shades. And finally they would themselves eat, each with his chief wife. But they would not eat beforehand for fear of angering the shades.

643 In time of tribal war also the Kyungu and nobles of Ngonde
796 led the people in prayer. All chiefs and nobles were summoned
[721] from the plain and the great ones entered the Kyungu's house to receive their instructions:

[782] When he had finished speaking he would tell them to go and pray. So they would leave his house and gather all together, all the chiefs, and the other men, and pray. The premier noble of Ngonde would begin asking each of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn to bless them in the fight. And then the great chiefs would pray after him.

This organization of religious ritual in the Ngonde plain was both a factor of and itself determined by the general political structure. Many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions, but the reverse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular significance,
[782] the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle were sent to Lubaga by the chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and health; but the 'clearing out of the ashes' was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruits ritual at all; while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

643 The majesty (*ubusiya*) of the Kyungu was cultivated in a variety
789 of ways. He smeared himself with ointment made from lion fat, and his bed was built up with elephant tusks and lion pelts. He
[352] was enthroned on the sacred iron stool called Kisumbi, he had a
[293] spear, Kamisa, and Mulima, a porous piece of iron 'like a mouth organ' used to make rain, all handed down from the first Kyungu.
[778] His zebra tails, set with medicines in horn handles, were waved in

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

war and during prayer to the shades, and he also had the famous drum on which the blood of a child was poured: 643 789 [778]

The Kyungu had a drum, called Mwenekelwa, which sometimes refused to sound when struck, then they asked: 'What does it wish, friends?' and they killed a sheep and poured the blood over Mwenekelwa; if it refused to sound when they struck it again, they killed a cow and poured the blood over it and if it still refused to sound when they struck it again, they said: 'What does it want now? It wants a man.' And they took the child of a commoner and cut his throat and poured the blood over the drum and struck it and it sounded loudly. If the drum did not sound when struck it was as if it had boomed an order; its silence was like a prayer. The drum was to show the majesty (*ubusiya*) of the Kyungu, that all the little chiefs at a distance might say: 'Something is happening, let us hear what it is.' Then they all gathered and were told to bring ivory. . . . They needed the blood of a man because their Lord (*Kyala gwabo*, i.e. the Kyungu) had fastened up the drum saying 'I myself am war, there is no other war' . . . [782]

The corpses of those sacrificed to the drum, like those condemned to death, were thrown over the scarp edge of Mbande, to be sucked into the marsh beneath.

Towards the early Kyungus their subjects expressed the feelings of worship and terror appropriate to an irascible divinity. 643 782

At Mbande the nobles of Ngonde would sit round praising the Kyungu —the drums went *kinde! kinde!* And they would praise him in antiphony: 'Oh, Kyungu! . . . Great Father! Great Father!—burier of men!—Great Father! Great Father!—Great Father!—O Mpeta![1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kiposa[1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kyabala![1]—Great Father! Great Father! O Striker and Stabber! Great Father! Great Father! O Mwenende! Great Father! Great Father! O Mpolombasambo! Great Father! Great Father! Dweller in the hot sun!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Fish-eater! O Banana-eater!—Great Father! Great Father!' [539]

The general form of this praise-song was identical with that of the prayers in the sacred groves and so it is literally true to say that the nobles of Ngonde worshipped the living Kyungus.

But the majority of their subjects only worshipped from afar in fear and trembling. At Mbande no ordinary commoner was ever conducted into the sacred enclosure, but only the territorial nobles and the elder chiefs, and they only occasionally; while when the Kyungu travelled through his country all men save the 643

[1] These names are obscure.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 very oldest fled from his approach. Even in speech fearful circumlocutions were used to refer to his journeying—'The country is on the move'—'the great hill is moving'—'the mystery is coming'. It was taboo both for the old men who stayed to see him, and for those who entered the sacred enclosure, ever to greet him in the usual way. Falling down and clapping the hands was the only greeting for the Kyungu.

From the wives of the Kyungu also men fled in terror, fearing lest they be compromised and thrown over the cliff of Mbande, and this both added to the atmosphere of terror which surrounded him and was an expression of it.

Of the effects of personal relationships upon public events we heard much less in Ngonde than in Selya for we lived there for a much shorter period, but there were indications that, as in Selya, public misfortune was traditionally attributed to quarrels between the nobles of Mbande and within the family of the [731] Kyungu. One fearful drought was thought to have been caused by the exile of Kyungu's son, Mwakasungula,[1] and men tell how the rain came down in torrents on his return. The nobles also asserted their power of calling on the shades of the Kyungu to [769] punish him when he did wrong, and rebuking him over beer telling him, 'It was we who caused you to be ill, don't do it again'. Since he was killed by his nobles if he really fell ill their power over him was inexorable.

(d) PALIKYALA

• 778 PaliKyala is a cave at the north-east corner of Lake Nyasa where sacrifices are made to the hero, Kyala (2). It is on the 769 border between Nyakyusa, Kisi, and Kinga country; the chiefs are Nyakyusa, but of Kinga extraction,[2] while many of the commoners are Kisi. Nyakyusa is generally spoken as the first language, Kisi as the second, and Nyakyusa, Kinga, and Kisi all sacrifice to Kyala. As indicated in the myth already quoted (*vide supra*, p. 8) the location of the shrine has changed from one cave to another; according to one version, Kyala was driven out by Europeans; according to another, 'the Lake rose and roared and destroyed all the pots in the cave and the roar was heard in the mountains by the Kinga' and after that Kyala moved.

793 The ritual differs from that at Lubaga and Mbande in that

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, p. 96.
[2] They are not of the lineage of Lewanika.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 793 [789] black and white) animals are killed, with the same symbolism as in BuKinga.[1] 'We kill a white sheep in the dry season that the sun may shine—if we killed a black sheep in summer the wet season would last all the year.'

The Kinga pray for fertility of the fields, that illness may pass, that they 'may sleep at home'; the local people[2] for fertility of the fields and that the pots they make (and on the sale of which they largely depend) may not crack in the firing. The more distant chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa plain sacrifice only in drought or plague—the last sacrifice remembered was during a plague of locusts about 1915, but the Kinga chief Kyelela sent a cow in PaliKyala in July 1937.

778 688 Like the grove of Lubaga, Kyala's cave is fearful. There is a story of two men who took a length of creeper from near it to tie up their canoe, and when they got home both went mad. Godfrey Wilson's guide, a young Christian, refused to enter the cave on the grounds that his pagan half-brother had once entered and taken away a potsherd and 'when he got home he went mad'.

[177] [323] [1] Merensky appears to have been misinformed on this point, *op. cit.*, pp. 321-2.

[2] The potters are primarily Kisi, but neighbouring Nyakyusa have taken to this lucrative trade.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

often leaks out, but in theory the young men must not know, and those seized always put up a show of resistance before being bundled into the hut of the senior heir's mother. Once there, no man dare flee lest, like a Lwembe fleeing from the stool, he should [784] die. The two heirs are seized also and carried into the hut with their headmen. A litter is spread for them, and they remain there in complete seclusion, required to 'talk softly' and avoid quarrelling, guarded by the 'doctor of the coming out' and forbidden to wash except that each of the chiefs and his senior village headman washes with medicines in the doorway of the hut. Each chief also lies down with a commoner and is covered with a black cloth [789] which, according to Mwandini (the old blind chief 107) is a symbol of clouds and therefore of plenty. 'It means, may it be heavy—cloudy—above, may food be plentiful; may both heirs bring fruitfulness.' The commoner who lies with the chief is 'one body with him', 'his wife', and continues through life to share with him certain medicines. Some said that the senior village headman performs this function for his chief: others that it is another man altogether. The whole matter is very secret and our information is limited. The period of seclusion varies. Mwanyilu (177), who 'came out' in 1953, remained in the hut a month, and he complained most bitterly of the inconvenience of not washing for so long. During this time the young men are admonished by [807] their fathers' senior village headmen, and told of their faults and their future duties. According to Mwambuputa (Mwankuga's [150] senior headman who was responsible for bringing out Mwanyilu), he said: 'Listen to the people: they are the real chiefs! Be hospitable! Greet people politely! Don't beat your men!' And the other senior headman, Kakuju, said: 'Do not beat your men, respect them! Feed your people on milk, meat, chickens, beer! Fear your people!'

Then the great moment, from which the ritual takes its name, arrives. Very early in the morning a crowd gathers and a junior kinsman of the chief knocks on the door and shouts: 'Come out! War has come!' Each heir, followed by his senior headman, rushes out and grasps the 'spear of chieftainship' held ready at the [778] doorway for him, while the headman grasps a medicated zebra tail. The spear has a little horn of medicines bound to it 'to show that the chief has come out', and brandishing it is 'comparable to carrying the chief aloft. We show his greatness to the people and acclaim him.' 'The spear of chieftainship is strength, man-

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

hood.' Some say that it is not the chief himself who grasps the spear but his senior village headman who pauses in the doorway calling the war cry and rejoicing. However that may be, the spear represents the authority of a ruling chief. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) and his junior brother Mwabungulu (178), both were secluded and rushed out of the hut, but for Mwabungulu there was no spear since the chiefdom of their father was not divided into independent units. 796 643 622 (778)

The heirs separate, each going to where his village is to stand, whether it be pasture land or the site of a former village. The young men build temporary shelters for themselves and proceed to the most important rite of all, the making of fire by friction, using a lion bone as the trough of the drill and a reed as the shaft. Each of the two young chiefs starts the process, then his senior village headmen take over, one twirling the shaft and the other holding the trough. It is difficult to make fire with the bone and reed and great importance is attached to success; the senior headman may even be replaced if he fails, for it is taken as a sign that his headmanship will be a failure. If he succeeds, he is known in future as *ulifumu gwa lupegwa*—the headman of the fire-making. All the old fires throughout the chiefdom are put out and each appointed headman, in order of precedence, takes fire from his immediate senior and calls to his men: 'You of such and such a village come to me' and gives fire to them. The men, though crowded together in one or two shelters, split into small groups, each with its own fire, to cook. This is interpreted as a symbol of the ending of the old chieftainship and the establishment of the new. 'That fire means a new chief has come, he brings new fire, we throw away the old fire in the houses. . . .' 'The old chieftainship is coming to an end, the new has come. The fires are put out in all the homesteads, those of the young men and those of the old men, they make new fire which is taken to every home. . . .' 'But why fire?' we asked. 'Because of old . . . we chiefs came with fire, the commoners had not yet got it, they ate raw food only. When we came we slept in men's houses and we lighted fires and cooked food. Men were astonished and said: "Ha! What's this?" They were burned so they said: "These are chiefs because they brought this fire." It is this they remember still.' '*Fire is* lordship (*ubutwa*)', therefore a junior chief who goes through the ritual with his brothers does not make fire with his headmen; only those who are to rule do so. In other contexts the lighting of fire by friction is a 643 622 796 372

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 symbol of potency,[1] and we suggest that this also is an element in
622 the ritual of the 'coming out', for the fertility of the chiefdom is
796 thought to be bound up with the virility of the chief.

[372] There are a number of stories about the way in which Mwakyusa (38) surpassed his brothers and one of them tells how each brother made fire and set alight the pasture land (for traditionally parts of the pasture land were fired each season to provide fresh grass for grazing in the early spring), and the fires started by the elder brothers soon died out, but that started by Mwakyusa 'burned for a whole month'. This is interpreted as an omen of his greatness as a chief: fire, potency, lordship are inextricably linked.

At the 'coming out' all things are made new. No matter how
[561] crowded the country the young men must move to new sites and the shelters in which they live must be new, though, as will be
[356] shown, they do not necessarily move to *unscrapped* country. On their new site the young men live as bachelors, milking their cows and cooking for themselves on their new fires the meat of the cattle they seize, the bananas and grain brought by their wives and mothers. Meat is abundant, for the young chief now rules and has the right to take what cattle he chooses, even from the villages of the old men in his country. 'It was as if there were war,
[726] the young men seized cattle, food, and women', and though they did not fight their fathers directly, as the Meru did, they clearly asserted their power. And, as so common further south, the accession of a chief was the occasion for raiding the neighbours:
[778] the young men, we were told, went forthwith to test the efficacy of the magic spears and the medicines with which their chief and headmen had been treated. Or the chiefs might lead a battue to clear the country of wild pig, as Mwakatumbula (Mwambete 160) did directly after his 'coming out'. Well fed and exuberant, the
[574] young men dance and display their cattle, and entertain visitors lavishly, for every chief seeks to attract men to his country by his hospitality.

Then they set up the sign and memorial of the chieftainship:
[824] they plant cuttings of two species[2] of *ficus*, *indola* which is much used as a shade tree, and *umpondapanda* from which bark-cloth is
[423] made. Close to these the first house of the chief and that of his senior village headmen are built, and the trees also mark the

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 124, 143.

[2] When writing *Good Company* I mistakenly thought that two cuttings of the same species were planted. Cf. *Good Company*, p. 27.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

married. Thus, yet another bond is forged between chief and headman, for he who provides marriage cattle is 'father' to him who marries, and the chief's wives acknowledge this by avoiding the village headmen of the senior generation as they do their father-in-law. Once the chief's ritual marriage is complete the sex taboo is lifted and such of his men as are already married are joined by their wives. In theory, though not nowadays in practice, the taboo is observed until the marriage of the chief. 643 583 [834]

All through the ritual of the 'coming out' the idea of a new beginning is expressed—a new site for the villages, new houses, new fire, new power for the young men. The events of this ritual, the seclusion, the lying on a litter, the prohibition on washing, washing with medicines in the doorway of the hut, the admonition, are directly parallel to the events of the rituals of death and puberty which, we have argued in a previous book,[1] are dramatizations of death and rebirth. There seems little doubt that the 'coming out' is yet another celebration of this theme. The young men enter an enclosed house—that of the senior's mother—and 'come out' (*ukuuka*) renewed as a child 'comes out' (*ukuuka*) of the mother's womb. No Nyakyusa informant volunteered such an interpretation, but, when it was suggested, it was eagerly accepted as expressing the real meaning of 'coming out'. 643 561 796 181

(*b*) THE CHIEF'S MEDICINES

Reference has already been made to medicines used by chiefs and by village headmen at the 'coming out' and we must now examine them more closely. The great medicines of chieftainship are *ifugila* and their function is to create *amaaga*, i.e. spiritual power, and *ubuniya*, i.e. dignity, majesty, in order to make the chief fearful 'so that men obey him'. The medicines are comparable to robes of office for they are designed to give their user assurance and fill the commonality with awe. The Nyakyusa also think that chiefs and headmen should be 'heavy' with 'pythons in their bellies' which give them the power to see and fight witches. Without such a 'python' a chief or village headman cannot fulfil his duty of 'watching over the country by day and by night' and if a man is not born with one he may develop it through the proper use of medicines. This notion has been examined elsewhere.[2] The *ifugila* medicines are also thought to give courage and ferocity (*ukugasi*) in war, with luck in seizing enemy 643 778 [787] [754]

[1] *op. cit.*, p. 225. [2] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 37-102.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 cattle and protecting one's own, and to attract men to the
778 country.

The two senior sons of a chief are given powdered *ikingila* to
785 drink from early childhood; at the 'coming out' they lie on it and
643 drink it again with their village headmen, some is buried beneath
778 their ritual trees, and the chief's homestead is treated with it periodically. One form of *ikingila* is made of the heart of a lion and the heart of a leopard, together with the scrapings from a charred root, and one of its qualities is to create lions or leopards which guard the trees under which it is buried. 'They make anyone who has cut a branch of one of the trees for firewood tremble at night, he trembles and returns the wood; they do not kill, but they stay roaring there until he repents.' Now part of the dignity (*ubusiya*) of a chief is that lions and leopards attend him; they roam his
[776] country; they are his familiars (*imbege*). 'The sons of Lwembe' lack the fearful power of their great ancestor who 'rode a lion like a donkey', but they are believed to command familiars which clear the country of the wild pig that destroy men's gardens, and protect the sacred groves by terrifying any sacrilegious person who dares chop wood where he should fear. But they do not kill men or cattle. That is what distinguishes them from 'God's lions which kill cattle even by day' and the man-eaters made by sorcerers to
[754] destroy those they hate. There is no hint of lycanthropy—our informants denied emphatically that chiefs, dead or alive, turned into *imbege*, but they 'follow the chief' when he travels.

A second *ikingila*, sprinkled on the chief's mat when he is secluded, and drunk with his two senior village headmen, is made of red, black, and shining white or yellow pebbles, which are ground up and mixed with *imbinga*, a medicine brought by the Kinga, but the symbolism of these ingredients remains obscure.

The greatest of the *ifingila*, used only for the chief himself, is *isyifwila*, a terrible substance with power perilously like that of witchcraft. When either of the senior wives of a chief gives birth
[874] to a son a little is hidden in the litter on which she lies; it is put into the litter on which the heirs lie at the 'coming out'; and into the sacred tails and trumpets which are carried into battle. Like other medicines of chieftainship, *isyifwila* is used to give the chief majesty (*ubusiya*), 'that people who meet him may fear him'; that he and his warriors may appear fierce; that they may be 'heavy and strong' in war; that when the trumpet is blown it

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

may 'make the enemy fearful and sue for peace'; and that even men who have left his country may return to him. And it is so powerful that the dose must be carefully adapted to the individual. If a chief is already 'heavy' with an inherited python he is given the merest fragment, but a gentle fellow thought to be 'light', 'empty', is given more, that his words may carry weight. Too much will make a chief harsh (*nkali*)—'he will always be beating men'—and he must be given an antidote to calm him down. Too much in the tails causes them to 'fly through the air at night, gleaming, and throttle the cows'. This is the danger of *isyifwila*, that it may act like the pythons in the bellies of witches and kill men and cattle. Controlled by a chief it is held to be reasonably safe, though Kalobo, Mwaipopo's (116) second wife, who was grumbling because no tail had been lodged in her house was told that she did not know how lucky she was for '*isyifwila* is very fearful—it enters the belly, it makes itself into familiars'.

643 778 789 [754]

The use of *isyifwila* is forbidden to commoners. In Ngonde, with its hierarchy of chiefs, it was the danger of attempting to equal one of superior rank that was emphasized. 'If a commoner sprinkles *isyifwila* on himself saying, "Let me surpass my fellows", and he meets a chief (who is entitled to use it) then he dies immediately because he said to himself, "I also am a chief"'; and 'If an Ngana chief dances and sprinkles his spear with *isyifwila* . . . and then meets Kyungu, he dies.' In the more democratic atmosphere of BuNyakyusa chiefs were 'very angry' if commoners used it, but it was the danger of its acting like witchcraft and throttling men and cattle and, eventually, its owner, that men spoke of most. We heard of half a dozen men—among them the most successful trader of Selya—who were reputed to use it 'to surpass their fellows' and 'get rich' and one case actually came to Court. Mwaipopo, the chief (116), raised the matter himself:

[688] [754]

> Why does this thing go about at night? I have seen it myself, it shines, I know it. It is that with which the doctors treat us chiefs to make us impressive [*i.e. isyifwila*]. Do you not know, you commoners, that we chiefs have prohibited its use in our countries? Ask your fellow Mandala! He is bad, he planted this thing, it kills you people.

So two village headmen went and called Mandala who lived near Ngulyo, and brought him to Court. There he was asked: 'Why did you keep this which kills people?' Mandala denied vehemently saying, 'I have not planted this.' But Mwaipopo

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 replied: 'Why does he deny it? He told me once: "I have a thing
778 which kills people!"' Then, turning to the man: 'Go and fetch it
789 out into the light.' Mandala went and we heard that he brought
[754] out another medicine, not the one asked for, he brought it to the headmen and Mwaipopo. Mwaipopo (who, being a chief, knew *inyifwila*) rejected the one Mandala brought saying: 'This is not it.' Then Mandala brought out another and again the chief rejected it saying: 'This is not the one we want.' Then he brought out a little bag made of bark-cloth. They sought a doctor to clear it out. All this happened in secret; we heard of it but did not see it. But in Court Mwaipopo turned Mandala out of his country 'because he had admitted that he was wicked', and Mwaipopo reminded the other chiefs in Court of a previous case of a man in Mwangomo's country who had used this medicine.

Inyifwila is made out of a python 'as thick as a man's thigh' which has been killed by crawling over razors. In Ngonde we were told:

> A certain snake they call *ngone* is killed in the hills to the west. They build a hut, closed, with a man inside ringing a cow bell and razors all over the roof. The snake comes and crawls over the roof, trying to get in and so dies. Then the doctors come to 'close it up'. When they have done so they cut it up for medicine—*inyifwila*; some is brought to Kyungu direct . . . some is taken to the doctors, and it is the doctors who give it to the chief.

A similar story was told in BuNyakyusa but they got their
[825] *inyifwila* from the Sangu and Hehe, to the north and east, not from the west, and in their account the trap was baited with a goat, not a man, and it was the blood of the python (*isota*) shed on the surrounding grass and on the trap itself which was used for medicine. To test the medicine the doctors gave a little to a
[787] chicken; if the chicken died the medicine was satisfactory; and the remains of the chicken were burnt and the ashes used as tested *inyifwila*.

'That snake is awful (*siya fje*), no one approaches to kill it.
[825] No! If it were speared everyone would die.' And because the python which is so terrible is thought to be linked with the rain-
[821] bow it, too, is disliked. 'We fear the rainbow very much, we say it appears when a python looks up to the sky; if we are near a river we run from it for pythons live near rivers. . . . No, we are not mistaken, it is so.' The essential quality of the python is *ubusiya* (fearfulness, majesty, dignity) and this is what is required

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

in rulers and is thought to be transferred to them in the medicine brewed out of python blood. 643

It will be noticed that the central mystery of Lubaga and the sources of the most powerful medicine are the same, and the medicine is akin to witchcraft. The shades, medicines, and witchcraft are distinguished and are thought to operate independently, but they are all manifestations of a mystical power which is logically one, though none of our informants saw it as that. 778 789

We referred earlier to the function of the chiefs' medicines in giving courage in war and luck in raiding. Certain emblems of chieftainship are carried in war: a sacred spear, a bamboo trumpet (*ililonge*) or a great war-horn (*ingangabwite*), and several giraffe or zebra tails (*imiswigala*), and all of these have little horns filled with *inyifwila* attached to them. Of the trumpet it was said: 'You hear it and your heart swells and a great trembling comes over you and you fight.' 'The chiefs forbid them to be blown now because their blowing always brings war.' Each of the senior village headmen is given a tail at the 'coming out' and he went into battle with it bound on to his upper arm. A notable warrior was sometimes given one also. To lose a tail in battle was comparable to losing the regimental colours and there are epics of their loss and recovery. If the leader who carried it saw that he was surrounded he would try to pass it back, or he might hide it on the ground: [293] [721] [726]

> then that night they would go back to the spot and they would find it because it shone with a light and made a bubbling noise, *burukut, burukut, burukut*. . . . [774]
>
> In the old days the medicine [in the tails] was frequently renewed; for there was war, and it gave the headmen the power of dreaming of the course of war. . . . But now, since you have brought peace to the land, no one renews it, and it has gone rotten.

However, the tails in Mwaipopo's chiefdom *were* thus treated in December 1937, and we saw it done. The four tails, with six tiny medicine horns and a calabash of medicated ointment, were formally handed over to the care of Kalinga, Mwaipopo's (116) chief wife, having previously been in the care of his mother. Mwaipopo himself was there with two kinsmen and the three commoner priests Kissogota, Njobakosa, and Ngulyo, but not Kasitile (86) since he was 'father-in-law' to Kalinga and could not meet her, though he was informed of the ritual. Kalobo, the second senior wife, looked on. Kalinga poured out the ointment

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 and Mwaipopo and Kissogota smeared it over the tails which
778 were then put out with the horns to dry in the sun. Mwaipopo
789 suggested getting Mwaisyelage, the doctor, to treat them further, and the others agreed saying: 'Let Mwaipopo find someone, that the earth may be good, that it be heavy.' Njobakosa had spoken earlier of the cattle giving much milk after the treatment of the tails. And they went on to discuss the fact that the young chief Mwankuga II (151) had begotten no child by the wife inherited from his elder brother (150) whose place he had taken. Thus the function of the chief in creating plenty and
[842] fertility was in the priests' minds, and there may be some link between the virility of the chief and success in war—one informant spoke of the chief's senior wives jumping over the tails immediately after the consummation of their marriage—but of this we are not certain. What is common knowledge is that the tails are 'for seizing cattle', and they are associated with 'manure and blood'. We were told at the conclusion of the ritual: 'Formerly we should have gone tomorrow, after this treating of the tails, to fight.'

Besides medicines for majesty, courage, and popularity as rulers, chiefs use medicines to protect themselves against the fearfulness of the groves in which they sacrifice, medicines to 'close the country to hunger', to make their capitals grand, and to cause thieves who have stolen, to walk round and round until caught.

Medicines are regarded as essential to authority, victory, and successful rule, and the kind used and the dose given are adjusted to the status and character of the individual. 'Village headmen
[622] do not drink the most important *ikingila*; they drink a lesser one, *imbinga*; the senior headman is given most, the junior less.' And the chief's wives do not drink *ikingila* at all, but only a powder suitable for them. But the use of these medicines has its dangers. The chief, like other people who have been drinking protective medicines, does not eat the new crops grown on fields fertilized
[754] by ash without fortifying himself. The danger is said to come from the burnt rubbish heaps, because medicines for defence against witches and sorcerers are burnt in them and, as we have seen, certain of the medicines which the chief uses create a power akin to witchcraft. He tastes the new millet ritually in June, the cow
[788] peas in September, and pumpkin leaves in November; and he also tastes the 'new earth' at the break of the rains in October or early November. 'We chiefs fear that the medicines we have drunk will

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

turn round in the belly; people say the earth will go bad in us.' 643
'A child who has drunk medicines will be ill, the smell of the new 778 789
food or the wet earth goes to the belly.' [788]

The chief eats the first fruits and medicines with the commoner who lies down with him at the commencement of his 'coming out' and 'is his wife to taste with him the first fruits and powdered medicines' and is 'fearful' like the medicines. He is identified with [644] the chief's body and may be compared with the *isithununu* of the Pondo chief[1] or the *insila* of the Swazi.[2] His function is to protect the chief against the medicines themselves.

(c) DEATH AND BURIAL OF A CHIEF

Both because of a chief's descent, and because of his use of 643 763 766 medicines, mystical power resides in his body.

In the old days a ruling chief was not allowed to die, but was buried while still living, because they feared that if he became unconscious before death he would take away all the food with him, and great hunger would come on us. Men feared *ifingila* medicine in his belly. They said: 'If he dies naturally many of his people will die. . . . He should go alive.' And formerly they buried him with the son of a commoner, also alive, for they said, 'Let him enjoy the company of his man on the road.' When a chief was sick before the coming out of his sons they tried to keep him alive if possible, but if he was clearly going to die then they buried him like this; after the coming out they hastened his death—but only if he were ill. That was why the chiefs fear the 'coming out' of their sons so greatly. Had Mwaipopo lived in the old days and his heir been alive he would have been buried during his last illness.

When a ruling chief was sick the village headmen sent the chief's wives away and looked after him themselves. Then, if they thought he would, or should, die, they tore off all his nails, those of his toes and those of his fingers, and pulled out his hair, and put them in a pot. After that they buried him by night still alive, with a live person, the child of a commoner whom they had seized very secretly. The pot stayed in the house of the senior wife of the chief who had died, and they said, 'It is the chief, we are with him still.' This was the sacred [778] pot for the sacred beer.[3] They kept silence about the death for a month or perhaps two months, saying: 'Let the chief go away first.'

And when a younger brother, a junior chief, died, though he died

[1] M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 390.
[2] H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p. 78.
[3] Kasitile flatly denied this, *vide infra*, p. 64.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 naturally and was buried dead, and no human was buried with him,
763 yet they buried a live cow with him in imitation of the custom of the
senior, because the junior was also a chief, and the cow was like a
766 person. And now in European times the ruling chiefs are buried with a cow, not with a man, in imitation of the custom of the juniors; but still they are buried at night.

Kasitile denied that chiefs were buried before death, but he admitted that they were smothered.

[793] When the chief was very ill we priests came, Njobakosa and Ngulyo, and I. We took his nails and his hair, we tore them off while he was still alive, he started up and we hid ourselves that he should not see us. Then we attended to him.

Here he made a gesture of stopping up the nostrils. That is, they hastened his death as soon as the nails and hair had been stripped off.

And we dug the grave; we buried him by night, when he had died, when he had gone, with a live cow; we did this at night for it was taboo [784] for people to see the burial of a senior chief. We killed a cow in the sacred grove and we ate it, we the priests, before people heard that he had died. The chief Mwakagile (59) when his death was approaching said: 'My body is sick.' After waiting two days, the village headmen said, 'This illness has defeated us', and they tore off his nails—yes, [778] before he died. If they had waited until after his death, would not the *ifingila*, the power of chieftainship, have passed away? But they did not smother him, he just died. . . . His nails and hair were put into a little reed, which they hid beneath an *umwali* (*Chrophora excelsa*) tree at the village headman's, the *umwali* which grew at the homestead of Njobakosa [the grandfather of the present Njobakosa]. They buried it at a commoner's place, as if to say: 'We commoners are the earth, we have taken the power of growth (*ifugo*) from the chief, those nails and the [778] hair are the power of growth of the country (*ifyala fila newili fyo ifugo lya kisu*).

Kasitile took Godfrey Wilson's hand and explained: 'Because, Mwaipaja (G.W.), when you cut these nails of yours do they not grow again?' 'Yes, they grow again.' 'Well, then, where does their growth come from? Does it not come from the body?' 'Yes.' 'Well, so it is, the village headmen take the power of growth (*ilifugo*) from the chief, his nails and his hair.'

On another occasion Kasitile explained that formerly the relics had been kept in a pot in the house, but that when Mwaipopo (116) succeeded

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Njobakosa [the grandfather] ran off with them to Mwaihojo in the hills, where he died so that they disappeared and were never returned to his fellow-priests. Therefore they bury the relics by the *umwali* tree, at his old homestead, lest someone run off with them again. . . . The hair and nails of the chief are buried there, the earth of the chief will always be heavy. All this is very secret. . . . 643 763 766 [778]

Mwandisi (107, the old blind chief) told us that

When a chief dies they take his nails and hair and put them in the house of his wife who buries them with medicine for fertility of the soil (*ifugo*), then at the time of planting the village headmen come and take that medicine to plant the food with. This was done on the death of the chief Mwakalukwa (141) and the chief Mwakalinga (142) and others for, it is said, the chief goes off with our fertility (*imboto yetu*).

Thus, though our informants differed slightly about the details, they were agreed that the power of growth lies in the nails and hair of a chief, and these must be taken from him while he is yet alive, and later used to fertilize the earth.

The burial of a chief's son with a live black calf we saw for ourselves, and the wailing was delayed until after the burial. A distinctive funeral of this sort is accorded to all the sons of a ruling chief and his senior daughter, but not (we were told) to more distant kinsmen. The other mark of a royal funeral is the slaughter of many head of cattle to accompany the deceased and to feed the mourners. At the death of the chief Mwakyembe (99) over 300 head were killed, and Mwaipopo (116) killed thirty head at the funeral of his mother. Since a chief has many wives and daughters he has many affines all of whom must bring cows to kill, and he also has a large herd himself on which to draw. To fail to feed his people at a funeral is to fail as a chief. The whole country mourns for two or three weeks, no one going to work in the fields, or occupying themselves with ordinary business. All smear themselves with mud, as if they were kinsmen, and even the men bind their bel[illegible] tightly with mourning belts 'that they may not tremble'. [765]

(*d*) THE CHIEF AND THE 'BREATH OF MEN'

Fruitfulness, the power of growth (*imboto*), lies in the chief's body and the village headmen have no share in it; they only tend it, taking care that it does not disappear with the dead. But the headmen share with the chief and the priests the duty of 'watching 643 778 622

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 over the country by day and by night', and power (*amanga*)
778 to see the enemies of darkness (that is, the witches) is thought to
622 come to each priest or village headman from a python in his belly. No one can fulfil his duties as a ruler and defender unless he is 'heavy', but to have a python inside one is *also* the mark of a witch. Pressed on the point the Nyakyusa hold that a chief or
[754] village headman only has one python whereas witches have several, but this distinction is not maintained consistently, and many of our informants were agreed that the power of witchcraft and the power to see and fight witches were one and the same. The essential distinction lies in the use to which the power is put; wrongly used it is 'witchcraft' (*ubulosi*); rightly used to defend the village or to punish evil-doers it is 'the breath of men' (*imbepo sya bandu*) and how any particular case is labelled depends upon the viewpoint of the speaker. The victim of a misfortune and his kin will indignantly attribute it to 'witchcraft' when other people regarded it as due to his wrongdoing and a punishment brought about by 'the breath of men'.

Each village headman, together with those of the village who are 'heavy', is thought competent both to defend those of his village whom he judges innocent against witches from outside or within, and to punish wrong-doers, by bringing upon them the chill of fever. Hence those who have angered their neighbours and believe themselves to be attacked by 'witches', take refuge in another village.

The power of witchcraft is believed to be inherited, rarely acquired; but the power of defence is both inherited and increased by drinking medicines, and there seems little doubt that the medicines drunk by chief and village headmen at the 'coming out' to create in themselves *ubusisya*—majesty, awesomeness—also develop *amanga*, the power to see and fight witches. Indeed, one of our Christian informants insisted that *ubusisya bo bulosi*—'awesomeness *is* witchcraft'.

These ideas have been discussed in some detail elsewhere.[1] Here I am only concerned to show the importance of the belief in 'the breath of men' in the relationship between chief and village headmen. Not only do village headmen have the ultimate power of life and death over their chief, but they are thought to bring illness upon him if he acts unconstitutionally or disregards their advice, or fails in his duty of providing beef for his men. He may

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 91-135.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

play one village against another and go to sleep in that section of the country which supports him, but he dare not anger all his headmen. In the same way a village headman dare not anger the main body of his men. In short, public opinion is an effective sanction because those in authority believe that the disapproval of their fellows may bring a fever or paralysis upon them. One of our Christian informants was insistent that, were it not for the belief in the 'breath of men', pagan chiefs and headmen would act tyrannically. 643 778 622

The situations in which a chief or headman fears the breath of men are very varied. We have already referred to the chief who thought his illness was due to his refusal to hold the 'coming out' for his sons when advised to do so.[1] Mwaipopo, before whose court a very bitter land dispute between two of his villages had been brought, refused to give judgement and was careful to sleep in the village that had possession of the land, and therefore less cause for anger.[2] Kasitile, the hereditary priest of the chief's lineage who counted as 'a chief' as opposed to 'a commoner', thought he had angered the village headmen of his generation (who had become priests) by not providing meat for them (*vide infra*, p. 125). [754]

The headmen are responsible for the health of their chief and it is they who go to consult an oracle if he is ill and take him to a doctor. Mwankuga II (151), heir to Mwaipopo's chiefdom, had not begotten a son by any of the wives he inherited from his elder brother who had died. His village headmen[3] went to consult an oracle and were told that it was the wrath (*imindu*) of his father; so they reported the matter to Mwaipopo, who sent a junior kinsman to consult another oracle. The diagnosis was confirmed and Mwaipopo gathered his younger brothers and prayed and told the shades that he had no quarrel with his kinsmen. Then he told the village headmen to take Mwankuga to a doctor for treatment, but this they did not do, so that Mwankuga went to consult a doctor on his own. According to Kasitile it was because the headmen had not taken Mwankuga that the medicine did not work. 'They should take him to the doctor and be present in dreams, to watch over him in dreams.' What the headmen were angry about was not revealed—there was no obvious cause. [842] [753] [787] [782]

[1] *op. cit.*, pp. 134-5. [2] *op. cit.*, pp. 188-90.

[3] Mwankuga I who died had 'come out' before Mwankuga II inherited from him, but Mwaipopo (116) continued to rule as chief and draw a Government salary.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 As we have seen, the chief's fearsome medicine *inyifwila* is
778 thought to be very dangerous, and too much in the tails may cause
622 them 'to fly about throttling men and cattle', but a chief is never
[754] accused of working witchcraft; it is inconceivable to the Nyakyusa that he could be. If the tails have got out of hand they are treated
[789] by a doctor 'to close them up'; no one suggests that the chief should get rid of them. It is commoners, 'black people', who are witches —cannibals, the eaters of raw flesh—as opposed to chiefs who, since the dawn of history, have killed cattle for meat and cooked their food like civilized men. But the distinction does not extend very far; junior kinsmen of the chief are 'commoners' and may well be accused of practising witchcraft.

There was a delicate balance of power in the Nyakyusa con-
[182] stitution between hereditary chief and commoner headmen and the belief in the power of medicines and of witchcraft was an integral part of it. The chief provided fruitfulness by the power of his own body and his medicines; all men depended upon him for their well-being—food, cattle, children, success in war; but he in his turn depended upon the goodwill of his men led by their village headmen; without it he shivered and fell ill, only to be buried by them 'with the breath still in his body' lest the power of growth disappear with his breathless corpse.

Something of the quality of this mutual dependence and fear is conveyed in Kasitile's account of his own illness quoted in Chapter VIII.

(*e*) THE NECESSITY FOR HARMONY

182 The welfare of the chiefdom is thought to depend upon
643 harmony between the chief and his village headmen and priests,
622 and also between the chief and his kinsmen. Any friction between
793 them may result in public misfortune as well as sickness to the individual at fault. The quarrel of Kasitile, the priest, first with
[753] the Kinga priests, and then with the commoner priests of Mwai-
[821] popo's chiefdom was believed to affect the crops and the weather, as well as Kasitile's own health (*vide infra*, pp. 124-41), and
[688] Mwaipopo's failure to tell Kasitile formally of the death of their kinsman led to rain which spoiled the funeral dance. A quarrel between the lineages of two chiefs which should have sacrificed
643 together was said to have been followed by a very poor millet
602 crop (*vide infra*, pp. 79-80, 118, 136).
578 How the personal relationship of a chief with his kinsmen is

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

thought to affect the whole country was illustrated in Mwaihojo's 643
chiefdom where the people were plagued by wild pig destroying 602
their gardens. Mwaihojo (147) had a longstanding quarrel with 578
his half-brother, Mwakyonde (148), whose country he had seized after their 'coming out'. Mwakyonde became famous as a doctor, and he was a great raconteur and beer-drinker, a regular Silenus, [157]
the boon companion of many influential men, whereas his brother was cold and irascible; so although he had lost his chieftaincy, Mwakyonde had considerable power. In February 1937, four lions were seen in the adjoining chiefdom of Mwaipopo (116), and we heard pig squealing as it was killed. Angombwike (whose father lived near Mwakyonde in Mwaihojo's country) explained to us: 'People say that these are Mwakyonde's lions. . . . Lion- [754]
makers have bundles of twigs which they put into the long grass, [789]
and which turn into lions. Long ago Mwakyonde made lions and they came and killed all the pigs, and the country (Mwaihojo's) was at peace, but he quarrelled with Mwaihojo and put his bundles of twigs into his box and locked it up. Then the country was filled with pig, and buck, and elephant, and all the crops were spoiled, and so it is still. Now Mwakyonde has begun to be friendly with Mwaipopo (116); they enjoy each other's company and drink beer together, and so he is making lions again in Kipungu, the land where Mwaipopo is hoeing, to kill the pig for Mwaipopo. They say Mwaipopo has given him a country in secret.' Now Mwaihojo claimed as his the forest country, which Mwaipopo's men had begun to colonize, therefore to aid Mwaipopo there was an effective slap at Mwaihojo. The lions came into Mwaihojo's country—we heard them repeatedly close to our camp—but they did not clear the pig.

Then, in March, Mwakyonde was supposed to be using a new [778]
medicine he had obtained to scare off pig from the fields. We asked him about it. 'Oh, it has failed. The pigs are still there eating. I've done everything I should but without effect. I think [775]
that the pigs are possessed by the shades (*sili nimindu ingulube*).' 'Why?' we asked. 'Because my elder brother (Mwaihojo) and I are not on good terms (*tutikwangala kanunu*) the shades are angry.'

So the destruction of men's gardens was traced to the quarrel between the chief and his brother.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

SACRIFICES AT THE GROVES OF CHIEFS

(a) THE PLACE, OCCASION, AND FORM OF SACRIFICE

778. 769 [137] A CHIEF is buried near the trees planted at his 'coming out' and around the grave a thicket grows up. It is taboo for men to cut saplings or brushwood there and since trees grow very fast in the climate and soil of the Nyakyusa valley, the thicket soon becomes a grove, and there sacrifices to the dead chief are made. The priests look for the stone planted at his marriage, and place the offering beside it. How long a chief is so honoured depends on how conspicuous he was as a ruler or warrior, and perhaps also on [782] whether the sacrifices are judged to be efficient in producing rain and health or not. Mbyanga and Kabale, two groves which are particularly honoured, were the shrines of founders of expanding lineages. At Mbyanga was planted a cutting of a tree which sprouted from the grave of Mwakisambwe (30) who had first occupied the country in which Mbyanga is situated. He is often spoken of as having been 'buried' at Mbyanga, in fact he was carried back ten miles to Lubaga, whence he had come, for burial. But he is worshipped at Mbyanga and we attended a sacrifice there for which his great-great-great-grandson, Mwaihojo (147) the chief, provided a cow, and Mwaihojo's grandsons ate the holy food. In contrast to this, the grave of Mwaipopo's (116) younger brother, who had once ruled a country but was defeated in war and whose sons had died, was completely neglected; no one sacrificed there. We knew more than a dozen chiefs' groves at which sacrifices were made, and there must have been a great many more in different parts of BuNyakyusa.

643 769 Since every ruling chief normally had two heirs, sacrifices involved co-operation between independent chiefdoms—two chiefs at the grove of their father, four at that of their grandfather, and so on. But if there is friction between the chiefs, some branches of the lineage cease to participate, saying that the connexion is 'too distant', and celebrate at the groves of their nearer ancestors only. This happened at the sacrifice of Mbyanga which we [578] [688] attended (*vide infra*, pp. 79-81). The sanction for co-operation is the belief that quarrelling between kinsmen annoys the shades and

[p. 70]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

778
137

9. SHRINE IN THE SACRED GROVE, MBYANGA

[Facing p. 71]

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 each name mentioned: 'We give this meat to you so-and-so.'
[782] 'May the children sleep, may we all sleep, may it rain, may there be much food, may milk be plentiful.' Then follows a communion in which young 'grand-children' of the dead share the sacred meat and beer. 'The shades eat together, they break off firewood
[775] there from the tree, they rejoice, some clap their hands to give thanks.' Finally, a hut is built for the shades and half-formed bananas and sweet milk are left in it to 'ripen'. It was thought that if the sacrifice were accepted they did so miraculously quickly and the milk increased in quantity, the bananas in size. Among the Kukwe a white and grey cock and a hen were offered as well as the cow or bull. An account of two of the sacrifices we attended will make this clearer.

(b) SACRIFICE TO MWAIJONGA

769 In July 1935, two days after the Kinga had sacrificed at
782 Lubaga (*vide supra*, p. 50), the chief Mwaipopo (116) came to tell us that he was going to sacrifice at the grove of his father, Mwaijonga (82). Ngulyo, heir to Mwaijonga's second senior headman and now his priest, came with the chief, and he remarked,

> Kasitile (86) summoned us some time ago. He and Njobakwa and Kimogota[1] and I thought that the hunger was very great indeed, and Kasitile sent us to tell Mwaipopo (116) to look for a cow and sacrifice. Then Mwaipopo agreed, because the hunger is indeed very great; he has not yet found the cow; when he has, we shall inform Kasitile and then kill it in Mwaijonga's grove.

> Mwaipopo 'found' the cow at once for next morning Kasitile told us

> Mwambene (Mwaipopo, 116) came with Ngulyo yesterday to say he had found the cow. This evening, after sunset, because there is a moon (second quarter) I shall pray at my place with water; and Mwaipopo will pray at his homestead also with water. Tomorrow morning they will kill the cow. I shall not be there—I never go—I stay at home and they [i.e. the shades] find me at home.

The same evening (10 July 1935) Godfrey Wilson went to Kasitile's homestead just after sunset. Kasitile took a calabash cup hanging under the eaves saying: 'No one ever drinks from this
[776] cup, it is for praying only. At my death it will go to my heir to use for prayer.' He filled the cup from his wife's water-pot, and then

[1] Heirs of two other village headmen of Mwaijonga, also priests of his grove.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

plunged into it a glowing brand from the fire. Then he went to a low tree in the middle of a cultivated field where the byre of his senior brother (85) had been. He took a root of 'blessed grass' with him, and as he stood before the tree he took a couple of bites of the root and two sips of water. Then he blew out the water in a cloud twice and he spoke for twenty minutes and mentioned thirty-five names or more: 'Thou Mwakanjoki (60), . . . thou Kalesi (18), Mwakalebela (19), . . . Mwakir'eya (96) and Mwampondele (27), . . . Kikungubeja, Silubwike, Kyamba Kitali, Neyanigwa,[1] . . . Mwalpaja (21.) He talked about the punishment of 'Mwakagile their child' (i.e. of Mwaipopo (116) who was here identified with his grandfather) . . . 'Kyala is there . . . he sees Mwaipopo. He says "Do this ritual, I am rejoiced".' At another point Kasitile added the name 'Jesus' to a list of ancestors. He prayed for food, children, and cattle. . . . 'Give us bananas, millet, maize, may children be born in the morning and in the evening, may cows calve in the morning and in the evening.' He spoke of the old sacrifices of Mwalubange (98) and others which had been accepted . . .

Now Mwaipopo has found a cow, he has learnt his lesson, he has agreed; receive him tomorrow, grant him food, give food to all in Selye . . . to Mwainumo (60), Mwaitende (61). . . . You are proud (*ali namutinge*) to send so much hunger. . . . When I went down to the plain men asked me 'Are you taking all the food with you?' I said 'Yes', but now I have come up, the earth has come up. You alone remain and hold back. I ask you to send food again. I alone remain of all the contemporaries of Mwaijonga (82). I alone am Kasitile. All the people of Kyungu (16), of Mwakyusa (98), all know I am Kasitile. I alone remain. The birds say, the snakes say that I am Kasitile. There is trouble all round in BuNdali, Bufungu, BuKinga, but we thought here there would be no trouble in the country of Mwakilima (111) and Mwanjala (77), but there is. They have sacrificed, the Kinga have come to Lubaga. Mwakileya (111) has begun, Mwakagile [i.e. Mwaipopo, 116, here identified with his grandfather, 59] sleeps with hunger, receive him tomorrow. I 'treat' the earth, all treat their earth, all over the country.

Next morning early the chiefs and priests met near Mwaijonga's grove which is some hundreds of yards from Ipinda, his senior village, where his *ndele* tree still stands.[2] The talk turned on the

[1] These four are the Kinga priests with hereditary titles, who serve at Lubaga.

[2] Why the grove was not beside the *ndele* tree as it usually is was not made clear to us.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F717 Ngonde F717
Nyakyusa

weather, and the ritual. 'We prayed yesterday at Ipinda, Mwaipopo and all of us, we prayed and prayed. Did you feel the cold as much as usual last night? Did you hear the banana leaves rustle as usual?' 'No.' 'Well, Kyala has heard our prayer.'

At 7.45 a.m. they moved into the grove. A black cow had already been killed. 'We killed it at cock-crow, while it was still dark, we were all there. Mwambene (the chief Mwaipopo 116) handed the axe to Mwanyoso (his junior kinsman *vide* p. 84) who killed the cow.' Bananas were brought and all roasted them and etc., waiting for the other priests, Njobokosa and Kimogota. After a discussion about certain persons who had not come because the last time they got no meat, one of them said: 'Don't talk of what is forbidden in the sacred grove, don't let's make a noise; no, we pray to Mwakagile (59). . . . If we quarrel and make a noise the shades will not hear our prayer.' James (119), Kasitile's heir, was there but not Kasitile (86) himself. Someone asked whether Tandale ought to be summoned. But one said: 'We have never asked this Tandale to come here; we used to ask his father.'[1] . . . Tandale lives in the boys' village. He has not the position of Ngulyo and Kimogota.'

Mwaipopo: 'Why do you argue about this today and not before?'

After an hour's delay Njobokosa arrived, and shortly after him Kimogota, who apologized, saying: 'I am late because my child has just died.'

Kimogota and Ngulyo flayed the cow, letting the blood pour out on to the ground. There was some discussion over the division of the meat, and they cut out the chine, saying: 'We send it with the tail to Kasitile—if we sever the tail we have spoiled it.'

Ngulyo took the sacred meat (*ipamwaga*) from both forelegs, and with Kimogota's help he chopped off twenty-three small pieces. The rest of this meat was left for the children. At 10.10 all gathered to go to the grave. A sacred stone (*ulufge*)[2] was found under a tree. Mwaitonja (Mwaipopo's junior kinsman) cleared the undergrowth with his bill-hook and dug a hole close to the stone, then he threw the meat which Kimogota was holding on two leaves, placed the leaves on top and filled in the earth. Five or six men spoke:

[1] Tandale the senior had buried the previous chief, Mwaipopo I (105).

[2] It was not clear whether this was the one placed at Mwaipopo's coming out or not, since his fields was some hundreds of yards away.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[769] In this grove of Kabale these chiefs in particular gather together,
[782] Mwakilulele (67 K) and his brothers Mwakalukwa (68 K) and Mwangoka (24 K) [or his son], with the younger brothers Mwakamela (66 K) and Mwakilusa (69 K) in whose country the grove is situated. The senior, Mwakilulele, initiates matters; it is he who calls his fellows saying: 'Let us pray in the grove.' Then Mwakilulele seeks a black cow and Mwangoka seeks a black bull, Mwakilusa brews beer and brings two fowls, a black and grey cock, and a black and yellow hen. So they go to the grave with their children, young boys and girls and the junior chiefs who have just their positions as ruling chiefs—sons of Mwangomale (4 K)—and their village headmen. In the grove they pour
[775] some of the beer over the sacred stones and kill the cattle and take the liver and fat round the stomach and the meat from the upper forelegs (*ganangale*) and cut it into small pieces and put it on two leaves, sweet banana and plantain. Then they take little pieces of meat and throw them on the ground and pluck out the feathers of the fowls. They praise the shades saying: 'Receive the fowls and beer and meat, may there be fertility of the fields that all the crops may be plentiful.' . . . 'Help us Kyala, thou Ndolombwike (?), thou Kajubili (?), you created us, together with our fathers. Help us that illness may be slight, that we may increase and be many, that all the fowls and cattle may increase and that the fields may be fertile.' When they pluck out the feathers of the hen the praises are for the wives of the chiefs who have died. Then they pick up little pieces of meat and eat them with young children; it is taboo for wives to eat it. Boys drink the beer which is in the calabash cup—they receive it in their hands—and the girls finish the beer in the large calabash. Then the men drink the rest of the beer and divide the meat. . . . The calabash cup and the large calabash and the head are left in the grove overnight . . . then the large calabash
[774] and the cup are taken home and hung under the eaves—it is taboo to put them in the house—women must not approach them. When they have finished and come out of the grove rain pours down immediately and they rejoice saying: 'Kyala has helped us' . . . or 'the fathers have heard'.

Pouring out the beer on the ground and throwing down little pieces of meat, and sticking feathers into the ground means: 'May the fathers beneath receive them, may they bless the crops so that they flourish and food be plentiful. . . .' Children finish the food because they are like the shades—when the children have eaten they say the shades have eaten. They roast the meat at a distance because if they roast it close to the place of sacrifice no shades come there for the smoke drives them off. . . . The large calabash and cup and head which stay there
[776] symbolize fertility (*ukuta*), so that when we eat they may help us and
[769] the food may not fail. The taboo on women—wives—eating the sacrificial meat (the *ganangale*) and drinking the beer in the calabash

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and cup is because this food is sacrified to their fathers-in-law. Those who are not sons of Ngomale do not drink the sacrificial beer or eat the meat either, because they are of other lineages. A *black* cow is used in the grove because groves are always fearful and darkness falls if something improper is done. So it is said that the blackness of the cow matches the fearfulness (*ubusiye*) of the grove. 769 782 [778] [784] [825]

Besides the sacrifices at Kabale and to their more immediate ancestors, Kukwe chiefs sent offerings to the BaNgumba, earlier occupants of the country. Mwamunda explained:

My grandfather prayed in the grove which is across the river on mission land, in the forest; it was the grove of us BaNgumba; we were owners of the soil, the Kukwe chiefs found us here. If ever a chief sent my grandfather and his fellows to pray there they went with an unripe stem of bananas, and sweet milk, and unripe maize, and small sweet potatoes; then they prayed and came home again and the next day, when they went to look they found the stem of bananas had ripened, the maize had hardened, the milk was thick and the sweet potatoes large; everything which was unripe had ripened. Then they said Kyala [that is Kyala and the shades] had stood by us. . . . We spoke of Kyala even before the Europeans had come. . . .[1]

They say that very long ago we BaNgumba, we sons of Kasyapula, had not yet got fire, the chiefs brought it. It is this they commemorate in the 'coming out' ritual. We, the owners of the soil, were always here, the chiefs came and built, and when others came the firstcomers fled. They are like you Europeans who fight wars; we owners of the soil think only of hoeing. [173]

(*e*) MODERN CHANGES

It is quite clear that, though sacrifices to the heroes and at the groves of chiefs were still made while we were among the Nyakyusa (and more frequently than our friends at first admitted), the cycle was attenuated. Not only had human sacrifice probably ceased but the chiefs were reluctant to part with cattle. . . . Kasitile (86) said one day: 769 782 177

Since you [Europeans] came into the country the rituals have disappeared. Mwaipopo (116) never thinks of the rituals now. . . . It is cold and there is hunger; I went to Mwaipopo and told him to tell his

[1] According to the records of the first missionaries, sacrifices on Rungwe were to *Mbumba* but the same passage refers to *Mbumba or Kiala* meaning God. It is not clear whether the two names were equated by Kukwe informants or by the missionary himself, who was in touch with missionaries elsewhere in the district. (*Journal de l'Unité des Frères*, 1894.) I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Foster for drawing my attention to this valuable Journal.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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782
177

priests to sacrifice to his father and elder brother so that fertility may return and men may eat sweet potatoes, but he does nothing.

A conversation between Kasitile and Mwanyuso, his fellow priest (*side* p. 76), was also instructive on this point:

The soil has changed, we are not like those of old, we are different. Mwakisambwe (90) had power; when he prayed the thunder crashed and rain fell in torrents. In the old days when the Kings came they came with drums and we all feared them, what they said was done—they did not have to say much—just a few words and it was done. But now they spend all their time explaining things and talking and we do not do anything. . . .

MWANYOSO: I have sent people time and again to Mwaijande (?) for a cow, but he just insults us. . . . I have asked Mwaibujo (143) about celebrating. . . .

KASITILE: What did he say?

MWANYOSO: I don't know . . . if he is wise . . .

KASITILE (*breaking in*): Well, you had better admit that the chiefs do not respect you—the chiefs say: 'It is European times now.'

G.W.: What do they fear? The Government does not affect the ritual, does it?

KASITILE: They are unwilling to part with the cows which I take for sacrifice, they do not like to lose their cows. In the old days they feared, and when we said: 'We do not sleep, celebrate in the grove', they agreed quickly, for they feared that we, their men, would move to another chiefdom.

(f) THE FIRST FRUITS

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No communal ritual of the first fruits is celebrated among the Nyakyusa as in Ngonde,[1] but after the millet harvest a little grain is collected from every homestead and later brewed into beer which is offered to the shades of the chief. In Mwaipopo's country the offerings of millet were collected by the priest, Ngulyo, who, with his colleagues Kisogola and Njobokoso, took it to Kalinga, senior widow of the late chief (119). She was custodian of a sacred pot inherited by the chief from his predecessors, in which the offerings of millet are stored, and this is the pot which, according to some informants, also contained the power of growth—the nails and hair torn from the dead chief (*side supra*, pp. 64-5). When the new crop was reaped Kalinga almost emptied the pot, refilled it with the fresh grain, and brewed beer with the old. There had once been a sacred winnowing basket used in preparing the beer, but

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, p. 50.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

it was stolen by Ngoni raiders. When the brewing was ripe, the chief sought a calabash of curds and Kalinga cut a stem of bananas, and the priests ate and drank in her hut, together with junior kinsmen of the chief's family, but not the chief himself. As they drank they prayed: 769 782

Oh thou Mwakagile (95) give us millet, may it be plentiful, and may the milk be plentiful and may the bananas grow.

One pot of beer was due to Kasitile, the priest, and he would leave it overnight in his house.

The shades come and drink a lot, only a little beer is left in the morning. . . . then the bananas flourish and there is much fertility in the homesteads. . . . The sacred pot gives fertility of the soil to the whole country. [775] [778]

A very bitter quarrel flared up while we were in Selya because Kasitile came upon Ngulyo and his colleagues drinking the sacred beer without their having sent him his pot, or even notifying him of the brewing. The repercussions of this are discussed in chapter IX. [578]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VI

LAND AND POWER

The crux of the chiefs' 'coming out' was a redistribution of power and of land, and we must pause in our description of the ritual cycle to discuss the relation between chiefdoms and villages and the land, and to consider more closely the balance of power between successive generations.

(a) THE TERRITORIAL ALIGNMENT OF CHIEFDOMS AND VILLAGES

Tradition makes it clear that the heroes came to a sparsely occupied country and that their descendants gradually spread out as their numbers increased. The settlers chose to live on hillocks overlooking the surrounding country. Lubaga and Mbande, the seats of the two 'divine kings' are commanding sites. The grove of Kabale, where the ancestors of the Kukwe chiefs first established themselves, is on an eminence rising from the plateau, and Kambaselela (near the Mbaka bridge) on which the early chiefs Mwaipaja (21) and Mwaipopo (26) were buried is a hill very like Mbande, overlooking the plain.

Unlike most of their neighbours the Nyakyusa show a preference for cleared and cultivated land, planted with bamboos and the oil-bearing *mapunguti* trees (*Trichilia sspp.*)[1] as well as the great *umuali* (*Cordyla africana*) which, in their view, adds dignity to the homestead.[2] A study of the trees planted at the 'coming out' and the sacred groves in Mwaipopo's chiefdom (C 24)[3] shows that for four generations the ruling chiefs (descendants of Mwaipopo 8) have established their principal villages within a quarter of a mile of one another, and for seven generations the descendants of Mwakisambwe (30) have lived within two or three miles of one another (*side* plan, p. 101), though there were acres of fertile land

[1] I am indebted to Mr. P. R. Nightingale, Forestry Officer, Tukuyu, for giving me the botanical names of these and other trees.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 77-8.

[3] C followed by a number is the reference number of a chiefdom as listed in the genealogies of chiefs.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ages, they sometimes build in villages of different generations. When it comes to the selection of village headmen, however, care is taken to ensure that they are indeed sons of men who came out with the previous chief, and a village like Katumba which comprised both younger brothers and sons of Mwankuga's generation breaks up, some members 'coming out' with Mwankuga's son, others acting as 'fathers'. Within a village all the members are equal subject to their headman, but a hierarchy of villages is clear. 561 622

The pre-eminence of the two senior village headmen of a chief is marked. They alone make fire with him at the 'coming out'. They alone are handed war tails with which to lead their men in battle. Each is responsible for one half of the country and a dispute not settled by the headman of the village of the defendant is reported to the senior headman in whose side of the country the village lies, and he brings it before the chief. Each senior headman has his own village, the two senior villages of the country, in which the royal ladies live; the senior wife married at the 'coming out' is established close to the senior village headman, the second wife close to the second senior headman. A chief may establish wives in a number of villages, and some at least of those he inherits from his father continue to live in his father's old homestead 'to sweep the graves', but his capitals (*ifisegalala*) are the two senior villages of the country in which his two senior wives and two senior village headmen live[1] and the names of the capitals are used not only for the senior villages but for the half sections of the generation they lead. The importance of the two senior headmen is apparent even when their generation has handed over political authority to their sons. At the sacrifices we have described Njobakosa and Ngulyo, heirs of the senior headmen of the chief Mwaijonga (82) officiated, and at the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) it was Mwambuputa and Kakuju his father's senior headmen who organised the ritual. 631 643 [293] [778]

Each village established at a 'coming out' is a clearly defined unit with its own land, and leader, and name, but villages are also segments of larger units, the half-section of the chiefdom under a senior headman, and the whole chiefdom under the leadership of 621 631 561

[1] Mwanyilu (177), though he had two senior headmen, established his two senior wives in one house, close to the house of Kilaulo his most senior headman. This was explained as a temporary measure 'because they were young', but it is not the traditional pattern, and may be linked with the fact that the splitting of the country each generation is no longer accepted as the inevitable pattern.

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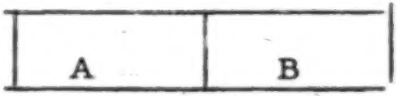
FN17 Ngonde
Nyakyusa

Chart showing position of sections of plan of Mwaipopo's Chiefdom. (Facing p. 100)



9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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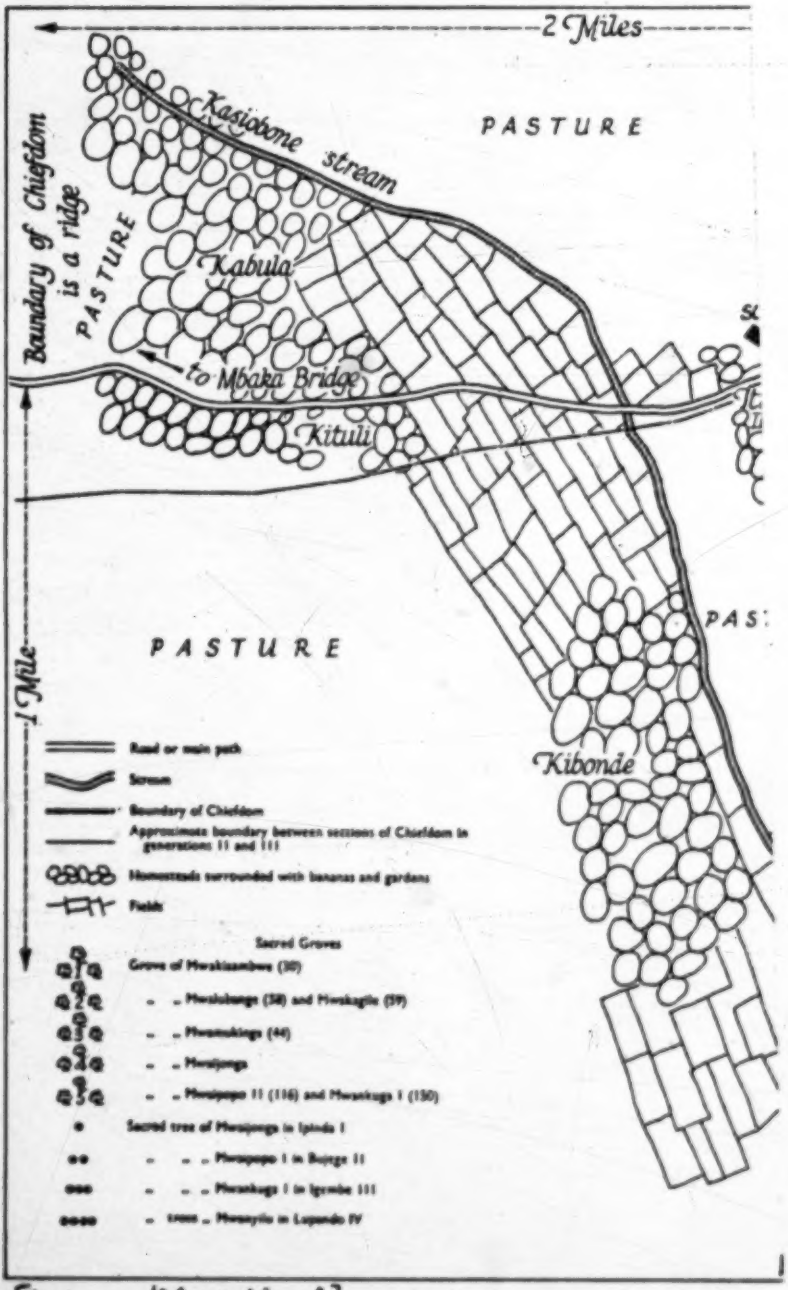

[facing p. 100; section A]

PLAN OF MWAIPOPO'S CHIEFDOM

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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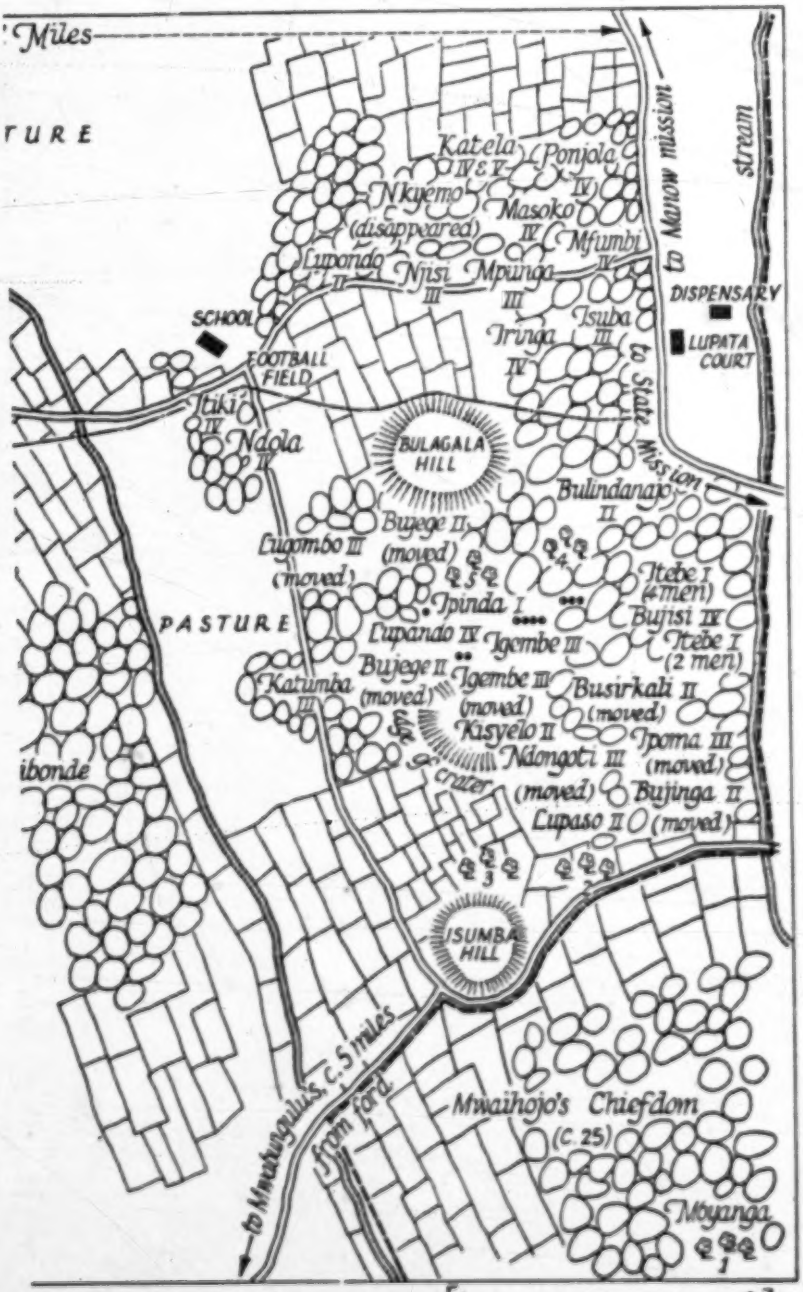

POPO'S CHIEFDOM (C 24) IN 1955 [facing p. 100; section B]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 They say that complaining drives away illness, even though the witches
796 are not seen, and do not confess saying, 'It is we' yet they are ashamed
[753] thinking 'People have caught me' and they desist.]

MWAMULENGA: Catch anyone you see in your dreams. If someone is ill should we not all gather?

MWAMUNDA: Countrymen, give thanks that there are the chiefs.

And the company assented.

Then there was a discussion about the direction in which the chief should spit and people run. One pointing towards Tukuyu said: 'We always looked that way.' Another said: 'We always reached the boundary.'

Mwafula (a village headman) came with his young son carrying
[778] a calabash of medicated water. Porokoto took a sip and spat out eastward, 'in the direction of the grove of Kabale, to the shades.'

Mwamulenga shouted: 'Now we have prayed, the sickness is
[755] finished, we are present and watch over the homesteads. If we see anyone bringing sickness we will catch him and crush him on the sleeping mat.' There was a roar from the crowd, then all rushed yelling 300 yards or so eastward to the edge of the fields, and back again. Porokoto ran a little way with them, his malacca cane raised, then stopped, looking self-conscious, and strolled homeward. Everyone else scattered, chattering and laughing. On the way back we were greeted: 'You have prayed! Did you catch witches? Whom did you catch?'

Mwasalemba, senior brother of Porokoto and an expert in ritual, added one or two points in explanation:

In the old days we threw out the ashes, but we have not yet done so this time; we begin with the ritual on the pasture land and throw out the ashes afterwards. In the old days we threw them out of all the houses and put in fresh fire, new ash, saying 'Thou Kyala, thou shade,
[775] receive us, let us sleep here, we throw out the ashes, let sickness be
[753] slight.' Those who are angry now are our shades—those of the chiefs—they have gathered with the shades of the commoners. The medicated water means: 'Thou shade, you fathers, may we sleep, use this water for us if we are ill, may we be strong.' The water goes to the shades with these words.

Q.: Why must the women come?

M.: They call the war cry, we run swiftly, the women follow calling the war cry which means, 'You shade, we call the war cry for you that we may be pure—without anger—in our bellies, make us strong also, thou shade, may we also be pure in our bellies, this is your war cry . . .' The running and calling the war cry is to mock at him, to drive him

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VIII

RAIN-MAKING AND 'SPRINKLING THE HOMESTEADS'

789 Two activities which are closely linked with sacrifice at the groves of chiefs, but which are distinguished from them because they consist in the manipulation of medicines, rather than prayers and oblations, are 'rain-making' and 'sprinkling the homesteads' to ensure fertility of the soil.

(a) RAIN MAGIC

Rain-makers (*abapelafula*) are men who use perforated instru-
791 ments called 'rain' (*ifula*) to produce rain or sunshine. The heroes were believed to create rain by the virtue in their own bodies, but the Kyungu also had a much prized instrument of iron, perforated
[778] 'like a mouth organ', and several of the chiefs had perforated stones which were used to 'make rain'. In most cases the care of them was delegated to a junior kinsman, a commoner, or (in Ngonde) even a slave, but often the office became hereditary and rain-makers were men of considerable power. Such was Kasitile whose grandfather (44), a younger brother of the chief Mwamukinga (43), had been entrusted with his rain stones. The Kyungu was thought to control the rain in the whole of the Ngonde plain, the Lwembe in an area less clearly defined, but which included Selya, BuKinga, and parts of the Nyakyusa plain, Kyala in the eastern portion of the Nyakyusa plain, and parts of BuKinga and BuKisi. Chiefs were credited with making local rain, in their own countries.

789 The technique of 'making' rain was to seal the holes in the
778 perforated instruments with ointment and immerse them in water.

The rain instrument that helped Kyungu was called Mulima. Its holes were its eyes. If they were empty it would be empty in the sky above also, there would be no clouds; if some were full then there would be a few clouds, if all were full then there would be many clouds and rain. If it were raining and he put it in a tree so that its eyes looked up, then the sun would shine. . . . If he opened its eyes that they might be empty and put it in a tree so that it looked up then the clouds dried up above, the sky also became empty.

[p. 114]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The imagination of the Nyakyusa doctor who invented this magic was near enough to that of Shakespeare to be intelligible to an Englishman. The sun is an 'eye'. Clouds may close it. Holes in a rain instrument are also 'eyes' and if these are closed the 'eye of heaven' will also shut—with clouds. 789 778

The Kyungu seems to have kept Mulima (which was only 'the size of a spectacle case') on him, but the ordinary instruments—stones—were left in the chiefs' groves with potsherds in which they were immersed in water when required.

Kyungu Mwakabange had his rain-makers Mugoma and Komanga. Mugoma was a slave, Komanga a man of Ngonde. When the sky was hard he sent a message to them saying: 'Put them into water.' If there were too much rain he said: 'Take them out.' Each had two potsherds with two stones for each. To make rain they rubbed the stones with mutton fat and a medicine called *ilifugo* (fertility) and put them into the sherds and poured water over them.

Godfrey Wilson was taken by Kasitile to see his rain stones in the grove near his house in April 1935. Kasitile addressed his shades:[1]

My fathers, do not be angry, *Mwakalebela* (19) (he spat), *Mwanjala* (23), *Mwakisambwe* (30), *Mwakilima* (31), *Mwamapondele* (27), *Mwakihaba* (45), *Mwamukinga* (44), Mwalubange (58), Mwakagile (59), Mwandemele (?), Mwakanjoki (60), Mwaijonga (82), Mwafungo (83), Mwamwifu (84), Mwakabule (117), Mwaipopo (115), these are our friends (repeated urgently), you did not know them, you feared them, but now we do not fear them, they have come and met with us as friends. [782]

There was a large broken pot and three stones, two of them with holes an inch or so in diameter. There used to be five stones—two had been stolen by the Ngoni when they raided this country. When he wishes to make rain, water drawn from a waterfall is brought by Kasitile's wife and left overnight in the grove. Then he pours it into the pot and puts in the stones . . . 'the water bubbles; it is cold, but it seems to boil and the *ifula* go whirling and knocking against the sides of the pot.' . . . The bubbling of the water is compared with rain. Kasitile did not know where his stones had come from. Mwakisambwe his great-grandfather had

[1] The names italicized are those G.W. actually heard in the grove; the whole list was given by Kasitile afterwards as names he had mentioned, but in fact he had not mentioned more than eight.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 them first, then his grandfather, and father. Others told us that
778 rain stones always came from Kisi country, a very wet strip of land on the north-east shore of the Lake where the clouds always seem to gather when one looks south from the Nyakyusa valley and plain, and a piece of perforated wood used in Ngonde for making rain came from the hills of Misuku, also a very wet country. Kasitile's stones were of two types, but no direct association of male and female was made. However, the Kukwe spoke of a 'mother' stone having young. 'The rain-maker puts back the stone in the potsherd without water (after rain has come) and going later he finds that it has got young, perhaps seven, with the mother there are eight.'

The rain-makers are subject to certain taboos: during the dry
791 season they may not wash lest they drive away the rain nor do they
[784] shave for 'they compare hair and clouds saying, "Let it be black", they compare a bald pate with sunshine.' And the rain-maker
[262] may not eat roasted maize 'for as the maize crackles in the potsherd when it is roasted, so the thunder will crackle in the sky'. He may not eat green maize (which is reaped during the rains) until the dry weather begins 'because he creates rain, which means he creates all the food which grows with the rain'. If he begins eating too soon he may stop the growth. And when the rain-maker is manipulating his instruments a sex taboo is observed.
[834] 'When I am making rain,' said Kasitile, 'I do not sleep with my wives for two days, it's taboo. How would Kyala help us if I did?'

In theory the rain-maker always works under the direction of
[643] the political authority—the Kyungu or a chief—but he is also thought to wreak vengeance on those who anger him. Kasitile was critical of his colleague in the hills above Isumba: 'He never makes a nice gentle rain, it always destroys food. . . . He is always demanding things from men, and, if they refuse, he brings his rain to destroy things. . . . There is a very strong wind and heavy
[964] rain which takes roofs off homes.' But when Kasitile himself was
[687] angry, because his son was taken as a tax defaulter to work on the roads, the weather grew bad.

789 People say I am angry, that this rain is because they came and beat me because of tax. This time the tax collectors came to my place and beat me and when I thought, 'It is not the custom with our forefathers for the tax collectors to come at all to men like me', I grew angry and prayed. . . . When I was in MuNgonde the country suffered from hunger, all their children were in trouble. . . . Then I came up, and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

it was something done secretly, at night, and feared by everyone. 789
Ambilikile related how, as a small boy growing up on the plain, he had been severely beaten by his mother when he called out one night, hearing a noise in the bananas, for it was made by the doctor 'sprinkling the homesteads'. The doctor heard and entered their hut angrily, and seized some of the calabashes. The medicine for sprinkling sometimes—probably always—contained human flesh, hence the anxiety of mothers not to draw the attention of the fearful doctor to their children. In Selya, after the sacrifice at Lubaga, the Kinga returned to Kasitile's homestead to sprinkle a medicine which contained the flesh of the child they had killed for the drum, and Mwamakunda (his assistant) went round by night pruning the bananas throughout Mwaipopo's country with a sacred knife, which was kept in Kasitile's homestead and [778] Kasitile put porridge of banana flour, made from a stem of bananas provided by the chief's senior wife, in the grove called Kinyangwa ('the porridge of banana flour') near his house. Then fertility was said to spread from Kasitile's throughout the country. According to Kasitile himself, the medicine contained an ingredient he did not know . . .

My elder brother died without showing me the tree. . . . Mwamakunda does not know it either, he just got it from my father. We hope that it will appear in a dream, but it has not yet been revealed. . . . We dreamed of a cow, and of Mwaipaja (G.W.), but the medicine was not seen. I will seek another from a doctor . . . perhaps from Misuku.[1]

At this time also, in some—perhaps all—chiefdoms millet was taken from the sacred pot containing the 'power of growth', i.e. the hair and nails of the dead chiefs (*vide supra*, pp. 64-5) to mix [778] with the millet seed about to be planted.

Besides this secret and fearsome 'sprinkling' on behalf of chiefdoms, there was a much more open use of medicines for fertility by village groups, when they burnt the rubbish heaps in which they planted millet,[2] and by private individuals in their own fields.

During the hot weather a chief sometimes sends to all the 784
villages of his chiefdom a man, curiously dressed in a cap 789
and jerkin of banana leaves, who forbids people to cut their bananas, or even leaves of banana stems that have not

[1] A district famous for its medicines.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 52-4.

M. Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

793 NDEMBWE
755 NSOKI
[551] NSESA
[791] A SANGU
} Diviners consulted by Kasitile

NDISA a kinsman of Kasitile

It will be remembered that, in accordance with the custom of
793 delegating ritual functions to a junior line, Kasitile's grand-
755 father (44) had been appointed rain-maker and priest responsible for receiving the Kinga when they came to sacrifice at Lubaga. Kasitile thus held an important public office. He was living on the plain (where he had inherited the estate of his father's younger brother) where his own elder brother (85) died and he came up into Selya to bury him and succeed to his position. But he failed to notify the Kinga priests of his brother's death and they were
[787] very angry, and told him he would die if he stayed in the homestead, so he fled back to the plain. There he fell ill, and he was carried back to Selya to be treated by the visiting Kinga priests, who told him he was sick 'because he went to the plain in a hurry and they had not given him medicine'. The idea here is that the heir to a chief or priest must cultivate the power that was in his
[778] father's body by drinking medicines: Kasitile was 'losing the *ifingila* of his father by not drinking medicines'. Now *ifingila* implies *both* the medicines of chieftainship and the power which they create in the body of a man.

So Kasitile was treated and we quote his own account of what happened:

> The Kinga came to cook medicine by the tree where I pray—it is where the cattle byre of my elder brother was. They put some medicine for Jane [his senior wife] and me in beer . . . and we drank together . . .
> [783] and they boiled medicines in a pot and told us both to wash with the infusion every day for two months. I found a goat and called the priests Ngulyo, Njobakosa, and Kisogota and . . . they and the Kinga priests ate the meat together, and they told me to stay for two months and return to the plain again, and so I did. Then the Kinga sent for me to come back and I've come up to live. I found a cow, and called the priests and killed it at the sacred grove, Kinyangwa, and all the people ate the meat. Then the Kinga told me to move to my father's old homestead, and I did so this very year.

Before we arrived, therefore, Kasitile had been in conflict with
[753] his fellow priests, and he had been very ill, and attributed his

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

younger one[1] gossips with her fellow, she does not go to the witches herself, but just talks to the other wife who calls the witches to her aid. These two wives say: 'The favourite has borne many children to her husband; we are poor' [i.e. the favourite gets an unfair share of her husband's attentions]. 754 753

Kasitile speaks of his wives as 'witches' which, according to Nyakyusa ideas, they were, if they injured him, but he was also in the wrong to have shown his preference for Jane so clearly. [775] As was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*, the shades are thought to punish such favouritism. [689]

Towards the end of August Kasitile went to consult Ndembwe, a diviner and doctor, living nearly a day's journey away in the hills, who used a 'stick in the ground' as a divining rod. On his return Kasitile reported: 791 787

Ndembwe says it's the 'breath of men', not the wives, but the dispute about the beer. I paid him 1*s.* and drank three preparations of medicine at his place. He is coming here—I have found some beer and I am sending to call him tomorrow. Then Kasitile added confidentially: About the source of the 'breath' I am uncertain. Ndembwe suggested testing my wives. He can see the heavy ones, for in Ndali country he has drunk much medicine to give him spiritual power (*amasiga*). He told me to come home, not to go back to Mwakyonde's country, and he is coming to give me medicine to drink and also to sprinkle medicine in the house. He will sleep here and see who it is that comes—he will know if the wives are heavy, or if it is the people of the country. 753 [782] [778] [787]

Kasitile's uncertainty was apparent. The first diviner had stated clearly that the sickness came from the witchcraft of the wives, but Kasitile wanted a further test.

We were away from Selya for some time and did not hear of any further developements in Kasitile's illness until early in 1937. By then a new reason for his ill-health had been put forward, viz. his impiety in cutting all the branches off a tree growing at the entrance to a sacred grove which has sprung up over his father's grave. He cut the tree because it was encroaching on his homestead. Then he fell ill and he went to consult Ndembwe again. 753 688

He asked me: 'Have you done something wrong at home?' I replied: 'No, I have done nothing wrong.' 'But the oracle says you have done wrong at home.' I said: 'Perhaps it is because I cut a tree at the [787]

[1] Sister of the favourite Jane. To accuse Jane's sister would cast a slur on Jane, for witchcraft is normally hereditary.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

755 791 [769] some live coals into a small calabash and held them against Kasitile's chest 'to clear out the blood of coughing'. To pacify the shades a pot of medicines in water was put on the fire; the doctor, Kasitile, and his 'senior wife' (actually her younger sister, as Jane was away) each held the pot with a crooked finger. Then Kasitile and all his wives and children were sprinkled with the hot medicines. And the doctor told Kasitile to sacrifice a bull.

During the following week preparations for the sacrifice went ahead. [793] Kasitile walked for some hours through the forest to call Mwamakunda, his fellow priest who always assisted him in the celebrations at Lubaga and 'sprinkling the country'. Mwamakunda is a very old man, contemporary of Kasitile's father, and he asked: 'Are you bringing your European to the sacrifice?'

KASITILE: Yes.

[186] MWAMAKUNDA: But your father Mwakanjoki (60) did not know any [688] Europeans, he feared them, he died without ever meeting one. After [777] your father died, when your elder brother was alive, Europeans came —Germans—and cut down a tree, the *umuali* tree in the sacred grove near Kamesu; blood gushed out, it shouted so that it was heard in BuKinga.

Kasitile explained that the Germans had wanted timber. Afterwards [782] Mwaipopo (the chief 116) sought a sheep and they tried to put the [783] grove to rights ('close up') by sacrificing it. This was the tree beside which the sacred meat was always put when they sacrificed in the grove. Now one branch has grown up again from the roots.

Mwamakunda went on: 'But you did wrong at the beginning not to take the European to pray, and to tell Mwakanjoki (60) that he should not be afraid, the European has made himself our friend.' Kasitile, reporting the interview to us said: 'I concealed that we went together to the grove to pray (*vide supra*, p. 115) and Mwamakunda told me: "Let the European take something, let it stay overnight in the house, and go with him, and pray very much. . . . Mwakanjoki has gone off in a huff from your home, you have offended him yourself. Go with the 753 European, take him to your father's home. Now your father has taken 769 offence, he is shaking your body by night because you cut the tree; you 688 have done wrong."' I.e. two causes for the anger of the shades and 186 Kasitile's consequent sickness were given: (i) the cutting of the tree by Mwakanjoki's grave and (ii) Godfrey Wilson's presence at rituals and at Kasitile's homestead. So before the sacrifice of expiation for 783 pruning the grove was performed Godfrey Wilson went to be intro- 782 duced to Kasitile's shades for the second time.

Record of G.W. 9/6/37

[778] In the evening as the sun was setting, I went to Kasitile's house with a cloth and 1s. He put them in the house, took down the calabash which

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

always hangs under the eaves and is only used for prayer, filled it with [783]
water and put into it a stone and a live coal from the fire. Then he [782]
took some roots from the roof (previously put there ready) and we
went off to the same spot as before (*vide supra*, p. 115). Kasitile chewed [778]
the root, took water and blew it out, and began to pray:

'Do not be startled, come in your own persons, gather together, [769]
with Mwakanjoki (60). You made friends with him before, now he has
entered, he has made himself our friend. Indeed I made a mistake, I
have come to enter; I cut you on the head, I have done wrong. The
sons of Kagile (i.e. 39 + his descendants) complain of me, saying, "It
is he who has gone off with the millet, bananas, and maize; and child-
ren cry at night behind the huts; we are barren because he has cut
Mwakanjoki." I have sought this cow which you wanted. Mwakanjoki
(60), Lwembe (37), Mwakalebela (19), Mwatomoka (29), Mwalu-
bange (58), Mwakagile (55), Mwaijonga (82), Kyala (9), we have
come to attend to you (pointing to the grave). Kikungubeja, Nyanigwa
Kyamba Kitali,[1] Lyambilo (10) come to your home if you are at
Mwalubange's (58), come if you are at Mwaitende's (61), come
Mwakanjoki (60) and the Kings and Lwembe (3); Mwakalebela (19)
come, give me cattle and millet, and the powerful medicine which you
had. Since you are brooding over me go out from my body, go out!
I pay my debt. We have come to take you to your home since you have
gone off in a huff, come! I will never cut your branches again. I fear
you and I will respect the branches. Come to your house, that of
Mwamalobe (85), of Kanjoki (mother of 60), come. And he (G.W.) is [123]
innocent (*mude*), do not fear him. He is the owner of the ritual, he is
Mwamalobe (85), he is my senior, I am the junior. Sometimes I wish
to embrace him, sometimes I fear that he is going to imprison me.[2]
May the bananas increase! I am left alone! It is I who am here! Move [789]
out of my body! And give us medicine! May the offering increase
overnight, may the cattle increase and the maize, and in the morning
let me tell Mwaipeja (G.W.) that the bananas and medicine have
increased. If there is anything else you are a liar, if this chill begins
again then I have gone, I am not here. Amen! (*ne*).'

Very early the following morning the sacrificial bull was killed. [777]
Kasitile had arranged that our Mohammedan cook should come to cut
its throat.[3] Then, later in the morning, the crucial drinking and
'speaking out' began. Kasitile had provided two pots of beer.

[1] These Kings princes whose names are titles of office.

[2] In the earlier years of our acquaintance Kasitile had denied both the smothering of an ailing chief and human sacrifice for the drum. It is possible that he had co-operated in either one or both of these ritual acts. He himself reported that the Ngonde diviner had told him: 'You have a European as a close friend. . . . You enjoy his company much, but there is something left . . .' (i.e. the friendship is not yet complete). [114]

[3] Ostensibly so that he could partake of the meat, but the reason given seemed inadequate.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F2017 Ngonde F2017
Nyakyusa

All the time there was a constant refrain of questioning, especially [713]
from Mwamakunda (who as Kasitule's assistant acts as his mouthpiece [712]
to the others: 'But why has Mwakanjiki (56) gone off in a huff? Why?'
There was a continuous effort to extract reasons.

The meat from the top of the foreleg (*ijumapa*) was cut up into little portions and some was put aside for the boys, sons of Kasitule. Then Kasitule led the way with a bill-hook and Mwamakunda and I followed. Mwamakunda carried the meat in a leaf. We went to the [778]
sacred grove, Kinyangwa. When we reached the edge Kasitule told us to wait and he cut a path into the middle with the bill-hook, then we followed.

Mwamakunda threw the meat slowly, piece by piece, into the rotting stump of an old umuali tree, from which a lusty growth had sprung, [769]
one shoot being 30 feet high. Kasitule prayed: 'Come Mwakanjiki (56), together with Lowanbe (57), Mwakalebela (13), and the Kings, come, with—with—with—come. We pray of you millet, maize, bananas, all your food.' (Mwamakunda threw a piece of meat at each word.) 'We are still mourning you, we have tears. We finish now, that is all. Bring bananas, bring millet, maize, children, may the cows calve, stand by us Mwakanjiki (56), N—, N—, N— Lowanbe (57), Mwakalebela (13), Nyanigwe,[1] Kyambu Kitali,[1] Ngulube (6), N—, N—, N—, Don't come again Mwakanjiki, let us sleep well. This is Mwamlangaje [i.e. Mwamakunda the younger. It was his first visit to the sacred grove in place of his father]. I have brought him to you. Do not be startled at this Mwaipaja (G.W.), he is innocent, he is our friend. Move out of my body, let this chill go from my body! We have finished! Amen!'

Kasitule and Mwamakunda gave instructions and suggestions to each other in low voices from time to time during the prayer and throwing of the meat. We went out, Kasitule and Mwamakunda looking ahead, and Kasitule warned me: 'Do not look behind, Mwaipaja.' For the next two days Kasitule said he and Mwamakunda would [734]
wash with medicines, and refrain from intercourse with their wives 'because they entered the sacred grove'.

Then we rejoined Mwaipaja and the priests and the meat was cut up. Mwaipaja said: 'Indeed people gossip, where does the whispering go? To whom do the words go? Perhaps they went to you (the commoner) priests?' Kasitule had something on his mind: 'When I returned [687]
from Lubaga who came to say: "Thank you, you have arrived back?" [i.e. no one came to greet him formally on his return]. Njobokwa answered this saying that no offence was meant.

Then Njobokwa turned to Mwaipaja (118) and raised the question [614]
of his son, Mwaeba (132) who had seduced Mwaipaja's wife, Mpera.

[1] The hereditary Kings priests.

[793]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

to which all had led up.) Then Mwaipopo (116) spoke: 'We have taken home Mwakanjiki (80), we have taken home Mwakimembwe (91).' And the others agreed: 'We have taken him, we have taken him.' Mwaipopo went on to speak of the tree cutting: 'It was always a swept place, Mwakanjiki (80) built there, let it be a swept place again, let it be clear, let our prayers go beneath to enter the house here [i.e. no matter that the trees have been pruned], prayers go beneath in the swept place. See, we buri'd our father Mwaijonga (80) in the swept place, was it heavy? [i.e. a sacred grove] No, a tree grew here. So if I like I cut that it may be clear again.' To which Kasitile replied: 'Thank you, Mwakaglo' (116, identified with his grandfather 99). Mwaipopo continued: 'Let no one whisper. Who whispered? Where do we all look? Here! It is our earth, here, it is our tree, here, it is our fertility of the soil (ndoto), here. No one stirred up Mwakimembwe (91); he stirred up himself.'

So they prepared to go, saying, 'It's getting dark, it's getting dark.' But Kasitile stopped them. 'Wait, there is one thing left, tell Mwakaglo (116, identified with his grandfather 99) that he should seek a cow, let us finish.' They took this up: 'Yes, since we have taken your grandfather to his home, let us go to your father, Mwaijonga (80), and to Mwakalinde (117), let us finish them.'

Mwaipopo ignored this. 'It's getting dark, let us go.' And Kasitile referred it by addressing Njobokoma and his fellows: 'But Njobokoma have you cattle?' 'Yes!'

'And has Kimagura got some?'

'Yes.'

'Well, then, is it you who will seek this cow?'

'No!'

'Indeed, it hurts Mwakaglo' (116, identified with his grandfather 99) [i.e. it hurts him to have to spend his cow].

'Do not "cut leaves at home" [i.e. summon a crowd and discuss the matter publicly], he will be startled, he will swear at us, speak with him privately.'

So they went off. Jane (wife of Kasitile, 86) took the breast of beef to Mwaipopo's (116) place. One leg went to the priests, Njobokoma, Ngulyo, and Kimagura, one to Mwamakunda and Nilino (Kasitile's kinsman), and another kinsman who was not present, the hump and neck were sent to me; and two legs and the chine were kept for Kasitile himself and his female relatives.

A couple of weeks later, when Kasitile came to visit, he explained one or two points in the ritual. Asked about Mwamakunda's forceful words 'Why do you shut up words in the heart?' and the reply of Kimagura and Njobokoma, he said: 'That is very important. Mwamakunda is my man, he stands by me, he eats meat with me, he compelled

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

(their witchcraft); to each other they say: 'It is your father.' Because 688
if they confess to a fellow commoner saying, 'It is we', he says, 'You 775
are "eating" me, drink the ordeal'. The witch is driven out. But to us 774
they admit saying, 'It was we who were angry.' They do not fear us. 826
Commoners are the seniors in the country; they arrived first. 554

It will be remembered that the commoners are spoken of as 'black people' (abatite) and that the first chiefs were 'pale' (mwele) but these words also have moral implications. 'It is said that a person "has a black heart" or "has black blood", or "is black in his face towards us" when he is thought to be a witch, eating his fellows, or when he is a thief, or a liar, or an adulterer, or dirty. Even though his body is light coloured (mwele) the word "black" (atite) is used of him metaphorically.' And mwele implies innocent, pure, as well as light in colour. The comparable symbolism of 'nigger' and 'white man' is all too familiar in Johannesburg or Charleston.

That Kasitile himself was much afraid of the commoner chiefs [152]
and was relieved by the 'speaking out' was clear, and the people [578]
of the country as a whole were glad that the ritual had been celebrated, for they expected an increase in fertility. Some days later Mwakyonde (148), came in and said, laughing, but half 793
serious: 'Congratulations, Mwaipaja (G.W.). You have celebrated 778 ●
the ritual, we rejoice greatly, you give us fertility of the soil, you 183
are a great priest.'

In some moods Kasitile was inclined to become a Christian, but
he felt an obligation to the country as priest, and believed too [177]
strongly in the efficacy of the traditional rituals to abandon them. [787]
He said to G.W. one day, over a pot of beer: 'If it were not for the ritual I would get you to speak to the Europeans of the mission, and I would go with my wife Jane, and be baptised. If my son was old enough and had agreed to carry on the ritual I would do it; perhaps I will when I am old. . . . It is good to have one's heart washed clean, we are dirty inside. The Christians say to us: "You with your four wives each, you are all dirty, you love one and squabble with the rest." Well, it is so with me, I love Jane only; I would like to go and be baptised with her. But I fear for the ritual, I fear hunger, the hunger of the people. For I am the food of the country, I am the maker of food.'

We left Selya shortly after this and were not able to observe the effect of the ritual on political relationships in Selya. Kasitile lived another seventeen years, duly performing his functions, and in 1954 he was succeeded by his brother's son, James.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 A second class of medicines is not neutral at all, but itself
[278] selects between right and wrong. The most famous is the *mwafi* ordeal which is used to reveal the truth. The *mwafi* poison was formerly administered by a doctor,[1] before witnesses, and the innocent were believed to vomit almost immediately, while the guilty did not vomit at all, or were slow to do so, and fell ill, some even dying. Nowadays *mwafi* is administered only in the greatest secrecy, but various minor methods of divination, all of which turn on the correct use of medicines, are in common use. The 'divination with porridge' has been described (*vide supra*, p. 128). The medicine added to it is spoken of as 'a kind of *mwafi*'. Another method is to rub an inverted wooden cup on a smooth board. Questions are posed, as to the porridge. When the answer is 'no' the cup slips; when the answer is 'yes' the cup sticks. Sometimes a stick of *musika* wood is rubbed on the ground in place of the cup on the board, and there are half a dozen other methods using bells, horns, segments of bamboo, a pipe, or boiling water. In each case virtue lies in the medicines added to the porridge or rubbed on to the cup or stick, and into scarifications in the diviner's hands. An ordinary man who has not been treated cannot use the instruments, and porridge without '*mwafi*' is useless.

751 754 789 Certain medicines used for protection and to wreak vengeance, are also thought to be selective, and to injure only the guilty. These are horns, owned by doctors. Mwanjesi (who came of a family of doctors) told us:

[778] My father had a water-buck horn filled with medicines and ointment, as a protection against witches. He used it, like other doctors, for burning the grass, for burning the rubbish heaps before planting millet, and for protecting a child. When the millet crops are poor, people say the witches have eaten it, and the next year the chief sends for the doctor and his protective horn. . . . He comes and makes fire and treats the tinder with ointment from his horn, and each pile of weeds is lit from that fire. . . . He sends some to the chief to fire the grass for fresh grazing. Then there is much milk, the cows that eat that grass give much milk for the witches stay away and neither eat the millet nor throttle the cows. So with a child, if a man has lost many children and has one left, he calls the doctor to come with his protective medicine (*ilipings*) and treat the child with medicines from his horn as a protection against witches. My father used the same horn for all these things.

[1] For a description of the procedure, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 113-18, 241-8.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

a missionary, was warned by her servants before Godfrey Wilson's 789
arrival in her neighbourhood 'not to go out at night as there were 751
chapambala about, sent by the Government to kill people and take 759
their blood', and women going for firewood made a long detour 186
to avoid his camp. One was overheard asking when she caught sight of him: 'Is that the man who kills people?' Angumbwike explained that, since all really strong Nyakyusa medicines contained human blood, it was argued that European medicines, which were so powerful, must contain it also. 'They follow their own customs.'

It seems obvious to the Nyakyusa that Europeans must have strong medicines because their confidence and success are so great. Moreover, it is held (in theory) that they are immune to attacks from witchcraft. X, who had been a clerk and lost his job, and was bitter, expanded on this:

> People say that Europeans have *isipifolo* (*side* p. 58), see they are brave, they do not fear, if someone seizes a spear they do not fear, they just come to him, they are very brave. And also the witches say that they are unable to choke Europeans. When we hear people boasting of their mystical power (*amaupe*) we always say to them: 'But if that is so, go and choke a European, show us!' Then they always say, 'Oh no, we can't do that, when we go to a European house at night we find it all lighted up and flaming, we can't get near them.' I think [775] this is the power of the Holy Spirit which you Europeans have.

> He came of a well-known family of doctors and perhaps spoke from first-hand knowledge. He just laughed at the suggestion that the light might come from lamps. But the fact that Europeans were held to be immune did not prevent our servants and friends [753] attributing our recurring attacks of malaria to witchcraft.

(c) DOCTORS

Among the Nyakyusa, as perhaps in every society, the doctors 791
with the greatest reputation are those at a distance, and a high proportion of the practitioners in the country are of foreign lineages, their fathers, or grandfathers, or great-grandfathers having come in, bringing medicines with them, and begun to practice. In fact, we were assured that there were no Nyakyusa doctors who were famous, they were all Sangu, or Kinga, or Kisi, or from Ngonde or Mbeku in Nyasaland, but detailed investigation proved this to be false. The trade in medicines from a distance is a very old one and continues today. As we have seen, [434] [278] [438]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XI

NYAKYUSA COSMOLOGY

772 We can now piece together, from myth and ritual, the traditional Nyakyusa view of their universe. They have no elaborated system of ideas and the synthesis which follows is more systematic than any uneducated Nyakyusa would formulate.

773 The origin of men was a 'dark house', located high on the Livingstone plateau, and from here the Nyakyusa themselves, and people familiar to them, are thought to have sprung, but there is a hint of the first of the heroes having come 'from the north', and there is also the contradictory notion that the heroes were creators. 'It was Kyala who made us in the beginning with iron ore'; 'Kyala is the smith who forges us'; 'Mbasi is the smith who forges us'; [774] 'Lwembe made Mumbo out of clay to be the father of commoners'. But all are agreed that Lwembe (or Mbasi) was the ancestor of the chiefs and no clear distinction is made between creator and progenitor.

Crops and animals and fire were distributed by the heroes. Of their first creation or invention there is no tale for, though Lwembe created animals, he was already a herd-boy when he did so. Moreover, the 'owners of the soil' in the Nyakyusa valley had some crops before Lwembe came bringing them others, together with cattle and fire; but which were the indigenous crops of the valley and which the new is not discussed. If contradictions between the various myths are pointed out they are explained, like divergences in ritual, in terms of differing origin: 'It is the Lambya people to the west who say that cattle came out of an anthill, and the Nyakyusa proper who say they were brought by Lwembe', and so on. Differentiation is epitomized and accounted for by the separation of lineages.

775 The heroes had a creative force in their own persons, which is inherited by their descendants, the divine kings, and, in a lesser degree, the chiefs; as in Egypt 'the King's potency is felt in the very body and person of each of his subjects'.[1] That potency is partly innate in the royal line, but it is nourished by the use of medicines of which the greatest are reserved to rulers. Vigour is

[1] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, p. 60.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

thought to be embedded in the visibly growing parts of the body of a chief, and the horrifying practice of plucking out the hair and nails of a dying man is an assertion of the value of vitality, energy, force of personality in a leader.

The separate origin of chiefs and people, and the reciprocity between them, are constantly emphasized. Among many primitive peoples a myth of common origin is the charter for unity, and foreign lineages are linked by some fiction to the dominant line; but among the Nyakyusa it is the reciprocity between cultivators and cattle-owners, between 'owners of the soil' who ate their food raw and immigrants who brought with them cattle and fire, which is the basis of unity. The chiefs (like the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers or the Voortrekkers) speak of themselves as having brought civilization to a savage land, but they acknowledge the contribution of the previous 'owners of the soil' in a way in which the white Americans and South Africans do not. Characteristically, the dichotomy of chiefs and commoners is couched in terms of descent, but in fact this is a fiction, for the younger sons of chiefs join the ranks of the commoners, and the mother of a chief is often of commoner origin.

The complementary character of the economies of chiefs and commoners is matched, in belief, by a balance in mystical power. The divine kings have an innate creative power while the commoners have pythons in their bellies with which to destroy their enemies. It sounds like a myth of good and evil put about by the chiefs, but we never heard it expressed in that way even by Kaisile, who so feared and hated the commoner priests. The destructive power of the commoners can be used morally, to maintain the established order, as well as irresponsibly by witches. The constitution was a balance between chiefs and commoners, not a dictatorship. *Chiefs maintain their positions by feasting their men on beef*, and this, the Nyakyusa think, prevents the witches from attacking; and with most their pythons 'lie quiet'.

Ultimate power is symbolized by the python, for though the chiefs—like English kings—are commonly associated with lions and leopards, the terror of the grove of Lubaga, and the source of the *simple* medicine upon which the potency of divine kings and chiefs depends is a python, like that which lies in the belly of a witch. The most fearful thing of the tropical forest (and the forests on the Livingstone escarpment and Rungwe mountain are but the remains of much greater ones) is a natural symbol for power.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The shade is the principle of life represented by seed, or the root of a banana, or a tree growing by a grave;[1] the hero embodied a vital force which caused grain to sprout and clay cattle to breathe. The line between a hero, the shade of one of his successors, and the shade of a chief is a very faint one. They all have power over people other than their descendants and are approached by hereditary priests. As some elderly men of Ngonde put it: 'The nobles, not the living Kyungu, go to the groves of the Kyungus to pray; they go because the Kyungus who have died are shades to us all (*be bayuka bete twese*).' 769 775 [793]

The heroes had miraculous power but it differed in degree, rather than in kind, from that possessed by their descendants. Like that of the divine kings and chiefs it lay both in their own bodies and in medicines, especially the *fagula* which is still used by chiefs. [778]

Kyala and Lwembe dwell 'beneath' (*pan*) with the shades, as opposed to 'above' (*kumwanya*), which implied traditionally 'on earth' not 'in the sky'. There is no hint of a sky god in the traditional system, and the distinction between black and white offerings, which the early missionaries took to be a distinction between offerings to the shades and to a sky god,[2] was unequivocally interpreted by the priests in another fashion. The white (*mwele*) offering to Kyala or Ngulube is a symbol not of purity, but of an unclouded sky, and the numinous quality of the heroes is conceived of as contamination, not holiness. Like the shades, the heroes must be 'driven off' lest men go mad, and it is when they have driven them away that men are *bele*—white, innocent, free of anger. Men should be *bele* but this is never cited as an attribute of the pagan Kyala. It is the terribleness, not the goodness or purity of God of which the Nyakyusa are aware. This is underlined by the fact that a madman who, 'when he comes home rushes off', and 'does not see that his fellows are human beings,' and who 'has a loose heart' (i.e. is passionate and quarrelsome), or 'whose heart curls up like a leaf in the sun, or turns upside down', is called 'Mkala' or is said to have been 'caught hold of by Kyala'. 775 769 [753] [825]

Kyala is one hero among others but, as has been shown, the name is also used in the sense of 'the lord'. Kyala as 'the lord' of a commoner or junior kinsman is distinct from Kyala the hero with his own place in a genealogy and his own shrine. The difference

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 103-5, 111 *et passim*.
[2] F. Fülleborn, *Das Deutsche Nyasa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet*, pp. 50-1.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The negative rituals—the taboos which surround the pro- 797
creative functions—disappear rather slowly, but a Christian 795
father will enter his wife's hut to greet her after she has given [834]
birth to a child, and will eat food cooked by her a week or two [262]
later, which the pagans think extremely rash. An atmosphere of scepticism and experiment begins to develop; a few Christians spoke of breaking even the deeply-entrenched taboos surrounding menstruation 'to see what happened'. But that many Christians, especially women, feared the old taboos was apparent when one [606]
watched the behaviour of Christian daughters-in-law towards their fathers-in-law. In theory Christians disregarded the rules of avoidance if their fathers-in-law are Christian, or avoid 'only a little', but in practice a Christian woman is usually embarrassed and fearful if, by mischance, she meets her father-in-law face to face.[1]

Christians withdraw from the pagan communal rituals even [7%]
more completely than they do from the rituals of kinship. No Christian takes any part in the sacrifices to the heroes, or at the groves of chiefs, or in cleansing the country, or in rain-making, or sprinkling the homesteads. As for the ritual of chieftainship, from that also Christians withdraw. At the time we were first in BuNyakyusa only two chiefs were professing Christians, one of whom was already baptized before his installation. The 'coming out' performed for him was much curtailed since he refused to use the traditional medicines and, because of the difficulty over medicines, Christians were not acceptable as village headmen. In Ngonde, where the proportion of Christians was much greater, there were Christian headmen and chiefs, but the ritual of 'coming out' had disappeared altogether, and the Kyungu had delegated the celebration of all pagan rituals to one of his councillors who still believed in them, he himself being a sceptic.

There are tales of the early missionaries visiting the groves to [177]
challenge pagan belief. The pagans believe that they were confounded and some of the more conservative Christians also think that the terror of the grove drove the Reverend — Jauer from Lubaga (*vide supra*, p. 29) and that *because* the Reverend — Kleus summoned the teachers and school children to a feast in the grove of Mbyanga, and killed 'a black cow' for them there, a season of plenty followed. 'Many people said: "He seems to have [778]
been advised by someone, why did he go to Mbyanga and sing

[1] For an account of such a meeting, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 84-5.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

there?" And after he went there was much food.' In fact, it appears that he took the teachers and schoolchildren to the grove that they might no longer be afraid of it: the girls gathered firewood there, and everyone entered and made a noise, thus breaking great taboos. But all this happened long ago (the visit to Mbyanga was in 1913 or 1914) and, as was indicated earlier, the common view among Christians is that pagan rituals *used* to be necessary and efficacious, but are so no longer. We were assured by Christians who themselves took no part in twin rituals that 'formerly people fell ill if they did not celebrate'. 'Yes, of course, they were very sick indeed in the old days, the whole body would swell.' Some even maintained that it was still necessary for pagans to celebrate though not for Christians. A Christian chief explained:

> The sacred grove of Mwakihaba is just here in my country; . . . in the old days they used to take a little fresh milk and an unripe stem of bananas, and put them in the grove. . . . The next day the calabash was full of milk and the stem was ripe. This was really so in the old days, Kyala heard men and agreed to their requests in this way. We went to ask for rain and food in the groves; the chief would kill a cow and Kyala agreed, food and rain came. Now that the Gospel has spread, since the Europeans have opened the Gospel to us Kyala refuses to agree, he says: 'Since they are proud and refuse to hear the Gospel I will discipline them', and he refuses to agree to the old ways.
>
> QUESTION: What about witchcraft?
>
> Perhaps there were people who were witches in the old days; at any rate I know that when milk ran short and a man was accused to the chief of bewitching the cattle, the chief used to take his cattle and drive him out of the country, and then milk was plentiful again. Of that I am sure.
>
> QUESTION: And now?
>
> No, it is not like that now.

Many pagans attribute the decline in fertility which is taking place, and the decrease in the yield of milk, to the decay of the old communal rituals and the unhampered activities of witches.

Nevertheless, as the number of Christians in an area increases, the pagans tend to curtail their rituals more and more. The direct parallel between pagan confession, sacrifice, and communion with the shades, and the Holy Communion of the Christian Church is recognised by many, and one is felt to replace the other. Regarding the rituals of kinship we were repeatedly told: 'We see that the Christians, who say the only rituals are the

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

were connected. And if the expected judgement does not fall when a son has wronged his father it is said: 'The father loves the child so much that he only complains half-heartedly.' 797 795 754

It is admitted (when the point is pressed) that misfortunes *may* fall on good men as well as evil, and then they are interpreted as a discipline, a testing, from God, but this is 'a hard saying', scarcely to be believed. The *inequalities* in the fortunes of men demand explanations and Christians, as well as pagans, find it very difficult to believe that they are 'natural'. They always suspect some human intervention; they believe that men manipulate mystical power to buy fortune for themselves. The reality of pythons in the belly may be doubted by the better educated, but belief in 'medicines' has scarcely diminished, and new medicines are constantly coming in from outside, among them costly patent medicines guaranteed to cure any and every disease, or to make the user popular and successful. Some sort of distinction between medicines which it is permissible for a Christian to use and those, like love-potions and defence against witchcraft, which are not permissible, is attempted, but the line is an arbitrary one. And often there is a conflict in the individual's own mind: as one elderly woman of a chief's family (who would normally have taken the first-fruits medicines) put it: 'It's taboo to use these medicines; even if we do fall ill we say: "No, I will not take it, I look towards God (pointing upwards)."'

Most Christians have pagan kinsfolk who are quick to interpret misfortunes in pagan terms, and the sort of conflict of ideas that arises is illustrated in the case of a young woman who died in childbirth. She and her father were Moravians; her husband had joined the Pentecostal Church which rejects all Nyakyusa medicines. Her first child was still-born, the second died shortly after its birth, and her father insisted that she should have been taking a medicine which it was customary for women in his lineage (he was a Penja) to drink during pregnancy; the girl herself wished to be treated, for she did not accept the teaching of the Pentecostal Church on this point, but her husband refused. During her third pregnancy she was ill and finally, with her husband's consent, she was carried to a Nyakyusa doctor of her father's choosing; nevertheless she died. Her father and her husband had been on bad terms, the father demanding, rather arbitrarily, the balance of the marriage cattle; and there was a great deal of gossip, some neighbours hinting that her own father had killed

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

one of the early missionaries the sons of leading men had been 797x
sent to Kondowe to be educated and their influence had been 795x
important in gaining the support of the Kyungu and chiefs for the mission.

In the second generation of Christians not nearly all those baptized in infancy come to be confirmed or 'blessed'—an elder in Ngonde put it at about half. There is, therefore, a large group of people who have been Church members and have been struck off the Church register because they have married a second wife or committed adultery or become drunkards, and show no sign of repentance, and of those who have grown up as Christians, but have not maintained any connexion with a Church in later life. [688]

So far we have talked of Christian rituals and dogma in terms of the three mission Churches whose converts form the great bulk of Christians: differences between them are negligible. The doctrinal differences between Protestant and Roman Catholic do not bulk large to the Nyakyusa, and since the Roman Catholic Church had not been operating for any long period among them and had a membership of under 1,000, many of whom were Ngoni from Songea or Kisi, who had settled in Tukuyu district, it was not possible to make any adequate comparison of the differences between Protestant and Catholic groups.

Two small Churches, the Pentecostal Holiness and the Watch Tower, had certain peculiarities. The Pentecostal Holiness Church holds highly emotional services at which members are expected to 'speak with tongues'; during prayers the whole congregation begins to jabber, each man usually being unintelligible to his neighbour, though words of other languages can be distinguished. Our informants maintained that the attraction of the Church was that its members seemed to 'have more of the Holy Ghost', as demonstrated by the 'speaking with tongues', though the more cynical of outsiders mentioned also 'the loaves and fishes'—cheaper Bibles, and the fact that the European leader was the largest employer of labour in the district and those who belonged to his Church got on best with him. Many of the members had formerly been Moravians. Its rules were strict: members were not permitted to smoke or drink, or use any Nyakyusa medicines. [781] [776] [466] [795]

The Watch Tower members emphasized that their Church, through its leader, Judge Rutherford, interpreted prophecy in a way in which no other Church could do. They practised baptism [852]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 conscious. This disintegration of a former coherence, and a [769] decreasing awareness of the meaning of symbols used, are perhaps [796] characteristic of changing societies in Africa.

Despite the growth of the Christian Church, the great demand for schools, and the dropping of the old rituals directed to family [754] shades and the heroes, belief in the power of medicines flourishes. [778] Probably most deaths and misfortunes are still attributed to an enemy using either witchcraft or sorcery. The traditional belief in witchcraft is rejected by educated people, but belief in the power of medicines is general. Autopsies still take place and occasionally the poison ordeal is administered in secrecy; one case was mentioned which occurred in 1942. As we have seen, medicines have always been regarded as a potential instrument of individual competition. They are used in the rituals of kinship to ensure health, fertility, and good manners and morals; in the ritual of chieftainship to buttress authority, and in 'sprinkling the homesteads' to fertilize the fields; but also by individuals to steal the fertility of their neighbours' fields and to grow rich at the expense of their neighbours, and it is their use as an instrument of individual aggrandisement that is most talked of today. There were many reports of their use by rivals to office as chiefs, and the floods of 1955, which washed away the Mbaka bridge and caused a serious landslide on that river, were interpreted as incidents in a [578] prolonged fight between chiefs who were rivals for the position of paramount. The deaths of the heir of one of them in 1953, and of the other chief himself in 1956, were also attributed to their duel with medicines.

Along with the political changes there has been a development 791 of the Churches, more particularly of the Moravian Church, 795 which is now largely self-supporting, with growing congregations served by African ministers.[1] Until 1938 the two main Protestant 177 missions in Nyakyusa valley, the Moravian and Lutheran, were staffed by Germans and their funds came mainly from Germany. The war meant the withdrawal of the missionaries and the cutting off of funds. After a lapse of three years one Moravian missionary, and later one Lutheran, came to take charge of the missions and they were reinforced by other missionaries after the end of the war, but the whole policy in both missions is to build up self-supporting churches staffed by African pastors.

The work of the White Fathers mission was not interrupted by

[1] Change in Ngonde is not discussed.

13:Lehnann E-5 (1939) 1951FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ancestors and of Kyara[17]. At the same time he moved his curved wood 787
to and from the ground and when he did so, it indicated a negative [776]
answer from the beings invoked. But when he was asked: "Is the guilt for the sickness to be found in the husband of the chief's sister?", he was unable to move his wood as before; he could only stamp it on the ground, and this meant an affirmative reaction of the invoked spirits. Now, therefore, the meeting had reached its aim.

I asked the diviner to tell me how he had acquired his faculty. He 791
explained that (besides the necessary inner disposition) the payment of a fee for the medical preparation was necessary in order to become a diviner[18]. This outfit consisted in a special vaccination by a learned diviner. For this purpose the neophyte was incised by his master on [304]
different spots on the upper side of the knuckles, and in these small incisions was rubbed a medical powder. By these means the initiate may be inspired by the prophesying spirits. These influences are then felt by the diviner as a power which directs the movements of his hand in the manner described.

6. Near the hut of the chief's principal wife was a "sacred" banana 824
plant, in the grove opposite to the chief's hut and in the grove with 778
the grave of the chief's father already described. At particular times, 782
when any need demands it, the chief offers a prayer in this place to 769
his ancestors[19]. The sickness of his sister, for instance, was such an occasion for him to address the ancestors. I was invited by the chief to witness his act; but I raised objections, telling him that my presence might perhps rather cause the anger than the help of his ancestors. In reality, did not want the chief to stage a theatrical act on my [23]
behalf. But the chief rejected my excuses and explained that he would act in the same manner as if I were not present, because he had made up his mind to this prayer. The chief was assisted during this ceremony by Mwainyekule who presented to the chief a calabash of water as he arrived at the banana plant devoted to this purpose. The chief took some mouthfuls of the water and squirted it towards the banana plant. Then he recited the names of his ancestors and begged them to help his sister.

7. During one afternoon, I was told that a ceremony to end the 831
initiation of a (betrothed) girl was going on in a family of the village.

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[17] name of the supreme spiritual being.

[18] Cf. Mackenzie, p. 126.

[19] Mackenzie refers that such a place is named "ikiyinja", "the family place of prayer" (pp. 144, 197), but without indication of the locality, as Kerewe.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

After these admonitions, the mats which the girl had manufactured were inspected. During this examination it was told her that a wife should be seen in the possession of as many beautiful mats as possible, made by her for herself and for her husband. Should the girl reveal such conduct as a wife, *ubusangalufu* (happiness) would be in her hut. 881 867 285

When the proper ceremony seemed to have come to an end, another discussion followed. The girl had told the *unnyago*, during the above mentioned admonition, that her parents also sometimes exchanged angry words. Therefore, a new discussion between the father and the mother arose, in which also the *unnyago* was the "speaker", but the other participants of the ceremony also shared in it, and the discussion too became at times heated. Still, after about 15 minutes, it suddenly came to an end, and the matter in dispute was declared settled. With this the whole ceremony ended. 881 578

8. One day I asked the chief for permission to visit his huts. He dwelt in a rectangular hut *(ikibaga)*. A very beautiful *ikitara* (bed) was in the main room, composed of many sleeping mats *(ubuleli*, pl. *imileli)* and of big round wooden blocks (sections of a tree-trunk), one at the head and a smaller one at the foot of the bed. Each of the four fine mats which lay uppermost had a special name. All the mats rested on sticks of reed laid across beams lying on smaller poles on the floor[23]. These mats were naturally of nearly the same height as the wooden block which formed the head part of the *ikitara*. In some other old-fashioned and better houses in Nyakyusa villages, similar beds were to be seen, but generally the bedsteads are much more simple. 622 352 [342]

One of the most important permissions granted me by the chief was to enter the "store room", connected with his main room by a door. The objects to be seen here were the same as those to be found in other huts or store-rooms, e. g. the big *(ifitabo* (baskets) for storing grain, up to four feet high, smeared over with cow-dung and clay, and smaller baskets for different purposes. In one corner hung different kinds of dancing fans *(urukope*, sg.) made of hairs from the tails of bulls, with fine handles of horn. In the dark opposite corner of the same wall there seemed to hang a similar object, but it was wrapped in banana bast. This was the real sign of the chief's dignity, the symbol of his authority and power, named *ubusuripala*. A long discussion was needed to induce the chief to unveil it. Only by constantly consulting by glances the present *amafumu* the chief slowly unveiled it. He told us that 342 353 622 [251] [237] [778] [125]

23. Cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 301.

24. *Bachingwe* I, 1

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 353 622 778 [775] he had received this object from his ancestors and it must always hang on this spot, as the ancestral spirits *(ubusyuka)*[26] themselves controlled its presence. It consisted of an *unswigara*, i. e. the tail of an ox, but the upper part of it was hollow. In this hollow part medicines *(ifingila)*[27] were kept. Yet another magical medicine, in the shape of a [824] piece of bark of the tree called *Erythrophleum Guineense*[28] was fastened at the upper end of this sign. When my European attendant immediately said to the chief: "And from this piece you make your *mwafi*"[29], the chief exclaimed in astonishment: "*Umne wana Kyara!*" (You are sons of Kyara! i. e. You Europeans know everything.)

After this there was no more delay in revealing to us some more features of this sign of dignity. According to the belief of his fathers this object possessed a special *amaka* (power)[30], e. g. to defeat enemies, if the chief were to hold it directly against them. Also if a thief were [789] to try to enter the room by force, by making a hole beneath the wall of this part of the hut, he would be stricken by power coming from the *ubusisya* and he would have the impression that eyes are directed against him, and so be driven away.

After these interesting communications I went to visit the hut of [595] one of his wives, which still revealed the *isyenga*, the old-fashioned round structure of bamboo poles diverging from their upper end and thatched with grass[31].

241 784 9. The frequent walks in company with the chief or some of his *amafumu* gave me several opportunities for enquiries. On one occasion,

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[26] Cf. Wilson, *Burial*, p. 9: usuyuka (Sing.); Mackenzie, p. 181: bayuka (Karonga).

[27] Cf. Mackenzie, p. 275: ifingira (Karonga).

[28] The pharmacological substance of the bark (Cortex Erythrophloei, „Sasse-bark") is the alkaloid Erythrophleïn which produces the same typical effects on the heart as the Digitalis-group (cf. C. G. Santesson: Pfeilgiftstudien XII. Arkiv för Botanik 27 A, No. 4, Stockholm 1935, p. 6).

[29] Cf. Wilson, Land Rights, p. 32; Merensky, p. 134; Fillebore, p. 300.

[30] amaka is not a specific expression for „magical" or (religious) „supernatural" power, although, from the European standpoint this meaning may be connected with the word in specific cases, but generally it means any striking expression or effect of a quality of a person or object, e. g. ugubi ubi ugulume amaka, in this wood is power. This word is, therefore, a parallel to the Austronesian, especially Polynesian word mana, examined in my treatise „Mana. The term of that what is exceedingly striking", Staatliches Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde. I. Reihe, Ethnographie. Vol. 1. Leipzig 1933. If the Nyakyusa wishes to say that a phenomenon is "supernatural", then he connects it with Kyara, or he names it directly "Kiara" (cf. Merensky, p. 110 [197, 218]).

[31] Cf. Fillebore, p. 277, fig. 149: Schematical average of a round-hut (as also to be found with the Nyakyusa still today).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

or his crops fail, or his cattle die, he reflects on any quarrels he may have had with kinsmen or affines or neighbours, and on any rituals he should have performed and has omitted wholly or in part. He may be quite clear in his own mind that the misfortune is due to some particular wrong-doing (*isangwa*)—perhaps a quarrel with a brother, or neglect to kill for his new neighbours on his inheritance from his father—and proceed directly to patch up the quarrel and perform the neglected ritual. More often he thinks of several possible causes and lays them before the oracle, relying upon it to select between them. How several possible causes of misfortune occurred to the chief sufferers, their kinsmen and neighbours, is shown in the cases of Enesi, Katasya, Mwambuputa and Mpoma quoted at the end of the book (pp. 258 ff.).

No linguistic distinction is made between an offence punished by the courts and one thought to be punished by the shades; both are wrong-doings (*isangwa*), and there is no sharp distinction between an offence against a living kinsman and an offence against a dead one. In short, there is no clear conception of 'sin' as opposed to 'tort' or 'crime'.

There are two themes constantly recurring in Nyakyusa theology: firstly, men must observe the traditional rituals (both positive and negative) or they will go mad; and secondly, the anger of senior relatives and neighbours will injure unless it is confessed and goodwill expressed.

The first conception is a magical one:[1] what is required is the performance or avoidance of particular acts in a particular form on particular occasions; the second is sacramental, it is 'anger in the heart' that is dangerous, and no ritual is held to be efficacious without a change of heart.

Often the two conceptions are not consciously related to one another: again and again one is told: 'The rituals must be performed or men will go mad,' and there is no reference to the state of mind of the performers; but on certain occasions they overlap explicitly, as when Kasitile adjured his kinsmen to confess all while they were performing the ritual to 'rot the ropes'; and always there is a symbolic connection, for the rituals themselves express the value of amity between kinsmen, of respect for seniors and obligation towards juniors.

The neglect of the marriage ritual is itself an expression of disrespect for parents or parents-in-law, and a breach of the sex code,

[1] In the sense defined by G. S. M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 89-90.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XIV

The Supreme Being

776 OF the Supreme Being there is little that can be said with certainty beyond that He was believed in prior to the coming of the white man and the teachings of Christianity. The existence of this belief cannot be doubted. Indications of it are found everywhere in the native mind inextricably intertwined with life and thought and language, with prayer and sacrifice, with birth and death, with famine and pestilence and sword. For the rest, there is much confusion. That a developed [779] theology does not exist, hardly needs to be said. What one informant will give as common belief, another will say he never heard of; it belongs, he will tell you, to another district, but it was not the belief of his fathers.

776 538 Many parables and proverbs, of the pre-European origin of which there can be no doubt, give evidence of the belief in a Supreme Being. "Who mocks at orphans," says an old proverb, "let him beware: God is watching him." "God will judge between us and the white man," a common saying at funerals, is necessarily of recent origin; but there are scores of other sayings which are certainly ancient. Many

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The African National Church

Belief

1. We believe religion is an essential component of man's growth and that man should live according to his religion and not merely be a nominal member of a Church whose rules he cannot carry out. Like all other countries Africa is in need of a Church which would correspond with her God-given customs and manners. 797[1] 795[K] 779

2. We believe the commission of the Christian Church to Africa was to impart Christ and education in such a way as to fit in with manners and customs of the people and not that it should impose on the African the unnecessary and impracticable methods of European countries, such as having one wife, etc., which have no biblical authority.

3. We believe the immoralities now prevailing among us are the direct result of the unnatural position into which the African has been driven, coupled by the false and misleading theory that outside one's own Church beliefs others can do no good.

4. We believe in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man regardless of colour and creed, and that the African religion with its traditions, laws, and customs was instituted by Him so that the Africans may realise Him by their own observance. [186]

Constitution

1. The name of this Church shall be called the *African National Church*.

2. This Church shall not be antagonistic towards other organised Churches but shall acknowledge and recognise them in their own spheres whether Christian, Jewish, Mohammedan, or Buddhist; and all African religions serving God through their ancestral spirits because all are trying to uplift man towards the love of God, our opinion being that all were given by Him for the guidance of man.

3. As the African National Church is a new movement having no previous form in Nyasaland, and the first to affect the educated Natives who are outside the other organised Churches by suspension or otherwise, its ministers and other office-bearers shall be elected and ordained by the vote of the whole congregation.

4. The governance of this Church shall be according to European methods, that is to say, it shall have buildings for worship, hold conferences and councils, and keep proper records of its proceedings, funds, etc.

5. Members of the Church shall be people of good character according to the Native traditions, laws, and customs, as contained in the *First Five Books of the Christian Bible*, whether polygamists or not.

6. The Rules of faith shall be based on the said *Five Books of the Christian Bible*, and members shall be suspended only when they break such, our guidance for discipline being the *Ten Commandments*.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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Aim

The aim of this Church is the uplifting of the African *en masse* taking in its rise the old people who are at present being left out by religions of the North and its civilisation, as well as winning those who are considered bad because of polygamy and drink, and are refused any latent qualities for doing good any more, to try and restore an atmosphere of a deeply, naturally religious life as prevailed in the days of long ago which was manifest in words as well as deeds.

Regarding the organisation of the Church, it was stated:

Every district requiring a Pastor shall submit its application to the annual General Conference for its approval.

Any novice Pastor elected and ordained by the minister shall not be entitled at his early appointment or nomination to administer the ministerial duties, but shall sit with his Presiding Pastor for at least six months for his qualification as a minister.

If any Church, elders, preachers, deacons or group of Churches shall be found ordaining a Pastor or Pastors without the approval of the Annual General Conference, leaders of such offending Churches shall be brought before the Annual General Conference for trial and if found guilty be suspended or expelled from the organisation.

The office bearers of our organisation shall be as follows:

[791]

(a) The Secretary who is the sole head of the organisation.
(b) The Presiding Pastors.
(c) Pastors.
(d) Preachers.
(e) Elders.
(f) Deacons and Deaconesses.

The Society shall be divided into districts over which one Presiding Pastor shall be stationed to supervise a Pastor or Pastors under him in that area.

It shall be the duty of every Pastor to feed his flock and to sit as Chairman of his Kirk Session, to enforce the discipline of the Church and to forward his monthly report to his Presiding Pastor.

It shall be the duty or duties of the Presiding Pastor to visit his Pastor or Pastors showing or teaching them good governance of the Church and to send to the Secretary his quarterly reports of his district activities.

If any of the Presiding Pastors or Pastors shall fail to comply with the rules of this constitution they shall upon resolution thereof by the Annual General Conference, be suspended or expelled from the Church.

It shall be the duties of the Elders to look after their Church members

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

during worshipping hours, but shall reserve none until evening when worshipping is over.

Any member found contravening these rules shall be dealt with by the Session and if found guilty shall be suspended or expelled from the Church.

The term of Chairman for the Annual Conference shall be two years, but he shall be elected again if required.

The Annual General Conference shall be composed of a body of men chosen from each division, viz. Pastors, Elders, Deacons, and other notable men.

A general confession with words and music composed by one of the Pastors of the African National Church, Robert Samba, is used as an alternative to the Ten Commandments. Nyamera translates it for us from the original Tumbuka.

Jehovah God we have come before Thee to worship and to confess our sins which we have done during the week.

Response: May they all go away (*from Malenge*).[1]

We have sinned before Thee in speaking to people, we have offended Thy creatures, we have spoken bad words, we have grieved their hearts, Father.

May they all go away.

We have sinned against Thee in thoughts covering the wives and husbands of others; we have broken the Ten Commandments, Father. We have done wrong in our village, Father. Witchcraft, adultery, and hatred, all these are in our village. We pray forgive all, Father.

May they all go away.

Our chiefs do not love one another in their hearts. Take such hearts from them and give them one heart.

May they all go away.

A new commandment you have given unto us all to love one another as in Heaven, where there is no quarrelling. Teach us all to keep Thy Word, Father.

May they all go away.

That our chiefs may be one in loving and ruling their country and their people, and lead us all well. This we pray, father, grant us.

May they all go away.

The old worship is broken down; we have come as wild animals which are without God. Call us again to worship, Father.

May they all go away.

Africa is the land of our forefathers. We have damaged her with our new ways, by leaving all the ways of our forefathers, ways which gave peace to the country, Father.

[1] The phrase used in the pagan ritual for cleansing the country, cf. p. 109.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

May they all go away.

Our Church is calling everyone to come in so that the house of marriage may be filled. It is Thy work to give them[1] all new dresses.

May they all go away.

We are taking beer as wild animals; we forget worship which is our life. Teach us to drink beer moderately, Father.

May they all go away.

We have forgotten all the laws You gave to our forefathers. We have married women by snatching. Turn us to a life of new marriages according to the ways of our forefathers, Father.

May they all go away.

Father, Son and Holy Ghost, One God, ever and ever. Do unto us according to what we have said. Amen, amen, amen.

In spite of the assertion in the constitution that the rules of faith are based on the first five books of the Bible, a sermon we heard was based on New Testament parables; candidates at baptism must give their assent to Apostles' creed; and the doctrine of the resurrection is preached at funerals, John xi. 25-6, and Job xix. 25-7, being read.

The African National Church has five schools at which half the fees charged in corresponding classes in mission schools are levied, but not all of them succeed in keeping their pupils. In 1937 there was a 'strike' by African National Church parents against sending their children to one school because 'the children of the leaders in this area are attending the Livingstonia schools and some goes to their own National Schools'.

The members of Ngonola's Church were less sophisticated than those of the African National Church and we heard of no written constitution. The services were also simpler. The only sermon we heard was on repentance.

Repent and repent soon; do not delay! Repent in your hearts! There is no virtue in baptism; it is just water; but let your hearts be washed clean. The world is full of things which excite wonder and envy. Many when they see the riches of their fellow say to themselves: 'I will go and steal his things', but we must not do that. Many go and commit adultery in the long grass, but we must not do that. God has sent us the Gospel. These are the words of Christ and some other are his words (building up the New Testament). Our Fathers had never heard of it, but we have, and Christ calls us to repent. In the old days when a

[1] Referring, Nyamwera said, to the views of polygamists. Many women in Ngonola objected to polygamy on the ground that where there were several wives they were not properly clothed.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

stranger came through the country our fathers lay in wait for him and killed him, but we are learning and have to learn to give him food and a night's shelter. Repent and let your hearts be washed!

We differ from other Christians because we baptise in Jordan, and they baptise in a dish in the church. They say we are wrong, but we say we do what Christ told us to do. They also say we are wrong to marry more than one wife. The words we say are just the same as the creed of those at Kabembe (i.e. Lutherans) with two differences, that of baptism and that of having more than one wife.

Communion services are celebrated half-yearly at each of several different centres by the leaders of the 'independent' Churches, and since they are unable to obtain wine, sweet tea or a light beer are used instead.

The members of Ngemela's Church contribute to buy a bull and rice and beer, and share a feast together after a communion service, and it is alleged by outsiders, though stoutly denied by members, that these are 'love feasts' at which members exchange wives,[1] to show that they are 'one body'. The African National Church also holds feasts after services and some outsiders say these too are 'love feasts', but outside opinion on the African National Church's feasts was much less unanimous than about Ngemela's feasts. It is certain that in Ngemela's church men and women drink sitting together in a manner not conventional among the Nyakyusa. Members of the mission Churches spoke of members of the independent Churches as living 'just like pagans' and averred that, despite their polygyny, their members ran off with other men's wives and were scarcely disciplined for doing so.

It is also clear that the would-be members are baptised almost immediately, with no period of testing and instruction such as is insisted upon by the mission Churches; that very many of them are members who have been suspended by other Churches; and that the 'pastors' have no special training for their task.

Nyamwa's church attracted more educated people than did Ngemela's and, in terms of Dr. Sundkler's classification,[2] his was a typical Ethiopian Church with its emphasis on African nationalism. Ngemela, the son of a minor chief, behaved much like a chief and attracted the less educated. He emphasized 'washing' —baptism by immersion—and repentance, and he was peripatetic

[1] This is also alleged of the Watch Tower in Northern Rhodesia, cf. Ian Cunnison, 'A Watch Tower Assembly in Central Africa', *International Review of Missions*, xl (1951), p. 480.

[2] B. G. M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets*, Lutterworth Press (1948), pp. 55-59.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

like most of the leaders of Zionist Churches in the south.[1] 797[1]

It is noticeable that the two 'independent' Churches have a more elaborate form of service than the Church from which their leaders have sprung, and Ngemela habitually wears conspicuous vestments. There is, of course, great variation between different denominations in the emphasis placed on ritual, some Protestants abjuring it and turning their very insistence on starkness and simplicity into a ritual in itself—a taboo. There seems to be a clear tendency in Southern Africa for 'independent' Churches to express themselves more and more in ritual and less in dogma. In this way they reduce the gap between themselves and the pagans, for the pagan religion is expressed almostly exclusively in ritual, whereas Christianity is expressed in creeds and confessions as well as in the rituals of the Church.

795[1] 779 [796]

(*c*) THE CONTRAST BETWEEN PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

There are certain common elements in the rituals celebrated by pagans and Christians: some of the occasions are the same, and in the conceptions of sacrifice, of death and rebirth, of confession and cleansing, there are similarities; but there are also profound differences. The conception of life, immortality, replaces the preoccupation with fertility, for though most Nyakyusa Christians, like the pagans, regard celibacy as evidence of physical abnormality, and the conventional desire of a woman is to have six children—a quiverful in Nyakyusa eyes—yet fertility is no longer the end of all being, sought in every ritual. There are profound differences, too, in the values expressed in the rituals regarding sex relations, the range of moral obligations, and social change. In pagan thought polygyny is good—a man should have many children. Child marriage is defended on the ground that a girl 'gets accustomed to her husband' if she goes to him early, and homosexual relations between youths and young men are tolerated since they have no wives and cannot marry if the older men are polygynists. What is upheld is the chastity of women, and a total separation of the sex activities of members of successive generations, expressed in the taboos limiting familiarity between mother and son, father and nubile daughter, father-in-law and daughter-law. In Christian thought it is the 'pure in heart' who 'see God' and this is interpreted by the mission Churches to imply monogamy. Only in the 'independent' African Churches is it assumed

797[1] 795[1] [592] [589] [595] [589] [836] [826] [561] [183] [595]

[1] The emphasis on healing, so common in the south, is absent.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

535 brother had just been buried said: 'Those who are really sad sit
764 quite still and silent.' But he was an old man with little strength
721 for dancing; on the first day of his brother's burial he sat still, but
177 on the second day he danced a little.

As for the women who participate in the war-dance, running about among the men and calling the war-cry, their behaviour is clearly distinguished in accordance with their relationship to the dead man. 'The distant (women) relatives dance in their dirt, they cannot adorn themselves much, but non-relatives adorn themselves. The wives and sisters of a dead man and the nearer women relatives are the chief mourners and they cannot dance at the burial. They are truly grieved. If a wife danced we'd say she did not love her husband—well, perhaps she might wander round distraught to the sound of the drums, but with grief on her face and without looking at the young men! If she looked at the young men we'd say she did not love her husband. If a brother's wife danced we should laugh at her and say she was no kinswoman of the dead man! But for a man it is different, he dances with his grief to enable his heart to bear it. In the old days, if there was a fight, the chief women mourners did not follow and call the war-cry, but the others; all the men went to fight but not all the women to watch.'

535 Our observations show that there is just as much dancing at the
764 burials of women as at those of men. Here too the dance, as now
177 performed, combines the two functions: assuaging the fearful grief
532 of some people and providing a sexual display in honour of the
727 dead: 'We dance at her burial, for she too was a brave dancer (*mapi*).' But in the old days also there was dancing at women's burials: 'For a woman', one old man explained, 'bears us men, so that she too is a warrior.' 'In the past,' said another old man, 'we did dance at women's burials, only a little, not so much as at men's; we said that she was only a woman, but that since the loss she also was concerned in war.'

The change in the quality of the burial dance is one of emphasis only; in the past also the sexual element was present: 'We danced so that the women should see our strength'—but it was not dominant. And the warlike quality which was then dominant has by no means disappeared; we heard of many spear-fights at burial dances. At one of them the chief, in order to prevent its continuance, made the dancers abandon the war-dance and finish the funeral with the ordinary dances of sexual display.

721 The emotional quality of mourning (*ubulile*) is different in
764

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

Nyakyusa pagan society from its quality in England. The word *ukulila* in other contexts means to cry, weep, or complain aloud; at burial it is used to refer specifically to the wailing, and by extension to the whole of the ritual. The quality of Nyakyusa mourning is both more openly terrified and grief-stricken and also more lively than in England. And these two qualities of fearful grief and vitality are very closely connected.

That some at least of those who attend a Nyakyusa burial are moved by grief it is easy to establish. We have heard people talking regretfully in ordinary conversation of a man's death; we have seen a man whose sister had just died walk over alone towards her grave and weep quietly by himself without any parade of grief; and we have heard of a man killing himself because of his grief for a dead son. But, even among the chief mourners, they are not all grieved: 'There are some men', said an old woman, 'who have no sorrow when their wives die. J., when his wife died, was quite unmoved; and some women are not much upset when they lose their husbands. L. was not when her husband died; perhaps she was thinking of marrying again, for she was quite young. But old women are always grieved for they cannot marry again.'

Whatever their private feelings may be, however, the chief mourners and other relatives are obliged for very shame to show signs of grief. The chief women mourners, as we have seen, may not dance; the more distant women relatives may not adorn themselves; and all the chief mourners, both men and women, are expected to weep and shed tears. We have seen an old man weeping at his half-brother's burial, although the two had, nominally, been on very bad terms and had hardly spoken to each other for years. And all relatives, however distant, who come to a burial are expected to greet the chief mourners sympathetically. Very many non-relatives do so too, but they may omit the greeting without offence, if there is a great crowd present.

We have plenty of evidence that the grief at death is largely mixed with fear. It is, indeed, probable that the fear of death (fear of their own future death, fear of the shades, fear of the contagion of the corpse) troubles some people at a burial more deeply than grief. So this as it may, it is clear that the mourning is, for some, an expression of real fears. And it is the relatives, above all, who are afraid. Neither contagious diseases nor subsequent affliction by the shades, nor the vague contagion of the corpse concern any non-relatives, except those who dig the grave and bury the dead

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3117 Ngonde F3117
Nyakyusa

761 764 man; but all kinsmen and affines fear contagion, and the family fear spiritual afflictions as well.

[11] These fears are dealt with in two ways: fear is an immediate state of feeling which the Nyakyusa, on this occasion, express and make tolerable in the wailing, the dancing, and so on; but their terror is also rationalized[1] as a fear of certain specific events proceeding from religious causes, and thus is pacified by various ritual actions which are believed effectively to prevent these happenings. The killing of cows, the washing with magical plants, the subsequent ritual of protection—all these are designed to check the occurrence of fearful events.

761 764 721 535 But still the fear, as an actual state of feeling at the time of a death, has to be expressed in some tolerable form. Its expression in the wailing associated with grief is already clear; and it is also proved that the war-dance is, for the men most affected, both an expression and an alleviation of their terrified grief: 'There is war in our hearts—a passion of fear and grief conquerors us—it is made tolerable in the dance.'

761 764 It is the attitude of the chief mourners that is the clue to the whole ritual; and the contrast between terrified wailing and lively dancing, which seems very strange at first to a European observer, is explained by it. The fear and sorrow of death are only emotionally tolerable if their expression is followed by, or combined with, an assertion of life. This is certainly true of the Nyakyusa, and possibly it is universally true. Having no confident expectation of happiness in a future life, these pagan Africans turn at burial to a realization of present life in its most intense quality, to the war-dance, to sexual display, to lively talk, and to the raising of great questions of sense.

And to this emotional reaction of the chief mourners the sympathetic vivacity of other people is essential. The Nyakyusa were astonished to hear of the sobriety of an English funeral: 'We talk and dance to comfort the relatives. If we others sat sad and glum, then the grief of the relatives would for sacred cows. If we just sorrowed what depths of grief would they not reach? And so we sit and talk and laugh and dance until the relatives laugh too.' And they were even more surprised at the suggestion that anyone might wish for privacy. 'We are quite different: we keep people company, when a relative has died, to cheer them. I am com-

[1] The word 'rationalized' properly implies neither truth nor falsehood of thought, but simply the fact of its existence.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

forted, I think people follow the custom, many have come to see me.'

There is no criticism of men or women who come to a burial to dance rather than to weep: 'They are not relatives—it is our custom of mourning.' They are saluting the dead and 'seeing him on his way', they are helping 'to comfort the relatives'. The presence of non-relatives at a burial is variously determined by feelings of affection and grief, of respect and sympathy for the family, by a sense of shame, by fear of being accused of witchcraft, and finally by the attraction of the crowds, the lively conversation, the dancing, and the meat.

At the burial of a Nyakyusa Christian there is little unrestrained wailing and no dancing; instead the young men of the congregation gather round the grieving relatives and sing cheerful hymns, full of the certainty of Heaven, 'to accompany him on his way to God' and 'to comfort the mourners'.

(c) Prestige at funerals

As has already been indicated, the length of the mourning depends upon the status of the deceased. It is short for a child—there is no sacrifice and no crowd; for a rich man it is longer than for a poor man; for the kinsman of a chief longer than for a commoner. Mwaikambo explained:

> Many conceal their position (*ubufumbe*), it only appears at death. People may never know that a man is rich—only those who build close to him will know—but when he dies many know; many people come to the funeral. For a commoner, an ordinary person, the drums usually play a lament for two days only, sometimes for three, but for a village headman they play the lament for four days, or perhaps a week, and also for a man who has married a chief's daughter it continues for four days or a week. Then people ask why the drums are playing for so long and the reply comes: 'He married into the chief's family. The chief honours him in kinship.' Drums follow the importance of a man.
>
> Those who stay longest at a funeral are kinsmen. If a man has many kinsmen then the funeral will last long because his kinsmen do not return home quickly. A chief has many kinsmen, more than anyone else, because the people of his chiefdom are all like kinsmen. With a village headman also the people who build with him are somewhat like kinsmen, and his funeral lasts a long time.

The size of the crowd at a funeral depends very largely upon the amount of meat provided, and this in turn depends upon the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 the evening saying with admiration that it was a most impressive
556 (aiye) burial; months or years afterwards it is still remembered and described with pride by the family, with admiration by the neighbours. What is chiefly remembered is the number of cattle killed and the number of people present; sometimes the vigour of the women's wailing and of the men's dancing is also described.

(f) *A particular burial* (recorded by G. W.)

764 It is the second day; the man, who was quite young, died yesterday afternoon and was buried early this morning. I arrive at 7.30 a.m. to find that the wailing is the dominant activity. The dead man's house is full of weeping men and women, shedding tears and wailing in the conventional high-pitched voice. His sister, his young wife, a stepmother, a classificatory brother and two half-brothers, with many other women, are inside the house. The noise is considerable. The rest of the women, fifty or more, are seated just outside, in and around an unfinished bamboo house which he died leaving half-built; they too are weeping and wailing. A few men are seated in a group on the opposite side of the swept place facing the women; they are either silent or talking soberly.

764 The emotional pitch is very high. The classificatory brother leaves
● 781 the house and walks about round the new grave with his hands to his head, shedding tears and calling: 'Alas! Alas! What kin are left? Alas! What kin are left?' He is a mature man about forty years old. Then he takes by the hand a half-sister of the dead man, a woman of thirty or more, smothered in mud and pot-black, her belly supported by many back-cloths, and with a baby on her back; together they walk over the grave weeping and wailing, addressing each other in words that I fail to distinguish, and stumbling about as though blind with grief. The baby sleeps quietly all the time. Then comes an old woman, stepmother of the dead man, leading a daughter in each hand (his half-sisters), all wailing, shedding tears and calling out indistinguishable words. They sit down on the newly-filled grave with their arms on one another's shoulders rocking to and fro and weeping. More people keep arriving and in the background now is the insistent wailing of seventy or a hundred women in and outside the house.

For the first hour after my arrival the drums are only occasionally beaten, and a few young men rush across the grave brandishing spears, but only spasmodically.

The two half-brothers, after wailing in the house, come outside and walk up and down together still weeping. Then they each take a spear and run back and forth several times wailing the dead man's name.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

One of the half-sisters, meanwhile, rolls over and over in the fresh earth 764
of the grave in passionate contortions, with the tears running down her 781
cheeks. Gradually a group of women relatives collects on the grave, eight or nine of them; they sit huddled up together with their arms on one another's shoulders wailing. One woman, before she sits down, makes a series of trembling gestures towards the grave, crying out 'Awuuu!' in fearful grief.

Then, at last, the drums begin in earnest and the young men start to 764
dance. The insistent vital rhythm of the drums contrasts sharply with 535
the grief and despair of the wailing. The situation begins to change. Still in the house the wailing is loud and continuous, but the women on the grave give place to the dancers and return to the house, while the group of women outside gradually ceases wailing and turns all its attention to the dance. The conversation among the men changes also, some are silent now and the talk is more eager than before. Soon the dancers begin to cut the bananas; one even falls full on a young man's head, causing loud laughter among the onlookers. But at first the dance, though always lively, is by no means wholly gay. The male kinsmen dance with grief in their looks, calling out 'Alas!' as each shakes his spear.

No women are yet dancing at all; two or three kinswomen wailing almost distraught, and one of the half-sisters in particular [illegible] blind to the dancers, who have to get out of her way. The situation is, however, a lively one, and it becomes livelier still as the young men from another village come to join in, bringing three more drums with them. Six drums are now being beaten and about thirty young men are dancing. Two hours have passed since I first arrived.

At 4.30 p.m. I am back again to find the scene changed once more. There is no sound of wailing, not even inside the house. About a hundred men are either dancing or standing round looking on, with a number of girls walking rhythmically about among the dancers. These girls are non-relatives and adorned with great finish.

The young men leap and dance, some with more agility than others; 764
they stamp, roll on the ground, leap in the air, turn somersaults, hurl 535
their spears into the earth and fight invisible enemies. All the spectators, 781
save the chief women mourners and one or two of the men, seem lively and excited. I see the young wife of the dead man looking tired and sad, and she and the other women chief mourners spend most of the time in the house; but one of the half-brothers, on the other hand, who appeared to be so greatly affected seven or eight hours before, is laughing gaily as he dances.

Two cows have been killed and are now being cut up. As the sun 764
sinks and the dancers go away home, taking their meat with them, the relatives and near neighbours gather round fires and begin to roast and eat the meat. Some is given separately to the groups of friends from

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Soya, Malingade

764 Then they explained to me that formerly it was forbidden to
177 scrape bananas at a death, you eat them with the ash on, for if you scrape you will scrape your body also, that is, you will scratch and scratch. But now that custom is finished. Three men were scraping away.

784 Mwaikambo said: 'In all rituals it is forbidden to scrape bananas —in the puberty and twin rituals also.'

134 Kaswile: It is forbidden to scrape bananas only at a death ritual,
789 not at other rituals. If you scrape bananas you scrape your own body. It is the corpse. We have died, we are the corpse. . . .

604 The mother's brother (*mwenjwe*) hands bananas and meat over his
•781 shoulder to the children who are tonsured, then he goes off home and they go home without looking back at one another. If they do look
789 back at one another the child will grow feeble and go mad. If the mother's brother does not come to cut the bananas grove and do this, if the child sees others eating that banana it becomes feeble and goes mad. The bananas and the meat are the filth which madness takes hold of, they are filth. Yes, it is like the bananas which they eat at the pumpkin-seeds ritual.

Question: Why the mother's brother?

Kaswile: Who should give it to them? Their kinsmen (*ndama*) should give it to them, he who looks after everything for them.

ii. *Mwandisi's interpretation.*[1]

764 Question: What do you do in the death ritual, what does it mean?

Mwandisi: When a child has died I do not approach the women, my wives, until we have finished the ritual. On the night of the day we drink the beer then we come together. It is a ritual. Yes, the coming
[119] together of man and woman is a ritual (*ku kwanga*). If we come together before the beer then we overcrop our child, Lubabelo, he will be impotent and not beget children. No, his children are not relatives (*ku kanda*) they are my comrades (*kubwanga*) but if Lubabelo fornicate (*ukulinda*) the ritual with his wife then he overcrops (*ukulinda*) his children. And when we have finished the ritual Lubabelo begins[2] and goes first to his wife. We follow him at our homes. If we begin we would overcrop him, it is taboo (*mwiko*). At the ritual of pumpkin-seeds, we drive away the shades, we say: 'Do not rise from the dead and come to us, go to the land of the shades, that we may bear and beget another child, you prevent us doing so!'

[1] He saw Lubabelo, who was with us during the earlier part of the conversation, left so that we could speak freely. There was no difficulty about Mwandisi's wife being present.

[2] Mwandisi was referring to a ritual performed on the death of his son Lubabelo's child.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Lake

'We perform the ritual upon the immediately-following younger brother of a man, on his wife, children, and grandchildren. On the husband, the immediately-following younger sister of a woman, children, and grandchildren. My mother's sister here did not immediately follow her, therefore she does not have the ritual done for her.'

B. died first. A. performed the ritual for him. A. has now died and C. does not perform the ritual.

K. has no wife with him, she's left him.

I returned the same evening just before sunset, as they told me to. We waited a long time. K's classificatory mother asked him: 'Where about the room of bananas?' And he went off to arrange with a neighbour that he should not and 'steal' a particular room. As the light faded from the sky, Sijele, the officiant, arrived, walking as she always does with the help of a stick. Still we waited for N., and by the time she came it was full night.

From the moment of Sijele's arrival there was a prolonged discussion as to whether or not we should include maize in this evening's ritual food, or whether beans alone were correct. Precedents were quoted from previous rituals, including that of the dead woman's husband and those of the local chief's family. Sijele left declaring that to include maize was a foreign custom. After N. arrived, the argument continued and it was finally decided that beans alone were correct. For about half an hour after we were all gathered ready in the hut, round the fire, the talk continued. N. and S. described, with immense enjoyment, the use of the ritual, particularly the battling with snake. Although, as we shall see later, the snake symbolizes death and the corpse, there was no atmosphere of awe about the description—it was vigorous and expressive and punctuated by the laughter of the listeners. There was no solemnity; no evident sense of awe; the two officiants, the principals, and the rest of us laughed and talked all the time. It was clearly thought more important to perform the ritual correctly, but not, apparently, the least important to spread a 'religious atmosphere' over it.

'Who shall begin? Let the young gentleman (*ulyfumi*) begin!' The child was made to begin, K. followed and K's younger brother came last. Kabera held his son's hands open to receive the beans and powdered medicine, in front of the fire. A pot was put on the fire and beans brought in calabash spoons. Sijele began by opening her little packet of powdered medicine and putting a pinch into the pot with a few beans, then she poured in some water from a drinking calabash. As she did each of these activities she said: 'This is the ritual of my wife.' (N.B. she was speaking for the child, grandsons call their grandmothers 'my wife'.) Then the child was helped to do the same thing. Sijele put

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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is the act of God, let it work, His house is great. But if it is the act of men, let it go where the sin is. I and mine have done nothing amiss."

As they go, they chew, for their own protection, the leaves of a shrub called *mwayiwman*, putting the chewed leaves into a small sack at the side. The common people are warned to go in certain directions only for wood and water as long as the lion is known to be about. When it approaches a village, the local headman speaks:

> "You lion, if you have been sent out by men, follow where your prey leads you; if you are from God, His house is great, go where you will."

Just how much effect this has on the lion, need not, perhaps, be too closely investigated.

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There are numerous stories, which, if they do nothing else, illustrate the naïve faith of native Christians in the protecting care of God. A school inspector, going his rounds in 1920, when Kaleta's lion was about, was offered the use of the protecting drugs, but refused. "God Himself," he said, "is my protector." In 1913 an evangelist was followed for some distance by a lion, and at last turned on the brute:

> "You lion," he said, "you have no master. I have a Master, Jesus Christ. I do not fear you. Do not follow me; get off in another direction";

which the lion, after roaring angrily, did! In the same year a lion was moving about on the lake shore,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

but the Christians, secure in their faith, refused to be kept from their gardens. No one, so far as I heard, either Christian or heathen, was killed at that time. A Christian man, walking alone through the bush, was chased by an elephant. "And God said, 'Look,' and I looked, and behold a pit; and I went down into it, and the elephant passed me by; and again God said 'Look,' and I looked, and behold in the pit a very evil snake." There the written report ends; but as I had myself seen this man holding "a very evil snake" alive in his hand, I have no reason to doubt that he acted with promptitude in the pit.

The *ingulula* is a whitish snake, about four feet long, with a deadly bite. That it should exist at all is bad enough; but there are sorcerers who create it for their own purposes. Mwankoore, who lives about two miles from me, is believed to possess this power. He takes the roots of the *paci* tree, which he puts into a pot along with a powerful medicine, and in a little time a snake emerges. The secret of this medicine is known to a very few, and is guarded by word and by spell. The intending purchaser must face a guard of other snakes sent out to kill him by the makers of the drug; should he, however, kill the snakes, he is acknowledged to be a great doctor, and a supply of the medicine is given to him, for which he pays a cow.

When a sorcerer wishes to kill an enemy, he takes in his hand the snake he has created, and drops it at the house of his intended victim. It immediately makes for the doomed man, strikes, and returns with

9; Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

one of the early missionaries the sons of leading men had been sent to Kondowe to be educated and their influence had been important in gaining the support of the Kyungu and chiefs for the mission. 797[1] 795[2]

In the second generation of Christians not nearly all those baptized in infancy come to be confirmed or 'blessed'—an elder in Ngonde put it at about half. There is, therefore, a large group of people who have been Church members and have been struck off the Church register because they have married a second wife or committed adultery or become drunkards, and show no sign of repentance, and of those who have grown up as Christians, but have not maintained any connexion with a Church in later life. [688]

So far we have talked of Christian rituals and dogma in terms of the three mission Churches whose converts form the great bulk of Christians: differences between them are negligible. The doctrinal difference between Protestant and Roman Catholic do not bulk large to the Nyakyusa, and since the Roman Catholic Church had not been operating for any long period among them and had a membership of under 1,000, many of whom were Ngoni from Songea or Kisi, who had settled in Tukuyu district, it was not possible to make any adequate comparison of the differences between Protestant and Catholic groups.

Two small Churches, the Pentecostal Holiness and the Watch Tower, had certain peculiarities. The Pentecostal Holiness Church holds highly emotional services at which members are expected to 'speak with tongues'; during prayers the whole congregation begins to jabber, each man usually being unintelligible to his neighbour, though words of other languages can be distinguished. Our informants maintained that the attraction of the Church was that its members seemed to 'have more of the Holy Ghost', as demonstrated by the 'speaking with tongues', though the more cynical of members mentioned also 'the loaves and fishes'—cheaper Bibles, and the fact that the European leader was the largest employer of labour in the district and those who belonged to his Church got on best with him. Many of the members had formerly been Moravians. Its rules were strict: members were not permitted to smoke or drink, or use any Nyakyusa medicines. [781] [778] [766] [795]

The Watch Tower members emphasized that their Church, through its leader, Judge Rutherford, interpreted prophecy in a way in which no other Church could do. They practised baptism [800]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Selja, Ms. Ngonde.

765 deceased was a man and wealthy, the heir kills a bull or cow for a feast.

765 184 According to one account, 'the heir kills a cow saying: "This is your cow, Father." Then he takes the pruning calabash and fills it with beer and goes to the banana grove. The others sit in the courtyard watching from afar. He blows beer and then pours out a little, several times, mentioning the dead man's name and those of three or four prominent dead relatives, and prays for children, health, and food. He takes his own senior son (or the son of his dead brother) with him to see what he does, for he (the son) will do it after his death. Then they come back and the meat is eaten and beer drunk.' But we never saw this happen nor was the prayer in the banana grove mentioned by other informants.

• 732 765 If the millet put to soak fails to sprout, however, there must be prayer. It is thought that there has been disagreement among the mourners and the shades are angry and have spoilt the millet. The kinsmen gather to confess their quarrels and pray before preparing another batch.

765 At the shaving of the sprouting hair (or some other time during the death ritual) the sisters of the dead man formally admonish his widows on their behaviour as wives. One admonition recorded lasted two hours, and the main theme was the stinginess of the widows in entertaining their sisters-in-law when the latter had come to visit.

765 768 787 On the morning after 'the shaving of the sprouting hair' the participants shave their whole heads and are anointed with cinnamon by the officiant. In the evening comes the formal handing over of the inheritance, if the deceased was a married man. The heir sits in the doorway of the mourning hut and the senior wife of the deceased hands him a bill-hook, such as is used for pruning bananas. He is adjured by his relatives, his village headman, and his neighbours to care for the children of the deceased as if they were his own, and the widows are told: 'This is your husband who will love for you always.' If there is any division of property it is [472] formally made on this occasion, the dead man's sisters and the village headman being primarily responsible for a just allocation. And though, traditionally, women were given no choice about inheritance, this was in fact the occasion on which their persons and preferences were canvassed. Then the heir is thrown into the hut with the women he has inherited 'so to the sahw' (unfamiliar), and must have intercourse with all of them that night. One of

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FM17 Ngonde FM17
Nyakyusa
Selja, Malinde

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taboo, and the practical difficulties of observing the taboo if fathers 779
and sons live in the same village is cited as a reason for the age- 811
village organization.[1]

The marriage ritual may be said to finish with the eating of the 815
dikolage, but avoidance of father-in-law and daughter-in-law con- 804
tinues until death and no clear line can be drawn between the marriage ritual proper and the rituals of pregnancy and birth which follow.

It is plain from the events described that the *ukwenga kwa-* 851
kwenga is a marriage as well as a puberty ritual and that the hus- 735
band and his family play an essential part in it, but if a girl is not betrothed before puberty a curtailed ritual is still performed for her when she grows up. She drinks the *ukulila* medicine, she washes with a brother, and her mothers put her formally into the hut of seclusion. They cook for the various feasts, and they tell her brothers to call their friends to help dance the stamping dance. The litter is cleaned by her mothers in due course, and she is shaved and instructed. When she is eventually married, only the rites of daughtering the bull of virginity, taking her to her husband, and returning with the *dikolage* are performed. She does not wash with him ritually.

(3) *The asset purpose and symbolism*

The avowed purpose of the *ukwenga* ritual is to protect the 782
physical and mental health of the girl and to ensure her fertility. 785
"If the ritual is not performed the girl will fall ill, go mad, or not 881
bear children." Numerous informants were agreed on this point. Angamwilile expanded it, saying: "It is said that if they do not perform the ritual of *ukwenga* the bride will go mad. When she is sick of the *ukulila* they perform the ritual. If the doctor says: "Those below are angry," then the father of the girl takes water and prays in the banana grove saying: "My father and my grandfather, let the child recover from her sickness." Sometimes the doctor says: "The *na-mad-ne's* (meaning a village) have cursed her"; then the father make a bull and they eat it. It is the curse which comes from the mouths of people when many whisper saying: "Why have they not performed the ritual? Why have they not performed it?" It comes from their evil breath." Neglect of the puberty ritual is therefore thought both to anger the shades and to shock the neighbours, who expect to feast on this occasion.

[1] Cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 54-6.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

ritual, though not openly admitted. The younger brother pro- 783
tested at the inclusion of the cactus stems and it is likely that they 784
were an ingredient intended to injure the sender of sorcery.

(d) Prayer to the shades

Misfortune is also believed to come from the anger of senior 571
relatives, living and dead. If a junior has angered his senior kins- 776
man the senior is said to 'mutter over the fire'. 'He is so angry 784
that he cannot speak intelligible words, he murmurs and mumbles to himself. . . .' 'I crouch over the fire in the evening and mutter to myself in a low voice: "I am astonished and hurt at my son. Did I not provide marriage-cattle for him? And he does this to me?" ' Then the shades hear him and the wrong-doer falls ill, or is sterile, or his crops or fishing fail. 'No man has the power of making the shades hear like this save Father (tate)—he mutters alone and the shades hear him—all of us, pagans and Christians alike, believe in the power of Father to mutter, because whenever a man wrongs his father something always happens to him—he finds blessing nowhere.' The 'father' is a man's own father who begot him, or his heir, or, in a lesser degree, his father's elder full brother, or any kinsman who has given marriage-cattle on his behalf. 'If a man has given me cattle for marriage then he has authority over me (*je ngula gwange*)[1] for cattle are important (*mbale*).'

If a senior is at fault (for example, an heir who neglects his wards) the shades may, in theory, punish him also, but more often any misfortune that befalls him is attributed to the just wrath of his neighbours who watch over the interests of the dead man's children. The idea that misfortunes spring from the anger of the living is strong; indeed, one of our best informants, Angumbwike, maintained that 'the shades never act alone', and Mwakwelinja, an old man, said: 'It is really we who get angry, but the shades help a little because they are always with us; we always dream of them.'

The shades are 'the fathers' (*basate*), and prayers are addressed 775
primarily to the men of the lineage, but a father's sister is also 782
classed as a 'father'. Some informants denied that a mother could bring sickness on her children:

'Women never murmur against their children, only the father, the 776
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[1] Literally, 'he is my grass-cut'.

783 spit' and 'to forgive'. *Ukuputa* means 'to blow out water' and *ukuputa* (the reflexive form) means 'to pray', with the implication of confessing whatever anger or grudge a man may have in his heart. Full confessions both by the wrongdoer and by seniors who have been angry are held to be essential to the lifting of the misfortune.

774 The man who prays represents the living members of the lineage
783 and he calls on his immediate seniors, who are dead, for support.
613 'You, Father, you my elder brother, you so-and-so (his grandfather) stand by me, help me, do not be angry, here I am, your child, your younger brother. I am above here, it was not I who killed you but Kyala alone.'

He may also remonstrate with the shades, asking why they should afflict the living. *Ukwilomeya* (lit. 'to cause oneself to blame', from the root *ukulomela* 'to scold' or 'to blame') is used to mean 'to sacrifice', and the conception of remonstrating with, or scolding, troublesome shades is an element of Nyakyusa sacrifice.

783 If beer has been prepared, a libation is poured out either on the
●782 hearth-bricks or in the banana grove nearest the door of the house, which is used by the owner as his sacred grove (*ulujinja lyale ulukwa*). If an animal is sacrificed the blood must soak into the earth for, as already indicated, the 'earth is the shade's'. Furthermore, the rest of the beer or the fish and the *ipa nsupa* meat from the forelegs of the beast[1] is left overnight on the ground in the sacred grove, more rarely under the officiant's bed, and eaten or drunk in the morning by young boys of the lineage, grandsons[2] of the last deceased, for they are 'the comrades of the shades'. Other people may finish up the beer or meat, but wives of the lineage may not touch it: they seclude themselves in their huts and remain silent during the ritual, for 'they fear their fathers-in-law (*ababile ababamwenu*)'.

783 The proper person to approach the shades is (among commoners) the senior member of a lineage of three generations; but
613 if he lives at a considerable distance—perhaps twenty miles or more away—then a junior may pray on his own account, only asking help from his senior in cases of serious illness. 'If father and son, or brothers, live far apart, as here in Selya and at Mwaya

[71]

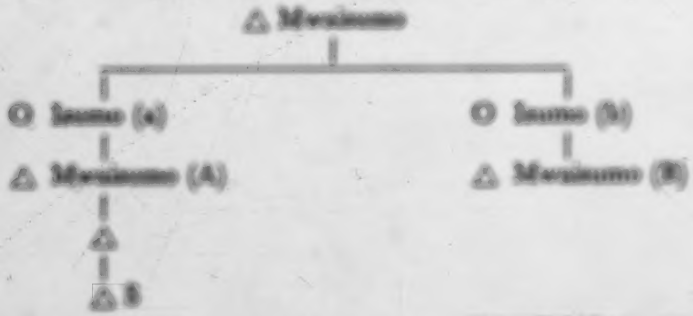
[1] The cut is the same as the Kinna (*ukwipanga*) which is sacred in a Pondo sacrifice. Cf. W. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 143. Nyakyusa informants denied that the gall is of importance in their ritual as it is among the Ngoni and Tswa.

[2] One case was recorded of a son of the last deceased, still a small child, assisting the sacrificial beer.

2: Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1937 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

sister immediately older than herself, the sister's daughter, and the sister immediately younger than herself, took part.

At the ritual of spearing, the principals are the children and grandchildren of the slayer and the slain, their brothers, their mother's kin (*abipwa*) and their wives. We were not able to watch any case of treatment against *ukulanga* and are not certain exactly how far the infection is thought to spread. Our informants were agreed that the number of kinsmen concerned is less than in a twin ritual, but we traced one case in which a minor chief, Mwainumo (B.), forbade the father of a man who had killed S., the great grandson of Mwainumo's mother's sister, to enter his country lest he spread disease among his relatives.



At a ritual to 'wet the rope' those concerned are the descendants of the one who has been bound and their wives, *ukilanga* and *ukilanga*' children. At the one ritual we saw there were present 27 members of the dead man's own lineage (3 sons, 2 younger half-brothers, 1 full sister, 4 half-sisters, 3 sons, 3 daughters, 2 grandsons, 7 granddaughters), one wife, the wives of 4 sons, one father's sister's son, one son and 6 daughters of his sisters or half-sisters.

The ritual for protection against sorcery which we attended was performed at the home of the senior brother (heir to his father) of the dead woman. There were present her two brothers, their wives and children; her father's brother's daughter; two wives and one daughter of her sister's sons; her mother, two of her mother's brothers with their wives and children; two of her mother's sisters and the daughters of one of them. Her husband (who lived next door) could not take the medicine at his in-law's house, but some was sent for him to use at his home with his wives and kindfolk.

In the simple ritual of prayer (i) the shades the senior kinsman who offers the prayer and blows out water are alone but, if there

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FM17 Ngonde FM17
Nyakyusa

782 has been a quarrel in the family, those members of the lineage
602 who have been at variance must attend and share the meat or beer, and bless one another. Grandchildren, 'comrades of the shades', must eat the offering left overnight in the banana grove.

593 If a son has quarrelled with his father and comes to beg pardon
621 the father calls his neighbours who must be present and partake of a
783 feast and bless the young man. 'If father and son just agree with one another and people do not eat anything, then the son will not be settled in well.'

595 At a puberty-marriage ritual the principals are the nubile girl
621 and her father or brother, her husband, and sometimes her mother
602 or mother-in-law. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest son's wife, or with her eldest daughter, if she is initiated at home. At an ordinary birth the principals are the mother and infant.

769 Besides these principals who undergo the full ritual there are
602 many minor actors. At a funeral there are the grave-diggers who,
621 traditionally among the Nyakyusa, were mature men, relatives or village neighbours.[1] They wash after the burial and are rewarded with a special leg of the funeral beef. As we have seen, the affines (*abale*), that is the fathers-in-law and sons-in-law of the deceased or of 'the owner of the funeral', come with cattle to kill or cloth. When a woman dies, her husband and her father, or her brother, kill cattle, and their affines bring cloths or, occasionally, cattle. Kinsmen—members of the lineage and their wives—and neighbours bring gifts of food to cook for the crowd of mourners, and small gifts of millet which are presented to the shade and used for making the ritual beer. After an abnormal birth, village neighbours have their legs splashed with washing medicine but do not
646 drink medicine or shave. The cattle of the village are also
647 splashed. At the puberty ritual the bride's maids keep her company during her seclusion. The co-wives and neighbours of her
621 mother and mother-in-law assist in instructing her, and the neigh-
602 bours of her father join with him first in scolding her and then in giving her gifts. Her father-in-law is identified with his brothers and his father's brothers' sons, whom she avoids, as well as his sisters, and her mother-in-law's brothers, and sisters' husbands. They, in turn, avoid her sisters, as well as herself.

621 By the 'congregation' we mean those who attend rituals to ex-
783 press sympathy, and whose presence is felt to be necessary to the

[1] In Ngonde they are skinned, cross-cousins.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

success of the ritual, but who do not play any specially defined 621
part. As we have seen, all who are reckoned kinsmen and all fellow 788
villagers must attend a funeral, and a large crowd enhances the status of the kinsmen of the deceased. At a puberty and marriage ritual the 'congregation' is much smaller but is nevertheless important, as is shown by the complaint of the girl marrying a Christian that if she were not initiated she would not be famed. At other rituals all who attend are actors.

The officiants (*abanyage*) for death, puberty and marriage, and 791
birth rituals are almost always elderly women who, by their own choice, have learnt the medicines and observances from some older *anyage* by acting as her assistant. We came across only one man who acted as *anyage* in death and puberty rituals, though at the rituals of spearing, binding with ropes, and protection against sorcery men are more common than women. Often all the elderly women are referred to as '*abanyage*' for 'they help the *anyage*', but the one who has been called upon to provide the medicines and organize the proceedings, and who is paid for her trouble, is clearly recognized. Sometimes she is a kinswoman of the 'owner' of the ritual—if a member of the lineage knows the medicines she will carry out the rituals for all her kin, as did Syungu, wife of Chief Porokoto's half-brother—but she is not necessarily a relative. It is knowledge, not kinship connections, that qualify her. She is the final arbitrator on procedure, and is insistent on exact observance of the details. Because knowledge of medicines is so important Nyakyusa often refer to the officiant at a ritual as *anyanga*, a doctor, but *anyage* is the more precise word since *anyanga* has other applications.

On the occasion of prayer in sickness, and in the ritual of recon- 791
ciliation, no specialist *anyage* is necessary. The senior kinsman of a 782
lineage prays to his shades direct, and a father and his neighbours 783
receive and bless an erring son without the mediation of any priest; but the doctor called in to treat a sick man may press the kinsmen to confess their anger and bless one another (as Mwakimale did in the case quoted) and come very close to organizing a ritual of reconciliation.

At a marriage ritual there is a 'go-between' (*anyage*) represent- 585
ing the bride's father and one representing the groom, and, besides their legal function as witnesses to the passage of cattle, they help [675]
the officiant to organize the ritual, and are specifically responsible for conveying invitations to the feasts. The wife of the groom's 'go-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

My bull was wounded. When I tried to kill it, it troubled me, it did not die. I took a banana sapling and chewed it and prayed to my fathers, saying: 'This bull has been wounded because it was destroying people's crops. I am killing it because the people are angry with me and they might spear me in the night if I don't kill it.' My son struck it the third time, then it bellowed and I said: 'Yes, they have heard my prayer,' and it fell down and died. The shades were preventing it dying because they liked it to be alive. The whole country liked this bull because of its beautiful bellowing. 775 782

The shades are very real to an old man like Mwakwelebeja: 775

We live with the shades, constantly the fathers come to us, and also a wife who has died. The shades rise and come to us. In the morning I wake up and tell my wife the shades came to me, I slept with them, and with the wife who has died.

QUESTION: Why do they come?

MWAKWELEBEJA: You just dream. Sometimes they speak something, and in the morning I tell my wife they said so-and-so. Sometimes they bring food. If a sick man dreams that he eats their food he will die. If he dreams that he visits them and they drive him away he will recover. Sometimes I dream of my father or of my mother, sometimes of the villagers, So-and-so, and So-and-so. Yes, we fear to dream of the shades, even if we don't eat food. We fear that if they come often we will follow them. 775 828

And even to young men like Kititu they seem near:

Yes, the shades come to us in dreams at night. Perhaps I dream of my father who has died, he appears, he gives me a cow, I wonder, it seems that I have gained that cow. I rejoice and am glad. This is all in a dream. Perhaps my mother has died and I dream of her. She gives me food as it were on this table. I eat, I drink beer with her. Our grandfathers used to dream of war. When the Ngoni were in the country they would dream that they and the shades, the fathers who had died, were fighting with the Ngoni; in the dream they would spear them and the blood would appear. All men dream, but those whose dreams come true we call *abasololi*—prophets. These men sometimes dream of public matters, as well as private, they go to Kasitile [the priest] and say: 'Hunger is coming, carry out the ritual in the sacred grove.' Then they take a cow, bananas, and milk to the sacred grove as Kasitile says. Then there are those who fall into a fit and the friends of such a man go to Kasitile and tell what he said. [791]

Perhaps I dream of my father or grandfather, and he comes and gives me food. I know him by his appearance in the dream. Perhaps my grandfather died while I was still a child, but I know him by his dreams

V. CAUSES OF MISFORTUNE

761 *(a) The death of Katanya*

The following account of the death of Katanya is quoted in full
[28] because it illustrates how several possible causes of misfortune were considered. Possible causes mentioned were:

(a) The anger of his junior kinsmen
(b) The witchcraft of his wives
(c) The anger of his shades
(d) The anger of his neighbours because he had given them too small a cut of a bull killed as a sacrifice to his shades
(e) The adultery of his son with three of his wives
(f) The sorcery of his half-brother's son, Mwamukinga, with whom there was a long-standing quarrel over inheritance and whom he had accused of killing his (Mwamukinga's) full brother
(g) The sorcery of the Chief Mwalinjo, for Katanya, a man of the neighbouring Chief Mwaipopo, had built and cultivated on land claimed by both Mwalinjo and Mwaipopo

Record of G. W., 4/1/38

761 Angumbwike told me at midday that Katanya had died. He was a village headman of Mwaipopo, the fellow of Mwainyopolela. His case (*mapue*) was thus:

The millet did not grow in his field, so he called all his children to
782 his homestead and killed a big bull for them, saying: 'Perhaps my children are angry at home. Perhaps my wives have worked witchcraft.' But to the neighbours he gave one leg and the children at home ate the rest. He did not, however, live long. He died immediately. It is said that the meat is still there. They have not eaten it. Such is the case of his death.

Kasitile, when I called on him yesterday, was out and his wife said he had gone to see Katanya who was ill.

Later in the day—4.1.38. Likuyila came in and I asked about Katanya's death.

But he has not died, he is still just alive. We heard that the millet
[787] failed in his field and the maize and beans in all his gardens. They all failed. One of his wives went into a trance repeatedly. She said: 'Those beneath are angry. Seek a bull and kill it.' Then he sought one, but
761 now they have killed him. Perhaps he stinted his fellows in the village
578 of meat, because if a man kills his animal alone and his fellows hear

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F2617 Ngonde F2617
Nyakyusa

that he has killed, they are astonished and say: 'He should have called 781
us. Does he perform ritual alone?' 678

QUESTION: But why were those beneath angry in the first place? They are not angry without cause.

LEKUTULA: Indeed, they are never angry without cause. There is always some wrong. But we do not know what it is in this case. If you do not kill cattle for your father's burial they are always angry. But we do not know what wrong Katanya committed to make them angry.

Later Mwanilu came in. He told me that Katanya is still alive, but 786
perhaps he will die this evening. We do not speak with him. He is just 782
breathing. We only ask his wives: 'Does he sleep?' The case is thus: the millet failed in his field and he said: 'I shall pray to my shades and it will grow again.' Then he went to a certain man to get his big bull and gave him a cow in calf, saying: 'Take this and give me your bull, 691
and later they will give him a little calf worth you. The bull was very big. He killed it. Before he did so he was already slightly ill, but when he had killed it the illness became very much worse. We say they have bewitched him because he stirred his fellows in the village. But they themselves deny it, saying: 'But we always kill and eat ourselves alone. I, Mwainyapulelo, killed my animal and ate it alone. Have I died 782
therefore? According to the custom, if I have killed my beast as a sacrifice (*jakuipatula*) then I give my fellows one leg.'

QUESTION: Did Katanya not do so?

MWANIPU: No, Katanya did not give them any. He ate alone. Some who men give the chief the breast because the chief is the owner of the country. Katanya did not give him that. Yes, if someone dies then the chief is usually given the breast. But when a beast is killed for sacrifice, no one having died, then many eat by themselves. The meatmen give to the chief.

QUESTION: Did he inquire of a diviner or not?

MWANIPU: We do not know. Some inquire of a diviner. Some think 787
for themselves that the fathers are shaking them. Concerning his death, 789
we are only speculating, saying: 'Perhaps they have bewitched him. 761
They were angry on account of the meat.' But perhaps it is sorcery. See, he was sweating very much on his face. Let him die. We will look in his belly. Perhaps he has been speared. They have bewitched him. Perhaps it is sorcery. We only speculate.

In the morning Mwaipupo (the chief) was very, very angry. He said: 763
'Why have you gathered together, you people? Go off home. Do you want to finish off a dying man? It is taboo to gather together. First let a man die, then come to lament the death.'

QUESTION: Is it a Nyakyusa custom to be angry if people gather together at a sick man's house? Is it as if they bewitch him?

MWANIPU: Yes.

763 Question: Why the gathering?

Mwaseni: We were startled to hear that he had died. They raised the lament of death in the morning and his cattle were home when Kaitile and I were on the pasture land. We were startled to see Kasanya's cattle going home and said: 'He has died.' But his relatives saw that he had not died. They said it is taboo to lament when someone is still alive.

Question: Why do cows come home when a man dies?

Mwaseni: It is a form of mourning. They should also weep and say farewell. He had property. For if I, Mwasile, die, though I do not have cattle myself, yet because I am the son of Mwaipopo cattle are
764 killed at the funeral. It is impressive. But if I were a commoner and
765 had no cattle, then the funeral would be a flop. There would be no meat and people would say: 'He has not yet died, he has left one head.' They must die cattle to kill. If an important commoner dies, one who has cattle, then his funeral is impressive. People dance at his homestead and say: 'Our fellow, who has died, was a strong man who danced the war-dance in the homesteads.' And if he was tough in disputes, if he always got the better of them and no one ever got his cow, then they say: 'A tough fellow has died. May he leave a son as tough as himself. He died with his toughness.' They praise him.

● 766 Question: Tell me about the killing of Kasanya's bull.

Mwaseni: He killed the bull without telling his neighbours, but when he poured out the beer he called Mwainyapoleta and Kapugum and two others. There were four. He had built in Bushali village in which there are ten homesteads, but, customarily, we do not call all the neighbours, only those who are nearer. Only if I have killed a full-grown beast do I call them all and give them a leg. Yes, it was a big bull and perhaps it is on account of that that they are angry. When they came they were startled, saying: 'They are drinking beer! And there is meat lying outside!' They entered and drank a little. Then Kasanya divided the meat for his relatives and took his own. He gave to Mwainyapoleta and his fellows three ribs. Then M. said to his three fellows: 'Let us go home. I will not take this little piece of meat.' So they all went away. The other three ate the meat, only M. did not.

Question: So they were angry?

764 Mwaseni: Perhaps! We say sometimes: 'They were angry and ate
767 him.' But perhaps it was sorcery, because just now three snakes entered the house of his chief wife—the black snakes. One entered and they killed it. Another entered and they killed it. Then they caught the third to take to a doctor, the son of Mwakanyamale. The doctor said: 'This snake is sorcery,' and he will find a medicine to give them to drink that the illness may be slight. But he has not yet done so.

Mbwaso: 'I am ashamed, and also I am very angry, because people 756
say it is I who am working sorcery against them, although when they 578
were ill I carried them to my house.'[1]

Mpoma turned back on the road when they sent medicine for the sick man (i.e. he did not go to the sick man).

A woman: 'Why do they work sorcery against one another when they are both ill?'

Another woman: 'The wives of Mfikule say Mpoma says: "Let me be alone, let me kill all of them and get everything for myself by running."'

Mwamunyuka: 'Since I carried him to my place I said the illness would not be serious. He also sent a message to *your* place, Mpoma, saying that he was ill, and asking for some milk, but you did not send any.'

Mbwaso: 'He *was* told so.'

Ten women: 'The widows fight with Mpoma. They say: "You have sent a medicine to work sorcery against your fellows."'

Kanyamale: 'Also they speak of his wrongdoing, in not approaching the sick man.'

Another woman: 'Yes, and also you are angry.'

Mbwaso: 'Yes, when they said the present patient was still ill, I prayed, I said aloud: "What am I doing? Get away, what am I doing?" and I sent a medicine and he recovered.'

A woman: 'We consulted an oracle, it said: "It is Mwakyusa who 787
is angry," but I said: "What is he angry about?" The oracle said: "He is angry on account of cattle." He says: "Why does he fear me when he has taken cattle?" So we said: "Mwakyusa is angry because he has taken cattle."'

Ten Mazwaso (Mwakyusa's slaves): 'We like him (the shade), let 753
him come.'

Woman: 'They are jealous of the sick man [i.e. a third cause suggested. The unreasonable jealousy of his neighbours]. He dies like his father. People say: "He sees meat in our houses, he borrows our cloths," and he dies of their unreasonable jealousy (*ukulisa*)[2]'

The women and the men said: 'Thank you, Mwakisunde, because you have made us think of these things [he had taken the initiative in prayer]. You make us make friends, and make us love one another, and bless one another.'

Mwakisunde spoke, saying: 'There are many, many roads on which people travel and there is one road through which illness comes.' They 782 •
say that if many people are with a sick man then the illness spreads.

They also prayed, confirming their anger in the case of Kanyamale, [781]

[1] 'It is the custom to carry people to the "father", the head of the family, when very sick. This is not supposed to cure them, but it is customary (*ukulisa*). That is where we all are ill, at their father's place.'

2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

•762 the wife of Mpoma, but about this I do not know much. When they
[761] stopped speaking Kanyumale was ill. Then her husband charged her
759 with witchcraft and she said: 'What is the case about? I have been ill
since we came from confining anger.' Then Kanyumale grew milky
and gathered up her mats and went with them to her child's place.
Mpoma said: 'I must follow her,' but his fellows mothed him and he
turned back. Then he borrowed a spear from his fellows and went to
drive off the game which were eating his crops. When he found no
animals he went home. On his return, when he was still outside, he
heard the wives whispering about some case. He asked them to open
the door for him, but they were silent and did not open the door of the
hut. Then he pushed it open. When he entered the hut he closed it and
he cross-examined the wives, asking what they were talking about. One
said: 'I was just asleep.' He said: 'With whom were you speaking?
You are hiding a man in this house.' One woman got up immediately
and opened the door. Mpoma cross-examined them hotly. He said:
'Why did you open the door if indeed there is no man in the hut?'
Mpoma got in a passion and went elsewhere. He returned again and
said: 'Marry the child. I will not destroy him,' and he went away alone.
[27] He took the case to Mwakinaya, the village headman, and lost it. Then
the court said: 'You get the children. Let them come here, though their
mother is not here.'

757 Later on it was like this: Mwakisonde went to attend to the medicines
759 to give to the sick man to drink; they began by putting powdered medi-
cines in a pot, then they put in some water, then they put in three sorts
of powdered medicine, one black and two red. Mwakisonde, because
he was the doctor, began; he put in the water first. Mpoma, the senior,
followed him, then all the others. When the water boiled, they stirred
up porridge with a spoon, then they gave the sick man some to drink,
and the relatives drank. If there were one who was working sorcery
against his fellows, he would die when he drank that medicine. But the
sick man, before he drank this medicine, drank something else. When
the water boiled, they mixed a medicine and scarified themselves all
over their bodies.

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

opened a trading store at Karonga, under Mr. Monteith Fotheringham, a man of great vigour and capacity. His presence aroused the hostility of the Arabs, who feared the loss of their slaving profits, and a period of fighting followed, in which the Konde took sides with the white man as their one hope. After a great encounter with their enemies, the defeated Konde took refuge in the Kambwe lagoon, the dry reeds on the margin of which were set on fire by the victors. The helpless natives leaped into the water, where many were drowned, and numbers were taken by the crocodiles which swarmed in the lagoon. In 1895 a small force was moved up by Sir Harry Johnston, High Commissioner for the newly formed British Protectorate, and the Arabs were defeated, and their leader, Mlozi, hanged the same day. From that time the Konde have progressed in peace under the influence of Government, Trade, and Missions. 175

One incident, very striking in itself, may be given as indicating the influence of Chungu. On one of her trips the *Domira*, the steamer of the African Lakes Corporation, went ashore on the sands near Karonga. Vigorous but unsuccessful efforts were made, with the help of great gangs of natives, to float her; and at length Chungu was asked to lend his powerful aid. This was Chungu Mwakasungula II. Taking with him a white cock, he went with his councillors to where the stranded steamer lay helpless on the sand. The following prayer, which he offered, was given to 175 782 643

5: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

me by the son of one of the councillors who stood near him:

> "Art Thou angry with me, O God, who didst redeem me from slavery? The Angoni mocked me, the Arabs mocked me; then didst Thou cause me to see these mighty ones (the Europeans); and I said, 'Rejoice, for God has heard my prayers.' Who, then, of my ancestors is angry? Against whom have I sinned? For it is they who are my helpers in speaking to Thee. Many of them died by the spear; they saw their families destroyed; they suffered hunger again and again, before the mighty ones came. Now, O God, be merciful, and let the feet of these men come up out of the water."

Then taking water in his mouth he squirted it north and south saying, "I am lord of that country, I Mogemo: I am lord of that country, I Kyabera," to which the assembled councillors responded, "E! Mogemo; E! Kyabera." Then whirling the cock over his head and dipping it in the water, he gave the signal to the men hanging on the ropes to pull. And the steamer floated off into the water!

Meantime in the north internal warfare went on intermittently, but no man of outstanding capacity arose to give cohesion to the various families of the Nyakyusa. Before the arrival of the Moravian missionaries in the area in 1891, various Europeans visited the district. Hunters came and went, and for a brief space there was a station of the Livingstonia Mission not far from Tukuyu. In 1893 the German

3: Mackenzie M-S (co. 1923) 1925
F3617 Bigonde F3617

441 marriage settlement; the wealth some one has brought from the South; or perhaps they exchange impressions of Europeans they have worked for—a subject into which a great deal of humour can be packed; for it must not be imagined that the white man is taken too seriously. His little foibles, his often none too good temper, his haste to get a job done, and above all his cool assumption of unquestioned superiority, supply endless fun to the village joker. "Basta as she is spoke" by some Europeans gladdens the weary hours for many a humorously inclined native.

241 Should the rains be late, the situation may be serious, for not only does the heat continue, but the harvest will be correspondingly late, and there is dark fear lest the supplies in the barns, intended to last until March, should have to do until April is well on. Public prayer is offered, led by the chief. The preliminary ceremonies have been attended to, and as soon as the first rains fall all sally out with the first streak of dawn to begin the year's work. From a score of small crofts one may hear the long happy shout of the men, and the shrill call of the women, as they toil in the early morning; but as the day advances and the heat increases, the shouting dies away, and every one puts the last ounce of energy into the task in hand. Henceforward, for about three months, the native gives all his attention to his crops; for as the season advances, and the grain begins to grow, the weeds come up also in wild profusion, and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F3517 Ngonde F3517

sie, as much privacy as possible being secured in the universal banana grove: and always in a sitting, not a lying position.

A difficult birth is a serious misfortune for the mother. Births are normally easy, and difficult labour indicates the wrath of the spirits for evil done. Medicine is in all cases given to facilitate delivery, and if this fails other means must be tried. A message is sent to the husband and the father of the woman, and prayer, without ceremony, for the matter is urgent, is offered by both men:

> "Ye fathers and ancestors, and ye who are of the far past, let this child be born safely. If I have sinned, be merciful; and if ye will not be merciful, kill me, but let the woman and the child live."

While thus praying he has been chewing the pith of a banana leaf, and at the end he takes water into his mouth, which he squirts out, saying, "Let my sin be carried away," and throws on the roof the chewed pith; for if he is not by birth the representative of the family he has no natural right to pray, but the ceremony of chewing and throwing on the roof averts evil consequences.

If all this fails it is clear that the woman has sinned; and her only hope of life for herself and her child lies in confession. The midwife takes a number of small sticks which she throws on the ground one by one, inviting the suffering woman to name the men with whom she has consorted. Natives assert emphatically that birth becomes easier after confession;

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F917 Ngonde F917

chief. For Changa must not die a natural death; the lani would be turned into water should such a calamity be allowed to happen. Having decided that the illness is really grave, the councillors, one by one, give their voice in the formula, "*Sikn na mwaka*," literally, day and year; but actually meaning, "Does God die?" In solemn procession these terrible persons enter the house, and, having turned out the chief's wives, lay him down on the floor. Two keep him in that posture, while a third stops his breath by holding his mouth and nostrils, a fourth meanwhile gently slapping him all over the body until the life has gone out of him.

No announcement of the death was made. One of the councillors lived in the royal dwelling, so that if any came to consult Changa a response might be given, and as he was rarely seen by common men, it was easy to keep up the deception. The councillors with their own hands digged the grave, and on their shoulders, at midnight, carried the body, anointed with lion fat, and enswathed in cloth, to the place of burial. Six or eight slaves, who did not return, went with them. Four went down into the grave to receive the body of their dead master, two at the head and two at the feet, and, in sitting position, held him in their arms. The remaining slaves being placed on the top, the soil was filled in on living and dead.

After the lapse of about a month, a big iron drum, now lost, was beaten, and it conveyed only one message to the people. "*Katebite ku Mphande*," Mphande (the royal residence) has done its work;

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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231 a cow about to be delivered of a calf was rushed down to running water, and the calf, when delivered, immediately submerged. Then cow and owner ran for their lives, and when the scourge had passed over, the owner, if he survived, took the calf out of the water, resuscitated it, and let it go. The explanation given to me by a medical colleague of the conditions under which such a thing is possible, render it highly probable that if ever it occurred at all, it must have been very rarely, and even less in times of war than in times of peace. What is interesting, however, is the fact that the physiological possibility of it is known to the natives. I have not met anyone who has seen it done.

241 *Agriculture.*—St. Paul would almost certainly have 771 told the Konde that they were "too religious"; not because he would have seen tokens of their religiousness in the streets and villages; no mere passer-by, and no indifferent foreigner, ever sees that. One must look deep, and live long among them, before that side of their life reveals itself to him with any fulness. There is hardly an act of theirs that is not accompanied by a ceremony of some kind, if that is religion, and to them it undoubtedly is. Agriculture is a highly religious occupation on that view, but hardly more so than many others. Leaving native Christians aside, the great majority of the people consult a diviner before beginning to hoe. He may say that all is well; or he may discover that some spirit stands in the way of a good crop, and must be propitiated; or that a certain piece of ground is bewitched, and no good will come of hoeing it until the spell has been removed.

[787] 241 782

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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If a spirit is to be propitiated, beer is poured out and petition made as follows: 241 782

"Ye fathers, I am about to sow my seed. How can it grow if ye kill what I put into the ground? If ye are gracious to me, let me see the harvest."

Finishing his oblations with the usual squirting of water from the mouth, he next day sows his seed in confidence. If there are no obstacles from the spirits he does not pray. Why should he? There is nothing to pray about.

The ceremonies are practically the same all over the Konde country, but many chiefs have special practices of their own. A very picturesque ceremony is that of the chief Mwniumo. When the early rains have fallen, and the ground has been hoed, chief and people go to the grave of the ancestral chiefs, carrying their shields of ox-hide. The chief and his headmen, standing in rows, raise their shields above their heads, and Mwniumo, taking water into his mouth, squirts it upwards, and prays for a good harvest. Immediately all the people break out into rejoicing, dancing, shouting, blowing bamboo whistles, and drumming. The seed may now be sown. 241 782 522

The first hoeing is *ulwalwa*, gathering the heaps of dry rubbish and burning them. But even this is not done without ceremony. Every man goes to the doctor to get medicine, which is put into the biggest heap in his garden; then, when the wife of the village headman has set fire to one of the heaps, which must not be one of those in her husband's garden, all the 241 787

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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CHAPTER X

Hunting & Fishing

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STRICT game laws have made hunting a thing of the past; or at best it is done secretly, when it is not a wild, excited scramble after some unfortunate animal that has wandered into the gardens in search of food. Before the white man took over the country, however, hunting was an important and regular part of the year's work. The diviner fixed upon a favourable day for setting out, and the whole community met for the preliminary ceremonies, when prayer was offered to the spirits, and through them to God. All quarrels must be made up before the hunters set out, and there must be no sin or strife in the village while they are absent, else they will not all come back alive. In hunting, as in every important act of his life, the Konde must be sure of the goodwill of the spirits, for a single angry spirit may spoil a whole season's work, and render abortive every effort of the hunter, just as he may bring to nothing every other kind of activity. This permanent possibility of interference from the underworld is one of the fundamental facts of the inner life of the people, and real understanding of the native mind does not begin until this elementary fact has been grasped.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (on. 1923) 1923
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224 hunter received a cow, not as compensation for the tusks, but as a reward for his skill; the chief took the tusks without question; they were his *ensawa* (skill).

224 251 The flesh was roasted on the field, over a slow fire. Sticks were fixed in the ground, and a kind of trestle made, perhaps about two feet high, under which a great fire was kindled, and the flesh, cut into long strips, placed over it. In this condition it keeps good for months, but it requires prolonged cooking when it is to be eaten. This method of preserving the flesh is used to-day, when a European makes a good kill.

224 Dogs were employed for hunting pigs and smaller animals. The dog chased the game, which, after a little, turned and chased the dog, and was led to where the hunters were waiting with spears. Dogs were used also for tracking, and are said to follow all but the largest animals. There are large dogs of European breed, which chase leopards, usually in couples, but not always do both dogs return from the chase, and sometimes neither.

224 787 782 An unsuccessful hunting season was a matter for careful inquiry; for there must have been a cause, and it was the duty of the diviner to find it. Generally it was due to the never-failing trouble in the spirit-land, and when the diviner discovered the names of the individual spirits to whose meticulous ill-temper the hunting fiasco was to be attributed, arrangements were made for their propitiation. Beer was made, and each hunter took a small piece of the flesh of the animal he was specially expert in killing; and the

2: Mackenzie M-S (on. 1925) 1925
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whole company repaired again to the hunting ground, where they built a hut under a large tree. The leader cooked native porridge, which was eaten along with beer and honey, when the spirits had had their due. A small heap of the porridge was set down with a little honey poured over it, and a small piece of flesh was laid beside it. Each ancestor was named, as his portion was laid out, and prayer was offered: 224 787 782

> "Ye fathers, we have brought this beer and food for you. Why are you angry? Neither pig, nor bushbuck, nor any other animal falls into our traps. Give them to us, ye who give us all. In our gardens there is maize and millet and all things else. Why then do you hinder us now? Why are our traps empty? Be merciful to us. God be merciful to us, and go to the Bawanga" (a neighbouring tribe).

After this ceremony, the hunt is resumed with fresh courage and new hopes, and possibly a great success.

Lion and leopard hunting is not, of course, prohibited by the game laws, and they are hunted or trapped with frequent success. A short time ago a leopard skin was brought to me, evil-smelling, and ruined by the spear-holes which marked a fierce encounter; and one of the hunters, showing me where the leopard had leaped upon him, begged for a little medicine to apply to his wounds. The idea that his adventure made him an interesting person was not in all his thoughts. 224

When a trap is used, it is made of very strong timber, and divided into two portions. In one the live bait is

3: Mackenzie M-S (cn. 1925) 1925
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226 Women have dipping baskets without top or bottom, which they dip at random, and when fish is plentiful they get a good catch. Boys prepare bunches of worms fastened to a cord and thrown into the stream. Sitting down on the banks, they sing or whistle to attract the fish. A sharp pull when a nibble is felt lands the unwary fish.

Nets large and small are in use on the lake. The larger are furnished with stone sinkers and wood floats, and are operated very much as in Europe, a canoe feeding out the net, which is hauled in from both ends with the catch enclosed. The smaller nets are sometimes operated by one man, heavier ones requiring two; and there are tiny dipping nets, of which a man will sometimes have one in each hand. Nets must be treated with medicine before being used. The Abakisi, a small tribe living at Mateme near the north end of the lake, stalk the fish under water, and are said to catch all kinds in this way.

226 782 In many places the first fish caught is not sent to the village, but is cooked and given to little children to eat, the bones being thrown back into the water. The idea is that this is one way of giving the spirits their portion; I have already pointed out that beer offered to the spirits is in some families poured into the hands of children, who drink it, though adults may not do so. And flesh offered at the family place of prayer (the *ikiyisija*) is similarly given next day to children, who are told that it is the gift of their grandfather.

251 The remainder of the catch is dried over a slow

J. Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
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of these are expressed in archaic language, which is not in use at all to-day, except in these and similar sayings. Thus we have, "*Cikinde ko ni*," the Great One is everywhere; "*Gwende mwene*," go where you will (you will hear of God). "*Imbwa yiburwa pa lwigi*," literally means, the dog is fighting at the door, but the actual meaning is, God is within you. Expressions like these are very numerous, and, even in their archaic form, are in common use every day.

The names in use for the Deity give some indication of how He is regarded. The name most commonly used in Konde is *Kyala*, but although it is now almost exclusively used in public worship, in the translation of the Scriptures, and in hymns, it is, perhaps, the weakest of all the Divine names. For it may be applied to persons in whom the Deity dwells, or to men who, though they lived on earth, were yet *Kyala*. The name is sometimes applied to white men, who are dangerous because they are believed to have closer relations with the source of all power than common men have. Other names are *Tewende*, the Owner of all things; *Nkwemuke*, the Undying One; *Chata*, the Originator; *Kyashiri*, the Unseen; *Kaleri*, He who is everywhere present. The name *Ndewembwike* is the one used on solemn occasions, and comes from the verb *kutewembeka*, to create in a sense in which God only can. *Mperi*, again, is the Maker, applied to God only, though the verb from which it is derived may be applied to men also.

Prayer is addressed directly to the ancestral spirits, who in many cases are conceived as having power of

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

782 themselves to grant a petition; but more frequently they are entreated to carry the petitions to God, who alone can give what is asked for. "Why do you ask me for rain?" says Chungu, when his impatient people come to him, "God owns the rain, and only He can give it." "But," reply the people, "common men cannot pray. Pray you to your ancestors, and let them carry your prayer to God." There is, however, also direct address in the formula, "Be gracious to us, O God, and hear the prayers of those whom we have named," the reference being to the spirits, to whom the main body of the petition is addressed. At birth, prayer is offered for the welfare of the child, "May God be gracious to you, my son." The dead are with God, and the spirits who were in the underworld before the entrance there of the souls of men, see His face, "for these are they who see God." Sickness also may be a divine infliction, though it may also be due to the wrath of an offended spirit. A heathen chief who came to see me during an illness, said, "You will recover if it is God's will," words which might well be a mere echo of what he had heard from Christian teachers; but the impression they made on me was that he was expressing a pious thought from the depths of his own being.

776 When I was told that Chungu had once crossed the lake on dry land, and asked how that could be, the answer, quietly and seriously given, was that "Chungu is the man who speaks with God"; why therefore should the statement be doubted? God gives to prophets their dream-visions, and to others their

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

773 776 approach of the Angoni warriors, and where to flee for safety when they arrived. He asked for *bhang* and a pipe, and these were laid on the ground, and soon smoke was seen issuing from the earth. For *Mbasi* was not seen; they only heard his voice. Then he became communicative. "The Angoni are coming now," he told them, "go at once to Masoko with your wives and children and cattle." The unfortunate Mwakanyamata did as he was advised, only to be robbed of all his cattle by another friend of *Mbasi*, to whom the deceitful God sent word to have no mercy on the cattle of a fool like Mwakanyamata, who believed what he was told! And to this day Mwakanyamata is laughed at as the man who allowed himself to be deceived by the wiles of *Mbasi*.

According to another version, *Mbasi* was a rival claimant to Divine honours with *Ndorombwike* Himself. Originally he was a serpent, killed in the dim past by the chief Mwakibinga. *Mbasi* returned to earth as a spirit, seeking to persuade men to worship him, offering them wealth in cattle if they agreed. But men refused, "for the dead do not return." One chief, Mwatonoka, accepted the false God, but was defeated in battle by Mwakarobo, a final proof that *Mbasi* was a deceiver.

776 782 Stories of *Mbasi* and his activities are numerous. He used to do some of his own work; that is to say, instead of sending one of his prophets to demand what he wanted, he shouted from the great *ilisyeto* (grave of a chief; place of prayer) at Lubaga in Nserya, and made his own demands. Milk, beer,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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bananas, were placed at the door of Mwakindingo his prophet, and if in the morning the quantity was found to be less, it was clear to all that *Mbasi* had come to receive the offerings.

But the trick worked too often. As the fear of *Mbasi* diminished, men began to take advantage of their still credulous neighbours, and to demand in the name of the fading divinity cattle, beer, food supplies, to be sent to the places indicated by the impersonator of the God. This became so common that the Germans, who then ruled the country, interfered and put it down.

Very long ago there lived near Karonga a man called Firaguli, who after his death became a godlet, and lived on the mountain which now goes by his name. There was also a great man called Kambwe, who entered the ranks of the gods or godlets at his death, and lived in the pool a few miles from Karonga, to which in like manner he has given his name. To both of these divinities the people prayed in long-past times; and both, though able to see to the general welfare of the people, were not strong enough to punish them when evil was prevalent. When punishment was necessary, they called in the help of Mwanjebe, a minor deity of the neighbouring Henga people. Firaguli went south on a favouring breeze to invite his more powerful neighbour to come to his help; and Mwanjebe, who lived in a pool at the foot of a waterfall near the Overtoun Institution, came up on a floating island. Then smallpox broke out among the people, and if a visit to Kambwe showed

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 Of the persons officially connected with the spirits, the most important is the chief. It has already been 622 said that " Chungu is the man who speaks with God " ; 782 he is also the man who speaks with authority to the spirits. He, and all other chiefs, approach the spirits for the general good, but as heads of families they have the right to offer private prayers as well. Each head of a family may also pray for his own people ; but no man may pray so long as his father or elder brother is alive. Next, every chief has an official who may be called a priest ; he is the *unnyago*, the man whose duty it is to go daily at the order of the chief to present an offering at the grave where the last chief is buried. He does not pray ; he simply lays the offering, usually a few maize cobs, on the grave and departs. When the chief goes in person to pray, as he sometimes does, without any public ceremony, this man goes with him, hears the prayers, and knows the ritual ; and it is he who will teach the new chief his duties when the time comes for him to perform them. When, however, the chief dies, the *unnyago* is in great danger, for the spirits take possession of his person, a danger which can only be averted by a powerful medicine supplied by the doctor, and taken as soon as the chief has died. If this is not done, he becomes mad, lives in the bush, gibbering and naming all the dead chiefs of the past, including names known to no living person, but supposed to be those of long-dead chiefs, uttered by themselves through him.

778 With regard to places of worship : the " high place " is always at the grave of the dead chief ; and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

water. When, later, men came, more favoured of God, the waters retired to the lakes and pools, and there these spirits exist to this day, at enmity with men, whom they seek to destroy. On the lake, during a storm, they are still to be heard, demanding a victim to be thrown to them whom they may "eat." In the past, if a canoe was overtaken by a storm, one of the rowers was thrown into the water, whereupon the storm ceased, and the others arrived in safety.

At many places all over the district there are pools in which these spirits dwell. The most interesting is at Kisyombe, and about it many stories are told, and believed, which throw an interesting light on the Konde mind. When the chief of three generations ago was a very old man, it was prophesied that at his death the lake would recede, the fish would die, bush would grow where water was, and a great disease would carry off many of the people. And it all happened. But the lake, as it receded, left a pool in which some spirits were imprisoned. It is now partly silted up with sand, and treacherous to walk upon. If a man finds himself sinking as he walks over it, he calls out that he belongs to Kisyombe, whereupon he is pushed up from below by the water-spirits, who own Kisyombe's power. A boy who sank right through, but was returned, was directed by the spirits to give a report of all that he saw, and particularly he must insist that these spirits are *abandu* (human beings). If no sacrifice is offered the spirits take their due, by snatching at passing children; but it is long since the last child was taken. The pool at Rungwe is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XVI

The Worship of the Spirits

771 THE Konde are either a deeply religious, or a deplorably spirit-ridden people; and, having regard to some of the prayers given in this chapter and throughout the book, I am inclined to think that religious is the more correct term. It is true that the prayers are in all cases for material goods, such as health and good fortune, for rain and crops, for protection against pestilence; but if religion means a sense of dependence upon unseen powers, then it cannot be denied that the Konde are religious.

•782 776 On all great occasions, prayer and offerings are made; but also when a spirit is believed to be angry: if there is quarrelling in the family; if a man beats his wife; if a girl has arrived at puberty, or a marriage has been arranged, without their being consulted; if a woman has been unfaithful to her husband; if a man neglect his parents; if ceremonies are neglected; or the 776 spirits themselves forgotten. Their wrath is shown very specially by a disease of the lips breaking out on the guilty person, and by fever; but also in many other ways; by the failure of the beer to ferment, by sickness, by a storm in which some one is drowned, by

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

failure of crops, of increase of livestock, of children, by too little or too much rain, or by ill-success in hunting or fishing; and, very emphatically, by a sudden death.

The prayer and ceremony at the presentation of a new-born child have already been given. More pathetic is the prayer offered when a child is ill. Standing at the sacred banana grove, the family representative prays:

> "... and now this little one whom I hold in my hands, be gracious to him. He [she] has come into a world of sickness, of cold, of all the troubles that you yourselves were familiar with. Let him lie in peace. Let none in the spirit-land be angry with him. To-morrow he will be full-grown, and he will bring you beer, flesh, flour. Pray to God for him. O God, who art Lord of all, let thy breath be cool upon him (liti, Let thy spittle be cool upon him)."

Then, spitting on the child's breast and back, he says:

> "And thou child, may there be life in thee. God be gracious unto thee. Live in peace and be not wearied."

Not all diseases are due to the anger of the spirits; a natural illness is one that yields to treatment. It is the act of God, and when the right medicine has been used, cure will follow, for God does not need to be entreated as the spirits do. Yet the spirits carry their petitions to God, as if He did need to be entreated,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•782 but the Konde see no contradiction there. If a diviner has to be consulted, the process is long, and the result not certain, at least at first. The omission of a name from the list of ancestors may cause delay, for the omitted one will refuse to go to God with the petition, and unanimity is of the very essence of prayer. Or, again, the wrong person may offer the prayer and offerings which follow upon discovery, by the diviner, of the offended spirit; this is so important that I have known a man go a hundred and forty miles to his elder brother, to have his prayers correctly offered.

The *umputi* (person who prays; the name is now applied to all clergymen) goes to the graveside, or he stands at the banana grove set apart for the purpose, or on the verandah of his house, and prays:

> "My fathers, I have come to you because I have found that you have caused the illness of my friend. You are angry with him because he has given you no beer. Now the *malesi* (cereal from which beer is made) is here; behold it, all of you, with your eyes, and when it is made I will bring it to you and you shall be satisfied. Then let the sickness leave the body of our friend."

Then taking water into his mouth, he squirts it out, *pu* (*puta*, pray).

When the beer has been made, he goes again to pray:

> "You, and you, and you [naming them], come to the feast. You who died by a crocodile, who

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

were killed by a tree, who were killed in war, by lightning, by lion or leopard, I call you all to come; and whosoever has been forgotten, let him come. I pray to you all, let my dog be well, let him lie down in peace. He is the saliva of God. O God, be merciful, and turn back the disease." 782

The beer that he brought and laid on the ground before him, is now poured into the palms of little children, who drink it in that way. If a flesh offering is also made, it is laid down in small pieces, and each ancestor is named as his portion is laid down. When ants come out to feast on it, it is known that the spirits have accepted the offering, and all present run away lest the spirits should work evil upon them.

Little children are affectionately referred to as dogs, especially when they commit a fault, which the father apologizes for. "How can you be angry with the little one? He has no more sense of what is fitting than a dog." But to call a person a dog in any other connection is a great insult, and must be atoned for. Spitting on a person is another insult, but when done ceremonially, it is believed to have great virtue, and is no doubt connected with the idea of the "Spittle of God" referred to above. 576

If the sick person does not recover, the fault is not in the system. Some mistake has been made, the diviner is unskilful, his wife is "unclean," or some other cause prevents the expected result from following; for, when the proper ceremonies have been performed, the patient recovers. But a final cause of failure is always kept in hand; it is the will of God 761

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

761 that the sick man should die, and there is nothing more that can be done. Numerous instances have been cited to me of recovery of sick persons when all had been correctly performed; and scepticism on the subject was received with almost incredulous amazement. And there is no reason to doubt that in many cases recovery did follow; for the conviction in the mind of the patient that the wrath of the offended spirit had been averted, would, according to modern ideas of psychology, have a healing effect also upon his body.

753 Smallpox is the disease most dreaded by the people, and its approach was accompanied with most elaborate 782 ceremonies. The subject is dealt with again under "Witchcraft" and "Medicine." It might come either through the action of the spirits or through [787] witchcraft. In either case its approach is foreseen by the *abakunguluka* (prophets) in dreams, and the chief and his subordinates go to the grave of the ancestors, and there, by night, a black ram is killed. The lungs and liver are roasted, and laid in little heaps on the grave, each ancestor being named as his portion is laid down, and prayer is offered:

> "Ye fathers, look upon us in mercy. Drive away from us this plague, lest our children die, and none be left in the land. Send it to the Basango or the Basafwa, but save us. Pray to God for us. Hear, O God, the words of those we have named. And go to the west, O God, or to the Basango."

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

The flesh is now eaten roasted, and the stomach of the animal, filled with medicines not known to me, is given to an old man, and the skin placed on his back; with these he goes, by night, through the whole district covered by the prayer. If the journey is not finished in one night, he lies in a village until it is dark again, care being taken that he is seen by none, and completes his circuit. On his return, the chief calls all the people together, and declares that if the disease is the work of witchcraft, the evil ones will certainly be discovered and punished; but if it is the work of the spirits, "we have prayed to them to send it far hence to the Basango." Family ceremonies, of a similar nature, follow, each head of a family offering a little beer to his ancestors. At Karonga this latter ceremony has almost entirely been abandoned. There, however, the prophet to whom the coming of smallpox has been revealed goes about the villages, crying, "*ilibofu, ilibofu, ilibofu*" (smell, of dead bodies), a dreadful cry, which brings the people in a mass to the chief to demand the performance of the ceremonies. Similar prayers are offered when mumps, dysentery, or widespread eye disease visits the community.

When a man is about to set out on a journey, his father gives him his blessing, and prays to the spirits for him, adding:

> "May lion and leopard and hyena, crocodile and snake and falling tree, be far from you, and may you return in peace."

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•782 A person involved in a lawsuit was similarly prayed for:

> "Be merciful, and let his case be good. May he escape and return to us; for those men are gods; whom they imprison they imprison, and whom they kill they kill."

The men referred to are the European Administrative Officers, before whom cases are heard. If the case is tried by a native chief, the clause is omitted. A man who has been away at work, in the employment of a white man, gives, on his return in safety, a piece of cloth to the family representative, who, after it has been laid up in the house for a time, asks the permission of the spirits to wear it, for it is theirs; and, taking their permission for granted, leaves a tiny rag to represent it. Less careful persons wear it at once, the rag being enough to keep the spirits in good temper. The numerous other occasions on which worship is offered are described in the appropriate chapters.

Greatest of all Konde ceremonies is the prayer for rain. And around this ceremony much erroneous information has collected; for the so-called "rain-maker" does not make the rain; his duties are quite different. The rain is the gift of God; it is His to give or withhold as He sees fit. All that living men can do is to pray to the spirits, who, in turn, present the petition to God; and God, if there is no obstacle among men themselves, will grant the petition.

782 778 Of sacred objects connected with rain ceremonies, the most important is the *mulima* (an old word meaning *the world*), which is never seen by anyone except

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

its guardian, and very rarely even by him. It was originally in the possession of Chungu, but some generations ago was passed secretly by the reigning Chungu to a son who was hated by the people, and not in the least likely to succeed to royal dignity. It is at present guarded by a man called "Tom," though, fortunately perhaps, the honorific name of *Mwakabanga* is used in direct address. As no one sees it, descriptions must be received with caution, and there are many natives who disbelieve in its existence, regarding the whole story as the invention of men who wished to gain honour for themselves. It is commonly described as about the size of a man's fist, with *maso* (eyes) all over it, of the size and colour of a red bean. When the eyes open, rain is coming, when they close it is being withheld. But, as the *mulima* is kept buried in the ground, it is not quite clear how it is known whether the eyes are closed or open. So long as the stone, if it is a stone, is kept in the ground rain will fall normally, but if the guardian has a quarrel with another chief, he will dig it up, a signal to the spirits that something is wrong, which must be dealt with before they go to God to ask for the rain.

Prayer for rain is offered, either when it becomes clear that "God's rain," that is to say, rain that comes without prayer, is not to fall; or when the official dreamers declare that they do not see the rain where they always see it. Numerous variations in the actual words and ceremonies are found, almost every chief having some special form of his own; but what is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

●782 here given is obtained from descriptions by persons who were actually present at prayer offered by Chungu. [643] The decision to pray does not originate with the chief himself; it comes from the people, who approach Chungu through the subordinate chiefs, and Chungu, after reminding them that only God can give rain, consents to pray.

In the past a human sacrifice was offered, and the flesh of the victim, burned and ground to powder, was distributed over the district as a "medicine" guaranteed to ensure a good crop. This has long ceased at Karonga; the last known occurrence of it farther north was in 1907, when a boy of about ten was sacrificed; and in 1917 a boy mysteriously disappeared, not without suspicion that he was offered in sacrifice. I have been told that human sacrifice is offered in the Kinga Mountains even now; but, except for repeated statements, I have no evidence. The victim, always a boy, is made to drink beer until he dies, when his body is burned and ground to powder for distribution. The child is selected in secret conclave by the chiefs, and no one knows that the tragedy has taken place until public announcement has been made, except the parents of the boy, whose disappearance must have been known to them. Weeping for the victim is prohibited.

For the ordinary sacrifice offered to-day, a black or white ox or cow, preferably the latter, has to be found, and brought to Chungu. The owner must be paid, and there is a case known where refusal to do so led to the failure of the whole ceremony. When the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•782 animal is found Chungu and his councillors go to the river to wash, and must not return to their wives until the whole ceremony is over. Arrived at the *ilisyeto* (burial place), the chief and those who are with him salute the dead by lying prone on their backs, then turning to the right, and finally assuming a sitting position, a soft hand-clapping accompanying these movements. Chungu then, sitting on the ground, and with his eyes open, addresses his ancestors :

> " Hear me, ye who were before us [naming them]. I have brought this ox for the whole people. We cry to you. Why are you angry with us ? Why do you not go to God to pray for us ? Our children are dying. Pray for us. Thou who art not seen with the eyes of men, hear the petitions of those whom we name unto thee."

The animal is then killed by a blow on the back of the neck with an axe, and the flesh laid in little heaps upon the grave, each ancestor being named as his portion is laid down. The chief and his followers also feast until the ants come out and attack the portions laid down for the spirits, when all flee, for the spirits have come to accept the sacrifice, and it is well not to be too near them. For three days those who took part in the ceremony remain in their houses, for they have been in contact with unseen powers, and are dangerous until the effect has passed off. If the animal brought for sacrifice breaks its halter and gets away during the prayers, it is a token that something is wrong, and all proceedings are stayed until the wrong is discovered and righted.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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Now begin the duties of the person who is called the rainmaker. In the Misuku Hills there is a rain forest, the trees of which drop moisture. Word is sent to the local chief that the spirits have accepted the prayers of Chungu; and a quantity of rain-tree twigs is sent and delivered to the rainmaker. This official, known as the *unsusi*, goes to the lake by night to fetch water, which is placed in a pot along with the twigs, and some small smooth black or white stones, the pot being now covered with banana leaves, and placed near a small bush "where God stores the rain." The rainmaker now goes into his house, where he prays, lying on his face; a position which he retains until rain has actually fallen. Chungu also continues in prayer.

The rainmaker is a quite inferior official. In the past he might be a slave, or any other unimportant person appointed for the duty. His function seems to be that of a "conductor," through whose person, or acts, or abstinence from action, the continuance of the rain granted at the prayer of the chief is assured. He must not cut his hair during the rainy season, for the heavens would dry up if he did. He must not wash in water, for that would bring on a flood; in June he may begin cautiously to wash himself, and later he may indulge in the luxury of a full bath, and at the same time he may cut, but not shave, his hair. He must not be angry or scold during the rains, lest he bring on a lightning storm with fatal effects to some one. Further, during all those months he may not roast maize or ground-nuts, the leaping of which

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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while being rōasted is like the play of lightning, and 791
would bring on a fatal stroke from the sky.

In 1912 "God's rain" fell as usual in December; 782
but in January came drought which continued into 731
February. Urgent messages were sent to Chungu, who replied that he was helpless, as the *mulima* was lost. After diligent inquiry, it was found to be in possession of Mwandosya, who refused to act, because in the distribution of the cattle of a deceased relative another chief, Kasikula, had taken more than his share. Kasikula was ordered by Chungu to restore the balance, but he refused, and only agreed when the men present took up clubs to thrash him into obedience. Prayer was then offered in the usual way, and Mwandosya announced that God had commanded him to forgive the offender. "Rain," he said, "will come at once. You Karonga, will be overtaken by it before you can reach home." And so it fell out. Rain came in torrents, preceded by a great storm which overthrew a number of trees in a neighbouring estate, and greatly injured the fine avenue leading to the Mission House.

Now for some days there had been much thunder, 782
and dark clouds covered the sky; anyone could tell that the rain was near. But for the Konde that was just the point. The rain was there, and it was quite obviously being withheld. Why else did it not fall? And it did fall when the wrong was righted, and the prayers offered. Who but a white man could doubt the relation of cause and effect?

One or two local variations are worth noting. At Karonga an offering of black cloth is made along with

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

782 the other things presented. In many places a pot half filled with beer is left all night at the grave where the offerings are made, and if the beer is found in the morning to have risen to the top, and filled the pot, it is a sign that the spirits have agreed to go to God with the petition. If it has not risen there is something wrong, and the wrong must be made good. It sometimes happens that the animal sacrifice is not killed, but is kept by the guardian of the grave, and belongs thenceforth, with all its issue, to the spirits. It is used just like any other cow, but it must not be sold.

An old custom seldom now followed is the children's rain dance. Boys and girls, carrying ashes in pots in one hand, and a small branch in the other, go to the cross-roads, with a leader who carries a fowl. They move with a kind of hopping and leaping dance, and, arrived at the cross-roads, they gather around the leader, who sings:

> "Let all old things fly away; we get new things from God. His house is great. He has room for everything."

Ashes and branches are now thrown in a heap, and the fowl left there, while the children return as they went, with song and dance.

782 789 It is remarkable that while rain is often so difficult to bring on, it is in the power of anyone, who has just cause, to stop it. But just cause he must have, and he must secure the co-operation of the spirits. This being done by prayer, offered by the family

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

representative, or by the chief if he can be induced to do so, the person who wishes the rain to stop, ties a bunch of feathers to his spear, dips the feathers in red ochre, and sets the spear upright in his garden. Or if he wishes the prohibition to act over a wide area, the spear with the feathers is set up in some hidden place among the reeds on the lake shore. The rain will presently stop. One man well known to me, takes a small piece of polished blackthorn in his hand, and wherever he goes the rain stops. His own faith in his powers, and the faith of many others, is quite beyond dispute. There is an old man not far from me whose family has possessed for many generations the power of causing the wind to blow, or to cease blowing, at will. The old man I speak of is believed to have exercised his powers quite successfully in 1923.

A very few Europeans are believed to possess power over the rain. In 1908 a house was being built at the Overtoun Institution, Livingstonia, the residence of the Scottish missionary, the Rev. Robert Laws, C.M.G. The house was still unfinished when the rains were due, and no rain fell. At last, some time in January, the roofing was finished, and next day rain fell in torrents. Dr. Laws had removed the embargo! Similar powers are ascribed to another well-known missionary, the Rev. Dr. Elmslie of Angoniland. And still, if the rain is too much or too little, the people say, "Ah! it is the Great One at Livingstonia. Why is he doing this?"

Prayer for rain is offered in one place or another

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

782 practically every year; but it is now done in secret, an idea having got abroad that the white man disapproves of such practices. Do forbidden acts still find a place in these ceremonies? Who can tell? In some matters the native is as secret as the grave and the European who claims to know "all about it" is a deluded man.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

759 money was to be used for. It came out, however, that it was to pay a native doctor, to whom he was taking his wife for consultation! The native's fee was two shillings. The fee at the dispensary would not have been one-tenth of that sum, but the patient preferred the high fee and the unqualified adviser. Nor is this surprising, when it is remembered that so much of the troubles which afflict the native, are believed to be due to the interference of spirits, with which the European doctor will have nothing to do; while the Konde doctor will consult them as part at least, if not the whole, of his diagnosis. Hence the confidence in him. He is in touch with the sources of the trouble.

759 789 And this same conviction, that the native doctors are in touch with the sources of the trouble, leads to some of the most foolish beliefs of the common people, and of the most mischievous practices of the doctors. It is the source of the absurd confidence in the power of medicine to turn bullets into water, for example. In 1897 medicine was prepared which would cause the white man, in what was then the Neu Langenburg area, to disappear. It is believed by many natives with whom I have been in touch, that some doctors are seeking for a "formula" to-day, which will succeed where the previous one so obviously failed; suggestive of a state of mind similar perhaps to that of our own alchemists of centuries ago; but suggestive also of a desire, at least in some quarters, to see the last of the white man.

757 782 Both the gathering of herbs, and the administration

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

757 of the medicine, is a religious act. Mwenekasanga-
782 mara, the doctor referred to in the previous chapter, used the following prayer, when gathering herbs; it was given to me by his son, who got it from his father. And Mwenekasangamara claimed that it had descended through many generations in his family.

> "Be merciful to me, thou Creator. The medicine which I am seeking is the same that my fathers sought, and it was Thou that didst open their eyes. Show me the roots, and I shall know them. But if my patient is not to recover, hide them from me, and I shall know that it is Thy will."

The following, used when medicine is being administered in a case of ulcer that has resisted treatment, is rather a statement than a prayer:

> "If this disease has come from God, medicine will heal it; for God, who made us, made also the trees, and gave us intelligence to know their properties. But if it has come from men, I cannot heal it."

The last sentence means that witchcraft or the anger of a spirit is at the root of the trouble, and steps must be taken to discover the facts. Then, but only then, the ulcer will yield to treatment.

789 But behind both the prayer and the medicine, or at any rate in addition to them, there is something else. There are certain medicines which are never administered to patients; their function is to give power to the doctor himself; administered to a

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 769 789 magical powers. And the faith alike in ancestors and in witchcraft gave to every group of subjects a religious hold over their rulers.

(a) *THE THEISTIC ELEMENT.*

643 764 778 Though the early Kyungus had lived on the stony top of Mbande none of them had been buried there, for "the ground was too hard to dig graves in." They and their successors were all buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. Thus Kyungu Mwangonde is referred to as "He of Bwiba," Kyungu Mwakasungula as "He of Ipota," and so on.

643 731 787 782 Now drought and widespread sickness were believed to be caused by the anger either of some dead Kyungu or of the living one. "In time of drought they (the nobles of Ngonde) would go to a diviner to enquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would tell them that it was so and so. So they would tell the (living) Kyungu. And he would give them either a bull or a sheep, together with some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own house, one of the pots which were continually brought by his people as tribute.[1] And he would give them some flour and some cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove. Now the diviner would have told them that he (the dead Kyungu) was angry because they had omitted (for so long) to build his house. So they would begin by building his house in the grove, they would build a miniature hut with rafters.[2] Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fix some of the pieces to the house in the grove—an action which they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And, finally, they would pour out (some of) the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a house in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

643 731 787 "But occasionally if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any of them: 'No—no.'

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[1] *Vide infra* section 4.

[2] This is the custom traditional in the sacred groves of all important chiefs, both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa. We have seen it done among the Nyakyusa. The hut which we saw built was between two and three feet high.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

And at length he would tell them that it was the living Kyungu who was angry because so and so had insulted him. Then there would be no sacrifice in the grove at all, but the nobles of Ngonde would go to the one who had insulted the Kyungu and charge him with it, asking him what he meant by thus killing them all, would not the whole land starve! And so the wrongdoer would take a cow to the Kyungu who, thereupon, would address the nobles of Ngonde, saying: 'If it was my anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been some one (of the dead Kyungus) whom you forgot to ask about.' And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again! 643 731 787

"If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would; and then the diviner would tell them that it was so and so (one of the dead Kyungus), and they would go and sacrifice in his grove."

Thus the belief in the power of the dead Kyungus, a power in which their living successor participated, was one of the factors of the central political institutions of Ngonde. The Kyungu did not himself sacrifice in the sacred groves but the nobles of Ngonde did so, with materials provided by him, and from these sacrifices the whole plain was believed to benefit. While to insult the Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. And we have already seen, in the story of Mwakasungula's return from exile,[1] that other prominent members of the royal family also were believed to share this power. 643 769 782 731

The absence of central political institutions among the Nyakyusa was, as we shall see, mainly due to economic causes; but in part also this difference can be traced to the climatic difference acting upon similar religious faiths. The Nyakyusa had in the Lwembes, the hereditary chiefs of Lubaga, a line of religious paramounts. Chiefs from all over the district sent gifts to them to ask for health and rain. That they never achieved any secular paramountcy at all was mainly because they were poor. But the difference of rainfall was important too. Droughts in Ngonde occurred frequently, and each one made the people remember their Kyungu's power. North of the Songwe droughts were rare and slight. 643 731

[1] p. 27.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

the senior territorial nobles of the plain, and they told their juniors. A sacrifice was made in one of the sacred groves of the Kyungus and all fires in the whole Ngonde plain were put out. And then "all the chiefs from every country near Mbande and the nobles and all the great-commoners and all the ordinary men and the women too went to Kyimbwe." At Kyimbwe, which is a cross-roads in the bush, they threw away the ashes of their old fires; while those few people who could not get to Kyimbwe threw them away near their own houses on the same day as the others. At Kyimbwe new fire was made with fire-sticks by the nobles of Ngonde and distributed to the whole plain in order. Great chiefs and senior nobles took it first and passed it to their juniors, chiefs passed to great-commoners, and in each group the common people got it from their own ruling noble or their own great-commoner. 769 796

And then, later in the year when the first maize and the first pumpkin leaves were ready to eat, an elaborate first-fruit ceremony was carried out. The first-fruits were offered by the nobles of Ngonde in the grove of the previous Kyungu, the one who had last died. "Then the great chiefs would do so next—Kalonga, Mwakasungula, Mwembelo, Katamba and the chiefs of Ngana also, each in his own sacred grove (i.e. at the grave of his own predecessor in the title). . . . . And then after them everyone, both chiefs and people, each at his father's grave. All offered first-fruits to their own spirits. And finally they would eat themselves, each with his chief wife. But beforehand they would not eat for fear of angering the spirits."

These two rituals concerned the plain alone; the nobles and chiefs of the hills are said to have had similar rituals of their own but they were not synchronized with or dependent upon those of the plain.

In time of tribal war also the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde led the people in prayer. All chiefs and nobles were summoned from the plain and the great ones entered the Kyungu's house to receive their instructions: "When he had finished speaking he would tell them to go to pray. So they would leave his house and gather all together, all chiefs and men, and pray. The premier noble of Ngonde would begin, asking each of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn to bless them in the fight. And then the great chiefs would pray after them" (each addressing his own predecessors in his title). The territorial nobles did not pray, for it was the royal family alone whose spirits were then addressed. Here again it was the plain alone that was concerned. 643 565 732 726

Now this organization of religious ritual in the Ngonde plain was both a factor of and itself determined by the general political

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17
NyaKyusa

000 structure. We shall see in later sections how many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions. But the reverse is equally true. 796 Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular content at all, the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle were sent to Lubaga by the other chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and health; but the "clearing out of the ashes" was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruit ritual at all;[1] while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

643 Besides the Kyungus the great chiefs of Ngonde also were believed 622 to be able to avert local droughts and misfortunes in their districts by 565 offerings to their own immediate ancestors; and the lesser chiefs like- 769 wise and the territorial nobles—each in his own little area. While among the territorial nobles, the original owners of the land had wider 731 powers. It will be remembered that to them the first Kyungu is said to have given head-cloths and asked for their prayers. Sometimes people would prophesy future misfortune "at Kisindile", or "at Kaluma" or "at Ifumbo," or would prophesy of present misfortunes that such was their source. Then the territorial noble concerned[2] would be formally visited by the nobles of Ngonde, and he and they together would offer sacrifice to his ancestors on behalf of all Ngonde.

778 And then also there were sacred lagoons near the lake—Nthola, 776 Kambwe, Kibondo, Mulale and Katindi. They were associated not with ancestral spirits at all but with a vaguely defined supreme deity 782 named Mbamba. And beside them also prayers and sacrifices were made from time to time by the nobles of Ngonde.

771 Over these other spiritual powers we need not linger, save to 643 notice one most significant fact. The participation by the Kyungu in 565 the divinity of his ancestors was no isolated phenomenon in Ngonde. 622 The head of every family in the country, whether of chiefs or commoners, was similarly placed; in his own family and, in the case of a chief or noble, in his own area too, he was both a priest and a demi-god; he dealt with the spirits and by virtue of his relation to them shared their powers; his anger could curse. The Kyungus were but the greatest of many divinities. And thus there was in theistic ritual a high degree of local and family autonomy; local or family misfortunes

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[1] Particular people among the Nyakyusa carried it out: reigning chiefs, senior great-commoners, prophets, and any person whose birth was held to be due to magical treatment of a previously barren woman. But only they.

[2] Mwene-kisindile, Mwene-kaluma, Mwen-ifumbo etc.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 cooked it instead. One of the reasons for killing most of his sons, as we
643 have seen, was to lessen the danger of his wives committing adultery
834 with them, for adultery was a magical cause of sickness. His wives themselves were jealously guarded.

643 Then again a Kyungu might not wade across the river lest the act
784 of doing so should magically bring a deluge of rain from heaven, he
821 had always to be carried.

And the breath and the growing parts of a Kyungu's body—his
789 hair and nails and the constantly replaced mucus of his nose—were
643 believed to be magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde
764 plain. When he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was
826 buried "with breath in his body"; while portions of his hair and nails and of his nasal mucus were taken from him beforehand and buried later by the nobles of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This action was believed to "close up the land, to keep it rich and heavy and fertile, as it was when he himself lived in it."

789 Now the Lwembe of Lubaga had equally magical flesh, but the other chiefs of Ngonde and the Nyakyusa had not. They could wade
622 across rivers, fall ill and be wounded without endangering their sub-
826 jects. But of all alike the breath and the hair and nails had a magical importance. Every ruling chief in both areas had his nostrils stopped by his great-commoners when nearing death, while portions of his hair and nails[1] were taken from him when living and buried after his death in a special place. The hair and nails were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops. "You see these nails of yours," said the man who explained the symbolism to us, "if you cut them do they not grow again?" (They do.) "And where does their growth come from? Does it not come from within the body?" (It does.) "Well then that is the reason, the great-commoners take power of growth from the chief in the form of his nails and hair."

Besides his magical body the Kyungu had a host of magical
789 possessions. There was the iron stool *Kisumbi* on which he was set at
782 his accession; once he had sat upon it he could not flee the position or he would die. There was the drum *Mwenekelwa* whose note was believed to be heard by the most distant of the Kyungu's subjects. When it was beaten "all the little nobles from afar off would hear and obey the summons; they would all come together. Then we would tell them that so and so had not brought any ivory for a long time! Then they would come with tusks as tribute, to pay worship to the Kyungu." But sometimes the drum would refuse to sound and they would kill a

[1] We were only told about the nasal mucus in the case of the Kyungu.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

sheep over it; if it still refused they would kill a cow; and if it still refused then they would kill a human being, the child of a commoner. 789 782

Then there was *Mulima*, a porous piece of iron "like a mouth organ," which the Kyungu used to make rain. If he held it up out of doors with its holes clear, so that he could see right through them, then it would be fine, but if he stopped up the holes and then held it up out of doors the sky would at once become overcast and rain would fall. And there were his zebra tails set in horn handles, with medicine in the handles, which his people carried to war to give them victory; and his spear *Kamisa*, and so on. 789

There is no sharp distinction in the pagan religion of Ngonde and the Nyakyusa between its magical and its theistic elements. Sometimes the magical, sometimes the theistic predominates, but often they are inextricably mixed. In the prayers and sacrifices to the ancestors magic enters at every turn: particular people, a particular place, particular materials and gestures, particular words are held to be essential to their success. Nor are the more permanent and obvious magical objects always free from divine associations. When we asked, for example, why the drum *Mwenekelwa* had needed occasional human sacrifices to make it work properly we got this answer: "It was because their god[1] had given this drum to the Kyungu saying: 'I alone am war, there is none other war save me.' It (the human sacrifice) was like a prayer. The refusal of *Mwenekelwa* to sound was like the prophetic fit that falls on people (from the spirits) commanding sacrifice (in the groves)." Or, again, it is clear from our evidence that the living Kyungu's power of causing a drought was believed to arise both from his relationship to the spirits and from his possession and use of *Mulima* together. His magical body and possessions, being inherited from his predecessors, were part of his relationship to them. 789 771

Now one of the material facts which had magical significance in Ngonde was that of general social status. The magical powers of the Kyungu not only contributed to the general political authority of Mbande but were, in part, magically derived from it. Only the greatest in the land could possess the greatest magic without endangering his life. There were, for example, a number of chiefs' medicines (*ifingila*), and if a chief used a medicine which was above his status then it was believed that, on meeting the Kyungu or some great chief, to whose 789 554 643

[1] The phrase "their god" (*Kyala gwabo*) is normally used by pagans nowadays to mean the ancestral spirits, or some one among them. The term *Kyala*, which originally referred only to one of the most influential Nyakyusa spirits, has now been identified either with the Christian God or with divinity in general thoughout all this area.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 come to it. But, on the other hand, everyone knows when a sacrifice is
778 taking place, and, in spite of the influence of missions, most people in the
793 pagan community believe in its efficacy.

●782 Sacrifices are prompted either by actual misfortune or by prophecies
787 of it. The four sacrifices which I have seen myself were all stimulated by an actual shortage of food, and the hereditary priests have often told me that " now-a-days the chiefs do not listen to us until hunger comes." But, traditionally, sacrifices are said to have been usually prompted by prophecies of coming misfortune which was then averted by them. In each chiefdom the ruling great commoners, the hereditary priests and some private persons as well are believed to have the power of dreaming of misfortune (*okokunguluka*) before it comes. And the chiefs are said always to have listened to these dreams, formerly, and to have acted upon them.

778 Among the groves there is an order of seniority ; the older the grove
173 the more chiefdoms are concerned in the sacrifices there. And in Selya is the most important grove of all—Lubaga. All the chiefdoms of Selya, many of the Nyakyusa proper and even some of the neighbouring chiefdoms of the Mwamba are traditionally concerned in its sacrifices. Lubaga, the Nyakyusa say, is the grove of Lwembe, one of the original chiefs who came down the Livingstone Mountains from the East, eight or nine generations ago ; and from him all the present Selya chiefs are descended. The ancestor of the chiefs of the Nyakyusa proper was a brother of Lwembe ; and though the Kukwe and Mwamba chiefs are not related, yet those of the Mwamba who are nearest to Lubaga used to send cows there for sacrifice as well, because of the great reputation that this grove had.

622 Sacrifices are still made in the country of the chief of Lubaga
782 (Mwakisisya) for all the surrounding chiefdoms, but the full ritual has not been carried out for fourty years. Traditionally each chief of Lubaga was ritually installed into a position somewhat resembling that of Sir James Frazer's " Divine Kings," a position hedged with taboos, in which not only the sacrifices he made to Lwembe but his own health and fertility also were believed to be intimately connected with the prosperity of his own and neighbouring chiefdoms. But the present chief has never been properly installed, nor was his father before him. The sacrifices at Lubaga are believed to benefit not only the Nyakyusa but also the next
[173] tribe to the East, the Kinga, who live on the heights of the Livingstone Mountains ; for Lwembe, they say, was born a Kinga and moved down the mountains to Lubaga, taking the fertility of the soil with him. And

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

And. 622
every year two hereditary Kinga priests come a three days journey from 782
their own country to participate in the sacrifice of a black cow to the [574]
spirits of Lwembe and his descendants.

Down by Lake Nyasa, in the extreme South East of the Nyakyusa 778
district, there is another equally sacred spot where sacrifices were, and 1764
believe still are[21] made to Kyala, a younger brother of Lwembe.

The Christians and the Moslems form other religious groups which 795
transcend the boundaries of a single chiefdom, but an examination of the Nyakyusa Christian and Moslem communities is beyond the scope of this paper.

The political group which is constituted by a Court district, though 636
only ten years old, is of great importance in Nyakyusa society ; but here again the detailed examination of its organization and the relationships of its members is beyond the scope of this paper.

Conclusion : Culture and Society

The aim of sociology is to describe single forms of society fully and, 121
in comparison with one another, to explain them completely, in so far as 128
reasons can be found within this particular scientific field. Neither full description nor complete explanation of Nyakyusa society has here been attempted : many important facts have been omitted from the account, irregularities of detail have been slurred over, the connections of fact have been only occasionally and sketchily established, and no systematic comparison of this unit with others has been made at all.

But the method of this paper has involved an analysis, summary and 121
general though it has been, of the nature of some of the many institutions in which the Nyakyusa meet, of some of the actual elements in their relationships with one another. It is in their dealings with the earth and their cattle, with the spirits and with men who break the law, in their discussions and arguments, their ceremonial feasts, their giving and receiving, in their loves and hates and in their admiration and mockery of one another that they forever make and remake their own human relationships.

Culture is the matter of which society is the form ; inseparable in fact they are only intelligible together. No two men can be related unless they both do something and unless their activities are somehow connected. Nor can either escape relationship with his fellow if what

[21] I have not yet been there to investigate.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

539 fierce warriors. They were first driven out, then later Lwembe (3) was driven out too. When Lwembe was a child, herding cattle with his fellows, he moulded cattle of clay and they became alive; so with lions and leopards, too; he also took up a handful of earth and it became beans or millet. His fellows told Mwemusi of this and he was astonished. Then Mwemusi sent men to watch; they went early in the morning and hid themselves and watched; they watched him making all these things. Then they wanted to kill him, but the forefather of Mwakalukwa [another Kinga chief] gave him two cows; he was a friend and said: 'Leave the country, they want to kill you, take these cows and eat them on the road.' Lwembe went away with Kissoule and Mwamaloba (Mwamalunguka) and two wives and all his animals.

These three, Nkekete (1), Kyala (2), and Lwembe (3), were driven out by Mwemusi, but Lwembe's younger brothers, the BaMwalukissa (4), were left. When Lwembe went away, Mwemusi's men followed him, wishing to kill him, but they feared his animals, and did not try.

Nkekete (1) set out to the Lake [Nyasa] and went into a stream; he is in the water now, in a stream with pools near the Lake, in Kisi country. Kyala (2) went and built among stones in a cave. When the [177] Europeans came they took rifles and shot at Kyala in the place where he had built, so he moved to a different place. Of old he was in a cave washed by the waters of the Lake, but after the Europeans came he moved to his present cave at the boundary between Kisselelo's and Kisi country. Kyala had fowls there; some saw them in the old days [782] and some did not. Nkekete is in a stream with pools in it; there (at Lumbila in Kisi country) men sacrifice a cow. Kyala's sheep are killed near his cave.

Neither Nkekete nor Kyala had any children, but Lwembe (3), who went off alive, begot many children. We speak with them. Nkekete and Kyala were killed, Lwembe was not. . . . All the Kinga [782] chiefs when praying in the sacred groves say the names of their fathers [769] who have died, and also the names of Nkekete, Kyala, and Lwembe, in that order . . . Lwembe was the youngest of the three brothers . . . Nkekete and Kyala only made crops—millet and beans. We ask for fertility of the soil (*imboto*), and sunshine, and rain from them, but not animals. From Lwembe we ask for milk, and fertility of men and cattle, and snakes, and goats, and sheep, and all crops. Lwembe has everything. We ask for sunshine and rain from Lwembe as well.

When Lwembe went down into Selya he found the hill people (*BaMwamba*) and the people of the plain (Mwakyembe's men)[1] already there. They feared him because he had all things, and they still fear him. He was greater than Nkekete. They cut Nkekete's throat, but they couldn't kill Lwembe. He made the small lakes—all of them. He

[1] In other versions Mwakyembe is a descendant of Lwembe.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

539 Mwakaleli and came here and died. The Kinga went to BuSangu to buy food, for there was great hunger after Mbasi and Kyala were driven out, and wandering home they came here and met Mbasi. He said, 'Go home, there will be plenty of food, but I want my things.' He had left them at his father's place when he fled with his sister Kyungu. He asked for his leopard and otterskins, his drums, his bows for shooting birds,[1] his harp, mats, a stool, bamboo beer, and twenty hoes. . . . Then the Kinga went back and found their country full of food; and they brought all his things to Mbasi and even things like salt that he had not asked for. . . . This is how the ritual began. . . . Mbasi ruled because he had helped them in their hunger.

173 773 Kasitile (86), the rain-maker, speaking of the same incident, stressed only the hoes. Lwembe 'came to Lubaga and found a good place to settle, then he sent out messengers to Mwemusi (the Kinga chief) and said: "I want my hoes, especially my great, eyed hoe" (*ilikumbulu ilya maso*).' (The old ritual hoes had per- [778] forations—'eyes'—on the blades comparable to the perforations on other rain-making instruments.) Still today Kinga priests [782] come to Lubaga to sacrifice to Lwembe (3), and they bring with them hoes.[2]

The hero of Ngonde, the Kyungu (16), was also associated with [643] iron implements which he had brought with him—a spear, staff, stool, and a sieve used for making rain, which were royal insignia, and razors, spears, and knives of an unusual pattern, which long remained in the groves of the hero and his successors.

In the commonly-told Nyakyusa myth it was Lwembe who [372] introduced fire to BuNyakyusa—'he found the original occupants eating their food raw'—and the fact that he conferred so great a benefit is the charter for the position of the chiefs, celebrated at every 'coming out'. The Kinga priests push the spread of fire back a little further.

539 Of old in this country [BuKinga] there was no fire, men ate food un- 372 cooked; there were very few men in the country, most of it was forest. This was after Mwemusi came to Kinga country. Then one man, a hunter, went into the forest to hunt buck and otter, and he had dogs. And in the forest he made fire with a drill and cooked his food; and gave his friends cooked food to eat, and they were astonished.

[1] The bow and arrow are not now used among the Nyakyusa, but men in their thirties had used them when boys, for shooting birds.

[2] cf. Ludwig Weichert, *Mayibuye i Africa! Kehre wieder Afrika* (Berlin, 1927), p. 129, for a photograph of one.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 lord', and Kyala the Christian deity. In the sacrifices at Lubaga
643 and the groves of various chiefs, the name Kyala was mentioned repeatedly, as will be shown. Some may interpret this as evidence of a traditional belief in an overriding deity. We think that in most cases it is used in the sense of Kyala the hero, or Kyala 'the lord', but after forty years[1] and more of missionary activity it is not possible to establish exactly what the traditional conception of Kyala was. Moreover, it will be obvious that many of the speakers
[177] quoted in later chapters now entertain religious notions which have been unconsciously, and sometimes profoundly, modified by Christian ideas, a phenomenon especially noteworthy in their references to Kyala.

All the Nyakyusa proper (that is those of Selya, the Lake plain,
769 and Masoko) send cattle to sacrifice at Lubaga (the grove of
782 Lwembe), and several of the Kinga chiefs send there too. The people of Ngonde send to the Kyungu at Mbande, but not to Lubaga, while the people living north of the Songwe did not ever send to Mbande. Some of the people of the Lake plain (Mu-Ngonde) and various Kinga chiefs send to PaliKyala as well as to Lubaga, but the hill people never send to PaliKyala, nor did the Kisi who lived around PaliKyala send to Lubaga. In other words, Lwembe and Kyala were 'brothers' and it was possible to sacrifice to both, though people living close to one centre did not send to the other. All those living south of the Songwe river looked to Mbande; those north of it to Lubaga or PaliKyala. Lwembe, Kyala, and Kyungu were ancestors, honoured primarily by their own descendants or by those of a brother, but they were also divine heroes who might be appealed to by unrelated people through their priests.

The distinction between a 'divine king' and an early ancestor who established a line of chiefs is not a sharp one, and we have indeed been uncertain whether or not to class Mwangomale (4K),[2] the founder (or at least a notable son) of the Kukwe line, with Lwembe and Kyungu. Sacrifices used to be made to Mwangomale at the grove of Kabale by a number of Kukwe chiefs, but we have no evidence either of the formal installation of a living representative in each generation or of sacrifices by unrelated people, and therefore do not include Mwangomale among the 'divine kings'. The early inhabitants of the Rungwe

[1] Field-work began in 1934.

[2] Numerals followed by K refer to the genealogy of Kukwe chiefs facing p. 27.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

area, the Penja, have a grove, Lukata, where they worship their founding ancestor, and the Nyika living on the west bank of the Kiwira river have their grove, Lubaga, twenty miles or more from the Lubaga in Selya and unconnected with it. A third distinct group, the Saku, who were the first inhabitants of the south-eastern part of Rungwe District, have their own grove, Nkeso, where their progenitors Mwamakula and Mwalukinge were buried. None of these has anything like the prestige and sanctity of the Lwembe or the Kyungu, but they are probably the prototype from which the 'divine kings' developed. 769 782

What circumstances produced a 'divine king' at Lubaga and not (so far as our limited knowledge goes) at Kabale we do not know, but we can show how the 'divine kingship' at Mbande, near the Lake shore, developed rather differently from the originally similar institution at Lubaga which is forty miles from the Lake. The Kyungu gradually acquired political power in a way in which the Lwembe did not. Among the Nyakyusa the 'sons of Lwembe' spread through the country establishing themselves as independent chiefs. They acknowledged the mystical supremacy of the Lwembe, and sent cattle to him to sacrifice, but they were sovereigns in their own territories. Just what this mystical supremacy of Lwembe implied was and still is often a matter of dispute, as we shall see. On the death of a chief his country was normally divided into two independent sections, each ruled by one of his sons. One heir sometimes fought the other and reduced him to a subordinate position, but the number of independent chiefdoms appears to have increased fairly steadily, and their size did not diminish in proportion, for the Nyakyusa chiefs have been expanding their area of occupation over a long period, establishing themselves as rulers over scattered and unorganized peoples with less developed techniques than their own, or colonizing unoccupied forest country. Expansion into uncultivated forest is still going on (1955), and were it not for the vigilance of the British Administration it is almost certain that the Safwa people would have been conquered and absorbed like the Penja, Lugulu, and others before them.[1] In 1936 over 100 independent chiefdoms were recognized by the people themselves, and they varied in size from 100 to 3,000 adult men. 769 643 [773] [173] [636] [173] [634]

In Ngonde the development was different. In the early period all the sons of the Kyungu, save two, were killed, and the territorial 173 643

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 4.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

231
142
782

4*a*. SACRIFICE AT LUBAGA

4*b*. THE SACRIFICIAL MEAT

[facing p. 23]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 734 round him and sit at home in the middle in the sun. . . . All the old chiefs inspired fear (*bapala*). It used to be taboo to walk near the house of a chief and approach him unless taken by a village headman . . . nowadays men walk about and enter his home and [177] even steal his food.'[1] The power came partly from his position as the living Lwembe, and partly from the medicines with which he was treated, especially the terrible *ifingila*.

643 [554] The 'divine king' who came as a conqueror bringing iron is also associated with victory in battle. Still today a brave fighter is saluted as 'Lwembe', and an iron spear is one of the emblems of chieftainship.

643 793 782 The Lwembe was himself a priest—he is often referred to as *unyago*—but he was assisted by commoners. There is a hereditary keeper of the grove of Lubaga named Kissoule who is the descendant of that Kissoule the commoner who fled from BuKinga with Lwembe. It is he who conducts the sacrifices, who daubs the participants with medicines before they enter, and who protects the groves. 'If by mistake the grove was a little burnt then the people here paid a beast to Kissoule, it was his to eat as he liked.' Others of the priests say that Lwembe found their ancestors at Lubaga; they are 'owners of the soil' there, and one of them, Mwasesi, could give us the names of six generations of ancestors who had been priests of Lubaga before him. But the bulk of the commoner priests are not hereditary at all, they are surviving village headmen (or their heirs) of the most recently dead Lwembe.

The success of the sacrifices at Lubaga was held to depend upon the proper co-operation of chiefs and priests: first, on the Lwembe himself (the shortage of food among the Kinga, and of milk among the Nyakyusa, while we were there, was attributed by Kasitile to the fact that there was no living Lwembe); secondly on the commoner priests of Lubaga; thirdly on the commoner Kinga priests; fourthly on Kasitile (86) and certain other priests of Selya; and fifthly on the chiefs of the Nyakyusa and the Kinga who provided the offerings. 'Can a priest celebrate alone?' said Kasitile. 'No, the ritual depends on the chiefs.' The celebrations thus linked together chiefs and people, as well as Kinga and Nyakyusa, and numerous different Nyakyusa chiefdoms. The hereditary Kinga priests live in the country of the Kinga chief Mwakalukwa and

[1] This is inconsistent with Kasitile's statement quoted above. The general opinion was that chiefs were more powerful than formerly, but the living Lwembe less so.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'Lwembe listens to him'. 'If Kinga messengers went [to Lubaga] without going through Mwakalukwa's country there would be much hunger. . . . Once Mwemusi and Kyelela [Kinga chiefs] conspired together and sent off men with hoes to Lubaga, without reference to Mwakalukwa. They carried ten hoes. But when they got back disease killed many in the country, and they paid Mwakalukwa and did not do it again.'

It is true that an independent Nyakyusa chief *can* send an offering to Lubaga on his own; it is received by the priests of Lubaga and sacrificed in the grove, and such a sacrifice is held to be in some measure efficient, but drought or sickness in the country as a whole is often attributed to one or other of the participating groups failing to play their part. Moreover, such a failure is thought to be dangerous to the chief or priest who neglects his duties, as we shall see in the case of Kasitile.

The priests of Lubaga ministered to the Lwembe but they had also the right and duty of admonishing him if he did wrong, just as village headmen have the right and duty of admonishing their chief. If the Lwembe broke a taboo 'then Kissoule and the other priests would be very angry and reproach him for bathing and making hunger, and he would pay them a bull in recompense.' Even the 'divine king' was subject to the rule of law. All through the political organization and ritual patterns of the Nyakyusa there is this balance and reciprocity between chiefs and commoners and it is here that the Nyakyusa system differs radically from that described by Professor Frankfort for ancient Egypt.[1] The heroes had brought the gift of chieftainship to the Nyakyusa but it had not ousted another, perhaps older, tradition of democratic leadership; instead, the two were welded in a partnership which, to the Nyakyusa, is so much part of the necessary order of the universe that they speak of commoner priests and headmen as 'wives' of the chiefs. The Kissoule in office is 'the wife' of the Lwembe.

In the grove at Lubaga sacrifices of black cattle and sheep and libations of millet beer were offered by the Nyakyusa, while the Kinga brought hoes, bamboo beer, salt, the sacred drum *ngoma*, and *ifika*, that is, marvels whose nature, Kasitile averred, he did not know himself. The shrine of Lubaga, and the actors and actions connected with it, are miraculous and terrible, terrible even to the actors themselves who tremble when they enter the grove, and

[1] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (1948), pp. 51-6.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 dare not greet their children on their return without the safeguard
789 of protective medicines. At a celebration the Kinga priests took
751 medicines, 'powdered medicine which comes from Mwemusi and Mwakalukwa [the Kinga chiefs]', and smeared it on Lwembe's forehead and shoulders 'because the grove is great. If you entered it without this medicine you died'; they gave the Lwembe the medicine 'so that Kyala (*vide* pp. 17-18) might not kill him, that he might show respect and escape'.

783 Another medicine, *imbinga*, which is red in colour, was brought
789 from BuKinga to smear on the foreheads of the children of the Lwembe and Kissoule, the priest, when these two returned home after celebrating in the grove. Their senior wives 'would smear the *imbinga* on the children's foreheads, when they would turn round calling: "You hit us", and Mwakisiya (56) (the Lwembe) and Kissoule (the priest) would both reply: "No, I am innocent (*mwelu*)." The medicine was smeared on the children because Mwakisisya and his fellow thought: "How can we meet them, how can they look on our bodies, since we are taboo from the ritual." Yes, the words are the same as in the twin ritual, but the medicine is different.' During one of the rituals we attended, Mwakilima (111) begged the Kinga priests to bring him some of this medicine for the protection of his children.

1118 The numinous quality of everything connected with Lubaga
769 can hardly be exaggerated; the Nyakyusa believe that it overcomes even curious Europeans. The most sacred and terrible object of all was the drum which was polished with blood, the blood of children, who, in Nyakyusa thought, had died for the people, that the country might live and be fertile. 'Formerly,
[782] when the Kinga came with a drum, they said: "Catch the child of a commoner, fat and strong, hide him in the drum." In the old days when the Kinga came beating their drum, ping . . . ping . . . [single strokes with long intervals] we of the country used to run away and women would hide their children for fear lest they be snatched up and put in the drum.'[1] The child was strangled

[1] These statements were made by three different groups of informants independently. All had special knowledge of these matters. The *ilikale*, the sacred drum of the
[554] Kinga, differs in shape from the Nyakyusa *ifingala*. It is made of *ntaja* wood and ox-hide and is beaten when a ritual is celebrated and to summon men to war. The Kinga do not dance to drums and the Nyakyusa did not do so formerly either, but after the Europeans arrived Nyakyusa chiefs began to buy *ifingala* from outside BuNyakyusa, paying a bull for a set—'a mother drum and her children'. Only quite recently have Nyakyusa craftsmen learnt from a Henga immigrant to make *ifingala*.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and its body taken to Lubaga and added to the 'medicine for fertility' (*ukuta gwe ifuge*) which was sprinkled throughout the country, starting at Lubaga, proceeding to the other sacred groves, and then to the ordinary homesteads. Thus the terror of the grove had objective roots in the fact of human sacrifice, but it is rather a fear of the unknown and miraculous than of death itself; a fight involving casualties was not terrible in the same way as the grove and the throb of the sacred drum.

The Kinga priests travelled 'the road of Lwembe', down the escarpment of the Livingstone mountains from Mwakalukwa's country and across Selya, beating their drum. They stopped to sleep at the home of Kasitile the priest, and poured a libation of beer at 'the places where Lwembe had rested': Isumba, a hill overlooking Kasitile's homestead, Kituli in Mwaipopo's country, and near the homestead of the priest Munyoso.[1] 'He [Lwembe] used to shout on Isumba, the little hill here, then no one would cut the trees on the hill,' said Kasitile. 'It was one of his resting places; he used to come here to tell my grandfather to go and get a cow for Lubaga, and later to tell my father to do so. . . .' The beer is poured at the base of an *ulaje* tree (a variety of *ficus*) at Isumba, in the long grass in Kituli, and at the base of an *ulaje* near Munyoso's homestead. 'They pour [it] out here by the *ulaje*, they beat the drum to say: "We have come", then the people of Munyoso hide their children—that's of old.' Besides the drum the Kinga travelled with a kudu horn[2] (blown in battle in BuKinga) and a sacred drum and horn were lodged in the hut of the Lwembe's chief wife. Before they start the Kinga priests make an offering of millet flour and beer in one of their own groves,[3] and leave there overnight the beer and salt and hoes which they will take to the Lwembe, 'that the aba-Ngulube (9) may see them before they go to Lwembe'.

At Lubaga there were several places of prayer and offering: the trees planted at the installation of the last living Lwembe (*vide infra* pp. 54-5), the trees planted at the installation of a previous

[1] Probably grandson of Ka and representative of a junior lineage to which priestly functions had been delegated.

[2] *Ukulilwa* in Kinga, *ingunga kudu* in Nyakyusa. cf. plate 5b.

[3] Nyundulu, a Kinga chief, and two priests took Godfrey Wilson to a sacrifice in one of their groves. The form of sacrifice is very similar to that among the Nyakyusa save that the meat-offering is placed in the fork of a tree. The priests had gone very early in the morning 'to tell Bukelile (the dead chief) "Do not be angry, a European comes to greet you".'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

778 Lwembe, and the grove of the first Lwembe himself, the last being
●782 the most sacred. In it stands a miraculous tree from which, the priests aver, sometimes comes sap like water, and sometimes blood. 'If it is watery there will be a plague of ulcers in the country—
[753] running sores—if it is blood there will be dysentery. But as soon
[755] as the hoes are placed in the grove, or the black bull is killed, then the sick begin to recover.'

788 Godfrey Wilson attended three celebrations at Lubaga, and we heard of five others which occurred during our period of fieldwork. The ritual is esoteric, that is to say, only the representative of Lwembe and his priests participate, and the details are not revealed to others, but its occurrence is widely known and discussed among older men.

The celebrations observed were modified by the fact that no one
[643] had been installed as Lwembe since the death of Mwakisiya
[793] (56) before 1914. The possible candidates whom the priests had
[177] wished to instal had refused—'they feared the grove'; the only one who was said to be willing was rejected on account of his character. The priests gave 'European times' as the reason for there being no Lwembe. 'When the country was ours before you Europeans came' the elected candidate was compelled to accept office. On the death of Mwakisiya, the Kinga priests ordered that his senior son Mwanjala I (77) should take his place, and when Mwanjala I died (three years after his father) his full brother Mwanjala II (78) succeeded. He took a leading part in the rituals observed, but was not an anointed Lwembe. The priests explained: 'We fear, thinking that if a chief is seized [and compelled to sit on the stool] he will complain to the Government and we shall be punished.' During the period of German rule they had been threatened with imprisonment if they continued the ritual . . . 'we feared and stole through the country by night' . . . . And there is still much secrecy about its truncated celebration. Since the journey down 'the road of Lwembe' with the drum traditionally involved human sacrifice, and the Lwembe was smothered when ailing, there is an absolute incompatibility between a full celebration of the ritual and European administration.

177 The influence of the Christian minority is also considerable. The
788 view of most Nyakyusa Christians with whom we discussed communal rituals is that they used to be efficient, but are so no longer, since men have been taught a better way of approaching God. 'God said: "They are mistaken but in their hearts they are

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

looking for me", and so if there was much heat he would send rain.' But this no longer happens. 177 788

At the same time both pagans and Christians tell a myth of how a European missionary, Rev. — Jauer (Mwaisumo), who visited the grove of Lubaga intending to remove the hoes in the grove to demonstrate the falsehood of the ritual, was confounded by a miracle (*ifika*). [773] [789]

Once the missionary Mwaisumo wished to go and see the grove of Lubaga. He was warned that if he entered he would flee because there were many marvels there, and the rain would catch him. He said: 'Oh, I shall go, nothing will happen.' So he went and entered the grove, and he found many hoes, some standing up, some lying down, and some of them had 'eyes'. He seized one to take it away, then there was a crash of thunder, and he was afraid and fled. When he ran out of the grove the rain fell in torrents. It is said that he was so frightened he left his jacket behind. From that time people said that indeed there are miracles at Lubaga. 539

'European times' is given as the reason for sacrifices being less frequent and regular than formerly. The occasions were, and still are: any period of hunger or scarcity, such as the Kinga regularly experience during the dry season, and the Nyakyusa also complain of at that time; any irregular misfortune such as a failure of the rains, a plague of locusts or an epidemic; and any prediction of hunger or disease by a prophet (*usololi* or *ukangulako*). But the chiefs are said to be more reluctant to provide the cattle for sacrifice than formerly, and less quickly influenced by the actual occurrence of hunger or by prophecy that famine is imminent. Nevertheless they still 'treat the earth' (*ukutendekeya amfu*) by sending a black cow to Lubaga when hunger presses. 782 [177]

According to Kasitile (86) and Mwamakunda (his fellow priest) no ritual could be performed in the grove of the first Lwembe when he had no living representative. Formerly, the Kisoule in office and another priest penetrated alone, and there bound a live sheep and left it to bleat until a python took it. 'It is Kyala, he turns himself into a python' (*Je kyala: ipela ssta*). Here Kasitile used *kyala* in the sense of 'the lord' and he was referring to Lwembe. According to another informant, when the heir to any priesthood connected with Lubaga is installed he should sleep in the grove enclosed in a stout wicker hut, and remain there until the python of the grove comes and *licks* him. The case was cited of a priest who had lain captive for two weeks 643 793 792

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[643] [793] and come home 'very thin', but just when this happened was not clear.

We turn now to the account of the three sacrifices witnessed at Lubaga which illustrates (*a*) the occasions of celebration, (*b*) the procedure, and (*c*) the tensions between the participants. In the ritual described on pp. 35-8, Mwakilima (111) complained that most of the chiefs of Selya did not even recognize his ritual supremacy by sending cattle to kill at Lubaga, but Kasitile the priest retorted that Mwakilima himself, in his capacity as a chief, was slow to provide the cattle for sacrifice required by his own priests.

In July 1935, two Kinga priests, Kikungubeja and Nsyanigwa, came from the Kinga chief Mwakalukwa to Lubaga, with an offering of hoes. A bull, provided by Mwakilima (111) as chief of Lwembe's line, was then killed beside a tree planted at the 'coming out' of Mwakisisya (56), the last Lwembe, on the site on which the house of his second wife, Kitega, was built, and the meat was thrown into the old banana grove close by. At the end of September the same two priests returned (each accompanied by a grandson) bringing bamboo beer and 10*s*. and a hoe with which to buy a bull to sacrifice again, for the Kinga were suffering [787] hunger and a prophet in their country had gone into a trance and prophesied cold, disease, and hunger, and urged the chiefs to pray. No fault had brought the hunger, they said, but 'the shades wish a cow. The shades say: "Formerly we ate much, now you do not kill cows for us, indeed we wish to eat. . . ." Therefore much hunger affects our country. It is on this account that we Kinga come with a bull and hoes. When the blood of the sacrifice soaks into the earth then the shades are satisfied, and they also receive the meat from the upper foreleg (*ijammapa*).'[1]

The initiative came from the Kinga who were suffering most severely, but the Nyakyusa were also complaining of scarcity. [731] The weather was very hot and dry and Mwakilima (108) remarked to Kasitile (86) the priest, who had come up to Lubaga for the sacrifice: 'You have killed us with this sun.' He was referring to the unusually small yield of early maize and beans which had been scorched by the drought. Kasitile replied: 'No, all of us [are responsible], the sun has hated us.' Both men smiled.

Five days after the Kinga reached Lubaga (28th September 1955) the sacrifice was offered up. The men concerned gathered in

[1] The sacred cut. cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*, p. 98.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the house of Mwamalunguka, a hereditary priest of Lubaga (whose ancestor came with the first Lwembe (*vide* p. 8). There were present five chiefs of Mwakisisya's (56) line, including Mwanjala II (78), who represents the Lwembe, but is ailing and has never been installed; two Kinga priests and a Kinga messenger sent to escort them; four priests of Lubaga (including Mwamalunguka himself), Kasitile the priest of Selya, and Godfrey Wilson. 782

Mwanjala brought a small black bull worth 12*s*., bought with the money and a hoe provided by the Kinga, and sent for a stem of bananas and a flask of fresh milk. A rowdy discussion began about the procedure: 'In the old days we used to pour whey over our hands to wash them, and to wash our mouths, and in the sacred grove we would pour it away. . . .' Then the party went to a small grove surrounded by cultivated land, and Nsyanigwa, the Kinga priest, stopped at the stump of a tree, still alive, on the edge of the grove, saying: 'This is the *umpandapanda* tree [a *ficus* planted at the coming out of a chief] where we used to pour the beer,' but Mwanjala denied it saying 'No, they have hoed over it, the tree was here in the bean patch.' After some dispute they agreed to go right into the grove to sacrifice. The grove is on the site at which the trees were planted at the 'coming out' of Mwakisisya (56) the last Lwembe, and the house of his senior wife, Njala, was built. She is buried there, where her swept courtyard used to be, and during Mwakisisya's lifetime the beer used to be poured out beside this sacred tree. The last sacrifice here was when Kissoule was a boy (1885-90), hence the uncertainty as to the place, but just why the beer sacrifices had all been at the homestead of Kitega (*vide supra*) was not clear. 782 796 [778]

Nsyanigwa (the Kinga priest) asked Mwamalunguka (the priest of Lubaga) to bring over the three calabashes, one of millet beer, one of milk and one of bamboo beer, but Mwamalunguka refused and Nsyanigwa had to fetch them himself. It was the Kinga who had insisted on the Nyakyusa providing millet beer saying: 'If we first pour out our bamboo beer we will go off with all the fertility of the country, let them begin with theirs.' Mwanjala, summoned by Nsyanigwa, came and stood at the foot of the tree while Nsyanigwa poured millet beer first into his hands and then at the foot of the tree, and the priests prayed, Mwanjala and Nsyanigwa in Nyakyusa, Kikungubeja in Kinga: [842]

Oh thou Mwambipili, thou Kissoule, thou Mwamalunguka,[1] thou

[1] Three hereditary priests of Lubaga.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 Lwembe, this is your millet beer, we complain of hunger, oh thou
796 Mwampondele (27), thou Lwembe.

Then the milk was poured likewise and again they prayed for milk and calves, for children and health:

Here is your milk . . . may the locusts pass, may sickness be slight, may milk be plentiful, may the cows calve!

Finally the bamboo beer was poured out, too, and both the Kinga priests prayed in Kinga speaking of hunger. Mwanjala, instructed by Nsyanigwa, took some bamboo beer into his mouth and blew it three times in different directions, saying, between blowing: 'May the rain come.'

The bull was killed by Mwanjande (?). Nsyanigwa first gave the axe and knife to Mwanjala saying: 'This axe and knife [an unhafted and very old spearhead] I, Nsyanigwa, brought from BuKinga to kill the bull, go and kill it.' Mwanjala asked: 'Shall I not give the axe to my younger brother?' and Nsyanigwa replied: 'Yes, give it to him.' So Mwanjala gave it to Mwanjande who killed the bull with one blow at the back of the head. Mwansasu (a commoner priest) cut up the carcass, collecting the first stream of blood in a pot. Then the sacred meat was taken from the fore-
[778] legs, that from the right leg being placed on a plantain leaf, that from the left on a leaf of sweet banana. It was cut up and carried by Kitega (heir of 57?), who walked behind Mwanjala and the two Kinga priests, to the tree where they had poured the beer and milk. Mwanjala turned to the group of those sitting talking and shouting and said: 'Friends, a spear will go to the shades
[769] [i.e. the shades will be offended by your noise], be quiet', and they fell silent until the offering of meat was made. Then Mwanjala scraped a hollow in the cleared earth at the root of the tree with his foot and threw into it seven or eight pieces. He and the Kinga prayed, while Kitega stood silently holding the rest of the meat:

Oh thou Lwembe, thou Mwampondele (27), stand by us, this is your bull. . . . Give us children, milk, cattle, food; may sickness be slight . . . stand by us.

All this meat was taken from the plantain leaf—the men's portion. At the end, as they walked away Kitega asked: 'What about the women's meat?' And Mwanjala repeated his question. The Kinga replied: 'Are there two sacred places? No! There is no sacrifice

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

to the women here, but to their husbands.' So Kitega took back to the tree the sweet banana leaf, containing the portion for the women. 782 796

Meanwhile strips of meat had been roasted and were eaten with roast bananas, while the milk was finished up by the Nyakyusa present. All the millet beer had been poured out, but the bamboo beer that remained was finished, part drunk, part blown from the mouth by the two Kinga boys, grandsons of the priests. Then the rest of the meat was divided up, one back leg being given to the Kinga. But they took the head (their traditional right) as well, without being given it. There was some considerable protest at this: 'Do you take twice?' they were asked. And more protest still when they began to go away with it. Nsyanigwa (the Kinga priest) replied furiously. 'Let it go, let them take it' was the final comment of the local people, but both parties were angry. Two legs went to the chiefs, one to the Nyakyusa commoners, and the breast to Mwanjala.

After the meat had been safely disposed of Nsyanigwa gave his parting instructions: 'You sirs (*batwa*), thank you, thank you. We remember that it was Mwakalukwa (the Kinga chief) who said "Pray for us"! Thank you! We thank you! Now you must build your chief, Mwanjala (78), a little hut in which to sleep with the breast of beef so that the lord (*kyala*)[1] may eat, and in the morning if *kyala* has eaten let him go to his home. This calf I brought, I Nsyanigwa, from BuKinga. Let the knife I brought remain with it too.' Then Nsyanigwa went off and his advice was discussed. Mwanjala laughed and said: 'I have no house to sleep in . . . shall I sleep by myself? Outside?' Several suggested that it was the custom for some other man to accompany him. No one knew who should do so, but someone suggested Kissoule. In fact Mwanjala went home with the breast of beef and did not remain overnight in the grove. But he and the priests held apart from their wives and children. Mwamalunguka (the priest) explained: 'We avoid sleeping with our wives for three nights. It is taboo to go to them. We say, "Let us wash and anoint ourselves and be alone until that lord (*kyala*) has gone out of our bodies, since we were in the ritual". We bathe tomorrow and the next day and anoint ourselves, but avoid our wives for three nights. Also our children are anointed on the forehead with medicine—the young [784] [783]

[1] The name *kyala* had not been used in the invocation, and the only references to him in this ritual were the two just quoted.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 children, not the married ones with wives. Kissoule and I both
796 have our children anointed now.'

[783] This ritual was not complete because Mwanjala shirked the
[643] crucial act of remaining in the grove until a python licked him.
[793] The Kinga priests were continually nagging at the Nyakyusa for
[177] their failure to provide an acceptable Lwembe, but it is doubtful whether in 1935 Mwanjala II would have been acceptable to any of them since he was old and ailing. It was Mwakilima (111) that men wanted and he steadily refused to be installed.

[787] The next ritual observed at Lubaga was in March 1937. An ordinary commoner of Selya (not a priest) named Kijaja had been prophesying repeatedly: 'I do not sleep, you will not eat the crops you hoe if you do not go to Lubaga.' He was taken to his village headman and thence to the chief Mwaihojo (147) who finally, two years after he had begun prophesying, agreed to find a bull. Word then came to Kasitile (86) who notified the commoner priests of chief Mwaipopo (116) and sent a message to the priests of Lubaga. Kasitile (86), together with three other priests of Selya (Mwalukuta, Nyama, Mwamakunda) and Godfrey Wilson, set off early one morning from Kasitile's house to take the bull (brown streaked with black, called *ingombe isolola*) to Lubaga. On the way they called in at Munyoso's house, where the Kinga stop on their journey to pour a libation of beer (*vide supra*, p. 27). Kasitile asked Munyoso, 'Shall the bull enter?' and he replied, 'Yes, let it come into the house', so it was tied up inside while the party talked with Munyoso. He was sick and did not want to accompany them. The others pressed him, and at first he refused. Whereupon Mwalukuta said: 'Very well, then, we are at your place, let the bull return and we will go another day', in other words, refusing to go without him. 'No, that is taboo,' said
[784] Kasitile, 'once the bull has faced towards Lubaga and entered a house here it is taboo for it to turn back. The shades will be angry.' And so Munyoso went with them.

On the way they passed a group of men hoeing hard. One of them called out: 'Where are you going with that bull? Where are you off enjoying yourselves?' 'Ah, you fellows,' answered Kasitile, 'do you ask where we are going? We visit where our fathers always did.' They understood at once. 'Oh thank you, thank you,' they cried. 'You,' went on Kasitile, 'do you call that work? Are you growing your own food? No, you lie still and eat without effort. It is *we* who exert ourselves for you' (implying

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

that their crop depended upon sacrifices at Lubaga). But five minutes later, as if to illustrate the constant co-existence of dogma and science, of economic and ritual effort, Kasitile commented on a very uneven field of millet saying: 'Its unevenness is due to the rubbish heaps. Where they burnt the rubbish the millet has grown well', as indeed it had.

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The party went to the house of Mwakisopile, priest of Lubaga, and after a polite interval for greetings and small talk Kasitile proceeded to explain his business. 'The sky has changed its temper towards us, we do not sleep (*Kumwanya kutusambukile, tutikugona*). Therefore I said to myself, "Let me go to my father, let me go to my mother." I have come to ask for bananas, and for maize.' So the host sent messages to Mwanjala III (79) and the priests Mwamalunguka and Kesa. Mwanjala II (78) and Kissoule the chief priest of Lubaga, were away from home. Kasitile had long been ailing (*vide infra*, pp. 121-41) and Kesa asked after his health. 'The sky has changed its temper towards us', repeated Kasitile, implying that his illness was connected with Lubaga, and hinting at the quarrel between the priests and men of Mwakisisya (56) of Lubaga and the priests and men of the chief Mwaipopo of Selya (*vide infra*, pp. 37-8). Mwakisopile (the host) repeated to Kesa the reason for the visit. 'Mwamukinga (i.e. Kasitile 86),' he said, 'and Mwalukuta and Mwamakunda declare they do not sleep. They have come to ask for bananas and maize and children, and that the cattle may increase.' Kasitile added, 'The sky has made us still and silent. We long for the grove: since Mwakisisya (56) died we have wished for it. We have come to beg. I lie down wrapped in mats but the cold will not leave me. So I said to myself, "Let me go to my father, let me go to my mother." I am hungry. Have I food? The earth is destroyed.'

Then Kesa and Mwakisisya (111) replied: 'We are astonished that the people of Selya don't sleep. We have heard nothing about it. I, Mwakisisya sleep all right. And only Mwakalobo (67 or heir) and Mwankuga (94) these two alone of all the Selya chiefs came to me. Most of the men in Selya insult us! Ask them who has remembered that they should sacrifice here?'

Kasitile answered: 'It was I, Mwakisambwe (30, i.e. Kasitile speaks as his great grandfather) who initiated it.'

Kesa: 'Yes, but who agreed to give you an animal?'

Kasitile: 'It was Mwalubange, it was Kajula (i.e. the chief Mwaihojo, 147).'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782
796

He also admitted that the people of Selya had insulted the Lwembe, 'But,' he added, 'we have heard that Mwakisisya (111) himself, when someone does not sleep, says "All right", but does not offer a cow.' Thus Kasitile accused the chief of Lubaga who should be Lwembe, to his face, of being reluctant to provide cattle for sacrifice just as the chiefs of Selya were reluctant.

Then Mwalukuta interposed: 'But Kasitile, you admitted that you had injured your father, you had injured your mother.'

Kasitile: 'Yes, indeed it is so, I have injured[1] my father, I have injured my mother.'

That ended the discussion. Kesa fetched bananas and a huge calabash of thick milk for the men of Selya, and Mwalukuta and Mwamakunda started eating at once. Kasitile reproved them: 'What? Do you eat anyhow?' They dropped the bitten bananas hastily. 'Do you not know that you have come here to ask for bananas, to ask for maize? We have come to Mwatonoka (29), to Mwakisisya (56), to Mwanjala (77), to Mwampondele (27) to ask for it. Kyala provided the food.' Then he took up his flask of thick milk and two bananas, and went over to the banana grove at a little distance and prayed aloud:

'You, Mwatonoka (29), you Mwanjala (77) . . . I have come, I Mwalubange (58), I Mwakagile (59) [Kasitile represents their descendants] I have come to beg for maize, to beg for bananas.' Then he came back and joined the party. He sent a large flask of milk over to the local priests; they wanted to refuse and leave all the milk for the visitors, eating only roast bananas, but Kasitile said: 'No, Kyala has provided the food, Kyala has provided it, let us all eat and be satisfied.'

During the meal Kesa and Godrey Wilson discussed steamships and aeroplanes, and the distance and fares to Europe. Mwamalunguka had been to Mbeya and described the wind of an aeroplane coming down and starting, most graphically. Mwanjala (78) wanted very much to go to Europe to see the country. Then Kasitile said: 'Let us go, friends, the rain is coming', so they got up and left, leaving the bull tied to the bananas; the Selya priests had nothing further to do with that; the Lubaga men would kill it at their own convenience.

On the journey back Mwamakunda apologized to Kasitile for having begun to eat before they prayed: 'I am sorry, Mwamukinga (44, addressing Kasitile by his grandfather's name), you have

[1] *Nakendile*: literally surpassed, overstepped, with the implication of injuring.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

instructed us, you have taught us the customs, we did not know them, we thought that when the food came that was all.' 782 796

Kasitile said: 'Yes, I do it as our fathers did it.' Then they discussed the dispute between Mwakisisya and Kasitile and agreed that Kasitile had got the better of Mwakisisya with the reference to his own reluctance to provide cattle for sacrifice.

Kasitile was determined to extract a cow for sacrifice from the chief Mwaipopo (116) also, and presently he said:

Friends, listen, let us report at home that we used hard words, we insulted Mwakisisya, we said there is nothing left to eat though we are not really starving. What has come over me? Why am I ill? Let Mwaipopo pay a cow.

The following day Mwamalunguka, one of the priests of Lubaga, explained what was meant by the complaint of insults from Selya:

The people of Mwaipopo (116) do really insult us, and since the Europeans have given them a Court they have begun to say that Mwakisisya (111) is a priest, not a chief, but just an old priest (*inyago*), and we his men are all angry to hear this because Mwakisisya was always the senior. And they do not send us cattle to sacrifice, they say: 'It's European times now, all that is finished.' [177] [578]

But of Kasitile's retort that Mwakisisya himself did not listen to his priests at home, Mwamalunguka said: 'Indeed it is so, that was an excellent reply.'

The party going up to Lubaga and back travelled dry, but on the return journey Kasitile noticed that the road was wet and he remarked, 'The rain follows us again', and it was true, clouds were gathering quickly. An hour and a half after they got home heavy rain began and continued for three or four hours. During the preceding weeks there had been many heavy showers and bright spells, unnoticed and of no particular significance, but the downpour on the day of the sacrifice was immediately connected with it.

Three weeks later the rain had almost stopped and people were talking of drought. Kasitile was quick to link this with the failure to follow up the offering at Lubaga with sacrifices in the groves of the chiefs. On the sixth of April he spoke his mind to Mwambuputa, the senior village headman of Mwaipopo, when both were visiting us. 769 782 796

Where is the rain? [said Kasitile] I am at fault, and my child Mwaipopo (116) also. He ought to provide a cow to kill at Mwaijonga's

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 (82) grove. According to custom, we should kill a bull here at the same
782 time as one is killed at Lubaga. A messenger from there finds us eating.
796 That was the custom when the chiefs were really chiefs. Now we neglect the rituals. Mwakisisya (111) cut a ripe banana stem for us, but now the bananas are rotting in the homesteads without ripening [owing to our failure to sacrifice]. If our fathers did not sleep they sacrificed cattle, but if we do not sleep we merely offer beer.

Then Kasitile recalled the quarrel between the men of Mwaipopo (116) and those of Lubaga.

Why did you insult Mwakisisya (111) saying 'What remains of your
[344] power?' When we built the Court House in Mwaipopo's country, Mwakisisya's men came to help, and some advised that a beast should be sent to Lubaga to seek blessing on the Court, but others said: 'What use is Lubaga?' . . . Mwakisisya cut a banana stem for us and said 'Seek another cow oh thou Mwakagile' (59, i.e. identifying Kasitile with the grandfather of the chief Mwaipopo whom he represented).

This, however, was an invention of Kasitile's. He continued: 'I, Kasitile, have seen a sacrifice at the grove of Mwaijonga (82) twice, at that of Mwaipopo (115) once, and at that of Mwakabule (117) once, but at Lubaga Kyala has received us frequently.' To which Mwambuputa replied: 'Yes, Kyala has helped us.'

Under pressure from Kasitile and the other priests of his chiefdom Mwaipopo did eventually provide a cow for sacrifice at the grove of his father Mwaijonga (82) but the description of that ritual is deferred to a later chapter.

771 A fundamental conception in Nyakyusa religion is that the proper working of the natural order depends upon harmony of the social order; on proper co-operation between the 'divine king' and his 'sons' the chiefs, between priests and chiefs, and between them and the whole community. If the Lwembe or a rain-
[731] maker is offended, that causes drought or flood in the area of his
[821] influence. When there is heavy rain in Selya it is said, 'There is anger at Lubaga' or 'There is anger at Lwembe's place'. Mwanjala II (78) talking of how angry he had been over an insult remarked, 'Had it been the wet season there would have been a torrent of rain.'

[578] And not only does quarrelling between chiefs and priests bring public misfortune; it reacts upon their own health. How Kasitile
753 linked his ill-health with the quarrel between Mwakisisya (111)
771 of Lubaga and the men of Mwaipopo (116) over the Court, and Mwaipopo's failure to provide cattle for sacrifice has just been

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 too hard to dig graves in'. They and their successors were all
778 buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves
[766] trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. . . . We traced sixteen groves in the plain surrounding Mbande and the nobles who pointed them out remembered participating in celebrations at all except that of the last Kyungu. The ruling Kyungu and the spirits of his
[769] dead predecessors were believed to form one divine company, the anger of any one of whom had terrible effects, and both living and dead were placated with offerings.

778 In time of drought the nobles of Ngonde would go to a diviner
787 to inquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would
● 782 tell them that it was so and so. They would inform the living
821 Kyungu and he would give them a bull or a sheep, together with some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own
643 house, brought by his people as tribute. And he would give them some flour and cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove and build a miniature hut. Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fasten some of the pieces on to the hut in the grove—an action they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And finally, they would pour out some of the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a hut and make an offering in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

643 But occasionally, if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the
688 Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself
787 who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any
689 of them: 'No . . . no.' And at length he would tell them that it was the living Kyungu who was angry because so-and-so had in-
821 sulted him. Then there would be no sacrifice at the grove at all, but the nobles of Ngonde would go to the one who had insulted the Kyungu and charge him with it, asking him what he meant by thus killing them all, would not the whole land starve? And
643 so the wrongdoer would take a cow to the Kyungu who, there-
821 upon, would address the nobles of Ngonde, saying: 'If it was my

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been someone [of the dead Kyungus] whom you forgot to ask about.' 'And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again.' If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry, and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would, and then the diviner would tell them that it was so-and-so (one of the dead Kyungus) and they would go and sacrifice in his grove. 643 [821] [787]

Thus to insult Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. An 'insult' might mean any neglect of the obligations of the chiefs and nobles and commoners of the plain to their lord. [687] [688]

The people of Ngonde hoed large fields as tribute to the Kyungu and if they failed to do so 'he grew angry and poured all the water out of the pot in which he kept his rain stones' (*vide infra*, p. 114) and 'the sky dried up'. Then the chiefs called their men to hoe. . . . 'They hoed and hoed and hoed and their wives planted, then the rain came in a torrent. . . . Kyungu created much rain.' [651] [789]

Or if an elephant hunter neglected to send the Kyungu one of the tusks of any elephant he killed he would not kill another. 'The country beneath was angry . . . the shades of the dead Kyungus . . . they were angry saying: "Why do you stint our child?" ' [651] [769]

The rainfall in the Ngonde plain is less than half what it is in the Nyakyusa valley and anxiety about rainfall was constantly shown in the communal rituals; elephant hunting was also a matter of concern in a way in which it was not among the Nyakyusa and this too is reflected in rituals; but there was also the preoccupation with health and fertility, as in the prayers at Lubaga. In the groves circling Mbande the nobles prayed: 'May the sterile bear children, may the cattle and fowls increase, may the children sleep and not cry at night, may the witches not injure anyone.' And as we shall see, it was health and fertility that men had in mind when they cleared out the ashes each year after the break of the rains. 643 132 771 788 [782]

Towards Christmas time, when the first maize and the first 769 796

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 796 pumpkin leaves were ready to eat, an elaborate first-fruit ceremony was formerly carried out. The new season's food was offered first by the nobles of Ngonde in the grove of the previous Kyungu, the one who had last died.

[778] The great chiefs would do so next, each at his own sacred grove (the grave of his own predecessor in the title). And after them everyone, both chiefs and people, each at his father's grave. All offered first fruits to their own shades. And finally they would themselves eat, each with his chief wife. But they would not eat beforehand for fear of angering the shades.

643 796 [721] In time of tribal war also the Kyungu and nobles of Ngonde led the people in prayer. All chiefs and nobles were summoned from the plain and the great ones entered the Kyungu's house to receive their instructions:

[782] When he had finished speaking he would tell them to go and pray. So they would leave his house and gather all together, all the chiefs, and the other men, and pray. The premier noble of Ngonde would begin asking each of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn to bless them in the fight. And then the great chiefs would pray after him.

This organization of religious ritual in the Ngonde plain was both a factor of and itself determined by the general political structure. Many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions, but the reverse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular significance, the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle [782] were sent to Lubaga by the chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and health; but the 'clearing out of the ashes' was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruits ritual at all; while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

643 789 The majesty (*ubusisya*) of the Kyungu was cultivated in a variety of ways. He smeared himself with ointment made from lion fat, and his bed was built up with elephant tusks and lion pelts. He [352] was enthroned on the sacred iron stool called Kisumbi, he had a [293] spear, Kamisa, and Mulima, a porous piece of iron 'like a mouth organ' used to make rain, all handed down from the first Kyungu. [778] His zebra tails, set with medicines in horn handles, were waved in

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

war and during prayer to the shades, and he also had the famous drum on which the blood of a child was poured: 643 789 [778]

The Kyungu had a drum, called Mwenekelwa, which sometimes refused to sound when struck, then they asked: 'What does it wish, friends?' and they killed a sheep and poured the blood over Mwenekelwa; if it refused to sound when they struck it again, they killed a cow and poured the blood over it and if it still refused to sound when they struck it again, they said: 'What does it want now? It wants a man.' And they took the child of a commoner and cut his throat and poured the blood over the drum and struck it and it sounded loudly. If the drum did not sound when struck it was as if it had boomed an order; its silence was like a prayer. The drum was to show the majesty (*ubusiya*) of the Kyungu, that all the little chiefs at a distance might say: 'Something is happening, let us hear what it is.' Then they all gathered and were told to bring ivory. . . . They needed the blood of a man because their Lord (*Kyala gwabo*, i.e. the Kyungu) had fastened up the drum saying 'I myself am war, there is no other war' . . . [782]

The corpses of those sacrificed to the drum, like those condemned to death, were thrown over the scarp edge of Mbande, to be sucked into the marsh beneath.

Towards the early Kyungus their subjects expressed the feelings of worship and terror appropriate to an irascible divinity. 643 782

At Mbande the nobles of Ngonde would sit round praising the Kyungu —the drums went *kinde! kinde!* And they would praise him in antiphony: 'Oh, Kyungu! . . . Great Father! Great Father!—burier of men!—Great Father! Great Father!—Great Father!—O Mpeta![1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kiposa[1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kyabala![1]—Great Father! Great Father! O Striker and Stabber! Great Father! Great Father! O Mwenende! Great Father! Great Father! O Mpolombasambo! Great Father! Great Father! Dweller in the hot sun!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Fish-eater! O Banana-eater!—Great Father! Great Father!' [539]

The general form of this praise-song was identical with that of the prayers in the sacred groves and so it is literally true to say that the nobles of Ngonde worshipped the living Kyungus.

But the majority of their subjects only worshipped from afar in fear and trembling. At Mbande no ordinary commoner was ever conducted into the sacred enclosure, but only the territorial nobles and the elder chiefs, and they only occasionally; while when the Kyungu travelled through his country all men save the 643

[1] These names are obscure.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Kyala has no living representative—in the myth he had no descendants—but only a priest. However, the priest is sometimes referred to as 'Kyala' as were the early missionaries who preached about Kyala.[1] The present priest (1936) is a young man who, by his own account, would be a Christian were it not for his public responsibility in providing food for the country. His grandfather, Mwakinyasa, was a Kisi who came as an immigrant doctor from Ikubajila in Kisi country to the south, and was the first of his family to hold office at PaliKyala. Before that the chiefs of the line of Mwampasa themselves celebrated the ritual. According to Mwampasa's descendant, the present chief Mwandula, 'We planted food and the crops failed, but when "the owner of food" (Mwakinyasa) came with many medicines it grew, there was much food in the homesteads, hence we said: "Kyala has indeed loved this man, let us give him the duty of sacrificing", so the chiefs gave him cattle of his own and said: "Let the ritual come out of our bodies and go to Mwakinyasa."' It was Mwakinyasa who (according to his grandson) introduced a variety of crops—beans, maize, cowpeas and groundnuts—to the people of Ikombe; before that they grew only bananas and *mapemba*,[2] so the myth of the hero who brought benefits is linked to the new line of priests. But there is no tradition that the priest of Mwampasa's line was once a 'divine king' like the Lwembe and the Kyungu.

Those who sacrifice at PaliKyala are the local chiefs (descendants of Mwampasa), the Kinga chiefs Mwakalukwa and Kyelela (to whom Mwampasa was related), and various chiefs of the Nyakyusa plain as far west as Mwandisi (107) near Mwaya. The Kinga priests bring bamboo beer, hoes, sheep, and occasionally goats or cattle; the local people offer white fowls, flour, cattle, and, traditionally, pots, which are produced in quantity near by, and which were being sold at the market at Ikombe when the Europeans first arrived in the country.[3] The Nyakyusa of the plain send black (or black and white) cattle and sheep. According to the Kinga priests they themselves offer black animals in Bu-Kinga when they want rain—black clouds—and white animals when they want sun and a clear sky. At Lubaga only dark animals are offered, but at PaliKyala white fowls and black, or white (or

[1] F. Fülleborn, *Das Deutsche Njassa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet*, p. 317.

[2] *Mapemba*—maize in Penja, but here it is contrasted with *ifilombe* (maize).

[3] Joseph Thomson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back* (1881), v. I, pp. 262-3. The missionary, Dr. A. Merensky, saw hatchets and choppers, as well as pots, on the floor of the cave. F. Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 black and white) animals are killed, with the same symbolism as
793 in BuKinga.[1] 'We kill a white sheep in the dry season that the
[789] sun may shine—if we killed a black sheep in summer the wet season would last all the year.'

The Kinga pray for fertility of the fields, that illness may pass, that they 'may sleep at home'; the local people[2] for fertility of the fields and that the pots they make (and on the sale of which they largely depend) may not crack in the firing. The more distant chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa plain sacrifice only in drought or plague—the last sacrifice remembered was during a plague of locusts about 1915, but the Kinga chief Kyelela sent a cow in PaliKyala in July 1937.

Like the grove of Lubaga, Kyala's cave is fearful. There is a
778 story of two men who took a length of creeper from near it to tie
688 up their canoe, and when they got home both went mad. Godfrey Wilson's guide, a young Christian, refused to enter the cave on the grounds that his pagan half-brother had once entered and taken away a potsherd and 'when he got home he went mad'.

[1] Merensky appears to have been misinformed on this point, *op. cit.*, pp. 321-2.

[177] [2] The potters are primarily Kisi, but neighbouring Nyakyusa have taken to this
[323] lucrative trade.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

play one village against another and go to sleep in that section of the country which supports him, but he dare not anger all his headmen. In the same way a village headman dare not anger the main body of his men. In short, public opinion is an effective sanction because those in authority believe that the disapproval of their fellows may bring a fever or paralysis upon them. One of our Christian informants was insistent that, were it not for the belief in the 'breath of men', pagan chiefs and headmen would act tyrannically. 643 778 622

The situations in which a chief or headman fears the breath of men are very varied. We have already referred to the chief who thought his illness was due to his refusal to hold the 'coming out' for his sons when advised to do so.[1] Mwaipopo, before whose court a very bitter land dispute between two of his villages had been brought, refused to give judgement and was careful to sleep in the village that had possession of the land, and therefore less cause for anger.[2] Kasitile, the hereditary priest of the chief's lineage who counted as 'a chief' as opposed to 'a commoner', thought he had angered the village headmen of his generation (who had become priests) by not providing meat for them (*vide infra*, p. 125). [754]

The headmen are responsible for the health of their chief and it is they who go to consult an oracle if he is ill and take him to a doctor. Mwankuga II (151), heir to Mwaipopo's chiefdom, had not begotten a son by any of the wives he inherited from his elder brother who had died. His village headmen[3] went to consult an oracle and were told that it was the wrath (*imindu*) of his father; so they reported the matter to Mwaipopo, who sent a junior kinsman to consult another oracle. The diagnosis was confirmed and Mwaipopo gathered his younger brothers and prayed and told the shades that he had no quarrel with his kinsmen. Then he told the village headmen to take Mwankuga to a doctor for treatment, but this they did not do, so that Mwankuga went to consult a doctor on his own. According to Kasitile it was because the headmen had not taken Mwankuga that the medicine did not work. 'They should take him to the doctor and be present in dreams, to watch over him in dreams.' What the headmen were angry about was not revealed—there was no obvious cause. [842] [753] [787] [782]

[1] *op. cit.*, pp. 134-5. [2] *op. cit.*, pp. 188-90.

[3] Mwankuga I who died had 'come out' before Mwankuga II inherited from him, but Mwaipopo (116) continued to rule as chief and draw a Government salary.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769
782
142
291
516

8. COMMUNION WITH THE SHADES

[Facing p. 70]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

SACRIFICES AT THE GROVES OF CHIEF

(e) THE PLACE, OCCASION, AND FORM OF SACRIFICE

778. 769 [137] A CHIEF is buried near the trees planted at his 'coming out' s
around the grave a thicket grows up. It is taboo for men to c
saplings or brushwood there and since trees grow very fast in t
climate and soil of the Nyakyusa valley, the thicket soon becom
a grove, and there sacrifices to the dead chief are made. T
priests look for the stone planted at his marriage, and place t
offering beside it. How long a chief is so honoured depends on h
conspicuous he was as a ruler or warrior, and perhaps also
[782] whether the sacrifices are judged to be efficient in producing r
and health or not. Mbyanga and Kabale, two groves which
particularly honoured, were the shrines of founders of expandi
lineages. At Mbyanga was planted a cutting of a tree whi
sprouted from the grave of Mwakisambwe (90) who had f
occupied the country in which Mbyanga is situated. He is oft
spoken of as having been 'buried' at Mbyanga, in fact he w
carried back ten miles to Lubaga, whence he had come, for buri
But he is worshipped at Mbyanga and we attended a sacrif
there for which his great-great-great-grandson, Mwaihojo (1
the chief, provided a cow, and Mwaihojo's grandsons ate the h
food. In contrast to this, the grave of Mwaipope's (116) young
brother, who had once ruled a country but was defeated in w
and whose sons had died, was completely neglected; no
sacrificed there. We knew more than a dozen chiefs' groves
which sacrifices were made, and there must have been a gr
many more in different parts of BuNyakyusa.

643 769 Since every ruling chief normally had two heirs, sacrif
involved co-operation between independent chiefdoms—
chiefs at the grove of their father, four at that of their grandfath
and so on. But if there is friction between the chiefs, some brand
of the lineage cease to participate, saying that the connexion
'too distant', and celebrate at the groves of their nearer ancest
only. This happened at the sacrifice of Mbyanga which
[578] [698] attended (*vide infra*, pp. 79-81). The sanction for co-operatio
the belief that quarrelling between kinsmen annoys the shades

[p. 70]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

may nullify any ritual, but often it is not strong enough to overcome the fissiparous tendencies of the lineage. In theory a celebration at the grove of a senior should precede that at the grove of a junior and sacrifices at Lubaga would be followed by sacrifices at the groves of the 'sons of Lwembe' in order of seniority, but this does not happen in practice nowadays and we doubt whether it ever did, since a hierarchy was not organized and maintained by a central authority as in Ngonde. In 1935 a celebration at the grove of Mwaijonga (80) preceded one at the grove of his great-grandfather Mwakisambwe (90) by a month, as we shall see.

Sacrifices are made when a drought or flood occurs, or a plague of locusts, or an epidemic among men or cattle; when fishing is poor in the chiefdoms of the plain, or war is imminent. They occur most often during the 'winter' in the hills, when a malaria-sodden people feel the chill of damp mists and cool south winds, and in October, just before the break of the rains, when the country is parched; but they are not confined to these periods. In theory the village headmen and the priests who 'watch over the country' foresee *coming* misfortune in dreams, and avert it by making the appropriate sacrifices. And they are helped by ordinary people who are dreaming repeatedly or falling into a trance or fit, and prophesying evil and jabbering of 'a black cow, a black cow' or some other appurtenance of sacrifice. But in practice the prophecies generally occur when there is hunger or plague in the land, or an omen (such as a python or a ground hornbill behaving oddly) has been seen.

The dreamers are *akamalili* or *akalangulaka*, and, as these names indicate, they are believed to have descended into the land of the shades. *Ulamlala*[1] means to go down into something, like the roots of a tree into the earth, and *akalangula isangula* means to pluck a banana flower which (as was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*) is a symbol for a corpse and is buried; so the *akalangulaka* are those who have been buried in the earth. '*Akalangulaka* go to the land of the shades and return. . . . An *ankangulaka* plucks up the "blessed grass" (*ilisipile*) in his swept courtyard and goes beneath and sees.[2] . . . He goes down into the earth beneath and takes the chief to the land of the shades when he dies, and he also sees the witches. . . .' More rarely, the *amamlili* or *ankangulaka* is

[1] *Ulamlala*—a hearth pronunciation, the implication being that the infant's head is in *lamplala*, but children born in this way are not necessarily prophets.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 73, 212.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

said just to become aware of future events without any dream. *Abakungulaka* are distinguished from those who suffer from fits or fall into trances (*abakaw' omulage*), but a woman in a trance may also prophesy and induce the chief and priests to celebrate a ritual, for it is thought that she too is in communication with the shades. Men say 'The shade has entered her' or 'Kyala catches hold of her that she may speak of the matter'. This type of prophecy is something new among the Nyakyusa. Mwandisi (107) told us that 'it did not exist in BuKinga whence we came', but had been introduced from the south, through Ngonde, and it is mainly confined to women, whereas the *abakungulaka* are men.

There are many tales of famous prophecies. Nsamba (90) claimed that his father (63) foretold that 'there will come a white thing on the Lake, and it will land on the shore. That will be the man who will make peace', and Mwakalinga (142) who died fighting the Germans is said to have foretold his own death.[1]

Dreams and revelations of the possessed concerning public matters are reported to the local village headman and referred to the other headmen and priests, and a prophecy is accepted as valid only after formal discussion. As we shall see, Kasitile was sceptical about the revelations of one man who was repeatedly 'possessed', perhaps because he threatened to become a rival in interpreting public misfortune. If there is doubt, suspicions are confirmed or problems elucidated, by divination.

When they judged a sacrifice necessary the village headman and priests went to their chief saying, 'We do not sleep', and it was his obligation to secure an animal for sacrifice. He might provide it out of his own herd, but very often the duty of 'finding' sacrificial cattle was delegated to a junior line—the ruling chief gave cattle to a younger brother charging him and his heirs with the function of providing sacrificial cattle when necessary. Today all the chiefs are reluctant to expend cattle on rituals whose validity is questioned, and there is often friction between the senior and junior lines over who should 'find' the cow or bull required. Their reluctance is illustrated by the following passage from Godfrey Wilson's diary:

Mbaspa (on the lake shore): 22/12/34

It is still stormy; there has been wind and heavy rain for four days. People are saying: 'We are hungry. It is very bad. We need light rain

[1] According to Mr. Harkin's informant the Saralwe eruption was foretold a year before it occurred. *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, 40 (1955), p. 61.

9: Wilson E-5 (1954-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for planting, but now all the fields are muddy, we can neither hoe nor plant.' Five days ago there was no rain but locusts, and people did not plant for fear lest the locusts should eat the rice and maize as it sprouted. Kissoule tells me: 'Kyala is very angry. . . . Mwandisi (107, the priest-chief) wants to pray to put things right, he has sent Mwalulabosya to ask Mwakisisile (170, the ruling chief) for a cow. Mwalulabosya and Mwakalobo went and the chief agreed saying: "I have not got one now, but I will look for one!" Then Mwalulabosya sent me (Kissoule) to fetch it, but the chief refused saying: "I am busy now." Then Mwandisi (107), who is blind and infirm, went himself, but still there is no cow.'

769 782 [177] [643]

The priests who minister to dead chiefs, like the priests of Lubaga, are of different types. The senior village headmen of a dead chief are responsible for conducting sacrifices at his grove in co-operation with his heir, and when a headman dies his office is taken over by his heir. Where a grove is much honoured this continues for generations and the heirs of one of the village headmen become hereditary keepers of the grove, each incumbent of the office assuming his name. Secondly, there are chiefs of a junior line, who become hereditary priests on whom the ruling chiefs depend for their prayers, but these priest-chiefs do not actually attend the sacrifices; the celebration is delegated to commoner priests and junior kinsmen. Mwandisi (107) mentioned above, Kasitile (86) and Nsamba (90) were all priest-chiefs of this sort. Kasitile prayed at his own home, blowing out water before any celebration in Mwaipopo's country, and he was given the chine of any animal sacrificed on behalf of the country. If this were not done 'all the cattle in the country would die . . . it is the most important part of the meat'. The commoner priests who conducted the ritual always shared the head of the sacrificial beast and the breast went to the chief. With priest-chiefs, as with commoner chiefs, the name of the first incumbent of the office (or an early and famous incumbent) may become a hereditary title, e.g. three generations of priests in Selya have been known as *Kasitile*.

793 622 769

The essential elements in the ritual are: the sacrifice of a black bull or cow in the grove; the offering up of the blood and pieces of the sacred meat from the forelegs, together with the beer, on the earth close to a sacred stone and near a sacred tree; an invocation calling on the shades to come and feast, and petitions for rain, fertility, and health. One piece of meat is thrown down for

769 782

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 each name mentioned: 'We give this meat to you so-and-so.'
[782] 'May the children sleep, may we all sleep, may it rain, may there be much food, may milk be plentiful.' Then follows a communion in which young 'grand-children' of the dead share the sacred meat and beer. 'The shades eat together, they break off firewood
[775] there from the tree, they rejoice, some clap their hands to give thanks.' Finally, a hut is built for the shades and half-formed bananas and sweet milk are left in it to 'ripen'. It was thought that if the sacrifice were accepted they did so miraculously quickly and the milk increased in quantity, the bananas in size. Among the Kukwe a white and grey cock and a hen were offered as well as the cow or bull. An account of two of the sacrifices we attended will make this clearer.

(b) SACRIFICE TO MWAIJONGA

769 In July 1935, two days after the Kinga had sacrificed at
782 Lubaga (*vide supra*, p. 30), the chief Mwaipopo (116) came to tell us that he was going to sacrifice at the grove of his father, Mwaijonga (82). Ngulyo, heir to Mwaijonga's second senior headman and now his priest, came with the chief, and he remarked,

Kasitile (86) summoned us some time ago. He and Njobakosa and Kissogota[1] and I thought that the hunger was very great indeed, and Kasitile sent us to tell Mwaipopo (116) to look for a cow and sacrifice. Then Mwaipopo agreed, because the hunger is indeed very great; he has not yet found the cow; when he has, we shall inform Kasitile and then kill it in Mwaijonga's grove.

Mwaipopo 'found' the cow at once for next morning Kasitile told us

Mwambene (Mwaipopo, 116) came with Ngulyo yesterday to say he had found the cow. This evening, after sunset, because there is a moon (second quarter) I shall pray at my place with water; and Mwaipopo will pray at his homestead also with water. Tomorrow morning they will kill the cow. I shall not be there—I never go—I stay at home and they [i.e. the shades] find me at home.

The same evening (10 July 1935) Godfrey Wilson went to Kasitile's homestead just after sunset. Kasitile took a calabash cup hanging under the eaves saying: 'No one ever drinks from this
[776] cup, it is for praying only. At my death it will go to my heir to use for prayer.' He filled the cup from his wife's water-pot, and then

[1] Heirs of two other village headmen of Mwaijonga, also priests of his grove.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

plunged into it a glowing brand from the fire. Then he went to a low tree in the middle of a cultivated field where the byre of his senior brother (85) had been. He took a root of 'blessed grass' with him, and as he stood before the tree he took a couple of bites of the root and two sips of water. Then he blew out the water in a cloud twice and he spoke for twenty minutes and mentioned thirty-five names or more: 'Thou Mwakanjoki (60), . . . thou Kalesi (18), Mwakalebela (19), . . . Mwakir'sya (56) and Mwampondele (27), . . . Kikungubeja, Silobwike, Kyamba Kitali, Nsyanigwa,[1] . . . Mwaipaja (21.) He talked about the punishment of 'Mwakagile their child' (i.e. of Mwaipopo (116) who was here identified with his grandfather) . . . 'Kyala is there . . . he sees Mwaipopo. He says "Do this ritual, I am rejoiced".' At another point Kasitile added the name 'Jesus' to a list of ancestors. He prayed for food, children, and cattle. . . . 'Give us bananas, millet, maize, may children be born in the morning and in the evening, may cows calve in the morning and in the evening.' He spoke of the old sacrifices of Mwalubange (58) and others which had been accepted . . .

Now Mwaipopo has found a cow, he has learnt his lesson, he has agreed; receive him tomorrow, grant him food, give food to all in Selya . . . to Mwaisumo (62), Mwaitende (61). . . . You are proud (*ali namatings*) to send so much hunger. . . . When I went down to the plain men asked me 'Are you taking all the food with you?' I said 'Yes', but now I have come up, the earth has come up. You alone remain and hold back. I ask you to send food again. I alone remain of all the contemporaries of Mwaijonga (82). I alone am Kasitile. All the people of Kyungu (16), of Mwakyusa (98), all know I am Kasitile. I alone remain. The birds say, the snakes say that I am Kasitile. There is trouble all round in BuNdali, BuSangu, BuKinga, but we thought here there would be no trouble in the country of Mwakilima (111) and Mwanjala (77), but there is. They have sacrificed, the Kinga have come to Lubaga. Mwakisya (111) has begun, Mwakagile [i.e. Mwaipopo, 116, here identified with his grandfather, 59] sleeps with hunger, receive him tomorrow. I 'treat' the earth, all treat their earth, all over the country.

Next morning early the chiefs and priests met near Mwaijonga's grove which is some hundreds of yards from Ipinda, his senior village, where his *indola* tree still stands.[2] The talk turned on the

[1] These four are the Kinga princes with hereditary titles, who serve at Lubaga.

[2] Why the grove was not beside the *indola* tree as it usually is was not made clear to us.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 weather, and the ritual. 'We prayed yesterday at Ipinda, Mwai-
782 popo and all of us, we prayed and prayed. Did you feel the cold as much as usual last night? Did you hear the banana leaves rustle as usual?' 'No.' 'Well, Kyala has heard our prayer.'

At 7.45 a.m. they moved into the grove. A black cow had already been killed. 'We killed it at cock-crow, while it was still dark, we were all there. Mwambene (the chief Mwaipopo 116) handed the axe to Mwanyoso (his junior kinsman *vide* p. 84) who killed the cow.' Bananas were brought and all roasted them and ate,
[578] waiting for the other priests, Njobakosa and Kissogata. After a discussion about certain persons who had not come because the last time they got no meat, one of them said: 'Don't talk of what is
[784] forbidden in the sacred grove, don't let's make a noise; no, we pray to Mwakagile (59). . . . If we quarrel and make a noise the shades will not hear our prayer.' James (119), Kasitile's heir, was there but not Kasitile (86) himself. Someone asked whether Tandale ought to be summoned. But one said: 'We have never asked this Tandale to come here; we used to ask his father.[1] . . . Tandale lives in the boys' village. He has not the position of Ngulyo and Kissogota,'

Mwaipopo: 'Why do you argue about this today and not before?'

After an hour's delay Njobakosa arrived, and shortly after him Kissogota, who apologized, saying: 'I am late because my child has just died.'

Kissogota and Ngulyo flayed the cow, letting the blood pour out on to the ground. There was some discussion over the division of the meat, and they cut out the chine, saying: 'We send it with the tail to Kasitile—if we sever the tail we have spoiled it.'

Ngulyo took the sacred meat (*ityammapa*) from both forelegs,
[778] and with Kissogota's help he chopped off twenty-three small pieces. The rest of this meat was left for the children. At 10.10 all gathered to go to the grave. A sacred stone (*ulufiga*)[2] was found under a tree. Mwaiteteja (Mwaipopo's junior kinsman) cleared the undergrowth with his bill-hook and dug a hole close to the stone, then he threw the meat which Kissogota was holding on two leaves, placed the leaves on top and filled in the earth. Five or six men spoke:

[1] Tandale the senior had buried the previous chief, Mwaipopo I (115).

[2] It was not clear whether this was the one planted at Mwajonga's coming out or not, since his *ibala* was some hundreds of yards away.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Here is your cow, your food. We pray to Kyala. May theft go away. Give us food and beans and millet, may we eat and be satisfied. . . . It is said that the sweet potatoes are scarce now, help us. You Mwakabule (117), Mwakomo (112). . . . This is your cow Mwaijonga (82). This is your meat. I shall seek another also which we shall give you like this. 769 782

NGULYO: May the locusts go away. It is you who have caused theft because there is hunger.

KISOOOTA: At night since we eat scraps of food our bellies are disquieted . . . may we be satisfied. People are eating millet porridge;[1] when food is plentiful they say it's horrible. When someone eats millet porridge he dies, it kills a man. We pray to him, this Kyala, because we do not know him, so we say: 'You Mwaijonga (82) drive away the hunger. Give all of us, Mwaipopo's people, food, and hear us all.' [262]

Mwaipopo's young sons (not the older ones) ate the rest of the sacred meat (*vide* plate 8). Other boys who approached were chased away: 'They thought because their friends were getting meat they would too.' Then the remainder of the carcass was divided: two legs went to the chiefs, two to the commoners, the chine to Kasitile, the breast to Mwaipopo (the chief) who gave half to his sons and half to his daughters—his wives may not eat it. The head went to the priests Ngulyo and his fellows—and some entrails were sent to Seba, widow of Mwaijonga (82). There was some discussion about the disposal of the head: 'Let it be put in Ngulyo's house', they said. Mwaipopo commenting later, explained: [262]

We leave the head in the house of a commoner near the sacred grove in order that the shades can come and eat it. So also with the chine. . . . Kasitile leaves it so that his shades may eat it. We throw the meat by a tree which was planted long ago. He whom we have buried looks towards it, he sits facing the tree and the meat is thrown beside it.[2] He sees the meat we throw. We offer the meat of the upper forelegs (*tjammapa*), this is the sacred meat, the rest we eat ourselves. The blood pours out on to the ground, it goes beneath, which means that the owners, the shades, receive it, because they are beneath. The shades say: 'We are angry because you have not given us cows to treat the grove, we are angry and send this hunger. Treat the grove frequently!' [775]

Kasitile also discussed the ritual with us later and he remarked:

[1] Millet is ordinarily used only for brewing beer. The Nyakyusa regard millet porridge as very distasteful and eat it only during extreme scarcity. [273]

[2] We omitted to ask why, in this case, a hut had not been built in the grove.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 782 I kept the chine for two nights in my house. The shades came to eat—they left practically nothing. Had I not been ill I would have asked you to come and see since you say they do not eat. . . . The shades come and see that we are celebrating the rituals.

The whole ritual was esoteric. Only the chief with eight of his [793] agnatic kinsmen, four of his young sons (but not his grown-up [643] heir or young grandson), and four priests participated, and we [123] two anthropologists were permitted to look on. Peeping small boys were chased off. The shades were addressed in a conversational tone and, except during the invocation, the priests and [784] chiefs chatted to one another, but arguments and raised voices were taboo. The boys who ate the meat were told:

[869] See, we your fathers are sacrificing, we are making plenty of food. Follow the custom of your fathers when it is your turn to sacrifice. Learn how to do it.

The same evening Kasitile prayed at his tree again. He explained:

I would not usually pray at all tonight, it is finished. Mwaipopo and I prayed yesterday, today the ritual is finished, but that boy of mine [his heir, 119] does not visit me, he's not been to see me and he did not tell me that he was going to the ritual. . . . I am going to pray to tell my fathers not to be startled, to tell them I am not angry, to tell them to send only a little rain, not a lot, to tell them to accept the sacrifice.

He went to the same place, and chewed the root of 'blessed grass' and blew out water as before. He prayed to about thirty persons, especially to Mwamaloba (85, his elder brother) and Mwakanjoki (60, his father), and also to Mwakagile (59), Mwaijonga (82), Mwaipasi (81), Mwakabule (117), Mwamwifu (84), Mwafungo (83), Mwakipesile (118), Mwakapala (?), Lyambilo (12), Mwalubange (58), Mwamukinga (43), Mwaihojo (147?), Mwaitende (61), and Kyala (2). No mention was made of the Lubaga chiefs this time, or of sons of Mwaipaja (21) or of 'Jesus'.

You have received your child Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 59), Mwaijonga (82), you have received the chief, this boy of mine (119) is quarrelling with me, do not be upset, he is a fool, a fool, but let him be . . . go and call your brothers to eat, you Mwaijonga (82), you Mwaipopo (115), and all your younger brothers; call Mwakagile (59) and Mwakanjoki (60) . . . Mwalubange (58) go to eat with your younger brother, let us find food, millet, bananas, children, milk . . . let there be a little rain only, not too much . . . people believe

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

that I can speak, that when I speak food comes tomorrow; let it be so. 769

Three points call for comment here. First, it will be noted that if the crops failed Kasitile had a scapegoat in his heir who was quarrelling with him. The sacrifice was performed correctly but a quarrel between any of the leading actors could destroy its efficacy, and Kasitile made it clear that he was being very forbearing with a difficult 'son'. 782

Secondly, a great many names were mentioned in the prayers, but they were not mentioned in any discernible order. This is obvious if the prayers are compared with the genealogy facing p. 3 [793] And since Kasitile was a famous priest, acknowledged to be an expert in ritual and tradition we must conclude that the order was not thought important: all that was required was to mention the names of dead members of the lineage, including even one (Mwakabule 117) who was junior both to Mwaipopo and Kasitile who were sacrificing.

Thirdly, what did Kasitile imply by his reference to the moon? 769 (p. 74). We omitted to ask Kasitile himself, but a number of informants insisted that there is no necessary connexion between 782 the celebration of a ritual and the phases of the moon. However, 821 rain is expected with the *waning* moon, therefore rituals which are intended to produce rain are usually performed with the waning moon, and the sacrifice to Mwaijonga in which sun and warmth were sought, was performed with the waxing moon. This may or may not be what Kasitile had in mind.

Everyone agreed afterwards that the rituals had been effective for the weather grew slightly warmer. Before the sacrifice at [132] Lubaga on 7th July, the temperature was 62° F. at sunset, but from the 9th onward the cloud cleared, and by the 14th the sunset temperature was 68° F. Whether or not the Kinga priests living high on their mountains with a view down the Lake whence storms come are weatherwise, and time their visits carefully, we do not know. Certainly any change in the weather after a celebration is interpreted as a direct answer to prayer.

(c) SACRIFICE TO MWAKISAMBWE

A month later a sacrifice was made to Mwaijonga's great-great- 769 grandfather Mwakisambwe (30) in the grove Mbyanga. The chief 782 Mwaipopo was not concerned this time, but the senior line of Mwaihojo (147) and a junior line who had traditionally the responsibility of providing cows for celebrations at Mbyanga.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 782 Mwalukuta, the hereditary priest of Mbyanga, had been pressing the chiefs to sacrifice for some time. He had sent messengers in March, April, May, and again in July, saying: 'At Mbyanga things have gone back, it is bad, see hunger kills!' At last, in August, Mwaihojo agreed to provide a cow if Mwaitende of the junior line finally refused. Mwalukuta, the priest of the grove, ex-
[793] plained:

> We went to Mwaitende (121, identified with his grandfather 61) and asked him to sacrifice. He said: 'No, I am not coming; do the work there at Mbyanga yourselves.' We said: 'Why do you refuse to come, to return a cow? Our grandfathers gave you a cow, why don't you return it? They gave you cows on the understanding that you would bring them back, one by one, and kill them in the sacred grove here. Why do you refuse to return them?' It has always been the custom for the junior brothers to find cows for sacrifice. Their seniors give them wealth and appoint them priests to bring cattle to the sacred grove.
> [177] But in European times they refuse to come, each man kills at his own place. . . . I must go and tell Kasitile (86) and also Kifubuka, or rather his son—the father refuses to come he had a lawsuit with Kasitile. . . . Kifubuka used to kill the cow, then Kasitile said Makuli should kill the cow, but now Makuli has refused to come so I go to fetch Kifubuka [the younger]. Makuli was a chief who ate the meat. . . . Mwaitende (61) used to send the cow to him and Mwaluseke to bring to Mbyanga . . . as he now refuses to send the cow they say: 'What should we bring?' and have refused to come here.

There had been another spell of cold weather and the tempera-
[132] ture on the night of 8th August was down to 59° F., but fine weather was visibly approaching from the Lake. On the 9th the ritual was to have been held, but not everyone had been formally summoned and it was put off to the 10th.

Only eight men came, Mwalukuta I, the priest of the grove,
[793] and his younger brother Mwalukuta II, two other priests (Nyama and Mwakasukula) and Mwakyonde (148), younger brother of Mwaihojo the chief who provided the cow, and three other young men of the chief's lineage. One of the young chiefs was
[291] wearing a red cloth and was scolded by Mwakyonde for doing so: 'It's taboo in the sacred grove.' 'Why?' 'Because it's like a rainbow.'[1] And he took it off.

The mother of Nyama brought a bundle of saplings for building the hut for the shade, and Kisisile, the senior wife of Mwaihojo the

[1] The rainbow is a symbol of misfortune. cf. p. 60.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

chief, brought a bundle of firewood. Mwalukuta I was not expected to enter the grove and he went off soon. His brother and Nyama took a little basket of maize and millet. The chiefs stayed on the edge of the grove and the three commoners entered alone. Mwalukuta II and Nyama built a little hut five feet from the 'grave' with the saplings brought by Nyama's mother. 'We put firewood and food and a little calabash which we have prepared in it, it's for the shades.' The calabash contained millet, maize, pumpkin seeds, ground nuts, and cow peas; and a stem of bananas was put beside it. Mwalukuta swept the 'grave' which was marked by a few small trees, and Mwakasukula killed the cow, which must lie facing east to BuKinga. Mwalukuta spoke the invocation: 'Thou Mwakisambwe (30) . . . Mwakihaba (45) has gone back, but Mwamukinga (44) is here still. . . . Mwakihaba says, "I am no longer a relative, I have gone out." ' Then they took the sacred meat from the forelegs of the cow: that from the right leg was buried near the 'grave', that from the left by an *nkuju* tree (a species of *ficus*) forty paces away. The priests ate some roasted meat and intestines with bananas, and the rest of the meat was divided between them and the chiefs. The head went to Nyama's house and was kept for three nights. The priests explained that they are forbidden to bathe for three days or lie with their wives, but on the fourth day they eat the head and after that they bathe and resume married life.

Eighteen days after the sacrifice Mwalukuta went to look and found the stem of bananas which had been left in the little hut had ripened, and the earth on the grave had been disturbed. This was a good omen. But later his legs began to trouble him—he could scarcely walk—and it was said that certain priests who should have been called to the ritual had not been summoned and were angry and had cursed him. He fled to a distance and sought a bull to kill for his fellows.

(*d*) SACRIFICE AT KABALE

The form of sacrifice among the Kukwe is very similar. We never saw a sacrifice at Kabale—our friends assured us that they had been dropped before 1935—but a description by two of the leading priests of the grove of Kabale demonstrates the similarity between the rituals there and in Selya. The only points of difference were that the Kukwe sacrificed fowls as well as cattle, and granddaughters shared the sacred food with grandsons.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 In this grove of Kabale three chiefs in particular gather together,
782 Mwakilulele (67 K) and his brothers Mwakalukwa (68 K) and Mwangoka (24 K) [or his son], with the younger brothers Mwakamela (66 K) and Mwakilasa (69 K) in whose country the grove is situated. The senior, Mwakilulele, initiates matters; it is he who calls his fellows saying: 'Let us pray in the grove.' Then Mwakilulele seeks a black cow and Mwangoka seeks a black bull, Mwakilasa brews beer and brings two fowls, a black and grey cock, and a black and yellow hen. So they go to the grave with their children, young boys and girls and the junior chiefs who have lost their positions as ruling chiefs—sons of Mwangomale (4 K)—and their village headmen. In the grove they pour
[778] some of the beer over the sacred stones and kill the cattle and take the liver and fat round the stomach and the meat from the upper forelegs (*ijammapa*) and cut it into small pieces and put it on two leaves, sweet banana and plantain. Then they take little pieces of meat and throw them on the ground and pluck out the feathers of the fowls. They praise the shades saying: 'Receive the fowls and beer and meat, may there be fertility of the fields that all the crops may be plentiful.' . . . 'Help us Kyala, thou Ndolombwike (?), thou Kajubili (?), you created us, together with our fathers. Help us that illness may be slight, that we may increase and be many, that all the fowls and cattle may increase and that the fields may be fertile.' When they pluck out the feathers of the hen the praises are for the wives of the chiefs who have died. Then they pick up little pieces of meat and eat them with young children; it is taboo for wives to eat it. Boys drink the beer which is in the calabash cup—they receive it in their hands—and the girls finish the beer in the large calabash. Then the men drink the rest of the beer and divide the meat. . . . The calabash cup and the large calabash and the head are left in the grove overnight . . . then the large calabash
[784] and the cup are taken home and hung under the eaves—it is taboo to put them in the house—women must not approach them. When they have finished and come out of the grove rain pours down immediately and they rejoice saying: 'Kyala has helped us' . . . or 'the fathers have heard'.

Pouring out the beer on the ground and throwing down little pieces of meat, and sticking feathers into the ground means: 'May the fathers beneath receive them, may they bless the crops so that they flourish and food be plentiful. . . .' Children finish the food because they are like the shades—when the children have eaten they say the shades have eaten. They roast the meat at a distance because if they roast it close to the place of sacrifice no shades come there for the smoke drives
[778] them off. . . . The large calabash and cup and head which stay there
[784] symbolize fertility (*mboto*), so that when we eat they may help us and the food may not fail. The taboo on women—wives—eating the sacrificial meat (the *ijammapa*) and drinking the beer in the calabash

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and cup is because this food is sacrified to their fathers-in-law. Those who are not sons of Ngomale do not drink the sacrificial beer or eat the meat either, because they are of other lineages. A *black* cow is used in the grove because groves are always fearful and darkness falls if something improper is done. So it is said that the blackness of the cow matches the fearfulness (*ubusiya*) of the grove. 769 782 [778] [784] [825]

Besides the sacrifices at Kabale and to their more immediate ancestors, Kukwe chiefs sent offerings to the BaNgumba, earlier occupants of the country. Mwamunda explained:

My grandfather prayed in the grove which is across the river on mission land, in the forest; it was the grove of us BaNgumba; we were owners of the soil, the Kukwe chiefs found us here. If ever a chief sent my grandfather and his fellows to pray there they went with an unripe stem of bananas, and sweet milk, and unripe maize, and small sweet potatoes; then they prayed and came home again and the next day, when they went to look they found the stem of bananas had ripened, the maize had hardened, the milk was thick and the sweet potatoes large; everything which was unripe had ripened. Then they said Kyala [that is Kyala and the shades] had stood by us. . . . We spoke of Kyala even before the Europeans had come. . . .[1]

They say that very long ago we BaNgumba, we sons of Kasyapula, had not yet got fire, the chiefs brought it. It is this they commemorate in the 'coming out' ritual. We, the owners of the soil, were always here, the chiefs came and built, and when others came the firstcomers fled. They are like you Europeans who fight wars; we owners of the soil think only of hoeing. [173]

(*e*) MODERN CHANGES

It is quite clear that, though sacrifices to the heroes and at the groves of chiefs were still made while we were among the Nyakyusa (and more frequently than our friends at first admitted), the cycle was attenuated. Not only had human sacrifice probably ceased but the chiefs were reluctant to part with cattle. . . . Kasitile (86) said one day: 769 782 177

Since you [Europeans] came into the country the rituals have disappeared. Mwaipopo (116) never thinks of the rituals now. . . . It is cold and there is hunger; I went to Mwaipopo and told him to tell his

[1] According to the records of the first missionaries, sacrifices on Rungwe were to *Mbamba* but the same passage refers to *Mbamba or Kiala* meaning God. It is not clear whether the two names were equated by Kukwe informants or by the missionary himself, who was in touch with missionaries elsewhere in the district. (*Journal de l'Unité des Frères*, 1894.) I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Fueter for drawing my attention to this valuable Journal.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 priests to sacrifice to his father and elder brother so that fertility may
782 return and men may eat sweet potatoes, but he does nothing.
177

A conversation between Kasitile and Mwanyoso, his fellow priest (*vide* p. 76), was also instructive on this point:

The soil has changed, we are not like those of old, we are different. Mwakisambwe (30) had power; when he prayed the thunder crashed and rain fell in torrents. In the old days when the Kinga came they came with drums and we all feared them, what they said was done—they did not have to say much—just a few words and it was done. But now they spend all their time explaining things and talking and we do not do anything. . . .

MWANYOSO: I have sent people time and again to Mwaijande (?) for a cow, but he just insults us. . . . I have asked Mwaihojo (147) about celebrating. . . .

KASITILE: What did he say?

MWANYOSO: I don't know . . . if he is wise . . .

KASITILE (*breaking in*): Well, you had better admit that the chiefs do not respect you—the chiefs say: 'It is European times now.'

G.W.: What do they fear? The Government does not affect the ritual, does it?

KASITILE: They are unwilling to part with the cows which I take for sacrifice, they do not like to lose their cows. In the old days they feared, and when we said: 'We do not sleep, celebrate in the grove', they agreed quickly, for they feared that we, their men, would move to another chiefdom.

(f) THE FIRST FRUITS

769 No communal ritual of the first fruits is celebrated among the
782 Nyakyusa as in Ngonde,[1] but after the millet harvest a little grain is
[241] collected from every homestead and later brewed into beer which is offered to the shades of the chief. In Mwaipopo's country the offerings of millet were collected by the priest, Ngulyo, who, with
[793] his colleagues Kissogoia and Njobakosa, took it to Kalinga, senior widow of the late chief (113). She was custodian of a sacred pot inherited by the chief from his predecessors, in which the offerings
[778] of millet are stored, and this is the pot which, according to some informants, also contained the power of growth—the nails and hair torn from the dead chief (*vide supra*, pp. 64-5). When the new crop was reaped Kalinga almost emptied the pot, refilled it with the fresh grain, and brewed beer with the old. There had once been a sacred winnowing basket used in preparing the beer, but

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, p. 42.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

it was stolen by Ngoni raiders. When the brewing was ripe, the chief sought a calabash of curds and Kalinga cut a stem of bananas, and the priests ate and drank in her hut, together with junior kinsmen of the chief's family, but not the chief himself. As they drank they prayed: 769 782

Oh thou Mwakagile (59) give us millet, may it be plentiful, and may the milk be plentiful and may the bananas grow.

One pot of beer was due to Kasitile, the priest, and he would leave it overnight in his house.

The shades come and drink a lot, only a little beer is left in the morning. . . . then the bananas flourish and there is much fertility in the homesteads. . . . The sacred pot gives fertility of the soil to the whole country. [775 778]

A very bitter quarrel flared up while we were in Selya because Kasitile came upon Ngulyo and his colleagues drinking the sacred beer without their having sent him his pot, or even notifying him of the brewing. The repercussions of this are discussed in chapter IX. [578]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

system is still the accepted form in Mwaipopo's chiefdom; the advantages of separating kinsmen in different villages are explicitly stated, and the contrast between the Nyakyusa and their neighbours in this respect emphasized. 'Certainly we do not live with kinsmen here but the Kinga do.' 'It is not good for a son to live close to his father, they will quarrel.' 'When we move to another village we consider friendship not kinship in selecting it.'

(b) THE BALANCE BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND SECTIONS

The ritual cycle of the 'coming out' and the sacrifices in the groves helped to maintain a balance of power between generations, as well as between chiefs and commoners. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) in 1953 it was Mwabuputa, the senior village headman of his father, who took the leading part. He was described as 'the greatest man in the country' who 'brings out the chief' and his manner indicated that he was well aware of his power. During the reign of Mwaipopo (116) the power of his father's village headmen, Njobakosa and Ngulyo, was apparent at every ritual. Spiritual power was shared between chiefs and commoners, but exercised ideally by a virile chief of the ruling generation and the experienced headmen of the retired generation.

Those chosen as senior village headmen at the 'coming out' are commonly older than the young chief, but village headmen are thought of as surviving their chief—it is they who were responsible for smothering him, and performing the sacrifices in his grove. The headmanship is an *office* and so long as the office is necessary an incumbent is found for it, in the person of the heir of the original holder who is so closely identified with the deceased that most precise inquiry is often necessary to establish whether a given individual is the original holder, the succeeding heir, or a later heir, successor to the successor. The Ngulyo who officiated at the rituals in 1935 was the heir of the original Ngulyo (some said the *grandson*, not the son) and he was criticized by Kasitile as being 'a young man who knew nothing'. The principle, so familiar in Central Africa, of a perpetual office[1] emerges, among the

[1] I. Cunnison, *Kinship and Local Organization on the Luapula*, Communications of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute No. 5 (1950), pp. 14-15; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), p. 122; A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, O.U.P. (1939), p. 24; 'Some Types of Family Structure among the Central Bantu, in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, p. 224; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, London (1911), p. 3.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

inheritance ensure that a limited number of young men are absorbed into the senior generation and live with the older men, sharing their activities and from time to time holding office as headmen or priests of that generation, and the selection in each generation of young men who are *not* the sons of village headmen, or chiefs, or headmen of the past generation, ensures that commoners without office are constantly recruited to the hierarchy of rulers. In short, power is distributed.

(c) RITUAL AND SECULAR BONDS

As in so many societies, economic and ritual links extended, traditionally, further than political links.[1] Selya was dependent upon BuKinga for iron and the Kinga came to fruitful Selya to pray for fertility. The priests who came to pray brought the hoes. The many independent chiefdoms of Selya and the Mbaka valley acknowledged the spiritual overlordship of the Lwembe by sending sacrifices to him, and it was through the network of hereditary priests like Kasitile, Mwamakunda, Mwalukuta, and Nyama of Selya, and the Kinga priests Kikungubeja, Nsyanigwa, Kyamba Kitali, and Silobwike that wider bonds were maintained. Mwaipopo (116) when he was granted a Court which gave him the secular leadership of Selya, failed to make any acknowledgement of Lwembe's traditional power, and it was Kasitile who later urged him to do so. The western chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa still buy medicines and bark-cloth from the Ndali to the west, and have done so for many generations, but no common ritual links them as it does Selya and the plain with BuKinga. The trade was of lesser importance than that to the east, for it does not seem to have included iron, though the Nyiha who share a common culture with the Lambya, the western neighbours of the Nyakyusa, are known to have been skilled smiths.[2] With the Sangu to the

[1] cf. E. Colson, 'The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia' in *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa* (ed. Colson and Gluckman).

A comparison with the frontier in West and South Africa where economic and religious expansion compelled the establishment of Government is instructive. Cf. W. K. Hancock, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs*, vol. ii, part ii, pp. 162-8.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between the Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, vi (1890), p. 289. Elton's suggestion that some of the Nyakyusa iron came from the west is discounted by Cotterill. J. F. Elton, *The Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa* (1879), p. 371 and map, cf. J. Thompson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back*, vol. i, p. 272.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631 north the Nyakyusa were continually at war; they did not trade
782 or pray with them. Thus we conclude that participation in a
[721] common ritual is, in the Nyakyusa case, directly linked with a common origin and essential trade.

643 The divine kings, Lwembe and Kyungu, were regarded as having power over certain areas, a power closely linked with
[789] rainfall. Indeed, one informant argued that the chiefs living
[782] around Masoko had never sent sacrifices to Lubaga, 'because when it rains at Lubaga the rain does not come as far as Masoko'. He
[821] was mistaken in his facts—the chiefs of Masoko did at one time send to Lubaga as Mwambete (162), chief at Masoko, himself admitted—but the argument points to a conception of supernatural power tied to a rainfall area. This notion was not, however, applied consistently.

643 The balance between secular and mystical power has altered
173 during the past ten generations. The founding heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, came as conquerors and must surely have led their men personally; but early in the history of Ngonde the Kyungu was secluded, and power was exercised almost exclusively by the nobles (*vide supra*, pp. 40-46); and the Lwembe also was, at one period, 'not seen by ordinary men' and led a life hedged about with taboos. There is sharp contrast in Nyakyusa tradition between the active chiefs who were warriors, and arbitrators, and worked hard in their fields[1] and the 'divine king' who lived in seclusion. As we have seen, the chiefs often delegated ritual functions, with the taboos involved, to a junior kinsman such as Mwamukinga (44) or Mwakihaba (45) (*vide* pp. 79-81, 114) whose heirs succeeded to the office. It is even possible that the
[178] first Lwembe at Lubaga (Mwakalebela 19) took over ritual functions from his senior brother, Kalesi (18).[2] The present tendency is for the development of secular power and its separation from mystical power. The Kyungu is no longer a god but an administrator: the heir of the Lwembes sits as an elected representative of chiefs on the Local Council. In the traditional
182 Nyakyusa society ritual played an essential part in maintaining
177 the balance between generations, sections, and social strata, and in

[1] In 1955 a young chief was bitterly criticized by his men because he 'never had a hoe in his hands' whereas his father and grandfather had (to our personal knowledge) been diligent in hoeing.

[2] But according to one excellent informant, Mwakisambwe (50) lived secluded while Mwakilima (51) 'fed men'—i.e. entertained.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The imagination of the Nyakyusa doctor who invented this magic was near enough to that of Shakespeare to be intelligible to an Englishman. The sun is an 'eye'. Clouds may close it. Holes in a rain instrument are also 'eyes' and if these are closed the 'eye of heaven' will also shut—with clouds. 789 778

The Kyungu seems to have kept Mulima (which was only 'the size of a spectacle case') on him, but the ordinary instruments—stones—were left in the chiefs' groves with potsherds in which they were immersed in water when required.

Kyungu Mwakabange had his rain-makers Mugoma and Komanga. Mugoma was a slave, Komanga a man of Ngonde. When the sky was hard he sent a message to them saying: 'Put them into water.' If there were too much rain he said: 'Take them out.' Each had two potsherds with two stones for each. To make rain they rubbed the stones with mutton fat and a medicine called *ilifuge* (fertility) and put them into the sherds and poured water over them.

Godfrey Wilson was taken by Kasitile to see his rain stones in the grove near his house in April 1935. Kasitile addressed his shades:[1]

My fathers, do not be angry, *Mwakalebela* (19) (he spat), *Mwanjala* (23), *Mwakisambwe* (30), *Mwakilima* (31), *Mwamapondele* (27), *Mwakihaba* (45), *Mwamukinga* (44), Mwalubange (58), Mwakagile (59), Mwandemele (?), Mwakanjoki (60), Mwaijonga (82), Mwafungo (83), Mwamwifu (84), Mwakabule (117), Mwaipopo (115), these are our friends (repeated urgently), you did not know them, you feared them, but now we do not fear them, they have come and met with us as friends. [782] ●

There was a large broken pot and three stones, two of them with holes an inch or so in diameter. There used to be five stones—two had been stolen by the Ngoni when they raided this country. When he wishes to make rain, water drawn from a waterfall is brought by Kasitile's wife and left overnight in the grove. Then he pours it into the pot and puts in the stones . . . 'the water bubbles; it is cold, but it seems to boil and the *ifula* go whirling and knocking against the sides of the pot.' . . . The bubbling of the water is compared with rain. Kasitile did not know where his stones had come from. Mwakisambwe his great-grandfather had

[1] The names italicised are those G.W. actually heard in the grove; the whole list was given by Kasitile afterwards as names he had mentioned, but in fact he had not mentioned more than eight.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

younger one[1] gossips with her fellow, she does not go to the witches herself, but just talks to the other wife who calls the witches to her aid. These two wives say: 'The favourite has borne many children to her husband; we are poor' [i.e. the favourite gets an unfair share of her husband's attentions]. 754 753

Kasitile speaks of his wives as 'witches' which, according to Nyakyusa ideas, they were, if they injured him, but he was also in the wrong to have shown his preference for Jane so clearly. [775] As was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*, the shades are thought to punish such favouritism. [689]

Towards the end of August Kasitile went to consult Ndembwe, a diviner and doctor, living nearly a day's journey away in the hills, who used a 'stick in the ground' as a divining rod. On his return Kasitile reported: 791 787

Ndembwe says it's the 'breath of men', not the wives, but the dispute about the beer. I paid him 1s. and drank three preparations of medicine at his place. He is coming here—I have found some beer and I am sending to call him tomorrow. Then Kasitile added confidentially: About the source of the 'breath' I am uncertain. Ndembwe suggested testing my wives. He can see the heavy ones, for in Ndali country he has drunk much medicine to give him spiritual power (*amanga*). He told me to come home, not to go back to Mwakyonde's country, and he is coming to give me medicine to drink and also to sprinkle medicine in the house. He will sleep here and see who it is that comes—he will know if the wives are heavy, or if it is the people of the country. 753 [782] [778] [787]

Kasitile's uncertainty was apparent. The first diviner had stated clearly that the sickness came from the witchcraft of the wives, but Kasitile wanted a further test.

We were away from Selya for some time and did not hear of any further developments in Kasitile's illness until early in 1937. By then a new reason for his ill-health had been put forward, viz. his impiety in cutting all the branches off a tree growing at the entrance to a sacred grove which has sprung up over his father's grave. He cut the tree because it was encroaching on his homestead. Then he fell ill and he went to consult Ndembwe again. 753 688

He asked me: 'Have you done something wrong at home?' I replied: 'No, I have done nothing wrong.' 'But the oracle says you have done wrong at home.' I said: 'Perhaps it is because I cut a tree at the [787]

[1] Sister of the favourite Jane. To accuse Jane's sister would cast a slur on Jane, for witchcraft is normally hereditary.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

753 entrance to the grove?' Ndembwe told me, 'You will get no cattle',
688 and indeed the cows are aborting. He told me: 'Brew beer and look
[787] for a sheep[1] and pray to your grandfather.'

782 Kasitile did not find an animal for sacrifice. He slaughtered a kid 'just for meat', killing it near the grove, but without praying or taking any of the meat into the grove, for it is not customary to offer goat's meat to the shades. His health improved a little, for a
787 time, but again he got worse and went off to see another diviner, saying: 'Perhaps there is some other cause; perhaps Ndembwe is mistaken.' He decided to go to consult an oracle some distance away 'because the oracle near home does not convince us; those who live near know all our wrongdoings; those at a distance don't know the affairs of the homestrads here'. This time Godfrey Wilson was invited to accompany him 'since he was his friend'.

Record of G.W. Kajiji

787 We left Isumba about 7 a.m. and walked for an hour over the hills
753 through the bush. Kasitile had sent his wives, Jane and Kilulali, on ahead to tell the diviner, Nuki, that we were coming. . . . He came in
[791] from the fields to meet us and was taken aback by the presence of a
[186] European. Kasitile kept saying: 'Do not be startled, he is from home, he is our friend.' . . . Food was served, then Nuki's wife brought out some cooked millet porridge for the divination. He broke off a large piece and began to roll it between his hands. He smeared ointment on his hands and added powdered medicine. . . . He rolled and rolled, sometimes throwing the ball up and catching it again, spitting on his hands meantime. He murmured as he rolled, then at last he said to Kasitile, 'Speak!' Kasitile called his two wives to come near, and he explained his symptoms and the circumstances, how the sickness had fallen on him just after he had cut the tree in the sacred grove.

Nuki asked for other possibilities. Kasitile: 'Perhaps the country is angry—I am a senior there. If it is the fathers who are angry I admit
[684] having done wrong. Perhaps my wives have committed adultery in the long grass and they are the cause of the illness.' Nuki rolled and rolled the ball of porridge speaking aloud: 'It is Kyala above?' (looking up).
[778] Kasitile interrupted him: 'Yes, indeed, Kyala, but Kyala stands where he stood at home, does he stand a' 'w? He stands with the fathers.' Nuki (as he rolled the porridge): 'Your fathers are angry about that grove?' Then the ball of porridge flattened out in his hands and he broke off . . . 'No, that is not the cause' (*side glance cut*).

Rolling it into a ball again he went on: 'Your wives have committed

[1] This was Kasitile's own account. Others told us that he had been advised to look for a bull.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

some live coals into a small calabash and held them against Kaitile's chest 'to clear out the blood of coughing'. To pacify the shades a pot of medicines in water was put on the fire; the doctor, Kaitile, and his 'senior wife' (actually her younger sister, as Jane was away) each held the pot with a crooked finger. Then Kaitile and all his wives and children were sprinkled with the hot medicines. And the doctor told Kaitile to sacrifice a bull.

During the following week preparations for the sacrifice went ahead. Kaitile walked for some hours through the forest to call Mwamakunda, his fellow priest who always assisted him in the celebrations at Lubaga, and 'sprinkling the country'. Mwamakunda is a very old man, contemporary of Kaitile's father, and he asked: 'Are you bringing your European to the sacrifice?'

KAITILE: Yes.

MWAMAKUNDA: But your father Mwakanjiki (lit) did not know any Europeans, he feared them, he died without ever meeting one. After your father died, when your elder brother was alive, Europeans came —Germans—and cut down a tree, the amandi tree in the sacred grove near Kamono; blood gushed out, it shouted so that it was heard in BuKinga.

Kaitile explained that the Germans had wanted timber. Afterwards Mwaipopo (the chief 118) sought a sheep and they tried to put the grove to rights ('clear up') by sacrificing it. This was the tree beside which the sacred meat was always put when they sacrificed in the grove. Now one branch has grown up again from the roots.

Mwamakunda went on: 'But you did wrong at the beginning not to take the European to pray, and to tell Mwakanjiki (lit) that he should not be afraid, the European has made himself our friend.' Kaitile, reporting the interview to us said: 'I concealed that we went together to the grove to pray (*vide supra*, p. 115) and Mwamakunda told me: "Let the European take something, let it stay overnight in the house, and go with him, and pray very much. . . . Mwakanjiki has gone off to a bull from your home, you have offended him yourself. Go with the European, take him to your father's home. Now your father has taken offence, he is shaking your body by night because you cut the tree; you have done wrong."' i.e. two causes for the anger of the shades and Kaitile's consequent sickness were given: (i) the cutting of the tree by Mwakanjiki's grave and (ii) Godfrey Wilson's presence at rituals and at Kaitile's homestead. So before the sacrifice of explation for pruning the grove was performed Godfrey Wilson went to be introduced to Kaitile's shades for the second time.

Record of G.W. 15/4/37

In the evening as the sun was setting, I went to Kaitile's house with a cloth and so. He put them in the house, took down the calabash which

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

always hangs under the eaves and is only used for prayer, filled it with [783]
water and put into it a stone and a live coal from the fire. Then he [782]
took some roots from the roof (previously put there ready) and we
went off to the same spot as before (*ibid. supra*, p. 115). Kasitile chewed [778]
the root, took water and blew it out, and began to pray:

'Do not be startled, come in your own persons, gather together, [769]
with Mwakanjoki (6a). You made friends with him before, now he has
[illegible] 'we make friends' [illegible] 'I make a mistake,' I
have come to enter; I cut you on the head, I have done wrong. The
sons of Kaglie (*i.e.* 39 & his descendants) complain of me, saying, "It
is he who has gone off with the millet, bananas, and maize; and child-
ren cry at night behind the huts; we are barren because he has cut
Mwakanjoki." I have sought this cow which you wanted. Mwakanjoki
(6a), Lwambe (37), Mwakalebela (19), Mwatumoko (29), Mwalu-
lange (38), Mwakagile (35), Mwaijunga (8a), Kyala (1), we have
come to attend to you (pointing to the grave). Kikungulwja, Nyanigwa
Kyambe Kitali,[1] Lyambilo (16) come to your home if you are at
Mwalubange's (38), come if you are at Mwaimunda's (61), come
Mwakanjoki (6a) and the Kinga and Lwambe (3); Mwakalebela (19)
come, give me cattle and millet, and the powerful medicine which you
had. Since you are brooding over me go out from my body, go out!
I pay my debt. We have come to take you to your home since you have
gone off in a huff, come! I will never cut your branches again. I fear
you and I will respect the branches. Come to your house, that of
Mwamalaba (8a), of Kanjoki (mother of 6a), come. And he (G.W.) is [123]
innocent (*mashi*), do not fear him. He is the owner of the ritual, he is
Mwamalaba (8a), he is my senior, I am the junior. Sometimes I wish
to embrace him, sometimes I fear that he is going to imprison me.[2]
May the bananas increase! I am left alone! It is I who am here! Move [769]
out of my body! And give us medicine! May the offering increase
overnight, may the cattle increase and the maize, and in the morning
let me tell Mwaipaja (G.W.) that the bananas and medicine have
increased. If there is anything else you are a liar, if this chill begins
again then I have gone, I am not here. *Amen! (ee).*'

Very early the following morning the sacrificial bull was killed. [177]
Kasitile had arranged that our Mohammedan cook should come to cut
its throat.[3] Then, later in the morning, the crucial drinking and
'speaking out' began. Kasitile had provided two pots of beer.

[1] These Kinga priests whose names are titles of office.

[2] In the earlier years of our acquaintance Kasitile had denied both the sacrificing of an ailing chief and human sacrifice for the drum. It is possible that he had consented in either one or both of these ritual acts. He himself reported that the Kinga diviner had told him: 'You have a European as a close friend. . . . You enjoy his company much, but there is something left . . .' (*i.e.* the friendship is not yet complete). [114]

[3] Ostensibly so that he could partake of the meat, but the reason given seemed inadequate.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Record of G.W. 10/4/57

783 782 I was summoned two hours after sunrise and found at Kasitile's: Mwaipopo (the chief 116), Kissogota, Ngulyo, and Njobakosa the commoner priests; Mwamakunda the younger (his father is too weak to come himself), and a half-wit who has attached himself to Kasitile. Mwaipopo asked me: 'Did you escape the rain yesterday evening?' I said, 'No, I was caught by it, I'd come without a coat, and I thought it quite safe as I lived so near' (a quarter of a mile away). Mwaipopo replied: 'Ah, but you were at prayer. Do they not listen? Did you think you would escape the rain when you were at prayer?' and he laughed at me. During the afternoon it began to thunder close by. Kasitile glanced round and whispered to me out of the corner of his mouth: 'They are listening!'

Drinking continued all day, and all day, with intervals, they discussed the case (*ukujoba inongwa*) or spoke out (*ukuanya*) or prayed (*ukuriputa*). This half formal prayer (*ukuriputa*) over beer is an essential part of the ritual. They began by discussing the cutting of the tree by [688] Kasitile. 'They are angry, Mwakanjoki (60) is angry, he is startled [769] that Mwamaloba (i.e. Kasitile 86) cut him himself. Mwakanjoki says, 'Who is there?' [i.e. Kasitile did it without formally telling the shades about it]. They (*sic*) went off in a huff . . . we have come to fetch him (*sic*) back.'

Then Kastile told them about his prayer and how he had admitted his fault saying: 'Indeed, I, your wife, have done wrong, Mwakanjoki (60), indeed I come to enter, I Mwamaloba (86), I am a woman.' 'If you went to Mwalubange's (58) come, if you went to Mwaitende's (61) come.' 'Yes,' Kissogota broke in, 'you are a woman, and also you are a man, take the calabash cup and pray. It is you then (who are at fault).' 'Thank you,' said the others, 'thank you Mwakinambwe (Kasitile is identified with his great-grandfather, 30), thank you Mwakagile (Mwaipopo, 116), is identified with his grandfather, 59), for praying with water.' (Mwaipopo had also prayed at his place.)

So the discussion continued. 'We try everything, a sacred stem of bananas from Kalinga (senior widow of 115) is cut, it goes (to the shades), people milk their cows, they collect millet (*vide* pp. 84-5, 121), we try everything, we try everything.'

Then Mwamakunda started a new topic, the old *umuali* tree: 'But friends, do you say they have gone away now? They went away long ago. Did this *umuali* tree fall when Kasitile (60, father of the present one) was alive?' 'When he was dead,' they agreed. 'Well, then, where has your wisdom disappeared to?' 'Yes indeed,' broke in Kasitile, 'Indeed, but we attended to that. They said, "Mwaipopo seek a sheep." They attended to it again. And when I came from the plain, I killed a cow, the meat went there, we attended to it.'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

All the time there was a constant refrain of questioning, especially [783]
from Mwamakunda (who as Kasitile's assistant acts as his mouthpiece [782]
to the others: 'But why has Mwakanjuki (60) gone off in a huff? Why?'
There was a continuous effort to extract reasons.

The meat from the top of the foreleg (*jisenepe*) was cut up into little portions and some was put aside for the boys, sons of Kasitile. Then Kasitile led the way with a bill-hook and Mwamakunda and I followed. Mwamakunda carried the meat in a leaf. We went to the [778] sacred grove, Kinyangwa. When we reached the edge Kasitile told us to wait and he cut a path into the middle with the bill-hook, then we followed.

Mwamakunda threw the meat slowly, piece by piece, into the rotting stump of an old *musali* tree, from which a lusty growth had sprung, [769] one shoot being 30 feet high. Kasitile prayed: 'Come Mwakanjuki (60), together with Lwembe (37), Mwakalebela (19), and the Kings, come, with—with—with—come. We pray of you millet, maize, bananas, all your food.' (Mwamakunda threw a piece of meat at each word.) 'We are still mourning you, we have tears. We finish now, that is all. Bring bananas, bring millet, maize, children, may the cows calve, stand by us Mwakanjuki (60), N—, N—, N— Lwembe (37), Mwakalebela (19), Neyanigwe,[1] Kyambe Kitali,[1] Ngalube (9), N—, N—, N—. Don't come again Mwakanjuki, let us sleep well. This is Mwambagoje [i.e. Mwamakunda the younger. It was his first visit to the sacred grove in place of his father]. I have brought him to you. Do not be startled at this Mwaipaja (G.W.), he is innocent, he is our friend. Move out of my body, let this chill go from my body! We have finished! Amen!'

Kasitile and Mwamakunda gave instructions and suggestions to each other in low voices from time to time during the prayer and throwing of the meat. We went out, Kasitile and Mwamakunda looking ahead, and Kasitile warned me: 'Do not look behind, Mwaipaja.' For the next two days Kasitile said he and Mwamakunda would [834] wash with medicines, and refrain from intercourse with their wives 'because they entered the sacred grove'.

Then we rejoined Mwaipopo and the priests and the meat was cut up. Mwaipopo said: 'Indeed people gossip, where does the whispering go? To whom do the words go? Perhaps they went to you (the commoner) priests?' Kasitile had something on his mind: 'When I returned [689] from Lubaga who came to say: "Thank you, you have arrived back?" [i.e. no one came to greet him formally on his return]. Njobokoma answered this saying that no offence was meant.

Then Njobokoma turned to Mwaipopo (116) and raised the question [684] of his son, Mwaseba (152) who had seduced Mwaipopo's wife, Mpeta.

[1] The hereditary Kings priests. [793]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 Why had Mwaipopo refused so long to enter into relationship with
782 Mwaseba? Mwaipopo explained that the delay was on account of
[669] Mpeta. 'Let my wife come first,' he said, and told how, when the case first came to light, he had taken Mpeta to his kinsman Mwaiteteja, who took her to Mwaseba's village headman, Kakuja, and he to her people. She must come back the same way, and has not yet done so. Ngulyo said that at first he had been inclined to criticize Mwaipopo, but now saw that he was right. Kasitile spoke of the enormity of Mwaseba's offence, for Mpeta is a kinswoman of Mwaipopo's wife
[835] Kalobo, and on the death of her son Mwakalobo, Mwaseba was put in his place, so he has seduced a woman who, by legal fiction, is his mother, as well as the wife of his father. His act is *deadly* incestuous.

[836] They then spoke of the separation of those who pray at Miyanga (*vide supra*, p. 80) and blamed them for it. 'Have they millet though? Kyala judges them himself.' Then Kasitile reproved Mwaipopo (the chief) for another matter. 'But you, Mwakaglie (116, identified with his grandfather 55) have little wisdom left. Why did you not give some of the beer which we drank recently at your house[1] to the people of Ipinda, the BaKalinga? The food from a distance you should divide.' And Mwaipopo agreed meekly [i.e. Mwaipopo has built with his young wives away from his inherited wife Kalinga (senior widow of 115) and is apt to neglect her; he must send some of the 'food from a distance'—ceremonial presents from affines—to his senior wives, not give it all to his friends and young wives.]

Then there were mutual compliments and self-depreciation between Kasitile and Kimagota (the commoner priest). Kimagota pointed to Mwaipopo and Kasitile, and said: 'You are impressive you, you are impressive, we are mere cannibals (*bafyakwende*).' Kasitile replied: 'You are impressive yourself, if I look at you my body changes.'

Suddenly Kimagota got up and pretended to go: 'I am off, friends!' Ngulyo started to protest: 'We have not yet finished, we are speaking.' But Kimagota said, 'No, you told me to "be off"!' He went outside but returned admitting he had been only pretending. Mwaipopo: 'Yes, do you think we don't know you? Drink! Why do you not drink?'

The Mwamakunda began to ask angrily: 'Why do you shut up words in the heart? Why? Do you wish that Mwakimanowe (i.e. Kasitile, 86, identified with his great-grandfather, 30) should become a fool? Kimagota answered: 'We have not yet done so, Mwamkagije (Mwamakunda), we have not yet; do you think we are angry? Who went to fetch Kasitile from the plain? It was we, we went ourselves.'

Njobokoma took up the matter: 'We have power we have, if we
[794] please we can give the chief worms.' (This was said fiercely; Kasitile and Mwaipopo listened without comments. It was the crucial moment

[1] Sent as a present by Mwaipopo's affines.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

to which all had led up.) Then Mwaipopo (116) spoke: 'We have taken home Mwakanjoki (60), we have taken home Mwakisambwe (90).' And the others agreed: 'We have taken him, we have taken him.' Mwaipopo went on to speak of the tree cutting: 'It was always a swept place, Mwakanjoki (60) built there, let it be a swept place again, let it be clear, let our prayers go beneath to enter the house here [i.e. no matter that the trees have been pruned], prayers go beneath in the swept place. See, we buried our father Mwaijonga (82) in the swept place, was it heavy? [i.e. a sacred grove] No, a tree grew later. So if I like I cut that it may be clear again.' To which Kasitile replied: 'Thank you, Mwakagile' (116, identified with his grandfather 55). Mwaipopo continued: 'Let no one whisper. Who whispered? Where do we all look? Here! It is our earth, here, it is our tree, here, it is our fertility of the soil (*mbele*), here. No one stirred up Mwakisambwe (90); he stirred up himself.'

783
782
[668]
[778]

So they prepared to go, saying, 'It's getting dark, it's getting dark.' But Kasitile stopped them. 'Wait, there is one thing left, tell Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 55) that he should seek a cow, let us finish.' They took this up: 'Yes, since we have taken your grandfather to his home, let us go to your father, Mwaijonga (82), and to Mwakabule (117), let us finish them.'

Mwaipopo ignored this. 'It's getting dark, let us go.' And Kasitile enforced it by addressing Njobakosa and his fellows: 'But Njobakosa have you cattle?' 'Yes!'

'And has Kimagwa got some?'

'Yes.'

'Well, then, is it you who will seek this cow?'

'No!'

'Indeed, it hurts Mwakagile' (116, identified with his grandfather 55) [i.e. it hurts him to have to spend his cows].

'Do not "cut leaves at home" [i.e. summon a crowd and discuss the matter publicly], he will be startled, he will swear at us, speak with him privately.'

[576]

So they went off. Jane (wife of Kasitile, 86) took the breast of beef to Mwaipopo's (116) place. One leg went to the priests, Njobakosa, Ngulyo, and Kimagwa, one to Mwamakunda and Nilisu (Kasitile's kinsman), and another kinsman who was not present, the hump and neck were sent to me; and two legs and the chine were kept for Kasitile himself and his female relatives.

A couple of weeks later, when Kasitile came to visit, he explained one or two points in the ritual. Asked about Mwamakunda's forceful words 'Why do you shut up words in the heart?' and the reply of Kimagwa and Njobakosa, he said: 'That is very important. Mwamakunda is my man, he stands by me, he eats meat with me, he compelled

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

them to speak out, because if they do not admit that it is they, then the ritual fails.'

QUESTION: What does that mean?

KASITILE: It is witchcraft!

QUESTION: Witchcraft? (in apparent surprise).

KASITILE: Yes, it is their witchcraft, the priests gathered with the shade, they bring a chill on my body.

QUESTION: Pythons? (still in surprise).

KASITILE: Yes, they fly in their witchcraft to come here, they speak with the shades, saying: 'Punish him! Let him find us something to eat!' They call the shades to help. Hence I sought something for them to eat that they should be satisfied.

QUESTION: But I thought witchcraft and the shades were quite separate? (still in apparent surprise).

KASITILE: No, they are together, look you, did not Kisogota boast? He said, 'Indeed we came, it is us, it is us. Why did you cut that branch? But now there is no accusation against you.' He boasted very much. He said: 'We have power, if we like we can give him worms.' [It is Njobukosa who was heard to say this, but Kasitile's personal quarrel was with Kisogota.] Did I not tell you that I had worms when I came up from the plain? I had them! I went to doctors and the diviners said: 'You are a chief, you were in the plain, why do you not kill a bull on your return?' Then when I killed a bull the worms disappeared! Where did they come from? They came from the priests, they called the shades to their aid. So I admitted to Kisogota, saying: 'Indeed I have done wrong, I your wife, I Maloba' (86, the feminine form of the name is used).

QUESTION: So, a white person (*umuzungu*, *vide infra*, p. 141) cannot be a priest, but only a witch, a heavy one?

KASITILE: Yes, indeed, how can a white person take hold of the ritual? His fellows will drive him away. See! To a ritual do we call everyone?

No!

KASITILE: And is my home near to Kisogota's?

No, he lives at a distance.

KASITILE: Yes, indeed, it is the black ones (*Isaile*) whom we call because it is they who punish us chiefs.

QUESTION: Well, then, is the anger of the shades always provoked by the witches? What about sores (*imisolo*) on the mouth?[1] What about madness if a commoner does not perform the death ritual?

KASITILE: No, I do not lie, that is different. Sores on the mouth come from the shades, the witches are not there, and if a commoner fails to perform the ritual, madness also comes from the shades, it comes

[1] Cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 181, 219.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

indeed from the whispering of men and the shades here, but people speak openly, saying: 'Why does he not celebrate the ritual?' The witches do not come into it. 754 775

QUESTION: Well, when the witches do throttle someone, do they always call shades, or not? 753

KASITILE: No, sometimes they throttle a man alone, and the shades are not there.

QUESTION: But your sickness?

KASITILE: Now the priests in their witchcraft gathered with the shades. The day after we had celebrated Njobakosa came to my place and said: 'We have finished then!' I replied: 'Yes, my body is better now, but the cough is separate, it is from Kyala.' And did you not hear what Mwaipopo asked in his cups—'How did the doctor (the Sangu) know that you are a priest? And that you had done wrong? Indeed they (Kissogota and his fellows) had told him!' [793]

QUESTION: What did he mean by that?

KASITILE: That they had gone to the doctor in dreams to tell him. [787]

Asked about Kissogota's words: 'You are impressive, we are cannibals, we are', Kasitile explained: 'It means, "You chiefs kill cattle for us, you are impressive, that is your impressiveness. Do we kill cattle? No! We eat men, we are witches." Because when we have killed cattle they receive blood, their witchcraft goes away, it stays in its house.'

QUESTION: And your reply, 'You are impressive, you are'?

KASITILE: I replied: 'You are impressive, you are, you are witches, if I were alone what would I do? It is you who brought the chilling breath on me and said I had done wrong. Even though I have not done wrong, you wish to eat meat. If I walk about among you, my body shrinks, it fears.'

Mwaipopo (the chief 116) had also prayed with water the night before the sacrifice, he helps me in prayer and if he prays at his house, I help him. We pray with water to bring out everything; if I do not pray with water then something is left within. I summon all the gods, all the fathers, and all the shades. (*Apa takuiputa nameni ko kuyoya* [782] [776] [775] *ilinga lapa, lenga ndikuiputa nameni po liyele lime nkati. Nikumpala kyala* [539] *gwesa, tata gwesa, abayuka basa.*)

QUESTION:

KASITILE: Yes, when Kissogota and his fellows came in their witchcraft to call my shades to their aid, I saw them in dreams, I saw them! And if they correct Mwaipopo like this in witchcraft, together with the shades, he sees them; he complies immediately, he seeks a cow. And if they just come to throttle me I see them. It is the village headmen of the country who come to throttle me, the shades are not there, no, only Kissogota and his fellows, they stand with the shades, not the others they come and suck my blood and they go away again. I do not speak, [787]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

his cave and who, though a creator, is equalled by other heroes and 776
dwells in the bowels of the earth, there was Kyala an ultimate 775
power and first cause, unique and omnipotent, who dwelt in 171
heaven 'above'. The implications of *kumwanya* (above) have 797
changed along with the implications of *Kyala*.

The new balance between the different elements in pagan thought was reflected in everyday speech. In the 1930's men spoke constantly of the shades (*abasyuka*), the witches (*abaloti*), and 'the breath of men' (*imbepo sya bandu*); Kyala did not figure much in the conversation of pagans. But in 1955, from the moment when the bus I arrived in skidded off the road and the passengers began assuring each other that *Kyala alimo* (God is present), because no one had been injured, I heard the name constantly. Such a change is hard to prove, but the impression of a marked shift in emphasis was strong.

The conception of the hero Mbasi has also radically altered. 776
During the years before 1914 a man, with two boys in attendance, 685
posed as Mbasi and went round Selya by night, growling in a gruff voice that he was Mbasi, and seizing cattle and fowls and food. He was eventually taken by night, by some Christians, and died after seven months' imprisonment in Tukuyu. Today the [797]
Christians never use 'Mbasi' for God, but sometimes identify him with 'Satan', and the pagans use 'Lwembe' rather than 'Mbasi'.

The range of relationships in space was narrow in the tradi- 782 ●
tional Nyakyusa society, and the range of relationship in time was correspondingly so. Only a limited number of chiefdoms co-operated in sacrifice to a hero (and often they seem to have acted separately, rather than in concert), and all historical time was contained in the genealogies depicted. There was a dawn when 773
men ate food raw and lived without fire, or cattle, or chiefs, but history began when the heroes descended from the mountains, ten or twelve generations ago. Time was telescoped when all the known world lay within 100 miles.

A social revolution occurred once, with the coming of the chiefs, but then time stood still, and ever since the heroic age has remained the pattern of right behaviour. Departure from the [753]
rituals laid down spells madness and death, for 'Kyala created us so'. Part of primeval reality is the conflict of generations expressed in the myth of the seduction of a young wife by her husband's father, in the rules of avoidance, and in the ritual of the 'coming out'. There is no convention of fighting on this last occasion (as

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 Sacrifice is offered that a particular shade, or all the shades of the lineage, may be 'satisfied, assuaged'. The word used is 782 *ukuhoboka* which is also used of a man who has been hungry and has eaten well of fine food, of a man who has married a bride who pleases him, and of a living father or father-in-law who has been angry but is now pacified. In its applicative form, *ukuhobokela*, means to forgive. And the act of sacrifice is an offering, a gift, to the shade strictly comparable to the gift a young man makes to his father when 'begging pardon' for some offence. A son who has committed the most heinous offence of all, seducing one of his [684] father's wives, can 'beg pardon' only by offering a cow; but many [783] smaller offerings are made by juniors to seniors to beg forgiveness for lesser offences.[1] When a cuckolded father receives his son he kills the cow brought to him and eats with his neighbours. It is held to be essential that the living who are insulted (and a man's neighbours are insulted with him) should share in the meat and express satisfaction.[2]

Other conceptions also are, however, manifest in sacrifices. At the offering to a recently dead chief the sacred cut of the meat is divided between the shade, whose portion is placed on the earth near his grave (ideally beside the stone set up at his marriage), and his young grandsons, who are identified with him. The conclusion that this is a communion between the living and the dead is inescapable. At a sacrifice to Lwembe it is certain of the hereditary priests, and they alone, who may share the sacred cut. At the sacrifices made by private persons the communion between shades and grandchildren is explicit when an offering of fish is made.[3] It is less clear in the sacrifice at a funeral, but is made plain [764] in the eating of grain or bananas with the *ikipiki* medicine which symbolizes the lineage. Then the shade is told 'all the food we have eaten you have eaten . . . farewell.' The communion of sacrifice is indeed but one manifestation of the identification of the participants in a ritual with the shades for, as has been shown in a previous book, the essential character of all the rituals of kinship is a death and rebirth, a death in which the participants—the kinsmen chiefly concerned—are made one with the shades and born anew,[4] and this theme is repeated in the ritual of the 'coming out'.

769 783 One paradox remains to be clarified. The shades must be

[1] *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 181-6.
[2] *Good Company*, pp. 107, 240.
[3] *Rituals of Kinship*, p. 185.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 203-5.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

797 went away to work again and in time I earned four cows which I
795 hid with friends far from home. My father knew nothing about
583 them. Then I wrote to my father from Mwasebe [about twenty
584 miles from where his father lived] where I was working, saying that I had found a girl there, the daughter of a Christian, and please could I have the cows with which to marry her? My father said: "No, she lives too far away." ' Then later he found a Christian girl of whom his father approved and a satisfactory marriage was arranged.

A common topic of discussion among Christian women was whether parents should choose mates for their children, or leave them free to choose for themselves, for though traditionally a girl had to signify her consent to marriage, she was betrothed very young and her freedom of choice was small. The growing insistence on personal freedom in marriage is symptomatic of a radical change in the attitude towards persons.

797 The pagan rituals were the main occasions of recreation. It has
795 been shown, in *Rituals of Kinship*, how pagan funerals and marriages
[764] are the occasion for feasting and dancing and display, and how the
[585] seclusion hut of a nubile girl is the gathering place for the young men and girls of the neighbourhood. Even a twin ritual is a festival
[782] with beer for the older men and some meat for everyone. The sacrifices at the groves were feasts for the leading men of the country, and the 'coming out' was the occasion of the greatest feast of the generation, and dances were practised for months
[796] ahead. Partly because of a change in sex morality, and partly
[688] because the meat and beer at pagan feasts are offered to the shades, Christians are largely excluded from these festivals. They may not participate in pagan dances, or join in the lewd songs, or attend the initiation hut of a girl, and they are partly debarred from the feasts of the pagans: certain of the Churches (notably the Church
[273] of Scotland and, for a time, the Moravians) forbid Christians to drink beer at all.

[796] And the Christian rituals, though some of them are 'festivals of the Church', are scarcely celebrated as such. There has been a separation between ritual and recreation which has left a gap in the Christian community. It is true that the Christian young men
[535] and girls sing and dance at funerals and marriages, but the elders,
[684] for the most part, look on with dubious eyes, saying that dancing leads to adultery, and several of the dances introduced by

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Councils, the importance of establishing machinery for their appointment in chiefdoms where the 'coming out' is no longer held is obvious. 177 [622] [423]

The traditional communal rituals have not been dropped altogether, but their celebration is sporadic and not everyone supports them. Careful enquiries suggest that in less than half of the chiefdoms has the 'coming out' been celebrated when it was due. In the most conservative portion of the district, Selya, there were celebrations in 1952 and 1954, but even in that area a number of the ruling chiefs have never 'come out'. The omission is due partly to the desire of the old men to retain office, partly to the increase in population and the planting of coffee which makes any new deal in land unacceptable, and partly to the feeling of many that the old ritual is an anachronism, if not directly incompatible with their new faith in Christianity. Some chiefs who have not 'come out' would welcome a celebration; one such told us that 'if the "coming out" died chieftainship would die'; but a young chief's personal wishes are not decisive in this matter. Sacrifices at the groves of chiefs and heroes are not as frequent as before, but they still occur at some groves in time of drought or other emergency. The Kinga came to Lubaga in 1954, and they were expected to come and instal Kasitile's heir in 1955. In 1954 also there were sacrifices to Mwaijonga (82) and Mwakisambwe (30) for it was a season of scarcity. Rituals for cleansing the country and sprinkling the homesteads occur sporadically 'when occasion demands', but not annually in any chiefdom and never in some. And when celebrations do occur they do not unite the people of a chiefdom as they used to do. Christians oppose them and many non-Christians are also sceptical. [561] [796] [643] [782] [769] [771]

In 1935 the traditional rituals celebrated by lineages and chiefdoms formed a coherent system. They were directed towards the shades and the heroes, as was manifest in the sacrifices and in the dramas of death and rebirth when those secluded 'dwelt with the shades' or were 'caught hold of' by Kyala.[1] The older participants were then conscious, in greater or lesser degree, of the symbolism implicit in the actions they performed. By 1955 the ritual cycle was nowhere celebrated in full: what remained were 'bits and pieces' of ritual, none of them fully intelligible without reference to the complete cycle. The link between the rites and the shades and the heroes was less clear, and the symbolism less [769] [796]

[1] *Vide supra*, pp. 27-48, 70-85; *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 31, 98, 101, 111-13, 203.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XIV

RELIGION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

182 In this chapter we shall seek to show how the traditional communal rituals both reflect and maintain the traditional political structure, and to consider in what measure the change from paganism to Christianity compels a change in other aspects of the society, or, alternatively, how far the economic and political changes taking place among the Nyakyusa compel a change in religion.

The heroic myths are the charter for chieftainship. The heroes
182 from whom the chiefs are descended are pictured as creators and
773 benefactors, the authors of fertility and civilized living. But myth
769 and ritual also entrench the rights of commoners and unify people
643 of different stocks by asserting their complementary diversity. No ritual can be celebrated without the participation of commoner priests. They 'speak out' at rituals and bring public opinion directly to bear on the chief, whose own health is held to depend upon their goodwill; at the same time the whole country looks to the chief as the source of fertility in man and beast and field.

Ritual was the integrating force with the widest range in the
182 traditional society. Independent chiefs, even those whose people
643 were culturally as different as the Nyakyusa and Kinga, joined in
796 sacrifice to Lwembe and Kyala and were mystically dependent
782 upon one another. As Kasitile put it 'the Kinga come (to Lubaga) both when there is trouble in our land and in theirs'. In Ngonde the 'divine king', the Kyungu, who controlled a flourishing trade in ivory, developed secular as well as ritual functions and emerged as a paramount chief, but in the Nyakyusa valley the ritual bond had no secular backing save the exchange of iron and salt for food, which linked Kinga and Nyakyusa in a tenuous partnership. The sacrifices to the Lwembe did not exclude war between chiefs who acknowledged him, nor did sacrifice to their common ancestor exclude war between Mwaipopo (116) and Mwaihojo (147), but the necessity of co-operation in sacrifice compelled later reconciliaton. Perhaps the insistence on the sacredness of the heroes and their living representatives, the elaborate ritual of

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

chieftainship, and the dependence upon medicines as a means of enforcing law were connected with the ineffectiveness of secular authority. Certainly the Kyungu's emergence from seclusion, and the dropping of the taboos which surrounded him were connected with his acquisition of economic power; but we know too little of the conditions that make for elaboration of ritual to postulate any general connexion between the absence of ritual in public life and the effectiveness of secular authority. 182 643 782 796

The cycle of sacrifices to the heroes and dead chiefs among the Nyakyusa is more than an ancestor cult, for it includes non-relatives among its priests and beneficiaries; but it has many of the features of an ancestor cult, among them the identification of piety with conservatism. A good man follows exactly in the footsteps of his father who becomes his god. This is reconciled with a myth of a new beginning, ten generations ago, when civilized life came to the Nyakyusa valley, and the new beginning is celebrated each generation with the 'coming out' of the young chief and his contemporaries. 182 769 [773]

All Nyakyusa rituals are cathartic in the sense that they make explicit and seek to dissipate, by their very expression and rejection, certain anti-social tendencies. In the Nyakyusa view the root of evil is 'anger in the heart' unadmitted and corrosive, and only by an open confession can it be overcome.[1] Hence in every situation of misfortune, public or private, men are pressed to 'speak out' (*ukusaya*) and admit their anger. At the 'coming out' the conflict of generations is expressed in the prolonged debate over the date of the celebration and the detailed arrangements, and in the dancing and slaughter of cattle, and is finally resolved when authority and land are handed over to the young men by their fathers. The fissiparous tendencies of a chiefdom are made explicit and canalized in constitutional form by the division of the old chief's country into two, under his senior sons; and criticism of the young chiefs is made explicit in the formal admonition by the father's village headmen. The rejection of conflict is clearest at the annual purification when men throw out the ashes contaminated by family bickering and the cannibalism of witches, and *fight* one another 'that the homesteads may be peaceful'. This fighting is 'to bring out war from within (*ukusaya*)', 182 783 796 631

[1] cf. *Good Company*, pp. 99-112. The belief that a witch or sorcerer must *confess* if the patient was to recover was the reason for the torture of witches in many African societies.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

4. A visit to the chief's father's grave was paid in company with the chief and some of his *amafumu*. It was situated in a banana grove *(ilisyeto*[11]*)* not very remote from the chief's hut. The grave of the present chief's father was on the ground-floor, about one hundred paces from its edge and was characterised by a small sixedged basalt block about half a metre in height[12] and about forty centimetres in breadth. An *indola*-plant was also standing on the grave about one metre from the basalt block. 765 [764]

On this occasion the chief also told me of the special cases for which sacrifices are offered in this grove. These are performed only in cases of very serious accidents, sickness or famine which may overcome the chieftainship. In such cases a black cow is slaughtered after sunset at the edge of the grove. In the presence of the chief some pieces of meat of the slaughtered beast, together with some bananas, are laid down at the grave. The chief adds a prayer to his ancestors at some distance from the grave, referring to the evil by which the chieftainship or some special village of it has been afflicted. He enumerates all the names of his ancestors and asks them for their help. 769 782

The remaining pieces of the meat and other bananas are left in the grove during the night. When the next day dawns, the *amafumu* return and some *abanyago* divide the meat and eat it together. On this occasion the chief orders the removal of all remains of ashes from the huts. The ashes are thrown down in such unclean places as where leprous persons had been buried. After this has been done, the chief in conjunction with an *unnyago*[13] produces a new fire for the huts by twirling, and all other fires of the village, or villages, must be kindled anew from this "need-fire". [766] [372]

5. The reason for visiting an *undagusi* (diviner)[14] who dwelled in Ibungu an older age-set village[15] which seemed to the visitor to be a more ancient part of Katumba, was caused by the sickness of the chief's sister. In accordance with the custom of the Nyakyusa in bringing women back to their father's village if they are very sick, the 787 [164 484]

[11] Cf. *Johnston*, *ilisieta*, pl. *amasieta*, p. 450; *Mackenzie*, ilisyeto, burial place, p. 209; *masyeto*, graves of the dead chiefs, p. 121; *Wilson*, Introduction, p. 287, *elisyeto*, sacred grove; *Merensky*, p. 115.

[12] Cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 327.

[13] Cf. n. 5, p. 3.

[14] Cf. *Johnston*, p. 451.

[15] I proposed to call the special form of villages found within the Nyakyusa society, which are erected on the age-set principle, „age-set villages" (African Studies, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 15—16 June 1943), a terminology that does not alter *G. Wilsons* statements on the "Age Villages" (Introduction, p. 269 ff). [56 621]

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ancestors and of Kyara[17]. At the same time he moved his curved wood 787
to and fro on the ground and when he did so, it indicated a negative [776]
answer from the beings invoked. But when he was asked: "Is the guilt for the sickness to be found in the husband of the chief's sister?", he was unable to move his wood as before; he could only stamp it on the ground, and this meant an affirmative reaction of the invoked spirits. Now, therefore, the meeting had reached its aim.

I asked the diviner to tell me how he had acquired his faculty. He 791
explained that (besides the necessary inner disposition) the payment of a fee for the medical preparation was necessary in order to become a diviner[18]. This outfit consisted in a special vaccination by a learned diviner. For this purpose the neophyte was incised by his master on [304]
different spots on the upper side of the knuckles, and in these small incisions was rubbed a medical powder. By these means the initiate may be inspired by the prophesying spirits. These influences are then felt by the diviner as a power which directs the movements of his hand in the manner described.

6. Near the hut of the chief's principal wife was a "sacred" banana 824
plant, in the grove opposite to the chief's hut and in the grove with 778
the grave of the chief's father already described. At particular times, 782
when any need demands it, the chief offers a prayer in this place to 769
his ancestors[19]. The sickness of his sister, for instance, was such an occasion for him to address the ancestors. I was invited by the chief to witness this act; but I raised objections, telling him that my presence might perhaps rather cause the anger than the help of his ancestors. [23]
In reality, I did not want the chief to stage a theatrical act on my behalf. But the chief rejected my excuses and explained that he would act in the same manner as if I were not present, because he had made up his mind to this prayer. The chief was assisted during this ceremony by Mwainyekule who presented to the chief a calabash of water as he arrived at the banana plant devoted to this purpose. The chief took some mouthfuls of the water and squirted it towards the banana plant. Then he recited the names of his ancestors and begged them to help his sister.

7. During one afternoon, I was told that a ceremony to end the 881
initiation of a (betrothed) girl was going on in a family of the village.

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[17] name of the supreme spiritual being.

[18] Cf. *Mackenzie*, p. 226.

[19] *Mackenzie* refers that such a place is named "ikiyinja", "the familly place oft prayer" (pp. 144, 197), but without indication of the locality, as Karonga.

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done." (G. Wilson, Introduction, p. 260). 241

The putting of maize-grains as seed into the earth is the women's work, the sowing of millet *(malesi)* of both sexes. If you ask the men after they had come home from their work: "*Mukumbide ifivanya fya nongi?*", "Whose fields did you hoe?", the answer often may be: "*Tukumbide ifivanya fya tata!*" We have hoed the fields of our father. [243 462]

In former times, the Nyakyusa had a lot of ceremonies relating to the beginning of the hoeing season and of the beginning of the harvest-work. They are, however, nowadays nearly extinguished under the influence of European culture. [177]

With respect to the beginning of the hoeing season, a very comprehensive ceremony had to be carried out by the chief in community whith the *unganga* (medicine man) for providing the fields with extraordinary *(-sisya)* power *(amaka)*: *amaka amasisya*, in this case: fertility. 241 622 [192]

When the crop was ripe, it was (at first) forbidden *(mwiko)* to take anything from the crop before the chief had given the permission. First the oldest male villagers informed the chief that it may be now the just time to give the crop free for the people, saying: "The people is hungry, we will now give them to eat!" Then the chief ordered that 6 or 8 (maize') corn-cobs were brought to him, and he sent these corn-cobs by a messenger to the (holy) offering-grove where they must be put down. After that has been correctly executed, he gave the permission for reaping the new crop. [182]

(NB. It was believed that those corn-cobs put into the offering-grove were eaten especially from the leopards. The powderes bones of the leopards were considered important ingredients of the consecration drink which the chief had to take at his initiation ceremonies and which should give him the strength *(amaka)* of a leopard, so that he also was called "the leopard" or "the leopard chief".) [237 825]

4. *Herding the Cattle and Cleansing the Stable.* The sociological importance of cattle among the Nyakyusa and the specific practice among them of herding the cattle by herdboys, that is also of highly sociological importance for the structure of the Nyakyusa society, is already described by G. Wilson (Introduction, p. 269 f). 233

The cleansing of the stables of which the Nyakyusa possess a great number of very well built ones, which have also sometimes a considerable length — apart from the cattle kraals —, is the task of 233 343 462

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Food (other than meat) is provided on the day of the burial by the women of the home at which the burial takes place, on the succeeding day by visiting relatives, and on the third day by village neighbours. Women neighbours, like woman relatives, often bring gifts of bark-cloth belts (*amakiba*) with which to bind up the bellies of their bereaved friends, who are all stremble and full of fear, and so support them. These belts symbolize the sympathy of friends in the fearful grief of the mourners. 'If a woman wears many belts at a burial that means that she has many friends; her passionate grief is comforted by their friendship.'[1] And neighbours, like relatives and close friends from other chiefdoms, may bring cloths which are used to wrap the corpse and bind up the bellies of the chief mourners. But these gifts of food, firewood, belts, and cloth are the limit of a neighbour's obligations; very rarely does a neighbour bring a bull to kill for the funeral feast, whereas close kinsmen and affines are obliged to provide a bull or cow for this purpose if they have one. And neighbours take virtually no share in the elaborate ritual which follows for cleansing relatives from the contagion of death, driving the thought of the deceased out of their minds, and bringing back his spirit to bless the home. Their only part is to bring small gifts of millet from which to brew the beer drunk at the close of this ritual.

764 [431 292]

At an ordinary birth there is very little ceremony and the village as a group is not concerned, though close friends will help the mother during her confinement, fetching wood and water for her, and bringing occasional gifts of cooked food; but twin births are regarded as fearful and dangerous, and an elaborate ritual is performed to cleanse relatives from the contagion which, if left untreated, is believed to lead to serious swelling of the arms, legs, and stomachs, accompanied by diarrhoea. Relatives are treated with many medicines, while village neighbours are sprinkled with one only, but their cattle, especially the cattle herded with those of the man who has begotten twins, are thought to be in danger. At one twin ritual we watched there was some discussion whether all the cattle of the age-village should be treated, or only those of the herd-group to which the father of the twins belonged. Finally it was decided that on previous occasions all the cattle of the village had been treated, and a message was sent

[844] 621 845 783 [753]

[1] *cf.* Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939), p. 12.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 to bring all the herds of the village for treatment. The father of these twins explained that neighbours would suffer less than •783 relatives, if left untreated, but 'their legs would ache a little 621 because we eat with them'. And here we come to an idea which appears in many situations in Nyakyusa life, the idea that con- [264] tagion is spread through eating together. Relatives of parents of twins are not thought to be in danger until they eat or drink with one of the parents: the ritual is performed so that they may eat together safely. Similarly a murderer and his relatives are thought to be in magical danger from the relatives of the murdered man only if they should eat or drink with them. So too, the bond between neighbours which puts them in danger from the impurity of one of them is the sharing of food.

881 At the initiation and marriage of a girl, neighbours again assist 621 and identify themselves with the principals. When she reaches puberty a girl is secluded, and her companions in the village—the girls who are her immediate juniors, for the older ones will have joined their husbands—keep her company. Some are her own younger sisters and half-sisters, others are not related at all. Should one girl of the village not join them she is not accused of witchcraft, but it is unusual for one to stay away; to do so would show 'pride' (*amatiego*). These companions (*abapanji*) sleep and eat with the 'bride' (*umwanga*)[1] and share her tasks and lessons, fetching firewood, making mats, learning songs, and listening to the instruction of 'the mothers'. They and the 'bride' go about together as a group and, accompanied by one or two 'mothers', may visit a 'bride' and her maids in another village, the two [571] groups competing in dancing and singing. So keen is the rivalry that formerly, we were told, the visits sometimes led to fighting between the maids and 'mothers' of each 'bride', particularly when the competing groups came from different chiefdoms. At the end of the ritual two of the maids accompany the bride to her [264] husband's house, and spend a few days with her there, sharing the attentions of her husband at night (*vide infra*, p. 87).

During her seclusion the bride avoids her father, whom she refers to as 'father-in-law', and she avoids also all his contem-

[1] *Umwanga* means a girl who has reached puberty but has not yet borne a child. She is usually, though not invariably, betrothed, and her 'husband' has a part in the puberty ritual. There is no exact English translation, and we think that 'bride' is the least misleading in this context.

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 them if the father says his son has done wrong his neighbours
572 reply: "You have caused him to do wrong yourself. Did you suppose him to be a boy that you did not provide marriage-cattle for him?" Then the father becomes more ready to pay damages for his son.' And again, 'If a young man finds that his father objects to his marrying the girl he loves, he complains to his father's neighbours (*pamafwene abapalemani ba pasie*). Then they discuss the matter and say to the father: "Do you want him to teach you a lesson by taking a chief's wife or daughter, for whom many cattle must be given?" So the father agrees.'

768 Neighbours are concerned, too, to see a fair distribution of a
621 deceased fellow's estate, and the fulfilment of the heir's obligations to his wards. 'It is not the relatives, but "the fathers of the village" who watch over a young boy's interests when his father is dead' (*vide infra*, p. 106). We listened to one discussion of a
[554] quarrel over inheritance which was believed to have led to kinsmen working sorcery against each other. At this discussion four village neighbours of the sick man (thought to be suffering from the sorcery of his father's brother's son), as well as ten relatives, attended.

614 The father's neighbours are also asked to mediate when a son
593 has wronged his father and seeks forgiveness. For example,
621 Mwangabola's son had committed adultery with his father's wife. He paid six head of cattle and then went off to the coast,
783 where he remained a long time. When he returned he brought two cows and approached his father's neighbours, asking them to take the cows to his father. When they took the cows his father said: 'He must find a bull as well, and brew beer, because he is my eldest son.' So he got a bull and brewed beer, and the father also brewed. 'Then', said the old man who reported the case, 'the fathers of the village came together and the bull was killed and they ate the meat and drank the beer. . . . Thus the son made friends with his father.'

621 Here we have the ritual of reconciliation between relatives in
783 which neighbours of the senior must participate, for their anger is held to be as dangerous to the junior as that of his senior relative. Informal giving of advice merges into the practice of arbitration, and of murmuring against a wrong-doer, and thus, it is thought, causing him misfortune. These latter practices are discussed in ensuing chapters.

1:Wilson K-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ment of fellow villagers (*lubumiqe*) or their angry murmuring (*lubudumuye*) will bring on wrong-doers 'the breath of men' (*umdogo ya bamdu*) causing them, or their children, or cattle, to fall ill, and this breath is the power of the pythons exerted by 'defenders' and witches acting together. We asked Mbukile whether 'the defenders' really came to choke a proud, quarrelsome person. 'Mother! They come. "The defenders" and the witches all call one another. They all go. "The defender" is not angry (at the attack), he says, "The man killed himself, he was a quarrelsome fellow!" ' And another friend explained: 'If a woman witch wishes to choke her husband, perhaps the first night "the defenders" will turn her back, but then she will plead with them and explain that her husband is a bad man and ill-treats her, then perhaps on the second night they will change their minds and come and help her. Yes, "the defenders" turn round sometimes and throttle people.'

'The breath of men' is thought to cause prolonged illness but not death, and should a death occur then a charge of witchcraft may be brought, and the suspects be required to drink the poison ordeal. 'We said, it is forbidden to kill a man. We others were afraid, although we had disliked the victim ourselves, we feared at some later time the witch would kill us.' All our informants accepted this view in theory, but in practice several cases in which the supposed victims died were cited as instances of 'the breath of men' (see table, pp. 216–8).

The effect of 'the breath of men' is spoken of as 'the curse' (*ibipumu*)[1] and its typical symptom is sterility, or a paralysis of the legs, which, it is thought, can only be cured when the sinner repents and reforms his behaviour, providing at the same time a feast of beer and meat for men of his village or, if it be against his father that he has sinned, of his father's village. At the least it is essential that the men of the village should admit their responsibility for the sickness, and express hopes for the recovery of the patient. 'Formerly, they would pray and pray, they would let out all their anger, saying: "Certainly we were angry, it was us, but now it is all over." Then life would come back to the sick man and he recovered' (cf. Document, p. 246).

We see then, that a clear distinction is made by the Nyakyusa

[1] *Ibipumu* is not used in the Kisukuma dialect, but is commonly usage in Sukuma, on the Lake-shore plain, and in Ngonde.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

for his own son whom he begot saying: "He is my own flesh and blood", then the men of the village will pass judgement.' 626

This 'breath' is thought also to fall on a chief who is harsh towards his people, or who acts unconstitutionally, as in refusing to make a 'coming out' ceremony for his sons when his village headmen advise him; and it falls on a village headman who treats a junior in office unfairly, or is overbearing to his men. Both pagan and Christian informants insisted that fear of 'the breath of men' was a powerful sanction in the traditional system against arbitrary rule. *Ansgene*, a Christian deacon, himself raised the subject one day and said: 'Headmen and chiefs—pagans—would be hard on their people and seize their goods if they (the headmen and chiefs) did not fear witchcraft. Witchcraft is like God to them.'

At every point the solidarity of the village is emphasized; the neighbours themselves are held to be insulted by the bad behaviour of a son—'their son'—to one of their fellows, or by a woman 'soiling their son', or by an heir failing to recognize their concern in the inheritance of a deceased fellow. For example, *Mwakanyunule* had begotten no child for ten years, and this was attributed to the fact that, after quarrelling with his elder brother and refusing to attend his funeral, he had not admitted his fault to the men of the village when he came back and killed a cow. [842] His impotence was attributed to their curse.

As we have seen, recovery is thought to depend (i) upon the wrong-doer reforming and providing the men of the village, which is angry, with a bull or bear for a feast, acknowledging guilt as he does so; and (ii) upon the men of the village admitting their anger and responsibility for his illness, and expressing good will. 'If a daughter-in-law should have looked on her father-in-law by mistake she makes beer and sends it to her father-in-law. He calls his friends and admits: "Indeed I was angry with her for she looked at me", and the others say: "Yes, indeed, let her child get fat".' (*vide* pp. 133-4). 783 626

It may well be asked, is there any objective reality at the root of this belief in 'the breath of men'? Does the wrong-doer, fearing his neighbours, really become paralyzed or impotent? It is possible that a sinner may sometimes develop these symptoms as the result of fear. We do not know, what is certain is that impotence, sterility, lingering illnesses including paralysis, and sickly 626 753

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 replied the other, "that is why I have followed him, for your
627 house is my home! If you love M. you too will be expelled!" And the others said: "Had you known about the case, we should have expelled you both!" "Let us tell him then", said Mwambuputa. But M. was not in the house and had to be fetched. When he came Mwambuputa said: "Your neighbours have followed you saying that they have expelled you. You have done some evil, have you not? I, when I received you, did not know of this, I thought you were just moving." "What is their reason for driving me away?" asked M. "That I've not yet asked them, we will ask them together." Then one man said: "You M., when you moved, why did you move?" M.: "The reason was this, our child (*sic*) at home was sick and we met to express our anger; after this I said to a friend, 'Why do they express their anger and say some one of us has eaten the child for there is a great deal of fever about and many children are sick?' This I said, and then found my friends said I was the witch. 'We expel you' they said, so I moved." "Yes," they said, "you knew yourself to be a witch, why else did you not show indignation and surprise and take your friends to Mwambuputa to be tried? Now you've given them power, and they have followed you here!" Another said: "If your friends drive you from the village will you be obstinate?" Then Mwambuputa said: "No more words, leave the village, your fellows tell you to go!"

754 M. condemned himself in the eyes of his neighbours by
783 suggesting that their hinted accusation was false, after they had gathered to express indignation; and here we come to one of the essential points in the Nyakyusa concept of witchcraft. A witch may repent; if he does repent he is no longer a danger to the village, but an asset, since as a witch he has the power to defend the village as well as to attack; and *admission of guilt is taken as a sign of repentance*. The Nyakyusa hold that a witch is always conscious of his evil activity and they have no ritual expressions of good will such as the Zande blowing on chicken wings, but they stress the obligation of a suspect to admit guilt, either directly or by implication. It is said that in the past, if a suspect admitted guilt, he was not driven out. Very few people, however, do admit guilt; the only case we traced was that of a labourer on the Lupa gold-fields who was accused by his fellows of harming the eyes of one of the gang, who had just discovered a large

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

nugget of gold. This 'witch' was actually expelled from the camp by his fellows, but Nyakyusa, commenting on the case, remarked that had it occurred in one of the home villages, he would only have been fined. 754 783

Sometimes a case begins with the startling shout of 'a defender' in the night, who claims to have seen in his dreams that a witch is attacking either himself or a fellow villager. 'A man who dreams of fighting, or being beaten, will sometimes wake up in the middle of the night and go out of his house and shout: "You, so and so, why do you come and fight with me?" But often he will not mention the name then, but waits till the morning when his friends will come and ask him: "Why were you shouting last night?" Then he tells them the name of the man he dreamed of, and if another man dreams of him in the same way the next night or later, then they say he is a witch.' Such a case was described by Mwaikambo: 'A certain man, Kololo, dreamed of his fellow, and in the morning he called out on the road, "I dreamed of so and so, we fought with him in the night, he was throttling me." So his fellows came to his help and said to the accused man: "You, Moses, we have caught you, move elsewhere!" So Moses [who was a pagan, despite his name] moved to another village in the same chiefdom, that of Korosso.' 754 787

Occasionally a witch reveals himself by threatening a neighbour with whom he has quarrelled, using the stereotyped phrases: 'You *may* sleep or you may not' (*Uligona*), or 'What are you?' (*Uligwaki*), or 'Something may happen!' Here is an actual case as reported to us: 'Mwanibe once ordered a boy, the son of a village neighbour, to go on a message for him, but the boy refused, though it is customary for men to send their neighbours' sons on messages. Then Mwanibe got angry with him and snatched his cloth away, saying in anger: "You, boy, something may happen!" implying that the boy would fall ill. The boy fell ill that very evening, and died shortly afterwards. Mwanibe hurried to return the cloth, but the boy's people drove him away with it saying: "What sort of sorrow have you? Are you pretending, so that we shall not suspect you?" For they said it was he who had "eaten" the boy.' 754

The cases quoted so far all involve a direct accusation of witchcraft against the suspect, but sometimes he is compelled to move without ever being accused face to face. Mwaisumo ex- 754 627

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

objection to marrying the child of one who has been convicted is clearly not pushed to its logical conclusion. No slur is cast on any one lineage when an individual is convicted of witchcraft, for he may have inherited it from either parent, or even got it from a friend; conversely no lineage is cleared by an autopsy, for not all the children of a witch are necessarily witches. Thus a man may have a father or brother or son who is 'pure', yet be a witch himself. As we have seen, even persons belonging to the same lineage may occasionally accuse each other. Nevertheless, when an individual who is reputed to be a witch dies, the close relatives do sometimes insist on an autopsy, in order to clear the deceased of suspicion, and possibly themselves also (*vide supra*, p. 117). In one case we recorded it was a daughter who insisted on the autopsy being performed on her mother, a reputed witch. No witchcraft was found.

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So far we have dealt with cases of misfortune befalling an individual, followed by action against a fellow villager who is suspected of being responsible. This type of case is far the commonest within the field of witchcraft. When a general misfortune, such as a plague or epidemic, threatens, the chiefdom acts as a whole, not the villages separately, and the ritual is directed primarily to securing the blessing of the shades. There is some suggestion of ridding the chiefdom of witchcraft at the same time, but the emphasis is on appeasing the ancestors. The traditional new year cleansing (*ukutag' ikikonge*), now rarely performed, was also the concern of chiefdoms not separate villages, and it involved prayer to the ancestors.

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5. *The ego-village and the ancestors*

We have dealt at length on witchcraft and 'the breath of men', for, in Nyakyusa belief, the defence of the village against witches and the punishment of wrong-doers by 'the breath' of their fellows is the main corporate activity of the village in the religious sphere. There are no village rituals directed to the ancestors comparable to those performed on behalf of lineages and chiefdoms. Indeed, belief in the power of shades operates only in situations where social position is determined by descent, as it is in lineages and in the succession to chieftainship. The office of village headman is not hereditary. The son of a village headman

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 A man who has been driven out and then fetched back pro-
783 vides a feast for his friends on his return. This feast is essentially the same as the 'ritual of reconciliation' that takes place when a wrong-doer begs pardon of his own village or that of his father (*vide supra*, p. 101). For a private individual only his own village is concerned, but if the exile happens to be a senior headman then all the villages of the chiefdom participate. A detailed account of such a feast, which we attended, is given on pp. 271–4.

166 If a civilized society social separation overcomes friction in
785 two ways: first, it separates individuals who are personally incompatible, and secondly, it provides the individual who is a
578 misfit in one group with a choice of groups whose values may be more compatible with his own than those of the group from which he came.[1] In Nyakyusa society villages were formerly all of the same type, with virtually identical group values, therefore the individual only escaped from personal incompatibilities by moving. In the modern society, however, there is a variation of type as between pagan and Christian villages and, among the Christians, as between the several denominations. The convert in a pagan village often moves to a Christian village finding that more compatible, and the son of a Christian, having abandoned Christianity and perhaps married several wives, leaves the Christian village in which he grew up and joins a pagan one with whose members he has more in common.

578 The Nyakyusa, in their rationalizations about witchcraft,
166 recognize the fact that friction is often personal and may be overcome by moving. Constantly villages receive individuals who have been driven out of some other village for practising witch-
785 craft, and when we inquired whether a man who had once been accused was not feared as a neighbour, the reply was always in the same tenor as that of Mwamunde: 'Perhaps he has bewitched his fellows there, we do not know, but he has not bewitched us.' There is also the implication that quarrels may be forgotten after a temporary separation, since those who have moved because they feared witchcraft, and even some who have been accused of practising witchcraft, are welcomed back.

578 When our informants discussed moving and returning to the
166 home village they always emphasized friction with one's fellows (*abanaba*) as providing the chief impetus to move, and the desire

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, op. cit., pp. [illegible].

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(b) 'The Breath of Men.'

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—*contd.*

No.	Category of Sufferer	Symptoms	Alleged sin	Diagnosis	Ritual performed
1	Village headman (Mwanalupanga)	(a) 9 children died (b) Further deaths among his children after he moved	Grandpa neighbours outside food Failed to perform death ritual of children before burying		Fled to Lake-shore plain (Mu Ngombe) Removed house. Killed bull. Abandoned land as not performing ritual
2	Widow	Widow ailing	Ritual not performed for her ex-husband's father	Illness due to 'the breath of men'. Diagnosis by divination	Very ritual break. Frightened neighbours and relatives. Told of illness. People admitted their sorcery.[1] Said the witchcraft finished. She continued ill.
3	Widow	Widow ill	Sister of chief's family had not killed bull on site of inheritance ritual	Illness due to 'the breath of men'. Diagnosis by divination	Very ritual neighbours and relatives. Killed. Neighbours admitted their sorcery
4	Kasati	Kasati ill	Father failed to send a gift of food and beer, when she was taken back to her husband, and she is the daughter of a chief's sister	'The breath' comes from her husband's kinship. 'They are angry because of the gift not sent food'	Illness continued. The girl died shortly afterwards and her death was attributed to sorcery
5	Chief	T.B.;	Refused to hold 'cooking out' of sons	'The country was empty'	Killed 3 cows for people to feast
6	Married woman	Have no more children	Run off with lover three times. Finally husband forced lover to sue fine	His father's village 'abandoned' because she had 'killed a man in court'. 'Breath' of village affection because she came more frequently to see a grandparent. Thwarted diagnosis of the doctor to whom she went for medicine that she might bear children	Illness continued
7	Man (a doctor)	Deprived an child for 10 years	Did not come to have sister brother with whom he had quarrelled	'The sun (of his father's village) was angry. Illness due to the cattle (diagnosis) of sun'	Killed 1 cow in sister brother's village but did not kill the cow of the village chief. It property (i.e. which he left)
8	Man (b)	Man (b) for 2 years (with epileptic) was cured and ill mind	Incestuous lover of father's sister	All sons were circumcised and cured. A	A killed 4 cows at father's place. Relatives and neighbours ate after cutting at him. A recovered quickly. He had also been treated by a native doctor

[1] (Ibwijigo = to complain. The implication is that they repented, and so got rid of their sorcery (cf. pp. 89-102).

[P. 206]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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(b) 'The Breath of Man.'—*contd.*

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—*contd.*

No.	Category of Sufferer	Symptoms	Alleged sin	Diagnosis	Ritual performed
9	Senior Village Headman	Paralysed	He encouraged child to expel junior headman from country when latter refused to bow road	'Illness of senior headman due to the breath of his junior colleagues. He was cursed because he was reputed to be the favourite of the chief.' Diagnosis by divination	Bull and beer provided by junior headman. Ate and drank with senior headman and made friends
10	Woman	Unable to walk	Told by villagers (sorcerers) to choose lots of her brother. Refused to do so, asking them to choose	'They (villagers) cursed her'	Holding pot down. Thought that villagers will deny responsibility, saying 'It is not our fault if child's sick'
11	Woman	Her baby ill	Insulted husband's mother	Illness diagnosed as 'impotu,' a disease due to 'the breath of man'. No divination, 'knew diagnosis'	Woman and child given medicines by a doctor. Woman's father brought a cow for the mother-in-law the husband.
12	Headman of young men	Ill a long time and died ill	He and his young men built in the village of their Headman before father had moved	Illness due to 'the breath of man' (the fathers) because he seized another's office as headman by building in his village. Diagnosis by divination	Bull should have asked old man to bless him
13	Male (man)	Ill a year. Died the next year	Did not drink father's (young) beer in father's village. 'Others ate the food'	Village angry. Their breath fell on him when he came to fetch away property. Diagnosis by divination	After a year's illness, killed a bull. Ate with friends and relatives in father's village
14	Man	Died	Killed large bull for his children (sacrifice to ancestors) and gave only one leg to neighbours	'Perhaps (he died) because he grudged his fellow villagers meat. Neighbours are alarmed if a man kills and does not call them to feast'	
15	Woman	Her child ill	Parents at her husband	Illness diagnosed as *ngwiri* (an illness due to 'the breath of man'). Diagnosis by divination	Admission of sin. Woman's father gave her collar to lower here. Her husband called his fellows to drink and drink drink, sugar and speak about the child's recovery (cf. p. 226)
16	Younger brother of chief	Died	Claimed to be a chief	People said 'breath of man'. Family said witchcraft. Diagnosis by divination	

[P. 207]

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MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of Sufferer	Symptoms	Alleged sin	Diagnosis	Ritual performed
17	Village headman	Hurt his hand on a stone directly he reached the Lapa to work	Had left for work without the agreement of his people	'Country was angry because he was a headman' (and had gone to work)	None. Died shortly afterwards. Death attributed to witchcraft of fellow headman (cf. cases of witchcraft No. 20)
18	Young child Wenzi-bugu, heir of his deceased mother brother and so heir to chieftainship	Did not beget a son by his beloved wives	Not specified	Village headmen angry as medicine chief has taken not effective. The headmen showed their anger by not taking chief to doctor as they should have done. He went alone	None when case recorded
19	Kaelilo, hereditary priest (cf. chief's lineage)	Kaelilo ill	Did not cook for his village neighbours. 'They complained because I, a great chief, did not cook food for them'	Fell ill right after attending a beer drink at a neighbour's house	Treated neighbours. Treated by a doctor
20	Kaelilo	Kaelilo had worms	Provided 1 pot of beer for fellow priests when he should have provided 4 pots or a cow	Sickness due to wrath of men. Diagnosis of a doctor	
21	Kaelilo	Kaelilo ill	Cut down a sacred tree which he should not have cut	'The whole country is angry'. 'Priests and village headmen are angry'	Treated other priests on cows and beer
22	Village headman, Bilala	His son drowned	Ordered to pay a fine for disorder at waters, and refused. Complained to the District Officer	'All the village headmen are angry'	None recorded. Later brought home (cf. pp. 208-9)
23	Man (junior brother of chief)	Died	He had cut one branch for an axe-handle from a self-sown tree growing in the cultivated land of a village to which he was a new-comer. He had not asked the villagers' permission to cut wood as he should have done	'The "owners" of the village were angry and killed him'	None recorded

[p. 208]

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

23. RITUAL OF RECONCILIATION

Mwakionde (doctor, brother of a chief).

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'If my son has sworn at me, my friends in the village are angry and say: "Why has our child sworn at his father?" Then the youth falls ill, and people say: "It isthe curse (*ikigune*). It was we who were angry, because he swore at our fellow." Then he seeks something with which to pay—perhaps a bull or cow. If I, the father, am a rich man I brew beer for the people coming to instruct my child and to say: "It was we who were angry, young man, because you swore at your father. Now may you recover!" While they are drinking the beer they kill the bull, which he found, and eat it.'

Mwambelike (pagan man).

'A junior relative who has wronged a senior and later wishes to make friends has to satify not only him but his neighbours. For example: A man X seduced a widow of his father who was regarded as the property of his senior half-brother, Y, the heir. (She was not Y's wife, because she was sister of his mother, but given to deceased's younger half-brother.) Later X paid Y one cow as a fine "for seducing his mother". Then X brought him a bull to re-enter the family and make friends, saying: "Indeed, I wronged you, my father." Y said: "If you wish to make friends again you must also bring a cow for the village to eat, so that all hall know that I am satisfied." X brought a heifer calf which was eaten by the village.'

There was no mentionof sickness in this case.

[p. 240]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

38. BRINGING HOME A VILLAGE HEADMAN

Mwambuputa's home-coming

Mwambuputa is the senior headman of Mwankuga who had fled to the Lake-shore plain from fear of 'the breath' of his men (cf. pp. 229–30). He was brought back with ceremony. His return also brought to a head an old land dispute (cf. pp. 188–90). For the status of the personalities concerned consult the table of villages and headmen on pp. 181–5. 621 622 166

Record of G. W., 1/5/35.

'I visited Tandale (Mwainyobolela) the village headman of Busikali and the man chosen to bury chiefs. Katolile (the village headman by inheritance of Bujenga, and a brother of Jane, Kasitile's wife) turned up with two others to fetch him to the home-coming of Mwambuputa (Mwafungo)[1] in Igembe. We picked up Kikalango (a junior son of the chief Mwaipopo) on the way and he and Tandale told me the following story: 166

"Mwambuputa went to the Lake-shore plain (MuNgonde). Then Mwankuga I (the young chief), while he was still alive, found a cow and the village headmen went off with it to fetch Mwambuputa home. Mwankuga did not go himself. This cow was kept by Mwambuputa, not eaten. It was to say to him; 'Come back, my headman.' Then Mwambuputa agreed and said: 'I will return, take my son back with you now.' So they came back. Then Mwankuga I died, and Mwambuputa came up to his funeral and put up temporary huts to live in, and he has not since been back to MuNgonde. Yes, he could have built proper houses before this ceremony, had he wished, it is not forbidden."

"Those who come to this gathering are his fathers (i.e. the men of Mwaipopo) and his friends (i.e. the men of Mwankuga), all commoners—no chiefs come to this ceremony. And in fact neither Mwaipopo nor Mwankuga II was there, nor did I see any of Mwaipopo's brothers. Kikalango and Kitita (junior sons of Mwaipopo) came to accompany me. We arrived at Mwambuputa's huts with Ngulyo, about noon. About 100 men were present. I noticed Mwambuputa himself, Kakuju, Ngulyo, Tandale, Katotile, and Mwasebe (Kabolile). 166 183

[1] Some informants used the name 'Mwambuputa', others 'Mwafungo'. To avoid confusion we use only the former.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 195' FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166
783

'I was told: "The meaning of the ceremony is this: Mwambuputa says to us: 'My fathers, you sent for me, I have come'; and then they show him a place to build, saying: 'You, friend, this is your homestead here.'" At noon Kakuju explained: "Now Mwanaambe the senior headman of Mwaipopo (actually he has inherited this position and lives in another chiefdom, coming here for cases and ceremonies) has gone to announce to Mwaipopo that: 'Your child has returned'. Mwaipopo will send him back saying to him: 'Thank you for telling me, my headman, do you go and perform the ceremony and ritual (*ukatendekeye, ukanyagule*) he is your child, you are his father.' Then he will return here and say: 'I have told Mwaipopo, let us go and show Mwambuputa his new homestead.' These huts of Mwambuputa's are on the old men's side, it is Bujege here. He will be given a homestead in Igembe. He had no place in Igembe, he was a stranger. So after the funeral of Mwankuga I, he went to the old men and was given a homestead, and bananas to eat here. A man named Mwanbenja had them before, but he moved to Mwangomo's country. Now they will go and give him a homestead in Igembe. He did build before in Igembe, but he spent a long time on the plain, and others have built there." (For another version cf. pp. 188–90.)

'Then Kakuju asked Kikalango: "Have they told Mwankuga?" Kikalango replied: "I do not know." Kakuju explained to me: "They should tell him, 'Your man has returned'." Mwanaambe (Mwegama) came back and called the old village headmen together for a discussion. Then he led us off to Igembe, to the homestead of Mbuluko Mwaipopo a cross-cousin (*antani*) of the chief. Just before we got there Mwanaambe turned to Tandale and the other senior men and said: "Look after Mwambuputa in the war by night, look after him in dreams."

'Kititu and Kikalango explained that "Mbuluko is Mwakalungu and Mwaipopo;[1] now they have come here he will have to move and give place to Mwambuputa. At first he refused, but they pacified him. He cannot refuse, he will move. They just considered where it would be best for the village headman to be." And, previously, on the way, they had told me that to whatever house we came, the householder would have to move and give place.

'Two bulls, one full-grown, and one a little smaller, had been promised by Mwambuputa, and were brought with us. Mwanjinga, son of Mwanaambe killed them both. Mwanaambe said to the village headmen: "We give Mwambuputa to you, Mwakwese, and you (here he mentioned other village headmen whose names are not in my notes). He was in exile (*udite*), he has returned." A woman, wife of the house-

[1] The implication is that Mbuluko inherited through his mother from his grandfather, Mwaipopo I, but we did not pursue this.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166
783

holder, brought out a dish of cooked beans and set them down. The two men nearest took and shared them. The division of meat was carried out by Mwansambe in collaboration with his senior colleagues. It was as follows:

1 ribs and saddle (*akakwa*) to Mwaipopo (chief)
1 ribs and saddle to Mwankuga (young chief)
1 hump to Mwaipopo
1 hump and liver to me (sent with me when I went home).

'It was explained that "If it had been an ordinary killing we would have sent both ribs and saddle to Mwaipopo, one for Kalinga, and one for Kalobo (the two chief wives), now we send one to Mwankuga because it is his ceremony."

1 leg to the men of Bujege
1 leg to the men of Bujenga
1 leg to the men of Nkyemo
1 leg to the men of Ndupando
} 4 senior age-villages of Mwaipopo

1 leg to the men of Igembe
1 leg to the men of Ipoma
2 legs to the men of Njesi and their juniors the men of Mponga
} 4 senior age-villages of Mwankuga

'Mwakatika of Mponga, the headman of the village immediately junior to Njesi had not come, so Kakuju of Njesi divided two legs, one for his own village Njesi, and one for Mponga.

'I went home with Kititu and Kikalango and two children sent to carry my meat. On the way Kititu said: "The leg of Igembe will be divided up at Mwambuputa's place (i.e. where it was killed) into four parts. The four villages of Igembe will each get their share: each of these four groups will have a pot, but the meat will be no further divided.

Igembe, 1 pot
Lugombo, 1 pot
Katumba, 1 pot
Nkilonde, 1 pot ('They eat with the men of Igembe')."

'(This was confirmed the following day by a young man of Katumba who had eaten some of the meat.)

'Kabolile Mwaseba of Ipoma came with his younger men also. Swafiwu Mwaijonga is his assistant headman and he was there, but Kabolile cooked all the meat together, in one pot. It was explained that "While in Igembe we have many villages it is not so in Ipoma.

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)195' FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166
783

There is Ndongoti, true, but they always eat with their elders. The men of Igembe are the oldest of all, they are inheriting from the men of Bujege as they die. They are senior to the men of Ipoma who are their juniors. The men of Ipoma did go through the 'coming out', but with their elders. Mwalieu has no separate village."

'About the ceremony I was told "Mwambuputa took the initiative, he sent a message to Mansambe saying: 'I have returned' and Mansambe told the others." And someone else explained that, "Before Mwambuputa killed the bulls we did not see that he had come back; now he has returned."'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Ku Ngonde

765 (*isolya*); and it is wrapped in a leaf (of the same species as the
768 flower) which represents a blanket. The symbolism is interpreted
776 in terms of the habit of growth. A trunk of plantain or sweet banana flowers and fruits only once, then dies and is pruned away, being replaced by a sucker from the same root, hence the association between the flower and the corpse. *Ilinzi* is a large variety of [242] plantain, eaten when it is green and hard; *isijali* is a smallish banana eaten when it is ripe and sweet, and it takes nine months to develop. 'When an *isijali* stem forms and a woman conceives a child at the same time, the bananas will be ripe and the woman bear her child together.' No one hesitated about this identification of plantain with male, sweet banana with female; it is as obvious in Nyakyusa as the associations of 'breeches' and 'petticoats' in English.

765 The officiant sprinkles a powdered medicine on to the earth of the grave and all the participants (that is, the heirs, widows, children, and certain siblings of the deceased) rub themselves in it. They rub forehead, right elbow, right knee and right toe in the pile of earth. Only chiefs and their close relatives and twins refrain, for they have been drinking medicine, and such close contact with a corpse would 'spoil their medicine': 'The medicine would go rotten if they touched the grave which contains medicine,' so the chief's forehead, etc., must not touch the grave. He merely touches the earth with a finger-tip.

783 Having touched the earth, all the participants go to wash in a
785 stream, and when they return they wash again ritually in the *doorways of the mourning hut, the doctor* pouring out medicated water from a small calabash and each participant catching the water in his hands and rubbing them and his mouth and knees with it. Then they oil themselves. Until this ritual they must remain dirty and dishevelled with the mud and ash of mourning on them, and any who steal away to wash are fined by the other relatives.

786 Next the officiant takes roasted bananas and sticks into each one or more pumpkin-pips (*ipungu*) and one or more lentils (*isandale*).[1] He half-buries these in the earth at the doorway of the hut, or sits in the doorway holding a banana near the ground, and each participant approaches in turn and *ipungu* and bites off the banana, and eats it.

The *ulufunde* (the litter of dry banana leaves on which the

[1] Some also add *ampuse* (*imbungo*), others *ulwanda* (*ugandu*).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Ha Ngonde

them knocks on the wall when he has succeeded, and the officiant raises the *akalala*, the trill of applause and triumph[1] which is also the war-cry, and shakes a basket of seeds by the door shouting: 'Ours, ours, we marvel at the thing!' Until this ritual connection the heir and the widows remain continent, and great importance is attached to the success of the heir in having intercourse with all the widows. Should a widow refuse the heir after touching the ash it is said that she will either die herself or cause any man she lies with to die of 'the ash'; but if she escapes before being smeared with ash then she is safe. The heir is also in danger if a widow should refuse him after he has touched the ash.

The morning after the ritual union the heir is formally summoned out of the hut by a man knocking on the door and crying: 'Come out, war has come (*Soka! ubuite bwitile*),' i.e. sexual intercourse has begun. He sits on a stool in the doorway of the hut and is greeted by the children of the deceased: 'Good morning, Father.'

iii. '*The gaping cough.*' Each of the inherited women goes off to her own father's homestead with the filth (*indefu*) of intercourse on her. She does not even wash her hands, and she takes with her cooked bananas which she has smeared with her husband's semen and her own emission. This she buries in the banana grove in her father's homestead in which he prays to his ancestors. She takes meat to her father if an animal has been killed at the 'shaving of the sprouting hair'. The heir similarly goes to his father's homestead (or that of his father's heir) with cooked bananas to be buried in his father's sacred grove. Each wife drinks beer mixed with medicine with her father and other close relatives. From the time when the heir sleeps with the widows until this ritual is performed, they cannot visit their parents nor can their children do so (though usually children come and go freely in the house of their mother's people) and, more particularly, a widow may not drink from her mother's cup, or eat with her, or sit over her fire, or touch her hand. It is believed that, if the ritual is neglected, those for whom it should have been performed will be seized with a racking cough (*ingwale*) and diarrhoea. Even Christians, who eschew the other parts of the death ritual, often participate in the *ingwale*.

When a woman has died she should be replaced by a sister or brother's daughter, just as the dead man is by a brother or son,

[1] The closest equivalent in our society is cheering, but the *akalala* is raised by women.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F?17 Ngonde F?17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe.

(*ukwenya ulufumbe*). Rich people kill a cow 'to clear out the litter' 764
which, like those killed at the burial, is said to go with the deceased [756]
to the land of the shades.

Some time later (the date varies from one ritual to another) they 764
build a little hut at the intersection of two paths—cross-roads—or, 766
if there is no cross-roads near, on the path to the stream, and in this hut they make a hearth with fire-bricks (*amafyo*); a fire is lighted and each participant in turn puts oil-seeds from the *umpangati* tree into a pottherd on the fire, saying as he does so: 'This is the death of my mother (etc.).' The seeds are mixed with 764
medicine and, when they are roasted, are ground for ointment. Then beans are put on with water in the same fashion, each participant pouring a little water and saying: 'This is the ritual of my mother (etc.).' Next, the participants are made to sit down on a bark-cloth. The officiant draws lines on the head of each with a bunch of *ikinjala* grass dipped in the lees of beer, and as she shaves him she mocks him saying: 'Poor fool, it found its mother was dead, went stealing, and they have speared it on the head.' Then the participants go to wash, each wearing two banana leaves round his loins and two round his neck. One of each pair is a plantain, and it is put on first, the other is a sweet banana and it comes on top. And each participant sticks a plantain into his (or her) waistband in front, and a sweet banana behind. When they [761]
come to the stream each participant sits down in it and the officiant puts pebbles between his fingers and toes, in the crooks of his elbows and knees, in his mouth and ears, and on his head. These, and the leaves and bananas he wore, are allowed to flow away in the water. They return to the temporary hut carrying flowers, *kalengalenge* and *kalungu*, which they throw on to the roof, and the officiant pours water she has brought in a little calabash on to the thatch above the doorway, while each participant in turn runs through the drops, out at a back door, in again and out through the drops. As they come home millet is scattered on the ground before them, then they eat roasted bananas with lentils (and sometimes pumpkin-seeds) stuck in them as in the Selya ritual, boiled bananas and beans, a bean mash, and roasted chicken or, sometimes, meat. The bananas are from the plantain seen they stole and from a sweet banana seen provided by the family, and some of the food is salted, some unsalted. As they eat they look in the direction from which their lineage came, then the officiant anoints them with ointment (made from the oil-seeds

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngunde F3617
Nyakyusa
Culture

QUESTION: Where is the one who has just died? 766

MWANAMBWE: It is him the shade has brooded over. We say: "You 775
shade, look after this child of yours, care for him and don't abandon him. He also should be a shade, let the others speak to him in the future." When we sing 'Farewell . . .' we lament him who has died.

QUESTION: And the trampling dance (*shakaya ingwe*)?

MWANAMBWE: We say: "You shade, care for your fellow, don't desert him, may he be with you in your body." We trample the ground because the shade is in the ground, he is within the body, he is underground, everywhere.

QUESTION: What do you mean by 'in your body'?

MWANAMBWE: Because the shade has created us, we came from him, we die, we go there to him; not to others, but to him.

QUESTION: The two leaves and leaving and saying: '*Syoka, syoka* of father, *syoka, syoka* of mother'?

MWANAMBWE: Syoka is the name we have been given for the shade. We say: 'The shade, the shade of father, the shade, the shade of mother!' because since a woman has died we speak to the shade as if the husband was 'father' (*ise*) who brooded over his wife. He has brooded over all us living, both me and my wife. That is what these leaves are [i.e. the husband and wife]. We speak to that man who was first buried, saying: 'Perhaps you are within, perhaps you are beneath, oh shade!' We speak to that first man who was the first to die.

Sweeping the house is that it may be clean (*mwela*). Before that it is [72] ●
dirty. . . .

The shade brooded both over the dead and over me, the living; he brooded over the dead who is with him and over me who am alive; I am in him—we all are. . . .

QUESTION: Why the water on the roof? 768

MWANAMBWE: If we neglect this then a child will go mad, he runs 773
off to the water and the water comes into his nose [i.e. he drowns] because we have not given him water in the doorway of the little hut there. If we neglect something then the child goes mad and runs off and catches hold of fences, he smears fences on his body and urinates into his hands and washes with the urine.

QUESTION: Why does the shade want him to do these filthy things? 769

MWANAMBWE: Because if we do not perform the ritual for him and 775
do not care for him we do not remember him, then he says: 'Since you do not remember me this child will also get dirty, because I have got dirty underground, I am dead. See, you buried me! The earth has covered my mouth and eyes, why do you not care for me?'

QUESTION: But even if you do care for him ritually, still the earth is in his mouth! How is he satisfied?

MWANAMBWE: Because this shadow (*ipangalo*) [pointing in explanation to the shadows of the banana trees] is what we care for, it is the

2: Wilson E-5-(1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Selya, Nsilyende.

763 If a bride is her husband's first or second wife* (but not if she is a junior wife) she washes with him ritually at his homestead. The officiant (*ayuge*), who may be her husband's own mother or some other mature woman chosen by her, pours out medicated water, and groom and bride wash together, his hands being above and hers below. This usually takes place about a month after her seclusion, but neither is nor the following events are timed to coincide with periods.

In one ritual we watched, that of the daughter of Chief Mwaihaja, the go-between in the marriage and the brother of the groom came to fetch the bride for the ritual washing (*ukumbwale*), bringing her a small gift of 10 cents, four weeks after her first menstruation. She washed in medicated water with her husband at his house and returned to her father's the same night (May 13). Next day, about 3 p.m., the groom's 'mothers' (*abakamwane*), twelve of them, and one girl, arrived carrying six stems of bananas and four enormous pots of curds for the ritual of *ukwingwile*, 'putting her in'. They approached, singing two of the ritual songs:

Litubale, Itubale,
Tubale mwalagale.
Let us go, let us go,
Let us go for ever and never return.

and

Akwenguni kwakagile
Pulili po pakale bwenge.
The *ewenguni* tree rained on,
The place is like that of my own in-laws.

The bride was carried first by one and then by another of her 'mothers' (*abamwe*)* while a compact group of mothers and maids, with the bride raised high in their midst, danced to and fro. And all the time she held a cow to shield her head and face. After five minutes or so the dancing stopped and the 'mother-in-law' sat down in the shade, as Kyelowe (a senior wife of Mwaihaja who acted in place of the bride's own mother who was divorced) came to greet them formally and receive their gifts of food. Meanwhile the bride herself knelt on the ground beside Kyelowe's hut, her head covered with a cow, and surrounded by her maids. Presently

* Informants differed on this point. Some maintained that child wives washed with their wives, concubines with our wife. Others insisted that concubines also washed with you.

* i.e. her father's wives, and wives of his brothers and neighbours.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Selya, Ma Ngonde

375 334 new home, and her mother-in-law provides her with fire and a pot.

833 After the bride has had full intercourse with her husband she cannot return home, or see her own parents, until she has taken them the ritual *ilikalaga*. After sexual intercourse she wipes her husband's genitals with her hands, then wipes them on a fowl and some millet: these together form the *ilikalaga*. In the morning she goes off without washing—'with the filth of intercourse on her'—to her parents' house, taking the fowl and millet with her. The fowl is killed on a path and cooked with *ikipili* medicine and, if the bride is the eldest daughter of one of the father's first two wives, her father and mother eat it together. Her mother eats alone if she is a younger daughter, or the mother is a junior wife. If the father is a chief the husband may kill a young bull and beef is sent in place of the hen.

834 After eating the *ilikalaga* her parents resume intercourse[1] which has been taboo from the time the girl first menstruated. If no hen is brought because the husband is poor, the parents still resume sexual intercourse, but the bride, when she visits her home, must not take water from her mother's pot. Someone else draws for her and she drinks it outside from a separate calabash. If she drinks inside, or if her mother uses the calabash she has used, it is believed that her mother will get diarrhoea. She also avoids her father's bed and stool.

[783]

606 With the ritual of marriage must be included the negative ritual of avoidance between a woman and her husband's father and between those identified with him or her. The taboo applies from the time of betrothal or, if the girl has been betrothed as an infant, from well before she reaches puberty, and forbids father-in-law and daughter-in-law ever to look at one another or meet face to face on the pathway, or enter the same house, much less speak together. As we have seen, a similar taboo applies between the bride and her own father during her seclusion, but is relaxed when he has given her a gift. Between a woman and her father-in-law, however, it is never relaxed, except among the more sophisticated Christians. A myth of origin tells of a case of incest between father-in-law and daughter-in-law which led to the establishment of the

[1] Kaviti maintained that if the mother has not reached the menopause the parents do not lie together until the daughter's pregnancy is apparent. 'For the mother to conceive before the daughter is forbidden, but old women are thin and dry.' Mwakikunda denied any danger to mother conceiving before daughter.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selja, Mu Ngonde

602 585 again an acknowledgment of kinship. 'If she washed outside it would mean that she was not the daughter of her father.'

585 833 The two fresh leaves of plantain and sweet banana on which the officiant places her soiled bark-cloth, and on top of which she kneels to eat bananas are, as already stated, symbols of male and female. Everyone understood this. Fewer people were aware of the symbolism of eating the banana, but Kasitile and one or two others were fully conscious of it and forthright in discussion. He said:

> At the 'putting her in' (*ukwingenia*) the mothers-in-law bring a new bark-cloth and dress her in it; the old one is thrown away on the litter. They mix together bananas and *ikipili* medicine which she receives. Don't you understand? They treat her. The plantain is the symbol of the man, of his penis, we are treating her, may she 'cook well' for her husband [i.e. be proficient in intercourse], may she bear children. She eats on that bark-cloth which means may the blood go to make children, this is your husband. Eating is a symbol (*ikimapili*) of sexual intercourse. She eats the plantain, meaning she has intercourse with her husband.

He connected this with the admonition at the end of the ritual. When she eats the banana nothing is said, it is only implied, but [842] at the drinking of beer they teach her, saying: "Look after your husband well; if you are sweeping the house and he catches hold of you don't be startled, accept him, and catch hold of him also. . . . Men when they do this beget children."'

●783 881 585 The second washing at the groom's, which is performed for every wife and not only for a senior one, is interpreted as a cleansing ritual. In the morning the officiant calls the husband and wife and says: 'Come and wash now and clean off the filth.'

Shaving is both a purification and a sign of the completion of the ritual. 'The hair of a girl who has reached puberty is the filthiness of puberty, of the menstrual blood which she produces then. She throws it away.' Mwakwelebeja and his wife said: 'The shaving is to show that she has awakened to puberty (*alombwile ulunenge*). During the ritual she did not shave. We perform the rite of shaving that she may begin to shave again, and to let her smear herself with brown ointment. It is like a burial. If a man's close relative [765] dies he does not shave or wash.' Mwalibojo said: 'The shaving is to show that the *ulunenge* ritual is finished.'

Clearing the litter which is 'filthy', contaminated with the menstrual blood of the girl, is also a symbol of purification. The washing in a leaf basin into which *ikipili* medicine had been

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Malingwe

sprinkled in the form of a cross was interpreted by Lyandileko (the woman doctor already quoted) as the means by which the taboo on a bride crossing a stream was removed. 'We give her *ikipili* to wash with that she may not fear streams. It is taboo to cross water while she is in the puberty ritual. Here I give her the *ikipili* so that she may cross. If she crosses before she has been treated the grown chin. She will be like a stream [i.e. her periods will be very heavy].' Another informant remarked that if a bride crossed water before she was treated, the flow of menstrual blood would be excessive. Kaitile interpreted this rite rather differently. He said: 'It is to tell her not to break the commandment with the men. . . . "Do not break the commandment, do not step over him. When you lie down, let the man get up first." It is taboo (*mwiko*) for the woman to get up first and step over (*ukukilenya*) me, the man. My legs would swell up immediately. Sprinkling medicine thus [in a vertical line] is the man. He must get up first. Sprinkling thus [in a horizontal line] is the woman. She must follow.' Probably there is a double symbolism, as in several other rites. Both Lyandileko and Kaitile were experts on ritual and open in conversation with us.

Lyandileko explained the jumping over fire in a whisper: 'It means, Kagile (M. W.), that she will never begin again. She is going to do this at her husband's.' Angombwike said:

> It is to give the girl fire, to say: 'Do not burn there at your husband's.' It means: 'Now you have grown up, you are a woman. I have made fire for you (*ugupele umoto*).' For when a girl has run off as a child and been deflowered, then her mothers say: 'When shall we make fire for you? We cannot give it to you properly.' And at cooking she burns her hands, perhaps the water for the porridge spills over her hands and burns them. We hear that formerly they gave her fire, a torch of burning grass, to take to her husband's and kindle fire there, but they have left that. She jumps over fire, that is to give it to her.

The rite was also interpreted as a test of virginity. 'If a bride clears the fire she is virgin, if she falls in she has been foolish with men.'

The symbolism here is doubtless complex, but of the various informants Lyandileko, by reason of her status and personality, carries most weight, and I think it is probably correct to regard the jumping over fire both as a *rite de passage* and as a symbol of intercourse.

The cloth put on the bride like a veil after she has washed

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Gelya, Malengwale

§31 at the stream comes from the girl's father.[1] He spits on it and
§35 gives it to her mothers to dress her in at the stream.' (Kasitile.) Angombwike explained further:

Dressing her in it means her father has made her grow up. It means: 'Now she is a woman let her act like a woman.' They symbolize the genitals (*ilinga*) of the man, because among us, according to Nyakyusa custom, in front is a woman and behind a man. They tell her, saying: 'You have grown up, you have work [i.e. intercourse] with a man.'

Question: *Ejipindi?*

Answer: *Ejipindi* is very old. It's to bless her and say: 'You have grown up. When you go to your husband it will not be painful. Have intercourse.' If the woman is no longer a virgin they do not speak of it. They say she knows already, she has learnt on the veld.

§39 *Ejipindi*, like *undumila*, is a word not used in mixed company. Once Kasitile whispered, when inquiry had been made, unwittingly, before other people: 'No, Mwaipaja (G. W.), there are children present, and my senior, that is bad. But when there are only cross-cousins (*batsao*), then . . .' So the conversation changed.

§41 The washing at the stream is a final purification. Lyandikako
§43 said:

● §43 We give the bride beads, body-rings because she was not wearing good things (*isuno*), she was filthy during the puberty ritual. We wash her and put on body-rings and a cloth, and she stands in the winnowing basket, because now she must not step on dirt (*ubudodo*).

§45 The earth, it will be remembered, is smeared with faeces,
§47 corpses, and the shades. Then comes the triumphal return to her father's house, the girl carried high, and the women dancing. 'Crying "*Niya*" and carrying the girl, on return from bathing, is for display.' Lyandikako, asked the reason for throwing millet in the winnowing basket, replied:

It's to say it [the food, i.e. the meat of the bull of puberty] is cum. We examine the girl at the river. If she is rubbish (*inga ibula*) we do not rejoice. The mothers of the girl give gifts (*ukuhomola*). It's a rejoicing because it's cum, it's cum, the girl is virgin.

Niya, the word the women repeat as they carry and dance with the bride on the return from the stream, was interpreted by Angombwike as meaning: 'Put me down.'[2] 'It is traditional and

[1] Mwakisunda denied this, see infra, p. 109.
[2] Ukuniya: to put down behind (as opposed to in front).

Z: Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Selja, Ms Ngonde

have thought of it now, this is the cow.' Then, in the evening, the mother's brother blows out water in the banana grove and prays much to the fathers. And when he has prayed he says: 'Send the girl to a doctor to drink medicine.' Then the girl bears a child. The pagans say of us Christians when we have children without performing the ritual: 'You have a medicine, you are baptized with a medicine.'

Mwakisela confirmed that the mother's brother, like the father, may prevent a girl bearing a child.

Yes, it is so, if I do not give marriage-cattle for my wife our child will not bear. We go to divine and the oracle catches hold of my wife saying that the fathers are angry. We ask what they are angry about, and the answer is 'cattle'. Then I, the father of the girl, go with a cow and leave it and return. My wife and daughter remain there. They pray and pray and the girl conceives.

It is clear, therefore, that the shades are present in intercourse and control conception. At marriage the shade of her father must 'move aside a little' so that the bride may conceive, and she herself becomes dangerous to her mother (and in a lesser degree to her father) because she has mingled her blood with that of another lineage. Mingling the blood of different lineages is dangerous and a bride can safely meet her mother only after performing a ritual in which her parents, as well as herself, become 'one flesh' with her husband. 'When a bride brings a hen and millet to her mother it is to say: "Mother, I have wiped my husband's genitals, I have grown up."' All our informants were agreed that this *dikulaga* or *dikuda* (both words are used) is to safeguard the mother's health, particularly to prevent her suffering from diarrhoea. Mwandisi's statement was clear:

In the puberty ritual, when a bride has come from her husband, having lain with him, she catches hold of a little millet and a fowl without washing herself and carries them to her mother. The mother eats it with the fowl that her belly may be free. If the daughter does not bring these things, then, when she drinks from the same calabash as her mother, she contagies her mother, who has diarrhoea. Yes, the illness comes from the shades because she has come hot from the bed. . . . This diarrhoea comes from the belly when those below are angry and those above also. They say: 'The mother has contagied the child' or 'The child has contagied the mother'. If a girl has reached puberty we, the parents, do not come together until she has gone to her husband and lain with him. If we have intercourse we

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa
Selga Mukingsle

§81 evening our child, she will be barren and not bear children, but when
§85 she has lain with her husband then we two lie together again.
§13
§13 Kaitile identified the hen with the body of the girl, the millet
§13 with the seed of her husband, and a daughter going to the back of
§39 her mother's hut (*bwafu*), or drinking out of the common calabash,
as meeting with her mother.

If she does this before she has brought a fowl she soils her mother. Her mother develops diarrhoea. That is getting rid of the dirt (*kukunyu ulupuali*). . . . The mother's diarrhoea is like that from adultery. If my wife lies with a man in the bush, and I lie with her also, she soils the food which I eat with her, it is dirty, and I have diarrhoea, it is to get rid of the filth. . . . Yes, even though we do not lie together, I get a little diarrhoea, the filth of my wife.

Question: Is the *ilibalaga* to drive away the shade again?

Kaitile: No, it is something else. It is to save the mother that she may not have diarrhoea and may not become weak.

§71 The explanation given of the Kukwe *ilibala* rite makes clear
§85 that it is a symbolic mingling of 'the blood' of son-in-law and mother-in-law, which makes contact between them (through the bride) safe.

§71 Failure to bring the *ilibalaga* is thought sometimes to result
§73 in very serious illness. One of the wives of our neighbour,
§73 Mwakibela, was delirious. We asked what the cause was. He explained:

The daughter reached puberty and went to her husband, but refused to drink with her mother. She just came and took water in the calabash cup, she brought nothing from her husband. . . . If the husband is poor a girl brings a fowl for drinking with her mother. . . . The divination said: 'It's the girl.'

Question: Why did she not bring a hen from her husband?

Mwakibela: He is not a man of wisdom, he's very harsh, and a fool.

§81 After the *ilibalaga* has been eaten by her parents a bride is no
§85 longer dangerous to them, and she, fortified by the various treat-
§89 ments with *umbanda* and *ilipili* medicines, no longer fears the 'heavy cow'. The critical periods of first menstruation and first intercourse are past. But the rule of avoidance between her and her father-in-law (and those identified with him) continues through life and is directly associated by the Nyakyusa with the

2: Wilson K-S (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
KaKwe

[75] [76] ried to the stream, runs in and out under the dripping water, is anointed with red ointment, shares the mush of beans and bananas, and drinks meth-rated beer with her from the same calabash. In [77] the old days it was taboo for either bride or groom to set foot to the ground on their way to the stream.

For a senior wife, the mother-in-law moulds hearth-bricks with powdered medicine, and sets them up in the groom's hut. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest daughter if the daughter is her first-born, or with her senior daughter-in-law if her eldest child is a boy. 'If they do not do this they go mad.'

As in Selya, an admonition of the bride by her 'mothers', in the presence of her in-laws, concludes the full 'bringing out' ritual. We never heard it in Kukwe country, but the points mentioned by informants were similar to those emphasized in Selya. Kajinga, Pawakuto's second wife, summed up the teaching thus:

> Obey your husband when he calls you. Fetch water and wood. Don't say: 'First let me fetch firewood' if your husband wants you to do something else. Do what your husband says first, then to-morrow go for wood. It is forbidden to refuse when your husband wants to sleep with you. In the morning get up and wash. Wash first, then light the fire and give your husband food. Don't say: 'There isn't any food.'

[78] [81] [82] Next day, on her return home, the bride is given presents by the people of her home village (*ukugwa*), her father making the first gift. The groom brings the bull of puberty on which all the 'mothers' feast, but the meat from the top of the right foreleg (*ipmaga*) is reserved for the bride's own parents who sing as they eat it:

Kyanile, Kyanile, Kyanipaw

Some days later a party of 'mothers' takes her formally to her husband's house (*ukwakula*) with gifts of beer and food and firewood, and are feasted by the groom's people and given chickens and shillings.

[83] [84] [85] When she is finally living with her husband, before she can visit or greet her parents, the bride must put milk and a fowl (some use a live fowl, others a cooked one) under her bed at night. After having had intercourse with her husband 'she takes the fowl and milk and gives them to her parents with the filth of intercourse still on her. This is called the *ilibale*. If she does not do this her mother will fall ill and have diarrhoea.' When they take the food

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

(from under the bed) in the morning it has the filth of intercourse 585
on it, then the father and mother should eat it. If this is not done 681
they will fall ill with diarrhoea. If the hen is taken alive some eat 743
it and others do not.'

After discussing this rite Mwaulemba went on:

You know, also, that when a girl has gone through the puberty 786
ritual as her husband's she must not take firewood from her mother's 862
enthem (*lusiala*) until she is obviously pregnant. Before then, while she is lying with her husband, she must not. We say: 'How can you take your mother's firewood when you are sleeping with your husband?' It is just the same whether the mother is old or young. If the bride goes through the ritual without sleeping with her husband that is all right; it is when she begins to sleep with him that she begins to avoid her mother's loft. At that time I, the father, may meet her mother and [896]
sleep with her, but with *coitus interruptus*. I must not make her pregnant. The daughter must begin. As soon as she is pregnant then we parents can begin to conceive a child again. If we do so before our daughter, then she will never bear a child at all, and others will say: 'How could you swamp your daughter?'

Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is observed as in Selya, but is slightly less strict. 446 1194

(3) The court purpose and symbolism

As has already been indicated, the symbolism of the Kukwe 586
ritual of puberty is similar to that of Selya. The same actions are 851
interpreted in exactly the same way and, where actions differ 189
somewhat, they are still interpreted as expressing the same general conceptions. For example, the Kukwe bride and groom make fire together by friction and eat porridge cooked on it, whereas a bride in Selya eats bananas with powdered medicine, but both actions are symbols of sexual intercourse. Both in Selya and in Kukwe country the bride is purified and, as part of the process of purification, the shade of her father's lineage is driven from her body; but only among the Kukwe is this symbolized by sitting in a running stream and allowing the water to wash away pebbles from between her fingers and toes.

That there may be no doubt about the interpretation of the 125
Kukwe ritual we again quote a number of statements by Nyakyusa 881
informants. These refer specifically to the Kukwe form of the puberty ritual.

Chief Pandanti's wives, discussing the ritual together, were em-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F?017 Ngonde F?017
Nyakyusa
KeKe

Mwamasowa: The bride does not cross water for it is said that the blood which began to flow when she reached puberty will not dry on her body if she does.

To sleep on the litter and to refuse to sleep on sleeping-mats is a sign of childhood (for during childhood girls do not think much about cleanliness, but are dirty); it means that they leave behind these (literally 'come out from') childish things. The litter is burnt because if it has not been burnt the children take bits of it to make a fire and cook food, then, when they have eaten that food, their bodies are sick. We say the body becomes unhealthily fat (*shapepiele*). Food is collected for a bride because if, later, a woman, who has eaten bad food collected for her, eats food collected for another bride going through the puberty ritual, she will fall sick and her body will grow unhealthily fat. Bringing food for the *shamshulile* and giving gifts at the *shapwe* are to congratulate the bride because she has grown up, she is now an adult.

X: The wearing of banana leaves [at the bringing out] is a sign of fertility. The ritual is finished, the girl is someone's wife now. . . . The plantain represents the penis, the sweet banana the clitoris.

Sitting in a stream and letting water carry away pebbles placed between fingers and toes is a symbol of purification and separation from the shade. The first element—purification—was mentioned by most informants: 'The rite means that the dirt is finished,' said Pumkono's wife; but the more self-conscious identified 'dirt' with the shade. Mwamlombe made the matter quite clear. When asked why pebbles were placed in the clefts of fingers and toes, he replied: 'Kyala, when he created men, said: "At death throw it away, it is the shade, it is the body."'

Question: In the puberty ritual?

Mwamasowa: It is to say that the shade has brooded over the child, since he created blood we throw him away. May the shade go with these stones, then may she bear children; if he does not go, if you do not wear the girl, then Kyala broods over her and she does not bear children.

Question: Why does she avoid her father at this time?

Mwamasowa: Because I, the father, and her mother, perform the ritual for our child. Our shade has entered into her, has brooded over her, therefore we do not come together on the mat until we have finished wearing our child; when we have finished, and have wearied her, then we do what we will on the mat. If I want to lie with my wife [during the ritual] she refuses, saying: 'Our child has not yet finished, she is still undergoing the puberty ritual.' But if she agrees and we lie together, then our child will never bear. When we have finished the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F7617 Ngonde F7617
Nyakyusa
Wilson

§§3
778 they both work in us, they are not only in *one* person. They work in the woman and in the man, they work in both of us.

§§5 Mwangwanda, an elderly pagan, explained the symbolism of the new hearth-brick at some length:

> We take a new hearth-brick and place it by the hearth in the bride's house. It means: 'You have grown up, you are a woman, you must always cook a pot,' and she cooks on that hearth-brick. . . . It means: 'You have grown up, the food that your mother once will come no more, you must cook for your husband yourself.' It is placed for the senior wife only, not for others. If I find that my first wife is not a virgin we do not place a brick for her—she has lain with another. But if she has a younger sister and she brings her as a junior wife and she is a virgin and I deflower her myself, then the first sister is still the senior wife and we place a brick for her and her child will inherit as the senior son, for another shut up her womb [i.e. made her virgin again]. If she has no younger sister I may marry her, but she will not be my chief wife. The next one I marry will be my senior wife and for her the brick will be placed and her son will inherit.

781 There is also an association, not made explicit by our informants, between a log of firewood and a marriageable woman.
5§§ One of the tasks of the bride and her maids is to fetch heavy logs of firewood which are stored in her mother's loft. At least one log goes with her when she is taken by her 'mother' to her husband, and this she keeps all her life, taking it with her if she moves. From it the shades are said to chip splinters when they wish to warm themselves at the dying fire at night. After she has gone to her husband and before she conceives, a bride is forbidden to touch the firewood in her mother's loft, and in the funeral ritual, when a widow returns home for the *ingonde* she steals a log of firewood from her mother's loft and takes it to her husband's. Into the cracks of this log the officiants press seeds. It seems probable that the reddish log represents a woman in her reproductive capacity, which is formally transferred to her husband and segregated from the reproductive activities of her mother. This, we repeat, is our own interpretation, not formulated by any Nyakyusa.

783 The taboo on a bride who has slept with her husband approach-
784 ing her mother until she has brought the ritual *ilibale* is associated with the danger of mixing the bloods of different lineages.

> A bride avoids dipping water out of a pot and drinking from a calabash belonging to her relations for the following reason: A girl is of one blood (*ililupe*) with her mother, and when she goes to her husband, the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3117 Ngonde F3117
Nyakyusa
Kinship

blood of another lineage mingles with hers, but it has not reached her mother because they have not met. To drink water together from one calabash is to meet. Then the mother has diarrhoea because her body is not accustomed to the blood of another lineage. To have diarrhoea is to go bad, to expel (*ahanyu*) the filth. The *ilibale* of the fowl in the body of the groom which mingles with the body of the girl's parents that they may be one blood with him.

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784
[785]

Thus, not only husband and wife, but also parents and son-in-law become one flesh.

[462]
[463]

As in Selya, a direct connection is made between the parents receiving a bull for the bride's virginity, and her bearing a child to her husband. Mwandondo explained: 'Kyala together with the shades have made the girl grow up. If the girl runs off with her husband and I, the father, have not received cattle, then the earth is angry, the shades say: "We shall see if she will flourish there." Then the girl does not conceive, and the diviner says: "The shades are angry." The groom's people bring cattle, then I, the father, pray for my child and she conceives, her belly swells.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN
Nyakyusa

Question: The spirits are angry?

Mwakasole: Yes, they say: 'That woman for whom we gave marriage-cattle has overstepped her husband.' Yes, it is the shades who are angry in his belly.

Kakome, a doctor, made it clear that the danger to the husband whose his wife committed adultery came from the semen of another man entering her.

If your wife commits adultery you get very tired on a journey, you suffer from diarrhoea; in the old days we fell in war.

Question: What if the adulterer practises coitus interruptus?

Kakome: Yes, if the man is clean he withdraws and the semen falls to the ground. If he always withdraws when he has intercourse with my wife, then I escape, nothing happens. The woman is like a child. See, when your wife who has not yet reached puberty plays with young men on the weld it is no matter. Do they create a child with her? No! But if she is an adulteress he is there in her, and I am there in her, and Kyala says: 'Ha! Are there two?' And he spears you, the owner of the woman. You are ashed by going to the woman; that is filth. But if I catch an adulterer with my wife, even if he has practised coitus interruptus, I am angry and kill him—there is jealousy! But as for diarrhoea, I do not suffer from it.

The most dangerous adultery of all, according to the Nyakyusa, is that of a man with his father's wife. Angumbwike explained:

If a man dies and his son has been lying with his wives in secret, whether with or without his permission, the son is very much afraid to approach his father's place. If he goes near or touches the corpse he will himself die, for he is one flesh with his father; their blood has mingled in the woman's belly. He keeps a long way away and so do the wives with whom he has lain. The leading men of the village are told about it and a doctor is fetched and the son and the wives involved are taken to a waterfall and washed there. If he is the eldest son a younger brother kills the cow meanwhile. Then he comes back to the homestead and kills a cow himself. While you were away in Europe I saw a case of this with my own eyes. A man died whose son had been lying with his wives. As soon as the son approached his father's place he fell down sick to death. People picked him up and rushed him away to a distance. Then he began to breathe a little easier. They took him to a waterfall and washed him and he recovered, more or less. He is still unwell from time to time. It is not madness, just illness. And if, before the father's death, such a son approaches his father, the old man gets very ill indeed and the elder wives turn the son out of the house. There is none of this trouble if a brother [either a full brother or a half-brother]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

has lain with the dead man's wives. A brother will approach the corpse without fear. But there is another trouble: if a man seduces his brother's wife the husband may have diarrhoea perhaps with bloody stools. Many people do not come to their fathers' funerals before the burial. And also if the father is ill, and they see he is near death, they run away, returning when he has been buried. Because it is said that a man will die if he has slept with his mother, his father's wife, and sees his father or sees the corpse, as did Jonas, the son of Kiaokora. He slept with his mothers in secret. When his father died (in a different village from that in which Jonas lived) Jonas seized his father's cattle and ran away with them. When they had buried his father he came to mourn. The women with whom he had slept told on him because he had given them syphilis.

A wife who commits adultery with her husband's son is held to be in great danger also. Mwandisi said:

If they conceal it and approach the grave both the son and the wife will die. Both are washed naked, under a waterfall. The officiant washes them together with a fowl.

Question: Why the waterfall and the nakedness?

Mwandisi: The water is to take away the sickness. Being naked is so that the case may go away and you, the man, may be empty (free) and the woman may be empty. For if such a son looks into the grave and approaches to weep, the shades and Kyala are angry and say: "Are you a relative? How can you look into the grave? It is you who have killed him, by causing him diarrhoea." And if the woman approaches and holds her dead husband in her arms, then she dies. Those below are angry and say: "Is she your relative?" And she dies. But if she has committed adultery with someone who is no relation she approaches and does not fear, and the adulterer does not fear either, but approaches.

For a woman, adultery is held to be dangerous also in childbirth:

If she has had lovers, she has a difficult delivery and the child refuses to come out until she confesses. Sometimes she confesses three, then the child comes, it comes out. . . . She confesses the name and takes a bit of stick and spits on it and throws it away, and you will be surprised to see that she gives birth at once. If she is very bad she will tell you three names and throw away three sticks.

Any contact with childbirth is held to be even more dangerous to men than contact with menstruation. It also is thought to cause weakness, and it is warriors who are most affected. Traditionally,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Traditionally

[174] no man entered the confinement hut in which a woman remained until the cord had dropped off the new-born child and she had purified herself, and she did not normally resume cooking for her husband for some weeks; but these taboos are less strictly observed than formerly, partly, our informants insisted, because the country has been pacified and men do not fear to die in battle if they neglect them.

The obvious interpretation here is that a man is felt to partake of the weakness of a menstruating or confined woman if he comes into association with her. 'His legs become swollen and painful and he is very tired'; 'strength leaves him'; 'he has no speed in running'; 'his belly aches and his body grows red' . . . . The picture is surely one of a woman's physical weakness: a man is identified with his wife during pregnancy, observing the taboos she observes, and during menstruation and confinement he must isolate himself as far as possible from her lest he share her weakness; but none of our informants make a connection between the weakness of the woman and the weakness of the man—the interpretation is ours. The Nyakyusa were obsessed with the idea of 'filth' emanating from menstruation and childbirth; indeed, the feeling that women, by reason of their physiology and the taboo on washing during menstruation, are dirty, is cited by men as one of the reasons for not eating with them or sitting to chat with them. Only in this limited sense is the conception of ritual impurity linked with social status. Here the contrast with a Hindu society, in which states of [7] ritual impurity (basically very similar to those of the Nyakyusa) are linked with caste differences, is marked.[1]

[175] The second general conception underlying the taboos of pregnancy is that of *ubwite*, heaviness, a condition associated with sexual intercourse, pregnancy, the python of witchcraft, and medicines.[2] A 'heavy' (*wite*) person is dangerous to an 'empty' (*bwite*) one, hence women sleeping with their husbands, and pregnant women could mothers with infants and brides in seclusion, who are 'empty'; and the 'empty' are treated to prevent diarrhoea and give them weight. Diarrhoea and 'emptiness' are closely associated.

[176] The great specific against 'emptiness' is *dipele* medicine, used in the puberty, birth, and death rituals, and even used to protect cattle against a menstruating woman. 'If a woman is the only wife

[1] cf. M. N. Srinivas, *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India* (1952).
[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 29.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

845 If a woman has difficulty in labour we officiate will her: 'Speak!
847 With whom did you commit adultery?' and the child comes down.
When she has spoken it is born. We do not give her medicine. We give
her earth.

848 QUERY: What if an illegitimate boy dies, do you perform the
ritual with *ilipiki*?

LOMMANO: No, because he was a child of the long grass [i.e. illegitimate], we only treat the mother. We do not perform the ritual with the *ilipiki* of the husband. If it is a girl, and she to whom we gave earth grows up, the father [i.e. her mother's husband or, if the mother was unmarried, her father] says: 'Let the husband perform the ritual, because the cattle are mine, she is my child, and that is the custom.' If they give a child of the long grass the medicine it will die, because it is not its medicine. . . . I know about it because I give children the medicine.

There is no question about the legal rights over an illegitimate child, and Nyoni and the other men hold that ritual and legal control went together. Lyandileko and Kasule, both specialists in this field, hold that traditionally, at least, the *ilipiki* could only be used for a legitimate child: to do otherwise was dangerous.

So important is this acknowledgement of legitimacy that in many Christian families, where other traditional rituals are ignored, the husband's mother still brings *ilipiki* for his child.

851 As soon as the child is born a fowl—a cock for a boy, a hen for a girl—is sent to the young wife's parents, to notify them of the birth. Then her 'mothers' come 'to keep her company' (*ukwangapo*) during her confinement, and at the end of it they take her home with them for a visit of a month or more. They bring her back to her husband, formally, with gifts of beer, food, and mats (*ulumbeko*), just as they did after the puberty ritual. We met one party, taking back a young mother to her husband, in which there were twenty-one women carrying baskets with food or pots of beer. The grandmother was happy and excited and, dancing up to greet us, she said, breathlessly: 'That's the owner of this beer [pointing to her daughter], all these pots!' The feast was unusually lavish on this occasion. Two pots of beer, two mats of bananas, a vessel of milk, and a mat, were taken by the daughter of Chief Mwaigoqo when she returned to her husband after the birth of her first child, and that seems to be the ordinary standard. The husband kills a bull calf for meat for his guests, or gives them a shilling or two.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F3117 Ngonde F3117
Nyakyusa

All the women present, and Mwaipopo himself, had shaved today.

We stayed forty minutes there and some of the food was eaten on the spot. The rest of the food, the pot of beer, and the cinnamon and ensuge, we carried back with us to Mwakabelo's. The beer was given to Mwakabelo who drank it with eleven other men, his kinsmen and neighbours. The food and cinnamon and ensuge went to the women.

28 July 1935

The women had intended to go and visit the maternal relations (*abipaw*) of the mother of twins yesterday, but her 'father' (Mwaipopo) had sent a message to say: 'Do not come yet, they are all away, some in Mwambonia's country, others planting potatoes.' Mwakabelo, asked about his own mother's relations, replied: 'My own *abipaw* have all died, and even if they had not, it would be too far to go, for they lived in Kakwe country. I did not throw medicine into the grass for them, so, we never do.

'The doctor is coming soon to sprinkle the cattle, all our herd here, my cattle and my neighbours', with medicine.' There are two herd groups in the village.

28 July 1935 (Sunday)

6. *Treating the cattle*

We were called to Mwakabelo's place. He told us:

The doctor brought medicine last night, just before dark, and she said to me: 'Sprinkle the cattle yourself.' 'Perhaps it is taboo for me to do so?' I replied: 'No, not at all, you sprinkle them; I am going off to church to-morrow, to the catechumen's class.' Her elder sister is baptised already and the herself intends to be baptised. So I asked her: 'To whom shall we go for medicine then?' She replied: 'I am giving the medicine to my daughter, the wife of Mwakisale, the son of Mwaikiji.'

When we arrived at about 1.15 p.m. Mwakabelo's cattle and some others were standing round a smoky fire, as usual, during the middle hours.[1] The pot of medicine was steaming on another fire at a little distance. 'How do the cattle fall sick, if you do not treat them?' we asked. 'They purge continually. . . .'

Mwakabelo's wife said: 'We should send to Mwangonu and let his cattle be treated too.' Mwakabelo (to us): 'Mwangonu herds his cattle with Mwakibona, in a separate herd from ours.' she says they should come too; certainly when Mwangonu had twins our

[1] *cf.* Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 32. [2] *op. cit.*, p. 36.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

§95 cattle were up to be counted." (To his wife): "All right, they shall
●723 come," and he sent off a boy with a message.

Mwampona came to inquire about the message sent to him and then went back to fetch his and Mwakikoto's cattle. Six banana suckers were prepared. The cattle present were splashed by Mwakichela and two of his wives, each holding two banana tails. They were the cattle of Mwakichela himself and those of seven neighbours who herd with him. Then the other herd of the village came in (the cattle of five men) and was splashed. Mwakalebo II and Mwakikoto (neighbours) both came up at the end and had their legs splashed with the remains of the medicine. They had both been splashed before—we had seen Mwakikoto being splashed—so we asked: "Why again?"

Mwakalebo II replied: "We were a great crowd the first time, and I did not get properly splashed." Mwakikoto: "I feel a pain."

13 February 1935

§96 Mwakichela and his wife told us that he had been to her mother's people (*ukipwa*) after we left Isumba, but that he did not go to his *ukipwa* and will not do so.

vi. *The Ukulenga*

We only saw the twin ritual enacted right through once, but the different events mentioned here were repeatedly described to us, and the ritual for Mwakichela's twins may be taken as typical. Two essential actions are, however, omitted from this account, viz. the eating of messages of porridge from the ground and the ritual innocuous.[1] We describe these in the words of Mwakatage of the plain, a middle-aged Christian, himself the younger brother of twins, who gave a very detailed account of the whole ritual. He said that at the 'bringing out' rite, beside being smeared with medicine and splashed, children are given medicated porridge.

The women cook porridge for the children, medicated porridge, outside on the ridel. To this cooking and eating of porridge they only take children who are connected. The reason that they eat porridge is this: It is a ritual which they do so that when the parents of twins come out of their house, we may not just greet them, but that they may be one with us, we whose bellies are heavy (*ungulupamunyage*) this *mapwa*, *ifuni ipage na mawe ndi bonto mundi*). To eat the porridge they fashion little balls or messages, one for each child, smear them with medicine

[1] This rite was also described by a Ngoni doctor who had just experienced it in a twin ritual.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F7517 Ngonde F7517
Nyakyusa

they take hold of the corpse. But they wait for the doctor; if they do not do so the same disease will come—a swelling of legs and diarrhoea. An ordinary corpse is not feared in this way.

Yes, a man fears to take his other wives. He says: 'If I just go to them I shall give them the disease of the twins that I begot with this wife.' The wife he takes without precaution will swell in the legs and stomach, and pass blood with her stools. He first tries to have a child with the wife who bore twins, waiting till the twins are walking about. He lies with the mother of the twins but withdraws, and then, when the children are grown, he impregnates her. He does not go to the other wives. And if he asks for another wife before trying to impregnate the mother of the twins her father will refuse. If he takes her without asking, her father will make him pay a cow. He can only ask for another wife if the mother of the twins does not conceive. For one month[1] the husband refrains altogether from intercourse, then after the ritual he goes to his wife (the mother of the twins) but does not impregnate her. . . . A man is supposed to tell the twin doctor before he begets another child with his wife. He must do it openly, and not in secret. It is taboo to do it secretly. Nothing happens, but the doctor is angry, saying: 'Why did you not tell me, the doctor, the owner of the body?'

Thereon already familiar from the death and puberty—marriage rituals recur again here. The parents of twins are isolated and cleansed like mourners and nubile girls. Contact with them is held to be dangerous because 'those below'—in this case Kyala and Mbasi rather than the shades—have brooded over them, and must be driven off before normal procreation can be resumed. After their isolation the *ilibalage*—the symbol of their ritual union—must be offered to the shades of both lineages, that of the man and that of the woman. There is also the eating of balls of porridge, the symbol, in the other rituals, of the actions of a mediator, but the fear of mediators was not adduced by our informants as the purpose of the twin ritual; rather it is the formidable potency which produces two children instead of one, that is the danger—'the parents of twins have a fire'—and men protect themselves against it by burning themselves with hot medicines. They 'burn the twin birth'.

[1] Presumably longer when the initiation and ritual bated longer.

CHAPTER VII

RITUALS OF MISFORTUNE

[745] An abnormal birth is the most dangerous misfortune that can befall a family in Nyakyusa society, and the ritual to ward off its expected results is the most elaborate, but there are lesser misfortunes also, which may be averted by simpler rituals.

[746] *(a) Cleansing after spearing*

[682] When one man has speared another and killed him, even though the action was legitimate (as slaying an enemy in battle, or a cattle thief or an adulterer caught *in flagrante delicto*), the slayer and his relatives dare not eat together with the relatives of the slain, or enter their houses, but they themselves, and the kinsmen of the slain also, fall ill, coughing, spitting blood, and wasting away. This sickness is known as *ulubanga*, 'the disease of spearing'.* Both parties are thought to suffer primarily from contact with each other and both protect themselves by drinking medicines, but they drink separately, each engaging a doctor to treat them. We were told:

[747] If one man kills another it does not finish. He begets children and they die; an autopsy is performed and reveals fighting with spears (*ungwe*).* The disease may not injure the slayer or his children, but the relatives with whom he eats and drinks, and so also on the other side; it may not hurt the children of the dead man, but those relatives with whom his children eat and drink.

We all fell ill, especially the brothers of the slain. The murderer always remembered to drink the medicine because he knew that he had killed someone, but when your brother was slain perhaps you forgot to drink the medicine. Then, afterwards, if you drank beer with someone, not knowing that it was he who had killed your brother, you fell ill.

[748] The manner of treatment is as follows:

If I have killed someone they take me to a wanzilli and make me

* *Ungwe*: a spear. * *Ungwe* or fight together with spears.

vomit by tickling the back of my throat with a hen's feather, while I 782
am standing under the fall with the water coming down on my head. The blood of him you have killed is in the waterfall. May it not come! May it all go out of the body! You vomit because it is there in the body. May it go out! Then a medicine is cooked and the legs of the slayer and his relatives are washed with it. It is the medicine of twins: the twin medicine and the spearing medicine are one because they are a rejection of the blood. When people's legs have been splashed then we all dance; that is to drive away him whom we have killed.

But even after such treatment the kin of the slayer and the slain 783
fear to eat together. 'We remain enemies. If we eat with them it 404
makes us thin.'

Those who drink protective medicine are the agnatic kin of the slayer and the slain, their mothers' kin (*ahjwa*) and their wives, but not their affines. Those who must be treated are wives, and blood relatives but not affines. Affines are of different blood, but wives are of your flesh.'

The spearing ritual is not a joint ritual in which a large group 783
of kin participate; married men, even brothers, make their own arrangements for taking protective medicine.

We do not meet together with all our relatives, the descendants of our sons, so, it is not like the twin ritual. We drink it each man with his wives and children in his house. If I have a married brother he also goes to a doctor to ask for medicine for himself. He asks his own doctor, not the one to whom I went. We drink separately, we do not meet together when we drink.

Only if a daughter had been given in compensation for a murder 783
(as sometimes happened) and later he who married her took mar- 482
riage cattle to her father to establish kinship, then, our informants said, the two parties should drink the 'medicine of spearing' (*ndola gwa lahanga*) together.

(f) *Rotting the rope*

A man who has been bound with rope (*ngoji*), or has committed 783
suicide by hanging,* or raided cattle and tethered them, is also 481

[784]

* When the incidence of suicide is among the Nyakyusa we do not know. The Rev. Shewalaby, one of the few Europeans to live in the area, speaks of it being 'not uncommon'. We recorded two cases: one of a man whose wife and children had died, the other a woman forced to leave her home and marry against her will. O, a Christian whom we knew well, wrote to his pagan elder brother that he would commit suicide if his brother insisted on the pagan practice of performing an autopsy on the body of their dead sister.

believed to be a danger to his kin and descendants, but it a manner somewhat different from the one who has killed another. The sickness is thought to come from the *ngwe* and is called *ngwe* after them.

Mwakambe explained:

If one member of a family commits suicide by hanging then his surviving relatives, if they do not drink a medicine, will die of the 'ngwe', always. If a man hangs himself all his relatives fear; if a woman only her children.

Kaitile's wife, Kilubi, had borne ten children, but all save one had died. He said:

It is because of the ngwe of her father. They bound him at Tabeyo; he died in gaol; it is those ngwe which are killing my children. I said to her father (i.e. the bird): 'Let us go to divine,' but he has not yet agreed to do so.

The death of Mukwetile, a junior kinsman of the Chief Mwaipopo, whose funeral we attended, was attributed to the ngwe and to other cattle raided by his grandfather. Kaitile, himself a diviner agnatic kinsman, explained this case also:

One of the fathers of Mukwetile was killed by the hill people. They attacked him on the road. So in younger Mwamnile, the father of Mukwetile, took twenty cows belonging to the hill people as they passed north, coming from the salt lake. This was long ago. Then Mukwetile's father omitted to kill a cow for those who had helped him to secure the cows. So they were angry and brought *ngwe*—the disease of ngwe—upon him. After seizing the cattle he moved to Mwantebale's country in the hills and he was quite well, but then he came back to live here, first sending two cows to the Chief Mwaipopo, but killing none for the people, who were angry and said: 'Why does he not kill for us? What sort of chief is he?' He got weak and fell ill and died. They did not perform an autopsy, saying it was forbidden to do it on a chief; and his son died also and was not examined, but now when the younger son died, Mwaipopo said: 'Let us examine him so that we may know.' And it is that old *ngwe*. . . .

The sickness of ngwe (*ngwe*) is of three sorts coming from: (a) the suicide (by hanging) of a relative long ago; (b) the binding of a man by other people, as distinct from a man binding himself; and (c) the doubtful entombment of men and their breath. In dreams they put the sickness of ngwe into his stomach, they say: 'May the sickness of ngwe come into his stomach.' The sickness of ngwe lies in wait for an heir. A man dies and the sickness comes on his heir, others are all right; as it

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

gone on. Mwamnaile was never found, but we say it was that sickness 753
of the ropes of the cattle that he seized from the hill people. Perhaps the 681
people of that country were shocked, and the sickness is due to their
breath, to witchcraft. Perhaps the owners of the cattle took the ropes
they had used for tying up the cattle which were stolen, to a doctor to
be cooked with medicine. We have not discovered the dreads yet, we [757]
have not yet been to divine; the divination will tell us, however. But
the medicine for cutting the ropes (*mdwape*) is the same for all these ill-
nesses from ropes, so we cook it immediately, before going to divine.
We divine when we clear away the litter. The cooking of medicine at
the grave now is to rot him who has died that the sickness of ropes
(*ngwiji*) may not come on us. Yes, only the heir fears to die, but we
others fear lest we fall ill, coughing. The sickness of ropes does not kill
us, but makes us ill and thin. Yes, I drank and ate the medicine myself.
After the divination we drink another medicine, in beer, not the
female beer. They brew another lot just for the medicine.

We saw the drinking of medicine 'to rot the ropes' at Mukwa- 783 ●
bila's funeral. He was buried at Kaniile's homestead and Kaniile 764
was organising the proceedings. The doctor dug a hole at the foot
of the grave and put into it a length of green wood which pro-
jected a foot or so above the level of the ground. On this was
balanced a pot, and a fire was lighted beneath it. In the pot she
boiled certain leaves and roots. She took a large drinking calebash,
put in some ash from a fire-brand, added some of the same species
of leaves as had gone into the pot, and stirred up the mixture with
water. This mixture was drunk by the relatives present and fifteen
or twenty leaf cups were made to send to those who had not come.
Medicated porridge was also made and some was eaten by the
relatives present.

Then the pot was taken off the fire. We were told: 'We are
praying (*ndipalamipani*). We want to take the pot off the fire.' No
words were said, but the medicines were taken out of the pot by
the deceased's father's sister (the oldest surviving member of the
lineage) to prepare more porridge for those relatives who had not
attended, and the officiant poured the water into a hole which she
made in the middle of the grave. She covered it again with earth.

While the officiant was preparing the medicine at the grave,
Kaniile, who was helping her, said to a half-brother of the
deceased:

> Pray earnestly with this medicine, be on good terms with others.
> Half-brother: Me? What one was there against me?

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 KASITILE: You sons of Musika had a case against you . . . you fought.
764 HALF-BROTHER: But that case concerned a woman.

A discussion of the case followed.

KASITILE: Friend, we pray here. Listen carefully.
HALF-BROTHER: I have spoken and not concealed anything.
KASITILE: That's what I say, let us pray well.
HALF-BROTHER: I performed the ritual for him. Let him die with his hair.
SUTTER: Let us confess [lit. vomit] we were angry.
HALF-BROTHER: Yes, it is so, we were angry. The cow made us angry.

783 Mwainumo described a treatment with *indaga* medicines which differed slightly from the one we saw and involved the slaughter of a sheep; according to his account the medicines are coiled in the pot like ropes, and the participants are washed under a waterfall, though they are not made to vomit like the relatives of a murderer. Doubtless the details vary with the officiant, but the principle that medicines are used to rot the ropes remains constant.

764 (c) *Protection against sorcery or vengeance magic*
789 Sickness caused by sorcery or vengeance magic is believed to
783 spread among kinsmen in much the same way as sickness due to the shedding of blood or binding with ropes, and the ritual performed as a protection against it is very similar to the ritual for 'rotting the ropes' just described. We saw it performed after the death of E. who died on 23 March 1935. Her elder brother (heir to her father) and her husband, who were pagans, wished to perform an autopsy, but her younger brother, a Christian, prevented their doing so. Soon after her burial her mother and husband fell very ill and three weeks later (April 13) the five-year-old son of her elder brother M. died. An autopsy was performed on the child and the diagnosis was that his mother's father, after quarrelling with M., his son-in-law, had drunk medicines to bring death to M's children. M. explained: 'My wife has already buried two
[763] children. This boy is the third. Previously we found evidence of *ilyepa*[1] at the autopsy, and this time it is the same. The disease
000 comes from my wife's father.' However, when M. went to confirm

[1] *Ilyepa* is a medicine alleged to be drunk by a *senior* relative, when he is angry, which, if his anger is justified, will cause his *junior* relative to suffer in his own person or that of his children.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

However, when M. went to consult the cause of both deaths with a famous diviner, Sambo, he was told that the boy's death was due to the anger of neighbours who had not been treated as they should have been, but E's death was due to the sorcery of her first husband. M's report of the divinations is worth quoting:

I have just been to Sambo in the country of Swelii, he has divined and he tells me that the death of E. was due to the sorcery (*ubwiigi*) of Mwakyusa, her first husband. He also told me the name of the doctor from whom Mwakyusa got the medicine to kill her, the man is K.; he is both a doctor and a smith in the country of X. He told me that Mwakyusa was angry because, when he tore her mouth, he paid to us a cow in damages; he said: 'I have paid the cow, I should have my wife. But they have taken her back and eaten my cow.' E. had left all her things in his house, her bark-cloths, her cloths, everything. Sambo tells me that Mwakyusa took all these things to K. and spoke four names, saying: 'I wish E. my wife, M., and one of M's wives [mother of the dead child] to die. If these die I shall be happy.' So the doctor prepared a medicine which he put into a calabash. He did this while saying the names, and he addressed the names to the cloths, as if one of them was E., one was me, and so on. If E. had left nothing behind he would have had to send a man up with medicine to our place.

He told me to go to Mwakisonde, who is a great doctor. Mwakisonde will come to my place and cook medicine, we shall all drink it, not only the three people named but all my distant relatives will collect to drink it, N., E's second husband will come too. About the child, Sambo denies that it is *ifyepe*, he says it is due to the wrong-doing of her father. At first my wife was married when very young, but her husband went away and left her, she never lived with him. So when she grew up she said: 'I am tired of being alone, I am going to get married.' So she came to me. I paid five cows to Mwandosia (the chief) who is the mother's brother of her father. Her own father is dead. She has a father by inheritance, but Mwandosia had looked after her a great deal, so I sent the cattle to him, and he sent them on to the elder brother of her first husband. But her father's heir said: 'That finishes the cows to be paid to her husband, but I want one for myself to make six.' Well, at first I was involved in a lawsuit and did not bring the cow, so her father was angry; he came and took her back home; then after a time I found the cow and took it to him, and he sent her back to me, but he did not, as the custom is, cook food for my friends of the village. He should have cooked some chickens and brewed some beer, so that my friends would be happy and say 'Thank you'. So now my friends are angry, they say: 'Why does he not bring his daughter back properly? Perhaps he is not her father!' The breath comes from my friends, they

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

●783 are angry because of food. If I had not given him the cow it would have been his anger, now it is that of my friends. At the other doctor the doctors diagnosed *ilopa*, but Sambo denies this. It is just the offence to my neighbours. He says I am to send the woman to him, and he will put her right himself.

A month after E's death (April 25) Mwakisonde, the doctor, came to her elder brother's home to perform the ritual of protection. He and her second husband were next-door neighbours. The preparation and drinking of medicines was at her brother's homestead, but they moved to her husband's (where she was buried) to treat the grave. Beer had been prepared and the doctor added medicine to it. The mother of E., and one of her brother's wives, ground millet from their own crop, letting it fall on freshly-cut leaves of the sweet banana. This millet was used for the medicine. Meanwhile, one of the doctor's assistants opened the grave, digging down until he reached the cave in which the corpse had been placed. Then medicine to cause vomiting (*indeyi*), made with the lees of the beer, was poured in and eight pots of water. Mwakisonde explained that 'opening the grave is to rot the poison in the body' and the water is put in that it may reach the corpse—the amount depends on the depth of the grave. Then the grave was filled in again and three small lengths of root, anointed with red pigment, were stuck into the fresh earth. These, Mwakisonde said, were 'to close the way so that if the medicine comes again it will be turned back'. 'All these pieces of root are to close the way so that if that man comes again to work sorcery we shall escape, if Kyala keeps us.'

Then the doctor prepared a pot with about twenty roots, two varieties of spiny cactus, one impaled on the other, six packets of medicine, and water, and set it to boil on a fire made near the doorway of her brother's hut. The fire was lighted by friction by the male kinsmen, and the old fire was cleared out of the hut. A small bull was killed and its blood added to the brew. Porridge was made from this and the specially ground millet, and eaten by the participants. Then each of them, beginning with her elder brother, was scarified on the back, arms, legs, and feet and medicine from a horn rubbed in.

783 All through Mwakisonde spoke only of *protection*, but others,
784 speaking of the rite of filling the grave with water, explained it as a means of making the sorcery recoil on the sender, causing his death, and there is little doubt that this was one object of the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F7617 Ngonde F7617
Nyakyusa

ritual, though not openly admitted. The younger brother pro- 783
nounced at the inclusion of the cactus cross and it is likely that they 784
were an ingredient intended to injure the sender of sorcery.

(d) Prayer to the shades

Misfortune is also believed to come from the anger of senior 773
relations, living and dead. If a junior has angered his senior kins- 774
man the senior is said to 'mutter over the fire'. 'He is so angry 774
that he cannot speak intelligible words, he murmurs and mumbles to himself. . . .' 'I crouch over the fire in the evening and mutter to myself in a low voice: "I am astonished and hurt at my son. Did I not provide marriage-cattle for him? And he does this to me?" ' Then the shades hear him and the wrong-doer falls ill, or is senile, or his crops or fishing fail. 'No man has the power of making the shades hear like this save Father (*tate*)—he mutters alone and the shades hear him—all of us, pagans and Christians alike, believe in the power of Father to mutter, because whenever a man wrongs his father something always happens to him—he finds blessing nowhere.' The 'father' is a man's own father who begot him, or his heir, or, in a lesser degree, his father's elder full brother, or any kinsman who has given marriage-cattle on his behalf. 'If a man has given our cattle for marriage then he has authority over me (*je wpele gwange*)[1] for cattle are important (*indalo*).'

If a senior is at fault (for example, an heir who neglects his wards) the shades may, in theory, punish him also, but more often any misfortune that befalls him is attributed to the just wrath of his neighbours who watch over the interests of the dead man's children. The idea that misfortunes spring from the anger of the living is strong; indeed, one of our best informants, Angombwike, maintained that 'the shades never act alone', and Mwakwelebeja, an old man, said: 'It is really we who get angry, but the shades help a little because they are always with us; we always dream of them.'

The shades are 'the fathers' (*batate*), and prayers are addressed 776
primarily to the men of the lineage, but a father's sister is also 782
classed as a 'father'. Some informants denied that a mother could bring sickness on her children:

Women never murmur against their children, only the father, the 776 775

[1] Literally, 'he is my grass-seed'.

difficult labour is from this, not from adultery. And in a case of difficult labour her husband does pray to his shades.

All were agreed that a woman is in the power of the shades of her father's lineage and if her father is angry with her, or with his son-in-law her husband, his shades afflict her, causing her to be barren or to have miscarriages, or ailing children. Hence a woman who is barren or ill, or whose children are sickly, often returns to her father's homestead so that he may pray for her, and she sleeps there on the night of the ritual, for the shades come by night. More rarely, if she has quarrelled with her father, she goes outside her husband's homestead and, facing towards her father's home, she prays herself on the pathway. But in all the cases we traced in which a woman's miscarriages were believed to have made her, or her child, ill, there was a dispute between her father (or his heir) and her husband over marriage-cattle or the bull of puberty; and we were told that her father's shades 'are angry only if marriage-cattle have not been paid, and for no other reason', thus it seems that the control of her father's shades over a married woman is in fact somewhat limited.

The characteristic illness sent by the shades is sores round the mouth, and fever—an illness which is not severe and clears up quickly. These symptoms are immediately interpreted as *isinde*, affliction from the shades. Beer going sour before it is mature is also *isinde*, usually thought to be caused by quarrels between husband and wife. But almost any misfortune, mild or serious, is interpreted as *isinde* if members of the lineage are conscious of quarrels between themselves, or with their spouses or fathers-in-law.

The ritual consists in the reconciliation of the living in the presence of the dead and, if the misfortune is serious, a sacrifice of flesh, fish, or fowl. The junior begs pardon of his senior who acknowledges his anger and expresses forgiveness by taking a mouthful of water from his calabash cup (*ulupindi*) and blowing it out (*ukwiputa*) in his sacred banana grove. For the patient to recover, or the blight on crops or fish-traps to be removed, *the senior kinsman must confess his anger*, and spitting, or blowing out water, is a symbol of confession and forgiveness. Mwaisumo was explicit on the matter: 'If a father is angry with his son or daughter he may say, some day: "I forgive you now" and spit on the ground: all the anger that is in him comes out like spit.' *Ukwow* means both 'to

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

783 spit' and 'to forgive'. *Ukuputa* means 'to blow out water' and
ukuputa (the reflexive form) means 'to pray', with the implication
of confessing whatever anger or grudge a man may have in his
heart. Full confessions both by the wrongdoer and by seniors who
have been angry are held to be essential to the lifting of the
misfortune.

776 The man who prays represents the living members of the lineage
783 and he calls on his immediate seniors, who are dead, for support.
613 'You, Father, you my elder brother, you so-and-so (his grand-
father) stand by me, help me, do not be angry, here I am, your
child, your younger brother. I am above here, it was not I who
killed you but Kyala alone.'

He may also remonstrate with the shades, asking why they
should afflict the living. *Ukuikomoya* (lit. 'to cause oneself to blame',
from the root *ukukomola* 'to scold' or 'to blame') is used to mean 'to
sacrifice', and the conception of remonstrating with, or scolding,
troublesome shades is an element of Nyakyusa sacrifice.

783 If beer has been prepared, a libation is poured out either on the
782 hearth-bricks or in the banana grove nearest the door of the house,
which is used by the owner as his sacred grove (*ifyinja kyale
ikhomo*). If an animal is sacrificed the blood must soak into the
earth for, as already indicated, the 'earth is the shade's'. Further-
more, the rest of the beer or the fish and the *ifu* omaga meat from
the foreleg of the beast[1] is left overnight on the ground in the sacred
grove, more rarely under the officiant's bed, and eaten or drunk in
the morning by young boys of the lineage, grandsons[2] of the last
deceased, for they are 'the comrades of the shades'. Other people
may finish up the beer or meat, but wives of the lineage may not
touch it: they seclude themselves in their huts and remain silent
during the ritual, for 'they fear their fathers-in-law (*bikatile
abakomoomo*)'.

783 The proper person to approach the shades is (among com-
613 moners) the senior member of a lineage of three generations; but
if he lives at a considerable distance—perhaps twenty miles or
more away—then a junior may pray on his own account, only
asking help from his senior in cases of serious illness. 'If father and
son, or brothers, live far apart, as here in Selya and at Mwaya

[[71]]

[1] The cut is the same as the Xhosa *isinqomo* which is sacred in a *Pondo* sacrifice.
cf. M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 249. Nyakyusa informants denied that the gall
is of importance in their ritual as it is among the Nguni and Nuer.

[2] One case was recorded of a son of the last deceased, still a small child, drinking
the sacrificial beer.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F'317 Ngonde F'317
Nyakyusa

(forty miles away), then, if a child is a little ill, you pray yourself, 783
but if it is very ill you send a message to your elder.' The senior 773
knows the shades (*ajimuyo imisoki*) and prays alone.

The wives of a lineage avoid everything connected with offerings to the shades in the same way as they avoid a father-in-law, even though their husband's father is not yet dead and they do not avoid his living grandfather: 'If a cock has grown up at my homestead my wives do not eat it. It is taboo. It is the shades'. But my wives may eat a hen. When the cock crows it roams the house. If a wife eats it she will die soon and people will say: "She has eaten a cock."' A wife also avoids bananas from the sacred grove, and sacrificial meat and beer, and milk from a cow that has looked into a grove; she must stay silent and secluded in her hut when prayer is made in the grove, and is forbidden to sleep by the hearth at night.

Mwalumo's account of 'prayer when a child is ill' and descrip- 783
tions of four particular rituals will make the procedure clearer. 773

Mwalumo: Our regular custom here, when a child is ill with sores on the mouth from *imisoki*, is to pray to the shades (*ukuipaile kubamake*), especially to my father, or my elder brother if I have inherited from him. Before I pray I go to a diviner. We consult the oracle, and he tells 783
me: 'It is *imisoki*, your fathers are angry because you have not performed such and such a ritual, perhaps because you have not killed cattle at the funeral of your brother, or your mother's brother, perhaps you have not performed the later death ritual for them.' So when I come home I tell my relatives and wives all the diviner has told me. Then they complain (*ukwipipe*) saying: 'Why are they angry? Take water and complain in the evening.'

So at dusk, when the cattle come home, I take my calabash cup (*ulupindi*), and water, and a live coal from the fire, and put it in the calabash. I go out to the banana grove of my father where I always pray. I take a mouthful of water, I blow it out and say: 'You, Father, you so-and-so, you so-and-so, why are you angry, Father? Since you left me I have nourished the children. How have I wronged you? Even though I have wronged you, forgive me, Father, may the child recover. Stand by me.' When I have finished I enter the house, and next day I may find the child a little better.

Before I pray, if the diviner has told me that they are angry because I have stinted a certain brother of something, I go to tell him and beg his pardon for neglecting him, my brother. Sometimes, if it is a serious case concerning a cow that I have not given him, I seek for a cow with which to ask his forgiveness.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

787 The diviner does not divine by himself, but he who goes to inquire of him says: 'Perhaps it is so-and-so who is angry, perhaps it is so-and-so because I did not give him such and such a thing, perhaps it is so-and-so, I have heard a rumour that he is angry.' Then if he mentions someone whom the diviner has also heard say that he is angry because his brother has not given him something, the diviner assents, saying: 'Yes, it is that.'

783 MWAMBANGO (a middle-aged pagan): When I inherited from Mwalidiale, my elder brother, I was just about puberty, and my senior brother [i.e. half-brother], Mwakasonde, took me to his place with all the wives, to bring me up. He was there in Mwangomo's country. I went to his home and two years running I hoed millet and it refused to grow. Then my sister said: 'Consult an oracle and see why it is.' So I went to the diviner who said: 'Your elder brother is angry because you left his grave, because you do not sweep his grave.' So I asked what to do and he told me to get millet and brew beer. So I brewed beer and left a little in a calabash overnight in the banana grove, and prayed with water. Also I left a cock. I killed the cock because I had no bull, and I left all the meat there also overnight. Then the next day the children, Angumbwike and others [Angumbwike was a son of the deceased] drank the beer and ate the cock. They ate all the cock, and took the first drink of the beer, and I finished it off. The diviner had told me to let the children begin first. Then next year the millet was very plentiful. I never did it again because I have never had trouble over food. If the crops had not grown I would have done it again.

783 AMBUMBA (a Christian teacher): When I was a boy my mother's brother once went to fish and caught two fish in his trap. He gave them to two of his wives, the third being absent. When she came back she was angry, saying: 'They have sinned me of food'. For a long time after that he found no fish in his traps. At last he consulted an oracle. The oracle attributed it to the third wife, because she had been angry. People said that she had been angry, and that the shades of her husband were angry too, and had stopped the fish entering the traps. So my mother's brother went to the wife and said: 'The oracle attributed it to you, were you angry?' She admitted it, saying: 'I was angry, but now I am satisfied. It's all right.' So then my mother's brother took his calabash cup and went in the evening to the banana grove and prayed with water. Next morning, before noon, when men always go to examine the fish traps, he found his traps full and overflowing with fish: they were leaping about inside. Indeed, it was very remarkable. I was there, for I grew up at my mother's brother's home.

Yes, the shades hear wives, though wives never pray to them; they listen to their anger.

The first catch after such a prayer is offered to the shades.

783 MWAMBONI: The fish, when they have been cooked, remain overnight

2; Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1937 F3117 Ngombe F3117
Nyakyusa

in the banana grove. No one sees any. Then in the morning the children 783
go there and see. Are they not the ancestors of the shades? But for so grown people it is taboo. We see later on. That is the old custom. And formerly no one dried the fish which first entered the trap. They cooked and ate them in the house with the children. . . . If they put them to dry in the sun the shades were angry, saying: 'Where are the fish we gave you? We do not see them in the house.'

Lastly: Sometimes it is her father's anger which prevents a girl 782
from becoming pregnant. Perhaps she runs off with men repeatedly, 778
then her father is angry with her. He says: 'She is squandering my cattle.' He complains (*shalamaya*) with his wives at the hearth and calls to mind his fathers, the shades. Then the girl does not conceive.

If later on the father forgives her, he sends a messenger to her hus- 783
band, saying: 'Send me your wife, let her come and we will pray.' 782
Then, after calling his fathers and killing a bull, he takes meat from the top of the fireing (*ensipa*) and cuts it into pieces and puts a piece into the mouth of the girl, and she eats. They say that it is to drive the shades from the body of the girl, the shades who have caught hold of her fecundity. Some of the meat from the *ensipa* is thrown down, and the children pick it up and eat it. It is taboo for others to take and eat it.

Finally (a Christian elder): Perhaps your father has died and people 782
have come to marry your sister; and perhaps the sister of your father 778
(*ayabamama*) claims one cow, saying: 'I am your father, give me one.' 783
If you grudge it, then there is much murmuring which is heard by the shades, by your brother and your father who died. And so if your sister does not conceive people say: 'They grudged the father's sister, the shades are angry.' Then you seek a fowl and beer, and send them to your father's sister, and she puts the fowl under her bed that the shades may know it. She speaks, saying: 'Indeed I was angry.' The shades hear. That fowl opens the door; she knows that the cow is near, it is coming. She confesses everything (*shanaga gwa*) on receiving the fowl; this she speaks in her house. You go later with the cow to bring your sister to your father's sister. Then if the girl bears at her husband's everyone says: 'Indeed it was so.'

And if your sister has run off with a man and you are angry, the shades hear. You say: 'I do not know if she will conceive there.' Then she does not bear and people say: 'Let her take her husband to her brother.' If the husband is rich perhaps he seeks two cows and a bull calf, but the cows for bringing back are not sent first, a hen is sent first with a message, saying: 'I come on such and such a day.' The hen is put under the bed. The shades know about it. I, the brother, who was angry, pray, and she bears a child. But this does not happen among Christians; there is nothing of it.

768 One minor quarrel occurred at a funeral we attended. Kaitile
769 was given only a little meat and he complained, saying: 'Why do
● 767 you give me a leg, I the owner of the funeral?' He took umbrage and left the funeral with his wives. Then they went to his home to say: 'We are in the wrong, we made a mistake in dividing.' Then Kaitile was satisfied and prayed over a medicine (*ubwo*) which they cooked to eat. If he did not pray the medicine would go bad and would not cook. He said in his prayer: 'I have no case against them, let the medicine cook, the young men just played with the meat, it is not a serious case, may the medicine cook at once.'

(c) *Reconciliation*

620 A distinction is made by the Nyakyusa between misfortune due
763 to the anger of senior relatives and that due to the anger of neighbours,[1] and the rituals performed are theoretically distinct, though in practice they merge into one another.

570 A man fears the anger of his fellow villagers who murmur
763 against him when he has offended them, and whose cold breath is believed to fall upon him and chill him with fever or cause a paralysis. Married men or women fear only the anger of their own neighbours, but a young man and his wife also fear their parents' neighbours. The ritual performed to lift the curse of neighbours consists in acknowledging guilt and making an offering of beer or meat for them to feast upon; then, while they eat or drink, they *admit their anger* and express goodwill.

The doctor comes beforehand and gives the sick man medicine to drink. A cow is killed. People are there and say: 'May this medicine help our child.' To drink without people there is like continuing the quarrel. People are there and they speak (*ubwiyapi*), saying: 'Someone was angry, but no one is angry now. May this medicine help you.' They drink beer and eat meat saying: 'We are not angry now.' Those who were angry are present and they are satisfied. *Ubwiyapi* is to speak many things, and it is like praying (*ubwipate*) but without actually taking water and spitting.

570 Sometimes responsibility is fixed squarely on *either* shades *or*
775 neighbours, but since neighbours are said to 'help a father to
763 mourn' against an erring son, and since they may share in beef or beer offered to the shades, the rituals merge into one another, and some offerings seem to be intended to pacify *both* the shades and the neighbours, though in Nyakyusa theory the sources of

[1] Discussed in relation to the age-village in *Good Company*, pp. 98–108.

2: Wilson E-9 (1934-1938)1937 F'317 Ngonde F'317
Nyakyusa

misfortune and the clouds are distinct. In theory, when the shades are angry the essential offering is that made in the sacred banana grove or on the hearth; it is eaten by the grandsons of the most recently dead, and whether neighbours partake or not depends upon the generosity of the diviner; whereas when neighbours are angry there is no offering in the grove or at the hearth, the neighbours are feasted, admit anger and express forgiveness.

However, neighbours are slow to admit responsibility (for to name someone comes close to witchcraft) and in some cases there is both a formal feast for the neighbours and a prayer to the shades, and it is left uncertain where final responsibility rests. The following cases illustrate this:

Misfortune: It is the custom among us Nyakyusa to marry many wives, mature ones and youngsters, so if a man has one at his home sometimes happens that one of them makes love to one of his father's wives. Perhaps they commit adultery in secret, perhaps he runs off with her to a distant chiefdom. Then the father breaks off relations with him.

The son, wherever he is, hears that he has been cursed by his father and his body becomes like giant flesh. If the son is wise he gathers his property and returns to his father. He takes a friend with him and goes into the house of one of his father's neighbours. His friend and his father's neighbour speak together. 'I have come to return unto my father because I have done wrong.' He tells the neighbour what they have brought to offer the father—usually a cow and a bull. Then that neighbour sends three messenger or perhaps four or five, and they go to pacify their mere fellow, saying: 'Our child has returned. He knows that he has done wrong towards you, but we have received him because he has confessed humbly and begged forgiveness.' His father refuses furiously and almost spears himself in his passion. His fellows pacify him for the whole day, or perhaps two or three days, then at last he agrees. Then the young man and his fellows bring the cow and the bull. The father also calls together many of his fellows and he seeks beer and cooks food. They gather together at the father's homestead and the father says: 'My son has come and admitted that he has done wrong, asking that I forgive him and saying: 'I did not know what I was doing, these are the cattle which I have brought', and the others agree. Then they kill the bull. They roast some meat. The father catches one side of it, the son the other and the village headman cuts it in the middle, and the father and son each eat their piece. This is the blessing (*ulungi*), meaning that there is kinship between them now. They eat together. Then all the people eat. Also with the beer it is like this. The village headman picks a straw and puts it in the beer, hands it to the father who drinks, and then to the son. Then other people drink, and they

Z: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

752 and the son into his father's house. He walks through the whole house
753 and the mothers acclaim him. This is the sign to show everybody that
●783 he has entered his father's house. The women call the *ukulala*. They are rejoicing because he has entered.

There are, however, some who do not return to their fathers. They remain strangers [*abanda* as opposed to *abakonu*] until their death. There is a young man at my home who took his father's wife. Where he fled to no one knows because he is still in hiding. His father separated from him altogether.

A son must always bring something and the father must collect his friends. If they just agree with one another and people do not eat anything, then the son will not be settled in well. He will be ill. They say that the illness comes from the shades. If the father is angry he murmurs (*kwihunya*) and they hear. At first the people are not angry, but later on, when they have heard from the father about the matter, they also are angry. It is as if they help the father to murmur. Their shades are not there, only those of the father's lineage, but his shades have regard to the people. If the people do not eat anything and are not present, they are not satisfied even though the father is satisfied. The father prays to his shades alone in the evening with water in his mouth, and they pour out beer on the hearth-bricks.

[753]

756 KAMTULE: If a rich commoner has died and the heir buries him with
666 only one cow, the shades and people are angry with the heir, breath
783 falls on his body; perhaps he falls ill, or perhaps his child falls ill. But they do not meet; people, the witches, are angry and the shades are angry; the shades because they have buried him with only one cow, people because they have not eaten meat, but the shades and people are independent of each other. The oracle says: 'The shades are angry,' it does not speak of people. It knows that people also are angry, but it speaks only of the shades. And when he makes amends he prays in the evening; the next day he calls people and kills a cow and he throws the *ipo ensepa* meat in the banana grove and says: 'Here it is, Father,' and people say: 'Indeed, he did wrong, his father was angry.' But they do not confess, saying: 'We were angry.' No, they say: 'The shades were angry.'

754 Another type of case is that in which 'the breath of men' is
783 believed to have fallen on an infant because of its mother's disrespectful behaviour towards her husband's parents or husband's father's sister. When a child is thin and ailing with *ingoto*, the cure is for the mother to confess to the doctor who comes to treat the child all the rude things she has said, and provide beer (exceptionally a bull) to offer to her injured parents-in-law. They drink the beer with their neighbours and wish her well. Ambilikile's wife

2: Wilson E-9 (1936-1938)1957 F3117 Ngonde F3117
Nyakyusa

cited a case she had seen in which the doctor smeared the child with medicine and beer, and the mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law of the erring woman drank the beer and said: 'All right.' T. (a Christian woman) quoted another case:

> One of my mother's co-wives swore at her mother-in-law. . . . When she bore a child it was very thin and ill, so they sought a doctor, and beat the mother and she confessed all she had said in cursing at my grandmother, her mother-in-law. She and the child were treated by the doctor and when her father saw that the child did not recover quickly he brought a cow in payment . . . it is still at my home. From that time the child recovered. If anyone says there is no such thing as the illness of *ngulu* they lie because I have seen it with my own eyes.[1]

When a junior comes to beg pardon of a senior it is the business of the latter's neighbours to persuade him to receive the prodigal. That was indicated in Mwaikambo's account quoted above and reaffirmed by Mwakwelebeja who cited the case of his wife's father, a youngest brother, who had run off with three of his eldest brother's widows allocated to the middle brother, after they had been smeared with ash and the heir had slept with them.

When they had performed the death ritual and finished it and the widows had slept with the heir in the house and had taken the *ilibalaga* to their fathers, . . . then three of the widows ran off with the youngest brother. He fled with them to Masoko and to the hills, where he lived a long time and begot children with them. Then later on he brought 'the cow of the ashes (*isumbe ja nyisumbele*)' to return to his senior brother. The senior received it and killed it and poured out beer. We ate.

QUESTION: Do people not refuse to receive such a cow, sometimes?

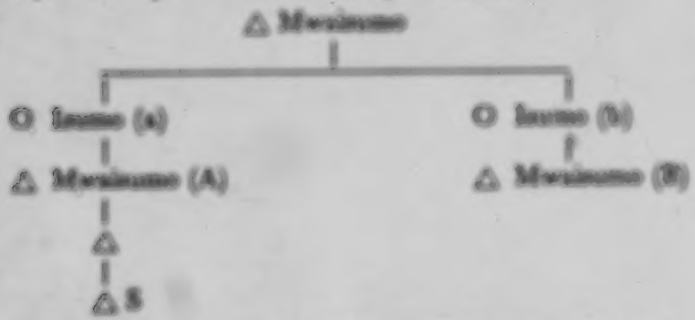
MWAKWELEBEJA: No, they fear to do so, they fear people, because the wrongdoer has come to them and it is they, the neighbours, who tell the senior kinsman: 'He has come, forgive him.' If the senior refuses they will be angry with him. Also we tell him: 'See, that man has strength to beget children with these women, you will eat the cattle.' Then he agrees and says: 'Let us make friends.'

The illness that falls on a widow who rejects the heir after being smeared with the ash is 'like a curse from the ash'. Her lover, 'if he is strong and has medicines he will escape, but if he is not strong he will fall ill . . . because he takes men's lips with him [i.e. suffers from their breath].'

[1] A third case, in which the beer was brought to the woman's husband, is quoted in *Good Company*, p. 236.

sister immediately older than herself, the sister's daughter, and the sister immediately younger than herself, took part. 745 602

At the ritual of spearing, the principals are the children and grandchildren of the slayer and the slain, their brothers, their mother's kin (*abipwe*) and their wives. We were not able to watch any case of treatment against *ulubanga* and are not certain exactly how far the infection is thought to spread. Our informants were agreed that the number of kinsmen concerned is less than in a twin ritual, but we traced one case in which a minor chief, Mwainumo (B.), forbade the father of a man who had killed S., the great grandson of Mwainumo's mother's sister, to enter his country lest he spread disease among his relatives. 783 602 681



At a ritual to 'rot the ropes' those concerned are the descendants of the one who has been bound and their wives, siblings and siblings' children. At the one ritual we saw there were present 27 members of the dead man's own lineage (3 sons, 2 younger half-brothers, 1 full sister, 4 half-sisters, 3 sons, 5 daughters, 2 grandsons, 7 granddaughters), one wife, the wives of 4 sons, one father's sister's son, one son and 6 daughters of his sisters or half-sisters. 783 602

The ritual for protection against sorcery which we attended was performed at the home of the senior brother (heir to his father) of the dead woman. There were present her two brothers, their wives and children; her father's brother's daughter; two wives and one daughter of her sister's son; her mother, two of her mother's brothers with their wives and children; two of her mother's sisters and the daughters of one of them. Her husband (who lived next door) could not take the medicine at his in-law's house, but some was sent for him to use at his home with his wives and kinsfolk. 784 602 754

In the simple ritual of prayer to the shades the senior kinsman who offers the prayer and blows out water acts alone but, if there 782 602

2: Wilson E-S (1936-1938)1937 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

782 has been a quarrel in the family, those members of the lineage
602 who have been at variance must attend and share the meat or beer, and bless one another. Grandchildren, 'comrades of the shades', must eat the offering left overnight in the banana grove.

593 If a son has quarrelled with his father and comes to beg pardon
621 the father calls his neighbours who must be present and partake of a
783 feast and bless the young man. 'If father and son just agree with one another and people do not eat anything, then the son will not be settled in well.'

585 At a puberty-marriage ritual the principals are the nubile girl
621 and her father or brother, her husband, and sometimes her mother
602 or mother-in-law. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest son's wife, or with her eldest daughter, if she is initiated at home. At an ordinary birth the principals are the mother and infant.

769 Besides these principals who undergo the full ritual there are
602 many minor actors. At a funeral there are the grave-diggers who,
621 traditionally among the Nyakyusa, were mature men, relatives or village neighbours.[1] They wash after the burial and are rewarded with a special leg of the funeral beef. As we have seen, the affines (*abale*), that is the fathers-in-law and sons-in-law of the deceased or of 'the owner of the funeral', come with cattle to kill or cloth. When a woman dies, her husband and her father, or her brother, kill cattle, and their affines bring cloths or, occasionally, cattle. Kinsmen—members of the lineage and their wives—and neighbours bring gifts of food to cook for the crowd of mourners, and small gifts of millet which are presented to the shade and used for making the ritual beer. After an abnormal birth, village neighbours have their legs splashed with scalding medicine but do not
595 drink medicines or shave. The cattle of the village are also
621 splashed. At the puberty ritual the bride's maids keep her company during her seclusion. The co-wives and neighbours of her
881 mother and mother-in-law assist in instructing her, and the neighbours of her father join with him first in avoiding her and then in giving her gifts. Her father-in-law is identified with his brothers and his father's brothers' sons, whom she avoids, as well as his sisters, and her mother-in-law's brothers, and sisters' husbands. They, in turn, avoid her sisters, as well as herself.

621 By the 'congregation' we mean those who attend rituals to ex-
789 press sympathy, and whose presence is felt to be necessary to the

[1] In Ngonde they are *abatani*, cross-cousins.

manner of the ritual, but who do not play any specially defined 621
part. As we have seen, all who are reckoned kinsmen and all fellow 788
villagers must attend a funeral, and a large crowd whatever the status of the kinsmen of the deceased. At a puberty and marriage ritual the 'congregation' is much smaller but is nevertheless important, as is shown by the complaint of the girl marrying a Christian that if she were not initiated she would not be famed. At other rituals all who attend are actors.

The officiants (abangaga) for death, puberty and marriage, and 791
birth rituals are almost always elderly women who, by their own choice, have learnt the medicines and observances from some older ngaga by acting as her assistant. We came across only one man who acted as ngaga in death and puberty rituals, though at the rituals of spearing, binding with ropes, and protection against sorcery men are more common than women. Often all the elderly women are referred to as 'abangaga' for 'they help the ngaga', but the one who has been called upon to provide the medicines and organize the proceedings, and who is paid for her trouble, is clearly recognized. Sometimes she is a kinswoman of the 'owner' of the ritual—if a member of the lineage knows the medicines she will carry out the rituals for all her kin, as did Syungu, wife of Chief Fwenkonto's half-brother—but she is not necessarily a relative. It is knowledge, not kinship connections, that qualify her. She is the final arbiterator on procedure, and is insistent on exact observance of the details. Because knowledge of medicines is so important Nyakyusa often refer to the officiant at a ritual as ngaga, a doctor, but ngaga is the more precise word since ngaga has other applications.

On the occasion of prayer in sickness, and in the ritual of recon- 791
ciliation, no specialist ngaga is necessary. The senior kinsman of a 782
lineage prays to his shades direct, and a father and his neighbours 783
receive and bless an erring son without the mediation of any priest; but the doctor called in to treat a sick man may press the kinsmen to confess their anger and bless one another (as Mwakisonde did in the case quoted) and come very close to organizing a ritual of reconciliation.

At a marriage ritual there is a 'go-between' (ungaga) represent- 585
ing the bride's father and one representing the groom, and, besides their legal function as witnesses to the passage of cattle, they help [675]
the officiant to organize the ritual, and are specifically responsible for conveying invitations to the feasts. The wife of the groom's 'go-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

796 lustration both with corpse and shade. In other rituals the identification is with the shade alone, but still the participant is felt to be filthy and close to madness. The symbols of purification are many: cleaning and burning the hut, burning the clothes or known were during the exclusion, elaborate and repeated washing and shaving, and anointing the body with rouge and oil. One aspect of purification is the driving away of the 'filthy' shade symbolized first by throwing away pebbles or a stem of bananas into a running stream; and, secondly, by casting seeds into a pot which is put on the fire, grinding millet in the doorway and letting it fall on bark-cloth, putting various parts of the body on the fire symbolically and grinding them symbolically, passing a winnowing basket of millet between the legs, scattering millet, and dancing the trampling dance. The second group of symbols all represent sexual intercourse. Seed or grain is identified with semen, fire with intercourse, bark-cloth and the round winnowing basket—a woman's basket *par excellence*—represents the woman, and putting seeds on the fire, grinding, passing the basket of millet between the legs, and probably also the trampling dance[1] represent the sex act. The shade is thought to be ejected from the body as semen, and therefore intercourse is a means of driving the shade from the body.

796 An element of the death ritual is the separation of corpse and
775 spirit, the final disposal of the corpse, and the bringing of the new shade back 'to warm himself with the other shades' at the family hearth: he is received as the water which drips from the doorway of the hut, and welcomed to the hearth with music; but the distinction between the corpse which is got rid of and the shade which is welcomed is not maintained systematically. Repeatedly our informants spoke of the shade (*ungulu*) being driven away from dreams and waking thought, and from men's bodies, as well as being separated from the corpse. The aim of Nyakyusa ritual is not that union with God constantly sought in Christian ritual, but a separation both from the shades and the heroes; for close association with the pagan gods spells madness and death, not fullness of life. A measure of separation from the shades is a condition of fertility as well as of sanity. Intercourse cannot be fruitful until the shades of her father's lineage have 'moved aside a little' from the nubile girl, the shade of a deceased husband from his widow.

[1] The action of the trampling dance and the contexts in which it occurs at death and puberty suggest this, but such an interpretation was not explicitly given.

2: Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1957 F3117 Ngonde F3117
Nyakyusa

Ngonde to *Nkonjeni*, the sacred place of the fathers in the homestead, 778
grows, there they pray.'

The unity of a lineage is symbolized by the *ilipili* medicine, 774
interpreted as 'our blood' or 'semen'. With it mourners, menstru- 602
ating girls, bride and groom, the new-born babies and their 781
mothers are treated. To provide it or use it is to acknowledge agnatic kinship: husband and wife wash with it together in acknowledgement that the wife is now 'one blood' with her husband; the grandmother gives it to her son's child in acknowledgement of its legitimacy; in the death rituals the mourners eat food with it acknowledging their kinship with the shade. To belong to a lineage is to be protected practically and spiritually, and the *ilipili* medicine is held to protect those who are 'empty' and weak—the 'hollow men'—from those who are 'heavy' with real semen or medicines.

The shade, *umpaka*,[1] 'he who is risen from the dead', may be 776
interpreted as the principle of life, but at the same time he is 'the 778
one beneath', *ugwe pasi*, filthy, and fearful. What men worship is life; what they fear is death, corruption; and for the pagan Nyakyusa, as for the Christian,[2] the two are inextricably mingled. *Imiinde* (sing. *iinde*) means dirt, dust, rubbish, the liver of the sacrificial bull, and also the shade. When 'miinde' is cited as the cause of some disease it is the shades (as things rather than persons) which are meant: 'dust to dust' is an image of pagan as of Christian theology. We have spoken of the Nyakyusa disgust for filth (*ubusyuli*), which is associated with a corpse, menstruation, childbirth, intercourse, faeces, and all these are identified in some fashion with the shade. Faeces 'go below to the land of the shades'. The hair of a corpse is the shade's, the hair of a girl at puberty is 'the filth of her menstrual blood'. In all the rituals the filth is (713)
buried, shaved off, burnt, washed away, and at the death ritual 'he who is risen' is brought 'to warm himself' at the family hearth, but yet he dwells in the earth and is 'dirty'.

The conception of impurity, uncleanness, associated with phy- 713
siological functions of coition, excretion, menstruation, childbirth and death is, as we have already suggested, a very widespread one.

[1] *Umpaka*: to rise from the dead. For the sense the personal class is more commonly used, but some of the old men always spoke of *imipaka* rather than *umpaka*. A young man, commenting on this, explained: 'The shades are not people like us, but *iminde*', i.e. they are things—dust—not persons.

[2] 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' John xii, 24.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 The Nyakyusa perhaps emphasize it[2] more than their neighbours
[17] (though not more than the Jews or the Hindus), and their preoccupation with purification in the rituals is paralleled by the emphasis laid on cleanliness (*ubwifyusi*) in person, in house and courtyard, in cooking, and in disposal of excrement. Their extreme cleanliness, in contrast with their neighbours, was remarked upon by all the early travellers in the area and is still obvious.[1] Houses and courtyards are swept and garnished; pots and dishes scoured, food scrupulously covered with fresh banana leaves when it is served at feasts; a good housewife is *umwifyusi*, she who is clean. Men wash daily in running water and children are trained to take a hoe with them when they go to defaecate, and to bury the faeces.

783 The horror of 'filth' is very closely associated with the fear of
158 madness, which is at the same time a fear of too close association
828 with the dead. It is when the dead have not been driven away, but return in dreams; when the necessary separation of living and dead has not been achieved, that men go mad. Madness is most often spoken of as the penalty for neglect of the death ritual, but it is not, in theory, confined to that: 'All the rituals are the same, if they are neglected, men will become mad.' Besides madness, men fear sterility, debility, swollen limbs ('an unhealthy fatness') and diarrhœa 'to get rid of the filth in the belly' if the rituals are neglected, or taboos broken.

796 That a common symbolic pattern expressing common sentiments recurs in all the rituals is clear, but it is also true that each ritual is characterized by peculiar sentiments and symbols. The funeral rites are first and foremost an expression of grief—kinsmen and neighbours gather to weep for the dead. Their grief is symbolized by the stylized wailing, the passionate dancing, the smearing with mud and ash, wearing mourning belts, and the song of farewell at the hearth. It is true that, in the later stages of the funeral, friends seek to comfort the chief mourners with cheerful songs and dances, and in one aspect the funeral ritual is an assertion of life, but grief not joy is its dominant note. By contrast, the ritual of puberty and marriage is a rejoicing—rejoicing 'because our child has grown up', because she is virgin, because there is feasting, because there is a marriage.

881 Elements peculiar to the puberty ritual are the celebration of virginity by killing a bull, and the prayer for blessing when its

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 77–8.

[2] [i.e., the conception of impurity associated with physiological functions.— Analyst]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

121 554 linked to the physiological cycle of individuals and their close kin, and cannot be detached from it as in Christianity.

121 626 Law is a condition of social survival; no society can exist without it; and in so far as religion helps to maintain law and order it fulfills a necessary social function. Among the Nyakyusa (and perhaps in all societies) order is maintained partly by fear of supernatural sanctions. The rituals we have described both enhance fear and relieve it. They harness fear to social ends.

121 771 The preceding chapters are full of the pagan fear of death, menstruation, childbirth, and shedding blood. The rituals express the fear and teach men what they must do to be saved. They teach them to co-operate with their kinsmen and to follow traditional custom, for in that alone does salvation lie. The fear of madness or sterility compels each generation to follow traditional custom as ordained for them by the heroes: thus is the dependence of man upon his society instilled. The death ritual illustrates this most dramatically. In every society men must overcome death emotionally, they must turn to life. In the death ritual the mourners are distraught, terrified; they express their grief and put it behind them; their relatives and neighbours gather round them, share their sorrow, and help them to overcome it. The dead is replaced. Death is associated with fecundity and so made tolerable. It is no accident that the Nyakyusa interpret all the rituals, and especially the death ritual, as a protection against going mad, against the disintegration of the personality. And safety is assured to the living by following minutely the traditions of their lineage.

[184] That the nature of men's fears is culturally determined is clear from the Nyakyusa evidence, for Christians and pagans alike are agreed that 'the Christians fear much less' than do pagans, and the Christians do in fact ignore taboos which the pagans feel to be binding. But the rituals do not create fear out of nothing. All the situations in which they are performed—birth and death, marriage, and misfortune—are situations of emotional tension in all societies. The rituals heighten the emotions and canalize them. They both teach men to feel, and teach them what it is proper to feel.

771 783 Many writers have shown us that the conception of sacred includes both the idea of holiness and of pollution;[1] that the awful, the fearful, may be conceived both as pure and as filthy. In

[1] See particularly W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (1889), pp. 153, 446–54 (1914 ed.); R. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (1923).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Nyakyusa thought the emphasis is almost exclusively on the filthy. Awe is expressed in terms of pollution. As we have seen, there is a clear conception of resurrection, of separation between rotting corpse and shade, but still the shades are 'filthy', and the mourner, or the bride, or the mother and newborn child, who is identified with them, is filthy too. There is a conception of purity, innocence, whiteness (*mwelu*), which is applied to those free from witchcraft or other crime, and to virgins, but it is not cited as an attribute of the shades or of the heroes; indeed, it is those who have been *separated* from the shades or Kyala who are pure.

Nyakyusa religion is characterized by two things: the general linking of misfortune with sin—the conception that if someone falls ill physically or mentally it is usually because he or his kinsman has done wrong—and the preoccupation with pollution. These are connected. The chief sins are neglect of ritual and quarrelling between kinsmen. Now neglect of ritual is, in essence, failure to purify oneself—failure to separate from the filthy shade—therefore sin and pollution are linked, though not identified. The connection between pollution and quarrelling between kinsmen is less direct but it exists, for rituals, the means of purification, are also the occasion for composing quarrels, and cleansing oneself of anger by confession—spitting it out—is a condition of their efficacy.

That the Nyakyusa are dogged by the sense of guilt is clear, but whether it is more overwhelming in their society than in others, or merely more openly expressed, is arguable. Why some people look down to earth, to the rotting corpse and bodily excretions which are buried in the earth, and express their awe in terms of pollution, corruption, and others look to the sky and express it in terms of light and purity; why some people seek union with God and others separation from Him, we do not know. The answer to these, as to many questions regarding Nyakyusa religion, lies beyond the field of this investigation.

Z: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO SHADES

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Ref.	*Category of sufferer*	*Misfortune*	*Category of shade*	*Alleged sin*	*Investigation*	*Ritual performed*
1.	Man. Katasya	(a) Crops did not grow (b) Katasya died	'Abapasi'	Quarrelling with kinsmen	Autopsy disproved this. Found to be sorcery	Killed a bull for family
2.	Children of village headman	Death of several children	Father of village headman	Village headman moved to father's homestead though told by father's neighbours he should remain in young man's village where he was headman	Autopsy	Prayer
3.	Cattle	Cattle died at father-in-law's (and would have to be replaced)	Shades were angry. His brother complained very much when he took all the cattle	Younger brother took all cattle he had from elder full brother to whom they had been handed on his return from work, and gave them for his marriage	—	—
4.	Two girls	Girls died	—	A wrong (*inongwa*) not specified	Autopsy Divination	—
5.	Younger brother	Died	Elder brother	Elder brother not buried where he asked to be	Divination	Buried where elder brother had asked

Ref.	*Category of sufferer*	*Misfortune*	*Category of shade*	*Alleged sin*	*Investigation*	*Ritual performed*
6.	Son	Millet crop cultivated by son failed	Father	Had moved from father's homestead. Left grave unswept	Divination	Prayer
7.	Husband	No fish in traps	—	Stinted one wife of fish	Divination	Prayed in banana grove. Wife confessed her anger
8.	Kasitile	Kasitile fell ill	Mother	Neglected to leave flour or beer in his hut for shades	Divination	—
9.	Married woman (wife of Mwakobela)	Woman delirious		Her newly-married daughter returned from husband without bringing a hen or anything, and drank from mother's calabash cup	Divination	—
10.	Child	Death of child	Father's sister?	Father neglected death ritual of his sister	Autopsy. 'The ritual entered the stomach of the child'	Neglected death ritual performed

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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

MPOMA: 'I am ashamed, and also I am very angry, because people say it is I who am working sorcery against them, although when they were ill I carried them to my house.'[1] 754 578

Mpoma turned back on the road when they sent medicine for the sick man (i.e. he did not go to the sick man).

A WOMAN: 'Why do they work sorcery against one another when they are both left?'

ANOTHER WOMAN: 'The wives of Mbikule say Mpoma says: "Let me be alone, let me kill all of them and get everything for myself by cunning."'

MWAMBUJULE: 'Since I carried him to my place I said the illness would not be serious. He also sent a message to *your* place, Mpoma, saying that he was ill, and asking for some milk, but you did not send any.'

MPOMA: 'No one told me.'

THE WOMAN: 'The widows fight with Mpoma. They say: "You have eaten a medicine to work sorcery against your fellows."'

KANYAMALE: 'Also they speak of his wrongdoing, in not approaching the sick man.'

ANOTHER WOMAN: 'Yes, and also you are angry.'

MPOMA: 'See, when they said the present patient was still ill, I prayed, I said aloud: "What am I doing? Get away, what am I doing?" and I sent a medicine and he recovered.'

A WOMAN: 'We consulted an oracle, it said: "It is Mwakyona who is angry," but I said: "What is he angry about?" The oracle said: "He is angry on account of cattle." He says: "Why does he fear me when he has taken cattle?" So we said: "Mwakyona is angry because he has taken cattle."' 787

THE MBUNGUS (Mwakyona's sisters): 'We like him (the shade), let him come.' 753

WOMAN: 'They are jealous of the sick man [i.e. a third cause suggested. The unreasonable jealousy of his neighbours]. He dies like his father. People say: "He eats meat in our houses, he borrows our cloths," and he dies of their unreasonable jealousy (*akabini*)!'

The women and the men said: 'Thank you, Mwakionde, because you have made us think of these things [he had taken the initiative in prayer]. You make us make friends, and make us love one another, and bless one another.'

Mwakionde spoke, saying: 'There are many, many roads on which people travel and there is one road through which illness enters.' They say that if many people are with a sick man then the illness spreads. 782

They also prayed, confessing their anger in the case of Kanyamale, [783]

[1] 'It is the custom to carry people to the "father", the head of the family, when very sick. This is not supposed to cure them, but it is customary (*loluiho*). That is where we all are ill, at their father's place.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 the wife of Mpoma, but about this I do not know much. When they
[783] stopped speaking Kanyamale was ill. Then her husband charged her
with witchcraft and she said: 'What is the case about? I have been ill
754 since we came from confessing anger.' Then Kanyamale grew sulky
and gathered up her mats and went with them to her child's place.
Mpoma said: 'I must follow her,' but his fellows soothed him and he
turned back. Then he borrowed a spear from his fellows and went to
drive off the game which were eating his crops. When he found no
animals he went home. On his return, when he was still outside, he
heard the wives whispering about some case. He asked them to open
the door for him, but they were silent and did not open the door of the
hut. Then he pushed it open. When he entered the hut he closed it and
he cross-examined the wives, asking what they were talking about. One
said: 'I was just asleep.' He said: 'With whom were you speaking?
You are hiding a man in this house.' One woman got up immediately
and opened the door. Mpoma cross-examined them hotly. He said:
'Why did you open the door if indeed there is no man in the hut?'
Mpoma got in a passion and went elsewhere. He returned again and
said: 'Marry the child. I will not destroy him,' and he went away alone.
[627] He took the case to Mwakisisya, the village headman, and lost it. Then
the court said: 'You get the children. Let them come here, though their
mother is not here.'

757 Later on it was like this: Mwakionde went to attend to the medicine
754 to give to the sick man to drink; they began by putting powdered medi-
cines in a pot, then they put in some water, then they put in three sorts
of powdered medicine, one black and two red. Mwakionde, because
he was the doctor, began; he put in the water first. Mpoma, the senior
followed him, then all the others. When the water boiled, they stirred
up porridge with a spoon, then they gave the sick man some to drink
and the relatives drank. If there were one who was working sorcery
against his fellows, he would die when he drank that medicine. But the
sick man, before he drank this medicine, drank something else. When
the water boiled, they mixed a medicine and scarified themselves all
over their bodies.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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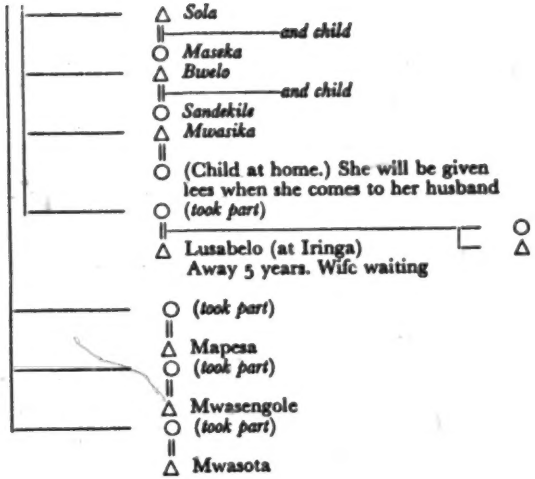

Key: △ ○ = alive. ▲ ● = dead.

Name in capitals = Widow inherited. Names in italics = participated in ritual. † = Christian.

Participants:

Men of lineage	11	Father + his full brother + 4/6 his half-brothers + widow's 2 full brothers + 2/3 half-brothers; son of half-brother.
Daughters of lineage	18	6/8 half-sisters (1 Christian, 1 away), 8/10 father's half-sisters (1 Christian, 1 away did not), 4 unmarried daughters of half-brother.
Wives	32	Mother, 2 co-wives of mother, 2 wives of father's brother, 15 wives of father's half-brothers (including chief) (1 sick, drank at home), 3 Christian did not come, 4 wives of own full brothers, 3 wives of half-brothers, 1 widow of grandfather, 4 wives of father's half-brother's sons.
Children		of brothers, of father's brothers, and half-brothers.

N.B. Sons-in-law do not participate.

[Facing p. 274 (A)]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(7) ○ Nsole (inherited by Mwasalemba)

○ Malija† (Did not come, no medicine sent)
△ Ulinyelusi†

○
△ Filipo† (Gone to Dar-es-Salaam)

△ *Johani*
(1) ○ *Ngola*
children
(2) ○ *Sambwele*

○ (*took part*)
Kilongo
△ Undekile

○ (*took part:* came without children)
△ Mpekele

○ (*took part*)
△ Mwasota

▲
●
△ *Sola*
and child
○ *Masekn*
△ *Buwlo*
and child
○ *Sandekile*
△ *Mwasika*
○ (Child at home.) She will be given lees when she comes to her husband
○ (*took part*)
△ Lusabelo (at Iringa)
Away 5 years. Wife waiting
○
△

[Facing p. 274 (B)]

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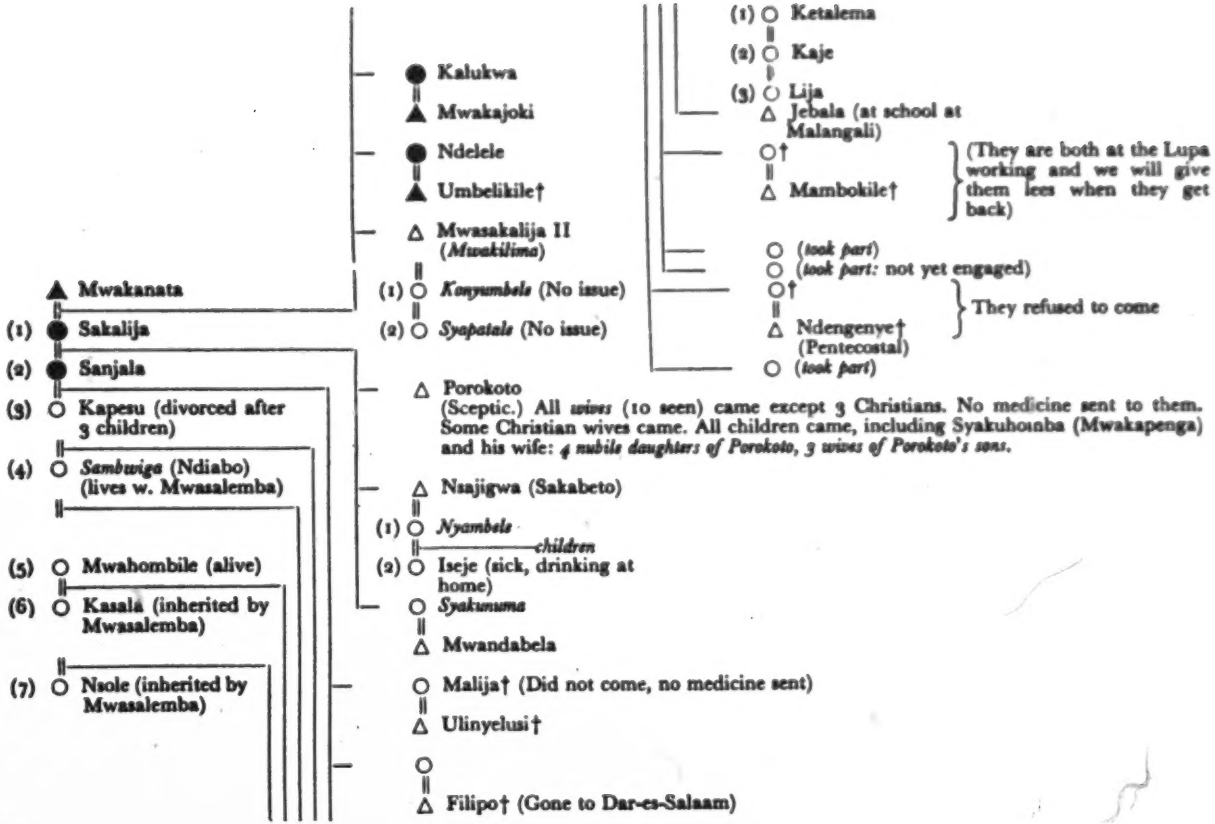
2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa



[facing p. 274 (c)]

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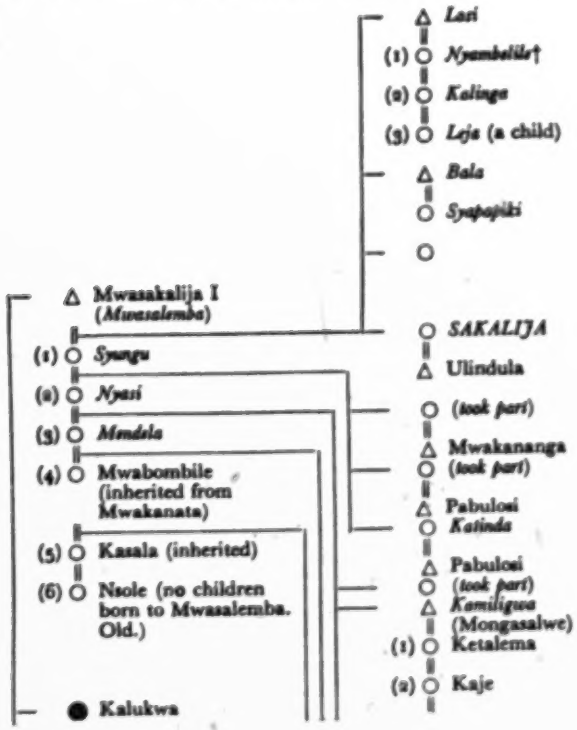
TABLE (c) (*See pp.* 43, 192).

GENEALOGY OF MWASALEMBA (RITUAL OF THE GASPING COUGH)



[Facing p. 274(D)]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

601
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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

air, as much privacy as possible being secured in the universal banana groves: and always in a sitting, not a lying position. 844

A difficult birth is a serious misfortune for the mother. Births are normally easy, and difficult labour indicates the wrath of the spirits for evil done. Medicine is in all cases given to facilitate delivery, and if this fails other means must be tried. A message is sent to the husband and the father of the woman, and prayer, without ceremony, for the matter is urgent, is offered by both men: 845 782

> "Ye fathers and ancestors, and ye who are of the far past, let this child be born safely. If I have sinned, be merciful; and if ye will not be merciful, kill me, but let the woman and the child live."

While thus praying he has been chewing the pith of a banana leaf, and at the end he takes water into his mouth, which he squirts out, saying, "Let my sin be carried away," and throws on the roof the chewed pith; for if he is not by birth the representative of the family he has no natural right to pray, but the ceremony of chewing and throwing on the roof averts evil consequences.

If all this fails it is clear that the woman has sinned; and her only hope of life for herself and her child lies in confession. The midwife takes a number of small sticks which she throws on the ground one by one, inviting the suffering woman to name the men with whom she has consorted. Natives assert emphatically that birth becomes easier after confession; 845 783

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

845 and the statement cannot be altogether devoid of
783 truth. The influence of the mind upon the body is universally admitted: may it not be that the consciousness of guilt has the effect of contracting the muscles, and the relaxation which follows confession renders birth less painful? And may it not be that even a false confession, wrung from a despairing sufferer, brings a momentary relief sufficient to bring the child to the birth? One is glad to add, however, that many women have the courage to refuse altogether to submit to this shameful ordeal, insisting that their trouble is due, not to the wrath of the spirits, but to other causes, and that they will die rather than confess what is not true.

When birth has taken place, the cord is cut with a
844 bamboo knife, and the placenta buried in the family
846 place of prayer, a small part protruding to leave a connection which insures further children. All this time no one in the house may swallow saliva. The father calls out to know the sex of the child, but he must not yet enter (for the party have entered the house as soon as possible after the birth). After a few days the mother is anointed with oil and shaved, along with her child, and powdered with medicine. Meantime intimation has been sent to the grandparents; a cock if a boy, a hen if a girl, telling them all that they wish to know. The mother may now resume her household duties.

But in about a week she goes to show the child to
851 her own parents, and at the end of her visit, which
603 lasts some weeks, great preparations are made by both
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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

846 earlier days. The family of Lugulu at Mwakeleli wear blinders of leaves for weeks after a birth. At the end of the period a feast of beer and ill-cooked food is prepared, and both sets of families spend the night in open reviling of each other, and ceaseless tramping of the feet the livelong night. In the morning good food is eaten, and both parties go their ways with mutual good will. This is called *ukutila indila*, to fear the fears; to endure the terrors. No explanation of what the terrors are has reached me.

845 783 The birth of twins is regarded as one of the greatest of misfortunes, and is followed by ceremonies intended to cleanse the parents from the stain which has come upon them, and to prevent its spread to others. A hut is built outside the village, with a partition in the middle, on either side of which the parents live, but they must speak to each other only in whispers, and to others not at all. The doctor sprinkles all the relatives with medicine, and kindles a fire, in the smoke of which every one must stand for a moment. The parents are shut up in the hut, but may leave it for a few moments at night, and no one may see them. After about a month the doctor comes again, with beating drums and shaking rattle, and brings the parents out of their house of restraint. A second sprinkling of medicine upon each relative being made, the doctor takes a bunch of grass from the roof, kindles it, and hands it to the father, who, holding it in one hand, crawls out of the house, and runs, followed by the crowd. He returns, however, and receives their

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

salutations with his hand upon his mouth. Beer mixed 845
with medicine is handed to him, and, all the others 783●
drinking one by one from a calabash, he takes a little into his mouth and squirts it upon each as he or she drinks. The final stage comes about a month later, when, in the presence of the doctor, without whom nothing can be done, all the grandparents and both parents drink beer amid a circle of shouting villagers, and then, laying hold of the calabash, break it in pieces. After one more sprinkling of all, the doctor departs, taking with him a cow as fee for his many exertions. But until another child is born, the parents must eat alone, or with other parents of twins; and the mother may not pass behind anyone without warning them and receiving their consent, signified by clapping the hands.

The naming of the child. The Konde child pos- 551
sesses a varied selection of names. When he is grown he will offer a European employer one or another, sometimes in perfect honesty, sometimes with intent to hide the fact that under a previously given name he had a bad character. But the names are all genuine. Descent is through the father, and the new-born child [611]
takes the personal name of its paternal grandfather, let us say Ambangire. But his mother must never refer to her father-in-law by name, nor may she use the name in referring to any other person who bears it; her son therefore takes her own name; if she is called Kalukwa, he will be named Mwakalukwa; next he takes the family name of his father, say Mwakasungula.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

residence there, I never locked my doors, and the only 674
theft of which I had to complain was the pendulum of a clock taken from an open building!

Murder.—Murder is, from the native point of view, 682
a much less serious crime than cattle stealing. But it 673
should be remembered that British law calls crimes murder which are not so called by the Konde. A man who kills his wife's paramour has not committed murder: he has exacted a just revenge, and no more. In a case of real murder, the murderer or his friends usually pay a fine, or rather a compensation, of up to ten head of cattle; and the loss to the family of the murdered man is further made good by the other family handing over a daughter. This girl must never be spoken of as a substitute, for that would cause her children, when she has them, to die. It is needless to add that under British law compensation of any kind to the family of the murdered person does not acquit the murderer. What follows, therefore, is purely native law, which, if administered at all, is administered only when there is reason to believe that the police will never come to hear of it.

When a murder was committed, the chief directed 627
the friends of the murderer to bring him for trial, but
if they chose to put him to death themselves, the case 783
was ended. Should it be impossible to discover the murderer, a friend of his, it hardly mattered who, was put to death, and a wide-extending vendetta might be the result. When the law is satisfied, a formal reconciliation between the two families takes place. Under the guidance of the medicine man, who is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

627 master of ceremonies on all such occasions, a sheep, provided by the family of the murderer, is killed, and
783 taken hold of by the parties, while the doctor divides the carcase into two parts, each side taking its share. Medicine is poured into a pot, and a red-hot spear is plunged into it. The carcase of the sheep, cooked with this medicine, is placed upon banana leaves, and the feast of reconciliation is partaken of, along with beer which also has been doctored. The reconciliation, however, is not complete until the girl has been handed over: until that is done, the feast has only stayed action on the part of the murdered man's relatives. If the murderer is not known, the relatives of the victim drink a medicine, without which, if they happened unwittingly to drink water in the culprit's house, they would themselves also die.

The murder of a pregnant woman is a very serious
682 matter, for it is really a double murder, and the chief
673 has to be compensated for the loss of dependents. It is more heinous to murder a woman than a man, for the woman, being dead, bears no more children, and loss to the community results.

For accidental death there are numerous regulations.
682 If a man dies, or is killed, while in the employment of
672 another, or on a journey with him, compensation must be paid to the relatives. There is no feast of reconciliation, for the thing was not done in malice. When a person is killed by an ox or a cow, the owner pays a cow, and kills the offending animal, lest it lead him into further trouble and expense of the same kind. If one is cutting down a tree, and some one is killed by

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

784 it ? " even although he avoids the name. If a woman about to go for water or firewood hears anyone use the word for lion, she will not go. An elephant in the garden is referred to, very strangely, as *ikisu*, the world ; a crocodile is *ikya mmisi*, the thing in the water ; and a snake is referred to as " the thing from the grass." The name of a dead person is not used by relatives.

Again, it is *mwiko* to see certain persons. Chungu, in the past, must not be seen by young people, though I have been unable to learn that anything very dreadful happened to them if they did. On the other hand, children are still kept away from great doctors, whose glance has power to kill them ; nor may anyone watch a doctor making up his medicines.

784 Growing crops and food being cooked must not be approached by unclean persons, for the uncleanness •783 would pass over and affect the food or the crops ; as it would affect other persons if they came near the unclean. Uncleanness is transmissible, and the full ceremonial of the original uncleanness must be gone through by the one to whom it has been transmitted, lest it should desecrate the whole community with its living *tabu*.

784 Prohibited places are numerous, chief among them being graves, which are *mwiko* to all except the families to which they belong. It is forbidden to work when a dead person is being mourned for, but I cannot learn that a breach of this rule would imply anything except disrespect to the dead.

If we try to classify the prohibitions we shall find

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

 787 578

crawls about on his buttocks, a helpless object. The 593
curse has taken effect.

After a time good-natured people try to bring 578
father and son together again. The son is persuaded 593
to make his father an offering of an ox or a cow in 783
token of repentance. If the father agrees, a day is fixed, and the whole community, including the little children, assembles at the house of the injured father. Beer is prepared, the ox is killed, the son publicly expresses his repentance, and the father his acceptance thereof. Then the people, having heard all the details of the crime,[1] express their feelings in a prolonged groan. A dose of medicine is now given to the son, a stick is put into his hands, and he is bidden to rise and walk, which he does in the presence of all! A similar curse falls upon the man who does evil with one of his father's wives; and there are a very few other crimes which automatically bring on the same punishment.

It is not difficult, from the point of view of modern 000
mental science, to explain the facts. The disability is due to the conviction in the mind of the younger man, strengthened by a similar conviction in the mind of the whole community, that such results always follow deeds like his. Similar phenomena are by no means unknown among Europeans, where the response to each other of mind and body is not so immediate as it is among the more unsophisticated Konde. The man bearing his sin is mentally, perhaps, rather than physically, unable to stand upright; and the conviction having been removed from his mind,

[1] [Fighting and throwing down one's father — Analyst]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

763 *mortem* takes place, though in the neighbourhood of Missions and Magistracies the practice is beginning to die out. Only the operators are present, and when it is over the others approach again. The brothers or 764 near relatives of the dead man go down into the grave and receive the body from other relatives who hand it to them. It is not placed in the bottom of the grave, but in a cavity dug into the side, the entrance to which is closed with a bamboo door, before the soil is filled in. The body faces towards the original home of the dead. If the dead man possessed cattle, a curious ceremony now takes place. A cow is brought, and made to look into the grave where her late owner lies, her head being forcibly bent if necessary. The cow is now the property of the spirits, and must never be given away or sold out of the family. Little children of the dead man are handed across the grave, and older children leap over it, and then pull themselves, in a sitting position, over the soil which is presently to be filled in. If this ceremony is properly performed, the dead parent will not disturb the children by nightmares. Its omission is an insult to the dead; but the practice is being abandoned by the more progressive sections of the community. It is at this point that the parting address, given in the chapter on "The Spirits," is spoken. When the soil is filled in, a cutting of *indola* tree is placed at head and foot, to mark the grave.

764 All who took any part in the burying must now wash in running water, which carries off the pollu- •783 tion; and carries off also the danger of the disease

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

which killed the man passing over to those present 764
at the funeral. Those who performed the *post mortem* [783]
take medicine as well. The funeral ox or cow is now killed, and the flesh divided among the various groups. The next stage is to "disinherit" the dead man, to cut him off from all connection with earthly matters. His mats were buried with him; now his bananas are cut down, his hoes are taken to the grave and the hafts broken, while all baskets and pots are destroyed and left to rot there. His cattle go to his heirs, and his [587]
wives build themselves huts in which they live for a year, "covering the footsteps of the dead man"; after which they also go to the heirs. (Much of this is now falling into disuse, especially around Karonga.) The dead man has been dissociated from the living: the bananas grow again, but they are not his; his house may be occupied, but he has only the rights of a ghost in it; and in many places the house is left to decay as soon as the funeral is over, and the wives have built themselves huts not far off. But the belief also prevails, side by side with the desire to cut off the dead man from the living, that by destroying his goods they go with him to the land of spirits.

The Konde have a strange belief, that a dead body [77]
casts no shadow; if it does, it is a sign that the spirit 766
still lingers around, and if he is not driven off, another member of the family will die soon. The most effective way of despatching him to his proper abode is to burn his body. If the diviner finds that a second death in the family is due to the reluctance of the first to go to his fathers, the body is dug up, and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 dare not greet their children on their return without the safeguard
789 of protective medicines. At a celebration the Kinga priests took
751 medicines, 'powdered medicine which comes from Mwemusi and Mwakalukwa [the Kinga chiefs]', and smeared it on Lwembe's forehead and shoulders 'because the grove is great. If you entered it without this medicine you died'; they gave the Lwembe the medicine 'so that Kyala (*vide* pp. 17-18) might not kill him, that he might show respect and escape'.

783 Another medicine, *imbinga*, which is red in colour, was brought
789 from BuKinga to smear on the foreheads of the children of the Lwembe and Kissoule, the priest, when these two returned home after celebrating in the grove. Their senior wives 'would smear the *imbinga* on the children's foreheads, when they would turn round calling: "You hit us", and Mwakisiya (56) (the Lwembe) and Kissoule (the priest) would both reply: "No, I am innocent (*mwelu*)." The medicine was smeared on the children because Mwakisisya and his fellow thought: "How can we meet them, how can they look on our bodies, since we are taboo from the ritual." Yes, the words are the same as in the twin ritual, but the medicine is different.' During one of the rituals we attended, Mwakilima (111) begged the Kinga priests to bring him some of this medicine for the protection of his children.

718 The numinous quality of everything connected with Lubaga
769 can hardly be exaggerated; the Nyakyusa believe that it overcomes even curious Europeans. The most sacred and terrible object of all was the drum which was polished with blood, the blood of children, who, in Nyakyusa thought, had died for the people, that the country might live and be fertile. 'Formerly,
[782] when the Kinga came with a drum, they said: "Catch the child of a commoner, fat and strong, hide him in the drum." In the old days when the Kinga came beating their drum, ping . . . ping . . . [single strokes with long intervals] we of the country used to run away and women would hide their children for fear lest they be snatched up and put in the drum.'[1] The child was strangled

[1] These statements were made by three different groups of informants independ-
[534] ently. All had special knowledge of these matters. The *ilikole*, the sacred drum of the Kinga, differs in shape from the Nyakyusa *indingala*. It is made of *nkuju* wood and ox-hide and is beaten when a ritual is celebrated and to summon men to war. The Kinga do not dance to drums and the Nyakyusa did not do so formerly either, but after the Europeans arrived Nyakyusa chiefs began to buy *indingala* from outside BuNyakyusa, paying a bull for a set—'a mother drum and her children'. Only quite recently have Nyakyusa craftsmen learnt from a Henga immigrant to make *indingala*.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

to the women here, but to their husbands.' So Kitega took back to the tree the sweet banana leaf, containing the portion for the women. 782 796

Meanwhile strips of meat had been roasted and were eaten with roast bananas, while the milk was finished up by the Nyakyusa present. All the millet beer had been poured out, but the bamboo beer that remained was finished, part drunk, part blown from the mouth by the two Kinga boys, grandsons of the priests. Then the rest of the meat was divided up, one back leg being given to the Kinga. But they took the head (their traditional right) as well, without being given it. There was some considerable protest at this: 'Do you take twice?' they were asked. And more protest still when they began to go away with it. Nsyanigwa (the Kinga priest) replied furiously. 'Let it go, let them take it' was the final comment of the local people, but both parties were angry. Two legs went to the chiefs, one to the Nyakyusa commoners, and the breast to Mwanjala.

After the meat had been safely disposed of Nsyanigwa gave his parting instructions: 'You sirs (*batwa*), thank you, thank you. We remember that it was Mwakalukwa (the Kinga chief) who said "Pray for us"! Thank you! We thank you! Now you must build your chief, Mwanjala (78), a little hut in which to sleep with the breast of beef so that the lord (*kyala*)[1] may eat, and in the morning if *kyala* has eaten let him go to his home. This calf I brought, I Nsyanigwa, from BuKinga. Let the knife I brought remain with it too.' Then Nsyanigwa went off and his advice was discussed. Mwanjala laughed and said: 'I have no house to sleep in . . . shall I sleep by myself? Outside?' Several suggested that it was the custom for some other man to accompany him. No one knew who should do so, but someone suggested Kissoule. In fact Mwanjala went home with the breast of beef and did not remain overnight in the grove. But he and the priests held apart from their wives and children. Mwamalunguka (the priest) explained: 'We avoid sleeping with our wives for three nights. It is taboo to go to them. We say, "Let us wash and anoint ourselves and be alone until that lord (*kyala*) has gone out of our bodies, since we were in the ritual". We bathe tomorrow and the next day and anoint ourselves, but avoid our wives for three nights. Also our children are anointed on the forehead with medicine—the young [784] [783]

[1] The name *kyala* had not been used in the invocation, and the only references to him in this ritual were the two just quoted.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 children, not the married ones with wives. Kissoule and I both
796 have our children anointed now.'

[783] This ritual was not complete because Mwanjala shirked the
[643] crucial act of remaining in the grove until a python licked him.
[793] The Kinga priests were continually nagging at the Nyakyusa for
[177] their failure to provide an acceptable Lwembe, but it is doubtful whether in 1935 Mwanjala II would have been acceptable to any of them since he was old and ailing. It was Mwakilima (111) that men wanted and he steadily refused to be installed.

[787] The next ritual observed at Lubaga was in March 1937. An ordinary commoner of Selya (not a priest) named Kijaja had been prophesying repeatedly: 'I do not sleep, you will not eat the crops you hoe if you do not go to Lubaga.' He was taken to his village headman and thence to the chief Mwaihojo (147) who finally, two years after he had begun prophesying, agreed to find a bull. Word then came to Kasitile (86) who notified the commoner priests of chief Mwaipopo (116) and sent a message to the priests of Lubaga. Kasitile (86), together with three other priests of Selya (Mwalukuta, Nyama, Mwamakunda) and Godfrey Wilson, set off early one morning from Kasitile's house to take the bull (brown streaked with black, called *ingombe isolola*) to Lubaga. On the way they called in at Munyoso's house, where the Kinga stop on their journey to pour a libation of beer (*vide supra*, p. 27). Kasitile asked Munyoso, 'Shall the bull enter?' and he replied, 'Yes, let it come into the house', so it was tied up inside while the party talked with Munyoso. He was sick and did not want to accompany them. The others pressed him, and at first he refused. Whereupon Mwalukuta said: 'Very well, then, we are at your place, let the bull return and we will go another day', in other words, refusing to go without him. 'No, that is taboo,' said
[784] Kasitile, 'once the bull has faced towards Lubaga and entered a house here it is taboo for it to turn back. The shades will be angry.' And so Munyoso went with them.

On the way they passed a group of men hoeing hard. One of them called out: 'Where are you going with that bull? Where are you off enjoying yourselves?' 'Ah, you fellows,' answered Kasitile, 'do you ask where we are going? We visit where our fathers always did.' They understood at once. 'Oh thank you, thank you,' they cried. 'You,' went on Kasitile, 'do you call that work? Are you growing your own food? No, you lie still and eat without effort. It is *we* who exert ourselves for you' (implying

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

chief, brought a bundle of firewood. Mwalukuta I was not expected to enter the grove and he went off soon. His brother and Nyama took a little basket of maize and millet. The chiefs stayed on the edge of the grove and the three commoners entered alone. Mwalukuta II and Nyama built a little hut five feet from the 'grave' with the saplings brought by Nyama's mother. 'We put firewood and food and a little calabash which we have prepared in it, it's for the shades.' The calabash contained millet, maize, pumpkin seeds, ground nuts, and cow peas; and a stem of bananas was put beside it. Mwalukuta swept the 'grave' which was marked by a few small trees, and Mwakasukula killed the cow, which must lie facing east to BuKinga. Mwalukuta spoke the invocation: 'Thou Mwakisambwe (30) . . . Mwakihaba (45) has gone back, but Mwamukinga (44) is here still. . . . Mwakihaba says, "I am no longer a relative, I have gone out."' Then they took the sacred meat from the forelegs of the cow: that from the right leg was buried near the 'grave', that from the left by an *nkuju* tree (a species of *ficus*) forty paces away. The priests ate some roasted meat and intestines with bananas, and the rest of the meat was divided between them and the chiefs. The head went to Nyama's house and was kept for three nights. The priests explained that they are forbidden to bathe for three days or lie with their wives, but on the fourth day they eat the head and after that they bathe and resume married life.

Eighteen days after the sacrifice Mwalukuta went to look and found the stem of bananas which had been left in the little hut had ripened, and the earth on the grave had been disturbed. This was a good omen. But later his legs began to trouble him—he could scarcely walk—and it was said that certain priests who should have been called to the ritual had not been summoned and were angry and had cursed him. He fled to a distance and sought a bull to kill for his fellows.

(*d*) SACRIFICE AT KABALE

The form of sacrifice among the Kukwe is very similar. We never saw a sacrifice at Kabale—our friends assured us that they had been dropped before 1935—but a description by two of the leading priests of the grove of Kabale demonstrates the similarity between the rituals there and in Selya. The only points of difference were that the Kukwe sacrificed fowls as well as cattle, and granddaughters shared the sacred food with grandsons.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VII

CLEANSING THE COUNTRY

769 SACRIFICES to the heroes and the shades of the chiefs are holy and private—only a handful of priests and chiefs may enter the groves and the details of the rituals are not discussed with other people. But there are other celebrations in which everyone 796 participates; these are the rituals for cleansing the community— 783 'throwing out the rubbish' (*ukujola ikikungu*)—more specifically the *ashes* from all the hearths.

In Ngonde the cleansing is organized for the whole kingdom, from Mbande, but among the Nyakyusa each chiefdom acts independently. Traditionally, we were told, the *ukujola ikikungu* was an annual celebration, observed at the 'new year', after the break of the rains, but it could also take place if there were much sickness in the country, or plague, or prophecies of evil to come. It was celebrated (in an attenuated form and by a section of the community only) in Ngonde in July 1937, to cleanse the country of a plague of rats, and in September of the same year a somewhat similar ritual was performed in Porokoto's chiefdom because a [787] fearful omen had been seen—a ground hornbill had eaten a [178] chicken. The annual celebrations had been dropped both in Ngonde and BuNyakyusa before 1935.

As has been shown in the *Rituals of Kinship* the Nyakyusa believe [769] that too close an association with the shades is dangerous; all the [755] family rituals are designed to drive them away, to drive them out of the bodies of the mourners, or menstruating girls, or parents of twins; and the purpose of 'throwing out the ashes' in all the homesteads is essentially the same. The shades 'come to warm 783 themselves' at the hearths of their descendants, they 'bring sickness [775] to the hearths' and so the old ashes are cleared out and new fire is lighted. The phrase *ukujola ikikungu* is used in Ngonde for clearing out the litter (*ulufumbo*) after a burial, or an initiation ritual, and for shaving after a ritual, as well as for clearing the ashes from all the hearths in the country.

[754] It is also thought that domestic fires are contaminated by [775] witches who may have cooked the human flesh they steal over their victims' own fires. In Ngonde it was the connexion between

[p. 102]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the shades and the hearths which was stressed; in Porokoto's country people talked mostly of the witches; but it seemed clear that both conceptions were present when men murmured: 'The hearth bricks are bad' (*amafiga mabibi*) and they sought to cleanse them by clearing out the old fire and lighting new. 'To clear out the ashes means they take away all that dirt, the dirt which the witches have brought and the shades; it is the cause of illness.' When witches are thought to be active there is also a public complaint, and a public warning is given 'to whom it may concern' to desist.[1] This occurred in the ritual after the ground hornbill had eaten the chicken. Above all, men must admit their anger to one another: 'they fight that the homesteads may be peaceful'. The theme so familiar in Nyakyusa rituals—that quarrels must be confessed if they are to be composed—recurs yet again. Though we distinguish the rituals for 'cleansing the country' from sacrifices, on the ground that the whole community participates in the 'cleansing' while the sacrifice is esoteric, the two are closely linked, and a sacrifice commonly precedes or follows the cleansing. We turn now to the detailed accounts of celebrations for 'cleansing' in Ngonde and among the Kukwe.

(*a*) THE RATS

In Ngonde they used to clear out the ashes at the new year, at the first hoeing (in December) after 'the break of the rains'. They feared that death and disease would spread through the land if they continued living with the old fires, that the shades in the earth, both the shades of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry. Let them drive the shades away and hoe in peace. They always remembered to do so each new year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually, they never forgot. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to clear out the ashes; and then they would hoe in peace. And at other times, too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the ashes again. 'It is to drive away the shade with the sickness that he brings. We throw out the ashes and firebrands because he has come to warm himself over the fire in our houses, we throw out the pots and winnowing baskets because he has come to see us eating; let him go there (to the grove) and eat what he asked for—we say the shades ask for food—let him eat hens, perhaps a sheep. We say the shades bring sickness to the fire, hence we throw out the ashes and make new fire with a drill.'

The nobles of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 109-13.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 the order to clear out the ashes; messages were sent to the great
796 chiefs and the senior territorial nobles of the plain, and they told
[643] their juniors. A sacrifice was made in one of the sacred groves of the Kyungus and all fires in the whole Ngonde plain were put out. And then

> all the chiefs from every country near Mbande and the nobles and all the village headmen and all the ordinary men and women, too, went to Kyimbwe where we threw away the sickness of all the country.

At Kyimbwe, which is the crossroads in the bush, they threw away the ashes of their old fires, and some of the pots and baskets in which food is served; while those few people who could not get to Kyimbwe threw them away from their own houses on the same day as the others. At Kyimbwe new fire was made with a
[372] fire-drill by the nobles of Ngonde who

> ran with it without looking back and the people danced alongside them and speared one another! . . . They said, 'Let us dance, let us fight that the homesteads may be peaceful'. . . . 'Let us throw out the ashes that death may leave the homesteads and they be at peace.' It is to bring out war from within (*ukusosya*).

The symbolism is the same as in the rituals of kinship when kinsmen gather to admit their quarrels and press one another to speak out, so that they may cleanse themselves of anger.

The new fire was distributed to the whole plain in order. Great chiefs and senior nobles took it first and passed it to their juniors, chiefs passed to village headmen, and in each group the common people got it from their own ruling noble or their own village headman.

In July 1937, while we were visiting Ngonde, there was a
[731] plague of rats[1] which threatened the food supply, and Bungulu,
[136] the wife of a chief and well known as a prophetess, went into a
[791] trance and revealed that the rats were caused by the anger of the
[787] previous Kyungu and could be got rid of only by a ritual 'throwing out the rubbish' and sacrifice. Her husband reported the matter to Mulwa, the premier noble of Ngonde, to whom the present Kyungu, Peter—at one time a Church member—had long since handed over all responsibility for communal rituals. Mulwa called four of the leading chiefs who were pagan and a number of

[1] Nothing new in Ngonde. Lord (then Captain) Lugard suffered from them in 1888: F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), vol. i, p. 127. In 1937 the country swarmed with rats: in our own camp we killed 70 to 100 each night.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

commoners, and they went together to the grove of Mwangalaba, the last Kyungu (elder brother of Peter), with a white hen and sacrificed it there, and prayed saying: 783 796

Mwangalaba go thou to Mwakasungula your father and let him go to Mwangonde, and he to Mwagemo and he to Kiposa and he to Mpeta and he to Mwendemange and he to Kyabala and he to Syola and he to the Kyungu who lived at Mano and he to Ngulube (9) and Lyambilo (12). May he stand by us, may we sleep, may the rats disappear and illness also, may we sleep. Then when we had finished the invocation [I quote Mulwa] we extinguished the fires in all our houses; in the houses of the chiefs, and of Kyungu's great wife Namwilan'ombe, and of us commoners, we threw water on the ashes, but each took some ash, and a firebrand to the crossroads at Kyimbwe where we collected them all and left them to rot; there we threw away the rats saying: 'Let them fly away to Ngulube (9), let them fly away with the wind, let us sleep.' Then we ran to the pasture land to make new fire with a drill. We all took fire there in the bush, each a firebrand and lighted new fires in our own houses and in the house of the Kyungu, that is of his great wife. We arranged it with our wife Namwilan'ombe, because Kyungu had said 'Work with your husbands there'.

'Throwing away the rats' consisted in enclosing a live rat in two winnowing baskets, opening them at Kyimbwe, and flourishing them first in one direction and then in another, releasing the rat in the process. This had been specifically ordered by Bungulu, the prophetess.

(*b*) THE GROUND HORNBILL

In the country of Porokoto (49 K) there was much illness and many deaths (some, at least, from typhoid) during the dry season of 1937, and when a ground hornbill—always a bird of ill-omen among the Nyakyusa—mysteriously attacked a chicken in Syokela village, everyone was horrified. Mwamunda, a village headman, explained what had happened: [164] [165] 787 [825]

The headman of Syokela came with two men to Bwilile (senior village headman of his side) and said: 'Tell the chief that a ground hornbill has eaten a fowl at our place. We ask what this means. And also we do not sleep, we are ill.' Then Bwilile told me and we went together to the chief who said: 'I have heard, let us discuss it.' So we gathered at Nsyani's and the headman of Syokela stood up and said: 'My fathers, and friends, and children, and you chiefs, we have come to ask: have you ever before heard of a ground hornbill eating a fowl? (With an air

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 of intense questioning.) We have not, but perhaps you have?' Then we all denied having heard of such a thing; we had no idea what the portent meant and said: 'Let us consult an oracle.' The chief agreed. . . . Then men went to the doctor and the oracle said: 'It is because you have not celebrated at Mwakan'ata's (30 K) place since his death;[1] you must kill a cow and clear the grass at his place. This [775] ground hornbill is your father Mwakan'ata; seek a cow and celebrate and pray, then you will see what will happen.' They told the chief this and he said: 'Must I find a cow then?' But it is we village headmen 783 who have done wrong because some of us said: 'What's a cow for? Let us just pray; why should we throw away a cow?' Others of us said: 796 'Yes, let a cow be found', but the chief listened to those who opposed killing a cow. So we went and prayed without eating anything.

The ritual was put off three times; the first time the people were summoned men of one village had not come; the second time men of another; the third time a headman was missing and also the women had not been called. Finally, on the morning of 28th September, men and women and children gathered on the pasture land just beyond Ilolo village (where we lived). The men and boys sat, with their headmen, by villages, each forming a segment of the great circle round the chief, while the women all crowded together some distance behind him. . . . 'We all go, except the Christians.'

The chief Porokoto, rather nervous in his manner, stood up and addressed the company after one of the headmen had said pointedly: 'We are all women, a man stands in the middle, it is he who speaks.' For women never pray, blowing out water, and commoners in this situation do not pray, only the chief.

Porokoto: The reason I have called you together is this: there is no peace in the country; there is much cold, many people are shivering with fever, let us drink water and drive away Kyala. This concerns all the homesteads; the cold [i.e. fever] is finishing us. What do you say Mwamunda? [to the headman].
Mwamunda: Thank you! We rejoice that you chiefs have remembered. May we sleep well, may there not be illness, may the cold pass, may the children grow well, and all the crops. Indeed we are all in great trouble. Kyala help us, may we be pure (*tujebelu*)!

Then the chief called on one village headman after another to speak; and his elder brother, Mwasalemba, also spoke.

[1] Porokoto was already sceptical of pagan ritual and has since become a Christian.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

MWAFULA: Indeed, may the illness not be great, may the children not cry by night, may the cattle increase, and the fields be fertile, and the fowls also increase. May children sleep. Our fathers always confessed in the house. Now we are shocked at what is happening. 783 796

MWANTIMWA: We say thank you, chiefs, you do not forget us. Let the sickness pass and go away, may the cattle sleep, and you women, may the children grow. May the fields be fertile; may there not be envy of one another. We are sorry because there is much illness. Our fathers say 'Why have the chiefs turned round?'

MWAMULENGA: Chief, we beg you, we thank you, indeed there is sickness. Is there anyone who says in their quarter there is much sickness (more than elsewhere)? Do we say something about sickness?

MWAMUNDA: No, Mwampiki, all of us who have come here are sick.

KILONGO: Yes, we are all rotting.

Mwaikambo commenting on this explained:

If there is sickness one may admit and say, 'It is I, I was angry on account of such and such.' Yes, indeed, they confess openly, because he who sees in his belly (=knows in his heart) that 'It is I who have done this' trembles when his fellows speak many words thinking, 'Perhaps they have seen me.' So he confesses. When he confesses he escapes, they only grumble at him saying, 'Don't do it again.' If someone admits the others say, 'It is he, but we have punished him.' I think that even in the old days he was not driven out, because they hope that, if he has confessed, the illness he caused will go away.

MWASALEMBA: Have you ever before heard of a hornbill eating a hen? We are horrified. Even the prophets did not speak of such an event. [787]

ANOTHER: Indeed, it has never before happened, we are glad that our chiefs have taken the initiative with these words.

ANOTHER: For this custom is old, it began long ago in the time of our fathers. It is the custom to give hope in the homesteads, that we may grow strong.

MWAMPIKI: Always, if the chief is ill it is said, 'Where are you, oh people?' All the homesteads watch over the chief when he is ill. [Mwaikambo commenting: It is said that people have the work of watching over their chief that no one may bewitch him, hence when he is ill they reproach people saying: 'Where are you?' Let the old customs be observed now (implying that they have left all the old customs and hence there is much sickness in the country).] [754] [177]

ANOTHER: There are some who say 'Let so-and-so die that I may move into his homestead. Let envy which brings sickness also go away.'

ANOTHER: If sickness appears let us tell the chief that we may all express astonishment together, asking where the illness has come from, then it will be light, if we all grumble together. [Mwaikambo commenting: [753]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 They say that complaining drives away illness, even though the witches
796 are not seen, and do not confess saying, 'It is we' yet they are ashamed thinking 'People have caught me' and they desist.]

[753] MWAMULENGA: Catch anyone you see in your dreams. If someone is ill should we not all gather?

MWAMUNDA: Countrymen, give thanks that there are the chiefs.

And the company assented.

Then there was a discussion about the direction in which the chief should spit and people run. One pointing towards Tukuyu said: 'We always looked that way.' Another said: 'We always reached the boundary.'

Mwafula (a village headman) came with his young son carrying
[778] a calabash of medicated water. Porokoto took a sip and spat out eastward, 'in the direction of the grove of Kabale, to the shades.'

Mwamulenga shouted: 'Now we have prayed, the sickness is
[755] finished, we are present and watch over the homesteads. If we see anyone bringing sickness we will catch him and crush him on the sleeping mat.' There was a roar from the crowd, then all rushed yelling 300 yards or so eastward to the edge of the fields, and back again. Porokoto ran a little way with them, his malacca cane raised, then stopped, looking self-conscious, and strolled homeward. Everyone else scattered, chattering and laughing. On the way back we were greeted: 'You have prayed! Did you catch witches? Whom did you catch?'

Mwasalemba, senior brother of Porokoto and an expert in ritual, added one or two points in explanation:

In the old days we threw out the ashes, but we have not yet done so this time; we begin with the ritual on the pasture land and throw out the ashes afterwards. In the old days we threw them out of all the houses and put in fresh fire, new ash, saying 'Thou Kyala, thou shade,
[775] receive us, let us sleep here, we throw out the ashes, let sickness be
[753] slight.' Those who are angry now are our shades—those of the chiefs—they have gathered with the shades of the commoners. The medicated water means: 'Thou shade, you fathers, may we sleep, use this water for us if we are ill, may we be strong.' The water goes to the shades with these words.

Q.: Why must the women come?

M.: They call the war cry, we run swiftly, the women follow calling the war cry which means, 'You shade, we call the war cry for you that we may be pure—without anger—in our bellies, make us strong also, thou shade, may we also be pure in our bellies, this is your war cry . . .' The running and calling the war cry is to mock at him, to drive him

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

away. We run with him, we leave him over there, we return and bring him in. We drive him off because he brought sickness; when we have done so we return and bring him again that we may be pure—without anger—and he also may be pure. We are with him all the time; we never throw him away. We always have the old one in the belly, an infant is he, and if I die I am with him, this earth (pointing to the earth of his homestead) never goes away, it is he. So if the crops fail when I have hoed I say: 'The shade is angry, this earth.' (*Papo ndule ndinagaw bwila mundu, mundeke je jojo, nalenga mfwile ndinagaw—umfu ugu gutijenga nakamo je jojo—papo lenga ndemile nitati 'unyuka akalele umfu ugu' be fainile.*) Yes, in the death ritual also we drive him away with his sickness, and bring him back, always the old one. 783 796 [785] [753]

After the ritual all have normal intercourse with their wives, but the night before there was no intercourse. How should we do evil on the mats when we have not yet blessed the shade? But when we have blessed him then all of us lie on our mats again. To lie together is to overstep the ritual, the shades are shocked and say, 'How can you do this? You agreed yesterday to bless the shades and you do this, why?' Then later, if a woman bears a child which cries at night, people say, 'You overstepped the ritual, pray for the child.' Or perhaps the woman is barren. We liken the water and the war cry to what we do on the mats—the water is the shade's and the war cry is his, it is his work. When we have spoken to the shade he comes into my belly—then I come together with my wife again. [833] [842]

This interpretation by Mwasalemba indicates that the blowing out of water is a symbol of emission. 'It is what men do.' It has been shown in *Rituals of Kinship* that the shades are driven out of the body in the sex act; that the shade and semen are identified; and that driving off the shade is a condition of health and sanity. The fact that blowing out water is *also* a symbol of confession—admission of anger, 'bringing out all that is within'—and supplication does not invalidate Mwasalemba's interpretation, for the same act is symbolized in many ways and the same symbol expresses events which are distinct, but associated. As in so many societies, abstinence is felt to be a necessary preparation for the celebration of a ritual, and the union, real or symbolic, of husband and wife the necessary conclusion.[1] All this is intelligible only in terms of the Nyakyusa ideas about procreation discussed in *Rituals of Kinship*. The shade is the vital force in men 833 783 755

[1] cf. I. Cunnison, 'Headmanship and Ritual of Lunguda Village', *Africa*, xxvi (1956), pp. 5-15; H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (1927), vol. i, pp. 500-01; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (1911), pp. 48, 52-55.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and women, it is procreative power, fertility. That power is constantly expelled from the belly but returns again and by that expulsion and return men live.

There was a great deal of criticism from the conservatives because no sacrifice had been made.

MWAMUNDA: Now people are talking much saying, 'We have abandoned that which they did formerly, we are doing something else.' People have many dreams (gesture head on hand as if heavy with anxiety), many say: 'I have dreamed of the dead, they told me to sacrifice a cow, to pray, we did not pray properly, that is useless, it will not effect anything.' So we have told the chief saying: 'Let us kill a cow at the grave of Mwakan'ata,' he has agreed, but the cow has not yet come.

Formerly, on the night following the day of the prayer we should have eaten the sacrificial cow, the chief would have killed two cows and the headmen from different villages would have come and eaten by night, and drunk beer provided by the chief, in the house of the senior wife of the chief. . . . They ate a little meat, raw, the rest they roasted. Then in the morning, when they had eaten and were satisfied, they would go to clear out the house, to throw out the ashes, and to pray, as we prayed now, and to make new fire by friction in the pasture land. The village headman made fire with medicine which the chief gave him, the name of the medicine is Mhambo, it's a tree. To throw out the ashes means to clear out all the filth, the filth which the witches and the shades have brought to us—the filth that is sickness. . . . Do not the witches eat meat at the fire? Human flesh? Some roast at your fires your bodies which they have seized, some go home with the human flesh to their own fires, hence comes the filth of the ashes. The village headmen eat the sacrificial meat at night with the shades, they celebrate for them with the blood which goes beneath. . . .

If the chief has done something wrong, then those above [i.e. the village headmen] pray to those beneath saying, 'Let us help one another to punish him who has strayed, but we do not wish that he should die, let him be ill; perhaps then he will seek something to nourish us.' Again the night before the throwing out of the ashes they confess their anger and say: 'You beneath, this our child (the chief) has remembered us, there is no accusation against him now, may sickness go away from the country, and children sleep, let us all sleep and the cows calve. We greet those beneath.' In my childhood I was repeatedly surprised at night when my father came in, he had a little parcel of meat. 'Where have you been?' I asked. 'We have been praying.' But since I grew up and became a village headman, and was recorded as such [by the administration] we have never seen sacrificial meat.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Mwandisi made a great deal of the fact that at the 'throwing out of the rubbish' the village headmen ate meat raw. 783 796

Formerly . . . we threw away the ashes and charred brands . . . that is to drive away the shades who warm themselves over the hearth in the house; they bring us sickness, let them warm themselves over there in the long grass! Also in the long grass there we killed meat, and the priests ate it raw: no one saw them doing that there in the long grass; we went by day with drums, people from all the homesteads, a moving multitude . . . then we came home . . . the priests remained with their wives, they threw away their bark-cloths, they cut off morsels of meat and ate them raw. Because the priests are witches it is they who ate raw meat before we chiefs came, the priests are witches. . . . The witches and shades gather and bring sickness together, we kill a cow in the grove, we drive them away. No, they do not eat raw meat in the grove, they cook it. But at the capital if the chief has killed a cow for men to eat the priests eat meat raw. We have seen them. I, Mwandisi, have seen Mwajole and Kalambo the senior village headmen eating raw meat at my place and my wives have seen them also. [262] [753] [793]

'Yes', said one of his wives, 'we saw them and we ran away saying: "Well! Fancy doing it *openly*!"' Mwandisi continued:

The senior village headmen are witches, children of those who ate raw food long ago. Some village headmen only rush to eat a cow we have killed, but some go to eat a person; those are the witches who eat raw meat! [754]

The function of a chief is to feed his men on beef, and in doing so he placates the witches who are commoners and who, like their forefathers, prefer their meat raw. If they do not get beef then the witches eat men.[1] [643]

(*d*) SMALLPOX

The prayer and 'clearing out of the rubbish', traditionally celebrated before an approaching epidemic, was described by an elderly Christian, Fibombe. It illustrates very clearly the combination of practical precaution—isolation—and magical protection, and also the idea that sickness was brought into the country by witches. 783 796 753

When the chief had heard that smallpox was coming, or dysentery, he said, 'Let us pray'. Before my baptism I saw it, in the country of the

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 90-4.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

796 Penja chief, Mwalukasa. He called all his people because he heard that
783 smallpox was coming and said: 'Let us pray.' And he called his fellow
753 chiefs, those of the same lineage, and said: 'Let this illness not come, may it go to other chiefs. . . . Listen! I am the chief! We have heard that smallpox is approaching, who is here who rejoices at his approach? Who is here who wishes that it should kill us?'

THE CHIEFS: We, we do not rejoice that it is coming, we reject it, chief Mwalukasa, may it pass by this homestead.

THE COMMONERS: And we also reject it, may it pass by our homesteads.

MWALUKASA: And I, I reject it, may smallpox not come into our country. If there be one who has relatives in a chiefdom where there is smallpox and they come to call him to a funeral let them stay at a distance, and not sleep here, let him not go near until the illness has passed by, at the end of the year. If you witches go to fetch it, you will kill your
[754] fellows with whom you are chatting now. You will not enjoy my company or build with me, the chief, if you go and bring in smallpox and kill your fellows. We pray that it may pass. [For it is believed in this country that the witches go to bring in illness, or wild animals, from a distance.]

THE COMMONERS: Yes, indeed, may it pass by.

MWALUKASA: If you go to bury a brother in a country in which there is smallpox stand afar off, tie the cow you bring to a tree and call to them: 'Here is my cow for killing, come and take it.' Take your cow, but do not go into the homestead.

And the people did as he said. Then he told them to get ready for the ritual. He took his calabash cup and three other chiefs with
[769] calabash cups followed him. They blew water and prayed to Kyala and the shades. Then the people were gathered together; and the chiefs, led by Mwalukasa, ran round facing each group in turn and blowing out water towards them; the men held their shields in front of them and when the chiefs blew they shook their shields violently, as if fighting.

When all was finished then Mwalukasa said: 'When you go home,
[372] throw out the ashes and the fires; all make new fire with drills.' And they all did this.

Finally he had bamboos planted with medicine on the main roads between BuPenja and BuKukwe and BuPenja and BuNyiha. No one
[755] ill with smallpox, or who had lived in contact with smallpox, was allowed to pass, unless he had been ill and recovered. I saw the one bamboo clump on the boundary of Nyiha and Penja country. No one passed it, it was very fearsome (*lasiya fje*).

As in cultivation there was a combination of ritual and science.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(d) THE WILD PIG

Another sort of cleansing, unorganized, but concerning groups of neighbours, not kinsmen, is the 'blessing one another' (*ukuse-jesa*) which takes place if a pig-hunt fails and quarrelling between the hunters is suspected to be the cause. It was described by a Christian, who had called his pagan neighbours to help him in tracking down a pig, which he had wounded during the previous night in his maize garden. It eluded them, hour after hour, though they were close upon it.

783 ●
796
224
[578]

The neighbours began to think that the pig was sent by the shades (*sili nemiende*)—they meant themselves. So they stopped hunting and gathered together to express their anger, and they said: 'Our fathers built together and drank beer together, why should this pig trouble us so? We don't suspect our friend who is a Christian for he has shown that he has no quarrel with us. Had he been angry he would not have called us to hunt with him. But if one of the rest of us has a quarrel with his fellow let him speak out, that we may all be free of anger (*teje bela*) and seize the pig, for if we think hard thoughts about one another we shall not have strength to take the pig.' All said that they were in friendship with their fellows, so first one and then another took his spear and . . . laid it on the ground and said: 'I am without anger (*Une ndimwela itela*).' All of them did this. One spoke to his fellow and said: 'Perhaps you are angry over that quarrel we had over beer?' But he replied, 'No.' Then the first man took up his spear from the ground and said, 'Father help us to catch this pig, if there was a quarrel, forgive, do not think of that with which I caused you to be angry. We bless one another, we are without anger.' Then all the others did the same, and they set off again to hunt.

This account, and the commentary of Mwaikambo on it, made it plain that the true translation of *bela* in such a context is 'without anger'. The communal rituals in which a whole chiefdom, or a group of neighbours, participate all have this one end, the cleansing of the group of quarrels by their open expression and explicit rejection.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

793 NDEMBWE
755 NSOKI
[551] NEESA
[791] A SANGU
} Diviners consulted by Kasitile
NDISA a kinsman of Kasitile

It will be remembered that, in accordance with the custom of
793 delegating ritual functions to a junior line, Kasitile's grand-
755 father (44) had been appointed rain-maker and priest responsible for receiving the Kinga when they came to sacrifice at Lubaga. Kasitile thus held an important public office. He was living on the plain (where he had inherited the estate of his father's younger brother) where his own elder brother (85) died and he came up into Selya to bury him and succeed to his position. But he failed to notify the Kinga priests of his brother's death and they were
[787] very angry, and told him he would die if he stayed in the homestead, so he fled back to the plain. There he fell ill, and he was carried back to Selya to be treated by the visiting Kinga priests, who told him he was sick 'because he went to the plain in a hurry and they had not given him medicine'. The idea here is that the heir to a chief or priest must cultivate the power that was in his
[778] father's body by drinking medicines: Kasitile was 'losing the *ifingila* of his father by not drinking medicines'. Now *ifingila* implies *both* the medicines of chieftainship and the power which they create in the body of a man.

So Kasitile was treated and we quote his own account of what happened:

> The Kinga came to cook medicine by the tree where I pray—it is where the cattle byre of my elder brother was. They put some medicine for Jane [his senior wife] and me in beer . . . and we drank together . . .
> [783] and they boiled medicines in a pot and told us both to wash with the infusion every day for two months. I found a goat and called the priests Ngulyo, Njobakosa, and Kissogota and . . . they and the Kinga priests ate the meat together, and they told me to stay for two months and return to the plain again, and so I did. Then the Kinga sent for me to come back and I've come up to live. I found a cow, and called the priests and killed it at the sacred grove, Kinyangwa, and all the people ate the meat. Then the Kinga told me to move to my father's old homestead, and I did so this very year.

Before we arrived, therefore, Kasitile had been in conflict with
[753] his fellow priests, and he had been very ill, and attributed his

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

755 some live coals into a small calabash and held them against Kasitile's
791 chest 'to clear out the blood of coughing'. To pacify the shades a pot of medicines in water was put on the fire; the doctor, Kasitile, and his
[769] 'senior wife' (actually her younger sister, as Jane was away) each held the pot with a crooked finger. Then Kasitile and all his wives and children were sprinkled with the hot medicines. And the doctor told Kasitile to sacrifice a bull.

During the following week preparations for the sacrifice went ahead.
[793] Kasitile walked for some hours through the forest to call Mwamakunda, his fellow priest who always assisted him in the celebrations at Lubaga and 'sprinkling the country'. Mwamakunda is a very old man, contemporary of Kasitile's father, and he asked: 'Are you bringing your European to the sacrifice?'

KASITILE: Yes.

[186] MWAMAKUNDA: But your father Mwakanjoki (60) did not know any Europeans, he feared them, he died without ever meeting one. After
[688] your father died, when your elder brother was alive, Europeans came
[177] —Germans—and cut down a tree, the *umwali* tree in the sacred grove near Kamesu; blood gushed out, it shouted so that it was heard in BuKinga.

Kasitile explained that the Germans had wanted timber. Afterwards
[782] Mwaipopo (the chief 116) sought a sheep and they tried to put the grove to rights ('close up') by sacrificing it. This was the tree beside
[783] which the sacred meat was always put when they sacrificed in the grove. Now one branch has grown up again from the roots.

Mwamakunda went on: 'But you did wrong at the beginning not to take the European to pray, and to tell Mwakanjoki (60) that he should not be afraid, the European has made himself our friend.' Kasitile, reporting the interview to us said: 'I concealed that we went together to the grove to pray (*vide supra*, p. 115) and Mwamakunda told me: "Let the European take something, let it stay overnight in the house, and go with him, and pray very much. . . . Mwakanjoki has gone off in a huff from your home, you have offended him yourself. Go with the
753 European, take him to your father's home. Now your father has taken
769 offence, he is shaking your body by night because you cut the tree; you
688 have done wrong."' i.e. two causes for the anger of the shades and
186 Kasitile's consequent sickness were given: (i) the cutting of the tree by Mwakanjoki's grave and (ii) Godfrey Wilson's presence at rituals and at Kasitile's homestead. So before the sacrifice of expiation for
783 pruning the grove was performed Godfrey Wilson went to be intro-
782 duced to Kasitile's shades for the second time.

Record of G.W. 9/4/37

[778] In the evening as the sun was setting, I went to Kasitile's house with a cloth and 2*s*. He put them in the house, took down the calabash which

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

always hangs under the eaves and is only used for prayer, filled it with 783
water and put into it a stone and a live coal from the fire. Then he 782
took some roots from the roof (previously put there ready) and we
went off to the same spot as before (*vide supra*, p. 115). Kasitile chewed [778]
the root, took water and blew it out, and began to pray:

'Do not be startled, come in your own persons, gather together, [769]
with Mwakanjoki (60). You made friends with him before, now he has
entered, he has made himself our friend. Indeed I made a mistake, I
have come to enter; I cut you on the head, I have done wrong. The
sons of Kagile (i.e. 59 + his descendants) complain of me, saying, "It
is he who has gone off with the millet, bananas, and maize; and child-
ren cry at night behind the huts; we are barren because he has cut
Mwakanjoki." I have sought this cow which you wanted. Mwakanjoki
(60), Lwembe (3?), Mwakalebela (19), Mwatonoka (29), Mwalu-
bange (58), Mwakagile (59), Mwaijonga (82), Kyala (2), we have
come to attend to you (pointing to the grave). Kikungubeja, Nsyanigwa
Kyamba Kitali,[1] Lyambilo (12) come to your home if you are at
Mwalubange's (58), come if you are at Mwaitende's (61), come
Mwakanjoki (60) and the Kinga and Lwembe (3); Mwakalebela (19)
come, give me cattle and millet, and the powerful medicine which you
had. Since you are brooding over me go out from my body, go out!
I pay my debt. We have come to take you to your home since you have
gone off in a huff, come! I will never cut your branches again. I fear
you and I will respect the branches. Come to your house, that of
Mwamaloba (85), of Kanjoki (mother of 60), come. And he (G.W.) is
innocent (*mwelu*), do not fear him. He is the owner of the ritual, he is [123]
Mwamaloba (85), he is my senior, I am the junior. Sometimes I wish
to embrace him, sometimes I fear that he is going to imprison me.[2]
May the bananas increase! I am left alone! It is I who am here! Move [789]
out of my body! And give us medicine! May the offering increase
overnight, may the cattle increase and the maize, and in the morning
let me tell Mwaipaja (G.W.) that the bananas and medicine have
increased. If there is anything else you are a liar, if this chill begins
again then I have gone, I am not here. Amen! (*sic*).'

Very early the following morning the sacrificial bull was killed. [177]
Kasitile had arranged that our Mohammedan cook should come to cut
its throat.[3] Then, later in the morning, the crucial drinking and
'speaking out' began. Kasitile had provided two pots of beer.

[1] Three Kinga priests whose names are titles of office.

[2] In the earlier years of our acquaintance Kasitile had denied both the smothering [114]
of an ailing chief and human sacrifice for the drum. It is possible that he had co-
operated in either one or both of these ritual acts. He himself reported that the Sangu
diviner had told him: 'You have a European as a close friend. . . . You enjoy his
company much, but there is something left . . .' (i.e. the friendship is not yet complete).

[3] Ostensibly so that he could partake of the meat, but the reason given seemed
inadequate.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Record of G.W. 10/4/37

783 I was summoned two hours after sunrise and found at Kasitile's:
782 Mwaipopo (the chief 116), Kissogota, Ngulyo, and Njobakosa the commoner priests; Mwamakunda the younger (his father is too weak to come himself), and a half-wit who has attached himself to Kasitile. Mwaipopo asked me: 'Did you escape the rain yesterday evening?' I said, 'No, I was caught by it, I'd come without a coat, and I thought it quite safe as I lived so near' (a quarter of a mile away). Mwaipopo replied: 'Ah, but you were at prayer. Do they not listen? Did you think you would escape the rain when you were at prayer?' and he laughed at me. During the afternoon it began to thunder close by. Kasitile glanced round and whispered to me out of the corner of his mouth: 'They are listening!'

Drinking continued all day, and all day, with intervals, they discussed the case (*ukujoba inongwa*) or spoke out (*ukusosya*) or prayed (*ukwiputa*). This half formal prayer (*ukwiputa*) over beer is an essential part of the ritual. They began by discussing the cutting of the tree by
[688] Kasitile. 'They are angry, Mwakanjoki (60) is angry, he is startled
[769] that Mwamaloba (i.e. Kasitile 86) cut him himself. Mwakanjoki says, 'Who is there?' [i.e. Kasitile did it without formally telling the shades about it]. They (*sic*) went off in a huff . . . we have come to fetch him (*sic*) back.'

Then Kastile told them about his prayer and how he had admitted his fault saying: 'Indeed, I, your wife, have done wrong, Mwakanjoki (60), indeed I come to enter, I Mwamaloba (86), I am a woman.' 'If you went to Mwalubange's (58) come, if you went to Mwaitende's (61) come.' 'Yes,' Kissogota broke in, 'you are a woman, and also you are a man, take the calabash cup and pray. It is you then (who are at fault).' 'Thank you,' said the others, 'thank you Mwakisambwe (Kasitile is identified with his great-grandfather, 30), thank you Mwakagile (Mwaipopo, 116), is identified with his grandfather, 59), for praying with water.' (Mwaipopo had also prayed at his place.)

So the discussion continued. 'We try everything, a sacred stem of bananas from Kalinga (senior widow of 115) is cut, it goes (to the shades), people milk their cows, they collect millet (*vide* pp. 84-5, 121), we try everything, we try everything.'

Then Mwamakunda started a new topic, the old *umwali* tree: 'But friends, do you say they have gone away now? They went away long ago. Did this *umwali* tree fall when Kasitile (60, father of the present one) was alive?' 'When he was dead,' they agreed. 'Well, then, where has your wisdom disappeared to?' 'Yes indeed,' broke in Kasitile, 'Indeed, but we attended to that. They said, "Mwaipopo seek a sheep." They attended to it again. And when I came from the plain, I killed a cow, the meat went there, we attended to it.'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

All the time there was a constant refrain of questioning, especially from Mwamakunda (who as Kasitile's assistant acts as his mouthpiece to the others: 'But why has Mwakanjoki (60) gone off in a huff? Why?' There was a continuous effort to extract reasons. 783 782

The meat from the top of the foreleg (*ijammapa*) was cut up into little portions and some was put aside for the boys, sons of Kasitile. Then Kasitile led the way with a bill-hook and Mwamakunda and I followed. Mwamakunda carried the meat in a leaf. We went to the sacred grove, Kinyangwa. When we reached the edge Kasitile told us to wait and he cut a path into the middle with the bill-hook, then we followed. [778]

Mwamakunda threw the meat slowly, piece by piece, into the rotting stump of an old *umwali* tree, from which a lusty growth had sprung, one shoot being 30 feet high. Kasitile prayed: 'Come Mwakanjoki (60), together with Lwembe (3?), Mwakalebela (19), and the Kinga, come, with—with—with—come. We pray of you millet, maize, bananas, all your food.' (Mwamakunda threw a piece of meat at each word.) 'We are still mourning you, we have tears. We finish now, that is all. Bring bananas, bring millet, maize, children, may the cows calve, stand by us Mwakanjoki (60), N—, N—, N— Lwembe (3?), Mwakalebela (19), Nsyanigwe,[1] Kyamba Kitali,[1] Ngulube (9), N—, N—, N—. Don't come again Mwakanjoki, let us sleep well. This is Mwambagoje [i.e. Mwamakunda the younger. It was his first visit to the sacred grove in place of his father]. I have brought him to you. Do not be startled at this Mwaipaja (G.W.), he is innocent, he is our friend. Move out of my body, let this chill go from my body! We have finished! Amen!' [769]

Kasitile and Mwamakunda gave instructions and suggestions to each other in low voices from time to time during the prayer and throwing of the meat. We went out, Kasitile and Mwamakunda looking ahead, and Kasitile warned me: 'Do not look behind, Mwaipaja.' For the next two days Kasitile said he and Mwamakunda would wash with medicines, and refrain from intercourse with their wives 'because they entered the sacred grove'. [834]

Then we rejoined Mwaipopo and the priests and the meat was cut up. Mwaipopo said: 'Indeed people gossip, where does the whispering go? To whom do the words go? Perhaps they went to you (the commoner) priests?' Kasitile had something on his mind: 'When I returned from Lubaga who came to say: "Thank you, you have arrived back?" [i.e. no one came to greet him formally on his return]. Njobakosa answered this saying that no offence was meant. [689]

Then Njobakosa turned to Mwaipopo (116) and raised the question of his son, Mwaseba (152) who had seduced Mwaipopo's wife, Mpeta. [684]

[1] The hereditary Kinga priests. [793]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 Why had Mwaipopo refused so long to enter into relationship with
782 Mwaseba? Mwaipopo explained that the delay was on account of
Mpeta. 'Let my wife come first,' he said, and told how, when the case
[684] first came to light, he had taken Mpeta to his kinsman Mwaiteteja, who took her to Mwaseba's village headman, Kakuju, and he to her people. She must come back the same way, and has not yet done so. Ngulyo said that at first he had been inclined to criticize Mwaipopo, but now saw that he was right. Kasitile spoke of the enormity of Mwaseba's offence, for Mpeta is a kinswoman of Mwaipopo's wife
[835] Kalobo, and on the death of her son Mwakalobo, Mwaseba was put in his place, so he has seduced a woman who, by legal fiction, is his mother, as well as the wife of his father. His act is *doubly* incestuous.

[686] They then spoke of the separation of those who pray at Mbyanga (*vide supra*, p. 80) and blamed them for it. 'Have they millet though? Kyala judges them himself.' Then Kasitile reproved Mwaipopo (the chief) for another matter. 'But you, Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 59) have little wisdom left. Why did you not give some of the beer which we drank recently at your house[1] to the people of Ipinda, the BaKalinga? The food from a distance you should divide.' And Mwaipopo agreed meekly [i.e. Mwaipopo has built with his young wives away from his inherited wife Kalinga (senior widow of 115) and is apt to neglect her; he must send some of the 'food from a distance'—ceremonial presents from affines—to his senior wives, not give it all to his friends and young wives.]

Then there were mutual compliments and self-depreciation between Kasitile and Kissogota (the commoner priest). Kissogota pointed to Mwaipopo and Kasitile, and said: 'You are impressive you, you are impressive, we are mere cannibals (*balyabandu*).' Kasitile replied: 'You are impressive yourself, if I look at you my body changes.'

Suddenly Kissogota got up and pretended to go: 'I am off, friends!' Ngulyo started to protest: 'We have not yet finished, we are speaking.' But Kissogota said, 'No, you told me to "be off"!' He went outside but returned admitting he had been only pretending. Mwaipopo: 'Yes, do you think we don't know you? Drink! Why do you not drink?'

The Mwamakunda began to ask angrily: 'Why do you shut up words in the heart? Why? Do you wish that Mwakisambwe (i.e. Kasitile, 86, identified with his great-grandfather, 30) should become a fool? Kissogota answered: 'We have not yet done so, Mwambagoje (Mwamakunda), we have not yet; do you think we are angry? Who went to fetch Kasitile from the plain? It was we, we went ourselves.'

Njobakosa took up the matter: 'We have power we have, if we
[754] please we can give the chief worms.' (This was said fiercely; Kasitile and Mwaipopo listened without comments. It was the crucial moment

[1] Sent as a present by Mwaipopo's affines.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

to which all had led up.) Then Mwaipopo (116) spoke: 'We have taken home Mwakanjoki (60), we have taken home Mwakisambwe (30).' And the others agreed: 'We have taken him, we have taken him.' Mwaipopo went on to speak of the tree cutting: 'It was always a swept place, Mwakanjoki (60) built there, let it be a swept place again, let it be clear, let our prayers go beneath to enter the house here [i.e. no matter that the trees have been pruned], prayers go beneath in the swept place. See, we buried our father Mwaijonga (82) in the swept place, was it heavy? [i.e. a sacred grove] No, a tree grew later. So if I like I cut that it may be clear again.' To which Kasitile replied: 'Thank you, Mwakagile' (116, identified with his grandfather 59). Mwaipopo continued: 'Let no one whisper. Who whispered? Where do we all look? Here! It is our earth, here, it is our tree, here, it is our fertility of the soil (*mboto*), here. No one stirred up Mwakisambwe (30); he stirred up himself.'

783 782 [688] [778]

So they prepared to go, saying, 'It's getting dark, it's getting dark.' But Kasitile stopped them. 'Wait, there is one thing left, tell Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 59) that he should seek a cow, let us finish.' They took this up: 'Yes, since we have taken your grandfather to his home, let us go to your father, Mwaijonga (82), and to Mwakabule (117), let us finish them.'

Mwaipopo ignored this. 'It's getting dark, let us go.' And Kasitile softened it by addressing Njobakosa and his fellows: 'But Njobakosa have you cattle?' 'Yes!'

'And has Kissogota got some?'

'Yes.'

'Well, then, is it you who will seek this cow?'

'No!'

'Indeed, it hurts Mwakagile' (116, identified with his grandfather 59) [i.e. it hurts him to have to spend his cows].

'Do not "cut leaves at home" [i.e. summon a crowd and discuss the matter publicly], he will be startled, he will swear at us, speak with him privately.'

[576]

So they went off. Jane (wife of Kasitile, 86) took the breast of beef to Mwaipopo's (116) place. One leg went to the priests, Njobakosa, Ngulyo, and Kissogota, one to Mwamakunda and Ndisu (Kasitile's kinsman), and another kinsman who was not present, the hump and neck were sent to me; and two legs and the chine were kept for Kasitile himself and his female relatives.

A couple of weeks later, when Kasitile came to visit, he explained one or two points in the ritual. Asked about Mwamakunda's forceful words 'Why do you shut up words in the heart?' and the reply of Kissogota and Njobakosa, he said: 'That is very important. Mwamakunda is my man, he stands by me, he eats meat with me, he compelled

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 them to speak out, because if they do not admit that it is they, then the
782 ritual fails.'

QUESTION: What does that mean?

754 KASITILE: It is witchcraft!

QUESTION: Witchcraft? (in apparent surprise).

KASITILE: Yes, it is their witchcraft, the priests gathered with the shade, they bring a chill on my body.

QUESTION: Pythons? (still in surprise).

KASITILE: Yes, they fly in their witchcraft to come here, they speak
[775] with the shades, saying: 'Punish him! Let him find us something to eat!' They call the shades to help. Hence I sought something for them to eat that they should be satisfied.

QUESTION: But I thought witchcraft and the shades were quite separate? (still in apparent surprise).

KASITILE: No, they are together, look you, did not Kissogota boast? He said, 'Indeed we came, it is us, it is us. Why did you cut that branch? But now there is no accusation against you.' He boasted very much. He said: 'We have power, if we like we can give him worms.' [It is Njobakosa who was heard to say this, but Kasitile's personal quarrel was with Kissogota.] Did I not tell you that I had worms when I came up from the plain? I had them! I went to doctors and the diviners said: 'You are a chief, you were in the plain, why do you not kill a bull on your return?' Then when I killed a bull the worms disappeared! Where did they come from? They came from the priests, they called the shades to their aid. So I admitted to Kissogota, saying: 'Indeed I have done wrong, I your wife, I Maloba' (86, the feminine form of the name is used).

QUESTION: So, a white person (*umwelu*, *vide infra*, p. 141) cannot be a priest, but only a witch, a heavy one?

KASITILE: Yes, indeed, how can a white person take hold of the ritual? His fellows will drive him away. See! To a ritual do we call everyone?

No!

KASITILE: And is my home near to Kissogota's?

No, he lives at a distance.

KASITILE: Yes, indeed, it is the black ones (*batitu*) whom we call because it is they who punish us chiefs.

QUESTION: Well, then, is the anger of the shades always provoked by
[648] the witches? What about sores (*imindu*) on the mouth?[1] What about
[775] madness if a commoner does not perform the death ritual?

KASITILE: No, I do not lie, that is different. Sores on the mouth come
[753] from the shades, the witches are not there, and if a commoner fails to perform the ritual, madness also comes from the shades, it comes

[1] Cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 181, 219.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 but I see them. It's taboo to speak. They must seek blood and they go
775 off; we fear them!

QUESTION: Why do you chiefs never speak out if you are throttled?

753 KASITILE: If I speak how many would there be to name? Very many!
[689] For us it's taboo to accuse a man of witchcraft, but the commoners
[554] accuse one another. Look you, do few people keep you company?
Many!

Like us chiefs, everyone comes. It's taboo for us to speak out, we fear. Look you, when Mwambene (Mwaipopo 116) and I were alone we feared to throw out the beer, we said: 'If we throw it out will they leave?' But when Kissogota came, he said: 'All right, I will throw it
[152] out myself.' We fear the fierce great priests, the terrible witches, they are angry.[1] We shrink when they appear.

[622] The village headmen of the country call on the priests for help against us, they whisper by the fire, the priests come in their witchcraft, they call on my shades saying, 'Let us punish him', also they eat,
[793] together with the shades. Our shades never initiate anything, never; they look to the priests. But with a commoner the shade may initiate matters himself. Yes, people whisper indeed, but is that witchcraft? No! They whisper openly and ask, 'Why did you not perform the ritual?' But even although people are silent, still the shade comes
[688] saying, 'Why did you not perform the ritual? I am on the road.' He initiates the thing himself.

QUESTION: But don't people eat meat at the ritual of a commoner?

KASITILE: Yes, and if he does not celebrate it they accuse him, but they accuse him openly.

QUESTION: If the heir buries him with a few cattle?

688 KASITILE: If a rich commoner dies and the heir buries him with only
775 one cow, the shades are angry and the people also; their chilling breath comes on his body, perhaps he falls ill himself, perhaps his
774 child falls ill, but the people and witches do not meet together, people are angry here, and the shades there; all of them and the shades too, because he has celebrated with one cow only. People are angry because
[787] they wish to eat the meat. But the oracle says, 'The shades are angry.' It does not speak of people, it knows that people also are angry, but it speaks of the shades. And at the celebration he prays in the evening, the next day he calls people and kills a cow, and throws the sacred
[783] meat in the banana grove, saying, 'Here is your meat, father.' People say, 'Indeed he did wrong, his father was angry', but they do not confess saying, 'It was we', no, they say 'the shades' . . .

[826] We chiefs have bodies which are different, the commoners arrived
[554] first in the country, they ate raw food, we fear them saying, 'They eat raw food.' It is we who followed and brought fire. To us they confess

[1] *Imipyago indosi mitalala.* The noun class implies size, ferocity, and dislike.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

773 among some other peoples with a corresponding ritual), but the young men seize cattle belonging to the older generation, thus asserting their authority. The opposition of generations is taken for granted and given expression in constitutional form: the ritual is a celebration not of 'rebellion' but of growth. For all their reluctance to hand over power the fathers 'rejoice and are glad because their sons have grown up'. Change in the structure of society after the revolution of the heroic age, is not celebrated, and is scarcely admitted, but the process of growth, of death and procreation, is expressed in every ritual. Indeed, the ritual cycle is like a fugue with the theme of death and rebirth constantly recurring.

771 The pagan universe is just and orderly. There is a nemesis
772 attached to spilling blood or binding a man with ropes. The anger of men,[1] or of the shades who are roused by men, is what brings
812 most misfortune, and often, the Nyakyusa think, such anger is justified. Even medicines may be selective, injuring only the guilty. The good man who celebrates the proper rituals, fulfils his kinship obligations, and keeps on good terms with his neighbours, is protected, while the evil-doer falls ill. But some evil men, witches and sorcerers, attack the innocent out of jealousy and spite. Evil to the Nyakyusa, lies primarily within men: it is 'anger in the heart' which materializes as pythons that throttle others.
[578] Because they are aware of angry impulses in themselves the Nyakyusa find it difficult to believe that any society without witchcraft can exist; to say that there is no *ubulosi* is like suggesting that there is no ill will or anger in a community. And since anger brings misfortune there is an obligation on those whose anger might have caused sickness or ill luck to express goodwill by spitting or blowing out water, and saying, 'May the patient recover' or 'I am without anger'. Among commoners the man required to show goodwill is usually a senior relative, rather than a suspected witch (as among the Azande). But a neighbour or
[574] friend who might be a witch or sorcerer should also express goodwill when he visits the sick, and fellow hunters who have ill luck may stop to declare their goodwill to one another, as we have seen. If a chief or priest-chief is sick the village headmen and priests must wish him well and confess any anger they have felt towards
[783] him. The blowing out of water is a symbol of confession, 'bringing

[1] For a full account of the belief in witchcraft and the 'breath of men', cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 91-121, 198-261.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

out all the anger that is within', 'admitting that I have done wrong', begging pardon (*ukupelesya*) and *also* a symbol of emission and so of driving off the shades (*vide supra*, pp. 104, 108-110; 139). Good health depends upon good social relationships, and of one who is ailing it is commonly said: 'It seems as if they (unspecified) had hated her.' Further, the proper working of the natural order is held to depend upon the proper working of the social order. Drought, or 'cold', or pestilence falls on a chiefdom if there is quarrelling between chief and priests, and the anger of the Lwembe with his 'sons' will shrivel the crops of Selya. The heroes, the shades, many of the men of power (*abamanga*), and many medicines help to maintain an orderly universe; only the witches and sorcerers work against it. In short, order and right living are an integral part of Nyakyusa religion as they are of Christianity.

The ultimate good is the power of fertility, of generation, which lies in the heroes and shades; the punishment for evil-doing is ill-health of body or mind and sterility. And towards the heroes and shades, who are both life-givers and avengers, the attitude of men is clearly ambivalent: the shades are driven away—'let them warm themselves over there in the long grass', men say when they throw out the ashes (*vide supra*, pp. 109-11) but they bring them home again to 'warm themselves by the hearth'.

In analysing the rituals of the Nyakyusa, I have been driven to the conclusion that they are, in fact, dogged by a sense of guilt,[1] for this is the only hypothesis on which the linking of misfortune and sin, the preoccupation with 'filth', and the recurring acts of purification can be explained. One of the sources of this sense of guilt is, I suggest, awareness of anger within, for it is believed that such anger injures others. An act of confession is essential to many rituals, and what must be confessed are anger, hard thoughts, ill will against others. The anger is acknowledged to come primarily from men—it is the angry parent who rouses the shades to action by muttering over the fire—but the guilt, the filth, is projected on to the shade or the hero. It is when they 'brood on' men that men are contaminated. A shade or a man that is *ngolofu*—good, righteous—is one without a grudge, without anger against anyone, free of witchcraft, and free of sex transgression—'there is no accusation against him'.

[1] I doubted this earlier, cf. 'Nyakyusa Ritual and Symbolism', *American Anthropologist*, v, 56 (1954), pp. 237-8.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 Sacrifice is offered that a particular shade, or all the shades of
782 the lineage, may be 'satisfied, assuaged'. The word used is *ukuhoboka* which is also used of a man who has been hungry and has eaten well of fine food, of a man who has married a bride who pleases him, and of a living father or father-in-law who has been angry but is now pacified. In its applicative form, *ukuhobokela*, means to forgive. And the act of sacrifice is an offering, a gift, to the shade strictly comparable to the gift a young man makes to his father when 'begging pardon' for some offence. A son who has committed the most heinous offence of all, seducing one of his
[684] father's wives, can 'beg pardon' only by offering a cow; but many
[783] smaller offerings are made by juniors to seniors to beg forgiveness for lesser offences.[1] When a cuckolded father receives his son he kills the cow brought to him and eats with his neighbours. It is held to be essential that the living who are insulted (and a man's neighbours are insulted with him) should share in the meat and express satisfaction.[2]

Other conceptions also are, however, manifest in sacrifices. At the offering to a recently dead chief the sacred cut of the meat is divided between the shade, whose portion is placed on the earth near his grave (ideally beside the stone set up at his marriage), and his young grandsons, who are identified with him. The conclusion that this is a communion between the living and the dead is inescapable. At a sacrifice to Lwembe it is certain of the hereditary priests, and they alone, who may share the sacred cut. At the sacrifices made by private persons the communion between shades and grandchildren is explicit when an offering of fish is made.[3] It is less clear in the sacrifice at a funeral, but is made plain
[764] in the eating of grain or bananas with the *ikipiki* medicine which symbolizes the lineage. Then the shade is told 'all the food we have eaten you have eaten . . . farewell.' The communion of sacrifice is indeed but one manifestation of the identification of the participants in a ritual with the shades for, as has been shown in a previous book, the essential character of all the rituals of kinship is a death and rebirth, a death in which the participants—the kinsmen chiefly concerned—are made one with the shades and born anew,[4] and this theme is repeated in the ritual of the 'coming
769 out'.
783 One paradox remains to be clarified. The shades must be

[1] *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 181-6.
[2] *Good Company*, pp. 107, 240.
[3] *Rituals of Kinship*, p. 185.
[4] *ibid.*, pp. 203-5.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

assuaged and men should be *mwelu*, pure, innocent, without anger in their hearts. But, as has been shown, this quality of purity is the very *opposite* of spiritual power (*amanga* or *ubusisya*). It is attributed neither to Kyala and the other heroes nor to the priests; according to Kasitile (p. 138) a pure person cannot be a commoner priest and the chiefs themselves, though *mwelu*—pale—by comparison with the black commoners who are witches, are also 'heavy' (*nsito*) with the medicines they have drunk. Men become *mwelu* by confession; 'speaking out' is a condition of efficacy in sacrifice and the officiant blows out water as a symbol of bringing up all the anger that was in his heart. The parents of twins and the priests of Lubaga, having celebrated their awful rituals emerge, crying, '*Tuli belu*'—we are pure. The very quality which rituals produce in men is the *opposite* of that which characterizes their heroes, their priests, and their rulers. Galahad whose 'strength was as the strength of ten because his heart was pure' is wholly foreign to Nyakyusa thought.

Truthfulness was never mentioned as a characteristic of the righteous or the pure, nor is it a quality of the heroes or priests. Men censure one another for *ubutungulu* which is commonly translated as 'lying', but means rather 'speaking indiscreetly'. In one Nyakyusa text the child who is told certain ritual secrets by his father and reveals them when he should not is *ntungulu*, and this is an accepted use of the word. No burning concern with truth or falsehood is apparent in the Nyakyusa tradition though they are passionately interested in what they conceive to be right and wrong.

The conception of witchcraft and sorcery implies a freedom, a choice of good or evil, for the individual. Much is determined. In Nyakyusa thought, the sins of the fathers are visited on the children, and a child may fall ill because his great-grandfather shed blood or was bound with ropes, and was not adequately cleansed, or because his father has neglected a ward; moreover, kinsmen are 'members one of another', and a ritual neglected by one may bring suffering to others; but there is *also* the notion of individual responsibility. A witch or sorcerer acts consciously and voluntarily—our informants scouted the idea of a witch being unaware of his actions—and he may repent and desist. There are now, periodically in Africa, 'revivalist' movements in which a pagan doctor or diviner urges men to throw away their evil medicines and repent from their witchcraft. One such movement

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 swept through BuNyakyusa in the early 1930's; perhaps other
783 similar movements preceded it—we do not know. What is clear
[177] is that traditionally there was continuous public pressure to
[185] overcome hatred within the village and the kinship group; to rid
oneself of it by confession and an expression of goodwill. In pagan
[578] thought Utopia is a society without witches or sorcerers and, though it was never achieved, everyone is convinced that formerly these evil-doers were fewer than now, because they were restrained by law, whereas 'witches' now go scot-free.

183 The interests of the Nyakyusa are personal and practical. Health, fertility, and amity between kinsmen and neighbours are what they seek. It is with rain and drought, with the rise of
773 the Lake or the striking of lightning which destroys property; with stock, crops, and the wild animals which prey upon them that the myths are concerned. We could trace no tales of the sun, moon, and stars, and no rituals are directed to them. Reference is made to volcanic disturbance in the myths of the heroes—'the ground rumbled' when Nkekete and Kyala walked, and there are stories of small lakes disappearing and reappearing elsewhere—but the concern shown is surprisingly little if an eruption indeed destroyed villages last century as Mr. Harkin's single informant suggests (*vide supra*, p. 16).

Reality is thought to be revealed to men in dreams, by prophets
787 who 'go down thinking like the roots of a tree' to the world of the
791 shades, and by oracles. What men seek to know are the causes of misfortune—public and private—and the identity of witches. Occasionally, it is said, a prophet has looked into the future and foretold drought, or flood, or the coming of Europeans—'white things on the Lake'—against whom it would be foolish to fight, but for the most part they are concerned with the misfortunes
[183] that exist, and urging men to pray in the groves. The contemplative is not honoured in Nyakyusa tradition; the man of spiritual power is a detective—a discoverer of evil-doers—or an administrator whose awfulness adds to his authority.

183 Men are preoccupied with their relationships to other living men—their kinsmen, neighbours, and fellow office-holders—
771 and with their dead fathers. They are not concerned with their relationship to Kyala. The rituals celebrated by kinsmen are directed to the shades not to any supreme God, and it is quarrelling between kinsmen that angers the shades and makes the celebration of certain rituals necessary. The communal rituals are

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

directed towards heroes who are also forefathers, and it is quarrelling between chiefs and priests or village headmen that disturbs the natural order and causes disease and failure of crops. Kasitile was a famous priest, a man of perception, more than usually aware of the deeper implications of the rituals, but he never spoke of any personal relationship with Kyala, and he brushed aside the diviner's suggestion that his sickness was due to Kyala. He was dogged by a sense of guilt which, in pagan terms, could be redeemed only by sacrifice to his father and persuading his fellow priests to 'speak out' and admit their anger against him. Only when he was referring explicitly to Christian doctrine did he hint at redemption by Kyala (*vide supra*, pp. 128-9, 141). The genius of Nyakyusa religion is an awareness of the corrupting power of 'anger in the heart' and the necessity of confession and reconciliation if men are to be healthy in mind and body; they have no developed conception of God comparable to that of the Nuer. To them it is not 'the first and greatest commandment' which is familiar but 'the second which is like unto it'.

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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

779 797 795 [681] during worshipping hours, but shall reserve same until evening when worshipping is over.

Any member found contravening these rules shall be dealt with by the Session and if found guilty shall be suspended or expelled from the Church.

The term of Chairman for the Annual Conference shall be two years, but he shall be elected again if required.

The Annual General Conference shall be composed of a body of men chosen from each division, viz. Pastors, Elders, Deacons, and other notable men.

A general confession with words and music composed by one of the Pastors of the African National Church, Robert Sambo, is used as an alternative to the Ten Commandments. Nyasuru translated it for us from the original Tumbuka.

[783] [688] Jehovah God we have come before Thee to worship and to confess our sins which we have done during the week.

Response: May they all go away (*fyoss fibukeje*).[1]

We have sinned before Thee in speaking to people, we have offended Thy creatures, we have spoken bad words, we have grieved their hearts, Father.

May they all go away.

We have sinned against Thee in thoughts coveting the wives and husbands of others; we have broken the Ten Commandments, Father. We have done wrong in our village, Father. Witchcraft, adultery, and hatred, all these are in our village. We pray forgive all, Father.

May they all go away.

Our chiefs do not love one another in their hearts. Take such hearts from them and give them one heart.

May they all go away.

A new commandment you have given unto us all to love one another as in Heaven, where there is no quarrelling. Teach us all to keep Thy Word, Father.

May they all go away.

That our chiefs may be one in loving and ruling their country and their people, and lead us all well. This we pray, father, grant us.

May they all go away.

The old worship is broken down; we have come as wild animals which are without God. Call us again to worship, Father.

May they all go away.

Africa is the land of our forefathers. We have damaged her with our new ways, by leaving all the ways of our forefathers, ways which gave peace to the country, Father.

[1] The phrase used in the pagan ritual for cleansing the country, cf. p. 105.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

chieftainship, and the dependence upon medicines as a means of enforcing law were connected with the ineffectiveness of secular authority. Certainly the Kyungu's emergence from seclusion, and the dropping of the taboos which surrounded him were connected with his acquisition of economic power; but we know too little of the conditions that make for elaboration of ritual to postulate any general connexion between the absence of ritual in public life and the effectiveness of secular authority.

The cycle of sacrifices to the heroes and dead chiefs among the Nyakyusa is more than an ancestor cult, for it includes non-relatives among its priests and beneficiaries; but it has many of the features of an ancestor cult, among them the identification of piety with conservatism. A good man follows exactly in the footsteps of his father who becomes his god. This is reconciled with a myth of a new beginning, ten generations ago, when civilized life came to the Nyakyusa valley, and the new beginning is celebrated each generation with the 'coming out' of the young chief and his contemporaries.

All Nyakyusa rituals are cathartic in the sense that they make explicit and seek to dissipate, by their very expression and rejection, certain anti-social tendencies. In the Nyakyusa view the root of evil is 'anger in the heart' unadmitted and corrosive, and only by an open confession can it be overcome.[1] Hence in every situation of misfortune, public or private, men are pressed to 'speak out' (*akasuya*) and admit their anger. At the 'coming out' the conflict of generations is expressed in the prolonged debate over the date of the celebration and the detailed arrangements, and in the dancing and slaughter of cattle, and is finally resolved when authority and land are handed over to the young men by their fathers. The fissiparous tendencies of a chiefdom are made explicit and canalized in constitutional form by the division of the old chief's country into two, under his senior sons; and criticism of the young chiefs is made explicit in the formal admonition by the father's village headmen. The rejection of conflict is clearest at the annual purification when men throw out the ashes contaminated by family bickering and the cannibalism of witches, and *fight* one another 'that the homesteads may be peaceful'. This fighting is 'to bring out war from within (*akasuya*)',

[1] cf. *Good Company*, pp. 99-112. The belief that a witch or sorcerer must confess if the patient was to recover was the reason for the torture of witches in many African societies.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and is therefore to be interpreted as 'confusion of anger', rather than as 'rebellion'.

Sometimes there is an expression of opposite tendencies, both implicitly approved. The sacrifices to the heroes and at the graves of the chiefs emphasize seniority and precedence, and express the dependence of junior on senior kinsmen, but the myth, recalled in every celebration, tells of the surpassing power of the son or younger brother in the beginning of time, and the junior brother of a chief often holds office as a priest. Then there is the drama of driving away the shade and bringing him back transformed, which is so characteristic of the rituals of kinship and appears again at the cleansing of the country. Such contradictions are doubtless expressions of ambivalent attitudes among the participants themselves, and of the attempt in ritual to reconcile conflicting social principles—in these instances authority with the rights and duties of juniors, and change with continuity.

In a society without written records legal certainty depends very largely on publicity. This is apparent in the law relating to marriage contracts and family inheritance,[1] and still more so in the law of the chiefdom. The ritual of 'coming out' celebrates radical changes in social status, and the public recognition of the leaders, members, and territorial boundaries of villages, as well as of the heirs to chieftainship. Thus certainty in these matters is assured. There is no positive value of the co-regency of father and son (as in ancient Egypt),[2] but the installation of the young chiefs before the death of their father serves to mitigate conflicts over the succession. Confusion over village boundaries and village leadership often appears when the ritual has not been celebrated, for there is no public definition to refer to.

How close is the link between religious belief and practice and social structure? There is no doubt that the sacrifices to the dead chiefs and heroes and the traditional rituals of kinship supported the former political and kinship structure of the Nyakyusa. Their performance compelled co-operation between kinsmen,[3] between neighbouring chiefs, and between chiefs and people. How far then does the change in religion, begun when the first Christian convert professed his new faith, compel a change in the social

[1] Godfrey Wilson, 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Law', *Africa*, vol. ix, 1936, p. 19.
[2] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, pp. [illegible].
[3] cf. *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. [illegible].

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

"Ha! what's this?" They were burned; so they said: "These are chiefs because they brought this fire." It is this they remember, even to-day. . . .' And another informant explained: 'The fire means (*kukuti*) that a new chief has come, he brings fire, we throw away the old fire in the house.'

Having lighted their fires the young men cut bamboos and build temporary shelters for themselves, making one or more huts according to their numbers. It is forbidden for them to sleep in old huts, nor may they build on the site on which they lived as boys. Usually their first huts are on what was formerly pasture land, and later their fathers move aside to make room for the new generation. On the new site the two senior headmen of the new chief, together with a doctor, plant with magical ritual two branches of a *ficus* (known in Nyakyusa as *ifyuuky*) — *gnaphalocarpa* — which is important economically since the bark of saplings provides the traditional dress of Nyakyusa women. These trees, known as *ulupando* and *umpandapanda*, are planted where the future boundary will run between the two halves of the young chief's country, and the senior headman (who is leader of the senior half of the country) builds his house near where the *ulupando* has been planted. He and his colleague, together with the doctor, proceed, after planting the trees, to set up the hearth-stones of his hut. Again magic is performed. Nyakyusa informants were not agreed as to the symbolism of these trees, as they were about the symbolism of the new fire. The root *ulupanda* means to plant a crop, or to set up, or establish the hearth-stones of a house; it is used also for establishing, or treating, with medicines. Some informants interpreted the *ulupando* as the chief and *umpandapanda* as his wife, saying: 'We are planting the chief and his wife.' Others said that the two trees represented the two senior headmen of the country, another that they represented the chief's two senior wives. What is certain is that *ulupando* is regarded as more important than *umpandapanda* and that both are taboo. No one may cut the trees. If anyone breaks the taboo it is believed that lions and leopards (closely associated with chiefs) will roar at night, and treatment by a doctor will be necessary to still them. It is also widely believed that the strength of the chief is associated with the growth of the trees. 'If these trees go dry the reign will not be successful, the chief will be defeated in war. If they flourish and grow the reign will be successful, the chief is

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 a ruler.' It is relevant to add that cuttings of this tree strike easily
643 in the soil and climate of Nyakyusa country. When a chief dies
784 he is buried beside his trees, and gradually a thicket—a sacred
[644] grove—forms round them.

The young men spend much time feasting and dancing. Formerly not only did they raid cattle for food from neighbouring chiefdoms, but they also took cattle, milk, and bananas from their fathers' villages. And they still do the latter, for they say: 'We are now the owners of the country.' The milk and bananas are often sent by the old chief, but 'if the chief is stingy, they teach him a lesson by going and *taking* bananas, saying: "We are important people."' Great emphasis is laid on this right of the young men to take food: one group, the mates of the first heir of a [illegible] 'We [illegible] with grandfather, we are many men's cattle.'

342 After a month or two the members of each new village move
621 off to build on a site of their own, and the wives of those who are married join them. Wives do not come to the first temporary shelters. The senior of the new villages remains on the site of the temporary shelters where fire was made, the ritual trees planted, and the hearth-stones of the senior headman established with magic. Gradually each member builds himself a permanent hut.

621 The old men move aside to make room for their sons. If land
561 is short they may move on to the site on which a boys' village formerly was, or there may be other land available. Whatever the position, adequate land must be provided for the young men's villages. And, we were told, 'We old men are glad to move, we are glad our sons are so many and we leave the land to them.' Or again: 'The old men move because new fire has come; the young men have made themselves into new people, hence they cannot build on their old sites but on new ones. Perhaps the old men will succeed them, for they may build in the boys' village where their sons were, or if there is space they go elsewhere. But the old men rejoice greatly, for their sons have "come out".' Nevertheless there are sometimes disputes between villages of different generations regarding a particular site (*vide* Document, p. 188).

663 A few months after the 'coming out' each of the two young
562 chiefs marries two wives. A young chief may be married already;
585 but the two whom he now takes rank as his great wives (*abake*

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tion is already as important beyond as within the village, and village control over the main cash crops has not been established, as it was over certain food crops. With increasing centralization the village headman, embodiment of the solidarity and relative autonomy of each village, is losing power to the chiefs and courts, on the one hand, and to the specialist agriculturalists, school teachers, elders, and ministers of religion on the other.

Friendships beyond the age-village are fostered by common experiences at a boarding school or a labour centre, and by common interests as members of a church or a coffee co-operative which does not necessarily include fellow villagers. And most dangerous of all, fellow villagers are not bound to one another in resistance to external dangers as they were formerly. Lion, leopard, and buffalo still exist in the district, but we heard of no recent case of a village combining for defence against dangerous (as distinct from destructive) game: if action were necessary a European sportsman was usually glad of the chance of a bag. With the cessation of cattle-raiding and inter-village warfare, the curtailment of the right of self-help, and the development of courts with power to enforce judgement in cases involving members of different chiefdoms, dependence on fellow villagers for protection from material dangers and the responsibility of a village for the actions of its members, virtually cease. A sense of dependence upon neighbours for mystical protection lingers, but as elementary education, belief in Christian dogma, and the solidarity of Christian congregations increase, this supposed dependence upon the *amanga* or mystical power of neighbours also lessens. Many men who fear sorcery (including poisoning) do not fear witchcraft, and it is only against witches that neighbours are believed to protect one. Thus change in the form of beliefs is correlated with the development of more intense relationships beyond the village.

An age-village organization is probably dependent upon isolation in another fashion also: by their own account the Nyakyusa feeling that close association between successive generations is improper has been blunted by the example of Europeans and Swahili who do not share this feeling (*vide supra*, p. 69). The missionaries teach that avoidance between father- and daughter-in-law is unnecessary, if not in itself sinful, and the implication is that only 'superstition' maintains the taboo (*vide*

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 *supra*, p. 84). The Nyakyusa pattern of avoidance has undoubtedly influenced that of the small groups absorbed by them,
177 but they in turn have been influenced by these groups, and by the
• 784 example of Christians of neighbouring tribes. In Ilolo avoidance between father- and daughter-in-law is much less strict than in
178 Selya. This was attributed partly to the influence of neighbouring small groups of Nyika and Penja, who had not the same tradition of strict avoidance as the Nyakyusa, and partly to the influence of the Christians, whose number was proportionately greater in Ilolo than in Selya. As Nyakyusa informants argued: the pagans see Christian women disregard avoidance taboos, and they see that nothing dreadful happens to them (as the result of their neglect), so the pagans, too, begin to think that avoidance is of no importance.

621 The relationship between the generations is also modified
561 among the Nyakyusa, as among other African people, by the power of young men to earn money and so command wealth. As
178 we have seen, sons are in a position to *invite* their fathers to drink beer in the father's own homestead. Once fathers and sons have begun to *ukwangala*, drinking beer together, and once the horror of a woman seeing her father-in-law has diminished, then there is much less insistence on the need to buttress separation of the generations by territorial segregation. When convenient, fathers and sons will continue to live apart, but if a building site and arable land near his age-mates is lacking a son may suggest that avoidance does not really matter after all, and his father (if a Christian or a sceptic) may agree to the son building near him.

621 Nyakyusa age-villages still flourish, but they are hardly likely
561 to survive many decades with increasing pressure on land, the planting of coffee and other long-term crops, the development of
178 trade and migration, and a diminishing isolation from the ideas and values of the outside world. Age is no longer the sole basis for village grouping in Rungwe district—common belief and common occupation now provide other grounds for building together. There are Christian villages, an administrative station, a military station, and trading centres such as Mwaya, the Lake port. Tukuyu (the administrative centre) has its police lines, quarters for hospital attendants, traders' quarters, and so on,
COO while Masoko has soldiers' and traders' quarters. This account of age-villages may therefore have some significance as a docu-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

mourners sat) is sprinkled with powdered medicine and carried 765
out by the officiant and burnt, or thrown away under the bananas. If the deceased has been buried elsewhere still a bunch of banana leaves representing the *ulufumbo* is taken out. 'Until then the rubbish (*imindu*) is kept in the house and not swept out because they are grieving—a person cannot be clean, it would seem as if he did not grieve.'

Next the officiant takes an old pot and, holding it, circles round the hearth while her assistant drops pumpkin-seeds, beans, lentils and cowpeas into it and the participants sing: 'The croaking bird, the croaking bird (*ilinwanwa*).' The food is transferred to another pot and put on the fire and the officiant touches the hearth with different parts of her body (or makes gestures as if to do so), she and the participants saying as she does so: 'The knee is also put on (the fire), the heel is also put on, the backs of the knees are also put on, the loins are also put on, the belly is also put on, the back of the head is also put on.' Then she stamps noisily on the hearth, and the participants sing: 'It startles him. . . .'

Relatives and village neighbours are expected to bring small [43]
gifts of millet at this ritual and these are formally received by the officiant, who sits outside the mourning hut with two large baskets beside her and acknowledges each gift as it is brought and emptied into one or other of them. The one is for the millet of kinsmen, the other for that of neighbours. She addresses each giver in terms of his or her relationship to the deceased, announcing: 'Your grandchild has brought a measure, your daughter has brought a measure, your fellow (i.e. neighbour) has brought a measure, etc. . . .' This is spoken of as 'measuring the measures' (*ukugela imigelo*); it is 'to greet the shade', and if millet is not available at the time the ritual is performed it is done symbolically.

A fresh piece of bark is stripped from the species of *ficus* used for making bark-cloth, hammered a little and placed on a fresh banana leaf and sprinkled with powdered medicine. A grindstone is lifted on to it and the officiant grinds some of the millet just presented and allows it to fall on the bark. During the grinding the officiant says: 'The knee is also ground, the heels are also ground,' and so on, mentioning the belly and loins. From the time of the death until this ritual, hammering of bark-cloth in the home [96]
of the deceased is taboo (*musiko*), for hammering bark-cloth is a [784]
symbol of sexual intercourse and 'the hammer belonged to him [83]
who died'. The first millet ground is made into a paste and later

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

768 It is forbidden for the heir to lie with the dead man's wives before
[784] the ritual[1] is over. But at the time of the beer, when the drinking is
[833] finished, we put him into the house and he lies with them. If he has lain with them previously the semen refuses to come. . . . But if all goes well the officiants raise the cry of triumph (*akalulu*) and shake a winnowing basket of seeds by the door and cry: 'Ours, ours, we marvel at the thing, we marvel at the thing (*ifyitu, ifyitu, tunyomwike ilindu*).' If he fails they go to divine and the diviner says: '*Mindu* (sickness from the shades), he has forestalled the ritual (*akindile ubunyago*).' Then they pray in the bananas. He must have intercourse with all the women he is inheriting; yes, however old they may be, he must lie with them that night or else they will lose their strength of body or mind, or else their legs will swell. With the old ones he will never lie again! He drinks
[831] fresh milk to give him strength beforehand! Fresh milk gives strength, it produces semen.

The next morning each of the wives goes off to her father with *ilibalaga* and with meat; the first is buried in the bananas, it goes to the place of the shades, the meat is eaten. And the man too goes with his *ilibalaga* to his own father. Each wife makes her *ilibalaga* by wiping her own and her husband's genitals with her hands and then taking cooked bananas in them. He himself does likewise at the end.

768 The *ilibalaga* goes to the place of the shades, it is to drive away the
775 shade of the dead man; before this he had not reached the place of shades but was on the way. In this manner we tell the shade that we have put another in his place, we tell him to go and join the other shades now and to come back with them to warm themselves by the fire in his old house.

[643] QUESTION: How can a chief who inherits many wives lie with them all in one night?

643 KASITILE: I do not know how. Kyala gives him strength! . . . He has
768 intercourse with them all. Yes, really this does happen. . . . But if the
833 man is old and fails to lie with them all, perhaps the wives will conceal the fact. He lies on one side of a partition wall with his wives and the people (for many come to sleep in his house that night) on the other. Then if he fails altogether . . . no one beats the partition with a stick, they all stay quiet till morning; but if he succeeds at first, and fails at the last few, they may perhaps conceal it. One of the wives is told by the officiant to beat the partition with a stick when he has lain with all his wives. When she does this the officiants who are in the doorway shake up lentils and millet and pumpkin-seeds in a winnowing basket and call out: 'Ours, ours! We marvel at the thing!' If he fails altogether they stay quiet and next day go to divine; the diviner says: '*Mindu*.' Then they pray and pray, and praise all the shades of old, and that night he tries again and the semen comes.

775 The seeds of lentil, millet and pumpkin are symbols of the shades, the
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833

[1] [i.e. the farewell to the dead.--Analyst]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

764 Then they explained to me that formerly it was forbidden to
177 scrape bananas at a death, you eat them with the ash on, for if you scrape you will scrape your body also, that is, you will scratch and scratch. But now that custom is finished. Three men were scraping away.

●784 Mwaikambo said: 'In all rituals it is forbidden to scrape bananas —in the puberty and twin rituals also.'

184 KASITILE: It is forbidden to scrape bananas only at a death ritual,
784 not at other rituals. If you scrape bananas you scrape your own body. It is the corpse. We have died, we are the corpse. . . .

604 The mother's brother (*umwipwa*) hands bananas and meat over his
781 shoulder to the children who are treated, then he goes off home and they go home without looking back at one another. If they do look
764 back at one another the child will grow feeble and go mad. If the mother's brother does not come to cut the banana grove and do this, if the child sees others eating that banana it becomes feeble and goes mad. The banana and the meat are the filth which madmen take hold of, they are filth. Yes, it is like the banana which they eat at the pumpkin-seeds ritual.

QUESTION: Why the mother's brother?

KASITILE: Who should give it to them? Their kinsman (*unkamu*) should give it to them, he who looks after everything for them.

ii. *Mwandisi's interpretation.*[1]

764 QUESTION: What do you do in the death ritual, what does it mean?

MWANDISI: When a child has died I do not approach the women, my wives, until we have finished the ritual. On the night of the day we drink the beer then we come together. It is a ritual! Yes, the coming
[833] together of man and woman is a ritual (*bo bunyago*). If we come together before the beer then we overstep our child, Lubabelo, he will be impotent and not beget children. No, his children are not relatives (*bo bandu*) they are my comrades (*bobinangu*) but if Lubabelo forestalls (*ukukinda*) the ritual with his wife then he oversteps (*ukukinda*) his children. And when we have finished the ritual Lubabelo begins[2] and goes first to his wife. We follow him at our home. If we begin we would overstep him, it is taboo (*mwiko*). At the ritual of pumpkin-seeds, we drive away the shade, we say: 'Do not rise from the dead and come to us, go to the land of the shades, that we may bear and beget another child, you prevent us doing so!'

[1] His son Lubabelo, who was with us during the earlier part of the conversation, left so that we could speak freely. There was no difficulty about Mwandisi's wife being present.

[2] Mwandisi was referring to a ritual performed on the death of his son Lubalelo's child.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764 heir. It is the ritual we are performing, they are signs of widowhood (*fya bufwele*), of lamentation (*kyo kesa*). The ashes are a sign of lamentation and the *ilingolongofwa* creeper is a sign of lamentation. Yes, all these things are part of the ritual, we cannot leave them out, it is taboo. (If we did) those below [i.e. the shades] would be angry and say: 'They have startled me and caused me pain in the heart; they have injured the ritual by foreshadowing evil.'

768 At the end the heir sleeps with the women in the house—before the
764 beer. He performs the ritual with them, the officiants wait for them and ask them: 'How was it?' If he says 'No,' they say: 'Kyala does not
[787] stand in the house.' They go and divine at a doctor's who says:' So-and-so is angry.'

QUESTION: Kyala does not stand in the house (*Kyala akema nnyumba*)?

MWANDISI: It is the shades, they say Kyala does not give support. Then again he performs the ritual (*ikunyagula*, i.e. he attempts to have coitus) and they ask him: 'How was it?' They say: 'Yes, they (the shades) have stood with us, Kyala has stood with us.' [He gave both forms as alternatives: *batwemile* and *Kyala emile*.] Then they clap their hands and raise the shout of triumph (*akalulu*).

QUESTION: Is that the cry: 'Ours, ours!'?

[184 MWANDISI: No, that's the cry of the hill people. With us it's taboo.
●784] Then in the morning someone shouts: 'War has come.' They come out immediately and run away to the pasture-lands.

764 QUESTION: Is this 'coming out' (*ukusoka*) the same as that in the coming out of chiefs (*ubusoka*) and in the twin ceremony?

MWANDISI: Yes, they run because their legs were heavy (*nsito*) in the house, now they have grown lighter and are strong; because in the twin ceremony the seclusion in the house lasts four months, at the coming out of chiefs two months, and that is hard, but at death it is only one, so it is light. But at death and the birth of twins it is the war (*ubwite*)
[833 of the mats. Is it not war with women? [*ubwite* is used here for sexual
795] intercourse.] Then when they have come out they give one another beer to drink in the doorway. The heir takes beer in his mouth and
[753] spits it out and hands the vessel on to his wives and children. Each does the same. They do not swallow it. To do so causes diarrhœa. The man and his wives are burning. They have come from the bed. This giving one another to drink, when each spits and does not swallow, happens after the eating of sausages of porridge on the road.[1] It is the same in the twin ritual except that whereas it is only the principals who give one another to drink at the death ritual, in the twin ritual not only they, but all relatives, and even non-relatives do it as well!

QUESTION: How about the eating of millet porridge with powdered medicine on the road?

[1] No other informant mentioned this in the MuNgonde death ritual.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

(from under the bed) in the morning it has the filth of intercourse on it, then the father and mother should eat it. If this is not done they will fall ill with diarrhœa. If the hen is taken alive some eat it and others do not.' 585 881 783

After discussing this rite Mwasalemba went on:

You know, also, that when a girl has gone through the puberty ritual at her husband's she must not take firewood from her mother's rafters (*kwijulu*) until she is obviously pregnant. Before then, while she is lying with her husband, she must not. We say: 'How can you take your mother's firewood when you are sleeping with your husband?' It is just the same whether the mother is old or young. If the bride goes through the ritual without sleeping with her husband that is all right; it is when she begins to sleep with him that she begins to avoid her mother's loft. At that time I, the father, may meet her mother and sleep with her, but with *coitus interruptus*. I must not make her pregnant. The daughter must begin. As soon as she is pregnant then we parents can begin to conceive a child again. If we do so before our daughter, then she will never bear a child at all, and others will say: 'How could you overstep your daughter?' 784 842 [834]

Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is observed as in Selya, but is slightly less strict. 606 184

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

As has already been indicated, the symbolism of the Kukwe ritual of puberty is similar to that of Selya. The same actions are interpreted in exactly the same way and, where actions differ somewhat, they are still interpreted as expressing the same general conceptions. For example, the Kukwe bride and groom make fire together by friction and eat porridge cooked on it, whereas a bride in Selya eats bananas with powdered medicine, but both actions are symbols of sexual intercourse. Both in Selya and in Kukwe country the bride is purified and, as part of the process of purification, the shade of her father's lineage is driven from her body; but only among the Kukwe is this symbolized by sitting in a running stream and allowing the water to wash away pebbles from between her fingers and toes. 585 881 184

That there may be no doubt about the interpretation of the Kukwe ritual we again quote a number of statements by Nyakyusa informants. These refer specifically to the Kukwe form of the puberty ritual. 585 881

Chief Porokoto's wives, discussing the ritual together, were em-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN1
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

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775 they both work in us, they are not only in one partner. They work in the woman and in the man, they work in both of us.

885 Mwangwanda, an elderly pagan, explained the symbolism of the new hearth-brick at some length:

> We take a new hearth-brick and plant it by the hearth in the bride's house. It means: 'You have grown up, you are a woman, you must always cook a pot,' and she cooks on that hearth-brick. . . . It means: 'You have grown up, the food that your mother sent will come no more, you must cook for your husband yourself.' It is planted for the senior wife only, not for others. If I find that my first wife is not a virgin we do not plant a brick for her—she has lain with another. But if she has a younger sister and she brings her as a junior wife and she is a virgin and I deflower her myself, then the first sister is still the senior wife and we plant a brick for her and her child will inherit as the senior son, for another shut up her womb [i.e. made her virgin again]. If she has no younger sister I may marry her, but she will not be my chief wife. The next one I marry will be my senior wife and for her the brick will be planted and her son will inherit.

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585 There is also an association, not made explicit by our informants, between a log of firewood and a marriageable woman. One of the tasks of the bride and her maids is to fetch heavy logs of firewood which are stored in her mother's loft. At least one log goes with her when she is taken by her 'mothers' to her husband, and this she keeps all her life, taking it with her if she moves. From it the shades are said to chip splinters when they wish to warm themselves at the dying fire at night. After she has gone to her husband and before she conceives, a bride is forbidden to touch the firewood in her mother's loft, and in the funeral ritual, when a widow returns home for the *ingotolo* she steals a log of firewood from her mother's loft and takes it to her husband's. Into the cracks of this log the officiants press seeds. It seems probable that the reddish log represents a woman in her reproductive capacity, which is formally transferred to her husband and segregated from the reproductive activities of her mother. This, we repeat, is our own interpretation, not formulated by any Nyakyusa.

783 The taboo on a bride who has slept with her husband approach-
●784 ing her mother until she has brought the ritual *ilibuko* is associated with the danger of mixing the bloods of different lineages.

> A bride avoids dipping water out of a pot and drinking from a calabash belonging to her relatives for the following reasons: A girl is of one blood (*ililopa*) with her mother, and when she goes to her husband, the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

blood of another lineage mingles with hers, but it has not reached her mother because they have not met. To drink water together from one calabash is to meet. Then the mother has diarrhœa because her body is not accustomed to the blood of another lineage. To have diarrhœa is to go bad, to expel (*ukusosya*) the filth. The *ilibuko* of the fowl is the body of the groom which mingles with the body of the girl's parents that they may be one blood with him.

Thus, not only husband and wife, but also parents and son-in-law become one flesh.

As in Selya, a direct connection is made between the parents receiving a bull for the bride's virginity, and her bearing a child to her husband. Mwasalemba explained: 'Kyala together with the shades have made the girl grow up. If the girl runs off with her husband and I, the father, have not received cattle, then the earth is angry, the shades say: "We shall see if she will flourish there." Then the girl does not conceive, and the diviner says: "The shades are angry." The groom's people bring cattle, then I, the father, pray for my child and she conceives, her belly swells.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

her husband may give her *ikipiki* to rub on her hands and on a 842
stick with which she touches each of the cattle. She gives them 789
ikipiki that they may not be "empty". Then she can clean out the byre at any time.'

A third idea that recurs, again and again, is that of *ukukilanya*, 842
overstepping, which is used in both a literal and a metaphorical 784
sense. It is taboo for a woman to step over her husband in any way, hence there are explicit rules (taught during initiation) on posture in intercourse. It she should step over him it is said that 'his legs will swell' and he has grounds for divorcing her. It is taboo for an adult to step over a child and for a woman who is having intercourse to step over one who is not, though a child may step over an adult and a virgin or youth who is not having intercourse may step over a married person of the same sex who is not. In a society [516]
in which everyone sits on the ground, often with legs outstretched, observance of the taboo necessitates care.

In its metaphorical sense *ukukilyana* is used for a 'heavy' person 195
coming into close contact with an 'empty' one, as, for example, a woman who is sleeping with her husband entering the hut of a woman with a new-born child, or the mother of a bride resuming intercourse before her daughter has had intercourse, or a bride who has not yet brought the *ilibalaga*, the symbol of her union with her husband, to her parents, drinking from her mother's calabash, or entering the inner part of her hut; or a wife who has committed adultery cooking for her husband. It is used, too, of a woman who continues to bear children after the marriage of her son for, it is said, if she does so the son's wife will never conceive at all, or will be long in conceiving, or her child will not walk, on account of a curse.

MWAIKAMBO: It is not customary for mother and son both to have 842
infants. Women mostly begin to stop intercourse when their sons marry. 834
They say it is not good that both mother and son should have small children, because the mother of the young man now thinks of helping her daughter-in-law in nourishing her children. If mother and son both have babies, people are much astonished and say it is not a good custom; they create a curse (*ikigune*) and the fertility of the son and his wife rots. [789]

Mwaihojo's wife put it this way:

I leave off having children when my son is married for I should receive my grandchild in my arms, and care for my grandchildren, and be with them in the house.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

843 and that cures him. So, when a man comes to a smith's forge for the
326 first time, he always takes a piece of charcoal from the fire and spits on
772 it and throws it into the fire. This means: 'I have come to your forge, smith, may this fire not come on my body.'

And sometimes the smith's iron does not glow and sparkle well. Then he is angry, saying: 'Heavy ones are present. Some of you have pregnant wives, you are spoiling my fire.' We all pick up pieces of charcoal and spit on them and throw them into the fire again. Then the fire blazes up well and the iron glows and sparks.

Mwambuputa, the village headman, confirmed this:

When my wife is pregnant I fear the smithy. I spit on a piece of charcoal. Until she gives birth I fear, but when we just play together on the mat, and she has not yet conceived, I do not fear. . . . Only when it is seen that the 'iron' is there do I fear.

QUESTION: The iron?

MWAMBUPUTA: It's the blood of the man. The man is the smith. He forges iron there with the woman. The woman is the bellows. The smithing flourishes because of the sweat. Sometimes a woman conceives if I have lain with her two or three times—if Kyala gives us a child—but some delay, and I sleep with them a whole month.

QUESTION: The woman is a bellows?

[833] MWAMBUPUTA: Yes, because when she is having intercourse she gasps: 'He, he, he!'

QUESTION: And the man?

MWAMBUPUTA: Yes, but where do we find the fire? In the body of the woman! It's a great fire. Hence we say the bellows is the woman. It's smithing. Women are the anvil. Is there not fire in their bodies? Therefore I hammer there.

The primary taboo is on the pregnant woman approaching the smithy lest she injure it, but it is also thought that, like grain and cattle, it may be treated with strong medicines which will cause her to miscarry if she breaks the taboo. Hence the Nyakyusa dictum: 'She who has a miscarriage is she who is proud (*namatingo*).'

784 The conception that like things are antagonistic, and that the
772 sexual activities of different couples must not be mixed, is clearly shown in the taboos relating to fire and the calabash cup used for water. An elderly councillor of Ngonde, himself a Christian, explained it:

It is taboo for married people to blow up the fire in someone else's house, or to drink from the calabash cup; if they do they will bring a

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

coughing disease to the owners of the house. . . . Pagans used to fear to let those who are sleeping together touch the hearth-bricks or blow up the fire in their house for, if they do so, then the owners of the house, both man and woman, fall sick coughing. They say it is the disease of fires (*myoto*). . . . But when a woman has borne a child and is suckling it, and her husband is not with her, then it is not taboo.

Making fire by friction and, in more general terms, fire, are symbols of sexual intercourse, and 'the fire of the body and the fire of the house fight'. Drinking from a calabash cup is perhaps also a symbol of intercourse—the shape of the cup suggests it—but there is no direct evidence of such an association.

The taboo on mixing the sex activities of different couples is pushed to the point that women avoid for a day the milk of a cow that has been with the bull. 'They say: "We will harm the cow. It will abort." They compare it with themselves as women.'

Two last pregnancy taboos may be noted which turn, not on the feeling that like things are antagonistic, but that like produces like. Things felt to be alike are treated as causally related. We quote Mwambuputa, the village headman:

> Women fear to stand in a doorway when they are pregnant. They say: 'How should the child stand in the doorway? It will refuse to come out.' Because if birth is delayed, it is as if the child refused to come out of the house. That is the symbol. And I, the husband, feared also [to stand in a doorway]. Now we men do not fear; it is finished; but women still fear.
>
> And another thing, when a woman was pregnant we feared to sit close together, I, the husband, and my child. It was taboo. And for my wife and another woman to sit close together was taboo. It was said that she would bear twins, because we had sat together. Now we men do not fear, but women still do.

(*b*) *The confinement*

A first confinement, like first menstruation, is the occasion for elaborate ritual, and though at later confinements (as at later menstrual periods) certain taboos must be observed, they are less numerous and less strictly enforced than those connected with the birth of the first child, *umwana gwa busungu*.

A first child should be born at the husband's mother's house, 'and if the first child is a girl they will tell her to come again for the second, saying: "Come that we may treat our husband [i.e. grandson]." ' The woman lies, during labour, on a heap of leaves

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 'To-day there is no ritual, we have come to express sympathy (*ukuti ndaga*).'[1]

845 The two grown sons of Mwakobela were building a little hut of
342 saplings and had finished the main structure, but had not yet thatched it. 'She will sleep there to-night. They will put leaves on top.' Kikuku brought a message from Mwaipopo, to whom they had previously sent to tell him of the twin birth: 'If the hut is not finished she may sleep in the house, I agree to that. But Mwakobela said:

845 No, the hut is finished, she can sleep there. [To me]: To-night she will just sleep there, then the doctor will come [it is Mwaipopo's business to find the doctor] and will induct her (*ukummwingisya*), and then we shall lay the litter. The woman and her mother sleep there for a month with the twins—no others—the mother alone keeps her company (*ikumpanja*); then the doctor will come again to bring her out (*ukunsosya*). The ritual is in two parts, the induction and the bringing out.

They tie up the cord of the first twin to be born with a shred of plantain bark, and of the second with a shred of sweet banana bark, the plantain bark is a sign of seniority.

The woman may not cook while she is in the hut—it's taboo. But the other wives cook food for her and bring it to prevent her dying of hunger. Also her friends of the village will come with food and firewood to greet her. The pot in which food is cooked for the parents of twins must not be covered when it is on the fire, and if plantains are cooked only the middle bunches on the stem are used, not the ends; those at the ends are thrown away. When they are eating the wife may not begin until the husband has received his and put some in his mouth, then she too may eat.

845 It is wholly taboo for the mother of twins to call for anything she
●784 wants. She knocks with a stick to summon the one who brings her food. . . . If her husband wants anything he calls to his wives, it is not taboo, but he does not shout loudly, he must be careful not to make too great a noise, for if he shouts his children's hearts are startled and, it is said, they will die.

Traditionally, when the mother had to leave the hut to relieve herself, she walked backwards and hid her face with a piece of mat, to prevent herself from looking at the front of anyone. She avoided cows at pasture, and if she caught sight of anyone in the distance she waved a hand to warn them to let her pass.

May 13

845 Mwaiswelo III (Mwakobela's brother) came to fetch us at ten-

[1] This phrase can imply either condolence or congratulation.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER VII

Things Forbidden

WHEN the Konde wish to say that a certain thing is prohibited, they call it *mwiko*, a word which includes all that is more popularly known as *tabu*, prohibitions connected with religion, good manners, medicines; in short there is a code of regulations which might well be called the laws of life, were it not that they are in all cases prohibitions, and never injunctions directing one what to do. What is *mwiko* is what is forbidden, and it is forbidden because it is disgraceful, wicked, improper, inconvenient. No decent person ever breaks these laws intentionally, but the punishment for unwitting breach is the same as for the most wicked intention; it is in most cases automatic, falling indifferently upon the well- and the ill-intentioned. But while this is so, the punishment is by no means inevitable; medicines, ceremonies, payments, can avert most of them, leaving little except the curse of a father, and one or two other things, against which there is no protection.

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The native has no explanation of these prohibitions, except that they were handed down from the fathers. They are all the more valid for that; buried deep in the past, and coming upon each individual with all

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•784 the authority and mystery of the ages, he accepts them unquestioningly; nor would his faith be at all weakened if he knew that in some cases punishment had failed to follow transgression. He would conclude that protection had in some acknowledged way been found, but he had not happened to hear of it. To break a *tabu* in order to see what would happen is an act of folly so extreme that only a few men can afford to risk it.

Anything like a complete account of the endless prohibitions which hedge the life of the Konde is not attempted here. He meets them when he first opens his eyes upon the world, and parts from them only when he goes to the land of spirits, where, no doubt, another set of laws awaits him. While he lives he has to be on the watch for prohibitions referring to God and the spirits; to persons, acts, words, places, animals, and in some degree to time itself.

Thus it is *mwiko* to use the name of God unnecessarily in taking an oath; nor may the name of the chief be used with too much freedom, *tata*, father, being his more common appellation. A wife may never speak of her father-in-law by name, nor a husband of his mother-in-law. Some parts of the body are *mwiko*, and are not named. Animals, again, especially dangerous animals, are more dangerous if their names are used, for the name calls the owner to the place where it is heard. A lion or leopard known to be prowling about at night is referred to as *tata*, father; and if the animal is being hunted, one coming in later to join in the hunt must not ask, "Where is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•784 it?" even although he avoids the name. If a woman about to go for water or firewood hears anyone use the word for lion, she will not go. An elephant in the garden is referred to, very strangely, as *ikisu*, the world; a crocodile is *ikya mmisi*, the thing in the water; and a snake is referred to as "the thing from the grass." The name of a dead person is not used by relatives.

Again, it is *mwiko* to see certain persons. Chungu, in the past, must not be seen by young people, though I have been unable to learn that anything very dreadful happened to them if they did. On the other hand, children are still kept away from great doctors, whose glance has power to kill them; nor may anyone watch a doctor making up his medicines.

784 Growing crops and food being cooked must not be
783 approached by unclean persons, for the uncleanness would pass over and affect the food or the crops; as it would affect other persons if they came near the unclean. Uncleanness is transmissible, and the full ceremonial of the original uncleanness must be gone through by the one to whom it has been transmitted, lest it should desecrate the whole community with its living *tabu*.

784 Prohibited places are numerous, chief among them being graves, which are *mwiko* to all except the families to which they belong. It is forbidden to work when a dead person is being mourned for, but I cannot learn that a breach of this rule would imply anything except disrespect to the dead.

If we try to classify the prohibitions we shall find

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

that the classes tend to shade into each other, leaving no clear line of demarcation between one class and another; but there are some that are quite definitely religious, and with those we may begin.

It is forbidden to mock at the lame, the deaf, the blind, the dumb, or persons otherwise unfortunate. The wrath of God is aroused, and the offender will suffer the disability he laughs at in others. "Who mocks an orphan," says an old proverb; "let him beware; God is watching him." To insult one's father is a crime so great that nothing can avert the curse which follows, and follows automatically. The prohibition against the use of names, too, has in some cases certainly, in others probably, a religious sanction. It is *mwiko* for anyone but the family representative to pray to the spirits; though, in a case known to me, where a Christian prayed in an assembly of chiefs and others gathered for the purpose, and the rain asked for duly came, the older people acknowledged that the event justified the breach of custom.

Omission of the customary funeral rites is disgraceful, and the dead man will not fail to avenge himself upon the offender. A case came to my knowledge quite recently where a son refused to perform the usual ceremonies for his just-departed father, and the life of his own son was thereby saved, so every one believed, by a timely surrender. It is an interesting fact that no opprobrium attaches to a Christian who omits these rites, nor does any visitation follow from the spirit land, while upon a heathen the punishment

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

falls automatically. If the family "priest" becomes a Christian, and therefore ceases to pray to the spirits, no one will take up his religious duties until he has been publicly appointed by the family to do so.

To offer a blemished animal in sacrifice, to eat the blood of a sacrificed animal, to eat animals that do not divide the hoof, are all forbidden; though the double qualification, to divide the hoof and chew the cud, is not insisted upon. This has direct religious sanction, but whether the prohibition against eating beasts of prey is so founded, I do not know. The Bendali even now will eat lion's flesh, and at Karonga long ago, though not now, the crocodile was eaten.

Night belongs to the spirits, and certain things must not be done then. If a woman sweeps out the house at night, her husband will indignantly ask her why she is driving off his ancestors! The spirits cut their hair at night, therefore living men must not. If bark-cloth is beaten out at night, the cattle will die; and if food is pounded or firewood cut up, leopards will come, and kill cattle, and perhaps people. It is *unwise* to clap the hands at night (except openly in the dance), for the spirits do so, and imitation might be regarded by them as mockery, not flattery. A fire should not be kindled at night, nor should one lie on his back if lightning is playing around, for the lightning gets at one more easily in that position. To sit in the doorway at night is to usurp the place of the spirits when ceremonies are being performed.

Animals in which the spirits dwell, frogs, lizards,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

784 snakes, lions, crocodiles, must not be carelessly killed. Kill a frog, and you will become a leper; the spirit that lived in the frog will see to that. Not that a spirit dwells in every frog; but why take unnecessary risks! As for the lizard, what harm has it ever done to anyone? The stronger and more dangerous animals can take care of themselves; but again, not every one of these is inhabited by a spirit; one that kills people may be safely killed. The two-headed snake, *Ndamirakwa*, may be the temporary dwelling of God Himself, and must not be killed. The owl is perhaps in a different category: it is a favourite dwelling of sorcerers; and some insist on killing it for that very reason, while others say that to kill it is *mwiko*.

Hair must not be swept up, but picked up, and all foreign matter separated; else death may follow, either by witchcraft, or by the action of the spirits. It must not be left lying about, lest goats should eat it; in which case the late owner will assuredly become bald! The hair on the chest again, must not be cut, for one's children will die. All this no doubt had a religious sanction in the past; but no Konde will admit that it is any more than a custom handed down, and for that reason to be carefully observed.

763 784 The jealousy of the spirits demands that a child dying during the life of its paternal-grandfather, be buried at the house of the latter, not at its own father's; that the child of a second wife be buried at the house of the principal wife; and that a man who would die well, should die at the house of his

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

first wife, for it is there only that the spirits meet him; and if he becomes ill anywhere else, he has himself removed as soon as possible to the place where it is proper for him to die, if die he must. 763 784

A man who has been falsely reported dead in a far land, must not, on his return home, enter the village without ceremony. Letters sent on ahead to assure his relatives that he is alive, are not enough; his father comes out to meet him; but he takes care not to see his son until assurance has been given that he is a true man, not a spirit; whereupon the father throws some food over his son's head, and both enter the village in peace. 784

It is *mwiko* to kill a python unless one is sure that it is dangerous. If it is found in the feeding ground, and the cows that day give a specially good milking, then it has been herding the cattle, and is not to be sought for afterwards with hostile intent. But the boys who saw it must go to the doctor to get medicine. Further, God Himself may be in it, or the spirit of a dead chief, and therefore it must be watched for assurance of its friendliness. If it enters a house a fowl is thrown to it, with which, if it makes off, all is well.

Very interesting are some of the prohibitions connected with the white man; and it is obvious that these are of recent growth, so that we actually see *tabus* in the making. It is *mwiko* to go into a white man's house, for the pictures on his walls are the spirits of his ancestors, who are specially dangerous at night, when they may launch an unseen spear at 784 177

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•784 the unlucky wight who has had the temerity to enter
177 so dangerous a place. Further, a man dying of that invisible spear-wound will almost certainly have his portion with the spirits of white men, than which there is no more undesirable fate. Did he not have enough of the white men here on earth? This fear of the white man is passing; but there are still old men and women who will not approach him, for they insist that he is God, and it is *mwiko* to see God. An old man died recently at Karonga, who had always refused to see a white man, lest the sight should smite him down. One of the teachers at the Mission at Ipyana told me that his own mother will not go near him when he has on a white garment, for that, she knows, is the sign that he is going to speak to God, and even a native is dangerous at such a time, for the power of God may break through to destruction. There is a curious belief still lingering among old people, that Europeans are forbidden to sleep in houses, but must come out at night, and sleep in pools, their native element being water; for they are water spirits in origin, a belief no doubt due to the widespread story that we came from the sea itself, rather than from some place beyond it. White people are supposed to hold it *mwiko* to weep for the dead; and indeed why should they, seeing their dead arise at once and appear on the walls?

784 Some great chiefs must not tell if they have been wounded in battle. These remarkable men have power to remove a wound from a fatal to a non-fatal spot, and so recover. When Mwakalinga, in a fight

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

with the Germans, was struck in the forehead by a bullet, he immediately removed the wound to his leg, where it was harmless. His *amafumu* (subordinate chiefs), however, sternly ordered him to replace it; for he had been toying with Christianity, to the disgust of his subordinates, who, seeing a chance to get rid of him, eagerly seized it, and Mwakalinga passed to his fathers. Mwafongo at Karonga has the same power, and there may be others. 784 •

War is attended with so many religious ceremonies that the *taboo* connected with it are best taken under this head. Cowardice in battle is *mwiko*, and the coward gets no share of the spoils. There is a beer feast as part of the preparation for war; but drunkenness before a battle is strictly forbidden. At the approach of war, husbands and wives must not live together, and he who is guilty of illegal intercourse will be killed at the first spear throw, before he has had time to throw his own spear; while a chief who is given to such acts will be defeated, and his men slain. 784 703

Prohibitions due to fear of infection are very numerous. One must not pass over the outstretched legs of another, for the offender will be "caught" by any disease from which the offended may be suffering; but a slight nip in the leg of the other by the offender wards off evil consequences. It is *mwiko* to throw a spear at a hyena, for the animal may escape with a wound, and barrenness will result for the offender, unless he goes at once to get counteracting medicines. If your father comes to visit you, you 784 753

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

784 784 753 must not give him your own mat to sit on; he sits on a leaf, which is thrown away when he leaves you; otherwise your wives will become thin, and will have no children. It is *mwiko* for an aunt to pat a nephew or niece on the buttocks, lest any disease she has may pass over to them. A man in an epileptic fit must not be roused; he who rouses him will himself become epileptic!

784 The saliva is sacred, and is often used in religious ceremonies; but to spit upon a man is *mwiko*, and may bring itch and scab if payment is not made. The kidneys of an animal may be eaten only if given to you by a chief, or handed on the point of a spear; death of your children is the penalty of neglect of this precaution. Disease clings to the drug that is used to cure it; what is left must be thrown away where no one passes, lest a chance passer-by touching it with his foot be smitten by the disease. For possibly similar reasons, the family of a murdered man must not have friendly relations with the family of the murderer until the necessary ceremonies have been attended to: the spear that killed their friend may kill them too; that is to say, they may be smitten with a disease which reasonable men will trace to their folly in being friendly with hostile persons. The leaves upon which a man sat while his case was being tried have mysterious powers in them; a sorcerer may make deadly medicine out of them: therefore it is *mwiko* not to throw them carefully away.

The blood of a lion killed in the hunt must not be

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

allowed to escape; it has *ifugira*, the most powerful 789
of all drugs, and is divided between the chief and the great doctors, who alone may cut up a lion's carcase. Another very powerful drug is *ilibebwe*, which, if cast into a doctor's house, destroys the virtue of all his medicines; and if carried through a garden will wither up all crops; it is therefore *wuike* to possess it unless one is a doctor.

The code of manners includes prohibitions against 576
speaking with the mouth full in the presence of elders; the elders will curse the offender with dire results; against spitting, for sorcerers only are great enough to dare, and one may be accused of sorcery. If a great man is passing, one must sit right down on the ground to salute him; to sit on a chair or any kind of seat is grossly bad manners, and is *wuike*; it is followed by the unspoken but unfailing curse. Nakedness, even among the unclothed Konde, is a serious offence; at the least a small apron of leaves must be worn, for sorcerers go naked at night, and a charge may lie against anyone found unclad. If a stranger, notwithstanding the prohibition against it, asks for food, it must not be refused: how do you know that he is not a friend of Kabeta, who will send lions to punish you for churlishness! A woman must [244]
not eat while the males of her family are eating; if she does, her husband will talk to her presently. When on a journey, the young men must go first to face the dangers of the road; it is *wuike* for the elders or chiefs to be in front. If two companies meet, they must not mix; each keeps its own side of

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

576 the road, and all spears must be lowered from the "ready" position, as must axes or other weapons. It is *mwiko* to attend to one's personal comfort in a public place.

843 The prohibitions connected with women are very
184 numerous, and only a selection is given. A pregnant woman may not go near food in any condition, growing, being threshed, or being cooked; nor may she go near beer that is being prepared. If she goes out of the house, she must not turn back in the doorway; the ancestors are there; she must go right out, and if she needs to go in again, she must do it from a pace or so from the door. The penalty is the death of the child she is carrying. An interesting prohibition is that against going behind anyone, and it applies specially though not exclusively to women. The incised medicine of the person behind whom she passes loses its virtue; but the evil may be averted by the person turning round to face her. A woman must not sweep rubbish out of the house; she must lift it out; to sweep it out is to scatter her husband's wealth.

595 The younger wife must not begin sowing or planting until the elder has begun; she must not sleep at night nearer the fire than the elder; she must carry loads for the elder wife, and be generally in a subordinate position. There is no reluctance on the part of the first wife to see her husband taking others; the more he has the greater is her position. A singular prohibition is that which forbids a man to take his widowed mother home to care for her; he must care

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

for her where she is, or at any rate at a distance from his own house. 595

Twins are among the greatest of misfortunes; and along with twins are counted children born feet first. This subject is dealt with separately, and it needs only to be noted that parents are segregated, must not speak even to each other except in whispers, must not drink milk, lest the cow should dry up, or give only water. The mother must not pass behind anyone without asking for permission, which is given by clapping hands; nor may she pass her own father without a ceremony in which she throws dust over his head. This goes on until another child is born, or until about five years have elapsed. 845 784

It is *mwiko* for a dog to drink the milk of a cow that has recently calved; the cow will dry up. The same result will follow if strangers go into the house while cows are being milked. It is forbidden to common people to eat new season's food until chiefs and village headmen and twins have eaten first; and even they eat only when the first fruits have been mixed with medicine by the doctor. The first fish of the season must not be taken to the village. It is eaten at the river by the boys. It belongs to the spirits. To make a sucking noise with the lips is *mwiko*, being a token of impudence; it may also lead to accusation of witchcraft. Never steal from a blacksmith; the scraps of iron you steal will produce a noise in your throat like the noise of his bellows, and presently you will die. 784

For a man to see his daughter-in-law, no matter 606

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nothing was left to chance. The spirits having been placated, the natural skill of the hunters must be reinforced by medicines. Indeed it is not improbable that the native would say that the whole of his skill and success is due to medicines and ceremonies. The warrior goes out to battle armed and protected by prayers, drugs, and a good conscience; equally for the hunter good morals, good medicines, are as important as reliable weapons and a steady nerve. *Unkota wa nyango*, to ensure a good spear-throw, or a straight aim with the ancient rifle which some hunters carried, was rubbed into flesh cuts in the hands; and *burungo*, to make sure that the animal died quickly and without a long chase, was incised into the arms; but more frequently, and more effectively for this purpose, *bulembe* was attached to the spear. This latter is a deadly poison, happily, perhaps, known only to a very few, for a single scratch is said to be fatal. It is said that the Germans tried unsuccessfully to secure the secret of its manufacture. The poison is attached, in a leaf, to the blade of the spear, and the thrust into the flesh of the animal releases it, so that it enters the blood, and causes a speedy death.

224 789 [278]

Women must not touch or go near hunting weapons, which are kept in the roof of the house. The spears must not be placed near the fire, lest the game, sniffing in the breeze the smell of smoke, deduce the presence of mankind, and make off. The hunters must eat only freshly cooked food, for cold food destroys, as it does also for chiefs, the virtue of their medicines. Fatal results are sure to follow contact

224 784

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

224 784 with their wives before setting out; and a wife who sins in her husband's absence, will cause his death on the hunting ground. The smell of clothes, like the smell of fire, would drive the game away, and therefore leaves only are worn while actually on the chase. Hunters thus fully equipped are called *abarumba*, the rank and file being mere *abafwimi* (drivers). The hunt might last for four to eight weeks, and as the men did not return to their homes until it was over, huts were built in which they slept. The boy who did the cooking was not allowed to hunt, for his close contact with the fire would be fatal to success.

224 Thus protected, the hunters went fearlessly to their work. In ordinary hunting there is no danger to speak of, though wounded animals sometimes turn furiously upon their hunters. But who can tell what sudden dangers the bush will spring upon one? I have passed within sound of the snoring of a gorged lion, and being unarmed, I could only pass on; I have been charged by enraged elephant and buffalo, and only barely escaped; and not once or twice lions have crossed the path not far from where I was. Such dangers the native hunters faced, armed only with spears or old breech-loading rifles, no doubt further strengthened by the consciousness of the numerous medicines by which they were protected. These, however, are incidental dangers: the actual hunting involved dangers knowingly and unflinchingly faced. I have myself been present when a native speared a wounded buffalo at a distance of a yard or two, dancing, waving his spear, and singing a song of

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

were dealt with by the local rulers or by the family-heads, not by the central authorities. It was only occasionally that general fears or misfortunes turned all men's thoughts together to Mbande. 771 643 565

Now the great-commoners of every chief were believed to have independent access to his ancestral spirits and this gave them a spiritual hold over him. If they compared him too unfavourably with his predecessors then, it was believed, those predecessors might hear and afflict him in various ways. And so it was also with the nobles of Ngonde and the reigning Kyungu. But as this belief was intimately linked with the belief in witchcraft it will be more conveniently analysed in that context.[1] 622

(b) *THE MAGICAL ELEMENT.*

Magic (the belief that certain particular objects, events, words or actions, involving particular people in particular situations, possessed in themselves an extraordinary power) was an essential ingredient of the old pagan religion of Ngonde. While the greatest magical object in the country was, traditionally, the body of the Kyungu. And the fact that the central political authority of Ngonde was so largely vested in the nobles of Ngonde was due above all to their responsibility for controlling this magical object in the public interest. 789 643

If the Kyungu cut himself, and more particularly if his blood fell to the ground, then it was the duty of the nobles of Ngonde to kill him, lest the whole land be afflicted with disease; and if he was ill likewise. "They considered that if his blood fell to the ground that was his life falling. And they likened him to a god, considering it taboo for a god to be wounded; they thought that if his blood fell to the ground it would turn into a sickness and all the people would die. And so, when the Kyungu was wounded, they thought it best to put him out of the way and start afresh with a new one. They thought it taboo for him to have even the tiniest wound on his body. And it was equally taboo for him to fall ill; everyone else, it was believed, would fall ill too; it was better to put him out of the way so that the people should keep well." 789 643 784 753

In consequence of this belief elaborste precautions were taken to maintain the Kyungu's health. Sexual impurity was believed to be magically dangerous to health in many ways and so the Kyungu, above all men, must be guarded from it. It was not considered safe even for his own wives to cook his food, lest one of them touch it during a menstrual period, and so young boys who had not yet reached puberty 789 643 934

[1] Vide infra section 3 (c).

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 cooked it instead. One of the reasons for killing most of his sons, as we
643 have seen, was to lessen the danger of his wives committing adultery
834 with them, for adultery was a magical cause of sickness. His wives themselves were jealously guarded.

643 Then again a Kyungu might not wade across the river lest the act
764 of doing so should magically bring a deluge of rain from heaven, he
821 had always to be carried.

And the breath and the growing parts of a Kyungu's body—his
789 hair and nails and the constantly replaced mucus of his nose—were
643 believed to be magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde
764 plain. When he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was
826 buried "with breath in his body"; while portions of his hair and nails and of his nasal mucus were taken from him beforehand and buried later by the nobles of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This action was believed to "close up the land, to keep it rich and heavy and fertile, as it was when he himself lived in it."

789 Now the Lwembe of Lubaga had equally magical flesh, but the
other chiefs of Ngonde and the Nyakyusa had not. They could wade
622 across rivers, fall ill and be wounded without endangering their sub-
826 jects. But of all alike the breath and the hair and nails had a magical importance. Every ruling chief in both areas had his nostrils stopped by his great-commoners when nearing death, while portions of his hair and nails[1] were taken from him when living and buried after his death in a special place. The hair and nails were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops. "You see these nails of yours," said the man who explained the symbolism to us, "if you cut them do they not grow again?" (They do.) "And where does their growth come from? Does it not come from within the body?" (It does.) "Well then that is the reason, the great-commoners take power of growth from the chief in the form of his nails and hair."

Besides his magical body the Kyungu had a host of magical
789 possessions. There was the iron stool *Kisumbi* on which he was set at
782 his accession; once he had sat upon it he could not flee the position or he would die. There was the drum *Mwenekelwa* whose note was believed to be heard by the most distant of the Kyungu's subjects. When it was beaten "all the little nobles from afar off would hear and obey the summons; they would all come together. Then we would tell them that so and so had not brought any ivory for a long time! Then they would come with tusks as tribute, to pay worship to the Kyungu." But sometimes the drum would refuse to sound and they would kill a

[1] We were only told about the nasal mucus in the case of the Kyungu.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 643 were not ill, they were not troubled as we are. For later in the evening, while the Lwembe was still alive, the commoner priests removed his nails and hair; they came near and plucked them off. He shouted: 'Who is snatching at me?' They replied: 'No one', and then they smothered him with cloth in the nostrils and in the anus, and he went away [i.e. he died]. . . . They did it only when he had initiated it himself by saying: 'I have eaten food in the land of the shades'; they [775] did not begin it themselves. . . . They collected the relics in a little bamboo flask, and a priest treated them so that Lwembe might not go away with the food to the land of the shades, that the fertility of the soil (*ilifugo*), this *ifingila*, might always remain above.

[778] These relics, the hair and the nails, were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops.

While the Lwembe lived he was secluded—ordinary men did 643 not see him—and he was subject to numerous taboos. For example, he might not tread in water lest the country should be flooded; [784] he never bathed in a stream (as Nyakyusa men do daily) and was carried across any river when travelling; he must not sit on a green banana leaf lest the bananas in the country should fail, but was always provided with a skin to sit upon, and he ate only the middle portion of a banana throwing away the ends for 'if he finished the whole of a banana he would create hunger in the country'. No one might grasp his hand, or drink out of the same calabash as he, save the priests of his own age; if he drank from a calabash when travelling he took it with him, for 'if he left it behind he left hunger in that place'.

The selection of the Lwembe was in the hands of the hereditary priests of Lubaga and the hereditary Kinga priests, who come from BuKinga to sacrifice at Lubaga. The man they choose must be of good character—at the time we were in BuNyakyusa the only willing candidate was rejected because 'he is a bad man, a thief, they refuse to have a thief as priest'—he must exhibit in his own home the power of fertility. 'They don't catch just anyone, but [842] one with children, and cattle, and fertility of the fields in his own homestead. If the man taken as chief is not fertile and rich there will be many sterile people in the homesteads, and much disease and hunger.'

When the priests had decided upon the man of their choice, they seized him and set him upon a sacred skin and a pad of leaves; and it was believed that once he had been set thereon he [761] would die if he refused office; tales were told of a younger brother

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(28) of Mwampondele (27) who had fled from the stool and had died. 643 [761]

The chosen man was secluded in a hut, lying on a litter with his priests, who kept him company (*ukumpanja*), just as a nubile girl is secluded and lies on a litter with her maids, or a young chief with his village headmen at his 'coming out'. Here is the account of Mwasesi, the oldest of the priests of Lubaga (a man of about seventy-five) who saw the installation of the last Lwembe, Mwakisisya (56).

A skin and a head-pad of leaves (*ingata*)[1] are brought by the Kinga. The priests catch the chief and set him on these; and then he cannot run away, it is taboo. I, Mwasesi, would sit on one side of him and my friend on the other, and force him to sit on them. Then we plead with him and say: 'You are the Lion, the Leopard, the Snake, the Banana, the Bean, the Millet, the Cow Pea, and the Lentil.' (Lentils are very important, you know, because it is with them that we celebrate the ritual, and with cow peas.) Then, after a time, he says: 'Leave me', and he goes to find the cow; this cow is just for the priests to eat that night. Then we take him into a certain house, cut leaves and spread them for a litter; and we keep him company there on the litter for some time. Then he sends messages to Mwakyusa (38), to Mwankyuse (33), and to Mwakisambe (30), and the Kinga [i.e. their descendants]. Each chief who is Lwembe's descendant sends commoner priests . . . they gather to induct him into Lubaga, he who was in the house. It is just like the 'coming out' ritual for a young chief. 643 788

The Lwembe in his own person, and in a lesser degree his 'sons' who are ordinary chiefs, are identified with the power of growth. Not only must the Lwembe not die with the breath still in his body, or with his hair and nails still upon it, but when he is chosen the priests test whether his reign will be long or short (perhaps whether they can permit him to live or not) by taking a little millet, putting it in a banana leaf and watching to see whether it sprouts or not. 'If it sprouts and grows at once he will live long; if it does not, he will be the priest [i.e. divine king] but will die very soon.' 643 [787]

Because the power of making rain, food, milk and children lay in the body of the Lwembe he was fearful and terrible. 'No one built close to him, it was taboo, no one touched Mwakisisya (56) . . . if he wished to make it rain he would make it rain all 643 784

[1] The Kinga priests spoke of a cloth to wear and a stool and an axe which were kept in the inner part of the hut of the Lwembe's great wife and which no man, save a priest of Lubaga, might see.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 round him and sit at home in the middle in the sun. . . . All the
784 old chiefs inspired fear (*bapala*). It used to be taboo to walk near the house of a chief and approach him unless taken by a village headman . . . nowadays men walk about and enter his home and
[177] even steal his food.'[1] The power came partly from his position as the living Lwembe, and partly from the medicines with which he was treated, especially the terrible *ifingila*.

643 The 'divine king' who came as a conqueror bringing iron is also
[554] associated with victory in battle. Still today a brave fighter is saluted as 'Lwembe', and an iron spear is one of the emblems of chieftainship.

643 The Lwembe was himself a priest—he is often referred to as
793 *unyago*—but he was assisted by commoners. There is a hereditary
782 keeper of the grove of Lubaga named Kissoule who is the descendant of that Kissoule the commoner who fled from BuKinga with Lwembe. It is he who conducts the sacrifices, who daubs the participants with medicines before they enter, and who protects the groves. 'If by mistake the grove was a little burnt then the people here paid a beast to Kissoule, it was his to eat as he liked.' Others of the priests say that Lwembe found their ancestors at Lubaga; they are 'owners of the soil' there, and one of them, Mwasesi, could give us the names of six generations of ancestors who had been priests of Lubaga before him. But the bulk of the commoner priests are not hereditary at all, they are surviving village headmen (or their heirs) of the most recently dead Lwembe.

The success of the sacrifices at Lubaga was held to depend upon the proper co-operation of chiefs and priests: first, on the Lwembe himself (the shortage of food among the Kinga, and of milk among the Nyakyusa, while we were there, was attributed by Kasitile to the fact that there was no living Lwembe); secondly on the commoner priests of Lubaga; thirdly on the commoner Kinga priests; fourthly on Kasitile (86) and certain other priests of Selya; and fifthly on the chiefs of the Nyakyusa and the Kinga who provided the offerings. 'Can a priest celebrate alone?' said Kasitile. 'No, the ritual depends on the chiefs.' The celebrations thus linked together chiefs and people, as well as Kinga and Nyakyusa, and numerous different Nyakyusa chiefdoms. The hereditary Kinga priests live in the country of the Kinga chief Mwakalukwa and

[1] This is inconsistent with Kasitile's statement quoted above. The general opinion was that chiefs were more powerful than formerly, but the living Lwembe less so.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'Lwembe listens to him'. 'If Kinga messengers went [to Lubaga] without going through Mwakalukwa's country there would be much hunger. . . . Once Mwemusi and Kyelela [Kinga chiefs] conspired together and sent off men with hoes to Lubaga, without reference to Mwakalukwa. They carried ten hoes. But when they got back disease killed many in the country, and they paid Mwakalukwa and did not do it again.' 643 793 782

It is true that an independent Nyakyusa chief *can* send an offering to Lubaga on his own; it is received by the priests of Lubaga and sacrificed in the grove, and such a sacrifice is held to be in some measure efficient, but drought or sickness in the country as a whole is often attributed to one or other of the participating groups failing to play their part. Moreover, such a failure is thought to be dangerous to the chief or priest who neglects his duties, as we shall see in the case of Kasitile. [753] [731]

The priests of Lubaga ministered to the Lwembe but they had also the right and duty of admonishing him if he did wrong, just as village headmen have the right and duty of admonishing their chief. If the Lwembe broke a taboo 'then Kissoule and the other priests would be very angry and reproach him for bathing and making hunger, and he would pay them a bull in recompense.' Even the 'divine king' was subject to the rule of law. All through the political organization and ritual patterns of the Nyakyusa there is this balance and reciprocity between chiefs and commoners and it is here that the Nyakyusa system differs radically from that described by Professor Frankfort for ancient Egypt.[1] The heroes had brought the gift of chieftainship to the Nyakyusa but it had not ousted another, perhaps older, tradition of democratic leadership; instead, the two were welded in a partnership which, to the Nyakyusa, is so much part of the necessary order of the universe that they speak of commoner priests and headmen as 'wives' of the chiefs. The Kissoule in office is 'the wife' of the Lwembe. 643 [793] [784] [642]

In the grove at Lubaga sacrifices of black cattle and sheep and libations of millet beer were offered by the Nyakyusa, while the Kinga brought hoes, bamboo beer, salt, the sacred drum *ngoma*, and *ifika*, that is, marvels whose nature, Kasitile averred, he did not know himself. The shrine of Lubaga, and the actors and actions connected with it, are miraculous and terrible, terrible even to the actors themselves who tremble when they enter the grove, and 782 789 751

[1] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (1948), pp. 51-6.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

to the women here, but to their husbands.' So Kitega took back to the tree the sweet banana leaf, containing the portion for the women. 782 796

Meanwhile strips of meat had been roasted and were eaten with roast bananas, while the milk was finished up by the Nyakyusa present. All the millet beer had been poured out, but the bamboo beer that remained was finished, part drunk, part blown from the mouth by the two Kinga boys, grandsons of the priests. Then the rest of the meat was divided up, one back leg being given to the Kinga. But they took the head (their traditional right) as well, without being given it. There was some considerable protest at this: 'Do you take twice?' they were asked. And more protest still when they began to go away with it. Nsyanigwa (the Kinga priest) replied furiously. 'Let it go, let them take it' was the final comment of the local people, but both parties were angry. Two legs went to the chiefs, one to the Nyakyusa commoners, and the breast to Mwanjala.

After the meat had been safely disposed of Nsyanigwa gave his parting instructions: 'You sirs (*batwa*), thank you, thank you. We remember that it was Mwakalukwa (the Kinga chief) who said "Pray for us"! Thank you! We thank you! Now you must build your chief, Mwanjala (78), a little hut in which to sleep with the breast of beef so that the lord (*kyala*)[1] may eat, and in the morning if *kyala* has eaten let him go to his home. This calf I brought, I Nsyanigwa, from BuKinga. Let the knife I brought remain with it too.' Then Nsyanigwa went off and his advice was discussed. Mwanjala laughed and said: 'I have no house to sleep in . . . shall I sleep by myself? Outside?' Several suggested that it was the custom for some other man to accompany him. No one knew who should do so, but someone suggested Kissoule. In fact Mwanjala went home with the breast of beef and did not remain overnight in the grove. But he and the priests held apart from their wives and children. Mwamalunguka (the priest) explained: 'We avoid sleeping with our wives for three nights. It is taboo to go to them. We say, "Let us w[illegible] and anoint ourselves and be alone until that lord (*kyala*) has gone out of our bodies, since we were in the ritual". We bathe tomorrow and the next day and anoint ourselves, but avoid our wives for three nights. Also our children are anointed on the forehead with medicine—the young [784] [783]

[1] The name *kyala* had not been used in the invocation, and the only references to him in this ritual were the two just quoted.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 children, not the married ones with wives. Kissoule and I both
796 have our children anointed now.'
[783] This ritual was not complete because Mwanjala shirked the
[643] crucial act of remaining in the grove until a python licked him.
[793] The Kinga priests were continually nagging at the Nyakyusa for
[177] their failure to provide an acceptable Lwembe, but it is doubtful whether in 1935 Mwanjala II would have been acceptable to any of them since he was old and ailing. It was Mwakilima (111) that men wanted and he steadily refused to be installed.

[787] The next ritual observed at Lubaga was in March 1937. An ordinary commoner of Selya (not a priest) named Kijaja had been prophesying repeatedly: 'I do not sleep, you will not eat the crops you hoe if you do not go to Lubaga.' He was taken to his village headman and thence to the chief Mwaihojo (147) who finally, two years after he had begun prophesying, agreed to find a bull. Word then came to Kasitile (86) who notified the commoner priests of chief Mwaipopo (116) and sent a message to the priests of Lubaga. Kasitile (86), together with three other priests of Selya (Mwalukuta, Nyama, Mwamakunda) and Godfrey Wilson, set off early one morning from Kasitile's house to take the bull (brown streaked with black, called *isgombe isolola*) to Lubaga. On the way they called in at Munyoso's house, where the Kinga stop on their journey to pour a libation of beer (*vide supra*, p. 27). Kasitile asked Munyoso, 'Shall the bull enter?' and he replied, 'Yes, let it come into the house', so it was tied up inside while the party talked with Munyoso. He was sick and did not want to accompany them. The others pressed him, and at first he refused. Whereupon Mwalukuta said: 'Very well, then, we are at your place, let the bull return and we will go another day', in other words, refusing to go without him. 'No, that is taboo,' said
● [784] Kasitile, 'once the bull has faced towards Lubaga and entered a house here it is taboo for it to turn back. The shades will be angry.' And so Munyoso went with them.

On the way they passed a group of men hoeing hard. One of them called out: 'Where are you going with that bull? Where are you off enjoying yourselves?' 'Ah, you fellows,' answered Kasitile, 'do you ask where we are going? We visit where our fathers always did.' They understood at once. 'Oh thank you, thank you,' they cried. 'You,' went on Kasitile, 'do you call that work? Are you growing your own food? No, you lie still and eat without effort. It is *we* who exert ourselves for you' (implying

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

643 755 [78] die. . . . People feared very much because the Lwembe had medicines for smearing on his body, which could cause rain, sickness, food, ulcers, anything.

And they feared lest they might get ulcers if they killed one of Lwembe's men 'on the road'—*i.e.* a traveller. In short, Lwembe's mystical power afforded the first feeble beginnings of a 'king's peace' in a land of warring chiefdoms, where strangers were fair game.

(c) Mbande

778 Mbande is a hill on the plain of north Nyasaland with a commanding view of the surrounding country and well suited to defence. The west side is precipitous and below the scarp edge there used to be a marsh; to the north the hill is protected by a wide reach of the Lukulu river. It is a sacred place and for many 643 generations was the home of the 'divine king', the Kyungu. Like the Lwembe he was the living representative of a hero, and was selected by a group of hereditary nobles from one of two related lineages, the office alternating (if suitable candidates were available) between the two. They sought a big man,[1] one who had begotten children and whose sons were already married, not a young man for, the nobles said, 'young men always want war, and destroy the country'. He must be a man of wisdom (*gwe nsalale*) and generous in feeding his people.

The Kyungu's life was governed by taboos even more rigorous than those surrounding the Lwembe. He must not fall ill, or [794] [755] suffer a wound, or even scratch himself and bleed a little, for his ill health, or his blood falling on the earth would bring sickness to the whole country. 'Men feared when Kyungu's blood fell on the ground, they said, "It is his life".' 'If he had a headache his wives (if they loved him) told him not to mention it, they hid his illness; but if the nobles entered and found him ill they dug the grave and put him in it, saying, "He is the ruler (*ntemi*), it's taboo for him to be ill". Then he thought: "Perhaps it is so" (with a gesture of resignation).'

Great precautions were taken to preserve his health. He lived 751 in a separate house with his powerful medicines. His food was 643 prepared by boys below the age of puberty lest a menstruating [91] woman, or a youth who had lain with a woman, should touch it [694] and so bring sickness upon him; and his numerous wives were [755]

[1] *Ulyambele mwanna.* It implies both big physically and important.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

often leaks out, but in theory the young men must not know, and
[473] those selected always put up a show of resistance before being
[222] bundled into the hut of the senior heir's mother. Once there, no
[796] man dare flee but, like a Lwembe fleeing from the stool, he should
[784] die. The two heirs are seized also and carried into the hut with their headmen. A litter is spread for them, and they remain there in complete seclusion, required to 'talk softly' and avoid quarrelling, guarded by the 'doctor of the coming out' and forbidden to wash except that each of the chiefs and his senior village headman washes with medicines in the doorway of the hut. Each chief also lies down with a commoner and is covered with a black cloth
[789] which, according to Mwandisi (the old blind chief 107) is a symbol of clouds and therefore of plenty. 'It means, may it be heavy—cloudy—above, may food be plentiful; may both heirs bring fruitfulness.' The commoner who lies with the chief is 'one body with him', 'his wife', and continues through life to share with him certain medicines. Some said that the senior village headman performs this function for his chief: others that it is another man altogether. The whole matter is very secret and our information is limited. The period of seclusion varies. Mwanyile (177), who 'came out' in 1955, remained in the hut a month, and he complained most bitterly of the inconvenience of not washing for so long. During this time the young men are admonished by
[807] their fathers' senior village headmen, and told of their faults and their future duties. According to Mwandugonte (Mwandugo's [150] senior headman who was responsible for bringing out Mwanyile), he said: 'Listen to the people: they are the real chiefs! Be hospitable! Greet people politely! Don't beat your mom!' And the other senior headman, Kalonje, said: 'Do not beat your mom, support them! Feed your people on milk, meat, chickens, beer! Fear your people!'

Then the great moment, from which the ritual takes its name, arrives. Very early in the morning a crowd gathers and a junior kinsman of the chief knocks on the door and shouts: 'Come out! War has come!' Each heir, followed by his senior headman,
[778] rushes out and grasps the 'spear of chieftainship' held ready at the doorway for him, while the headman grasps a medicated zebra tail. The spear has a little horn of medicines bound to it 'to show that the chief has come out', and brandishing it is 'comparable to carrying the chief cloth. We show his greatness to the people and acclaim him.' 'The spear of chieftainship is strength, rest-

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1935
F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

naturally and was buried dead, and no human was buried with him, yet they buried a live cow with him in imitation of the custom of the senior, because the junior was also a chief, and the cow was like a person. And now in European times the ruling chiefs are buried with a cow, not with a man, in imitation of the custom of the junior; but still they are buried at night.

Kaitile denied that chiefs were buried before death, but he admitted that they were smothered.

[791] When the chief was very ill we priests came, Njobokwa and Ngulye, and I. We took his nails and his hair, we tore them off while he was still alive, he started up and we hid ourselves that he should not see us. Then we attended to him.

Here he made a gesture of stepping up the mantle. That is, they buried his death as soon as the nails and hair had been stripped off.

And we dug the grave; we buried him by night, where he had died, where he had gone, with a live cow; we did this at night for it was taboo for people to see the burial of a senior chief. We killed a cow in the sacred grove and we cut it, we the priests, before people heard that he had died. The chief Mwalugile (35) when his death was approaching said: 'My body is sick.' After waiting two days, the village headmen said, 'This illness has delivered us', and they tore off his nails—yes, before he died. If they had waited until after his death, would not the people, the power of chieftainship, have passed away? But they did not smother him, he just died. . . . His nails and hair were put into a little reed, which they hid beneath an amaal (Chaphaw mulsi) tree at the village headman's, the amaal which grew at the homestead of Njobokwa [the grandfather of the present Njobokwa]. They buried it at a commoner's place, as if to say: 'We commoners are the earth, we have taken the power of growth (ifuga) from the chief, these nails and the hair are the power of growth of the country (ifuja fia nsali fa ifuga fa ifisi).

Kaitile took Godfrey Wilson's hand and explained: 'Bwana, Mwaipaja (G.W.), when you cut these nails of yours do they not grow again?' 'Yes, they grow again.' 'Well, then, where does their growth come from? Does it not come from the body?' 'Yes.' 'Well, so it is, the village headmen take the power of growth (ifuga) from the chief, his nails and his hair.'

On another occasion Kaitile explained that formerly the relics had been kept in a pot in the house, but that when Mwaipaja (1.0) succeeded

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

weather, and the ritual. 'We prayed yesterday at Ipinda, Mwaipopo and all of us, we prayed and prayed. Did you feel the cold as much as usual last night? Did you hear the banana leaves rustle as usual?' 'No.' 'Well, Kyala has heard our prayer.'

At 7.45 a.m. they moved into the grove. A black cow had already been killed. 'We killed it at cock-crow, while it was still dark, we were all there. Mwambene (the chief Mwaipopo 116) handed the axe to Mwanyuso (his junior kinsman *vide* p. 84) who killed the cow.' Bananas were brought and all roasted them and ate, waiting for the other priests, Njobokosa and Kisagata. After a discussion about certain persons who had not come because the last time they got no meat, one of them said: 'Don't talk of what is forbidden in the sacred grove, don't let's make a noise; no, we pray to Mwakagile (59). . . . If we quarrel and make a noise the shades will not hear our prayer.' James (119), Kasitile's heir, was there but not Kasitile (86) himself. Someone asked whether Tandale ought to be summoned. But one said: 'We have never asked this Tandale to come here; we used to ask his father.'[1] . . . Tandale lives in the boys' village. He has not the position of Ngulyo and Kisagata.'

Mwaipopo: 'Why do you argue about this today and not before?'

After an hour's delay Njobokosa arrived, and shortly after him Kisagata, who apologized, saying: 'I am late because my child has just died.'

Kisagata and Ngulyo flayed the cow, letting the blood pour out on to the ground. There was some discussion over the division of the meat, and they cut out the chine, saying: 'We send it with the tail to Kasitile—if we sever the tail we have spoiled it.'

Ngulyo took the sacred meat (*ipumuapo*) from both forelegs, and with Kisagata's help he chopped off twenty-three small pieces. The rest of this meat was left for the children. At 10.10 all gathered to go to the grave. A sacred stone (*ulufge*)[2] was found under a tree. Mwaitenja (Mwaipopo's junior kinsman) cleared the undergrowth with his bill-hook and dug a hole close to the stone, then he threw the meat which Kisagata was holding on two leaves, placed the leaves on top and filled in the earth. Five or six men spoke:

[1] Tandale the senior had buried the previous chief, Mwaipopo I (115).

[2] It was not clear whether this was the one planted at Mwaipopo's coming out or not, since his kaboko was some hundreds of yards away.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 782 I kept the chine for two nights in my house. The shades came to eat—they left practically nothing. Had I not been ill I would have asked you to come and see since you say they do not eat. . . . The shades come and see that we are celebrating the rituals.

The whole ritual was esoteric. Only the chief with eight of his [793] agnatic kinsmen, four of his young sons (but not his grown-up [643] heir or young grandson), and four priests participated, and we [123] two anthropologists were permitted to look on. Peeping small boys were chased off. The shades were addressed in a conversational tone and, except during the invocation, the priests and [784] chiefs chatted to one another, but arguments and raised voices were taboo. The boys who ate the meat were told:

[869] See, we your fathers are sacrificing, we are making plenty of food. Follow the custom of your fathers when it is your turn to sacrifice. Learn how to do it.

The same evening Kasitile prayed at his tree again. He explained:

I would not usually pray at all tonight, it is finished. Mwaipopo and I prayed yesterday, today the ritual is finished, but that boy of mine [his heir, 119] does not visit me, he's not been to see me and he did not tell me that he was going to the ritual. . . . I am going to pray to tell my fathers not to be startled, to tell them I am not angry, to tell them to send only a little rain, not a lot, to tell them to accept the sacrifice.

He went to the same place, and chewed the root of 'blessed grass' and blew out water as before. He prayed to about thirty persons, especially to Mwamaloba (85, his elder brother) and Mwakanjoki (60, his father), and also to Mwakagile (59), Mwaijonga (82), Mwaipasi (81), Mwakabule (117), Mwamwifu (84), Mwafungo (83), Mwakipesile (118), Mwakapala (7), Lyambilo (12), Mwalubange (58), Mwamukinga (45), Mwailojo (1477), Mwaitende (61), and Kyala (2). No mention was made of the [illegible]

You have received your child Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 59), Mwaijonga (82), you have received the chief, this boy of mine (119) is quarrelling with me, do not be upset, he is a fool, a fool, but let him be . . . go and call your brothers to eat, you Mwaijonga (82), you Mwaipopo (115), and all your younger brothers; call Mwakagile (59) and Mwakanjoki (60) . . . Mwalubange (58) go to eat with your younger brother, let us find food, millet, bananas, children, milk . . . let there be a little rain only, not too much . . . people believe

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

769 In this grove of Kalule three chiefs in particular gather together,
782 Mwakilidele (67 K) and his brothers Mwakalukwa (68 K) and Mwangoka (24 K) [or his son], with the younger brothers Mwakamula (66 K) and Mwakilima (69 K) in whose country the grove is situated. The senior, Mwakilidele, initiates matters; it is he who calls his fellows saying: 'Let us pray in the grove.' Then Mwakilidele seeks a black cow and Mwangoka seeks a black bull, Mwakilima brews beer and brings two fowls, a black and grey cock, and a black and yellow hen. So they go to the grove with their children, young boys and girls and the junior chiefs who have lost their positions as ruling chiefs—sons of Mwangomale (4 K)—and their village headmen. In the grove they pour
[778] some of the beer over the sacred stones and kill the cattle and take the liver and fat round the stomach and the meat from the upper forelegs (*jimmaje*) and cut it into small pieces and put it on two brown, sweet bananas and plantain. Then they take little pieces of meat and throw them on the ground and pluck out the feathers of the fowls. They praise the shades saying: 'Receive the fowls and beer and meat, may there be fertility of the fields that all the crops may be plentiful.' . . . 'Help us Kyala, thou Nikolambwike (?), thou Kajubili (?), you created us, together with our fathers. Help us that illness may be slight, that we may increase and be many, that all the fowls and cattle may increase and that the fields may be fertile.' When they pluck out the feathers of the hen the praises are for the wives of the chiefs who have died. Then they pick up little pieces of meat and eat them with young children; it is taboo for wives to eat it. Boys drink the beer which is in the calabash cup—they receive it in their hands—and the girls finish the beer in the large calabash. Then the men drink the rest of the beer and divide the meat. . . . The calabash cup and the large calabash and the head are left in the grove overnight . . . then the large calabash
[784] and the cup are taken home and hung under the eaves—it is taboo to put them in the house—women must not approach them. When they have finished and come out of the grove rain pours down immediately and they rejoice saying: 'Kyala has helped us' . . . or 'the fathers have heard'.

Pouring out the beer on the ground and throwing down little pieces of meat and sobbing, therefore after the grounds [illegible] many the shades beneath receive them, may they bless the crops so that they flourish and food be plentiful. . . .' Children finish the food because they are like the shades—when the children have eaten they say the shades have eaten. They roast the meat at a distance because if they roast it close to the place of sacrifice no shades come there for the smoke drives them off. . . . The large calabash and cup and head which may there
[779] symbolize fertility (*ndoni*), so that when we eat they may help us and
[784] the food may not fail. The taboo on women—wives—eating the sacrificial meat (the (*jimmaje*) and drinking the beer in the calabash

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FIGT Ngonde FIGT
Nyakyusa

and cup is because this food is sacrificed to their fathers-in-law. Those who are not sons of Ngonde do not drink the sacrificial beer or eat the meat either, because they are of other lineages. A black cow is used in the grove because graves are always fearful and darkness falls if something improper is done. So it is said that the blackness of the cow matches the fearfulness (*shetipe*) of the grove.

Besides the sacrifices at Kabale and to their more immediate ancestors, Kalewe chiefs sent offerings to the Ba'Ngonde, earlier occupants of the country. Mwamunda explained:

My grandfather prayed in the grove which is across the river on mission land, in the forest; it was the grove of us Ba'Ngonde; we were owners of the soil, the Kalewe chiefs found us here. If ever a chief sent my grandfather and his fellows to pray there they went with an unripe stem of bananas, and sweet milk, and unripe maize, and small sweet potatoes; then they prayed and came home again and the next day, when they went to look they found the stem of bananas had ripened, the maize had hardened, the milk was thick and the sweet potatoes large; everything which was unripe had ripened. Then they said Kyala [that is Kyala and the chiefs] had eaten by us. . . . We spoke of Kyala even before the Europeans had come. . . .*

They say that very long ago we Ba'Ngonde, we sons of Kanyangala, had not yet got fire, the chiefs brought it. It is this they commemorate in the 'coming out' ritual. We, the owners of the soil, were always here, the chiefs came and built, and when others came the foreigners fled. They are like you Europeans who fight wars; we owners of the soil think only of farming.

(c) MORAL CHOICES

It is quite clear that, though sacrifices to the heroes and at the graves of chiefs were still made while we were among the Nyakyusa (and more frequently than our friends at first admitted), the cycle was attenuated. Not only had human sacrifice ceased, but the chiefs were reluctant to part with cattle. . . . Kaniele (86) said one day:

Since you [Europeans] came into the country the chiefs have disappeared. Mwalipepo (*cit*) never thinks of the chiefs now. . . . It is cold and there is hunger; I went to Mwalipepo and told him to tell his

* According to the records of the free missions, sacrifices at Kangoni were to Mkondo but the more passage which is Mkondo a chief meaning God. It is not clear whether the two names were squared by Kalewe informants or by the missionary himself, who was in touch with missionaries elsewhere in the district. (*Journal de l'Unité des Frères*, 1894.) I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Fuchs for drawing my attention to the valuable journal.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

[773] [774] them first, then his grandfather, and father. Others told us that rain stones always came from Kisi country, a very wet strip of land on the north-east shore of the Lake where the clouds always seem to gather when one looks south from the Nyakyusa valley and plain, and a piece of petrified wood used in Ngonde for making rain came from the hills of Mindu, also a very wet country. Kaitile's stones were of two types, but no direct association of male and female was made. However, the Kukwe spoke of a 'mother' stone having young. 'The rain-maker puts back the stone in the pot-bed without water (after rain has come) and going later he finds that it has got young, perhaps seven, with the mother there are eight.'

[775] [776] The rain-makers are subject to certain taboos: during the dry season they may not wash lest they drive away the rain nor do they shave for 'they compare hair and clouds saying, "Let it be black", they compare a bald pate with sunshine.' And the rain-maker [777] may not eat roasted maize 'for as the maize crackles in the pot-shard when it is roasted, so the thunder will crackle in the sky'. He may not eat green maize (which is reaped during the rains) until the dry weather begins 'because he creates rain, which means he creates all the food which grows with the rain'. If he begins eating too soon he may stop the growth. And when the rain-maker is manipulating his instruments a sex taboo is observed. [778] 'When I am making rain,' said Kaitile, 'I do not sleep with my wives for two days, it's taboo. How would Kyala help us if I did?'

In theory the rain-maker always works under the direction of [779] the political authority—the Kyungu or a chief—but he is also thought to wreak vengeance on those who anger him. Kaitile was critical of his colleague in the hills above Isumba: 'He never makes a nice gentle rain, it always destroys food. . . . He is always demanding things from men, and, if they refuse, he brings his rain to destroy things. . . . There is a very strong wind and heavy [780] [781] rain which makes much of Kyungu.' But when Kaitile himself was angry, because his son was taken as a tax defaulter to work on the roads, the weather grew bad.

[782] People say I am angry, that this rain is because they came and beat me because of tax. This time the tax collectors came to my place and beat me and when I thought, 'It is not the custom with our forefathers for the tax collectors to come at all to men like me', I grew angry and prayed. . . . When I was in Mulipunde the country suffered from hunger, all their children were in trouble. . . . Then I came up, and

Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

it was something done secretly, at night, and feared by everyone. Amkilikile related how, as a small boy growing up on the plain, he had been severely beaten by his mother when he called out one night, hearing a noise in the bananas, for it was made by the doctor 'sprinkling the homesteads'. The doctor heard and entered their hut angrily, and seized some of the calabashes. The medicine for sprinkling sometimes—probably always—contained human flesh, hence the anxiety of mothers not to draw the attention of the fearful doctor to their children. In Selya, after the sacrifice at Lubaga, the Kings returned to Kaitile's homestead to sprinkle a medicine which contained the flesh of the child they had killed for the drum, and Mwamakonde (his assistant) went round by night pruning the bananas throughout Mwaipopo's country with a sacred knife, which was kept in Kaitile's homestead and Kaitile put porridge of banana flour, made from a stem of bananas provided by the chief's senior wife, in the grove called Kinyangwa ('the porridge of banana flour') near his house. Then fertility was said to spread from Kaitile's throughout the country. According to Kaitile himself, the medicine contained an ingredient he did not know . . .

> My elder brother died without showing me the tree. . . . Mwamakonde does not know it either, he just got it from my father. We hope that it will appear in a dream, but it has not yet been revealed. . . . We dreamed of a cow, and of Mwaipopo (G.W.), but the medicine was not seen. I will seek another from a doctor . . . perhaps from Mlenda.[1]

At this time also, in some—perhaps all—chiefdoms millet was taken from the sacred pot containing the 'power of growth', i.e. the hair and nails of the dead chiefs (*vide supra*, pp. 64-5) to mix with the millet seed about to be planted.

[illegible] Elsewhere, there was a much more open use of medicines for fertility by village groups, when they burnt the rubbish heaps in which they planted millet,[2] and by private individuals in their own fields.

During the hot weather a chief sometimes sends to all the villages of his chiefdom a cow, curiously dressed in a cap and jerkin of banana leaves, who forbids people to cut their bananas, or even leaves of banana stems that have not

[1] A doctor famous for his medicines.

[2] Cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. [illegible].

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

784
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yet fruited, and tells them to eat beans, sweet potatoes, and cow peas instead. The owner of a grove can cut a stem of bananas only with the permission of the man who proclaims the prohibition (*agwe lanaga*), and those who trespass pay him a fine of a hen, a knife, a pot, or their sleeping mats. The avowed purpose is that 'bananas should ripen in all the homesteads and the country appear rich and productive', but there may be further implications which we did not discover.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

he had received this object from his ancestors and it must always hang on this spot, as the ancestral spirits (*abasyuka*)[28] themselves controlled its presence. It consisted of an *usuripera*, i. e. the tail of an ox, but the upper part of it was hollow. In this hollow part medicines (*ifingila*)[29] were kept. Yet another magical medicine, in the shape of a piece of bark of the tree called *Erythrophleum Guineense*[30] was fastened at the upper end of this sign. When my European attendant immediately said to the chief: "And from this piece you make your *mwaji*"[31], the chief exclaimed in astonishment: "*Umwe uwa Kyara!*" (You are sons of Kyara! i. e. You Europeans know everything.)

After this there was no more delay in revealing to us some more features of this sign of dignity. According to the belief of his fathers this object possessed a special *amaka* (power)[32], e. g. to defeat enemies, if the chief were to hold it directly against them. Also if a thief were to try to enter the room by force, by making a hole beneath the wall of this part of the hut, he would be stricken by power coming from the *ubusuripa* and he would have the impression that eyes are directed against him, and so be driven away.

After these interesting communications I went to visit the hut of one of his wives, which still revealed the *ingenga*, the old-fashioned round structure of bamboo poles diverging from their upper end and thatched with grass[33].

9. The frequent walks in company with the chief or some of his *amafumu* gave me several opportunities for enquiries. On one occasion,

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[28] Cf. Wilson, Burial, p. 9: *umayuka* (Sing.); *Mackenzie*, p. 191: *bamyuka* (Karonga).

[29] Cf. *Mackenzie*, p. 275: *ifingiro* (Karonga).

[30] The pharmacological substance of the bark (Cortex Erythrophleii, „Sassa-bark") is the alkaloid Erythrophleïn which produces the same typical effects on the heart as the Digitalis-group (cf. C. G. Santesson: Pharmakologiska studier XII. Arkiv för Kemoch 27 A, No. 4, Stockholm 1939, p. 6).

[31] Cf. Wilson, Land Rights, p. 82; *Merensky*, p. 134; *Fülleborn*, p. 366.

[32] *amaka* is not a specific expression for „magical" or (religious) „supernatural" power, although, from the European standpoint this meaning may be connected with the word in specific cases, but generally it means any striking expression or effect of a quality of a person or object, e. g. spirit *ubi* against *amaka*, to this word is power. This word is, therefore, a parallel to the *Austronesian*, especially Polynesian word *mana*, essential to my treatise „Mana. The term of that which is exceedingly striking", Baessler Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde, I. Berlin, Ethnographia, Vol. 2, Leipzig, 1935. If the Nyakyusa wishes to say that a phenomenon is "supernatural", then he connects it with Kyara, or he names it directly "Kiara" (cf. *Merensky*, p. 110 (187), 216).

[33] Cf. Fülleborn, p. 271, fig 140: Schematical sketch of a round-hut (as also to be found with the Nyakyusa still today).

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

when we went to a field I saw a stick of a special type upright in the soil. It was made of a reed split at the top, with a small bundle of leaves squeezed in the split. A piece of bark stood out from this bundle. I asked the chief for the significance of this and he explained that it was an ulusinga, i. e. a tabu sign to prevent anyone from stepping on the field which was an imasibi (yam-field). This sign was believed to possess "magical power", to strike an invader with illness. Each owner of a field has the right to protect his field in such a manner, and a chief especially has the right to command tabus regarding plants which are staple food for the whole chieftainship, as, for instance, maize that is not allowed to be reaped before the chief has given his permission. All such tabus are also named mwiko*. During the time of such a general tabu, visitors, who by chance come through a village under tabu, are not allowed to greet the inhabitants of the village or to speak to them.

The chief added that special watchmen are installed during these periods; these men are dressed in a terrifying manner, and have the right to arrest any person transgressing the tabu. The chief may punish the offenders immediately, imposing on them, for instance, a cow as a fine. This was also the case with an ordinary theft in a field, but nowadays such affairs are regulated by the law of the Mandated Government. After the repeal of such a general tabu by the chief, beer will be drunk (e. g. ubwelwe bwa kutapila bwa kutwedela, the beer that is poured out at the harvest), and the usual eating community of men will be re-established, for Nyakyusa men like to eat together as comrades, not in families.

10. When I was in Katumba, dances were held on several days from the afternoon till midnight, very similar in form to that which Mackenzie describes (p. 140) by the name Ikombwki.

The men stood on one side of the open place in several lines, with sticks in their hands; on the opposite side were the women and girls. Between them, more in the background, were the drummers, at the beginning of the dance; then they moved round the place. The principal drummer was a man of great excitability. He performed most extravagant movements with his body and his drumstick, making somersaults, jumping over the drum, treating it as a "living being", running to it and turning just in front of it.

* This word mwiko (forbidden) has the same wide (profane and ritual) meanings as tapu or tabu in the Polynesian Languages (cf. Rud. Lehmann: Die polynesischen Tabu-Sitten, Brsch. Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde 5, 16, Leipzig 1939).

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

one of the early missionaries the sons of leading men had been sent to Kondowe to be educated and their influence had been important in gaining the support of the Kyungu and chiefs for the mission. 797[x] 795[x]

In the second generation of Christians not nearly all those baptised in infancy come to be confirmed or 'blessed'—an elder in Ngonde put it at about half. There is, therefore, a large group of people who have been Church members and have been struck off the Church register because they have married a second wife or committed adultery or become drunkards, and show no sign of repentance, and of those who have grown up as Christians, but have not maintained any connexion with a Church in later life. [688]

So far we have talked of Christian rituals and dogma in terms of the three mission Churches whose converts form the great bulk of Christians: differences between them are negligible. The doctrinal differences between Protestant and Roman Catholic do not bulk large to the Nyakyusa, and since the Roman Catholic Church had not been operating for any long period among them and had a membership of under 1,000, many of whom were Ngoni from Songea or Kisi, who had settled in Tukuyu district, it was not possible to make any adequate comparison of the differences between Protestant and Catholic groups.

Two small Churches, the Pentecostal Holiness and the Watch Tower, had certain peculiarities. The Pentecostal Holiness Church holds highly emotional services at which members are expected to 'speak with tongues'; during prayers the whole congregation begins to jabber, each man usually being unintelligible to his neighbour, though words of other languages can be distinguished. Our informants maintained that the attraction of the Church was that its members seemed to 'have more of the *Holy Ghost*', *as demonstrated by the 'speaking with tongues'*, though the more cynical of outsiders mentioned also 'the brown and fabric'—cheaper Bibles, and the fact that the European leader was the largest employer of labour in the district and those who belonged to his Church got on best with him. Many of the members had formerly been Moravians. Its rules were strict: members were not permitted to smoke or drink, or use any Nyakyusa medicines. [781] [776] [764] [795]

The Watch Tower members emphasised that their Church, through its leader, Judge Rutherford, interpreted prophecy in a way in which no other Church could do. They practised baptism [832]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

believed to remain in a woman and, if she has neglected the taboos, this blood 'rots' the child later conceived (cf. Document, p. 219). This connection is insisted upon, though witchcraft inherited from the father is spoken of as being carried directly in his blood, which is thought to be transferred to his wife during intercourse. 754 841

Furthermore, a pregnant woman is believed to have some of the attributes of a witch. She, like a witch, causes grain and pulse to diminish if she passes near by when it is spread out to dry, or greets women who are stamping or grinding grain. If she speaks or comes too close 'the child inside catches hold of the food, and it disappears'. And if she should speak inadvertently, forgetting that she is pregnant, she must throw a stone or a piece of stick into the grain, or take a little of the flour in her hand, otherwise the women will say: 'She is proud, that girl, she is a witch, why is she talking?' and it is thought that she will have a miscarriage. A pregnant woman, like a witch, and one who has been using medicine, is spoken of as 'heavy' (*saito*) in contrast with one who is 'empty' (*bwaa*), having nothing in the belly, and Mwaikambo explained that, 'When they speak of a pregnant woman being "heavy", they think that perhaps the foetus is witchcraft.' The foetus and the python of witchcraft are felt to be somewhat alike; but in most situations they are clearly distinguished, and indeed it is held that a woman may have both. If the afterbirth is delayed it is said that the woman is herself a witch, and her python is closing up the vaginal passage, so that the afterbirth cannot come away. A pregnant woman is not spoken of as a witch unless she harms someone by neglecting the taboos connected with her state, and her husband, who must keep the same taboos, may also be called a witch if he breaks them. 754 843

Sickness and death among men and cattle, and a diminution in the milk yield of cows, are held to be common results of witchcraft, and any 'unnatural' event, such as a case of bestiality, or of sodomy between a grown man and a boy (not between two youths), or of intercourse between a young man and an old woman, or of unusual behaviour among animals or birds, is taken as evidence that witches are at work. It is the 'unnatural' element that is emphasised (cf. Document, p. 225). An owl hooting on one's roof, and someone staring at one, are also taken as indications of witchcraft. 754 [788]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

iii. *'The defenders' and 'the breath of men'*

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Proof of the activity and identity of witches is sought first in the dreams of victims and of 'the defenders' (*abamanga*) of his village who are believed to have power to see and to fight witches in dreams. As we have seen, the witches are believed to leave their bodies sleeping and to fly through the air to the house of the man against whom they have a grudge, and there to enter his body while he sleeps, and either 'throttle' (*ukupita*), 'trample' (*ukuhwanga*), or 'eat' (*ukulya*) his inside. In the morning, or during the night, the victim wakes up more or less conscious of what has happened to him. If they come often, many nights running, he falls sick and may die, unless he takes steps to defend himself. 'The defenders' (*abamanga*) are believed to be able to see and recognize the identity of the witches and to counter them in two ways. First by turning them back at night, saying: 'Where are you going to throttle your fellow? Go back!' and then driving them off with spears or striking a witch's python, so that the witch dies; and secondly, by reporting to neighbours and to the political authorities the names of the people they have seen engaged in witchcraft. An ordinary person can never recognize the witch who attacks him, even though he may be conscious that he is being throttled. And all these things happen in dreams: 'The witches go out in dreams to throttle people.' 'It is in dreams that "the defenders" recognize them.' Certain dreams, interpreted by a traditional symbolism, are taken as signs of being bewitched: 'If I dream that someone comes to fight me, perhaps he beats me with a stick, perhaps he overwhelms me and crushes me down to earth, perhaps he hits me with his fist; then I wake up and tell people: "Last night they came to throttle me."' 'If I recognise people who come to fight me in my dreams that means I have myself the power of defence; if I do not recognize them then I have not.' 'If I dream that I am flying alone through the air high up at night, that means they have come to throttle me.' 'If I wake up suddenly at night in fear and sweating, even though I do not recollect the dream, I know they have come to throttle me.' 'Dreams of being chased, of being beaten, of the house burning, of one coming to the door and weeping for me as if I were dead, these are all signs of witchcraft.' Close friends tell one another

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

their dreams—provided they have not dreamed of attacking one another—and when more than one of them has dreamed of X as an aggressor, then the presumption is very strong that X is a witch. Dreams to the Nyakyusa are the stuff of religious reality, and the very close association between witchcraft and dreams is apparent in the language—*injoni* meaning a dream, and *ubuloni* (the same root in the abstract noun class) meaning witchcraft. It is perhaps also significant, that *ukugoga* means to dream, and *ukugogwa* (in the passive form) means to be killed. Restless nights are taken as proof that either the witches or ancestors are troubling a man: 'We do not sleep' (*tukigona*) is the formal phrase in which village headmen or priests notify the chief that something is amiss in the country, and a ritual is required; and an ordinary person using the same phrase implies that he is harried either by the ancestors or by witches. 'You *may* sleep or you may not' (*uligona*) is the commonest form in which a threat of witchcraft is made.

The vision and power of 'the defenders' (*abamanga*) comes from the same source as the power of the witches,[1] from pythons in the belly, the essential difference between the witches and 'the defenders' being that the latter use their power in accordance with law and morality, while the witches act for selfish ends, and their activities are illegal. This close association of 'the defenders' with the power of witchcraft is apparent in language, *ukumanga* being sometimes used almost synonomously with *ukuloga* for 'to bewitch', while *abamanga* means 'the defenders'.[2] There are, moreover, certain differences between the pythons of witches, and those of 'defenders'. In the first place, the condition of 'the

[1] For similar concepts among the Thonga and Azande cf. H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. II, p. 516; E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*, pp. 224 ff.

[2] cf. the Bantu *bwanga* discussed by R. J. B. Moore in *Africa*, Vol. XIII, 1940, pp. 211 ff. and *Bantu Studies*, Vol. 15, 1941, pp. 37 ff.; the note on the use of this word in a number of languages in *Africa*, Vol. XVI, 1946, pp. 119-20; and C. M. N. White in *Africa*, Vol. XVIII, 1948, pp. 83-100.

I translate *-manga* in Nyakyusa as 'mystical power', *aba-manga* 'to exercise mystical power' (for good and evil), and *aba-manga* as 'those possessing mystical power', with the further implication that they use this power for defence. Writing in *Africa*, Vol. IX, 1936, pp. 85, and Vol. X, 1937, pp. 262 ff., we translated *aba-manga* as 'defender-witches' and *aba-loi* as 'aggressor-witches'. On further reflection, however, I have preferred to confine 'witch' and 'witchcraft' to those acting in a manner disapproved by their society, since this is common usage, and for want of a better term I call *aba-manga* 'the defenders'.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 defenders' is not visible at an autopsy. Secondly, it is maintained
• 787 that while a witch has several pythons, a defender has only one,
791 and whereas witchcraft is always inherited or acquired in early childhood, a python of defence may be acquired later, through drinking medicine. Old Mwandesi, recognized by the Nyakyusa themselves as an authority on law and history, explained it to us thus: 'Some are born with pythons; they are those with many pythons, perhaps three. Some get them from medicine made of leaves which is given them to drink at the "coming out", they have only one, it is they who watch over the cattle, they are the village headmen (*amafumu*). He who has many pythons, who is born with them, having inherited them, suns them secretly at his home. He takes them out and suns them, then swallows them again, they are his intestines. Such a man is a great witch; he is the kind who is convicted of witchcraft. But the village headman who has got his python through medicine has only one, he does not sun it, he is not convicted of witchcraft, he only detects the witches in dreams. When he begets a child the latter will have one python only. If his son or daughter goes about throttling people, then his father says: "Where did you get *many* pythons? See! I have only one. It is you woman! (accusing his wife)." So they submit themselves to the poison ordeal. The man vomits and the ordeal catches the woman.' Mwandesi contradicted himself in this statement, first suggesting that the power of defence was only acquired through drinking medicines, and then that the child of a village headman inherited one python from his father. Most Nyakyusa maintain that the *power of defence can be acquired in either fashion*. The *medicines drunk* at the 'coming out' develop it even in an 'empty' man, but many men, including assistant headmen and ordinary citizens who are not specially treated at the 'coming out', are believed to have it. It is asserted that no women have it, though many of them are spoken of as witches, and in particular instances informants implied that some women 'saw' the witches (cf. Document, pp. 252–3).

Mbukile confirmed Mwandesi's main point, saying: 'Some of us are empty, pure (*bwele*), we have no pythons, not one; some are 'defenders' and pure, they are those who watch over the country; such a man has only one python to watch over his country. The ruler of the country, the chief, also has one python; for both village headman and chief watch over the country. Some are

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

witches, they have two or three pythons, it is they who are caught by the poison ordeal.'. 'Watching over the country' implies detecting the witches and turning them back, and also reporting them the next morning to the authorities. Particularly 'the defenders' watch over the cows, and they are said actually to increase the milk yield by sucking the milk from the teats and spitting it out again. Mbukile explained this also: ' "The defender" watches over the cows. He takes milk in his mouth and squirts it on the ground; he does not swallow it in his dream. The next day the milk will be plentiful.' A village headman we knew enlarged further on the point: 'If a man is the son of a true village headman and goes to drink the milk of cows, he drinks from the teats, but his python vomits the milk and the next day the owner of the cow will find much milk and say: "He who came last night was the child of a village headman (*ulifwa*). He was good, he was not a witch, no, but a benefactor."[1] So they say. But if a real witch goes to bewitch the cows then the milk dries up altogether for a time. The owners of the cows will milk none for many days. He is a witch indeed.' Similarly, it is held that if witches can be compelled to vomit the human flesh they have eaten, 'to put back the meat', the patient will recover.

'Emptiness' and 'innocence' are associated in several contexts; and vomiting, spitting, and confession (*ukuonya*) are all taken as expressions of good will and repentance. *Ukuteme*, for example, means both 'to spit' and 'to forgive', the symbolism being interpreted in this way: 'If a father is angry with his son or daughter he may say some day, "I forgive you now" and spit on the ground: all the anger that is in him comes out like spit.' Blowing water from the mouth is an essential element in prayers to the ancestors, and the close association between them is apparent in the language: *ukupata* meaning to 'blow out water' and *ukupata* (the reflexive form) meaning 'to pray',[2] with the implication of confessing whatever anger or grudge a man may have in his heart. Kasitile, the rainmaker, explained: 'This prayer with water is to confess *everything*. If I do not pray with water then something is left within.'

[1] For a similar concept among the Thonga cf. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. II, p. 512.

[2] The Zande symbolism is very similar: cf. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, 'Zande Theology' in *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XXX (1948), pp. 10–16.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

c. *Procedure in witchcraft cases*

Whenever someone is very ill there is anxious speculation among relatives and neighbours as to the cause of the illness. If witchcraft is suspected—and witchcraft is thought to be by far the commonest cause of sickness and death—people begin to whisper (*ukukeka*) that so and so is responsible. Even if the trouble is only a sudden fall in the milk supply there are whispers about witchcraft and the identity of the witch. Then the neighbours meet and complain (*ukusijaje*), or else the leader of the village-section, or even the headman of the village, takes the initiative and, summoning his people, admonishes them. The object of such complaint and exhortation is to warn off the witch. 'People speak very angrily, then the witches are ashamed within themselves, and stop their witchcraft, because they die of shame.' If the warning is effective—that is if the patient or the cows recover—the case will be dropped; but if the trouble continues then the village proceeds to the discovery of the witch. Mwaisumo explained: 'If sickness occurs, the village headman will call his people round him and say: "This village is not right, disease is killing the people, there must be someone who is bewitching them. We warn him to stop!" Then, if he does not stop he will call the people round him again and say: "Well, we must drive him away." Then they discuss their dreams with the headman; it is always by their dreams that they find out the witch, no other way.' A case was quoted in which the milk yield of a village had diminished and the villagers had 'called one another' to come together to complain. While they were complaining a 'defender' called out: 'I have seen the one who is throttling the cows; come together again to-morrow, and no one must stay behind.' When they met the next day one man called the names of each villager in turn, and 'the defender' responded to each with 'Yes', until 'Mwaalutabe' was called. Then he was silent. The name was called three times, and at the third time the whole company groaned. Mwaalutabe got up and, denying the accusation, appealed to the ordeal. He was found guilty by it and was driven from the village (cf. Document, pp. 241–3).

Mwakwelebeja, himself a commoner credited with the power of discovering witches in dreams, made a revealing comment on

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

nugget of gold. This 'witch' was actually expelled from the camp by his fellows, but Nyakyusa, commenting on the case, remarked that had it occurred in one of the home villages, he would only have been fined. 754 783

Sometimes a case begins with the startling shout of 'a defender' in the night, who claims to have seen in his dreams that a witch is attacking either himself or a fellow villager. 'A man who dreams of fighting, or being beaten, will sometimes wake up in the middle of the night and go out of his house and shout: "You, so and so, why do you come and fight with me?" But often he will not mention the name then, but waits till the morning when his friends will come and ask him: "Why were you shouting last night?" Then he tells them the name of the man he dreamed of, and if another man dreams of him in the same way the next night or later, then they say he is a witch.' Such a case was described by Mwakambo: 'A certain man, Kolelo, dreamed of his fellow, and in the morning he called out on the road, "I dreamed of so and so, we fought with him in the night, he was throttling me." So his fellows came to his help and said to the accused man: "You, Moses, we have caught you, move elsewhere!" So Moses [who was a pagan, despite his name] moved to another village in the same chiefdom, that of Kyesse.' 754 787

Occasionally a witch reveals himself by threatening a neighbour with whom he has quarrelled, using the stereotyped phrases: 'You may sleep or you may not' (*Ulipema*), or 'What are you?' (*Ulipwale*), or 'Something may happen!' Here is an actual case as reported to us: 'Mwantibe once ordered a boy, the son of a village neighbour, to go on a message for him, but the boy refused, though it is customary for men to send their neighbours' sons on messages. Then Mwantibe got angry with him and snatched his cloth away, saying in anger: "You, boy, something may happen!" implying that the boy would fall ill. The boy fell ill that very evening, and died shortly afterwards. Mwantibe hurried to return the cloth, but the boy's people drove him away with it saying: "What sort of sorrow have you? Are you pretending, so that we shall not suspect you?" For they said it was he who had "eaten" the boy.' 754

The cases quoted so far all involve a direct accusation of witchcraft against the suspect, but sometimes he is compelled to move without ever being accused face to face. Mwaisumo ex- 754 627

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

barricaded his doorway with thorns. On his return he found them, and he moved to Mwalujo's country (the adjoining chiefdom).'

Often an accusation of witchcraft is made without resort to divination at all: the behaviour of the accused (as in the case quoted on pp. 110–13) or the word of 'the defender', is taken as evidence. But if there is doubt as to the identity of the witch, the patient or his family may consult a diviner (*undagwa*),[1] putting before him the names of persons they suspect. Whatever the grounds of accusation, however, it was normally confirmed by the *ewusyi* ordeal, if the accused did not admit guilt. The chief might order a suspect to go to the ordeal, or a man or woman accused by his neighbours would appeal to the ordeal, when denying the charge. In such a case the accuser and accused first went to the chief to report and get official witnesses, then, accompanied by these witnesses and other friends, they went to a doctor who had a store of a certain medicine, *ewusyi*, and there, at his homestead, they drank the *ewusyi* together. Those who failed to vomit were judged guilty. The procedure was described by a number of witnesses (*vide* Documents, pp. 240–4). The accuser and the accused, each accompanied by supporters, go to the doctor, who warns them not to drink if what they have said is false. The doctor sprinkles powder into rapid water and gives the accuser and the accused the infusion to drink. He addresses the *ewusyi*, and the supporters address each their own friend. Then, when one vomits his (or her) supporters applaud willing,[2] and they go home, the man who vomited paying the doctor. Mwaudisi described how after one of the two had vomited the other would sit mute and miserable, quite still. He would be left alone awhile, but later the doctor would try to make him bring up the poison: 'Should a man die?' they said. Only rarely, it seems, did anyone die of drinking *ewusyi*.

If the accuser failed to vomit he was judged guilty of witchcraft himself; if neither vomited both were judged guilty; if both vomited the accuser was fined, paying two or more cows to the accused in compensation for slander. If he had no cows he might give a girl in marriage.

[1] For the methods of divination see Godfrey Wilson 'An African Mentality', *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936), p. 8.

[2] A high-pitched ululation expressing praise and triumph.

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 Sometimes the individuals concerned did not actually take the
687 ordeal themselves, but each was represented by one of his or her
695 children, as when Mwainumo's mother was accused of bewitching the village cows, and one of her younger sons drank the *sweep* representing her (cf. Document, p. 140). Very often the ordeal was used to discover which *group* was responsible for the trouble, whether it was the father's people or the mother's, or perhaps the village, and a child was chosen to represent each group and given the poison. Mwainumo himself had drunk *sweep* as a child, representing his father's people (cf. Document, p. 144). And a sceptic explained that each family chose a member who vomited readily—his family was always represented by a certain daughter who vomited *sweep* immediately.

The ordeal is only administered nowadays in the greatest secrecy, and probably very rarely, for informants who had no hesitation in discussing with us witchcraft accusations and trials of supposed witches, though these were well known to be illegal, denied that the ordeal was administered. The most recent example we traced occurred in 1930.

763 So far we have only dealt with cases in which witchcraft is
767 suspected as the cause of illness among men, or of a decrease in
774 the milk supply. The matter is more serious if someone has actually died. If there is any doubt as to the cause of death, an autopsy is performed, and a diagnosis made from the condition of the stomach and intestines. 'Wounds' or scars in the stomach are taken as evidence of attacks by witches, and a black oily substance in the bowel, or *sal* streaked with black and white, is a mark of sorcery; if the bowel is swollen, or if the entrails burst out of the intestine, it is proof that the deceased was himself a witch, and was probably killed in a quarrel with fellow witches. Death due to a relative having been bound with ropes (cf. Document, p. 144), or a disease of the bowels (*ditayu*) attributed to natural causes, is also thought to be apparent at an autopsy. Some maintain too, that the source of witchcraft can be discovered from the examination, wounds on the right side of the stomach indicating that the witch is a member of the father's family, or of the age-village; wounds on the left indicating that he is a member of the mother's family (cf. Document p. 148).

At the autopsy the crowd is kept at a distance and usually only one or two senior relatives or neighbours, the headman of the

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

 763

village, and the doctor who operates are present. Occasionally 787
their judgement is challenged. 754

"Once an old pagan woman, whose husband was reputed to have been a witch, demanded an autopsy. When they opened the stomach the entrails (*ifimbubbuli*) jumped out. [When the entrails jump out this way they say "the python is fighting".] The observers looked, and said to the doctor, "All right, all right, bind him up again!" But the widow objected, saying, "No, come near all of you." She called all the people and went to the corpse, and tore open the stomach. All cried out, saying: "Alas! do not do that. It is forbidden." Then she turned to the old people and said: "Is there anything here? Nothing! He is only a witch by hearsay. Yes, indeed, just because the entrails jumped out you convicted him." For detailed accounts of two of the autopsies observed see the Document on pp. 247–50.

In the past the source of witchcraft was always confirmed 787
through the ordeal; nowadays divination with the rubbing-board 754
is sometimes used instead. Mwamunda described the procedure: "The custom of drinking *umwafi* has ceased, but some, when a person has died, perhaps a child, make an autopsy. . . . Then, if they find wounds of witchcraft (*ifilonda ifya mangu*) the father and the mother of the child go to a doctor to divine, but they do not drink *umwafi*, they divine with the rubbing-board. Perhaps the divination indicates the mother. She then goes to her father, and he goes to divine with his wife, the grandmother of the dead child. If he (the grandfather) is then indicated he next takes his kinsmen with him, and when the divination indicates one of them the man will say: "This divination is consensus; it always deceives." But others will think him guilty and say: "A kinsman was caught, he had eaten his grandchild." Or perhaps the divination indicates the father of the dead child. If so he divines again asking: "Is it relatives, or is it the country?" (For a man has a country, not a woman.) Then perhaps the divination will show that it is not relatives, but the "breath of God" (*Kyuki*), that is to say other people, non-relatives. Or perhaps the divination indicates the father of the dead child and his relatives; and if so the father goes with his kinsmen and one of them is indicated. Then the father goes again with the man indicated by the previous divination, to confirm the verdict. Before going to court he asks himself: "How shall I bring a case which depends for evidence on divination?

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 754 Will the Europeans allow it?" And so (instead of bringing a charge of witchcraft) he sues his kinsman for a shilling. Later he sues him for a cow, and some even get a court order to collect the cow. Another man in such a position may claim a legal separation from his kinsman and their reciprocal debts in cattle are repaid.[1] It's a case indeed, that!

Mwamonda came from Rungwe, not far from the administrative centre, Tukuyu, hence perhaps his hesitation in preferring a charge of witchcraft; in more remote parts cases concerning witchcraft are taken to the courts. Nsosa explained: "We judge cases concerning witchcraft openly, but we do not have them written in the court book. When "a defender" has seen his fellow throttling someone he tells us, and we judge that witch. It is "the defenders" who see the witches. Perhaps "the defender" comes out of his house by night and calls out: "I see so and so throttling so and so! Listen to-morrow!" Yes, that happens nowadays. When someone tells us this we agree, the witch is convicted, even though he denies it. We say: "You are a witch, a thief, even though you do not admit it, get out of the country." Formerly when the accused denied he was a witch they went to the ordeal, and the ordeal caught the witch; now, since the Europeans have forbidden the use of *umwafi*, we accept the word of "the defenders". For you know the defenders see the witches! In dreams!" "What about the man who accused the wife of Mwakobela?" we asked. "He denied it; he said: "I did not see her". So on that account we said: "Since you have slandered her you must pay thirty shillings." If he had really seen her and told us properly we should have decided against the woman and divorced her from her husband, but he denied it, saying: "I did not see her", and we all said: "The woman is not a witch, who has seen her?" And if a man is fined because he has accused his fellow of witchcraft without seeing him really, we do not write that in the book either."

754 683 Formerly, when a man was convicted of witchcraft, and did not admit it, he was compelled to move from his village, and often to leave the chiefdom altogether. Often his cattle and crops were taken by the chief, who killed one or more for 'the innocent' to eat. No compensation was paid to relatives as in an ordinary

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*.

APPLICATIONS AFFECTED BY ADVERSE CLAIMS—cont.

(c) Finally—cont.

No.	Name of applicant	Nature of claim	Nature of claim	Social [illegible] of claim [illegible]	Place	Grounds of objection	Investigation	Nature of [illegible]	Recommendation [illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]		[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

INFORMATION ATTACHED TO MATERIAL CAUSES—*contd.*

(c) Edinburgh—*contd.*

No.	Cause of accident	Cause of death	Cause of death	Social relationship of victim with accused	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Outlet of vice	Social relationship of accused with accused
[illegible]	Rational	[illegible]	Victim	Same household	[illegible]	[illegible]	Unknown	[illegible]	Spouse
[illegible]	Rational	Wife	"	Same household	[illegible]	[illegible]	Unknown		Spouse
[illegible]	Rational	Wife	"	Same household	[illegible]	Grounds of suspicion	"		Spouse
[illegible]	Unknown	Wife (Younger)	Rational (Wife)	Same household	[illegible]	Rational (W) and (H) [illegible]	"	[illegible]	Spouse
[illegible]	"	Wife (Younger)	Rational (Wife)	Same household	"	"	"	[illegible]	Spouse
[illegible]	Rational's wife	Wife	Rational	Same household	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	Spouse
[illegible]	Unknown	Rational's [illegible]				[illegible]			Rational's wife's [illegible]

Appendix

SUPPLEMENTARY ATTRACTIONS TO MYSTICAL CAVERN *cont.*

(b) 'The Sheath of Skin'[1]

No.	Category of Tableau	Description	Alleged Sin	Punishment	Chief protagonist
1	Village Headman (Chandrapura)	(a) A skeleton clad (b) Further, double-jointed skeleton (also 'the sheath')	Covetger neighbour's wife's fruit Failed to purchase death sheet in order not delay burning		Pale in Lake where grass idly figures Represent house. Skeleton both, unclothed head in our pulmonology sheet
2	Widow	Widow sitting	Wished and gratuitously to rise as widow taken	Wished rise in the breath of man? Fingernails by alimentary	Wife (other hand, [illegible] and [illegible]. Front of [illegible] through [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
3	Widow	Widow (2)	Was an death towards hard one [illegible] in one a [illegible] sheet	Wished rise in the breath of man? Fingernails by alimentary	Wife (other neighbour and [illegible] [illegible]. Neighbour [illegible] [illegible]
4	Fowler	Fowler (2)	Fowler [illegible] a gift of fowl and [illegible], [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

No.	Category of Sufferer	Symptoms	Alleged Ills	Diagnosis	Usual protection
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

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[P·207]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN1
Nyakyusa

17. DREAMS AS EVIDENCE OF WITCHCRAFT

Mwaisumo (cont).

154
781

"Suppose I dream we are fighting, and that you knock me down, a
that you come to beat me, then I will say to my friends that yo
bewitched me last night. Men talk with their friends and tell the
dreams. If several people dream like this of one man, they say: "Wh
should we dream of him? He must be a witch (*uwalosi*)." More tha
one person must dream of the same man before they will say this. I
I dream of you, my friend, like this I will not tell you in the morning
that I dreamed so, or else you will say to me: "Why do you accuse m
of witchcraft?" and you will take it first to the headman, and then t
the chief, and make a case. We Christians do not believe this; we say
"It is just a dream" and we tell it to each other, but the pagans tell
to their friends, and if two or more dream of the same man they say
"He is a witch."

"There are a number of dreams—dreams of fighting, of being
chased, being beaten, of the house burning, of one coming to the do
and weeping for me as if I were dead—which are signs (*ifwanyile*) o
witchcraft. There are other signs, too. An owl (*ngwalo*) may come o
night and sit on my roof. I go out and chase it away, watching th
direction in which it flies; it flies towards your house. Then the ne
night it comes to another man's house, and he again goes out an
chases it and watches its flight, and again it flies towards your house
Then we shall say that you are a witch. Or if you meet a man in th
road and stare at him, and that night he falls sick, he will remember
and say: "Why did so and so stare at me like that? He is bewitching
me."

"A man may dream of a woman, like this, or a woman of a man—o
being beaten, etc., and will say it is witchcraft (*ubulosi*). But if the
dream of each other and desire each other that is not witchcraft
(Here he laughed.) They will seek each other out. He will tell her: "
dreamed of you last night", or else, if she has any love for him, wi
say: "I dreamed of you." Yes, that is an invitation. It is queer but
often happens that a man and a woman will dream of each other o
the same night.

"Women dream of each other, of fetching firewood and fighting."

[p.226]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

Ali (a young man, a Christian).

"The pagans say that if I dream of flying that means that the witches came and tried to eat me. If I do not dream at all, but wake up in a sweat, then they say: "They came to bewitch you by night." They say that the sweat is the water with which the witches wash their hands before eating. Again, if I dream that someone comes and holds me down so that I cannot get up, they say: "The witches came to kill you." They say a man is a defender (*gwa mungu*) if he does not merely dream, but sees in his dream who it is that came. So with dreams of fighting, if I recognize that my opponent is so and so, then they say I have mystical power (*uwungu*), not otherwise. We Christians have all these dreams but say they mean nothing and do not fear them."

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

woman has been angry with her husband, and perhaps quarrelled with him, and has sworn at her husband by "the things" (*i.e.* the sex organs) of his mother, or perhaps his father, the child she bears will fall sick with *ingoto*. It becomes very thin and does not grow. The disease is recognized when a child is very ill from infancy, and it is very thin but does not die. Then they say it is *ingoto*. Sometimes they inquire of a diviner and the diviner reveals that it is ill of *ingoto*.

"I remember a certain woman who was married to a man, Akyusile. This man had married two wives, and she of whom I speak was the third. This woman was very proud (*nomalinga fyo*) and was constantly quarrelling with her husband and her co-wives. When she quarrelled with her husband he got angry and beat her. Then she swore at him horribly, about "the things" of his mother or father. She said: "You! So and so of your father! So and so of your mother!" Then this woman bore a girl child and when it had grown a little it became very ill. It was very ill for a whole year. When it began to recover she quarrelled again with her husband and swore at him smokingly, and the child got ill again. So her husband (the father of the child) and she went to inquire of a diviner. The divination revealed *ingoto*. It said: "Your wife has sworn at you about the things of your mother when you were quarrelling." When they got home the husband drove his wife away, saying: "Go to your father!" When she got home the woman told her father everything and he took millet and gave it to her to make beer with which to pay. So she brewed beer and brought it to her husband, saying: "I did wrong, my husband." Her husband called his fellows and they all drank the beer and expressed their anger (*ubwipipi*) and said: "May the child recover and grow well!"

"This happened when I was 13 or 14 years old. The girl (who was ill) is still alive; her body shows signs of not having grown properly.

"The disease comes from "the breath of men" because these insults were made publicly and others heard them. I do not think anything would happen if the insults were private, I am not sure."

A curse of neighbours for neglect of rituals.
Lingomabulo (young Christian man).

"If I do not do the (death) ritual properly for my father the death of my children is due to the curse upon me, the dispute with relatives and the curse of people—non-relatives (*mapepo mbalamu, ilipepo mbanda*).

"Sometimes the villagers (*mnyalwanda*) bind a man's loins so that he cannot beget children with his wife. They are both sterile. Mwakusuk-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F7617 Ngonde F7617
Nyakyusa
Selja, Hellgook.

764 hair. It is the ritual we are performing, they are signs of withdrawal (*fye bafende*), of lamentation (*fye kwe*). The ashes are a sign of lamentation and the *dingilongyfye* creeper is a sign of lamentation. Yes, all these things are part of the ritual, we cannot leave them out, it is taboo. [If we did] those below [i.e. the shades] would be angry and say: 'They have startled me and caused me pain in the heart; they have injured the ritual by foreshadowing evil.'

764 At the end the heir sleeps with the women in the house—before the heir. He performs the ritual with them, the officiants wait for them and ask them: 'How was it?' If he says 'No,' they say: 'Kyala does not stand in the house.' They go and divine at a doctor's who says: 'So-and-so is angry.'

[77] Question: Kyala does not stand in the house (*Kyala alemo ugumbe*)?

Mwamsenge: It is the shades, they say Kyala does not give support. Then again he performs the ritual (*ibungwala*, i.e. he arranges to have coitus) and they ask him: 'How was it?' They say: 'Yes, they (the shades) have stood with us, Kyala has stood with us.' [He gave both forms as alternatives: *Amawala* and *Kyala ewala*.] Then they clap their hands and raise the shout of triumph (*ifyalala*).

Question: Is that the cry: 'Gum, gum'?

[76] Mwamsenge: No, that's the cry of the bill people. With us it's taboo. 764 Then in the morning someone shouts: 'Wae lukwanza.' They come out immediately and run away to the pasture-land.

764 Question: Is this 'coming out' (*ukwaka*) the same as that in the coming out of cloth (*ukwaka*) and in the twin ceremony?

Mwamsenge: Yes, they run because their legs were loose (*wola*) in the house, now they have grown lighter and are strong; because in the twin ceremony the seclusion in the house lasts four months, or the coming out of cloth two months, and that is hard, but at death it is only one, so it is light. But at death and the birth of twins it is the war (*ngwala*) [77] of the men. Is it not war with women? [*ukwala* is used here for sexual intercourse.] Then when they have come out they give one another 764 have to drink in the doorway. The heir takes beer in his mouth and [78] spits it out and hands the vessel on to his wives and children. Each does the same. They do not swallow it. To do so causes diarrhoea. The man and his wives are burning. They have come from the bed. This giving one another to drink, when each spits and does not swallow, happens after the eating of messages of porridge on the road.* It is the same in the twin ritual except that whereas it is only the principals who give one another to drink at the death ritual, in the twin ritual not only they, but all relatives, and even non-relatives do it as well!

Question: How about the eating of millet porridge with powdered medicine on the road?

* Six other informants mentioned this in the Malipanda death ritual.

[E8 kind. We take such a one [either type] to a doctor, tying a rope round
777 his waist on the way. For if we leave him free he goes and drowns him-
self in the lake. So then the doctor says 'His heart has suddenly turned
over', and gives him a powdered medicine to eat from a bark-cloth.
Then when he has eaten the medicine the doctor puts a finger at the
back of his tongue to make him vomit, again and again. So then the
fish comes out of him. Then the doctor says: 'Don't eat meat or fish
until I give you other medicine here.' Then he ties some of the same
medicine in two bark-cloths and ties one round his neck, one round his
loins. . . .

[E8 Sometimes a man in the road fi finds a woman, then he takes the
434 leaves off his waist, catches hold of her and, forcing her to the ground,
has intercourse with her. Then when the woman returns home she
complains that a man in the road fi has caught and raped her. Then
her husband says: 'Well, it's all over now. If he'd been in normal
health I'd have sued him for a cow for adultery before the chief, but
seeing he is mad there's no point in my doing so, it's all over now!' . . .

[E8 Sometimes madness comes by itself, although no ritual has been
777 omitted, sometimes because they have not performed a ritual. The
symptoms of the two kinds are exactly the same, their cause is different.
The one connected with ritual comes because the doctors are angry:
'Why have you left that child unwashed, without putting stone on its
head . . . ? It seems it is of no account.' And then the child goes mad.

[E8 When madness comes of itself the doctor takes the patient to a
777 waterfall and lets the water tumble on his head; then he makes him
vomit, and the vomit is carried away in the water. But that which
comes from ritual they don't treat in this way; they make him vomit
at home, and then perform the ritual for him.

[E8 Sometimes madness brings witches (ngwi)—the man has everything
777 come to his speech and says of people: 'What sort are they? They are
witches!' And if there is a gathering he speaks out: 'You are a witch—
you bewitch your neighbour's cows!' So then people ask what he means
by letting everything come to his speech like this, and they are told he
has the mad fi on him. The madness gives him power to see the
witches, he sees them aretly. And of all if a madman with the fi on
him accused you of witchcraft you would go at once to drink the ordeal.
[E8 And if the ordeal accused you so then your house was burnt over you!

Question: Why the washing and eating porridge?

Investigator: If we don't do this then the children will vomit a
764 watery fluid.

I put a direct question to him about the sausages of porridge
and he admitted with a smile, rather an embarrassed one: 'Yes,
well, you have understood it; yes, it is a symbol of eating excre-
ment . . . we do it at night.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F3017 Ngombe F3017
Nyakyusa

gone on. Mwamulilo was never found, but we say it was that sickness of the ropes of the cattle that he stolen from the hill people. Perhaps the people of that country were shocked, and the sickness is due to their breath, to witchcraft. Perhaps the owners of the cattle took the ropes they had used for tying up the cattle which were stolen, to a doctor to be cooked with medicine. We have not discovered the details yet, we have not yet been to divine; the divination will tell us, however. But the medicine for cutting the ropes (*mikaya*) is the same for all these illnesses from ropes, so we cook it immediately, before going to divine. We divine when we clear away the litter. The cooking of medicine at the grave now is to cut him who has died that the sickness of ropes (*mpyo*) may not come on us. Yes, only the heir has to die, but we others fear lest we fall ill, coughing. The sickness of ropes does not kill us, but makes us ill and thin. Yes, I drank and ate the medicine myself. After the divination we drink another medicine, to bear, not the female bear. They brew another pot just for the medicine.

We saw the drinking of medicine 'to eat the ropes' at Mukwetile's funeral. He was buried at Kasitile's homestead and Kasitile was organising the proceedings. The doctor dug a hole at the foot of the grave and put into it a length of green wood which projected a foot or so above the level of the ground. On this was balanced a pot, and a fire was lighted beneath it. In the pot the boiled certain leaves and roots. She took a large drinking calabash, put in some ash from a fire-brand, added some of the same species of leaves as had gone into the pot, and stirred up the mixture with water. This mixture was drunk by the relatives present and fifteen or twenty leaf cups were made to send to those who had not come. Medicated porridge was also made and some was eaten by the relatives present.

Then the pot was taken off the fire. We were told: 'We are praying (*ndipahelepano*). We want to take the pot off the fire.' No words were said, but the medicines were taken out of the pot by the deceased's father's sister (the oldest surviving member of the lineage) to prepare more porridge for those relatives who had not attended, and the officiant poured the water into a hole which she made in the middle of the grave. She covered it again with earth.

While the officiant was preparing the medicine at the grave, Kasitile, who was helping her, said to a half-brother of the deceased:

> Pray earnestly with this medicine, be on good terms with others.
> Have courage. Ha! What can we do against us?

However, when we went to enquire
the cause of both deaths with a famous diviner, Sambu, he was 787
told that the boy's death was due to the anger of neighbours who 757
had not been treated as they should have been, but E's death was due to the sorcery of her first husband. M's report of the divination is worth quoting:

I have just been to Sambu in the country of Tembi, he has divined and he tells me that the death of E. was due to the sorcery (*ubuge*) of Mwebyoma, her first husband. He also told me the name of the doctor from whom Mwebyoma got the medicine to kill her, the man is K.; he is both a doctor and a smith in the country of X. He told me that Mwebyoma was angry because, when he saw her mouth, he paid to us a cow in damages; he said: 'I have paid the cow, I should have my wife. But they have taken her back and eaten my cow.' E. had left all her things in his house, her bark-cloths, her cloths, everything. Sambu tells me that Mwebyoma took all these things to K. and spoke five names, saying: 'I wish K. my wife, M., and one of M's sons [mother of the dead child] to die. If these die I shall be happy.' So the doctor prepared a medicine which he put into a calabash. He did the whole saying the names, and he addressed the names to the cloths, as if one of them was E., one was me, and so on. If E. had left nothing behind he would have had to send a man up with medicine to our place.

He told me to go to Mwebimoto, who is a great doctor. Mwebimoto 783
will come to my place and cook medicine, we shall all drink it, not only the three people named but all my distant relatives will collect to drink it, M., E's second husband will come too. About the child, Sambu divines that it is dead, he says it is due to the wrong-doing of her father. As for my wife was married when very young, but her husband went away and left her, she never lived with him. So when she grew up she said: 'I am tired of being alone, I am going to get married.' So she came to me. I paid five cows to Mwebimoto (the chief) who is the mother's brother of her father. The real father is dead. She has a father by inheritance, but Mwebimoto had looked after her a great deal, so I sent the cattle to him, and he sent them on to the elder brother of her first husband. But her father's heir said: 'That finishes the cows to be paid to her husband, but I want one for myself to make sin.' Well, as for I was involved in a lawsuit and did not bring the cow, so her father was angry, he came and took her back home; then after a time I found the cow and took it to him, and he sent her back to me, but he did not, as the custom is, cook food for my friends of the village. He should have killed some chickens and brewed some beer, so that my friends would be happy and say 'Thank you'. So now my friends are angry, they say: 'Why does he not bring his daughter back properly? Perhaps he is not her father?' The lawsuit comes from my friends, they

S. Wilson E-3 (1934-1938)1937 F'N17 Ngonde F'N17
Nyakyusa

(forty miles away), then, if a child is a little ill, you pray yourself, 783
but if it is very ill you send a message to your elder.' The senior 773
leaves the shrine (*ugimaga imisoki*) and prays alone.

The wives of a lineage avoid everything connected with offerings to the shades in the same way as they avoid a father-in-law, even though their husband's father is not yet dead and they do not avoid his living grandfather: 'If a cock has grown up at my homestead my wives do not eat it. It is taboo. It is the shades'. But my wives may eat a hen. When the cock crows it rouses the house. If a wife eats it she will die soon and people will say: "She has eaten a cock." ' A wife also avoids bananas from the sacred grove, and sacrificial meat and beer, and milk from a cow that has looked into a grave; she must stay alone and secluded in her hut when prayer is made in the grove, and is forbidden to sleep by the hearth at night.

Mwaisumo's account of 'prayer when a child is ill' and descrip- 783
tions of four particular rituals will make the procedure clearer. 775

Mwaisumo: Our regular custom here, when a child is ill with sores on the mouth from *mimbi*, is to pray to the shades (*abaipate bakayuke*), especially to my father, or my elder brother if I have inherited from him. Before I pray I go to a diviner. We consult the oracle, and he tells me: 'It is *mimbi*, your fathers are angry because you have not performed such and such a ritual, perhaps because you have not killed cattle at the funeral of your brother, or your mother's brother, perhaps you have not performed the later death ritual for them.' So when I come home I tell my relatives and wives all the diviner has told me. Then they complain (*abwijipi*) saying: 'Why are they angry? Take water and complain in the evening.' [77]

So at dusk, when the cattle come home, I take my calabash cup (*ulupindi*), and water, and a live coal from the fire, and put it in the calabash. I go out to the banana grove of my father where I always pray. I take a mouthful of water, I blow it out and say: 'You, Father, you ancestors, you ancestors, why are you angry, Father? Since you left me I have secluded the children. How have I wronged you? Even though I have wronged you, forgive me, Father, may the child recover, found by me.' When I have finished I enter the house, and next day I may find the child a little better.

Before I pray, if the diviner has told me that they are angry because I have sinned a certain brother of something, I go to tell him and beg his pardon for neglecting him, my brother. Sometimes, if it is a serious case concerning a cow that I have not given him, I seek for a cow with which to ask his forgiveness.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F7617 Ngonde F7617
Nyakyusa

●787 The diviner does not divine by himself, but he who goes to inquire of him says: 'Perhaps it is so-and-so who is angry, perhaps it is so-and-so because I did not give him such and such a thing, perhaps it is so-and-so, I have heard a rumour that he is angry.' Then if he mentions someone whom the diviner has also heard say that he is angry because his brother has not given him something, the diviner assents, saying: 'Yes, it is that.'

783 Mwamelage (a middle-aged pagan): When I inherited from Mwakisisile, my elder brother, I was just about puberty, and my senior brother [i.e. half-brother], Mwakasonde, took me to his place with all the wives, to bring me up. He was there in Mwangomo's country. I went to his home and two years running I hoed millet and it refused to grow. Then my sister said: 'Consult an oracle and see why it is.' So I went to the diviner who said: 'Your elder brother is angry because you left his grave, because you do not sweep his grave.' So I asked what to do and he told me to get millet and brew beer. So I brewed beer and left a little in a calabash overnight in the banana grove, and prayed with water. Also I left a cock. I killed a cock because I had no bull, and I left all the meat there also overnight. Then the next day the children, Angombwike and others [Angombwike was a son of the deceased] drank the beer and ate the cock. They ate all the cock, and took the first drink of the beer, and I finished it off. The diviner had told me to let the children begin first. Then next year the millet was very plentiful. I never did it again because I have never had trouble over food. If the crops had not grown I would have done it again.

593 783 Amelekile (a Christian teacher): When I was a boy my mother's brother once went to fish and caught two fish in his trap. He gave them to two of his wives, the third being absent. When she came back she was angry, saying: 'They have stinted me of food'. For a long time after that he found no fish in his traps. At last he consulted an oracle. The oracle attributed it to the third wife, because she had been angry. People said that she had been angry, and that the shades of her husband were angry too, and had stopped the fish entering the trap. So my mother's brother went to the wife and said: 'The oracle attributed it to you, were you angry?' She admitted it, saying: 'I was angry, but now I am satisfied. It's all right.' So then my mother's brother took his calabash cup and went in the evening to the banana grove and prayed with water. Next morning, before noon, when men always go to examine the fish traps, he found his traps full and overflowing with fish: they were leaping about inside. Indeed, it was very remarkable. I was there, for I grew up at my mother's brother's home.

Yes, the shades hear wives, though wives never pray to them; they listen to their anger.

The first catch after such a prayer is offered to the shades.

783 Mwamsoni: The fish, when they have been cooked, remain overnight

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

though wives are assimilated to their husbands' lineages for ritual purposes, men play no part in the rituals of their wives' lineages.

The second fundamental principle expressed in the rituals of kinship is that a moral law holds within the lineage. Senior kinsmen, living and dead, have a mystical power over their juniors, but their anger is dangerous only if it is just. They cannot murder irresponsibly. Kinsmen are 'members of one another' in the sense that the life and death of one affect the others. The sins of a father are visited on his children, his juniors in the lineage (though a woman's sins affect only her own husband and children), and the very fact of kinship makes a mystical bond between agnatic kin, descendants of a common great-grandfather, and a man and his daughters or sister's children. The moral law is thought to operate also within the age-village, where the just are promoted and the evil punished by 'the breath of men'; but within both lineage and village irresponsible and malicious injury by witches or sorcerers is possible.

When misfortune occurs the sufferer, and his kinsmen and neighbours, seek an explanation in conflicts and ritual omissions, and interpret the misfortune in terms of these, putting the possible alternatives before the oracle. Thus the danger of conflict with kinsmen and neighbours, and of neglect of ritual, is constantly before men's minds. In practice, there is a strong tendency to push the blame for misfortune outside the lineage of living and dead on to the neighbours.

(3) The celebration of rituals and maintenance of the structure

In any society the practical, intellectual, and emotional aspects are mutually dependent; the practical organization is dependent upon, and at the same time supports, an intellectual system—certain cosmological ideas—and attitudes. It has been argued very cogently that these ideas and attitudes are maintained by their expression in myth and rite[1] but little evidence for this has been published. Can objective evidence be collected? The anthropologist cannot look into men's minds; he is not concerned with personal religion—with the varieties of religious experience. Can he observe any effect of participation in ritual upon the behaviour of groups and categories of people? It must be admitted that our evidence here is thin.

[1] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Andaman Islanders* (1922), pp. 238 ff.; *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (1952), pp. 157 ff.

[illegible] OF CRIMINAL AFFAIRS [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Ref.	Category of sufferer	Sufferers	Category of dead	Dispute on	Investigation	Final punishment
1.	Man. Kamaya	(a) Crops did not grow (b) Kamaya died	'Unknown'	Quarrelling with kinsmen	Kamaya the priest. Also found to be sorcery	Killed a bull for family
2.	Children of village headman	Death of several children	Father of village headman	Village headman moved to father's homestead. Brought evil to father's neighbours he should return to young man's village where he was headman	Kamaya	Prayer
3.	Cattle	Cattle died or falls on cricket's (and would have to be replaced)	Blacks were angry. His brother was glutted very much when he took all the cattle	Younger brother took all cattle to bad from elder full brother to whom they had been handed on his return from work, and gave them for his marriage	—	—
4.	Two girls	Girls died	—	A wrong (tongue) not specified	Kamaya Divination	—
5.	Younger brother	Died	Older brother	Elder brother not buried where he ought to be	Divination	Buried where elder brother had ought

21 Wilkinson Rd. 9 (1936–1939) 1939 Nightmare

Dynamite

[illegible]

Age	Category of afflicted	Affliction	Category of fault	Alleged sin	Investigation	Ritual performed
[illegible]	Son	Mother, young, [illegible]	Father	Dad moved from Italy, [illegible] Left green sausage	Divination	Prayer
[illegible]	Husband	No fish in cage	—	Cannot see wife of fish	Divination	Prayed to have one green, Will-[illegible] for anger
[illegible]	Cousin	Cousin fell ill	Mother	Neglected to have flour or fast in lily for fever	Divination	—
[illegible]	Married, [illegible] wife of Sheikh [illegible]	Woman Affliction		Her [illegible] daughter-[illegible] husband without bring up a [illegible] or working, and death from [illegible] [illegible]	Divination	—
[illegible]	Child	Death of child	Father's [illegible]	Father neglected death ritual of his sister	Kumpan: "The child [illegible] for [illegible] of the child"	Neglected death ritual performed

V. CAUSES OF MISFORTUNE

761 (a) *The death of Katanya*

The following account of the death of Katanya is quoted in full [26] because it illustrates how several possible causes of misfortune were considered. Possible causes mentioned were:

(a) The anger of his junior kinsman
(b) The witchcraft of his wives
(c) The anger of his shades
(d) The anger of his neighbours because he had given them too small a cut of a bull killed as a sacrifice to his shades
(e) The adultery of his son with three of his wives
(f) The sorcery of his half-brother's son, Mwamulenge, with whom there was a long-standing quarrel over inheritance and whom he had accused of killing his (Mwamulenge's) full brother
(g) The sorcery of the Chief Mwalinjo, for Katanya, a man of the neighbouring Chief Mwaipopo, had built and cultivated on land claimed by both Mwalinjo and Mwaipopo

Record of C. W., 4/1/38

761 Angamwile told me at midday that Katanya had died. He was a village headman of Mwaipopo, the fellow of Mwainyopelela. His case (inquest) was this:

The millet did not grow in his field, so he called all his children to 762 his homestead and killed a big bull for them, saying: 'Perhaps my children are angry at home. Perhaps my wives have worked witchcraft.' But to the neighbours he gave one leg and the children at home ate the rest. He did not, however, live long. He died immediately. It is said that the meat is still there. They have not eaten it. Such is the case of his death.

Kasisile, whom I called on him yesterday, was out and his wife said he had gone to see Katanya who was ill.

Later in the day—4.1.38. Liberyila came in and I asked about Katanya's death.

But he has not died, he is still just alive. We heard that the millet [767] failed in his field and the maize and beans in all his gardens. They all failed. One of his wives went into a trance repeatedly. She said: 'Those beneath are angry. Seek a bull and kill it.' Then he sought one, but 761 now they have killed him. Perhaps he stinted his fellows in the village 578 of meat, because if a man kills his animal alone and his fellows hear

that he has killed, they are astonished and say: 'He should have called 761
us. Does he perform ritual alone?' 678

Question: But why were these beasts angry in the first place? They are not angry without cause.

Lusungulu: Indeed, they are never angry without cause. There is always some wrong. But we do not know what it is in this case. If you do not kill cattle for your father's burial they are always angry. But we do not know what wrong Kasanya committed to make them angry.

Later Mwanilu came in. He told me that Kasanya is still alive, but 766
perhaps he will die this evening. We do not speak with him. He is just 762
breathing. We only ask his wives: 'Does he sleep?' The case is thus: the soldier failed to his field and he said: 'I shall pray to my shades and it will grow again.' Then he went to a certain man to get his big bull, and gave him a cow to call, saying: 'Take this and give me your bull,' 763
and later they will give him a little calf worth you. The bull was very big. He killed it. Before he did so he was already slightly ill, but when he had killed it the illness became very much worse. We say they have bewitched him because he stopped his fellows in the village. But they themselves deny it, saying: 'Will we always kill and eat ourselves alone. I, Mwaiwanyambila, killed my animal and ate it alone. Have I died 762
therefore? According to the custom, if I have killed my beast as a sacrifice (*pakuipatila*) then I give my fellows one leg.'

Question: Did Kasanya not do so?

Mwaiwanyambila: No, Kasanya did not give them any. He ate alone. Some wise men give the chief the breast because the chief is the owner of the country. Kasanya did not give him that. Yes, if someone dies then the chief is usually given the breast. But when a beast is killed for sacrifice, no one having died, then many eat by themselves. The sacrifice goes to the chief.

Question: Did he inquire of a diviner or not?

Mwaiwanyambila: We do not know. Some inquire of a diviner. Some think 767 ●
for themselves that the fathers are shaking them. Concerning his death, 768
we are only speculating, saying: 'Perhaps they have bewitched him. 761
They were angry on account of the meat.' But perhaps it is sorcery. See, he was sweating very much on his face. Let him die. We will look in his belly. Perhaps he has been speared. They have bewitched him. Perhaps it is sorcery. We only speculate.

In the morning Mwalupaga (the chief) was very, very angry. He said: 763
'Why have you gathered together, you people? Go off home. Do you want to finish off a dying man? It is taboo to gather together. First let a man die, then come to lament the death.'

Question: Is it a Nyakyusa custom to be angry if people gather together at a sick man's house? Is it so if they bewitch him?

Mwaiwanyambila: Yes.

763 Question: Why the gathering?

Mwaseni: We were startled to hear that he had died. They raised the lament of death in the morning and his cattle were home when Kaitile and I were on the pasture land. We were startled to see Kaseni's cattle going home and said: 'He has died.' But his relatives saw that he had not died. They said it is taboo to lament when someone is still alive.

Question: Why do cows come home when a man died?

Mwaseni: It is a form of mourning. They should also weep and see himself. He had property. For if I, Mwaniki, die, though I do not have cattle myself, yet because I am the son of Mwaipopo cattle are
764 killed at the funeral. It is impressive. But if I were a commoner and
765 had no cattle, then the funeral would be a flop. There would be no meat and people would say: 'He has not yet died, he has left one head.' They count the cattle to kill. If an important commoner dies, one who has cattle, then his funeral is impressive. People dance at his homestead and say: 'Our fellow, who has died, was a strong man who danced the war-dance in the homestead.' And if he was tough in disputes, if he always got the better of them and no one ever got his cow, then they say: 'A tough fellow has died. May he leave a son as tough as himself. He died with his toughness.' They praise him.

762 Question: Tell me about the killing of Kaseni's bull.

Mwaseni: He killed the bull without telling his neighbours, but when he poured out the beer he called Mwainyapolela and Kapugusu and two others. There were four. He had built in Bushali village in which there are ten homesteads, but, customarily, we do not call all the neighbours,only those who are nearest. Only if I have killed a full-grown beast do I call them all and give them a leg. Yes, it was a big bull and perhaps it is on account of that that they are angry. When they came they were startled, saying: 'They are drinking beer! And there is meat lying outside!' They entered and drank a little. Then Kasaya divided the meat for his relatives and took his own. He gave to Mwainyapolela and his fellows three ribs. Then M. said to his three fellows: 'Let us go home. I will not take this little piece of meat.' So they all went away. The other three ate the meat, only M. did not.

Question: So they were angry?

764 Mwaseni: Perhaps! We say sometimes: 'They were angry and ate
● 767 him.' But perhaps it was sorcery, because just now three snakes entered the house of his chief wife—the twelve snakes. One entered and they killed it. Another entered and they killed it. Then they caught the third to take to a doctor, the son of Mwakanyamale. The doctor said: 'This snake is sorcery,' and he will find a medicine to give them to drink that the illness may be slight. But he has not yet done so.

and sulfur on the grave. When his son-in-law arrived, the chief women
736 mourners got up from under the tree and went with him into the hut
to wail. They came out all wailing. The women under the tree were
wailing all the time with a leader standing up in the middle. But the
wailing was drowned by the drums of which there were four sets.

739 Three young men were got up with white clay spots and some had
740 bells on their ankles and bow-sticks. They held spears, and danced and
741 leaps wildly. 'What', I asked Kamtiki, 'is the meaning of the white
clay?'

Kamtiki: It is war paint. During war we painted ourselves with white clay formerly. Then if I saw one with white clay I did not spear him. It was my comrade. But he whom I saw without it was an enemy and I speared him. It was the sign.

745 Questioner: But did the other side not use it?

Kamtiki: We took them by surprise.

Mwanyuwa came to visit me in the evening.

746 Questioner: And what steps are they taking about Katanya's death
747 from sorcery?

Mwanyuwa: They sought the doctor, Mwangulumbe, for the burial ceremony. He provided a medicine and burnt it on the grave. Then they buried the dead man and danced on the grave. That means they destroyed the sorcery. The dead man should take it away with him.

Questioner: And has the doctor given them medicine to drink?

Mwanyuwa: He has not yet done so. They will fetch him again to cook the medicine at the home.

Questioner: What about the payment?

757 Mwanyuwa: For yesterday they did not pay anything, now, but when they have fetched him to their home, then they will pay some shillings. But if many people have died, then they fetch a famous doctor such as Mwakisunde. Then he comes with all the protective medicines (amagingo) and treats them. Then such a doctor gets a cow. The famous doctors in this country are Mwakisunde and Kapugano and Mwakanyamale.

767 Questioner: Will they consult an oracle?

Mwanyuwa: Why should they consult an oracle? They know what it is. It is the sorcery of their brothers!

769 Questioner: But it might be the sorcery of another. Some way of Mwalinjo (the chief).

Mwanyuwa: They are liars. See, Katanya had just come from his brothers. He got the illness at their place. It is they. If it was from Mwalinjo and his people, they would have speared him by night. We would have found wounds and much blood, but we did not find them.

Questioner: He came from his brothers?

Mwanyuwa: Yes, there was a rivalry because their father, Mwakilinjo, had died. Their senior brother inherited and he also died. Katanya

[illegible] Mwakisunde ba Mpoma (Mwakisunde) take the inheritance because he is the eldest. Mwakisunde said: 'Let him be their father.' But when they gave the inheritance to Mpoma, they talked to one another and said that Mwambujule should take one wife because he did not have any wife. He was a bachelor. So they gave him one wife, but four wives of the father were inherited by Mpoma. After a little time Mwambujule said: 'My fellow has made a mistake with the property and he has not given me anything.' So he swore to attract the mothers. He said: 'Come to me and let me inherit you myself.' The mothers agreed, they ran away and came to his place. Mpoma was angry and went to Mwakisunde to tell him that Mwambujule had attracted the mothers and taken them to his house. Mwakisunde said: 'Do not make a case.' The village headmen went to Mwambujule to admonish him together with the mothers. Then he returned them to Mpoma.

[illegible] Later on, illness appeared. The sister of Mpoma fell ill. They gave her medicines to drink and she recovered. Then the brother of Mwambujule fell ill and the doctors said it was sorcery (*ubulogi*), that is, Mwakisunde thinks it is sorcery. This is also a common rumour. But, as will be seen later, the diviner, when appealed to, said: '*Mizimu*,' that is, the shades.

[illegible] When Mwakisunde saw the sick man, he called together all of them that they might grumble (*kujumana*) and drive away the illness, because it is said that when people pray (*ukuipata*) the sickness from sorcery goes away. It is said if one has worked sorcery against his fellow he always hides himself, he does not appear at his friend's house, because, if he appears, if he comes and says: 'I am sorry for the illness (*ndaga ubulwe*),' goes without praying at all, the illness disappears. Also, if a sick man has died, he does not go or he will die soon. It is said that the dead rise. Yes, it is the same in the case of witchcraft. Then also they say that if someone has 'eaten' his fellow he does not go to him, he hides himself at his own home, and if his fellow has died he does not go or he will die very quickly. The dead rise. In the prayer they especially drive away the shades, because it is said that sickness from the shades comes from us living. If, for example, I have done something bad to my fellow, and the shades are angry, but if he forgives me, they also forgive. He must express forgiveness openly in words of prayer (*amaupe gawe ga kuipata*). If he forgives me only in his heart, the shades do not forgive. This prayer that we heard during the day had power both against sorcery and against the shades, they spoke of both. In the evening it was completed.

[illegible] Mwakisunde called them all together and said: 'Friends, I am astonished that the illness has come again.' The people: 'Ho; this illness puzzles us very much.'

MWAKISUNDE: 'For what reason does this man fall ill in the summer, and that man fall ill in the summer, and the other fall ill?'

Mpoma: 'I am ashamed, and also I am very angry, because people 756
say it is I who am working sorcery against them, although when they 758
were ill I carried them to my house.'[1]

Mpoma turned back on the road when they sent medicine for the sick man (i.e. he did not go to the sick man).

A woman: 'Why do they work sorcery against one another when they are both ill?'

Another woman: 'The wives of Mikkale say Mpoma says: "Let me be alone, let me kill all of them and get everything for myself by cursing."'

Mwambepa: 'Since I carried him to my place I said the illness would not be serious. He also sent a message to your place, Mpoma, saying that he was ill, and asking for some milk, but you did not send any.'

Mpoma: 'No one told me.'

Tan woman: 'The widows fight with Mpoma. They say: "You have sent a medicine to work sorcery against your fellows."'

Kanyamale: 'Also they speak of his wrongdoing, in not approaching the sick man.'

Another woman: 'Yes, and also you are angry.'

Mpoma: 'Yes, when they said the present patient was still ill, I prayed, I said aloud: "What am I doing? Get away, what am I doing?" and I sent a medicine and he recovered.'

A woman: 'We consulted an oracle, it said: "It is Mwakyusa who 757 ●
is angry," but I said: "What is he angry about?" The oracle said: "He is angry on account of cattle." He says: "Why does he fear me when he has taken cattle?" So we said: "Mwakyusa is angry because he has taken cattle."'

Tan Mazwere (Mwakyusa's sister): 'We like him (the shade), let 759
him come.'

Woman: 'They are jealous of the sick man [i.e. a third cause suggested. The unreasonable jealousy of his neighbours]. He dies like his father. People say: "He eats meat in our houses, he borrows our clothes," and he dies of their unreasonable jealousy (*ukubiwi*)!'

The women and the men said: 'Thank you, Mwakisonde, because you have made us think of these things [he had taken the initiative in prayer]. You make us make friends, and make us love one another, and bless one another.'

Mwakisonde spoke, saying: 'There are many, many roads on which people travel and there is one road through which illness enters.' They 762
say that if many people are with a sick man then the illness spreads.

They also prayed, confessing their anger in the case of Kanyamale, [763]

[1] 'It is the custom to carry people to the "father", the head of the family, when very sick. This is not supposed to cure them, but it is customary (*ukuzibe*). That is where we all are ill, at their father's place.'

3: Mackenzie M-S (co. 1925) 1925
F317 Ngonde F317

Chungu is dead. Then the chiefs and their men, fully armed, gathered to the mourning. Weeping there was none, for Chungu must not be wept for; and women were not present, for the mourning for Chungu is war; quarrels may break out among the men, and there may be many deaths before the mourning is over. The chiefs bring cows for the feast, and gifts of ivory to be laid up in the house where Chungu goes to pray when he prays alone. 643 645 766

The councillors now address themselves to the task of selecting a successor. There are no candidates; for not only must Chungu himself be helped out of the world, but all his sons, born after his accession, are put to death at birth. Daughters are allowed to live, and sons born before their father attained to the chief dignity, are not under the ban. Here again British rule steps in, but British rule has not yet been able to sweep all fear of the past out of the minds of the people. From among the *Balowaya*, a circle of families within which the new Chungu must be found, name after name is presented to the spirits by the diviner, and when the divining rod indicates that the right name has been presented, the formula is uttered, "*Ikapasi bitike*," the underworld has spoken. 643 847 787

At a great feast, at which all men of royal blood must be present, Mulwa, one of the councillors, by hereditary right offers prayer to the spirits, as if the selection had not already been made: 643 645

"Ye chiefs, we pray you to show us our lord, who shall be our leader in all things. Let him be the man of your appointing, not of our desire; to

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F3517 Ngonde F3517

643 "Ho, ho, ho, we go to him who kills and saves alive."
644 On arrival, each as had the honour of a personal interview, received his blessing, "May God be gracious to you"; the visitor lying on his back and clapping hands. At parting, perhaps a month later, he was pressed to stay, but the parting benediction was given: "God be with you. May lion and leopard and hyena, snake and tree and personal enemy, be still before you. May you find your family in health." Then taking water, and squirting it from his mouth, he prayed the spirits to care for the departing guest.

643 The duties and powers of Chungu, as they were in the past, and, in diminished glory and extent, still are, may be briefly stated.

1. First and foremost, Chungu is the man who speaks with God, and offers up the prayers of the community in time of war, pestilence, drought, or famine.

•[787] 2. Dreams by the official dreamers were brought to him by the councillors, and measures taken to meet the approaching evil by offerings at the graves of his ancestors, and by personal intercession.

3. After consulting his ancestors, he decided questions of peace or war.

643 4. Along with his councillors he heard important
645 lawsuits, and appeals against the decisions of other chiefs.

5. He confirmed in their position subordinate chiefs when recommended by his council to do so.

6. The whole land being his, he gave possessions to

3: Mechanic M-5 (no. 1925) 1925
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The complaint is not seldom made that in this respect they were better off under the Germans, for the Germans had a vigorous way with rascals, while now criminals are cared for in comfortable prisons, while honest men suffer loss for which they get no compensation. Professional thieves openly jeer at the sentences imposed: good feeding, houses, fires, blankets, and back to your "work" in better and better condition than when you left it!

So openly, so far as their own immediate neighbourhoods are concerned, are thieving operations carried on, that both the doctor and the diviner (the two offices are often combined in one person) are consulted; the former to find out whether the proposed place will be successful, the latter to supply the necessary medicines. Watchers being stationed to give the alarm, medicine is thrown on the roof of the house to be robbed, to make sure that the inmates shall sleep soundly; and on the door, to make it open of itself, as many seriously believe. On entering, the first man in begins by handing out all weapons, so rendering the owner defenceless should he awaken; then a brand from the fire, which is always burning in every house, is waved about to fill the place with smoke; and a third medicine is placed under the heads of the sleeping people of the house. If the thieves dig in, as they often do, the work is performed with remarkable silence. When the hole is big enough, a large banana leaf is thrust in and moved about, to test if the inmates are really sleeping. Then one man goes in feet first, for a spear-wound in the foot from a

3: Mackenzie M-9 (ca. 1925) 1925
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a cow about to be delivered of a calf was rushed down to running water, and the calf, when delivered, immediately submerged. Then cow and owner ran for their lives, and when the scourge had passed over, the owner, if he survived, took the calf out of the water, circumcised it, and let it go. The explanation given to me by a medical colleague of the conditions under which such a thing is possible, render it highly probable that if ever it occurred at all, it must have been very rarely, and even less in times of war than in times of peace. What is interesting, however, is the fact that the physiological possibility of it is known to the natives. I have not met anyone who has seen it done.

Agriculture.—Dr. Fool would almost certainly have told the Konde that they were "too religious"; not because he would have seen tokens of their religiousness in the streets and villages; no mere passer-by, and no indifferent foreigner, ever sees that. One must look deep, and live long among them, before that side of their life reveals itself to him with any fulness. There is hardly an act of theirs that is not accompanied by a ceremony of some kind, if that is religion, and to them it undoubtedly is. Agriculture is a highly religious occupation on that view, but hardly more so than many others. Leaving native Christians aside, the great majority of the people consult a diviner before beginning to hoe. He may say that all is well; or he may discover that some spirit stands in the way of a good crop, and must be propitiated; or that a certain piece of ground is bewitched, and no good will come of hoeing it until the spell has been removed.

3:Mackenzie M-5 (cm. 1925) 1925
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protective powers of the drug are securely transferred to his own stock. 251

A man who does not hoe is held in supreme contempt, but he does not starve. His neighbours give him food, seizing the opportunity to add much sound advice. But lazy men are held in suspicion, for it is highly probable that they will become garden thieves. 511

When there is reason to anticipate a general scarcity of food, the spirits are invited to confirm or dissipate fears. The chief orders a collection of *malwi* (millet) to be made, each village headman bringing the contribution of his people in a small basket. One headman is selected whose wife makes the beer, the behaviour of which indicates the spirit's answer to the question put. The beer is poured into a large calabash, and thence into two cups, which are placed at the *mayeto* (graves of the dead chiefs). There they are left for the night, and if in the morning the beer is found to have risen in the cups, filling them to the top, the harvest will be good; otherwise it will be bad. If the signs are good, all care is cast away, beer is made in great quantities, and drinking and feasting take the place of the previous anxiety. But when the spirits foretell a bad harvest the utmost economy is practised, and the chief is bound to see that no one makes prodigal use of his resources. 261 M7

3: Mekeneis M-5 (ca. 1923) 1923
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224 hunter received a cow, not as compensation for the tusks, but as a reward for his skill; the chief took the tusks without question; they were his *ensuere* (child).

224 251 The flesh was roasted on the field, over a slow fire. Stakes were fixed in the ground, and a kind of trestle made, perhaps about two feet high, under which a great fire was kindled, and the flesh, cut into long strips, placed over it. In this condition it keeps good for months, but it requires prolonged cooking when it is to be eaten. This method of preserving the flesh is used to-day, when a European makes a good kill.

224 Dogs were employed for hunting pigs and smaller animals. The dog chased the game, which, after a little, turned and chased the dog, and was led to where the hunters were waiting with spears. Dogs were used also for treeing, and are said to follow all but the largest animals. There are large dogs of European breed, which chase leopards, usually in couples, but not always do both dogs return from the chase, and sometimes neither.

224 An unsuccessful hunting season was a matter for
•787 careful inquiry; for there must have been a cause,
782 and it was the duty of the diviner to find it. Generally it was due to the never-failing trouble in the spirit-land, and when the diviner discovered the names of the individual spirits to whose meticulous ill-temper the hunting fiasco was to be attributed, arrangements were made for their propitiation. Beer was made, and each hunter took a small piece of the flesh of the animal he was specially expert in killing; and the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

whole company repaired again to the hunting ground, where they built a hut under a large tree. The leader cooked native porridge, which was eaten along with beer and honey, when the spirits had had their due. A small heap of the porridge was set down with a little honey poured over it, and a small piece of flesh was laid beside it. Each ancestor was named, as his portion was laid out, and prayer was offered:

> "Ye fathers, we have brought this beer and food for you. Why are you angry? Neither pig, nor bushbuck, nor any other animal falls into our traps. Give them to us, ye who give us all. In our gardens there is maize and millet and all things else. Why then do you hinder us now? Why are our traps empty? Be merciful to us. God be merciful to us, and go to the Basango" (a neighbouring tribe).

After this ceremony, the hunt is resumed with fresh courage and new hopes, and possibly a great success.

Lion and leopard hunting is not, of course, prohibited by the game laws, and they are hunted or trapped with frequent success. A short time ago a leopard skin was brought to me, evil-smelling, and ruined by the spear-holes which marked a fierce encounter; and one of the hunters, showing me where the leopard had leaped upon him, begged for a little medicine to apply to his wounds. The idea that his adventure made him an interesting person was not in all his thoughts.

When a trap is used, it is made of very strong timber, and divided into two portions. In one the live bait is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

721 Not all Konde wars arose from such trivial causes, or had results so trifling; but much of it was of this petty nature: wife stealing, cattle stealing, insults, civil war to drive out an unpopular chief, were among the causes. More important were the wars waged to acquire new territory, as in the wars of the first Chungu, and the conquests made by the Sango and Kinga chiefs some generations ago. There were, properly speaking, no religious wars, nor was there any desecration of sacred places; but there is an interesting tradition of a tribe which determined to accept Mbasi as God, contrary to the decision of the other tribes, and was severely defeated in battle; and Mbasi, about whom more will be said in another chapter, has ever since been regarded as a deceiver. If there is anything in the tradition, it indicates a certain amount of loose cohesion among the tribes.

721 Approaching war was foretold by prophecy and by
• 787 portent. The *abakunguluka* (prophets) declared that for the sins of the people war was coming; the same terror was foretokened if the horns of the new moon were not of equal length, or if the cattle bellowed at night without obvious cause. But when a chief wished to go to war he held secret council with his headmen and official advisers, the objective of the war being almost always to "eat" the cattle of another chief. Usually it was agreed literally to sleep upon it. If one of the dreamers had a war-dream, as he might very well have, he told the others, and all together went to inform the chief. In these dreams, the progress of the fight was foreseen, and the result,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

including the individuals killed, was told to the chief. 721
If the dream was favourable, confirmation was sought.
The chief took his zebra tail of office, poured oil into 787
it, and hung it up in the house of his chief wife. If during the night it exuded cattle dung and blood, the sign was good; if blood only, it was bad. Blood indicated the death of men, but that was of secondary importance if the dung was there which indicated spoil in cattle as the result of victory. Along with the tail was hung up the chief's spear, which now gleamed and glittered like fire in the night, while the tail moved about with a swishing sound, indicating that the spirits urged battle. All this took place in the presence of the chief and the principal medicine man only; and their report was published in the morning, when the blowing of a horn summoned all males to the meeting-place. "My children," says the chief, "we are hungry. Let us eat the cattle of so and so." But he gives the name, not of the real point of attack, but of some other chief living in another direction; for there was always the possibility of traitors in the community, who would carry warning to the enemy.

A wild scene of hurry followed. Spears were 726
collected and sharpened, defects attended to, new 789
hafts attached. The shields were examined and strengthened if necessary. If there was a blacksmith in the village he was besieged by warriors whose weapons had become rusty or useless, all eager to equip themselves for the spoil. But man and weapon are alike useless until they have been given power and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

it is there that prayer for the community at large is 778
offered by the living chief. All over the land there are more or less important graves, where local chiefs pray with their people; but the most important is naturally the one at Mphande, near Karonga, where Chungu goes to pray. At the house of every head of a family there is the *ikiyinja*, the sacred banana grove, where the family ceremonies are performed. This grove is never cut down, and the wife must not eat the fruit of it, for the spirit of her father-in-law is there if he is dead; if not, of ancestral fathers-in-law. The decay of the spirit hut, a small erection covering the grave of a chief, is attended with great danger to all the people, for the dead chief will some day visit his resentment upon his unworthy successor, whose duty it is to keep the hut in order; and when the chief suffers, his land suffers with him. A sheep or goat is tied up at the place, and if it is found there in the morning, all is well, it is killed, and the hut is rebuilt. But if it has been killed by some prowling [787] beast of prey, the dead chief is very angry, and the diviner must say what else must be done to appease him, before another animal is found for the sacrifice, and the hut rebuilt.

Here and there are to be found traces of non- 776
human spirits. They are not called *basyuka*, but *mapiri*, a word which in the neighbouring Henga dialect means hills, but the Konde use it in invocation when crossing water. Their dwelling is in the water; and they are pre-human, spirits that were in the world when the whole earth was covered with

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

761 that the sick man should die, and there is nothing more that can be done. Numerous instances have been cited to me of recovery of sick persons when all had been correctly performed; and scepticism on the subject was received with almost incredulous amazement. And there is no reason to doubt that in many cases recovery did follow; for the conviction in the mind of the patient that the wrath of the offended spirit had been averted, would, according to modern ideas of psychology, have a healing effect also upon his body.

753 782 Smallpox is the disease most dreaded by the people, and its approach was accompanied with most elaborate ceremonies. The subject is dealt with again under "Witchcraft" and "Medicine." It might come either through the action of the spirits or through [787] witchcraft. In either case its approach is foreseen by the *abakunguluka* (prophets) in dreams, and the chief and his subordinates go to the grave of the ancestors, and there, by night, a black ram is killed. The lungs and liver are roasted, and laid in little heaps on the grave, each ancestor being named as his portion is laid down, and prayer is offered:

> "Ye fathers, look upon us in mercy. Drive away from us this plague, lest our children die, and none be left in the land. Send it to the Basango or the Basafwa, but save us. Pray to God for us. Hear, O God, the words of those we have named. And go to the west, O God, or to the Basango."

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

its guardian, and very rarely even by him. It was originally in the possession of Chungu, but some generations ago was passed secretly by the reigning Chungu to a son who was hated by the people, and not in the least likely to succeed to royal dignity. It is at present guarded by a man called "Tom," though, fortunately perhaps, the honorific name of *Mwakabanga* is used in direct address. As no one sees it, descriptions must be received with caution, and there are many natives who disbelieve in its existence, regarding the whole story as the invention of men who wished to gain honour for themselves. It is commonly described as about the size of a man's fist, with *maso* (eyes) all over it, of the size and colour of a red bean. When the eyes open, rain is coming, when they close it is being withheld. But, as the *mulima* is kept buried in the ground, it is not quite clear how it is known whether the eyes are closed or open. So long as the stone, if it is a stone, is kept in the ground rain will fall normally, but if the guardian has a quarrel with another chief, he will dig it up, a signal to the spirits that something is wrong, which must be dealt with before they go to God to ask for the rain.

Prayer for rain is offered, either when it becomes clear that "God's rain," that is to say, rain that comes without prayer, is not to fall; or when the official dreamers declare that they do not see the rain where they always see it. Numerous variations in the actual words and ceremonies are found, almost every chief having some special form of his own; but what is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XVII

The Foretellers

AMONG primitive peoples all over the world, the power of certain individuals to foretell events, to anticipate the future, is profoundly believed in. Western science has so organized life that such methods of meeting the future are needless and foolish. Smallpox is met at a distance, as are many other diseases, by quarantine regulations, by isolation, by skilful treatment when it comes. Hunger is warded off by foresight, by careful distribution, by skilful farming. The terror of heavenly bodies visiting our skies is neutralized by the calculations of astronomers published long beforehand.

The Konde have their own way of meeting these emergencies. Smallpox is warded off in dreams by the prophets. Hunger, in not a few cases, is anticipated by prophetic warning that rain will not fall at the usual time, and therefore food stocks must be carefully guarded. Eclipses, and even earthquakes, are foretold, not by the scientific methods of the West, but by the foretellers, whose information is as confidently trusted by the Konde, as are the calculations of science in more advanced lands.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•781 It cannot be asserted that Konde prophecy contains much that is dramatic. It is true that those who were doomed to die in battle were known beforehand to the chief and one or two others; but such dramatic events as the bloody spectre foretelling death at Ticonderoga, at the time an unknown place; or the visions of Highland seers in Scotland; or the no less dramatic forecasts of some Hindu priests, are not to be found here. Konde prophecy, if one may give it that name, was more of an everyday affair, not so much concerned with the fate of individuals, as with the general welfare.

791 There are two classes of foretellers. First are the persons already referred to as *abakunguluka*. Their initiation into office has already been described, and it is enough to say that the medicines taken, and the ceremonies undergone, at the time of their installation as subordinate chiefs, gives them power to see in dreams all danger to the chief or the community. The verb *kukunguluka* means to go, or fall, down; to sink deep; and the *unkunguluka* is the man who goes down, in dreams, to the underworld, to obtain there the word that he is to deliver to the chief. *Kusololoka*, with its noun *unsololi*, has the same meaning.

The primary duty of these men was to guard the person of the chief from unseen dangers. Anything that threatened was seen in dreams, and measures taken to ward it off. Witchcraft, illness, poison, danger from animals, from falling trees, were thus foreseen. But in order effectively to protect him, they must know where he is, and what he is doing at

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

a given time. The young chief, Reuben, the account of whose installation is given in the chapter on the chieftainship, told me that on his return home his prophets would tell him that he had been talking with me, and would demand an account of all that passed between us. These men, it may be here noted, would not give me any information about themselves or their methods; that was *mwiko* (forbidden); but they had no objection at all to the chief telling me all I wished to know. Practically all that is here said about them, therefore, is derived from various chiefs, and whatever is not so derived is common knowledge, which anyone may pick up.

When the message came to a prophet, he went to tell his fellow-prophets, and all together went to the chief, to whom all such dreams must be related, before publication to the common people, and the steps decided upon which are to be taken to ward off whatever danger threatens. War was seen, down to its smallest details. The dreamer was actually, in dreams, present at the fight, and saw both the killed and the wounded. The names were given to the chief, who, when he marched out with his forces, left behind any of these whom he wished to save. The people very confidently affirm that just the persons named, and no others, were killed. The incredulity of the white man is regarded as an entirely uncalled for slight upon upright men discharging a duty about which, to the Konde, there is no mystery at all.

The German defeat at Karonga in September, 1914, was very clearly foretold by Njuli and Mwandisi,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

both still living near the lake shore; but the Germans knew nothing of the prophecy. The effect of it, however, was that no local carriers could be recruited, and most of the carriers employed were found among the Basango to the north. Next, it was asserted that the Germans would evacuate Neu Langenburg without fighting, which is what actually happened; and, finally, about the same time, it was declared that the "first-comers" would become lords of the country. These first-comers were Mr. Moir of Glasgow and his companions, who hunted elephant north of the Songwe River in the early eighties. Dr. Laws of Livingstonia visited the north end of the lake much earlier, but that visit did not make the same impression as the more prolonged stay of Mr. Moir and his fellow-hunters.

Smallpox is the most dreaded scourge in the district. It is believed to come from the south, pass through the land, and finally to disappear among the Basango to the north, to whom the Konde consigned, with much gusto, all the evils that they were threatened or afflicted with. Its coming was foretold by the prophets, who declared that it was an act of God in punishment of wickedness. But smallpox was sometimes brought by the sorcerers. These enemies of society were caught in the act—in dreams—by the prophets, who also, in dreams, went out to meet and repel them. If the evil-doers were caught and beaten, their bodies next day would betray them, for the dream-fight is a stern reality, and the body bears the marks of battle. If the prophets succeeded in

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

driving out all the sorcerers, no one would die of 791
smallpox, but one remaining sorcerer could work 753
unlimited mischief so long as he remained undis- 754
covered.

In a community which practises "subsistence 791
agriculture," it is important to know beforehand 261
when the rains will be late, and it is the duty of the prophets to let the chief know, and through him the people, when this will happen. In such a contingency, the chief issues instructions, varying in minuteness, regulating the kinds of food which are to be used, and warning against greed. Punishment used to follow disregard of the prohibition, but the chiefs, although they still issue orders as before, do not now venture to punish offenders, or at any rate they punish none who would be likely to report them to the Administration.

Famine, however, was not always the result of 731
drought. It was often, in the past, the result of war. When a powerful enemy approached, the people left the villages and took refuge in the bush, sometimes for long periods, leaving all that they could not carry to fall into the hands of the invader. The last occasion on which such a famine was foretold was when the Angoni passed through the land seeking a habitation. The people fled before them, and a famine resulted which is still traditionally remembered. With such a powerful enemy approaching, the prophets had an easy task in foreseeing famine.

The death of chiefs is also foretold. The prophets 622
see in dreams the house of a chief being built in the 787

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

622 spirit-world, and they know that when it is finished
787 the person for whom it is intended must very soon go and occupy it. This vision is not told to the chief, but to those who have the duty of choosing his successor, who quietly make their arrangements while the living chief is still among them. He himself has forewarnings also, for he sees his ancestors beckoning him, and knows that his hour is near. Common people die in the common way.

787 No prophecies are more interesting than those which concern the European. They are found over a wide area in Bantuland, and among the Konde they were very detailed and definite. Many versions of these prophecies are still current, the most detailed being that ascribed to Mwakipesire of Masoko. With a great multitude of people the prophet climbed a small hill near Masoko, and there delivered his message.

> "A man will come from the lake, white in body, and he will be lord of the whole country. War he will bring to an end, the Angoni he will conquer, the Arab he will expel. He will bring us cloth, and we shall throw away our garments of leaves. Our way of worship will come to an end, for he will tell us how to go direct to God Himself; but he will not come until all who are here to-day have gone to the spirits."

Maseke of Karonga added that the white man would come in a canoe that sent out smoke, that the peace would be so great that none would carry a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

spear, and that the land would be filled with wonders of which no man had ever heard. 787

How far the original form of these prophecies has been modified by experience, I do not undertake to say. All who pretend to knowledge of the subject vigorously deny any modification. Whether the actual performances of the white man have satisfied the expectations aroused by the prophecies, is a question susceptible of more than one answer. The great mass of the people would certainly not rejoice at the departure of the Europeans; nevertheless there are some who would be glad to see the last of them. Long before the Great War, prophecies were freely circulating among the people, that the Germans would go away, and be succeeded by white men of another land. Just now similar prophecies are being made about the British, who are to be succeeded by another white race as yet unknown. The fact, which is well known to many people, that some "doctors" are seeking for a medicine which will cause the white man to disappear, is significant.

There is a tradition that a series of forecasts was made long ago: the Great War, the influenza which followed it, the great earthquake of 1919, and finally a great darkness which is still to come.

The progress of Christianity has not destroyed the faith, especially of the heathen, in the local prophets; and it is not improbable that Christians still retain a conviction that these men were not wholly without Divine guidance. The chief Swebe, when I asked him whether in all cases smallpox foretold had actually 791 [797]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

and kill many people. The chief, Mwenemusuku, protected his land in the manner described in the chapter on "The Powers of Evil," and none of his people were killed, though the total killed by a lion in that year in neighbouring districts was very large. A letter in my possession puts the number at forty, while others say fifty. Where the chief protected his land in the traditional way, the people were safe; where this was not done, the toll of human lives was great.

In 1922 the same woman predicted that, for the sins of the people, a spotted hyena would kill many. Again the chief protected his land, and again no one was killed; while in a neighbouring and unprotected land, the death-roll was considerable. In the same year leopards were predicted in the Nserya district. The chief was urged to sacrifice an ox, but refused. Six people were killed, and a number of mauled men and women were treated by Dr. Brown at the Mission at Itete.

To the Konde, as I have already said, there is no difficulty in connecting prediction and fulfilment. The inspiration of the foretellers is not doubted; the animals came as foretold; why should reasonable men refuse to acknowledge a relation between the two events? At any rate it may be presumed that the native will go on seeing a connection, while the white man will fall back upon the ever-ready doctrine of coincidence, and refuse upon any terms to acknowledge any other relation.

There is, however, spirit possession of another kind,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XVIII

Divination & the Lot

THE fact of death is not regarded by the tribes of Central Africa as forming a barrier between the living and the dead. The two form one community, and the means of communication between them are naturally therefore well developed. Living and dead are mutually dependent, and a certain amount of goodwill must necessarily exist between them. What the dead cannot do for themselves, the living must do for them; and what the living must know, but do not, the dead can tell them if properly interrogated. It is upon this fact that divination depends, as do omens also to some extent. The use of charms and amulets, however, depends upon the other, and perhaps closely related fact, that Nature is not a fixed system of laws pursuing its way regardless of human needs, but is pliable, responsive, and will advise, protect, injure, according to the means used by those who possess the power.

The idea that the whole system of consultation of the spirits, of the interpretation of omens, and of the use of charms and amulets, is based upon conscious deception—a few clever men in each community

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•787 taking advantage of the credulity of the masses—can
811 be entertained only by those who have acquired no insight into the native mind and its working. It is impossible to maintain that a system, as wide as a continent, and as persistent as the centuries, should be the outcome of an age-long conspiracy to cheat. The human mind does not work in that way. The system is involved in the world-view; it is woven into the mind-texture of the people, and the honesty of the "practitioners" is, in many cases, as indubitable as the faith of the people.

791 The prayer for rain, for instance, is offered with a simple sincerity, as honest as any petition ever offered in a Christian church. I am not asserting that the prayer brings the rain; nor yet that it does not. Nor do I suppose that the diviner is in touch with fact, when he uses what he considers to be means of getting into communication with the spirits. I am arguing only for the honesty, in a great majority of cases, of the men who do these things. They are men with a conviction.

The diviner usually hands on his knowledge and his office to one of his own family; but an outsider may learn his secrets by paying an ox or a cow. I am not aware that there is any serious attempt to guard the secrets of the profession, though the various drugs used are not made known except to those who are willing to pay the fee. The only form of initiation is
[304] the incising of medicines into the arms or wrists of the initiate, and this incision may be renewed should occasion require it.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Divining is resorted to primarily in cases of illness: to find the cause and suggest the cure. But it is used on many other occasions; indeed almost anything that one wants to know, he may bring to the diviner. One may require information about lost or stolen goods; another may want to know whether a thieving expedition will be successful; and the diviner's art is at the service of both. Success in hunting or fishing may be inquired about; news of absent friends may be had; the reason why the gardens yield a poor crop; will the inquirer get work from the European to whom he purposes applying, and will the pay be good? These and numerous other matters are brought for answer to the diviner.

787

In 1922 the store of an unusually intelligent native trader was burned down, and cash to the amount of £170 was stolen. The trader went to a diviner, and paid him a fee of five pounds, in return for which he was informed that after a certain time had passed his money would all be restored. About the middle of October, 1923, the whole had been paid in, but whether the date corresponded with the time given by the diviner, I do not know; and it should be added that the local magistrate at Karonga took up the case with great vigour, a fact which no doubt had its effect.

I was present in 1902 at an act of divination of which I was myself the subject. During the course of a long journey I had entered a village with only two men, all the other carriers having fallen behind. The villagers took me for an "undesirable," and refused the usual salutations; but when my men arrived,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

• 181 they realized that an error had been committed. The diviner was called to find out whether I would wish to wipe out the insult, and I had the opportunity of seeing the process. The diviner, a middle-aged man, sat on the ground with a flat stone in front of him, and in his hand a short stick about six inches long, which he grasped in the middle, while the top was held by a lanky youth, evidently anyone chosen at random for the purpose. The diviner moved the stick up and down, striking it sometimes on the stone, sometimes on the ground to right or left of the stone, repeating at the same time words of which all I understood were the word for "God," and that for "white man." I smiled at the performance, and in a little the diviner declared that the spirits refused to speak, a result which, as I afterwards learned, was due to my incredulous smiles. The same afternoon he and I went out together to hunt; he with bow and arrows, I with a modern rifle; and the same ill-success attended the efforts of both.

The methods of divining are many, and only a few of them can be given here. The general outline, however, is the same, or nearly so, in all cases. Eliminating questions are asked, gradually limiting the range of possibility, until the correct answer has been found. Is the sick man going to die? If not, what is the disease due to? God? A spirit? Who? His father? Elder brother? etc. etc. What is the disease? Is it this, or that, or the other? What does the offended spirit want? a cow, sheep, goat? and is it to be killed or not? One illustration must suffice. The

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 192) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

father of a sick child went a few months ago to a diviner, who told him that the illness was due to his own folly in not sacrificing a cow at the funeral of his father, who had died recently. "Go and pray," said the diviner, "I will give you no medicine." After prayer, a cow was killed, and due observance made of the ritual demanded, after which the child recovered. If the sickness is due to the anger of a living person, who has persuaded his ancestors to avenge him for some wrong done, the diviner directs that an appropriate offering be brought to the offended man, who thereupon requests the spirits to remove their anger, and the patient recovers. 787

A few of the methods may now be briefly described.

I. *Ikipiki*, the stick, or cup. A hollowed-out, cup-shaped piece of wood, perhaps three inches long, is moved backwards and forwards over a piece of banana stalk, the open end of the cup downwards, and questions are asked as described. When the cup refuses to move, the right question has been asked, and the answer thereby given. In the act of divination that I saw here a few months ago, the diviner seemed honestly unable to move the cup, though in my own hand it moved easily.

II. *Isiba*. The horn of a small buck is filled with medicines, and placed with its base on the ground. When questions are asked, it begins to sway, and stands still again when the right question has been put.

III. *Isyabwe* is a recent importation from another district. The diviner, having drunk a medicine called *musika*, sits on the dark side of the door, having in his 787 177

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•787 177 hand a small calabash partly filled with sand; the inquirer sits on the other side of the door. The diviner shakes his calabash, saying, "Speak, Mulambya, who dwellest by the clear waters; tell me what disease this man is suffering from." He soon begins to feel a rising in the throat, which causes him to speak in a falsetto voice, "*He, tata.*" The falsetto now gives way to the natural voice, in which the questions are put, the answer, coming in falsetto, being the response of the spirit. It would be interesting to know whether the *musika* medicine has qualities which cause the throat to contract so as to produce a falsetto voice, but the point is one upon which I have no information.

787 IV. *Wa m'maboko*, the hands. When an inquirer chooses this method, the diviner goes to the bush, whence he takes a *kilago*, a rush-like grass about eighteen inches in length. Detaching the rootlets, he chews them carefully, and spits the juice into his hands. The palms being rubbed smoothly over each other, the questions are put, and when the hands stick, the answer has been given.

V. *Kayamba*, the tortoise. The intestines of the tortoise are removed, and a cord passed through the mouth and the anus. The cord is held upright by the left hand, while the tortoise is lifted with the right as each question is put. When the right question is asked, the tortoise, instead of falling to the ground, stops half-way on the string. This form of divination is very widely known among the tribes around Lake Nyasa.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

VI. *Indeko*, the pot. An axe-head is fixed upright in the ground, and a pot containing water and medicine is balanced on the edge. If the pot falls and breaks, the patient will not recover; if it keeps its balanced position, he will soon be well. The diviner Mwankosore, who showed me this method, added that in the case of an illness discovered by this method to be due to witchcraft, he gave his walking-stick to the patient, who immediately got up and walked, perfectly whole. I shall have occasion again to refer to recoveries of this nature.

When the diviner is consulted with regard to theft, a different procedure is followed.

I. *Ikifwani*, the image. This savours more of magic than of divining, but it is placed here because it is called by the latter name by those who practise it. An incident which took place in 1918 will make the method clear. In that year there was scarcity of food, and consequent theft from gardens and storehouses. One man went to the diviner, and asked him to find the goods and the thief. The diviner took a small image of a man, about two feet in height, made from a block of wood. In the head was a cavity, into which medicine was put, and the cavity closed. The party went to the garden from which the food had been stolen, and, the image being laid on the ground, the diviner prayed to it to lead them to the thief. It was then taken up in the right hand of a strong man, and presently began to shake violently, so that it could with difficulty be held. In a little it swayed in one direction, and the holder moved thither, the whole

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

• 787 party following, until the shaking of the image ceased in a garden. Digging at that spot, the stolen food was discovered; and the image, being asked now to find the thief, led them to a certain house, the owner of which at once confessed the theft, and paid a cow as fine. A similar incident occurred in 1919, when a number of hoes were stolen. The person accused by the image vigorously denied guilt, but gave in when threatened with the poison test, and paid a cow as fine. In this case the confession, as indeed in both cases, may have been due to fear of what would happen in the poison ordeal, and the fine paid rather than undergo further trials, even although the accused persons were not really guilty.

II. *Ulupembe*, the horn. Recently a cow was stolen, and the owner went to a diviner for help, taking with him a piece of the halter by which the cow had been tethered in the house. The diviner made a fire by rubbing two sticks together, and as the smoke ascended, he added to the smouldering fire tiny bits of the rope, along with some of his own medicines, and as the smoke increased, the diviner directed it to go towards the village where the thief lived. Noting the direction in which the smoke moved, he told the owner to wait until some one died in that village, at the same time bidding him on no account weep for the dead man, for then the medicine would kill him also. If the bladder of the first person to die showed signs of blackness, there need be no doubt that he was the thief, and his friends would be obliged to pay over a cow. For the nearest relative of the dead man would go

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

to the diviner to find out the cause of the discoloration, and would of necessity make reparation. 787

III. A few years ago a policeman had his goods stolen at Mwaya. Instead of reporting to the proper quarters, he went to a diviner, who sprinkled the policeman's house with medicine, which he publicly declared would kill the thief, and in a short time the goods were brought to the chief of the district. The deception in this case is too obvious to call for comment.

Inquiries regarding hunting and fishing, and every other kind of question, are conducted in ways similar to those already given. Employment with a white man is evidently still a matter for careful consideration, and it is entirely possible that the diviner prevents many a man from going to work who would otherwise be glad to go. "Shall I find work?" "Shall I find peace?" "Shall I get good wages?" The second question is much the most important, and means, "Shall I be employed by a white man who is not a perpetual scold?" the kind of European whom the native hates and fears more than anything else.

The fee paid to the diviner varied from about a halfpenny to an ox or a cow. [791]

While there is undoubtedly deliberate cheating and charlatanry, these should be regarded, not as the essence of the system, but its excrescence. In many cases, if not in all, the diviner has subconsciously decided what answer shall be given; in the region of the subconscious his mind is made up, and, there being no opposing idea, the "mental process issues in

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

a conation which passes over into the physical motor response" (Tansley). The image in the mind, of the divining rod acting in the manner conceived, tends to become a physical fact, and the rod comes to a halt in obedience to a previously formed decision, of which the operator is, in most cases, not consciously aware. Nevertheless the opportunities for deception are many.

Ifipendo, the lot. The lot is resorted to in a variety of cases, but its application is much more limited than that of divination.

I. When divination has decided that an illness is due to poison, the lot is invoked to find the poisoner. Little pieces of dough are kneaded into as many tiny cups as there are persons suspected. Into each is put a small quantity of *mwafi* (the poison used for the ordeal), and the suspected persons are then invited to take each the cup that he selects for himself, the preparations having been made, of course, in their absence. The guilty person is he who takes the cup in which the poison remains unabsorbed into the dough, the others being assumed to have vomited. This might just as well be called a way of undergoing the poison ordeal, but as it is called *ifipendo* it is included here.

II. In cases of disputed inheritance no poison is put into the cups, but a little dry flour. The claimant who selects the cup in which the moisture from the dough has penetrated to the dry flour is declared to be the rightful heir.

When the rain stops, and no natural cause can be assigned, it is assumed to be the act of some person

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

unknown. Now when a common man stops the rain, he must first have obtained the assistance of his chief; and the chief, being discovered by the method just described, must take measures to have the evil undone. 787

III. If a question arises as to the ownership of some article, small sticks are set upright in the ground. The claimants sit each opposite his own stick, and he whose stick first falls, if it falls towards him, is the rightful owner. But if the stick falls towards another person, then that person is declared the owner. Finally, if goods of any kind are divided into lots, one lot for each of a number of persons, sticks are taken, marked to correspond with the lots. Each shareholder picks out a stick, the marks, of course, not being shown to him, and gets the goods which correspond to the marks. There is no appeal, the decision of the lot is final.

The poison ordeal, though now prohibited, and administered only in secret, was, until European government began to put it down, so common that a description of it comes in appropriately in any chapter dealing with native life; and as it has been referred to here already, the method of administering to individuals will be given now, leaving administration to a whole community for the chapter on "Witchcraft." The ordeal was applied for reasons grave or trivial, from an accusation of murder down to a petty family quarrel of no importance except in a moment of ill-temper. Both parties to a quarrel or an accusation went to the doctor, and stated their case. He took a piece of bark of the *mwafi* tree for each, raised it a little in 787 627

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 627 his hand and let it fall to the ground; if one turned round in falling and the other fell without turning, the doctor knew beforehand which was the guilty person—he whose bark turned round in falling. The poison was then prepared from the bark by the doctor, by whom it was administered next day. The one who vomited was in the right, the other in the wrong.

Assuming that the poison was honestly administered, that is to say, that the doctor did not give a strong mixture to one and a weak to another, which he very probably did in many cases, must it be assumed that the result was merely fortuitous? Is it not a psychological possibility that the consciousness of guilt in the one case, and of innocence in another, causes the poison in the stomach to act in the way that generations of belief in its efficacy has led the whole community to expect that it would act? I do not suggest that this happened in all cases. No doubt the generations have seen countless cases of tragic miscarriage of justice; on the other hand, so many confessions have followed conviction under the ordeal, that it is difficult to believe that in all cases the discovery of the guilty person was a mere fortuity.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

772 of what is coming. But these signs and tokens are not the act of an impersonal universe; they are the act of God, a revelation of His care for men.

• 781 In Konde omens and portents the dramatic element is slight. I can retail nothing to equal in creepiness the cry of the Irish banshee, or Highland dogs barking at an invisible funeral, or the family ghost clanking its chain in an old English mansion. But a Konde dog howls at night, and sudden silence falls upon the previously laughing and chatting company sitting around the fire, or out in the cool moonlight. Who is going to die? And when? And of what sickness? Or a branch creaks in the forest as one is passing through it at night; and the belated traveller hastens his steps without looking backward, for that way lies death. The bold man who passes the grave of a chief at night, and hears his name called, takes to his heels, eyes front for his very life, for the backward look is death, though to the closed eye there is little danger that cannot be averted.

Omens are offered by nature; they come spontaneously, so far as men are concerned. There are cases in which the omens are consulted, or taken, but generally the information is given by events, rather than discovered by experiment, as with the ancient Roman augurs. And although some men know more about them than others, there are no specialists to whom a fee has to be paid for the interpretation of the omen.

The rough classification which is here attempted, makes no pretence of being exhaustive. Life is full

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

of hints and tokens of the goodwill or illwill of the unseen powers, and the wise man is he who profits by them where that is possible; where it is not possible, he is the wise man who quietly awaits the event, thankful that at least the misfortune does not take him at unawares, and that, if he cannot ward off the danger, he can meet it with an equanimity impossible to one upon whom the blow falls suddenly. 787

1. Weather lore is strangely absent, perhaps because in the tropics there is a regularity about the weather which renders prognostication as unnecessary as barometers. If, on a rainy evening, the crow caws on a high note, it will be hot the next day, with a cloudless sky; if on a low note the rain will continue. Another token of rain is given when the long-necked, long-legged birds, *mwankusye*, fly in a line abreast towards the lake. 787 821

2. Of bad news there are countless indications; of good news only a very few hints have come to light. Twitching of the upper eyelid indicates good fortune of some kind undefined; but if the twitching is in the lower lid, death is near, of the person whose eye twitches, or of a friend. 787 827

3. Before the settlement of the country by the Europeans, long journeys were rarely undertaken, and omens on the way were carefully watched for, and as carefully heeded when they were given. Serpents are the most trusted mediums and great significance is attached to their movements. A serpent lying on one side of the path, and slipping into the bush on that side as the travellers approach, indicates a clear 787 825

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•787 825 path. But if the serpent crosses to the other side and into the bush, the way is closed, and the travellers will return to their homes, no matter how near their destination they may be. What will happen if they continue their journey is not clear; some undefined evil will overtake them. Parties on the war-path heeded this warning, for it was an omen of defeat if they went on, which, naturally, they never did. If [763] the snake escapes into a hole, it indicates a death at the nearest village; and if a python is seen on the road, the travellers, whose path is not closed, may expect to find the death-wail going on at the first village they come to.

A two-headed snake, whatever that may be, is a [763] sure sign of death at the place one is going to; and two snakes fighting indicate coming evil, which can only be averted by returning to the place whence one has set out. A tree falling across a path, is another warning, which no man disregards; but the tree must fall within view of the person to whom the hint is given; trees that have fallen otherwise have no significance. But it is worth noting that natives travelling with white men pay no heed to any omens. They are protected by the power of the European, and any significance the omens may have is his affair.

787 825 4. Travellers have their tokens on the way: the people to whom they go have foretokens of their approach. If the fire "speaks," if it makes a burring noise in the flame; if the hens go about uttering low cries; if *amayogobera*, small black birds with white

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 breasts, sit on a tree near the house; if *mwanjala*,
[825] little black and white birds of another species, hop about twittering; the approach of strangers is fore-
[574] told. Hospitality to strangers is a primary virtue among the Konde, and food is prepared at once; but it is not cooked until they actually arrive. To offer
[576] them food already cooked, is to offer a cold welcome, and possibly to do an injury; for cold food must not be eaten by chiefs, nor by hunters, nor by doctors, for in all these cases the effect would be to destroy the power of the medicines by virtue of which they are assured of success in their various callings.

787 5. Omens having reference to food are numerous, and a few examples must suffice. If a fly goes into
262 one's mouth, it is a sure sign that the person will soon be eating flesh, a rare treat for the Konde, who seldom eat flesh, unless there is an occasion for it: a birth, a marriage, or a death. But the fly indicates none of these; the flesh hinted at is a pure gift with no kind of condition attached. The same good fortune is suggested if a child eats cinders from the fire-place. A leopard crying all night in the neighbourhood is giving information that some one has broken a food prohibition. New season's food has been eaten before the chief has laid an offering of the first-fruits of that particular food-stuff at the grave of his ancestors, and the dwellers in the underworld are angry at the insult offered them. The chief is informed of the crying of the leopard, and the diviner is called in to find the culprit.

787 There is a common grass called *ditika*, which in

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 appearance is not unlike *malesi*, from which beer is made. If anyone eats this while there is abundance of proper food, it is an omen of famine to come. If the offender is a child, he is not beaten; but if he is grown up, he is mercilessly dealt with. It is not pretended that the beating averts the evil, nor has the man's action in eating the *ditika* anything to do with the coming famine, except to foretell it. If one asks, Why then is he beaten? the answer is simply that having foretold evil he deserves to be beaten. This unpalatableness of plain truth (if it is plain truth) is not unknown among other races than the Bantu.

787 224 825 6. Elephants while being hunted impart a great deal of varied information to the hunters. As elephant hunting by natives has long been prohibited, the omens afforded are no longer available, but that does not affect the belief in them. "The elephant does not lie" is an assured conviction in the minds of the hunters, and when an omen was given, the hunt was abandoned until the matter was investigated.

If, as the hunters approach, elephants are found leaping upon each other, a halt is called; both because in that condition they are specially dangerous, and because the omen is otherwise bad. There is sin among the hunters, and the whole party returns to the *fitembe*, the temporary quarters erected for the hunting period. There the case is gone into. Some one has wronged his neighbour in the manner suggested by the action of the elephants, and nothing can be done until it is put right. To go on with the hunt would be the extremest folly, and if no one

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

confesses, the party returns to the village, and the diviner is called to discover the culprit. 787 224

If two elephants are found kneeling and facing each other, some one's wife has erred in his absence, and the hunt is stopped until justice is done. An elephant taking up dust with his trunk and offering it to another, shows that some one has offered snuff to another man's wife, a most significant action, demanding immediate satisfaction. If an elephant is seen touching the teats of another, a similar action has been committed in the village, and again the hunt stops for inquiry and punishment. Trumpeting elephants are a sign of quarrelling in the village, and one plastering its face with mud is a sign of death, for the women at the death-wail cover their faces with mud or chalk. The hunters return, and do not resume until all is clear again. It is most important that not only the hunters should be free from evil, but their friends also, for evil brings them into danger, and it is the duty of all in the village to see that the natural dangers of the hunt are not increased by unnatural evil in their homes. 825

7. War was foretold by the prophets, but confirmatory signs were usually not wanting. If the horns of the new moon were of unequal length, an enemy was known to be approaching; necessarily an enemy from a distance, for the phenomenon must have been visible over a wide area. The same terror was announced by a cow bellowing at night, if there was no known cause for its outcry. This, naturally, is a thing of the past, as war, at least native war, has 787 721

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 721 [825] ceased. What significance would now be attached to these omens, I do not know. The buffalo, like the elephant, does not lie, and wise men heed its warnings. Many years ago a man called Masapa went to the Kinga region, where he quarrelled with the people, and barely escaped with his life. His chief, Mwaisumo, took up the quarrel, and prepared to invade the enemy's territory, undeterred by the predictions of defeat which came in dreams to his prophets, until, on the way, one of his men was killed by a buffalo, and this was a warning not to be disregarded. On their return home, they were received by their women folks, not with contempt and mocking, but as wise men, who were too wary to tempt "Providence" by foolish action. One more war omen. If a man, on the point of leaving for the field of battle, was suddenly, but accidentally, seized by the wrist by his wife, he laid down his weapons, and quietly stayed at home; not for him the joy of battle; he would have been killed, and no one thought the worse of him for heeding the omen.

781 763 8. Foretokens of death are so numerous that it is difficult even to classify them. Whatever is rare, or unnatural, or sudden, may be taken as a warning of approaching death. A mole seen by day, is a rare event, and full of dread. A Christian living near me saw this wonder in February, 1923, and in the same month he got news of the death of a friend a hundred miles away! No connection? He thought there was. To see the *kasuchi*, a small aquatic animal, is to see something so rare that its appearance m[illegible] the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

foretoken of widespread death; but no one known to me has had the misfortune to see it. Foxes are said to have increased so greatly since the advent of the white man, that no significance is now attached to their crying; but a generation ago it announced the approaching death of a great chief. There was an interesting recrudescence of this belief in 1914. In July of that year there was a great barking of foxes in the neighbourhood of the Overtoun Institution (outside the Konde country). The news spread far, and the general anticipation of widespread disaster was held to have been amply justified when the first intimation of the Great War was received. A dog howling at night, surely nothing uncommon, still predicts death, and the dog is beaten, not because its howling brings on the evil, or because the beating can avert it; it foretells misfortune, and the forecast is unwelcome, and the unfortunate retailer of information must suffer for lack of common sense.

A cock crowing at night, when no cock should crow, is a foretoken of death, and in the first place of its own; no second time would that cock be the harbinger of news so unwelcome. Sudden things, again, an unexpected collapse of a house which looks strong, or of a tree which shows no sign of decay; or of a grave which is being digged, or a pot of beer which falls without obvious cause; these are all of dreadful omen, indicating the death of a chief. The father of the present chief Kabeta, living near Rungwe, was a great planter of trees. As he lay dying, all the trees which he had planted in his youth

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

781 fell one after another, and when Kabeta went to his
763 fathers, he had no more trees to his credit than when he was born. The fall of the village tree, planted at the installation of the chief, shows that he in whose honour it was planted is about to go to the spirit-land.

781 9. The heavens give very few signs. If the full
821 moon is red, with a red circle around it, plague is coming. If the sun "builds a house" (*nimbus*), some woman is about to give birth to twins. Worst of all, naturally, is an eclipse. "*Kyala asambwike*," they say, "God has lost patience, He is going to kill us all," and they go out with drums and wild shoutings to induce the Supreme Being to go away to the Basango.

781 What has been described in the foregoing paragraphs is called *kusura*, to foreshadow, forecast, the agent being entirely unconscious of the significance of the action. There is another class of actions which also forecast; but although the difference is not very obvious, a different word is used, *kusikura*, which sometimes means to insult, but commonly to act as a pointer to coming evil. Such actions are mostly unnatural; many of them are in themselves evil, and their occurrence is regarded as a portent.

1. Unnatural anger. Anger in a child is a phenomenon of awe. If a grown-up person arouses it—not in his own child—that person has received warning that his death is near. How this comes about is not clear. Some natives say that the anger is a sign, which cannot be explained; others that the child

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

has a disease, from which he does not himself suffer, but which passes over to the person who arouses the wrath. 787

At Karonga, if two old men fight with their fists, and tear each other's garments, they have forecasted death for each other. The death of a friend of one or the other will shortly take place. Among the Banyakyusa to the north, the fight of any two, young or old, with fists only, is a portent of the same significance. Such anger blazes up suddenly, and the two men fly at each other in blind fury, unable to restrain themselves sufficiently to go and fetch the weapons with which reasonable men fight. The fist as a weapon of war is not highly regarded by Africans generally, however dear it may be to others. 787 579

2. Unnatural actions. To invite an old man to climb a tree may seem to us more laughable than deadly; but to the Konde it is a dreadful combination of insult and forecast; it is a forecast, because such a thing is an insult so great as to be in itself a portent. The number of things that come under this head is legion; but generally, to ask an old person to do what is unnatural for an old person to do, is *kusikura*. Little girls quite innocently removing their scanty covering in the presence of an old man, have unwittingly warned him that his days are near an end. Perhaps under the same category we may include an invitation given by a child to an old man to come and eat; to us it could not come in a more charming way; but the old Konde would turn his back indignantly on the ill-bred brat who 787 578

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 578 so insulted him. This does not apply to an invitation to drink beer, but no one can explain why there is a difference.

3. Accusations against a man of good character come under the same heading. Some evil has been done, and the wrong-doer has not been discovered. Then, perhaps in joke, or it may be out of personal dislike, some one says that so and so did it. The person referred to knows that his days will not be long in the land. "Did I ever do a thing like that?" he asks indignantly. "Why, then, am I accused?" It can only be *kusikura*, and he expects to die, at the best, within a year or two.

787 828 4. If the spirits, in dreams, offer food, it must not be accepted, even in the dream; to accept it means death.

787 578 593 Connected with the foregoing, but having a different name among the Konde, are insults or injuries to parents. A man who fights with his father, and throws him down, has achieved the final wickedness. Whether the old man was right or wrong in the matter in dispute is of no consequence; the whole community expresses its abhorrence of the deed. "Has this man reached even to God?" that is to say, does he consider himself the equal of God, that he does such things? Word is sent to the chief, and the whole district is informed of the evil thing that has been done. There is no formal denunciation, no spoken curse; but the *ikugune*, the curse of all fathers, and of all ancestors, is upon the son. He becomes lame; then unable to stand upright; finally he

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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crawls about on his buttocks, a helpless object. The curse has taken effect.

After a time good-natured people try to bring father and son together again. The son is persuaded to make his father an offering of an ox or a cow in token of repentance. If the father agrees, a day is fixed, and the whole community, including the little children, assembles at the house of the injured father. Beer is prepared, the ox is killed, the son publicly expresses his repentance, and the father his acceptance thereof. Then the people, having heard all the details of the crime,[1] express their feelings in a prolonged groan. A dose of medicine is now given to the son, a stick is put into his hands, and he is bidden to rise and walk, which he does in the presence of all! A similar curse falls upon the man who does evil with one of his father's wives; and there are a very few other crimes which automatically bring on the same punishment.

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It is not difficult, from the point of view of modern mental science, to explain the facts. The disability is due to the conviction in the mind of the younger man, strengthened by a similar conviction in the mind of the whole community, that such results always follow deeds like his. Similar phenomena are by no means unknown among Europeans, where the response to each other of mind and body is not so immediate as it is among the more unsophisticated Konde. The man bearing his sin is mentally, perhaps, rather than physically, unable to stand upright; and the conviction having been removed from his mind,

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[1] [Fighting and throwing down one's father — Analyst]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

memories and yarns, eats food made from the flour of a pumpkin, which destroys the virtues of his hunting medicines, and at the same time takes away all probability of his death being the prolonged weariness it would otherwise be.

Fishing nets are drugged to ensure a good catch; but here again caution must be exercised, for a very great catch is an omen of a very large family, which is not always an ambition held by the Konde people.

The mother who has just given birth to a child must not cook food, nor may she warm herself at the common fire; a small fire is kindled for her at which she sits by herself; and when the child goes out of the house for the first time a medicine is put into its mouth to guard it against the ills of the world into which it has come.

Christians do none of these things; but Christians are not as other people. They have passed away from the fear of spirits and from the dread of a world in which anything may happen at any moment; and the fact that they escape the consequences of failure to follow custom is having its effect on the common people, many of whom are cautiously experimenting to see whether they too may live a freer and more unshadowed life; but the belief in the protective powers of such things as I have been describing dies hard.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

kind of grass grows there maize will do well, or maybe ground-nuts. 242
Some grass-lands have very poor soil in which no crop at all will grow properly, the one we call *kyusi* for example, or again the one we call *wanyugeni* ("the ant"); no one hoes these lands. Some gardens we hoe on the higher ground, others near the streams, either right in the mud by the water or else in ground that is merely moist. On the higher ground we hoe millet, peas, sweet-potatoes, cassava and some other crops; in the muddy places by the water we hoe yams, building huge ridges for them called *fibimbiko*; and there too we sometimes put in (during the dry season) the shoots of sweet potatoes that we shall later plant elsewhere. If the soil is only a little muddy and is mixed with sand, then we plant maize there. The right soil for beans we call *kibumba*—a red soil which is sometimes mixed with sand. Ground-nuts we either plant in the *kibumba* (if it is the sandy kind) or else just in sand. Whenever a man is hoeing a field for millet or ground-nuts or sweet-potatoes, he can tell just from the soil whether his crop will do well or not."[9]

And so also the Nyakyusa well understand the different qualities of 232
pasture. The cattle are herded by small boys but on most mornings one of the men also goes out with the herd to show the boys where to pasture it and what grass-land to avoid.

Into the value of arable land sentiment also enters and men like, 311
ceteris paribus, to hoe their gardens where they themselves or their fathers 769
and brothers have hoed before. So too the value of building plots is determined both by practical and emotional considerations: large and relatively level sites on which bananas grow well are preferred to narrow or steeply sloping ones or to sites where bananas do badly, but, on the other hand, of two equally convenient sites that with family associations is normally preferred. And in the case of building sites religious considerations may also enter. A friend of mine told me that, when his father died, he did not move but left his father's site vacant with the new grave upon it; a year or two later his millet crop unaccountably failed and [787] the diviner told him that his father's spirit was angry that no one had "swept his grave," i.e. that the plot had been left vacant. My friend did not actually move, even then, for he preferred his own site; he compromised by the performance of a ritual sacrifice to his father's spirit. But in such cases a man will often move to his dead father's site for fear of further misfortunes.

We have discussed briefly the purposes for which and the techniques 000
by means of which the Nyakyusa use their land, and we have indicated a few of the main considerations which lead them to value some particular

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[9] Text written for me by a literate Nyakyusa.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 769 789 magical powers. And the faith alike in ancestors and in witchcraft gave to every group of subjects a religious hold over their rulers.

(a) *THE THEISTIC ELEMENT.*

643 764 778 Though the early Kyungus had lived on the stony top of Mbande none of them had been buried there, for "the ground was too hard to dig graves in." They and their successors were all buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. Thus Kyungu Mwangonde is referred to as "He of Bwiba," Kyungu Mwakasungula as "He of Ipeta," and so on.

643 731 787 782 Now drought and widespread sickness were believed to be caused by the anger either of some dead Kyungu or of the living one. "In time of drought they (the nobles of Ngonde) would go to a diviner to enquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would tell them that it was so and so. So they would tell the (living) Kyungu. And he would give them either a bull or a sheep, together with some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own house, one of the pots which were continually brought by his people as tribute.[1] And he would give them some flour and some cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove. Now the diviner would have told them that he (the dead Kyungu) was angry because they had omitted (for so long) to build his house. So they would begin by building his house in the grove, they would build a miniature hut with rafters.[2] Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fix some of the pieces to the house in the grove—an action which they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And, finally, they would pour out (some of) the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a house in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

643 731 787 "But occasionally if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any of them: 'No—no.'

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[1] *Vide infra* section 4.

[2] This is the custom traditional in the sacred groves of all important chiefs, both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa. We have seen it done among the Nyakyusa. The hut which we saw built was between two and three feet high.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

And at length he would tell them that it was the living Kyungu who was angry because so and so had insulted him. Then there would be no sacrifice in the grove at all, but the nobles of Ngonde would go to the one who had insulted the Kyungu and charge him with it, asking him what he meant by thus killing them all, would not the whole land starve! And so the wrongdoer would take a cow to the Kyungu who, thereupon, would address the nobles of Ngonde, saying: 'If it was my anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been some one (of the dead Kyungus) whom you forgot to ask about.' And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again! 643 731 787

"If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would; and then the diviner would tell them that it was so and so (one of the dead Kyungus), and they would go and sacrifice in his grove."

Thus the belief in the power of the dead Kyungus, a power in which their living successor participated, was one of the factors of the central political institutions of Ngonde. The Kyungu did not himself sacrifice in the sacred groves but the nobles of Ngonde did so, with materials provided by him, and from these sacrifices the whole plain was believed to benefit. While to insult the Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. And we have already seen, in the story of Mwakasungula's return from exile,[1] that other prominent members of the royal family also were believed to share this power. 643 769 782 731

The absence of central political institutions among the Nyakyusa was, as we shall see, mainly due to economic causes; but in part also this difference can be traced to the climatic difference acting upon similar religious faiths. The Nyakyusa had in the Lwembes, the hereditary chiefs of Lubaga, a line of religious paramounts. Chiefs from all over the district sent gifts to them to ask for health and rain. That they never achieved any secular paramountcy at all was mainly because they were poor. But the difference of rainfall was important too. Droughts in Ngonde occurred frequently, and each one made the people remember their Kyungu's power. North of the Songwe droughts were rare and slight. 643 731

[1] p. 27.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 Nor were rain and health the only blessings which were sought in
769 the sacred groves round Mbande, general fertility, the peace of the
778 country, the absence of rats and the success of the ivory trade were believed to depend in part on the favour of the dead Kyungus. And we have a little evidence that some of these other blessings also were believed to be withheld by the anger of a living Kyungu.

The religious powers of dead and living Kyungus, however, were only believed to be effective in the Ngonde plain; the fiefs of the hills, certainly, and, as far as we know, the chiefdoms of the Nyondos and Kamemes also, were unaffected by them. And this fact is correlated with the slighter secular hold which Mbande had over the hills as compared with the plain.

769 Two notable religious rituals of the plain must now be mentioned.
796 It was customary, first, to clear out the ashes (*ukujola ikikungu*) each year after the break of the rains. In traditional belief the spirits of the ancestors, whether of chiefs or of commoners, were closely associated with the fires in the houses of their descendants; and so it was only by clearing out the old fires regularly that the spirits and their potential anger could be driven away. Every religious ritual which deals with the ancestors, whether in Ngonde or among the Nyakyusa, has the function of driving them away. For, while the Christians believe that sustained communion with God may be a blessed state, the pagans in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa believe that sustained communion
[787] with the ancestral spirits is always terrible and dangerous; prophecy may flow from it, but if the communion is not broken, if it continues too long, then evil will result; and prophecy is nearly always prophecy of evil. In pagan belief the spirits of the dead come constantly to "brood" on man and his works and have constantly to be satisfied and driven away by ritual.

"Always they used to clear-out the ashes at the new year, at the first hoeing, at the break of the rains in December. They feared that death and disease would spread through the land if they continued living with the old fires, that the spirits in the ground, both the spirits of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry; let them drive the spirits away and hoe in peace. They always remembered to do so each new year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually, they never forgot. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to clear out the ashes; and then they would hoe in peace. And at other times too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the ashes again."

The nobles of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave the order to clear out the ashes; messages were sent to the great chiefs and

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

even here it was rather position than area that was at stake : " We object to their proximity, let them move further off," said the chiefs of Ngelenge. 669

Civil wars varied in size and importance from little local fights between neighbouring villages, fiefs or chiefdoms to more extensive fights between groups or even whole houses of chiefs. And in every case the political organization took on, for the time, a military character. Great-commoners led their villagers to war, chiefs their great-commoners ; the senior of a group of brother chiefs summoned his juniors to help him, while a great chief summoned all the local chiefs of his house. But only the Kyungu himself could summon the territorial nobles.

Now leadership in war is a factor of political authority ; the great chiefs, nobles, chiefs and great-commoners derived part of their status from their military functions. But, on the other hand, it is equally true to say that it was the other factors of their status which enabled them to exercise this military authority.

In every war, for instance, there were religious elements. Chiefs had war medicines and prayed to their ancestors for success ; while the loyalty of the great-commoners and people to their chief had both a spiritual and an economic importance. Sometimes, in peace, the leading commoners would dream of war and, if they dreamt of running away, then their chief would hastily kill meat for them. Such dreams were witchcraft and, unless promptly dealt with by a feast, were held to be a certain harbinger of future defeat. [789] [787]

" In civil warfare the Kyungu never took any part at all, he remained impartial at Mbande. His sons fought one another by themselves." (But what of the war, between Ngelenge and Ngana, did he not help his own sons in any way?) " No, he did not. For both ' the cousins ' and ' the sons ' alike were his children, he was the father of all."

(b) *TRIBAL WAR.*

The procedure of tribal warfare and that of the occasional punitive expeditions against the Kyungu's subordinates was the same. Messages were sent by the *valukuta* to all chiefs and nobles of the plain to come to Mbande. There the more important of them entered the Kyungu's house and were given their orders by him personally : " And then, when the Kyungu had told them whom to go and fight, he would finish up by saying ' That is all then, go away now and call down blessings on your arms.' So they would leave his house and gather all together, chiefs and their men, and pray." 721 [202]

The premier noble of Ngonde would begin, reciting all the names of the sacred groves of the Kyungu and asking each one to bless them in their fight. Then after him each great chief in turn would pray in like 726

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ever made to the spirits, but when some member of a family or his wife or 769
child falls sick the anger of the spirits is often suspected as a possible 753
cause. There are usually other reasons suspected as well, and so the [787]
sickness is taken to a diviner for diagnosis. Various causes are suggested
to the diviner and he selects one among them. If the anger of the spirits
is selected then this senior kinsman must pray for the one who is sick, if
he is to recover. When half-brothers live at a distance from one another,
after their father and his brothers have died, then each may pray to the
spirits to cure a little sickness in his own family but if the sickness persists
then a message must be sent to the senior kinsman. And, as the anger of
the spirits is due to wrong doing, the sinner must reform his ways as well.

The wrongs which rouse the spirits to anger are usually breaches of 673
family morality. If a son does not respect his father or insults him, if an
heir neglects to feed and provide for the dead man's children, then when
sickness falls on him or his own children it will probably be traced to the
anger of the spirits at his behaviour.

Space does not allow any full analysis of religion in family life and in 754
the relationships of kinsmen and affines. Not only the ancestor cult but 771
witchcraft and magic are factors in them. A man's neglect of a wife or
his cruelty to her may, it is believed, lead to his falling sick through her
witchcraft and that of sympathetic neighbours; his relations with his
father-in-law are affected by the fear that if he offends him, his father-in-
law may, by magical means, kill his children, and so on.

Wider kinship groupings than the family gather at ceremonies and 614
are recognized in the rules against incest. But there are no clans; there
is no descent group continuous down the generations with a common
name and definite membership. Each individual family has its own
penumbra of kinsfolk, the effective kindred of a man and his son, or of
two half-brothers are not all the same, while each single person is especial-
ly related by respect, affection and mutual obligations to particular
kinsmen beyond his own family. Descent, as we have seen, is patrilineal 611
except in the case of illigitimate children. A man asked for his *ekekolo* 614
always recites first the names of his paternal forbears as far as he can [848]
remember. But if he is related through mother or grandmother to a
chief he usually volunteers this fact as part of his *ekekolo*; and questions
always elicit some knowledge of his mother's paternal kinsfolk and a
statement that "they are my *ekekolo* too." Descendants of a common
grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are to-day forbidden to marry, 582
and no case of infringment has come to my notice; descendants of a
common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry but, I am told,

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 come to it. But, on the other hand, everyone knows when a sacrifice is
778 taking place, and, in spite of the influence of missions, most people in the
793 pagan community believe in its efficacy.

782 Sacrifices are prompted either by actual misfortune or by prophecies
787 of it. The four sacrifices which I have seen myself were all stimulated by an actual shortage of food, and the hereditary priests have often told me that " now-a-days the chiefs do not listen to us until hunger comes." But, traditionally, sacrifices are said to have been usually prompted by prophecies of coming misfortune which was then averted by them. In each chiefdom the ruling great commoners, the hereditary priests and some private persons as well are believed to have the power of dreaming of misfortune (*okokunguluka*) before it comes. And the chiefs are said always to have listened to these dreams, formerly, and to have acted upon them.

778 Among the groves there is an order of seniority ; the older the grove
173 the more chiefdoms are concerned in the sacrifices there. And in Selya is the most important grove of all—Lubaga. All the chiefdoms of Selya, many of the Nyakyusa proper and even some of the neighbouring chiefdoms of the Mwamba are traditionally concerned in its sacrifices. Lubaga, the Nyakyusa say, is the grove of Lwembe, one of the original chiefs who came down the Livingstone Mountains from the East, eight or nine generations ago ; and from him all the present Selya chiefs are descended. The ancestor of the chiefs of the Nyakyusa proper was a brother of Lwembe ; and though the Kukwe and Mwamba chiefs are not related, yet those of the Mwamba who are nearest to Lubaga used to send cows there for sacrifice as well, because of the great reputation that this grove had.

622 Sacrifices are still made in the country of the chief of Lubaga
782 (Mwakisisya) for all the surrounding chiefdoms, but the full ritual has not been carried out for fourty years. Traditionally each chief of Lubaga was ritually installed into a position somewhat resembling that of Sir James Frazer's " Divine Kings," a position hedged with taboos, in which not only the sacrifices he made to Lwembe but his own health and fertility also were believed to be intimately connected with the prosperity of his own and neighbouring chiefdoms. But the present chief has never been properly installed, nor was his father before him. The sacrifices at Lubaga are believed to benefit not only the Nyakyusa but also the next
[173] tribe to the East, the Kinga, who live on the heights of the Livingstone Mountains ; for Lwembe, they say, was born a Kinga and moved down the mountains to Lubaga, taking the fertility of the soil with him. And

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

173 It is surprising to westerners, whose whole framework of reference is shaped by the conception of historical time, that the heroic myth is not more explicitly dated by the volcanic eruptions known to have taken place near Lubaga,[1] but to the Nyakyusa the sequence of events does not appear important except in so far as it determines seniority.

[177] Nowadays, with the changing form of the society, there develops a new mythology. Kyala is described by younger men as a creator, apart and distinct from any hero or ancestor, and they reject any suggestion that he was once on a footing with Lwembe and Kyungu. The more conservative fit Christian names into the heroic myth. One version goes as follows:

> Kyala had two sons, Kyala the elder who was Mbasi or Satano, and Kyala the younger who was Jesus. Kyala the younger made corn, and cattle, and fire, and cooked meat, and men ate; then Mbasi or Satano was furious because his younger brother was outdoing him, and killed him, and became the only one.

Here the traditional theme of the jealousy of the senior is dominant, but generally it is the power of the heroes over fertility, under the old dispensation, that is stressed.

[787] [177] Many people tell today of old prophecies concerning the coming of Europeans and of the triumph of a new religion. To the Christians these provide some bridge between the past and the present, for they interpret the words of pagan prophets as evidence of their foreknowledge of a truth they had not yet been taught.

[1] D. A. Harkin, 'The Sarabwe Lava Flow, Kiejo, Rungwe District', *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, September 1955, suggests that the most recent eruption in the district, that of Kiejo, took place about 1800, but this conclusion is based on the description of the eruption by *one* man, and the statement that his great grandfather witnessed it. That *some* ancestor of Andulile Kajigiri witnessed the eruption is likely, but had it taken place only three generations ago it might be expected that other families also would have had a tradition of the event. Kiejo is clearly visible from Mwaipopo's country and had the eruption taken place early in the nineteenth century either the chief Mwakagile (59) or his father Mwamukinga (43) must have observed it. Their descendants are emphatic that there is no tradition of their having done so, though it is commonly known that an eruption of Kiejo occurred in the distant past. [133]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(28) of Mwampondele (27) who had fled from the stool and had died. 643 [761]

The chosen man was secluded in a hut, lying on a litter with his priests, who kept him company (*ukumpanja*), just as a nubile girl is secluded and lies on a litter with her maids, or a young chief with his village headmen at his 'coming out'. Here is the account of Mwasesi, the oldest of the priests of Lubaga (a man of about seventy-five) who saw the installation of the last Lwembe, Mwakisisya (56).

A skin and a head-pad of leaves (*ingata*)[1] are brought by the Kinga. The priests catch the chief and set him on these; and then he cannot run away, it is taboo. I, Mwasesi, would sit on one side of him and my friend on the other, and force him to sit on them. Then we plead with him and say: 'You are the Lion, the Leopard, the Snake, the Banana, the Bean, the Millet, the Cow Pea, and the Lentil.' (Lentils are very important, you know, because it is with them that we celebrate the ritual, and with cow peas.) Then, after a time, he says: 'Leave me', and he goes to find the cow; this cow is just for the priests to eat that night. Then we take him into a certain house, cut leaves and spread them for a litter; and we keep him company there on the litter for some time. Then he sends messages to Mwakyusa (38), to Mwankyuse (33), and to Mwakisambe (30), and the Kinga [i.e. their descendants]. Each chief who is Lwembe's descendant sends commoner priests . . . they gather to induct him into Lubaga, he who was in the house. It is just like the 'coming out' ritual for a young chief. 643 788

The Lwembe in his own person, and in a lesser degree his 'sons' who are ordinary chiefs, are identified with the power of growth. Not only must the Lwembe not die with the breath still in his body, or with his hair and nails still upon it, but when he is chosen the priests test whether his reign will be long or short (perhaps whether they can permit him to live or not) by taking a little millet, putting it in a banana leaf and watching to see whether it sprouts or not. 'If it sprouts and grows at once he will live long; if it does not, he will be the priest [i.e. divine king] but will die very soon.' 643 [787]

Because the power of making rain, food, milk and children lay in the body of the Lwembe he was fearful and terrible. 'No one built close to him, it was taboo, no one touched Mwakisisya (56) . . . if he wished to make it rain he would make it rain all 643 784

[1] The Kinga priests spoke of a cloth to wear and a stool and an axe which were kept in the inner part of the hut of the Lwembe's great wife and which no man, save a priest of Lubaga, might see.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[643] [793] and come home 'very thin', but just when this happened was not clear.

We turn now to the account of the three sacrifices witnessed at Lubaga which illustrates (*a*) the occasions of celebration, (*b*) the procedure, and (*c*) the tensions between the participants. In the ritual described on pp. 35-8, Mwakilima (111) complained that most of the chiefs of Selya did not even recognize his ritual supremacy by sending cattle to kill at Lubaga, but Kasitile the priest retorted that Mwakilima himself, in his capacity as a chief, was slow to provide the cattle for sacrifice required by his own priests.

In July 1935, two Kinga priests, Kikungubeja and Nsyanigwa, came from the Kinga chief Mwakalukwa to Lubaga, with an offering of hoes. A bull, provided by Mwakilima (111) as chief of Lwembe's line, was then killed beside a tree planted at the 'coming out' of Mwakisisya (56), the last Lwembe, on the site on which the house of his second wife, Kitega, was built, and the meat was thrown into the old banana grove close by. At the end of September the same two priests returned (each accompanied by a grandson) bringing bamboo beer and 10*s*. and a hoe with which to buy a bull to sacrifice again, for the Kinga were suffering [787] hunger and a prophet in their country had gone into a trance and prophesied cold, disease, and hunger, and urged the chiefs to pray. No fault had brought the hunger, they said, but 'the shades wish a cow. The shades say: "Formerly we ate much, now you do not kill cows for us, indeed we wish to eat. . . ." Therefore much hunger affects our country. It is on this account that we Kinga come with a bull and hoes. When the blood of the sacrifice soaks into the earth then the shades are satisfied, and they also receive the meat from the upper foreleg (*ijammapa*).'[1]

The initiative came from the Kinga who were suffering most severely, but the Nyakyusa were also complaining of scarcity. [731] The weather was very hot and dry and Mwakilima (108) remarked to Kasitile (86) the priest, who had come up to Lubaga for the sacrifice: 'You have killed us with this sun.' He was referring to the unusually small yield of early maize and beans which had been scorched by the drought. Kasitile replied: 'No, all of us [are responsible], the sun has hated us.' Both men smiled.

Five days after the Kinga reached Lubaga (28th September 1955) the sacrifice was offered up. The men concerned gathered in

[1] The sacred cut. cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*, p. 96.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 children, not the married ones with wives. Kissoule and I both
796 have our children anointed now.'
[783] This ritual was not complete because Mwanjala shirked the
[643] crucial act of remaining in the grove until a python licked him.
793 The Kinga priests were continually nagging at the Nyakyusa for
177 their failure to provide an acceptable Lwembe, but it is doubtful whether in 1935 Mwanjala II would have been acceptable to any of them since he was old and ailing. It was Mwakilima (111) that men wanted and he steadily refused to be installed.

[787] The next ritual observed at Lubaga was in March 1937. An ordinary commoner of Selya (not a priest) named Kijaja had been prophesying repeatedly: 'I do not sleep, you will not eat the crops you hoe if you do not go to Lubaga.' He was taken to his village headman and thence to the chief Mwaihojo (147) who finally, two years after he had begun prophesying, agreed to find a bull. Word then came to Kasitile (86) who notified the commoner priests of chief Mwaipopo (116) and sent a message to the priests of Lubaga. Kasitile (86), together with three other priests of Selya (Mwalukuta, Nyama, Mwamakunda) and Godfrey Wilson, set off early one morning from Kasitile's house to take the bull (brown streaked with black, called *ingombe isolola*) to Lubaga. On the way they called in at Munyoso's house, where the Kinga stop on their journey to pour a libation of beer (*vide supra*, p. 27). Kasitile asked Munyoso, 'Shall the bull enter?' and he replied, 'Yes, let it come into the house', so it was tied up inside while the party talked with Munyoso. He was sick and did not want to accompany them. The others pressed him, and at first he refused. Whereupon Mwalukuta said: 'Very well, then, we are at your place, let the bull return and we will go another day', in other words, refusing to go without him. 'No, that is taboo,' said
[784] Kasitile, 'once the bull has faced towards Lubaga and entered a house here it is taboo for it to turn back. The shades will be angry.' And so Munyoso went with them.

On the way they passed a group of men hoeing hard. One of them called out: 'Where are you going with that bull? Where are you off enjoying yourselves?' 'Ah, you fellows,' answered Kasitile, 'do you ask where we are going? We visit where our fathers always did.' They understood at once. 'Oh thank you, thank you,' they cried. 'You,' went on Kasitile, 'do you call that work? Are you growing your own food? No, you lie still and eat without effort. It is *we* who exert ourselves for you' (implying

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 too hard to dig graves in'. They and their successors were all
778 buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves
[766] trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. . . . We traced sixteen groves in the plain surrounding Mbande and the nobles who pointed them out remembered participating in celebrations at all except that of the last Kyungu. The ruling Kyungu and the spirits of his
[769] dead predecessors were believed to form one divine company, the anger of any one of whom had terrible effects, and both living and dead were placated with offerings.

778 In time of drought the nobles of Ngonde would go to a diviner to inquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the
● 787 names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would
782 tell them that it was so and so. They would inform the living Kyungu and he would give them a bull or a sheep, together with
821 some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own
643 house, brought by his people as tribute. And he would give them some flour and cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove and build a miniature hut. Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fasten some of the pieces on to the hut in the grove—an action they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And finally, they would pour out some of the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a hut and make an offering in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

643 But occasionally, if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the
688 Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself
787 who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any
689 of them: 'No . . . no.' And at length he would tell them that it was the living Kyungu who was angry because so-and-so had in-
821 sulted him. Then there would be no sacrifice at the grove at all, but the nobles of Ngonde would go to the one who had insulted the Kyungu and charge him with it, asking him what he meant by thus killing them all, would not the whole land starve? And
643 so the wrongdoer would take a cow to the Kyungu who, there-
821 upon, would address the nobles of Ngonde, saying: 'If it was my

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been someone [of the dead Kyungus] whom you forgot to ask about.' 'And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again.' If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry, and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would, and then the diviner would tell them that it was so-and-so (one of the dead Kyungus) and they would go and sacrifice in his grove.

643 [821] [787]

Thus to insult Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. An 'insult' might mean any neglect of the obligations of the chiefs and nobles and commoners of the plain to their lord.

[687] [688]

The people of Ngonde hoed large fields as tribute to the Kyungu and if they failed to do so 'he grew angry and poured all the water out of the pot in which he kept his rain stones' (*vide infra*, p. 114) and 'the sky dried up'. Then the chiefs called their men to hoe. . . . 'They hoed and hoed and hoed and their wives planted, then the rain came in a torrent. . . . Kyungu created much rain.'

[651] [789]

Or if an elephant hunter neglected to send the Kyungu one of the tusks of any elephant he killed he would not kill another. 'The country beneath was angry . . . the shades of the dead Kyungus . . . they were angry saying: "Why do you stint our child?" '

[651] [769]

The rainfall in the Ngonde plain is less than half what it is in the Nyakyusa valley and anxiety about rainfall was constantly shown in the communal rituals; elephant hunting was also a matter of concern in a way in which it was not among the Nyakyusa and this too is reflected in rituals; but there was also the preoccupation with health and fertility, as in the prayers at Lubaga. In the groves circling Mbande the nobles prayed: 'May the sterile bear children, may the cattle and fowls increase, may the children sleep and not cry at night, may the witches not injure anyone.' And as we shall see, it was health and fertility that men had in mind when they cleared out the ashes each year after the break of the rains.

643 132 771 788 [782]

Towards Christmas time, when the first maize and the first

769 796

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

future boundary between the two halves of the chiefdom, where it will split the next generation. They serve as beacons[1] and are cited as evidence both of the 'coming out' and of the division of land in any later dispute. At the same time the trees are symbols of chieftainship and with their growth the success of the reign is mystically linked. According to one account, 'four headmen fetch the cuttings and the young chief stands between them (*vide plate* 6) and tells the trees to grow well, and the others say: "We are planting you likewise, we are at the ritual of establishing a new chieftainship, you are a symbol for our chief, spread branches that our young headmen and other people may rest in your shade." ' A doctor assists at the planting, burying at the roots a live white sheep and medicines, which, it is said, later turn into the lions or leopards which protect the trees from the impious (*vide infra*, p. 58); and he sweeps beneath the trees, a symbol of what the senior headman must do in future, for it is his duty to 'watch over the trees'. In Nyakyusa thought, village headmen are an integral part of chieftainship—it cannot exist without them—and the trees symbolize *both* the chief and his lady and the two senior headmen. The same informant (well known as a doctor for the 'coming out') told us: 'It means we are planting the chief and his lady; *umpandapanda* is the herd to herd *indola*, which is the more important. *Umpandapanda* is the woman, it may dry up, but *ulupando* (*indola*) never does; it is the chief, it is familiars (*ulupege*). but *umpandapanda* is not', and a moment or two later, 'the *ulupando* is the senior village headman, *umpandapanda* is the junior headman'. The strength of the chief is associated with the growth of the trees. If these trees go dry the reign will not be successful, the chief will be defeated in war. If they flourish and grow the reign will be successful, the chief is a ruler. The *indola* planted for Mwaijonga (82) is shown proudly by his great-grandson, and Mwambete (162) who had a long reign and an enormous family boasted of the size of his *umpandapanda*—'a great spreading tree'. Ideally the young chief should, in due course, sit in the shade of his *indola* with his headmen, to settle disputes.

After the trees are planted the young men build their senior headman's house and the doctor sets up his hearth bricks, burying medicine beneath them also. The marriage of the chief follows.[2]

[1] cf. D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-Lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, v, IV (1895), p. 117.

[2] According to most accounts, but *vide infra*, p. 56.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

married. Thus, yet another bond is forged between chief and headman, for he who provides marriage cattle is 'father' to him who marries, and the chief's wives acknowledge this by avoiding the village headmen of the senior generation as they do their father-in-law. Once the chief's ritual marriage is complete the sex taboo is lifted and such of his men as are already married are joined by their wives. In theory, though not nowadays in practice, the taboo is observed until the marriage of the chief. 643 583 [834]

All through the ritual of the 'coming out' the idea of a new beginning is expressed—a new site for the villages, new houses, new fire, new power for the young men. The events of this ritual, the seclusion, the lying on a litter, the prohibition on washing, washing with medicines in the doorway of the hut, the admonition, are directly parallel to the events of the rituals of death and puberty which, we have argued in a previous book,[1] are dramatizations of death and rebirth. There seems little doubt that the 'coming out' is yet another celebration of this theme. The young men enter an enclosed house—that of the senior's mother—and 'come out' (*ukusoka*) renewed as a child 'comes out' (*ukusoka*) of the mother's womb. No Nyakyusa informant volunteered such an interpretation, but, when it was suggested, it was eagerly accepted as expressing the real meaning of 'coming out'. 643 561 796 181

(*b*) THE CHIEF'S MEDICINES

Reference has already been made to medicines used by chiefs and by village headmen at the 'coming out' and we must now examine them more closely. The great medicines of chieftainship are *ifingila* and their function is to create *amanga*, i.e. spiritual power, and *ubusisya*, i.e. dignity, majesty, in order to make the chief fearful 'so that men obey him'. The medicines are comparable to robes of office for they are designed to give their user assurance and fill the commonality with awe. The Nyakyusa also think that chiefs and headmen should be 'heavy' with 'pythons in their bellies' which give them the power to see and fight witches. Without such a 'python' a chief or village headman cannot fulfil his duty of 'watching over the country by day and by night' and if a man is not born with one he may develop it through the proper use of medicines. This notion has been examined elsewhere.[2] The *ifingila* medicines are also thought to give courage and ferocity (*ubugasi*) in war, with luck in seizing enemy 643 778 [787] [754]

[1] *op. cit.*, p. 205. [2] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 97-102.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

replied: 'Why does he deny it? He told me once: "I have a thing which kills people!"' Then, turning to the man: 'Go and fetch it out into the light.' Mandala went and we heard that he brought out another medicine, not the one asked for, he brought it to the headmen and Mwaipopo. Mwaipopo (who, being a chief, knew *inyifwila*) rejected the one Mandala brought saying: 'This is not it.' Then Mandala brought out another and again the chief rejected it saying: 'This is not the one we want.' Then he brought out a little bag made of bark-cloth. They sought a doctor to clear it out. All this happened in secret; we heard of it but did not see it. But in Court Mwaipopo turned Mandala out of his country 'because he had admitted that he was wicked', and Mwaipopo reminded the other chiefs in Court of a previous case of a man in Mwangomo's country who had used this medicine.

Inyifwila is made out of a python 'as thick as a man's thigh' which has been killed by crawling over razors. In Ngonde we were told:

> A certain snake they call *ngone* is killed in the hills to the west. They build a hut, closed, with a man inside ringing a cow bell and razors all over the roof. The snake comes and crawls over the roof, trying to get in and so dies. Then the doctors come to 'close it up'. When they have done so they cut it up for medicine—*inyifwila*; some is brought to Kyungu direct . . . some is taken to the doctors, and it is the doctors who give it to the chief.

A similar story was told in BuNyakyusa but they got their *inyifwila* from the Sangu and Hehe, to the north and east, not from the west, and in their account the trap was baited with a goat, not a man, and it was the blood of the python (*isota*) shed on the surrounding grass and on the trap itself which was used for medicine. To test the medicine the doctors gave a little to a chicken; if the chicken died the medicine was satisfactory; and the remains of the chicken were burnt and the ashes used as tested *inyifwila*.

'That snake is awful (*nisya fijo*), no one approaches to kill it. No! If it were speared everyone would die.' And because the python which is so terrible is thought to be linked with the rainbow it, too, is disliked. 'We fear the rainbow very much, we say it appears when a python looks up to the sky; if we are near a river we run from it for pythons live near rivers. . . . No, we are not mistaken, it is so.' The essential quality of the python is *ubusisya* (fearfulness, majesty, dignity) and this is what is required

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

play one village against another and go to sleep in that section of the country which supports him, but he dare not anger all his headmen. In the same way a village headman dare not anger the main body of his men. In short, public opinion is an effective sanction because those in authority believe that the disapproval of their fellows may bring a fever or paralysis upon them. One of our Christian informants was insistent that, were it not for the belief in the 'breath of men', pagan chiefs and headmen would act tyrannically. 643 778 622

The situations in which a chief or headman fears the breath of men are very varied. We have already referred to the chief who thought his illness was due to his refusal to hold the 'coming out' for his sons when advised to do so.[1] Mwaipopo, before whose court a very bitter land dispute between two of his villages had been brought, refused to give judgement and was careful to sleep in the village that had possession of the land, and therefore less cause for anger.[2] Kasitile, the hereditary priest of the chief's lineage who counted as 'a chief' as opposed to 'a commoner', thought he had angered the village headmen of his generation (who had become priests) by not providing meat for them (*vide infra*, p. 125). [754]

The headmen are responsible for the health of their chief and it is they who go to consult an oracle if he is ill and take him to a doctor. Mwankuga II (151), heir to Mwaipopo's chiefdom, had not begotten a son by any of the wives he inherited from his elder brother who had died. His village headmen[3] went to consult an oracle and were told that it was the wrath (*imindu*) of his father; so they reported the matter to Mwaipopo, who sent a junior kinsman to consult another oracle. The diagnosis was confirmed and Mwaipopo gathered his younger brothers and prayed and told the shades that he had no quarrel with his kinsmen. Then he told the village headmen to take Mwankuga to a doctor for treatment, but this they did not do, so that Mwankuga went to consult a doctor on his own. According to Kasitile it was because the headmen had not taken Mwankuga that the medicine did not work. 'They should take him to the doctor and be present in dreams, to watch over him in dreams.' What the headmen were angry about was not revealed—there was no obvious cause. [842] [753] [787] [782]

[1] *op. cit.*, pp. 134-5. [2] *op. cit.*, pp. 188-90.

[3] Mwankuga I who died had 'come out' before Mwankuga II inherited from him, but Mwaipopo (116) continued to rule as chief and draw a Government salary.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

may nullify any ritual, but often it is not strong enough to overcome the fissiparous tendencies of the lineage. In theory a celebration at the grove of a senior should precede that at the grove of a junior and sacrifices at Lubaga would be followed by sacrifices at the groves of the 'sons of Lwembe' in order of seniority, but this does not happen in practice nowadays and we doubt whether it ever did, since a hierarchy was not organized and maintained by a central authority as in Ngonde. In 1935 a celebration at the grove of Mwaijonga (82) preceded one at the grove of his great-grandfather Mwakisambwe (30) by a month, as we shall see.

Sacrifices are made when a drought or flood occurs, or a plague of locusts, or an epidemic among men or cattle; when fishing is poor in the chiefdoms of the plain, or war is imminent. They occur most often during the 'winter' in the hills, when a malaria-sodden people feel the chill of damp mists and cool south winds, and in October, just before the break of the rains, when the country is parched; but they are not confined to these periods. In theory the village headmen and the priests who 'watch over the country' foresee *coming* misfortune in dreams, and avert it by making the appropriate sacrifices. And they are helped by ordinary people who are dreaming repeatedly or falling into a trance or fit, and prophesying evil and jabbering of 'a black cow, a black cow' or some other appurtenance of sacrifice. But in practice the prophecies generally occur when there is hunger or plague in the land, or an omen (such as a python or a ground hornbill behaving oddly) has been seen.

The dreamers are *abasololi* or *abakunguluka*, and, as these names indicate, they are believed to have descended into the land of the shades. *Ukusoloka*[1] means to go down into something, like the roots of a tree into the earth, and *ukukungula ingungula* means to pluck a banana flower which (as was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*) is a symbol for a corpse and is buried; so the *abakunguluka* are those who have been buried in the earth. '*Abakunguluka* go to the land of the shades and return. . . . An *unkunguluka* plucks up the "blessed grass" (*ikisajelo*) in his swept courtyard and goes beneath and sees.[2] . . . He goes down into the earth beneath and takes the chief to the land of the shades when he dies, and he also sees the witches. . . .' More rarely, the *unsololi* or *unkunguluka* is

[1] *Ukusoloka*—a breach presentation, the implication being that the infant's head is in *lusuka*, but children born in this way are not necessarily prophets.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 77, 212.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

791 said just to become aware of future events without any dream.
787 *Abakunguluka* are distinguished from those who suffer from fits or fall into trances (*abakom' amalago*), but a woman in a trance may also prophesy and induce the chief and priests to celebrate a ritual, for it is thought that she too is in communication with the shades. Men say 'The shade has entered her' or 'Kyala catches hold of her that she may speak of the matter'. This type of prophecy is something new among the Nyakyusa. Mwandisi (107) told us that 'it [177] did not exist in BuKinga whence we came', but had been introduced from the south, through Ngonde, and it is mainly confined to women, whereas the *abakunguluka* are men.

787 There are many tales of famous prophecies. Nsamba (90) claimed that his father (63) foretold that 'there will come a white thing on the Lake, and it will land on the shore. That will be the man who will make peace', and Mwakalinga (142) who died fighting the Germans is said to have foretold his own death.[1]

Dreams and revelations of the possessed concerning public matters are reported to the local village headman and referred to the other headmen and priests, and a prophecy is accepted as valid only after formal discussion. As we shall see, Kasitile was sceptical about the revelations of one man who was repeatedly 'possessed', perhaps because he threatened to become a rival in interpreting public misfortune. If there is doubt, suspicions are confirmed or problems elucidated, by divination.

769 When they judged a sacrifice necessary the village headman and priests went to their chief saying, 'We do not sleep', and it was his
782 obligation to secure an animal for sacrifice. He might provide it out of his own herd, but very often the duty of 'finding' sacrificial cattle was delegated to a junior line—the ruling chief gave cattle to a younger brother charging him and his heirs with the function of providing sacrificial cattle when necessary. Today [177] all the chiefs are reluctant to expend cattle on rituals whose [643] validity is questioned, and there is often friction between the senior and junior lines over who should 'find' the cow or bull required. Their reluctance is illustrated by the following passage from Godfrey Wilson's diary:

Mwaya (on the lake shore): 22/12/34

It is still stormy; there has been wind and heavy rain for four days. People are saying: 'We are hungry. It is very bad. We need light rain

[1] According to Mr. Harkin's informant the Sarabwe eruption was foretold a year before it occurred. *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, 40 (1955), p. 21.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

chief, brought a bundle of firewood. Mwalukuta I was not 769
expected to enter the grove and he went off soon. His brother and 782
Nyama took a little basket of maize and millet. The chiefs stayed on the edge of the grove and the three commoners entered alone. Mwalukuta II and Nyama built a little hut five feet from the 'grave' with the saplings brought by Nyama's mother. 'We put firewood and food and a little calabash which we have prepared in it, it's for the shades.' The calabash contained millet, maize, pumpkin seeds, ground nuts, and cow peas; and a stem of bananas was put beside it. Mwalukuta swept the 'grave' which was marked by a few small trees, and Mwakasukula killed the cow, which must lie facing east to BuKinga. Mwalukuta spoke the invocation: 'Thou Mwakisambwe (50) . . . Mwakihaba (45) has gone back, but Mwamukinga (44) is here still. . . . Mwakihaba says, "I am no longer a relative, I have gone out." ' Then they took the sacred meat from the forelegs of the cow: that from the right leg was buried near the 'grave', that from the left by an *skuju* tree (a species of *ficus*) forty paces away. The priests ate some roasted meat and intestines with bananas, and the rest of the meat was divided between them and the chiefs. The head went to Nyama's house and was kept for three nights. The priests explained that they are forbidden to bathe for three days or lie with their wives, but on the fourth day they eat the head and after that they bathe and resume married life. [515] [834]

Eighteen days after the sacrifice Mwalukuta went to look and found the stem of bananas which had been left in the little hut had ripened, and the earth on the grave had been disturbed. This was a good omen. But later his legs began to trouble him—he could scarcely walk—and it was said that certain priests who should have been called to the ritual had not been summoned and were angry and had cursed him. He fled to a distance and sought a bull to kill for his fellows. [787] [783]

(*d*) SACRIFICE AT KABALE

The form of sacrifice among the Kukwe is very similar. We never saw a sacrifice at Kabale—our friends assured us that they had been dropped before 1935—but a description by two of the leading priests of the grove of Kabale demonstrates the similarity between the rituals there and in Selya. The only points of difference were that the Kukwe sacrificed fowls as well as cattle, and granddaughters shared the sacred food with grandsons.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VII

CLEANSING THE COUNTRY

769 SACRIFICES to the heroes and the shades of the chiefs are holy and private—only a handful of priests and chiefs may enter the groves and the details of the rituals are not discussed with other people. But there are other celebrations in which everyone 796 participates; these are the rituals for cleansing the community— 783 'throwing out the rubbish' (*ukujala ikikungu*)—more specifically the *ashes* from all the hearths.

In Ngonde the cleansing is organized for the whole kingdom, from Mbande, but among the Nyakyusa each chiefdom acts independently. Traditionally, we were told, the *ukujala ikikungu* was an annual celebration, observed at the 'new year', after the break of the rains, but it could also take place if there were much sickness in the country, or plague, or prophecies of evil to come. It was celebrated (in an attenuated form and by a section of the community only) in Ngonde in July 1937, to cleanse the country of a plague of rats, and in September of the same year a somewhat similar ritual was performed in Porokoto's chiefdom because a [787] fearful omen had been seen—a ground hornbill had eaten a [778] chicken. The annual celebrations had been dropped both in Ngonde and BuNyakyusa before 1935.

As has been shown in the *Rituals of Kinship* the Nyakyusa believe [769] that too close an association with the shades is dangerous; all the [755] family rituals are designed to drive them away, to drive them out of the bodies of the mourners, or menstruating girls, or parents of twins; and the purpose of 'throwing out the ashes' in all the homesteads is essentially the same. The shades 'come to warm 783 themselves' at the hearths of their descendants, they 'bring sickness [775] to the hearths' and so the old ashes are cleared out and new fire is lighted. The phrase *ukujala ikikungu* is used in Ngonde for clearing out the litter (*ulufumbe*) after a burial, or an initiation ritual, and for shaving after a ritual, as well as for clearing the ashes from all the hearths in the country.

[754] It is also thought that domestic fires are contaminated by [775] witches who may have cooked the human flesh they steal over their victims' own fires. In Ngonde it was the connexion between

[p. 102]

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F2617 Ngonde F2617
Nyakyusa

the shades and the hearths which was strewed; in Porokoro's country people talked mostly of the witches; but it seemed clear that both conceptions were present when men murmured: 'The hearth bricks are bad' (*amafiga mabibi*) and they sought to cleanse them by clearing out the old fire and lighting new. 'To clear out the ashes means they take away all that dirt, the dirt which the witches have brought and the shades; it is the cause of illness.' When witches are thought to be active there is also a public complaint, and a public warning is given 'to whom it may concern' to desist.[1] This occurred in the ritual after the ground hornbill had eaten the chicken. Above all, men must admit their anger to one another: 'they fight that the homesteads may be peaceful'. The theme so familiar in Nyakyusa rituals—that quarrels must be confessed if they are to be composed—recurs yet again. Though we distinguish the rituals for 'cleansing the country' from sacrifices, on the ground that the whole community participates in the 'cleansing' while the sacrifice is esoteric, the two are closely linked, and a sacrifice commonly precedes or follows the cleansing. We turn now to the detailed accounts of celebrations for 'cleansing' in Ngonde and among the Kukwe.

(c) THE RATS

In Ngonde they used to clear out the ashes at the new year, at the first hoeing (in December) after 'the break of the rains'. They feared that death and disease would spread through the land if they continued living with the old fire, that the shades in the earth, both the shades of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry. Let them drive the shades away and live in peace. They always remembered to do so each new year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually, they never forgot. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to clear out the ashes; and then they would live in peace. And at other times, too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the ashes again. 'It is to drive away the shade with the sickness that he brings. We throw out the ashes and firebrands because he has come to warm himself over the fire in our houses, we throw out the pots and winnowing baskets because he has come to see us eating; let him go there (to the grave) and eat what he asked for—we say the shades ask for food—let him eat here, perhaps a sheep. We say the shades bring sickness to the fire, hence we throw out the ashes and make new fire with a drill.'

The nobles of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 179-79.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 the order to clear out the ashes; messages were sent to the great
796 chiefs and the senior territorial nobles of the plain, and they told
[443] their juniors. A sacrifice was made in one of the sacred groves of the Kyungus and all fires in the whole Ngonde plain were put out. And then

> all the chiefs from every country near Mbande and the nobles and all the village headmen and all the ordinary men and women, too, went to Kyimbwe where we threw away the sickness of all the country.

At Kyimbwe, which is the crossroads in the bush, they threw away the ashes of their old fires, and some of the pots and baskets in which food is served; while those few people who could not get to Kyimbwe threw them away from their own houses on the same day as the others. At Kyimbwe new fire was made with a
[372] fire-drill by the nobles of Ngonde who

> ran with it without looking back and the people danced alongside them and speared one another! . . . They said, 'Let us dance, let us fight that the homesteads may be peaceful'. . . . 'Let us throw out the ashes that death may leave the homesteads and they be at peace.' It is to bring out war from within (*ulusuye*).

The symbolism is the same as in the rituals of kinship when kinsmen gather to admit their quarrels and press one another to speak out, so that they may cleanse themselves of anger.

The new fire was distributed to the whole plain in order. Great chiefs and senior nobles took it first and passed it to their juniors, chiefs passed to village headmen, and in each group the common people got it from their own ruling noble or their own village headman.

In July 1937, while we were visiting Ngonde, there was a
[734] plague of rats[1] which threatened the food supply, and Bungulu,
[136] the wife of a chief and well known as a prophetess, went into a
[791] trance and revealed that the rats were caused by the anger of the
[787] previous Kyungu and could be got rid of only by a ritual 'throwing out the rubbish' and sacrifice. Her husband reported the matter to Mulwa, the premier noble of Ngonde, to whom the present Kyungu, Peter—at one time a Church member—had long since handed over all responsibility for communal rituals. Mulwa called four of the leading chiefs who were pagan and a number of

[1] Nothing new in Ngonde. Lord (then Captain) Lugard suffered from them in 1888: F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), vol. i, p. 127. In 1937 the country swarmed with rats: in our own camp we killed 70 to 100 each night.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

commoners, and they went together to the grove of Mwangalaba, the last Kyungu (elder brother of Peter), with a white hen and sacrificed it there, and prayed saying: 783 796

Mwangalaba go thou to Mwakasungula your father and let him go to Mwangonde, and he to Mwagemo and he to Kiposa and he to Mpeta and he to Mwendemange and he to Kyabala and he to Syola and he to the Kyungu who lived at Mano and he to Ngulube (9) and Lyambilo (12). May he stand by us, may we sleep, may the rats disappear and illness also, may we sleep. Then when we had finished the invocation [I quote Mulwa] we extinguished the fires in all our houses; in the houses of the chiefs, and of Kyungu's great wife Namwilan'ombe, and of us commoners, we threw water on the ashes, but each took some ash, and a firebrand to the crossroads at Kyimbwe where we collected them all and left them to rot; there we threw away the rats saying: 'Let them fly away to Ngulube (9), let them fly away with the wind, let us sleep.' Then we ran to the pasture land to make new fire with a drill. We all took fire there in the bush, each a firebrand and lighted new fires in our own houses and in the house of the Kyungu, that is of his great wife. We arranged it with our wife Namwilan'ombe, because Kyungu had said 'Work with your husbands there'.

'Throwing away the rats' consisted in enclosing a live rat in two winnowing baskets, opening them at Kyimbwe, and flourishing them first in one direction and then in another, releasing the rat in the process. This had been specifically ordered by Bungulu, the prophetess.

(b) THE GROUND HORNBILL

In the country of Porokoto (49 K) there was much illness and many deaths (some, at least, from typhoid) during the dry season of 1937, and when a ground hornbill—always a bird of ill-omen among the Nyakyusa—mysteriously attacked a chicken in Syokela village, everyone was horrified. Mwamunda, a village headman, explained what had happened: [164] [165] 787 [825]

The headman of Syokela came with two men to Bwilile (senior village headman of his side) and said: 'Tell the chief that a ground hornbill has eaten a fowl at our place. We ask what this means. And also we do not sleep, we are ill.' Then Bwilile told me and we went together to the chief who said: 'I have heard, let us discuss it.' So we gathered at Nsyani's and the headman of Syokela stood up and said: 'My fathers, and friends, and children, and you chiefs, we have come to ask: have you ever before heard of a ground hornbill eating a fowl? (With an air

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 of intense questioning.) We have not, but perhaps you have?' Then we all denied having heard of such a thing; we had no idea what the portent meant and said: 'Let us consult an oracle.' The chief agreed. . . . Then men went to the doctor and the oracle said: 'It is because you have not celebrated at Mwakan'ata's (90 K) place since his death;[1] you must kill a cow and clear the grass at his place. This [775] ground hornbill is your father Mwakan'ata; seek a cow and celebrate and pray, then you will see what will happen.' They told the chief this and he said: 'Must I find a cow then?' But it is we village headmen 783 who have done wrong because some of us said: 'What's a cow for? 796 Let us just pray; why should we throw away a cow?' Others of us said: 'Yes, let a cow be found', but the chief listened to those who opposed killing a cow. So we went and prayed without eating anything.

The ritual was put off three times; the first time the people were summoned men of one village had not come; the second time men of another; the third time a headman was missing and also the women had not been called. Finally, on the morning of 28th September, men and women and children gathered on the pasture land just beyond Ilolo village (where we lived). The men and boys sat, with their headmen, by villages, each forming a segment of the great circle round the chief, while the women all crowded together some distance behind him. . . . 'We all go, except the Christians.'

The chief Porokoto, rather nervous in his manner, stood up and addressed the company after one of the headmen had said pointedly: 'We are all women, a man stands in the middle, it is he who speaks.' For women never pray, blowing out water, and commoners in this situation do not pray, only the chief.

Porokoto: The reason I have called you together is this: there is no peace in the country; there is much cold, many people are shivering with fever, let us drink water and drive away Kyala. This concerns all the homesteads; the cold [i.e. fever] is finishing us. What do you say Mwamunda? [to the headman].
Mwamunda: Thank you! We rejoice that you chiefs have remembered. May we sleep well, may there not be illness, may the cold pass, may the children grow well, and all the crops. Indeed we are all in great trouble. Kyala help us, may we be pure (*tajebele*)!

Then the chief called on one village headman after another to speak; and his elder brother, Mwasalemba, also spoke.

[1] Porokoto was already sceptical of pagan ritual and has since become a Christian.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

MWAFULA: Indeed, may the illness not be great, may the children not cry by night, may the cattle increase, and the fields be fertile, and the fowls also increase. May children sleep. Our fathers always confessed in the house. Now we are shocked at what is happening. 783 796

MWANTIMWA: We say thank you, chiefs, you do not forget us. Let the sickness pass and go away, may the cattle sleep, and you women, may the children grow. May the fields be fertile; may there not be envy of one another. We are sorry because there is much illness. Our fathers say 'Why have the chiefs turned round?'

MWAMULENGA: Chief, we beg you, we thank you, indeed there is sickness. Is there anyone who says in their quarter there is much sickness (more than elsewhere)? Do we say something about sickness?

MWAMUNDA: No, Mwampiki, all of us who have come here are sick.

KILONGO: Yes, we are all rotting.

Mwaikambo commenting on this explained:

If there is sickness one may admit and say, 'It is I, I was angry on account of such and such.' Yes, indeed, they confess openly, because he who sees in his belly (=knows in his heart) that 'It is I who have done this' trembles when his fellows speak many words thinking, 'Perhaps they have seen me.' So he confesses. When he confesses he escapes, they only grumble at him saying, 'Don't do it again.' If someone admits the others say, 'It is he, but we have punished him.' I think that even in the old days he was not driven out, because they hope that, if he has confessed, the illness he caused will go away.

MWAAALEMBA: Have you ever before heard of a hornbill eating a hen? We are horrified. Even the prophets did not speak of such an event. [787]

ANOTHER: Indeed, it has never before happened, we are glad that our chiefs have taken the initiative with these words.

ANOTHER: For this custom is old, it began long ago in the time of our fathers. It is the custom to give hope in the homesteads, that we may grow strong.

MWAMPIKI: Always, if the chief is ill it is said, 'Where are you, oh people?' All the homesteads watch over the chief when he is ill. [Mwaikambo commenting: It is said that people have the work of watching over their chief that no one may bewitch him, hence when he is ill they reproach people saying: 'Where are you?' Let the old customs be observed now (implying that they have left all the old customs and hence there is much sickness in the country).] [754] [177]

ANOTHER: There are some who say 'Let so-and-so die that I may move into his homestead. Let envy which brings sickness also go away.'

ANOTHER: If sickness appears let us tell the chief that we may all express astonishment together, asking where the illness has come from, then it will be light, if we all grumble together. [Mwaikambo commenting: [753]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

833 and women, it is procreative power, fertility. That power is
783 constantly expelled from the belly but returns again and by that
755 expulsion and return men live.

There was a great deal of criticism from the conservatives
177 because no sacrifice had been made.

787 MWAMUNDA: Now people are talking much saying, 'We have abandoned that which they did formerly, we are doing something else.' People have many dreams (gesture head on hand as if heavy with anxiety), many say: 'I have dreamed of the dead, they told me to sacrifice a cow, to pray, we did not pray properly, that is useless, it will not effect anything.' So we have told the chief saying: 'Let us kill a cow at the grave of Mwakan'ata,' he has agreed, but the cow has not yet
783 come.

Formerly, on the night following the day of the prayer we should
796 have eaten the sacrificial cow, the chief would have killed two cows and the headmen from different villages would have come and eaten by night, and drunk beer provided by the chief, in the house of the senior wife of the chief. . . . They ate a little meat, raw, the rest they roasted. Then in the morning, when they had eaten and were satisfied, they would go to clear out the house, to throw out the ashes, and to
[372] pray, as we prayed now, and to make new fire by friction in the pasture land. The village headman made fire with medicine which the chief gave him, the name of the medicine is Mbamba, it's a tree. To throw out the ashes means to clear out all the filth, the filth which the
[754] witches and the shades have brought to us—the filth that is sickness. . . .
[775] Do not the witches eat meat at the fire? Human flesh? Some roast at your fires your bodies which they have seized, some go home with the human flesh to their own fires, hence comes the filth of the ashes. The village headmen eat the sacrificial meat at night with the shades, they celebrate for them with the blood which goes beneath. . . .

If the chief has done something wrong, then those above [i.e. the village headmen] pray to those beneath saying, 'Let us help one another to punish him who has strayed, but we do not wish that he
[754] should die, let him be ill; perhaps then he will seek something to nourish us.' Again the night before the throwing out of the ashes they confess their anger and say: 'You beneath, this our child (the chief) has remembered us, there is no accusation against him now, may sickness go away from the country, and children sleep, let us all sleep and the cows calve. We greet those beneath.' In my childhood I was repeatedly surprised at night when my father came in, he had a little parcel of meat. 'Where have you been?' I asked. 'We have been praying.' But since I grew up and became a village headman, and was recorded as such [by the administration] we have never seen sacrificial meat.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

793
142
291

106. KASITILE THE PRIEST

516
787

106. DIVINATION WITH PORRIDGE

[Facing p. 118]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 rain started again and it rained for an hour during the division of the meat; then again it lessened and stopped.

A showery and varied day was turned to account by Kasitile. The way he did it was to keep quite silent about the rain and about the insult, but let the others talk. No one directly connected the rain with him in his presence, but they talked about how heavy it was, now and again. If there is too much or too little rain, or Kasitile is known to be angry the weather is noticed and connected with him. The conclusion that Kasitile sometimes deliberately played up to the credulity of his neighbours is irresistible. But when there was a drought he grew very troubled. In January 1938 there was drought in Mwaipopo's country though in some of the neighbouring chiefdoms there had been heavy rain. We went with Kasitile to visit his fellow priest, Mwamakunda, in the bush country. There was discussion about the drought.

KASITILE: I have put in the rain stones, but nothing has happened, I tremble!

[787] THE OTHERS: Kijaja went into a trance and said: 'Let a cow come from Mwakihaba (45), Mwakilima (31) has driven away his senior kinsmen and refused to send a cow, he has refused to return the cow which was given him by his senior brother. Let him return it, instead of saying: "Let the nasty old man (*ikangale*) celebrate there at his place." Then if it comes there will be much rain and food.' [i.e. Kijaja attributes the [688] drought to the refusal of the junior line of chiefs to send the customary cow for the sacrifice at Mbyanga, *vide supra*, pp. 79-80].

[787] KASITILE: Kijaja has gone into a trance and prophesied just recently. Kyala has brooded over him recently, he is a new prophet, but I, Kasitile, have not heard [i.e. have not been formally notified]. Had we been together with Kijaja I would have argued with him and silenced him. See! In Mwakihaba's country it has rained; it has rained heavily there, but not here. I would have said: 'Kijaja you are a new prophet. . . .' But I don't know about this rain. . . . Had I consulted an oracle the cause would have come to light.

MWAMAKUNDA (came and sat down): What about this rain? Have you put them in water?

KASITILE: Yes, I have put them in water and nothing happens, I put them in water and nothing happens. I have not consulted an oracle about this rain. . . . I tremble. . . .

MWAMAKUNDA: Yes, indeed! Consult an oracle. . . . Then you did put them in water. . .?

KASITILE: They have lain there two weeks, but the rain refuses to come.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IX

KASITILE THE PRIEST

WE turn now from the description of rituals to a personal document, an account of the illness of Kasitile (86), the leading priest of Selya, the causes suggested for it, and the rituals performed. His case shows: (i) the power of village headmen over chiefs in general, more particularly the power of the commoner priests (village headmen of the previous generation) over hereditary priests of the chief's lineage; (ii) the persistent linking of misfortune with sin in both public and private life; (iii) the function of divination in selecting between possible causes of disease; (iv) the influences of Christian and Muslim teaching and Western medical science on a conservative who goes so far as to invite a Muslim to cut the throat of the sacrificial animal and speaks of turning Christian in his old age; and (v) the very great importance attached to 'speaking out' (*ukusosya*) and not leaving anger to smoulder unconfessed. Beer is necessary for such a ritual 'speaking out' and the participants are pressed to drink deep, for *in vino veritas*.

The *dramatis personae* are:

KASITILE (86) of the chief's lineage, priest of Selya
JANE his senior and favourite wife
JANE'S YOUNGER SISTER and co-wife
KILULELE a third wife suspected of bewitching Kasitile
MWAIPOPO (116) the chief and senior kinsman of Kasitile
MWAKYONDE (148) the doctor who was treating Kasitile
KINGA *priests* (i.e. Kikungubeja Nsyanigwa, Kyamba Kitali, *vide* pp. 24-34)
NGULUYO, NJOBOKOSA, KISSOGOTA } Village headmen of Mwaijonga (82) and priests of his grove, *vide* pp. 74-7, 84-5
MWAMAKUNDA THE ELDER a hereditary priest, assistant to Kasitile
MWAMAKUNDA THE YOUNGER (Mwambagoje) son of the elder who often acted in his place

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

793 NDEMBWE
755 NSOKI
[551] NSESA
[791] A SANGU
} Diviners consulted by Kasitile

NDISA a kinsman of Kasitile

It will be remembered that, in accordance with the custom of
793 delegating ritual functions to a junior line, Kasitile's grand-
755 father (44) had been appointed rain-maker and priest responsible for receiving the Kinga when they came to sacrifice at Lubaga. Kasitile thus held an important public office. He was living on the plain (where he had inherited the estate of his father's younger brother) where his own elder brother (85) died and he came up into Selya to bury him and succeed to his position. But he failed to notify the Kinga priests of his brother's death and they were
[787] very angry, and told him he would die if he stayed in the homestead, so he fled back to the plain. There he fell ill, and he was carried back to Selya to be treated by the visiting Kinga priests, who told him he was sick 'because he went to the plain in a hurry and they had not given him medicine'. The idea here is that the heir to a chief or priest must cultivate the power that was in his
[778] father's body by drinking medicines: Kasitile was 'losing the *ifingila* of his father by not drinking medicines'. Now *ifingila* implies *both* the medicines of chieftainship and the power which they create in the body of a man.

So Kasitile was treated and we quote his own account of what happened:

> The Kinga came to cook medicine by the tree where I pray—it is where the cattle byre of my elder brother was. They put some medicine for Jane [his senior wife] and me in beer . . . and we drank together . . .
> [783] and they boiled medicines in a pot and told us both to wash with the infusion every day for two months. I found a goat and called the priests Ngulyo, Njobakosa, and Kissogota and . . . they and the Kinga priests ate the meat together, and they told me to stay for two months and return to the plain again, and so I did. Then the Kinga sent for me to come back and I've come up to live. I found a cow, and called the priests and killed it at the sacred grove, Kinyangwa, and all the people ate the meat. Then the Kinga told me to move to my father's old homestead, and I did so this very year.

Before we arrived, therefore, Kasitile had been in conflict with
[753] his fellow priests, and he had been very ill, and attributed his

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

793 trouble is that Mwaipopo (the chief 116) is getting old. . . .'
754 Here Kasitile suggested two different causes for the scarcity in the
[731] country: (*a*) the negligence of the priests, and (*b*) the senility of the
[789] chief. In the old days Mwaipopo would have been smothered, as Angombwike explained (*vide supra*, p. 63).

[753] On the 9th, Kasitile, much troubled by his cough at night,
[757] expressed a great desire for the return of the missionary nurse to Kabembe hospital. 'She is killing us by her absence, the black people don't know anything about these things, only the Europeans. Why, I went there and the dresser just gave me an injection without taking my temperature—no European ever does that.'

[787] The following day he sent off his sons with 10 c. to inquire about
[753] his case from a diviner. The diviner said: 'The wives at his home are gossiping to other people about their husband. People want the husband's body to be light. It is not Jane, because she is his favourite, but the others.' Kasitile said:

I shan't do anything, I said 'Let's leave it.' I am still in Butola [the village to which he moved for safety]. Mwakyonde is giving me medicine for my disease. It drives out the cold which is in my body. Yes, the cold is the breath of the witches coming to throttle me—it's due to my
755 wives' gossip. But it started as a quarrel with other people [non-
753 relatives] first. One day I went to drink beer in Bujege and that night I fell sick; that is how it began. Men are complaining because I, a chief, a senior, do not cook food for them. They throttle me on that account. They say: 'Let us see whether he is really a chief, a senior!' But others say: 'He has done no wrong.' Yes, the sickness took me on the way home from the beer. Perhaps Kyala asked: 'What has he
[776] done?' and found I had done no wrong. If there had not been a Kyala who saves us I would have been dead.

When I consulted a diviner he struck a spear and looked along it,
[787] then he said: 'The disease now is from his wives—the earlier attack was from men, but this one is from his wives. When they gather at the hearth they say: "Come hither, we see him where he sleeps."'

754 'Are the wives witches?' we asked.
753 Kasitile replied:

Yes. They say: 'There is a favourite, we are not beloved.' If a man's wives are good the witches can get into the house, but their cold breath dissipates quickly; you are given medicine and recover quickly; but if the wives are bad they gather together the medicine and press it down, so that it is powerless. One of my wives is very bad, her lineage is bad, it is she who calls to her aid the heavy ones, the witches. The

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

younger one[1] gossips with her fellow, she does not go to the witches herself, but just talks to the other wife who calls the witches to her aid. These two wives say: 'The favourite has borne many children to her husband; we are poor' [i.e. the favourite gets an unfair share of her husband's attentions]. 754 753

Kasitile speaks of his wives as 'witches' which, according to Nyakyusa ideas, they were, if they injured him, but he was also in the wrong to have shown his preference for Jane so clearly. [775] As was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*, the shades are thought to [689] punish such favouritism.

Towards the end of August Kasitile went to consult Ndembwe, a diviner and doctor, living nearly a day's journey away in the hills, who used a 'stick in the ground' as a divining rod. On his return Kasitile reported: 791 787

Ndembwe says it's the 'breath of men', not the wives, but the dispute about the beer. I paid him 1*s.* and drank three preparations of medicine at his place. He is coming here—I have found some beer and I am sending to call him tomorrow. Then Kasitile added confidentially: About the source of the 'breath' I am uncertain. Ndembwe suggested testing my wives. He can see the heavy ones, for in Ndali country he has drunk much medicine to give him spiritual power (*amanga*). He told me to come home, not to go back to Mwakyonde's country, and he is coming to give me medicine to drink and also to sprinkle medicine in the house. He will sleep here and see who it is that comes—he will know if the wives are heavy, or if it is the people of the country. 753 [782] [778] [787]

Kasitile's uncertainty was apparent. The first diviner had stated clearly that the sickness came from the witchcraft of the wives, but Kasitile wanted a further test.

We were away from Selya for some time and did not hear of any further developments in Kasitile's illness until early in 1937. By then a new reason for his ill-health had been put forward, viz. his impiety in cutting all the branches off a tree growing at the entrance to a sacred grove which has sprung up over his father's grave. He cut the tree because it was encroaching on his homestead. Then he fell ill and he went to consult Ndembwe again. 753 688

He asked me: 'Have you done something wrong at home?' I replied: 'No, I have done nothing wrong.' 'But the oracle says you have done wrong at home.' I said: 'Perhaps it is because I cut a tree at the [787]

[1] Sister of the favourite Jane. To accuse Jane's sister would cast a slur on Jane, for witchcraft is normally hereditary.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

753 entrance to the grove?' Ndembwe told me, 'You will get no cattle',
688 and indeed the cows are aborting. He told me: 'Brew beer and look
[787] for a sheep[1] and pray to your grandfather.'

782 Kasitile did not find an animal for sacrifice. He slaughtered a kid 'just for meat', killing it near the grove, but without praying or taking any of the meat into the grove, for it is not customary to offer goat's meat to the shades. His health improved a little, for a
787 time, but again he got worse and went off to see another diviner, saying: 'Perhaps there is some other cause; perhaps Ndembwe is mistaken.' He decided to go to consult an oracle some distance away 'because the oracle near home does not convince us; those who live near know all our wrongdoings; those at a distance don't know the affairs of the homesteads here'. This time Godfrey Wilson was invited to accompany him 'since he was his friend'.

Record of G.W. 8/2/37

787 We left Isumba about 7 a.m. and walked for an hour over the hills
753 through the bush. Kasitile had sent his wives, Jane and Kiluleli, on ahead to tell the diviner, Nsoki, that we were coming. . . . He came in from the fields to meet us and was taken aback by the presence of a
[791] European. Kasitile kept saying: 'Do not be startled, he is from home,
[186] he is our friend.' . . . Food was served, then Nsoki's wife brought out some cooked millet porridge for the divination. He broke off a large piece and began to roll it between his hands. He smeared ointment on his hands and added powdered medicine. . . . He rolled and rolled, sometimes throwing the ball up and catching it again, spitting on his hands meantime. He murmured as he rolled, then at last he said to Kasitile, 'Speak!' Kasitile called his two wives to come near, and he explained his symptoms and the circumstances, how the sickness had fallen on him just after he had cut the tree in the sacred grove.

Nsoki asked for other possibilities. Kasitile: 'Perhaps the country is angry—I am a senior there. If it is the fathers who are angry I admit
[684] having done wrong. Perhaps my wives have committed adultery in the long grass and they are the cause of the illness.' Nsoki rolled and rolled the ball of porridge speaking aloud: 'It is Kyala above?' (looking up). Kasitile interrupted him: 'Yes, indeed, Kyala, but Kyala stands
[775] where he stood at home, does he stand alone? He stands with the fathers.' Nsoki (as he rolled the porridge): 'Your fathers are angry about that grove?' Then the ball of porridge flattened out in his hands and he broke off . . . 'No, that is not the cause' (*vide* plate 10*b*).

Rolling it into a ball again he went on: 'Your wives have committed

[1] This was Kasitile's own account. Others told us that he had been advised to look for a *bull*.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

adultery?' Again the ball flattened. 'It denies it.'[1] Then Kasitile, obviously dissatisfied, spoke: 'Nsoki, three cows have slipped their calves at my home, I sent to Ndembwe and he said: "Your fathers are angry, you cut a tree, Mwakisambwe (30) is angry; seek something", so I sought a kid and I recovered. Later I took my bill-hook and cut all round. Now the illness has begun again, and I thought perhaps it was because I did not go to BuKinga to buy a bull, because I sought only a kid?' Nsoki (no longer rolling the porridge): 'Perhaps my oracle is mistaken, it denies it, Kyala above has sent the breath (*imbepo*) to discipline you. I asked the oracle saying, "Perhaps it is the fathers?" but see, it denied it.' Kasitile: 'No, it is not mistaken.' Then he told all over again the story of his pruning the grove and of his illness and of his recovery after killing the kid, concluding 'then I cut again and fell sick.' Nsoki: 'But Kasitile, see! There is much illness about, Kyala has sent it all through the country, to discipline us.'

Shortly afterwards we left. I apologized to Kasitile for spoiling his divination for it was obvious, from his face, that it had gone wrong. He assured me that I had done no wrong but agreed that Nsoki had been afraid of me. . . . 'He feared your body, Mwaipaja [G.W.], you are impressive (*nsisya*), no one builds together with Europeans, he feared to speak. . . . Do you suppose that Kyala alone sent the fever? No! He stands with people, he stands with the shades.' I asked him what he thought. 'Ndembwe's oracle was not mistaken, the shades were indeed angry, but now Nsoki's oracle denies it. It really denied it, I saw the porridge with my own eyes, so I think the illness is from another source now. When he spoke of the "breath of Kyala" he meant "men".' Kasitile lowered his voice as he said this.

QUESTION: But what quarrel have they with you?

KASITILE: None! The oracle denied this. I have done no wrong . . . (later on) He spoke of the fathers, but he was afraid to speak out—they are angry; I should seek something.

QUESTION: To eat with whom?

KASITILE: With the village headman . . . (later on) See Mwaipaja, I cut the grove and at once I fell ill. If you come from doing something and fall ill, do you not begin to wonder? The shades are angry.

He was quite incoherent. First he said the 'breath of men', then the shades, then that the oracle denied the shades—'I saw it do so'—then that it denied witchcraft and that anyway he'd given no occasion for it. The one thing clear was that the divination could not be accepted as it stood. Kyala never acts alone in Nyakyusa thought, and Kasitile's conversation reflected the uncertainty of mind which he had gone to Nsoki to have resolved and which had not been resolved. His opinion

[1] He explained later that 'if the porridge becomes fluid and soft, that means it agrees to what has been said; if it does not change, it denies it'.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 clearly inclined to the shades as it had before the divination, but as
753 before the certain conviction was lacking.

Four days later (12/2/37) Kasitile went to Nsesa in Kituli village to consult the oracle again 'for that of Nsoki went wrong'. He told us afterwards 'This oracle supported the finding of Ndembwe's. It said:
[775] Your kinsman who is dead is angry; he says, "Why did you not
[769] celebrate the ritual? I am tired of the hair (*Ngatele nasyo inwili*). And what did you offer your father after cutting that tree?"' Here yet another cause of Kasitile's illness is suggested—the neglect of the death ritual of a kinsman. The implication is that the chief mourners have
[765] not yet performed the concluding rite of shaving which makes it
[302] possible for the deceased to join his fathers. The hair which the mourners shave off is called 'the hair of the corpse'.

QUESTION: What are you going to do then?

KASITILE: I shall charge the young man, son of my dead kinsman, with
[688] neglect, and tell him to celebrate the ritual that the shades which have
[602] bound me may go out of my body.

QUESTION: And the bull?

KASITILE: If I can find one I shall kill it.

QUESTION: Who will be there?

[793] KASITILE: The priests will be there, Ngulyo, Kissogota, Njobakosa, Mwalukuta and Mwakasukula,[1] and also Mwaipopo (116) himself. Were I a commoner I should kill alone with my younger brothers, but since I am a public personage (*ndi nkulumba*) the village headmen are there. (To Mwaikambo, the clerk.) It is good at your home in the hills; here things are bad.

QUESTION: But they also have shades?

[775] KASITILE: But they are not important. Look you, I just cut a tree and they have seized me and dwell in my body. Are there sacred groves in
[178] the hills? Do men visit them? There in the hills rituals have died; the puberty ritual and the rituals of the groves are celebrated very little.

On 27th March Kasitile looked in to say that he was going to con-
787 sult a visiting Sangu doctor 'from very far off' about his cough, but
791 G.W. had better not come lest his presence spoil the divination.
753 Kasitile came again after the consultation, full of excitement. 'What a doctor! That is a doctor indeed! That is a diviner! He took an axe and divined with it; he took coppers which I brought and threw them in a little pot, together with the axe, and ash, and he said: "You also take ash and throw it in" and I did so. Then he looked into the little pot and said: "You built on the plain!" He knew this without being told! I said: "Yes".'

SANGU: There was a quarrel there.

[1] The last two are priests of Mbyanga (*vide* p. 80) who did not in fact come. Mwamakunda, Kasitile's assistant, who did come is not mentioned.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

KASITILE: Yes indeed.
SANGU: Now your body is sick, you are coughing. 787
KASITILE: Yes indeed, I am ill, and I am coughing a great deal. 791
SANGU: Yes, it is that quarrel down there. You came with the cough from the plain. 753
KASITILE: Yes, I came with it.
SANGU: You are a priest, you are a senior priest. (He knew this himself!)
KASITILE: Yes indeed.
SANGU: But the cough comes from the quarrel in the plain. If you were not a priest you would have died.
KASITILE: Indeed, we quarrelled over land, over the boundaries, on the plain. I hoed someone else's land—the land of a commoner there. [578]
SANGU: They placed something to injure you.

Kasitile paused in his narrative and we asked how the 'something' operated.

KASITILE: In dreams, by means of their witchcraft. [754]

The Sangu told me: 'It is this which causes you to cough continually, but there is something else also, you did not move to the plain from here without trouble.'

KASITILE: No, I moved with an accusation against me. [775]
SANGU: Yes indeed, you did wrong and now your fathers are very angry. [776]
KASITILE: Yes, I cut a tree.
SANGU: Mother! You cut a tree? The fathers and Kyala are brooding over you, Kyala is angry and broods over you. Pray, pray very much. It is you who are throttling the cattle of the country.

We expressed surprise and Kasitile continued: 'Yes, indeed. The Sangu said: "It is your wrongdoing (in cutting the tree) which is causing the cows to abort. I will clear out the thing which came with you from the plain. Bring 2*s.* tomorrow." He's a great doctor, Mwaipaja.' [688]

The astonishing thing was that Kasitile, a man of considerable intelligence and inclined to query the truth of the revelations of some oracles, was so much impressed by the fact that the foreign doctor (staying in the country) knew that he was a priest and had sojourned in the plain, though to anyone knowing KiNyakyusa well his connexion with the plain was apparent in his speech, and his bearing indicated him as a personage.

Talking of the divination three days later, Kasitile told us the Sangu doctor had said: 'You have done wrong at home. This Kyala (pointing to the little pot into which he was looking) knows that Lwembe and the Kinga and your father are angry, your father is very important, he works with Kyala, he is with him.' 755

As a treatment for the cough the doctor put various ingredients with 791

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

indeed from the whispering of men and the shades here, but people speak openly, saying: 'Why does he not celebrate the ritual?' The witches do not come into it. 754 775

QUESTION: Well, when the witches do throttle someone, do they always call shades, or not? 753

KASITILE: No, sometimes they throttle a man alone, and the shades are not there.

QUESTION: But your sickness?

KASITILE: Now the priests in their witchcraft gathered with the shades. The day after we had celebrated Njobakosa came to my place and said: 'We have finished then!' I replied: 'Yes, my body is better now, but the cough is separate, it is from Kyala.' And did you not hear what Mwaipopo asked in his cups—'How did the doctor (the Sangu) know that you are a priest? And that you had done wrong? Indeed they (Kissogota and his fellows) had told him!' [793]

QUESTION: What did he mean by that?

KASITILE: That they had gone to the doctor in dreams to tell him. [787]

Asked about Kissogota's words: 'You are impressive, we are cannibals, we are', Kasitile explained: 'It means, "You chiefs kill cattle for us, you are impressive, that is your impressiveness. Do we kill cattle? No! We eat men, we are witches." Because when we have killed cattle they receive blood, their witchcraft goes away, it stays in its house.'

QUESTION: And your reply, 'You are impressive, you are'?

KASITILE: I replied: 'You are impressive, you are, you are witches, if I were alone what would I do? It is you who brought the chilling breath on me and said I had done wrong. Even though I have not done wrong, you wish to eat meat. If I walk about among you, my body shrinks, it fears.'

Mwaipopo (the chief 116) had also prayed with water the night before the sacrifice, he helps me in prayer and if he prays at his house, I help him. We pray with water to bring out everything; if I do not pray with water then something is left within. I summon all the gods, all the fathers, and all the shades. (*Apa tukwiputa namesi ko kusyosya ilisyu loysa, lenga ndikwiputa namesi po lisyele limo nkati. Nikumpala kyala gwesa, tata gwesa, abasyuka bosa.*) [782] [776] [775] [539]

QUESTION:

KASITILE: Yes, when Kissogota and his fellows came in their witchcraft to call my shades to their aid, I saw them in dreams, I saw them! And if they correct Mwaipopo like this in witchcraft, together with the shades, he sees them; he complies immediately, he seeks a cow. And if they just come to throttle me I see them. It is the village headmen of the country who come to throttle me, the shades are not there, no, only Kissogota and his fellows, they stand with the shades, not the others they come and suck my blood and they go away again. I do not speak, [787]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 but I see them. It's taboo to speak. They must seek blood and they go
775 off; we fear them!

QUESTION: Why do you chiefs never speak out if you are throttled?

753 KASITILE: If I speak how many would there be to name? Very many!
[689] For us it's taboo to accuse a man of witchcraft, but the commoners
[554] accuse one another. Look you, do few people keep you company?

Many!

Like us chiefs, everyone comes. It's taboo for us to speak out, we fear. Look you, when Mwambene (Mwaipopo 116) and I were alone we feared to throw out the beer, we said: 'If we throw it out will they leave?' But when Kissogota came, he said: 'All right, I will throw it
[152] out myself.' We fear the fierce great priests, the terrible witches, they are angry.[1] We shrink when they appear.

[622] The village headmen of the country call on the priests for help against us, they whisper by the fire, the priests come in their witchcraft, they call on my shades saying, 'Let us punish him', also they eat,
[793] together with the shades. Our shades never initiate anything, never; they look to the priests. But with a commoner the shade may initiate matters himself. Yes, people whisper indeed, but is that witchcraft? No! They whisper openly and ask, 'Why did you not perform the ritual?' But even although people are silent, still the shade comes
[688] saying, 'Why did you not perform the ritual? I am on the road.' He initiates the thing himself.

QUESTION: But don't people eat meat at the ritual of a commoner?

KASITILE: Yes, and if he does not celebrate it they accuse him, but they accuse him openly.

QUESTION: If the heir buries him with a few cattle?

688 KASITILE: If a rich commoner dies and the heir buries him with only
775 one cow, the shades are angry and the people also; their chilling
774 breath comes on his body, perhaps he falls ill himself, perhaps his child falls ill, but the people and witches do not meet together, people are angry here, and the shades there; all of them and the shades too, because he has celebrated with one cow only. People are angry because
[787] they wish to eat the meat. But the oracle says, 'The shades are angry.' It does not speak of people, it knows that people also are angry, but it speaks of the shades. And at the celebration he prays in the evening, the next day he calls people and kills a cow, and throws the sacred
[783] meat in the banana grove, saying, 'Here is your meat, father.' People say, 'Indeed he did wrong, his father was angry', but they do not confess saying, 'It was we', no, they say 'the shades' . . .

[826] We chiefs have bodies which are different, the commoners arrived
[554] first in the country, they ate raw food, we fear them saying, 'They eat raw food.' It is we who followed and brought fire. To us they confess

[1] *Imipago indori mikalala.* The noun class implies size, ferocity, and dislike.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

278 842 The patient knelt and received the medicine in cupped hands, guiding it into her mouth. Lyandileko hung a little medicine horn on the runnel before pouring. The patient kept the medicine in her mouth until the runnel was removed and she spat through the hole. Then the hole was filled up with the petal off which the medicine had been poured. Lyandileko smeared the patient on the belly with medicine from a horn, and pushed the horn down under her bark-cloth to the genitals, in front, and on to the buttocks behind. As she did this she said, 'If you are barren the banana will rot, if you are fertile I give you medicine to bear a child.' This was done for each patient in turn. Then the banana suckers were planted and the medicine from the remaining petals poured into bottles (two made of banana leaves, one a Vermouth bottle) for the patients to take home. They were to take a dose each day for a week. As the treatment was proceeding Lyandileko talked of her successes: 'So-and-so drank twice and her belly sprouted. . . . So-and-so drank and she came back to me pregnant. . . .'

After a week the women came back to see whether their banana suckers had sprouted. Lyandileko explained: 'The banana sucker is the child, it sprouts quickly, it is the belly which sprouts quickly. [787] If it dies they consult an oracle—the woman does not conceive.' And her son added, 'If a woman's sucker dies Lyandileko tells her: "Don't say I have not worked for you, don't you see your banana? You are rotten in yourself, indeed they must have allowed your cord to fall between your mother's legs."[1] They rejoice very much if it has grown.' Each petal represents a child; Lyandeliko used male and female symbols (plantain and sweet banana petals) alternately for boys and girls. One mother who had no child had asked for ten, another with two already for eight, another with three already for six. Lyandileko's arithmetic had gone wrong for there were only seventeen petals altogether. The horn is the horn of protection (*ulupembe lwa ipinge*) and it means here, 'May the "iron" stay nicely within, may it not come out in front or behind, may it stay inside.' (Iron is a symbol for the reproductive [823] capacity of women.) Neither Lyandileko nor her son (who were both forthright in their discussion of ritual) seemed to be conscious of any symbolic enactment of coition, though a knowledge of the symbolism of the death and puberty rituals suggests that.

[1] Cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, p. 145.

9: Wilson Σ-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 [278] A second class of medicines is not neutral at all, but itself selects between right and wrong. The most famous is the *musafi* ordeal which is used to reveal the truth. The *musafi* poison was formerly administered by a doctor,[1] before witnesses, and the innocent were believed to vomit almost immediately, while the guilty did not vomit at all, or were slow to do so, and fell ill, some even dying. Nowadays *musafi* is administered only in the greatest secrecy, but various minor methods of divination, all of which turn on the correct use of medicines, are in common use. The 'divination with porridge' has been described (*vide supra*, p. 128). The medicine added to it is spoken of as 'a kind of *musafi*'. Another method is to rub an inverted wooden cup on a smooth board. Questions are posed, as to the porridge. When the answer is 'no' the cup slips; when the answer is 'yes' the cup sticks. Sometimes a stick of *mutike* wood is rubbed on the ground in place of the cup on the board, and there are half a dozen other methods using bells, horns, segments of bamboo, a pipe, or boiling water. In each case virtue lies in the medicines added to the porridge or rubbed on to the cup or stick, and into scarifications in the diviner's hands. An ordinary man who has not been treated cannot use the instruments, and porridge without '*musafi*' is useless.

751 759 769 Certain medicines used for protection and to wreak vengeance, are also thought to be selective, and to injure only the guilty. These are horns, owned by doctors. Mwanjesi (who came of a family of doctors) told us:

[778] My father had a water-buck horn filled with medicines and ointment, as a protection against witches. He used it, like other doctors, for burning the grass, for burning the rubbish heaps before planting millet, and for protecting a child. When the millet crops are poor, people say the witches have eaten it, and the next year the chief sends for the doctor and his protective horn. . . . He comes and makes fire and treats the tinder with ointment from his horn, and each pile of weeds is lit from that fire. . . . He sends some to the chief to fire the grass for fresh grazing. Then there is much milk, the cows that eat that grass give much milk for the witches stay away and neither eat the millet nor throttle the cows. So with a child, if a man has lost many children and has one left, he calls the doctor to come with his protective medicine (*ilipiego*) and treat the child with medicines from his horn as a protection against witches. My father used the same horn for all these things.

[1] For a description of the procedure, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 113-16, 241-6.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

swept through BuNyakyusa in the early 1930's; perhaps other similar movements preceded it—we do not know. What is clear is that traditionally there was continuous public pressure to overcome hatred within the village and the kinship group; to rid oneself of it by confession and an expression of goodwill. In pagan thought Utopia is a society without witches or sorcerers and, though it was never achieved, everyone is convinced that formerly these evil-doers were fewer than now, because they were restrained by law, whereas 'witches' now go scot-free.

The interests of the Nyakyusa are personal and practical. Health, fertility, and amity between kinsmen and neighbours are what they seek. It is with rain and drought, with the rise of the Lake or the striking of lightning which destroys property; with stock, crops, and the wild animals which prey upon them that the myths are concerned. We could trace no tales of the sun, moon, and stars, and no rituals are directed to them. Reference is made to volcanic disturbance in the myths of the heroes—'the ground rumbled' when Nkekete and Kyala walked, and there are stories of small lakes disappearing and reappearing elsewhere—but the concern shown is surprisingly little if an eruption indeed destroyed villages last century as Mr. Harkin's single informant suggests (*vide supra*, p. 16).

Reality is thought to be revealed to men in dreams, by prophets who 'go down thinking like the roots of a tree' to the world of the shades, and by oracles. What men seek to know are the causes of misfortune—public and private—and the identity of witches. Occasionally, it is said, a prophet has looked into the future and foretold drought, or flood, or the coming of Europeans—'white things on the Lake'—against whom it would be foolish to fight, but for the most part they are concerned with the misfortunes that exist, and urging men to pray in the groves. The contemplative is not honoured in Nyakyusa tradition; the man of spiritual power is a detective—a discoverer of evil-doers—or an administrator whose authority adds to his authority.

Men are preoccupied with their relationships to other living men—their kinsmen, neighbours, and fellow office-holders—and with their dead fathers. They are not concerned with their relationship to Kyala. The rituals celebrated by kinsmen are directed to the shades not to any supreme God, and it is quarrelling between kinsmen that angers the shades and makes the celebration of certain rituals necessary. The communal rituals are

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951.F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

4. A visit to the chief's father's grave was paid in company with the chief and some of his *amafumu*. It was situated in a banana grove (*ilingeto*[14]) not very remote from the chief's hut. The grove of the present chief's father was on the ground-floor, about one hundred paces from its edge and was characterized by a small steadged basalt block about half a metre in height[15] and about forty centimetres in breadth. An indole-plant was also standing on the grove about one metre from the basalt block.

"Use blue ceramics from chief's days while now do here sprinkle cassava into shrine?" sacrifices are offered in this grove. These are performed only in cases of very serious accidents, sickness or famine which may overcome the chieftainship. In such cases a black cow is slaughtered after sunset at the edge of the grove. In the presence of the chief, the pieces of meat of the slaughtered beast, together with some bananas, are laid down at the grove. The chief adds a prayer to his ancestors at some distance from the grove, referring to the evil by which the chieftainship or some special village of it has been afflicted. He enumerates all the names of his ancestors and asks them for their help.

The remaining pieces of the meat and other bananas are left in the grove during the night. When the next day dawns, the *amafumu* return and some *abangapo* divide the meat and eat it together. On this occasion the chief orders the removal of all remains of ashes from the huts. The ashes are thrown down in such unclean places as where leprous persons had been buried. After this has been done, the chief in conjunction with an *wangapo*[16] produces a new fire for the huts by twirling, and all other fires of the village, or villages, must be kindled anew from this "seed-fire".

5. The reason for visiting an *undagwa* (diviner)[17] who dwelled in Ibungo an older age-set village[18] which seemed to the visitor to be a more ancient part of Katumba, was caused by the sickness of the chief's sister. In accordance with the custom of the Nyakyusa in bringing women back to their father's village if they are very sick, the

[14] Cf. *Jahnati* =, *Ganeta*, pl. *amaganeta*, p. 486; *Machumu*, *Ilingeto*, burial place, p. 200; *mangeto*, grave of the dead chiefs, p. 101; Wilson, Introduction, p. 307, *ilingeto*, sacred grave; *Marwanka*, p. 115.

[15] Cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 227.

[16] Cf. n. 5, p. 5.

[17] Cf. *Johnston*, p. 481.

[18] I proposed to call the special form of villages found within the Nyakyusa society, which are created on the age-set principle, „age-set village" (African Studies, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 75—89 June 1943), a terminology that does not alter G. Wilson's statements on the "Age Village" (Introduction, p. 288 ff).

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[787 [164 784] sister of the chief had also been brought back to the village of her brother. I was of the opinion that she was afflicted by a serious tropical ulcer on the ankle of the left foot. The healing of these ulcers commonly takes a very long time, and as this woman had already much suffered, and as the medicine-man consulted seemed to be unable to restore her, she was brought to her brother's village, but there also she had not yet recovered. The chief had, therefore, resolved to ask the diviner, whose name was Mwaigwisya, for the real cause of her sickness.

After he and his *amafumu* had taken their seats on mats, the chief explained to the diviner the reason of his visit. The diviner then grasped a curved piece of wood about 20 cms. in length with his right hand, after he had spat upon his hands. Then he moved the wood round his head, and finally placed it with one of its ends on the even, cleansed ground before his mat, and waited for the questions of the chief. The single questions, as for instance: "Is the sickness caused by Kyaru?", or "Is the sickness caused by this or that person?", etc., were put to the diviner by Lamek Mwainyekule, the son of a chief of another chieftainship[10], now belonging to the *amafumu* of Mwamasika, as he now stayed in his village. Mwainyekule seemed to be not only

[291 512]

The Séance with the diviner.

[772] the most intimate adviser of Mwamasika, but altogether the most clever man I met among this people. After each of the questions addressed to him the diviner murmured the names of the chief's

[10] A village of this name is to be found on Dr. Kieperts map (of 1888), southern to the Kaya.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ancestors and of Kyara[17]. At the same time he moved his curved wood to and fro on the ground and when he did so, it indicated a negative answer from the beings invoked. But when he was asked: "Is the guilt for the sickness to be found in the husband of the chief's sister?", he was unable to move his wood as before; he could only stamp it on the ground, and this meant an affirmative reaction of the invoked spirits. Now, therefore, the meeting had reached its aim. 787 [776]

I asked the diviner to tell me how he had acquired his faculty. He explained that (besides the necessary inner disposition) the payment of a fee for the medical preparation was necessary in order to become a diviner[18]. This outfit consisted in a special vaccination by a learned diviner. For this purpose the neophyte was incised by his master on different spots on the upper side of the knuckles, and in these small incisions was rubbed a medical powder. By these means the initiate may be inspired by the prophesying spirits. These influences are then felt by the diviner as a power which directs the movements of his hand in the manner described. 791 [304]

6. Near the hut of the chief's principal wife was a "sacred" banana plant, in the grove opposite to the chief's hut and in the grove with the grave of the chief's father already described. At particular times, when any need demands it, the chief offers a prayer in this place to his ancestors[19]. The sickness of his sister, for instance, was such an occasion for him to address the ancestors. I was invited by the chief to witness this act; but I raised objections, telling him that my presence might perhaps rather cause the anger than the help of his ancestors. In reality, I did not want the chief to stage a theatrical act on my behalf. But the chief rejected my excuses and explained that he would act in the same manner as if I were not present, because he had made up his mind to this prayer. The chief was assisted during this ceremony by Mwainyekule who presented to the chief a calabash of water as he arrived at the banana plant devoted to this purpose. The chief took some mouthfuls of the water and squirted it towards the banana plant. Then he recited the names of his ancestors and begged them to help his sister. 824 778 782 769 [23]

7. During one afternoon, I was told that a ceremony to end the initiation of a (betrothed) girl was going on in a family of the village. 881

[17] name of the supreme spiritual being.
[18] Cf. Mackenzie, p. 226.
[19] Mackenzie refers that such a place is named "Ikiyinja", "the family place oft prayer" (pp. 144, 197), but without indication of the locality, as Karonga.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

witches, they have two or three pythons, it is they who are caught by the poison ordeal.' 'Watching over the country' implies detecting the witches and turning them back, and also reporting them the next morning to the authorities. Particularly 'the defenders' watch over the cows, and they are said actually to increase the milk yield by sucking the milk from the teats and spitting it out again. Mbukile explained this also: ' "The defender" watches over the cows. He takes milk in his mouth and squirts it on the ground; he does not swallow it in his dream. The next day the milk will be plentiful.' A village headman we knew enlarged further on the point: 'If a man is the son of a true village headman and goes to drink the milk of cows, he drinks from the teats, but his python vomits the milk and the next day the owner of the cow will find much milk and say: "He who came last night was the child of a village headman (*ubifwesa*). He was good, he was not a witch, no, but a benefactor."[1] So they say. But if a real witch goes to bewitch the cows then the milk dries up altogether for a time. The owners of the cows will milk none for many days. He is a witch indeed.' Similarly, it is held that if witches can be compelled to vomit the human flesh they have eaten, 'to put back the meat', the patient will recover.

'Emptiness' and 'innocence' are associated in several contexts; and vomiting, spitting, and confession (*ukusuyá*) are all taken as expressions of good will and repentance. *Ukusesa*, for example, means both 'to spit' and 'to forgive', the symbolism being interpreted in this way: 'If a father is angry with his son or daughter he may say some day, "I forgive you now" and spit on the ground: all the anger that is in him comes out like spit.' Blowing water from the mouth is an essential element in prayers to the ancestors, and the close association between them is apparent in the language: *ukuputa* meaning to 'blow out water' and *ukuputa* (the reflexive form) meaning 'to pray',[2] with the implication of confessing whatever anger or grudge a man may have in his heart. Kasitile, the rainmaker, explained: 'This prayer with water is to confess *everything*. If I do not pray with water then something is left within.'

[1] For a similar concept among the Thonga cf. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. II, p. 515.

[2] The Zande symbolism is very similar: cf. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, 'Zande Theology' in *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XIX (1936), pp. 11-12.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

are primarily to his kinsmen and fellow villagers, and secondarily to fellow members of his chiefdom; beyond the chiefdom and circle of kinsmen he had, traditionally, no obligations. The Christian definition of 'neighbour' is a much wider one. It is emphasized by the missionaries that the Christian Church is universal, and Nyakyusa Christians themselves are conscious of their unity with, and obligations to, members of other chiefdoms, other cultural groups, and other races. The new sanctions for behaviour operating within the Christian group—the emphasis on Christian duty; the hope of that 'peace which passeth all understanding' and of eternal life; and the fear of suspension or expulsion from the communion of the faithful, and of hell-fire[1]—all these apply to relations beyond, as well as within, the village, the chiefdom, and the circle of kin.

Two other points were mentioned by Christian informants when discussing the differences between pagan and Christian morality: they said that Christian children growing up were liable to be 'proud' (*namatiego*) in their bearing and manner of greeting, because they do not fear 'the breath of men'; and also that Christian men were not afraid to ask many cattle for their daughters at marriage, again because they do not fear their neighbours' disapproval in the way pagans fear it. The implication is that there is less insistence upon conformity to a given code among Christians than among pagans; a greater tolerance of diversity of behaviour.

These differences between pagan and Christian dogma are matched by differences between their ritual. There are no Christian rituals in which the village as a group, distinct from other groups, is concerned. The congregation—the group worshipping in one church—is drawn from many villages, and though devout Christians living in the same neighbourhood often gather for morning and evening prayer, such rituals never include a whole village. Even in a Christian village on mission land only a small proportion of the villagers attend daily prayer regularly. As we have seen, the members of a pagan village meet from time to time to warn off witches, or to bless a repentant wrong-doer (*vide supra*, pp. 101, 109 ff.), but since belief in witchcraft or in 'the curse' is not orthodox among Christians, there is no ritual con-

[1] cf. Monica Hunter, 'An African Christian Morality', *Africa*, Vol. X (1937), p. 289-91.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

nected with it in a Christian village or village-section. The nearest parallel to the pagan ritual of reconciliation is the formal re-admission of a repentant sinner to the congregation.

The change in belief and ritual tends to weaken village solidarity; for the Christian village is neither a defensive unit, nor is it the group from within which retribution and forgiveness come. A Christian does not feel himself dependent upon village neighbours to the same degree as does a pagan. We argue that the extension of the range of interdependence reduces its intensity in the narrower circles of relationship, and this is evident in the religious as in the economic aspect.[1]

Since the authority of a village headman is largely dependent upon his supposed mystical power, Christians are rarely appointed to this office by the Nyakyusa. We heard of only one Christian headman and he was in the country of a Christian chief. Christians cannot go through the full 'coming out' ceremony which involves treatment with medicines to give *amanga*, and a Christian headman cannot fulfil the traditional ritual functions in relation to the chief and his ancestors. But in Ngonde, where the percentage of Christians is high (46 per cent as opposed to 15 per cent among the Nyakyusa) and the 'coming out' ceremony has been dropped, there are a number of Christian headmen who simply abstain from the performance of any pagan rituals (as does the Kyungu himself) leaving them to those headmen who are pagan and feel the ritual to be important. And pagan informants whom we asked about defence against witchcraft in a village in which the headman was a Christian, replied: 'Others will protect the country from witchcraft,' implying that there are always other 'defenders' in a village besides its leader.

In Christian village-sections the same difficulties do not arise, for assistant headmen are never treated at the 'coming out', nor have they ritual functions, other than the formal reproof of supposed witches (*vide supra*, p. 109). Hence the recognised leader of any group of Christians living in a pagan village is normally a Christian. In Christian villages on mission land the leaders are, of course, always Christian. These villages do not participate in any 'coming out' ceremony and the leaders are appointed by the missionary in consultation with the 'session' (*i.e.* representatives of the congregation), not by the old chief and

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 23-41.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

The bundle of medicine and the belt are burnt with the litter at the coming out. And whenever a child is born, every time, not only at the birth of the first or second, it is washed by the husband's mother with this same powdered medicine from the store in her pot. If this is not done they fear that perhaps the child will go mad or something dreadful will happen. They say of the powdered medicine: 'It is our kinship, it is our blood (*Bo bukamu bwetu, lyo ilopa lyetu*).' And if a girl runs off with a lover in the veld they mock her and say: 'Who has given you powdered medicine? You are no relative.' They say: 'She is not our relative, she has not got our blood. . . .' The medicine is to create relationship (*ubukamu*). Using it means that the bride is now of my lineage (*ikikolo*). You know that burial customs differ. When they have used the medicine they will bury my wives as they bury me, either sitting up or lying down, as the case may be. We Christians do not do this because we have another way. We take hands before the priest and say: 'This is my relative (*unkamu guangu*).'

Another informant (a pagan), questioned separately, gave a similar interpretation. He said: 'Washing with the medicine means, "my wife has come. She is now my relative (*nkamu guangu*)."'

As already indicated, the act of washing with her husband proclaims the seniority of a wife. Washing with her own mother and her father or young brother, is to proclaim kinship. 'The girl washes with a brother to show that she has brothers and sisters. If she does not do so it shows that she is a poor person without relatives.' 'She has washed at her husband's place, then she comes home and her father honours her by looking for a boy, not an old one but a young one, to wash with her. Then the girl thinks: "I have fathers, I am no bastard." But if she washed alone she would think: "Perhaps I am not their child, perhaps I have no relatives."' Kasitile said: 'If she washes with me, her father, it means: "She is my child, I begot her myself, she is my first-born."' Mwakionde, after discussing the circumstances under which a father washes, said: 'To wash is to admit that I have lived and borne a child and grown up.' 'And if a brother does it?' we asked. 'It means: "You young man, you are her father." If they ever quarrel the brother says: "Why do you not respect me, your father? We washed together in water."' A young brother is chosen 'because the grown-up boys are going about. They want one who has not made love to girls.'

Standing in the doorway of her mother's hut (or of the woman acting in place of her mother if the latter is dead or divorced) is

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VIII

THE PARTICIPANTS

(a) Categories of participants

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THE people who take part in rituals have been referred to repeatedly and now it is possible to define who they are. They fall into four categories: the principals, the minor actors, the congregation, and the officiants or priests. The principals are those who undergo the full ritual lest they go mad; they are always close kin, but what category of kin depends on the type of ritual and the status of the person for whom it is performed. After a death, those who *must* perform the ritual to drive away the shade are the children and grandchildren of the deceased—all of them, the widows and the heir, if a man has died, or, if it is a woman and a senior wife, the widower and her related co-wife if she has one.[1] A man does not perform the ritual for a junior wife or one he has inherited. Children of a related co-wife are treated, for the purposes of ritual, as her own children, and all must undergo the ritual, but only some of the children of other co-wives are selected to perform it. When a man dies the children of the heir perform it, but only some of the children of his other brothers and half-brothers. 'We choose some and leave the others until their own father dies.' The genealogy given on p. 273 to show who performed the ritual on a particular occasion illustrates this. A mother (unless she has been divorced) performs the ritual for all her own children, and the children of a sister who is a co-wife. A divorced woman may come to mourn her dead child at her former husband's homestead but she takes no part in the ritual. 'I, the husband, perform the ritual alone; the woman comes to weep and returns to her new husband. I, the husband, say: "The blood is mine; that bag was bought (*alyokigwa*) with cattle; she was divorced and bought with cattle again."' A man performs the ritual for a son and daughter of each wife, and grandparents perform it for some, but not all, grandchildren.

[1] Probably also the younger sister or brother's daughter who replaces her as a wife, but we have no conclusive evidence on this point.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Certain siblings perform the ritual, but not all of them. We 788
have referred already to the heir, who is commonly a dead man's 593
younger brother, and who must perform it whether he is a full brother or half-brother, and to a woman's related co-wife who may be either a younger sister or a brother's daughter. The brother or sister 'who followed at the mother's breast', i.e. the sibling immediately younger, must always perform it. Nyakyusa find it very difficult to formulate the rules—there were lively arguments between well-informed people when the question was posed —but these principles emerge from a study of those who actually participated in eight funeral rituals.

Since the funeral ritual is directed to the shades, men can only 764
perform it in the homesteads of their agnatic kinsmen, or of their 602
maternal grandfather or his heir: they can never perform it at the homestead of affines (*kubuko*) for there they are not kinsmen (*abakamu*) but in-laws (*abako*). Hence a husband performs the ritual for his senior wife at his own homestead and her father (or his heir) at his. 'According to custom "the husbands" (*abalume*) perform the ritual, then, when they have done so, she whom we have put in place of the dead comes to us and says: "Fathers, we have performed the ritual, perform it yourselves." ' We never saw a ritual of farewell to a dead woman at her father's house but believe it to be a modified form of the ritual performed at her husband's.

Because of the rules of avoidance, a father-in-law and daughter- 606
in-law cannot, together, go through a ritual which involves the 764
close proximity of the principals. When, therefore, a man performs the death ritual for a son or son's child, he performs it at his own home, and the daughter-in-law concerned does so at her husband's homestead. The widow or parents must begin, and the father or grandparents follow. Thus when Mwandisi's son's son died, the parents of the child first performed the ritual at their home and Mwandisi and his wife then followed at theirs. But in a twin ritual, where participants can be secluded, father-in-law and daughter-in-law may attend the same performance.

A woman can perform a ritual either at her father's or her hus- 788
band's (as well as at her mother's father's) and she may even per- 593
form it according to two different forms, following that of her father's lineage when she is visiting him, and that of her husband's lineage when she is performing it at his homestead.

It is possible that, on the death of a man, his sisters' children 764
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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 has been a quarrel in the family, those members of the lineage
602 who have been at variance must attend and share the meat or beer, and bless one another. Grandchildren, 'comrades of the shades', must eat the offering left overnight in the banana grove.

593 If a son has quarrelled with his father and comes to beg pardon
621 the father calls his *neighbours* who must be present and partake of a
783 feast and bless the young men. 'If father and son just agree with one another and people do not eat anything, then the son will not be settled in well.'

585 At a puberty–marriage ritual the principals are the nubile girl
881 and her father or brother, her husband, and sometimes her mother
602 or mother-in-law. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest son's wife, or with her eldest daughter, if she is initiated at home. At an ordinary birth the principals are the mother and infant.

764 Besides these principals who undergo the full ritual there are
602 many minor actors. At a funeral there are the grave-diggers who,
621 traditionally among the Nyakyusa, were mature men, relatives or village neighbours.[1] They wash after the burial and are rewarded with a special leg of the funeral beef. As we have seen, the affines (*abako*), that is the fathers-in-law and sons-in-law of the deceased or of 'the owner of the funeral', come with cattle to kill or cloth. When a woman dies, her husband and her father, or her brother, kill cattle, and their affines bring cloths or, occasionally, cattle. Kinsmen—members of the lineage and their wives—and neighbours bring gifts of food to cook for the crowd of mourners, and small gifts of millet which are presented to the shade and used for making the ritual beer. After an abnormal birth, village neigh-
845 bours have their legs splashed with scalding medicine but do not
621 drink medicines or shave. The cattle of the village are also splashed. At the puberty ritual the bride's maids keep her com-
881 pany during her seclusion. The co-wives and neighbours of her
621 mother and mother-in-law assist in instructing her, and the neigh-
602 bours of her father join with him first in avoiding her and then in giving her gifts. Her father-in-law is identified with his brothers and his father's brothers' sons, whom she avoids, as well as his sisters, and her mother-in-law's brothers, and sisters' husbands. They, in turn, avoid her sisters, as well as herself.

621 By the 'congregation' we mean those who attend rituals to ex-
● 788 press sympathy, and whose presence is felt to be necessary to the

[1] In Ngonde they are *abatani*, cross-cousins.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

success of the ritual, but who do not play any specially defined 621
part. As we have seen, all who are reckoned kinsmen and all fellow 788
villagers *must* attend a funeral, and a large crowd enhances the status of the kinsmen of the deceased. At a puberty and marriage ritual the 'congregation' is much smaller but is nevertheless important, as is shown by the complaint of the girl marrying a Christian that if she were not initiated she would not be famed. At other rituals all who attend are actors.

The officiants (*abanyago*) for death, puberty and marriage, and 791
birth rituals are almost always elderly women who, by their own choice, have learnt the medicines and observances from some older *unyago* by acting as her assistant. We came across only one man who acted as *unyago* in death and puberty rituals, though at the rituals of spearing, binding with ropes, and protection against sorcery men are more common than women. Often all the elderly women are referred to as '*abanyago*' for 'they help the *unyago*', but the one who has been called upon to provide the medicines and organize the proceedings, and who is paid for her trouble, is clearly recognized. Sometimes she is a kinswoman of the 'owner' of the ritual—if a member of the lineage knows the medicines she will carry out the rituals for all her kin, as did Syungu, wife of Chief Porokoto's half-brother—but she is not necessarily a relative. It is knowledge, not kinship connections, that qualify her. She is the final arbitrator on procedure, and is insistent on exact observance of the details. Because knowledge of medicines is so important Nyakyusa often refer to the officiant at a ritual as *unganga*, a doctor, but *unyago* is the more precise word since *unganga* has other applications.

On the occasion of prayer in sickness, and in the ritual of recon- 791
ciliation, no specialist *unyago* is necessary. The senior kinsman of a 782
lineage prays to his shades direct, and a father and his neighbours 783
receive and bless an erring son without the mediation of any priest; but the doctor called in to treat a sick man may press the kinsmen to confess their anger and bless one another (as Mwakionde did in the case quoted) and come very close to organizing a ritual of reconciliation.

At a marriage ritual there is a 'go-between' (*umfuya*) represent- 585
ing the bride's father and one representing the groom, and, besides
their legal function as witnesses to the passage of cattle, they help [675]
the officiant to organize the ritual, and are specifically responsible for conveying invitations to the feasts. The wife of the groom's 'go-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ritual they distinguish *abakamu* (kinsmen) from *abandu itolo* (non-relatives) or *abapakipanga* (villagers), and *abakikolo* (those of the lineage of a dead man) from *abako* (affines) and mother's relatives (*abipwa*). These categories have different functions.

(*b*) *Christians*

The performance of family rituals is complicated by the fact that 16 per cent of the Nyakyusa are professing Christians, and in almost every lineage there are individuals who withdraw from the full performance of traditional rituals at death, puberty, and marriage, birth, and misfortune. In most cases such a withdrawal is treated tolerantly by the pagan kinsmen: the Christian kinsmen come to mourn, to congratulate the bride, to express sympathy with the parents of twins; and their non-participation in the washing and shaving and avoidance of ritual meat and beer is accepted. At the funeral of Mwamulenga his preceding full brother, who should have been a principal in the death ritual, was a Christian, and he took no part, though his children went through it. At the funeral of Mwampiki (p. 248) one boy was left untreated on the ground that he was a Christian and a Christian 'should not have two gods'. At the puberty ritual of Mwaihojo's daughter (p. 91) the brother called to wash with her was influenced by Christians and was reluctant to take part, though he finally did so.

Only when a son who is heir to family wealth, or to the office of chieftainship or priesthood refuses the inheritance of widows (as a Christian must do) is there very strong pressure on him to conform to traditional custom: the union of the heir with the widows is held essential to their health. Sometimes also there is acute conflict between different members of the family over the performance of an autopsy, the pagans pressing for it and the Christians opposing it. This we saw in the death of E. when her pagan senior brother wished to examine her, and her Christian junior brother opposed him vehemently.

That Christians cannot take part in certain of the rituals[1] and do not suffer if they omit them is generally accepted. The farewell to the dead at the homestead of the deceased, and the treatment of kinsmen of twins, fall into this category. About certain other rituals, such as the ritual of the gasping cough and the protection against sorcery, opinions are divided. Some of our Christian friends insisted that 'the gasping cough is a real illness' and cited

[1] There are minor differences in the rules of the different missions.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

795 the case of a Christian who had stayed away from a ritual in his
184 family and 'as soon as he met his relatives he fell sick and coughed
•788 like an animal. So they got some of the lees of the beer and gave it to him and he recovered.' A number of Christian kinsmen, leaders in the Church, did not come to the gasping-cough ritual which we attended, but others did come and sipped the beer, or had the lees sent to them at their homes. In the ritual for protection against sorcery which we watched a Christian brother and his wife took part.

And some Christians, though they deny the necessity of many of the pagan rituals for themselves as Christians, still believe them to be necessary to their pagan kinsmen. Hence the anomalous (and to the missionaries the highly unorthodox) position of a woman professing Christianity and acting as officiant in a pagan ritual, as did N. in the death ritual for Kalata's mother (p. 239). N., it will be remembered, came by night. The officiant who performed the ritual for Mwakobela's twins was under instruction as a Christian and was proposing to hand on her medicines to her daughter, a pagan, when she herself was received into the Church. She explained this when Mwakobela (her patient) asked her: 'And what shall we do for twin medicine when you become a Christian?' And we had little doubt that she believed in the efficacy of her medicine for pagans.

Though Christians cannot go through pagan rituals as principals they do not withdraw altogether: they often help their pagan neighbours as grave-diggers at a funeral and in the provision of food for guests at funerals and marriages; and the young men and girls may dance as a separate group, singing their own
[578] songs or hymns and ignoring the drums. Sometimes acute rivalry between the two groups of dancers is apparent.

771 The effect of Christian teaching on pagan ritual is not limited
177 to the partial withdrawal of professing Christians. In those villages most influenced by missions, such as Ilolo, near Rungwe, there is considerable scepticism among pagans, and many of them curtail the rituals in their families, or do not attend them. The Christian view is that 'the pagans see that the Christians disregard the rituals and nothing happens to them, so they begin to ignore them too'. 'Pagans fear much less than they used to do.'

177 Men who are in European employment either inside or outside
464 the district cannot attend all the rituals. Their case is partially met by keeping the lees of the ritual beer with which to treat them

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(28) of Mwampondele (27) who had fled from the stool and had died. 643 [761]

The chosen man was secluded in a hut, lying on a litter with his priests, who kept him company (*ukumpanja*), just as a nubile girl is secluded and lies on a litter with her maids, or a young chief with his village headmen at his 'coming out'. Here is the account of Mwasesi, the oldest of the priests of Lubaga (a man of about seventy-five) who saw the installation of the last Lwembe, Mwakisisya (56).

A skin and a head-pad of leaves (*ingata*)[1] are brought by the Kinga. The priests catch the chief and set him on these; and then he cannot run away, it is taboo. I, Mwasesi, would sit on one side of him and my friend on the other, and force him to sit on them. Then we plead with him and say: 'You are the Lion, the Leopard, the Snake, the Banana, the Bean, the Millet, the Cow Pea, and the Lentil.' (Lentils are very important, you know, because it is with them that we celebrate the ritual, and with cow peas.) Then, after a time, he says: 'Leave me', and he goes to find the cow; this cow is just for the priests to eat that night. Then we take him into a certain house, cut leaves and spread them for a litter; and we keep him company there on the litter for some time. Then he sends messages to Mwakyusa (38), to Mwankyuse (33), and to Mwakisambe (30), and the Kinga [i.e. their descendants]. Each chief who is Lwembe's descendant sends commoner priests . . . they gather to induct him into Lubaga, he who was in the house. It is just like the 'coming out' ritual for a young chief. 643 788

The Lwembe in his own person, and in a lesser degree his 'sons' who are ordinary chiefs, are identified with the power of growth. Not only must the Lwembe not die with the breath still in his body, or with his hair and nails still upon it, but when he is chosen the priests test whether his reign will be long or short (perhaps whether they can permit him to live or not) by taking a little millet, putting it in a banana leaf and watching to see whether it sprouts or not. 'If it sprouts and grows at once he will live long; if it does not, he will be the priest [i.e. divine king] but will die very soon.' 643 [787]

Because the power of making rain, food, milk and children lay in the body of the Lwembe he was fearful and terrible. 'No one built close to him, it was taboo, no one touched Mwakisisya (56) . . . if he wished to make it rain he would make it rain all 643 784

[1] The Kinga priests spoke of a cloth to wear and a stool and an axe which were kept in the inner part of the hut of the Lwembe's great wife and which no man, save a priest of Lubaga, might see.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

778 Lwembe, and the grove of the first Lwembe himself, the last being
782 the most sacred. In it stands a miraculous tree from which, the priests aver, sometimes comes sap like water, and sometimes blood. 'If it is watery there will be a plague of ulcers in the country—
[753] running sores—if it is blood there will be dysentery. But as soon
[755] as the hoes are placed in the grove, or the black bull is killed, then the sick begin to recover.'

Godfrey Wilson attended three celebrations at Lubaga, and we
● 788 heard of five others which occurred during our period of fieldwork. The ritual is esoteric, that is to say, only the representative of Lwembe and his priests participate, and the details are not revealed to others, but its occurrence is widely known and discussed among older men.

The celebrations observed were modified by the fact that no one
[643] had been installed as Lwembe since the death of Mwakisisya
[793] (56) before 1914. The possible candidates whom the priests had
[177] wished to instal had refused—'they feared the grove'; the only one who was said to be willing was rejected on account of his character. The priests gave 'European times' as the reason for there being no Lwembe. 'When the country was ours before you Europeans came' the elected candidate was compelled to accept office. On the death of Mwakisisya, the Kinga priests ordered that his senior son Mwanjala I (77) should take his place, and when Mwanjala I died (three years after his father) his full brother Mwanjala II (78) succeeded. He took a leading part in the rituals observed, but was not an anointed Lwembe. The priests explained: 'We fear, thinking that if a chief is seized [and compelled to sit on the stool] he will complain to the Government and we shall be punished.' During the period of German rule they had been threatened with imprisonment if they continued the ritual . . . 'we feared and stole through the country by night'. . . . And there is still much secrecy about its truncated celebration. Since the journey down 'the road of Lwembe' with the drum traditionally involved human sacrifice, and the Lwembe was smothered when ailing, there is an absolute incompatibility between a full celebration of the ritual and European administration.

The influence of the Christian minority is also considerable. The
177 view of most Nyakyusa Christians with whom we discussed
788 communal rituals is that they used to be efficient, but are so no longer, since men have been taught a better way of approaching God. 'God said: "They are mistaken but in their hearts they are

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

looking for me", and so if there was much heat he would send rain.' But this no longer happens. 177 788

At the same time both pagans and Christians tell a myth of how a European missionary, Rev. — Jauer (Mwaisumo), who visited the grove of Lubaga intending to remove the hoes in the grove to demonstrate the falsehood of the ritual, was confounded by a miracle (*ifika*). [773] [789]

Once the missionary Mwaisumo wished to go and see the grove of Lubaga. He was warned that if he entered he would flee because there were many marvels there, and the rain would catch him. He said: 'Oh, I shall go, nothing will happen.' So he went and entered the grove, and he found many hoes, some standing up, some lying down, and some of them had 'eyes'. He seized one to take it away, then there was a crash of thunder, and he was afraid and fled. When he ran out of the grove the rain fell in torrents. It is said that he was so frightened he left his jacket behind. From that time people said that indeed there are miracles at Lubaga. 539

'European times' is given as the reason for sacrifices being less frequent and regular than formerly. The occasions were, and still are: any period of hunger or scarcity, such as the Kinga regularly experience during the dry season, and the Nyakyusa also complain of at that time; any irregular misfortune such as a failure of the rains, a plague of locusts or an epidemic; and any prediction of hunger or disease by a prophet (*unsololi* or *unkunguluka*). But the chiefs are said to be more reluctant to provide the cattle for sacrifice than formerly, and less quickly influenced by the actual occurrence of hunger or by prophecy that famine is imminent. Nevertheless they still 'treat the earth' (*ukutendekesya umfu*) by sending a black cow to Lubaga when hunger presses. 782 [177]

According to Kasitile (86) and Mwamakunda (his fellow priest) no ritual could be performed in the grove of the first Lwembe when he had no living representative. Formerly, the Kissoule in office and another priest penetrated alone, and there bound a live sheep and left it to bleat until a python took it. 'It is Kyala, he turns himself into a python' (*Jo kyala: ipela sota*). Here Kasitile used *kyala* in the sense of 'the lord' and he was referring to Lwembe. According to another informant, when the heir to any priesthood connected with Lubaga is installed he should sleep in the grove enclosed in a stout wicker hut, and remain there until the python of the grove comes and *licks* him. The case was cited of a priest who had lain captive for two weeks 643 793 782

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been someone [of the dead Kyungus] whom you forgot to ask about.' 'And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again.' If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry, and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would, and then the diviner would tell them that it was so-and-so (one of the dead Kyungus) and they would go and sacrifice in his grove.

Thus to insult Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. An 'insult' might mean any neglect of the obligations of the chiefs and nobles and commoners of the plain to their lord.

The people of Ngonde hoed large fields as tribute to the Kyungu and if they failed to do so 'he grew angry and poured all the water out of the pot in which he kept his rain stones' (*vide infra*, p. 114) and 'the sky dried up'. Then the chiefs called their men to hoe. . . . 'They hoed and hoed and hoed and their wives planted, then the rain came in a torrent. . . . Kyungu created much rain.'

Or if an elephant hunter neglected to send the Kyungu one of the tusks of any elephant he killed he would not kill another. 'The country beneath was angry . . . the shades of the dead Kyungus . . . they were angry saying: "Why do you stint our child?" '

The rainfall in the Ngonde plain is less than half what it is in the Nyakyusa valley and anxiety about rainfall was constantly shown in the communal rituals; elephant hunting was also a matter of concern in a way in which it was not among the Nyakyusa and this too is reflected in rituals; but there was also the preoccupation with health [illegible] fertility, as in the prayers at Lubaga. In the groves circling Mbande the nobles prayed: 'May the sterile bear children, may the cattle and fowls increase, may the children sleep and not cry at night, may the witches not injure anyone.' And as we shall see, it was health and fertility that men had in mind when they cleared out the ashes each year after the break of the rains.

Towards Christmas time, when the first maize and the first

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 and Mwaipopo and Kisogota smeared it over the tails which
778 were then put out with the horns to dry in the sun. Mwaipopo
789 suggested getting Mwainyelage, the doctor, to treat them further, and the others agreed saying: 'Let Mwaipopo find someone, that the earth may be good, that it be heavy.' Njobakosa had spoken earlier of the cattle giving much milk after the treatment of the tails. And they went on to discuss the fact that the young chief Mwankuga II (151) had begotten no child by the wife inherited from his elder brother (150) whose place he had taken. Thus the function of the chief in creating plenty and [842] fertility was in the priests' minds, and there may be some link between the virility of the chief and success in war—one informant spoke of the chief's senior wives jumping over the tails immediately after the consummation of their marriage—but of this we are not certain. What is common knowledge is that the tails are 'for seizing cattle', and they are associated with 'manure and blood'. We were told at the conclusion of the ritual: 'Formerly we should have gone tomorrow, after this treating of the tails, to fight.'

Besides medicines for majesty, courage, and popularity as rulers, chiefs use medicines to protect themselves against the fearfulness of the groves in which they sacrifice, medicines to 'close the country to hunger', to make their capitals grand, and to cause thieves who have stolen, to walk round and round until caught.

Medicines are regarded as essential to authority, victory, and successful rule, and the kind used and the dose given are adjusted to the status and character of the individual. 'Village headmen [622] do not drink the most important *ikisgila*; they drink a lesser one, *imbinga*; the senior headman is given most, the junior less.' And the chief's wives do not drink *ikisgila* at all, but only a powder suitable for them. But the use of these medicines has its dangers. The chief, like other people who have been drinking protective medicines, does not eat the new crops grown on fields fertilised [754] by ash without fortifying himself. The danger is said to come from the burnt rubbish heaps, because medicines for defence against witches and sorcerers are burnt in them and, as we have seen, certain of the medicines which the chief uses create a power akin to witchcraft. He tastes the new millet ritually in June, the cow [788] peas in September, and pumpkin leaves in November; and he also tastes the 'new earth' at the break of the rains in October or early November. 'We chiefs fear that the medicines we have drunk will

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

turn round in the belly; people say the earth will go bad in us.' 'A child who has drunk medicines will be ill, the smell of the new food or the wet earth goes to the belly.'

The chief eats the first fruits and medicines with the commoner who lies down with him at the commencement of his 'coming out' and 'is his wife to taste with him the first fruits and powdered medicines' and is 'fearful' like the medicines. He is identified with the chief's body and may be compared with the *isithumwa* of the Pondo chief[1] or the *isula* of the Swazi.[2] His function is to protect the chief against the medicines themselves.

(c) DEATH AND BURIAL OF A CHIEF

Both because of a chief's descent, and because of his use of medicines, mystical power resides in his body.

In the old days a ruling chief was not allowed to die, but was buried while still living, because they feared that if he became unconscious before death he would take away all the food with him, and great hunger would come on us. Men feared *ifwile* medicine in his belly. They said: 'If he dies naturally many of his people will die. . . . He should go alive.' And formerly they buried him with the son of a commoner, also alive, for they said, 'Let him enjoy the company of his man on the road.' When a chief was sick before the coming out of his sons they tried to keep him alive if possible, but if he was clearly going to die then they buried him like this; after the coming out they hastened his death—but only if he were ill. That was why the chiefs fear the 'coming out' of their sons so greatly. Had Mwaipopo lived in the old days and his heir been alive he would have been buried during his last illness.

When a ruling chief was sick the village headmen sent the chief's wives away and looked after him themselves. Then, if they thought he would, or should, die, they tore off all his nails, those of his toes and those of his fingers, and pulled out his hair, and put them in a pot. After that they buried him by night still alive, with a live person, the child of a commoner whom they had seized very secretly. The pot stayed in the house of the senior wife of the chief who had died, and they said, 'It is the chief, we are with him still.' This was the sacred pot for the sacred beer.[3] They kept silence about the death for a month or perhaps two months, saying: 'Let the chief go away first.'

And when a younger brother, a junior chief, died, though he died

[1] M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 350.
[2] H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p. 38.
[3] Kaulile Rudy denied this, *ante infra*, p. 69.

Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

the chief himself. The members of each village co-operate in some measure in cultivation and herding and they form a defensive group against attack 'by day and by night'—i.e. against armed raiders and witches.[1] But there is no great elaboration of ritual for single villages. Such village rituals as occur are connected with defence against witchcraft and involve driving out a suspect witch, or receiving back a member who has fled from fear of witchcraft, or protecting the village fields against witches.[2] Most communal rituals are organized on the basis of the chiefdom or group of chiefdoms, and villages or sections participate as segments of the chiefdom.

The principle of generation and that of section hold one another in check. All those who have 'come out' together have a strong sense of unity as opposed to the generations of their fathers and sons, but every generation is split into two sections each led by an heir of the chief, and these sections have a certain territorial solidarity. It is common in Africa for organized age-groups to cut across kinship and territorial groups. The Nyakyusa peculiarity lies in the territorial unity of age-sets which occupy villages, and the manner in which the fissiparous tendencies within a chiefdom have a constitutional outlet in the rivalry between the sections of a ruling generation which become independent at the 'coming out' of the next generation.

The combination of the hereditary and selective principles of leadership among the Nyakyusa is also somewhat different from that among their neighbours. With many Central African peoples the heir to the holder of the office of village headman or chief is selected, and the most capable member of a given lineage or lineage segment appointed.[3] Among the Nyakyusa succession is precisely defined and there is no selection of a suitable heir except to the supreme and greatly feared office of 'divine king', but the selective principle is given full scope in the 'catching' of leaders for the young men's villages at every 'coming out'. It is this combination of the hereditary and selective principles which binds together chiefs and commoners and successive generations. The rules of

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 44-48, 91-103.

[2] *op. cit.*, pp. 32-4, 105 ff., 134-8, 170-4.

[3] J. Gluckman, 'Headmanship and Ritual of Lampale Village', *Africa*, xxvi (1956), p. 111; M. G. Marwick, 'The Social Context of Cewa Witch Belief', *Africa*, xxii (1952), pp. 215-21; V. Turner, 'Ndembu Village Structure', *Africa*, xxv (1955), pp. 175-91; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), pp. 137-63.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631 recognized over 100 chiefdoms, mustering anything from 100 to 3,000 adult men apiece.

Although no centralized political authority existed before the 769 German occupation, certain groups of chiefdoms joined in com-
631 mon rituals directed to common ancestors. We traced four such centres of worship among the Nyakyusa; the most important being Lubaga, in the middle of the valley, where Kings priests (from the top of the Livingstone mountains) join with many Nyakyusa chiefdoms in sacrifice to Lwembe, who is claimed as the ancestor both of the chiefs of the Nyakyusa proper, and of the Kings. At LiKyala, on the Lake-shore plain, Kings also join in sacrifice with the surrounding Nyakyusa chiefdoms. In Ngonde the chief connected with a similar centre of worship, Mbande, developed far-reaching secular as well as religious powers; and by the time the Europeans arrived he was established as a paramount chief with the title of the Kyungu. This development was [439] directly connected with the fact that Ngonde traded with the outside world, and that their Kyungu, through his control of ivory, was able also to control the guns and cloth which came into the country:[1] the Nyakyusa, remaining isolated, remained politically disunited.

Besides sacrificing to a distant ancestor in company with the representatives of a large group of chiefdoms, two or more chiefs who are neighbours participate in a sacrifice at the grove in which their common father, or grandfather, is buried. Thus common worship links both large groups of chiefdoms, whose chiefs are more or less distantly related, and small groups of contiguous chiefdoms whose chiefs are close kinsmen. The sacrifices made are to the chiefs of immediately preceding generations, and to certain great heroes of the distant past, such as Lwembe and Kyala.

All these sacrifices are believed to bring rain and fertility, for 769 the well-being of each chiefdom is thought to be bound up with
769 the health of the chief and the goodwill of his ancestors.

The Nyakyusa are all agreed that their chiefs, *abanyafyale*, are 173 'strangers' who came down from the Livingstone mountains
652 eight or ten generations ago, and found the valley already occu-
563 pied by people who had no knowledge of fire, but ate their food raw. The chiefs brought fire with them—some say, cattle also;

[1] Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., pp. 9, 39-48.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

622 neighbours, he judges their cases; he is their leader at ceremonies
157 and in the old days he led them to war also. He represents their desires to the chief, and it is through him, and in consultation with him, that the chief gives orders. Besides this each headman [754] (*ulifumu*) is believed to protect his own villagers from witchcraft, 'to watch over the country by night', to shield men and cattle from the spiritual forces of evil.[1] To fit them for this task, village headmen are treated with medicines at the 'coming out' to give them the power of seeing and fighting witches.

622 So important is this position of village headman that legal precautions are taken 'to prevent the village headman becoming a chief', as several informants have put it to us. It is illegal to choose a village headman from among the kinsmen of a chief, and it is illegal to elect the son of a village headman to that office in any age-village of his own contemporaries, though he may perhaps inherit the position in his father's village when his father dies.

622 To return to the 'coming out' ceremony: when the old men
621 have made up their minds, one of them goes among the crowd of young men, and catches hold of those they have chosen in order of seniority: first the one who is to be leader of the senior village of the first son of the old chief, then the leader of the senior village of his second son, then the leader of the next senior village of the first son, and so on. There are commonly eight age-villages of young men; of these four will belong to the chiefdom of the first son, four to that of the second. The eight new village headmen are now publicly known, four in each new chiefdom.

622 The young chiefs, together with the senior headman of each,
789 are then treated with medicines that they may be impressive (*usiya*). From birth a chief undergoes periodical treatment to
643 make him impressive (*usiya*) 'that we commoners may tremble before him'. The treatment at the 'coming out' is directed towards the same end: 'We treat him, then he will be altogether a chief, men will respect him!' The village headmen now drink the

[192] [1] The essential meaning of a word in one culture is often illuminated by the meaning of a word from the same stem among neighbouring peoples. In this connection it is significant that *ifumu* in Bemba and *ufumu* in Nyanja mean 'chief', but in Ambo *ufufumu* means 'magicians' (including diviners) (*African Political Systems*, p. 145), and among the Subiyaba *lufumu* is used in the same sense (*Africa*, Vol. XIX, p. 14). cf. H. H. Johnston, *A Comparative Study of the Bantu and Semi-Bantu Languages*, Vol. II, p. 270.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

medicines of power for the first time, and these are thought to create or develop in them *amanga*, that is, the power of seeing and fighting witches (*vide infra*, *pp.* 96-102). To the senior headman of each young chief is handed a magic horn to attract people to the country. 'The horn is the luck of the chief that many people may come to build.' To each is given also a magic tail, which, it is believed, will enable him to dream of wars that are approaching and which, together with a magic spear, he carries into battle. 'The spear of the chieftainship is to fight battles with, it is manhood, strength.' The horn, the tail, and the spear are emblems of office handed on by the senior village headman of the old chief to the senior headmen of the young chiefs. They were treated periodically by a special doctor and a set was provided for each independent chiefdom at the coming out. The treatment of these emblems is now rarely undertaken—we were fortunate to see it once. The Nyakyusa say that since the country has been pacified, it has become unnecessary; its purpose was to secure success in war.

The next stage in the action is the one from which the whole institution takes its name: 'the coming out' (*ukwenka*). The two young chiefs are secluded for a few hours in the hut of the old chief's first wife, where they receive various forms of magical treatment, and when this is finished someone outside knocks at the door and cries 'Come out!' Then, to quote the words of a village headman who told us about his own 'coming out', 'The director of ceremonies said: "Get up!" The chiefs got up and came out (*kaukila*)[1] of the house to us, and we, the crowd of young men, cried "Come out!" and welcomed them. Then we all ran shouting and calling the war cry towards the next chiefdom. In the old days we should have invaded that country to take cattle and to bring them back and eat them at the new huts which we build next. But that is finished now.' The senior headmen of the new chiefdom lead the charge, each grasping his war tail, his

[1] Cf. the traditional Nyakyusa greeting (now archaic) '*Kukila!*' literally meaning 'You have come out (of the house)' i.e. 'Good morning!' This greeting was not confined to those who had been through the *ukwenka* ceremony.

A comparison of the meaning of the root in other Bantu languages is again suggestive. In Ekoma *ukwenka* means 'to install circumcised lads into manhood by giving them presents when they come out from their seclusion and are publicly acknowledged as men by the assembly of men' (Kropf, *A Kafir English Dictionary*); *ukwenka* means 'backsliding, robbery (of a circumcised man, not a boy).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

law to avoid her father-in-law, another informant said: 'It is forbidden to look at fathers-in-law. If we do look then we shall not die well, we shall long to die and not be able to do so, because both those below (the dead) and those above (the living) are angry. Yes, it is the witches we mean when we say "those above".'

c. *The ego-village and medicines*

Unlike the belief in witchcraft and 'the breath of men', which mainly affects relationships within a village, or the ancestor cult which is confined to the relations between kinsmen, and between chief and people, the use of medicines (*mwiko*)[1] enters into every type of relationship in Nyakyusa society. Medicines are employed to win success in almost every undertaking: cultivating, herding, hunting, love-making, war. They are regarded as one of the main props of authority; the impressiveness (*ubunkye*) of a chief, and the power of a village headman to command, being directly related to the medicines with which they are treated (*vide supra*, pp. 14–5). They are resorted to for the promotion of fertility, for the treatment of the sick, and for protection and retaliation generally, as well as the means of directly harming an enemy. Medicines are believed to operate along with other mystical powers. For example, they are an essential element in rituals directed to the ancestors, and they are used for the discovery of witchcraft (in the ordeal) as well as for protection against it, and for the treatment of patients thought to have been 'eaten' by the witches or chilled by 'the breath of men'. Used alone, medicines are held to be ineffective against witchcraft or 'the breath of men', but they are regarded as a useful complement to other action, such as the banishment of the witch or the repentance of the sinner.

The power of witchcraft or of defence against witches (*umungwi*) is connected with medicines, for it is thought often to be acquired for defensive purposes (and more rarely for aggressive purposes) through drinking medicines (*vide* pp. 23, 221). But the powers of witchcraft, or witch defence, and of medicines are quite distinct; the one implies a peculiar physical condition, the presence of one or more pythons in the belly, whereas the other may be bought from a doctor and used by anyone, and its

[1] The root *-kwa* implies something derived from a plant, cf. *ifikwa*, a wooden spoon.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

efficacy neither depends upon nor affects the user's anatomy. The creation and control of wild animals, for example, is thought to turn on knowing the right medicines, not on any innate power, and is not therefore classed as witchcraft.

The Nyakyusa hold that just as 'python power' may be put to good or evil use, so also medicines may be employed legally or illegally. Particular techniques are not in themselves either good or bad; their morality turns on the purpose which they serve. Thus our friend and neighbour, Mwakisonde, who was believed to have created four lions, which were roaming the neighbourhood, by placing certain bundles of twigs in the long grass, was regarded as a benefactor; for the lions had attacked neither men nor cattle, and besides adding dignity (*ubunyo*) to the country were killing the wild pig, which had been destroying the gardens. But a certain X— was driven out of Mwaijande's country because he was alleged to have created leopards which had killed children and cows. 'In 1926 X— was notorious for making leopards. It was said that he got a medicine from Mlinda to make them. His neighbours feared to quarrel with him for in that year leopards infested the whole of Selya, especially the country of Mwaijande. It was said that if one quarrelled with this man one's child would be killed by leopards the following day. He was notorious. Once he quarrelled with a neighbour, saying: "Your cattle are eating my food." Then the following day the child of that man was taken by a leopard. The chief drove X— out. When they questioned him he denied having familiars ("animals") but the chief said: "Move from my country, for your animals are destroying this country." He said: "Chief, give me the ordeal." The chief refused, saying: "Not get out of my country." So he moved. Now he is back in the country of Mwaijande. He returned to the place from which he had moved."[1]

Not all medicines believed to cause sickness and death are illegal; there are many retaliatory medicines which are believed only to harm the evil-doer, e.g. the thief, the adulterer, or the eater of stolen food; and the use of these 'medicines of ownership' (*ifilombolo*) is considered quite legitimate. A man gives his wives medicines to drink (without their knowledge) and then any lover who may sleep with them will, it is said, contract disease in

[1] In another account this man was spoken of as a witch (*pandai*), cf. Divination, p. 250.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

consequence, though the wives themselves are free. Further the adulterer will pass the disease on to any women he subsequently sleeps with, including his own wives. Gonorrhoea is one of the diseases attributed to this type of medicine. Medicines are also put on houses or fields, for the purpose of bringing upon thieves, or eaters of stolen food, the itch, swollen genitals, dislocation of the knee-cap and thigh, and other ills. One doctor proudly told us of a medicine he possessed which would prevent a thief leaving the field in which he was stealing 'and make him go round and round till daylight, when he is discovered and admits his theft'. Certain protective medicines are thought to cause sorcery to recoil on the sender. But their use is legal; so also is the use of a vengeance magic called 'the horn', *ulupende* (cf. Document, p. 212), and another type, *ilyepe*, which is held to work only between relatives. These medicines are resorted to when one party to a dispute is dissatisfied with the judgement given in court, and occasionally in cases which have never been taken to court. They are held to harm the person against whom they are directed only if he be guilty. If he is innocent, they recoil on the user. What is illegal is the direct use of medicines to harm an enemy, without any safeguard to ensure that the medicine should only harm the guilty. This is *ubulogo*, 'the snaring of men', which we translate here as sorcery.[1] The common techniques of sorcery are said to be putting medicine in an enemy's path, pricking it into his footprints, or putting it into his food and drink.

In theory the distinction between the legal and illegal use of destructive medicines is clear, but the classification of a particular case depends upon the standpoint of the informant. Just as the supposed victims of 'the breath of men' referred angrily to the attacks of 'witches', so informants whose families were alleged to have suffered from 'the horn', referred to it as 'sorcery' (*ubulogo*).

The belief in sorcery and in retaliatory magic is directly parallel to the belief in witchcraft and the 'breath of men', while the belief in protective medicines is parallel to the belief in the power of 'the defenders'. The distinction between the two sets of beliefs turns, however, not only on the difference between the manipulation of medicines, and the exercise of an innate power,

[1] In 'An African Morality', *Africa*, Vol. III (1938) 'sorcery' was used for all destructive magic; I now confine it to the illegal use of destructive medicines.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 but also on the relationships to which they apply. While witchcraft,
'the breath of men', and the power of 'the defenders' are thought
789 to operate primarily within the village and never beyond the chiefdom, sorcery, retaliatory and protective medicines may operate beyond the village and chiefdom as well as within them. Moreover, while the whole village, led by the headman, joins in defence against witchcraft, protective and retaliatory medicines are used primarily by individuals and families. Medicines of vengeance ('the horn' and *ilyepa*) are directed against kinship groups—members of an agnatic lineage, their spouses, and the children of daughters, are all held to be in danger—not local groups. The next-door neighbours of a man attacked will be safe so long as they are not kinsmen or affines.

The one occasion on which the village or village-section, acting
241 as a group, uses medicines, is at the burning of rubbish heaps in
789 the fields, before planting millet and certain other crops (*vide supra*, pp. 51–4). As we have shown, these medicines are supposed to protect the grain from witches and sorcerers, as well as to increase the yield. The Kukwe argue that the headman who lit the medicated fires must also be the first to taste the food grown on the fields, and he takes it with medicines, but this is not insisted upon by all the Nyakyusa; most commonly it is family groups that are careful to eat protective medicines with the first-fruits from their fields.

754 Envy is what makes men take to sorcery, the Nyakyusa say,
envy of another's riches, or power, or employment. As we have
789 seen, envy is cited as a motive for witchcraft also. But it is not the sole motive. Greed is the primary cause (*vide supra*, p. 92). And while witchcraft can only be used to work off a grudge against a village neighbour, sorcery can be used against anyone. Like witchcraft, the effects of 'the breath of men' are said to be confined to the village. Moreover 'the breath' can only operate against a known sinner—it is the murmuring of neighbours about an individual which causes him to sicken; whereas most retaliatory medicines work against unknown persons, discovering the thief, adulterer, or sorcerer, as well as punishing him. As elsewhere in Africa, the use of sorcery and retaliatory medicines is said to be almost entirely confined to men, though women are often named as witches. In short, the situations in which sorcery and medicines of retaliation are used overlap at one or two points with those in

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

which witchcraft and 'the breath of men' operate, but their supposed fields of action are relatively distinct.

In the past, the punishment for sorcery was death with torture by impaling, not merely confiscation of property and banishment. Proof of the practice of sorcery depended upon the evidence of the doctor who had supplied the medicine (who was not regarded as implicated in the crime) and upon the *umwafi* ordeal. The Nyakyusa insist that the practice of sorcery was formerly rare, and that it has increased enormously, much more than the practice of witchcraft. This belief is to be related to two facts. First, Nyakyusa co-operate much more than they formerly did with people who live in different villages. The clerks who work together in Government offices, and who have a fearsome reputation as sorcerers, do not necessarily live in the same village; and being apart at night when the witches fly, they cannot be supposed to bewitch one another. But there is frequent occasion for friction between them and therefore a standing temptation to employ sorcery. So also in other types of employment, in trade and on journeys, individuals are frequently in contact with men of different villages. Secondly, belief in sorcery is felt to be compatible with the acceptance of a scientific explanation of causes of disease in a way that belief in witchcraft is not. *Ubutege* is commonly translated as 'poisoning' by those who speak English, whether the medicine is or is not put into food or drink, or whether it is supposed to affect all who eat it or only the individual against whom it is directed. All types of sorcery tend to be rationalized as 'poisoning'; and many educated Nyakyusa who deny the reality of witchcraft admit to a lively fear of sorcerers.

As the table on pp. 198–213 shows, however, accusations of witchcraft are still much more common than accusations of sorcery in the community as a whole. We heard of thirty-eight cases of supposed witchcraft to eleven of sorcery, and there was no reason to think that our friends were more likely to mention the one type of case than the other.

d. The age-village and Christianity

Since common action against witches, and to punish transgressors through 'the breath of men', is one of the primary functions of an age-village, what happens in a Christian village, or

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 akin to witchcraft and distinct from the power of senior relatives is used to punish wrong-doers and to protect[1] the village from witches, and in the belief that village headmen are foremost among 'the defenders'.

626 The closest parallel to the Nyakyusa concept of 'the breath of men' of which we have evidence in Africa is the belief in the 789 'conditional curse' among the Meru, Embu, and Kikuyu people. Lambert shows that the main sanction enforcing the judgement of the Council of Elders among the Meru people was the belief that its curse brought misfortune, and he was told in Embu that the Warriors' Council has a similar power over warriors.[2] Kenyatta shows tha among the Kikuyu the conditional curse was used to protect beacons, to enforce the judgement of the Council of Elders, and to guard against bribery.[3] As we have seen, the Nyakyusa of the plain also use a word *ikigune*, which is best translated as 'the curse', when the people of the hills use the phrase 'the breath of men' (*vide supra*, p. 101), and whatever phrase is used the implication is that misfortune comes from the shocked astonishment and the anger of neighbours (or father's neighbours) which has been expressed in 'murmuring'. In the Nyakyusa view a formal cursing is not necessary to bring down misfortune, but the anger must be *expressed* (*vide supra*, p. 106). A belief in the legitimate exercise of mystical power by contemporaries or seniors to punish non-relatives thus appears in four societies with highly developed age-organizations, and further field-work may show that the two are always coincident.

However that may be, the belief in 'the curse' (or 'the breath 626 of men') among the Nyakyusa is shaped by the fact that villages are occupied by age-sets. The social function of 'the breath of men' in a Nyakyusa age-village is strictly parallel to that of the mystical power of senior relatives in a kinship village. Where, as among most African peoples, the neighbours are kinsmen, no distinction is made between the mystical effects of the legitimate

[1] There are indications that the power of witchcraft is thought sometimes to be used for defence among the Thonga (Junod, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 510, 516), and the Azande (Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., pp. 129–30) but the idea does not apparently bulk large, and there is no suggestion of a similar power being used to punish wrong-doers.

[2] H. E. Lambert, *The Use of Indigenous Authorities in Tribal Administration* (Communications from the School of African Studies, University of Cape Town), pp. 9–10, 14–15.

[3] J. Kenyatta, op. cit., pp. 39–40, 221–2.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

anger of neighbours on the one hand, and of kinsmen on the other.

The idea that a Nyakyusa village headman has the mystical power called *amanga*, and leads the attacks of justly enraged neighbours, gives him a position in his village comparable to that of the headman who, among many African peoples, is the senior kinsman in his village. Each has mystical power over the members of his village, and the fact that the Nyakyusa headman's power is derived from 'a python in the stomach', and operates like witchcraft, while the power of a senior kinsman derives from his birth, and operates through the shades, makes relatively little difference to the relations of the village headman with his people.

The Nyakyusa system is peculiar in that the village headman is foremost as the discoverer of, and defender against, witches; he combines the functions fulfilled elsewhere by the village headman and the witch-doctor. The protection which kinship villages in other African cultures seek on the one hand from their ancestors, and on the other from the witch-doctor,[1] the Nyakyusa look for from their village headmen. Doctors who claim to discover witches, and provide medicines for protection against them, exist in Nyakyusa society; some, at least, of them are spoken of as having *amanga*—the same mystical power as the headmen have—through which they are enabled to see and fight the witches; but witch-doctors play a much smaller part than they do among the Azande or the Pondo; in the battle against witches they are quite overshadowed by the village headmen. Defence against witchcraft is a village affair, and the foremost 'defenders' (*abamanga*) are the political authorities. Village rituals directed to the ancestors are conspicuously absent among the Nyakyusa, and our hypothesis is that this absence, together with the belief that the 'python power' of village headmen and others is used to punish wrong-doers and defend the innocent within their village, is dependent upon the age-village organization, in which neighbours are not kinsmen and the position of village headman is not hereditary.

[1] cf. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., pp. 181-82, 231; Junod, op. cit., pp. 492, 516-8. The Thonga 'magician' is also believed to fly and know the witches, because he shows their power.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

a. THE 'COMING OUT' (*UBUSOKA*)

Mwaikambo (clerk and son of a chief).[1]

621 622 643 "The village headmen begin to talk among themselves, saying: "Our sons have grown up, should we not establish them?" So they go to tell the chief, saying: "Our sons have grown up, let us show them to the country." Two chiefs always "come out". We call them the senior and the junior. It is an old custom which is still followed that two chiefs should "come out".

[789] "So the village headmen seek a doctor to make them a medicine horn and treat the tails of chieftainship with medicine. The village headmen take council together and choose two senior headmen to "come out" with the chiefs. These senior headmen drink medicine (*embondaeya*) with the chiefs.

"When many people, together with the two young chiefs, have come together the doctor gives powdered medicine (*embondaeya*) to the chiefs and the senior headman chosen for each chief. They give a spear of chieftainship, and a horn, and tail to each of the men chosen as senior headmen—one for each chief. Each senior headman then binds the horn to the blade of the spear, and standing with his own chief and many men and women, raises the spear to the sky. The women trill [535] and each party goes to its place of "coming out" on the pasturage. Each chief, with his followers, goes to his own place. The men dance; sometimes they have drums, sometimes not.

[537] "Then when each party has reached it own place they make fire with fire sticks. The chief just simulates the action of fire-making then his senior headman takes the sticks and makes fire by friction. When they have built the shelters for sleeping in they warm themselves at the fire they have made; they do not take fire from the houses of men. If there are many of them then there will be three or four shelters, if few, then only one shelter. The men and their chief who has "come out" sleep in these shelters and enjoy themselves together (*nakwangale*). The first day they kill two head of cattle. Also they plant "the tree of coming out" (*swapile gwa busoka*) which is called *ulupunde*. They plant it with a man who has come out previously, a man of their fathers' generation, he begins to plant, then he explains to them what to do, saying "plant", then the new senior headman plants it.

"While they sleep in these shelters with their cattle, they eat food which they take from their fathers, bananas, and milk, and other food.

[1] For a note on conspicuous informants see p. vi.

[p. 186]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

From time to time their father, the chief, gives them a bull to kill. During the "coming out" food is very plentiful. If people pass on the road they honour them and give them food, and make love to them that they may build there. They remain in their shelters, they do not go about much. If the chief is stingy they teach him a lesson by taking bananas; they say: 'Know that we are important people, we are those who have 'come out' and we are your parents." Later on they play drums—I think only in recent years. And the village headmen seize a woman, the daughter of a commoner, as a wife for the chief.

'The horn is the luck of the chiefs, that many people may come to build. Binding the horn to the blade of the spear is to show that the chief is one who has "come out" (*sasoka*); it is as if he were carried aloft (i.e. "chaired"[1]. We show his greatness ("seniority") to people, then we trill. 643 776

'The fire made with fire sticks is to symbolize the new chieftainship. We do not take the old fire of the old men. 643 [572]

'The medicine is to make the chief heavy (*soito*), that it may be apparent that he is a chief. [764]

'The *ulupundo* tree is a memorial of the "coming out", that men may come and say: 'So and so planted this tree when he came out." Some say it is to show the power (*amaka*) of the chief, because if it does not grow it is said that his chieftainship will perhaps not flourish; then they will say: 'Let us move and plant elsewhere." It is said that the spear of chieftainship is to fight battles; it is strength, manhood; it is treated with medicine.

'The tails are those with which battles are fought. When men go to war the senior headman grasps the tail. If the tail does not lead them well they return from the fight. It, also, they treat with medicines.' [775]

[1] A bride at a puberty-marriage ritual is carried about shoulder high.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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189
673

(c) 'The Curse' of Christians

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of Sufferer	Misfortune	Alleged sin	Category of individual or group believed to have called down a curse
1	Ex-schoolboy	Cannot get a job	Disobeyed his Nyakyusa teacher	Teacher
2	Ex schoolboy	Dismissed from government job. Reasons unknown. Unemployed	Sent to boarding school with mission money, then refused to work for mission. Later married 12 wives. He also stole	The congregation
3	Teacher, son of elder	Eaten by a crocodile (seven years after stealing)	Committed adultery with daughter of chief. Spoke against the church	The congregation
4	Son of elder	Died of venereal disease	Committed adultery	The congregation
5	Pagan man	Died	Refused food to travelling Christian elder	The elder
6	Mohammedan man	Cut his leg with his bow	Hoed on Sunday	Two Christian men
7	Ex-schoolboy	Always lost his job through clever and good English-speaker. Now a fisherman and 'talks English to the fish'	Not known	European missionary
8	Ex-boarding schoolboy	Cannot get a job. 'Just hanging like uneducated people'	Eloped with a girl betrothed to a fellow Christian	European missionary
9	Christian woman	Paralysed for sixteen years	Took an unfair share of meat at feasts	Christian neighbours
10	Man-servant of missionary	Married several times. Each time wife died	Dressed in missionary's clothes and sat at table pretending to write with his pen	European missionary
11	Rich man	Property disappeared	Caught with a woman and denied having committed adultery	European missionary (said to have uttered a conditional curse: 'If you are lying all your property will disappear')
12	Woman	Became a wanderer	Stole things from left of mother-in-law's hut. Disobeyed husband and complained of him to neighbours. Asked for divorce	European missionary
13	Young man, newly married	Did not beget a child	Did not make a wedding feast for his neighbours in Christian village	Christian neighbours (complaining they had eaten no meat). Young man's pagan 'mothers' inquired of diviner and this was the diagnosis

[P.209]

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngwaketse FN17
Ngwaketse

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No.	Category of victim	Category of accused	Category of accuser	Spatial relationship of victim and accuser	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case
1	Chief	'People'	Chief and one of his village headmen	Other chiefdoms	Made chief ill	Envy of chief having a court. Illness of chief.		
2	Conquered chief	Conquering chief (pre-European)		Different villages but same country (after the conquest)	Conquered had killed conqueror by sorcery	Hwamakole had taken Mwamba's country. Death of conqueror		
3	Christian who became very popular by healing sons. People said he would 'kill' the persons of the accused because of his popularity	Senior village headman X		Same village	X sought medicine to work sorcery against the Christian	X envied popularity of new-comer. He was overheard by neighbours saying he would work sorcery. Serious illness of Christian followed		
4	Child of P.	Classificatory brother of P.	P., father of victim	Different chiefdoms		Quarrel over inheritance of cattle. P's brother claimed cows from him. Case went to court of defendant's chief. Involved in his favour		
5	Man (Mwanyika) and his wife	Not specified	Son of deceased (Mwanyika)			Death of Mwanyika and his wife	Autopsy on Mwanyika. Found a powder, thought to be strychnine, in his stomach. No autopsy on wife but 'knew that she died from the same disease'	Family drank pot-herbs medicine
6	3 wives of X. Sister of X. 1 married daughter and another child. Husband of married daughter					All died within a short time of one another. Sorcery spread through autopsies	Autopsies	Family drank medicines provided by a doctor and the illness ceased

[P.210]

754
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578
763

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of victim	Category of accused	Category of avenger	Spatial relationship of victim and accuser	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigation	Upshot of case
7	Daughter of A. Son and daughter of A's full brother B	A accused. X, his parallel cousin (child of A's father's brother). X accused A	A, father and brother of victim		Use of sorcery against one another	Junior brother's son married inheritance divided. Elder brother's son (A) did not. This was followed by illness of victims	Suggested by doctor that trouble due to sorcery or to anger of ancestors over family quarrel	Open discussion of quarrel (adultery). Death confession against sorcery. Also proper to ancestors
8	Child of neighbour B	Man X	Neighbour B.	Same village	Sent his leopard to kill the child	Child killed by leopard on day after X had quarrelled with accuser B, saying B's cattle were eating his crops	X asked for ordeal. This refused	X driven out of country by chief. Later forgiveness
9	Foreman and clerk A, very lucky in striking gold and favourite of his employer	Fellow clerk B.		Same camp	B accused of killing A by sorcery	A died suddenly at his house. B was very jealous of A's wealth, and had spoken in secret of his desire to kill A by sorcery, saying 'may he die at his house'		
10	Wife of village headman					Death	Autopsy. Symptoms of sorcery found	
11	Man who had run off with another's wife	Injured husband	Vague	Victim on Lopa. Injured husband in Ichuga (200 miles distant)	Husband blowing medicine at the seducer of his wife (i.e. working sorcery—uhwanga). The husband's friends might have claimed this as vengeance-magic)	Continued illness of victim	Divination by a doctor	Victim treated with medicine. Moved to another house. He finally recovered, but his hair has fallen off

[P. 211]

E.W.Hammond-E-S(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Nkgomdo FN17
Nyakyusa

(c) Frequency Maps (Chapter—the Book) — MISPLACED ATTACHED TO MORTAL CAUSE—cont.

No.	Category of Victim	Category of accident	Category of accident	Spatial relationship of victim and accident	Charge	Grounds of suspicion	Investigations	Fate of case
1	2 boatings in and 3P	2 Boring (Boatings)			Accused used the form. The not off 'B' that he was doing so	Accused said 'B' had stolen his wallet. 'B' and 3P both died	Autopsy revealed death due to the force	That there accused not of sentence for anchoring rule to avoid but arranging accused. The Judge had said the form to be case rule
2	1. Behaviour of accused. 2. Child of [illegible] victim	Husband of woman [illegible] (Kinship Edit)	Relationship of deceased [illegible]		Accused used the form. Relationship of victim-spoke of doubts of the [illegible] (Charge)	Victim 1 had stayed with accused's wife. Accused [illegible] that he had arranged himself. Both victims 1 and 2 died suddenly		Prosecution statement to husband [illegible] should be
3	Child of 1 and children of other wives of it's husband	Co-wife 2.	1, mother of victim	Same household	2 used the form	2 had stolen 2's harness and sold [illegible] to other [illegible] that taken food to husband and then to [illegible]. 2 was [illegible]. The death of child 1 put children of other wives relevance		1 and 2 for both, 1 and other wives [illegible] and death [illegible]
4	Man 1, and woman 2 [illegible] for [illegible]	Man 1 who [illegible] the woman 2	Man 3, brother of deceased 1	Different [illegible]	1 used the form	1 was off with 3, mother of it's [illegible] brother where 2 had [illegible] 1 and 2 both died. 3 laughed. 1 [illegible] that [illegible] the form?		3 [illegible] 1 and had [illegible]

14. (Pregnancy Might (Clapmaster—the Hunt)—cont.) **REPORTS MADE ATTACHED TO MEDICAL CARDS—cont.**

No.	Category of [illegible]	Category of [illegible]	Category of [illegible]	Family relationship of victim and accused	Charge	Details of complaint	Investigation	Outline of case
3	3-4-15 [illegible]	3, [illegible] of 3	3, [illegible] of [illegible]		3 and the [illegible]	3-1: Daughter [illegible] 3, a pensioner [illegible] 3 [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] 20 to 30 [illegible]. Both [illegible] to collect [illegible] from the daughter's [illegible] husband. 3 [illegible] 3 to [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] 3 [illegible] [illegible] 3 [illegible] [illegible] 3

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

11. WITCHCRAFT AND LUST FOR MEAT AND MILK

Mwaisumo (abel).

154
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264

'Some "defenders" (*abewanga*), when they smell something delicious in the house of a relative or a close friend, say: "The meat (if it's meat) smells nice, give me a little to eat, I am a witch, the pythons will come up and carry me off to throttle someone." This can only be said (and it is said quite seriously) in the house of a relative or great friend because in no other house can a man ask for meat. Shame prevents him. People think a man who asks for food is a fool.

'Some people, when they have eaten a little and finished, say: "Give me a little more, if we witches are grudged food the pythons come up!" It is said that throttling is in order to eat delicious food (*ubupiite ku kulya ifiafa*). The witches say human flesh is delicious, and the milk of cows is also delicious.

'Some people will eat cooked food which has been left over-night; others refuse it, and when asked why, say: "It is forbidden for us witches to eat cooked food which has stood over-night." I have heard this said often. "The defenders" say it spoils their pythons. Chiefs do not eat kept food either; it is said to spoil their *ifiapolo* medicine. People say that it is bad for chiefs or witches or "defenders" to eat left-over food because it has been touched by the ancestors at night. This is often said by "defenders" as well as others.'

[p. 218]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

15. THE ASSOCIATIONS OF *UKULOGA* AND *UKUPITA*

Mwaisumo (aged).

'Ubudogo is like ukupita but not the same. It is said that when someone is angry with you and has drunk a medicine to give him power to bewitch (*ukuka pa budogo*), he grows you and the word alone has power to bring illness. You will be very ill.

'It is said that when a woman is pregnant and walks round a person who has many medicines, one of them being a medicine ubudogo, she will have a miscarriage. There is no case (against the owner of the medicines).

'It is said that when the owner of pythons, or the owner of medicines, passes when food has been spread out to dry, the food will disappear. He bewitches it (ubudogo). It is as if he hankered after the food in his heart; it disappears and becomes less. When a python man ("he of pythons")—they speak much of python men, little of medicine men—passes cattle and hankers after milk, he bewitches the milk (ubudogo). It disappears. He does not throttle (ukupita) the cattle; no, the milk just disappears.

'It is forbidden to say of a child that it is beautiful. It is all right to a close friend but not among ordinary people. To do so is to bewitch (ubudogo) the child. The child will fall ill. It is forbidden to say of a cow that its udder is big. If the owner hears he says: "You are bewitching it" (ubudogo), meaning the milk will disappear. Everyone fears to admire children or cows in this way; if such a sign is followed by sickness or failure of milk people swear at the man who has expressed admiration, but do not bring a case.

'The work of pythons is especially to steal away the milk, to throttle (ukupita). It is reported that some say: "I am a witch, but I have not got a python. I do not throttle the cows." They might mean they "eat" people but do not steal milk.'

Kalonge (pagan man).

'Ukupita is to throttle (with hands round the throat).'

In reply to a question as to the further meanings of the word ukupita, Kalonge said: 'When my relatives are there I say: "Have you *kupita* with my wife?" But when we are alone I say: "Did you sleep with my wife?" or "Did you have intercourse with her (*gwadapwa*

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 F317 Ngundo F317
Nyakyusa

789 334 146 sugar?" We only liken intercourse and witchcraft; witchcraft is quite different. When a woman is an adulteress I say: "You are a witch (*mulosi*); you kill me," but it is just a metaphor (*fye fibwa*). Adultery involves paying for cattle for all of us; it differs from witchcraft. And when I ask a man: "Why, why did you fornicate with my wife?" that means: "You are like a witch." It is just a metaphor. But (he volunteered), if I catch an adulterer with my wife, even if he has practised coitus interruptus, I am angry and kill him from jealousy, though I do not suffer from diarrhoea."

837 753 An adulteress is spoken of as an enemy because she brings illness upon her husband' by her adultery, if intercourse is complete, but not, it is thought, if coitus interruptus is practised. The illness commonly thought to be caused by a wife's adultery is diarrhoea.

1:Wilson E-9(1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngombe F317
Nyakyusa

woman has been angry with her husband, and perhaps quarrelled with him, and has sworn at her husband by "the things" (i.e. the sex organs) of his mother, or perhaps his father, the child she bears will fall sick with *ngombe*. It becomes very thin and does not grow. The disease is recognized when a child is very ill from infancy, and it is very thin but does not die. Then they say it is *ngombe*. Sometimes they inquire of a diviner and the diviner reveals that it is ill of *ngombe*.

"I remember a certain woman who was married to a man, *Kinyamba*. This man had married two wives, and she of whom I speak was the third. This woman was very proud (*mwalinga fyo*) and was constantly quarrelling with her husband and her co-wives. When she quarrelled with her husband he got angry and beat her. Then she swore at him horribly, about "the things" of his mother or father. She said: "You! So and so of your father! So and so of your mother!" Then this woman bore a girl child and when it had grown a little it became very ill. It was very ill for a whole year. When it began to recover she quarrelled again with her husband and swore at him insultingly, and the child got ill again. So her husband (the father of the child) and she went to inquire of a diviner. The divination revealed *ngombe*. It said: "Your wife has sworn at you about the things of your mother when you were quarrelling." When they got home the husband drove his wife away, saying: "Go to your father!" When she got home the woman told her father everything and he took millet and gave it to her to make beer with which to pay. So she brewed beer and brought it to her husband, saying: "I did wrong, my husband." The husband called his fellows and they all drank the beer and expressed their anger (*ubwiyaya*) and said: "May the child recover and grow well!"

"This happened when I was 13 or 14 years old. The girl (who was ill) is still alive; her body shows signs of not having grown properly.

"The disease comes from "the breath of men" because these insults were made publicly and others heard them. I do not think anything would happen if the insults were private, I am not sure."

A curse of neighbours for neglect of rituals.
Lugwimbula (young Christian man).

"If I do not do the (death) ritual properly for my father the death of my children is due to the case against me, the dispute with relatives and the curse of people—non-relatives (*mapepo ubukowa, ilipepo ubundu*).

"Sometimes the villagers (*amafumu*) bind a man's loins so that he cannot beget children with his wife. They are both sterile. Mwakwak-

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

ale, the doctor in Selya, is a case of this. He had quarrelled with his ther brother and did not come to bury him. Later he came and killed cow, but did not tell the men of the village (*ewaphwa*) properly, and ey were angry, and so for the last ten years he has had no child. He ives do not conceive at all. That is due to the curse of men (*dipaso ya fumbi*).'

A curse for 'soiling a man'.
Ingwembile (young Christian man).

Ingwembile cited a case of sterility attributed to *dipaso* because a woman had 'soiled' a man.

'She had run away three times with X. Finally her husband forced to eat her filth and drink her urine. X was very ill but recovered. he bore no further children on her return to her husband. She went Lyambilele (the informant's mother) for medicine but the latter id she could not help as it was *dipaso*. Her neighbours were shocked ecause she had "soiled the child of someone". Also the neighbours of 's father were shocked. Their "breath" takes effect because she ents frequently in their village, going to see a grandparent. They say: "This is the woman who soiled our child."'

N.B.—It is the woman who is held to have soiled, not her husband X.

A curse due to incest.
Gwae (young Christian man).

'S, son of Y (a chief), made love to his father's sister X. X's husband, , had married (*ubwendeki*) a full sister, Y, of S. S lay with X. S had ysteria and X and her husband C both fell sick of it. C asked X where the disease came from. She accused S. C complained to Y. was very angry and all men were astonished at it. It is forbidden. How could he have intercourse with his mother, the sister of his father! Y took four of S's cows and gave them to C. People cursed (*dipaso*) S, who was very ill for two years. His eye came out of its socket. He went to a mission hospital.

'The villagers (*ewaphwa*) gathered at Y's and said: "This sickness of S is because of that case of his when he lay with X. It is because of that he is sick." So Y went to S and told him to bring four cows, which he did. Y called his people and brothers and sisters and said: "Show your child." They swore and swore at him, and they caught hold of the woman and swore, saying: "How did you agree to sleep with your

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

789 child? You have both sinned greatly." Then they killed the cows and
636 ate them. I was there. Very quickly A recovered and his eye is all
931 right now.'

A curse on a senior village headman due to the anger of a junior village headman.
Mwandabo (Pagan man).

789 "A young chief, Mwaidemale, called his men to hoe a road at the
636 order of the Government. The third village headman of the country and his men refused to come, saying: "Not we, we have been once already", and they beat Mwaidemale's messenger. So Mwaidemale was very angry, and reported the village headman to his father, who was also very angry and told the headman and all his men (a very big age-village) to move to another chief. And the senior headman agreed, saying: "Indeed, my junior is a proud fellow. Let them go." So they all went to the country of Mwamnem.

"Now the senior headman has fallen ill with the "breath of men". He is unable to walk. The diviner said his illness was due to "the breath" of his junior colleague—he had been cursed because he is expected to be the favourite of the chief. He was very ill and moved to Kawanu's country where he has begun to recover.

"After being away for a year the third headman brought a cow to pay to the chief (Mwakabokofo). The chief refused it, saying: "No, indeed, my country is quarrelsome. Perhaps you think it was you who built it? I do not wish that you should return. Go with your cow." Some of the third village headman's men came back and then Mwakabokofo allowed to build, but he said that he would never let the banished headman back. Many men stayed with their headman and refused to return until he did. Only two years ago (1937) the headman brought a cow to Mwakabokofo who forgave him on the condition that he found something to take to the senior headman, who was ill, to fetch him back from Kawanu's country. So the third headman fetched his senior with a huge bull. They came back with it and killed it and drank much beer and made friends. Most of the beer was provided by the third headman, who had spent two years in exile, but some by the senior.

"The mystical power (*amangu*) of the third headman and his men was able to reach the senior headman because a whole village had moved, but had a single man moved he would not have been able to send "breath" to another country, because when "the defendant" came at night in the power of *amangu* (*amangu gabi*) the owners of the country who remain in it ask them: "Where are you going?" and

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

they reply: "We are just walking about in our country, to our homes", and the owners of the country do not drive them away; but of a single man they ask: "Why are you walking about here?" and they drive him off.'

'The breath of men' and witchcraft.
Mwambugwate (former village headman).

' "'The breath of men' (*ombepo ya bandu*) and witchcraft (*ubudwi*) go together. If all the members of a village murmur that a certain man is evil then the words of the innocent (*abadu*) have no weight, no strength at all, but those of the heavy men (*abanene*) have. It is the heavy men who carry that breath into his body in dreams, they chastise him, but the innocent just talk and murmur against him, that is all."

Question: "Then that breath comes from the python inside them?"

Mwambugwate: "Yes, that is where it comes from, it is one with witchcraft, identical. Sometimes they just chastised him a little, he did not die, but just fell sick; and in such a case there was never any drinking of *umwafi*; if he killed a beast for them they would pray (*abalipaite*) and pray, they would let out all their anger, saying: "Certainly we were angry, it was us, but now it is all over." Then life came back to him and he recovered. That is the curse (*dhigwe*).

"But sometimes they would kill him—and then they had to drink *umwafi* . . . if a man died and they found spear-marks, wounds, in his entrails the chief would get angry and say: "You have killed your fellow, drink the *umwafi*." So then the *umwafi* would convict one of witchcraft and he would be expelled from the country. For we said: "It is forbidden to kill a man." We others were afraid, although we had disliked the victim ourselves, we feared that at some later time the witch would kill us."

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

63. RITUAL OF RECONCILIATION

Mwakisunde (doctor, brother of a chief).

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"If my son has sworn at me, my friends in the village are angry and say: "Why has our child sworn at his father?" Then the youth falls ill, and people say: "It is the curse (*ibipase*). It was we who were angry, because he swore at our fellow." Then he seeks something with which to pay—perhaps a bull or cow. If I, the father, am a rich man I brew beer for the people coming to instruct my child and to say: "It was we who were angry, young man, because you swore at your father. Now may you recover!" While they are drinking the beer they kill the bull, which he found, and eat it.'

Mwambelile (pagan man).

'A junior relative who has wronged a senior and later wishes to make friends has to satisfy not only him but his neighbours. For example: A man X seduced a widow of his father who was regarded as the property of his senior half-brother, Y, the Elder. (She was not Y's wife, because she was a sister of his mother, but given to deceased's younger half-brother.) Later X paid Y one cow as a fine "for enduring his mother". Then X brought him a bull to re-unite the family and as a friends, saying: "Indeed, I wronged you, my father." Y said: "If you wish to make friends again you must also bring a cow for the village to eat, so that all shall know that I am satisfied." X brought a heifer calf which was eaten by the village.'

There was no mention of sickness in this case.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F317 Ngonde F317 Nyakyusa

[2] object or action which it is felt to resemble. The images men use,
[1] the things they feel to be alike, are determined in a general way by the form of the society, and Nyakyusa images are in terms of bananas, staple grains, cattle, smithing on a primitive forge, lineage organization and so on. There are cultural idioms, accepted forms of expression, which frequently recur, but the particular associations are not predictable any more than the associations made by a poet in our own society—the priest and the diviner are indeed in one aspect poets.

[7] The essence of Nyakyusa ritual is that things which are felt to
[1] be alike are taken as causally connected. Both positive actions and
[2] avoidances or taboos are based on the assumption that like objects or actions react on one another. This was clearly recognized by an informant who remarked: 'avoidances come from resemblances.' The basis is invariably the *feeling* of likeness, but mixed up with this there is often exact observation, as in the following taboo. The husband of a pregnant woman may not hunt big game because, it is said, they will be unusually fierce and attack him particularly. The association made is between a pregnant woman who is irritable, 'fierce' (*ukali*), and the game which is fierce. The husband is identified with his wife, 'and', the Nyakyusa say, 'lion always attack a cow in calf'. Sometimes like things are felt to be antagonistic, as 'seed in the belly' and seed in the ground, and sometimes sympathetic. Sometimes like is thought to produce like—a pregnant woman is forbidden to sit close to someone lest she brave twins—and sometimes men mime a misfortune as a prophylactic against it.

[7] The rituals are magical in the sense that efficacy is held to lie in
[1] the particular material form,[1] but they vary in detail with the
[7] cultural group, just as the language does.[2] The rituals of the Lake-shore plain in Tanganyika (Mu-Ngonde) and of Selya are almost identical, but those of the Kukwe, the Lugulu, the Sukwe, the Ndali, the Penje, and the people of Ngonde in Nyasaland are all somewhat different. Differences in ritual are directly connected by the people themselves with differences in lineage, and the principle is maintained that every individual follows the ritual of his or her father's lineage, though a married woman will follow that of her

[1] For a discussion of this characteristic of magic cf. G. M. W. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change* (1945), pp. 70–73, 88–93.

[2] An account of the various cultural groups included under Nyakyusa, and of related peoples, is given in *Good Company*, pp. 1–15.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

husband when at her husband's home. Kakuse, a doctor, explained: 'The ritual for a woman is that of her husband's group, always. My mother was Lugulu, but at her death we did the Kukwe ritual. If my daughter marries a Sangu and dies, they will do the Sangu ritual; she has moved.' We attended a death ritual which was actually performed in two slightly different ways by two sets of mourners. A member of a Sangu family, long established in Selya, had died; sons and daughters of the family performed what was said to be the Sangu ritual, but the children of daughters married to Selya men performed the Selya ritual. Whether the Sangu ritual is really so similar to the Selya ritual as this celebration suggests is doubtful—it seems unlikely, since the Sangu are very different from the Nyakyusa in other respects and their languages are not mutually intelligible—but some sort of adjustment had been made by this foreign family living in Selya and by others in a like position. Our informants *expected* to find parallels to the events of their own rituals in the rituals of neighbouring groups, and they expected also to find minor differences. Any variations are explained by the phrase 'that is the custom in their lineage', and the officiant is the final arbitrator as to what is correct. A number of informants also pointed out that the staple foods were used in the death ritual and that these varied somewhat with the area. 'We eat the principal food of the country—it differs with different people. The Kisi and Ngonde (of Nyamlani) use fish, the Ndali use goats, we Nyakyusa cannot use rice but the Swahili would. Our food is bananas.' The pumpkin, which we also use, is a very old vegetable and is still much eaten; it is one of the best vegetables.' The Sangu use millet porridge, the Penje maize and beans.

In this book are described the rituals of the main cultural groups of the Nyakyusa—those of the people of Selya and Mwaseko and the Lake-shore plain (Malipunde)[1] which are similar, and those of the Kukwe which are different, and a few references are made to other variations. The variations are suggestive, for though the details differ, the values and attitudes expressed are identical. There are also minor differences between families of the same cultural group, and in the practice of different officiants, but their

[1] The Nyakyusa use plantain as a general word for plantains and bananas, though there is properly one variety of plantain. 'Banana' is used here to include all varieties of bananas and plantains.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 9.

Z: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Colgate, Mo Ngonde

identification of the mourners with the corpse and the separation of the shade from both of them. 'What they do to the participants they do to the deceased. . . . If they are not cleansed he is still muddy. . . . We throw away the corpse, the contamination of death, into the river . . . we drive the shade away off our bodies to join his fellows . . . we separate the corpse and the shade.' Thirdly, bringing back the shade as a beneficent spirit into the house. 'In the ritual we tell the shade to go away and join his fellows, and then to come back with them and warm himself by the fire in our house. . . . At first the shade is in our bodies, we cast him out . . . at first it is as if we were still holding the corpse in our arms, but we throw the corpse away into the river . . . the shade we bring back into our house.'

Fourthly, a mimicry of the actions of a madman in eating excrement as a prophylactic against behaviour of that sort. The dead, if not separated from the living, bring madness upon them, and simulating madness is a protection against it.

Fifthly, the corpse and faeces are identified. 'The corpse is filth, it is excrement. And so when a madman for whom they have not performed the ritual eats filth that is the corpse, he is still holding it, they have not done the ritual for him.'

Sixthly, the shades are identified with women and weds and their control over pottery and fertility is recognised. The Nyakyusa think that they are always present in sexual intercourse, and symbols of sexual intercourse are interpreted as a means of driving out the shade from the participants' bodies.

Seventhly, 'the food which he loved' is symbolically 'given to the shade' of the man who has just died and he is urged to be satisfied: 'You, shade, do not think there was little food at your ritual. . . . The food which we have eaten you have eaten . . . do not create hunger.'

Eighthly, the shade is acknowledged as a kinsman by eating with him food and beer mixed with shyale—the symbol of agnatic kinship—before he is driven away.

Lastly, a dead man is formally replaced by his heir, a woman by her sister or her brother's daughter.

These conceptions are expressed in the following texts which are given as they were recorded by Godfrey Wilson. No attempt has been made to systematise Kaisile's or Mwasalile's arguments, but the statements made during numerous sessions have been placed in sequence, and are separated only by dots.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Kaluwe

for the ritual. We think that when she has slept with her new husband she is full (*wise*) and if she gives us food it will make us ill. 764 537

Mwamwembwa: The new husband gives us relatives a disease by impregnating the girl, he who is no relative of ours, the new husband. *Ngonde* is an illness. [75]

ii. *Kaluwe's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W.)

Kaluwe: Yes, if we do not perform the ritual the children run mad. 764 They speak foolishly and deliriously, they run about wildly wearing leaves, they eat filth. But they do not fight with their fellows—that is what those do who have the madness of Kyala. It is those of whom we say: 'Perhaps Kyala loved them.' 537

Questioner: Why the first washing?

Kaluwe: That is to get rid of the dishes, the filth, for they hold the corpse in their hands. They do not eat the ritual food until they have washed.

Questioner: Why the eating of porridge?

Kaluwe: Because of the tears we have wept. We have mourned him; now let us eat and strengthen our bodies again.

Questioner: Why are beans thrown into the pot in the morning?

Kaluwe: These beans, which we throw into the pot, saying: 'This is my father's death', are an ending of the ritual. They remain all night in the house after they have been cooked, and the shades come and eat. In the morning the doctor [*mganga*, i.e. the officiant] washes us again with prepared medicine and we eat the beans and finish them. We use beans in the ritual for that is the food which our father loved. We think: 'Our father has died, he will never live for us again', and so we say: 'This is the death of my father.' So then the shade of our father comes at night and tastes the food and says to us: 'I, your father, have died, you have mourned for me; live you yet awhile, do not come quickly to death; and may you has plenty of food and have no hunger.' If we leave out this ritual with the beans the fertility of our gardens disappears and we have great hunger, we eat nothing. [77]

Questioner: Why the circling to the harp and crumbling oil-seeds?

Kaluwe: The circumcision (made from the oil-seeds) is to finish the ritual. The song (*ukulenda*) is to say good-bye, to the shade, it means 'farewell', it is to drive him away. We circle round because our father was an active man, he walked round seeing his friends, he danced; that is why we circle round the fire. [In Kaluwe's family they do not say the war dance of triumph, they only dance to the harp.] [78]

Questioner: Why the pelting? [I told him what Mwamwembwa had said and he agreed heartily.]

Kaluwe: Yes, that's it! We drive them away, this means 'We have driven you away now.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
E.Kut.

764 that's sum of bananas symbolizing that we may eat other people's food, we have finished the ritual. Because during the ritual those who have not completed it eat apart. If they eat ordinarily we say of them: 'You so-and-so, you!' And at the last beer of the death ritual, when they have mixed the beer, we . . . say to the women: 'Where will you go?' 'We will find his cattle.' 'Very well.' Then we drink. But if the widows agree, according to custom, then we give them to our comrade, saying: 'These are your wives.' He sleeps with them in the house and we drink.

Question: What does circling with the harp mean?

Nyaso: We spoke of that before. He who gives the harp is just someone who makes us go in line, they have finished him, he was bewitched over. He says: 'Let me help my friend and play the harp for him and make him circle round.'

Question: And what does the stamping dance (*shakuyo ngunje*) mean?

[71] Nyaso: It is to drive away sickness, to drive him away, to say: 'Go away with your sickness'.

Question: But how exactly?

Nyaso: Because he who has died trampled the ground long ago when his father died, and we trample now that he has died, and his father trampled for his grandfather, and his grandfather for an ancestor. It means: 'We have finished with you, go away.' And at the hatching we put pebbles between our fingers and let them fall into the stream . . . [He performed a dramatic pantomime of sitting down in the water and falling first one way and then the other, and pushing his hands away so that they let the stones fall out. As he let them fall he said: 'We have driven you away, we have finished with you!'] . . .

Question: Why did shelling oil-seeds during the circling round?

Nyaso and Mwaseyamba: We do not do it, we differ in our rituals. But we do the sending of the banana bunch and throwing things in the pot on the fire, and hitting the ground and saying: '*Qabo, qabo.*'

Question: Why?

Nyaso and Mwaseyamba: Because if we don't do it our children run into the passage and make balls of rubbish (*qhabo fye mindi*) and eat; then they become weak and foolish; but if we perform the ritual then they are fine children.

Question: Why the throwing into the pot?

Nyaso and Mwaseyamba: It means that we have finished with him [with a gesture of throwing away].

Question: Why the washing at first?

Mwaseyamba: If we do not wash them they become weak and foolish, so we wear them and wash them and give them porridge, and then they recover. If we leave them they go off to the rubbish heap and make dirt (*ngabile mindi*); they take the dirt from the rubbish heap, they

2: Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Selga, Ms Ngonde

§27
§34

front. See, the man ejects semen! Does it not go inside? The woman becomes heavy and overcome the bride."

§34
§35

Even after she has been treated, the bride avoids any close contact with those who are 'heavy'; in particular they are excluded from her hut. Her own mother 'does not sleep with the father at all from the time the girl grows up until she goes to her husband, and begins intercourse with him. It is taboo. She says to her husband: "See, I am keeping my child company." ' But the 'play' of her companions does not matter, for intercourse *inter crura* does not make anyone heavy; it is the semen of a man in a woman's belly which makes her heavy, and her husband also, through contact with her.

77[1]

The second medicine used at the puberty ritual is the *dipili*,[1] made from the bark of certain small-leaved forest trees. The same species is used by many Nyakyusa families, but the identity of the person who provides it is very important, for it is identified with the blood (*ililupa*) of the family. In the puberty-marriage ritual the groom's mother provides the *dipili* with which the bride washes at her husband's (if she is a senior wife), at the *rite of* 'putting her in' (*ukwingwa*), at the second washing with her husband, at the shaving, and at the washing before jumping over fire. The same medicine is used each time. It is also sprinkled on the bananas she cuts at the *ukwingwa*. The bride's own mother, however, provides the *dipili* which is added to her porridge and buried under the hearth the day she first menstruates, and that used for washing her father, or brother, and mother at the *ukwingwa*. Also, should it be known that the bride is not a virgin, the mother-in-law will refuse to bring her *dipili* and it must be provided for each rite by her mother. The medicine is in itself *wowonse* (*uriye*). Kaitile's wife remarked one day that the bride slept with one of her maids in front of her, 'at her stomach', and one behind. We asked why. She replied: "That *dipili* medicine! It's *wowonse*. She

77[2]
§41

fears to be alone." "If *wowonse* has not given her the *dipili* to drink and heavy men cook food and give it to her she goes bad, she has periods without cessation." "The mother gives porridge with *dipili* to the girl and buries some under the hearth. That means may she be heavy in her stomach, for if heavy men warm themselves at the fire in the house, she is in danger of going bad, she will have a continuous issue of blood." "If the *dipili* were not given, her period

[1] Dipili: a tree of any species. *Dipili*: medicine made from the bark of certain species (one is a Monanchora) and used in the rituals of death, puberty, and birth.

§26

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Selya, Ngonde

would never dry up.' Kasitile said: 'The work of the *ndumbi* and *dipdi* are the same, they are together. The heavy rain will overwhelm the girl, they are going to injure her so that she is barren, constantly menstruating, with painful periods.' Lyundilako, a woman doctor, and exceptionally intelligent, said: 'The bride uses the *dipdi* medicine because she is empty (*bwa*). So she washes and rubs herself with *dipdi*. If she does not wash with it she will have diarrhoea.'

The *dipdi* is also said to make a bride 'patient and polite'. 'If the girl did not wash with the powdered medicine (*dipdi*) she might be rude and proud when she went to her husband's home and much men there.' This was the statement of Mwakwelelaja, an old commoner particularly well versed in matters of ritual, and it was separately confirmed both by his wife and by Lyundilako, the woman doctor, but not everyone knew the connection. Mwalelaja, the chief, who was present when Mwakwelelaja gave his explanation, said: 'Really! I never knew that!' and his wives, when applied to, said: 'We don't know. The mothers have died' (this though some of them were past middle age).

Angumbwike identified the *dipdi* medicine with the blood of a lineage and a bride's treatment with it with the union in marriage. He said:

> As soon as a girl grows up people begin to think about her bearing children. They say: 'The mother-iron is discharged, the blood for bearing children has come.' When they grind and brew beer in her honour, they do it in honour of her 'iron' [i.e. menstrual blood]. They give her medicine for disciplining her in the lineage of her husband. When the mother-iron they cry: 'Oun, oun, o ion bwiwel' ([*ion, ([ion, ([ion*]).' The girl is given a bundle of the medicine, powdered, and is made to wear a belt of bark-cloth with the powder in it, the medicine is brought from the husband's home by his mother. The husband, as it were, says: 'This is my blood [or semen] which I have sent to her.' The little bundle is the symbol (*ikimapile*) of the child she will bear, the belt with medicine on it means that the mother 'iron' belongs to the blood of her husband. The powdered medicine is brought by the husband's mother. A man's chief wife always has a bamboo flask or a gourd full of medicine of their lineage (*a ifikola ifadi*), powdered ready for use. If she dies it goes to the second wife, if the husband dies to the first wife of the eldest son, and by her it is distributed as need. The powdered medicine is the blood (*mkomanga*[*] *ya dipdi*).

* i.e. the powder made from the *dipdi*.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Selya, Malingonde

The bundle of medicine and the belt are burnt with the liver at the 791 ●
coming out. And whenever a child is born, every time, not only at the [904]
birth of the first or second, it is washed by the husband's mother with 591
this same powdered medicine from the store in her pot. If this is not
done they fear that perhaps the child will go mad or something dreadful
will happen. They say of the powdered medicine: 'It is our kinship, it
is our blood (*Ifu fukuma kwete, ya ifupa yete*).' And if a girl runs off with
a lover in the wild they search her and say: 'Who has given you powder-
ed medicine? You are no relative.' They say: 'She is not our relation,
she has not got our blood. ...' The medicine is to create relationship
(*ubukwe*). Using it means that the bride is one of my lineage (*ibikulu*). [602]
You know that burial customs differ. When they have used the medicine
they will bury my wives as they bury me, either sitting up or lying down,
as the case may be. We Christians do not do this because we have [776]
another way. We take hands before the priest and say: 'This is my
relative (*ndumu gwange*).'

Another informant (9 pages), questioned separately, gave a similar interpretation. He said: 'Washing with the medicine means, "my wife has come. She is now my relative (*ndumu gwange*)."'

As already indicated, the act of washing with her husband pro- 793
claims the maternity of a wife. Washing with her own mother and 602
her father or young brother, is to proclaim kinship. 'The girl
washes with a brother to show that she has brothers and sisters. If
she does not do so it shows that she is a poor person without relati-
ves.' 'She has washed at her husband's place, then she comes
home and her father honours her by looking for a boy, not an old
one but a young one, to wash with her. Then the girl thinks: "I
have fathers, I am no bastard." But if she washed alone she would
think: "Perhaps I am not their child, perhaps I have no relatives."'
Kamisile said: 'If she washes with me, her father, it means: "She is
my child, I begot her myself, she is my firstborn."' Mwakisonde,
after discussing the circumstances under which a father washes,
said: 'To wash is to admit that I have lived and borne a child and
grown up.' 'And if a brother does it?' we asked. 'It means: "You
young man, you are her father."' If they ever quarrel the brother
says: "Why do you not respect me, your father? We washed to-
gether in water."' A young brother is chosen 'because the grown-
up boys are going about. They were one who has not made love
to girls.'

Standing in the doorway of her mother's hut (or of the woman 602
acting in place of her mother if the latter is dead or divorced) is 795

2. Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1937 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Kaka

between them. These two remain with the bride all through the period of seclusion, never leaving her, but the other maids may come and go if called away to perform other duties.

From the onset of menstruation until the ritual washing a girl may neither cross a stream nor wash; after it she crosses streams and washes her hands and feet, but does not yet bathe her whole body. She sleeps on the litter with her companions for about a month and 'by day and by night the young men sing songs with the girls. . . . The play is the puberty but resembles adultery—we call it love-making (ubugwanga).' 'The groom visits his bride on the litter.' 'Gifts of beer and firewood are brought by the bride's mothers (abawabalala) and, after her second period has passed, the rite of ubusepe (bringing out) is performed.'

The litter is swept out and burnt. Bride and groom are dressed and go separately to bathe. 'The women carry the girl and the men's fellows carry him.' The girl is examined to prove her virginity and the women return with her rejoicing, and make her and her husband run in and out of the doorway of a hut over which they pour water. Then follows the admonition.

At the ubusepe (bringing out) rite the officiants drink a special brewing of beer made in the following fashion: the chief officiant puts a little millet, mixed with powdered medicine, into a flat winnowing basket, makes the bride stand in it and, lowering her back-cloth soiled by first menstruation, lets it fall into the millet.* Then she shends and burns it, lest an enemy, wishing to prevent the bride conceiving, should get hold of it. The bride's fresh back-cloth is sprinkled with medicines to make her 'heavy', the arbor of the old one are treated with medicines to ensure her fertility, and the millet is put to soak and brewed into beer in the hut in which she lies secluded on the litter.

We saw the Kabwe ubusepe rite performed only once. The girl, a daughter of a chief, was not yet married or betrothed, so there was no groom to play his part, and the whole ritual was carried out in her father's homestead, her own mother going through it with her. She herself appeared more reluctant, and there were various modifications due to the pressure of new ideas. We quote the account to show the manner of washing, and of entering and leaving the hut—rites which were described in detail by a number of informants, and which are characteristic of the Kabwe ritual cycle.

* It was not made clear by Kabwe informants exactly when this happened.

Record of M. W., 13 September 1938

[illegible] I arrived at nine o'clock in the morning to find Syungu, the elderly wife of the chief's senior brother, who acts as officiant in all the rituals for the chief's family, grinding and cooking *ugonda* together with a powdered medicine and red pigment, to make an unguent. I asked the purpose of the medicine. She replied: 'It's *ingili* that she may be happy, that she may bear children and not be barren.'

[illegible] Some of the chief's wives gave me beer—ordinary beer. They themselves were drinking from a pot which had stood in the inner part of the house (*ingili*) and to which medicine had been added. They explained that it might be drunk only by themselves, the chief's wives. A strange woman, a Penja, came along and, though warned that this pot was not for her, insisted on drinking some of it. She explained how Penja ritual differed from that of the Kelwa—they kill sheep for the puberty ritual. Usually this beer stands to brew in the enclosure but 'on the brew'.

[illegible] The women were preparing a dish of beans and bananas cooked together, and when it was ready a little was given to the officiant, some was put aside for the girl (*ananga*),[illegible] until the remains were offered to the guests. One of the cooks threw away the entire stem of the head of bananas used, but was told by the officiant to fetch it back, as all the rubbish must be cleared away together at the end of the rite.

After midday the officiant shaved some hair from the girl's temples and the back of her neck, and then she shaved the mother completely. I asked why the girl was not shaved completely and was told: 'The fellows would laugh at her if she had no hair.' The officiant prepared four banana leaves, stripping each off on one side of the mid-rib and shredding the other half so as to make a rough fringe. Standing with her back to the girl, she touched herself over the genitals, breasts, and forehead, then handed the leaf back over her head, telling the girl to fasten it round her waist. She repeated the performance with the second leaf, telling the girl to fasten it round her neck. The girl complied with the first leaf but refused the second, saying: 'I have a cloth,' and she pulled her house cloth round her shoulders. The officiant followed the same procedure with the girl's mother, who fastened both leaves round herself. Then one of the chief's wives took the mother on her shoulders and carried her round the corner of the house. The bride followed on foot, and three other wives of the chief, singing:

Ejimale
Ejetile
Ejimalise
Ejetile

[illegible] [illegible] Usually we have mentioned *ananga* by 'bride', but in this case the *ananga* [illegible] *cf.* Gennep 4, p. 79.

[illegible] SYSTEMS OF SOMATIC CAUSE: THE NYAKYUSA

Traditionally, [illegible] no man entered the confinement hut in which a woman remained until the cord had dropped off the new-born child and she had purified herself, and she did not normally resume cooking for her husband for some weeks; but these taboos are less strictly observed than formerly, partly, our informants indeed, because the country has been pacified and men do not fear to die in battle if they neglect them.

The obvious interpretation here is that a man is fit to partake of the weakness of a menstruating or confined woman if he comes into association with her. 'His legs become swollen and painful and he is very tired'; 'strength leaves him'; 'he has no speed in running'; 'his belly aches and his body grows cold' . . . . The picture is surely one of a woman's physical weakness: a man is identified with his wife during pregnancy, observing the taboos she observes, and during menstruation and confinement he must isolate himself as far as possible from her lest he share her weakness; but none of our informants make a connection between the weakness of the woman and the weakness of the man—the interpretation is ours. The Nyakyusa were obsessed with the idea of 'filth' emanating from menstruation and childbirth; indeed, the feeling that women, by reason of their physiology and the taboo on washing during menstruation, are dirty, is cited by men as one of the reasons for not eating with them or sitting to chat with them. Only in this limited sense is the conception of ritual impurity linked with social status. Here the contrast with a Hindu society, in which states of ritual impurity (basically very similar to those of the Nyakyusa) are linked with caste differences, is marked.[1]

The second general conception underlying the taboos of precaution is that of *ubuele*, heaviness, a condition associated with sexual intercourse, pregnancy, the position of witchcraft, and medicines.[2] A 'heavy' (*uele*) person is dangerous to an 'empty' (*bunu*) one, hence women sleeping with their husbands, and pregnant women avoid mothers with infants and brides in seclusion, who are 'empty'; and the 'empty' are treated to prevent diarrhoea and give them weight. Diarrhoea and 'emptiness' are closely associated.

The great specific against 'emptiness' is digestive medicine, used in the puberty, birth, and death rituals, and even used to protect cattle against a menstruating woman. 'If a woman is the only wife

[1] cf. M. N. Srinivas, Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India (1952).
[2] cf. Monica Wilson, Good Company, p. 25.

S: Wilson E-9 (1934-1938)1937 F3117 Ngoudu F3117
Nyakyusa

her husband may give her digidi to rub on her hands and on a stick with which she touches each of the cards. He gives them digidi that they may see he "empty". Then she can clean out the hyena at any time.' [142] [141]

A third idea that recurs, again and again, is that of *ubulilanga*, contamination, which is used in both a literal and a metaphorical sense. It is taboo for a woman to engrossed her husband in any way, hence there are explicit rules (taught during initiation) on posture in intercourse. If she should step over him it is said that 'his legs will swell' and he has grounds for divorcing her. It is taboo for an adult to step over a child and for a woman who is having intercourse to step over one who is not, though a child may step over an adult and a virgin or youth who is not having intercourse may step over a married person of the same sex who is not. In a society in which everyone sits on the ground, often with legs outstretched, observance of the taboo necessitates care. [144]

In its metaphorical sense *ubulilanga* is used for a 'heavy' person coming into close contact with an 'empty' one, as, for example, a woman who is sleeping with her husband entering the hut of a woman with a new-born child, or the mother of a bride entering intercourse before her daughter has had intercourse, or a bride who has not yet brought the *ilibalaga*, the symbol of her union with her husband, to her parents, drinking from her mother's calabash, or entering the inner part of her hut; or a wife who has committed adultery cooking for her husband. It is used, too, if a woman who continues to bear children after the marriage of her son for, it is said, if she does so the son's wife will never conceive at all, or will be long in conceiving, or her child will not walk, on account of a curse. [145]

Mwanamwe: It is not customary for mother and son both to have infants. Women usually begin to stop intercourse when their sons marry. They say it is not good that both mother and son should have small children, because the mother of the young man now thinks of helping her daughter-in-law in nourishing her children. If mother and son both have babies, people are much astonished and say it is not a good custom; they create a curse (*ilipate*) and the fertility of the son and his wife ceases. [146] [147]

Mwalingi's wife put it this way:

I have off having children when my son is married for I should receive my grandchild in my arms, and care for my grandchildren, and be with them in the house.

2: Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

child, the beauty of the body, the blackness, has not yet come. It's dirty (*ipuli*); even after it's come out it's dirty.' The confinement is not now feared by men, they just go in, because European times have come. There is no war now, but long ago they feared to enter, they feared to see the hair and the navel cord. They said: "We will get weary in the legs." ' 'When they went to war their legs became tied up.' During her seclusion the mother eats alone off leaves or out of special dishes, and even after she comes out of the hut she is careful not to eat with women who are 'heavy', or allow her dishes to be used by men. She has her own water-pot and calabash cup for several months.

To the Nyakyusa, the most dangerous point in the confinement is the loosening of the cord, and the baby is watched, day and night, to make sure that the cord does not fall between its mother's legs (*mwage*) for if that happens it is believed that the child will be sterile. As soon as the cord is safely off, mother and child are washed and shaved with *ikipiki* medicine 'to get rid of the filth', and anointed with ointment. They are given a millet porridge mixed with *ikipiki* which has been buried after dark at a cross-roads and left overnight. 'They say people will overstep the child. If they have not made porridge for him he will have diarrhoea.' The porridge is administered to the infant in the doorway of the hut. Then 'they throw out the rubbish (*ilinde*)', the litter is burnt, the hut smeared, and mother and child 'come out'. In some families the husband kills a bull, especially to make a carrying skin for the baby, but whether he kills specially or not the baby is slung in a skin which conceals it from men.

Angumtwike made it perfectly clear that the use of *ikipiki* in the ritual of birth has a double significance: it is to 'close up' the bowels of the child and the womb of the woman, and it is to acknowledge kinship between the mother and the new-born baby on the one hand, and the father's lineage on the other.

When a child is in the belly it is said that 'It's a person (*munda*, i.e. a non-relative)'. When it is newly-born and has not yet eaten the *ikipiki* it is called *kamundi*, which means that it is not yet our relative, we do not know it. The child is called *kamundi* until the umbilical cord falls off and it eats the *ikipiki*, and comes out of the house. If an infant (*kamundi*) dies in the house people do not mourn, they just say: 'The woman had a miscarriage.' They come to her and say: 'Have you recovered?' They do not say a child has died', and they don't say anything to relatives at a distance. As for the ritual, the mother undergoes a ritual alone, or with

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

846 her older child, only the two of them [i.e. the mother and the immedi-
789 ately preceding child]. Before a child has eaten the *ikipiki* they make it of no account, calling it *kanwele*. . . .

When the child is born both mother and child are treated with *ikipiki*, and powdered *ikipiki* is sprinkled on the heap of leaves on which delivery took place. When it is a first child they wash the mother's breasts in the skin for carrying the baby, that is to put the child to the breast for the first time that they (the breasts) may participate in kinship (*pepe ga bakowa*). But for a second child they only wash off the dirt, they do not wash the breasts in the carrying skin, they say: 'We did it for the first child.'

Then they bring mother and child into the house (*bilodingeye*). To a visitor they say: 'Friend, you are a month pregnant, do not come in. You are heavy.' And if a woman is eight months pregnant she also does not come in, she is heavy. If a heavy one comes and wishes to enter, the mother of the newly-born child refuses at the doorway; the heavy one takes earth from her footprint and rubs it on the child on the litter. She receives him on her lap and the others say: 'Thank you, you have met with him.' Then the pregnant one can speak to or about the child without fear, she has met it.

When the cord has fallen off they bury *ikipiki* on the road; it remains overnight, and in the morning they dig it up and bring it and make millet porridge for the mother, not for the child. How can a tiny child eat? To the child they give powdered *ikipiki* in a little water. The woman and child eat together—it is as we, in our ritual, eat together the blood of Jesus, the *ikipiki* of the pagans is their blood. And when a child has eaten the *ikipiki* they say it is their relative now, 'it has entered into our *ikipiki* (*ingile ikipiki kyetu*)'. The mother when she eats the millet porridge closes herself up because much water and blood comes out of the womb. It is said heavy ones must not overstep her.

Then they shave the hair of the child. They anoint its head with *ikipiki* and shave it—not the mother. If she chooses she also shaves, it is customary, but they don't anoint her with medicine. If she does not choose she does not shave. They sprinkle fine ash from the fire on the child's head.

789 The *ikipiki* at puberty is one and the same, and at death, it is one and the same. If a woman had reached puberty and washed with a man, and then leaves him and comes to me, we do not give her *ikipiki*, we say: 'Let her eat the *ikipiki* of kinship in the birth ritual, when she has borne a child.'

Kasitile made the same points about the function of *ikipiki*:

789 Yes, the *ikipiki* of the birth, puberty, and death rituals is one; that of
846 the twin ritual is different. When a child is born they spread a litter for

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

him. They fear that if heavy men come and speak, those who are preg- [75]
nant, the child will suffer, it will become weak and exhausted on the [§66]
time, and will have constant diarrhoea. So they go to the cross-roads
and mix millet flour and powdered *dipiki* with the feather of a chicken,
they give the child some in his mouth to make the motion firm, and
close the bowels. They do this[1] at the cross-roads that those who pass
may step over it and take the disease away. That medicine closes the
bowel, it saves the stomach and bowel when heavy men come, those
who are pregnant. If we do not wear it the child becomes exhausted
with diarrhoea, though the mother is all right.

It is taboo to give birth in the house, a woman bears a child outside [§67]
on a pile of leaves; when she has borne the child they sprinkle pow-
dered *dipiki* on those leaves, but if I, the father, am angry about the
child I refuse the *dipiki*, saying: 'It's not my child, it's a bastard.' That
is of old though. Now, in European times, they wear all children. Yes, [77]
now all are my children; formerly there were bastards. The *dipiki* is
our blood, it is kept in the senior wife's house.

There was some disagreement on this point. Neyani, an elderly [§68]
man who was already married before Europeans came to the
country, when asked: 'Do you perform rituals for bastards?' re-
plied: 'Yes, they are born with[2] my cattle (*Bapagigwe mumende
yenge*).' Four other men who discussed the matter together,
agreed that—

When a woman has borne an illegitimate child we know that the child is the child of her husband because it was born with his cattle (*mumende yake*). Whether the child is a boy or a girl, whether the genitor is known or unknown, and whether he has paid damages or not, the children belong to the woman's lord (*mwene ndende*). When an illegitimate child is born to an unmarried girl her fathers perform the ritual, for that 'man of the long grass' is like a bull. For an illegitimate child born to a married woman the rituals are performed by the husband, for the 'man of the long grass' is like a bull or a cock. Who is going to give a calf to a man alone, the bull who begot it?

But Lyandileko who, as a doctor and a grandmother, was intimately concerned in such matters, insisted:

If a woman has committed adultery and we do not know the man, we give her earth; it's just rubbish. If I give her medicine she and the child will die. If she has borne the child in the long grass and her father refuses to let her enter the house, non-relatives give it to her. If I, the mother, am there I give her this earth [touching the ground].

[1] The baby is not taken to the crossroads, only the *dipiki* and millet flour.
[2] Literally within.

2: Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1937 F3617 Ngombe F3617
Nyakyusa

bore or strike a beast with a stick 'until the twins had grown up' 245
(an elastic phrase), 'but if he has no cow to milk a doctor comes and gives him a medicine to drink in the house, then he can milk the cows outside. To enter the byre is altogether taboo.' He and his attendant during his seclusion drink the milk of one cow only, which has been specially treated. All his wives could milk until the end of the ritual and the mother of twins herself 'can only begin to clean the byre after she has borne at least one other child'—some say two or three other children. If a cow is given her for milk (after the end of the ritual) it is taboo for others to share that milk. If these taboos are broken it is said that the cattle will purge and die, or their legs will swell.

It is also taboo for a parent of twins to pass behind people—he (or she) must always pass in front. 'They fear that if he passes behind, he (the parent) will always have twins.'

Twins, and their parents who have been through the full ritual, are thereafter immune from the danger of twin birth and may even go in so great a number of twins—Mwakatobile's sister, who herself had borne twins, entered his wife's seclusion hut. There are, however, two or three taboos which apply to twins in later life. It is taboo for one of a pair of twin girls to get married without the 247
other. Angundwike explained:

If a man comes wooing the first he must do it secretly, and when he speaks to her father he must do it secretly, he may bring cows but no one knows about it; if it becomes known they say the younger might curse herself (akulima) and die. Then when another has come wooing the other, secretly, the father tells them both to come wooing openly on the same day. They come with cows. Then the father summons all his children, and the twin girls, and tells them: 'These men have come to marry you, do you like them?' And he asks the elder (ndwa): 'Which do you like?' She chooses. Even if she chooses the man who came for her sister he must accept, and if he tries to persuade people will hush him up at once, for it is the custom for the elder to get married first. Then the younger (mwindda) says she likes the other one and their father takes the cattle. If either one is wooed secretly before the other she must stay quietly at home till a wooer comes for her sister. If she did not (whichever way it happened) the other might die. It is common knowledge in the boys' village here that of X's twin daughters a lover has only come for the younger, none for the elder. And so both are still unmarried. [74]

Twins and their parents, the fearful cows (ubipaya), and other 264
people who have been treated with medicines, eat first-fruits of 787

[264] millet, beans and pumpkin with medicines. 'We fear lest the
●797 medicines we have drunk will turn round in the belly';[4] and they must be buried in a box. 'If they are buried outside there will be drought and famine.'

(f) *The mere purpose and symbolism*

[264] [262] The mere purpose of the twin ritual is plain to all Nyakyusa. Twin birth is thought to be contagious, causing other twin births, and also to make men and cattle ill. The ritual is to prevent this. Mwambelile, a middle-aged pagan, was explicit on the point:

> People are afraid to go to the house of a man with twins. They think that they will have twins themselves if they do, and we do not like twin births; they are taboo in the country. Or perhaps their legs will swell, or their bellies, or faces, if they go to his house. So we go to a doctor and he comes and sprinkles all the people in the village, even tiny children, and all the cattle. He takes a banana stalk to burn the twin birth (*pakalya ipasa*). He burns so because of the twin birth. The water is hot and medicated. He sprinkles us all with it and when we have all been sprayed we say we have been burnt because of the twin birth.

[75] When a man has begotten twins we are in awe of the Kyala (*tukulela Kyala ipa*). . . . If people drink out of the same vessel as the parents of twins, or if the father of twins sleeps with his other wives, this makes the disease increase, the disease of swelling legs and stomach; men catch it, the wives catch it, the children and fathers of the wives catch it. There is also a twin ceremony for cattle; if a cow drops twin calves we fear the same things. You, your wife and children drink medicines, and the cows are all sprinkled with medicine—but not your other relatives, or neighbours.

Mwakibola himself said:

> If I did not wash and went to eat with my relatives, my legs would swell, I should pass out and gasp. Swelling of the legs is due to our shades (*mimale gaete*) or perhaps Kyala beneath is angry (*Kyala pasi ukulela*).

[265] References to Kyala as the cause of twins are frequent:

> Kasuma: The shades are in twin birth, and Kyala is there—it is he who gives two children. We drive them away. Kyala and the shades are together. When we bury the *ikilalaga* in the banana grove I say: 'Kyala, leave my bellows (which means my wife) for me, you shades leave it for me.' If the shades are angry perhaps my penis is broken in copulation.
>
> Mwamsamo: I have not heard people speak of the shades in twin

[4] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 34.

783 Kamwaza: You sons of Mwalia had a case against you . . . you fought.
784 Half-brothers: But that case concerned a woman.

A discussion of the case followed.

Kamwaza: Friend, we pray here. Listen carefully.
Half-brothers: I have spoken and not concealed anything.
Kamwaza: That's what I say, let us pray well.
Half-brothers: I performed the ritual for him. Let him die with his hate.
Saiwa: Let us vomit [lit. vomit] we were angry.
Half-brothers: Yes, it is so, we were angry. The sore made us angry.

783 Mwaisumo described a treatment with indaya medicines which differed slightly from the one we saw and involved the slaughter of a sheep; according to his account the medicines are boiled in the pot like ropes, and the participants are washed under a waterfall, though they are not made to vomit like the relatives of a murderer. Doubtless the details vary with the officiant, but the principle that medicines are used to rot the ropes remains constant.

784 (c) *Protection against sorcery or witchcraft magic*

784 Sickness caused by sorcery or witchcraft magic is believed to
783 spread among kinsmen in much the same way as sickness due to the shedding of blood or binding with ropes, and the ritual performed as a protection against it is very similar to the ritual for 'rotting the ropes' just described. We saw it performed after the death of E. who died on 23 March 1935. Her older brother (heir to her father) and her husband, who were pagans, wished to perform an autopsy, but her younger brother, a Christian, prevented their doing so. Soon after her burial her mother and husband fell very ill and three weeks later (April 13) the five-year-old son of her older brother M. died. An autopsy was performed on the child and the diagnosis was that his mother's father, after quarrelling with M., his son-in-law, had drunk medicines to bring death to M's children. M. explained: 'My wife has already buried two
[784] children. This boy is the third. Previously we found evidence of *ifupa** at the autopsy, and this time it is the same. The disease
cont comes from my wife's father.' However, when M. wanted to confirm

* *Ifupa* is a medicine alleged to be drunk by a senior relative, when he is angry, which, if his anger is justified, will cause his junior relative to suffer in his own person or that of his children.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

ordinates and the circuits are distinct. In theory, when the shades 777
are angry the essential offering is that made in the sacred banana 778
grove or on the hearth; it is eaten by the grandsons of the most 783
recently dead, and whether neighbours partake or not depends
upon the generosity of the officiant; whereas when neighbours are
angry there is no offering in the grove or at the hearth, the neigh-
bours are feasted, admit anger and express forgiveness.

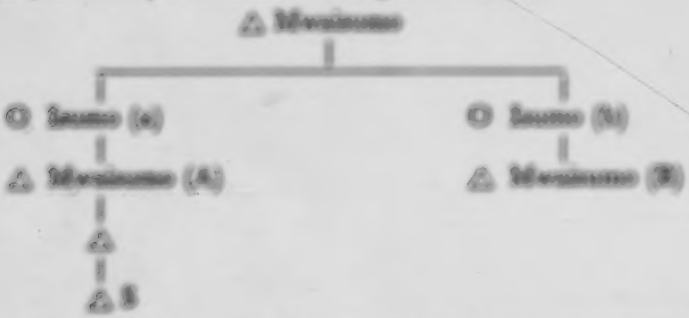
However, neighbours are slow to admit responsibility (for to 789
some someone comes close to witchcraft) and in some cases there
is both a formal feast for the neighbours and a prayer to the shades,
and it is left uncertain where final responsibility rests. The follow-
ing cases illustrate this:

Mwakasumbe: It is the custom among us Nyakyusa to marry many 565
wives, mature men and young men, so if a man has one at his home 897
sometimes happens that one of them makes love to one of his father's
wives. Perhaps they commit adultery in secret, perhaps he runs off with
her to a distant chiefdom. Then the father breaks off relations with him.

The son, wherever he is, learns that he has been cursed by his father 793
and his body becomes like grass fresh. If the son is wise he gathers his 799
property and returns to his father. He takes a friend with him and goes 783
into the house of one of his father's neighbours. His friend and his 621
father's neighbour speak together. 'I have come to return unto my
father because I have done wrong.' He tells the neighbour what they
have brought to offer the father—usually a cow and a bull. Then that
neighbour seeks three comrades or perhaps four or five, and they go to
pacify their irate fellow, saying: 'Our child has returned. He knows
that he has done wrong towards you, but we have received him because
he has confessed humbly and begged forgiveness.' His father refuses furi-
ously and almost spears himself in his passion. His fellows pacify him
for the whole day, or perhaps two or three days, then at last he agrees.
Then the young man and his fellows bring the cow and the bull. The
father also calls together many of his fellows and he seeks beer and 791
cooks food. They gather together at the father's homestead and the 799
father says: 'My son has come and admitted that he has done wrong, 783
asking that I forgive him and saying: 'I did not know what I was doing,
these are the cattle which I have brought', and the others agree. Then
they kill the bull. They roast some meat. The father catches one side of
it, the son the other and the village headman cuts it in the middle, and
the father and son each eat their piece. This is the blessing (*ubusuje*),
meaning that there is kinship between them now. They eat together.
Then all the people eat. Also with the beer it is like this. The village
headman picks a straw and puts it in the beer, hands it to the father
who drinks, and then to the son. Then other people drink, and they

sister immediately older than herself, the sister's daughter, and the sister immediately younger than herself, took part. 765 602

At the ritual of spearing, the principals are the children and 783
grandchildren of the slayer and the slain, their brothers, their 602
mother's kin (*ahipwa*) and their wives. We were not able to watch 682
any case of treatment against *ahilanga* and are not certain exactly how far the infection is thought to spread. Our informants were agreed that the number of kinsmen concerned is less than in a twin ritual, but we record one case in which a minor chief, Mwainsumo (B.), forbade the father of a man who had killed S., the great grandson of Mwainsumo's mother's sister, to enter his country lest he spread disease among his relatives.



[30]

At a ritual to 'rot the corpse' those concerned are the descendants 783
of the one who has been bound and their wives, siblings and sib- 602
lings' children. At the one ritual we saw there were present 27 members of the dead man's own lineage (3 sons, 2 younger half-brothers, 1 full sister, 4 half-sisters, 3 sons, 3 daughters, 2 grandsons, 7 granddaughters), one wife, the wives of 4 sons, one father's sister's son, one son and 6 daughters of his sisters or half-sisters.

The ritual for protection against sorcery which we attended was 782
performed at the home of the senior brother (heir to his father) of 602
the dead woman. There were present her two brothers, their 759
wives and children; her father's brother's daughter; two wives and one daughter of her sister's son; her mother, two of her mother's brothers with their wives and children; two of her mother's sisters and the daughters of one of them. Her husband (who lived next door) could not take the medicine at his in-law's house, but some was sent for him to use at his home with his wives and kinsfolk.

In the simple ritual of prayer to the shades the senior kinsman 782
who offers the prayer and blows out water acts alone but, if there 602

585 between' accompanies 'the mothers-in-law' when they go to induct or instruct the bride, and the wife of her father's 'go-between' is one of the group of mothers which takes the bride to her husband. The duties of a 'go-between' do not end at marriage: the [p.1] groom's 'go-between' is responsible for taking to the bride's people the hen to announce the birth of the first child, and, among the Lugulu, the 'go-between' of the father is master of ceremonies at the ritual of vivification.

799 The ideas that emerge from this analysis are, that in the protective rituals—after death, twin birth, spearing, binding with ropes, and death from sorcery—the parents, children, grandchildren, and some siblings, and siblings' children of the person primarily affected undergo the ritual. Links through females as well as males are recognized—daughters' children as well as sons' children attend—but they are not treated as far, and a brother's or half-brother's children attend far more often than a sister's children. Moreover, children of an unrelated co-wife perform the death ritual for a woman rather than her sister's children.

602 793 Wives always attend rituals in which their husbands are concerned—indeed, they often come with their children when their husbands stay away—but when the wife is concerned as a sister or daughter, her husband never accompanies her.

793 The closest relatives, such as own children, children of the heir 602 or of a related co-wife, and proximate full siblings, must *all* participate, but the more distant relatives select representatives.

602 The range of relatives concerned varies with the particular ritual—it is widest in the twin ritual and narrowest for an ordinary birth—and is also modified by proximity, for relatives who live near come when those in the same category living twenty miles away do not.

Affines (*shabi*) never perform a ritual together even when they are next-door neighbours and close friends, but *shabi* in one generation are *abpwe* (mother's kin) in the next, and a man and his *abpwe* can participate together, as in the protection against sorcery described. More often, however, the members of each lineage act separately.

602 Our Nyakyusa informants distinguished the officiants—*abepuge* 621 —from those undergoing a ritual but they did not make distinc- 615 tions of the sort attempted here between principals and kin who do not undergo the ritual. The distinctions they drew were between kinsmen and neighbours and between lineages. At a death

S: Wilson E-5 (1926-1928)1957 F7017 Ngombe F7017
Nyakyusa

kipepo, *ko Mkaripano*, the sacred place of the fathers in the human 772
grove, there they pray.'

The virility of a lineage is symbolized by the *dipele* medicine, 773
incorporated as 'our blood' or 'women'. With it mourners, mourn- 774
ing girls, bride and groom, the new-born babies and their 775
mothers are treated. To provide it or use it is to acknowledge agnatic kinship: husband and wife wash with it together in acknowledgement that the wife is now 'our blood' with her husband; the grandmother gives it to her son's child in acknowledgement of its legitimacy; in the death rituals the mourners eat food with it acknowledging their kinship with the dead. To belong to a lineage is to be protected practically and spiritually, and the *dipele* medicine is held to protect those who are 'empty' and weak—the 'hollow men'—from those who are 'heavy' with real women or medicines.

The dead, *amadu*,[1] 'he who is risen from the dead', may be 776
incorporated as the principle of life, but at the same time he is 'the 777
one beneath', *ugwe pasi*, filthy, and fearful. When men worship it is life; when they fear it death, corruption, and for the pagan Nyakyusa, as for the Christian,[2] the two are inextricably mingled. *Amadu* (sing. *dindu*) means dirt, dust, rubbish, the litter of the evolution hut, and also the dead. When '*mindu*' is cited as the cause of some disease it is the dead (as things rather than persons) which are meant: 'dust to dust' is an image of pagan as of Christian theology. We have spoken of the Nyakyusa disgust for filth (*ubupele*), which is associated with a corpse, menstruation, childbirth, intercourse, faeces, and all these are identified in some fashion with the dead. Faeces 'go below to the land of the dead'. The hair of a corpse is the dead's, the hair of a girl at puberty is 'the filth of her menstrual blood'. In all the rituals the filth is [713]
buried, shaved off, burnt, washed away, and at the death ritual 'he who is risen' is brought 'to warm himself' at the family hearth, but yet he dwells in the earth and in 'dirty'.

The conception of impurity, uncleanness, associated with physiological functions of coition, excretion, menstruation, childbirth and death is, as we have already suggested, a very widespread one. 713

[1] Ubupadu: to rise from the dead. For the sense the personal class is most commonly used, but some of the old men always spoke of *amipadu* rather than *abapadu*. A young man, commenting on this, explained: 'The dead are not people like us, but *mindu*', i.e. they are things—dust—not persons.

[2] 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' John xii, 24.

and sniffed at the grave. When his son-in-law arrived, the chief's women mourners got up from under the tree and went with him into the hut to wail. They came out all wailing. The women under the tree were wailing all the time with a louder wailing up in the middle. But the wailing was drowned by the drums of which there were three sets.

There young men were got up with white clay spots and some had bells on their ankles and hatchettes. They held spears, and danced and leaps wildly. 'What', I asked Kaitila, 'is the meaning of the white clay?'

Kaitila: It is war paint. During war we painted ourselves with white clay formerly. Then if I saw one with white clay I did not spear him. It was my comrade. But he whom I saw without it was an enemy and I speared him. It was the sign.

Question: But did the other side not see it?

Kaitila: We took them by surprise.

Mwaseko came to visit me in the evening.

Question: And what sorts are they taking about Kateya's death from sorcery?

Mwaseko: They sought the doctor, Mwangulumbe, for the burial sorcerer. He pounded a medicine and burnt it on the grave. Then they buried the dead man and danced on the grave. That means they destroyed the sorcery. The dead man should take it away with him.

Question: And has the doctor given them medicine to drink?

Mwaseko: He has not yet done so. They will fetch him again to cook the medicine at the house.

Question: What about the payment?

Mwaseko: For sorcerer they did not pay anything, now, but when they have fetched him to their house, then they will pay some shillings. But if many people have died, then they fetch a famous doctor such as Mwakisunde. Then he comes with all the protective medicines (amapingo) and cures them. Then such a doctor gets a cow. The famous doctors in this country are Mwakisunde and Kapugano and Mwakanyamale.

Question: Will they consult an oracle?

Mwaseko: Why should they consult an oracle? They know what it is. It is the sorcery of their brothers!

Question: But it might be the sorcery of another. Some say of Mwalisoje (the chief).

Mwaseko: They are liars. Sir, Kateya had just come from his brothers. He got the illness at their place. It is they. If it was from Mwalisoje and his people, they would have speared him by night. We would have found wounds and much blood, but we did not find them.

Question: He came from his brothers?

Mwaseko: Yes, there was a ritual because their father, Mwakilaje, had died. Their senior brother inherited and he also died. Kateya

3: Mackenzie M-5 (co. 1925) 1925
F317 Ngonde F317

third to cook food, and a final gift is required to make her lie down on the mat along with her girl friend, who stays with her for a few days. This ceremony of the gifts is never omitted in heathen marriages, and each successively binds the girl to her husband. 584 585

If the bride is a twin, the doctor must be present, to sprinkle medicine over house and bedding, and to give the couple a decoction supposed to prevent the occurrence of twins in the new family. 587

Except the daughters of Christian parents, all Konde girls are married before they arrive at puberty, and what has been described above applies to child wives, who stay with their husbands for about a month, and then go home. 582 177

The child wife having grown to womanhood, however, further ceremonies have to be observed. The husband arrives at her father's house with an ox for the feast, and a mock struggle for possession of the bride takes place. The women of her family barricade themselves in the house, which is attacked by the women of the other family. Payment of a shilling opens the door, and the further struggle which takes place in the house is brought to an end by the formal presentation of the ox. The husband and his friends enter, and engage in a weird dance, a mere tramping of the floor in unison, with shouting and waving of spears, no doubt a survival of what was once marriage by capture. 583

The washing and shaving of the bride follows, and her bark-cloth is burned, and a new one given her, and then comes the feast of beef and beer, the materials 585

3: Mackenzie M-5 (co. 1925) 1925
F3817 Signode F3817

The complaint is not seldom made that in this respect they were better off under the Germans, for the Germans had a vigorous way with crooks, while now criminals are cared for in comfortable prisons, while honest men suffer loss for which they get no compensation. Professional thieves openly jeer at the sentences imposed: good feeding, houses, fires, blankets, and back to your "work" in better and fitter condition than when you left it!

So openly, so far as their own immediate neighbourhoods are concerned, are thieving operations carried on, that both the doctor and the diviner (the two offices are often combined in one person) are consulted; the former to find out whether the proposed plans will be successful, the latter to supply the necessary medicines. Watchers being stationed to give the alarm, medicine is thrown on the roof of the house to be robbed, to make sure that the inmates shall sleep soundly; and on the door, to make it open of itself, as many seriously believe. On entering, the first man in begins by handing out all weapons, so rendering the owner defenceless should he awaken; then a brand from the fire, which is always burning in every house, is waved about to fill the place with smoke; and a third medicine is placed under the heads of the sleeping people of the house. If the thieves dig in, as they often do, the work is performed with remarkable silence. When the hole is big enough, a large banana leaf is thrust in and moved about, to test if the inmates are really sleeping. Then one man goes in feet first, for a spear-wound in the foot from a

J. Mackenzie M-5 (10. 1925) 1925
F3817 Ngonde F3817

wretched homesteader is less serious than the thrust through the chest which ended the life of an inventive soldier a year ago. 674

When everything has been handed out to confederates, the doors are opened, and the cattle taken out; for the latter sleep in the same house as their owners; a custom which is attributed to the conviction that in no other way is there any chance at all of defending their property. If the owner has been killed in the house, the cattle, I am assured, will refuse to move; but they will pass over the dead body if placed in the doorway, and give no further trouble. Murder is a not infrequent accompaniment of cattle stealing. A woman was killed with a blow of an axe, not five miles from my house, because she awoke and cried out when thieves were making off with their booty. There is a story, which has been only partially confirmed by the police, that in 1923 six persons were killed by the owners of cattle with which they were making off. The cattle lowed while being removed, the owners were roused, and overtook the thieves, who were killed in the fight which ensued.

Old stories say that thieves possess medicine which make it impossible for them to be recognized should the victim waken up while they are still in the house. They ask him if he knows who they are; and as death may be the penalty of an affirmative answer, it is easy to believe that it is rarely given. So confident are the thieves of the power of the drug, that they sometimes coolly arouse their victims, and compel 674 189

2: Mackenzie M-5 (co. 1923) 1923
F3117 Ngonde F3117

673 them to cook for them. One brave man, thus occupied, suddenly thrust a blazing brand into the face of one of his spoilers, whereupon he and his confederates bolted.

675 The native law of reprisal is the same as the old American law of horse stealing—death on the spot if caught. The chief did not interfere in such cases. On the contrary, he was indignant if criminals of this kind were brought to him. He refused to look at them, and reminded the captors that it was their duty to kill them where they were caught: let them be taken off and dealt with according to the law without further parley. Hanging on a tree was the commonest mode of disposing of captured thieves.

But the Konde loves his cattle, and not all the fear of the thieves and their medicines will hinder some individuals from doing all in their power to recover their property. An old man came some time ago to ask the loan of forty shillings. He explained that he had been robbed, and that his plan was to go through the country offering to buy a cow, in the hope that the thieves, not recognizing him, would offer him his own animal. It is pleasing to relate that the old man's plan was completely successful. *Per contra*, thieves sometimes bring intelligence, of a kind, to bear upon their profession, and cases are known where they have actually charged the real owner with having stolen their cattle, and had them awarded to them.

674 In strong contrast to the Nyakyusa of the north, the people of Karonga, though they steal from each other, do not steal from Europeans. During five years

If a spirit is to be propitiated, beer is poured out and petition made as follows:

> "Ye fathers, I am about to sow my seed. How can it grow if ye kill what I put into the ground? If ye are gracious to me, let me see the harvest."

Finishing his ablutions with the usual squirting of water from the mouth, he next day sows his seed in confidence. If there are no obstacles from the spirits he does not pray. Why should he? There is nothing to pray about.

The ceremonies are practically the same all over the Kaonde country, but many chiefs have special practices of their own. A very picturesque ceremony is that of the chief Mwaiseuma. When the early rains have fallen, and the ground has been hoed, chief and people go to the grave of the ancestral chiefs, carrying their shields of ox-hide. The chief and his headmen, standing in rows, raise their shields above their heads, and Mwaiseuma, taking water into his mouth, squirts it upwards, and prays for a good harvest. Immediately all the people break out into rejoicing, dancing, shouting, blowing bamboo whistles, and drumming. The seed may now be sown.

The first hoeing is *ukuchewa*, gathering the heaps of dry rubbish and burning them. But even this is not done without ceremony. Every man goes to the doctor to get medicine, which is put into the biggest heap in his garden; then, when the wife of the village headman has set fire to one of the heaps, which must not be one of those in her husband's garden, all the

D. Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

other women take fire from the lighted heap, and kindle their own, first setting the torch to the large heap which contains the medicine, the virtue of which is carried to all the other heaps as they are set alight one by one.

There is a custom, now passing away, but still followed by a few, of throwing medicine into the ground at one hoe. Many use manure for fertilization, but the medicines I am speaking of have no manure qualities. They are *ndoto*, something possessing mysterious power, the virtues of which are known by experience, but are not open to rational explanation. One of the best-known medicines of this kind is elephant manure, dried and set on fire, and the smoke allowed to spread over the garden. Where this is used it insures a bumper crop.

Not even yet, however, is all ready, for the seed must be doctored before being sown. A medium-sized basket is taken, and plastered on the inside with the drug, which, of course, has been obtained from the local doctor, who at this season does a roaring trade. Into the basket the seed is put, mixed with more medicine, and then sown. The object in this case is not, however, to secure a good crop, but to prevent the yield being interfered with. If even a sorcerer steals from that garden, he will sicken, and probably die; or a disease will eat up his lips, and he will stand revealed to all men for what he is, a garden thief, and, it may be, a sorcerer as well.

Working parties are often formed for the hoeing, the group spending one day in each garden, and being

2: Mackenzie M-9 (ca. 1925) 1929
F3517 Ngombe F3517

Nothing was left to chance. The spirits having been placated, the natural skill of the hunters must be reinforced by medicines. Indeed it is not improbable that the native would say that the whole of his skill and success is due to medicines and ceremonies. The warrior goes out to battle armed and protected by prayers, drugs, and a good conscience; equally for the hunter good morals, good medicines, are as important as reliable weapons and a steady nerve. *Ukeza na nyanga*, to ensure a good spear-throw, or a straight aim with the ancient rifle which some hunters carried, was rubbed into fresh cuts in the hands; and *barwaga*, to make sure that the animal died quickly and without a long chase, was incised into the arms; but more frequently, and more effectively for this purpose, *bulowale* was attached to the spear. This latter is a deadly poison, happily, perhaps, known only to a very few, for a single scratch is said to be fatal. It is said that the Germans tried unsuccessfully to secure the secret of its manufacture. The poison is attached, in a leaf, to the blade of the spear, and the thrust into the flesh of the animal releases it, so that it enters the blood, and causes a speedy death.

Women must not touch or go near hunting weapons, which are kept in the roof of the house. The spears must not be placed near the fire, lest the game, sniffing in the breeze the smell of smoke, deduce the presence of mankind, and make off. The hunters must eat only freshly cooked food, for cold food destroys, as it does also for chiefs, the virtue of their medicines. Fatal results are sure to follow contact

B: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1923) 1925
F3517 Sigonda F3517

which the birds settle on the branches and are skilfully caught. The other method is to throw dust in the air, where birds are numerous, just after the young begin to leave the nests. The birds, "thinking it is rain," settle on the ground and are easily caught.

Fishing.—Fishing remains an important part of the year's work for those living near river or lake. For river fishing, huts are built in the vicinity of the place where the traps are to be set, for the fishers live there as long as the season lasts. Ceremonies similar to those observed before the hunters set out for the bush, must be performed. Sometime in May, when the river is in flood, the chief fisher of the Mbuke dreams of fish, a sign that the time has come to begin the year's work. A great quantity of *sokonda*, fish poison, is prepared, each fisher, and there may be as many as fifty, preparing his own. When all are ready, led by the chief fisher, they go to the water, and trample the poison leaves into the bottom of the river. The poison sickens the fish, which are then easily caught in the traps which are set for them with the mouth opening upstream. As soon as all the traps are set, the men lie down on their backs on the bank, and proceed to invoke the aid of sympathetic magic. They open and close their mouths, gasp, in imitation of dying fish. The probability of a good season is greatly enhanced by this process, which, though omitted now by many, is still widely followed.

The traps are laid in rows right across the river, and are in the form of immense baskets with gradually

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

including the individuals killed, was told to the chief. 721
If the dream was favourable, confirmation was sought. 787
The chief took his zebra tail of office, poured oil into it, and hung it up in the house of his chief wife. If during the night it exuded cattle dung and blood, the sign was good; if blood only, it was bad. Blood indicated the death of men, but that was of secondary importance if the dung was there which indicated spoil in cattle as the result of victory. Along with the tail was hung up the chief's spear, which now gleamed and glittered like fire in the night, while the tail moved about with a swishing sound, indicating that the spirits urged battle. All this took place in the presence of the chief and the principal medicine man only; and their report was published in the morning, when the blowing of a horn summoned all males to the meeting-place. "My children," says the chief, "we are hungry. Let us eat the cattle of so and so." But he gives the name, not of the real point of attack, but of some other chief living in another direction; for there was always the possibility of traitors in the community, who would carry warning to the enemy.

A wild scene of hurry followed. Spears were 726
collected and sharpened, defects attended to, new 789
hafts attached. The shields were examined and strengthened if necessary. If there was a blacksmith in the village he was besieged by warriors whose weapons had become rusty or useless, all eager to equip themselves for the spoil. But man and weapon are alike useless until they have been given power and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

726 protection by the medicine man; and the armed
789 warriors, standing in rows or circles, were sprinkled with medicine from a huge pot, rendering them and their weapons irresistible. In the rising of 1906 in the Songea area, it is said that the fighting men were so confident of the power of the drugs that they rushed up to the mouths of the German guns, only to perish there by the bullets which they believed would be turned into water.

Besides the publicly administered medicine, a more powerful drug was to be had for a fee; and the chief himself was armed and protected at all points in this way. One medicine ensured that his spear would find the heart of an enemy; another that the enemy's spear would fall short; a third he chewed as the fight went on; and a few very great chiefs possess a medicine which enables them to remove a fatal wound to a non-fatal spot. Those who could obtain it attached another medicine to the spear handle, and some carried a charm on their shields.

Fighting men carried spears numbering from six
726 up to twenty; and the greater the number the
714 bolder the hero, for a large number of spears indicated a determination not to run until every weapon available had been thrown at the enemy, or otherwise
[567] disposed of. Great heroes were followed by slaves who carried additional supplies of weapons. Some had wide shields of ox-hide, and others had narrow strips strengthened by slim bamboos. On their heads they wore the *ikipubili*, a plume of red and black feathers, the capture of which from an enemy was

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

roll of the Great War was a terrifying revelation of the unyielding nature of the Europeans in a quarrel. 727

Individual chiefs had special methods of securing victory. Mwamakula's wife, when her husband marched out with his forces, sat on a live sheep as long as the fighting went on: so assuring good luck to her husband in taking cattle, and preventing them running away when taken. Another wife sat on a cooking pot, to keep the enemy in a state of security while the warriors were closing in on them. They would go about as usual, unaware of danger, cooking and eating, until the storm burst, and there was no hope of defence. His sister had a *lusero* similar to the one carried into battle; and one of his old men lay down on the path, each soldier stepping over him as he passed on. While the fight was being waged, this old man sat on his haunches and pulled himself forward in that position, the effect being to make the enemy run. The *lusero* was carried hereditarily by Mfwimi, and when he laid it down it moved forward of itself as the enemy retired. 726 789

In the north there was a great prophet, whose presence in the battle always assured the victory to his own side; but if he retired, even for a moment, the battle turned, and he was brought back, by force if necessary. 726 792

Two great wars still stand out in the minds of the people: the victorious march of the Angoni, and the slaving invasion of the so-called Arabs. Both these enemies brought with them methods of fighting unknown to the Konde, who fled before the Angoni, 721

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

593 send the son into his father's house. He walks through the whole house
789 and the mothers acclaim him. This is the sign to show everybody that
783 he has entered his father's house. The women call the *akalulu*. They are rejoicing because he has entered.

There are, however, some who do not return to their fathers. They remain strangers [*abandu* as opposed to *abakamu*] until their death. There is a young man at my home who took his father's wife. Where he fled to no one knows because he is still in hiding. His father separated from him altogether.

A son must always bring something and the father must collect his friends. If they just agree with one another and people do not eat any-
[753] thing, then the son will not be settled in well. He will be ill. They say that the illness comes from the shades. If the father is angry he mutters (*ikwibunesya*) and they hear. At first the people are not angry, but later on, when they have heard from the father about the matter, they also are angry. It is as if they help the father to mutter. Their shades are not there, only those of the father's lineage, but his shades have regard to the people. If the people do not eat anything and are not present, they are not satisfied even though the father is satisfied. The father prays to his shades alone in the evening with water in his mouth, and they pour out beer on the hearth-bricks.

764 KASITILE: If a rich commoner has died and the heir buries him with
556 only one cow, the shades and people are angry with the heir, breath
783 falls on his body; perhaps he falls ill, or perhaps his child falls ill. But they do not meet; people, the witches, are angry and the shades are angry; the shades because they have buried him with only one cow, people because they have not eaten meat, but the shades and people are independent of each other. The oracle says: 'The shades are angry,' it does not speak of people. It knows that people also are angry, but it speaks only of the shades. And when he makes amends he prays in the evening; the next day he calls people and kills a cow and he throws the *ija mmapa* meat in the banana grove and says: 'Here it is, Father,' and people say: 'Indeed, he did wrong, his father was angry.' But they do not confess, saying: 'We were angry.' No, they say: 'The shades were angry.'

754 Another type of case is that in which 'the breath of men' is
783 believed to have fallen on an infant because of its mother's disrespectful behaviour towards her husband's parents or husband's father's sister. When a child is thin and ailing with *ingoto*, the cure is for the mother to confess to the doctor who comes to treat the child all the rude things she has said, and provide beer (exceptionally a bull) to offer to her injured parents-in-law. They drink the beer with their neighbours and wish her well. Ambilikile's wife

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

782 the other things presented. In many places a pot half filled with beer is left all night at the grave where the offerings are made, and if the beer is found in the morning to have risen to the top, and filled the pot, it is a sign that the spirits have agreed to go to God with the petition. If it has not risen there is something wrong, and the wrong must be made good. It sometimes happens that the animal sacrifice is not killed, but is kept by the guardian of the grave, and belongs thenceforth, with all its issue, to the spirits. It is used just like any other cow, but it must not be sold.

An old custom seldom now followed is the children's rain dance. Boys and girls, carrying ashes in pots in one hand, and a small branch in the other, go to the cross-roads, with a leader who carries a fowl. They move with a kind of hopping and leaping dance, and, arrived at the cross-roads, they gather around the leader, who sings :

> " Let all old things fly away ; we get new things from God. His house is great. He has room for everything."

Ashes and branches are now thrown in a heap, and the fowl left there, while the children return as they went, with song and dance.

782 789 It is remarkable that while rain is often so difficult to bring on, it is in the power of anyone, who has just cause, to stop it. But just cause he must have, and he must secure the co-operation of the spirits. This being done by prayer, offered by the family

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

representative, or by the chief if he can be induced to do so, the person who wishes the rain to stop, ties a bunch of feathers to his spear, dips the feathers in red ochre, and sets the spear upright in his garden. Or if he wishes the prohibition to act over a wide area, the spear with the feathers is set up in some hidden place among the reeds on the lake shore. The rain will presently stop. One man well known to me, takes a small piece of polished blackthorn in his hand, and wherever he goes the rain stops. His own faith in his powers, and the faith of many others, is quite beyond dispute. There is an old man not far from me whose family has possessed for many generations the power of causing the wind to blow, or to cease blowing, at will. The old man I speak of is believed to have exercised his powers quite successfully in 1923.

A very few Europeans are believed to possess power over the rain. In 1908 a house was being built at the Overtoun Institution, Livingstonia, the residence of the Scottish missionary, the Rev. Robert Laws, C.M.G. The house was still unfinished when the rains were due, and no rain fell. At last, some time in January, the roofing was finished, and next day rain fell in torrents. Dr. Laws had removed the embargo! Similar powers are ascribed to another well-known missionary, the Rev. Dr. Elmslie of Angoniland. And still, if the rain is too much or too little, the people say, "Ah! it is the Great One at Livingstonia. Why is he doing this?"

Prayer for rain is offered in one place or another

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

791 come, answered with an emphatic affirmative, and with an intonation which clearly meant, "Why should it be doubted?" The spirits form a link between men and God, and there is, in the native mind, no reason at all to doubt that God can make the future known to certain individuals when it is His will to do so. The darkness of mind, so often attributed to the heathen, is not absolute, and they themselves, while readily acknowledging the superiority of Christianity, do not admit that they were wholly without guidance in the past.

The second class of foretellers are the *abakomwa malago*, a phrase which may be roughly translated as spirit-possessed persons, trance-seers, inspired persons. They foretell the future by means of an indwelling spirit, but the occupation is always temporary. The possessed person runs about calling, "Listen, listen, listen." His friends seek to restore him by pouring water on his head, but if he resists they let him alone, believing that he has a message. He breaks away, followed by his friends, who carefully note all he says. One man known to me climbed, in that condition, a mountain of two thousand feet, and on recovering consciousness was in an exhausted condition, though he showed no signs of exhaustion while in the trance.

791 These seers, if we may use a short name for them, announce very much the same things as the prophets,
• 189 but they seem to have made the forecasting of animal visitations their special province. In 1920 a woman called Nakanjere declared that a lion would come

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

and kill many people. The chief, Mwenemusuku, 791
protected his land in the manner described in the 789
chapter on "The Powers of Evil," and none of his people were killed, though the total killed by a lion in that year in neighbouring districts was very large. A letter in my possession puts the number at forty, while others say fifty. Where the chief protected his land in the traditional way, the people were safe; where this was not done, the toll of human lives was great.

In 1922 the same woman predicted that, for the sins of the people, a spotted hyena would kill many. Again the chief protected his land, and again no one was killed; while in a neighbouring and unprotected land, the death-roll was considerable. In the same year leopards were predicted in the Nserya district. The chief was urged to sacrifice an ox, but refused. Six people were killed, and a number of mauled men and women were treated by Dr. Brown at the Mission at Itete.

To the Konde, as I have already said, there is no 787
difficulty in connecting prediction and fulfilment. 811
The inspiration of the foretellers is not doubted; the animals came as foretold; why should reasonable men refuse to acknowledge a relation between the two events? At any rate it may be presumed that the native will go on seeing a connection, while the white man will fall back upon the ever-ready doctrine of coincidence, and refuse upon any terms to acknowledge any other relation.

There is, however, spirit possession of another kind, 755
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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XVIII

Divination & the Lot

THE fact of death is not regarded by the tribes of Central Africa as forming a barrier between the living and the dead. The two form one community, and the means of communication between them are naturally therefore well developed. Living and dead are mutually dependent, and a certain amount of goodwill must necessarily exist between them. What the dead cannot do for themselves, the living must do for them; and what the living must know, but do not, the dead can tell them if properly interrogated. It is upon this fact that divination depends, as do omens also to some extent. The use of charms and amulets, however, depends upon the other, and perhaps closely related fact, that Nature is not a fixed system of laws pursuing its way regardless of human needs, but is pliable, responsive, and will advise, protect, injure, according to the means used by those who possess the power.

The idea that the whole system of consultation of the spirits, of the interpretation of omens, and of the use of charms and amulets, is based upon conscious deception—a few clever men in each community

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

the footprints of the victim, and the banana or other leaf on which he sat, mixed with medicines of various kinds. The mixture is not administered to the victim. It is enough that it has been compounded. 754

One more method of operating will be sufficient, though there are many others. The witch or wizard, stark-naked, goes, at night, after all are in bed, to the house of the person he wishes to injure, and there dances the dance called *kuyinga*, and then goes silently away. In the morning a child becomes sick, and shortly dies. Or, if it is not desired to be so unforgiving, the harvest of the victim will be blighted. The wise householder, however, is not without defence. He secures himself and his family, and his gardens, from this kind of thing by placing medicine in the roof of his house, which roots to the spot the dancing wizard, who is found there in the morning, and dealt with.

There is a very complete system of protection, which has been developed during the ages, guarding the person and the community against all kinds of evil, forming, as one writer has remarked, an insurance against accidents and evil powers. The protection against witchcraft is especially complete. 754 789

First, there is the risk of discovery by revelation, as in the dreams already referred to; or by experiment, as when the doctors apply their tests. But although the dreamer sometimes makes his discovery before any evil has been done, he perhaps as frequently fails; and the doctor is never called in until the evil demands drastic treatment.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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Therefore it must be anticipated by the use of powerful medicines, which would probably be called charms in Europe; but as the Konde call them medicines, I prefer to use that term. There is communal protection, and individual. For the former certain herbs are taken, burned into an ash, and mixed with oil. The mixture is put into two horns, one of which is placed in the rafters inside the chief's house, and the other under the eaves outside, and behind. No one may approach the chief's house from behind, for the medicines would destroy him. But, wheels within wheels, another drug is known which can destroy the efficacy of the drugs in the horn, and therefore anyone seen approaching the house from behind would be suspected of trying to nullify the measures taken to ensure public safety. To make this nullifying drug, the leaves of *malimbalimba* and *undurusya* are taken, and their extract added to what is in the horn, which thereupon loses its virtue, and the public are exposed to danger.

To protect individual houses, the leaves of certain trees are taken, and laid on the fire, so that the smoke, spreading through the house, may ensure the safety of the inmates. Then the same leaves, pounded and mixed with water, are sprinkled on the floor; and finally the root of another herb is buried under the doorstep, and will effectually prevent the entrance of witch or warlock. When a new house is being built, this same root is placed in various positions in the foundation, and the house is now protected from turret to foundation-stone, and the inmates dwell in

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

security. As already said, no heathen house is without this protection. Gardens and cattle kraals are protected in similar ways. 789 754

But witchcraft spreads its nets far and wide, and it is not enough to protect the house, for a man may be attacked outside. To meet this menace, other measures must be taken. Each person drinks a decoction, and swallows a tiny white stone, found only in the Malila district. The effect of this is to enable him to see in dreams any dangers which threaten him personally from witchcraft; and to make assurance doubly sure, some persons wear charms on neck or wrist or ankle.

No one knows when danger will come upon him. One who looks you steadily in the face is probably a wizard; why else should he look at you so? One who does not return your salutation, or returns it half-heartedly; one who denies the reality of witchcraft; one who is a notorious invader of the rights of husbands; all such men (or women) are to be avoided, for they are all probably dangerous.

And the reproach of witchcraft follows one after death. If the *post mortem* shows marks on the internal organs, the person has died of witchcraft; but if the bowels are swollen or blackened, either to the right or to the left, the dead man was beyond doubt himself a wizard; the swollen condition indicates clearly the presence of the two serpents which were the source of his secret powers. Any suspicion that was formerly entertained against him is now confirmed, and his heirs may find themselves involved in demands for reparation. 754 763

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

754 In 1922 a sorcerer got into the house of the chief
789 Kaloso, near Mwaya. The medicine which is always there brought him to a halt, and when Kaloso rose in the morning, he found him there in the form of an owl! Kaloso is one of the most intelligent chiefs I know; but he sent out word, and his people came in great numbers to see with their own eyes the owl which was a sorcerer caught in the act. The owl was not killed, for who knew what evil might be brought on the district if that were done? I suggested that it was an ordinary owl, which somehow had got into the house the previous evening. But ordinary owls, I was told, do not go into houses, while every one knows that wizards can be changed into owls by the medicine in the chief's house.

754 Sorcerers have naturally means of self-defence not available for common men. One wounded in a fight licks the wound and recovers; or if the wound is inaccessible to his lips, he takes the blood with his hand and swallows it, with the same result. One who has fallen sick of smallpox licks the pustules and recovers.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

having received the cattle, but admitted that he was deceiving the people. 754

There is a medicine which protects those who have it against these lions. Kabeta himself, on the occasion referred to, gave medicine to the people of Chinunka, and to the son of Nyondo. To Mwakapalira of Chinunka he gave charms to put on his neck, and a rod to carry in his hand, with the assurance that these gave perfect protection to whoever carried them. One Sunday, Mwakapalira sent his two wives to the garden to get *malesi* to make beer; on the way they met some Christians, who told them that it was Sunday, and they should not do such work; but the women replied that God did not stop working on Sunday, and in any case they were adequately protected. One of the women was killed within an hour by a lion, and belief in Kabeta's charms against his own lions fell to zero. 754 789

Individual protection, however, is not enough, and when such visitations threaten, the chief usually takes measures for the public safety. The following is the method practised by the chief Mwenemusuku: his doctor takes the heart and claws of a lion, which he boils together with the flesh of the dread flying-serpent *inyifiwira;* the chief eats the heart of the lion, and is assured by the doctor that he is now himself a lion. The rest of the medicine is powdered and sent to all the headmen. These send out men to "walk the marches," bearing some of the medicine, and praying as they go:

"Ye spirits, be gracious to us. This evil that is coming upon us, we know not whence it is. If it

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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is the act of God, let it work, His house is great. But if it is the act of men, let it go where the sin is. I and mine have done nothing amiss."

As they go, they chew, for their own protection, the leaves of a shrub called *munyekomaso*, putting the chewed leaves into a small sack at the side. The common people are warned to go in certain directions only for wood and water as long as the lion is known to be about. When it approaches a village, the local headman speaks:

> "You lion, if you have been sent out by men, follow where your prey leads you; if you are from God, His house is great, go where you will."

Just how much effect this has on the lion, need not, perhaps, be too closely investigated.

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There are numerous stories, which, if they do nothing else, illustrate the naïve faith of native Christians in the protecting care of God. A school inspector, going his rounds in 1920, when Kabeta's lion was about, was offered the use of the protecting drugs, but refused. "God Himself," he said, "is my protector." In 1913 an evangelist was followed for some distance by a lion, and at last turned on the brute:

> "You lion," he said, "you have no master. I have a Master, Jesus Christ. I do not fear you. Do not follow me; get off in another direction";

which the lion, after roaring angrily, did! In the same year a lion was moving about on the lake shore,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

but the Christians, secure in their faith, refused to be 781
kept from their gardens. No one, so far as I heard, 797
either Christian or heathen, was killed at that time. A Christian man, walking alone through the bush, was chased by an elephant. "And God said, 'Look,' and I looked, and behold a pit; and I went down into it, and the elephant passed me by; and again God said 'Look,' and I looked, and behold in the pit a very evil snake." There the written report ends; but as I had myself seen this man holding "a very evil snake" alive in his hand, I have no reason to doubt that he acted with promptitude in the pit.

The *inguluka* is a whitish snake, about four feet 754
long, with a deadly bite. That it should exist at all 789
is bad enough; but there are sorcerers who create it for their own purposes. Mwankosore, who lives about two miles from me, is believed to possess this power. He takes the roots of the *pusi* tree, which he puts into a pot along with a powerful medicine, and in a little time a snake emerges. The secret of this medicine is known to a very few, and is guarded by word and by spell. The intending purchaser must face a guard of other snakes sent out to kill him by the makers of the drug; should he, however, kill the snakes, he is acknowledged to be a great doctor, and a supply of the medicine is given to him, for which he pays a cow.

When a sorcerer wishes to kill an enemy, he takes 754
in his hand the snake he has created, and drops it at the house of his intended victim. It immediately makes for the doomed man, strikes, and returns with

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

759 money was to be used for. It came out, however, that it was to pay a native doctor, to whom he was taking his wife for consultation! The native's fee was two shillings. The fee at the dispensary would not have been one-tenth of that sum, but the patient preferred the high fee and the unqualified adviser. Nor is this surprising, when it is remembered that so much of the troubles which afflict the native, are believed to be due to the interference of spirits, with which the European doctor will have nothing to do; while the Konde doctor will consult them as part at least, if not the whole, of his diagnosis. Hence the confidence in him. He is in touch with the sources of the trouble.

759 And this same conviction, that the native doctors are in touch with the sources of the trouble, leads to
789 some of the most foolish beliefs of the common people, and of the most mischievous practices of the doctors. It is the source of the absurd confidence in the power of medicine to turn bullets into water, for example. In 1897 medicine was prepared which would cause the white man, in what was then the Neu Langenburg area, to disappear. It is believed by many natives with whom I have been in touch, that some doctors are seeking for a "formula" to-day, which will succeed where the previous one so obviously failed; suggestive of a state of mind similar perhaps to that of our own alchemists of centuries ago; but suggestive also of a desire, at least in some quarters, to see the last of the white man.

757 Both the gathering of herbs, and the administration
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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

757 782 of the medicine, is a religious act. Mwenekasangamara, the doctor referred to in the previous chapter, used the following prayer, when gathering herbs; it was given to me by his son, who got it from his father. And Mwenekasangamara claimed that it had descended through many generations in his family.

> "Be merciful to me, thou Creator. The medicine which I am seeking is the same that my fathers sought, and it was Thou that didst open their eyes. Show me the roots, and I shall know them. But if my patient is not to recover, hide them from me, and I shall know that it is Thy will."

The following, used when medicine is being administered in a case of ulcer that has resisted treatment, is rather a statement than a prayer:

> "If this disease has come from God, medicine will heal it; for God, who made us, made also the trees, and gave us intelligence to know their properties. But if it has come from men, I cannot heal it."

The last sentence means that witchcraft or the anger of a spirit is at the root of the trouble, and steps must be taken to discover the facts. Then, but only then, the ulcer will yield to treatment.

789 But behind both the prayer and the medicine, or at any rate in addition to them, there is something else. There are certain medicines which are never administered to patients; their function is to give power to the doctor himself; administered to a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 patient, they would almost certainly kill him, for it is very probable that a patient who believed that he had taken one of these by mistake or otherwise, would die of sheer fright.

825 278 The *inyifwira* is a fiery flying-serpent, which lives in pools, and turns the waters red; climbs trees, which thereupon break out into flame, but are not consumed; chases its prey for five miles, and lucky is he whose heels are light enough to escape; and finally, when dead, its body is made into the most powerful drug in the Konde Pharmacopœia. It gives authority to chiefs, and skill to doctors and diviners, and the common man who obtains possession of a tiny quantity is assured of success and riches. To tell the ordinary heathen Konde that all this is fable, is like telling very good and not necessarily unintelligent persons of a few generations ago, that there was no devil, with horns and hoofs and a tail!

Only the biggest doctors undertake to kill this monster when a fresh supply is called for. And even they, before beginning, protect themselves and their assistants with a great variety of other drugs, not so dangerous to obtain. The creature having been located in some pool or other, a small hut is built at a great distance, into which in the past a slave was put, to-day a sheep or a goat. The hut is now clayed over, and closed on all sides, the clay being thickly planted with sharp knives, and the whole sprinkled plentifully with a powdered food, of which the snake is very fond. All being ready, a swift runner is sent to the pool, a bell in his hand, the ringing of which attracts the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XXIII

Wonder Medicine

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NOT that the Konde wonders; he wonders at the achievements of the European; but his own far greater marvels do not rouse his curiosity. They are part of the order of Nature, and no more matter for surprise than the effects of medicine administered directly to a patient. Through long generations they have known men who had power to stop the rain, or to cause the wind to blow, or to do other things which common men cannot do. Where is the difficulty in believing these things? Is it true that the white man does not even believe what he sees taking place before his eyes? "*Imbulukutu yo ryola*," the ear is a deceiver, indeed, but you must either believe what you see before you, or give up all pretence of sanity. Coincidence? It is just as easy to say God, and a great deal more sensible; for it is God who gives to each man his powers; to one, power to cause the wind to blow; to another, power to bring lions and leopards; to another, power of witchcraft, and so on. In every case medicine is used, but, to repeat what was said in the preceding chapter, "God, who made man, made also the trees, and gave us intelligence to know their properties."

One of my native friends, when on a journey,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

chews, as he goes, a certain root; and he fears no wild animal, for none will come near him. The secret has been in his father's family for generations, and not one of them was ever killed by a wild animal. Another incises powdered medicine into his wrists and ankles, and he is absolutely free from danger of snakes. Nor has it ever been heard of that a man wearing certain charms on his ankles while crossing a river, has been taken by a crocodile. Men have been taken by crocodiles from time to time, but they were either too poor to buy this charm, or too foolish to wear it. It is all law, though the Konde knows nothing about what we call law. Get the right medicine, and the desired result is sure: that is law. Perform the correct ceremonies, and what you ask for will come, as sure as water will come through an open pipe: that also is law. But it does not follow that the native will accept anything that is offered him as a charm. He must know who made it, where the maker got his knowledge, what is his ancestry. Any proof will not do. It must be proof that will satisfy the Konde; and that is by no means what would satisfy a white man. But the obstinacy with which the white man refuses to believe in things that to the African are so obvious as hardly to call for explanation, is part of the reason why still the latter has doubts as to the perfect sanity of the European. One who does not comprehend the obvious is mentally below par.

In preceding chapters native beliefs and practices in regard to various illnesses, agriculture, war, lions, hunting and fishing, have been indicated.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•789 One of the commonest charms is called *isigita*, and is worn on neck, wrist, or ankle, as a protection against snakes, crocodiles, lions, or leopards. It guards also against sore eyes, ulcers, evil spirits. This powerful charm, the description of which reads like a patent medicine advertisement, is made as follows: take dry *pupwe* or *mphiyi* roots, reduce to powder, add powdered head of *kitumbi* snake, and a piece of *mphiyi* root; set the whole to boil on the fire in a broken pot. Then cut the roots into four pieces, string them on cords, leave two such cords in the house, and carry another wherever you go. If bitten by a snake, chew quickly at the charm, and then bind it on the wound.

When crossing a river, this charm, strung as before, is tied to the legs, the four pieces in this case hanging at about three inches from each other. Numerous other charms are used for the same purpose, but the one I have described is the favourite.

[755] Children suffering from mumps take small bundles of firewood, and lay them at the cross-roads, where the first passer-by will pick up the disease, and the children will immediately recover.

A youth who finds himself unpopular with maidens, goes to the doctor, who incises a powder between the eyes in the forehead. His unpopularity will assuredly pass away, as will that of a girl similarly treated. An older man who is disliked or distrusted by his fellows, has a different medicine incised into the same place, and with equal success. But, more valuable still, a man who is involved in a lawsuit, before either the magistrate or the local chief, or who wishes to gain

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 the favour of the white man for any reason, can be supplied with a charm which will secure the end he has in view. For a few moments after the interview begins, he chews at the charm, then removes it from his mouth, trusting for the rest to what has been incised in his forehead. A favourable result may be confidently expected.

789 Thieving charms are also in use, and men who operate under such protection are called *balebi*. A 674 drug unknown to me is tied up in a leaf, and thrown on to the roof of the house to be robbed, and also at the door, to make the inmates sleep. The thieves enter, either by opening the now facile door, or by digging; and immediately place another drug under the heads of the sleeping owners of the house. "May they sleep heavily; may they dream dreams," is their incantation. Another medicine is worn on the wrists. So bold are the robbers thus protected that, when they have removed everything they wish, they awaken the sleepers, and demand food (which is given to them), without fear of being recognized; but it is not perhaps surprising, considering the fear in which these criminals are held, that the victims never admit that they recognize the thieves.

The house, however, may be protected. Powdered root of *ikitebo* is spread all over the house, and any thief who enters will have sores breaking out on his lips, a thing which happens only to thieves who have ignored this charm.

789 Kondeland should be a paradise for debtors, for the 426 man who knows the ropes can arrange to put off pay-

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 426 ment so often that finally it is either not paid at all, or paid when it is quite convenient for the debtor to do so. To secure this desirable result the debtor, when he learns that his creditor is coming to demand payment, slips out into the bush, where he gets the roots of a plant called *butisi*, which he chews as the creditor approaches. A most amiable conversation ensues, at the end of which the creditor begs his friend on no account to disturb himself about the small matter that lies between them: any other time will do just as well, and he will be delighted to call again in a couple of months or so. The same end is attained by incising a powder into the forehead between the eyes.

789 224 763 Hunting medicines have already been referred to. One is incised along the bone from the thumb to the elbow; another is taken internally, but this latter is dangerous, because it leads to a lingering death. When death draws on, instead of dying as common men do, the whole body of the hunter who drinks this medicine becomes helpless; the heart keeps going, the lips move and talk; death does not come. Then his friends come and sing to him: "*Ndembo syaya mmiyombo*," the elephants are among the trees. The sick man, puffing out his cheeks, emits breath with a whirring sound, which is supposed to resemble a sound made by elephants, and presently he breathes his last.

755 But there are few ills, imaginary or otherwise, for which there are no cures, imaginary or otherwise: and the cautious hunter, finding old age creeping on him, and his hunting days becoming a thing of

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

memories and yarns, eats food made from the flour of a pumpkin, which destroys the virtues of his hunting medicines, and at the same time takes away all probability of his death being the prolonged weariness it would otherwise be. 755

Fishing nets are drugged to ensure a good catch; but here again caution must be exercised, for a very great catch is an omen of a very large family, which is not always an ambition held by the Konde people. 789 226 787

The mother who has just given birth to a child must not cook food, nor may she warm herself at the common fire; a small fire is kindled for her at which she sits by herself; and when the child goes out of the house for the first time a medicine is put into its mouth to guard it against the ills of the world into which it has come. 846 789

Christians do none of these things; but Christians are not as other people. They have passed away from the fear of spirits and from the dread of a world in which anything may happen at any moment; and the fact that they escape the consequences of failure to follow custom is having its effect on the common people, many of whom are cautiously experimenting to see whether they too may live a freer and more unshadowed life; but the belief in the protective powers of such things as I have been describing dies hard. 789 771

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

incorporating the previous inhabitants. Now saturation point has been reached; their chiefdoms cover nearly all the available land and include in their membership all the indigenous people; and the custom of dividing chiefdoms into two is doomed. At the moment, however, it is still a vital part of their constitutional law. The division of a chiefdom is apparent from the moment that a ruling chief marries his two great wives, for he builds their houses separately, one in each "side" (*ulubafu*) of his chiefdom. The son of each great wife inherits that side of the chiefdom in which his mother's house is built. 631 622

When the ruling chief begins to get old the two heirs are ceremonially "brought out" and recognized as chiefs, though they do not assume full powers until their father's death. And their "coming out" is also the "coming out" of all the young men, of all the boys' villages which have been built by the sons of the old chief's men. At the "coming out" each such village is formally given land by the old chief and his great-commoners, often in a new place. 622 621

In every village there is a headman whose title, *ulifumu*, is simply a specialized use of the general term for a member of an old family who is not a chief. Every commoner is called an *ulifumu* in his home chiefdom.[1] These two uses of the term I distinguish by calling the village headman a "great-commoner." Great-commoners, then, are selected for their wealth and ability by the older great-commoners of the chiefdom and hold office for life. In the boys' villages before the "coming out" they are chosen by the older great-commoners—those in charge of their fathers' villages—on that side of the chiefdom. If they prove satisfactory their appointments are confirmed by all the great-commoners of the old chiefdom at the "coming out," if not new ones are then selected. 621 624

At the "coming out" the young great-commoners are ritually treated with medicines to give them the power of witchcraft which they are expected to use in the interests of morality, while the young chiefs are treated with medicines to make them fierce and impressive themselves and to ensure the fertility of their land and the prosperity of the people under them. [754] [788]

Traditionally the young chiefs assumed authority, each in the young men's villages which composed his own new chiefdom, immediately after the "coming out" and in the old villages in one side of his father's chiefdom when his father died. To-day the position differs for the Administration does not recognize the young chiefs at all until their father is dead. 621 622

The separation of chiefdoms established at the "coming out" is often modified subsequently. In the old days brother chiefs frequently

[1] Vide infra p. 33.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Mwambelo, younger brother of Mwakasungula, succeeded and abandoning the enclosure at Mbande, went to live by the lake shore.[1] And so yet another step was taken from the traditional religious seclusion. His successors returned to Mbande; but the custom of building an enclosure round the houses of the Kyungu was not resumed. 173

In his reign Mwafulilwa, chief of the next tribe to the south of Ngonde, sought aid against the Ngoni and the men of Ngonde responded and won a battle. But the Ngoni then replied with another night raid in which they found Mwambelo alone in his house and killed him and returned home. Another attack followed before a new Kyungu had been installed, but it was repulsed, "for this time they had come by day!"

"And then the nobles of Ngonde made Gwa Sapasi Kyungu; he was a son of Kalambo, a chief of Ngana; for they said that, as so many of the chiefs of Ngelenge had been killed by the Ngoni, they would now take one of their cousins again as the Kyungu." And now at last Ngonde submitted to the Ngoni. Gwa Sapasi, with the concurrence of all the chiefs and all the nobles save one[2] sent a tusk of ivory to the Ngoni chief Mtwalo. "And from that time forwards the Ngoni never fought with us again."

A few years later, in 1875, after Gwa Sapasi had died and been succeeded by Mwafongo, the Europeans first visited Ngonde. Arab slaves traders established themselves there about the same time, and with the struggle between the two races for the possession of Ngonde the modern period begins. 175

3. *RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS (MIDDLE PERIOD).*

The traditional status of the Kyungus had in part a religious basis.[3] The ruling Kyungu and the spirits of his dead predecessors were believed to form one divine company, the anger of any one of whom had terrible effects: while in his own flesh and in some of his possessions magical power was believed to reside. But the Kyungu was not alone in his religious potency, he was but the greatest of many. The nobles of Ngonde and the territorial nobles, the chiefs both great and small, professional rainmakers and doctors, the great-commoners of the villages, heads of families and even ordinary men and women—all alike were believed to have some access to, some dealings with divine or 643 769 789

[1] Three nobles of Ngonde, in recounting this story, maintained that Mwambelo was mad.

[2] He was Mwenisungo, whose story is omitted here for lack of space.

[3] As this paper is concerned only with political institutions no full analysis of the tribal religion of Ngonde is here attempted, only those aspects of it are dealt with which have political significance.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 769 789 magical powers. And the faith alike in ancestors and in witchcraft gave to every group of subjects a religious hold over their rulers.

(a) *THE THEISTIC ELEMENT.*

643 764 778 Though the early Kyungus had lived on the stony top of Mbande none of them had been buried there, for "the ground was too hard to dig graves in." They and their successors were all buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. Thus Kyungu Mwangonde is referred to as "He of Bwiba," Kyungu Mwakasungula as "He of Ipota," and so on.

643 731 787 782 Now drought and widespread sickness were believed to be caused by the anger either of some dead Kyungu or of the living one. "In time of drought they (the nobles of Ngonde) would go to a diviner to enquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would tell them that it was so and so. So they would tell the (living) Kyungu. And he would give them either a bull or a sheep, together with some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own house, one of the pots which were continually brought by his people as tribute.[1] And he would give them some flour and some cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove. Now the diviner would have told them that he (the dead Kyungu) was angry because they had omitted (for so long) to build his house. So they would begin by building his house in the grove, they would build a miniature hut with rafters.[2] Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fix some of the pieces to the house in the grove—an action which they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And, finally, they would pour out (some of) the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a house in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

643 731 787 "But occasionally if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any of them: 'No—no.'

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[1] *Vide infra* section 4.

[2] This is the custom traditional in the sacred groves of all important chiefs, both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa. We have seen it done among the Nyakyusa. The hut which we saw built was between two and three feet high.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

were dealt with by the local rulers or by the family-heads, not by the central authorities. It was only occasionally that general fears or misfortunes turned all men's thoughts together to Mbande. 771 643 565

Now the great-commoners of every chief were believed to have independent access to his ancestral spirits and this gave them a spiritual hold over him. If they compared him too unfavourably with his predecessors then, it was believed, those predecessors might hear and afflict him in various ways. And so it was also with the nobles of Ngonde and the reigning Kyungu. But as this belief was intimately linked with the belief in witchcraft it will be more conveniently analysed in that context.[1] 622

(b) *THE MAGICAL ELEMENT.*

Magic (the belief that certain particular objects, events, words or actions, involving particular people in particular situations, possessed in themselves an extraordinary power) was an essential ingredient of the old pagan religion of Ngonde. While the greatest magical object in the country was, traditionally, the body of the Kyungu. And the fact that the central political authority of Ngonde was so largely vested in the nobles of Ngonde was due above all to their responsibility for controlling this magical object in the public interest. 789 643

If the Kyungu cut himself, and more particularly if his blood fell to the ground, then it was the duty of the nobles of Ngonde to kill him, lest the whole land be afflicted with disease; and if he was ill likewise. "They considered that if his blood fell to the ground that was his life falling. And they likened him to a god, considering it taboo for a god to be wounded; they thought that if his blood fell to the ground it would turn into a sickness and all the people would die. And so, when the Kyungu was wounded, they thought it best to put him out of the way and start afresh with a new one. They thought it taboo for him to have even the tiniest wound on his body. And it was equally taboo for him to fall ill; everyone else, it was believed, would fall ill too; it was better to put him out of the way so that the people should keep well." 789 643 784 753

In consequence of this belief elaborate precautions were taken to maintain the Kyungu's health. Sexual impurity was believed to be magically dangerous to health in many ways and so the Kyungu, above all men, must be guarded from it. It was not considered safe even for his own wives to cook his food, lest one of them touch it during a menstrual period, and so young boys who had not yet reached puberty 789 643 834

[1] *Vide infra* section 3 (e).

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 cooked it instead. One of the reasons for killing most of his sons, as we
643 have seen, was to lessen the danger of his wives committing adultery
834 with them, for adultery was a magical cause of sickness. His wives themselves were jealously guarded.

643 Then again a Kyungu might not wade across the river lest the act
784 of doing so should magically bring a deluge of rain from heaven, he
821 had always to be carried.

789 And the breath and the growing parts of a Kyungu's body—his
643 hair and nails and the constantly replaced mucus of his nose—were
764 believed to be magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde
826 plain. When he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was buried "with breath in his body"; while portions of his hair and nails and of his nasal mucus were taken from him beforehand and buried later by the nobles of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This action was believed to "close up the land, to keep it rich and heavy and fertile, as it was when he himself lived in it."

789 Now the Lwembe of Lubaga had equally magical flesh, but the
622 other chiefs of Ngonde and the Nyakyusa had not. They could wade
826 across rivers, fall ill and be wounded without endangering their subjects. But of all alike the breath and the hair and nails had a magical importance. Every ruling chief in both areas had his nostrils stopped by his great-commoners when nearing death, while portions of his hair and nails[1] were taken from him when living and buried after his death in a special place. The hair and nails were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops. "You see these nails of yours," said the man who explained the symbolism to us, "if you cut them do they not grow again?" (They do.) "And where does their growth come from? Does it not come from within the body?" (It does.) "Well then that is the reason, the great-commoners take power of growth from the chief in the form of his nails and hair."

789 Besides his magical body the Kyungu had a host of magical
782 possessions. There was the iron stool *Kisumbi* on which he was set at his accession; once he had sat upon it he could not flee the position or he would die. There was the drum *Mwenekelwa* whose note was believed to be heard by the most distant of the Kyungu's subjects. When it was beaten "all the little nobles from afar off would hear and obey the summons; they would all come together. Then we would tell them that so and so had not brought any ivory for a long time! Then they would come with tusks as tribute, to pay worship to the Kyungu." But sometimes the drum would refuse to sound and they would kill a

[1] We were only told about the nasal mucus in the case of the Kyungu.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

sheep over it; if it still refused they would kill a cow; and if it still refused then they would kill a human being, the child of a commoner. 789 782

Then there was *Mulima*, a porous piece of iron "like a mouth organ," which the Kyungu used to make rain. If he held it up out of doors with its holes clear, so that he could see right through them, then it would be fine, but if he stopped up the holes and then held it up out of doors the sky would at once become overcast and rain would fall. And there were his zebra tails set in horn handles, with medicine in the handles, which his people carried to war to give them victory; and his spear *Kamisa*, and so on. 789

There is no sharp distinction in the pagan religion of Ngonde and the Nyakyusa between its magical and its theistic elements. Sometimes the magical, sometimes the theistic predominates, but often they are inextricably mixed. In the prayers and sacrifices to the ancestors magic enters at every turn: particular people, a particular place, particular materials and gestures, particular words are held to be essential to their success. Nor are the more permanent and obvious magical objects always free from divine associations. When we asked, for example, why the drum *Mwenekelwa* had needed occasional human sacrifices to make it work properly we got this answer: "It was because their god[1] had given this drum to the Kyungu saying: 'I alone am war, there is none other war save me.' It (the human sacrifice) was like a prayer. The refusal of *Mwenekelwa* to sound was like the prophetic fit that falls on people (from the spirits) commanding sacrifice (in the groves)." Or, again, it is clear from our evidence that the living Kyungu's power of causing a drought was believed to arise both from his relationship to the spirits and from his possession and use of *Mulima* together. His magical body and possessions, being inherited from his predecessors, were part of his relationship to them. 789 771

Now one of the material facts which had magical significance in Ngonde was that of general social status. The magical powers of the Kyungu not only contributed to the general political authority of Mbande but were, in part, magically derived from it. Only the greatest in the land could possess the greatest magic without endangering his life. There were, for example, a number of chiefs' medicines (*ifingila*), and if a chief used a medicine which was above his status then it was believed that, on meeting the Kyungu or some great chief, to whose 789 554 643

[1] The phrase "their god" (*Kyala gwabo*) is normally used by pagans nowadays to mean the ancestral spirits, or some one among them. The term *Kyala*, which originally referred only to one of the most influential Nyakyusa spirits, has now been identified either with the Christian God or with divinity in general thoughout all this area.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 554 643 status it rightly belonged, he would at once fall down dead. And many stories are still told of such happenings in the past.

And besides this there was the fact that the Kyungu, being the richest man in Ngonde and in the most intimate contact with the ivory traders, could secure medicines from a distance, which had a greater reputation than local ones.

789 771 554 But, as in the theistic aspect of the religion of Ngonde there was considerable local and family autonomy, so also was there in the magical aspect; and here there was individual autonomy also. Lesser rulers had lesser magic than Mbande, but still it was magic. Ordinary chiefs, for instance, had magically filled zebra tails which gave their people military success. And every individual could go to a doctor and exchange a little of his surplus food for magic. Success in love and hunting, in warfare and legal disputes, good crops and good health—all alike, it was believed, magic could give.

(c). *THE ELEMENT OF WITCHCRAFT.*

754 622 624 Both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa it was believed that certain commoners had snakes in their stomachs which gave them the power of witchcraft (*uvulosi* or *amanga*[1]) and among those who had this power were the great-commoners of every chiefdom. Normally a ruling chief was spiritually protected by his great-commoners from the malicious attacks of other witches, but, if he did wrong, then the great-commoners, so it was held, would cease to protect him and join in the attack.

Now in many circumstances the great-commoners' power of witchcraft and the power of the chief's dead predecessors were believed to act together. The anger of witches and that of the ancestors were sharply distinguished in theory, but in practice they often coincided. The great-commoners, for example, not only had the power of bewitching their chief but also of appealing to his predecessors to punish him for wrong-doing; and on particular occasions they were often believed to do both at once.[2] And the nobles of Ngonde had similar powers in relation to the Kyungu.[3]

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[1] *Uvulosi* is normally used when the act of witchcraft is disapproved of and *amanga* when it is approved of by the speaker.

[2] A point of considerable theoretical interest is raised by the repeated statements of our best informant on these matters that it was *because* they were witches that the great-commoners had this power of influencing the chief's ancestors, that they went to the chief's ancestors in their capacity of witches and in the manner of witchcraft (i.e. by means of the snakes in their stomachs). But our evidence on this point is not yet conclusive.

[3] So we were told when we put the question; but it was never volunteered. It was the hold which the nobles of Ngonde had over the Kyungu in consequence of his magical flesh which was the more emphasized.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

even here it was rather position than area that was at stake : " We object to their proximity, let them move further off," said the chiefs of Ngelenge. 669

Civil wars varied in size and importance from little local fights between neighbouring villages, fiefs or chiefdoms to more extensive fights between groups or even whole houses of chiefs. And in every case the political organization took on, for the time, a military character. Great-commoners led their villagers to war, chiefs their great-commoners ; the senior of a group of brother chiefs summoned his juniors to help him, while a great chief summoned all the local chiefs of his house. But only the Kyungu himself could summon the territorial nobles.

Now leadership in war is a factor of political authority ; the great chiefs, nobles, chiefs and great-commoners derived part of their status from their military functions. But, on the other hand, it is equally true to say that it was the other factors of their status which enabled them to exercise this military authority.

In every war, for instance, there were religious elements. Chiefs had war medicines and prayed to their ancestors for success ; while the loyalty of the great-commoners and people to their chief had both a spiritual and an economic importance. Sometimes, in peace, the leading commoners would dream of war and, if they dreamt of running away, then their chief would hastily kill meat for them. Such dreams were witchcraft and, unless promptly dealt with by a feast, were held to be a certain harbinger of future defeat. [789] [787]

" In civil warfare the Kyungu never took any part at all, he remained impartial at Mbande. His sons fought one another by themselves." (But what of the war, between Ngelenge and Ngana, did he not help his own sons in any way?) " No, he did not. For both ' the cousins ' and ' the sons ' alike were his children, he was the father of all."

(b) *TRIBAL WAR.*

The procedure of tribal warfare and that of the occasional punitive expeditions against the Kyungu's subordinates was the same. Messages were sent by the *valukuta* to all chiefs and nobles of the plain to come to Mbande. There the more important of them entered the Kyungu's house and were given their orders by him personally : " And then, when the Kyungu had told them whom to go and fight, he would finish up by saying ' That is all then, go away now and call down blessings on your arms.' So they would leave his house and gather all together, chiefs and their men, and pray." 721 [202]

The premier noble of Ngonde would begin, reciting all the names of the sacred groves of the Kyungu and asking each one to bless [illegible] in their fight. Then after him each great chief in turn would pray [illegible] 726

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

When the eldest sons of his contemporaries reach the age of about 622
33-35 years the old chief is approached by his great commoners who say : 631
" 'The sons have grown up, let us make the ' Coming Out ' for them." After a period of delay, for he is unwilling to relinquish his own honour and power, the old chief agrees, and the " Coming Out " takes place. His two heirs, together with all the boys and young men, whether married or single, who are sons of the old chief's contemporaries, are summoned to attend, according to their age-villages, at the old chief's principal house. When they arrive they wait there for two days, while the old great commoners discuss with their chief where to give the young men land, and whom they will select as great commoners of the young villages. We have already noted the principles which guide their choice of leaders. In many of the young village groups there are already leaders who have been previously appointed by the old great commoners, but these leaders are, I am told, only temporary, they are never reappointed at the " Coming Out ; " at the " Coming Out " " everything is made new," the boundaries of the young age-villages are redrawn, and new great commoners appointed in them ; only the groups of young men themselves remain unchanged.

The legal action which now takes place comprizes three events : firstly the public selection of new great commoners, secondly the public appearance and the public recognition of the two young chiefs, and thirdly the giving of land to the young age villages.

When the old men have made up their minds, one of them goes 624
among the crowd of young men and catches hold of those they have chosen in order of their seniority : First the one who is to be leader of the senior village of the first son of the old chief, then the leader of the senior village of his second son, then the leader of the next senior village of the first son, and so on. There are usually eight age-villages of young men, of these four will belong to the chiefdom of the first son, four to that of the second. The eight new great commoners are now publicly known, four in each new chiefdom.

The next stage of the action is the one from which the whole institu- 622
tion takes its name ; the " Coming Out." The two young chiefs are secluded for a few hours in the hut of the old chief's first wife, there they receive various forms of magical treatment and when it is finished, "then," to quote the words of a great commoner who told me about his own [789]
coming out, " the director of ceremonies said : ' Get up ! ' the chiefs got up, and came out of the house to us, and we, the crowd of young men, said : ' Come on ! ' and welcomed them. Then we all ran shouting and calling the war cry towards the next chiefdom. In the old days we would

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

went from Mwemusi's country down the path by Mwakalukwa's to Mwakaleli. He lived a year at Lumbila and found it too cold, and thence he went to Masoko, and thence to Lubaga. All men feared him and his animals. 599

In another version Lwembe's survival is linked with the possession of *ifingila*, the medicine on which still, today, the authority of chiefs is thought largely to depend. [773] [173]

Nkekete had much food and Mwemusi killed him because he had no *ifingila*. He killed him and he rose again. 'Why don't you die?' Mwemusi asked. Nkekete replied: 'I don't know, I have nothing, I am quite alone, I have no *ifingila*.' Mwemusi killed him again and he rose, many times. Then at last Nkekete said, 'I am tired.' And he showed Mwemusi and his men a razor (*ulwembe*) and said 'Kill me by cutting my throat with this', and they did and he stayed dead.

Mwemusi feared to kill Lwembe because he was very 'heavy'. He had *ifingila*, and when they tried to kill him they found his house full of animals, lions and others. . . . Once he turned himself into a stone when they tried to capture him. So Mwemusi told him to go far off, and he went with his two wives and two men, Kissoule and Kimonile. He went off riding on a lion like a donkey, with a lion behind his wives, and men were astonished when they saw him.

It is perhaps significant that Lwembe who survived is 'The Razor', by which Nkekete was killed, and the python from which *ifingila* medicine is made must be killed with razors and in no other way (*vide infra*, p. 60). [789] [825] [278]

It is Lwembe's capacity to make things live and grow which is always emphasized: [773]

Lwembe and another were given millet in their hands; Lwembe's sprouted, but not that of his fellow. He was told, 'You plant here and the other there.' The next day Lwembe's had sprouted, but not that of the other. He and his friend went to a hill in dry weather and wanted water. He just struck the earth and water came out. . . . He created leopards and kept them, and he moulded cattle of clay, he moulded them and they became cows, and his friends did the same and they remained clay.

When the heroes were driven out there was a fearful famine in BuKinga, for they had taken the fertility of the country with them, which is why, the priests say, sacrifices to them were begun by the Kinga. The priests of Lubaga were explicit on the point: [773] [173]

Mbasi (Lwembe 15?) came from BuKinga, he took the road to

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'Lwembe listens to him'. 'If Kinga messengers went [to Lubaga] 643
without going through Mwakalukwa's country there would be 793
much hunger. . . . Once Mwemusi and Kyelela [Kinga chiefs] 782
conspired together and sent off men with hoes to Lubaga, without reference to Mwakalukwa. They carried ten hoes. But when they got back disease killed many in the country, and they paid Mwakalukwa and did not do it again.'

It is true that an independent Nyakyusa chief *can* send an offering to Lubaga on his own; it is received by the priests of Lubaga and sacrificed in the grove, and such a sacrifice is held to be in some measure efficient, but drought or sickness in the country as [753] a whole is often attributed to one or other of the participating [731] groups failing to play their part. Moreover, such a failure is thought to be dangerous to the chief or priest who neglects his duties, as we shall see in the case of Kasitile.

The priests of Lubaga ministered to the Lwembe but they had 643
also the right and duty of admonishing him if he did wrong, just [793] as village headmen have the right and duty of admonishing their chief. If the Lwembe broke a taboo 'then Kissoule and the other [784] priests would be very angry and reproach him for bathing and making hunger, and he would pay them a bull in recompense.' Even the 'divine king' was subject to the rule of law. All through the political organization and ritual patterns of the Nyakyusa [642] there is this balance and reciprocity between chiefs and commoners and it is here that the Nyakyusa system differs radically from that described by Professor Frankfort for ancient Egypt.[1] The heroes had brought the gift of chieftainship to the Nyakyusa but it had not ousted another, perhaps older, tradition of democratic leadership; instead, the two were welded in a partnership which, to the Nyakyusa, is so much part of the necessary order of the universe that they speak of commoner priests and headmen as 'wives' of the chiefs. The Kissoule in office is 'the wife' of the Lwembe.

In the grove at Lubaga sacrifices of black cattle and sheep and 782
libations of millet beer were offered by the Nyakyusa, while the Kinga brought hoes, bamboo beer, salt, the sacred drum *ngoma*, and 789 ●
ifika, that is, marvels whose nature, Kasitile averred, he did not 751
know himself. The shrine of Lubaga, and the actors and actions connected with it, are miraculous and terrible, terrible even to the actors themselves who tremble when they enter the grove, and

[1] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (1948), pp. 51-6.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 dare not greet their children on their return without the safeguard
789 of protective medicines. At a celebration the Kinga priests took
751 medicines, 'powdered medicine which comes from Mwemusi and Mwakalukwa [the Kinga chiefs]', and smeared it on Lwembe's forehead and shoulders 'because the grove is great. If you entered it without this medicine you died'; they gave the Lwembe the medicine 'so that Kyala (*vide* pp. 17-18) might not kill him, that he might show respect and escape'.

783 Another medicine, *imbinga*, which is red in colour, was brought
789 from BuKinga to smear on the foreheads of the children of the Lwembe and Kissoule, the priest, when these two returned home after celebrating in the grove. Their senior wives 'would smear the *imbinga* on the children's foreheads, when they would turn round calling: "You hit us", and Mwakisiya (56) (the Lwembe) and Kissoule (the priest) would both reply: "No, I am innocent (*mwelu*)." The medicine was smeared on the children because Mwakisisya and his fellow thought: "How can we meet them, how can they look on our bodies, since we are taboo from the ritual." Yes, the words are the same as in the twin ritual, but the medicine is different.' During one of the rituals we attended, Mwakilima (111) begged the Kinga priests to bring him some of this medicine for the protection of his children.

1118 The numinous quality of everything connected with Lubaga
767 can hardly be exaggerated, the Nyakyusa believe that it overcomes even curious Europeans. The most sacred and terrible object of all was the drum which was polished with blood, the blood of children, who, in Nyakyusa thought, had died for the people, that the country might live and be fertile. 'Formerly,
[782] when the Kinga came with a drum, they said. "Catch the child of a commoner, fat and strong, hide him in the drum." In the old days when the Kinga came beating their drum, ping . . . ping . . . [single strokes with long intervals] we of the country used to run away and women would hide their children for fear lest they be snatched up and put in the drum.'[1] The child was strangled

[534] [1] These statements were made by three different groups of informants independently. All had special knowledge of these matters. The *ilidali*, the sacred drum of the Kinga, differs in shape from the Nyakyusa *indingala*. It is made of *ntaju* wood and ox-hide and is beaten when a ritual is celebrated and to summon men to war. The Kinga do not dance to drums and the Nyakyusa did not do so formerly either, but after the Europeans arrived Nyakyusa chiefs began to buy *indingala* from outside BuNyakyusa, paying a bull for a set—'a mother drum and her children'. Only quite recently have Nyakyusa craftsmen learnt from a Henga immigrant to make *indingala*.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and its body taken to Lubaga and added to the 'medicine for fertility' (*ukuta gwa ifuga*) which was sprinkled throughout the country, starting at Lubaga, proceeding to the other sacred groves, and then to the ordinary homesteads. Thus the terror of the grove had objective roots in the fact of human sacrifice, but it is rather a fear of the unknown and miraculous than of death itself; a fight involving casualties was not terrible in the same way as the grove and the throb of the sacred drum.

The Kinga priests travelled 'the road of Lwembe', down the escarpment of the Livingstone mountains from Mwakalukwa's country and across Selya, beating their drum. They stopped to sleep at the home of Kasitile the priest, and poured a libation of beer at 'the places where Lwembe had rested': Isumba, a hill overlooking Kasitile's homestead, Kituli in Mwaipopo's country, and near the homestead of the priest Munyoso.[1] 'He [Lwembe] used to shout on Isumba, the little hill here, then no one would cut the trees on the hill,' said Kasitile. 'It was one of his resting places; he used to come here to tell my grandfather to go and get a cow for Lubaga, and later to tell my father to do so. . . .' The beer is poured at the base of an *ulaje* tree (a variety of *fuse*) at Isumba, in the long grass in Kituli, and at the base of an *ulaje* near Munyoso's homestead. 'They pour [it] out here by the *ulaje*, they beat the drum to say: "We have come", then the people of Munyoso hide their children—that's of old.' Besides the drum the Kinga travelled with a kudu horn[2] (blown in battle in BuKinga) and a sacred drum and horn were lodged in the hut of the Lwembe's chief wife. Before they start the Kinga priests make an offering of millet flour and beer in one of their own groves,[3] and leave there overnight the beer and salt and hoes which they will take to the Lwembe, 'that the aba-Ngulube (9) may see them before they go to Lwembe'.

At Lubaga there were several places of prayer and offering: the trees planted at the installation of the last living Lwembe (*vide infra* pp. 54-5), the trees planted at the installation of a previous

[1] Probably grandson of Ka and representative of a junior lineage to which priestly functions had been delegated.

[2] *Ukulilwa* in Kinga, *ingenge* kudu in Nyakyusa, cf. plate 3b.

[3] Nyundule, a Kinga chief, and two priests took Godfrey Wilson to a sacrifice in one of their groves. The form of sacrifice is very similar to that among the Nyakyusa save that the meat-offering is placed in the fork of a tree. The priests had gone very early in the morning 'to tell Bukelile (the dead chief) "Do not be angry, a European comes to greet you".'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

looking for me", and so if there was much heat he would send rain.' But this no longer happens. 177 788

At the same time both pagans and Christians tell a myth of how a European missionary, Rev. — Jauer (Mwaisumo), who visited the grove of Lubaga intending to remove the hoes in the grove to demonstrate the falsehood of the ritual, was confounded by a miracle (*ifike*). [773] [789]

Once the missionary Mwaisumo wished to go and see the grove of Lubaga. He was warned that if he entered he would flee because there were many marvels there, and the rain would catch him. He said: 'Oh, I shall go, nothing will happen.' So he went and entered the grove, and he found many hoes, some standing up, some lying down, and some of them had 'eyes'. He seized one to take it away, then there was a crash of thunder, and he was afraid and fled. When he ran out of the grove the rain fell in torrents. It is said that he was so frightened he left his jacket behind. From that time people said that indeed there are miracles at Lubaga. 539

'European times' is given as the reason for sacrifices being less frequent and regular than formerly. The occasions were, and still are: any period of hunger or scarcity, such as the Kinga regularly experience during the dry season, and the Nyakyusa also complain of at that time; any irregular misfortune such as a failure of the rains, a plague of locusts or an epidemic; and any prediction of hunger or disease by a prophet (*umulali* or *ushungulaka*). But the chiefs are said to be more reluctant to provide the cattle for sacrifice than formerly, and less quickly influenced by the actual occurrence of hunger or by prophecy that famine is imminent. Nevertheless they still 'treat the earth' (*ukutendekeya umfu*) by sending a black cow to Lubaga when hunger presses. 782 [177]

According to Kasitile (86) and Mwamakunda (his fellow priest) no ritual could be performed in the grove of the first Lwembe when he had no living representative. Formerly, the Kissoule in office and another priest penetrated alone, and there bound a live sheep and left it to bleat until a python took it. 'It is Kyala, he turns himself into a python' (*Je kyala: ipela ute*). Here Kasitile used *kyala* in the sense of 'the lord' and he was referring to Lwembe. According to another informant, when the heir to any priesthood connected with Lubaga is installed he should sleep in the grove enclosed in a stout wicker hut, and remain there until the python of the grove comes and *licks* him. The case was cited of a priest who had lain captive for two weeks 643 793 782

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

indicated (*vide supra*, p. 35). And, as we shall see later, he also [771]
suspected that his quarrels with the Kinga priests and with the [753]
commoner priests of Mwaipopo's chiefdom made him ill. [578]

Chiefs, and even the 'divine king' himself, lived in fear of the
legitimate anger of their people, more particularly of their village 649
headmen and priests, believing that such anger would bring them 753
sickness, and this belief gave headmen and priests a very strong [622]
hold over their lord. How it worked was illustrated by an incident
at Lubaga.

Mwanjala II (78) remarked to Mwakilima (111): 'I sent to summon [796]
Mwaussi (a commoner priest) for the ritual tomorrow but he refused
saying: "I shall not come." He is angry because he was not called to
the ritual at your home, nor was he told formally when the Kinga
came, or when Mwaipoja [G.W.] came.' Mwakilima (111) asked:
'Will you pay him?' [i.e. admit your mistake and offer him com-
pensation]. Mwanjala replied that he would, and Mwakilima ex-
pressed disgust. One of the Kinga priests who was listening broke
into the conversation: 'Ignore him if he refuses to come. If it were us
we should leave him and celebrate without him, but you Nyakyusa [794]
are all witches, and you fear to ignore a man who refuses to come to a
ritual saying that he will bewitch you. You are cowards, you are!'

At this Godfrey Wilson asked if there were no witchcraft in BuKinga.
The Kinga priest replied: 'There is some, but if the chief gives orders to
celebrate a ritual and someone refuses to come we ignore him, and
celebrate without him. You Nyakyusa *pay* a man for doing wrong. A
man refuses to come when he should and then you *pay* him! If you are
afraid of witchcraft why not finish the ritual and send his portion of
meat to him afterwards?'

Another priest objected: 'Then he would say it was too small a
piece.'

The commoner priests then could control even the Lwembe (for
Mwanjala II acted in the place of the Lwembe though he was
not installed), but at the same time the mystical power of the
Lwembe was feared both by ordinary chiefs and commoners.
Mwaijonga (80), who ruled before the European occupation,
insulted and fought Mwakiniya the Lwembe (56), and killed
some of his men, because 'Lwembe had spoiled the year', but
he sent back the cattle that were seized.

In the old days it did not matter killing the Lwembe's men (in war), but [727]
no one dared to take his cattle, they feared lest he would spoil the year
and send too much rain, and a plague of ulcers, and cause the cattle to [739]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 753 die. . . . People feared very much because the Lwembe had medicines for smearing on his body, which could cause rain, sickness, food, ulcers, anything.

And they feared lest they might get ulcers if they killed one of Lwembe's men 'on the road'—i.e. a traveller. In short, Lwembe's mystical power afforded the first feeble beginnings of a 'king's peace' in a land of warring chiefdoms, where strangers were fair game.

(c) Mbande

778 Mbande is a hill on the plain of north Nyasaland with a commanding view of the surrounding country and well suited to defence. The west side is precipitous and below the scarp edge there used to be a marsh; to the north the hill is protected by a wide reach of the Lukulu river. It is a sacred place and for many 643 generations was the home of the 'divine king', the Kyungu. Like the Lwembe he was the living representative of a hero, and was selected by a group of hereditary nobles from one of two related lineages, the office alternating (if suitable candidates were available) between the two. They sought a big man,[1] one who had begotten children and whose sons were already married, not a young man for, the nobles said, 'young men always want war, and destroy the country'. He must be a man of wisdom (*guo mahala*) and generous in feeding his people.

The Kyungu's life was governed by taboos even more rigorous than those surrounding the Lwembe. He must not fall ill, or [784] suffer a wound, or even scratch himself and bleed a little, for his [753] ill health, or his blood falling on the earth would bring sickness to the whole country. 'Men feared when Kyungu's blood fell on the ground, they said, "It is his life".' 'If he had a headache his wives (if they loved him) told him not to mention it, they hid his illness; but if the nobles entered and found him ill they dug the grave and put him in it, saying, "He is the ruler (*stesi*), it's taboo for him to be ill". Then he thought: "Perhaps it is so" (with a gesture of resignation).'

751 Great precautions were taken to preserve his health. He lived 643 in a separate house with his powerful medicines. His food was prepared by boys below the age of puberty lest a menstruating [911] woman, or a youth who had lain with a woman, should touch it [644] and so bring sickness upon him; and his numerous wi[illegible] [753]

[1] *Ugumbulo mnono*. It implies both big physically and important.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

immured in the royal enclosure—a great stockade—and jealously guarded, for any infidelity on their part was thought to make their husband ill, and with him the whole country. 643 [644] [753]

When the Kyungu did fall ill he was smothered by the nobles who lived around him at Mbande, and buried in great secrecy, with a score or more of living persons—slaves—in the grave beneath him, and one or two wives and the sons of commoners above. And in the midst of all this slaughter the nobles brought a sheep to look into the grave that the dead Kyungu might be gentle (*molole*) like the sheep! 643 766 [825]

The living Kyungu was thought to create food and rain, and his breath and the growing parts of his body—his hair and nails and the constantly replaced mucus of his nose—were believed to be magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde plain. When he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was buried 'with the breath in his body'; while portions of his hair and nails and of his nasal mucus were taken from him beforehand and buried by the nobles of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This was 'to defend the country against hunger', 'to close up the land, to keep it rich and heavy and fertile as it was when he himself lived in it'. [778] [789]

His death was kept secret—a relatively easy matter since he lived in seclusion—and one of the nobles (*Ngasi*) impersonated him wearing his clothes. After a month or two when the nobles had decided whom to choose as the new Kyungu, the luckless man was summoned to Mbande: 'Your father calls you.' 'Then he came with his companions and entered the house to make obeisance; they seized him and put the sacred cloth on him and set him on the stool "Kisumbi", saying, "Thou Kyungu, thou art he", and he became the Kyungu. Then they struck the drum, Mwenekelwa, and everyone knew that the Kyungu had died and another had been installed.' Men feared greatly to be seized as the Kyungu, just as they feared to be seized as the Lwembe, because the life of a divine king was short. Ngonde historians quote a number of cases of sons of the Kyungu who fled to escape being set on the stool; once they had sat on it they dared not flee lest they die. 643 768

Though[1] the early Kyungus had lived on the stony top of Mbande none of them had been buried there, for 'the ground was 643 778 766

[1] The following section is quoted, with additions and amendments, from Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, pp. 25 ff.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been someone [of the dead Kyungus] whom you forgot to ask about.' 'And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again.' If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry, and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would, and then the diviner would tell them that it was so-and-so (one of the dead Kyungus) and they would go and sacrifice in his grove. 643 [821] [787]

Thus to insult Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. An 'insult' might mean any neglect of the obligations of the chiefs and nobles and commoners of the plain to their lord. [687] [688]

The people of Ngonde hoed large fields as tribute to the Kyungu and if they failed to do so 'he grew angry and poured all the water out of the pot in which he kept his rain stones' (*vide infra*, p. 114) and 'the sky dried up'. Then the chiefs called their men to hoe. . . . 'They hoed and hoed and hoed and their wives planted, then the rain came in a torrent. . . . Kyungu created much rain.' [651] [789]

Or if an elephant hunter neglected to send the Kyungu one of the tusks of any elephant he killed he would not kill another. 'The country beneath was angry . . . the shades of the dead Kyungus . . . they were angry saying: "Why do you stint our child?" ' [651] [769]

The rainfall in the Ngonde plain is less than half what it is in the Nyakyusa valley and anxiety about rainfall was constantly shown in the communal rituals; elephant hunting was also a matter of concern in a way in which it was not among the Nyakyusa and this too is reflected in rituals; but there was also the preoccupation with health and fertility, as in the prayers at Lubaga. In the groves circling Mbande the nobles prayed: 'May the sterile bear children, may the cattle and fowls increase, may the children sleep and not cry at night, may the witches not injure anyone.' And as we shall see, it was health and fertility that men had in mind when they cleared out the ashes each year after the break of the rains. 643 132 771 788 [782] 769

Towards Christmas time, when the first maize and the first 796

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 796 pumpkin leaves were ready to eat, an elaborate first-fruit ceremony was formerly carried out. The new season's food was offered first by the nobles of Ngonde in the grove of the previous Kyungu, the one who had last died.

[778] The great chiefs would do so next, each at his own sacred grove (the grave of his own predecessor in the title). And after them everyone, both chiefs and people, each at his father's grave. All offered first fruits to their own shades. And finally they would themselves eat, each with his chief wife. But they would not eat beforehand for fear of angering the shades.

643 796 [721] In time of tribal war also the Kyungu and nobles of Ngonde led the people in prayer. All chiefs and nobles were summoned from the plain and the great ones entered the Kyungu's house to receive their instructions:

[782] When he had finished speaking he would tell them to go and pray. So they would leave his house and gather all together, all the chiefs, and the other men, and pray. The premier noble of Ngonde would begin asking each of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn to bless them in the fight. And then the great chiefs would pray after him.

This organization of religious ritual in the Ngonde plain was both a factor of and itself determined by the general political structure. Many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions, but the reverse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular significance, the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle [782] were sent to Lubaga by the chiefs to be sacrified for rain and health; but the 'clearing out of the ashes' was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruits ritual at all; while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

643 789 The majesty (*ubusiya*) of the Kyungu was cultivated in a variety of ways. He smeared himself with ointment made from lion fat, and his bed was built up with elephant tusks and lion pelts. He [352] was enthroned on the sacred iron stool called Kisumbi, he had a [293] spear, Kamisa, and Mulima, a porous piece of iron 'like a mouth organ' used to make rain, all handed down from the first Kyungu. [778] His zebra tails, set with medicines in horn handles, were waved in

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

war and during prayer to the shades, and he also had the famous drum on which the blood of a child was poured: 643 789 [778]

The Kyungu had a drum, called Mwenekelwa, which sometimes refused to sound when struck, then they asked: 'What does it wish, friends?' and they killed a sheep and poured the blood over Mwenekelwa; if it refused to sound when they struck it again, they killed a cow and poured the blood over it and if it still refused to sound when they struck it again, they said: 'What does it want now? It wants a man.' And they took the child of a commoner and cut his throat and poured the blood over the drum and struck it and it sounded loudly. If the drum did not sound when struck it was as if it had boomed an order; its silence was like a prayer. The drum was to show the majesty (*ubusiya*) of the Kyungu, that all the little chiefs at a distance might say: 'Something is happening, let us hear what it is.' Then they all gathered and were told to bring ivory. . . . They needed the blood of a man because their Lord (*Kyala gwabo*, i.e. the Kyungu) had fastened up the drum saying 'I myself am war, there is no other war' . . . [782]

The corpses of those sacrificed to the drum, like those condemned to death, were thrown over the scarp edge of Mbande, to be sucked into the marsh beneath.

Towards the early Kyungus their subjects expressed the feelings of worship and terror appropriate to an irascible divinity. 643 782

At Mbande the nobles of Ngonde would sit round praising the Kyungu —the drums went *kinde! kinde!* And they would praise him in antiphony: 'Oh, Kyungu! . . . Great Father! Great Father!—burier of men!—Great Father! Great Father!—Great Father!—O Mpeta![1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kiposa[1]—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kyabala![1]—Great Father! Great Father! O Striker and Stabber! Great Father! Great Father! O Mwenende! Great Father! Great Father! O Mpolombasambo! Great Father! Great Father! Dweller in the hot sun!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Fish-eater! O Banana-eater!—Great Father! Great Father!' [539]

The general form of this praise-song was identical with that of the prayers in the sacred groves and so it is literally true to say that the nobles of Ngonde worshipped the living Kyungus.

But the majority of their subjects only worshipped from afar in fear and trembling. At Mbande no ordinary commoner was ever conducted into the sacred enclosure, but only the territorial nobles and the elder chiefs, and they only occasionally; while when the Kyungu travelled through his country all men save the 643

[1] These names are obscure.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 black and white) animals are killed, with the same symbolism as
793 in BuKinga.[1] 'We kill a white sheep in the dry season that the
[789] sun may shine—if we killed a black sheep in summer the wet season would last all the year.'

The Kinga pray for fertility of the fields, that illness may pass, that they 'may sleep at home'; the local people[2] for fertility of the fields and that the pots they make (and on the sale of which they largely depend) may not crack in the firing. The more distant chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa plain sacrifice only in drought or plague—the last sacrifice remembered was during a plague of locusts about 1915, but the Kinga chief Kyelela sent a cow in PaliKyala in July 1937.

Like the grove of Lubaga, Kyala's cave is fearful. There is a
778 story of two men who took a length of creeper from near it to tie
688 up their canoe, and when they got home both went mad. Godfrey Wilson's guide, a young Christian, refused to enter the cave on the grounds that his pagan half-brother had once entered and taken away a potsherd and 'when he got home he went mad'.

[177] [323]

[1] Merensky appears to have been misinformed on this point, *op. cit.*, pp. 321-2.

[2] The potters are primarily Kisi, but neighbouring Nyakyusa have taken to this lucrative trade.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 often leaks out, but in theory the young men must not know, and
622 those seized always put up a show of resistance before being
796 bundled into the hut of the senior heir's mother. Once there, no man dare flee lest, like a Lwembe fleeing from the stool, he should
[784] die. The two heirs are seized also and carried into the hut with their headmen. A litter is spread for them, and they remain there in complete seclusion, required to 'talk softly' and avoid quarrelling, guarded by the 'doctor of the coming out' and forbidden to wash except that each of the chiefs and his senior village headman washes with medicines in the doorway of the hut. Each chief also lies down with a commoner and is covered with a black cloth
[789] which, according to Mwandisi (the old blind chief 107) is a symbol of clouds and therefore of plenty. 'It means, may it be heavy—cloudy—above, may food be plentiful; may both heirs bring fruitfulness.' The commoner who lies with the chief is 'one body with him', 'his wife', and continues through life to share with him certain medicines. Some said that the senior village headman performs this function for his chief: others that it is another man altogether. The whole matter is very secret and our information is limited. The period of seclusion varies. Mwanyilu (177), who 'came out' in 1953, remained in the hut a month, and he complained most bitterly of the inconvenience of not washing for so long. During this time the young men are admonished by
[867] their fathers' senior village headmen, and told of their faults and their future duties. According to Mwambuputa (Mwankuga's [150] senior headman who was responsible for bringing out Mwanyilu), he said: 'Listen to the people: they are the real chiefs! Be hospitable! Greet people politely! Don't beat your men!' And the other senior headman, Kakuju, said: 'Do not beat your men, respect them! Feed your people on milk, meat, chickens, beer! Fear your people!'

Then the great moment, from which the ritual takes its name, arrives. Very early in the morning a crowd gathers and a junior kinsman of the chief knocks on the door and shouts: 'Come out! War has come!' Each heir, followed by his senior headman,
[778] rushes out and grasps the 'spear of chieftainship' held ready at the doorway for him, while the headman grasps a medicated zebra tail. The spear has a little horn of medicines bound to it 'to show that the chief has come out', and brandishing it is 'comparable to carrying the chief aloft. We show his greatness to the people and acclaim him.' 'The spear of chieftainship is strength, man-

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

622 He, like many of his men, may have been married long before the
643 'coming out', but his ritual wedding to the mothers of his heirs
796 follows it, and from the time of his seclusion, until his marriage,
585 he, and all his men, should live as bachelors. The brides are chosen by his village headmen and in theory they are carried off by force, whether betrothed or not, but nowadays, since the
[177] Administration discountenances forced marriages, the headmen arrange matters with the girls' families beforehand, very privately, but still they come with a show of force to carry off the brides. Girls are chosen who are approaching puberty and they are taken to the house of a commoner contemporary of their future husband. There they live until both have grown up and the puberty ritual can be celebrated. It follows the usual course except that the
[584] neighbours of the man in whose house the brides are secluded play the part of the girls' families, cooking for the groom's party at the prescribed feasts. The chief washes with both girls, thereby acknowledging them as his senior wives; the marriage bed is prepared with medicines and there is great rejoicing. The following morning someone knocks at the door of the nuptial chamber crying: 'War has come', and the chief and his brides rush out to the pasture land, just as the parents of twins do at the end of their ritual.[1] Then[2] a long narrow stone (*ulufiga*) is set with medicines
[789] in the earth, beside the chief's trees as a symbol of his marriage (*ikimanyilo kya bwegi*) to the mothers of his heirs. 'The stone *is* the chief' (*ilifiga ili jo malafyale*). Hearth-bricks (*amafiga*) are then set up for each bride with medicines buried beneath them, and they are given fire from that ritually kindled by their husband and his headman. Finally they are given medicines to drink in order to develop in them 'the dignity of chief's wives' (*ubusisya bwa bwehe*).

643 No marriage is complete, in Nyakyusa eyes, until cattle have been handed over, and though the chief's brides have been carried
583 off by force, cattle—more than double the normal number—are given to their fathers. The village headmen of the retiring generation should provide these cattle and they or their heirs are recompensed when the eldest daughters born of the two wives are

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 158, 169.

[2] Mwanyilu's marriage apparently preceded the planting of his trees and the phallic stone was erected at the same time as the trees were planted, but the marriages of the sons of Mwangoka *followed* the planting of their trees. The order of events seems to vary, and differences are explained as due to the order of the doctor in charge of the ritual. 'Different doctors have different customs.'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 778 cattle and protecting one's own, and to attract men to the country.

The two senior sons of a chief are given powdered *ikingila* to 785 drink from early childhood; at the 'coming out' they lie on it and 643 drink it again with their village headmen, some is buried beneath 778 their ritual trees, and the chief's homestead is treated with it periodically. One form of *ikingila* is made of the heart of a lion and the heart of a leopard, together with the scrapings from a charred root, and one of its qualities is to create lions or leopards which guard the trees under which it is buried. 'They make anyone who has cut a branch of one of the trees for firewood tremble at night, he trembles and returns the wood; they do not kill, but they stay roaring there until he repents.' Now part of the dignity (*ubusisya*) of a chief is that lions and leopards attend him; they roam his [776] country; they are his familiars (*imbege*). 'The sons of Lwembe' lack the fearful power of their great ancestor who 'rode a lion like a donkey', but they are believed to command familiars which clear the country of the wild pig that destroy men's gardens, and protect the sacred groves by terrifying any sacrilegious person who dares chop wood where he should fear. But they do not kill men or cattle. That is what distinguishes them from 'God's lions which kill cattle even by day' and the man-eaters made by sorcerers to [754] destroy those they hate. There is no hint of lycanthropy—our informants denied emphatically that chiefs, dead or alive, turned into *imbege*, but they 'follow the chief' when he travels.

A second *ikingila*, sprinkled on the chief's mat when he is secluded, and drunk with his two senior village headmen, is made of red, black, and shining white or yellow pebbles, which are ground up and mixed with *imbinga*, a medicine brought by the Kinga, but the symbolism of these ingredients remains obscure.

The greatest of the *ifingila*, used only for the chief himself, is *inyifwila*, a terrible substance with power perilously like that of witchcraft. When either of the senior wives of a chief gives birth [844] to a son a little is hidden in the litter on which she lies; it is put into the litter on which the heirs lie at the 'coming out'; and into the sacred tails and trumpets which are carried into battle. Like other medicines of chieftainship, *inyifwila* is used to give the chief majesty (*ubusisya*), 'that people who meet him may fear him'; that he and his warriors may appear fierce; that they may be 'heavy and strong' in war; that when the trumpet is blown it

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

may 'make the enemy fearful and sue for peace'; and that even men who have left his country may return to him. And it is so powerful that the dose must be carefully adapted to the individual. If a chief is already 'heavy' with an inherited python he is given the merest fragment, but a gentle fellow thought to be 'light', 'empty', is given more, that his words may carry weight. Too much will make a chief harsh (*nkali*)—'he will always be beating men'—and he must be given an antidote to calm him down. Too much in the tails causes them to 'fly through the air at night, gleaming, and throttle the cows'. This is the danger of *inyifwila*, that it may act like the pythons in the bellies of witches and kill men and cattle. Controlled by a chief it is held to be reasonably safe, though Kalobo, Mwaipopo's (116) second wife, who was grumbling because no tail had been lodged in her house was told that she did not know how lucky she was for '*inyifwila* is very fearful—it enters the belly, it makes itself into familiars'.

The use of *inyifwila* is forbidden to commoners. In Ngonde, with its hierarchy of chiefs, it was the danger of attempting to equal one of superior rank that was emphasized. 'If a commoner sprinkles *inyifwila* on himself saying, "Let me surpass my fellows", and he meets a chief (who is entitled to use it) then he dies immediately because he said to himself, "I also am a chief" '; and 'If an Ngana chief dances and sprinkles his spear with *inyifwila* . . . and then meets Kyungu, he dies.' In the more democratic atmosphere of BuNyakyusa chiefs were 'very angry' if commoners used it, but it was the danger of its acting like witchcraft and throttling men and cattle and, eventually, its owner, that men spoke of most. We heard of half a dozen men—among them the most successful trader of Selya—who were reputed to use it 'to surpass their fellows' and 'get rich' and one case actually came to Court. Mwaipopo, the chief (116), raised the matter himself:

> Why does this thing go about at night? I have seen it myself, it shines, I know it. It is that with which the doctors treat us chiefs to make us impressive [i.e. *inyifwila*]. Do you not know, you commoners, that we chiefs have prohibited its use in our countries? Ask your fellow Mandala! He is bad, he planted this thing, it kills you people.

So two village headmen went and called Mandala who lived near Ngulyo, and brought him to Court. There he was asked: 'Why did you keep this which kills people?' Mandala denied vehemently saying, 'I have not planted this.' But Mwaipopo

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 replied: 'Why does he deny it? He told me once: "I have a thing
778 which kills people!"' Then, turning to the man: 'Go and fetch it
789 out into the light.' Mandala went and we heard that he brought
[754] out another medicine, not the one asked for, he brought it to the headmen and Mwaipopo. Mwaipopo (who, being a chief, knew *inyifwila*) rejected the one Mandala brought saying: 'This is not it.' Then Mandala brought out another and again the chief rejected it saying: 'This is not the one we want.' Then he brought out a little bag made of bark-cloth. They sought a doctor to clear it out. All this happened in secret; we heard of it but did not see it. But in Court Mwaipopo turned Mandala out of his country 'because he had admitted that he was wicked', and Mwaipopo reminded the other chiefs in Court of a previous case of a man in Mwangomo's country who had used this medicine.

Inyifwila is made out of a python 'as thick as a man's thigh' which has been killed by crawling over razors. In Ngonde we were told:

> A certain snake they call *ngone* is killed in the hills to the west. They build a hut, closed, with a man inside ringing a cow bell and razors all over the roof. The snake comes and crawls over the roof, trying to get in and so dies. Then the doctors come to 'close it up'. When they have done so they cut it up for medicine—*inyifwila*; some is brought to Kyungu direct . . . some is taken to the doctors, and it is the doctors who give it to the chief.

A similar story was told in BuNyakyusa but they got their
[825] *inyifwila* from the Sangu and Hehe, to the north and east, not from the west, and in their account the trap was baited with a goat, not a man, and it was the blood of the python (*isota*) shed on the surrounding grass and on the trap itself which was used for medicine. To test the medicine the doctors gave a little to a
[787] chicken; if the chicken died the medicine was satisfactory; and the remains of the chicken were burnt and the ashes used as tested *inyifwila*.

'That snake is awful (*nisya fijo*), no one approaches to kill it.
[825] No! If it were speared everyone would die.' And because the python which is so terrible is thought to be linked with the rain-
[821] bow it, too, is disliked. 'We fear the rainbow very much, we say it appears when a python looks up to the sky; if we are near a river we run from it for pythons live near rivers. . . . No, we are not mistaken, it is so.' The essential quality of the python is *ubusisya* (fearfulness, majesty, dignity) and this is what is required

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

in rulers and is thought to be transferred to them in the medicine brewed out of python blood. 643 778 789

It will be noticed that the central mystery of Lubaga and the sources of the most powerful medicine are the same, and the medicine is akin to witchcraft. The shades, medicines, and witchcraft are distinguished and are thought to operate independently, but they are all manifestations of a mystical power which is logically one, though none of our informants saw it as that.

We referred earlier to the function of the chiefs' medicines in giving courage in war and luck in raiding. Certain emblems of chieftainship are carried in war: a sacred spear, a bamboo trumpet (*ililonge*) or a great war-horn (*ingangabwite*), and several giraffe or zebra tails (*imiswigala*), and all of these have little horns filled with *inyifwila* attached to them. Of the trumpet it was said: 'You hear it and your heart swells and a great trembling comes over you and you fight.' 'The chiefs forbid them to be blown now because their blowing always brings war.' Each of the senior village headmen is given a tail at the 'coming out' and he went into battle with it bound on to his upper arm. A notable warrior was sometimes given one also. To lose a tail in battle was comparable to losing the regimental colours and there are epics of their loss and recovery. If the leader who carried it saw that he was surrounded he would try to pass it back, or he might hide it on the ground: [293] [721] [726]

> then that night they would go back to the spot and they would find it because it shone with a light and made a bubbling noise, *burukut, burukut, burukut*. . . . [774]
>
> In the old days the medicine [in the tails] was frequently renewed; for there was war, and it gave the headmen the power of dreaming of the course of war. . . . But now, since you have brought peace to the land, no one renews it, and it has gone rotten.

However, the tails in Mwaipopo's chiefdom *were* thus treated in December 1937, and we saw it done. The four tails, with six tiny medicine horns and a calabash of medicated ointment, were formally handed over to the care of Kalinga, Mwaipopo's (116) chief wife, having previously been in the care of his mother. Mwaipopo himself was there with two kinsmen and the three commoner priests Kissogota, Njobakosa, and Ngulyo, but not Kasitile (86) since he was 'father-in-law' to Kalinga and could not meet her, though he was informed of the ritual. Kalobo, the second senior wife, looked on. Kalinga poured out the ointment

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 and Mwaipopo and Kissogota smeared it over the tails which
778 were then put out with the horns to dry in the sun. Mwaipopo
suggested getting Mwaisyelage, the doctor, to treat them
789 further, and the others agreed saying: 'Let Mwaipopo find someone, that the earth may be good, that it be heavy.' Njobakosa had spoken earlier of the cattle giving much milk after the treatment of the tails. And they went on to discuss the fact that the young chief Mwankuga II (151) had begotten no child by the wife inherited from his elder brother (150) whose place he had taken. Thus the function of the chief in creating plenty and
[842] fertility was in the priests' minds, and there may be some link between the virility of the chief and success in war—one informant spoke of the chief's senior wives jumping over the tails immediately after the consummation of their marriage—but of this we are not certain. What is common knowledge is that the tails are 'for seizing cattle', and they are associated with 'manure and blood'. We were told at the conclusion of the ritual: 'Formerly we should have gone tomorrow, after this treating of the tails, to fight.'

Besides medicines for majesty, courage, and popularity as rulers, chiefs use medicines to protect themselves against the fearfulness of the groves in which they sacrifice, medicines to 'close the country to hunger', to make their capitals grand, and to cause thieves who have stolen, to walk round and round until caught.

Medicines are regarded as essential to authority, victory, and successful rule, and the kind used and the dose given are adjusted to the status and character of the individual. 'Village headmen
[622] do not drink the most important *ikingila*; they drink a lesser one, *imbinga*; the senior headman is given most, the junior less.' And the chief's wives do not drink *ikingila* at all, but only a powder suitable for them. But the use of these medicines has its dangers. The chief, like other people who have been drinking protective medicines, does not eat the new crops grown on fields fertilized
[754] by ash without fortifying himself. The danger is said to come from the burnt rubbish heaps, because medicines for defence against witches and sorcerers are burnt in them and, as we have seen, certain of the medicines which the chief uses create a power akin to witchcraft. He tastes the new millet ritually in June, the cow
[788] peas in September, and pumpkin leaves in November; and he also tastes the 'new earth' at the break of the rains in October or early November. 'We chiefs fear that the medicines we have drunk will

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

turn round in the belly; people say the earth will go bad in us.' 643
'A child who has drunk medicines will be ill, the smell of the new 778
food or the wet earth goes to the belly.' 789 [788]

The chief eats the first fruits and medicines with the commoner who lies down with him at the commencement of his 'coming out' and 'is his wife to taste with him the first fruits and powdered medicines' and is 'fearful' like the medicines. He is identified with [644] the chief's body and may be compared with the *isithunuu* of the Pondo chief[1] or the *insila* of the Swazi.[2] His function is to protect the chief against the medicines themselves.

(c) DEATH AND BURIAL OF A CHIEF

Both because of a chief's descent, and because of his use of 643 medicines, mystical power resides in his body. 763 766

In the old days a ruling chief was not allowed to die, but was buried while still living, because they feared that if he became unconscious before death he would take away all the food with him, and great hunger would come on us. Men feared *ifingila* medicine in his belly. They said: 'If he dies naturally many of his people will die. . . . He should go alive.' And formerly they buried him with the son of a commoner, also alive, for they said, 'Let him enjoy the company of his man on the road.' When a chief was sick before the coming out of his sons they tried to keep him alive if possible, but if he was clearly going to die then they buried him like this; after the coming out they hastened his death—but only if he were ill. That was why the chiefs fear the 'coming out' of their sons so greatly. Had Mwaipopo lived in the old days and his heir been alive he would have been buried during his last illness.

When a ruling chief was sick the village headmen sent the chief's wives away and looked after him themselves. Then, if they thought he would, or should, die, they tore off all his nails, those of his toes and those of his fingers, and pulled out his hair, and put them in a pot. After that they buried him by night still alive, with a live person, the child of a commoner whom they had seized very secretly. The pot stayed in the house of the senior wife of the chief who had died, and they said, 'It is the chief, we are with him still.' This was the sacred [778] pot for the sacred beer.[3] They kept silence about the death for a month or perhaps two months, saying: 'Let the chief go away first.'

And when a younger brother, a junior chief, died, though he died

[1] M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 390.
[2] H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p. 78.
[3] Kasitile flatly denied this, *vide infra*, p. 64.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 As we have seen, the chief's fearsome medicine *inyifwila* is
778 thought to be very dangerous, and too much in the tails may cause
622 them 'to fly about throttling men and cattle', but a chief is never
[754] accused of working witchcraft; it is inconceivable to the Nyakyusa that he could be. If the tails have got out of hand they are treated
[789] by a doctor 'to close them up'; no one suggests that the chief should get rid of them. It is commoners, 'black people', who are witches —cannibals, the eaters of raw flesh—as opposed to chiefs who, since the dawn of history, have killed cattle for meat and cooked their food like civilized men. But the distinction does not extend very far; junior kinsmen of the chief are 'commoners' and may well be accused of practising witchcraft.

There was a delicate balance of power in the Nyakyusa con-
[182] stitution between hereditary chief and commoner headmen and the belief in the power of medicines and of witchcraft was an integral part of it. The chief provided fruitfulness by the power of his own body and his medicines; all men depended upon him for their well-being—food, cattle, children, success in war; but he in his turn depended upon the goodwill of his men led by their village headmen; without it he shivered and fell ill, only to be buried by them 'with the breath still in his body' lest the power of growth disappear with his breathless corpse.

Something of the quality of this mutual dependence and fear is conveyed in Kasitile's account of his own illness quoted in Chapter VIII.

(*e*) THE NECESSITY FOR HARMONY

182 The welfare of the chiefdom is thought to depend upon
643 harmony between the chief and his village headmen and priests,
622 and also between the chief and his kinsmen. Any friction between
793 them may result in public misfortune as well as sickness to the individual at fault. The quarrel of Kasitile, the priest, first with
[753] the Kinga priests, and then with the commoner priests of Mwai-
[821] popo's chiefdom was believed to affect the crops and the weather, as well as Kasitile's own health (*vide infra*, pp. 124-41), and
[688] Mwaipopo's failure to tell Kasitile formally of the death of their kinsman led to rain which spoiled the funeral dance. A quarrel between the lineages of two chiefs which should have sacrificed
643 together was said to have been followed by a very poor millet
602 crop (*vide infra*, pp. 79-80, 118, 136).
578 How the personal relationship of a chief with his kinsmen is

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

thought to affect the whole country was illustrated in Mwaihojo's 643
chiefdom where the people were plagued by wild pig destroying 602
their gardens. Mwaihojo (147) had a longstanding quarrel with 578
his half-brother, Mwakyonde (148), whose country he had seized after their 'coming out'. Mwakyonde became famous as a doctor, and he was a great raconteur and beer-drinker, a regular Silenus, [157]
the boon companion of many influential men, whereas his brother was cold and irascible; so although he had lost his chieftaincy, Mwakyonde had considerable power. In February 1937, four lions were seen in the adjoining chiefdom of Mwaipopo (116), and we heard pig squealing as it was killed. Angombwike (whose father lived near Mwakyonde in Mwaihojo's country) explained to us: 'People say that these are Mwakyonde's lions. . . . Lion- [754]
makers have bundles of twigs which they put into the long grass, [789]
and which turn into lions. Long ago Mwakyonde made lions and they came and killed all the pigs, and the country (Mwaihojo's) was at peace, but he quarrelled with Mwaihojo and put his bundles of twigs into his box and locked it up. Then the country was filled with pig, and buck, and elephant, and all the crops were spoiled, and so it is still. Now Mwakyonde has begun to be friendly with Mwaipopo (116); they enjoy each other's company and drink beer together, and so he is making lions again in Kipungu, the land where Mwaipopo is hoeing, to kill the pig for Mwaipopo. They say Mwaipopo has given him a country in secret.' Now Mwaihojo claimed as his the forest country, which Mwaipopo's men had begun to colonize, therefore to aid Mwaipopo there was an effective slap at Mwaihojo. The lions came into Mwaihojo's country—we heard them repeatedly close to our camp—but they did not clear the pig.

Then, in March, Mwakyonde was supposed to be using a new [778]
medicine he had obtained to scare off pig from the fields. We asked him about it. 'Oh, it has failed. The pigs are still there eating. I've done everything I should but without effect. I think [775]
that the pigs are possessed by the shades (*sili nimindu ingulube*).' 'Why?' we asked. 'Because my elder brother (Mwaihojo) and I are not on good terms (*tutikwangala kanunu*) the shades are angry.'

So the destruction of men's gardens was traced to the quarrel between the chief and his brother.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631 north the Nyakyusa were continually at war; they did not trade
782 or pray with them. Thus we conclude that participation in a
[721] common ritual is, in the Nyakyusa case, directly linked with a common origin and essential trade.

643 The divine kings, Lwembe and Kyungu, were regarded as
[789] having power over certain areas, a power closely linked with
[782] rainfall. Indeed, one informant argued that the chiefs living around Masoko had never sent sacrifices to Lubaga, 'because when it rains at Lubaga the rain does not come as far as Masoko'. He
[821] was mistaken in his facts—the chiefs of Masoko did at one time send to Lubaga as Mwambete (162), chief at Masoko, himself admitted—but the argument points to a conception of supernatural power tied to a rainfall area. This notion was not, however, applied consistently.

643 The balance between secular and mystical power has altered
173 during the past ten generations. The founding heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, came as conquerors and must surely have led their men personally; but early in the history of Ngonde the Kyungu was secluded, and power was exercised almost exclusively by the nobles (*vide supra*, pp. 40-46); and the Lwembe also was, at one period, 'not seen by ordinary men' and led a life hedged about with taboos. There is sharp contrast in Nyakyusa tradition between the active chiefs who were warriors, and arbitrators, and worked hard in their fields[1] and the 'divine king' who lived in seclusion. As we have seen, the chiefs often delegated ritual functions, with the taboos involved, to a junior kinsman such as Mwamukinga (44) or Mwakihaba (45) (*vide* pp. 79-81, 114) whose heirs succeeded to the office. It is even possible that the
[178] first Lwembe at Lubaga (Mwakalebela 19) took over ritual functions from his senior brother, Kalesi (18).[2] The present tendency is for the development of secular power and its separation from mystical power. The Kyungu is no longer a god but an administrator: the heir of the Lwembes sits as an elected representative of chiefs on the Local Council. In the traditional
182 Nyakyusa society ritual played an essential part in maintaining
177 the balance between generations, sections, and social strata, and in

[1] In 1955 a young chief was bitterly criticized by his men because he 'never had a hoe in his hands' whereas his father and grandfather had (to our personal knowledge) been diligent in hoeing.

[2] But according to one excellent informant, Mwakisambwe (30) lived secluded while Mwakilima (31) 'fed men'—i.e. entertained.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VIII

RAIN-MAKING AND 'SPRINKLING THE HOMESTEADS'

789 Two activities which are closely linked with sacrifice at the groves of chiefs, but which are distinguished from them because they consist in the manipulation of medicines, rather than prayers and oblations, are 'rain-making' and 'sprinkling the homesteads' to ensure fertility of the soil.

(a) RAIN MAGIC

Rain-makers (*abapelafula*) are men who use perforated instru-
791 ments called 'rain' (*ifula*) to produce rain or sunshine. The heroes were believed to create rain by the virtue in their own bodies, but the Kyungu also had a much prized instrument of iron, perforated
[778] 'like a mouth organ', and several of the chiefs had perforated stones which were used to 'make rain'. In most cases the care of them was delegated to a junior kinsman, a commoner, or (in Ngonde) even a slave, but often the office became hereditary and rain-makers were men of considerable power. Such was Kasitile whose grandfather (44), a younger brother of the chief Mwamukinga (43), had been entrusted with his rain stones. The Kyungu was thought to control the rain in the whole of the Ngonde plain, the Lwembe in an area less clearly defined, but which included Selya, BuKinga, and parts of the Nyakyusa plain, Kyala in the eastern portion of the Nyakyusa plain, and parts of BuKinga and BuKisi. Chiefs were credited with making local rain, in their own countries.

789 The technique of 'making' rain was to seal the holes in the
778 perforated instruments with ointment and immerse them in water.

The rain instrument that helped Kyungu was called Mulima. Its holes were its eyes. If they were empty it would be empty in the sky above also, there would be no clouds; if some were full then there would be a few clouds, if all were full then there would be many clouds and rain. If it were raining and he put it in a tree so that its eyes looked up, then the sun would shine. . . . If he opened its eyes that they might be empty and put it in a tree so that it looked up then the clouds dried up above, the sky also became empty.

[p. 114]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The imagination of the Nyakyusa doctor who invented this magic was near enough to that of Shakespeare to be intelligible to an Englishman. The sun is an 'eye'. Clouds may close it. Holes in a rain instrument are also 'eyes' and if these are closed the 'eye of heaven' will also shut—with clouds. 769 778

The Kyungu seems to have kept Mulima (which was only 'the size of a spectacle case'?) on him, but the ordinary instruments—stones—were left in the chiefs' groves with potsherds in which they were immersed in water when required.

Kyungu Mwakabange had his rain-makers Mugoma and Komanga. Mugoma was a slave, Komanga a man of Ngonde. When the sky was hard he sent a message to them saying: 'Put them into water.' If there were too much rain he said: 'Take them out.' Each had two potsherds with two stones for each. To make rain they rubbed the stones with mutton fat and a medicine called *ilifuge* (fertility) and put them into the sherds and poured water over them.

Godfrey Wilson was taken by Kasitile to see his rain stones in the grove near his house in April 1935. Kasitile addressed his shades:[1]

My fathers, do not be angry, *Mwakaibela* (19) (he spat), *Mwanjala* (23), *Mwakisambwe* (30), *Mwakilima* (31), *Mwamupondele* (27), *Mwakibaba* (45), *Mwamukinga* (44), Mwalubange (58), Mwakagile (59), Mwandemele (?), Mwakanjaki (60), Mwaijonga (82), Mwafungo (83), Mwamwilu (84), Mwakabule (117), Mwaipopo (115), these are our friends (repeated urgently), you did not know them, you feared them, but now we do not fear them, they have come and met with us as friends. [782]

There was a large broken pot and three stones, two of them with holes an inch or so in diameter. There used to be five stones—two had been stolen by the Ngoni when they raided this country. When he wishes to make rain, water drawn from a waterfall is brought by Kasitile's wife and left overnight in the grove. Then he pours it into the pot and puts in the stones . . . 'the water bubbles; it is cold, but it seems to boil and the *ifola* go whirling and knocking against the sides of the pot.' . . . The bubbling of the water is compared with rain. Kasitile did not know where his stones had come from. Mwakisambwe his great-grandfather had

[1] The names indicated are those G.W. actually heard in the grove; the whole list was given by Kasitile afterwards as names he had mentioned, but in fact he had not mentioned more than eight.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 778 them first, then his grandfather, and father. Others told us that rain stones always came from Kisi country, a very wet strip of land on the north-east shore of the Lake where the clouds always seem to gather when one looks south from the Nyakyusa valley and plain, and a piece of perforated wood used in Ngonde for making rain came from the hills of Misuku, also a very wet country. Kasitile's stones were of two types, but no direct association of male and female was made. However, the Kukwe spoke of a 'mother' stone having young. 'The rain-maker puts back the stone in the potsherd without water (after rain has come) and going later he finds that it has got young, perhaps seven, with the mother there are eight.'

791 The rain-makers are subject to certain taboos: during the dry season they may not wash lest they drive away the rain nor do they [784] shave for 'they compare hair and clouds saying, "Let it be black", they compare a bald pate with sunshine.' And the rain-maker [262] may not eat roasted maize 'for as the maize crackles in the potsherd when it is roasted, so the thunder will crackle in the sky'. He may not eat green maize (which is reaped during the rains) until the dry weather begins 'because he creates rain, which means he creates all the food which grows with the rain'. If he begins eating too soon he may stop the growth. And when the rain-maker is manipulating his instruments a sex taboo is observed. [834] 'When I am making rain,' said Kasitile, 'I do not sleep with my wives for two days, it's taboo. How would Kyala help us if I did?'

In theory the rain-maker always works under the direction of [643] the political authority—the Kyungu or a chief—but he is also thought to wreak vengeance on those who anger him. Kasitile was critical of his colleague in the hills above Isumba: 'He never makes a nice gentle rain, it always destroys food. . . . He is always demanding things from men, and, if they refuse, he brings his rain to destroy things. . . . There is a very strong wind and heavy rain which takes roofs off houses.' But when Kasitile himself was [864] angry, because his son was taken as a tax defaulter to work on the [687] roads, the weather grew bad.

789 People say I am angry, that this rain is because they came and beat me because of tax. This time the tax collectors came to my place and beat me and when I thought, 'It is not the custom with our forefathers for the tax collectors to come at all to men like me', I grew angry and prayed. . . . When I was in MuNgonde the country suffered from hunger, all their children were in trouble. . . . Then I came up, and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

began to prepare my rain, and made the country good. Food started to be plentiful. Why should I be treated thus? I asked. And the shades and Kyala heard me, so it rained *heavily* (too much). Do I grow angry by my own power? I do, and I put the rain stones in water, and when Kyala hears me then it rains too much, my anger has results; but if Kyala does not agree then, when I go the next day to the grove, I find there is no water in the potsherd. . . . I work by Kyala's power; when water is in the sherd I know it is he who has helped me. . . . We don't do it ourselves, it rains if the shades and Kyala help us. I cannot say that I do things alone without their help, it is they who give me breath (*mkupe*) and when they help I feel the power, the rain will fall very heavily. . . . 789 [775]

The way in which the weather was connected by the people of Selya with Kasitile is illustrated by the following entry in Godfrey Wilson's note-book:

Mwaipopo the chief had omitted to tell Kasitile formally that their kinsman, Mwaikyambe, had died. Kasitile had come to the funeral in the morning, and gone off in a huff saying, 'They did not tell me.' Mwaipopo then sent Ngulyo (the priest) after him with 1s. to pacify him. 'Yes, he paid because he had wronged his father.' Kasitile accepted the 1s. and came back. There had been rain during the night, but the early morning was fine. About 11 a.m. it began to rain, softly at first and then hard. I was in Mwaipopo's house drinking beer. They discussed the rain, hinting that it was caused by Kasitile. 'That Kasitile' was the most direct hint I heard. But they discussed the fact that 'this morning it was raining at Kasitile's,' i.e. that the rain began there and spread over the country. The rain was coming from that direction, it was true, but the morning at Kasitile's had been fine. Ngulyo said, 'When I got to Kasitile's place there was rain.' Suddenly there was a hush and someone whispered: 'Sh! He is at the door, he is coming in', and Kasitile came in. Mwaipopo apologized again, through Ngulyo, for having omitted to call him: 'I had just got back from Tukuyu, I was surprised that no one had told you, Mwakisambwe (identifying Kasitile with his great-grandfather *qv*). You too, Ngulyo and Kimagura, are at fault, you should have told him. When I got to the funeral this morning and was told that Mwakisambwe had gone away again saying no one had told him then I sent you to tell him.' All this was said in a rather plaintive voice to Ngulyo, Kasitile being next Ngulyo. Kasitile said nothing. At noon, when we got up and went out, the rain had lessened, and it stopped almost at once. On my way back from the funeral later, I heard one of the young men, a son of Mwaipopo, who was with me, say to the other: 'Kasitile has forgiven, but only partially, the rain has spoilt the ritual.' About 1 p.m. the [689]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 rain started again and it rained for an hour during the division of the meat; then again it lessened and stopped.

A showery and varied day was turned to account by Kasitile. The way he did it was to keep quite silent about the rain and about the insult, but let the others talk. No one directly connected the rain with him in his presence, but they talked about how heavy it was, now and again. If there is too much or too little rain, or Kasitile is known to be angry the weather is noticed and connected with him. The conclusion that Kasitile sometimes deliberately played up to the credulity of his neighbours is irresistible. But when there was a drought he grew very troubled. In January 1938 there was drought in Mwaipopo's country though in some of the neighbouring chiefdoms there had been heavy rain. We went with Kasitile to visit his fellow priest, Mwamakunda, in the bush country. There was discussion about the drought.

KASITILE: I have put in the rain stones, but nothing has happened, I tremble!

[787] THE OTHERS: Kijaja went into a trance and said: 'Let a cow come from Mwakihaba (45). Mwakilima (51) has driven away his senior kinsmen and refused to send a cow, he has refused to return the cow which was given him by his senior brother. Let him return it, instead of saying: "Let the nasty old man (*ikwepale*) celebrate there at his place." Then if it comes there will be much rain and food.' [i.e. Kijaja attributes the [788] drought to the refusal of the junior line of chiefs to send the customary cow for the sacrifice at Mbyanga, *vide supra*, pp. 79-80].

[787] KASITILE: Kijaja has gone into a trance and prophesied just recently. Kyala has brooded over him recently, he is a new prophet, but I, Kasitile, have not heard [i.e. have not been formally notified]. Had we been together with Kijaja I would have argued with him and silenced him. See! In Mwakihaba's country it has rained; it has rained heavily there, but not here. I would have said: 'Kijaja you are a new prophet. . . .' But I don't know about this rain. . . . Had I consulted an oracle the cause would have come to light.

MWAMAKUNDA (came and sat down): What about this rain? Have you put them in water?

KASITILE: Yes, I have put them in water and nothing happens, I put them in water and nothing happens. I have not consulted an oracle about this rain. . . . I tremble. . . .

MWAMAKUNDA: Yes, indeed! Consult an oracle. . . . Then you did put them in water. . .?

KASITILE: They have lain there two weeks, but the rain refuses to come.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

. . . I put the stones into water, it is as if someone spilt it out, the herd dries up. . . . Now Kyala has gone away, the shades have fled, formerly they clapped their hands (indicating satisfaction). . . . There is something about which the shade is angry, because in this homestead we were accustomed to pray frequently. . . . If I boast saying: 'It will rain tomorrow', will it rain? 789 [775]

MWAMAKUNDA THE YOUNGER (gravely, and with hesitation): No, not if Kyala does not wish.

WIFE OF MWAMAKUNDA: But formerly it agreed [i.e. the rain came].

A day or two later Kasitile came in, during the evening, with Mwalusanye, a young doctor, the son of doctors.

K.: This rain, do you not ask about it?

G.W.: Have you been to consult the oracle?

K.: Yes. I consulted it the day before yesterday.

G.W.: What did it say?

K.: It said: 'Your fathers are angry, and Kyala and the Holy Spirit (*NaMbepo Musikemo*)!' [775] [776]

G.W.: What do they say we have done wrong?

K.: Since Mwaipopo received a Court what have the chiefs given us to say 'We did wrong?' Did they give me a cow? They did not. [Here Kasitile was referring to the insult to Lubaga, *vide supra*, pp. 35-8, and he identifies himself with the priests of Lubaga.] In MuNgonde I was a commoner, I ate meat, here I live hungry.

G.W.: And now who will speak out about this matter?

K.: You, you tell Mwaipopo 'Ask Pikumbaba (Kasitile 86) why this rain does not come, what has happened to it?'

G.W. refused and asked: Who should suggest this according to custom?

K.: Mwamakunda.

MWALUSANYE: Because according to custom, Mwaipaja (G.W.), if things were as they are with us now, if the rain refused, our fathers came to Kasitile (60), the father of this one, to ask him saying, 'Kasitile what has happened to the rain?' But now that our fathers are dead, we are bad, we do not ask. [177] [688]

And a few days later the chief said: We have thrown away our food, it's drying up in the ground . . . this drought! Kasitile says: 'It has defeated me . . . the shades (*imisabi*) have caught hold of us.' Perhaps they claim a cow, perhaps it is because Mwaibojo (147) and his fellows paid here. . . . But those beneath are angry (pointing downwards and speaking with conviction), the owner is angry.

The rain-maker therefore is not conceived of as working independently; the goodwill of the shades of the chief is necessary, and perhaps also those of the rain-maker himself, though this is not quite clear. Nowadays, at least, Kyala is also invoked. In [775] [777]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 drought, as in illness, a number of possible causes are discussed, [775] and if one possible cause is dealt with and yet the drought persists, [777] another will be put forward. A shrewd priest or doctor can turn this to account and find many reasons for the failure of his ritual, as the following case shows.

789 In the wet Nyakyusa valley rain-makers are not concerned only with drought, but also with flood, and, in the years 1935-8, 791 with the rise in the level of the Lake which inundated many gardens.[1] On the Nyakyusa plain the rise was attributed to the [821] action of a Kisi doctor, Mwatabi, who had first boasted that he could bring up the Lake and then been commissioned by the chief, Mwakalukwa (141), to do so, 'because there was much grass by the Lake and many mosquitoes, and it was dirty there'. He was told to 'take the Lake up a bit, but not too far' and given a sheep. Then, the following season, in April (a month of torrential rain), Mwakalukwa's son Mwakisisile (170, for Mwakalukwa himself had died) gave him a little bull saying,

[578] Send the Lake back, it has come too far. Then the doctor went home thinking to himself, 'Why does he give me such a little bull?' and he met a headman of the neighbouring chief, Mwakabulufu (138), and said, 'Why should I send the Lake back, Mwakisisile has given me a bull only; had he given me a cow, I'd have done so, but now I am angry.' Then Mwakabulufu heard and sent a message to say he would provide a cow, since Mwakalukwa was dead. But the doctor refused: 'No, Mwakalukwa (the son, 170) is still alive, he must give it.' The following September, before the usual end of the dry season, there was rain on the plain. It is the Kisi's rain. Mwakisisile (170) refused to give him anything, he said he was a liar, but the commoners collected 30s. and a goat, and the Kisi performed a ritual just recently, and said: 'The Lake will go back, but my strength will bring the rain; it will rain during the dry season this month.' We laughed very much in Tukuyu to hear such a prophecy, but it is raining!

The following year—after the Lake had risen again—another reason was given. It was said that a rain-maker at Bojo in Kisi country had died, and just before he died he had thrown a rain stone into the Lake.

(b) MAGIC OF FERTILITY

789 We did not learn very much about 'sprinkling the homesteads';

[1] There is a periodic rise and fall in the level of the Lake. In 1937 the Lake steamer was anchoring in what had been the roof-tops of the District Commissioner's house at Karonga.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

it was something done secretly, at night, and feared by everyone. Ambilikile related how, as a small boy growing up on the plain, he had been severely beaten by his mother when he called out one night, hearing a noise in the bananas, for it was made by the doctor 'sprinkling the homesteads'. The doctor heard and entered their hut angrily, and seized some of the calabashes. The medicine for sprinkling sometimes—probably always—contained human flesh, hence the anxiety of mothers not to draw the attention of the fearful doctor to their children. In Selya, after the sacrifice at Lubaga, the Kinga returned to Kasitile's homestead to sprinkle a medicine which contained the flesh of the child they had killed for the drum, and Mwamakunda (his assistant) went round by night pruning the bananas throughout Mwaipopo's country with a sacred knife, which was kept in Kasitile's homestead and Kasitile put porridge of banana flour, made from a stem of bananas provided by the chief's senior wife, in the grove called Kinyangwa ('the porridge of banana flour') near his house. Then fertility was said to spread from Kasitile's throughout the country. According to Kasitile himself, the medicine contained an ingredient he did not know . . .

My elder brother died without showing me the tree. . . . Mwamakunda does not know it either, he just got it from my father. We hope that it will appear in a dream, but it has not yet been revealed. . . . We dreamed of a cow, and of Mwaipaja (G.W.), but the medicine was not seen. I will seek another from a doctor . . . perhaps from Misuku.[1]

At this time also, in some—perhaps all—chiefdoms millet was taken from the sacred pot containing the 'power of growth', i.e. the hair and nails of the dead chiefs (*vide supra*, pp. 64-5) to mix with the millet seed about to be planted.

Besides this secret and fearsome 'sprinkling' on behalf of chiefdoms, there was a much more open use of medicines for fertility by village groups, when they burnt the rubbish heaps in which they planted millet,[2] and by private individuals in their own fields.

During the hot weather a chief sometimes sends to all the villages of his chiefdom a man, curiously dressed in a cap and jerkin of banana leaves, who forbids people to cut their bananas, or even leaves of banana stems that have not

[1] A district famous for its medicines.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 32-4.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

784 yet fruited, and tells them to eat beans, sweet potatoes, and cow
789 peas instead. The owner of a grove can cut a stem of bananas only with the permission of the man who proclaims the prohibition (*ugwa lusinge*), and those who trespass pay him a fine of a hen, a knife, a pot, or their sleeping mats. The avowed purpose is that 'bananas should ripen in all the homesteads and the country appear rich and productive', but there may be further implications which we did not discover.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

illness to neglect of his duty to the Kinga. All the time we were in BuNyakyusa he was ailing—possibly he suffered from tuberculosis—and one wrongdoing after another was suggested as the cause of his illness. 793 755 [753]

His case is intelligible only in terms of the conception of 'the breath of men', that is, a power akin to witchcraft thought to be legitimately exercised by village headmen and others to punish wrongdoers, but which is referred to by the victims as 'witchcraft'. This has been discussed at length elsewhere.[1] [754]

On 2nd July 1935, Kasitile had left his own house and was living with a friend in a neighbouring village. His doctor, Mwakyonde, said that he was being 'throttled by the witches' and had invited him to come and recollect himself (*ukwipelekesya*) in the tranquillity of a village of another chiefdom in which there were many people with spiritual power (*abamanga*) so that 'the witches' could not get at him. This is a common precaution in case of illness, for witches are thought not to have power ordinarily outside their own village and never beyond the chiefdom.[2] 793 754

The cause of the illness was explained as follows: Kasitile had quarrelled with Kissogota, the commoner priest, and others of the principal men of the country, because he had found them drinking the sacred beer (*ubwikemo*), brewed after the millet harvest (*vide supra*, pp. 84-5) without telling him, or sending him the pot which was his due. They invited him to drink, but he refused and they each sent him 1*s.* to beg pardon. Kasitile bought beer with one of the shillings and called the senior commoner priest, Ngulyo, and his fellows to drink saying, 'I was angry, friends, you "overstepped" me' (i.e. they had ignored his rights). He himself should have brewed when he confessed his anger, and slaughtered a calf or prepared food for them as well, but he had bought only one shilling's worth of beer and provided nothing himself. Then, when they had drunk, Kasitile fell ill. Hence it was said that the commoner priests were angry and 'ate' (i.e. bewitched) him. Kasitile's own comment was: 'The fault lies with the young priests (Ngulyo, a young man, had inherited his father's position), they are useless as priests . . . I was not told of that ritual beer, yet the medicine comes from me, from this home where I keep it. They should have come to me to get it and put it with the millet in the holy pot. They drank the beer without medicine. It is they who have brought cold and hunger on the country. I think the [578] [753] [689] [731] [789]

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 91-121, 167-9. [2] *op. cit.*, pp. 102-3.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

793 trouble is that Mwaipopo (the chief 116) is getting old. . . .'
754 Here Kasitile suggested two different causes for the scarcity in the
[731] country: (*a*) the negligence of the priests, and (*b*) the senility of the
[789] chief. In the old days Mwaipopo would have been smothered, as Angombwike explained (*vide supra*, p. 63).

[753] On the 9th, Kasitile, much troubled by his cough at night,
[757] expressed a great desire for the return of the missionary nurse to Kabembe hospital. 'She is killing us by her absence, the black people don't know anything about these things, only the Europeans. Why, I went there and the dresser just gave me an injection without taking my temperature—no European ever does that.'

[787] The following day he sent off his sons with 10 c. to inquire about
[753] his case from a diviner. The diviner said: 'The wives at his home are gossiping to other people about their husband. People want the husband's body to be light. It is not Jane, because she is his favourite, but the others.' Kasitile said:

I shan't do anything, I said 'Let's leave it.' I am still in Butola [the village to which he moved for safety]. Mwakyonde is giving me medicine for my disease. It drives out the cold which is in my body. Yes, the cold is the breath of the witches coming to throttle me—it's due to my
755 wives' gossip. But it started as a quarrel with other people [non-
753 relatives] first. One day I went to drink beer in Bujege and that night I fell sick; that is how it began. Men are complaining because I, a chief, a senior, do not cook food for them. They throttle me on that account. They say: 'Let us see whether he is really a chief, a senior!' But others say: 'He has done no wrong.' Yes, the sickness took me on the way home from the beer. Perhaps Kyala asked: 'What has he
[776] done?' and found I had done no wrong. If there had not been a Kyala who saves us I would have been dead.

When I consulted a diviner he struck a spear and looked along it,
[787] then he said: 'The disease now is from his wives—the earlier attack was from men, but this one is from his wives. When they gather at the hearth they say: "Come hither, we see him where he sleeps."'

754 'Are the wives witches?' we asked.
753 Kasitile replied:

Yes. They say: 'There is a favourite, we are not beloved.' If a man's wives are good the witches can get into the house, but their cold breath dissipates quickly; you are given medicine and recover quickly; but if the wives are bad they gather together the medicine and press it down, so that it is powerless. One of my wives is very bad, her lineage is bad, it is she who calls to her aid the heavy ones, the witches. The

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

always hangs under the eaves and is only used for prayer, filled it with 783
water and put into it a stone and a live coal from the fire. Then he 782
took some roots from the roof (previously put there ready) and we
went off to the same spot as before (*vide supra*, p. 115). Kasitile chewed [778]
the root, took water and blew it out, and began to pray:

'Do not be startled, come in your own persons, gather together, [769]
with Mwakanjoki (60). You made friends with him before, now he has entered, he has made himself our friend. Indeed I made a mistake, I have come to enter; I cut you on the head, I have done wrong. The sons of Kagile (i.e. 59 + his descendants) complain of me, saying, "It is he who has gone off with the millet, bananas, and maize; and children cry at night behind the huts; we are barren because he has cut Mwakanjoki." I have sought this cow which you wanted. Mwakanjoki (60), Lwembe (3?), Mwakalebela (19), Mwatonoka (29), Mwalubange (58), Mwakagile (59), Mwaijonga (82), Kyala (2), we have come to attend to you (pointing to the grave). Kikungubeja, Nsyanigwa Kyamba Kitali,[1] Lyambilo (12) come to your home if you are at Mwalubange's (58), come if you are at Mwaitende's (61), come Mwakanjoki (60) and the Kinga and Lwembe (3); Mwakalebela (19) come, give me cattle and millet, and the powerful medicine which you had. Since you are brooding over me go out from my body, go out! I pay my debt. We have come to take you to your home since you have gone off in a huff, come! I will never cut your branches again. I fear you and I will respect the branches. Come to your house, that of Mwamaloba (85), of Kanjoki (mother of 60), come. And he (G.W.) is [123]
innocent (*mwelu*), do not fear him. He is the owner of the ritual, he is Mwamaloba (85), he is my senior, I am the junior. Sometimes I wish to embrace him, sometimes I fear that he is going to imprison me.[2] May the bananas increase! I am left alone! It is I who am here! Move [789]
out of my body! And give us medicine! May the offering increase overnight, may the cattle increase and the maize, and in the morning let me tell Mwaipaja (G.W.) that the bananas and medicine have increased. If there is anything else you are a liar, if this chill begins again then I have gone, I am not here. Amen! (*sic*).'

Very early the following morning the sacrificial bull was killed. [177]
Kasitile had arranged that our Mohammedan cook should come to cut its throat.[3] Then, later in the morning, the crucial drinking and 'speaking out' began. Kasitile had provided two pots of beer.

[1] Three Kinga priests whose names are titles of office.

[2] In the earlier years of our acquaintance Kasitile had denied both the smothering of an ailing chief and human sacrifice for the drum. It is possible that he had co- [114]
operated in either one or both of these ritual acts. He himself reported that the Sangu diviner had told him: 'You have a European as a close friend. . . . You enjoy his company much, but there is something left . . .' (i.e. the friendship is not yet complete).

[3] Ostensibly so that he could partake of the meat, but the reason given seemed inadequate.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER X

MEDICINES

278 789 755 THE Nyakyusa regard medicines as an ultimate source of power —given the right ingredients and the 'know how' a man may achieve anything. This conception is integral to their view of reality, moreover the distinctions made regarding the just use of them throw light on the Nyakyusa moral system, and must be examined. But a full analysis of Nyakyusa medicines (*imikota*) would require a book in itself together with an expert knowledge of botany and of the properties of plants. Here we are concerned only with those aspects of the belief and practice in medicines which touch directly on social relationships or which illuminate the Nyakyusa conception of reality and morality, and their use of symbols.

Already many references have been made to medicines for they are an adjunct of most rituals, but their use is not confined to these; often a private individual is treated alone, and such a treatment is not classed by the Nyakyusa as a ritual (*ubunyago*), so we must stray, for a little time, beyond the limits of our title.

(*a*) TYPES OF MEDICINES

278 789 A classification in terms of purpose shows a close conformity with the use of medicines by other peoples in Africa. The use of medicines for protection and cure; for fertility; for success in any chancy undertaking from hunting and fishing to love-making, theft, a court case, or securing a job; for exacting vengeance; and for oracles, is familiar enough. What emerges from a detailed analysis is that the intractability of *persons* is felt to be at least as great a problem as the intractability of *things*, and many treatments are directed towards transforming personalities and developing moral qualities. The medicine given to a bride at puberty is to make her 'patient and polite' as well as fertile; the medicines given to chiefs and village headmen are to make them dignified and wise. A thief is often treated with medicines by his relatives to cure him of his thieving habits; and the famous *gwambemula* medicine is used to control the anger of a husband, a chief, an employer, or a superior officer. (It is said to be much in

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

demand among police and soldiers as well as wives.) Then there are medicines used by men and women to make themselves more attractive and persuasive as lovers, litigants, leaders, clients, servants, salesmen, and so on. 278 789

Certain Nyakyusa medicines are based on observation of cause and effect. Their pharmacopia includes purges and poisons—for example, castor oil has long been cultivated and used both for making ointment and as an aperient—and some of the drugs administered, and the poulticing with hot leaves, may well be therapeutic; we have no systematic knowledge of the plants used and cannot assess them. But the scientific element is demonstrably limited, for a great many medicines are based on the principle of association, a feeling of likeness between things, and things *felt* to be alike are believed to react on one another, like producing like, or like things being antagonistic. 278 [789]

No distinction is made by the Nyakyusa themselves between those medicines which one trained in western science would say are based on observation of cause and effect (e.g. a purge or a poison), and those which are based on association—indeed our friends constantly cited supposed observations of cause and effect as evidence of the efficacy of all sorts of medicines and taboos. Mwakyonde used charcoal, mixed with iron from a forge, as a medicine for protection against lightning, burying a little, and powdering a little, and sprinkling it about a homestead, 'because at the forge they blow the bellows and it says, "*Muli, muli, muli*" (i.e. boom, boom, boom) and the lightning *jikumuleka* (booms). When we blow the bellows at a forge it makes a noise like thunder.' There was no hint that he was aware that electricity might be attracted by iron, but he insisted that where he had buried the charcoal and iron the lightning *never* struck again, and he regarded this as cause and effect. Therefore the distinction we have made between observation and association is ours, not theirs. [751] [821]

That the symbolic element is at least as important as the practical was apparent from Lyandileko's treatment for sterility, which was famous for its success. She had three patients one morning, all women wanting to bear children. In front of her she ranged seventeen banana petals and mixed four different medicines in them. Then she chose three young banana shoots and bored a hole in each, inserting into it a length of the mid-rib of a banana leaf, slightly hollowed to form a runnel. She told an onlooker to bring the first petal full of medicine and poured it into the runnel. 842 278

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

753 and achievement. An account of the treatment of a field for
578 protection against wild pig emphasizes this.

If people wish to protect a crop from wild pig they go to a doctor to
789 ask for medicine. When he gives it to them he tells them that there
241 must be no quarrelling in the home after they have barricaded the
[689] field. Four women go to the field with the husband of the one who cultivates it. They go after sunset. One women is shaved; her head is a symbol of the garden devastated by pig. A second woman, who keeps
[302] her hair, has a head-pad on her head and carries bananas with medicine. She enters the field and eats the bananas. The husband climbs a hill at a little distance, and two of the women go into the long grass close to the field. The bald pate twists a head-pad and the one with hair smears it with medicine and as they do so they look towards their
[831] husband and abuse him saying, 'You lay with your mother', and he swears at them saying, 'The leather aprons of your fathers' . . . and many other insults. Then the women walk round the edge of the field, sprinkling medicines, and they go out the way they came in. The circular pad is a symbol of the barricade placed round the field. When
[262] they return home they do not eat but go to sleep hungry (though the clever ones eat beforehand). If they quarrel, the pig finishes the food. It is as if quarrelling destroyed the fierceness, the power, of the protective medicine; you must put aside all quarrelling that the medicine may be powerful. If the pigs come it is as if there were a quarrel, so the woman and her husband quarrel in the field mimicking the pig. The husband on the hill is like the pig approaching the field, his wives in the long grass also represent pigs. . . . The husband and his wives quarrel only in the field. If, when the maize is ripe, the husband beats one of his wives for any cause she does not go to pick the maize herself, a friend picks it for her. If she goes in her anger she finds the maize finished, nothing but earth is left.

789 Here the link between medicines and morality is made plain.
689 Quarrelling weakens medicines of all sorts and renders them ineffective. But a mimic quarrel between husband and wives in the fields renders the medicine effective. It represents the battle between the pig and the medicines. There is a suggestion else-
[775] where (pp. 69, 113) that pigs are *sent* by the shades when kinsmen or neighbours quarrel, but in the account just quoted it is implied that quarrelling in the home directly injures the medicine.

278 In themselves, many medicines are neutral. They may be
754 put to good or evil ends, but because they are mysterious and
789 powerful, they are feared, in the same sort of way as atomic energy is feared in contemporary society. Men use medicines themselves 'for purely peaceful purposes', but they are shocked at

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the prospect of their enemies using them. The notion that medicines are a weapon which may be used rightly or wrongly is very clearly brought out in the attitude towards 'making' animals. If a private individual 'makes' lion, or leopard, or crocodile which kill men that is sorcery—there is no question about it—and we heard of at least one man who had been driven from his home because he was reputed to have made leopards which killed children and cattle,[1] but when Mwakyonde 'made' lions which drove off pig and did not attack men, that was a public service (*vide* p. 69). And when one chief uses lions in his conflict with another the action is felt to be comparable with war, rather than murder. In February 1937, four lions were hunting in a piece of bush country near the salt lick, which two chiefs claimed. Mwansumbwe, a chief from the hills, had sent some of his men to clear fields in the bush, but Mwakagile (50, or his heir), the neighbouring chief, objected saying, 'This is my land.' There was a long case and finally the District Officer gave judgement in favour of Mwakagile and refused Mwansumbwe any compensation for his work in clearing the bush. 'You got a crop for your labour,' he said. Mwansumbwe was incensed by the judgement and grew even more angry when his men elected to remain on the land they had cleared and became men of Mwakagile. So, everyone said, Mwansumbwe had sought medicines and created these lions. They killed seven cattle in a few days, attacking even by daylight. 'Yes,' we were told, 'there are always lion in the bush, but they do not ordinarily kill cattle as they have done now.'

Another chief who tried the same sort of thing was not so successful. 'Some time ago the chief Mwakila made elephants, he turned his wives into elephants and they ate the bananas of Malapula, but Malapula said, "Let's try", and he created much rain which poured down on to the elephants and those wives died. Then Mwakila was defeated. How about you Europeans? Have you this custom? Do you turn a wife into an animal?'

'No!'

'We have it, if I choose I give my wife *isigita* and she becomes a lion which roars, it roars and eats people.'[2]

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 124.

[2] This, and the tale of a young man fleeing from justice who obtained a medicine to turn himself into a lion, were the only accounts of lycanthropy we heard—usually the medicines themselves (such as those of a chief) turn into animals, or the young of ordinary lion, leopard, or crocodile 'smell the medicines' and become attached to the 'owner' who feeds and commands them.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 A second class of medicines is not neutral at all, but itself selects between right and wrong. The most famous is the *mwafi* [278] ordeal which is used to reveal the truth. The *mwafi* poison was formerly administered by a doctor,[1] before witnesses, and the innocent were believed to vomit almost immediately, while the guilty did not vomit at all, or were slow to do so, and fell ill, some even dying. Nowadays *mwafi* is administered only in the greatest secrecy, but various minor methods of divination, all of which turn on the correct use of medicines, are in common use. The 'divination with porridge' has been described (*vide supra*, p. 128). The medicine added to it is spoken of as 'a kind of *mwafi*'. Another method is to rub an inverted wooden cup on a smooth board. Questions are posed, as to the porridge. When the answer is 'no' the cup slips; when the answer is 'yes' the cup sticks. Sometimes a stick of *musika* wood is rubbed on the ground in place of the cup on the board, and there are half a dozen other methods using bells, horns, segments of bamboo, a pipe, or boiling water. In each case virtue lies in the medicines added to the porridge or rubbed on to the cup or stick, and into scarifications in the diviner's hands. An ordinary man who has not been treated cannot use the instruments, and porridge without '*mwafi*' is useless.

751 Certain medicines used for protection and to wreak vengeance, 754 are also thought to be selective, and to injure only the guilty. These are horns, owned by doctors. Mwanjesi (who came of a ● 789 family of doctors) told us:

[778] My father had a water-buck horn filled with medicines and ointment, as a protection against witches. He used it, like other doctors, for burning the grass, for burning the rubbish heaps before planting millet, and for protecting a child. When the millet crops are poor, people say the witches have eaten it, and the next year the chief sends for the doctor and his protective horn. . . . He comes and makes fire and treats the tinder with ointment from his horn, and each pile of weeds is lit from that fire. . . . He sends some to the chief to fire the grass for fresh grazing. Then there is much milk, the cows that eat that grass give much milk for the witches stay away and neither eat the millet nor throttle the cows. So with a child, if a man has lost many children and has one left, he calls the doctor to come with his protective medicine (*ilipingo*) and treat the child with medicines from his horn as a protection against witches. My father used the same horn for all these things.

[1] For a description of the procedure, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 115-16, 241-6.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

If a man has quarrelled with a kinsman, or is conscious of having bitter enemies, or hears that someone with whom he has had a dispute has 'gone to the doctors', he is likely to go to a horn doctor for protective medicine, even though he is perfectly well. 751 [578]

'The horn' is believed to discover and punish the guilty whether they are known to the injured or not, but if someone uses it without just cause the medicine will recoil on himself. The seven cases of using the horn reported to us[1] were all used in revenge: two for theft, two for seduction, and three for withholding cattle due. And it is revenge that was emphasized in one account of the treatment: 789 751 754

If someone has stolen my cow I go to a doctor and pay him a bull. Then he prepares the medicine (the horn) and stands facing it, with a spear over his shoulder, pointing towards it, and he speaks aloud saying: 'So-and-so, if you have not taken the cow you will recover, if you have eaten it you will die.' Then the breath (*imbepo*) goes to the man named and if he has really stolen the cow he dies. . . . [685]

But another informant, listing the contents of a 'horn', stressed the protective element. It contains 'the bile of a crocodile, the skin of a python, and *inyifwila* medicine (*vide* p. 58) which has been used to kill men' . . . [278]

If a witch comes to throttle and kill you then the bile of the crocodile throttles and strikes him [the witch], and the *inyifwila* does the same, it is to kill the witches, it spears those who come to throttle you. The skin of the python means that if people come to throttle you they find you have changed yourself into a python.

Another type of vengeance magic, *ilyepa*, is thought to work only between blood relatives.

If your father-in-law is angry it is your children he kills, not yourself. If the diviner says the disease comes from the woman's side of the family the protective medicine is given only to her, not to the man; if from his side only he is protected, not the wife. The relative who is angry drinks a medicine; he puts a barbed spear into the fire and when it is red hot he slashes a banana sucker with it and speaks the name, then the kinsman who is mentioned dies. [578]

A third type is that used to secure property (*ukusinga*) and snare thieves or adulterers; for the exclusive rights of a husband over his wife are treated as property rights. Often a medicated stick is placed in a field to ward off thieves, and some husbands [685] [684]

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 212-56.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 are said to give their wives a medicine (without their know-
751 ledge) which will cause any man who lies with them to fall ill
754 of gonorrhoea or some other venereal disease. Many Christians
[753] believe in this medicine and some inquired whether Europeans did not use it also. One family of doctors are specialists in it:

[791] The sons of Manyafu are very famous, they are great doctors. People fear them very much. No one can steal anything belonging to them or run off with their wives. If a man runs off with a wife of theirs, he will return their wife and pay. . . . Because when he has slept with the woman by night they stink in each other's nostrils, the woman stinks in the face of the man and he likewise in hers. And if rain falls by night the roof comes off the hut in which they sleep and the rain enters. Perhaps the man quarrels with the woman, perhaps frogs and snakes are numerous, perhaps gourds sprout in the house—sometimes they sprout bringing evil. So it is also if a man has run off with the wife of another and the husband goes to the sons of Manyafu. They agree to work, but he must pay them.

[681] Lyandileko, whose husband's family have owned a 'horn' for generations, was very insistent that vengeance magic maintained law and order for it could injure only the guilty. 'A thief feared to steal lest he be caught by my father-in-law (Mwaisyelage). He feared the horn if he used sorcery. He feared to seize another's cow thinking, "They will go to Mwaisyelage".'
[684] And protective medicines which cause an adulterer to fall ill of gonorrhoea, or a thief to die, are considered perfectly legitimate; the misfortune would not have befallen the man unless he had done wrong.

[648] The prohibition by the government of the *mwafi* oracle has puzzled people. Medicines are admittedly dangerous, but it is held that Europeans 'encourage' witches and sorcerers by forbidding the use of the one effective weapon against them, and doctors with vengeance magic or other strong medicines 'fear the fate of the *mwafi* doctors'. There is an inescapable contradiction here, the Nyakyusa relying on *mwafi* and vengeance magic as a means of discovering criminals, and the Europeans punishing any doctor found administering poison, or intimidating people by threats. Furthermore, it is widely believed that Europeans them-
[186] selves use strong medicines made up with blood. Any Europeans without an obvious occupation are suspect of being *abanyambuta*, who go around killing people and taking their blood for the Government to use for medicines. One of our European friends,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

a missionary, was warned by her servants before Godfrey Wilson's 789
arrival in her neighbourhood 'not to go out at night as there were 751
abanyambuta about, sent by the Government to kill people and take 754
their blood', and women going for firewood made a long detour 186
to avoid his camp. One was overheard asking when she caught sight of him: 'Is that the man who kills people?' Angombwike explained that, since all really strong Nyakyusa medicines contained human blood, it was argued that European medicines, which were so powerful, must contain it also. 'They follow their own customs.'

It seems obvious to the Nyakyusa that Europeans must have strong medicines because their confidence and success are so great. Moreover, it is held (in theory) that they are immune to attacks from witchcraft. X, who had been a clerk and lost his job, and was bitter, expanded on this:

> People say that Europeans have *inyifwila* (*vide* p. 58), see they are brave, they do not fear, if someone seizes a spear they do not fear, they just come to him, they are very brave. And also the witches say that they are unable to choke Europeans. When we hear people boasting of their mystical power (*amanga*) we always say to them: 'But if that is so, go and choke a European, show us!' Then they always say, 'Oh no, we can't do that, when we go to a European house at night we find it all lighted up and flaming, we can't get near them.' I think [778] this is the power of the Holy Spirit which you Europeans have.

He came of a well-known family of doctors and perhaps spoke from first-hand knowledge. He just laughed at the suggestion that the light might come from lamps. But the fact that Europeans were held to be immune did not prevent our servants and friends [753] attributing our recurring attacks of malaria to witchcraft.

(c) DOCTORS

Among the Nyakyusa, as perhaps in every society, the doctors 791
with the greatest reputation are those at a distance, and a high proportion of the practitioners in the country are of foreign lineages, their fathers, or grandfathers, or great-grandfathers having come in, bringing medicines with them, and begun to practice. In fact, we were assured that there were *no* Nyakyusa doctors who were famous, they were all Sangu, or Kinga, or Kisi, [439] or from Ngonde or Misuku in Nyasaland, but detailed investiga- [278] tion proved this to be false. The trade in medicines from a dist- [438] ance is a very old one and continues today. As we have seen,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for an appropriate medicine, and his main function is organizing the observances. 791 793

(d) SYMBOLISM

In the field of medicine imagination runs riot, and associations are unpredictable. The ingredients of most medicines are professional secrets and unknown to the user who takes the concoction on trust from his doctor, and inquires no further. Therefore the study of medicine is not linked to the study of social relationships in the same manner as is the study of ritual, for the symbolism of medicines is individual and free, whereas the symbolism of ritual is common and obligatory. 278 789

Nevertheless, the imagination of doctors works within the general symbolic system, and such knowledge as we have indicates that many of the associations made are similar to those used in ritual. In medicine, as in the rituals of kinship, one type of banana stands for a male, another for a female, a banana sucker represents a kinsman, a sprouting shoot conception. Smithing and coition are felt to be alike, and the molten iron that trickles out of a forge is linked with menstrual blood. Hair stands for growth, and a bald pate a devastated field. A ring, or circumambulation, implies a protecting fence. Pythons, crocodiles, leopards, and lions stand for power and majesty, spears and thorns for attack; vomiting and emptiness for innocence, spitting for forgiveness. There is colour symbolism in medicines (though we know little of it save that the *ikipiki* which stands for the blood of the lineage is red, or reddish brown), and auditory symbolism, the rumble of thunder and the groaning of a bellows being identified. Men mime that which they wish to avoid, as well as that which they desire; like things are antagonistic as well as sympathetic. No doubt a laborious study of prescriptions would reveal further general principles of association, as well as the range of individual imagination, but such a task has yet to be undertaken. [831] [326] [825] [827] [822]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

x797 there?" And after he went there was much food.' In fact,
x795 appears that he took the teachers and schoolchildren to the gr
that they might no longer be afraid of it: the girls gathered fi
[778] wood there, and everyone entered and made a noise, thus breaki
great taboos. But all this happened long ago (the visit to Mbyan
was in 1913 or 1914) and, as was indicated earlier, the comm
view among Christians is that pagan rituals *used* to be necess
and efficacious, but are so no longer. We were assured by Chri
[845] ians who themselves took no part in twin rituals that 'forme
[753] people fell ill if they did not celebrate'. 'Yes, of course, they w
very sick indeed in the old days, the whole body would swe
Some even maintained that it was still necessary for pagans
celebrate though not for Christians. A Christian chief explaine

[778] The sacred grove of Mwakihaba is just here in my country; . . .
the old days they used to take a little fresh milk and an unripe stem
[789] bananas, and put them in the grove. . . . The next day the calab
was full of milk and the stem was ripe. This was really so in the
days, Kyala heard men and agreed to their requests in this way.
went to ask for rain and food in the groves; the chief would kill a c
and Kyala agreed, food and rain came. Now that the Gospel
spread, since the Europeans have opened the Gospel to us Ky
refuses to agree, he says: 'Since they are proud and refuse to hear
Gospel I will discipline them', and he refuses to agree to the old ways.
QUESTION: What about witchcraft?

Perhaps there were people who were witches in the old days; at a
[859] rate I know that when milk ran short and a man was accused to
chief of bewitching the cattle, the chief used to take his cattle and dr
him out of the country, and then milk was plentiful again. Of tha
am sure.

QUESTION: And now?

No, it is not like that now.

Many pagans attribute the decline in fertility which is taki
[686] place, and the decrease in the yield of milk, to the decay of
old communal rituals and the unhampered activities of witch

Nevertheless, as the number of Christians in an area increas
the pagans tend to curtail their rituals more and more. T
direct parallel between pagan confession, sacrifice, and co
munion with the shades, and the Holy Communion of
Christian Church is recognised by many, and one is felt to repla
the other. Regarding the rituals of kinship we were repeated
told: 'We see that the Christians, who say the only rituals are

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 F317 Ngoode F317
Nyakyusa

123 755 in the open air and not within the hut as on the previous day. But the patient was unwilling to be photographed. He feared, he said, that by the photo I would take „his inner man together with the medicine just accepted" with me to Europe. I tried to calm him, showing him some pictures of my family, and I also let him look through the view-finder of my camera, so that at last he was satisfied. Then, after feeling more confident, he told me the cause of the pains which led him to come to the doctor. He thought he had been bewitched, as he had met a descendant of a man whom some long time ago had killed one of his own ancestors.

142 281 516 756

The Medicine Man and one of his patients. The medicines are spread out on the mat.

756 Then the medicine man also explained to me how he had come to the position of a doctor. He did not inherit his position from his father, but he was instructed in medical practices by another doctor. The circumstances which had led him to this position were the following.

[939] Before his initiation to the medical practice he had entered into forbidden relations with the wife of another man. To protect himself
[781] from the magical revenge of the deceived husband and his kin he went to a medicine man to acquire antidotes against the expected bewitching. He had to pay two cows for this medicine, and as he had paid them, the medicine-man offered to initiate him into the secrets of the practice of a medicine-man. The character of the client, probably, had won his confidence, and indeed, the medicine-man whose guest I now was, made a profound impression on me.

754 He also described some forms of bewitching[1] for vengeance. For this purpose the avenger poisons a fowl in his own village utterly curses

[1] Cf. G. Wilson, Introduction, p.??? (belief in witchcraft).

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

he had received this object from his ancestors and it must always hang on this spot, as the ancestral spirits (*ahwayuka*)[28] themselves controlled its presence. It consisted of an *uwutipere*, i. e. the tail of an ox, but the upper part of it was hollow. In this hollow part medicines (*ifingula*)[29] were kept. Yet another magical medicine, in the shape of a piece of bark of the tree called *Erythrophleum Guineense*[30] was fastened at the upper end of this sign. When my European attendant immediately said to the chief: "And from this piece you make your *mwaf*"[31], the chief exclaimed in astonishment: "*Uwee uwee Kyaro!*" (You are sons of Kyaro! i. e. You Europeans know everything.)

After this there was no more delay in revealing to us some more features of this sign of dignity. According to the belief of his fathers this object possessed a special *ewaka* (power)[32], e. g. to defeat enemies, if the chief were to hold it directly against them. Also if a thief were to try to enter the room by force, by making a hole beneath the wall of this part of the hut, he would be stricken by power coming from the *ahwinya* and he would have the impression that eyes are directed against him, and so be driven away.

After these interesting communications I went to visit the hut of one of his wives, which still revealed the *ingenge*, the old-fashioned round structure of bamboo poles diverging from their upper end and thatched with grass[33].

9. The frequent walks in company with the chief or some of his *mwafuwa* gave me several opportunities for enquiries. On one occasion,

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[28] Cf. Wilson, Burial, p. 9: *uwapuka* (Sing.); Mackenzie, p. 191: *bapuka* (Karonga).

[29] Cf. Mackenzie, p. 275: *ifingula* (Karonga).

[30] The pharmacological substance of the bark (Cortex Erythrophleii, „Sassa-bark") is the alkaloid Erythrophleïn which produces the same typical effects on the heart as the Digitalis-group (cf. C. O. Sundman: Pharmakologische Studien XII. Arkiv för Botanik 27 A, No. 4, Stockholm 1935, p. 6).

[31] Cf. Wilson, Land Rights, p. 32; Moreauly, p. 134; Fülleborn, p. 308.

[32] *ewaka* is not a specific expression for „magical" or (religious) „supernatural" power, although, from the European standpoint this meaning may be connected with the word in specific cases, but generally it means any striking expression or effect of a quality of a person or object, e. g. spirit etc against enemies, in this word is power. This word is, therefore, a parallel to the Austronesian, especially Polynesian word *mana*, examined in my treatise „Mana. The term of that what is exceedingly striking". Unpublished Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde, I Reihe, Ethnographica, Vol. 3. Leipzig 1935. If the Nyakyusa wishes to say that a phenomenon is "supernatural", then he converts it with Kyaro, or he names it directly "Kiaro" (cf. Moreauly, p. 134 [137, 140]).

[33] Cf. Fülleborn, p. 271, fig. 145: Schematical sketch of a round-hut (as also to be found with the Nyakyusa still today).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

iii. *'The defenders' and 'the breath of men'*

Proof of the activity and identity of witches is sought first in the dreams of victims and of 'the defenders' (*abamunga*) of his village who are believed to have power to see and to fight witches in dreams. As we have seen, the witches are believed to leave their bodies sleeping and to fly through the air to the house of the man against whom they have a grudge, and there to enter his body while he sleeps, and either 'throttle' (*ukupita*), 'trample' (*ukubumba*), or 'eat' (*ukulya*) his inside. In the morning, or during the night, the victim wakes up more or less conscious of what has happened to him. If they come often, many nights running, he falls sick and may die, unless he takes steps to defend himself. 'The defenders' (*abamunga*) are believed to be able to see and recognize the identity of the witches and to counter them in two ways. First by turning them back at night, saying: 'Where are you going to throttle your fellow? Go back!' and then driving them off with spears or striking a witch's python, so that the witch dies; and secondly, by reporting to neighbours and to the political authorities the names of the people they have seen engaged in witchcraft. An ordinary person can never recognize the witch who attacks him, even though he may be conscious that he is being throttled. And all these things happen in dreams: 'The witches go out in dreams to throttle people.' 'It is in dreams that "the defenders" recognize them.' Certain dreams, interpreted by a traditional symbolism, are taken as signs of being bewitched: 'If I dream that someone comes to fight me, perhaps he beats me with a stick, perhaps he overwhelms me and crushes me down to earth, perhaps he hits me with his fist; then I wake up and tell people: "Last night they came to throttle me."' 'If I recognize people who come to fight me in my dreams that means I have myself the power of defence; if I do not recognize them then I have not.' 'If I dream that I am flying alone through the air high up at night, that means they have come to throttle me.' 'If I wake up suddenly at night in fear and sweating, even though I do not remember the dream, I know they have come to throttle me.' 'Dreams of being chased, of being beaten, of the house burning, of one coming to the door and weeping for me as if I were dead, these are all signs of witchcraft.' Close friends tell one another

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

their dreams—provided they have not dreamed of attacking one another—and when more than one of them has dreamed of X as an aggressor, then the presumption is very strong that X is a witch. Dreams to the Nyakyusa are the stuff of religious reality, and the very close association between witchcraft and dreams is apparent in the language—*injoi* meaning a dream, and *ubuloi* (the same root in the abstract noun class) meaning witchcraft. It is perhaps also significant, that *ukugoga* means to dream, and *ukugogwa* (in the passive form) means to be killed. Restless nights are taken as proof that either the witches or ancestors are troubling a man: 'We do not sleep' (*tukigona*) is the formal phrase in which village headmen or priests notify the chief that something is amiss in the country, and a ritual is required; and an ordinary person using the same phrase implies that he is harried either by the ancestors or by witches. 'You *may* sleep or you may not' (*ukigona*) is the commonest form in which a threat of witchcraft is made.

The vision and power of 'the defenders' (*abamanga*) comes from the same source as the power of the witches,[1] from pythons in the belly, the essential difference between the witches and 'the defenders' being that the latter use their power in accordance with law and morality, while the witches act for selfish ends, and their activities are illegal. This close association of 'the defenders' with the power of witchcraft is apparent in language, *abamanga* being sometimes used almost synonomously with *ukulaga* for 'to bewitch', while *abamanga* means 'the defenders'.[2] There are, moreover, certain differences between the pythons of witches, and those of 'defenders'. In the first place, the condition of 'the

[1] For similar concepts among the Thonga and Azande cf. H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. II, p. 516; E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*, pp. 224 ff.

[2] cf. the Bemba *bwanga* discussed by R. J. B. Moore in *Africa*, Vol. XIII, 1940, pp. 211 ff. and *Bantu Studies*, Vol. 15, 1941, pp. 37 ff.; the note on the use of this root in a number of languages in *Africa*, Vol. XVI, 1946, pp. 119–20; and C. M. N. White in *Africa*, Vol. XVIII, 1948, pp. 83–102.

I translate *-manga* in Nyakyusa as 'mystical power', *abo-manga* 'to exercise mystical power' (for good and evil), and *abo-manga* as 'those possessing mystical power', with the further implication that they use this power for defence. Writing in *Africa*, Vol. IX, 1936, pp. 85, and Vol. X, 1937, pp. 265 ff., we translated *abo-manga* as 'defender witches' and *abo-loi* as 'aggressor witches'. On further reflection, however, I have preferred to confine 'witch' and 'witchcraft' to those acting in a manner disapproved by their society, since this is common usage, and for want of a better term I call *abo-manga* 'the defenders'.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 defenders' is not visible at an autopsy. Secondly, it is maintained
781 that while a witch has several pythons, a defender has only one,
and whereas witchcraft is always inherited or acquired in early
● 791 childhood, a python of defence may be acquired later, through drinking medicine. Old Mwandesi, recognised by the Nyakyusa themselves as an authority on law and history, explained it to us thus: 'Some are born with pythons; they are those with many pythons, perhaps three. Some get them from medicine made of leaves which is given them to drink at the "coming out", they have only one, it is they who watch over the cattle, they are the village headmen (*amafumu*). He who has many pythons, who is born with them, having inherited them, suns them secretly at his home. He takes them out and suns them, then swallows them again, they are his intestines. Such a man is a great witch; he is the kind who is convicted of witchcraft. But the village headman who has got his python through medicine has only one, he does not sun it, he is not convicted of witchcraft, he only detects the witches in dreams. When he begets a child the latter will have one python only. If his son or daughter goes about throttling people, then his father says: "Where did you get many pythons? See! I have only one. It is you woman! (scrunching his wife)." So they submit themselves to the poison ordeal. The man vomits and the ordeal catches the woman.' Mwandesi contradicted himself in this statement, first suggesting that the power of defence was only acquired through drinking medicines, and then that the child of a village headman inherited one python from his father. Most Nyakyusa maintain that the power of defence can be acquired in either fashion. The medicines drunk at the 'coming out' develop it even in an 'empty' man, but many men, including assistant headmen and ordinary citizens who are not specially treated at the 'coming out', are believed to have it. It is asserted that no women have it, though many of them are spoken of as witches, and in particular instances informants implied that some women 'saw' the witches (cf. Document, pp. 250–3).

Mbukile confirmed Mwandesi's main point, saying: 'Some of us are empty, pure (*bwele*), we have no pythons, not one; some are 'defenders' and pure, they are those who watch over the country; such a man has only one python to watch over his country. The ruler of the country, the chief, also has one python; for both village headmen and chief watch over the country. Some are

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

witches, they have two or three pythons, it is they who are caught by the poison ordeal.' 'Watching over the country' implies detecting the witches and turning them back, and also reporting them the next morning to the authorities. Particularly 'the defenders' watch over the cows, and they are said actually to increase the milk yield by sucking the milk from the teats and spitting it out again. Mbukile explained this also: ' "The defender" watches over the cows. He takes milk in his mouth and squirts it on the ground; he does not swallow it in his dream. The next day the milk will be plentiful.' A village headman we knew enlarged further on the point: 'If a man is the son of a true village headman and goes to drink the milk of cows, he drinks from the teats, but his python vomits the milk and the next day the owner of the cow will find much milk and say: "He who came last night was the child of a village headman (*ulifwa*). He was good, he was not a witch, no, but a benefactor."'[1] So they say. But if a real witch goes to bewitch the cows then the milk dries up altogether for a time. 'The owners of the cows will milk none for many days. He is a witch indeed.' Similarly, it is held that if witches can be compelled to vomit the human flesh they have eaten, 'to put back the meat', the patient will recover.

'Emptiness' and 'innocence' are associated in several contexts; and vomiting, spitting, and confession (*ukusuya*) are all taken as expressions of good will and repentance. *Ukusuya*, for example, means both 'to spit' and 'to forgive', the symbolism being interpreted in this way: 'If a father is angry with his son or daughter he may say some day, "I forgive you now" and spit on the ground: all the anger that is in him comes out like spit.' Blowing water from the mouth is an essential element in prayers to the ancestors, and the close association between them is apparent in the language: *ukuputa* meaning to 'blow out water' and *ukwiputa* (the reflexive form) meaning 'to pray',[2] with the implication of confessing whatever anger or grudge a man may have in his heart. Kasitile, the rainmaker, explained: 'This prayer with water is to confess *everything*. If I do not pray with water then something is left within.'

[1] For a similar concept among the Thonga cf. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. II, p. 373.

[2] The Zande symbolism is very similar: cf. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, 'Zande Theology' in *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XIX (1936), pp. 10-14.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

576 In Nyakyusa society it is senior relatives who formally blow
754 out water to express their good will, not suspected witches, as among the Azande. But the admission of anger by the supposed witch or justly shocked neighbours, and their wishes for the patient's good health, are anxiously sought (*vide infra*, p. 101), for such good wishes are thought to lead directly to his recovery.

754 The reverse of this emphasis on the value of confessing anger is the belief that the man who nurses a grudge in secret without ever admitting it is the most dangerous enemy, whether he be a senior relative muttering to the shades, or a neighbour using witchcraft, or a rival who has turned to sorcery. Mwambuputa, a conservative village headman without any school education, was very explicit on the point: 'The root of witchcraft is this—when two people have a quarrel in their hearts and do not let it out. Maybe I have a neighbour who hates me, but he never lets it out, he says nothing and we seem to be on friendly terms—those are the quarrels that are pregnant with witchcraft. But if he lets it out and tells me that I have wronged him in some way then the quarrel has no menace in it. It is when he lets nothing out and stays silent, though angry in his heart, that he comes in dreams to throttle me. That is the root of witchcraft.' Hence the insistence on one accused of witchcraft admitting guilt (*vide infra*, p. 111).

754 'The defenders' are powerful, but it is believed that witches are occasionally able in dreams to get past them, and throttle
● 791 men against whom they have a grudge, or their cows. ' "The defenders" do not go out in dreams to fight the aggressors every night. A witch wanting to throttle a man comes night after night.' 'Nowadays it is much worse than it used to be, since the Europeans prevent us reporting them, and getting them stopped; "the defenders" work hard, but some nights they sleep without dreaming and the witches get past.'

754 Although the primary function of 'the defenders' is to see and drive off witches, nevertheless they are also thought to use their
791 power to punish a wrong-doer. In doing so they are assisted by the witches, but, the Nyakyusa argue, the village headman who
626 leads this night attack in dreams is no more breaking the law than he is when he fines a thief in court. In both cases he is exerting power to maintain the law. The Nyakyusa have a lively fear of shocking their neighbours, for it is held that the shocked astonish-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ment of fellow villagers (*bikuwiga*) or their angry murmuring (*bikuibumeya*) will bring on wrong-doers 'the breath of men' (*embepo nya bamda*) causing them, or their children, or cattle, to fall ill, and this breath is the power of the pythons exerted by 'defenders' and witches acting together. We asked Mbukile whether 'the defenders' really came to choke a proud, quarrelsome person. 'Mother! They come. "The defenders" and the witches all call one another. They all go. "The defender" is not angry (at the attack), he says, "The man killed himself, he was a quarrelsome fellow!" ' And another friend explained: 'If a woman witch wishes to choke her husband, perhaps the first night "the defenders" will turn her back, but then she will plead with them and explain that her husband is a bad man and ill-treats her, then perhaps on the second night they will change their minds and come and help her. Yes, "the defenders" turn round sometimes and throttle people.'

'The breath of men' is thought to cause prolonged illness but not death, and should a death occur then a charge of witchcraft may be brought, and the suspects be required to drink the poison ordeal. 'We said, it is forbidden to kill a man. We others were afraid, although we had disliked the victim ourselves, we feared at some later time the witch would kill us.' All our informants accepted this view in theory, but in practice several cases in which the supposed victims died were cited as instances of 'the breath of men' (see table, pp. 206–8).

The effect of 'the breath of men' is spoken of as 'the curse' (*ibigwe*)[1] and its typical symptom is sterility, or a paralysis of the legs, which, it is thought, can only be cured when the sinner repents and reforms his behaviour, providing at the same time a feast of beer and meat for men of his village or, if it be against his father that he has sinned, of his father's village. At the feast it is essential that the men of the village should *admit their responsibility* for the sickness, and express hopes for the recovery of the patient. 'Formerly, they would pray and pray, they would let out all their anger, saying: "Certainly we were angry, it was us, but now it is all over." Then life would come back to the sick man and he recovered' (cf. Document, p. 240).

We see then, that a clear distinction is made by the Nyakyusa

[1] *Ibigwe* is not used in the Kukwe dialect, but is common usage in Selya, on the Lake-shore plain, and in Ngonde.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 626 between the legal and illegal use of power derived from pythons. 'The breath of men' is the general public opinion of a whole group—of an age-village or chiefdom—acting through the 'python power' of those of its members who happen to be possessed of it, led by one or more village headmen and directed against a single person. On the other hand, individuals proved to be witches are those believed to have acted by themselves, either against the public opinion of their age-village or chiefdom, or at any rate without securing its support. No pagan Nyakyusa doubts that witchcraft is bad, or that 'the breath of men' is used to bring legitimate punishment on evil-doers, but the classification of particular cases varies somewhat with the point of view of the individual. The victim of 'the breath of men' may speak indignantly about the attacks of 'the witches'.[1]

791 576 'The defenders' are regarded as pillars of society, and their exercise of python power as right and proper, yet no one readily admits to the possession of such power; it is a proud and boastful thing to do, and not good manners. Informants, when discussing it, rarely spoke as if they had direct knowledge of the power, usually prefacing their remarks with: 'It is said that', or 'I hear that'. This was true even of village headmen who are all believed to have the power. One such man, to whom a direct question was put, replied: 'I would not go so far as to boast of it myself, but other people in my village have it.' In villages of mature and old men, others besides the headmen are often known by name as having it; and besides this there is the general belief that in each such age-village 'some people', not specified, have it as well.

iv. Witchcraft, 'the breath of men' and morality

754 [626] Now the power of witchcraft and 'the breath of men' is held to operate primarily within one age-village, and it is denied that it can ever extend beyond the chiefdom. 'How could the people of another chiefdom "eat" a man?' said the village headman, Mwafula, 'It is those *here*'. The typical accusations are against neighbours and wives or co-wives and, nowadays, against fellow workers living in the same camp (cf. table, p. 198). The fact that it is within the village that witchcraft is thought to operate is

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'An African Morality' in *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936), pp. 87-8, for such a case.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

v. Procedure in witchcraft cases

Whenever someone is very ill there is anxious speculation among relatives and neighbours as to the cause of the illness. If witchcraft is suspected—and witchcraft is thought to be by far the commonest cause of sickness and death—people begin to whisper (*ukuheha*) that so and so is responsible. Even if the trouble is only a sudden fall in the milk supply there are whispers about witchcraft and the identity of the witch. Then the neighbours meet and complain (*ukwijaja*), or else the leader of the village-section, or even the headman of the village, takes the initiative and, summoning his people, admonishes them. The object of such complaint and exhortation is to warn off the witch. 'People speak very angrily, then the witches are ashamed within themselves, and stop their witchcraft, because they die of shame.' If the warning is effective—that is if the patient or the cows recover—the case will be dropped; but if the trouble continues then the village proceeds to the discovery of the witch. Mwaisumo explained: 'If sickness occurs, the village headman will call his people round him and say: "This village is not right, disease is killing the people, there must be someone who is bewitching them. We warn him to stop!" Then, if he does not stop he will call the people round him again and say: "Well, we must drive him away." Then they discuss their dreams with the headman, it is always by their dreams that they find out the witch, no other way.' A case was quoted in which the milk yield of a village had diminished and the villagers had 'called one another' to come together to complain. While they were complaining a 'defender' called out: 'I have seen the one who is throttling the cows; come together again to-morrow, and no one must stay behind.' When they met the next day one man called the names of each villager in turn, and 'the defender' responded to each with 'Yes', until 'Mwasalutaba' was called. Then he was silent. The name was called three times, and at the third time the whole company groaned. Mwasalutaba got up and, denying the accusation, appealed to the ordeal. He was found guilty by it and was driven from the village (cf. Document, pp. 241–3).

Mwakwelebeja, himself a commoner credited with the power of discovering witches in dreams, made a revealing comment on

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

791 754 the discovery of witches. He said: 'The witches betray themselves. When we are sitting discussing the witches throttling people, we may notice one looking nervous and glancing sidelong at his friends, then we, who are innocent, know that he is the man.' Certainly a suspect is closely watched, and if he shows anxiety, or fails to join in the condemnation of witches and the expression of good will, this is brought up against him, as the following case shows.

754 627 'A certain man called Mwakagugu had a guest staying with him; a soldier on leave. Now this soldier was in the habit of calling in the neighbours to eat when his wife cooked a meal, and M. was always angry in his heart, wishing to eat alone with his guest. When the soldier invited in other people M. would refuse to join them. (The soldier was correct, according to Nyakyusa custom, in what he did. It is good to call in friends to eat.) On one occasion the soldier bought some beer and a crowd of men were drinking it, in another house, not M.'s; but they took a dry bamboo from M.'s place as firewood, to heat the water for the beer. Then M. was very angry indeed and asked: "What do you mean by taking my bamboo?" And his neighbours silently criticized him, thinking "Our friend here has not even bought this beer, and then he gets angry when we take his bamboo!" Another day when the soldier killed a bullock and gave a leg of the meat to some guests of his who were present his child fell ill, its ear swelled up and burst, and it screamed with pain. Later, a neighbour's wife cooked some porridge for her husband without any relish so when she brought the porridge to where the men were sitting, the soldier called to his own wife to bring a chicken she had cooked, as relish, and he offered it to the other men, eating none himself. Again, on yet another occasion, when his wife brought him his porridge she called M. to join him; but M. laughed and said: "Let them (the soldier and his other friends), eat it by themselves." This was the woman's story. And then straight away they were startled by the child screaming and refusing to lie down.

'So then all the neighbours gathered together and gave expression to their anger (*ukwijaja*), asking themselves the cause of the sickness, and why it was that it always became apparent when they were eating. "If the man in question" they said, naming no one, "does it again, we will expel him from the country!" As

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 efficacy neither depends upon nor affects the user's anatomy.
757 The creation and control of wild animals, for example, is thought
789 to turn on knowing the right medicines, not on any innate power, and is not therefore classed as witchcraft.

The Nyakyusa hold that just as 'python power' may be put to
• 791 good or evil use, so also medicines may be employed legally or
754 illegally. Particular techniques are not in themselves either good or bad; their morality turns on the purpose which they serve.
789 Thus our friend and neighbour, Mwakionde, who was believed to have created four lions, which were roaming the neighbourhood, by placing certain bundles of twigs in the long grass, was regarded as a benefactor; for the lions had attacked neither men nor cattle, and besides adding dignity (*ubusisya*) to the country were killing the wild pig, which had been destroying the gardens. But a certain X— was driven out of Mwaijande's country because he was alleged to have created leopards which had killed children and cows. 'In 1926 X— was notorious for making leopards. It was said that he got a medicine from Misuku to make them. His neighbours feared to quarrel with him for in that year leopards infested the whole of Selya, especially the country of Mwaijande. It was said that if one quarrelled with this man one's child would be killed by leopards the following day. He was notorious. Once he quarrelled with a neighbour, saying: "Your cattle are eating my food." Then the following day the child of that man was taken by a leopard. The chief drove X— out. When they questioned him he denied having familiars ("animals") but the chief said: "Move from my country, for your animals are destroying this country." He said: "Chief, give me the ordeal." The chief refused, saying: "No! get out of my country." So he moved. Now he is back in the country of Mwaijande. He returned to the place from which he had moved.'[1]

789 Not all medicines believed to cause sickness and death are illegal; there are many retaliatory medicines which are believed only to harm the evil-doer, e.g. the thief, the adulterer, or the eater of stolen food; and the use of these 'medicines of ownership' (*ifilembeko*) is considered quite legitimate. A man gives his wives medicines to drink (without their knowledge) and then any lover who may sleep with them will, it is said, contract disease in

[1] In another context this man was spoken of as a witch (*undosi*), cf. Document, p. 252.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

success of the ritual, but who do not play any specially defined 621
part. As we have seen, all who are reckoned kinsmen and all fellow 788
villagers *must* attend a funeral, and a large crowd enhances the status of the kinsmen of the deceased. At a puberty and marriage ritual the 'congregation' is much smaller but is nevertheless important, as is shown by the complaint of the girl marrying a Christian that if she were not initiated she would not be famed. At other rituals all who attend are actors.

The officiants (*abanyago*) for death, puberty and marriage, and 791
birth rituals are almost always elderly women who, by their own choice, have learnt the medicines and observances from some older *unyago* by acting as her assistant. We came across only one man who acted as *unyago* in death and puberty rituals, though at the rituals of spearing, binding with ropes, and protection against sorcery men are more common than women. Often all the elderly women are referred to as '*abanyago*' for 'they help the *unyago*', but the one who has been called upon to provide the medicines and organize the proceedings, and who is paid for her trouble, is clearly recognized. Sometimes she is a kinswoman of the 'owner' of the ritual—if a member of the lineage knows the medicines she will carry out the rituals for all her kin, as did Syungu, wife of Chief Porokoto's half-brother—but she is not necessarily a relative. It is knowledge, not kinship connections, that qualify her. She is the final arbitrator on procedure, and is insistent on exact observance of the details. Because knowledge of medicines is so important Nyakyusa often refer to the officiant at a ritual as *unganga*, a doctor, but *unyago* is the more precise word since *unganga* has other applications.

On the occasion of prayer in sickness, and in the ritual of recon- 791
ciliation, no specialist *unyago* is necessary. The senior kinsman of a 782
lineage prays to his shades direct, and a father and his neighbours 783
receive and bless an erring son without the mediation of any priest; but the doctor called in to treat a sick man may press the kinsmen to confess their anger and bless one another (as Mwakionde did in the case quoted) and come very close to organizing a ritual of reconciliation.

At a marriage ritual there is a 'go-between' (*umfusya*) represent- 585
ing the bride's father and one representing the groom, and, besides
their legal function as witnesses to the passage of cattle, they help [675]
the officiant to organize the ritual, and are specifically responsible for conveying invitations to the feasts. The wife of the groom's 'go-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

My bull was wounded. When I tried to kill it, it troubled me, it did not die. I took a banana sapling and chewed it and prayed to my fathers, saying: 'This bull has been wounded because it was destroying people's crops. I am killing it because the people are angry with me and they might spear me in the night if I don't kill it.' My son struck it the third time, then it bellowed and I said: 'Yes, they have heard my prayer,' and it fell down and died. The shades were preventing it dying because they liked it to be alive. The whole country liked this bull because of its beautiful bellowing. 775 782

The shades are very real to an old man like Mwakwelebeja: 775

We live with the shades, constantly the fathers come to us, and also a wife who has died. The shades rise and come to us. In the morning I wake up and tell my wife the shades came to me, I slept with them, and with the wife who has died.

QUESTION: Why do they come?

MWAKWELEBEJA: You just dream. Sometimes they speak something, and in the morning I tell my wife they said so-and-so. Sometimes they bring food. If a sick man dreams that he eats their food he will die. If he dreams that he visits them and they drive him away he will recover. Sometimes I dream of my father or of my mother, sometimes of the villagers, So-and-so, and So-and-so. Yes, we fear to dream of the shades, even if we don't eat food. We fear that if they come often we will follow them. 775 828

And even to young men like Kititu they seem near:

Yes, the shades come to us in dreams at night. Perhaps I dream of my father who has died, he appears, he gives me a cow, I wonder, it seems that I have gained that cow. I rejoice and am glad. This is all in a dream. Perhaps my mother has died and I dream of her. She gives me food as it were on this table. I eat, I drink beer with her. Our grandfathers used to dream of war. When the Ngoni were in the country they would dream that they and the shades, the fathers who had died, were fighting with the Ngoni; in the dream they would spear them and the blood would appear. All men dream, but those whose dreams come true we call *abasololi*—prophets. These men sometimes dream of pubic matters, as well as private, they go to Kasitile [the priest] and say: 'Hunger is coming, carry out the ritual in the sacred grove.' Then they take a cow, bananas, and milk to the sacred grove as Kasitile says. Then there are those who fall into a fit and the friends of such a man goto Kasitile and tell what he said. [791]

Perhaps I dream of my father or grandfather, and he comes and gives me food. I know him by his appearance in the dream. Perhaps my grandfather died while I was still a child, but I know him by his dress

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

The Worship of the Spirits

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Now begin the duties of the person who is called the rainmaker. In the Misuku Hills there is a rain forest, the trees of which drop moisture. Word is sent to the local chief that the spirits have accepted the prayers of Chungu; and a quantity of rain-tree twigs is sent and delivered to the rainmaker. This official, known as the *unsusi*, goes to the lake by night to fetch water, which is placed in a pot along with the twigs, and some small smooth black or white stones, the pot being now covered with banana leaves, and placed near a small bush "where God stores the rain." The rainmaker now goes into his house, where he prays, lying on his face; a position which he retains until rain has actually fallen. Chungu also continues in prayer.

The rainmaker is a quite inferior official. In the past he might be a slave, or any other unimportant person appointed for the duty. His function seems to be that of a "conductor," through whose person, or acts, or abstinence from action, the continuance of the rain granted at the prayer of the chief is assured. He must not cut his hair during the rainy season, for the heavens would dry up if he did. He must not wash in water, for that would bring on a flood; in June he may begin cautiously to wash himself, and later he may indulge in the luxury of a full bath, and at the same time he may cut, but not shave, his hair. He must not be angry or scold during the rains, lest he bring on a lightning storm with fatal effects to some one. Further, during all those months he may not roast maize or ground-nuts, the leaping of which

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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while being roasted is like the play of lightning, and would bring on a fatal stroke from the sky.

In 1912 "God's rain" fell as usual in December; 782 but in January came drought which continued into 731 February. Urgent messages were sent to Chungu, who replied that he was helpless, as the *mulima* was lost. After diligent inquiry, it was found to be in possession of Mwandosya, who refused to act, because in the distribution of the cattle of a deceased relative another chief, Kasikula, had taken more than his share. Kasikula was ordered by Chungu to restore the balance, but he refused, and only agreed when the men present took up clubs to thrash him into obedience. Prayer was then offered in the usual way, and Mwandosya announced that God had commanded him to forgive the offender. "Rain," he said, "will come at once. You Karonga, will be overtaken by it before you can reach home." And so it fell out. Rain came in torrents, preceded by a great storm which overthrew a number of trees in a neighbouring estate, and greatly injured the fine avenue leading to the Mission House.

Now for some days there had been much thunder, 782 and dark clouds covered the sky; anyone could tell that the rain was near. But for the Konde that was just the point. The rain was there, and it was quite obviously being withheld. Why else did it not fall? And it did fall when the wrong was righted, and the prayers offered. Who but a white man could doubt the relation of cause and effect?

One or two local variations are worth noting. At Karonga an offering of black cloth is made along with

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XVII

The Foretellers

AMONG primitive peoples all over the world, the power of certain individuals to foretell events, to anticipate the future, is profoundly believed in. Western science has so organized life that such methods of meeting the future are needless and foolish. Smallpox is met at a distance, as are many other diseases, by quarantine regulations, by isolation, by skilful treatment when it comes. Hunger is warded off by foresight, by careful distribution, by skilful farming. The terror of heavenly bodies visiting our skies is neutralized by the calculations of astronomers published long beforehand.

The Konde have their own way of meeting these emergencies. Smallpox is warded off in dreams by the prophets. Hunger, in not a few cases, is anticipated by prophetic warning that rain will not fall at the usual time, and therefore food stocks must be carefully guarded. Eclipses, and even earthquakes, are foretold, not by the scientific methods of the West, but by the foretellers, whose information is as confidently trusted by the Konde, as are the calculations of science in more advanced lands.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

781 It cannot be asserted that Konde prophecy contains much that is dramatic. It is true that those who were doomed to die in battle were known beforehand to the chief and one or two others; but such dramatic events as the bloody spectre foretelling death at Ticonderoga, at the time an unknown place; or the visions of Highland seers in Scotland; or the no less dramatic forecasts of some Hindu priests, are not to be found here. Konde prophecy, if one may give it that name, was more of an everyday affair, not so much concerned with the fate of individuals, as with the general welfare.

791 There are two classes of foretellers. First are the persons already referred to as *abakunguluka*. Their initiation into office has already been described, and it is enough to say that the medicines taken, and the ceremonies undergone, at the time of their installation as subordinate chiefs, gives them power to see in dreams all danger to the chief or the community. The verb *kukunguluka* means to go, or fall, down; to sink deep; and the *unkunguluka* is the man who goes down, in dreams, to the underworld, to obtain there the word that he is to deliver to the chief. *Kusololoka*, with its noun *unsololi*, has the same meaning.

The primary duty of these men was to guard the person of the chief from unseen dangers. Anything that threatened was seen in dreams, and measures taken to ward it off. Witchcraft, illness, poison, danger from animals, from falling trees, were thus foreseen. But in order effectively to protect him, they must know where he is, and what he is doing at

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

a given time. The young chief, Reuben, the account of whose installation is given in the chapter on the chieftainship, told me that on his return home his prophets would tell him that he had been talking with me, and would demand an account of all that passed between us. These men, it may be here noted, would not give me any information about themselves or their methods; that was *mwiko* (forbidden); but they had no objection at all to the chief telling me all I wished to know. Practically all that is here said about them, therefore, is derived from various chiefs, and whatever is not so derived is common knowledge, which anyone may pick up.

When the message came to a prophet, he went to tell his fellow-prophets, and all together went to the chief, to whom all such dreams must be related, before publication to the common people, and the steps decided upon which are to be taken to ward off whatever danger threatens. War was seen, down to its smallest details. The dreamer was actually, in dreams, present at the fight, and saw both the killed and the wounded. The names were given to the chief, who, when he marched out with his forces, left behind any of those whom he wished to save. The people very confidently affirm that just the persons named, and no others, were killed. The incredulity of the white man is regarded as an entirely uncalled for slight upon upright men discharging a duty about which, to the Konde, there is no mystery at all.

The German defeat at Karonga in September, 1914, was very clearly foretold by Njuli and Mwandisi,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

791 both still living near the lake shore; but the Germans
781 knew nothing of the prophecy. The effect of it, however, was that no local carriers could be recruited, and most of the carriers employed were found among the Basango to the north. Next, it was asserted that the Germans would evacuate Neu Langenburg without fighting, which is what actually happened; and, finally, about the same time, it was declared that the "first-comers" would become lords of the country. These first-comers were Mr. Moir of Glasgow and his companions, who hunted elephant north of the Songwe River in the early eighties. Dr. Laws of Livingstonia visited the north end of the lake much earlier, but that visit did not make the same impression as the more prolonged stay of Mr. Moir and his fellow-hunters.

791 Smallpox is the most dreaded scourge in the
753 district. It is believed to come from the south, pass through the land, and finally to disappear among the
754 Basango to the north, to whom the Konde consigned, with much gusto, all the evils that they were threatened or afflicted with. Its coming was foretold by the prophets, who declared that it was an act of God in punishment of wickedness. But smallpox was sometimes brought by the sorcerers. These enemies of society were caught in the act—in dreams—by the prophets, who also, in dreams, went out to meet and repel them. If the evil-doers were caught and beaten, their bodies next day would betray them, for the dream-fight is a stern reality, and the body bears the marks of battle. If the prophets succeeded in

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F7617 Ngonde F7617

driving out all the sorcerers, no one would die of smallpox, but one remaining sorcerer could work unlimited mischief so long as he remained undiscovered.

In a community which practises "subsistence agriculture," it is important to know beforehand when the rains will be late, and it is the duty of the prophets to let the chief know, and through him the people, when this will happen. In such a contingency, the chief issues instructions, varying in minuteness, regulating the kinds of food which are to be used, and warning against greed. Punishment used to follow disregard of the prohibition, but the chiefs, although they still issue orders as before, do not now venture to punish offenders, or at any rate they punish none who would be likely to report them to the Administration.

Famine, however, was not always the result of drought. It was often, in the past, the result of war. When a powerful enemy approached, the people left the villages and took refuge in the bush, sometimes for long periods, leaving all that they could not carry to fall into the hands of the invader. The last occasion on which such a famine was foretold was when the Angoni passed through the land seeking a habitation. The people fled before them, and a famine resulted which is still traditionally remembered. With such a powerful enemy approaching, the prophets had an easy task in foreseeing famine.

The death of chiefs is also foretold. The prophets see in dreams the house of a chief being built in the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F7617 Ngonde F7617

peer, and that the land would be filled with wonders of which no man had ever heard.

How far the original form of these prophecies has been modified by experience, I do not undertake to say. All who pretend to knowledge of the subject vigorously deny any modification. Whether the actual performances of the white man have satisfied the expectations aroused by the prophecies, is a question susceptible of more than one answer. The great mass of the people would certainly not rejoice at the departure of the Europeans; nevertheless there are some who would be glad to see the last of them. Long before the Great War, prophecies were freely circulating among the people, that the Germans would go away, and be succeeded by white men of another land. Just now similar prophecies are being made about the British, who are to be succeeded by another white race as yet unknown. The fact, which is well known to many people, that some "doctors" are seeking for a medicine which will cause the white man to disappear, is significant.

There is a tradition that a series of forecasts was made long ago: the Great War, the influenza which followed it, the great earthquake of 1919, and finally a great darkness which is still to come.

The progress of Christianity has not destroyed the faith, especially of the heathen, in the local prophets; and it is not improbable that Christians still retain a conviction that these men were not wholly without Divine guidance. The chief Swebe, when I asked him whether in all cases smallpox foretold had actually

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
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791 come, answered with an emphatic affirmative, and with an intonation which clearly meant, "Why should it be doubted?" The spirits form a link between men and God, and there is, in the native mind, no reason at all to doubt that God can make the future known to certain individuals when it is His will to do so. The darkness of mind, so often attributed to the heathen, is not absolute, and they themselves, while readily acknowledging the superiority of Christianity, do not admit that they were wholly without guidance in the past.

The second class of foretellers are the *shakomwa malaga*, a phrase which may be roughly translated as spirit-possessed persons, trance-seers, inspired persons. They foretell the future by means of an indwelling spirit, but the occupation is always temporary. The possessed person runs about calling, "Listen, listen, listen." His friends seek to restore him by pouring water on his head, but if he resists they let him alone, believing that he has a message. He breaks away, followed by his friends, who carefully note all he says. One man known to me climbed, in that condition, a mountain of two thousand feet, and on recovering consciousness was in an exhausted condition, though he showed no signs of exhaustion while in the trance.

791 These seers, if we may use a short name for them,
789 announce very much the same things as the prophets, but they seem to have made the foreseeing of animal visitations their special province. In 1900 a woman called Nakanjere declared that a lion would come

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F7617 Ngonde F7617

and kill many people. The chief, Mwenemusuku, protected his land in the manner described in the chapter on "The Powers of Evil," and none of his people were killed, though the total killed by a lion in that year in neighbouring districts was very large. A letter in my possession puts the number at forty, while others say fifty. Where the chief protected his land in the traditional way, the people were safe; where this was not done, the toll of human lives was great.

In 1922 the same woman predicted that, for the sins of the people, a spotted hyena would kill many. Again the chief protected his land, and again no one was killed; while in a neighbouring and unprotected land, the death-roll was considerable. In the same year leopards were predicted in the Nserya district. The chief was urged to sacrifice an ox, but refused. Six people were killed, and a number of mauled men and women were treated by Dr. Brown at the Mission at Itete.

To the Konde, as I have already said, there is no difficulty in connecting prediction and fulfilment. The inspiration of the foretellers is not doubted; the animals came as foretold; why should reasonable men refuse to acknowledge a relation between the two events? At any rate it may be presumed that the native will go on seeing a connection, while the white man will fall back upon the ever-ready doctrine of coincidence, and refuse upon any terms to acknowledge any other relation.

There is, however, spirit possession of another kind,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 taking advantage of the credulity of the masses—can
911 be entertained only by those who have acquired no insight into the native mind and its working. It is impossible to maintain that a system, as wide as a continent, and as persistent as the centuries, should be the outcome of an age-long conspiracy to cheat. The human mind does not work in that way. The system is involved in the world-view; it is woven into the mind-texture of the people, and the honesty of the "practitioners" is, in many cases, as indubitable as the faith of the people.

•791 The prayer for rain, for instance, is offered with a simple sincerity, as honest as any petition ever offered in a Christian church. I am not asserting that the prayer brings the rain; nor yet that it does not. Nor do I suppose that the diviner is in touch with fact, when he uses what he considers to be means of getting into communication with the spirits. I am arguing only for the honesty, in a great majority of cases, of the men who do these things. They are men with a conviction.

The diviner usually hands on his knowledge and his office to one of his own family; but an outsider may learn his secrets by paying an ox or a cow. I am not aware that there is any serious attempt to guard the secrets of the profession, though the various drugs used are not made known except to those who are willing to pay the fee. The only form of initiation is
[304] the incising of medicines into the arms or wrists of the initiate, and this incision may be renewed should occasion require it.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

to the diviner to find out the cause of the discoloration, and would of necessity make reparation. 187

III. A few years ago a policeman had his goods stolen at Mwaya. Instead of reporting to the proper quarters, he went to a diviner, who sprinkled the policeman's house with medicine, which he publicly declared would kill the thief, and in a short time the goods were brought to the chief of the district. The deception in this case is too obvious to call for comment.

Inquiries regarding hunting and fishing, and every other kind of question, are conducted in ways similar to those already given. Employment with a white man is evidently still a matter for careful consideration, and it is entirely possible that the diviner prevents many a man from going to work who would otherwise be glad to go. "Shall I find work?" "Shall I find peace?" "Shall I get good wages?" The second question is much the most important, and means, "Shall I be employed by a white man who is not a perpetual scold?" the kind of European whom the native hates and fears more than anything else.

"[illegible] [illegible] - [illegible]
halfpenny to an ox or a cow.

While there is undoubtedly deliberate cheating and charlatanry, these should be regarded, not as the essence of the system, but its excrescence. In many cases, if not in all, the diviner has subconsciously decided what answer shall be given; in the region of the subconscious his mind is made up, and, there being no opposing idea, the "mental process issues in

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

he settles many legal disputes between his neighbours. The village is, both for men and women, the chief field of friendship, conversation and mutual hospitality; and its members recognize greater obligations towards one another than they do towards those outside. Before the coming of the Europeans the age-village was also a military unit, led by its own great commoner, in the manner fully between chiefdoms.

In most villages there are several herds of cattle which feed separately. The herd boys, as we have seen, thus form separate groups within the village, as also do their fathers; the boys are related to the common activity of herding, the men, owners of the herd, by their joint interest in it and their common fear of witchcraft.

In the relationships of villagers the belief in witchcraft is a constantly recurring factor. It is believed that certain people, both men and women, have the power of harming their neighbours and their neighbours' cattle without taking any overt action whatever, without reciting any spells or performing any magical ritual at all.

Their influence, which is exercised at night in dreams, is only fully visible to those who are themselves endowed with this power; and to it is commonly attributed both sickness in men and the failure of cows to give milk. To this belief the elements of actual ill will and quarrelling, of actual sickness and the failure of cows to give milk and of actual dream experiences are combined in a significant whole. Witches are of two kinds, they say, those who use their power rightly (*ano mwiga*) and those who use it wrongly (*ano'ai*). The first kind are said generally to spend their dreams in trying to protect the others from harming those whom they hate. The good witches are the "defenders of the village." ... In each village the great commoner is believed to be the first among them. In each group of men whose cows are herded together there is, again, commonly one man who has the reputation of defender of the herd, who is believed to protect the cows from the witchcraft of disgruntled individuals whether members of that small group or not. But if, at any time, a single person earns a general unpopularity in the village, whether by his pride, his meanness or by wrongdoing, then it is believed that the defenders themselves lead the spiritual attack against him, and he falls sick. Such a blast of unpopularity acting through the power of witchcraft is called the "breath of men" (*umbuga wa anadu*); and the belief in its efficacy is one of the chief sanctions of the accepted social order of Nyakyusa life.[1]

[1] Godfrey Wilson "An African Morality" Africa Jan. 1936

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

may nullify any ritual, but often it is not strong enough to overcome the fratricidal tendencies of the lineage. In theory a celebration at the grove of a senior should precede that at the grove of a junior and sacrifices at Lubaga would be followed by sacrifices at the groves of the 'sons of Lwembe' in order of seniority, but this does not happen in practice nowadays and we doubt whether it ever did, since a hierarchy was not organized and maintained by a central authority as in Ngonde. In 1933 a celebration at the grove of Mwaijonga (Ba) preceded one at the grove of his great-grandfather Mwakisumbwe (pa) by a month, as we shall see.

Sacrifices are made when a drought or flood occurs, or a plague of locusts, or an epidemic among men or cattle; when fishing is poor in the chiefdoms of the plain, or war is imminent. They occur most often during the 'winter' in the hills, when a malaria-sodden people feel the chill of damp mists and cool south winds, and in October, just before the break of the rains, when the country is parched; but they are not confined to these periods. In theory the village headmen and the priests who 'watch over the country' foresee coming misfortune in dreams, and avert it by making the appropriate sacrifices. And they are helped by ordinary people who are dreaming repeatedly or falling into a trance or fit, and prophesying evil and jabbering of 'a black cow, a black cow' or some other appurtenance of sacrifice. But in practice the prophecies generally occur when there is hunger or plague in the land, or an omen (such as a python or a ground hornbill behaving oddly) has been seen.

The dreamers are *ababandale* or *abahangalale*, and, as these names indicate, they are believed to have descended into the land of the shades. *Ukuwalala*[1] means to go down into something, like the roots of a tree into the earth, and *ukuhangala* literally means to plant a banana flower which (as was shown in *Rituals of Fertility*) is a symbol for a corpse and is buried; so the *abahangalale* are those who have been buried in the earth. '*Abahangalale* go to the land of the shades and return. . . . An *ababandale* plucks up the "blessed grass" (*ifinjili*) in his own courtyard and goes beneath and sees.[2] . . . He goes down into the earth beneath and takes the chief to the land of the shades when he dies, and he also sees the witches. . . .' More rarely, the *ababandale* or *abahangalale* is

[1] *Ukuwalala* is a harsh pronunciation, the implication being that the infinitive should end in *-ngala*, but children born in this way are not necessarily prophets.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Fertility*, pp. 55, 60.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

said just to become aware of future events without any dream.

Abalangulula are distinguished from those who suffer from fits or fall into trances (*abalowi* *amalogo*), but a woman in a trance may also prophesy and induce the chief and priests to celebrate a ritual, for it is thought that she too is in communication with the shades. Men say 'The shade has entered her' or 'Kyala catches hold of her that she may speak of the matter'. This type of prophecy is something new among the Nyakyusa. Mwandisi (107) told us that 'it did not exist in BuKinga whence we came', but had been introduced from the south, through Ngonde, and it is mainly confined to women, whereas the *abalangulula* are men.

There are many tales of famous prophecies. Nsambu (90) claimed that his father (63) foretold that 'there will come a white thing on the Lake, and it will land on the shore. That will be the man who will make peace', and Mwakalinga (141) who died fighting the Germans is said to have foretold his own death.[1]

Dreams and revelations of the possessed concerning public matters are reported to the local village headman and referred to the other headmen and priests, and a prophecy is accepted as valid only after formal discussion. As we shall see, Kasisile was sceptical about the revelations of one man who was repeatedly 'possessed', perhaps because he threatened to become a rival in interpreting public misfortune. If there is doubt, suspicions are confirmed or problems elucidated, by divination.

When they judged a sacrifice necessary the village headman and priests went to their chief saying, 'We do not sleep', and it was his obligation to secure an animal for sacrifice. He might provide it out of his own herd, but very often the duty of 'finding' sacrificial cattle was delegated to a junior line—the ruling chief gave cattle to a younger brother charging him and his heirs with the function of providing sacrificial cattle when necessary. Today all the chiefs are reluctant to expend cattle on ritual when validity is questioned, and there is often friction between the senior and junior lines over who should 'find' the cow or bull required. Their reluctance is illustrated by the following passage from Godfrey Wilson's diary:

Mwaipa (on the lake shore): 22/12/34

It is still stormy; there has been wind and heavy rain for four days. People are saying: 'We are hungry. It is very bad. We need light rain

[1] According to Mr. Hunter's informant the Bambwe scription was foretold a year before it occurred. *Geographic Hour and Bamb*, 40 (1955), p. 10.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 the order to clear out the ashes; messages were sent to the great
796 chiefs and the senior territorial nobles of the plain, and they told
[643] their juniors. A sacrifice was made in one of the sacred groves of the Kyungus and all fires in the whole Ngonde plain were put out. And then

> all the chiefs from every country near Mbande and the nobles and all the village headmen and all the ordinary men and women, too, went to Kyimbwe where we threw away the sickness of all the country.

At Kyimbwe, which is the crossroads in the bush, they threw away the ashes of their old fires, and some of the pots and baskets in which food is served; while those few people who could not get to Kyimbwe threw them away from their own houses on the same day as the others. At Kyimbwe new fire was made with a
[372] fire-drill by the nobles of Ngonde who

> ran with it without looking back and the people danced alongside them and speared one another! . . . They said, 'Let us dance, let us fight that the homesteads may be peaceful'. . . . 'Let us throw out the ashes that death may leave the homesteads and they be at peace.' It is to bring out war from within (*ulasepe*).

The symbolism is the same as in the rituals of kinship when kinsmen gather to admit their quarrels and press one another to speak out, so that they may cleanse themselves of anger.

The new fire was distributed to the whole plain in order. Great chiefs and senior nobles took it first and passed it to their juniors, chiefs passed to village headmen, and in each group the common people got it from their own ruling noble or their own village headman.

In July 1937, while we were visiting Ngonde, there was a
[731] plague of rats[1] which threatened the food supply, and Bungulu,
[124] the wife of a chief and well known as a prophetess, went into a
[791] trance and revealed that the rats were caused by the anger of the
[787] previous Kyungu and could be got rid of only by a ritual 'throwing out the rubbish' and sacrifice. Her husband reported the matter to Mulwa, the premier noble of Ngonde, to whom the present Kyungu, Peter—at one time a Church member—had long since handed over all responsibility for communal rituals. Mulwa called four of the leading chiefs who were pagan and a number of

[1] Nothing new in Ngonde. Lord (then Captain) Lugard suffered from them in 1888: F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), vol. i, p. 105. In 1937 the country swarmed with rats: in our own camp we killed 30 to 100 each night.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VIII

RAIN-MAKING AND 'SPRINKLING THE HOMESTEADS'

789 Two activities which are closely linked with sacrifice at the groves of chiefs, but which are distinguished from them because they consist in the manipulation of medicines, rather than prayers and oblations, are 'rain-making' and 'sprinkling the homesteads' to ensure fertility of the soil.

(a) RAIN MAGIC

791 Rain-makers (*abapelafula*) are men who use perforated instruments called 'rain' (*ifula*) to produce rain or sunshine. The heroes were believed to create rain by the virtue in their own bodies, but the Kyungu also had a much prized instrument of iron, perforated [778] 'like a mouth organ', and several of the chiefs had perforated stones which were used to 'make rain'. In most cases the care of them was delegated to a junior kinsman, a commoner, or (in Ngonde) even a slave, but often the office became hereditary and rain-makers were men of considerable power. Such was Kasitile whose grandfather (44), a younger brother of the chief Mwamukinga (43), had been entrusted with his rain stones. The Kyungu was thought to control the rain in the whole of the Ngonde plain, the Lwembe in an area less clearly defined, but which included Selya, BuKinga, and parts of the Nyakyusa plain, Kyala in the eastern portion of the Nyakyusa plain, and parts of BuKinga and BuKisi. Chiefs were credited with making local rain, in their own country.

789 778 The technique of 'making' rain was to seal the holes in the perforated instruments with ointment and immerse them in water.

The rain instrument that helped Kyungu was called Mulima. Its holes were its eyes. If they were empty it would be empty in the sky above also, there would be no clouds; if some were full then there would be a few clouds, if all were full then there would be many clouds and rain. If it were raining and he put it in a tree so that its eyes looked up, then the sun would shine. . . . If he opened its eyes that they might be empty and put it in a tree so that it looked up then the clouds dried up above, the sky also became empty.

[p. 118]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 them first, then his grandfather, and father. Others told us that
778 rain stones always came from Kisi country, a very wet strip of land on the north-east shore of the Lake where the clouds always seem to gather when one looks south from the Nyakyusa valley and plain, and a piece of perforated wood used in Ngonde for making rain came from the hills of Misuku, also a very wet country. Kasitile's stones were of two types, but no direct association of male and female was made. However, the Kukwe spoke of a 'mother' stone having young. 'The rain-maker puts back the stone in the potsherd without water (after rain has come) and going later he finds that it has got young, perhaps seven, with the mother there are eight.'

791 The rain-makers are subject to certain taboos: during the dry season they may not wash lest they drive away the rain nor do they
[784] shave for 'they compare hair and clouds saying, "Let it be black", they compare a bald pate with sunshine.' And the rain-maker
[262] may not eat roasted maize 'for as the maize crackles in the potsherd when it is roasted, so the thunder will crackle in the sky'. He may not eat green maize (which is reaped during the rains) until the dry weather begins 'because he creates rain, which means he creates all the food which grows with the rain'. If he begins eating too soon he may stop the growth. And when the rain-maker is manipulating his instruments a sex taboo is observed.
[834] 'When I am making rain,' said Kasitile, 'I do not sleep with my wives for two days, it's taboo. How would Kyala help us if I did?'

In theory the rain-maker always works under the direction of
[643] the political authority—the Kyungu or a chief—but he is also thought to wreak vengeance on those who anger him. Kasitile was critical of his colleague in the hills above Isumba: 'He never makes a nice gentle rain, it always destroys food. . . . He is always demanding things from men, and if they refuse, he brings the rain to destroy things. . . . There is a very strong wind and heavy rain which takes roofs off homes.' But when Kasitile himself was
[964] angry, because his son was taken as a tax defaulter to work on the
[687] roads, the weather grew bad.

789 People say I am angry, that this rain is because they came and beat me because of tax. This time the tax collectors came to my place and beat me and when I thought, 'It is not the custom with our forefathers for the tax collectors to come at all to men like me', I grew angry and prayed. . . . When I was in Malignonde the country suffered from hunger, all their children were in trouble. . . . Then I came up, and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 drought, as in illness, a number of possible causes are discussed, [775] and if one possible cause is dealt with and yet the drought persists, [177] another will be put forward. A shrewd priest or doctor can turn this to account and find many reasons for the failure of his ritual, as the following case shows.

789 In the wet Nyakyusa valley rain-makers are not concerned only with drought, but also with flood, and, in the years 1935-8, 791 with the rise in the level of the Lake which inundated many gardens.[1] On the Nyakyusa plain the rise was attributed to the [821] action of a Kisi doctor, Mwatabi, who had first boasted that he could bring up the Lake and then been commissioned by the chief, Mwakalukwa (141), to do so, 'because there was much grass by the Lake and many mosquitoes, and it was dirty there'. He was told to 'take the Lake up a bit, but not too far' and given a sheep. Then, the following season, in April (a month of torrential rain), Mwakalukwa's son Mwakisisile (170, for Mwakalukwa himself had died) gave him a little bull saying,

[578] Send the Lake back, it has come too far. Then the doctor went home thinking to himself, 'Why does he give me such a little bull?' and he met a headman of the neighbouring chief, Mwakabulufu (138), and said, 'Why should I send the Lake back, Mwakisisile has given me a bull only; had he given me a cow, I'd have done so, but now I am angry.' Then Mwakabulufu heard and sent a message to say he would provide a cow, since Mwakalukwa was dead. But the doctor refused: 'No, Mwakalukwa (the son, 170) is still alive, he must give it.' The following September, before the usual end of the dry season, there was rain on the plain. It is the Kisi's rain. Mwakisisile (170) refused to give him anything, he said he was a liar, but the commoners collected 30s. and a goat, and the Kisi performed a ritual just recently, and said: 'The Lake will go back, but my strength will bring the rain; it will rain during the dry season this month.' We laughed very much in Tukuyu to hear such a prophecy, but it is raining!

The following year—after the Lake had risen again—another reason was given. It was said that a rain-maker at Bojo in Kisi country had died, and just before he died he had thrown a rain stone into the Lake.

(b) MAGIC OF FERTILITY

789 We did not learn very much about 'sprinkling the homesteads';

[1] There is a periodic rise and fall in the level of the Lake. In 1937 the Lake steamer was anchoring in what had been the road-way of the District Commissioner's house at Kyela.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

793 NDEMBWE
755 NSOKI
[551] NSEZA
[791] A SANGU
} Diviners consulted by Kasitile

NDISA a kinsman of Kasitile

It will be remembered that, in accordance with the custom of
793 delegating ritual functions to a junior line, Kasitile's grand-
755 father (44) had been appointed rain-maker and priest responsible for receiving the Kinga when they came to sacrifice at Lubaga. Kasitile thus held an important public office. He was living on the plain (where he had inherited the estate of his father's younger brother) where his own elder brother (85) died and he came up into Selya to bury him and succeed to his position. But he failed to notify the Kinga priests of his brother's death and they were
[787] very angry, and told him he would die if he stayed in the homestead, so he fled back to the plain. There he fell ill, and he was carried back to Selya to be treated by the visiting Kinga priests, who told him he was sick 'because he went to the plain in a hurry and they had *not* given him medicine'. The idea here is that the heir to a chief or priest must cultivate the power that was in his
[778] father's body by drinking medicines: Kasitile was 'losing the *ifugila* of his father by not drinking medicines'. Now *ifugila* implies *both* the medicines of chieftainship and the power which they create in the body of a man.

So Kasitile was treated and we quote his own account of what happened:

> The Kinga came to cook medicine by the tree where I pray—it is where the [illegible] Then you took medicine for Jane [his senior wife] and me in beer . . . and we drank together . . .
> [783] and they boiled medicines in a pot and told us both to wash with the infusion every day for two months. I found a goat and called the priests Ngulyo, Njobukwa, and Kimagwa and . . . they and the Kinga priests ate the meat together, and they told me to stay for two months and return to the plain again, and so I did. Then the Kinga sent for me to come back and I've come up to live. I found a cow, and called the priests and killed it at the sacred grove, Kinyangwa, and all the people ate the meat. Then the Kinga told me to move to my father's old homestead, and I did so this very year.

Before we arrived, therefore, Kasitile had been in conflict with
[753] his fellow priests, and he had been very ill, and attributed his

9: Wison E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

younger one[1] gossips with her fellow, she does not go to the witches herself, but just talks to the other wife who calls the witches to her aid. These two wives say: 'The favourite has borne many children to her husband; we are poor' [i.e. the favourite gets an unfair share of her husband's attentions]. 754 753

Kasitile speaks of his wives as 'witches' which, according to Nyakyusa ideas, they were, if they injured him, but he was also in the wrong to have shown his preference for Jane so clearly. [775] As was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*, the shades are thought to punish such favouritism. [689]

Towards the end of August Kasitile went to consult Ndembwe, a diviner and doctor, living nearly a day's journey away in the hills, who used a 'stick in the ground' as a divining rod. On his return Kasitile reported: 791 787

Ndembwe says it's the 'breath of men', not the wives, but the dispute about the beer. I paid him 1*s.* and drank three preparations of medicine at his place. He is coming here—I have found some beer and I am sending to call him tomorrow. Then Kasitile added confidentially: About the source of the 'breath' I am uncertain. Ndembwe suggested testing my wives. He can see the heavy ones, for in Ndali country he has drunk much medicine to give him spiritual power (*amasye*). He told me to come home, not to go back to Mwakyonde's country, and he is coming to give me medicine to drink and also to sprinkle medicine in the house. He will sleep here and see who it is that comes—he will know if the wives are heavy, or if it is the people of the country. 753 [782] [778] [787]

Kasitile's uncertainty was apparent. The first diviner had stated clearly that the sickness came from the witchcraft of the wives, but Kasitile wanted a further test.

We were away from Selya for some time and did not hear of any further developments in Kasitile's illness until early in 1937. By then a new reason for his ill-health had been put forward, viz. his impiety in cutting all the branches off a tree growing at the entrance to a sacred grove which has sprung up over his father's grave. He cut the tree because it was encroaching on his homestead. Then he fell ill and he went to consult Ndembwe again. 753 688

He asked me: 'Have you done something wrong at home?' I replied: 'No, I have done nothing wrong.' 'But the oracle says you have done wrong at home.' I said: 'Perhaps it is because I cut a tree at the [717]

[1] Sister of the favourite Jane. To accuse Jane's sister would cast a slur on Jane, for witchcraft is normally hereditary.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

753 entrance to the grove?' Ndembwe told me, 'You will get no cattle',
688 and indeed the cows are aborting. He told me: 'Brew beer and look
[787] for a sheep[1] and pray to your grandfather.'

782 Kasitile did not find an animal for sacrifice. He slaughtered a kid 'just for meat', killing it near the grove, but without praying or taking any of the meat into the grove, for it is not customary to offer goat's meat to the shades. His health improved a little, for a
787 time, but again he got worse and went off to see another diviner, saying: 'Perhaps there is some other cause; perhaps Ndembwe is mistaken.' He decided to go to consult an oracle some distance away 'because the oracle near home does not convince us; those who live near know all our wrongdoings; those at a distance don't know the affairs of the homesteads here'. This time Godfrey Wilson was invited to accompany him 'since he was his friend'.

Record of G.W. 8/2/37

787 We left Isumba about 7 a.m. and walked for an hour over the hills
753 through the bush. Kasitile had sent his wives, Jane and Kululeli, on ahead to tell the diviner, Nsoki, that we were coming. . . . He came in
[791] from the fields to meet us and was taken aback by the presence of a
[186] European. Kasitile kept saying: 'Do not be startled, he is from home, he is our friend.' . . . Food was served, then Nsoki's wife brought out some cooked millet porridge for the divination. He broke off a large piece and began to roll it between his hands. He smeared ointment on his hands and added powdered medicine. . . . He rolled and rolled, sometimes throwing the ball up and catching it again, spitting on his hands meantime. He murmured as he rolled, then at last he said to Kasitile, 'Speak!' Kasitile called his two wives to come near, and he explained his symptoms and the circumstances, how the sickness had fallen on him just after he had cut the tree in the sacred grove.

Nsoki asked for other possibilities. Kasitile: 'Perhaps the country is angry—I am a senior there. If it is the fathers who are angry I admit
[684] having done wrong. Perhaps my wives have committed adultery in the long grass and they are the cause of the illness.' Nsoki rolled and rolled the ball of porridge speaking aloud: 'It is Kyala above?' (looking up).
[778] Kasitile interrupted him: 'Yes, indeed, Kyala, but Kyala stands where he stood at home, does he stand alone? He stands with the fathers.' Nsoki (as he rolled the porridge): 'Your fathers are angry about that grove?' Then the ball of porridge flattened out in his hands and he broke off . . . 'No, that is not the cause' (*side plate 108*).

Rolling it into a ball again he went on: 'Your wives have committed

[1] This was Kasitile's own account. Others told us they he had been advised to look for a doll.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 clearly inclined to the shades as it had before the divination, but as
753 before the certain conviction was lacking.

Four days later (12/2/37) Kasitile went to Nsesa in Kituli village to consult the oracle again 'for that of Nsoki went wrong'. He told us afterwards 'This oracle supported the finding of Ndembwe's. It said: [775] Your kinsman who is dead is angry; he says, "Why did you not [769] celebrate the ritual? I am tired of the hair (*Ngatale nayo isusi*). And what did you offer your father after cutting that tree?"' Here yet another cause of Kasitile's illness is suggested—the neglect of the death ritual of a kinsman. The implication is that the chief mourners have [765] not yet performed the concluding rite of shaving which makes it [302] possible for the deceased to join his fathers. The hair which the mourners shave off is called 'the hair of the corpse'.

QUESTION: What are you going to do then?

KASITILE: I shall charge the young man, son of my dead kinsman, with [688] neglect, and tell him to celebrate the ritual that the shades which have [602] bound me may go out of my body.

QUESTION: And the bull?

KASITILE: If I can find one I shall kill it.

QUESTION: Who will be there?

[793] KASITILE: The priests will be there, Ngulyo, Kisengula, Njobakosa, Mwalukuta and Mwakasukula,[1] and also Mwaipopo (116) himself. Were I a commoner I should kill alone with my younger brothers, but since I am a public personage (*ofi ababwile*) the village headmen are there. (To Mwaikambo, the clerk.) It is good at your home in the hills; here things are bad.

QUESTION: But they also have shades?

[775] KASITILE: But they are not important. Look you, I just cut a tree and they have seized me and dwell in my body. Are there sacred groves in [178] the hills? Do men visit them? There in the hills rituals have died; the *puberty ritual and the rituals of the groves are celebrated very little.*

On 27th March Kasitile looked in to say that he was going to con-
787 sult a visiting Sango doctor 'from very far off' about his cough, but
791 G.W. had better not come lest his presence spoil the divination.
753 Kasitile came again after the consultation, full of excitement. 'What a doctor! That is a doctor indeed! That is a diviner! He took an axe and divined with it; he took coppers which I brought and threw them in a little pot, together with the axe, and ash, and he said: "You also take ash and throw it in" and I did so. Then he looked into the little pot and said: "You built on the plain?" He knew this without being told! I said: "Yes".'

SANGO: There was a quarrel there.

[1] The last two are priests of Mbwanga (see p. 80) who did not in their own Mwanakhondo, Kasitile's seniorate, who did come is not mentioned.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

KASITILE: Yes indeed.
SANGU: Now your body is sick, you are coughing. 787
KASITILE: Yes indeed, I am ill, and I am coughing a great deal. 791
SANGU: Yes, it is that quarrel down there. You came with the cough from the plain. 753
KASITILE: Yes, I came with it.
SANGU: You are a priest, you are a senior priest. (He knew this himself!)
KASITILE: Yes indeed.
SANGU: But the cough comes from the quarrel in the plain. If you were not a priest you would have died.
KASITILE: Indeed, we quarrelled over land, over the boundaries, on the plain. I hoed someone else's land—the land of a commoner there. [578]
SANGU: They placed something to injure you.
Kasitile paused in his narrative and we asked how the 'something' operated.
KASITILE: In dreams, by means of their witchcraft. [754]
The Sangu told me: 'It is this which causes you to cough continually, but there is something else also, you did not move to the plain from here without trouble.'
KASITILE: No, I moved with an accusation against me.
SANGU: Yes indeed, you did wrong and now your fathers are very angry. [775] [776]
KASITILE: Yes, I cut a tree.
SANGU: Mother! You cut a tree? The fathers and Kyala are brooding over you, Kyala is angry and broods over you. Pray, pray very much. It is you who are throttling the cattle of the country.
We expressed surprise and Kasitile continued: 'Yes, indeed. The Sangu said: "It is your wrongdoing (in cutting the tree) which is causing the cows to abort. I will clear out the thing which came with you from the plain. Bring us tomorrow." He's a great doctor, Mwaipeja.' [658]
The astonishing thing was that Kasitile, a man of considerable intelligence and inclined to query the truth of the revelations of some oracles, was so much impressed by the fact that the foreign doctor (staying in the country) knew that he was a priest and had sojourned in the plain, though to anyone knowing KiNyakyusa well his connexion with the plain was apparent in his speech, and his bearing indicated him as a personage.
Talking of the divination three days later, Kasitile told us the Sangu doctor had said: 'You have done wrong at home. This Kyala (pointing to the little pot into which he was looking) knows that Lwembe and the Kings and your father are angry, your father is very important, he works with Kyala, he is with him.' 755
As a treatment for the cough the doctor put various ingredients with 791

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

some live coals into a small calabash and held them against Kasitile's chest 'to clear out the blood of coughing'. To pacify the shades a pot of medicines in water was put on the fire; the doctor, Kasitile, and his 'senior wife' (actually her younger sister, as Jane was away) each held the pot with a crooked finger. Then Kasitile and all his wives and children were sprinkled with the hot medicines. And the doctor told Kasitile to sacrifice a bull.

During the following week preparations for the sacrifice went ahead. Kasitile walked for some hours through the forest to call Mwamakunda, his fellow priest who always assisted him in the celebrations at Lubaga and 'sprinkling the country'. Mwamakunda is a very old man, contemporary of Kasitile's father, and he asked: 'Are you bringing your European to the sacrifice?'

KASITILE: Yes.

MWAMAKUNDA: But your father Mwakanjoki (So) did not know any Europeans, he feared them, he died without ever meeting one. After your father died, when your elder brother was alive, Europeans came —Germans—and cut down a tree, the *umuali* tree in the sacred grove near Kamesu; blood gushed out, it shouted so that it was heard in BuKinga.

Kasitile explained that the Germans had wanted timber. Afterwards Mwaipupo (the chief 116) sought a sheep and they tried to put the grove to rights ('close up') by sacrificing it. This was the tree beside which the sacred meat was always put when they sacrificed in the grove. Now one branch has grown up again from the roots.

Mwamakunda went on: 'But you did wrong at the beginning not to take the European to pray, and to tell Mwakanjoki (So) that he should not be afraid, the European has made himself our friend.' Kasitile, reporting the interview to us said: 'I concealed that we went together to the grove to pray (*vide supra*, p. 115) and Mwamakunda told me: "Let the European take something, let it stay overnight in the house, and go with him, and pray very much. . . . Mwakanjoki has gone off in a huff from your house, you have offended him yourself. Go with the European, take him to your father's house. Now your father has taken offence, he is shaking your body by night because you cut the tree; you have done wrong."' I.e. two causes for the anger of the shades and Kasitile's consequent sickness were given: (i) the cutting of the tree by Mwakanjoki's grave and (ii) Godfrey Wilson's presence at rituals and at Kasitile's homestead. So before the sacrifice of explation for pruning the grove was performed Godfrey Wilson went to be introduced to Kasitile's shades for the second time.

Record of G.W. 25/2/37

In the evening as the sun was setting, I went to Kasitile's house with a cloth and so. He put them in the house, took down the calabash which

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

are said to give their wives a medicine (without their knowledge) which will cause any man who lies with them to fall ill of gonorrhoea or some other venereal disease. Many Christians believe in this medicine and some inquired whether Europeans did not use it also. One family of doctors are specialists in it:

The sons of Mwaysafu are very famous, they are great doctors. People fear them very much. No one can steal anything belonging to them or run off with their wives. If a man runs off with a wife of theirs, he will return their wife and pay. . . . Because when he has slept with the woman by night they stink in each other's nostrils, the woman stinks in the face of the man and he likewise in hers. And if rain falls by night the roof comes off the hut in which they sleep and the rain enters. Perhaps the man quarrels with the woman, perhaps frogs and snakes are numerous, perhaps gourds sprout in the house—sometimes they sprout bringing evil. So it is also if a man has run off with the wife of another and the husband goes to the sons of Mwaysafu. They agree to work, but he must pay them.

Lyandileko, whose husband's family have owned a 'horn' for generations, was very insistent that vengeance magic maintained law and order for it could injure only the guilty. 'A thief feared to steal lest he be caught by my father-in-law (Mwaisyelage). He feared the horn if he used sorcery. He feared to seize another's cow thinking, "They will go to Mwaisyelage".' And protective medicines which cause an adulterer to fall ill of gonorrhoea, or a thief to die, are considered perfectly legitimate; the misfortune would not have befallen the man unless he had done wrong.

The prohibition by the government of the *masji* oracle has puzzled people. Medicines are admittedly dangerous, but it is held that Europeans 'encourage' witches and sorcerers by forbidding the use of the one effective weapon against them, and doctors with vengeance magic or other strong medicines 'fear the face of the *masji* doctors'. There is an inescapable contradiction here, the Nyakyusa relying on *masji* and vengeance magic as a means of discovering criminals, and the Europeans punishing any doctor found administering poison, or intimidating people by threats. Furthermore, it is widely believed that Europeans themselves use strong medicines made up with blood. Any Europeans without an obvious occupation are suspect of being *abapumbulu*, who go around killing people and taking their blood for the Government to use for medicines. One of our European friends,

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

a missionary, was warned by her servants before Godfrey Wilson's arrival in her neighbourhood 'not to go out at night as there were *abapembele* about, sent by the Government to kill people and take their blood', and women going for firewood made a long detour to avoid his camp. One was overheard asking when she caught sight of him: 'Is that the man who kills people?' Angumbwike explained that, since all really strong Nyakyusa medicines contained human blood, it was argued that European medicines, which were so powerful, must contain it also. 'They follow their own customs.' 759 757 759 756

It seems obvious to the Nyakyusa that Europeans must have strong medicines because their confidence and success are so great. Moreover, it is held (in theory) that they are immune to attacks from witchcraft. X, who had been a clerk and lost his job, and was bitter, expounded on this:

People say that Europeans have *ingilele* (*side p. 38*), see they are brave, they do not fear, if someone seizes a spear they do not fear, they just come to him, they are very brave. And also the witches say that they are unable to choke Europeans. When we hear people boasting of their mystical power (*amaga*) we always say to them: 'But if that is so, go and choke a European, show us!' Then they always say, 'Oh no, we can't do that, when we go to a European house at night we find it all lighted up and flaming, we can't get near them.' I think this is the power of the Holy Spirit which you Europeans have. [771]

He came of a well-known family of doctors and perhaps spoke from first-hand knowledge. He just laughed at the suggestion that the light might come from lamps. But the fact that Europeans were held to be immune did not prevent our servants and friends attributing our recurring attacks of malaria to witchcraft. [753]

(c) DOCTORS

Among the Nyakyusa, as perhaps in every society, the doctors with the greatest reputation are those at a distance, and a high proportion of the practitioners in the country are of foreign lineages, their fathers, or grandfathers, or great-grandfathers having come in, bringing medicines with them, and begun to practice. In fact, we were assured that there were no Nyakyusa doctors who were famous, they were all Sangu, or Kinga, or Kisi, or from Ngonde or Mlanda in Nyamlani, but detailed investigation proved this to be false. The trade in medicines from a distance is a very old one and continues today. As we have seen, 791 [436] [778] [785]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1955
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

[91] [98] [270] [458] *ngofola* come from west of Ngonde, or east of the Kings; *mwaf* came from 'Nyamland'; medicine for fertility of the fields from Mlaoka which is rich in food; war medicine from the Ngoni and Kings. Whether neighbouring people get medicines from Ba-Nyakyusa we do not know—no one ever suggested it, but it is likely that they do.

Since foreign doctors and medicines have the highest reputation [77] new treatments are welcomed. This is where the practice of medicines differs radically from the rituals directed to the shades in which the chorus is tradition, and any deviation must be justified. But the willingness to accept something new did not lead to any systematic experiment, or any regard for experiment as such.

[91] [279] Anyone who chooses, and can pay the fee, can become a doctor by apprenticing himself to a practitioner of repute, but it is very noticeable that the majority of well-known doctors come from families of doctors, the medicines being passed down from one generation to the next and sometimes taught to wives as well. Lyundiko, who has often been quoted, was taught certain medicines by her husband, and had a large practice. The diviners we knew were all men, but many women know a number of medicines. Once in practice, a doctor may add to his knowledge by buying a medicine from a fellow practitioner or exchanging medicines with him. One doctor we knew had paid two bulls for the secret of his protection medicine (*amboto gwa ipuge*). The teaching includes what plants or other ingredients to collect and how to 'cook' them, i.e. what to mix together and what quantities to use. As elsewhere in Africa, it is the material substances, usually vegetable, which is held to be important in any treatment. The spell—the words addressed to the medicine—is of little significance except that when conquerer magic is prepared the man on whose behalf it is done may say the name of his enemy (if he knows his identity) and state his own innocence in a phrase like the following: 'Return this medicine, thou Kyala, I have done no wrong whatsoever to cause me to be killed; if he says he will kill me let him die.'

[71] [713] The doctor (*ngonga*) who 'knows medicines' is distinguished from the priest or officiant (*ngonga*) who knows how to conduct a ritual directed to the shades or heroes. The *ngonga* uses medicines in celebrating rituals, and he or she may be able to collect and prepare plants himself, but he sometimes has to apply to a doctor

9 Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1959
F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

for an appropriate medicine, and his main function is organising the ceremonies.

(d) SYMBOLISM

In the field of medicine imagination runs riot, and associations are unpredictable. The ingredients of most medicines are professional secrets and unknown to the user who takes the concoction on trust from his doctor, and inquires no further. Therefore the study of medicine is not linked to the study of social relationships in the same manner as is the study of ritual, for the symbolism of medicines is individual and free, whereas the symbolism of ritual is common and obligatory.

Nevertheless, the imagination of doctors works within the general symbolic system, and such knowledge as we have indicates that many of the associations made are similar to those used in ritual. In medicine, as in the rituals of kinship, one type of banana stands for a male, another for a female, a banana sucker represents a kinsman, a sprouting shoot conception. Smithing and cutting are felt to be alike, and the molten iron that trickles out of a forge is linked with menstrual blood. Hair stands for growth, and a bald pate a devastated field. A ring, or circumambulation, implies a protecting fence. Pythons, crocodiles, leopards, and lions stand for power and majesty, spears and thorns for attack; vomiting and emptiness for innocence, spitting for forgiveness. There is colour symbolism in medicines (though we know little of it save that the *digidi* which stands for the blood of the lineage is red, or reddish brown), and auditory symbolism, the rumble of thunder and the groaning of a bellows being identified. Men seize that which they wish to avoid, as well as that which they desire; the things are antipathetic as well as sympathetic. No doubt a laborious study of prescriptions would reveal further general principles of association, as well as the range of individual imagination, but such a task has yet to be undertaken.

[348] [711] [177] [184] [178] swept through Bu'Nyakyusa in the early 1930's; perhaps other similar movements preceded it—we do not know. What is clear is that traditionally there was continuous public pressure to overcome hatred within the village and the kinship group; to rid oneself of it by confession and an expression of goodwill. In pagan thought Utopia is a society without witches or sorcerers and, though it was never achieved, everyone is convinced that formerly these evil-doers were fewer than now, because they were restrained by law, whereas 'witches' now go scot-free.

[185] [177] The interests of the Nyakyusa are personal and practical. Health, fertility, and amity between kinsmen and neighbours are what they seek. It is with rain and drought, with the rise of the Lake or the striking of lightning which destroys property; with stock, crops, and the wild animals which prey upon them that the myths are concerned. We could trace no rites of the sun, moon, and stars, and no rituals are directed to them. Reference is made to volcanic disturbance in the myths of the heroes—'the ground rumbled' when Nkolote and Kyala walked, and there are stories of small lakes disappearing and reappearing elsewhere—but the concern shown is surprisingly little if an eruption indeed destroyed villages last century as Mr. Harkin's single informant suggests (*vide supra*, p. 48).

[79] [79] Reality is thought to be revealed to men in dreams, by prophets who 'go down thinking like the roots of a tree' to the world of the shades, and by oracles. What men seek to know are the causes of misfortune—public and private—and the identity of witches. Occasionally, it is said, a prophet has looked into the future and foretold drought, or flood, or the coming of Europeans—'white things on the Lake'—against whom it would be foolish to fight, but for the most part they are concerned with the misfortune that exists, and urging men to pray in the groves. The contemplative is not honoured in Nyakyusa tradition; the man of spiritual power is a detective—a discoverer of evil-doers—or an administrator whose subjects able to his authority.

[185] [177] Men are preoccupied with their relationships to other living men—their kinsmen, neighbours, and fellow office-holders—and with their dead fathers. They are not concerned with their relationship to Kyala. The rituals celebrated by kinsmen are directed to the shades not to any supreme God, and it is quarrelling between kinsmen that angers the shades and makes the celebration of certain rituals necessary. The commonest rituals are

13:Lehmann E-5 (939) 1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

ancestors and of Kyala[1]. At the same time he moved his curved wand to and fro on the ground and when he did so, it indicated a negative answer from the beings invoked. But when he was asked: "Is the guilt for the sickness to be found in the husband of the chief's sister?", he was unable to move his wand as before; he could only stamp it on the ground, and this meant an affirmative reaction of the invoked spirits. Now, therefore, the meeting had reached its aim. 787 [776]

I asked the diviner to tell me how he had acquired his faculty. He explained that (besides the necessary inner disposition) the payment of a fee for the medical preparation was necessary in order to become a diviner[2]. This outfit consisted in a special vaccination by a learned diviner. For this purpose the neophyte was incised by his master on different spots on the upper side of the knuckles, and in these small incisions was rubbed a medical powder. By these means the initiate may be inspired by the prophesying spirits. These influences are then felt by the diviner as a power which directs the movements of his hand in the manner described. 791 [304]

6. Near the hut of the chief's principal wife was a "sacred" banana plant, in the grove opposite to the chief's hut and in the grove with the grave of the chief's father already described. At particular times, when any need demands it, the chief offers a prayer in this place to his ancestors[3]. The sickness of his sister, for instance, was such an occasion for him to address the ancestors. I was invited by the chief to witness this act, but I raised objections, telling him that my presence might perhaps rather cause the anger than the help of his ancestors. In reality, I did not want the chief to stage a theatrical act on my behalf. But the chief rejected my excuses and explained that he would act in the same manner as if I were not present, because he had made up his mind to this prayer. The chief was assisted during this ceremony by Mwaisyobule who presented to the chief a calabash of water as he arrived at the banana plant devoted to this purpose. The chief took some mouthfuls of the water and squirted it towards the banana plant. Then he recited the names of his ancestors and begged them to help his sister. 824 778 782 769 [23]

7. During one afternoon, I was told that a ceremony to end the initiation of a (betrothed) girl was going on in a family of the village. 881

[1] name of the supreme spiritual being.
[2] cf. Mackenzie, p. 208.
[3] Mackenzie refers that such a place is named "ikyisyo", "the family place of prayer" (pp. 140, 187), but without indication of the locality, as Kyungu.

792

792 HOLY WEEK—prophets and monarchs; executive and authorities; monks, friars, and nuns; monastic orders (e.g., mendicant, hermit, cenobitic); monasteries and convents (e.g., organization, architecture); monastic rules (e.g., poverty, celibacy); characteristics, status, and means of support of holy men; etc.

See also:

Celibacy 489
Divine rulers 628
Monastic movement 681
Poverty and almsgiving 756
Concept of sanctity 750
Catholicism 760
Church 761

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F7617 Ngonde F7617

roll of the Great War was a terrifying revelation of the unyielding nature of the Europeans in a quarrel. 727

Individual chiefs had special methods of securing victory. Mwanakule's wife, when her husband marched out with his forces, sat on a live sheep so long as the fighting went on: so securing good luck to her husband in taking cattle, and preventing them running away when taken. Another wife sat on a cooking pot, to keep the enemy in a state of security while the warriors were closing in on them. They would go about as usual, unaware of danger, cooking and eating, until the storm burst, and there was no hope of defence. His sister had a *kasewe* similar to the one carried into battle; and one of his old men lay down on the path, each soldier stepping over him as he passed on. While the fight was being waged, this old man sat on his haunches and pulled himself forward in that position, the effort being to make the enemy run. The *kasewe* was carried laboriously by Mtwini, and when he laid it down it moved forward of itself as the enemy retired. 726 789

In the north there was a great prophet, whose presence in the battle always assured the victory to his own side; but if he retired, even for a moment, the battle turned, and he was brought back, by force if necessary. 726 792

Two great wars still stand out in the minds of the people: the victorious march of the Angoni, and the driving invasion of the so-called Arabs. Both these enemies brought with them methods of fighting unknown to the Konde, who fled before the Angoni, 721

3: Mackenzie M-5 (co. 1925) 1925
F317 Ngonde F317

and it may be so, but there is a variant, which is free 773
from suspicion, in which the God came back to life in the form of a serpent, was cut to pieces by his fellow-gods and the elders, who, when he again came back, served him as before, upon which he went to the white man, who to this day prays to him. As Kavonga the old people used to say, "We have enriven the Son of God in the rock," but I have not been able to trace the origin or connection of the saying, except that it is not Christian, and may be connected with traditions of *Ngoleza*.

The story of *Mbasi* is very different. He is the 776
evil one, to whom deceit and wickedness are a pleasure. 792
Europeans are still living who have seen the great stores of ivory and cloth which were offered to him by terror-inspired people, and laid up in a cave at Mbwana on the lake shore. The cave has now been robbed of its contents, as *Mbasi* himself has been of whatever of dread his name inspired in the past. It is not very long ago that the last prophet of *Mbasi* died. He lived near Mondo, and within living memory he climbed a small eminence there, and proclaimed that *Mbasi* demanded cattle to be sent to him without delay, the prophet himself being the guardian appointed by the God. And the cattle were sent in goodly numbers!

Long ago, says a legend, when *Mbasi* walked 773
the earth, he had men who were always with him. 776
Mwamunda went with him to his friend Mwakanyamata. *Mbasi* told them many things, of witchcraft, of hunger, of disease that were to come, of the

793

[illegible]

[illegible] secular affairs of the one age-village and full supremacy in religious matters over all. Appeals in difficult cases might be taken from either of the young chiefs to the old chief and his great commoners. After his death, the wives and sons of the old chief were inherited by his full-brother, to whom also his religious authority passed. Full political power over their separate chiefdoms then went to the two sons. The great commoners of the old chief, relinquishing their secular functions to their successors, then entered on their religious duties as priests of the dead chief, this priesthood then handed on to their sons. When all the old chief's full-brothers were dead, the religious functions of chiefship passed to the young chiefs, who were then fully emancipated. The boundaries between their chiefdoms, settled at the 'coming out' ceremony, were sometimes modified by warfare.[1] The age-village is still the chief unit of friendship, mutuals recognizing greater obligations to each other than to outsiders, before the European administration the village was also a military unit.[2]

[illegible] The great commoner of every village was very powerful, and measures existed to check his influence, for instance, no kinsmen of a chief or son of a great commoner could be elected to that office. His duties were to be hospitable to the villagers, judge their cases, lead them in war, and officiate at their ceremonies. He represented their wishes to the chief, and through him and in consultation with him the chief gave his orders. Each great commoner was believed to be able to protect his own villagers from witchcraft.

Warfare

[illegible] A state of war—actual or potential—always existed among the various Nyakwan chiefdoms. Among the Ugandic, also, civil war was endemic, the Kyoga section possessing a war-talking war gun. In tribal warfare he did not remain impartial, but gave orders and sold his chiefs to prey. They then called on the sacred groves of the buried Kyoga, and then each great chief called on his own predecessors for help. Although the secondary subtribe also fought, they did not prey to their ancestors, for tribal war was carried on under royal auspices alone. War was an important source of revenue to chiefs and slaves. The numerous civil wars of the period before the Ugandic invasion show that in spite of the hierarchical Kyoga the centralized political organization was not strong enough to overcome the local autonomy of the chiefdoms, except in the face of a common danger, such as the threat of Bunyoro or Ugandic invasion.[3]

Judicial cases and Traditional Justice in the Nyakwa

[illegible] There was no central court of appeal or tribunals to which the ordinary man could bring cases down, or appeal against the decisions of his local chiefs. In the capital the only cases dealt with by the subtribe of Ugandic were cases of treason against the Kyoga (mainly adulterous approach to the wives), which were necessarily punished by death. They also used the Kyoga's authority in punitive expeditions against neighbouring chiefs. Each subtribe of Ugandic decided the cases in its own hills. Each great chief held an appeal court to which cases from all the chiefdoms of his lineage came, for of all the descendants of the Kyoga the great chiefs alone had power to administer the poison ordeal. None of the secondary subtribe also had the power. It was reserved to cases only to witchcraft cases, but to appeal cases when evidence for a legal decision was lacking.

[1] Where a cult an subtribe. [2] Ibid., p. 145. [3] Ibid., p. 146 et seq.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

chief from the wanton attacks of witches; but if ever there is a just ground of offence they are believed to join their own power of witchcraft in the general attack. I know one chief who dare not give a judgement in a dispute between two of his villages for fear of the indignant witchcraft of the losing side. And a general unpopularity is believed always to lead, sooner or later to a chief's death. 632 759

Chiefs also, like other men, fear the use of sorcery (i.e. destructive magic) against them, and use a number of protective "medicines" (i.e. materials of magic) to protect themselves from it. They also use powerful "medicines" to give themselves personal impressiveness, prestige and authority among their people.

While in the families of commoners an ancestral spirit is only believed to affect the lives of his own descendants, the ancestors of a chief, on the other hand, are supposed to influence, for good or ill, the fortunes of whole chiefdoms. Rain and good crops, the fertility of women and cattle are dependent upon their good will, which in its turn is believed to depend upon a successor sacrifice of cows. And for this sacrifice the chiefs, their living descendants, are responsible.* But, owing to the continuous division of chiefdoms every generation, several chiefs are concerned in each sacrifice; every dead chief is a source of misfortune or of blessing to the successors of all his direct descendants. And so the discussion of this part of the Nyakyusa religion leads us to the investigation of the groups which extend beyond the boundaries of a single chief-chiefdom. 771 772

(c) Groups under than the Chiefdom

When a chief dies he is buried near the house of his senior great wife and trees are planted on his grave. The trees grow and form a sacred grove (*ikyoto*) hedged by taboos. Each of these groves is at first the religious centre of two, later of a number of chiefdoms, and to them the sacrifices are made. Responsibility for finding the cow for sacrifice is a particular grave rests with one of the living chiefs concerned, but responsibility for initiating the ritual and performing it lies not only with the chiefs but also with the hereditary priests (*amyaga*) to each chiefdom. These hereditary priests are descended, some from the great commoners of the dead chief who is buried in that particular grove, some from his half-brothers. The ritual is esoteric, there is no gathering of the people at the sacrifice, and only chiefs and those with hereditary priesthoods 773 774 775 776 777

*I am speaking here of the religious customs of the Nyakyusa proper and the Ngonde people. I believe about of the Kukwe and Mwaisale are very similar, but I have not studied them in detail.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 come to it. But, on the other hand, everyone knows when a sacrifice is
770 taking place, and, in spite of the influence of missions, most people in the
771 pagan community believe in its efficacy.

772 Sacrifices are prompted either by actual misfortune or by prophecies
787 of it. The four sacrifices which I have seen myself were all stimulated by an actual shortage of food, and the hereditary priests have often told me that "now-a-days the chiefs do not listen to us until hunger comes." But, traditionally, sacrifices are said to have been usually prompted by prophecies of coming misfortune which was then averted by them. In each chiefdom the ruling great commoners, the hereditary priests and some private persons as well are believed to have the power of dreaming of misfortune (*ubulanguliko*) before it comes. And the chiefs are said always to have listened to these dreams, formerly, and to have acted upon them.

778 Among the groves there is no order of seniority; the older the grove
779 the more chiefdoms are concerned in the sacrifices there. And in Selya is the most important grove of all—Lubaga. All the chiefdoms of Selya, many of the Nyakyusa proper and even some of the neighbouring chiefdoms of the Ilwanda are traditionally concerned in its sacrifices. Lubaga, the Nyakyusa say, is the grove of Lwembe, one of the original chiefs who came down the Livingstone Mountains from the East, eight or nine generations ago; and from him all the present Selya chiefs are descended. The ancestor of the chiefs of the Nyakyusa proper was a brother of Lwembe; and though the Kukwe and Ilwanda chiefs are not related, yet those of the Ilwanda who are nearest to Lubaga used to send cows there for sacrifice as well, because of the great reputation that this grove had.

[782] 782 Sacrifices are still made to the country of the chief of Lubaga (Mwakisunga) for all the surrounding chiefdoms, but the full ritual has not been carried out for twenty years. Traditionally each chief of Lubaga was closely identified into a position somewhat resembling that of Sir James Frazer's "Divine Kings," a position bedged with taboos, in which not only the sacrifices he made to Lwembe but his own health and fertility also were believed to be intimately concerned with the prosperity of his own and neighbouring chiefdoms. But the present chief has never been properly installed, nor was his father before him. The sacrifices at Lubaga are believed to benefit not only the Nyakyusa but also the people
[78] to the East, the Kinga, who live on the heights of the Livingstone Mountains; for Lwembe, they say, was born a Kinga and moved down the mountains to Lubaga, taking the fertility of the soil with him. And

Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

are redrawn and only the fields in old craters (the most prized and fertile of all) are not re-allotted. Thus the villages of kinsmen of two generations adjoin, and often those of three generations.

On the old chief's death his village headmen become priests of the grove in which he is buried, and, in co-operation with his son, the new chief, sacrifice there on behalf of the two countries into which his old chiefdom is divided. There is a nice balance of power between chief and village headmen in life, and when he dies his two heirs and the headmen (or their heirs) continue to share power, the power which belief in his spiritual force and their ability to guide it gives them. The success or failure of rituals is held largely to depend upon the personal relationships of the leading participants, chiefs and commoner priests.

Besides the ordinary commoner priests (the village headmen of a past generation or their heirs) there are priests of the chiefs' lineage, usually belonging to a junior line to which specific ritual functions, such as rain-making, have been entrusted, and whose office is hereditary in the same way as that of a chief. Kaitila (30),[1] the rain-maker, is such a priest: his grandfather was the brother of a ruling chief (49) and had been appointed as rain-maker (*ungulyala*) and priest (*ungwe*), the two functions being separate but overlapping. As rain-maker Kaitila ended the rain-drum, as priest he initiated the rituals in certain of the sacred groves, though he did not actually officiate himself. Kaitila was a key informant on ritual and a chapter is devoted to his history, since it epitomizes the relationships between chiefs and commoners.

As we have shown, most of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde chiefs claim some sort of kinship with one another. Those who are nearly related pray together at the graves of their common ancestors, and those more distantly connected join in sacrifice to their founding fathers, but in the communal rituals kinship is neither the dominant theme nor the exclusive principle of association, as it is in the rituals celebrated by private persons. In the communal rituals some of the priests are commoners unrelated to the dead who are honoured, and the sacrifices are held to benefit not only the descendants of the dead, but all those who live in the country they once ruled. Nevertheless, the symbolism of the communal rituals commonly recalls that of the rituals of kinship; themes which pervade the death ritual recur again in the rituals of 'coming out' and 'cleansing the country'. This background is

[1] Generals also a more side to the genealogy of Nyakyusa chiefs being p. 9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

641 round him and sit at home in the middle in the sun. . . . All the
139 old chiefs inspired fear (*lupele*). It used to be taboo to walk near the house of a chief and approach him unless taken by a village headman . . . nowadays men walk about and enter his home and
[177] even eat his food.'[1] The power came partly from his position as the living Lwembe, and partly from the medicines with which he was ensured, especially the mythic *ipagile*.

641 The 'divine king' who came as a conqueror bringing iron is also
[178] associated with victory in battle. Still today a brave fighter is hailed as 'Lwembe', and an iron spear is one of the emblems of chieftainship.

The Lwembe was himself a priest—he is often referred to as
641 a sayer—but he was assisted by commoners. There is a hereditary
[182] keeper of the grove of Lufingo named Kimwale who is the descendant of that Kimwale the commoner who fled from Bukinga with Lwembe. It is he who conducts the sacrifices, who finds the participants with medicines before they enter, and who protects the grove. 'If by mistake the grove was a little burnt then the people here paid a beast to Kimwale, it was his to eat as he liked.' Others of the priests say that Lwembe found their ancestors at Lufingo; they are 'owners of the soil' there, and one of them, Mwanali, could give us the names of six generations of ancestors who had been priests of Lufingo before him. But the bulk of the commoner priests are not hereditary at all, they are surviving village headmen (or their heirs) of the men recently dead Lwembe.

The success of the sacrifices at Lufingo was held to depend upon the proper cooperation of chiefs and priests: first, on the Lwembe himself (the shortage of food among the Kinga, and of milk among the Nyakyusa, while we were there, was attributed by Kaulile to the fact that there was no living Lwembe); secondly on the commoner priests of Lufingo, thirdly on the commoner Kinga priests, fourthly on Kaulile (86) and certain other priests of Selya, and fifthly on the chiefs of the Nyakyusa and the Kinga who provided the offerings. 'Can a priest celebrate alone?' said Kaulile. 'No, the ritual depends on the chiefs.' The celebrations thus linked together chiefs and people, as well as Kinga and Nyakyusa, and numerous different Nyakyusa chiefdoms. The hereditary Kinga priests live in the country of the Kinga chief Wembalubwe and

[1] This is inconsistent with Kaulile's statement quoted above. The general opinion was that chiefs were more powerful than formerly, but the living Lwembe was dead.

'Lwembe listens to him'. 'If Kings messengers went [to Lubaga] without going through Mwakalikwa's country there would be much hunger. . . . Ono Mwamusi and Kyelele [Kings chiefs] conspired together and sent off men with bow to Lubaga, without reference to Mwakalikwa. They carried no bow. But when they got back disease killed many in the country, and they paid Mwakalikwa and did not do it again.'

It is true that an independent Nyakyusa chief can send an offering to Lubaga on his own; it is received by the priests of Lubaga and sacrificed in the grove, and such a sacrifice is held to be in some measure efficient, but drought or sickness in the country as a whole is often attributed to one or other of the participating groups failing to play their part. Moreover, such a failure is thought to be dangerous to the chief or priest who neglects his duties, as we shall see in the case of Kaulile.

The priests of Lubaga ministered to the Lwembe but they had also the right and duty of admonishing him if he did wrong, just as village headmen have the right and duty of admonishing their chief. If the Lwembe broke a taboo 'then Kimasile and the other priests would be very angry and reproach him for lurking and making hunger, and he would pay them a bull in recompense.' Even the 'divine king' was subject to the rule of law. All through the political organization and ritual patterns of the Nyakyusa there is this balance and reciprocity between chief and commoner and it is here that the Nyakyusa system differs radically from that described by Professor Frankfort for ancient Egypt.[1] The terrain had brought the gift of clustering to the Nyakyusa but it had not caused another, perhaps older, tradition of democratic leadership; instead, the two were welded in a partnership which, to the Nyakyusa, is so much part of the necessary order of the universe that they speak of commoner priests and headmen as 'wives' of the chiefs. The Kimasile is often is 'the wife' of the Lwembe.

In the grove at Lubaga sacrifices of black cattle and sheep and libations of milk-beer were offered by the Nyakyusa, while the Kings brought beer, bamboo beer, salt, the sacred drum-spears, and (this, that is, matters whose nature, Kaulile avowed, he did not know himself) The shrine of Lubaga, and the actions and actions connected with it, are miraculous and sacrilege, terrible even to the priests themselves who tremble when they enter the grove, and

[1] H. Frankfort, Kingship and the God (1948), pp. 2-6.

and its lady taken to Lubaga and added to the 'medicine for fertility' (mkate gwa (fuga) which was sprinkled throughout the country, starting at Lubaga, proceeding to the other sacred groves, and then to the ordinary homesteads. Thus the terror of the grave had objective roots in the fact of human sacrifice, but it is rather a fear of the unknown and mirrorlove than of death itself; a fight involving casualties was not terrible in the same way as the grave and the death of the sacred drum.

The Kings priests travelled 'the road of Lwembe', down the escarpment of the Livingstone mountains from Mwakalebwe's country and across Selya, beating their drum. They stopped to sleep at the house of Kaulile the priest, and poured a libation of beer at 'the places where Lwembe had rested': Isumba, a hill overlooking Kaulile's homestead, Kindi in Mwalipepo's country, and near the homestead of the priest Mnayuwa.[1] 'He (Lwembe) used to shout on Isumba, the little hill here, that no one would cut the tree on the hill,' said Kaulile. 'It was one of his resting places; he used to come here to tell my grandfather to go and get a cowrie Lubaga, and later to tell my father to do so. . . .' The beer poured at the base of an single tree (a variety of ficus) on Isumba, in the long grass in Kindi, and at the base of an single tree Mnayuwa's homestead. 'They pour (it) out here by the single sycamore the drum to say: "We have come", then the people of Mnayuwa hide their children—that's of old.' Besides the drum the Kings travelled with a hide horn[2] (blown in battle in Bulungu) and a second drum and horn were lodged in the hut of the Lwembe's chief wife. Before they start the Kings priests make an offering of millet flour and beer in one of their own groves,[3] and leave there overnight the beer and milk and horn which they will take to the Lwembe, 'that the also-Ngulubiro (g) may see them before they go to Lwembe'.

At Lubaga there were several places of prayer and offering: the tree planted at the installation of the last living Lwembe (ish-Ngulu 19- 19-?); the tree planted at the installation of a previous

[1] Probably guardians of the soul representative of a justice lineage to which priestly functions had been delegated.

[2] Mulilo's Kings, lineage hide in Nyakyusa, of plate 36.

[3] Kaulile's Kings chief, and was priest with Mulilo Mbeno in a sacrifice in one of their drums. The form of sacrifice is very similar to that among the Nyakyusa over that the sacrificing is placed in the hole of a tree. The priests had gone over early to the Kaulile (the chief chief) 'The sun is angry, a European comes to grind grain'.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Lwembe, and the grave of the first Lwembe himself, the last being the most sacred. In it stands a miraculous tree from which, the priests aver, sometimes comes sap like water, and sometimes blood. 'If it is watery there will be a plague of ulcers in the country—running sores—if it is blood there will be dysentery. But as soon as the hens are placed in the grave, or the black bull is killed, then the sick begin to recover.'

Godfrey Wilson attended three celebrations at Lubaga, and we heard of five others which occurred during our period of fieldwork. The ritual is esoteric, that is to say, only the representatives of Lwembe and his priests participate, and the details are not revealed to others, but its occurrence is widely known and discussed among older men.

The celebrations observed were modified by the fact that no one had been installed as Lwembe since the death of Mwakitinya (96) before 1914. The possible candidates whom the priests had wished to instal had refused—'they feared the grave'; the only one who was said to be willing was rejected on account of his character. The priests gave 'European times' as the reason for there being no Lwembe. 'When the country was new before you Europeans came' the elected candidate was compelled to accept office. On the death of Mwakitinya, the Kings priests ordered that his senior son Mwanjale I (77) should take his place, and when Mwanjale I died (three years after his father) his full brother Mwanjale II (78) succeeded. He took a leading part in the rituals observed, but was not an ancient Lwembe. The priests explained: 'We fear, thinking that if a chief is seized [and compelled to sit on the stool] he will complain to the Government and we shall be punished.' During the period of German rule they had been threatened with imprisonment if they continued the ritual . . . 'we feared and stole through the country by night' . . . . And there is still much secrecy about its removed celebration. Since the journey down 'the road of Lwembe' with the drum traditionally involved human sacrifice, and the Lwembe was smothered when ailing, there is an absolute incompatibility between a full celebration of the ritual and European administration.

The influence of the Christian minority is also considerable. The view of most Nyakyusa Christians with whom we discussed communal rituals is that they used to be efficient, but are so no longer, since men have been taught a better way of approaching God. 'God said: "They are outsiders but in their hearts they are

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

looking for me", and so if there was much heat he would send rain.' But this no longer happens.

At the same time both pagans and Christians tell a myth of how a European missionary, Rev. — Jacot (Mwaisumo), who visited the grove of Lufungo intending to remove the bees in the grove to demonstrate the falsehood of the ritual, was confounded by a miracle (*ifilai*).

Once the missionary Mwaisumo wished to go and see the grove of Lufungo. He was warned that if he entered he would fail because there were many marvels there, and the rain would catch him. He said: 'Oh, I shall go, nothing will happen.' So he went and entered the grove, and he found many bees, some standing up, some lying down, and some of them had 'eyes'. He asked one to take it away, then there was a crash of thunder, and he was afraid and fled. When he ran out of the grove the rain fell in torrents. It is said that he was so frightened he left his jacket behind. From that time people said that indeed there are miracles at Lufungo.

'European times' is given as the reason for sacrifices being less frequent and regular than formerly. The occasions were, and still are: any period of hunger or scarcity, such as the Kings regularly experience during the dry season, and the Nyakyusa also complain of at that time; any irregular misfortune such as a failure of the rains, a plague of locusts or an epidemic; and any prediction of hunger or disease by a prophet (*mwalili* or *mbungulisha*). But the chiefs are said to be more reluctant to provide the cattle for sacrifice than formerly, and too quickly influenced by the usual occurrence of hunger or by prophecy that famine is imminent. Nevertheless they still 'wear the earth' (*ukwambatsya ansi*) by sending a black cow to Lufungo when hunger proves.

According to Kasitili (66) and Mwamukundu (his fellow priest) no ritual could be performed in the grove of the free Lwembe when he had no living representative. Formerly, the Kinsmen in office and another priest penetrated alone, and there found a live sheep and left it to bleat until a python took it. 'It is Kyala, he turns himself into a python' (*Je Kyala: ipela ene*). Then Kasitili said *kyala* in the sense of 'the bird' and he was referring to Lwembe. According to another informant, when the bees in any priestland connected with Lufungo is troubled by *Kwalili* sheep in the grove enclosed in a stone wicker hut, and remain there until the python of the grove comes and kills him. The case was cited of a priest who had his captive for two weeks

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1959
F307 Nyonde F307
Nyakyusa

and come home 'very thin', but just when this happened was not clear.

We turn now to the account of the three sacrifices witnessed at Lufungo which illustrates (a) the occasions of celebration, (b) the procedure, and (c) the tensions between the participants. In the ritual described on pp. 55-6, Mwakilima (***) complained that most of the chiefs of Selya did not even integrate his ritual supremacy by sending cattle to kill at Lufungo, but Kasitile the priest ensured that Mwakilima himself, in his capacity as a chief, was slow to provide the cattle for sacrifice required by his own priests.

In July 1933, two Kings priests, Kilungulelo and Nyangiwe, came from the Kings chief Mwakalukwa to Lufungo, with an offering of beer. A bull, provided by Mwakilima (***) as chief of Lwombe's line, was then killed beside a tree planted at the 'coming out' of Mwakalukwa (38), the last Lwombe, on the site on which the house of his second wife, Kilungu, was built, and the meat was thrown into the old hearth grass close by. At the end of September the same two priests returned (each accompanied by a grandson) bringing bamboo beer and tea, and a hoe with which to buy a bull to sacrifice again, for the Kings were suffering hunger and a prophet in their country had gone into a trance and prophesied cold, disease, and hunger, and urged the chiefs to pray. No bull had brought the hunger, they said, but 'the diviner with a cow. The diviner says: "Formerly we ate much, now you do not kill cows for us, indeed we wish to eat . . . ." Therefore much hunger affects our country. It is on this account that we Kings come with a bull and beer. When the blood of the sacrifice sinks into the earth then the diviner are satisfied, and they also receive the meat from the upper feeding (*ipamaga*).'[1]

The initiative came from the Kings who were suffering most severely, but the Nyakyusa were also complaining of scarcity. The weather was very hot and dry and Mwakilima (*****) consulted to Kasitile (38) the priest, who had come up to Lufungo for the sacrifice: 'You have killed us with this sun.' He was referring to the unusually small yield of early maize and beans which had been scorched by the drought. Kasitile replied: 'No, all of us [are responsible], the sun has hated us.' Both men smiled.

Five days after the Kings reached Lufungo (28th September 1934) the sacrifice was offered up. The men concerned gathered in

[1] The quoted text of Mwakilima Wilson, Minutes of Chiefly meeting in Unyakyusa, p. 48.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1939
F307 Ngonde F307
Nyakyusa

[72] children, not the married ones with wives. Kimanda and I both
[73] have our children assisted now.'
[74]

This ritual was not complete because Mwanjala disliked the special act of remaining in the grove until a python licked him. The Kinga priests were continually nagging at the Nyakyusa for their failure to provide an acceptable Lwembe, but it is doubtful whether in 1933 Mwanjala II would have been acceptable to any of them since he was old and ailing. It was Mwakilima [111] that men wanted and he steadily refused to be installed.

[75] The next ritual observed at Lubaga was in March 1935. An ordinary commoner of Selya (not a priest) named Kinja had been prophesying repeatedly: 'I do not sleep, you will not eat the crops you lost if you do not go to Lubaga.' He was taken to his village headman and thence to the chief Mwalinja [112] who finally, two years after he had begun prophesying, agreed to find a bull. Word then came to Kantile [93] who notified the commoner priests of chief Mwangaga [114] and sent a message to the priests of Lubaga. Kantile [93], together with three other priests of Selya (Mwakikoma, Nyoma, Mwamakondo) and Godfrey Wilson, set off early one morning from Kantile's house to take the bull (brown streaked with black, called *ngombe ishiki*) to Lubaga. On the way they called in at Mwayuwa's house, where the Kinga stop on their journey to pour a libation of beer (cf. supra, p. 27). Kantile asked Mwayuwa, 'Shall the bull come?' and he replied, 'Yes, let it come into the house', as it was tied up inside while the party talked with Mwayuwa. He was sick and did not want to accompany them. The others pressed him, and at first he refused. Mwangaga Mwakikoma said: 'Very well, then, we are at your place, let the bull return and we will go another day', in other words, refusing to go without him. 'No, that is taboo,' said Kantile, 'since the bull has faced towards Lubaga and entered a house here it is taboo for it to turn back. The shrine will be angry.' And so Mwayuwa went with them.

On the way they passed a group of men having beer. One of them called out: 'Where are you going with that bull? Where are you off enjoying yourselves?' 'Eh, you fellows,' answered Kantile, 'do you ask where we are going? We visit where our fathers always did.' They embraced at once. 'Oh thank you, thank you,' they cried. 'Yes,' went on Kantile, 'do you call that work? Are you growing your own food? No, you lie still and we without effort. It is we who must somehow for you' (implying

Ukraine (E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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[facing p. 34]

Williams, E.J. (1924-1955) 1959
FMU Ngundu FMU
Nyakyusa

643 very oldest fled from his approach. Even in speech fearful circumlocutions were used to refer to his journeying—'The country is on the move'—'the great hill is moving'—'the mystery is coming'. It was taboo both for the old men who stayed to see him, and for those who crowed the social enclosure, even to greet him in the usual way. Falling down and clapping the hands was the only greeting for the Kyungu.

From the wives of the Kyungu also men fled in terror, fearing lest they be compromised and thrown over the cliff of Mbande, and this both added to the atmosphere of terror which surrounded him and was an expression of it.

Of the effects of personal relationships upon public events we heard much less in Ngundu than in Selya, for we lived there for a much shorter period, but there were indications that, as in Selya, public misfortune was traditionally attributed to quarrels between the nobles of Mbande and within the family of the
[75] Kyungu. One fearful drought was thought to have been caused by the exile of Kyungu's son, Mwalumungulu,[3] and men tell how the rain came down in torrents on his return. The nobles also asserted their power of calling on the shades of the Kyungu to
[76] punish him when he did wrong, and rebuking him ever been calling him, 'It was we who caused you to be ill, don't do it again'. Since he was killed by his nobles it he really fell ill their power over him was incomplete.

(d) PULKYULE

718 Pul(Kyule is a cave at the north-east corner of Lake Nyasa
719 where sacrifices are made to the lake, Kyule (c). It is on the border between Nyakyusa, Ngonde, and Kinga country; the chiefs are Nyakyusa, but of Kinga extraction,[4] while many of the commoners are Ngonde. Nyakyusa is generally spoken as the first language, Ngonde as the second, and Nyakyusa, Kinga, and Ngonde all sacrifice to Kyule. As indicated in the myth already quoted (vide supra, p. 6) the location of the shrine has changed from one cave to another; according to one version, Kyule was driven out by Kaingwana; according to another, 'the Lake rose and moved and destroyed all the gens in the cave and the cave was heard in the mountains by the Kinga' and after that Kyule moved.

● 77) The ritual differs from that at Lubaga and Mbande in that

[3] Godfrey Wilson, The Constitution of Ngonde, p. 46.
[4] They are one of the lineage of Lwangale.

Kyala has no living representative—in the myth he had no descendants—but only a priest. However, the priest is sometimes referred to as 'Kyala' as were the early missionaries who preached about Kyala.[1] The present priest (1956) is a young man who, by his own account, would be a Christian were it not for his public responsibility in providing food for the country. His grandfather, Mwokinyam, was a Kui who came as an immigrant doctor from Bulugila to Kui country to the south, and was the first of his family to hold office at PulKyala. Before that the chief of the line of Mwongum themselves celebrated the ritual. According to Mwongum's descendant, the present chief Mwondula, 'We planted food and the crops failed, but when "the owner of food" (Mwokinyam) came with many medicines it grew, there was much food in the homesteads, hence we said: "Kyala has indeed loved this man, let us give him the duty of sacrificing", so the chiefs gave him cattle of his own and said: "Let the ritual come out of our bodies and go to Mwokinyam."[2] It was Mwokinyam who (according to his grandson) introduced a variety of crops—beans, maize, sorghum and groundnuts—to the people of Bumbi; before that they grew only bananas and millets,[3] so the myth of the hero who brought benefits is linked to the new line of priests. But there is no tradition that the priest of Mwongum's line was once a 'divine king' like the Lwembe and the Kyungu.

Those who sacrifice at PulKyala are the local chiefs (descendants of Mwongum), the Kingo chief Mwebulubwa and Kyala (to whom Mwongum was related), and various chiefs of the Nyakyusa plain as far west as Mwondula (1956) near Mwaya. The Kingo priests bring bamboo beer, hens, sheep, and occasionally goats or cattle; the local people offer white beds, flour, cattle, and, traditionally, pots, which are produced in quantity near by, and which were being sold at the market at Bumbi when the Europeans first arrived in the country.[4] The Nyakyusa of the plain send black (or black and white) cattle and sheep. According to the Kingo priests they themselves offer black animals to Ba-Kingo when they want rain—black clouds—and white animals when they want sun and a clear sky. At Lubaga only black animals are offered, but at PulKyala white beds and black, or white (or

[1] O. Dahlblom, *Ein Bantu-Gott am Nyassa-See*, p. 27.
[2] Mwondula's mother is Kingo, but then it is connected with Mwondula (matrilineal).
[3] Joseph Thomson, *To the Central African Lakes and Back* (1881), v. 1, pp. 280–[illegible]. The statements (by A. Mwondula) are therefore such changes, as not to give, on the face of the case, O. Dahlblom, *op. cit.*, p. 30n.

St Wilson B-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F907 Ngonde F907
Nyakyusa

[772] [773] [774] black and white) animals die killed, with the same symbolism as in Bulungu.[1] 'We kill a white sheep in the dry season that the sun may shine—if we killed a black sheep in summer the wet season would last all the year.'

The Kings pray for fertility of the fields, that illness may pass, that they 'may sleep at home'; the local people[2] for fertility of the fields and that the pots they make (and on the sale of which they largely depend) may not crack in the firing. The more distant chieftains of the Nyakyusa plain sacrifice only in drought or plague—the last sacrifice remembered was during a plague of locusts about 1913, but the Kings shot Kyelela and a cow in Fulikwale in July 1931.

[775] [776] Like the grove of Lubaga, Kyela's cave is fearful. There is a story of two men who took a length of cowpat from near it to do up their canoe, and when they got home both went mad. Geoffrey Wilson's guide, a young Christian, refused to enter the cave on the grounds that his pagan half-brother had once entered and taken away a pendant and 'when he got home he went mad'.

[777] [778]

[1] Normally appears to have been sacrificed on this point, as it, as goats.

[2] The people are primarily Ngoni, but neighbouring Nyakyusa have taken to the harvest rites.

[illegible] CONCEPTUAL ASPECTS OF THE SYSTEMS

[illegible] separate allegiance sometimes were through the ritual because he might have be required as a chief, and the son of a conquered chief who had retained limited authority over a small area might be permitted to 'come out' with his senior brothers also. The common pattern, then, was for two sons to 'come out' as principals, but for a variety of reasons one or more 'younger brothers' might join them.

In Ngonde, as opposed to BaWenkyusa, several brothers normally were through the ritual as principals and the reason given to me that power should be distributed. They would say, as were told, 'If we bring out only two they will be beautiful and [illegible] their people, let them be many therefore, then, if a man has a quarrel with his chief, he can flee to another ....' In BaWenkyusa any tendency to secessory in a chief was effectively curbed by his village headmen; but it is possible that headmen never had as much power in Ngonde as they did in BaWenkyusa.

An analysis of the genealogies of Nyakyusa chiefs shows that very often one half-brother has power to the other, but occasionally several brothers (e.g. seven sons of Mwaipopo [illegible]) get independent chiefdoms, and a junior brother (e.g. Mwakyusa [illegible]) might attract a larger following of men than his seniors. Mwakyusa led his men from the hills to the more fertile plain and drove out the Kyungu of Ngonde from the lake-shore north of the Songwe river.

The 'coming out' was traditionally the occasion when authority was handed over by the older generation to the younger. The old chief retired and he was expected to die shortly. In Nyakyusa theory he died because his men no longer loved him: 'A chief did not live long after the "coming out" of his sons; he died because there was war and people would complain: "He is too old, when we fight we are beaten, he had better die, perhaps the heir will help us." He died of the "breath of men".' But, as will be shown, his headmen had the duty of smothering a chief who seemed likely to die, and they were much more ready to do this after the 'coming out' of his sons than before. It was right that the sons should come out before their father's death, but not right that the period of emergency should be extended, for the division of authority between old and young was uneasy. When the old chief did die his headmen became the private (*ubwapopo*) responsible for the mortuary in his grave, and the young men were solely responsible for the defence of the country and the administration of justice.

Sr Wilson G-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

[64] [65] [66] naturally and was buried dead, and no human was buried with him, yet they buried a live cow with him in imitation of the custom of the senior, because the junior was also a chief, and the cow was like a person. And now in European times the ruling chiefs are buried with a cow, not with a man, in imitation of the custom of the *junior*; but still they are buried at night.

Kasitile denied that chiefs were buried before death, but he admitted that they were smothered.

[70] When the chief was very ill we priests came, Njobokwa and Ngolye, and I. We took his nails and his hair, we tore them off while he was still alive, he started up and we hid ourselves that he should not see us. Then we attended to him.

Here he made a gesture of stopping up the nostrils. That is, they hastened his death as soon as the nails and hair had been stripped off.

And we dug the grave; we buried him by night, when he had died, when he had gone, with a live cow; we did this at night for it was taboo for people to see the burial of a senior chief. We killed a cow in the sacred grove and we ate it, we the priests, before people heard that he had died. The chief Mwakagile (71) when his death was approaching said: 'My body is sick.' After waiting two days, the village headmen said, 'This illness has delivered us', and they tore off his nails—yes, [72] before he died. If they had waited until after his death, would not the *ifisopo*, the power of chieftainship, have passed away? But they did not smother him, he just died. . . . His nails and hair were put into a little [73] [74] [75] [76] [77] [78] [79] [80] [81] [82] [83] [84] [85] [86] [87] [88] [89] [90] [91] [92] [93] [94] [95] [96] [97] [98] [99] [100] [101] [102] [103] [104] [105] [106] [107] [108] [109] [110] [111] [112]

F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

683 As we have seen, the chief's fearsome medicine *ipyfiele* is
778 thought to be very dangerous, and too much in the tails may cause
622 them 'to fly about throttling men and cattle', but a chief is never
[754] accused of working witchcraft; it is inconceivable to the Nyakyusa
that he could be. If the tails have got out of hand they are treated
[789] by a doctor 'to close them up'; no one suggests that the chief should
get rid of them. It is commoners, 'black people', who are witches
—cannibals, the eaters of raw flesh—as opposed to chiefs who,
since the dawn of history, have killed cattle for meat and cooked
their food like civilized men. But the distinction does not extend
very far; junior kinsmen of the chief are 'commoners' and may
well be accused of practising witchcraft.

There was a delicate balance of power in the Nyakyusa con-
[182] stitution between hereditary chief and commoner headmen and
the belief in the power of medicines and of witchcraft was an
integral part of it. The chief provided fruitfulness by the power of
his own body and his medicines; all men depended upon him for
their well-being—food, cattle, children, success in war; but he in
his turn depended upon the goodwill of his men led by their
village headmen; without it he shivered and fell ill, only to be
buried by them 'with the breath still in his body' lest the power of
growth disappear with his breathless corpse.

Something of the quality of this mutual dependence and fear
is conveyed in Kasitile's account of his own illness quoted in
Chapter VIII.

(c) THE NECESSITY FOR HARMONY

182 The welfare of the chiefdom is thought to depend upon
643 harmony between the chief and his village headmen and priests,
622 and also between the chief and his kinsmen. Any friction between
793 them may result in public misfortune as well as sickness to the
individual at fault. The quarrel of Kasitile, the priest, first with
[753] the Kinga priests, and then with the commoner priests of Mwai-
[821] popo's chiefdom was believed to affect the crops and the weather,
as well as Kasitile's own health (*vide infra*, pp. 124-41), and
[688] Mwaipopo's failure to tell Kasitile formally of the death of their
kinsman led to rain which spoiled the funeral dance. A quarrel
between the lineages of two chiefs which should have sacrificed
643 together was said to have been followed by a very poor millet
602 crop (*vide infra*, pp. 79-80, 118, 156).
578 How the personal relationship of a chief with his kinsmen is

Wilson E.S (1924-1955) 1959
FMU Ngonde FMU
Nyakyusa

for planting, but now all the fields are muddy, we can neither hoe nor plant.' Five days ago there was no rain but herons, and people did not plant for fear lest the herons should eat the rice and rains not ensue. Kimondo tells me: 'Kyala is very angry. . . . Mwandisi (101), the priest-chief, wants to pray to put things right, he has sent Mwalulilowaya to ask Mwakisale (170, the ruling chief) for a cow. Mwalulilowaya and Mwakisale went and the chief agreed saying: "I have not got one now, but I will look for one!" Then Mwalulilowaya sent me (Kimondo) to fetch it, but the chief refused saying: "I am busy now." Then Mwandisi (101), who is blind and infirm, went himself, but still there is no cow.'

The priests who minister to dead chiefs, like the priests of Lofungu, are of different types. The senior village headmen of a dead chief are responsible for conducting sacrifices at his grove in co-operation with his heir, and when a headman dies his office is taken over by his heir. Where a grove is much honoured this continues for generations and the heirs of one of the village headmen become hereditary keepers of the grove, each incumbent of the office assuming his name. Secondly, there are chiefs of a junior line, who become hereditary priests on whom the ruling chiefs depend for their prayers, but these priest-chiefs do not actually attend the sacrifices; the celebration is delegated to commoner priests and junior kinsmen. Mwandisi (101) mentioned above, Kasitile (88) and Nsambo (90) were all priest-chiefs of this sort. Kasitile prayed at his own home, blowing out water before any celebration in Mwaipope's country, and he was given the chine of any animal sacrificed on behalf of the country. If this were not done 'all the cattle in the country would die . . . it is the most important part of the meat'. The commoner priests who conducted the ritual always shared the head of the sacrificial beast and the breast went to the chief. With priest-chiefs, as with commoner chiefs, the name of the first incumbent of the office (or an early and famous incumbent) may become a hereditary title, e.g. three generations of priests in Selya have been known as *Kasitile*.

The essential elements in the ritual are: the sacrifice of a black bull or cow in the grove; the offering up of the blood and pieces of the sacred meat from the forelegs, together with the beer, on the earth close to a sacred stone and near a sacred tree; an invocation calling on the shades to come and feast, and petitions for rain, fertility, and health. One piece of meat is thrown down for

[76-4] I kept the chief for two nights in my house. The shades came to me—
[76-5] they left practically nothing. Had I not been ill I would have asked you to come and see since you say they do not eat. . . . The shades come and see that we are celebrating the ritual.

[77-1] The whole ritual was esoteric. Only the chief with eight of his
[77-2] agnatic kinsmen, four of his young sons (but not his grown-up
[77-3] heir or young grandson), and four priests participated, and we two anthropologists were permitted to look on. Peeping small
[77-4] boys were chased off. The shades were addressed in a conventional tone and, except during the invocation, the priests and
[78-1] chiefs chatted to one another, but arguments and raised voices were taboo. The boys who are the most were told:

[78-2] Sir, we your fathers are sacrificing, we are making plenty of food. Follow the custom of your fathers when it is your turn to sacrifice. Learn how to do it.

The same evening Kasitilo prayed at his tree again. He explained:

I would not usually pray at all tonight, it is finished. Mwaipopo and I prayed yesterday, today the ritual is finished, but that boy of mine (his heir, 115) does not visit me, he's not been to see me and he did not tell me that he was going to the ritual. . . . I am going to pray to tell my fathers not to be exacted, to tell them I am not angry, to tell them to send only a little rain, not a lot, to tell them to accept the sacrifice.

He went to the same place, and chewed the root of 'blessed grass' and blew out water as before. He prayed to about thirty persons, especially to Mwamalaba (8), his elder brother) and Mwakanjaki (6), his father), and also to Mwakagile (35), Mwaijenga (8a), Mwaipopo (8c), Mwakabule (117), Mwamwila (8d), Mwalunga (8f), Mwakipanile (118), Mwakapala (7), Lyambile (10), Mwalubanga (38), Mwamukinga (45), Mwalinja (147?), Mwainende (6c), and Kyala (1). No mention was made of the Lufanga chiefs this time, or of sons of Mwaipopo (11) or of 'Jesus'.

You have received your child Mwakagile (118, identified with his grandfather 35), Mwaijenga (8a), you have received the chief, this boy of mine (115) is quarrelling with me, do not be upset, he is a fool, a fool, but let him be . . . go and call your brothers to eat, you Mwaijenga (8a), you Mwaipopo (115), and all your younger brothers; call Mwakagile (35) and Mwakanjaki (6) . . . Mwalubanga (38) go to eat with your younger brother, let us find food, millet, bananas, chickens, milk . . . let there be a little rain only, not too much . . . people believe

that I can speak, that when I speak food comes tomorrow; he is in us.

These prices call for comment here. First, it will be noted that if the crops failed Kaitile had a scapegoat in his hair who was quarrelling with him. The sacrifice was performed correctly but a quarrel between any of the leading actors could destroy its efficacy, and Kaitile made it clear that he was being very forbearing with a difficult 'son'. 249 FF2.

Secondly, a great many names were mentioned in the prayers, but they were not mentioned in any discernible order. This is obvious if the prayers are compared with the genealogy facing p. 9 And since Kaitile was a famous priest, acknowledged to be an expert in ritual and tradition we must conclude that the order was not thought important: all that was required was to mention the names of dead members of the lineage, including even one (Mwakalole 111) who was junior both to Mwaipopo and Kaitile who were sacrificing. [91]

Thirdly, what did Kaitile imply by his reference to the moon? (p. 74). We omitted to ask Kaitile himself, but a number of informants insisted that there is no necessary connexion between the celebration of a ritual and the phases of the moon. However, rain is expected with the waxing moon, therefore rituals which are intended to produce rain are usually performed with the waxing moon, and the sacrifice to Mwaijonga in which sun and warmth were sought, was performed with the waxing moon. This may or may not be what Kaitile had in mind. 249 FF2 FF2

Everyone agreed afterwards that the rituals had been effective for the weather grew slightly warmer. Before the sacrifice on Lufuga on 7th July, the temperature was 61° F. at noon, but from the 9th onward the cloud cleared, and by the 14th the noon temperature was 68° F. Whether or not the Kings priests living high on their mountains with a view down the Lake whence storms come are weatherwise, and time their visits carefully, we do not know. Certainly any change in the weather after a celebration is interpreted as a direct answer to prayer. [72]

(c) SACRIFICE TO MWAKIMAMBWE

A month later a sacrifice was made to Mwaijonga's great-great-grandfather Mwakimambwe (91) in the grove Mlyunga. The chief Mwaipopo was not concerned this time, but the senior line of Mwalinga (147) and a junior line who had traditionally the responsibility of providing cows for celebrations at Mlyunga. 249 FF2

[illegible] CONSERVED SUPPLY OF THE [illegible]

[illegible] Mwalikuru, the hereditary priest of Mlowoga, had been pressing the chiefs to sacrifice for some time. He had sent messengers in March, April, May, and again in July, saying: 'Do Mlowoga things have gone back, it is bad, we hunger kills?' At last, in August, Mwalikuju agreed to provide a cow if Mwalonde of the junior line finally refused. Mwalikuru, the priest of the grove, explained:

[78] We went to Mwalonde (so, identified with his grandfather G.) and asked him to sacrifice. He said: 'No, I am not coming; do the work down at Mlowoga yourselves.' We said: 'Why do you refuse to come, to return a cow? Our grandfathers gave you a cow, why don't you return it? They gave you cows on the understanding that you would bring them back, one by one, and kill them in the sacred grove here. Why do you refuse to return them?' It has always been the custom for the junior brothers to find cows for sacrifice. Their seniors give them wealth and appoint them priests to bring cattle to the sacred grove. [77] But in Ilavapati lands they refuse to come, each man kills at his own place. . . . I must go and tell Kasitile (M) and also Kilindu, so rather his son—the latter refuses to come he had a lawsuit with Kasitile . . . . Kilindu used to kill the cow, then Kasitile said Mshali should kill the cow, but now Mshali has refused to come so I go to fetch Kilindu (the younger). Mshali was a chief who ate the meat. . . . Mwalonde (G.) used to send the cow to him and Mwalonde to bring to Mlowoga . . . . so he now refuses to send the cow they say: 'What should we bring?' and have refused to come here.

[132] There had been another spell of cold weather and the temperature on the night of 6th August was down to 39° F., but fine weather was visibly approaching from the Lake. On the 9th the ritual was to have been held, but as everyone had been formally summoned and it was put off to the 10th.

[78] Only eight men came, Mwalikuru I, the priest of the grove, and his younger brother Mwalikuru II, two other priests (Nyama and Mwalumbula) and Mwakyonde (off), younger brother of Mwalikuju the chief who provided the cow, and three other young men of the chief's lineage. One of the young chiefs was [29] wearing a red cloth and was scolded by Mwakyonde for doing so: 'It's taboo in the sacred grove.' 'Why?' 'Because it's like a rainbow.'* And he took it off.

The mother of Nyama brought a bundle of saplings for building the hut for the shade, and Kimile, the senior wife of Mwalikuju the

* The rainbow is a symbol of misfortune, cf. p. 6n.

priests to sacrifice to his father and elder brother so that fertility may return and men may not meet pestilence, but he does nothing.

A conversation between Kaulile and Mwanyuo, his fellow priest (*vide* p. 76), was also instructive on this point:

> The soil has changed, we are not like those of old, we are different. Mwakisunilwe (30) had power; when he prayed the thunder crashed and rain fell in torrents. In the old days when the Kings came they came with drums and we all feared them, what they said was done—they did not have to say much—just a few words and it was done. But now they spend all their time explaining things and talking and we do not do anything. . . .
>
> Mwanyuo: I have seen people time and again to Mwajisale (?) for a cow, but he just insults us. . . . I have asked Mwalugo (147) about sacrificing. . . .
>
> Kaulile: What did he say?
>
> Mwanyuo: I don't know . . . If he is wise . . .
>
> Kaulile (frowning in): Well, you had better admit that the chiefs do not respect you—the chiefs say: 'It is European times now.'
>
> G.M.: What do they fear? The Government does not affect the ritual, does it?
>
> Kaulile: They are unwilling to part with the cows which I take for sacrifice, they do not like to lose their cows. In the old days they feared, and when we said: 'We do not clapp, celebrate in the grave', they agreed quickly, for they feared that we, their sons, would move to another chiefdom.

(5) THE FIRST FRUITS

The communal ritual of the first fruits is celebrated among the Nyakyusa as in Ngonde,[1] but after the millet harvest a little grain is collected from every homestead and later brewed into beer which is offered to the shades of the chief. In Mwaipape's country the offerings of millet were collected by the priest, Ngulya, who, with his colleagues Kimapia and Nyhakuma, took it to Kalinga, senior widow of the late chief (119). She was custodian of a sacred pot inherited by the chief from his predecessors, in which the offerings of millet are stored, and this is the pot which, according to some informants, also contained the power of growth—the nails and hair torn from the dead chief (*vide supra*, pp. 64-5). When the new crop was reaped Kalinga almost emptied the pot, refilled it with the fresh grain, and brewed beer with the old. There had once been a sacred winnowing basket used in preparing the beer, but

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, p. 40.

Nyakyusa, who are still buried in the grave of a dead chief such as Mwalimwenbwe (91), for an indefinite number of generations, and the heirs of his senior village headmen serve as his priests, taking the name of the first holder of the office. Most of the priests of Lubaga hold perpetual titles of this sort. The conception of the separation rite is familiar enough in the western tradition, but European observers in Africa are sometimes confused by the use of a personal name and the almost complete identification of such holder with his predecessor, as well as by the practice of treating certain kinship relationships as if they were offices.

Succession was determined among the Nyakyusa by association with a chief. There was no name for those who 'came out' together other than that of their chief, who was the focus of the ritual. On the other hand, however, a 'coming out' concerned a whole generation, and it could not be held out of season. If the heir died he was replaced by a brother, as were Mwaipopo I (103) and Mwankuge I (131). If a chief had no male heir of the right age in his senior house his daughter might represent an heir. For example, at the coming out of the sons of Mwaijonga, it was a girl Ijonga (114) who performed the leading part in the ritual which fell due before the birth of Mwaipopo I (103). When Mwaipopo I was born and grew up he succeeded office, but he died young and was replaced by his younger brother without a further celebration. Because the 'coming out' was thus linked to the maturity of a whole generation we have felt some confidence in assigning approximate dates to the arrival of the heroes. The period between each 'coming out' we estimate at thirty to thirty-five years, though the higher figure is probably more nearly correct. There must in fact have been some flexibility in the timing of the 'coming out' to account for the differences in the number of generations of ruling chiefs in different segments of the lineage. Some of the differences may be due to errors (e.g. it is possible that 70 is an elder brother not the father of 98, and that a generation has been omitted between Mwakupele (94) and Mwakage (75), but even where there is little possibility of error the number of generations does not always tally.

In theory a man always belongs to the generation succeeding that of his father, irrespective of his age, provided he has not inherited from a man of the previous generation and taken his status, but in practice, since men often have sons of very different

[673] [674] [675] [676] [677] [678] [679] [680] [681] [682] [683] [684] [685] [686] [687] [688] [689] [690] [691] [692] [693] [694] [695] [696] [697] [698] [699] [700] [701] [702] [703] [704] [705] [706] [707] [708] [709] [710] [711] [712]

[illegible] makes a great deal of the fact that at the 'throwing [illegible] of the rubbish' the village headmen are most use.

[illegible] . . . we throw away the ashes and charcoal beside . . . then [illegible] to drive away the shades who warm themselves over the hearth in [illegible] houses; they bring us sickness, for them warm themselves over [illegible] in the long grass! Also in the long grass there are killed snakes, [illegible] the priests say it was: we saw men there doing that there in the [illegible] long grass; we went by day with drums, people from all the house[illegible], a morning multitude . . . then we came home . . . the priests [illegible] with their wives, they throw away their loin-cloths, they [illegible] off morsels of meat and we throw raw. Because the priests are [illegible] it is they who are raw meat before we chick-eaters, the priests [illegible] witches. . . . The witches and shades gather and bring sickness [illegible], we kill a cow in the grass, we drive them away. We, they do [illegible] eat raw meat in the grass, they cook it. But at the capital of the [illegible] has killed a cow for men to eat the priests eat meat raw. We have [illegible] them. I, Mwanilai, have seen Mwanjale and Kalumbu the senior [illegible] headmen eating raw meat at my place and my wives have seen [illegible] also.

'Yes', said one of his wives, 'we saw them and we ran away [illegible]: "Well! Funny doing is speaking!"' Mwanilai continued:

[illegible] senior village headmen are witches, children of those who are raw [illegible] long ago. Some village headmen only cook to eat a cow we have [illegible], but some go to eat a person; those are the witches who eat raw [illegible]

[illegible] function of a chief is to feed his men on beef, and in doing so [illegible] placates the witches who are consumers and who, like their [illegible], prefer their meat raw. If they do not get beef then the [illegible] witches eat men.[1]

(c) [illegible]

The prayer and 'clearing out of the rubbish', traditionally [illegible] followed before an approaching epidemic, was described by an [illegible] Christian, Filemba. It illustrates very clearly the com[illegible] of practical prevention—isolation—and magical pre[illegible], and also the idea that sickness was brought into the [illegible] by witches.

[illegible] the chief had heard that smallpox was coming, or dysentery, he [illegible], 'Let us pray'. Before my baptism I saw it, in the country of the

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. [illegible].

N-Wilson, D.-S. [1936-1992] 1959
[illegible] Ngwale [illegible]
Nyakyusa

967
W2
[illegible]

[illegible]

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967

[illegible] DISCUSSION WITH PERSONS

[Facing p. 118]

CHAPTER IX

LASITTLE THE PRIEST

We have seen how the description of rituals to a personal disease, an account of the illness of Kasitile (90), the leading priest of Selya, the issues suggested for it, and the rituals performed. We saw shown: (i) the power of village headmen over chiefs in general, more particularly the power of the commoner priests (village headmen of the previous generation) over hereditary priests of the chief's lineage; (ii) the prominent linking of misfortune with sin in both public and private life; (iii) the function of divination in choosing between possible causes of disease; (iv) the influence of Christian and Muslim teaching and Western medical science on a conservative who goes so far as to invite a Muslim to cut the throat of the sacrificial animal and speaks of running Christian in his old age; and (v) the very great importance attached to 'speaking out' (ahunyo) and not leaving anger to smoulder unvented. Beer is necessary for such a ritual 'speaking out' and the participants are pressed to drink deep, for in wine [p. 73] [p. 73] [p. 73]

[752] [753] [754] [755] [756] [757] [758] [759] [760] [761] [762] [763]

THE DESCENT, ROYALS OF THE KINGDOM

Kwanaw
Nawe
Nawe
A Lusaw
} Children consulted by Kasitile

Nawe a kinsman of Kasitile

It will be remembered that, in accordance with the custom of delegating ritual functions to a junior line, Kasitile's grandfather (ga) had been appointed rain-maker and priest responsible for receiving the Kings when they came to sacrifice at Lufingo. Kasitile thus held an important public office. He was living on the plain (where he had inherited the estate of his father's younger brother) when his own elder brother (fb) died and he came up onto Selya to bury him and succeed to his position. But he failed to notify the Kings priests of his brother's death and they were very angry, and told him he would die if he stayed in the homestead, so he fled back to the plain. There he fell ill, and he was carried back to Selya to be treated by the visiting Kings priests, who told him he was sick 'because he came to the plain in a hurry and they had not given him medicine'. The idea here is that the heir to a chief or priest must ingestion the power that was in his father's body by drinking medicines: Kasitile was 'losing the *ifingile* of his father' by not drinking medicines'. Now *ifingile* implies both the medicines of chieftainship and the power which they create in the body of a man.

So Kasitile was treated and we quote his own account of what happened:

> The Kings came to cook medicine by the tree where I pray—it is where the cattle have of my elder brother was. They put some medicine for Jane [his senior wife] and me in beer . . . and we drank together . . . and they boiled medicines in a pot and told us both to wash with the infusion every day for two months. I found a goat and called the priests Ngulya, Njelukuma, and Kimagwa and . . . they and the Kings priests ate the meat together, and they told me to stay for two months and return to the plain again, and so I did. Then the Kings sent for me to come back and I've come up to live. I found a cow, and called the priests and killed it at the sacred grove, Kinyangwa, and all the people ate the meat. Then the Kings told me to move to my father's old homestead, and I did so this very year.

Before we arrived, therefore, Kasitile had been in conflict with his fellow priests, and he had been very ill, and attributed his

illness to neglect of his duty to the Kings. All the time we were [753]
in Ruthyakyusa he was ailing—unwilling to suffer from tuber- [754]
culosis—and one wrongdoing after another was suggested as the [755]
cause of his illness.

His case is intelligible only in terms of the conception of 'the
breath of man', that is, a power akin to witchcraft thought to be [756]
legitimately exercised by village headmen and others to punish
wrongdoers, but which is referred to by the victims as 'witchcraft'.
This has been discussed at length elsewhere.[1]

On 2nd July 1935, Kamtunda had left his own house and was [757]
living with a friend in a neighbouring village. His doctor, Mwa- [758]
lyonde, said that he was being 'thwarted by the witches' and had
invited him to come and swallow himself (*ukwipitikaya*) in the
tranquillity of a village of another chiefdom in which there were
many people with spiritual power (*ubumanga*) so that 'the witches'
could not get at him. This is a common precaution in case of
illness, for witches are thought not to have power ordinarily
outside their own village and never beyond the chiefdom.[2]

The cause of the illness was explained as follows: Kamtunda had [759]
quarrelled with Kimagoro, the commoner priest, and others of the [760]
principal men of the country, because he had found them drinking
the sacred beer (*ubwikwa*), brewed after the millet harvest (see
pp. 84-5) without telling him, or sending him the pot
which was his due. They invited him to drink, but he refused and
they each sent him 1s. to beg pardon. Kamtunda bought beer with
one of the shillings and called the senior commoner priest,
Ngulye, and his fellows to drink saying, 'I was angry, friends, you
"overstepped" me' (*i.e.* they had ignored his rights). He himself [689]
should have brewed when he confirmed his anger, and slaughtered
a calf or prepared food for them as well, but he had bought only
one shilling's worth of beer and provided nothing himself. Then,
when they had drunk, Kamtunda fell ill. Hence it was said that the
commoner priests were angry and 'ate' (*i.e.* bewitched) him.
Kamtunda's own comment was: 'The fault lies with the young
priests (Ngulye, a young man, had inherited his father's position),
they are useless as priests . . . I was not told of that ritual beer, yet
the medicine comes from me, from this home where I keep it.
They should have come to me to get it and put it with the millet
in the holy pot. They drank the beer without medicine. It is they [761]
who have brought cold and hunger on the country. I think the [762]

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 91-111, 1951. [2] *op. cit.*, pp. 100-3.

visible is that Mwalimpa (the chief [illegible]) is getting old. . . .' Here Kaitile suggested two different causes for the scarcity in the country: (a) the negligence of the priests, and (b) the senility of the chief. In the old days Mwalimpa would have been smothered, as Angoulvenko explained (cf. supra, p. 6).

On the 9th, Kaitile, much troubled by his cough at night, proposed a great dance for the return of the missionary nurse to Kalombo hospital. 'She is killing us by her absence, the black people don't know anything about these things, only the Europeans. Why, I went there and the dresser just gave me an injection without taking my temperature—no European ever does that.'

The following day he set off his sons with [illegible], to inquire about his case from a diviner. The diviner said: 'The wives in his home are gossiping to other people about their husband. People want the husband's body to be light. It is not Jane, because she is his favourite, but the others.' Kaitile said:

> I don't do anything, I said 'Let's leave it.' I am still in Bunda [the village to which he moved for safety]. Mwalimpa is giving me medicine for my disease. It drives out the cold which is in my body. Yes, the cold is the breath of the witches coming to throttle me—it's due to my wives' gossip. But it started as a quarrel with other people [non-relatives] first. One day I went to drink beer in Bujego and that night I fell sick; that is how it began. Men are complaining because I, a chief, a senior, do not cook food for them. They throttle me on that account. They say: 'Let us see whether he is really a chief, a senior!' But others say: 'He has done no wrong.' Yes, the sickness took me on the way home from the beer. Perhaps Kyala asked: 'What has he done?' and found I had done no wrong. If there had not been a Kyala who saves us I would have been dead.
>
> When I consulted a diviner he struck a spear and looked along it, then he said: 'The disease now is from his wives—the earlier attack was from men, but this one is from his wives. When they gather at the hearth they say: "Come hither, we see him where he sleeps."'

'Are the wives witches?' we asked.
Kaitile replied:

> Yes. They say: 'There is a favourite, we are not beloved.' If a man's wives are good the witches can get into the house, but their cold breath dissipates quickly; you are given medicine and recover quickly; but if the wives are bad they gather together the medicine and pass it down, so that it is powerless. One of my wives is very bad, her lineage is bad, it is she who calls to her aid the heavy ones, the witches. The

[illegible] closely inclined to the shades as it had before the divination, but as before the certain conviction was lacking.

[illegible]

Four days later (1924/27) Kantile came to Gana in Gisali village to consult the oracle again. 'In that of Nadi were wrong'. He told us afterwards 'The oracle supported the feeling of Gbaskiwe's. It said: "Your kinsman who is dead is angry; he says, "Why did you not sacrifice the ritual? I am tired of the hair (Fgaski says mad), And what did you offer your father after cutting that tree?"' Here we another cause of Kantile's illness is suggested—the neglect of the death ritual of a kinsman. The implication is that the ritual omissions have not yet performed the consulting rite of shaving which makes it possible for the deceased to join his fathers. The hair which the mourners shave off is called 'the hair of the corpse'.

Question: What are you going to do then?

Answer: I shall charge the young man, son of my dead kinsman, with neglect, and tell him to celebrate the ritual that the shades which have bound me may go out of my body.

Question: And the bail?

Answer: If I can find one I shall tell it.

Question: Who will be there?

Answer: The priests will be there, Sigaiyo, Kinagoro, Ojelabum, Mwalubum and Mwakumbalu,[1] and also Mwaigoga (?) himself. Were I a commoner I should kill alone with my younger brothers, for since I am a public personage (all chuckle) the village headmen are there. (To Mwakumbalu, the clerk.) It is good at your home in the hills; how things are bad.

Question: But they also have shades?

Answer: But they are not important. Look you, I just cut a tree and they have stood on and dwell in my body. Are there sacred groves in the hills? Do men visit them? There in the hills rituals have died; the puberty ritual and the rituals of the groves are celebrated very little.

On 27th March Kantile looked in to say that he was going to consult a visiting Sangu doctor 'from very far off' about his cough, but G.W. had better not come lest his presence spoil the divination. Kantile came again after the consultation, full of enthusiasm. 'What a doctor! That is a doctor indeed! That is a diviner! He took an ant and divined with it, he took coppers which I brought and threw them in a little pot, together with the ant, and ash, and he said: "You also take ash and throw it in" and I did so. Then he looked into the little pot and said: "You built on the plain!" He knew this without being told! I said: "Yes".'

Answer: There was a quarrel there.

[1] The last two are priests of Mbungu (see p. 8n) who did not in fact come. Mwamakumbalu, Kantile's assistant, who did come is not mentioned.

G. Wilson (G.S.) (1904-1935) 1935
Field Notebook
Nyakyusa

some fire, cooks him a small calabash and hold them against Kaitile's chest 'to clear out the blood of coughing'. To purify the shades a pot of medicines in water was put on the fire; the doctor, Kaitile, and his senior wife (actually her younger sister, as Jane was away) each held the pot with a crooked finger. Then Kaitile and all his wives and children were sprinkled with the hot medicines. And the doctor told Kaitile to sacrifice a bull.

During the following week preparations for the sacrifice were closed. Kaitile walked for some hours through the forest to call Mwamakumbu, his kinsman who always assisted him in the ceremonies at Lubaga and 'sprinkling the country'. Mwamakumbu is a very old man, contemporary of Kaitile's father, and he asked: 'Are you bringing your Europeans to the sacrifice?'

KAITILE: Yes.

MWAMAKUMBU: But your father Mwakanjiki (Sr) did not know any Europeans, he feared them, he died without ever meeting one. After your father died, when your elder brother was alive, Europeans came —Germans—and cut down a tree, the smooth tree in the sacred grove near Kamono; blood gushed out, it shouted so that it was heard in Bulungu.

Kaitile explained that the Germans had wounded Gadsen. Afterwards Mwaipopo (the chief 116) sought a sleep and they tried to put the grove to rights ('clean up') by sacrificing it. This was the tree beside which the sacred rings was always put when they sacrificed in the grove. Now one branch has grown up again from the root.

Mwamakumbu went on: 'But you did wrong at the beginning not to take the European to pray, and to tell Mwakanjiki (Sr) that he should not be afraid, the European has made himself our friend.' Kaitile, reporting the interview to us said: 'I concluded that we went together to the grove to pray [*vide supra*, p. 115] and Mwamakumbu told me: "Let the European take something, let it stay overnight in the house, and go with him, and [pray very much. . . . Mwakanjiki has gone off to a hill from your house, you have offended him yourself. Go with the European, take him to your father's house. Now your father has taken offence, he is shaking [your body by night because you cut the tree; you have done wrong."' [*i.e.* two causes for the anger of the shades and Kaitile's consequent sickness were given: (i) the cutting of the tree by Mwakanjiki's grove and (ii) Godfrey Wilson's presence at rituals and at Kaitile's homestead. So before the sacrifice of expiation for pruning the grove was performed Godfrey Wilson went to be introduced to Kaitile's shades for the second time.

Record of G.W. 3/4/37

In the evening as the sun was setting, I went to Kaitile's house with a cloth and so. He put them in the house, took down the calabash which

All the time there was a constant refrain of questioning, especially [773]
from Mwamakunda (who as Kamtila's assistant sate at his mouthpiece [774]
to the others: 'But why has Mwakunjiki (lit) gone off to a hall? Why?' [775]
There was a continuous effort to extract reasons.

The meat from the top of the footing (*ipamaga*) was cut up into little portions and some was put aside for the boys, sons of Kamtila. Then Kamtila led the way with a bill-hook and Mwamakunda and I followed. Mwamakunda carried the meat to a leaf. We went to the [776]
sacred grave, Kinyangwa. When we reached the edge Kamtila said we to work and he cut a path into the middle with the bill-hook, then we followed.

Mwamakunda threw the meat down, piece by piece, into the rotting [777]
stump of an old sacred tree, from which a hairy growth had sprung, one shoot being so few high. Kamtila prayed: 'Come Mwakunjiki (lit), together with Lwanda (137), Mwakalinda (143), and the Kings, come, with—with—with—come. We pray of you millet, maize, bananas, all your food.' (Mwamakunda threw a piece of meat at each word.) 'We are still remembering you, we have tears. We finish now, that is all. Bring bananas, bring millet, maize, children, may the cows calve, guard by us Mwakunjiki (lit), N—, N—, N— Lwanda (137), Mwakalinda (143), Nyawinjwa,[1] Kyambu Kindi,[1] Ngulubu (42), N—, N—, N—, Don't come again Mwakunjiki, let us sleep well. This is Mwamalaggo [i.e. Mwamakunda the younger. It was his first visit to the sacred grave in place of his father]. I have brought him to you. Do not be startled at this Mwaipaja (G.M.), he is innocent, he is our friend. Move out of my body, let this child go from my body! We have finished! Amen!'

Kamtila and Mwamakunda gave instructions and suggestions to each other in low voices from time to time during the prayer and throwing of the meat. We went out, Kamtila and Mwamakunda looking ahead, and Kamtila warned me: 'Do not look behind, Mwaipaja.' For the next two days Kamtila said he and Mwamakunda would [778]
wash with medicines, and refrain from intercourse with their wives 'because they entered the sacred grave'.

Then we rejoined Mwaipaja and the priests and the meat was cut up. Mwaipaja said: 'Indeed people gossip, where does the whispering go? To whom do the words go? Perhaps they went to you (the commoner) priests?' Kamtila had something on his mind: 'When I returned [779]
from Lubaga who came to say: "Thank you, you have arrived back?" [i.e. no one came to greet him formally on his return]. Njobokwa answered this saying that no offence was meant.

Then Njobokwa turned to Mwaipaja (116) and raised the question [784]
of his son, Mwaelba (130) who had seduced Mwaipaja's wife, Mpeta.

[1] The hereditary Kings priests.

Indeed from the whispering of men and the shades here, but people speak openly, saying: 'Why does he not unknown the chief?' The witches do not come here. [757] [776]

Question: Well, when the witches do throttle someone, do they always call shades, or not? [753]

Kaetula: No, sometimes they throttle a man alone, and the shades are not there.

Question: But your sickness?

Kaetula: Now the priests in their witchcraft gathered with the shades. The day after we had celebrated Mphalanse came to my place and said: 'We have finished them!' I replied: 'Yes, my body is better now, but the cough is unknown, it is from Kyetle.' And did you not hear what Mwaipopo asked in his rage—'How did the doctor (the Sangu) know that you are a priest? And that you had done wrong? Indeed they (Kimagota and his fellows) had told him!' [787]

Question: What did he mean by that?

Kaetula: That they had gone to the doctor in dreams to tell him. [787]

Asked about Kimagota's words: 'You are impromkin, we are cannibals, we are', Kaetula explained: 'It means, "You climb kill cattle for us, you are impromkin, that is your impromkinness. Do we kill cattle? No! We are men, we are witches." Because when we have killed cattle they receive blood, their witchcraft goes away, it stays in its house.'

Question: And your reply, 'You are impromkin, you are'?

Kaetula: I replied: 'You are impromkin, you are, you are witches, if I were alone what would I do? It is you who brought the chilling breath on me and said I had done wrong. Even though I have not done wrong, you wish to eat meat. If I walk about among you, my body shrinks, it frets.'

Mwaipopo (the chief priest) had also prayed with water the night before the sacrifice, he helps me in prayer and if he prays at his house, I help him. We pray with water to bring out everything; if I do not pray with water there something is left within. I summon all the gods, all the fathers, and all the shades. (*Aba nakwiputa nawei ku kwapopo diga kwa, kwga nakwiputa nawei po kigale kwa ukati. Nikumpala kpuka gwaa, tete gwaa, ekupuka kwa.*) [782] [776] [775] [539]

Question:

Kaetula: Yes, when Kimagota and his fellows came in their witchcraft to call my shades to their aid, I saw them in dreams, I saw them! And if they correct Mwaipopo like this in witchcraft, together with the shades, he sees them; he complies immediately, he seeks a cow. And if they just come to throttle me I see them. It is the village headmen of the country who come to throttle me, the shades are not there, no, only Kimagota and his fellows, they stand with the shades, not the others they come and suck my blood and they go away again. I do not speak, [787]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 but I see them. It's taboo to speak. They must seek blood and they go
775 off; we fear them!

QUESTION: Why do you chiefs never speak out if you are throttled?

753 KASITILE: If I speak how many would there be to name? Very many!
[689] For us it's taboo to accuse a man of witchcraft, but the commoners
[554] accuse one another. Look you, do few people keep you company?
Many!

Like us chiefs, everyone comes. It's taboo for us to speak out, we fear. Look you, when Mwambene (Mwaipopo 116) and I were alone we feared to throw out the beer, we said: 'If we throw it out will they leave?' But when Kissogota came, he said: 'All right, I will throw it
[152] out myself.' We fear the fierce great priests, the terrible witches, they are angry.[1] We shrink when they appear.

[622] The village headmen of the country call on the priests for help against us, they whisper by the fire, the priests come in their witchcraft, they call on my shades saying, 'Let us punish him', also they eat,
● [793] together with the shades. Our shades never initiate anything, never; they look to the priests. But with a commoner the shade may initiate matters himself. Yes, people whisper indeed, but is that witchcraft? No! They whisper openly and ask, 'Why did you not perform the ritual?' But even although people are silent, still the shade comes
[688] saying, 'Why did you not perform the ritual? I am on the road.' He initiates the thing himself.

QUESTION: But don't people eat meat at the ritual of a commoner?

KASITILE: Yes, and if he does not celebrate it they accuse him, but they accuse him openly.

QUESTION: If the heir buries him with a few cattle?

688 KASITILE: If a rich commoner dies and the heir buries him with only
775 one cow, the shades are angry and the people also; their chilling breath comes on his body, perhaps he falls ill himself, perhaps his
774 child falls ill, but the people and witches do not meet together, people are angry here, and the shades there; all of them and the shades too, because he has celebrated with one cow only. People are angry because they wish to eat the meat. But the oracle says, 'The shades are angry.'
[787] It does not speak of people, it knows that people also are angry, but it speaks of the shades. And at the celebration he prays in the evening, the next day he calls people and kills a cow, and throws the sacred
[783] meat in the banana grove, saying, 'Here is your meat, father.' People say, 'Indeed he did wrong, his father was angry', but they do not confess saying, 'It was we', no, they say 'the shades' . . .

[826] We chiefs have bodies which are different, the commoners arrived
[554] first in the country, they ate raw food, we fear them saying, 'They eat raw food.' It is we who followed and brought fire. To us they confess

[1] *Iminyago indosi mikalala.* The noun class implies size, ferocity, and dislike.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(their witchcraft); to each other they say: 'It is your father.' Because if they confess to a fellow commoner saying, 'It is we', he says, 'You are "eating" me, drink the ordeal'. The witch is driven out. But to us they admit saying, 'It was we who were angry.' They do not fear us. Commoners are the seniors in the country; they arrived first. 688 775 774 826 554

It will be remembered that the commoners are spoken of as 'black people' (*abatitu*) and that the first chiefs were 'pale' (*mwelu*) but these words also have moral implications. 'It is said that a person "has a black heart" or "has black blood", or "is black in his face towards us" when he is thought to be a witch, eating his fellows, or when he is a thief, or a liar, or an adulterer, or dirty. Even though his body is light coloured (*mwelu*) the word "black" (*ntitu*) is used of him metaphorically.' And *mwelu* implies innocent, pure, as well as light in colour. The comparable symbolism of 'nigger' and 'white man' is all too familiar in Johannesburg or Charleston.

That Kasitile himself was much afraid of the commoner chiefs and was relieved by the 'speaking out' was clear, and the people of the country as a whole were glad that the ritual had been celebrated, for they expected an increase in fertility. Some days later Mwakyonde (148), came in and said, laughing, but half serious: 'Congratulations, Mwaipaja (G.W.). You have celebrated the ritual, we rejoice greatly, you give us fertility of the soil, you are a great priest.' [152] [578] 793 778 183

In some moods Kasitile was inclined to become a Christian, but he felt an obligation to the country as priest, and believed too strongly in the efficacy of the traditional rituals to abandon them. He said to G.W. one day, over a pot of beer: 'If it were not for the ritual I would get you to speak to the Europeans of the mission, and I would go with my wife Jane, and be baptized. If my son was old enough and had agreed to carry on the ritual I would do it; perhaps I will when I am old. . . . It is good to have one's heart washed clean, we are dirty inside. The Christians say to us: "You with your four wives each, you are all dirty, you love one and squabble with the rest." Well, it is so with me, I love Jane only; I would like to go and be baptized with her. But I fear for the ritual, I fear hunger, the hunger of the people. For I am the food of the country, I am the maker of food.' [177] [797]

We left Selya shortly after this and were not able to observe the effect of the ritual on political relationships in Selya. Kasitile lived another seventeen years, duly performing his functions, and in 1954 he was succeeded by his brother's son, James.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

791 *inyifwila* comes from west of Ngonde, or east of the Kinga; *mwafi*
[439] came from 'Nyasaland'; medicine for fertility of the fields from
[278] Misuku which is rich in food; war medicine from the Sangu and
[438] Kinga. Whether neighbouring people get medicines from Bu-Nyakyusa we do not know—no one ever suggested it, but it is likely that they do.

Since foreign doctors and medicines have the highest reputation
[177] new treatments are welcomed. This is where the practice of medicines differs radically from the rituals directed to the shades in which the charter is tradition, and any deviation must be justified. But the willingness to accept something new did not lead to any systematic experiment, or any regard for experiment as such.

791 Anyone who chooses, and can pay the fees, can become a
278 doctor by apprenticing himself to a practitioner of repute, but it is very noticeable that the majority of well-known doctors come from families of doctors, the medicines being passed down from one generation to the next and sometimes taught to wives as well. Lyandileko, who has often been quoted, was taught certain medicines by her husband, and had a large practice. The diviners we knew were all men, but many women know a number of medicines. Once in practice, a doctor may add to his knowledge by buying a medicine from a fellow practitioner or exchanging medicines with him. One doctor we knew had paid two bulls for the secret of his protective medicine (*umkota gwa ipingo*). The teaching includes what plants or other ingredients to collect and how to 'cook' them, i.e. what to mix together and what quantities to use. As elsewhere in Africa, it is the material substance, usually vegetable, which is held to be important in any treatment. The spell—the words addressed to the medicine—is of little significance except that when vengeance magic is prepared the man on whose behalf it is done may say the name of his enemy (if he knows his identity) and state his own innocence in a phrase like the following: 'Return this medicine, thou Kyala, I have done no wrong whatsoever to cause me to be killed; if he says he will kill me let him die.'

The doctor (*inganga*) who 'knows medicines' is distinguished
791 from the priest or officiant (*unyago*) who knows how to conduct a
793 ritual directed to the shades or heroes. The *unyago* uses medicines in celebrating rituals, and he or she may be able to collect and prepare plants himself, but he sometimes has to apply to a doctor

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for an appropriate medicine, and his main function is organizing the observances. 791 793

(d) SYMBOLISM

In the field of medicine imagination runs riot, and associations are unpredictable. The ingredients of most medicines are professional secrets and unknown to the user who takes the concoction on trust from his doctor, and inquires no further. Therefore the study of medicine is not linked to the study of social relationships in the same manner as is the study of ritual, for the symbolism of medicines is individual and free, whereas the symbolism of ritual is common and obligatory. 278 789

Nevertheless, the imagination of doctors works within the general symbolic system, and such knowledge as we have indicates that many of the associations made are similar to those used in ritual. In medicine, as in the rituals of kinship, one type of banana stands for a male, another for a female, a banana sucker [831] represents a kinsman, a sprouting shoot conception. Smithing and [326] coition are felt to be alike, and the molten iron that trickles out of a forge is linked with menstrual blood. Hair stands for growth, and a bald pate a devastated field. A ring, or circumambulation, implies a protecting fence. Pythons, crocodiles, leopards, and lions stand [825] for power and majesty, spears and thorns for attack; vomiting and [827] emptiness for innocence, spitting for forgiveness. There is colour [822] symbolism in medicines (though we know little of it save that the *ikipiki* which stands for the blood of the lineage is red, or reddish brown), and auditory symbolism, the rumble of thunder and the groaning of a bellows being identified. Men mime that which they wish to avoid, as well as that which they desire; like things are antagonistic as well as sympathetic. No doubt a laborious study of prescriptions would reveal further general principles of association, as well as the range of individual imagination, but such a task has yet to be undertaken.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The shade is the principle of life represented by seed, or the root of a banana, or a tree growing by a grave;[1] the hero embodied a vital force which caused grain to sprout and clay cattle to breathe. The line between a hero, the shade of one of his successors, and the shade of a chief is a very faint one. They all have power over people other than their descendants and are approached by hereditary priests. As some elderly men of Ngonde put it: 'The nobles, not the living Kyungu, go to the groves of the Kyungus to pray; they go because the Kyungus who have died are shades to us all (*bo basyuka betu twesa*).'

The heroes had miraculous power but it differed in degree, rather than in kind, from that possessed by their descendants. Like that of the divine kings and chiefs it lay both in their own bodies and in medicines, especially the *ifingila* which is still used by chiefs.

Kyala and Lwembe dwell 'beneath' (*pasi*) with the shades, as opposed to 'above' (*kumwanya*), which implied traditionally 'on earth' not 'in the sky'. There is no hint of a sky god in the traditional system, and the distinction between black and white offerings, which the early missionaries took to be a distinction between offerings to the shades and to a sky god,[2] was unequivocally interpreted by the priests in another fashion. The white (*mwelu*) offering to Kyala or Ngulube is a symbol not of purity, but of an unclouded sky, and the numinous quality of the heroes is conceived of as contamination, not holiness. Like the shades, the heroes must be 'driven off' lest men go mad, and it is when they have driven them away that men are *belu*—white, innocent, free of anger. Men should be *belu* but this is never cited as an attribute of the pagan Kyala. It is the terribleness, not the goodness or purity of God of which the Nyakyusa are aware. This is underlined by the fact that a madman who, 'when he comes home rushes off', and 'does not see that his fellows are human beings,' and who 'has a loose heart' (i.e. is passionate and quarrelsome), or 'whose heart curls up like a leaf in the sun, or turns upside down', is called 'Mbasi' or is said to have been 'caught hold of by Kyala'.

Kyala is one hero among others but, as has been shown, the name is *also* used in the sense of 'the lord'. Kyala as 'the lord' of a commoner or junior kinsman is distinct from Kyala the hero with his own place in a genealogy and his own shrine. The difference

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 205-7, 211 *et passim*.

[2] F. Fülleborn, *Das Deutsche Njassa- und Ruvuma-Gebiet*, pp. 321-2.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

x797 *Aim*

x795 The aim of this Church is the uplifting of the African *en masse* taking in its rise the old people who are at present being left out by religions of the North and its civilization, as well as winning those who are considered bad because of polygamy and drink, and are refused any latent qualities for doing good any more, to try and restore an atmosphere of a deeply, naturally religious life as prevailed in the days of long ago which was manifest in words as well as deeds.

779

Regarding the organization of the Church, it was stated:

Every district requiring a Pastor shall submit its application to the annual General Conference for its approval.

Any novice Pastor elected and ordained by the minister shall not be entitled at his early appointment or nomination to administer the ministerial duties, but shall sit with his Presiding Pastor for at least six months for his qualification as a minister.

If any Church, elders, preachers, deacons or group of Churches shall be found ordaining a Pastor or Pastors without the approval of the Annual General Conference, leaders of such offending Churches shall be brought before the Annual General Conference for trial and if found guilty be suspended or expelled from the organization.

The office bearers of our organization shall be as follows:

[793]

(*a*) The Secretary who is the sole head of the organization.
(*b*) The Presiding Pastors.
(*c*) Pastors.
(*d*) Preachers.
(*e*) Elders.
(*f*) Deacons and Deaconesses.

The Society shall be divided into districts over which one Presiding Pastor shall be stationed to supervise a Pastor or Pastors under him in that area.

It shall be the duty of every Pastor to feed his flock and to sit as Chairman of his Kirk Session, to enforce the discipline of the Church and to forward his monthly report to his Presiding Pastor.

It shall be the duty or duties of the Presiding Pastor to visit his Pastor or Pastors showing or teaching them good governance of the Church and to send to the Secretary his quarterly reports of his district activities.

If any of the Presiding Pastors or Pastors shall fail to comply with the rules of this constitution they shall upon conviction thereof by the Annual General Conference, be suspended or expelled from the Church.

It shall be the duties of the Elders to look after their Church members

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

going about visiting them in their homes and leading them in a Christian life and to report to his Session all the offending members. 797x

It shall be the duties of a Preacher to go about preaching the Gospel to beginners as well as helping Pastors to encourage members at the Church on Sundays. He should keep records of his itinerary and report the same to his district Pastor. 795x [793]

It shall be the duties of every Deacon whether male or female, to see that all members pay their monthly contribution which is one penny per month and to bring monies or foodstuffs to his or her Pastor at the end of every month, and to bring to the Session those who neglect to pay.

Pastors through the Presiding Pastor are empowered to administer Sacraments—to Baptize and dispense Holy Communion and to ordain or remove any Elder, Preacher or Deacon who neglects his or her duties, and to report their activities to their Presiding Pastor.

To clear away suspicions among the people, Christians or non-Christians, Pastor or Pastors in the district if found guilty of misconduct or any case of adultery shall be brought to their Session to be tried, and if found guilty shall be suspended from the ministerial duties until his case is referred to the Annual General Conference by his District Pastor. [684]

Any Presiding Pastor or Pastors found intentionally violating these rules as constituted and approved by the Annual General Conference shall, at the discretion of the said General Conference, be suspended or expelled from the Church.

All monies of the Church shall within three months' time be forwarded to the Secretary of Religion who shall Bank same in the Savings Bank.

The term of service for Elders and Deacons or Deaconesses shall be for two years only, but an office-bearer may also be suspended before the end of his or her term if:

He or she has committed misconduct. [681]
He or she neglects to fulfil his or her duties.
He or she does not attend Church worship.
He or she is a drunkard.
He or she is unruly.
He or she marries unlawfully against Native law which binds African marriages.

No office-bearer of any rank shall be found preaching when he is drunk, but shall hand the Service over to someone else.

Every member of the African National Church shall kneel down when praying. One who is preaching can kneel or stand.

Every member of the African National Church shall cease to drink

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(c) *Katela* (Generation IV and V)

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Boys (none married)		*Father*	*Father's village*
Andulu	full brothers	Mwaseba (152)	Mpunga
Alijesi			
Jestina	half-brothers	Mwaseba (152)	Mpunga
Mololo			
Freda			
Tukafika			
Lascki			
Kimamba			
Abandubandu		Bampolile	Masoko
Andambile		Peteli	Masoko
Lalogwa		Mbukanya	Masoko
Bandadanwile		Imilano	Masoko
Anigwile		Mungile	Masoko
Kofia		Gusike	Masoko
Kaswelile		Mwaiposi	Masoko
Akipwele		Mwankuni	Masoko
Bajeko		Mwangosi	Masoko
Adumile		Gwilliam	Masoko (Inherited in Lupondo)
Kajobene		Mwalusamba	Masoko
Fryin		Anitike	Masoko
Mwitingi		Simeon	Masoko
Ndalwisye		Mwangoje	Masoko
Osijah		Mwaipaja	Mfumbi

i.e. out of twenty-three members, two are full brothers and six others are half-brothers. No other kinship connections were traced.

COMMONER PRIESTS MENTIONED

793
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Kikungubeja, Kyamba Kitali, Nsyanigwa, Silobwike	Hereditary Kinga priests who come to Lubaga and visit Kasitile on the way
Kissoule, Mwamalunguka, Mwambipili	Hereditary priests of Lubaga
Mwamakunda	Kasitile's assistant priest
Mwalukuta, Nyama	Hereditary priests of Mbyanga, the grove of Mwakisambwe (30)
Kissogota, Ngulyo, Njobakosa	Village headmen of Mwaijonga (82) and priests of his grove
Mwambuputa, Kakuju	Village headmen of Mwankuga (150) and priests responsible for 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177)

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

£25,500 was earned by Nyakyusa migrant labourers and those employed in the district.[1] Earnings from employment are thus probably about equal to the total earnings from the sale of produce.

Within the district Nyakyusa men are employed in Government service as clerks, hospital orderlies, agricultural inspectors, and as labourers on roads and buildings. They are employed also as house servants by Europeans, as labourers on the twelve European-owned estates in the district, and as shop assistants and servants by Indian traders. There is also a little employment of Nyakyusa by Nyakyusa in agricultural work. Traditionally chiefs, being responsible for hoeing the fields of many wives, sometimes employed poor men to hoe for them, rewarding them after two hoeing seasons with a heifer or bull, but the extent of such employment was, in the old days, small and confined to the chiefs. Nowadays it has been considerably extended, rich men employing others to hoe or, less commonly, to plough for them, and paying them in stock or cash. A few monogamists also employ young boys to assist their wives in fetching wood and water.

Most Nyakyusa men now take paid employment at one time or another. Of a small sample of seventy-nine men, seventy-six (94 per cent) had been in paid employment. There was, however, a marked difference between the work histories of young and old, and between pagan and Christian. Of the pagan men over middle age, the majority of those who worked had not done so willingly, but had been conscripted as carriers, and the total periods for which they had worked were short, averaging under six months per man. On the other hand, all the Christian men over middle age had worked willingly, and the total period for which each had worked averaged over twelve years. Of the young men, all who had worked had done so willingly, but as with the older men, there was a marked difference between the length of time pagans and Christians spent in employment. The profession of Christianity is, amongst the Nyakyusa, correlated with education, and Christian young men, more especially the sons of Christians, tend to secure the skilled or semi-skilled jobs. Those who have skilled work tend to stay longer in a job and return home less frequently because they fear lest they may not find an equally good job again, and because they have often travelled far to find skilled

[1] Based on the estimated number of men in employment, and an analysis of wage rates within and outside the district.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

464 work. The unskilled can always get a job, and frequent moves make little difference to their pay. In the sample taken 81 per cent
795 of the Christian sons of Christians, 40 per cent of the Christian sons of pagans, and 5 per cent of the pagan sons of pagans had had skilled or semi-skilled jobs. These cases are set out in a table on p. 193. Of twenty-eight individuals who remained over a year at a stretch in employment, twenty were in skilled or semi-skilled jobs, and eighteen had had some schooling.

It was very difficult to get adequate information on the pro-
166 portion of time that young men spent away, for though the periods they spent at work might be accurately remembered, the periods at home were not easily recorded. Ten young Christians (other than those cited in the sample above), whose work histories were carefully investigated, had spent, on the average, eighteen and a half months, out of the twenty-five months preceding their return home, in employment outside Rungwe district. That is, they had spent less than a quarter of their time at home. They are certainly not typical of the whole district, but they are probably not unrepresentative of the young Christians.

Certain points emerge from this study. Firstly, the time spent away from their homes at work by middle-aged and elderly pagans is negligible. Secondly, the middle-aged Christians have all worked for long periods, but during most of that time they have lived with their families in Christian villages attached to missions in the district; they are not migrants in the sense that their sons are, though they move from one mission village to another following employment. Thirdly, the great bulk of the young men work outside the district at some time, and those in skilled jobs (mostly Christians) tend to stay away for much longer periods than the unskilled. The effects of this are noticed by Nyakyusa themselves, who remarked of Kabembe Christian village that: 'There were few nice houses, for so many of the young men are away at work.' Nevertheless, even in Christian villages, the effects of men's absence is much less marked than it is in Ngonde, where the percentage of absentees is estimated at over half the able-bodied men.[1]

[464] [1] It was estimated in 1934 that the total male labour force of the district was approximately 10,000 and that, of these, 500 men were in Southern Rhodesia and the Union, and 5,000 on the Lupa goldfields. (Figures supplied by courtesy of the District Commissioner, Karonga, from District records.)

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

606 house, one pouring wet day, when sitting or cooking out of doors was impossible. Mwambelike's wife was cooking for us and other visitors. Suddenly there was a cry from her husband and others, 'Father-in-law!' She ran out of the room, leaving her cooking. The man who came in was a mother's brother's son (*untani*) of Mwambelike's father, and counted as a mother's brother (*umwipa*) to Mwambelike. Mwambelike explained to him that his wife was cooking and asked him to stay 'at the door', so he went out, and the woman came back. She cooked placidly for half an hour. Mwambelike said: 'Tell my daughter to come and help you with the cooking', then, looking round, he said: 'Oh no, she can't, her father-in-law is here too.' This was her betrothed husband's mother's brother. Mwambelike's daughter was about thirteen years old and had not yet reached puberty. Some time later the wife called to this girl to bring her some water. Nothing was said by the men and after three calls the girl scurried in giggling, put the water down, and scurried out. Then the men took notice, the 'father-in-law' said nothing, but Mwambelike said apologetically: 'It's all right; she did not look at him.' When the wife had finished cooking our food she went out, and the men called her 'father-in-law' in. He stayed about five minutes then, realizing that all the men were hungry, he said: 'I will go away. Let her get on with her cooking'; so he went out and she came back and cooked for the other guests.

606 177 ●795 The strength of the feeling against seeing one's father-in-law is apparent in the behaviour of Christian women. The missionaries have taught that avoidance is unnecessary and inconvenient, if not unchristian, and that a daughter-in-law should behave as a daughter to her husband's father. Various Christian women assured us that they 'did not avoid their fathers-in-law', though most admitted to 'avoiding a little'. One day S—, who had volunteered that she did not avoid her father-in-law, had come to tea with us, together with another Christian woman. S—'s father-in-law, a chief, came along the veranda on an unexpected visit. Before he was visible S— leapt up, gasped 'father-in-law!' and hid herself in the corner of the room behind the door, facing the wall with her face buried in her hands. She stood there a few seconds gasping, then came back to her place and pushing away her chair, sat down on the floor, whispering determinedly: 'I *won't* avoid him, I *won't* avoid him.' Her friend also slipped off

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

her chair and sat on the floor. We said to Mwaipopo as he entered: 'There is a daughter-in-law here.' He said: 'That's all right, she is enjoying the company of Kagile (M.W.)', but he was obviously restive, and went outside as soon as food appeared. He said to G.W.: 'That's quite all right, let them go on enjoying each other's company. She (i.e. S—) does not avoid me because M— (a local missionary) brought her to me one day and I killed a bull for them, but let us stay outside now, for they would be ashamed to eat.' The women protested very much saying *they* would go out, but the chief would not agree. As soon as they had drunk their tea they hurried off, and crouching down with their backs towards the men they answered their farewell greetings.

In reply to queries as to why they insist that father-in-law and daughter-in-law avoid one another, the Nyakyusa relate a myth of incest between them: 'Long ago a chief's son married a very beautiful wife. The boy's father saw the girl and after one look desired her, for she was very beautiful, and he said: "She is fit to be a chief's wife (*umwehe*)." Men said this was a very bad thing and agreed that in future they would not look at their daughters-in-law. That is how avoidance began. It was for fear of fathers making love to their sons' wives.' This myth is related with some diffidence, and not everyone knows it, but it was told us, or referred to, repeatedly, and may be taken as current in the society. One informant, a very intelligent woman doctor, also associated seeing a father-in-law with seeing his sexual activities. 'We think that to see your husband's father is very rude, because it is as if you saw him sleeping with your husband's mother. You compare, you see, your husband's body and you see your husband's father's body. It is very bad.'

Age-villages are then associated with the feeling that fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law must be kept completely separate lest they should commit incest, and that adolescent youths should not have any glimpse of the sexual activities of their parents; but the separation of the generations is not complete, for marriage with the daughter of a village neighbour is approved, provided he is not an *immediate* neighbour. Mwakionde explained that in the old days people disliked marriage with the daughter of a next-door neighbour because she was 'like a daughter'—'the fathers ate *embalaga* (a dish made with bananas) together'—but marriage with the daughters of other village-mates was always approved.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

usually has a separate hut for its girls, to which, we were told, 584
their lovers come secretly by night.

Nyakyusa informants connected the existence of girls' houses 582
with the marriage age. In Ngonde the marriage age of girls is
much higher than it is among the Nyakyusa, partly because there [795]
are many more Christians (45 per cent as against 16 per cent)
who do not allow polygyny, partly because even the girls from
pagan families in Ngonde dislike marrying a polygynist, and
partly because a much higher percentage of young men are away at
work, than from Nyakyusa country. Formerly, they said, the marri-
age age was higher among the Nyakyusa also, and then the Nyak-
yusa had *isaka*. It is certain that among the Nyakyusa betrothal [881]
of a girl has long taken place before puberty, for the husband
plays an essential part in the puberty ritual, and there were always
some girls who were betrothed when quite tiny; but the evidence
is fairly clear that the average age of betrothal among the pagans
has been going down. The Nyakyusa view is that no man in his
senses, who is able to marry, will engage a little girl of eight if he
can find one approaching puberty; and it is the scarcity of wives
that makes men 'marry' little girls. It is also clear that the number [231]
of cattle in the country, and their rate of circulation, has increased
during the last two decades, so there are 'too many cattle chasing
too few brides' with the result that the marriage age of girls
has fallen, and the number of cattle given at marriage has
increased.

Once she is betrothed, a girl's 'husband' has exclusive sexual 584
rights over her, and she cannot entertain lovers in the *isaka*. The 836
only two occasions on which she may flirt and have external 881
relations with a man other than her husband, are during an initia-
tion ceremony, when the girls of the village who have not yet
reached puberty sleep with their fellow who is being initiated,
and there entertain young men, and when she accompanies a
bride to her husband's house. A bridegroom is expected to have
external relations with his wife's two friends, as well as with his
wife, on the night they bring her to his house. Love-making at the
initiation-marriage ritual is held to be 'part of the ritual' and a
means of sex education, and a husband can make no complaint
about his 'wife' receiving lovers then, provided that penetration
does not take place.

Homosexual practices are said to be very common in the boys' 838

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

838 villages—they begin among boys of ten to fourteen herding cows, and continue among young men until marriage, but they are said never to continue after that, and are regarded simply as a substitute for heterosexual pleasure. 'A man never dreams of making love to another man'—only of making love to a woman. If a boy's own father, or a village father, finds a son with another youth he will beat him, but provided both parties were willing, there is no court case, and the older men treat the practice tolerantly as a manifestation of adolescence. To force a fellow to [684] have homosexual intercourse against his will is a serious offence, comparable to witchcraft (*vide* Document, p. 196). Lesbian practices are said also to exist, but we have no certain evidence of this: if they do occur it is much more likely to be among the older wives of chiefs and other polygynists than among the girls, who have so much attention from young men.'

864 It is in conversation and play with village contemporaries that some knowledge of sex is acquired. Girls learn about sex from their immediate seniors, and they get some sex experience, along with formal instruction on morals, at the puberty rituals of their seniors in the age-village and at their own initiation. Boys learn from the conversation of their older fellows at night, in the boys' village. Any suggestion that sex education should be given by parents or middle-aged teachers shocks the Nyakyusa profoundly, for they hold that discussion of sex is totally incompatible with the respect due from children to parents. The taboo on sex talk between members of different generations appears to be absolute among men, but is less emphasized among women, for formal instruction on morals is given to a girl by her mother's fellows during the initiation ritual, and a young wife of her father, or of her father's neighbour, may whisper advice on sex matters even although she is classed as a 'mother'.

534 As we have already indicated, there are profound differences between pagans and Christians in their sex code. The Christian 795 dogma that sex relations should only take place between adult 177 married persons excludes the freedom of girls to have external sex relations before betrothal, or in the 'bride's' hut; it excludes girls visiting their betrothed husbands before puberty; and it excludes homosexuality, which is regarded as a mortal sin. Segregation of successive generations is not a part of the Christian tradition, hence the modifications in the rules of avoid-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ance among Nyakyusa Christians, and the tendency for fathers and sons to build fairly close to one another.

The forms of display approved among Christians are also changing with the change in the sex code. The nakedness of the Nyakyusa shocked the missionaries, and it is insisted that Christian women, as well as men, should wear at least one cloth; also many of the traditional dances and songs are felt by the Nyakyusa converts themselves to be incompatible with the profession of Christianity, consequently at funerals and weddings there is often a group of Christians dancing quite separately from pagans, and singing their own song, which, more often than not, is a hymn. A wedding dance to a hymn does not appear incongruous to Nyakyusa, as it does to European observers.

e. Wisdom

There is a very close connection between the values we have cited, and all save one are coherent with one another. The enjoyment of good company implies observance of the rules of decency; *ukwangala* is between equals, not between parents and children; it merges into neighbourliness, for one who does not help, or seek help from, a neighbour is unfriendly (*atikwangala kanunu*); and it is dependent upon that generous hospitality which is one of the manifestations of dignity (*ubusisya*).

The one value which is not wholly coherent with the others is the value of display (*ukumoga*). Certain forms of display are compatible with urbanity and friendliness between neighbours, but the swaggering truculence of the warrior is not—it is liable to breed quarrels between fellow villagers, as well as with outsiders; and display also ceases to be compatible with other values when it involves adultery. The friends of a woman who has eloped with a lover may greet her with the phrase: '*Ndaga, umogile*!' which literally translated means 'Thank you, you have displayed yourself', and implies, 'Congratulations! Had a good time?' But no Nyakyusa would maintain that to commit adultery was, in general, good.

The all-embracing virtue to the Nyakyusa is wisdom (*amahala*). It includes the enjoyment of company and the practice of hospitality, for no man is wise who is surly, or aloof, or stingy; it includes neighbourly behaviour, dignity, and respect for law and

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

convention, but it does not include display. The wise may dance, but they do not need to dance in order to be wise, and those who commit adultery, or are boastful, or quarrelsome show foolishness (*ubukonyofu*) and sinful pride (*amatingo*), the opposite of wisdom. Wisdom is expressed in all relationships, not only in village relationships, but it is *learned* in the village; pagan Nyakyusa insist that 'it is by conversing with our friends that we gain wisdom'.

The Christian view is somewhat different. Urbanity, neighbourliness, hospitality, and dignity are components of wisdom for a Christian also, but he would add something further—'the knowledge of God'—and such knowledge is sought not in village relationships only. It is sought also in schools, in the religious teaching of the missionaries, in the scriptures, in worship, and in prayer.

Having considered some of the values[1] realized in age-villages, we now turn to the sanctions maintaining them.

[1] It may be asked why we have omitted fertility in our discussion of values realized in village relationships, when fertility in men, cattle, and fields is one of the ultimate values of Nyakyusa society. The reason is that fertility is realized in the relationships of kinship and of the chiefdom, rather than in village relationships. The village rituals in the fields, which we have described, are primarily defensive—to protect the crops against the attacks of witches and sorcerers—and the fertility of the soil is held to depend mainly on the chief, and the rituals he performs on behalf of his country.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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which witchcraft and 'the breath of men' operate, but their supposed fields of action are relatively distinct. 789

In the past, the punishment for sorcery was death with torture by impaling, not merely confiscation of property and banishment. Proof of the practice of sorcery depended upon the evidence of the doctor who had supplied the medicine (who was not regarded as implicated in the crime) and upon the *umwafi* ordeal. The Nyakyusa insist that the practice of sorcery was formerly rare, and that it has increased enormously, much more than the practice of witchcraft. This belief is to be related to two facts. First, Nyakyusa co-operate much more than they formerly did with people who live in different villages. The clerks who work together in Government offices, and who have a fearsome reputation as sorcerers, do not necessarily live in the same village; and being apart at night when the witches fly, they cannot be supposed to bewitch one another. But there is frequent occasion for friction between them and therefore a standing temptation to employ sorcery. So also in other types of employment, in trade and on journeys, individuals are frequently in contact with men of different villages. Secondly, belief in sorcery is felt to be compatible with the acceptance of a scientific explanation of causes of disease in a way that belief in witchcraft is not. *Ubutege* is commonly translated as 'poisoning' by those who speak English, whether the medicine is or is not put into food or drink, or whether it is supposed to affect all who eat it or only the individual against whom it is directed. All types of sorcery tend to be rationalized as 'poisoning'; and many educated Nyakyusa who deny the reality of witchcraft admit to a lively fear of sorcerers. 754 683

As the table on pp. 198–213 shows, however, accusations of witchcraft are still much more common than accusations of sorcery in the community as a whole. We heard of thirty-eight cases of supposed witchcraft to eleven of sorcery, and there was no reason to think that our friends were more likely to mention the one type of case than the other. 754

d. The age-village and Christianity

Since common action against witches, and to punish transgressors through 'the breath of men', is one of the primary functions of an age-village, what happens in a Christian village, or 195 754 184

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

795 754 184 when members of a pagan village embrace Christianity? Orthodox Nyakyusa Christians, that is, those accepting the teaching of the European missionaries of any of the four denominations at work in the area, deny the reality of witchcraft and of 'the breath of men'; they deny the power of any individual to harm another by virtue of 'a python' in the stomach, or to bring illness to his erring neighbour by murmuring with others about him.

As we have already seen, the profession of Christianity and school education tend to coincide among the Nyakyusa, and the educated tend to be sceptical of witchcraft, while believing in sorcery. Such scepticism is directly related to the dogmatic teaching of missionaries, to instruction in physiology in schools, and to the challenge of certain missionaries and Nyakyusa Christians that pagans should prove the existence of witchcraft at autopsies (*vide* Document, p. 254). The suggestion that 'pythons' are really acute tape-worm (*vide supra* p. 92) or an enlarged kidney is typical of the critical attitude of educated Christians to pagan dogma. We have no doubt that belief in witchcraft is weakening, and that this weakening is directly due to mission teaching.

795 754 184 626 Nevertheless most Christians continue to have some belief in a mystical power exerted by individuals or groups to the harm of others. For a few the contradiction between the traditional and the Christian dogma involves acute mental conflict; for many the conflict is resolved through the concept of 'the curse' (*ikigune*) of the congregation, led by the priest or pastor and elders, and through emphasis on sorcery rather than on witchcraft. Most Christians believe that the just wrath of those set in authority, and of the faithful members of a congregation, may bring misfortune on a sinner. They argue that the power which punishes the wrong-doer comes from God, not from ancestors or from pythons in men's bellies, but that it is brought upon an individual by the anger and murmuring of men.[1] Further, it is believed that

[1] The phrase 'the breath of men' (*ezubepe zya bandu*) is never used with reference to the punishment of sinners in the Christian congregation, but always 'the curse' (*ikigune*), a word which is used to translate certain phrases in the Gospels, and which conveys an idea felt to be compatible with Christian dogma. As already noted (p. 101) the pagans of the plain and of Selya use 'the curse' (*ikigune*) more or less synonomously with 'the breath of men' (*ezubepe zya bandu*). For details of cases of misfortune attributed to the curse of Christians see Monica Hunter, 'An African Christian Morality', *Africa*, Vol. X (1937), pp. 283-91.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Christians are only affected by the shocked astonishment of fellow Christians, not by the disapproval of pagans, and the unit within which 'the curse' is commonly spoken of as operating is the congregation. In two of the cases we recorded (*vide* Document, p. 209) it was suggested that illness was due to the anger of neighbours, fellow Christians, over stinginess and greed, but in the other cases it was not village neighbours who were primarily concerned, but the Christian congregation, a group embracing members from many villages.

The type of behaviour believed to be punishable by 'the curse' of fellow Christians also differs somewhat from that thought to be punished by 'the breath of men'. The virtue Christians emphasize most is chastity, and 'the curse' is often said to be a punishment for fornication or adultery. The other sin commonly spoken of as bringing down a curse is disobedience, or disrespectful behaviour to the minister (or priest) or elder of the congregation. Among pagans 'the breath of men' serves also to sanction sexual morals and to sustain respect for those in authority, but their sex code is different. It is incest, or familiarity between father- and daughter-in-law, which they regard as really evil, not sex relations outside marriage. And they emphasize respect to senior relatives and fathers' neighbours rather than to the leaders of any wider group.

Christians lay much less stress on hospitality to neighbours than pagans, and it is generally agreed that they eat alone more than pagans would dare to do. As one Christian put it, a pagan would *always* call his neighbours to share meat or beer when he had it, but a Christian might eat a sheep, or a goat, or even a calf, alone with his family. It is good, the Christians say, to call friends to share a feast, but not an inescapable obligation. Nor do Christians regularly send the saddle and ribs of any animal they kill to the chief, as pagans do; 'for', they say, 'we do not fear "the breath of men".' But hospitality towards strangers is felt to be a condition of salvation. One informant explained that 'If a man is stingy towards his neighbours it does not matter; but if he is stingy towards a stranger from a distance, he might die from lack of food; and that would be the fault of the stingy one. Such a fault would prevent him from entering Heaven.' This statement points to the most striking difference between Christian and pagan morality—the range of moral obligations. A pagan's duties

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

795 are primarily to his kinsmen and fellow villagers, and secondarily
574 to fellow members of his chiefdom; beyond the chiefdom and
184 circle of kinsmen he had, traditionally, no obligations. The
577 Christian definition of 'neighbour' is a much wider one. It is emphasized by the missionaries that the Christian Church is universal, and Nyakyusa Christians themselves are conscious of their unity with, and obligations to, members of other chiefdoms, other cultural groups, and other races. The new sanctions for behaviour operating within the Christian group—the emphasis on Christian duty; the hope of that 'peace which passeth all understanding' and of eternal life; and the fear of suspension or expulsion from the communion of the faithful, and of hell-fire[1]—all these apply to relations beyond, as well as within, the village, the chiefdom, and the circle of kin.

795 Two other points were mentioned by Christian informants
184 when discussing the differences between pagan and Christian
577 morality: they said that Christian children growing up were liable to be 'proud' (*namatingo*) in their bearing and manner of greeting, because they do not fear 'the breath of men'; and also that Christian men were not afraid to ask many cattle for their daughters at marriage, again because they do not fear their neighbours' disapproval in the way pagans fear it. The implication is that there is less insistence upon conformity to a given code among Christians than among pagans; a greater tolerance of diversity of behaviour.

795 These differences between pagan and Christian dogma are
788 matched by differences between their ritual. There are no
184 Christian rituals in which the village as a group, distinct from other groups, is concerned. The congregation—the group worshipping in one church—is drawn from many villages, and though devout Christians living in the same neighbourhood often gather for morning and evening prayer, such rituals never include a whole village. Even in a Christian village on mission land only a small proportion of the villagers attend daily prayer regularly. As we have seen, the members of a pagan village meet from time to time to warn off witches, or to bless a repentant wrong-doer (*vide supra*, pp. 101, 109 ff.), but since belief in witchcraft or in 'the curse' is not orthodox among Christians, there is no ritual con-

[1] *cf.* Monica Hunter, 'An African Christian Morality', *Africa*, Vol. X (1937), p. 265–91.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

795 nected with it in a Christian village or village-section. The nearest
788 parallel to the pagan ritual of reconciliation is the formal re-
184 admission of a repentant sinner to the congregation.

795 The change in belief and ritual tends to weaken village solid-
621 arity; for the Christian village is neither a defensive unit, nor is
184 it the group from within which retribution and forgiveness come. A Christian does not feel himself dependent upon village neighbours to the same degree as does a pagan. We argue that the extension of the range of interdependence reduces its intensity in the narrower circles of relationship, and this is evident in the religious as in the economic aspect.[1]

622 Since the authority of a village headman is largely dependent
795 upon his supposed mystical power, Christians are rarely appointed
184 to this office by the Nyakyusa. We heard of only one Christian headman and he was in the country of a Christian chief. Christians cannot go through the full 'coming out' ceremony which involves treatment with medicines to give *amanga*, and a Christian headman cannot fulfil the traditional ritual functions in relation to the chief and his ancestors. But in Ngonde, where the percentage of Christians is high (46 per cent as opposed to 15 per cent among the Nyakyusa) and the 'coming out' ceremony has been dropped, there are a number of Christian headmen who simply abstain from the performance of any pagan rituals (as does the Kyungu himself) leaving them to those headmen who are pagan and feel the ritual to be important. And pagan informants whom we asked about defence against witchcraft in a village in which the headman was a Christian, replied: 'Others will protect the country from witchcraft,' implying that there are always other 'defenders' in a village besides its leader.

In Christian village-sections the same difficulties do not arise, for assistant headmen are never treated at the 'coming out', nor have they ritual functions, other than the formal reproof of supposed witches (*vide supra*, p. 109). Hence the recognized leader of any group of Christians living in a pagan village is normally a Christian. In Christian villages on mission land the leaders are, of course, always Christian. These villages do not participate in any 'coming out' ceremony and the leaders are appointed by the missionary in consultation with the 'session' (i.e. representatives of the congregation), not by the old chief and

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 25-41.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

his village headmen. In some villages the 'elder' is both a religious leader and a secular authority, but there is a tendency to separate the two offices and to appoint a 'peacemaker' whose duty it is to settle disputes, collect taxes, and represent the village in its relationships with the chief and the administration, while the 'elder' confines himself to watching over the spiritual welfare of his people. Such division of authority is symptomatic of the growing differentiation of Nyakyusa society.

e. Witchcraft, medicines, and the British administration

Under British administration the use of the *umwafi* ordeal, imputation of witchcraft, intimidation or obtaining goods under false pretences by threats of witchcraft or sorcery, or offers of protection against them, are punishable offences. As we have seen, the ordeal is now administered only in the greatest secrecy, and probably very seldom, but accusations of witchcraft are frequent, and are even heard before the Native Courts, though not recorded (*vide* Document, p. 257). In the villages near the Government station more caution is observed in making accusations than in more remote parts of the district: very often the identity of the witch is only hinted at, or thorns are piled at his door by persons who remain anonymous (*vide supra*, p. 114) so that no individual can be convicted of imputing witchcraft. As one man put it: '"The defenders" see the witches, but cannot name them to anyone.' Autopsies continue in conservative villages but they are no longer performed on every corpse, as is said to have been customary in the old days. The chief Porokoto, himself a sceptic, argued that it was no use performing an autopsy when a charge could not be laid. If the members of a village are all convinced that a particular fellow is a witch he is forced to move, since his unpopularity becomes intolerable to him (*supra*, pp. 110–5). As Mwambuputa put it: 'We don't like him, and he doesn't like us either: he does not enjoy our company (*atikwangala na nuswe*), so he moves.' But if the friction is only between two individuals, the supposed witch may brazen it out, for without resort to the *umwafi* ordeal there is no sure means of deciding between the accuser and the accused.

The prohibition of witch-finding is not accepted as right and just: the common view is that the Europeans 'protect the witches',

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

622 parties before referring the matter to the chief. And any decisions
627 they may have reached are reported to the chief.

Disputes between members of a boys' village may be settled by the leader of their village, but more serious cases go to the headman of their fathers' village, and may proceed through him to the senior headman of the side. Old men go to their own headmen, but there is an appeal to the senior headman of the ruling generation, on the side in which they live, except in inheritance cases. In these the old men are the ultimate authority. Christians living in sections of pagan villages take their cases to their section leader—himself a Christian, whose position is comparable to that
627 of a pagan assistant headman. Thence a civil case goes to the village headman, but where an offence against the Christian code
795 is involved (as in theft, or adultery, or wife-beating) the case also comes before the court of the congregation, consisting of the minister, elders, and deacons. Disputes between members of Christian villages established on mission land come before the 'elder' or 'peacemaker' of the village, appointed by the Church, and if they are not settled by him they usually go directly to the chief. They also come before the court of the congregation if they involve an offence against Church law (cf. Document, pp. 262–3).

627 Disputes between pagan women are settled in the same way as disputes between men. There is neither the leadership and authority of a senior woman of the homestead as among the Nguni and Bemba,[1] nor that of a senior age-set or women's council as among the Meru[2]. The first woman to be settled as a wife in a young men's village is, as we have seen, entitled to the deference of the wives who follow her, but she has no authority over them. In the same way, though a man's senior wife takes precedence in family rituals, and the wife of a headman may lead in a village ritual, or the wife of a chief in one made on behalf of the country, such precedence in ritual does not carry authority over other women. Certain women versed in the rituals performed at puberty, marriage, birth, and death, and knowing the proper medicines to use, are called in on these occasions, but such

[1] Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, pp. 18, 35–41; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 38–9; A. I. Richards, *Bemba Marriage and Present Economic Conditions*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 4, pp. 67–9.

[2] E. M. Holding, 'Women's Institutions and the African Church', *International Review of Missions*, July 1942, pp. 290–300.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

abanyago have no more general authority than the doctors who divine or treat the sick. Their parallels among men are the priests (also called *abanyago*) who perform the rain ritual and the sacrifices to dead chiefs. 627

The one position which endows a woman with legal authority is that of father's sister. A senior sister has a joint responsibility, along with the headman of the village, for the distribution of her dead brother's property, and her brother's children may appeal to her to arbitrate if they have a dispute with their father while he is yet alive: this is particularly important in the families of chiefs, since a chief's son cannot bring his father before commoners for arbitration. The authority of a father's sister is, however, exercised only within the lineage and does not extend even to wives of lineage members. Co-wives may take a dispute for arbitration to their husband, but if, as often happens, he is thought to be prejudiced, they go to a male neighbour, or to the headman of the village, in the same way as when the dispute is with an unrelated person (cf. p. 140). 627 768 613 604

Only in the group of unmarried girls in a village does there appear to be the germ of control by seniors of the same sex. We traced one case in which a quarrel between two girls nearing the age of puberty was settled by the slightly older girls of the same village, who punished one who had beaten her fellow without justification, and then lied to them when they inquired into the case, by scratching her with their nails. As they reach puberty the girls, who have grown up together in one village and formed a closely knit group, become scattered among the different age-villages of their husbands and there leadership among women is not developed (*vide infra*, pp. 171–2). This does not mean, however, that women are excluded from arbitration; they can, and frequently do, bring cases on their own account, not necessarily acting through husband or father. Unlike the pagans, Christian women who have quarrelled do sometimes ask a leading woman of their congregation to arbitrate. At Rungwe the women leaders were the sister of the chief and the wife of a teacher, both personalities; and it was to them that their fellows went to relate their troubles and ask for an opinion. We traced two such cases. Very often, however, Christian women go to a man, the Christian leader of the village, as their husbands do. 627 795 627

The Administration has not attempted to suppress arbitration 627

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

166 A man who has been driven out and then fetched back pro-
783 vides a feast for his friends on his return. This feast is essentially the same as the 'ritual of reconciliation' that takes place when a wrong-doer begs pardon of his own village or that of his father (*vide supra*, p. 101). For a private individual only his own village is concerned, but if the exile happens to be a senior headman then all the villages of the chiefdom participate. A detailed account of such a feast, which we attended, is given on pp. 271–4.

166 In a civilized society social separation overcomes friction in
two ways: first, it separates individuals who are personally in-
●795 compatible, and secondly, it provides the individual who is a
578 misfit in one group with a choice of groups whose values may be more compatible with his own than those of the group from which he came.[1] In Nyakyusa society villages were formerly all of the same type, with virtually identical group values, therefore the individual only escaped from personal incompatibilities by moving. In the modern society, however, there is a variation of type as between pagan and Christian villages and, among the Christians, as between the several denominations. The convert in a pagan village often moves to a Christian village finding that more compatible, and the son of a Christian, having abandoned Christianity and perhaps married several wives, leaves the Christian village in which he grew up and joins a pagan one with whose members he has more in common.

578 The Nyakyusa, in their rationalizations about witchcraft,
recognize the fact that friction is often personal and may be over-
166 come by moving. Constantly villages receive individuals who have been driven out of some other village for practising witch-
754 craft, and when we inquired whether a man who had once been accused was not feared as a neighbour, the reply was always in the same tenor as that of Mwamunda: 'Perhaps he has bewitched his fellows there, we do not know, but he has not bewitched us.' There is also the implication that quarrels may be forgotten after a temporary separation, since those who have moved because they feared witchcraft, and even some who have been accused of practising witchcraft, are welcomed back.

578 When our informants discussed moving and returning to the
home village they always emphasized friction with one's fellows
166 (*abanine*) as providing the chief impetus to move, and the desire

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, op. cit., pp. 60–1.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 561 562 on the other hand, come from many villages, and they move from village to village more than men, because most women are inherited at least once in their lives. Nor do the women form an age-set, for men inherit wives as old, or older than themselves, and they continue to marry young brides until they themselves are elderly. A village thus contains women of all ages, the older ones often being quite late-comers to it. There is neither the unity of a kinship group, with leadership of mother or grandmother, as among a matrilineal people like the Bemba, nor the leadership of the mother-in-law as among the patrilineal Nguni and Sotho peoples. It is true that among the latter peoples the leadership of women devolves on a man's senior wife when his mother is dead, but the pattern has developed in a society in which daughters-in-law usually live for a long time in the same homestead as their mother-in-law, whereas among the pagan Nyakyusa a woman rarely joins her own son until she is decrepit, long after his marriage. When the Nguni or Sotho chief wife is obeyed by her co-wives it is as the successor of her mother-in-law; indeed on the latter's death she is often referred to by junior wives as 'mother'. Where women have authority in a patrilineal society it is usually as mother, or grandmother, or father's sister. But there are none with such positions in the context of the age-village; the office of headman is not hereditary so there is no mother of the heir, and the headman's own mother and sisters normally live elsewhere.

562 613 595 Such solidarity and leadership as exist among women in pagan Nyakyusa society are within the group of women of the same lineage who live together. Great emphasis is laid on the propriety of a wife bringing a younger sister, or brother's daughter, as a junior wife for her husband (*ukusakula*): this is felt to be a compliment to the husband and a comfort to the wife, proof that the marriage has been a success. Co-wives who are of the same lineage are very closely identified, their children being treated almost as full siblings, and they themselves co-operating in everything.

562 795 One of the marked changes in contemporary Nyakyusa society is the development of leadership among women in the Christian congregations.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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(c) *'The Curse' of Christians*

MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of Sufferer	Misfortune	Alleged sin	Category of individual or group believed to have called down a curse
1	Ex-schoolboy	Cannot get a job	Disobeyed his Nyakyusa teacher	Teacher
2	Ex schoolboy	Dismissed from government job. Reason unknown. Unemployed	Sent to boarding school with mission money, then refused to work for mission. Later married 12 wives. He also stole	The congregation
3	Teacher, son of elder	Eaten by a crocodile (seven years after sinning)	Committed adultery with daughter of chief. Spoke against the church	The congregation
4	Son of elder	Died of venereal disease	Committed adultery	The congregation
5	Pagan man	Died	Refused food to travelling Christian elder	The elder
6	Mohammedan man	Cut his leg with his hoe	Hoed on Sunday	Two Christian men
7	Ex-schoolboy	Always lost his job though clever and good English-speaker. Now a fisherman and 'talks English to the fish'	Not known	European missionary
8	Ex-boarding schoolboy	Cannot get a job. 'Just hoeing like uneducated people'	Eloped with a girl betrothed to a fellow Christian	European missionary
9	Christian woman	Paralysed for sixteen years	Took an unfair share of meat at feasts	Christian neighbours
10	Man-servant of missionary	Married several times. Each time wife died	Dressed in missionary's clothes and sat at table pretending to write with his pen	European missionary
11	Rich man	Property disappeared	Caught with a woman and denied having committed adultery	European missionary (said to have uttered a conditional curse: 'If you are lying all your property will disappear')
12	Woman	Became a wanderer	Stole things from loft of mother-in-law's hut. Disobeyed husband and complained of him to neighbours. Asked for divorce	European missionary
13	Young man, newly married	Did not beget a child	Did not make a wedding feast for his neighbours in Christian village	Christian neighbours (complaining they had eaten no meat). Young man's pagan 'mothers' inquired of diviner and this was the diagnosis

[p.209]

I: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

33. SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES IN CHRISTIAN VILLAGES

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a. *Christian suing a Christian*

Mundekesye (appointed by the Church to settle disputes in villages on Itete mission land).

'Nsangalofu (a Christian elder) accused Jonah's son, Lwimkio, of making love to the wife of Nsangalofu's son, Nkisu. I (Mundekesye) was trying the case between Nkisu and Lwimiko. Lwimiko denied everything, but Nkisu's wife said: "Yes, he was making love to me; he did so on three occasions." I gave judgement, saying: "You Lwimiko, are guilty, because the woman admits it," and ordered Lwimiko to pay a cow. Lwimiko refused, so I took the case to the Court. I reported my decision and Lwimiko's refusal to pay. The Court asked Lwimiko why he refused to pay up when the woman admitted their guilt, and ordered him to pay a cow.

'I reported the case to Mwangomo (the chief in whose country Mundekesye lives), but as it was quite clear I took it direct to Court. Difficult cases I take to Mwangomo before they go on to Court.

'Nsangalofu and Nkisu brought the case to me. I called the elders of the Church to be present at the hearing of the case. The congregation notified Mwakapelela (the European missionary who lives on another station) and he ordered that Lwimiko should move off mission land. Lwimiko and Nkisu had both built in Mpanda (a boys' village on mission land).'

b. *Arbitration between Christians*

Asagene (Christian deacon in Itete).

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'Mogege accused Amanise of stealing a cloth belonging to him, and brought Amanise before his fellows. He brought him to Rheuben, near whom he lives.

'Amanise denied the accusation, so the case was taken to Mundekesye (*vide supra*). Mundekesye tried the case with "all the congregation" (i.e. elders and deacons and anyone who cared to attend the court) and found Amanise guilty. The case was then taken before the missionary who ordered that Amanise should be fined 5s. and suspended from membership of the Church. He also ordered that should he refuse to pay he should move off mission land, because this was the

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

second occasion on which he had been found guilty of theft. (The elders of the congregation had suggested turning Amanise off mission land immediately, but the missionary advised giving him a second chance and fining him.)'

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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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TO WHOM DO THEY PRAY?

Abanyafyale, abanyafyale bikwiputa kugu?
Abanyafyale, abanyafyale bikwiputa kugu?
Kubasyuka! Kubasyuka!

Chorus: Alikumwanya! Alikumwanya!

Abasungu, abasungu bikwiputa kugu?
Abasungu, abasungu bikwiputa kugu?
Kundalama! Kundalama!

Chorus: Alikumwanya! Alikumwanya!

Abisilamu, abisilamu, bikwiputa kugu?
Abisilamu, abisilamu, bikwiputa kugu?
Kwa Mohamedi! Kwa Mohamedi!

Chorus: Alikumwanya! Alikumwanya!

Abosigwa, abosigwa, bikwiputa kugu?
Abosigwa, abosigwa, bikwiputa kugu?
Kwa Jesu! Kwa Jesu!

Chorus: Alikumwanya! Alikumwanya!

Translation

The chiefs, the chiefs to whom do they pray?
The chiefs, the chiefs to whom do they pray?
To the shades! To the shades!

Chorus: He is above! He is above!

The Europeans, the Europeans to whom do they pray?
The Europeans, the Europeans to whom do they pray?
To money! To money!

Chorus: He is above! He is above!

The Mohammedans, the Mohammedans to whom do they pray?
The Mohammedans, the Mohammedans to whom to they pray?
To Mohammed! To Mohammed!

Chorus: He is above! He is above!

The baptised, the baptised to whom do they pray?
The baptised, the baptised to whom do they pray?
To Jesus! To Jesus!

Chorus: He is above! He is above!

(Song of Nyakyusa Christians)

[p. v]
[p vi is blank]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

forted, I think people follow the custom, many have come to see me.' 781 764

There is no criticism of men or women who come to a burial to dance rather than to weep: 'They are not relatives—it is our custom of mourning.' They are saluting the dead and 'seeing him on his way', they are helping 'to comfort the relatives'. The presence of non-relatives at a burial is variously determined by feelings of affection and grief, of respect and sympathy for the family, by a sense of shame, by fear of being accused of witchcraft, and finally by the attraction of the crowds, the lively conversation, the dancing, and the meat. [183]

At the burial of a Nyakyusa Christian there is little unrestrained wailing and no dancing; instead the young men of the congregation gather round the grieving relatives and sing cheerful hymns, full of the certainty of Heaven, 'to accompany him on his way to God' and 'to comfort the mourners'. 781 764 795 184

(*e*) *Prestige at funerals*

As has already been indicated, the length of the mourning depends upon the status of the deceased. It is short for a child—there is no sacrifice and no crowd; for a rich man it is longer than for a poor man; for the kinsman of a chief longer than for a commoner. Mwaikambo explained: 764 555 556

> Many conceal their position (*ubufumuke*), it only appears at death. People may never know that a man is rich—only those who build close to him will know—but when he dies many know; many people come to the funeral. For a commoner, an ordinary person, the drums usually play a lament for two days only, sometimes for three, but for a village headman they play the lament for four days, or perhaps a week, and also for a man who has married a chief's daughter it continues for four days or a week. Then people ask why the drums are playing for so long and the reply comes: 'He married into the chief's family. The chief honours him in kinship.' Drums follow the importance of a man.
>
> Those who stay longest at a funeral are kinsmen. If a man has many kinsmen then the funeral will last long because his kinsmen do not return home quickly. A chief has many kinsmen, more than anyone else, because the people of his chiefdom are all like kinsmen. With a village headman also the people who build with him are somewhat like kinsmen, and his funeral lasts a long time.

The size of the crowd at a funeral depends very largely upon the amount of meat provided, and this in turn depends upon th 764 556

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

her mother-in-law covers her head with a red cloth 'for display'. 'We are rejoicing because our child has grown up,' and she too takes her on her shoulders and dances with her. When the 'husbands' come to dance the stamping dance: 'It too is a rejoicing. It shows I have married a wife now.' All through there is rejoicing over the fine food, and the celebration and feasting is primarily among the women. The culmination comes when the girl is publicly shown to be a virgin and the mothers can claim the bull crying in exultation: 'It's ours, it's ours.'

An interesting sidelight on the attitude of girls towards the ritual came from a young man, a Christian, who was betrothed to a pagan girl and had forbidden her to go through the ritual. He said:

> Once my wife, when she had reached puberty, asked me why I objected to her undergoing the puberty ritual. I said it was forbidden for us Christians to participate in it, and I asked her if she wished to do so. She said 'Yes', and I asked why. She said: 'When the ritual is performed for us we are famed. People tell each other that so-and-so's daughter has grown up and people from far away come to sing songs, so we become very well known. See, now I have grown up, but no one sees that I have done so. Only you know.' Then I said: 'We Christians also have the custom of celebrating growing up at the handing over of marriage-cattle to the father (*ukukwa*). We do not hand over cattle when girls are still small, so everyone sees that a girl has grown up when we do so.' She agreed and said: 'I, also, have seen a little of the handing over of cattle among Christians.'

In fact, the *ukukwa* is the occasion for a great feast among Christians to which many young men and girls come to sing and dance.

The giving of presents to the bride by her father and his contemporaries is interpreted as part of the rejoicing.

> To give presents (*ukubonola*) is to rejoice. It's an occasion for display and rejoicing, because the girl has grown up. The father gives her a present because he rejoices that she has grown up. He says to her: 'Congratulations, you have grown up, you are going away to your husband, you are going away to gain a child!'

During the period of seclusion the girl's father is spoken of as her father-in-law (*unkamwana*). She must *ukutila* (respect and avoid) him:

> Because he is her father who begot her. She thinks: 'I must respect

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ritual they distinguish *abakamu* (kinsmen) from *abandu itolo* (non-relatives) or *abapakipanga* (villagers), and *abakikolo* (those of the lineage of a dead man) from *abako* (affines) and mother's relatives (*abipwa*). These categories have different functions.

(*b*) *Christians*

The performance of family rituals is complicated by the fact that 16 per cent of the Nyakyusa are professing Christians, and in almost every lineage there are individuals who withdraw from the full performance of traditional rituals at death, puberty, and marriage, birth, and misfortune. In most cases such a withdrawal is treated tolerantly by the pagan kinsmen: the Christian kinsmen come to mourn, to congratulate the bride, to express sympathy with the parents of twins; and their non-participation in the washing and shaving and avoidance of ritual meat and beer is accepted. At the funeral of Mwamulenga his preceding full brother, who should have been a principal in the death ritual, was a Christian, and he took no part, though his children went through it. At the funeral of Mwampiki (p. 248) one boy was left untreated on the ground that he was a Christian and a Christian 'should not have two gods'. At the puberty ritual of Mwaihojo's daughter (p. 91) the brother called to wash with her was influenced by Christians and was reluctant to take part, though he finally did so.

Only when a son who is heir to family wealth, or to the office of chieftainship or priesthood refuses the inheritance of widows (as a Christian must do) is there very strong pressure on him to conform to traditional custom: the union of the heir with the widows is held essential to their health. Sometimes also there is acute conflict between different members of the family over the performance of an autopsy, the pagans pressing for it and the Christians opposing it. This we saw in the death of E. when her pagan senior brother wished to examine her, and her Christian junior brother opposed him vehemently.

That Christians cannot take part in certain of the rituals[1] and do not suffer if they omit them is generally accepted. The farewell to the dead at the homestead of the deceased, and the treatment of kinsmen of twins, fall into this category. About certain other rituals, such as the ritual of the gasping cough and the protection against sorcery, opinions are divided. Some of our Christian friends insisted that 'the gasping cough is a real illness' and cited

[1] There are minor differences in the rules of the different missions.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

795 the case of a Christian who had stayed away from a ritual in his
184 family and 'as soon as he met his relatives he fell sick and coughed
788 like an animal. So they got some of the lees of the beer and gave it to him and he recovered.' A number of Christian kinsmen, leaders in the Church, did not come to the gasping-cough ritual which we attended, but others did come and sipped the beer, or had the lees sent to them at their homes. In the ritual for protection against sorcery which we watched a Christian brother and his wife took part.

And some Christians, though they deny the necessity of many of the pagan rituals for themselves as Christians, still believe them to be necessary to their pagan kinsmen. Hence the anomalous (and to the missionaries the highly unorthodox) position of a woman professing Christianity and acting as officiant in a pagan ritual, as did N. in the death ritual for Kalata's mother (p. 239). N., it will be remembered, came by night. The officiant who performed the ritual for Mwakobela's twins was under instruction as a Christian and was proposing to hand on her medicines to her daughter, a pagan, when she herself was received into the Church. She explained this when Mwakobela (her patient) asked her: 'And what shall we do for twin medicine when you become a Christian?' And we had little doubt that she believed in the efficacy of her medicine for pagans.

Though Christians cannot go through pagan rituals as principals they do not withdraw altogether: they often help their pagan neighbours as grave-diggers at a funeral and in the provision of food for guests at funerals and marriages; and the young men and girls may dance as a separate group, singing their own
[578] songs or hymns and ignoring the drums. Sometimes acute rivalry between the two groups of dancers is apparent.

771 The effect of Christian teaching on pagan ritual is not limited
177 to the partial withdrawal of professing Christians. In those villages most influenced by missions, such as Ilolo, near Rungwe, there is considerable scepticism among pagans, and many of them curtail the rituals in their families, or do not attend them. The Christian view is that 'the pagans see that the Christians disregard the rituals and nothing happens to them, so they begin to ignore them too'. 'Pagans fear much less than they used to do.'

177 Men who are in European employment either inside or outside
464 the district cannot attend all the rituals. Their case is partially met by keeping the lees of the ritual beer with which to treat them

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

And every year two hereditary Kinga priests come a three days journey from their own country to participate in the sacrifice of a black cow to the spirits of Lwembe and his descendants.

Down by Lake Nyasa, in the extreme South East of the Nyakyusa district, there is another equally sacred spot where sacrifices were, and believe still are[21] made to Kyala, a younger brother of Lwembe.

The Christians and the Moslems form other religious groups which transcend the boundaries of a single chiefdom, but an examination of the Nyakyusa Christian and Moslem communities is beyond the scope of this paper.

The political group which is constituted by a Court district, though only ten years old, is of great importance in Nyakyusa society ; but here again the detailed examination of its organization and the relationships of its members is beyond the scope of this paper.

Conclusion : Culture and Society

The aim of sociology is to describe single forms of society fully and, in comparison with one another, to explain them completely, in so far as reasons can be found within this particular scientific field. Neither full description nor complete explanation of Nyakyusa society has here been attempted : many important facts have been omitted from the account, irregularities of detail have been slurred over, the connections of fact have been only occasionally and sketchily established, and no systematic comparison of this unit with others has been made at all.

But the method of this paper has involved an analysis, summary and general though it has been, of the nature of some of the many institutions in which the Nyakyusa meet, of some of the actual elements in their relationships with one another. It is in their dealings with the earth and their cattle, with the spirits and with men who break the law, in their discussions and arguments, their ceremonial feasts, their giving and receiving, in their loves and hates and in their admiration and mockery of one another that they forever make and remake their own human relationships.

Culture is the matter of which society is the form ; inseparable in fact they are only intelligible together. No two men can be related unless they both do something and unless their activities are somehow connected. Nor can either escape relationship with his fellow if what

[21] I have not yet been there to investigate.

9: Wilson
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FN17 Ngonde
Nyakyusa

[For data on the various Christian sects and their missionary activities, see category 116, pp. 166-202./

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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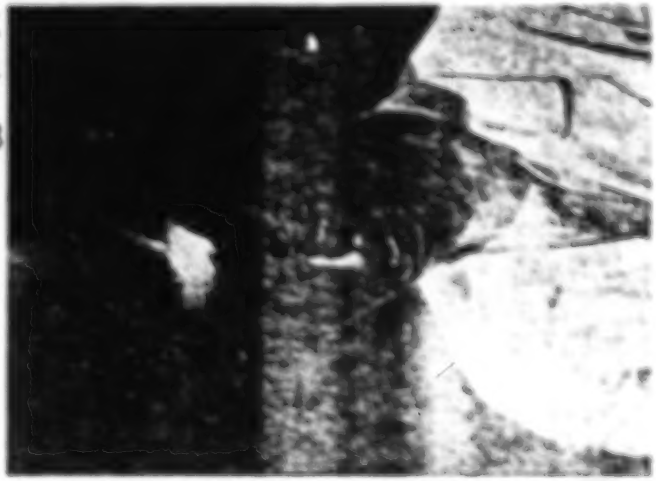

166. NYAMBEE, LEADER OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CHURCH

167. MOSHELA, FOUNDER OF A SEPARATIST CHURCH

[opp. p. 166]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 conscious. This disintegration of a former coherence, and a [769] decreasing awareness of the meaning of symbols used, are perhaps [796] characteristic of changing societies in Africa.

Despite the growth of the Christian Church, the great demand for schools, and the dropping of the old rituals directed to family [754] shades and the heroes, belief in the power of medicines flourishes. [778] Probably most deaths and misfortunes are still attributed to an enemy using either witchcraft or sorcery. The traditional belief in witchcraft is rejected by educated people, but belief in the power of medicines is general. Autopsies still take place and occasionally the poison ordeal is administered in secrecy; one case was mentioned which occurred in 1942. As we have seen, medicines have always been regarded as a potential instrument of individual competition. They are used in the rituals of kinship to ensure health, fertility, and good manners and morals; in the ritual of chieftainship to buttress authority, and in 'sprinkling the homesteads' to fertilize the fields; but also by individuals to steal the fertility of their neighbours' fields and to grow rich at the expense of their neighbours, and it is their use as an instrument of individual aggrandisement that is most talked of today. There were many reports of their use by rivals to office as chiefs, and the floods of 1955, which washed away the Mbaka bridge and caused a serious landslide on that river, were interpreted as incidents in a [578] prolonged fight between chiefs who were rivals for the position of paramount. The deaths of the heir of one of them in 1953, and of the other chief himself in 1956, were also attributed to their duel with medicines.

Along with the political changes there has been a development 797 of the Churches, more particularly of the Moravian Church, which is now largely self-supporting, with growing congregations 795 served by African ministers.[1] Until 1938 the two main Protestant 177 missions in Nyakyusa valley, the Moravian and Lutheran, were staffed by Germans and their funds came mainly from Germany. The war meant the withdrawal of the missionaries and the cutting off of funds. After a lapse of three years one Moravian missionary, and later one Lutheran, came to take charge of the missions and they were reinforced by other missionaries after the end of the war, but the whole policy in both missions is to build up self-supporting churches staffed by African pastors.

The work of the White Fathers mission was not interrupted by

[1] Change in Ngonde is not discussed.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the war and the form of its activities has not altered appreciably. Three other missions based elsewhere now have small congregations in the District and a Lutheran pastor under discipline broke away and formed his own 'independent' Church, which differs from the other 'independent' Churches in that the rule of monogamy is enforced. 177 797 795

The total number of converts has increased very considerably, much more than keeping pace with the increase in population; taking the three main missions together, their converts form over 14 per cent of the total population.[1] Figures for the five mission Churches with small congregations in the District—Pentecostal Holiness, Assemblies of God, Seventh Day Adventists, Anglican, and Watch Tower—are not available. Nor do we know the membership of one of the 'independent' African Churches, but supposing the membership of the missions with small congregations in the District to be 2,000 (a conservative estimate) the percentage claiming to be Christian is 24 per cent as against 16 per cent in 1938. Dissimilarities in the response to Christian teaching in different areas are very marked. Around Rungwe, the main Moravian mission-station, the bulk of the population is Christian, and the whole atmosphere is that of a Christian community, whereas in Selya, where mission work began in 1891 as it did in Rungwe, Christians still form a small minority in dominantly pagan chiefdoms. The reasons for this difference are complex. One factor is that Selya is geographically isolated whereas Rungwe is near a main road and within easy reach of the Government and trading centre Tukuyu; but much more important have been differences in mission policy regarding education, and differences in the personalities of missionaries, chiefs, and early converts. [162]

The change from a society based on kinship to one based on voluntary association is apparent in the economic field as well as in the religious. Co-operative societies formed by producers of coffee and rice, which collect and market the crops, and give opportunity 177 474 454

[1] Figures supplied by the courtesy of the missionaries directing each mission and the leaders of two 'independent' Churches were as follows for 1954:

Moravians		29,590
Lutherans		10,000 (approximately)
Roman Catholic		4,700
Last Church (Ngonde) (Also called 'Native Mission')	('independent')	10,781
'African Lutheran Church'	('independent')	200

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tructure? And how far does the new economic and political 182
rganization produce a change in religion? These theoretical 769
uestions can be answered only by a series of comparative studies. 797
Here there is evidence for one area alone, and the connexions
vhich we postulate can be established only if they hold in a whole
ange of societies.

Christianity implies an emergence from the nexus of kinship, 182
or the worshipping group is two or three believers, not a body of 797
inshmen, and conversion is a personal choice. This is more obvious 795
n a missionary church than in one long established, for, as we
ave seen, the convert in a pagan community must withdraw from 602
is kinsfolk to become a Christian,[1] but it remains true, even in a
Christian society. The new doctrine implies a body of believers—
Church. The particular form varies, but the Church has
ppeared wherever the Christian faith has been established.
n short, we argue that the change in religion necessarily disrupts
n organization based primarily on kinship and establishes a
ew type of organization based partly on voluntary association.
Vith the change from the ritual of the lineage to the ritual of the
Church the authority and leadership of senior kinsmen is diminished; they are replaced by 'elders' and priests or pastors whose
asis of authority is not birth, but selection by the Church.
Furthermore, association for worship becomes a pattern for
ssociation in other fields, and the Church is the training ground
among the Nyakyusa, as it has been among so many other peoples,
or organizers of other types of societies.

And not only is kinship subordinated to faith; the forms of 182
inship are themselves modified. From the time of their first 595
rrival the missionaries have taught that Christianity implies 797
nonogamy and they have baptized no polygynist who does not
ut away his additional wives. This teaching has been questioned
y many Africans and by some European missionaries themselves,
vho doubt the wisdom of persuading a man already married to
end away his wives—or even of countenancing such an action.
But the rule of monogamy has remained as a condition of membership in all the Churches with European connexions.[2] It has been
ejected, as we have seen, by two of the 'independent' African

[1] *ibid.*, pp. 197-9.

[2] The rule was suspended for a brief period in one mission working not far from he Nyakyusa area, but was later enforced. cf. Lyndon Harries in *Survey of African Marriage and Family Life* (edited by A. Phillips), pp. 341-2.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

articular symbols are tied to a particular social structure; the poet makes his choice within the whole range of the familiar.

The impetus to change has come both from the religious field and from the secular. For example, the pressure towards monogamy among the Nyakyusa has been religious; given plentiful land and cash crops additional wives are an economic asset, not a liability. In this respect the contrast with the Ciskei in South Africa, where families are dependent for food on wage-earners in towns, and no man can support two families,[1] is marked. On the other hand, the decay of Nyakyusa age-villages is primarily due to economic pressure, though it is facilitated by the insistence of Christians that there is no danger in father-in-law and daughter-in-law meeting one another. The first generation of Christians living on mission land built villages apart for their sons, despite the teaching that avoidance of a father-in-law by his daughter-in-law was foolish, if not sinful. But a radical change in pagan observance of ritual avoidance is brought about by the general practice of going out to work for long periods, and the competition for coffee and rice-lands, which makes the territorial separation of fathers and sons impossible. As we have shown, young men going to work commonly leave their wives in their fathers' homesteads, valuing the support and supervision given them there above the old stringency of avoidance and, where land is scarce and valuable, fathers do not move aside each generation to make way for their sons. Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law continues only in an attenuated form.

From German times control by a European government has compelled a modification of the traditional sacrifices to the heroes and of the ritual of chieftainship. How the Kinga priests came to Lubaga 'in secret' and how they failed to instal a new Lwembe after the death of Mwakisisya about 1914 has been described. Killing a child to anoint a drum or make medicine for the fields, compelling a man to accept a dangerous office, killing chiefs because they are ailing, or plucking off their nails before they die; all these are actions which are held, and must be held, to be 'contrary to natural justice' by any Western government. Here the change in political organization compels a change in ritual and there is evidence that belief in the traditional forms is much diminished, though not dead. The European government also

[1] Keiskammahoek Rural Survey. Vol. ii, *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, by D. H. Houghton and E. M. Walton; vol. iii, *Social Structure*, by M. Wilson *et al.*

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

CHAPTER III

FAREWELL TO THE DEAD

AFTER spending three or four days weeping, and feasting, and 765
dancing, the main body of mourners scatter to their homes, but the close kinsmen remain for a week or two sleeping at the home of the deceased, awaiting the ritual of farewell. The Nyakyusa themselves distinguish three main events in it: the 'picking up of pumpkin-seeds' (*ukusala inyungu*) when the chief mourners first begin to wash; the 'shaving of the sprouting hair' (*ukutemela ilitemelo*) when the beer of inheritance is brewed and the estate divided; and the 'ritual of the gasping cough' (*ingotolo*) when the widows, having lain with the heir, go to visit their parents. The details differ appreciably between Selya and MuNgonde on the one hand, [184] and Kukwe country on the other, and we describe them separately.

I. IN SELYA AND MUNGONDE

(*a*) *The events*

i. '*Picking up pumpkin-seeds.*' The picking up of pumpkin-seeds 768
begins with the formal recognition of the heir, if the deceased was a 765
married man. The heir and widows are suddenly seized and hustled, 796
resisting, into the mourning hut. If they go willingly 'it seems as if they wished their relative to die'. The officiant smears their chests with ash and puts a strand of the *ilingolongofwa* creeper on each one's right shoulder. These are both signs of mourning, and the creeper is also 'a sign that we have given him the inheritance'. After a few minutes the heir and widows are formally summoned to come out of the hut, and they go off to wash away the ash and creeper in the stream. But first, the flowering head of a banana is buried in the courtyard near the door of the mourning hut and the grave of the deceased. If he was not a married man and there are no widows to be inherited, the ritual begins with this. The banana flower is explicitly identified with the corpse: it must face in the direction from which the ancestors came, as the corpse does; if the deceased is a male the flowering head is from a plantain (*itoki*); if a female from a sweet banana (*injali* or *indefu* or

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

765 *iselya*); and it is wrapped in a leaf (of the same species as the
768 flower) which represents a blanket. The symbolism is interpreted
796 in terms of the habit of growth. A trunk of plantain or sweet banana flowers and fruits only once, then dies and is pruned away, being replaced by a sucker from the same root, hence the association between the flower and the corpse. *Ilitoki* is a large variety of
[262] plantain, eaten when it is green and hard; *injali* is a smallish banana eaten when it is ripe and sweet, and it takes nine months to develop. 'When an *injali* stem forms and a woman conceives a child at the same time, the bananas will be ripe and the woman bear her child together.' No one hesitated about this identification of plantain with male, sweet banana with female; it is as obvious in Nyakyusa as the associations of 'breeches' and 'petticoats' in English.

765 The officiant sprinkles a powdered medicine on to the earth of the grave and all the participants (that is, the heirs, widows, children, and certain siblings of the deceased) rub themselves in it. They rub forehead, right elbow, right knee, and right toe in the pile of earth. Only chiefs and their close relatives and twins refrain, for they have been drinking medicines, and such close contact with a corpse would 'spoil their medicine': 'The medicine would go rotten if they touched the grave which contains medicine,' so the chief's forehead, etc., must not touch the grave. He merely touches the earth with a finger-tip.

783 Having touched the earth, all the participants go to wash in a stream, and when they return they wash again ritually in the
765 doorway of the mourning hut, the doctor pouring out medicated water from a small calabash and each participant catching the water in his hands and rubbing them and his mouth and knees with it. Then they oil themselves. Until this ritual they must remain dirty and dishevelled with the mud and ash of mourning on them, and any who steal away to wash are fined by the other relatives.

765 Next the officiant takes roasted bananas and sticks into each one or more pumpkin-pips (*inyungu*) and one or more lentils (*inandala*).[1] She half-buries these in the earth at the doorway of the hut, or sits in the doorway holding a banana near the ground, and each participant approaches in turn and stoops and bites off the banana, and eats it.

The *ulufumbo* (the litter of dry banana leaves on which the

[1] Some also add cowpeas (*imbange*), others oil-seeds (*inyemba*).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764 by the dust, at some other funeral without having completed the
765 ritual for his own parents, and the danger of the 'gasping cough'
828 exists only when a widow, having lain with the heir, eats or drinks with her own relatives.

796 Everyone knows the connection between madness and the performance of the whole ritual and between coughing and the final act, but not everyone is conscious of the symbolism of the various events. For example, Mwakisisile, a middle-aged pagan man whom we knew well, could not interpret the details of the symbolism and he explained: 'Some ask about these things in the ritual, some do not ask. I have not asked. We only know, many of us, that in the ritual we drive the shade, who is here, away from the body, and that if we do not drive him away we run mad. But we do not understand the details of the ritual such as straining water through a leaf, or passing the baskets between the legs, so as to be able to say: "This detail means this." ' Those most conscious of the symbolism are the *abanyago*, the officiants at the family rituals and the priests of the communal rituals. Kasitile, the hereditary rain-maker of Selya, who was a close friend of Godfrey Wilson's, and formally presented him to his dead ancestors urging them 'not to be startled at a white face', was our foremost authority on the symbolism of the Selya ritual. He was more conscious of the symbolism than most people, but his interpretation was confirmed at almost every point by others. Kasitile was not paid for
[124] information—none of our informants was—but he and Godfrey Wilson exchanged gifts from time to time in the manner customary among the Nyakyusa, and he often had a meal with us. Mwandisi, a very old blind chief living on the Lake-shore plain (MuNgonde) who was regarded by the Nyakyusa themselves as an authority on history and custom, was also a friend prepared to expound the
[184] rituals. His interpretation contradicted Kasitile's on one point only—he denied that one purpose of the ritual was to bring back the shade into the house. Other informants, though less coherent, corroborated Kasitile's interpretation, which may therefore be taken as a general, not a personal one.

764 There are nine main themes in the ritual: first, the driving away
765 of the dead from the dreams of his close kinsmen, and measures to
796 prevent him 'brooding over them' (*ukobatela*)—the word is that used of a hen brooding over her chickens. Widows, in particular, must be separated from the shade of their husband before the heir (or any other man) dare have intercourse with them. Secondly, the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

identification of the mourners with the corpse and the separation of the shade from both of them. 'What they do to the participants they do to the deceased. . . . If they are not cleansed he is still muddy. . . . We throw away the corpse, the contamination of death, into the river . . . we drive the shade away off our bodies to join his fellows . . . we separate the corpse and the shade.' Thirdly, bringing back the shade as a beneficent spirit into the home. 'In the ritual we tell the shade to go away and join his fellows, and then to come back with them and warm himself by the fire in our house. . . . At first the shade is in our bodies, we cast him out . . . at first it is as if we were still holding the corpse in our arms, but we throw the corpse away into the river . . . the shade we bring back into our house.'

Fourthly, a miming of the actions of a madman in eating excrement as a prophylactic against behaviour of that sort. The dead, if not separated from the living, bring madness upon them, and simulating madness is a protection against it.

Fifthly, the corpse and faeces are identified: 'The corpse is filth, it is excrement. And so when a madman for whom they have not performed the ritual eats filth that is the corpse, he is still holding it, they have not done the ritual for him.'

Sixthly, the shades are identified with semen and seeds and their control over potency and fertility is recognized. The Nyakyusa think that they are always present in sexual intercourse, and symbols of sexual intercourse are interpreted as a means of driving out the shade from the participants' bodies.

Seventhly, 'the food which he hoed' is symbolically 'given to the shade' of the man who has just died and he is urged to be satisfied: 'You, shade, do not think there was little food at your ritual. . . . The food which we have eaten you have eaten . . . do not create hunger.'

Eighthly, the shade is acknowledged as a kinsman by eating with him food and beer mixed with *ikipiki*—the symbol of agnatic kinship—before he is driven away.

Lastly, a dead man is formally replaced by his heir, a woman by her sister or her brother's daughter.

These conceptions are expressed in the following texts which are given as they were recorded by Godfrey Wilson. No attempt has been made to systematize Kasitile's or Mwandisi's arguments, but the statements made during numerous sessions have been placed in sequence, and are separated only by dots.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IX

THE NYAKYUSA CONCEPTION OF REALITY

(a) *The symbolic pattern*

AFTER these lengthy descriptions and interpretations of family rituals, we at last approach our goal, viz. an analysis of the symbolic pattern of the Nyakyusa people. Contrary to the commonly held theory that ritual is always more constant than interpretation, we find variations in the details of ritual related to variation in descent, but the conceptions expressed vary very little. Some symbols (such as the plantain representing a male and the sweet banana representing a female) occur in all the rituals; others are peculiar to one or other of the cultural groups, but recur in all, or several, of the rituals of that group. Our informants constantly made cross-references between different rituals; the more conscious were aware both of a recurrent symbolic pattern in the rituals of their own dialect group and of a common content with the rituals of other groups. It is clearly recognized, for example, that the foods used in ritual vary with the resources of the area; that the Kukwe cast away the shade by allowing pebbles placed between their fingers and toes to wash down-stream and by burning grass necklaces in which they have slept, while the Nyakyusa do it by throwing away a stem of bananas; in short, that differing ritual idioms express common sentiments.

The framework of all the rituals (save those of misfortune) is the *induction* with a formal laying of the litter of banana leaves in a hut into which the participant is brought to live apart from other people; the retreat or *seclusion* during which he lives and eats apart and is regarded as filthy, for he is 'brooded over' by the shades; and the *bringing out* when the shades are driven away and he is purified. During the seclusion not only is the participant filthy, but he *may* not wash or shave or use cosmetics; in the death ritual he embraces the corpse, smears himself with mud and ash, and mimes the actions of a madman, eating filth, casting off his clothes, and, in the Kukwe version, being mocked at as a fool. The madman is filthy like a corpse and mourners accept identi-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

●796 fication both with corpse and shade. In other rituals the identification is with the shade alone, but still the participant is felt to be filthy and close to madness. The symbols of purification are
796 many: clearing and burning the litter, burning the clothes or
783 leaves worn during the seclusion, elaborate and repeated washing and shaving, and anointing the body with rouge and oil. One aspect of purification is the driving away of the 'filthy' shade symbolized first by throwing away pebbles or a stem of bananas into a running stream; and, secondly, by casting seeds into a pot which is put on the fire, grinding millet in the doorway and letting it fall on bark-cloth, putting various parts of the body on the fire symbolically and grinding them symbolically, passing a winnowing basket of millet between the legs, scattering millet, and dancing the trampling dance. The second group of symbols all represent sexual intercourse. Seed or grain is identified with semen, fire with intercourse, bark-cloth and the round winnowing basket—a woman's basket *par excellence*—represent the woman, and putting seeds on the fire, grinding, passing the basket of millet between the legs, and probably also the trampling dance[1] represent the sex act. The shade is thought to be ejected from the body as semen, and therefore intercourse is a means of driving the shade from the body.

796 An element of the death ritual is the separation of corpse and
775 spirit, the final disposal of the corpse, and the bringing of the new shade back 'to warm himself with the other shades' at the family hearth: he is received as the water which drips from the doorway of the hut, and welcomed to the hearth with music; but the distinction between the corpse which is got rid of and the shade which is welcomed is not maintained systematically. Repeatedly our informants spoke of the shade (*unsyuka*) being driven away from dreams and waking thought, and from men's bodies, as well as being separated from the corpse. The aim of Nyakyusa ritual is not that union with God constantly sought in Christian ritual, but a separation both from the shades and the heroes; for close association with the pagan gods spells madness and death, not fullness of life. A measure of separation from the shades is a condition of fertility as well as of sanity. Intercourse cannot be fruitful until the shades of her father's lineage have 'moved aside a little' from the nubile girl, the shade of a deceased husband from his widow.

[1] The action of the trampling dance and the contexts in which it occurs at death and puberty suggest this, but such an interpretation was not explicitly given.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

We interpret the induction, seclusion, and bringing out as symbols of death and rebirth. There can be no doubt that the induction and seclusion represent death. Strewing leaves—or laying a litter—which is an essential act in every induction is a sign of misfortune and death;[1] and at the induction of a bride her 'mothers' sing: 'Go, go and never return', and 'We wail a dirge'. The mourners, the nubile girl, the mother of a new-born child, and the parents of twins are all 'filthy' and one with the dead; Kasitile said of mourners: 'We have died, we *are* the corpse.' The period of seclusion implies a sojourn with the shades, and our hypothesis is that it represents *both* death and gestation. The hut appears as a symbol of the womb in the pregnancy and 'gasping cough' rituals, and the doorway which 'belongs to the shades' is a symbol for the vagina. In the pregnancy ritual, passing through the doorway is explicitly interpreted as a symbol of birth, and in the death ritual mourners come out of the doorway stooping, and bump their heads against an obstruction. In the 'bringing out' in the death and puberty rituals, the mourners and the nubile girl run in and out of the doorway and water drops from the thatch. Kakune, the doctor, interpreted this as a symbol of the mourners' receiving the shade back on to their bodies. We interpret it, rather more widely, as a symbol of rebirth. Both men and spirit are reborn, the shade in the bodies of the participants. 796

All through the rituals the connection of the shades with potency and fertility is emphasized. They cause menstruation and sexual desire; they are present in intercourse and ejected as semen; they control conception; they control fertility in the fields. 'The shade and the semen are brothers.'[2] 'When they shake the millet and pumpkin-seeds (after ritual connection) the seed is semen . . . and it is the shade. . . .' The symbols of male and female, plantain and sweet banana, recur repeatedly. The wearing of them is explicitly interpreted as a symbol of fertility, and laying them together under the litter is perhaps a symbol of the marriage union, like eating the banana with *ikipiki* medicine. Intercourse between husband and wife is the culmination of the rituals of death, puberty, and twin birth, and is held to be essential to the health of 796 775 831

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 232.

[2] cf. Bhaca, *idlozi*: shade, semen (W. D. Hammond-Tooke, *A General Ethnographic Survey of the amaBhaca*. Unpublished thesis presented for the degree of Ph.D. in the University of Cape Town); Xhosa, *idlozi*: semen virile (A. Kropf, *Kaffir-English Dictionary*); Zulu, *idlozi*: departed spirit (C. M. Doke and Vilikazi, *A Dictionary of the Zulu Language*). 171 196

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

796 the wife or the widow (even though she be old), as well as proof of
775 the support of the shades for the husband or heir. A symbol of the
831 ritual connection, the *ilibalaga*, is offered to the shades of both lineages. Indeed, the rituals of death and twin birth, as well as the ritual of puberty and marriage, may be interpreted as a celebration of the union of husband and wife. For the parents of twins the end of the ritual marks the resumption of married life after a break during which contact between them was felt to be dangerous; for a widow and the heir of a dead man the end of the death ritual marks the beginning of their union.

796 The admonition of a widow or the mother of twins on her proper behaviour as a wife,[1] like a girl at her first marriage, underlines the fact that the death and twin-birth rituals are, in a sense, also marriage rituals.

592 The parts of the homestead connected with the shades are: first,
775 those associated with the procreative activities of husband and wife—the hearth, the bed, and the doorway of the hut. Prayer may be made at the hearth, and offerings are poured out on the hearth-bricks, or left overnight under the bed. 'The doorway is the shades' and much of the action in ritual takes place there. As has already been shown, the hearth is explicitly associated with the sexual life of husband and wife: hearth-bricks are planted at marriage, making fire by friction is a symbol of the marriage union, firewood is associated with a woman's reproductive capacity, and the hearth must not be approached by sexually active people other than the owner of the hut and her husband. The bed is the marriage bed. The doorway is identified with the vagina. Secondly, a defined grove of bananas, usually those nearest the doorway of the chief wife's hut, is thought to be frequented by the shades. It has been shown that plantains and sweet bananas are the symbols of male and female in all the rituals: in the sacred banana grove only plantains are grown. Bananas are propagated by suckers and the symbolism implied (but never explicitly stated) is that the root at which the offering of meat to the shades is placed represents the lineage which continually reproduces itself. What is explicit is that
[778] the banana grove is sacred, and that offerings are placed or buried at the root of a banana plant. We were told: '*ilikemo*[2] *lyabatata*

[1] We did not see this at the twin ritual observed, but were told that the mother of twins was sometimes admonished by her husband's sisters.

[2] *Ilikemo*: a single banana plant from the sacred banana grove, a ritual killing of cattle in the sacred grove of a chief; *inyikemo*: sacrificial meat; *ifikemo*: Holy Communion (modern usage).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

 592

kijenja, ko bikwiputa, the sacred place of the fathers is the banana 775
grove, there they pray.'

The virility of a lineage is symbolized by the *ikipiki* medicine, 796
interpreted as 'our blood' or 'semen'. With it mourners, menstru- 602
ating girls, bride and groom, the new-born babies and their 789
mothers are treated. To provide it or use it is to acknowledge agnatic kinship: husband and wife wash with it together in acknowledgement that the wife is now 'one blood' with her husband; the grandmother gives it to her son's child in acknowledgement of its legitimacy; in the death rituals the mourners eat food with it acknowledging their kinship with the shade. To belong to a lineage is to be protected practically and spiritually, and the *ikipiki* medicine is held to protect those who are 'empty' and weak—the 'hollow men'—from those who are 'heavy' with real semen or medicines.

The shade, *unsyuka,*[1] 'he who is risen from the dead', may be 796
interpreted as the principle of life, but at the same time he is 'the 775
one beneath', *ugwa pasi,* filthy, and fearful. What men worship is life; what they fear is death, corruption; and for the pagan Nyakyusa, as for the Christian,[2] the two are inextricably mingled. *Imindu* (sing. *ilindu*) means dirt, dust, rubbish, the litter of the seclusion hut, and also the shade. When '*mindu*' is cited as the cause of some disease it is the shades (as things rather than persons) which are meant: 'dust to dust' is an image of pagan as of Christian theology. We have spoken of the Nyakyusa disgust for filth (*ubunyali*), which is associated with a corpse, menstruation, childbirth, intercourse, faeces, and all these are identified in some fashion with the shade. Faeces 'go below to the land of the shades'. The hair of a corpse is the shade's, the hair of a girl at puberty is 'the filth of her menstrual blood'. In all the rituals the filth is [783]
buried, shaved off, burnt, washed away, and at the death ritual 'he who is risen' is brought 'to warm himself' at the family hearth, but yet he dwells in the earth and is 'dirty'.

The conception of impurity, uncleanness, associated with phy- 783
siological functions of coition, excretion, menstruation, childbirth and death is, as we have already suggested, a very widespread one.

[1] *Ukusyuka*: to rise from the dead. For the noun the personal class is most commonly used, but some of the old men always spoke of *imisyuka* rather than *abasyuka*. A young man, commenting on this, explained: 'The shades are not people like us, but *imindu*', i.e. they are things—dust—not persons.

[2] 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' John xii, 24.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 The Nyakyusa perhaps emphasize it[1] more than their neighbours
[17] (though not more than the Jews or the Hindus), and their pre-occupation with purification in the rituals is paralleled by the emphasis laid on cleanliness (*ubwifyusi*) in person, in house and courtyard, in cooking, and in disposal of excrement. Their extreme cleanliness, in contrast with their neighbours, was remarked upon by all the early travellers in the area and is still obvious.[1] Houses and courtyards are swept and garnished; pots and dishes scoured, food scrupulously covered with fresh banana leaves when it is served at feasts; a good housewife is *umwifyusi*, she who is clean. Men wash daily in running water and children are trained to take a hoe with them when they go to defaecate, and to bury the faeces.

783 The horror of 'filth' is very closely associated with the fear of
158 madness, which is at the same time a fear of too close association
828 with the dead. It is when the dead have not been driven away, but return in dreams; when the necessary separation of living and dead has not been achieved, that men go mad. Madness is most often spoken of as the penalty for neglect of the death ritual, but it is not, in theory, confined to that: 'All the rituals are the same, if they are neglected, men will become mad.' Besides madness, men fear sterility, debility, swollen limbs ('an unhealthy fatness') and diarrhœa 'to get rid of the filth in the belly' if the rituals are neglected, or taboos broken.

•796 That a common symbolic pattern expressing common sentiments recurs in all the rituals is clear, but it is also true that each ritual is characterized by peculiar sentiments and symbols. The funeral rites are first and foremost an expression of grief—kinsmen and neighbours gather to weep for the dead. Their grief is symbolized by the stylized wailing, the passionate dancing, the smearing with mud and ash, wearing mourning belts, and the song of farewell at the hearth. It is true that, in the later stages of the funeral, friends seek to comfort the chief mourners with cheerful songs and dances, and in one aspect the funeral ritual is an assertion of life, but grief not joy is its dominant note. By contrast, the ritual of puberty and marriage is a rejoicing—rejoicing 'because our child has grown up', because she is virgin, because there is feasting, because there is a marriage.

881 Elements peculiar to the puberty ritual are the celebration of virginity by killing a bull, and the prayer for blessing when its

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 77–8.

1 [i.e., the conception of impurity associated with physiological functions.— Analyst]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

meat is offered in the bride's father's grove; the two symbols of 881
first intercourse—treatment with *undumila* medicine and jumping over fire; the recognition of the end of childhood by calling on the bride's mother to put her down off her back; the insistence that she show modesty before her father and his fellows as before a father-in-law; and the taboo on crossing water lest her menstrual flow become like a river.

The twin ritual is characterized by the fear of infection from too 845
great potency, and the treatment with scalding medicines to 'burn' the twin birth.

Sometimes our informants gave different interpretations of the 796
same symbol and there was no agreement between them, as with 184
the stem of bananas stolen in the Kukwe death ritual, and the bunch of flowers brought back from the stream. Nsyani said stealing the bananas symbolized that 'we may now eat other people's food', and Mwamulenga that it was a symbol of driving away disease. Kakune, the doctor, interpreted the bunch of flowers brought back from the stream as a symbol of the shade which was brought home; Mwamulenga saw picking and carrying flowers as yet another symbol of the actions of a madman. Though there was general agreement over the interpretation of many symbols, it is possible that some have no commonly accepted meaning, but suggest different things to different people. It is clear, however, that with the Nyakyusa, as with ourselves, one symbol has often several associations for the same person, and Kasitile and the more self-conscious of our informants were aware of this. For Kasitile the banana in the death ritual is the corpse and the pumpkin-seeds in it the shade; it is also faeces which madmen eat; it is also, in the puberty ritual, the male organ and the seeds are the semen. Eating a banana is a symbol *both* of copulation and of the actions of a madman. Conversely, the same object or action is symbolized in many different ways—there are nine or ten symbols of sex intercourse, and twenty of driving away the shade, recorded in the texts quoted above.

When an action recurs in different rituals, informants almost always interpreted it in the same way in each context: the exception was the trampling dance (*ukukanya inganya*) interpreted as a way of 'driving away the shade' in the death ritual and a 'rejoicing' in the puberty ritual. It was always explained as 'customary'. 'Father and grandfather did it.'

This brings us to the ultimate explanation given for all the 829

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

new-comers, and drove out undesirables; but always with the concurrence of the council. 643 645

7. He gave periodical feasts to all chiefs and their followers.

8. In general, it was the duty of Chungu to keep the land in peace; but no decision of his was valid without the approval of his council.

In the north, across the Songwe, the failure to attain unity of control had as its natural consequence the failure to attain the same imposing ceremonial as at Karonga. The chiefs each retained his independence, and what has now to be said applies equally to the independent chiefs of the north, and to those of the south who were at one time under the dominion of Chungu. 643

A convenient starting-point is the installation of the heir and successor of a chief. The installation of Reuben, which began on 18th September, and ended on 19th November, 1921, is typical of all, and the description which follows was given to me by himself. 643 644 796

On the appointed day he left his home, and accompanied by eight young men who were to be his subordinate chiefs, and official dreamers, and all the young men of his father's principal village, he went to the place which was to be the site of his own village. There good huts were built for him and the eight young chiefs, and mere shelters for the others. The first item in a long ceremonial was the tree-planting. The medicine man took two pots into which he put two *imbigita* (lion-making medicines), and having filled the pots with earth, he planted a young

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 644 •796 seedling in each, *indola* in one, and *imbandapanda* in the other. Pits to receive the pots were digged by the doctor, and held in position by the two most important of the subordinate chiefs, who, with closed eyes, filled in the soil all around. The two *imbigita* become later the two lions of the young chief. Every chief has these mysterious lions, which are quite harmless except to evil-doers; if any common person creates or controls a lion, it is the duty of these two to slay it. No one may eat food at harvest time until a portion has been set aside for these lions. The two trees in time provide the shade under which the chief's court will sit, and as long as they stand his residence must not be removed from their neighbourhood.

The doctor now took a broom, and swept the dust into the faces of Reuben and his subordinates, praying that the men under them would be in number as the dust of the earth. All the old fires were extinguished, [372] and new fire was made by the young chief and his fellows; at present from two pieces of wood rubbed together, but in the past, the lower was the bone of a leopard or lion specially dried for the purpose. In the old warlike days this fire kindled the courage of the chiefs, but with the peace that has been brought in by the white men such courage is not called for. From the fire thus made, brands were given out to all householders in the district, and no ashes from old fires were allowed to remain in any house.

Next came the great medicine drinking, which was to give authority to the new chiefs. It is indeed a

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

fearsome mixture: ground flesh of *inyifwira* (the flying serpent); heart and nose of hyena, which enables one to see danger ahead; heart of hawk, giving power to see danger from behind; and heart of the fish-eagle, which swoops down upon its prey. Thus furnished the young rulers can foresee the future, deal with the present, and be a terror to all evil-doers. This powerful medicine is drunk by all chiefs at their installation, and spread under the beds to make them see in dreams what is coming in the future. But never may the chief eat food that is not freshly cooked, for that would take away all virtue even from these potent drugs.

From that time until the 19th November, the young men led a happy, care-free life. Their food was daily provided; cattle were set apart for them; they did not shave all that time, and no girls were allowed to go near them. On the closing day of the ceremonial, the fathers of all the young rulers came and stood at a distance, and the younger brother of Reuben was given a spear with which he knocked on the closed door of the hut in which Reuben and his companions were waiting, and called out, "There is war outside; come out." Immediately all rushed to where the elders were standing, and after greetings, the company formed itself into a boundary commission, to fix the limits of Reuben's authority. Finally, the same day, the new chief was married to the two girls whose offspring will be his successors. They must be daughters of men of note, not cowards in battle, of no reproach in the tribe; and the girls

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

MAIN CULTURAL FEATURES

Religion

769 The ancestor cult was the main feature of Ngonde religion. As long as a man had alive a father, father's full brother, or a senior brother, this senior kinsman dealt with the ancestral spirits, not only on his behalf, but also on behalf of his wives and children. In the absence of sickness or misfortune no appeal was made to the spirits. If the diviner diagnosed anger of the ancestors as cause, the senior kinsman had to pray for the sick one. If the half-brothers lived at a distance from each other after the death of their father and uncles, each might pray to the spirits to cure a little sickness, but if it persisted a message had to be sent to the senior kinsman. Wrongs which aroused the anger of the spirits were usually breaches of family morality, insult to a father, neglect of responsibilities by an heir. Offerings consisted of a bull, hen, or beer in the case of commoners, a cow in the case of a chief. The worship of dead chiefs as such was not connected with everyday morality. On the offering of cows by chiefs to their immediate ancestors depended the food and health of the chiefdom and the fertility of women and cows.[1]

769 Each Kyungu was buried in the valley around Mbande, and the grave was planted with trees, making a sacred grove. In times of drought and widespread sickness, sacri-
643 fices were made at the graves under the guidance of a diviner.[2] An insult to the living Kyungu was believed to cause a drought. Each chief or noble was believed to be able to avert local misfortunes for his own people, and the head of every family participated in the divinity of his own ancestors. The great commoners of each chief were believed to have independent access to his ancestral spirits, and so to have a hold upon him. The nobles of Ngonde had a similar power over the Kyungu.

643 As the Kyungu's health was bound up with the welfare of the community, elaborate precautions to maintain his health and to protect him from the danger of sexual impurity were taken, and when he ailed he was killed by suffocation.[3]

778 Sacred lagoons by the lake were associated not with the ancestors, but with a vague supreme deity, *Mbande*.[4]

796 There were two important annual rituals for the whole tribe in addition to the special sacrifices to avert misfortune. One was the clearing out of the ashes each year after the break of the rains, which was performed on the order of the Kyungu, given through the nobles of Ngonde. The second was the elaborate first-fruits ceremony: fruits were offered by the nobles of Ngonde, in the grove of the last dead Kyungu, and then by the great chiefs, each in the grove of his own predecessor. The nobles and the chiefs of the hills had similar rituals, but they were not synchronized with those of the plain.[5]

Witchcraft

759 The Ngonde believe that certain men and women have the power of harming their
626 neighbours and neighbours' cattle without taking any overt action. The witchcraft is hereditary, and of particular virulence if inherited through the mother.[6] Witches exert their influence at night in dreams. There are two kinds of witches, sorcerers, defender

[1] Wilson, G. 1938, pp. 198–9; 1. 1938, p. 80; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 130 and 136, also Ch. VII.
[2] Wilson, G. 1939, pp. 19–20.
[3] Ibid., p. 30; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 138–40.
[4] Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 130–80.
[5] Ibid., pp. 32–6.
[6] Wilson, G. 1939, pp. 19–20.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

693 769 778 Nor were rain and health the only blessings which were sought in the sacred groves round Mbande, general fertility, the peace of the country, the absence of rats and the success of the ivory trade were believed to depend in part on the favour of the dead Kyungus. And we have a little evidence that some of these other blessings also were believed to be withheld by the anger of a living Kyungu.

The religious powers of dead and living Kyungus, however, were only believed to be effective in the Ngonde plain; the fiefs of the hills, certainly, and, as far as we know, the chiefdoms of the Nyondos and Kamemes also, were unaffected by them. And this fact is correlated with the slighter secular hold which Mbande had over the hills as compared with the plain.

769 776 Two notable religious rituals of the plain must now be mentioned. It was customary, first, to clear out the ashes (*ukujola ikikungu*) each year after the break of the rains. In traditional belief the spirits of the ancestors, whether of chiefs or of commoners, were closely associated with the fires in the houses of their descendants; and so it was only by clearing out the old fires regularly that the spirits and their potential anger could be driven away. Every religious ritual which deals with the ancestors, whether in Ngonde or among the Nyakyusa, has the function of driving them away. For, while the Christians believe that sustained communion with God may be a blessed state, the pagans in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa believe that sustained communion with the ancestral spirits is always terrible and dangerous; prophecy may flow from it, but if the communion is not broken, if it continues too long, then evil will result; and prophecy is nearly always prophecy of evil. In pagan belief the spirits of the dead come constantly to "hound" on man and his works and have constantly to be satisfied and driven away by ritual. [767]

"Always they used to clear-out the ashes at the new year, at the first hoeing, at the break of the rains in December. They feared that death and disease would spread through the land if they continued living with the old fires, that the spirits in the ground, both the spirits of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry; let them drive the spirits away and hoe in peace. They always remembered to do so each new year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually, they never forgot. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to clear out the ashes; and then they would hoe in peace. And at other times too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the ashes again."

The tribes of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave the order to clear out the ashes; messages were sent to the great chiefs and

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

the senior territorial nobles of the plain, and they told their juniors. A sacrifice was made in one of the sacred groves of the Kyungus and all fires in the whole Ngonde plain were put out. And then "all the chiefs from every country near Mbande and the nobles and all the great-commoners and all the ordinary men and the women too went to Kyimbwe." At Kyimbwe, which is a cross-roads in the bush, they threw away the ashes of their old fires; while those few people who could not get to Kyimbwe threw them away near their own houses on the same day as the others. At Kyimbwe new fire was made with fire-sticks by the nobles of Ngonde and distributed to the whole plain in order. Great chiefs and senior nobles took it first and passed it to their juniors, chiefs passed to great-commoners, and in each group the common people got it from their own ruling noble or their own great-commoner. 769 796

And then, later in the year when the first maize and the first pumpkin leaves were ready to eat, an elaborate first-fruit ceremony was carried out. The first-fruits were offered by the nobles of Ngonde in the grove of the previous Kyungu, the one who had last died. "Then the great chiefs would do so next—Kalonga, Mwakasungula, Mwembelo, Katamba and the chiefs of Ngana also, each in his own sacred grove (i.e. at the grave of his own predecessor in the title). . . . . And then after them everyone, both chiefs and people, each at his father's grave. All offered first-fruits to their own spirits. And finally they would eat themselves, each with his chief wife. But beforehand they would not eat for fear of angering the spirits."

These two rituals concerned the plain alone; the nobles and chiefs of the hills are said to have had similar rituals of their own but they were not synchronized with or dependent upon those of the plain.

In time of tribal war also the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde led the people in prayer. All chiefs and nobles were summoned from the plain and the great ones entered the Kyungu's house to receive their instructions: "When he had finished speaking he would tell them to go to pray. So they would leave his house and gather all together, all chiefs and men, and pray. The premier noble of Ngonde would begin, asking each of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn to bless them in the fight. And then the great chiefs would pray after them" (each addressing his own predecessors in his title). The territorial nobles did not pray, for it was the royal family alone whose spirits were then addressed. Here again it was the plain alone that was concerned. 643 565 732 726

Now this organization of religious ritual in the Ngonde plain was both a factor of and itself determined by the general political

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17
NyaKyusa

structure. We shall see in later sections how many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions. But the reverse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular content at all, the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle were sent to Lubaga by the other chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and health; but the "clearing out of the ashes" was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruit ritual at all;[1] while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

Besides the Kyungus the great chiefs of Ngonde also were believed to be able to avert local droughts and misfortunes in their districts by offerings to their own immediate ancestors; and the lesser chiefs likewise and the territorial nobles—each in his own little area. While among the territorial nobles, the original owners of the land had wider powers. It will be remembered that to them the first Kyungu is said to have given head-cloths and asked for their prayers. Sometimes people would prophesy future misfortune "at Kisindile", or "at Kaluma" or "at Ifumbo," or would prophesy of present misfortunes that such was their source. Then the territorial noble concerned[2] would be formally visited by the nobles of Ngonde, and he and they together would offer sacrifice to his ancestors on behalf of all Ngonde.

And then also there were sacred lagoons near the lake—Nthola, Kambwe, Kibondo, Mulale and Katindi. They were associated not with ancestral spirits at all but with a vaguely defined supreme deity named Mbamba. And beside them also prayers and sacrifices were made from time to time by the nobles of Ngonde.

Over these other spiritual powers we need not linger, save to notice one most significant fact. The participation by the Kyungu in the divinity of his ancestors was no isolated phenomenon in Ngonde. The head of every family in the country, whether of chiefs or commoners, was similarly placed; in his own family and, in the case of a chief or noble, in his own area too, he was both a priest and a demi-god; he dealt with the spirits and by virtue of his relation to them shared their powers; his anger could curse. The Kyungus were but the greatest of many divinities. And thus there was in theistic ritual a high degree of local and family autonomy; local or family misfortunes

[1] Particular people among the Nyakyusa carried it out: reigning chiefs, senior great-commoners, prophets, and any person whose birth was held to be due to magical treatment of a previously barren woman. But only they.

[2] Mwene-kisindile, Mwene-kaluma, Mwene-ifumbo etc.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Chiefdom and Wider Groups

(a) The "Coming Out"

128 Space forbids a full description of the relationships of villagers in all their intricate detail, but a short description of the "Coming Out" (*ovoroka*) which is at the same time the most important legal act and the most exciting ceremonial of Nyakyusa life, will, I hope, make the nature of the age-village completely clear, and will also provide us with an easy transition to the discussion of the organization of the chiefdom (*ekisu*).

622 631 I have never seen a "Coming Out" properly; on one occasion I travelled to see one and arrived just a day late when all the important action and ceremonial was over, but I have had it fully described to me at different times by several people. Every chief (*omalafyule*) is normally succeeded in his chieftainship by two sons, who divide his country between them. There are sometimes exceptions to this: in very large chiefdoms three or even four sons sometimes succeed, each taking a portion of the country; and in minor chiefdoms, that is in small chiefdoms which have come under the dominion of a neighbouring and powerful chief, only one son of the minor chief succeeds to the whole of that country.[14] But the rule is that two sons divide the country of their father. This rule worked well in the old days, for till quite lately the Nyakyusa have been an expanding people in a district too large for their needs; and the combined countries of the two sons nearly always, in the old days, covered a greater area of effective occupation than the country of their father which they had divided. Now saturation point is approaching, or has come, and the rule makes for ever smaller and smaller chiefdoms. Various forces are tending to the alteration of the rule, but it is still a vital part of the constitution. (*vide infra.*)

The "Coming Out" (*ovoroka*) is a series of legal acts by which the country of an old chief and his great commoners is, with certain reservations, divided and handed over into the possession and control of his two sons and their respective great commoners. These legal acts are accompanied by much pomp and ceremony. It is at once the initiation of all the youth of the old chiefdom into public life, the constitution of two new [796] political units and the proclamation of two new chiefs. The "Coming Out" not only consists of a series of legal acts and public ceremonies, but of religious ritual as well, action is taken to increase the personal qualities appropriate in a chief and his great commoners by magical means.

[14] These minor chiefdoms have nothing to do with the present system of subordinating some chiefs to others (*vide infra*, sec. (b))

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

are redrawn and only the fields in old craters (the most prized and fertile of all) are not re-allotted. Thus the villages of kinsmen of two generations adjoin, and often those of three generations. 561 621 884

On the old chief's death his village headmen become priests of the grove in which he is buried, and, in co-operation with his sons, the new chiefs, sacrifice there on behalf of the two countries into which his old chiefdom is divided. There is a nice balance of power between chief and village headmen in life, and when he dies his two heirs and the headmen (or their heirs) continue to share power, the power which belief in his spiritual force and their ability to guide it gives them. The success or failure of rituals is held largely to depend upon the personal relationships of the leading participants, chiefs and commoner priests. 423 634 793 622

Besides the ordinary commoner priests (the village headmen of a past generation or their heirs) there are priests of the chiefs' lineage, usually belonging to a junior line to which specific ritual functions, such as rain-making, have been entrusted, and whose office is hereditary in the same way as that of a chief. Kasitile (86),[1] the rain-maker, is such a priest: his grandfather was the brother of a ruling chief (43) and had been appointed as rain-maker (*umpelafula*) and priest (*unyago*), the two functions being separate but overlapping. As rain-maker Kasitile tended the rain stones, as priest he initiated the rituals in certain of the sacred groves, though he did not actually officiate himself. Kasitile was a key informant on ritual and a chapter is devoted to his history, since it epitomizes the relationships between chiefs and commoners. 793

As we have shown, most of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde chiefs claim some sort of kinship with one another. Those who are nearly related pray together at the groves of their common ancestors, and those more distantly connected join in sacrifice to their founding fathers, but in the communal rituals kinship is neither the dominant theme nor the exclusive principle of association, as it is in the rituals celebrated by private persons. In the communal rituals most of the priests are commoners unrelated to the dead who are honoured, and the sacrifices are held to benefit not only the descendants of the dead, but all those who live in the countries they once ruled. Nevertheless, the symbolism of the communal rituals constantly recalls that of the rituals of kinship; themes which pervade the death ritual recur again in the rituals of 'coming out' and 'cleansing the country'. This background is 634 796 769

[1] Numerals after a name refer to the genealogy of Nyakyusa chiefs facing p. 3.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

634 accessible in an earlier book, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*,[1]
796 and the details need not be recapitulated here.
769 Perhaps the reader has already noted a certain difficulty over tenses: 'is' tends to merge into 'was'. When we first visited
114 BuNyakyusa in 1934 missionaries of various denominations had
797 already been at work, and a foreign government in control, for
177 forty years past. Between 1934 and my last visit in 1955 the changes have been great, but I use the present tense for things seen at first hand, whether earlier or later, and a separate chapter is devoted to the twenty years' change. It is well to recognize at the outset, however, that in 1934 the sanctity and power of the
[643] 'divine kings' was already questioned and their rituals were
[796] curtailed, and even the pagan cosmology of the Nyakyusa was beginning to exhibit traces of Christian influence. One striking example was the changing, or rather the fluid, connotation of the name *Kyala*.

Two new types of organization developed in BuNyakyusa with the arrival of the Europeans: churches which are based on a principle of association wholly new to the pagan tradition—common belief as opposed to kinship or contiguity; and a centralized system of government. To these have now been added trading concerns, of which the most important are co-operative societies exporting coffee and rice.

121 The subject of this book is (i) the traditional rituals celebrated on behalf of chiefdoms and groups of chiefdoms, and (ii) the changing ideas and values apparent as a section of the Nyakyusa turn from paganism to Christianity. In the concluding chapters an attempt is made to demonstrate the links between the changes in social structure and the changes in ritual.

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*, 1957.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the house of Mwamalunguka, a hereditary priest of Lubaga (whose ancestor came with the first Lwembe (*vide* p. 8). There were present five chiefs of Mwakisisya's (56) line, including Mwanjala II (78), who represents the Lwembe, but is ailing and has never been installed; two Kinga priests and a Kinga messenger sent to escort them; four priests of Lubaga (including Mwamalunguka himself), Kasitile the priest of Selya, and Godfrey Wilson. 782

Mwanjala brought a small black bull worth 12*s*., bought with the money and a hoe provided by the Kinga, and sent for a stem of bananas and a flask of fresh milk. A rowdy discussion began about the procedure: 'In the old days we used to pour whey over our hands to wash them, and to wash our mouths, and in the sacred grove we would pour it away. . . .' Then the party went to a small grove surrounded by cultivated land, and Nsyanigwa, the Kinga priest, stopped at the stump of a tree, still alive, on the edge of the grove, saying: 'This is the *umpandapanda* tree [a *ficus* planted at the coming out of a chief] where we used to pour the beer,' but Mwanjala denied it saying 'No, they have hoed over it, the tree was here in the bean patch.' After some dispute they agreed to go right into the grove to sacrifice. The grove is on the site at which the trees were planted at the 'coming out' of Mwakisisya (56) the last Lwembe, and the house of his senior wife, Njala, was built. She is buried there, where her swept courtyard used to be, and during Mwakisisya's lifetime the beer used to be poured out beside this sacred tree. The last sacrifice here was when Kissoule was a boy (1885-90), hence the uncertainty as to the place, but just why the beer sacrifices had all been at the homestead of Kitega (*vide supra*) was not clear. 782 796 [778]

Nsyanigwa (the Kinga priest) asked Mwamalunguka (the priest of Lubaga) to bring over the three calabashes, one of millet beer, one of milk and one of bamboo beer, but Mwamalunguka refused and Nsyanigwa had to fetch them himself. It was the Kinga who had insisted on the Nyakyusa providing millet beer saying: 'If we first pour out our bamboo beer we will go off with all the fertility of the country, let them begin with theirs.' Mwanjala, summoned by Nsyanigwa, came and stood at the foot of the tree while Nsyanigwa poured millet beer first into his hands and then at the foot of the tree, and the priests prayed, Mwanjala and Nsyanigwa in Nyakyusa, Kikungubeja in Kinga: [842]

Oh thou Mwambipili, thou Kissoule, thou Mwamalunguka,[1] thou

[1] Three hereditary priests of Lubaga.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 Lwembe, this is your millet beer, we complain of hunger, oh thou
796 Mwampondele (27), thou Lwembe.

Then the milk was poured likewise and again they prayed for milk and calves, for children and health:

Here is your milk . . . may the locusts pass, may sickness be slight, may milk be plentiful, may the cows calve!

Finally the bamboo beer was poured out, too, and both the Kinga priests prayed in Kinga speaking of hunger. Mwanjala, instructed by Nsyanigwa, took some bamboo beer into his mouth and blew it three times in different directions, saying, between blowing: 'May the rain come.'

The bull was killed by Mwanjande (?). Nsyanigwa first gave the axe and knife to Mwanjala saying: 'This axe and knife [an unhafted and very old spearhead] I, Nsyanigwa, brought from BuKinga to kill the bull, go and kill it.' Mwanjala asked: 'Shall I not give the axe to my younger brother?' and Nsyanigwa replied: 'Yes, give it to him.' So Mwanjala gave it to Mwanjande who killed the bull with one blow at the back of the head. Mwansasu (a commoner priest) cut up the carcass, collecting the first stream of blood in a pot. Then the sacred meat was taken from the fore-
[778] legs, that from the right leg being placed on a plantain leaf, that from the left on a leaf of sweet banana. It was cut up and carried by Kitega (heir of 57?), who walked behind Mwanjala and the two Kinga priests, to the tree where they had poured the beer and milk. Mwanjala turned to the group of those sitting talking and shouting and said: 'Friends, a spear will go to the shades
[769] [i.e. the shades will be offended by your noise], be quiet', and they fell silent until the offering of meat was made. Then Mwanjala scraped a hollow in the cleared earth at the root of the tree with his foot and threw into it seven or eight pieces. He and the Kinga prayed, while Kitega stood silently holding the rest of the meat:

Oh thou Lwembe, thou Mwampondele (27), stand by us, this is your bull. . . . Give us children, milk, cattle, food; may sickness be slight . . . stand by us.

All this meat was taken from the plantain leaf—the men's portion. At the end, as they walked away Kitega asked: 'What about the women's meat?' And Mwanjala repeated his question. The Kinga replied: 'Are there two sacred places? No! There is no sacrifice

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

to the women here, but to their husbands.' So Kitega took back to the tree the sweet banana leaf, containing the portion for the women. 782 796

Meanwhile strips of meat had been roasted and were eaten with roast bananas, while the milk was finished up by the Nyakyusa present. All the millet beer had been poured out, but the bamboo beer that remained was finished, part drunk, part blown from the mouth by the two Kinga boys, grandsons of the priests. Then the rest of the meat was divided up, one back leg being given to the Kinga. But they took the head (their traditional right) as well, without being given it. There was some considerable protest at this: 'Do you take twice?' they were asked. And more protest still when they began to go away with it. Nsyanigwa (the Kinga priest) replied furiously. 'Let it go, let them take it' was the final comment of the local people, but both parties were angry. Two legs went to the chiefs, one to the Nyakyusa commoners, and the breast to Mwanjala.

After the meat had been safely disposed of Nsyanigwa gave his parting instructions: 'You sirs (*batwa*), thank you, thank you. We remember that it was Mwakalukwa (the Kinga chief) who said "Pray for us"! Thank you! We thank you! Now you must build your chief, Mwanjala (78), a little hut in which to sleep with the breast of beef so that the lord (*kyala*)[1] may eat, and in the morning if *kyala* has eaten let him go to his home. This calf I brought, I Nsyanigwa, from BuKinga. Let the knife I brought remain with it too.' Then Nsyanigwa went off and his advice was discussed. Mwanjala laughed and said: 'I have no house to sleep in . . . shall I sleep by myself? Outside?' Several suggested that it was the custom for some other man to accompany him. No one knew who should do so, but someone suggested Kissoule. In fact Mwanjala went home with the breast of beef and did not remain overnight in the grove. But he and the priests held apart from their wives and children. Mwamalunguka (the priest) explained: 'We avoid sleeping with our wives for three nights. It is taboo to go to them. We say, "Let us wash and anoint ourselves and be alone until that lord (*kyala*) has gone out of our bodies, since we were in the ritual". We bathe tomorrow and the next day and anoint ourselves, but avoid our wives for three nights. Also our children are anointed on the forehead with medicine—the young [784] [783]

[1] The name *kyala* had not been used in the invocation, and the only references to him in this ritual were the two just quoted.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 children, not the married ones with wives. Kissoule and I both
796 have our children anointed now.'

[783] This ritual was not complete because Mwanjala shirked the crucial act of remaining in the grove until a python licked him. [643] The Kinga priests were continually nagging at the Nyakyusa for [793] their failure to provide an acceptable Lwembe, but it is doubtful [177] whether in 1935 Mwanjala II would have been acceptable to any of them since he was old and ailing. It was Mwakilima (111) that men wanted and he steadily refused to be installed.

[787] The next ritual observed at Lubaga was in March 1937. An ordinary commoner of Selya (not a priest) named Kijaja had been prophesying repeatedly: 'I do not sleep, you will not eat the crops you hoe if you do not go to Lubaga.' He was taken to his village headman and thence to the chief Mwaihojo (147) who finally, two years after he had begun prophesying, agreed to find a bull. Word then came to Kasitile (86) who notified the commoner priests of chief Mwaipopo (116) and sent a message to the priests of Lubaga. Kasitile (86), together with three other priests of Selya (Mwalukuta, Nyama, Mwamakunda) and Godfrey Wilson, set off early one morning from Kasitile's house to take the bull (brown streaked with black, called *ingombe isolola*) to Lubaga. On the way they called in at Munyoso's house, where the Kinga stop on their journey to pour a libation of beer (*vide supra*, p. 27). Kasitile asked Munyoso, 'Shall the bull enter?' and he replied, 'Yes, let it come into the house', so it was tied up inside while the party talked with Munyoso. He was sick and did not want to accompany them. The others pressed him, and at first he refused. Whereupon Mwalukuta said: 'Very well, then, we are at your place, let the bull return and we will go another day', in other words, refusing to go without him. 'No, that is taboo,' said [784] Kasitile, 'once the bull has faced towards Lubaga and entered a house here it is taboo for it to turn back. The shades will be angry.' And so Munyoso went with them.

On the way they passed a group of men hoeing hard. One of them called out: 'Where are you going with that bull? Where are you off enjoying yourselves?' 'Ah, you fellows,' answered Kasitile, 'do you ask where we are going? We visit where our fathers always did.' They understood at once. 'Oh thank you, thank you,' they cried. 'You,' went on Kasitile, 'do you call that work? Are you growing your own food? No, you lie still and eat without effort. It is *we* who exert ourselves for you' (implying

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

that their crop depended upon sacrifices at Lubaga). But five minutes later, as if to illustrate the constant co-existence of dogma and science, of economic and ritual effort, Kasitile commented on a very uneven field of millet saying: 'Its unevenness is due to the rubbish heaps. Where they burnt the rubbish the millet has grown well', as indeed it had.

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The party went to the house of Mwakisopile, priest of Lubaga, and after a polite interval for greetings and small talk Kasitile proceeded to explain his business. 'The sky has changed its temper towards us, we do not sleep (*Kumwanya kutusambukile, tutikugona*). Therefore I said to myself, "Let me go to my father, let me go to my mother." I have come to ask for bananas, and for maize.' So the host sent messages to Mwanjala III (79) and the priests Mwamalunguka and Kesa. Mwanjala II (78) and Kissoule the chief priest of Lubaga, were away from home. Kasitile had long been ailing (*vide infra*, pp. 121-41) and Kesa asked after his health. 'The sky has changed its temper towards us', repeated Kasitile, implying that his illness was connected with Lubaga, and hinting at the quarrel between the priests and men of Mwakisisya (56) of Lubaga and the priests and men of the chief Mwaipopo of Selya (*vide infra*, pp. 37-8). Mwakisopile (the host) repeated to Kesa the reason for the visit. 'Mwamukinga (i.e. Kasitile 86),' he said, 'and Mwalukuta and Mwamakunda declare they do not sleep. They have come to ask for bananas and maize and children, and that the cattle may increase.' Kasitile added, 'The sky has made us still and silent. We long for the grove: since Mwakisisya (56) died we have wished for it. We have come to beg. I lie down wrapped in mats but the cold will not leave me. So I said to myself, "Let me go to my father, let me go to my mother." I am hungry. Have I food? The earth is destroyed.'

Then Kesa and Mwakisisya (111) replied: 'We are astonished that the people of Selya don't sleep. We have heard nothing about it. I, Mwakisisya sleep all right. And only Mwakalobo (67 or heir) and Mwankuga (94) these two alone of all the Selya chiefs came to me. Most of the men in Selya insult us! Ask them who has remembered that they should sacrifice here?'

Kasitile answered: 'It was I, Mwakisambwe (30, i.e. Kasitile speaks as his great grandfather) who initiated it.'

Kesa: 'Yes, but who agreed to give you an animal?'

Kasitile: 'It was Mwalubange, it was Kajula (i.e. the chief Mwaihojo, 147).'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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He also admitted that the people of Selya had insulted the Lwembe, 'But,' he added, 'we have heard that Mwakisisya (111) himself, when someone does not sleep, says "All right", but does not offer a cow.' Thus Kasitile accused the chief of Lubaga who should be Lwembe, to his face, of being reluctant to provide cattle for sacrifice just as the chiefs of Selya were reluctant.

Then Mwalukuta interposed: 'But Kasitile, you admitted that you had injured your father, you had injured your mother.'

Kasitile: 'Yes, indeed it is so, I have injured[1] my father, I have injured my mother.'

That ended the discussion. Kesa fetched bananas and a huge calabash of thick milk for the men of Selya, and Mwalukuta and Mwamakunda started eating at once. Kasitile reproved them: 'What? Do you eat anyhow?' They dropped the bitten bananas hastily. 'Do you not know that you have come here to ask for bananas, to ask for maize? We have come to Mwatonoka (29), to Mwakisisya (56), to Mwanjala (77), to Mwampondele (27) to ask for it. Kyala provided the food.' Then he took up his flask of thick milk and two bananas, and went over to the banana grove at a little distance and prayed aloud:

'You, Mwatonoka (29), you Mwanjala (77) . . . I have come, I Mwalubange (58), I Mwakagile (59) [Kasitile represents their descendants] I have come to beg for maize, to beg for bananas.' Then he came back and joined the party. He sent a large flask of milk over to the local priests; they wanted to refuse and leave all the milk for the visitors, eating only roast bananas, but Kasitile said: 'No, Kyala has provided the food, Kyala has provided it, let us all eat and be satisfied.'

During the meal Kesa and Godrey Wilson discussed steamships and aeroplanes, and the distance and fares to Europe. Mwamalunguka had been to Mbeya and described the wind of an aeroplane coming down and starting, most graphically. Mwanjala (78) wanted very much to go to Europe to see the country. Then Kasitile said: 'Let us go, friends, the rain is coming', so they got up and left, leaving the bull tied to the bananas; the Selya priests had nothing further to do with that; the Lubaga men would kill it at their own convenience.

On the journey back Mwamakunda apologized to Kasitile for having begun to eat before they prayed: 'I am sorry, Mwamukinga (44, addressing Kasitile by his grandfather's name), you have

[1] *Nakendile*: literally surpassed, overstepped, with the implication of injuring.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

instructed us, you have taught us the customs, we did not know them, we thought that when the food came that was all.' 782 796

Kasitile said: 'Yes, I do it as our fathers did it.' Then they discussed the dispute between Mwakisisya and Kasitile and agreed that Kasitile had got the better of Mwakisisya with the reference to his own reluctance to provide cattle for sacrifice.

Kasitile was determined to extract a cow for sacrifice from the chief Mwaipopo (116) also, and presently he said:

Friends, listen, let us report at home that we used hard words, we insulted Mwakisisya, we said there is nothing left to eat though we are not really starving. What has come over me? Why am I ill? Let Mwaipopo pay a cow.

The following day Mwamalunguka, one of the priests of Lubaga, explained what was meant by the complaint of insults from Selya:

The people of Mwaipopo (116) do really insult us, and since the Europeans have given them a Court they have begun to say that Mwakisisya (111) is a priest, not a chief, but just an old priest (*inyago*), and we his men are all angry to hear this because Mwakisisya was always the senior. And they do not send us cattle to sacrifice, they say: 'It's European times now, all that is finished.' [177] [578]

But of Kasitile's retort that Mwakisisya himself did not listen to his priests at home, Mwamalunguka said: 'Indeed it is so, that was an excellent reply.'

The party going up to Lubaga and back travelled dry, but on the return journey Kasitile noticed that the road was wet and he remarked, 'The rain follows us again', and it was true, clouds were gathering quickly. An hour and a half after they got home heavy rain began and continued for three or four hours. During the preceding weeks there had been many heavy showers and bright spells, unnoticed and of no particular significance, but the downpour on the day of the sacrifice was immediately connected with it.

Three weeks later the rain had almost stopped and people were talking of drought. Kasitile was quick to link this with the failure to follow up the offering at Lubaga with sacrifices in the groves of the chiefs. On the sixth of April he spoke his mind to Mwambuputa, the senior village headman of Mwaipopo, when both were visiting us. 769 782 796

Where is the rain? [said Kasitile] I am at fault, and my child Mwaipopo (116) also. He ought to provide a cow to kill at Mwaijonga's

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 (82) grove. According to custom, we should kill a bull here at the same
782 time as one is killed at Lubaga. A messenger from there finds us eating.
That was the custom when the chiefs were really chiefs. Now we
●796 neglect the rituals. Mwakisisya (111) cut a ripe banana stem for us,
but now the bananas are rotting in the homesteads without ripening
[owing to our failure to sacrifice]. If our fathers did not sleep they
sacrificed cattle, but if we do not sleep we merely offer beer.

Then Kasitile recalled the quarrel between the men of Mwaipopo (116) and those of Lubaga.

Why did you insult Mwakisisya (111) saying 'What remains of your
[344] power?' When we built the Court House in Mwaipopo's country,
Mwakisisya's men came to help, and some advised that a beast should
be sent to Lubaga to seek blessing on the Court, but others said: 'What
use is Lubaga?' . . . Mwakisisya cut a banana stem for us and said
'Seek another cow oh thou Mwakagile' (59, i.e. identifying Kasitile
with the grandfather of the chief Mwaipopo whom he represented).

This, however, was an invention of Kasitile's. He continued: 'I, Kasitile, have seen a sacrifice at the grove of Mwaijonga (82) twice, at that of Mwaipopo (115) once, and at that of Mwakabule (117) once, but at Lubaga Kyala has received us frequently.' To which Mwambuputa replied: 'Yes, Kyala has helped us.'

Under pressure from Kasitile and the other priests of his chiefdom Mwaipopo did eventually provide a cow for sacrifice at the grove of his father Mwaijonga (82) but the description of that ritual is deferred to a later chapter.

771 A fundamental conception in Nyakyusa religion is that the proper working of the natural order depends upon harmony of the social order; on proper co-operation between the 'divine king' and his 'sons' the chiefs, between priests and chiefs, and between them and the whole community. If the Lwembe or a rain-
[731] maker is offended, that causes drought or flood in the area of his
[821] influence. When there is heavy rain in Selya it is said, 'There is anger at Lubaga' or 'There is anger at Lwembe's place'. Mwanjala II (78) talking of how angry he had been over an insult remarked, 'Had it been the wet season there would have been a torrent of rain.'

[578] And not only does quarrelling between chiefs and priests bring public misfortune; it reacts upon their own health. How Kasitile
753 linked his ill-health with the quarrel between Mwakisisya (111)
771 of Lubaga and the men of Mwaipopo (116) over the Court, and Mwaipopo's failure to provide cattle for sacrifice has just been

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

indicated (*vide supra*, p. 35). And, as we shall see later, he also 771
suspected that his quarrels with the Kinga priests and with the [753]
commoner priests of Mwaipopo's chiefdom made him ill. [578]

Chiefs, and even the 'divine king' himself, lived in fear of the
legitimate anger of their people, more particularly of their village 643
headmen and priests, believing that such anger would bring them 753
sickness, and this belief gave headmen and priests a very strong [622]
hold over their lord. How it worked was illustrated by an incident
at Lubaga.

Mwanjala II (78) remarked to Mwakilima (111): 'I sent to summon [796]
Mwasesi (a commoner priest) for the ritual tomorrow but he refused
saying: "I shall not come." He is angry because he was not called to
the ritual at your home, nor was he told formally when the Kinga
came, or when Mwaipaja [G.W.] came.' Mwakilima (111) asked:
'Will you pay him?' [i.e. admit your mistake and offer him compensation]. Mwanjala replied that he would, and Mwakilima expressed disgust. One of the Kinga priests who was listening broke
into the conversation: 'Ignore him if he refuses to come. If it were us
we should leave him and celebrate without him, but you Nyakyusa [754]
are all witches, and you fear to ignore a man who refuses to come to a
ritual saying that he will bewitch you. You are cowards, you are!'

At this Godfrey Wilson asked if there were no witchcraft in BuKinga. The Kinga priest replied: 'There is some, but if the chief gives orders to celebrate a ritual and someone refuses to come we ignore him, and celebrate without him. You Nyakyusa *pay* a man for doing wrong. A man refuses to come when he should and then you *pay* him! If you are afraid of witchcraft why not finish the ritual and send his portion of meat to him afterwards?'

Another priest objected: 'Then he would say it was too small a piece.'

The commoner priests then could control even the Lwembe (for Mwanjala II acted in the place of the Lwembe though he was not installed), but at the same time the mystical power of the Lwembe was feared both by ordinary chiefs and commoners. Mwaijonga (82), who ruled before the European occupation, insulted and fought Mwakisisya the Lwembe (56), and killed some of his men, because 'Lwembe had spoiled the year', but he sent back the cattle that were seized.

In the old days it did not matter killing the Lwembe's men (in war), but [727]
no one dared to take his cattle, they feared lest he would spoil the year
and send too much rain, and a plague of ulcers, and cause the cattle to [789]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been someone [of the dead Kyungus] whom you forgot to ask about.' 'And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again.' If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was *certainly not angry, and they must have forgotten someone, they* had better go and divine again. And so they would, and then the diviner would tell them that it was so-and-so (one of the dead Kyungus) and they would go and sacrifice in his grove.

643 [821] [787]

Thus to insult Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. An 'insult' might mean any neglect of the obligations of the chiefs and nobles and commoners of the plain to their lord.

[687] [688]

The people of Ngonde hoed large fields as tribute to the Kyungu and if they failed to do so 'he grew angry and poured all the water out of the pot in which he kept his rain stones' (*vide infra*, p. 114) and 'the sky dried up'. Then the chiefs called their men to hoe. . . . 'They hoed and hoed and hoed and their wives planted, then the rain came in a torrent. . . . Kyungu created much rain.'

[651] [789]

Or if an elephant hunter neglected to send the Kyungu one of the tusks of any elephant he killed he would not kill another. 'The country beneath was angry . . . the shades of the dead Kyungus . . . they were angry saying: "Why do you stint our child?" '

[651] [769]

The rainfall in the Ngonde plain is less than half what it is in the Nyakyusa valley and anxiety about rainfall was constantly shown in the communal rituals; elephant hunting was also a matter of concern in a way in which it was not among the Nyakyusa and this too is reflected in rituals; but there was also the preoccupation with health and fertility, as in the prayers at Lubaga. In the groves circling Mbande the nobles prayed: 'May the sterile bear children, may the cattle and fowls increase, may the children sleep and not cry at night, may the witches not injure anyone.' And as we shall see, it was health and fertility that men had in mind when they cleared out the ashes each year after the break of the rains.

643 132 771 788 [782]

Towards Christmas time, when the first maize and the first

769 796

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 pumpkin leaves were ready to eat, an elaborate first-fruit cere-
796 mony was formerly carried out. The new season's food was offered first by the nobles of Ngonde in the grove of the previous Kyungu, the one who had last died.

[778] The great chiefs would do so next, each at his own sacred grove (the grave of his own predecessor in the title). And after them everyone, both chiefs and people, each at his father's grave. All offered first fruits to their own shades. And finally they would themselves eat, each with his chief wife. But they would not eat beforehand for fear of angering the shades.

643 In time of tribal war also the Kyungu and nobles of Ngonde
796 led the people in prayer. All chiefs and nobles were summoned
[721] from the plain and the great ones entered the Kyungu's house to receive their instructions:

[782] When he had finished speaking he would tell them to go and pray. So they would leave his house and gather all together, all the chiefs, and the other men, and pray. The premier noble of Ngonde would begin asking each of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn to bless them in the fight. And then the great chiefs would pray after him.

This organization of religious ritual in the Ngonde plain was both a factor of and itself determined by the general political structure. Many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions, but the reverse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular significance, the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle
[782] were sent to Lubaga by the chiefs to be sacrified for rain and health; but the 'clearing out of the ashes' was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruits ritual at all; while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

643 The majesty (*ubusiya*) of the Kyungu was cultivated in a variety
789 of ways. He smeared himself with ointment made from lion fat, and his bed was built up with elephant tusks and lion pelts. He
[352] was enthroned on the sacred iron stool called Kisumbi, he had a
[293] spear, Kamisa, and Mulima, a porous piece of iron 'like a mouth organ' used to make rain, all handed down from the first Kyungu.
[778] His zebra tails, set with medicines in horn handles, were waved in

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Since the 'coming out' of his sons spelt not only retirement, but a speedy death to a chief, he was not unnaturally reluctant to hasten it and, we were told, chiefs would try to defer it, but were pressed by their village headmen to celebrate, and had eventually to accept their advice. Indeed we heard of one chief whose illness was attributed to the 'breath' of his men, angry because he refused to hold the 'coming out' which was due. 643 [753]

Nowadays the situation is radically altered by the fact that chiefs continue to live long after the 'coming out' of their sons, and the administration treats the old chief as the sole authority, or the old men find good reasons for not holding the celebration at all.

Before the ritual there is much speculation and excitement throughout the chiefdom, and private discussions between the old chief and his village headmen about suitable candidates for office. They look for men of wisdom (*amahala*),[1] skilled in settling disputes, modest (for boastfulness is judged intolerable in a Nyakyusa age-village as it is in an English public school), and given to hospitality. A leader must feed his men and to do so he requires to be relatively wealthy, therefore the poor have little chance of office. [183] [577]

When the old men are agreed among themselves they summon all the young men to the capital. They come dancing and swaggering with all their cattle, and there the old headmen seize, one by one, those they have chosen as village headmen for the next generation, beginning with the senior headman for each heir, then the second senior for each, and so on. Usually eight are chosen, four for each young chief. We get a glimpse of what it means to one individual in the following statement by the second headman of the chief, Koroso (173): 643 622 796

I made fire at the 1910 'coming out'. I can't tell much because we who were caught were in fear and trembling. I knew beforehand, because my brother was told to come from Ipyana [mission], but he was a Christian and the missionaries refused to allow him to become a village headman—they feared the medicines. He ran away and came here—he wanted to be a headman and the old men wanted him, but then he changed his mind and went off to be a soldier, and so they took me. [177]

Probably word of who have been chosen as village headmen

[1] For a discussion of the content of *amahala*, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 89-90.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 often leaks out, but in theory the young men must not know, and
622 those seized always put up a show of resistance before being
● 796 bundled into the hut of the senior heir's mother. Once there, no
man dare flee lest, like a Lwembe fleeing from the stool, he should
[784] die. The two heirs are seized also and carried into the hut with their headmen. A litter is spread for them, and they remain there in complete seclusion, required to 'talk softly' and avoid quarrelling, guarded by the 'doctor of the coming out' and forbidden to wash except that each of the chiefs and his senior village headman washes with medicines in the doorway of the hut. Each chief also lies down with a commoner and is covered with a black cloth
[789] which, according to Mwandini (the old blind chief 107) is a symbol of clouds and therefore of plenty. 'It means, may it be heavy—cloudy—above, may food be plentiful; may both heirs bring fruitfulness.' The commoner who lies with the chief is 'one body with him', 'his wife', and continues through life to share with him certain medicines. Some said that the senior village headman performs this function for his chief: others that it is another man altogether. The whole matter is very secret and our information is limited. The period of seclusion varies. Mwanyilu (177), who 'came out' in 1953, remained in the hut a month, and he complained most bitterly of the inconvenience of not washing for so long. During this time the young men are admonished by
[867] their fathers' senior village headmen, and told of their faults and their future duties. According to Mwambuputa (Mwankuga's [150] senior headman who was responsible for bringing out Mwanyilu), he said: 'Listen to the people: they are the real chiefs! Be hospitable! Greet people politely! Don't beat your men!' And the other senior headman, Kakuju, said: 'Do not beat your men, respect them! Feed your people on milk, meat, chickens, beer! Fear your people!'

Then the great moment, from which the ritual takes its name, arrives. Very early in the morning a crowd gathers and a junior kinsman of the chief knocks on the door and shouts: 'Come out! War has come!' Each heir, followed by his senior headman, rushes out and grasps the 'spear of chieftainship' held ready at the
[778] doorway for him, while the headman grasps a medicated zebra tail. The spear has a little horn of medicines bound to it 'to show that the chief has come out', and brandishing it is 'comparable to carrying the chief aloft. We show his greatness to the people and acclaim him.' 'The spear of chieftainship is strength, man-

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

hood.' Some say that it is not the chief himself who grasps the spear but his senior village headman who pauses in the doorway calling the war cry and rejoicing. However that may be, the spear represents the authority of a ruling chief. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) and his junior brother Mwabungulu (178), both were secluded and rushed out of the hut, but for Mwabungulu there was no spear since the chiefdom of their father was not divided into independent units.

The heirs separate, each going to where his village is to stand, whether it be pasture land or the site of a former village. The young men build temporary shelters for themselves and proceed to the most important rite of all, the making of fire by friction, using a lion bone as the trough of the drill and a reed as the shaft. Each of the two young chiefs starts the process, then his senior village headmen take over, one twirling the shaft and the other holding the trough. It is difficult to make fire with the bone and reed and great importance is attached to success; the senior headman may even be replaced if he fails, for it is taken as a sign that his headmanship will be a failure. If he succeeds, he is known in future as *ulyfoma gwa lupepo*—the headman of the fire-making. All the old fires throughout the chiefdom are put out and each appointed headman, in order of precedence, takes fire from his immediate senior and calls to his men: 'You of such and such a village come to me' and gives fire to them. The men, though crowded together in one or two shelters, split into small groups, each with its own fire, to cook. This is interpreted as a symbol of the ending of the old chieftainship and the establishment of the new. 'That fire means a new chief has come, he brings new fire, we throw away the old fire in the houses. . . .' 'The old chieftainship is coming to an end, the new has come. The fires are put out in all the homesteads, those of the young men and those of the old men, they make new fire which is taken to every home. . . .' 'But why fire?' we asked. 'Because of old . . . we chiefs came with fire, the commoners had not yet got it, they ate raw food only. When we came we slept in men's houses and we lighted fires and cooked food. Men were astonished and said: "Ha! What's this?" They were burned so they said: "These are chiefs because they brought this fire." It is this they remember still.' 'Fire is lordship (*ubutwe*)', therefore a junior chief who goes through the ritual with his brothers does not make fire with his headmen; only those who are to rule do so. In other contexts the lighting of fire by friction is a

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

symbol of potency,[1] and we suggest that this also is an element in the ritual of the 'coming out', for the fertility of the chiefdom is thought to be bound up with the virility of the chief.

There are a number of stories about the way in which Mwakyusa (38) surpassed his brothers and one of them tells how each brother made fire and set alight the pasture land (for traditionally parts of the pasture land were fired each season to provide fresh grass for grazing in the early spring), and the fires started by the other brothers soon died out, but that started by Mwakyusa 'burned for a whole month'. This is interpreted as an omen of his greatness as a chief: fire, potency, lordship are inventically linked.

At the 'coming out' all things are made new. No matter how crowded the country the young men must move to new sites and the shelters in which they live must be new, though, as will be shown, they do not necessarily move to *unoccupied* country. On their new site the young men live as bachelors, milking their cows and cooking for themselves on their new fires the meat of the cattle they seize, the bananas and grain brought by their wives and mothers. Meat is abundant, for the young chief now rules and has the right to take what cattle he chooses, even from the villages of the old men in his country. 'It was as if there were war, the young men seized cattle, food, and women', and though they did not fight their fathers directly, as the Meru did, they clearly asserted their power. And, as so common further south, the accession of a chief was the occasion for raiding the neighbours: the young men, we were told, went forthwith to test the efficacy of the magic spears and the medicines with which their chief and headmen had been treated. Or the chief might lead a hunt to clear the country of wild pig, as Mwakatumbula (Mwambete rite) did directly after his 'coming out'. Well fed and exuberant, the young men dance and display their cattle, and entertain visitors lavishly, for every chief seeks to attract men to his country by his hospitality.

Then they set up the sign and memorial of the chieftainship: they plant cuttings of two species[2] of *fiso*, *indele* which is much used as a shade tree, and *umpundapunda* from which bark-cloth is made. Close to these the first house of the chief and that of his senior village headmen are built, and the trees also mark the

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 124, 125.

[2] Wilson writing *Good Company* I mistakenly thought that two cuttings of the same species were planted. Cf. *Good Company*, p. 23.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

future boundary between the two halves of the chiefdom, where it will split the next generation. They serve as beacons[1] and are cited as evidence both of the 'coming out' and of the division of land in any later dispute. At the same time the trees are symbols of chieftainship and with their growth the success of the reign is mystically linked. According to one account, 'four headmen fetch the saplings and the young chief stands between them (*side plate 6*) and tells the trees to grow well, and the others say: "We are planting you likewise, we are at the ritual of establishing a new chieftainship, you are a symbol for our chief, spread branches that our young headmen and other people may rest in your shade."'[2] A doctor assists at the planting, burying at the roots a live white sheep and medicines, which, it is said, later turn into the lions or leopards which protect the trees from the impious (*side infra*, p. 58); and he sweeps beneath the trees, a symbol of what the senior headman must do in future, for it is his duty to 'watch over the trees'. In Nyakyusa thought, village headmen are an integral part of chieftainship—it cannot exist without them—and the trees symbolize *both* the chief and his lady and the two senior headmen. The same informant (well known as a doctor for the 'coming out') told us: 'It means we are planting the chief and his lady; *umpandipande* is the hard to hard *indole*, which is the more important. *Umpandipande* is the woman, it may dry up, but *ulupande* (*indole*) never does; it is the chief, it is familiars (*ulupege*). Just *umpandipande* is out', and a moment or two later, 'the *ulupande* is the senior village headman, *umpandipande* is the junior headman'. The strength of the chief is associated with the growth of the trees. If these trees go dry the reign will not be successful, the chief will be defeated in war. If they flourish and grow the reign will be successful, the chief is a ruler. The *indole* planted for Mwaijonga (81) is shown proudly by his great-grandson, and Mwambene (160) who had a long reign and an enormous family boasted of the size of his *umpandipande*—'a great spreading tree'. Ideally the young chief should, in due course, sit in the shade of his *indole* with his headmen, to settle disputes.

After the trees are planted the young men build their senior headman's house and the doctor sets up his hearth bricks, burying medicine beneath them also. The marriage of the chief follows.[3]

[1] cf. D. Kirk-Greene, 'Greater-Lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, [illegible], p. [illegible].

[2] According to some accounts, but *side infra*, p. 58.

[3]

FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

622 He, like many of his men, may have been married long before the
643 'coming out', but his ritual wedding to the mothers of his heirs
796 follows it, and from the time of his seclusion, until his marriage,
585 he, and all his men, should live as bachelors. The brides are chosen by his village headmen and in theory they are carried off by force, whether betrothed or not, but nowadays, since the [177] Administration discountenances forced marriages, the headmen arrange matters with the girls' families beforehand, very privately, but still they come with a show of force to carry off the brides. Girls are chosen who are approaching puberty and they are taken to the house of a commoner contemporary of their future husband. There they live until both have grown up and the puberty ritual can be celebrated. It follows the usual course except that the [584] neighbours of the man in whose house the brides are secluded play the part of the girls' families, cooking for the groom's party at the prescribed feasts. The chief washes with both girls, thereby acknowledging them as his senior wives; the marriage bed is prepared with medicines and there is great rejoicing. The following morning someone knocks at the door of the nuptial chamber crying: 'War has come', and the chief and his brides rush out to the pasture land, just as the parents of twins do at the end of their ritual.[1] Then[2] a long narrow stone (*ulufiga*) is set with medicines [789] in the earth, beside the chief's trees as a symbol of his marriage (*ikimanyilo kya bwegi*) to the mothers of his heirs. 'The stone *is* the chief' (*ilifiga ili jo malafyale*). Hearth-bricks (*amafiga*) are then set up for each bride with medicines buried beneath them, and they are given fire from that ritually kindled by their husband and his headman. Finally they are given medicines to drink in order to develop in them 'the dignity of chief's wives' (*ubusiya bwa bwehe*).

643 No marriage is complete, in Nyakyusa eyes, until cattle have
583 been handed over, and though the chief's brides have been carried off by force, cattle—more than double the normal number—are given to their fathers. The village headmen of the retiring generation should provide these cattle and they or their heirs are recompensed when the eldest daughters born of the two wives are

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 158, 169.

[2] Mwanyilu's marriage apparently preceded the planting of his trees and the phallic stone was erected at the same time as the trees were planted, but the marriages of the sons of Mwangoka *followed* the planting of their trees. The order of events seems to vary, and differences are explained as due to the order of the doctor in charge of the ritual. 'Different doctors have different customs.'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

married. Thus, yet another bond is forged between chief and headman, for he who provides marriage cattle is 'father' to him who marries, and the chief's wives acknowledge this by avoiding the village headmen of the senior generation as they do their father-in-law. Once the chief's ritual marriage is complete the sex taboo is lifted and such of his men as are already married are joined by their wives. In theory, though not nowadays in practice, the taboo is observed until the marriage of the chief. 643 583 [834]

All through the ritual of the 'coming out' the idea of a new beginning is expressed—a new site for the villages, new houses, new fire, new power for the young men. The events of this ritual, the seclusion, the lying on a litter, the prohibition on washing, washing with medicines in the doorway of the hut, the admonition, are directly parallel to the events of the rituals of death and puberty which, we have argued in a previous book,[1] are dramatizations of death and rebirth. There seems little doubt that the 'coming out' is yet another celebration of this theme. The young men enter an enclosed house—that of the senior's mother—and 'come out' (*ukuseka*) renewed as a child 'comes out' (*ukuseka*) of the mother's womb. No Nyakyusa informant volunteered such an interpretation, but, when it was suggested, it was eagerly accepted as expressing the real meaning of 'coming out'. 643 561 796 181

(*b*) THE CHIEF'S MEDICINES

Reference has already been made to medicines used by chiefs and by village headmen at the 'coming out' and we must now examine them more closely. The great medicines of chieftainship are *ifingila* and their function is to create *amanga*, i.e. spiritual power, and *ubusiya*, i.e. dignity, majesty, in order to make the chief fearful 'so that men obey him'. The medicines are comparable to robes of office for they are designed to give their user assurance and fill the commonality with awe. The Nyakyusa also think that chiefs and headmen should be 'heavy' with 'pythons in their bellies' which give them the power to see and fight witches. Without such a 'python' a chief or village headman cannot fulfil his duty of 'watching over the country by day and by night' and if a man is not born with one he may develop it through the proper use of medicines. This notion has been examined elsewhere.[2] The *ifingila* medicines are also thought to give courage and ferocity (*ubugani*) in war, with luck in seizing enemy 643 778 [787] [754]

[1] *op. cit.*, p. 205. [2] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 97-102.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

fashion. Each village is occupied by an age-set and men are emphatic that age and friendship, not kinship, are the basis of a village, but the villages of fathers, sons, and grandsons commonly, though not invariably, adjoin one another, as Bujege, Igembe, and Lupando, or Lupondo, Njisi, and Iringa in Mwaipopo's chiefdom (*side* plan, p. 101). Each section of a chiefdom comprises half the ruling generation, and interspersed with their villages are those of their fathers and sons. Men are identified by the name of their village, section, and chief; the village name defines their age-set, the name of section and chief their generation. The section name is always that of the senior village which leads it. Generation succeeds generation in office when their heirs 'come out', but the relative position of villages (age-sets) within a generation remains constant. Since chiefdoms traditionally split each generation at the 'coming out' the men of the retired generation who remained belonged to one section only; those of the other section of their generation were members of another chiefdom. The territorial arrangements reflected in the plan of Mwaipopo's chiefdom on p. 101 are modified by the fact that the chiefdom has not split for four generations. In generation I Kibonde was the portion of the junior heir, Mwafungo (83), but he died young and his land and widow were inherited by the senior brother, Mwaijonga (82). The son of this levirational union, Mwakipesile (118), went through the 'coming out' in generation II along with Mwaijonga's heirs, Ijonga (114, representing her full brother 115), and Mwakabule (117). Mwakipesile inherited Kibonde and Mwakabule inherited Kituli, but both were later defeated in war by Mwaipopo II and their land incorporated in his chiefdom. Mwakipesile's heir, Likosyela, and Mwakabule remained as subordinate chiefs. Though the girl Ijonga celebrated the 'coming out' in place of her unborn brother she could not rule, and Mwaiteteja, son of Mwaijonga II (younger full brother of 82) acted for her. He was finally defeated by Mwaipopo II and fled to the periphery of the country. Kabula was his village, and he was subordinate to Mwaipopo, not independent.

In generation III the chiefdom did not split because by that time the British administration was in control, and the territorial division remained much the same, Igembe and Njisi becoming the senior villages in place of Bujege and Lupondo, with Mwankuga (150) and Mwaseba (152) as the young chiefs. Kibonde,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

system is still the accepted form in Mwaipopo's chiefdom; the advantages of separating kinsmen in different villages are explicitly stated, and the contrast between the Nyakyusa and their neighbours in this respect emphasized. 'Certainly we do not live with kinsmen here but the Kinga do.' 'It is not good for a son to live close to his father, they will quarrel.' 'When we move to another village we consider friendship not kinship in selecting it.'

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(b) THE BALANCE BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND SECTIONS

The ritual cycle of the 'coming out' and the sacrifices in the groves helped to maintain a balance of power between generations, as well as between chiefs and commoners. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu (177) in 1953 it was Mwabuputa, the senior village headman of his father, who took the leading part. He was described as 'the greatest man in the country' who 'brings out the chief' and his manner indicated that he was well aware of his power. During the reign of Mwaipopo (116) the power of his father's village headmen, Njobakosa and Ngulyo, was apparent at every ritual. Spiritual power was shared between chiefs and commoners, but exercised ideally by a virile chief of the ruling generation and the experienced headmen of the retired generation.

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Those chosen as senior village headmen at the 'coming out' are commonly older than the young chief, but village headmen are thought of as surviving their chief—it is they who were responsible for smothering him, and performing the sacrifices in his grove. The headmanship is an *office* and so long as the office is necessary an incumbent is found for it, in the person of the heir of the original holder who is so closely identified with the deceased that most precise inquiry is often necessary to establish whether a given individual is the original holder, the succeeding heir, or a later heir, successor to the successor. The Ngulyo who officiated at the rituals in 1935 was the heir of the original Ngulyo (some said the *grandson*, not the son) and he was criticized by Kasitile as being 'a young man who knew nothing'. The principle, so familiar in Central Africa, of a perpetual office[1] emerges, among the

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[1] I. Cunnison, *Kinship and Local Organization on the Luapula*, Communications of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute No. 3 (1956), pp. 14-15; J. C. Mitchell, *The Yao Village*, Manchester (1956), p. 100; A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, O.U.P. (1939), p. 94; 'Some Types of Family Structure among the Central Bantu', in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, p. 224; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, London (1911), p. 3.

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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Nyakyusa, when sacrifices are continued in the grove of a dead chief such as Mwakisambwe (90), for an indefinite number of generations, and the heirs of his senior village headmen serve as his priests, taking the name of the first holder of the office. Most of the priests of Lubaga held perpetual titles of this sort. The conception of the *corporation sole* is familiar enough in the western tradition, but European observers in Africa are sometimes confused by the use of a personal name and the almost complete identification of each holder with his predecessors, as well as by the practice of treating certain kinship relationships as if they were offices.

Generation was determined among the Nyakyusa by association with a chief. There was no name for those who 'came out' together other than that of their chief, who was the focus of the ritual. On the other hand, however, a 'coming out' concerned a whole generation, and it could not be held out of season. If the heir died he was replaced by a brother, as were Mwaipopo I (115) and Mwankuga I (150). If a chief had no male heir of the right age in his senior house his daughter might represent an heir. For example, at the coming out of the sons of Mwaijonga, it was a *girl* Ijonga (114) who performed the leading part in the ritual which fell due before the birth of Mwaipopo I (115). When Mwaipopo I was born and grew up he assumed office, but he died young and was replaced by his younger brother without a further celebration. Because the 'coming out' was thus linked to the maturity of a whole generation we have felt some confidence in assigning approximate dates to the arrival of the heroes. The period between each 'coming out' we estimate at thirty to thirty-five years, though the higher figure is probably more nearly correct. There must in fact have been some flexibility in the timing of the 'coming out' to account for the differences in the number of generations of ruling chiefs in different segments of the lineage. Some of the differences may be due to errors (e.g. it is possible that 70 is an elder brother not the father of 98, and that a generation has been omitted between Mwakapeje (54) and Mwakage (75), but even where there is little possibility of error the number of generations does not always tally.

In theory a man always belongs to the generation succeeding that of his father, irrespective of his age, provided he has not inherited from a man of the previous generation and taken his status, but in practice, since men often have sons of very different

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

NOTE

621 It should be realized that (i) the names of the two senior villages of a
631 generation are well known and clear cut, but those of subordinate
561 villages are more fluid. Furthermore a village often has subdivisions,
distinguished by its members by name, but known to outsiders only by
[103] the general village name. (ii) A village may acquire a new name at the
[796] 'coming out'; the senior village of Mwanyilu's generation used to be called 'Mpuguso' but 'came out' as 'Lupando'. (iii) Some villages die out altogether, e.g. Kyemo II. (iv) Some villages straddle generations. Katela in 1955 is in the same sort of position as Katumba in 1935. It includes eight sons of Mpunga who belong to generation III, but also fourteen sons of men of Masoko who 'came out' with Mwanyilu. In the case of Katumba the members who were sons of men of generation III moved to younger villages and 'came out' with Mwanyilu, among them being his senior headman Kilasile, a man of over forty. But Kilasile's contemporaries who were sons of men of generation II could not 'come out' with Mwanyilu, at least not as a group—and the members of Katumba attended the 'coming out' as 'fathers'. Boys join a village of contemporaries but may move later to a village of younger men who are of their own structural generation.

At the 'coming out' of Mwanyilu and Mwabungulu five village headmen were 'caught' and secluded with their chiefs. They represented five clear-cut villages. Kilasile and Sikambombo, Mwanyilu's two senior headmen who made fire are leaders of Lupando and Iringa respectively; Pauliki and Batungulu their juniors are leaders of
[622] Bujisi (or Ipoma) and Mfumbi (or Isuba), and Mwanjotile the single headman of the junior heir, Mwabungulu, has his own village of Nkuyu established on newly settled land in the forest. The young men of Kibonde were included under Kilasile's authority, and those of Kituli and Kabula under Sikambombo's. The names Lupando and Iringa are well known as those of sections of Mwanyilu's chiefdom, but the names Bujisi and Mfumbi are not: the young men of these villages still use the names of their fathers' villages, Ipoma and Isuba, though there is a clear territorial separation between fathers and sons. Taxes
[651] are collected under the names of Igembe, Ipoma, Kibonde, Njisi, Isuba, Kituli, and the three forest villages, Kilosi, Kiloba, and Nkuyu.

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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VII

CLEANSING THE COUNTRY

769 SACRIFICES to the heroes and the shades of the chiefs are holy and private—only a handful of priests and chiefs may enter the groves and the details of the rituals are not discussed with other people. But there are other celebrations in which everyone 796 participates; these are the rituals for cleansing the community— 783 'throwing out the rubbish' (*ukujola ikikungu*)—more specifically the *ashes* from all the hearths.

In Ngonde the cleansing is organized for the whole kingdom, from Mbande, but among the Nyakyusa each chiefdom acts independently. Traditionally, we were told, the *ukujola ikikungu* was an annual celebration, observed at the 'new year', after the break of the rains, but it could also take place if there were much sickness in the country, or plague, or prophecies of evil to come. It was celebrated (in an attenuated form and by a section of the community only) in Ngonde in July 1937, to cleanse the country of a plague of rats, and in September of the same year a somewhat similar ritual was performed in Porokoto's chiefdom because a [787] fearful omen had been seen—a ground hornbill had eaten a chicken. The annual celebrations had been dropped both in [178] Ngonde and BuNyakyusa before 1935.

As has been shown in the *Rituals of Kinship* the Nyakyusa believe [769] that too close an association with the shades is dangerous; all the family rituals are designed to drive them away, to drive them out [755] of the bodies of the mourners, or menstruating girls, or parents of twins; and the purpose of 'throwing out the ashes' in all the homesteads is essentially the same. The shades 'come to warm 783 themselves' at the hearths of their descendants, they 'bring sickness to the hearths' and so the old ashes are cleared out and new fire is [775] lighted. The phrase *ukujola ikikungu* is used in Ngonde for clearing out the litter (*ulufumbo*) after a burial, or an initiation ritual, and for shaving after a ritual, as well as for clearing the ashes from all the hearths in the country.

It is also thought that domestic fires are contaminated by [754] witches who may have cooked the human flesh they steal over [775] their victims' own fires. In Ngonde it was the connexion between

[p. 102]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the shades and the hearths which was stressed; in Porokoto's 783
country people talked mostly of the witches; but it seemed clear [754]
that both conceptions were present when men murmured: 'The [775]
hearth bricks are bad' (*amafiga mabibi*) and they sought to cleanse them by clearing out the old fire and lighting new. 'To clear out the ashes means they take away all that dirt, the dirt which the witches have brought and the shades; it is the cause of illness.' When witches are thought to be active there is also a public complaint, and a public warning is given 'to whom it may concern' to desist.[1] This occurred in the ritual after the ground hornbill had eaten the chicken. Above all, men must admit their [578]
anger to one another: 'they fight that the homesteads may be [681]
peaceful'. The theme so familiar in Nyakyusa rituals—that quarrels must be confessed if they are to be composed—recurs yet again. Though we distinguish the rituals for 'cleansing the country' from sacrifices, on the ground that the whole community participates in the 'cleansing' while the sacrifice is esoteric, the two are closely linked, and a sacrifice commonly precedes or follows the cleansing. We turn now to the detailed accounts of celebrations for 'cleansing' in Ngonde and among the Kukwe.

(*a*) THE RATS

In Ngonde they used to clear out the ashes at the new year, at the 783
first hoeing (in December) after 'the break of the rains'. They feared 796
that death and disease would spread through the land if they continued [753]
living with the old fires, that the shades in the earth, both the shades [761]
of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry. Let them drive the shades away and hoe in peace. They always remembered to do so each new year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually, they never forgot. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to clear out the ashes; and then they would hoe in peace. And at other [787]
times, too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the ashes again. 'It is to drive away the shade with the sickness that he brings. We throw out the ashes and firebrands because he has come to warm himself over the fire in our houses, we throw out the pots and winnowing baskets because he has come to see us eating; let him go there (to the grove) and eat what he asked for—we say the shades ask [775]
for food—let him eat hens, perhaps a sheep. We say the shades bring sickness to the fire, hence we throw out the ashes and make new fire with a drill.'

The nobles of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave [643]

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 109-13.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 the order to clear out the ashes; messages were sent to the great
796 chiefs and the senior territorial nobles of the plain, and they told
[643] their juniors. A sacrifice was made in one of the sacred groves of the Kyungus and all fires in the whole Ngonde plain were put out. And then

> all the chiefs from every country near Mbande and the nobles and all the village headmen and all the ordinary men and women, too, went to Kyimbwe where we threw away the sickness of all the country.

At Kyimbwe, which is the crossroads in the bush, they threw away the ashes of their old fires, and some of the pots and baskets in which food is served; while those few people who could not get to Kyimbwe threw them away from their own houses on the same day as the others. At Kyimbwe new fire was made with a
[372] fire-drill by the nobles of Ngonde who

> ran with it without looking back and the people danced alongside them and speared one another! . . . They said, 'Let us dance, let us fight that the homesteads may be peaceful'. . . . 'Let us throw out the ashes that death may leave the homesteads and they be at peace.' It is to bring out war from within (*ukusaya*).

The symbolism is the same as in the rituals of kinship when kinsmen gather to admit their quarrels and press one another to speak out, so that they may cleanse themselves of anger.

The new fire was distributed to the whole plain in order. Great chiefs and senior nobles took it first and passed it to their juniors, chiefs passed to village headmen, and in each group the common people got it from their own ruling noble or their own village headman.

In July 1937, while we were visiting Ngonde, there was a
[731] plague of rats[1] which threatened the food supply, and Bungulu,
[136] the wife of a chief and well known as a prophetess, went into a
[791] trance and revealed that the rats were caused by the anger of the
[787] previous Kyungu and could be got rid of only by a ritual 'throwing out the rubbish' and sacrifice. Her husband reported the matter to Mulwa, the premier noble of Ngonde, to whom the present Kyungu, Peter—at one time a Church member—had long since handed over all responsibility for communal rituals. Mulwa called four of the leading chiefs who were pagan and a number of

[1] Nothing new in Ngonde. Lord (then Captain) Lugard suffered from them in 1890: F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), vol. i, p. 127. In 1937 the country swarmed with rats: in our own camp we killed 70 to 100 each night.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

commoners, and they went together to the grove of Mwangalaba, the last Kyungu (elder brother of Peter), with a white hen and sacrificed it there, and prayed saying: 783 796

Mwangalaba go thou to Mwakasungula your father and let him go to Mwangonde, and he to Mwagemo and he to Kiposa and he to Mpeta and he to Mwendemange and he to Kyabala and he to Syola and he to the Kyungu who lived at Mano and he to Ngulube (9) and Lyambilo (12). May he stand by us, may we sleep, may the rats disappear and illness also, may we sleep. Then when we had finished the invocation [I quote Mulwa] we extinguished the fires in all our houses; in the houses of the chiefs, and of Kyungu's great wife Namwilan'ombe, and of us commoners, we threw water on the ashes, but each took some ash, and a firebrand to the crossroads at Kyimbwe where we collected them all and left them to rot; there we threw away the rats saying: 'Let them fly away to Ngulube (9), let them fly away with the wind, let us sleep.' Then we ran to the pasture land to make new fire with a drill. We all took fire there in the bush, each a firebrand and lighted new fires in our own houses and in the house of the Kyungu, that is of his great wife. We arranged it with our wife Namwilan'ombe, because Kyungu had said 'Work with your husbands there'.

'Throwing away the rats' consisted in enclosing a live rat in two winnowing baskets, opening them at Kyimbwe, and flourishing them first in one direction and then in another, releasing the rat in the process. This had been specifically ordered by Bungulu, the prophetess.

(b) THE GROUND HORNBILL

In the country of Porokoto (49 K) there was much illness and many deaths (some, at least, from typhoid) during the dry season of 1937, and when a ground hornbill—always a bird of ill-omen among the Nyakyusa—mysteriously attacked a chicken in Syokela village, everyone was horrified. Mwamunda, a village headman, explained what had happened: [164] [165] 787 [825]

The headman of Syokela came with two men to Bwilile (senior village headman of his side) and said: 'Tell the chief that a ground hornbill has eaten a fowl at our place. We ask what this means. And also we do not sleep, we are ill.' Then Bwilile told me and we went together to the chief who said: 'I have heard, let us discuss it.' So we gathered at Nayeni's and the headman of Syokela stood up and said: 'My fathers, and friends, and children, and you chiefs, we have come to ask: have you ever before heard of a ground hornbill eating a fowl? (With an air

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

787 of intense questioning.) We have not, but perhaps you have?' Then we all denied having heard of such a thing; we had no idea what the portent meant and said: 'Let us consult an oracle.' The chief agreed. . . . Then men went to the doctor and the oracle said: 'It is because you have not celebrated at Mwakan'ata's (30 K) place since his death;[1] you must kill a cow and clear the grass at his place. This [775] ground hornbill is your father Mwakan'ata; seek a cow and celebrate and pray, then you will see what will happen.' They told the chief this and he said: 'Must I find a cow then?' But it is we village headmen who have done wrong because some of us said: 'What's a cow for? 783 Let us just pray; why should we throw away a cow?' Others of us said: 796 'Yes, let a cow be found', but the chief listened to those who opposed killing a cow. So we went and prayed without eating anything.

The ritual was put off three times; the first time the people were summoned men of one village had not come; the second time men of another; the third time a headman was missing and also the women had not been called. Finally, on the morning of 28th September, men and women and children gathered on the pasture land just beyond Ilolo village (where we lived). The men and boys sat, with their headmen, by villages, each forming a segment of the great circle round the chief, while the women all crowded together some distance behind him. . . . 'We all go, except the Christians.'

The chief Porokoto, rather nervous in his manner, stood up and addressed the company after one of the headmen had said pointedly: 'We are all women, a man stands in the middle, it is he who speaks.' For women never pray, blowing out water, and commoners in this situation do not pray, only the chief.

Porokoto: The reason I have called you together is this: there is no peace in the country; there is much cold, many people are shivering with fever, let us drink water and drive away Kyala. This concerns all the homesteads; the cold [i.e. fever] is finishing us. What do you say Mwamunda? [to the headman].
Mwamunda: Thank you! We rejoice that you chiefs have remembered. May we sleep well, may there not be illness, may the cold pass, may the children grow well, and all the crops. Indeed we are all in great trouble. Kyala help us, may we be pure (*tajebele*)!

Then the chief called on one village headman after another to speak; and his elder brother, Mwasalemba, also spoke.

[1] Porokoto was already sceptical of pagan ritual and has since become a Christian.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

MWAFULA: Indeed, may the illness not be great, may the children not cry by night, may the cattle increase, and the fields be fertile, and the fowls also increase. May children sleep. Our fathers always confessed in the house. Now we are shocked at what is happening. 783 796

MWANTIMWA: We say thank you, chiefs, you do not forget us. Let the sickness pass and go away, may the cattle sleep, and you women, may the children grow. May the fields be fertile; may there not be envy of one another. We are sorry because there is much illness. Our fathers say 'Why have the chiefs turned round?'

MWAMULENGA: Chief, we beg you, we thank you, indeed there is sickness. Is there anyone who says in their quarter there is much sickness (more than elsewhere)? Do we say something about sickness?

MWAMUNDA: No, Mwampiki, all of us who have come here are sick.

KILONGO: Yes, we are all rotting.

Mwaikambo commenting on this explained:

If there is sickness one may admit and say, 'It is I, I was angry on account of such and such.' Yes, indeed, they confess openly, because he who sees in his belly (=knows in his heart) that 'It is I who have done this' trembles when his fellows speak many words thinking, 'Perhaps they have seen me.' So he confesses. When he confesses he escapes, they only grumble at him saying, 'Don't do it again.' If someone admits the others say, 'It is he, but we have punished him.' I think that even in the old days he was not driven out, because they hope that, if he has confessed, the illness he caused will go away.

MWASALEMBA: Have you ever before heard of a hornbill eating a hen? We are horrified. Even the prophets did not speak of such an event. [787]

ANOTHER: Indeed, it has never before happened, we are glad that our chiefs have taken the initiative with these words.

ANOTHER: For this custom is old, it began long ago in the time of our fathers. It is the custom to give hope in the homesteads, that we may grow strong.

MWAMPIKI: Always, if the chief is ill it is said, 'Where are you, oh people?' All the homesteads watch over the chief when he is ill. [Mwaikambo commenting: It is said that people have the work of watching over their chief that no one may bewitch him, hence when he is ill they reproach people saying: 'Where are you?' Let the old customs be observed now (implying that they have left all the old customs and hence there is much sickness in the country).] [754] [177]

ANOTHER: There are some who say 'Let so-and-so die that I may move into his homestead. Let envy which brings sickness also go away.'

ANOTHER: If sickness appears let us tell the chief that we may all express astonishment together, asking where the illness has come from, then it will be light, if we all grumble together. [Mwaikambo commenting: [753]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 They say that complaining drives away illness, even though the witches
796 are not seen, and do not confess saying, 'It is we' yet they are ashamed thinking 'People have caught me' and they desist.]
[753] MWAMULENGA: Catch anyone you see in your dreams. If someone is ill should we not all gather?
MWAMUNDA: Countrymen, give thanks that there are the chiefs.

And the company assented.

Then there was a discussion about the direction in which the chief should spit and people run. One pointing towards Tukuyu said: 'We always looked that way.' Another said: 'We always reached the boundary.'

Mwafula (a village headman) came with his young son carrying
[778] a calabash of medicated water. Porokoto took a sip and spat out eastward, 'in the direction of the grove of Kabale, to the shades.'

Mwamulenga shouted: 'Now we have prayed, the sickness is
[755] finished, we are present and watch over the homesteads. If we see anyone bringing sickness we will catch him and crush him on the sleeping mat.' There was a roar from the crowd, then all rushed yelling 300 yards or so eastward to the edge of the fields, and back again. Porokoto ran a little way with them, his malacca cane raised, then stopped, looking self-conscious, and strolled homeward. Everyone else scattered, chattering and laughing. On the way back we were greeted: 'You have prayed! Did you catch witches? Whom did you catch?'

Mwasalemba, senior brother of Porokoto and an expert in ritual, added one or two points in explanation:

In the old days we threw out the ashes, but we have not yet done so this time; we begin with the ritual on the pasture land and throw out the ashes afterwards. In the old days we threw them out of all the houses and put in fresh fire, new ash, saying 'Thou Kyala, thou shade,
[775] receive us, let us sleep here, we throw out the ashes, let sickness be
[753] slight.' Those who are angry now are our shades—those of the chiefs—they have gathered with the shades of the commoners. The medicated water means: 'Thou shade, you fathers, may we sleep, use this water for us if we are ill, may we be strong.' The water goes to the shades with these words.

Q.: Why must the women come?

M.: They call the war cry, we run swiftly, the women follow calling the war cry which means, 'You shade, we call the war cry for you that we may be pure—without anger—in our bellies, make us strong also, thou shade, may we also be pure in our bellies, this is your war cry . . .' The running and calling the war cry is to mock at him, to drive him

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

away. We run with him, we leave him over there, we return and bring him in. We drive him off because he brought sickness; when we have done so we return and bring him again that we may be pure—without anger—and he also may be pure. We are with him all the time; we never throw him away. We always have the old one in the belly, an infant is he, and if I die I am with him, this earth (pointing to the earth of his homestead) never goes away, it is he. So if the crops fail when I have hoed I say: 'The shade is angry, this earth.' (*Papo nkulu tulinagwe bwila munda, mutukeke jo jujo, nalenga mfwile ndinagwe—umfu ugu gutijonga nakamo jo jujo—papo lenga ndemile nikuti 'unsyuka akalele umfu ugu' bo fisitile.*) Yes, in the death ritual also we drive him away with his sickness, and bring him back, always the old one. 783 796 [775] [753]

After the ritual all have normal intercourse with their wives, but the night before there was no intercourse. How should we do evil on the mats when we have not yet blessed the shade? But when we have blessed him then all of us lie on our mats again. To lie together is to overstep the ritual, the shades are shocked and say, 'How can you do this? You agreed yesterday to bless the shades and you do this, why?' Then later, if a woman bears a child which cries at night, people say, 'You overstepped the ritual, pray for the child.' Or perhaps the woman is barren. We liken the water and the war cry to what we do on the mats—the water is the shade's and the war cry is his, it is his work. When we have spoken to the shade he comes into my belly—then I come together with my wife again. [833] [842]

This interpretation by Mwasalemba indicates that the blowing out of water is a symbol of emission. 'It is what men do.' It has been shown in *Rituals of Kinship* that the shades are driven out of the body in the sex act; that the shade and semen are identified; and that driving off the shade is a condition of health and sanity. The fact that blowing out water is *also* a symbol of confession—admission of anger, 'bringing out all that is within'—and supplication does not invalidate Mwasalemba's interpretation, for the same act is symbolized in many ways and the same symbol expresses events which are distinct, but associated. As in so many societies, abstinence is felt to be a necessary preparation for the celebration of a ritual, and the union, real or symbolic, of husband and wife the necessary conclusion.[1] All this is intelligible only in terms of the Nyakyusa ideas about procreation discussed in *Rituals of Kinship*. The shade is the vital force in men 833 783 755

[1] cf. I. Cunnison, 'Headmanship and Ritual of Luapula Villages', *Africa*, xxvi (1956), pp. 3-13; H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (1927), vol. i, pp. 320-22; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (1911), pp. 48, 53, 55.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

833 and women, it is procreative power, fertility. That power is
783 constantly expelled from the belly but returns again and by that
755 expulsion and return men live.

There was a great deal of criticism from the conservatives
177 because no sacrifice had been made.

787 MWAMUNDA: Now people are talking much saying, 'We have abandoned that which they did formerly, we are doing something else.' People have many dreams (gesture head on hand as if heavy with anxiety), many say: 'I have dreamed of the dead, they told me to sacrifice a cow, to pray, we did not pray properly, that is useless, it will not effect anything.' So we have told the chief saying: 'Let us kill a cow at the grave of Mwakan'ata,' he has agreed, but the cow has not yet
783 come.

Formerly, on the night following the day of the prayer we should
796 have eaten the sacrificial cow, the chief would have killed two cows and the headmen from different villages would have come and eaten by night, and drunk beer provided by the chief, in the house of the senior wife of the chief. . . . They ate a little meat, raw, the rest they roasted. Then in the morning, when they had eaten and were satisfied, they would go to clear out the house, to throw out the ashes, and to
[372] pray, as we prayed now, and to make new fire by friction in the pasture land. The village headman made fire with medicine which the chief gave him, the name of the medicine is Mbamba, it's a tree. To throw out the ashes means to clear out all the filth, the filth which the
[754] witches and the shades have brought to us—the filth that is sickness. . . .
[775] Do not the witches eat meat at the fire? Human flesh? Some roast at your fires your bodies which they have seized, some go home with the human flesh to their own fires, hence comes the filth of the ashes. The village headmen eat the sacrificial meat at night with the shades, they celebrate for them with the blood which goes beneath. . . .

If the chief has done something wrong, then those above [i.e. the village headmen] pray to those beneath saying, 'Let us help one another to punish him who has strayed, but we do not wish that he
[754] should die, let him be ill; perhaps then he will seek something to nourish us.' Again the night before the throwing out of the ashes they confess their anger and say: 'You beneath, this our child (the chief) has remembered us, there is no accusation against him now, may sickness go away from the country, and children sleep, let us all sleep and the cows calve. We greet those beneath.' In my childhood I was repeatedly surprised at night when my father came in, he had a little parcel of meat. 'Where have you been?' I asked. 'We have been praying.' But since I grew up and became a village headman, and was recorded as such [by the administration] we have never seen sacrificial meat.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Mwandisi made a great deal of the fact that at the 'throwing out of the rubbish' the village headmen ate meat *raw*. 783 796

Formerly . . . we threw away the ashes and charred brands . . . that is to drive away the shades who warm themselves over the hearth in the house; they bring us sickness, let them warm themselves over there in the long grass! Also in the long grass there we killed meat, and the priests ate it *raw*: no one saw them doing that there in the long grass; we went by day with drums, people from all the homesteads, a moving multitude . . . then we came home . . . the priests remained with their wives, they threw away their bark-cloths, they cut off morsels of meat and ate them raw. Because the priests are witches it is they who ate raw meat before we chiefs came, the priests are witches. . . . The witches and shades gather and bring sickness together, we kill a cow in the grove, we drive them away. No, they do not eat raw meat in the grove, they cook it. But at the capital if the chief has killed a cow for men to eat the priests eat meat raw. We have seen them. I, Mwandisi, have seen Mwajole and Kalambo the senior village headmen eating raw meat at my place and my wives have seen them also. [262] [753] [793]

'Yes', said one of his wives, 'we saw them and we ran away saying: "Well! Fancy doing it *openly*!" ' Mwandisi continued:

The senior village headmen are witches, children of those who ate raw food long ago. Some village headmen only rush to eat a cow we have killed, but some go to eat a person; those are the witches who eat raw meat! [754]

The function of a chief is to feed his men on beef, and in doing so he placates the witches who are commoners and who, like their forefathers, prefer their meat raw. If they do not get beef then the witches eat men.[1] [643]

(c) SMALLPOX

The prayer and 'clearing out the rubbish', traditionally celebrated before an approaching epidemic, was described by an elderly Christian, Fibombe. It illustrates very clearly the combination of practical precaution—isolation—and magical protection, and also the idea that sickness was brought into the country by witches. 783 796 753

When the chief had heard that smallpox was coming, or dysentery, he said, 'Let us pray'. Before my baptism I saw it, in the country of the

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 50-4.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

796 Penja chief, Mwalukasa. He called all his people because he heard that
783 smallpox was coming and said: 'Let us pray.' And he called his fellow
753 chiefs, those of the same lineage, and said: 'Let this illness not come, may it go to other chiefs. . . . Listen! I am the chief! We have heard that smallpox is approaching, who is here who rejoices at his approach? Who is here who wishes that it should kill us?'

THE CHIEFS: We, we do not rejoice that it is coming, we reject it, chief Mwalukasa, may it pass by this homestead.

THE COMMONERS: And we also reject it, may it pass by our homesteads.

MWALUKASA: And I, I reject it, may smallpox not come into our country. If there be one who has relatives in a chiefdom where there is smallpox and they come to call him to a funeral let them stay at a distance, and not sleep here, let him not go near until the illness has passed by, at the end of the year. If you witches go to fetch it, you will kill your
[754] fellows with whom you are chatting now. You will not enjoy my company or build with me, the chief, if you go and bring in smallpox and kill your fellows. We pray that it may pass. [For it is believed in this country that the witches go to bring in illness, or wild animals, from a distance.]

THE COMMONERS: Yes, indeed, may it pass by.

MWALUKASA: If you go to bury a brother in a country in which there is smallpox stand afar off, tie the cow you bring to a tree and call to them: 'Here is my cow for killing, come and take it.' Take your cow, but do not go into the homestead.

And the people did as he said. Then he told them to get ready for the ritual. He took his calabash cup and three other chiefs with
[769] calabash cups followed him. They blew water and prayed to Kyala and the shades. Then the people were gathered together; and the chiefs, led by Mwalukasa, ran round facing each group in turn and blowing out water towards them; the men held their shields in front of them and when the chiefs blew they shook their shields violently, as if fighting.

When all was finished then Mwalukasa said: 'When you go home,
[372] throw out the ashes and the fires; all make new fire with drills.' And they all did this.

Finally he had bamboos planted with medicine on the main roads between BuPenja and BuKukwe and BuPenja and BuNyiha. No one
[755] ill with smallpox, or who had lived in contact with smallpox, was allowed to pass, unless he had been ill and recovered. I saw the one bamboo clump on the boundary of Nyiha and Penja country. No one passed it, it was very fearsome (*lusiya fje*).

As in cultivation there was a combination of ritual and science.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(d) THE WILD PIG

Another sort of cleansing, unorganised, but concerning groups of neighbours, not kinsmen, is the 'blessing one another' (*ukuse-jana*) which takes place if a pig-hunt fails and quarrelling between the hunters is suspected to be the cause. It was described by a Christian, who had called his pagan neighbours to help him in tracking down a pig, which he had wounded during the previous night in his maize garden. It eluded them, hour after hour, though they were close upon it.

The neighbours began to think that the pig was sent by the shades (*ili wenkude*)—they meant themselves. So they stopped hunting and gathered together to express their anger, and they said: 'Our fathers built together and drank beer together, why should this pig trouble us so? We don't suspect our friend who is a Christian for he has shown that he has no quarrel with us. Had he been angry he would not have called us to hunt with him. But if one of the rest of us has a quarrel with his fellow let him speak out, that we may all be free of anger (*tuje bele*) and seize the pig, for if we think hard thoughts about one another we shall not have strength to take the pig.' All said that they were in friendship with their fellows, so first one and then another took his spear and . . . laid it on the ground and said: 'I am without anger (*Une ndiwunele ibele*).' All of them did this. One spoke to his fellow and said: 'Perhaps you are angry over that quarrel we had over beer?' But he replied, 'No.' Then the first man took up his spear from the ground and said, 'Father help us to catch this pig, if there was a quarrel, forgive, do not think of that with which I caused you to be angry. We bless one another, we are without anger.' Then all the others did the same, and they set off again to hunt.

This account, and the commentary of Mwaikambo on it, made it plain that the true translation of *bele* in such a context is 'without anger'. The communal rituals in which a whole chiefdom, or a group of neighbours, participate all have this one end, the cleansing of the group of quarrels by their open expression and explicit rejection.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

The negative rituals—the taboos which surround the pro- [797]
creative functions—disappear rather slowly, but a Christian [795]
father will enter his wife's hut to greet her after she has given
birth to a child, and will eat food cooked by her a week or two [E91]
later, which the pagans think extremely rash. An atmosphere of [262]
scepticism and experiment begins to develop; a few Christians
spoke of breaking even the deeply-entrenched taboos surrounding
menstruation 'to see what happened'. But that many Christians,
especially women, feared the old taboos was apparent when one
watched the behaviour of Christian daughters-in-law towards [406]
their fathers-in-law. In theory Christians disregarded the rules of
avoidance if their fathers-in-law are Christian, or avoid 'only a
little', but in practice a Christian woman is usually embarrassed
and fearful if, by mischance, she meets her father-in-law face to
face.[1]

Christians withdrew from the pagan communal rituals even [78]
more completely than they do from the rituals of kinship. No
Christian takes any part in the sacrifices to the heroes, or at the
groves of chiefs, or in cleansing the country, or in rain-making,
or sprinkling the homesteads. As for the ritual of chieftainship,
from that also Christians withdrew. At the time we were first in
BuNyakyusa only two chiefs were professing Christians, one of
whom was already baptized before his installation. The 'coming
out' performed for him was much curtailed since he refused to
use the traditional medicines and, because of the difficulty over
medicines, Christians were not acceptable as village headmen. In
Ngonde, where the proportion of Christians was much greater,
there were Christian headmen and chiefs, but the ritual of
'coming out' had disappeared altogether, and the Kyungu had
delegated the celebration of all pagan rituals to one of his coun-
cillors who still believed in them, he himself being a sceptic.

There are tales of the early missionaries visiting the groves to [771]
challenge pagan belief. The pagans believe that they were
confounded and some of the more conservative Christians also
think that the terror of the grove drove the Reverend — Jauer
from Lofuga (*vide supra*, p. 93) and that *because* the Reverend —
Kiesa summoned the teachers and school children to a feast in the
grove of Mlyungu, and killed 'a black cow' for them there, a
season of plenty followed. 'Many people said: "He seems to have [771]
been advised by someone, why did he go to Mlyungu and sing

[1] For an account of such a meeting, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 8-9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

The festivities and display are most often linked, not to the Church ritual, but to the handing over of marriage cattle. Since the feasts of the puberty ritual are not celebrated, the Christians concentrate their energies on the *ukukwa*, when quantities of food are provided by the bride's family, and a crowd gathers to sing and dance. Then, some time after the cattle have been handed over, the bride is taken to her husband by a party of 'mothers' and friends, and a feast is provided by the groom. The pattern is very similar to that of the pagan handing over of marriage cattle (*ukukwa*) and bringing home the bride (*ukukala*), but new songs and dances replace the somewhat bawdy pagan ones, and the Christian youths, unlike the pagans, dance without spears. Often at a Christian wedding pagans also attend, and there are rival groups of dancers, pagans, and Christians, between whom quarrels readily flare up. And when the new songs and dances of the Christians are copied by the pagans, as they sometimes are, then the Christians drop them, for they wish to be different.

The traditional examination of the bride by the 'mothers' and the giving of a bull if she goes to her husband a virgin, are maintained in the Christian community. The bull is usually killed as a feast for the mothers 'to say thank you for nourishing her', but there is, of course, no offering of the sacred meat to the ancestors, and sometimes the bull is not killed at all, or the groom brings shillings instead. As so often happens, a former ritual survives as ceremonial, an observance felt to be specially appropriate to the occasion, but no longer regarded as a condition of health or salvation.

When she is taken to her husband the bride is exhorted by her 'mothers' on her duties as a married woman. The traditional emphasis on separation from her mother is still there: 'You have left your mother, your husband is your mother, we have separated. . . .' And she is exhorted to be chaste, to obey her husband and answer him submissively, to be clean and diligent in her work, to be hospitable, and above all, as a Christian, to feel 'shame from a distance'. Here the contrast between pagan and Christian ethics is emphasized: a pagan wife is only obliged to cook for kinsmen and neighbours, not strangers, but for a Christian to let a stranger starve is spoken of as a mortal sin.

The annual festivals of the Church are not so closely parallel to pagan communal rituals, for they were developed in a northern and temperate climate with a rhythm very different from the

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

succession of 'sun', 'rain' and 'cold' into which the Nyakyusa year is divided; but there are parallels in the traditional prayers for rain, and at sunshine and harvest, which the Christians are quick to point out. What is totally new to the Nyakyusa is the division of a year into weeks, each with a day of rest and worship; but the conception once introduced has been accepted very quickly, and it is common to find pagans as well as Christians refraining from work in their fields on a Sunday. This is partly the effect of experience in European employment where Sunday is a day off, but partly, perhaps, it is because the idea of taboo is deeply embedded in pagan thought, and the teaching of some missionaries and converts has been in terms of taboo—of prohibitions connected with 'the Sabbath'. 797^ 795^ [796] [805] [681]

In the Christian villages and village-sections, some at least of the converts gather for morning and evening prayer and on Sundays in their little mud Church or school-house, and once a month or once a quarter they gather in the main Church of the district. Besides this, those seeking baptism or preparing for confirmation gather for regular weekly instruction over a period of two or three years. There is thus regular common worship and instruction, and a strong sense of community between fellow Christians, particularly when they are in a small minority in an area.

But though the Christian is a member of a Church and worships in community, the emphasis (at least in the Protestant Churches in BaNyakyusa) tends to be on the individual, and some pagans spoke as if turning Christian implied an abandoning of public duties. Kasitile's remark that if it were not for his responsibility for the ritual he would be baptized, has already been quoted (p. 141), and the young priest of PalKyala said the same. Whether these two were serious in wishing to become Christian is irrelevant here; they both believed that they had duties to their community which could not be fulfilled if they were Christians. The 'individualism' of young Christians is a matter of concern to many missionaries who are struggling to create among Christians that very sense of mystical union which pagan kinsmen exhibit.

The idea of the corporate nature of the worshipping group, with all that implies in mutual responsibility, is but one example of the profound similarity between the underlying ideas of pagan and Christian ritual that will be apparent to most readers. In the pagan tradition confession, oblation, and communion are as essential to the sacrifices at the graves as they are to the Christian eucharist; [771]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

stranger came through the country our fathers lay in wait for him and killed him, but we are learning and have to learn to give him food and a night's shelter. Repent and let your hearts be washed!

We differ from other Christians because we baptise in Jordan, and they baptise in a dish in the church. They say we are wrong, but we say we do what Christ told us to do. They also say we are wrong to marry more than one wife. The words we say are just the same as the creed of those at Kabembe (i.e. Lutherans) with two differences, that of baptism and that of having more than one wife.

Communion services are celebrated half-yearly at each of several different centres by the leaders of the 'independent' Churches, and since they are unable to obtain wine, sweet tea or a light beer are used instead.

The members of Ngemela's Church contribute to buy a bull and rice and beer, and share a feast together after a communion service, and it is alleged by outsiders, though stoutly denied by members, that these are 'love feasts' at which members exchange wives,[1] to show that they are 'one body'. The African National Church also holds feasts after services and some outsiders say these too are 'love feasts', but outside opinion on the African National Church's feasts was much less unanimous than about Ngemela's feasts. It is certain that in Ngemela's church men and women drink sitting together in a manner not conventional among the Nyakyusa. Members of the mission Churches spoke of members of the independent Churches as living 'just like pagans' and averred that, despite their polygyny, their members ran off with other men's wives and were scarcely disciplined for doing so.

It is also clear that the would-be members are baptised almost immediately, with no period of testing and instruction such as is insisted upon by the mission Churches; that very many of them are members who have been suspended by other Churches; and that the 'pastors' have no special training for their task.

Nyasuru's church attracted more educated people than did Ngemela's and, in terms of Dr. Sundkler's classification,[2] his was a typical Ethiopian Church with its emphasis on African nationalism. Ngemela, the son of a minor chief, behaved much like a chief and attracted the less educated. He emphasized 'washing' —baptism by immersion—and repentance, and he was peripatetic

[1] This is also alleged of the Watch Tower in Northern Rhodesia, cf. Ian Cunnison, 'A Watch Tower Assembly in Central Africa', *International Review of Missions*, xl (1951), p. 487.

[2] B. G. M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets*, Lutterworth Press (1948), pp. 55-9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

like most of the leaders of Zionist Churches in the south.[1] 797[x]

It is noticeable that the two 'independent' Churches have a more elaborate form of service than the Church from which their leaders have sprung, and Ngemela habitually wears conspicuous vestments. There is, of course, great variation between different denominations in the emphasis placed on ritual, some Protestants abjuring it and turning their very insistence on starkness and simplicity into a ritual in itself—a taboo. There seems to be a clear tendency in Southern Africa for 'independent' Churches to express themselves more and more in ritual and less in dogma. In this way they reduce the gap between themselves and the pagans, for the pagan religion is expressed almostly exclusively in ritual, whereas Christianity is expressed in creeds and confessions as well as in the rituals of the Church. 795[x] 779 [796]

(e) THE CONTRAST BETWEEN PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

There are certain common elements in the rituals celebrated by pagans and Christians: some of the occasions are the same, and in the conceptions of sacrifice, of death and rebirth, of confession and cleansing, there are similarities; but there are also profound differences. The conception of life, immortality, replaces the preoccupation with fertility, for though most Nyakyusa Christians, like the pagans, regard celibacy as evidence of physical abnormality, and the conventional desire of a woman is to have six children—a quiverful in Nyakyusa eyes—yet fertility is no longer the end of all being, sought in every ritual. There are profound differences, too, in the values expressed in the rituals regarding sex relations, the range of moral obligations, and social change. In pagan thought polygyny is good—a man should have many children. Child marriage is defended on the ground that a girl 'gets accustomed to her husband' if she goes to him early, and homosexual relations between youths and younger men are tolerated since they have no wives and cannot marry if the older men are polygynists. What is upheld is the chastity of women, and a total separation of the sex activities of members of successive generations, expressed in the taboos limiting familiarity between mother and son, father and mature daughter, father-in-law and daughter-in-law. In Christian thought it is the 'pure in heart' who 'see God' and this is interpreted by the mission Churches to imply monogamy. Only in the 'independent' African Churches is it asserted 797[x] 795[x] [842] [589] [595] [589] [838] [836] [561] [183] [595]

[1] The emphasis on healing, so common in the south, is absent.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

went away to work again and in time I earned four cows which I hid with friends far from home. My father knew nothing about them. Then I wrote to my father from Mwaelse [about twenty miles from where his father lived] where I was working, saying that I had found a girl there, the daughter of a Christian, and please could I have the cows with which to marry her? My father said: "No, she lives too far away." Then later he found a Christian girl of whom his father approved and a satisfactory marriage was arranged.

A common topic of discussion among Christian women was whether parents should choose mates for their children, or leave them free to choose for themselves, for though traditionally a girl had to signify her consent to marriage, she was betrothed very young and her freedom of choice was small. The growing insistence on personal freedom in marriage is symptomatic of a radical change in the attitude towards persons.

The pagan rituals were the main occasions of recreation. It has been shown, in *Rituals of Kinship*, how pagan funerals and marriages are the occasion for feasting and dancing and display, and how the seclusion hut of a nubile girl is the gathering place for the young men and girls of the neighbourhood. Even a twin ritual is a festival with beer for the older men and some meat for everyone. The sacrifices at the graves were feasts for the leading men of the country, and the 'coming out' was the occasion of the greatest feast of the generation, and dances were practised for months ahead. Partly because of a change in sex morality, and partly because the meat and beer at pagan feasts are offered to the shades, Christians are largely excluded from these festivals. They may not participate in pagan dances, or join in the lewd songs, or attend the initiation hut of a girl, and they are partly debarred from the feasts of the pagans: certain of the Churches (notably the Church of Scotland and, for a time, the Moravians) forbid Christians to drink beer at all.

And the Christian rituals, though some of them are 'festivals of the Church', are scarcely celebrated as such. There has been a separation between ritual and recreation which has left a gap in the Christian community. It is true that the Christian young men and girls sing and dance at funerals and marriages, but the elders, for the most part, look on with dubious eyes, saying that dancing leads to adultery, and several of the dances introduced by

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

leap in sympathy; as one of our friends explained, she found it hard to accept food from the neighbouring Safwa who were 'so dirty in their cooking'.

Both pagans and Christians pin their faith to resurrection, but the interpretations differ radically. To the pagan the shade is resurrected 'in the body of his child', it scarcely has any separate existence. To Christians the personality, the individual soul, is something indestructible and continuing. This theological difference is but one facet of a deep cleavage between the pagan view of a man and his relations with his group, and the Christian view.

Because the traditional religion is a cult of the shades, piety consists in doing just as father did. It is neglect of traditional rituals, departure from traditional ways, that is held to bring madness, sterility, or death. But Christianity is revolutionary; it is the yeast working in society to transform it. That is often forgotten in communities with a Christian tradition, but where the Gospel has been preached only for a generation and confirming Christians are but one in six, it is in men's minds all the time. The Nyakyusa could not be unaware that the Gospel implied changing their society.

In the pagan tradition the meticulous performance of the rituals is stressed: the right medicines, the right persons, the right order of events are all important. The attitude of mind of the participants matters also—if they are on bad terms the ritual will be ineffective—but goodwill and forgiveness alone are useless without the performance of the proper ritual. In the Christian tradition, as interpreted to us by Nyakyusa converts, it is the inward and spiritual attitude of the participants that is stressed.

Finally, all the pagan rituals are directed to driving off the shades or the heroes, whereas the Christian rituals are the 'means of grace', of coming near to God. Christians pray that the Holy Spirit should take up his abode within them; they seek to emulate the saints who 'walked with God'. Our Christian friends were quite clear about the contrast here between the pagan and Christian traditions: it is crystallized in the attitude to dreams: 'If a pagan dreams of conversa (*ahanogale*) with shades, he fears death; 'if a Christian dreams of conversa with God he rejoices greatly because it means he is gaining strength in Christianity.'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Councils, the importance of establishing machinery for their appointment in chiefdoms where the 'coming out' is no longer held is obvious. [77] [622] [923]

The traditional communal rituals have not been dropped altogether, but their celebration is sporadic and not everyone supports them. Careful enquiries suggest that in less than half of the chiefdoms has the 'coming out' been celebrated when it was due. In the most conservative portion of the district, Selya, there were celebrations in 1952 and 1954, but even in that area a number of the ruling chiefs have never 'come out'. The omission is due partly to the desire of the old men to retain office, partly to the increase in population and the planting of coffee which makes any new deal in land unacceptable, and partly to the feeling of many that the old ritual is an anachronism, if not directly incompatible with their new faith in Christianity. Some chiefs who have not 'come out' would welcome a celebration; one such told us that 'if the "coming out" died chieftainship would die'; but a young chief's personal wishes are not decisive in this matter. Sacrifices at the graves of chiefs and heroes are not as frequent as before, but they still occur at some graves in time of drought or other emergency. The Kings came to Lubaga in 1954, and they were expected to come and install Kasile's heir in 1955. In 1954 also there were sacrifices at Mwenjonga (80) and Mwakisumbwe (91) for it was a season of scarcity. Rituals for cleansing the country and sprinkling the homesteads occur sporadically 'when occasion demands', but not annually in any chiefdom and never in some. And when celebrations do occur they do not unite the people of a chiefdom as they used to do. Christians oppose them and many non-Christians are also sceptical. [561] [796] [613] [782] [771]

In 1955 the traditional rituals celebrated by kingship and chief-dom formed a coherent system. They were directed towards the shades and the heroes, as was manifest in the sacrifices and in the dramas of death and rebirth when these included 'death with the shades' or were 'caught hold of' by Kyala.[1] The older participants were then conscious, in greater or lesser degree, of the symbolism implicit in the actions they performed. By 1955 the ritual cycle was nowhere celebrated in full: what remained were 'bits and pieces' of ritual, some of them fully intelligible without reference to the complete cycle. The link between the rites and the shades and the heroes was less clear, and the symbolism less [769] [776]

[1] Old rites, pp. 117-38, 30-85; Rituals of Fertility, pp. 31, 38, 100, 111-13, 119.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 conscious. This disintegration of a former coherence, and a [769] decreasing awareness of the meaning of symbols used, are perhaps [796] characteristic of changing societies in Africa.

Despite the growth of the Christian Church, the great demand for schools, and the dropping of the old rituals directed to family [794] shades and the heroes, belief in the power of medicines flourishes. [778] Probably most deaths and misfortunes are still attributed to an enemy using either witchcraft or sorcery. The traditional belief in witchcraft is rejected by educated people, but belief in the power of medicines is general. Autopsies still take place and occasionally the poison ordeal is administered in secrecy; one case was mentioned which occurred in 1940. As we have seen, medicines have always been regarded as a potential instrument of individual competition. They are used in the rituals of kinship to ensure health, fertility, and good manners and morals; in the ritual of chieftainship to buttress authority, and in 'sprinkling the homesteads' to fertilize the fields; but also by individuals to steal the fertility of their neighbours' fields and to grow rich at the expense of their neighbours, and it is their use as an instrument of individual aggrandisement that is most talked of today. There were many reports of their use by rivals to office as chiefs, and the floods of 1955, which washed away the Mbaka bridge and caused a serious landslide on that river, were interpreted as incidents in a [578] prolonged fight between chiefs who were rivals for the position of paramount. The deaths of the heir of one of them in 1953, and of the other chief himself in 1956, were also attributed to their duel with medicines.

Along with the political changes there has been a development 797 of the Churches, more particularly of the Moravian Church, 795 which is now largely self-supporting, with growing congregations served by African ministers.[1] Until 1938 the two main Protestant 177 missions in Nyakyusa valley, the Moravian and Lutheran, were staffed by Germans and their funds came mainly from Germany. The war meant the withdrawal of the missionaries and the cutting off of funds. After a lapse of three years one Moravian missionary, and later one Lutheran, came to take charge of the missions and they were reinforced by other missionaries after the end of the war, but the whole policy in both missions is to build up self-supporting churches staffed by African pastors.

The work of the White Fathers mission was not interrupted by

[1] Change in Ngonde is not discussed.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XIV

RELIGION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

182 In this chapter we shall seek to show how the traditional communal rituals both reflect and maintain the traditional political structure, and to consider in what measure the change from paganism to Christianity compels a change in other aspects of the society, or, alternatively, how far the economic and political changes taking place among the Nyakyusa compel a change in religion.

182 773 769 643 The heroic myths are the charter for chieftainship. The heroes from whom the chiefs are descended are pictured as creators and benefactors, the authors of fertility and civilized living. But myth and ritual also entrench the rights of commoners and unify people of different stocks by asserting their complementary diversity. No ritual can be celebrated without the participation of commoner priests. They 'speak out' at rituals and bring public opinion directly to bear on the chief, whose own health is held to depend upon their goodwill; at the same time the whole country looks to the chief as the source of fertility in man and beast and field.

182 643 796 782 Ritual was the integrating force with the widest range in the traditional society. Independent chiefs, even those whose people were culturally as different as the Nyakyusa and Kinga, joined in sacrifice to Lwembe and Kyalo and were mystically dependent upon one another. As Kasitile put it 'the Kinga come (to Lubaga) both when there is trouble in our land and in theirs'. In Ngonde the 'divine king', the Kyungu, who controlled a flourishing trade in ivory, developed secular as well as ritual functions and emerged as a paramount chief, but in the Nyakyusa valley the ritual bond had no secular backing save the exchange of iron and salt for food, which linked Kinga and Nyakyusa in a tenuous partnership. The sacrifices to the Lwembe did not exclude war between chiefs who acknowledged him, nor did sacrifice to their common ancestor exclude war between Mwaipopo (1:6) and Mwalingo (1:5), but the necessity of co-operation in sacrifice compelled later reconciliation. Perhaps the insistence on the succession of the heroes and their living representatives, the elaborate ritual of

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

chieftainship, and the dependence upon medicines as a means of enforcing law were connected with the ineffectiveness of secular authority. Certainly the Kyungu's emergence from seclusion, and the dropping of the taboos which surrounded him were connected with his acquisition of economic power; but we know too little of the conditions that make for elaboration of ritual to postulate any general connexion between the absence of ritual in public life and the effectiveness of secular authority. 182 643 782 796

The cycle of sacrifices to the heroes and dead chiefs among the Nyakyusa is more than an ancestor cult, for it includes non-relatives among its priests and beneficiaries; but it has many of the features of an ancestor cult, among them the identification of piety with conservatism. A good man follows exactly in the footsteps of his father who becomes his god. This is reconciled with a myth of a new beginning, ten generations ago, when civilized life came to the Nyakyusa valley, and the new beginning is celebrated each generation with the 'coming out' of the young chief and his contemporaries. 182 769 [773]

All Nyakyusa rituals are cathartic in the sense that they make explicit and seek to dissipate, by their very expression and rejection, certain anti-social tendencies. In the Nyakyusa view the root of evil is 'anger in the heart' unadmitted and corrosive, and only by an open confession can it be overcome.[1] Hence in every situation of misfortune, public or private, men are pressed to 'speak out' (*ukunyepe*) and admit their anger. At the 'coming out' the conflict of generations is expressed in the prolonged debate over the date of the celebration and the detailed arrangements, and in the dancing and slaughter of cattle, and is finally resolved when authority and land are handed over to the young men by their fathers. The fissiparous tendencies of a chiefdom are made explicit and cancelled in constitutional form by the division of the old chief's country into two, under his senior sons; and criticism of the young chiefs is made explicit in the formal admonition by the father's village headmen. The rejection of conflict is clearest at the annual purification when men throw out the sins contaminated by family bickering and the cannibalism of witches, and *fight* one another 'that the homesteads may be peaceful'. This fighting is 'to bring out war from within (*ukunyepe*)'. 182 783 796 631

[1] cf. Good Company, pp. 99-112. The belief that a witch to succeed must confess if the witchcraft was to succeed was the reason for the torture of witches in many African societies.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and is therefore to be interpreted as 'confusion of anger', rather than as 'rebellion'.

Sometimes there is an expression of opposite tendencies, both implicitly approved. The sacrifices to the heroes and at the graves of the chiefs emphasize seniority and precedence, and express the dependence of junior on senior kinsmen, but the myth, recalled in every celebration, tells of the surpassing power of the son or younger brother in the beginning of time, and the junior brother of a chief often holds office as a priest. Then there is the drama of driving away the chiefs and bringing him back transformed, which is so characteristic of the rituals of kinship and appears again at the cleansing of the country. Such contradictions are doubtless expressions of ambivalent attitudes among the participants themselves, and of the attempt in ritual to reconcile conflicting social principles—in these instances authority with the rights and duties of juniors, and change with continuity.

In a society without written records legal certainty depends very largely on publicity. This is apparent in the law relating to marriage contracts and family inheritance,[3] and still more so in the law of the chiefdom. The ritual of 'coming out' celebrates radical changes in social status, and the public recognition of the leaders, members, and territorial boundaries of villages, as well as of the heirs to chieftainship. Thus certainty in these matters is assured. There is no positive value of the co-agnatic of father and son (as in ancient Egypt),[4] but the installation of the young chiefs before the death of their father serves to mitigate conflicts over the succession. Continuity over village boundaries and village leadership often appears when the ritual has not been celebrated, for there is no public definition to refer to.

How close is the link between religious belief and practice and social structure? There is no doubt that the sacrifices to the dead chiefs and heroes and the traditional rituals of kinship supported the former political and kinship structure of the Nyakyusa. Their performance compelled co-operation between kinsmen,[5] between neighbouring chiefs, and between chiefs and people. How far then does the change in religion, begun when the first Christian converts professed his new faith, compel a change in the social

[3] Godfrey Wilson, 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Law', *Africa*, vol. ix, 1936, p. 1[illegible].
[4] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, pp. [illegible].
[5] cf. *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. [illegible].

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa

particular symbols are tied to a particular social structure; the poet makes his choice within the whole range of the familiar.

The impetus to change has come both from the religious field and from the secular. For example, the pressure towards monogamy among the Nyakyusa has been religious; given plentiful land and cash crops additional wives are an economic asset, not a liability. In this respect the contrast with the Ciskei in South Africa, where families are dependent for food on wage-earners in towns, and no man can support two families,[1] is marked. On the other hand, the decay of Nyakyusa age-villages is primarily due to economic pressure, though it is facilitated by the insistence of Christians that there is no danger in father-in-law and daughter-in-law meeting one another. The first generation of Christians living on mission land built villages apart for their sons, despite the teaching that avoidance of a father-in-law by his daughter-in-law was foolish, if not sinful. But a radical change in pagan observance of ritual avoidance is brought about by the general practice of going out to work for long periods, and the competition for coffee and rice-lands, which makes the territorial separation of fathers and sons impossible. As we have shown, young men going to work commonly leave their wives in their fathers' homesteads, valuing the support and supervision given them there above the old stringency of avoidance and, where land is scarce and valuable, fathers do not move aside each generation to make way for their sons. Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law continues only in an attenuated form.

From German times onward by a European government has compelled a modification of the traditional sacrifices to the heavens and of the ritual of chieftainship. How the Kings priests came to Lubaga 'in secret' and how they failed to instal a new Lusumbe after the death of Mwaskinya about 1914 has been described. Killing a child to sanctify a drum or make medicine for the fields, compelling a man to accept a dangerous office, killing chiefs because they are ailing, or plucking off their nails before they die; all these are actions which are held, and must be held, to be 'contrary to natural justice' by any Western government. Here the change in political organization compels a change in ritual and there is evidence that belief in the traditional forms is much diminished, though not dead. The European government also

[1] Bantu-speaking Rural Survey, Vol. 1, *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, by D. H. Houghton and E. M. Walmsley; vol. 4, *Social Structure*, by M. Wilson et al.

9 Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

177 fined the administration of the poison ordeal, driving out people
649 alleged to be witches, and killing supposed sorcerers 'contrary to
176 natural justice'. Here the change is not in the celebration of a ritual but in the execution of 'justice' based on traditional religious beliefs.

The early missionaries were very important as employers of
177 labour and a market for produce; indeed at one time they were the
177 sole source of western trade-goods among the Nyakyusa. For long they provided the only skilled medical attention. They were the source of new learning, teaching, from the start, reading and writing and new manual skills, and the link between learning and religion, so familiar in the history of Europe, is still strong. Therefore acceptance of Christianity *tended* to go along with acceptance of its new economic and political structure, but it was never identified with it. Already in the thirties a popular song contrasted Christians with Europeans, and African nationalism was finding expression in 'independent' Churches.

Secularism fits as well with the new economic and political
178 structure as Christianity, and it has been argued elsewhere that
177 one of the characteristics of the change from a small-scale, isolated,
649 self-sufficient people to a large-scale society is increasing secularism. The evidence from BaNyakyusa does not so far support this, but here is a *separation* of religious and other activities. Religion is not interwoven with the modern political system as it was with the old. Traditionally the fusion between ritual and political activities was almost complete; village headmen became priests as they grew old, and chiefs became gods. Now there is a separation between Church and state, between Government and mission, which co-operate closely only in the organization of schools. It is true that Christian congregations pray regularly for 'those set in authority over us', but for the most part religious ritual does not enter into state functions. The flag is hoisted and saluted at sunrise and sunset at administrative and military centres; certain occasions, such as the Queen's birthday or the visit of the Queen's representative, the Governor, are celebrated with secular ceremonial. Only at the Coronation, to which African representatives from Rungwe district were sent, did the state ceremonial and the Christian ritual merge.[1] Political tension is not now directly

[1] R. Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, Chicago (1941); *A Village that Chose Progress*, Chicago (1950).

[2] 'The entire solemnity of the Coronation, from start to finish, is distinctly a religious rite.' Canon Charles Smyth, 'The Coronation Rite', *The Listener*, 28th May 1953.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Age-villages combined to form a chiefdom under the hereditary chief, *mwalyale*, but active co-operation between villages thus associated was often slight; indeed in the larger chiefdoms there commonly existed intermittent animosity which might break out in raiding or even civil war. The integrity of these larger chiefdoms was weak – for example, when the Nyakyusa were attacked by Sangu and Ngoni war-parties, and later by the Germans, villages of the same chiefdom conspicuously failed to join in common defence. Similarly the land affairs of one village were no concern of any other, and each jealously guarded its own rights.

Size of the chiefdoms was large; smallness of scale is typical of Nyakyusa political organization and social attitudes. In 1955 the smallest indigenous chiefdom contained only 36 men. In 1948 35,700 people were divided amongst about 18 indigenous chiefs, but undoubtedly had not the Colonial Government frozen the system there would have been rather more – at least five more. Today there are 12 recognised "administrative chiefs", amongst whom five have each less than 3,000 people under them, and the largest chiefdom contains fewer than 10,000 people – the average is just over 4,000 people.

Nevertheless the chiefdom, the collection of villages, was important, because in the creation of the chiefdom villages were created, and in its development the villages developed, matured and died away. A village survived only so long as its members lived and by the nature of the age-organization there was but little possibility of the recruitment of new members, for villagers' sons left to form their own new villages. Their sons eventually came to comprise the core of the new chiefdoms.

In connection with the constitution of a Nyakyusa village and with land tenure, the significant feature of the chiefdom was its establishment, together with the induction of a new chief, at the great "coming-out" ceremony, *ukwimba*. In brief, each chief was succeeded by two of his sons – the eldest son of each of the senior houses of the chief, i.e., of his first two wives. At the "coming-out" ceremony, when the sons were still young men and their father was not a particularly old man, the old chiefdom was divided into two, each part coming under one of the new young chiefs. Before this critical occasion – at which much important ritual was performed – the younger sons of the old chiefdom had already moved away from their fathers' villages and had established their own incipient villages nearby, each one containing a group of *ensoala*. A Nyakyusa boy from the age of about seven years could not continue to live with his father and mother, but, in company with his age-mate, built his own hut on a site adjacent to the main village as indicated by the fathers' headmen. Until the "coming-out" ceremony these younger villages came under the control of the old village headmen; but with the induction of the new chiefs they achieved independent status, each with its own headman appointed from among its members by the old headmen. Each new village was allocated a new building site and a new arable area, and quite commonly the old villagers, the older men, moved away a little in order to give the younger men adequate access to the land, for it was considered that the young men's needs for land were paramount.

After this wholesale reorganization of the old chiefdoms, where new villages were established and new boundaries demarcated,[1] the old chief himself, the old headmen and the older men (the "fathers") gradually retired from active public life. The old chief was supposed to commit suicide after a time (or was quietly killed off) in order to leave the field clear for his sons; the old headmen became the religious and ritual leaders of the new chiefdoms, with the favour of elder statesmanship, and the old men's

1. [illegible]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

died of wounds and fever. Because the Europeans lacked arms the war dragged on,[1] and the power of the slavers was finally broken only in 1895, when Sir Harry Johnston came up the Lake with a well-armed force.[2]

German missionaries of the Berlin and Moravian missions arrived in 1891, and established themselves at a number of stations in Nyakyusa country.[3] The Songwe had by that time been agreed upon as the boundary between Nyasaland and German East Africa, and the German administration followed hard on the heels of the missionaries.[4] Twenty years later war broke out between England and Germany; there was fighting throughout Rungwe district, and many Nyakyusa were impressed as carriers. The absorption of the Nyakyusa into a world society was considerably accelerated by war.

d. The form of Nyakyusa society

Not only was the Nyakyusa valley long isolated from the outside world, but it was divided into a number of small, independent chiefdoms, whose members had few dealings with people beyond their own chiefdoms and those immediately adjoining. Each family produced for its own needs, so that trade was the merest trickle; and marriage outside the boundaries of the chiefdom was discouraged, since beyond the jurisdiction of one's own chief there was no security for life and property. A plea against a man of a neighbouring chiefdom might not be heard by the defendant's chief. Nyakyusa men enlarged to us on the dangers and difficulties of travelling even twenty miles from home, before the coming of the Europeans; a journey from Selya to Tukuyu (twenty-five miles) was said to take three days, because travellers had to seek cover so often.

The number and size of chiefdoms varied; for a continuous process of splitting, together with periodical conquest and re-absorption, was going on and, as we have seen, the area of Nyakyusa occupation was expanding. In 1938 the Nyakyusa themselves

[1] Legard, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 50–187.
[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa* (1897), p. 149.
[3] A. Hemmendy, *Deutsche Arbeit am Nyasa* (1896); J. T. Hamilton, *Twenty Years of Pioneer Missions in Nyasaland* (1900).
[4] F. Fülleborn, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, Band IX (1906).

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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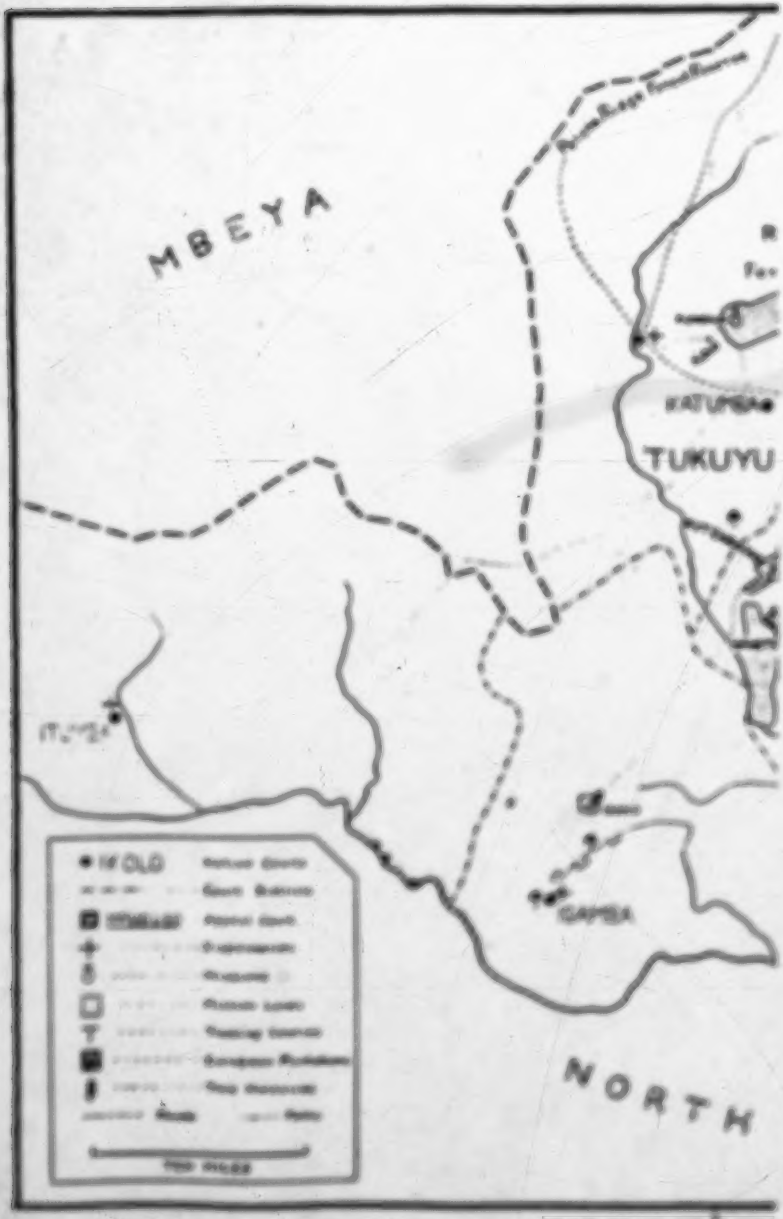

MAP III. RUNGWE

[facing p. 16(a)]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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GWE DISTRICT

Drawn by J. F. L. Simmons after R. de Z. Hall and C. D. Archer

[Facing p. 16 (b)]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their village headmen, and assist the president and his village headmen in the hearing of cases. Much of the legal business previously transacted by each chief in his own country is now taken to court (*KuiKoroti*); but the power of village headmen to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages is still the basis of the legal system.

Though the Administration has worked through the traditional authorities it has consciously and deliberately modified the traditional system; and, as part of its policy of development, it has established schools, dispensaries, and nurseries for coffee-seedlings and other plants. There are three schools in Rungwe district receiving Government grants: one directly under the Administration, one under the Native Authority, and one a mission school. There are also a great number of 'bush schools', that is, mission village schools under uncertificated teachers giving instruction in the three R's and in religion. Over 19,000 children (12·6 per cent of the population served) are enrolled in the various schools; but 96 per cent of these are in 'bush schools', many of whom never learn even to read and write.

The structure of Nyakyusa society has been further complicated by the conversion of a substantial minority (16 per cent in 1938)[1] of the people to Christianity. The Christians form a group with values radically different from those of the pagans, on whom they react in innumerable ways.[2] The growth of this diversity in the society is a direct effect of its diminishing isolation.

To treat of Nyakyusa villages as if missions, or the Administration, or migrant labour and coffee export did not exist would simplify, but distort our analysis. We have therefore included some account of the differences in behaviour between pagan and Christian, of the effects of centralization on the position of village headmen, and of the influence of trade and migration on economic co-operation in the village. A discussion of the organization of schools and Christian congregations, of the development of courts of record, and 'court districts', of the relation between

[1] Calculated from figures supplied by the courtesy of the missions and the independent African Churches working in the district.

[2] Moslems are very few and they have little influence on the community as a whole. These few are mostly Swahili traders, Ngoni settlers, or soldiers of the K.A.R. from Nyasaland. We heard of only two or three Nyakyusa who had turned Moslem.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

less separate, but as time goes on the demarcation between them becomes less and less clear. In most chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa the ceremony is still observed, but in the country of Porokoto, near Rungwe mission, it has not been performed for a generation, and there the territorial separation between young and old is much less definite than in other chiefdoms. The maintenance of the age-village system is ultimately dependent upon the moving aside of the old men in each generation to make room for their sons.

The reason commonly given for the omission of the ceremony in Ngonde is that since the country has become more densely populated there is no longer room for two chiefs to divide the country of their father. The old system of division was adapted to an expanding population in a relatively empty country; and the two young chiefs ordinarily ruled a greater area, and more men, than their father. Further, it is said, the ritual was in one aspect a preparation for war, and fighting between chiefdoms has ceased. These explanations are obviously not adequate, since the ceremony is still performed in Nyakyusa chiefdoms in which there is neither room for expansion, nor war. Its omission may be related rather to the general abandoning of traditional rituals in Ngonde. Forty-five per cent of the people of Ngonde, including many leading men, are professing Christians, and there is a very general scepticism of the efficacy of traditional rituals. This scepticism extends even to those who are not Church members.

In Porokoto's chiefdom, the 'coming out' was omitted partly because of a dispute over the succession; but there, also, many of the traditional rituals are not regularly performed (as they are in other parts of Nyakyusa country), because the proportion of Christians is high since Porokoto's chiefdom adjoins the main Moravian mission station, Rungwe, and because pagan faith in these rituals has therefore been shaken. As Porokoto (who is not a professing Christian himself) put it, when explaining why he had not performed the twin ritual for his own twin daughters: 'We see that nothing happens to the Christians when they omit the rituals, so we begin to say "What value have they?"' Thus not only are Christians forbidden by their Churches to participate in the ritual acts of the 'coming out' but pagans themselves begin to doubt their necessity.

The presence of Christians further complicates the traditional

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

village organization since many of them live in separate Christian villages, or sections of villages. When the first German missionaries arrived among the Nyakyusa in 1892, they bought land from the chiefs and village headmen at the different points at which they decided to settle, and villages of Christian converts have grown up on this land. The nucleus of these villages consisted of Ngonde workmen who came from Karonga (where a Scots mission was already established) to help the Germans build their mission houses. Later, local Nyakyusa who came to work at the mission stations built there too, and a party of ninety slaves, rescued by the German administration from the Arab leader, Mlozi, were given into the care of the missionaries and settled on the land they had bought. These slaves were from other tribes, not Nyakyusa, and there was difficulty in repatriating them to their home villages. The foreigners and Nyakyusa who remained on mission land were those who accepted Christian teaching. Practically all the early converts were already working for the missionaries and living near them before their baptism, and later converts were encouraged to move out of their pagan villages and join the new villages of Christians on mission land. On the other hand, any who left the Church, or who were suspended for practising polygyny or for some other cause, were, and still are, liable to be turned off mission land by the missionary in charge. Thus these villages comprise only professing Christians.

In the villages on mission land there is a certain division of authority between Church and State. Up to 1929 such villages were treated as being outside the control of any chief. A Nyakyusa informant described the position thus: 'The missionaries said that they had bought their land and they would not admit any authority of the chief over it. They collected the taxes for the (German) Government themselves. The chief never sent into "European country" (*Kilungu*) for anything. The people there did not cook for him. The missionary used to be the chief in the European country; but since the English came it is different.' Under the system of Indirect Rule the administrative authority of chiefs over Africans living on mission-owned land is recognized, taxes are paid through the chief, and civil cases between Christians may be taken to the chief's court (*vide infra*, p. 158). But chiefs still treat Christians living on mission land rather differently from those living on land which has not been so alienated. They

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

are, for example, chary of calling out Christians to carry loads when a Government official comes by wanting porters, or of sending their messengers into the mission villages when they require food for any purpose. The headers of the villages on mission land are not headmen appointed at the 'coming out' (in which the Christian villages do not share), but 'elders' or 'peacemakers' appointed by the Church (usually the missionary and 'session'); and it is under such a leader that the members of a village on mission land rally when they are called out to co-operate in some activity, such as a pig hunt, in which each village acts as a unit.

Even on mission land, however, the traditional village organization and age-grouping are in some measure maintained. Boys leave their fathers' houses well before they reach puberty and build together a little distance away. There they are joined by younger brothers until the village is closed and the youngsters are told to start a new village of their own. Where there is plenty of land, as at Ibote mission in Selya, the division between the generations is still quite clear, but where good building sites are scarce, as on Rungwe mission land, the divisions are blurred. As we have seen, the maintenance of clear territorial divisions between the generations depends upon the old men moving aside and leaving the greater part of the land for the more numerous ruling generation. Such a movement never occurs on mission land, which is not part of the land of any chief. It follows that territorial separation of age groups cannot there continue for long.

Many Nyakyusa Christians nowadays prefer not to live on mission land, on the ground that there is less security of tenure, and less opportunity to develop coffee planting, on mission land than off it (*vide infra*, p. 48). At the same time the Moravian and Berlin missions have ceased to pursue their early policy of gathering converts at mission stations,[1] so that more and more Christians are coming to live intermingled with pagan neighbours. Very often, however, Christians choose to gather in one section of a village: scholars who have decided to become Christians often get permission to build near their school; they choose to move out of the pagan villages in which they have been living in order to

[1] The Swiss mission in Ngonde never sought to gather its converts into separate villages, recommending rather that Christians should remain in their own houses and influence their pagan neighbours.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

build with Christian contemporaries, and sometimes the teacher is himself quite a young man and builds with them. Members of two independent churches, the Watch Tower[1] and the followers of Ngomola, have also built apart with fellow believers. Each such group has its own name, and a sense of unity, and its religious leader is recognized as the leader in secular affairs also, but politically it is a section of a larger pagan village of contemporaries. We know of no case in which a purely Christian group living off mission land has been given status as a village at the 'coming out'.

797 621

Since the same word, *ikipanga*,[2] is used both for a village and its sub-divisions the distinction between village and village-section is often not clear in ordinary speech, but it is apparent at the 'coming out', and in legal procedure.

621

[1] The Watch Tower (Jehovah's Witnesses) is of course a world organization, but Nyakyusa followers were organized under their own leaders and so far as we could discover were subject to no outside supervision between 1933 and 1938.

[2] *Ikipanga* is also used sometimes for the following of a chief, and nowadays for a congregation or church; cf. the Kiswa dialect.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

425 and need not be recapitulated. The essential fact here is that the village is the group which allocates land to a new-comer, and which maintains the rights of individuals who have moved and who wish to return.

Once established in a village, a man can hoe any ground which 425 has not yet been cultivated, and thereby make it his own.[1] No 423 reference need be made to the headman and other villagers, provided that he does not encroach on land formerly cultivated by others, or on the main pasture land. There is no limit to the acreage he may use. Pasture-land is jointly owned by the whole village group and no individual has exclusive rights to any portion of it. Every member of a village has the right to graze his cattle on the village pastures, and this right may also be granted to an outsider by the village headman in consultation with his neighbours. But no one has the right to cut trees near the village (unless they are ones he has planted or inherited) without the permission of his fellow villagers. The death of one man we knew, the younger brother of a chief, was attributed to the fact that he had cut a branch from a self-sown tree growing in the arable land of a village in which he was a new-comer, without asking permission of his fellow villagers. It was said that 'the owners' of the village were angry and killed him because he had not asked their leave before lopping the tree. He had wanted the branch to make an axe-handle.

The land rights of Christians living in the chiefdoms are 423 identical with those of their pagan fellows; but those who live on 797 mission land are in a different position. They are tenants of the mission, paying an annual rent of 1s., and liable to be evicted by the missionary in charge if they leave the Church. A man so driven out loses the coffee-trees he has planted. One Christian informant remarked: 'We do not think it good to plant coffee on mission land because very often a man is turned out of the Church.' And at Rungwe mission even those moving voluntarily lose the coffee they have planted. Now all trees introduced by Europeans have been declared by the Federation of Chiefs to be the property of the planter, even though he has moved to a different chiefdom, and Christians feel that they have greater security of ownership in coffee planted in the chiefdoms than in that on mission land. The difficulties likely to arise at a 'coming out' are ignored, and

[1] Ibid., pp. 41-2.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

it is implied that coffee planted in the chiefdoms will be inherited by a man's heirs. As a leading Christian woman put it: 'We like to build on this side of the river because the other is mission land, and if a man moves he loses the coffee and everything else he has planted there. . . . A man has children and he wishes his children to inherit what he has planted.' The number of coffee-trees each man may plant on mission land is also limited to ten, so that the development of large plantations, such as some estate Nyakyusa are undertaking, is impossible there.

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3. *Building*

When a group of boys starts a new village two or three friends usually combine to erect a little hut and live in it together. As younger boys join the village the older ones instruct and help their juniors to build. Thus, although as they grow older each boy builds a hut for himself, the habit of co-operation with village-mates in construction is already established. Until they are married, boys do all the work on their huts for themselves, fetching their own reeds or bamboos for the frame, and cutting and carrying thatching grass. They usually leave their huts unmodded. Adult men, on the other hand, are helped by their wives and female relatives as well as by sons and sons-in-law, and one or two of their own village neighbours. Men fell the bamboos, construct the framework of the house, and thatch, while women cut and carry grass, carry bamboos, mould the mud bricks which are packed between the bamboo uprights, and plaster the hut inside. The wife for whom the hut is being built is responsible for the women's work, but she usually gets some help from her co-wives and women neighbours, as well as from her mother and sisters, and the mother and sisters of her husband. Sons and sons-in-law are expected to bring with them other young men, their village-mates. Co-operation is thus both with relatives and village neighbours—the neighbours of the couple building the hut, and of their sons and sons-in-law.

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The huts of married men are built with immense care, for not only are substantial houses essential to comfort, and indeed a condition of survival, in this climate of torrential rains and cold winter mists, but the Nyakyusa take great pride in the appearance of their homesteads (*vide infra*, p. 77). The early European

342

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

29. CHRISTIAN SCEPTICISM OF WITCHCRAFT

Nzangalafe (Christian Elder, an early convert).

'At first when we repented, the missionaries asked us whether we believed in witchcraft, and we said: "Yes, there is witchcraft", and we told them about it and the wounds found in the bellies of people who have been killed by witchcraft. So the missionaries said to us: "When there is a death tell us, and we shall go and look." I was taken once by Klaus (a missionary) to a death. I was afraid to go near the corpse—everyone was afraid—but the missionary stood over the grave and looked at the corpse and even put his hand inside (the stomach). The person was said to have died of *ipube* (a kind of sorcery), but Klaus said he had died of a disease of the chest. He told people to come and look. Mwaipopo (the chief) was there but he refused to come and look; they all refused. After some time I came and Klaus showed me. In this way we have been and examined corpses, and we have never seen the wounds of witchcraft. . . . Klaus used to go round to funerals, examining corpses. . . . Ndabele been has seen a corpse which the pagans said had a python. Last week Ndabele went to a funeral near Ibwa and the pagans said there was a python inside: the woman (who had died) had been a witch. He said: "Let's see the python, let's see it", but no one could show it to him.'

[p. 254]

2: Wilson E-5 (1924-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

764 the living and enter the dreams of their kinsmen; but the nature of
765 their survival is uncertain.

A man, when he dies, is believed to join his ancestors. Until the
768 end of the funeral rites, they say, he is on the way and if the ritual
769 is not properly performed he does not reach them, but troubles the dreams and lives of the survivors until he is properly driven away. 'If you do not perform the ritual for your father or mother you may go mad or else have a slow and lingering death.'

777 Many of the younger pagans, however, are affected by Christian
778 belief. Young men spoke confidently of going after death 'to a fine
797 country with dancing and feasting and a chief to rule us'. But many old men scoff at such beliefs. 'They have learnt them from the missionaries—how do they know, have they been there to see?' Among some of the younger men also the ritual of death is less important than it used to be. As one Christian said: 'The pagans no longer fear to die away from home—they used to fear very much to die in a strange country (and many still do), they thought: "If I die far from home I shall never reach my ancestors, for people will not bury me properly." Nor do all the young men now fear if they fail to attend a father's funeral ritual.' 'We no longer believe in the old rituals,' said a sophisticated young pagan, 'because we see that the Christians do not do these things and nothing happens to them.'

761 An additional reason for fearing death is the Nyakyusa belief in
763 the contagious character of many diseases. Death is thought to be
764 caused sometimes by witchcraft, and sometimes by one of a variety
766 of diseases. Of these diseases some are held to be hereditary and to run in families, and they are usually non-contagious; others, and they are usually contagious, are believed to be due to the sorcery of enemies. And the contagion is thought to be spread by an corpse. It is especially dangerous to relatives; other people do not fear these diseases unless they actually hold the corpse in their arms, or dig the grave, or help to bury it, but all relatives are afraid.

769 Besides the contagion of specific diseases, the corpse itself is held always to have a vaguely defined, but none the less fearful, contagion of its own. And, because of this, all who have had any close contact with the body go to bathe immediately after the burial. Those of the chief mourners who hold the body in their arms, the grave-diggers and those who get down into the grave to bury it, all go to bathe. 'Even when death is not due to a contagious disease

J. Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F7617 Ngonde F7617

The Spirit-Ridden Konde

CHAPTER I

The Land & the People

UNGONDE, as the Konde people call their country, lies around the north end of Lake Nyasa. Northwards of that point it stretches for about fifty miles, and southwards for roughly the same distance. Like all their neighbours, the Konde belong to the great Bantu race, which occupies Africa from the Cape to the Congo, and beyond. /3/ /4/

The lake shore plain is narrow, fertile, and populous, with its centre at Karonga, where there is a British Magistrate, some trading stores, and a station of the Livingstonia Mission of the United Free Church of Scotland. Beyond the plain the tribe, under various local names, reaches up into the mountains on both sides of the lake. Outside of Nyasaland, and northwards across the Songwe, it covers a large area in what was once German East Africa, but is now known as Tanganyika Territory. Here, too, the plain is low, fertile, and populous as at Karonga. Northwards of the plain lie the healthy uplands of Mwenbe and /3/ /13/ [11]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

13/ Bukuwe, culminating, so far as the peopled regions
133 are concerned, in Tukuyu, five thousand feet above sea-level, the residence of the Administrative Officer and his staff, with Post and Telegraph Offices, and a large Government Hospital. Here also are many small trading stores, conducted by Indians and Somali; and a little to the south is the Kyimbila
[79r] Station of the Scottish Churches Mission, carrying on the work of the exiled German missionaries. Still further to the south, and less elevated, is the British military post of Mwaka.

The population of these fertile and healthy high-
36/ lands is dense. From Tukuyu or Kyimbila, looking
10/ south and west, numerous villages, each hidden in its banana grove, fill the view westwards to the Bundali Hills, where the Kihira River is marked out by a morning mist, and southwards towards the lake, thirty miles distant. In this region the people call themselves Nyakyusa, with a number of local names indicating no difference of origin or language. The
24/ soil is so fertile, and the rain usually so abundant, that in many places two crops are taken annually of some foodstuffs, while of the others the single crop is so great that scarcity, so uncommon occurrence in some parts of Central Africa, is rarely experienced.

133 The Bundali Hills close in this happy valley (for in
101 spite of its elevation the country has the appearance of a valley) on the west; and beyond them, after a most exhausting march, over lofty summits, through deep ravines threaded by bridgeless rivers, one comes to the home of the Bundali, a race of hardy

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F7617 Ngonde F7617

highlanders closely related to the Konde. Here, at Isoko, is another station of the Scottish Churches Mission. /33 /01 [791]

Eastwards of the Tukuyu uplands lie the Kings Mountains, better known as the Livingstone Range, near the foot of which lies the Itete Station of the Scottish Churches Mission. From here one gets a view of lake and mountain, river and plain, which may well be regarded as one of the finest of the kind in Africa. The evening sun, shining upon the great mountain mass, reveals hundreds of crevices and folds in which lie tiny houses, beside waterfalls or rapidly dashing streams; while up to the summits stretch the wheat-fields, green or golden yellow in the evening light. At one's feet sleep the countless villages, banana hidden; and away in the distance Lake Nyasa reflects the last gleams of departing day. /33 [791]

Over the mountains lies the country of the Kings people, a land indescribably rough and mountainous, but here and there well watered, with fertile valleys producing wheat, oats, peas, in abundance, besides the usual African products. Here the cold is so great that during part of the year many of the people sleep in pits hollowed out of the ground, and heated by fires which are extinguished at bed-time. /33 /01

Northwards the upland valley is bounded by the Igale Hills, from the top of which one looks to the lofty Mbeye Mountain, which from one point of view presents an astonishing likeness to Arthur's Seat and the Salisbury Crags at Edinburgh. Beyond Igale live the Sengo and the Safwa, the former a vigorous

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

175 me by the son of one of the councillors who stood
772 near him:
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"Art Thou angry with me, O God, who didst redeem me from slavery? The Angoni mocked me, the Arabs mocked me; then didst Thou cause me to see these mighty ones (the Europeans); and I said, 'Rejoice, for God has heard my prayers.' Who, then, of my ancestors is angry? Against whom have I sinned? For it is they who are my helpers in speaking to Thee. Many of them died by the spear; they saw their families destroyed; they suffered hunger again and again, before the mighty ones came. Now, O God, be merciful, and let the feet of these men come up out of the water."

Then taking water in his mouth he squirted it north and south saying, "I am lord of that country, I Mogomo: I am lord of that country, I Kyhuru," to which the assembled councillors responded, "E! Mogomo; E! Kyhuru." Then whirling the cock over his head and dipping it in the water, he gave the signal to the men hanging on the ropes to pull. And the steamer floated off into the water!

185 Meantime in the north internal warfare went on
177 intermittently, but no man of outstanding capacity arose to give cohesion to the various families of the
[W] Nyakyusa. Before the arrival of the Moravian missionaries in the area in 1891, various Europeans visited the district. Hunters came and went, and for a brief space there was a station of the Livingstonia Mission not far from Tukuyu. In 1893 the German

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
F7617 Ngonde F7617

young gathering around the white man, and lending themselves to his purpose, the old even to-day approaching him with reluctance, if at all, for to them he still retains much of the awe and hidden power with which he was credited in the earlier days.

The individual Konde is not so popular with white men as are members of other tribes; indeed there are employers who will not knowingly give work to a Konde at all. As workmen, it must be acknowledged that they are both less active and less reliable than surrounding tribes; they are neither so intelligent nor so loyal to contract. The Konde soon wearies of effort, and longs to get back to the lowing of his cattle and his pretty little hut in its banana grove. He loves his children, and the hope of being able to clothe them if he works well, does not compensate him for prolonged absence. Loyalty, as the Henga, Angoni, and Yao are loyal, does not distinguish the Konde, who show loyalty rather to chief and to tribal custom, than to the white man with his problematical benefits. They have never attached themselves to the Europeans, as many of the surrounding tribes have done; for the Konde are less convinced than others that the one hope of Africa is the European and his influence; less convinced, be it added, that Africa stands so desperately in need of saving. That may be due to their unweakened condition—and, again, it may not. Educationally, too, they are less advanced than other tribes. Only a few of them are to be found in Government offices, or doing the skilled work which commands such good pay from Europeans; nor have they supplied,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

in any numbers, the trained assistants in Mission work who form one of the principal successes of Missions among other tribes.

But this does not imply that the Konde are without virtues. They are very shy, and respectful to authority, the latter a characteristic that scores for many defects in the minds of those who consider subserviency the primary virtue in a native of Africa. Their conservative nature prevents them being too free with strangers, and they will not greet a passing European, either until he takes the initiative, or until long friendship has convinced them that it will not be regarded as an undue liberty. Once their confidence has been gained, they are found to be merry, laughing, and bright. The friendliness of children is an attractive feature of the tribe. And the adults are most willing to be friendly also, provided the first advances are made by the European. When one begins to know them intimately, it becomes obvious that their backwardness is not due to lack of capacity, but to an unyielding conservatism, which leads them to think long—and some have been thinking for a generation—before committing themselves to anything new. "We will think about it" is a common response to invitations to take their place alongside the more progressive tribes. Yet with it all they are a lovable people, responsive to friendliness, deeply attached to each other, and to all who rightly claim the name of friend.

Slavery is, formally at least, a thing of the past. It is asserted by natives that some men and women are still in slavery, but while that is not impossible, no one

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

representative, or by the chief if he can be induced to do so, the person who wishes the rain to stop, ties a bunch of feathers to his spear, dips the feathers in red ochre, and sets the spear upright in his garden. Or if he wishes the prohibition to act over a wide area, the spear with the feathers is set up in some hidden place among the reeds on the lake shore. The rain will presently stop. One man well known to me, takes a small piece of polished blackthorn in his hand, and wherever he goes the rain stops. His own faith in his powers, and the faith of many others, is quite beyond dispute. There is an old man not far from me whose family has possessed for many generations the power of causing the wind to blow, or to cease blowing, at will. The old man I speak of is believed to have exercised his powers quite successfully in 1923.

A very few Europeans are believed to possess power over the rain. In 1908 a house was being built at the Overtoun Institution, Livingstonia, the residence of the Scottish missionary, the Rev. Robert Laws, C.M.G. The house was still unfinished when the rains were due, and no rain fell. At last, some time in January, the roofing was finished, and next day rain fell in torrents. Dr. Laws had removed the embargo! Similar powers are ascribed to another well-known missionary, the Rev. Dr. Elmslie of Angoniland. And still, if the rain is too much or too little, the people say, "Ah! it is the Great One at Livingstonia. Why is he doing this?"

Prayer for rain is offered in one place or another

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

spear, and that the land would be filled with wonders of which no man had ever heard.

How far the original form of these prophecies has been modified by experience, I do not undertake to say. All who pretend to knowledge of the subject vigorously deny any modification. Whether the actual performances of the white men have satisfied the expectations aroused by the prophecies, is a question susceptible of more than one answer. The great mass of the people would certainly not rejoice at the departure of the Europeans; nevertheless there are some who would be glad to see the last of them. Long before the Great War, prophecies were freely circulating among the people, that the Germans would go away, and be succeeded by white men of another land. Just now similar prophecies are being made about the British, who are to be succeeded by another white race as yet unknown. The fact, which is well known to many people, that some "doctors" are seeking for a medicine which will cause the white man to disappear, is significant.

There is a tradition that a series of forecasts was made long ago: the Great War, the influenza which followed it, the great earthquake of 1919, and finally a great darkness which is still to come.

The progress of Christianity has not destroyed the faith, especially of the heathen, in the local prophets; and it is not improbable that Christians still retain a conviction that these men were not wholly without Divine guidance. The chief Swebe, when I asked him whether in all cases smallpox foretold had actually

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F7617 Ngonde F7617

754 is the act of God, let it work, His house is great.
789 But if it is the act of men, let it go where the sin is. I and mine have done nothing amiss."

As they go, they chew, for their own protection, the leaves of a shrub called *mwayiwaman*, putting the chewed leaves into a small sack at the side. The common people are warned to go in certain directions only for wood and water as long as the lion is known to be about. When it approaches a village, the local headman speaks:

> "You lion, if you have been sent out by men, follow where your prey leads you; if you are from God, His house is great, go where you will."

Just how much effect this has on the lion, need not, perhaps, be too closely investigated.

781 There are numerous stories, which, if they do
•797 nothing else, illustrate the naive faith of native Christians in the protecting care of God. A school inspector, going his rounds in 1920, when Kabera's lion was about, was offered the use of the protecting drugs, but refused. "God Himself," he said, "is my protector." In 1915 an evangelist was followed for some distance by a lion, and at last turned on the brute:

> "You lion," he said, "you have no master. I have a Master, Jesus Christ. I do not fear you. Do not follow me; get off in another direction";

which the lion, after roaring angrily, did! In the same year a lion was moving about on the lake shore,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F917 Ngonde F917

but the Christians, secure in their faith, refused to be kept from their gardens. No one, so far as I heard, either Christian or heathen, was killed at that time. A Christian man, walking alone through the bush, was chased by an elephant. "And God said, 'Look,' and I looked, and behold a pit; and I went down into it, and the elephant passed me by; and again God said 'Look,' and I looked, and behold in the pit a very evil snake." There the written report ends; but as I had myself seen this man holding "a very evil snake" alive in his hand, I have no reason to doubt that he acted with promptitude in the pit.

The *ingulube* is a whitish snake, about four feet long, with a deadly bite. That it should exist at all is bad enough; but there are sorcerers who create it for their own purposes. Mwankonono, who lives about two miles from me, is believed to possess this power. He takes the roots of the *pani* tree, which he puts into a pot along with a powerful medicine, and in a little time a snake emerges. The secret of this medicine is known to a very few, and is guarded by word and by spell. The intending purchaser must face a guard of other snakes sent out to kill him by the makers of the drug; should he, however, kill the snakes, he is acknowledged to be a great doctor, and a supply of the medicine is given to him, for which he pays a cow.

When a sorcerer wishes to kill an enemy, he takes in his hand the snake he has created, and drops it at the house of his intended victim. It immediately makes for the doomed man, strikes, and returns with

5:Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for labour and food. There are also a few small plantations owned by Europeans inside the district which fulfil a similar function. 20,000 acres only of land have been alienated in Rungwe District by the two Governments which have in turn controlled it; and it is the declared intention of the present Government to alienate no more. Of the alienated land only 2,000 acres is at the moment in use.

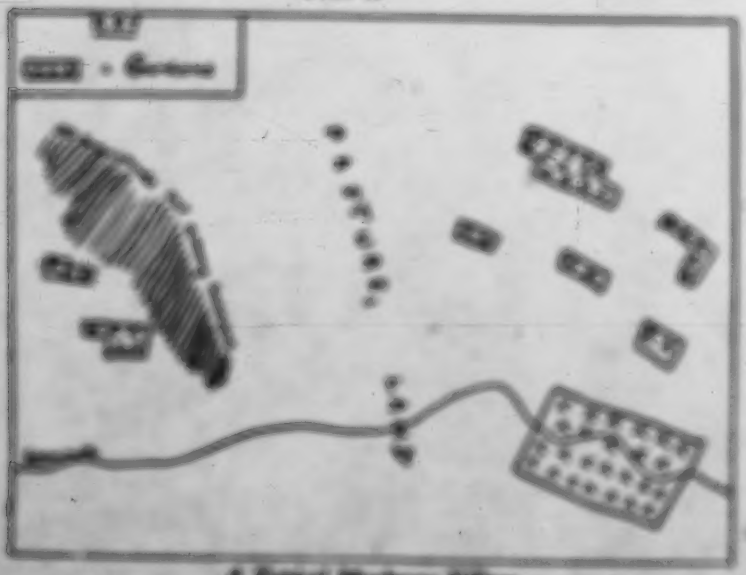
Missionaries of the Berlin Lutherans and the Moravian missions have been in the district since 1891, and a substantial proportion, about 10%, of the population now professes Christianity. The Christians live, some in separate Christian villages, some scattered about among their pagan neighbours. In the Christian villages the traditional age grouping usually prevails, with elders and deacons taking the place of great-commoners.

Such is outline in the form of society within which individual Nyakyusa hold property in land.

2. *INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD*

A village, as we have seen, usually consists of a group of houses built fairly close together with one or more blocks of garden land at some distance from them, while the village cattle graze the adjoining grass lands, in various different herds.

Plan 1



A Typical Nyakyusa Village

5:Wilson K-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

him if it was his idea that the village should die out and leave him, the great-commoner, without men? As he had moved, the great-commoner would have continued, the place was presumably distasteful to him and it had now been allotted to another man. The claim would certainly have been disallowed!"

The examples in this paper have been taken almost entirely from pagan families. For Christians the situation is very much the same except where they live actually on mission land, there they are tenants of the Mission concerned and pay rent to it. And Christians, wherever they live, tend to be more awfully in their occupation of land, since they are not forever moving in fear of witchcraft.

8. CONCLUSION

I have striven in this paper to make the individual land-rights possessed by Nyakyusa to-day intelligible to the European reader and to demonstrate to him their determining factors. Of these factors the following are the most important. The Nyakyusa were until recently an isolated and primitive people and so bring with them into the modern world a legal tradition based upon small social groups. This tradition is being inevitably modified both in theory and practice under modern conditions, but not out of all recognition; for they are still a relatively isolated people and the system of indirect rule secures them, in general, against arbitrary legal changes. Within their legal system individuals have, as in any system they must have, certain precisely defined and enforceable rights—among these rights in land.

Many kinds of land, however, are plentiful, though less so than of old owing to the growth of population, the opening of new markets for food and the recent introduction of ploughs. And this cheapness of land is reflected at times in a lack of rigour in the enforcement of rights in it which is unfamiliar to the European observer. Sufficient land for all is a fundamental condition of Nyakyusa society in its present form, which has no place for a landless man.

And, finally, the habitual movement of men with their families from one village to another to escape the witchcraft of their neighbours leads to a constant transfer of homesteads and gardens and is the main cause of difficulty in the administration of their laws of property in land and trees. This difficulty is greatest in the case of the newly introduced coffee trees which need continuous tending.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

enables us to accept it as broadly accurate. But from 1875 onwards our written records[1] begin to supplement the oral tradition.

A little before 1875 Mwalunge, another chief of Ngara, had succeeded Gwa Sapani as the Kyungu; and in that year the Europeans first reached Ngonde. But about the same time Arab slave and ivory traders established themselves there also and for the next twenty years disputed its possession with the Europeans. 175 177

In 1879 Dr. Laws and his party made a voyage of exploration in the "Dale" round the lake and visited Ngonde; and within the next six years both a Free Church of Scotland mission station and a post of the African Lakes Corporation were set up there. The site they selected was on the lake shore in Kalonga's district and so became known by his name.[2] But the Arab traders were in Ngonde too. The Arabs sometimes traded with the people of Ngonde, sometimes fought them, while the African Lakes Corporation Agent tried to combine a lucrative trade with the Arabs and the protection of the people against them. [172]

During the course of a fight with the Arabs Kyungu Mwalunge was killed and Mwabulambo, yet another chief of Ngara, was taken in his place. The nobles of Ngonde at first wanted to take Malewa, a chief of Ngilonga, but he fled from them; "they asked the Arab Mlozi to lend them men to look for him, but he hid in a tree and escaped them. So they took Mwabulambo."

It was fourteen years after the arrival of Dr. Laws before the British made any move to take over Ngonde; and in the interval Monteith Fotheringham, the African Lakes Agent, only just succeeded in maintaining himself against the Arabs, owing to the help of Captain F. D. (now Lord) Lugard. But in 1889 H. H. (afterwards Sir Harry) Johnston arrived and made treaties both with the chiefs and the Arabs in Ngonde, and from then until 1896 the country formed part of the "sphere of influence" of the British South Africa Company. In 1893 Mlozi, the ruling Arab, openly refused to accept the new state of affairs and was hanged. And in the next year Ngonde was incorporated in the British Protectorate of Central Africa (afterwards renamed Nyasaland).

About this time—the present Kyungu says it was in 1896—the nobles of Ngonde deposed Kyungu Mwabulambo and made Mwabulambo 175

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[1] Lake and Mountain of Africa, Hung, 1895.
[2] Adventures in Nyasaland, L. M. Fotheringham, 1891.
[3] The Rise of our East African Empire, F. D. Lugard, 1893.
[4] British Central Africa, H. H. Johnston, 1897.
[5] Pioneering the Dawn Planet in Central Africa, A. J. Swann, 1898.
[6] Lake of Livingstone, W. P. Livingstone, 1923.
[7] After Livingstone, P. L. M. Mair, 1925. Etc.

Spell "Kyungu," not Kyungwe; "Ngara," not Kyungwe; "Ngara" being somewhere.

6:Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1939 F317 Ngonde F317

692 permanent social relationships beyond the local groups of chieftdom and fief, and by the religious mechanism of the Kyungu. Now every one of these factors has today ceased to operate. And it is worth dwelling on this, for it follows that the constitution of the middle period has ceased to exist and something radically different has been developed in its place. Divine kingship and the ivory trade are dead, a host of complex and permanent relationships now covers Ngonde and links it to the outside world, the Kyungu rules his people in person, under Government. And the continuity which is aimed at by a policy of "indirect rule" is thus only possible in Ngonde to a very limited extent.

On the other hand, as some continuity is inevitable even through the most radical political change, so an acceptance by the Government of that inevitability is itself a factor of political order. It is far easier to rule Ngonde to-day through the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde than it would be, say, through a committee of commoners chosen for their personal ability; for the successors of the traditional rulers still have a status in Ngonde which is continuous, though not identical with that of the past.

178 Christianity has gained a great hold on Ngonde,* and has helped to undermine the old pagan faith even among those who do not profess it. 778 And the whole intervillatically organized system of pagan ritual is almost dead. A few days after our arrival in Ngonde, in July 1937, the nobles of 797 Ngonde organized the clearing out of the mbwa, for a special purpose. A bad plague of rats had appeared in the country and an old woman had announced prophetically that it was due to the anger of the spirits. Mulwa did all the organizing, for, as he said to us: "The present Kyungu commanded all commoners to clear things years ago and told me to manage without him. So I went and told Kalonga and Mwakamangala and Mwamnyakwa, who is the senior of the chiefs of Ngonde; it is their business to tell their juniors." But of the hundred odd chiefs and nobles in the Ngonde plain only four chiefs and a few nobles responded to the summons to put up their old fires and to bring the mbwa to Kyimbwa. How many commoners put out their fires I do not know, for we did not hear of the ritual until it was over. Even this, however, was an exceptional occasion and the regular yearly performance of the ritual has ceased. Neither is the old fire-fruit ritual any longer performed.

The Scots Mission in Ngonde concentrated from the first on the conversion and education of the sons of leading men, so that now many of the rulers themselves are either Christians or ex-Christians. The present Kyungu was, as we have seen, a Christian, and, though he has

* 40% of the population profess Christianity.

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now abandoned his Christianity and taken a number of wives, he appears to be wholly sceptical of pagan beliefs. "It is I who have killed the custom of praying in the sacred groves," he told us, "for my brother, Mwangulaba, used to give the sultan of Ngonde cattle for sacrifice; but I have never once given them a beast, nor do I give them hens, nor beer, nor flour." He subsequently admitted, however, that he did sometimes give them "a few pence" to buy a hen for sacrifice. Many of the old magical taboos he certainly no longer observes and we have no evidence that he observes any; while the magical possessions of his predecessors are mostly lost.

Thus the old beliefs survive in the minds of many men in Ngonde, both pagan and Christian, we have certain evidence; but upon those beliefs little public action is now taken. The profession of Christianity is normal among the younger people, and their attitude to the ritual which occurred during our visit was one of amusement. And even the belief in witchcraft, which has proved in many parts of Africa to be most permanent, is beginning in Ngonde to be publicly called in question by some of the pagans themselves.*

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The present Native rulers of Ngonde are thus no longer generally believed to control the destinies of their people; rain, health and fertility are no longer in their gift. And this brings radical changes into all political relationships. It is by their secular functions alone that the present Native rulers stand or fall. The losing of the public gardens of the Kyungu by his people, for instance, was largely kept up to former chiefs because of his rain-making powers; he gave them rain, they gave him service. But, if he is now still able to claim this service from them, it is because he gives them other things than rain.*

178
402
771

Thus again the decline of the old beliefs inevitably alters the balance of power between the different political authorities. The Kyungu is no longer a magical object carefully secluded and controlled by the sultan of Ngonde; and as he now rules his people in person. It is he himself who now takes all the major decisions, within the sphere of responsibility allowed him by the Government. The sultan of Ngonde are reduced to a merely advisory status. While the decline of the old theists and witchcraft beliefs brings a similar change into the relations of every chief with his great-commoners. Many chiefs in Ngonde still fear that they will fail if they offend their great-commoners, but is this in fact and is

* The same cannot be said of the Tonkawa, among whom, for various reasons, the missions have made far fewer converts in proportion to the total population. Among the Tonkawa the old rituals and beliefs are still very much alive.

* Cf. infra p. 97.

* One of the chiefs, for example, is an ordained minister of the Church of Central Africa (Presbyterian).

S:W Gem E-5 (1934-1936)936 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

the capital, Tukuyu, and it is still thus used to distinguish this group from others. This group will here be referred to as "*Nyakyusa proper.*" There is the North of the district to the West and East of Mount Rungwe call themselves *Kukwe* and *Mwambe* respectively, and there is a group of *Sisilisiwa* to the East, under the Livingstone Mountains, called *Selya*. All these four groups share a common culture, distinguished by minor local peculiarities of dialect and custom. Immediately bordering the Nyakyusa to the South West are the *Ngonde* (Europeanised as "*Konde*") in Northern Nyasaland; they belong to the same cultural group but are distinguished by greater differences of customs and speech than the others. I have not yet visited them.

In the hills to the West of the Rift live the *Nikali*, who are included in this administrative district; and on the plateau under these hills, to the West of the Kukwe, live the *Pwija*. Both these small groups have old languages of their own which, though related to that of the Nyakyusa are more or less unintelligible to them; and they have equally distinct cultures. But they are now rapidly being assimilated to the Nyakyusa both in speech and in law.

I use the name Nyakyusa, in accordance with modern usage, to include the Nyakyusa proper, the Kukwe, Mwambe, and Selya groups, but to exclude the Nikali, the Pwija, and the Konde. The Nyakyusa together with the Nikali and Pwija number 130,000; the Konde of Nyasaland 30,000.*

Members of the Berlin and Moravian Missions were the first Europeans to settle in the district, where they have lived now for forty-five years and have made numerous converts. The German Administration followed them closely, and later came a few planters. But pronounced economic change is a matter of the past five to ten years during which time the Lupa Gold Fields of South Tanganyika have been opened up and have employed increasing numbers of Africans on the diggings. During the past few years the young men of the Nyakyusa have developed the habit of going for a few months, now and again, to the Gold Fields to earn money for tax and clothes. They seldom stay more than six months at a time, often only one or two; so that their absence does not cause the same difficulties in their own community that are found in other areas where the men spend longer periods away from home.

The Family, together with a sketch of wider Kinship Groupings

The relationships of husband and wife, parent and child, sibling and sibling are continually visible in the culture of the Nyakyusa. The

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*Government Census figure.

9: Wilson
795
●797

FN17 Ngonde
Nyakyusa

[For data on the various Christian sects and their missionary activities, see category 116, pp. 166-202./

[634] accessible in an earlier book, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*,[1]
[78] and the details need not be recapitulated here.

[765] Perhaps the reader has already noted a certain difficulty over
[766] terms: 'a' tends to merge into 'wa'. When we first visited
[767] BuNyakyusa in 1934 minimisation of various denominations had
[768] already been at work, and a foreign government in control, for
[769] forty years past. Between 1934 and my last visit in 1955 the
changes have been great, but I use the present tense for things
seen at first hand, whether earlier or later, and a separate chapter
is devoted to the twenty years' change. It is well to recognise at
the outset, however, that in 1934 the sanctity and power of the
[641] 'divine kings' was already questioned and their rituals were
[78] curtailed, and even the pagan cosmology of the Nyakyusa was
beginning to exhibit traces of Christian influence. One striking
example was the changing, or rather the fluid, connotation of the
name *Kyala*.

Two new types of organisation developed in BuNyakyusa with
the arrival of the Europeans: churches which are based on a
principle of association wholly new to the pagan tradition—
common belief as opposed to kinship or contiguity; and a
centralised system of government. To these have now been added
trading concerns, of which the most important are co-operative
societies exporting coffee and rice.

[72] The subject of this book is (i) the traditional rituals celebrated
on behalf of chiefdoms and groups of chiefdoms, and (ii) the
changing ideas and values apparent as a section of the Nyakyusa
turn from paganism to Christianity. In the concluding chapters
an attempt is made to demonstrate the links between the changes
in social structure and the changes in ritual.

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*, 1957.

In Wilson R-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FMU Ngonde FMU7
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER III

THE "DIVINE KINGS"

(a) CHARACTERISTICS OF "DIVINE KINGS"

Two heroic myths and genealogies proclaim the origin of chieftainship, and point to a distinction between ordinary chiefs and those we call 'divine kings'. Two remote ancestors who were prominent are worshipped as heroes and creators, their graves are centres at which a large number of chiefdoms join in celebration, and living representatives are selected in every generation bearing their names. These are the 'divine kings', the Lwembe of Lufingo (in the centre of Nyakyusa country) and the Kyungu of Mbaindo near Karonga in Nyamlond. A third hero, Kyala, is associated with the cave, PulKyala, near Ikombe at the north-east corner of the Lake, and he is worshipped in the same way as the other two, except that the priest of the cave is not his descendant and does not embody him. According to the myth, Kyala was the brother of Lwembe, but died without issue. However, the word for chiefs—*aba-nya-Kyala*—is popularly believed to mean 'the sons of Kyala'.[1]

Kyala is one hero among others, but his name is also used in the sense of 'the lord': a chief is *kyala gwala* (his lord) to a commoner, a father is *kyala gwala* to his son or daughter 'because he created him' and a slaveboy is *kyala* to his living kinsman (*ungwala ja kyala*). Of one who performs a feat—something difficult—it is said 'he is Kyala'.[2] This usage is said to be very old, but there is yet another meaning of the word which is new. *Kyala* was used by the European missionaries (who first established themselves near PulKyala) as their translation of 'God'. Today these three conceptions are inextricably mixed: Kyala the hero, Kyala 'the

[1] I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Fuerer for drawing my attention to this point. It is doubtful whether *Kyala* and *Kala* in fact come from the same root. *Kyala* in Ikoba means the daughter of a chief (A. C. G. Hodgson, 'Some Notes on the Wakinko of Mdokwaga District, *J.R.A.I.*, lxi (1931), p. 431). In Bena speakers mean 'my husband's father or mother' (A. T. and G. M. Culwick, *Ubena of the Rivers*, p. 136). In Gwela subjects mean 'lady', mistress of a household and garden (J. Rennie, *The Bagesu*, p. 44). cf. Hyiha, *kala* 'to begin, to hear' (J. L. Krapf and J. Rebmann, *A Hyiha-English Dictionary*, edited by T. H. Spendeu, 1887).

[2] cf. F. R. Lehmann, 'Some field notes on the Nyakyusa', *Antiqua*, New Series, 1951, vol. 5, p. 68.

Wilson R-5 (1934-1935) 1935
FMU Ngombe FMU
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IX

KASITILE THE PRIEST

We have now from the description of rituals to a personal domain, an account of the illness of Kasitile (96), the leading priest of Selya, the causes suggested for it, and the rituals performed. We saw above: (i) the power of village headmen over chiefs in general, more particularly the power of the commoner priests (village headmen of the previous generation) over hereditary priests of the chief's lineage; (ii) the prominent linking of misfortune with sin in both public and private life; (iii) the function of divination in selecting between possible causes of disease; (iv) the influence of Christian and Muslim teaching and Western medical science on a conservative who goes so far as to invite a Muslim to cut the throat of the sacrificial animal and speaks of turning Christian in his old age; and (v) the very great importance attached to 'speaking out' (ukunyapa) and not leaving anger to smoulder uncontrolled. Beer is necessary for such a ritual 'speaking out' and the participants are pressed to drink deep, for in wine [717] [718] [719] [720] [721] [722] [723] [724] [725] [726] [727] [728] [729] [730] [731] [732] [733] [734] [735] [736] [737] [738] [739] [740] [741] [742] [743] [744] [745] [746] [747] [748] [749] [750] [751] [752] [753] [754] [755] [756] [757] [758] [759] [760] [761] [762] [763] [764] [765] [766] [767] [768] [769] [770] [771] [772] [773] [774] [775] [776] [777] [778] [779] [780] [781] [782] [783] [784] [785] [786] [787] [788] [789] [790] [791] [792] [793] [794] [795] [796] [797] [798] [799] [800] [801] [802] [803] [804] [805] [806] [807] [808] [809] [810] [811] [812] [813] [814] [815] [816] [817] [818] [819] [820] [821] [822] [823] [824] [825] [826] [827] [828] [829] [830] [831] [832] [833] [834] [835] [836] [837] [838] [839] [840] [841] [842] [843] [844] [845] [846] [847] [848] [849] [850] [851] [852] [853] [854] [855] [856] [857] [858] [859] [860] [861] [862] [863] [864] [865] [866] [867] [868] [869] [870] [871] [872] [873] [874] [875] [876] [877] [878] [879] [880] [881] [882] [883] [884] [885] [886] [887] [888] [889] [890] [891] [892] [893] [894] [895] [896] [897] [898] [899] [900] [901] [902] [903] [904] [905] [906] [907] [908] [909] [910] [911] [912] [913] [914] [915] [916] [917] [918] [919] [920] [921] [922] [923] [924] [925] [926] [927] [928] [929] [930] [931] [932] [933] [934] [935] [936] [937] [938] [939] [940] [941] [942] [943] [944] [945] [946] [947] [948] [949] [950] [951] [952] [953] [954] [955] [956] [957] [958] [959] [960] [961] [962] [963] [964] [965] [966] [967] [968] [969] [970] [971] [972] [973] [974] [975] [976] [977] [978] [979] [980] [981] [982] [983] [984] [985] [986] [987] [988] [989] [990] [991] [992] [993] [994] [995] [996] [997] [998] [999] [1000] [1001] [1002] [1003] [1004] [1005] [1006] [1007] [1008] [1009] [1010] [1011] [1012] [1013] [1014] [1015] [1016] [1017] [1018] [1019] [1020] [1021] [1022] [1023] [1024] [1025] [1026] [1027] [1028] [1029] [1030] [1031] [1032] [1033] [1034] [1035] [1036] [1037] [1038] [1039] [1040] [1041] [1042] [1043] [1044] [1045] [1046] [1047] [1048] [1049] [1050] [1051] [1052] [1053] [1054] [1055] [1056] [1057] [1058] [1059] [1060] [1061] [1062] [1063] [1064] [1065] [1066] [1067] [1068] [1069] [1070] [1071] [1072] [1073]

The *dramatis personae* are:

Kasitile (96) of the chief's lineage, priest of Selya [1074]
Jaen his senior and favourite wife
Jaen's younger sister and co-wife
Kaonga a third wife suspected of bewitching Kasitile [1075]
Mwanyewo (118) the chief and senior kinsman of Kasitile
Mwanyewo (148) the doctor who was treating Kasitile
Kimia *priest* (i.e. Kikongolaja Nayanigwe, Kyambo Kisali, *side pp.* 24-34)
Nsolwo, Nyamkoma, Kimbuta — Village headmen of Mwaijonga (81) and priests of his grove, *side pp.* 74-7, 84-5
Mwamakemba the elder a hereditary priest, assistant to Kasitile
Mwamakemba the younger (Mwamlangaje) son of the elder who often acted in his place

St Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

(their witchcraft); to each other they say: 'It is your fetish.' Because if they confess to a fellow commoner saying, 'It is we', he says, 'You are "seeing" me, drink the ordeal'. The witch is driven out. But to us they admit saying, 'It was we who were angry.' They do not fear us. Commoners are the seniors in the country; they arrived first.

It will be remembered that the commoners are spoken of as 'black people' (*abatita*) and that the first chiefs were 'pale' (*mwela*) but these words also have moral implications. 'It is said that a person "has a black heart" or "has black blood", or "is black in his face towards us" when he is thought to be a witch, eating his fellows, or when he is a thief, or a liar, or an adulterer, or dirty. Even though his body is light coloured (*mwela*) the word "black" (*ntita*) is used of him metaphorically.' And *mwela* implies innocent, pure, as well as light in colour. The comparable symbolism of 'nigger' and 'white man' is all too familiar in Johannesburg or Charleston.

That Kaitile himself was much afraid of the commoner chiefs and was relieved by the 'speaking out' was clear, and the people of the country as a whole were glad that the ritual had been celebrated, for they expected an increase in fertility. Some days later Mwakyonde (148), came in and said, laughing, but half serious: 'Congratulations, Mwaipaja (G.W.). You have celebrated the ritual, we rejoice greatly, you give us fertility of the soil, you are a great priest.'

In some moods Kaitile was inclined to become a Christian, but he felt an obligation to the country as priest, and believed too strongly in the efficacy of the traditional rituals to abandon them. He said to G.W. one day, over a pot of beer: 'If it were not for the ritual I would get you to speak to the Europeans of the mission, and I would go with my wife Jane, and be baptised. If my son was old enough and had agreed to carry on the ritual I would do it; perhaps I will when I am old. . . . It is good to have one's heart washed clean, we are dirty inside. The Christians say to us: "You with your four wives each, you are all dirty, you love one and squabble with the rest." Well, it is so with me, I love Jane only; I would like to go and be baptised with her. But I fear for the ritual, I fear hunger, the hunger of the people. For I am the food of the country, I am the maker of food.'

We left Selya shortly after this and were not able to observe the effect of the ritual on political relationships in Selya. Kaitile lived another seventeen years, duly performing his functions, and in 1954 he was succeeded by his brother's son, James.

9: Wilson E-5 (1954-1955) 1959
FMU Ngonde FMU
Nyakyusa

is illustrated in the reference made by priests to the python which appears in Lwembe's grave as Kyala (*ante supra*, pp. 69, 70). This python is 'the lord', Lwembe.

Nowadays Kyala is spoken of as a first cause—the origin of death, and of social institutions, as well as the creator of life. The narrative version of the myth of the origin of death begins: 'When Kyala created the country and the people at the beginning there was no death. Then he thought there should be death and life. He asked people to choose between life and death, and they chose life.' And when men are asked the reason for a custom or ritual they may answer 'Kyala made us so', 'Kyala made us black people like that'.

Since Kyala is nowadays regarded as the creator of the natural order he is often blamed for the intractability of things—the log that splits, the lorry that skids. Once a vendor of very small potatoes said, when the buyer complained of the size, 'Kyala gave them to us like this', only to be jeered at by the onlookers who admonished him: 'Had you cultivated better they would have been larger.'

Much of the material quoted is susceptible of the interpretation that Kyala is an overriding power to which the shades, witches, and medicines are subject. 'The medicine will be effective if Kyala wills'; 'rain will fall when the rain-maker make his stones if Kyala wills'; 'when the doctor treats the cattle they "vomit" (froth over), then if Kyala has helped us the cattle give much milk'. Even in 1955 conservatives like Kasitile sometimes expressed such beliefs, but they did not do so consistently. Their preoccupation was with other forces and acknowledgment of Kyala seemed to be tacked on almost as an afterthought. This came out very clearly in Kasitile's session with the diviner who, fearing the presence of a European, gave 'Kyala' as the cause of Kasitile's disease, and Kasitile rejected the verdict saying: 'Kyala never stands alone.' The influence of Christian teaching on pagan thought was already considerable in 1955—Kasitile added 'Jesus' and 'the Holy Spirit' to the shades invoked—and we believe the mention of Kyala in many of the pagan prayers at that date to have been due to Christian influence. The idea of a supreme power is accepted very readily *as an addition* to the belief in the shades, the witches, and medicines, though it does not easily replace them altogether. By 1955 the shift in emphasis was clear. Besides Kyala 'the lord' of a commoner or junior, and Kyala the hero who is worshipped at

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3027 Ngonde F3027
Nyakyusa

like cave and who, though a creator, is equalled by other heroes and dwells in the bowels of the earth, there was Kyala an ultimate power and first cause, unique and omnipotent, who dwelt in heaven 'above'. The implications of *kumunya* (above) have changed along with the implications of *Kyala*.

The new balance between the different elements in pagan thought was reflected in everyday speech. In the 1930's men spoke constantly of the shades (*abapolo*), the witches (*abalosi*), and 'the breath of men' (*indoga ya bandu*); Kyala did not figure much in the conversation of pagans. But in 1955, from the moment when the bus I arrived in skidded off the road and the passengers began assuring each other that *Kyala alone* (God is present), because no one had been injured, I heard the name constantly. Such a change is hard to prove, but the impression of a marked shift in emphasis was strong.

The conception of the hero Mbasi has also radically altered. During the years before 1914 a man, with two boys in attendance, posed as Mbasi and went round Selya by night, growling in a gruff voice that he was Mbasi, and seizing cattle and fowls and food. He was eventually taken by night, by some Christians, and died after seven months' imprisonment in Tukuyu. Today the Christians never use 'Mbasi' for God, but sometimes identify him with 'Satan', and the pagans use 'Lwembe' rather than 'Mbasi'.

The range of relationships in space was narrow in the traditional Nyakyusa society, and the range of relationship in time was correspondingly so. Only a limited number of chiefdoms co-operated in sacrifice to a hero (and often they seem to have acted separately, rather than in concert), and all historical time was contained in the genealogies depicted. There was a dawn when men ate food raw and lived without fire, or cattle, or chiefs, but history began when the heroes descended from the mountains, ten or twelve generations ago. Time was telescoped when all the known world lay within 100 miles.

A social revolution occurred once, with the coming of the chiefs, but then time stood still, and ever since the heroic age has remained the pattern of right behaviour. Departure from the rituals laid down spells madness and death, for 'Kyala created us so'. Part of primeval reality is the conflict of generations expressed in the myth of the seduction of a young wife by her husband's father, in the rules of avoidance, and in the ritual of the 'coming out'. There is no convention of fighting on this last occasion (as

[177] [178] [179] [179] [179

Williams E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FMCF Ngombe FMCF
Nyakyusa

the war and the form of its activities has not altered appreciably. These other missions based elsewhere now have small congregations in the District and a Lutheran pastor under discipline broke away and formed his own 'Independent' Church, which differs from the other 'Independent' Churches in that the rule of monogamy is enforced.

The total number of converts has increased very considerably, much more than keeping pace with the increase in population; taking the three main missions together, their converts form over 19 per cent of the total population.* Figures for the five minor Churches with small congregations in the District—Pentecostal Holiness, Assemblies of God, Seventh Day Adventists, Anglicans, and Watch Tower—are not available. Nor do we know the membership of one of the 'Independent' African Churches, but supposing the membership of the missions with small congregations in the District to be 2,000 (a conservative estimate) the percentage claiming to be Christian is 19 per cent as against 18 per cent in 1938. Distinctiveness in the response to Christian teaching in different areas are very marked. Around Rungwe, the main Moravian mission-station, the bulk of the population is Christian, and the whole atmosphere is that of a Christian community, whereas in Selya, where mission work began in 1891 as it did in Rungwe, Christians still form a small minority in dominantly pagan chiefdoms. The reasons for this difference are complex. One factor is that Selya is geographically isolated whereas Rungwe is near a main road and within easy reach of the Government and trading centre Tukuyu; but much more important have been differences in mission policy regarding education, and differences in the personalities of missionaries, chiefs, and early converts.

The change from a society based on kinship to one based on voluntary association is apparent in the economic field as well as in the religious. Co-operative societies formed by producers of coffee and rice, which collect and market the crops, and give opportunity

* Figures supplied by the courtesy of the administrative directing each mission and the leaders of two 'Independent' Churches were as follows for 1950:

Moravians		10,000
Lutherans		10,000 (approximately)
Roman Catholic		6,000
Free Church (Ngombe)	('Independent')	10,000
(Also called 'Native Mission')		
'African Lutheran Church'	('Independent')	400

St Wilson E-5 (1934-1935) 1935
F307 Nyakyusa F307
Nyakyusa

and is therefore to be interpreted as 'confusion of anger', rather than as 'rebellion'.

Sometimes there is an expression of opposite tendencies, both implicitly approved. The sacrifices to the heroes and to the graves of the chiefs emphasize seniority and precedence, and express the dependence of junior on senior kinsmen, but the myth, recalled in every celebration, tells of the surpassing power of the son or younger brother in the beginning of time, and the junior brother of a chief often holds office as a priest. Then there is the drama of driving away the chiefs and bringing him back westward, which is an characteristic of the rituals of kinship and appears again at the cleansing of the country. Such contradictions are doubtless expressions of ambivalent attitudes among the participants themselves, and of the attempt in ritual to reconcile conflicting social principles—in these instances authority with the rights and duties of juniors, and change with continuity.

In a society without written records legal certainty depends very largely on publicity. This is apparent in the law relating to marriage contracts and family inheritances,[7] and still more so in the law of the chieftdom. The ritual of 'coming out' celebrates political changes in social status, and the public recognition of the bodies, members, and territorial boundaries of villages, as well as of the heirs to chieftainship. Thus certainty in these matters is secured. There is no positive value of the co-regency of father and son (as in ancient Egypt),[8] but the installation of the young chiefs before the death of their father serves to mitigate conflicts over the succession. Confusion over village boundaries and village membership often appears when the ritual has not been celebrated, for there is no public definition to refer to.

How close is the link between religious belief and practice and social structure? There is no doubt that the sacrifices to the dead chiefs and heroes and the traditional rituals of kinship supported the former political and kinship structure of the Nyakyusa. Their performance compelled co-operation between kinsmen,[9] between neighbouring chiefs, and between chiefs and people. How far then does the change in religion, begun when the first Christian convert professed his new faith, compel a change in the social

[7] Geoffrey Wilson, 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Law', *Africa*, vol. ix, 1935, p. 29.
[8] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, pp. 101-6.
[9] cf. *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 130-200, 227.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FMU? Ngonde FMU?
Nyakyusa

structure? And how far does the new economic and political organization produce a change in religion? These theoretical questions can be answered only by a series of comparative studies. Here there is evidence for one area alone, and the conversion affiliations we postulate can be modified only if they hold in a whole range of societies.

Christianity implies an emergence from the areas of kinship, for the worshipping group is two or three believers, not a body of kinsmen, and conversion is a personal choice. This is more obvious in a missionary church than in one long established, for, as we have seen, the convert in a pagan community must withdraw from his kindred to become a Christian,[5] but it remains true, even in a Christian society. The new doctrine implies a body of believers—a Church. The particular form varies, but the Church has appeared wherever the Christian faith has been established. In short, we argue that the change in religion necessarily disrupts an organization based primarily on kinship and establishes a new type of organization based partly on voluntary association. With the change from the ritual of the lineage to the ritual of the Church the authority and leadership of senior kinsmen is diminished; they are replaced by 'elders' and priests or pastors whose basis of authority is not birth, but selection by the Church. Furthermore, association for worship becomes a pattern for association in other fields, and the Church is the training ground among the Nyakyusa, as it has been among so many other peoples, for organizers of other types of association.

And not only is kinship subordinated to faith; the forms of kinship are themselves modified. From the time of their first arrival the missionaries have taught that Christianity implies monogamy and they have baptized no polygynist who does not put away his additional wives. This teaching has been questioned by many Africans and by some European missionaries themselves, who doubt the wisdom of persuading a man already married to send away his wives—or even of commemorating such an action. But the rule of monogamy has remained as a condition of membership in all the Churches with European connexions.[6] It has been rejected, as we have seen, by two of the 'independent' African

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 137-9.

[6] The rule was suspended for a brief period in one mission working not far from the Nyakyusa area, but was later enforced. cf. Lyndon Harries in *Survey of African Marriage and Family Life* (edited by A. Phillips), pp. 341-2.

St Wilson E-5 (1954-1955) 1959
FMC7 Ngonde FMC7
Nyakyusa

Churches in the area. Nevertheless the bulk of professing Christians are monogamists, though it is still customary and, in Rungwe District, economically profitable, for a rich man who is not a Christian to have more than one wife. The difficulties of establishing monogamy are accentuated by the great disproportion in the numbers of men and women. If the figures available are accurate, a general acceptance of monogamy would mean that only about 70 per cent of the women could be married; therefore the Church is necessarily concerned in seeking an adjustment to the disproportion of the population—in keeping the men alive if our assumption that the shortage of men is due to a heavy male death rate is true.

The ethic of the gospel pressures still further. It is taken to imply the freedom of an individual to accept or reject a partner in marriage. This has been maintained from the first in the Nyakyusa Church, and is enforced by the courts, which apply a conception of personal rights springing from the Christian tradition.

Thus Nyakyusa men attribute the rapid rise in the divorce rate to the new 'freedom' of women. Christian teaching stresses the family and the sanctity of marriage, but it ignores the lineage. In the traditional rituals of kinship the lineage is represented again and again, while in Christian ritual it is the elementary family and the Church that are pictured. The preoccupation with fertility and the reproduction cycle was linked with the glorification of the lineage itself, and it disappears when the lineage ceases to be the basis of social grouping.

How closely linked are symbols to other aspects of a society? Our hypothesis is that they are relatively free, but it can be shown that many of the symbols used in the traditional rituals of the Nyakyusa reflect the economy, and vary somewhat from one area to another, with the staple crops. The development of trade or of new crops is a prerequisite for using the symbols of bread and wine traditional in the Christian rituals, and even the 'independent' African Churches use new foods, not the beer and bananas of the country; thus changes in material symbols and changes in economy may be directly connected. The imagery changes also with the changing social structure; Kyala ceases to be pictured as a senior kinsman, when the lineage organization begins to weaken; he is God the father of a family rather than an early member of the royal lineage. But there is no evidence that

particular symbols are tied to a particular social structure; the poor cannot his choice within the whole range of the familiar.

The impetus to change has come both from the religious field and from the secular. For example, the pressure towards monogamy among the Nyakyusa has been religious; given plentiful land and cash crops additional wives are an economic asset, not a liability. In this respect the contrast with the Chikai in South Africa, where families are dependent for food on wage-earners in towns, and no man can support two families,[1] is marked. On the other hand, the decay of Nyakyusa age-villages is primarily due to economic pressure, though it is facilitated by the insistence of Christians that there is no danger in father-in-law and daughter-in-law meeting one another. The first generation of Christians living on mission land built villages apart for their sons, despite the teaching that avoidance of a father-in-law by his daughter-in-law was foolish, if not sinful. But a radical change in pagan observance of ritual avoidance is brought about by the general practice of going out to work for long periods, and the competition for coffee and sisal lands, which makes the territorial separation of fathers and sons impossible. As we have shown, young men going to work commonly leave their wives in their fathers' homesteads, relying the support and supervision given them there where the old stringency of avoidance and, where land is scarce and valuable, fathers do not move aside each generation to make way for their sons. Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law continues only in an attenuated form.

From German times control by a European government has compelled a modification of the traditional sacrifices to the heroes and of the ritual of chieftainship. How the Kings priests come to Lufungo 'in secret' and how they failed to instal a new Lusumbe after the death of Mwakinyo about 1914 has been described. Killing a child to master a drum or make medicine for the fields, compelling a man to accept a dangerous office, killing chiefs because they are ailing, or plucking off their nails before they die; all these are actions which are held, and must be held, to be 'contrary to natural justice' by any Western government. Here the change in political organization compels a change in ritual and there is evidence that belief in the traditional forms is much diminished, though not dead. The European government also

[1] Kirkenmandsk Rural Survey, Vol. I, *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, by D. H. Houghton and E. M. Walton; vol. II, *Social Structure*, by M. Wilson *et al.*

St William B-4 (2324-2394) 1969
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Nyakyusa

[illegible] found the administration of the poison ordeal, driving out people alleged to be witches, and killing supposed sorcerers 'contrary to natural justice'. Here the change is not in the celebration of a ritual but in the conception of 'justice' based on traditional religious beliefs.

[illegible] The early administrators were very important as employers of labour and a market for produce; indeed at one time they were the sole source of western trade-goods among the Nyakyusa. For long they provided the only skilled medical attention. They were the source of new learning, teaching, from the start, reading and writing and new manual skills, and the link between learning and religion, as familiar in the history of Europe, is still strong. Therefore acceptance of Christianity could go along with acceptance of the new economic and political structure, but it was never identified with it. Already in the thirties a popular song contrasted Christians with Europeans, and African nationalism was finding expression in 'independent' Churches.

[illegible] Socialism fits as well with the new economic and political structure as Christianity, and it has been argued elsewhere that one of the characteristics of the change from a small-scale, isolated, self-sufficient people to a large-scale society is increasing secularism.[1] The evidence from Ba-Nyakyusa does not so far support this, but there is a separation of religious and other activities. Religion is not interwoven with the modern political system as it was with the old. Traditionally the fusion between ritual and political activities was almost complete; village headmen became priests as they grew old, and chiefs became gods. Now there is a separation between Church and state, between Government and religion, which co-operate closely only in the organization of schools. It is true that Christian congregations pray regularly for 'those set in authority over us', but for the most part religious ritual does not enter into state functions. The flag is hoisted and saluted at sunrise and sunset at administrative and military centres; certain occasions, such as the Queen's birthday or the visit of the Queen's representative, the Governor, are celebrated with secular ceremonial. Only at the Coronation, to which African representatives from Rungwe district were sent, did the state ceremonial and the Christian ritual merge.[2] Political tension is not now directly

[1] R. Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, Chicago [illegible]; *A Village that Chose Progress*, Chicago [illegible].

[2] 'The entire solemnity of the Coronation, from start to finish, is distinctly a religious rite.' Canon Charles Smyth, 'The Coronation Rite', *The Listener*, [illegible] May [illegible].

and try to understand the nature and causes for change. Here, then, is a good opportunity for the study of social change – not only in land tenure in each, but also in village and family organization, political authority and economic life.

The Nyakyusa are a Bantu people inhabiting the main part of the Rungwe District in southern Tanganyika immediately to the north of Lake Nyasa. In 1948 they numbered about 195,000 in that District, but about 15,000 men were probably at the time temporarily absent from their homes and in employment in the mines and farms of the Rhodesias and South Africa (see Gulliver, 1955), while about 15,000 had migrated to live in the adjacent Mbeya District to the north.

The tribal area occupies a confined geographical basin surrounding the northern end of Lake Nyasa. It extends only about 40 miles from the tip of the lake at 1,500 feet above sea level to the Poroto Mountains in the north at 8,000 feet, and from east to west is only about 30 miles, from the plateau down south of the Livingstone Mountains (with peaks up to 10,000 feet) to the Tukuli Highlands (rising to about 7,000 feet). There are therefore extremely large ecological differences within so small an area. Three major regions are to be distinguished: the "Northern Highlands" over about 4,500 feet, the low-lying "Lake Plain" to the south, and the "Central Region" between. Everywhere rainfall is reliable and high, averaging at least 100 inches annually[1], and this amply compensates for a certain poverty and stress of the soil, although (and particularly in the Central Region) it brings dangers of soil erosion. Except in the highest parts the banana is the staple food, supplemented by maize, beans, large millet and groundnuts. In the Northern Highlands coffee has become well established as the principal cash crop; in the Lake Plain paddy rice cultivation provides both a food and a cash crop; in the Central Region the country is too low generally for coffee and too high and dry for rice, consequently cash-cropping is considerably inferior and the people's standard of living is rather poorer.

The Nyakyusa and their country tended for a long time to be relatively isolated from the outside world by high mountain walls and rain-washed roads. In addition, or because of it perhaps, they developed an almost unique culture which was supported by considerable conservatism and high mobility. They still continue to regard their African neighbours beyond the mountains as their social and cultural inferiors. The turmoil of the slave-raids in Central Africa passed them by; in modern times they have not enthusiastically accepted Christianity and they have refused to take up the use of Swahili, the Territorial lingua franca. In recent years, and more especially since the end of World War II, they have, however, accepted and pushed forward with vigour a rapid and extensive economic development, involving particularly the production of coffee and paddy as cash crops, and large-scale labour migration to the south in the high-wage mining industries. The multiplicity of petty, often tiny, independent chiefdoms has been recognized to provide four local government areas, each under a Rural Council, in which the old chiefdoms have become something like parishes[2]. Although much of the old conservatism and narrow parochialism persists, yet there is now an atmosphere of accepted change, of a keen desire for economic development, and a general acceptance of a cash economy.

Probably the most significant feature of modern life in the Nyakyusa country is the increasing scarcity of land for agriculture in relation to the

1. In Tukuli in the Northern Highlands, annual rainfall averaged 99.32 inches between 1950 and 1962; at Kyela in the Lake Plain, the average between 1950 and 1962 was 108.23 inches.
2. See Gulliver, P.H., The evolution of a system of local government in African rural areas in the Rungwe District, Tanganyika, the nature of African administration, M. A. Thesis, 1951.

342. ordinary or to a few some distance from the other houses of the village. They were never roughcast with mud).

Nearly all the dwellings had a gore-supported verandah. I measured up and down stretches of two houses of this type, one belonging to the above-mentioned woman called Mbilu, whose husband lived some days to an village. She was a Christian (actually a church-elder). On the outside of her bamboo-framed, mud-roughcast wall, she had drawn a church in yellow, red, and black colours, and below she had written the word kanisa (church). Apart from a house near Lake Nyasa, of which I took a photograph and which had very unobtrusive and drastic drawings on its outside wall (crocodiles, a man and his bicycle, a man with his firearm), it is the only instance in which I saw any kind of coloured decoration on a house. Besides improved gateways to stay on hearth and floor, I saw no decorations on the inside or outside of houses, except for gateways to the outside sidebeams of the wall.

343. In this house, approximately 9 metres long, there were two vertical supporting posts, reaching to the very ridge of the roof, where presumably they were joined to the ridge beam. However, the beam could not be seen.

344. The hearth was peculiar in that it consisted of two pairs of hearthstones near a clay base that surrounded a supporting post and a shorter post. Thus two hearths were available, at the same time serving as fire-guarding to the posts. Though Mbilu was a single woman, the house had two hearths. You might think that she had seen a stove and had found that two cooking places would be useful. I saw this arrangement in one more place, in the house of a widow, who—by the way—was also a Christian.

345. A space nearly half the size of the house was partitioned off, the half-wall having a doorway. This room was for storage only, chickens etc.; it had a barred window. Besides the hearths, the living-room had four's seats, stools, baskets, Mbilu's bed (2 m by 1 m), table, wooden shelves, boxes, and a chest. These last-mentioned objects she had had no difficulty in obtaining from the neighbouring joiner's workshop belonging to the mission.

346. The other village is from quite a different district, that of Ruwangwale. It was a very long house, as often seen in this locality, 26 metres long. I was told that

The type of house called dzeu, or ziwe.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[797] stranger came through the country our fathers lay in wait for him and
[795] killed him, but we are learning and have to learn to give him food and
[779] a night's shelter. Repent and let your hearts be washed!

[688] We differ from other Christians because we baptize in Jordan, and they baptize in a dish in the church. They say we are wrong, but we
[595] say we do what Christ told us to do. They also say we are wrong to marry more than one wife. The words we say are just the same as the creed of those at Kabembe (i.e. Lutherans) with two differences, that of baptism and that of having more than one wife.

[796] Communion services are celebrated half-yearly at each of several different centres by the leaders of the 'independent' Churches, and since they are unable to obtain wine, sweet tea or a light beer are used instead.

The members of Ngemela's Church contribute to buy a bull and rice and beer, and share a feast together after a communion
[798] service, and it is alleged by outsiders, though stoutly denied by members, that these are 'love feasts' at which members exchange wives,[1] to show that they are 'one body'. The African National Church also holds feasts after services and some outsiders say these too are 'love feasts', but outside opinion on the African National Church's feasts was much less unanimous than about Ngemela's feasts. It is certain that in Ngemela's church men and women drink sitting together in a manner not conventional among the Nyakyusa. Members of the mission Churches spoke of members of the independent Churches as living 'just like pagans' and averred that, despite their polygyny, their members ran off with other men's wives and were scarcely disciplined for doing so.

It is also clear that the would-be members are baptized almost immediately, with no period of testing and instruction such as is insisted upon by the mission Churches; that very many of them are members who have been suspended by other Churches; and that the 'pastors' have no special training for their task.

Nyasuru's church attracted more educated people than did Ngemela's and, in terms of Dr. Sundkler's classification,[2] his was a typical Ethiopian Church with its emphasis on African nationalism. Ngemela, the son of a minor chief, behaved much like a chief and attracted the less educated. He emphasized 'washing' —baptism by immersion—and repentance, and he was peripatetic

[1] This is also alleged of the Watch Tower in Northern Rhodesia. cf. Ian Cunnison, 'A Watch Tower Assembly in Central Africa', *International Review of Missions*, xl (1951), p. 467.

[2] B. G. M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets*, Lutterworth Press (1948), pp. 55-9.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

succession of 'sun', 'rain' and 'cold' into which the Nyakyusa year is divided; but there are parallels in the traditional prayers for rain, and at seedtime and harvest, which the Christians are quick to point out. What is totally new to the Nyakyusa is the division of a year into weeks, each with a day of rest and worship; but the conception once introduced has been accepted very quickly, and it is common to find pagans as well as Christians refraining from work in their fields on a Sunday. This is partly the effect of experience in European employment when Sunday is a day off, but partly, perhaps, it is because the idea of taboo is deeply embedded in pagan thought, and the teaching of some missionaries and converts has been in terms of taboo—of prohibitions connected with 'the Sabbath'.

In the Christian villages and village-sections, some at least of the converts gather for morning and evening prayer and on Sundays in their little mud Church or school-house, and once a month or once a quarter they gather in the main Church of the district. Besides this, those seeking baptism or preparing for confirmation gather for regular weekly instruction over a period of two or three years. There is thus regular common worship and instruction, and a strong sense of community between fellow Christians, particularly when they are in a small minority in an area.

But though the Christian is a member of a Church and worships in community, the emphasis (at least in the Protestant Churches in BuNyakyusa) tends to be on the individual, and some pagans spoke as if turning Christian implied an abandoning of public duties. Kasitile's remark that if it were not for his responsibility for the ritual he would be baptized, has already been quoted (p. 141), and the young priest of PaliKyala said the same. Whether these two were serious in wishing to become Christian is irrelevant here; they both believed that they had duties to their community which could not be fulfilled if they were Christians. The 'individualism' of young Christians is a matter of concern to many missionaries who are struggling to create among Christians that very sense of mystical union which pagan kinsmen exhibit.

The idea of the corporate nature of the worshipping group, with all that implies in mutual responsibility, is but one example of the profound similarity between the underlying ideas of pagan and Christian ritual that will be apparent to most readers. In the pagan tradition confession, oblation, and communion are as essential to the sacrifices at the groves as they are to the Christian eucharist;

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

By *ritual* we mean a primarily religious action, that is, action directed to securing the blessing of some mystical power or powers. The action may be a negative, i.e. an avoidance or taboo, as well as a positive one. Symbols and concepts are employed in rituals but are subordinated to practical ends. Ritual is distinguished from *ceremonial*, which is an elaborate conventional form for the expression of feeling, not confined to religious occasions; any emotional situation, whether religious or secular, may be clothed in ceremony, and a ceremony is not enforced by mystical sanctions, only by conventional ones. In short, a ceremony is an appropriate and elaborate form for the expression of feeling; but a ritual is action believed to be efficacious.[1] Confusion between the two arises in our own society, for what is ritual to some (e.g. a rite of baptism or marriage) is but ceremonial to others. In Nyakyusa society the distinction is fairly clear-cut: *ubunyago*, which is translated here as *a ritual*, means a series of actions directed towards the shades or heroes, and enforced by mystical sanctions, as opposed to action which is merely customary and conventional (*ulwiho*). At a burial, some actions are only *ulwiho*, others are also *ubunyago*. A negative ritual, that which is taboo, is *mwiko*.

Ubunyago is applied as a noun, and in its verbal form, *ukunyagula* (to perform a ritual), to funeral rites, especially that part of such rites in which only immediate relatives participate (*ubunyago bwa bufyele*); to the girls' puberty and marriage ritual (*ubunyago bwa busungu*), to the ritual at birth (*ubunyago bwa bufwe*), especially at twin birth (*ubunyago bwa mapasa*); to the rituals performed on behalf of the country for rain and fertility (*ubunyago bwa kisu*); to the treatment of the young chief and village headmen when authority is handed to them by the older generation (*ubunyago bwa busoka*); and, nowadays, to the sacraments of the Christian Church. *Unyago* is the specialist who knows the right medicines and observances and conducts the ritual. The word is translated as 'officiant' or 'priest'.

By a *symbol* is meant something which typifies or represents something else. Our Nyakyusa informants spoke of *ififwani*—likenesses (the word is also used for photographs)—and in expounding rituals they repeatedly said of an object or action: 'This means (*kokuti*) such and such.' Symbolism is always based on an association, a feeling of likeness between things. The intrinsic quality of an object, or relationship, or event, is expressed in terms of another

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, 1939.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

121 object or action which it is felt to resemble. The images men use,
811 the things they feel to be alike, are determined in a general way by the form of the society, and Nyakyusa images are in terms of bananas, staple grains, cattle, smithing on a primitive forge, lineage organization and so on. There are cultural idioms, accepted forms of expression, which frequently recur, but the particular associations are not predictable any more than the associations made by a poet in our own society—the priest and the doctor are indeed in one aspect poets.

771 The essence of Nyakyusa ritual is that things which are felt to
813 be alike are taken as causally connected. Both positive actions and
843 avoidances or taboos are based on the assumption that like objects or actions react on one another. This was clearly recognized by an informant who remarked: 'avoidances come from resemblances.' The basis is invariably the *feeling* of likeness, but mixed up with this there is often exact observation, as in the following taboo. The husband of a pregnant woman may not hunt big game because, it is said, they will be unusually fierce and attack him particularly. The association made is between a pregnant woman who is irritable, 'fierce' (*nkali*), and the game which is fierce. The husband is identified with his wife, 'and', the Nyakyusa say, 'lion *always* attack a cow in calf'. Sometimes like things are felt to be antagonistic, as 'seed in the belly' and seed in the ground, and sometimes sympathetic. Sometimes like is thought to produce like—a pregnant woman is forbidden to sit close to someone lest she bears twins—and sometimes men mime a misfortune as a prophylactic against it.

789 The rituals are magical in the sense that efficacy is held to lie in
184 the particular material form,[1] but they vary in detail with the
771 cultural group, just as the language does.[2] The rituals of the Lakeshore plain in Tanganyika (MuNgonde) and of Selya are almost identical, but those of the Kukwe, the Lugulu, the Saku, the Ndali, the Penja, and the people of Ngonde in Nyasaland are all somewhat different. Differences in ritual are directly connected by the people themselves with differences in lineage, and the principle is maintained that every individual follows the ritual of his or her father's lineage, though a married woman will follow that of her

[1] For a discussion of this characteristic of magic cf. G. & M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change* (1945), pp. 72–3; 88–95.

[2] An account of the various cultural groups included under Nyakyusa, and of related peoples, is given in *Good Company*. pp. 1–5.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

781 man; but all kinsmen and affines fear contagion, and the family
764 fear spiritual afflictions as well.

These fears are dealt with in two ways: fear is an immediate
[811] state of feeling which the Nyakyusa, on this occasion, express and make tolerable in the wailing, the dancing, and so on; but their terror is also rationalized[1] as a fear of certain specific events proceeding from religious causes, and thus is pacified by various ritual actions which are believed effectively to prevent those happenings. The killing of cows, the washing with magical plants, the subsequent ritual of protection—all these are designed to check the occurrence of fearful events.

781 But still the fear, as an actual state of feeling at the time of a
764 death, has to be expressed in some tolerable form. Its expression
721 in the wailing associated with grief is already clear; and it is also
535 proved that the war-dance is, for the men most affected, both an expression and an alleviation of their terrified grief: 'There is war in our hearts—a passion of fear and grief exasperates us—it is made tolerable in the dance.'

781 It is the attitude of the chief mourners that is the clue to the
764 whole ritual; and the contrast between terrified wailing and lively dancing, which seems very strange at first to a European observer, is explained by it. The fear and sorrow of death are only emotionally tolerable if their expression is followed by, or combined with, an assertion of life. This is certainly true of the Nyakyusa, and possibly it is universally true. Having no confident expectation of happiness in a future life, these pagan Africans turn at burial to a realization of present life in its most intense quality, to the war-dance, to sexual display, to lively talk, and to the eating of great quantities of meat.

And to this emotional reaction of the chief mourners the sympathetic vivacity of other people is essential. The Nyakyusa were astonished to hear of the sobriety of an English funeral: 'We talk and dance to comfort the relatives. If we others sat sad and glum, then the grief of the relatives would far exceed ours. If we just sorrowed what depths of grief would they not reach? And so we sit and talk and laugh and dance until the relatives laugh too.' And they were even more surprised at the suggestion that anyone might wish for privacy. 'We are quite different: we keep people company, when a relative has died, to cheer them. I am com-

[1] The word 'rationalize' properly implies neither truth nor falsehood of thought, but simply the fact of its existence.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

585
354 new home, and her mother-in-law provides her with fire and a pot.

783 After the bride has had full intercourse with her husband she cannot return home, or see her own parents, until she has taken them the ritual *ilibalaga*. After sexual intercourse she wipes her husband's genitals with her hands, then wipes them on a fowl and some millet: these together form the *ilibalaga*. In the morning she goes off without washing—'with the filth of intercourse on her'—to her parents' house, taking the fowl and millet with her. The fowl is killed on a path and cooked with *ikipiki* medicine and, if the bride is the eldest daughter of one of the father's first two wives, her father and mother eat it together. Her mother eats alone if she is a younger daughter, or the mother is a junior wife. If the father is a chief the husband may kill a young bull and beef is sent in place of the hen.

834 After eating the *ilibalaga* her parents resume intercourse[1] which has been taboo from the time the girl first menstruated. If no hen is brought because the husband is poor, the parents still resume sexual intercourse, but the bride, when she visits her home, must not take water from her mother's pot. Someone else draws for her and she drinks it outside from a separate calabash. If she drinks
[753] inside, or if her mother uses the calabash she has used, it is believed that her mother will get diarrhœa. She also avoids her father's bed and stool.

606 With the ritual of marriage must be included the negative ritual of avoidance between a woman and her husband's father and between those identified with him or her. The taboo applies from the time of betrothal or, if the girl has been betrothed as an infant, from well before she reaches puberty, and forbids father-in-law and daughter-in-law ever to look at one another or meet face to face on the pathway, or enter the same house, much less speak together. As we have seen, a similar taboo applies between the bride and her own father during her seclusion, but is relaxed when he
[184] has given her a gift. Between a woman and her father-in-law, however, it is never relaxed, except among the more sophisticated
773 Christians. A myth of origin tells of a case of incest between father-
606 in-law and daughter-in-law which led to the establishment of the
● 811

[1] Kasitile maintained that if the mother has not reached the menopause the parents do not lie together until the daughter's pregnancy is apparent. 'For the mother to conceive before the daughter is forbidden, but old women are fruits sucked dry.' Mwakionde denied any danger in mother conceiving before daughter.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

taboo, and the practical difficulties of observing the taboo if fathers and sons live in the same village is cited as a reason for the age-village organization.[1]

The marriage ritual may be said to finish with the eating of the *ilibalaga*, but avoidance of father-in-law and daughter-in-law continues until death and no clear line can be drawn between the marriage ritual proper and the rituals of pregnancy and birth which follow.

It is plain from the events described that the *ubunyago bwabusungu* is a marriage as well as a puberty ritual and that the husband and his family play an essential part in it, but if a girl is not betrothed before puberty a curtailed ritual is still performed for her when she grows up. She drinks the *undumila* medicine, she washes with a brother, and her mothers put her formally into the hut of seclusion. They cook for the various feasts, and they tell her brothers to call their friends to help dance the stamping dance. The litter is cleared by her mothers in due course, and she is shaved and instructed. When she is eventually married, only the rites of slaughtering the bull of virginity, taking her to her husband, and returning with the *ilibalaga* are performed. She does not wash with him ritually.

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

The avowed purpose of the *ubusungu* ritual is to protect the physical and mental health of the girl and to ensure her fertility. 'If the ritual is not performed the girl will fall ill, go mad, or not bear children.' Numerous informants were agreed on this point. Angombwike expanded it, saying: 'It is said that if they do not perform the ritual of *ubusungu* the bride will go mad. When she is sick of the madness they perform the ritual. If the doctor says: "Those below are angry," then the father of the girl takes water and prays in the banana grove saying: "My father and my grandfather, let the child recover from her sickness." Sometimes the doctor says: "The so-and-so's (naming a village) have cursed her"; then the father seeks a bull and they eat it. It is the curse which comes from the mouths of people when many whisper saying: "Why have they not performed the ritual? Why have they not performed it?" It comes from their evil breath.' Neglect of the puberty ritual is therefore thought both to anger the shades and to shock the neighbours, who expect to feast on this occasion.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 82–6.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

and kill many people. The chief, Mwenemusuku, 791
protected his land in the manner described in the 789
chapter on "The Powers of Evil," and none of his people were killed, though the total killed by a lion in that year in neighbouring districts was very large. A letter in my possession puts the number at forty, while others say fifty. Where the chief protected his land in the traditional way, the people were safe; where this was not done, the toll of human lives was great.

In 1922 the same woman predicted that, for the sins of the people, a spotted hyena would kill many. Again the chief protected his land, and again no one was killed; while in a neighbouring and unprotected land, the death-roll was considerable. In the same year leopards were predicted in the Nserya district. The chief was urged to sacrifice an ox, but refused. Six people were killed, and a number of mauled men and women were treated by Dr. Brown at the Mission at Itete.

To the Konde, as I have already said, there is no 787
difficulty in connecting prediction and fulfilment. 811
The inspiration of the foretellers is not doubted; the animals came as foretold; why should reasonable men refuse to acknowledge a relation between the two events? At any rate it may be presumed that the native will go on seeing a connection, while the white man will fall back upon the ever-ready doctrine of coincidence, and refuse upon any terms to acknowledge any other relation.

There is, however, spirit possession of another kind, 755
828

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XVIII

Divination & the Lot

THE fact of death is not regarded by the tribes of Central Africa as forming a barrier between the living and the dead. The two form one community, and the means of communication between them are naturally therefore well developed. Living and dead are mutually dependent, and a certain amount of goodwill must necessarily exist between them. What the dead cannot do for themselves, the living must do for them; and what the living must know, but do not, the dead can tell them if properly interrogated. It is upon this fact that divination depends, as do omens also to some extent. The use of charms and amulets, however, depends upon the other, and perhaps closely related fact, that Nature is not a fixed system of laws pursuing its way regardless of human needs, but is pliable, responsive, and will advise, protect, injure, according to the means used by those who possess the power.

The idea that the whole system of consultation of the spirits, of the interpretation of omens, and of the use of charms and amulets, is based upon conscious deception—a few clever men in each community

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 taking advantage of the credulity of the masses—can
•811 be entertained only by those who have acquired no insight into the native mind and its working. It is impossible to maintain that a system, as wide as a continent, and as persistent as the centuries, should be the outcome of an age-long conspiracy to cheat. The human mind does not work in that way. The system is involved in the world-view; it is woven into the mind-texture of the people, and the honesty of the "practitioners" is, in many cases, as indubitable as the faith of the people.

791 The prayer for rain, for instance, is offered with a simple sincerity, as honest as any petition ever offered in a Christian church. I am not asserting that the prayer brings the rain; nor yet that it does not. Nor do I suppose that the diviner is in touch with fact, when he uses what he considers to be means of getting into communication with the spirits. I am arguing only for the honesty, in a great majority of cases, of the men who do these things. They are men with a conviction.

The diviner usually hands on his knowledge and his office to one of his own family; but an outsider may learn his secrets by paying an ox or a cow. I am not aware that there is any serious attempt to guard the secrets of the profession, though the various drugs used are not made known except to those who are willing to pay the fee. The only form of initiation is
[304] the incising of medicines into the arms or wrists of the initiate, and this incision may be renewed should occasion require it.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

773 among some other peoples with a corresponding ritual), but the young men seize cattle belonging to the older generation, thus asserting their authority. The opposition of generations is taken for granted and given expression in constitutional form: the ritual is a celebration not of 'rebellion' but of growth. For all their reluctance to hand over power the fathers 'rejoice and are glad because their sons have grown up'. Change in the structure of society after the revolution of the heroic age, is not celebrated, and is scarcely admitted, but the process of growth, of death and procreation, is expressed in every ritual. Indeed, the ritual cycle is like a fugue with the theme of death and rebirth constantly recurring.

771 The pagan universe is just and orderly. There is a nemesis
772 attached to spilling blood or binding a man with ropes. The anger of men,[1] or of the shades who are roused by men, is what brings
● 812 most misfortune, and often, the Nyakyusa think, such anger is justified. Even medicines may be selective, injuring only the guilty. The good man who celebrates the proper rituals, fulfils his kinship obligations, and keeps on good terms with his neighbours, is protected, while the evil-doer falls ill. But some evil men, witches and sorcerers, attack the innocent out of jealousy and spite. Evil to the Nyakyusa, lies primarily within men: it is 'anger in the heart' which materializes as pythons that throttle others.
[578] Because they are aware of angry impulses in themselves the Nyakyusa find it difficult to believe that any society without witchcraft can exist; to say that there is no *ubulosi* is like suggesting that there is no ill will or anger in a community. And since anger brings misfortune there is an obligation on those whose anger might have caused sickness or ill luck to express goodwill by spitting or blowing out water, and saying, 'May the patient recover' or 'I am without anger'. Among commoners the man required to show goodwill is usually a senior relative, rather than a suspected witch (as among the Azande). But a neighbour or
[574] friend who might be a witch or sorcerer should also express goodwill when he visits the sick, and fellow hunters who have ill luck may stop to declare their goodwill to one another, as we have seen. If a chief or priest-chief is sick the village headmen and priests must wish him well and confess any anger they have felt towards
[783] him. The blowing out of water is a symbol of confession, 'bringing

[1] For a full account of the belief in witchcraft and the 'breath of men', cf. Monica Wilson, *Gurd Company*, pp. 91-121, 198-261.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

out all the anger that is within', 'admitting that I have done wrong', begging pardon (*ukupelesya*) and *also* a symbol of emission and so of driving off the shades (*vide supra*, pp. 104, 108-110; 139). Good health depends upon good social relationships, and of one who is ailing it is commonly said: 'It seems as if they (unspecified) had hated her.' Further, the proper working of the natural order is held to depend upon the proper working of the social order. Drought, or 'cold', or pestilence falls on a chiefdom if there is quarrelling between chief and priests, and the anger of the Lwembe with his 'sons' will shrivel the crops of Selya. The heroes, the shades, many of the men of power (*abamanga*), and many medicines help to maintain an orderly universe; only the witches and sorcerers work against it. In short, order and right living are an integral part of Nyakyusa religion as they are of Christianity.

The ultimate good is the power of fertility, of generation, which lies in the heroes and shades; the punishment for evil-doing is ill-health of body or mind and sterility. And towards the heroes and shades, who are both life-givers and avengers, the attitude of men is clearly ambivalent: the shades are driven away—'let them warm themselves over there in the long grass', men say when they throw out the ashes (*vide supra*, pp. 109-11) but they bring them home again to 'warm themselves by the hearth'.

In analysing the rituals of the Nyakyusa, I have been driven to the conclusion that they are, in fact, dogged by a sense of guilt,[1] for this is the only hypothesis on which the linking of misfortune and sin, the preoccupation with 'filth', and the recurring acts of purification can be explained. One of the sources of this sense of guilt is, I suggest, awareness of anger within, for it is believed that such anger injures others. An act of confession is essential to many rituals, and what must be confessed are anger, hard thoughts, ill will against others. The anger is acknowledged to come primarily from men—it is the angry parent who rouses the shades to action by muttering over the fire—but the guilt, the filth, is projected on to the shade or the hero. It is when they 'brood on' men that men are contaminated. A shade or a man that is *ngolofu*—good, righteous—is one without a grudge, without anger against anyone, free of witchcraft, and free of sex transgression—'there is no accusation against him'.

[1] I doubted this earlier, cf. 'Nyakyusa Ritual and Symbolism', *American Anthropologist*, v, 56 (1954), pp. 237-8.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

121 object or action which it is felt to resemble. The images men use,
811 the things they feel to be alike, are determined in a general way by the form of the society, and Nyakyusa images are in terms of bananas, staple grains, cattle, smithing on a primitive forge, lineage organization and so on. There are cultural idioms, accepted forms of expression, which frequently recur, but the particular associations are not predictable any more than the associations made by a poet in our own society—the priest and the doctor are indeed in one aspect poets.

771 The essence of Nyakyusa ritual is that things which are felt to
● 813 be alike are taken as causally connected. Both positive actions and
843 avoidances or taboos are based on the assumption that like objects or actions react on one another. This was clearly recognized by an informant who remarked: 'avoidances come from resemblances.' The basis is invariably the *feeling* of likeness, but mixed up with this there is often exact observation, as in the following taboo. The husband of a pregnant woman may not hunt big game because, it is said, they will be unusually fierce and attack him particularly. The association made is between a pregnant woman who is irritable, 'fierce' (*nkali*), and the game which is fierce. The husband is identified with his wife, 'and', the Nyakyusa say, 'lion *always* attack a cow in calf'. Sometimes like things are felt to be antagonistic, as 'seed in the belly' and seed in the ground, and sometimes sympathetic. Sometimes like is thought to produce like—a pregnant woman is forbidden to sit close to someone lest she bears twins—and sometimes men mime a misfortune as a prophylactic against it.

789 The rituals are magical in the sense that efficacy is held to lie in
184 the particular material form,[1] but they vary in detail with the
771 cultural group, just as the language does.[2] The rituals of the Lakeshore plain in Tanganyika (MuNgonde) and of Selya are almost identical, but those of the Kukwe, the Lugulu, the Saku, the Ndali, the Penja, and the people of Ngonde in Nyasaland are all somewhat different. Differences in ritual are directly connected by the people themselves with differences in lineage, and the principle is maintained that every individual follows the ritual of his or her father's lineage, though a married woman will follow that of her

[1] For a discussion of this characteristic of magic cf. G. & M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change* (1945), pp. 72–3; 88–95.

[2] An account of the various cultural groups included under Nyakyusa, and of related peoples, is given in *Good Company*, pp. 1–5.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

776 understand that the chief desire of the people is to induce Him to go away again. "Go far hence, O God, to the Sango, for Thy House is very large," is a prayer which is not seldom heard, when it is believed [821] that He is near. An eclipse is a special visitation, and is met with wild drumming and shouting, confession of sins, and entreaties, for the consciousness of sin is by no means absent from their minds. Offerings are brought to the spirits to induce them to intercede, but no offerings are made to *Ndorombwike* Himself, for nothing can be offered that has any value for Him. "God is calling in the waterfall," "God has kindled a fire in the pool," are cries of dread alarm to this day, only in a small degree comparable to the fear that is inspired when it is declared that a spirit, of however great a man, is angry. God is an ever present terror, and the idea of communion with Him for any purpose, is one that has not entered the Konde mind. He is *Tenende*, the Owner of the world, and it is for men [673] to see that He is not offended. Of the many sins which bring the wrath of God and the spirits on the community, the most important are widespread sexual sin, and neglect of sacrifices.

And yet God is *Tata Twesa*, the Father of us all, from whom help may be expected when men deserve it. The remarkable incident of the floating of the *Domira*, referred to in Chapter I, bears its own evidence of native thinking about the Deity. "Then I said, Rejoice, for God has heard my prayers." It does not seem open to reasonable doubt that Chungu was casting himself upon unseen powers, making, in

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

of hints and tokens of the goodwill or illwill of the unseen powers, and the wise man is he who profits by them where that is possible; where it is not possible, he is the wise man who quietly awaits the event, thankful that at least the misfortune does not take him at unawares, and that, if he cannot ward off the danger, he can meet it with an equanimity impossible to one upon whom the blow falls suddenly. 787

1. Weather lore is strangely absent, perhaps because in the tropics there is a regularity about the weather which renders prognostication as unnecessary as barometers. If, on a rainy evening, the crow caws on a high note, it will be hot the next day, with a cloudless sky; if on a low note the rain will continue. Another token of rain is given when the long-necked, long-legged birds, *mwankusye*, fly in a line abreast towards the lake. 787 821

2. Of bad news there are countless indications; of good news only a very few hints have come to light. Twitching of the upper eyelid indicates good fortune of some kind undefined; but if the twitching is in the lower lid, death is near, of the person whose eye twitches, or of a friend. 787 827

3. Before the settlement of the country by the Europeans, long journeys were rarely undertaken, and omens on the way were carefully watched for, and as carefully heeded when they were given. Serpents are the most trusted mediums and great significance is attached to their movements. A serpent lying on one side of the path, and slipping into the bush on that side as the travellers approach, indicates a clear 787 825

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

781 fell one after another, and when Kabeta went to his
763 fathers, he had no more trees to his credit than when he was born. The fall of the village tree, planted at the installation of the chief, shows that he in whose honour it was planted is about to go to the spirit-land.

781 9. The heavens give very few signs. If the full moon is red, with a red circle around it, plague is
821 coming. If the sun "builds a house" (*nimbus*), some woman is about to give birth to twins. Worst of all, naturally, is an eclipse. "*Kyala asambwike*," they say, "God has lost patience, He is going to kill us all," and they go out with drums and wild shoutings to induce the Supreme Being to go away to the Basango.

781 What has been described in the foregoing paragraphs is called *kusura*, to foreshadow, forecast, the agent being entirely unconscious of the significance of the action. There is another class of actions which also forecast; but although the difference is not very obvious, a different word is used, *kusikura*, which sometimes means to insult, but commonly to act as a pointer to coming evil. Such actions are mostly unnatural; many of them are in themselves evil, and their occurrence is regarded as a portent.

1. Unnatural anger. Anger in a child is a phenomenon of awe. If a grown-up person arouses it—not in his own child—that person has received warning that his death is near. How this comes about is not clear. Some natives say that the anger is a sign, which cannot be explained; others that the child

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 cooked it instead. One of the reasons for killing most of his sons, as we
643 have seen, was to lessen the danger of his wives committing adultery
834 with them, for adultery was a magical cause of sickness. His wives themselves were jealously guarded.

643 Then again a Kyungu might not wade across the river lest the act
784 of doing so should magically bring a deluge of rain from heaven, he
821 had always to be carried.

789 And the breath and the growing parts of a Kyungu's body—his
643 hair and nails and the constantly replaced mucus of his nose—were
764 believed to be magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde
826 plain. When he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was buried "with breath in his body"; while portions of his hair and nails and of his nasal mucus were taken from him beforehand and buried later by the nobles of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This action was believed to "close up the land, to keep it rich and heavy and fertile, as it was when he himself lived in it."

789 Now the Lwembe of Lubaga had equally magical flesh, but the
622 other chiefs of Ngonde and the Nyakyusa had not. They could wade
826 across rivers, fall ill and be wounded without endangering their subjects. But of all alike the breath and the hair and nails had a magical importance. Every ruling chief in both areas had his nostrils stopped by his great-commoners when nearing death, while portions of his hair and nails[1] were taken from him when living and buried after his death in a special place. The hair and nails were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops. "You see these nails of yours," said the man who explained the symbolism to us, "if you cut them do they not grow again?" (They do.) "And where does their growth come from? Does it not come from within the body?" (It does.) "Well then that is the reason, the great-commoners take power of growth from the chief in the form of his nails and hair."

789 Besides his magical body the Kyungu had a host of magical
782 possessions. There was the iron stool *Kisumbi* on which he was set at his accession; once he had sat upon it he could not flee the position or he would die. There was the drum *Mwenekelwa* whose note was believed to be heard by the most distant of the Kyungu's subjects. When it was beaten "all the little nobles from afar off would hear and obey the summons; they would all come together. Then we would tell them that so and so had not brought any ivory for a long time! Then they would come with tusks as tribute, to pay worship to the Kyungu." But sometimes the drum would refuse to sound and they would kill a

[1] We were only told about the nasal mucus in the case of the Kyungu.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 (82) grove. According to custom, we should kill a bull here at the same
782 time as one is killed at Lubaga. A messenger from there finds us eating.
That was the custom when the chiefs were really chiefs. Now we
796 neglect the rituals. Mwakisisya (111) cut a ripe banana stem for us, but now the bananas are rotting in the homesteads without ripening [owing to our failure to sacrifice]. If our fathers did not sleep they sacrificed cattle, but if we do not sleep we merely offer beer.

Then Kasitile recalled the quarrel between the men of Mwaipopo (116) and those of Lubaga.

Why did you insult Mwakisisya (111) saying 'What remains of your
[344] power?' When we built the Court House in Mwaipopo's country, Mwakisisya's men came to help, and some advised that a beast should be sent to Lubaga to seek blessing on the Court, but others said: 'What use is Lubaga?' . . . Mwakisisya cut a banana stem for us and said 'Seek another cow oh thou Mwakagile' (59, i.e. identifying Kasitile with the grandfather of the chief Mwaipopo whom he represented).

This, however, was an invention of Kasitile's. He continued: 'I, Kasitile, have seen a sacrifice at the grove of Mwaijonga (82) twice, at that of Mwaipopo (115) once, and at that of Mwakabule (117) once, but at Lubaga Kyala has received us frequently.' To which Mwambuputa replied: 'Yes, Kyala has helped us.'

Under pressure from Kasitile and the other priests of his chiefdom Mwaipopo did eventually provide a cow for sacrifice at the grove of his father Mwaijonga (82) but the description of that ritual is deferred to a later chapter.

771 A fundamental conception in Nyakyusa religion is that the proper working of the natural order depends upon harmony of the social order; on proper co-operation between the 'divine king' and his 'sons' the chiefs, between priests and chiefs, and between them and the whole community. If the Lwembe or a rain-
[731] maker is offended, that causes drought or flood in the area of his
[821] influence. When there is heavy rain in Selya it is said, 'There is anger at Lubaga' or 'There is anger at Lwembe's place'. Mwanjala II (78) talking of how angry he had been over an insult remarked, 'Had it been the wet season there would have been a torrent of rain.'

[578] And not only does quarrelling between chiefs and priests bring public misfortune; it reacts upon their own health. How Kasitile
753 linked his ill-health with the quarrel between Mwakisisya (111)
771 of Lubaga and the men of Mwaipopo (116) over the Court, and Mwaipopo's failure to provide cattle for sacrifice has just been

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 too hard to dig graves in'. They and their successors were all
778 buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves
[766] trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. . . . We traced sixteen groves in the plain surrounding Mbande and the nobles who pointed them out remembered participating in celebrations at all except that of the last Kyungu. The ruling Kyungu and the spirits of his
[769] dead predecessors were believed to form one divine company, the anger of any one of whom had terrible effects, and both living and dead were placated with offerings.

778 In time of drought the nobles of Ngonde would go to a diviner
787 to inquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the
782 names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would tell them that it was so and so. They would inform the living
● 821 Kyungu and he would give them a bull or a sheep, together with some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own
643 house, brought by his people as tribute. And he would give them some flour and cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove and build a miniature hut. Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fasten some of the pieces on to the hut in the grove—an action they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And finally, they would pour out some of the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a hut and make an offering in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

643 But occasionally, if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the
688 Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself
787 who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the
689 names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any of them: 'No . . . no.' And at length he would tell them that it
821 was the living Kyungu who was angry because so-and-so had insulted him. Then there would be no sacrifice at the grove at all, but the nobles of Ngonde would go to the one who had insulted the Kyungu and charge him with it, asking him what he meant by thus killing them all, would not the whole land starve? And
643 so the wrongdoer would take a cow to the Kyungu who, there-
821 upon, would address the nobles of Ngonde, saying: 'If it was my

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been someone [of the dead Kyungus] whom you forgot to ask about.' 'And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again.' If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry, and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would, and then the diviner would tell them that it was so-and-so (one of the dead Kyungus) and they would go and sacrifice in his grove.

Thus to insult Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. An 'insult' might mean any neglect of the obligations of the chiefs and nobles and commoners of the plain to their lord.

The people of Ngonde hoed large fields as tribute to the Kyungu and if they failed to do so 'he grew angry and poured all the water out of the pot in which he kept his rain stones' (*vide infra*, p. 114) and 'the sky dried up'. Then the chiefs called their men to hoe. . . . 'They hoed and hoed and hoed and their wives planted, then the rain came in a torrent. . . . Kyungu created much rain.'

Or if an elephant hunter neglected to send the Kyungu one of the tusks of any elephant he killed he would not kill another. 'The country beneath was angry . . . the shades of the dead Kyungus . . . they were angry saying: "Why do you stint our child?" '

The rainfall in the Ngonde plain is less than half what it is in the Nyakyusa valley and anxiety about rainfall was constantly shown in the communal rituals; elephant hunting was also a matter of concern in a way in which it was not among the Nyakyusa and this too is reflected in rituals; but there was also the preoccupation with health and fertility, as in the prayers at Lubaga. In the groves circling Mbande the nobles prayed: 'May the sterile bear children, may the cattle and fowls increase, may the children sleep and not cry at night, may the witches not injure anyone.' And as we shall see, it was health and fertility that men had in mind when they cleared out the ashes each year after the break of the rains.

Towards Christmas time, when the first maize and the first

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 replied: 'Why does he deny it? He told me once: "I have a thing
778 which kills people!"' Then, turning to the man: 'Go and fetch it
789 out into the light.' Mandala went and we heard that he brought
[754] out another medicine, not the one asked for, he brought it to the headmen and Mwaipopo. Mwaipopo (who, being a chief, knew *inyifwila*) rejected the one Mandala brought saying: 'This is not it.' Then Mandala brought out another and again the chief rejected it saying: 'This is not the one we want.' Then he brought out a little bag made of bark-cloth. They sought a doctor to clear it out. All this happened in secret; we heard of it but did not see it. But in Court Mwaipopo turned Mandala out of his country 'because he had admitted that he was wicked', and Mwaipopo reminded the other chiefs in Court of a previous case of a man in Mwangomo's country who had used this medicine.

Inyifwila is made out of a python 'as thick as a man's thigh' which has been killed by crawling over razors. In Ngonde we were told:

> A certain snake they call *ngone* is killed in the hills to the west. They build a hut, closed, with a man inside ringing a cow bell and razors all over the roof. The snake comes and crawls over the roof, trying to get in and so dies. Then the doctors come to 'close it up'. When they have done so they cut it up for medicine—*inyifwila*; some is brought to Kyungu direct . . . some is taken to the doctors, and it is the doctors who give it to the chief.

A similar story was told in BuNyakyusa but they got their
[825] *inyifwila* from the Sangu and Hehe, to the north and east, not from the west, and in their account the trap was baited with a goat, not a man, and it was the blood of the python (*isota*) shed on the surrounding grass and on the trap itself which was used for medicine. To test the medicine the doctors gave a little to a
[787] chicken; if the chicken died the medicine was satisfactory; and the remains of the chicken were burnt and the ashes used as tested *inyifwila*.

'That snake is awful (*nisya fijo*), no one approaches to kill it.
[825] No! If it were speared everyone would die.' And because the python which is so terrible is thought to be linked with the rain-
[821] bow it, too, is disliked. 'We fear the rainbow very much, we say it appears when a python looks up to the sky; if we are near a river we run from it for pythons live near rivers. . . . No, we are not mistaken, it is so.' The essential quality of the python is *ubusisya* (fearfulness, majesty, dignity) and this is what is required

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 As we have seen, the chief's fearsome medicine *inyifwila* is
778 thought to be very dangerous, and too much in the tails may cause
622 them 'to fly about throttling men and cattle', but a chief is never
[754] accused of working witchcraft; it is inconceivable to the Nyakyusa that he could be. If the tails have got out of hand they are treated
[789] by a doctor 'to close them up'; no one suggests that the chief should get rid of them. It is commoners, 'black people', who are witches —cannibals, the eaters of raw flesh—as opposed to chiefs who, since the dawn of history, have killed cattle for meat and cooked their food like civilized men. But the distinction does not extend very far; junior kinsmen of the chief are 'commoners' and may well be accused of practising witchcraft.

There was a delicate balance of power in the Nyakyusa con-
[182] stitution between hereditary chief and commoner headmen and the belief in the power of medicines and of witchcraft was an integral part of it. The chief provided fruitfulness by the power of his own body and his medicines; all men depended upon him for their well-being—food, cattle, children, success in war; but he in his turn depended upon the goodwill of his men led by their village headmen; without it he shivered and fell ill, only to be buried by them 'with the breath still in his body' lest the power of growth disappear with his breathless corpse.

Something of the quality of this mutual dependence and fear is conveyed in Kasitile's account of his own illness quoted in Chapter VIII.

(*e*) THE NECESSITY FOR HARMONY

182 The welfare of the chiefdom is thought to depend upon
643 harmony between the chief and his village headmen and priests,
622 and also between the chief and his kinsmen. Any friction between
793 them may result in public misfortune as well as sickness to the individual at fault. The quarrel of Kasitile, the priest, first with
[753] the Kinga priests, and then with the commoner priests of Mwal-
[821] popo's chiefdom was believed to affect the crops and the weather, as well as Kasitile's own health (*vide infra*, pp. 124-41), and Mwaipopo's failure to tell Kasitile formally of the death of their
[688] kinsman led to rain which spoiled the funeral dance. A quarrel between the lineages of two chiefs which should have sacrificed
643 together was said to have been followed by a very poor millet
602 crop (*vide infra*, pp. 79-80, 118, 136).
578 How the personal relationship of a chief with his kinsmen is

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

that I can speak, that when I speak food comes tomorrow; let it be so. 769

Three points call for comment here. First, it will be noted that if the crops failed Kasitile had a scapegoat in his heir who was quarrelling with him. The sacrifice was performed correctly but a quarrel between any of the leading actors could destroy its efficacy, and Kasitile made it clear that he was being very forbearing with a difficult 'son'. 782

Secondly, a great many names were mentioned in the prayers, but they were not mentioned in any discernible order. This is obvious if the prayers are compared with the genealogy facing p. 3 And since Kasitile was a famous priest, acknowledged to be an expert in ritual and tradition we must conclude that the order was not thought important: all that was required was to mention the names of dead members of the lineage, including even one (Mwakabule 117) who was junior both to Mwaipopo and Kasitile who were sacrificing. [793]

Thirdly, what did Kasitile imply by his reference to the moon? (p. 74). We omitted to ask Kasitile himself, but a number of informants insisted that there is no necessary connexion between the celebration of a ritual and the phases of the moon. However, rain is expected with the *waning* moon, therefore rituals which are intended to produce rain are usually performed with the waning moon, and the sacrifice to Mwaijonga in which sun and warmth were sought, was performed with the waxing moon. This may or may not be what Kasitile had in mind. 769 782 821

Everyone agreed afterwards that the rituals had been effective for the weather grew slightly warmer. Before the sacrifice at Lubaga on 7th July, the temperature was 62° F. at sunset, but from the 9th onward the cloud cleared, and by the 14th the sunset temperature was 68° F. Whether or not the Kinga priests living high on their mountains with a view down the Lake whence storms come are weatherwise, and time their visits carefully, we do not know. Certainly any change in the weather after a celebration is interpreted as a direct answer to prayer. [132]

(c) SACRIFICE TO MWAKISAMBWE

A month later a sacrifice was made to Mwaijonga's great-great-grandfather Mwakisambwe (30) in the grove Mbyanga. The chief Mwaipopo was not concerned this time, but the senior line of Mwaihojo (147) and a junior line who had traditionally the responsibility of providing cows for celebrations at Mbyanga. 769 782

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

631 north the Nyakyusa were continually at war; they did not trade
782 or pray with them. Thus we conclude that participation in a
[721] common ritual is, in the Nyakyusa case, directly linked with a common origin and essential trade.

643 The divine kings, Lwembe and Kyungu, were regarded as having power over certain areas, a power closely linked with
[789] rainfall. Indeed, one informant argued that the chiefs living
[782] around Masoko had never sent sacrifices to Lubaga, 'because when it rains at Lubaga the rain does not come as far as Masoko'. He
[821] was mistaken in his facts—the chiefs of Masoko did at one time send to Lubaga as Mwambete (162), chief at Masoko, himself admitted—but the argument points to a conception of supernatural power tied to a rainfall area. This notion was not, however, applied consistently.

643 The balance between secular and mystical power has altered
173 during the past ten generations. The founding heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, came as conquerors and must surely have led their men personally; but early in the history of Ngonde the Kyungu was secluded, and power was exercised almost exclusively by the nobles (*vide supra*, pp. 40-46); and the Lwembe also was, at one period, 'not seen by ordinary men' and led a life hedged about with taboos. There is sharp contrast in Nyakyusa tradition between the active chiefs who were warriors, and arbitrators, and worked hard in their fields[1] and the 'divine king' who lived in seclusion. As we have seen, the chiefs often delegated ritual functions, with the taboos involved, to a junior kinsman such as Mwamukinga (44) or Mwakihaba (45) (*vide* pp. 79-81, 114) whose heirs succeeded to the office. It is even possible that the
[178] first Lwembe at Lubaga (Mwakalebela 19) took over ritual functions from his senior brother, Kalesi (18).[2] The present tendency is for the development of secular power and its separation from mystical power. The Kyungu is no longer a god but an administrator: the heir of the Lwembes sits as an elected representative of chiefs on the Local Council. In the traditional
182 Nyakyusa society ritual played an essential part in maintaining
177 the balance between generations, sections, and social strata, and in

[1] In 1955 a young chief was bitterly criticized by his men because he 'never had a hoe in his hands' whereas his father and grandfather had (to our personal knowledge) been diligent in hoeing.

[2] But according to one excellent informant, Mwakisambwe (30) lived secluded while Mwakilima (31) 'fed men'—i.e. entertained.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 drought, as in illness, a number of possible causes are discussed, [775] and if one possible cause is dealt with and yet the drought persists, [177] another will be put forward. A shrewd priest or doctor can turn this to account and find many reasons for the failure of his ritual, as the following case shows.

789 In the wet Nyakyusa valley rain-makers are not concerned only with drought, but also with flood, and, in the years 1935-8, 791 with the rise in the level of the Lake which inundated many gardens.[1] On the Nyakyusa plain the rise was attributed to the [821] action of a Kisi doctor, Mwatabi, who had first boasted that he could bring up the Lake and then been commissioned by the chief, Mwakalukwa (141), to do so, 'because there was much grass by the Lake and many mosquitoes, and it was dirty there'. He was told to 'take the Lake up a bit, but not too far' and given a sheep. Then, the following season, in April (a month of torrential rain), Mwakalukwa's son Mwakisisile (170, for Mwakalukwa himself had died) gave him a little bull saying,

[578] Send the Lake back, it has come too far. Then the doctor went home thinking to himself, 'Why does he give me such a little bull?' and he met a headman of the neighbouring chief, Mwakabulufu (138), and said, 'Why should I send the Lake back, Mwakisisile has given me a bull only; had he given me a cow, I'd have done so, but now I am angry.' Then Mwakabulufu heard and sent a message to say he would provide a cow, since Mwakalukwa was dead. But the doctor refused: 'No, Mwakalukwa (the son, 170) is still alive, he must give it.' The following September, before the usual end of the dry season, there was rain on the plain. It is the Kisi's rain. Mwakisisile (170) refused to give him anything, he said he was a liar, but the commoners collected 30*s.* and a goat, and the Kisi performed a ritual just recently, and said: 'The Lake will go back, but my strength will bring the rain; it will rain during the dry season this month.' We laughed very much in Tukuyu to hear such a prophecy, but it is raining!

The following year—after the Lake had risen again—another reason was given. It was said that a rain-maker at Bojo in Kisi country had died, and just before he died he had thrown a rain stone into the Lake.

(*b*) MAGIC OF FERTILITY

789 We did not learn very much about 'sprinkling the homesteads';

[1] There is a periodic rise and fall in the level of the Lake. In 1937 the Lake steamer was anchoring in what had been the roof-tree of the District Commissioner's house at Karonga.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

demand among police and soldiers as well as wives.) Then there are medicines used by men and women to make themselves more attractive and persuasive as lovers, litigants, leaders, clients, servants, salesmen, and so on. 278 789

Certain Nyakyusa medicines are based on observation of cause and effect. Their pharmacopia includes purges and poisons—for example, castor oil has long been cultivated and used both for making ointment and as an aperient—and some of the drugs administered, and the poulticing with hot leaves, may well be therapeutic; we have no systematic knowledge of the plants used and cannot assess them. But the scientific element is demonstrably limited, for a great many medicines are based on the principle of association, a feeling of likeness between things, and things *felt* to be alike are believed to react on one another, like producing like, or like things being antagonistic. 278 [789]

No distinction is made by the Nyakyusa themselves between those medicines which one trained in western science would say are based on observation of cause and effect (e.g. a purge or a poison), and those which are based on association—indeed our friends constantly cited supposed observations of cause and effect as evidence of the efficacy of all sorts of medicines and taboos. Mwakyonde used charcoal, mixed with iron from a forge, as a medicine for protection against lightning, burying a little, and powdering a little, and sprinkling it about a homestead, 'because at the forge they blow the bellows and it says, "*Muli, muli, muli*" (i.e. boom, boom, boom) and the lightning *jikumuleka* (booms). When we blow the bellows at a forge it makes a noise like thunder.' There was no hint that he was aware that electricity might be attracted by iron, but he insisted that where he had buried the charcoal and iron the lightning *never* struck again, and he regarded this as cause and effect. Therefore the distinction we have made between observation and association is ours, not theirs. [751] [821]

That the symbolic element is at least as important as the practical was apparent from Lyandileko's treatment for sterility, which was famous for its success. She had three patients one morning, all women wanting to bear children. In front of her she ranged seventeen banana petals and mixed four different medicines in them. Then she chose three young banana shoots and bored a hole in each, inserting into it a length of the mid-rib of a banana leaf, slightly hollowed to form a runnel. She told an onlooker to bring the first petal full of medicine and poured it into the runnel. 842 278

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

her by his anger, others that the husband was to blame for rejecting medical treatment earlier on. The girl herself was reported to have said to her mother-in-law, when she was lying ill at the doctor's house: 'Are you angry with me and has your anger caused the trouble? Perhaps I did not help you in collecting firewood?' But her mother-in-law replied: 'No, I am not angry with you at all.' And the girl continued: 'I know that my father is angry. Someone might go and ask him to pray for me.' There was also tension with the husband's pagan father who had protested that his son was praying for the death of his own children when he prayed with his Pentecostal friends that God's will be done. 'The Pentecostal people say: "I like to die. I don't take any medicine . . . if someone dies or not it is all the same thing."'

Nevertheless, it is true to say that the field in which natural causation is accepted is much wider among Christians than among pagans. It expands very slowly, but the change is evident. Even two cases of 'madness' (*ukubopa ikigili*), invariably the symptom of the wrath of the gods in pagan thought, were interpreted to us by a Christian teacher in terms of grief and shock. The first was of a young man whose wife and grandmother (who lived with him) both died very suddenly, and whose only cow was taken by other relatives and killed for the funeral feast. The loss of the cow following the loss of his wife and grandmother was held to have shattered him finally—'the lineage was finished'. The other case was of a mother, devoted to her daughter, who was distraught when the daughter went off to a distance, accompanying her husband to his place of work. For a daughter to marry beyond easy visiting distance was traditionally inconceivable.

The vagaries of the weather, attributed by the pagans to the neglect of sacrifices or quarrels between chiefs and priests, are explained in scientific terms by some Christians. Heavy rain fell around Rungwe in October 1937 and prevented people burning their rubbish heaps to fertilize their millet gardens. The pagans insisted that such early rain was unheard of and kept asking each other what could have caused it. A Christian elder assured us that the early rain was *not* very unusual in the hill country; he had seen other seasons like it. And in January of the same year the people of Mwaipopo's country were 'astonished' because no heavy rain had fallen and young maize and millet were shrivelling in the ground. They said: 'It has rained all round' and 'it seems as if we had offended Kyala'. Kasitile went to divine (*vide supra*, p. 119).

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

We remarked to a Christian friend, a deacon, that the rains were late. He replied: 'Well, it is not so very unusual. Sometimes rains begin in one part of the country and not in another. Sometimes we do not get heavy rain down here until the end of January.' In short, the more educated Christians are beginning to think in more general terms: they do not as yet define probabilities statistically in terms of rainfall averages, but they are tending in that direction.

And what of the positive content of Christianity? The supreme attraction, mentioned again and again as the reason for conversion, is: 'There is life' (*ubumi bulipo*), and it is life in a world to come rather than 'more abundant life' here and now that is spoken of. The contrast is between heaven above and the shadowy world 'beneath' of pagan thought, or a fearful fiery hell in which most Christians believe and to which, some think, all pagans are condemned. Constantly in sermons by Nyakyusa preachers there was stress on life, resurrection, and on the rewards and punishments of the future life, and this theme recurs again and again in the dreams of Christians.

There is a gulf also between the pagan conception of 'driving off' the shades and the heroes lest by 'brooding over' a man they bring madness and death, and the Christian ideal of union with God. Sermons stress the goodness and love of God, characteristics quite foreign to the traditional picture of Kyala.

Something of the quality of Christian thought and feeling may be grasped by an examination of the names taken at baptism—the convert from paganism always chooses a new name for himself and the meaning is more immediately obvious to everyone than it is with modern English Christian names derived, as they mostly are, from languages no longer familiar. Many of the Nyakyusa names express a very direct personal relationship with God, the Redeemer: 'He has looked upon me', 'He has roused me', 'He has waited hoping for me', 'He has died for me', 'He gives me courage', 'He has changed me', 'He has chosen me out', 'He has comforted me', and a score more of the same type. Some refer to the Gospels: 'Word of Truth', 'The Word has taken hold of me'. A few speak of purification: 'Make me white', 'He has washed me'. Some express that union with God which the pagans so greatly fear: 'We are with him', 'He has come near', 'He has brooded over me', 'Let us approach', and some thanksgiving: 'Let us sing to Him', 'We praise Him', 'We have rejoiced', and some life: 'He is risen',

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for an appropriate medicine, and his main function is organizing the observances. 791 793

(d) SYMBOLISM

In the field of medicine imagination runs riot, and associations are unpredictable. The ingredients of most medicines are professional secrets and unknown to the user who takes the concoction on trust from his doctor, and inquires no further. Therefore the study of medicine is not linked to the study of social relationships in the same manner as is the study of ritual, for the symbolism of medicines is individual and free, whereas the symbolism of ritual is common and obligatory. 278 789

Nevertheless, the imagination of doctors works within the general symbolic system, and such knowledge as we have indicates that many of the associations made are similar to those used in ritual. In medicine, as in the rituals of kinship, one type of banana stands for a male, another for a female, a banana sucker [831] represents a kinsman, a sprouting shoot conception. Smithing and [326] coition are felt to be alike, and the molten iron that trickles out of a forge is linked with menstrual blood. Hair stands for growth, and a bald pate a devastated field. A ring, or circumambulation, implies a protecting fence. Pythons, crocodiles, leopards, and lions stand [825] for power and majesty, spears and thorns for attack; vomiting and [827] emptiness for innocence, spitting for forgiveness. There is colour symbolism in medicines (though we know little of it save that the [822] *ikipiki* which stands for the blood of the lineage is red, or reddish brown), and auditory symbolism, the rumble of thunder and the groaning of a bellows being identified. Men mime that which they wish to avoid, as well as that which they desire; like things are antagonistic as well as sympathetic. No doubt a laborious study of prescriptions would reveal further general principles of association, as well as the range of individual imagination, but such a task has yet to be undertaken.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

278 842 The patient knelt and received the medicine in cupped hands, guiding it into her mouth. Lyandileko hung a little medicine horn on the runnel before pouring. The patient kept the medicine in her mouth until the runnel was removed and she spat through the hole. Then the hole was filled up with the petal off which the medicine had been poured. Lyandileko smeared the patient on the belly with medicine from a horn, and pushed the horn down under her bark-cloth to the genitals, in front, and on to the buttocks behind. As she did this she said, 'If you are barren the banana will rot, if you are fertile I give you medicine to bear a child.' This was done for each patient in turn. Then the banana suckers were planted and the medicine from the remaining petals poured into bottles (two made of banana leaves, one a Vermouth bottle) for the patients to take home. They were to take a dose each day for a week. As the treatment was proceeding Lyandileko talked of her successes: 'So-and-so drank twice and her belly sprouted. . . . So-and-so drank and she came back to me pregnant. . . .'

After a week the women came back to see whether their banana suckers had sprouted. Lyandileko explained: 'The banana sucker is the child, it sprouts quickly, it is the belly which sprouts quickly. [787] If it dies they consult an oracle—the woman does not conceive.' And her son added, 'If a woman's sucker dies Lyandileko tells her: "Don't say I have not worked for you, don't you see your banana? You are rotten in yourself, indeed they must have allowed your cord to fall between your mother's legs."[1] They rejoice very much if it has grown.' Each petal represents a child; Lyandeliko used male and female symbols (plantain and sweet banana petals) alternately for boys and girls. One mother who had no child had asked for ten, another with two already for eight, another with three already for six. Lyandileko's arithmetic had gone wrong for there were only seventeen petals altogether. The horn is the horn of protection (*ulupembe lwa ipingo*) and it means here, 'May the "iron" stay nicely within, may it not come out in front or behind, may it stay inside.' (Iron is a symbol for the reproductive [823] capacity of women.) Neither Lyandileko nor her son (who were both forthright in their discussion of ritual) seemed to be conscious of any symbolic enactment of coition, though a knowledge of the symbolism of the death and puberty rituals suggests that.

[1] Cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, p. 145.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KaKuse

and say: 'You, Father, stand by me.' We bring him back when we have bathed. He also bathed there, he is present![1] 764 775

QUESTION: The meaning of the shaving?

KAKUNE: The doctor takes a bunch of *ikisajelo* grass and a little millet beer and then makes two cross lines in the hair before shaving, and he shaves us.

QUESTION: Why?

KAKUNE: It is the ritual, we drive him off.

Being unable to get any more I then suggested that the *ikisajelo* and beer represented the shade and that they took him on to their bodies in order to throw him off.

Kakune: 'Yes, that's it, you are very intelligent for you understand it! That's it!'

QUESTION: And is the *ikisajelo* grass the shade's which the seers uproot? [824]

KAKUNE: Yes, we have heard that long ago there were three seers (*abalungulula*), X and Y and Z [I missed the names], who went with two village headmen to look; one seer uprooted the *ikisajelo* grass to look beneath at the land of the shades and he called the village headmen to look. When they shrank back and said 'He!' he said it was a homestead such as those above.

QUESTION: Did this happen in the day-time?

KAKUNE: It happened in the day-time, in the open, not in a dream. But later on, when one village headman had gone he said: 'Let me look again.' He tried to uproot it but the *ikisajelo* grass was stuck, it would not come up. But all that happened a long time ago; seers are not seen nowadays. And when we have finished everything, at the time of destroying the ritual house, the doctor touches us all with the razor, that is the tuft (*itemele*).

QUESTION: Is this before the beer of inheritance? 764

KAKUNE: Yes, before the beer, on the day of bathing. It means that letting the 'hair of the corpse' grow is finished, we have finished. You may drink freely. And have we written about the roasted chicken and the bananas?[2]

G. W.: No.

KAKUNE: What? No? But we all eat these with our fellow villagers—and a bull if we have killed one, for we kill a bull if we have it—at the bathing in the stream. And in the evening the doctor prepares the

[1] The statement above was not made quite so straightforwardly as it is written down; at certain points Kakune stopped and I prompted him either with: 'And then?' or 'What does that mean?' There were no leading questions and I took down his words exactly.

[2] Our best informants often asked whether what they told us was properly recorded.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

§27
front. See, the man ejects semen! Does it not go inside? The woman §34
becomes heavy and oversteps the bride.'

Even after she has been treated, the bride avoids any close con- §34
tact with those who are 'heavy'; in particular they are excluded §33
from her hut. Her own mother 'does not sleep with the father at all from the time the girl grows up until she goes to her husband, and begins intercourse with him. It is taboo. She says to her husband: "See, I am keeping my child company." ' But the 'play' of her companions does not matter, for intercourse *inter crura* does not make anyone heavy; it is the semen of a man in a woman's belly which makes her heavy, and her husband also, through contact with her.

The second medicine used at the puberty ritual is the *ikipiki*,[1] 789
made from the bark of certain small-leafed forest trees. The same species is used by many Nyakyusa families, but the identity of the person who provides it is very important, for it is identified with the blood (*ililopa*) of the family. In the puberty-marriage ritual the groom's mother provides the *ikipiki* with which the bride washes at her husband's (if she is a senior wife), at the rite of 'putting her in' (*ukwingenia*), at the second washing with her husband, at the shaving, and at the washing before jumping over fire. The same medicine is used each time. It is also sprinkled on the bananas she eats at the *ukwingenia*. The bride's own mother, however, provides the *ikipiki* which is added to her porridge and buried under the hearth the day she first menstruates, and that used for washing her father, or brother, and mother at the *ukwingenia*. Also, should it be known that the bride is not a virgin, the mother-in-law will refuse to bring her *ikipiki* and it must be provided for each rite by her mother. The medicine is in itself awesome (*ukipa*). Kasitile's wife remarked one day that the bride slept with one of her maids in front of her, 'at her stomach', and one behind. We asked why. She replied: 'That *ikipiki* medicine! It's awesome. She 789
fears to be alone.' 'If someone has not given her the *ikipiki* to drink §41
and heavy ones cook food and give it to her she goes bad, she has periods without cessation.' 'The mother gives porridge with *ikipiki* to the girl and buries some under the hearth. That means may she be heavy in her stomach, for if heavy ones warm themselves at the fire in the house, she is in danger of going bad, she will have a continuous issue of blood.' 'If the *ikipiki* were not given, her period

[1] *Ilu-piki*: a tree of any species. *Ikipiki*: medicine made from the bark of certain species (one is a Mimosaceae) and used in the rituals of death, puberty, and birth. §28

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya
Kukwe

764 A mash made of beans, lentils and pumpkin-seeds was salted, to be eaten with millet porridge; one unsalted was prepared to be eaten with bananas. Each principal then washed again with water and powdered medicine at the doorway. The unsalted mash and bananas were handed to each of the principals to eat. The salted mash and porridge (in one ball) was placed on one of the hearth-bricks and each one came and stooped and bit (as with the bananas before outside), then took [177] away the mouthful to eat. 'We used to put it up on the wall, we have abandoned the custom nowadays.' Mpogo begged for 'only a little'. Finally, each principal sat in the doorway and the officiant smeared a cross on his head with a paste of millet flour (previously ground on the bark-cloth) and water.

It was 6 p.m., the sun sinking, as I left.

The kinsmen present are marked on the genealogy on p. 273. There were also three neighbours one of whom was a younger full brother of the village headman, Mwambuputa. The headman was not there himself.

(b) *Farewell to Kalata's mother (Kukwe)*

Record of G. W. 6/11/36

Kalata's mother died on Monday evening, November 2, and was buried the next day.

KALATA: They will perform the ritual on me and my younger brother and on my son; if we had a sister alive they would do it for her too, but we have none. . . . The officiant is Sijele, wife of Mwainombola. He is a relative of ours, our mothers avoided him. He was their 'father-in-law'. . . . My father is already dead.

[328] A young man present had gone for the *ikipiki* medicine to wash with and brought back a plant, *ipazati*, but the officiant (Sijele) had seen it and gone for another, saying 'that is the *ikipiki* of the Sangu'. However, two older men and the dead woman's younger sister disagreed with her and said *ipazati* was right.

There were present one classificatory father of Kalata with a small son, Kalata's own small son, Kalata's younger brother, Kalata himself, a young man *ustasi* to Kalata (son of the dead woman's brother) and a small son; the wife and the sister of the *ustasi*, a younger sister of the dead woman, and another young woman, all with mourning belts tied round them. A fifth young woman had no belt.

The sister's daughter began to grind millet. A young woman went off to look for medicines for sweeping out the rubbish (*imisala*). Everyone gave her advice as to where to find them. Sijele came in with a bunch of twigs for sweeping, and a separate one for washing. There was more discussion of *ipazati*. Sijele said that *ipazati* was for bathing with after the burial, not for washing with now.

A young woman began to clear the rubbish (*ukusepa imisala*) with the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

small pot for cooking the beans; each poured a little in turn, as they 764
had done with the oil-seeds, and said the same words as before. The officiants then picked the flowering head of a banana and selected a petal or two to use as a basin to prepare the ointment in. The beans, however, they did not throw into the pot, because they had done this before, they just put some in to cook. When the beans were all ready for making the mash, but before they took them off the fire, the officiants shaved the principals' hair. The officiants made them sit down on a bark-cloth spread on the ground and drew lines where they were going to shave with a bunch of grass called '*ifusejelo*', which had been dipped in some lees of beer. They began by shaving along the lines marked with the lees, one from forehead to neck, one from ear to ear over the crown. Then, as they shaved each in turn, they mocked him, saying: 'Poor fool, it found its mother (grandmother) was dead. Went stealing and they've speared it on the head!' After the officiant had shaved the lines and mocked them they helped each other to finish shaving their heads.

The mash was made by mixing the beans with the plantain that they had stolen previously, and with a sweet banana which they cut for the occasion. The plantain they say is the man, the sweet banana the woman. While mixing the mash together they took out of it a bean, a plantain and a sweet banana for each of the principals. And to some of the mash they added salt, to some not.

Then they went to bathe. They cut leaves of plantain and of sweet banana. First they tied the plantain leaves round the principals' loins and then the sweet banana leaves on top, and round their necks they tied one plantain leaf also. Then they stuck one plantain in front, and a sweet banana behind, and went to bathe. The principals wore cloths under the leaves because of the women present.

When we reached the stream the principals sat down in the water looking downstream. The doctor twisted grass into pads and put a pad on each one's head with a pebble on the pad. Then she put pebbles in the forks of all their fingers and toes, and in their mouths and ears, and made them hold a flower in each hand. They lay down in the water looking first upstream, for that is the direction of BuKukwe, and then finally downstream again. Stones, leaves and bananas fell into the water and then they bathed themselves in the ordinary way, each still wearing a cloth.

On the way back the doctor picked a kind of water grass (*slukele*) and a certain flower called *stungengelengo* and made each of the principals [524] ●
hold some grass in one hand and a flower in the other. When we reached the little hut (in the path between house and river) the principals threw the grass and the flower on to its thatch. Also they had brought water in a calabash from the stream, and this they poured on the thatch where they had thrown the flower. As the water dripped

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

QUESTION: When he says it is sorcery, does he mean that the snakes 754
have been sent by someone?

MWANIFU: Yes, Mwaipaja (G. W.), you understand.

5/1/38

Katasya died during the night. I came to the burial with the doctor, 764
Mwakańamale, meeting Mwamalunda on the road. They told me that the son, Mwakanjwike, had fled from the funeral. 'It is said that he had made love to three of his father's wives. They all fled, the three women and the young man. Yes, they will take them to a waterfall to cleanse them.'

I sat by Mwaipopo, the chief. There was a dispute about the autopsy. 763
Kasitile came to the chief to say: 'They are refusing to examine him.' 'Why are they refusing? There is much illness about. Let us examine him and *know*.' Mwaipopo spoke with heat. Then a relative came and told him: 'Katasya said: "Do not examine me when I die."' Mwaipopo: 'Why? There is that case of the son (incestuous adultery) or perhaps it is sorcery, or perhaps, if the neighbours refuse to examine him, it is a confession that they have bewitched him. Let us examine him. It will trouble us later on. Also, he was praying to the shades, saying: "The millet failed." Then he died! Let us examine him and know.'

Five cows and a bull were killed. About twenty cattle were standing 764
in the herd. The corpse was carried around with wailing and drum- 763
ming and the cattle were driven round also. Then followed the autopsy. I went with Mwanyoso, with Kasitile's relative, Mwakasenga, and with the brother of the dead man. A woman doctor performed it with a bamboo knife. Another woman kept a hand on the head of the dead man meanwhile. 'You brave ones!' was the comment of the other women, two or three of whom stood watching. The doctor hesitated, as if in fear, before the first cut. Mwanyoso encouraged her: 'Go ahead!' As she pulled out the bowels we all crowded round to look. Mwanyoso said: 'Ropes,' but no one else took this up, and he did not 763
mention it again. They looked into the chest and found something 754
wrong. 'He is burned within! It is sorcery!'

MWANYOSO: We chiefs do not fear the commoners, we look for wounds and speak if they are there. But there are none. Look well! If he had been speared there would be much blood, and wounds. But he is burned within. They have worked sorcery against him with Mwangwala. That is the name of the medicine which some Nyakyusa plant. [324] It's sorcery! Then is that of the country (i.e. witchcraft) not there?

It is not there.

How about the son?

That we do not find. He just has diarrhœa.

Mwanyoso then told Mwaipopo (the chief): 'We have examined him, it is sorcery.'

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

We have already seen in two examples that a man, when returning to the chiefdom from which he has moved, may recover his old gardens even though he builds in a different village. And it frequently happens also that a man comes to a village and asks for garden-land only, continuing to live in another village, or even in another chiefdom. Such requests the villagers always, so far as I know, grant willingly, for once a man has taken up land in a new village there is every prospect that he will one day move altogether and build there. In case of sickness he is more likely to move to the group where he is already half-established and sure of a warm welcome than anywhere else. 423 425

When a man moves he has the right to reap the crops standing in his old gardens so soon as they ripen, but after that the ground, save in the case of craters, reverts to the joint ownership of villagers and chief. And his building plot and bananas revert to them immediately. The next-door neighbours on either side keep the bananas clean and eat the fruit themselves until the plot and the bananas are given by the villagers, with the chief's approval, to another man. If the previous holder has moved to a place without bananas and not very far away he may, in the first year, send to his late neighbours and ask to be allowed to cut and carry away some of the banana fruit "for my bananas in my new plot have not yet grown." But his request is of grace and not of right, it may be refused. If the villagers like and respect him and hope to persuade him to return later it will always be granted, but if they dislike him and are glad to be rid of him then it will not. If the plot is a separate one without immediate neighbours then no one keeps the bananas clean and, unless someone else is given the plot soon, they get choked with weeds and die.

When a man dies the heir takes his wives, his cattle and his moveable property, and, if he comes to live in the dead man's village, his land also. But if the heir remains in his own old village[1] he has no rights over the dead man's land. The situation is then exactly comparable to that which obtains when a man moves from one village to another, his land rights in the old village lapse. 423 428

Rights in trees differ in some respects from rights in land and they differ also for different kinds of trees; and here, as an added complication, we are also faced with a difference of local custom. 423

Prior to the introduction of new trees by Europeans the only ones of any great value to the Nyakyusa were the bamboo (*ihilasi*) and the *anyusgati* tree, whose botanical name I have been unable to find out. Bamboos 423 824

[1] Owing to the age grouping among villagers and the long period which traditionally separated one pregnancy from another in a woman's life it is unusual to find full-brothers in the same village.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

423 are used for house building, while the *syunguti* produces a fruit (*indilolo*)
824 which is both delicious to eat and also full of seeds which are dried and crushed for ointment (*inyemba*). Of the two trees the bamboo is the more valuable.

423 Now among the Kukwe and Selya groups rights in these trees are
425 somewhat similar to rights in the valuable crater plots. When a man moves, his bamboos and *syunguti* trees, unlike his bananas, do not revert
621 to the villagers ; normally they continue to belong to his nearest kinsman in that chiefdom, who cuts and uses the bamboos and picks the fruits of the *syunguti* trees. If the villagers give the site to another man then the newcomer has no rights over these trees unless the kinsman himself gives them to him. But it sometimes happens that, where only *syunguti* trees and not bamboos are involved, the kinsfolk do not bother to exercise their rights ; then the trees are treated like bananas, picked by the neighbours until a newcomer is given that plot, and then by him.

423 If however, among the Selya and Kukwe groups, a man moves
425 leaving no kinsfolk near at hand, then the chief (*umalafyale*) as the supreme overlord has a right to his trees, and if they are near the chief's own place
622 this right is exercised ; he cuts and uses the bamboos and his wives pick the *syunguti* trees. If another man is given the land by the villagers to build on then he goes and asks the chief to allow him some of the *syunguti* trees, and his request is usually granted, the chief gives him two or three of the trees, keeping two or three for himself. But the bamboos, being more valuable, are usually kept altogether by the chief. If, however, the ownerless trees are at a distance from the chief's place then he normally does not trouble to claim the *syunguti* trees but only the bamboos. The former are at first picked by the neighbours and later given by the villagers to a newcomer together with the site. And, even with the bamboos, if they are a long way from the chief's place a " good chief," they say, will allow the newcomer to cut some of them without payment ; but it is wholly within the chief's power to keep them all for himself if he wishes, and " bad chiefs " do so. Furthermore a chief does occasionally also exercise his right to claim an ownerless *syunguti* tree at a distance. If one of his wives comes and complains to him that she has no *syunguti* tree of her own, then he takes her to a site from which someone has recently moved leaving ownerless trees behind and there he gives her one of the trees ; the rest he leaves as usual to the villagers and so to the newcomer.

423 Bamboos are men's property and only a man can claim them but
621 *syunguti* trees can be claimed by a kinswoman, a sister or a daughter, of the old owner if none of his near kinsmen have troubled to do so.

423 We must here take note of a most significant modern development.
178 In the old days rights in trees could only be exercised by members of the

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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824

6. YOUNG CHIEF WITH HIS TREES

[Facing p. 54]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 symbol of potency,[1] and we suggest that this also is an element in
622 the ritual of the 'coming out', for the fertility of the chiefdom is
796 thought to be bound up with the virility of the chief.

[372] There are a number of stories about the way in which Mwakyusa (38) surpassed his brothers and one of them tells how each brother made fire and set alight the pasture land (for traditionally parts of the pasture land were fired each season to provide fresh grass for grazing in the early spring), and the fires started by the elder brothers soon died out, but that started by Mwakyusa 'burned for a whole month'. This is interpreted as an omen of his greatness as a chief: fire, potency, lordship are inextricably linked.

At the 'coming out' all things are made new. No matter how [561] crowded the country the young men must move to new sites and the shelters in which they live must be new, though, as will be [356] shown, they do not necessarily move to *unoccupied* country. On their new site the young men live as bachelors, milking their cows and cooking for themselves on their new fires the meat of the cattle they seize, the bananas and grain brought by their wives and mothers. Meat is abundant, for the young chief now rules and has the right to take what cattle he chooses, even from the villages of the old men in his country. 'It was as if there were war, [726] the young men seized cattle, food, and women', and though they did not fight their fathers directly, as the Meru did, they clearly asserted their power. And, as so common further south, the accession of a chief was the occasion for raiding the neighbours: [778] the young men, we were told, went forthwith to test the efficacy of the magic spears and the medicines with which their chief and headmen had been treated. Or the chiefs might lead a battue to clear the country of wild pig, as Mwakatumbula (Mwambete 162) did directly after his 'coming out'. Well fed and exuberant, the [574] young men dance and display their cattle, and entertain visitors lavishly, for every chief seeks to attract men to his country by his hospitality.

Then they set up the sign and memorial of the chieftainship: [824] they plant cuttings of two species[2] of *ficus*, *indola* which is much used as a shade tree, and *umpandapanda* from which bark-cloth is [423] made. Close to these the first house of the chief and that of his senior village headmen are built, and the trees also mark the

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 124, 143.

[2] When writing *Good Company* I mistakenly thought that two cuttings of the same species were planted. Cf. *Good Company*, p. 27.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

future boundary between the two halves of the chiefdom, where it will split the next generation. They serve as beacons[1] and are cited as evidence both of the 'coming out' and of the division of land in any later dispute. At the same time the trees are symbols of chieftainship and with their growth the success of the reign is mystically linked. According to one account, 'four headmen fetch the cuttings and the young chief stands between them (*vide plate* 6) and tells the trees to grow well, and the others say: "We are planting you likewise, we are at the ritual of establishing a new chieftainship, you are a symbol for our chief, spread branches that our young headmen and other people may rest in your shade."' A doctor assists at the planting, burying at the roots a live white sheep and medicines, which, it is said, later turn into the lions or leopards which protect the trees from the impious (*vide infra*, p. 58); and he sweeps beneath the trees, a symbol of what the senior headman must do in future, for it is his duty to 'watch over the trees'. In Nyakyusa thought, village headmen are an integral part of chieftainship—it cannot exist without them—and the trees symbolize *both* the chief and his lady and the two senior headmen. The same informant (well known as a doctor for the 'coming out') told us: 'It means we are planting the chief and his lady; *umpandapanda* is the herd to herd *indola*, which is the more important. *Umpandapanda* is the woman, it may dry up, but *ulupando* (*indola*) never does; it is the chief, it is familiars (*ulupege*). but *umpandapanda* is not', and a moment or two later, 'the *ulupando* is the senior village headman, *umpandapanda* is the junior headman'. The strength of the chief is associated with the growth of the trees. If these trees go dry the reign will not be successful, the chief will be defeated in war. If they flourish and grow the reign will be successful, the chief is a ruler. The *indola* planted for Mwaijonga (82) is shown proudly by his great-grandson, and Mwambete (162) who had a long reign and an enormous family boasted of the size of his *umpandapanda*—'a great spreading tree'. Ideally the young chief should, in due course, sit in the shade of his *indola* with his headmen, to settle disputes.

After the trees are planted the young men build their senior headman's house and the doctor sets up his hearth bricks, burying medicine beneath them also. The marriage of the chief follows.[2]

[1] cf. D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-Lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, v, IV (1895), p. 117.

[2] According to most accounts, but *vide infra*, p. 56.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VI

LAND AND POWER

643 561 423 THE crux of the chiefs' 'coming out' was a redistribution of power and of land, and we must pause in our description of the ritual cycle to discuss the relation between chiefdoms and villages and the land, and to consider more closely the balance of power between successive generations.

(a) THE TERRITORIAL ALIGNMENT OF CHIEFDOMS AND VILLAGES

173 361 Tradition makes it clear that the heroes came to a sparsely occupied country and that their descendants gradually spread out as their numbers increased. The settlers chose to live on hillocks overlooking the surrounding country. Lubaga and [103] Mbande, the seats of the two 'divine kings' are commanding sites. [778] The grove of Kabale, where the ancestors of the Kukwe chiefs first established themselves, is on an eminence rising from the plateau, and Kambasekela (near the Mbaka bridge) on which the early chiefs Mwaipaja (21) and Mwaipopo (26) were buried is a hill very like Mbande, overlooking the plain.

361 Unlike most of their neighbours the Nyakyusa show a preference for cleared and cultivated land, planted with bamboos and the [824] oil-bearing *unsyunguti* trees (*Trichillia supp.*)[1] as well as the great *umwali* (*Chorophora excelsa*) which, in their view, adds dignity to the homestead.[2] A study of the trees planted at the 'coming out' and the sacred groves in Mwaipopo's chiefdom (C 24)[3] shows that for four generations the ruling chiefs (descendants of Mwaijonga 82) have established their principal villages within a quarter of a mile of one another, and for seven generations the descendants of Mwakisambwe (30) have lived within two or three miles of one another (*vide* plan, p. 101), though there were acres of fertile land

[1] I am indebted to Mr. P. B. Nightingale, Forestry Officer, Tukuyu, for giving me the botanical names of these and other trees.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 77-8.

[3] C followed by a number is the reference number of a chiefdom as listed in the genealogies of chiefs.

[p. 88]

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Haya FN8

H 342 As indicated above, the floor is covered with grass. Various domestic utensils may be seen, stuck into thin screens of plant material.

H 342 178 But this old, beautiful type of hut is very much on the decline. It is costly to make and to keep in repair, and the thick straw roof is, admittedly, highly inflammable. A flying trip round Lake Victoria clearly shows how the straw roofs in the banana groves are being replaced by corrugated iron. This change may even have another reason, viz. the fact that fodder for cattle is in short supply and that the grass for roofs is hard to come by. No doubt, it is a question of time when the fine old Haya hut will have disappeared.

N 114 In the Southern Highlands, where I was given the opportunity to stay for three months at various Danish mission stations, I visited the village round the Rungwe mission, the neighbouring villages of Ilolo and Kikota, and some villages near the Rutenganio mission station, I made a trip to Lake Nyasa and another to the Poloto mountains. I must admit to a limited knowledge of drawing technique and of house construction, but I have measured a number of houses and sketched their plan and also the furnishings I found in them. The positioning of the various objects has been established.

N 361 [342 356] The high standard of dwellings of the Banyakyusa is truly to be wondered at. The houses, clustered in villages, often along a winding street, lie intermingled with banana and coffee bushes. The houses are large and their interior is clean. Often two or three houses belong to one family, and, if so, will be grouped round a courtyard.

N 342 Even if you could find houses built from sun-dried bricks and fired tiles, most were from bamboo with a grass roofing.

[824] All houses stand on a clay base which, though not very high, no doubt means some protection against penetration of ground moisture during the heavy rains of April–June.

N [824] Besides bamboo, sometimes the bole of tree fern, *makeke*, is used in outer walls. Such tree fern stems have not the carrying capacity of bamboo, but they are far more resistant to rot. Among the other common features of the existing types of houses, should be mentioned the mud clods, the size of rolls that from the inside are pressed between the vertical bamboo poles; also, the inner wall is rough-cast with a mixture of mud and cow manure; the floor is from tamped clay. In some places you find very fine floors in which a pattern has been rolled into the wet clay; to this end a short length of the stem of the banana cluster has been employed, viz. the length between the seats of the male and the female flowers. Also employed are another plant stem, or an empty corn cob.

N [237] [531]

N 354 595 In all houses where women live, there are one or more hearths. The presence of two hearths in one house usually means that the husband has two wives, each wife having her own hearth, either in the common house or in a house of her own.

N 342 The houses always have a kind of ceiling made from bamboo sticks and carried

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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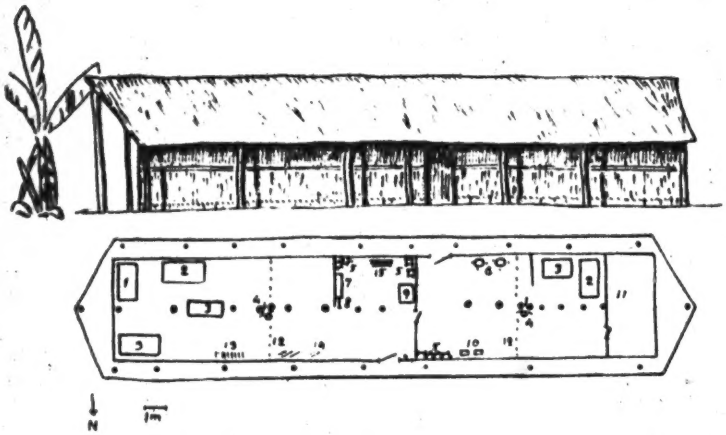

An *ikibaga* in the village of Kisondela, the district of Rutengalo, belonging to a man with two wives. The rooms have bamboo ceilings from dotted lines to either gable. Posts reaching to ridge of roof are filled in. 1, husband's bed; 2, wife's bed; 3, child's bed; 4, hearth; 5, hens' nests; 6, water jar; 7, roost; 8, ladder; 9, table; 10, stools; 11, store-room; 12, dotted lines show limitation of ceiling; 13, small objects; 14, working material; 15, sleeping mat.

born. On page 357, he reports how the boys, when 7 or 10 years old, will leave their parents' house to live in long, rectangular cowhouse-like houses big or small, in a special youngsters' quarter at the far end of the village. On page 358 he writes: In many cases you do not know for certain whether you are dealing with [343] a youngsters' house or a cowhouse—for the cattle may well be kept in these houses—or the herdsmen may sleep in the cowhouses. However, this mostly holds [184 true of the low-lying Konde country, while on the other hand, in the high country, 231] the cattle is usually kept in the dwelling houses. On pages 371 and 372, he relates how the cattle is tied to posts at night, and he shows a picture of a cowhouse.

He also refers (on page 376) to the use of the rectangular house for married men besides the boys. The difference is seen in the fact that these houses are not [462] roughcast with mud, as this work is the province of women. Finally, he reports that, during the last few years of his stay in the Konde country, he saw Konde [177] houses being built under increasing influence of the coastal culture, in imitation of the Swahili houses. They were roughcast with mud inside and out, and had a verandah supported by posts.

In 1955, many *ikabagas* could be seen. Some were for the cattle, but most were dwelling houses for married people. (Boys aged 7–10 and upwards until the [824 marriageable age lived in ramshackle boys' houses, the material of which was not 855] bamboo, but a thinner grass, resembling bamboo very much. These houses stood

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

against the wrong-doer. It is supposed that after this procedure sickness or even death may come to that person. Another method consists of laying a bewitched object on the path usually used by the offender; with the same result. Such bewitching is practised, for instance, when a quarrel has broken out between relatives. With the Nyakyusa any quarrelling with kinsmen is considered a very serious crime, as such a conduct is apt, in their estimation, to destroy the highly-valued family harmony.

3. Another day a ceremony *(ubunyago)*[6] to end mourning was held at Katumba. Some time before an older child had died, and now they were gathered to take leave of the dead[7].

At some distance from the hut, on the open space before it, a square represented the grave, in which the blossom of a banana[8] was interred, representing the dead. The mourners knelt at this grave and touched it with their elbows, knees and foreheads[9]. Each of the chief mourners had to do this, according to the belief of the Natives, lest he should fall into madness.

The next act was performed by the *unnyago*[10], the leading person of the ceremony, one in full knowledge of the rites. Immediately before the door of the hut of the mourning parents, the *unnyago* threw the collections of corn, brought by the participants in small baskets in honour of the dead, together into a big basket, and uttered the names of the contributors addressing the dead. The other participants repeated these names.

Then the mourners went into the hut; but, after some moments, they reappeared one by one and each one, as he left the door in a crouching position, was softly struck on his neck by the *unnyago* with a piece of the trunk of a banana plant. It was explained to me that this ceremony would induce new strength to the mourners, who were weakened by the death of their relative.

The portion of the ceremony which followed, consisted in the forming of a line by the mourners between the hut and the grave. The persons now stood straddle-legged on leaves of banana, the *unnyago* at the

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[6] Cf. *Wilson*, Conventions of Burial, p. 9, n. 4: nounyago.

[7] *Wilson* has described burials (*ifwa*, sg.) of adult persons; nevertheless, I think, my description will be of some value.

[8] Cf. my Chaga Notes, Bantu Studies, XV, p. 392.

[9] Cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 328.

[10] Cf. *Mackenzie*, p. 296; pl. *banyago*, p. 51; *Wilson*, Introduction, p. 287, *avanyago* (hereditary priests).

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ancestors and of Kyara[17]. At the same time he moved his curved wood 787
to and fro on the ground and when he did so, it indicated a negative [776]
answer from the beings invoked. But when he was asked: "Is the guilt for the sickness to be found in the husband of the chief's sister?", he was unable to move his wood as before; he could only stamp it on the ground, and this meant an affirmative reaction of the invoked spirits. Now, therefore, the meeting had reached its aim.

I asked the diviner to tell me how he had acquired his faculty. He 791
explained that (besides the necessary inner disposition) the payment of a fee for the medical preparation was necessary in order to become a diviner[18]. This outfit consisted in a special vaccination by a learned diviner. For this purpose the neophyte was incised by his master on [304]
different spots on the upper side of the knuckles, and in these small incisions was rubbed a medical powder. By these means the initiate may be inspired by the prophesying spirits. These influences are then felt by the diviner as a power which directs the movements of his hand in the manner described.

6. Near the hut of the chief's principal wife was a "sacred" banana 824
plant, in the grove opposite to the chief's hut and in the grove with 778
the grave of the chief's father already described. At particular times, 782
when any need demands it, the chief offers a prayer in this place to 769
his ancestors[19]. The sickness of his sister, for instance, was such an occasion for him to address the ancestors. I was invited by the chief to witness this act; but I raised objections, telling him that my presence might perhaps rather cause the anger than the help of his ancestors. [23]
In reality, I did not want the chief to stage a theatrical act on my behalf. But the chief rejected my excuses and explained that he would act in the same manner as if I were not present, because he had made up his mind to this prayer. The chief was assisted during this ceremony by Mwainyekule who presented to the chief a calabash of water as he arrived at the banana plant devoted to this purpose. The chief took some mouthfuls of the water and squirted it towards the banana plant. Then he recited the names of his ancestors and begged them to help his sister.

7. During one afternoon, I was told that a ceremony to end the 881
initiation of a (betrothed) girl was going on in a family of the village.

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[17] name of the supreme spiritual being.
[18] Cf. *Mackenzie*, p. 226.
[19] *Mackenzie* refers that such a place is named "ikiyinja", "the familiy place oft prayer" (pp. 144, 197), but without indication of the locality, as Karonga.

342 he had received this object from his ancestors and it must always hang
353 on this spot, as the ancestral spirits *(ubusyuka)*[26] themselves controlled
622 its presence. It consisted of an *unswigara*, i. e. the tail of an ox, but
778 the upper part of it was hollow. In this hollow part medicines
[775] *(ifingila)*[27] were kept. Yet another magical medicine, in the shape of a
[824] piece of bark of the tree called *Erythrophleum Guineense*[28] was fastened at the upper end of this sign. When my European attendant immediately said to the chief: "And from this piece you make your *mwafi*"[29], the chief exclaimed in astonishment: "*Umne wana Kyara!*" (You are sons of Kyara! i. e. You Europeans know everything.)

After this there was no more delay in revealing to us some more features of this sign of dignity. According to the belief of his fathers this object possessed a special *amaka* (power)[30], e. g. to defeat enemies, if the chief were to hold it directly against them. Also if a thief were
[789] to try to enter the room by force, by making a hole beneath the wall of this part of the hut, he would be stricken by power coming from the *ubusisya* and he would have the impression that eyes are directed against him, and so be driven away.

After these interesting communications I went to visit the hut of
[595] one of his wives, which still revealed the *isyenga*, the old-fashioned round structure of bamboo poles diverging from their upper end and thatched with grass[31].

241 9. The frequent walks in company with the chief or some of his
784 *amafumu* gave me several opportunities for enquiries. On one occasion,

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[26] Cf. *Wilson*, Burial, p. 9: *unsyuka* (Sing.); *Mackenzie*, p. 191: *basyuka* (Karonga).

[27] Cf. *Mackenzie*, p. 275: *ifingira* (Karonga).

[278] [28] The pharmacological substance of the bark (Cortex Erythroploëi, „Sassa-bark") is the alcaloid Erythrophleïn which produces the same typical effects on the heart as the Digitalis-group (cf. *C. G. Santesson:* Pfeilgiftstudien XII. Arkiv för Botanik 27 A, No. 4, Stockholm 1935, p. 6).

[29] Cf. *Wilson*, Land Rights, p. 32; *Merensky*, p. 134; *Fülleborn*, p. 309.

[30] *amaka* is not a specific expression for „magical" or (religious) „supernatural" power, although, from the European standpoint this meaning may be connected with the word in specific cases, but generally it means any striking expression or effect of a quality of a person or object, e. g. *upiki eki ngalimo amaka*, in this wood is power. This word is, therefore, a parallel to the Austronesian, especially Polynesian word *mana*, examined in my treatise „Mana. The term of that what is exceedingly striking". Staatliches Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde. I. Reihe. Ethnographie. Vol. 2. Leipzig. 1922. If the Nyakyusa wishes to say that a phenomenon is "supernatural", then he connects it with Kyara, or he names it directly "Kiara" (cf. *Merensky*, p. 110 [197, 218]).

[31] Cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 377, fig. 140: Schematical average of a round-hut (as also to be found with the Nyakyusa still today).

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

but I was astonished that this trap was erected relatively near to my tent on the border of the village of Katumba. 223

6. Fishing. Fishing is a much more common practice with the Nyakyusa than hunting. The old-established custom of poisoning fish in their smaller rivers is still widely used. The poison is derived from the *unkeredu* shrup. Its branches and leaves are broken off, reduced to small pieces between stones and then packed in a covering of grass to resemble a long cigar about 1 meter in length and 25 cm in width. The bundles prepared in such a manner are fixed between two rowes of stones placed across the river for this purpose. The poison gradually diffuses into the water, which takes on a green colour. The fish are soon affected by the poison and rise to the surface with gaping mouths. They are then easily caught with a scoop made from bamboo. The open end of a piece of bamboo is split into several sections and the splinters are bent apart and tied together with raffia to form a sort of funnel[1]. The fish are strung through their gills on small pliable sticks and roasted at home over a fire. All people are allowed to join in this fishing which to them is always a festive occasion in the cooler season. 226 [324] [252]

Fishing in broader and deeper rivers, such as the lower Kiwira, is done by means of large fish-traps. They are made and repaired by men on the banks of the river. The traps are attached to poles rammed into the bed and almost invariably boats trying to reach the Lake Nyassa get struck on submerged poles. These large fish-traps strung across the river form quite an impressive sight. Looking up-stream, they look like the bows of little ships standing in a row.

7. Preparing food. With the Nyakusa the preparation of food is so exclusively the task of the women, that R. Thurnwald ist quite correct when says (Black and White in East Africa, London 1935, p. 157): "Menfolk starve if there are no women to prepare their meals". There is thus a very strong division of labour between the sexes, also noticable in the carrying of loads. For a young man to carry the load of an old woman or his sweetheart, whom perchance he might meet on the road, would be a grave violation of a rigid custom. 252 462 [482]

As the preparation of the food is the women's duty, also the grinding *(ukutika)* of the corn in a mortar *(ikituli)* with a pestle *(ikitiro)* which is the exclusive task of the female sex. The wife is always the first to rise in the morning to prepare breakfast. Usually, however, this is not [264]

[1] NB. They are of the same kind as those of the Hottentots along the Great Fish River in South West Africa. [171]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

find it. There are many cases like that. My friends in the age-village will go to a diviner who will declare that the shades are angry because I do not care for my father.' If a daughter makes a runaway marriage her father is angry and it is believed that either she may not conceive or her baby may be ailing until the marriage-cattle and bull of puberty have been given by her husband and accepted by her father.

The respect and obedience due to a father is due to his heir, and in certain circumstances to his sister also; while on his part the heir has the same obligations to his juniors as the deceased had. Fibombe cited the example, already quoted, of a man quarrelling with his dead father's sister over the distribution of the marriage-cattle for his own sister, and the girl failing to conceive because of the anger of her father's sister. If a son, whose parents are dead, neglects to provide his sister with the customary gifts of food when she returns to her husband after a visit to her 'father', he may become impotent: 'Those below are angry and when he has begotten twins he will have trouble at the ritual.' Or the girl may fall ill. 'She thinks: "Who is my father? This is my father, but he does not care for me." ' The mystical power of a senior relative is linked directly with his obligation to give gifts:

My father's elder half-brother has power over me only if he has given marriage-cattle for my father or nurtured him. If he has given him cattle to marry a wife then he has power over him. . . . My superior (*mbala gwangu*) is he who gives me everything.

Favouritism in a polygynous family, shown in the unfair division of milk or meat or fish by the husband between his wives, is thought to anger the shades, which cause his cows to bleed from the udder when milked, or prevent fish entering his traps, and so do the bad temper and insulting language of a quarrelsome wife. Mwakwelebeja explained that:

If a woman is bad-tempered when she is making beer the beer goes sour. If my wife and I quarrel my shades are angry and the beer is spoiled. I say to my wife: 'You have spoiled the beer because you do not listen to what I say.'

Neglect of his wards by the heir is a wrong-doing frequently mentioned.

It is said that if I neglect my brother's children he and my father will be very angry, they will not come to meet me when I die, as the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

of hints and tokens of the goodwill or illwill of the unseen powers, and the wise man is he who profits by them where that is possible; where it is not possible, he is the wise man who quietly awaits the event, thankful that at least the misfortune does not take him at unawares, and that, if he cannot ward off the danger, he can meet it with an equanimity impossible to one upon whom the blow falls suddenly. 787

1. Weather lore is strangely absent, perhaps because in the tropics there is a regularity about the weather which renders prognostication as unnecessary as barometers. If, on a rainy evening, the crow caws on a high note, it will be hot the next day, with a cloudless sky; if on a low note the rain will continue. Another token of rain is given when the long-necked, long-legged birds, *mwankusye*, fly in a line abreast towards the lake. 787 821

2. Of bad news there are countless indications; of good news only a very few hints have come to light. Twitching of the upper eyelid indicates good fortune of some kind undefined; but if the twitching is in the lower lid, death is near, of the person whose eye twitches, or of a friend. 787 827

3. Before the settlement of the country by the Europeans, long journeys were rarely undertaken, and omens on the way were carefully watched for, and as carefully heeded when they were given. Serpents are the most trusted mediums and great significance is attached to their movements. A serpent lying on one side of the path, and slipping into the bush on that side as the travellers approach, indicates a clear 787 825

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

path. But if the serpent crosses to the other side and into the bush, the way is closed, and the travellers will return to their homes, no matter how near their destination they may be. What will happen if they continue their journey is not clear; some undefined evil will overtake them. Parties on the war-path heeded this warning, for it was an omen of defeat if they went on, which, naturally, they never did. If the snake escapes into a hole, it indicates a death at the nearest village; and if a python is seen on the road, the travellers, whose path is not closed, may expect to find the death-wail going on at the first village they come to.

A two-headed snake, whatever that may be, is a sure sign of death at the place one is going to; and two snakes fighting indicate coming evil, which can only be averted by returning to the place whence one has set out. A tree falling across a path, is another warning, which no man disregards; but the tree must fall within view of the person to whom the hint is given; trees that have fallen otherwise have no significance. But it is worth noting that natives travelling with white men pay no heed to any omens. They are protected by the power of the European, and any significance the omens may have is his affair.

4. Travellers have their tokens on the way: the people to whom they go have foretokens of their approach. If the fire "speaks," if it makes a burring noise in the flame; if the hens go about uttering low cries; if *amayogobera*, small black birds with white

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 breasts, sit on a tree near the house; if *muanjala*,
[825] little black and white birds of another species, hop
about twittering; the approach of strangers is fore-
[574] told. Hospitality to strangers is a primary virtue
among the Konde, and food is prepared at once; but
it is not cooked until they actually arrive. To offer
[576] them food already cooked, is to offer a cold welcome,
and possibly to do an injury; for cold food must not
be eaten by chiefs, nor by hunters, nor by doctors, for
in all these cases the effect would be to destroy the
power of the medicines by virtue of which they are
assured of success in their various callings.

5. Omens having reference to food are numerous,
787 and a few examples must suffice. If a fly goes into
262 one's mouth, it is a sure sign that the person will
soon be eating flesh, a rare treat for the Konde, who
seldom eat flesh, unless there is an occasion for it: a
birth, a marriage, or a death. But the fly indicates
none of these; the flesh hinted at is a pure gift with
no kind of condition attached. The same good
fortune is suggested if a child eats cinders from the
fire-place. A leopard crying all night in the neigh-
bourhood is giving information that some one has
broken a food prohibition. New season's food has
been eaten before the chief has laid an offering of the
first-fruits of that particular food-stuff at the grave
of his ancestors, and the dwellers in the underworld
are angry at the insult offered them. The chief is
informed of the crying of the leopard, and the
diviner is called in to find the culprit.

787 There is a common grass called *dinika*, which in

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 appearance is not unlike *maleni*, from which beer is made. If anyone eats this while there is abundance of proper food, it is an omen of famine to come. If the offender is a child, he is not beaten; but if he is grown up, he is mercilessly dealt with. It is not pretended that the beating averts the evil, nor has the man's action in eating the *ditika* anything to do with the coming famine, except to foretell it. If one asks, Why then is he beaten? the answer is simply that having foretold evil he deserves to be beaten. This unpalatableness of plain truth (if it is plain truth) is not unknown among other races than the Bantu.

787 224 825 6. Elephants while being hunted impart a great deal of varied information to the hunters. As elephant hunting by natives has long been prohibited, the omens afforded are no longer available, but that does not affect the belief in them. "The elephant does not lie" is an assured conviction in the minds of the hunters, and when an omen was given, the hunt was abandoned until the matter was investigated.

If, as the hunters approach, elephants are found leaping upon each other, a halt is called; both because in that condition they are specially dangerous, and because the omen is otherwise bad. There is sin among the hunters, and the whole party returns to the *fitembe*, the temporary quarters erected for the hunting period. There the case is gone into. Some one has wronged his neighbour in the manner suggested by the action of the elephants, and nothing can be done until it is put right. To go on with the hunt would be the extremest folly, and if no one

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

confesses, the party returns to the village, and the diviner is called to discover the culprit. 787 224

If two elephants are found kneeling and facing each other, some one's wife has erred in his absence, and the hunt is stopped until justice is done. An elephant taking up dust with his trunk and offering it to another, shows that some one has offered snuff to another man's wife, a most significant action, demanding immediate satisfaction. If an elephant is seen touching the teats of another, a similar action has been committed in the village, and again the hunt stops for inquiry and punishment. Trumpeting elephants are a sign of quarrelling in the village, and one plastering its face with mud is a sign of death, for the women at the death-wail cover their faces with mud or chalk. The hunters return, and do not resume until all is clear again. It is most important that not only the hunters should be free from evil, but their friends also, for evil brings them into danger, and it is the duty of all in the village to see that the natural dangers of the hunt are not increased by unnatural evil in their homes. 825

7. War was foretold by the prophets, but confirmatory signs were usually not wanting. If the horns of the new moon were of unequal length, an enemy was known to be approaching; necessarily an enemy from a distance, for the phenomenon must have been visible over a wide area. The same terror was announced by a cow bellowing at night, if there was no known cause for its outcry. This, naturally, is a thing of the past, as war, at least native war, has 787 721

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 ceased. What significance would now be attached to
721 these omens, I do not know. The buffalo, like the
[825] elephant, does not lie, and wise men heed its warnings. Many years ago a man called Masapa went to the Kinga region, where he quarrelled with the people, and barely escaped with his life. His chief, Mwaisumo, took up the quarrel, and prepared to invade the enemy's territory, undeterred by the predictions of defeat which came in dreams to his prophets, until, on the way, one of his men was killed by a buffalo, and this was a warning not to be disregarded. On their return home, they were received by their women folks, not with contempt and mocking, but as wise men, who were too wary to tempt "Providence" by foolish action. One more war omen. If a man, on the point of leaving for the field of battle, was suddenly, but accidentally, seized by the wrist by his wife, he laid down his weapons, and quietly stayed at home; not for him the joy of battle; he would have been killed, and no one thought the worse of him for heeding the omen.

781 8. Foretokens of death are so numerous that it is
763 difficult even to classify them. Whatever is rare, or unnatural, or sudden, may be taken as a warning of approaching death. A mole seen by day, is a rare event, and full of dread. A Christian living near me saw this wonder in February, 1923, and in the same month he got news of the death of a friend a hundred miles away! No connection? He thought there was. To see the *kawchi*, a small aquatic animal, is to see something so rare that its appearance must be the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 patient, they would almost certainly kill him, for it is very probable that a patient who believed that he had taken one of these by mistake or otherwise, would die of sheer fright.

•825 The *inyifwira* is a fiery flying-serpent, which lives
2-78 in pools, and turns the waters red; climbs trees, which thereupon break out into flame, but are not consumed; chases its prey for five miles, and lucky is he whose heels are light enough to escape; and finally, when dead, its body is made into the most powerful drug in the Konde Pharmacopœia. It gives authority to chiefs, and skill to doctors and diviners, and the common man who obtains possession of a tiny quantity is assured of success and riches. To tell the ordinary heathen Konde that all this is fable, is like telling very good and not necessarily unintelligent persons of a few generations ago, that there was no devil, with horns and hoofs and a tail!

Only the biggest doctors undertake to kill this monster when a fresh supply is called for. And even they, before beginning, protect themselves and their assistants with a great variety of other drugs, not so dangerous to obtain. The creature having been located in some pool or other, a small hut is built at a great distance, into which in the past a slave was put, to-day a sheep or a goat. The hut is now clayed over, and closed on all sides, the clay being thickly planted with sharp knives, and the whole sprinkled plentifully with a powdered food, of which the snake is very fond. All being ready, a swift runner is sent to the pool, a bell in his hand, the ringing of which attracts the

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

snake. It emerges from the pool, with a *hu hu* sound, and the runner flies for his life towards the hut, pursued by the snake. Attracted by the sprinkled food, it climbs all over the hut, and is cut to pieces on the knives. After a little, and usually at night, the doctor in charge goes out to reconnoitre, and, finding the dead body, sends to tell all the surrounding chiefs and big doctors; who come, protected by a powerful prophylactic, for even the dead *inyifwira* can kill the unprotected. Each chief gets a portion of the flesh, a large share going to Chungu, who in turn distributes it to his leading subordinates and doctors. The blood is collected and sold, a small portion for a cow, to smaller men, who have no natural right to it.

The dread in which this medicine (*ifingira* it is now called) is held by the common people, is extraordinary. At Karonga in 1923 a man was accused of attempting to poison another. On his person was found a small packet done up in bark-cloth, which no native in the court would touch; and when the magistrate took it into his hands and proceeded to open it, the court was cleared in an instant. Whether it was the medicine made from the *inyifwira* snake, I do not know; but it undoubtedly belonged to that class of medicines.

Illnesses may be due to natural causes, which the native calls God. They yield to treatment without any ceremony. The prayer already quoted indicates the Konde attitude to such diseases. Secondly, illness may be due to witchcraft, and then there is no hope of cure until the sorcerer has been outwitted by

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

went from Mwemusi's country down the path by Mwakalukwa's to Mwakaleli. He lived a year at Lumbila and found it too cold, and thence he went to Masoko, and thence to Lubaga. All men feared him and his animals. 599

In another version Lwembe's survival is linked with the possession of *ifingila*, the medicine on which still, today, the authority of chiefs is thought largely to depend. [773] [173]

Nkekete had much food and Mwemusi killed him because he had no *ifingila*. He killed him and he rose again. 'Why don't you die?' Mwemusi asked. Nkekete replied: 'I don't know, I have nothing, I am quite alone, I have no *ifingila*.' Mwemusi killed him again and he rose, many times. Then at last Nkekete said, 'I am tired.' And he showed Mwemusi and his men a razor (*ulwembe*) and said 'Kill me by cutting my throat with this', and they did and he stayed dead.

Mwemusi feared to kill Lwembe because he was very 'heavy'. He had *ifingila*, and when they tried to kill him they found his house full of animals, lions and others. . . . Once he turned himself into a stone when they tried to capture him. So Mwemusi told him to go far off, and he went with his two wives and two men, Kissoule and Kimonile. He went off riding on a lion like a donkey, with a lion behind his wives, and men were astonished when they saw him.

It is perhaps significant that Lwembe who survived is 'The Razor', by which Nkekete was killed, and the python from which *ifingila* medicine is made must be killed with razors and in no other way (*vide infra*, p. 60). [789] [825] [278]

It is Lwembe's capacity to make things live and grow which is always emphasized: [773]

Lwembe and another were given millet in their hands; Lwembe's sprouted, but not that of his fellow. He was told, 'You plant here and the other there.' The next day Lwembe's had sprouted, but not that of the other. He and his friend went to a hill in dry weather and wanted water. He just struck the earth and water came out. . . . He created leopards and kept them, and he moulded cattle of clay, he moulded them and they became cows, and his friends did the same and they remained clay.

When the heroes were driven out there was a fearful famine in BuKinga, for they had taken the fertility of the country with them, which is why, the priests say, sacrifices to them were begun by the Kinga. The priests of Lubaga were explicit on the point: [773] [173]

Mbasi (Lwembe 15?) came from BuKinga, he took the road to

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and Tutsi who established conquest states to the north-west.[1] 173

Whatever the origin and adventures of the heroes they were 773
important in Nyakyusa and Ngonde history because their [174]
graves became centres of religious ritual which linked together groups that were otherwise largely independent. The myths about them are the charter for chieftainship. They are depicted as benefactors who brought to uncivilized men not only the institution of chieftainship itself, but fire, cattle, iron, seed, and a creative power resident in their own bodies and those of their anointed heirs. But the myths also justify the power of commoners [778]
who first occupied the country and who have witchcraft in their [754]
bellies:

The commoners whom Lwembe found here were extraordinary. They 539
were cultivators, but they had not yet got fire, they ate their food raw. It was we chiefs, it was Lwembe, who brought fire and cattle—he came and found the original occupants without cattle; hence the commoners say, 'We are the earth'. Commoners are different from us physically, they are black; they are awe-inspiring, they are witches. Before you Europeans came the chiefs like Mwaipopo (116) were not [177]
awe-inspiring, they feared the commoners very much; the commoners hammered the chief with their fists—yes, by daylight. And if the chief [754]
cut a man's bananas that man took the chief's. If the commoners were [643]
angry with Mwaipopo they fetched Mwangomo (124 whose chiefdom adjoins Mwaipopo's) at night by their witchcraft; he came in the night with his people and seized the cattle, both those of the chief, Mwaipopo, and those of the commoners. The next day the commoners said: 'It is we, we are angry. Why do you not look after us? Why do you not kill cattle for us?' Then Mwaipopo would kill two head of cattle and all the men in the country ate. . . . Mwaipopo and his equals were not awe-inspiring long ago, it is you Europeans who have created chieftainship and awe.

[1] cf. H. H. Curson and R. W. Thornton, 'A Contribution to the Study of African Native Cattle', *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Science and Animal Industry*, vii, 2 October 1936 (Government Printer, Pretoria). An analysis of the distribution and migration of breeds in Africa. [113]

H. B. Thompson and R. Scott, *Uganda* (1935), pp. 195 ff.

Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 68: 69.

M. Merker, *Die Masai*, pp. 157 ff., 1904, Berlin.

H. H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, 1904, pp. 86, 105 (early photographs of Nyoro cattle).

The short-horn type predominates among the Nyakyusa, but some animals suggest an intermixture with Sanga cattle. The hump is regarded as a great delicacy and is exaggerated in the clay cattle which boys model. Cf. Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 72. The similarity between the ritual and symbolism of the Nyakyusa and those of the Ganda as described by Roscoe is marked. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, 1911. [231] [825] [532]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

immured in the royal enclosure—a great stockade—and jealously guarded, for any infidelity on their part was thought to make their husband ill, and with him the whole country.

When the Kyungu did fall ill he was smothered by the nobles who lived around him at Mbande, and buried in great secrecy, with a score or more of living persons—slaves—in the grave beneath him, and one or two wives and the sons of commoners above. And in the midst of all this slaughter the nobles brought a sheep to look into the grave that the dead Kyungu might be gentle (*mololo*) like the sheep!

The living Kyungu was thought to create food and rain, and his breath and the growing parts of his body—his hair and nails and the constantly replaced mucus of his nose—were believed to be magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde plain. When he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was buried 'with the breath in his body'; while portions of his hair and nails and of his nasal mucus were taken from him beforehand and buried by the nobles of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This was 'to defend the country against hunger', 'to close up the land, to keep it rich and heavy and fertile as it was when he himself lived in it'.

His death was kept secret—a relatively easy matter since he lived in seclusion—and one of the nobles (*Ngosi*) impersonated him wearing his clothes. After a month or two when the nobles had decided whom to choose as the new Kyungu, the luckless man was summoned to Mbande: 'Your father calls you.' 'Then he came with his companions and entered the house to make obeisance; they seized him and put the sacred cloth on him and set him on the stool "Kisumbi", saying, "Thou Kyungu, thou art he", and he became the Kyungu. Then they struck the drum, Mwenekelwa, and everyone knew that the Kyungu had died and another had been installed.' Men feared greatly to be seized as the Kyungu, just as they feared to be seized as the Lwembe, because the life of a divine king was short. Ngonde historians quote a number of cases of sons of the Kyungu who fled to escape being set on the stool; once they had sat on it they dared not flee lest they die.

Though[1] the early Kyungus had lived on the stony top of Mbande none of them had been buried there, for 'the ground was

[1] The following section is quoted, with additions and amendments, from Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, pp. 29 ff.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[413] replied: 'Why does he deny it? He told me once: "I have a thing
[778] which kills people!"' Then, turning to the man: 'Go and fetch it
[789] out into the light.' Mandala went and we heard that he brought
out another medicine, not the one asked for, he brought it to the
[754] headmen and Mwaipopo. Mwaipopo (who, being a chief, knew *inyifwila*) rejected the one Mandala brought saying: 'This is not it.' Then Mandala brought out another and again the chief rejected it saying: 'This is not the one we want.' Then he brought out a little bag made of bark-cloth. They sought a doctor to clear it out. All this happened in secret; we heard of it but did not see it. But in Court Mwaipopo turned Mandala out of his country 'because he had admitted that he was wicked', and Mwaipopo reminded the other chiefs in Court of a previous case of a man in Mwangomo's country who had used this medicine.

Inyifwila is made out of a python 'as thick as a man's thigh' which has been killed by crawling over razors. In Ngonde we were told:

> A certain snake they call *ngone* is killed in the hills to the west. They build a hut, closed, with a man inside ringing a cow bell and razors all over the roof. The snake comes and crawls over the roof, trying to get in and so dies. Then the doctors come to 'close it up'. When they have done so they cut it up for medicine—*inyifwila*; some is brought to Kyungu direct . . . some is taken to the doctors, and it is the doctors who give it to the chief.

A similar story was told in BuNyakyusa but they got their
[825] *inyifwila* from the Sangu and Hehe, to the north and east, not from the west, and in their account the trap was baited with a goat, not a man, and it was the blood of the python (*isota*) shed on the surrounding grass and on the trap itself which was used for medicine. To test the medicine the doctors gave a little to a
[787] chicken; if the chicken died the medicine was satisfactory; and the remains of the chicken were burnt and the ashes used as tested *inyifwila*.

'That snake is awful (*nisya fijo*), no one approaches to kill it.
[825] No! If it were speared everyone would die.' And because the python which is so terrible is thought to be linked with the rain-
[821] bow it, too, is disliked. 'We fear the rainbow very much, we say it appears when a python looks up to the sky; if we are near a river we run from it for pythons live near rivers. . . . No, we are not mistaken, it is so.' The essential quality of the python is *ubusisya* (fearfulness, majesty, dignity) and this is what is required

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and cup is because this food is sacrified to their fathers-in-law. Those who are not sons of Ngomale do not drink the sacrificial beer or eat the meat either, because they are of other lineages. A *black* cow is used in the grove because groves are always fearful and darkness falls if something improper is done. So it is said that the blackness of the cow matches the fearfulness (*ubusiya*) of the grove. 769 782 [778] [784] [825]

Besides the sacrifices at Kabale and to their more immediate ancestors, Kukwe chiefs sent offerings to the BaNgumba, earlier occupants of the country. Mwamunda explained:

My grandfather prayed in the grove which is across the river on mission land, in the forest; it was the grove of us BaNgumba; we were owners of the soil, the Kukwe chiefs found us here. If ever a chief sent my grandfather and his fellows to pray there they went with an unripe stem of bananas, and sweet milk, and unripe maize, and small sweet potatoes; then they prayed and came home again and the next day, when they went to look they found the stem of bananas had ripened, the maize had hardened, the milk was thick and the sweet potatoes large; everything which was unripe had ripened. Then they said Kyala [that is Kyala and the shades] had stood by us. . . . We spoke of Kyala even before the Europeans had come. . . .[1]

They say that very long ago we BaNgumba, we sons of Kasyapula, had not yet got fire, the chiefs brought it. It is this they commemorate in the 'coming out' ritual. We, the owners of the soil, were always here, the chiefs came and built, and when others came the firstcomers fled. They are like you Europeans who fight wars; we owners of the soil think only of hoeing. [173]

(*e*) MODERN CHANGES

It is quite clear that, though sacrifices to the heroes and at the groves of chiefs were still made while we were among the Nyakyusa (and more frequently than our friends at first admitted), the cycle was attenuated. Not only had human sacrifice probably ceased but the chiefs were reluctant to part with cattle. . . . Kasitile (86) said one day: 769 782 177

Since you [Europeans] came into the country the rituals have disappeared. Mwaipopo (116) never thinks of the rituals now. . . . It is cold and there is hunger; I went to Mwaipopo and told him to tell his

[1] According to the records of the first missionaries, sacrifices on Rungwe were to *Mbamba* but the same passage refers to *Mbamba or Kiala* meaning God. It is not clear whether the two names were equated by Kukwe informants or by the missionary himself, who was in touch with missionaries elsewhere in the district. (*Journal de l'Unité des Frères*, 1894.) I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Fueter for drawing my attention to this valuable Journal.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

commoners, and they went together to the grove of Mwangalaba, the last Kyungu (elder brother of Peter), with a white hen and sacrificed it there, and prayed saying: 783 796

Mwangalaba go thou to Mwakasungula your father and let him go to Mwangonde, and he to Mwagemo and he to Kiposa and he to Mpeta and he to Mwendemange and he to Kyabala and he to Syola and he to the Kyungu who lived at Mano and he to Ngulube (9) and Lyambilo (12). May he stand by us, may we sleep, may the rats disappear and illness also, may we sleep. Then when we had finished the invocation [I quote Mulwa] we extinguished the fires in all our houses; in the houses of the chiefs, and of Kyungu's great wife Namwilan'ombe, and of us commoners, we threw water on the ashes, but each took some ash, and a firebrand to the crossroads at Kyimbwe where we collected them all and left them to rot; there we threw away the rats saying: 'Let them fly away to Ngulube (9), let them fly away with the wind, let us sleep.' Then we ran to the pasture land to make new fire with a drill. We all took fire there in the bush, each a firebrand and lighted new fires in our own houses and in the house of the Kyungu, that is of his great wife. We arranged it with our wife Namwilan'ombe, because Kyungu had said 'Work with your husbands there'.

'Throwing away the rats' consisted in enclosing a live rat in two winnowing baskets, opening them at Kyimbwe, and flourishing them first in one direction and then in another, releasing the rat in the process. This had been specifically ordered by Bungulu, the prophetess.

(*b*) THE GROUND HORNBILL

In the country of Porokoto (49 K) there was much illness and many deaths (some, at least, from typhoid) during the dry season of 1937, and when a ground hornbill—always a bird of ill-omen among the Nyakyusa—mysteriously attacked a chicken in Syokela village, everyone was horrified. Mwamunda, a village headman, explained what had happened: [164] [165] 787 [825]

The headman of Syokela came with two men to Bwilile (senior village headman of his side) and said: 'Tell the chief that a ground hornbill has eaten a fowl at our place. We ask what this means. And also we do not sleep, we are ill.' Then Bwilile told me and we went together to the chief who said: 'I have heard, let us discuss it.' So we gathered at Nsyani's and the headman of Syokela stood up and said: 'My fathers, and friends, and children, and you chiefs, we have come to ask: have you ever before heard of a ground hornbill eating a fowl? (With an air

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for an appropriate medicine, and his main function is organizing the observances. 791 793

(d) SYMBOLISM

In the field of medicine imagination runs riot, and associations are unpredictable. The ingredients of most medicines are professional secrets and unknown to the user who takes the concoction on trust from his doctor, and inquires no further. Therefore the study of medicine is not linked to the study of social relationships in the same manner as is the study of ritual, for the symbolism of medicines is individual and free, whereas the symbolism of ritual is common and obligatory. 278 789

Nevertheless, the imagination of doctors works within the general symbolic system, and such knowledge as we have indicates that many of the associations made are similar to those used in ritual. In medicine, as in the rituals of kinship, one type of banana stands for a male, another for a female, a banana sucker represents a kinsman, a sprouting shoot conception. Smithing and coition are felt to be alike, and the molten iron that trickles out of a forge is linked with menstrual blood. Hair stands for growth, and a bald pate a devastated field. A ring, or circumambulation, implies a protecting fence. Pythons, crocodiles, leopards, and lions stand for power and majesty, spears and thorns for attack; vomiting and emptiness for innocence, spitting for forgiveness. There is colour symbolism in medicines (though we know little of it save that the *ikipiki* which stands for the blood of the lineage is red, or reddish brown), and auditory symbolism, the rumble of thunder and the groaning of a bellows being identified. Men mime that which they wish to avoid, as well as that which they desire; like things are antagonistic as well as sympathetic. No doubt a laborious study of prescriptions would reveal further general principles of association, as well as the range of individual imagination, but such a task has yet to be undertaken. [831] [326] [825] [827] [822]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

thought to be embedded in the visibly growing parts of the body of a chief, and the horrifying practice of plucking out the hair and nails of a dying man is an assertion of the value of vitality, energy, force of personality in a leader. 773 [778]

The separate origin of chiefs and people, and the reciprocity between them, are constantly emphasized. Among many primitive peoples a myth of common origin is the charter for unity, and foreign lineages are linked by some fiction to the dominant line; but among the Nyakyusa it is the *reciprocity* between cultivators and cattle-owners, between 'owners of the soil' who ate their food raw and immigrants who brought with them cattle and fire, which is the basis of unity. The chiefs (like the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers or the Voortrekkers) speak of themselves as having brought civilization to a savage land, but they acknowledge the contribution of the previous 'owners of the soil' in a way in which the white Americans and South Africans do not. Characteristically, the dichotomy of chiefs and commoners is couched in terms of descent, but in fact this is a fiction, for the younger sons of chiefs join the ranks of the commoners, and the mother of a chief is often of commoner origin. [182]

The complementary character of the economies of chiefs and commoners is matched, in belief, by a balance in mystical power. The divine kings have an innate creative power while the commoners have pythons in their bellies with which to destroy their enemies. It sounds like a myth of good and evil put about by the chiefs, but we never heard it expressed in that way even by Kasitile, who so feared and hated the commoner priests. The destructive power of the commoners can be used morally, to maintain the established order, as well as irresponsibly by witches. The constitution was a balance between chiefs and commoners, not a dictatorship. Chiefs maintain their position by feasting their men on beef, and this, the Nyakyusa think, prevents the witches from attacking; sated with meat their pythons 'lie quiet'. 778 565

Ultimate power is symbolized by the python, for though the chiefs—like English kings—are commonly associated with lions and leopards, the terror of the grove of Lubaga, and the source of the *ifingila* medicine upon which the potency of divine kings and chiefs depends is a python, like that which lies in the belly of a witch. The most fearful thing of the tropical forest (and the forests on the Livingstone escarpment and Rungwe mountain are but the remains of much greater ones) is a natural symbol for power. [825]

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done." (G. Wilson, Introduction, p. 260). 241

The putting of maize-grains as seed into the earth is the women's work, the sowing of millet *(malesi)* of both sexes. If you ask the men after they had come home from their work: "*Mukumbide ifivanya fya nongi?*", "Whose fields did you hoe?", the answer often may be: "*Tukumbide ifivanya fya tata!*" We have hoed the fields of our father. [243 462]

In former times, the Nyakyusa had a lot of ceremonies relating to the beginning of the hoeing season and of the beginning of the harvest-work. They are, however, nowadays nearly extinguished under the influence of European culture. [177]

With respect to the beginning of the hoeing season, a very comprehensive ceremony had to be carried out by the chief in community whith the *unganga* (medicine man) for providing the fields with extraordinary *(-sisya)* power *(amaka): amaka amasisya*, in this case: fertility. 241 622 [192]

When the crop was ripe, it was (at first) forbidden *(mwiko)* to take anything from the crop before the chief had given the permission. First the oldest male villagers informed the chief that it may be now the just time to give the crop free for the people, saying: "The people is hungry, we will now give them to eat!" Then the chief ordered that 6 or 8 (maize') corn-cobs were brought to him, and he sent these corn-cobs by a messenger to the (holy) offering-grove where they must be put down. After that has been correctly executed, he gave the permission for reaping the new crop. [782]

(NB. It was believed that those corn-cobs put into the offering-grove were eaten especially from the leopards. The powderes bones of the leopards were considered important ingredients of the consecration drink which the chief had to take at his initiation ceremonies and which should give him the strength *(amaka)* of a leopard, so that he also was called "the leopard" or "the leopard chief".) [237 825]

4. *Herding the Cattle and Cleansing the Stable.* The sociological importance of cattle among the Nyakyusa and the specific practice among them of herding the cattle by herdboys, that is also of highly sociological importance for the structure of the Nyakyusa society, is already described by G. Wilson (Introduction, p. 269 f). 233 233

The cleansing of the stables of which the Nyakyusa possess a great number of very well built ones, which have also sometimes a considerable length — apart from the cattle kraals —, is the task of 343 462

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

people say: '*Tukali ukunkesya unsyuka* (We have not yet bidden farewell to the shade),' *ukukesya* being the word used for bidding a courteous farewell to departing guests. Mwaisumo elaborated the point. He said: 'The death ritual is a saying good-bye, it is to see off the dead man accompanying him on his way (*ukunsindikela*); to demonstrate that we have buried him indeed, and to pray that forgetfulness may now come on us.' Another informant explained: 'Touching the earth is to say "Good-bye, friend."'

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The danger of madness was given as the reason both for the whole ritual and for many separate actions in it. 'You go mad if you do not shave after a death,' said the wife of the chief Mwaihojo. 'You go mad if you keep the hair of the corpse (*inwili sya mfimba*),' said Mwandisi, the old blind historian, and he went on: 'Yes, much madness comes from the shades if you have neglected the death ritual for a wife or for parents, and the ritual at puberty also. Madness comes from the shades and from Kyala. And if a woman refuses to perform the ritual for her husband who has died, and refuses to lie down with the heir, she also goes mad.' If someone does go mad the cause is usually said to be neglect of the death ritual or some mistake in its performance.

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Other types of illness are also attributed to neglect of the death ritual. Kasitile was ailing and thought that his illness was due partly to the fact that he had not completed the death ritual for a relative. Mwilabe said of the sweeping in the ritual: 'They sweep round their legs lest their bodies become swollen and sick. It is said that their bodies will swell if they attend the ritual of someone else and this is done and they themselves have not been swept over.' Several informants mentioned 'a lingering and painful death' (a terror often spoken of by the Nyakyusa) as the penalty for neglecting a ritual, and the last part of the ritual is expressly interpreted as a prophylactic against the 'gasping cough'.

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Finally, it is said that the crops will not flourish if the ritual is neglected. Kakuju, a village headman of Selya, was explicit on the point: 'If you do not bury your father properly the food will disappear. They (the diviners) will tell you to find something and when beer has been left overnight outside in the banana grove you pray to the shade.' The fear that the crops will not flourish is not mentioned so frequently as the danger of madness, but it is a general notion.

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The danger of madness or other illness coming on one is thought to be greatest if a man tastes the ritual food or beer, or is sprinkled

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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

764 i. *Kasitile's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. in Nyakyusa and
765 translated by him shortly afterwards.)[1]

775 KASITILE: We go to bathe wearing leaves, we throw them away, we bathe, then we come back and shave our hair. This means we are driving away the shade (*unsyuka*), for at first he is in our bodies. Our fathers told us: 'When I die I shall not reach the place of the shades unless you do the ritual for me; those who preceded me will drive me back saying: "You are not one of us, you cannot come, they have not yet done your ritual." For the shades linger on the way at first, they do not reach their place.' We do the ritual so as to tell the shade: 'We have given you everything, now go away and may your fellow shades receive you, do not come here.'

764 When we return from bathing we put a banana in the ground with
765 a pumpkin-seed and a lentil in it. We stoop and bite a piece off, and then we shave the hair. There is much idiocy (*ubulema*) if you do not
828 perform the ritual, and madness (*ikigili*), or perhaps you will have a lingering death. The shade is in the body, he causes madness (*ikigili*), he says: 'Why have you not done the ritual?' The shades pound and stamp the body.

Mwambuputa (a village headman) joining in the conversation said:

775 All this round us [with a sweeping gesture] is the place of the shades.
764 What we have buried is only the body, to prevent it stinking, but the heart (*indumbula*) stays here.

KASITILE: The banana which we bite in the ground is like the
764 sausages of porridge of the Kukwe, it is excrement, it is filth; because
765 I think that if I do not perform the ritual I may run mad and eat filth.
828 Also before this they beat up a mash of cowpeas, they take it with a spoon and put it against the wall, and one by one we come and eat. This also is eating filth so that we may escape and be clean.

[177] Madness (*ikigili*)[2] is of two kinds, one comes from Kyala (but we used to say from Mbasi, we did not say Kyala) and one from ritual. Mwaipopo (the chief) had the madness (*ikigili*); it is in his family on his mother's side. This is the madness of Mbasi, they do their rituals all right. Mbasi is he who lived with my father here. He called 'Kanjuki! Kanjuki!' from the hillside; then my mother would cook him some food
764 and my father would put something out for him.[3] When we perform
765 the rituals the shades are very pleased to see it; of old you might hear
775 them clapping their hands in the evening here, after we had finished a ritual. But they have gone away now. . . . Yes, the shades are filthy

● 826

[1] I have made minor changes in the translation.
[2] Distinguished from a trance or epileptic fit, *ukukoma amalago*.
[3] See *Communal Rituals among the Nyakyusa* (in preparation).

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 cooked it instead. One of the reasons for killing most of his sons, as we
643 have seen, was to lessen the danger of his wives committing adultery
834 with them, for adultery was a magical cause of sickness. His wives themselves were jealously guarded.

643 Then again a Kyungu might not wade across the river lest the act
784 of doing so should magically bring a deluge of rain from heaven, he
821 had always to be carried.

789 And the breath and the growing parts of a Kyungu's body—his hair and nails and the constantly replaced mucus of his nose—were
643 believed to be magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde
764 plain. When he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was
826 buried "with breath in his body"; while portions of his hair and nails and of his nasal mucus were taken from him beforehand and buried later by the nobles of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This action was believed to "close up the land, to keep it rich and heavy and fertile, as it was when he himself lived in it."

789 Now the Lwembe of Lubaga had equally magical flesh, but the other chiefs of Ngonde and the Nyakyusa had not. They could wade
622 across rivers, fall ill and be wounded without endangering their sub-
826 jects. But of all alike the breath and the hair and nails had a magical importance. Every ruling chief in both areas had his nostrils stopped by his great-commoners when nearing death, while portions of his hair and nails[1] were taken from him when living and buried after his death in a special place. The hair and nails were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops. "You see these nails of yours," said the man who explained the symbolism to us, "if you cut them do they not grow again?" (They do.) "And where does their growth come from? Does it not come from within the body?" (It does.) "Well then that is the reason, the great-commoners take power of growth from the chief in the form of his nails and hair."

789 Besides his magical body the Kyungu had a host of magical possessions. There was the iron stool *Kirumbi* on which he was set at
782 his accession; once he had sat upon it he could not flee the position or he would die. There was the drum *Mwenekelwa* whose note was believed to be heard by the most distant of the Kyungu's subjects. When it was beaten "all the little nobles from afar off would hear and obey the summons; they would all come together. Then we would tell them that so and so had not brought any ivory for a long time! Then they would come with tusks as tribute, to pay worship to the Kyungu." But sometimes the drum would refuse to sound and they would kill a

[1] We were only told about the nasal mucus in the case of the Kyungu.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 but I see them. It's taboo to speak. They must seek blood and they go
775 off; we fear them!

Question: Why do you chiefs never speak out if you are throttled?

753 Kaitile: If I speak how many would there be to name? Very many!
[689] For us it's taboo to accuse a man of witchcraft, but the commoners
[554] accuse one another. Look you, do few people keep you company?
Many!

Like us chiefs, everyone comes. It's taboo for us to speak out, we fear. Look you, when Mwambene (Mwaipopo 116) and I were alone we feared to throw out the beer, we said: 'If we throw it out will they leave?' But when Kimogota came, he said: 'All right, I will throw it
[152] out myself.' We fear the fierce great priests, the terrible witches, they are angry.[1] We shrink when they appear.

[622] The village headmen of the country call on the priests for help against us, they whisper by the fire, the priests come in their witchcraft, they call on my shades saying, 'Let us punish him', also they eat,
[793] together with the shades. Our shades never initiate anything, never; they look to the priests. But with a commoner the shade may initiate matters himself. Yes, people whisper indeed, but is that witchcraft? No! They whisper openly and ask, 'Why did you not perform the ritual?' But even although people are silent, still the shade comes
[688] saying, 'Why did you not perform the ritual? I am on the road.' He initiates the thing himself.

Question: But don't people eat meat at the ritual of a commoner?

Kaitile: Yes, and if he does not celebrate it they accuse him, but they accuse him openly.

Question: If the heir buries him with a few cattle?

688 Kaitile: If a rich commoner dies and the heir buries him with only
775 one cow, the shades are angry and the people also; their chilling
774 breath comes on his body, perhaps he falls ill himself, perhaps his child falls ill, but the people and witches do not meet together, people are angry here, and the shades there; all of them and the shades too, because he has celebrated with one cow only. People are angry because
[787] they wish to eat the meat. But the oracle says, 'The shades are angry.' It does not speak of people, it knows that people also are angry, but it speaks of the shades. And at the celebration he prays in the evening, the next day he calls people and kills a cow, and throws the sacred
[783] meat in the banana grove, saying, 'Here is your meat, father.' People say, 'Indeed he did wrong, his father was angry', but they do not confess saying, 'It was we', no, they say 'the shades' . . .

[826] We chiefs have bodies which are different, the commoners arrived
[554] first in the country, they ate raw food, we fear them saying, 'They eat raw food.' It is we who followed and brought fire. To us they confess

[1] Amipopo indoi mikalale. The noun class implies size, ferocity, and dislike.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(their witchcraft); to each other they say: 'It is your father.' Because if they confess to a fellow commoner saying, 'It is we', he says, 'You are "eating" me, drink the ordeal'. The witch is driven out. But to us they admit saying, 'It was we who were angry.' They do not fear us. Commoners are the seniors in the country; they arrived first.

It will be remembered that the commoners are spoken of as 'black people' (abatite) and that the first chiefs were 'pale' (mwele) but these words also have moral implications. 'It is said that a person "has a black heart" or "has black blood", or "is black in his face towards us" when he is thought to be a witch, eating his fellows, or when he is a thief, or a liar, or an adulterer, or dirty. Even though his body is light coloured (mwele) the word "black" (atite) is used of him metaphorically.' And mwele implies innocent, pure, as well as light in colour. The comparable symbolism of 'nigger' and 'white man' is all too familiar in Johannesburg or Charleston.

That Kasitile himself was much afraid of the commoner chiefs and was relieved by the 'speaking out' was clear, and the people of the country as a whole were glad that the ritual had been celebrated, for they expected an increase in fertility. Some days later Mwakyonde (148), came in and said, laughing, but half serious: 'Congratulations, Mwaipaja (G.W.). You have celebrated the ritual, we rejoice greatly, you give us fertility of the soil, you are a great priest.'

In some moods Kasitile was inclined to become a Christian, but he felt an obligation to the country as priest, and believed too strongly in the efficacy of the traditional rituals to abandon them. He said to G.W. one day, over a pot of beer: 'If it were not for the ritual I would get you to speak to the Europeans of the mission, and I would go with my wife Jane, and be baptised. If my son was old enough and had agreed to carry on the ritual I would do it; perhaps I will when I am old. . . . It is good to have one's heart washed clean, we are *dirty* inside. The Christians say to us: "You with your four wives each, you are all dirty, you love one and squabble with the rest." Well, it is so with me, I love Jane only; I would like to go and be baptised with her. But I fear for the ritual, I fear hunger, the hunger of the people. For I am the food of the country, I am the maker of food.'

We left Selya shortly after this and were not able to observe the effect of the ritual on political relationships in Selya. Kasitile lived another seventeen years, duly performing his functions, and in 1954 he was succeeded by his brother's son, James.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selm, Nellgunde

881 The first act of the ritual, the giving of the *undumile*[1] medicine
751 to the girl, is a symbol of sexual intercourse, and it is thought to be a prophylactic against pain in intercourse, frequent or painful periods, and injury from contact with those who are 'heavy'. 'It is given so that her belly may not be painful,' said Mwaisumo's mother, an elderly woman. Kaitile's wife explained: 'The pungent root is the penis of the husband, the cup is her vagina, the salt, also pungent, is the semen of her husband. Biting the root and eating the salt is copulation.' Mwakionde's wife gave a similar interpretation:

884 The *undumile* is put through the leaf of a bark-cloth tree, shaped into
751 a cup, and it is a sign of man and woman, the penis in the vagina. It is similar to the plantains which we give her when we wash her. The plantains are a symbol of the husband. If we do not give her the *ikipili* medicine the blood never dries up, and it is the same with the *undumile*. If it is not given she constantly has periods and is barren. Yes, some have a period twice in one month—those who have rotted. Only a few are like this, not many. . . . The *undumile* is given to the girl at once, in the month as soon as she grows up, so that she can go about without fear; otherwise, if she washes without having had it, then a heavy one may walk over her footprints, that is overstep her, and she will not bear a child, she menstruates continually.

Kaitile's wife said much the same: 'If the heavy ones have overstepped her, her body rots. The man is not sterile, but the woman is; the man's semen is fertile, but the woman has painful periods. It is the pain of periods we symbolize in the sharpness of the *undumile* and salt.'

927 The heavy ones (*abasile*), feared both during the puberty ritual
834 and by a mother with a new-born child, are those who sleep with their husbands. They include women both before and after conception. 'When the pregnancy is advanced and the husband has left off sleeping with his wife, then she is not heavy and she can keep a mother with a new-born baby company and hold the baby. A man who is sleeping with a woman is also heavy. They say: "He will overstep us."' This was the statement of Mwakionde's wife and Kaitile, questioned separately, confirmed every point. We then asked Kaitile: 'How is the heaviness (*abasile*) from lying with a man dangerous to those going through puberty and childbirth?'

Kaitile: 'Because those who are with their husbands are heavy, they are strong, their fellow the bride (*ansungu*) is empty, light in

[1] *Undumile* is derived from *ukulumile*: to bite, to be painful.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

 §27

front. See, the man ejects semen! Does it not go inside? The woman §34
becomes heavy and oversteps the bride.'

Even after she has been treated, the bride avoids any close con- §34
tact with those who are 'heavy'; in particular they are excluded §33
from her hut. Her own mother 'does not sleep with the father at all from the time the girl grows up until she goes to her husband, and begins intercourse with him. It is taboo. She says to her husband: "See, I am keeping my child company."' But the 'play' of her companions does not matter, for intercourse *inter crura* does not make anyone heavy; it is the semen of a man in a woman's belly which makes her heavy, and her husband also, through contact with her.

The second medicine used at the puberty ritual is the *ikipiki*,[1] 789
made from the bark of certain small-leafed forest trees. The same species is used by many Nyakyusa families, but the identity of the person who provides it is very important, for it is identified with the blood (*ililopa*) of the family. In the puberty-marriage ritual the groom's mother provides the *ikipiki* with which the bride washes at her husband's (if she is a senior wife), at the rite of 'putting her in' (*ukwingenia*), at the second washing with her husband, at the shaving, and at the washing before jumping over fire. The same medicine is used each time. It is also sprinkled on the bananas she eats at the *ukwingenia*. The bride's own mother, however, provides the *ikipiki* which is added to her porridge and buried under the hearth the day she first menstruates, and that used for washing her father, or brother, and mother at the *ukwingenia*. Also, should it be known that the bride is not a virgin, the mother-in-law will refuse to bring her *ikipiki* and it must be provided for each rite by her mother. The medicine is in itself awesome (*nsiya*). Kasitile's wife remarked one day that the bride slept with one of her maids in front of her, 'at her stomach', and one behind. We asked why. She replied: 'That *ikipiki* medicine! It's awesome. She 789
fears to be alone.' 'If someone has not given her the *ikipiki* to drink §41
and heavy ones cook food and give it to her she goes bad, she has periods without cessation.' 'The mother gives porridge with *ikipiki* to the girl and buries some under the hearth. That means may she be heavy in her stomach, for if heavy ones warm themselves at the fire in the house, she is in danger of going bad, she will have a continuous issue of blood.' 'If the *ikipiki* were not given, her period

[1] *Un-piki*: a tree of any species. *Ili-piki*: medicine made from the bark of certain species (one is a Mmasenda) and used in the rituals of death, puberty, and birth. [§24]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

spread and the foods and altars traditional in them continue to be used: thus Nyakyusa Christians use wheaten bread and wine from the grape, whereas their pagan neighbours use bananas and millet beer, and their altar is a table set at the east end of a consecrated building, not the earth of a banana grove. /2/

Nyakyusa ideas of physiology are those of a strongly patrilineal society, in marked contrast with those of the Bemba who are matrilineal:[1] to the Nyakyusa a woman is a 'bag' which the husband fills with his 'blood' and so creates a child, while the Bemba believe that 'blood' is passed through the woman, not the man. The taboos of pregnancy also have a patrilineal slant. A difficult labour is commonly attributed, among the Nyakyusa, to the wife's adultery, never to that of her husband, as among the Bemba. §27 /7/

Differences in ritual vary in general form with the differences in economy and structure, but there remains a relative autonomy between them. Not only do symbols spread beyond the economy within which they were coined but, as we showed earlier, poetic licence exists, and the particular associations made by priest and poet are not predictable. Ritual idioms are linked to language, but how closely we do not know. What evidence there is from Bantu Africa suggests a similarity in symbols over a wide area, connected with the similarity in language, but such a hypothesis has yet to be established. /2/

Secondly, the expression of sentiments reaffirms them. Treating food, and reproduction, and family relationships, and the community as sacred, expresses the importance of these things to the group concerned, and at the same time breeds respect for them. Treating them as important in ritual makes people feel that they are important. In Whitehead's phrase, 'the object of symbolism is the enhancement of the importance of what is symbolised'.[2] Rituals are also cathartic in that they express and explicitly reject anti-social attitudes, such as anger, terror, and the wish for death.

Thirdly, the general attitudes expressed in Nyakyusa rituals are necessary to the continuance of any society; they are conditions of social living; and the particular attitudes are necessary to the maintenance of the particular Nyakyusa structure.

Every society, if it is to survive, must value fertility in some /2/

[1] A. I. Richards, 'Some types of family structure amongst the Central Bantu' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by Radcliffe-Brown and Forde, p. 207; 'Mother-right among the Central Bantu' in *Essays Presented to C. G. Seligman*, edited by Evans-Pritchard, Firth, Malinowski, Schapera, p. 276.

[2] A. N. Whitehead, *Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effect* (1927), p. 79.

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

of hints and tokens of the goodwill or illwill of the unseen powers, and the wise man is he who profits by them where that is possible; where it is not possible, he is the wise man who quietly awaits the event, thankful that at least the misfortune does not take him at unawares, and that, if he cannot ward off the danger, he can meet it with an equanimity impossible to one upon whom the blow falls suddenly. 787

1. Weather lore is strangely absent, perhaps because in the tropics there is a regularity about the weather which renders prognostication as unnecessary as barometers. If, on a rainy evening, the crow caws on a high note, it will be hot the next day, with a cloudless sky; if on a low note the rain will continue. Another token of rain is given when the long-necked, long-legged birds, *mwanikunye*, fly in a line abreast towards the lake. 787 821

2. Of bad news there are countless indications; of good news only a very few hints have come to light. Twitching of the upper eyelid indicates good fortune of some kind undefined; but if the twitching is in the lower lid, death is near, of the person whose eye twitches, or of a friend. 787 827

3. Before the settlement of the country by the Europeans, long journeys were rarely undertaken, and omens on the way were carefully watched for, and as carefully heeded when they were given. Serpents are the most trusted mediums and great significance is attached to their movements. A serpent lying on one side of the path, and slipping into the bush on that side as the travellers approach, indicates a clear 787 825

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for an appropriate medicine, and his main function is organizing the observances. 791 793

(d) SYMBOLISM

In the field of medicine imagination runs riot, and associations are unpredictable. The ingredients of most medicines are professional secrets and unknown to the user who takes the concoction on trust from his doctor, and inquires no further. Therefore the study of medicine is not linked to the study of social relationships in the same manner as is the study of ritual, for the symbolism of medicines is individual and free, whereas the symbolism of ritual is common and obligatory. 278 789

Nevertheless, the imagination of doctors works within the general symbolic system, and such knowledge as we have indicates that many of the associations made are similar to those used in ritual. In medicine, as in the rituals of kinship, one type of banana stands for a male, another for a female, a banana sucker represents a kinsman, a sprouting shoot conception. Smithing and coition are felt to be alike, and the molten iron that trickles out of a forge is linked with menstrual blood. Hair stands for growth, and a bald pate a devastated field. A ring, or circumambulation, implies a protecting fence. Pythons, crocodiles, leopards, and lions stand for power and majesty, spears and thorns for attack; vomiting and emptiness for innocence, spitting for forgiveness. There is colour symbolism in medicines (though we know little of it save that the *ikipili* which stands for the blood of the lineage is red, or reddish brown), and auditory symbolism, the rumble of thunder and the groaning of a bellows being identified. Men mime that which they wish to avoid, as well as that which they desire; like things are antagonistic as well as sympathetic. No doubt a laborious study of prescriptions would reveal further general principles of association, as well as the range of individual imagination, but such a task has yet to be undertaken. [831] [326] [825] [827] [822]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

765 washing and the throwing away of a stem of bananas and leaves in a
768 stream, and bringing back a hen and bark-cloth; eating a mash on the hearth; the brewing of beer with the millet presented; a ritual drinking and further shaving when this is ripe; an admonition of the heir on his duties and acknowledgement of him as 'father' by the children of the deceased; sexual intercourse between the heir and the widows he inherits; the burial by each inherited woman of some of the fluids from that intercourse in her father's banana grove, and a ritual drinking of beer with her father and other close relatives.

If the deceased is a woman her brother comes to cut her husband's banana grove and seize her children, as a sign that kinship between the lineages has ceased, but he is dissuaded with gifts, and treats his sister's children with medicines. A sister is sent to replace the dead woman, the widower has intercourse with her at 'the shaving of the sprouting hair', and she returns home to bury some of the fluids in her father's grove, and drink beer with him ritually.

An account of one of the rituals which we attended in Selya which is quoted in the documents (p. 234) may give some reality to this stark outline.

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

765. When asked why the ritual of death is performed the first reply
764 of Nyakyusa informants was that they were driving away (*ukukaga*)
●828 the dead and that if it were neglected those for whom it should have been performed would go mad (*ukubopa ikigili*). Angombwike explained: 'In the death ritual they drive away the shade (*unsyuka*) saying: "Why are you always at me, nagging at me, in dreams?" It is to swear at him (the shade) and drive him away.'

Another informant explained: 'The touching of the earth is the expression of the wish that he will not come into our dreams and thoughts any more, and he does not!' Another confirmed this saying: 'The powdered medicine and touching the earth are alike;
765 they wish to stop him (the deceased) coming into our dreams.'
764 And an Ndali informant said: 'Shaving is to get rid of the shade
775 which was on their bodies.'

There is also the implication of speeding the deceased on his way to the land of the shades, for it is believed that if the ritual is not performed he will not be welcomed by his dead kinsmen and will continue to haunt the living. Of an unfinished death ritual

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

people say: '*Tukali ukunkesya unsyuka* (We have not yet bidden farewell to the shade),' *ukukesya* being the word used for bidding a courteous farewell to departing guests. Mwaisumo elaborated the point. He said: 'The death ritual is a saying good-bye, it is to see off the dead man accompanying him on his way (*ukunsindikela*); to demonstrate that we have buried him indeed, and to pray that forgetfulness may now come on us.' Another informant explained: 'Touching the earth is to say "Good-bye, friend." '

The danger of madness was given as the reason both for the whole ritual and for many separate actions in it. 'You go mad if you do not shave after a death,' said the wife of the chief Mwaihojo. 'You go mad if you keep the hair of the corpse (*inwili sya mfimba*),' said Mwandisi, the old blind historian, and he went on: 'Yes, much madness comes from the shades if you have neglected the death ritual for a wife or for parents, and the ritual at puberty also. Madness comes from the shades and from Kyala. And if a woman refuses to perform the ritual for her husband who has died, and refuses to lie down with the heir, she also goes mad.' If someone does go mad the cause is usually said to be neglect of the death ritual or some mistake in its performance.

Other types of illness are also attributed to neglect of the death ritual. Kasitile was ailing and thought that his illness was due partly to the fact that he had not completed the death ritual for a relative. Mwilabe said of the sweeping in the ritual: 'They sweep round their legs lest their bodies become swollen and sick. It is said that their bodies will swell if they attend the ritual of someone else and this is done and they themselves have not been swept over.' Several informants mentioned 'a lingering and painful death' (a terror often spoken of by the Nyakyusa) as the penalty for neglecting a ritual, and the last part of the ritual is expressly interpreted as a prophylactic against the 'gasping cough'.

Finally, it is said that the crops will not flourish if the ritual is neglected. Kakuju, a village headman of Selya, was explicit on the point: 'If you do not bury your father properly the food will disappear. They (the diviners) will tell you to find something and when beer has been left overnight outside in the banana grove you pray to the shade.' The fear that the crops will not flourish is not mentioned so frequently as the danger of madness, but it is a general notion.

The danger of madness or other illness coming on one is thought to be greatest if a man tastes the ritual food or beer, or is sprinkled

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764 by the dust, at some other funeral without having completed the
765 ritual for his own parents, and the danger of the 'gasping cough'
●828 exists only when a widow, having lain with the heir, eats or drinks with her own relatives.

796 Everyone knows the connection between madness and the performance of the whole ritual and between coughing and the final act, but not everyone is conscious of the symbolism of the various events. For example, Mwakisisile, a middle-aged pagan man whom we knew well, could not interpret the details of the symbolism and he explained: 'Some ask about these things in the ritual, some do not ask. I have not asked. We only know, many of us, that in the ritual we drive the shade, who is here, away from the body, and that if we do not drive him away we run mad. But we do not understand the details of the ritual such as straining water through a leaf, or passing the baskets between the legs, so as to be able to say: "This detail means this." ' Those most conscious of the symbolism are the *abanyago*, the officiants at the family rituals and the priests of the communal rituals. Kasitile, the hereditary rain-maker of Selya, who was a close friend of Godfrey Wilson's, and formally presented him to his dead ancestors urging them 'not to be startled at a white face', was our foremost authority on the symbolism of the Selya ritual. He was more conscious of the symbolism than most people, but his interpretation was confirmed at almost every point by others. Kasitile was not paid for
[124] information—none of our informants was—but he and Godfrey Wilson exchanged gifts from time to time in the manner customary among the Nyakyusa, and he often had a meal with us. Mwandisi, a very old blind chief living on the Lake-shore plain (MuNgonde) who was regarded by the Nyakyusa themselves as an authority on history and custom, was also a friend prepared to expound the
[184] rituals. His interpretation contradicted Kasitile's on one point only—he denied that one purpose of the ritual was to bring back the shade into the house. Other informants, though less coherent, corroborated Kasitile's interpretation, which may therefore be taken as a general, not a personal one.

764 There are nine main themes in the ritual: first, the driving away
765 of the dead from the dreams of his close kinsmen, and measures to
796 prevent him 'brooding over them' (*ukobatela*)—the word is that used of a hen brooding over her chickens. Widows, in particular, must be separated from the shade of their husband before the heir (or any other man) dare have intercourse with them. Secondly, the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

764 i. *Kasitile's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. in Nyakyusa and
765 translated by him shortly afterwards.)[1]
775

KASITILE: We go to bathe wearing leaves, we throw them away, we bathe, then we come back and shave our hair. This means we are driving away the shade (*unsyuka*), for at first he is in our bodies. Our fathers told us: 'When I die I shall not reach the place of the shades unless you do the ritual for me; those who preceded me will drive me back saying: "You are not one of us, you cannot come, they have not yet done your ritual." For the shades linger on the way at first, they do not reach their place.' We do the ritual so as to tell the shade: 'We have given you everything, now go away and may your fellow shades receive you, do not come here.'

764 When we return from bathing we put a banana in the ground with
765 a pumpkin-seed and a lentil in it. We stoop and bite a piece off, and then we shave the hair. There is much idiocy (*ubulema*) if you do not
●828 perform the ritual, and madness (*ikigili*), or perhaps you will have a lingering death. The shade is in the body, he causes madness (*ikigili*), he says: 'Why have you not done the ritual?' The shades pound and stamp the body.

Mwambuputa (a village headman) joining in the conversation said:

775 All this round us [with a sweeping gesture] is the place of the shades.
764 What we have buried is only the body, to prevent it stinking, but the heart (*indumbula*) stays here.

KASITILE: The banana which we bite in the ground is like the
764 sausages of porridge of the Kukwe, it is excrement, it is filth; because
765 I think that if I do not perform the ritual I may run mad and eat filth.
828 Also before this they beat up a mash of cowpeas, they take it with a spoon and put it against the wall, and one by one we come and eat. This also is eating filth so that we may escape and be clean.

[177] Madness (*ikigili*)[2] is of two kinds, one comes from Kyala (but we used to say from Mbasi, we did not say Kyala) and one from ritual. Mwaipopo (the chief) had the madness (*ikigili*); it is in his family on his mother's side. This is the madness of Mbasi, they do their rituals all right. Mbasi is he who lived with my father here. He called 'Kanjuki! Kanjuki!' from the hillside; then my mother would cook him some food and my father would put something out for him.[3] When we perform
764 the rituals the shades are very pleased to see it; of old you might hear
765 them clapping their hands in the evening here, after we had finished a
775 ritual. But they have gone away now. . . . Yes, the shades are filthy
828

[1] I have made minor changes in the translation.
[2] Distinguished from a trance or epileptic fit, *ukukoma amalage*.
[3] See *Communal Rituals among the Nyakyusa* (in preparation).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

(*banyali*), they are in the body at first, they shake it and you fall ill; 764
they say: 'You are still muddy, you have not done the ritual.' . . . 765
When a man dies his heart (*indumbula*) and his body (*umfimba*) separate, 775
they are divorced, the heart with the blood (*ililopa*) and the shadow 828
(*ilisyungulu*) are separated from the corpse which rots in the ground.
The corpse is filth, it is excrement. And so when a madman, for whom
they have not performed the ritual, eats filth, that is the corpse, he is
still holding it, they have not done the ritual for him. If they have not
done the ritual for the shade his fellows drive him back and say: 'You
cannot come yet, you are still muddy, they have not bathe you in the
river.' . . .

Yes, that which they do to my body, to me the heir (or the relative)
they do to the shade himself. He, the corpse, is earthy, muddy. That is
why we smear ourselves with mud, we mourners; it is this earth that
we drive away in the ritual, it is mud, it is the corpse. . . .

The hair of the mourners which we shave in the ritual is one with
the hair of the corpse, it is his. We wash and shave and anoint him and
he goes to his own place. . . .

First we bite the banana with the seeds stuck into it in the ground,
and then we eat bananas and seeds in the usual way. It is the food
which he, the shade, ate. . . .

They seize the heir and widows at the pumpkin-seed ritual. The
officiant is there, she smears ashes on their chests and puts a strand of
ilingolongofwa creeper on their necks, then if the woman refuses the man [837
later there is a case and she must pay the fine for adultery. If she 681]
refuses before this there is no case, and she does not pay. The ashes and
creeper are signs of death, of mourning, of the corpse—they cast them
away into the river.

QUESTION: The rubbing in earth—what does it represent?

KASITILE: The banana flower is the corpse. We are saying to him:
'You corpse, we have finished with you, do not come here again, it is
finished for ever, do not look towards us, go away.' This earth is the
same as the mud with which we smear ourselves at the burial. We bathe,
we cast it away.

QUESTION: The washing at the door with medicine?

KASITILE: We wash with powdered medicine at the door because we
are just going to take filth (*indafu*) in our hands—to take the bananas
and pumpkin-seeds. We bathe, we wash, and then they give us the
bananas. It is taboo (*musiko*) to eat before washing. The calabash used
for this washing is hung up in the porch and used for the beer later, the
beer which they drink on the path after anointing themselves.

QUESTION: The bananas and lentils and pumpkin-seeds?

KASITILE: At the eating of bananas and pumpkin-seeds we do not
separate them, everything is then pressed together in one place; but
the banana flower we bury is separate, that is the corpse. And at the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764 water when we bathe we make a separation—they take a stem of
765 bananas, and a bark-cloth, and a hen to the water. The bananas they
775 throw away—that is the corpse; the hen and the bark-cloth they bring
● 828 back to the homestead and the officiant takes them home with her—that is the shade, is not the shade in the house with us? Do we not pray to him?

QUESTION: Putting food into the pot?

KASITILE: This food is the filth of the body. We say: 'We cast you from us, let our hearts be purified; the mud we smeared on our faces we cast it away, all our body casts you away. We are not corpses; we are putting you to rights and shaving your hair, go away to your fellows.' We begin to get rid of the earth we had on our faces so that we may anoint ourselves again. In our lineage we eat only bean mash, not bananas and millet porridge, we differ in our rituals.

QUESTION: The sweeping of rubbish on to legs and the weeping?

KASITILE: This means: 'We begin to cast you off wholly, let all the ritual that is left come to us, we throw it away.' The measures of millet are to tell the shade that So-and-so has brought millet and is doing his ritual. 'Do not think he is angry with you,' we tell him, 'he has brought this millet.' The throwing of millet from the winnowing basket on to the participants' heads as they stand in a line outside means that we cast him away, we are taking him to the river—at the river we throw away the corpse. They throw away the leaves and the stem of bananas.

QUESTION: Hitting the heads with a banana sapling in the doorway?

KASITILE: They hit the participants on the head, that is the *ndweka* disease of the dead man,[1] we are setting them to rights.

QUESTION: The stem of bananas, hen, and bark-cloth?

KASITILE: The stem of bananas is the corpse, they leave it in the water with the leaves; the bark-cloth and hen are the shade which they bring into the house.

QUESTION: The circling with the pot and putting in of food?

KASITILE: This is the shade whom they bring into the house (*bikumbeka*) when they have brought him from the water. The banana flower they bury is the same as the leaf they wear, it is the corpse which they throw away in the water.

Yes, we separate the corpse and the shade with all our might, the earth we rub our bodies in is the corpse, we throw it into the water and the shade we bring back to the house. The eating of the bean mash on
[177] the wall (the old custom) and on the hearth (both old and contemporary) that is the shade in the house. He warms himself by the fire in the house, we pray to him. Putting food into the pot means: 'Leave our

[1] Not clear to me.—M. W.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

bodies altogether, go away to your friends, sit here by the hearth and warm yourself.' 764

QUESTION: The grinding of millet flour on to bark and the subsequent anointing of the participants with this flour in a paste, before shaving? 765 775 828

KASITILE: This means: 'This is your food that you ate, we give it to you.' And the smearing on the hair means: 'We have finished your ritual for you, we have left nothing out, bear us no grudge.'

QUESTION: The sweeping of rubbish (*imindu*) on to the participants' legs?

KASITILE: The rubbish is the rubbish of death, it is dirt. 'Let it come now,' we say. 'Let it not come later, may we never run mad.' The wailing (during sweeping) means: 'Go away, farewell!' We have finished the burial now, it will never be done again save once more at the beer.

QUESTION: The basket of millet between legs and over heads?

KASITILE: That is to drive him away, to tell him: 'Do not return to these your relatives here, you were in their bodies, now you are separate, we have driven you away, you are no relative of ours!' All that we do in the house there means that he is in our bodies and we are going to cast him out. The flour on the shoulder is like the flour paste in the hair, this is the corpse, we throw it away.

QUESTION: The song 'We are startled by the shade' (*Tunyomwike ilindu*)?

KASITILE: The *ilindu* is the shade, we are startled.

QUESTION: How startled?

KASITILE: Ha! Are you not startled when you run mad?[1] The heart is terribly startled, it curls upwards; when they say this phrase: 'We are startled by the *ilindu*' they quiet the heart and make it lie down again. Let him go away and be startled with his fellows!

QUESTION: The word *ilinwanwa* (the croaking bird)?

KASITILE: That is the shade that broods on the body. 'Friend,' we say to him, 'we have put you to rights, do not come to us, oh croaking bird.'

QUESTION: The ritual as a whole?

KASITILE: It means: 'We have given you everything, we have eaten filth on the hearth'—for if one runs mad one eats filth, faeces. . . .

QUESTION: What is the symbolism of pouring water on the thatch and running through the drops?

KASITILE: The ritual has many parts. We teach a person that he should do it properly and not leave out anything. Do we not fear (*ukutila*) the water for washing, the water of the corpse? When heavy rain falls do we not flee from the downpour and enter the house? That is how it is then. We mimic what he did when he was alive. . . .

[1] *Ukunyomoka ilindu* is used also for an epileptic fit.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764 *ifi fikusoka kukyeni nunyambala bo basyuka, bo baputile abasyuka tukubakaga: lenga tukanyagwila tukubopa ikigili! Abasyuka bo bakasokaga bikujamo; papo lenga tumalile po basokile munda. Loli bikwandesya kangi tukuja nabo bwila!*)

842 What we do comes from the shades and from Kyala himself. The
831 blood is theirs and his together. Those who create (*ukubumba*) a child say: 'I am just eating at a woman,' but Kyala creates a child! If Kyala and the shades do not 'cook' [i.e. do not cause desire] you will do nothing, the penis is flaccid, but if Kyala has 'cooked' then you really do something, your heart (*indumbula*) is full of desire. Always the shades are there and we drive them away, they are there and we drive them away. . . .

775 A shade is resurrected in the body of his child (*Unsyuka ikusyuka itolo mumbeli gwa mwanake*). . . .

764 Passing the basket of pumpkin-seeds, millet, and lentils between the
775 legs and on to the head and throwing to one side means: 'Here between the legs there is work, may they go out in intercourse, and from the head where we dream, may they go out also.' Because in the ritual we say: 'Let them come into the body' at first, then we drive them away. Rubbing ourselves in the earth and passing millet between the legs means: 'May they come';[1] throwing millet and so on to one side it is to drive them away, that they may go out.

QUESTION: Which shade do you drive away?

MWANDISI: He who has just died, we drive him away.

QUESTION: What about the first ancestor?

MWANDISI: He is there at their place [the place of the shades], we drove him away long ago, he just receives him [the newly deceased].

QUESTION: Why the pumpkin-seeds in the bananas?

MWANDISI: It is the semen (*ulukungu*) for begetting children. . . .

QUESTION: Do the shades always come when a man dies?

MWANDISI: Yes, they always come, they receive their fellow. Yes, even though he has died from sorcery they come and receive him, and even though he has died from witchcraft they come, the shades receive him, and if it is from illness he has died they also come. There is no
[761] death without the shades, they always come to receive their fellow.

When the witches have 'eaten' someone the shades come to receive
764 him. No, the witches eat him alone, but the shades receive him. Some-
775 one may get up in the morning and say: 'I dreamed they ate me and I
763 was with the shades!' Then he is about to die. Sometimes someone
● 828 dreams and says: 'In the night I was in the land of the shades with so-and-so, I left him there, I escaped myself and came home.' Then his friend is about to die.

764 If you do not perform the ritual you go mad (*kukyembela ikigili*) or
775 perhaps you get very thin, and are unable to die, you are ailing and do

[1] i.e. the participants identify themselves with the deceased.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

764
not die. That comes from the shades when they are angry and say: 775
'We shall see!' It is to be finished off.

QUESTION: So the shades always come at death?

MWANDISI: Yes. See, Mwafyuma who died [the old Mwafyuma, a 764
classificatory brother of Mwandisi, died the day before yesterday]. I 775
dreamed at night of Mwakalukwa [a classificatory son of Mwandisi 828
who died about 1932] and in the morning I told X here [his son-in-law who lives near was sitting with us and at once assented, 'Yes, he told me'] that I had dreamed of Mwakalukwa, and there were many deaths in the country—the people of Kisale were mourning and the peopleof Ndemba and that Mwakalukwa had said to me: 'Where are we dead to care for those who come?' And I said to X: 'If someone comes from Mwaya you will see that someone has died.' That very day my son here [Pugana his son was sitting near] came and said: 'Mwafyuma has died.'

This dream of Mwandisi's was cited as a proof that the shades come to receive a man at death. They came to Mwandisi in a dream—the shade of Mwakalukwa came, which he took to mean that the death was to be in Mwakalukwa's country, not Mwakalinga's.

QUESTION: You said the shades come to receive a man killed by 764
witches. Have they no power to drive away witches? 775

MWANDISI: No, the shades have not the power to drive away the 754
witches but Kyala drives them away.

QUESTION: Kyala? You mean the headman of the village!

MWANDISI: Yes, the headman drives them off, Kyala gave him the power (or duty).

iii. *Evidence of other informants*

KISSOULE: We begin by burying the flowering head of an *ilitoki* 764
banana—that is a person—then we rub forehead, elbow, and knee in the earth there and go to bathe. We push away the earth, that means our business above here (in the world of the living) is finished, we have really buried you, do not come here above, go to your place (below), in the world of the shades.

MWAILAPE (a Christian): They throw the stem of bananas into the water and the bark and feathers, but if it is a fowl and the bark is good, they take them back and they belong to the officiant. Throwing away the stem of bananas means: 'We are driving you (the shade) away. Be off!' The millet which is tossed in the faces of the participants is also thrown away in the water. Tossing it in their faces means: 'This is your food which you cultivated, go away with it.'

MWAKHIHILE AND OTHERS: The touching of the ground is the ex-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

764 QUESTION: What are the stones in the clefts of hands and toes?
773 MWASALEMBA: Kyala when he created men said: 'At the death ritual do this, it is the shade, it is the body.'

775 Mwasalemba went on to discuss the puberty ritual and attributed sexual desire and diarrhœa to the shades. He explained that faeces (which are buried) 'go below to the land of the shades' (*vide* p. 127; 210 ff.).

764 SYUNGU: If we leave out something a child runs off to Mwibonde
[158] [wild pasture-land] and catches hold of that which is bad and pants with madness (*ikigili*). Some go to Mwibonde and gather faggots and put them on their heads then throw them away again.

QUESTION: How is it that people ever omit a ritual?

SYUNGU: Some omit some of it. They make mistakes out of ignorance.

QUESTION: But do any omit it altogether?

[184] SYUNGU: No, only the Christians. No pagan neglects it altogether.

QUESTION: But those who have run away and are not there (e.g. women who have eloped with lovers)?

SYUNGU: Yes, indeed, it is they who neglect it, but those who are at home perform the ritual.

QUESTION: How about stealing the banana bunch?

SYUNGU: Yes, we steal it, but we tell the owner beforehand, and when we eat the mash we mix the stolen with the home-grown, that which is stolen is always a plantain and that from home is a sweet banana. The plantain is the man's and the sweet banana the woman's. And when we bathe we wear a plantain leaf, which has been stolen, in front, and a sweet banana leaf, which comes from home, behind.

MWASALEMBA:[1] The girl brought the spear of her husband and stuck it in the ground. At the end Losi (my eldest son and her full brother) pulled it up and it will always be on my wall. The spear is an essential part of the ritual; without it the ritual would go wrong. If she came with no spear we should send her back again to fetch one.

764 We drink the medicine because, when our son-in-law has died and
587 our daughter lies with another who has not been our son-in-law before, if she comes and gives us food with the filth (*indafu*) on her then we gasp and cough with *ingotolo*. It is quite different if she runs away from her husband when he is alive. Then we drink no medicine. Yes, then she comes, with *indafu* on her, and gives us food and nothing happens.
● [828] I don't know why. Kyala made us black people like this. It is when her husband dies that we drink. We drink as soon as she lies with her new husband, not after she becomes pregnant. If we see that she is pregnant before she comes we are angry. She should come first to the ritual and then conceive. She does not wait until her periods stop before coming

[1] Referring to the *ingotolo* ritual for his daughter described on p. 66.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

764 QUESTION: Why the leaves and bananas?

KAKUNE: If you do not wear these and throw them away your own children [i.e. children of the participant] will die soon after birth; you beget a daughter and she dies, a son and he dies, then people say: 'See, you did not perform the ritual.' . . .

QUESTION: What is the meaning of the death ritual?

KAKUNE: Because the deceased has died on us (*atufwelile mumbeli*), if we do not treat him, he looks on us, we are together with him, he does not move away at all, so then, we drive him off.

He then described the acts of the ritual in great detail exactly checking what Mwaikambo and I saw when Kalata's mother died (cf. pp. 238–44) except that he did not mention grinding ointment [184] at the circling round. I asked about this and he thought it was not done in his lineage but was not sure.

QUESTION: The stones between the toes?

KAKUNE: It is to make a separation, it is our separation, we are driving him off; we go into the water with pebbles and throw them away, they are the deceased, we drive him off.

QUESTION: And what about running through the house letting the water drip on you after bathing?

KAKUNE: Yes, indeed, we come from the stream carrying water which we have drawn, and flowers in our hands, and we throw the flowers on the thatch.

QUESTION: What does it mean?

764 775 KAKUNE: It is because we have come from the stream, we have driven him away in the stream, but we bring back water we have drawn and flowers—they are the deceased. It means we are with him for he has not moved (*akasama*); let us drive him out again. We throw away the flowers on the thatch and we pour water on the thatch and it trickles down on the body. It is he [the deceased] whom we receive. If we drive him away altogether at the water what will he say to us?

QUESTION: You receive him and drive him off again?

KAKUNE: We drive him off so that his whole body should not be [208] seen, because we fear to see the dead . . . and at the same time we do *not* drive him away, he will come in dreams to tell us of misdeeds (*akutabula isongwe*).

When we receive him we drive him away again at the anointing with ointment. The doctor anoints us on the toe, knee, elbow, stomach, and forehead, and says: 'I have finished them, anoint yourselves.' Then we anoint ourselves and say: 'You have moved to another village.' But at the same time we do not throw him away altogether, we pray to him

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

new husband has not been sleeping with her], then at first, before she 764
lies with him, we (her relatives) eat with her. But when the child leaves 587
the breast and her husband begets another then she comes to perform the ritual. Otherwise we cannot eat with her. And so with a pregnant widow—at first we eat with her but when the child is born and has been weaned and her new husband begets another she comes to perform the ritual.

The new husband must send a bull or a sheep with his spear, and we who drink the beer divide the meat, saying: 'Thank you, you have nourished us.' Yesterday he sent 30s., and I, the doctor, got 1s. If it had been a bull I would have got some meat. The husband does not come himself, but he sends a friend to bring the woman. This friend does not eat or drink the medicine, but he drinks the beer without medicine and the cassava we cook. [In the ritual just completed] Mwasalemba provided three pots of beer—we drank one before and two after the ceremony. That was what the men were waiting for.

No, it never happens that one who has drunk the medicine of 764
ingotolo falls sick of it afterwards, never. 753

The spear is taken and kept by the girl's brother at the command of 587
her father, who says: 'Take this spear, your sister has brought it.' It is 602
a symbol (*ikimanyilo*) of kinship, it is like the spear with which a girl was betrothed in the old days. At the betrothal the lover would stick the spear in the ground, the girl pulled it up and took it to her father, sticking it into the ground before him, and he, if he agreed, told her brother to take it up. And if there is any dispute later about cattle then the spear is proof of agreement. It has the same significance at betrothal and at the *ingotolo* ritual. Sometimes the heir has to bring cattle that have not yet been paid by the dead man. When the woman's brother takes the spear into the house at the *ingotolo* ritual, that means: 'Now you[1] have entered into the house—your house—so we bring you in.' And then she can go in.

The calling out of 'Thief' is a custom in the ritual, but it is like a 764
song, it's not important. The firewood is shown to the woman and a bean and a grain of maize are put into a crack of the wood. That means that the ritual is complete.

No, there is no extra safety in coming to the ceremony; those who drink at home are equally protected!

iii. *Evidence of other informants*

CURRENT TALK: Some people have been told by those who have run 158
mad, that they see a man who comes to them sometimes. When that 828
man is with them then they lose the sense of what they are doing. The

[1] It was not clear from the context whether 'you' referred to groom or bride. The symbolism suggests the act of marriage but of this we have no direct evidence.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

158 man tells them 'Go there', and then the victim goes; perhaps he says
● 228 'Run', and then he runs where he is told. Some say that smoke comes out of the ground, rises, and goes to the bush, and that they run to the bush where the smoke ended. They say that the smoke rises from the ground and goes with great speed to the place at which it comes to an end.

And those who run mad say: 'When you fellows catch hold of me and I overcome you though you are many, it is not that I fight alone by myself with my own strength, but there are four men with me who help me. And when you tie me up they help me to loose the rope.'

MWAIKAMBO: A boy of my own age ran mad; when he recovered he told us some of what he had seen in his madness (*mandepo gwako gw bigili*). He said he had seen lots of black cows, all entering the ground, going one by one into a hole; and that he had thereupon become unconscious and run wildly about.

A Christian told me that he had a relative (a non-Christian) who ran mad and who constantly told them how the fit started in him. He said that it was when he saw in the spirit (*mandepo gwako*) a very old person wearing ragged clothes, then he ran mad. The Christian who told me this added that he thought himself that perhaps it was Satan that his kinsman saw.

[24] Those who run mad eat filthy things—mud, cowdung, human faeces, all kinds of frogs and so on. When you ask them about this they say they do not know what they are doing. And they often run about naked.

MWAKANELA AND MWALIPOKA (two old men).

Madness takes two forms: one comes from Kyala, one from the ritual. When a man has the madness from Kyala his actions are filthy. He eats filthy things without discrimination, he loses his own sense of humanity and the sense of his friends' humanity also, he loses the sense of his own actions. This is one way of telling that a man has the madness from Kyala. Another way is this: they catch the madman and go to a doctor to treat him with medicines; well, when the doctor gives him the emetic the patient vomits butterflies. When they have made him vomit and given him another medicine too he either recovers altogether or perhaps he goes mad again later. But even if he recovers, his body is different from that of other men, and when he is angry his heart seems to be full of madness again. The madness of Kyala is the most serious.

The madness of ritual is the less serious kind; people who have it do not act in a filthy way. Their madness is like a passionate anger (*ilyaje*), that is all. When you catch such a man and take him to a doctor for the emetic we find no butterflies in the vomit. Again, if he has taken the medicine and recovered, his body is perfectly healthy and it seems as

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F7617 Ngonde F7617
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

if he never was mad at all; not like those with the madness of Kyala, their bodies are changed i.e. the internal state of the body, the heart. |58 ¶23

Another way of diagnosing the madness of ritual is this: people catch it from the food of other people's ritual; if a man who has not completed the ritual of his family [who has not been through the ritual at the deaths of both his father and his mother] eats the ritual food of another family, then madness falls on him or on his children, and the victim speaks like an idiot.

Then if the man's children die the doctors see signs of the madness of ritual; it may be due to infection from other people's ritual food or from omitting the ritual of their own family. They give the surviving children medicines to drink which look towards the ritual and also they begin to perform the ritual.

The actions of those with the madness of Kyala are these: they eat filth, run about unconscious of what they are doing, and speak foolish things. In their mad state (*mendepo yako*) they tell us that they lose the sense of being people and of the humanity of others also. If it is madness of ritual, the cure is to perform the ritual and also to give them the medicine of the ritual. If it is of Kyala, to give them the medicine of madness.

Ambwenja (a doctor): Madness (*digili*) is of two sorts: one comes from Kyala and one from ritual. The symptoms are alike; all eat filth and throw off their clothes. But when a patient is brought to a doctor, he knows, when he has made him vomit, whether they have neglected a ritual or not.

Mwambwiza: Madness is of two sorts: one comes from we know not where, the other from the ritual. When a man has the first sort he throws off his clothes and eats filth; but the sort which comes from the ritual does not make him eat filth and he does not throw off his clothes; but he just talks nonsense.

Amwambwiza: There are two sorts of madness: one is from Kyala, in which no one eats filth, they just run about wildly; and the other from the ritual, in which all eat faeces and filth.

Umwanza ano na Wiza, Jesula (Christian): In the state of madness the man's head seems to himself to be empty. When he sits or stands there is a giddy whirling before his eyes; he seems to see people and they speak with him and then, when he answers them, we others think he is talking to himself. Sometimes these people seem to be a long way off, then they call out his name, he answers, and then he begins to be mad.

Mad people see a man, very terrible, and when he comes to them they flee from him. They say he is Mlimi. This about Mlimi and about the empty head and giddiness is common report; we heard it from no particular madman.

Another way of knowing the madness of ritual is this: If a man runs

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

and fashions earth with his fingers, tying some up in leaves and rolling some up between his palms, if he does things which they do in the ritual, then they perform the whole ritual. Saga, Jonale's grandmother, did these things, but then they began to perform the ritual and at once she recovered. She just talked to herself and went on moulding earth. She could not throw her clothes away for she was sick, her death was very near. As soon as they had done the ritual and she had recovered, not died. The reason they had not performed a complete ritual for her was because she had been away at the time it was performed. She had run off with a lover. It was the ritual of her mother which was not performed for her.

It is clear that, though informants were not agreed about the distinguishing features of the two types of madness, they were agreed about its general characteristics, and that one form was connected with neglect of rituals.

Question: Why the little hut?

Mwamkanda (an old chief): When performing the ritual they build a little hut in which to carry it out. This hut tells us of the man's behaviour when alive, he lived in a house. So that now he is dead we kill his home too, and that is why they destroy the hut at the end of the ritual. They perform the ritual in a house because he lived in a house.

Question: Why the stealing of the stem of plantains?

Mwamkanda: This tells us about driving the disease away, that the disease which killed him should leave our homestead. The stem of bananas is a symbol (*ilimangalo*) of the disease. We do not know where the disease came from. When we steal the bananas we think that the disease came from some other place and killed him, it has not always been in our house. That is why we go to another homestead to steal the stem of bananas. But when we are driven away with the bananas that is a symbol of driving the disease away again, we drive the disease away. Sometimes the householders come out and drive us away, sometimes they may still, and we who have come with the thief drive him away. We arrange with the householder beforehand. The meaning is the same in either case.

Question: Why the food?

Mwamkanda: The salted and unsalted food, the mash, the beans and bananas which they take out separately, the chicken, the roast bananas, those in which they put beetle and pumpkin-seeds—all these they eat, for they are afraid that if they do not, but leave one of them out, then when they eat, in the ritual of other people, some of those they omitted, the ritual will infect them. So that is why they eat everything. If a man doesn't eat any chicken he will catch the disease afterwards from the very smell of a ritual chicken!

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

created in the belly which matches millet and beans. These are the 843
foods that Kyale said are important.

MWAIKAMBO: When a woman is pregnant she fears to pass people who are at work planting, smithing, milking, or brewing beer, because they say the child in the belly, the weight (*abusite*), is like a witch, it will damage food like witchcraft; beer is spoiled and tastes nasty, food does not grow, the smith's iron is not easily worked, the milk is not good. If a pregnant woman comes across her fellows planting she stops them for a few minutes while she passes. If they are brewing they give her a little beer to taste.

ANGOMBWEKE: As for avoiding food, a woman avoids especially when she has been pregnant for one or two months. It is said that if she passes through the gardens, perhaps when people are planting, or when they have already planted but the seed has not yet sprouted, the child in the belly tries to snatch the millet, and it meets the medicine (for people plant millet with a medicine, saying: 'May my millet not rot in the ground'), then perhaps the mother has a miscarriage. If the child in her belly has sprouted then she does not fear much . . . and if the millet has sprouted she does not fear much, but when it has not yet sprouted then the medicine is fierce.

Besides the symbol of the foetus with 'jaws agape' snatching food, there is a symbol of 'seed within' fighting 'seed without'. Mwaikambo was careful to point out that this interpretation was a personal one, assented to, but not volunteered, by others he consulted; however, it was later confirmed by Kasitile.

MWAIKAMBO: A pregnant woman should avoid those planting beans and millet, or straining ointment, sunning millet, or brewing beer, because there is kinship (*abalama*) between the child in her belly and food, we call all of them seed (*mbeje*). The seed in her belly and that outside fight; that within is fierce and overcomes that outside. To help them plant is to make friends; to knot a leaf is to bind the anger of the human seed. All those with whom I have discussed the matter agreed that this is so, but they have agreed when I began to explain it to them; none of them understand the other symbols. I discussed it with about eleven men.

KASITILE: The taboo against a pregnant woman passing millet and other seed spread out to dry is because these seeds fight with the child inside. It is seed, it defeats them; it is seed, it is water, it is blood. To bind a leaf is to bind that blood within, that it may not kill the seeds out drying. If someone else's food is being planted and a pregnant woman approaches, and does not bind a leaf and throw it in the grain basket, then the seed is insufficient to plant.

A general principle of Nyakyusa thought is the opposition of 828●
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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

828 like activities; things which are felt to be alike are often felt to be
772 antagonistic. We have shown that certain of the pregnancy taboos are interpreted in terms of the opposition between seed in plants and seed in the womb, and between pumpkins in the field and pumpkins in the vagina, and we have touched on the opposition between procreation and war. Sexual intercourse, 'the war of the mats', is directly compared with war; the two are felt to be alike and therefore incompatible. Association with a menstruating or parturient woman is felt to be weakening to a warrior; continence of a warrior before battle is enjoined—'men feared to die quickly if they slept with their wives just before war.' Moreover, a menstruating wife never touches her husband's weapons lest they be weakened.

843 Hunting is classed with war and the same taboos apply. Added
834 to them is the notion that, since a pregnant woman is often angry,
224 the animals her husband hunts will be angry also, and he is in
721 much greater danger than an ordinary hunter.

772 Amoomwike: If you go into the bush and you have left your wife heavy, at home, if you meet a lion it will not run off, but will injure you, maul you. And if you are many, a leopard or a lion will attack you, the heavy one, not the others.

Question: Why?

Amoomwike: It is as if there was much anger. And we've noticed something else, if a lion attacks cattle it always attacks a cow in calf. And another thing. If a woman is heavy she is very bad-tempered (*akali*), it's like a passion. Perhaps the woman is bad-tempered or perhaps good, and you, the husband, are bad-tempered. Pregnancy shows in many ways. . . .

A pregnant woman has a great fire in her body, she sweats a lot and is passionate (*asiyeje*), she is fierce (*akali*). That fire is strong: we all fear [illegible] pregnancy begins the animals in the bush wish to kill you, the husband. That fierceness [the fire] makes them hate you; you are like a twin. A first-born child is very fierce (*akali*), so a woman is very passionate and sweats a great deal.

843 His wife's pregnancy puts a man in danger from wild animals,
593 and so does a quarrel with her, quite apart from the pregnancy
772 which tends to produce such quarrels. Mwaisumo said: 'If I go hunting after quarrelling with my wife it is very dangerous, I might be killed by a wild animal.'

843 Besides the idea that animals will attack the husband of a preg-
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2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

753 681 believed to be a danger to his kin and descendants, but in a manner somewhat different from the one who has killed another. The sickness is thought to come from the ropes and is called *ingwje* after them.

Mwaikambo explained:

[763] If one member of a family commits suicide by hanging then his surviving relatives, if they do not drink a medicine, will die of the 'ropes', always. If a man hangs himself all his relatives fear; if a woman only her children.

Kasitile's wife, Kilulefi, had borne ten children, but all save one had died. He said:

It is because of the ropes of her father. They bound him at Tukeyu; he died in gaol; it is those ropes which are killing my children. I said to her father [i.e. the heir]: 'Let us go to divine,' but he has not yet agreed to do so.

The death of Mukwabila, a junior kinsman of the Chief Mwaipopo, whose funeral we attended, was attributed to the ropes used to tether cattle raided by his grandfather. Kasitile, himself a distant agnatic kinsman, explained this case also:

One of the fathers of Mukwabila was killed by the hill people. They seized him on the road. So in revenge Mwamunika, the father of [317] Mukwabila, took twenty cows belonging to the hill people as they passed north, coming from the salt lick. This was long ago. Then Mukwabila's father omitted to kill a cow for those who had helped him to secure the cows. So they were angry and brought *ingwje*—the disease of ropes—upon him. After seizing the cattle he moved to Mwambebule's country in the hills and he was quite well, but then he came back to live here, first sending two cows to the Chief Mwaipopo, but killing [illegible] for us? What sort of chief is he?' He got weak and fell ill and died. They [763] did not perform an autopsy, saying it was forbidden to do it on a chief, and his son died also and was not examined, but now when the younger son died, Mwaipopo said: 'Let us examine him so that we may know.' And it is that old *ingwje*. . . .

The sickness of ropes (*ingwje*) is of three sorts coming from: (1) the suicide (by hanging) of a relative long ago; (2) the binding of a man by other people, as distinct from a man binding himself; and (3) the shocked astonishment of men and their breath. In dreams they put the sickness of ropes into his stomach, they say: 'May the sickness of ropes [763] come into his stomach.' The sickness of ropes lies in wait for an heir. A man dies and the sickness comes on his heir, others are all right; so it

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 One minor quarrel occurred at a funeral we attended. Kaitile
578 was given only a little meat and he complained, saying: 'Why do
783 you give me a leg, I the owner of the funeral?' He took umbrage and left the funeral with his wives. Then they went to his home to say: 'We are in the wrong, we made a mistake in dividing.' Then Kaitile was satisfied and prayed over a medicine (*akata*) which they cooked to eat. If he did not pray the medicine would go bad and would not cook. He said in his prayer: 'I have no case against them, let the medicine cook, the young men just played with the meat, it is not a serious case, may the medicine cook at once.'

(*c*) *Reconciliation*

628 A distinction is made by the Nyakyusa between misfortune due
783 to the anger of senior relatives and that due to the anger of neighbours,[1] and the rituals performed are theoretically distinct, though in practice they merge into one another.

578 A man fears the anger of his fellow villagers who murmur
783 against him when he has offended them, and whose cold breath is believed to fall upon him and chill him with fever or cause a paralysis. Mature men or women fear only the anger of their own neighbours, but a young man and his wife also fear their parents' neighbours. The ritual performed to lift the curse of neighbours consists in acknowledging guilt and making an offering of beer or meat for them to feast upon; then, while they eat or drink, they admit their anger and express goodwill.

The doctor comes beforehand and gives the sick man medicine to drink. A cow is killed. People are there and say: 'May this medicine help our child.' To drink without people there is like continuing the quarrel. People are there and they speak (*ukwijeje*), saying: 'Someone was angry, but no one is angry now. May this medicine help you.' [illegible] who were angry are present and they are satisfied. *Ukwijeje* is to speak many things, and it is like praying (*ukwipeta*) but without actually taking water and spitting.

578 Sometimes responsibility is fixed squarely on either shades or
778 neighbours, but since neighbours are said to 'help a father to
783 murmur' against an erring son, and since they may share in beef or beer offered to the shades, the rituals merge into one another, and some offerings seem to be intended to pacify both the shades and the neighbours, though in Nyakyusa theory the sources of

[1] Discussed in relation to the age-village in *Good Company*, pp. 98–108.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 The Nyakyusa perhaps emphasize it more than their neighbours
[70] (though not more than the Jews or the Hindus), and their preoccupation with purification in the rituals is paralleled by the emphasis laid on cleanliness (*ubusifuci*) in person, in house and courtyard, in cooking, and in disposal of excrement. Their extreme cleanliness, in contrast with their neighbours, was remarked upon by all the early travellers in the area and is still obvious.[1] Houses and courtyards are swept and garnished; pots and dishes scoured, food scrupulously covered with fresh banana leaves when it is served at feasts; a good housewife is *umusifuci*, she who is clean. Men wash daily in running water and children are trained to take a hoe with them when they go to defaecate, and to bury the faeces.

783 The horror of 'filth' is very closely associated with the fear of
158 madness, which is at the same time a fear of too close association
•828 with the dead. It is when the dead have not been driven away, but return in dreams; when the necessary separation of living and dead has not been achieved, that men go mad. Madness is most often spoken of as the penalty for neglect of the death ritual, but it is not, in theory, confined to that: 'All the rituals are the same, if they are neglected, men will become mad.' Besides madness, men fear sterility, debility, swollen limbs ('an unhealthy fatness') and diarrhoea 'to get rid of the filth in the belly' if the rituals are neglected, or taboos broken.

776 That a common symbolic pattern expressing common sentiments recurs in all the rituals is clear, but it is also true that each ritual is characterized by peculiar sentiments and symbols. The funeral rites are first and foremost an expression of grief—kinsmen and neighbours gather to weep for the dead. Their grief is symbolized by the [illegible] mourning [illegible] ing with mud and ash, wearing mourning belts, and the song of farewell at the hearth. It is true that, in the later stages of the funeral, friends seek to comfort the chief mourners with cheerful songs and dances, and in one aspect the funeral ritual is an assertion of life, but grief not joy is its dominant note. By contrast, the ritual of puberty and marriage is a rejoicing—rejoicing 'because our child has grown up', because she is virgin, because there is feasting, because there is a marriage.

[1] Elements peculiar to the puberty ritual are the celebration of virginity by killing a bull, and the prayer for blessing when in

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 77-8.

‡ [i.e., the corruption of impurity associated with physiological functions.— Analyst]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

My bull was wounded. When I tried to kill it, it troubled me, it did not die. I took a banana sapling and chewed it and prayed to my fathers, saying: 'This bull has been wounded because it was destroying people's crops. I am killing it because the people are angry with me and they might spear me in the night if I don't kill it.' My son struck it the third time, then it bellowed and I said: 'Yes, they have heard my prayer,' and it fell down and died. The shades were preventing it dying because they liked it to be alive. The whole country liked this bull because of its beautiful bellowing. 775 782

The shades are very real to an old man like Mwakwelebeja: 775

We live with the shades, constantly the fathers come to us, and also a wife who has died. The shades rise and come to us. In the morning I wake up and tell my wife the shades came to me, I slept with them, and with the wife who has died.

QUESTION: Why do they come?

MWAKWELEBEJA: You just dream. Sometimes they speak something, and in the morning I tell my wife they said so-and-so. Sometimes they bring food. If a sick man dreams that he eats their food he will die. If he dreams that he visits them and they drive him away he will recover. Sometimes I dream of my father or of my mother, sometimes of the villagers, So-and-so, and So-and-so. Yes, we fear to dream of the shades, even if we don't eat food. We fear that if they come often we will follow them. 775 828

And even to young men like Kitita they seem near:

Yes, the shades come to us in dreams at night. Perhaps I dream of my father who has died, he appears, he gives me a cow, I wonder, it seems that I have gained that cow. I rejoice and am glad. This is all in a dream. Perhaps my mother has died and I dream of her. She gives me food as it were on this table. I eat, I drink beer with her. Our [illegible] they would dream that they and the shades, the fathers who had died, were fighting with the Ngoni; in the dream they would spear them and the blood would appear. All men dream, but those whose dreams come true we call *abandi*—prophets. These men sometimes dream of public matters, as well as private, they go to Kaitile [the priest] and say: 'Hunger is coming, carry out the ritual in the sacred grove.' Then they take a cow, bananas, and milk to the sacred grove as Kaitile says. Then there are those who fall into a fit and the friends of such a man go to Kaitile and tell what he said. 775

Perhaps I dream of my father or grandfather, and he comes and gives me food. I know him by his appearance in the dream. Perhaps my grandfather died while I was still a child, but I know him by his dress

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

775 and appearance—the mind of a child is tenacious. If one comes whom
●828 I never knew, I note his appearance in the dream and next day I tell my friends and relatives about it. Then perhaps an old woman, my grandmother, will say: 'That is how So-and-so used to look.' Perhaps I dream of someone wearing brass body-rings, with a plume nodding on his head. Then the older ones know him and tell me it is So-and-so. In the old days, in the days of our mothers, if we dreamed of eating food like this my relatives would say: 'They have come to fetch him; he will get disease and die soon; he has eaten the food of the shades.'
775 But in European times now it is different. . . . Our mothers fear such
828 dreams; there is a medicine to put on the walls. If I always dream like
177 this they bring it and say: 'It's forbidden to dream of the shades.'

QUESTION: And now?

KITITU: Now if dreams come true we say that the man who had dreamed is a prophet.

828 QUESTION: Are all dreams pregnant with trouble?

KITITU: Yes, dreams usually mean trouble. Suppose I love a girl and want to marry her, and then I dream of marriage, of having the cattle and going and being accepted by her fathers who are all present [in the dream], then I rejoice and I hope.[1] Then I begin to think of going to earn the cattle, and I go to work and come back with three or four cattle and go to hand over the marriage-cattle. All ends happily, but it might not. Perhaps they will accept me, perhaps not.

At work I dream that a sister has died, and I find it is true, then I think other dreams will be true. . . . I fear that perhaps my death is near. I go to a doctor and say I want a medicine, he gives me some to put under my head and sleep on. He grinds a medicine and tell me to sprinkle it in the room.

775 It is generally agreed that dreams of the dead are not welcomed:
828 [illegible] they are dead.' Then I take a coal from the fire and say: 'Do not come in dreams.' If the shade comes it always means trouble.

And the only occasions of prayer to the shades are when men are in trouble and anticipate misfortune.

We never pray except when there is trouble. No, we never pray to give thanks. Why should we? There is nothing to grumble at!

673 (c) *Belief and behaviour*

753 In the Nyakyusa view there is a direct and immediate link be-
777 tween misfortune and wrong-doing. When illness befalls a man,

[1] Kititu's father delayed long in providing him with marriage-cattle. The following year he eloped with a girl.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

and kill many people. The chief, Mwenemusuku, 791
protected his land in the manner described in the 789
chapter on "The Powers of Evil," and none of his people were killed, though the total killed by a lion in that year in neighbouring districts was very large. A letter in my possession puts the number at forty, while others say fifty. Where the chief protected his land in the traditional way, the people were safe; where this was not done, the toll of human lives was great.

In 1922 the same woman predicted that, for the sins of the people, a spotted hyena would kill many. Again the chief protected his land, and again no one was killed; while in a neighbouring and unprotected land, the death-roll was considerable. In the same year leopards were predicted in the Nserya district. The chief was urged to sacrifice an ox, but refused. Six people were killed, and a number of mauled men and women were treated by Dr. Brown at the Mission at Itete.

To the Konde, as I have already said, there is no 787
difficulty in connecting prediction and fulfilment. 811
The inspiration of the foretellers is not doubted; the animals came as foretold; why should reasonable men refuse to acknowledge a relation between the two events? At any rate it may be presumed that the native will go on seeing a connection, while the white man will fall back upon the ever-ready doctrine of coincidence, and refuse upon any terms to acknowledge any other relation.

There is, however, spirit possession of another kind, 755

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

755 which is still a terror to many people: sheer evil
828 spirits, who seek to take possession of a human being as a dwelling-place. Possessed children hide themselves, crying out, "*Abandu, abandu*" (men, men). Adults reveal their possession by dashing about, dancing, shouting. If the possessed makes for water, it is known that a water spirit has entered into him; if he goes to the hills, it is a mountain spirit. In either case the patient is taken by the medicine man to a waterfall, "where God dwells," and given medicine to drink. If he resists, force is used, but frequently the doctor is impressive enough to succeed without it. A bell is rung; the doctor speaks, "We have found you. Come out of the man." Then he takes water into his mouth and squirts it on the breast and back of the afflicted person, striking him at the same time with the calabash from which he took the water, and holding it for a little over the patient's head. Next he sprinkles the whole body with flour, and the party returns to the village, where every one is required to drink a medicine administered by the doctor; for when the spirit goes out of its present victim, he will seek another dwelling, but the medicine protects all who drink it from invasion. The patient must not shave his head for six to eight months, nor may he eat flesh of any kind. When the period prescribed is over, the doctor comes to shave the head of the patient, who has now recovered, and eats part of a fowl which has been treated with yet another medicine.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

787 so insulted him. This does not apply to an invitation
578 to drink beer, but no one can explain why there is a difference.

3. Accusations against a man of good character come under the same heading. Some evil has been done, and the wrong-doer has not been discovered. Then, perhaps in joke, or it may be out of personal dislike, some one says that so and so did it. The person referred to knows that his days will not be long in the land. "Did I ever do a thing like that?" he asks indignantly. "Why, then, am I accused?" It can only be *kusikura*, and he expects to die, at the best, within a year or two.

787 4. If the spirits, in dreams, offer food, it must not
828 be accepted, even in the dream: to accept it means death.

Connected with the foregoing, but having a
787 different name among the Konde, are insults or
578 injuries to parents. A man who fights with his father,
593 and throws him down, has achieved the final wickedness. Whether the old man was right or wrong in the matter in dispute is of no consequence; the whole community expresses its abhorrence of the deed. "Has this man reached even to God?" that is to say, does he consider himself the equal of God, that he does such things? Word is sent to the chief, and the whole district is informed of the evil thing that has been done. There is no formal denunciation, no spoken curse; but the *ilungwe*, the curse of all fathers, and of all ancestors, is upon the son. He becomes lame; then unable to stand upright; finally he

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

754 all speed to its "father." Should the victim have the good fortune to kill it, it will return to its original elements, and appear before him as a mere root of a tree.

The next class of people who possess destructive powers are the poisoners. Direct evidence is naturally hard to get, for the poisoner must act in secret. The poison need not be administered directly, though that is often done; if placed where the victim will touch it, it is enough; over the door, where it will drip on his head, or on the threshold, where he will touch it with his foot. Death will follow. In 1905 a man called Ulukamba had a quarrel with a neighbour, and sent his son to place medicine in the doorway of his enemy. Two days later a son of the latter died suddenly. The boy who placed the medicine gave away the secret, by telling some one, and Ulukamba was put to the poison test, which condemned him, and he was ordered to pay over two cows. He refused, threatened to inform the magistrate that the chief had consented to the poison ordeal, and the case had to be dropped. But the belief that he killed the boy is still firmly held by all the people of his village. There was no case against the boy who placed the medicine, as he was obeying orders issued by his father.

• 828 543 The destructive power of anger is firmly believed in by the Konde. To speak the name of a brother in anger, is strictly forbidden, for it may lead to his death. The process is rationalised thus: the spirits hear the words of anger, and, assuming that there is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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good reason for it, send a disease, or engineer an accident which kills the person named. A well-known doctor, named Mwenekasangamara, now dead, was credited with wider powers. If he spoke in anger the name of any person within his family, and that was a very wide circle, that person would die. But he had the privilege of withdrawing, and so neutralizing the effect of his anger. The underlying idea is that it is contrary to God's law to speak evil of dignities; if the person spoken against, like Mwenekasanganara, heard of it, his anger would be aroused, and the spirits would come to his support.

A daughter who despised her father, might be punished with barrenness if her father so desired. Mwenekasangamara imposed this punishment on a married daughter, and the curse was not removed until she had made proper atonement, and soon afterwards her infirmity was corrected. Another well-known case is that of a man called Songwe, living at Lungubo, whose daughter aroused his wrath to such a degree that he called upon his ancestors to destroy her. She became ill the same day, and died the next. This was in December, 1912. In the light of modern psychological beliefs, there is nothing impossible in the story.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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753 the use of both drugs and ceremonies. Next, the action of the spirits brings on diseases, and until the cause of their anger has been dealt with, no doctor will undertake to cure the patient. Wounds or injuries in battle, by falling trees, by attack of animals, or by any other means, may be due to any of the above causes.

759 The doctor may be a man or a woman. The fee varies from about a farthing to a sixty shilling cow, and the manner of payment varies also. In some cases payment precedes treatment; in others, it follows; and in still others the degree of cure effected decides the amount to be paid.

757 In what follows, no attempt is made at scientific classification; rather a rough grouping of symptoms guides the sequence of items. Medicines are usually administered in beer or in milk, hot or cold, according to the disease which is being treated. And the place where the decoction is drunk is very important; in snake bite, for instance, it is fatal for the patient to go inside the house before the medicine has been taken which it is hoped will save his life. A native Christian was, in 1913, suspended from ordinances for drinking medicine while seated on a banana stem at a place where two paths met.

• 828 Mental troubles of various kinds are treated, and
757 not, I am assured, without success in some cases.
278 *Maya* is grief, due to any cause. It is treated by giving an infusion of a plant called *nsabe*, not unlike parsley in appearance. The result is great cheerfulness in the patient, due, no doubt, to exhilarating qualities in

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

the plant. *Ipingu* is sadness, or anger. The parents or relatives of an absent friend, having no news of him for some time, give way to grief or anger, and the emotion causes illness in the absent one. The latter goes to the diviner to learn why he is ill, and is told. The leaves of a plant called *inyekenyeke* are pounded and boiled in water, and the infusion drunk, the patient saying in the presence of the doctor:

828 757 278

> "Let the words of those people fall back upon them. I have spoken no evil; I am not a hard man. God and the spirits behold me. May I get sleep."

Minyenya is nightmare. The actual meaning of the word is *ancestors*, and the bad dreams are due to their action. It is cured by an infusion of the plant *hatetya*, taken while repeating the incantation: "We drive you away, you who trouble us. Leave our friend that he may sleep." *Amabela* is disobedience to parents or relatives. Take the brain of *ichungulu* and *munyu*, and add the flesh of the fish *ingumba*; reduce to a powder, and mix with beer in a small calabash. This the disobedient one is forced to drink three or four times, nothing being left in the calabash. I have no doubt at all that most children find obedience less obnoxious than the mixture. Similar success attends the use of a drug made from the *malombwa* tree. The *kasika* is a tiny creature which covers itself with scraps of grass, and moves by using its head as a lever. It is a sovereign remedy, when mixed with other drugs, for madness, as well as for that form of madness which

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

makes a woman unfaithful to her husband. For *impulamutu*, a brain trouble which makes the sufferer strike his head against trees or other hard objects, there is a cure, but I have not discovered what it is. For dizziness, an infusion is made from the roots of the *kalemerera* plant, and the patient first drinks, then washes his face with, the infusion. Epilepsy is treated with a mixture made from the roots and leaves of many plants. The mouth is forced open if necessary when the drink is being administered. Natives assert that cures are effected, but I know of no cases that have been cured.

There is no disease more common among the Bantu peoples than ulcers, sores, abscesses. The common *kironda* is treated with a wash made from the infusion of pounded *burungo* leaves. If it does not yield to treatment, it is due to witchcraft or spirits, and in either case the necessary preliminaries must be gone through. A special form of this disease is found when the ulcers break out on the breast or in the mouth. The diseased part is washed with an infusion of *indoko* bark, and another infusion is taken internally twice a day for a few days. A more malignant form is called *ndorska*, for which the leaves of the plant *kanga* are infused, and applied as for *kironda*, with the same ceremonies, if a cure is not effected within a reasonable time. *Mpenga* is a slightly different form of *ndorska*. *Kabinda* is something of the nature of an inside tumour which must be let out. Roots of the *kabinda* shrub are reduced to a dry powder, spread on the leaf of the *ontagata* tree, and bound to

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The shade is the principle of life represented by seed, or the root of a banana, or a tree growing by a grave;[1] the hero embodied a vital force which caused grain to sprout and clay cattle to breathe. The line between a hero, the shade of one of his successors, and the shade of a chief is a very faint one. They all have power over people other than their descendants and are approached by hereditary priests. As some elderly men of Ngonde put it: 'The nobles, not the living Kyungu, go to the groves of the Kyungus to pray; they go because the Kyungus who have died are shades to us all (*be bayuka bete tuene*).'

The heroes had miraculous power but it differed in degree, rather than in kind, from that possessed by their descendants. Like that of the divine kings and chiefs it lay both in their own bodies and in medicines, especially the *fingila* which is still used by chiefs.

Kyala and Lwembe dwell 'beneath' (*pasi*) with the shades, as opposed to 'above' (*kamuenye*), which implied traditionally 'on earth' not 'in the sky'. There is no hint of a sky god in the traditional system, and the distinction between black and white offerings, which the early missionaries took to be a distinction between offerings to the shades and to a sky god,[2] was unequivocally interpreted by the priests in another fashion. The white (*mwele*) offering to Kyala or Ngulube is a symbol not of purity, but of an unclouded sky, and the numinous quality of the heroes is conceived of as contamination, not holiness. Like the shades, the heroes must be 'driven off' lest men go mad, and it is when they have driven them away that men are *bela*—white, innocent, free of anger. Men should be *bela* but this is never cited as an attribute of the pagan Kyala. It is the terribleness, not the goodness or purity of God of which the Nyakyusa are aware. This is underlined by the fact that a madman who, 'when he comes home rushes off', and 'does not see that his fellows are human beings,' and who 'has a hot heart' (i.e. is passionate and quarrelsome), or 'whose heart curls up like a leaf in the sun, or turns upside down', is called 'Mlisa' or is said to have been 'caught hold of by Kyala'.

Kyala is one hero among others but, as has been shown, the name is also used in the sense of 'the lord'. Kyala as 'the lord' of a commoner or junior kinsman is distinct from Kyala the hero with his own place in a genealogy and his own shrine. The difference

[1] Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. [illegible], [illegible] *et passim*.
[2] E. Fülleborn, *Das Deutsche Nyasa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet*, pp. [illegible].

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

her by his anger, others that the husband was to blame for rejecting medical treatment earlier on. The girl herself was reported to have said to her mother-in-law, when she was lying ill at the doctor's house: 'Are you angry with me and has your anger caused the trouble? Perhaps I did not help you in collecting firewood?' But her mother-in-law replied: 'No, I am not angry with you at all.' And the girl continued: 'I know that my father is angry. Someone mightgo and ask him to pray for me.' There was also tension with the husband's pagan father who had protested that his son was praying for the death of his own children when he prayed with his Pentecostal friends that God's will be done. 'The Pentecostal people say: "I like to die. I don't take any medicine . . . if someone dies or not it is all the same thing."'

Nevertheless, it is true to say that the field in which natural causation is accepted isnuch wider among Christians than among pagans. It expands very slowly, but the change is evident. Even two cases of 'madness' (*ukuleya ikigili*), invariably the symptom of the wrathof the gods in pagan thought, were interpreted to us by a Christian teacher in terms of grief and shock. The first was of a young man whose wife and grandmother (who lived with him) both died very suddenly, and whose only cow was taken by other relatives and killed for the funeral feast. The loss of the cow following he loss of his wife and grandmother was held to have shattered him finally—'the lineage was finished'. The other case was of a mother, devoted to her daughter, who was distraught when the daughter went off to a distance, accompanying her husband to his place of work. For a daughter to marry beyond easy visiting distance was traditionally inconceivable.

The vagaries of the weather, attributed by the pagans to the neglect of sacrifices or quarrels between chiefs and priests, are explained in scientific terms by some Christians. Heavy rain fell around Rungwe in October 1937 and prevented people burning their rubbish heaps to fertilize their millet gardens. The pagans lamented that such early rain was unheard of and kept asking each other what could have caused it. A Christian elder assured us that the early rain was not very unusual in the hill country; he had seen other seasons like it. And in January of the same year the people of Mwaipape's country were 'astonished' because no heavy rain had fallen and young maize and millet were shrivelling in the ground. They said: 'It has rained all round' and 'it seems as if we had offended Kyala'. Kaitile went to divine (*vide supra*, p. 115).

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

against the wrong-doer. It is supposed that after this procedure sickness or even death may come to that person. Another method consists of laying a bewitched object on the path usually used by the offender; with the same result. Such bewitching is practised, for instance, when a quarrel has broken out between relatives. With the Nyakyusa any quarrelling with kinsmen is considered a very serious crime, as such a conduct is apt, in their estimation, to destroy the highly-valued family harmony.

3. Another day a ceremony (ubunyago)[7] to end mourning was held at Katumba. Some time before an older child had died, and now they were gathered to take leave of the dead[8].

At some distance from the hut, on the open space before it, a square represented the grave, in which the blossom of a banana[9] was interred, representing the dead. The mourners knelt at this grave and touched it with their elbows, knees and foreheads[10]. Each of the chief mourners had to do this, according to the belief of the Natives, lest he should fall into madness.

The next act was performed by the unyago[11], the leading person of the ceremony, one in full knowledge of the rites. Immediately before the door of the hut of the mourning parents, the unyago threw the collections of corn, brought by the participants in small baskets in honour of the dead, together into a big basket, and uttered the names of the contributors addressing the dead. The other participants repeated these names.

Then the mourners went into the hut; but, after some moments, they reappeared one by one and each one, as he left the door in a crouching position, was softly struck on his neck by the unyago with a piece of the trunk of a banana plant. It was explained to me that this ceremony would induce new strength to the mourners, who were weakened by the death of their relative.

The portion of the ceremony which followed, consisted in the forming of a line by the mourners between the hut and the grave. The persons now stood straddle-legged on leaves of banana, the unyago at the

[7] Cf. Wilson, Ceremonies of Burial, p. 8, n. 6: unyago.
[8] Wilson has described burials (Ufwa, ep.) of adult persons; cerem'ls, I think, my description will be of some value.
[9] Cf. my Chaga Notes, Bantu Studies, XV, p. [illegible].
[10] Cf. Pitikaluru, p. [illegible].
[11] Cf. Mathematia, p. [illegible]; cf. Isanyago, p. 91; Wilson, Introduction, p. [illegible], unyago (hereditary priests).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IV

VALUES

a. *Good company*

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Over of the values most constantly stressed by the Nyakyusa is that of *ubwangala* which, in its primary sense, means 'the enjoyment of good company' and, by extension, the mutual aid and sympathy which spring from personal friendship. It implies urbane manners and a friendliness which expresses itself in eating and drinking together; not only merry conversation, but also discussion between equals, which the Nyakyusa regard as the principal form of education. 'It is by conversing with our friends', said one of our witnesses, 'that we gain wisdom (*ewakala*); it is bad to sit quite still in man's company. A man who does this is a fool; he learns no wisdom, he has only his own thoughts. Moreover, a man who does not spend time with other people is always dirty, he does not compare himself with any friends. For we learn cleanliness of body in company, those who are dirty learning from their more cleanly friends. Again, if a man is accused of some crime and brought before the chief and is unable to defend himself easily and with eloquence we mock at him and say: "What is the matter with you? Do you live all by yourself? How is it that you are so foolish?" Wisdom and cleanliness are the two great things to be learnt in company. It is bad to live alone far from other people, such a man learns nothing: he never learns to express himself well, to converse wittily with friends, or to argue a case with eloquence. It is better to live with other people.'

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'To live with other people', says our informant, but he implies 'to live with contemporaries'. For *ubwangala*, in the sense of discussion and easy give-and-take, can never occur between men and women, and is made difficult between men of different generations by the respect required of sons for their fathers. Since men are held to acquire manners, eloquence, and wisdom only in company it is necessary, the Nyakyusa argue, that they should build in villages, rather than in scattered homesteads, and since

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 F317 Nguonde F317
Nyakyusa

abwangale is only possible between contemporaries[1] they must build with contemporaries. The value set on *abwangale* is thus related to the age-village; male contemporaries build together, and the company of, and good fellowship with, his age-mates is what creates a man of wisdom and character. Such is the Nyakyusa view of society.

For conversation to flow merrily and discussion to be profound there must be *ifyakwangalala*—'the wherewithal for good fellowship', that is, food and drink—and very great stress is laid on sharing these. Men and boys are expected to eat regularly with age-mates. Traditionally, fathers and sons never ate or drank together—to do so was held to be incompatible with the respect due from son to father—and men sought the company of equals at meals. From the time a small boy begins to herd he is encouraged to bring home two or three friends to eat with him, and in turn he visits each of them. Since boys have no fields of their own until they marry, but co-operate in cultivation with their parents, it is to their own mothers they go for food, and parents are proud of a son bringing many friends. 'Perhaps', said Angombwike, 'a son will come with his friends and cut a huge bunch of bananas, and take thick milk and eat with them. When the father comes back his wives will tell him: "Your son has eaten all the thick milk and cut a banana bunch!" Then he will ask: "How many men were with my son?" "Six!" "Ah, he's a chief!" the old man will say, smiling proudly.' 'And formerly if a young man came home often alone to eat, his father would beat him, or even take a spear and wound him, and when people asked why he would say: "This great fool comes alone to my place, again and again." It is good to eat with friends, for boys to go round in groups of four or five.'

After marriage each man is cooked for by his own wife, but he continues to eat with his friends, bringing them to his home or going to their's. The first wife to come to a young man's village is said to have a hard life. 'She has to draw water and cook for all the young men of the village—they come to drink, and to wash, and they beat her with a stick if she refuses them. No, the

[1] *Ubwangale* is sometimes used with reference to relatives as well as to village-mates, as in the phrase 'ndibwangale kwanse nakulwane kulu', meaning 'he is now my good mates with his relatives', but in its fullest sense it can only be used with reference to contemporaries.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

meat is offered in the bride's father's grove; the two symbols of 881
first intercourse—treatment with *undwila* medicine and jumping over fire; the recognition of the end of childhood by calling on the bride's mother to put her down off her back; the insistence that she show modesty before her father and his fellows as before a father-in-law; and the taboo on crossing water lest her menstrual flow become like a river.

The twin ritual is characterized by the fear of infection from too 845
great potency, and the treatment with scalding medicines to 'burn' the twin birth.

Sometimes our informants gave different interpretations of the 796
same symbol and there was no agreement between them, as with 184
the stem of bananas stolen in the Kukwe death ritual, and the bunch of flowers brought back from the stream. Nsyani said stealing the bananas symbolized that 'we may now eat other people's food', and Mwamulenga that it was a symbol of driving away disease. Kakune, the doctor, interpreted the bunch of flowers brought back from the stream as a symbol of the shade which was brought home; Mwamulenga saw picking and carrying flowers as yet another symbol of the actions of a madman. Though there was general agreement over the interpretation of many symbols, it is possible that some have no commonly accepted meaning, but suggest different things to different people. It is clear, however, that with the Nyakyusa, as with ourselves, one symbol has often several associations for the same person, and Kasitile and the more self-conscious of our informants were aware of this. For Kasitile the banana in the death ritual is the corpse and the pumpkin-seeds in it the shade; it is also faeces which madmen eat; it is also, in the puberty ritual, the male organ and the seeds are the semen. Eating a banana is a symbol *both* of copulation and of the actions of a madman. Conversely, the same object or action is symbolized in many different ways—there are nine or ten symbols of sex intercourse, and twenty of driving away the shade, recorded in the texts quoted above.

When an action recurs in different rituals, informants almost always interpreted it in the same way in each context: the exception was the trampling dance (*ukukanya ingenye*) interpreted as a way of 'driving away the shade' in the death ritual and a 're-joicing' in the puberty ritual. It was always explained as 'customary'. 'Father and grandfather did it.'

This brings us to the ultimate explanation given for all the 829

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

829 rituals: 'they are customary' (*lalesile*), 'they come to us from long ago', 'our fathers and grandfathers performed them'; and established in the nature of the universe: 'Kyala made us black people like that.'

(*b*) *The nature of the shades*

775 619 The nature of the shades is revealed in Nyakyusa rituals, and we are now in a position to summarize their attributes.

The shades, 'those who have risen from the dead', are the dead members of a lineage and, unless they were ruling chiefs when alive, they have power only over their own kinsmen, and are concerned only with behaviour between members of the lineage, not with behaviour towards outsiders. As we have seen, the shades of her father's lineage 'move aside a little' from a woman when marriage-cattle and the bull of puberty have been given for her but, if these are still owing, it is thought that her child as well as she herself may be made ill by her father's shades. Membership of a lineage is determined by the passage of marriage-cattle: a child belongs to the group which provided cattle for its mother. Therefore, it is argued, the shades of the lineage which provided the cattle, and they alone, if the payment has been made in full, have power over children. If no cattle have been given the child is in the power of the mother's shades. But there are difficulties over the *ukipili* medicine, for only that of the genitor's lineage can rightly be used, and its use implies membership of the lineage that provides it. There is a further idea that shades only have power over those living in a homestead of their lineage. 'A child is never made ill by the mother's shades when it is in the father's homestead, only when it is with its mother's people.'

775 The dead dwell beneath (*pasi*), in 'the land of the shades' (*lubaipula*), which is a shadowy reflection of the land of the living, with homesteads and gardens, wives and cattle, villages and chiefdoms.

MWAKAMWO: People think that in the land of the shades they build houses like we do, they marry wives, they have children, they plant food and build houses. I heard this always from old men, but they only guess. They say: 'Perhaps it is nice, perhaps horrible.' They do not know very much. They fear to die. I have never met any old pagan man who wanted to die, they always fear. Property is important: People are much taken up with the idea that riches are there in the land of the shades. They say: 'If a man dies his fathers come to receive

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

less when 'he (or she) of the pythons' has passed by. Mwaisumo explained: 'They say that if the owner of pythons or the owner of medicines passes when food has been spread out to dry, the food will disappear. He bewitches it (*abalaga*). It is as if he hankers after the food in his heart, and it disappears and becomes less.' Nevertheless, of the thirty-eight accusations of witchcraft recorded, none actually turned on loss of grain or pulse. We heard also that a witch may spoil a brewing of beer, causing it to taste bitter, but again we could trace no case of this.

The lust of witches for good food is constantly emphasized by the Nyakyusa and, unlike some other Bantu peoples, they do not make a direct connection between witchcraft and sex: there is no suggestion of *incubi* or *succubae* such as play a great part in Pondo thought,[1] and sexual dreams are not taken as evidence of witchcraft. The facts that the witches are witches by virtue of 'pythons in the stomach', that they always go naked, and fly through the air riding their pythons when on their evil nocturnal rounds, suggest sexual associations, but we cannot prove that the Nyakyusa are conscious of such symbolism. It is, however, significant that the word commonly used for working witchcraft, 'throwing' (*abagwile*), is also used as a polite word for sexual intercourse, and that the other word for working witchcraft *abalaga*[2] (passive: *abalagigwe*) is similar to *abalagwa*, meaning to copulate. Bestiality and homosexuality between a grown man and a boy (but not between two youths) are spoken of as witchcraft (*abalaba*), and sex play between girls, including stretching of the vaginal opening, is called *abagalagala*, a word used for the cunning—the wicked cleverness—of witches.

An association is also made between witchcraft on the one hand and menstruation and pregnancy on the other. A woman who is a witch is said to pass on her witchcraft to her child by neglecting the menstruation taboos before the child is yet conceived. 'It starts when a woman is menstruating, then she begins to give the child her cunning (*abagalagala*).' Some of the menstrual blood is

[1] cf. Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, pp. 272-82.

[2] *Ubalaga* and *ubalaba* are from *-La* stem root. For its meaning in other Bantu languages cf. H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. II, pp. 429ff. Also D. J. and J. D. Krige, *The Realm of a Rain Queen*, p. 290; C. M. N. White in *Africa*, 1948 (Vol. XVIII), pp. 65; E. W. H. Johnston, *A Comparative Study of Bantu and Semi-Bantu Languages*, Vol. II, p. 408. The close similarity of meaning in a number of languages is striking.

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

Christians are only affected by the shocked astonishment of fellow Christians, not by the disapproval of pagans, and the unit within which 'the curse' is commonly spoken of as operating is the congregation. In two of the cases we recorded (*vide* Document, p. 209) it was suggested that illness was due to the anger of neighbours, fellow Christians, over stinginess and greed, but in the other case it was not village neighbours who were primarily concerned, but the Christian congregation, a group embracing members from many villages.

The type of behaviour believed to be punishable by 'the curse' of fellow Christ ian also differs somewhat from that thought to be punished by 'the breath of men'. The views Christians emphasize most is chastity, and 'the curse' is often said to be a punishment for fornication or adultery. The other are commonly spoken of as bringing down a curse in disobedience, or disrespectful behaviour to the minister (or priest) or elder of the congregation. Among pagans 'the breath of men' serves also to sanction sexual morals and to sustain respect for those in authority, but their sex ends in difference. It is incest, or familiarity between father- and daughter-in-law, which they regard as really evil, not sex relations outside marriage. And they emphasize respect to senior relatives and fathers' neighbours rather than to the leaders of any wider group.

Christians lay much less stress on hospitality to neighbours than pagans, and it is generally agreed that they eat alone more than pagans would dare to do. As one Christian put it, a pagan would always call his neighbours to share meat or beer when he had it, but a Christian might eat a sheep, or a goat, or even a calf, alone with his family. It is good, the Christians say, to call friends to share a feast, but not an inescapable obligation. Nor do Christians regularly send the saddle and ribs of any animal they kill to the chief, as pagans do; 'For', they say, 'we do not fear "the breath of men".' But hospitality towards strangers is felt to be a condition of salvation. One informant explained that 'If a man is stingy towards his neighbours it does not matter; but if he is stingy towards a stranger from a distance, he might die from lack of food; and that would be the fault of the stingy one. Such a fault would prevent him from entering Heaven.' This statement points to the most striking difference between Christian and pagan morality—the range of moral obligations. A pagan's duties

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F2617 Ngonde F2617
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mr Magwede

mourners eat) is sprinkled with powdered medicine and carried 765
out by the officiant and burnt, or thrown away under the banana. If the deceased has been buried elsewhere still a bunch of banana leaves representing the *ulufumbo* is taken out. 'Until then the rubbish (*imisala*) is kept in the house and not swept out because they are grieving—a person cannot be clean, it would seem as if he did not grieve.'

Next the officiant takes an old pot and, holding it, circles round the hearth while her assistant drops pumpkin-seeds, beans, lentils and cowpeas into it and the participants sing: 'The croaking bird, the croaking bird (*ilimamba*).' The food is transferred to another pot and put on the fire and the officiant touches the hearth with different parts of her body (or makes gestures as if to do so), she and the participants saying as she does so: 'The knee is also put on (the fire), the head is also put on, the backs of the knees are also put on, the loins are also put on, the belly is also put on, the back of the head is also put on.' Then she stamps noisily on the hearth, and the participants sing: 'It startles him. . . .'

Relatives and village neighbours are expected to bring small [93]
gifts of millet at this ritual and these are formally received by the officiant, who sits outside the mourning hut with two large baskets beside her and acknowledges each gift as it is brought and emptied into one or other of them. The one is for the millet of kinsmen, the other for that of neighbours. She addresses each giver in terms of his or her relationship to the deceased, announcing: 'Your grandchild has brought a measure, your daughter has brought a measure, your fellow (i.e. neighbour) has brought a measure, etc. . . .' This is spoken of as 'measuring the measures' (*ukupele imipele*); it is 'to greet the shade', and if millet is not available at the time the ritual is performed it is done symbolically.

A fresh piece of bark is stripped from the species of *ficus* used for making bark-cloth, hammered a little and placed on a fresh banana leaf and sprinkled with powdered medicine. A grindstone is lifted on to it and the officiant grinds some of the millet just presented and allows it to fall on the bark. During the grinding the officiant says: 'The knee is also ground, the heels are also ground,' and so on, mentioning the belly and loins. From the time of the death until this ritual, hammering of bark-cloth in the homestead of the deceased is taboo (*wasile*), for hammering bark-cloth is a symbol of sexual intercourse and 'the hammer belonged to him who died'. The first millet ground is made into a paste and later

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selwyn McNaughton

It is forbidden for the heir to lie with the dead man's wives before the rituals are over. But at the time of the beer, when the drinking is finished, we put him into the house and he lies with them. If he has lain with them previously the seasons refuse to come. . . . But if all goes well the officiants raise the cry of triumph (*ukulala*) and shake a winnowing basket of seeds by the door and cry: 'Oum, oum, we marvel at the thing, we marvel at the thing (*ifyela, ifyela, tumumuele ilinde*).' If he fails they go to divine and the diviner says: '*Mindu* (sickness from the shades), he has forestalled the ritual (*ukindile ubwenge*).' Then they pray in the banana. He must have intercourse with all the women he is inheriting; yes, however old they may be, he must lie with them that night or else they will lose their strength of body or mind, or else their legs will swell. With the old ones he will never lie again! He drinks fresh milk to give him strength beforehand! Fresh milk gives strength, it produces semen.

The next morning each of the wives goes off to her father with *ilibelaga* and with meat; the first is buried in the banana, it goes to the place of the shades, the meat is eaten. And the man too goes with his *ilibelaga* to his own father. Each wife makes her *ilibelaga* by wiping her own and her husband's genitals with her hands and then taking cooked bananas in them. He himself does likewise at the end.

The *ilibelaga* goes to the place of the shades, it is to drive away the shade of the dead man; before this he had not reached the place of shades but was on the way. In this manner we tell the shade that we have put another in his place, we tell him to go and join the other shades now and to come back with them to warm themselves by the fire in his old house.

Question: How can a chief who inherits many wives lie with them all in one night?

Kaswa: I do not know how. Kyala gives him strength! . . . He has intercourse with them all. Yes, really this does happen. . . . But if the man is old and fails to lie with them all, perhaps the wives will conceal the fact. He lies on one side of a partition wall with his wives and the people (for many come to sleep in his house that night) on the other. Then if he fails altogether . . . no one beats the partition with a stick, they all stay quiet till morning; but if he succeeds at first, and fails at the last few, they may perhaps conceal it. One of the wives is told by the officiant to beat the partition with a stick when he has lain with all his wives. When she does this the officiants who are in the doorway shake up beans and millet and pumpkin-seeds in a winnowing basket and call out: 'Oum, oum! We marvel at the thing!' If he fails altogether they stay quiet and next day go to divine; the diviner says: '*Mindu*.' Then they pray and pray, and persuade all the shades of old, and that night he rises again and the seasons come.

The seeds of beans, millet and pumpkin are symbols of the shades, the

[Lit. the parcel to the dead.—Ford 56]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selyn, Malgonde

767 *Shanda balyani nanyandala be kayuda, be kapatile akayuda tulukulaga: longa takanyapatile tulukupa dilgili? Akayuda be bakandaga bilujimu; pupo longa tawulile pa bandile mundu. Lali bilumudaga kangi takaja nabe bwile!*)

842 What we do comes from the shades and from Kyala himself. The
•831 blood is theirs and his together. Those who create (*ulukunda*) a child say: 'I am just eating at a woman,' but Kyala creates a child! If Kyala and the shades do not 'cook' [i.e. do not cause desire] you will do nothing, the penis is flaccid, but if Kyala has 'cooked' then you really do something, your heart (*mdumbula*) is full of desire. Always the shades are there and we drive them away, they are there and we drive them away. . . .

775 A shade is resurrected in the body of his child (*Uuyuda ilaayuda ilulo mundali gwa mumwale*). . . .

764 Passing the basket of pumpkin-seeds, millet, and lentils between the
775 legs and on to the head and throwing to one side means: 'Here between the legs there is work, may they go out in intercourse, and from the head where we dream, may they go out also.' Because in the ritual we say: 'Let them come into the body' at first, then we drive them away. Rubbing ourselves in the earth and passing millet between the legs means: 'May they come';* throwing millet and so on to one side it is to drive them away, that they may go out.

Question: Which shade do you drive away?

Mwanam: He who has just died, we drive him away.

Question: What about the first ancestor?

Mwanam: He is there at their place [the place of the shades], we drove him away long ago, he just receives him [the newly deceased].

Question: Why the pumpkin-seeds in the harvest?

Mwanam: It is the seeds (*ulukunga*) for begetting children. . . .

Question: Do the shades always come when a man dies?

Mwanam: Yes, they always come, they receive their fellow. Yes, even though he has died from sorcery they come and receive him, and even though he has died from witchcraft they come, the shades receive him, and if it is from illness he has died they also come. There is no
[765] death without the shades, they always come to receive their fellow.

When the witches have 'eaten' someone the shades come to receive
764 him. No, the witches eat him alone, but the shades receive him. Some-
775 times men get up in the morning and say: 'I dreamed they ate me and I
763 was with the shades!' Then he is about to die. Sometimes someone
823 dreams and says: 'In the night I was in the land of the shades with so-and-so, I left him there, I escaped myself and came home.' Then his friend is about to die.

766 If you do not perform the ritual you go mad (*bulyandala dilgili*) or
775 perhaps you get very thin, and are unable to die, you are ailing and do

* i.e. the participants identify themselves with the deceased.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
K.Kut

Mwamasowa: The bride does not cross water for it is said that the blood which began to flow when she reached puberty will not dry on her body if she does. 585 881

To sleep on the litter and to refuse to sleep on sleeping-mats is a sign of childhood (for during childhood girls do not think much about cleanliness, but are dirty); it means that they leave behind those [literally 'come out from'] childish things. The litter is burnt because if it has not been burnt the children take bits of it to make a fire and cook food, then, when they have eaten that food, their bodies are sick. We say the body becomes unhealthily fat (*ubujipiele*). Food is collected for a bride because if, later, a woman, who has not had food collected for her, eats food collected for another bride going through the puberty ritual, she will fall sick and her body will grow unhealthily fat. Bringing food for the *ukumbulile* and giving gifts at the *ubugwe* are to congratulate the bride because she has grown up, she is now an adult. [145]

X: The wearing of banana leaves [at the bringing out] is a sign of fertility. The ritual is finished, the girl is someone's wife now. . . . The plantain represents the penis, the sweet banana the clitoris. [151]

Sitting in a stream and letting water carry away pebbles placed between fingers and toes is a symbol of purification and separation from the shade. The first element—purification—was mentioned by most informants: 'The rite means that the dirt is finished,' said Pumkem's wife; but the more self-conscious identified 'dirt' with the shade. Mwamlomba made the matter quite clear. When asked why pebbles were placed in the cleft of fingers and toes, he replied: 'Kyala, when he created men, said: "At death throw it away, it is the shade, it is the body."' 781 775

Question: In the puberty ritual? 781

Mwamlomba: It is to say that the shade has brooded over the child, since he created blood we throw him away. May the shade go with these stones, then may she bear children; if he does not go, if you do not wear the girl, then Kyala broods over her and she does not bear children. 775

Question: Why does she avoid her father at this time? 781

Mwamlomba: Because I, the father, and her mother, perform the ritual for our child. Our shade has entered into her, has brooded over her, therefore we do not come together on the mat until we have finished treating our child; when we have finished, and have treated her, then we do what we will on the mat. If I want to lie with my wife [during the ritual] she refuses, saying: 'Our child has not yet finished, she is still undergoing the puberty ritual.' But if she agrees and we lie together, then our child will never bear. When we have finished the 124

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

come him, it does not wish to come out. And although the faeces are 775
firm they are the corpse. Because we bury a corpse underground, and 553
faeces also go underground to the shades. They disappear by night, that is the shades. If someone excretes faeces and finds it in the grass we say: 'The shade has caught hold of him.'

Question: Are faeces associated with sexual intercourse? 516
775

Mwasumba: Yes, the shade does both things, he causes diarrhoea 553
and sexual intercourse. If you defaecate firm stools that is not the shade, that is the food we eat, but watery diarrhoea which troubles you repeatedly at night—that is the shade. If you have diarrhoea for three days people say: 'The shades have bewitched you' or 'The shade has caught hold of you.'

Question: Madness? 158

Mwasumba: That is the shade because it says: 'Since you have me 775
in your belly, and they have not treated you, I cause this—these faeces 579
are the corpse. A madman defaecates and catches hold of his faeces, perhaps he eats them, perhaps he binds it up in the grass and catches hold of it. It is the corpse.'

Kakese, the doctor, also interpreted the puberty ritual as being, 553
in one aspect, the transference of a girl from her father's group to 775
her husband's and, like Kaitile and Mwasumba, he identified 530
sexual desire and puberty with the shades. He said:

At puberty a girl has left her father's and has gone to others; if she dies he to whom she has gone buries her.

Question: Where does the blood of a woman come from?

Kakese: If the girl is unmarried, from her shades; they create her blood, but in the ritual we treat her so that she moves to my place, she comes to my shades; the blood of a married woman is created by my shades and hers together. And the 'blood' of a man [i.e. semen] also comes from the shades.

Question: Do the shades reveal themselves at birth?

Kakese: Yes, because if I am angry or my father is angry I do not beget a child, but when he has prayed I do so. If I am angry with the woman and she has caught hold of me and injured me, then we do not have a child. The ordeal (*mwaafi*) convicts the woman. She goes to 515
her father who prays. Then we have a child.

Question: Where does the power to have and beget children come 96.2
from? 775

Kakese: From the shades, you have the shades in your belly. If 507
they are not there you are all like women in the house, you cannot have an erection, but when the shades work, you have an erection. 433
775

Question: Whose shades are present at intercourse?

Kakese: Mine, the man's and the woman's, we both have them,

CHAPTER V

THE RITUAL OF BIRTH*

§42 Kuna (or Lwanda) and the shades create desire in men and women and control conception; when the shades are angry women do not conceive—this is one of the main tenets of pagan Nyakyusa cosmology, and it is combined with a limited knowledge of physiology. It is clearly understood that conception cannot take place without intercourse, and that gestation in humans lasts for nine months, but it is believed that repeated intercourse is necessary
[§37] for conception, and formerly, if a man found his wife pregnant after having lain with her only once, he accused her of adultery.

(a) *Taboos of gestation*

[[§1] The preservation of children is an ultimate value of Nyakyusa
§42 society and the accepted end of marriage, but it is regarded as
763 dangerous under certain conditions and is hedged about with taboos. These are enforced so that both parents and children may be healthy; a breach of them is thought to result in violent diarrhoea, as well as monstrously swollen legs and weakness in men, general debility in children, and miscarriage or an excessive menstrual flow in women. The onus of observing these falls primarily on women, though their husbands must also co-operate, and a breach of taboos is treated as immoral, for it is believed to endanger the life, or health, or property of others.

• [§1] Certain general conceptions underlie the taboos. The first is that *of shamali*, filth, which is held to come from the sex fluids, menstruation, and childbirth, as well as from a corpse, and the blood of a slain enemy. All these are felt to be both disgusting and dangerous, and the sex fluids are held to be particularly dangerous to an infant, hence the taboo on husband and wife resuming intercourse very soon after childbirth.

[§6] At first, when the child is very young, we think it very bad for the parents to sleep together at all, because when the child is very young

* This account comes from a score or more women who cited individually, as well as from our regular informants on ritual whose names are mentioned.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

coughing disease to the owners of the house. . . . Pagans used to fear to let 789
those who are sleeping together touch the hearth-bricks or blow up the 772
fire in their house for, if they do so, then the owners of the house, both
men and women, fall sick coughing. They say it is the disease of fires
(*ngoto*). . . . But when a woman has borne a child and is suckling it,
and her husband is not with her, then it is not taboo.

Making fire by friction and, in more general terms, fire, are §31 ●
symbols of sexual intercourse, and 'the fire of the body and the 772
fire of the house fight'. Drinking from a calabash cup is perhaps [772]
also a symbol of intercourse—the shape of the cup suggests it—but
there is no direct evidence of such an association.

The taboo on mixing the sex activities of different couples is §34
pushed to the point that women avoid for a day the milk of a cow 772
that has been with the bull. 'They say: "We will harm the cow.
It will abort." They compare it with themselves as women.'

Two last pregnancy taboos may be noted which turn, not on §43
the feeling that like things are antagonistic, but that like produces 772
like. Things felt to be alike are treated as causally related. We
quote Mwambuputa, the village headman:

> Women fear to stand in a doorway when they are pregnant. They say: 'How should the child stand in the doorway? It will refuse to come out.' Because if birth is delayed, it is as if the child refused to come out of the house. That is the symbol. And I, the husband, feared also [to stand in a doorway]. Now we men do not fear; it is finished; but women still fear.
>
> And another thing, when a woman was pregnant we feared to sit close together, I, the husband, and my child. It was taboo. And for my wife and another woman to sit close together was taboo. It was said that she would bear twins, because we had sat together. Now we men do not fear, but women still do.

(*f*) *The confinement*

A first confinement, like first menstruation, is the occasion for §44
elaborate ritual, and though at later confinements (as at later
menstrual periods) certain taboos must be observed, they are less
numerous and less strictly enforced than those connected with the
birth of the first child, *amaume gwa hamaga*.

A first child should be born at the husband's mother's house,
'and if the first child is a girl they will tell her to come again for
the second, saying: "Come that we may treat our husband [i.e.
grandson]."' The woman lies, during labour, on a heap of leaves

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

We interpret the induction, seclusion, and bringing out as symbols of death and rebirth. There can be no doubt that the induction and seclusion represent death. Strewing leaves—or laying a litter—which is an essential act in every induction is a sign of misfortune and death;[1] and at the induction of a bride her 'mothers' sing: 'Go, go and never return', and 'We wail a dirge'. The mourners, the mbile girl, the mother of a new-born child, and the parents of twins are all 'filthy' and one with the dead; Kaisile said of mourners: 'We have died, we are the corpse.' The period of seclusion implies a sojourn with the shades, and our hypothesis is that it represents both death and gestation. The hut appears as a symbol of the womb in the pregnancy and 'gaping cough' rituals, and the doorway which 'belongs to the shades' is a symbol for the vagina. In the pregnancy ritual, passing through the doorway is explicitly interpreted as a symbol of birth, and in the death ritual mourners come out of the doorway stooping, and bump their heads against an obstruction. In the 'bringing out' in the death and puberty rituals, the mourners and the mbile girl run in and out of the doorway and water drops from the thatch. Kakuse, the doctor, interpreted this as a symbol of the mourners' receiving the shade back on to their bodies. We interpret it, rather more widely, as a symbol of rebirth. Both men and spirit are reborn, the shade in the bodies of the participants.

All through the rituals the connection of the shades with potency and fertility is emphasized. They cause menstruation and sexual desire; they are present in intercourse and ejected as semen; they control conception; they control fertility in the fields. 'The shade and the semen are brothers.'[2] 'When they shake the millet and pumpkin-seeds (after ritual connection) the seed is semen . . . and it is the shade. . . .' The symbols of male and female, plantain and sweet banana, recur repeatedly. The wearing of them is explicitly interpreted as a symbol of fertility, and laying them together under the litter is perhaps a symbol of the marriage union, like eating the banana with *ilipili* medicine. Intercourse between husband and wife is the culmination of the rituals of death, puberty, and twin birth, and is held to be essential to the health of

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. [illegible]

[2] cf. Bhaya, *ubuyi*: shade, semen; M. D. Hammond-Tooke, *A General Ethnographic Survey of the amaBhaca*, Unpublished thesis presented for the degree of Ph.D. in the University of Cape Town); Bhaya, *ubuyi*: semen with (A. Kropf, *Kafir-English Dictionary*); Zulu, *ubuyi*: departed spirit (C. M. Doke and Vilakazi, *A Dictionary of the Zulu Language*).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

776 the wife or the widow (even though she be old), as well as proof of
777 the support of the shades for the husband or heir. A symbol of the
●231 ritual connection, the *ilibalaya*, is offered to the shades of both lineages. Indeed, the rituals of death and twin birth, as well as the ritual of puberty and marriage, may be interpreted as a celebration of the union of husband and wife. For the parents of twins the end of the ritual marks the resumption of married life after a break during which contact between them was felt to be dangerous; for a widow and the heir of a dead man the end of the death ritual marks the beginning of their union.

776 The admonition of a widow or the mother of twins on her proper behaviour as a wife,[1] like a girl at her first marriage, underlines the fact that the death and twin-birth rituals are, in a sense, also marriage rituals.

772 The parts of the homestead connected with the shades are: first,
775 those associated with the procreative activities of husband and wife—the hearth, the bed, and the doorway of the hut. Prayer may be made at the hearth, and offerings are poured out on the hearth-bricks, or left overnight under the bed. 'The doorway is the shades' and much of the action in ritual takes place there. As has already been shown, the hearth is explicitly associated with the sexual life of husband and wife: hearth-bricks are placed at marriage, making fire by friction is a symbol of the marriage union, firewood is associated with a woman's reproductive capacity, and the hearth must not be approached by sexually active people other than the owner of the hut and her husband. The bed is the marriage bed. The doorway is identified with the vagina. Secondly, a defined grove of bananas, usually those nearest the doorway of the chief wife's hut, is thought to be frequented by the shades. It has been shown that plantains and sweet bananas are the symbols of male and female in all the rituals: in the sacred banana grove only plantains are grown. Bananas are propagated by suckers and the symbolism implied (but never explicitly stated) is that the place at which the offering of meat to the shades is placed represents the lineage which continually reproduces itself. What is explicit is that
[778] the banana grove is sacred, and that offerings are placed or buried at the root of a banana plant. We were told: '*ilibalaya*[2] *lyakutuula*

[1] We did not see this or the twin ritual observed, but were told that the mother of twins was sometimes admonished by her husband's sisters.

[2] *Ilibalaya*: a single banana plant from the sacred banana grove, a ritual killing of cattle in the sacred grove of a chief, spiritual sacrificial meat, phrase Holy Communion (modern usage).

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 F317 Ngonde F317 Nyakyusa

392 Impotence and barrenness are well known facts, and magic is much used
395 to cure them; but apart from their operation it is believed that such
584 conception directly depends upon the frequency with which a man visits his wife. And thus the bearing of children is, for a woman, a demonstration of her husband's great affection for her. People adduce the number of children that a woman has borne to prove, to conversation, that she is her husband's favourite.

595 Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan Nyakyusa; a plurality of wives is necessary, in this society, for full sexual satisfaction, wives bring a man wealth, prestige and authority, the more wives he has the more children, he thinks, will be born to him.

553 It is believed that any contact with the sexual fluids is dangerous to a
531 young child's health, and so, after a woman has borne a child, her husband is supposed wholly to refrain from intercourse with her for about a year, until the child is old enough to play by itself and allow its mother time to wash in the mornings before touching it. Then he may begin to visit her again, but still she must not become pregnant until the child is weaned. "If she does her breasts become rotten," and the first child is burned. As children are not weaned for two or three years, this rule involves the
[illegible] couple in yet another year or more either of celibacy or of infrequent intercourse (which also is believed to avoid conception). These taboos on intercourse after a child's birth are to some extent
[illegible] observed in practice, and are one of the reasons for polygyny among the Nyakyusa.

644 Another reason is the absence of hired labour. With a few minor
[illegible] exceptions the only way a man can increase the supply of labour at his disposal is by marrying more wives. Polygyny is the mark of a wealthy man, conditioned by his control of cattle, conditioning his supply of food. And the cattle spent in marriage come back again with interest as the polygynist's daughters begin to be betrothed and married.

593 It is extremely common for a man to take as his second or third wife the sister, half-sister, or brother's daughter of his first or second wife. By doing so a man pays a great compliment to the wife whose sister, or niece, he takes and to her family; his action implies complete satisfaction with her and friendship with her family. He sends his wife home "to fetch our (her kinswoman) into the open" (*ukwalula*); but she will not agree to do so unless she approves of him as a husband, and so, if she does agree, her action likewise compliments him. I know of one case in which a man wished to take his second wife's younger sister in this way,

9: Wilson E-5 (1924-1955) 1959
FNU7 Ngonde FNU7
Nyakyusa

and achievement. An account of the treatment of a field for protection against wild pig emphasizes this.

If people wish to protect a crop from wild pig they go to a doctor to ask for medicine. When he gives it to them he tells them that there must be no quarrelling in the home after they have barricaded the field. Four women go to the field with the husband of the one who cultivates it. They go after sunset. One woman is shaved; her head is a symbol of the garden devastated by pig. A second woman, who keeps her hair, has a head-pad on her head and carries bananas with medicine. She enters the field and eats the bananas. The husband climbs a hill or a little distance, and two of the women go into the long grass close to the field. The held pots wears a head-pad and the one with hair smears it with medicine and as they do so they look towards their husband and abuse him saying, 'You lay with your mother', and he answers or them saying, 'The leather aprons of your fathers' . . . and many other insults. Then the women walk round the edge of the field, sprinkling medicine, and they go out the way they came in. The circular pad is a symbol of the barricade placed round the field. When they return home they do not eat but go to sleep hungry (though the shaver does not beforehand). If they quarrel, the pig finishes the food. It is as if quarrelling destroyed the favourable, the power, of the protective medicine; you must put aside all quarrelling that the medicine may be powerful. If the pigs come it is as if there were a quarrel, as the woman and her husband quarrel in the field scrutinizing the pig. The husband on the hill is like the pig approaching the field, his wives in the long grass also represent pigs. . . . The husband and his wives quarrel only in the field. If, when the maize is ripe, the husband beats one of his wives for any cause she does not go to pick the maize herself, a friend picks it for her. If she goes in her anger she finds the maize finished, nothing but earth is left.

Here the link between medicine and morality is made plain. Quarrelling produces medicines of all sorts and renders them ineffective. But a minor quarrel between husband and wives in the fields renders the medicine effective. It represents the battle between the pig and the medicines. There is a suggestion elsewhere (pp. 89, 109) that pigs are sent by the shades when kinsmen or neighbours quarrel, but in the account just quoted it is implied that quarrelling in the home directly injures the medicine.

In themselves, many medicines are neutral. They may be put to good or evil ends, but because they are dangerous and powerful, they are feared, in the same sort of way as cosmic energy is feared in contemporary society. Men use medicines themselves 'for purely peaceful purposes', but they are shocked at

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

for an appropriate medicine, and his main function is organising the ceremonies.

(d) SYMBOLISM

In the field of medicine imagination runs riot, and associations are unpredictable. The ingredients of most medicines are professional secrets and unknown to the user who takes the concoction on trust from his doctor, and inquires no further. Therefore the study of medicine is not linked to the study of social relationships in the same manner as is the study of ritual, for the symbolism of medicines is individual and free, whereas the symbolism of ritual is common and obligatory.

Nevertheless, the imagination of doctors works within the general symbolic system, and such knowledge as we have indicates that many of the associations made are similar to those used in ritual. In medicine, as in the rituals of kinship, one type of banana stands for a male, another for a female, a banana sucker represents a binatum, a spreading shoot conception. Smithing and cutting are felt to be alike, and the molten iron that trickles out of a forge is linked with menstrual blood. Hair stands for growth, and a bald pate a devastated field. A ring, or circumambulation, implies a protecting fence. Pythons, crocodiles, leopards, and lions stand for power and majesty, spears and thorns for attack; vomiting and emptiness for innocence, spitting for forgiveness. There is colour symbolism in medicines (though we know little of it save that the depth which stands for the blood of the lineage is red, or reddish brown), and auditory symbolism, the rumble of thunder and the groaning of a hollow being identified. Men mimic that which they wish to avoid, as well as that which they desire; like things are antagonistic as well as sympathetic. No doubt a laborious study of prescriptions would reveal further general principles of association, as well as the range of individual imagination, but such a task has yet to be undertaken.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

764 Besides fighting, the dancers indulge in an orgy of destruction,
537 slashing at the bananas and *fence* saplings (which surround the
747 empty courtyard) with their spears.

764 The dance was thus, traditionally, a common form for the ex-
535 pression by the dancers of a considerable range of emotions, vary-
152 ing from an intolerable burden of grief and fear to a recognition of and salute to the warlike quality of the dead man and a vivid consciousness of their own. And this last feeling passed easily into actual fighting.

764 To-day it is not so much into the excitement of warfare that
535 the feelings turn, but rather into those of love. Burial dances are
• 152 the occasions of much sexual display, of the beginning of some love affair and the consummation of others, and this is nothing new. 'At a death people did not want war (though it came sometimes), they wanted love-making: they displayed the pride of their strength!' 'We spoured one another . . . our wives called the warrior when they saw the strength of their husbands.'

777 Dances of sexual display, on occasions other than burials, are
535 traditional among the Nyakyusa; but all our informants are
107 unanimous in declaring that both these other dances and the dances of burial are far more frequently followed by lovers' meetings than they used to be. For the enforcement of peace among the Nyakyusa has been accompanied by the prohibition of violence of any kind; and this has freed sexual passion from its rigid traditional bonds. Girls are married young and engaged younger; and
[619] while formerly any man who seduced or even flirted with another man's betrothed or wife was speared or tortured by the husband and his friends if they caught him, such punishments are now illegal and the present fine of cattle is a far less effective deterrent. 'In the old days love-making only went on in secret; if a man stood and talked to a woman he expected to be speared. But now the Europeans have introduced the custom of making love openly!' (i.e. by forbidding the previous penalties.)

764 For all the younger men and women, save the chief mourners
535 and close friends, the quality of the burial dance is now pre-
152 dominantly and openly sexual. But the older people are, on the one hand, more conscious of its warlike associations and, on the other hand, inclined to regard the whole occasion more soberly than their juniors. 'There are two reasons for coming to a burial: the old men come to mourn their friend, they say: "Let us go and mourn him"; but the young men say: "Let us follow the

2: William E-5 (1934-1938);1957 F3117 Ngonde F3117
Nyakyusa

tradition of the leaping dance and show ourselves to the girls!' 764
And so it is with the women, some of the young women do not 725
come to mourn but to call the war-cry to the boys! Those who 132
come to mourn go into the hut and weep and weep. The young men say that they dance by reason of the women. The old men say that in the past it was different, it was war; the women ran behind the fighters watching the battle and calling the war-cry. And we all say that the present custom of dancing is the sober custom of a peaceful land.'

As the old significance of the dance to the majority of the participants was a lively salute to the dead man's fighting quality and a heightened sense of their own, so now it is his sexual quality which they honour and their own which they enjoy. 'Why', we asked a young man, 'do you dance nowadays at burials? There is little or no warfare and the dead man was never a fighter?' His answer came almost in the traditional form of words: 'We think that he too danced before the women, he was a brave dancer (*mage*), and so we too dance (*ukuhina*) at his death.'

'He too was a brave dancer (*mage*).' The word *mage* is from the 725
verb *ukumage* which refers to the ordinary dances of sexual display 764
in contrast to the war-dance (*ukuhina*). It is the war-dance which 721
is still normally danced at death. Not only, however, is its signi- 132
ficance being assimilated to that of the ordinary dances of courtship, as this quotation clearly shows, but these other dances are 177
now often performed at burials. Near Rungwe Mission the pagans dance the war-dance on the first day of a burial and sometimes on the second day as well, but always on the third day the dance is changed. The men abandon cloth skirts, spears, and ankle-bells [192]
and put on their best clothes, an ample white toga being particularly fashionable; the women adorn themselves with great care and some put cosmetics in their hair. The dance is no longer a wild melée, but is slow and graceful; and its sexual significance is now apparent, not only in the faces of the dancers and the comments of the bystanders, but also in the form of movement.

This custom is new. None of the chief mourners takes part in the 725
dance, though they watch it. In the war-dance, however, the chief 764
mourners among the men are expected to participate, and some 721
of them always do so. 'The (men) relatives dance if they have 177
strength, they weep first and then dance. For if they sit still and no one of them dances we others say that they have not mourned him properly.' But they do not all dance. One old man whose

538 746 541 177 brother had just been buried said: 'Those who are really sad sit quite still and silent.' But he was an old man with little strength for dancing; on the first day of his brother's burial he sat still, but on the second day he danced a little.

As for the women who participate in the war-dance, running about among the men and calling the war-cry, their behaviour is clearly distinguished in accordance with their relationship to the dead man. 'The dancer (women) relatives dance in their dirt, they cannot adorn themselves much, but non-relatives adorn themselves. The wives and sisters of a dead man and the senior women relatives are the chief mourners and they cannot dance at the burial. They are truly grieved. If a wife danced we'd say she did not love her husband—well, perhaps she might wander round distraught to the sound of the drums, but with grief on her face and without looking at the young men! If she looked at the young men we'd say she did not love her husband. If a brother's wife danced we doubt laugh at her and say she was no kinswoman of the dead man! But for a man it is different, he dances with his grief to enable his heart to bear it. In the old days, if there was a fight, the chief women mourners did not follow and call the war-cry, but the others; all the men went to fight but not all the women to watch.'

539 746 177 Our observation shows that there is just as much dancing at the burials of women as at those of men. Here too the dance, as now performed, combines the two functions: assuaging the painful grief 539 541 of some people and providing a sexual display in honour of the dead: 'We dance at her burial, for she too was a brave dancer (*mapi*).' But in the old days also there was dancing at women's burials: 'For a woman', one old man explained, 'bears a man, so that she too is a warrior.' 'In the past,' said another old man, 'we did dance at women's burials, only a little, not as much as at men's; we said that she was only a woman, but that none the less she also was concerned in war.'

The change in the quality of the burial dance is one of emphasis only; in the past also the sexual element was present: 'We danced so that the women should see our strength'—but it was not dominant. And the warlike quality which was then dominant has by no means disappeared; we heard of many spear-fights at burial dances. At one of them the chief, in order to prevent its continuance, made the dancers abandon the war-dance and finish the funeral with the ordinary dances of sexual display.

751 764 The emotional quality of mourning (*ubuhe*) is different in

J: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

the fang will drop out, and the man will be saved! There are men living near me who claim to have seen this being done.

The birth of children is accompanied by loving care, gross superstition, and much medical treatment, useful or otherwise. All women at that time are given a drink of *indobo* leaves, pounded and mixed with water. If the placenta has not come away satisfactorily, castor oil is given. And if pain supervenes, the bark of *indobo* is again given, pounded and mixed with water. For a child weak at birth, roots of *uwudu* and *mangwina* are taken, pounded, mixed with water, and the child is washed in the mixture. Sterility in man or woman can be removed by the right drugs; and when a woman is getting on in years and wishes no more children, a mixture is in use which will have the desired effect. Medicines for producing abortion are widely known, and frequently used, as also are love potions.

Steaming is resorted to in cases of great pain or weakness. Water is cooked in a large pot, with the bark of *mparampara* added. When the pot has boiled, it is taken off the fire, and the patient, covered with a mat, kneels over it, supported if very weak, for about ten minutes. Massaging also is employed when one is very tired, the leaves of *mayoka* being pounded to give a juice for lubrication, or, as the people themselves say, to get into the body through the pores. Cupping is employed for headache and rheumatic pains. Eight cuts are made in two lines, on each side of the head; a small horn is put over the cuts; a

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 F367 Ngonde F367
Nyakyusa

535 [832] These dances seemed to be a representation of "sex appeal" or courting. Each new phase of the dance was introduced by the advancing of one or two young women fairly near to the side of the men, then each retreated followed by the whole lines of both the sexes. If the youngest girls present who stood mostly behind the "dancing" line (i. e. the group of the advancing women and older girls) were to come too near the proper dancing place, they were driven back. The older people and the *amafuwa* were only spectators.

535 292 The women had no special dancing dress, but the men did. They now were mostly a sort of tight jackets or sweaters and wide robes, coloured or with patterns.

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Synopsis

000 Verfasser legt seine Ermittlungen vor, die er während seines dreimonatigen Aufenthalts im Dorfe der Masoko (die zu den Nyakyusa gehören) sammelte. Sie geben einen Einblick in die damals, 1939, überwiegend traditionsgebundene Lebensweise dieses Stammes, namentlich bezüglich der Medizinmänner und der Behandlung der Kranken. Um im Falle der Schwester des Häuptlings die Ursache der Erkrankung zu ermitteln, wurde ein Wahrsager gerufen, der bei einer Sitzung den Ehemann als Urheber feststellte. Zur Heilung wurden vom Häuptling Zeremonien am Grabe von dessen Vater angeordnet. Außerdem beschreibt Verfasser aus eigener Erfahrung die Trauerzeremonie nach dem Tode eines Kindes, die Initiation eines verlobten Mädchens u. a.

J. Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa
Galya Mulungulu

It is forbidden for the heir to lie with the dead man's wives before the ritual is over. But at the time of the heir, when the drinking is finished, we put him into the house and he lies with them. If he has lain with them previously the omen refuses to come. . . . But if all goes well the officiants raise the cry of triumph (*ubulala*) and shake a winnowing basket of seeds by the door and cry: 'Ours, ours, we marvel at the thing, we marvel at the thing (*ifyela, ifyela, tupumwile ilinda*).' If he fails they go to diviner and the diviner says: 'Blinds (sickness from the shades), he has forestalled the ritual (*ubulala ubungaga*).' Then they pray in the bananas. He must have intercourse with all the women he is inheriting; yes, however old they may be, he must lie with them that night or else they will lose their strength of body or mind, or else their legs will swell. With the old men he will never lie again! He drinks fresh milk to give him strength beforehand! Fresh milk gives strength, it produces semen.

The next morning each of the wives goes off to her father with *ilibelaga* and with meat; the fire is buried in the bananas, it goes to the place of the shades, the meat is eaten. And the man too goes with his *ilibelaga* to his own father. Each wife makes her *ilibelaga* by wiping her own and her husband's genitals with her hands and then taking content bananas in them. He himself does likewise at the end.

The *ilibelaga* goes to the place of the shades, it is to drive away the shade of the dead man; before this he had not reached the place of shades but was on the way. In this manner we tell the shade that we have put another in his place, we tell him to go and join the other shades now and to come back with them to warm themselves by the fire in his old house.

QUESTION: How can a chief who inherits many wives lie with them all in one night?

KAMUNA: I do not know how. Kyala gives him strength! . . . He has intercourse with them all. Yes, really this does happen. . . . But if the man is old and fails to lie with them all, perhaps the wives will conceal the fact. He lies on one side of a partition wall with his wives and the people (for many come to sleep in his house that night) on the other. Then if he fails altogether . . . no one beats the partition with a stick, they all stay quiet all morning; but if he succeeds at few, and fails at the last few, they may perhaps conceal it. One of the wives is told by the officiant to beat the partition with a stick when he has lain with all his wives. When she does this the officiants who are in the doorway shake up lentils and millet and pumpkin-seeds in a winnowing basket and call out: 'Ours, ours! We marvel at the thing!' If he fails altogether they stay quiet and next day go to diviner; the diviner says: 'Blinds.' Then they pray and pray, and praise all the shades of old, and that night he tries again and the omen comes.

The seeds of lentil, millet and pumpkin are symbols of the shades, the

[i.e. the reward to the dead.—Analyst]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F3117 Ngemba F3117
Nyakyusa
Swiga, Malagasy

beetl is the shade, the millet is the shade, the pumpkin-seed is the 775
shade. The doctor takes them away home and sets them, that means 748
that the shades have gone away. The words they say: 'Gum, gum! We 333
marvel at the thing!' means: 'The sinners is gum, the shades have supported him, they have given us the sinners, they have not bound it.' For if the shades are angry they bind him and the sinners does not come. . . . If the heir and his dead father (or brother) were on bad terms then, although the ritual is correctly done, yet still the shades will bind his sinners at the end of the ritual. Fertility (*ubugo*) does not belong to the shades but to Kyala, but if the shade is angry he binds it. [illegible]

There are three symbols: the banana is the corpse and the seed is the shade. It is the filth which soulless earth hold of, it is the faeces which they eat. And the banana is the body of the man and the seed is his sinners. Eating is sexual intercourse. It is this he has done during his lifetime. It is to send him away and say that we are about to put another in his homestead. It is the body and sinners of him who has died. Also when a woman has died the husband says . . . it [the banana and seed] is what we did. . . .

The seed is the shade, and it is the blood for creating a person [i.e. the sinners] because the shade and the sinners are brothers.[1]

Yes, they are intermingled, all are together in the ritual: the corpse, and the shade, and the body of the man [i.e. his penis] and the blood [sinners] and the filth of soulless; all are intermingled. You understand, Mwaipaja (G. W.), you are a priest now, you are a real priest. . . .

When they shake up the millet and beetle and pumpkin-seeds at the hour when he has finished coitus with the woman it also has a double symbolism (*Sepa for Mwami Mbili*), the seed is the blood [sinners]—Gum, gum—and it is the shade who has gone. Also at puberty it is like this. . . .

Those who say the *dipele* is one and the same for birth, puberty and the death ritual are right. It is one only. . . . The *dipele* is our blood, it is kept in the house of the senior wife. It pertains both to men and to the shades, for when we marry we do a ritual with it, so the shade says: 'I have eaten it during my life, I was born with it (for it went into his stomach), I married a woman with it (we wash and shave our hair with it at marriage), now that I am dead they perform the ritual with it.' It is one and the same. The *dipele* is our invention.[2] It is one and the same in all lineages.

One day at a funeral roasted bananas were brought. A man 764
started scraping the ash off his with a spear. Kaitile asked him: 'Do you scrape bananas?' He answered: 'Yes, but if there were the liver in the house we would avoid doing so.'

[1] cf. (Ubungo: sinners; *Ipangu*: pumpkin-seed.
[2] (Dude Sam Ishale: 'the invention of the lineage'); the large invention.

764 Then they explained to me that formerly it was forbidden to
177 scrape bananas at a death, you cut them with the sub on, for if you scrape you will scrape your body also, that is, you will scratch and scratch. But now that custom is finished. Those men were scraping away.

764 Mwakisambo said: 'In all rituals it is forbidden to scrape bananas —in the puberty and twin rituals also.'

764 Kaswa: It is forbidden to scrape bananas only at a death ritual,
765 not at other rituals. If you scrape bananas you scrape your own body. It is the corpse. We have died, we are the corpse. . . .

764 The mother's brother (*mwajinei*) hands bananas and meat over his
765 shoulder to the children who are mourned, then he goes off home and
767 they go home without looking back at one another. If they do look back at one another the child will grow feeble and go mad. If the mother's brother does not come to cut the bananas grown and do this, if the child sees others eating that bananas it becomes feeble and goes mad. The bananas and the meat are the fish which mudmen take hold of, they are fish. Yes, it is like the bananas which they cut at the pumpkin-seeds ritual.

Question: Why the mother's brother?

Kaswa: Who should give it to them? Their kinsmen (*ndowa*) should give it to them, he who looks after everything for them.

3. *Mwambi's interpretation.*[1]

764 Question: What do you do in the death ritual, what does it mean?

Mwamsan: When a child has died I do not approach the women, my wives, until we have finished the ritual. On the night of the day we drink the beer then we count together. It is a ritual. Yes, the coming
• [31] together of men and women is a ritual (*ku kumana*). If we count together before the beer then we overcome our child, Lubabelo, he will be impotent and not begat children. No, his children are not relatives (*ba kwele*) they are my comrades (*bakimange*) but if Lubabelo forsaults (*abalinde*) the ritual with his wife then he overcome (*abalinde*) his children. And when we have finished the ritual Lubabelo begins[2] and goes free to his wife. We follow him at our home. If we begin we would overcome him, it is taboo (*mwile*). At the ritual of pumpkin-seeds, we drive away the shade, we say: 'Do not rise from the dead and come to us, go to the land of the shades, that we may bear and begat another child, you prevent us doing so!'

[1] He was Lubabelo, who was with us during the earlier part of the conversation, left so that we could speak freely. There was no difficulty about Mwambi's wife being present.

[2] Mwambi was referring to a ritual performed on the death of his son Lubabelo's child.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F7617 Ngonde F7617
Nyakyusa
Selya, Kukwende

Question: The banana and the pumpkin-seeds? 764

Mwanzwe: These are the ritual which we—I the man, and she the woman—perform at the end, they are the sexual intercourse. The pumpkin-seed and the lentil and the millet are the blood of the man, the banana is his procreative power (*ubugwa jake*). The pumpkin-seed ritual is important—when we have finished it then I go to my wife and do not fear her, but Lehabelelo begins. Before the pumpkin-seed ritual it is completely taboo.

Question: And the beer?

Mwanzwe: That is not important, but the pumpkin-seed ritual is. But when a man has died then his wife must not approach the heir until the beer ritual.

Question: Then the lust for copulation always comes from the shades? 833 ●

Mwanzwe: Yes, desire comes from the shades. If they are angry you are impotent and cannot beget a child; and sometimes also you are impotent because the umbilical cord (*ishidzi*) has fallen on your mother. 775 §92

Mwanzwe's Wife: When my husband says in his heart: 'I shall go to my wife', that comes from the shades.

Question: The umbilical cord?

Mwanzwe's Wife: It is completely taboo for it to fall on the loins, then the child will not develop, it will be sterile and not bear (or beget) a child. And the mother herself will not bear again, she will not conceive again. . . . A woman cries a great deal with the pain in her belly until the cord comes away: when it has come away then she is filled with wonder and does not cry.[1]

Mwanzwe: Pumpkin-seeds are used by us and the people of Selya, 764 the Kukwe perform the ritual with beans, and the people of Ngonde with fish and beer. . . .

Question: Why do the heir and wife appear to refuse when caught in the ritual?

Mwanzwe: Because someone has died. Should they rejoice therefore? If they rejoice it seems as if they wished their relative to die.

Question: Do they fear the dead will harm them if they appear to rejoice?

Mwanzwe: No, they fear those above [i.e. the living] lest they laugh at them. They are ashamed. But sometimes a woman really refuses. She fights and fights, and struggles and struggles, and says: 'No.' Her friends (the women) hit her and put her in the house, then when she has come out of the house she runs off, she flees.

Question: The ashes and the *ilingolenggelwa* creeper?

Mwanzwe: They are signs of mourning, they give them to the

[1] The umbilical cord, *ishidzi*, is literally the 'cord of weeping'.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selja, Ngonde

764 *Sele.* It is the ritual we are performing, they are signs of widowhood (*fye bufwele*), of lamentation (*fye kwe*). The ashes are a sign of lamentation and the *dingolongyfwe* creeper is a sign of lamentation. Yes, all these things are part of the ritual, we cannot leave them out, it is taboo. (If we did) those below [i.e. the shades] would be angry and say: 'They have startled me and caused me pain in the heart; they have injured the ritual by foreshadowing evil.'

764 At the end the heir sleeps with the women in the house—before the
764 heir. He performs the ritual with them, the officiants wait for them
and ask them: 'How was it?' If he says 'No,' they say: 'Kyala does not
[713] stand in the house.' They go and divine at a doctor's who says: 'So-and-so is angry.'

Question: Kyala does not stand in the house (*Kyala akwa ngwandu*)?

Mwamsene: It is the shades, they say Kyala does not give support. Then again he performs the ritual (*dungwala*, i.e. he arranges to have coitus) and they ask him: 'How was it?' They say: 'Yes, they (the shades) have stood with us, Kyala has stood with us.' [He gave both forms as alternatives: *Isamwala* and *Kyala ewala*.] Then they clap their hands and raise the shout of triumph (*ukulula*).

Question: Is that the cry: 'Oum, oum!'?

[714 Mwamsene: No, that's the cry of the hill people. With us it's taboo.
714 Then in the morning someone shouts: 'War has come.' They come out immediately and run away to the pasture-lands.

764 Question: Is this 'coming out' (*ukwoka*) the same as that in the coming out of chith (*ukwoka*) and in the twin ceremony?

Mwamsene: Yes, they run because their legs were heavy (*usile*) in the house, now they have grown lighter and are strong; because in the twin ceremony the seclusion in the house lasts four months, at the coming out of chith two months, and that is hard, but at death it is only one, so it is light. But at death and the birth of twins it is the war (*ubwite*)
[733 of the men. Is it not war with women? [*ubwite* is used here for sexual
713 intercourse.] Then when they have come out they give one another beer to drink in the doorway. The heir takes beer in his mouth and
[753 spits it out and hands the vessel on to his wives and children. Each does the same. They do not swallow it. To do so causes diarrhoea. The man and his wives are burning. They have come from the bed. This giving one another to drink, when each spits and does not swallow, happens after the eating of sausages of porridge on the road.[1] It is the same in the twin ritual except that whereas it is only the principals who give one another to drink at the death ritual, in the twin ritual not only they, but all relatives, and even non-relatives do it as well!

Question: How about the eating of millet porridge with powdered medicine on the road?

[1] No other informant mentioned this in the Mu-Ngonde death ritual.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ugonde F317
Nyakyusa
Ex Sec.

775 shade (*mwandu*)? That (which was buried) is just earth, the body has
764 rotted, it is the shade that we care for.

QUESTION: And the necklace of banana bark?

764 MWAMALEMBA: We sleep with them. In the morning we bathe again and throw them in the water. . . . Yes, indeed, some throw them away in the little hut. It is the shade, we perform the ritual and throw him away. . . . If we do not perform the ritual we do not sleep, then we pray in the banana grove and are startled.

QUESTION: Why the banana bark?

MWAMALEMBA: It is with the banana that we perform the ritual: the plantain is what we steal and the sweet banana what we eat at home, and in the banana grove we pray.

When a man dies his wives sit in a row on a bark-cloth. It's at the shaving of the hair, the doctor shaves them on the bark-cloth. It's a new one because we say: 'You must throw away the bark-cloths which your husband who has died caught hold of, and wear other cloths.' So they sit on a new one.

QUESTION: What do they do with it?

MWAMALEMBA: They throw it away on the lions.

QUESTION: Where?

MWAMALEMBA: In the little hut. It means: 'Now we have mourned, let us throw away everything, let us wear others.' If a woman has died we men do not sit on the bark-cloth, but if I have died then my wife sits on the bark-cloth and throws away her old ones, and also when a son has died the mother throws away her old bark-cloths, but she does not sit on the bark-cloth! No! And she does not throw away her bark-cloth for the death of a small son, nor for a daughter, even though she be grown up. No! See, she is also a woman and wears a bark-cloth in front. But for a grown son a mother throws away her bark-cloths, saying: 'Because he was my child, I bore him, he sucked my breasts, so I throw away the bark-cloths.' Only for a grown son who has wives in his house does the mother throw away her bark-cloth, nor for a bachelor.

764 QUESTION: The stones between the fingers?
775 MWAMALEMBA: We throw him away. It is the shade.

QUESTION: Is the first intercourse after a death a ritual or not?

764 MWAMALEMBA: No, it is not a ritual; we begin to have intercourse
768 when the ritual is finished. But among the Penja when someone has
171 died and the ritual has been performed and is finished, the husband takes a cow and gives it to the father of his wife, saying: 'I take the woman.' Then he has intercourse with her. But we do not, except in the case of twins.

● 833 QUESTION: And ordinary intercourse?

775 MWAMALEMBA: The shade is together with the heart (*ulwaja indumbale*); it is he who is roused and goes to a woman, it is he who stiffens

2: Wilson E-9 (1934-1938)1937 F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa
Kinship

as in front, we men, and the woman is also round. If you have not the §33
shade in you (*shungu ungwale*)[1], then you are sterile, you are impotent, 778
you do not copulate with women; we say that the shades have brooded over you. Why do they not cause him to go to women? He just looks at them. Because the shade remains within a man and says: 'No!' It causes a man to copulate with a woman. If it has brooded on him then it does not cause him; it is within him, it does not wish to come out.

Question: Why do you let the hair grow in the death ritual?

Mwamsumbe: The hair is very important, it's very important. 764

Mwamlombe identified growing hair after spearing a man, and after the birth of twins and later shaving, with growing hair and shaving in the death ritual.

Question: So letting the hair grow at an ordinary death is part of the ritual?

Mwamsumbe: It [the hair] is the corpse's. We have not yet driven him away. At the shaving we drive him off.

Syungu (wife of Mwamlombe) told me that stones were placed 764
between the toes, not only of the participants in the death ritual, 778
but also of a bride (*unungu*)[2] and that the stones are children (*amabwe ya bana*). The girl should bear six or ten children to her husband.

'But', I said, 'at the death ritual you throw away the corpse, the shade.'

Syungu answered: 'Yes, it is so, children are born by the power §42
of the shades (*amasha ga kaywale*).'

Mwamlombe himself, when asked about this, said: 'The stones are the shade, we throw him away so that when he has gone the girl may bear children.'

Syungu: When a girl does not bear children we say: 'Perhaps §42
the shades are angry, the husband has not finished giving marriage- 778
cattle.'

Question: And madness?

Syungu: If she goes mad we say, if we have not treated her: 'We 158
have neglected the ritual, we have not treated her!' The girl runs about 785
aimlessly, she smears herself with filth. But when we have treated her and she goes mad then we say: 'Perhaps Kyala has deserted me, see nothing remains, we have treated her.'

[1] He used both the phrases shadu kuja mungale (to be without the shade) and ungale shamashadu (the shade broods on him) for the same phenomenon.

[2] *Unungu*: a girl who has reached puberty but has not yet borne a child; one undergoing the puberty-marriage ritual (*ubunungu*).

2: Wilson E-9 (1934-1938)1937 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kelkam

[78.6] porridge—messages of porridge are buried in the ground and blown off by the principals who stoop down to do it.

QUESTION: What does it mean?

KAGONO: It means that we are about to honour them; they eat, and he whom we have buried also remains below, he also eats, we bury the message in the earth and we say we are burying him also, then he will fear to come to the house.

QUESTION: And this porridge is a symbol of the filth which those who run mad eat?

KAGONO (laughing): Yes, because if we omit to do these things the children become fatuous, their hearts say 'Ho! ho!' [jeering and excited] and they rush off to the road and are dire (*mwali*).

QUESTION: Why should the shades do this to them? How are they innocent in dire (*mwali*)?

KAGONO: I don't know. We say it is because we have not accompanied them on the road and on account of this the shade is very angry and says: 'We shall see whether their children flourish!' He has bewitched them (*shalagala*).

QUESTION: And what about the circling round with the harp and the trampling at the fire?

KAGONO: That is not very important, Mwanjaja [G. W.], it is because he cultivated food and danced at beer drinks when he was alive, so we dance for him now that he is dead. . . . A widow must lie with her husband the night before she comes to do the (*ingomb*) ritual, [137] and she comes with his filth on her, she does not wash. If she comes without having lain with him the night before then we all get the [78.7] disease. The disease comes from the new husband, it comes from his seed, the seed that begets us men. When his seed enters her womb then she is heavy (*nzite*) and if she eats or drinks out of our dishes and pots while we are empty (*bwai*), before we have supped ourselves with medicines, then she gives us the disease. She has not given us the preventive medicine (*mdwaga*).

[78.9] If a woman changes from one husband to another and both are [78.3] alive, there is no danger and no ritual. It is death that brings the danger, because that man [her first husband] has died; he has died and rotted below, and from that disease comes. The disease only comes from this situation. If no relative has died there is no (*ngomb*). But if my wife has run off with another man and then comes back to me with his semen in her, then I take some powdered medicine and eat some and throw a little on the fire, and if I do not do this then my legs will hurt, I shall be unable to walk properly, and my body will become weak. Neither she nor her relatives take medicine, nor does her new husband, if she goes to him and he pays for her and takes her. He just marries her.

[78.9] [367] If the widow is left with a sucking child and is empty [*bwai*: i.e. her

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa
Seligman, Malinowski

at the groom's home (*ubwabwale*). The party was given a hen [93]
when they arrived and a second the next morning. The groom and [94]
some of his friends spent the night with the bride and her friends. [95]
(He and she lie together on this occasion but do not yet have full
intercourse.)[1] In the morning the mother-in-law shaved the [96]
bride's head, eyebrows, and eyelashes, leaving only a small tuft on
the nape of her neck. Then she mixed water with powdered medi-
cine and poured it for groom and bride to wash. The groom
washed his hands and mouth only, the bride her hands and mouth
and whole body. During her seclusion she might not use oil or the
red powder favoured as a cosmetic by Nyakyusa women,[2] but
after this third washing she was free to do so, and she oiled herself
meticulously. Meanwhile the groom was shaved by one of his [100]
friends.

On the same day the bride returned to her father's homestead
with her own party and seven 'mothers' of the groom who brought
five stems of bananas, a pot of water, and a small bull for the ritual
of 'clearing out the litter' (*ubusuyo ulufombo*). She herself was wear-
ing the skin of a bull over her head—'she wears any skin she can
get hold of'. One of the groom's party shaved off the last tuft of [102]
her hair and buried it carefully in the *ulufombo*, the litter of banana
leaves on which she had slept and sat during her seclusion. Had
her own mother been present she would have shaved also and so [103]
should the brother, but he did not do so. The groom's mother and
Kyolwe (representing the bride's mother) carried out the litter to
the edge of the banana plantation surrounding the homestead. As
they did so they whispered to each other. Kyolwe said the bride
was a little liar. Her husband had offered her 1s. to take to her
mothers and she had refused it saying: 'No, they swear at me and
grudge me food.' 'She's your child,' said the mother-in-law. 'No,'
said Kyolwe, 'she's another woman's child, she's a foolish child.'
Every scrap of litter in the hut was carefully collected and a little
of the soil below it scraped off and carried out with the leaves. All
who had helped with the clearing washed their hands carefully.

Then the groom's mother made a basin of two banana leaves
close to the pile of litter. Into it she poured the water her party
had brought with them, and sprinkled in powdered medicine in

[1] One or two informants maintained that 'she must not refuse him now or he will refuse to wash with her, saying: "She is not my wife."' But others were insistent that according to strict custom only intercourse *inter crura* was allowed. Full intercourse at this time would make nonsense of the *ilibolaga* ritual which follows. [113]

[2] Formerly also by men: cf. V. Giraud, *Les Lacs de l'Afrique Equatoriale* (1890), p. 176.

2: Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa
Selya, Ng Ngonde

no water." Don't let your in-laws say to us: "You did not bring 585
her up properly, she behaves proudly." '

Another whispered: 'When your husband comes to lie with you do not fight him, but accept him. If you avoid him you have a case against you,' and she laughed as she said it.

There was also whispered advice about menstruation: 'You wait three or four days. . . . When a child appears look after yourself.' During the instruction the bride sat with her maids crouching round her, their heads covered by cloths, all giggling a little. None of the mothers made any attempt to hit the bride, though in discussing the ritual a number of informants insisted that 'the mothers do not teach her by word of mouth only, they also beat her' and 'they scold her for all the things which she has hitherto done wrong at her husband's house'. Old Kasitile explained that: 'If the girl is a good wife, then the husband tells the mothers, saying: "You must not swear at my wife, she always listens to me." Then no one beats her. . . . But if she is proud at her husband's then they beat her.' The mother who bore her husband says: "She has been proud towards me, she's a harsh (shali) girl," and they hit her with their fists.'

The teaching as described by a number of women may be summed up thus: the bride is told to fetch relish from the fields, draw water, sweep the house, tend the fire, fetch firewood ('if you do not draw water or fetch firewood you are a fool') and prepare food for her husband when he comes in from hoeing at midday and again in the evening; she must never be proud (sumatage) when her husband calls for water or anything else, but always answer with the submissive *ee* and not just say *ok*; she must be hospitable to her husband's friends and her own mothers when they come to visit; she must cook for children and be gentle to them. She must look towards her mother-in-law now—her own mothers are 'just people'. 'We have sent you to your husband's house and if we hear of quarrels there you are no child of ours.' She is told to wipe her husband after intercourse, to wash her own [155]
body often and to be careful to attend to herself properly when she is menstruating and to wash her hands frequently and not allow her husband to approach her then. She is told not to reject her husband at other times ('if you refuse him he will demand his cattle back'), and she is warned not to flirt with other men. Most 364
instruction in the art of love-making (including demonstration of the correct body movements) comes informally from girl friends a

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F3517 Ngonde F3517
Nyakyusa
Selga, Mr Ngonde

§27
front. See, the man ejects semen! Does it not go inside? The woman §28
becomes heavy and overcome the bride.'

Even after she has been treated, the bride avoids any close con- §29
tact with those who are 'heavy'; in particular they are excluded §30
from her hut. Her own mother 'does not sleep with the father at all from the time the girl grows up until she goes to her husband, and begins intercourse with him. It is taboo. She says to her husband: "See, I am keeping my child company." ' But the 'play' of her companions does not matter, for intercourse *inter crura* does not make anyone heavy; it is the semen of a man in a woman's belly which makes her heavy, and her husband also, through contact with her.

The second medicine used at the puberty ritual is the *ikipiki*,[1] 781
made from the bark of certain small-leaded forest trees. The same species is used by many Nyakyusa families, but the identity of the person who provides it is very important, for it is identified with the blood (*ililopa*) of the family. In the puberty-marriage ritual the groom's mother provides the *ikipiki* with which the bride washes at her husband's (if she is a senior wife), at the rite of 'putting her in' (*ukwingwisa*), at the second washing with her husband, at the shaving, and at the washing before jumping over fire. The same medicine is used each time. It is also sprinkled on the bananas she eats at the *ukwingwisa*. The bride's own mother, however, provides the *ikipiki* which is added to her porridge and buried under the hearth the day she first menstruates, and that used for washing her father, or brother, and mother at the *ukwingwisa*. Also, should it be known that the bride is not a virgin, the mother-in-law will refuse to bring her *ikipiki* and it must be provided for each rite by her mother. The medicine is in itself awesome (*ukiye*). Kaniile's wife remarked one day that the bride slept with one of her maids in front of her, 'at her stomach', and one behind. We asked why. She replied: 'That *ikipiki* medicine! It's awesome. She 782
fears to be alone.' 'If someone has not given her the *ikipiki* to drink §91
and heavy ones cook food and give it to her she goes bad, she has periods without cessation.' The mother gives porridge with *ikipiki* to the girl and buries some under the hearth. That means may she be heavy in her stomach, for if heavy ones warm themselves at the fire in the house, she is in danger of going bad, she will have a continuous issue of blood.' 'If the *ikipiki* were not given, her period

[1] *Umupiki*: a tree of any species. *Ikipiki*: medicine made from the bark of certain species (one is a *Monanthotaxis*) and used in the rituals of death, puberty, and birth. [§28]

2: Wilson E-3 (1936-1938)1957 F3117 Ngonde F3117
Nyakyusa
Selig, Hellmuth

again an acknowledgement of kinship. 'If she washed outside it would mean that she was not the daughter of her father.'

The two fresh leaves of plantain and sweet banana on which the officiant places her soiled bark-cloth, and on top of which she knots its cut banana ore, are already stated, symbols of male and female. Everyone understood this. Fewer people were aware of the symbolism of eating the banana, but Kaitile and one or two others were fully conscious of it and forthright in discussion. He said:

> At the 'putting her in' (*ukwingwisa*) the mothers-in-law bring a new bark-cloth and dress her in it; the old one is thrown away on the litter. They mix together banana and *ikipiki* medicine which she receives. Don't you understand? They wear her. The plantain is the symbol of the man, of his penis, we are wearing her, may she 'cook well' for her husband [i.e. be proficient in intercourse], may she bear children. She eats on that bark-cloth which means may the blood go to make children, this is your husband. Eating is a symbol (*ukwingwisa*) of sexual intercourse. She eats the plantain, meaning she has intercourse with her husband.

He connected this with the admonition at the end of the ritual. When she eats the banana nothing is said, it is only implied, but at the drinking of beer they teach her, saying: "Look after your husband well; if you are sweeping the house and he catches hold of you don't be startled, accept him, and catch hold of him also. . . . Men when they do this beget children."'

The second washing at the groom's, which is performed for every wife and not only for a senior one, is interpreted as a cleansing ritual. In the morning the officiant calls the husband and wife and says: 'Come and wash now and clean off the filth.'

Shaving is both a purification and a sign of the completion of the ritual. 'The hair of a girl who has reached puberty is the filthiness of puberty, of the menstrual blood which she produces then. She throws it away.' Mwakwelebeja and his wife said: 'The shaving is to show that she has awakened to puberty (*alombwile ukwenga*). During the ritual she did not shave. We perform the rite of shaving that she may begin to shave again, and to let her smear herself with brown ointment. It is like a burial. If a man's close relative dies he does not shave or wash.' Mwalibojo said: 'The shaving is to show that the *ukwenga* ritual is finished.'

Clearing the litter which is 'filthy', contaminated with the menstrual blood of the girl, is also a symbol of purification. The washing in a leaf basin into which *ikipiki* medicine had been

2: Wilson E-3 (1934-1936)1937 Ｆ7117 Ngonde Ｆ7117
Nyakyusa
Sabya, W. Nyawiki

sprinkled in the form of a cross was interpreted by Lyandileko (the woman doctor already quoted) as the means by which the taboo on a bride crossing a stream was removed. 'We give her dipdi to wash with that she may not fear streams. It is taboo to cross water while she is in the puberty ritual. Then I give her the dipdi so that she may cross. If she crosses before she has been treated she grows thin. She will be like a stream [i.e. her periods will be very heavy].' Another informant remarked that if a bride crossed water before she was treated, the flow of menstrual blood would be excessive. Kaitile interpreted this rite rather differently. He said: 'It is to tell her not to break the commandments with the man. . . . "Do not break the commandments, do not step over him. When you lie down, let the man get up first." It is taboo (*mwiko*) for the woman to get up first and step over (*ukulimpa*) me, the man. My legs would swell up immediately. Sprinkling medicine thus [in a vertical line] is the man. He must get up first. Sprinkling thus [in a horizontal line] is the woman. She must follow.' Probably there is a double symbolism, as in several other rites. Both Lyandileko and Kaitile were experts on ritual and open in conversation with us.

Lyandileko explained the jumping over fire in a whisper: 'It means, Kapile (M. W.), that she will never begin again. She is going to do this at her husband's.' Angumbwike said:

> It is to give the girl fire, to say: 'Do not burn there at your husband's.' It means: 'Now you have grown up, you are a woman. I have made fire for you (*upapele omoto*).' For when a girl has run off as a child and been deflowered, then her mothers say: 'When shall we make fire for you? We cannot give it to you properly.' And at cooking she burns her hands, perhaps the water for the porridge spills over her hands and burns them. We hear that formerly they gave her fire, a torch of burning grass, to take to her husband's and kindle fire there, but they have left that. She jumps over fire, that is to give it to her.

The rite was also interpreted as a test of virginity. 'If a bride clears the fire she is virgin, if she falls in she has been foolish with men.'

The symbolism here is doubtless complex, but of the various informants Lyandileko, by reason of her status and personality, carries most weight, and I think it is probably correct to regard the jumping over fire both as a *rite de passage* and as a symbol of intercourse.

The cloth put on the bride like a tail after she has washed

Mwakanjiki and his fellows, said that Lwendo is there (in the belly), they did not speak of Kyala. Did you not hear at Lubaga?[1] What did I ask her?

G. W.: You asked for a child!

KAMWALE: Yes, I asked for a child. The menstrual blood is that which we discharge when lying together. I, the man, discharge, and the woman also discharges. If Kyala does not support us, then that blood degenerates, it becomes blood which flows out at the period.

G. W.: But the girl has periods before intercourse?

KAMWALE: Yes, indeed, that is her blood. Does a woman not discharge? If she sleeps alone, as a bachelor, her blood just flows out, it does not create a child. In intercourse we try to discharge together. If I see that the woman is gasping I try to discharge with her. If I am gasping and wish to discharge, I wait for the woman. Yes, there is shades. We see all like that. But our fathers feared that if the woman discharges first she will bear a girl, and if I, the man, discharge first she will bear a boy! The shades of her fathers are there in the body of a girl, and we drive them away. It is like the case of a widow; the situations are just alike. We cause the girl and say: 'Now the woman is free.' At the coming of the bull we seem to say: 'You shade, be present and look upon us. This event is for you to go away a little. May she bear children.'

G. W.: So if the shade is in the girl she cannot bear children?

KAMWALE: What can the shade go away with if you do not pray?

QUESTION: What happens if she washes and performs all the ritual with a man, a husband, and then leaves him, without having had full intercourse, for another man?

KAMWALE: It does not matter. She is freed from the lineage of her father; she has moved to another lineage, so they do not treat her again. (*Sika mkanda, shaula shikale lya gwelo, wamale shikale lilangi, pajapja kuthamandikaya kangi.*)

On another occasion Kamile said that intercourse took place 'when Kyala and the shades have gathered there. They come out in the woman and her belly sprouts [i.e. she conceives].'

Kamile was not offering a personal interpretation when he talked about conception. Conversation with a number of people showed that the ideas he put forward were generally held. Mwandai, the old blind chief, when asked where the blood to beget children came from, replied:

It is from him who makes us all do things, Kyala and the shades together.

[1] Rituals are performed on behalf of the country at Lubaga. Kamile was a hereditary priest. See *Ceremonial Rituals among the Nyakyusa* (forthcoming).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F317 Ngonde F317
Hynkyuka
Selig/Ma Ngonde

941 Question: And women?
775 Mwamsoo: When the shades are angry a woman is constantly miscarrying and does not bear a child; if they are not angry she conceives.

[941] And on another occasion he said:

942 775 Lust comes from the shades; if they are angry with you you are impotent; you cannot beget a child.

His wife added: 'My husband says in his heart: "Let me go to my wife." It is the shade that makes him.'

One informant after another mentioned both Kyala (or Lwembe) and the shades as being present in intercourse. Mwakisondo, after [943] talking of miscarriages being due to the anger of the shades, went on:

Kyala has created the bowel of desire. If a man is impotent we say Kyala has not given him breath to beget a child.

Kaczyo: If my child runs off with a man, whether a stranger or her husband, before she has reached puberty and I continue angry, if Kyala has helped me she does not bear a child. Then it is said 'her father was angry'. They come to me bringing the remaining marriage-cattle and I pray and she bears a child.

Question: If the husband asked for her property and deflowered her before puberty?

Kaczyo: There is no case, it was all right, even long ago. I said: 'Finish paying the cattle.' Perhaps he begged me, saying: 'I am poor, Father,' and I was satisfied.

942 775 No pagan questions the power of the shades over fertility, and this power is believed to be exercised by the mother's lineage, as well as that of the father. Angombwike, the Christian, said:

[944] The pagans fear that if they do not perform the puberty ritual when a girl reaches puberty, she will dry up. The blood will not come again even though she is not pregnant. Then, if her periods do not come for two or three months, like this, she will never bear a child. They say the shades are angry and have bound her fertility. And if she does not reach puberty at all, if menstruation does not begin, her father prays in the banana grove, saying: 'You, fathers, what are you angry about?' And if the girl's mother's brother is angry on account of cattle—perhaps her father has not given marriage-cattle properly for her mother—he, the mother's brother, binds a wisp of the litter (*ulufumbo*) from her puberty ritual in the loft, then the girl will not bear a child. Inquiry is made of a diviner who says: 'The mother's brother has bound her.' The father takes a cow to him and says: 'I am sorry, I have done wrong, I

2: Wilson E-3 (1934-1938)1937 ?]?1? Ngonde ?]?1?
Nyakyusa
Galya, Ms Ngonde

have thought of it now, this is the cow.' Then, in the evening, the mother's brother blows out water in the banana grove and prays much to the fathers. And when he has prayed he says: 'Send the girl to a doctor to drink medicine.' Then the girl bears a child. The pagans say of us Christians when we have children without performing the ritual: 'You have a medicine, you are baptized with a medicine.' 862 778

Mwakabela confirmed that the mother's brother, like the father, may prevent a girl bearing a child.

Yes, it is so, if I do not give marriage-cattle for my wife our child will not bear. We go to diviner and the oracle catches hold of my wife saying that the fathers are angry. We ask what they are angry about, and the answer is 'cattle'. Then I, the father of the girl, go with a cow and leave it and return. My wife and daughter remain there. They pray and pray and the girl conceives.

It is clear, therefore, that the shades are present in intercourse and control conception. At marriage the shade of her father must 'move aside a little' so that the bride may conceive, and she herself becomes dangerous to her mother (and in a lesser degree to her father) because she has mingled her blood with that of another lineage. Mingling the blood of different lineages is dangerous and a bride can safely meet her mother only after performing a ritual in which her parents, as well as herself, become 'one flesh' with her husband. 'When a bride brings a hen and millet to her mother it is to say: "Mother, I have wiped my husband's genitals, I have grown up."' All our informants were agreed that this *ilikolage* or *ilikolo* (both words are used) is to safeguard the mother's health, particularly to prevent her suffering from diarrhoea. Mwandisi's statement was clear: 862 833 775 [783 781]

In the puberty ritual, when a bride has come from her husband, having lain with him, she catches hold of a little millet and a fowl without washing herself and carries them to her mother. The mother eats it with the fowl that her belly may be firm. If the daughter does not bring these things, then, when she drinks from the same calabash as her mother, she overstepps her mother, who has diarrhoea. Yes, the illness comes from the shades because she has come hot from the bed. . . . This diarrhoea comes from the belly when those below are angry and those above also. They say: 'The mother has overstepped the child' or 'The child has overstepped the mother'. If a girl has reached puberty we, the parents, do not come together until she has gone to her husband and lain with him. If we have intercourse we 881 585 783 784 834

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

585 phatic that 'if the bride does not wash with powdered medicine
881 she will go mad and she will bury children'.

Syungu, the officiant for all the rituals in Porokoto's lineage, said:

[158] If a girl goes mad, we say, if we have not treated her: 'We neglected the ritual, let us treat her.' She runs about aimlessly and makes bundles of filth. But if we have treated her we say: 'Perhaps Kyala has gone away from me. See! Nothing has been omitted, we have treated her.' And if she does not bear a child at her husband's her in-laws say to her: 'Did your father and mother not treat you?'

[753] MUNGASALWA (a middle-aged pagan): It is said that if she eats food with her fellows who sleep with their husbands they will harm (overstep) her, and she has diarrhœa. When she has been given powdered medicine, then she eats with them. . . . To lie on powdered medicine which has been sprinkled on the ground is to give the bride weight (*ubusito*), because if it is not done those who are with their husbands will overstep her and she will have diarrhœa.

[177] POROKOTO'S WIVES: In the old days we put medicine in her porridge so that she would not run away from her husband . . . not now. It's European times now.

[882] QUESTION: In Selya it is said that if she is not given powdered medicine she will be proud.

WIVES: Yes, here too. And if the girl is proud we beat her.

MUNGASALWA: Washing and catching in her hands the water that falls from her husband's hands has two meanings. In some families the husband and wife wash separately, in others they wash together. In either case the first meaning is present, in the second both meanings.

[753] It is said that when someone has not washed in the puberty ritual his or her children will die, for that water (with which he neglected to wash) will enter the child's stomach and kill it. The water is in the child's stomach but its symptoms are those of diarrhœa. The nubile girl catching water in her hands teaches us that the woman will receive

● [833] everything. The man is like the upper grindstone, the woman like the nether grindstone (we speak of intercourse), which means that the women receives the semen which comes from the man.

Making fire by friction is a symbol of procreation.[1] If the fire does not kindle we say the couple are sterile. Two fire-sticks are used, one is the man the other the woman, and the fire is the child. The sawdust made by the rubbing is the semen.

KAJINGA: If the fire does not come the man is sterile and the girl will quarrel with her husband and perhaps run away. It does not mean she will be barren with other men.

[1] *Ukupegesa*: to make fire by friction; *ukwipegesa*: to masturbate.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

881 When we have finished the
834 ritual I come together with my wife again, but if our child is unmarried
[833] it is taboo to procreate a child, we practise *coitus interruptus*, the semen falls on the mat. . . . This is until the girl goes to her husband, until she is married. If my wife wears a bark-cloth I say to her during our daughter's puberty ritual: 'Arrange your bark-cloth carefully lest I, the man, desire you, I shall catch hold of you and we will cause the shade to make our child barren.' When she has gone to her husband we say our shade has finished, he has gone away in the water. Our child has gone to another shade. Yes, she also has intercourse with her husband at his home, but that does not matter, I have intercourse with my wife.

834 He was emphatic that the parents begin full intercourse as soon as the girl goes to her husband, it is not necessary to wait for her to become pregnant.

833 QUESTION: What do the spirits do in intercourse?
775 MWASALEMBA: The shade causes my penis to stand up and says: 'Go to the woman, there.' And also the woman's shade says: 'Your husband comes into you.' It is the shades which create desire, then we have intercourse, the shades meet together, hers—the woman's—and mine. If I do not go to my wife the shade says: 'Why, what's wrong with my place? Are there thorns? Why do you not enter?' They brood over (*bikobatela*) us both, both me and my wife.

QUESTION: What do they want?

MWASALEMBA: They want to create a child.

838 QUESTION: Why then do men desire masturbation and sodomy? [At
775 first when I asked this he said: 'No, the shade is a woman,' but then he
839 corrected himself].

MWASALEMBA: It is the shade which creates this desire, we have it within. A youth masturbates, the semen falls on the ground—perhaps two youths; it's also the shade. And a woman also masturbates. . .

775 QUESTION: You perform the rituals for many reasons?
771 MWASALEMBA: Yes, if we do not perform the rituals the shade broods on us and we do not bear children. Perhaps he broods on the crops, and they do not grow well but poorly, perhaps we run mad.

On another occasion Mwasalemba said:

775
833 The shade is in the heart. It is the shade which desires to go to a woman, which causes us men to have erections and excites desire in women. If you have not got the shade you are impotent, you do not go to women. We say: 'The shade has brooded over this man, why do they not rouse him to go to women?' He just looks at women. Then the shade rouses up in the belly and says: 'Ha!' It rouses up and the man has intercourse with a woman. If it has brooded over him, it does not

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

rouse him, it does not wish to come out. And although the faeces are 775 833
firm they are the corpse. Because we bury a corpse underground, and faeces also go underground to the shades. They disappear by night, that is the shade. If someone excretes faeces and finds it in the grass we say: 'The shade has caught hold of him.' 514

QUESTION: Are faeces associated with sexual intercourse? 775

MWASALEMBA: Yes, the shade does both things, he causes diarrhœa 833
and sexual intercourse. If you defaecate firm stools that is not the shade, that is the food we eat, but watery diarrhœa which troubles you repeatedly at night—that is the shade. If you have diarrhœa for three days people say: 'The shades have hammered you' or 'The shade has caught hold of you.'

QUESTION: Madness? 158

MWASAMEMBA: That is the shade because it says: 'Since you have me 775
in your belly, and they have not treated you, I cause this—these faeces 514
are the corpse. A madman defaecates and catches hold of his faeces, perhaps he eats them, perhaps he binds it up in the grass and catches hold of it. It is the corpse.'

Kakune, the doctor, also interpreted the puberty ritual as being, 833
in one aspect, the transference of a girl from her father's group to 775
her husband's and, like Kasitile and Mwasalemba, he identified 881
sexual desire and potency with the shades. He said:

At puberty a girl has left her father's and has gone to others; if she dies he to whom she has gone buries her.

QUESTION: Where does the blood of a woman come from?

KAKUNE: If the girl is unmarried, from her shades; they create her blood, but in the ritual we treat her so that she moves to my place, she comes to my shades; the blood of a married woman is created by my shades and hers together. And the 'blood' of a man [i.e. semen] also comes from the shades.

QUESTION: Do the shades reveal themselves at birth?

KAKUNE: Yes, because if I am angry or my father is angry I do not beget a child, but when he has prayed I do so. If I am angry with the woman and she has caught hold of me and injured me, then we do not have a child. The ordeal (*umwafi*) convicts the woman. She goes to [627]
her father who prays. Then we have a child.

QUESTION: Where does the power to bear and beget children come 842
from? 775

KAKUNE: From the shades, you have the shades in your belly. If [833]
they are not there you are all like women in the house, you cannot have an erection, but when the shades work, you have an erection. 833

QUESTION: Whose shades are present at intercourse? 775

KAKUNE: Mine, the man's and the woman's, we both have them,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

833 775 they both work in us, they are not only in one partner. They work in the woman and in the man, they work in both of us.

885 Mwangwanda, an elderly pagan, explained the symbolism of the new hearth-brick at some length:

> We take a new hearth-brick and plant it by the hearth in the bride's house. It means: 'You have grown up, you are a woman, you must always cook a pot,' and she cooks on that hearth-brick. . . . It means: 'You have grown up, the food that your mother sent will come no more, you must cook for your husband yourself.' It is planted for the senior wife only, not for others. If I find that my first wife is not a virgin we do not plant a brick for her—she has lain with another. But if she has a younger sister and she brings her as a junior wife and she is a virgin and I deflower her myself, then the first sister is still the senior wife and we plant a brick for her and her child will inherit as the senior son, for another shut up her womb [i.e. made her virgin again]. If she has no younger sister I may marry her, but she will not be my chief wife. The next one I marry will be my senior wife and for her the brick will be planted and her son will inherit.

881 585 There is also an association, not made explicit by our informants, between a log of firewood and a marriageable woman. One of the tasks of the bride and her maids is to fetch heavy logs of firewood which are stored in her mother's loft. At least one log goes with her when she is taken by her 'mothers' to her husband, and this she keeps all her life, taking it with her if she moves. From it the shades are said to chip splinters when they wish to warm themselves at the dying fire at night. After she has gone to her husband and before she conceives, a bride is forbidden to touch the firewood in her mother's loft, and in the funeral ritual, when a widow returns home for the *ingotolo* she steals a log of firewood from her mother's loft and takes it to her husband's. Into the cracks of this log the officiants press seeds. It seems probable that the reddish log represents a woman in her reproductive capacity, which is formally transferred to her husband and segregated from the reproductive activities of her mother. This, we repeat, is our own interpretation, not formulated by any Nyakyusa.

783 784 The taboo on a bride who has slept with her husband approaching her mother until she has brought the ritual *ilibuko* is associated with the danger of mixing the bloods of different lineages.

> A bride avoids dipping water out of a pot and drinking from a calabash belonging to her relatives for the following reasons: A girl is of one blood (*ililopa*) with her mother, and when she goes to her husband, the

2: Wilsen E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the women has constantly to handle it and if, just after intercourse, she 846
has to do this without time to wash first, then the child, we think, will
get diarrhœa or grow thin. Women[1] always wash very carefully in the [512]
mornings after intercourse, both for the sake of the children and the
husband. If the woman touches food unwashed after intercourse we
think it will make her husband sick, and he will get unhealthily fat. If [753]
a child is old enough to play by itself . . . so that the wife can wash
properly before attending to it, then it is all right for the couple to have
intercourse, but not for the woman to become pregnant again yet. She
should not do that until the child is weaned![2]

Contact with menstrual blood or a menstruating woman is held 841
to be dangerous to a man, more particularly to a warrior, hence there is an absolute taboo on intercourse during menstruation (for five to eight days) and restrictions on cooking for a man. A menstruating woman does not blow up the fire on which her husband's food is cooking, or squeeze the food to test whether it is ready, or scrape ash off bananas or sweet potatoes she has roasted, or serve food, for 'her breath comes from her belly and it is dirty; her belly is dirty on account of the menstrual blood. All her body is dirty. She does not wash. When she washes, you, the husband, think that the flow has dried up and catch hold of her!' So a woman who is menstruating fans the fire instead of blowing it, and calls a co-wife or a child to serve the food she has cooked. She does not even crouch over the fire to warm herself, lest she contaminate it; and she neither uses the common calabash cup for drinking nor scoops water from the household water jar with her hand, but fashions a cup for herself from a leaf, or has her own little water-pot. She avoids passing behind or shaking hands with a man; she avoids a new-born infant; she keeps well away from cattle, neither passing behind them when they are in the homestead nor clearing out dung from the byre; she avoids touching medicines or entering the house of a doctor; and she avoids eating pumpkin or pumpkin leaves, or picking them. These taboos are enforced lest she injure men or infants or cattle or medicines, for 'she is dirty' and her 'dirt' is thought to cause purging and to rot medicines, and she,

[1] The 'filth' is on the wife because she cleanses her husband with her hands.

[2] *Coitus interruptus* is practised until the mother is ready to conceive again. 'Formerly [833] ●
it was taboo to make a woman pregnant before her previous child was four or five years old. Her husband's sisters made a great case about it. The child must know how to run before a younger brother was born. We said: "How can a woman carry two children?" Now she becomes pregnant again when the elder is two. Of those who bear again before that it is said: "They kill the elder child." ' (Statement of Nsajigwa, an elderly man.)

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

843 and that cures him. So, when a man comes to a smith's forge for the
326 first time, he always takes a piece of charcoal from the fire and spits on
it and throws it into the fire. This means: 'I have come to your forge,
772 smith, may this fire not come on my body.'

And sometimes the smith's iron does not glow and sparkle well. Then he is angry, saying: 'Heavy ones are present. Some of you have pregnant wives, you are spoiling my fire.' We all pick up pieces of charcoal and spit on them and throw them into the fire again. Then the fire blazes up well and the iron glows and sparks.

Mwambuputa, the village headman, confirmed this:

When my wife is pregnant I fear the smithy. I spit on a piece of charcoal. Until she gives birth I fear, but when we just play together on the mat, and she has not yet conceived, I do not fear. . . . Only when it is seen that the 'iron' is there do I fear.

QUESTION: The iron?

MWAMBUPUTA: It's the blood of the man. The man is the smith. He forges iron there with the woman. The woman is the bellows. The smithing flourishes because of the sweat. Sometimes a woman conceives if I have lain with her two or three times—if Kyala gives us a child—but some delay, and I sleep with them a whole month.

QUESTION: The woman is a bellows?

[833] MWAMBUPUTA: Yes, because when she is having intercourse she gasps: 'He, he, he!'

QUESTION: And the man?

MWAMBUPUTA: Yes, but where do we find the fire? In the body of the woman! It's a great fire. Hence we say the bellows is the woman. It's smithing. Women are the anvil. Is there not fire in their bodies? Therefore I hammer there.

The primary taboo is on the pregnant woman approaching the smithy lest she injure it, but it is also thought that, like grain and cattle, it may be treated with strong medicines which will cause her to miscarry if she breaks the taboo. Hence the Nyakyusa dictum: 'She who has a miscarriage is she who is proud (*namatingo*).'

784 The conception that like things are antagonistic, and that the
772 sexual activities of different couples must not be mixed, is clearly shown in the taboos relating to fire and the calabash cup used for water. An elderly councillor of Ngonde, himself a Christian, explained it:

It is taboo for married people to blow up the fire in someone else's house, or to drink from the calabash cup; if they do they will bring a

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The *ilibalaga* is to make the mother's relatives one blood with the daughter's children. 'The food which each of the parents brings to relatives is the blood of the lineage (*lyo ilopa lya kikolo kyabo*) that they may have one body (*ukuti baje mbili gumo*). They do not look at one another when they take the *ilibalaga* because the blood [of the two lineages] has not yet met.' 845

The statements of two doctors, the one from Selya and the other a Kukwe, throw a little more light on the symbolism of the various actions. Mwakionde (of Selya) replied to a question about why the parents of twins only eat the middle bananas in a bunch:

Those of the sides belong to Kyala, because the twin was with Kyala; Kyala brooded over him, he came to them and gave them two children. After two days they throw away those bananas on the side, they throw them behind the huts, where they throw the rubbish of twins. . . . That means: may Mbasi be driven away when he comes to look at the children, may he be driven away to the rubbish heap behind the huts.

QUESTION: Why are the parents not allowed to call out?

MWAKIONDE: When we give each other medicines to drink? Since you have borne twins we do not meet one another. It's taboo to call out.

QUESTION: Snatching food from one another?

MWAKIONDE: They spread meat and cooked bananas on leaves of plantain and sweet banana. The doctor sprinkles powdered medicine, then we all snatch. Then the doctor gathers up the rubbish (*imindu*), those leaves, and throws them away behind the huts.

QUESTION: But why the snatching?

MWAKIONDE: If we do not snatch from one another our legs swell.

QUESTION: The running to the pasture?

MWAKIONDE: I myself have borne twins, you are my relative. When they have shaved my hair in the house, when you come with a shield to the doorway, 'Come out, Mwakionde,' you cry. 'War has come!' Then I go out. You give me the shield at the doorway. I run off with it. Another comes and snatches it, and another and another. It's to help the legs. Women do it afterwards, and then cry the war-cry. If I just meet a twin then Mbasi is angry and says: 'Why do you kill your fellow by just meeting him?' I am ill, I have diarrhœa, my legs swell, and my face swells, but sometimes the sickness returns to the parent of twins and he himself is ill.

KAKUNE (a Kukwe): In European times we do not fear; we drink [177] medicine, that is all; but of old we feared very much. At the coming out 845 (*ukusoka*) beer is brewed and the people and relatives drink it, and then 833 in the night the man and wife, secluded in the hut, have intercourse,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 and the doctor stands outside at the door. The doctor asks: 'Is it suc-
●833 cessful? [i.e. can you have intercourse with her?]' and the man says: 'No, it is not successful.' Then all we *abanyago* (priests, officiants), the fathers of the girl who are there, and the fathers of the man, pray, in words only [i.e. without blowing out water], saying: 'Father, support us, Grandfather, support us, Kyala, support us, let not the ritual go on for ever.' And then the man is able to eject, and he tells the doctor: 'It's all right now.'

845 The disease comes from the twin birth (*ilipasa*) when a couple have
753 had twins (*bapasile*). If the relatives speak with them or tread in their footsteps when they [the relatives] are empty (*bwasi*), not having drunk medicine, then their legs will swell up and they will have diarrhœa. No, they do not say that the private parts will swell, only the legs. The refusal of the seed to come is due to the shades (*imindu*). If a man has angered his father or mother who are alive, or if they are dead and he gives nothing to his sister, then those below, *balungu*, are angry. *Imindu* catches hold of them and then when he begets twins he will have trouble at the ritual.

845 The semen refuses to come also if the girl has angered her parents,
833 or if her husband has angered them. It's *imindu*. This copulation is an essential part of the ritual. If the parents of twins do not do this and you meet them afterwards, your legs will swell and dysentery will set in. The fearful ones [the parents of twins] have a fire and create sickness in us. We say: 'Kyala has loved [*sic*] you, he has created you so that you bear twin children. Now we speak with you.'

845 Yes, the old people said: 'Kyala and those below.' They said those below beg Kyala to give them two children. This was said of old, before the Europeans came. One who has himself had twins will not fear his relative who has twins for he says: 'I also am heavy (*ndi nsito*), I am a fearful one, a parent of twins myself.' No one fears the twins themselves, but their parents are feared.

The child that follows twins (*ndili*), does not anoint himself at any later twin ritual. It is said that he finished before because he followed twins.

When the parents of twins leave the hut they run with a lighted piece of thatch,[1] followed by all the friends and relatives; the friends and relatives call out: 'You hit us with fire [i.e. you give us the disease].' They reply: 'We are pure (*tuli belu*) [i.e. we have no disease, it is finished]. Kyala has prayed for us.'

845 And at the death of a parent of twins the relatives fear to touch the
764 corpse until the twin doctor comes and puts a medicine in the hand of the corpse and sprinkles hot medicine on the legs of the relatives—then

[1] This was not seen or mentioned in the Selya ritual.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

842 Impotence and barrenness are well known facts, and magic is much used
595 to cure them; but apart from their operation it is believed that each
581 conception directly depends upon the frequency with which a man visits his wife. And thus the bearing of children is, for a woman, a demonstration of her husband's great affection for her. People adduce the number of children that a woman has borne to prove, in conversation, that she is her husband's favourite.

595 Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan Nyakyusa; a plurality of wives is necessary, in this society, for full sexual satisfaction, wives bring a man wealth, prestige and authority, the more wives he has the more children, he thinks, will be born to him.

853 It is believed that any contact with the sexual fluids is dangerous to a
831 young child's health, and so, after a woman has borne a child, her husband is supposed wholly to refrain from intercourse with her for about a year, until the child is old enough to play by itself and allow its mother time to wash in the mornings before touching it. Then he may begin to visit her again, but still she must not become pregnant until the child is weaned. "If she does her breasts become rotten" and the first child is harmed.
[833 As children are not weaned for two or three years, this rule involves the
862] couple in yet another year or more either of *coitus interruptus* or of infrequent intercourse (which also is believed to avoid conception).
These taboos on intercourse after a child's birth are to some extent
[595] observed in practice, and are one of the reasons for polygyny among the Nyakyusa.

464 Another reason is the absence of hired labour. With a few minor
595 exceptions the only way a man can increase the supply of labour at his disposal is by marrying more wives. Polygyny is the mark of a wealthy man, conditioned by his control of cattle, conditioning his supply of food. And the cattle spent in marriage come back again with interest as the polygynist's daughters begin to be betrothed and married.

595 It is extremely common for a man to take as his second or third wife the sister, half-sister, or brother's daughter of his first or second wife. By doing so a man pays a great compliment to the wife whose sister, or niece, he takes and to her family; his action implies complete satisfaction with her and friendship with her family. He sends his wife home "to fetch out (her kinswoman) into the open" (*okosakola*); but she will not agree to do so unless she approves of him as a husband, and so, if she does agree, her action likewise compliments him. I know of one case in which a man wished to take his second wife's younger sister in this way,

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

away. We run with him, we leave him ever there, we return and bring him in. We drive him off because he brought sickness; when we have done so we return and bring him again that we may be pure—without anger—and he also may be pure. We are with him all the time; we never throw him away. We always have the old one in the belly, an infant is he, and if I die I am with him, this earth (pointing to the earth of his homestead) never goes away, it is he. So if the crops fail when I have hoed I say: 'The shade is angry, this earth.' (*Papo nkulu tulinagwe bwila munda, mutukeke jo jujo, nalenga mfuile ndinagwe—umfu ugu gutijonga nakamo jo jujo—papo lenga ndemile nikuti 'unsyuka akalele umfu ugu' bo fisitile.*) Yes, in the death ritual also we drive him away with his sickness, and bring him back, always the old one.

After the ritual all have normal intercourse with their wives, but the night before there was no intercourse. How should we do evil on the mats when we have not yet blessed the shade? But when we have blessed him then all of us lie on our mats again. To lie together is to overstep the ritual, the shades are shocked and say, 'How can you do this? You agreed yesterday to bless the shades and you do this, why?' Then later, if a woman bears a child which cries at night, people say, 'You overstepped the ritual, pray for the child.' Or perhaps the woman is barren. We liken the water and the war cry to what we do on the mats—the water is the shade's and the war cry is his, it is his work. When we have spoken to the shade he comes into my belly—then I come together with my wife again.

This interpretation by Mwasalemba indicates that the blowing out of water is a symbol of emission. 'It is what men do.' It has been shown in *Rituals of Kinship* that the shades are driven out of the body in the sex act; that the shade and semen are identified; and that driving off the shade is a condition of health and sanity. The fact that blowing out water is *also* a symbol of confession—admission of anger, 'bringing out all that is within'—and supplication does not invalidate Mwasalemba's interpretation, for the same act is symbolized in many ways and the same symbol expresses events which are distinct, but associated. As in so many societies, abstinence is felt to be a necessary preparation for the celebration of a ritual, and the union, real or symbolic, of husband and wife the necessary conclusion.[1] All this is intelligible only in terms of the Nyakyusa ideas about procreation discussed in *Rituals of Kinship*. The shade is the vital force in men

[1] cf. I. Cunnison, 'Headmanship and Ritual of Luapula Villages', *Africa*, xxvi (1956), pp. 5-13; H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (1927), vol. i, pp. 320-22; J. Roscoe, *The Baganda* (1911), pp. 48, 53, 55.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

833 and women, it is procreative power, fertility. That power is
783 constantly expelled from the belly but returns again and by that
755 expulsion and return men live.

There was a great deal of criticism from the conservatives
177 because no sacrifice had been made.

787 MWAMUNDA: Now people are talking much saying, 'We have abandoned that which they did formerly, we are doing something else.' People have many dreams (gesture head on hand as if heavy with anxiety), many say: 'I have dreamed of the dead, they told me to sacrifice a cow, to pray, we did not pray properly, that is useless, it will not effect anything.' So we have told the chief saying: 'Let us kill a cow at the grave of Mwakan'ata,' he has agreed, but the cow has not yet
783 come.

Formerly, on the night following the day of the prayer we should
796 have eaten the sacrificial cow, the chief would have killed two cows and the headmen from different villages would have come and eaten by night, and drunk beer provided by the chief, in the house of the senior wife of the chief. . . . They ate a little meat, raw, the rest they roasted. Then in the morning, when they had eaten and were satisfied, they would go to clear out the house, to throw out the ashes, and to
[372] pray, as we prayed now, and to make new fire by friction in the pasture land. The village headman made fire with medicine which the chief gave him, the name of the medicine is Mbamba, it's a tree. To throw out the ashes means to clear out all the filth, the filth which the
[754] witches and the shades have brought to us—the filth that is sickness. . . .
[775] Do not the witches eat meat at the fire? Human flesh? Some roast at your fires your bodies which they have seized, some go home with the human flesh to their own fires, hence comes the filth of the ashes. The village headmen eat the sacrificial meat at night with the shades, they celebrate for them with the blood which goes beneath. . . .

If the chief has done something wrong, then those above [i.e. the village headmen] pray to those beneath saying, 'Let us help one another to punish him who has strayed, but we do not wish that he
[754] should die, let him be ill; perhaps then he will seek something to nourish us.' Again the night before the throwing out of the ashes they confess their anger and say: 'You beneath, this our child (the chief) has remembered us, there is no accusation against him now, may sickness go away from the country, and children sleep, let us all sleep and the cows calve. We greet those beneath.' In my childhood I was repeatedly surprised at night when my father came in, he had a little parcel of meat. 'Where have you been?' I asked. 'We have been praying.' But since I grew up and became a village headman, and was recorded as such [by the administration] we have never seen sacrificial meat.

1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

156 (*ukumoga*) is not confined to the company of contemporaries of the same sex. Indeed the liveliest dancing is before members of [535 the opposite sex, and is often the preliminary to love-making; but 584] full opportunity for disp'ay is thought to depend upon living in a village, rather than in scattered homesteads. Some Nyakyusa are 166 colonists, cultivating and building out in unoccupied bush coun- try five or six miles from a settled area; but living out in the bush 156 is disliked by most people and is done, we were told, only for gain. Cattle are said to increase very much more quickly out in bush, where grazing is plentiful, than they do on the village pastures, and the yield of virgin fields made in the bush is high. Hence the Nyakyusa dictum: 'People live in the villages for display, in the bush for gain.' And individuals commonly display themselves as members of a group—a group of contemporaries of the same sex, that is, of village-mates.

d. Decency

●834 The basis of Nyakyusa sexual morality is the separation of the sexual activities of successive generations, more particularly the separation of the sexual activities of mothers and sons, and the complete segregation of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

Nyakyusa informants hold that boys are sent out of their parents' 834 village to build apart so that their parents may have privacy. 864 Mwaisumo explained: 'If a boy over ten years old stays at home to sleep, he is laughed at by his friends, and his own parents send him away. They say, "If he sleeps at home he will hear what his parents talk about at night"; the night is always full of lewd talk; and he may even see them undressing. He will grow up a fool, with little wisdom! You see at the boys' village', he went on to say, 'the older boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love-making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger ones listen to these things and that's all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn, but we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night; and that is very bad, that is foolishness. But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to listen, that is how children grow up.'

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Another informant added: 'Boys usually move of their own accord; if they don't their fellows mock them saying: "Why do you sleep with your mother and see the evil things of your mother when she puts on her bark-cloth? . . . You sleep with your mother and see the evil things of your father and mother. Perhaps they think you are asleep, but you see them."' 834

Sons and mothers are separated at night, but the boys come to their mothers' houses for food; fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law are completely segregated from the time a girl is betrothed or, if she has been betrothed in infancy, from the time she is about eight years old. Her father-in-law is pointed out once to the newly betrothed girl, and after that she must never look at him. She never enters a house in which he is, and she leaves a path if she catches a glimpse of him, or is warned by her friends that he is approaching; she also avoids his name and anything associated with him, being particularly careful to avoid going near the bed in her mother-in-law's house, should she visit her mother-in-law during her father-in-law's absence. The avoidance is extended to a large group of kinsmen—her father-in-law's brothers and cousins, her mother-in-law's brothers, the husbands of her mother-in-law's sisters, and the fathers-in-law (direct and by extension) of each of her own sisters;[1] but it is *not* extended to the father-in-law's village-mates. In practice, the forms of avoidance vary with the actual relationship—the more distant the connection the less strictly are the rules observed—and with the locality, for the Nyakyusa proper avoid in-laws more carefully than the Kukwe do. A Nyakyusa wife, for example, should *never* enter her father-in-law's house, but a Kukwe wife may do so during his absence. 834 606 602

The Nyakyusa argue, cogently enough, that it would be quite impossible for father-in-law and daughter-in-law to live in the same village and avoid one another as they do; and indeed the difficulties of avoidance are apparent at ceremonies when members of different villages are congregated. Then the women are on the watch all the time, and one or another is constantly taking refuge in a hut, or in the bananas, as her friends warn her of the approach of a 'father-in-law'. The practical difficulties were obvious when we attended a funeral ceremony at Mwambelike's 606

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

her chair and sat on the floor. We said to Mwaipopo as he entered: 'There is a daughter-in-law here.' He said: 'That's all right, she is enjoying the company of Kagile (M.W.)', but he was obviously restive, and went outside as soon as food appeared. He said to G.W.: 'That's quite all right, let them go on enjoying each other's company. She (i.e. S—) does not avoid me because M— (a local missionary) brought her to me one day and I killed a bull for them, but let us stay outside now, for they would be ashamed to eat.' The women protested very much saying *they* would go out, but the chief would not agree. As soon as they had drunk their tea they hurried off, and crouching down with their backs towards the men they answered their farewell greetings.

In reply to queries as to why they insist that father-in-law and daughter-in-law avoid one another, the Nyakyusa relate a myth of incest between them: 'Long ago a chief's son married a very beautiful wife. The boy's father saw the girl and after one look desired her, for she was very beautiful, and he said: "She is fit to be a chief's wife (*umwehe*)." Men said this was a very bad thing and agreed that in future they would not look at their daughters-in-law. That is how avoidance began. It was for fear of fathers making love to their sons' wives.' This myth is related with some diffidence, and not everyone knows it, but it was told us, or referred to, repeatedly, and may be taken as current in the society. One informant, a very intelligent woman doctor, also associated seeing a father-in-law with seeing his sexual activities. 'We think that to see your husband's father is very rude, because it is as if you saw him sleeping with your husband's mother. You compare, you see, your husband's body and you see your husband's father's body. It is very bad.'

Age-villages are then associated with the feeling that fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law must be kept completely separate lest they should commit incest, and that adolescent youths should not have any glimpse of the sexual activities of their parents; but the separation of the generations is not complete, for marriage with the daughter of a village neighbour is approved, provided he is not an *immediate* neighbour. Mwakionde explained that in the old days people disliked marriage with the daughter of a next-door neighbour because she was 'like a daughter'—'the fathers ate *embalaga* (a dish made with bananas) together'—but marriage with the daughters of other village-mates was always approved.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

838 villages—they begin among boys of ten to fourteen herding cows, and continue among young men until marriage, but they are said never to continue after that, and are regarded simply as a substitute for heterosexual pleasure. 'A man never dreams of making love to another man'—only of making love to a woman. If a boy's own father, or a village father, finds a son with another youth he will beat him, but provided both parties were willing, there is no court case, and the older men treat the practice tolerantly as a manifestation of adolescence. To force a fellow to [684] have homosexual intercourse against his will is a serious offence, comparable to witchcraft (*vide* Document, p. 196). Lesbian practices are said also to exist, but we have no certain evidence of this: if they do occur it is much more likely to be among the older wives of chiefs and other polygynists than among the girls, who have so much attention from young men.'

864 It is in conversation and play with village contemporaries that some knowledge of sex is acquired. Girls learn about sex from their immediate seniors, and they get some sex experience, along with formal instruction on morals, at the puberty rituals of their seniors in the age-village and at their own initiation. Boys learn from the conversation of their older fellows at night, in the boys' village. Any suggestion that sex education should be given by parents or middle-aged teachers shocks the Nyakyusa profoundly, for they hold that discussion of sex is totally incompatible with the respect due from children to parents. The taboo on sex talk between members of different generations appears to be absolute among men, but is less emphasized among women, for formal instruction on morals is given to a girl by her mother's fellows during the initiation ritual, and a young wife of her father, or of her father's neighbour, may whisper advice on sex matters even although she is classed as a 'mother'.

• 534 As we have already indicated, there are profound differences between pagans and Christians in their sex code. The Christian 795 dogma that sex relations should only take place between adult married persons excludes the freedom of girls to have external 177 sex relations before betrothal, or in the 'bride's' hut; it excludes girls visiting their betrothed husbands before puberty; and it excludes homosexuality, which is regarded as a mortal sin. Segregation of successive generations is not a part of the Christian tradition, hence the modifications in the rules of avoid-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

 834 795 177

ance among Nyakyusa Christians, and the tendency for fathers and sons to build fairly close to one another.

The forms of display approved among Christians are also changing with the change in the sex code. The nakedness of the Nyakyusa shocked the missionaries, and it is insisted that Christian women, as well as men, should wear at least one cloth; also many of the traditional dances and songs are felt by the Nyakyusa converts themselves to be incompatible with the profession of Christianity, consequently at funerals and weddings there is often a group of Christians dancing quite separately from pagans, and singing their own song, which, more often than not, is a hymn. A wedding dance to a hymn does not appear incongruous to Nyakyusa, as it does to European observers.

e. Wisdom

There is a very close connection between the values we have cited, and all save one are coherent with one another. The enjoyment of good company implies observance of the rules of decency; *ukwangala* is between equals, not between parents and children; it merges into neighbourliness, for one who does not help, or seek help from, a neighbour is unfriendly (*atikwangala kanunu*); and it is dependent upon that generous hospitality which is one of the manifestations of dignity (*ubusisya*). 182

The one value which is not wholly coherent with the others is the value of display (*ukumoga*). Certain forms of display are compatible with urbanity and friendliness between neighbours, but the swaggering truculence of the warrior is not—it is liable to breed quarrels between fellow villagers, as well as with outsiders; and display also ceases to be compatible with other values when it involves adultery. The friends of a woman who has eloped with a lover may greet her with the phrase: '*Ndaga, umogile*!' which literally translated means 'Thank you, you have displayed yourself', and implies, 'Congratulations! Had a good time?' But no Nyakyusa would maintain that to commit adultery was, in general, good. [837]

The all-embracing virtue to the Nyakyusa is wisdom (*amahala*). It includes the enjoyment of company and the practice of hospitality, for no man is wise who is surly, or aloof, or stingy; it includes neighbourly behaviour, dignity, and respect for law and 577

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sets have club houses in which young men sleep. Among the Cewa, though boys do not move out of the parent village, they have a special hut in which they sleep together from the age of five or six.[1] But among all these people the age-set scatters at marriage, each young man building his permanent home, to which he brings his wife, alongside his kinsmen or, in the case of the Cewa, alongside his wife's kin. 621 561 171

The peculiarity of the Nyakyusa then consists in the fact that contemporaries live together permanently through life, not merely as bachelors: age-villages appear in an isolated area surrounded (so far as we know) by people with no similar institution. 621 561

We cannot hope to explain how, or when, age-villages developed among the Nyakyusa: there is no reference to them in such documents as exist, and we could trace no oral tradition regarding their origin. Even the historian Mwandesi (cf. p. vi) had no idea whether age-villages were introduced by the incoming Nyakyusa chiefs, or were found by them among the previous inhabitants of the valley, or were invented after the conquest. We can, however, inquire into the social characteristics associated with age-villages. *What are the peculiarities of Nyakyusa society not found in societies with kinship villages?* In this chapter we attempt to answer that question.

b. Age-villages and incest

The Nyakyusa themselves associate living in age-villages with decency in sex life—the separation of the sex activities of successive generations, and the avoidance of incest. When asked why small boys build apart from their parents they refer to the danger of a growing boy overhearing lewd talk between his parents, or seeing them unclothed (*vide supra*, p. 82); and they enlarge on the difficulties of father- and daughter-in-law avoidance were father and son to live in the same village—an avoidance which is consciously related to the fear of incest between father- and daughter-in-law (*vide supra*, p. 85). We may add also the fear of young men seducing their fathers' junior wives, who are often girls of their own age. Nyakyusa informants did not mention this last point as a reason for living in age-villages, but it is significant 621 834 606

[1] A. G. O. Hodgson, 'Notes on the Achewa and Angoni of the Dowa District of Nyasaland Protectorate', *J.R.A.I.*, LXIII (1933), p. 189.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 that adolescent sons are not permitted to visit their homes after dark, and when they come by day for their meals they are
● 834 often required to eat in the open court-yard and not 'hide in
606 the bananas or huts' lest they make love to their fathers' wives. They do not sit about in the men's village. Thus, although the villages of fathers and sons adjoin until the sons 'come out', the young men are physically separated from their young 'mothers'.

The feeling that sons should not be cognizant of the sex activities of parents, and that father-in-law and daughter-in-law should avoid one another is not, of course, peculiar to the Nyakyusa; all we seek to show is that the extreme elaboration of these avoidances among the Nyakyusa is dependent upon the existence of age-villages. Whereas a Pondo daughter-in-law must never
[171] walk across the courtyard of the kinship village in which she lives, or approach the cattle byre or the men's side of her mother-in-law's hut, lest she come too near her father-in-law, yet, living in the same village, she necessarily sees him daily; the Nyakyusa daughter-in-law, living in a separate village, need not (and should not) set eyes on her father-in-law after her marriage. Where the territorial segregation of fathers and sons is blurred (as at Rungwe) there father- daughter-in-law avoidance is less strictly observed. The Nyakyusa regard this extreme form of avoidance as a peculiarity of their culture which has been imparted by them to the small groups (such as Ndali, Penja, and Nyika) whom they are assimilating.

Father- and daughter-in-law incest is clearly a potential danger in a society in which cattle are controlled by middle-aged and elderly men, who frequently have to choose between taking another wife themselves and giving cattle for a son's marriage, and who are accustomed to marrying young girls of an age suitable to be wives to their sons. But we cannot show that the danger is *greater* among the Nyakyusa than it is among other patrilineal cattle people such as the Pondo, Zulu, or Swazi, who do not find it necessary to segregate fathers- and daughters-in-law in different villages.

On the other hand the danger (common to all polygynous societies) of sons seducing their fathers' wives is exaggerated among the Nyakyusa by the absence of circumcision, the late
545 marriage age of men, the very early betrothal and marriage of
582 girls, the high degree of polygyny, and the practice of sons

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

enjoy limited sex relations with a relatively large group of unmarried girls.[1] But the Pondo have exogamous clans numbering, on the average, 3,000 to 4,000 members; marriage into the clan of either parent or either grandmother is prohibited; and clans, though not strictly territorial groups, have a territorial basis. Therefore very many of the adolescents growing up in one area are forbidden to flirt together or marry. Moreover, clan incest is regarded with great horror and is associated very closely with witchcraft. A pregnant woman (who must confess her sins and her dreams that she may have safe delivery) is specifically instructed to confess any flirtations within the prohibited degrees, and to confess if she has had witch-lovers.[2] Even in town, where so many traditional taboos are disregarded, clan exogamy is still insisted upon by Xhosa-speaking people.[3]

Furthermore, in Pondo belief the 'familiar' commonly appears as a European or light-coloured person.[4] and South Africa is a caste society in which sex relations between white and black are very strongly disapproved. We conclude, therefore, that the 'familiar' stands for the embodiment of sex temptation, of forbidden lust, and that the reason why there is so much emphasis on sex in Pondo witch beliefs is that Pondo live in a society in which sex relations between members of certain large groups who are mutually attractive, are regarded with horror.

In Nyakyusa society the pattern is quite different. Sex relations are prohibited only between the descendants of a common great-grandfather, who are in any case scattered in different villages and not constantly meeting one another. And not only are Europeans very few in Nyakyusa country, but the taboo on sex relations between the colour groups is much less strong than in

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 180–4.

It has been suggested by European doctors that limited sex relations are in themselves psychologically disturbing (cf. M. Kohler, M.D., *Marriage Customs in Southern Natal*, p. 33–5), while Africans have argued that such a practice prevents psychological disturbances (cf. J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, pp. 155–60).

[2] Hunter, op. cit., p. 148.

[3] Hunter, op. cit., p. 483; R. Levin, *Marriage in Langa Native Location* (Communications from the School of African Studies, University of Cape Town), pp. 13–14.

[4] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 482, 491. My further investigations since *Reaction to Conquest* was published indicate that the 'familiar' is usually described as a European when it takes human form.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

South Africa. Sex hunger obviously exists in the large group of bachelors and among the wives of elderly polygynists, but its satisfaction through adultery is not regarded as shameful or horrible. Adultery was formerly extremely dangerous, and is now expensive, but it is not disgraceful. Thus desire, being fully conscious, is not transformed into dreams and fantasies.

It is possible that all witch beliefs are an expression of lust, directed by jealousy, envy, and hatred. Certainly sex lust and the lust for good food appear in the accounts of witch beliefs in one area after another in Africa. The Zande fear that a glimpse of the cats associated with women witches, and particularly with Lesbian practices in the harems of princes, will kill a man, is a classic example of the one;[1] while the Lovale,[2] Thonga,[3] and Nyanja[4] belief that witches kill in order to eat the corpses of their victims is an example of the other. We do not suggest that the Nyakyusa alone believe that the lust for prized food is a motive for witchcraft, or that they think it is the sole motive,[5] but that their emphasis on lust for food, and the particular form it takes, is directly related to the age-village organization. It is significant that the stress laid on sharing food in the village diminishes along with the belief in witchcraft, and a rigid insistence on living with age-mates.

f. '*The breath of men*'

And what of the belief in 'the defenders' of the village and the chilling 'breath of men'? Is the idea that contemporaries have a mystical power over one another a function of their living together—a correlate of an age-village, as opposed to a kinship village, organization? The Nyakyusa concept of witchcraft is similar in many respects to that of the Azande, the Thonga, and the Lovale, but, as we have shown, the Nyakyusa differ from these other peoples in the emphasis they lay on the lust for food as a motive for witchcraft; they differ also in the belief that a power

[1] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., pp. 51–57.
[2] C. M. N. White, op. cit., pp. 96–7. [3] Junod, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 506.
[4] B. Malkebu, A. Kumbanga, G. Chipengule, B. Chisunzi *Maholo Athu* Nyasaland Education Department, Zomba (1945).
[5] For the sex associations in Nyakyusa witchcraft *vide supra*, pp. 94–5. There is a hint of the lust for food among the Pondo in the idea that the baboon familiar milks cows, and Thikolose steals food. Hunter, op. cit., pp. 275–81, 287.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

them knocks on the wall when he has succeeded, and the officiant 765
raises the *akalulu*, the trill of applause and triumph[1] which is also 768
the war-cry, and shakes a basket of seeds by the door shouting: 587
'Ours, ours, we marvel at the thing!' Until this ritual connection the heir and the widows remain continent, and great importance is attached to the success of the heir in having intercourse with all the widows. Should a widow refuse the heir after touching the ash it is said that she will either die herself or cause any man she lies with to die of 'the ash'; but if she escapes before being smeared with ash then she is safe. The heir is also in danger if a widow should refuse him after he has touched the ash.

The morning after the ritual union the heir is formally summoned out of the hut by a man knocking on the door and crying: 'Come out, war has come (*Soka! ubwite bwisile*),' i.e. sexual intercourse has begun. He sits on a stool in the doorway of the hut and is greeted by the children of the deceased: 'Good morning, Father.'

iii. '*The gasping cough.*' Each of the inherited women goes off to 783
her own father's homestead with the filth (*indafu*) of intercourse 768
on her. She does not even wash her hands, and she takes with her 587
cooked bananas which she has smeared with her husband's semen and her own emission. This she buries in the banana grove in her father's homestead in which he prays to his ancestors. She takes meat to her father if an animal has been killed at the 'shaving of the sprouting hair'. The heir similarly goes to his father's homestead (or that of his father's heir) with cooked bananas to be buried in his father's sacred grove. Each wife drinks beer mixed with medicine with her father and other close relatives. From the time when the heir sleeps with the widows until this ritual is per- [574]
formed, they cannot visit their parents nor can their children do so (though usually children come and go freely in the home of their mother's people) and, more particularly, a widow must not drink from her mother's cup, or eat with her, or sit over her fire, or touch her hand. It is believed that, if the ritual is neglected, those for whom it should have been performed will be seized with a racking cough (*ingotolo*) and diarrhœa. Even Christians, who eschew the other parts of the death ritual, often participate in the *ingotolo*.

When a woman has died she should be replaced by a sister or 587
brother's daughter, just as the dead man is by a brother or son, 834

[1] The closest equivalent in our society is cheering, but the *akalulu* is raised by women.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

587 and the widower should refrain from sexual intercourse with his
834 other wives until the ritual union with the 'wife who replaces the dead' (*unsasi*) at the 'shaving of the sprouting hair'. Nowadays, however, widowers do not keep this taboo strictly, and many lie with their other wives after the 'picking up of pumpkin-seeds'.

765 Before the 'shaving of the sprouting hair' for a dead woman her brother (or, if he is dead, his heir) goes to cut down the bananas at her former husband's home, as a sign that kinship between them is at an end, but he is persuaded to desist. Mwakwelebeja, an elderly man who had just performed it after the death of his sister Seba, the wife of the chief Mwaipopo, in company with his neighbour Mwaiselage and his wives, thus described the ritual:

> We arrived and our wives and the wives of Mwaipopo went into the house to wail, and we men went in too and cried: 'Alas father! Alas father!' Then we seized my *umwipwa*, the girl Ijonga, the daughter of Seba, and went off with her. The women, the chief's wives, fought with us and cried: 'Bring a cloth, bring a cloth!' They gave us a cloth and we left the girl. Then I seized a bill-hook and began to cut down the banana grove. I cut indeed! They cried: 'Not the banana grove!' and gave me another cloth.
>
> QUESTION: What does this mean?
>
> MWAKWELEBEJA: When we seize the girl it is as if we said: 'My child has died, the kinship is finished, it is finished here, I'll be off with my sister's children (*abipwa*), they are *my* children.' And when they give me a cloth they pay saying: 'Father, we pray you, don't! There is still kinship, Father, you are not a stranger! Do not terminate the kinship, it is still there.' And when I cut the banana grove it means the same; it means my child has died here, it is finished here, the kinship has ended. And when they give me a cloth, they beseech me saying: 'Not the banana grove, Father, the kinship is not yet finished, it still exists!' Formerly, if they were rich they gave a bull. . . . We were unfortunate, Mwaipopo paid us nothing.
>
> After I had cut the grove I gave bananas and meat (from a cow I had brought to kill) to all my sisters' children, on the roadway (outside the homestead). I stood with my back to them and handed the bananas and meat over my shoulder. They came up behind me one by one, and took the food in their mouths. [This was demonstrated, dramatically.] Yes, it is a ritual. If we do not give them bananas and meat, their legs swell up, they fall ill and become mad.

765 Some of our informants maintained that this ritual of cutting
184 the bananas was performed only when the deceased's family had no girl to send in her place. Mwakwelebeja and Mwaiselage, how-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

585
354 new home, and her mother-in-law provides her with fire and a pot.

783 After the bride has had full intercourse with her husband she cannot return home, or see her own parents, until she has taken them the ritual *ilibalaga*. After sexual intercourse she wipes her husband's genitals with her hands, then wipes them on a fowl and some millet: these together form the *ilibalaga*. In the morning she goes off without washing—'with the filth of intercourse on her'—to her parents' house, taking the fowl and millet with her. The fowl is killed on a path and cooked with *ikipiki* medicine and, if the bride is the eldest daughter of one of the father's first two wives, her father and mother eat it together. Her mother eats alone if she is a younger daughter, or the mother is a junior wife. If the father is a chief the husband may kill a young bull and beef is sent in place of the hen.

●834 After eating the *ilibalaga* her parents resume intercourse[1] which has been taboo from the time the girl first menstruated. If no hen is brought because the husband is poor, the parents still resume sexual intercourse, but the bride, when she visits her home, must not take water from her mother's pot. Someone else draws for her and she drinks it outside from a separate calabash. If she drinks [753] inside, or if her mother uses the calabash she has used, it is believed that her mother will get diarrhœa. She also avoids her father's bed and stool.

606 With the ritual of marriage must be included the negative ritual of avoidance between a woman and her husband's father and between those identified with him or her. The taboo applies from the time of betrothal or, if the girl has been betrothed as an infant, from well before she reaches puberty, and forbids father-in-law and daughter-in-law ever to look at one another or meet face to face on the pathway, or enter the same house, much less speak together. As we have seen, a similar taboo applies between the bride and her own father during her seclusion, but is relaxed when he [184] has given her a gift. Between a woman and her father-in-law, however, it is never relaxed, except among the more sophisticated 773 Christians. A myth of origin tells of a case of incest between father-606 in-law and daughter-in-law which led to the establishment of the 811

[1] Kasitile maintained that if the mother has not reached the menopause the parents do not lie together until the daughter's pregnancy is apparent. 'For the mother to conceive before the daughter is forbidden, but old women are fruits sucked dry.' Mwakionde denied any danger in mother conceiving before daughter.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

881 The first act of the ritual, the giving of the *undumila*[1] medicine
751 to the girl, is a symbol of sexual intercourse, and it is thought to be a prophylactic against pain in intercourse, frequent or painful periods, and injury from contact with those who are 'heavy'. 'It is given so that her belly may not be painful,' said Mwaisumo's mother, an elderly woman. Kasitile's wife explained: 'The pungent root is the penis of the husband, the cup is her vagina, the salt, also pungent, is the semen of her husband. Biting the root and eating the salt is copulation.' Mwakionde's wife gave a similar interpretation:

841 The *undum'la* is put through the leaf of a bark-cloth tree, shaped into
751 a cup, and it is a sign of man and woman, the penis in the vagina. It is similar to the plantains which we give her when we wash her. The plantains are a symbol of the husband. If we do not give her the *ikipiki* medicine the blood never dries up, and it is the same with the *undumila*. If it is not given she constantly has periods and is barren. Yes, some have a period twice in one month—those who have rotted. Only a few are like this, not many. . . . The *undumila* is given to the girl at once, in the mouth as soon as she grows up, so that she can go about without fear; otherwise, if she washes without having had it, then a heavy one may walk over her footprints, that is overstep her, and she will not bear a child, she menstruates continually.

Kasitile's wife said much the same: 'If the heavy ones have overstepped her, her body rots. The man is not sterile, but the woman is; the man's semen is fertile, but the woman has painful periods. It is the pain of periods we symbolize in the sharpness of the *undumila* and salt.'

827 The heavy ones (*abasito*), feared both during the puberty ritual
● 834 and by a mother with a new-born child, are those who sleep with their husbands. They include women both before and after conception. 'When the pregnancy is advanced and the husband has left off sleeping with his wife, then she is not heavy and she can keep a mother with a new-born baby company and hold the baby. A man who is sleeping with a woman is also heavy. They say: "He will overstep us." ' This was the statement of Mwakionde's wife and Kasitile, questioned separately, confirmed every point. We then asked Kasitile: 'How is the heaviness (*ubusito*) from lying with a man dangerous to those going through puberty and childbirth?'

Kasitile: 'Because those who are with their husbands are heavy, they are strong, their fellow the bride (*unsungu*) is empty, light in

[1] *Undumila* is derived from *ukuhumila*: to bite, to be painful.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

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ront. See, the man ejects semen! Does it not go inside? The woman 834
becomes heavy and oversteps the bride.'

Even after she has been treated, the bride avoids any close con- 834
act with those who are 'heavy'; in particular they are excluded 833
rom her hut. Her own mother 'does not sleep with the father at
ll from the time the girl grows up until she goes to her husband,
nd begins intercourse with him. It is taboo. She says to her hus-
band: "See, I am keeping my child company." ' But the 'play' of
er companions does not matter, for intercourse *inter crura* does not
nake anyone heavy; it is the semen of a man in a woman's belly
which makes her heavy, and her husband also, through contact
with her.

The second medicine used at the puberty ritual is the *ikipiki*,[1] 789
made from the bark of certain small-leafed forest trees. The same
pecies is used by many Nyakyusa families, but the identity of
he person who provides it is very important, for it is identified
with the blood (*ililopa*) of the family. In the puberty-marriage
itual the groom's mother provides the *ikipiki* with which the bride
vashes at her husband's (if she is a senior wife), at the rite of
putting her in' (*ukwingesia*), at the second washing with her hus-
band, at the shaving, and at the washing before jumping over fire.
The same medicine is used each time. It is also sprinkled on the
bananas she eats at the *ukwingesia*. The bride's own mother, how-
ever, provides the *ikipiki* which is added to her porridge and buried
under the hearth the day she first menstruates, and that used for
washing her father, or brother, and mother at the *ukwingesia*.
Also, should it be known that the bride is not a virgin, the mother-
n-law will refuse to bring her *ikipiki* and it must be provided for
each rite by her mother. The medicine is in itself awesome (*nsisya*).
Kasitile's wife remarked one day that the bride slept with one of
her maids in front of her, 'at her stomach', and one behind. We
asked why. She replied: 'That *ikipiki* medicine! It's awesome. She 789
fears to be alone.' 'If someone has not given her the *ikipiki* to drink 841
and heavy ones cook food and give it to her she goes bad, she has
periods without cessation.' 'The mother gives porridge with *ikipiki*
to the girl and buries some under the hearth. That means may she
be heavy in her stomach, for if heavy ones warm themselves at the
fire in the house, she is in danger of going bad, she will have a con-
tinuous issue of blood.' 'If the *ikipiki* were not given, her period

[1] *Um-piki*: a tree of any species. *Iki-piki*: medicine made from the bark of certain species (one is a Mussaenda) and used in the rituals of death, puberty, and birth. [824]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

881 at the stream comes from the girl's father.[1] He spits on it and
585 gives it to her mothers to dress her in at the stream.' (Kasitile.) Angombwike explained further:

> Dressing her in it means her father has made her grow up. It means: 'Now she is a woman let her act like a woman.' They symbolize the genitals (*ikisepe*) of the man, because among us, according to Nyakyusa custom, in front is a woman and behind a man. They tell her, saying: 'You have grown up, you have work [i.e. intercourse] with a man.'
>
> QUESTION: *Kipetule?*
>
> AGOMBWIKE: *Kipetule* is very old. It's to bless her and say: 'You have grown up. When you go to your husband it will not be painful. Have intercourse.' If the woman is no longer a virgin they do not speak of it. They say she knows already, she has learnt on the veld.

834 *Kipetule*, like *undumila*, is a word not used in mixed company. Once Kasitile whispered, when inquiry had been made, unwittingly, before other people: 'No, Mwaipaja (G. W.), there are children present, and my senior, that is bad. But when there are only cross-cousins (*batani*), then . . .' So the conversation changed.

881 The washing at the stream is a final purification. Lyandileko
585 said:

783 We give the bride brass body-rings because she was not wearing good things (*inunu*), she was filthy during the puberty ritual. We wash her and put on body-rings and a cloth, and she stands in the winnowing basket, because now she must not step on dirt (*ububibi*).

881 The earth, it will be remembered, is associated with faeces,
585 corpses, and the shades. Then comes the triumphal return to her father's house, the girl carried high, and the women dancing. 'Crying "*Nisya*" and carrying the girl, on return from bathing, is for display.' Lyandileko, asked the reason for throwing millet in the winnowing basket, replied:

> It's to say it [the food, i.e. the meat of the bull of puberty] is ours. We examine the girl at the river. If she is rubbish (*lenga lindu*) we do not rejoice. The mothers of the girl give gifts (*ukubonola*). It's a rejoicing because it's ours, it's ours, the girl is virgin.

Nisya, the word the women repeat as they carry and dance with the bride on the return from the stream, was interpreted by Angombwike as meaning: 'Put me down.'[2] 'It is traditional and

[1] Mwakionde denied this, *vide infra*, p. 109.
[2] *Ukwiya*: to put down behind (as opposed to in front).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

have thought of it now, this is the cow.' Then, in the evening, the mother's brother blows out water in the banana grove and prays much to the fathers. And when he has prayed he says: 'Send the girl to a doctor to drink medicine.' Then the girl bears a child. The pagans say of us Christians when we have children without performing the ritual: 'You have a medicine, you are baptized with a medicine.'

Mwakobela confirmed that the mother's brother, like the father, may prevent a girl bearing a child.

Yes, it is so, if I do not give marriage-cattle for my wife our child will not bear. We go to divine and the oracle catches hold of my wife saying that the fathers are angry. We ask what they are angry about, and the answer is 'cattle'. Then I, the father of the girl, go with a cow and leave it and return. My wife and daughter remain there. They pray and pray and the girl conceives.

It is clear, therefore, that the shades are present in intercourse and control conception. At marriage the shade of her father must 'move aside a little' so that the bride may conceive, and she herself becomes dangerous to her mother (and in a lesser degree to her father) because she has mingled her blood with that of another lineage. Mingling the blood of different lineages is dangerous and a bride can safely meet her mother only after performing a ritual in which her parents, as well as herself, become 'one flesh' with her husband. 'When a bride brings a hen and millet to her mother it is to say: "Mother, I have wiped my husband's genitals, I have grown up."' All our informants were agreed that this *ilibalaga* or *ilibuko* (both words are used) is to safeguard the mother's health, particularly to prevent her suffering from diarrhœa. Mwandisi's statement was clear:

In the puberty ritual, when a bride has come from her husband, having lain with him, she catches hold of a little millet and a fowl without washing herself and carries them to her mother. The mother eats it with the fowl that her belly may be firm. If the daughter does not bring these things, then, when she drinks from the same calabash as her mother, she oversteps her mother, who has diarrhœa. Yes, the illness comes from the shades because she has come hot from the bed. . . . This diarrhœa comes from the belly when those below are angry and those above also. They say: 'The mother has overstepped the child' or 'The child has overstepped the mother'. If a girl has reached puberty we, the parents, do not come together until she has gone to her husband and lain with him. If we have intercourse we

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

881 overstep our child, she will be barren and not bear children, but when
585 she has lain with her husband then we two lie together again.
783
753 Kasitile identified the hen with the body of the girl, the millet
834 with the seed of her husband, and a daughter going to the back of her mother's hut (*kosofu*), or drinking out of the common calabash, as meeting with her mother.

If she does this before she has brought a fowl she soils her mother. Her mother develops diarrhœa. That is getting rid of the dirt (*kokusosya ubunyali*). . . . The mother's diarrhœa is like that from adultery. If my wife lies with a man in the bush, and I lie with her also, she soils the food which I eat with her, it is dirty, and I have diarrhœa, it is to get rid of the filth. . . . Yes, even though we do not lie together, I get a little diarrhœa, the filth of my wife.

QUESTION: Is the *ilibalaga* to drive away the shade again?

KASITILE: No, it is something else. It is to save the mother that she may not have diarrhœa and may not become weak.

881 The explanation given of the Kukwe *ilibuko* rite makes clear
585 that it is a symbolic mingling of 'the blood' of son-in-law and mother-in-law, which makes contact between them (through the bride) safe.

881 Failure to bring the *ilibalaga* is thought sometimes to result
585 in very serious illness. One of the wives of our neighbour,
753 Mwakobela, was delirious. We asked what the cause was. He replied:

Her daughter reached puberty and went to her husband, but refused to drink with her mother. She just came and took water in the calabash cup, she brought nothing from her husband. . . . If the husband is poor a girl brings a fowl for drinking with her mother. . . . The divination said: 'It's the girl.'

QUESTION: Why did she not bring a hen from her husband?

MWAKOBELA: He is not a man of wisdom, he's very harsh, and a fool.

881 After the *ilibalaga* has been eaten by her parents a bride is no
585 longer dangerous to them, and she, fortified by the various treat-
606 ments with *undumila* and *ikipiki* medicines, no longer fears the 'heavy ones'. The critical periods of first menstruation and first intercourse are past. But the rule of avoidance between her and her father-in-law (and those identified with him) continues through life and is directly associated by the Nyakyusa with the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

(from under the bed) in the morning it has the filth of intercourse on it, then the father and mother should eat it. If this is not done they will fall ill with diarrhœa. If the hen is taken alive some eat it and others do not.' 585 881 783

After discussing this rite Mwasalemba went on:

You know, also, that when a girl has gone through the puberty ritual at her husband's she must not take firewood from her mother's rafters (*kwijulu*) until she is obviously pregnant. Before then, while she is lying with her husband, she must not. We say: 'How can you take your mother's firewood when you are sleeping with your husband?' It is just the same whether the mother is old or young. If the bride goes through the ritual without sleeping with her husband that is all right; it is when she begins to sleep with him that she begins to avoid her mother's loft. At that time I, the father, may meet her mother and sleep with her, but with *coitus interruptus*. I must not make her pregnant. The daughter must begin. As soon as she is pregnant then we parents can begin to conceive a child again. If we do so before our daughter, then she will never bear a child at all, and others will say: 'How could you overstep your daughter?' 784 842 [834]

Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is observed as in Selya, but is slightly less strict. 606 184

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

As has already been indicated, the symbolism of the Kukwe ritual of puberty is similar to that of Selya. The same actions are interpreted in exactly the same way and, where actions differ somewhat, they are still interpreted as expressing the same general conceptions. For example, the Kukwe bride and groom make fire together by friction and eat porridge cooked on it, whereas a bride in Selya eats bananas with powdered medicine, but both actions are symbols of sexual intercourse. Both in Selya and in Kukwe country the bride is purified and, as part of the process of purification, the shade of her father's lineage is driven from her body; but only among the Kukwe is this symbolized by sitting in a running stream and allowing the water to wash away pebbles from between her fingers and toes. 585 881 184

That there may be no doubt about the interpretation of the Kukwe ritual we again quote a number of statements by Nyakyusa informants. These refer specifically to the Kukwe form of the puberty ritual. 585 881

Chief Porokoto's wives, discussing the ritual together, were em-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

MUNGASALWA: The bride does not cross water for it is said that the 585 881
blood which began to flow when she reached puberty will not dry on her body if she does.

To sleep on the litter and to refuse to sleep on sleeping-mats is a sign of childhood (for during childhood girls do not think much about [863]
cleanliness, but are dirty); it means that they leave behind them [literally 'come out from'] childish things. The litter is burnt because if it has not been burnt the children take bits of it to make a fire and cook food, then, when they have eaten that food, their bodies are sick. We say the body becomes unhealthily fat (*ukujegejala*). Food is collected for a bride because if, later, a woman, who has not had food collected for her, eats food collected for another bride going through the puberty ritual, she will fall sick and her body will grow unhealthily fat. Bringing food for the *ukusumbulila* and giving gifts at the *ukugwa* are to congratulate the bride because she has grown up, she is now an adult.

X: The wearing of banana leaves [at the bringing out] is a sign of fertility. The ritual is finished, the girl is someone's wife now. . . . The [831]
plantain represents the penis, the sweet banana the clitoris.

Sitting in a stream and letting water carry away pebbles placed 783
between fingers and toes is a symbol of purification and separation 775
from the shade. The first element—purification—was mentioned by most informants: 'The rite means that the dirt is finished,' said Porokoto's wife; but the more self-conscious identified 'dirt' with the shade. Mwasalemba made the matter quite clear. When asked why pebbles were placed in the clefts of fingers and toes, he replied: 'Kyala, when he created men, said: "At death throw it away, it is the shade, it is the body."'

QUESTION: In the puberty ritual? 881
MWASALEMBA: It is to say that the shade has brooded over the child, 775
since he created blood we throw him away. May the shade go with these stones, then may she bear children; if he does not go, if you do not treat the girl, then Kyala broods over her and she does not bear children.

QUESTION: Why does she avoid her father at this time? 881
MWASALEMBA: Because I, the father, and her mother, perform the 834
ritual for our child. Our shade has entered into her, has brooded over her, therefore we do not come together on the mat until we have finished treating our child; when we have finished, and have treated her, then we do what we will on the mat. If I want to lie with my wife [during the ritual] she refuses, saying: 'Our child has not yet finished, she is still undergoing the puberty ritual.' But if she agrees and we lie together, then our child will never bear. When we have finished the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

881 When we have finished the
834 ritual I come together with my wife again, but if our child is unmarried
[833] it is taboo to procreate a child, we practise *coitus interruptus*, the semen falls on the mat. . . . This is until the girl goes to her husband, until she is married. If my wife wears a bark-cloth I say to her during our daughter's puberty ritual: 'Arrange your bark-cloth carefully lest I, the man, desire you, I shall catch hold of you and we will cause the shade to make our child barren.' When she has gone to her husband we say our shade has finished, he has gone away in the water. Our child has gone to another shade. Yes, she also has intercourse with her husband at his home, but that does not matter, I have intercourse with my wife.

834 He was emphatic that the parents begin full intercourse as soon as the girl goes to her husband, it is not necessary to wait for her to become pregnant.

833 QUESTION: What do the spirits do in intercourse?
775 MWASALEMBA: The shade causes my penis to stand up and says: 'Go to the woman, there.' And also the woman's shade says: 'Your husband comes into you.' It is the shades which create desire, then we have intercourse, the shades meet together, hers—the woman's—and mine. If I do not go to my wife the shade says: 'Why, what's wrong with my place? Are there thorns? Why do you not enter?' They brood over (*bikobatela*) us both, both me and my wife.

QUESTION: What do they want?

MWASALEMBA: They want to create a child.

838 QUESTION: Why then do men desire masturbation and sodomy? [At
775 first when I asked this he said: 'No, the shade is a woman,' but then he
839 corrected himself].

MWASALEMBA: It is the shade which creates this desire, we have it within. A youth masturbates, the semen falls on the ground—perhaps two youths; it's also the shade. And a woman also masturbates. . .

775 QUESTION: You perform the rituals for many reasons?
771 MWASALEMBA: Yes, if we do not perform the rituals the shade broods on us and we do not bear children. Perhaps he broods on the crops, and they do not grow well but poorly, perhaps we run mad.

On another occasion Mwasalemba said:

775
833 The shade is in the heart. It is the shade which desires to go to a woman, which causes us men to have erections and excites desire in women. If you have not got the shade you are impotent, you do not go to women. We say: 'The shade has brooded over this man, why do they not rouse him to go to women?' He just looks at women. Then the shade rouses up in the belly and says: 'Ha!' It rouses up and the man has intercourse with a woman. If it has brooded over him, it does not

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

her husband may give her *ikipiki* to rub on her hands and on a 842
stick with which she touches each of the cattle. She gives them 789
ikipiki that they may not be "empty". Then she can clean out the
byre at any time.'

A third idea that recurs, again and again, is that of *ukukilanya*, 842
overstepping, which is used in both a literal and a metaphorical 784
sense. It is taboo for a woman to step over her husband in any way,
hence there are explicit rules (taught during initiation) on posture
in intercourse. It she should step over him it is said that 'his legs
will swell' and he has grounds for divorcing her. It is taboo for an
adult to step over a child and for a woman who is having inter-
course to step over one who is not, though a child may step over
an adult and a virgin or youth who is not having intercourse may
step over a married person of the same sex who is not. In a society [516]
in which everyone sits on the ground, often with legs outstretched,
observance of the taboo necessitates care.

In its metaphorical sense *ukukilyana* is used for a 'heavy' person 195
coming into close contact with an 'empty' one, as, for example, a
woman who is sleeping with her husband entering the hut of a
woman with a new-born child, or the mother of a bride resuming
intercourse before her daughter has had intercourse, or a bride
who has not yet brought the *ilibalaga*, the symbol of her union
with her husband, to her parents, drinking from her mother's
calabash, or entering the inner part of her hut; or a wife who has
committed adultery cooking for her husband. It is used, too, of a
woman who continues to bear children after the marriage of her
son for, it is said, if she does so the son's wife will never conceive at
all, or will be long in conceiving, or her child will not walk, on
account of a curse.

MWAIKAMBO: It is not customary for mother and son both to have 842
infants. Women mostly begin to stop intercourse when their sons marry. 834
They say it is not good that both mother and son should have small
children, because the mother of the young man now thinks of helping
her daughter-in-law in nourishing her children. If mother and son both
have babies, people are much astonished and say it is not a good custom;
they create a curse (*ikigune*) and the fertility of the son and his wife rots. [789]

Mwaihojo's wife put it this way:

I leave off having children when my son is married for I should receive my grandchild in my arms, and care for my grandchildren, and be with them in the house.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

195 *Ukukinda* means to pass, to surpass, and *ukukilanya* (overstepping), in its metaphorical use, implies that 'one has power and the other is weak, so the powerful one does some injury to the weak one'.

●834 Fourthly, as was made apparent in the puberty ritual, it is held 842 to be dangerous to 'mix bloods'. Adultery is not only an infringe- [753] ment of the exclusive rights of a husband, but it may injure him directly, causing him to have diarrhœa, which is a 'getting rid of the filth' due to contact with a strange 'blood'. It was implied that intercourse with a menstruating woman was in some sense 'mixing bloods' also, and the danger to parents of contact with a newly-married daughter before a precautionary ritual has been performed, stems from the same thing; the parents, through their daughter, are brought into contact with the blood of another lineage, that of the new son-in-law.

843 Besides being 'heavy' and therefore liable to 'overstep' others, a pregnant woman is thought to reduce the quantity of any grain she approaches, for the foetus within her is voracious and snatches it. Therefore neither she nor her husband (who participates in her condition) may approach other people's millet[1] or beans or oil-seeds spread out to dry, or speak to those who are reaping or grinding or stamping or brewing, without making a gesture of good-will by spitting on a pebble or knotting a leaf, and throwing it into the heap of grain. The sanction is fear of a miscarriage, for the owners of the food may have used medicines 'so that the food may be much and people be astonished'. Her own crops a pregnant woman may handle freely, and a chief's wife does not observe the taboo in her own village.

Two or three quotations will make these conceptions clearer:

ANGOMBWIKE: When my wife has conceived they say we are both 'heavy', both my wife and I. Then, if oil-seeds or millet are out drying in the sun, they tell us not to speak. 'You are heavy ones,' they say. So we are silent. They say that if there is talking we will catch hold of the oil-seeds or millet, and it will diminish. Yes, I must avoid the grain even though I am alone, because I am heavy.

KASITILE: Maize does not vanish but millet and beans. The child which is being made bewitches them; they disappear. . . . The child has opened its mouth wide, its jaws gape.[2] It is that child which is being

[184] [1] Some held that millet was the only grain affected; others maintained that maize was also.

[2] *Umuvana apambwile ulupambo nkanwa. Ulupambo* is used of the gaping jaws of a crocodile.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

like activities; things which are felt to be alike are often felt to be antagonistic. We have shown that certain of the pregnancy taboos are interpreted in terms of the opposition between seed in plants and seed in the womb, and between pumpkins in the field and pumpkins in the vagina, and we have touched on the opposition between procreation and war. Sexual intercourse, 'the war of the mats', is directly compared with war; the two are felt to be alike and therefore incompatible. Association with a menstruating or parturient woman is felt to be weakening to a warrior; continence of a warrior before battle is enjoined—'men feared to die quickly if they slept with their wives just before war.' Moreover, a menstruating wife never touches her husband's weapons lest they be weakened.

Hunting is classed with war and the same taboos apply. Added to them is the notion that, since a pregnant woman is often angry, the animals her husband hunts will be angry also, and he is in much greater danger than an ordinary hunter.

ANGOMBWIKE: If you go into the bush and you have left your wife heavy, at home, if you meet a lion it will not run off, but will injure you, maul you. And if you are many, a leopard or a lion will attack you, the heavy one, not the others.

QUESTION: Why?

ANGOMBWIKE: It is as if there was much anger. And we've noticed something else, if a lion attacks cattle it always attacks a cow in calf. And another thing. If a woman is heavy she is very bad-tempered (*nkali*), it's like a passion. Perhaps the woman is bad-tempered or perhaps good, and you, the husband, are bad-tempered. Pregnancy shows in many ways. . . .

A pregnant woman has a great fire in her body, she sweats a lot and is passionate (*nelyojo*), she is fierce (*nkali*). That fire is strong; we all flee from the woman, we all dislike her. And when pregnancy begins the animals in the bush wish to kill you, the husband. That fierceness [the fire] makes them hate you; you are like a twin. A first-born child is very fierce (*nkali*), so a woman is very passionate and sweats a great deal.

His wife's pregnancy puts a man in danger from wild animals, and so does a quarrel with her, quite apart from the pregnancy which tends to produce such quarrels. Mwaisumo said: 'If I go hunting after quarrelling with my wife it is very dangerous, I might be killed by a wild animal.'

Besides the idea that animals will *attack* the husband of a preg-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

coughing disease to the owners of the house. . . . Pagans used to fear to let those who are sleeping together touch the hearth-bricks or blow up the fire in their house for, if they do so, then the owners of the house, both man and woman, fall sick coughing. They say it is the disease of fires (*myoto*). . . . But when a woman has borne a child and is suckling it, and her husband is not with her, then it is not taboo.

Making fire by friction and, in more general terms, fire, are symbols of sexual intercourse, and 'the fire of the body and the fire of the house fight'. Drinking from a calabash cup is perhaps also a symbol of intercourse—the shape of the cup suggests it—but there is no direct evidence of such an association.

The taboo on mixing the sex activities of different couples is pushed to the point that women avoid for a day the milk of a cow that has been with the bull. 'They say: "We will harm the cow. It will abort." They compare it with themselves as women.'

Two last pregnancy taboos may be noted which turn, not on the feeling that like things are antagonistic, but that like produces like. Things felt to be alike are treated as causally related. We quote Mwambuputa, the village headman:

> Women fear to stand in a doorway when they are pregnant. They say: 'How should the child stand in the doorway? It will refuse to come out.' Because if birth is delayed, it is as if the child refused to come out of the house. That is the symbol. And I, the husband, feared also [to stand in a doorway]. Now we men do not fear; it is finished; but women still fear.
>
> And another thing, when a woman was pregnant we feared to sit close together, I, the husband, and my child. It was taboo. And for my wife and another woman to sit close together was taboo. It was said that she would bear twins, because we had sat together. Now we men do not fear, but women still do.

(*b*) *The confinement*

A first confinement, like first menstruation, is the occasion for elaborate ritual, and though at later confinements (as at later menstrual periods) certain taboos must be observed, they are less numerous and less strictly enforced than those connected with the birth of the first child, *umwana gwa busungu*.

A first child should be born at the husband's mother's house, 'and if the first child is a girl they will tell her to come again for the second, saying: "Come that we may treat our husband [i.e. grandson]." ' The woman lies, during labour, on a heap of leaves

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 this is eaten by the relative who receives the *ilibalaga*, after he has buried it. He who receives the *ilibalaga* buries it, and while he is doing so he looks up country to the origin of the Nyakyusa, who moved down to the plain (MuNgonde); the officiant then tells them all to look up country. . . . The mother of twins meets her family and it means: 'I am all right now, I am clear, I am your friend, Kyala had bound me. . . .' On reaching home the woman waits on the path . . . her husband (who has been with the *ilibalaga* to his people) likewise waits for his wife. . . . Then they both advance together and meet, and go into their house [not the temporary hut] and eat and drink together. This eating and drinking together means that their ritual is finished; they say: 'We have survived that rubbishy Kyala who had bound us (*tuponile kwa lyaKyala ili lya tupinile*).'[1] They eat the food which has come from their two families together, first drinking together the beer. This is the end of the twin ritual as it has always been performed. People avoid the parents of twins for they say: 'He brings disease into our family.'

845 From the time the twins are born until he meets their mother
●834 ritually, intercourse with any woman is taboo to the father of twins. After the ritual he may live with the mother (though she should not conceive again until the twins are running about), but he cannot visit his other wives. Only when she has given birth again—and had a normal delivery—is he free to live with his
[753] other wives. Should he break this taboo it is believed that the wife with whom he breaks it will fall grievously ill with swelling of the legs and belly, and her father is entitled to claim a cow as damages. Some polygynists are said to circumvent the taboo in this way:

> The husband will go to the father of one of his wives and will take a cow to him and say: 'I have got twins, I petition for your daughter.' Then he can take her into his house and sleep with her, but with his other wives he cannot sleep until she has borne a child. When she does so, then he goes to the fathers of his other wives, taking a bull to each, and says: 'I have had a twin birth but now it is finished, and I am taking your daughters.' If the first wife thus taken bears no child, then he must take a cow to the father of another and try with her.

But several of our informants held that no father in his senses would permit his daughter to be taken by her husband after he had fathered twins, until the mother of twins had herself borne a normal child.

845 The isolation of the parents of twins from cattle also continues for some time. The father of twins does does not milk or enter a

[1] Mwaikambo, commenting on the text, said: 'It is as if Kyala was *lindu* (rubbish).' The concord implies *ilindu* not a person, as is usual with the proper name Kyala.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

they take hold of the corpse. But they wait for the doctor; if they do not do so the same disease will come—a swelling of legs and diarrhœa. An ordinary corpse is not feared in this way. 845 764 [753]

Yes, a man fears to take his other wives. He says: 'If I just go to them I shall give them the disease of the twins that I begot with this wife.' The wife he takes without precaution will swell in the legs and stomach, and pass blood with her stools. He first tries to have a child with the wife who bore twins, waiting till the twins are walking about. He lies with the mother of the twins but withdraws, and then, when the children are grown, he impregnates her. He does not go to the other wives. And if he asks for another wife before trying to impregnate the mother of the twins her father will refuse. If he takes her without asking, her father will make him pay a cow. He can only ask for another wife if the mother of the twins does not conceive. For one month[1] the husband refrains altogether from intercourse, then after the ritual he goes to his wife (the mother of the twins) but does not impregnate her. . . . A man is supposed to tell the twin doctor before he begets another child with his wife. He must do it openly, and not in secret. It is taboo to do it secretly. Nothing happens, but the doctor is angry, saying: 'Why did you not tell me, the doctor, the owner of the body?' 845 842 [834]

Themes already familiar from the death and puberty–marriage rituals recur again here. The parents of twins are isolated and cleansed like mourners and nubile girls. Contact with them is held to be dangerous because 'those below'—in this case Kyala and Mbasi rather than the shades—have brooded over them, and must be driven off before normal procreation can be resumed. After their isolation the *ilibalaga*—the symbol of their ritual union—must be offered to the shades of both lineages, that of the man and that of the woman. There is also the eating of balls of porridge, the symbol, in the other rituals, of the actions of a madman, but the fear of madness was not adduced by our informants as the purpose of the twin ritual; rather it is the formidable potency which produces two children instead of one, that is the danger—'the parents of twins have a fire'—and men protect themselves against it by burning themselves with hot medicines. They 'burn the twin birth'. 845 783

[1] Presumably longer when the seclusion and ritual lasted longer.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

or his crops fail, or his cattle die, he reflects on any quarrels he may have had with kinsmen or affines or neighbours, and on any rituals he should have performed and has omitted wholly or in part. He may be quite clear in his own mind that the misfortune is due to some particular wrong-doing (*isengwa*)—perhaps a quarrel with a brother, or neglect to kill for his new neighbours on his inheritance from his father—and proceed directly to patch up the quarrel and perform the neglected ritual. More often he thinks of several possible causes and lays them before the oracle, relying upon it to select between them. How several possible causes of misfortune occurred to the chief sufferers, their kinsmen and neighbours, is shown in the cases of Enesi, Katasya, Mwambuputa and Mpoma quoted at the end of the book (pp. 258 ff.).

No linguistic distinction is made between an offence punished by the courts and one thought to be punished by the shades; both are wrong-doings (*isengwa*), and there is no sharp distinction between an offence against a living kinsman and an offence against a dead one. In short, there is no clear conception of 'sin' as opposed to 'tort' or 'crime'.

There are two themes constantly recurring in Nyakyusa theology: firstly, men must observe the traditional rituals (both positive and negative) or they will go mad; and secondly, the anger of senior relatives and neighbours will injure unless it is confessed and goodwill expressed.

The first conception is a magical one:[1] what is required is the performance or avoidance of particular acts in a particular form on particular occasions; the second is sacramental, it is 'anger in the heart' that is dangerous, and no ritual is held to be efficacious without a change of heart.

Often the two conceptions are not consciously related to one another: again and again one is told: 'The rituals must be performed or men will go mad,' and there is no reference to the state of mind of the performers; but on certain occasions they overlap explicitly, as when Kasitile adjured his kinsmen to confess all while they were performing the ritual to 'rot the ropes'; and always there is a symbolic connection, for the rituals themselves express the value of amity between kinsmen, of respect for seniors and obligation towards juniors.

The neglect of the marriage ritual is itself an expression of disrespect for parents or parents-in-law, and a breach of the sex code,

[1] In the sense defined by G. & M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 89-95.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[585] of which the basic rule is the separation of the reproductive
834 activities of successive generations.

If my wife goes to the inner part of my mother's house, it is a wrong. Perhaps she will bear a thin and sickly child. She has gone to the inner part of her in-law's house and my mother is angry with her for going where my father goes. Perhaps, when she is first pregnant, my wife goes to the back of her own mother's house. That is a wrong, too. Perhaps she will have a difficult labour. The trouble in both cases comes from the anger of the elders, my mother's in the first case, her mother's in the second. It is said that if my wives have seen my father by inheritance, then, when I die, the fathers who are dead will not receive me because I have injured ('kept back') their younger brother. I think, for my part, that the pagans honour this custom [of avoidance] very much because they say that the shades will be angry if it is neglected.

775 Apart from the neglect of rituals, the types of behaviour com-
673 monly believed to be directly punished by the shades are (1) quar-
578 rels between father and son or between brothers, turning on the
681 seduction of a senior's wife by his junior, on the sharing of marriage-cattle or, nowadays, on the sharing of the earnings of a young man working for wages, or on his seduction of women which necessitates the payment of fines by his father; (2) quarrels between father and daughter or father-in-law and son-in-law turning on the handing over of marriage-cattle by the son-in-law and the provision of gifts for his daughter by the father; (3) quarrels between husband and wife; (4) quarrels between relatives of all sorts over failure to attend, or to invite to, rituals; and (5) the neglect of his wards by the heir.

578 Cases of family quarrels over seduction leading to misfortune
775 have already been quoted (pp. 134–5; 187–8). One concerning cattle and earnings was cited by Mwakwelebeja. A young man, X., went out to work and left the cattle he earned with his elder full brother. When he married he took all these cattle and gave them to his father-in-law. His elder brother was very angry. X. said: 'I take all the cattle for you have never given me any of yours.' His brother replied: 'How could I give you cows? I have no children.' Then all the cattle X. had given to his father-in-law died and had to be replaced. 'The shades were angry because when the younger brother took the cows his elder brother complained very much.' And if a young man goes out to work and gives his father no share of his earnings the shades are angry: 'Perhaps I will fall ill; perhaps when I look for work I shall not

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

were dealt with by the local rulers or by the family-heads, not by the central authorities. It was only occasionally that general fears or misfortunes turned all men's thoughts together to Mbande. 771 643 565

Now the great-commoners of every chief were believed to have independent access to his ancestral spirits and this gave them a spiritual hold over him. If they compared him too unfavourably with his predecessors then, it was believed, those predecessors might hear and afflict him in various ways. And so it was also with the nobles of Ngonde and the reigning Kyungu. But as this belief was intimately linked with the belief in witchcraft it will be more conveniently analysed in that context.[1] 622

(b) *THE MAGICAL ELEMENT.*

Magic (the belief that certain particular objects, events, words or actions, involving particular people in particular situations, possessed in themselves an extraordinary power) was an essential ingredient of the old pagan religion of Ngonde. While the greatest magical object in the country was, traditionally, the body of the Kyungu. And the fact that the central political authority of Ngonde was so largely vested in the nobles of Ngonde was due above all to their responsibility for controlling this magical object in the public interest. 789 643

If the Kyungu cut himself, and more particularly if his blood fell to the ground, then it was the duty of the nobles of Ngonde to kill him, lest the whole land be afflicted with disease; and if he was ill likewise. "They considered that if his blood fell to the ground that was his life falling. And they likened him to a god, considering it taboo for a god to be wounded; they thought that if his blood fell to the ground it would turn into a sickness and all the people would die. And so, when the Kyungu was wounded, they thought it best to put him out of the way and start afresh with a new one. They thought it taboo for him to have even the tiniest wound on his body. And it was equally taboo for him to fall ill; everyone else, it was believed, would fall ill too; it was better to put him out of the way so that the people should keep well." 789 643 784 753

In consequence of this belief elaborate precautions were taken to maintain the Kyungu's health. Sexual impurity was believed to be magically dangerous to health in many ways and so the Kyungu, above all men, must be guarded from it. It was not considered safe even for his own wives to cook his food, lest one of them touch it during a menstrual period, and so young boys who had not yet reached puberty 789 643 934

[1] *Vide infra* pages 3 90.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

789 cooked it instead. One of the reasons for killing most of his sons, as we
643 have seen, was to lessen the danger of his wives committing adultery
834 with them, for adultery was a magical cause of sickness. His wives themselves were jealously guarded.

643 Then again a Kyungu might not wade across the river lest the act
784 of doing so should magically bring a deluge of rain from heaven, he
821 had always to be carried.

789 And the breath and the growing parts of a Kyungu's body—his hair and nails and the constantly replaced mucus of his nose—were
643 believed to be magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde
764 plain. When he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was
826 buried "with breath in his body"; while portions of his hair and nails and of his nasal mucus were taken from him beforehand and buried later by the nobles of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This action was believed to "close up the land, to keep it rich and heavy and fertile, as it was when he himself lived in it."

789 Now the Lwembe of Lubaga had equally magical flesh, but the other chiefs of Ngonde and the Nyakyusa had not. They could wade
622 across rivers, fall ill and be wounded without endangering their sub-
826 jects. But of all alike the breath and the hair and nails had a magical importance. Every ruling chief in both areas had his nostrils stopped by his great-commoners when nearing death, while portions of his hair and nails[1] were taken from him when living and buried after his death in a special place. The hair and nails were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops. "You see these nails of yours," said the man who explained the symbolism to us, "if you cut them do they not grow again?" (They do.) "And where does their growth come from? Does it not come from within the body?" (It does.) "Well then that is the reason, the great-commoners take power of growth from the chief in the form of his nails and hair."

789 Besides his magical body the Kyungu had a host of magical possessions. There was the iron stool *Kisumbi* on which he was set at
782 his accession; once he had sat upon it he could not flee the position or he would die. There was the drum *Mwenekelwa* whose note was believed to be heard by the most distant of the Kyungu's subjects. When it was beaten "all the little nobles from afar off would hear and obey the summons; they would all come together. Then we would tell them that so and so had not brought any ivory for a long time! Then they would come with tusks as tribute, to pay worship to the Kyungu." But sometimes the drum would refuse to sound and they would kill a

[1] We were only told about the nasal mucus in the case of the Kyungu.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

married. Thus, yet another bond is forged between chief and headman, for he who provides marriage cattle is 'father' to him who marries, and the chief's wives acknowledge this by avoiding the village headmen of the senior generation as they do their father-in-law. Once the chief's ritual marriage is complete the sex taboo is lifted and such of his men as are already married are joined by their wives. In theory, though not nowadays in practice, the taboo is observed until the marriage of the chief.

All through the ritual of the 'coming out' the idea of a new beginning is expressed—a new site for the villages, new houses, new fire, new power for the young men. The events of this ritual, the seclusion, the lying on a litter, the prohibition on washing, washing with medicines in the doorway of the hut, the admonition, are directly parallel to the events of the rituals of death and puberty which, we have argued in a previous book,[1] are dramatizations of death and rebirth. There seems little doubt that the 'coming out' is yet another celebration of this theme. The young men enter an enclosed house—that of the senior's mother—and 'come out' (*ukusoka*) renewed as a child 'comes out' (*ukusoka*) of the mother's womb. No Nyakyusa informant volunteered such an interpretation, but, when it was suggested, it was eagerly accepted as expressing the real meaning of 'coming out'.

(*b*) THE CHIEF'S MEDICINES

Reference has already been made to medicines used by chiefs and by village headmen at the 'coming out' and we must now examine them more closely. The great medicines of chieftainship are *ifungila* and their function is to create *amanga*, i.e. spiritual power, and *ubusiya*, i.e. dignity, majesty, in order to make the chief fearful 'so that men obey him'. The medicines are comparable to robes of office for they are designed to give their user assurance and fill the commonality with awe. The Nyakyusa also think that chiefs and headmen should be 'heavy' with 'pythons in their bellies' which give them the power to see and fight witches. Without such a 'python' a chief or village headman cannot fulfil his duty of 'watching over the country by day and by night' and if a man is not born with one he may develop it through the proper use of medicines. This notion has been examined elsewhere.[2] The *ifungila* medicines are also thought to give courage and ferocity (*ubugan*) in war, with luck in seizing enemy

[1] op. cit., p. 205. [2] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 97-102.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

chief, brought a bundle of firewood. Mwalukuta I was not 769
expected to enter the grove and he went off soon. His brother and 782
Nyama took a little basket of maize and millet. The chiefs stayed on the edge of the grove and the three commoners entered alone. Mwalukuta II and Nyama built a little hut five feet from the 'grave' with the saplings brought by Nyama's mother. 'We put firewood and food and a little calabash which we have prepared in it, it's for the shades.' The calabash contained millet, maize, pumpkin seeds, ground nuts, and cow peas; and a stem of bananas was put beside it. Mwalukuta swept the 'grave' which was marked by a few small trees, and Mwakasukula killed the cow, which must lie facing east to BuKinga. Mwalukuta spoke the invocation: 'Thou Mwakisambwe (30) . . . Mwakihaba (45) has gone back, but Mwamukinga (44) is here still. . . . Mwakihaba says, "I am no longer a relative, I have gone out." ' Then they took the sacred meat from the forelegs of the cow: that from the right leg was buried near the 'grave', that from the left by an *nkuju* tree (a species of *ficus*) forty paces away. The priests ate some roasted meat and intestines with bananas, and the rest of the meat was divided between them and the chiefs. The head went to Nyama's house and was kept for three nights. The priests ex- [515]
plained that they are forbidden to bathe for three days or lie with [834]
their wives, but on the fourth day they eat the head and after that they bathe and resume married life.

Eighteen days after the sacrifice Mwalukuta went to look and found the stem of bananas which had been left in the little hut had ripened, and the earth on the grave had been disturbed. This [787]
was a good omen. But later his legs began to trouble him—he could scarcely walk—and it was said that certain priests who should have been called to the ritual had not been summoned and were angry and had cursed him. He fled to a distance and sought a [783]
bull to kill for his fellows.

(*d*) SACRIFICE AT KABALE

The form of sacrifice among the Kukwe is very similar. We never saw a sacrifice at Kabale—our friends assured us that they had been dropped before 1935—but a description by two of the leading priests of the grove of Kabale demonstrates the similarity between the rituals there and in Selya. The only points of difference were that the Kukwe sacrificed fowls as well as cattle, and granddaughters shared the sacred food with grandsons.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 them first, then his grandfather, and father. Others told us that
778 rain stones always came from Kisi country, a very wet strip of land on the north-east shore of the Lake where the clouds always seem to gather when one looks south from the Nyakyusa valley and plain, and a piece of perforated wood used in Ngonde for making rain came from the hills of Misuku, also a very wet country. Kasitile's stones were of two types, but no direct association of male and female was made. However, the Kukwe spoke of a 'mother' stone having young. 'The rain-maker puts back the stone in the potsherd without water (after rain has come) and going later he finds that it has got young, perhaps seven, with the mother there are eight.'

The rain-makers are subject to certain taboos: during the dry
791 season they may not wash lest they drive away the rain nor do they
[784] shave for 'they compare hair and clouds saying, "Let it be black", they compare a bald pate with sunshine.' And the rain-maker
[262] may not eat roasted maize 'for as the maize crackles in the potsherd when it is roasted, so the thunder will crackle in the sky'. He may not eat green maize (which is reaped during the rains) until the dry weather begins 'because he creates rain, which means he creates all the food which grows with the rain'. If he begins eating too soon he may stop the growth. And when the rain-maker is manipulating his instruments a sex taboo is observed.
● [834] 'When I am making rain,' said Kasitile, 'I do not sleep with my wives for two days, it's taboo. How would Kyala help us if I did?'

In theory the rain-maker always works under the direction of
[643] the political authority—the Kyungu or a chief—but he is also thought to wreak vengeance on those who anger him. Kasitile was critical of his colleague in the hills above Isumba: 'He never makes a nice gentle rain, it always destroys food. . . . He is always demanding things from men, and, if they refuse, he brings his rain to destroy things. . . . There is a very strong wind and heavy
[464] rain which takes roofs off homes.' But when Kasitile himself was
[687] angry, because his son was taken as a tax defaulter to work on the roads, the weather grew bad.

789 People say I am angry, that this rain is because they came and beat me because of tax. This time the tax collectors came to my place and beat me and when I thought, 'It is not the custom with our forefathers for the tax collectors to come at all to men like me', I grew angry and prayed. . . . When I was in MuNgonde the country suffered from hunger, all their children were in trouble. . . . Then I came up, and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

All the time there was a constant refrain of questioning, especially 783
from Mwamakunda (who as Kasitile's assistant acts as his mouthpiece 782
to the others: 'But why has Mwakanjoki (60) gone off in a huff? Why?'
There was a continuous effort to extract reasons.

The meat from the top of the foreleg (*ijammapa*) was cut up into little portions and some was put aside for the boys, sons of Kasitile. Then Kasitile led the way with a bill-hook and Mwamakunda and I followed. Mwamakunda carried the meat in a leaf. We went to the [778] sacred grove, Kinyangwa. When we reached the edge Kasitile told us to wait and he cut a path into the middle with the bill-hook, then we followed.

Mwamakunda threw the meat slowly, piece by piece, into the rotting stump of an old *umuvali* tree, from which a lusty growth had sprung, [769] one shoot being 30 feet high. Kasitile prayed: 'Come Mwakanjoki (60), together with Lwembe (3?), Mwakalebela (19), and the Kinga, come, with—with—with—come. We pray of you millet, maize, bananas, all your food.' (Mwamakunda threw a piece of meat at each word.) 'We are still mourning you, we have tears. We finish now, that is all. Bring bananas, bring millet, maize, children, may the cows calve, stand by us Mwakanjoki (60), N—, N—, N— Lwembe (3?), Mwakalebela (19), Nsyanigwe,[1] Kyamba Kitali,[1] Ngulube (9), N—, N—, N—. Don't come again Mwakanjoki, let us sleep well. This is Mwambagoje [i.e. Mwamakunda the younger. It was his first visit to the sacred grove in place of his father]. I have brought him to you. Do not be startled at this Mwaipaja (G.W.), he is innocent, he is our friend. Move out of my body, let this chill go from my body! We have finished! Amen!'

Kasitile and Mwamakunda gave instructions and suggestions to each other in low voices from time to time during the prayer and throwing of the meat. We went out, Kasitile and Mwamakunda looking ahead, and Kasitile warned me: 'Do not look behind, Mwai- [834] paja.' For the next two days Kasitile said he and Mwamakunda would wash with medicines, and refrain from intercourse with their wives 'because they entered the sacred grove'.

Then we rejoined Mwaipopo and the priests and the meat was cut up. Mwaipopo said: 'Indeed people gossip, where does the whispering go? To whom do the words go? Perhaps they went to you (the commoner) priests?' Kasitile had something on his mind: 'When I returned [689] from Lubaga who came to say: "Thank you, you have arrived back?" [i.e. no one came to greet him formally on his return]. Njobakosa answered this saying that no offence was meant.

Then Njobakosa turned to Mwaipopo (116) and raised the question [684] of his son, Mwaseba (152) who had seduced Mwaipopo's wife, Mpeta.

[1] The hereditary Kinga priests. [793]

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9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The negative rituals—the taboos which surround the pro- 797x
creative functions—disappear rather slowly, but a Christian 795x
father will enter his wife's hut to greet her after she has given [834]
birth to a child, and will eat food cooked by her a week or two
later, which the pagans think extremely rash. An atmosphere of [262]
scepticism and experiment begins to develop; a few Christians
spoke of breaking even the deeply-entrenched taboos surrounding
menstruation 'to see what happened'. But that many Christians,
especially women, feared the old taboos was apparent when one [606]
watched the behaviour of Christian daughters-in-law towards
their fathers-in-law. In theory Christians disregarded the rules of
avoidance if their fathers-in-law are Christian, or avoid 'only a
little', but in practice a Christian woman is usually embarrassed
and fearful if, by mischance, she meets her father-in-law face to
face.[1]

Christians withdraw from the pagan communal rituals even [796]
more completely than they do from the rituals of kinship. No
Christian takes any part in the sacrifices to the heroes, or at the
groves of chiefs, or in cleansing the country, or in rain-making,
or sprinkling the homesteads. As for the ritual of chieftainship,
from that also Christians withdraw. At the time we were first in
BuNyakyusa only two chiefs were professing Christians, one of
whom was already baptized before his installation. The 'coming
out' performed for him was much curtailed since he refused to
use the traditional medicines and, because of the difficulty over
medicines, Christians were not acceptable as village headmen. In
Ngonde, where the proportion of Christians was much greater,
there were Christian headmen and chiefs, but the ritual of
'coming out' had disappeared altogether, and the Kyungu had
delegated the celebration of all pagan rituals to one of his coun-
cillors who still believed in them, he himself being a sceptic.

There are tales of the early missionaries visiting the groves to [177]
challenge pagan belief. The pagans believe that they were
confounded and some of the more conservative Christians also
think that the terror of the grove drove the Reverend — Jauer
from Lubaga (*vide supra*, p. 29) and that *because* the Reverend —
Kleus summoned the teachers and school children to a feast in the
grove of Mbyanga, and killed 'a black cow' for them there, a
season of plenty followed. 'Many people said: "He seems to have [778]
been advised by someone, why did he go to Mbyanga and sing

[1] For an account of such a meeting, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 84-5.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

her chair and sat on the floor. We said to Mwaipopo as he entered: 'There is a daughter-in-law here.' He said: 'That's all right, she is enjoying the company of Kagile (M.W.)', but he was obviously restive, and went outside as soon as food appeared. He said to G.W.: 'That's quite all right, let them go on enjoying each other's company. She (i.e. S—) does not avoid me because M— (a local missionary) brought her to me one day and I killed a bull for them, but let us stay outside now, for they would be ashamed to eat.' The women protested very much saying *they* would go out, but the chief would not agree. As soon as they had drunk their tea they hurried off, and crouching down with their backs towards the men they answered their farewell greetings.

In reply to queries as to why they insist that father-in-law and daughter-in-law avoid one another, the Nyakyusa relate a myth of incest between them: 'Long ago a chief's son married a very beautiful wife. The boy's father saw the girl and after one look desired her, for she was very beautiful, and he said: "She is fit to be a chief's wife (*umwehe*)." Men said this was a very bad thing and agreed that in future they would not look at their daughters-in-law. That is how avoidance began. It was for fear of fathers making love to their sons' wives.' This myth is related with some diffidence, and not everyone knows it, but it was told us, or referred to, repeatedly, and may be taken as current in the society. One informant, a very intelligent woman doctor, also associated seeing a father-in-law with seeing his sexual activities. 'We think that to see your husband's father is very rude, because it is as if you saw him sleeping with your husband's mother. You compare, you see, your husband's body and you see your husband's father's body. It is very bad.'

Age-villages are then associated with the feeling that fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law must be kept completely separate lest they should commit incest, and that adolescent youths should not have any glimpse of the sexual activities of their parents; but the separation of the generations is not complete, for marriage with the daughter of a village neighbour is approved, provided he is not an *immediate* neighbour. Mwakionde explained that in the old days people disliked marriage with the daughter of a next-door neighbour because she was 'like a daughter'—'the fathers ate *embalaga* (a dish made with bananas) together'—but marriage with the daughters of other village-mates was always approved.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

582 Marriage with the daughter of a father's age-mate is also favoured, though she is called 'a village-sister' (*ulilumbu pa kipanga*), and such a marriage means that a girl has to avoid a father-in-law in her own father's village.

837 Adultery with the wife of a village neighbour is regarded as a heinous offence, much worse than ordinary adultery, and so also 835 is the seduction of the wife of one's father, or of one of his village neighbours, even though a father's wives are eventually inherited by his son. 'It is bad,' Mwaisumo said, 'because they are friends of one's own mother.' That is to say, there is a direct extension of the incest taboo so long as the father is alive. A son who has committed adultery with his own father's wives is afraid to attend his [764] father's funeral lest he fall dead.[1]

584 Since marriage between 'brothers and sisters of the village' is approved, courtship goes on between the youths of a boys' village and the girls of their fathers' village, with this limitation, that brothers and sisters, or cousins—the descendants of a common grandfather or great-grandfather—must not be present at a flirtation. Boys from the same age-village go about together, and they commonly flirt with any group of girls they meet, whether from their fathers' village or not. It is then that the incest taboos are learnt. If one of the boys is known to be related to one of the girls his companions send him away saying: 'Don't you see your sister is here? You cannot come.'

Formerly, we were told, girls of the same village lived together (until they were married) in a girls' house (*isaka*), where they were visited secretly by lovers, who had external relations with them. Such girls' houses no longer exist among the Nyakyusa, each daughter living in her father's homestead until she is married, and sleeping with her own mother, or with a stepmother when her father visits her mother, or with the other children in a separate division of the long house, if her mother is the only wife. Only when she is keeping an older companion company at the initiation ritual does she sleep with the other girls of the village in a hut provided by the 'bride's' father.[2] But permanent girls' houses still exist in Ngonde. There each family

[1] Occasionally an elderly man gives his son leave to sleep with his wives in secret, while he (the father) is still alive; then an elaborate ritual is performed on the father's death.

[2] This hut is referred to as *isaka* also, but only during the initiation; it is to be distinguished from a hut regularly reserved for girls.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Christians are only affected by the shocked astonishment of fellow Christians, not by the disapproval of pagans, and the unit within which 'the curse' is commonly spoken of as operating is the congregation. In two of the cases we recorded (*vide* Document, p. 209) it was suggested that illness was due to the anger of neighbours, fellow Christians, over stinginess and greed, but in the other cases it was not village neighbours who were primarily concerned, but the Christian congregation, a group embracing members from many villages.

The type of behaviour believed to be punishable by 'the curse' of fellow Christians also differs somewhat from that thought to be punished by 'the breath of men'. The virtue Christians emphasize most is chastity, and 'the curse' is often said to be a punishment for fornication or adultery. The other sin commonly spoken of as bringing down a curse is disobedience, or disrespectful behaviour to the minister (or priest) or elder of the congregation. Among pagans 'the breath of men' serves also to sanction sexual morals and to sustain respect for those in authority, but their sex code is different. It is incest, or familiarity between father- and daughter-in-law, which they regard as really evil, not sex relations outside marriage. And they emphasize respect to senior relatives and fathers' neighbours rather than to the leaders of any wider group.

Christians lay much less stress on hospitality to neighbours than pagans, and it is generally agreed that they eat alone more than pagans would dare to do. As one Christian put it, a pagan would *always* call his neighbours to share meat or beer when he had it, but a Christian might eat a sheep, or a goat, or even a calf, alone with his family. It is good, the Christians say, to call friends to share a feast, but not an inescapable obligation. Nor do Christians regularly send the saddle and ribs of any animal they kill to the chief, as pagans do; 'for', they say, 'we do not fear "the breath of men".' But hospitality towards strangers is felt to be a condition of salvation. One informant explained that 'If a man is stingy towards his neighbours it does not matter; but if he is stingy towards a stranger from a distance, he might die from lack of food; and that would be the fault of the stingy one. Such a fault would prevent him from entering Heaven.' This statement points to the most striking difference between Christian and pagan morality—the range of moral obligations. A pagan's duties

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

inheriting their stepmothers. Where circumcision is practised a grown woman scorns sex relations with an uncircumcised boy, therefore uncircumcised youths are not potential lovers of their fathers' junior wives; but with the Nyakyusa there is no ceremony to mark the sexual maturity of a male, and adolescent youths are acceptable to young married women of their own age. And not only does the wide difference in the age of men and girls at first marriage allow of a high degree of polygyny, but the very early bethrothal of girls (over whom their future husbands have exclusive sexual rights except during the initiation ritual) means that there are very few girls available to the unmarried men. The institution of girls' huts (*isaka*) has disappeared among the Nyakyusa owing to the lack of nubile girls who are not already betrothed, and the period of seclusion at initiation (when betrothed girls are available to men other than their husbands) is short. The contrast with Nguni society, in which girls do not marry until sixteen to twenty-two, and have several years of great sex freedom before marriage[1] is marked. We suggest that it is because unmarried girls are so scarce and lusty bachelors so many, that the seduction of the wives of polygynists is frequent, and homosexual practices are general.[2] Nyakyusa insist that formerly seduction was rare,[3] and possibly the impulse towards it was indeed less strong when girls married rather later and *isaka* existed (*vide supra*, p. 87).

835 304 595 582 [838]

Lastly, the Nyakyusa permit the inheritance of a father's widows by his sons, a practice regarded as improper by certain other peoples (e.g. the Pondo[4]) who practise the levirate. A son is required to treat all his father's wives as 'mothers' while his father and father's full brothers are alive, and intercourse with a father's wife is treated as a heinous offence necessitating special purification; but after the death of the father and his full brothers these same women become wives of their former 'sons'—with the limitation that a man cannot inherit his own mother or her kins-

587 835

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 180–6; M. Kohler, *Marriage Customs in Southern Natal*, pp. 20–44; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 135–6.

[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, p. 408 (footnote), hints that similar practices exist among the Nyasaland Tonga and elsewhere *before* adolescence only. The Nyakyusa certainly continue after puberty.

[3] MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 63, states that the acknowledged child of an adulterous union was openly put to death. [848]

[4] Hunter, op. cit., p. 211.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

587 woman. It is scarcely surprising that the seduction of the young
835 wives of an ageing father is a common theme for scandal. We do not suggest that the Oedipus complex involving own mother and son never occurs among the Nyakyusa; what we are concerned to show is that the relationship between a man and his stepmothers is particularly likely to be ambivalent.

583 It may be asked why there is so much emphasis on the segregation of sons from their parents, and not of daughters. The answer
584 again lies in the sex difference in the marriage age. Betrothed girls pay long visits to their husbands even before puberty, and directly after the initiation which follows first menstruation they leave their fathers' home to join their husbands. During her initiation a girl carefully avoids her father and his contemporaries in the village, and after marriage, when she returns home to visit, she must observe certain restrictions not applicable to an unmarried girl: notably she must not approach her parents' bed, and informants interpret the taboo as being due to the danger of mixing the sex activities of mother and daughter.

621 In short, we argue that there is a connection between the existence of age-villages and the fear of incest between father-in-law
835 and daughter-in-law on the one hand, and between stepson and stepmother on the other, and we suggest that certain features of the Nyakyusa social system facilitate incest of the second type. The incest theme elaborated in one fashion among people organized in clans and practising clan exogamy, and in another among people practising brother—sister avoidance, finds yet a different expression in age-villages, of which the overt purpose is the separation of sons and mothers, of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

c. *Good company*

577 The emphasis on the separation of parents and children is matched by the value laid on good fellowship (*ukwangala*)
621 between contemporaries. A main end of age-villages, in the Nyakyusa view, is to allow men the enjoyment of congenial company, that is the company of friends and equals. The value of *ukwangala* is, indeed, directly linked with the age-village organization: to attain it men must build not only in villages, rather than in scattered homesteads, but also with contemporaries rather than with kin, since there can be no free and easy inter-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

000 enjoy limited sex relations with a relatively large group of unmarried girls.[1] But the Pondo have exogamous clans numbering, on the average, 3,000 to 4,000 members; marriage into the clan of either parent or either grandmother is prohibited; and clans, though not strictly territorial groups, have a territorial basis. Therefore very many of the adolescents growing up in one area are forbidden to flirt together or marry. Moreover, clan incest is regarded with great horror and is associated very closely with witchcraft. A pregnant woman (who must confess her sins and her dreams that she may have safe delivery) is specifically instructed to confess any flirtations within the prohibited degrees, and to confess if she has had witch-lovers.[2] Even in town, where so many traditional taboos are disregarded, clan exogamy is still insisted upon by Xhosa-speaking people.[3]

Furthermore, in Pondo belief the 'familiar' commonly appears as a European or light-coloured person.[4] and South Africa is a caste society in which sex relations between white and black are very strongly disapproved. We conclude, therefore, that the 'familiar' stands for the embodiment of sex temptation, of forbidden lust, and that the reason why there is so much emphasis on sex in Pondo witch beliefs is that Pondo live in a society in which sex relations between members of certain large groups who are mutually attractive, are regarded with horror.

835 In Nyakyusa society the pattern is quite different. Sex relations are prohibited only between the descendants of a common great-grandfather, who are in any case scattered in different villages and not constantly meeting one another. And not only are 834 Europeans very few in Nyakyusa country, but the taboo on sex relations between the colour groups is much less strong than in

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 180–4.

It has been suggested by European doctors that limited sex relations are in themselves psychologically disturbing (cf. M. Kohler, M.D., *Marriage Customs in Southern Natal*, p. 33–5), while Africans have argued that such a practice prevents psychological disturbance (cf. J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, pp. 155–60).

[2] Hunter, op. cit., p. 148.

[3] Hunter, op. cit., p. 483; R. Levin, *Marriage in Langa Native Location* (Communications from the School of African Studies, University of Cape Town), pp. 13–14.

[4] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 282, 491. My further investigations since *Reaction to Conquest* was published indicate that the 'familiar' is usually described as a European when it takes human form.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

male, the doctor in Selya, is a case of this. He had quarrelled with his elder brother and did not come to bury him. Later he came and killed a cow, but did not tell the men of the village (*amafumu*) properly, and they were angry, and so for the last ten years he has had no child. His wives do not conceive at all. That is due to the curse of men (*ikigune kya bandu*).' 789 626 842

A curse for 'soiling a man'.
Angombwike (young Christian man).

Angombwike cited a case of sterility attributed to *ikigune* because a woman had 'soiled' a man. 789

'She had run away three times with X. Finally her husband forced X to eat her filth and drink her urine. X was very ill but recovered. She bore no further children on her return to her husband. She went to Lyandeleko (the informant's mother) for medicine but the latter said she could not help as it was *ikigune*. Her neighbours were shocked because she had "soiled the child of someone". Also the neighbours of X's father were shocked. Their "breath" takes effect because she visits frequently in their village, going to see a grandparent. They say: "This is the woman who soiled our child." ' 626 842

N.B.—It is the woman who is held to have suffered, not her husband or X.

A curse due to incest.
Grant (young Christian man).

'A, son of B (a chief), made love to his father's sister X. X's husband, C, had married (*ukusakula*) a full sister, Y, of A. A lay with X. A had syphilis and X and her husband C both fell sick of it. C asked X where the disease came from. She accused A. C complained to B. B was very angry and all men were astonished at it. It is forbidden. How could he have intercourse with his mother, the sister of his father! B took four of A's cows and gave them to C. People cursed (*ukuguna*) A, who was very ill for two years. His eye came out of its socket. He went to a mission hospital. 789 626 835

'The villagers (*amafumu*) gathered at B's and said: "This sickness of A is because of that case of his when he lay with X. It is because of that he is sick." So B sent to A and told him to bring four cows, which he did. B called his people and brothers and sisters and said: "Bless your child." They swore and swore at him, and they caught hold of the woman and swore, saying: "How did you agree to sleep with your

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 child? You have both sinned greatly." Then they killed the cows and
626 ate them. I was there. Very quickly A recovered and his eye is all
835 right now.'

A curse on a senior village headman due to the anger of a junior village headman.
Mwandeba (Pagan man).

789 'A young chief, Mwaidemale, called his men to hoe a road at the
626 order of the Government. The third village headman of the country and his men refused to come, saying: "Not we, we have been once already", and they beat Mwaidemale's messenger. So Mwaidemale was very angry, and reported the village headman to his father, who was also very angry and told the headman and all his men (a very big age-village) to move to another chief. And the senior headman agreed, saying: "Indeed, my junior is a proud fellow. Let them go." So they all went to the country of Mwansasu.

'Now the senior headman has fallen ill with the "breath of men". He is unable to walk. The diviner said his illness was due to "the breath" of his junior colleague—he had been cursed because he is reputed to be the favourite of the chief. He was very ill and moved to Korosso's country where he has begun to recover.

'After being away for a year the third headman brought a cow to pay to the chief (Mwakabolofu). The chief refused it, saying: "No, indeed, my country is quarrelsome. Perhaps you think it was you who built it? I do not wish that you should return. Go with your cow." Some of the third village headman's men came back and then Mwakabolofu allowed to build, but he said that he would never let the banished headman back. Many men stayed with their headman and refused to return until he did. Only two years ago (1937) the headman brought two cows to Mwakabolofu who forgave him on the condition that he found something to take to the senior headman, who was ill, to fetch him back from Korosso's country. So the third headman fetched his senior with a huge bull. They came back with it and killed it and drank much beer and made friends. Most of the beer was provided by the third headman, who had spent two years in exile, but some by the senior.

'The mystical power (*amanga*) of the third headman and his men was able to reach the senior headman because a whole village had moved, but had a single man moved he would not have been able to send "breath" to another country, because when "the defenders" come at night in the power of *amanga* (*mmanga gabo*) the owners of the country who remain in it ask them: "Where are you going?" and

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love-making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger ones listen to these things and that is all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn. But we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night ; and that is very bad, that is foolishness.—But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to listen, that is how children grow up." 864 577

On another occasion when I told this same man that in Europe many people thought it a good thing for boys to get sexual instruction from their parents and teachers he was shocked : " But I think it is impossible " he protested " for parents to go into detail with their children ; there is too much shame on both sides. And if they did, it would damage the children's respect for them."

There is thus a correlation in this society between the age-village system at its genesis and the belief that a boy's dawning interest in sex must be informed, not by his parents, but by friends only a little older than himself.

Few men marry before twenty-five years of age, but affairs with girls begin before puberty. All affairs are related in detail to friends in the age-village, and the younger ones learn by listening ; and they also learn when the older boys send them as messengers to the girls of their fancy. 582 836 [202]

Besides the more serious love affairs which are carried on in secret, groups of boys from the same age-village commonly flirt with any girls they meet on the way, and it is then that the incest taboos are learnt. If one of the boys is known to be related to one of the girls, either through a common grandfather or great-grandfather, his companions send him away : " Don't you see your sister is here ? You cannot come ! " 835 867

Contrary to a general belief about " primitive " societies, homosexual intercourse is common in the boys' villages, between close friends, but there is no real perversion ; homosexuality is said to be always *faute de mieux*. The older men in discussion dismiss it with the tolerant word " adolescence," it is never continued after marriage, and all except the feeble-minded get married sooner or later. 838

But life in a boys' village also gives its members much information and wisdom unconnected with sex. There, as we have seen, boys perfect their skill in building, and there also they learn to argue and express themselves with adult fluency. It is characteristic of the Nyakyusa legal 621 868 867

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 Why had Mwaipopo refused so long to enter into relationship with
782 Mwaseba? Mwaipopo explained that the delay was on account of Mpeta. 'Let my wife come first,' he said, and told how, when the case
[684] first came to light, he had taken Mpeta to his kinsman Mwaiteteja, who took her to Mwaseba's village headman, Kakuju, and he to her people. She must come back the same way, and has not yet done so. Ngulyo said that at first he had been inclined to criticize Mwaipopo, but now saw that he was right. Kasitile spoke of the enormity of Mwaseba's offence, for Mpeta is a kinswoman of Mwaipopo's wife
● [835] Kalobo, and on the death of her son Mwakalobo, Mwaseba was put in his place, so he has seduced a woman who, by legal fiction, is his mother, as well as the wife of his father. His act is *doubly* incestuous.

They then spoke of the separation of those who pray at Mbyanga
[686] (*vide supra*, p. 80) and blamed them for it. 'Have they millet though? Kyala judges them himself.' Then Kasitile reproved Mwaipopo (the chief) for another matter. 'But you, Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 59) have little wisdom left. Why did you not give some of the beer which we drank recently at your house[1] to the people of Ipinda, the BaKalinga? The food from a distance you should divide.' And Mwaipopo agreed meekly [i.e. Mwaipopo has built with his young wives away from his inherited wife Kalinga (senior widow of 115) and is apt to neglect her; he must send some of the 'food from a distance'—ceremonial presents from affines—to his senior wives, not give it all to his friends and young wives.]

Then there were mutual compliments and self-depreciation between Kasitile and Kissogota (the commoner priest). Kissogota pointed to Mwaipopo and Kasitile, and said: 'You are impressive you, you are impressive, we are mere cannibals (*balyabandu*).' Kasitile replied: 'You are impressive yourself, if I look at you my body changes.'

Suddenly Kissogota got up and pretended to go: 'I am off, friends!' Ngulyo started to protest: 'We have not yet finished, we are speaking.' But Kissogota said, 'No, you told me to "be off"!' He went outside but returned admitting he had been only pretending. Mwaipopo: 'Yes, do you think we don't know you? Drink! Why do you not drink?'

The Mwamakunda began to ask angrily: 'Why do you shut up words in the heart? Why? Do you wish that Mwakisambwe (i.e. Kasitile, 86, identified with his great-grandfather, 30) should become a fool? Kissogota answered: 'We have not yet done so, Mwambagoje (Mwamakunda), we have not yet; do you think we are angry? Who went to fetch Kasitile from the plain? It was we, we went ourselves.'

Njobakosa took up the matter: 'We have power we have, if we
[754] please we can give the chief worms.' (This was said fiercely; Kasitile and Mwaipopo listened without comments. It was the crucial moment

[1] Sent as a present by Mwaipopo's affines.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

usually has a separate hut for its girls, to which, we were told, their lovers come secretly by night.

Nyakyusa informants connected the existence of girls' houses with the marriage age. In Ngonde the marriage age of girls is much higher than it is among the Nyakyusa, partly because there are many more Christians (45 per cent as against 16 per cent) who do not allow polygyny, partly because even the girls from pagan families in Ngonde dislike marrying a polygynist, and partly because a much higher percentage of young men are away at work, than from Nyakyusa country. Formerly, they said, the marriage age was higher among the Nyakyusa also, and then the Nyakyusa had *isaka*. It is certain that among the Nyakyusa betrothal of a girl has long taken place before puberty, for the husband plays an essential part in the puberty ritual, and there were always some girls who were betrothed when quite tiny; but the evidence is fairly clear that the average age of betrothal among the pagans has been going down. The Nyakyusa view is that no man in his senses, who is able to marry, will engage a little girl of eight if he can find one approaching puberty; and it is the scarcity of wives that makes men 'marry' little girls. It is also clear that the number of cattle in the country, and their rate of circulation, has increased during the last two decades, so there are 'too many cattle chasing too few brides' with the result that the marriage age of girls has fallen, and the number of cattle given at marriage has increased.

Once she is betrothed, a girl's 'husband' has exclusive sexual rights over her, and she cannot entertain lovers in the *isaka*. The only two occasions on which she may flirt and have external relations with a man other than her husband, are during an initiation ceremony, when the girls of the village who have not yet reached puberty sleep with their fellow who is being initiated, and there entertain young men, and when she accompanies a bride to her husband's house. A bridegroom is expected to have external relations with his wife's two friends, as well as with his wife, on the night they bring her to his house. Love-making at the initiation-marriage ritual is held to be 'part of the ritual' and a means of sex education, and a husband can make no complaint about his 'wife' receiving lovers then, provided that penetration does not take place.

Homosexual practices are said to be very common in the boys'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mungonde

CHAPTER IV

THE RITUAL OF PUBERTY AND MARRIAGE

1. IN SELYA AND MUNGONDE

(a) *The events*

881 THE puberty ritual for girls among the Nyakyusa is fused with the
585 marriage ritual. Girls are usually betrothed well before puberty
584 and they may live with their 'husbands' for some time before they
●856 grow up, for the view of most Nyakyusa is that a girl should become accustomed to her husband gradually and that it is good for her to visit him from time to time, sweeping his house, cleaning the byre, drawing water and cooking for him, and learning the art of love-making with him and no one else. While she is still very immature it is insisted that he should only have intercourse with her *inter crura*, but when she is approaching puberty he often has full intercourse with her. No legal case can be brought against him in court if he does so, provided that he has not forced or frightened her, but his friends may tell him he is foolish, and is 'teaching his wife adultery', since now he can have no proof, in the physical examination at puberty, that she has not slept with other men. No stigma attaches to the girl; if it is her husband who has deflowered her she is acclaimed in the ritual as a virgin. In some pagan families, however, notably those of chiefs, girls are not allowed to visit their husbands before puberty. The girl's father has the right to
[71] refuse it, for before the ritual a wife is only 'borrowed'. Unlike the neighbouring Bemba, the Nyakyusa are not anxious lest the girl should conceive before her first menstruation—if she should do so the ritual is performed in the ordinary way—but many fathers dislike letting their daughters go before the main bulk of the marriage cattle have been handed over. Opposition on the part of the missions and the Administration to early marriage also influences the more sophisticated. The period of betrothal is long, for pagan
[45] girls are commonly engaged from about 8 years old onwards, and the average age of puberty appears to be between 15 and 16.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Seiya, Mulungwe

and the average age of puberty appears to be between 15 and 16.[1] [145]

With the onset of first menstruation the ritual (*ukwipaga bwa-ssi*
bwanga) starts immediately: it is begun even for a girl not yet betrothed, though for her it cannot be completed. The main acts are a treatment of the 'bride' (*unwanga*) with medicines to fortify her against the dangers of menstruation and intercourse; seclusion at her father's homestead and a driving of the shades of his lineage from her body that she may conceive by her husband; instruction in the duties of a wife; examination for virginity; and the exchange of feasts between her husband's family and her own to celebrate her maturity and virginity.

The first treatment is with a medicine called *undumila*. 'If the girl grows up at her father's place we, her mothers, treat her at once; if at her husband's she is sent home to us, if it is near, but if it is far away, her husband's mothers treat her there.' She must take the medicine before she tastes any food after the onset of menstruation. A pungent-tasting root is pushed through the tip of a funnel or 'cup' made of a leaf of the bark-cloth tree, and salt is poured into the cup. The girl takes the tip of the root in her mouth and pulls it inward with her teeth, thus causing the salt to trickle into her mouth. Her mother also makes millet porridge and adds to it a medicine, *ikipili*, and gives a little to her, burying the rest under the hearth of the hut.

She is then secluded in her mother's hut. Her girl friends who have not yet reached puberty prepare a litter of banana leaves for her to sit and sleep upon, and they keep her company (*ukwipanja*), hence their name, *ukwipanji*. They come 'to cheer their fellow that she should not be left alone'. They sleep with her on the litter, and spend the greater part of their days there, learning to depilate and adorn themselves and, some say, to stretch the vagina by manual manipulation. Food for them is provided by the bride's mother, and on the litter they entertain the young men of neighbouring boys' villages, singing and dancing, and cuddling. In a bride's hut intercourse *inter crura* is permitted, and no 'husband' can claim [136] damages if his betrothed wife lies with another young man there, unless penetration has taken place. On moonlight nights the girls

[1] Information from Christian women who knew the exact ages of their daughters and of pagan contemporaries of their daughters. Cases of first menstruation ranging from the ages of 12 to 18 were cited, but those under 14 years old were regarded as unusually young. The mothers' information was confirmed by a woman missionary who ran a school for Christian adolescent girls in the district. [145]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

at the groom's home (*ukunukunula*). The party was given a hen 881
when they arrived and a second the next morning. The groom and 584
some of his friends spent the night with the bride and her friends. [131]
(He and she lie together on this occasion but do not yet have full
intercourse.)[1] In the morning the mother-in-law shaved the [336]
bride's head, eyebrows, and eyelashes, leaving only a small tuft on
the nape of her neck. Then she mixed water with powdered medicine and poured it for groom and bride to wash. The groom washed his hands and mouth only, the bride her hands and mouth and whole body. During her seclusion she might not use oil or the red powder favoured as a cosmetic by Nyakyusa women,[2] but after this third washing she was free to do so, and she oiled herself meticulously. Meantime the groom was shaved by one of his [302]
friends.

On the same day the bride returned to her father's homestead with her own party and seven 'mothers' of the groom who brought five stems of bananas, a pot of water, and a small bull for the ritual of 'clearing out the litter' (*ukusoya ulufimbo*). She herself was wearing the skin of a bull over her head—'she wears any skin she can get hold of'. One of the groom's party shaved off the last tuft of [302]
her hair and buried it carefully in the *ulufimbo*, the litter of banana leaves on which she had slept and sat during her seclusion. Had her own mother been present she would have shaved also and so [183]
should the brother, but he did not do so. The groom's mother and Kyobwe (representing the bride's mother) carried out the litter to the edge of the banana plantation surrounding the homestead. As they did so they whispered to each other. Kyobwe said the bride was a little liar. Her husband had offered her 1s. to take to her mothers and she had refused it saying: 'No, they swear at me and grudge me food.' 'She's your child,' said the mother-in-law. 'No,' said Kyobwe, 'she's another woman's child, she's a foolish child.' Every scrap of litter in the hut was carefully collected and a little of the soil below it scraped off and carried out with the leaves. All who had helped with the clearing washed their hands carefully.

Then the groom's mother made a basin of two banana leaves close to the pile of litter. Into it she poured the water her party had brought with them, and sprinkled in powdered medicine in

[1] One or two informants maintained that 'she must not refuse him now or he will refuse to wash with her, saying: "She is not my wife."' But others were insistent that according to strict custom only intercourse *inter cruras* was allowed. Full intercourse at this time would make nonsense of the *ilibalaga* ritual which follows. [333]

[2] Formerly also by men: cf. V. Giraud, *Les Lacs de l'Afrique Equatoriale* (1890), p. 176.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

present possesses. A young man is given cows by his father and sends 436
them to his father-in-law; his father's income in cattle is derived partly from the increase of his own stock, but chiefly from the marriages of his own and his brothers' sisters and daughters, for it is the custom for full-brothers and half-brothers to give one another cows as their daughters and sisters get married; the young man's father-in-law gives the cows which he receives some to his brothers, some to his sons, and some he keeps himself. And thus, continually, the cattle are driven down the paths of human relationship.

The passage of cattle makes the children of a marriage legitimate 585
and members of their father's family; the sons can inherit from their 84-8
father, and the daughters, when they marry in their turn, bring cattle to him. But if a woman bears a child to a man who has given no cows for her, the child is illegitimate, has no right of inheritance anywhere, and belongs either to her husband or father, not to its own biological sire.

Getting married is not a single event; the marriage-cattle are seldom 583
handed over all at once, but in one, two, or three over a period of 584
years; and a girl very commonly goes to visit and sleep with her betrothed 836
husband, from time to time, for several years before she finally sets up home with him and begins to bear his children. There are three ways of getting married: (1) by negotiation with the girl's father (2) by running off with an unmarried girl (3) by running off with a married woman. The first is the ideal, socially approved, method and is not uncommonly followed. The negotiations often begin while the girl is still an infant, sometimes even before she is born; the man sends one or two cows to her father to bespeak her (*ukwinegela*). These cows are counted as part of the marriage-cattle (*ezyawele*) and the girl is henceforth called his "wife," but she lives at home with her parents. Sometimes a boy is betrothed by his father while he himself is still young, but always, I think, to a girl several years his junior. Such betrothals are determined by the friendship of the two families. A girl who is bespoken in infancy does not, ideally, go to live altogether with her husband till after she has reached puberty and passed through the elaborate initiation which then takes place. But there is an intermediate period when, from the age of ten or earlier, she is allowed to visit and sleep with her husband from time to time. The man sends a bull or a hen to her father to ask for his wife (*ukwisukulila*), and the old man agrees to let her go on occasional visits. But she is seldom allowed to go until at least three cows, in all, have been received for her. She is not supposed to be deflowered before puberty and she and her husband always, at first, practise limited intercourse without penetration. Not infrequently, however, full intercourse

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

583 takes place on some occasion and her parents usually find out when it
584 does. In some families the girl's mother examines her after each visit to
836 her husband to see if the hymen is intact, sometimes the girl tells her mother herself. When her father hears about it his action is determined partly by his feelings towards his son-in-law, partly by his need for cattle. Sometimes he does nothing at all; occasionally he sends back the cows he has received for his daughter and breaks off the marriage, and this is particularly likely to happen if the girl has been forced against her will or generally ill-treated. More usually, however, he sends his daughter to live with her husband saying: "You have made her a woman yourself, you must pay the rest of the marriage-cattle quickly."

836 We have no evidence to suggest that the girls in any general way dislike sleeping with their husbands before puberty, rather the reverse; and the men say: "It is good, it accustoms a girl to her husband." But some girls dislike the particular men to whom they are betrothed.

881 The initiation of a girl at puberty lasts for some months and includes several exchanges of food between her family and that of her husband, and a number of ceremonies in which both her girl friends of the same village[6] and her husband's friends from his village[6] participate. If a girl
[584] is not bespoken before puberty the initiation is still carried out in a modified form, but its full significance is lost.

585 Soon after her initiation a girl, if she has been bespoken, goes to live altogether with her husband, to play her part in his economy and to bear him children. If only a few cows have been received for her, her father insists on one or two more being handed over before she is allowed to go. At some time, perhaps during the girl's initiation, perhaps years later, the final marriage ceremony (*okubwa*) takes place. The balance of the marriage-cattle are brought to her father by the husband and his village neighbours,[6] her "mothers" prepare a great deal of food for the guests to eat, there is dancing, feasting and great excitement.

554 The number of cows handed over varies with the wealth and social
583 status of the two families concerned. Six to ten cows is the most usual number, but sometimes as few as four or as many as thirty change hands.

583 The second method of marriage is adopted when a man falls in love with a grown girl, who is not bespoken, and cannot find the cows to satisfy her father at once; he runs off with her and regularises the position
583 later by sending cattle. The third method is adopted when a man falls
837 in love with a married woman and has cows available; he runs off with

[6] Vide index "The Age Village"
[p. 269, cat. 86 — Analysis]

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love-making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger ones listen to these things and that is all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn. But we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night; and that is very bad, that is foolishness.—But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to listen, that is how children grow up." 864 577

On another occasion when I told this same man that in Europe many people thought it a good thing for boys to get sexual instruction from their parents and teachers he was shocked: "But I think it is impossible" he protested "for parents to go into detail with their children; there is too much shame on both sides. And if they did, it would damage the children's respect for them."

There is thus a correlation in this society between the age-village system at its genesis and the belief that a boy's dawning interest in sex must be informed, not by his parents, but by friends only a little older than himself.

Few men marry before twenty-five years of age, but affairs with girls begin before puberty. All affairs are related in detail to friends in the age-village, and the younger ones learn by listening; and they also learn when the older boys send them as messengers to the girls of their fancy. 582 836 [202]

Besides the more serious love affairs which are carried on in secret, groups of boys from the same age-village commonly flirt with any girls they meet on the way, and it is then that the incest taboos are learnt. If one of the boys is known to be related to one of the girls, either through a common grandfather or great-grandfather, his companions send him away: "Don't you see your sister is here? You cannot come!" 835 867

Contrary to a general belief about "primitive" societies, homosexual intercourse is common in the boys' villages, between close friends, but there is no real perversion; homosexuality is said to be always *faute de mieux*. The older men in discussion dismiss it with the tolerant word "adolescence," it is never continued after marriage, and all except the feeble-minded get married sooner or later. 838

But life in a boys' village also gives its members much information and wisdom unconnected with sex. There, as we have seen, boys perfect their skill in building, and there also they learn to argue and express themselves with adult fluency. It is characteristic of the Nyakyusa legal 621 868 867

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

like most of the leaders of Zionist Churches in the south.[1] 797x

It is noticeable that the two 'independent' Churches have a more elaborate form of service than the Church from which their leaders have sprung, and Ngemela habitually wears conspicuous vestments. There is, of course, great variation between different denominations in the emphasis placed on ritual, some Protestants abjuring it and turning their very insistence on starkness and simplicity into a ritual in itself—a taboo. There seems to be a clear tendency in Southern Africa for 'independent' Churches to express themselves more and more in ritual and less in dogma. In this way they reduce the gap between themselves and the pagans, for the pagan religion is expressed almostly exclusively in ritual, whereas Christianity is expressed in creeds and confessions as well as in the rituals of the Church. 795x 779 [796]

(e) THE CONTRAST BETWEEN PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

There are certain common elements in the rituals celebrated by pagans and Christians: some of the occasions are the same, and in the conceptions of sacrifice, of death and rebirth, of confession and cleansing, there are similarities; but there are also profound differences. The conception of life, immortality, replaces the preoccupation with fertility, for though most Nyakyusa Christians, like the pagans, regard celibacy as evidence of physical abnormality, and the conventional desire of a woman is to have six children—a quiverful in Nyakyusa eyes—yet fertility is no longer the end of all being, sought in every ritual. There are profound differences, too, in the values expressed in the rituals regarding sex relations, the range of moral obligations, and social change. In pagan thought polygyny is good—a man should have many children. Child marriage is defended on the ground that a girl 'gets accustomed to her husband' if she goes to him early, and homosexual relations between youths and young men are tolerated since they have no wives and *cannot* marry if the older men are polygynists. What is upheld is the chastity of women, and a total separation of the sex activities of members of successive generations, expressed in the taboos limiting familiarity between mother and son, father and nubile daughter, father-in-law and daughter-law. In Christian thought it is the 'pure in heart' who 'see God' and this is interpreted by the mission Churches to imply monogamy. Only in the 'independent' African Churches is it asserted 797x 795x [842] [589] [595] [584] [838] [836] [561] [183] [595]

[1] The emphasis on healing, so common in the south, is absent.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

582 Marriage with the daughter of a father's age-mate is also favoured, though she is called 'a village-sister' (*ulilumbu pa kipanga*), and such a marriage means that a girl has to avoid a father-in-law in her own father's village.

837 835 Adultery with the wife of a village neighbour is regarded as a heinous offence, much worse than ordinary adultery, and so also is the seduction of the wife of one's father, or of one of his village neighbours, even though a father's wives are eventually inherited by his son. 'It is bad,' Mwaisumo said, 'because they are friends of one's own mother.' That is to say, there is a direct extension of the incest taboo so long as the father is alive. A son who has committed adultery with his own father's wives is afraid to attend his [764] father's funeral lest he fall dead.[1]

584 Since marriage between 'brothers and sisters of the village' is approved, courtship goes on between the youths of a boys' village and the girls of their fathers' village, with this limitation, that brothers and sisters, or cousins—the descendants of a common grandfather or great-grandfather—must not be present at a flirtation. Boys from the same age-village go about together, and they commonly flirt with any group of girls they meet, whether from their fathers' village or not. It is then that the incest taboos are learnt. If one of the boys is known to be related to one of the girls his companions send him away saying: 'Don't you see your sister is here? You cannot come.'

Formerly, we were told, girls of the same village lived together (until they were married) in a girls' house (*isaka*), where they were visited secretly by lovers, who had external relations with them. Such girls' houses no longer exist among the Nyakyusa, each daughter living in her father's homestead until she is married, and sleeping with her own mother, or with a stepmother when her father visits her mother, or with the other children in a separate division of the long house, if her mother is the only wife. Only when she is keeping an older companion company at the initiation ritual does she sleep with the other girls of the village in a hut provided by the 'bride's' father.[2] But permanent girls' houses still exist in Ngonde. There each family

[1] Occasionally an elderly man gives his son leave to sleep with his wives in secret, while he (the father) is still alive; then an elaborate ritual is performed on the father's death.

[2] This hut is referred to as *isaka* also, but only during the initiation; it is to be distinguished from a hut regularly reserved for girls.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

 834 795 177

ance among Nyakyusa Christians, and the tendency for fathers and sons to build fairly close to one another.

The forms of display approved among Christians are also changing with the change in the sex code. The nakedness of the Nyakyusa shocked the missionaries, and it is insisted that Christian women, as well as men, should wear at least one cloth; also many of the traditional dances and songs are felt by the Nyakyusa converts themselves to be incompatible with the profession of Christianity, consequently at funerals and weddings there is often a group of Christians dancing quite separately from pagans, and singing their own song, which, more often than not, is a hymn. A wedding dance to a hymn does not appear incongruous to Nyakyusa, as it does to European observers.

e. Wisdom

There is a very close connection between the values we have cited, and all save one are coherent with one another. The enjoyment of good company implies observance of the rules of decency; *ukwangala* is between equals, not between parents and children; it merges into neighbourliness, for one who does not help, or seek help from, a neighbour is unfriendly (*atikwangala kanunu*); and it is dependent upon that generous hospitality which is one of the manifestations of dignity (*ubusisya*). 182

The one value which is not wholly coherent with the others is the value of display (*ukumoga*). Certain forms of display are compatible with urbanity and friendliness between neighbours, but the swaggering truculence of the warrior is not—it is liable to breed quarrels between fellow villagers, as well as with outsiders; and display also ceases to be compatible with other values when it involves adultery. The friends of a woman who has eloped with a lover may greet her with the phrase: '*Ndaga, umogile*!' which literally translated means 'Thank you, you have displayed yourself', and implies, 'Congratulations! Had a good time?' But no Nyakyusa would maintain that to commit adultery was, in general, good. [837]

The all-embracing virtue to the Nyakyusa is wisdom (*amahala*). It includes the enjoyment of company and the practice of hospitality, for no man is wise who is surly, or aloof, or stingy; it includes neighbourly behaviour, dignity, and respect for law and 577

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

South Africa. Sex hunger obviously exists in the large group of bachelors and among the wives of elderly polygynists, but its satisfaction through adultery is not regarded as shameful or horrible. Adultery was formerly extremely dangerous, and is now expensive, but it is not disgraceful. Thus desire, being fully conscious, is not transformed into dreams and fantasies.

It is possible that all witch beliefs are an expression of lust, directed by jealousy, envy, and hatred. Certainly sex lust and the lust for good food appear in the accounts of witch beliefs in one area after another in Africa. The Zande fear that a glimpse of the cats associated with women witches, and particularly with Lesbian practices in the harems of princes, will kill a man, is a classic example of the one;[1] while the Lovale,[2] Thonga,[3] and Nyanja[4] belief that witches kill in order to eat the corpses of their victims is an example of the other. We do not suggest that the Nyakyusa alone believe that the lust for prized food is a motive for witchcraft, or that they think it is the sole motive,[5] but that their emphasis on lust for food, and the particular form it takes, is directly related to the age-village organization. It is significant that the stress laid on sharing food in the village diminishes along with the belief in witchcraft, and a rigid insistence on living with age-mates.

f. 'The breath of men'

And what of the belief in 'the defenders' of the village and the chilling 'breath of men'? Is the idea that contemporaries have a mystical power over one another a function of their living together—a correlate of an age-village, as opposed to a kinship village, organization? The Nyakyusa concept of witchcraft is similar in many respects to that of the Azande, the Thonga, and the Lovale, but, as we have shown, the Nyakyusa differ from these other peoples in the emphasis they lay on the lust for food as a motive for witchcraft; they differ also in the belief that a power

[1] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., pp. 51–57.
[2] C. M. N. White, op. cit., pp. 96–7. [3] Junod, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 506.
[4] B. Malkebu, A. Kumbanga, G. Chipengule, B. Chisunzi *Makolo Athu* Nyasaland Education Department, Zomba (1945).
[5] For the sex associations in Nyakyusa witchcraft *vide supra*, pp. 94–5. There is a hint of the lust for food among the Pondo in the idea that the baboon familiar milks cows, and Thikolose steals food. Hunter, op. cit., pp. 275–81, 287.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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nagwe)?" We only liken intercourse and witchcraft; witchcraft is quite different. When a woman is an adulteress I say: "You are a witch (*undosi*); you kill me," but it is just a metaphor (*fyo fifwani*). Adultery involves paying for cattle for all of us; it differs from witchcraft. And when I ask a man: "Why, why did you *kupita* with my wife?" that means: "You are like a witch." It is just a metaphor. But (he volunteered), if I catch an adulterer with my wife, even if he has practised *coitus interruptus*, I am angry and kill him from jealousy, though I do not suffer from diarrhoea.'

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An adulteress is spoken of as an *undosi* 'because she brings illness upon her husband' by her adultery, if intercourse is complete, but *not, it is thought, if coitus interruptus is practised. The illness com-* monly thought to be caused by a wife's adultery is diarrhoea.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

33. SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES IN CHRISTIAN VILLAGES

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a. *Christian suing a Christian*

Mundekesye (appointed by the Church to settle disputes in villages on Itete mission land).

'Nsangalofu (a Christian elder) accused Jonah's son, Lwimkio, of making love to the wife of Nsangalofu's son, Nkisu. I (Mundekesye) was trying the case between Nkisu and Lwimiko. Lwimiko denied everything, but Nkisu's wife said: "Yes, he was making love to me; he did so on three occasions." I gave judgement, saying: "You Lwimiko, are guilty, because the woman admits it," and ordered Lwimiko to pay a cow. Lwimiko refused, so I took the case to the Court. I reported my decision and Lwimiko's refusal to pay. The Court asked Lwimiko why he refused to pay up when the woman admitted their guilt, and ordered him to pay a cow.

'I reported the case to Mwangomo (the chief in whose country Mundekesye lives), but as it was quite clear I took it direct to Court. Difficult cases I take to Mwangomo before they go on to Court.

'Nsangalofu and Nkisu brought the case to me. I called the elders of the Church to be present at the hearing of the case. The congregation notified Mwakapelela (the European missionary who lives on another station) and he ordered that Lwimiko should move off mission land. Lwimiko and Nkisu had both built in Mpanda (a boys' village on mission land).'

b. *Arbitration between Christians*

Asagene (Christian deacon in Itete).

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'Mogege accused Amanise of stealing a cloth belonging to him, and brought Amanise before his fellows. He brought him to Rheuben, near whom he lives.

'Amanise denied the accusation, so the case was taken to Mundekesye (*vide supra*). Mundekesye tried the case with "all the congregation" (i.e. elders and deacons and anyone who cared to attend the court) and found Amanise guilty. The case was then taken before the missionary who ordered that Amanise should be fined 5s. and suspended from membership of the Church. He also ordered that should he refuse to pay he should move off mission land, because this was the

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

35. JOINT RESPONSIBILITY OF NEIGHBOURS

Mwaikambo (*clerk*).

628 'In former times people did not live at peace as we do now. Because
621 they fought frequently they never were friendly with those of other
837 villages as they are to-day. The occasion for beginning a fight was usually a dispute over women or cattle. If a man had made love to a woman of another village he got a friend to steal her for him. Then if the "owners" of the woman saw them they told their chief that men of such and such a village had run off with "their wife". Their chief allowed all his people to go to recapture "their wife". Also those who had stolen the woman told their chief that they had a case against them, they had stolen someone's wife. Then the chief replied that they should tell everyone to be ready.'

Mwamgwanda (*old pagan man*).

628 'In the old days if one man A, had "eaten" the cow of another, B,
621 living in a different chiefdom, and failed to repay it, though B came frequently to claim his cow, and if the wife of a village neighbour of A visited in B's country, B might seize her and take her to his chief,
672 saying: "This woman is the wife of C, a neighbour of A, who has
685 'eaten' my cow." Then the chief sent to the chief of A's country, saying that they had caught the wife of C and they wanted the cow due from A. Then A would send the cow and B would send back the wife of C with a bull to say: "Thank you, you have settled my case." Then the husband, C, might demand a hoe as well. If A denied his debt when the message came, and asserted that B's friends had seized the woman without cause, his chief would send him to B's chief, saying: "My man denies the charge. Let them drink *umwafi*." Then A and B would take the ordeal in B's country.'

[p. 266]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

764 Besides fighting, the dancers indulge in an orgy of destruction,
535 slashing at the bananas and *ficus* saplings (which surround the
721 swept courtyard) with their spears.

764 The dance was thus, traditionally, a common form for the ex-
535 pression by the dancers of a considerable range of emotions, vary-
152 ing from an intolerable burden of grief and fear to a recognition of and salute to the warlike quality of the dead man and a vivid consciousness of their own. And this last feeling passed easily into actual fighting.

764 To-day it is not so much into the excitements of warfare that
534 the feelings turn, but rather into those of love. Burial dances are
832 the occasions of much sexual display, of the beginning of some love affairs and the consummation of others, and this is nothing new. 'At a death people did not want war (though it came sometimes), they wanted love-making: they displayed the pride of their strength!' 'We speared one another . . . our wives called the war-cry when they saw the strength of their husbands.'

177 Dances of sexual display, on occasions other than burials, are
535 traditional among the Nyakyusa; but all our informants are
837 unanimous in declaring that both these other dances and the dances of burial are far more frequently followed by lovers' meetings than they used to be. For the enforcement of peace among the Nyakyusa has been accompanied by the prohibition of violence of any kind; and this has freed sexual passion from its rigid tradi-
[684] tional bonds. Girls are married young and engaged younger; and while formerly any man who seduced or even flirted with another man's betrothed or wife was speared or tortured by the husband and his friends if they caught him, such punishments are now illegal and the present fine of cattle is a far less effective deterrent. 'In the old days love-making only went on in secret; if a man stood and talked to a woman he expected to be speared. But now the Europeans have introduced the custom of making love openly!' (i.e. by forbidding the previous penalties.)

764 For all the younger men and women, save the chief mourners
535 and close friends, the quality of the burial dance is now pre-
832 dominantly and openly sexual. But the older people are, on the one hand, more conscious of its warlike associations and, on the other hand, inclined to regard the whole occasion more soberly than their juniors. 'There are two reasons for coming to a burial: the old men come to mourn their friend, they say: "Let us go and mourn him"; but the young men say: "Let us follow the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

(*banyali*), they are in the body at first, they shake it and you fall ill; 764
they say: 'You are still muddy, you have not done the ritual.' . . . 765
When a man dies his heart (*indumbula*) and his body (*umfimba*) separate, 775
they are divorced, the heart with the blood (*ililopa*) and the shadow 828
(*ilisyungulu*) are separated from the corpse which rots in the ground. The corpse is filth, it is excrement. And so when a madman, for whom they have not performed the ritual, eats filth, that is the corpse, he is still holding it, they have not done the ritual for him. If they have not done the ritual for the shade his fellows drive him back and say: 'You cannot come yet, you are still muddy, they have not bathe you in the river.' . . .

Yes, that which they do to my body, to me the heir (or the relative) they do to the shade himself. He, the corpse, is earthy, muddy. That is why we smear ourselves with mud, we mourners; it is this earth that we drive away in the ritual, it is mud, it is the corpse. . . .

The hair of the mourners which we shave in the ritual is one with the hair of the corpse, it is his. We wash and shave and anoint him and he goes to his own place. . . .

First we bite the banana with the seeds stuck into it in the ground, and then we eat bananas and seeds in the usual way. It is the food which he, the shade, ate. . . .

They seize the heir and widows at the pumpkin-seed ritual. The officiant is there, she smears ashes on their chests and puts a strand of *ilingolongofiwa* creeper on their necks, then if the woman refuses the man later there is a case and she must pay the fine for adultery. If she refuses before this there is no case, and she does not pay. The ashes and creeper are signs of death, of mourning, of the corpse—they cast them away into the river. [837 681]

QUESTION: The rubbing in earth—what does it represent?

KASITILE: The banana flower is the corpse. We are saying to him: 'You corpse, we have finished with you, do not come here again, it is finished for ever, do not look towards us, go away.' This earth is the same as the mud with which we smear ourselves at the burial. We bathe, we cast it away.

QUESTION: The washing at the door with medicine?

KASITILE: We wash with powdered medicine at the door because we are just going to take filth (*indafu*) in our hands—to take the bananas and pumpkin-seeds. We bathe, we wash, and then they give us the bananas. It is taboo (*muiko*) to eat before washing. The calabash used for this washing is hung up in the porch and used for the beer later, the beer which they drink on the path after anointing themselves.

QUESTION: The bananas and lentils and pumpkin-seeds?

KASITILE: At the eating of bananas and pumpkin-seeds we do not separate them, everything is then pressed together in one place; but the banana flower we bury is separate, that is the corpse. And at the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

THE RITUAL OF BIRTH[1]

842 KYALA (or Lwembe) and the shades create desire in men and women and control conception; when the shades are angry women do not conceive—this is one of the main tenets of pagan Nyakyusa cosmology, and it is combined with a limited knowledge of physiology. It is clearly understood that conception cannot take place without intercourse, and that gestation in humans lasts for nine months, but it is believed that repeated intercourse is necessary [837] for conception, and formerly, if a man found his wife pregnant after having lain with her only once, he accused her of adultery.

(a) *Taboos of procreation*

[181] The procreation of children is an ultimate value of Nyakyusa society and the accepted end of marriage, but it is regarded as 842 dangerous under certain conditions and is hedged about with 753 taboos. These are enforced so that both parents and children may be healthy; a breach of them is thought to result in violent diarrhœa, as well as monstrously swollen legs and weakness in men, general debility in children, and miscarriage or an excessive menstrual flow in women. The onus of observing them falls primarily on women, though their husbands must also co-operate, and a breach of taboo is treated as immoral, for it is believed to endanger the life, or health, or property of others.

831 Certain general conceptions underlie the taboos. The first is that of *ubunyali*, filth, which is held to come from the sex fluids, menstruation, and childbirth, as well as from a corpse, and the blood of a slain enemy. All these are felt to be both disgusting and dangerous, and the sex fluids are held to be particularly dangerous to an infant, hence the taboo on husband and wife resuming intercourse very soon after childbirth.

846 At first, when the child is very young, we think it very bad for the parents to sleep together at all, because when the child is very young

[1] This account came from a score or more women not cited individually, as well as from our regular informants on ritual whose names are mentioned.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

841 for her part, fears lest the medicines with which men protect themselves and their cattle may injure her, causing her menstrual flow to 'last a whole month'. She avoids pumpkins lest she suffer from a small growth in the vagina called a 'pumpkin' and bear sickly children. 'It is said that this disease is due to women picking or eating pumpkins when they are menstruating . . . the menstrual blood resembles the pumpkin and they fight together.'

841 586 If a wife fails to warn her husband that she is menstruating and permits him to have intercourse with her, he will be furiously angry and may even divorce her saying: 'You are soiling me, get out!'

841 753 Any contact with a menstruating woman is believed to cause him suffering. 'His legs become swollen and painful and he is very tired.' 'Strength leaves the man.' 'He sits back weakly; he has no speed in running.' Kasitile explained:

> The danger of menstrual blood is that it is filthy; it is an illness. Formerly, if a foolhardy man took his wife when she was menstruating, when he went to war, he fell. We others said: 'Why were you vanquished? Did you enter when your wife was unwell? Do you not know that it is a very serious illness?'

Angombwike added:

> Formerly, the fear was greater than it is to-day. If a man made love to a menstruating woman they said he would fall ill of *imbela*, an illness for which there was no remedy. His belly ached and his body grew red; he just lay down. His face swelled and his legs ached. Now pagans are not so much afraid of menstruation; they have listened to the Christians.

Asked why sleeping with a menstruating woman should make a man weary, informants linked the danger from menstrual blood with the danger that besets a husband when his wife commits adultery, and the 'blood' of two men mixes in the woman's womb. Menstrual blood is not so dangerous to a husband as the 'blood' of another man, but yet it is 'filthy'. One of Mwakionde's wives said:

> My husband gets tired if he sleeps with me when I am menstruating because he has given us our menstrual blood; it is that which has entered into me; there are two bloods, his and mine.

Mwambuputa, a village headman, elaborated further:

[837] If my wife has committed adultery and cooks my food or draws water for me, then my legs are weary and I also have diarrhœa. If she

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

scrapes bananas when she is menstruating, or conceals that she is menstruating and we have intercourse, then my legs are tired, but I do not have diarrhœa, because it is my blood; she is my relative (*akamu gwangu*), she is my wife, her blood and mine are one. But when she has lain with a man in the bush there is his blood; I have diarrhœa to get rid of it; the food which she cooks for me is dirty, she has made it filthy, I have diarrhœa and get rid of it, she oversteps me. And also if she has concealed that she is menstruating and we have intercourse, I am overstepped. To overstep is to insult—but since the blood is mine I do not get rid of it. That menstrual blood is very dirty! 841 753

If I have always been all right and strong, and I find that I get tired walking and hoeing, I think: 'What is it? See, always I was all right, and now I am very tired.' My friends say: 'It is women, you have lain with one who was menstruating.' And if I eat food and start diarrhœa they say: 'It's women, they have committed adultery.' My wives deny it. We go to divine, and one is caught; if she agrees that's that, but if she denied it, formerly we went to the poison ordeal. The woman drank alone, not I. If she vomited then I was defeated, the woman was good, but if it caught her then her father paid one cow. [627]

What we feared greatly in the old days, Mwaipaja, was war. We feared to die. For if my fellow in the village committed adultery with my wife then, when we went to war, we both died; if we went to fight at Mwangomo's [a neighbouring chiefdom], both he and I would be speared. Then people were astonished and said: 'Why, have so-and-so and so-and-so died? Perhaps they both lay with the same woman.' For this reason we drove adulterers from the village, and for this reason the chief was angry with an adulterer, saying: "This is my place! Why do you kill my people?" ' 684 721

Others confirmed Mwambuputa's statement that adultery led to death in battle:

Formerly, when there was war, if your fellow made love to your wife in secret and you all went to fight, you died on one day on account of the woman.

Mwandisi linked the disquiet in a man's belly with the anger of the shades seated there. 837 753

If a woman has gone behind the house with another man and comes and cooks food for her husband, blowing up the fire and cooking for him, then the food turns round in his stomach and says: 'Is this my kinsman?' She made friends with others behind the house and cooked for them [i.e. committed adultery]. So then the man develops diarrhœa because the food turned round in his stomach. He falls down on the road, he falls down in battle.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

837 QUESTION: The spirits are angry?
753 MWANDISI: Yes, they say: 'That woman for whom we gave marriage-
775 cattle has overstepped her husband.' Yes, it is the shades who are angry in his belly.

842 Kakune, a doctor, made it clear that the danger to the husband
837 when his wife committed adultery came from the semen of another
753 man entering her.

If your wife commits adultery you get very tired on a journey, you suffer from diarrhœa; in the old days we fell in war.

QUESTION: What if the adulterer practises *coitus interruptus*?

KAKUNE: Yes, if the man is clean he withdraws and the semen falls to the ground. If he always withdraws when he has intercourse with my wife, then I escape, nothing happens. The woman is like a child. See, when your wife who has not yet reached puberty plays with young men on the veld it is no matter. Do they create a child with her? No! But if she is an adulteress he is there in her, and I am there in her, and Kyala says: 'Ha! Are there two?' And he spears you, the owner of the woman. You are soiled by going to the woman; that is filth. But if I catch an adulterer with my wife, even if he has practised *coitus interruptus*, I am angry and kill him—there is jealousy! But as for diarrhœa, I do not suffer from it.

837 The most dangerous adultery of all, according to the Nyakyusa,
684 is that of a man with his father's wife. Angombwike explained:

If a man dies and his son has been lying with his wives in secret, whether with or without his permission, the son is very much afraid to approach his father's place. If he goes near or touches the corpse he will himself die, for he is one flesh with his father; their blood has mingled in the woman's belly. He keeps a long way away and so do the wives with whom he has lain. The leading men of the village are told
[783] about it and a doctor is fetched and the son and the wives involved are taken to a waterfall and treated there. If he is the eldest son a younger brother kills the cows meanwhile. Then he comes back to the homestead and kills a cow himself. While you were away in Europe I saw a case of this with my own eyes. A man died whose son had been lying with his wives. As soon as the son approached his father's place he fell down sick to death. People picked him up and rushed him away to a
[783] distance. Then he began to breathe a little easier. They took him to a waterfall and treated him and he recovered, more or less. He is still unwell from time to time. It is not madness, just illness. And if, before the father's death, such a son approaches his father, the old man gets very ill indeed and the elder wives turn the son out of the house. There is none of this trouble if a brother [either a full brother or a half-brother]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

has lain with the dead man's wives. A brother will approach the corpse without fear. But there is another trouble: if a man seduces his brother's wife the husband may have diarrhoea perhaps with bloody stools. Many people do not come to their fathers' funerals before the burial. And also if the father is ill, and they see he is near death, they run away, returning when he has been buried. Because it is said that a man will die if he has slept with his mother, his father's wife, and sees his father or sees the corpse, as did Jones, the son of Kinokora. He slept with his mothers in secret. When his father died (in a different village from that in which Jones lived) Jones seized his father's cattle and ran away with them. When they had buried his father he came to mourn. The women with whom he had slept told on him because he had given them syphilis.

A wife who commits adultery with her husband's son is held to be in great danger also. Mwandini said:

If they conceal it and approach the grave both the son and the wife will die. Both are washed naked, under a waterfall. The officiant washes them together with a fowl.

Question: Why the waterfall and the nakedness?

Mwandini: The water is to take away the sickness. Being naked is so that the case may go away and you, the man, may be empty (*bwari*) and the woman may be empty. For if such a son looks into the grave and approaches to weep, the shades and Kyala are angry and say: 'Are you a relative? How can you look into the grave? It is you who have killed him, by causing him diarrhoea.' And if the woman approaches and holds her dead husband in her arms, then she dies. Those below are angry and say: 'Is she your relative?' And she dies. But if she has committed adultery with someone who is no relation she approaches and does not fear, and the adulterer does not fear either, but approaches.

For a woman, adultery is held to be dangerous also in childbirth:

If she has had lovers, she has a difficult delivery and the child refuses to come out until she confesses. Sometimes she confesses three, then the child comes, it comes out. . . . She confesses the name and takes a bit of stick and spits on it and throws it away, and you will be surprised to see that she gives birth at once. If she is very bad she will tell you three names and throw away three sticks.

Any contact with childbirth is held to be even more dangerous to men than contact with menstruation. It also is thought to cause weakness, and it is warriors who are most affected. Traditionally,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

misfortune and the rituals are distinct. In theory, when the shades are angry the essential offering is that made in the sacred banana grove or on the hearth; it is eaten by the grandsons of the most recently dead, and whether neighbours partake or not depends upon the generosity of the officiant; whereas when neighbours are angry there is no offering in the grove or at the hearth, the neighbours are feasted, admit anger and express forgiveness.

However, neighbours are slow to admit responsibility (for to curse someone comes close to witchcraft) and in some cases there is both a formal feast for the neighbours and a prayer to the shades, and it is left uncertain where final responsibility rests. The following texts illustrate this:

MWAKAMBO: It is the custom among us Nyakyusa to marry many wives, mature ones and young ones, so if a man has sons at his home it sometimes happens that one of them makes love to one of his father's wives. Perhaps they commit adultery in secret, perhaps he runs off with her to a distant chiefdom. Then the father breaks off relations with him.

The son, wherever he is, learns that he has been cursed by his father and his body becomes like grass fresh. If the son is wise he gathers his property and returns to his father. He takes a friend with him and goes into the house of one of his father's neighbours. His friend and his father's neighbour speak together. 'I have come to return unto my father because I have done wrong.' He tells the neighbour what they have brought to offer the father—usually a cow and a bull. Then that neighbour seeks three comrades or perhaps four or five, and they go to pacify their irate fellow, saying: 'Our child has returned. He knows that he has done wrong towards you, but we have received him because he has confessed humbly and begged forgiveness.' His father refuses furiously and almost spears himself in his passion. His fellows pacify him for the whole day, or perhaps two or three days, then at last he agrees. Then the young man and his fellows bring the cow and the bull. The father also calls together many of his fellows and he seeks beer and cooks food. They gather together at the father's homestead and the father says: 'My son has come and admitted that he has done wrong, asking that I forgive him and saying: 'I did not know what I was doing, these are the cattle which I have brought', and the others agree. Then they kill the bull. They roast some meat. The father catches one side of it, the son the other and the village headman cuts it in the middle, and the father and son each eat their piece. This is the blessing (*ubwipi*), meaning that there is kinship between them now. They eat together. Then all the people eat. Also with the beer it is like this. The village headman picks a straw and puts it in the beer, hands it to the father who drinks, and then to the son. Then other people drink, and they

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

beats out its monotonous noise. In the meantime there may be uncontrolled persons running about, leaping, waving spears, not seldom casting a taunt, which is quickly taken up, and spears are thrown, and wounds, and even death, may be the result.

Sometimes the wailing takes place in the house, or 'no-house-open,' pano ontiloe. It is interesting to watch men and women approach the place of mourning: they come with all appearance of *sang-froid*, but suddenly emotion grips them, and they take up the wail with streaming tears. It does not occur to anyone that he should restrain himself; it was not for that that he came. Yet the recovery from this high-pitched emotion is just as rapid. There is a sudden hush, some one addresses to the widow the old, world-old, world-wide comfort, that all must die; and, amazing to relate, this is often received with laughter, not mocking laughter, but laughter intended to relieve the strain which all are feeling. Sometimes too, jesting, and even obscene language, are indulged in, with the same end in view. And as emotion rises again, and this especially among the dancers, free rein is given to looseness of language and gesture, and more definite evil follows in the darkness.

It is affirmed that all this looseness has arisen since the coming of the white man; but statements of the harm done by the latter are so common among the Konde and other tribes, that one may well be sceptical. The explanation given is that European government will not permit the old death penalty for adultery, and therefore it has become more common; or that

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

765 the number of cattle has increased so greatly since
•837 European administration commenced, that there are many who can pay the fine imposed; or again, that since civilized government will not permit the fighting that used to take place, the emotion generated has to find other outlets.

765 As parties from a distance come to the mourning, they go first to the "owner" of the dead, and offer their sympathies. In return they are given a long account of the progress of the disease, and of the measures that were taken by relatives to prevent death. A man approaching a widow, will sit at a distance of about a yard to offer his condolences, but a woman throws her arms around the neck of the bereaved.

762 The Konde do not attach the same value to life as we do, and suicide is not uncommon. I have known of suicide due to small money troubles, loss of a law-suit, continued poverty, prolonged illness, leprosy, quarrels at home, and finally to disappointment in love; this last, I am told, only on the part of the man; a woman disappointed in love does not commit suicide. For people who die by their own act, there is less mourning than for an ordinary death, and the parting words at the graveside are not the same; "since it was by your own desire that you went." The spirits require an explanation from every one who comes to them in this way; but any answer seems to satisfy them. Ordinarily the new-comers are received with the words, "Come and rest." This information comes from persons who "died" and returned, though a more common belief is that the dead do not return.

7: Sanderson 4-5 (ca. 1920) 1923 F317 Ngonde F317

Mwao is very nearly a translation of the word *tabu*, and may be used either 601
of things or of forbidden degrees of relationship.

5. The following points are noteworthy :—

(1) The wife of a "brother," whether older or younger, uterine or not, is called 601
by the same term (*ukwi*) as a wife. I am informed that sexual intercourse, 602
though not countenanced, is not uncommon, and such cases are apt to 537
be treated leniently should they come to (native) court. This might be regarded as evidence of former "group marriages," but it should be noted that a man's first heir is his brother, who succeeds to the wives in common with the rest of the "property."

The same term (*ukwi*) is used by a woman for the "brothers" 601
of her husband as for the husband himself, and their wives are *ukwiwinako* (= "her fellow-wives").

(2) The "sisters" of a wife are also called *ukwi*. The husband of the eldest 601
of a family has a prior right to marry her uterine sisters, and a semi- 515
right to her other "sisters"; such marriages are very common. Any man who marries a woman to whom another has a prior right becomes *mwaphwiwi* (or *bikwati*) to the married one. (See Definitions.) Reciprocally a woman calls her "sister's" husband *ukwi*, even after her marriage to another.

(3) A man has the right to marry the daughter of his wife's "brother" as 532
among the Thonga,[1] and the wife of the wife's "brother" is called 601
ukwiko (see Definitions); the son of the wife's "brother" is often called *ukwiwo* instead of *mwaiwo*. There is a special term for a father's sister, which is reciprocally used by a woman for her "brother's" daughter; the term *ukwi-mwiwanga* (= "my fellow-wife") does not appear to be used by her unless and until her husband actually marries the girl. This special term is *wainga*, and it can hardly be mere coincidence that it so closely resembles the Nandi term *wapet* for father's sister[2] (*wa-* being a common Bantu prefix, usually honorific, and, on the other hand, the terminal *-t* merely formative).

A woman calls the son of her husband's "sister" *ukwiwo*. (See para. (8) below.)

(4) All "grand-daughters," except those by marriage, are called *ukwi*, but marriage has never been allowed within living memory; the husband of these "grand-daughters" are called *mwaphwiwi* (*bikwati*). A "grandson" is not called *ukwiwo* but (*mwiwakako*) *mwiwanga* (= "my younger");

[1] B. S. Seligman, "The relationship systems of the Nandi, Masai and Thonga. *Man*, April, 1917, 48 (quoting *Junod*).
[2] Seligman, loc. cit., quoting Hobley, "The Nandi."

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

593 takes place on some occasion and her parents usually find out when it
584 does. In some families the girl's mother examines her after each visit to
836 her husband to see if the hymen is intact, sometimes the girl tells her mother herself. When her father hears about it his action is determined partly by his feelings towards his son-in-law, partly by his need for cattle. Sometimes he does nothing at all; occasionally he sends back the cows he has received for his daughter and breaks off the marriage, and this is particularly likely to happen if the girl has been forced against her will or generally ill-treated. More usually, however, he sends his daughter to live with her husband saying: "You have made her a woman yourself, you must pay the rest of the marriage-cattle quickly."

836 We have no evidence to suggest that the girls in any general way dislike sleeping with their husbands before puberty, rather the reverse; and the men say: "It is good, it accustoms a girl to her husband." But some girls dislike the particular men to whom they are betrothed.

981 The initiation of a girl at puberty lasts for some months and includes several exchanges of food between her family and that of her husband, and a number of ceremonies in which both her girl friends of the same village[a] and her husband's friends from his village[a] participate. If a girl
[609] is not bespoken before puberty the initiation is still carried out in a modified form, but its full significance is lost.

585 Soon after her initiation a girl, if she has been bespoken, goes to live altogether with her husband, to play her part in his economy and to bear him children. If only a few cows have been received for her, her father insists on one or two more being handed over before she is allowed to go. At some time, perhaps during the girl's initiation, perhaps years later, the final marriage ceremony (*ukubwa*) takes place. The balance of the marriage-cattle are brought to her father by the husband and his village neighbours,[a] her "mothers" prepare a great deal of food for the guests to eat, there is dancing, feasting and great excitement.

554 The number of cows handed over varies with the wealth and social
583 status of the two families concerned. Six to ten cows is the most usual number, but sometimes as few as four or as many as thirty change hands.

583 The second method of marriage is adopted when a man falls in love with a grown girl, who is not bespoken, and cannot find the cows to satisfy her father at once; he runs off with her and regularizes the position
589 later by sending cattle. The third method is adopted when a man falls
837 in love with a married woman and has cows available; he runs off with

[a] See index "The Age Village".
[illegible]

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

583 her and then returns to her first husband the cows he had given for her
837 with two in addition as adultery fine. But this return is usually made only after the first husband has brought a lawsuit against him.

837 Adultery is extremely common now-a-days; when a man runs off
684 with, or is discovered seducing, a married woman and has not enough
177 cows to marry her, he is legally compelled to pay two cows for the adultery to her husband. In pre-European days an adulterer, if caught, was usually punished by the husband and his neighbours with death or extreme torture, and the old men tell me that adultery was then a rarer event.

584 The extent to which a girl is usually allowed to choose whom she
177 will marry is difficult to gauge, and varies in different circumstances. Opportunities of meeting and flirting with young men at dances and ceremonies are frequent; and the older men say that, owing to the abolition by the Europeans of the old severe punishments for adultery, girls
585 are freer now than they used to be, for their lovers no longer fear to run off with them if they are married or betrothed (which is in Nyakyusa law very much the same thing). The custom of betrothing infant girls is, they declare, less common than it used to be; they are now more chary of pledging their daughters "for when they grow up they just run off with someone else." A girl's choice is, however, limited by the necessity of finding a lover who has cows, and few young men have enough to secure her if she is already married, though they may have enough to pay an adultery fine.

[428] Owing, in part, to the laws of inheritance, by which a commoner's*
543 full-brother inherits before his son, it is the older men who control the cattle. Every bachelor is largely or wholly dependent on his own father (or his dead father's heir) for the cows for his first marriage, and he must hoe his father's fields for many years before he is given enough to secure a wife and to set up a family of his own. Economic reciprocity is an element in most human relationships, and it enters into the Nyakyusa relationship of father and son. It is well understood, in this society, that
593 after a certain length of time spent hoeing his father's fields a young man
685 is entitled to some cows, if his father has any; and if his father delays too long the young man either stops hoeing for his father or else he takes legal action and endorses his claim. Between father and son such law cases are rare, but they are frequent between a young man and the brother of his father who has inherited his father's wives, property, and position in the family.

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*The lines of inheritance for a chief are, in certain respects, different; vide infra, "The Chiefdoms."
[Cf. ch. ii. p. 278 ff. — Ed.]

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

636 177 578 *supra*). Only one of them can receive the salary and they commonly dispute about it. Quarrels are particularly frequent over the position of senior chief, for the presidency of a Court carries with it a relatively large salary. Old senior chiefs cling to the position long after their sons have "come out" and when they die their full-brothers still dispute the position with the sons because of the salary involved. Such a situation could not have arisen before 1926, for then there was no comparable issue between them.

636 622 177 And the introduction of salaries has also had a most profound effect upon the relative status of the two young chiefs who "come out" together. When an ordinary chief, with a small salary, dies the Government recognises the first son alone as chief and pays the whole salary to him. This reduces the second son to the position of a minor chief as effectively as a defeat in war might have done in the old days. But, while the action of warfare only occasionally led to the subordination of one of the brothers, this action of the Government does so invariably, and always subordinates the younger brother. When a senior chief dies, on the other hand, the salary is usually divided: the bulk of it goes to the first son, together with the position of senior chief, while to the second son is given the salary of an ordinary chief.

354 622 As the prestige and authority of a father in his family, or of a man among his neighbours, is closely connected with his wealth on the one hand, and with his believed religious powers on the other, so also the status of a chief among his people. He has more cows, more wives, more food than other men; he is spiritually responsible for the fertility of the land, the women and the cattle of his chiefdom. But he is no autocrat, and all his public functions require for their exercise the co-operation of his great commoners.

622 347 Polygyny is, above all, the mark of a chief. Few commoners have more than five or six wives, but a chief frequently marries fifteen, thirty, fifty or even more; his wives weed and plant the fields which their unmarried sons hoe, and there is plenty of food for guests. Chiefs themselves hoe when they have time, and often they employ a poor man to hoe for them as well, rewarding him after a year or two with a cow. It is not 337 possible for one man to satisfy so many women sexually, and it is generally said that every chief's wife, save the five or six who are his favourites, has a lover. But intrigues must be carried on with care, for their discovery means a great public scandal.

The extent of a chief's polygyny is conditioned by his control of cattle, and his income in cattle is derived mainly from inheritance and the

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

123 755 in the open air and not within the hut as on the previous day. But the patient was unwilling to be photographed. He feared, he said, that by the photo I would take „his inner man together with the medicine just accepted" with me to Europe. I tried to calm him, showing him some pictures of my family, and I also let him look through the view-finder of my camera, so that at last he was satisfied. Then, after feeling more confident, he told me the cause of the pains which led him to come to the doctor. He thought he had been bewitched, as he had met a descendant of a man whom some long time ago had killed one of his own ancestors.

[142 291 516 756]

The Medicine Man and one of his patients. The medicines are spread out on the mat.

756 Then the medicine man also explained to me how he had come to the position of a doctor. He did not inherit his position from his father, but he was instructed in medical practices by another doctor. The circumstances which had led him to this position were the following.

[839] Before his initiation to the medical practice he had entered into forbidden relations with the wife of another man. To protect himself [784] from he magical revenge of the deceived husband and his kin he went to a medicine man to acquire antidotes against the expected bewitching. He had to pay two cows for this medicine, and as he had paid them, the medicine-man offered to initiate him into the secrets of the practice of a medicine-man. The character of the client, probably, had won his confidence, and indeed, the medicine-man whose guest I now was, made a profound impression on me.

754 He also described some forms of bewitching[1] for vengeance. For this purpose the avenger poisons a fowl in his own village uttering curses

[1] Cf. G. Wilson, Introduction, p. 277 (belief in witchcraft).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

usually has a separate hut for its girls, to which, we were told, 584
their lovers come secretly by night.

Nyakyusa informants connected the existence of girls' houses 582
with the marriage age. In Ngonde the marriage age of girls is
much higher than it is among the Nyakyusa, partly because there [795]
are many more Christians (45 per cent as against 16 per cent)
who do not allow polygyny, partly because even the girls from
pagan families in Ngonde dislike marrying a polygynist, and
partly because a much higher percentage of young men are away at
work, than from Nyakyusa country. Formerly, they said, the marri-
age age was higher among the Nyakyusa also, and then the Nyak-
yusa had *isaka*. It is certain that among the Nyakyusa betrothal [881]
of a girl has long taken place before puberty, for the husband
plays an essential part in the puberty ritual, and there were always
some girls who were betrothed when quite tiny; but the evidence
is fairly clear that the average age of betrothal among the pagans
has been going down. The Nyakyusa view is that no man in his
senses, who is able to marry, will engage a little girl of eight if he
can find one approaching puberty; and it is the scarcity of wives
that makes men 'marry' little girls. It is also clear that the number [221]
of cattle in the country, and their rate of circulation, has increased
during the last two decades, so there are 'too many cattle chasing
too few brides' with the result that the marriage age of girls
has fallen, and the number of cattle given at marriage has
increased.

Once she is betrothed, a girl's 'husband' has exclusive sexual 584
rights over her, and she cannot entertain lovers in the *isaka*. The 836
only two occasions on which she may flirt and have external 881
relations with a man other than her husband, are during an initia-
tion ceremony, when the girls of the village who have not yet
reached puberty sleep with their fellow who is being initiated,
and there entertain young men, and when she accompanies a
bride to her husband's house. A bridegroom is expected to have
external relations with his wife's two friends, as well as with his
wife, on the night they bring her to his house. Love-making at the
initiation-marriage ritual is held to be 'part of the ritual' and a
means of sex education, and a husband can make no complaint
about his 'wife' receiving lovers then, provided that penetration
does not take place.

Homosexual practices are said to be very common in the boys' 838

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

villages—they begin among boys of ten to fourteen herding cows, and continue among young men until marriage, but they are said never to continue after that, and are regarded simply as a substitute for heterosexual pleasure. 'A man never dreams of making love to another man'—only of making love to a woman. If a boy's own father, or a village father, finds a son with another youth he will beat him, but provided both parties were willing, there is no court case, and the older men treat the practice tolerantly as a manifestation of adolescence. To force a fellow to have homosexual intercourse against his will is a serious offence, comparable to witchcraft (*vide* Document, p. 196). Lesbian practices are said also to exist, but we have no certain evidence of this: if they do occur it is much more likely to be among the older wives of chiefs and other polygynists than among the girls, who have so much attention from young men.'

It is in conversation and play with village contemporaries that some knowledge of sex is acquired. Girls learn about sex from their immediate seniors, and they get some sex experience, along with formal instruction on morals, at the puberty rituals of their seniors in the age-village and at their own initiation. Boys learn from the conversation of their older fellows at night, in the boys' village. Any suggestion that sex education should be given by parents or middle-aged teachers shocks the Nyakyusa profoundly, for they hold that discussion of sex is totally incompatible with the respect due from children to parents. The taboo on sex talk between members of different generations appears to be absolute among men, but is less emphasized among women, for formal instruction on morals is given to a girl by her mother's fellows during the initiation ritual, and a young wife of her father, or of her father's neighbour, may whisper advice on sex matters even although she is classed as a 'mother'.

As we have already indicated, there are profound differences between pagans and Christians in their sex code. The Christian dogma that sex relations should only take place between adult married persons excludes the freedom of girls to have external sex relations before betrothal, or in the 'bride's' hut; it excludes girls visiting their betrothed husbands before puberty; and it excludes homosexuality, which is regarded as a mortal sin. Segregation of successive generations is not a part of the Christian tradition, hence the modifications in the rules of avoid-

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

inheriting their stepmothers. Where circumcision is practised a grown woman scorns sex relations with an uncircumcised boy, therefore uncircumcised youths are not potential lovers of their fathers' junior wives; but with the Nyakyusa there is no ceremony to mark the sexual maturity of a male, and adolescent youths are acceptable to young married women of their own age. And not only does the wide difference in the age of men and girls at first marriage allow of a high degree of polygyny, but the very early bethrothal of girls (over whom their future husbands have exclusive sexual rights except during the initiation ritual) means that there are very few girls available to the unmarried men. The institution of girls' huts (*isaka*) has disappeared among the Nyakyusa owing to the lack of nubile girls who are not already betrothed, and the period of seclusion at initiation (when betrothed girls are available to men other than their husbands) is short. The contrast with Nguni society, in which girls do not marry until sixteen to twenty-two, and have several years of great sex freedom before marriage[1] is marked. We suggest that it is because unmarried girls are so scarce and lusty bachelors so many, that the seduction of the wives of polygynists is frequent, and homosexual practices are general.[2] Nyakyusa insist that formerly seduction was rare,[3] and possibly the impulse towards it was indeed less strong when girls married rather later and *isaka* existed (*vide supra*, p. 87).

Lastly, the Nyakyusa permit the inheritance of a father's widows by his sons, a practice regarded as improper by certain other peoples (e.g. the Pondo[4]) who practise the levirate. A son is required to treat all his father's wives as 'mothers' while his father and father's full brothers are alive, and intercourse with a father's wife is treated as a heinous offence necessitating special purification; but after the death of the father and his full brothers these same women become wives of their former 'sons'—with the limitation that a man cannot inherit his own mother or her kins-

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 180-4; M. Kuper, *Marriage Customs in Southern Natal*, pp. 10-44; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 133-6.

[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, p. 408 (footnote), hints that similar practices exist among the Nyasaland Tonga and elsewhere *before* adolescence only. The Nyakyusa certainly continue after puberty.

[3] MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 63, states that the acknowledged child of an adulterous union was openly put to death.

[4] Hunter, op. cit., p. 111.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

7. HOMOSEXUALITY

X (an exceptionally reliable informant)

838 'When a boy sleeps with his friend they sleep together; it is not forbidden. Everyone thinks it all right. Sometimes when boys sleep together each may have an emission on the other (*bitundanila*). If they are great friends there is no wrong done. If a boy has an emission on his friend in his sleep without the friend knowing there is no case. Boys sometimes agree to dance together (*ukukina*) and work their evil together and that also is no wrong. But they fear very much to dance thus because their parents will be angry, saying: "You are learning adultery; you will be fools when you grow up." Boys do this when they are out herding; then they begin to dance together and to have intercourse together. But there is something which is a great wrong—if one [684] boy, perhaps out herding or perhaps in the boys' village at night, catches hold of his fellow and has an emission on him (*nukutundila*) then it is a great case involving a fine. One who has been forced by his fellow will tell his parents and they will take him to the village headman to inform the headman. It is a great case and the boy who forced his fellow pays a bull or perhaps a cow. They say that to force [754] a fellow thus is witchcraft (*bo bulosi*); he is not a woman. But when they have agreed and dance together, then even if people find them they say it is adolescence (*lukulilo*), all children are like that. And they say that sleeping together and dancing is also adolescence.

'This custom is mostly among children, it is forbidden for men to sleep together. They do not fear lest when they have soiled a friend they will pay; no, they fear to be shamed. Not many cases of grown men having intercourse together come to light, but only of boys together or of a man and a boy. Some, during intercourse, work in the mouth of their friend, and have an orgasm; those do very, very great wrong. Some have intercourse in the anus, some between the legs—there are many who practise this latter form and this is what boys mostly do. That of the mouth people do very rarely when they dance together, because one who does it may have a great case against him.

'A person never dreams of making love to another man but only when two youths sleep together on a mat, then something evil may take place between them, at night during sleep. Perhaps when one has dreamed that he is having intercourse with a woman but he has been caught and not finished, he soils his friend.

'And when out herding, some of the older boys do evil with the

[p. 196]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

young ones, the older ones persuade the little ones to lie down with them and to do that which is forbidden with them between the legs. Sometimes two older boys who are friends do it together, one gets on top of his fellow, then he gets off and the other mounts. All this which they do together or with a junior is a small wrong. When their parents find them they reprove them and tell them it is forbidden, they beat them a little. But when a little boy is caught hold of by an older boy against his will, and he tells that so and so caught him and had intercourse (*ukulogwa*) with him then the older boy will be fined, perhaps a bull. 838 [684]

'It is altogether forbidden to do evil to a fellow by night. The boy who has been so treated will be angry and run off to the court, and he who did evil to him will be fined. He will pay one cow, because they say it is forbidden to do evil to your fellow by night. There are some who, when they have dreamed at night of a woman, wake up and catch hold of a friend, and have intercourse with him.'

A and J.

A and J agreed that homosexuality occurred frequently in boys' villages. 'A boy has intercourse with his fellow, but a grown man? No, never, we've never heard of it. They always want women; only when a man cannot get a woman he does this, only in youth. A few men do not marry but they are half-wits who have no kind of intercourse at all. [732]

'And there is one famous case in the hills of a man who, though not mad, dresses as a woman; but he has no intercourse either with men or women.'

A case was also quoted of a doctor in Tukuyu who 'is a woman; she has borne children, now her body has grown the sexual organs of a man and her feelings have changed also; but she keeps it very secret, she is spoken of as a woman.' [143]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

16. THINGS ASSOCIATED WITH WITCHCRAFT

Mwainumo (clerk).

1. 'Bestiality. This is associated with witchcraft (*sya bu lon*) because, it is said, witches eat the flesh of human beings which an ordinary person does not eat—ordinary people all avoid human flesh. One who has intercourse with an animal, a thing which an ordinary person does not do but avoids, is like one who eats human flesh.' 754 839

2. 'Intercourse with a very young girl. This is associated with witchcraft because no one desires it, only this person' (*i.e.* such a desire is abnormal).

3. 'Intercourse with a very old woman. This is associated with witchcraft because no one desires old women.'

4. 'Intercourse between a grown man and a boy. This is associated with witchcraft because grown men always desire women.' 754 838

In reply to a question: 'No, it never happens that two grown men lie together, but youths do. That is not associated with witchcraft; that is adolescence.'

5. 'If a woman takes something very dirty (such as excrement) and puts it on her husband's bed, or in his food, because she hates him, that is associated with witchcraft because it is very, very dirty. No one (normal) does such a thing.' 754

In reply to a question: 'No, if children play with excrement, that is not associated with witchcraft.'

6. 'In Selya we do not eat the meat of a leopard though in Kukwe country they do. If a Selya man tastes it people say: "How can he eat leopard meat which no one eats? It's like witchcraft." Leopard meat is forbidden because leopards kill and eat people. 754 262

'So with the meat of a dog or rat or monkey. A dog is not eaten because it's our friend—a person—and a monkey is a person.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

881 When we have finished the
834 ritual I come together with my wife again, but if our child is unmarried
[833] it is taboo to procreate a child, we practise *coitus interruptus*, the semen falls on the mat. . . . This is until the girl goes to her husband, until she is married. If my wife wears a bark-cloth I say to her during our daughter's puberty ritual: 'Arrange your bark-cloth carefully lest I, the man, desire you, I shall catch hold of you and we will cause the shade to make our child barren.' When she has gone to her husband we say our shade has finished, he has gone away in the water. Our child has gone to another shade. Yes, she also has intercourse with her husband at his home, but that does not matter, I have intercourse with my wife.

834 He was emphatic that the parents begin full intercourse as soon as the girl goes to her husband, it is not necessary to wait for her to become pregnant.

833 QUESTION: What do the spirits do in intercourse?
775 MWASALEMBA: The shade causes my penis to stand up and says: 'Go to the woman, there.' And also the woman's shade says: 'Your husband comes into you.' It is the shades which create desire, then we have intercourse, the shades meet together, hers—the woman's—and mine. If I do not go to my wife the shade says: 'Why, what's wrong with my place? Are there thorns? Why do you not enter?' They brood over (*bikobatela*) us both, both me and my wife.

QUESTION: What do they want?

MWASALEMBA: They want to create a child.

838 QUESTION: Why then do men desire masturbation and sodomy? [At
775 first when I asked this he said: 'No, the shade is a woman,' but then he
639 corrected himself].

MWASALEMBA: It is the shade which creates this desire, we have it within. A youth masturbates, the semen falls on the ground—perhaps two youths; it's also the shade. And a woman also masturbates. . .

775 QUESTION: You perform the rituals for many reasons?
771 MWASALEMBA: Yes, if we do not perform the rituals the shade broods on us and we do not bear children. Perhaps he broods on the crops, and they do not grow well but poorly, perhaps we run mad.

On another occasion Mwasalemba said:

775
833 The shade is in the heart. It is the shade which desires to go to a woman, which causes us men to have erections and excites desire in women. If you have not got the shade you are impotent, you do not go to women. We say: 'The shade has brooded over this man, why do they not rouse him to go to women?' He just looks at women. Then the shade rouses up in the belly and says: 'Ha!' It rouses up and the man has intercourse with a woman. If it has brooded over him, it does not

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love- 864
making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger 577
ones listen to these things and that is all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn. But we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night ; and that is very bad, that is foolishness.—But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to listen, that is how children grow up."

On another occasion when I told this same man that in Europe many people thought it a good thing for boys to get sexual instruction from their parents and teachers he was shocked : " But I think it is impossible " he protested " for parents to go into detail with their children ; there is too much shame on both sides. And if they did, it would damage the children's respect for them."

There is thus a correlation in this society between the age-village system at its genesis and the belief that a boy's dawning interest in sex must be informed, not by his parents, but by friends only a little older than himself.

Few men marry before twenty-five years of age, but affairs with 582
girls begin before puberty. All affairs are related in detail to friends in 836
the age-village, and the younger ones learn by listening ; and they also [202]
learn when the older boys send them as messengers to the girls of their fancy.

Besides the more serious love affairs which are carried on in secret, 835
groups of boys from the same age-village commonly flirt with any girls 867
they meet on the way, and it is then that the incest taboos are learnt. If one of the boys is known to be related to one of the girls, either through a common grandfather or great-grandfather, his companions send him away : " Don't you see your sister is here ? You cannot come ! "

Contrary to a general belief about " primitive " societies, homosexual 838
intercourse is common in the boys' villages, between close friends, but there is no real perversion ; homosexuality is said to be always *faute de mieux*. The older men in discussion dismiss it with the tolerant word " adolescence," it is never continued after marriage, and all except the feeble-minded get married sooner or later.

But life in a boys' village also gives its members much information 621
and wisdom unconnected with sex. There, as we have seen, boys perfect 868
their skill in building, and there also they learn to argue and express 867
themselves with adult fluency. It is characteristic of the Nyakyusa legal

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

like most of the leaders of Zionist Churches in the south.[1] 797x

It is noticeable that the two 'independent' Churches have a more elaborate form of service than the Church from which their leaders have sprung, and Ngemela habitually wears conspicuous vestments. There is, of course, great variation between different denominations in the emphasis placed on ritual, some Protestants abjuring it and turning their very insistence on starkness and simplicity into a ritual in itself—a taboo. There seems to be a clear tendency in Southern Africa for 'independent' Churches to express themselves more and more in ritual and less in dogma. In this way they reduce the gap between themselves and the pagans, for the pagan religion is expressed almostly exclusively in ritual, whereas Christianity is expressed in creeds and confessions as well as in the rituals of the Church. 795x 779 [796]

(*e*) THE CONTRAST BETWEEN PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

There are certain common elements in the rituals celebrated by pagans and Christians: some of the occasions are the same, and in the conceptions of sacrifice, of death and rebirth, of confession and cleansing, there are similarities; but there are also profound differences. The conception of life, immortality, replaces the preoccupation with fertility, for though most Nyakyusa Christians, like the pagans, regard celibacy as evidence of physical abnormality, and the conventional desire of a woman is to have six children—a quiverful in Nyakyusa eyes—yet fertility is no longer the end of all being, sought in every ritual. There are profound differences, too, in the values expressed in the rituals regarding sex relations, the range of moral obligations, and social change. In pagan thought polygyny is good—a man should have many children. Child marriage is defended on the ground that a girl 'gets accustomed to her husband' if she goes to him early, and homosexual relations between youths and young men are tolerated since they have no wives and *cannot* marry if the older men are polygynists. What is upheld is the chastity of women, and a total separation of the sex activities of members of successive generations, expressed in the taboos limiting familiarity between mother and son, father and nubile daughter, father-in-law and daughter-law. In Christian thought it is the 'pure in heart' who 'see God' and this is interpreted by the mission Churches to imply monogamy. Only in the 'independent' African Churches is it asserted 797x 795x [842] [589] [595] [584] [838] [836] [561] [183] [595]

[1] The emphasis on healing, so common in the south, is absent.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

724 torts committed by its members has also disappeared. Instead,
672 there is both a great increase in the number of cases treated as
offences against the state; murder, manslaughter and grievous
673 bodily injury being no longer treated as offences against a group
177 of kin, but as crimes against the state; and a great extension in
the *range* of law. A modern Nyakyusa has no difficulty in suing
a debtor, or the seducer of his wife, living in another chiefdom.

681 Nevertheless neighbours still feel a certain obligation for the
maintenance of each other's rights. For example, a certain young
672 man eloped with a very young girl, who, though betrothed, had
not yet reached puberty. On their way out of the district they
were seen by a 'village father' of the girl, who brought them back
to her father, and then joined with him and other neighbours in
beating the young man and taking him to the chief. The youth
admitted his fault in seducing so young a girl and asked the chief
to summon his father-in-law (for he was already married) that he
might borrow from his father-in-law the cattle with which to pay
the fine for seduction. But his father-in-law was a neighbour of
the father of the girl he had seduced, and he refused to lend any
cattle, saying, 'You have run off with the daughter of my neigh-
bour in the village: that means you have wronged *me*.'

839 And a group of herd-boys are still liable to be treated by their
672 fathers as responsible for one another. One informant, discussing
a case of bestiality committed by a herd-boy, remarked that the
leader of the group forbade the others to mention it at home on
the ground that 'if our fathers know they will say that we all (in
this herd group) do it.'

d. Social separation

681 One of the mechanisms for maintaining good relations in
Nyakyusa villages (as in all groups) is the separation of the dissi-
dent individual from the group.[1] This separation may be com-
pulsory or voluntary. As we have seen, witches, thieves, adulter-
ers, and obstinate debtors were formerly banished from Nyak-
yusa villages because they were regarded as a danger to their
neighbours, liable to harm them directly or to bring retribution
upon them. The village, being held responsible for certain actions
of its members, and forming a defensive unit against the sup-

[1] cf. G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 60-1.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

16. THINGS ASSOCIATED WITH WITCHCRAFT

Mwaisumo (*ibid*).

1. 'Bestiality. This is associated with witchcraft (*ya ba lwi*) because, it is said, witches eat the flesh of human beings which an ordinary person does not eat—ordinary people all avoid human flesh. One who has intercourse with an animal, a thing which an ordinary person does not do but avoids, is like one who eats human flesh.' 754 839

2. 'Intercourse with a very young girl. This is associated with witchcraft because no one desires it, only this person' (i.e. such a desire is abnormal).

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In reply to a question: 'No, it never happens that two grown men lie together, but youths do. That is not associated with witchcraft; that is adolescence.'

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'So with the meat of a dog or rat or monkey. A dog is not eaten because it's our friend—a person—and a monkey is a person.'

[p.225]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Lukwa

[illegible] when we have finished the
[illegible] ritual I come together with my wife again, but if our child is unmarried
[illegible] it is taboo to procreate a child, we practise coitus interruptus, the semen
[illegible] falls on the mat. . . . This is until the girl goes to her husband, until she is married. If my wife wears a bark-cloth I say to her during our daughter's puberty ritual: 'Arrange your bark-cloth carefully lest I, the man, desire you, I shall catch hold of you and we will cause the shade to make our child barren.' When she has gone to her husband we say our shade has finished, he has gone away in the water. Our child has gone to another shade. Yes, she also has intercourse with her husband at his home, but that does not matter, I have intercourse with my wife.

[illegible] He was emphatic that the parents begin full intercourse as soon as the girl goes to her husband, it is not necessary to wait for her to become pregnant.

[illegible] Questioner: What do the spirits do in intercourse?
[illegible] Mwanzambwe: The shade causes my penis to stand up and says: 'Go to the woman, there.' And also the woman's shade says: 'Your husband comes into you.' It is the shades which create desire, then we have intercourse, the shades meet together, here—the woman's—and mine. If I do not go to my wife the shade says: 'Why, what's wrong with my place? Are there thorns? Why do you not come?' They brood over (bikhatela) us both, both me and my wife.

Questioner: What do they want?

Mwanzambwe: They want to create a child.

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On another occasion Mwanzambwe said:

[illegible] The shade is in the heart. It is the shade which desires to go to a
[illegible] woman, which causes us men to have emotions and excites desire in women. If you have not got the shade you are impotent, you do not go to women. We say: 'The shade has brooded over this man, why do they not cause him to go to women?' He just looks at women. Then the shade comes up in the belly and says: 'Ha!' It comes up and the man has intercourse with a woman. If it has brooded over him, it does not

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 less when 'he (or she) of the pythons' has passed by. Mwaisumo explained: 'They say that if the owner of pythons or the owner of medicines passes when food has been spread out to dry, the food will disappear. He bewitches it (*ukulogo*). It is as if he hankers after the food in his heart, and it disappears and becomes less.' Nevertheless, of the thirty-eight accusations of witchcraft recorded, none actually turned on loss of grain or pulse. We heard also that a witch may spoil a brewing of beer, causing it to taste bitter, but again we could trace no case of this.

754 The lust of witches for good food is constantly emphasized by
831 the Nyakyusa and, unlike some other Bantu people, they do not make a direct connection between witchcraft and sex: there is no suggestion of *incubi* or *succubae* such as play a great part in Pondo thought,[1] and sexual dreams are not taken as evidence of witchcraft. The facts that the witches are witches by virtue of 'pythons in the stomach', that they always go naked, and fly through the air riding their pythons when on their evil nocturnal errands, suggest sexual associations, but we cannot prove that the Nyakyusa are conscious of such symbolism. It is, however, significant that the word commonly used for working witchcraft, 'throttling' (*ukupita*), is also used as a polite word for sexual intercourse, and that the other word for working witchcraft *ukulogo*[2] (passive: *ukulogigwa*) is similar to *ukulogwa*, meaning to copulate. Bestiality and homosexuality between a grown man and a boy (but not between two youths) are spoken of as witchcraft (*ubulosi*), and sex play between girls, including stretching of the vaginal opening, is called *ubugalagala*, a word used for the cunning—the wicked cleverness—of witches.

754 An association is also made between witchcraft on the one hand
• 841 and menstruation and pregnancy on the other. A woman who is a witch is said to pass on her witchcraft to her child by neglecting the menstruation taboos before the child is yet conceived. 'It starts when a woman is menstruating, then she begins to give the child her cunning (*ubugalagala*).' Some of the menstrual blood is

[1] cf. Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, pp. 273–89.

[2] *Ukulogo* and *ukulosi* are from the same root. For its meaning in other Bantu languages cf. H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. II, pp. 509ff. Also E. J. and J. D. Krige, *The Realm of a Rain Queen*, p. 250; C. M. N. White in *Africa*, 1948 (Vol. XVIII), pp. 83 ff.; H. H. Johnston, *A Comparative Study of Bantu and Semi-Bantu Languages*, Vol. II, p. 426. The close similarity of meaning in a number of languages is striking.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

believed to remain in a woman and, if she has neglected the taboos, this blood 'rots' the child later conceived (cf. Document, p. 219). This connection is insisted upon, though witchcraft inherited from the father is spoken of as being carried directly in his blood, which is thought to be transferred to his wife during intercourse.

Furthermore, a pregnant woman is believed to have some of the attributes of a witch. She, like a witch, causes grain and pulse to diminish if she passes near by when it is spread out to dry, or greets women who are stamping or grinding grain. If she speaks or comes too close 'the child inside catches hold of the food, and it disappears'. And if she should speak inadvertently, forgetting that she is pregnant, she must throw a stone or a piece of stick into the grain, or take a little of the flour in her hand, otherwise the women will say: 'She is proud, that girl, she is a witch, why is she talking?' and it is thought that she will have a miscarriage. A pregnant woman, like a witch, and one who has been using medicine, is spoken of as 'heavy' (nzito) in contrast with one who is 'empty' (bwaa), having nothing in the belly, and Mwaikambo explained that, 'When they speak of a pregnant woman being "heavy", they think that perhaps the foetus is witchcraft.' The foetus and the python of witchcraft are felt to be somewhat alike; but in most situations they are clearly distinguished, and indeed it is held that a woman may have both. If the afterbirth is delayed it is said that the woman is herself a witch, and her python is closing up the vaginal passage, so that the afterbirth cannot come away. A pregnant woman is not spoken of as a witch unless she harms someone by neglecting the taboos connected with her state, and her husband, who must keep the same taboos, may also be called a witch if he breaks them.

Sickness and death among men and cattle, and a diminution in the milk yield of cows, are held to be common results of witchcraft, and any 'unnatural' event, such as a case of bestiality, or of sodomy between a grown man and a boy (not between two youths), or of intercourse between a young man and an old woman, or of unusual behaviour among animals or birds, is taken as evidence that witches are at work. It is the 'unnatural' element that is emphasized (cf. Document, p. 223). An owl hooting on one's roof, and someone staring at one, are also taken as indications of witchcraft.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

12. INHERITANCE OF WITCHCRAFT

Bwalile (elderly pagan man).

Question: "How does a mother give her child witchcraft? How does a father give a child witchcraft?"

"It starts when a woman is menstruating; then she begins to give a child her cunning (*ubugwalagwale*). It is said that when a woman is menstruating she should avoid certain things (*ukwetile*), particularly she should not pass behind people. For when a woman is menstruating a child has begun in her belly. People know that a certain woman is cunning when they see that she does not avoid people at certain times. Then they say: "Friends, this woman is spoiling the child. Why does she not observe the avoidances? Look, we have seen that she is fruitful (meaning that she is menstruating)." For *it* is that dirt which creates witchcraft. When a woman does not avoid, then she gives the child in her belly witchcraft. It is from this that witchcraft really comes. When a woman is not cunning, then she always observes the avoidance taboos; she does not go about anyhow. From of old it has been thought important that a menstruating woman should observe certain avoidances. A woman avoids certain things because she fears to spoil the child in her belly. When a woman does not avoid these things, the dirt, that is to say the menstrual blood, goes to where the child is. That is how she spoils the child. On this account women fear to go about anyhow, to pass behind people; they fear those medicines with which we men smear our bodies, all those for good fortune and others. Especially they fear a fierce medicine, that of fire. For there is a medicine with which some people smear themselves which causes a person to faint if the user strikes him once with the flat of his hand. It is this medicine which spoils the child in the belly of a menstruating woman if she passes behind a man. This is the lineage of witchcraft. It comes especially from this, from that dirty little thing (i.e. woman) who does not observe the avoidance rules. Hence, we say she has given her child witchcraft.

"A father gives his child witchcraft because the man's blood goes into the woman, for a woman is a pocket."

Nyakyusa confirmed the above statement of the origin of witchcraft, and explained:

"A woman does not menstruate when she is pregnant, but some menstrual blood remains in her, which may "spoil" her. We all think that when a woman is menstruating some of the blood remains in her

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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belly, and it is this which spoils the child when a woman does not avoid certain things. There is no other way in which a woman gives her child witchcraft.'

Mwakasale (1948).

Some people have witchcraft implanted in them (*ubupanda*) by their parents. Some children are witches; they are born with it in their stomachs. When a child is small, even a tiny baby, the witches may take it with them to bewitch (*kwanga*) in order that it also may learn the business of witchcraft. Hence sometimes it is said that a mother, or perhaps a father, shielded himself behind her (his) child, meaning that he fought with other witches and when they were going to spear him he put his child in front of him. When such a child grows up he will be skilled in witchcraft.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selja, Malingwale

§31 The first act of the ritual, the giving of the *undumila*[1] medicine
79 to the girl, is a symbol of sexual intercourse, and it is thought to be a prophylactic against pain in intercourse, frequent or painful periods, and injury from contact with those who are 'heavy'. 'It is given so that her belly may not be painful,' said Mwaisumo's mother, an elderly woman. Kasitile's wife explained: 'The pungwe root is the penis of the husband, the cup is her vagina, the salt, also pungwe, is the semen of her husband. Biting the root and eating the salt is copulation.' Mwakisonde's wife gave a similar interpretation:

§32 The *undumila* is put through the leaf of a bark-cloth tree, shaped into
79 a cup, and it is a sign of man and woman, the penis in the vagina. It is similar to the placenta which we give her when we wash her. The placenta are a symbol of the husband. If we do not give her the *dipele* medicine the blood never dries up, and it is the same with the *undumila*. If it is not given she constantly has periods and is barren. Yes, some have a period twice in one month—those who have rotted. Only a few are like this, not many. . . . The *undumila* is given to the girl at once, in the mouth as soon as she grows up, so that she can go about without fear; otherwise, if she wanders without having had it, then a heavy one may walk over her footprints, that is overstep her, and she will not bear a child, she menstruates continually.

Kasitile's wife said much the same: 'If the heavy ones have overstepped her, her body rots. The man is not sterile, but the woman is; the man's semen is fertile, but the woman has painful periods. It is the pain of periods we symbolize in the sharpness of the *undumila* and salt.'

§27 The heavy ones (*abasite*), feared both during the puberty ritual
§36 and by a mother with a new-born child, are those who sleep with their husbands. They include women both before and after conception. 'When the pregnancy is advanced and the husband has left off sleeping with his wife, then she is not heavy and she can keep a mother with a new-born baby company and hold the baby. A man who is sleeping with a woman is also heavy. They say: "He will overstep us."' This was the statement of Mwakisonde's wife and Kasitile, questioned separately, confirmed every point. We then asked Kasitile: 'How is the bowfiom (*abasite*) from lying with a man dangerous to those going through puberty and childbirth?'

Kasitile: 'Because those who are with their husbands are heavy, they are strong, their fellow the bride (*amange*) is empty, light in

[1] *Undumila* is derived from *ukulumila*, to bite, to be painful.

2: Wilson 2-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Sel 58, Ha Ngonde

§27 front. See, the man ejects semen! Does it not go inside? The woman §34 becomes heavy and overstepa the bride.'

Even after she has been treated, the bride avoids any close con- §34 tact with those who are 'heavy'; in particular they are excluded §33 from her hut. Her own mother 'does not sleep with the father at all from the time he girl grows up until she goes to her husband, and begins intercourse with him. It is taboo. She says to her husband: "See, I am keeping my child company." ' But the 'play' of her companions does not matter, for intercourse *inter crura* does not make anyone heavy; it is the semen of a man in a woman's belly which makes her heavy, and her husband also, through contact with her.

The second medicine used at the puberty ritual is the *ikipiki*,[1] 789 made from the bark of certain small-leafed forest trees. The same species is used by many Nyakyusa families, but the identity of the person who provides it is very important, for it is identified with the blood (*ilapa*) of the family. In the puberty-marriage ritual the groom's mother provides the *ikipiki* with which the bride washes at her husband's (if she is a senior wife), at the rite of 'putting her in' (*ukwingenia*), at the second washing with her husband, at the shaving, and at the washing before jumping over fire. The same medicine is used each time. It is also sprinkled on the hearthstone she enters at the *ukwingenia*. The bride's own mother, however, provides the *ipiki* which is added to her porridge and buried under the hearth he day she first menstruates, and that used for washing her father, or brother, and mother at the *ukwingenia*. Also, should it be known that the bride is not a virgin, the mother-in-law will refuse o bring her *ikipiki* and it must be provided for *each rite by her mother*. The medicine is in itself awesome (*ntipa*). Kasitile's wife remarked one day that the bride slept with one of her maids in front of her, 'at her stomach', and one behind. We asked why. She replied: 'That *ikipiki* medicine! It's awesome. She 789 flees to be alone.' If someone has not given her the *ikipiki* to drink §94 and heavy ones cook food and give it to her she goes bad, she has periods without cessation.' The mother gives porridge with *ikipiki* to the girl and burns some under the hearth. That means may she be heavy in her stomach, for if heavy ones warm themselves at the fire in the house, she is in danger of going bad, she will have a continuous issue of blood.' 'If the *ikipiki* were not given, her period

[1] Uncertain: a tree of any species. *Ikipiki*: medicine made from the bark of certain species (see is a Mwanyanja) and used in the rituals of death, puberty, and birth. §28

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selish, Ma Ngonde

789 would never dry up.' Kasitile said: 'The work of the *undwile* and
● 894 *ikipili* are the same, they are together. The heavy ones will over-
step the girl, they are going to injure her so that she is barren,
constantly menstruating, with painful periods.' Lyandilelo, a
woman doctor, and exceptionally intelligent, said: 'The bride
[753] uses the *ikipili* medicine because she is empty (*bwasi*). So she
washes and eats bananas with *ikipili*. If she does not wash with it
she will have diarrhoea.'

789 The *ikipili* is also said to make a bride 'patient and polite'. 'If
577 the girl did not wash with the powdered medicine (*ikipili*) she
might be rude and proud when she went to her husband's home
and insult men there.' This was the statement of Mwakwelebeja,
an old commoner particularly well versed in matters of ritual, and
it was separately confirmed both by his wife and by Lyandilelo,
the woman doctor, but not everyone knew the connection. Mwai-
heja, the chief, who was present when Mwakwelebeja gave his
explanation, said: 'Really! I never knew that!' and his wives,
whom applied to, said: 'We don't know. The mothers have died'
(this though some of them were past middle age).

613 Angombwike identified the *ikipili* medicine with 'he blood of a
789 lineage and a bride's treatment with it with the union in marriage.
881 He said:

> As soon as a girl grows up people begin to think about her bearing children. They say: 'The mulwa *iron* is discharged, the blood for bearing children has come.' When they grind and brew beer in her honour, they do it in honour of her 'iron' [i.e. menstrual blood]. They give her medicines for disciplining her in the lineage of her husband. When the mothers hear they cry: 'Oum, oum, it has fruited! (*ifwete, ifwete, ifwete*).' The girl is given a bundle of the medicine, powdered, and is made to wear a belt of bark-cloth with the powder in it; the medicine is brought from the husband's house by his mothers. The husband, as it were, says: 'That is my blood [or semen] which I have sent to her.' The little bundle is the symbol (*ikimapile*) of the child she will bear, the belt with medicine on it means that the mulwa 'iron' belongs to the blood of that husband. The powdered medicine is brought by the husband's mother. A man's chief wife always has a bamboo flask or a pot full of medicine of their lineage (*ze kikulale kwabo*), powdered ready for use. If she dies it goes to the second wife, if the husband dies to the first wife of the eldest son, and by her it is distributed as need. The powdered medicine is the blood (*imbwalangwe*[1] *ya ilupa*).

[1] i.e. the powder made from the *ikipili*.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Malgonde

Mwakanjiki and his fellows, said that Lwembe is there (in the belly), they did not speak of Kyala. Did you not hear at Lubaga?[1] What did I ask for? 842/775

G. W.: You asked for a child!

KAETILE: Yes, I asked for a child. The menstrual blood is that which we discharge when lying together. I, the man, discharge, and the woman also discharges. If Kyala does not support us, then that blood degenerates, it becomes blood which flows out at the period. 842 841

G. W.: But the girl has periods before intercourse?

KAETILE: Yes, indeed, that is her blood. Does a woman not discharge? If she sleeps alone, as a bachelor, her blood just flows out, it does not create a child. In intercourse we try to discharge together. If I see that the woman is gasping I try to discharge with her. If I am gasping and wish to discharge, I wait for the woman. Yes, there is choice. We are all like that. But our fathers feared that if the woman discharges first she will bear a girl, and if I, the man, discharge first she will bear a boy! The shades of her fathers are there in the body of a girl, and we drive them away. It is like the case of a widow; the situations are just alike. We treat the girl and say: 'Now the woman is free.' At the eating of the bull we seem to say: 'You shade, be present and look upon us. This meat is for you to go away a little. May she bear children.' [832] 842 775

G. W.: So if the shade is in the girl she cannot bear children?

KAETILE: What can the shade go away with if you do not pray?

QUESTION: What happens if she washes and performs all the ritual with a man, a husband, and then leaves him, without having had full intercourse, for another man?

KAETILE: It does not matter. She is freed from the lineage of her father, she has moved to another lineage, so they do not treat her again. (*Ilike ndonde, ahwile akikolo kya gwise, ncamile akikolo ckingi, pajapo kwikwimbikaya kangi.*)

On another occasion Kaetile said that intercourse took place 'when Kyala and the shade: have gathered there. They come out in the woman and her belly sprouts [i.e. she conceives].'

Kaetile was not offering a personal interpretation when he talked about conception. Conversation with a number of people showed that the ideas he put forward were generally held. Mwandisi, the old blind chief, when asked where the blood to beget children came from, replied:

> It is from him who makes us all do things, Kyala and the shades together.

[1] Rituals are performed on behalf of the country at Lubaga. Kaetile was a hereditary priest. See *Ceremonial Rituals among the Nyakyusa* (forthcoming).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Seiya Mu Ngonde

§41 775 QUESTION: And menses?

MWANDOM: When the shades are angry a woman is constantly menstruating and does not bear a child; if they are not angry she conceives.

§33 §42 775 And on another occasion he said:

Lust comes from the shades; if they are angry with you you are impotent; you cannot beget a child.

His wife added: 'My husband says in his heart: "Let me go to my wife." It is the shade that makes him.'

One informant after another mentioned *both* Kyala (or Luembe) *and* the shades as being present in intercourse. Mwakionde, after [§43] talking of miscarriages being due to the anger of the shades, went on:

Kyala has created the bowel of desire. If a man is impotent we say Kyala has not given him breath to beget a child.

KAKUPU: If my child runs off with a man, whether a stranger or her husband, before she has reached puberty and I continue angry, if Kyala has helped me she does not bear a child. Then it is said 'her father was angry'. They come to me bringing the remaining marriage-cattle and I pray and she bears a child.

QUESTION: If the husband asked for her properly and deflowered her before puberty?

KAKUPU: There is no case, it was all right, even long ago. I said: 'Finish paying the cattle.' Perhaps he begged me, saying: 'I am poor, Father,' and I was satisfied.

§42 775 No pagan questions the power of the shades over fertility, and this power is believed to be exercised by the mother's lineage, as well as that of the father. Angombwike, the Christian, said:

[§44] The pagans fear that if they do not perform the puberty ritual when a girl reaches puberty, she will dry up. The blood will not come again even though she is not pregnant. Then, if her periods do not come for two or three months, like this, she will never bear a child. They say the shades are angry and have bound her fertility. And if she does not reach puberty at all, if menstruation does not begin, her father prays in the banana grove, saying: 'You, fathers, what are you angry about?' And if the girl's mother's brother is angry on account of cattle—perhaps her father has not given marriage-cattle properly for her mother—he, the mother's brother, binds a wisp of the litter (*ulufwede*) from her puberty ritual in the loft, then the girl will not bear a child. Inquiry is made of a diviner who says: 'The mother's brother has bound her.' The father takes a cow to him and says: 'I am sorry, I have done wrong. I

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the women has constantly to handle it and if, just after intercourse, she has to do this without time to wash first, then the child, we think, will get diarrhoea or grow thin. Women[1] always wash very carefully in the mornings after intercourse, both for the sake of the children and the husband. If the woman touches food unwashed after intercourse we think it will make her husband sick, and he will get unhealthily fat. If a child is old enough to play by itself . . . so that the wife can wash properly before attending to it, then it is all right for the couple to have intercourse, but not for the woman to become pregnant again yet. She should not do that until the child is weaned![2]

Contact with menstrual blood or a menstruating woman is held to be dangerous to a man, more particularly to a warrior, hence there is an absolute taboo on intercourse during menstruation (for five to eight days) and restrictions on cooking for a man. A menstruating woman does not blow up the fire on which her husband's food is cooking, or squeeze the food to test whether it is ready, or scrape ash off bananas or sweet potatoes she has roasted, or serve food, for 'her breath comes from her belly and it is dirty; her belly is dirty on account of the menstrual blood. All her body is dirty. She does not wash. When she washes, you, the husband, think that the flow has dried up and catch hold of her!' So a woman who is menstruating fans the fire instead of blowing it, and calls a co-wife or a child to serve the food she has cooked. She does not even crouch over the fire to warm herself, lest she contaminate it; and she neither uses the common calabash cup for drinking nor scoops water from the household water jar with her hand, but fashions a cup for herself from a leaf, or has her own little water-pot. She avoids passing behind or shaking hands with a man; she avoids a new-born infant; she keeps well away from cattle, neither passing behind them when they are in the homestead nor clearing out dung from the byre; she avoids touching medicines or entering the house of a doctor; and she avoids eating pumpkin or pumpkin leaves, or picking them. These taboos are enforced lest she injure men or infants or cattle or medicines, for 'she is dirty' and her 'dirt' is thought to cause purging and to rot medicines, and she,

[1] The 'Old' is on the wife because she cleanses her husband with her hands.

[2] Coitus interruptus is practised until the mother is ready to conceive again. 'Formerly it was taboo to make a woman pregnant before her previous child was four or five years old. The husband's anxiety made a great case about it. The child must know how to run before a younger brother was born. We said: "How can a woman carry two children?" Now she becomes pregnant again when the elder is two. Of those who bore again before that it is said: "They kill the elder child." ' (Summary of Sanjayo, an elderly man.)

2: Wilson E-5 (193--1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for her part, fears lest themedicines with which men protect themselves and their cattle may injure her, causing her menstrual flow to 'last a whole month'. She avoids pumpkins lest she suffer from a small growth in the vagina called a 'pumpkin' and bear sickly children. 'It is said that this disease is due to women picking or eating pumpkins when they are menstruating . . . the menstrual blood resembles the pumpkin and they fight together.'

If a wife fails to warn her husband that she is menstruating and permits him to have intercourse with her, he will be furiously angry and may even divorce her saying: 'You are soiling me, get out!'

Any contact with a menstruating woman is believed to cause him suffering. 'His legs become swollen and painful and he is very tired.' 'Strength leaves the man.' 'He sits back weakly; he has no speed in running.' Kaitle explained:

> The danger of menstrual blood is that it is filthy; it is an illness. Formerly, if a foolhardy man took his wife when she was menstruating, when he went to war, he fell. We others said: 'Why were you vanquished? Did you enter who your wife was unwell? Do you not know that it is a very serious illness?'

Angumbwike added:

> Formerly, the fear was greater than it is to-day. If a man made love to a menstruating woman they said he would fall ill of *ndola*, an illness for which there was no remedy. His belly ached and his body grew red; he just lay down. His face swelled and his legs ached. Now pagans are not so much afraid of menstruation; they have listened to the Christians.

Asked why sleeping with a menstruating woman should make a man weary, informants linked the danger from menstrual blood with the danger that lowers a husband when his wife commits adultery, and the 'blood' of two men mixes in the woman's womb. Menstrual blood is not so dangerous to a husband as the 'blood' of another man, but yet it is 'filthy'. One of Mwakionde's wives said:

> My husband gets tired if he sleeps with me when I am menstruating because he has given us our menstrual blood; it is that which has entered into me; there are two bloods, his and mine.

Mwambopera, a village headman, elaborated further:

> If my wife has committed adultery and cooks my food or draws water for me, then my legs are weary and I also have diarrhoea. If she

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

scrapes bananas when she is menstruating, or conceals that she is menstruating and we have intercourse, then my legs are tired, but I do not have diarrhoea, because it is my blood; she is my relative (*ekewe gwange*), she is my wife, her blood and mine are one. But when she has lain with a man in the bush there is his blood; I have diarrhoea to get rid of it; the food which she cooks for me is dirty, she has made it filthy, I have diarrhoea and get rid of it, she overstepe me. And also if she has concealed that she is menstruating and we have intercourse, I am overstepped. To overstep is to insult—but since the blood is mine I do not get rid of it. That menstrual blood is very dirty! 641 753

If I have always been all right and strong, and I find that I get tired walking and hoeing, I think: 'What is it? See, always I was all right, and now I am very tired.' My friends say: 'It is women, you have lain with one who was menstruating.' And if I eat food and start diarrhoea they say: 'It's women, they have committed adultery.' My wives deny it. We go to divine, and one is caught; if she agrees that's that, but if she denied it, formerly we went to the poison ordeal. The woman drank alone, not I. If she vomited then I was defeated, the woman was good, but if it caught her then her father paid one cow. [27]

What we feared greatly in the old days, Mwaipeja, was war. We feared to die. For if my fellow in the village committed adultery with my wife then, when we went to war, we both died; if we went to fight at Mwangomo's [a neighbouring chiefdom], both he and I would be speared. Then people were astonished and said: 'Why, have so-and-so and so-and-so died? Perhaps they both lay with the same woman.' For this reason we drove adulterers from the village, and for this reason the chief was angry with an adulterer, saying: '"This is my place! Why do you kill my people!"' 684 721

Others confirmed Mwamboputa's statement that adultery led to death in battle:

Formerly, when there was war, if your fellow made love to your wife in secret and you all went to fight, you died on one day on account of the woman.

Mwandisi linked the disquiet in a man's belly with the anger of the shades seated there. 837 783

If a woman has gone behind the house with another man and comes and cooks food for her husband, blowing up the fire and cooking for him, then the food turns round in his stomach and says: 'Is this my kinsman?' She made friends with others behind the house and cooked for them [i.e. committed adultery]. So then the man develops diarrhoea because the food turned round in his stomach. He falls down on the road, he falls down in battle.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

die. . . . People feared very much because the Lwembe had medicines for smearing on his body, which could cause rain, sickness, food, ulcers, anything.

And they feared lest they might get ulcers if they killed one of Lwembe's men 'on the road'—*i.e.* a traveller. In short, Lwembe's mystical power afforded the first feeble beginnings of a 'king's peace' in a land of warring chiefdoms, where strangers were fair game.

(c) Mbande

Mbande is a hill on the plain of north Nyasaland with a commanding view of the surrounding country and well suited to defence. The west side is precipitous and below the scarp edge there used to be a marsh; to the north the hill is protected by a wide reach of the Lukulu river. It is a sacred place and for many generations was the home of the 'divine king', the Kyungu. Like the Lwembe he was the living representative of a hero, and was selected by a group of hereditary nobles from one of two related lineages, the office alternating (if suitable candidates were available) between the two. They sought a big man,[1] one who had begotten children and whose sons were already married, not a young man for, the nobles said, 'young men always want war, and destroy the country'. He must be a man of wisdom (*gwa mahale*) and generous in feeding his people.

The Kyungu's life was governed by taboos even more rigorous than those surrounding the Lwembe. He must not fall ill, or suffer a wound, or even scratch himself and bleed a little, for his ill health, or his blood falling on the earth would bring sickness to the whole country. 'Men feared when Kyungu's blood fell on the ground, they said, "It is his life".' 'If he had a headache his wives (if they loved him) told him not to mention it, they hid his illness; but if the nobles entered and found him ill they dug the grave and put him in it, saying, "He is the ruler (*ainu*), it's taboo for him to be ill". Then he thought: "Perhaps it is so" (with a gesture of resignation).'

Great precautions were taken to preserve his health. He lived in a separate house with his powerful medicines. His food was prepared by boys below the age of puberty but a menstruating woman, or a youth who had lain with a woman, should touch it and so bring sickness upon him; and his numerous wives were

[1] Upendule ainu. It implies both big physically and important.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

for his own son whom he begot saying: "He is my own flesh and blood", then the men of the village will pass judgement.' 626

This 'breath' is thought also to fall on a chief who is harsh towards his people, or who acts unconstitutionally, as in refusing to make a 'coming out' ceremony for his sons when his village headmen advise him; and it falls on a village headman who treats a junior in office unfairly, or is overbearing to his men. Both pagan and Christian informants insisted that fear of 'the breath of men' was a powerful sanction in the traditional system against arbitrary rule. Asagene, a Christian deacon, himself raised the subject one day and said: 'Headmen and chiefs—pagans—would be hard on their people and seize their goods if they (the headmen and chiefs) did not fear witchcraft. Witchcraft is like God to them.'

At every point the solidarity of the village is emphasized; the neighbours themselves are held to be insulted by the bad behaviour of a son—'their son'—to one of their fellows, or by a woman 'soiling their son', or by an heir failing to recognize their concern in the inheritance of a deceased fellow. For example, Mwakanyamale had begotten no child for ten years, and this was attributed to the fact that, after quarrelling with his elder brother and refusing to attend his funeral, he had not admitted his fault to the men of the village when he came back and killed a cow. [842] His impotence was attributed to their curse.

As we have seen, recovery is thought to depend (i) upon the wrong-doer reforming and providing the men of the village, which is angry, with a bull or beer for a feast, acknowledging guilt as he does so; and (ii) upon the men of the village admitting their anger and responsibility for his illness, and expressing good will. 'If a daughter-in-law should have looked on her father-in-law by mistake she makes beer and sends it to her father-in-law. He calls his friends and admits: "Indeed I was angry with her for she looked at me", and the others say: "Yes, indeed, let her child get fat".' (*vide* pp. 235-8). 783 626

It may well be asked, is there any objective reality at the root of this belief in 'the breath of men'? Does the wrong-doer, fearing his neighbours, really become paralysed or impotent? It is possible that a sinner may sometimes develop these symptoms as the result of fear. We do not know, what is certain is that impotence, sterility, lingering illnesses including paralysis, and sickly 626 783

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

626 753 children, are not uncommon; that the penalty of sin is believed often to be delayed, and an illness may be attributed to a wrong committed many years previously; and lastly, that the victim of retribution may be one of several individuals. Parents are thought to be punished by the sickness of their children as well as in their own persons; in a case of sexual transgression it may be either partner who suffers; in the case of a neglected death ritual it may be either the heir or the widow on whose behalf it should have been performed (cf. Document, pp. 206, 236–7). When a woman bears a child after her son is married to a girl who has reached puberty, it is thought that she may fall ill herself, or her husband may be cursed 'because he had agreed to his son marrying a grown girl before the son's mother had grown old'; or the son may have no children because he eloped with his wife, or has 'married a grown girl when his father had only agreed that he should be betrothed to a little girl'.

[849]

626 754 869 A lively fear of witchcraft and of the 'breath of men' is inculcated in Nyakyusa children when quite young. Mwaikambo, a Christian, explained that boys learn about witchcraft from their senior play-mates when they are out herding, and in the hut at night in the boys' village, when tales are told. 'Then one fears in one's stomach and thinks: "Father! perhaps I, also, will be eaten by witches."' Ambilikile, another Christian informant, confirmed this, saying: 'We learn about witches from comments on cases of sickness, and from tales. When someone has died people say: "He was a witch, we found a python." Or perhaps of another it is said that "the witches had eaten him". In these tales the witches are said to have eaten people, or speared them, by means of witchcraft, so that the victim dies. We are also told how the witches fight in the power of witchcraft with their fellows from other villages, and how they fly on their pythons. What we hear always makes witchcraft awe-inspiring. I feared it very much.'

We had ample evidence that for most Nyakyusa the fear of witchcraft and of 'the breath of men' continues throughout life, and that it directly affects behaviour. It is, perhaps, the main sanction for moral behaviour within the village.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

12. INHERITANCE OF WITCHCRAFT

Bwilile (elderly pagan man).

Question: 'How does a mother give her child witchcraft? How does a father give a child witchcraft?' 754

'It starts when a woman is menstruating; then she begins to give a child her cunning (*ubugalagala*). It is said that when a woman is menstruating she should avoid certain things (*akatile*), particularly she should not pass behind people. For when a woman is menstruating a child has begun in her belly. People know that a certain woman is cunning when they see that she does not avoid people at certain times. Then they say: "Friends, this woman is spoiling the child. Why does she not observe the avoidances? Look, we have seen that she is fruitful (meaning that she is menstruating)." For it is that dirt which creates witchcraft. When a woman does not avoid, then she gives the child in her belly witchcraft. It is from this that witchcraft really comes. When a woman is not cunning, then she always observes the avoidance taboos; she does not go about anyhow. From of old it has been thought important that a menstruating woman should observe certain avoidances. A woman avoids certain things because she fears to spoil the child in her belly. When a woman does not avoid these things, the dirt, that is to say the menstrual blood, goes to where the child is. That is how she spoils the child. On this account women fear to go about anyhow, to pass behind people; they fear those medicines with which we men smear our bodies, all those for good fortune and others. Especially they fear a fierce medicine, that of fire. For there is a medicine with which some people smear themselves which causes a person to faint if the user strikes him once with the flat of his hand. It is this medicine which spoils the child in the belly of a menstruating woman if she passes behind a man. This is the lineage of witchcraft. It comes especially from this, from that dirty little thing (i.e. woman) who does not observe the avoidance rules. Hence, we say she has given her child witchcraft.

'A father gives his child witchcraft because the man's blood goes into the woman, for a woman is a pocket.' [42]

Ntulesongwe confirmed the above statement of the origin of witchcraft, and explained:

'A woman does not menstruate when she is pregnant, but some menstrual blood remains in her, which may "spoil" her. We all think that when a woman is menstruating some of the blood remains in her

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

woman has been angry with her husband, and perhaps quarrelled with him, and has sworn at her husband by "the things" (i.e. the sex organs) of his mother, or perhaps his father, the child she bears will fall sick with *ingoto*. It becomes very thin and does not grow. The disease is recognized when a child is very ill from infancy, and it is very thin but does not die. Then they say it is *ingoto*. Sometimes they inquire of a diviner and the diviner reveals that it is ill of *ingoto*.

'I remember a certain woman who was married to a man, *Akwyambe*. This man had married two wives, and she of whom I speak was the third. This woman was very proud (*nomutinga fijo*) and was constantly quarrelling with her husband and her co-wives. When she quarrelled with her husband he got angry and beat her. Then she swore at him horribly, about "the things" of his mother or father. She said: "You! So and so of your father! So and so of your mother!" Then this woman bore a girl child and when it had grown a little it became very ill. It was very ill for a whole year. When it began to recover she quarrelled again with her husband and swore at him insultingly, and the child got ill again. So her husband (the father of the child) and she went to inquire of a diviner. The divination revealed *ingoto*. It said: "Your wife has sworn at you about the things of your mother when you were quarrelling." When they got home the husband drove his wife away, saying: "Go to your father!" When she got home the woman told her father everything and he took millet and gave it to her to make beer with which to pay. So she brewed beer and brought it to her husband, saying: "I did wrong, my husband." Her husband called his fellows and they all drank the beer and expressed their anger (*ukwijaja*) and said: "May the child recover and grow well!"

'This happened when I was 13 or 14 years old. The girl (who was ill) is still alive; her body shows signs of not having grown properly.

'The disease comes from "the breath of men" because these insults were made publicly and others heard them. I do not think anything would happen if the insults were private, I am not sure.'

A curse of neighbours for neglect of rituals.
Lugumbwalile (young Christian man).

'If I do not do the (death) ritual properly for my father the death of my children is due to the case against me, the dispute with relatives and the curse of people—non-relatives (*mugwa ndubwen, ifigwa ndundu*).

'Sometimes the villagers (*ababwa*) bind a man's loins so that he cannot beget children with his wife. They are both sterile. If widows-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

made, the doctor in Selye, is a case of this. He had quarrelled with his older brother and did not come to bury him. Later he came and killed a cow, but did not tell the men of the village (*ewaflowa*) properly, and they were angry, and so for the last ten years he has had no child. His wives do not conceive at all. That is due to the curse of men (*dipuse fye bande*).'

A curse for 'soiling a man'.
Angombwike (young Christian man).

Angombwike cited a case of sterility attributed to *dipuse* because a woman had 'soiled' a man.

'She had run away three times with X. Finally her husband forced X to eat her filth and drink her urine. X was very ill but recovered. She bore no further children on her return to her husband. She went to Lyandolobo (the informant's mother) for medicine but the latter said she could not help as it was *dipuse*. Her neighbours were shocked because she had "soiled the child of someone". Also the neighbours of X's father were shocked. Their "breath" taken effect because she visits frequently in their village, going to see a grandparent. They say: "This is the woman who soiled our child."'

N.B.—It is the woman who is held to have suffered, not her husband or X.

A curse due to incest.
Gwase (young Christian man).

'A, son of B (a chief), made love to his father's sister X. X's husband, C, had married (*ubwabwili*) a full sister, Y, of A. A lay with X. A had syphilis and X and her husband C both fell sick of it. C asked X where the disease came from. She accused A. C complained to B. B was very angry and all men were astonished at it. It is forbidden. How could he have intercourse with his mother, the sister of his father! B took four of A's cows and gave them to C. People cursed (*ubugwa*) A, who was very ill for two years. His eye came out of its socket. He went to a mission hospital.

'The villagers (*ewaflowa*) gathered at B's and said: "This sickness of A is because of that case of his when he lay with X. It is because of that he is sick." So B went to A and told him to bring four cows, which he did. B called his people and brothers and sisters and said: "Bless your child." They swore and swore at him, and they caught hold of the woman and swore, saying: "How did you agree to sleep with your

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Colyn, Michael.

identification of the mourners with the corpse and the separation of the shade from both of them. 'What they do to the participants they do to the deceased. . . . If they are not cleansed he is still muddy. . . . We throw away the corpse, the contamination of death, into the river . . . we drive the shade away off our bodies to join his fellows . . . we separate the corpse and the shade.' Thirdly, bringing back the shade as a beneficent spirit into the home. 'In the ritual we tell the shade to go away and join his fellows, and then to come back with them and warm himself by the fire in our house. . . . At first the shade is in our bodies, we cast him out . . . at first it is as if we were still holding the corpse in our arms, but we throw the corpse away into the river . . . the shade we bring back into our house.'

Fourthly, a mixing of the actions of a madman in eating excrement as a prophylactic against behaviour of that sort. The dead, if not separated from the living, bring madness upon them, and swallowing madness is a protection against it.

Fifthly, the corpse and faeces are identified: 'The corpse is filth, it is excrement. And so when a madman for whom they have not performed the ritual eats filth that is the corpse, he is still holding it, they have not done the ritual for him.'

Sixthly, the shades are identified with women and weals and their control over potency and fertility is recognized. The Nyakyusa think that they are always present in sexual intercourse, and symbols of sexual intercourse are interpreted as a means of driving out the shade from the participants' bodies.

Seventhly, 'the food which he loved' is symbolically 'given to the shade' of the man who has just died and he is urged to be satisfied: 'You, shade, do not think there was little food at your ritual. . . . The food which we have eaten you have eaten . . . do not create hunger.'

Eighthly, the shade is acknowledged as a kinsman by eating with him food and beer mixed with *digili*—the symbol of agnatic kinship—before he is driven away.

Lastly, a dead man is formally replaced by his heir, a woman by her sister or her brother's daughter.

These conceptions are expressed in the following texts which are given as they were recorded by Godfrey Wilson. No attempt has been made to systematize Lastile's or Mwandisi's arguments, but the statements made during numerous sessions have been placed in sequence, and are expressed only by dots.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa
Selga, MuNgonde

lentil is the shade, the millet is the shade, the pumpkin-seed is the 775
shade. The doctor takes them away home and eats them, that means 768
that the shades have gone away. The words they say: 'Ours, ours! We §33
marvel at the thing!' mean: 'The semen is ours, the shades have supported him, they have given us the semen, they have not bound it.' For if the shades are angry they bind him and the semen does not come. . . . If the heir and his dead father (or brother) were on bad terms then, although the ritual is correctly done, yet still the shades will bind his semen at the end of the ritual. Fertility (*indaga*) does not belong to the shades but to Kyala, but if the shade is angry he binds it. [942]

There are three symbols: the banana is the corpse and the seed is the shade. It is the filth which madmen catch hold of, it is the faeces which they eat. And the banana is the body of the man and the seed is his semen. Eating is sexual intercourse. It is this he has done during his illness. It is to send him away and say that we are about to put another in his homestead. It is the body and semen of him who has died. Also when a woman has died the husband eats . . . it [the banana and seed] is what we did. . . .

The seed is the shade, and it is the blood for creating a person [i.e. the semen] because the shade and the semen are brothers.[1]

Yes, they are intermingled, all are together in the ritual: the corpse, and the shade, and the body of the man [i.e. his penis] and the blood [semen] and the filth of madness; all are intermingled. You understand, Mwaipaja (G. W.), you are a priest now, you are a real priest. . . .

When they shake up the millet and lentils and pumpkin-seeds at the hour when he has finish d coitus with the women it also has a double symbolism (*kuja ja ifuwa ifili*): the seed is the blood [semen]—Ours, ours—and it is the shade who has gone. Also at puberty it is like this. . . .

Those who say the *ikipili* is one and the same for birth, puberty and the death ritual are right. It is one only. . . . The *ikipili* is our blood, it is kept in the house of the senior wife. It pertains both to men and to the shades, for when we marry we do a ritual with it, so the shade says: 'I have eaten it during my life, I was born with it (for it went into his stomach), I married a woman with it (we wash and shave our hair with it at marriage), now that I am dead they perform the ritual with it.' It is one and the same. The *ikipili* is our intention.[2] It is one and the same in all lineages.

One day at a funeral roasted bananas were brought. A man 764
started scraping the ash off his with a spear. Kaitile asked him: 'Do you scrape bananas?' He answered: 'Yes, but if there were the liver in the house we would avoid doing so.'

[1] cf. Chikangu: semen; kyangu: pumpkin-seed.
[2] Chala ibaa ishale: 'the intention of the lineage'; the large intention.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Malinde

QUESTION: The banana and the pumpkin-seeds?

MWANDISI: These are the ritual which we—I the man, and she the woman—perform at the end, they are the sexual intercourse. The pumpkin-seed and the lentil and the millet are the blood of the man, the banana is his procreative power (*ubugo jale*). The pumpkin-seed ritual is important—when we have finished it then I go to my wife and do not fear her, but Lubabelo begins. Before the pumpkin-seed ritual it is completely taboo.

QUESTION: And the beer?

MWANDISI: That is not important, but the pumpkin-seed ritual is. But when a man has died then his wife must not approach the heir until the beer ritual.

QUESTION: Then the lust for copulation always comes from the shades?

MWANDISI: Yes, desire comes from the shades. If they are angry you are impotent and cannot beget a child; and sometimes also you are impotent because the umbilical cord (*ululele*) has fallen on your mother.

MWANDISI'S WIFE: When my husband says in his heart: 'I shall go to my wife', that comes from the shades.

QUESTION: The umbilical cord?

MWANDISI'S WIFE: It is completely taboo for it to fall on the loins, then the child will not develop, it will be sterile and not bear (or beget) a child. And the mother herself will not bear again, she will not conceive again. . . . A woman cries a great deal with the pain in her belly until the cord comes away: when it has come away then she is filled with wonder and does not cry.[1]

MWANDISI: Pumpkin-seeds are used by us and the people of Selya; the Kukwe perform the ritual with beans, and the people of Ngonde with fish and beer. . . .

QUESTION: Why do the heir and wife appear to refuse when caught in the ritual?

MWANDISI: Because someone has died. Should they rejoice therefore? If they rejoice it seems as if they wished their relative to die.

QUESTION: Do they fear the dead will harm them if they appear to rejoice?

MWANDISI: No, they fear those above [i.e. the living] lest they laugh at them. They are ashamed. But sometimes a woman really refuses. She fights and fights, and struggles and struggles, and says: 'No.' Her friends (the women) hit her and put her in the house, then when she has come out of the house she runs off, she flees.

QUESTION: The ashes and the *Gnepinogyfus* creeper?

MWANDISI: They are signs of mourning, they give them to the

[1] The umbilical cord, *ululele*, is literally the 'cord of weeping'.

Nyakyusa
Gelya, Malgonda

764 *Mbumba kalyani mapembulo ku kuyuka, ku kapitile abayuka ndulubaga:*
775 *kanga ndumyapitile ndulubaga dingili? Abayuka ku kalundaga bilajimu; pajo kanga tumulile pa kundila mumbu. Lali bilumundayo kanga kalaya ndu kulila?*)

●643 What we do comes from the shades and from Kyala himself. The
131 blood is theirs and his together. Those who create (*ndulundu*) a child say: 'I am just eating at a woman,' but Kyala creates a child! If Kyala and the shades do not 'cook' [i.e. do not cause desire] you will do nothing, the penis is flaccid, but if Kyala has 'cooked' then you really do something, your heart (*ndumbula*) is full of desire. Always the shades are there and we drive them away, they are there and we drive them away. . . .

775 A shade is reincarnated in the body of his child (*Dayuka dayuka ndu mumbul gwa mumulu*). . . .

764 Passing the basket of pumpkin-seeds, millet, and lentils between the
775 legs and on to the head and throwing to one side means: 'Here between the legs there is work, may they go out in innumerous, and from the head where we dream, may they go out also.' Because in the ritual we say: 'Let them come into the body' at first, then we drive them away. Rubbing ourselves in the earth and passing millet between the legs means: 'May they come';* throwing millet and so on to one side it is to drive them away, that they may go out.

Questioner: Which shade do you drive away?

Informant: He who has just died, we drive him away.

Questioner: What about the first ancestor?

Informant: He is there at their place [the place of the shades], we drove him away long ago, he just receives him [the newly deceased].

Questioner: Why the pumpkin-seeds in the harvest?

Informant: It is the season (*ndulunga*) for begetting children. . . .

Questioner: Do the shades always come when a man dies?

Informant: Yes, they always come, they receive their fellow. Yes, even though he has died from sorcery they come and receive him, and even though he has died from witchcraft they come, the shades receive him, and if it is from illness he has died they also come. There is no
764 death without the shades, they always come to receive their fellow.

When the witches have 'eaten' someone the shades come to receive
764 him. No, the witches eat him alone, but the shades receive him. Some-
775 one may get up in the morning and say: 'I dreamed they ate me and I
764 was with the shades!' Then he is about to die. Sometimes someone
128 dreams and says: 'In the night I was in the land of the shades with so-and-so, I left him there, I escaped myself and came home.' Then his friend is about to die.

766 If you do not perform the ritual you go mad (*kalyandula dingili*) or
775 perhaps you get very thin, and are unable to die, you are ailing and do

* i.e. the participants identify themselves with the deceased.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Ecklat

as in front, we men, and the women is also round. If you have not the shade in you (*shango mwaka*)*, then you are sterile, you are impotent, you do not copulate with women; we say that the shades have brooded over you. Why do they not rouse him to go to women? He just looks at them. Because the shade rouses within a man and says: 'Hu!' It rouses a man to copulate with a woman. If it has brooded on him then it does not rouse him; it is within him, it does not wish to come out.

Questioner: Why do you let the hair grow in the death ritual?

Mwanzumbe: The hair is very important, it's very important.

Mwanzumbe identified growing hair after spearing a man, and after the birth of twins and later shaving, with growing hair and shaving in the death ritual.

Questioner: So letting the hair grow at an ordinary death is part of the ritual?

Mwanzumbe: It [the hair] is the corpse's. We have not yet driven him away. At the shaving we drive him off.

Syungu (wife of Mwanzumbe) told me that stones were placed between the tom, not only of the participants in the death ritual, but also of a bride (*mwanga*)† and that the stones are children (*mwana ko lomo*). The girl should bear six or ten children to her husband.

'But', I said, 'at the death ritual you throw away the corpse, the shade.'

Syungu answered: 'Yes, it is so, children are born by the power of the shades (*mwaka ga lumbu*).'

Mwanzumbe himself, when asked about this, said: 'The stones are the shade, we throw him away so that when he has gone the girl may bear children.'

Sumuni: When a girl does not bear children we say: 'Perhaps the shades are angry, the husband has not finished giving marriage-cattle.'

Questioner: And madness?

Sumuni: If she goes mad we say, if we have not treated her: 'We have neglected the ritual, we have not treated her!' The girl runs about aimlessly, she smears herself with filth. But when we have treated her and she goes mad then we say: 'Perhaps Kyala has deserted us, we nothing remains, we have treated her.'

* He said both the phrases *shada lujo mwaka* (to be without the shade) and *mpaka dumulaka* (the shade breaks us too) for the same phenomenon.

† *Mwanga* a girl who has reached puberty but has not yet borne a child, not undergoing the puberty-marriage ritual (*mwanga*).

2: Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1937 F3117 Ngonde F3117
Nyakyusa
Fulton.

even delicacies in the house. And at the inheritance, when I have in- 764
herited the women, they go to their own homes with a bull if I am
wealthy, or perhaps three shillings. They go back to their fathers with
the dirt on them—*ingwale!*

Question: Where does the *ingwale* come from when you do not wear
dirt?

Mwaulu: Ryala is startled and you gasp with *ingwale*, your breath
is short.

Question: Does the husband also go to his place?

Mwaulu: Yes, he always returns to his father's.

Question: Why the two leaves representing a man and a woman or
the hitting the ground and saying: 'Gula, gula'?

Mwaulu: Because we are two [holding up two fingers], a man
and a woman. Formerly when someone died or a bachelor died took a
leaf of the sweet banana and said: 'It is your wife.' They buried it with
him, saying: 'Go to the land of the shades because you were never
married.'

Question: What does the cooking or shaving mean?

Mwaulu: It is one with eating the plantain stem. We cook them
meaning, may they escape, and not take rubbish from the rubbish
heap. And at the shaving of the hair we drive him away, saying: 'Go
to your fathers.' He has been alone, he was on the road, may he go.

Pendaso the Chief admitted that the wearing of leaves and 242
bananas in the rituals of death and of puberty were symbols of
fertility (*ibwanyile fye ishaje*); the plantain represents the penis, the
sweet banana represents the clitoris, 'for in the old days they were
leaves only, no cloths'. In the puberty ritual the wearing of leaves
and bananas is the same. It is a sign of fertility: 'the ritual is now
finished and the girl is someone's wife.'

Mwaijumba, who provided the beer of inheritance for the ritual 273
of Njobe Nani, explained to us as he drank: 'We drink beer to 764
drive away our friend. It means that everything is finished:
"Come to your house frequently now. It is finished! May the
fathers [i.e. the other shades] receive him! May he not return!
We have poured out this beer for you, it is finished."'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selig, Hellmann

again as acknowledgment of kinship. 'If she washed outside it would mean that she was not the daughter of her father.'

The two fresh leaves of plantain and sweet banana on which the officiant places her soiled bark-cloth, and on top of which she kneels to eat bananas are, as already stated, symbols of male and female. Everyone understood this. Fewer people were aware of the symbolism of eating the bananas, but Kamtilo and one or two others were fully conscious of it and forthright in discussion. He said:

> At the 'putting her in' (*ahwingwile*) the mothers-in-law bring a new bark-cloth and dress her in it; the old one is thrown away on the litter. They sits together bananas and digale medicine which she receives. Don't you understand? They wear her. The plantain is the symbol of the man, of his penis, we are covering her, may she 'cook well' for her husband (i.e. be proficient in intercourse), may she bear children. She sees on that bark-cloth which means may the blood go to make children, this is your husband. Eating is a symbol (*ikimwpile*) of sexual intercourse. She sees the plantain, meaning she has intercourse with her husband.

He connected this with the admonition at the end of the ritual. When she eats the bananas nothing is said, it is only implied, but at the drinking of beer they teach her, saying: 'Look after your husband well; if you are sweeping the house and he catches hold of you don't be startled, accept him, and catch hold of him also. . . . Men when they do this begin children.'[1]

The second washing of the groom's, which is performed for every wife and not only for a senior one, is incorporated in a closing ritual. In the morning the officiant calls the husband and wife and says: 'Come and wash now and clean off the filth.'

Shaving is both a purification and a sign of the completion of the ritual. 'The hair of a girl who has reached puberty is the filthiness of puberty, of the menstrual blood which she produces then. She throws it away.' Mwakwelebeja and his wife said: 'The shaving is to show that she has awakened to puberty (*ahwinjile ahwinga*). During the ritual she did not shave. We perform the rite of shaving that she may begin to shave again, and to let her sweat herself with brown ointment. It is like a burial. If a man's close relative dies he does not shave or wash.' Mwalinjo said: 'The shaving is to show that the *ahwinga* ritual is finished.'

Clearing the litter which is 'filthy', contaminated with the menstrual blood of the girl, is also a symbol of purification. The washing in a leaf basin into which digale medicine had been

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F'317 Ngonde F'317
Nyakyusa
Selig, Hobgood

child at her husband's.' Neglect to kill the bull may result in sterility. Mwamba, a middle-aged man, said:

If we officiants, the mothers of the girl, have not eaten, and the father also, the girl will not bear a child, these people are angry and the shades are angry, they (the shades) help them (the living). And if you do not perform the other customs of the lineage the shades are angry, the fathers and the mothers. They say: 'What! Have you not treated the child?'

Mwakisonde, the doctor, explained:

When a woman conceives and has a miscarriage, it is sinde, the shades are angry. Perhaps if we have not killed the bull of puberty we buy one. The shades are angry, saying: 'Why have we not received a libation of blood poured on the ground for our grandchild? They have done wrong towards us, we who created them.' The girl does not bear a child because pouring out the blood of a beast (bull or cow) is to pray (*ukwa ililaga fye wonse ku lusipani*).

Mwakabela, our neighbour, said:

If we have not eaten the bull of puberty, they bewitch us (*ifisondaga*), the child does not bear a child. Our fathers in the lineage bewitch us, they say: 'We have not eaten the puberty meat.' Then, later on, the kinsfolk bringing the bull and we eat, and the (*je mwapi*) meat we throw in the banana grove, and we pray and pray and the girl conceives.

The fertility of the girl is believed to depend upon driving away the shade of her father's lineage from her body. We have already quoted (p. 98) the prayer: 'There is the meat! I have eaten the food of others, *come eat a little*, may she bear a child at her husband's.' Mwanilage explained this conception:

Those of old said: 'We drive away Kyala and the shades, may she bear at her husband's.' She moves to others, to a different lineage. Where that lineage rise up from the dead (*kipakuga ifilolo fifile*). If we do not treat the girl she will not bear a child at her husband's.

To understand this it is necessary to understand the Nyakyusa theory of conception. It is held that sexual desire in both men and women comes from Kyala and the shades, and without their support a man is impotent, a woman barren. Kasitile was quite explicit on the matter:

Kyala is in the belly. He causes the blood of a woman which forms a child to flow and the blood of the man also. We say that Kyala is in the belly; he watches over us at the conception of a child. But our fathers,

2: Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa
Selys, Hallgonde

Mwakanjiki and his fellows, said that Lwembe is there (in the belly), they did not speak of Kyala. Did you not hear at Lubaga?* What did I ask for?

G. W.: You asked for a child!

Kaitula: Yes, I asked for a child. The menstrual blood is that which we discharge when lying together. I, the man, discharge, and the woman also discharges. If Kyala does not support us, then that blood degenerates, it becomes blood which flows out at the period.

G. W.: But the girl has periods before intercourse?

Kaitula: Yes, indeed, that is her blood. Does a woman not discharge? If she sleeps alone, as a bachelor, her blood just flows out, it does not create a child. In intercourse we try to discharge together. If I see that the woman is gasping I try to discharge with her. If I see gasping and wish to discharge, I wait for the woman. Yes, there is choice. We are all like that. But our fathers feared that if the woman discharges first she will bear a girl, and if I, the man, discharge first she will bear a boy! The shades of her fathers are there in the body of a girl, and we drive them away. It is like the case of a widow; the situations are just alike. We wear the girl and say: 'Now the woman is free.' At the eating of the bull we come to say: 'You shade, be present and look upon us. This meat is for you to go away a little. May she bear children.'

G. W.: So if the shade is in the girl she cannot bear children?

Kaitula: What can the shade go away with if you do not pray?

Question: What happens if she washes and performs all the ritual with a man, a husband, and then leaves him, without having had full intercourse, for another man?

Kaitula: It does not matter. She is freed from the lineage of her father, she has moved to another lineage, so they do not count her again. (*Ilika ulumbe, ulumbe ulilule lya gwiso, ucumile ulilule ilingi, pepepe kulilumulilinge lungi.*)

On another occasion Kaitula said that intercourse took place 'when Kyala and the shades have gathered there. They come out in the woman and her belly sprouts [i.e. she conceives].'

Kaitula was not offering a personal interpretation when he talked about conception. Conversations with a number of people showed that the ideas he put forward were generally held. Mwandai, the old blind chief, when asked where the blood to beget children came from, replied:

It is from him who makes us all do things, Kyala and the shades together.

* Rituals are performed on behalf of the country at Lubaga. Kaitula was a hereditary priest. See Gossard (Black) among the Nyakyusa (forthcoming).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selig Mr Ngonde

[41] 773 Questions: *And women?*

Mwamsumi: When the shades are angry a woman is constantly miscarrying and does not bear a child; if they are not angry she conceives.

[42] And on another occasion he said:

[43] 773 Lust comes from the shades; if they are angry with you you are impotent; you cannot beget a child.

His wife added: 'My husband says in his heart: "Let me go to my wife." It is the shade that makes him.'

One informant after another mentioned both Kyala (or Lwembe) and the shades as being present in intercourse. Mwakisonde, after [44] talking of miscarriages being due to the anger of the shades, went on:

Kyala has created the breed of desire. If a man is impotent we say Kyala has not given him breath to beget a child.

Kasuyo: If my child runs off with a man, whether a stranger or her husband, before she has reached puberty and I continue angry, if Kyala has helped me she does not bear a child. Then it is said 'her father was angry'. They come to me bringing the remaining marriage-cattle and I pray and she bears a child.

Questions: If the husband asked for her properly and delivered her before puberty?

Kasuyo: There is no case, it was all right, even long ago. I said: 'Finish paying the cattle.' Perhaps he begged me, saying: 'I am poor, Father,' and I was satisfied.

[45] 773 No pagan questions the power of the shades over fertility, and this power is believed to be exercised by the mother's lineage, as well as that of the father. Angonelwike, the Christian, said:

[46] The pagans fear that if they do not perform the puberty ritual when a girl reaches puberty, she will dry up. The blood will not come again even though she is not pregnant. Then, if her periods do not come for two or three months, like this, she will never bear a child. They say the shades are angry and have bound her fertility. And if she does not reach puberty at all, if menstruation does not begin, her father prays in the heathen grove, saying: 'You, fathers, what are you angry about?' And if the girl's mother's brother is angry on account of cattle—perhaps her father has not given marriage-cattle properly for her mother—for, the mother's brother, binds a wing of the lion (*ulyilonde*) from her puberty ritual to the left, then the girl will not bear a child. Inquiry is made of a diviner who says: 'The mother's brother has bound her.' The father takes a cow to him and says: 'I am sorry, I have done wrong, I

Z: Wilson K-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Galya, Ms Ngonde

have thought of it now, this is the cow.' Then, in the evening, the mother's brother blows out water in the banana grove and prays much to the fathers. And when he has prayed he says: 'Send the girl to a doctor to drink medicine.' Then the girl bears a child. The pagans say of us Christians when we have children without performing the ritual: 'You have a medicine, you are baptized with a medicine.'

Mwakabela confirmed that the mother's brother, like the father, may prevent a girl bearing a child.

Yes, it is so, if I do not give marriage-cattle for my wife our child will not bear. We go to divine and the oracle-cattle hold of me with saying that the fathers are angry. We ask what they are angry about, and the answer is 'cattle'. Then I, the father of the girl, go with a cow and leave it and return. My wife and daughter remain there. They pray and pray and the girl conceives.

It is clear, therefore, that the shades are present in intercourse and control conception. At marriage the shade of her father must 'move aside a little' so that the bride may conceive, and she herself becomes dangerous to her mother (and in a lesser degree to her father) because she has mingled her blood with that of another lineage. Mingling the blood of different lineages is dangerous and a bride can safely meet her mother only after performing a ritual in which her parents, as well as herself, become 'one flesh' with her husband. When a bride brings a hen and millet to her mother it is to say: 'Mother, I have wiped my husband's genitals, I have grown up.'[1] All our informants were agreed that this *ubulenge* or *ubudo* (both words are used) is to safeguard the mother's health, particularly to prevent her suffering from diarrhoea. Mwandisi's statement was clear:

In the puberty ritual, when a bride has come from her husband, having lain with him, she carries hold of a little millet and a fowl without reaching herself and carries them to her mother. The mother sees it with the fowl that her belly may be free. If the daughter does not bring these things, then, when she drinks from the same calabash as her mother, she overcomes her mother, who has diarrhoea. Yes, the illness comes from the shades because she has come her from the bed. . . . This diarrhoea comes from the belly when those below are angry and those above also. They say: 'The mother has overcapped the child' or 'The child has overcapped the mother'. If a girl has reached puberty we, the parents, do not come together until she has gone to her husband and lain with him. If we have intercourse we

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kaluli

between them. These two remain with the bride all through the period of seclusion, never leaving her, but the other maids may come and go if called away to perform other duties.

From the onset of menstruation until the ritual washing a girl may neither cross a stream nor wash; after it she crosses streams and washes her hands and feet, but does not yet bathe her whole body. She sleeps on the litter with her companions for about a month and 'by day and by night the young men sing songs with the girls. . . . The play in the puberty hut resembles adultery—we call it love-making (ubugumiye).' 'The groom visits his bride on the litter.' 'Gifts of beer and firewood are brought by the bride's mothers (abasumbakisi) and, after her second period has passed, the rite of ukusuya (bringing out) is performed.'

The litter is swept out and burnt. Bride and groom are shaved and go separately to bathe. 'The women carry the girl and the man's fellows carry him.' The girl is examined to prove her virginity and the women return with her rejoicing, and make her and her husband run in and out of the doorway of a hut over which they pour water. Then follow the admonition.

At the ukusuya (bringing out) rite the officiants drink a special brewing of beer made in the following fashion: the chief officiant puts a little millet, mixed with powdered medicine, into a flat winnowing basket, makes the bride stand in it and, lowering her bark-cloth soiled by first menstruation, lets it fall into the millet.[1] Then she shields and burns it, lest an enemy, wishing to prevent the bride conceiving, should get hold of it. The bride's fresh bark-cloth is sprinkled with medicines to make her 'heavy', the adze of the old one are treated with medicines to ensure her fertility, and the millet is put to soak and brewed into beer in the hut in which she has secluded on the litter.

We saw the Kaluli ukusuya rite performed only once. The girl, a daughter of a chief, was not yet married or betrothed, so there was no groom to play his part, and the whole ritual was carried out in her father's homestead, her own mother going through it with her. She herself appeared more reluctant, and there were various modifications due to the pressure of new ideas. We quote the account to show the manner of washing, and of entering and leaving the hut—rites which were described in detail by a number of informants, and which are characteristic of the Kaluli ritual cycle.

[1] It was not made clear by Kaluli informants exactly what this happened.

J. Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

(from under the bed) in the morning is has the filth of intercourse on it, then the father and mother should eat it. If this is not done they will fall ill with diarrhoea. If the hen is taken alive some eat it and others do not.'

After discussing this rite Mwambonda went on:

'You know, also, that when a girl has gone through the puberty ritual or her husband's she must not take firewood from her mother's [192] ● rafters (kanjala) until she is obviously pregnant. Before then, while she is lying with her husband, she must not. We say: 'How can you take your mother's firewood when you are sleeping with your husband?' It is just the same whether the mother is old or young. If the bride goes through the ritual without sleeping with her husband that is all right; it is when she begins to sleep with him that she begins to avoid her mother's hut. At that time I, the father, may meet her mother and sleep with her, but with other marriage. I must not make her pregnant. The daughter must begin. As soon as she is pregnant then we parents can begin to conceive a child again. If we do so before our daughter, then she will never bear a child at all, and others will say: 'How could you conceive your daughter?' [194]

Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is observed as in Ndyo, but is slightly less strict.

(3) *The meet purpose and symbolism*

As has already been indicated, the symbolism of the Kukwe ritual of puberty is similar to that of Ndyo. The same actions are interpreted in exactly the same way and, where actions differ somewhat, they are still interpreted as expressing the same general conceptions. For example, the Kukwe bride and groom make love together by friction and eat porridge cooked on it, whereas a bride in Ndyo eats bananas with powdered medicine, but both actions are symbols of sexual intercourse. Both in Ndyo and in Kukwe country the bride is purified and, as part of the process of purification, the shade of her father's lineage is driven from her body; but only among the Kukwe is this symbolized by sitting in a running stream and allowing the water to wash away pollution from between her fingers and toes.

That there may be no doubt about the interpretation of the Kukwe ritual we again quote a number of statements by Nyakyusa informants. These refer specifically to the Kukwe form of the puberty ritual.

Chief Pandanei's wives, discussing the ritual together, were em-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Kakoe

come him, it does not wish to come out. And although the faeces are 776
from they are the corpse. Because we bury a corpse underground, and 553
faeces also go underground to the shades. They disappear by night, that is the shade. If someone excretes faeces and finds it in the grass we say: 'The shade has caught hold of him.'

Question: Are faeces associated with sexual intercourse? 516 776

Mwamnyanga: Yes, the shade does both things, he causes diarrhoea 553
and sexual intercourse. If you defaecate firm stools that is not the shade, that is the food we eat, but watery diarrhoea which troubles you repeatedly at night—that is the shade. If you have diarrhoea for three days people say: 'The shades have humoured you' or 'The shade has caught hold of you.'

Question: Madness? 558

Mwamnyanga: That is the shade because it says: 'Since you have me 775
in your belly, and they have not treated you, I cause this—these faeces 579
are the corpse. A madman defaecates and catches hold of his faeces, perhaps he eats them, perhaps he binds it up in the grass and catches hold of it. It is the corpse.'

Kakoe, the doctor, also interpreted the puberty ritual as being, 552
in one aspect, the transference of a girl from her father's group to 775
her husband's and, like Kaitile and Mwamlowlo, he identified 579
sexual desire and perversity with the shades. He said:

At puberty a girl has left her father's and has gone to others; if she dies he to whom she has gone buries her.

Question: Where does the blood of a woman come from?

Kakoe: If the girl is unmarried, from her shades; they create her blood, but in the ritual we treat her so that she moves to my place, she comes to my shades; the blood of a married woman is created by my shades and here together. And the 'blood' of a man [i.e. semen] also comes from the shades.

Question: Do the shades reveal themselves at birth?

Kakoe: Yes, because if I am angry or my father is angry I do not beget a child, but when he has prayed I do so. If I am angry with the woman and she has caught hold of me and injured me, then we do not have a child. The ordeal (*mwaafi*) convicts the woman. She goes to 577
her father who prays. Then we have a child.

Question: Where does the power to bear and beget children come 552
from? 776

Kakoe: From the shades, you have the shades in your belly. If 557
they are not there you are all like women in the house, you cannot have 553
an erection, but when the shades work, you have an erection. 553
775

Question: Whose shades are present at intercourse?

Kakoe: Mine, the man's and the woman's, we both have them,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Kukuti

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blood of another lineage mingles with hers, but it has not reached her mother because they have not met. To drink water together from one calabash is to meet. Then the mother has diarrhoea because her body is not accustomed to the blood of another lineage. To have diarrhoea is to go bad, to empd (*ukuempd*) the filth. The *ilibale* of the fowl is the body of the groom which mingles with the body of the girl's parents that they may be one blood with him.

[785]

Then, not only husband and wife, but also parents and son-in-law become one flesh.

[786]
[787]

As in Safwa, a direct connection is made between the parents receiving a bull for the bride's virginity, and her bearing a child to her husband. Mwambombo explained: 'Kyala together with the shades have made the girl grow up. If the girl runs off with her husband and I, the father, have not received cattle, then the earth is angry, the shades say: "We shall see if she will flourish there." Then the girl does not conceive, and the diviner says: "The shades are angry." The groom's people being cattle, then I, the father, pray for my child and she conceives, her belly swells.'

CHAPTER V

THE RITUAL OF BIRTH[1]

942 Kyala (or Lwembe) and the shades create desire in men and women and control conception; when the shades are angry women do not conceive—this is one of the main tenets of pagan Nyakyusa cosmology, and it is combined with a limited knowledge of physiology. It is clearly understood that conception cannot take place without intercourse, and that gestation in humans lasts for nine months, but it is believed that repeated intercourse is necessary for conception, and formerly, if a man found his wife pregnant after having lain with her only once, he accused her of adultery.

[47]

(a) *Taboos of procreation*

[91] The procreation of children is an ultimate value of Nyakyusa society and the accepted end of marriage, but it is regarded as dangerous under certain conditions and is hedged about with taboos. These are enforced so that both parents and children may be healthy; a breach of them is thought to result in violent diarrhoea, as well as monstrously swollen legs and weakness in men, general debility in children, and miscarriage or an excessive menstrual flow in women. The onus of observing these falls primarily on women, though their husbands must also cooperate, and a breach of taboo is treated as immoral, for it is believed to endanger the life, or health, or property of others.

92 763

927 Certain general conceptions underlie the taboos. The first is that *of shayuli*, filth, which is held to come from the sex fluids, menstruation, and childbirth, as well as from a corpse, and the blood of a slain enemy. All these are felt to be both disgusting and dangerous, and the sex fluids are held to be particularly dangerous to an infant, hence the taboo on husband and wife resuming intercourse very soon after childbirth.

946 As for, when the child is very young, we think it very bad for the parents to sleep together at all, because when the child is very young

[1] This account came from a score or more women not cited individually, as well as from our regular informants on ritual whose names are mentioned.

777 Question: The spirits are angry?
Nyakusa: Yes, they say: "That woman for whom we gave marriage-
778 cattle has cuckolded her husband." Yes, it is the shades who are angry in his belly.

●142 Kakone, a doctor, made it clear that the danger to the husband
777 when his wife committed adultery came from the anger of another
778 man cuckolding her.

If your wife commits adultery you get very tired on a journey, you suffer from diarrhoea; in the old days we fell to war.

Question: What if the adulterer practices extra-marriage?

Kakone: Yes, if the man is clever he withdraws and the semen falls to the ground. If he always withdraws when he has intercourse with my wife, then I escape, nothing happens. The woman is like a child. Yes, when your wife who has not yet reached puberty plays with young men as the child is no matter. Do they create a child with her? No! But if she is an adulteress he is there to her, and I am there to her, and Kyala says: 'Wa! Are there two?' And he spears you, the owner of the woman. You are called by going to the woman; that is filth. But if I catch an adulterer with my wife, even if he has practised extra-marriage, I am angry and kill him—there is jealousy! But as for diarrhoea, I do not suffer from it.

777 The most dangerous adultery of all, according to the Nyakyusa,
778 is that of a man with his father's wife. Angumbwike explained:

If a man dies and his son has been lying with his wives in secret, whether with or without his permission, the son is very much afraid to approach his father's place. If he goes near or touches the corpse he will himself die, for he is one flesh with his father; their blood has mingled in the woman's belly. He keeps a long way away and so do the
[777] wives with whom he has lain. The leading men of the village are told about it and a doctor is fetched and the son and the wives involved are taken to a waterfall and washed there. If he is the elder son a younger brother kills the wives immediately. Then he comes back to the homestead and kills a cow himself. While you were away in Europe I saw a case of this with my own eyes. A man died whose son had been lying with his wives. As soon as the son approached his father's place he fell down sick to death. People picked him up and carried him away to a distance. Then he began to breathe a little easier. They took him to a
[778] waterfall and washed him and he recovered, more or less. He is still unwell from time to time. It is not madness, just illness. And if, before the father's death, such a son approaches his father, the old man gets very ill indeed and the elder wives turn the son out of the house. There is none of this trouble if a brother [either a full brother or a half-brother]

2: Wilson E-9 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Subtitle

[illegible] no man entered the confinement hut in which a woman remained until the cord had dropped off the new-born child and she had purified herself, and she did not normally resume cooking for her husband for some weeks; but these taboos are less strictly observed than formerly, partly, our informants insisted, because the country has been pacified and men do not fear to die in battle if they neglect them.

The obvious interpretation here is that a man is felt to partake of the weakness of a menstruating or confined woman if he comes into association with her. 'His legs become swollen and painful and he is very tired'; 'strength leaves him'; 'he has no speed in running'; 'his belly aches and his body grows cold' .... The picture is merely one of a woman's physical weakness: a man is identified with his wife during pregnancy, observing the taboos she observes, and during menstruation and confinement he must isolate himself as far as possible from her lest he share her weakness; but none of our informants made a connection between the weakness of the woman and the weakness of the man—the interpretation is ours. The Nyakyusa were obsessed with the idea of 'filth' emanating from menstruation and childbirth; indeed, the feeling that women, by reason of their physiology and the taboo on washing during menstruation, are dirty, is cited by men as one of the reasons for not eating with them or sitting to chat with them. Only in this limited sense is the conception of ritual impurity linked with social status. Here the contrast with a Hindu society, in which states of ritual impurity (basically very similar to those of the Nyakyusa) are linked with caste differences, is marked.[1]

[illegible] The second general conception underlying the theme of precautions is that of shame, bareness, a condition associated with sexual intercourse, pregnancy, the puberty of vicherwali, and medicines.[2] A 'heavy' (mito) person is dangerous to an 'empty' (bwai) one, hence women sleeping with their husbands, and pregnant women avoid mothers with infants and brides in seclusion, who are 'empty'; and the 'empty' are vested to prevent diarrhoea and give them weight. Diarrhoea and 'emptiness' are closely associated.

[illegible] The great specific against 'emptiness' is digestive medicine, used in the puberty, birth, and death rituals, and even used to protect cattle against a menstruating woman. 'If a woman is the only wife

[1] Cf. M. N. Srinivas, Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India (1952).
[2] Cf. Monica Wilson, Good Company, p. 24.

her husband may give her *dipili* to rub on her hands and on a [642]
stick with which she touches each of the cattle. He gives them [787]
dipili that they may not be "empty". Then she can clean out the byre at any time."

A third idea that recurs, again and again, is that of *ukulilanga*, [642]
overstepping, which is used in both a literal and a metaphorical [784]
sense. It is taboo for a woman to step over her husband in any way, hence there are explicit rules (taught during initiation) on posture in intercourse. If she should step over him it is said that 'his legs will swell' and he has grounds for divorcing her. It is taboo for an adult to step over a child and for a woman who is having intercourse to step over one who is not, though a child may step over an adult and a virgin or youth who is not having intercourse may step over a married person of the same sex who is not. In a society in which everyone sits on the ground, often with legs outstretched, observance of the taboo necessitates care. [516]

In its metaphorical sense *ukulilanga* is used for a 'heavy' person [45]
coming into close contact with an 'empty' one, as, for example, a woman who is sleeping with her husband entering the hut of a woman with a new-born child, or the mother of a bride entering intercourse before her daughter has had intercourse, or a bride who has not yet brought the *ilibalaga*, the symbol of her union with her husband, to her parents, drinking from her mother's calabash, or entering the inner part of her hut; or a wife who has committed adultery cooking for her husband. It is used, too, of a woman who continues to bear children after the marriage of her son for, it is said, if she does so the son's wife will never conceive at all, or will be long in conceiving, or her child will not walk, on account of a curse.

Miscarriage: It is not customary for mother and son both to have [642]
infants. Women usually begin to stop intercourse when their sons marry. [554]
They say it is not good that both mother and son should have small children, because the mother of the young man now thinks of helping her daughter-in-law in nourishing her children. If mother and son both have babies, people are much scandalized and say it is not a good custom; they ensure a curse (*ilipaw*) and the fertility of the son and his wife suffers. [785]

Mwalingi's wife put it this way:

I have off having children when my son is married for I should receive my grandchild in my arms, and care for my grandchildren, and lie with them in the house.

[75] *Ubulinde* means to pass, to surpass, and *ubulinge* [overwrapping], in its metaphorical use, implies that 'one has power and the other is weak, as the powerful one does some injury to the weak one'.

[76] Fourthly, as was made apparent in the puberty ritual, it is held to be dangerous to 'mix blood'. Adultery is not only an infringement of the exclusive rights of a husband, but it may injure him directly, causing him to have diarrhoea, which is a 'getting rid of the filth' due to contact with a strange 'blood'. It was implied that intercourse with a menstruating woman was in some sense 'mixing blood' also, and the danger to parents of contact with a newly-married daughter before a precautionary ritual has been performed, stems from the same thing; the parents, through their daughter, are brought into contact with the blood of another lineage, that of the new son-in-law.

[77] Besides being 'heavy' and therefore liable to 'overcome' others, a pregnant woman is thought to reduce the quantity of any grain she approaches, for the foetus within her is voracious and swallows it. Therefore neither she nor her husband (who participates in her condition) may approach other people's millet or beans or oil-seeds spread out to dry, or speak to those who are reaping or grinding or stamping or brewing, without making a gesture of good-will by spitting on a pebble or knotting a leaf, and throwing it into the heap of grain. The intention is fear of a miscarriage, for the owners of the food may have used medicines 'so that the food may be much and people be astonished'. She can reap a pregnant woman may handle freely, and a chief's wife does not observe the taboo in her own village.

Two or three quotations will make these conceptions clearer:

Informant: When my wife has conceived they say we are both 'heavy', both my wife and I. Then, if oil-seeds or millet are our drying in the sun, they tell us not to speak. 'You are heavy men,' they say. So we are silent. They say that if there is talking we will catch hold of the oil-seeds or millet, and it will diminish. Yes, I must avoid the grain even though I am silent, because I am heavy.

Lawrence: Maize does not vanish but millet and beans. The child which is being made bewitches them; they disappear. . . . The child has opened its mouth wide, its jaw gape.* It is that child which is being

[78] * Some held that millet was the only grain affected, others maintained that maize was also.

* *Ulumwa* literally signifies shame. *Ulipanda* is used of the gaping jaw of a crocodile.

[269] [787] millet, beans and pumpkin with medicine. 'We fear lest the medicine we have drunk will turn round in the belly';* and they must be buried in a hut. 'If they are buried outside there will be drought and famine.'

[270] [271] *(f) The mere purpose and prohibition*

The overt purpose of the twin ritual is plain to all Nyakyusa. Twin birth is thought to be contagious, causing other twin births, and also to make men and cattle ill. The ritual is to prevent this. Mwambelile, a middle-aged pagan, was explicit on the point:

> People are afraid to go to the house of a man with twins. They think that they will have twins themselves if they do, and so do not like twin births; they are taboo in the country. Or perhaps their legs will swell, or their bellies, or faces, if they go to his house. So we go to a doctor and he comes and sprinkles all the people in the village, even tiny children, and all the cattle. He takes a banana stalk to burn the twin birth (*pululya ipese*). He burns it because of the twin birth. The water is hot and medicated. He sprinkles it all with it and when we have all been treated we say we have been burnt because of the twin birth.

[272] When a man has begotten twins we are in awe of his Kyala (*ndulula Kyala ipi*). . . . If people drink out of the same vessel as the parents of twins, or if the father of twins sleeps with his other wives, this makes the disease increase, the disease of swelling legs and stomach; men catch it, the wives catch it, the children and fathers of the wives catch it. There is also a twin ceremony for cattle; if a cow drops twin calves we fear the same things. You, your wife and children drink medicine, and the cows are all sprinkled with medicine—but not your other relatives, or neighbours.

Mwakichela himself said:

> If I did not wash and come to me with my relatives, my legs would swell, I should pass out and gasp. Swelling of the legs is due to our shades (*mizimu yanu*) or perhaps Kyala becomes is angry (*Kyala yao ahalile*).

[273] References to Kyala as the cause of twins are frequent:

> Kaswaga: The shades are in twin birth, and Kyala is there—it is he who gives two children. We drive them away. Kyala and the shades are equivalent. When we bury the *ilibalaga* in the banana grove I say: 'Kyala, leave my believe (which means my wife) for me, you shades leave it for me.' If the shades are angry perhaps my penis is broken in copulation.
>
> Mwakasanga: I have not heard people speak of the shades in twin

* cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 34.

2: Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1937 F3017 Ugunda F3017
Nyakyusa

they take hold of the corpse. But they wait for the doctor; if they do not do so the same disease will come—a swelling of legs and diarrhoea. An ordinary corpse is not feared in this way.

You, a man fears to take his other wives. He says: 'I'll just go to them I shall give them the disease of the twins that I beget with this wife.' The wife he takes without generation will swell in the legs and stomach, and pass blood with her stools. He first wins to have a child with the wife who bore twins, waiting till the twins are walking about. He lies with the mother of the twins but withdraws, and then, when the children are grown, he impregnates her. He does not go to the other wives. And if he asks for another wife before trying to impregnate the mother of the twins her father will refuse. If he takes her without asking, her father will make him pay a cow. He can only ask for another wife if the mother of the twins does not conceive. For one month the husband refrains altogether from intercourse, then after the ritual he goes to his wife (the mother of the twins) but does not impregnate her. . . . A man is supposed to tell the twin doctor before he begets another child with his wife. He must do it openly, and not in secret. It is taboo to do it secretly. Nothing happens, but the doctor is angry, saying: 'Why did you not tell me, the doctor, the owner of the body?'

Themes already familiar from the death and puberty-marriage rituals recur again here. The parents of twins are isolated and cleansed like mourners and initiate girls. Contact with them is held to be dangerous because 'those below'—in this case Kyala and Mbasi rather than the shades—have brooded over them, and must be driven off before normal procreation can be resumed. After their isolation the *ilibalaga*—the symbol of their ritual union—must be offered to the shades of both lineages, that of the man and that of the woman. There is also the eating of balls of porridge, the symbol, in the other rituals, of the actions of a mulungu, but the fear of mulungu was not affirmed by our informants as the purpose of the twin ritual; rather it is the formidable potency which produces two children instead of one, that is the danger—'the parents of twins have a fire'—and men protect themselves against it by burning themselves with hot medicines. They 'burn the twin birth'.

* Presumably longer when the initiation and ritual hand longer.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

in the banana grove. No one eats any. Then in the morning the children 783
go there and eat. Are they not the comrades of the shades? But for us grown people it is taboo. We eat later on. That is the old custom. And formerly no one dried the fish which first entered the trap. They cooked and ate them in the house with the children. . . . If they put them to dry in the sun the shades were angry, saying: 'Where are the fish we gave you? We do not see them in the house.'

Kaswa: Sometimes it is her father's anger which prevents a girl 942
from becoming pregnant. Perhaps she runs off with men repeatedly, 578
then her father is angry with her. He says: 'She is squandering my cattle.' He complains (*shashwaapa*) with his wives at the hearth and calls to mind his fathers, the shades. Then the girl does not conceive.

If later on the father forgives her, he sends a messenger to her hus- 783
band, saying: 'Send me your wife, let her come and we will pray.' 942
Then, after calling his fellows and killing a bull, he takes meat from the top of the footing (*mwapa*) and cuts it into pieces and puts a piece into the mouth of the girl, and she eats. They say that it is to drive the shades from the body of the girl, the shades who have caught hold of her fecundity. Some of the meat from the *mwapa* is thrown down, and the children pick it up and eat it. It is taboo for others to take and eat it.

Fanuel (a Christian elder): Perhaps your father has died and people 942
have come to marry your sister; and perhaps the sister of your father 578
(*mpashwaapa*) claims one cow, saying: 'I am your father, give me one.' 783
If you grudge it, then there is much murmuring which is heard by the shades, by your brother and your father who died. And so if your sister does not conceive people say: 'They grudged the father's sister, the shades are angry.' Then you seek a fowl and beer, and send them to your father's sister, and she puts the fowl under her bed that the shades may know it. She speaks, saying: 'Indeed I was angry.' The shades hear. That fowl opens the door; she knows that the cow is near, it is coming. She confesses everything (*shanyaa yaai*) on receiving the fowl; this she speaks in her house. You go later with the cow to bring your sister to your father's sister. Then if the girl bears at her husband's everyone says: 'Indeed it was so.'

And if your sister has run off with a man and you are angry, the shades hear. You say: 'I do not know if she will conceive there.' Then she does not bear and people say: 'Let her take her husband to her brother.' If the husband is rich perhaps he seeks two cows and a bull calf, but the cows for bringing back are not sent first, a hen is sent first with a message, saying: 'I come on such and such a day.' The hen is put under the bed. The shades know about it, I, the brother, who was angry, pray, and she bears a child. But this does not happen among Christians; there is nothing of it.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

spread and the foods and altars traditional in them continue to be used: thus Nyakyusa Christians use wheaten bread and wine from the grape, whereas their pagan neighbours use bananas and millet beer, and their altar is a table set at the east end of a consecrated building, not the earth of a banana grove. |21

Nyakyusa ideas of physiology are those of a strongly patrilineal society, in marked contrast with those of the Bemba who are matrilineal:[1] to the Nyakyusa a woman is a 'bag' which the husband fills with his 'blood' and so creates a child, while the Bemba believe that 'blood' is passed through the woman, not the man. The taboos of pregnancy also have a patrilineal slant. A difficult labour is commonly attributed, among the Nyakyusa, to the wife's adultery, never to that of her husband, as among the Bemba. §27 |71

Differences in ritual vary in general form with the differences in economy and structure, but there remains a relative autonomy between them. Not only do symbols spread beyond the economy within which they were coined but, as we showed earlier, poetic licence exists, and the particular associations made by priest and poet are not predictable. Ritual idioms are linked to language, but how closely we do not know. What evidence there is from Bantu Africa suggests a similarity in symbols over a wide area, connected with the similarity in language, but such a hypothesis has yet to be established. |21

Secondly, the expression of sentiments reaffirms them. Treating food, and reproduction, and family relationships, and the community as sacred, expresses the importance of these things to the group concerned, and at the same time breeds respect for them. Treating them as important in ritual makes people feel that they are important. In Whitehead's phrase, 'the object of symbolism is the enhancement of the importance of what is symbolized'.[2] Rituals are also cathartic in that they express and explicitly reject anti-social attitudes, such as anger, terror, and the wish for death.

Thirdly, the general attitudes expressed in Nyakyusa rituals are necessary to the continuance of any society; they are conditions of social living; and the particular attitudes are necessary to the maintenance of the particular Nyakyusa structure.

Every society, if it is to survive, must value fertility in some |21

[1] A. I. Richards, 'Some types of family structure amongst the Central Bantu' in §42 *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by Radcliffe-Brown and Forde, p. 207; 'Mother-right among the Central Bantu' in *Essays Presented to C. G. Seligman*, edited by Evans-Pritchard, Firth, Malinowski, Schapera, p. 276.

[2] A. N. Whitehead, *Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effects* (1923), p. 74.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F3117 Ngonde F3117
Nyakyusa

[2] 182 degree. Sir Charles Darwin has suggested that those societies which put a premium on fertility will ultimately be dominant, by the weight of numbers,[1] but the evidence from Africa suggests that those societies which have in fact survived have regulated reproduction. Of the concern of the Nyakyusa with fertility there can be no doubt. The gods are the reproductive principle expressed in the idiom of a patrilineal society—'the shade and the semen are brothers'. One of the express purposes of the rituals of kinship, as well as of the communal rituals, is to secure fertility; one of the major sanctions of religion is the fear of the loss of it. And further than this, all their major activities are expressed in terms of the reproductive cycle and thought to be linked to it. The association of crops, and cattle, and hunting, and war with pregnancy and menstruation in women has already been indicated, and a more general connection between fertility in crops, and cattle, and men will be shown in the account of communal rituals. The two principal crafts, iron smelting and bark-cloth making, are associated with the act of coition. So also are fire-making, grinding, cooking, and eating; and the hearth and hut are identified with the union of husband and wife, and with childbirth. Whether such a preoccupation with fecundity, and the tendency to express all activities in terms of the reproductive cycle, are stronger among the Nyakyusa than among most other peoples we do not yet know, but at least they do not minimize its importance. It is the more significant therefore that, though maximum fertility of soil and stock was sought, there was a limitation of the human reproductive rate by deliberate spacing, and by limiting a woman's period of child-bearing to the years before her son's marriage. The Nyakyusa appear to have been an expanding people in relatively empty country, and the six or seven births per woman which this system allowed, combined with an infant mortality of perhaps 50 per cent, did not cause undue pressure upon their resources.

[2] 182 The particular form of limitation was linked to the structure of age-villages. The very wide spacing, with four to five years between pregnancies, and the taboo on a woman bearing after the marriage of her eldest son, ensured that, as a general rule, full brothers built in different villages. Thus the most closely-knit kinship group, that of full brothers and their sons, did not coincide with the local group, and the fissiparous tendency of lineages was checked by village loyalties. A group of full brothers and their

[1] Charles Darwin, *The Next Million Years*, p. 171 *et passim*.

J. Mackenzie M-9 (ca. 1925) 1925
F3117 Ngonde F3117

the spear which is to slay her if she disregards it. The injured husband, too, has the right to inflict death upon the paramour. This is no mere tale of the past, but a grim fact of to-day. Just a very short time ago, two of my workmen asked a day's leave of absence to go and bury a relative who had suffered the extreme penalty at the hands of an outraged husband. Cases of this nature are very numerous, and are normally treated by British law as murder; but native law still looks upon them as a just reprisal by the husband.

Divorce is granted only for approved reasons. The husband, when he believes he has ground for divorce, requests his go-between to take up the case; but the latter will do so only if he is satisfied that the evidence is sufficient to secure a verdict in his client's favour. The woman's father fixes a day for the public hearing of the case, himself as judge, for there is an appeal to the chief only if either party is dissatisfied with the decision arrived at. The finding of the court is in all cases reported to the chief.

The commonest cause is unfaithfulness of the wife, which being proved or admitted, there is no further discussion, although the trouble is sometimes patched up by the gift of a cow to the husband. If a wife has conceived, and does not tell her husband, it is a very grave matter indeed, for she is assumed to be trying to hide from him what is not his, and an action for divorce may follow. Barrenness, if known to be of the wife, is a cause of divorce; but not seldom the wife retorts the charge upon her husband, and cases are not unknown where, by mutual agreement, both

S: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F317 Nyonde F317

daily for supplies, provided it is again quickly covered up with both sand and flowing water. All this must be done at night lest the killing-place be revealed to others, and the flesh stolen. 261

Bread is made of twice-ground maize with salt added. It is kneaded into loaves of about three inches thick, and placed in layers, interleaved with banana leaf, in a pot with maize in the bottom. This bread is often taken on a journey, and will keep for five or six days. Eggs are "scrambled," with milk and salt, in a broken pot, but this is a European introduction. No young girl will eat hard-boiled eggs; they produce a snake in the abdomen, which, of course, in turn produces barrenness. 260 [17] [18]

Very unpleasant to our minds are some of the delicious foods the Konde rejoice in: flying ants eaten alive as they are picked up where they fall from their brief honeymoon in the air; crawling white ants, a horrible mass of moving life; the Kungu fly, found on Lake Nyasa, whence it comes ashore in dense clouds, settles on bush and tree, and is shaken off into small baskets, to be taken home and baked into cakes while it is still fresh. In Bundali it is said that some still eat lion's flesh, and once upon a time the crocodile was eaten at Karonga. Sorcerers are accused of devouring human flesh. A new grave is sprinkled with a powerful medicine which makes the corpse come up without disturbing the soil, and the ghoulish feast is enjoyed without leaving a trace of the dead behind. 262 [154 244]

757 the fang will drop out, and the man will be saved!
878 There are men living near me who claim to have seen this being done.

844 The birth of children is accompanied by loving care, great superstition, and much medical treatment, useful or otherwise. All women at that time are given a drink of *indabe* leaves, pounded and mixed with water. If the placenta has not come away satisfactorily, castor oil is given. And if pain supervenes, the bark of *indabe* is again given, pounded and mixed with water. For a child weak at birth, roots of *ewoda* and *mangwiwa* are taken, pounded, mixed with water, and the child is washed in the mixture. Sterility in men or women can be removed
•362 by the right drugs; and when a woman is getting on in years and wishes no more children, a mixture is in
847 use which will have the desired effect. Medicines for producing abortion are widely known, and
848 frequently used, as also are love potions.

757 Steaming is resorted to in cases of great pain or weakness. Water is cooked in a large pot, with the bark of *mpamapara* added. When the pot has boiled, it is taken off the fire, and the patient, covered with a mat, kneels over it, supported if very weak, for about ten minutes. Massaging also is employed when one is very tired, the leaves of *mayoka* being pounded to give a juice for lubrication, or, as the people themselves say, to get into the body through the pores. Cupping is employed for headache and rheumatic pains. Eight cuts are made in two lines, on each side of the head; a small horn is put over the cuts; a

crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done.

In a polygynous family each wife has her own fields (*mahuka*), hoed by her husband and her own sons, which she plants, weeds and reaps with the help of her own daughters, and the produce of which she uses to cook for her husband, her own children and herself. The relative rights of husband and wife to disposal of produce vary with different crops, but no co-wife has any rights over a woman's food. She may, and often does, ask her co-wives to help in her fields and sends them presents of cooked food from her own fire, she may help them and receive presents in return; but they have no rights over her fields or her food, only her husband and herself. And the fields which are hoed by a bachelor son belong to his own mother, who in her turn cooks food for him to eat.

Each wife has either a hut to herself, or else a separate shown in a large hut, and there she has her fire for cooking. The kitchen her own firewood and water or sends an unmarried daughter for them.

At meals the ages and the sexes eat separately; in some polygynous families each wife sends a dish to the husband, in others the wives take it in turns to cook for him. The husband eats alone or with neighbours of his own age[1] to share his dish, the older boys and their friends[2] eat separately from the younger children, and each mother again usually eats with her own daughters, apart.

In the relationship of husband and wife the chief elements are sexual intercourse, co-operation in work, the procreation of children and factors of personal inclination, character and temperament. By men women are praised for sexual skill, cleanliness and beauty, for good cooking and hard work, for their fecundity, and for gentleness of speech and behaviour, and those with opposite qualities are criticized. Among women men are praised for sexual skill and attractiveness, for vigour in hoeing and skill in house-building, and for kindness; while sexual neglect, laziness, impotence and cruelty are disliked and may cause a woman to leave her husband for another man.

The birth of children is a most important factor in the marriage relationship, for children are greatly desired both by men and women. They are desired for themselves and also because they bring their parents wealth and prestige; a boy will one day work in the fields of his father and mother, a girl will bring in cattle from her marriage. And the possession of children brings compliments and respect both to man and woman.

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[1] Vide infra "The Age-Village."
[2] [Cf. IIb, pp. 249 ff. — Analyst.]

[illegible] Impotence and barrenness are well known facts, and magic is much used to cure them; but apart from their operation it is believed that such conception directly depends upon the frequency with which a man visits his wife. And thus the bearing of children is, for a woman, a demonstration of her husband's great affection for her. People utilize the number of children that a woman has borne to prove, in conversation, that she is her husband's favourite.

[illegible] Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan Nyakyusa; a plurality of wives is necessary, in this society, for full sexual satisfaction, wives being a man wealth, prestige and authority, the more wives he has the more children, he thinks, will be born to him.

[illegible] It is believed that any contact with the sexual fluids is dangerous to a young child's health, and so, after a woman has borne a child, her husband is supposed wholly to refrain from intercourse with her for about a year, until the child is old enough to play by itself and allow its mother time to work in the mornings before touching it. Then he may begin to visit her again, but still she must not become pregnant until the child is weaned. "If she does her breasts become rotten" and the first child is burned. As children are not weaned for two or three years, this rule involves the couple in yet another year or more either of entire abstinence or of infrequent intercourse (which also is believed to avoid conception). These taboos on intercourse after a child's birth are to some extent observed in practice, and are one of the reasons for polygyny among the Nyakyusa.

[illegible] Another reason is the absence of hired labour. With a few minor exceptions the only way a man can increase the supply of labour at his disposal is by marrying more wives. Polygyny is the mark of a wealthy man, conditioned by his control of cattle, conditioning his supply of food. And the cattle spent in marriage come back again with interest as the polygynist's daughters begin to be betrothed and married.

[illegible] It is extremely common for a man to take as his second or third wife the sister, half-sister, or brother's daughter of his first or second wife. By doing so a man pays a great compliment to the wife whose sister, or niece, he takes and to her family; his action implies complete satisfaction with her and friendship with her family. He sends his wife home "to fetch out (her kinswoman) into the open" (*ukwakula*); but she will not agree to do so unless she approves of him as a husband, and so, if she does agree, her action likewise compliments him. I know of one case in which a man wished to take his second wife's younger sister in this way,

Wilson E-5 (1924-1955) 1959
FMU Ugonde FMU
Nyakyusa

[760] were not ill, they were not troubled as we are. For later in the evening,
(607) while the Lwembe was still alive, the commoner priests removed his nails and hair; they came near and plucked them off. He shouted: 'Who is scratching at me?' They replied: 'No one', and then they smothered him with cloth in the mouth and in the anus, and he went away [i.e. he died]. . . . They did it only when he had intended to 'remind' by saying: 'I have seen food in the land of the shades'; they
[770] did not begin it themselves. . . . They collected the relics in a little bamboo flask, and a priest counted them so that Lwembe might not go away with the food in the land of the shades, that the fertility of the soil (*ifyage*), this (*fagile*), might always remain above.

[770] These relics, the hair and the nails, were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops.

While the Lwembe lived he was secluded—ordinary men did
(607) not see him—and he was subject to numerous taboos. For example,
[780] he might not wash in water but the country should be flooded; he never bathed in a stream (as Nyakyusa men do daily) and was carried across any river when travelling; he must not sit on a green banana leaf lest the bananas in the country should fall, but was always provided with a skin to sit upon, and he ate only the middle portion of a banana throwing away the ends for 'if he finished the whole of a banana he would cause hunger in the country'. No one might grasp his hand, or drink out of the same calabash as he, save the priests of his own age; if he drank from a calabash when travelling he took it with him, for 'if he left it behind he left hunger in that place'.

The selection of the Lwembe was in the hands of the hereditary priests of Lubaga and the hereditary Kings priests, who came from BaKinga townships at Lubaga. The man they chose must be of good character—at the time we were in BaNyakyusa the only willing candidate was rejected because 'he is a bad man, a thief, they refuse to have a thief as priest'—he must exhibit in his own house the power of fertility. 'They don't catch just anyone, but
● [772] one with children, and cattle, and fertility of the fields in his own homestead. If the man taken as chief is not fertile and rich there will be many sterile people in the homesteads, and much disease and hunger.'

When the priests had decided upon the man of their choice, they seized him and set him upon a sacred skin and a pad of leaves; and it was believed that once he had been set thereon he
[761] would die if he refused office; tales were told of a younger brother

the house of Mwamalungulu, a hereditary priest of Lubaga (whose ancestor came with the first Lwembe (*vide* p. 6). There were present five chiefs of Mwakinaya's (96) line, including Mwanjala II (98), who represents the Lwembe, but is ailing and has never been installed; two Kinga priests and a Kinga messenger sent to escort them; four priests of Lubaga (including Mwamalungulu himself), Kaitile the priest of Selya, and Godfrey Wilson. [92]

Mwanjala brought a small black bull worth £20, bought with the money and a hoe provided by the Kinga, and went for a store of bananas and a flask of fresh milk. A lively discussion began about the procedure: 'In the old days we used to pour ulwy over our hands to wash them, and to wash our mouths, and in the sacred grove we would pour it away. . . .' Then the party went to a small grove surrounded by cultivated land, and Nyanigwa, the Kinga priest, popped at the stump of a tree, still alive, on the edge of the grove, saying: 'This is the *ungondigonde* tree [a fine planted at the coming out of a child] where we used to pour the beer,' but Mwanjala denied it saying 'No, they have lost sight of it, the tree was here in the beer patch.' After some dispute they agreed to go right into the grove to sacrifice. The grove is on the site at which the trees were planted at the 'coming out' of Mwakinaya (96) the last Lwembe, and the house of his senior wife, Njala, was built. She is buried there, where her sacred courtyard used to be, and during Mwakinaya's lifetime the beer used to be poured out beside this sacred tree. The last sacrifice here was when Kimuda was a boy (1889-90), hence the uncertainty as to the place, but just why the beer sacrifices had all been at the homestead of Kinga (*vide supra*) was not clear.

Nyanigwa (the Kinga priest) asked Mwamalungulu (the priest of Lubaga) to bring over the three calabashes, one of millet beer, one of milk and one of bamboo beer, but Mwamalungulu refused and Nyanigwa had to fetch them himself. It was the Kinga who had insisted on the Nyakyusa providing millet beer saying: 'If we first pour out our bamboo beer we will go off with all the fertility of the country, let them begin with theirs.' Mwanjala, accompanied by Nyanigwa, came and stood at the foot of the tree while Nyanigwa poured millet beer first into his hands and then at the foot of the tree, and the priests prayed, Mwanjala and Nyanigwa in Nyakyusa, Kikungubeja in Kinga:

Oh thou Mwambipili, thou Kimuda, thou Mwamalungulu,[1] thou

[1] Three hereditary priests of Lubaga.

and Mwenyepo and Kiongwe assured it over the rails which were then put out with the horns to dry in the sun. Mwenyepo suggested getting Mwenyelugo, the doctor, to treat them further, and the others agreed saying: 'Let Mwenyepo find someone, that the earth may be good, that it be heavy.' Nyhalowe had spoken earlier of the cattle giving much milk after the treatment of the rails. And they were on to discuss the fact that the young chief Mwenlugo III [illegible] had begotten an child by the wife inherited from his elder brother [illegible] whose place he had taken. Thus the function of the chief in creating plenty and fertility was in the priests' minds, and there may be some link between the virility of the chief and success in war—one informant spoke of the chief's senior wives jumping over the rails immediately after the consummation of their marriage—but of this we are not certain. What is common knowledge is that the rails are 'for eating cattle', and they are associated with 'manure and blood'. We were told at the conclusion of the ritual: 'Formerly we should have gone tomorrow, after this treating of the rails, to fight.'

Besides medicines for majesty, courage, and popularity as rulers, chiefs use medicines to protect themselves against the forfeitures of the graves in which they sacrifice, medicines to 'chase the country to hunger', to make their capitals grand, and to cause thieves who have stolen, to walk round and round until caught.

Medicines are regarded as essential to authority, victory, and successful rule, and the kind used and the dose given are adjusted to the status and character of the individual. 'Village headmen do not drink the most important dimpiki; they drink a lesser one, indiapu; the senior headman is given one, the junior two.' And the chief's wives do not drink dimpiki at all, but only a powder suitable for them. But the use of these medicines has its dangers. The chief, like other people who have been drinking protective medicines, does not eat the new crops grown on fields fertilized by ash without fortifying himself. The danger is said to come from the burnt rubbish heaps, because medicines for defence against witches and sorcerers are burnt in them and, as we have seen, certain of the medicines which the chief uses create a power akin to witchcraft. He tastes the new millet ritually in June, the new peas in September, and pumpkin leaves in November; and he also tastes the 'new earth' at the break of the rains in October or early November. 'We think fear that the medicines we have drunk will

play one village against another and go to sleep in that section of the country which supports him, but he does not anger all his headmen. In the same way a village headman does not anger the main body of his sons. In short, public opinion is an effective sanction because those in authority believe that the disapproval of their fellows may bring a fever or pestilence upon them. One of our Christian informants was insistent that, were it not for the belief in the 'breath of men', pagan chiefs and headmen would act tyrannically.

The situations in which a chief or headman fears the breath of men are very varied. We have already referred to the chief who thought his illness was due to his refusal to hold the 'venging oath' for his sons who advised to do so.[1] Mwaipopo, before whom court a very bitter land dispute between two of his villages had been brought, refused to give judgment and was careful to sleep in the village that had possession of the land, and therefore was cause for anger.[2] Kasitile, the hereditary priest of the chief's lineage who counted as 'a chief' as opposed to 'a commoner', thought he had angered the village headmen of his generation (who had become priests) by not providing meat for them (see infra, p. 105).

The headmen are responsible for the health of their chief and it is they who go to consult an oracle if he is ill and take him to a doctor. Mwankuga II (1951), heir to Mwaipopo's chieftdom, had not begotten a son by any of the wives he inherited from his elder brother who had died. His village headmen[3] went to consult an oracle and were told that it was the wrath (*mizimu*) of his father; so they reported the matter to Mwaipopo, who sent a junior kinsman to consult another oracle. The diagnosis was confirmed and Mwaipopo gathered his younger brothers and prayed and told the shades that he had no quarrel with his kinsmen. Then he told the village headmen to take Mwankuga to a doctor for treatment, but this they did not do, so that Mwankuga went to consult a doctor on his own. According to Kasitile it was because the headmen had not taken Mwankuga that the medicine did not work. 'They should take him to the doctor and be present in dreams, to watch over him in dreams.' What the headmen were angry about was not revealed—there was no obvious cause.

[1] cf. ch., pp. 194-5. [2] cf. ch., pp. 188-90.

[3] Mwankuga I, who died had 'some son' before Mwankuga II inherited from him, but Mwaipopo (1-18) continued to rule as chief and draw a Government salary.

N.Wilson R-5 (1934-1935) 1959
F907 Ngonde F907
Nyakyusa

away. We run with him, we leave him over there, we return and bring him in. We drive him off because he brought sickness; when we have done so we return and bring him again that we may be pure—sickness, anger—and he also may be pure. We are with him all the time; we never throw him away. We always have the old one in the belly, we [765] [766] [767] [768]
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9: Wilson E.-5 (2534-2551) 2519
2367 Ngwende 2367
Nyakyusa

demand among police and soldiers as well as others.) There are medicines used by men and women to make themselves more attractive and persuasive to lovers, litigants, leaders, chiefs, servants, salesmen, and so on. 276 277

Certain Nyakyusa medicines are based on observation of cause and effect. Their pharmacopeia includes purges and poisons—for example, castor oil has long been cultivated and used both for making circumcised and as an aperient—and some of the drugs administered, and the poultices with fig leaves, may well be therapeutic; we have no systematic knowledge of the plants used and cannot assess them. But the scientific element is demonstrably limited, for a great many medicines are based on the principle of association, a feeling of likeness between things, and things felt to be alike are believed to react on one another, like producing like, or like things being antagonistic. 278 [79]

No distinction is made by the Nyakyusa themselves between those medicines which one trained in western science would say are based on observation of cause and effect (e.g. a purge or a poison), and those which are based on association—indeed our friends constantly cited supposed observations of cause and effect as evidence of the efficacy of all sorts of medicines and taboos. Mwakyonde used charcoal, mixed with iron from a forge, as a medicine for protection against lightning, burying a little, and powdering a little, and sprinkling it about a homestead, 'because at the forge they blow the bellows and it says, "*Mali, mali, mali*" (i.e. boom, boom, boom) and the lightning *ifumulako* (boom). When we blow the bellows at a forge it makes a noise like thunder.' There was no hint that he was aware that electricity might be attracted by iron, but he insisted that where he had buried the charcoal and iron the lightning *never* struck again, and he regarded this as cause and effect. Therefore the distinction we have made between observation and association is ours, not theirs. [75] [71]

That the symbolic element is at least as important as the practical was apparent from Lyandileko's treatment for sterility, which was famous for its success. She had three patients one morning, all women wanting to bear children. In front of her she ranged seventeen banana petals and mixed four different medicines in them. Then she chose three young banana shoots and bored a hole in each, inserting into it a length of the mid-rib of a banana leaf, slightly hollowed to form a runnel. She told an onlooker to bring the first petal full of medicine and poured it into the runnel. 142 279

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Hyakyuse

The patient knelt and received the medicine in cupped hands, guiding it into her mouth. Lyandikko hung a little medicine horn on the round before pouring. The patient kept the medicine in her mouth until the round was removed and she spat through the hole. Then the hole was filled up with the petal off which the medicine had been poured. Lyandikko smeared the patient on the belly with medicine from a horn, and pushed the horn down under her bark-cloth to the genitals, in front, and on to the buttocks behind. As she did this she said, 'If you are barren the barren will out, if you are fertile I give you medicine to bear a child.' This was done for each patient in turn. Then the banana suckers were planted and the medicine from the remaining petals poured into bottles (two made of banana leaves, one a Vermouth bottle) for the patients to take home. They were to take a dose each day for a week. As the treatment was proceeding Lyandikko talked of her successes: 'So-and-so drank twice and her belly sprouted. . . . So-and-so drank and she came back to me pregnant. . . .'

After a week the women came back to see whether their banana suckers had sprouted. Lyandikko explained: 'The banana sucker is the child, it sprouts quickly, it is the belly which sprouts quickly. If it dies they consult an oracle—the woman does not conceive.' And her son added, 'If a woman's sucker dies Lyandikko tells her: "Don't say I have not worked for you, don't you see your banana? You are rotten in yourself, indeed they must have allowed your cord to fall between your mother's legs."[1] They rejoice very much if it has grown.' Each petal represents a child; Lyandikko used male and female symbols (plantain and sweet banana petals) alternately for boys and girls. One mother who had no child had asked for ten, another with two already for eight, another with three already for six. Lyandikko's arithmetic had gone wrong for there were only seventeen petals altogether. The horn is the horn of protection (*ekgumbe kwe ginge*) and it means here, 'May the "iron" stay nicely within, may it not come out in front or behind, may it stay inside.' (Iron is a symbol for the reproductive capacity of women.) Neither Lyandikko nor her son (who were both forthright in their discussion of ritual) seemed to be conscious of any symbolic enactment of coition, though a knowledge of the symbolism of the death and puberty rituals suggests that.

[1] Cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, p. 143.

There is no single supreme power; it lies in the second heaven, in medicines, in witches, and with the shades. Kyala is a hero, a benefactor, to whom sacrifices are made, and he is comparable to Lwembe and Kyungu, though he left no direct descendants. The evidence suggests that the names Kyala, Lwembe or Mbasi, Kyungu, and Ngulube were used in the same way in different areas, Kyala being the hero of the north-east shore of the Lake, Kyungu of the north-west, Lwembe of the central Nyakyusa valley, and Ngulube of the stony edge of the Livingstones. Sometimes informants used Lwembe and Kyala alternatively saying they mean the same thing, although, as we have noted, Lwembe (or Mbasi) was specially associated with cattle, whereas Kyala, who was killed and rose again, only controlled crops, and may perhaps be taken as personifying vegetation. The distinction is in no sense clear-cut, but there is a line of a cultivating people having been defeated by cattle-keepers with iron weapons, since Kyala was finally killed with a 'razor' (*ubwembe*), and The Razor himself —Lwembe—could not be killed though men tried.

In their creative aspect the heroes and shades are closely identified: 'Kyala creates desire'; 'the shade comes up in the belly when a woman conceives'; 'Kyala and the shades stand together'. Kaitile said:

> Lwembe . . . makes a child. I lie with a woman; Lwembe is there, he works. Sometimes, if he is angry he works badly and a leg is missing, or the woman has a miscarriage. Sometimes he works well. Lwembe goes about looking upon the mothers; he is in my bellows (i.e. in my will). It is he who came from BaKings . . . and wished first to build at Nsumba's (i.e. where Nsumba go now live). He failed there and went to Kasumbale's and failed there and he stood Lubaga. All is his. A child is his and a cow, and the iron which the Kings make is his, and food is his. . . . He is in a bull and a man. Where do you get the 'blood' (to beget a child)? Are you alone? . . . No, the Kabwe do not know Lwembe, but the people of the plain do, they are one with us.
> QUESTION: And Kyala?
> KAITILE: He is there, Kyala and Lwembe are together among us and the people of the plain. It is Lwembe who creates twins. You do not. Who has made your body? Who has created you? Who has given you strength and breath so that you are born, and live, and grow up, and marry? It is Lwembe and Kyala together.[1]

[1] cf. J. Buss, 'Die Zwillingsgeburt bei den Nyakyusa', *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 79. Jahrgang, pp. 194ff.; 'Aus dem Leben von Anyakisi Mahenge', *Zeitschrift für Eingeborenen-Sprachen*, Band xxiv (1934), p. 210.

the most of the leaders of Zionist Churches in the south. 797*

It is noticeable that the new 'Independent' Churches have a 795*
more elaborate form of service than the Church from which their 779
leaders have sprung, and Ngoneshi habitually wears conspicuous
vestments. There is, of course, great variation between different [796]
denominations in the emphasis placed on ritual, some Protestants
objecting to and turning their very insistence on outward and
simplicity into a ritual in itself—a taboo. There seems to be a clear
tendency in Southern Africa for 'Independent' Churches to
express themselves more and more in ritual and less in dogma. In
this way they reduce the gap between themselves and the pagans,
for the pagan religion is expressed almost exclusively in ritual,
whereas Christianity is expressed in creeds and confessions as well
as in the rituals of the Church.

(d) THE CONTRAST BETWEEN PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

There are certain common elements in the rituals celebrated by 797*
pagans and Christians: some of the occasions are the same, and in 795*
the conceptions of sacrifice, of death and rebirth, of confession and
cleansing, there are similarities; but there are also profound
differences. The conception of life, immortality, replaces the pre-
occupation with fertility, for though most Nyakyusa Christians,
like the pagans, regard celibacy as evidence of physical abnormal- [842]
ality, and the conventional desire of a woman is to have six [589]
children—a quiverful in Nyakyusa eyes—yet fertility is no
longer the end of all being, sought in every ritual. There are
profound differences, too, in the values expressed in the rituals
regarding sex relations, the range of moral obligations, and social [595]
change. In pagan thought polygyny is good—a man should have
many children. Child marriage is defended on the ground that a [589]
girl 'goes accustomed to her husband' if she goes to him early, and
homosexual relations between youths and young men are tolerated [838]
since they have no wives and cannot marry if the older men are
polygynists. What is upheld in the chastity of women, and a total [826]
separation of the sex activities of members of successive genera-
tions, expressed in the taboos limiting familiarity between mother [561]
and son, father and mobile daughter, father-in-law and daughter-
law. In Christian thought it is the 'pure in heart' who 'see God' [183]
and this is interpreted by the mission Churches to imply mono-
gamy. Only in the 'independent' African Churches is it assumed [595]

* The emphasis on healing, so common in the south, is absent.

I. Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1951 P3117 Ngombe P3117
Nyakyusa

believed to remain in a woman and, if she has neglected the taboos, the blood 'eats' the child later conceived (cf. Document, p. 229). This connection is insisted upon, though witchcraft inherited from the father is spoken of as being carried directly in his blood, which is thought to be transferred to his wife during intercourse. 759 841

Furthermore, a pregnant woman is believed to have some of the attributes of a witch. She, like a witch, causes grain and pulse to diminish if she passes near by when it is spread out to dry, or grows women who are stamping or grinding grain. If she speaks or comes too close 'the child inside catches hold of the food, and it disappears'. And if she should speak inadvertently, forgetting that she is pregnant, she must throw a stone or a piece of stick into the grain, or take a little of the flour in her hand, otherwise the women will say: 'She is proud, that girl, she is a witch, why is she talking?' and it is thought that she will have a miscarriage. A pregnant woman, like a witch, and one who has been using medicine, is spoken of as 'heavy' (nzito) in contrast with one who is 'empty' (bwere), having nothing in the belly, and Mwaikando explained that, 'When they speak of a pregnant woman being "heavy", they think that perhaps the foetus is witchcraft.' The foetus and the python of witchcraft are felt to be somewhat alike; but in most situations they are clearly distinguished, and indeed it is held that a woman may have both. If the afterbirth is delayed it is said that the woman is herself a witch, and her python is closing up the vaginal passage, so that the afterbirth cannot come away. A pregnant woman is not spoken of as a witch unless she harms someone by neglecting the taboos connected with her state, and her husband, who must keep the same taboos, may also be called a witch if he breaks them. 759 843

Sickness and death among men and cattle, and a diminution in the milk yield of cows, are held to be common results of witchcraft, and any 'unnatural' event, such as a case of bestiality, or of sodomy between a grown man and a boy (not between two youths), or of intercourse between a young man and an old woman, or of unusual behaviour among animals or birds, is taken as evidence that witches are at work. It is the 'unnatural' element that is emphasized (cf. Document, p. 225). An owl hooting on one's roof, and someone staring at one, are also taken as indications of witchcraft. 759 [787]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

121 object or action which it is felt to resemble. The images men use,
811 the things they feel to be alike, are determined in a general way by the form of the society, and Nyakyusa images are in terms of bananas, staple grains, cattle, smithing on a primitive forge, lineage organization and so on. There are cultural idioms, accepted forms of expression, which frequently recur, but the particular associations are not predictable any more than the associations made by a poet in our own society—the priest and the doctor are indeed in one aspect poets.

771 The essence of Nyakyusa ritual is that things which are felt to
813 be alike are taken as causally connected. Both positive actions and
843 avoidances or taboos are based on the assumption that like objects or actions react on one another. This was clearly recognized by an informant who remarked: 'avoidances come from resemblances.' The basis is invariably the *feeling* of likeness, but mixed up with this there is often exact observation, as in the following taboo. The husband of a pregnant woman may not hunt big game because, it is said, they will be unusually fierce and attack him particularly. The association made is between a pregnant woman who is irritable, 'fierce' (*nkali*), and the game which is fierce. The husband is identified with his wife, 'and', the Nyakyusa say, 'lion *always* attack a cow in calf'. Sometimes like things are felt to be antagonistic, as 'seed in the belly' and seed in the ground, and sometimes sympathetic. Sometimes like is thought to produce like—a pregnant woman is forbidden to sit close to someone lest she bears twins—and sometimes men mime a misfortune as a prophylactic against it.

789 The rituals are magical in the sense that efficacy is held to lie in
184 the particular material form,[1] but they vary in detail with the
771 cultural group, just as the language does.[2] The rituals of the Lakeshore plain in Tanganyika (MuNgonde) and of Selya are almost identical, but those of the Kukwe, the Lugulu, the Saku, the Ndali, the Penja, and the people of Ngonde in Nyasaland are all somewhat different. Differences in ritual are directly connected by the people themselves with differences in lineage, and the principle is maintained that every individual follows the ritual of his or her father's lineage, though a married woman will follow that of her

[1] For a discussion of this characteristic of magic cf. G. & M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change* (1945), pp. 72–3; 88–95.

[2] An account of the various cultural groups included under Nyakyusa, and of related peoples, is given in *Good Company*, pp. 1–3.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

585 881 child at her husband's.' Neglect to kill the bull may result in sterility. Mwaseba, a middle-aged man, said:

If the officiants, the mothers of the girl, have not eaten, and the father also, the girl will not bear a child, these people are angry and the shades are angry, they (the shades) help them (the living). And if you do not perform the other customs of the litter the shades are angry, the fathers and the mothers. They say: 'What! Have you not treated the child?'

Mwakionde, the doctor, explained:

[843] When a woman conceives and has a miscarriage, it is *mindu*, the shades are angry. Perhaps if we have not killed the bull of puberty we buy one. The shades are angry, saying: 'Why have we not received a libation of blood poured on the ground for our grandchild? They have done wrong towards us, we who created them.' The girl does not bear a child because pouring out the blood of a beast (bull or cow) is to pray (*ukona ililopa lya nombe ko kwiputa*).

Mwakobela, our neighbour, said:

If we have not eaten the bull of puberty, they bewitch us (*bikundoga*), the child does not bear a child. Our fellows in the lineage bewitch us, they say: 'We have not eaten the puberty meat.' Then, later on, the husband brings the bull and we eat, and the *ija mmapa* meat we throw in the banana grove, and we pray and pray and the girl conceives.

842 775 The fertility of the girl is believed to depend upon driving away the shade of her father's lineage from her body. We have already quoted (p. 98) the prayer: 'Here is the meat! I have eaten the food of others, *come out a little*, may she bear a child at her husband's.' Mwaisilage explained this conception:

Those of old said: 'We drive away Kyala and the shades, may she bear at her husband's.' She moves to others, to a different lineage. May that lineage rise up from the dead (*kiyukege ikikolo kila*). If we do not treat the girl she will not bear a child at her husband's.

To understand this it is necessary to understand the Nyakyusa theory of conception. It is held that sexual desire in both men and women comes from Kyala and the shades, and without their support a man is impotent, a woman barren. Kasitile was quite explicit on the matter:

Kyala is in the belly. He causes the blood of a woman which forms a child to flow and the blood of the man also. We say that Kyala is in the belly; he watches over us at the conception of a child. But our fathers,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

841 QUESTION: And menses?
775 MWANDISI: When the shades are angry a woman is constantly menstruating and does not bear a child; if they are not angry she conceives.

833 And on another occasion he said:
842
775 Lust comes from the shades; if they are angry with you you are impotent; you cannot beget a child.

His wife added: 'My husband says in his heart: "Let me go to my wife." It is the shade that makes him.'

One informant after another mentioned *both* Kyala (or Lwembe) *and* the shades as being present in intercourse. Mwakionde, after [843] talking of miscarriages being due to the anger of the shades, went on:

Kyala has created the bowel of desire. If a man is impotent we say Kyala has not given him breath to beget a child.

KAKUJU: If my child runs off with a man, whether a stranger or her husband, before she has reached puberty and I continue angry, if Kyala has helped me she does not bear a child. Then it is said 'her father was angry'. They come to me bringing the remaining marriage-cattle and I pray and she bears a child.

QUESTION: If the husband asked for her properly and deflowered her before puberty?

KAKUJU: There is no case, it was all right, even long ago. I said: 'Finish paying the cattle.' Perhaps he begged me, saying: 'I am poor, Father,' and I was satisfied.

842 No pagan questions the power of the shades over fertility, and
775 this power is believed to be exercised by the mother's lineage, as well as that of the father. Angombwike, the Christian, said:

[881] The pagans fear that if they do not perform the puberty ritual when a girl reaches puberty, she will dry up. The blood will not come again even though she is not pregnant. Then, if her periods do not come for two or three months, like this, she will never bear a child. They say the shades are angry and have bound her fertility. And if she does not reach puberty at all, if menstruation does not begin, her father prays in the banana grove, saying: 'You, fathers, what are you angry about?' And if the girl's mother's brother is angry on account of cattle—perhaps her father has not given marriage-cattle properly for her mother—he, the mother's brother, binds a wisp of the litter (*ulufumbo*) from her puberty ritual in the loft, then the girl will not bear a child. Inquiry is made of a diviner who says: 'The mother's brother has bound her.' The father takes a cow to him and says: 'I am sorry, I have done wrong, I

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

195 *Ukukinda* means to pass, to surpass, and *ukukilanya* (overstepping), in its metaphorical use, implies that 'one has power and the other is weak, so the powerful one does some injury to the weak one'.

834 Fourthly, as was made apparent in the puberty ritual, it is held 842 to be dangerous to 'mix bloods'. Adultery is not only an infringe- [753] ment of the exclusive rights of a husband, but it may injure him directly, causing him to have diarrhœa, which is a 'getting rid of the filth' due to contact with a strange 'blood'. It was implied that intercourse with a menstruating woman was in some sense 'mixing bloods' also, and the danger to parents of contact with a newly-married daughter before a precautionary ritual has been performed, stems from the same thing; the parents, through their daughter, are brought into contact with the blood of another lineage, that of the new son-in-law.

●843 Besides being 'heavy' and therefore liable to 'overstep' others, a pregnant woman is thought to reduce the quantity of any grain she approaches, for the foetus within her is voracious and snatches it. Therefore neither she nor her husband (who participates in her condition) may approach other people's millet[1] or beans or oil-seeds spread out to dry, or speak to those who are reaping or grinding or stamping or brewing, without making a gesture of good-will by spitting on a pebble or knotting a leaf, and throwing it into the heap of grain. The sanction is fear of a miscarriage, for the owners of the food may have used medicines 'so that the food may be much and people be astonished'. Her own crops a pregnant woman may handle freely, and a chief's wife does not observe the taboo in her own village.

Two or three quotations will make these conceptions clearer:

ANGOMBWIKE: When my wife has conceived they say we are both 'heavy', both my wife and I. Then, if oil-seeds or millet are out drying in the sun, they tell us not to speak. 'You are heavy ones,' they say. So we are silent. They say that if there is talking we will catch hold of the oil-seeds or millet, and it will diminish. Yes, I must avoid the grain even though I am alone, because I am heavy.

KASITILE: Maize does not vanish but millet and beans. The child which is being made bewitches them; they disappear. . . . The child has opened its mouth wide, its jaws gape.[2] It is that child which is being

[184] [1] Some held that millet was the only grain affected; others maintained that maize was also.

[2] *Umwana apambwile ulupambo nkanwa. Ulupambo* is used of the gaping jaws of a crocodile.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

created in the belly which snatches millet and beans. These are the foods that Kyala said are important. 843

MWAIKAMBO: When a woman is pregnant she fears to pass people who are at work planting, smithing, milking, or brewing beer, because they say the child in the belly, the weight (*ubusito*), is like a witch, it will damage food like witchcraft; beer is spoiled and tastes nasty, food does not grow, the smith's iron is not easily worked, the milk is not good. If a pregnant woman comes across her fellows planting she stops them for a few minutes while she passes. If they are brewing they give her a little beer to taste.

ANGOMBWIKE: As for avoiding food, a woman avoids especially when she has been pregnant for one or two months. It is said that if she passes through the gardens, perhaps when people are planting, or when they have already planted but the seed has not yet sprouted, the child in the belly tries to snatch the millet, and it meets the medicine (for people plant millet with a medicine, saying: 'May my millet not rot in the ground'), then perhaps the mother has a miscarriage. If the child in her belly has sprouted then she does not fear much . . . and if the millet has sprouted she does not fear much, but when it has not yet sprouted then the medicine is fierce.

Besides the symbol of the foetus with 'jaws agape' snatching food, there is a symbol of 'seed within' fighting 'seed without'. Mwaikambo was careful to point out that this interpretation was a personal one, assented to, but not volunteered, by others he consulted; however, it was later confirmed by Kasitile.

MWAIKAMBO: A pregnant woman should avoid those planting beans and millet, or straining ointment, sunning millet, or brewing beer, because there is kinship (*ubukamu*) between the child in her belly and food, we call all of them seed (*mbeju*). The seed in her belly and that outside fight; that within is fierce and overcomes that outside. To help them plant is to make friends; to knot a leaf is to bind the anger of the human seed. All those with whom I have discussed the matter agreed that this is so, but they have agreed when I began to explain it to them; none of them understand the other symbols. I discussed it with about eleven men.

KASITILE: The taboo against a pregnant woman passing millet and other seed spread out to dry is because these seeds fight with the child inside. It is seed, it defeats them; it is seed, it is water, it is blood. To bind a leaf is to bind that blood within, that it may not kill the seeds out drying. If someone else's food is being planted and a pregnant woman approaches, and does not bind a leaf and throw it in the grain basket, then the seed is insufficient to plant.

A general principle of Nyakyusa thought is the opposition of 828 772

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

like activities; things which are felt to be alike are often felt to be antagonistic. We have shown that certain of the pregnancy taboos are interpreted in terms of the opposition between seed in plants and seed in the womb, and between pumpkins in the field and pumpkins in the vagina, and we have touched on the opposition between procreation and war. Sexual intercourse, 'the war of the mats', is directly compared with war; the two are felt to be alike and therefore incompatible. Association with a menstruating or parturient woman is felt to be weakening to a warrior; continence of a warrior before battle is enjoined—'men feared to die quickly if they slept with their wives just before war.' Moreover, a menstruating wife never touches her husband's weapons lest they be weakened.

Hunting is classed with war and the same taboos apply. Added to them is the notion that, since a pregnant woman is often angry, the animals her husband hunts will be angry also, and he is in much greater danger than an ordinary hunter.

ANGOMBWIKE: If you go into the bush and you have left your wife heavy, at home, if you meet a lion it will not run off, but will injure you, maul you. And if you are many, a leopard or a lion will attack you, the heavy one, not the others.

QUESTION: Why?

ANGOMBWIKE: It is as if there was much anger. And we've noticed something else, if a lion attacks cattle it always attacks a cow in calf. And another thing. If a woman is heavy she is very bad-tempered (*nkali*), it's like a passion. Perhaps the woman is bad-tempered or perhaps good, and you, the husband, are bad-tempered. Pregnancy shows in many ways. . . .

A pregnant woman has a great fire in her body, she sweats a lot and is passionate (*nelyojo*), she is fierce (*nkali*). That fire is strong; we all flee from the woman, we all dislike her. And when pregnancy begins the animals in the bush wish to kill you, the husband. That fierceness [the fire] makes them hate you; you are like a twin. A first-born child is very fierce (*nkali*), so a woman is very passionate and sweats a great deal.

His wife's pregnancy puts a man in danger from wild animals, and so does a quarrel with her, quite apart from the pregnancy which tends to produce such quarrels. Mwaisumo said: 'If I go hunting after quarrelling with my wife it is very dangerous, I might be killed by a wild animal.'

Besides the idea that animals will *attack* the husband of a preg-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

nant woman there is a notion that they will *flee* from him, and therefore he will be hopelessly unsuccessful in hunting. Isaiah, who persisted in hunting while his wife was pregnant and rarely brought in anything, was the laughing-stock of his neighbours. Lyandileko, the woman doctor, explained: 'The animals flee because the man smells. He smells because his wife is pregnant.'

Procreation and smithing are also felt to be in opposition because they are felt to be alike. A pregnant woman usually avoids a forge altogether, lest she miscarry, and her husband, if he approaches one, remains silent until he has picked up a piece of charcoal, spat on it, and thrown it into the fire. If he neglects to do so, the iron does not coalesce. Kasitile explained the taboo very clearly:

> If a woman is pregnant she and her husband both fear to go near a forge lest either the iron or the foetus is spoiled. The foetus is spoiled only because medicines are used on the forge; that is to say, the medicine of the forge spoils the iron in the belly of a woman, and she has a miscarriage. But if there is no medicine then the iron is spoiled; it is difficult to work until the smith has sought a doctor to treat it with medicine; then the iron is all right again.

Kasitile speaks of 'the iron in the belly of the woman' and the details of this symbolism are instructive. Angombwike said:

> When a smith forges a spear he does not sleep with his wives[1] because, we say, when a woman conceives the fire blazes within her to forge a person, and the woman's fire and the smith's fire fight. When a smith comes with the fire of his smithy on his body and lies with a woman, the woman has a miscarriage.
>
> The iron of a woman is that within which receives the seed [i.e. the womb]. And we ordinary people who are not smiths, we fear the smith's fire. We do not fear to injure a woman, no, but we fear *ilipondelo*, the disease of the forge, in children. If a man sits talking with a smith at his forge and catches hold of the iron being forged there, if his wife at home bears a child, the child will cough: 'He, he.' It's like the cough of *ingotolo*, but we call it 'the forge'. Then people say: 'The forge! Indeed, you, the father, must have sat with a smith at the forge.' Then the father thinks, and he remembers, and takes the child to that smith with whom he sat, and the smith lets his bellows play on the child's body

[1] All informants were agreed that a forge is dangerous to a pregnant woman or her husband, but a smith consulted denied that he observed any sex taboos himself. 'The fire is mine.' 'But,' he said, 'if my wife is pregnant or has given birth to twins, when I go to someone else's forge I myself, with the wisdom of a smith, spit on a piece of charcoal and throw it in the fire.'

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

843 and that cures him. So, when a man comes to a smith's forge for the
326 first time, he always takes a piece of charcoal from the fire and spits on
it and throws it into the fire. This means: 'I have come to your forge,
772 smith, may this fire not come on my body.'

And sometimes the smith's iron does not glow and sparkle well. Then he is angry, saying: 'Heavy ones are present. Some of you have pregnant wives, you are spoiling my fire.' We all pick up pieces of charcoal and spit on them and throw them into the fire again. Then the fire blazes up well and the iron glows and sparks.

Mwambuputa, the village headman, confirmed this:

When my wife is pregnant I fear the smithy. I spit on a piece of charcoal. Until she gives birth I fear, but when we just play together on the mat, and she has not yet conceived, I do not fear. . . . Only when it is seen that the 'iron' is there do I fear.

QUESTION: The iron?

MWAMBUPUTA: It's the blood of the man. The man is the smith. He forges iron there with the woman. The woman is the bellows. The smithing flourishes because of the sweat. Sometimes a woman conceives if I have lain with her two or three times—if Kyala gives us a child—but some delay, and I sleep with them a whole month.

QUESTION: The woman is a bellows?

[833] MWAMBUPUTA: Yes, because when she is having intercourse she gasps: 'He, he, he!'

QUESTION: And the man?

MWAMBUPUTA: Yes, but where do we find the fire? In the body of the woman! It's a great fire. Hence we say the bellows is the woman. It's smithing. Women are the anvil. Is there not fire in their bodies? Therefore I hammer there.

The primary taboo is on the pregnant woman approaching the smithy lest she injure it, but it is also thought that, like grain and cattle, it may be treated with strong medicines which will cause her to miscarry if she breaks the taboo. Hence the Nyakyusa dictum: 'She who has a miscarriage is she who is proud (*namatingo*).'

784 The conception that like things are antagonistic, and that the
772 sexual activities of different couples must not be mixed, is clearly shown in the taboos relating to fire and the calabash cup used for water. An elderly councillor of Ngonde, himself a Christian, explained it:

It is taboo for married people to blow up the fire in someone else's house, or to drink from the calabash cup; if they do they will bring a

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

coughing disease to the owners of the house. . . . Pagans used to fear to let 784
those who are sleeping together touch the hearth-bricks or blow up the 772
fire in their house for, if they do so, then the owners of the house, both man and woman, fall sick coughing. They say it is the disease of fires (*myoto*). . . . But when a woman has borne a child and is suckling it, and her husband is not with her, then it is not taboo.

Making fire by friction and, in more general terms, fire, are 831
symbols of sexual intercourse, and 'the fire of the body and the 772
fire of the house fight'. Drinking from a calabash cup is perhaps [372]
also a symbol of intercourse—the shape of the cup suggests it—but there is no direct evidence of such an association.

The taboo on mixing the sex activities of different couples is 834
pushed to the point that women avoid for a day the milk of a cow 772
that has been with the bull. 'They say: "We will harm the cow. It will abort." They compare it with themselves as women.'

Two last pregnancy taboos may be noted which turn, not on 843
the feeling that like things are antagonistic, but that like produces 772
like. Things felt to be alike are treated as causally related. We quote Mwambuputa, the village headman:

> Women fear to stand in a doorway when they are pregnant. They say: 'How should the child stand in the doorway? It will refuse to come out.' Because if birth is delayed, it is as if the child refused to come out of the house. That is the symbol. And I, the husband, feared also [to stand in a doorway]. Now we men do not fear; it is finished; but women still fear.
>
> And another thing, when a woman was pregnant we feared to sit close together, I, the husband, and my child. It was taboo. And for my wife and another woman to sit close together was taboo. It was said that she would bear twins, because we had sat together. Now we men do not fear, but women still do.

(*b*) *The confinement*

A first confinement, like first menstruation, is the occasion for 844
elaborate ritual, and though at later confinements (as at later menstrual periods) certain taboos must be observed, they are less numerous and less strictly enforced than those connected with the birth of the first child, *umwana gwa busungu*.

A first child should be born at the husband's mother's house, 'and if the first child is a girl they will tell her to come again for the second, saying: "Come that we may treat our husband [i.e. grandson]." ' The woman lies, during labour, on a heap of leaves

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Lugulu

Even after her return a wife may delay before cooking or drawing water again for her husband. Mwaisumo said: 846

> Some men do not let their wives cook for them until the child's body has gone black and it laughs. . . . This is mainly due to the mockery of friends, for some people refuse to come and eat with a man if the food is cooked by a woman who has recently borne a child, even though she has come out of confinement. They laugh at him and say: 'Why do you eat food prepared by a newly delivered woman? Have you no sense of disgust?' And her friends laugh at the woman, too, saying: 'Look you, the child has not yet grown at all!'
>
> MWAMBUPUTA: Formerly a woman with a new-born child did not cook food. We said she was filthy. What food that she had overstepped would anyone eat? Until two months had passed she avoided cooking, then she cooked.[1] And she hid the child. Men should not see it for two months. It was taboo.

This is the full ritual performed for a first-born child and, some say, for the first-born of each sex. For others there is no sending a fowl to the girl's parents, or bringing her back with gifts, and it does not matter where the child is born; but still the seclusion of mother and infant, treatment with *ikipiki* medicine brought by the husband's mother, and shaving are felt to be important. 851

We did not find any significant differences between the rituals of birth in Selya and in Kukwe, but there is one rite peculiar to the Lugulu people and regarded by other Nyakyusa with somewhat shocked amusement, which is interesting because it expresses, in crude terms, a conflict between the groom and the bride's family repeatedly suggested in the ritual of Selya and Kukwe, but never openly acknowledged. We did not see this rite ourselves, but quote the account of Kakune, the doctor, whose mother was Lugulu. Though himself a Kukwe, he speaks in the first person as if he were Lugulu—a dramatic device common enough in Nyakyusa. 184

> KAKUNE: When my daughter goes to her husband, and first becomes pregnant, they tell us: 'She is pregnant.' And we say: 'Oh, she is pregnant? She is pregnant! War has come!' When she has borne her child, the go-between in the marriage representing the husband comes to her parents with a hen to tell them. Then later they send the go-between a message, saying: 'Come'. Meanwhile they have prepared huge quantities of food: porridge, and curds, and beer. And then the girl's husband calls his friends of the age-village (he does not call his relatives, but his [843] 851

[1] A monogamist eats with his friends in the age-village, or is provided for by his mother, like a bachelor.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

861 romping glee; and the musical jingle of the tiny bells that most of them wear on their ankles up till three or so is pleasant to the European, and rings with a thrilling response in the heart of the adoring mother, who sits on the ground watching the gambols of her little one.

843 The unborn child is treated with great care, and surrounded with superstitions. The mother must submit to restrictions in regard to diet, and indications of the sex of the coming child are given by the preferences she shows for permitted foods. She must not eat hot food, for that would burn the child's head; nor beans, for they might cause the disease called *ilyulu*. An expectant mother who drinks much milk will bear a son; if she has a great desire for flesh foods, a daughter is known to be coming. A scolding woman need not be surprised if her child is a boy, especially if her husband is the victim of her language. Some women will not eat rice, perhaps because it is a new food, all the possibilities of which have not yet been fully explored.

844 The worst possible place for a woman to have her child born is at her own father's house, unless it is with the consent of her husband; for every one will assume that the child has an unknown father. If an [754] expectant mother suspects her husband of sorcery she will take care to have her child born at a distance, so that it may not inherit its father's undesirable powers, these being transmissible only at close quarters, and only after birth. With heathen women, the birth, if in the daytime, takes place mostly in the open

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

576 the road, and all spears must be lowered from the "ready" position, as must axes or other weapons. It is *mwiko* to attend to one's personal comfort in a public place.

843 784 The prohibitions connected with women are very numerous, and only a selection is given. A pregnant woman may not go near food in any condition, growing, being threshed, or being cooked; nor may she go near beer that is being prepared. If she goes out of the house, she must not turn back in the doorway; the ancestors are there; she must go right out, and if she needs to go in again, she must do it from a pace or so from the door. The penalty is the death of the child she is carrying. An interesting prohibition is that against going behind anyone, and it applies specially though not exclusively to women. The incised medicine of the person behind whom she passes loses its virtue; but the evil may be averted by the person turning round to face her. A woman must not sweep rubbish out of the house; she must lift it out; to sweep it out is to scatter her husband's wealth.

595 The younger wife must not begin sowing or planting until the elder has begun; she must not sleep at night nearer the fire than the elder; she must carry loads for the elder wife, and be generally in a subordinate position. There is no reluctance on the part of the first wife to see her husband taking others; the more he has the greater is her position. A singular prohibition is that which forbids a man to take his widowed mother home to care for her; he must care

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

were connected. And if the expected judgement does not fall when a son has wronged his father it is said: 'The father loves the child so much that he only complains half-heartedly.' 797 795 754

It is admitted (when the point is pressed) that misfortunes *may* fall on good men as well as evil, and then they are interpreted as a discipline, a testing, from God, but this is 'a hard saying', scarcely to be believed. The *inequalities* in the fortunes of men demand explanations and Christians, as well as pagans, find it very difficult to believe that they are 'natural'. They always suspect some human intervention; they believe that men manipulate mystical power to buy fortune for themselves. The reality of pythons in the belly may be doubted by the better educated, but belief in 'medicines' has scarcely diminished, and new medicines are constantly coming in from outside, among them costly patent medicines guaranteed to cure any and every disease, or to make the user popular and successful. Some sort of distinction between medicines which it is permissible for a Christian to use and those, like love-potions and defence against witchcraft, which are not permissible, is attempted, but the line is an arbitrary one. And often there is a conflict in the individual's own mind: as one elderly woman of a chief's family (who would normally have taken the first-fruits medicines) put it: 'It's taboo to use these medicines; even if we do fall ill we say: "No, I will not take it, I look towards God (pointing upwards)." '

Most Christians have pagan kinsfolk who are quick to interpret misfortunes in pagan terms, and the sort of conflict of ideas that arises is illustrated in the case of a young woman who died in childbirth. She and her father were Moravians; her husband had joined the Pentecostal Church which rejects all Nyakyusa medicines. Her first child was still-born, the second died shortly after its birth, and her father insisted that she should have been taking a medicine which it was customary for women in his lineage (he was a Penja) to drink during pregnancy; the girl herself wished to be treated, for she did not accept the teaching of the Pentecostal Church on this point, but her husband refused. During her third pregnancy she was ill and finally, with her husband's consent, she was carried to a Nyakyusa doctor of her father's choosing; nevertheless she died. Her father and her husband had been on bad terms, the father demanding, rather arbitrarily, the balance of the marriage cattle; and there was a great deal of gossip, some neighbours hinting that her own father had killed

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Food (other than meat) is provided on the day of the burial by the women of the home at which the burial takes place, on the succeeding day by visiting relatives, and on the third day by village neighbours. Women neighbours, like woman relatives, often bring gifts of bark-cloth belts (*amakiba*) with which to bind up the bellies of their bereaved friends, who are all atremble and full of fear, and so support them. These belts symbolize the sympathy of friends in the fearful grief of the mourners. 'If a woman wears many belts at a burial that means that she has many friends; her passionate grief is comforted by their friendship.'[1] And neighbours, like relatives and close friends from other chiefdoms, may bring cloths which are used to wrap the corpse and bind up the bellies of the chief mourners. But these gifts of food, firewood, belts, and cloth are the limit of a neighbour's obligations; very rarely does a neighbour bring a bull to kill for the funeral feast, whereas close kinsmen and affines are obliged to provide a bull or cow for this purpose if they have one. And neighbours take virtually no share in the elaborate ritual which follows for cleansing relatives from the contagion of death, driving the thought of the deceased out of their minds, and bringing back his spirit to bless the home. Their only part is to bring small gifts of millet from which to brew the beer drunk at the close of this ritual.

764 [431 292]

At an ordinary birth there is very little ceremony and the village as a group is not concerned, though close friends will help the mother during her confinement, fetching wood and water for her, and bringing occasional gifts of cooked food; but twin births are regarded as fearful and dangerous, and an elaborate ritual is performed to cleanse relatives from the contagion which, if left untreated, is believed to lead to serious swelling of the arms, legs, and stomachs, accompanied by diarrhoea. Relatives are treated with many medicines, while village neighbours are sprinkled with one only, but their cattle, especially the cattle herded with those of the man who has begotten twins, are thought to be in danger. At one twin ritual we watched there was some discussion whether all the cattle of the age-village should be treated, or only those of the herd-group to which the father of the twins belonged. Finally it was decided that on previous occasions all the cattle of the village had been treated, and a message was sent

[844] 621 845 783 [753]

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939), p. 12.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

has lain with the dead man's wives. A brother will approach the corpse 837
without fear. But there is another trouble: if a man seduces his brother's 684
wife the husband may have diarrhœa perhaps with bloody stools. Many people do not come to their fathers' funerals before the burial. And also if the father is ill, and they see he is near death, they run away, returning when he has been buried. Because it is said that a man will die if he has slept with his mother, his father's wife, and sees his father or sees the corpse, as did Jones, the son of Kisokora. He slept with his mothers in secret. When his father died (in a different village from that in which Jones lived) Jones seized his father's cattle and ran away with them. When they had buried his father he came to mourn. The women with whom he had slept told on him because he had given them syphilis.

A wife who commits adultery with her husband's son is held to be in great danger also. Mwandisi said:

If they conceal it and approach the grave both the son and the wife will die. Both are washed naked, under a waterfall. The officiant washes them together with a fowl.

QUESTION: Why the waterfall and the nakedness?

MWANDISI: The water is to take away the sickness. Being naked is so 837
that the case may go away and you, the man, may be empty (*bwasi*) 684
and the woman may be empty. For if such a son looks into the grave 783
and approaches to weep, the shades and Kyala are angry and say: 'Are you a relative? How can you look into the grave? It is you who have killed him, by causing him diarrhœa.' And if the woman approaches and holds her dead husband in her arms, then she dies. Those below are angry and say: 'Is she your relative?' And she dies. But if she has committed adultery with someone who is no relation she approaches and does not fear, and the adulterer does not fear either, but approaches.

For a woman, adultery is held to be dangerous also in child- 845
birth: 684

If she has had lovers, she has a difficult delivery and the child 783
refuses to come out until she confesses. Sometimes she confesses three, then the child comes, it comes out. . . . She confesses the name and takes a bit of stick and spits on it and throws it away, and you will be surprised to see that she gives birth at once. If she is very bad she will tell you three names and throw away three sticks.

Any contact with childbirth is held to be even more dangerous 844
to men than contact with menstruation. It also is thought to cause weakness, and it is warriors who are most affected. Traditionally,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Traditionally,
● 844 no man entered the confinement hut in which a woman remained
[177] until the cord had dropped off the new-born child and she had purified herself, and she did not normally resume cooking for her husband for some weeks; but these taboos are less strictly observed than formerly, partly, our informants insisted, because the country has been pacified and men do not fear to die in battle if they neglect them.

The obvious interpretation here is that a man is felt to partake of the weakness of a menstruating or confined woman if he comes into association with her. 'His legs become swollen and painful and he is very tired'; 'strength leaves him'; 'he has no speed in running'; 'his belly aches and his body grows red'. . . . The picture is surely one of a *woman's* physical weakness: a man is identified with his wife during pregnancy, observing the taboos she observes, and during menstruation and confinement he must isolate himself as far as possible from her lest he share her weakness; but none of our informants make a connection between the weakness of the woman and the weakness of the man—the interpretation is ours. The Nyakyusa were obsessed with the idea of 'filth' emanating from menstruation and childbirth; indeed, the feeling that women, by reason of their physiology and the taboo on washing during menstruation, are dirty, is cited by men as one of the reasons for not eating with them or sitting to chat with them. Only in this limited sense is the conception of ritual impurity linked with social
[171 status. Here the contrast with a Hindu society, in which states of
783] ritual impurity (basically very similar to those of the Nyakyusa) are linked with caste differences, is marked.[1]

842 The second general conception underlying the taboos of procreation is that of *ubusito*, heaviness, a condition associated with sexual intercourse, pregnancy, the python of witchcraft, and medicines.[2] A 'heavy' (*nsito*) person is dangerous to an 'empty' (*bwasi*) one, hence women sleeping with their husbands, and pregnant women avoid mothers with infants and brides in seclusion, who are 'empty'; and the 'empty' are treated to prevent diarrhœa and give them weight. Diarrhœa and 'emptiness' are closely associated.

842 The great specific against 'emptiness' is *ikipiki* medicine, used
789 in the puberty, birth, and death rituals, and even used to protect cattle against a menstruating woman. 'If a woman is the only wife

[1] cf. M. N. Srinivas, *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India* (1952).
[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 95.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

coughing disease to the owners of the house. . . . Pagans used to fear to let 784
those who are sleeping together touch the hearth-bricks or blow up the 772
fire in their house for, if they do so, then the owners of the house, both man and woman, fall sick coughing. They say it is the disease of fires (*nyoto*). . . . But when a woman has borne a child and is suckling it, and her husband is not with her, then it is not taboo.

Making fire by friction and, in more general terms, fire, are 831
symbols of sexual intercourse, and 'the fire of the body and the 772
fire of the house fight'. Drinking from a calabash cup is perhaps [372]
also a symbol of intercourse—the shape of the cup suggests it—but there is no direct evidence of such an association.

The taboo on mixing the sex activities of different couples is 834
pushed to the point that women avoid for a day the milk of a cow 772
that has been with the bull. 'They say: "We will harm the cow. It will abort." They compare it with themselves as women.'

Two last pregnancy taboos may be noted which turn, not on 843
the feeling that like things are antagonistic, but that like produces 772
like. Things felt to be alike are treated as causally related. We quote Mwambuputa, the village headman:

> Women fear to stand in a doorway when they are pregnant. They say: 'How should the child stand in the doorway? It will refuse to come out.' Because if birth is delayed, it is as if the child refused to come out of the house. That is the symbol. And I, the husband, feared also [to stand in a doorway]. Now we men do not fear; it is finished; but women still fear.
>
> And another thing, when a woman was pregnant we feared to sit close together, I, the husband, and my child. It was taboo. And for my wife and another woman to sit close together was taboo. It was said that she would bear twins, because we had sat together. Now we men do not fear, but women still do.

(*b*) *The confinement*

A first confinement, like first menstruation, is the occasion for 844
elaborate ritual, and though at later confinements (as at later menstrual periods) certain taboos must be observed, they are less numerous and less strictly enforced than those connected with the birth of the first child, *umuana gwa bwanga*.

A first child should be born at the husband's mother's house, 'and if the first child is a girl they will tell her to come again for the second, saying: "Come that we may treat our husband [i.e. grandson]." ' The woman lies, during labour, on a heap of leaves

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

844 behind the huts, moving inside after delivery, on to a litter of banana leaves spread for her. Her mother-in-law attends her and treats her and the new-born child with *ikipiki* medicine. She washes them in a basin made of two banana leaves, one sweet banana, one plantain, and is particularly careful to wash the infant's mouth and the mother's vagina. Powdered *ikipiki* is sprinkled in the water in the form of a cross. This is done 'that the mother and child should not have diarrhœa'. The cross is a symbol of overstepping (*kokukilyana kuno*, *kokukilanya kuno*, demonstrating a cross) and is made 'because heavy ones, those who are with their husbands on the bed, will come and overstep the mother and child if they are not treated'. Mother and child are also given a roasted banana with powdered *ikipiki* sprinkled on it. In bringing the *ikipiki* the husband's mother acknowledges the legitimacy of the child. 'If someone does not give a child *ikipiki* it is a bastard. It is as if the husband said: "Why do you insult your husband by committing adultery with others? Others have created this foetus; it is not mine!" '

[851 848]

The cord is tied with a shred of bark-cloth and then cut with a bamboo knife. 'An iron knife is taboo, it's a spear, other children will die from the spear disease (*ulukuego*); to use a spear is like killing someone.' The after-birth is buried in the banana plantation with a piece of the cord sticking up, and later the litter is burnt at the same place. 'Only officiants (*abanyage*) eat of these bananas growing over the burying place—no young person may do so for it's the banana grove of the litter.' The cord must be buried upright or 'the mother will not bear again'.

845 A delayed delivery is most commonly attributed to the woman's
775 adultery,[1] and she is pressed by the midwife to confess the name of her lover or lovers, but it is also believed that it may be due to *imisala*, that is the shades. The husband consults a diviner who indicates whether the *imisala* is on his side or that of the woman's father and the one who is thus indicated should pray. 'Sometimes the woman herself tells of a quarrel which would lead to *imisala* and then her husband or father goes to pray.'

846 Mother and child remain in confinement until the navel cord drops off, sheltered from 'heavy ones', who should not enter or even greet the mother from the doorway, and from men, to whom both mother and child are dangerous. 'Men must not see a tiny

[71]

[1] Unlike certain other Central African peoples, the Nyakyusa do not attribute difficulty in childbirth to the adultery of the husband.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

him. They fear that if heavy ones come and speak, those who are pregnant, the child will suffer, it will become weak and exhausted on the litter, and will have constant diarrhœa. So they go to the cross-roads and mix millet flour and powdered *ikipiki* with the feather of a chicken, they give the child some in his mouth to make the motions firm, and close the bowels. They do this[1] at the cross-roads that those who pass may step over it and take the disease away. That medicine closes the bowel, it saves the stomach and bowel when heavy ones come, those who are pregnant. If we do not treat it the child becomes exhausted with diarrhœa, though the mother is all right. 789 846

It is taboo to give birth in the house, a woman bears a child outside on a pile of leaves; when she has borne the child they sprinkle powdered *ikipiki* on those leaves, but *if I*, the father, am angry about the child I refuse the *ikipiki*, saying: 'It's not my child, it's a bastard.' That is of old though. Now, in European times, they treat all children. Yes, now all are my children; formerly there were bastards. The *ikipiki* is our blood, it is kept in the senior wife's house. 844 [177]

There was some disagreement on this point. Nsyani, an elderly man who was already married before Europeans came to the country, when asked: 'Do you perform rituals for bastards?' replied: 'Yes, they are born with[2] my cattle (*Bapapigwe munombe gyangu*).' Four other men who discussed the matter together, agreed that— 848

When a woman has borne an illegitimate child we know that the child is the child of her husband because it was born with his cattle (*munombe gyake*). Whether the child is a boy or a girl, whether the genitor is known or unknown, and whether he has paid damages or not, the children belong to the woman's lord (*mwene akikala*). When an illegitimate child is born to an unmarried girl her fathers perform the ritual, for that 'man of the long grass' is like a bull. For an illegitimate child born to a married woman the rituals are performed by the husband, for the 'man of the long grass' is like a bull or a cock. Who is going to give a calf to a man alone, the bull who begot it?

But Lyandileko who, as a doctor and a grandmother, was intimately concerned in such matters, insisted:

If a woman has committed adultery and we do not know the man, we give her earth; it's just rubbish. If I give her medicine she and the child will die. If she has borne the child in the long grass and her father refuses to let her enter the house, non-relatives give it to her. If I, the mother, am there I give her this earth [touching the ground].

[1] The baby is not taken to the crossroads, only the *ikipiki* and millet flour.
[2] Literally within.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

861 romping glee; and the musical jingle of the tiny bells that most of them wear on their ankles up till three or so is pleasant to the European, and rings with a thrilling response in the heart of the adoring mother, who sits on the ground watching the gambols of her little one.

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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

air, as much privacy as possible being secured in the universal banana groves: and always in a sitting, not a lying position. 844

A difficult birth is a serious misfortune for the mother. Births are normally easy, and difficult labour indicates the wrath of the spirits for evil done. Medicine is in all cases given to facilitate delivery, and if this fails other means must be tried. A message is sent to the husband and the father of the woman, and prayer, without ceremony, for the matter is urgent, is offered by both men: 845 782

> "Ye fathers and ancestors, and ye who are of the far past, let this child be born safely. If I have sinned, be merciful; and if ye will not be merciful, kill me, but let the woman and the child live."

While thus praying he has been chewing the pith of a banana leaf, and at the end he takes water into his mouth, which he squirts out, saying, "Let my sin be carried away," and throws on the roof the chewed pith; for if he is not by birth the representative of the family he has no natural right to pray, but the ceremony of chewing and throwing on the roof averts evil consequences.

If all this fails it is clear that the woman has sinned; and her only hope of life for herself and her child lies in confession. The midwife takes a number of small sticks which she throws on the ground one by one, inviting the suffering woman to name the men with whom she has consorted. Natives assert emphatically that birth becomes easier after confession; 845 783

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

845 and the statement cannot be altogether devoid of
783 truth. The influence of the mind upon the body is universally admitted: may it not be that the consciousness of guilt has the effect of contracting the muscles, and the relaxation which follows confession renders birth less painful? And may it not be that even a false confession, wrung from a despairing sufferer, brings a momentary relief sufficient to bring the child to the birth? One is glad to add, however, that many women have the courage to refuse altogether to submit to this shameful ordeal, insisting that their trouble is due, not to the wrath of the spirits, but to other causes, and that they will die rather than confess what is not true.

• 844 When birth has taken place, the cord is cut with a
846 bamboo knife, and the placenta buried in the family place of prayer, a small part protruding to leave a connection which insures further children. All this time no one in the house may swallow saliva. The father calls out to know the sex of the child, but he must not yet enter (for the party have entered the house as soon as possible after the birth). After a few days the mother is anointed with oil and shaved, along with her child, and powdered with medicine. Meantime intimation has been sent to the grandparents; a cock if a boy, a hen if a girl, telling them all that they wish to know. The mother may now resume her household duties.

851 But in about a week she goes to show the child to
603 her own parents, and at the end of her visit, which
431 lasts some weeks, great preparations are made by both

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

757 the fang will drop out, and the man will be saved!
278 There are men living near me who claim to have seen this being done.

844 The birth of children is accompanied by loving care, gross superstition, and much medical treatment, useful or otherwise. All women at that time are given a drink of *indobo* leaves, pounded and mixed with water. If the placenta has not come away satisfactorily, castor oil is given. And if pain supervenes, the bark of *indobo* is again given, pounded and mixed with water. For a child weak at birth, roots of *unsuba* and *mungwina* are taken, pounded, mixed with water, and the child is washed in the
842 mixture. Sterility in man or woman can be removed by the right drugs; and when a woman is getting on in years and wishes no more children, a mixture is in
847 use which will have the desired effect. Medicines for producing abortion are widely known, and
832 frequently used, as also are love potions.

757 Steaming is resorted to in cases of great pain or weakness. Water is cooked in a large pot, with the bark of *mparampara* added. When the pot has boiled, it is taken off the fire, and the patient, covered with a mat, kneels over it, supported if very weak, for about ten minutes. Massaging also is employed when one is very tired, the leaves of *muyoka* being pounded to give a juice for lubrication, or, as the people themselves say, to get into the body through the pores. Cupping is employed for headache and rheumatic pains. Eight cuts are made in two lines, on each side of the head; a small horn is put over the cuts; a

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

757 witches, who use their power beneficently and spend their dreams in efforts to counter-
626 act the aggressor witches, *avalosi*, who use their power maliciously. The great commoner is the strongest of the former type, and the 'defender of the village'. A man who earns universal unpopularity is subject to a spiritual attack from the 'defenders', and is liable to fall sick from the blast of unpopularity. Belief in this efficacy of the 'breath of men' is one of the sanctions of the accepted social order.[1]

Only magic is believed to have power to punish wrongdoers who are neither kinsmen nor members of the same chiefdom. Magic exerts an influence on the behaviour of kinsmen and affines. The witchcraft of a neglected wife may cause a man to fall sick, or that of his father-in-law may harm his children.[2] The power of witchcraft never acts between relatives, though it might between husband and wife.[3]

754 An aggressor witch was reported in the old days by the great commoner to the chief,
627 who ordered the poison ordeal. If the accused failed to vomit (the dose was seldom fatal), he was proved guilty and killed or exiled, all his cows and property being taken by the chief and the victims of his aggressive witchcraft. If a private individual accused another, both were put to the ordeal; if both vomited, the accuser had to pay two cows to the other for slander; if either failed to vomit he was punished as guilty. The ordeal is now illegal, but men accused of aggressive witchcraft still find it best to fly the chiefdom. Great commoners normally used their witchcraft powers to protect their chief from attack, but if he erred they would join in the attack on him; the nobles of Ngonde had power to exert a similar constitutional check on the Kyungu.[4]

763 If death by aggressive witchcraft was suspected, it was proved or disproved by a routine post-mortem examination and by subsequent consultation with the diviner.[5]

Birth

844 A child should be born in its own father's house. A difficult birth is a sign of the
845 guilt of adultery, and is eased by confession.[6] A few days after the birth the mother is
851 anointed, shaved, and resumes her household duties. She later goes on a visit of some weeks to show the child to her own parents, returning to her husband after celebration by both sets of grandparents, and exchanges of food and hoes. The birth of twins was a great misfortune, requiring the segregation and ritual purification of both parents.[7]

Initiation

881 There was no puberty or initiation rite for boys. The initiation of a girl was really a pre-marriage rite. She went through a complicated rite to ensure fertility, in which the husband took part. The initiation lasts some months, and includes several exchanges of food between the families of the girl and her betrothed husband, and ceremonies in which her girl friends of the same village and his friends of his village take part. The girl is tested for virginity during the ceremonies. If she is not betrothed before puberty the initiation is carried out in a modified form, but the full significance is lost.[8]

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 277.
[2] Ibid., 5, 1939, p. 38.
[3] Ibid., 1, 1936, p. 91.
[4] Ibid., p. 256.
[5] Johnston, 1897, p. 443.
[6] Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 10; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 42–3.
[7] Ibid., pp. 44–8. According to H. H. Johnston, if the children died in succession the father was expected to kill himself, but it is possible that he is recounting a custom of the Southern Tumbuka (1897, p. 417).
[8] Ibid., 1925, p. 51; Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 11; Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 238.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 778 cattle and protecting one's own, and to attract men to the country.

The two senior sons of a chief are given powdered *ikingila* to 789 drink from early childhood; at the 'coming out' they lie on it and 643 drink it again with their village headmen, some is buried beneath 778 their ritual trees, and the chief's homestead is treated with it periodically. One form of *ikingila* is made of the heart of a lion and the heart of a leopard, together with the scrapings from a charred root, and one of its qualities is to create lions or leopards which guard the trees under which it is buried. 'They make anyone who has cut a branch of one of the trees for firewood tremble at night, he trembles and returns the wood; they do not kill, but they stay roaring there until he repents.' Now part of the dignity (*ubusisya*) of a chief is that lions and leopards attend him; they roam his country; they are his familiars (*imbege*). 'The sons of Lwembe' [776] lack the fearful power of their great ancestor who 'rode a lion like a donkey', but they are believed to command familiars which clear the country of the wild pig that destroy men's gardens, and protect the sacred groves by terrifying any sacrilegious person who dares chop wood where he should fear. But they do not kill men or cattle. That is what distinguishes them from 'God's lions which kill cattle even by day' and the man-eaters made by sorcerers to destroy those they hate. There is no hint of lycanthropy—our [754] informants denied emphatically that chiefs, dead or alive, turned into *imbege*, but they 'follow the chief' when he travels.

A second *ikingila*, sprinkled on the chief's mat when he is secluded, and drunk with his two senior village headmen, is made of red, black, and shining white or yellow pebbles, which are ground up and mixed with *imbinga*, a medicine brought by the Kinga, but the symbolism of these ingredients remains obscure.

The greatest of the *ifingila*, used only for the chief himself, is *inyifwila*, a terrible substance with power perilously like that of witchcraft. When either of the senior wives of a chief gives birth to a son a little is hidden in the litter on which she lies; it is put [844] into the litter on which the heirs lie at the 'coming out'; and into the sacred tails and trumpets which are carried into battle. Like other medicines of chieftainship, *inyifwila* is used to give the chief majesty (*ubusisya*), 'that people who meet him may fear him'; that he and his warriors may appear fierce; that they may be 'heavy and strong' in war; that when the trumpet is blown it

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Food (other than meat) is provided on the day of the burial by the women of the home at which the burial takes place, on the succeeding day by visiting relatives, and on the third day by village neighbours. Women neighbours, like woman relatives, often bring gifts of bark-cloth belts (*amakiba*) with which to bind up the bellies of their bereaved friends, who are all atremble and full of fear, and so support them. These belts symbolize the sympathy of friends in the fearful grief of the mourners. 'If a woman wears many belts at a burial that means that she has many friends; her passionate grief is comforted by their friendship.'[1] And neighbours, like relatives and close friends from other chiefdoms, may bring cloths which are used to wrap the corpse and bind up the bellies of the chief mourners. But these gifts of food, firewood, belts, and cloth are the limit of a neighbour's obligations; very rarely does a neighbour bring a bull to kill for the funeral feast, whereas close kinsmen and affines are obliged to provide a bull or cow for this purpose if they have one. And neighbours take virtually no share in the elaborate ritual which follows for cleansing relatives from the contagion of death, driving the thought of the deceased out of their minds, and bringing back his spirit to bless the home. Their only part is to bring small gifts of millet from which to brew the beer drunk at the close of this ritual.

764 [431 292]

At an ordinary birth there is very little ceremony and the village as a group is not concerned, though close friends will help the mother during her confinement, fetching wood and water for her, and bringing occasional gifts of cooked food; but twin births are regarded as fearful and dangerous, and an elaborate ritual is performed to cleanse relatives from the contagion which, if left untreated, is believed to lead to serious swelling of the arms, legs, and stomachs, accompanied by diarrhoea. Relatives are treated with many medicines, while village neighbours are sprinkled with one only, but their cattle, especially the cattle herded with those of the man who has begotten twins, are thought to be in danger. At one twin ritual we watched there was some discussion whether all the cattle of the age-village should be treated, or only those of the herd-group to which the father of the twins belonged. Finally it was decided that on previous occasions all the cattle of the village had been treated, and a message was sent

[844] 621 845 783 [753]

[1] cf. Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939), p. 12.

I:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 PNR Ngonde PNR
Nyakyusa

845 783 621 [264] to bring all the herds of the village for treatment. The father of these twins explained that neighbours would suffer less than relatives, if left untreated, but 'their legs would ache a little *because we eat with them*'. And here we come to an idea which appears in many situations in Nyakyusa life, the idea that contagion is spread through eating together. Relatives of parents of twins are not thought to be in danger until they eat or drink with one of the parents: the ritual is performed so that they may eat together safely. Similarly a murderer and his relatives are thought to be in magical danger from the relatives of the murdered man only if they should eat or drink with them. So too, the bond between neighbours which puts them in danger from the impurity of one of them is the sharing of food.

881 621 At the initiation and marriage of a girl, neighbours again assist and identify themselves with the principals. When she reaches puberty a girl is secluded, and her companions in the village—the girls who are her immediate juniors, for the older ones will have joined their husbands—keep her company. Some are her own younger sisters and half-sisters, others are not related at all. Should one girl of the village not join them she is not accused of witchcraft, but it is unusual for one to stay away; to do so would show 'pride' (*amatingo*). These companions (*abapanji*) sleep and eat with the 'bride' (*unsungu*)[1] and share her tasks and lessons, fetching firewood, making mats, learning songs, and listening to the instruction of 'the mothers'. They and the 'bride' go about together as a group and, accompanied by one or two 'mothers', may visit a 'bride' and her maids in another village, the two [571] groups competing in dancing and singing. So keen is the rivalry that formerly, we were told, the visits sometimes led to fighting between the maids and 'mothers' of each 'bride', particularly when the competing groups came from different chiefdoms. At the end of the ritual two of the maids accompany the bride to her [864] husband's house, and spend a few days with her there, sharing the attentions of her husband at night (*vide infra*, p. 87).

During her seclusion the bride avoids her father, whom she refers to as 'father-in-law', and she avoids also all his contem-

[1] *Unsungu* means a girl who has reached puberty but has not yet borne a child. She is usually, though not invariably, betrothed, and her 'husband' has a part in the puberty ritual. There is no exact English translation, and we think that 'bride' is the least misleading in this context.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

15. THE ASSOCIATIONS OF *UKULOGA* AND *UKUPITA*

Mwaisumo (clerk).

'*Ukuloga* is like *ukupita* but not the same. It is said that when someone is angry with you and has drunk a medicine to give him power to bewitch (*amaka ga kuloga*), he greets you and the word alone has power to bring illness. You will be very ill. 789 754

'It is said that when a woman is pregnant and walks round a person who has many medicines, one of them being a medicine *ukuloga*, she will have a miscarriage. There is no case (against the owner of the medicines). [845]

'It is said that when the owner of pythons, or the owner of medicines, passes when food has been spread out to dry, the food will disappear. He bewitches it (*ukuloga*). It is as if he hankered after the food in his heart; it disappears and becomes less. When a python man ("he of pythons")—they speak much of python men, little of medicine men—passes cattle and hankers after milk, he bewitches the milk (*ukuloga*). It disappears. He does not throttle (*ukupita*) the cattle; no, the milk just disappears.

'It is forbidden to say of a child that it is beautiful. It is all right to a close friend but not among ordinary people. To do so is to bewitch (*ukuloga*) the child. The child will fall ill. It is forbidden to say of a cow that its udder is big. If the owner hears he says: "You are bewitching it" (*ukuloga*), meaning the milk will disappear. Everyone fears to admire children or cows in this way; if such a sign is followed by sickness or failure of milk people swear at the man who has expressed admiration, but do not bring a case.

'The work of pythons is especially to steal away the milk, to throttle (*ukupita*). It is reported that some say: "I am a witch, but I have not got a python. I do not throttle the cows." They might mean they "eat" people but do not steal milk.'

Kakugu (pagan man).

'*Ukupita* is to throttle (with hands round the throat).' 789

In reply to a question as to the further meanings of the word *ukupita*, Kakugu said: 'When my relatives are there I say: "Have you *kupita* with my wife?" But when we are alone I say: "Did you sleep with my wife?" or "Did you have intercourse with her (*gwalogwa* 754 196

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

has lain with the dead man's wives. A brother will approach the corpse 837
without fear. But there is another trouble: if a man seduces his brother's 684
wife the husband may have diarrhœa perhaps with bloody stools. Many people do not come to their fathers' funerals before the burial. And also if the father is ill, and they see he is near death, they run away, returning when he has been buried. Because it is said that a man will die if he has slept with his mother, his father's wife, and sees his father or sees the corpse, as did Jones, the son of Kisokora. He slept with his mothers in secret. When his father died (in a different village from that in which Jones lived) Jones seized his father's cattle and ran away with them. When they had buried his father he came to mourn. The women with whom he had slept told on him because he had given them syphilis.

A wife who commits adultery with her husband's son is held to be in great danger also. Mwandisi said:

If they conceal it and approach the grave both the son and the wife will die. Both are washed naked, under a waterfall. The officiant washes them together with a fowl.

QUESTION: Why the waterfall and the nakedness?

MWANDISI: The water is to take away the sickness. Being naked is so 837
that the case may go away and you, the man, may be empty (*bwasi*) 684
and the woman may be empty. For if such a son looks into the grave 783
and approaches to weep, the shades and Kyala are angry and say: 'Are you a relative? How can you look into the grave? It is you who have killed him, by causing him diarrhœa.' And if the woman approaches and holds her dead husband in her arms, then she dies. Those below are angry and say: 'Is she your relative?' And she dies. But if she has committed adultery with someone who is no relation she approaches and does not fear, and the adulterer does not fear either, but approaches.

For a woman, adultery is held to be dangerous also in child- 845●
birth: 684

If she has had lovers, she has a difficult delivery and the child 783
refuses to come out until she confesses. Sometimes she confesses three, then the child comes, it comes out. . . . She confesses the name and takes a bit of stick and spits on it and throws it away, and you will be surprised to see that she gives birth at once. If she is very bad she will tell you three names and throw away three sticks.

Any contact with childbirth is held to be even more dangerous 844
to men than contact with menstruation. It also is thought to cause weakness, and it is warriors who are most affected. Traditionally,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

844 behind the huts, moving inside after delivery, on to a litter of banana leaves spread for her. Her mother-in-law attends her and treats her and the new-born child with *ikipiki* medicine. She washes them in a basin made of two banana leaves, one sweet banana, one plantain, and is particularly careful to wash the infant's mouth and the mother's vagina. Powdered *ikipiki* is sprinkled in the water in the form of a cross. This is done 'that the mother and child should not have diarrhœa'. The cross is a symbol of overstepping (*kokukilyana kuno, kokukilanya kuno,* demonstrating a cross) and is made 'because heavy ones, those who are with their husbands on the bed, will come and overstep the mother and child if they are not treated'. Mother and child are also given a roasted banana with powdered *ikipiki* sprinkled on it. In bringing the *ikipiki* the husband's mother acknowledges the legitimacy of the child. 'If someone does not give a child *ikipiki* it is a bastard. It is as if the husband said: "Why do you insult your husband by committing adultery with others? Others have created this foetus; it is not mine!" '

[851 848]

The cord is tied with a shred of bark-cloth and then cut with a bamboo knife. 'An iron knife is taboo, it's a spear, other children will die from the spear disease (*ulukwego*); to use a spear is like killing someone.' The after-birth is buried in the banana plantation with a piece of the cord sticking up, and later the litter is burnt at the same place. 'Only officiants (*abanyago*) eat of these bananas growing over the burying place—no young person may do so for it's the banana grove of the litter.' The cord must be buried upright or 'the mother will not bear again'.

845 A delayed delivery is most commonly attributed to the woman's adultery,[1] and she is pressed by the midwife to confess the name of her lover or lovers, but it is also believed that it may be due to *imindu*, that is the shades. The husband consults a diviner who indicates whether the *imindu* is on his side or that of the woman's father and the one who is thus indicated should pray. 'Sometimes the woman herself tells of a quarrel which would lead to *imindu* and then her husband or father goes to pray.'

775

846 Mother and child remain in confinement until the navel cord drops off, sheltered from 'heavy ones', who should not enter or even greet the mother from the doorway, and from men, to whom both mother and child are dangerous. 'Men must not see a tiny

[171]

[1] Unlike certain other Central African peoples, the Nyakyusa do not attribute difficulty in childbirth to the adultery of the husband.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 If a woman has difficulty in labour we officiants tell her: 'Speak!
783 With whom did you commit adultery?' and the child comes down. When she has spoken it is born. We do not give her medicine. We give her earth.

848 QUESTION: What if an illegitimate boy dies, do you perform the ritual with *ikipiki*?

LYANDILEKO: No, because he was a child of the long grass [i.e. illegitimate], we only treat the mother. We do not perform the ritual with the *ikipiki* of the husband. If it is a girl, and she to whom we gave earth grows up, the father [i.e. her mother's husband or, if the mother was unmarried, her father] says: 'Let the husband perform the ritual, because the cattle are mine, she is my child, and that is the custom.' If they give a child of the long grass the medicine it will die, because it is not its medicine. . . . I know about it because I give children the medicine.

There is no question about the legal rights over an illegitimate child, and Nsyani and the other men held that ritual and legal control went together. Lyandileko and Kasitile, both specialists in this field, held that traditionally, at least, the *ikipiki* could only be used for a legitimate child: to do otherwise was dangerous.

So important is this acknowledgement of legitimacy that in many Christian families, where other traditional rituals are ignored, the husband's mother still brings *ikipiki* for his child.

851 As soon as the child is born a fowl—a cock for a boy, a hen for a girl—is sent to the young wife's parents, to notify them of the birth. Then her 'mothers' come 'to keep her company' (*ukumpanja*) during her confinement, and at the end of it they take her home with them for a visit of a month or more. They bring her back to her husband, formally, with gifts of beer, food, and mats (*ukumbeka*), just as they did after the puberty ritual. We met one party, taking back a young mother to her husband, in which there were twenty-one women carrying baskets with food or pots of beer. The grandmother was happy and excited and, dancing up to greet us, she said, breathlessly: '*That's* the owner of this beer [pointing to her daughter], all these pots!' The feast was unusually lavish on this occasion. Two pots of beer, two stems of bananas, a vessel of milk, and a mat, were taken by the daughter of Chief Mwaipopo when she returned to her husband after the birth of her first child, and that seems to be the ordinary standard. The husband kills a bull calf for meat for his guests, or gives them a shilling or two.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VI

THE RITUAL OF ABNORMAL BIRTH

●845 TWIN birth is a fearful event to the Nyakyusa. The parents of twins, and twins themselves, are *abipasya*,[1] 'the fearful ones', felt to be very dangerous to their relatives and immediate neighbours, and to cattle, causing them to suffer from diarrhœa or purging, and swollen legs, if any contact takes place. Therefore the parents are segregated and an elaborate ritual is performed, in which a wide circle of kinsmen and neighbours and the family cattle participate. The infants are naturally segregated with their mother, but it is the danger from the parents rather than from the twins themselves that is emphasized. *Ilipasa* is commonly used to mean 'twins', 'twin birth', but it is more accurately translated as 'abnormal birth', for it is used of a child born feet foremost (*unsolola*) as well as for any multiple birth, and the same ritual is performed whatever the type of *ilipasa*.[2]

(*a*) *The events*

The ritual has four phases: first the building of temporary huts or shelters, one for each parent of the twins, in which traditionally they lived and ate, each in isolation, never raising their voices above a whisper, and each speaking only to an attendant. The woman is attended by her mother, the man by a young son or daughter. The second stage is the 'induction' (*ukwingisia*) or 'washing' (*ukusukusula*), when a ritual litter is spread for the parents and kinsmen and immediate neighbours wash their hands

[1] *Ukupasya*: to be afraid.

[2] *Ilipasa* or *ipasa* (pl. *ama-*): twin, twin birth, abnormal birth.

Ukupasa: to bear or beget twins or an abnormally born child.

'*Ilipasa* is of two sorts, to have two children is *ipasa* and to have one child when it comes out at birth feet foremost is *ipasa* also; they say it is a fearful child born feet foremost (*umwana mwipasya ubusolola*), so in both cases they speak of *ukupasa ilipasa*.'

Abapasa ipasa: parents of twins; *ulupaso* or *ulwiho lwa ipasa*: twin ritual; *ukupasana*: to branch from one root.

We have no information on the incidence of twin births or breach delivery among the Nyakyusa, but even supposing it to be higher than in western Europe, it is still the exception, not the rule. cf. M. D. W. Jeffreys, 'Twin births among Africans', *S.A. Journal of Science*, v. 50, 4 (1953).

with medicines and have their legs splashed with a scalding concoction. Visitors to this ritual bring gifts of millet which is put to soak for beer. When it is brewed the 'bringing out' (*ukusosya*) rite is celebrated. The temporary huts are burnt and a new shelter is erected in which the parents have ritual intercourse. Parents, twins, and relatives are shaved and anointed with medicated ointment, and together with their neighbours again have their legs splashed with scalding medicine, this time by the father of the twins. The children are given sausages of medicated porridge which they must eat from the ground. The parents of the twins burst out of their hut and rush towards the pasture land, the father brandishing his spears. Then all the participants snatch some of the meat of a sheep or small bull which has been killed. The rest of the meat is reserved for the fourth, and final, stage of the ritual. A mess of cooked bananas, meat, and medicine is taken by the mother of the twins into her hands, immediately after the ritual intercourse. Her husband takes some of this to bury in his father's banana grove, or to throw in the direction of his father's grave; the rest the woman takes to her own parents, to be buried in her own father's grove. She drinks beer ritually with her parents, and 'steals' things from her mother's house, then returns to meet her husband and drink beer ritually with him. 845

So far as our information goes[1] the form of the ritual among the Kukwe scarcely differs from that of Selya and the plain and we describe it as we saw it performed in Selya for our neighbours, Mwakobela and his wife. Mwakobela was a junior half-brother of the chief, Mwaipopo. (See Tables (a) and (b).) [184]

12 May 1935

i. *The birth of twins.* (Record of G. and M. W.)

Twins were born about eight-thirty this morning. We visited them at 5 p.m. in company with Mwaiswelo III (linked half-brother of Mwakobela) and Kikuku, who was representing Mwaipopo. Mwaipopo is 'owner' of the ritual because he is their 'father' (i.e. their senior brother). Mwaipopo did not go, though he was quite near, at our place. We found the woman with the two new-born infants sitting outside under the bananas, accompanied by the mother who bore her, and her mother's elder sister. The men seated by the house were the father, Mwakobela (Mwaiswelo II), his half-brother Mwakalendile and four friends from near by.

[1] We did not see the full ritual in Kukwe country, but had several accounts of it.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 'To-day there is no ritual, we have come to express sympathy (*ukuti ndaga*).'[1]

845 The two grown sons of Mwakobela were building a little hut of
342 saplings and had finished the main structure, but had not yet thatched it. 'She will sleep there to-night. They will put leaves on top.' Kikuku brought a message from Mwaipopo, to whom they had previously sent to tell him of the twin birth: 'If the hut is not finished she may sleep in the house, I agree to that. But Mwakobela said:

845 No, the hut is finished, she can sleep there. [To me]: To-night she will just sleep there, then the doctor will come [it is Mwaipopo's business to find the doctor] and will induct her (*ukummwingisya*), and then we shall lay the litter. The woman and her mother sleep there for a month with the twins—no others—the mother alone keeps her company (*ikumpanja*); then the doctor will come again to bring her out (*ukunsosya*). The ritual is in two parts, the induction and the bringing out.

They tie up the cord of the first twin to be born with a shred of plantain bark, and of the second with a shred of sweet banana bark, the plantain bark is a sign of seniority.

The woman may not cook while she is in the hut—it's taboo. But the other wives cook food for her and bring it to prevent her dying of hunger. Also her friends of the village will come with food and firewood to greet her. The pot in which food is cooked for the parents of twins must not be covered when it is on the fire, and if plantains are cooked only the middle bunches on the stem are used, not the ends; those at the ends are thrown away. When they are eating the wife may not begin until the husband has received his and put some in his mouth, then she too may eat.

845 It is wholly taboo for the mother of twins to call for anything she
784 wants. She knocks with a stick to summon the one who brings her food. . . . If her husband wants anything he calls to his wives, it is not taboo, but he does not shout loudly, he must be careful not to make too great a noise, for if he shouts his children's hearts are startled and, it is said, they will die.

Traditionally, when the mother had to leave the hut to relieve herself, she walked backwards and hid her face with a piece of mat, to prevent herself from looking at the front of anyone. She avoided cows at pasture, and if she caught sight of anyone in the distance she waved a hand to warn them to let her pass.

May 13

845 Mwaiswelo III (Mwakobela's brother) came to fetch us at ten-

[1] This phrase can imply either condolence or congratulation.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

forty-five to come and eat. 'Yesterday we just conversed, you did not eat. Now we have come to fetch you.' The mother and infants were in the little hut. Mwakobela was sitting and eating with us. They explained that of old he would not have done so. 'The people in the old days were greatly afraid—the father of twins did not meet and converse with other people, no, they were much afraid. He waited in the bananas. But since the Europeans came we do not fear. The Europeans took the twins in their arms and said: "Don't be afraid." In the old days the father of twins would take a spear and shield and dance the war-dance, and cry the war-cry, but we have dropped this custom nowadays.'

845 845 845 177

May 14

We visited Mwakobela and found him sitting alone making a hoe-handle. His wife was in the hut with the infants, attended by her mother.

845

May 22

We found Mwakobela hoeing a garden for beans. He told us that the elder of the twins had died two nights ago and had been buried early yesterday morning. . . .

No one came to the infant's burial; we buried him ourselves. But had he been a big child then people would have come. The doctor has not come yet [for the induction]. I have not got the millet yet.

[766]

July 7

ii. *The induction* (*ukwingisia*)

We arrived about 11 a.m. and found Mwakobela and his brother sitting outside the house with several guests. They were cutting a hide to make thongs for tying up cattle. By noon there were present twelve men, twenty-two married women, three adolescent girls, six 'daughters-in-law' sitting apart, and a crowd of children.[1] The doctor, a middle-aged woman and a distant connection of Mwakobela, arrived about noon. With the help of Mwakobela's wives she built a fire outside and cooked a pot of medicines. The women sat round this fire chatting; the little girls built themselves a separate fire, and the small boys yet another. Tiny children were with their mothers. At two-fifteen the doctor started the washing. She took a little powdered medicine from a bamboo flask and put it into a calabash of cold water. She made

[1] The identity and kinship connections of those who participated are discussed in Chapter VIII.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 the boys form a queue and bend forward, holding out their hands while she poured water over the hands of each of them. After washing, each took a mouthful of water and spat it out. They were warned not to spill it on their legs as they washed and spat. Some young men washed with the boys, and women watching shouted advice, but a number of the boys went off without taking a mouthful of water or without spitting. After the boys came the girls, and then the women and babies and some more small boys who had arrived late. We counted twenty-six boys and young men, twenty-six girls and babies, and twenty-four women washing.

Then came the splashing of legs. The doctor shredded a banana sucker to make a tail. All the company gathered round the boiling pot of medicine, and the doctor, dipping the tail into the pot, splashed the boiling liquid on to their legs. Children screamed; women hopped with the pain, but shouted to their children to come and be treated. Frightened small children were hauled back by men, women, and elder children—a full sister of the twins, about 9 years old, was dragged in yelling. Mothers were especially careful to see that their babies were splashed, and pulled up the cloths binding them to their backs, so that their legs might be exposed. Mwakobela and his brother came to be splashed but some of the young men hurried away immediately after washing, disregarding the women who shouted to them that it was taboo for them to leave before they had been splashed. The women took [183] the whole ritual much more seriously than the men, and they were very particular to see that their children were treated. One old woman who had helped a child to wash, holding its hands, came back again to wash herself. The doctor and other women shouted that she had already washed. She replied: 'Oh, I just helped the child. Have I really finished?' The mother and remaining twin did not stir from the hut—she looked dirty and dishevelled. The doctor was elegant; she wore five brass body-rings [301] and her body was well oiled and rouged. She organized everyone with great confidence and was treated with respect, a mat being spread for her to sit upon (no other woman had a mat), and her assistant fetching and carrying everything she required.

845 431 Many of the women relatives had brought gifts of millet and after the treatment was over they tipped their small basketfuls into a big grain basket. Then they had a snack of roasted plantains (Mwakobela provided three stems) and went home.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

23 July 1935

iii. *The bringing out* (*ukusaya*)

Seventeen days after the induction the 'bringing out' took place.[1] The hut had been burnt last night and a new one built in a new place. Mwakobela was inside it and when we went to greet him he only put his head out, saying: 'I am not coming out.' The doctor had slept at the homestead and a small bull had been killed yesterday evening. Mwakobela had provided it because the sheep which Mwaiteteja (his brother) had got from the hills had died. Twenty-one men were present and there were two pots of beer, of which we were given one. Mwaisumo (our clerk) left (as we had told him to do if he wished) and the men remarked: 'He is baptized, he only looks on, it's taboo for him to participate, it's taboo for him to drink the ritual beer.' 845

The meat was being cooked by Mwakobela's wives and the doctor was preparing the medicine. There were two lots of medicine: a fine powder (*imbendaya*) made of *kalembele* and *ikipiki*, and a rough sort (*ukuta*) made of *kajenja*[2] and *ukunguni*. The doctor explained: 'The powder is used for smearing on the forehead to enable people to meet the parents of the twins; it is not very important, it prevents the belly swelling. It is also drunk in beer at midday, for the same purpose, by the parents of the twins, and then by all their relatives. The second medicine is used for splashing on the legs with hot water; it prevents the legs from swelling. If anyone does not come to-day and his legs or belly swell, he will come to me, the doctor, and I will put hot medicines on his legs and give him powder to drink in beer. I will not smear his forehead then, no. . . . The non-relatives have their legs splashed but do not anoint their faces or drink the medicated beer.' Mwanyoso remarked: 'Our wives often do not come. Then we take home a little of the lees of the beer for them to drink.' Thirty-six people who had not washed at the induction washed now.

From the time we arrived at 7.30 a.m. the women were busy shaving each other and all the small girls except one. She was not shaved for she was in mourning—her mother had died recently. After shaving, the women and girls washed and anointed and rouged themselves. The mother of the twins (Masobesi) was in the new hut with her surviving twin and her husband. All were 845 302

[1] It was delayed three days to oblige us, as we had another engagement.

[2] *Kajenja* gives a yellow dye used traditionally to decorate bark-cloth, and nowadays also used as a relish like curry, 'but this is a new Swahili custom'.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 freshly shaved and anointed; the mother and child were also
302 rouged, and both husband and wife had on new cloths. The women explained: 'The filth is finished now', and, in answer to a question about why they shaved, they replied: 'We throw away the hair in the long grass because it is filthy.' The little girls picked up scraps of hair carefully and disposed of it in the long grass. Mwaiteteja (brother of Mwakobela) said of the shaving:

All the children, Mwakobela's and mine, boys and girls, and our wives, shave. I, Mwaiteteja, do not. Mwakobela shaved last night. At an ordinary birth only the mother shaves. Mwanyilu and other grandsons of Mwaipopo are 'just people' [i.e. not relatives for this purpose] and do not shave, but they are treated with the hot medicines.

MWANYONO: The anointing is part of the ritual. The shaving and anointing are to show that the ritual is over. Since the birth of the twins neither the women nor the children have shaved or anointed themselves, nor we men either, but we don't anoint ourselves very much anyway. We shall all shave to-day or to-morrow, but I have shaved already because of the funeral ritual of Mwakisisi which took place two days ago.

845 Husband and wife in the hut spoke in whispers, and not even the doctor entered: 'They fear the legs.'

The doctor ranged everyone in a rough circle and she and her assistant went round smearing the forehead of each with the powder mixed with ointment. The circle soon broke up and people came up to her of their own accord to be smeared. She just dabbed a line on the forehead of each.

Then the banana suckers were cut and frayed at the end. A regular circle was formed. Mwakobela rushed out of the hut (washed, shaved and wearing a new cloth), seized two of the suckers and dipped them in the hot medicine, and splashed it on to the circle. The people yelled and ran away, only to return. He splashed them thus two or three times and then returned to the hut. The doctor continued the splashing.

Then Mwanyono went up to the hut with a pruning hook and cut it open, crying: 'War has come!' Mwakobela and his wife and the child rushed out 'in the direction of Mwaijonga's place' [Mwakobela's father's home], followed by the whole crowd shouting: 'We are pure (*Tuli bola*).' They ran thirty or forty yards only
[77] and came back laughing and talking. Mwakobela said: 'In the old days I'd have taken a spear and shield and danced, alone!'

Two banana leaves were spread on the ground and the doctor

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde Nyakyusa FN17

emptied out the two pots which had been cooking, one of meat alone, the other of meat and plantains. She and her assistant divided the meat into smallish portions. Meanwhile all the younger people gathered round and, at a sign from the doctor, fell on the meat, each trying to secure a piece. Some people even took sticks and beat their way into the seething scrimmage. 845

Then a pot of beer was brought. The doctor added powdered medicine to it and Mwakobela stirred it. All drank in turn, some from the pot directly, some dipping in little pots or cups of leaves. Mwakobela himself did not drink. Mwanyoso, Jane (Kasitile's wife) and others took beer in leaf cups for those at home.

iv. Showing him the way home

Mwanyoso was just going off when the doctor called him back: 'You are the *wapaga*, you must show him the way home.' Mwanyoso then called to Kasitile's son: 'Come, Kasitile, and we will show him the way home.' The doctor, the two *abapaga*, Mwakobela and four or five others walked about fifty yards in the direction of the sacred grove of the dead chief, Mwaijonga, Mwakobela's father. Then the doctor said to Mwanyoso: 'Tell him where his home is.' So Mwanyoso pointed in that direction and said: 'That is the way to your house, the house of Mwaijonga.' Then Mwakobela took a packet wrapped in banana bark from the doctor, walked a few paces in that direction, turned round and threw the packet over his shoulder towards Mwaijonga's place. It fell in the grass behind him. 'So now we have finished,' said the doctor.

Meanwhile the mother of the twins with her surviving baby, the doctor's assistant, ten other women and twenty-three children set off to her 'father's place' about a quarter of a mile distant in Kibonde, with a calabash of beer. Her father is dead and her brother, Mwaipopo (not the chief), has inherited. The women and children all sat down at the edge of the homestead while the doctor's assistant went ahead. She ranged all the relatives present, twenty in all, in a line with their backs to the oncoming party and smeared their foreheads with powder and ointment. Then Masobesi's party approached, walking backwards, and when they were quite close the doctor's assistant said to the people of the homestead: 'Turn round and say: "We are pure."' They turned and shouted: 'We are pure!' laughing; and at the same time Masobesi's party turned too.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

●845 Then the doctor called for water, added powder to it, and took Mwaipopo, the owner of the homestead, off to the edge of the bananas, some way from the house, to wash. He scratched a hole with his hands under a banana stem, and buried a packet (just like the one thrown over his shoulder by Mwakobela) which the doctor gave him. Then she poured the water for him and he washed his hands and mouth, as the others had done at Mwakobela's place. The doctor took the mother of twins off to the edge of the swept place, some distance away, and poured water for her to wash her hands and mouth likewise. All this was quietly and seriously done.

[273] A calabash of beer was then brought out of the house, the doctor put powder in, the mother of the twins stirred it, Mwaipopo drank first, and all the others in turn. Likonyela was present and took part in all this. He took off some medicated beer to take to his sister, Kipesile, who lives in Ipande. 'She is sick and I want to go to see her, so I shall take the medicine to her myself.' I asked him why he was not at Mwakobela's (being a classificatory son of Mwakobela). He replied: 'Well, they never sent me a message, to call me, so I came here.' He and Mwaipopo, the head of this homestead, are sons of two sisters. Likonyela's wives were not here—'They are sick'; but one of his children was here carried by a younger sister of one of his wives.

Some medicated beer was also taken by a man, Kikaja, son of Nokile, a cross-cousin (*untani*). 'His father was our mother's brother.'

Then the mother of twins went into the house and took out three baskets of cooked food and one pot of beer prepared for her. Each time she took up a basket the women of the house shouted: 'Ha! The child is snatching food, that is taboo!' She also took out a little pot of ointment and one of rouge. Then she cut at a growing stem of bananas with a spear, while the women of the homestead shouted: 'The child is cutting a banana stem, it is taboo!' The stem was finally severed by a boy with a hoe—she did not cut it through. Then the women of the homestead rushed at the mother of twins and greeted her and pressed round the infant excitedly. One of them explained to me: 'We, his mothers, are greeting him [the twin], we say to him: "We have never seen you before, how are you standing up to the cold?" ' They also tied little pieces of string to the twin's wrists. 'It's to greet him and break the taboo (*ko kumbonola*),' they said.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

All the women present, and Mwaipopo himself, had shaved to-day. 845

We stayed forty minutes there and some of the food was eaten on the spot. The rest of the food, the pot of beer, and the ointment and rouge, we carried back with us to Mwakobela's. The beer was given to Mwakobela who drank it with eleven other men, his kinsmen and neighbours. The food and ointment and rouge went to the women.

26 July 1935

The women had intended to go and visit the maternal relatives (*abipwa*) of the mother of twins yesterday, but her 'father' (Mwaipopo) had sent a message to say: 'Do not come yet, they are all away, some in Mwandosia's country, others planting potatoes.' Mwakobela, asked about his own mother's relatives, replied: 'My own *abipwa* have all died, and even if they had not, it would be too far to go, for they lived in Kukwe country. I did not throw medicine into the grass for them, no, we never do. 845 574

'The doctor is coming soon to sprinkle the cattle, all our herd here, my cattle and my neighbours', with medicine.' There are two herd groups in the village. 845 783

28 July 1935 (Sunday)

v. *Treating the cattle*

We were called to Mwakobela's place. He told us:

The doctor brought medicine last night, just before dark, and she said to me: 'Sprinkle the cattle yourself.' 'Perhaps it is taboo for me to do so?' I replied: 'No, not at all, you sprinkle them; I am going off to church to-morrow, to the catechumen's class.' Her elder sister is baptized already and she herself intends to be baptized. So I asked her: 'To whom shall we go for medicine then?' She replied: 'I am giving the medicine to my daughter, the wife of Mwakisisile, the son of Mwaihojo.'

When we arrived at about 1.15 p.m. Mwakobela's cattle and some others were standing round a smoky fire, as usual, during the midday hours.[1] The pot of medicine was steaming on another fire at a little distance. 'How do the cattle fall sick, if you do not treat them?' we asked. 'They purge continually. . . .'

Mwakobela's wife said: 'We should send to Mwampona and let his cattle be treated too.' Mwakobela (to us): 'Mwampona herds his cattle with Mwakikato, in a separate herd from ours;[2] she says they should come too; certainly when Mwampona had twins our

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 34. [2] op. cit., p. 56.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 783 cattle went up to be treated.' (To his wife): 'All right, they shall come,' and he sent off a boy with a message.

Mwampona came to inquire about the message sent to him and then went back to fetch his and Mwakikato's cattle. Six banana suckers were prepared. The cattle present were splashed by Mwakobela and two of his wives, each holding two banana tails. They were the cattle of Mwakobela himself and those of seven neighbours who herd with him. Then the other herd of the village came in (the cattle of five men) and was splashed. Mwakalobo II and Mwakikato (neighbours) both came up at the end and had their legs splashed with the remains of the medicine. They had both been splashed before—we had seen Mwakikato being splashed —so we asked: 'Why again?'

Mwakalobo II replied: 'We were a great crowd the first time, and I did not get properly splashed.' Mwakikato: 'I feel a pain.'

15 February 1937

845 Mwakobela and his wife told us that she had been to her mother's people (*abipwa*) after we left Isumba, but that he did not go to his *abipwa* and will not do so.

vi. *The ilibalaga*

We only saw the twin ritual enacted right through once, but the different events mentioned here were repeatedly described to us, and the ritual for Mwakobela's twins may be taken as typical. Two essential actions are, however, omitted from this account, viz. the eating of sausages of porridge from the ground and the ritual intercourse.[1] We describe these in the words of Mwakatage of the plain, a middle-aged Christian, himself the younger brother of twins, who gave a very detailed account of the whole ritual. He said that at the 'bringing out' rite, besides being smeared with medicine and splashed, children are given medicated porridge.

The women cook porridge for the children, medicated porridge, outside on the road. To this cooking and eating of porridge they only take children who are unmarried. The reason that they eat porridge is this: it is a ritual which they do so that when the parents of twins come out of their house, we may not just greet them, but that they may be one with us, we whose bellies are heavy (*tungisakuponanyaga itolo nagwe, fikuti ajege na nawe tali basile munda*). To eat this porridge they fashion little balls or sausages, one for each child, smear them with ointment

[1] This rite was also described by a Kukwe doctor who had just supervised it in a twin ritual.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845

and stick them in the ground; then each one in turn kneels down and bites his sausage of porridge. . . . The parents of twins are still in the house, with those that accompany them. Then they kill a bull and cook most of the meat outside, because that is for everybody to snatch. But the portion of meat that is for those in the house of twins is put on the fire to cook by the doctor in their hut, for it is the meat of *ilibalaga*, that is of the most important rite. The doctor then approaches the twins' house and tells the man to come out. He obeys . . . and takes the frayed banana sucker heavy with water, and scatters the water in front, and to the sides, and all round, ending up by scattering it behind him, in the direction from which he came, then he runs back into his hut. The doctor goes into the hut too . . . he prepares a bed for the husband and wife and tells them to lie with each other, and they do so. Then he puts powdered medicine into the tiny pot of meat and bananas, which is there in the hut, lets the pot cook, and pours the contents out on to a leaf. He takes a little of this mixture and divides it into four portions, two for the man, two for the woman. Then he brings these to the parents who have had intercourse, before they have washed, while the filth is still on them. He tells the woman to take the food into her hands; she does so and smears filth on to it. Then the doctor makes two[1] little parcels, one for the man, one for the woman, and this it is that is called *ilibalaga* and is the most important element in the ritual.

After this the couple wash their hands and they eat. They eat the food, which the doctor left aside [i.e. which was not touched with soiled hands] and into which he has put a little powdered medicine. The man and his wife eat together. It is to bring them together again and let them eat together after they have been eating separately. The doctor then takes a little beer in a calabash cup and mixes it with water for them and gives it to them in the hut; they drink together there, the man and his wife. At dawn on the morrow the doctor says: 'Put on the fire some bananas and the uncooked meat left over.' He adds powdered medicine to it and it cooks, then he divides it into two portions, one for the man, one for the woman, and each portion is bundled up for the man and woman to take to their respective relatives. The doctor tells them to go each to their grandparents[2] with the filthy *ilibalaga* which he did up into parcels the day before. They take the parcels of meat which he did up this morning—the uncontaminated meat—and

[1] Probably four, two for each of them.

[2] According to Mwakatage an *ilibalaga* is taken by the father of twins to his parents and to his mother's people, and by the mother of twins to her parents and her mother's people, and at each meeting the same rite is performed. As we have seen, Mwakobela threw his *ilibalaga* in the direction of his father's grave, but did not visit any of his mother's people, and he denied that it was customary even to throw an *ilibalaga* in their direction.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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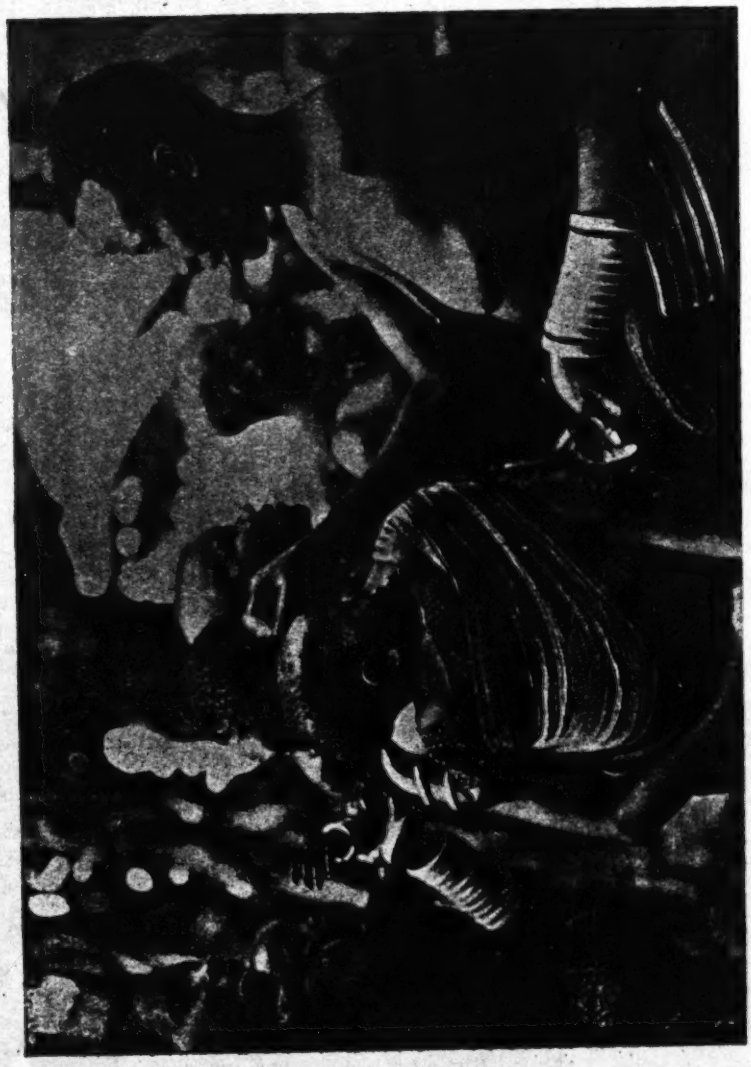
854
142



7. The officiant at a twin ritual anoints a child

[facing p. 164]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 this is eaten by the relative who receives the *ilibalaga*, after he has buried it. He who receives the *ilibalaga* buries it, and while he is doing so he looks up country to the origin of the Nyakyusa, who moved down to the plain (MuNgonde); the officiant then tells them all to look up country. . . . The mother of twins meets her family and it means: 'I am all right now, I am clear, I am your friend, Kyala had bound me. . . .' On reaching home the woman waits on the path . . . her husband (who has been with the *ilibalaga* to his people) likewise waits for his wife. . . . Then they both advance together and meet, and go into their house [not the temporary hut] and eat and drink together. This eating and drinking together means that their ritual is finished; they say: 'We have survived that rubbishy Kyala who had bound us (*tuponile kwa lyaKyala ili lya tupinile*).'[1] They eat the food which has come from their two families together, first drinking together the beer. This is the end of the twin ritual as it has always been performed. People avoid the parents of twins for they say: 'He brings disease into our family.'

845 From the time the twins are born until he meets their mother
834 ritually, intercourse with any woman is taboo to the father of twins. After the ritual he may live with the mother (though she should not conceive again until the twins are running about), but he cannot visit his other wives. Only when she has given birth again—and had a normal delivery—is he free to live with his other wives. Should he break this taboo it is believed that the wife
[753] with whom he breaks it will fall grievously ill with swelling of the legs and belly, and her father is entitled to claim a cow as damages. Some polygynists are said to circumvent the taboo in this way:

> The husband will go to the father of one of his wives and will take a cow to him and say: 'I have got twins, I petition for your daughter.' Then he can take her into his house and sleep with her, but with his other wives he cannot sleep until she has borne a child. When she does so, then he goes to the fathers of his other wives, taking a bull to each, and says: 'I have had a twin birth but now it is finished, and I am taking your daughters.' If the first wife thus taken bears no child, then he must take a cow to the father of another and try with her.

But several of our informants held that no father in his senses would permit his daughter to be taken by her husband after he had fathered twins, until the mother of twins had herself borne a normal child.

845 The isolation of the parents of twins from cattle also continues for some time. The father of twins does does not milk or enter a

[1] Mwaikambo, commenting on the text, said: 'It is as if Kyala was *lindu* (rubbish).' The concord implies *ilindu* not a person, as is usual with the proper name Kyala.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845
301
291

8. Preparing the meat for the participants to snatch at a twin ritual

[facing p.165]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

byre or strike a beast with a stick 'until the twins had grown up' 845
(an elastic phrase), 'but if he has no sons to milk a doctor comes and gives him a medicine to drink in the house, then he can milk the cows outside. To enter the byre is altogether taboo.' He and his attendant during his seclusion drink the milk of one cow only, which has been specially treated. All his wives avoid milk until the end of the ritual and the mother of twins herself 'can only begin to clean the byre after she has borne at least one other child'—some say two or three other children. If a cow is given her for milk (after the end of the ritual) it is taboo for others to share that milk. If these taboos are broken it is said that the cattle will purge and die, or their legs will swell.

It is also taboo for a parent of twins to pass behind people—he (or she) must always pass in front. 'They fear that if he passes behind, he (the parent) will always have twins.'

Twins, and their parents who have been through the full ritual, are thereafter immune from the danger of twin birth and may even go in to greet a mother of twins—Mwakobela's sister, who herself had borne twins, entered his wife's seclusion hut. There are, however, two or three taboos which apply to twins in later life. It is taboo for one of a pair of twin girls to get married without the 584
other. Angombwike explained:

If a man comes wooing the first he must do it secretly, and when he speaks to her father he must do it secretly, he may bring cows but no [761]
one knows about it; if it becomes known they say the younger might curse herself (*ukwibuna*) and die. Then when another has come wooing the other, secretly, the father tells them both to come wooing openly *on the same day*. They come with cows. Then the father summons all his children, and the twin girls, and tells them: 'These men have come to marry you, do you like them?' And he asks the elder (*mbasa*): 'Which do you like?' She chooses. Even if she chooses the man who came for her sister he must accept, and if he tries to protest people will hush him up at once, for it is the custom for the elder to get married first. Then the younger (*musindeka*) says she likes the other one and their father takes the cattle. If either one is wooed secretly before the other she must stay quietly at home till a wooer comes for her sister. If she did not (whichever way it happened) the other might die. It is common knowledge in the boys' village here that of X's twin daughters a lover has only come for the younger, none for the elder. And so both are still unmarried.

Twins and their parents, the fearful ones (*abipasya*), and other 264
people who have been treated with medicines, eat first-fruits of 789

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

264 millet, beans and pumpkin with medicines. 'We fear lest the
789 medicines we have drunk will turn round in the belly';[1] and they must be buried in a hut. 'If they are buried outside there will be drought and famine.'

845 (*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

842 The overt purpose of the twin ritual is plain to all Nyakyusa. Twin birth is thought to be contagious, causing other twin births, and also to make men and cattle ill. The ritual is to prevent this. Mwambelike, a middle-aged pagan, was explicit on the point:

> People are afraid to go to the house of a man with twins. They think that they will have twins themselves if they do, and we do not like twin births; they are taboo in the country. Or perhaps their legs will swell, or their bellies, or faces, if they go to his house. So we go to a doctor and he comes and sprinkles all the people in the village, even tiny children, and all the cattle. He takes a banana stalk to burn the twin birth (*pakokya ipasa*). He burns us because of the twin birth. The water is hot and medicated. He sprinkles us all with it and when we have all been treated we say we have been burnt because of the twin birth.
>
> 753 When a man has begotten twins we are in awe of this Kyala (*tukukeba Kyala uju*). . . . If people drink out of the same vessel as the parents of twins, or if the father of twins sleeps with his other wives, this makes the disease increase, the disease of swelling legs and stomach; men catch it, the wives catch it, the children and fathers of the wives catch it. There is also a twin ceremony for cattle; if a cow drops twin calves we fear the same things. You, your wife and children drink medicines, and the cows are all sprinkled with medicine—but not your other relatives, or neighbours.

Mwakobela himself said:

> If I did not wash and went to eat with my relatives, my legs would swell, I should pant and gasp. Swelling of the legs is due to our shades (*imindu gyetu*) or perhaps Kyala beneath is angry (*Kyala pasi akalele*).

845 References to Kyala as the cause of twins are frequent:

> KASITILE: The shades are in twin birth, and Kyala is there—it is he who gives two children. We drive them away. Kyala and the shades are together. When we bury the *ilibalaga* in the banana grove I say: 'Kyala, leave my bellows (which means my wife) for me, you shades leave it for me.' If the shades are angry perhaps my penis is broken in copulation.
>
> MWAIKAMBO: I have not heard people speak of the shades in twin

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 54.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

birth but they commonly say: 'This illness has come from Kyala, in the 845 ● ritual we drive away Kyala (*tukunkaga Kyala*).'

MWANDISI (asked about the meaning of the phrase 'War has come' in relation to twin birth): It means the war of Kyala, of the twins, the illness. We bring out Kyala. Let him get out of the body, Kyala has caught hold of him, has brooded over him, has given him twins. 'Go out therefore! (*Soka panja lelo*).' At first he was taboo. Kyala was in the house; he could not come out. So then we bring him out, saying: 'We have fought the war there, he has come out.'

NJOBAKOSA (another elderly man—also said that the ritual was to to 'drive off Kyala'): He [the father of twins] comes out, he takes a spear and shield and runs, and we run. One snatches up a shield, and another, and another. Then we give each other beer to drink, and food, and meat, snatching it from one another; we drive off Kyala. When the father of twins comes out of the hut we say: 'You hit us!' He replies: 'I am innocent (*mwelu*, lit. white) because he has been black (*ntitu*) on account of having twins.'

MWANDISI: If the ritual is not completed [i.e. if copulation does not take place], then they go to divine. It is said: 'The shades are angry.' Are the shades not with Kyala?

ANGOMBWIKE: I remember when I was a child, when I had one younger brother who was just beginning to walk, my father had twins. I remember the people sitting round the beer praying that his first ritual copulation should be successful. They began with Mbasi. 'You, Mbasi,[1] support us! (*Gwe Mbasi utwemele*). You, Kyala, support us!' Then they came to the shades. And I have heard that they always said both Mbasi and Kyala but began with Mbasi.

The parents of twins have been singled out by Kyala or Mbasi and therefore remain somewhat fearful all their lives. Angombwike said:

The parent of twins (*umwipasya*) seems like a great person (*alete mundu fijo*), he is not like us, his relatives. See, he has gained two people, he is the child of Mbasi, he is with Kyala, he has seen Kyala. You know that [262] pagans do not eat twin bananas, they fear, saying: 'These are twins (*mapasa*).' They give them to small children. (What I speak of is Nyakyusa custom, not the custom of the baptized.) And the parents of twins (*abipasya*) do not eat the bananas on the sides of the bunch, only those in the middle. When a girl has brought a bunch of bananas to them in the temporary hut . . . they say to her: 'Take away those at the sides,' and she takes away here one, and there one.

[1] There were hints of some special connection between the hero Mbasi and twins (*amapasa*), the elder of whom is *Mbasa*. The younger twin is *Musindeka*, the following [551] child is *Syula*, the next *Kumba*, and the next *Kumbulilu*.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845

QUESTION: Why?

ANGOMBWIKE: Because they say you are a middle one, Mbasi goes with you. We others are on the sides, you are on the open space between (*mpulo*);[1] he has drawn you apart, you are a man of Mbasi now; no one drives you away; no one makes you move aside to make way for someone who comes later. No one makes Mbasi, the fearful one (*umwipasya*), move aside; he is someone who is not moved aside.

He went on to explain that a father of twins must never move aside for a woman passing on the path; should he do so she would fall ill with swollen legs. 'The man looks at the woman and says: "I am here, I am someone, move aside," then she moves aside, she knows that he is *mwipasya*.'

Kyala creates twins, but they are not part of the natural order which he himself created. 'Kyala made us to have one child, so when we have twins it is like an illness.' Mwaikambo held that twins are both unnatural and animal-like.

The man who has borne twins we liken to an animal, because Kyala has created things so that we human beings bear just one child; it is only animals which have many young at one time. So when our fellow has twins we fear to sleep with him in the house because he is like an animal now, therefore we build for him a little hut at some distance, that his badness (*ububibi bwake*) may not move on to us. We seek a medicine for greeting him with, when he comes into the house. . . . He fears to call out because he is following the customs of animals which do not speak. . . . Snatching food is eating like animals. . . . The parents of twins avoid cattle because they are like animals which bear many cubs in a litter. And the blood in the parent of twins is much and fierce (*ililopa lya gwa ipasa lingi, kangi ikali*); it will make the cattle purge, and their legs swell.

A number of other men assented to this interpretation that twins are like animals, saying: 'Yes, it is so,' but no one else volunteered it. The feeling that twins are unnatural is general.

Part of the fearful quality of twins is their heaviness (*ubusito*), and friends and relatives drink medicines that they may be heavy also, and able to meet them.

When twins are born we drink medicine before we meet the parents, it is as if we were light, our bodies have not strength to escape their illness. So we treat ourselves with medicines that we also may be heavy in the belly, that we may have strength to escape their illness.

[1] *Umpulo*: the open swept place between lines of houses in a village.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The *ilibalaga* is to make the mother's relatives one blood with the daughter's children. 'The food which each of the parents brings to relatives is the blood of the lineage (*lyo ilopa lya kikolo kyabo*) that they may have one body (*ukuti baje mbili gumo*). They do not look at one another when they take the *ilibalaga* because the blood [of the two lineages] has not yet met.' 845

The statements of two doctors, the one from Selya and the other a Kukwe, throw a little more light on the symbolism of the various actions. Mwakionde (of Selya) replied to a question about why the parents of twins only eat the middle bananas in a bunch:

Those of the sides belong to Kyala, because the twin was with Kyala; Kyala brooded over him, he came to them and gave them two children. After two days they throw away those bananas on the side, they throw them behind the huts, where they throw the rubbish of twins. . . . That means: may Mbasi be driven away when he comes to look at the children, may he be driven away to the rubbish heap behind the huts.

QUESTION: Why are the parents not allowed to call out?

MWAKIONDE: When we give each other medicines to drink? Since you have borne twins we do not meet one another. It's taboo to call out.

QUESTION: Snatching food from one another?

MWAKIONDE: They spread meat and cooked bananas on leaves of plantain and sweet banana. The doctor sprinkles powdered medicine, then we all snatch. Then the doctor gathers up the rubbish (*imindu*), those leaves, and throws them away behind the huts.

QUESTION: But why the snatching?

MWAKIONDE: If we do not snatch from one another our legs swell.

QUESTION: The running to the pasture?

MWAKIONDE: I myself have borne twins, you are my relative. When they have shaved my hair in the house, when you come with a shield to the doorway, 'Come out, Mwakionde,' you cry. 'War has come!' Then I go out. You give me the shield at the doorway. I run off with it. Another comes and snatches it, and another and another. It's to help the legs. Women do it afterwards, and then cry the war-cry. If I just meet a twin then Mbasi is angry and says: 'Why do you kill your fellow by just meeting him?' I am ill, I have diarrhœa, my legs swell, and my face swells, but sometimes the sickness returns to the parent of twins and he himself is ill.

KAKUNE (a Kukwe): In European times we do not fear; we drink [177] medicine, that is all; but of old we feared very much. At the coming out (*ukusoka*) beer is brewed and the people and relatives drink it, and then 845 in the night the man and wife, secluded in the hut, have intercourse, 833

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 and the doctor stands outside at the door. The doctor asks: 'Is it suc-
833 cessful? [i.e. can you have intercourse with her?]' and the man says: 'No, it is not successful.' Then all we *abanyago* (priests, officiants), the fathers of the girl who are there, and the fathers of the man, pray, in words only [i.e. without blowing out water], saying: 'Father, support us, Grandfather, support us, Kyala, support us, let not the ritual go on for ever.' And then the man is able to eject, and he tells the doctor: 'It's all right now.'

845 The disease comes from the twin birth (*ilipasa*) when a couple have
753 had twins (*bapasile*). If the relatives speak with them or tread in their footsteps when they [the relatives] are empty (*bwasi*), not having drunk medicine, then their legs will swell up and they will have diarrhœa. No, they do not say that the private parts will swell, only the legs. The refusal of the seed to come is due to the shades (*imindu*). If a man has angered his father or mother who are alive, or if they are dead and he gives nothing to his sister, then those below, *balungu*, are angry. *Imindu* catches hold of them and then when he begets twins he will have trouble at the ritual.

845 The semen refuses to come also if the girl has angered her parents,
833 or if her husband has angered them. It's *imindu*. This copulation is an essential part of the ritual. If the parents of twins do not do this and you meet them afterwards, your legs will swell and dysentery will set in. The fearful ones [the parents of twins] have a fire and create sickness in us. We say: 'Kyala has loved [*sic*] you, he has created you so that you bear twin children. Now we speak with you.'

845 Yes, the old people said: 'Kyala and those below.' They said those below beg Kyala to give them two children. This was said of old, before the Europeans came. One who has himself had twins will not fear his relative who has twins for he says: 'I also am heavy (*ndi nsito*), I am a fearful one, a parent of twins myself.' No one fears the twins themselves, but their parents are feared.

The child that follows twins (*ndili*), does not anoint himself at any later twin ritual. It is said that he finished before because he followed twins.

When the parents of twins leave the hut they run with a lighted piece of thatch,[1] followed by all the friends and relatives; the friends and relatives call out: 'You hit us with fire [i.e. you give us the disease].' They reply: 'We are pure (*tuli belu*) [i.e. we have no disease, it is finished]. Kyala has prayed for us.'

845 And at the death of a parent of twins the relatives fear to touch the
764 corpse until the twin doctor comes and puts a medicine in the hand of the corpse and sprinkles hot medicine on the legs of the relatives—then

[1] This was not seen or mentioned in the Selya ritual.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

they take hold of the corpse. But they wait for the doctor; if they do not do so the same disease will come—a swelling of legs and diarrhœa. An ordinary corpse is not feared in this way. 845 764 [753]

Yes, a man fears to take his other wives. He says: 'If I just go to them I shall give them the disease of the twins that I begot with this wife.' The wife he takes without precaution will swell in the legs and stomach, and pass blood with her stools. He first tries to have a child with the wife who bore twins, waiting till the twins are walking about. He lies with the mother of the twins but withdraws, and then, when the children are grown, he impregnates her. He does not go to the other wives. And if he asks for another wife before trying to impregnate the mother of the twins her father will refuse. If he takes her without asking, her father will make him pay a cow. He can only ask for another wife if the mother of the twins does not conceive. For one month[1] the husband refrains altogether from intercourse, then after the ritual he goes to his wife (the mother of the twins) but does not impregnate her. . . . A man is supposed to tell the twin doctor before he begets another child with his wife. He must do it openly, and not in secret. It is taboo to do it secretly. Nothing happens, but the doctor is angry, saying: 'Why did you not tell me, the doctor, the owner of the body?' 845 842 [834]

Themes already familiar from the death and puberty–marriage rituals recur again here. The parents of twins are isolated and cleansed like mourners and nubile girls. Contact with them is held to be dangerous because 'those below'—in this case Kyala and Mbasi rather than the shades—have brooded over them, and must be driven off before normal procreation can be resumed. After their isolation the *ilibalaga*—the symbol of their ritual union—must be offered to the shades of both lineages, that of the man and that of the woman. There is also the eating of balls of porridge, the symbol, in the other rituals, of the actions of a madman, but the fear of madness was not adduced by our informants as the purpose of the twin ritual; rather it is the formidable potency which produces two children instead of one, that is the danger—'the parents of twins have a fire'—and men protect themselves against it by burning themselves with hot medicines. They 'burn the twin birth'. 845 783

[1] Presumably longer when the seclusion and ritual lasted longer.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER VII

RITUALS OF MISFORTUNE

845 An abnormal birth is the most dangerous misfortune that can befall a family in Nyakyusa society, and the ritual to ward off its expected results is the most elaborate, but there are lesser misfortunes also, which may be averted by simpler rituals.

753 (a) *Cleansing after spearing*

682 When one man has speared another and killed him, even though the action was legitimate (as slaying an enemy in battle, or a cattle thief or an adulterer caught *in flagrante delicto*), the slayer and his relatives dare not eat together with the relatives of the slain, or enter their houses, lest they themselves, and the kinsmen of the slain also, fall ill, coughing, spitting blood, and wasting away. This sickness is known as *ulukwego*, 'the disease of spearing'.[1] Both parties are thought to suffer primarily from contact with each other and both protect themselves by drinking medicines, but they drink separately, each engaging a doctor to treat them. We were told:

[763] If one man kills another it does not finish. He begets children and they die; an autopsy is performed and reveals fighting with spears (*isengene*)[2] The disease may not injure the slayer or his children, but the relatives with whom he eats and drinks, and so also on the other side; it may not hurt the children of the dead man, but those relatives with whom his children eat and drink.

We all fell ill, especially the brothers of the slain. The murderer always remembered to drink the medicine because he knew that he had killed someone, but when your brother was slain perhaps you forgot to drink the medicine. Then, afterwards, if you drank beer with someone, not knowing that it was he who had killed your brother, you fell ill.

783 The manner of treatment is as follows:

If I have killed someone they take me to a waterfall and make me

[1] *Isengene*: a spear. [2] *Ukusengene*: to fight together with spears.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 man. Women murmur but it only makes them sick themselves
775 [laughter]. But my father's sister (*ussasenge*) can murmur, she is a man like my father. . . . If my mother is old and I do not care for her she will murmur and fall sick herself, she will never make me sick. My mother is no relative in my homestead, she is no relative to the shades.

However, Mwakwelebeja (a very old and conservative man) held that 'People sometimes say: "My mother beneath is angry" though it's not common', and Kasitile was quite positive that a mother was also a shade with power to inflict misfortune, as the following conversation shows:

QUESTION: What shades influence a man or woman?

KASITILE AND HIS YOUNGEST WIFE: *Imisala* of father is there, and *imisala* of mother. Yes, indeed, *imisala* of mother exists. Once I had not put beer in the house and I fell ill. The divination said: 'It is *imisala* of your mother. She is angry not to find anything in your house.' Because we chiefs always put beer in a little calabash in the house, it stays there always.

QUESTION: When it goes bad?

KASITILE: We put some more. There is a little millet flour there now. Sometimes we put flour, sometimes beer. And when I come to die they bury beer with me. . . . Once the offering was not there, and my mother who was dead came to look and did not find anything. Then she went to father, who was dead, and said: 'I went to our child. His house was without anything.' Then father said: 'Let us go and look!' They did not find anything, then they shook me up. Then the oracle said: 'It is the *imisala* of your mother.'

QUESTION: And a wife?

KASITILE: Both her father and her mother punish [lit. hit] her at their place, even though she is with me, also they punish her.

QUESTION: But your shades?

KASITILE: How can they punish in-laws? They do not punish her, but the child whom she has borne, their grandchild, him they punish.

[593] Though Kasitile and others denied that the husband's shades could punish a wife, nevertheless she suffers from their anger through the child, through a difficult labour, or through the beer she brews going bad.

578 PYAGILAMO: It is said that when a woman who has quarrelled with
775 her husband is brewing beer and it goes bad, that means the shades are angry. The shades of the husband have made the beer go bad. The husband has murmured and the shades have heard. When a wife is
[594] pregnant it is taboo for her to quarrel with her husband; she will have a difficult labour. The husband murmurs and the shades hear. The

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

difficult labour is from this, not from adultery. And in a case of difficult labour her husband does pray to his shades.

All were agreed that a woman is in the power of the shades of her father's lineage and if her father is angry with her, or with his son-in-law her husband, his shades afflict her, causing her to be barren or to have miscarriages, or ailing children. Hence a woman who is barren or ill, or whose children are sickly, often returns to her father's homestead so that he may pray for her, and she sleeps there on the night of the ritual, for the shades come by night. More rarely, if she has quarrelled with her father, she goes outside her husband's homestead and, facing towards her father's home, she prays herself on the pathway. But in all the cases we traced in which a woman's ancestors were believed to have made her, or her child, ill, there was a dispute between her father (or his heir) and her husband over marriage-cattle or the bull of puberty; and we were told that her father's shades 'are angry only if marriage-cattle have not been paid, and for no other reason', thus it seems that the control of her father's shades over a married woman is in fact somewhat limited.

The characteristic illness sent by the shades is sores round the mouth, and fever—an illness which is not acute and clears up quickly. These symptoms are immediately interpreted as *iniada*, affliction from the shades. Beer going sour before it is mature is also *iniada*, usually thought to be caused by quarrels between husband and wife. But almost any misfortune, mild or serious, is interpreted as *iniada* if members of the lineage are conscious of quarrels between themselves, or with their spouses or fathers-in-law.

The ritual consists in the reconciliation of the living in the presence of the dead and, if the misfortune is serious, a sacrifice of flesh, fish, or fowl. The junior begs pardon of his senior who acknowledges his anger and expresses forgiveness by taking a mouthful of water from his calabash cup (*alapindi*) and blowing it out (*akwiputa*) in his sacred banana grove. For the patient to recover, or the blight on crops or fish-traps to be removed, *the senior kinsman must confess his anger*, and spitting, or blowing out water, is a symbol of confession and forgiveness. Mwaisumo was explicit on the matter: 'If a father is angry with his son or daughter he may say, some day: "I forgive you now" and spit on the ground: all the anger that is in him comes out like spit.' *Ukanwa* means both 'to

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F'N17 Ngonde F'N17
Nyakyusa

764 602 sometimes perform the ritual, but we lack conclusive evidence. One case in which a sister's daughter of the deceased man performed the ritual was recorded, but at other funerals girls in the same relationship did not. Kakuze, the doctor, asserted that a boy would perform the ritual for his mother's brother for 'he is mother, the brother of mother (*je jabe ulilombe gwe jabe*)', but in a number of cases we observed women performing the rituals for their brothers though their sons did not. A man's children may possibly perform the ritual for his sister but we traced no case of their doing so.

768 602 Those who drink the ritual beer when a widow returns to her father's house after her union with the heir are her father and the men of his lineage—brothers, half-brothers, sons, and some of his brother's sons; the wives and children of these; and daughters of the lineage, her own sisters and half-sisters, and sisters of her father, but not the husbands or children of daughters of the lineage. At one *ingumbe* ritual we attended there were present eleven men of the lineage, eighteen daughters, and thirty-two wives, as well as numerous children (cf. genealogy, Table (c)).

764 593 When a woman has died those who come to cut the banana grove and give medicated meat to her children are the *abipuo*—her brother (or his heir) and his wives.

764 602 The principals at a death ritual, then, are children and grandchildren, parents and grandparents, spouses, and certain siblings of the deceased, together with some of their children. If a woman dies, or a widow is inherited, her agnatic kin and their wives are concerned as well.

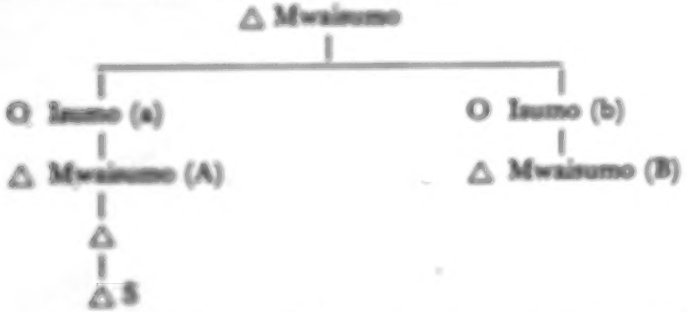
• 845 602 751 The group which takes protective medicine after an abnormal birth is larger. All the wives and children and grandchildren of the father of twins must come, his full siblings with their children and grandchildren, and the wives of his brothers, but not the husbands of his sisters; some of his half-brothers, with wives and children, some of the children of his father's brothers' sons (but not of father's brothers' daughters) and of his father's sisters' sons. On the mother's side her father, or his heirs, must take part with his wives and children, and her sisters. At the ritual for Mwakibela and his wife, previously described, we counted 136 relatives taking part, of which 24 were men, 19 boys, 33 women, 12 girls, and 33 babies (cf. genealogy, Table (c)).

845 602 When the mother of twins took the *ilibelage* back to her 'father', her brother (heir to her father), with his wives and children, her

2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sister immediately older than herself, the sister's daughter, and the sister immediately younger than herself, took part. 845 602

At the ritual of spearing, the principals are the children and grandchildren of the slayer and the slain, their brothers, their mother's kin (*abipaw*) and their wives. We were not able to watch any case of treatment against *ululunga* and are not certain exactly how far the infection is thought to spread. Our informants were agreed that the number of kinsmen concerned is less than in a twin ritual, but we traced one case in which a minor chief, Mwaisumo (B.), forbade the father of a man who had killed S., the great grandson of Mwaisumo's mother's sister, to enter his country lest he spread disease among his relatives. 783 602 682



[601]

At a ritual to 'rot the ropes' those concerned are the descendants of the one who has been bound and their wives, siblings and siblings' children. At the one ritual we saw there were present 27 members of the dead man's own lineage (3 sons, 2 younger half-brothers, 1 full sister, 4 half-sisters, 3 sons, 5 daughters, 2 grandsons, 7 granddaughters), one wife, the wives of 4 sons, one father's sister's son, one son and 6 daughters of his sisters or half-sisters. 783 602

The ritual for protection against sorcery which we attended was performed at the home of the senior brother (heir to his father) of the dead woman. There were present her two brothers, their wives and children; her father's brother's daughter; two wives and one daughter of her sister's sons; her mother, two of her mother's brothers with their wives and children; two of her mother's sisters and the daughters of one of them. Her husband (who lived next door) could not take the medicine at his in-law's house, but some was sent for him to use at his home with his wives and kinsfolk. 789 602 754

In the simple ritual of prayer to the shades the senior kinsman who offers the prayer and blows out water acts alone but, if there 782 602

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 has been a quarrel in the family, those members of the lineage
602 who have been at variance must attend and share the meat or beer, and bless one another. Grandchildren, 'comrades of the shades', must eat the offering left overnight in the banana grove.

593 If a son has quarrelled with his father and comes to beg pardon
621 the father calls his *neighbours* who must be present and partake of a
783 feast and bless the young men. 'If father and son just agree with one another and people do not eat anything, then the son will not be settled in well.'

585 At a puberty–marriage ritual the principals are the nubile girl
881 and her father or brother, her husband, and sometimes her mother
602 or mother-in-law. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest son's wife, or with her eldest daughter, if she is initiated at home. As an ordinary birth the principals are the mother and infant.

764 Besides these principals who undergo the full ritual there are
602 many minor actors. At a funeral there are the grave-diggers who,
621 traditionally among the Nyakyusa, were mature men, relatives or village neighbours.[1] They wash after the burial and are rewarded with a special leg of the funeral beef. As we have seen, the affines (*abalo*), that is the fathers-in-law and sons-in-law of the deceased or of 'the owner of the funeral', come with cattle to kill or cloth. When a woman dies, her husband and her father, or her brother, kill cattle, and their affines bring cloths or, occasionally, cattle. Kinsmen—members of the lineage and their wives—and neighbours bring gifts of food to cook for the crowd of mourners, and small gifts of millet which are presented to the shade and used for making the ritual beer. After an abnormal birth, village neigh-
845 bours have their legs splashed with scalding medicine but do not
621 drink medicines or shave. The cattle of the village are also splashed. At the puberty ritual the bride's maids keep her com-
881 pany during her seclusion. The co-wives and neighbours of her
621 mother and mother-in-law assist in instructing her, and the neigh-
602 bours of her father join with him first in avoiding her and then in giving her gifts. Her father-in-law is identified with his brothers and his father's brothers' sons, whom she avoids, as well as his sisters, and her mother-in-law's brothers, and sisters' husbands. They, in turn, avoid her sisters, as well as herself.

621 By the 'congregation' we mean those who attend rituals to ex-
788 press sympathy, and whose presence is felt to be necessary to the

[1] In Ngonde they are *abatwi*, cross-cousins.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

meat is offered in the bride's father's grove; the two symbols of first intercourse—treatment with *undumila* medicine and jumping over fire; the recognition of the end of childhood by calling on the bride's mother to put her down off her back; the insistence that she show modesty before her father and his fellows as before a father-in-law; and the taboo on crossing water lest her menstrual flow become like a river. 881

The twin ritual is characterized by the fear of infection from too great potency, and the treatment with scalding medicines to 'burn' the twin birth. 845

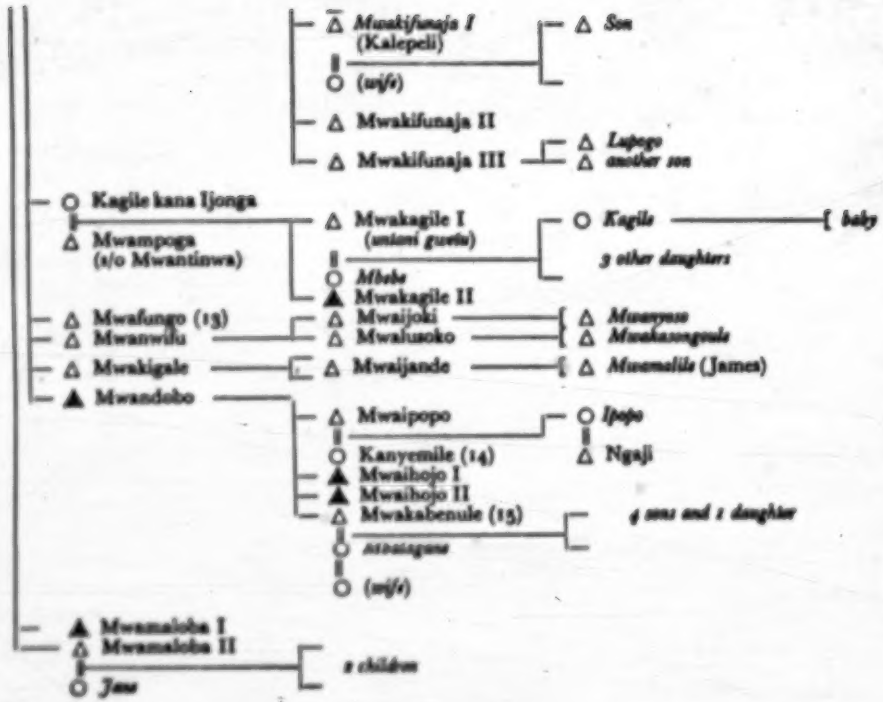
Sometimes our informants gave different interpretations of the same symbol and there was no agreement between them, as with the stem of bananas stolen in the Kukwe death ritual, and the bunch of flowers brought back from the stream. Nyani said stealing the bananas symbolized that 'we may now eat other people's food', and Mwamulenga that it was a symbol of driving away disease. Kakune, the doctor, interpreted the bunch of flowers brought back from the stream as a symbol of the shade which was brought home; Mwamulenga saw picking and carrying flowers as yet another symbol of the actions of a madman. Though there was general agreement over the interpretation of many symbols, it is possible that some have no commonly accepted meaning, but suggest different things to different people. It is clear, however, that with the Nyakyusa, as with ourselves, one symbol has often several associations for the same person, and Kasitile and the more self-conscious of our informants were aware of this. For Kasitile the banana in the death ritual is the corpse and the pumpkin-seeds in it the shade; it is also faeces which madmen eat; it is also, in the puberty ritual, the male organ and the seeds are the semen. Eating a banana is a symbol *both* of copulation and of the actions of a madman. Conversely, the same object or action is symbolized in many different ways—there are nine or ten symbols of sex intercourse, and twenty of driving away the shade, recorded in the texts quoted above. 796 184

When an action recurs in different rituals, informants almost always interpreted it in the same way in each context: the exception was the trampling dance (*ukukanya ingenya*) interpreted as a way of 'driving away the shade' in the death ritual and a 'rejoicing' in the puberty ritual. It was always explained as 'customary'. 'Father and grandfather did it.'

This brings us to the ultimate explanation given for all the 829

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(13) Living at a distance, so did not come to induction.
(14) Inherited by Mwakabenule.
(15) He lives near the father of the twins.



[facing p. 270(A)]

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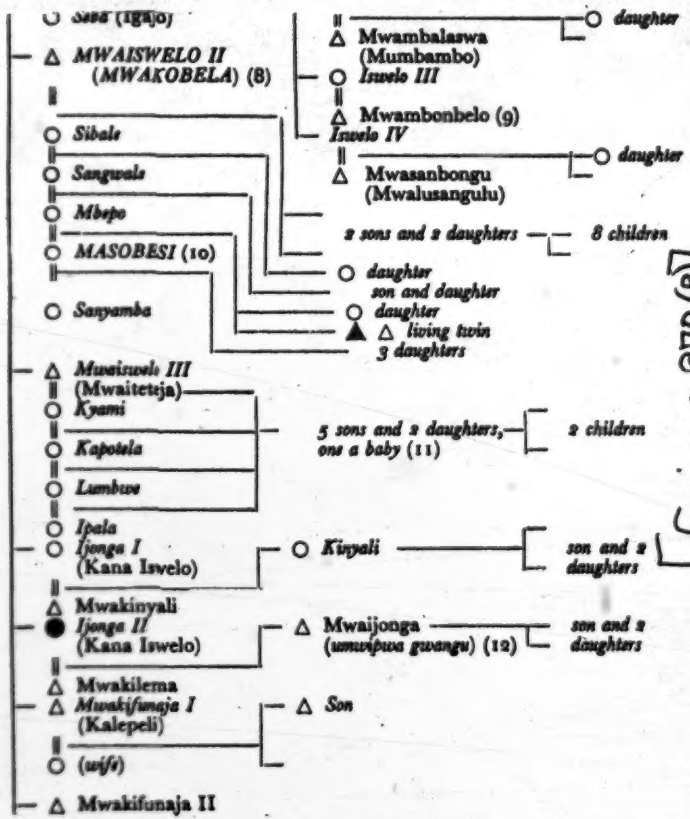
2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17 Nyakyusa

Key:
Persons participating in the ritual shown in italics.
△ ○ = alive. ▲ ● = dead.

NOTES:
(1) Do not come.
(2) 'Owner' of the ritual.
(3) Took medicine.
(4) At home of brother of mother of twins.
(5) Moved to Mwipande.
(6) Sick for 'washing'.
(7) Chief at Masoko.
(8) Father of the twins.
(9) Clerk at Tukuyu.
(10) Mother of the twins.
(11) The third daughter is 'a wanderer with no home'.
(12) He left children and went away. He himself had twins before.
(13) Living at a distance, so did not come to induction.
(14) Inherited by Mwakabenule.
(15) He lives near the father of the twins.



Facing p. 270 (B)

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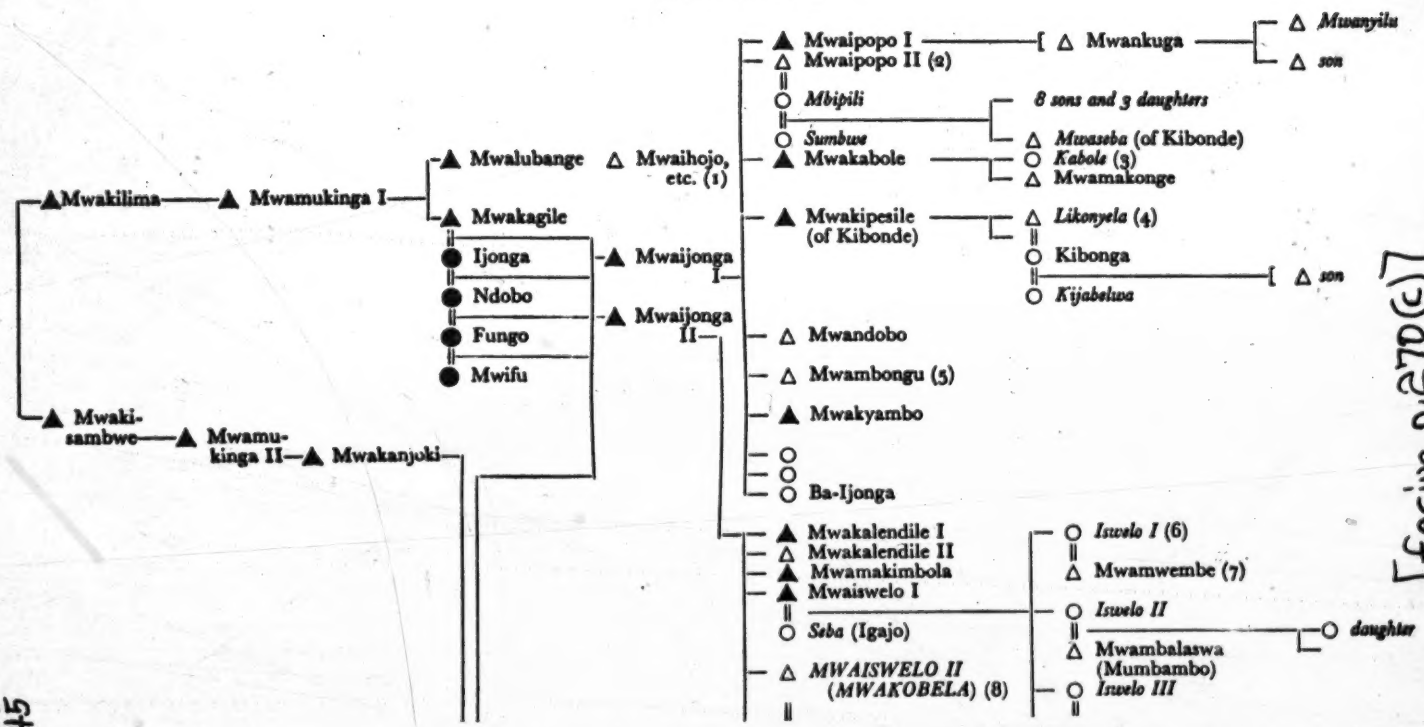
TABLE (a) *See pp.* 153—162.

GENEALOGY OF MWAKOBELA
(TWIN RITUAL)



[facing p. 270(c)]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
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3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

air, as much privacy as possible being secured in the universal banana groves: and always in a sitting, not a lying position. 844

A difficult birth is a serious misfortune for the mother. Births are normally easy, and difficult labour indicates the wrath of the spirits for evil done. Medicine is in all cases given to facilitate delivery, and if this fails other means must be tried. A message is sent to the husband and the father of the woman, and prayer, without ceremony, for the matter is urgent, is offered by both men: 845 782

> "Ye fathers and ancestors, and ye who are of the far past, let this child be born safely. If I have sinned, be merciful; and if ye will not be merciful, kill me, but let the woman and the child live."

While thus praying he has been chewing the pith of a banana leaf, and at the end he takes water into his mouth, which he squirts out, saying, "Let my sin be carried away," and throws on the roof the chewed pith; for if he is not by birth the representative of the family he has no natural right to pray, but the ceremony of chewing and throwing on the roof averts evil consequences.

If all this fails it is clear that the woman has sinned; and her only hope of life for herself and her child lies in confession. The midwife takes a number of small sticks which she throws on the ground one by one, inviting the suffering woman to name the men with whom she has consorted. Natives assert emphatically that birth becomes easier after confession; 845 783

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

845 783 and the statement cannot be altogether devoid of truth. The influence of the mind upon the body is universally admitted: may it not be that the consciousness of guilt has the effect of contracting the muscles, and the relaxation which follows confession renders birth less painful? And may it not be that even a false confession, wrung from a despairing sufferer, brings a momentary relief sufficient to bring the child to the birth? One is glad to add, however, that many women have the courage to refuse altogether to submit to this shameful ordeal, insisting that their trouble is due, not to the wrath of the spirits, but to other causes, and that they will die rather than confess what is not true.

844 846 When birth has taken place, the cord is cut with a bamboo knife, and the placenta buried in the family place of prayer, a small part protruding to leave a connection which insures further children. All this time no one in the house may swallow saliva. The father calls out to know the sex of the child, but he must not yet enter (for the party have entered the house as soon as possible after the birth). After a few days the mother is anointed with oil and shaved, along with her child, and powdered with medicine. Meantime intimation has been sent to the grandparents; a cock if a boy, a hen if a girl, telling them all that they wish to know. The mother may now resume her household duties.

851 603 431 But in about a week she goes to show the child to her own parents, and at the end of her visit, which lasts some weeks, great preparations are made by both

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

846 earlier days. The family of Lugulu at Mwakeleli wear blinders of leaves for weeks after a birth. At the end of the period a feast of beer and ill-cooked food is prepared, and both sets of families spend the night in open reviling of each other, and ceaseless tramping of the feet the livelong night. In the morning good food is eaten, and both parties go their ways with mutual good will. This is called *ukutila indila*, to fear the fears; to endure the terrors. No explanation of what the terrors are has reached me.

845 783 The birth of twins is regarded as one of the greatest of misfortunes, and is followed by ceremonies intended to cleanse the parents from the stain which has come upon them, and to prevent its spread to others. A hut is built outside the village, with a partition in the middle, on either side of which the parents live, but they must speak to each other only in whispers, and to others not at all. The doctor sprinkles all the relatives with medicine, and kindles a fire, in the smoke of which every one must stand for a moment. The parents are shut up in the hut, but may leave it for a few moments at night, and no one may see them. After about a month the doctor comes again, with beating drums and shaking rattle, and brings the parents out of their house of restraint. A second sprinkling of medicine upon each relative being made, the doctor takes a bunch of grass from the roof, kindles it, and hands it to the father, who, holding it in one hand, crawls out of the house, and runs, followed by the crowd. He returns, however, and receives their

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

salutations with his hand upon his mouth. Beer mixed 845
with medicine is handed to him, and, all the others 783
drinking one by one from a calabash, he takes a little into his mouth and squirts it upon each as he or she drinks. The final stage comes about a month later, when, in the presence of the doctor, without whom nothing can be done, all the grandparents and both parents drink beer amid a circle of shouting villagers, and then, laying hold of the calabash, break it in pieces. After one more sprinkling of all, the doctor departs, taking with him a cow as fee for his many exertions. But until another child is born, the parents must eat alone, or with other parents of twins; and the mother may not pass behind anyone without warning them and receiving their consent, signified by clapping the hands.

The naming of the child. The Konde child pos- 551
sesses a varied selection of names. When he is grown he will offer a European employer one or another, sometimes in perfect honesty, sometimes with intent to hide the fact that under a previously given name he had a bad character. But the names are all genuine. Descent is through the father, and the new-born child [611]
takes the personal name of its paternal grandfather, let us say Ambangire. But his mother must never refer to her father-in-law by name, nor may she use the name in referring to any other person who bears it; her son therefore takes her own name; if she is called Kalukwa, he will be named Mwakalukwa; next he takes the family name of his father, say Mwakasungula.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

for her where she is, or at any rate at a distance from 595
his own house.

Twins are among the greatest of misfortunes; and 845c
along with twins are counted children born feet first. 784
This subject is dealt with separately, and it needs only to be noted that parents are segregated, must not speak even to each other except in whispers, must not drink milk, lest the cow should dry up, or give only water. The mother must not pass behind anyone without asking for permission, which is given by clapping hands; nor may she pass her own father without a ceremony in which she throws dust over his head. This goes on until another child is born, or until about five years have elapsed.

It is *mwiko* for a dog to drink the milk of a cow that 784
has recently calved; the cow will dry up. The same result will follow if strangers go into the house while cows are being milked. It is forbidden to common people to eat new season's food until chiefs and village headmen and twins have eaten first; and even they eat only when the first fruits have been mixed with medicine by the doctor. The first fish of the season must not be taken to the village. It is eaten at the river by the boys. It belongs to the spirits. To make a sucking noise with the lips is *mwiko*, being a token of impudence; it may also lead to accusation of witchcraft. Never steal from a blacksmith; the scraps of iron you steal will produce a noise in your throat like the noise of his bellows, and presently you will die.

For a man to see his daughter-in-law, no matter 606

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

754 witches, who use their power beneficently and spend their dreams in efforts to counteract the aggressor witches, *avaloti*, who use their power maliciously. The great com-
626 moner is the strongest of the former type, and the 'defender of the village'. A man who earns universal unpopularity is subject to a spiritual attack from the 'defenders', and is liable to fall sick from the blast of unpopularity. Belief in this efficacy of the 'breath of men' is one of the sanctions of the accepted social order.[1]

Only magic is believed to have power to punish wrongdoers who are neither kinsmen nor members of the same chiefdom. Magic exerts an influence on the behaviour of kinsmen and affines. The witchcraft of a neglected wife may cause a man to fall sick, or that of his father-in-law may harm his children.[2] The power of witchcraft never acts between relatives, though it might between husband and wife.[3]

754 An aggressor witch was reported in the old days by the great commoner to the chief, who ordered the poison ordeal. If the accused failed to vomit (the dose was seldom
627 fatal), he was proved guilty and killed or exiled, all his cows and property being taken by the chief and the victims of his aggressive witchcraft. If a private individual accused another, both were put to the ordeal; if both vomited, the accuser had to pay two cows to the other for slander; if either failed to vomit he was punished as guilty. The ordeal is now illegal, but men accused of aggressive witchcraft still find it best to fly the chiefdom. Great commoners normally used their witchcraft powers to protect their chief from attack, but if he erred they would join in the attack on him; the nobles of Ngonde had power to exert a similar constitutional check on the Kyungu.[4]

763 If death by aggressive witchcraft was suspected, it was proved or disproved by a routine post-mortem examination and by subsequent consultation with the diviner.[5]

Birth

844 A child should be born in its own father's house. A difficult birth is a sign of the guilt of adultery, and is eased by confession.[6] A few days after the birth the mother is
845 anointed, shaved, and resumes her household duties. She later goes on a visit of some
851 weeks to show the child to her own parents, returning to her husband after celebration by both sets of grandparents, and exchanges of food and hoes. The birth of twins was a great misfortune, requiring the segregation and ritual purification of both parents.[7]

Initiation

881 There was no puberty or initiation rite for boys. The initiation of a girl was really a pre-marriage rite. She went through a complicated rite to ensure fertility, in which the husband took part. The initiation lasts some months, and includes several exchanges of food between the families of the girl and her betrothed husband, and ceremonies in which her girl friends of the same village and his friends of his village take part. The girl is tested for virginity during the ceremonies. If she is not betrothed before puberty the initiation is carried out in a modified form, but the full significance is lost.[8]

[1] Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 277.
[2] Ibid., p. 256.
[3] Ibid., 1, 1936, p. 91.
[4] Ibid., 5, 1939, p. 38.
[5] Johnston, 1897, p. 443.
[6] Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 10; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 42–3.
[7] Ibid., pp. 44–8. According to H. H. Johnston, if the children died in succession the father was expected to kill himself, but it is possible that he is recounting a custom of the Southern Tumbuka (1897, p. 417).
[8] Ibid., 1925, p. 51; Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 11; Wilson, 2, 1936, p. 238.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

may nullify any ritual, but often it is not strong enough to overcome the fissiparous tendencies of the lineage. In theory a celebration at the grove of a senior should precede that at the grove of a junior and sacrifices at Lubaga would be followed by sacrifices at the groves of the 'sons of Lwembe' in order of seniority, but this does not happen in practice nowadays and we doubt whether it ever did, since a hierarchy was not organized and maintained by a central authority as in Ngonde. In 1935 a celebration at the grove of *Mwaijonga* (82) preceded one at the grove of his great-grandfather Mwakisambwe (30) by a month, as we shall see. 643 769 [578] [688]

Sacrifices are made when a drought or flood occurs, or a plague of locusts, or an epidemic among men or cattle; when fishing is poor in the chiefdoms of the plain, or war is imminent. They occur most often during the 'winter' in the hills, when a malaria-sodden people feel the chill of damp mists and cool south winds, and in October, just before the break of the rains, when the country is parched; but they are not confined to these periods. In theory the village headmen and the priests who 'watch over the country' foresee *coming* misfortune in dreams, and avert it by making the appropriate sacrifices. And they are helped by ordinary people who are dreaming repeatedly or falling into a trance or fit, and prophesying evil and jabbering of 'a black cow, a black cow' or some other appurtenance of sacrifice. But in practice the prophecies generally occur when there is hunger or plague in the land, or an omen (such as a python or a ground hornbill behaving oddly) has been seen. [731] [782] [787]

The dreamers are *abasololi* or *abakunguluka*, and, as these names indicate, they are believed to have descended into the land of the shades. *Ukusoloka*[1] means to go down into something, like the roots of a tree into the earth, and *ukukungula ingungula* means to pluck a banana flower which (as was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*) is a symbol for a corpse and is buried; so the *abakunguluka* are those who have been buried in the earth. '*Abakunguluka* go to the land of the shades and return. . . . An *unkunguluka* plucks up the "blessed grass" (*ikisajelo*) in his swept courtyard and goes beneath and sees.[2] . . . He goes down into the earth beneath and takes the chief to the land of the shades when he dies, and he also sees the witches. . . .' More rarely, the *unsololi* or *unkunguluka* is 791 787

[1] *Ukusoloka*—a breech presentation, the implication being that the infant's head is in *bupuka*, but children born in this way are not necessarily prophets. [845]

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 77, 218.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

expresses the unity of groups of believers who associate in Churches. But the two systems are not wholly exclusive: the Christian still belongs to a lineage and a chiefdom, though he does not worship as a member of either, and thereby impairs their solidarity.

(b) THE CHRISTIAN WITHDRAWAL

What is the attitude of Christian converts to the rituals performed by their pagan kinsmen and neighbours and what replaces the traditional pagan rituals in the Christian community? These questions have already been touched upon in the accounts of pagan rituals, but we must now consider them more fully.

Christians withdraw very largely from the pagan rituals of kinship which, as was shown in a previous book, are directed to the shades. They attend the funerals of pagan kinsmen to weep and comfort the mourners, and they often undertake the work of grave-digging so fearful to pagans, but they take no part in the 'farewell to the dead' nor do the stricter among them eat of the funeral meat, since the cattle killed are an offering to the shades. Christians do not participate in the twin ritual which brings together such a large number of pagan kinsmen, nor do they share in the puberty ritual, and they forbid their daughters to keep a pagan bride company during her seclusion. For the most part their withdrawal is accepted tolerantly by their pagan kin who carry on without them, a pagan father even performing the 'farewell to the dead' for a Christian son who has died, lest his lineage shades be angered by the omission, but occasionally the non-participation of Christians leads to strained relations, as when pagans refuse to visit or eat with a bride or a remarried widow who has not celebrated with them after her union with her husband, and sometimes a Church member, under pressure from pagan relatives or driven by his own fears, celebrates the ritual for a pagan father. The dropping of the elaborate twin ritual creates surprisingly little difficulty considering how much the pagans fear sickness from twins. Their birth is interpreted by Christians as a special blessing —a bounteous increase—rather than 'an illness' as the pagans call it. A Christian woman, asked if a mother of twins was not fearful when the ritual was omitted, gave a classic reply: 'What she thinks in her heart I can't see; what I think in my heart you can't see; but we *do* see that no one avoids her when they meet her face to face.'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[797] [795] [778] there?" And after he went there was much food.' In fact, it appears that he took the teachers and schoolchildren to the grove that they might no longer be afraid of it: the girls gathered firewood there, and everyone entered and made a noise, thus breaking great taboos. But all this happened long ago (the visit to Mbyanga was in 1913 or 1914) and, as was indicated earlier, the common view among Christians is that pagan rituals *used* to be necessary and efficacious, but are so no longer. We were assured by Christians who themselves took no part in twin rituals that 'formerly [845] people fell ill if they did not celebrate'. 'Yes, of course, they were [753] very sick indeed in the old days, the whole body would swell.' Some even maintained that it was still necessary for pagans to celebrate though not for Christians. A Christian chief explained:

[778] The sacred grove of Mwakihaba is just here in my country; . . . in the old days they used to take a little fresh milk and an unripe stem of [789] bananas, and put them in the grove. . . . The next day the calabash was full of milk and the stem was ripe. This was really so in the old days, Kyala heard men and agreed to their requests in this way. We went to ask for rain and food in the groves; the chief would kill a cow and Kyala agreed, food and rain came. Now that the Gospel has spread, since the Europeans have opened the Gospel to us Kyala refuses to agree, he says: 'Since they are proud and refuse to hear the Gospel I will discipline them', and he refuses to agree to the old ways.

QUESTION: What about witchcraft?

Perhaps there were people who were witches in the old days; at any [758] rate I know that when milk ran short and a man was accused to the chief of bewitching the cattle, the chief used to take his cattle and drive him out of the country, and then milk was plentiful again. Of that I am sure.

QUESTION: And now?

No, it is not like that now.

Many pagans attribute the decline in fertility which is taking [698] place, and the decrease in the yield of milk, to the decay of the old communal rituals and the unhampered activities of witches.

Nevertheless, as the number of Christians in an area increases, the pagans tend to curtail their rituals more and more. The direct parallel between pagan confession, sacrifice, and communion with the shades, and the Holy Communion of the Christian Church is recognised by many, and one is felt to replace the other. Regarding the rituals of kinship we were repeatedly told: 'We see that the Christians, who say the only rituals are the

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

was not an individual one. True, a girl gave her formal consent in the marriage ritual, but the pressure on her to accept the husband selected for her by her kinsmen was almost irresistible. In the thirties Christian women who refused their husband's heir and lived alone, or married an unrelated man of their choice, were regarded by their pagan sisters as very daring, and little girls in pagan families took it as a matter of course that they should replace their dead sisters; today the right of a widow to choose whom she will marry is generally accepted, and the custom of replacing a dead woman by her sister has lapsed. 'Every girl wants her own husband nowadays', the old women say. Thus lineage obligations give way to individual freedom of choice in marriage. At the same time the rituals which emphasized the lineage are dropped or modified. The fearful fecundity of a double birth no longer appals men and the twin ritual which used to bring together all the living members of a lineage of three generations is not celebrated at all. At a puberty ritual a pagan girl may be given the *ikipili* medicine, the symbol of 'the blood of the lineage' by her mother, but there is no seclusion and elaborate feasting, no sacrifice of the bull of puberty that her father's shades may 'move aside a little' to make way for the shades of her husband's lineage. Only at a funeral do kinsmen still gather and celebrate, for many still fear the shades, and at a funeral the heir is installed and the importance of property and the inheritance of it has not diminished one whit. As we have seen, the traditional religion was formulated in terms of kinship; the gods were senior kinsmen; but today God, *Kyala*, is no ancestor; to pagans as well as to Christians he is separate and supreme. Men are still classified by their lineages, and one of the topics of village questions is how Prince Charles can be heir to the British throne when his father is not of the house of Windsor; but already in the economic field, and increasingly in the religious, it is the family of parents and children which is now dominant, not the lineage.

Divorce is far more frequent than formerly, partly because women claim a greater freedom of behaviour than before, as well as the right of choosing their own husbands, and are supported by the courts. As one village headman put it, 'Formerly a father beat his daughter with a stick if she ran home and sent her back to her husband who also beat her.' The women reject the old pattern of subservience which was expressed in crouching to greet a man, and addressing him in a very deferential fashion; the men observe, and

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617

Nyakyusa
Selya, Malungwale

The bundle of medicine and the belt are burnt with the liver at the coming out. And whenever a child is born, every time, not only at the birth of the first or second, it is washed by the husband's mother with this same powdered medicine from the store in her pot. If this is not done they fear that perhaps the child will go mad or something dreadful will happen. They say of the powdered medicine: 'It is our kinship, it is our blood (*Bo bakwa bantu, bo ilupa jwa*).' And if a girl runs off with a lover in the veld they mock her and say: 'Who has given you powdered medicine? You are no relative.' They say: 'She is not our relative, she has not got our blood. . . .' The medicine is to create relationship (*ukukwa*). Using it means that the bride is now of my lineage (*ikilolo*). You know that burial customs differ. When they have used the medicine they will bury my wives as they bury me, either sitting up or lying down, as the case may be. We Christians do not do this because we have another way. We take hands before the priest and say: 'This is my relative (*ukwa gwange*).'

Another informant (a pagwa), questioned separately, gave a similar interpretation. He said: 'Washing with the medicine means, "my wife has come. She is now my relative (*ukwa gwange*)."'

As already indicated, the act of washing with her husband proclaims the seniority of a wife. Washing with her own mother and her father or young brother, is to proclaim kinship. 'The girl washes with a brother to show that she has brothers and sisters. If she does not do so it shows that she is a poor person without relatives.' 'She has washed at her husband's place, then she comes home and her father honours her by looking for a boy, not an old one but a young one, to wash with her. Then the girl thinks: "I have fathers, I am no bastard." But if she washed alone she would think: "Perhaps I am not their child, perhaps I have no relatives."' Kaitile said: 'If she washes with me, her father, it means: "She is my child, I begot her myself, she is my first-born."' Mwakikonde, after discussing the circumstances under which a father washes, said: 'To wash is to admit that I have lived and borne a child and grown up.' 'And if a brother does it?' we asked. 'It means: "You young man, you are her father." If they ever quarrel the brother says: "Why do you not respect me, your father? We washed together in water."' A young brother is chosen 'because the grown-up boys are going about. They want one who has not made love to girls.'

Standing in the doorway of her mother's hut (or of the woman acting in place of her mother if the latter is dead or divorced) is

2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER V

THE RITUAL OF BIRTH[1]

892 KYALA (or Lwembe) and the shades create desire in men and women and provide conception; when the shades are angry women do not conceive—this is one of the main tenets of pagan Nyakyusa cosmology, and it is combined with a limited knowledge of physiology. It is clearly understood that conception cannot take place without intercourse, and that gestation in humans lasts for nine months, but it is believed that repeated intercourse is necessary [837] for conception, and formerly, if a man found his wife pregnant after having lain with her only once, he accused her of adultery.

(a) Taboos of procreation

[838] The procreation of children is an ultimate value of Nyakyusa society and the accepted end of marriage, but it is regarded as 892 dangerous under certain conditions and is hedged about with 763 taboos. These are enforced so that both parents and children may be healthy; a breach of them is thought to result in violent diarrhoea, as well as monstrously swollen legs and weakness in men, general debility in children, and miscarriage or an excessive menstrual flow in women. The onus of observing them falls primarily on women, though their husbands must also co-operate, and a breach of taboo is treated as immoral, for it is believed to endanger the life, or health, or property of others.

[839] Certain general conceptions underlie the taboos. The first is that of *ubupali*, filth, which is held to come from the sex fluids, menstruation, and childbirth, as well as from a corpse, and the blood of a slain enemy. All these are felt to be both disgusting and dangerous, and the sex fluids are held to be particularly dangerous to an infant, hence the taboo on husband and wife resuming intercourse very soon after childbirth.

● 896 As for, when the child is very young, we think it very bad for the parents to sleep together at all, because when the child is very young

[1] This account comes from a score or more women not cited individually, as well as from our regular informants on ritual whose names are mentioned.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the women has constantly to handle it and if, just after intercourse, she has to do this without time to wash first, then the child, we think, will get diarrhœa or grow thin. Women[1] always wash very carefully in the mornings after intercourse, both for the sake of the children and the husband. If the woman touches food unwashed after intercourse we think it will make her husband sick, and he will get unhealthily fat. If a child is old enough to play by itself . . . so that the wife can wash properly before attending to it, then it is all right for the couple to have intercourse, but not for the woman to become pregnant again yet. She should not do that until the child is weaned![2] 846 ● [512] [753]

Contact with menstrual blood or a menstruating woman is held to be dangerous to a man, more particularly to a warrior, hence there is an absolute taboo on intercourse during menstruation (for five to eight days) and restrictions on cooking for a man. A menstruating woman does not blow up the fire on which her husband's food is cooking, or squeeze the food to test whether it is ready, or scrape ash off bananas or sweet potatoes she has roasted, or serve food, for 'her breath comes from her belly and it is dirty; her belly is dirty on account of the menstrual blood. All her body is dirty. She does not wash. When she washes, you, the husband, think that the flow has dried up and catch hold of her!' So a woman who is menstruating fans the fire instead of blowing it, and calls a co-wife or a child to serve the food she has cooked. She does not even crouch over the fire to warm herself, lest she contaminate it; and she neither uses the common calabash cup for drinking nor scoops water from the household water jar with her hand, but fashions a cup for herself from a leaf, or has her own little water-pot. She avoids passing behind or shaking hands with a man; she avoids a new-born infant; she keeps well away from cattle, neither passing behind them when they are in the homestead nor clearing out dung from the byre; she avoids touching medicines or entering the house of a doctor; and she avoids eating pumpkin or pumpkin leaves, or picking them. These taboos are enforced lest she injure men or infants or cattle or medicines, for 'she is dirty' and her 'dirt' is thought to cause purging and to rot medicines, and she, 841

[1] The 'filth' is on the wife because she cleanses her husband with her hands.

[2] Coital interruption is practised until the mother is ready to conceive again. Formerly it was taboo to make a woman pregnant before her previous child was four or five years old. Her husband's sisters made a great case about it. The child must know how to run before a younger brother was born. We said: "How can a woman carry two children?" Now she becomes pregnant again when the elder is two. Of those who bear again before that it is said: "They kill the elder child." ' (Statement of Nsajigwa, an elderly man.) [133]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[844] behind the huts, moving inside after delivery, on to a litter of banana leaves spread for her. Her mother-in-law attends her and treats her and the new-born child with *ikipili* medicine. She washes them in a basin made of two banana leaves, one sweet banana, one plantain, and is particularly careful to wash the infant's mouth and the mother's vagina. Powdered *ikipili* is sprinkled in the water in the form of a cross. This is done 'that the mother and child should not have diarrhoea'. The cross is a symbol of overstepping (*kululilyana kwa, kululileya kwa*, demonstrating a cross) and is made 'because heavy ones, those who are with their husbands on the bed, will come and overstep the mother and child if they are not treated'. Mother and child are also given a roasted banana with powdered *ikipili* sprinkled on it. In bringing the *ikipili* the husband's mother acknowledges the legitimacy of the child. 'If someone does not give a child *ikipili* it is a bastard. It is as if the husband said: "Why do you insult your husband by committing adultery with others? Others have created this foetus; it is not mine!"'[1]

[851 849]

The cord is tied with a shred of bark-cloth and then cut with a bamboo knife. 'An iron knife is taboo, it's a spear, other children will die from the spear disease (*ulukwepe*); to use a spear is like killing someone.' The after-birth is buried in the banana plantation with a piece of the cord sticking up, and later the litter is burnt at the same place. 'Only officiants (*abapepe*) eat of these bananas growing over the burying place—no young person may do so for it's the banana grove of the litter.' The cord must be buried upright or 'the mother will not bear again'.

[845 775] A delayed delivery is most commonly attributed to the woman's adultery,[1] and she is pressed by the midwife to confess the name of her lover or lovers, but it is also believed that it may be due to *imisala*, that is the shades. The husband consults a diviner who indicates whether the *imisala* is on his side or that of the woman's father and the one who is thus indicated should pray. 'Sometimes the woman herself tells of a quarrel which would lead to *imisala* and then her husband or father goes to pray.'

[846] Mother and child remain in confinement until the navel cord drops off, sheltered from 'heavy ones', who should not enter or even greet the mother from the doorway, and from men, to whom both mother and child are dangerous. 'Men must not see a tiny

[711] [1] Unlike certain other Central African peoples, the Nyakyusa do not attribute difficulty in childbirth to the adultery of the husband.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

child, the beauty of the body, the blackness, has not yet come. It's dirty (*epali*); even after it's come out it's dirty.' 'The confinement is not now feared by men, they just go in, because European times have come. There is no war now, but long ago they feared to enter, they feared to see the hair and the navel cord. They said: "We will get weary in the legs." ' 'When they went to war their legs became tied up.' During her seclusion the mother eats alone off leaves or out of special dishes, and even after she comes out of the hut she is careful not to eat with women who are 'heavy', or allow her dishes to be used by men. She has her own water-pot and calabash cup for several months. §46 [17]

To the Nyakyusa, the most dangerous point in the confinement is the loosening of the cord, and the baby is watched, day and night, to make sure that the cord does not fall between its mother's legs (*nmage*) for if that happens it is believed that the child will be sterile. As soon as the cord is safely off, mother and child are washed and shaved with *ikipiki* medicine 'to get rid of the filth', and anointed with ointment. They are given a millet porridge mixed with *ikipiki* which has been buried after dark at a crossroads and left overnight. 'They say people will overstep the child. If they have not made porridge for him he will have diarrhoea.' The porridge is administered to the infant in the doorway of the hut. Then 'they throw out the rubbish (*ilinde*)', the litter is burnt, the hut smeared, and mother and child 'come out'. In some families the husband kills a bull, especially to make a carrying skin for the baby, but whether he kills specially or not the baby is slung in a skin which conceals it from men. [78]

Angumbwike made it perfectly clear that the use of *ikipiki* in the ritual of birth has a double significance: it is to 'close up' the bowels of the child and the womb of the woman, and it is to acknowledge kinship between the mother and the new-born baby on the one hand, and the father's lineage on the other. §46 78

When a child is in the belly it is said that 'It's a person (*mundu*, i.e. a non-relative)'. When it is newly-born and has not yet eaten the *ikipiki* it is called *kamundu*, which means that it is not yet our relative, we do not know it. The child is called *kamundu* until the umbilical cord falls off and it eats the *ikipiki*, and comes out of the house. If an infant (*kamundu*) dies in the house people do not mourn, they just say: 'The woman had a miscarriage.' They come to her and say: 'Have you recovered?' They do not say a child has died, and they don't say anything to relatives at a distance. As for the ritual, the mother undergoes a ritual alone, or with

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

846 her older child, only the two of them [i.e. the mother and the immedi-
789 ately preceding child]. Before a child has eaten the *ikipiki* they make it of no account, calling it *kanenele*. . . .

When the child is born both mother and child are treated with *ikipiki*, and powdered *ikipiki* is sprinkled on the heap of leaves on which delivery took place. When it is a first child they wash the mother's breasts in the skin for carrying the baby, that is to put the child to the breast for the first time that they (the breasts) may participate in kinship (*gaje ga bakoma*). But for a second child they only wash off the dirt, they do not wash the breasts in the carrying skin, they say: 'We did it for the first child.'

Then they bring mother and child into the house (*bikalingenya*). To a visitor they say: 'Friend, you are a month pregnant, do not come in. You are heavy.' And if a woman is eight months pregnant she also does not come in, she is heavy. If a heavy one comes and wishes to enter, the mother of the newly-born child refuses at the doorway; the heavy one takes earth from her footprint and rubs it on the child on the litter. She receives him on her lap and the others say: 'Thank you, you have met with him.' Then the pregnant one can speak to or about the child without fear, she has met it.

When the cord has fallen off they bury *ikipiki* on the road; it remains overnight, and in the morning they dig it up and bring it and make millet porridge for the mother, not for the child. How can a tiny child eat? To the child they give powdered *ikipiki* in a little water. The woman and child eat together—it is as we, in our ritual, eat together the blood of Jesus, the *ikipiki* of the pagans is their blood. And when a child has eaten the *ikipiki* they say it is their relative now, 'it has entered into our *ikipiki* (*ingile ukipiki kyete*)'. The mother when she eats the millet porridge closes herself up because much water and blood comes out of the womb. It is said heavy ones must not overstep her.

Then they shave the hair of the child. They anoint its head with *ikipiki* and shave it—not the mother. If she chooses she also shaves, it is customary, but they don't anoint her with medicine. If she does not choose she does not shave. They sprinkle fine ash from the fire on the child's head.

789 The *ikipiki* at puberty is one and the same, and at death, it is one and the same. If a woman had reached puberty and washed with a man, and then leaves him and comes to me, we do not give her *ikipiki*, we say: 'Let her eat the *ikipiki* of kinship in the birth ritual, when she has borne a child.'

Kasitile made the same points about the function of *ikipiki*:

789 Yes, the *ikipiki* of the birth, puberty, and death rituals is one; that of
846 the twin ritual is different. When a child is born they spread a litter for

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

him. They fear that if heavy ones come and speak, those who are pregnant, the child will suffer, it will become weak and exhausted on the litter, and will have constant diarrhœa. So they go to the cross-roads and mix millet flour and powdered *ikipiki* with the feather of a chicken, they give the child some in his mouth to make the motions firm, and close the bowels. They do this[1] at the cross-roads that those who pass may step over it and take the disease away. That medicine closes the bowel, it saves the stomach and bowel when heavy ones come, those who are pregnant. If we do not treat it the child becomes exhausted with diarrhœa, though the mother is all right. 789 846

It is taboo to give birth in the house, a woman bears a child outside on a pile of leaves; when she has borne the child they sprinkle powdered *ikipiki* on those leaves, but if I, the father, am angry about the child I refuse the *ikipiki*, saying: 'It's not my child, it's a bastard.' That is of old though. Now, in European times, they treat all children. Yes, now all are my children; formerly there were bastards. The *ikipiki* is our blood; it is kept in the senior wife's house. 844 [77]

There was some disagreement on this point. Nsyani, an elderly man who was already married before Europeans came to the country, when asked: 'Do you perform rituals for bastards?' replied: 'Yes, they are born with[2] my cattle (*Bapapigwe manembe ganga*).' Four other men who discussed the matter together, agreed that— 848

When a woman has borne an illegitimate child we know that the child is the child of her husband because it was born with his cattle (*manembe gake*). Whether the child is a boy or a girl, whether the genitor is known or unknown, and whether he has paid damages or not, the children belong to the woman's lord (*mwene nkikale*). When an illegitimate child is born to an unmarried girl her fathers perform the ritual, for that 'man of the long grass' is like a bull. For an illegitimate child born to a married woman the rituals are performed by the husband, for the 'man of the long grass' is like a bull or a cock. Who is going to give a call to a man alone, the bull who begot it?

But Lyandileko who, as a doctor and a grandmother, was intimately concerned in such matters, insisted:

If a woman has committed adultery and we do not know the man, we give her earth; it's just rubbish. If I give her medicine she and the child will die. If she has borne the child in the long grass and her father refuses to let her enter the house, non-relatives give it to her. If I, the mother, am there I give her this earth [touching the ground].

[1] The baby is not taken to the crossroads, only the *ikipiki* and millet flour.
[2] Literally within.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Lugulu

Even after her return a wife may delay before cooking or drawing water again for her husband. Mwaisumo said: 846

Some men do not let their wives cook for them until the child's body has gone black and it laughs. . . . This is mainly due to the mockery of friends, for some people refuse to come and eat with a man if the food is cooked by a woman who has recently borne a child, even though she has come out of confinement. They laugh at him and say: 'Why do you eat food prepared by a newly delivered woman? Have you no sense of disgust?' And her friends laugh at the woman, too, saying: 'Look you, the child has not yet grown at all!'

MWAMBUPUTA: Formerly a woman with a new-born child did not cook food. We said she was filthy. What food that she had overstepped would anyone eat? Until two months had passed she avoided cooking, then she cooked.[1] And she hid the child. Men should not see it for two months. It was taboo.

This is the full ritual performed for a first-born child and, some say, for the first-born of each sex. For others there is no sending a fowl to the girl's parents, or bringing her back with gifts, and it does not matter where the child is born; but still the seclusion of mother and infant, treatment with *ikipiki* medicine brought by the husband's mother, and shaving are felt to be important. 851

We did not find any significant differences between the rituals of birth in Selya and in Kukwe, but there is one rite peculiar to the Lugulu people and regarded by other Nyakyusa with somewhat shocked amusement, which is interesting because it expresses, in crude terms, a conflict between the groom and the bride's family repeatedly suggested in the ritual of Selya and Kukwe, but never openly acknowledged. We did not see this rite ourselves, but quote the account of Kakune, the doctor, whose mother was Lugulu. Though himself a Kukwe, he speaks in the first person as if he were Lugulu—a dramatic device common enough in Nyakyusa. 184

KAKUNE: When my daughter goes to her husband, and first becomes pregnant, they tell us: 'She is pregnant.' And we say: 'Oh, she is pregnant? She is pregnant! War has come!' When she has borne her child, the go-between in the marriage representing the husband comes to her parents with a hen to tell them. Then later they send the go-between a message, saying: 'Come'. Meanwhile they have prepared huge quantities of food: porridge, and curds, and beer. And then the girl's husband calls his friends of the age-village (he does not call his relatives, but his [843] 851

[1] A monogamist eats with his friends in the age-village, or is provided for by his mother, like a bachelor.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

845 and the statement cannot be altogether devoid of
783 truth. The influence of the mind upon the body is universally admitted: may it not be that the consciousness of guilt has the effect of contracting the muscles, and the relaxation which follows confession renders birth less painful? And may it not be that even a false confession, wrung from a despairing sufferer, brings a momentary relief sufficient to bring the child to the birth? One is glad to add, however, that many women have the courage to refuse altogether to submit to this shameful ordeal, insisting that their trouble is due, not to the wrath of the spirits, but to other causes, and that they will die rather than confess what is not true.

When birth has taken place, the cord is cut with a
844 bamboo knife, and the placenta buried in the family
● 846 place of prayer, a small part protruding to leave a connection which insures further children. All this time no one in the house may swallow saliva. The father calls out to know the sex of the child, but he must not yet enter (for the party have entered the house as soon as possible after the birth). After a few days the mother is anointed with oil and shaved, along with her child, and powdered with medicine. Meantime intimation has been sent to the grandparents; a cock if a boy, a hen if a girl, telling them all that they wish to know. The mother may now resume her household duties.

But in about a week she goes to show the child to
851 her own parents, and at the end of her visit, which
603 lasts some weeks, great preparations are made by both
431

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

sets of grandparents. The mother sets out from her 851
father's house with a train of friends carrying food, 603
and a very special friend who carries the baby. Arrived 431
at the paternal grandfather's, the food is laid down, and the child is taken by the grandfather, who presents a hoe to the maternal grandmother; and then, with the child in his arms, goes to the *ikiyinja* (the family place of prayer). He spits into the palm of his hand, and, laying it in blessing upon the child's head, he prays:

> "May it be well with you, my child. Ye spirits, be not surprised at this child of yours whom I present to you. I am old: let him take my place. Care for him in this world of sickness. I was alone, and ye have multiplied me and made me a company. Be not angry, but bless the child; and in the sight of God let him be acceptable."

The mother sits with head covered, for she must [606]
not be seen by her father-in-law. The parties now exchange gifts of food, and eat separately, after which the grandfather gives the child a gift, usually now a small coin, over which the little hand is closed. Next, the grandmother takes the infant and hands it to its mother, who, with a pot of beer on her head, goes off with her husband to their home. Arrived there, but not till then, the father takes the child in his arms, and thanks it for the gift it has brought, a foretoken of more yet to be earned.

Lingering here and there in certain families are 946
strange customs, probably belated survivals from

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•846 earlier days. The family of Lugulu at Mwakeleli wear blinders of leaves for weeks after a birth. At the end of the period a feast of beer and ill-cooked food is prepared, and both sets of families spend the night in open reviling of each other, and ceaseless tramping of the feet the livelong night. In the morning good food is eaten, and both parties go their ways with mutual good will. This is called *ukutila indila*, to fear the fears; to endure the terrors. No explanation of what the terrors are has reached me.

845 783 The birth of twins is regarded as one of the greatest of misfortunes, and is followed by ceremonies intended to cleanse the parents from the stain which has come upon them, and to prevent its spread to others. A hut is built outside the village, with a partition in the middle, on either side of which the parents live, but they must speak to each other only in whispers, and to others not at all. The doctor sprinkles all the relatives with medicine, and kindles a fire, in the smoke of which every one must stand for a moment. The parents are shut up in the hut, but may leave it for a few moments at night, and no one may see them. After about a month the doctor comes again, with beating drums and shaking rattle, and brings the parents out of their house of restraint. A second sprinkling of medicine upon each relative being made, the doctor takes a bunch of grass from the roof, kindles it, and hands it to the father, who, holding it in one hand, crawls out of the house, and runs, followed by the crowd. He returns, however, and receives their

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

memories and yarns, eats food made from the flour of a pumpkin, which destroys the virtues of his hunting medicines, and at the same time takes away all probability of his death being the prolonged weariness it would otherwise be.

Fishing nets are drugged to ensure a good catch; but here again caution must be exercised, for a very great catch is an omen of a very large family, which is not always an ambition held by the Konde people.

The mother who has just given birth to a child must not cook food, nor may she warm herself at the common fire; a small fire is kindled for her at which she sits by herself; and when the child goes out of the house for the first time a medicine is put into its mouth to guard it against the ills of the world into which it has come.

Christians do none of these things; but Christians are not as other people. They have passed away from the fear of spirits and from the dread of a world in which anything may happen at any moment; and the fact that they escape the consequences of failure to follow custom is having its effect on the common people, many of whom are cautiously experimenting to see whether they too may live a freer and more unshadowed life; but the belief in the protective powers of such things as I have been describing dies hard.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Chungu is dead. Then the chiefs and their men, fully armed, gathered to the mourning. Weeping there was none, for Chungu must not be wept for; and women were not present, for the mourning for Chungu is war; quarrels may break out among the men, and there may be many deaths before the mourning is over. The chiefs bring oxen for the feast, and gifts of ivory to be laid up in the house where Chungu goes to pray when he prays alone.

The councillors now address themselves to the task of selecting a successor. There are no candidates; for not only must Chungu himself be helped out of the world, but all his sons, born after his accession, are put to death at birth. Daughters are allowed to live, and sons born before their father attained to the chief dignity, are not under the ban. Here again British rule steps in, but British rule has not yet been able to sweep all fear of the past out of the minds of the people. From among the *Bakerenge*, a circle of families within which the new Chungu must be found, name after name is presented to the spirits by the diviner, and when the divining rod indicates that the right name has been presented, the formula is uttered, "*Abapasi bitike*," the underworld has spoken.

At a great feast, at which all men of royal blood must be present, Mulwa, one of the councillors, by hereditary right offers prayer to the spirits, as if the selection had not already been made:

"Ye chiefs, we pray you to show us our lord, who shall be our leader in all things. Let him be the man of your appointing, not of our desire; to

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

757 the fang will drop out, and the man will be saved!
278 There are men living near me who claim to have seen this being done.

844 The birth of children is accompanied by loving care, gross superstition, and much medical treatment, useful or otherwise. All women at that time are given a drink of *indobo* leaves, pounded and mixed with water. If the placenta has not come away satisfactorily, castor oil is given. And if pain supervenes, the bark of *indobo* is again given, pounded and mixed with water. For a child weak at birth, roots of *unsuba* and *mungwina* are taken, pounded, mixed with water, and the child is washed in the
842 mixture. Sterility in man or woman can be removed by the right drugs; and when a woman is getting on in years and wishes no more children, a mixture is in
•847 use which will have the desired effect. Medicines for producing abortion are widely known, and
832 frequently used, as also are love potions.

757 Steaming is resorted to in cases of great pain or weakness. Water is cooked in a large pot, with the bark of *mparampara* added. When the pot has boiled, it is taken off the fire, and the patient, covered with a mat, kneels over it, supported if very weak, for about ten minutes. Massaging also is employed when one is very tired, the leaves of *muyoka* being pounded to give a juice for lubrication, or, as the people themselves say, to get into the body through the pores. Cupping is employed for headache and rheumatic pains. Eight cuts are made in two lines, on each side of the head; a small horn is put over the cuts; a

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

inheriting their stepmothers. Where circumcision is practised a grown woman scorns sex relations with an uncircumcised boy, therefore uncircumcised youths are not potential lovers of their fathers' junior wives; but with the Nyakyusa there is no ceremony to mark the sexual maturity of a male, and adolescent youths are acceptable to young married women of their own age. And not only does the wide difference in the age of men and girls at first marriage allow of a high degree of polygyny, but the very early bethrothal of girls (over whom their future husbands have exclusive sexual rights except during the initiation ritual) means that there are very few girls available to the unmarried men. The institution of girls' huts (*isaka*) has disappeared among the Nyakyusa owing to the lack of nubile girls who are not already betrothed, and the period of seclusion at initiation (when betrothed girls are available to men other than their husbands) is short. The contrast with Nguni society, in which girls do not marry until sixteen to twenty-two, and have several years of great sex freedom before marriage[1] is marked. We suggest that it is because unmarried girls are so scarce and lusty bachelors so many, that the seduction of the wives of polygynists is frequent, and homosexual practices are general.[2] Nyakyusa insist that formerly seduction was rare,[3] and possibly the impulse towards it was indeed less strong when girls married rather later and *isaka* existed (*vide supra*, p. 87).

Lastly, the Nyakyusa permit the inheritance of a father's widows by his sons, a practice regarded as improper by certain other peoples (e.g. the Pondo[4]) who practise the levirate. A son is required to treat all his father's wives as 'mothers' while his father and father's full brothers are alive, and intercourse with a father's wife is treated as a heinous offence necessitating special purification; but after the death of the father and his full brothers these same women become wives of their former 'sons'—with the limitation that a man cannot inherit his own mother or her kins-

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 180-6; M. Kohler, *Marriage Customs in Southern Natal*, pp. 20-44; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 133-6.

[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, p. 408 (footnote), hints that similar practices exist among the Nyamland Tonga and elsewhere before adolescence only. The Nyakyusa certainly continue after puberty.

[3] MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 63, states that the acknowledged child of an adulterous union was openly put to death.

[4] Hunter, op. cit., p. 201.

2:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

844 behind the huts, moving inside after delivery, on to a litter of banana leaves spread for her. Her mother-in-law attends her and treats her and the new-born child with *ikipiki* medicine. She washes them in a basin made of two banana leaves, one sweet banana, one plantain, and is particularly careful to wash the infant's mouth and the mother's vagina. Powdered *ikipiki* is sprinkled in the water in the form of a cross. This is done 'that the mother and child should not have diarrhœa'. The cross is a symbol of overstepping (*kokulilyana kuno*, *kokukilanya kuno*, demonstrating a cross) and is made 'because heavy ones, those who are with their husbands on the bed, will come and overstep the mother and child if they are not treated'. Mother and child are also given a roasted banana with powdered *ikipiki* sprinkled on it. In bringing the *ikipiki* the husband's mother acknowledges the legitimacy of the child. 'If someone does not give a child *ikipiki* it is a bastard. It is as if the husband said: "Why do you insult your husband by committing adultery with others? Others have created this foetus; it is not mine!"' [851 [illegible]]

The cord is tied with a shred of bark-cloth and then cut with a bamboo knife. 'An iron knife is taboo, it's a spear, other children will die from the spear disease (*ulukwego*); to use a spear is like killing someone.' The after-birth is buried in the banana plantation with a piece of the cord sticking up, and later the litter is burnt at the same place. 'Only officiants (*abanyago*) eat of these bananas growing over the burying place—no young person may do so for it's the banana grove of the litter.' The cord must be buried upright or 'the mother will not bear again'.

845 A delayed delivery is most commonly attributed to the woman's 775 adultery,[1] and she is pressed by the midwife to confess the name of her lover or lovers, but it is also believed that it may be due to *imisala*, that is the shades. The husband consults a diviner who indicates whether the *imisala* is on his side or that of the woman's father and the one who is thus indicated should pray. 'Sometimes the woman [illegible] If tells of a quarrel which would lead to *imisala* and then her husband or father goes to pray.'

846 Mother and child remain in confinement until the navel cord drops off, sheltered from 'heavy ones', who should not enter or even greet the mother from the doorway, and from men, to whom both mother and child are dangerous. 'Men must not see a tiny

[71] [1] Unlike certain other Central African peoples, the Nyakyusa do not attribute difficulty in childbirth to the adultery of the husband.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

him. They fear that if heavy ones come and speak, those who are preg- 789
nant, the child will suffer, it will become weak and exhausted on the §96
litter, and will have constant diarrhœa. So they go to the cross-roads and mix millet flour and powdered *ikipili* with the feather of a chicken, they give the child some in his mouth to make the motions firm, and close the bowels. They do this[1] at the cross-roads that those who pass may step over it and take the disease away. That medicine closes the bowel, it saves the stomach and bowel when heavy ones come, those who are pregnant. If we do not treat it the child becomes exhausted with diarrhœa, though the mother is all right.

It is taboo to give birth in the house, a woman bears a child outside §94
on a pile of leaves; when she has borne the child they sprinkle powdered *ikipili* on those leaves, but if I, the father, am angry about the child I refuse the *ikipili*, saying: 'It's not my child, it's a bastard.' That is of old though. Now, in European times, they treat all children. Yes, [77]
now all are my children; formerly there were bastards. The *ikipili* is our blood, it is kept in the senior wife's house.

There was some disagreement on this point. Neyani, an elderly §48 ●
man who was already married before Europeans came to the country, when asked: 'Do you perform rituals for bastards?' replied: 'Yes, they are born with[2] my cattle (*Bapapigue mumende ganga*).' Four other men who discussed the matter together, agreed that—

When a woman has borne an illegitimate child we know that the child is the child of her husband because it was born with his cattle (*mumende gaake*). Whether the child is a boy or a girl, whether the genitor is known or unknown, and whether he has paid damages or not, the children belong to the woman's lord (*mumw ababale*). When an illegitimate child is born to an unmarried girl her fathers perform the ritual, for that 'man of the long grass' is like a bull. For an illegitimate child born to a married woman the rituals are performed by the husband, for the 'man of the long grass' is like a bull or a cock. Who is going to give a call to a man alone, the bull who begot it?

But Lyandilenko who, as a doctor and a grandmother, was intimately concerned in such matters, insisted:

If a woman has committed adultery and we do not know the man, we give her earth; it's just rubbish. If I give her medicine she and the child will die. If she has borne the child in the long grass and her father refuses to let her enter the house, non-relatives give it to her. If I, the mother, am there I give her this earth [touching the ground].

[1] The baby is not taken to the crossroads, only the *ikipili* and millet flour.
[2] Literally within.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

865 If a woman has difficulty in labour we officiants tell her: 'Speak!
789 With whom did you commit adultery?' and the child comes down. When she has spoken it is born. We do not give her medicine. We give her earth.

● 898 Question: What if an illegitimate boy dies, do you perform the ritual with *ikipili*?

Lyandilako: No, because he was a child of the long grass [i.e. illegitimate], we only treat the mother. We do not perform the ritual with the *ikipili* of the husband. If it is a girl, and she to whom we gave earth grows up, the father [i.e. her mother's husband or, if the mother was unmarried, her father] says: 'Let the husband perform the ritual, because the cattle are mine, she is my child, and that is the custom.' If they give a child of the long grass the medicine it will die, because it is not its medicine. . . . I know about it because I give children the medicine.

There is no question about the legal rights over an illegitimate child, and Neyani and the other men held that ritual and legal control went together. Lyandilako and Kasitile, both specialists in this field, held that traditionally, at least, the *ikipili* could only be used for a legitimate child: to do otherwise was dangerous.

So important is this acknowledgment of legitimacy that in many Christian families, where other traditional rituals are ignored, the husband's mother still brings *ikipili* for his child.

851 As soon as the child is born a fowl—a cock for a boy, a hen for a girl—is sent to the young wife's parents, to notify them of the birth. Then her 'mothers' come 'to keep her company' (*ukumpenje*) during her confinement, and at the end of it they take her home with them for a visit of a month or more. They bring her back to her husband, formally, with gifts of beer, food, and mats (*ulumbuko*), just as they did after the puberty ritual. We met one party, taking back a young mother to her husband, in which there were twenty-one women carrying baskets with food or pots of beer. The grandmother was happy and excited and, dancing up to greet us, she said, breathlessly: '*That's* the owner of this beer [pointing to her daughter], all these pots!' The feast was unusually lavish on this occasion. Two pots of beer, two stems of bananas, a vessel of milk, and a mat, were taken by the daughter of Chief Mwaipopo when she returned to her husband after the birth of her first child, and that seems to be the ordinary standard. The husband kills a bull calf for meat for his guests, or gives them a shilling or two.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

he takes such children away, leaving a cow as payment 586
to his late wife for bringing them up. The frantic appeals of the mother, when her child is being taken away from her, make a most distressing scene. I have been implored by mothers, kneeling at my feet, or rolling on the ground in agony, to intercede for them; but native and British law here coincide, and, apart from an appeal to the husband to forego his rights, nothing can be done. And any interference is inadvisable for the child's own sake, for there is reason to suspect that fathers deprived of what they consider their rights, take measures quietly to put the children to death. In the past the acknowledged [illegible] child of adultery was openly put to death; to-day the husband may claim it if it is a girl, for a girl is "cattle"; but a boy he, in most cases, entirely ignores.

There is formally no limit to the number of wives 595
a man may have, except the limit of his ability to part with cattle. But while polygamy was always lawful, it was not always expedient: warriors were often monogamous in practice until they reached an age when but little fighting was likely to be expected of them. And there were always men who never had more than one wife, two being a very common number for others. While there is a sentiment among some women in favour of monogamy, it is a very slow growth. There are women who will not marry Christians, because the wife of a Christian, being alone, has to do all the work, whereas in the other case, many wives make light work for each.

8:WGeon E-5 (1934-1936)1936 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

parent persons. A young man is given cows by his father and sends 436
them to his father-in-law; his father's income in cattle is derived partly from the increase of his own stock, but chiefly from the marriages of his own and his brothers' sisters and daughters, for it is the custom for full-brothers and half-brothers to give one another cows as their daughters and sisters get married; the young man's father-in-law gives the cows which he receives some to his brothers, some to his sons, and some he keeps himself. And thus, commonly, the cattle are driven down the paths of human relationship.

The passage of cattle makes the children of a marriage legitimate 565
and members of their father's family; the sons can inherit from their 848
father, and the daughters, when they marry in their turn, bring cattle to him. But if a woman bears a child to a man who has given no cows for her, the child is illegitimate, has no right of inheritance anywhere, and belongs either to her husband or father, not to its own biological sire.

Getting married is not a single event; the marriage-cattle are seldom 583
handed over all at once, but in one, two, or three over a period of 586
years; and a girl very commonly goes to visit and sleep with her betrothed 636
husband, from time to time, for several years before she finally sets up house with him and begins to bear his children. There are three ways of getting married: (1) by negotiation with the girl's father (2) by running off with an unmarried girl (3) by running off with a married woman. The first is the ideal, usually approved, method and is not uncommonly followed. The negotiations often begin while the girl is still an infant, sometimes even before she is born; the man sends one or two cows to her father to bespeak her (*ubwingulu*). These cows are counted as part of the marriage-cattle (*ingwele*) and the girl is henceforth called his "wife," but she lives at home with her parents. Sometimes a boy is betrothed by his father while he himself is still young, but always, I think, to a girl several years his junior. Such betrothals are determined by the friendship of the two families. A girl who is bespoken in infancy does not, ideally, go to live altogether with her husband till after she has reached puberty and passed through the elaborate initiation which then takes place. But there is an intermediate period when, from the age of ten or earlier, she is allowed to visit and sleep with her husband from time to time. The man sends a bull or a hen to her father to ask for his wife (*ukwendulila*), and the old man agrees to let her go on occasional visits. But she is seldom allowed to go until at least three cows, in all, have been received for her. She is not supposed to be delivered before puberty and she and her husband always, at first, practise limited intercourse without penetration. Not infrequently, however, full intercourse

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

over made to the spirits, but when some member of a family or his wife or 769
child falls sick the anger of the spirits is often suspected as a possible 753
cause. There are usually other reasons suspected as well, and so the [787]
sickness is taken to a diviner for diagnosis. Various causes are suggested
to the diviner and he selects one among them. If the anger of the spirits
is selected then this senior kinsman must pray for the one who is sick, if
he is to recover. When half-brothers live at a distance from one another,
after their father and his brothers have died, then each may pray to the
spirits to cure a little sickness in his own family but if the sickness persists
then a message must be sent to the senior kinsman. And, as the anger of
the spirits is due to wrong doing, the sinner must reform his ways as well.

The wrongs which cause the spirits to anger are usually breaches of 673
family morality. If a son does not respect his father or insults him, if an
heir neglects to feed and provide for the dead man's children, then when
sickness falls on him or his own children it will probably be traced to the
anger of the spirits at his behaviour.

Space does not allow any full analysis of religion in family life and in 754
the relationships of kinsmen and affines. Not only the ancestor cult but 771
witchcraft and magic are factors in them. A man's neglect of a wife or
his cruelty to her may, it is believed, lead to his falling sick through her
witchcraft and that of sympathetic neighbours; his relations with his
father-in-law are affected by the fear that if he offends him, his father-in-
law may, by magical means, kill his children, and so on.

Wider kinship groupings than the family gather at ceremonies and 614
are recognized in the rules against incest. But there are no clans; there
is no descent group continuous down the generations with a common
name and definite membership. Each individual family has its own
personnel of kindolk, the effective kindred of a man and his son, or of
two half-brothers are not all the same, while each single person is special-
ly related by respect, affection and mutual obligations to particular
kinsmen beyond his own family. Descent, as we have seen, is patrilineal 611
except in the case of illegitimate children. A man asked for his *ukukula* 614
always recites first the names of his paternal forbears as far as he can 614-5
remember. But if he is related through mother or grandmother to a
chief he usually volunteers this fact as part of his *ukukula*; and questions
always elicit some knowledge of his mother's paternal kindolk and a
statement that "they are my *ukukula* too." Descendants of a common
grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are to-day forbidden to marry, 582
and no case of infringement has come to my notice; descendants of a
common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry but, I am told,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3617 Ngonde F3617

Nyakyusa
Selja, Na Ngonde
Kukwe

ritual is powerful. If you do not perform the ritual for your father or 764
perhaps that of your wife then you won't be a person, your body 775
comes to an end and you die, but you are persons, you are still alive, you do not die when the body comes to an end, you take farewe as in the ritual. But when they bring millet and say: 'This is so-and-so's, and this so-and-so's' (naming him whose ritual you have omitted) and brew beer and drink it, then you die.

Question: How do the dead appear to us?

Answer: They appear before our eyes at night. You dream and in the morning say: 'I was with the so-and-so's in the night, with the so-and-so's'

Question: Where do you go (at death)?

Answer: When we die we go above. [75]

Question: That's a new thing?

Answer: Yes, indeed, formerly we said we went below; our fathers and grandfathers said that. But we now say we go below to rot and stink only but since we look toward home when they bury us perhaps the heart (*mbombale*) goes above (*kumwanga*) and that is home. We have seen this in European times in books. No, I am not a Christian and I cannot read, I've just learnt this. . . .

Kalumba (a doctor) and Mwaipaso. The *dipele* medicine put into the beer and lees at 'the shaving of the sprouting hair' is the same medicine as that which we eat at the pumpkin-seed ritual. The *dipele* of the death ritual and the puberty ritual and the birth ritual is one and the same, but the medicine for twins is different. . . . There is one *dipele* used in all the three rituals—puberty, birth, and death—but to it is added another medicine which is different for each of the three. *Dipele* is our kinship, it is our blood (*dipele ko bakwa bwala, ya dipo yaba*); when my wife has borne a child and so one wipes its mouth with [32] ●
the *dipele* it means it is not my child, it is just a bastard from the [33]
world, it is no relative of mine but a stranger. In the puberty ritual it is the same, we treat the girl with the *dipele* of her husband, the man from our lineage, from that of her father, she is now a stranger, not [34]
[illegible] (*ya ngeni*). When someone has died it is the same. We eat food together with the deceased, the shade, and his blood. It is like the Swahili custom of eating each other's blood to create kinship. It means: 'You were one kinsman from alow-time, but now it is finished, you are a stranger.' [35]
But the medicine for the twin ritual is separate, it is quite different.

6. IN KYAWA COUNTRY

The Kyawa ritual of death differs in detail from that of Selya 764
and Mu'Ngonde, but it is performed with the same overt purpose: 194
to drive away the dead from the bodies and dreams of the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

§44 behind the huts, moving inside after delivery, on to a litter of banana leaves spread for her. Her mother-in-law attends her and treats her and the new-born child with *ikipili* medicine. She washes them in a basin made of two banana leaves, one sweet banana, one plantain, and is particularly careful to wash the infant's mouth and the mother's vagina. Powdered *ikipili* is sprinkled in the water in the form of a cross. This is done 'that the mother and child should not have diarrhoea'. The cross is a symbol of overstepping (*kukulijapa kwa*, *kukulilanya kwa*, demonstrating a cross) and is made 'because heavy cross, those who are with their husbands on the bed, will come and overstep the mother and child if they are not treated'. Mother and child are also given a roasted banana with powdered *ikipili* sprinkled on it. In bringing the *ikipili* the husband's mother acknowledges the legitimacy of the child. 'If someone does not give a child *ikipili* it is a bastard. It is as if the husband said: "Why do you insult your husband by committing adultery with others? Others have created this fortune; it is not mine!"'*

The cord is tied with a shred of bark-cloth and then cut with a bamboo knife. 'An iron knife is taboo, it's a spear, other children will die from the spear disease (*ulubanga*); to use a spear is like killing someone.' The after-birth is buried in the banana plantation with a piece of the cord sticking up, and later the litter is buried at the same place. 'Only officiants (*abanyaga*) eat of those bananas growing over the burying place—no young person may do so for it's the banana grove of the litter.' The cord must be buried upright or 'the mother will not bear again'.

§45 A delayed delivery is most commonly attributed to the woman's adultery,* and she is pressed by the midwife to confess the name of her lover or lovers, but it is also believed that it may be due to witchcraft, when the 'ancestral' spirit (*ichimbi*) causes a litter that indicates whether the *mimbi* is on his side or that of the woman's father and the one who is thus indicated should pray. 'Sometimes the woman herself tells of a quarrel which would lead to *mimbi* and then her husband or father goes to pray.'

§46 Mother and child remain in confinement until the navel cord drops off, sheltered from 'heavy cross', who should not enter or even pass the mother from the doorway, and from men, to whom both mother and child are dangerous. 'Men must not see a tiny

* Unlike certain other Central African peoples, the Nyakyusa do not attribute adultery to childbirth or the adultery of the husband.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

If a woman has difficulty in labour we officiants tell her: 'Speak! With whom did you commit adultery?' and the child comes down. When she has spoken it is born. We do not give her medicine. We give her earth.

QUESTION: What if an illegitimate boy dies, do you perform the ritual with *ilipili*?

LUMBEMBEO: No, because he was a child of the long grass [i.e. illegitimate], we only treat the mother. We do not perform the ritual with the *ilipili* of the husband. If it is a girl, and she to whom we gave earth grows up, the father [i.e. her mother's husband or, if the mother was unmarried, her father] says: 'Let the husband perform the ritual, because the cattle are mine, she is my child, and that is the custom.' If they give a child of the long grass the medicine it will die, because it is not its medicine. . . . I know about it because I give children the medicine.

There is no question about the legal rights over an illegitimate child, and Neyati and the other men hold that ritual and legal control went together. Lyandileko and Kasinile, both specialists in this field, hold that traditionally, at least, the *ilipili* could only be used for a legitimate child: to do otherwise was dangerous.

So important is this acknowledgement of legitimacy that in many Christian families, where other traditional rituals are ignored, the husband's mother still brings *ilipili* for his child.

As soon as the child is born a fowl—a cock for a boy, a hen for a girl—is sent to the young wife's parents, to notify them of the birth. Then her 'mothers' come 'to keep her company' (*ukwempeje*) during her confinement, and at the end of it they take her home with them for a visit of a month or more. They bring her back to her husband, formally, with gifts of beer, food, and mats (*ulumbeko*), just as they did after the puberty ritual. We met one [illegible] were twenty-one women carrying baskets with food or pots of beer. The grandmother was happy and excited and, dancing up to greet us, she said, breathlessly: 'That's the owner of this beer [pointing to her daughter], all these pots!' The feast was unusually lavish on this occasion. Two pots of beer, two stems of bananas, a vessel of milk, and a mat, were taken by the daughter of Chief Mwaipopo when she returned to her husband after the birth of her first child, and that seems to be the ordinary standard. The husband kills a bull calf for meat for his guests, or gives them a shilling or two.

2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Lugulu

Even after her return a wife may delay before cooking or drawing water again for her husband. Mwaisumo said: §46

> Some men do not let their wives cook for them until the child's body has gone black and it laughs. . . . This is mainly due to the mockery of friends, for some people refuse to come and eat with a man if the food is cooked by a woman who has recently borne a child, even though she has come out of confinement. They laugh at him and say: 'Why do you eat food prepared by a newly delivered woman? Have you no sense of disgust?' And her friends laugh at the woman, too, saying: 'Look you, the child has not yet grown at all!'
>
> MWAISUMO: Formerly a woman with a new-born child did not cook food. We said she was filthy. 'That food that she had overstepped would anyone eat? Until two months had passed she avoided cooking, then she cooked.[1] And she hid the child. Men should not see it for two months. It was taboo.

This is the full ritual performed for a first-born child and, some say, for the first-born of each sex. For others there is no sending a fowl to the girl's parents, or bringing her back with gifts, and it does not matter where the child is born; but still the seclusion of mother and infant, treatment with *ikipolo* medicine brought by the husband's mother, and shaving are felt to be important. §51

We did not find any significant differences between the rituals of birth in Selya and in Kukwe, but there is one rite peculiar to the Lugulu people and regarded by other Nyakyusa with somewhat shocked amusement, which is interesting because it expresses, in crude terms, a conflict between the groom and the bride's family repeatedly suggested in the ritual of Selya and Kukwe, but never openly acknowledged. We did not see this rite ourselves, but quote the account of Kakone, the doctor, whose mother was Lugulu. Though himself a Kukwe, he speaks in the first person as if he §49

> KAKONE: When my daughter goes to her husband, and first becomes pregnant, they tell us: 'She is pregnant.' And we say: 'Oh, she is pregnant! She is pregnant! Wait here come!' When she has borne her child, the go-betweens in the marriage representing the husband come to her parents with a hoe to cell them. Then later they send the go-betweens a message, saying: 'Come'. Meanwhile they have prepared huge quantities of food: porridge, and curds, and beer. And then the girl's husband calls his friends of the age-village (he does not call his relatives, but his §50 §51

[1] A menstruation rite with his friends in the age-village, or is provided for by his mother, like a bachelor.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Lugulu

851 brothers he will call if they are near) and they come with a bull. They arrive at nightfall.

The girl's parents meanwhile have called all their relatives (but it does not matter if some relatives do not come; it brings them no trouble) and friends of the age-village, and the boys come too. And they shut the door fast and start drinking the beer. 'They have come, they have come, let us close the door', they say. Then the go-between outside calls to us: 'We have come,' but we are silent. We answer never a word. At last we answer and ask: 'What have you brought?' And he answers: 'A bull.'

'What-sized bull?' 'A little bull.' 'He! What do you mean by bringing a little bull only?' 'Well, it's a nice big bull!'

851 578 Then they come and bang on the door and we hold it shut and they bang, and bang, and then we begin insulting one another. We accuse them of filthiness, saying: 'They defaecate, they urinate!' And of incest, saying: 'You have intercourse with your mother'; and of foolishness, [519] and they accuse us likewise. At last they burst in and the insults continue inside. They actually defaecate in the house.[1]

851 But soon we call out: 'They have entered, let us make peace, friends,' and we all sit down. Then I (the father of the girl) call on the go-between, and he sits down opposite us. I and my wife, the girl's mother, sit by the fire. Then I ask him: 'What have you brought?' 'I have brought a bull!' 'Oh! Eh!' 'I am hungry, give me some food.'

Then we discuss this for a time and agree, and we give them the food to eat and some beer. They eat, the young men snatching food over there, and our young men here, and we, the elders, eating sedately at the back.

851 578 Then, when they have eaten, we begin to insult one another again over the cattle that have been paid, the laziness and slovenliness of the bride, the dirty cooking of her mother. They scold us and we scold them. Then after a time, with insults flying, and the young men stamping and stamping, we call out: 'Silence, silence,' and the noise subsides.

851 Then our son-in-law comes to the fire at the summons of the go-between, who says: 'Praise your father,' and he says: 'You of so-and-so, son of so-and-so (he mentions all my names), our true father.' Then the go-between says: 'Praise your mother!' and he praises her: 'You, so-and-so, daughter of so-and-so, our true mother!' and he goes back and sits down. Then the bride is called by the go-between and she is made to praise first her father and then her mother. And if there is any man who eloped with the bride from her husband's, but she later returned to her husband, the lover comes too. He fears to go blind

[1] Augustinovitch confirmed this saying, when the site was mentioned, whether we had been told these details.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Lugulu

if he does not. He does not enter the home. There would be fighting if he did! But he stands outside, and when he hears them praising he praises the parents too. No one hears him, he does it to save his sight. He comes with two or three friends but gets no food. 851

Then we give them beer, and they drink and we drink till dawn. And dawn finds many in drunken sleep. Then the go-between says: 'Dawn has come, friends, let us go!' And they go off and we bid them farewell. And my son, the bride's brother, goes off with them. The husband goes home with his friends, and then the go-between and my son and daughter (these three only) come back. Then our go-between [representing the bride's father] who is on the look-out for them, says: 'They come!' and we go out and call: 'Why do you come here again?' And we throw clubs at them and drive them off. Then the go-between goes home and the two come back and we greet them and say: 'Have you slept?' And food is cooked and they eat. Then that same day the girl goes off to her husband, alone, with food that her mothers have cooked. [273]

QUESTION: What is the reason for the custom?

KAKUWE: They have made the custom to gain wealth—that bull. The porridge (*ikyuude*) and relish (*ilisala*) must be called *mieyama*. If I, the father, or the mother, or the husband, call it porridge, then the one who does so will go blind. We Kukwe do not do this, but if one of us marries one of the people who observe it, that is, a daughter of the Lugulu, he must avoid or else he will lose his sight.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

585 between' accompanies 'the mothers-in-law' when they go to induct or instruct the bride, and the wife of her father's 'go-between' is one of the group of mothers which takes the bride to her husband. The duties of a 'go-between' do not end at marriage: the
●[351] groom's 'go-between' is responsible for taking to the bride's people the hen to announce the birth of the first child, and, among the Lugulu, the 'go-between' of the father is master of ceremonies at the ritual of vituperation.

789 The ideas that emerge from this analysis are, that in the *protec-*
602 *tive* rituals—after death, twin birth, spearing, binding with ropes, and death from sorcery—the parents, children, grandchildren, and some siblings, and siblings' children of the person primarily affected undergo the ritual. Links through females as well as males are recognized—daughters' children as well as sons' children attend—but they are not traced so far, and a brother's or half-brother's children attend far more often than a sister's children. Moreover, children of an unrelated co-wife perform the death ritual for a woman rather than her sister's children.

593 Wives always attend rituals in which their husbands are concerned—indeed, they often come with their children when their husbands stay away—but when the wife is concerned as a sister or daughter, her husband never accompanies her.

593 The closest relatives, such as own children, children of the heir
602 or of a related co-wife, and proximate full siblings, must *all* participate, but the more distant relatives select representatives.

602 The range of relations concerned varies with the particular ritual—it is widest in the twin ritual and narrowest for an ordinary birth—and is also modified by proximity, for relatives who live near come when those in the same category living twenty miles away do not.

Affines (*abalo*) never perform a ritual together even when they are next-door neighbours and close friends, but *abalo* in one generation are *abipwa* (mother's kin) in the next, and a man and his *abipwa* can participate together, as in the protection against sorcery described. More often, however, the members of each lineage act separately.

602 Our Nyakyusa informants distinguished the officiants—*abengwe*
621 —from those undergoing a ritual but they did not make distinc-
613 tions of the sort attempted here between principals and kin who do not undergo the ritual. The distinctions they drew were between kinsmen and neighbours and between lineages. At a death

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

845 783 and the statement cannot be altogether devoid of truth. The influence of the mind upon the body is universally admitted: may it not be that the consciousness of guilt has the effect of contracting the muscles, and the relaxation which follows confession renders birth less painful? And may it not be that even a false confession, wrung from a despairing sufferer, brings a momentary relief sufficient to bring the child to the birth? One is glad to add, however, that many women have the courage to refuse altogether to submit to this shameful ordeal, insisting that their trouble is due, not to the wrath of the spirits, but to other causes, and that they will die rather than confess what is not true.

844 846 When birth has taken place, the cord is cut with a bamboo knife, and the placenta buried in the family place of prayer, a small part protruding to leave a connection which insures further children. All this time no one in the house may swallow saliva. The father calls out to know the sex of the child, but he must not yet enter (for the party have entered the house as soon as possible after the birth). After a few days the mother is anointed with oil and shaved, along with her child, and powdered with medicine. Meantime intimation has been sent to the grandparents; a cock if a boy, a hen if a girl, telling them all that they wish to know. The mother may now resume her household duties.

• 851 603 431 But in about a week she goes to show the child to her own parents, and at the end of her visit, which lasts some weeks, great preparations are made by both

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

sets of grandparents. The mother sets out from her father's house with a train of friends carrying food, and a very special friend who carries the baby. Arrived at the paternal grandfather's, the food is laid down, and the child is taken by the grandfather, who presents a hoe to the maternal grandmother; and then, with the child in his arms, goes to the *ikiyinja* (the family place of prayer). He spits into the palm of his hand, and, laying it in blessing upon the child's head, he prays: 851 603 431

> "May it be well with you, my child. Ye spirits, be not surprised at this child of yours whom I present to you. I am old: let him take my place. Care for him in this world of sickness. I was alone, and ye have multiplied me and made me a company. Be not angry, but bless the child; and in the sight of God let him be acceptable."

The mother sits with head covered, for she must not be seen by her father-in-law. The parties now exchange gifts of food, and eat separately, after which the grandfather gives the child a gift, usually now a small coin, over which the little hand is closed. Next, the grandmother takes the infant and hands it to its mother, who, with a pot of beer on her head, goes off with her husband to their home. Arrived there, but not till then, the father takes the child in his arms, and thanks it for the gift it has brought, a foretoken of more yet to be earned. [606]

Lingering here and there in certain families are strange customs, probably belated survivals from 946

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

751 witches, who use their power beneficently and spend their dreams in efforts to counteract the aggressor witches, *anakoi*, who use their power maliciously. The great commoner is the strongest of the former type, and the 'defender of the village'. A man who earns universal unpopularity is subject to a spiritual attack from the 'defenders', and is liable to fall sick from the blast of unpopularity. Belief in this efficacy of the 'breath of men' is one of the sanctions of the accepted social order.[1]

Only magic is believed to have power to punish wrongdoers who are neither kinsmen nor members of the same chiefdom. Magic exerts an influence on the behaviour of kinsmen and affines. The witchcraft of a neglected wife may cause a man to fall sick, or that of his father-in-law may harm his children.[2] The power of witchcraft never acts between relatives, though it might between husband and wife.[3]

759 An aggressor witch was reported in the old days by the great commoner to the chief, who ordered the poison ordeal. If the accused failed to vomit (the dose was seldom fatal), he was proved guilty and killed or exiled, all his cows and property being taken by the chief and the victims of his aggressive witchcraft. If a private individual accused another, both were put to the ordeal; if both vomited, the accuser had to pay two cows to the other for slander; if either failed to vomit he was punished as guilty. The ordeal is now illegal, but men accused of aggressive witchcraft still find it best to fly the chiefdom. Great commoners normally used their witchcraft powers to protect their chief from attack, but if he erred they would join in the attack on him; the chiefs of Ngonde had power to exert a similar constitutional check on the Kyungu.[4]

763 If death by aggressive witchcraft was suspected, it was proved or disproved by a routine post-mortem examination and by subsequent consultation with the diviner.[5]

BIRTH

894 A child should be born in its own father's house. A difficult birth is a sign of the 895 guilt of adultery, and is cured by confession.[6] A few days after the birth the mother is 851 purified, shaved, and resumes her household duties. She later goes on a visit of some weeks to show the child to her own parents, returning to her husband after celebration by both sets of grandparents, and exchanges of food and beer. The birth of twins was a great misfortune, requiring the segregation and ritual purification of both parents.[7]

INITIATION

884 There was no puberty or initiation rite for boys. The initiation of a girl was really a pre-marriage rite. She went through a complicated rite to ensure fertility, in which the husband took part. The initiation lasts many months, and [illegible] her husband, and ceremonies in which her girl friends of the same village and his friends of his village take part. The girl is tested for virginity during the ceremonies. If she is not betrothed before puberty the initiation is carried out in a modified form, but the full significance is lost.[8]

[1] Wilson, o, 1938, p. 277.
[2] Ibid., p. 1939, p. 38.
[3] Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 10; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 40-3.
[4] Ibid., pp. 40-8. According to H. H. Johnston, if the children died in succession the father was supposed to fall himself, but it is possible that he is confusing a custom of the Southern Tumbuka (1897, p. 407).
[5] Ibid., 1925, p. 51; Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 10; Wilson, o, 1938, p. 238.
[6] Ibid., p. 238.
[7] Ibid., o, 1938, p. 40.
[8] Johnston, 1897, p. 405.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Christian ones, do not celebrate and nothing happens to them, so we no longer fear ourselves.' By 1937 the pagan rituals of kinship had been largely dropped in Ngonde, and around Rungwe mission they were disappearing, though in Selya no pagan dared neglect them. They were taken more seriously by the women than by the men, and many of the young men were openly scornful. The young men are eclectic in their beliefs, jeering at the twin ritual when they may be fearful of any neglect of the ritual of death; doubting the power of rain-makers, but terrified of a neighbour's sorcery.

797 x
795 x
[771]

(c) CHRISTIAN RITUAL AND DOGMA

And what are the alternatives to the traditional rituals? Celebrations at death, marriage, and birth continue—probably some sort of ritual on these occasions is universal in human societies. There is no celebration of a girl's puberty, as among the pagans, but the ritual of confirmation is, in one sense, parallel, for it is an acknowledgment of maturity by the acceptance of an individual into the full fellowship of the Church; but maturity in the Church, and the symbolic death and rebirth, are not necessarily linked with physiological development, as they are in the pagan ritual of *ukunenge*.[1]

[881]

All the Christian rituals are *communal* in the sense that they are centred in the Church—the Christian community; none is primarily a ritual of kinship. This is most pointed at a christening, when a child is received into the fellowship of the Church, whereas in the pagan birth ritual it is acknowledged as a member of the father's lineage by being given *ikipili* medicine (which is 'the blood of the lineage') by its paternal grandmother. Sometimes both rituals are celebrated by Christians who interpret the *ikipili* as an acknowledgment of legitimacy, and a medicine necessary to the child's health, but this is frowned upon by the more orthodox. A dying man is comforted by the priest or elders of the Church, and in some communions he receives the sacrament, the symbol of his salvation through Christ and his membership of the community of believers. At a funeral the members of the local Christian congregation take the leading part, comforting the mourners with prayers and hymns, digging the grave, and burying the dead. The contrast with a pagan funeral, in which cattle are

[152]
[763]
[764]

[1] The pagan rituals referred to in this section are described in *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

We remarked to a Christian friend, a deacon, that the rains were late. He replied: 'Well, it is not so very unusual. Sometimes rains begin in one part of the country and not in another. Sometimes we do not get heavy rain down here until the end of January.' In short, the more educated Christians are beginning to think in more general terms: they do not as yet define probabilities statistically in terms of rainfall averages, but they are tending in that direction. 797? 795? [821] [172]

And what of the positive content of Christianity? The supreme attraction, mentioned again and again as the reason for conversion, is: 'There is life' (*abumi bulipo*), and it is life in a world to come rather than 'more abundant life' here and now that is spoken of. The contrast is between heaven above and the shadowy world 'beneath' of pagan thought, or a fearful fiery hell in which most Christians believe and to which, some think, all pagans are condemned. Constantly in sermons by Nyakyusa preachers there was stress on life, resurrection, and on the rewards and punishments of the future life, and this theme recurs again and again in the dreams of Christians. [775] [772]

There is a gulf also between the pagan conception of 'driving off' the shades and the heroes left by 'brooding over' a man they bring madness and death, and the Christian ideal of union with God. Sermons stress the goodness and love of God, characteristics quite foreign to the traditional picture of Kyala. [769] [775] [776]

Something of the quality of Christian thought and feeling may be grasped by an examination of the names taken at baptism—the convert from paganism always chooses a new name for himself and the meaning is more immediately obvious to everyone than is is with modern English Christian names derived, as they mostly are, from languages no longer familiar. Many of the Nyakyusa names express a very direct personal relationship with God, the Redeemer: 'He has looked upon me', 'He has rescued me', 'He has waited hoping for me', 'He has died for me', 'He gives me courage', 'He has changed me', 'He has chosen me out', 'He has considered me', and a score more of the same type. Some refer to the Gospels: 'Word of Truth', 'The Word has taken hold of me'. A few speak of purification: 'Make me white', 'He has washed me'. Some express that union with God which the pagans so greatly fear: 'We are with him', 'He has come near', 'He has bounded over me', 'Let us approach', and some thanksgiving: 'Let us sing to Him', 'We praise Him', 'We have rejoiced', and some like: 'He is risen', 797? 795? 557 [553] [852]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

one of the early missionaries the sons of leading men had been 797[x]
sent to Kondowe to be educated and their influence had been 795[x]
important in gaining the support of the Kyungu and chiefs for the mission.

In the second generation of Christians not nearly all those baptised in infancy come to be confirmed or 'blessed'—an elder in Ngonde put it at about half. There is, therefore, a large group of people who have been Church members and have been struck off the Church register because they have married a second wife or committed adultery or become drunkards, and show no sign of repentance, and of those who have grown up as Christians, but have not maintained any connexion with a Church in later life. [688]

So far we have talked of Christian rituals and dogmas in terms of the three mission Churches whose converts form the great bulk of Christians: differences between them are negligible. The doctrinal differences between Protestant and Roman Catholic do not bulk large to the Nyakyusa, and since the Roman Catholic Church had not been operating for any long period among them and had a membership of under 1,000, many of whom were Ngoni from Songea or Kisi, who had settled in Tukuyu district, it was not possible to make any adequate comparison of the differences between Protestant and Catholic groups.

Two small Churches, the Pentecostal Holiness and the Watch Tower, had certain peculiarities. The Pentecostal Holiness Church holds highly emotional services at which members are expected to 'speak with tongues'; during prayers the whole congregation begins to jabber, each man usually being unintelligible to his neighbour, though words of other languages can be distinguished. Our informants maintained that the attraction of the Church was that its members seemed to 'have more of the Holy Ghost', as demonstrated by the 'speaking with tongues', though the more cynical of outsiders mentioned also 'the loaves and fishes'—cheaper Bibles, and the fact that the European leader was the largest employer of labour in the district and those who belonged to his Church got on best with him. Many of the members had formerly been Moravians. Its rules were strict: members were not permitted to smoke or drink, or use any Nyakyusa medicines. [781] [776] [764] [785]

The Watch Tower members emphasized that their Church, through its leader, Judge Rutherford, interpreted prophecy in a way in which no other Church could do. They practised baptism [833]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

by immersion and were strict about not eating the flesh of animals without a cloven hoof, and avoiding beer, but made a point of not being abstentarian and working in their fields on Sundays—these were the things they emphasized to us. They were also pacifist and would not join the Police or King's African Rifles, since Rutherford taught that all Government was evil.

(d) 'INDEPENDENT' AFRICAN CHURCHES

There is a great cleavage between the mission Churches and the 'independent' African Churches, which also claim to be Christian, read the Gospels at their services, and recite the Apostles' creed, but whose rules of life are avowedly based on the Old Testament rather than the New (*vide* p. 191). Both the 'independent' Churches operating in BuNyakyusa approve polygyny; the bulk of their members are middle-aged polygynists and they have at least as many men as women among them. Nyamwe's statement on polygyny was interesting:

> When we young men went to join the mission we found that many of our fathers were attracted by it. They said to us: 'If only the Europeans would let us come in with all our wives we would come.' . . . Sometimes it would happen that the son of an old man's second wife would join the mission and become a preacher and he would preach even to his father, saying: 'You pagans do wrong, you marry many women, you must repent, your ways are evil.' Then his father would say to him: 'On the contrary, it is not I who do wrong, if I had married only one wife you would never have been born, and you young men take one wife only and then what happens? You steal other men's wives, continually, in secret, and the country is full of lawsuits about women. It is our custom which is good.' . . . And so we, now, we have our Church and our fathers come in with us. It is our aim to take the old people with us, not ourselves to go forward alone. All the other matters which the missionaries brought to us we think are good, only this European custom of marriage is difficult.

Nyamwe and Ngomela had both been suspended from the Church of Scotland Mission for marrying second wives, and Nyamwe, a man of fifty-three, had four wives when we knew him. He kindly provided us with a copy of a statement on the beliefs and constitution of the African National Church, which is worth quoting in full:

B: W Gaon E-5 (1934-1936) 1934 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

[illegible] Impotence and barrenness are well known facts, and magic is much used to cure them; but apart from their operation it is believed that such conception directly depends upon the frequency with which a man visits his wife. And thus the bearing of children is, for a woman, a demonstration of her husband's great affection for her. People allege the number of children that a woman has borne to prove, in conversation, that she is her husband's favourite.

[illegible] Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan Nyakyusa; a plurality of wives is necessary, in this society, for full sexual satisfaction, wives being a man wealth, prestige and authority, the more wives he has the more children, he thinks, will be born to him.

[illegible] It is believed that any contact with the sexual fluids is dangerous to a young child's health, and so, after a woman has borne a child, her husband is supposed wholly to refrain from intercourse with her for about a year, until the child is old enough to play by itself and allow its mother time to wash in the mornings before touching it. Then he may begin to visit her again, but still she must not become pregnant until the child is weaned. "If she does her breasts become rotten" and the first child is harmed. As children are not weaned for two or three years, this rule involves the couple in yet another year or more either of celibacy or of infrequent intercourse (which also is believed to avoid conception). These taboos on intercourse after a child's birth are to some extent observed in practice, and are one of the reasons for polygyny among the Nyakyusa.

[illegible] Another reason is the absence of hired labour. With a few minor exceptions the only way a man can increase the supply of labour at his disposal is by marrying more wives. Polygyny is the mark of a wealthy man, conditioned by his control of cattle, conditioning his supply of food. And the cattle spent in marriage come back again with interest as the polygynist's daughters begin to be betrothed and married.

[illegible] It is extremely common for a man to take as his second or third wife the sister, half-sister, or brother's daughter of his first or second wife. By doing so a man pays a great compliment to the wife whose sister, or niece, he takes and to her family; his action implies complete satisfaction with her and friendship with her family. He sends his wife home "to fetch out (her kinswoman) into the open" (ukwalula); but she will not agree to do so unless she approves of him as a husband, and so, if she does agree, her action likewise compliments him. I know of one case in which a man wished to take his second wife's younger sister in this way,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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p. The efficient at a basin ritual consists a child

[Facing p. 164]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F5517 Nguude F5517

287 sometimes long coats. They look well for a few weeks and then take on a dirty depressing appearance, and it is safe to say that with the reduction in price of Home goods bark-cloth will go out of favour.

281 [285] Leather work has not developed to any great extent. Women use undressed skins for carrying babies; and men, in remote districts, use them as aprons. In Poloto skins are sewn together to form garments, and in the Kings Mountains the skins worn by the women are pleasingly decorated with shells, while the leg skins are skilfully cut into strips and used as ties, by which to bind the skin on the back. They are seldom worn in front, and the Kings women go in fore as to their backs, while a small bunch of grass alone clothes the front. Shields, wide and narrow; blacksmith's bellows of undressed goat skin; tobacco and snuff pouches, waist belts, caps, sandals; and long strips of hide for binding purposes, such as the haft of a spear, are all or nearly all the uses that are made of leather, if indeed the term leather should be used at all, as most of the articles named are made from unprepared skins.

301 Beads are strung into pleasing patterns by using various colours, and are worn in strings or broad bands, on neck, forehead, arms, ankles, shoulders. [291] Children often go clad only in a tiny apron of beadwork, and girls in the Kings Mountains wear similar aprons until marriage.

532 One European house in my neighbourhood is decorated with a frieze of crude representations of men on foot or on horseback, motor-cars, cycles, birds,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

25.2
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Bathing.

A bathing scene on one of the lakes. Image the shelf said that in the sun, and a mother. Kneels in one, bathing the face, which is now ready for cooking.

Cooking.

By cooking approaches, the cooking consist of stones on them with the pots. Tomatoes, and the dwelling on over the village, on the transportation begins to prepare the cooking food. This food will now the fashion to Kyela, and soon going to Lake Kyela the sea in the lake.

[Fraser, p. 197]

The chief Mwaseko-ndo and his family after he had received from me the "Kingsley Medal" for a gift.

to enter his hut, where the patient was sitting on the ground with his back to the wall. To heal his patient of the pains, the doctor made some small incisions in his skin over the stomach by means of a triangular-shaped knife, and then he rubbed in the incisions a thick black juice taken from the horn of an antelope (the horn was called lugumbo, pl. ulugumbo). The juice was prepared from different roots and herbs as a medicine against stomach pains. In the horn were certain divisions for other medicines, and in each of these divisions was stuck a small (black) stick for removing the specific medicine from it. After this treatment the patient declared that he felt severe pains in the region of his stomach. I asked the doctor for some of his medicines, but he was unwilling to give me anything. Then I promised to bring him next day some European medicines hoping to get in exchange some of his medicaments.

The following morning I returned. On this occasion I did acquire some of his medicines in exchange for various European tablets, especially as he was most fascinated with the hallucinogenic[illegible], of which I gave him a few crystals, explaining to him the use and the dose, when I dissolved some of the crystals before his eyes. It probably seemed to him to be a mystical process. Among the medicines I received from him was a medicine for luck, called lwamwalo. Some of the inhabitants of the village, who had sometimes opposed, were very unwilling for him to give me this medicine, and mentioned that I would take with me all the luck of the village.

On this second visit to the medicine-man, there was again a patient present, and I wanted to take a photograph of the scene because it was

S: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F3517 Ngonde F3517

cases of maize brewe are seen floating down streams, with diving and racing competition between the owners.

Girls help their mothers, and at a very early age look after their younger brothers or sisters. It is a common sight to see a small girl staggering along under weight of a fat baby brother strapped to her back.

In the better regions boys go naked till ten or twelve, wearing nothing but a piece of string on the waist and a charm on neck or wrist. Girls begin to wear bark-cloth waistbands at five or six, adding more as circumstances permit. Their clothing is provided by the father; but boys, at whatever age they begin to wear any kind of garment, have to earn it for themselves, for it is not the business of their fathers to clothe them. They often, however, get a fowl or two, or even a goat or a sheep, from a grandparent, with the proceeds of which they buy a yard or two of cloth.

In the great majority of families there is a great difference in the treatment of boys and girls. The boys are uncared for, dirty, naked, not too well fed; while the girls are kept clean and oiled, well fed, and as far as possible clothed at an early age. The reason is not far to seek. Girls are a source of wealth, and a dirty, ill-cared-for girl will command few head of cattle when the time comes to think of her marriage. Boys, on the other hand, have value only as representatives of the family when the father has passed to the spirit world, and that value is not dependent on external circumstances. A change is being effected,

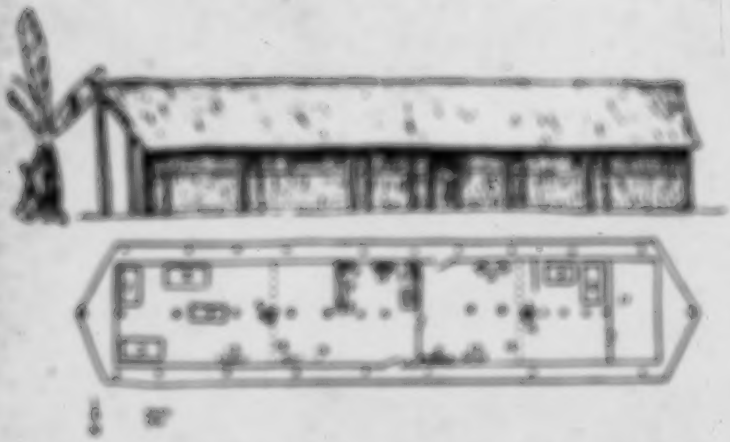
3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F917 Nguude F917

however, by the fact that, in the neighbourhood of Europeans, boys can earn money, and so help the family exchequer.

Puberty is reached at about fifteen, and boys pass that stage without ceremony. Girls are segregated, usually in groups. They lie on leaves spread on the floor, and must not be seen by boys, unless they are the daughters of chiefs, who are permitted to see boys at night. The initiate receives instruction, usually from her mother, though there are plenty of willing advisers besides, in household matters. When this is over, the wife of the *nfuya* (the man who was go-between at her parents' marriage) comes, with others, to inquire about the girl's character, to which a favourable answer is given by the mother: she cooks for strangers, has never known a man, and is of good temper. Then she is examined, and if she is found to be impure (as she is; there is practically no exception), she is put up into the rafters, where she is half-choked in the fumes of a smoky fire specially kindled. Here she remains until permitted to come down, a severe beating following upon any attempt to escape. (The cleansing power of smoke is to be noted also in connection with twins.) The children of Christian parents are examined in the same way. Happily the situation is improving, though very slowly. After being thoroughly smoked, the girl is washed and oiled, and the *bamyaga* (older women) come to instruct her in all her duties to husband and children when she has them.

Immediately after the initiation rites the betrothed

12: Stagnard E-5 (1955) 1962 F907 Ngunda F907
Nyakyusa



The village is the village of Kilendelela, the district of Kyimpulu, belonging to a man with two wives. The means here translate village from distant Kiswa to other guide. Plan showing the village of and are filled in: 1 footpath/field; 2 cattle field; 3 children field; 4 hearth; 5 hearth; 6 water pot; 7 water; 8 ladder; 9 ladder; 10 stools; 11 storerooms; 12 closed farm; 13 footpaths of village; 14 small objects; 15 working material; 16 sleeping mat.

houses. On page [illegible], for reasons here the boys, when 3 or 10 years old, will leave their parents' house to live in long, rectangular southern-like houses big or small, in a special 'youngsters' quarter at the far end of the village. On page [illegible] for contrast. In many cases you do not know for certain whether you are dealing with a youngsters' house or a southern—for the cattle may well be kept in these houses—as the herdsmen may sleep in the southern. However, this usually holds true of the low-lying Kundu country, while on the other hand, in the high country, the cattle is usually kept in the dwelling houses. On pages [illegible] and [illegible], for whose here the cattle is tied to posts or stake, and for shows a picture of a southern.

We also notice (on page [illegible]) in the use of the rectangular houses for married men besides the boys. The difference is seen in the fact that these houses are not roughcast with mud, as this work is the province of women. Finally, he reports that, during the last five years of his stay in the Kundu country, for new Kundu houses being built under increasing influence of the coastal culture, in imitation of the Swahili houses. They were roughcast with mud bricks and not, and had a verandah supported by posts.

In [illegible], many dialogue could be seen. Some were for the cattle, but most were dwelling houses for married people. (Boys aged 3 or 10 and upwards until the marriageable age lived in southern boys' houses, the material of which was not familiar, but a thicker grass, resembling bamboo very much. These houses could

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FM17 Ngonde FM17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER II

VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

(62) 591 NYAKYUSA villages (*ifyanga*)[1] are formed by groups of boys or men, all roughly of the same age, together with the wives and young children of those who are married. Women belong to the villages of their husbands, young children to those of their fathers. Girls live at home until they are betrothed, after which they visit their future husbands periodically, and soon after puberty each joins her husband in his village. Boys, who marry later in life, leave home at about the age of ten or eleven and set up villages of their own.

a. *The genesis of the village*

● 65 23 Between the ages of about six and eleven boys sleep at their fathers' houses and herd their fathers' cattle. This is a full-time, if not a very arduous, occupation. The cattle are driven out about an hour or two after sunrise and return to be milked about 1 p.m.; after an hour they are again driven out and do not come back until sunset. The cattle of a group of neighbours, usually five to ten,[2] are herded together by their young sons; and so these boys spend all day together for several years of their lives. This group of boys is the germ of the future age-village; it is a community with a common activity in the herding of the cattle, with a leader and laws and customs of its own.[3]

591 584 589 When the boys reach the age of ten or eleven, two important changes usually take place in their lives. Firstly, they leave the herding of cows to their younger brothers, and themselves begin the business of herding the fields which will occupy them until they die; secondly, they no longer sleep in the houses of their fathers but join an age-village of boys. Nowadays the two changes usually, but not always, take place at the same time, and well before puberty.

[1] cf. Swahili *ifanga*, 'a component of generals or animals of equal age'.

[2] The herd group is smaller in young men's villages where few own cattle; sometimes, and a very old man occasionally herds his cattle alone.

[3] G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. [illegible]

[p. 19]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Before the establishment of peace by European authority, however, cattle were commonly herded by young men, armed, and only the calves were entrusted to boys, who herded them near the homesteads; therefore moving to a boys' village did not coincide with the change of occupation. Even to-day it is not uncommon for some boys who have reached puberty to be found herding cattle. One we knew herded his father's cattle although he had reached puberty, because he had no younger brothers old enough to take over, and there were only five or six boys in his herd-group altogether. There are also cases where special circumstances put the age of moving later. In one age-village the boys leave home a little later than usual because there are leopards about and it is dangerous for small boys to walk from the village of their fathers to that of the boys, after dark.

When a number of the sons of a village of married men have reached the right age, their fathers give them a piece of land to one side of the parent village on which to build. There they build little huts of reeds for themselves, sufficiently well thatched to keep out the heavy rain, and there they sleep (side Plate II). The building of the huts on the land begins in a playful manner, before the boys move. While they are still herding cows and sleeping at home they build miniature huts there in their spare time, but do not sleep in them. When they move they build slightly more substantial huts with better thatch. At the beginning, when a group of boys starts a new village, or when boys join one already formed, they do not all have huts for themselves; two or three friends share a hut. But later, as they grow older, each builds for himself.

Until he marries each boy leaves his father's fields in his father's village and eats food cooked by his own mother or his father's house, but he sleeps with his friends. Thus between the time when he leaves home and his marriage each is a member of two villages: economically he still belongs to that of his father, socially to that of his own contemporaries. Though bachelors eat at their parents' homes, it is very rarely that they do not eat in the company of their own friends. A bachelor does not simply go home to eat by himself, but a group of bachelors, friends living in the same boys' village, go round together eating at the houses of each one's mother in turn.

In an age-village of married men there are always several

I:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

still cultivates his father's fields and eats at his father's home. In former days, we were told, the marriage age of men was even later than it is at present (*vide infra*, p. 8i). 'Perhaps after twenty a boy would be betrothed, but to a young girl, and he would wait eight years before she grew up.'

From the time boys begin to herd they recognize one of their number as a leader. 'When we herd cows as boys', a friend told us, 'there is always one who is obeyed by his fellows whatever he says. No one chooses him, he gains his leadership and his prestige by bodily strength. For always, when we are boys together among the cows, we vie with one another and dispute about going to turn back straying cattle, or about finding fire to cook the food we have brought with us. And so we start fighting, and we go on fighting until one of us beats all his fellows completely and so becomes the leader. And then it is he who sends others to turn back straying cattle, to fetch fire and to collect firewood. And he is greatly respected. He settles quarrels too. What we quarrel about most as boys is a particular insult: one says to another: "You are only a child, you are, I am your senior." This is always happening and then it is the part of the one who is leader to set those two on to fight. We all stand round and watch and the one who first cries is proved the child.'

Later, when the boys have built apart from their fathers, one of their number is often appointed by the headman of their fathers' village to settle disputes between them. Some boys' villages have no such appointed leader, but many of them do. Such appointments are, however, temporary. It is only when political authority is transferred to their generation that the young men's permanent leaders are chosen.

4. *The 'coming out' ceremony*

Eight or ten years after the young men of the senior boys' village of the children have begun to marry, their fathers hand over the government of the country to them. This transfer of authority is effected in an elaborate ceremony called the 'coming out' (*ukwimika*).

The 'coming out' is a series of legal acts by which the country of an old chief and his village headmen (*ungalume*) is, with certain reservations, handed over into the possession and control of his

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

to those crops, production of which is now expanding—beans, groundnuts, coffee and rice—even though the latter is planted like millet in a seed-bed of ash. The cultivation of rice is on a commercial basis. A small number of men own ploughs which they hire out for preparing rice-fields, and the weeding and reaping is also often done by hired labour. For the hulling, grading, and marketing of coffee the Agricultural Department has established a coffee co-operative, to which all native-grown coffee is sold, but in this organization villages as such play no part.

d. Herding

In each village there are, as we have seen, several herd-groups, five to ten neighbours herding their cattle together. This association is voluntary, but it is usual for members of adjoining homesteads to co-operate—special friends in a village tend to build together—and the group is more or less stable. All the boys of appropriate age (six to eleven) go to herd, even though there is one son of their father already in the group, and when a man has cattle, but no sons of an age to herd, he may leave his cattle to be looked after by the sons of neighbours. As one old man put it: 'My cows are herded by other men's sons, but I give them neither milk nor payment, it is my done in this country. When I beget a son he will herd too.' There is thus considerable give-and-take between fellow members of the group. Among Christians, and those pagans who wish their sons to go to school, the herds take shifts, half attending the morning session of school, and half the afternoon session. Formerly, young men armed with spears herded the cattle for fear of raids, while boys herded the calves which grazed near the villages. The same young men used to herd and low, taking it in turn, or boxing in the late afternoon when the cattle grazed near the villages and could be herded by the youngsters. The cattle were trained to follow the call of a herdsman and in case of danger were quickly led away and hidden.[1]

In the large villages of the plain an assistant headman, one of whose functions is the care of cattle, is connected with each herd-group. In his homestead, under the banana, a smoky fire is kept going during the heat of the day, and there the cattle of the group

[1] D. Rawlinson, op. cit., p. 100; P. L. M. Weir, op. cit., p. 29

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

551 He is now Ambengive Mwakalukwa Mwakasungula; but his mother usually has a pet name for him, which no one else uses; and, finally, at marriage he takes yet another name, used only by his wife. But only one name is used at a time. When the personal name, Ambengive, is used, he is among familiar friends; when he is called Mwakalukwa he is being referred to as his mother's son; and when it is desired to honour or humour him he is given his title of Mwakasungula.

Girls take the personal name of the paternal grandmother, but are sometimes referred to by their father's family name.

•[87] For boys, the work of life begins at about five. It is a greatly longed-for promotion, for at that age many of them go out with the bigger boys to herd the village cattle. One may see almost anywhere a couple of infants, with long sticks, looking after herds of fifteen to twenty head of cattle, and having a thoroughly good time of it. In the low-lying plains they do not begin till they are eight, for there the grass is longer, and the ever-present dangers of the bush are more difficult to guard against. The boys, big and little, get together in groups, and there is no kind of evil that growing boys can learn that they do not learn during that period; but they learn also much that is good, and useful in after life. About eight to ten thousand children of all ages around the Mission schools, but with many attendances is impossible, and the great school of life is the bush. The majority of parents follow the educational principles of Mr. Samuel

[87]

J. Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
F3617 Ngonde F3617

Weller, senior, and turn their children out into the bush to learn whatever the companions they find there have to teach them.

They play at "grown-ups," having their own chiefs and headmen; build houses, pay taxes, learn various useful and many injurious things. Their "chiefs" demand taxes, and there is no pretence about it. A boy must steal, even if it be from his own parents, whatever his chief wants, and pay it to him as tax. More serious thieving is often attempted, and the chief, who is usually the biggest bully of the crowd, will bring to trial and punishment the very boys whom he sent out to steal. Mimic battles are fought in good temper, but they sometimes end in serious injury to some of the warriors. The great achievement which all boys have to excel in is the high leap, and a thrashing may be the portion of the unlucky one who is weakest. Tricks of many kinds are indulged in, one of the favourites being to send a naive child off on some errand, and on his return direct him to sit in a place where a fire has been kindled, and the other removed in his absence; or he is ordered to sit where thorns have been placed for him. No boy dares to disobey such orders.

Mimicry is a favourite amusement. I have seen remarkably good imitations of motor-bicycles made by quite small boys, even the "phut-phut" being reproduced by another boy running along with a bent reed touching the ground. Lanterns are made out of pumpkins, as boys at home make turnip lanterns. Flute and drum are fashioned out of bamboo, and tiny

3: Mackenzie M-5 (co. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

canoes of maize leaves are seen floating down streams, with shouting and racing competition between the owners.

Girls help their mothers, and at a very early age look after their younger brothers or sisters. It is a common sight to see a small girl staggering along under weight of a fat baby brother strapped to her back.

In the better regions boys go naked till ten or twelve, wearing nothing but a piece of string on the waist and a charm on neck or wrist. Girls begin to wear bark-cloth waistbands at five or six, adding more as circumstances permit. Their clothing is provided by the father; but boys, at whatever age they begin to wear any kind of garment, have to earn it for themselves, for it is not the business of their fathers to clothe them. They often, however, get a fowl or two, or even a goat or a sheep, from a grandparent, with the proceeds of which they buy a yard or two of cloth.

In the great majority of families there is a great difference in the treatment of boys and girls. The boys are uncared for, dirty, unclad, not too well fed; while the girls are kept clean and oiled, well fed, and as far as possible clothed at an early age. The reason is not far to seek. Girls are a source of wealth, and a dirty, ill-cared-for girl will command low bride of cattle when the time comes to think of her marriage. Boys, on the other hand, have value only as representatives of the family when the father has passed to the spirit world, and their value is not dependent on external circumstances. A change is being effected,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

being the one that hits the object a given number of [526]
times in succession.

Ingwanu, the lion, is a piece of banana cord at- [524]
tached to a string and whirled round the head, when it makes a noise remotely resembling the growling of a lion. *Ifula*, rain, is our ball-saver; old people still believe that it stops the rain; but even they admit that no well-disposed spirit takes any notice of child's play. *Ramda* is a kind of top, spun by twirling it between the palms and letting it go. Whip-tops are [527]
in use, but are of European origin. A kind of missile ammunition is supplied by the seeds of the *ucyawapati* tree, which are thrown at the enemy, and all who are hit are "killed," and carried off the field.

Konde children are perfectly happy. Those who [527]
go to school hail the diminial hour with the same shouts of joy as little people at home. The boys will climb a tree perhaps, with the more glee if the teacher's prohibition has added a whiff of danger to the exploit. Or they will chase an unfortunate goat around; though the goat, having been handled from earliest childhood very much as we handle pet dogs, probably enjoys the sport as much as the boys do. A couple of boys may get astride a young bullock, and go careering along the road; or more likely the whole troop will make a rush for the nearest water in river or lake, and with terrific noise splash about in joyous enjoyment. No doubt those who are actually sacked look with envy on the scraps of clothing worn by their more fortunate fellows, but this does not silence the shout of glee which fills the air as boys and girls are let loose

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
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•857 from school. Where there is no school there is not the joy of being "let out"; but other joys exist, for the Konde child is just as much an adept at finding outlets for his energy as European children are when left to themselves.

3: Mechanate M-5 (on. 1923) 1923
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and will follow the caller wherever he goes. They come to be milked morning and evening, and no cow moves until her name is called. The greatest insult that can be offered to a man is to sprinkle milk on the road behind him as he passes, suggesting, "You are too incompetent to provide yourself and your family with milk to drink; I can spare some to mock you with." And each man is jealous of the quality of his herd. A year or two ago, a wedding party went to pay over a cow to the bride's father. It was not a high-class animal: a bystander threw a taunt, and in the fight which followed, two men were killed, and a number wounded.

The man is the owner of the cattle as a rule. It is rare for the wife to own any; but sometimes a father will make his daughter a present of a cow, which becomes hers absolutely, to pass, with its increase, to her son at her death or his marriage. The husband also may set a cow apart for his wife, but it returns to him in case of divorce.

During the day the cattle are herded by the village boys, each family sending one or two in turn to the work. They have a thoroughly good time, though for the smaller boys it is rather a testing time of moral and muscle, for they have a severe apprenticeship to serve. Cows are milked by the owner usually twice a day. No one ever milches a man while so engaged; if the milk stops, he will be accused of witchcraft. A visitor arriving at milking time will sit down and wait, neither he nor his host taking any notice of each other until the cow that is being milked

Unmarried children have the right to food partly in virtue of their general relationship to their parents, partly because they themselves assist in the work of the household. From the age of about six years boys herd cattle, from about eleven years they begin to hoe; while girls help their mothers in field work, in the fetching of wood and water and in the care of infants. And, owing to their practical usefulness, there seems to be less difficulty in getting motherless children regularly fed before they marry than in getting them entertained afterwards. Each such child is allotted to one wife and is mainly fed by her.

In some households unmarried sons hoe only the particular plots of their own mothers; but in others the sons and his sons work together as a team, hoeing each plot in turn. In two neighbouring polygynous households I found that in three cases the sons confined themselves to the plots of their own mothers, in seven the sons and his sons worked always together. Girls followed the same pattern as the boys. In the three cases the mother of each boy alone provided him with food, but in the other seven cases his step-mothers did also.

The variation of custom between different households was thus explained to me: "The custom of boys separate, each boy for his own mother only, is sometimes determined by lack of friendship between the women, sometimes by the dislikes of their husband in boyhood. If he is dead, about boyhood then it falls to the women to organise it, and each calls on her own son to hoe for her alone; and, in this case, if one wife has no son she will just have to enlist the services of other people to hoe for her (two ending their efforts will feed at the end of each day). Sometimes too the custom arises in this way—a boy finds that his step-mothers are reluctant to cook food for him when he comes in from hoeing, he employs that which his own mother cooks for him generously they do not, and so he begins to hoe for his mother alone.

"The custom of boys together, on the other hand, is determined by the will of the men, who himself organises it. And whenever a man is vigorous in hoeing there you will find that he and his sons all hoe together. It is only when a man is dead that the custom of boys separately arises from the orders of the women, and if the men is vigorous in hoeing his sons are never reluctant and suspicious about cooking, they hoe to his will just as his sons do."

When their husband dies women pass to his heir. If the heir is a brother of the dead man then he takes them all to wife. If a son he takes

[1] The custom of marriage two sisters and that of substituting a dead brother's child or sister's child for the dead man's children, for the sake of a dead woman make the heir's children or his own.

§84 her own father and the chief. A man has the right to divorce his wife, that is to send her away and demand back his cows, if she is dirty or lazy in housework or if she commits adultery, but men do not often demand a divorce for adultery unless it is persistent. If a man sends his wife away for some such reason she returns to her father and he, if he has cows available, sends back to her husband his marriage-cattle, if he has not yet the cows the husband must wait until the girl is remarried.

§85 ●§87 Into the relationship of mother and daughter economic co-operation and reciprocity enter. The care of young children is largely in the hands of their older sisters, and the girls also help their own mothers in fetching and in fetching and carrying. In return their mothers cook for them, teach them how to cook themselves and how to make mats.

§88 §89 Each mother is responsible also for her own daughter's virginity. One of the bulls which a young man brings during the initiation of his betrothed wife is only given if the girl is found on examination to be still virgin, or if he has deflowered her himself. It is given this bull belongs to the girl's mother to eat with her own friends. But, in spite of her mother's responsibility for her, a girl learns nothing positive from her mother about sex, but from her own slightly older friends; with them she discusses the mechanics of love-making in detail, but never with her mother.

§90 The relationships of siblings are, in general, closer than those of half-siblings, and the elder son in each individual family is privileged above his brothers. A boy's claim for cattle is, as we have seen, partly based on the time and energy he has put into losing his parents' fields; but it also depends, in part, on having full-sisters of his own. When a girl marries the cows come to her father, but her own full-brothers expect to receive some cows, in turn, for their own marriages, in the order of their age. Though the father controls the cattle the brothers think of them as "our cows" and they have an ultimate legal claim to them, which only gives liaisons or insult to their father are altogether vitiate. The elder of a group of full-brothers is the first to draw on these cows and to marry, his juniors wait longer. Full-brothers are bound together in many ways; the elder, who is privileged, is bound to help his juniors in any way he can, and they in turn respect him and in some give to him some cows from the marriages of their own daughters; §92 and each makes the others' quarrels his own. What chiefly unites them §93 is the law of inheritance, for though the elder has first right to the cattle from their sisters' marriages, and though the younger sons, later in life, give cattle from their daughters' marriages to him, yet they are his heirs, and all his privileges in time pass to them. When the elder dies his next

B:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

law to all his classificatory brothers. The normal routine of life is 606
constantly interrupted by women's avoidance of these men, they crouch and hide and make wide detours to avoid them, a man comes into a room and a woman runs out hastily, a father cannot enter his son's house while his son's wives are cooking there, ceremonies are duplicated to avoid bringing them in contact. Few people seem to realize the meaning of 606
this taboo, but occasionally a man is found who tells a story which makes 773
its function abundantly clear. It is said that an old chief, long ago before the taboo was instituted, fell in love with his son's wife and took her, and such was the horror of everyone at what he had done that this taboo was instituted. This story expresses the necessity, in a society where the old men are accustomed to take the young women as wives, of guarding in some way against the possibility of a father desiring his own son's wife for himself; more particularly perhaps because the cows for her marriage have come from him.

This taboo, separating father and daughter-in-law is one of the 606
reasons for the age-village system which we must next discuss. For in 621
Nyakyusa society father and son live in different villages.

Age-Villages

The most characteristic relationships of the Nyakyusa people are 621
those which centre in the age-village. Villages and age-groups are 561
common enough in other societies, and are familiar to all of us, but it is rare to find them combined; it is very uncommon to find, as we do among the Nyakyusa, that local groups of contemporaries live together for most or all of their lives.

Age-villages are formed by groups of men, all roughly of the same age, their wives and young children. Women belong to the villages of their husbands, young children to those of their fathers. The number of households in an age-village varies, but thirty is probably a fair average. Girls, as we have seen, live at home until they marry, which they normally do soon after puberty, and then each goes to the house and joins the village of her husband. But boys, who marry later in life, leave home at about the age of ten or eleven and set up villages of their own.

(a) *Herd-Boys*

Between the ages of about six and eleven the boys sleep at their 857 ●
fathers' houses and herd their fathers' cattle. This is a full-time if not a very arduous occupation; the cattle are driven out about an hour after sunrise and return to be milked about 1 p.m.; after an hour they are again driven out and do not come back until nearly sunset. The cattle of eight

8: W Gson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

857 to twelve neighbours are usually herded together by their young cows; and so these boys spend all the day together for several years of their lives. This group of boys is the germ of the future age-village; it is a community with a common activity in the herding of the cattle, with a leader and with laws and customs of its own.

"When we herd cows as boys" a friend of mine told me "there is always one who is obeyed by his fellows whatever he says. No one chooses him, he gains his leadership and his prestige by bodily strength. For always, when we are all boys together among the cows, we vie with one another and dispute about going to turn back straying cattle or about fetching fire to cook the food we have brought with us. And so we start fighting, and we go on fighting until one of us beats all his fellows completely and so becomes the leader. And then it is he who sends the others to turn back straying cattle, to fetch fire and to collect firewood. And he is greatly respected. He settles quarrels too. When we quarrel about meat as boys is a particular tooth; one says to another: 'You are only a child, you are, I am your senior.' This is always happening and then it is the part of the one who is leader to set those two on to fight. We all stand round and watch and the one who first cries is proved the child."

The herd-boys of my own acquaintance, a group of eleven altogether, told me that besides insulting one another like this, boys often cause trouble in their little community by stealing cow-bells from one another's cattle and hiding them away for future use. And one day, when I visited the local herd, the leader of the herd-boys told me they had caught two boys drowning a sheep that morning so as to be able to pretend it had drowned itself by accident, and then they would have had some of the meat to eat. "We beat them very much," he told me, and he called one of the culprits to come and exhibit his wounds. The leader further explained to me that such cases would not ever be reported at home, unless the culprits themselves complained to their parents that they had been unjustly beaten, "then," he said, "I should explain what they had done, and they would get beaten again!"

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The time that is not spent in herding cows, in arranging and watching duels and in punishing wrongdoers, is spent in playing various games, occasionally in pitched battles with neighbouring herd-boys, and in cooking and eating small amounts of food brought from home.

857 572 Friendships formed between members of this group sometimes last a lifetime. An old man once said to me of a friend of his who had died: "We herded cows together when we were boys."

D:\Wilson E-5 (1936-1936)\936 FN17 Nyonde FN17 Nyakyusa

As the boys one by one reach the age of ten or eleven, two important changes usually take place in their lives. Firstly they leave the herding of cows to their younger brothers, and themselves begin the business of tending the fields which will occupy them until they die; and secondly they no longer sleep in the houses of their fathers but join an age-village of boys. These two changes usually, but not always, take place at the same time and normally at about the age of ten or eleven years, well before puberty. But there are cases where special circumstances put the age of one or both of these changes later; I know one boy who herds his father's cattle although he has reached puberty, because he has no younger brother old enough to take over, and there are only five or six boys in his herd-group altogether. And in general I am told it is not uncommon for some boys who have reached puberty to be found still herding cattle. Again in one age-village the boys leave home a little later than usual because there are leopards about and it is dangerous for small boys to walk from the village of their fathers to that of the boys after dark.

(3) *The Boys' Village*

When a fair number of the sons of a village of married men have reached the right age, their fathers give them a piece of land to one side of the parent village on which to build. There they build little huts of reeds for themselves, sufficiently well-thatched to keep out the heavy rain, and there they sleep. The building of the huts on this land begins, in a playful manner, before the boys move. While they are still herding the cows and sleeping at home they build miniature huts there in their spare time, but do not sleep in them. When they move they build slightly more substantial huts with a better thatch. Until he marries each boy hoes his father's fields in his father's village and eats food cooked by his own mother at his father's house. But he sleeps with his friends. Thus between the time when he leaves home and his marriage each is a member of two villages, economically he still belongs to that of his father, socially to that of his own contemporaries. Though bachelors eat at their parents' homes, it is very rarely that they do not eat in the company of their own friends. A bachelor does not simply go home to eat but a group of bachelors, friends of the same boys'-village, go round together eating at the homes of each one's mother in turn.

In an age-village of married men there are always several different herds of cattle; and it is not only those from the same group of herd-boys that set up a new village together, but all the sons of the age-village. When a boy leaves the herd-group he joins a larger community, including the friends of his own age who have herded cows with him, but many

The age system of the Nyakyusa has been described in detail in *Good Company*,[1] but, since it forms the basis of their social structure, a brief explanation must here be given for the benefit of readers unacquainted with that earlier volume. Within each chiefdom there are a number of villages composed not of kinsmen but of age-mates. Villages begin when small boys of eight or ten years build together at a little distance from their fathers. They are joined by younger brothers, as time reach the age when boys stop sleeping at home, until the elder are in their middle teens, when the youngsters will be old to begin another village. The boys of a village have their own leader, a 'natural' leader, not specifically appointed, but they are subject to the headman of their fathers' village, and formerly fought as a group under his direction. But at the 'coming out' a headman for each village is selected from among its members by the fathers: if he dies, his heir—a younger brother or son—inherits his position, so that sometimes a young man becomes headman of an old man's village, taking the name and social position of his father. Only commoners are eligible as headmen: we have one condition who was rejected because his great-grandfather was a chief.

Two villages in each chiefdom are senior to the others and their headmen are responsible each for half of the country. During the 'coming out' ritual the chief marries two wives, 'mothers of the country', and one is established in each senior village or capital (*ikumpalala*). The elder sons of these two wives are the heirs, and later divide the old chief's country between them. Most of the chief's junior wives are divided between the capitals but some may be settled in a subsidiary village in unoccupied country. All the chief's sons build with commoners in villages appropriate to their age, and all save the two heirs are subject to the commoner headmen of their villages. They are entitled to some respect as 'sons of the chief', and those of strong personality gain a following and settle disputes between their fellows (as may any commoner), but only the two senior sons can claim political authority.

Before the 'coming out' the villages of young men and their fathers adjoin, for the boys have built on their fathers' land, on the fringes of their fathers' villages. But at the 'coming out' there is a new deal in land. The young men are established in the centre of the country and their fathers move to the periphery; it is not merely that fathers and sons exchange land, but all the boundaries

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, 1951.

ubwangalo is only possible between *ucwangwanko*[1] they must build with *ucwangwanko*. The rules set *ubwangalo* is then related to the age-village; male *ucwangwanko* build together, and the company of, and good fellowship with, his age-mates is what creates a man of wisdom and character. Such is the Nyakyusa view of society.

For conversation to flow merrily and discussion to be profound there must be *ubwangalo*—'the wherewithal for good fellowship', that is, food and drink—and very great stress is laid on sharing them. Men and boys are supposed to eat regularly with age-mates. Traditionally, fathers and sons never ate or drank together—to do so was held to be incompatible with the respect due from son to father—and men sought the company of equals or seniors. From the time a small boy begins to herd he is encouraged to bring home two or three friends to eat with him, and to race he visits each of them. Since boys have no fields of their own until they marry, but co-operate in cultivation with their parents, it is to their very mothers they go for food, and parents are proud of a son bringing many friends. 'Perhaps', said Isaguwelile, 'a son will come with his friends and eat a huge bunch of bananas, and take thick milk and eat with them. When the father comes back his wives will tell him: "Your son has eaten all the thick milk and eat a banana bunch!" Then he will ask: "How many men were with my son?" "Ooo!" "Eh, he's a chief!" the old man will say, smiling proudly.' And formerly if a young man came home often alone to eat, his father would beat him, or even take a spear and wound him, and when people asked why he would say: "This great fool comes alone to my place, again and again." It is good to eat with friends, for boys to go round in groups of four or five.'

After marriage such man is cooked for by his own wife, but he continues to eat with his friends, bringing them to his home or going to their's. The first wife to come to a young man's village is said to have a hard life. She has to draw water and cook for all the young men of the village—they come to drink, and to wash, and they beat her with a stick if she refuses them. No, the

[1] *Ubwangalo* is sometimes used with reference to relatives as well as to village-mates, as in the phrase 'ubwangalo kwanse nabalumbu bobe', meaning 'he is not on good terms with his relatives'; but to his fellow-men it can only be used with reference to *ucwangwanko*.

3: Mackenzie M-9 (co. 1925) 1925
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CHAPTER III

Konde Children

THE small Konde boy or girl stands gazing with frightened eyes at the mzungu (white man), and the little heart can be seen beating through the dark soft skin, while the breath comes and goes in rapid motion, and the tiny legs are ready to run at the first sign of a too near approach. For the white man is the bogey of the Konde child. From earliest infancy he has been taught to fear him, to regard him as a possible source of dreadful danger. "The white man will get you" is as common a threat as its parallel of the dreadful black man, with which foolish people at home inflict injury upon their children. The first impulse of a child in arms, approached in the most kindly fashion by a European, is to scream, and clasp its mother by the neck in an agony of fear. But once gain the confidence of these tiny black folks, and you find them as friendly, as delightful, as charming, as white children of the same age. Possibly the charming period passes sooner, for the Konde child begins to know good and evil at an age when the white man's child is still a mere prattler. Little black, or rather brown, folks are of a quick intelligence, ready to learn, full of

[142] romping glee; and the musical jingle of the tiny bells that most of them wear on their ankles up till three or so is pleasant to the European, and rings with a thrilling response in the heart of the adoring mother, who sits on the ground washing the genitals of her little one.

[143] The unborn child is treated with great care, and surrounded with superstitions. The mother must submit to restrictions in regard to diet, and indications of the sex of the coming child are given by the preferences she shows for permitted foods. She must not eat hot food, for that would burn the child's head; nor beans, for they might cause the disease called *dyale*. An expectant mother who drinks much milk will bear a son; if she has a great desire for fish foods, a daughter is known to be coming. A ailing woman need not be surprised if her child is a boy, especially if her husband is the victim of her language. Some women will not eat rice, perhaps because it is a new food, all the possibilities of which have not yet been fully explored.

[144] The worst possible place for a woman to have her child born is at her own father's house, unless it is with the consent of her husband; for every one will assume that the child has an unknown father. If an [159] expectant mother suspects her husband of sorcery she will take care to have her child born at a distance, so that it may not inherit its father's undesirable powers, these being transmissible only at close quarters, and only after birth. With heathen women, the birth, if in the daytime, takes place mostly in the open

357 to twelve neighbours are usually herded together by their young sons; and so these boys spend all the day together for several years of their lives. This group of boys is the germ of the future age-village; it is a community with a common activity in the herding of the cattle, with a leader and with love and concern of its own.

"When we herd cows as boys," a friend of mine told me, "there is always one who is obeyed by his fellows whatever he says. No one knows how he gains his leadership and his prestige by bodily strength. For always, when we are all boys together among the cows, we vie with one another and dispute about going to turn back straying cattle or about feeling for to seek the food we have brought with us. And so we start fighting, and we go on fighting until one of us beats all his fellows completely and so becomes the leader. And then it is he who sends the others to turn back straying cattle, to look for and to collect firewood. And he is greatly respected. He settles quarrels too. When we quarrel about most as boys is a particular insult, one says to another: 'You are only a child, you are, I am your senior.' This is always happening and then it is the part of the one who is leader to see that we do not fall. We all sit round and watch and the one who first cries is proved the child."

The herd-boys of my own acquaintance, a group of eleven disputatious, told me that besides visiting one another like this, boys often came visible in their little community by stealing cow-bells from one another' cattle and hiding them away for future use. And one day, when I visited the local herd, the leader of the herd-boys told me they had caught two boys drowning a sheep that morning so as to be able to pound it but drowned itself by accident, and then they would have had some of the meat to eat. "We beat them very much," he told me, and he called one of the culprits to come and exhibit his weals. The leader further explained to me that such cases would not ever be reported at home, unless the culprits themselves complained to their parents that they had been unjustly beaten, "then," he said, "I should explain what they had done, and they would get beaten again!"

The time that is not spent in herding cows, in arranging and watching duels and in punishing wrongdoers, is spent in playing various games, occasionally in pitched battles with neighbouring herd-boys, and in cooking and eating small amounts of food brought from home.

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[illegible]

[illegible] Sequence and succession are well-known facts, and ways to reach such to name them; but apart from their operation it is believed that such conception directly depends upon the frequency with which a man visits his wife — that thus the bearing of children is, for a woman, a demonstration of her husband's great affection for her. People address the number of children that a woman has borne to grown, in conversation, that she is her husband's favourite.

[illegible] Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan Nyakyusa; a plurality of wives is necessary, in this society, for full social satisfaction, wives being a man's wealth, prestige and authority, the more wives he has the more children, he thinks, will he have to him.

[illegible] It is believed that any contact with the usual Fuchi is dangerous to a young child's health, and so, after a woman has borne a child, her husband is supposed wholly to refrain from intercourse with her for about a year, until the child is old enough to play by itself and allow its mother time to walk to the marriage before weaning it. Then he may begin to visit her again, but still she must not become pregnant until the child is weaned. " If she does her frames become rotten " and the first child is harmed. The children are not counted for this or their mean, this rule involves the couple in yet another year or more either of celibate intercourse or of infrequent intercourse (which also is believed to avoid conception). These taboos on intercourse after a child's birth are to some extent observed in practice, and are one of the reasons for polygyny among the Nyakyusa.

[illegible] Another reason is the absence of hired labour. With a few minor exceptions the only way a man can increase the supply of labour at his disposal is by marrying more wives. Polygyny is the mark of a wealthy man, conditioned by his control of cattle, conditioning his supply of food. And the cattle spent in marriage come back again with interest as the polygynist's daughters begin to be betrothed and married.

[illegible] It is customarily customary for a man to take as his second or third wife the sister, half-sister, or brother's daughter of his first or second wife. By doing so a man pays a great compliment to the wife whose sister, or niece, he takes and to her family; his action implies complete satisfaction with her and friendship with her family. He sends his wife home " to fetch out (her bridewealth) into the open " (ubwandale); he also will not agree to do so unless she approves of him as a husband, and so, if she does agree, her action likewise compliments him. I know of one case in which a man wished to take his second wife's younger sister in this way,

Mbwanamwe: The bride does not come easily for it is said that the blood which begins to flow when she reached puberty will not dry on her body if she does. 175

To sleep on the litter and to refuse to sleep on sleeping-mats is a sign of childhood (for during childhood girls do not think much about marriage, but are dirty); it means that they leave behind these (literally 'wear out from') childish things. The litter is heavy because it is her, we have heard the children who live of it to make a fire and cook food, then, where they have eaten that food, their bodies are sick. We say the body becomes unhealthily fat (*shipyanie*). Food is collected for a bride because it, here, a woman, who has not had food collected for her, was food collected for another bride going through the puberty ritual, she will fall sick and her body will grow unhealthily fat. Bringing food for the shambhalla and giving gifts at the shaper are to congratulate the bride because she has grown up, she is now an adult.

X: The smearing of henna leaves [at the bringing out] is a sign of fertility. The ritual is finished, the girl is someone's wife now. . . . The [illegible] shaman supervises the press, the mortar because the chisels.

Sitting in a stream and letting water carry away pebbles placed between fingers and toes is a symbol of purification and separation from the shade. The first element—purification—was mentioned by most informants: "The rite means that the girl is finished," said Pandani's wife; but the more self-conscious identified 'dirt' with the shade. Mwanikwiko made the matter quite clear. When asked why pebbles were placed in the cloth of fingers and toes, he replied: "Kyala, when he crowned ours, said: 'As death throw it away, it is in the shade, it is in the body.'" 177 178

Question: Is the puberty ritual? 179

Mwanamwe: It is to say that the shade has brooded over the child, since he crowed blood we throw him away. May the shade go with those women, then may she bear children; if he does not go, if you do not wear the girl, then Kyala broods over her and she does not bear children. 179

Question: Why does she avoid her father at this time? 180

Mwanamwe: Because I, the father, and her mother, perform the ritual for our child. Our shade has entered into her, has brooded over her, therefore we do not come together on the mat until we have finished wearing our child; when we have finished, and have treated her, then we do what we will on the mat. If I were to lie with my wife [during the ritual] she refuses, saying: 'Our child has not yet finished, she is still undergoing the puberty ritual.' But if she agrees and we lie together, then our child will never bear. When we have finished the

to bring all the brides of the village for ceremony. The father of these twins explained that neighbours would suffer less than relatives, if left unwashed, but 'their legs would ache a little because we sat with them'. And here we come to an idea which appears in many situations in Nyakyusa life, the idea that contagion is spread through eating together. Relatives of parents of twins are not thought to be in danger until they eat or drink with one of the parents: the ritual is performed so that they may eat together safely. Similarly a murderer and his relatives are thought to be in magical danger from the relatives of the murdered man only if they should eat or drink with them. So too, the bond between neighbours which puts them in danger from the impurity of one of them is the sharing of food.

At the initiation and marriage of a girl, neighbours again unite and identify themselves with the principals. When she reaches puberty a girl is secluded, and her companions in the village—the girls who are her immediate juniors, for the older ones will have joined their husbands—keep her company. Some are her own younger sisters and half-sisters, others are not related at all. Should one girl of the village not join them she is not accused of witchcraft, but it is unusual for one to stay away; to do so would show 'pride' (*ussilaga*). These companions (*ubugangi*) sleep and eat with the 'bride' (*umwanga*)* and share her tasks and leisure, fetching firewood, making mats, learning songs, and listening to the instruction of 'the mothers'. They and the 'bride' go about together as a group and, accompanied by one or two 'mothers', may visit a 'bride' and her maids in another village, the two groups competing in dancing and singing. So keen is the rivalry that formerly, we were told, the visits sometimes led to fighting between the maids and 'mothers' of each 'bride', particularly when the competing groups came from different chiefdoms. At the end of the ritual two of the maids accompany the bride to her husband's house, and spend a few days with her there, sharing the attentions of her husband as night (*vide infra*, p. 95).

During her seclusion the bride avoids her father, whom she refers to as 'father-in-law', and she avoids also all his contem-

* *Umwanga* means a girl who has reached puberty but has not yet borne a child. She is usually, though not invariably, betrothed, and her 'husband' has a part in the puberty ritual. There is no exact English translation, and we think that 'bride' is the least misleading in this context.

[illegible] is not confined to the company of contemporaries of the same sex. Indeed the liveliest dancing is before members of the opposite sex, and is often the preliminary to love-making; but full opportunity for display is thought to depend upon living in a village, rather than in scattered homesteads. Some Nyakyusa are colonists, cultivating and building out in unoccupied bush country five or six miles from a settled area; but living out in the bush is disliked by most people and is done, we were told, only for gain. Cattle are said to increase very much more quickly out in bush, where grazing is plentiful, than they do on the village pastures, and the yield of virgin fields made in the bush is high. Hence the Nyakyusa dictum, 'People live in the villages for display, in the bush for gain.' And individuals commonly display themselves as members of a group—a group of contemporaries of the same sex, that is, of village-mates.

d. Decency

The basis of Nyakyusa sexual morality is the separation of the sexual activities of successive generations, more particularly the separation of the sexual activities of mothers and sons, and the complete segregation of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

Nyakyusa informants hold that boys are sent out of their parents' village to build apart so that their parents may have privacy. Mwamunsu explained: 'If a boy over ten years old stays at home to sleep, he is laughed at by his friends, and his own parents send him away. They say, "If he sleeps at home he will hear what his parents talk about at night"; the night is always full of lewd talk, and he may even see them coupling. He will grow up a fool, with little wisdom! You see at the boys' village', he went on to say, 'the older boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love-making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger ones listen to these things and that's all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn, but we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night; and that is very bad, that is foolishness. But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to learn, that is how children grow up.'

villages—they begin among boys of ten to fourteen herding cows, and continue among young men until marriage, but they are said never to continue after that, and are regarded simply as a substitute for heterosexual pleasure. 'A man never dreams of making love to another man'—only of making love to a woman. If a boy's own father, or a village father, finds a son with another youth he will beat him, but provided both parties were willing, there is no more case, and the older men treat the practice coherently as a manifestation of adolescence. To force a fellow to have homosexual intercourse against his will is a serious offence, comparable to witchcraft (see Documents, p. 198). Lesbian practices are said also to exist, but we have no certain evidence of this. If they do occur it is much more likely to be among the older wives of chiefs and other polygynists than among the girls, who have no much attention from young men.

It is in conversation and play with village contemporaries that some knowledge of sex is acquired. Girls learn about sex from their immediate seniors, and they get some sex experience, along with formal instruction on morals, at the puberty rituals of their sisters in the age-village and at their own initiation. Boys learn from the conversation of their older fellows at night, in the boys' village. Any suggestion that sex education should be given by parents or middle-aged teachers shocks the Nyakyusa profoundly, for they hold that discussion of sex is totally incompatible with the respect due from children to parents. The taboo on sex talk between members of different generations appears to be absolute among men, but is less emphasized among women, for formal instruction on morals is given to a girl by her mother's fellows during the initiation rituals, and a young wife of her father, or of her father's neighbour, may whisper advice on sex matters even although she is classed as a 'mother'.

As we have already indicated, there are profound differences between pagans and Christians in their sex code. The Christian dogma that sex relations 'should only take place between adult married persons' excludes the freedom of girls to have external sex relations before betrothal, or in the 'bride's' hut; it excludes girls visiting their betrothed husbands before puberty; and it excludes homosexuality, which is regarded as a mortal sin. Segregation of successive generations is not a part of the Christian tradition, hence the modifications in the rules of avoid-

[illegible] OUTLINE OF SONGS AMONG THE NYAKYUSA

[illegible] *In moonlight nights the girls*
[illegible] play special games in the courtyard, such as 'Kwoh, kwoh, little man'; they put bits of banana leaves in the forks of the fingers and toes and sing: 'Kwoh, kwoh, little man; kwoh, kwoh, little woman!' Then they spread wide their arms and legs and fingers and toes and kwoh them together. The leaves that fall out when they do so are collected and hidden some distance away. Then they all separate and hunt for them, singing:

> 'We look for our fellow the banana one.
> I don't know where she is, the banana one.'

When they find the leaves they pile them up and then each snatches one, singing:

> 'There she is, here she is!'

Then the game ends.

Another traditional song goes:

> 'Little mouth, little mouth, He-who-makes-her-friends-quarrel.'

But many of the songs the maids sing with the young men are just current popular songs.

[illegible] 'The maids are friends for the bride to amuse herself with. They
[illegible] amuse themselves with young men, singing, and if some other bride is secluded at the same time, they go and compete against her and her maids in singing.' At the seclusion of Mwaliteje's daughter described below, a dozen girls, all a little younger than herself, kept her company. Five were her own half-sisters, one was a wife of her father who had not yet reached puberty, one a daughter of her father's sister, and four were daughters of her father's neighbours.

[illegible] Although a bride's hut is the centre for our play, women who are
[illegible] sleeping with their husbands and are therefore 'heavy' (nsite) with semen, do not enter it and may not cook for her, for any contact with them is felt to be dangerous to her. Her own mother refrains from intercourse until her daughter has gone to her husband.

[illegible] The bride is not confined to the hut (as among many other African peoples) but is free to move about the immediate neighbourhood. Her movements are, however, limited by the taboo on crossing a stream, the need to avoid sexually active women, and the avoidance of her father and other men of his village, as well as her in-laws. When she leaves her hut she is accompanied by her

D. Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1937 F3017 Uganda F3017
Hyakyuan
Gulya, Ma Kyondo

no worse." Don't let your in-laws say to us: "You did not bring [illegible] her up properly, she behaves proudly." "

Another whispered: "When your husband comes to lie with you do not fight him, but accept him. If you avoid him you have a case against you," and she laughed as she said it.

There was also whispered advice about menstruation: "You wait three or four days. . . . When a child appears look after yourself." During the instruction the bride sat with her matrilineal counselling round her, their heads covered by cloths, all giggling a little. None of the mothers made any attempt to hit the bride, though in discussing the ritual a number of informants insisted that 'the mothers do not reach her by word of mouth only, they also beat her' and 'they scold her for all the things which she has hitherto done wrong at her husband's house'. Old Kaatile explained that: 'If the girl is a good wife, then the husband tells the mothers, saying: "You must not scold or say with, she always listens to me." Then no one beats her. . . . But if she is proud to her husband's then they beat her.' The mother who bore her husband says: "She has been proud towards me, she's a bad (shad) girl," and they hit her with their fists.'

The teaching as described by a number of women may be summed up thus: the bride is told to fetch water from the fields, draw water, sweep the house, cook the food, fetch firewood ('If you do not draw water or fetch firewood you are a fool') and prepare food for her husband when he comes in from herding at midday and again in the evening; she must never be proud (amatinge) when her husband calls for water or anything else, but always answer with the submissive ee and not just say ok; she must be hospitable to her husband's friends and her own mothers when they come to visit; she must cook for children and be gentle to them. She must look towards her mother-in-law now—her own mothers are 'just people'. 'We have sent you to your husband's house and if we hear of quarrels there you are no child of ours.' She is told to wipe her husband after intercourse, to wash her own body often and to be careful to attend to herself properly when she is menstruating and to wash her hands frequently and not allow her husband to approach her then. She is told not to reject her husband at other times ('If you refuse him he will demand his cattle back'), and she is warned not to flirt with other men. Most instruction in the art of love-making (including demonstration of the correct body movements) comes informally from girl friends a

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

•864 little older than herself, rather than at the formal admonition by her mothers, though a little is given then also.[1] She is especially [302] warned to depilate herself regularly. 'If she is hairy her husband will complain to the mothers and they will beat her.' The maids listen to the instruction along with the bride, and since every girl keeps several of her immediate seniors company before she grows up herself, no young woman can be left in doubt as to her duties as a wife.

881 At the shaving of the sprouting hair the 'bull of puberty' 585 (*ingombele jabusungu*) should be killed if the bride is found, on examination by her mothers and those of the groom, to be a virgin, or if the husband has told the women that he himself has deflowered her. Mwasofu's complaint at the ceremony just described was that the groom's party had not brought the bull though his daughter was a virgin, and he insisted that the bride could not go to her husband until it had been provided.

At another puberty ritual which we attended, the bull was duly brought and, after examining the girl, the mothers announced her virginity with the cry of triumph (*akalulu*), and shouted: 'It is ours, it is ours.' They rushed through the courtyard dancing and applauding. Before the examination the bull had been tied up near the mothers, and immediately the joyful announcement was made it was killed. The meat of this bull is divided between the bride's mothers, her father's kinsmen with whom he exchanges cattle, and his immediate neighbours. The ritual portion, the *ijemmapa*, cut from the top of the right foreleg, is taken by her father to his ritual grove of bananas and there he prays, saying: 'You, so-and-so (naming his father), since I have eaten the food of others (non-relatives) may she flourish at her husband's.' Another informant's version of the prayer was: 'I am eating the bull for my daughter, may she bear children!' A third said: 'Here is the meat! I have eaten the food of others, come out a little, may she bear a child at her husband's!'

If the bride is not a virgin the bull is not killed. It must be returned. Informants repeatedly implied, in talking of the ritual, that everyone knew beforehand whether the bride was virgin or not. 'If she is not a virgin we only do a little ritual, there is but one

[532] [1] Our informants maintained that clay images were not used as a medium of instruction, as among the Bemba, though Nyakyusa girls would stylized dolls out of clay almost identical with one shown for the Kisi in F. Fülleborn, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, Band IX, Atlas, plate no. 28, 30, 31, 72.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

586 her own father and the chief. A man has the right to divorce his wife, that is to send her away and demand back his cows, if she is dirty or lazy in housework or if she commits adultery, but men do not often demand a divorce for adultery unless it is persistent. If a man sends his wife away for some such reason she returns to her father and he, if he has cows available, sends back to her husband his marriage-cattle, if he has not got the cows the husband must wait until the girl is remarried.

593 857 Into the relationship of mother and daughter economic co-operation and reciprocity enter. The care of young children is largely in the hands of their elder sisters, and the girls also help their own mothers in field-work and in fetching and carrying. In return their mothers cook for them, teach them how to cook themselves and how to make mats.

585 593 Each mother is responsible also for her own daughter's virginity. One of the bulls which a young man brings during the initiation of his betrothed wife is only given if the girl is found on examination to be still virgin, or if he has deflowered her himself. If it is given this bull belongs to the girl's mother to eat with her own friends. But, in spite of her [664] mother's responsibility for her, a girl learns nothing positive from her mother about sex, but from her own slightly older friends; with them she discusses the technique of love-making in detail, but never with her mother.

593 The relationships of siblings are, in general, closer than those of half-siblings, and the eldest son in each individual family is privileged above his brothers. A boy's claim for cattle is, as we have seen, partly based on the time and energy he has put into hoeing his parents' fields; but it also depends, in part, on having full-sisters of his own. When a girl marries the cows come to her father, but her own full-brothers expect to receive these cows, in time, for their own marriages, in the order of their age. Though the father controls the cattle the brothers speak of them as "our cows" and they have an ultimate legal claim to them, which only gross laziness or insult to their father can altogether vitiate. The eldest of a group of full-brothers is the first to draw on these cows and to marry, his juniors wait longer. Full-brothers are bound together in many ways; the eldest, who is privileged, is bound to help his juniors in any way he can, and they in turn respect him and in time give to him some cows from the marriages of their own daughters; 593 and each makes the others' quarrels his own. What chiefly unites them 428 is the law of inheritance, for though the eldest has first right to the cattle from their sisters' marriages, and though the younger ones, later in life, give cattle from their daughters' marriages to him, yet they are his heirs, and all his privileges in time pass to them. When the eldest dies his next

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 561 others as well. Any boys' village is found to consist primarily of the sons of the members of some older village who originally gave the land for its building, but as we shall see later sons of other villages live there too.

621 342 At the beginning, when a group of boys starts a new age-village, or when boys join one already formed, they do not all have a hut to themselves, two or three friends share a hut. But later, as they grow older, each builds for himself. The younger ones build their huts of reeds, but the older ones try to get a few bamboos from their fathers or senior relatives and build more solid houses. Married men build entirely of bamboo, but often in a boys' village you will find a compromise between bamboo and reed, both being used in the same house; and the houses of bachelors, even though they be all of bamboo, are smaller than those of married men. The technique of good building is not very difficult, and the older boys instruct and help their juniors, as they join the village, to improve the skill playfully acquired as herd-boys so as to build more substantial huts.

245 262 The chief food of the Nyakyusa is the banana; men plant bananas immediately round their huts, though their fields are mostly at a distance. And bachelors, while they continue to eat their main meals at their parents' village, plant bananas round their own huts as well. Bananas begin to bear very quickly, sometimes within a year of planting, and so, soon after the establishment of a boys' village, its members have bananas of their own, which they cook for themselves and eat with their friends at odd times during the day. But they have as yet no fields.

● 864 [881] 577 There is no formal initiation of boys at puberty; but, on the other hand, the custom of leaving home and joining a boys' village is directly connected by the Nyakyusa with their ideas of decency in sexual life. They think it is perfectly all right to discuss sex openly among friends of about the same age but altogether wrong to discuss it either in the presence of, or with, their parents or those of their parents' generation. If a boy learns about love-making, in any way, from his parents the Nyakyusa think that he will not respect them properly and that he himself will be a fool. A boy must learn these things from his immediate seniors and friends. One man said to me: "If a boy after about ten years old stays at home to sleep, he is laughed at by his friends and his own parents send him away. They say: 'If he sleeps at home he will hear what his parents talk about at night, the night is always full of lewd talk; and he may even see them undressing. He will grow up a fool, with little wisdom.' You see at the boys' village" he went on to say, "the older

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love-making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger ones listen to these things and that is all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn. But we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night; and that is very bad, that is foolishness.—But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to listen, that is how children grow up." 864 577

On another occasion when I told this same man that in Europe many people thought it a good thing for boys to get sexual instruction from their parents and teachers he was shocked: "But I think it is impossible" he protested "for parents to go into detail with their children; there is too much shame on both sides. And if they did, it would damage the children's respect for them."

There is thus a correlation in this society between the age-village system at its genesis and the belief that a boy's dawning interest in sex must be informed, not by his parents, but by friends only a little older than himself.

Few men marry before twenty-five years of age, but affairs with girls begin before puberty. All affairs are related in detail to friends in the age-village, and the younger ones learn by listening; and they also learn when the older boys send them as messengers to the girls of their fancy. 582 836 [202]

Besides the more serious love affairs which are carried on in secret, groups of boys from the same age-village commonly flirt with any girls they meet on the way, and it is then that the incest taboos are learnt. If one of the boys is known to be related to one of the girls, either through a common grandfather or great-grandfather, his companions send him away: "Don't you see your sister is here? You cannot come!" 835 867

Contrary to a general belief about "primitive" societies, homosexual intercourse is common in the boys' villages, between close friends, but there is no real perversion; homosexuality is said to be always *faute de mieux*. The older men in discussion dismiss it with the tolerant word "adolescence," it is never continued after marriage, and all except the feeble-minded get married sooner or later. 838

But life in a boys' village also gives its members much information and wisdom unconnected with sex. There, as we have seen, boys perfect their skill in building, and there also they learn to argue and express themselves with adult fluency. It is characteristic of the Nyakyusa legal 621 868 867

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 system that small cases between neighbours are always first discussed and
868 often finally settled in the presence of some friend or friends who act as
867 arbitrators, without recourse to the constituted political authorities. Small disputes about petty theft, the possession of a cloth or some coppers, the ownership of a banana stem and so on, are as frequent in the boys' village as elsewhere, and as elsewhere the people concerned often argue it out to a finish before some friend or neighbour. And by listening to such disputes, or participating in them either as judge or principal, the boys acquire rhetorical skill and some knowledge of law. In some boys' villages there is a recognized leader appointed by the political authorities of the chiefdom to settle graver disputes, in others there is not. The position of such a leader, where there is one, will be discussed later.

577 Above all the boys' village gives to its members the conversation and
621 company of more of their own contemporaries than did the group of herd boys, and company the Nyakyusa hold to be the greatest of educators. In the most explicit discourse I heard on the value of company my informant explained that cleanliness, together with rhetorical and conversational skill, were all learned in company. These are his exact words: "We say that it is by conversing with our friends that we gain wisdom; it is bad to sit quite silent always in men's company. A man who does this seems to us a fool, he learns no wisdom, he has only his own thoughts. And a man who does not spend time with other people is always dirty, he does not compare himself with any friend. We say that we learn cleanliness of body in company, the dirty ones learn from their more cleanly friends. Again if a man is accused to the chief and is unable to defend himself easily and with eloquence we mock at him and say: 'What is the matter with you? Do you live all by yourself? How is it that you are so foolish?' We think that wisdom and cleanliness are the two great things learnt in company. We think it is bad to live alone far from other people, such a man learns nothing; he never learns to express himself well, to converse pleasantly with friends or to argue a case with eloquence. It is better to live with other people."

621 At first the sons of the parent village continue to join the boys'
561 village as they grow up; but after some years, when the senior members of the boys' village are about seventeen or eighteen years old, the younger ones begin to be refused admittance to the village: "they are children." The young ones then either begin a new age-village of their own, or else join a village which has already been started by the sons of a nearby men's village a little junior to that of their own fathers. If you enquire who are the members of such and such a boys' village you are always told that they are the sons of a particular village of men, but detailed investiga-

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

643 often leaks out, but in theory the young men must not know, and
622 those seized always put up a show of resistance before being
796 bundled into the hut of the senior heir's mother. Once there, no man dare flee lest, like a Lwembe fleeing from the stool, he should
[784] die. The two heirs are seized also and carried into the hut with their headmen. A litter is spread for them, and they remain there in complete seclusion, required to 'talk softly' and avoid quarrelling, guarded by the 'doctor of the coming out' and forbidden to wash except that each of the chiefs and his senior village headman washes with medicines in the doorway of the hut. Each chief also lies down with a commoner and is covered with a black cloth
[789] which, according to Mwandisi (the old blind chief 107) is a symbol of clouds and therefore of plenty. 'It means, may it be heavy—cloudy—above, may food be plentiful; may both heirs bring fruitfulness.' The commoner who lies with the chief is 'one body with him', 'his wife', and continues through life to share with him certain medicines. Some said that the senior village headman performs this function for his chief: others that it is another man altogether. The whole matter is very secret and our information is limited. The period of seclusion varies. Mwanyilu (177), who 'came out' in 1953, remained in the hut a month, and he complained most bitterly of the inconvenience of not washing for so long. During this time the young men are admonished by
[867] their fathers' senior village headmen, and told of their faults and their future duties. According to Mwambuputa (Mwankuga's [150] senior headman who was responsible for bringing out Mwanyilu), he said: 'Listen to the people: they are the real chiefs! Be hospitable! Greet people politely! Don't beat your men!' And the other senior headman, Kakuju, said: 'Do not beat your men, respect them! Feed your people on milk, meat, chickens, beer! Fear your people!'

Then the great moment, from which the ritual takes its name, arrives. Very early in the morning a crowd gathers and a junior kinsman of the chief knocks on the door and shouts: 'Come out! War has come!' Each heir, followed by his senior headman,
[778] rushes out and grasps the 'spear of chieftainship' held ready at the doorway for him, while the headman grasps a medicated zebra tail. The spear has a little horn of medicines bound to it 'to show that the chief has come out', and brandishing it is 'comparable to carrying the chief aloft. We show his greatness to the people and acclaim him.' 'The spear of chieftainship is strength, man-

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sitting there on the yard got up, as quickly as possible held her hands before her eyes and rushed off. This was because this man was her father-in-law. The strict social tabu in such circumstances is well know[22].

The next act consisted in shaving the girl's hair on her temples by the *unnyago;* the father was shaved by a younger brother of his in the same manner. (I cannot remember whether it was also the case with the mother of the girl.)

The old fashioned hut of the chief's wife.

Then the further ceremony took place again inside the hut. All the participants sat down on mats, and the *unnyago* accepted the complaints of the parents on the former conduct of their daughter. Sometimes the discussion between these parties, where the *unnyago* played the role of a mediator as is the case with the *unjobi* (or speaker) in the court, reached such a pitch of excitement that I thought a serious quarrel had broken out. The excitement was, perhaps, only of a ceremonial character; I was told, however, that in former times corporeal punishment has been inflicted, if, indeed, the girl had shown misconduct in the times before.

Next, the girl was instructed by the *unnyago* in her duties as a wife. These instructions were of a theoretical or moral nature concerning the correct conduct of the girl towards her parents also after the ceremony and towards her future husband. The practical part of the initiation instructions sometimes comes before this ceremony at the end of initiation. These practical instructions cover the preparing of food

[22] Cf. *Merensky*, p. 125; *Mackenzie*, p. 108 (at Karonga?). According to *Merensky* the daughter-in-law has to observe this tabu also towards the brethren of her father-in-law. All these persons are named *ukamoana*.

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

881 and other duties applicable to a girl after marriage. The practical
867 instruction takes place in or before a special hut in the village under
868 the leadership of the *ebanyago (avanyago)*. The girl is admonished by the *unnyago* to obey her parents without any delay, to perform the commands of her mother immediately, e. g. to clean the hut, and especially to show obedience when guests are present. Should the mother blame her daughter unjustly, she should not reply. (The girl had been blamed in the earlier discussion that she had not swept the hut when her mother required her to do it). Then her duties and
881 conduct towards her future husband were inculcated. As a wife she
867 must never accept anything from the hands of her husband without
543 kneeling and stretching out both hands, and turning away her face
562 with eyes cast down. Also as a wife she must not hold her head up

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Some of the drummers.

when she is addressed by a man. As a wife she must be anxious to prepare her husband's meal always at the right time, that means, it has to be ready when her husband returns from the field. If she sees her husband coming from the field, then she has to go to meet him, and take his hatchet from him. Should her husband scold her, she is
[356] not to reply; but she may ask her neighbours for help. It is one of her duties to take care of the regular cleaning of the hut[23]. The ashes must always be removed by her from the fireplace. If there are only a few ashes on the fireplace she must remove them with her hands[24].

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[23] The place near the house where the sweepings are thrown down is called *urutagililo*.

[24] Cf. *Mackenzie*, p. 51, who refers to such moral instructions connected with puberty customs, probably at Karonga; cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 359 (Nygonde plain).

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

After these admonitions, the mats which the girl had manufactured were inspected. During this examination it was told her that a wife should be seen in the possession of as many beautiful mats as possible, made by her for herself and for her husband. Should the girl reveal such conduct as a wife, *ubusangalufu* (happiness) would be in her hut. 881 867 285

When the proper ceremony seemed to have come to an end, another discussion followed. The girl had told the *unnyago*, during the above mentioned admonition, that her parents also sometimes exchanged angry words. Therefore, a new discussion between the father and the mother arose, in which also the *unnyago* was the "speaker", but the other participants of the ceremony also shared in it, and the discussion too became at times heated. Still, after about 15 minutes, it suddenly came to an end, and the matter in dispute was declared settled. With this the whole ceremony ended. 881 578

8. One day I asked the chief for permission to visit his huts. He dwelt in a rectangular hut *(ikibaga)*. A very beautiful *ikitara* (bed) was in the main room, composed of many sleeping mats *(ubuleli*, pl. *imileli)* and of big round wooden blocks (sections of a tree-trunk), one at the head and a smaller one at the foot of the bed. Each of the four fine mats which lay uppermost had a special name. All the mats rested on sticks of reed laid across beams lying on smaller poles on the floor[25]. These mats were naturally of nearly the same height as the wooden block which formed the head part of the *ikitara*. In some other old-fashioned and better houses in Nyakyusa villages, similar beds were to be seen, but generally the bedsteads are much more simple. 622 352 [342]

One of the most important permissions granted me by the chief was to enter the "store room", connected with his main room by a door. The objects to be seen here were the same as those to be found in other huts or store-rooms, e. g. the big *ifituba* (baskets) for storing grain, up to four feet high, smeared over with cow-dung and clay, and smaller baskets for different purposes. In one corner hung different kinds of dancing fans *(urukope*, sg.) made of hairs from the tails of bulls, with fine handles of horn. In the dark opposite corner of the same wall there seemed to hang a similar object, but it was wrapped in banana bast. This was the real sign of the chief's dignity, the symbol of his authority and power, named *ubuswigala*. A long discussion was needed to induce the chief to unveil it. Only by constantly consulting by glances the present *amafumu* the chief slowly unveiled it. He told us that 342 353 622 [251] [237] [778] [775]

[25] Cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 381.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

13. ACQUIRING WITCHCRAFT FROM FRIENDS

Bwilile (elderly pagan man).

'We have heard it said that sometimes, when a woman plays with a friend's child who is growing up a little, she may give it something in food, or offer it something to taste, which causes the child who has eaten it to become a witch. Hence people say: "A stranger gave him (or her) witchcraft; there is none in our family (*ikikolo*)."

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'Some make children climb up the walls or hut pole when they wish to give them witchcraft, hence when a child slides down it is said, "He (or she) is pure; he has no trace of witchcraft in his stomach." If he has any in his stomach, then he clings to the walls or pole, and it is said, "He is giving him mystical power (*amanga*)", meaning the witch is giving him the cunning of witchcraft that he also may be "clever". If there is a girl at home who is cunning, her friends shun her. They admonish her, saying: "Don't do those things. It's forbidden at a husband's place. You will always be driven out." She gives her friends things saying: "You eat that, and you that." And boys do likewise. We knew the custom of old. When boys are out herding cattle one friend tells another to dig up a certain plant, saying it will give him cunning. Hence it is said that a cunning boy wants to make his friends cunning also. When girls are secluded at puberty they always play with younger girls, and if one makes another climb the hut pole or wall the mothers are very angry, saying: "No! That's forbidden. Don't do (bad) things to others. It seems as if you were cunning."'

Commenting on this text, Mwaisumo said: 'The witches learn to enter a house by climbing up the wall, instead of going through the door, so that people don't see them come in. If a child has *no* witchcraft in its stomach at all, no one can give it witchcraft, but if the blood of the mother is dirty with witchcraft it becomes a witch.'

[p. 221]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XXV

The Brave Days of Old

LIKE the Romans and Greeks, and like many peoples at an elementary stage of civilization, the Konde place their great days in the past. 173

It is, perhaps, a little strange that this should be so; for there can be no doubt that the presence of the white man has stirred the African everywhere to the thought of a new day for his race. But they are at the same time conscious that great things were done in the past, and among the demands made upon me by natives whom I have consulted, and who have helped me with this book, there is none more insistent than that I should include the portentous happenings of an older day.

Old and middle-aged men speak gleefully of the days of their youth; of the great deeds they did when they were boys; how they trapped more skilfully, caught bigger fish, ran faster, leaped higher than the young men of to-day. And the deterioration, they assert very emphatically, is due to the presence of the white man. Not that the latter discourages sport; on the contrary he spurs it on; but in his own way, and that is not the Konde way. The white man's way is to give prizes to the winner; the Konde 177 868

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

way is to give the lash to the duffers; and they claim that theirs is the more effective method of bringing all up to a high standard. But thrash the ninny to-day, and he is off to the Administrative Officer to lodge his complaint, which the latter must inquire into. And hence much deterioration.

But these are not the facts of which they wish a permanent record to be made. There are other things; things which the pagan native profoundly believes, and which Christians also believe and take pride in, though they think that the missionary will object to their holding what he probably calls silly ideas. These stories include most of the typical tales of olden times: the hero-warrior, the defier of tyrants, the mighty medicine man, the great prophet, the man who has obtained lordship over Nature in some form, and the man who controls the spirits. All these, and many more, are included among the Konde tales, and I do not place them among folk tales, for the people regard them quite differently. A folk tale is to-day, whatever it may have been in the past, either a mere diversion to pass away an idle moment, or a moral for children, or a warning for adolescents. The tales which I am thinking of are, in the native mind, records of facts, facts which they believe to be no longer achievable, but indubitably fact in the past; and no study of the native mind can be complete which does not take this into account.

I. The hero-warrior. Chungu, in his early wanderings in search of a home, came near the hil Mphande, the seat of the Simbove rulers of that day.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love-making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger ones listen to these things and that is all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn. But we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night ; and that is very bad, that is foolishness.—But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to listen, that is how children grow up." 864 577

On another occasion when I told this same man that in Europe many people thought it a good thing for boys to get sexual instruction from their parents and teachers he was shocked : " But I think it is impossible " he protested " for parents to go into detail with their children ; there is too much shame on both sides. And if they did, it would damage the children's respect for them."

There is thus a correlation in this society between the age-village system at its genesis and the belief that a boy's dawning interest in sex must be informed, not by his parents, but by friends only a little older than himself.

Few men marry before twenty-five years of age, but affairs with girls begin before puberty. All affairs are related in detail to friends in the age-village, and the younger ones learn by listening ; and they also learn when the older boys send them as messengers to the girls of their fancy. 582 836 [202]

Besides the more serious love affairs which are carried on in secret, groups of boys from the same age-village commonly flirt with any girls they meet on the way, and it is then that the incest taboos are learnt. If one of the boys is known to be related to one of the girls, either through a common grandfather or great-grandfather, his companions send him away : " Don't you see your sister is here ? You cannot come ! " 835 867

Contrary to a general belief about " primitive " societies, homosexual intercourse is common in the boys' villages, between close friends, but there is no real perversion ; homosexuality is said to be always *faute de mieux*. The older men in discussion dismiss it with the tolerant word " adolescence," it is never continued after marriage, and all except the feeble-minded get married sooner or later. 838

But life in a boys' village also gives its members much information and wisdom unconnected with sex. There, as we have seen, boys perfect their skill in building, and there also they learn to argue and express themselves with adult fluency. It is characteristic of the Nyakyusa legal 621 868 867

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 system that small cases between neighbours are always first discussed and
868 often finally settled in the presence of some friend or friends who act as
867 arbitrators, without recourse to the constituted political authorities. Small disputes about petty theft, the possession of a cloth or some coppers, the ownership of a banana stem and so on, are as frequent in the boys' village as elsewhere, and as elsewhere the people concerned often argue it out to a finish before some friend or neighbour. And by listening to such disputes, or participating in them either as judge or principal, the boys acquire rhetorical skill and some knowledge of law. In some boys' villages there is a recognized leader appointed by the political authorities of the chiefdom to settle graver disputes, in others there is not. The position of such a leader, where there is one, will be discussed later.

577 Above all the boys' village gives to its members the conversation and
621 company of more of their own contemporaries than did the group of herd boys, and company the Nyakyusa hold to be the greatest of educators. In the most explicit discourse I heard on the value of company my informant explained that cleanliness, together with rhetorical and conversational skill, were all learned in company. These are his exact words: "We say that it is by conversing with our friends that we gain wisdom; it is bad to sit quite silent always in men's company. A man who does this seems to us a fool, he learns no wisdom, he has only his own thoughts. And a man who does not spend time with other people is always dirty, he does not compare himself with any friend. We say that we learn cleanliness of body in company, the dirty ones learn from their more cleanly friends. Again if a man is accused to the chief and is unable to defend himself easily and with eloquence we mock at him and say: 'What is the matter with you? Do you live all by yourself? How is it that you are so foolish?' We think that wisdom and cleanliness are the two great things learnt in company. We think it is bad to live alone far from other people, such a man learns nothing; he never learns to express himself well, to converse pleasantly with friends or to argue a case with eloquence. It is better to live with other people."

621 At first the sons of the parent village continue to join the boys'
561 village as they grow up; but after some years, when the senior members of the boys' village are about seventeen or eighteen years old, the younger ones begin to be refused admittance to the village: "they are children." The young ones then either begin a new age-village of their own, or else join a village which has already been started by the sons of a nearby men's village a little junior to that of their own fathers. If you enquire who are the members of such and such a boys' village you are always told that they are the sons of a particular village of men, but detailed investiga-

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

881 I went to the place and got permission to enter the hut in which the first part of the ceremony took place. I found there the parents of the girl, the girl sitting enveloped in clothes in one corner of the hut, and some older females, one of whom was the acting *unnyago*. Some male guests were also present[20]. As the girl had had her first catamenia the present ceremony marked at the same time the end of her preparation for marriage.

[273 278] The *unnyago* prepared a beverage of beer in which a light-brown medical powder *(imbondanya)* was put. First the girl had to drink from it, then the parents followed. This beverage was believed to strengthen *(ubusisya)* the consumers. Then a spear was handed to the girl by her father, and the girl handed it in turn to some relatives of the bridegroom waiting near the hut. These persons had to bring the [582 583] spear to the girl's bridegroom as a sign that he could now marry the girl[21], but not before he had brought a bull to the girl's father. After [431] this the girl, now sitting in the middle of the hut, was given small gifts from the participants in the ceremony.

[291 342 516 868 415]

Practical instruction of premature girls in house-hold matters.

[302] Following this the whole body of the girl was anointed before the door of the hut. The *unnyago* began by anointing her legs; then the [278] girl herself continued it. The ointment was prepared from castor oil and a powder of red wood *(Kipimba*, found commonly in the environment of Lake Rukwa). At this moment a male participant in the cere- [606] mony chanced to, come out of the hut, and suddenly a young woman

[20] Cf. Wilson, Introduction, p. 238; The Study of African Society, p. 11 (The Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. 2, 1939).

[21] *ukwepa*: to take (also as regards marrying); *ubwepia*: nuptials.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sitting there on the yard got up, as quickly as possible held her hands before her eyes and rushed off. This was because this man was her father-in-law. The strict social tabu in such circumstances is well known[10].

The next act consisted in shaving the girl's hair on her temples by the *unepepe*; the father was shaved by a younger brother of his in the same manner. (I cannot remember whether it was also the case with the mother of the girl.)

The old fashioned hut of the chief's wife.

Then the further ceremony took place again inside the hut. All the participants sat down on mats, and the *unepepe* accepted the complaints of the parents on the former conduct of their daughter. Sometimes the discussion between these parties, where the *unepepe* played the role of a mediator as is the case with the *unjobi* (or speaker) in the court, reached such a pitch of excitement that I thought a serious quarrel had broken out. The excitement was, perhaps, only of a ceremonial character; I was told, however, that in former times corporeal punishment has been inflicted, if, indeed, the girl had shown misconduct in the times before.

Next, the girl was instructed by the *unepepe* in her duties as a wife. These instructions were of a theoretical or moral nature concerning the correct conduct of the girl towards her parents also after the ceremony and towards her future husband. The practical part of the initiation instructions sometimes comes before this ceremony at the end of initiation. These practical instructions cover the preparing of food

[10] Cf. *Merensky*, p. 128; *Mackenzie*, p. 108 (at *Karonga?*). According to *Merensky* the daughter-in-law has to observe this tabu also towards the brothers of her father-in-law. All these persons are named *ukamama*.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa

and other duties applicable to a girl after marriage. The practical instruction takes place in or before a special hut in the village under the leadership of the *chwepage* (*swepage*). The girl is admonished by the *swepage* to obey her parents without any delay, to perform the commands of her mother immediately, e. g. to clean the hut, and especially to show obedience when guests are present. Should the mother blame her daughter unjustly, she should not reply. (The girl had been blamed in the earlier discussion that she had not swept the hut when her mother required her to do it). Then her duties and conduct towards her future husband were inculcated. As a wife she must never accept anything from the hands of her husband without kneeling and stretching out both hands, and turning away her face with eyes cast down. Also as a wife she must not hold her head up

Some of the drummers.

when she is addressed by a man. As a wife she must be anxious to prepare her husband's meal always at the right time, that means, it has to be ready when her husband returns from the field. If she sees her husband coming from the field, then she has to go to meet him, and take his hatchet from him. Should her husband scold her, she is not to reply; but she may ask her neighbours for help. It is one of her duties to take care of the regular cleaning of the hut[*]. The ashes must always be removed by her from the fireplace. If there are only a few ashes on the fireplace she must remove them with her hands[**].

[*] The place near the house where the sweepings are thrown down is called *swengelile*.

[**] Cf. *Markwanu*, p. 51, who refers to such moral instructions connected with puberty customs, probably at *Kwonga*; cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 330 (Ngonde plates).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

626 753 children, are not uncommon; that the penalty of sin is believed often to be delayed, and an illness may be attributed to a wrong committed many years previously; and lastly, that the victim of retribution may be one of several individuals. Parents are thought to be punished by the sickness of their children as well as in their own persons; in a case of sexual transgression it may be either partner who suffers; in the case of a neglected death ritual it may be either the heir or the widow on whose behalf it should have been performed (cf. Document, pp. 206, 236–7). When a [842] woman bears a child after her son is married to a girl who has reached puberty, it is thought that she may fall ill herself, or her husband may be cursed 'because he had agreed to his son marrying a grown girl before the son's mother had grown old'; or the son may have no children because he eloped with his wife, or has 'married a grown girl when his father had only agreed that he should be betrothed to a little girl'.

626 754 869 A lively fear of witchcraft and of the 'breath of men' is inculcated in Nyakyusa children when quite young; Mwaikambo, a Christian, explained that boys learn about witchcraft from their senior play-mates when they are out herding, and in the hut at night in the boys' village, when tales are told. 'Then one fears in one's stomach and thinks: "Father! perhaps I, also, will be eaten by witches."' Ambilikile, another Christian informant, confirmed this, saying: 'We learn about witches from comments on cases of sickness, and from tales. When someone has died people say: "He was a witch, we found a python." Or perhaps of another it is said that "the witches had eaten him". In these tales the witches are said to have eaten people, or speared them, by means of witchcraft, so that the victim dies. We are also told how the witches fight in the power of witchcraft with their fellows from other villages, and how they fly on their pythons. What we hear always makes witchcraft awe-inspiring. I feared it very much.'

We had ample evidence that for most Nyakyusa the fear of witchcraft and of 'the breath of men' continues throughout life, and that it directly affects behaviour. It is, perhaps, the main sanction for moral behaviour within the village.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

course and sharing of food and beer between fathers and sons. 577
Ukwangala implies eating and drinking together frequently, and 621
cannot be fully enjoyed by people who do not live close to one another.

The value of good fellowship with equals is constantly talked 577
about by the Nyakyusa, and it is dinned into boys from child- 869
hood that enjoyment and morality alike consist in eating and drinking, in talking and learning, in the company of contemporaries. The solitary and aloof, those who enjoy the company of women (as opposed to direct sexual satisfaction) and those who seek intimacy with members of another generation, are derided.

Now this very emphasis on the value of good fellowship with 577
equals is doubtless a reflection of the difficulty of achieving it. 578
The frequent accusations of witchcraft and movement from one village to another are evidence of friction between fellow villagers. Does the friction turn on the age-village organization?

d. The incidence of accusations of witchcraft

As we have seen, witchcraft is believed to operate primarily 578
within the village, and the typical accusation is against a neigh- 754
bour.[1] But in other societies also witchcraft accusations are most commonly made against those with whom one is living, and in close daily contact: in Pondoland it is members of the same homestead or of neighbouring homesteads who suspect one another of witchcraft; among Xhosa-speaking people in towns it is fellow employees, or fellow schoolmates; among the Azande it is members of the same small neighbourhood. Therefore it is not only the Nyakyusa who accuse village neighbours of witchcraft.

Of the *frequency* of accusation in different societies we can 754
make no comparison, for statistics on witchcraft are extremely difficult to collect. Few field-workers could be certain that they were cognizant of *every* accusation of witchcraft within a given

[1] Over a third of the accusations of witchcraft recorded were against neighbours, as distinct from spouses or co-wives or kinsmen and, if one excludes the modern type of accusation against fellow workers in the same camp, the proportion of accusations against neighbours is almost one half. The thirty-eight witchcraft accusations cannot, of course, be taken as a random sample in the technical sense; we recorded every case that came to our ears, but cannot be certain that inquiries brought to light every accusation in the villages investigated. Nevertheless the preponderance of accusations against neighbours is significant (*vide* Document, pp. 198 ff.).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

21. CHILDREN LEARNING OF WITCHCRAFT

Mwaikambo (*clerk*).

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'I learned about witchcraft from the accounts related by the elder boys in our boys' village. There we tell about witchcraft; of how the witches fight with people of another village, of their way of travelling to where they commit witchcraft (*kwa kumanga*), that is flying. We tell how they eat people and that the strength of witchcraft is in pythons. And we speak of some who are dead, who each had a python, or perhaps four, and of village headmen who have protective pythons (*isota sya buketi*). We relate cases which always appear true, and make us afraid.'

[p. 234]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

'*Tutigona* (we do not sleep),' is the formal phrase with which the village headman and other responsible people notify the chief that all is not well with the country, or with which a woman or a junior kinsman prefaces the troubles brought to the notice of the head of the homestead, when these troubles have not obviously materialized in sickness. Anger is dangerous first and foremost to the person against whom it is directed, but there is also the suggestion that it may react on the person who is angry. We have already quoted the remark: 'A woman never murmurs against anyone. If she does she falls sick herself.'

How the fear of the shades is inculcated in a child is shown in the following text:

I began by learning the word or name: *unsyuka*, and to know that the shade (*unsyuka*) was someone who had died, and people said that they were like flickering shadows (*imisyungulu*). Also people said a shade is someone very awesome (*nsisya*) if he appears to you. When I began to think of the shades at night I could not sleep because I feared the awfulness (*ubusisya*) of which they spoke. And this was specially told: 'If a person dies to-day, and perhaps you have not heard, then that dead man appears to you with cattle. He is smeared with earth on his face and forearms and knees. Then, because you do not know anything, you say: "Friend," and talk with him, saying: "Where are you going with the cattle?" He says: "I am going to my in-laws." Then if you go home and find they are wailing a death, and you tell your tale, they say: "So-and-so has died, you met him." They say you also will die. But you must be silent, and only speak after they have buried him.' So in my belly, in my thought, the shades appeared very fearful. Many people compare the awfulness of the shades with that of wild animals, and say the awfulness of the shades is greater. If a shade is standing here, and a wild animal there, you will flee towards the animal. So I also thought. But later I changed my mind, and said I would go towards the shade.

Once when there was some sickness at home I heard it said that the shades were angry, perhaps because there had been a quarrel, perhaps because he [*sic*] had not killed a cow for a relative's funeral. Once when I was ill with sores round the mouth, people said: '*Mindu*, the shades have created them'—that was to be 'beaten' by the shades. So, when they had consulted an oracle, they poured a little beer on the fire-bricks and prayed. Then the illness disappeared very quickly. When I asked my mother about it she said: 'The shades were angry, so you were ill. It was because your father was angry, or perhaps on some other account.' Thus I learnt the work of the shades, little by little, from illnesses among my parents and stories of my elders.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

769 782 I kept the chine for two nights in my house. The shades came to eat—they left practically nothing. Had I not been ill I would have asked you to come and see since you say they do not eat. . . . The shades come and see that we are celebrating the rituals.

The whole ritual was esoteric. Only the chief with eight of his [793] agnatic kinsmen, four of his young sons (but not his grown-up [643] heir or young grandson), and four priests participated, and we [123] two anthropologists were permitted to look on. Peeping small boys were chased off. The shades were addressed in a conversational tone and, except during the invocation, the priests and [784] chiefs chatted to one another, but arguments and raised voices were taboo. The boys who ate the meat were told:

[869] See, we your fathers are sacrificing, we are making plenty of food. Follow the custom of your fathers when it is your turn to sacrifice. Learn how to do it.

The same evening Kasitile prayed at his tree again. He explained:

I would not usually pray at all tonight, it is finished. Mwaipopo and I prayed yesterday, today the ritual is finished, but that boy of mine [his heir, 119] does not visit me, he's not been to see me and he did not tell me that he was going to the ritual. . . . I am going to pray to tell my fathers not to be startled, to tell them I am not angry, to tell them to send only a little rain, not a lot, to tell them to accept the sacrifice.

He went to the same place, and chewed the root of 'blessed grass' and blew out water as before. He prayed to about thirty persons, especially to Mwamaloba (85, his elder brother) and Mwakanjoki (60, his father), and also to Mwakagile (59), Mwaijonga (82), Mwaipasi (81), Mwakabule (117), Mwamwifu (84), Mwafungo (83), Mwakipesile (118), Mwakapala (?), Lyambilo (12), Mwalubange (58), Mwamukinga (43), Mwaihojo (147?), Mwaitende (61), and Kyala (2). No mention was made of the Lubaga chiefs this time, or of sons of Mwaipaja (21) or of 'Jesus'.

You have received your child Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 59), Mwaijonga (82), you have received the chief, this boy of mine (119) is quarrelling with me, do not be upset, he is a fool, a fool, but let him be . . . go and call your brothers to eat, you Mwaijonga (82), you Mwaipopo (115), and all your younger brothers; call Mwakagile (59) and Mwakanjoki (60) . . . Mwalubange (58) go to eat with your younger brother, let us find food, millet, bananas, children, milk . . . let there be a little rain only, not too much . . . people believe

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their village headmen, and assist the president and his village headmen in the hearing of cases. Much of the legal business previously transacted by each chief in his own country is now taken to court (*KwiKoroti*); but the power of village headmen to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages is still the basis of the legal system.

Though the Administration has worked through the traditional authorities it has consciously and deliberately modified the traditional system; and, as part of its policy of development, it has established schools, dispensaries, and nurseries for coffee-seedlings and other plants. There are three schools in Rungwe district receiving Government grants: one directly under the Administration, one under the Native Authority, and one a mission school. There are also a great number of 'bush schools', that is, mission village schools under uncertificated teachers giving instruction in the three R's and in religion. Over 19,000 children (12·6 per cent of the population served) are enrolled in the various schools; but 96 per cent of these are in 'bush schools', many of whom never learn even to read and write.

The structure of Nyakyusa society has been further complicated by the conversion of a substantial minority (16 per cent in 1938)[1] of the people to Christianity. The Christians form a group with values radically different from those of the pagans, on whom they react in innumerable ways.[2] The growth of this diversity in the society is a direct effect of its diminishing isolation.

To treat of Nyakyusa villages as if missions, or the Administration, or migrant labour and coffee export did not exist would simplify, but distort our analysis. We have therefore included some account of the differences in behaviour between pagan and Christian, of the effects of centralization on the position of village headmen, and of the influence of trade and migration on economic co-operation in the village. A discussion of the organization of schools and Christian congregations; of the development of courts of record, and 'court districts'; of the relation between

[1] Calculated from figures supplied by the courtesy of the missions and the independent African Churches working in the district.

[2] Moslems are very few and they have little influence on the community as a whole. These few are mostly Swahili traders, Ngoni settlers, or soldiers of the K.A.R. from Nyasaland. We heard of only two or three Nyakyusa who had turned Moslem.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

464
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212
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5. SUMMARY OF LABOUR HISTORIES

Information from men concerned

Category	No. of Cases	Worked	Average Total Period (those who worked)	Working One Year and over at a stretch	Schooling		Skilled and Semi-skilled (of those working)	Place of Work		
					Illiterate	Beyond Village School		In District only	Lupa Gold-fields	Out of Province
Pagan: Middle-aged and over	13	85%	5 months	23%	100%	Nil	10%	10%	—	8%
Christian: Middle-aged and over	10	100%	13 years, 4 months	90%	50%	Nil	60%	60%	—	Nil[1]
Pagan: Young	24	92%	—[2]	17%	63%	4%	5%	10%	70%	20%
Christian: Sons of pagans, young	11	91%	—	40%	9%	36%	40%	30%	70%	Nil
Christian: Sons of Christians, young	21	100%	—	38%	5%	19%	81%	5%	66%	29%
Total	79[3]	94%	—	38%	50%	12%	44%	27%	50%	17%

[1] Four worked on other mission stations of the Province.
[2] As many of the men are quite young, a record of the total period worked is insignificant. We lack material here on the *proportion* of time spent at work.
[3] This is not a true random sample for informants were selected haphazard; therefore, the percentages have no exact significance, but a correlation between Christianity, literacy, skilled work, and long-term employment is suggested.

[p. 193]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

elder watches over the morals of his flock and it is his duty to report to the Session any breaches of Church law among his people. Through him the cards entitling members to attend communion are distributed, and cards are withheld from those whom the Session has agreed must be suspended from membership. Each man has, on the average, 125 people to care for. The women elders organize the women's weekly meetings, and take parties of women on preaching tours in pagan villages. They are the leaders in any charitable activities of the congregation and in the instruction of a Christian girl at her marriage. A woman elder settles disputes between two women, and in family quarrels she is often asked by the elder in charge of the village to help him to reconcile the couple. She is also a supervisor of morals and reports to the local elder if she 'hears any woman speaking like a pagan'. Deacons are elected like elders and are primarily responsible for the collection of Church dues and the administration of Church funds, but in a village in which there is no elder a deacon will carry out some of his duties.

In practice, then, each local group—a Christian village or village section—has its chosen leader, a male elder or deacon who conducts daily prayers in the local school house or his own home, and also fulfils many of the functions of an assistant village headman, arbitrating in disputes and acting as the spokesman of his village section. The traditional organization of the age-villages, in which an individual had some choice as to the village he should join, and was not bound by kinship connexions, makes an adaptation to villages in which those of the same faith live together easy. It is noticeable that the Pentecostal and Watch Tower converts build their own village sections apart from Moravians or Lutherans. And since the traditional village leaders are chosen, not hereditary, it is very easy for a leading Christian to become an assistant headman, more or less formally recognized by the village headman named at the 'coming out'.

At first the teachers were more directly under the supervision of the missionary than of the congregation, being selected by him and paid by the mission, but in the middle thirties, when funds from Germany ceased coming to the Moravian and Lutheran missions, the payment of village school teachers fell on the congregations of these denominations. Each village wanting a school had to provide a building, and in this pagans and Christians often co-operated, for many pagans also wanted their children to

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

x795 x797 learn to read and write. In BuNyakyusa none of these village teachers was qualified and none received Government grants; [871] they taught only the three R's in the vernacular and gave religious instruction. In Ngonde, however, some of them were qualified. Besides the village schools there were by 1935 central schools at mission stations, organized by the missions, and some of them drawing Government grants, which took children up to Standard IV; and at Rungwe and Kondowe (Livingstonia) just south of Ngonde, there were mission boarding schools, giving further education and (at Kondowe) training teachers, evangelists, and ministers. The policy of different missions regarding education varied; the Church of Scotland missionaries believed in it wholeheartedly and achieved a relatively high standard in their village schools; but the Lutherans were doubtful how far it was the function of a Church to give anything except religious instruction, and in their village schools children barely learnt to read. Opinion among the Moravians was divided. But despite these differences, all the missions have, in fact, played a great part in education. [212] The first step—the reduction of the language to writing—was the work of the missionaries alone, and village schools have been very closely linked with congregations because, whatever their views on education in general, Protestant missionaries were agreed that to read the Gospels is the making of a Christian, and so literacy is usually required of candidates for baptism. Hence, the same man is often both teacher and elder, and the German missionaries who questioned the value of education laid the foundation of Nyakyusa literature with an admirable translation of the New Testament.

The missions have also been concerned with medical work. [743] From before 1914 there has been a hospital run by the Lutheran mission at Itete, and one run by the Church of Scotland at Kondowe and, for a period, a large leper-settlement was run by the White Fathers at Mwakete. Medical activities are not directly the concern of congregations but Christian women are often drawn in as voluntary helpers in one way or another. In Kabembe [758] the women deacons drew water for the sick and prepared food for a newly confined mother; at Karonga the women's association of the Church made clothes to be distributed through the babies' clinic, and so forth.

The congregations are not wholly self-supporting—the European missionaries are all paid from overseas and, until the middle thirties, funds for paying village teachers and evangelists were

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

in similar schools in 1938. Less than 40 per cent of the children between eight and eleven years old[1] are as yet in school in Rungwe District and the demand for places is enormous. Among the most insistent are girls wanting education. During the 1930's the Education Department was trying, with little success, to coax girls to stay in school long enough to learn to read and write, but today nearly a third of the primary school pupils are girls. A handful of boys and girls go out of the district to attend middle or secondary schools, and a few candidates for training as teachers and district nurses come in. Thus an educated person, or one who goes out to work, mixes with people whose backgrounds and languages are quite different from his own.

Then people are richer than they used to be, partly because of the wages earned abroad, and partly because of the coffee and rice grown and exported. There is also some employment within the district on tea estates (especially important to women and girls), and coal and vermiculite mines. The value of peasant crops exported has risen from about £24,000 in 1936[2] to nearly £578,000 from coffee and rice alone in 1955,[3] and some men have made as much as £150 from their coffee in a year. A coffee cheque of £30 to £60 is common. In addition to the peasant crops there is tea from estates—well over a million pounds of made tea in 1955 as well as a quantity of seed. This increase in wealth has involved a change in the division of labour. Because men are not at home to clear and hoe, their wives, perforce, must clear fields and hoe for themselves, assisted by their young sons, boys who twenty years ago would not yet have stopped herding.

There has been a rapid increase in population, more especially in the hills, due partly to the development of health services and

[1] Number of children in Mission and Native Authority schools in Rungwe District, 1955:

Boys	Girls	Total	No. of children 8-11 years of age (estimated at 10% of total population)
6,592	2,054	8,646	23,639
Middle Schools			
718	73	791	(This total does not include those who are in middle schools *outside* the District, nor does it include those following a professional course *in* the District)

(Figures provided by the courtesy of the Provincial Education Officer, Mbeya.)
Change in Ngonde is not discussed for it was not possible to visit that area in 1955.

[2] *Good Company*, p. 16.

[3] Calculated from figures kindly supplied by the District Commissioner, Mr. Peter Johnston.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

young gathering around the white man, and lending 182
themselves to his purposes, the old even to-day ap- 561
proaching him with reluctance, if at all, for to them 578
he still retains much of the awe and hidden power with which he was credited in the earlier days.

The individual Konde is not so popular with white 157
men as are members of other tribes; indeed there are employers who will not knowingly give work to a Konde at all. As workmen, it must be acknowledged that they are both less active and less reliable than surrounding tribes; they are neither so intelligent nor so loyal to contract. The Konde soon wearies of effort, and longs to get back to the lowing of his cattle and his pretty little hut in its banana grove. He loves his children, and the hope of being able to clothe them if he works well, does not compensate him for prolonged absence. Loyalty, as the Henga, Angoni, [177]
and Yao are loyal, does not distinguish the Konde, who show loyalty rather to chief and to tribal custom, than to the white man with his problematical benefits. They have never attached themselves to the European, as many of the surrounding tribes have done; for the Konde are less convinced than others that the one hope of Africa is the European and his influence; less convinced, be it added, that Africa stands so desperately in need of saving. That may be due to their unawakened condition—and, again, it may not. Edu- 872
cationally, too, they are less advanced than other tribes. 797
Only a few of them are to be found in Government offices, or doing the skilled work which commands such good pay from Europeans; nor have they supplied,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

812 in any numbers, the trained assistants in Mission work
797 who form one of the principal successes of Missions among other tribes.

157 But this does not imply that the Konde are without virtues. They are very shy, and respectful to authority, the latter a characteristic that atones for many defects in the minds of those who consider subserviency the primary virtue in a native of Africa. Their conservative nature prevents them being too free with strangers, and they will not greet a passing European, either until he takes the initiative, or until long friendship has convinced them that it will not be regarded as an undue liberty. Once their confidence has been gained, they are found to be merry, laughing, and bright. The friendliness of children is an attractive feature of the tribe. And the adults are most willing to be friendly also, provided the first advances are made by the European. When one begins to know them intimately, it becomes obvious that their backwardness is not due to lack of capacity, but to an unyielding conservatism, which leads them to think long—and some have been thinking for a generation—before committing themselves to anything new. " We will think about it " is a common response to invitations to take their place alongside the more progressive tribes. Yet with it all they are a lovable people, responsive to friendliness, deeply attached to each other, and to all who rightly claim the name of friend.

567 Slavery is, formally at least, a thing of the past. It is asserted by natives that some men and women are still in slavery, but while that is not impossible, no one

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

551 He is now Ambangire Mwakalukwa Mwakasungula; but his mother usually has a pet name for him, which no one else uses; and, finally, at marriage he takes yet another name, used only by his wife. But only one name is used at a time. When the personal name, Ambangire, is used, he is among familiar friends; when he is called Mwakalukwa he is being referred to as his mother's son; and when it is desired to honour or humour him he is given his title of Mwakasungula.

Girls take the personal name of the paternal grandmother, but are sometimes referred to by their father's family name.

857 For boys, the work of life begins at about five. It is a greatly longed-for promotion, for at that age many of them go out with the bigger boys to herd the village cattle. One may see almost anywhere a couple of infants, with long sticks, looking after herds of fifteen to twenty head of cattle, and having a thoroughly good time of it. In the low-lying plains they do not begin till they are eight, for there the grass is longer, and the ever-present dangers of the bush are more difficult to guard against. The boys, big and little, get together in groups, and there is no kind of evil that growing boys can learn that they do not learn during that period; but they learn also much that is good, and useful in after life. About eight to ten [872] thousand children of all ages attend the Mission schools, but with many attendance is spasmodic, and the great school of life is the bush. The majority of parents follow the educational principles of Mr. Samuel

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

May they all go away.

Our Church is calling everyone to come in so that the house of marriage may be filled. It is Thy work to give them[1] all new dresses.

May they all go away.

We are taking beer as wild animals; we forget worship which is our life. Teach us to drink beer moderately, Father.

May they all go away.

We have forgotten all the laws You gave to our forefathers. We have married women by snatching. Turn us to a life of new marriages according to the ways of our forefathers, Father.

May they all go away.

Father, Son and Holy Ghost, One God, ever and ever. Do unto us according to what we have said. Amen, amen, amen.

In spite of the assertion in the constitution that the rules of faith are based on the first five books of the Bible, a sermon we heard was based on New Testament parables; candidates at baptism must give their assent to Apostles' creed; and the doctrine of the resurrection is preached at funerals, John xi. 25-6, and Job xix. 25-7, being read.

The African National Church has five schools at which half the fees charged in corresponding classes in mission schools are levied, but not all of them succeed in keeping their pupils. In 1937 there was a 'strike' by African National Church parents against sending their children to one school because 'the children of the leaders in this area are attending the Livingstonia schools and none goes to their own National Schools'.

The members of Ngemela's Church were less sophisticated than those of the African National Church and we heard of no written constitution. The services were also simpler. The only sermon we heard was on repentance.

Repent and repent soon; do not delay! Repent in your hearts! There is no virtue in baptism; it is just water; but let your hearts be washed clean. The world is full of things which excite wonder and envy. Many when they see the riches of their fellow say to themselves: 'I will go and steal his things', but we must not do that. Many go and commit adultery in the long grass, but we must not do that. God has sent us the Gospel. These are the words of Christ and none other are his words (holding up the New Testament). Our Fathers had never heard of it, but we have, and Christ calls us to repent. In the old days when a

[1] Referring, Nyanuru said, to the wives of polygynists. Many women in Ngonde objected to polygyny on the ground that where there were several wives they were not properly clothed.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER XIII

TWENTY YEARS' CHANGE

How does Christianity interact with other revolutionary forces in the community? It has been possible to observe the changes that have taken place among the Nyakyusa after a lapse of twenty years, and a summary of them is necessary before we proceed to a discussion of the links between religious and secular change.

The first thing that strikes a visitor returning to Nyakyusa country after many years, is that the isolation, which was so typical of the valley, has greatly diminished. Buses, filled with Nyakyusa passengers, cross twice daily the high pass that leads out of the valley, and where once travellers died of exposure and starvation there is a hard road fringed with homesteads and fields. The belt of unoccupied country that even twenty years ago separated the Nyakyusa from their neighbours has disappeared, for they themselves have spilled out of the valley to the north and west, and their Kinga neighbours have come down the Livingstone escarpment to the east and cultivate the mountain slopes, for 'they no longer fear that people (i.e. the Nyakyusa) will seize their property'. Men travel abroad to find work and they go much farther and stay away longer than before. In the remotest village there is some man who has visited Burma or Malaya as a soldier, and a dozen lads who will argue the relative merits of the Orange Free State gold mines and the Copper-belt as centres of employment. Many women now accompany their husbands to Rhodesia, or other parts of Tanganyika, and some travel to visit daughters or sisters. The older women enlarge on their journeys and joke about how fearful they used to be.

Travel implies learning another language, most often Swahili, but also Bemba and English and the pidgin of the gold and copper mines called Fanakalo. Thus intellectual isolation is disappearing along with the physical isolation. The numerous 'bush schools' which existed in the Nyakyusa valley in 1938, and at which many of those who attended never even learnt to read and write, have been largely replaced by mission primary schools, state-aided and inspected, and in these and the Native Authority primary and middle schools there are now 9,437 pupils, as against about 300

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

in similar schools in 1938. Less than 40 per cent of the children between eight and eleven years old[1] are as yet in school in Rungwe District and the demand for places is enormous. Among the most insistent are girls wanting education. During the 1930's the Education Department was trying, with little success, to coax girls to stay in school long enough to learn to read and write, but today nearly a third of the primary school pupils are girls. A handful of boys and girls go out of the district to attend middle or secondary schools, and a few candidates for training as teachers and district nurses come in. Thus an educated person, or one who goes out to work, mixes with people whose backgrounds and languages are quite different from his own.

Then people are richer than they used to be, partly because of the wages earned abroad, and partly because of the coffee and rice grown and exported. There is also some employment within the district on tea estates (especially important to women and girls), and coal and vermiculite mines. The value of peasant crops exported has risen from about £14,000 in 1936[2] to nearly £37,000 from coffee and rice alone in 1955,[3] and some men have made as much as £150 from their coffee in a year. A coffee cheque of £50 to £60 is common. In addition to the peasant crops there is tea from estates—well over a million pounds of made tea in 1955 as well as a quantity of seed. This increase in wealth has involved a change in the division of labour. Because men are not at home to clear and hoe, their wives, perforce, must clear fields and hoe for themselves, assisted by their young sons, boys who twenty years ago would not yet have stopped herding.

There has been a rapid increase in population, more especially in the hills, due partly to the development of health services and

[1] Number of children in Mission and Native Authority schools in Rungwe District, 1955:

Boys	Girls	Total	No. of children 8–11 years of age (estimated as 10% of total population)
8,220 (Mission schools)	4,270 (Mission schools)	12,498	15,750
708	79	787	

(This total does not include those who are in middle schools outside the District, nor does it include those following a professional course in the District)

(Figures provided by the courtesy of the Provincial Education Officer, Mbeya.)

Change in figures is not discussed for it was not possible to visit that area in 1955.

[2] Seal Company, p. 18.

[3] Calculated from figures kindly supplied by the District Commissioner, Mr. Peter Johnston.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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Boys	Girls	Total	No. of children 8-11 years of age (estimated as 10% of total population)
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718	73	791	(This total does not include those who are in middle schools outside the District, nor does it include those following a professional course in the District)

(Figures provided by the courtesy of the Provincial Education Officer, Mbeya.)
Change in Ngonde is not discussed for it was not possible to visit that area in 1955.

[2] *Good Company*, p. 16.

[3] Calculated from figures kindly supplied by the District Commissioner, Mr. Peter Johnston.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER IV

VALUES

a. *Good company*

829 One of the values most constantly stressed by the Nyakyusa is
876 that of *ukwangala* which, in its primary sense, means 'the enjoy-
521 ment of good company' and, by extension, the mutual aid and
515 sympathy which spring from personal friendship. It implies ur-
bane manners and a friendliness which expresses itself in eating and drinking together; not only merry conversation, but also discussion between equals, which the Nyakyusa regard as the principal form of education. 'It is by conversing with our friends', said one of our witnesses, 'that we gain wisdom (*amahala*); it is bad to sit quite still in men's company. A man who does this is a fool; he learns no wisdom, he has only his own thoughts. Moreover, a man who does not spend time with other people is always dirty, he does not compare himself with any friends. For we learn cleanliness of body in company, those who are dirty learning from their more cleanly friends. Again, if a man is accused of some crime and brought before the chief and is unable to defend himself easily and with eloquence we mock at him and say: "What is the matter with you? Do you live all by yourself? How is it that you are so foolish?" Wisdom and cleanliness are the two great things to be learnt in company. It is bad to live alone far from other people, such a man learns nothing: he never learns to express himself well, to converse wittily with friends, or to argue a case with eloquence. It is better to live with other people.'

829 'To live with other people', says our informant, but he implies
876 'to live with contemporaries'. For *ukwangala*, in the sense of discussion and easy give-and-take, can never occur between men and women, and is made difficult between men of different generations by the respect required of sons for their fathers. Since men are held to acquire manners, eloquence, and wisdom only in company it is necessary, the Nyakyusa argue, that they should build in villages, rather than in scattered homesteads, and since

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

829 *ukwangala* is only possible between contemporaries[1] they must
876 build with contemporaries. The value set on *ukwangala* is thus related to the age-village; male contemporaries build together, and the company of, and good fellowship with, his age-mates is what creates a man of wisdom and character. Such is the Nyakyusa view of society.

576 For conversation to flow merrily and discussion to be profound
264 there must be *ifyakwangalela*—'the wherewithal for good fellowship', that is, food and drink—and very great stress is laid on
572 sharing these. Men and boys are expected to eat regularly with age-mates. Traditionally, fathers and sons never ate or drank together—to do so was held to be incompatible with the respect due from son to father—and men sought the company of equals at meals. From the time a small boy begins to herd he is encouraged to bring home two or three friends to eat with him, and in turn he visits each of them. Since boys have no fields of their own until they marry, but co-operate in cultivation with their parents, it is to their own mothers they go for food, and parents are proud of a son bringing many friends. 'Perhaps', said Angombwike, 'a son will come with his friends and cut a huge bunch of bananas, and take thick milk and eat with them. When the father comes back his wives will tell him: "Your son has eaten all the thick milk and cut a banana bunch!" Then he will ask: "How many men were with my son?" "Six!" "Ah, he's a chief!" the old man
[861] will say, smiling proudly.' 'And formerly if a young man came home often alone to eat, his father would beat him, or even take a spear and wound him, and when people asked why he would say: "This great fool comes *alone* to my place, again and again." It is good to eat with friends, for boys to go round in groups of four or five.'

264 After marriage each man is cooked for by his own wife, but he
562 continues to eat with his friends, bringing them to his home or going to their's .The first wife to come to a young men's village
574 is said to have a hard life. 'She has to draw water and cook for all the young men of the village—they come to drink, and to wash, and they beat her with a stick if she refuses them. No, the

[1] *Ukwangala* is sometimes used with reference to relatives as well as to village-mates, as in the phrase '*atikwangala kwenu nabakwenu baka*', meaning 'he is not on good terms with his relatives'; but in its fullest sense it can only be used with reference to contemporaries.

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1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

abakulumba) and their eldest sons are his two heirs in the chieftainship. Young girls, daughters of neighbouring chiefs, are carried off with a show of force from their fathers' homes, by the young chief's men, who themselves later contribute to the herd of cows sent to regularize the position. The two great wives are thus married not solely with the cows of their husband, but also with those of the men whose sons their sons will one day rule. The duty of arranging the match lies with the village headmen of the old chief, and it is said that they are often guided in their choice by dreams.

The girls who are carried off are just about to reach puberty, and they stay at the house of one of the men of the old chief until their periods begin. When both have reached puberty they are initiated, not at their fathers' houses, as are ordinary girls, but in the country of their husband, and both together. At their initiation the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the old retiring chief) play the part normally played by a girl's parents and their neighbours, while the young chief and his men take the usual part of a husband and his friends. And then, after the ceremonies are over, the two girls are given to the young chief as his wives. Houses are built for them separately, i.e. in the senior age-village of the new chiefdom for the first wife, in the next senior village for the second wife; and in this separation of dwelling place is already apparent the future division of the chiefdom between their sons.

Within the chiefdom, and among the wives and children of the chief two 'sides' (*imibafu*) are recognized. Usually, in each country there are, at its beginning, at least two age-villages and half the wives of the chief on either side. This distinction of two sides is important in succession, a son from each side eventually inheriting half the country.

From the time of the 'coming out' of the two young chiefs till the day of their own father's death there exists between him and them a delicate balance of prestige and power. Each of the three, traditionally, has judicial authority in his own age-villages, but appeals in difficult cases may be taken from either of the young chiefs and their village headmen to the old chief and his village headmen, while the religious duties of chieftainship are exercised entirely by the old chief. But in the old days it was the young chief who fought and fed men. 'Young chiefs used to lead their

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 783 621 [264] to bring all the herds of the village for treatment. The father of these twins explained that neighbours would suffer less than relatives, if left untreated, but 'their legs would ache a little *because we eat with them*'. And here we come to an idea which appears in many situations in Nyakyusa life, the idea that contagion is spread through eating together. Relatives of parents of twins are not thought to be in danger until they eat or drink with one of the parents: the ritual is performed so that they may eat together safely. Similarly a murderer and his relatives are thought to be in magical danger from the relatives of the murdered man only if they should eat or drink with them. So too, the bond between neighbours which puts them in danger from the impurity of one of them is the sharing of food.

881 621 At the initiation and marriage of a girl, neighbours again assist and identify themselves with the principals. When she reaches puberty a girl is secluded, and her companions in the village—the girls who are her immediate juniors, for the older ones will have joined their husbands—keep her company. Some are her own younger sisters and half-sisters, others are not related at all. Should one girl of the village not join them she is not accused of witchcraft, but it is unusual for one to stay away; to do so would show 'pride' (*amatingo*). These companions (*abapanji*) sleep and eat with the 'bride' (*unsungu*)[1] and share her tasks and lessons, fetching firewood, making mats, learning songs, and listening to the instruction of 'the mothers'. They and the 'bride' go about together as a group and, accompanied by one or two 'mothers', may visit a 'bride' and her maids in another village, the two [572] groups competing in dancing and singing. So keen is the rivalry that formerly, we were told, the visits sometimes led to fighting between the maids and 'mothers' of each 'bride', particularly when the competing groups came from different chiefdoms. At the end of the ritual two of the maids accompany the bride to her [864] husband's house, and spend a few days with her there, sharing the attentions of her husband at night (*vide infra*, p. 87).

During her seclusion the bride avoids her father, whom she refers to as 'father-in-law', and she avoids also all his contem-

[1] *Unsungu* means a girl who has reached puberty but has not yet borne a child. She is usually, though not invariably, betrothed, and her 'husband' has a part in the puberty ritual. There is no exact English translation, and we think that 'bride' is the least misleading in this context.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

poraries, the men of the village. They are forbidden to enter her hut, and if she catches sight of one outside she turns away from him and shields her face with a mat. And at the end of the seclusion each 'village father', as well as her own father, must make her a small gift, before she will greet him. The co-wives and some of the village neighbours of the bride's mother form the group of 'mothers' who treat and instruct the bride, help to provide food for the feasts, and finally take her to her husband. Not all the village neighbours are expected to cook for the marriage feasts of a commoner's daughter, only immediate neighbours and special friends (together with relatives) who have been asked to do so; but if an immediate neighbour is not invited to help he will feel affronted. Twijulege explained that 'If the owner of the homestead overlooks someone who has built close to him, and does not say to him, "They are coming to bring the marriage-cattle for *your* child, please help us to cook", then that friend will be angry, and will think to himself, "Perhaps we are not on good terms (*tutikwangala kanunu*) though I had always thought we were", and he will say to the father of the bride: "Why did you not tell me that they were coming to bring the marriage-cattle for your child that I might help you with the food? I was startled by the rejoicing." ' An old man who had only called one friend, besides relatives and the 'best man', to help cook at the marriage of his daughter, was stigmatized as 'a surly fellow who does not care about being on good terms with people'.

The groom, on his part, is supported by his village-mates, who come in a crowd driving the marriage-cattle, and dancing the stamping marriage dance (*ukukanya nganya*). His mother, who has a share in the ritual and brings gifts of food, follows him, accompanied by some of her co-wives and village neighbours.

Village solidarity is thus exhibited at ceremonies, not only in the allocation of food, but by the manner in which village contemporaries of the same sex rally to each other's help, dance together and, if need be, fight together.

Besides offering sympathy and help when their fellow is in need, it is the duty of neighbours to give him advice, and persuade him to act wisely. If, for example, a man has delayed very long in providing marriage-cattle for his son, his neighbours take the son's part, and try to persuade him to give the cattle. 'Perhaps', said one informant, 'the son may elope with a girl, and

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

usually has a separate hut for its girls, to which, we were told, 584
their lovers come secretly by night.

Nyakyusa informants connected the existence of girls' houses 582
with the marriage age. In Ngonde the marriage age of girls is
much higher than it is among the Nyakyusa, partly because there [795]
are many more Christians (45 per cent as against 16 per cent)
who do not allow polygyny, partly because even the girls from
pagan families in Ngonde dislike marrying a polygynist, and
partly because a much higher percentage of young men are away at
work, than from Nyakyusa country. Formerly, they said, the marri-
age age was higher among the Nyakyusa also, and then the Nyak-
yusa had *isaka*. It is certain that among the Nyakyusa betrothal [881]
of a girl has long taken place before puberty, for the husband
plays an essential part in the puberty ritual, and there were always
some girls who were betrothed when quite tiny; but the evidence
is fairly clear that the average age of betrothal among the pagans
has been going down. The Nyakyusa view is that no man in his
senses, who is able to marry, will engage a little girl of eight if he
can find one approaching puberty; and it is the scarcity of wives
that makes men 'marry' little girls. It is also clear that the number [231]
of cattle in the country, and their rate of circulation, has increased
during the last two decades, so there are 'too many cattle chasing
too few brides' with the result that the marriage age of girls
has fallen, and the number of cattle given at marriage has
increased.

Once she is betrothed, a girl's 'husband' has exclusive sexual 584
rights over her, and she cannot entertain lovers in the *isaka*. The 836
only two occasions on which she may flirt and have external 881
relations with a man other than her husband, are during an initia-
tion ceremony, when the girls of the village who have not yet
reached puberty sleep with their fellow who is being initiated,
and there entertain young men, and when she accompanies a
bride to her husband's house. A bridegroom is expected to have
external relations with his wife's two friends, as well as with his
wife, on the night they bring her to his house. Love-making at the
initiation-marriage ritual is held to be 'part of the ritual' and a
means of sex education, and a husband can make no complaint
about his 'wife' receiving lovers then, provided that penetration
does not take place.

Homosexual practices are said to be very common in the boys' 838

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

771 mediate ancestors of the participants, and another set which con-
105 cern chiefdoms and groups of chiefdoms, and are directed towards the immediate ancestors of ruling chiefs and certain distant ancestors of the chiefs' line, heroes in Nyakyusa history. The name of one of these heroes, Kyala, has been used by the missionaries to translate the word 'God', but all the evidence available goes to show that Kyala was, traditionally, but one of several distant ancestors to whom regular sacrifices were made on behalf of a large group of chiefdoms. All the rituals of this type—those directed to family shades, the chiefs' ancestors, and the heroes—are concerned with that which is beneath (*pasi*), not that which is above. Men look to the earth where corpses are buried, not to any sky god.

121 The theme of the present volume is the rituals celebrated by
771 kinsmen at death, at the puberty and marriage of a girl (the last two events usually coinciding), at birth, especially twin birth, and in misfortune. A further volume will deal with the communal rituals celebrated before the annual break of the rains; whenever public misfortune such as drought, flood, famine, or plague occurs or threatens; before battle; and when a chief is succeeded by his sons, and the younger generation take over power from their elders.
[881] There is no circumcision or initiation of men other than the 'coming out' ceremony, when a whole generation takes over responsibility for the administration and defence of the chiefdom from their fathers. Some reference to three of the heroes—Kyala, Lwembe, and Mbasi—is made in texts on the rituals of kinsmen, but our discussion of them is postponed to the second book in which the rituals directed to them are described.

775 A section of the Nyakyusa people is Christian and its influence
177 on pagan thought and practice is appreciable; however, discussion
128 of this is also postponed to the second book, since it is most evident in the changing concept of Kyala. There, too, the connections between change in ritual and other aspects of the social structure between 1934 and 1955 are analysed.

121 The Nyakyusa cult of senior relatives (like any ancestor cult) is
771 not intelligible or significant apart from a study of kinship, and it may be argued that this material should be presented only as part of an analysis of Nyakyusa kinship, but we cannot discuss everything at once and some measure of abstraction is necessary. No one ritual among the Nyakyusa is fully intelligible without reference to the whole series of rituals. The principle, propounded forty-five years ago by Professor Radcliffe-Brown, that a symbol

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde
Kukwe

ritual is powerful. If you do not perform the ritual for your father or 764
perhaps that of your wife then you won't be a person, your body 775
comes to an end and you die, but you are present, you are still alive, you do not die when the body comes to an end, you take faeces as in the ritual. But when they bring millet and say: 'This is so-and-so's, and this so-and-so's' (naming him whose ritual you have omitted) and brew beer and drink it, then you die.

QUESTION: How do the dead appear to us?

ANSWER: They appear before our eyes at night. You dream and in the morning say: 'I was with the so-and-so's in the night, with the so-and-so's!

QUESTION: Where do you go (at death)?

ANSWER: When we die we go above. [177]

QUESTION: That's a new thing?

ANSWER: Yes, indeed, formerly we said we went below; our fathers and grandfathers said that. But we now say we go below to rot and stink only but since we look toward home when they bury us perhaps the heart (*indumbula*) goes above (*kumwanya*) and that is home. We have seen this in European times in books. No, I am not a Christian and I cannot read, I've just learnt this. . . .

KALUNDA (a doctor) AND MWAIJUMBA: The *ikipiki* medicine put into the beer and lees at 'the shaving of the sprouting hair' is the same medicine as that which we eat at the pumpkin-seed ritual. The *ikipiki* of the death ritual and the puberty ritual and the birth ritual is one and the same, but the medicine for twins is different. . . . There is one *ikipiki* used in all the three rituals—puberty, birth, and death—but to it is added another medicine which is different for each of the three. *Ikipiki* is our kinship, it is our blood (*ikipiki bo bukamu bwetu, lyo ilopa lyetu*); when my wife has borne a child and no one wipes its mouth with [851] the *ikipiki* it means it is not my child, it is just a bastard from the veld, it is no relative of mine but a stranger. In the puberty ritual it is [881] the same, we treat the girl with the *ikipiki* of her husband. She moves from our lineage, from that of her father, she is now a stranger, not their relative (*ikusama nkikolo kyetu, kubagwise, mundu leleno, aka nkamu gwabo*). When someone has died it is the same. We eat food together with the deceased, the shade, and his blood. It is like the Swahili custom of eating each other's blood to create kinship. It means: 'You were our [171] kinsman from afore-time, but now it is finished, you are a stranger.' But the medicine for the twin ritual is separate, it is quite different.

2. IN KUKWE COUNTRY

The Kukwe ritual of death differs in detail from that of Selya 764
and MuNgonde, but it is performed with the same overt purpose: 184
to drive away the dead from the bodies and dreams of the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

even defaecate in the house. And at the inheritance, when I have inherited the women, they go to their own homes with a bull if I am wealthy, or perhaps three shillings. They go back to their fathers with the dirt on them—*ingotolo*! 764

QUESTION: Where does the *ingotolo* come from when you do not treat them?

MWAFULA: Kyala is startled and you gasp with *ingotolo*, your breath is short.

QUESTION: Does the husband also go to his place?

MWAFULA: Yes, he always returns to his father's.

QUESTION: Why the two leaves representing a man and a woman at the hitting the ground and saying: '*Syeku, syeku*'?

MWAFULA: Because we are two [holding up two fingers], a man and a woman. Formerly when someone died as a bachelor they took a leaf of the sweet banana and said: 'It is your wife.' They buried it with him, saying: 'Go to the land of the shades because you were never married.'

QUESTION: What does the mocking at shaving mean?

MWAFULA: It is one with stealing the plantain stem. We mock them meaning, may they escape, and not take rubbish from the rubbish heap. And at the shaving of the hair we drive him away, saying: 'Go to your fellows.' He has been alone, he was on the road, may he go.

Porokoto the Chief admitted that the wearing of leaves and bananas in the rituals of death and of puberty were symbols of fertility (*ifimanyilo fya mbapo*); the plantain represents the penis, the sweet banana represents the clitoris, 'for in the old days they wore leaves only, no cloths'. In the puberty ritual the wearing of leaves and bananas is the same. It is a sign of fertility: 'the ritual is now finished and the girl is someone's wife.' 842 881

Mwaijumba, who provided the beer of inheritance for the ritual of Njobe Nani, explained to us as he drank: 'We drink beer to drive away our friend. It means that everything is finished: "Come to your house frequently now. It is finished! May the fathers [i.e. the other shades] receive him! May he not return! We have poured out this beer for you, it is finished."' 273 764

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

CHAPTER IV

THE RITUAL OF PUBERTY AND MARRIAGE

I. IN SELYA AND MUNGONDE

(a) *The events*

●881 585 584 836 THE puberty ritual for girls among the Nyakyusa is fused with the marriage ritual. Girls are usually betrothed well before puberty and they may live with their 'husbands' for some time before they grow up, for the view of most Nyakyusa is that a girl should become accustomed to her husband gradually and that it is good for her to visit him from time to time, sweeping his house, cleaning the byre, drawing water and cooking for him, and learning the art of love-making with him and no one else. While she is still very immature it is insisted that he should only have intercourse with her *inter crura*, but when she is approaching puberty he often has full intercourse with her. No legal case can be brought against him in court if he does so, provided that he has not forced or frightened her, but his friends may tell him he is foolish, and is 'teaching his wife adultery', since now he can have no proof, in the physical examination at puberty, that she has not slept with other men. No stigma attaches to the girl; if it is her husband who has deflowered her she is acclaimed in the ritual as a virgin. In some pagan families, however, notably those of chiefs, girls are not allowed to visit their husbands before puberty. The girl's father has the right to [171] refuse it, for before the ritual a wife is only 'borrowed'. Unlike the neighbouring Bemba, the Nyakyusa are not anxious lest the girl should conceive before her first menstruation—if she should do so the ritual is performed in the ordinary way—but many fathers dislike letting their daughters go before the main bulk of the marriage cattle have been handed over. Opposition on the part of the missions and the Administration to early marriage also influences the more sophisticated. The period of betrothal is long, for pagan [145] girls are commonly engaged from about 8 years old onwards, and the average age of puberty appears to be between 15 and 16.[1]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

and the average age of puberty appears to be between 15 and 16.[1] [145]

With the onset of first menstruation the ritual (*ubunyago bwa-busungu*) starts immediately: it is begun even for a girl not yet betrothed, though for her it cannot be completed. The main acts are a treatment of the 'bride' (*unsungu*) with medicines to fortify her against the dangers of menstruation and intercourse; seclusion at her father's homestead and a driving of the shades of his lineage from her body that she may conceive by her husband; instruction in the duties of a wife; examination for virginity; and the exchange of feasts between her husband's family and her own to celebrate her maturity and virginity. 881

The first treatment is with a medicine called *undumila*. 'If the girl grows up at her father's place we, her mothers, treat her at once; if at her husband's she is sent home to us, if it is near, but if it is far away, her husband's mothers treat her there.' She must take the medicine before she tastes any food after the onset of menstruation. A pungent-tasting root is pushed through the tip of a funnel or 'cup' made of a leaf of the bark-cloth tree, and salt is poured into the cup. The girl takes the tip of the root in her mouth and pulls it inward with her teeth, thus causing the salt to trickle into her mouth. Her mother also makes millet porridge and adds to it a medicine, *ikipiki*, and gives a little to her, burying the rest under the hearth of the hut.

She is then secluded in her mother's hut. Her girl friends who have not yet reached puberty prepare a litter of banana leaves for her to sit and sleep upon, and they keep her company (*ukupanja*), hence their name, *abapanji*. They come 'to cheer their fellow that she should not be left alone'. They sleep with her on the litter, and spend the greater part of their days there, learning to depilate and adorn themselves and, some say, to stretch the vagina by manual manipulation. Food for them is provided by the bride's mother, and on the litter they entertain the young men of neighbouring boys' villages, singing and dancing, and cuddling. In a bride's hut intercourse *inter crura* is permitted, and no 'husband' can claim [836] damages if his betrothed wife lies with another young man there, unless penetration has taken place. On moonlight nights the girls

[1] Information from Christian women who knew the exact ages of their daughters and of pagan contemporaries of their daughters. Cases of first menstruation ranging from the ages of 12 to 18 were cited, but those under 14 years old were regarded as unusually young. The mothers' information was confirmed by a woman missionary who ran a school for Christian adolescent girls in the district. [145]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

881 On moonlight nights the girls
524 play special games in the courtyard, such as 'Knock, knock, little man'; they put bits of banana leaves in the forks of the fingers and toes and sing: 'Knock, knock, little man; knock, knock, little woman!' Then they spread wide their arms and legs and fingers and toes and knock them together. The leaves that fall out when they do so are collected and hidden some distance away. Then they all separate and hunt for them, singing:

> 'We look for our fellow the barren one.
> I don't know where she is, the barren one.'

When they find the leaves they pile them up and then each snatches one, singing:

> 'Here she is, here she is!'

Then the game ends.

Another traditional song goes:

'Little mouth, little mouth, She-who-makes-her-friends-quarrel.'

But many of the songs the maids sing with the young men are just current popular songs.

881 'The maids are friends for the bride to amuse herself with. They
883 amuse themselves with young men, singing, and if some other bride is secluded at the same time, they go and compete against her and her maids in singing.' At the seclusion of Mwaihojo's daughter described below, a dozen girls, all a little younger than herself, kept her company. Five were her own half-sisters, one was a wife of her father who had not yet reached puberty, one a daughter of her father's sister, and four were daughters of her father's neighbours.

864 Although a bride's hut is the centre for sex play, women who are
881 sleeping with their husbands and are therefore 'heavy' (*nsito*) with semen, do not enter it and may not cook for her, for any contact with them is felt to be dangerous to her. Her own mother refrains from intercourse until her daughter has gone to her husband.

881 The bride is not confined to the hut (as among many other African peoples) but is free to move about the immediate neighbourhood. Her movements are, however, limited by the taboo on crossing a stream, the need to avoid sexually active women, and the avoidance of her father and other men of his village, as well as her in-laws. When she leaves her hut she is accompanied by her

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

maids and always carries a mat or cloth to screen her face from 881
her father and his contemporaries, her father's full sisters, her older brothers,[1] and her 'mothers-in-law' (*abakamwana*).[2] These she must fear and respect (*ukutila*) and so avoid. Her father-in-law and his brothers she avoids altogether from the time of her engagement, or at least after she has reached the age of 8 or 9. Her companions do not *ukutila* with her, though those of them who are already betrothed will, of course, avoid their own fathers-in-law.

During the period of seclusion the girls have two specific tasks: to weave the fine mats used as beds, and to fetch firewood. Every [285]
bride should take to her husband's home at least one fine mat (*ubunyasa*) which she has made herself, as well as several coarse ones (*imitefu*),[3] and weaving a fine mat is a lengthy task, occupying a skilful woman a month. Each girl weaves for herself, but the firewood that each must fetch is stacked in the bride's mother's loft. The bride also occupies herself hammering out bark-cloth, [287]
pleating it for the strip worn between the legs, and decorating bark-cloth belts (*vide* plate 5), so that she may have the fresh ones required during the ritual, and a supply to take with her to her husband's; but this work is not emphasized as an obligation: rather it is a recreation. Women take great pride in the decora- [531]
tion of their belts—we watched several brides making them and handing them round for the admiration of their fellows. The maids may work in the fields if required to do so, but the bride herself does not, and 'she gets fat because she does not have much work to do'. The whole ritual normally lasts about three months, but if, for some reason such as a pressing need to go out to work, the husband is in a hurry for its completion, various acts may be telescoped. The time-table depends primarily on when the marriage-cattle and food for the various feasts are ready.

From the time of first menstruation until she does it ritually, a 881
bride should neither wash nor oil herself. The prohibition is felt 515
to be a very onerous one and some girls now break it, but women 177
said 'in the old days we did not wash'. 'Girls nowadays are more cunning. We were afraid.'

[1] Some informants denied that she avoided father's sisters or brothers. Others [184]
insisted that she must avoid them because 'brothers are fathers, and father's full sisters are father'.

[2] i.e. her husband's own mother and other women he calls mother. In this account [601]
the plural 'mothers' indicates own and classificatory mothers.

[3] Nyakyusa beds are made of layers of mats laid on rollers between two logs at head [352]
and foot. One chief's bed we noted was made up of sixty-eight mats.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

783 If a bride is her husband's first or second wife[1] (but not if she is
●881 a junior wife) she washes with him ritually at his homestead. The officiant (*unyago*), who may be her husband's own mother or some other mature woman chosen by her, pours out medicated water, and groom and bride wash together, his hands being above and hers below. This usually takes place about a month after her seclusion, but neither it nor the following events are timed to coincide with periods.

881 In one ritual we watched, that of the daughter of Chief Mwai-
584 hojo, the go-between in the marriage and the brother of the groom
[431] came to fetch the bride for the ritual washing (*ukusukusula*), bringing her a small gift of 10 cents, four weeks after her first menstruation. She washed in medicated water with her husband at his house and returned to her father's the same night (May 19). Next day, about 3 p.m., the groom's 'mothers' (*abakamwana*), twelve of them, and one girl, arrived carrying six stems of bananas and four enormous pots of curds for the ritual of *ukwingesia*, 'putting her in'. They approached, singing two of the ritual songs:

Litubuke, litubuke,
Tubuke mwailugula.
Let us go, let us go,
Let us go for ever and never return.

and

Akasyunguti kambagila
Paliti po pabuko bwangu.
The *syunguti* tree suited me,
The place is like that of my own in-laws.

The bride was carried first by one and then by another of her 'mothers' (*abanna*)[2] while a compact group of mothers and maids, with the bride raised high in their midst, danced to and fro. And all the time she held a mat to shield her head and face. After five minutes or so the dancing stopped and the 'mother-in-law' sat down in the shade, as Kyobwe (a senior wife of Mwaihojo who acted in place of the bride's own mother who was divorced) came to greet them formally and receive their gifts of food. Meanwhile the bride herself knelt on the ground beside Kyobwe's hut, her head covered with a mat, and surrounded by her maids. Presently

[1] Informants differed on this point. Some maintained that chiefs alone washed with two wives, commoners with one only. Others insisted that commoners also washed with two.

[2] i.e. her father's wives, and wives of his brothers and neighbours.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

the groom's mothers began to dance again. They approached the group of girls and the groom's own mother took the mat off the kneeling bride and spread a large scarlet cloth over her. Then she lifted her on to her shoulders and danced with her. The two parties coalesced and danced together, singing the ritual song *Tukulelela akela* (We sing a dirge). Everyone was smiling and joyful despite the song. By 3.40 the dancing was over and a large mat was spread for the 'mothers-in-law' to sit down in the shade. The bride knelt again with bent head covered by her mat and surrounded by her maids.

At this point Mwaihojo, her father, began scolding angrily because the groom's party had not brought a bull. 'Always when people come to marry my daughters they bring a bull, always. It looks as if the girl had been to visit her husband and you had found fault with her and did not like her.' The groom's mothers replied: 'We are poor.'

Mwaihojo: 'How can you say you are poor? You can find the marriage-cattle, you say. Why didn't you bring some of them? Then I would have killed one to eat now. See, I have killed a bull already. If I had known that you were not going to bring one I'd have killed another.'

The groom's mothers sat with downcast heads. For a commoner's daughter bananas and milk are adequate for the *ukwingenis* feast, but a chief has the right to expect a bull.

Presently the groom's own mother and one of her companions entered Kyobwe's hut to roast bananas and grind some of the bark of a tree they had brought for medicine. The powder was put into a small calabash with water. The bride knelt in the doorway of Kyobwe's hut and, as her mother-in-law poured out the medicated water, she washed her hands and wrists and mouth in it. The bride's half-brother, a lad of 15 or 16 years, was washed also, standing by the doorway of Kyobwe's hut, though he was most reluctant to co-operate. He kept looking towards his elder brother Lazarus, a Christian, and did not submit until Lazarus said: 'All right, go ahead!' Kyobwe, seeing his reluctance, said: 'You need not wash if you don't wish to, it doesn't matter. Perhaps we'll leave it out as it's European times now.' Then finally she said: 'Well, just hold out one hand,' and she washed it. Had the bride been the eldest daughter of either of her father's two senior wives he would have washed in place of her brother, and had her own mother not been divorced she would have washed also.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317

Nyakyusa
Salya, Ma Ngonde

§§1 One of the women of the groom's party then fetched two banana
534 leaves, one of sweet banana and one of plantain, and put them down in Kyobwe's hut. Meantime the mother of the groom changed the bride's belt and the bark-cloth worn between the legs, dressing her in new ones, and burying the old cloth, soiled by first menstruation, in a bundle of dry banana leaves. These she placed on top of the fresh leaves already mentioned, covered the pile with a small rough mat, and sprinkled it with powdered medicine. The bride knelt on the mat and, with head bent, ate roast bananas also sprinkled with the powdered medicine, which her mother-in-law handed to her. Her young brother who had washed with her also shared the bananas. After this the bride is free to wash, but not yet to oil herself.

The groom's mothers were feasted on meat and bananas—two large and two small basketfuls—and returned home. The atmosphere all through the ritual was one of rejoicing, and it was markedly a women's affair. The chief and several other men were present but, apart from his scolding of the women for not bringing a bull, the chief played no part at all.

[§2] According to strict custom the groom's mothers should have come a second time with gifts of food (*ukwambalala*)[1] to cement the friendship, but since the groom was in a hurry to get to work on the Lupa gold-fields this act was omitted. 'They brought the two lots of food together,' we were told, 'some of the milk and bananas were for the *ukwingania* and some for the *ukwambalala*.'

§§3 Three weeks later (June 14) the groom, with his go-between and
535 other friends, brought the main body of marriage-cattle (*ukulwa*), and they danced the stamping dance (*ukulanya ugwaju*) in the bride's father's courtyard and on the litter of the ablution hut, brandishing their spears as they stamped to the war rhythm. The bride's companions and mothers danced in a separate group, one mother carrying the bride on her shoulders. A lavish feast of cooked food was set before the groom and his friends, and they in their turn scattered pieces of meat and cows which the bride's [§7] maids and 'mothers' scrambled for. Meantime a quarrel broke out between the bride's father and her brothers over the distribution of the marriage-cattle.

§§1 Six weeks after the *ukwingania* (July 25) the bride, accompanied
537 by two of her father's wives, two of her maids, and a third girl invited because she was a good singer, went to wash ritually again

[1] *Ukwambalala*: to give a present for the first time to a new friend.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F3117 Ngonde F3117
Nyakyusa
Selp., Mulungushi

at the groom's home (*ubwikanda*). The party was given a hen when they arrived and a second the next morning. The groom and some of his friends spent the night with the bride and her friends. (He and she lie together on this occasion but do not yet have full intercourse.)* In the morning the mother-in-law shaved the bride's head, eyebrows, and eyelashes, leaving only a small tuft on the nape of her neck. Then she mixed water with powdered medicine and poured it for groom and bride to wash. The groom washed his hands and mouth only, the bride her hands and mouth and whole body. During her seclusion she might not use oil or the red powder favoured as a cosmetic by Nyakyusa women,* but after this third washing she was free to do so, and she oiled herself meticulously. Meantime the groom was shaved by one of his friends.

On the same day the bride returned to her father's homestead with her own party and seven 'mothers' of the groom who brought five stems of bananas, a pot of water, and a small bull for the ritual of 'clearing out the litter' (*ukusuya ulufumbo*). She herself was wearing the skin of a bull over her head—'she wears any skin she can get hold of'. One of the groom's party shaved off the last tuft of her hair and buried it carefully in the *ulufumbo*, the litter of banana leaves on which she had slept and sat during her seclusion. Had her own mother been present she would have shaved also and so should the brother, but he did not do so. The groom's mother and Kyelwa (representing the bride's mother) carried out the litter to the edge of the banana plantation surrounding the homestead. As they did so they whispered to each other. Kyelwa said the bride was a little lax. Her husband had offered her ca. to take to her mothers and she had refused it saying: 'No, they swear at me and grudge me food.' 'She's your child,' said the mother-in-law. 'No,' said Kyelwa, 'she's another woman's child, she's a foolish child.' Every scrap of litter in the hut was carefully collected and a little of the soil below it scraped off and carried out with the leaves. All who had helped with the clearing washed their hands carefully.

Then the groom's mother made a basin of two banana leaves close to the pile of litter. Into it she poured the water her party had brought with them, and sprinkled in powdered medicine in

* One or two informants maintained that 'she must not either lie down or be still either to cook with her, saying: "She is not my wife."' But others were insistent that according to strict custom full intercourse was even now allowed. Full intercourse at this time would make nonsense of the divinatory ritual which follows.

* Formerly also by men: cf. V. Grottanelli, *Ion Lion del Gruppo Spondylus* (1940), p. 158.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F917 Ngonde F917
Nyakyusa
Selga, Mallagode

§87 the form of a cross. The bride knelt down and carefully washed
§89 her whole body. When she had done so the groom's mother told one of her party to light the pile of litter. As it blazed up, the bride leapt across it. Three of her maids and a married half-sister had plucked banana suckers, of the sort used for propagating bananas, and they struck her with them as she leapt back and forth over the fire. She was nervous, though the jump was easy, and her maids jeered at her. Then she returned to Kyelwe's hut and dried herself in the sun. Now that the litter was burnt she had come out of her seclusion and was free to sleep on ordinary mats; from the morning of seclusion to the coming out, she could only sleep on the litter, except for the night preceding the burning which she spent with her husband.

§88 The mothers of the groom were feasted on sweet potatoes and
§92 curds provided by the bride's family, and there was a discussion
§93 as to whether the bull the groom's party had brought was 'milk to eat with the bananas' for the bride's family, or 'the bull of virginity'. The bride's father insisted that it was only a relish for the feast and he did not prepare the beer for the final act of the ritual. Two weeks later the bride eloped with her husband because he had not got another bull to bring her father, and the final rites were never performed for her.

§99 On the night before the ritual of 'clearing the litter' the bride's father should put millet to soak for beer, and when it is ready the groom's mothers come for the *ilimwalo* and *ulufunda*, that is, to 'shave the sprouting hair' and instruct the bride; but for the daughter of Mwamulo, for whom we watched it performed, it was long delayed. She had reached puberty seven months previously and before that had lived for three months with the man who had first betrothed her, but he had been unable to find sufficient cattle for the marriage, and the ritual was completed with another man.

§88 The groom's 'mothers' arrived about one-thirty, by which time everyone was getting impatient. The men had nearly finished their beer and grumbled that the groom's party was late, and the bride herself was begging her mother to be allowed to go and bathe. Her mother replied emphatically: 'No, no, how can you go? The mothers-in-law will wash you and dress you in brass bodystrings. That's the ritual.' Six women came in the groom's party—his own mother, his sister, two 'village mothers', and two young married women of the groom's village. A large mat was spread for

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selyn, Ma Ngonde

864 little older than herself, rather than at the formal admonition by her mothers, though a little is given then also.[1] She is especially [302] warned to depilate herself regularly. 'If she is hairy her husband will complain to the mothers and they will beat her.' The maids listen to the instruction along with the bride, and since every girl keeps several of her immediate seniors company before she grows up herself, no young woman can be left in doubt as to her duties as a wife.

• 881 At the shaving of the sprouting hair the 'bull of puberty' 585 (*ingambala jabusungu*) should be killed if the bride is found, on examination by her mothers and those of the groom, to be a virgin, or if the husband has told the women that he himself has deflowered her. Mwasofu's complaint at the ceremony just described was that the groom's party had not brought the bull although he had asked [illegible] virgin [illegible] could not go to her husband until it had been provided.

At another puberty ritual which we attended, the bull was duly brought and, after examining the girl, the mothers announced her virginity with the cry of triumph (*ukulala*), and shouted: 'It is ours, it is ours.' They rushed through the courtyard dancing and applauding. Before the examination the bull had been tied up near the mothers, and immediately the joyful announcement was made it was killed. The meat of this bull is divided between the bride's mothers, her father's kinsmen with whom he exchanges cattle, and his immediate neighbours. The ritual portion, the *ijimmapa*, cut from the top of the right foreleg, is taken by her father to his ritual grove of bananas and there he prays, saying: 'You, so-and-so (naming his father), since I have eaten the food of others (non-relatives) may she flourish at her husband's.' Another informant's version of the prayer was: 'I am eating the bull for my daughter, may she bear children!' A third said: 'Here is the meat! I have eaten the food of others, come out a little, may she bear a child at her husband's!'

If the bride is not a virgin the bull is not killed. It must be returned. Informants repeatedly implied, in talking of the ritual, that everyone knew beforehand whether the bride was virgin or not. 'If she is not a virgin we only do a little ritual, there is but one

[532] [1] Our informants maintained that clay images were not used as a medium of instruction, as among the Bemba, though Nyakyusa girls would sculpture dolls out of clay almost identical with one shown for the Kui in F. Fülleborn, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, Band IX, *Atlas*, plate no. 68, 30, 31, 32.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F?117 Ngonde F?117
Nyakyusa
Seiza, Malkgonde

vessel of milk and two stems of bananas. We do not carry her in triumph. The mothers-in-law do not bring the powdered medicine.' One informant maintained that the bride was always examined before she washed with her husband (*if she was a chief wife*) and we once saw the bride examined at the *akwingwa* ritual, but the examination before handing over the bull is the only one mentioned by most people. What is certain is that virginity must be publicly demonstrated in the ritual and that it is honoured.

After the shaving and instruction, the bride goes round her father's village visiting the men who have not already given her a gift. She is accompanied by the wife of the go-between who represented her father in the marriage negotiations. Each of her father's fellow villagers (as well as her elder brothers and her [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]—a [illegible], a chicken, a calabash, a spearhead, or some coins, as he wants her. These the bride divides between her maids, the officiant who treated her in the ritual, her husband, and herself; to the wife of the go-between is due one pot of the beer brewed for the shaving ritual, to take home to her husband.

If the agreed number of marriage-cattle have been handed over, the bride's father puts millet to soak for beer immediately after the rite of instruction has been completed and the bull of puberty eaten. When the brewing is ready the bride is formally taken to her husband's house (*ukwakula*) by a 'mother' and one or two of her maids. Her own mother never goes—the woman of the party is usually a junior wife of the bride's father or the wife of the go-between. They take with them one or two pots of beer, a basketful of plantains to roast for her husband, two or three cooking pots, a log of firewood, a calabash of light ointment (*ipumba*), and a little pot of brown ointment (*ukulab*) for anointing her husband and his friends in the village. 'What the wife brings when she comes for the first time is for all the men of the village to use to anoint themselves. They come every day to use it until it is finished.' These ointments are brought by every wife but they are especially important if the bride is her husband's first wife, and it is his bachelor neighbours who mostly use them. The bride also brings the fine mat and several coarse ones which she has woven during her seclusion, bark-cloths she has made for herself, and three hearth bricks (*ungilge*) carefully moulded for her by her mother out of clay and manure mixed with medicines. These are set up in her

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selp, Malinowski

taboo, and the practical difficulties of observing the taboo if fathers and sons live in the same village is cited as a reason for the age-village organization.[1]

The marriage ritual may be said to finish with the eating of the *ilikalaga*, but avoidance of father-in-law and daughter-in-law continues until death and no clear line can be drawn between the marriage ritual proper and the rituals of pregnancy and birth which follow.

It is plain from the events described that the *ubwangu bwa-fwanga* is a marriage as well as a puberty ritual and that the husband and his family play an essential part in it, but if a girl is not betrothed before puberty a curtailed ritual is still performed for her when she grows up. She drinks the *undumile* medicine, she washes with a brother, and her mothers put her formally into the *ilua* or *lwalumbu*. *They cook the wardrobe flowers, and they call their* brothers to call their friends to help dance the stamping dance. The litter is cleared by her mothers in due course, and she is shaved and instructed. When she is eventually married, only the *rites of slaughtering the bull of virginity*, taking her to her husband, and returning with the *ilikalaga* are performed. She does not wash with him ritually.

(F) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

The avowed purpose of the *ubwangu* ritual is to protect the physical and mental health of the girl and to ensure her fertility. 'If the ritual is not performed the girl will fall ill, go mad, or not bear children.' Numerous informants were agreed on this point. Angumbwike expanded it, saying: 'It is said that if they do not perform the ritual of *ubwangu* the bride will go mad. When she is sick of the madness they perform the ritual. If the doctor says: "Those below are angry," then the father of the girl takes water and prays in the banana grove saying: "My father and my grandfather, let the child recover from her sickness." Sometimes the doctor says: "The *na-mdwa*'s (naming a village) have cursed her"; then the father seeks a bull and they eat it. It is the curse which comes from the mouths of people when many whisper saying: "Why have they not performed the ritual? Why have they not performed it?" It comes from their evil breath.' Neglect of the puberty ritual is therefore thought both to anger the shades and to shock the neighbours, who expect to feast on this occasion.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 5n-6.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selma, Mahgonde

●881 751 The first act of the ritual, the giving of the *undumile*[1] medicine to the girl, is a symbol of sexual intercourse, and it is thought to be a prophylactic against pain in intercourse, frequent or painful periods, and injury from contact with those who are 'heavy'. 'It is given so that her belly may not be painful,' said Mwaisumo's mother, an elderly woman. Kasitile's wife explained: 'The pungent root is the penis of the husband, the cup is her vagina, the salt, also pungent, is the semen of her husband. Biting the root and eating the salt is copulation.' Mwakionde's wife gave a similar interpretation:

881 751 The *undumile* is put through the leaf of a bark-cloth tree, shaped into a cup, and it is a sign of man and woman, the penis in the vagina. It is similar to the plantains which we give her when we wash her. The plantains are a symbol of the husband. If we do not give her the *ukipili* medicine the blood never dries up, and it is the same with the *undumile*. If it is not given she constantly has periods and is barren. Yes, some have a period twice in one month—those who have rotted. Only a few are like this, not many. . . . The *undumile* is given to the girl at once, in the mouth as soon as she grows up, so that she can go about without fear; otherwise, if she washes without having had it, then a heavy one may walk over her footprints, that is overstep her, and she will not bear a child, she menstruates continually.

Kasitile's wife said much the same: 'If the heavy ones have overstepped her, her body rots. The man is not sterile, but the woman is; the man's semen is fertile, but the woman has painful periods. It is the pain of periods we symbolize in the sharpness of the *undumile* and salt.'

827 834 The heavy ones (*abasite*), feared both during the puberty ritual and by a mother with a new-born child, are those who sleep with their husbands. They include women both before and after conception. 'When the pregnancy is advanced and the husband has left off sleeping with his wife, then she is not heavy and she can keep a mother with a new-born baby company and hold the baby. A man who is sleeping with a woman is also heavy. They say: "He will overstep us." ' This was the statement of Mwakionde's wife and Kasitile, questioned separately, confirmed every point. We then asked Kasitile: 'How is the heaviness (*abasite*) from lying with a man dangerous to those going through puberty and childbirth?'

Kasitile: 'Because those who are with their husbands are heavy, they are strong, their fellow the bride (*ensonga*) is empty, light in

[1] *Undumile* is derived from *ukulumile*: to bite, to be painful.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

602 585 again an acknowledgment of kinship. 'If she washed outside it would mean that she was not the daughter of her father.'

585 833 The two fresh leaves of plantain and sweet banana on which the officiant places her soiled bark-cloth, and on top of which she kneels to eat bananas are, as already stated, symbols of male and female. Everyone understood this. Fewer people were aware of the symbolism of eating the banana, but Kasitile and one or two others were fully conscious of it and forthright in discussion. He said:

> At the 'putting her in' (*ukwingwia*) the mothers-in-law bring a new bark-cloth and dress her in it; the old one is thrown away on the litter. They mix together bananas and *ikipiki* medicine which she receives. Don't you understand? They treat her. The plantain is the symbol of the man, of his penis, we are treating her, may she 'cook well' for her husband [i.e. be proficient in intercourse], may she bear children. She eats on that bark-cloth which means may the blood go to make children, this is your husband. Eating is a symbol (*ikimanyilo*) of sexual intercourse. She eats the plantain, meaning she has intercourse with her husband.

He connected this with the admonition at the end of the ritual. When she eats the banana nothing is said, it is only implied, but [844] at the drinking of beer they teach her, saying: "Look after your husband well; if you are sweeping the house and he catches hold of you don't be startled, accept him, and catch hold of him also. . . . Men when they do this beget children." '

783 881 585 The second washing at the groom's, which is performed for every wife and not only for a senior one, is interpreted as a cleansing ritual. In the morning the officiant calls the husband and wife and says: 'Come and wash now and clean off the filth.'

Shaving is both a purification and a sign of the completion of the ritual. 'The hair of a girl who has reached puberty is the filthiness of puberty, of the menstrual blood which she produces then. She throws it away.' Mwakwelebeja and his wife said: 'The shaving is to show that she has awakened to puberty (*alembuzile ubuwangu*). During the ritual she did not shave. We perform the rite of shaving that she may begin to shave again, and to let her smear herself [769] with brown ointment. It is like a burial. If a man's close relative dies he does not shave or wash.' Mwaihojo said: 'The shaving is to show that the *ubuwangu* ritual is finished.'

Clearing the litter which is 'filthy', contaminated with the menstrual blood of the girl, is also a symbol of purification. The washing in a leaf basin into which *ikipiki* medicine had been

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

sprinkled in the form of a cross was interpreted by Lyandileko (the woman doctor already quoted) as the means by which the taboo on a bride crossing a stream was removed. 'We give her *ikipiki* to wash with that she may not fear streams. It is taboo to cross water while she is in the puberty ritual. Here I give her the *ikipiki* so that she may cross. If she crosses before she has been treated she grows thin. She will be like a stream [i.e. her periods will be very heavy].' Another informant remarked that if a bride crossed water before she was treated, the flow of menstrual blood would be excessive. Kasitile interpreted this rite rather differently. He said: 'It is to tell her not to break the commandment with the man. . . . "Do not break the commandment, do not step over him. When you lie down, let the man get up first." It is taboo (*mwiko*) for the woman to get up first and step over (*ukukilanya*) me, the man. My legs would swell up immediately. Sprinkling medicine thus [in a vertical line] is the man. He must get up first. Sprinkling thus [in a horizontal line] is the woman. She must follow.' Probably there is a double symbolism, as in several other rites. Both Lyandileko and Kasitile were experts on ritual and open in conversation with us.

Lyandileko explained the jumping over fire in a whisper: 'It means, Kagile (M. W.), that she will never begin again. She is going to do this at her husband's.' Angombwike said:

> It is to give the girl fire, to say: 'Do not burn there at your husband's.' It means: 'Now you have grown up, you are a woman. I have made fire for you (*ngupele umoto*).' For when a girl has run off as a child and been deflowered, then her mothers say: 'When shall we make fire for you? We cannot give it to you properly.' And at cooking she burns her hands, perhaps the water for the porridge spills over her hands and burns them. We hear that formerly they gave her fire, a torch of burning grass, to take to her husband's and kindle fire there, but they have left that. She jumps over fire, that is to give it to her.

The rite was also interpreted as a test of virginity. 'If a bride clears the fire she is virgin, if she falls in she has been foolish with men.'

The symbolism here is doubtless complex, but of the various informants Lyandileko, by reason of her status and personality, carries most weight, and I think it is probably correct to regard the jumping over fire both as a *rite de passage* and as a symbol of intercourse.

The cloth put on the bride like a tail after she has washed

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

881 at the stream comes from the girl's father.[1] He spits on it and
585 gives it to her mothers to dress her in at the stream.' (Kasitile.) Angombwike explained further:

> Dressing her in it means her father has made her grow up. It means: 'Now she is a woman let her act like a woman.' They symbolize the genitals (*ikisepe*) of the man, because among us, according to Nyakyusa custom, in front is a woman and behind a man. They tell her, saying: 'You have grown up, you have work [i.e. intercourse] with a man.'
>
> QUESTION: *Kipetule?*
>
> AGOMBWIKE: *Kipetule* is very old. It's to bless her and say: 'You have grown up. When you go to your husband it will not be painful. Have intercourse.' If the woman is no longer a virgin they do not speak of it. They say she knows already, she has learnt on the veld.

834 *Kipetule*, like *undumila*, is a word not used in mixed company. Once Kasitile whispered, when inquiry had been made, unwittingly, before other people: 'No, Mwaipaja (G. W.), there are children present, and my senior, that is bad. But when there are only cross-cousins (*batani*), then . . .' So the conversation changed.

881 The washing at the stream is a final purification. Lyandileko
585 said:

783 We give the bride brass body-rings because she was not wearing good things (*inunu*), she was filthy during the puberty ritual. We wash her and put on body-rings and a cloth, and she stands in the winnowing basket, because now she must not step on dirt (*ububibi*).

881 The earth, it will be remembered, is associated with faeces,
585 corpses, and the shades. Then comes the triumphal return to her father's house, the girl carried high, and the women dancing. 'Crying "*Nisya*" and carrying the girl, on return from bathing, is for display.' Lyandileko, asked the reason for throwing millet in the winnowing basket, replied:

> It's to say it [the food, i.e. the meat of the bull of puberty] is ours. We examine the girl at the river. If she is rubbish (*lenga lindu*) we do not rejoice. The mothers of the girl give gifts (*ukubonola*). It's a rejoicing because it's ours, it's ours, the girl is virgin.

Nisya, the word the women repeat as they carry and dance with the bride on the return from the stream, was interpreted by Angombwike as meaning: 'Put me down.'[2] 'It is traditional and

[1] Mwakionde denied this, *vide infra*, p. 109.
[2] *Ukuniya*: to put down behind (as opposed to in front).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

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means: Since you have carried me, put me down, mother, I am a woman,' i.e. this is the symbolic ending of childhood.

Mwakwelebeja's wife interpreted stepping into the winnowing basket as being 'in order that she may cook well for her husband and serve his food nicely'. Kasitile, when asked about it, replied:

> They honour the fearful ones (*abipasya*) themselves, saying: 'This is your child, she is Kyala, we are performing the ritual for her.' If they honour an *umwipasya* on the ground Kyala is startled, the child runs mad, she is ill. . . . In these customs we come together to teach the child. Kyala said: 'Shake the winnowing basket for a daughter and say: "We have sent you to your husband; if we hear of cases at your husband's you are no child of ours." ' The mothers of the village instruct the girl. She ought to look towards her mothers-in-law (as they do so) and, if she does not, they beat her again, saying: 'Those are your mothers there, we are not relatives, look to them over there.'

Mwakionde, a doctor, interpreted most of the events in the same way. Asked about the cloth hung over the bride's buttocks, he replied:

> It is because during the puberty ritual she does not wear iron [i.e. metal] or a good bark-cloth. . . . Then the cloth comes from the husband [*sic.*] with the three body-rings. It is a way of saying: 'She's my wife.' They carry her and say: *Nisya*.
>
> QUESTION: Why?
>
> MWAKIONDE: Because she has grown up. Until now she was a child. A while ago we bore and begot her, now she has grown up herself and is honoured, she herself begins to bear a child. It is to finish and say: 'Go to your husband and bear your own children.' Her mothers and the women of her father's village throw millet and maize and pumpkin-seeds. It is a rejoicing. Our child has flourished, she has grown up. They give the seed to her mother-in-law, the mother of the groom, and she takes it away.
>
> QUESTION: Is it not a ritual?
>
> MWAKIONDE: No, it is only a rejoicing.

Mwaihojo's daughter, asked why millet was thrown into the basket, replied simply: 'It is shaken, we are rejoicing greatly,' and indeed the basket is shaken in time to the dance, almost like a tambourine.

The theme of rejoicing recurs again and again in the course of the ritual. At the 'putting her in' her mothers dance with her on their shoulders 'to honour her because my child has grown up';

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

881 her mother-in-law covers her head with a red cloth 'for display'.
585 'We are rejoicing because our child has grown up,' and she too takes her on her shoulders and dances with her. When the 'husbands' come to dance the stamping dance: 'It too is a rejoicing. It shows I have married a wife now.' All through there is rejoicing over the fine food, and the celebration and feasting is primarily among the women. The culmination comes when the girl is publicly shown to be a virgin and the mothers can claim the bull crying in exultation: 'It's ours, it's ours.'

881 An interesting sidelight on the attitude of girls towards the ritual
585 came from a young man, a Christian, who was betrothed to a
184 pagan girl and had forbidden her to go through the ritual. He
793 said:

> Once my wife, when she had reached puberty, asked me why I objected to her undergoing the puberty ritual. I said it was forbidden for us Christians to participate in it, and I asked her if she wished to do so. She said 'Yes', and I asked why. She said: 'When the ritual is performed for us we are famed. People tell each other that so-and-so's daughter has grown up and people from far away come to sing songs, so we become very well known. See, now I have grown up, but no one sees that I have done so. Only you know.' Then I said: 'We Christians also have the custom of celebrating growing up at the handing over of marriage-cattle to the father (*ukukwa*). We do not hand over cattle when girls are still small, so everyone sees that a girl has grown up when we do so.' She agreed and said: 'I, also, have seen a little of the handing over of cattle among Christians.'

In fact, the *ukukwa* is the occasion for a great feast among Christians to which many young men and girls come to sing and dance.

881 The giving of presents to the bride by her father and his con-
585 temporaries is interpreted as part of the rejoicing.
431

> To give presents (*ukubonola*) is to rejoice. It's an occasion for display and rejoicing, because the girl has grown up. The father gives her a present because he rejoices that she has grown up. He says to her: 'Congratulations, you have grown up, you are going away to your husband, you are going away to gain a child!'

881 During the period of seclusion the girl's father is spoken of as
585 her father-in-law (*unkamwana*). She must *ukutila* (respect and
602 avoid) him:

> Because he is her father who begot her. She thinks: 'I must respect

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

my father-in-law, father.'[1] She says: 'I have grown up finally, I am a woman.' 'As I have grown up, I am a daughter-in-law (*unkamwana*).' 'If a girl looks at her father (during the ritual) she is proud (*namatingo*).' 'She used to be beaten if she looked at her father's friends. She is proud if she does. Her mothers will beat her.' She also fears ridicule—'We *ukutila* because we laugh at one another'—and mystical sanctions. 'If she does not *ukutila* (her father) she gets thin and brown. Since she has grown up she must avoid people.' 'She would become light in colour if she did not *ukutila* during the ritual.' 'She will grow thin and her body will be brown instead of black. We think that ugly.' 881 585 602

Mwandisi (the old blind chief), asked why a bride should *ukutila* her father, replied:

> She avoids him and he gives her a gift to break the taboo. During puberty it is taboo. Kyala has created us so. Because if her father looks at her she grows thin, those below [i.e. the shades] are angry.
>
> QUESTION: And those above?
>
> MWANDISI: Yes! Do they not injure them? Do they not give those who throw out the litter a bull that they may eat?

Mwakionde (the doctor), asked the same question, replied:

> It is because of the in-law relationship (*ubukamwana*). If I, the father, look at her she will grow thin and waste away, but at the beer we give her gifts of bark-cloth to break the taboo and say: 'You have come out (*usokile*). You have come out, my child. I am sorry about the fire, I am sorry.' Then she looks at us. She avoids me, the father, and my younger brothers and my fellows in the age-village who are all, according to our custom, her fathers. [601]

Ukutila of her mother-in-law (shielding her face with a mat or skin) was interpreted by Mwakionde in this way:

> It is on account of the dignity of her mother-in-law who says: 'She is my child, see, she respects and avoids me, saying: "She bore my husband." I am her superior. She acknowledges my dignity. She is wise, she respects me, her mother.'

Everyone was agreed that 'the bull of puberty' (*ingambako jabusungu*) is both a sacrifice to the shades, who are asked to bless the girl and make her fertile, and a feast for the mothers and that, strictly, it is only brought if the girl is virgin. 'We throw the *ija mmapa* meat in the banana grove and put a stone on top of it so that those below may eat, and we pray that the girl may bear a 585 881

[1] Some aspects of father-in-law and daughter-in-law avoidance are discussed in *Good Company*, pp. 83–6.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

585 881 child at her husband's.' Neglect to kill the bull may result in sterility. Mwaseba, a middle-aged man, said:

> If the officiants, the mothers of the girl, have not eaten, and the father also, the girl will not bear a child, these people are angry and the shades are angry, they (the shades) help them (the living). And if you do not perform the other customs of the litter the shades are angry, the fathers and the mothers. They say: 'What! Have you not treated the child?'

Mwakionde, the doctor, explained:

[843] When a woman conceives and has a miscarriage, it is *mindu*, the shades are angry. Perhaps if we have not killed the bull of puberty we buy one. The shades are angry, saying: 'Why have we not received a libation of blood poured on the ground for our grandchild? They have done wrong towards us, we who created them.' The girl does not bear a child because pouring out the blood of a beast (bull or cow) is to pray (*ukona ililopa lya nombe ko kwiputa*).

Mwakobela, our neighbour, said:

> If we have not eaten the bull of puberty, they bewitch us (*bikundoga*), the child does not bear a child. Our fellows in the lineage bewitch us, they say: 'We have not eaten the puberty meat.' Then, later on, the husband brings the bull and we eat, and the *ija mmapa* meat we throw in the banana grove, and we pray and pray and the girl conceives.

842 775 The fertility of the girl is believed to depend upon driving away the shade of her father's lineage from her body. We have already quoted (p. 98) the prayer: 'Here is the meat! I have eaten the food of others, *come out a little*, may she bear a child at her husband's.' Mwaisilage explained this conception:

> Those of old said: 'We drive away Kyala and the shades, may she bear at her husband's.' She moves to others, to a different lineage. May that lineage rise up from the dead (*kisyukege ikikolo kila*). If we do not treat the girl she will not bear a child at her husband's.

To understand this it is necessary to understand the Nyakyusa theory of conception. It is held that sexual desire in both men and women comes from Kyala and the shades, and without their support a man is impotent, a woman barren. Kasitile was quite explicit on the matter:

> Kyala is in the belly. He causes the blood of a woman which forms a child to flow and the blood of the man also. We say that Kyala is in the belly; he watches over us at the conception of a child. But our fathers,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

841 QUESTION: And menses?
775 MWANDISI: When the shades are angry a woman is constantly menstruating and does not bear a child; if they are not angry she conceives.

833 And on another occasion he said:
842
775 Lust comes from the shades; if they are angry with you you are impotent; you cannot beget a child.

His wife added: 'My husband says in his heart: "Let me go to my wife." It is the shade that makes him.'

One informant after another mentioned *both* Kyala (or Lwembe) *and* the shades as being present in intercourse. Mwakionde, after [843] talking of miscarriages being due to the anger of the shades, went on:

Kyala has created the bowel of desire. If a man is impotent we say Kyala has not given him breath to beget a child.

KAKUJU: If my child runs off with a man, whether a stranger or her husband, before she has reached puberty and I continue angry, if Kyala has helped me she does not bear a child. Then it is said 'her father was angry'. They come to me bringing the remaining marriage-cattle and I pray and she bears a child.

QUESTION: If the husband asked for her properly and deflowered her before puberty?

KAKUJU: There is no case, it was all right, even long ago. I said: 'Finish paying the cattle.' Perhaps he begged me, saying: 'I am poor, Father,' and I was satisfied.

842 No pagan questions the power of the shades over fertility, and
775 this power is believed to be exercised by the mother's lineage, as well as that of the father. Angombwike, the Christian, said:

[881] The pagans fear that if they do not perform the puberty ritual when a girl reaches puberty, she will dry up. The blood will not come again even though she is not pregnant. Then, if her periods do not come for two or three months, like this, she will never bear a child. They say the shades are angry and have bound her fertility. And if she does not reach puberty at all, if menstruation does not begin, her father prays in the banana grove, saying: 'You, fathers, what are you angry about?' And if the girl's mother's brother is angry on account of cattle—perhaps her father has not given marriage-cattle properly for her mother—he, the mother's brother, binds a wisp of the litter (*ulufumbo*) from her puberty ritual in the loft, then the girl will not bear a child. Inquiry is made of a diviner who says: 'The mother's brother has bound her.' The father takes a cow to him and says: 'I am sorry, I have done wrong, I

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

have thought of it now, this is the cow.' Then, in the evening, the mother's brother blows out water in the banana grove and prays much to the fathers. And when he has prayed he says: 'Send the girl to a doctor to drink medicine.' Then the girl bears a child. The pagans say of us Christians when we have children without performing the ritual: 'You have a medicine, you are baptized with a medicine.' 842 775

Mwakobela confirmed that the mother's brother, like the father, may prevent a girl bearing a child.

Yes, it is so, if I do not give marriage-cattle for my wife our child will not bear. We go to divine and the oracle catches hold of my wife saying that the fathers are angry. We ask what they are angry about, and the answer is 'cattle'. Then I, the father of the girl, go with a cow and leave it and return. My wife and daughter remain there. They pray and pray and the girl conceives.

It is clear, therefore, that the shades are present in intercourse and control conception. At marriage the shade of her father must 'move aside a little' so that the bride may conceive, and she herself becomes dangerous to her mother (and in a lesser degree to her father) because she has mingled her blood with that of another lineage. Mingling the blood of different lineages is dangerous and a bride can safely meet her mother only after performing a ritual in which her parents, as well as herself, become 'one flesh' with her husband. 'When a bride brings a hen and millet to her mother it is to say: "Mother, I have wiped my husband's genitals, I have grown up."' All our informants were agreed that this *ilibalaga* or *ilibuko* (both words are used) is to safeguard the mother's health, particularly to prevent her suffering from diarrhœa. Mwandisi's statement was clear: 842 833 775 [753 751]

In the puberty ritual, when a bride has come from her husband, having lain with him, she catches hold of a little millet and a fowl without washing herself and carries them to her mother. The mother eats it with the fowl that her belly may be firm. If the daughter does not bring these things, then, when she drinks from the same calabash as her mother, she oversteps her mother, who has diarrhœa. Yes, the illness comes from the shades because she has come hot from the bed. . . . This diarrhœa comes from the belly when those below are angry and those above also. They say: 'The mother has overstepped the child' or 'The child has overstepped the mother'. If a girl has reached puberty we, the parents, do not come together until she has gone to her husband and lain with him. If we have intercourse we 881 585 783 753 834

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

881 overstep our child, she will be barren and not bear children, but when
585 she has lain with her husband then we two lie together again.
783
753 Kasitile identified the hen with the body of the girl, the millet
834 with the seed of her husband, and a daughter going to the back of her mother's hut (*kosofu*), or drinking out of the common calabash, as meeting with her mother.

> If she does this before she has brought a fowl she soils her mother. Her mother develops diarrhœa. That is getting rid of the dirt (*kokusosya ubunyali*). . . . The mother's diarrhœa is like that from adultery. If my wife lies with a man in the bush, and I lie with her also, she soils the food which I eat with her, it is dirty, and I have diarrhœa, it is to get rid of the filth. . . . Yes, even though we do not lie together, I get a little diarrhœa, the filth of my wife.
>
> QUESTION: Is the *ilibalaga* to drive away the shade again?
>
> KASITILE: No, it is something else. It is to save the mother that she may not have diarrhœa and may not become weak.

881 The explanation given of the Kukwe *ilibuko* rite makes clear
585 that it is a symbolic mingling of 'the blood' of son-in-law and mother-in-law, which makes contact between them (through the bride) safe.

881 Failure to bring the *ilibalaga* is thought sometimes to result
585 in very serious illness. One of the wives of our neighbour,
753 Mwakòbela, was delirious. We asked what the cause was. He replied:

> Her daughter reached puberty and went to her husband, but refused to drink with her mother. She just came and took water in the calabash cup, she brought nothing from her husband. . . . If the husband is poor a girl brings a fowl for drinking with her mother. . . . The divination said: 'It's the girl.'
>
> QUESTION: Why did she not bring a hen from her husband?
>
> MWAKOBELA: He is not a man of wisdom, he's very harsh, and a fool.

881 After the *ilibalaga* has been eaten by her parents a bride is no
585 longer dangerous to them, and she, fortified by the various treat-
606 ments with *undumila* and *ikipiki* medicines, no longer fears the 'heavy ones'. The critical periods of first menstruation and first intercourse are past. But the rule of avoidance between her and her father-in-law (and those identified with him) continues through life and is directly associated by the Nyakyusa with the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

danger of incest. They account for the rule by a myth which tells 881
how a certain chief looked on his son's wife and saw that she 585
was beautiful and took her, and men were shocked, and forbade a 606
father-in-law and daughter-in-law ever to see one another again. And this taboo, they say, is the reason why fathers and sons must live in separate villages. To avoid (*ukutila*) is 'to fear, to show respect'. Avoidance occurs between women in a limited degree—a girl shows respect to her father's sister, a daughter-in-law to her mother-in-law and her husband's father's sister by not looking at them directly or touching their backs; but these women are in some measure identified with father and father-in-law, and the taboos are most stringent regarding things or actions which are associated with sexual activity. The behaviour of Nyakyusa women suggests very strongly that the fundamental idea in *ukutila* is avoidance of incest.[1] Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is the primary rule of good manners and morals in domestic relations, and is constantly expressed in everyday activities.

Besides being a celebration of the change from childhood to 581
womanhood, and of movement from the lineage of her father to 585
that of her husband, the puberty—marriage ritual includes a legal 584
contract. Either at the betrothal, or when the bulk of the marriage-cattle are handed over, the groom's go-between thrusts a spear into the earth of the swept courtyard and there, publicly, before her kinsfolk and neighbours, the bride must pluck it out and hand it to her father, in token of her consent to the marriage. 'It means: "With this spear you may slay me if I run away from my husband." And her father keeps the spear and may kill her if she does—some fathers did so in the old days.'

After taking the spear the father plucks a banana leaf and hands his daughter the mid-rib with which she strikes one of the cows brought by her husband, and all the women of the homestead acclaim her. Thus her acceptance of the marriage is demonstrated. And each time an instalment of the marriage-cattle is handed over, the go-between of her father and the go-between of the husband must both be present as witnesses; and they notify their sons of the contracts they have so witnessed so that the sons may give evidence after the death of their fathers if necessary.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 83-6, 106, 123, 180-2; 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde, p. 127-8.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

2. IN KUKWE COUNTRY

(a) *The events*

585 The puberty and marriage ritual performed by the Kukwe
●581 differs in detail from that performed by the Nyakyusa proper, but
184 the main elements—the seclusion of the bride and avoidance of her fathers and brothers, the laying of a ritual litter, the meeting of maids and young men on the litter, the avoidance of water, the treatment with *ikipiki* medicine, shaving and ceremonial purification, the instruction, the celebration of maturity and virginity by the exchange of feasts between the bride's parents and those of the groom, the slaughter of the bull of virginity provided by her husband, and the taking of a fowl to her mother after first intercourse —all these recur. And the overt purpose of the ritual is again that the girl may be fertile, and healthy in mind and body. The main differences are in the symbols used for intercourse and purification, and in the location of the rites. Among the Nyakyusa proper most of the ritual is performed at the bride's home, whereas among the Kukwe most of it is performed at the groom's home.

585 When a Kukwe girl first menstruates her father sends his go-
881 between in the marriage (*umfuya*) to inform her husband that she has grown up. If she has been visiting her husband, and is at his house when the first period begins, she runs home to her father's, and the formal message is despatched to her husband. He sends back a hen with the message: 'Thank you, you have nourished my wife,' and some time later sends a second hen by his go-between summoning her to come and wash. A party of two or three 'mothers' (her own mother does not go) and ten or a dozen maids takes her to her husband's, and there (if she is a senior wife) she washes with him in water mixed with powdered *ikipiki* medicine. The officiant pours the water which the husband catches in his hands, and the wife holds her hands below his. Then they kindle fire together by friction (*ukupepa ukupende*), husband and wife both twirling the stick (his hands are again above hers) and the officiant holding the horizontal trough. On the fire they have kindled porridge is cooked, which they eat together. A junior wife washes and kindles fire and eats porridge, not with her husband, but with his younger brother.

After the ritual meal 'mothers-in-law' cut banana leaves and spread the litter for the bride at their homestead, not at her father's. The officiant sprinkles powdered medicine over the floor on one side of the hut and makes two girls lie down with the bride

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

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between them. These two remain with the bride all through the period of seclusion, never leaving her, but the other maids may come and go if called away to perform other duties.

From the onset of menstruation until the ritual washing a girl may neither cross a stream nor wash; after it she crosses streams and washes her hands and feet, but does not yet bathe her whole body. She sleeps on the litter with her companions for about a month and 'by day and by night the young men sing songs with the girls. . . . The play in the puberty hut resembles adultery—we call it love-making (*ukuganiqa*).' 'The groom visits his bride on the litter.' 'Gifts of beer and firewood are brought by the bride's mothers (*ukuumbulela*) and, after her second period has passed, the rite of *ukusaya* (bringing out) is performed.'

The litter is swept out and burnt. Bride and groom are shaved and go separately to bathe. 'The women carry the girl and the man's fellows carry him.' The girl is examined to prove her virginity and the women return with her rejoicing, and make her and her husband run in and out of the doorway of a hut over which they pour water. Then follows the admonition.

At the *ukusaya* (bringing out) rite the officiants drink a special brewing of beer made in the following fashion: the chief officiant puts a little millet, mixed with powdered medicine, into a flat winnowing basket, makes the bride stand in it and, loosening her bark-cloth soiled by first menstruation, lets it fall into the millet.[1] Then she shreds and burns it, lest an enemy, wishing to prevent the bride conceiving, should get hold of it. The bride's fresh bark-cloth is sprinkled with medicines to make her 'heavy', the ashes of the old one are treated with medicines to ensure her fertility, and the millet is put to soak and brewed into beer in the hut in which she lies secluded on the litter.

We saw the Kukwe *ukusaya* rite performed only once. The girl, a daughter of a chief, was not yet married or betrothed, so there was no groom to play his part, and the whole ritual was carried out in her father's homestead, her own mother going through it with her. She herself appeared most reluctant, and there were various modifications due to the pressure of new ideas. We quote the account to show the manner of washing, and of entering and leaving the hut—rites which were described in detail by a number of informants, and which are characteristic of the Kukwe ritual cycle.

[1] It was not made clear by Kukwe informants exactly when this happened.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

Record of M. W., 13 September 1938

[281] 791 I arrived at nine o'clock in the morning to find Syungu, the elderly wife of the chief's senior brother, who acts as officiant in all the rituals for the chief's family, grinding and cooking *ipende* together with a powdered medicine and red pigment, to make an ointment. I asked the purpose of the medicine. She replied: 'It's *ikipili* that she may be heavy, that she may bear children and not be barren.'

[273] 799 Some of the chief's wives gave me beer—ordinary beer. They themselves were drinking from a pot which had stood in the inner room of the house (*kwafi*) and to which medicine had been added. They explained that it might be drunk only by themselves, the chief's wives. A strange woman, a Penja, came along and, though warned that this pot was not for her, insisted on drinking some of it. She explained how Penja ritual differed from that of the Kukwe—they kill sheep for the puberty ritual. Usually this beer stands to brew in the enclosure but 'on the fire'.

[71]

[281] The women were preparing a dish of beans and bananas cooked together, and when it was ready a little was given to the officiant, some was put aside for the girl (*mwanga*),* and the remains were offered to the guests. One of the cooks threw away the central stem of the head of bananas used, but was told by the officiant to fetch it back, as all the rubbish must be cleared away together at the end of the rite.

After midday the officiant shaved some hair from the girl's temples and the back of her neck, and then she shaved the mother completely. I asked why the girl was not shaved completely and was told: 'The fellows would laugh at her if she had no hair.' The officiant prepared four banana leaves, stripping each off on one side of the midrib and shredding the other half so as to make a rough fringe. Standing with her back to the girl, she touched herself over the genitals, breasts, and forehead, then handed the leaf back over her head, telling the girl to fasten it round her waist. She repeated the performance with the second leaf, telling the girl to fasten it round her neck. The girl complied with the first leaf but refused the second, saying: 'I have a cloth,' and she pulled her house cloth round her shoulders. The officiant followed the same procedure with the girl's mother, who fastened both leaves round herself. Then one of the chief's wives took the mother on her shoulders and carried her round the corner of the house. The bride followed on foot, and three other wives of the chief, singing:

Ejumulo
Ejumilo
Ejumulwa
Ejumilo

[24]

* Usually we have translated *mwanga* by 'bride', but in this case the way was lengthened: cf. Section 6, p. 79.

2; Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1937 F3117 Ngombe F3117
Nyakyusa
V.E.W.

The words 'rake to the cries of the mother in labour'—'they symbolize the adolescence of the bride and the toil of the mother in labour.'

They were together to the stream, the girl's mother walking after they were past the homesteads. The girl and her mother sat down on the bed of the stream, facing down-stream. The other women made them hold out their hands, and between each finger and toe, and behind each ear, they placed a small pebble. Flowers and grass, twined together, were placed on their heads, with stones on top. Then both were made to lie down in the water. The girl was pushed down and dipped south. She presented a little and was told: 'You are proud.' The women and girls on the bank laughed. She was told to take off her clothes and wash herself and, looking rather embarrassed, she went a little way upstream into the shelter of some bushes. The women said still she was shy of us. Her mother took off her cloth and washed it, and all the chief's wives present, a younger sister of the manga, and another little girl did so also. The manga dipped on a fresh dry cloth, her mother a fresh bark-cloth, and each was given a little bunch of ferns and flowers to carry. One woman filled a small calabash with water and the party returned to the mother's house. Mother and daughter were told by the officiant to throw their flowers on to the roof of the hut just above the doorway; she herself poured some of the water brought from the stream on to the thatch and made the girl enter the doorway as the water dripped down. Again she poured water and made the girl come out. The rite was repeated for the mother. Then the officiant took the red ointment she had prepared with medicine, and touched herself with it on the left ear, the left brow, the navel, the left temple, and left elbow. She touched the girl with it in the same places, smeared it on her legs, arms, shoulders, and head, and did the same for the mother, and for the small sister who had waited.

Next she cleared away the banana skins and bark-cloth left by the women who had cooked earlier and, along with this refuse, the burnt a bark-cloth strap taken off the girl when she washed. There was no litter (*ulyabula*), though the women said it was usual for there to be one. Then the girl ate some of the cooked bananas, beans, and mash of beans and bananas prepared, and drank some of the mashed beans with her mother, and the cerebral rite was at an end.

Usually, we were told, the mothers sing: 'Put me down, Mother, put me down,' as they carry the bride back from the stream after examining her, and throw gifts of grain into a winnowing basket, as they do in Selya, but there was no such rejoicing for this girl. It seemed likely, from the omens omitted, that she was known not to be a virgin, but we had no proof of this. When the manga is betrothed, her husband also throws and washes, is cer-

[illegible] ried to the stream, runs in and out under the dripping water, is anointed with red ochre, chews the mash of beans and bananas, and drinks medicated beer with her from the same calabash. In the old days it was taboo for either bride or groom to set foot to the ground on their way to the stream.

For a senior wife, the mother-in-law smears breath-bricks with powdered medicine, and sets them up in the groom's hut. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest daughter if the daughter is her first-born, or with her senior daughter-in-law if her eldest child is a boy. 'If they do not do this they go mad.'

So in Selya, an admonition of the bride by her 'mothers', in the presence of her in-laws, concludes the full 'bringing out' ritual. We never heard it in Kabwe country, but the points mentioned by informants were similar to those emphasized in Selya. Kajinga, Pendano's second wife, summed up the teaching thus:

Obey your husband when he calls you. Fetch water and wood. Don't say: 'Tire he on fetch firewood' if your husband wants you to do something else. Do what your husband says first, then to-morrow go for wood. It is forbidden to refuse when your husband wants to sleep with you. In the morning get up and wash. Wash first, then light the fire and give your husband food. Don't say: 'There isn't any food.'

[illegible] Next day, on her return home, the bride is given presents by the [illegible] people of her home village (*ubugwe*), her father making the first [illegible] gift. The groom brings the bull of puberty on which all the 'mothers' feast, but the meat from the top of the right foreleg (*ipanga*) is reserved for the bride's own parents who sing as they eat it:

Eyatile, Eyatile, Eyatipwe

Some days later a party of 'mothers' takes her formally to her husband's house (*ulumbilo*) with gifts of beer and food and firewood, and are feasted by the groom's people and given chickens and millinge.

[illegible] When she is finally living with her husband, before she can visit [illegible] or greet her parents, the bride must put milk and a fowl (some use [illegible] a live fowl, others a cooked one) under her bed at night. After having had intercourse with her husband she takes the fowl and milk and gives them to her parents with the gift of intercourse still on her. This is called the *ilibale*. If she does not do this her mother will fall ill and have diarrhoea.' When they take the fowl

2: Wilson E-S (1936-1938)1937 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

(from under the bed) in the morning it has the filth of intercourse on it, then the father and mother should eat it. If this is not done they will fall ill with diarrhoea. If the hen is taken alive some eat it and others do not.

After discussing this rite Mwandumba went on:

You know, also, that when a girl has gone through the puberty ritual as her husband's she must not take firewood from her mother's culture (hearth) until she is obviously pregnant. Before then, while she is lying with her husband, she must not. We say: 'How can you take your mother's [illegible]?' It is just the same whether the mother is old or young. If the bride goes through the ritual without sleeping with her husband that is all right; it is when she begins to sleep with him that she begins to avoid her mother's left. At that time I, the father, may meet her mother and sleep with her, but with coitus interruptus. I must not make her pregnant. The daughter must begin. As soon as she is pregnant then we parents can begin to conceive a child again. If we do so before our daughter, then she will never bear a child at all, and others will say: 'How could you conceive your daughter?' [296]

Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is observed as in Selya, but is slightly less strict.

(3) *The exact purpose and symbolism*

As has already been indicated, the symbolism of the Kukwe ritual of puberty is similar to that of Selya. The same actions are interpreted in exactly the same way and, where actions differ somewhat, they are still interpreted as expressing the same general conceptions. For example, the Kukwe bride and groom make fire together by friction and eat porridge cooked on it, whereas a bride in Selya eats hominy with powdered medicine, but both actions are symbols of sexual intercourse. Both in Selya and in Kukwe country the bride is purified and, as part of the process of purification, the shade of her father's lineage is driven from her body; but only among the Kukwe is this symbolized by sitting in a running stream and allowing the water to wash away pebbles from between her fingers and toes.

That there may be no doubt about the interpretation of the Kukwe ritual we again quote a number of statements by Nyakyusa informants. These refer specifically to the Kukwe form of the puberty ritual.

Chief Pandawe's wives, discussing the ritual together, were em-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukue

585 phatic that 'if the bride does not wash with powdered medicine
●881 she will go mad and she will bury children'.

Syungu, the officiant for all the rituals in Porokoto's lineage, said:

[158] If a girl goes mad, we say, if we have not treated her: 'We neglected the ritual, let us treat her.' She runs about aimlessly and makes bundles of filth. But if we have treated her we say: 'Perhaps Kyala has gone away from me. See! Nothing has been omitted, we have treated her.' And if she does not bear a child at her husband's her in-laws say to her: 'Did your father and mother not treat you?'

[753] MUNGABALWA (a middle-aged pagan): It is said that if she eats food with her fellows who sleep with their husbands they will harm (overstep) her, and she has diarrhoea. When she has been given powdered medicine, then she eats with them. . . . To lie on powdered medicine which has been sprinkled on the ground is to give the bride weight (*ubuzito*), because if it is not done those who are with their husbands will overstep her and she will have diarrhoea.

[177] POROKOTO'S WIVES: In the old days we put medicine in her porridge so that she would not run away from her husband . . . not now. It's European times now.

[882] QUESTION: In Selya it is said that if she is not given powdered medicine she will be proud.

WIVES: Yes, here too. And if the girl is proud we beat her.

MUNGABALWA: Washing and catching in her hands the water that falls from her husband's hands has two meanings. In some families the husband and wife wash separately, in others they wash together. In either case the first meaning is present, in the second both meanings.

[753] It is said that when someone has not washed in the puberty ritual his or her children will die, for that water (with which he neglected to wash) will enter the child's stomach and kill it. The water is in the child's stomach but its symptoms are those of diarrhoea. The mobile girl catching water in her hands teaches us that the woman will receive

[833] everything. The man is like the upper grindstone, the woman like the nether grindstone (we speak of intercourse), which means that the women receives the semen which comes from the man.

Making fire by friction is a symbol of procreation.[1] If the fire does not kindle we say the couple are sterile. Two fire-sticks are used, one is the man the other the woman, and the fire is the child. The sawdust made by the rubbing is the ovum.

KAJIMGA: If the fire does not come the man is sterile and the girl will quarrel with her husband and perhaps run away. It does not mean she will be barren with other men.

[1] *Ukupipuma*: to make fire by friction; *ukupipuma*: to manufacture.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa
KeKe

Mwanamwe: The bride does not swim water for it is said that the blood which began to flow when she reached puberty will not dry on her body if she does.

To sleep on the litter and to refuse to sleep on sleeping-mats is a sign of childhood (for during childhood girls do not think much about [245] cleanliness, but are dirty); it means that they leave behind them (literally 'come out from') childish things. The litter is burnt because it has not been burnt the children take bits of it to make a fire and cook food, then, when they have eaten that food, their bodies are sick. To say the body becomes unhealthily fat (*shipepete*). Food is collected for a bride because if, later, a woman, who has eat bad food collected for her, eats food collected for another bride going through the puberty ritual, she will fall sick and her body will grow unhealthily fat. Bringing food for the *shamshalile* and giving gifts at the *shagwa* are to congratulate the bride because she has grown up, she is now an adult.

K.: The wearing of banana leaves [at the bringing out] is a sign of fertility. The ritual is finished, the girl is someone's wife now. . . . The [p.3] mortain represents the penis, the cover banana the clitoris.

Sitting in a stream and letting water carry away pebbles placed 772
between fingers and toes is a symbol of purification and separation 773
from the shade. The first element—purification—was mentioned by most informants: 'The rite means that the dirt is finished,' said Ambokoni's wife; but the more self-conscious identified 'dirt' with the shade. Mwambindo made the matter quite clear. When asked why pebbles were placed in the clefts of fingers and toes, he replied: 'Kyala, when he created men, said: "At death throw it away, it is the shade, it is the body."'

Question: In the puberty ritual? 771
Mwanamwe: It is to say that the shade has brought over the child, 772
for he created blood we throw him away. May the shade go with our women, then may she bear children; if he does not go, if you do not wear the girl, then Kyala brooks over her and she does not bear children.

Question: Why does she avoid her father at this time? 771
Mwanamwe: Because I, the father, and her mother, perform the 772
ritual for our child. Our shade has entered into her, has brooded over us, therefore we do not come together on the mat until we have finished treating our child; when we have finished, and have treated us, then we do what we will on the mat. If I want to lie with my wife [during the ritual] she refuses, saying: 'Our child has not yet finished, she is still undergoing the puberty ritual.' But if she agrees and we come together, then our child will never bear. When we have finished the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F317 Ngombe F317
Nyakyusa
Lukas

[illegible] we had finished the
[illegible] ritual I come together with my wife again, but if our child is unmarried
[illegible] it is taboo to procreate a child, we practise coitus interruptus, the semen
[illegible] falls on the mat. . . . This is until the girl goes to her husband, until she
is married. If my wife wears a bark-cloth I say to her during our
daughter's puberty ritual: 'Arrange your bark-cloth carefully lest I,
the man, desire you, I shall catch hold of you and we will cause the
shade to make our child barren.' When she has gone to her husband
we say our shade has finished, he has gone away in the water. Our
child has gone to another shade. Yes, she also has intercourse with her
husband at his home, but that does not matter, I have intercourse with
my wife.

[illegible] He was emphatic that the parents begin full intercourse as soon as the girl goes to her husband, it is not necessary to wait for her to become pregnant.

[illegible] Question: What do the spirits do in intercourse?

[illegible] Mwamtemba: The shade causes my penis to stand up and says: 'Go to the woman, there.' And also the woman's shade says: 'Your husband comes into you.' It is the shades which cause desire, then we have intercourse, the shades meet together, here—the woman's—and mine. If I do not go to my wife the shade says: 'Why, what's wrong with my place? Are there thorns? Why do you not come?' They breed over (*kubanda*) us both, both me and my wife.

Question: What do they want?

Mwamtemba: They want to create a child.

[illegible] Question: Why then do men desire masturbation and sodomy? [At first when I asked this he said: 'No, the shade is a woman,' but then he corrected himself].

Mwamtemba: It is the shade which causes this desire, we have it within. A youth masturbates, the semen falls on the ground—perhaps two youths, it's also the shade. And a woman also masturbates. . .

[illegible] Question: You perform the rituals for many reasons?

[illegible] Mwamtemba: Yes, if we do not perform the rituals the shade breeds on us and we do not bear children. Perhaps he breeds on the crops, and they do not grow well but poorly, perhaps we run mad.

On another occasion Mwamtemba said:

[illegible] The shade is in the heart. It is the shade which desires to go to a woman, which causes us men to have erections and excites desire in women. If you have not got the shade you are impotent, you do not go to women. We say: 'The shade has breeded over this man, why do they not cause him to go to women?' He just looks at women. Then the shade comes up in the belly and says: 'Hey!' It comes up and the man has intercourse with a woman. If it has breeded over him, it does not

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kakuse

come him, it does not wish to come out. And although the faeces are 775
firm they are the corpse. Because we bury a corpse underground, and 553
faeces also go underground to the shades. They disappear by night,
that is the shade. If someone excretes faeces and finds it in the grass we
say: 'The shade has caught hold of him.' 516
Question: Are faeces associated with sexual intercourse? 775
Mwasanaka: Yes, the shade does both things, he causes diarrhoea 553
and sexual intercourse. If you defaecate firm stools that is not the shade,
that is the food we eat, but watery diarrhoea which troubles you
repeatedly at night—that is the shade. If you have diarrhoea for three
days people say: 'The shades have harmered you' or 'The shade has
caught hold of you.'
Question: Malowa? 158
Mwasanaka: That is the shade because it says: 'Since you have me 775
in your belly, and they have not treated you, I cause this—these faeces 517
are the corpse. A madman defaecates and catches hold of his faeces,
perhaps he eats them, perhaps he binds it up in the grass and catches
hold of it. It is the corpse.'

Kakuse, the doctor, also interpreted the puberty ritual as being, 553
in one aspect, the transference of a girl from her father's group to 775
her husband's and, like Kasitile and Mwasalomba, he identified 531
sexual desire and potency with the shades. He said:

*At puberty a girl has left her father's and has gone to others; if she
dies he to whom she has gone buries her.*
Question: Where does the blood of a woman come from?
Kakuse: If the girl is unmarried, from her shades; they create her
blood, but in the ritual we treat her so that she moves to my place, she
comes to my shades; the blood of a married woman is created by my
shades and hers together. And the 'blood' of a man [i.e. semen] also
comes from the shades.
Question: Do the shades sound themselves at birth?
Kakuse: Yes, because if I am angry or my father is angry I do not
beget a child, but when he has prayed I do so. If I am angry with the
woman and she has caught hold of me and injured me, then we do
not have a child. The ordeal (*ensuf*) convicts the woman. She goes to 517
her father who prays. Then we have a child.
Question: Where does the power to bear and beget children come 552
from? 775
Kakuse: From the shades, you have the shades in your belly. If 517
they are not there you are all like women in the house, you cannot have
an erection, but when the shades work, you have an erection. 532
Question: Whose shades are present at intercourse? 775
Kakuse: Mine, the man's and the woman's, we both have them,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKuse

§§3
778 they both work in us, they are not only in one partner. They work in the woman and in the man, they work in both of us.

§§5 Mwangwanda, an elderly pagan, explained the symbolism of the new hearth-brick at some length:

> We take a new hearth-brick and plant it by the hearth in the bride's house. It means: 'You have grown up, you are a woman, you must always cook a pot,' and she cooks on that hearth-brick. . . . It means: 'You have grown up, the food that your mother sent will come no more, you must cook for your husband yourself.' It is planted for the senior wife only, not for others. If I find that my first wife is not a virgin we do not plant a brick for her—she has lain with another. But if she has a younger sister and she brings her as a junior wife and she is a virgin and I deflower her myself, then the first sister is still the senior wife and we plant a brick for her and her child will inherit as the senior son, for another shut up her womb [i.e. made her virgin again]. If she has no younger sister I may marry her, but she will not be my chief wife. The next one I marry will be my senior wife and for her the brick will be planted and her son will inherit.

•781 There is also an association, not made explicit by our informants, between a log of firewood and a marriageable woman.
5§5 One of the tasks of the bride and her maids is to fetch heavy logs of firewood which are stored in her mother's loft. At least one log goes with her when she is taken by her 'mothers' to her husband, and this she keeps all her life, taking it with her if she moves. From it the shades are said to chip splinters when they wish to warm themselves at the dying fire at night. After she has gone to her husband and before she conceives, a bride is forbidden to touch the firewood in her mother's loft, and in the funeral ritual, when a widow returns home for the *ingoide* she steals a log of firewood from her mother's loft and takes it to her husband's. Into the cracks of this log the officiants press seeds. It seems probable that the reddish log represents a woman in her reproductive capacity, which is formally transferred to her husband and segregated from the reproductive activities of her mother. This, we repeat, is our own interpretation, not formulated by any Nyakyusa.

783 The taboo on a bride who has slept with her husband approach-
784 ing her mother until she has brought the ritual *ilibale* is associated with the danger of mixing the bloods of different lineages.

> A bride avoids dipping water out of a pot and drinking from a calabash belonging to her relatives for the following reasons: A girl is of one blood (*ililipa*) with her mother, and when she goes to her husband, the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

782 has been a quarrel in the family, those members of the lineage
602 who have been at variance must attend and share the meat or beer, and bless one another. Grandchildren, 'comrades of the shades', must eat the offering left overnight in the banana grove.

593 If a son has quarrelled with his father and comes to beg pardon
621 the father calls his *neighbours* who must be present and partake of a
783 feast and bless the young men. 'If father and son just agree with one another and people do not eat anything, then the son will not be settled in well.'

585 At a puberty–marriage ritual the principals are the nubile girl
881 and her father or brother, her husband, and sometimes her mother
602 or mother-in-law. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest son's wife, or with her eldest daughter, if she is initiated at home. At an ordinary birth the principals are the mother and infant.

764 Besides these principals who undergo the full ritual there are
602 many minor actors. At a funeral there are the grave-diggers who,
621 traditionally among the Nyakyusa, were mature men, relatives or village neighbours.[1] They wash after the burial and are rewarded with a special leg of the funeral beef. As we have seen, the affines (*abaka*), that is the fathers-in-law and sons-in-law of the deceased or of 'the owner of the funeral', come with cattle to kill or cloth. When a woman dies, her husband and her father, or her brother, kill cattle, and their affines bring cloths or, occasionally, cattle. Kinsmen—members of the lineage and their wives—and neighbours bring gifts of food to cook for the crowd of mourners, and small gifts of millet which are presented to the shade and used for making the ritual beer. After an abnormal birth, village neigh-
875 bours have their legs splashed with scalding medicine but do not
621 drink medicines or shave. The cattle of the village are also splashed. At the puberty ritual the bride's maids keep her com-
881 pany during her seclusion. The co-wives and neighbours of her
621 mother and mother-in-law assist in instructing her, and the neigh-
602 bours of her father join with him first in avoiding her and then in giving her gifts. Her father-in-law is identified with his brothers and his father's brothers' sons, whom she avoids, as well as his sisters, and her mother-in-law's brothers, and sisters' husbands. They, in turn, avoid her sisters, as well as herself.

621 By the 'congregation' we mean those who attend rituals to ex-
789 press sympathy, and whose presence is felt to be necessary to the

[1] In Ngonde they are slained, cross-circumcision.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 The Nyakyusa perhaps emphasize it* more than their neighbours
[17] (though not more than the Jews or the Hindus), and their pre-
occupation with purification in the rituals is paralleled by the
emphasis laid on cleanliness (*ubwifyusi*) in person, in house and
courtyard, in cooking, and in disposal of excrement. Their ex-
treme cleanliness, in contrast with their neighbours, was remarked
upon by all the early travellers in the area and is still obvious.[1]
Houses and courtyards are swept and garnished; pots and dishes
scoured, food scrupulously covered with fresh banana leaves when
it is served at feasts; a good housewife is *umwifyusi*, she who is
clean. Men wash daily in running water and children are trained
to take a hoe with them when they go to defaecate, and to bury
the faeces.

783 The horror of 'filth' is very closely associated with the fear of
158 madness, which is at the same time a fear of too close association
828 with the dead. It is when the dead have not been driven away, but
return in dreams; when the necessary separation of living and
dead has not been achieved, that men go mad. Madness is most
often spoken of as the penalty for neglect of the death ritual, but
it is not, in theory, confined to that: 'All the rituals are the same,
if they are neglected, men will become mad.' Besides madness,
men fear sterility, debility, swollen limbs ('an unhealthy fatness')
and diarrhœa 'to get rid of the filth in the belly' if the rituals are
neglected, or taboos broken.

796 That a common symbolic pattern expressing common senti-
ments recurs in all the rituals is clear, but it is also true that each
ritual is characterized by peculiar sentiments and symbols. The
funeral rites are first and foremost an expression of grief—kinsmen
and neighbours gather to weep for the dead. Their grief is sym-
bolized by the stylized wailing, the passionate dancing, the smear-
ing with mud and ash, wearing mourning belts, and the song of fare-
well at the hearth. It is true that, in the later stages of the funeral,
friends seek to comfort the chief mourners with cheerful songs and
dances, and in one aspect the funeral ritual is an assertion of life,
but grief not joy is its dominant note. By contrast, the ritual of
puberty and marriage is a rejoicing—rejoicing 'because our child
has grown up', because she is virgin, because there is feasting,
because there is a marriage.

● 881 Elements peculiar to the puberty ritual are the celebration of
virginity by killing a bull, and the prayer for blessing when its

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 77-8.

* [i.e., the conception of impurity associated with physiological functions.— Analyst]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

meat is offered in the bride's father's grove; the two symbols of 881
first intercourse—treatment with *undumila* medicine and jumping over fire; the recognition of the end of childhood by calling on the bride's mother to put her down off her back; the insistence that she show modesty before her father and his fellows as before a father-in-law; and the taboo on crossing water lest her menstrual flow become like a river.

The twin ritual is characterized by the fear of infection from too 845
great potency, and the treatment with scalding medicines to 'burn' the twin birth.

Sometimes our informants gave different interpretations of the 796
same symbol and there was no agreement between them, as with 184
the stem of bananas stolen in the Kukwe death ritual, and the bunch of flowers brought back from the stream. Nsyani said stealing the bananas symbolized that 'we may now eat other people's food', and Mwamulenga that it was a symbol of driving away disease. Kakune, the doctor, interpreted the bunch of flowers brought back from the stream as a symbol of the shade which was brought home; Mwamulenga saw picking and carrying flowers as yet another symbol of the actions of a madman. Though there was general agreement over the interpretation of many symbols, it is possible that some have no commonly accepted meaning, but suggest different things to different people. It is clear, however, that with the Nyakyusa, as with ourselves, one symbol has often several associations for the same person, and Kasitile and the more self-conscious of our informants were aware of this. For Kasitile the banana in the death ritual is the corpse and the pumpkin-seeds in it the shade; it is also faeces which madmen eat; it is also, in the puberty ritual, the male organ and the seeds are the semen. Eating a banana is a symbol *both* of copulation and of the actions of a madman. Conversely, the same object or action is symbolized in many different ways—there are nine or ten symbols of sex intercourse, and twenty of driving away the shade, recorded in the texts quoted above.

When an action recurs in different rituals, informants almost always interpreted it in the same way in each context: the exception was the trampling dance (*ukukanya ingenya*) interpreted as a way of 'driving away the shade' in the death ritual and a 'rejoicing' in the puberty ritual. It was always explained as 'customary'. 'Father and grandfather did it.'

This brings us to the ultimate explanation given for all the 829

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Yet still she remains a daughter of her father's lineage and shares in its rituals as well as in those of her husband's. 613

Lineages are linked by marriage and kinship between them is established by the passage of cattle. The son-in-law becomes 'one blood' with his parents-in-law when they drink the beer brewed or eat the chicken killed at the consummation of the marriage; some of his semen is buried in his father-in-law's grove, and his spear is placed in his father-in-law's hut. The significance of the link is magnified by the thicket of taboos which surrounds 'mixing bloods', and once forged the link should be, and commonly is, retained long after the deaths of the individuals by whom it was created, for each is replaced, the husband by a brother or son, the wife by a sister or brother's daughter. For each heir the ritual of 'mixing bloods' is performed afresh reminding them of their separation and union. 613 581

Cattle are closely identified with men and therefore with lineages. The shades watch over them. Like men, they are in danger from women who are ritually impure; at the death of their owner they, too, mourn; and kinship relationships are established and expressed by their transfer from one lineage to another. 'Kinship is cattle.' 613

The distinction and opposition of lineages is apparent in the ritual of puberty and marriage which expresses both hostility and conciliation. The two lineages dance in rivalry, haggle over cattle, and exchange feasts. Among the Nyakyusa, the opposition is not between men and women, as suggested by some recent writers on rituals elsewhere,[1] but between lineages; though the men and the women, both of the groom's party and the bride's, act separately. The hostility and conciliation reach their culmination in the ritual of vituperation among the Lugulu, when groom's group and bride's insult each other by word and in action and then, at the instance of the master of ceremonies, praise each other and feast together. 613 585 881 578

Among the Nyakyusa there is no clan organization and no common name for a lineage of many generations like the Pondo *iziduko*, which identifies agnatic kinship within a large group. A common name is used by members of a lineage of three or four generations at the most, and among commoners there is no invocation of a distant ancestor as among the Pondo. The hero [144 171] 613

[1] E. Fromm, *The Forgotten Language*; M. Gluckman, 'The Role of the Sexes in Wiko Circumcision Ceremonies', in *Social Structure*, edited by M. Fortes (1949).

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

however, by the fact that, in the neighbourhood of 855
Europeans, boys can earn money, and so help the family exchequer.

Puberty is reached at about fifteen, and boys pass 881
that stage without ceremony. Girls are segregated, usually in groups. They lie on leaves spread on the floor, and must not be seen by boys, unless they are the daughters of chiefs, who are permitted to see boys at night. The initiate receives instruction, usually from her mother, though there are plenty of willing advisers besides, in household matters. When this is over, the wife of the *mfusya* (the man who was go-between at her parents' marriage) comes, with others, to inquire about the girl's character, to which a favourable answer is given by the mother: she cooks for strangers, has never known a man, and is of good temper. Then she is examined, and if she is found to be impure (as she is; there is practically no exception), she is put up into the rafters, where she is half-choked in the fumes of a smoky fire specially kindled. Here she remains until permitted to come down, a severe beating following upon any attempt to escape. (The cleansing power of smoke is to be noted also in connection with twins.) The children of Christian parents are examined in the same way. Happily the situation is improving, though very slowly. After being thoroughly smoked, the girl is washed and oiled, and the *banyage* (older women) come to instruct her in all her duties to husband and children when she has them.

Immediately after the initiation rites the betrothal 584

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

751 626 witches, who use their power beneficently and spend their dreams in efforts to counteract the aggressive witches, *wulosi*, who use their power maliciously. The great commoner is the strongest of the former type, and the 'defender of the village'. A man who earns universal unpopularity is subject to a spiritual attack from the 'defenders', and is liable to fall sick from the blast of unpopularity. Belief in this efficacy of the 'breath of men' is one of the sanctions of the accepted social order.[1]

Only magic is believed to have power to punish wrongdoers who are neither kinsmen nor members of the same chiefdom. Magic exerts no influence on the behaviour of kinsmen and affines. The witchcraft of a neglected wife may cause a man to fall sick, or that of his father-in-law may harm his children.[2] The power of witchcraft never acts between relatives, though it might between husband and wife.[3]

759 611 An aggressive witch was reported in the old days by the great commoner to the chief, who ordered the poison ordeal. If the accused failed to vomit (the dose was seldom fatal), he was proved guilty and killed or exiled, all his cows and property being taken by the chief and the victim of his aggressive witchcraft. If a private individual accused another, both were put to the ordeal; if both vomited, the accuser had to pay two cows to the other for slander; if either failed to vomit he was punished as guilty. The ordeal is now illegal, but men accused of aggressive witchcraft still find it best to fly the chiefdom. Great commoners normally used their witchcraft powers to protect their chief from attack, but if he erred they would join in the attack on him; the nobles of Ngonde had power to exert a similar constitutional check on the Kyungu.[4]

763 If death by aggressive witchcraft was suspected, it was proved or disproved by a routine post-mortem examination and by subsequent consultation with the diviner.[5]

Birth

849 A child should be born in its own father's house. A difficult birth is a sign of the guilt of adultery, and is cured by confession.[6] A few days after the birth the mother is 845 sanctified, shaved, and resumes her household duties. She later goes on a visit of some 851 weeks to show the child to her own parents, returning to her husband after celebration by both sets of grandparents and exchanges of food and hoes. The birth of twins was a great misfortune, requiring the segregation and ritual purification of both parents.[7]

Initiation

861 There was no puberty or initiation rite for boys. The initiation of a girl was really a pre-marriage rite. She went through a complicated rite to ensure fertility, in which the husband took part. The initiation lasts some months, and includes several exchanges of food between the families of the girl and her betrothed husband, and ceremonies in which her girl friends of her home village and his friends of his village take part. The girl is tested for virginity during the ceremonies. If she is not betrothed before puberty the initiation is carried out in a modified form, but the full significance is lost.[8]

[1] Wilson, G, 1938, p. 100.
[2] Ibid., p. 1939, p. 38.
[3] Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 11; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 40–3.
[4] Ibid., pp. 44–6. According to L. H. Johnston, if the children died in succession the father was supposed to fall himself, but it is possible that he is recounting a custom of the Southern Tonga (ibid., p. 40).
[5] Ibid., 1925, p. 51; Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 11; Wilson, G, 1938, p. 138.
[6] Ibid., p. 138.
[7] Ibid., G, 1938, p. 90.
[8] Johnston, 1895, p. 445.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

583 takes place on some occasion and her parents usually find out when it
584 does. In some families the girl's mother examines her after each visit to
836 her husband to see if the hymen is intact, sometimes the girl tells her mother herself. When her father hears about it his action is determined partly by his feelings towards his son-in-law, partly by his need for cattle. Sometimes he does nothing at all; occasionally he sends back the cows he has received for his daughter and breaks off the marriage, and this is particularly likely to happen if the girl has been forced against her will or generally ill-treated. More usually, however, he sends his daughter to live with her husband saying: "You have made her a woman yourself, you must pay the rest of the marriage-cattle quickly."

836 We have no evidence to suggest that the girls in any general way dislike sleeping with their husbands before puberty, rather the reverse; and the men say: "It is good, it accustoms a girl to her husband." But some girls dislike the particular men to whom they are betrothed.

●881 The initiation of a girl at puberty lasts for some months and includes several exchanges of food between her family and that of her husband, and a number of ceremonies in which both her girl friends of the same village[4] and her husband's friends from his village[4] participate. If a girl
[584] is not bespoken before puberty the initiation is still carried out in a modified form, but its full significance is lost.

585 Soon after her initiation a girl, if she has been bespoken, goes to live altogether with her husband, to play her part in his economy and to bear him children. If only a few cows have been received for her, her father insists on one or two more being handed over before she is allowed to go. At some time, perhaps during the girl's initiation, perhaps years later, the final marriage ceremony (*ohukwa*) takes place. The balance of the marriage-cattle are brought to her father by the husband and his village neighbours,[4] her "mothers" prepare a great deal of food for the guests to eat, there is dancing, feasting and great excitement.

554 The number of cows handed over varies with the wealth and social
583 status of the two families concerned. Six to ten cows is the most usual number, but sometimes as few as four or as many as thirty change hands.

583 The second method of marriage is adopted when a man falls in love with a grown girl, who is not bespoken, and cannot find the cows to satisfy her father at once; he runs off with her and regularizes the position
583 later by sending cattle. The third method is adopted when a man falls
837 in love with a married woman and has cows available; he runs off with

[4] Vide index "The Age Village".
[p. 269, col. 1b — Analysis]

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

621 others as well. Any boys' village is found to consist primarily of the
561 sons of the members of some older village who originally gave the land for its building, but as we shall see later sons of other villages live there too.

621 At the beginning, when a group of boys starts a new age-village, or
342 when boys join one already formed, they do not all have a hut to themselves, two or three friends share a hut. But later, as they grow older, each builds for himself. The younger ones build their huts of reeds, but the older ones try to get a few bamboos from their fathers or senior relatives and build more solid houses. Married men build entirely of bamboo, but often in a boys' village you will find a compromise between bamboo and reed, both being used in the same house; and the houses of bachelors, even though they be all of bamboo, are smaller than those of married men. The technique of good building is not very difficult, and the older boys instruct and help their juniors, as they join the village, to improve the skill playfully acquired as herd-boys so as to build more substantial huts.

245 The chief food of the Nyakyusa is the banana; men plant bananas
262 immediately round their huts, though their fields are mostly at a distance. And bachelors, while they continue to eat their main meals at their parents' village, plant bananas round their own huts as well. Bananas begin to bear very quickly, sometimes within a year of planting, and so, soon after the establishment of a boys' village, its members have bananas of their own, which they cook for themselves and eat with their friends at odd times during the day. But they have as yet no fields.

868 There is no formal initiation of boys at puberty; but, on the other
[881] hand, the custom of leaving home and joining a boys' village is directly
577 connected by the Nyakyusa with their ideas of decency in sexual life. They think it is perfectly all right to discuss sex openly among friends of about the same age but altogether wrong to discuss it either in the presence of, or with, their parents or those of their parents' generation. If a boy learns about love-making, in any way, from his parents the Nyakyusa think that he will not respect them properly and that he himself will be a fool. A boy must learn these things from his immediate seniors and friends. One man said to me: "If a boy after about ten years old stays at home to sleep, he is laughed at by his friends and his own parents send him away. They say: 'If he sleeps at home he will hear what his parents talk about at night, the night is always full of lewd talk; and he may even see them undressing. He will grow up a fool, with little wisdom.' You see at the boys' village" he went on to say, "the older

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

622 have invaded that country for cows and brought them back and eaten them at the new huts which we built next. But that is finished now." In this way the new chiefs are shown to their people.

631 Finally the young men are told exactly where to go and build, and the boundaries between the new chiefdoms and the villages of each are fixed; the old boys' villages are abandoned and the houses gradually pulled down and put up in their new places. At first the men of the four age-villages of each young chief just put up rough shelters to sleep in, all together on the place where the senior age-village of each new chiefdom will later be built, but after a month or two they separate, each village to its own place, and there they build their houses.

The land is now their own, they are no longer members of boys' villages, living on land given them at the side of the parent villages by their fathers, they are owners of the soil, full citizens, with chief and great commoners to rule them.

(B) *Organisation and Life of a Single Chiefdom*

622 583 A few months after the "Coming Out" each of the two young chiefs marries two wives. He may be married already, but the two whom he now takes rank as his great wives (*amake amakulumbu*) and their sons are his two heirs in the chieftainship. Young girls, daughters of neighbouring chiefs, are carried off with a show of force from their fathers' homes by the young chief's men, who, themselves, later send cows to regularise the position. The two great wives are thus married, not with the cows of their husband, but with those of the men whose sons their sons will one day rule.

622 585 631 Girls are carried off who are just about to reach puberty, and they stay at the house of one of the men of the old chief until their periods begin. When both have reached puberty they are initiated, not at their fathers' houses, but in the country of their husband, both together. At their initiation, the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the old, retiring, chief) play the part normally played by a girl's parents and their neighbours, while the young chief and his men take the usual part of a husband and his friends. And then, after the ceremonies are over, the two girls are given to the young chief as his wives. Houses are built for them separately: in the senior age-village of the new chiefdom for the first wife, in the next senior village for the second wife; and in this separate of dwelling place is already apparent the future division of the chiefdom between their sons.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F7417 Ngonde F7417
Nyakyusa

Christian ones, do not celebrate and nothing happens to them, so we no longer fear ourselves.' By 1937 the pagan rituals of kinship had been largely dropped in Ngonde, and around Rungwe mission they were disappearing, though in Selya no pagan dared neglect them. They were taken more seriously by the women than by the men, and many of the young men were openly sceptical. The young men are eclectic in their beliefs, jeering at the twin ritual when they may be fearful of any neglect of the ritual of death; doubting the power of rain-makers, but terrified of a neighbour's sorcery.

797 795 [771]

(e) CHRISTIAN RITUAL AND DOGMA

And what are the alternatives to the traditional rituals? Celebrations at death, marriage, and birth continue—probably some sort of ritual on these occasions is universal in human societies. There is no celebration of a girl's puberty, as among the pagans, but the ritual of confirmation is, in one sense, parallel, for it is an acknowledgment of maturity by the acceptance of an individual into the full fellowship of the Church; but maturity in the Church, and the symbolic death and rebirth, are not necessarily linked with physiological development, as they are in the pagan ritual of *ubunyago*.[1]

[881]

All the Christian rituals are *communal* in the sense that they are centred in the Church—the Christian community; none is primarily a ritual of kinship. This is most pointed at a christening, when a child is received into the fellowship of the Church, whereas in the pagan birth ritual it is acknowledged as a member of the father's lineage by being given *dipili* medicine (which is 'the blood of the lineage') by its paternal grandmother. Sometimes both rituals are celebrated by Christians who interpret the *dipili* as an acknowledgment of legitimacy, and a medicine necessary to the child's health, but this is frowned upon by the more orthodox. A dying man is comforted by the priest or elders of the Church, and in some communions he receives the sacrament, the symbol of his salvation through Christ and his membership of the community of believers. At a funeral the members of the local Christian congregation take the leading part, comforting the mourners with prayers and hymns, digging the grave, and burying the dead. The contrast with a pagan funeral, in which cattle are

[852]

[764]

[764]

[1] The pagan rituals referred to in this section are described in *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

was not an individual one. True, a girl gave her formal consent in the marriage ritual, but the pressure on her to accept the husband selected for her by her kinsmen was almost irresistible. In the thirties Christian women who refused their husband's hair and lived alone, or married an unrelated man of their choice, were regarded by their pagan sisters as very daring, and little girls in pagan families took it as a matter of course that they should replace their dead sisters; today the right of a widow to choose whom she will marry is generally accepted, and the custom of replacing a dead woman by her sister has lapsed. 'Every girl wants her own husband nowadays', the old women say. Thus lineage obligations give way to individual freedom of choice in marriage. At the same time the rituals which emphasized the lineage are dropped or modified. The fearful fecundity of a double birth no longer appals men and the twin ritual which used to bring together all the living members of a lineage of three generations is not celebrated at all. At a puberty ritual a pagan girl may be given the *dipiki* medicine, the symbol of 'the blood of the lineage' by her mother, but there is no seclusion and elaborate feasting, no sacrifice of the bull of puberty that her father's ancestors may 'move aside a little' to make way for the shades of her husband's lineage. Only at a funeral do kinsmen still gather and celebrate, for many still fear the shades, and at a funeral the heir is installed and the importance of property and the inheritance of it has not diminished one whit. As we have seen, the traditional religion was formulated in terms of kinship; the gods were ancestors; but today God, *Kyala*, is an ancestor; to pagans he is well as to Christians he is supreme and supreme. Men are still classified by their lineages, and one of the topics of village questions is how Prince Charles can be heir to the British throne when his father is not of the house of Windsor; but already in the economic field, and increasingly in the religious, it is the family of parents and children which is now dominant, not the lineage.

Divorce is far more frequent than formerly, partly because women claim a greater freedom of behaviour than before, as well as the right of choosing their own husbands, and are supported by the courts. As one village headman put it, 'Formerly [illegible] beat his daughter with a stick if she ran home and sent her back to her husband who also beat her.' The women reject the old pattern of subservience which was expressed in crouching to greet a man, addressing him in a very deferential fashion; the men observe,

ancestors and of Kyewe[1]. At the same time he moved his carved wood [787]
to and fro on the ground and when he did so, it indicated a negative [778]
answer from the beings invoked. But when he was asked: "Is the guilt for the sickness to be found in the husband of the chief's sister?", he was unable to move his wood as before; he could only stamp it on the ground, and this meant an affirmative reaction of the invoked spirits. Now, therefore, the meeting had reached its aim.

I asked the diviner to tell me how he had acquired his faculty. He [791]
explained that (besides the necessary inner disposition) the payment of a fee for the medical preparation was necessary in order to become a diviner[2]. This outfit consisted in a special vaccination by a learned diviner. For this purpose the neophyte was incised by his master on [804]
different spots on the upper side of the knuckles, and in these small incisions was rubbed a medical powder. By these means the initiate may be inspired by the prophesying spirits. These influences are then felt by the diviner as a power which directs the movements of his hand in the manner described.

8. Near the hut of the chief's principal wife was a "sacred" banana [626]
plant, in the grove opposite to the chief's hut and in the grove with [775]
the grave of the chief's father already described. At particular times, [782]
when any need demands it, the chief offers a prayer to this plant to [767]
his ancestors[3]. The sickness of his sister, for instance, was such an occasion for him to address the ancestors. I was invited by the chief to witness this act, but I raised objections, telling him that my presence might perhaps rather cause the anger than the help of his ancestors. [25]
In reality, I did not want the chief to stage a theatrical act on my behalf. But the chief rejected my excuses and explained that he would act in the same manner as if I were not present, because he had made up his mind to this prayer. The chief was assisted during this ceremony by Mwaingulule who presented to the chief a calabash of water as he arrived at the banana plant devoted to this purpose. The chief took some mouthfuls of the water and squirted it towards the banana plant. Then he recited the names of his ancestors and begged them to help his sister.

9. During one afternoon, I was told that a ceremony to end the [810]
initiation of a (betrothed) girl was going on in a family of the village.

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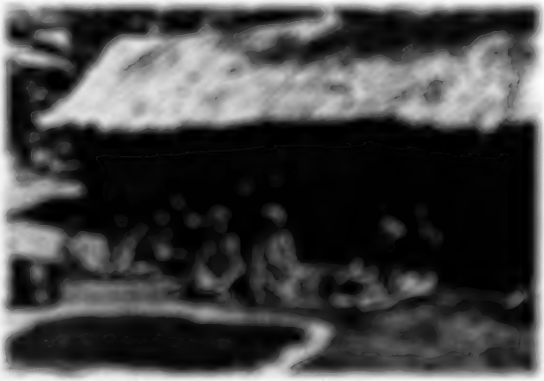
[1] name of the supreme spiritual being.

[2] Cf. Mackenzie, p. 106.

[3] Mackenzie refers that such a plant is named "Kyenyu", "the family plant (of) prayer" (pp. 106, 107), but without indication of the locality, as Kyenyu.

I went to the place and got permission to enter the hut in which the first part of the ceremony took place. I found there the parents of the girl, the girl sitting enveloped in clothes in one corner of the hut, and some older females, one of whom was the acting ungwego. Some male guests were also present[illegible]. As the girl had had her first catamenia the present ceremony marked at the same time the end of her preparation for marriage.

The ungwego prepared a beverage of beer in which a light-brown medical powder (mbondanga) was put. First the girl had to drink from it, then the parents followed. This beverage was believed to strengthen (ulwatiga) the movements. Then a spear was handed to the girl by her father, and the girl handed it in turn to some relatives of the bridegroom waiting near the hut. These persons had to bring the spear to the girl's bridegroom as a sign that he could now marry the girl[illegible], but not before he had brought a bull to the girl's father. After this the girl, now sitting in the middle of the hut, was given small gifts from the participants in the ceremony.



Practical instruction of premature girls in house-hold matters.

Following this the whole body of the girl was anointed before the door of the hut. The ungwego began by anointing her legs, then the girl herself anointed it. The ointment was prepared from castor oil and a powder of red wood (Kipwila, found commonly in the environment of Lake Rukwa). At this moment a male participant in the ceremony charged to come out of the hut, and suddenly a young woman

[illegible] Wilson, Introduction, p. [illegible], The Study of African Society, p. [illegible] (The Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. [illegible], 1945).

[illegible] ulwatiga is also also as regards mwaulwiga, ulwaugio, ingulwa.

sitting down on the curd got up, as quickly as possible held her hands before her eyes and walked off. This was because this man was her father-in-law. The strict social rules in such circumstances is well known[1].

The next act consisted in shaving the girl's hair as her couplet by the conjugal; the father was shaved by a younger brother of his in the same manner. (I cannot remember whether it was also the case with the mother of the girl)

The old fashioned hut of the chief's wife.

Then the further ceremony took place again beside the hut. All the participants sat down on mats, and the conjugal accepted the complaints of the parents on the former conduct of their daughter. Between the discussion between these parties, where the conjugal played the role of a mediator as is the case with the couple (or speaker) in the court, reached such a pitch of excitement that I thought a serious quarrel had broken out. The excitement was, perhaps, only of a ceremonial character; I was told, however, that in former times corporal punishment has been inflicted. (I believe, the girl had shown disrespect to the times before.

Then, the girl was instructed by the conjugal in her duties as a wife. These instructions were of a theoretical or moral nature concerning the correct conduct of the girl towards her parents also after the ceremony and towards her future husband. The practical part of the initiation instructions sometimes came before the ceremony at the end of initiation. These practical instructions were the preparing of food

[1] Cf. Ibramsky, p.180. (Ibramsky, p.180 in Kuczynski). According to Ibramsky the daughter-in-law has to observe the strict rule towards the mother of her father-in-law. All these persons are sacred characters.

and other duties applicable to a girl after marriage. The practical instruction takes place in or before a special hut in the village under the leadership of the *ehongoga* (*wongoga*). The girl is admonished by the *wongoga* to obey her parents without any delay, to perform the commands of her mother immediately, e. g. to clean the hut, and especially to show obedience when guests are present. Should the mother blame her daughter unjustly, she she-*ili* not reply. (The girl had been blamed in the earlier discussion that she had not swept the hut when her mother required her to do it). Then her duties and conduct towards her future husband were inculcated. As a wife she must never accept anything from the hands of her husband without kneeling and stretching out both hands, and turning away her face with eyes cast down. Also as a wife she must not hold her head up

Group of the Ngoude

when she is addressed by a man. As a wife she must be anxious to prepare her husband's meal always at the right time, that means, it has to be ready when her husband returns from the field. If she sees her husband coming from the field, then she has to go to meet him, and take his hatchet from him. Should her husband scold her, she is not to reply, but she may ask her neighbours for help. It is one of her duties to take care of the regular cleaning of the hut[*]. The ashes must always be removed by her from the fireplace. If there are only a few ashes on the fireplace she must remove them with her hands[**].

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[*] The place near the house where the *wongoga* are thrown down is called *yongoldo*.

[**] Cf. Mashwede, p. 6, who refers to such moral instructions connected with puberty customs, probably at Karonga; cf. Fülleborn, p. 66 (Ngoende group).

13:Lehmann R-9 (1939) 1951'367 Ngonde 3'367
Nyakyusa

After these conditions, the mats which the girl had manufactured were inspected. During this examination it was told her that a wife should be seen in the possession of as many beautiful mats as possible, made by her for herself and for her husband. Should the girl reveal such conduct as a wife, ulumengelele (happiness) would be in her hut.

When the proper ceremony seemed to have come to an end, another discussion followed. The girl had told the ceremony, during the above mentioned admonition, that her parents also sometimes exchanged angry words. Therefore, a new discussion between the father and the mother arose, in which also the ceremony was the "speaker", but the other participants of the ceremony also shared in it, and the discussion too became at times heated. Still, after about 15 minutes, it suddenly came to an end, and the matter in dispute was declared settled. With this the whole ceremony ended.

8. One day I asked the chief for permission to visit his huts. He dwelt in a rectangular hut (ikibaqa). A very beautiful ikitawa (bed) was in the main room, composed of many sleeping mats (ubulolo, pl. imilolo) and of big round wooden blocks (portions of a tree-trunk), one at the head and a smaller one at the foot of the bed. Each of the four fine mats which lay uppermost had a special name. All the mats rested on sticks of reed laid across beams lying on smaller poles on the floor[a]. These mats were naturally of nearly the same height as the wooden block which formed the head part of the ikitawa. In some other old-fashioned and better houses in Nyakyusa villages, similar beds were to be seen, but generally the bedsteads are much more simple.

One of the most important permissions granted me by the chief was to enter the "store room", connected with his main room by a door. The objects to be seen here were the same as those to be found in other huts or store-rooms, e. g. the big ifinche (basket) for storing grain, up to four feet high, smeared over with cow-dung and clay, and smaller baskets for different purposes. In one corner hung different kinds of dancing fans (uwabaqa, sg.) made of hairs from the tails of bulls, with fine handles of horn. In the dark opposite corner of the same wall there seemed to hang a similar object, but it was wrapped in banana leaf. This was the real sign of the chief's dignity, the symbol of his authority and power, named ulumengele. A long discussion was needed to induce the chief to unroll it. Only by constantly consulting by glances the present employees the chief slowly unrolled it. He told us that

[a] Cf. Fülleborn, p. 30.

[b] Bantuspr. 5.1

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 פתיח Ngonda פתיח
Nyakyusa
Kulua

[75] plain that 'if the bride does not wash with powdered medicine [76] she will go mad and she will bury children'.

Syungu, the officiant for all the rituals in Pawkonto's lineage, said:

[76] *If a girl goes mad, we say, if we have not treated her: 'We neglected the ritual, let us treat her.' She runs about aimlessly and makes bundles of filth. But if we have treated her we say: 'Perhaps Kyala has gone away from us. Sa! Nothing has been omitted, we have treated her.' And if she does not bear a child as her husband's her in-laws say to her: 'Did your father and mother not treat you?'*

[76-8] Mwanawiwa (a middle-aged pagan): *It is said that if the men feed with her fellows who sleep with their husbands they will leave (ovenay) her, and she has diarrhoea. When she has been given powdered medicine, then she sleeps with them. . . . To lie on powdered medicine which has been sprinkled on the ground is to give the bride weight (ubwite), because if it is not done those who are with their husbands will overnay her and she will have diarrhoea.*

[77] Pawkonto's Wife: *In the old days we put medicine in her porridge so that she would not run away from her husband . . . not now. It's Dangerous times now.*

[78] Question: *In Selya it is said that if she is not given powdered medicine she will be proud.*

Wife: *Yes, here too. And if the girl is proud we beat her.*

Mwanawiwa: Washing and catching in her hands the water that falls from her husband's hands has two meanings. In some families the husband and wife wash separately, in others they wash together. In either case the first meaning is present, in the second both meanings. [79] *It is said that when someone has not washed in the puberty ritual he or her children will die, for that water (with which he neglected to wash) will enter the child's stomach and kill it. The water is in the child's stomach but its symptoms are those of diarrhoea. The middle girl catching water in her hands washes so that the women will receive* [80] [illegible] *another grandchild (we speak of inheritance), which means that the women receive the semen which comes from the man.*

Making fire by friction is a symbol of procreation.[1] If the fire does not kindle we say the couple are sterile. Two fire-sticks are used, one is the man the other the woman, and the fire is the child. The movement made by the rubbing is the coitus.

Response: *If the fire does not come the man is sterile and the girl will quarrel with her husband and perhaps run away. It does not mean she will be known with other men.*

[1] Chapman to make fire by friction, chapman to manufacture.

S:Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1938 FN17 Ngendo FN17
Nyakyusa

and children a man has to assist him the more wealth he can produce. The man and his unmarried sons hoe, his wives and young daughters plant, weed and harvest, fetch water, cut firewood and cook the food; and in other practical activities there is equally fruitful co-operation within the household group.

When a man marries he takes his wife from her father's village to his own where he lives with a group of contemporaries. Each village is in origin an age-group, formed by the sons of some village of which men who have home one by one as they reach the age of ten to twelve years and build together on ground set aside for them by their fathers. It is not known, the Nyakyusa maintain, for a boy to sleep at home after any vigorous interest in sexual activity has awakened in him; and so, for the fifteen years or more between leaving home and marriage, he sleeps with bachelor friends in a boys' village. He and a group of friends go round in turn to the houses of their respective parents for meals, and each hears his own parents' fields, but all return to the boys' village at night.

As the members of the boys' village grow older, younger boys just leaving home begin to be refused admittance to it and so either start a fresh village of their own nearby or else join a village of their own contemporaries which has already been started. Boys' villages are thus forever living off from the villages of men. In fact a boys' village covers but little ground for, as its members are unmarried, the houses are small and close together and there are no garden lands attached to it. But as the young men marry one by one the village expands, houses are built bigger and further apart and some adjacent ground is brought under cultivation, until at last it assumes the normal aspect of a village of adult men.

A village thus consists of a male age-group with wives and children attached. Wives may be of any age and there is no such formal age grouping among them as among the men. Men, as time goes on, marry men too may enter the village who are not exact contemporaries of its other members. When a man dies his heir, either a younger brother or a son, often comes to live in his village; but are strangers who apply for land in a village even, I think, refused on the ground of unsuitable age. Villages vary considerably in size but average forty to fifty households.

In fact a village of boys, as we have said, is built on ground allotted to it by the village of their fathers, but a new allotment is made ceremonially at the "coming out" (ukwaika) of the young chiefs.

Every generation such chiefdom of the Nyakyusa is divided into two halves, a fact which is hard to understand until it is realized that the Nyakyusa consist of a number of immigrant groups which have, until very recently, been expanding their territory within the shores and

[illegible] permanent plots here and there which could be taken up and some existing holdings in the area are too large for the agricultural capabilities of their occupiers. The temporary huts have been done all. The local landlords had become seriously worried over the large-scale alienation of the land resources without any equivalent increase in the number of the villagers, and the plan worked to conserve the remaining land against the non-local settlement needs of the new people.

The principle of no land without residence also means that a villager who wishes to have more conveniently located land holdings in the village, a little earlier he would more probably have been able to obtain at least the lands beyond the immediate vicinity of the houses — in so far as the non-resident was not late in away to allow continued cultivation. This has been especially important for younger men who, wishing to take up a vacant holding elsewhere, also desire to retain their share of the parental holdings allocated by inheritance. Conversely, they are now unable to move up to their father's holdings and so retain their fields in their own village. Such men must now make a preliminary decision between the utility of perhaps two inadequate holdings which, however, combined together might be of satisfactory size.

As a consequence of this, inter-village separation is probably greater than it has ever been in European times, and far less strong perhaps than it was in the old days. Men feel that the security of their holdings, the future of their sons, and the possibility of increasing their public cultivation are actually within the security and stability of their own village. They tend to see other villages and other villagers as a potential threat to their own land requirements. Men often respect the claims of neighbouring villages which they think, will, given the chance, seize some of their land. Therefore and villagers would refuse to cross the boundary into another village when they encountered me during my investigations, for fear the suspect of surreptitious appropriation of the land there. Such claims are still strongly held in a village were regarded with some animosity. Footpaths would not look beyond their own village boundaries in an attempt to make an appreciation of the southern overall land situation. They visited only reluctantly to stay in other they already had and to guard in patriarchy. They were only too inclined to believe that other villages nearby have taken off and to see here an scapegoat for their own difficulties and shortage. It must be said that this resulted mainly in village endeavours and the invisibility of village boundaries has in fact resulted in make for a certain inequality of land holding according to the perseverance and ability with which land was claimed authority over formerly waste lands. This conditions, however, encouragement to men's claims today and in any case it is tending to disappear under the pressure of inter-village movements.

The Ponkyumb village in the Lake Plains, with its unmodified indigenous [illegible] and aggressive exclusiveness, and [illegible] of its [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] of a village moved to one side, [illegible] to build their own houses and [illegible] to acquire their own fields in [illegible] with its establishment as a full village in its own right, and this is no longer feasible or even possible, for the land is not available for this sort of expansion. The young men are driven back on a dependence on the fields already held by their fathers in the old village. They gradually move into their fathers' places and take over the parental holdings as or as have gone, and men whose time was in others were dissatisfied to any other village where they are gone elsewhere. The social basis of village living is lost.

The [illegible] and [illegible] have their fathers' houses and fields but live, [illegible] small huts together on a site somewhere adjacent to the main village site.

[illegible] in demand for the village headmen. But even building alone with the essentially unwalled beehive grass are becoming increasingly scarce and valuable, for we are desirous to decrease the amount of visible by undergoing the bush or water - rather the streams. The number of young men's villages is therefore diminishing and congestion of their huts is increasing to the stage very often where we more than a narrow passage if left between adjacent houses. There seems to be a wider age range in the young men's families where, often, a large village provides only one for all to sons. Smaller villages sometimes provide no accommodation at all for their sons, who are then compelled to seek membership of a neighbouring group. These families are mainly regarded nowadays as temporary residential areas for the young men until such time as they move on to an existing building - their father's or some other. There is therefore no attempt to provide sufficient space for an adequate banana grove with each young man's house, for which a fresh one plot behind it. The visible land behind the compound here already belongs to inheritance of the main village. When a young man is able to move and also up a building his married sis together, often, with the help of elders over by a neighbouring priest who has probably been sharing with another relations.

These young men's families do not, any longer, eventually mature and become villages in their own right with their own headmen and visible lands. Formerly, when this occurred, they would probably have taken over a good deal of the lands of the old village, as the young men exercised the privilege of their age mercenary against their elders with the emergence of the new situations. New situations, and with them new villages, are longer emerging, and this is mainly because Government has prohibited the alienation of [illegible] on the death of the old chief, as it is considered inconsistent with the development of stable, modern local government. Additionally, however, the shortage of land can no longer allow of the traditional expanding pattern mentioned elsewhere. The elder men's villages are not now prepared to yield ground to the young men, and the latter cannot expand elsewhere. These political requirements and land restriction work together to make the old system obsolete and to freeze the spatial distribution of villages as it existed in early European times. So far as I could ascertain in the distribution of the Lake Phone, probably no new village had emerged in the past 30 or more years, except for a few cases of large men-subsidiary sons who for administrative and social convenience. Many villages there date back to pre-European days when were under the sun, or even the grandsons, of the original headmen (though this is not essential or invariable in any way).

The age-basis of the Nyakyusa village is thus disappearing. Indeed, in many villages it has already disappeared in everything but the young men's families. Where the process has gone least far, there is still apparently a rough division of the single village into the old men's sector (men at least 40 years of age, and young men's sector (men at least 20 years of age, [illegible] 30 years old, being the younger brothers or elder sons of the old men) and the young men's and youths' sector. Its inhabitants were said to share a continuous allegiance to there and live on their father's lands and to become immediate neighbours of older men. They would, if possible, allow allowing a middle-aged man to shift there himself. Nevertheless even this sort of age-division is rapidly vanishing and in very many villages a man's neighbours may be of any age.

We have seen that inheritance is now one of the chief methods of obtaining land. Under the new inheritance rules this means that men [illegible] their fathers and who on their fathers' visible holdings building [illegible] and banana groves. Some young men which early where which has, there is no longer any notion or possibility of the younger generation entering into an

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Malipunde

On moonlight nights the girls play special games in the courtyard, such as 'Knock, knock, little man'; they put bits of banana leaves in the forks of the fingers and toes and sing: 'Knock, knock, little man; knock, knock, little woman!' Then they spread wide their arms and legs and fingers and toes and knock them together. The leaves that fall out when they do so are collected and hidden some distance away. Then they all separate and hunt for them, singing:

> 'We look for our fellow the barren one.
> I don't know where she is, the barren one.'

When they find the leaves they pile them up and then each snatches one, singing:

> 'Here she is, here she is!'

Then the game ends.

Another traditional song goes:

'Little month, little month, She-who-makes-her-friends-quarrel.'

But many of the songs the maids sing with the young men are just current popular songs.

'The maids are friends for the bride to amuse herself with. They amuse themselves with young men, singing, and if some other bride is excluded at the same time, they go and compete against her and her maids in singing.' At the exclusion of Mwaikuje's daughter described below, a dozen girls, all a little younger than herself, kept her company. Five were her own half-sisters, one was a wife of her father who had not yet reached puberty, one a daughter of her father's sister, and four were daughters of her father's neighbours.

Although a bride's hut is the centre for sex play, women who are sleeping with their husbands and are therefore 'heavy' (nzito) with women, do not enter it and may not cook for her, for any contact with them is felt to be dangerous to her. Her own mother refrains from intercourse until her daughter has gone to her husband.

The bride is not confined to the hut (as among many other African peoples) but is free to move about the immediate neighbourhood. Her movements are, however, limited by the taboo on crossing a stream, the need to avoid sexually active women, and the avoidance of her father and other men of his village, as well as her in-laws. When she leaves her hut she is accompanied by her

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

584 ceremonies begin; indeed, the one passes into the other. Girls are sometimes betrothed before birth, but this is usually done only when a wife has died, and the father, being obliged to supply another, offers the widower the next child to be born if it is a girl. He sends a boy to the man as a guarantee of good faith, but the boy remains only a week or so, and then returns to his home.

583 It may be accepted as certain that no boy comes through the dangers of adolescence unharmed. Fathers are said to warn their growing sons about these dangers, and sometimes they threaten to refuse to find wives for them if the warning goes unheeded; but nothing more is done, and the threat is never carried out.

584 585 Children's games are much too numerous for anything but a mere reference. For quiet moments, puzzles; or guessing what is in the hand of another; or what object, out of sight, is being touched. A favourite river- or lake-side sport is diving and staying under water while some one counts. Walking on the hands or on stilts is very popular.

586 *Fungile* is a ball game, with sides, the ball being thrown from one to another on the same side, while the other side endeavours to get and keep it a given number of throws, without letting it fall to the ground or into the hands of the opponents. *Ingube* is a game not unlike our hockey, a ball being struck about, and kept as far as possible within one's own side. *Ngulya* is played with sides sitting at a distance from a small object set up in the middle, while any round thing is thrown at it from side to side, the winning side

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

The age system of the Nyakyusa has been described in detail in *Good Company*,[1] but, since it forms the basis of their social structure, a brief explanation must here be given for the benefit of readers unacquainted with that earlier volume. Within each chiefdom there are a number of villages composed not of kinsmen but of age-mates. Villages begin when small boys of eight or ten years build together at a little distance from their fathers. They are joined by younger brothers, as these reach the age when boys stop sleeping at home, until the eldest are in their middle teens, when the youngsters will be told to begin another village. The boys of a village have their own leader, a 'natural' leader, not specifically appointed, but they are subject to the headman of their fathers' village, and formerly fought as a group under his direction. But at the 'coming out' a headman for each village is selected from among its members by the fathers: if he dies, his heir—a younger brother or son—inherits his position, so that sometimes a young man becomes headman of an old man's village, taking the name and social position of his father. Only commoners are eligible as headmen: we knew one candidate who was rejected because his great-grandfather was a chief.

Two villages in each chiefdom are senior to the others and their headmen are responsible each for half of the country. During the 'coming out' ritual the chief marries two wives, 'mothers of the country', and one is established in each senior village or capital (*ikitongolelo*). The eldest sons of these two wives are the heirs, and later divide the old chief's country between them. Most of the chief's junior wives are divided between the capitals but some may be settled in a colonising village in unoccupied country. All the chief's sons build with commoners in villages appropriate to their age, and all save the two heirs are subject to the commoner headmen of their villages. They are entitled to some respect as 'sons of the chief', and those of strong personality gain a following and settle disputes between their fellows (or may any commoner), but only the two senior sons can claim political authority.

Before the 'coming out' the villages of young men and their fathers adjoin, for the boys have built on their fathers' land, on the fringes of their fathers' villages. But at the 'coming out' there is a new deal in land. The young men are established in the centre of the country and their fathers move to the periphery; it is not merely that fathers and sons exchange land, but all the boundaries

[1] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, 1951.

9: Wilson E- (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

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F3017 Ngonde F3017
Nyakyusa

are redrawn and only the fields in old craters (the most prized and fertile of all) are not re-allotted. Thus the villages of kinsmen of two generations adjoin, and often those of three generations.

On the old chief's death his village headmen become priests of the grove in which he is buried, and, in co-operation with his son, the new chief, sacrifice there on behalf of the two countries into which his old chiefdom is divided. There is a nice balance of power between chief and village headmen in life, and when he dies his two heirs and the headmen (or their heirs) continue to share power, the power which belief in his spiritual force and their ability to guide it gives them. The success or failure of rituals is held largely to depend upon the personal relationships of the leading participants, chiefs and commoner priests.

Besides the ordinary commoner priests (the village headmen of a past generation or their heirs) there are priests of the chiefs' lineage, usually belonging to a junior line to which specific ritual functions, such as rain-making, have been entrusted, and whose office is hereditary in the same way as that of a chief. Kaitile (96),[1] the rain-maker, is such a priest: his grandfather was the brother of a ruling chief (gg) and had been appointed as rain-maker (*umpalele*) and priest (*ampage*), the two functions being separate but overlapping. As rain-maker Kaitile tended the rain-stones, as priest he initiated the rituals in certain of the sacred groves, though he did not actually officiate himself. Kaitile was a key informant on ritual and a chapter is devoted to his history, since it epitomizes the relationships between chiefs and commoners.

As we have shown, most of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde chiefs claim some sort of kinship with one another. Those who are usually related pray together at the graves of their common ancestors, and these more distantly connected join in sacrifice to their founding fathers, but in the communal rituals kinship is neither the dominant theme nor the exclusive principle of association, as it is in the rituals celebrated by private persons. In the communal rituals most of the priests are commoners unrelated to the dead who are honoured, and the sacrifices are held to benefit not only the descendants of the dead, but all those who live in the countries they once ruled. Nevertheless, the symbolism of the communal rituals commonly recalls that of the rituals of kinship; themes which pervade the death ritual recur again in the rituals of 'coming out' and 'dressing the country'. This background is

[1] Numerals after a name refer to the genealogy of Nyakyusa chiefs facing p. 9.

[33] 773 they both work in us, they are not only in one partner. They work in the woman and in the man, they work in both of us.

[35] Mwangwanda, an elderly pagan, explained the symbolism of the new hearth-brick at some length:

> We take a new hearth-brick and place it by the hearth in the bride's house. It means: "You have grown up, you are a woman, you must always cook a pot," and she cooks on that hearth-brick. . . . It means: "You have grown up, the food that your mother once will come no more, you must cook for your husband yourself." It is placed for the senior wife only, not for others. If I find that my first wife is not a virgin we do not place a brick for her—she has lain with another. But if she has a younger sister and she brings her as a junior wife and she is a virgin and I deflower her myself, then the first sister is still the senior wife and we place a brick for her and her child will inherit as the senior son, for another dug up her womb [i.e. made her virgin again]. If she has no younger sister I may marry her, but she will not be my chief wife. The next one I marry will be my senior wife and for her the brick will be placed and her son will inherit.

[36] 777 There is also an association, not made explicit by our informants, between a log of firewood and a marriageable woman. One of the tasks of the bride and her maids is to fetch heavy logs of firewood which are stored in her mother's loft. At least one log goes with her when she is taken by her 'mothers' to her husband, and this she keeps all her life, taking it with her if she moves. From it the shades are said to chip splinters when they wish to warm themselves at the dying fire at night. After she has ceased to see menses and before she conceives, a bride is forbidden to touch the firewood in her mother's loft, and in the funeral ritual, when a widow returns home for the agenda she steals a log of firewood from her mother's loft and takes it to her husband's. Into the cradle of this log the officiants pour seeds. It seems probable that the reddish log represents a woman in her reproductive capacity, which is formally transferred to her husband and segregated from the reproductive activities of her mother. This, we repeat, is our own interpretation, not formulated by any Nyakyusa.

[37] 778 The taboo on a bride who has slept with her husband approximating her mother until she has brought the ritual *libale* is associated with the danger of mixing the bloods of different lineages.

> A bride would flapping water out of a pot and drinking from a calabash belonging to her relatives for the following reason. A girl is of one blood (*ifiyo*) with her mother, and when she goes to her husband, the

[illegible] ith the ritual because
[illegible] ne son of a component
[illegible] or a small area might
[illegible] r brothers also. The
[illegible] 'come out' as prin-
[illegible] ne 'younger brothers'

[illegible] ne, several brothers
[illegible] pals and the women
[illegible] ed. They would say,
[illegible] will be beautiful and
[illegible] ne, then, if a man has
[illegible] ....' In Buffoulayeen
[illegible] ntirely confined by his
[illegible] ellows never had so
[illegible] ldren.

[illegible] ne chiefs shown that
[illegible] other, but secondary
[illegible] ngaye all get indi-
[illegible] (e.g. Mwalayeen gil)
[illegible] n-women. Mwalayeen
[illegible] place and down out
[illegible] north of the Sangoro

[illegible] ation where authority
[illegible] the younger. The old
[illegible] In Nyakyusa dioses
[illegible] ne. 'A chief did not
[illegible] he died because there
[illegible] ne son and people would complain: 'He is too old, when we fight we are beaten, he had better die, perhaps the lots will help us.' He died of the 'breath of men'.' But, as will be shown, his brothers had the duty of murdering a chief who seemed likely to die, and they were much more ready to do this after the 'coming out' of his sons than before. It was right that the sons should come out before their father's death, but not right that the period of contingency should be extended, for the division of authority between old and young was uneasy. When the old chief died the lot brothers became the priests (diviners) responsible for the work-[illegible] ers to the gods, and the young men were solely responsible for the defence of the country and the administration of justice.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]